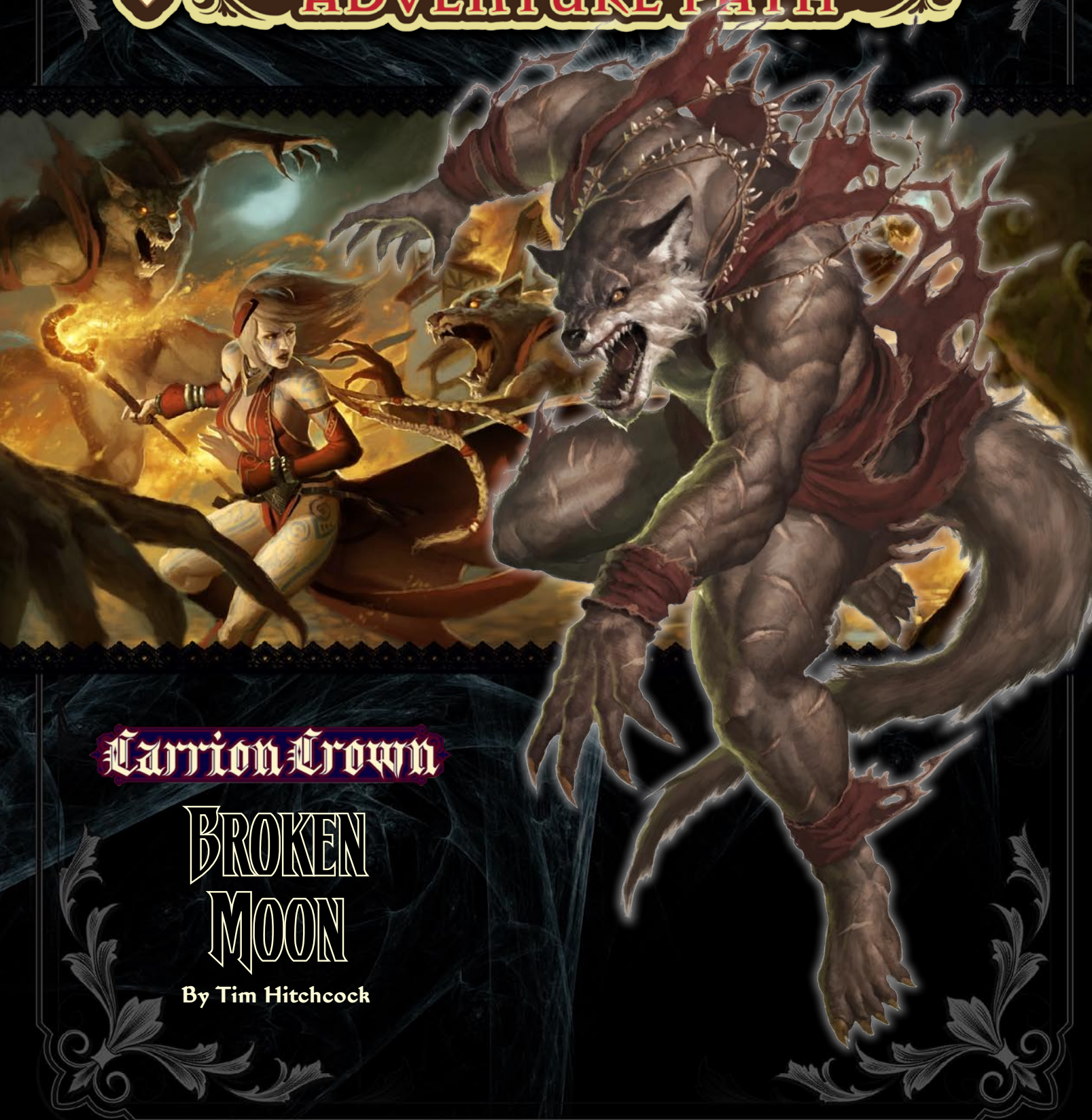


PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH[™]



Carrion Crown

BROKEN
MOON

By Tim Hitchcock

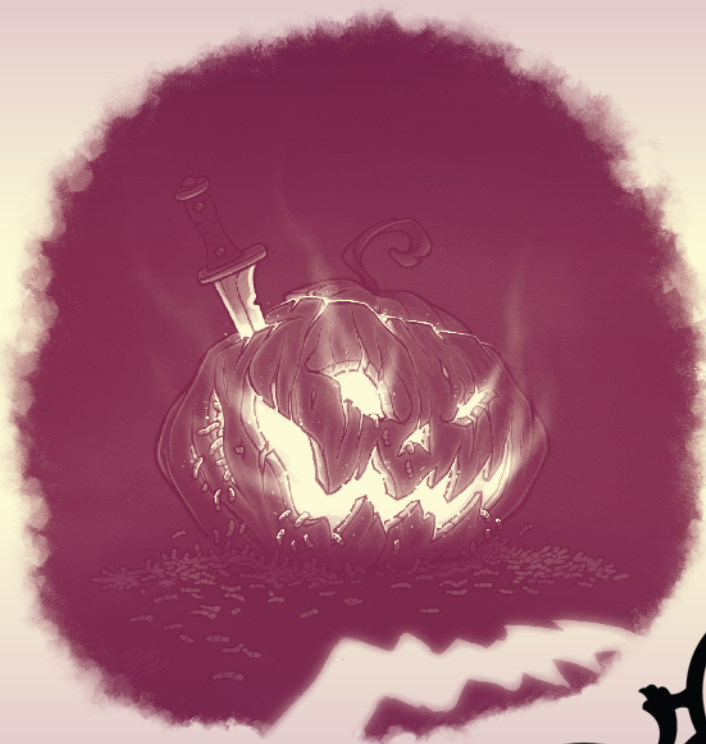
The Prince of Wolves

Legends among the wanderers of Ustalav tell of a mysterious 55th harrow card of a man standing atop a moonlit hill with a crown at his feet and dozens of peering eyes staring from the shadows. It is known as "The Prince of Wolves." Tied fundamentally to the tale of a cursed Ustalavic prince and his bestial followers, the card's appearance is said to presage the return of the true rulers of Ustalav, said by some to have all been slain by the Whispering Tyrant, to have turned traitors in ages past, or merely to have forgotten their noble lineage.



Vampire Pumpkins

Just as city dwellers sculpt gargoyles to represent and deter evil spirits, so do country dwellers carve pumpkins and similar produce with fearful visages to ward off evil around holy days and festival celebrations. Yet among Ustalav's strangest tales is that of the vampire pumpkin. These deadly gourds are said to arise from jack-o'-lanterns that have trapped and become possessed by evil essences. Through the dark these uncanny menaces cackle and roll, hungering for living blood as they spread flames and chaos among all who mistake them for simple decoration.





ADVENTURE PATH • PART 3 of 6

BROKEN MOON



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"Broken Moon" is a Pathfinder Adventure Path scenario designed for four 7th-level characters.
By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 9th level.

This product makes use of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, and *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*. These rules can be found online as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd.

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Carrion Is Off the Menu

So let me tell you about how we name Adventure Paths. In the best-case scenario, we have a code name that works. (Yes, we tend to have code names, or at least crappy names that we call an AP until we hit on one worth using—Legacy of Fire’s was “Genie War” for the longest time.) It’s rare that we have a best-case scenario, though. Typically, James is sprawled on my office couch and I have my feet on my desk and we try to outdo whatever lunatics use to write the taglines for Hammer Horror movie posters. There’s no doubt that it can be fun, but it can also be a lengthy, frustrating process. There’s a whole list of rules we’ve come up with, like how we avoid the “X of the Y” construction—obviously with dubious success. At the same time, we’re trying to come up with things that not only sound cool, but are marketable and don’t scream for ways to be made fun of (if you ever meet Sarah, just ask her to say “Dark Markets,” for example). So it’s this whole

long process that typically ends with phrases like “That’s perfect!” or “It’s 11:30. That’s good enough. I’m going home.” Coming up with the title for Carrion Crown was somewhere in the middle—sort of.

Okay, so now let me tell you how you slightly undermine all that work: forget the name you came up with. Yeah. We did that. The day before PaizoCon 2010. The day before we announced the Carrion Crown Adventure Path—which wasn’t its name.

The morning of, preparing to go into the PaizoCon Pathfinder Adventure Path seminar, James, Rob, and I are there looking at each other doubtfully. I don’t remember the specifics—a potentially damning theme for this story—but one of us looked at the other.

“What was the name again?”

“It’s.... Oh. Um... uh oh.”

“‘Something’ Crown?”

“Killer Crown? Crimson Crown? Something-Spooky Crown.”

“Carrion?”

“Oh, yeah! That’s totally it. We’re on.”

Yeah. That totally wasn’t it. Close. But no cigar. In fact, the name none of us would remember until a colorfully curse-riddled conversation much later was “Charnel Crown.”

We really should write these things down.

All that said, “carrion” works too. That’s probably why we got them mixed up, as they’re both “C” words that have to do with dead things. But the goof-up has totally taken “carrion” off the menu for us. We’ve just used it too much, with titles like “Howl of the Carrion King” on our backlist, spots like “Carrion Hill” on Golarion’s map, and monsters like carrion golems in our bestiaries. So, after Carrion Crown, this usefully sinister word is going on hiatus for a bit.

At the end of it all, the name works for us and I’m totally happy with it—though in a palm-to-forehead kind of way as I inevitably remember our goof. Honestly, “carrion” probably works better in the title, as it’s likely a more accessible word than “charnel.” So, as you can see on the cover, it all worked out in the end. But that’s how it happened. Just a bit of trivia in case you ever wonder where these names come from or why the word “carrion” doesn’t appear in the titles of any of our 2012 or 2013 offerings.

A LOT OF NIGHT MUSIC

I’ve got a lot for you to listen to this month, with music for both of this month’s feature monster types. Lycanthropes are definitely getting top billing, but “Broken Moon” is more than just Carrion Crown’s werewolf adventure. It’s also Carrion Crown’s walking dead adventure.

One of the first things we knew we wanted to do with Carrion Crown was put monsters on the covers. Specifically, well-known monsters from the traditions of horror literature, film, and roleplaying. Somehow that morphed into homages loosely riffing off Universal Studios’ classic monsters, and then a ghost was strong enough to stand on her own, and for the last one, a lich seemed like the best creature to represent the young but significant tradition of horror roleplaying. Unfortunately, we’ve only got six covers and there are way more cool monsters and terror tropes that we wanted to play with. So, “Broken Moon” does double duty, being chock-full of werewolves, but also culminating with a *Night of the Living Dead*-style village overrun by the walking dead. So, even though you might not realize it just looking at the cover, “Broken Moon” is Carrion Crown’s creature double feature.

To play that up—musically speaking—I’ve got two playlists for you this month, one featuring the moon madness of lycanthropy, and the other inspiring visions of unstoppable hordes of the undead.

ON THE COVER

Amid a three-way werewolf-undead-iconic showdown, Dave Rapoza gives us a look at Packlord Kvalca Sain, the werewolf whose death sparks a lycanthropic civil war in the depths of the Shudderwood in this month’s adventure, “Broken Moon.”

LYCANTHROPES

Donaggio, Pino: *The Howling*
 Elfman, Danny: *Nightbreed* and *The Wolfman*
 Frankel, Benjamin: *Curse of the Werewolf and Other Film Music*
 Haslinger, Paul: *Underworld* (and sequels)
 Kanno, Yoko: *Wolf’s Rain Soundtrack 2*
 LoDuca, Joseph: *Brotherhood of the Wolf*
 Marianelli, Dario: *The Brothers Grimm*
 Morricone, Ennio: *Wolf*
 Powell, Andrew: *Ladyhawke*

WALKING DEAD

Carpenter, John: *Village of the Damned*
 Goldsmith, Jerry: *The Mummy*
 Elm, Bill & Woody Jackson: *Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare*
 Heil, Reinhold & Johnny Klimek: *Land of the Dead*
 Isham, Mark: *The Crazies*
 Morasky, Mike: *Left 4 Dead*
 Murphy, John: *28 Days Later*
 Revell, Graeme: *The Crow*
 Suzuki, Kota: *Resident Evil 5*
 Taïeb, Jean-Pierre: *Frontiere(s)*

Next time around we’ve got “Wake of the Watcher,” which, for those of you who—like us—enjoy a healthy dose of Lovecraft with your fantasy, is going to be full-on Mythos Madness. Check out the preview on page 92 for just a hint of what’s in store and try to hold on to your sanity until then.

Wes

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Broken Moon

All manner of beasts and monsters lurk beneath the eaves of the Shudderwood, but none so numerous or feared as the forest's werewolves. Although the wood contains packs of these feral killers beyond counting, they can be loosely grouped into five distinct tribes: the provincial Broken Ones; the Kellid-descended Primals; the Prince's Wolves, with their ties to Sczarni; the mighty Silverhides; and the fiend-worshipping Demon Wolves. Of course, the greatest threat these werewolves pose is that they can be anyone—the rough woodcutter, the itinerant peddler, the riverboat captain—any of them might be a wolf in human skin, and travelers through the Shudderwood are well advised to keep moving, keep to themselves, and leave the dark shadows of the forest behind them as soon as they can. For when the moon is full, the true masters of the Shudderwood fill the night with their howls, and woe be to any man or woman who becomes their prey.

—Oleandra Amandine, Shadows of the Shudderwood

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the depths of the Shudderwood, the elite hunting retreat of Ascanor Lodge sits as a sole bastion of civilization among the fearsome beasts and ravenous werewolf packs that call the wood home. Fortunately for Ascanor and its guests, the lodge warden Estovion Lozarov has the power to summon a vilkacis, a powerful lycanthropic spirit. Though the creature occasionally slays a guest of the lodge (usually under the direction of the warden himself, who can barely control the beast), Estovion's ability to seemingly command the vilkacis has kept the lodge safe, as his power over the ancestral werewolf spirit has granted him and his lodge immunity from predation at the hands of the werewolves of the Shudderwood. In particular, Estovion enjoys an alliance with Mathus Mordrinacht, leader of the Silverhides, one of the most powerful werewolf tribes in the region. Ascanor's guests know nothing of this arrangement, nor of Estovion's power over the vilkacis, only that they can enjoy their holidays in the wilderness of the Shudderwood from the relative safety of Ascanor Lodge's walls.

This was the normal state of affairs in the Shudderwood until the Whispering Way made their appearance. At the behest of their mysterious leader in far-off Caliphass, a death-obsessed aristocrat and spellcaster named Adivion Adrissant, the Whispering Way has been gathering the necessary ingredients for the *Carrion Crown*, a rare elixir that has the potential to bring forth the powers of the Whispering Tyrant. Under the command of a necromancer named Auren Vrood, the cult seized the ectoplasmic spirit of Harrowstone's warden in Ravengro, and used the Beast of Lepidstadt to steal the Seasage Effigy from the University of Lepidstadt. With these two ingredients in hand, the Whispering Way left Schloss Caromarc in search of the next ingredients needed for the *Carrion Crown*—the heart of a powerful alpha werewolf lord, and a skull crafted from the bone fragments of a hundred slain innocents.

To acquire the werewolf's heart, Auren Vrood contacted Estovion, whom the Whispering Way had helped years before to gain control over the vilkacis. Knowing of Estovion's ties to the Shudderwood's werewolves, Vrood asked the lodge warden to put him in touch with the werewolves, threatening to reveal his secrets to his guests and the Palatinate government if he refused. Although not a supporter or ally of the Whispering Way, Estovion saw little choice but to acquiesce to Vrood's demands, and so arranged a clandestine meeting at Ascanor Lodge between the Whispering Way and Mathus Mordrinacht. At the meeting, Mathus agreed to orchestrate the assassination of the Shudderwood's most powerful werewolf, Kvalca Sain, an immense beast who held the title of packlord over all of the werewolves of the entire region. In exchange, Vrood promised that Mordrinacht could feast upon the unused portion of Sain's heart and claim her title for himself.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Characters should be 7th level when they begin "Broken Moon." The PCs should be 8th level by the time they arrive in Feldgrau, and they should reach 9th level by the end of the adventure. "Broken Moon" uses the medium XP track.

The results of this secret meeting soon unleashed a ripple of repercussions that spread throughout the forest, as Sain's assassination threw the werewolf tribes of the Shudderwood into disarray. As the packs struggle for control of Highthrone, their ancestral seat, located at an abandoned temple of Desna called the Stairs of the Moon, the werewolves are dangerously close to all-out civil war to decide who will become the next packlord.

Meanwhile, the Whispering Way have left the woods behind, and are heading into the war-torn plains of Ardeal known as the Furrows. There they search for the next ingredient they needed for the *Carrion Crown*, which lies buried in the tragically haunted ghost town of Feldgrau. Vrood directs his cultists as they exhume the bodies of Feldgrau's slain citizens, collecting a small bone sample from each one for use in the *Carrion Crown* elixir, then animating the corpses to serve in an undead army for the eventual use of the reborn Whispering Tyrant. Thus far, the task has proved incredibly time consuming, as the town's restless spirits do their best to interfere with the Whispering Way's desecration of their mortal remains. As a result, the cult is still hard at work in Feldgrau, seeking out the town's ghosts and haunts and destroying them, at least long enough to animate their remains.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

At the behest of Judge Daramid, the PCs head to Lozeri to investigate the resurgence of Ustlav's most infamous death cult, the Whispering Way. Following an old hunting trail through the haunted Shudderwood, the PCs eventually arrive at Ascanor Lodge, a posh hunting lodge located in the heart of the wood, from which they can launch their investigations.

At Ascanor, the PCs have the opportunity to talk with guests and use the lodge's libraries to learn about both the unrest among the werewolf tribes of the wood and the location of the ruins of a lost Desnan temple known as the Stairs of the Moon—a location that not only serves as a sacred meeting-place for the Shudderwood's werewolves, but may also be of interest to the Whispering Way. Also during their stay at the lodge, the PCs soon

find themselves embroiled in a murder mystery, as their investigations incite the paranoia of the lodge warden, who summons an evil werewolf spirit to possess one of the lodge guests and kill the PCs. Once the PCs identify the true killer, they follow the Whispering Way's trail to the ruined temple.

Arriving at the Stairs of the Moon, the PCs are plunged into the middle of the brutal civil war being fought between the Shudderwood's various werewolf tribes. Along the way, the PCs learn that the Whispering Way slew the Shudderwood's packlord and stole his heart, thereby instigating the current anarchy among the wolves. The cult then fled east to a small ghost town called Feldgrau, located in the war-blighted region of Ardeal now known as the Furrows. In pursuit is one of the Shudderwood's most depraved packs of demon-worshiping werewolves, intent on recovering the packlord's heart to claim rule over the remaining tribes.

Following both the Whispering Way and the werewolves, the PCs arrive in Feldgrau in the midst of a battle between the cult and the Demon Wolves. The PCs must maneuver their way between the two factions, as well as the animated undead remains of Feldgrau's slaughtered citizens, to finally confront and defeat the Whispering Way necromancer Auren Vrood.

INTRODUCTION

Before the PCs head into the Shudderwood toward Ascanor Lodge after the Whispering Way, either Alpon Caromarc or Judge Daramid tells them that entry into the posh hunting lodge is by invitation or reservation only. Even though Caromarc no longer rules Vieland, he retains his title of count, and as a member of Ustlav's hereditary nobility, he can write the PCs a letter of introduction to the lodge's warden, Estovion Lozarov. Likewise, Judge Daramid can use her connections with the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye to acquire blank invitations for the PCs to use to gain entry.

Once they arrive at the lodge, the PCs can investigate the whereabouts of the Whispering Way cultists. Even if the cultists did not stop at the lodge itself, the lodge's staff and guests are very knowledgeable about the Shudderwood, and the PCs might be able to find out where the cult did go by questioning them. Judge Daramid also informs the PCs that Ascanor Lodge contains an impressive library open to the use of its guests, and its rare collection of pre-Palatinate histories might aid them in discovering just what the Whispering Way is after in the Shudderwood. After all, there must be some reason the cult entered the forest, and if the PCs can figure out why, they may be able to uncover whatever insidious plots the Whispering Way might be nurturing.

PART ONE: THE SHUDDERWOOD

On the trail of the Whispering Way, the PCs embark on a journey to Ascanor Lodge, deep in the heart of the Shudderwood. Leaving behind the Dippelmere Swamp and Vieland, the PCs cross the Troll's Tail River into the neighboring Palatinate of Lozeri. Ahead, a dark shadow rises on the horizon, which soon grows into a massive forest of towering conifers known as the Shudderwood. When the PCs enter the woods, read or paraphrase the following description.

Standing at the edge of the Shudderwood is almost like staring into another world. Ominous, towering pine trees blot out the sunlight, allowing only occasional splinters of light to pierce through. Within this dimness, broken branches and occasional shrubs growing up through fallen trees create shadowy illusions both wondrous and haunting. Apart from pallid lichens, colorful fungi, feathermoss, and wintergreen, little else grows in the forest. The Shudderwood possesses an eerie stillness only occasionally lifted by the sounds of passing birds and small animals scurrying across the dry pine needles littering the forest floor.

According to Alpon Caromarc, the Whispering Way cultists most likely took the Silent Path, an ancient and rarely used hunting trail that is one of the most direct and covert routes through the Shudderwood. Marked in places with strange bone fetishes, the trail runs several hundred miles through the forest, crossing both the Beustral and the Calscroix rivers, passing by Ascanor Lodge, and finally ending at the town of Chastel on Lozeri's southeastern border.

A. EYES IN THE WOOD (CR 7)

The forest around the path thins, and a brisk crosswind scatters concealing drifts of pine needles across the trail. If not for the shallow grooves left behind by the wheels of traveling wagons, following the path would be nearly impossible.

Creatures: Four ettercaps lurk within this section of the wood, hunting for stragglers to feed to the object of their worship and admiration, an aberrantly seductive creature that resembles a giant silkworm, which lives within a nearby abandoned watchtower (area **B**). The ettercaps hide in the trees above the trail, and can be spotted with a DC 17 Perception check. Not foolish enough to launch an outright attack on a group of armed adventurers, the ettercaps only fight if cornered. As soon as they spot PCs, the ettercaps try to lure them to the nearby ruins of the Weaver's tower, impersonating human calls for help or dropping trails of coins or previous victims' personal items for the PCs to follow.



ETTERCAPS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 129)

TACTICS

During Combat The ettercaps try to snare opponents with their webs, only coming down from the trees to attack once their enemies are safely entangled in their webs.

Morale The ettercaps attempt to flee to the Weaver's Tower (area B) if reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, or if half their number are slain.

B. THE WEAVER'S TOWER

The soft, haunting melody of a harp drifts through the air, emanating from a ruined stone watchtower in a small clearing. The tower stands about three stories tall; blood ivy and grayish-green lichen blanket the stonework of the tower's crumbling exterior, while passing winds whistle softly through its darkened, gaping windows.

The tower sits a few hundred yards off the trail. It was once a watchtower guarding the former border of Vieland and Lozeri, but is now the lair of a malignant aberration called a weaverworm (see area B1). When the PCs come

within 300 feet of the tower, they must each make a DC 18 Will save or fall victim to the weaverworm's captivating song. Those who fail their saves are compelled to enter the tower and investigate the source of the music.

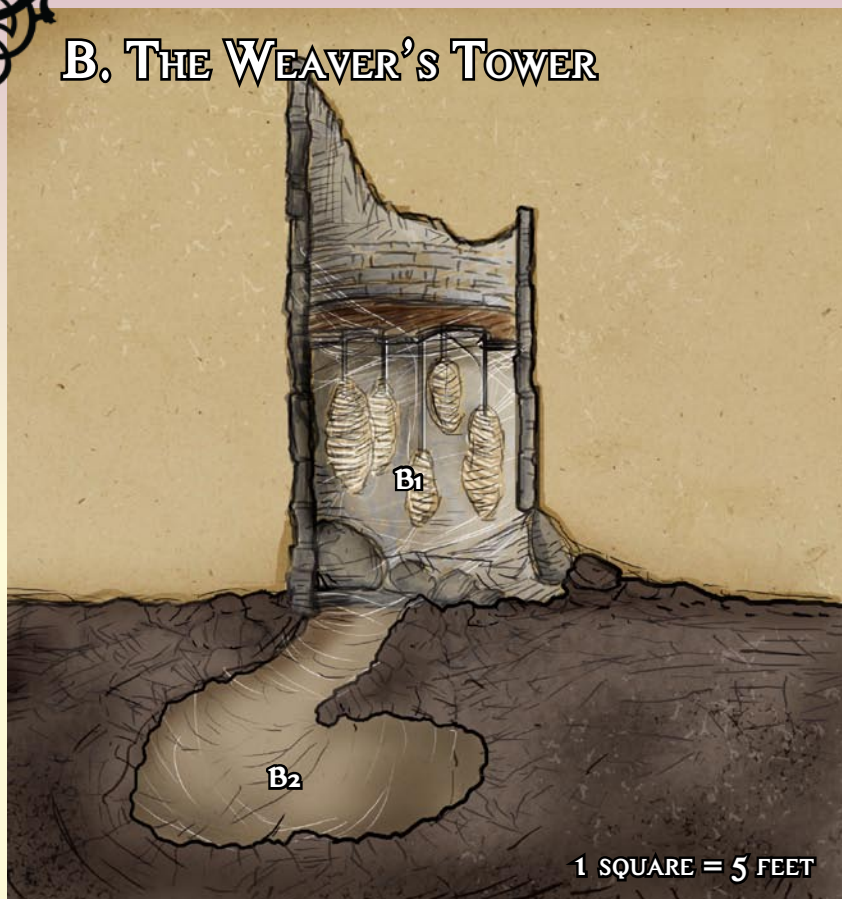
B1. CHAMBER OF COCOONS (CR 8)

Long, taut strands of shimmering silk fill the ruined tower's interior, forming an intricate pattern running from floor to ceiling. Half a dozen large cocoonlike shapes hang from the ceiling, suspended above the tower's hard-packed dirt floor. In the far corner, between two larger chunks of rubble, a wide burrow opens into the ground.

As soon as anyone enters the tower, the music goes silent. Anyone who opens a cocoon discovers the grisly remains within. The six cocoons contain the corpses of three goats, a horse, and two humans hanging upside down, their blood drained. The hole in the floor leads to the weaverworm's lair beneath the tower.

Creature: A malignant aberration called a weaverworm lurks in a burrow beneath the ruined tower. Related to lamias, the creature has the head and flayed torso of a giant woman atop the bulbous body of a sickly-looking,

B. THE WEAVER'S TOWER



multi-legged larva. Worshipped by local ettercaps, the weaverworm feeds off the blood of humanoids, which it lures to its lair by playing haunting, harplike music upon its webs. Anyone entering the tower disturbs the sensitive strands of webbing, and the vibrations alert the weaverworm to their presence. She ceases performing and waits for a few rounds to allow her prey to investigate her lair before she surfaces and attacks.

WEAVERWORM

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 95 (see page 86)

TACTICS

During Combat The weaverworm shoots her web, then reels in entangled prey, attempting to jab her barbed legs into the victim and paralyze it.

Morale The weaverworm focuses entirely on getting food. Once she attacks a potential meal, she fights to the death.

Development: The more recent of the human corpses carries a sealed envelope half soaked in blood. The envelope contains a severely damaged letter and is barely legible, but a DC 25 Linguistics check is enough to make out that the note is a reservation for a room at Ascanor

Lodge for a minor noble named Echtmoor Dravin a week previously. The PCs might try to use the letter later to gain entry to Ascanor Lodge, but the reservation becomes void if opened by anyone other than lodge staff, and attempting to pass off the blood-soaked reservation as their own provokes suspicion. However, the PCs can share the truth of Echtmoor's disappearance with Cilas Graydon to gain a reward, in addition to a powerful ally.

B2. LAIR OF THE WEAVERWORM

Soft webbing wreathes the walls, ceiling, and floor of this subterranean chamber. Several lumps bulge outward along the floor, unidentifiable under layers of sticky webs.

Treasure: The lumps of webbing contain the weaverworm's treasure, gathered from her victims: a *potion of heroism*, a *ring of feather falling*, and 721 gp in assorted coins.

C. THE WOLF TRAP (CR 6)

The pale corpse of a naked man hangs from a large yellow pine, bound to the trunk with rough cords. His mouth is stuffed with large, pale purple flowers, and his wrists and ankles are swollen

and dark with bruises marking where his bindings cut into his skin, but the large silver hunting knife embedded deep in his heart seems the most likely cause of death.

The display serves as both a warning and a brutal trap prepared by an amateur werewolf hunter named Duristan Silvio Ariesir, a wealthy aristocrat from Ardeal (see page 13). If later confronted or questioned about the trap, he readily admits to setting it and (despite its obvious danger to normal folk) seems to think it's quite clever.

Trap: Anyone approaching within 5 feet of the corpse risks stepping on a tripwire hidden in the pine needles around the tree's base. The trip wire unleashes a barrage of crossbow bolts from hidden crossbows mounted in the surrounding trees.

HAIL OF BOLTS TRAP	CR 6
XP 2,400	
Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20	
EFFECTS	
Trigger location; Reset manual	
Effect Atk +15 ranged (5d8); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)	

Development: Once the trap has been disabled or triggered, the PCs can safely inspect the corpse. Although the crucified victim was in fact a werewolf, he reverted to his human form when he died, so inspection of the body neither confirms nor denies this fact. However, a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the flowers stuffed into the corpse's mouth as wolfsbane, a toxic plant also noted for its ability to drive off werewolves or cure the curse of lycanthropy.

Anyone inspecting the crossbow bolts from the trap can attempt a DC 15 Perception check to notice a paste smeared on all their tips. Any attempts to identify it as an alchemical substance fail, but a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies it as *silversheen*, though the substance's potency has long since expired.

With this evidence, coupled with the silver knife buried in the man's heart, a DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check can identify the man as a werewolf (or at least suggests that his killers thought he was one).

Treasure: In addition to the silver hunting knife (which functions as a masterwork silver dagger), there are enough wolfsbane flowers to yield 3 doses of the poison.

PART TWO: ASCANOR LODGE

After several days of travel, the PCs finally reach their destination—Ascanor Lodge, a large and decadently appointed manor deep in the heart of the Shudderwood, used by Ustlav's elite as a hunting retreat. Once a private

hunting lodge owned by Lozeri's deposed count Beaurturne, the Palatine Council of Lozeri appropriated the estate when Beaurturne fled the county and opened it year round to paying guests.

The PCs come to Ascanor Lodge in search of the Whispering Way; though the cultists have already moved on, the lodge's guests and its libraries may provide some clue as to the cult's next step.

This section provides descriptions of the major NPCs in residence at the lodge and the various locations within the estate, followed by a series of events that transpire during the PCs' stay, starting with their arrival at the lodge. In addition, this section presents several clues that the PCs are likely to uncover during their investigations at Ascanor Lodge.

KEY NPCs AT ASCANOR LODGE

A number of independently motivated NPCs reside at Ascanor Lodge, going about their business and reacting as described below to events as they unfold. You should take care to understand these NPCs' motivations and track their actions. To make this seemingly monumental task easier and more efficient, the NPCs with the most important roles are listed first, followed by a listing of the lodge's remaining guests.

ESTOVION LOZAROV

Lodge Warden Estovion Lozarov is Ascanor's custodian and overseer. The only son of Ascanor's previous caretakers, Estovion grew up in the lodge and it is the only home he has ever known. Although a former retainer of Count Beaurturne, Estovion swore loyalty to the Palatine Council upon transfer of the property to Lozeri, and the council kept him on as lodge warden. In reality, Estovion remains a diehard traditionalist secretly loyal to the old aristocratic order, and uses his position to covertly fuel tensions between Ustlav's political elite. A master manipulator, Estovion works hard to keep abreast of the machinations of various aristocrats and wealthy merchants who stay at the lodge. By using his research to fuel the jealousy and paranoia of egotistical aristocrats, Estovion has done a superb job of nurturing their ongoing dissent. He even gathers information on guests of the lodge for other guests upon request, biasing his references if need be, though never obviously so, in order to keep them quibbling.

Estovion knows much about the surrounding lands and its people, but for the most part sequesters himself away in the library or his offices, where he ably manages the lodge's upkeep and extensive library and defers issues of daily maintenance to his staff. This practice has garnered him a reputation for keeping his mouth shut and avoiding anything to do with political and social affairs, and he has become one of Ascanor's most valuable resources.

Yet like most things Ustalavic, Estovion keeps his own dark secrets. Besides his political views, Estovion possesses the ability to raise and summon forth a vilkacis, a horrific, ghostlike werewolf capable of possessing mortals and using their bodies to perform savage acts of murder and terror. Once the vilkacis is summoned, Estovion has no control over the savage creature; thus, he only summons it in the direst circumstances. Over the past decade, he has only called it forth three times. Still, the testimonies of those who have witnessed the horrific acts of possessed guests have left a lasting influence upon Ascanor, spawning several dozen ghost stories as well as superstitions that the lodge is haunted. Most guests treat these tales as fiction, however, and freely share them over drinks as evening entertainment. None suspect Estovion's role these horrid incidents, nor that he personally targeted each victim to destroy whatever political influence she had at the time.

Estovion's control of the vilkacis grew out of his youthful fascination with the Stairs of the Moon, a long-abandoned, long-forgotten temple of Desna in the heart of the Shudderwood, and a sacred Desnan relic known as the *Dusk Moth* rumored to be secreted there. His initial explorations of the ruined temple focused almost exclusively on deciphering the mystery of the elusive relic. His first few forays into the temple proved successful, and his research continued until the full moon rose, at which point he discovered that the Shudderwood's werewolves used the temple's observatory to hold their council. Estovion survived the meeting out of sheer luck, by accidentally discovering a secret room where the last high priest of the temple had engaged in dark experiments with lycanthropy. The hidden room proved a safe hiding spot for Estovion, and within he discovered one of the observatory's greatest secrets—the vilkacis.

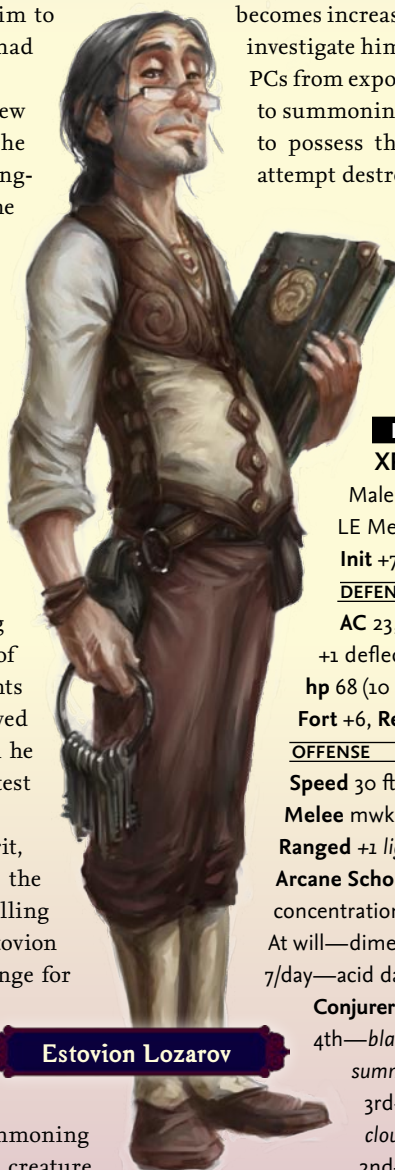
Obsessed with the lycanthropic spirit, the young Estovion contacted agents of the Whispering Way for assistance in controlling the undead creature. The cult helped Estovion learn how to summon the beast, in exchange for a favor that would be called in later, but he was unable to control it, and has spent many fruitless years attempting to learn to do so. At best, he can manipulate its attacks by strategically summoning it to certain locations, though once the creature

arrives, none in its way are spared its wrath. Regardless, Estovion's ability to summon the spirit has impressed the local werewolves, particularly one of the Shudderwood's more dominant tribes, the Mordrinacht, who now regard him as an ally, believing that he has the power to speak with their spirit ancestor and seemingly command it. The sole basis for Estovion's alliance with the Mordrinacht rests on the lodge warden's ability to summon the vilkacis. If he were ever to lose this ability, the werewolf packs would line up to feast upon his flesh.

Estovion is a slight man in his sixties, with a long face, myopic eyes, dirty spectacles, and a permanent squint. Despite his decrepit appearance, however, he remains alert and seemingly spry.

Estovion is the PCs' primary nemesis at Ascanor Lodge. As they go about exploring and investigating, Estovion becomes increasingly paranoid that the PCs are there to investigate him personally. Determined to prevent the PCs from exposing his treachery, he eventually resorts to summoning the vilkacis, using the savage creature to possess the bodies of various guests in a final attempt to destroy his perceived enemies. If confronted

by the PCs at any point, Estovion's reactions are summarized in the Tactics section of his stat block. Additional details on how Estovion responds to combat with the PCs may be found on page 33.



Estovion Lozarov

ESTOVION LOZAROV

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male old human aristocrat 3/conjurer 7

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +4 shield)

hp 68 (10 HD; 7d6+3d8+27)

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +12

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +3 (1d8–3/19–20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow +9 (1d8+1/19–20)

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

At will—dimensional steps (210 feet/day)

7/day—acid dart (1d6+3 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

4th—black tentacles, charm monster (DC 18),

summon monster IV

3rd—gaseous form, lightning bolt, stinking cloud (DC 17), summon monster III

2nd—darkvision, detect thoughts, dust of



*twilight** (DC 16), *scorching ray*, *web* (DC 16)
 1st—*expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2),
obscuring mist, *shield*
 o (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*
Opposition Schools Illusion, Necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Estovion casts *mage armor* every day. If he has the chance, he casts *shield* and drinks his *potion of cat's grace* before combat.

During Combat If attacked in the lodge, Estovion screams for help and casts *summon monster IV* to summon a fiendish dire wolf to protect him. He casts *stinking cloud* to occupy his foes while he attempts to flee to area **D31** (see page 18), using his dimensional steps ability if necessary.

Morale Once in his private office, Estovion disposes of his notes and journals in the fireplace, then uses his dimensional steps ability or *scroll of dimension door* to teleport outside. Once beyond Ascanor's walls, he immediately flees to the Stairs of the Moon.

Base Statistics Without his spells and potion, Estovion has
Init +5; **AC** 14, touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Ref** +6; **Ranged** +1
light crossbow +7 (1d8+1/19–20); **Dex** 14; **CMD** 15.

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 16

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Toughness

Skills Appraise +9, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Knowledge (planes) +11, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +17

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Sylvan, Varisian
SQ arcane bond (amulet), summoner's charm (3 rounds)

Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of dimension door*, *wand of acid arrow* (38 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *light crossbow* with 10 bolts, masterwork longsword, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *canopic stone* (see page 85), master keys to every room in Ascanor Lodge, spell component pouch, spellbook (all prepared spells plus all o-level spells, *acid arrow*, *dimension door*, and four additional spells of levels 1–4), 130 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

DURISTAN SILVIO ARIESIR

A young thrill-seeking aristocrat hailing from one of Ardeal's wealthiest families, Duristan has come to Lozeri to make a name for himself as a werewolf slayer. He's already had a few successful hunts and to date has slain three of the beasts. In reality, he's been lucky—he's had only minimal training in hunting werewolves and overall his hunts are little more than loosely planned, reckless excursions. As a result of his success, he's grown

dangerously overconfident. Still, he becomes somewhat star-struck in the presence of real adventurers, and eagerly attempts to discuss his hunting tales with them.

Duristan is somewhat contemptuous of most of the lodge's other guests. While he considers himself a hunter, he views the others as pampered politicians who use Ascanor Lodge to escape from their nagging spouses. Duristan rarely denies himself the opportunity to pique the ire of his fellow guests, whether by wearing his bloody armor around the lodge or by flirting with the lodge's "low-born" staff members and even inviting them to participate in "upper class" social events. Similarly, he tries to drag the PCs to these social occasions, using their presence to further annoy the uptight aristocratic guests. During dinners, he deliberately brings up uncomfortable or improper subject matter, and otherwise does his best to stir up outrage and rumor. Half a dozen rough hirelings (N human commoners 2/warriors 1) accompany Duristan and assist him on his hunts. Far from being skilled hunters, however, these minions are little more than vagabonds who ply what small skill at arms they have in exchange for Duristan's coin. (If you need statistics for these hirelings, you can use the stats for a vagabond presented on page 291 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.)

Duristan is not particularly handsome, with a long face and thinning brown hair. He wears a wolfskin which he claims is that of a werewolf, but a DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check is enough to realize that werewolves revert to human form when killed, so the skin is likely that of a normal wolf, if not a large, feral dog.

Duristan can give the PCs the lowdown on who's who at the lodge, along with his opinion of everyone. He explains who he is and why he's come to Ascanor, while admitting he is somewhat impressed by the PCs as he's never been in the company of "real adventurers." He badgers the PCs for pointers and tries his best to get them interested in his crusade against werewolves, suggesting they work together on more hunts.

DURISTAN SILVIO ARIESIR

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human aristocrat 4/fighter 3/ranger 1

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 shield)

hp 58 (8 HD; 4d10+4d8+16)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *silver longsword* +11/+6 (1d8+3/19–20)



Ranged +1 composite longbow +11/+6 (1d8+3/x3)
Special Attacks favored enemy (humanoid [shapechanger] +2)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Perception +8, Ride +10, Stealth +10, Survival +8

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ armor training 1, track +1, wild empathy +2

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 20 silver arrows; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 light steel shield, +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, +1 silver longsword, 158 gp

MADAME IVANJA

An influential courtesan with ties to the Violet Widow, an infamous Courtaud brothel themed as a Pharasmin chapel, **Madame Ivanja** (CN female human bard 3/expert 3) imports the most exquisite and luxurious companions for guests who request such services. The lodge itself has no formal affiliation with the brothel, but Estovion rents the watchtower (area D6) to Ivanja and grants her the privacy and freedom to conduct her business as she sees fit. Their association is strictly professional, and the business of prostitution remains an open secret between the lodge staff and those guests who partake of Ivanja's services. While the staff never discuss their guests' affairs beyond the walls, other guests are not so bound, and thus patrons must take care in maintaining discretion. The lodge isn't a brothel, however, and carnal activities remain confined to the privacy of the watchtower, individual clients' rooms, or chambers rented exclusively for private parties. Currently, only one of Madame Ivanja's courtesans is in residence at the lodge—a Vudrani woman named Niama.

Of Varisian descent, Madame Ivanja is also a skilled fortuneteller, and gives harrow readings upon request for a small fee. Ivanja doesn't permanently reside on the premises, though she often stays for long periods as work dictates. She keeps a traveling wagon parked on the watchtower's ground floor, which she uses to transport herself and her employees

back and forth between Courtaud and the lodge. At all times, four professional and very well-paid Qadiran guards (LN human fighter 6) keep watch over Madame Ivanja and her courtesans. Ivanja also maintains close personal ties with dozens of extremely powerful individuals—both key figures in local politics and high-ranking members of Golarion's most influential organizations.

DELGROS KROITZCER

Delgros Kroitzcer (LN human male ranger 7) serves as Ascanor's huntsmaster and leads (or at least accompanies) the majority of hunts for the lodge's guests. Delgros may well be one of Ascanor's most dangerous men, if only for his recklessness. A brilliant game hunter, he prides himself on capturing aggressive and exotic animals, which he keeps in a series of subterranean pens beneath the lodge grounds for the hunting pleasure of Ascanor's guests. Delgros rarely appears in the lodge itself, except when it is time to tell stories of the hunt. Only then does he show up, delivering short but terrifying tales of fearsome forest creatures, particularly those he keeps in his beast pens, hoping to entice his wealthy patrons into paying extra for an "exotic" hunt.

Delgros is in his early thirties, and he possesses a fine physique. Still, his appearance seems to complement his gruff demeanor, which he uses to his advantage, particularly with pampered city nobles who become titillated by what they consider his "feralness."

GUESTS OF ASCANOR LODGE

In addition to Duristan, the following individuals are also current guests at Ascanor. Each guest has a specific role to play in this section, which is noted in each character's description.

CILAS GRAYDON

Nearing 50 years old, **Cilas Graydon** (LN male middle-aged human aristocrat 3/fighter 4), the Margrave of Sturnidae, is a retired military commander who served under Count Neska of Barstoi. Graydon is infamous for the ruthless brutality of his martial strategies, and is almost universally loathed by citizens of both Ardeal and Barstoi. Toward the end of the civil war between Barstoi and Ardeal, Graydon broke with Neska and openly denounced him as a tyrant, an act that many credit as one of the causes behind Neska's retreat from Ardeal. Forced to flee his



Delgros Kroitzcer

home county, Graydon sought amnesty in Lozeri and soon became a strong voice in Palatine politics. Back in Barstoi, Neska convicted Graydon of treason, revoked his title, and placed a sizable bounty on his head. For his part, Graydon continues to identify himself by his ancestral title as an act of fearlessness and defiance.

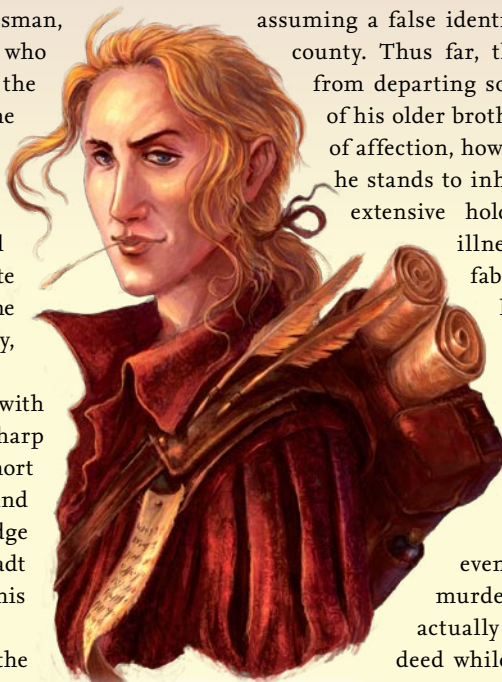
Although retired, the Margrave remains a sharp and near-flawless strategist, and his advice on military matters holds great value to the Palatine Council. In addition to serving as a powerful statesman, Graydon is also a serious hunter who frequently stays at Ascanor. During the evenings when he is not hunting, the other guests frequently consult him on matters of defense, strategy, and military affairs. For the past few days, Graydon has been expecting the arrival of his close friend and political associate Echtmoor Dravin. If the PCs speak to the Margrave about finding Dravin's body, see page 27.

Graydon stands nearly 6 feet tall, with a slender build, long features, and a sharp nose. He wears his hair cropped short and has a carefully trimmed goatee and waxed mustache. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recognizes the Lepidstadt scar across his left eyebrow as a sign of his martial prowess.

Role: Cilas Graydon serves as the physical embodiment of the Ustalavic aristocracy, as well as a constant reminder that it would be unwise to cross them, but he can also be a strong supporter and allies of the PCs. Graydon is destined to become the first victim of the vilkacis (see Event 6).

CORVIN TERGSVOR

The second son of Cervaus Tergsvor, one of Courtaud's most influential nobles, **Corvin Tergsvor** (N male human aristocrat 7/rogue 3) is enjoying an extended stay at Ascanor. A dissolute young poet and something of a black sheep, Corvin was involved in a minor scandal when he engaged the young wife of a wealthy courtier in the upstairs bedchambers of his father's manse during a dinner ball. Concerned for his family's name and reputation, Corvin's status-conscious father exiled him to the lodge for his indiscretion. Corvin finds Ascanor tedious and quaint, and when not overindulging in absinthe, spends his days scribbling dark verse and sarcastically heckling the other nobles. While he longs to return to Courtaud, he cannot set foot in the city for fear of losing his head to the jilted husband he cuckolded.



Corvin Tergsvor

Bored with his prolonged stay, Corvin takes every opportunity to amuse himself by harassing both Duristan and the PCs. While he occasionally baits other lodge guests, most are powerful enough that he avoids pushing his luck with them, especially those like Graydon who are too old and too serious to appreciate his humor.

Recently, Corvin has started to grow bitter about his passing youth and lack of romantic opportunities out here in the desolate woods, and he is seriously considering assuming a false identity and running off to another county. Thus far, the only thing preventing him from departing sooner has been the poor health of his older brother. His concerns are hardly out of affection, however, for if his brother perishes, he stands to inherit the entirety of his family's extensive holdings. In fact, his brother's illness is a complete fiction, wisely fabricated by Corvin's father to keep his wayward son in line.

Role: In contrast to Cilas Graydon, Corvin represents the corruption and decadence of Ustalav's hereditary nobility. His off-putting behavior makes him an obvious suspect in Ascanor's recent troublesome events, and though he eventually murders Graydon (see Event 6), he is actually innocent, as he commits the deed while possessed by the vilkacis and has no control over his own actions.

MARKIZA WELGORY

A frequent guest at the lodge, **Markiza Welgory** (CG female human aristocrat 5) has come to Ascanor to hunt fox. Now in her early forties, the Markiza is married to an older, quite wealthy husband, though at this point their marriage is chiefly a business proposition. Between her family name (and somewhat overblown title) and his financial prowess, their business has been incredibly successful. She often discusses trade regulations and taxes that directly affect her family's commodities business with other lodge guests, and her attentions are aggressively courted in exchange for trade options and access to her lucrative business connections.

The passing years have not been kind to the Markiza's husband; the Markiz always had the personality of a lake trout, but he is now fat with a bad case of gout to boot. Under such unfortunate circumstances, the Markiza is here unchaperoned, though she hires numerous "companions" to attend to the needs of her company and to accompany her to society functions and other important affairs. That all of these "companions" happen to be young, handsome

men is hardly a coincidence, and among Ustlav's elite, the subject of the Markiza's personal life has become rife with scandalous rumor.

When she is not involved in business or political discussions, or indulging in courtly or social activities, the Markiza engages in long fox hunts with her current "companion," a broad-shouldered and handsome young huntsman named **Ostovach** (N male human commoner 2/ranger 3), whom she has exclusively employed for the past two hunting seasons. A native of Lozeri, Ostovach guides his hunts with four fearsomely large Belkzen wolfhounds, and is often referred to as "the Markiza's hound" by Ascanor's other guests.

The rumors about the Markiza's illicit affairs with her "hound" are true, and the great majority of their hunts consist of carnal forest trysts. For his part, Ostovach is playing the Markiza for whatever he can. She pays him handsomely and he has received several other well-paying jobs as a result of her introductions. Likewise, the Markiza realizes her companion's principle interest in her lies in her finances. While she enjoys their torrid affair, Ostovach is not her only lover, and she considers him a toy to be discarded when she has no more use for him.

Role: The Markiza and Ostovach are nothing more than innocent guests at the lodge, though their attempts to keep their illicit affair secret provide a bit of ambiguity to the events at Ascanor as well as to the behavior and motives of the other guests. They can also serve as suspects or additional victims for the vilkacis, though any perceived involvement on their part is only a red herring.

ASCANOR LODGE AND GROUNDS

Ascanor Lodge is constructed out of layers of interlocking pine logs set atop a shallow stone foundation. Far from a simple cabin, the main lodge rivals some of the grandest mansions of Caliphas. Meant to impress Ustlav's pampered elite who come to the Shudderwood to "rough it," its intricate (and confusing) layout consists of various levels, balconies, patios, hallways, and towers. Ivy covers much of the stone foundation, while the remainder of the lodge consists of "rustic" hewn wood. The roof is shingled with gray and dark red slate, while the gables, shutters, and other trim are painted a dull reddish-brown. In addition to the main lodge, the grounds support stables, a maintenance shed, three houses for servants, a small watchtower, and a series of underground pens holding exotic creatures for hunts. A 10-foot-high, vine-covered

stone wall surrounds the entire property, enterable through a double-arched gatehouse.

Fireplaces throughout the lodge physically connect to all other areas with which they share a chimney. While travel through the fireplaces is nearly impossible, as the chimney openings are too small and fires are kept burning nearly all the time to heat the lodge, it is possible to listen in on private conversations in connected rooms when the fireplace's flue is open. Those attempting to listen through a chimney take a -4 penalty on their Perception checks to hear conversations on the other side.

Since Ascanor Lodge is a dynamic place, the various locations there are summarized below, rather than treated as individual encounter areas—the assorted guests and servants move freely throughout the lodge to participate in various events or in reaction to events that take place within the lodge. While the lodge's guests have their own private rooms on the second floor, their servants and hirelings stay in the various outbuildings with the lodge's permanent staff.

D1. Gatehouse: The entrance to the lodge is through twin wrought-iron portcullises (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 25) set within large arches inside a small half-timber watch-house, flanked on each side by a low stone tower. A small contingent of six mercenaries (LN human fighter 4) lives in the lower chambers of the towers and monitors the gate. Most of the time, the gates are

kept closed, and the guards refuse to open them without the presentation of a formal reservation.

D2. Porter's Cottage: This small, two-story cabin houses the lodge's porter, Belik of Courtaud, as well as Chef Ladimeur. They both live on the second floor, while the bottom floor is divided into dry storage and quarters for the lodge's two scullions and guests' servants.

D3. Ruessa's Cottage: The lodge's housekeeper, Ruessa, lives in this cottage with her niece and nephew. A small but impressive herb garden lies outside.

D4. Stables: Ascanor's superior hunting horses are kept in these stables, along with those mounts belonging to lodge guests. Stablemaster Quiene Steymor lives in a large loft above the stables, which she shares with the servants of guests if necessary.

D5. Maintenance Shed: This shed was originally meant as a storeroom and workshop, but Ascanor's groundskeeper and handyman Paucy Troabs converted it into his private living space. He still performs small jobs in the attached workshop, but handles larger jobs in the new workroom on



Markiza Welgory

the ground floor of the adjoining watchtower. Paucy keeps his extensive collection of skinned rats in the storeroom, preserved in jars filled with Ustalavic brandy.

D6. Watchtower: The watchtower has four floors. The unfinished ground floor serves as a storeroom and workshop. Madame Ivanja (see page 14) leases the upper floors from the lodge. She lives on the topmost floor, and uses the tower's other rooms to discreetly provide her extensive line of intimate services. The rooms are lavishly decorated with plush couches, feather beds with silk sheets and velvet curtains, water pipes, liquor, and other exotic accoutrements befitting a high-class brothel. The second-floor room is currently inhabited by the madam's employee, Niama.

D7. Huntsmaster's Cottage: This cottage belongs to Ascanor's huntsmaster, Delgros Kroitzcer (see page 14). He keeps his prized collection of hunting dogs in an attached kennel, along with the personal dogs of lodge guests. When not out on a hunt, Delgros splits his time between his house and his beast pens (area D8). Only on rare occasions does he drop by the lodge, typically at Estovion's request. Delgros also owns 2 vials of *silversheen* for use if werewolves ever attack the lodge. These may be found if the PCs search his cottage, though if the PCs ask Delgros about the availability of silver weapons, he offers to sell them the vials for the normal price.

D8. Beast Pens: Behind a locked, oversized door of reinforced oak (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25), this old stone well-shed provides entrance to a natural limestone cavern reworked and partitioned to form a series of crude underground holding cells that house a menagerie of exotic beasts for the lodge's guests to hunt. Delgros keeps the door chained and padlocked with a key he wears round his neck (Disable Device DC 25). His current collection boasts a grizzly bear, a juvenile dire boar, a dire wolverine, an elderly and arthritic dire wolf, a lobotomized ettercap with its web glands removed, a giant tarantula, and four large wolves.

D9. Cobbled Path: A narrow path of slate cobblestones runs along the southeast side of the lodge, connecting the gatehouse and main entrance to the back deck and hedge maze. A live trellis woven from the boughs of bent willows and deep red roses shelters the walkway.

D10. Back Deck: A wide, stone deck extends from the south side of the lodge, overlooking the estate's grounds. On the west side, a short flight of stone stairs leads down into the hedge maze, while to the east, a second flight leads to the courtyard fountain.

D11. Courtyard Fountain: A low, slate patio surrounds a large fountain filled with exotic Tian carp. A statue of the lodge's former owner, Count Beauturne, forms the fountain's centerpiece. Elaborately carved walnut trellises, laden with black grapes and blood-ivy, partition the courtyard from the estate lawn, providing some privacy to those within.

ASCANOR LODGE STAFF

In addition to Estovion and Delgros, several other individuals live and work at Ascanor Lodge. A short description of each individual is presented below.

Belik of Courtaud (LE male halfling expert 4/rogue 1): Tidy, well dressed, and officious, Belik works as Ascanor's porter. Personally loyal to Estovion, Belik secretly serves as the lodge warden's eyes and ears around the lodge.

Ladimeur (N male human expert 5): A talented and fastidiously obsessive chef from Ardeal, Chef Ladimeur cooks for Ascanor's guests, assisted by two scullions named Yvonna and Ostin.

Paucy Troabs (NE male human commoner 5): Ascanor's sloppy and dimwitted groundskeeper and handyman, Paucy has an eerie habit of appearing and disappearing throughout the day. When out of sight, he's often lurking in the maintenance shed (area D5) enjoying his favorite pastime—catching and skinning rats.

Quiene Steymor (N female human expert 4/ranger 2): Ascanor's stablemaster, Quiene is a short, fit woman in her early thirties with pale skin, dark eyes, and long auburn hair gone slightly gray at the temples. For the most part, she tends the lodge's horses, but she is skilled at woodcraft and occasionally accompanies Delgros on hunts.

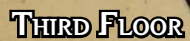
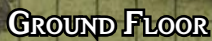
Ruessa Webbe (NG female human commoner 2): This plump, middle-aged spinster serves as the lodge's housekeeper, washerwoman, and seamstress. Her teenaged niece and nephew, Bisthe and Vasoray, work respectively as a chambermaid and footman in the lodge.

D12. Hedge Maze: This carefully pruned, 8-foot-tall hedge maze provides fun and privacy to guests.

D13. Main Entrance: A flight of wide, slate steps climb up to a shallow porch and a pair of massive iron-shod, timber doors (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25). A small brass bell hangs on a post near the door. Ringing the bell quickly attracts the attention of the nearest lodge servant. The door is typically kept barred on the inside, while a small shuttered hatch permits Ascanor's porter, Belik of Courtaud, to see anyone standing on the porch.

D14. Grand Hall: Connecting the main entrance and grand ballroom, this huge hallway serves as the centerpiece of the ground floor. Golden pine floor planks, over a foot in width and sanded smooth, stretch almost the entire length of the hall, while four massive tree trunks serve as pillars, running down the center of the room supporting the ceiling overhead. Large hide rugs and trophy heads of bears,

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



SECOND FLOOR

bucks, and snarling wolves adorn the floor and natural log walls, boasting of some of the lodge's patrons' finer kills. Garlands and banners embroidered with the crests of various aristocrats, secret orders, and hunting clubs hang from exposed rafters high overhead. Stone fireplaces on either side keep the room at a comfortable temperature.

D15. North Stairwell: This enclosed wooden staircase spirals upward to the private guest rooms on the building's second floor.

D16. South Stairwell: This enclosed wooden staircase provides access to the second floor of the south wing and the south tower. Estovion had Paucy deliberately make the staircase extra creaky in order to alert him to the presence of guests on the stairs. Anyone attempting to climb these stairs silently takes a –8 penalty on Stealth checks; characters who make no attempt at stealth are automatically heard by anyone in area **D27** through **D31**.

D17. Kitchen and Prep Rooms: The lodge's large kitchen includes a pair of storage and prep rooms and boasts an extensively stocked larder of freshly grown herbs, vegetables, and trimmings. Most of the courses prepared here consist of fresh game caught by Delgros or lodge guests. Meals run several courses long, and include crudités, elaborately layered terrines, rich soups, and lavish pastries (both sweet and savory), paired with exotic coffees, cordials, wines, and liqueurs. The fireplace between the kitchen and the dining room shares a chimney, permitting the chef and others to catch earfuls of gossip from neighboring diners. Chef Ladimeur runs the kitchen, but his two scullions handle the prep work and perform basic errands such as stocking the pantry, prepping ingredients, and cleaning.

D18. Dining Room: The lodge's dining room can seat up to 24 guests depending on how the staff arranges the room. Most days it is set for 12. Tall picture windows set into the curved southeast wall provide plenty of light and a view of the herb gardens outside Ruessa's cottage.

D19. Music Room: The lower portion of South Tower serves as a music room. The lodge frequently hires famous performers at the request of patrons. Their performances include music concerts, poetry readings, small theatrical shows, and exotic dance presentations. Almost as frequently, tipsy patrons attempt to impress other guests by performing themselves.

D20. Conference Room: Isolated from the rest of the lodge, the conference room offers a modicum of privacy to discreet guests. The room is essentially a large sun porch with a slate floor, and deep crimson curtains cut from heavy velveteen that can be drawn to cover the windows. Its few furnishings include a long table of oiled black walnut with matching chairs.

D21. Washrooms: These small rooms serve as washrooms for guests and contain fresh water, washbasins, towels, and chamber pots. Ruessa keeps them fastidiously clean. Upon

request, she can also prepare drawn baths or scented steam baths using pots of heated stones and wood chips.

D22. Trophy Room: While a large, four-sided stone fireplace serves as the centerpiece of this tremendous room, taxidermy fills the remainder of the chamber. Stuffed beasts of every kind imaginable line the walls, each set with a small brass plaque detailing the name of the hunter and the date the animal was killed. The names of Ustlav's elite—aristocrats, wealthy merchants, and powerful diplomats—dominate these plaques. The eight largest trophies stand in the center of the room, posed in striking positions upon huge wooden bases. They consist of a chimera, a river chuul, a dire bear, a fire lizard, a griffon, a juvenile manticore, a giant mantis, and a two-headed troll. It is considered a great honor to have a permanent display at Ascanor, and many compete for these bragging rights. Still, hunters frequently call the authenticity of rivals' kills into question, making them the subject of much debate, and it is not unheard of for duels to be fought over such accusations.

D23. Sitting Room: This chamber contains couches, chairs, and a few end tables. Several portraits of Lozeri's former nobility adorn the walls, and a stone fireplace keeps the room warm. It is predominantly used for partaking in hors d'oeuvres and aperitifs, and engaging in light conversation before or after dinner.

D24. Grand Ballroom: The largest room in Ascanor Lodge, the Grand Ballroom serves as a formal dance hall, banquet room, theater, or any other type of space the lodge guests may request. When not prepared for a specific function, guests may use the ballroom for conversation or informal dining. The west and south walls are lined with windows, while a series of arches cut into the inner walls open into other rooms within the lodge. As in the main hall, the high ceilings harbor a tangle of rough-hewn timber beams draped with banners and garlands.

D25. Front Deck: This covered, elevated deck faces the front of the lodge. Its doors are typically unlocked, and it can be used by any of the guests.

D26. Guest Bedrooms: Ascanor Lodge has seven rustically (though luxuriously) appointed private rooms for the use of its guests. Each contains a bed, chest, desk, chair, and fireplace, and (with the exception of area **D26a**) has an exterior balcony. Each guest is given a key to his or her room's good wooden door (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18 or Disable Device DC 25), though Estovion has a set of master keys to every room in the lodge.

D26a. Corvin's Room: Corvin Tergsvor (see page 15) occupies this room. Though it is the largest bedroom and has two beds, it is also the only one without a balcony. It shares a fireplace with the hall outside.

D26b. Empty Room: Originally reserved for Echtmoor Dravin (see page 10), this room is currently vacant and is one of the rooms Duristan may rent for the PCs.

RUNNING ON THE RAILS

The sequence of events in this section places this portion of the adventure on a “railroad.” You should attempt to keep the PCs “on the rails,” but without obviously strong-arming them or manipulating their actions. You can use Duristan, Graydon, and other potential NPC allies to guide and support the PCs’ actions, while still leaving them free to make their own choices regarding their investigations. Should the PCs take some sort of drastic action that threatens to derail the adventure, these wealthy nobles can step in and play the voice of reason. If necessary, they can even offer the PCs a reward or bribe to keep them focused, in the form of money, a minor magic item, or even property or another type of holding (likely worth no more than 3,000 gp), to be presented once the PCs properly finish their business in Ascanor. Regardless of whom the PCs side with, none of the nobles at Ascanor desire to see the lodge destroyed or overrun by an outside agency that would threaten to destroy the sanctity and privacy of their exclusive retreat.

D26c. Duristan’s Room: Duristan Ariesir (see page 13) lodges in this room, which shares its balcony and fireplace with area **D26b**.

D26d. Graydon’s Room: The Margrave of Sturnidae, Cilas Graydon (see page 14), is staying in this room. It shares its balcony and fireplace with area **D26e**.

D26e. Empty Room: This room is also vacant and can be rented by Duristan for the PCs.

D26f. The Markiza’s Room: Markiza Welgory (see page 15) rooms here. The room shares a balcony and fireplace with area **D26g** next door. Should anyone come here to speak with the Markiza privately, she stalls visitors with conversation for a short time before fully opening her door. While her behavior might seem suspicious, she is merely providing extra time for her lover Ostovach to slip under the bed or onto the balcony to avoid causing a scandal.

D26g. Ostovach’s Room: The Markiza’s “hound” Ostovach (see page 16) keeps his possessions here, though thanks to the balcony that he shares with the Markiza, he spends little time in his own room.

D27. Cross Passage: This passage connects the main lodge’s second floor to the south tower. While the libraries are technically available to all guests, Estovion locks the corridor’s northern door (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18 or Disable Device DC 25) during the evenings to prevent curious visitors from disturbing him.

D28. Estovion’s Quarters: For years this room has served as Estovion Lozarov’s living quarters. It contains

most of his mundane possessions and personal items. He keeps the room fairly tidy, though not meticulously so. The furnishings include a bed, a wardrobe, a writing desk, a small bookshelf, and a fireplace. Estovion keeps nothing valuable or incriminating here, so should he become the subject of investigation, he begrudgingly allows his investigators to freely search his room.

D29. Reading Library: Bookshelves line both walls of this long room, while a multi-shelved central partition divides this area. A small fireplace keeps the room cozy. At the far end, a balcony facing the front courtyard permits readers to get fresh air. The majority of the books here are for entertainment and consist of novels; plays; and collections of short stories, essays, and poetry.

D30. Reference Library: Shelves lining the walls of this circular tower room contain hundreds of reference books on such diverse topics as botany, demonology, geology, history, and religion. Cubicles in the center provide areas for reading, and a fireplace in the eastern wall heats the room. An ascending flight of stairs curves around the southern wall, leading to a trap door that opens onto area **D31**.

D31. South Tower: The highest point of the lodge building is the South Tower, which holds Estovion’s office and his private library. Its shelves hold the lodge’s most valuable and protected texts. Use of this area is strictly forbidden except by special request, and then only when accompanied by Estovion. He keeps the trap door leading into this room locked at all times (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25 or Disable Device DC 30). Estovion spends most of his time here unless called to pressing duties elsewhere in the lodge. Most evenings he remains in this area until just after midnight before locking up and retiring to his room.

EVENT 1: ARRIVAL AT ASCANOR

When the PCs first arrive at Ascanor Lodge (unless they foolishly try to enter the property covertly), they will likely attempt to enter through the front gate, where the mercenary guards stop them for questioning. Not having been told to expect new guests, the guards refuse to open the gates, instead sending for the lodge’s porter, Belik of Courtaud. Allow the PCs to explain themselves and their purpose to the porter. He graciously accepts the invitations from Judge Daramid (or Count Caromarc’s letter of introduction) and spends several minutes perusing them in minute detail, lips pursed pensively. He finally looks up, and hands the papers back to the PCs.

“I apologize for any misunderstanding, but as the porter of Ascanor Lodge, I cannot permit your entrance at this time. You do not have reservations in our books, and despite your claims, I have no evidence to justify allowing strangers into the lodge. From the looks of you, unlike the rest of my guests, you haven’t

come here to take a peaceful retreat. I want no trouble, so off with you all, and take whatever troubles you bring somewhere else!"

Meanwhile, the incident draws the attention of the lodge's guests, and a small crowd gathers near the gatehouse. Some of the onlookers seem curious, while others wear haughty sneers, but all whisper to one another, as if anxious to see the outcome of the disagreement.

At this point, the PCs must try to convince Belik to let them in. His starting attitude is unfriendly, so the PCs must make a DC 22 Diplomacy check to make him at least indifferent, at which point he grudgingly allows them inside. The PCs may also try to bluff their way past Belik, making an opposed Bluff check against his Sense Motive skill (he has a +9 modifier on the Sense Motive check).

If the PCs show Belik the bloodstained reservation found on Echtmoor Dravin's corpse (see area B1), it raises his suspicions even more, particularly if they broke the seal, and they take a -10 penalty on their Bluff or Diplomacy check. Belik actually knew Echtmoor (who was a regular guest at the lodge), so if the PCs try to pawn the reservation off as their own, he flatly refuses to allow them entrance onto the lodge grounds.

Should the PCs threaten Belik or attempt to draw their weapons, the mercenaries in the guardhouse move to his defense, as do others within the lodge. At this point, if the PCs seem poised to fight or leave, or if the PCs failed their checks to talk Belik into allowing them inside, a new interruption breaks the tension. Otherwise, read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs pass through the gate and enter the grounds of Ascanor Lodge.

A rough-and-tumble-looking woodsman heads for the gate, followed by a young noble dressed in finely tailored, studded hunting leathers. Despite the commotion, the two men push through the crowd, oblivious to anyone else's concerns. Several scruffy-looking hirelings follow behind them leading a pair of horses and carrying wooden crates marked with heraldic symbols. As they shuffle past, the woodsman calls back to the noble, "For the last time Duristan! I'll take you there, but I ain't bringing my dogs!"

A DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check identifies the coats of arms on the crates as belonging to the noble house of Ariesir of Ardeal.

The woodsman is Delgros Kroitzcer, Ascanor Lodge's huntsmaster. The nobleman is Duristan Silvio Ariesir, a self-styled werewolf hunter eager to both attract the attention of real adventurers and stir the ire of some of the lodge's snootier guests. Earlier that day, Delgros led a small party of patrons into the woods on a hunt that ended with the horrific, unexplained slaughter of the golden buck he and the guests were pursuing. The sight of the stag's flayed carcass so terrified the participants that they fled back to the lodge in a panic, spreading rumors of the Devil in Gray flying among the lodge's guests. Delgros attempted to quell the rumors, but Duristan immediately caught wind of the gossip and drew his own conclusion—that the stag was slain by a werewolf. Excited beyond belief,

Duristan demanded Delgros take him to see the carcass and quickly rallied his six ragtag hirelings to grab his werewolf-hunting equipment and set off on a hunt.

Duristan badgers Delgros for all sorts of information—whether there were any howls or footprints, whether Delgros tried to track the prints around the carcass, and whether he measured any of the claw or bite marks on the body. Almost in mid-sentence, Duristan catches sight of the PCs and sizes them up. He calls to them, "You there! Fall in with me, I need more able sword-arms for the hunt!"

Allow the PCs opportunity to respond to the brash aristocrat's pompous request. If PCs don't react well to his

arrogance, Duristan suddenly realizes that he is in the company of real adventurers and becomes star-struck. He quickly apologizes for his gaffe, claiming to be in the heat of great excitement. He entreats the PCs to join his hunt, his eyes gleaming as he tells them he's going to track down a werewolf. In exchange, he offers to treat them to dinner as well as pay for their accommodations at Ascanor upon their return from the hunt later that day. If the PCs were unable to convince Belik to let them in, Duristan promises to host them as his guests at the lodge.

If the PCs accept Duristan's offer, proceed to Event 2. Regardless of whether Belik allowed them entry, the porter quickly goes to inform Estovion of the PCs' arrival. If the PCs bear invitations from Judge Daramid, Estovion recognizes them as ones issued to members of the Order of the Palatine Eye, which sparks his suspicions that the Order has sent the PCs to compile evidence against him—or to orchestrate his assassination. Upon learning that the PCs ventured off into the woods with Duristan to hunt werewolves, Estovion's paranoia score increases by +1.



Duristan Silvio Ariesir

EVENT 2: THE FLAYED CARCASS (CR 7)

Just outside the gates of the lodge, Duristan and Delgros mount up and begin to trot in a westerly direction. After a few miles, they reach the spot where the dead stag was found.

The trail leads to a small clearing, where the trampled ground and snapped brush show signs of a great struggle. The soil is soaked with blood, and more has splashed upon the tree trunks and leaves. Despite the telltale evidence, Delgros's jaw drops and his eyes dart wildly with shock at the situation. "It's gone!" he cries.

The missing carcass spurs Delgros to organize a frantic search of the immediate area. A DC 15 Perception or Survival check reveals at least two distinct sets of prints in the clearing, besides those of the stag. Frustratingly, most are only partial prints and all are badly trampled. The most striking are large wolflike prints, twice the size of a typical wolf's prints. A DC 13 Knowledge (nature) check is enough to realize that the tracks are not consistent with normal lycanthrope hybrid prints, seeming more like dire wolf tracks, though with strange, elongated claws (these are actually the prints of werewolves of the Vollensag tribe, who change into Large dire wolves, and who left the carcass as a warning to the humans at Ascanor Lodge; see Event 3 below). The other set of prints belongs to a great boar, identifiable with a DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check. A DC 15 Survival check is enough to note a swath of crushed scrub and brush, as if something had been dragged off into the wood, and follow the trail for another 50 feet or so. Those following the tracks hear loud scuffling and grunting noises and spot the bushes rustling ahead.

Creatures: Three wild dire boars discovered the carcass and have dragged it off to feed on it. As soon as they spot the PCs, they raise their gore-soaked heads from their feast and attack. Eager to show off his bravery to the PCs, Duristan immediately attacks the boars, while both Delgros and Duristan's men hold back, waiting for a clear shot.

DIRE BOARS (3)
XP 1,200 each

hp 42 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 36)

Development: Once the PCs slay or drive off the boars, Duristan wastes no time inspecting the carcass of the stag. The task is a little over his head, however, and he requests the PCs aid him. A DC 22 Heal check discovers two types of wounds on the carcass—the tooth marks and tusk slashes of the boars, and a number of bites and lacerations that presumably caused the stag’s death. After examining these wounds, Duristan is convinced that werewolves are about. Excited with the prospect of another kill, Duristan quickly decides to wait out the night in the woods in the hope of catching the werewolves. Delgros derides Duristan’s plan as a “fool’s errand” and informs Duristan that he’s heading back to the lodge before night falls. Duristan hopes that the PCs will stay with him, and asks them to do so, promising them a hunt like no other. If the PCs were not able to win their own admission into Ascanor Lodge, Duristan also politely reminds them that he’s their ticket inside. If PCs elect to stay, go to Event 3. If they decide to return to the lodge instead, proceed to Event 4.

EVENT 3: THE MOON HUNT (CR 7)

Once Delgros departs, Duristan gets right to business. He recommends that they set up a central camp, lay baited traps about the perimeter, and wait for the wolves to come to them. Without waiting for the PCs' reply, Duristan splits his hirelings into pairs, and instructs them to bait the perimeter and keep watch. From the crates, his hirelings pull several silvered, toothed wolf traps and hunks of raw meat. Two pairs head out in opposite directions. The third pair remains behind, setting up a small camp, while Duristan pours each of the PCs a crystal snifter of exquisite Ustalavic brandy. He entreats the PCs to tell him of their exploits, and listens eagerly and attentively. When they have finished, he proudly tells them of his own prowess as werewolf hunter. To date, he's slain three, a fact he is quite pleased with. As if to punctuate his accomplishments, he shows off his scarward—a strange scar on his shoulder given to him by a local witch that purportedly grants immunity to the curse of lycanthropy. Duristan offers to hire her to give the PCs scarwards as well once they get back to Ascanor Lodge.

Later in the evening, as the brandy in the bottle gets lower and the PCs' conversation with Duristan dies down, a short, horrid snarl pierces the night, followed by a smothered scream. A DC 16 Perception check identifies the general direction of the sound as emanating from somewhere to the southwest.

Creatures: Duristan is unaware that this section of the forest has long been claimed as the territorial hunting grounds of the Vollensag, one of several werewolf tribes that inhabit the Shudderwood (see Werewolves of the Shudderwood on page 35). Also known as Primals because they uphold the primitive and barbaric culture of their Kellid ancestors, two of these werewolves killed the stag Delgros

was hunting as a warning to the humans at Ascanor Lodge. The werewolves immediately spotted Duristan and the PCs when they entered the werewolves' territory and secretly watched as they set camp. Unsure of the visitors' intentions, the Primals have remained on guard to monitor the PCs' group. They have identified Duristan as a werewolf hunter from Ascanor, but falsely assume that both he and the PCs serve Estovion Lozarov and support Mathus Mordrinacht in his claim to the position of packlord.

The Primals' primary objective this night is to send a strong message back to Ascanor Lodge that all efforts to support Mathus Mordrinacht in his bid to replace the Shudderwood's murdered packlord will be met with fierce retaliation from the Vollensag and their allies. Having determined that the humans laying traps and creeping around the camp perimeter are just hirelings, the two werewolves wait until nightfall, then stalk and kill the four perimeter guards. They have just killed the second pair of guards when the PCs become aware of the attack.

When the PCs arrive at the scene, they find the body of one dead hireling on the ground, and a huge, gray-furred werewolf with bloody jaws holding the lifeless body of another, whose throat has been torn open. The second werewolf hides in the shadows, only revealing himself if spotted or if the PCs threaten his partner.

As soon as the PCs approach, the first werewolf drops the body she is holding and commands them to stop, demanding to know why they have entered Vollensag territory. She waits long enough to hear a response, then derides their statement as a lie. Before the PCs can give more than a partial explanation, she interrupts them with the following statement.

"Your false explanations are meaningless. Go tell whoever sent you to stay out of wolf affairs! Let him know that his dealings with Mathus Mordrinacht and the Silverhide pack do not sit well with the other tribes of this wood. There shall be much blood spilled between our kin before a Silverhide packlord sits upon Highthrone. Mathus the betrayer shall never claim the title, and should you and yours continue to support him, the wrath of the wolf packs shall fall upon him! Now leave our territory and return to your cozy wooden den, or share the fate of these poor little sheep!"

The Primals glare at the PCs, expecting them to leave and return to the lodge. If the PCs hold their ground or move to attack, the werewolves howl. Almost immediately, another wolf echoes their cries, then another, and another, spreading through the darkness until the entire wood seems to resound with bone-chilling howls. If the PCs are not discouraged at this point, Duristan and his

remaining hirelings are certainly cowed, and beg the PCs to return to Ascanor immediately. If attacked, the werewolves immediately respond in kind.

VOLLENSAG STALKERS (HYBRID FORM) (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Human natural dire werewolf barbarian 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CE Large humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +6; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, -2 rage, -1 size)

hp 73 each (5d12+35)

Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +5

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1;

DR 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk greatsword +10 (2d6+10/19-20), bite +6 (1d8+3 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy) or unarmed strike +11 (1d4+7), bite +6 (1d8+3 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)



Vollensag Stalker

Ranged mwk dagger +5 (1d4+7/19–20)

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

Special Attacks curse of lycanthropy, rage (16 rounds/day), rage powers (powerful blow +2, superstition +3)

TACTICS

During Combat The werewolves rage on the first round of combat. They fight with their axes, biting only when given an easy opportunity to make second attacks.

Morale The werewolves do not want the PCs dead—they want them to carry the Primals’ threat back to Ascanor. As a result, they fight only until they have killed one of the PCs, or until reduced to fewer than half their hit points. At that point, they break off the battle, snarling a final warning to the PCs before running off into the woods.

Base Statistics When not raging, the werewolves’ statistics are **AC** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; **hp** 63; **Fort** +8, **Will** +3; **Melee** mwk greatsword +8 (2d6+7/19–20), bite +4 (1d8+2 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy) or unarmed strike +9 (1d4+5), bite +4 (1d8+2 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy); **Ranged** mwk dagger +5 (1d4+5/19–20); **Str** 21, **Con** 19; **CMB** +11; **Skills** Climb +10.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 15, **Con** 23, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 23

Feats Diehard, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +12, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +10, Survival +10

Languages Common, Hallit

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and dire wolf; *polymorph*), fast movement, lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves)

Gear masterwork dagger, masterwork greatsword, *bracers of armor* +2

Development: After the confrontation with the Primals, Duristan gathers his surviving hirelings to head back to Ascanor Lodge. Once the PCs return to the lodge, go to Event 4. If one of the PCs was bitten by a werewolf and contracted lycanthropy, she shows no symptoms of the curse until the next full moon. See the PCs as Lycanthropes sidebar on page 26 for guidelines if one of the PCs becomes an afflicted werewolf.

Story Award: If the PCs drive off the werewolves or avoid combat by returning to the lodge, award them full XP as if they defeated the werewolves, as they have learned several important facts from this meeting. The PCs should now have the knowledge that several werewolf tribes exist within the wood, and that they are fighting among themselves. They should also learn that someone at Ascanor Lodge has dealings with a werewolf named Mathus Mordrinacht.

EVENT 4: RETURN TO ASCANOR

Upon the PCs’ return to Ascanor (or an hour after they first meet Belik, if they stayed at the lodge), the halfling porter

Belik greets them. He wears an apologetic grin and carries a silver tray holding hand-carved wooden mugs containing a steaming beverage. Belik calls out and beckons the PCs over.

“Please accept my most sincere apologies for my inappropriate behavior earlier. I was not informed of your coming and acted hastily on behalf of the lodge warden. I can assure you that you will suffer no further ill treatment during your stay at Ascanor Lodge.” He politely offers the PCs hot coffee, and then continues.

“If it’s convenient for you, my master requests your company at this time for a brief introduction and to offer his apologies as well.”

If the PCs accept the invitation, Belik leads them into the lodge, through the Great Hall, and up the south stairs, stopping at the door to the reference library (area **D30**), where he knocks three times. The door creaks open, revealing a circular room with book-lined walls and Estovion Lozarov.

Belik bows low and presents a formal introduction: “Esteemed guests, may I present Estovion Lozarov, Lodge Warden of Ascanor.”

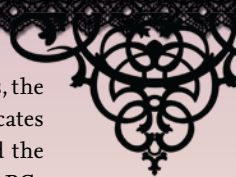
Estovion thanks the porter and curtly dismisses him, waiting until the halfling’s footsteps fade off down the hall before speaking. Then he greets the PCs and speaks in a somber tone.

“Please do not hold the actions of my porter against him. The error in your improper greeting was entirely mine. I neglected to inform my staff of the open invitations I gave to the Order,” —he pauses here to wink—“and they did not recognize the reservations. Rest assured, however, that all of the lodge’s facilities are at your disposal, including our libraries. While the general library is down the hall, this one,” he says, gesturing at the book-filled shelves, “is likely better suited to your research.”

Allow the PCs to briefly converse with Estovion if they wish, but his overall tone seems distracted and dismissive. As quickly as he can, he attempts to free himself from their company, saying, “My apologies, but I regrettably have some business to attend to at this time. Belik is waiting for you outside the door just down the hall. He shall show you to your rooms. Feel free to ask him for whatever you need.”

Estovion takes his leave by ascending the curved staircase at the back of the room to his office (area **D31**). Belik is waiting for them on the other side of the far door of area **D27**; if the PCs do not go to him immediately, he soon seeks them out and leads them to the only available guest rooms in the lodge (areas **D26b** and **D26e**). Once Belik shows them their rooms, the PCs are free to explore the lodge and the estate grounds, mingle with the other guests, or conduct research in the library.

If the PCs accepted Duristan’s offer to receive scar-wards against lycanthropy, he shows up at their rooms a few hours after they return to the lodge with the “witch,” a pretty



young woman who looks suspiciously like a prostitute. She is happy to give any of the PCs a scar-ward, but though she claims the ward is a traditional hex she learned from her grandmother, in truth, the scar-wards are no more than an old wives' tale and provide no protection whatsoever against lycanthrope attacks or the curse of lycanthropy.

If the PCs did not accompany Duristan on his hunt, he returns that night with tales of a werewolf attack in the woods that killed several of his hirelings. Though Duristan was unable to slay any of the beasts, he is still in good spirits, as the presence of werewolves so close to the lodge is a golden opportunity. Apparently, the werewolves are in some disarray, fighting among themselves, and they blame Ascanor Lodge for a betrayal by one of their own, a werewolf named Mathus Mordrinacht. Duristan does not know what any of this means, only that the chaos among the werewolves may make his hunts easier. He regales the guests with stories of the battle, and once again pressures the PCs to join him on another werewolf hunt. If the PCs decide to join him at this point, they may encounter plenty of other beasts in the wood (see the random encounter tables on page 83), but no werewolves—all of the werewolves have now gathered at the Stairs of the Moon (see Part Three).

INVESTIGATIONS AT ASCANOR LODGE

The PCs' primary reason for visiting Ascanor is to track down the Whispering Way, and they will likely want to begin this task as soon as they are settled. The cultists stopped by the lodge only briefly, so few of the staff members or current guests had any direct contact with them, but careful questioning can lead the PCs to those who did. Likewise, the PCs can use the lodge's libraries (particularly Estovion's private library in the South Tower) to find clues that eventually lead to Estovion, the Whispering Way, and the werewolves at the Stairs of the Moon.

As the adventure progresses, the PCs may also wish to learn more about the werewolves of the Shudderwood. Again, both the guests and libraries can provide the PCs with more clues to help their investigations.

Regardless of the exact nature of their investigations, the PCs should eventually uncover evidence that implicates Estovion Lozarov with both the Whispering Way and the werewolves of the Shudderwood, and that leads the PCs to the lost Desnan temple formerly known as Stairs of the Moon. How long these investigations last is determined by the PCs' actions, as well as by how paranoid they make Estovion (see below).

ESTOVION'S PARANOIA

While the PCs carry out their investigations, Estovion becomes increasingly paranoid that the Palatine Council has grown suspicious of him and has sent the PCs to gather evidence of his many treacheries. As the PCs unearth more clues, you will need to track Estovion's mounting paranoia. As his paranoia score increases, he reacts by initiating specific actions or events as described in the table below. The progression of events also flows in order, so if Estovion's paranoia reaches 8 or higher before you play through Events 5 and 6, those events should still be played out in sequence.

QUESTIONING THE GUESTS AND STAFF

In search of the Whispering Way or more information on the wolves of the Shudderwood, the PCs might very well wish to talk with some of the lodge's guests or staff, particularly once they learn of the Whispering Way's visit to the lodge 2 weeks ago (see Investigation #2 on page 29). The presence of Auren Vrood's sinister homunculus makes the cultists easy to remember for those who encountered them, regardless of the disguises they wore. Unfortunately, most of the current guests were not present at Ascanor when the cult made their brief appearance. If the PCs talk to either Cilas Graydon or Madame Ivanja, more details on these meetings are given on pages 27–28.

Duristan arrived at Ascanor only a few days before the PCs, after the Whispering Way left the lodge, so he has no information on the cultists. Obsessed with werewolves, he puts little faith in whispered rumors of a shadowy death-cult, and he assumes any deeds attributed to the

Paranoia Score	Reaction
1–4	Estovion has Belik leave threatening notes around the lodge for the PCs to find. The notes are anonymous, as if written by a helpful secret ally. Sample notes include warnings such as the following: “My friends, your investigations place you in grave danger.” “Some secrets are better left uncovered. Leave Ascanor before you too fall prey to its curse.” “Beware the wolves who watch the woods. They see all, but leave no traces.”
5–7	At this point, Estovion's suspicions drive him to attempt to learn more about his new guests. He's afraid to take direct actions such as outright murder (in part from fear of the Order of the Palatine Eye), but his tactics grow increasingly aggressive, initiating Event 5.
8+	Estovion's paranoia reaches the breaking point. Event 6 begins when he summons the vilkacis in an attempt to finish off the PCs once and for all.

PCs AS LYCANTHROPES

Given the large number of werewolves that the PCs face in “Broken Moon,” there is a good chance one or more of the PCs will contract lycanthropy during the course of the adventure. It is left to you to decide how such an affliction affects play. Most of the werewolves in the adventure are chaotic evil, and it is likely that the alignment of a PC who becomes a werewolf will shift in that direction. In most cases, you should take control of an afflicted PC in hybrid or animal form, as the power increase from becoming a werewolf should not be a reward. The adventure assumes that none of the PCs are lycanthropes, and you should do your best to enable the PCs to find a way to cure the affliction before it progresses too far. Perhaps the PCs find a patch of wolfsbane in the forest, or they can use the *scroll of remove disease* in area E4 to cure the affliction. More information on the effects of lycanthropy can be found on page 196 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.

PHASES OF THE MOON

An afflicted lycanthrope shows no sign of the disease until the next full moon. If you need to know the phases of the moon for the purposes of this adventure (such as if a PC contracts lycanthropy), simply look at a current calendar to see the moon phase on the day you start the adventure. Track the number of days that pass during this adventure from that point to arrive at the night the next full moon rises over the Shudderwood.

cult to be the work of werewolves. He is knowledgeable about werewolves, and can fill the PCs in on details of the Shudderwood’s werewolf tribes (see *Werewolves of the Shudderwood* on page 35). Duristan knows that the werewolves are riled up about something, but he doesn’t know why. He also knows the location of the Stairs of the Moon, and that the werewolves hold council there at a place they call Highthrone. If asked about the Prince’s Wolves, Duristan suggests going to the ruined temple to find them. Though he has never been to the Stairs of the Moon, Duristan can lead the PCs there if they wish, especially if the outing involves the prospect of a werewolf hunt.

Corvin has been at the lodge for some time, and was in fact present when the Whispering Way made their appearance. Unfortunately, he was deep in an absinthe-fueled fugue at the time, so he has no knowledge of their visit. He also knows nothing about werewolves, other than that the Shudderwood is said to be filled with them. Corvin sees the

PCs as beneath him, and his attitude toward them remains predominantly standoffish, if not openly derogatory. Corvin is loose-tongued, however, and he has no problem casting aspersions on the other guests (perhaps creating a few red herrings), regardless of the truth of such rumors.

Markiza Welgory was not at the lodge at the time the Whispering Way stopped by, but her “hound” Ostovach was. The hunter did not see them, but he does know of three strangers who visited the courtesan Niama about 2 weeks ago (see Investigation #3 on page 31), as he had planned to engage her services that evening, and was turned away by Madame Ivanja. Ostovach does not mention this on his own, nor does he bring it up in the Markiza’s presence, but he will disclose this information if privately asked about strange visitors to the lodge. Ostovach remembers these visitors because they were not regular guests, and as far as he knows, they didn’t even stay the night. If he is asked about werewolves, Ostovach knows only that the werewolves of the Shudderwood are divided into multiple tribes; he suggests the PCs talk to Delgros or Duristan for more information.

Among the lodge staff, only Estovion, Belik, and Quiene Steymor know of the cult’s visit, though only Estovion knows their true identity. The rest of the staff had no contact with the visitors. Delgros Kroitzcer was out on a hunt when the Whispering Way visited, but he does have information about the werewolves of the Shudderwood.

Estovion met with the Auren Vrood and the Whispering Way himself, and arranged the meeting between the cult and the werewolf leader Mathus Mordrinacht, as recorded in his journals (see Investigation #2 on page 29). Estovion does not divulge any of this information to the PCs, of course, and their inquiries only fuel his own suspicions about their reasons for coming to Ascanor. If the PCs question Estovion, his paranoia score increases by +1. If asked about werewolves, Estovion points the PCs to either Delgros or the traveler’s journals in the lodge’s reference library (see Investigation #1 on page 28). Estovion denies any knowledge of or connection to the Whispering Way, Mathus Mordrinacht, the werewolves of the Shudderwood, or the Stairs of the Moon, and if asked about any of these specific topics, his paranoia increases by +3.

The halfling porter Belik granted the Whispering Way entry onto the estate’s grounds, so he remembers the visitors (and Vrood’s strange familiar), though if the PCs talk to Estovion before they speak with Belik, Estovion instructs the porter to give them no information, and Belik claims to have no knowledge of any unusual visitors or events at the lodge. Otherwise, Belik’s starting attitude is unfriendly, but if made at least indifferent (DC 19 Diplomacy check), he can reveal the following information about the visitors from 2 weeks ago. Although they had no reservations, they did carry invitations from a highly

placed noble in Caliphas. Under no circumstances will Belik reveal the identity of this noble (in truth, he does not know exactly who issued the invitations, but he's not about to tell the PCs that). Belik can also confirm that they visited Madame Ivanja, and left the lodge without spending the night. Belik knows that these visitors met with Estovion, and that Mathus Mordrinacht visited the lodge that night as well, but he does not reveal these facts to the PCs, as he is long used to protecting Estovion's privacy. Any inquiries regarding werewolves are directed to Delgros or Duristan. If the PCs question Belik, he reports that fact to Estovion, increasing Estovion's paranoia by +1.

As stablemaster, Quiene Steymor dealt with the Whispering Way's mounts when they visited. She too remembers Vrood's creepy homunculus, and the fact that although the visitors claimed to be from Courtaud, they spoke with thick southern accents. Quiene can tell the PCs that she was instructed not to unsaddle or unload the horses, and that the visitors did not stay the night, riding out only a few hours after they had arrived. Quiene has no knowledge of their identities or of their business at the lodge, but she later heard from Ostovach that they visited Madame Ivanja.

Huntsmaster Delgros Kroitczcer knows nothing of the Whispering Way, but he can elaborate on the pack and tribal structure of the wood's werewolves (see Werewolves of the Shudderwood on page 35). He can also confirm that the werewolves seem to be more aggressive than usual, although to his knowledge they have never attacked the lodge. Delgros has heard of the Stairs of the Moon, as well as rumors that it is sacred to the wolves, but he has never been there and does not know its location.

THE MARGRAVE OF STURNIDAE

If the PCs talk to Cilas Graydon, he has no knowledge of any Whispering Way activity at the lodge (he was not present when the cultists visited), nor does he know much about the werewolves of the Shudderwood. However, the margrave has his own concerns, for his friend Echtmoor Dravin, who was expected a week ago at Ascanor, has yet to arrive, and Graydon fears the worst.

Should the PCs display the bloody reservation they found in area B1 to other guests or lodge staff or discuss it with them, or should they attempt to masquerade as Echtmoor to gain entrance into the lodge, word eventually reaches the Margrave that the PCs may know something of the whereabouts of his friend. If the PCs do not approach

him first, Graydon confronts them and demands to know how they came upon the reservation and what they know of his missing friend.

If the PCs truthfully reveal to Graydon what they know of the missing noble, he appreciates any information they can give him about his friend. Deeply saddened, the margrave goes into mourning. He keeps a low profile, avoids social functions, and spends most of his time in his room, making arrangements to recover Echtmoor's body. If the PCs brought Echtmoor's body or his personal effects with them and hand them over to Graydon, the margrave gives them a reward of 2,000 gp, and repays their kindness by becoming a strong ally of the PCs. He keeps an ear out for talk concerning the PCs, and if anyone threatens them or accuses them of wrongdoing, he comes to their defense, backing his words with his considerable finances and political clout.

If he becomes an ally, Graydon can assist the PCs' investigations by subtly guiding them to uncover more clues. If the PCs are having trouble piecing clues together, he might suggest that the PCs speak to a particular guest or staff member (such as Madame Ivanja), or he could recommend that they do some research in the lodge's libraries, if they have not yet done so. In addition, Graydon has long vacationed at Ascanor and knows the

secret of the connecting chimneys in the lodge's fireplaces. He shares this information with the PCs, allowing them to eavesdrop on other guests' conversations. If he overhears any suspicious conversations on his own, he likewise brings what he learns to the PCs' attention.

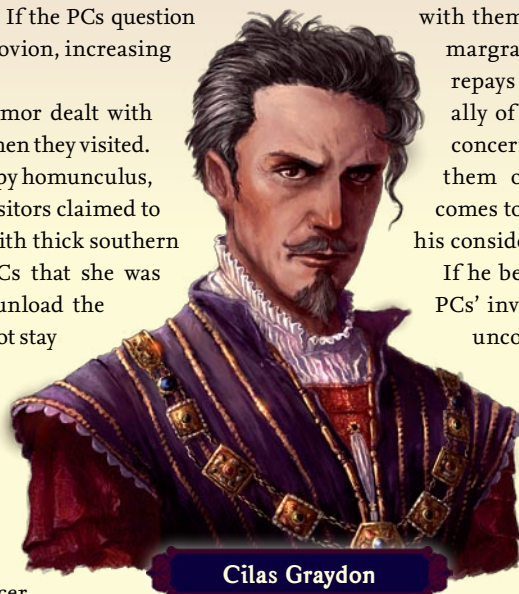
On the other hand, if the PCs are dishonest about the circumstances of Echtmoor's death, Graydon grows suspicious of them. He offers the PCs no reward and begins watching them closely, perhaps sharing his distrust with other guests. Later, when Graydon is murdered (see Event 6 on page 32), these suspicions could come back to haunt the PCs.

If the PCs make no mention of the reservation or the corpse they found, Graydon and the other guests eventually attribute Echtmoor's disappearance to the legendary Devil in Gray, Lozeri's resident bogeyman.

Story Award: If the PCs gain Graydon as an ally, award them 2,400 XP.

THE HARROWING

Madame Ivanja had her own dealings with the cultists of the Whispering Way when they visited Ascanor, but she will not discuss this information publicly. If the PCs question



THE CHOOSING

Madame Ivanja's harrow reading uses the stars suit, representing Wisdom. If you have a Harrow Deck, remove the nine cards of this suit. Discard the Eclipse card, which has a role later in the adventure (see the sidebar on page 43), and shuffle the remaining eight cards, then allow each of the players to draw a card. If you don't have a Harrow Deck, perform the choosing by having each player roll 1d8. The number on the die corresponds to one of the eight possible cards.

The card a PC draws (or the number rolled) during the choosing has special qualities during this adventure. Each of these cards is tied to a specific encounter in "Broken Moon," and when a PC who drew that card reaches that encounter, he gains a +2 bonus on all rolls modified by Wisdom and all divine spells cast by the character manifest at +1 caster level. These bonuses last for the encounter's duration.

1. **The Carnival:** Combat with Estovion, wherever it may occur.
2. **The Lost:** Combat with Acrietia (area F14).
3. **The Midwife:** Combat with the vilkacis or its possessed host (Event 6 or area E1).
4. **The Mute Hag:** Combat with Auren Vrood (area G4).
5. **The Owl:** Combat with Eugenie, Vicenith, and the risen dead (area F13).
6. **The Publican:** Combat with Mathus Mordrinacht and Cybrisa Dorzhanev (area E8).
7. **The Queen Mother:** Combat with the werewolf Duristan (area F2).
8. **The Winged Serpent:** Combat with Adimarus Ionacu (area F9a).

her about unusual events at the lodge, she claims to know nothing. Only if the PCs ask her questions about specific events, such as those found in Estovion's journals or learned of from questioning other guests, does she agree to a private meeting (see Investigation #3 on page 31).

However, Madame Ivanja does offer to perform a harrow reading for the PCs, in which she can tell the PCs' fortunes using a harrow deck, a deck of traditional Varisian fortune-telling cards consisting of 54 cards divided into six suits. If you have an actual

Harrow Deck (available at paizo.com) you can perform the harrowing yourself for your players using the deck.

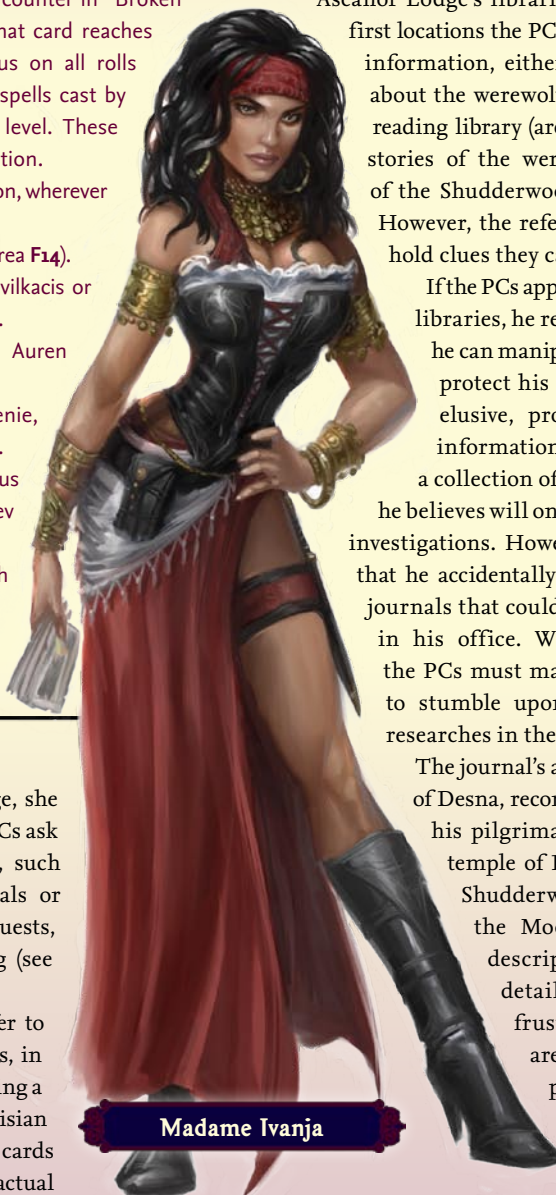
If the PCs agree to a reading, Madame Ivanja begins with a choosing, allowing each PC to draw a single card from the deck (see the sidebar for details on the choosing). Ivanja then performs the harrowing, foretelling that the PCs must face a powerful force yet unseen (Adivion Adrissant and the Whispering Way) that is manipulating the current situation, both in the Shudderwood and beyond. This force is steadily growing in both power and malevolence, and has the potential to threaten Ustalav and the indeed the whole world, yet the PCs are ultimately destined to have a hand in determining its fate.

INVESTIGATION #1: THE LIBRARIES

Ascanor Lodge's libraries are likely to be one of the first locations the PCs investigate in search of more information, either on the Whispering Way or about the werewolves of the Shudderwood. The reading library (area D29) contains many horror stories of the werewolves and other denizens of the Shudderwood, but no clues for the PCs. However, the reference library (area D30) does hold clues they can find.

If the PCs approach Estovion about using the libraries, he readily agrees to help, thinking he can manipulate their researches to better protect his own secrets. He is, of course, elusive, providing them with as little information as possible, most of it from a collection of old traveler's journals, which he believes will only muddle and confound their investigations. However, it has slipped his mind that he accidentally left a note in one of the old journals that could lead the PCs to clues hidden in his office. Without Estovion's assistance, the PCs must make a DC 25 Perception check to stumble upon that journal during their researches in the reference library.

The journal's author, an unnamed worshiper of Desna, recorded several entries describing his pilgrimage to an ancient, abandoned temple of Desna and observatory in the Shudderwood known as the Stairs of the Moon. The journal includes a description of the temple, but the details of its exact location are frustratingly vague. These pages are bookmarked with a folded piece of paper, scribbled with a faded note reading, "See 'Halo of Dreams' on page 322. Filed under Religion



Madame Ivanja

upstairs.” The note was written by Estovion some time ago, and refers to a book called *The Halo of Dreams* kept in the private library in the South Tower (area D31).

If Estovion becomes aware the PCs have read through these journals (either because he showed them to the PCs or through some other clue), he realizes later that night that he left notes within. He checks the journals to see if they were disturbed at the first opportunity. Unless the PCs have made a deliberate effort to hide the fact they found the note in the journal, Estovion’s paranoia increases by +1. If the note is missing, his paranoia increases by +2. If the entire journal is missing, his paranoia increases by +3.

The PCs can make Knowledge checks to learn about the Whispering Way and the werewolves of the Shudderwood on their own, but using the reference library allows them to make such checks untrained. If the PCs have ranks in the required skills, using the library grants a +4 bonus on Knowledge checks about the Whispering Way or the werewolves of the Shudderwood.

A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) or (religion) check reveals that the Whispering Way is an ancient organization of necromancers with ties to Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant. Higher checks reveal more information about the cult, such as the information presented on page 16 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #43: “The Haunting of Harrowstone.” In addition, more information can be found in the article on the Whispering Way later in this volume.

In researching the Whispering Way and members’ possible reasons for coming to the Shudderwood, the PCs can also find references to an ancient ruin in the forest called the Stairs of the Moon. Believed to have been destroyed long ago by agents of the Whispering Tyrant when he still ruled over Ustalav, the ruins are reputed to now be haunted by vengeful spirits.

If the PCs research the werewolves, a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals that five major tribes of werewolves roam within the Shudderwood. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) check identifies the leaders of the five tribes of werewolves roam within the Shudderwood, and the fact that the tribes meet at an ancient ruin in the Shudderwood called the Stairs of the Moon. This information is summarized in the Werewolves of the Shudderwood section on page 35. A DC 25 Knowledge (local) check uncovers the information that the werewolves are ruled by a single packlord, chosen from one of the five tribes, and that new a packlord must consume the heart of her predecessor to claim the title. This check also reveals that one of the five tribes, the Prince’s Wolves, have historically been enemies of the Whispering Tyrant and his minions (such as the Whispering Way).

INVESTIGATION #2: ESTOVION’S OFFICE

In search of more information, the PCs might be interested in investigating the South Tower (area D31),

either to use Estovion’s private library or to search his office. Unfortunately, Estovion strictly guards access to the tower. If the PCs approach Estovion about using his private library, he is outwardly helpful, and offers to allow the PCs access under his supervision, but his paranoia immediately increases by +1.

If the PCs specifically ask Estovion about *The Halo of Dreams*, he attempts to bluff them and denies the book’s existence. In addition, his paranoia score increases by +2. His suspicions raised, Estovion takes his leave at the earliest opportunity. He immediately checks the reference library for the traveler’s journal. If he finds it undisturbed, he removes the book from the library and hides it within his desk in area D31. If the journal has been disturbed or is missing, Estovion’s paranoia increases as described in Investigation #1 above.

Alternatively, the PCs can attempt to break into the South Tower and sneak a peek at the book without Estovion’s permission. Locating the book in Estovion’s private library requires a DC 15 Perception check. *The Halo of Dreams* is a text about the Desnan faith, and its spread from Varisia throughout Avistan. The book contains, among other things, references to a sacred Desnan relic known as the *Dusk Moth*, a sacred Desnan relic hidden in the stonework of an ancient temple called the Stairs of the Moon. Legends speak of priests transporting the relic to the temple, but all knowledge of it was lost when the Whispering Tyrant conquered Ustalav and the temple was abandoned. If the PCs examine page 322 of the book, they discover a highlighted passage, reproduced on page 30 as Player Handout #1.

In addition to the information in *The Halo of Dreams*, there is much to learn in Estovion’s office, though if the warden is accompanying the PCs, he refuses to allow them to search his office. If the PCs are alone, a casual search of the room (DC 10 Perception check) finds a stash of Estovion’s more telling notes and journals, which detail Estovion’s pro-aristocracy, anti-Palatinate political stance. A DC 15 Perception check unearths Estovion’s most recent journal, which details his alliance with Mathus Mordrinacht and the Silverhides and his recent involvement with the Whispering Way. The journal also mentions the cult’s interference in the affairs of the Shudderwood werewolves, though Estovion remains unaware that his ally Mathus helped to orchestrate the assassination of the Shudderwood’s packlord at the behest of the Whispering Way. The relevant journal entries are reproduced on page 30 as Player Handout #2.

If the PCs explore Estovion’s office after he has summoned the vilkacis and fled the lodge (see page 33), a DC 18 Perception check made while searching the room uncovers a sizable collection of partially burnt papers stuffed into the fireplace. To prevent them from being

THE HALO OF DREAMS

The origin of the Dusk Moth can be traced back to pre-Thassilonian Varisia, though the role it played in those ancient times has been lost to history. During the Age of Enthronement, Desna's priests recovered the relic from the ruins of Thassilon, and carried it into the Shudderwood during the founding of Ustalav. There the priests constructed a temple to the goddess of dreams and disassembled the Dusk Moth, incorporating its parts into a great observatory atop the temple, which they dubbed the Stairs of the Moon. High atop the observatory, during the twilight hour, the faithful enacted a sacred ritual of communion to activate the power of the Dusk Moth, placing them in a heightened dream-state in which they could commune directly with the Song of the Spheres.

Player Handout #1

ESTOVION'S JOURNAL

Just Over Two Weeks Prior to the PCs' Arrival:

It appears that my past has come back to haunt me, in the form of unexpected visitors who arrived last night. Ostensibly nobles from Courtaud, they bore invitations from Adivion Adrissant in Caliphas, and Belik admitted them to see me. Their leader, a disturbing man named Auren Vrood who carried a sinister-looking, twisted homunculus on his shoulder, confided to me that they were agents of the Whispering Way, come to finally collect the debt I owe them for helping me with the spirit I discovered at the stairs so long ago. Vrood "requested" that I arrange a meeting between him and one of the werewolves of the wood. Though I would prefer to have nothing more to do with them (for my youthful indiscretions were just that), I saw no choice but to acquiesce to their demands, lest they reveal my secrets to the Palatine Council. As Mathus is my sole ally among the packs, I will speak to him and arrange a meeting, and hopefully I can wash my hands of this whole sordid affair.

Two Weeks Prior to the PCs' Arrival:

Vrood and his fellows have returned. Though I made my office available to them, they declined and requested a meeting with Madame Ivanja instead. Mathus arrived shortly after and went straight to Ivanja's tower as well. I was somewhat surprised by their choice of location, but I suppose even necromancers and werewolves have their needs. I spoke briefly with Mathus after the meeting, but he was unusually withdrawn and gave no hint of what was said at the meeting.

Two Days Prior to the PCs' Arrival:

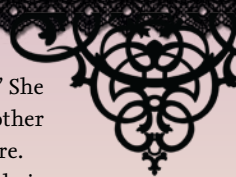
A grave threat has befallen the Shudderwood, and I fear its origins lie at Ascanor. Unknown forces, almost certainly agents of Vrood and the Whispering Way, have attacked the stairs, butchered Kvalca Sain, and stolen her heart for some dark purpose. Although their motives remain a mystery, this single act has thrown the entire hierarchy of the Shudderwood's packs into disarray and violence.

I know that it is customary when a packlord dies for her successor to consume the fallen packlord's heart. With Sain's heart gone, the position of packlord shall fall to whoever can claim the title, either by recovering the lost heart, or more likely through force, by slaying the leaders of the four rival tribes and adopting the surviving wolves into his own pack.

Mathus has spoken with me before of his desire to become packlord, and I now wonder if his secret meeting with Vrood was the impetus behind these events. Without Sain's heart, however, I doubt the other tribes will accept Mathus as their leader. He might find allies with the Sczarni or the Broken Ones, but the Vollensag and Jezeldans will never bow to his rule.

Mathus's concerns doubtlessly lie with his pack, not with me, however, and I worry my alliance with the Mordrinacht shall soon be forfeit. I fear greatly for the safety of the lodge, for if Mathus moves to take Highthrone without Sain's heart, or if it becomes known that his ascendance is due to the Whispering Way's interference, civil war will soon erupt among the packs of the wood, with Ascanor caught in the middle.

Player Handout #2



read, Estovion ripped and tore the pages from his journals before cramming them into the dying coals, but the journals were not completely consumed. Estovion's most recent journal entries survived and are still legible, and with some work, may be pieced back together and read (see Player Handout #2).

Story Award: If the PCs discover Estovion's connections with both the Whispering Way and the werewolves of the Shudderwood, award them 3,200 XP.

INVESTIGATION #3: IVANJA'S GUESTS

After speaking with the guests or piecing together the evidence from Estovion's journal, the PCs might wish to seek an audience with Madame Ivanja. She agrees to speak with them, but only in the company of her hired Qadiran guards in the watchtower (area D6). Ivanja makes it clear from the very beginning that she never discloses information concerning her clients. If specifically asked about the events detailed in Estovion's journal 2 weeks ago, however, she does recall the night in question. Only four guests visited the watchtower that evening, all enjoying the services of one of Ivanja's courtesans. If the PCs are interested, Ivanja can arrange a meeting with the woman who tended to the guests on that evening—for the proper fee of course. If the PCs pay the fee of 250 gp, Ivanja leads them to one of the private bedchambers on the tower's second floor. A pretty Vudrani woman, wearing heavy eyeliner and clad in nothing but a translucent silken scarf, waits within. Ivanja introduces the woman as **Niama** (N female human expert 2), then wishes the PCs a pleasurable evening, and shuts the door behind her as she exits.

Niama lies upon a pile of pillows smoking a sweet scented substance from a glass water pipe. With glazed eyes, she draws heavily on her pipe, waiting for the PCs to give her instructions. If queried, she can divulge that three nobles from Courtaud hired her that evening, and can confirm that one of them had an evil-looking, implike pet (Vrood's homunculus). They waited in her room for some time, but strangely, they only requested that she dance for them. Eventually a new guest arrived, a silver-haired woodsman with a full beard who smelled like a beast. At that point, her clients requested that she leave. She returned to her room about an hour later and found that they had disappeared.

Niama's starting attitude is indifferent, but if made at least friendly (DC 17 Diplomacy check), she reveals the following additional information. Niama has had enough experience with clients from all over Ustalav to recognize that although the nobles claimed to be from Courtaud, their accents clearly marked them as southerners, possibly from Caliphas. She also caught a glimpse of a strange amulet worn by one of them, depicting a gagged skull. Niama has no idea of the business her guests discussed, but as she was leaving the room, she did hear them mention "the Stairs of

the Moon" and something called "the packlord's heart." She does not know the meaning of either phrase, or any other information about the visitors, and frankly does not care.

Regardless of whether the PCs inform Estovion of their meeting with Madame Ivanja and Niama, he soon hears word of their visit, increasing his paranoia by +1.

EVENT 5: THE WILDING (CR 8)

Event 5 only occurs once Estovion's paranoia score rises to 5 or higher. This event should always precede Event 6. At this time, Estovion risks the safety of the lodge and its guests to create a commotion intended to goad the PCs into action, while Belik sneaks into their rooms to try to find more information about the purpose of the PCs' mission. To accomplish this, Estovion instructs the dimwitted groundskeeper Paucy Troabs to release a giant tarantula on the premises while the guests are occupied with aperitifs and ghost stories before dinner.

Paucy first lays a trail of rat blood from the beast pens (area D8) to the door off of the back deck (area D10). He then smears the door with blood, and leaves it ajar. Next, he sneaks into the beast pens and opens the cage of one of Delgros's most deadly specimens, a giant tarantula.

Creature: All of the lodge guests are in the sitting room (area D23), enjoying Ostovach's telling of a traditional Ustalavic ghost story. The giant tarantula enters the lodge and runs amok, cornering the guests in the sitting room. Their screams reverberate throughout the lodge, alerting the PCs if they are not already present. Rather than play out the combat with the NPCs, assume that one guest or staff member is knocked unconscious or succumbs to the spider's barbed hairs or poison every 1d4 rounds until the PCs arrive. If possible, avoid having the spider kill any major NPCs (especially Cilas or Corvin), as they have important roles to play in Event 6. Once the PCs attack the tarantula, it focuses its attacks on them, as they represent a greater threat.

GIANT TARANTULA

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 115 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 256)

Development: Once the PCs are engaged in combat with the tarantula, Belik sneaks into their quarters to look for more information on them. If, while rummaging through their possessions, he finds any evidence that leads him to believe the PCs are working for the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, or any physical evidence from their investigations that points toward Estovion, he reports his findings to Estovion, whose paranoia increases by +2.

If the PCs wish to investigate the tarantula attack, the blood trails are easily found, suggesting that the attack was staged. Estovion immediately accuses Paucy of being responsible, claiming the groundskeeper has long been

infatuated with the Markiza and was likely trying to rid the lodge of guests so he could get her alone. Estovion plays the part of caring guardian and claims responsibility for his simple, deluded groundskeeper. He places Paucy under house arrest, and orders the gate guards to lock him in the maintenance shed. Estovion publicly reprimands Delgros for his carelessness in leaving the beast pens unlocked, apologizing profusely to the guests. He begs them to forgive poor Paucy and assures everyone that he will work with the groundskeeper daily to rehabilitate him. Of course, all of this is nonsense. Estovion only wants to keep Paucy away from the PCs' questioning, and refuses to give the PCs access to him, claiming that Paucy has been traumatized enough by the night's events. Estovion fully intends to release Paucy once the PCs leave Ascanor. For his part, Paucy enjoys his time alone in the shed, happily skinning rats. Although simpleminded, Paucy is cunning, and if the PCs do manage to question him, he denies any involvement.

Event 6: The Spirit of the Wolf (CR 7)

Event 6 only occurs once Estovion's paranoia score rises to 8 or higher, and should always follow Event 5. The only exception to this progression is if the PCs directly confront Estovion with evidence of his involvement with the Whispering Way, in which case Estovion initiates this event as soon as possible. At this point, Estovion's paranoia and suspicion of the PCs reach such a fevered pitch that he decides to summon forth the vilkacis to kill them.

In the evening, Estovion retires to the South Tower (area D31) and posts a pair of mercenary guards from area D1 in area D30 below with strict orders to allow no one to disturb him. Once secure in his private office, Estovion summons the vilkacis to the lodge and tries to direct it to attack and kill the PCs. Upon arrival, the wolfish apparition possesses the weak-willed Corvin Tergsvor and goes in search of prey. Unfortunately, Estovion has little control over the spirit, and the vilkacis attacks and kills the Margrave of Sturnidae, Cilas Graydon, instead of the PCs.

The following morning, housekeeper Ruessa Webbe finds Graydon's corpse in his room, ripped to shreds as if by some great beast, his blood splattered all over the room. No one has any explanation for the death, and the surviving guests begin to panic, with the notable exception of Duristan. Quite to the contrary, Duristan is secretly thrilled with the turn of events, as he now suspects a werewolf is hiding among the guests of the lodge. He attempts to test his theory at breakfast by jabbing everyone with a silver fork, starting with himself.

If the PCs want to investigate Graydon's death, Estovion allows them to inspect the margrave's room. A DC 20 Heal check confirms Graydon was killed by the teeth and claws of a beast. It is impossible to determine exactly what kind of creature it was, but a DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check reveals

that the wounds are consistent with those a wolf might make. No tracks can be found leading either to or from the room.

The PCs can also interrogate any of the guests or staff if they choose. Everyone has an alibi for the previous night (the two guards confirm that Estovion remained in the South Tower all night), with the exception of Corvin, who claims to have blacked out (not unusual considering his absinthe addiction) until he awoke that morning.

Corvin actually has suspicions that he may be somehow responsible, as he awoke in torn and blood-soaked clothes, with no memory of the previous night. Fearing he may have committed the act during one of his increasingly frequent absinthe-fueled benders, Corvin hid the evidence at the bottom of the chest in his room (which can be found with a DC 15 Perception check should anyone search his room). Under no circumstances does Corvin admit to his own suspicions, and he does all he can to deflect attention away from himself, even accusing the PCs of committing the murder and framing him, if necessary.

Regardless of whom the PCs accuse of the killing, as long as Estovion hasn't been implicated and fled for the Stairs of the Moon, he summons the vilkacis again on subsequent nights to attack and hopefully kill the PCs. Each time, the vilkacis attempts to possess Corvin first, if possible, but it will possess any available guest or staff member if necessary.

Creature: At some point, the vilkacis finally attacks the PCs. You can heighten the feel of horror in this event by having the vilkacis pick off NPCs one by one, terrorizing the lodge, until the PCs are the only ones brave enough to do what needs to be done to stop the killings. Be careful not to drag this section out too long, however. There is really only one clue that points to Estovion being the one behind the attacks (the note in his journal—see Investigation #2 on page 29), so the players might get bored if the vilkacis continues to attack but they can find no clues about how to stop it.

Note that creatures possessed by the vilkacis take on certain physical features of the beast during the possession, making it clear that some supernatural force is at work. A DC 15 Sense Motive check is enough to realize that a possessed foe is under some sort of enchantment or possession, and not responsible for its actions. Note that Corvin does not possess the normal equipment for an NPC of his level, so his CR is reduced to 7 while under the possession of the vilkacis.

CORVIN TERGSVOR (POSSESSED)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male vilkacis-possessed human aristocrat 7/rogue 3 (see page 15)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 8 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, -2 rage)

hp 91 (10 HD; 3d8+7d8+47)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

Weaknesses vulnerable to silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d6+5 plus curse of lycanthropy), 2 claws +12 (1d4+5)

Special Attacks curse of lycanthropy (DC 18), sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat While possessed by the vilkacis, Corvin attacks the closest foe, trying to make sneak attacks if possible.

Morale If Corvin is killed, the vilkacis immediately tries to possess the nearest creature and continue its attacks. If the vilkacis is driven out of Corvin's body, it flees back to the Stairs of the Moon (see area E1), only to be summoned again the following night by Estovion.

Base Statistics When not possessed by the vilkacis, Corvin's statistics are **AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; **hp** 61; **Fort** +5, **Will** +5; **Str** 14, **Con** 10; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

Feats Deceitful, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Persuasive, Toughness

Skills Bluff +20, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +5, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Perception +12, Perform (oratory) +16, Ride +16, Stealth +14

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), rogue talents (fast stealth), trapfinding +1

Gear *clear spindle ioun stone*, expensive bottle of absinthe (worth 50 gp), jewelry worth 100 gp, noble's outfit, signet ring

Development: Despite his brash mouth, foul temper, and impulsive actions, Corvin is an innocent pawn, not a murderer. During the battle, if the PCs realize that Corvin is possessed, they might be able to kill or drive off the vilkacis without killing Corvin. If the PCs "destroy" the vilkacis, it rejuvenates back at the Stairs of the Moon in only 2 days. If the PCs act quickly, they can arrive at the ruined temple before the spirit restores itself.

Estovion waits long enough to learn the outcome of his murderous attempts. As soon as he discovers that the PCs have defeated the vilkacis, Estovion races to the South Tower (area D31) and throws what evidence he can into his fireplace before he flees, using his *scroll of dimension door* to teleport to the woods outside the lodge. With nowhere else to turn, Estovion heads directly to the Stairs of the Moon, hoping to find sanctuary with Mathus Mordrinacht. Unfortunately for Estovion, Mathus is having his own problems holding onto his position among the warring werewolves, and Estovion is left to his own devices. In this case, the PCs will encounter Estovion again in Part Three.

On the other hand, if the PCs catch or corner Estovion before he can flee, he turns violent and attacks. He unleashes everything he has in an attempt to kill the PCs. He fights to the death, believing he's got nothing to lose and knowing that betraying the Whispering Way or Mathus is a death sentence.

Treasure: If the PCs drive off or destroy the vilkacis without killing Corvin, the aristocrat is exceedingly grateful and rewards them with his *clear spindle ioun stone*.

CONCLUDING PART TWO

By the end of Part Two, the PCs should learn that Estovion met with Auren Vrood and the Whispering Way, and arranged a meeting between the cult and his werewolf ally Mathus Mordrinacht, and that the Whispering Way went to the Stairs of the Moon, where their actions caused the civil war just beginning between the werewolves of the Shudderwood. Regardless of whether or not Estovion was exposed or defeated, the PCs' next destination should likely be the Stairs of the Moon.

As soon as Duristan catches wind that the PCs are off to the Stairs of the Moon, the would-be werewolf slayer organizes a small hunting party and requests to accompany the PCs, offering to guide them to the temple. While he hopes they accept his offer, he sets off to investigate the ruins on his own if the PCs decline. Duristan's eventual fate is described on page 35.

Story Award: It is possible that the PCs might carry out their investigations so well that they learn all the necessary clues and head to the Stairs of the Moon without alerting Estovion or increasing his paranoia, and thus never face the vilkacis. In this case, although they miss some of the drama and adventure at Ascanor Lodge, they should still be rewarded for their success. Award them 9,600 XP (the same amount they would have received for fighting both Estovion and the possessed Corvin). Estovion remains at the lodge, blissfully ignorant of the PCs' involvement, and is not encountered in the next section. The PCs will still encounter the vilkacis at the Stairs of the Moon (see area E1).

PART THREE: THE STAIRS OF THE MOON

The Stairs of the Moon was an ancient temple of Desna constructed in the Shudderwood during the first half of the Age of Enthronement. For over 800 years, the temple administered to those of Desna's faithful among the settlers of the Shudderwood, until the Whispering Tyrant came to Ustalav. At that time, the high priest of Desna at the temple had a single son whom he loved dearly. During the wars against the Whispering Tyrant, the priest's son served as a missionary, but when he returned home some



years later he had changed, for at some point he had contracted a particularly virulent strain of lycanthropy. The priest tried everything he could to save his son. He imprisoned his son in a secret chamber beneath the temple and conducted experiments upon him, desperate to reverse the curse. When his research failed to yield positive results, these experiments turned dark and terrible. The priest developed a serum from his son's blood that he used to infect his congregation with lycanthropy in order to study the disease's effects. Over the generations, these afflicted werewolves' offspring became natural werewolves, and their descendents now hunt the Shudderwood as the Mordrinacht tribe. When the temple fell to the armies of the Whispering Tyrant, consumed in mysterious pillars of white fire, death transformed the cleric's wretched son into the undead vilkacis. The Stairs of the Moon was soon abandoned, and its memory wiped from the world at large.

Presently, the ruins of the Stairs of the Moon serve as a neutral meeting place for the Shudderwood's numerous werewolf packs and represent the werewolves' most sacred site. It is their proving grounds, their house of council, and

the location of Highthron—seat of the Shudderwood's packlord; it is where they meet to contest territories, organize new packs, and pronounce judgment on those accused of breaking pack laws.

The vilkacis resides at the Stairs as well, haunting the lower temple when not drawn to the summons of its *canopic stone*. Although a direct forebear only of the Mordrinacht pack, the vilkacis is venerated by all of the werewolf tribes of the Shudderwood as their spiritual ancestor. They have transformed the ground floor of the temple into a shrine to the spirit, cluttered with the remains of live sacrifices and blood offerings made during their frequent pilgrimages to the temple to pay it tribute.

By the time the PCs get to the Stairs of the Moon, the region's numerous werewolf packs have already drawn each other's blood, and the temple now stands as the hotly contested battleground for what might soon erupt into a full-blown civil war. The conflict arose in the wake of murder of the former packlord, Kvalca Sain. When a packlord dies, her successor consumes her heart and so absorbs his predecessor's inner strength. In the case of

Kvalca Sain, she was slain by the Whispering Way, who stole her heart (giving a part of it to Mathus Mordrinacht) and then fled. Since Mathus consumed only part of Sain's heart, and many of the tribes believe Mathus had a hand in orchestrating Sain's murder, the tribes have been thrown into contention—only his own tribe and the Dorzhanevs recognize his claim to the title of packlord. As things currently stand, the Jezeldans have allied themselves with the Vollensag against the Mordrinacht and Dorzhanevs. The Prince's Wolves are staying neutral for now, waiting to see how the conflict turns out.

When the PCs arrive, the Demon Wolves have set out to pursue the Whispering Way and recover Kvalca Sain's heart, so that their pack leader, Adimarus Ionacu, can consume it and claim the title of packlord for himself. Meanwhile, the Primals surround the temple, keeping the other packs from leaving and interfering with the Demon Wolves. The Mordrinacht and Dorzhanevs are holding the temple as best they can, primarily to prevent the Primals from taking Highthrone and challenging Mathus, the only current contender for the title, despite the tenuousness of his claim. No one wants to fight Adimarus alone, so their current hope is that the Demon Wolf either fails to recover the heart, or is slain during the process, so that a weaker, less capable member of his tribe will be forced to attempt to seize the title instead.

WEREWOLVES OF THE SHUDDERWOOD

While over a dozen distinct werewolf packs live within the Shudderwood, most packs trace their lineages to one of five tribes native to the region, which are described below. Most of these tribes have two names: that which they call themselves, and a more common epithet by which most outsiders know them.

Dorzhanevs or Broken Ones: These lycanthropes settle in remote or isolated territories, building small provincial communities near the wood's edge. For the most part, they pose as simple farmers or trappers, occasionally traveling to larger communities to sell or trade for goods. They live and hunt in small packs, targeting lone travelers or those who stray from larger groups. Physically smaller than the other tribes, the Broken Ones transform into red wolves. Their pack structure is matriarchal, and their current tribe leader is the druid Cybrisa Dorzhanev.

Jezeldans or Demon Wolves: The smallest and most recently formed pack in the Shudderwood, the Demon Wolves are an amalgam of newly afflicted werewolves, whose pitiful existence is typically scorned by most natural lycanthropes, and exiles from other tribes, all worshipers of the demon lord Jezelda, Mistress of the Hungry Moon. Their current tribe leader, an antipaladin named Adimarus Ionacu, was once in fact an afflicted werewolf who willingly contracted the disease in devotion

THE FATE OF DURISTAN

If Duristan accompanied the PCs to the Stairs of the Moon, he decides at some point to separate from them to hunt on his own, perhaps intending to circle around the temple with his hirelings and come up from behind it. Likewise, if the PCs did not accept his offer, he comes to the temple on his own. The results prove ill-fated for the brash and overconfident nobleman, who runs afoul of the Demon Wolves as they move toward Feldgrau. The wolves attack and Duristan's party is slaughtered. Duristan himself suffers grievous wounds but manages to survive. Unfortunately for him, his scar-ward does nothing to protect him, and he contracts lycanthropy, becoming an afflicted werewolf at the next full moon.

The Demon Wolves soon adopt Duristan into their pack, convincing him that if he recovers Kvalca Sain's heart, he can eat it to become a true werewolf and fully join the pack. This is a lie, of course, but as a newly afflicted lycanthrope, Duristan is only a tool to them, and the Demon Wolves plan to exploit his noble title to help them while traveling through Ardeal. Once they reach Feldgrau, Duristan must swear his loyalty to the pack or he'll be slain.

to his demonic patron. As a boon, Jezelda transformed him into a natural lycanthrope, and bade him convert more werewolves to her worship. To date, Adimarus's missionary zeal has been quite successful; the black-furred Jezeldans are one of the fastest-growing tribes in the region, and may soon rise as the new lords of the wood.

Mordrinacht or Silverhides: The Mordrinacht, colloquially known as the Silverhides for their gray-white fur, are more aggressive than the Broken Ones, yet possess more composure and subtlety than the other tribes. The Mordrinacht rarely form standard packs, instead living much of their lives as solitary individuals or lone wolves. Only in times of great importance do they unite and form organized packs. More so than all the others, the Mordrinacht have been successful at blending in with normal humans and living secretly within their communities, with a few bold individuals even settling in some of Ustlav's major cities. Descended from those afflicted with lycanthropy by the ancient high priest of Desna, the Mordrinacht have long gathered at the Stairs of the Moon to pay homage to the spirit of their ancestor, the vilkacis. It is no secret that the Silverhides' current leader, Mathus Mordrinacht, has had designs on the position of packlord over all the packs of the Shudderwood for some time.

Prince's Wolves: Varisian werewolves with ties to the Sczarni crime family, the Prince's Wolves were created as part of Prince Andriadus Virholt's efforts to rid his lands of the agents of the Whispering Tyrant centuries ago. The Prince's Wolves maintain a tight pack structure and spend much of their time traveling in small family groups, performing or pickpocketing to support themselves before moving on to do it again somewhere else. The Prince's Wolves transform into wolves with brown or gray fur, and their current tribe leader is a roguish scoundrel named Rhakis Szadro.

Vollensag or Primals: The smallest of the Shudderwood's tribes, the Vollensag are also the most homogenous, as they are all descended from the ancient Kellid tribes who once inhabited these lands before they were driven out by the invading Varisians. At present, less than 30 Vollensag remain, settled deep in the woods and traveling in small migratory hunting packs, living as much as their ancestors did. Despite their declining numbers, the Primals' ability to transform into large gray dire wolves makes them an influential force among the wolves of the wood. Until recently, the Vollensag tribe leader, Kvalca Sain, was packlord over all the wolves of the Shudderwood. Her recent assassination at the hands of Mathus Mordrinacht and the Whispering Way has thrown all of the tribes of the Shudderwood into disarray, not just the Vollensag themselves.

WOLVES IN THE WOOD (CR 7)

This encounter occurs as PCs first approach the Stairs of the Moon.

Venturing deeper into the Shudderwood, the long, spidery branches of the towering pines seem to weave more tightly together. Beneath this thick canopy, daylight fades, and the entire forest seems to blur into shadowy hues.

Even during the day, the dense pine forest lets in little light, subjecting creatures in the wood to the effects of dim light (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 172). At night, the darkness is as complete as in an underground cavern.

Creatures: A pair of Vollensag werewolves stalk this section of the wood in dire wolf form. Circling the temple, they keep a sharp watch for any creatures attempting to enter or leave the Stairs of the Moon. As soon as they spot anything, they howl to alert their kin, change to hybrid form, and rush in to attack. The Vollensag fight to the death.

VOLLENSAG STALKERS (HYBRID FORM) (2) **CR 5**
XP 1,600 each
hp 73 each (see page 23)

Development: Within 1d4 minutes, the howls of the werewolves attract 1d2 more Vollensag werewolves to the scene. If the PCs flee, the werewolves pursue the PCs

until they reach the Stairs of the Moon. One hundred feet from the temple, the forest line breaks, forming a small overgrown clearing around the ruins. As soon as more than three individuals enter the clearing, the werewolf archers posted at area E5 open fire with silver crossbow bolts. They target the Primals first, but they have orders to prevent all intruders from entering the sacred chambers beneath the temple. Therefore, once the PCs approach within 40 feet of the temple, the archers split their attacks between the Primals and the advancing PCs. If the PCs do enter area E1, the archers hold their position, trusting the vengeful jaws of the spirit ancestor, the vilkacis, to take care of any intruders. The archers remain in area E5, guarding the staircase to prevent anyone from ascending.

THE STAIRS OF THE MOON

The Stairs of the Moon lie only a few hours from Ascanor Lodge. The temple is essentially two buildings in one—a wedge-shaped, flat-roofed, trapezoidal edifice attached to an immense tower of stacked flat stones rising to a dizzying height. Also constructed from large stones, the wedge-shaped building stands about 25 feet tall, though it contains only a single story. A series of arches in the north wall permits access to the interior of the building's ground floor, while a pair of ascending ramps carved into stairs climbs to meet the spiraling stair that wraps around the tower. Along the south wall of the temple, the first ramp climbs from the forest floor in a straight path until it reaches the roof of the low building at its western end, 25 feet above the ground. Along its north wall, the opposing ramp doubles back, climbing another 25 feet to connect with the tower and join the staircase spiraling around it. The tower forms a tapering column of solid rock that rises nearly 150 feet above the forest floor, capped with an open-air observatory at the top. At one time, the tower's apex stood above the trees, but over the passing years the trees have surpassed its height, hiding the temple from view.

E1. SHRINE OF THE VILKACIS (CR 7)

The archways open into a cavernous, pillar-lined amphitheater of crumbling stone with high ceilings and a rough dirt floor strewn with bones. The skeletons of deer and other larger game animals hang from several of the columns, all of which are painted with crude symbols and marred with scratch marks. The southern portion of the room contains an elevated dais, connected to the earthen floor of the amphitheater by short stairs on either side. To the rear of the dais, an open archway leads deeper into the ruins.

Formerly the temple's chapter house, the ground floor is physically isolated from the observatory at the top of the tower. Hard-packed rocky soil covers the floor, though



anyone digging down an inch soon strikes a base of granite flagstone, long buried by time and the forces of nature.

Creature: For decades, this amphitheater has served as a shrine to the vilkacis, though the ancient spirit has actually resided here for over 1,500 years. If the PCs failed to destroy the vilkacis at Ascanor Lodge, it lurks here, attacking any non-lycanthrope intruders in its shrine. If the PCs already killed the vilkacis, or it has been summoned by Estovion, this area is empty.

VILKACIS CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 85 (see page 84)

TACTICS

During Combat The vilkacis attempts to possess the nearest creature, then uses its possessed host to attack other enemies.

Morale Here in its shrine, the vilkacis fights until destroyed.

If slain, the vilkacis rejuvenates in 2d4 days. The only way to permanently kill the spirit is to destroy its *canopic stone* (held by Estovion Lozarov) in area E4.

E2. DORMITORY

The small iron portcullis that once blocked the entrance to this room has been bent to the side, allowing access to what lies beyond. The chamber might once have been some sort of private quarters, though no furnishings remain. Dirt and dust across lie tracked across the floor, and the pungent stench of rot ebbs from the room.

Werewolves staying at the temple sometimes use this area as a den. A DC 14 Perception check reveals numerous tracks of humans, wolves, and hybrid werewolves. The smell of rot comes from a human corpse lying in a crumpled heap in the corner.

Treasure: One of the Whispering Way's agents was mortally wounded during the cult's attack on the Stairs, and she dragged herself here before she succumbed to her wounds. A search of the corpse reveals a plain iron ring etched with strange symbols still wrapped around her pallid finger; the etchings are identifiable with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check as symbols of the Whispering Way. The body also clutches a leather satchel containing a number of onyx gemstones ranging in value from 50 to 200 gp each. In total, these gemstones are worth 1,000 gp. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the onyxes as material components for the *animate dead* spell. Lastly, the corpse carries a map of Ustalav with several coordinates scrawled on the back. A DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check is needed to identify each of the coordinates—the towns of Ravengro and Lepidstadt, a location near Ascanor Lodge (likely the Stairs of the Moon), and the ghost town of Feldgrau in the Furrows of Ardeal.

E3. TRAPPED DORMITORY (CR 6)

This room may once have served as some sort of private quarters. Only a few pieces of rusted metal furniture remain, the rest having long rotted away. The dirt has been swept clear from most of the floor, exposing the flagstones beneath.

A DC 16 Perception check made while searching the room reveals several stones in the north corner that seem to be out of place. The stones can be easily removed, revealing a crude, short passage to area E4. If Estovion is hiding in that area, he is immediately alerted by the sounds of the stones being removed.

Trap: Any creature passing through the archway into this room triggers the *symbol of pain* Estovion cast from a scroll and placed upon the entrance to this room.

SYMBOL OF PAIN TRAP CR 6

XP 2,400

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 90 minutes; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*symbol of pain*, CL 9th, DC 19 Fortitude save negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 60-ft.-radius burst)

E4. ADYTUM (CR 9)

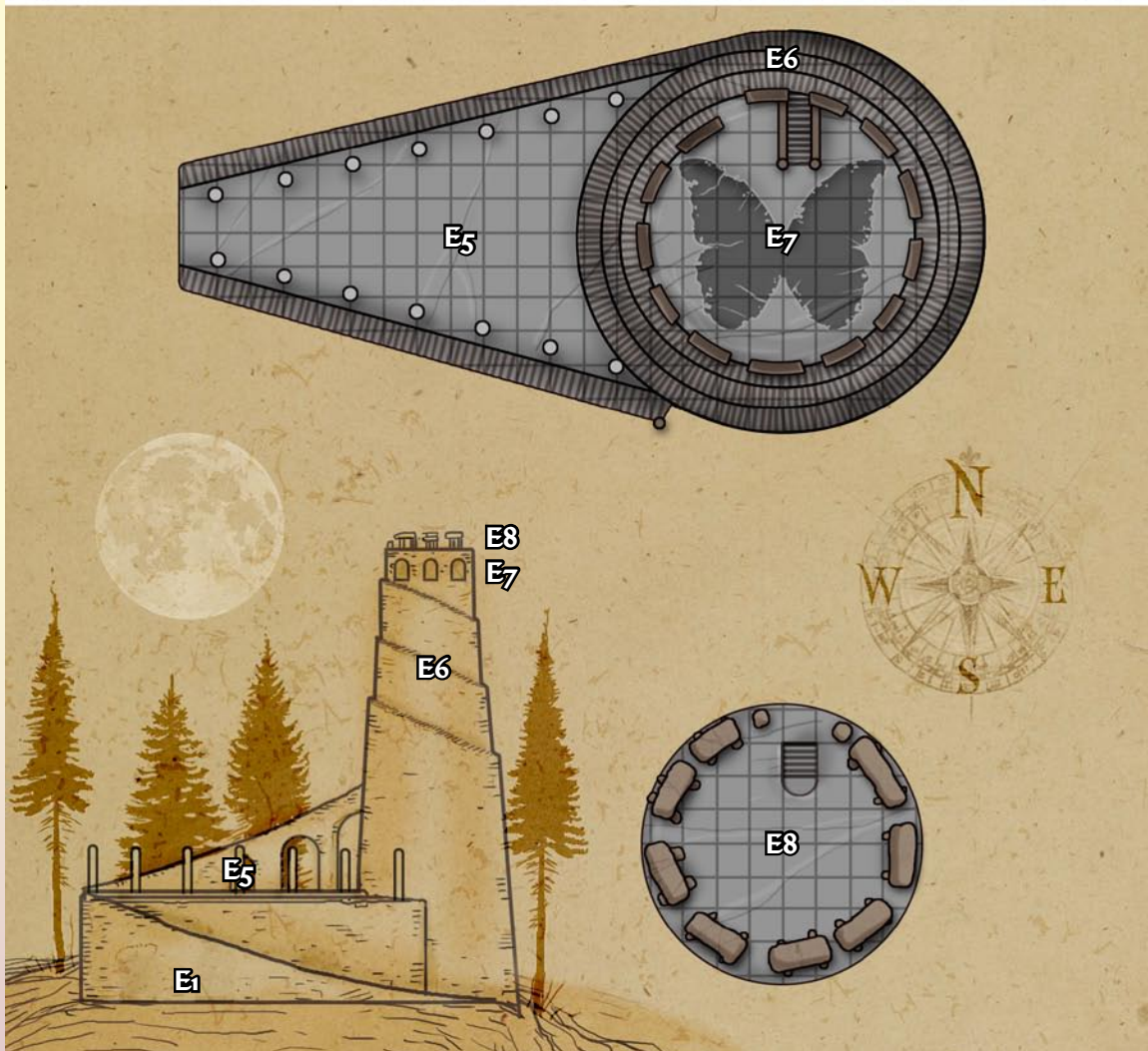
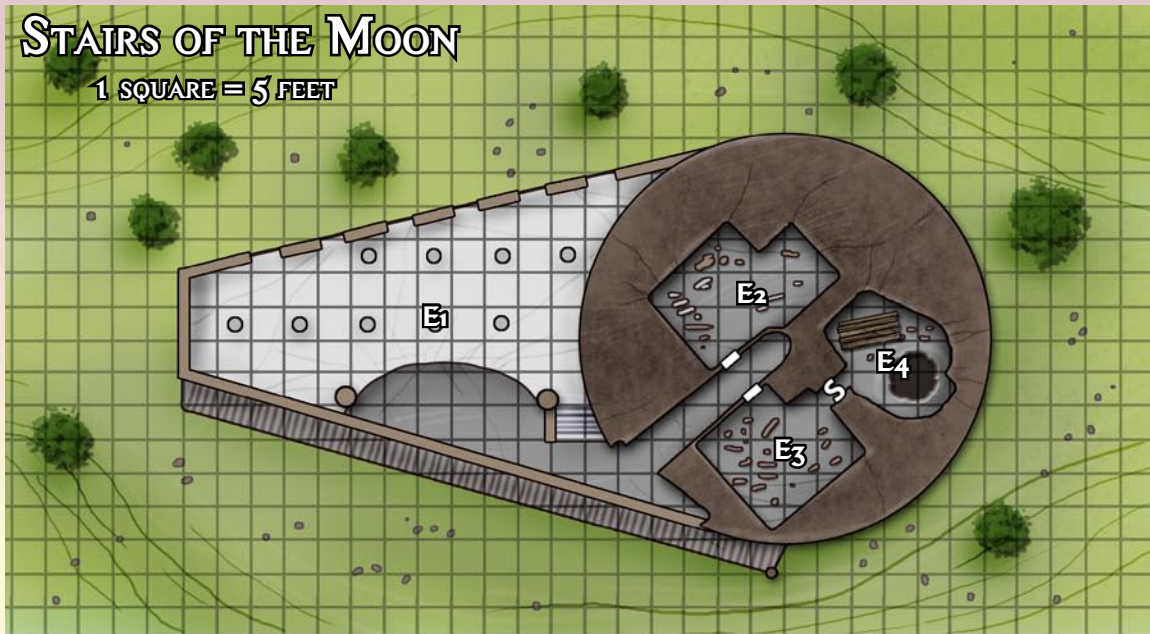
A partition of iron bars divides this chamber. To one side, rows of shelves lined with bottles and beakers filled with strange fluids and jars containing powdered reagents and herbs surround a long stone surgical table. Another shelf holds a selection of tarnished surgical tools. On the far side of the bars, a 10-foot-deep pit sits in the floor of a crudely chiseled cave. Rusted manacles lie scattered about the floor near the edge of the pit.

This hidden room is where the Desnan high priest once performed his desperate experiments to cure his son of lycanthropy. The items on the shelves consist of tonics and unguents with supposed curative properties. Several contain derivatives of poisonous plants and fungi and are highly toxic (if ingested, treat as *potions of poison*), but 1d3 of the bottles contain a magical wolfsbane-based tonic that functions as normal wolfsbane. The contents of the remaining jars and bottles have long ago dried and lost their effect.

Creature: If Estovion Lozarov escaped Ascanor Lodge, he is now hiding here. During his mad dash to the Stairs, one of the Primals guarding the temple attacked him by surprise, infecting him with lycanthropy. Desperate and half-mad from the affliction, Estovion attacks anyone entering the room. A DC 15 Perception check notices the gruesome werewolf bite on his forearm. If Estovion was killed back at the lodge, this room is empty.

STAIRS OF THE MOON

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



ESTOVION LOZAROV

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 68 (see page 12)

TACTICS

Before Combat Estovion casts *mage armor* every day. If alerted by the PCs moving the stones that conceal the entrance, he casts *shield* and drinks his *potion of cat's grace* before combat.

During Combat Estovion summons a dire wolf or multiple wolves to attack foes while he targets the PCs with his spells or *acid arrows* from his wand.

Morale Cornered in this room, Estovion fights to the death.

Development: The dust-covered skeletal remains of the high priest's son, who rose again as the vilkacis, lie at the bottom of the pit. If the PCs destroy the vilkacis's *canopic stone* here in this chamber, they can finally put the creature to rest.

Treasure: The surgical tools in the room are all made of solid silver, and the entire collection is worth 3,000 gp. A DC 10 Perception check made while undertaking a casual search of the room discovers a locked iron strongbox (DC 25 Disable Device check to open). Stashed inside are a *wand of spider climb* with 34 charges and three wooden scroll cases decorated with fragile, colorful moth wings, preserved with *unguent of timelessness*. One scroll case contains pages of faded notes taken from the Desnan priest's ancient journals, which provide a harrowing account of the priest's attempts to cure his son of lycanthropy, as described on page 34. The second case holds an ancient scroll containing a communion ritual that can be performed atop Highthrone (area E8) to activate the *Dusk Moth*. The third and final scroll case holds a *scroll of remove disease* (CL 12th).

E5. PRONAOS (CR 6)

Broken columns line the perimeter of the flat roof of the low, trapezoidal building adjoining the observatory tower. Exposed to the elements, the floor has suffered from years of weathering, and wide cracks now run across the surface, but a faded mosaic of a giant butterfly can still be made out in the shadow of the observatory tower.

This wide portico once functioned as an open-air temple to Desna. Now it serves as a watchpost for the werewolves inside the Stairs of the Moon.

Creatures: Four Dorzhanev werewolf archers in hybrid form hold the pronaos, keeping watch over the nearby woods with keen eyes. Charged with guarding the Stairs from other werewolves, all of the archers are armed with silver crossbow bolts. The archers attack anyone who approaches the temple, as described in the development section on page 36.

DORZHANEV ARCHERS (HYBRID FORM) (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Human natural werewolf fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

hp 22 each

TACTICS

During Combat The werewolves fire silver bolts at intruders approaching the temple or attempting to climb the stairs to area E5. Once enemies reach the pronaos, the archers drop their crossbows and draw their swords, attacking foes with their bites and blades.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, a hybrid shifts into wolf form and makes a run for the stairs to alert the werewolves in area E7. If two or more of the werewolves flee, the remaining archers break from combat and follow them.

Treasure: Each of the werewolves carries 20 alchemical silver crossbow bolts.

E6. SPIRAL STAIRS

The spiral stairs rise steeply, coiling around the tower's exterior. A scant three feet wide, in many places the stairs have been left worn and dangerously crumbling from weathering.

The spiral stairs begin 50 feet above the ground, and climb another 90 feet before ending at the Skychamber (area E7). The stairs are precarious and have no rails to prevent a fall. Any creature ascending the stairs must make a DC 15 Climb check to avoid falling to the ground below.

E7. SKYCHAMBER (CR 7)

Just beneath the observatory at the top of the tower, a series of 10-foot-high arches breaks the perimeter of the column, forming a crude monopteron. As in the temple below, the floor is inlaid with a butterfly mosaic, more protected from the ravages of time by the roof above it. To the north, a flight of stone stairs leads up to an opening in the ceiling.

This chamber served as a preparation room for priests using the observatory above.

Creatures: Three Silverhide werewolves in hybrid form guard this area, under strict orders from Mathus not to allow anything past to disturb events above. The werewolves keep a close watch on the spiral stairs below. As soon as they hear or spot intruders, they quietly alert their superiors in area E8 and prepare for combat, holding their actions to attack the first enemy to enter the Skychamber.

SILVERHIDE RANGERS (HYBRID FORM) (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Human natural werewolf ranger 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +7 (+9 in forest); **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +9 (+11 in forest)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 42 each (4d10+16)

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

DR 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d8+5 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy), 2 claws +8 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks combat style (natural weapon*), curse of lycanthropy, favored enemy (humans +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st—*magic fang*

TACTICS

Before Combat Once alerted to intruders in the temple, the Silverhides cast *magic fang* on their bite attacks.

During Combat The werewolves charge on the first round of combat, then attack with claws and bites, focusing their attacks on prone opponents.

Morale With nowhere to run to, the Silverhide rangers fight to the death.

Base Statistics Without *magic fang*, a Silverhide ranger's statistics are **Melee** bite +8 (1d8+4 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy).

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Aspect of the Beast (claws of the beast)*, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack

Skills Climb +11, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +9 (+11 in forest), Stealth +10 (+12 in forest), Survival +9 (+11 in forest), Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), track +2, wild empathy +2

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

E8. HIGHTHRONE (CR 9)

The stairs emerge onto a wide, circular platform at the top of the tower, standing almost one hundred and fifty feet above the forest floor. An arrangement of large menhirs and megaliths encircles the perimeter of the open-air observatory.

The Desnan priests at the temple used the top of the tower as an observatory, and pieces of the *Dusk Moth* were incorporated into the standing stones atop it. After the temple was abandoned, the werewolves of the Shudderwood

began to use the observatory as their council rock. From its precipice, the Packlord's howl can be heard throughout the forest, and perched upon it, he can summon all the other wolves of the Shudderwood to council. Subsequently, the observatory became known as Highthrone, and the werewolves consider it their most sacred spot.

Creatures: Mathus Mordrinacht, the leader of the Silverhides and main claimant to the title of packlord, currently holds Highthrone, along with his sole ally, Cybrisa Dorzhanev, leader of the Broken Ones. Mathus invited her and the other pack leaders here to meet with him under the pretense of a discussing a joint resolution over the fate of the Shudderwood tribes' leadership. Cybrisa is the only leader to accept the invitation so far, and she does not know that Mathus murdered Kvalca Sain. She is also unaware that Mathus's idea of resolution consists of him slaying her atop Highthrone, eating her heart, and claiming leadership over her tribe. In this way, Mathus hopes to increase his power base beyond his own tribe, until the tribes under his control outnumber the opposing tribes.

While Cybrisa initially sides with Mathus, if the PCs provide some evidence of Mathus's involvement in the assassination of Kvalca Sain (such as proof of his agreement with the Whispering Way), Cybrisa turns against him and joins the PCs in attacking him.

MATHUS MORDRINACHT (HYBRID FORM)

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male human natural werewolf ranger 8 (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 198)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +3 (+7 in forest); **Senses** low-light vision, scent;

Perception +12 (+16 in forest)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 104 (8d10+56)

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

DR 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *bastard sword* +11/+6 (1d10+4/19–20), mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4+1/19–20), bite +7 (1d6+2 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

Special Attacks curse of lycanthropy, favored enemy (humans +4, elves +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +6)

2nd—*bear's endurance*

1st—*longstrider*, *magic fang*

TACTICS

Before Combat Once alerted by the guards in area E7, Mathus casts *bear's endurance*, *longstrider*, and *magic fang*.

During Combat Mathus attempts to intimidate and

demoralize anyone who dares to enter Highthrone. Then he draws his weapons and attacks any foes brave enough to face him. If Cybrisa turns on him, he douses his blade with *silversheen* and shows her no mercy or quarter, and expects none in return.

Morale Mathus must hold on to Highthrone at all costs, and fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without his spells, Mathus's statistics are **hp** 88 (8d10+40); **Fort** +10; **Speed** 30 ft.; **Melee** +1 *bastard sword* +11/+6 (1d10+4/19–20), *mwk dagger* +10/+5 (1d4+1/19–20), *bite* +6 (1d6+1 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy); **Con** 17

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** 21, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24

Feats Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*bastard sword*), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (*bastard sword*)

Skills *Climb* +13, *Intimidate* +11, *Knowledge (geography)* +7 (+11 in forest), *Knowledge (local)* +4, *Knowledge (nature)* +7, *Perception* +12 (+16 in forest), *Spellcraft* +7, *Stealth* +13 (+17 in forest), *Survival* +12 (+16 in forest)

Languages Common

SQ *change shape* (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), *avored terrain* (forest +4, mountain +2), *hunter's bond* (companions), *lycanthropic empathy* (wolves and dire wolves), *swift tracker*, *track* +4, *wild empathy* +8, *woodland stride*

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *silversheen* (4);

Other Gear +1 *mithral chain shirt*, +1 *bastard sword*, *masterwork dagger*, *cloak of resistance* +1, 163 gp

CYBRISA DORZHANEV (HYBRID FORM)

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female human natural werewolf druid 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; *Perception* +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, *touch* 12, *flat-footed* 19 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 51 (5d8+25)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8; +4 vs. fey effects and plant-targeted effects

Defensive Abilities resist nature's lure; **DR** 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *darkwood club* +7 (2d6+4), *bite* +3 (1d6+2 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

Special Attacks curse of lycanthropy, wild shape 1/day

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9) 7/day—*storm burst* (1d6+2 nonlethal damage)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +9)

3rd—*call lightning*^D (DC 17), *greater magic fang*, *poison* (DC 17)
2nd—*flaming sphere* (DC 16), *fog cloud*^D, *gust of wind* (DC 16), *heat metal* (DC 16)

1st—*entangle* (DC 15), *faerie fire*, *obscuring mist*^D, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 14), *guidance*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; Domain Weather

TACTICS

Before Combat Once alerted by the guards in area E7, Cybrisa casts *greater magic fang* and *shillelagh*, and drinks her potion of *barkskin*.



Mathus Mordrinacht

During Combat Cybrisa casts *entangle* on the first round of combat, then uses her *scroll of summon nature's ally III* to summon 1d3 wolves to attack opponents. She tries to avoid melee combat, casting *call lightning* on entangled foes.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, Cybrisa uses wild shape to change into an eagle and fly away.

Base Statistics Without her spells and potion, Cybrisa's statistics are AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; **Melee** mwk darkwood club +7 (1d6+3), bite +2 (1d6+1 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy).

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Heal +12, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +12, Spellcraft +9, Survival +14

Languages Common, Druidic, Varisian

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), nature bond (Weather domain), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +4, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of lesser restoration*, *scroll of summon nature's ally III*;

Other Gear +1 *leather armor*, masterwork darkwood club, wooden holy symbol, spell component pouch, 235 gp

Development: If the PCs defeat Mathus and Cybrisa Dorzhanev is still alive, she attempts to parley for peace. She has no argument with the PCs, and would prefer they go about their business and leave the werewolves in peace. If the PCs agree to leave, she can fill them in on the current state of affairs among the werewolves, and inform them of the Demon Wolves' pursuit of the Whispering Way. Once the PCs are gone, she eats Mathus's heart and claims the title of packlord for herself.

Once Mathus is defeated, any Silverhides in the immediate area fall into disarray. Now leaderless, anarchy befalls their ranks, and their struggles shift inward as individual pack members attempt to seize power and fill the vacancy. If the PCs killed Cybrisa as well, the Dorzhanevs too are beset with anarchy. As a result, the werewolves temporarily ignore the PCs long enough for them to leave the Stairs of the Moon without conflict. If Cybrisa escapes the PCs or abandons the traitorous Mathus, she moves her tribe elsewhere to regroup, and plots her next course of action. Either way, the Silverhides and Dorzhanevs no longer pose an immediate threat.

If the PCs defeat all of the werewolves at the Stairs of the Moon, they may want to try activating the *Dusk Moth*, particularly if they found the communion ritual scroll in area E4. For ages, the Stairs of the Moon has lain abandoned, and a DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check is enough to realize that the temple must be reconsecrated, by spending a day working to clean and restore the temple, before the *Dusk Moth* can be activated. Alternatively, a cleric of Desna can simply cast a *consecrate* spell from atop Highthrone.

Once the temple has been reconsecrated, the *Dusk Moth* again becomes active, but only for a single night. While the relic is active, a faint radiance emanates from the menhirs atop the temple, almost like a refractive fog. The PCs can make a DC 25 Use Magic Device to blindly activate the *Dusk Moth* from within the stone circle. If they recovered the communion ritual scroll from area E4, they gain a +4 circumstance modifier on the check. Likewise, a worshiper of Desna gains a +4 circumstance modifier to perform the ritual.

If the ritual is successful, the PCs fall into a heightened dream trance that lasts for 1 hour. During the trance, the PCs commune directly with Desna herself. The goddess



Cybrisa Dorzhanev

thanks them for restoring and cleansing her temple and shows them a vision of the future. The PCs see themselves facing a black-robed necromancer wearing a bone breastplate as he stands before a ruined tower; fighting a terrifying, tentacled monster deep beneath the sea; confronting a beautiful female vampire spellcaster in an underground chamber; and battling a decaying lich, blazing with arcane power, atop a high spire beneath dark, churning clouds. These are visions of enemies the PCs are destined to face during the campaign: the necromancer Auren Vrood in Feldgrau later in this volume, a dark young of Shub-Niggurath in “Wake of the Watcher,” the vampire witch Aisa Dublesse in “Ashes at Dawn,” and the forsaken lich Adivion Adrissant in “Shadows of Gallowspire.” If you wish to further expand these visions to foreshadow the events of the Carrion Crown Adventure Path, refer to later volumes for more details on these encounters.

When the vision ends, Desna grants each PC a boon, bestowing a permanent +1 inherent bonus to either Wisdom or Charisma (player’s choice). The PCs awake 1 hour later as the radiant stones fade back to dull gray, and the last of the *Dust Moth’s* magic peters out. All of the PCs who took part in the trance find that the irises of their eyes have turned a pale silvery color, a visible and permanent sign of their experience.

AMBUSH OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE (CR 7)

While the Silverhides and Broken Ones are likely no longer a threat, the same cannot be said for the Primals.

Creatures: Drawn by the howls of their fellows, whom the PCs encountered when they first entered the Stairs of the Moon, two more Vollensag werewolves lurk in the woods, patiently monitoring the PCs’ assault on the temple. When the werewolves see the PCs climbing the stairs, the Primals creep toward the temple and set up an ambush around the perimeter. As soon as the PCs reenter the wood, the werewolves attack, fighting to the death.

VOLLENSAG STALKERS (HYBRID FORM) (2) **CR 5**
XP 1,600 each
hp 73 each (see page 23)

THE PRINCE’S WOLVES (CR 8)

Soon after leaving the Stairs of the Moon, the PCs stumble across the slaughtered and half-devoured remains of Duristan’s hunting party. A DC 18 Perception check or a DC 13 Survival check uncovers signs of struggle, blood, and dozens of monstrous wolf prints. The PCs can recover the horrifically mauled corpses of all of Duristan’s hirelings, but Duristan himself is nowhere to be found (see the sidebar on page 35 for details on Duristan’s fate).

Creatures: Soon after the PCs make their grisly discovery, a small pack of the Prince’s Wolves arrive, led

USING THE HARROW DECK

If the PCs reconsecrate the Stairs of the Moon to Desna, award each player a free draw from the Harrow Deck, as outlined in the *Carrion Crown Player’s Guide*. If you are using the optional system presented in the *Carrion Crown Player’s Guide*, the entire party receives the Eclipse card instead. This specific card can be played to grant all of the PCs spell resistance 20 for the duration of one encounter, as Desna’s power eclipses that of the PCs’ enemies. If played at night under the light of the moon, the spell resistance increases to 25. Alternatively, the card can be played to cure one individual afflicted with lycanthropy of the disease. The Eclipse card can only be used once, and the entire party must agree to use the card.



by their leader, Rhakis Szadro. The werewolves approach the PCs in human form, appearing as nothing more than Varisian travelers, and are careful to appear as non-threatening as possible (especially in light of how they’ve seen the PCs deal with the other werewolves). While not entirely trustworthy, the Prince’s Wolves are not evil. They have taken a beating in recent conflicts with the Primals and are not looking for another fight, though they can defend themselves if necessary.

Rhakis introduces himself and his pack as the Prince’s Wolves. They were not responsible for slaying the people here, but he knows who was. He informs the PCs that his tribe has long opposed the Whispering Way, and suspect the cult’s involvement in the murder of Kvalca Sain and the escalating conflict between the werewolves of the Shudderwood. He wishes to parley with the PCs to share information about their common enemy.

If the PCs agree to talk with him, Rhakis asks them why they have become involved in the conflict, and why they seek the Whispering Way. For his part, Rhakis can fill them in on the current situation among the werewolves (if the PCs have not learned this information already) and his suspicions regarding the Whispering Way’s involvement. He tells the PCs that so far the Prince’s Wolves have tried to stay out of the strife among the werewolves, as they are much more concerned with the Whispering Way’s plans.

The Prince's Wolves can smell the scent of Jezeldan werewolves all over this clearing and the slain hirelings, and Rhakis can inform the PCs that this group of Demon Wolves traveled east, following agents of the Whispering Way in pursuit of Sain's heart. Rhakis (correctly) believes their destination is the ghost town of Feldgrau, and has sent some of the Prince's Wolves after them to prevent the Jezeldans from laying their hands on the packlord's heart. Since the PCs' and the Prince's Wolves' goals currently overlap, Rhakis would like to reach an agreement or truce with the PCs, if not an actual alliance.

Besides wanting the defeat of the Whispering Way, Rhakis would like to see to it that the Demon Wolves do not recover Kvalca Sain's heart. While leaving the Demon Wolves to fight the Whispering Way might seem tempting, the threat of the Jezeldans taking control of the Shudderwood overshadows any possible benefit. The Demon Wolves are just that—werewolves who worship demons—and if their leader, Adimarus Ionacu, were to become packlord, their rule would be violent and bloody, and the werewolves would wage ceaseless war against Lozeri's innocent humans.

Someone, however, must remain behind to rule the werewolves and stop the killings. Rhakis plans to eat Mathus's heart (or Cybrisa's, if she has already claimed the title) and name himself packlord. Once Kvalca Sain's heart is removed from the picture, there will be no other basis for conflict over the title, and the Shudderwood can return to its previous, relatively peaceful state.

In exchange, Rhakis can give the PCs tokens

that mark them as allies of the Prince's Wolves, allowing them to safely work with the other Prince's Wolves who have gone ahead to Feldgrau.

If Rhakis senses that combat is imminent, he uses bardic performance to attempt to fascinate the PCs, hoping to avoid violence and convince them to work with him. If the PCs do attack, Rhakis and the Prince's Wolves shift to their hybrid forms and respond in kind.

RHAKIS SZADRO (HYBRID FORM)

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human natural werewolf bard 2/rogue 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CN Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 48 (6d8+18)

Fort +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +9 (1d6+4/18–20), bite +2 (1d6+1 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

Ranged mwk dagger +8 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 8 rounds/day

(countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1), curse of lycanthropy, sneak attack +2d6

Bard Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

1st (3/day)—*disguise self*, *hideous laughter* (DC 13), *grease* (DC 13)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *lullaby* (DC 12), *summon instrument*

TACTICS

During Combat If combat breaks out, Rhakis immediately shifts to hybrid form and uses bardic performance to inspire courage among the Prince's Wolves. He draws his blade and attempts to flank opponents to make sneak attacks, casting spells as necessary to hinder foes.

Morale If reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, Rhakis shifts to wolf form and flees into the forest.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Appraise +6, Climb +10, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +10, Disguise +7 (+17 with *disguise self*), Escape Artist +10, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +11,

Rhakis Szadro

Perform (comedy) +11, Perform (string) +9, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +1, change shape (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), rogue talents (finesse rogue, surprise attack), trapfinding +2, versatile performance (comedy)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 rapier, masterwork dagger, thieves' tools, 253 gp

PRINCE'S WOLVES (HUMAN FORM) (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Human natural werewolf fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CN Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

hp 19 each

TACTICS

During Combat The Prince's Wolves shift into hybrid form, working together to flank opponents and help Rhakis make sneak attacks.

Morale As long as Rhakis is alive and fighting, the Prince's Wolves fight on. If he is killed or flees, they flee as well.

Development: Although the Prince's Wolves are not evil, they are werewolves, and some PCs might be unwilling to ally themselves with monsters. In this case, treat the Prince's Wolves as no different from any of the other werewolf tribes of the Shudderwood. If the PCs attack and kill the werewolves, try to arrange things so that the PCs can still find their way to Feldgrau. If they found the cultist's map in area E2, they likely already know their next destination. If not, they can question one of the dying werewolves to gain that information, or perhaps one of Duristan's hirelings is still alive and overheard the Demon Wolves discussing Feldgrau. The PCs could also find the werewolves' tracks and follow them to Feldgrau. As long as the PCs know which way the Whispering Way went, it doesn't matter how they respond to the werewolves.

Story Award: If the PCs make an agreement or alliance with Rhakis, award them 2,400 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

PART FOUR: RACE TO FELDGRAU

The distance between Ascanor Lodge and Feldgrau is approximately 134 miles, approximately 4 days' travel by horse or 6 days on foot. In wolf form, the Demon Wolves move as fast as horses, so mounts of some kind are the PCs' best option to reach Feldgrau quickly, short of spells such as *phantom steed*. If the PCs do not have their own mounts, they can return to Ascanor Lodge and purchase light horses from Stablemaster Quiene Steymor for normal prices. These are hunting horses, not combat-

FELDGRAU PATROLS

d%	Encounter	Average	
		CR	Source
01–20	12 burning skeletons	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 251
21–25	1d4 Menadoran festrogs	6	see page 53
26–30	8 burning skeletons + Whispering Way cultist	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 251 and page 47
31–35	4 skeletal champions + Whispering Way cultist	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 252 and page 47
36–45	2d4 Menadoran festrogs	8	see page 53
46–55	8 skeletal champions	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 252
56–65	12 burning skeletons + Whispering Way curate	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 251 and page 48
66–75	3 Menadoran festrogs + Whispering Way cultist	8	see pages 53 and 47
76–85	2 Menadoran festrogs + Whispering Way curate	8	see pages 53 and 48
86–95	4 skeletal champions + Whispering Way curate	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 252 and page 48
96–00	2 Demon Wolf marauders*	8	see page 55

* Only two such patrols are present. Once two patrols have been encountered, treat this result as no encounter.

trained warhorses, but they can carry the PCs to Feldgrau faster than the PCs' feet will take them.

ABANDONED FARM (CR 7)

On the plains of Ardeal, just before they enter the scarred, war-torn wastelands of the Furrows, the PCs find a lone farmhouse. Read or paraphrase the following description.

The silhouette of a lone farmhouse stands against the stark gray sky. The house leans uneasily, its weathered planks straining to keep the fragile shell of peeling paint and cracked shingles upright. The bodies of four wolf-like humanoids hang from a large tree in the farm's yard.

The Demon Wolves stopped at this isolated farmstead on their way to Feldgrau, but did not stay long, after four of their number fell victim to the farm's current inhabitant.

Creature: A carnivorous hangman tree has taken up residence here. Due to the number of werewolves passing by the farm in recent days, the tree has used its hallucinatory spores to appear to have trapped several werewolves in its vines, in the hopes of attracting more lycanthropes to feed upon. The tree does not realize that werewolves revert to human form upon death, however, making its deception unrealistic to those with knowledge of lycanthropes.

As the PCs approach, have them make DC 20 Will saves against the tree's hallucinatory spores. Those who fail see four werewolves in hybrid form hanging from the tree's vines, but those who make their saves see four human skeletons instead, the remains of the four Demon Wolves slain by the tree. The tree attacks any creatures approaching the farmhouse's front door, which is just in reach of its constricting vines.

HANGMAN TREE

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 152)

FELDGRAU

Toward the end of Barstoi's forced occupation of Ardeal almost 2 decades ago, Count Aerinein Neska's troops spent a night in the small town of Feldgrau. When they pulled out the next morning, they repaid the town for its hospitality by butchering its citizens and putting Feldgrau to the torch. The soldiers disposed of the bodies

in a single mass grave in the center of the town square. Feldgrau became a literal ghost town overnight, and the souls of Feldgrau's slaughtered citizens now haunt its streets and ruined buildings.

The Whispering Way have already established a strong foothold in Feldgrau under the leadership of the necromancer Auren Vrood. He has instructed his agents to hunt down and destroy the haunted souls of the town's ghosts, and then raise their corpses to form the backbone of a growing army of mindless walking dead, ready to follow the orders of the risen Whispering Tyrant when he is reborn.

To further complicate matters, the Demon Wolves have arrived in Feldgrau as well, intent on claiming Kvalca Sain's heart and lordship over all Shudderwood, followed by those Prince's Wolves sent by Rhakis Szadro to oppose them. The Demon Wolves have occupied the town's abandoned mill, making guerilla strikes against the cultists and their undead allies, while waiting for the right time to confront Auren Vrood and reclaim the packlord's stolen heart. The Prince's Wolves have settled into the dyer's shop; eager to let the Demon Wolves and the cultists waste their strength on each other, they avoid all conflict. The PCs will have

to contend with both the Demon Wolves and the

Whispering Way in the ruins of Feldgrau before they finally face Auren Vrood in the town's crumbling tower.

Following the Demon Wolves' trail, the PCs approach the town from the northwest. Although the first building they come to is the Old Farmstead (area F1), the PCs may enter and explore the town in any order they wish.

Each time the PCs explore a new building, they have a 50% chance of encountering a Demon Wolf or Whispering Way patrol. If a patrol is present, roll on the Feldgrau Patrols table to determine the nature of the patrol. Place the patrol in the nearest unoccupied building adjacent to the PCs' building. If more than one building is possible, place the patrol in the one closest to Feldgrau Tower (area G). Thereafter, unless the PCs make an

effort to stay silent and hidden, make Perception checks for the patrol to see whether its members hear or spot the PCs moving through the ruins. If a patrol detects the PCs, its members move to attack, mindlessly pursuing the PCs through the ruined town and fighting until destroyed.



Hangman Tree



The Whispering Way patrols are made up of skeletons, skeletal champions, and Menadoran festrogs, and are led by human cultists and curates of the Whispering Way. The skeletons are the remains of the town's murdered citizens. The skeletal champions, formerly members of Feldgrau's militia slaughtered by Neska's troops, rose as undead creatures of their own accord when the Whispering Way brought their necromantic energies to Feldgrau. The Menadoran festrogs are twisted and deformed ghoulish creatures created from the bodies of ogres and hill giants. Two pairs of Demon Wolves patrol the town as well, though they attempt to avoid Whispering Way patrols for now.

WHISPERING WAY CULTIST

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Human rogue (spy) 3/necromancer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex)

hp 38 each (6 HD; 3d8+3d6+11)

Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +6

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d6/19–20 plus poison)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20 plus poison)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 12, 6/day), sneak attack +2d6

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6) 6/day—bolster* (1 round)

Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

2nd—*acid arrow*, *false life*, *scorching ray*

1st—*chill touch* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *vanish**

o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat Before going out on patrol, a cultist casts *false life* and *mage armor*.

During Combat A cultist uses his bolster ability on his undead allies, while attacking opponents at range with his spells.

Morale A Whispering Way cultist fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without his spells, a Whispering Way cultist's statistics are AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; hp 30.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 17

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +9, Craft (alchemy) +11, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +7, Disguise +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +4

Languages Common, Draconic, Necril, Varisian

SQ arcane bond (amulet), focused arcane school (undead)*, poison use, rogue talents (swift poison*), skilled liar

Combat Gear wand of command undead (6 charges), bloodroot poison (4 doses); **Other Gear** masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork short sword, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, plus all 0-level spells, command undead, and 1d3 random spells of level 1 and 2), spell component pouch, thieves' tools, Whispering Way amulet, 65 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

WHISPERING WAY CURATE

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Female human cleric of Urgathoa 7

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, -1 Dex)

hp 56 each (7d8+21)

Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 scythe +9 (2d4+4/x4)

Ranged hand of the acolyte +1 scythe +10 (2d4+4/x4)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 17, 4d6), hand of the acolyte (6/day)

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

6/day—bleeding touch (3 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th;

concentration +10)

4th—death ward^D, unholy blight (DC 17)

3rd—animate dead^D, bestow curse (DC 16), blindness/deafness (DC 16), dispel magic

2nd—death knell^D (DC 15), desecrate, hold person (DC 15), silence (DC 15),

spiritual weapon

1st—cause fear^D (DC 14), command (DC 14), detect undead, divine favor, protection from good, shield of faith o (at will)—bleed (DC 13), detect magic, read magic, resistance

D Domain spell; **Domains**

Death, Magic

TACTICS

Before Combat A curate casts *shield of faith* before combat.

During Combat A curate bolsters her undead allies with *desecrate* on the first round of combat. Thereafter, she attacks at range with hand of the acolyte or her spells, using her undead allies for cover. If forced into melee combat, she casts *divine favor* and attacks with her scythe.

Morale A Whispering Way curate fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without *shield of faith*, a Whispering Way curate's statistics are AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Whispering Way Curate

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Improved Channel, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +10

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, unholy water (4 flasks); **Other Gear** +1 breastplate, +1 scythe, *pearl of power* (1st level), onyxes worth 450 gp, silver dust worth 25 gp, spell component pouch, silver unholy symbol of Urgathoa

UNINHABITED BUILDINGS

Most of Feldgrau's buildings are uninhabited, and several lie in ruins. All have different shapes and sizes. Long ago picked clean by looters and other travelers, few contain anything left of value. If the PCs explore any of the unmarked buildings on the map, there is a flat 15% chance that a given structure contains 1d3 human corpses, either the remains of Whispering Way cultists or of Demon Wolves who reverted to their human forms when slain. All of the bodies have been stripped of valuables. In addition, a DC 15 Perception check uncovers strange, sinuous runes engraved on the foundations of several of the buildings, and highlighted in dried blood. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana or religion) check is enough to notice the similarities between these runes and the ones found at Harrowstone Prison in the town of Ravengro (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #43 for more details). In fact, the Whispering Way used these runes here in an attempt to quiet and remove the restless spirits of Feldgrau's dead.

F1. OLD FARMSTEAD

On the outskirts of the town stand the ruins of a small farmhouse and two outbuildings, their roofs long collapsed, exposing splintered frames of gray timber. Beyond, a sodden, unsown field stretches to the edge of the shattered town of Feldgrau. The barren earth is scarred with muddy trenches and covered with a perpetual wash of low, swirling fog. Dead trees, like pale and wiry skeletons, grasp at the gray skies, casting their long, ghostly shadows over the crumbling ruins.

Though the farmstead is uninhabited, the central farmhouse contains a makeshift shrine to Jezelda, demon lord of werewolves, identifiable with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. On the crude altar lies the very bloody remains of a Whispering Way cultist recently sacrificed to the demon.

Outside, a DC 15 Survival check discovers several sets of tracks, both wolf and human, leading into the town of Feldgrau. Both sets of tracks lead to the same building (see area F2). The wolf tracks belong to the Demon Wolves, while the human prints belong to their Prince's Wolves pursuers.

F2. BLACKSMITH'S FORGE (CR 8)

A large open forge stands in the far corner of this building, surrounded by deep stone basins and next to a huge black anvil atop a bench. Another workbench, laid with metalworking tools, polishing stones, and dried oilcloths, partitions the forge area from the remainder of the room. Two doorways exit through the wall opposite the forge.

This was the forge of Feldgrau's resident blacksmith. One of the doorways leads to a small office, while the second leads to a hallway containing a flight of stairs that descends into the building's basement and a back door that exits into the alley behind the building (see the map on page 50). The bodies of two Whispering Way cultists, who were slain by Duristan and his allies, lie at the bottom of the stairs.

Creature: Duristan Ariesir, now an afflicted werewolf, currently inhabits this building. Although he was bitten by the Demon Wolves, he has not yet been officially inducted into the pack and has not received Jezelda's blessing, so he does not have the fiendish template. He has, however, fully embraced his bestial state, and is now chaotic evil.

Currently in human form, Duristan happily greets the PCs as old friends. If questioned about his disappearance at the Stairs of the Moon, Duristan lies about what really happened using his Bluff skill. He claims his party was ambushed in the wood, and he suffered some serious injuries. He fled into the woods for shelter (true), but he claims his scar-ward saved him the horrible curse of lycanthropy (false). When he recovered, he set off in pursuit of the Demon Wolves, following them to Feldgrau (mostly true). Duristan claims he has hired a small group of mercenaries who are waiting for him in another building in the center of town (false; the "mercenaries" are really the Demon Wolves). He asks the PCs to join him, though his true intent is to lead them to his werewolf allies in the mill (area F9).

If the PCs see through Duristan's deception, they can either attack him, or attempt a Bluff check to convince him they aren't suspicious of him, perhaps following him to his ambush and taking the Demon Wolves by surprise.

If Duristan senses that the PCs distrust him, he attempts to shift into hybrid form, holding his sword ready in case that fails. Before he shifts, he shows them his scar-ward and says, "Remember when I told you this gave me immunity to lycanthropy? Well, I was wrong!" He attacks the PCs as soon as he is able to shift.

If the PCs attack Duristan while he's in human form, use the statistics on page 13, but with a Will save of +5, because of his increased Wisdom as a werewolf. Once he shifts to hybrid form, use the statistics below.

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



F9. THE MILL
GROUND FLOOR

**F9A. THE MILL
UPPER FLOOR**

DURISTAN SILVIO ARIESIR (HYBRID FORM)

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male human afflicted werewolf aristocrat 4/fighter 3/ranger 1
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +3 shield)

hp 74 (8 HD; 4d10+4d8+32)

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **DR** 5/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *silver longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+4/19–20), bite +5 (1d6+1 plus trip)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +11/+6 (1d8+3/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humanoid [shapechanger] +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Duristan focuses his attacks on the weakest enemies first.

Morale When reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Duristan attempts to shift into animal form, turning into a black wolf and fleeing out the back door. He passes through area **F4**, crosses the road to area **F8**, and then enters area **F9** to inform Adimarus of the PCs' arrival. If cornered, Duristan fights until killed or subdued.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Bluff +11, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Perception +11, Ride +10, Stealth +10, Survival +11

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ armor training 1, change shape (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), track +1, wild empathy +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 20 silver arrows;

Other Gear +1 studded leather, +1 light steel shield, +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, +1 silver longsword, 158 gp

Development: If the PCs subdue Duristan and cure him of his lycanthropy, he retains his chaotic evil alignment. Rather than thank them, he curses the PCs for taking away the powerful beast inside him, and opposes them at every turn. In order to return him to his former alignment, he must have an *atonement* spell cast over him.

Story Award: If the PCs cure Duristan of his affliction and he atones for his evil deeds, award them 4,800 XP as if they had defeated him in combat.

F3. CHANDLERY (CR 8)

Hundreds of candles fill this shop's shelves, lying in pale lumps of tallow and wax beneath years of dust. Several small copper kettles hang suspended from an iron rack over a brick hearth. Above the kettles, dozens of half-completed candles hang from iron rods. On a nearby table sits a spool of twisted cotton thread, waiting to be measured and cut into wicks, as well as a variety of wooden molds.

A map of this building may be found on page 50.

Haunt: This candle shop remains haunted by its former owner. A vocal dissenter of Count Neska's occupation, she and her family were among the first citizens to be executed. Angered at this injustice, her spirit refuses to vacate the premises.



Duristan Silvio Ariesir

THE BURNT CHANDLER

CR 8

XP 4,800

CE haunt (30-ft.-by-20-ft. candle shop)

Caster Level 8th

Notice Perception DC 26 (to hear the sound of marching feet approaching)

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

Effect When this haunt is triggered, each PC sees herself as a chandler at work, suddenly besieged by troops who break into her shop. The soldiers drag her by the throat from her hiding place under the counter, across the room, and then slam her head into a pot of boiling tallow. Everyone in the haunt's area of effect must make a DC 14 Will save or believe they are being choked. Each affected victim clutches her throat as she drags herself across the room and slams her face into one of the copper kettles, taking 8d6 points of fire damage as third-degree burns erupt across her face.

Destruction The remains of the chandler and her family, which now lie in the mass grave pit in the town square, must be given a proper burial.

F4. HOMESTEAD

Like many of the other buildings in town, this one once served as a modest homestead, though it has suffered extensive looting over the years. The corpse of a Whispering Way cultist lies sprawled across the floor, a terrifyingly huge bite missing from his abdomen. The splintered remains of three skeletons lie around the corpse. Both the cultist and the skeletons were killed by the Demon Wolves.

F5. DYER'S SHOP (CR 7)

Compared to the structures around it, this large wooden shop remains in relatively good condition (see map on page 50). The shop's double doors are barred (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 30). When the PCs enter the building, read or paraphrase the following.

Large, soot-blackened copper vats line the back wall of this broad, open room. A cagelike wooden rack built into the adjacent wall holds numerous bolts of cloth, their colors now faded and spotted with mold. A wide, open-faced hearth takes up most of the opposite side of the room; next to it is a long bench covered with hardened cakes of various colored dyes, powders, and salts.

The dyes in the vats have long ago evaporated, leaving behind nothing but a colorful, chalky residue. The cloth and tools are all in poor, essentially worthless condition.

Creatures: The six Prince's Wolves sent in pursuit of the Demon Wolves are holed up in this shop, currently in hybrid form. Knowing that they are outnumbered and in over their heads, they are waiting to see how the

battle between the Jezeldans and the Whispering Way turns out, hoping to rush in at the last minute and seize the packlord's heart while everyone else is weakened from fighting each other.

As soon as they hear anyone at the door, the Prince's Wolves take cover in the room and ready their crossbows. If an intruder enters, the werewolves announce that the building is theirs, and offer the interlopers three choices: leave, surrender, or die.

The Prince's Wolves have a starting attitude of hostile, but their attitude can be improved with a successful Diplomacy check. If the PCs have tokens from Rhakis Szadro (see page 44), they gain a +5 bonus on the check. If made at least indifferent, the Prince's Wolves can inform the PCs of the current situation in the town, namely the locations of Adimarus and the Demon Wolves (area F9), the ghost in the inn (area F8), the growing undead army in the town square (area F13), and the Whispering Way's headquarters in the old tower (area G).

The werewolves refuse to leave the shop or take any action until Adimarus Ionacu is dead. Once he is killed, the Prince's Wolves agree to take on the rest of the Demon Wolves in Feldgrau while the PCs move against the Whispering Way.

PRINCE'S WOLVES (HYBRID FORM) (6)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Human natural werewolf fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CN Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

hp 22 each

TACTICS

During Combat If forced into combat, the Prince's Wolves open fire with their crossbows, then draw their swords.

Morale The werewolves fight to the death.

Story Award: If the PCs ally with the Prince's Wolves, award them 3,600 XP, as if they had defeated the werewolves in combat.

F6. GLASSBLOWER'S SHOP (CR 8)

Rows of shelves in this shop hold a large collection of glass bottles, jars, and vases. The rear of the shop contains a large cast-iron furnace, a pile of logs, a few iron casks filled with sand, and an empty water trough. Wooden racks hold metal tongs and tubes, and an array of tools and small vials of liquids sit atop a nearby workbench.

Creatures: Two Whispering Way cultists and a sizable troupe of burning skeletons are in the process of ransacking this glassblower's shop for raw materials. They attack anyone entering the building, with the cultists taking cover behind the skeletons.

WHISPERING WAY CULTISTS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 38 each (see page 47)

BURNING SKELETONS (8)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 251)

Treasure: The vials of liquid contain mild acids used for engraving and polishing glass. A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check identifies 1d6 usable vials of acid that can be salvaged.

F7. BUTCHER SHOP (CR 8)

Lengths of rusted chain fitted with large hooks hang from the ceiling of this shop, above piles of animal bones. Inside stand several wooden tables covered with dark stains, holding a collection of rusted cleavers, knives, chisels, and bone saws. Several large stone cabinets line the exterior of the room, sealed with wooden doors.

The stone cabinets once served as the butcher's iceboxes, but now hold only the bones of butchered livestock.

Creatures: A Whispering Way curate, two skeletal champions, and a hulking undead ogre-thing known as a Menadoran festrog are currently scavenging the premises. The festrog is feeding on the naked corpse of a human woman on the floor, the remains of a Demon Wolf slain by the cult. They attack anyone entering the building.

MENADORAN FESTROG

CR 4

XP 1,200

NE Large undead (*Hungry Are the Dead* 30)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 42 (5d8+20)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5

Defensive Abilities diseased pustules; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (35 ft. on all fours)

Melee bite +7 (1d6+5 plus feed and trip), 2 claws +7 (1d6+5)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The festrog charges the closest enemy, attempting to trip and feed on its victim.

Morale The festrog fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 11, Con —, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 17

Base Atk +3; CMB +9; CMD 19 (23 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Run^B, Toughness

Skills Climb +6, Perception +6, Survival +3

Languages Common

SQ four-footed run

Gear hide armor

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Diseased Pustules (Su) A creature that damages a festrog with a slashing or piercing natural weapon, light weapon, or one-handed weapon is sprayed with foul, diseased pus from the creature's boils. The target must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6 rounds from this effect. Anyone who becomes sickened from this effect is also exposed to filth fever (DC 15 Fortitude save negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Feed (Su) When a festrog inflicts bite damage on a living creature, the festrog feeds on the creature's flesh and gains 5 temporary hit points.

Four-Footed Run (Ex) If a festrog doesn't hold or carry anything in its hands, it can run on all fours. This increases its speed to 50 feet.

SKELETAL CHAMPIONS (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 17 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 252)



Menadoran Festrog

WHISPERING WAY CURATE

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 56 (see page 48)

F8. HAUNTED INN AND PROVISIONER'S SHOP (CR 7)

Just off the town square, this building consists of a large, open storage area separated from a smaller storefront by a long wooden sales counter.

Erected during the early half of the conflict between Ardeal and Barstoi, this large building served as both a provisioner's shop and an inn catering to passing troops. A smaller side room behind the counter once stored the shop's more valuable items. The southern portion of the building served as a small, four-room inn. A connecting hallway from the provisioner's shop provides access to the inn, as does a smaller, private entrance to the south (see map on page 50).

Creature: The wavering, ghostly form of a sad, balding old man with stringy hair and tremendous bags beneath his eyes hovers behind the inn's front desk (area F8a). The inn's former owner, a man named Ulcris Sedmir, pushed for legislation that encouraged political neutrality during the civil war. The legislation allowed him to cater to passing troops without prejudice, including the troops who would one day become Feldgrau's conquerors. In the end, Neska's troops bought Ulcris's hospitality, but put Feldgrau to the sword and torch the next morning. Ulcris hid, but upon witnessing the horror of the troops slaughtering the townsfolk, he returned to his inn and hung himself in the storeroom, where his dangling bones can still be found (area F8b). Weighted with regret and sorrow, his tortured spirit now knows that the brutal murder of everyone he loved was the result of his own greed and ambition. In death, Ulcris seeks some sort of rectification of his sins, preferably through his own destruction.

When the PCs first enter the inn, they see Ulcris reliving the last moments before his death, tying a length of ghostly rope into a noose. He pays little heed to the PCs at first, though they can speak with him if they wish. His starting attitude is unfriendly, but if the PCs can calm the wretched ghost (with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check), he stops what he is doing and talks to them (see Development below). If the PCs do not interrupt him, Ulcris finishes his noose and throws it over the rafters (a process that takes only 3 rounds) to hang himself again. Once he has "died" again, he attacks any intruders, starting with his frightful moan.

ULCRIS SEDMIR

CR 7

XP 3,200

CN male human ghost aristocrat 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)

hp 73

Development: If the PCs make Ulcris friendly or helpful, he asks them for help putting the town's restless spirits to rest. Ulcris can tell them what transpired here 18 years ago, and informs them that a new peril has come to Feldgrau, one that threatens to rob its restless dead of their souls and spiral them toward oblivion. This peril has a name—Auren Vrood—a Whispering Way necromancer who is exhuming Feldgrau's bodies one by one and turning them into the walking dead, though Ulcris does not know his motives. If the PCs bring Ulcris the head of Auren Vrood, the ghostly innkeeper promises to rip out Vrood's memories and expose them to the PCs so that they can divine the necromancer's intentions for themselves (see Concluding the Adventure).

If destroyed, Ulcris rejuvenates in the inn 2d4 days later. The ghost can only be laid to rest if his remains and those of the townsfolk in the mass grave in the town square are given a proper funeral. If the PCs have not yet found his treasure at the time of his redemption, Ulcris divulges its location to them and tells them to take it and put it to good use, before he finally fades away.

Treasure: A DC 17 Perception check finds several loose floorboards under the inn's front desk that hide a cache beneath the floor. In the cache lies a small metal strongbox that contains a *lens of detection* and 1,800 gp—Ulcris's blood money.

Story Award: If the PCs give Ulcris and the townsfolk a proper burial and lay the ghost to rest, award them 6,400 XP.

F9. THE MILL (CR 8)

This building consists of two interconnected, barnlike rooms with high wooden ceilings. A huge millstone occupies the center of one room, resting at a cocked angle upon its broken spindle. The skeletal remains of a brace of oxen lie next to it, still harnessed to the millstone shaft with chains. A mountain of moldering flour sacks slumps against one of the walls. Behind them, a makeshift ladder climbs through an open hatch to the floor above.

Feldgrau's old mill is long abandoned, but Adimarus Ionacu and his Demon Wolves have taken over the building while they regroup. They have already lost several of their number to the Whispering Way and the cultists' undead allies, so the remainder of the pack is holed up here to plot their next move against the cult. See page 50 for a map of this area.

Creatures: Two Demon Wolves guard the ground floor of the mill. If they see Duristan approaching with the PCs, they shift into human form, and alert the werewolves upstairs. After greeting the PCs, they do their best to put them at ease, waiting for the right opportunity to shift into hybrid form and attack. If the PCs are not with Duristan, the werewolves are in hybrid form, and attack any intruders.

DEMON WOLF MARAUDERS (HYBRID FORM) (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Fiendish human natural werewolf fighter 4/ranger 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +4 natural)
hp 55 each (5d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **DR** 5/good, 10/silver; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 11

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *falchion* +12 (2d4+10/18–20), bite +5 (1d6+2 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

Special Attacks curse of lycanthropy, favored enemy (humans +2), smite good 1/day

TACTICS

During Combat The werewolves attempt to bite as many of the PCs as possible to spread their curse of lycanthropy.

Morale The Demon Wolves fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*falchion*), Weapon Specialization (*falchion*)

Skills Intimidate +6, Perception +10, Stealth +7, Survival +10

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, change shape (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), track +1, wild empathy –1

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *falchion*, wooden holy symbol of Jezelda

Development: Any sounds of fighting in this area alert Adimarus and the remaining pack members upstairs.

F9A. THE MILL (UPPER FLOOR) (CR 10)

The rough-cut floorboards of this open attic rest on exposed timbers. In several locations, the roof's wooden shingles have fallen away, leaving gaping holes. Beneath these holes, the gray, weathered floor planks appear rotten. Half a dozen piles of broken equipment and tools, unused for decades, lie under a carpet of dust, while trampled pathways reveal recent tracks of both humans and wolves.

In the far corner of the room stands a long wooden worktable covered by an elaborate arrangement of small objects. The werewolves have scratched several plans onto the worn table, using small pieces of rusted metal and

other rubble to mark the positions of various buildings and ways to get into Feldgrau Tower, where they believe the Whispering Way is holding Kvalca Sain's heart. The attic's broken windows provide a clear view of Feldgrau's town square and grave pit, the skeletons massing there, and the ruined tower beyond. See page 50 for a map of this area.

Creatures: Adimarus Ionacu, leader of the Demon Wolves, plots revenge against the Whispering Way from this room, accompanied by two members of his pack. Adimarus is a huge werewolf with smoky black fur and twisting antelope horns coming out of his forehead. Adimarus was once a simple warrior who was bitten by a werewolf. Soon after, he discovered the demon lord of werewolves, Jezelda. In exchange for his devotion, Jezelda made Adimarus a natural werewolf, and he became an antipaladin in her service, spreading both her worship and her curse with every bite.

The wolves are peering through the broken windows to watch the cult's activities, trying to determine their next move. If alerted by the sound of combat below, all of the werewolves are in hybrid form. Adimarus trusts his guards below to handle any intruders, so he does not go to aid them, but he and his remaining pack members attack anyone who enters the upper floor.

ADIMARUS IONACU (HYBRID FORM) CR 8

XP 4,800

Male fiendish human natural werewolf fighter 4/antipaladin of Jezelda 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 198, 294; *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 118)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

Aura cowardice (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +4 natural)
hp 74 (7d10+32)

Fort +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **DR** 5/good, 10/silver; **Immune** disease; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *bastard sword* +14/+9 (1d10+10/19–20), bite +7 (1d6+2 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

Special Attacks cruelty (sickened, DC 12), curse of lycanthropy, plague bringer, smite good (antipaladin; +1 attack and AC, +3 damage), smite good (fiendish; 1/day, +1 attack, +7 damage), touch of corruption (1d6, 2/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

At will—*detect good*

TACTICS

During Combat Adimarus opens with his smite attacks, focusing his attacks on paladins or good clerics if possible. He uses his touch of corruption to sicken opponents

who face him in combat, and tries to spread his curse of lycanthropy with his bite whenever possible.

Morale Adimarus cannot lose a fight without losing authority and command over his pack, so he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12 (+14 sunder); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. sunder)

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Bluff +5, Disguise +5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +8, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, change shape (human, hybrid, and wolf; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), unholy resilience

Gear +2 *breastplate*, +1 *bastard sword*, silver unholy symbol of Jezelda

DEMON WOLF MARAUDERS (HYBRID FORM) (2) **CR 6**

XP 2,400 each

hp 55 each (see page 55)

F10. TAVERN (CR 8)

On the southern outskirts of town stands a moderately sized building with a stone foundation and wooden frame, its pine-shingled roof topped with a captain's tower. A row of broken, dust-covered windows faces the street, the remaining glass yellowed with age.

This building was once a bustling tavern, serving both Feldgrau's townsfolk and those farmers who lived in the surrounding countryside.

Creatures: A Whispering Way curate leads two hideously deformed undead hill giants around the outside of the structure. Crawling on all fours like rabid dogs, the massive Menadoran festrogs sniff about for signs of intruders. As soon as they catch a scent, the festrogs lurch after it, running down and attacking any living creature they find.

MENADORAN FESTROGS (2) **CR 4**

XP 1,200 each

hp 42 each (see page 53)

WHISPERING WAY CURATE **CR 6**

XP 2,400

hp 56 (see page 48)

F11. APOTHECARY

An elaborately carved oak desk faces the door to this building. Behind the desk, a glass case filled with shelves holds dozens of bottles, vials, jars, and other small containers, all labeled with odd names.

This shop belonged to the town apothecary. Most of the compounds within the jars have long evaporated, leaving behind only unidentifiable residues. Some still contain the remains of recognizable objects or substances, such as leeches, maggots, and salts.

Treasure: The following intact items can be discovered among the apothecary's wares with DC 15 Perception checks (randomly determine which substance is found for each check): four vials of antitoxin, a jar of *restorative ointment*, and a small jar that contains *dust of sneezing and choking*.



Adimarus Ionacu

F12. GRAVEDIGGER'S SHED (CR 8)

This decrepit hovel lies on the edge of town, near the town's overgrown graveyard.

The town's gravedigger used this building as a workroom. Inside, several barrels hold salt, powdered limestone, and ash. Three open crates contain moldering burlap sacks, each large enough to cover a body. A handful of picks and shovels lean in the far corner, next to a decrepit wheelbarrow. All of the items in this building are in poor condition and of no value.

Creatures: Four skeletal champions and eight bloody skeletons stand in the shed, held in reserve by Vrood. They boil out of the building if disturbed, attacking any living creature they see.

BLOODY SKELETONS (8) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 6 each; fast healing 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 251)

SKELETAL CHAMPIONS (4) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 17 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 252)

F13. TOWN SQUARE (CR 9)

In the shadow of a crumbling tower lies a barren swath of muddy red earth that likely once served as the town square. A large trench has been excavated in the center of the square, and a confusing jumble of half-unearthed bones jut from its churned earth.

Almost 20 years ago, Count Neska's troops brutally butchered the residents of Feldgrau upon this site, hurling their remains into the trench that now serves as their mass grave. When the Whispering Way arrived in Feldgrau, they set about systematically digging out the townsfolk's fetid remains and assembling them into a gruesome army of walking dead. They were well on their way to completing the project when the Demon Wolves arrived to reclaim Kvalca Sain's stolen heart.

Creatures: In the square, two Whispering Way curates named Eugenie and Vicenith attempt to organize a dozen animated skeletons into small patrols. The PCs must make a DC 15 Perception to notice the curates among the milling skeletons. As soon as they see the PCs, the curates order the skeletons to form up in ranks around them. While the curates use the skeletons as unliving shields, if a PC cleric wants to run up and channel energy on the entire horde, let her do so! The skeletons are meant to be "ablative armor" that the PCs must blast through to get to the cultists, and using this tactic can make that PC feel like more of a hero.

HUMAN SKELETONS (12) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 4 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 250)

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons do not move from their positions, providing cover for the two curates in their midst, and making attacks of opportunity at any enemy who tries to break through their ranks.

EUGENIE AND VICENITH CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Whispering Way curate (see page 48)

hp 56 each

TACTICS

During Combat Eugenie and Vicenith stand in the middle of the undead horde, so that the PCs must fight their way through to get to the curates. They cast *desecrate* or channel negative energy to bolster their skeletal shields, while targeting opponents with ranged offensive spells. The curates take turns readying *dispel magic* to counterspell *fireballs* or similar area-effect offensive spells that might destroy large numbers of their skeletons at once.

Morale Eugenie and Vicenith dare not fail Vrood this close to the completion of his plans, and so fight to the death.

F14. ARMORY (CR 9)

Just northeast of the town square, a squat stone building stands adjacent to a ruined tower, its windows shuttered and its doors hanging open. Dimly lit by torches, the building's interior has been gutted. All that remains within are several stacks of wooden crates and a large stone vase.

The Whispering Way has taken over Feldgrau's armory as a supply depot and staging point for their growing undead army. The crates contain assorted weaponry and armor for equipping the undead troops being raised in the town square. Most of the equipment is junk—broken, chipped, bent, and rusted from years of neglect and misuse. As Neska's troops took what was stored in the armory when they left Feldgrau, half of the equipment now stored here was salvaged from the dead in the grave pit, while the rest came from throughout the town. The stone vase holds the last remaining portions of Kvalca Sain's heart, floating in a vile-smelling fluid. Auren Vrood has removed the portion of the heart needed for the *Carrion Crown*, and placed the remainder here as a decoy to lure the remaining werewolves out of the surrounding ruins.

Creatures: Auren Vrood has left the armory in charge of a dread wight monk named Acrietia and her small cadre of wight disciples. Their primary assignment is to keep watch over the packlord's heart. If intruders enter the armory, the wights attempt to hide in the shadows, allowing as many

individuals into the room as possible before moving to block the exits and attacking. They fight until destroyed.

ACRIETIA

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female human dread wight monk 6 (*Advanced Bestiary* 95, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +9; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 23, **touch** 19, **flat-footed** 17 (+5 **Dex**, +1 **dodge**, +1 **monk**, +2 **Wis**, +4 **natural**)

hp 60 (6d8+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +10 (1d8+4 plus energy drain) or flurry of blows +10/+10/+5 (1d8+4 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks command wights, create spawn, energy drain (1 level, DC 16), flurry of blows, stunning fist (6/day, DC 15, fatigued)

TACTICS

During Combat Acrietia uses her stunning fist attack to stun opponents so she or her disciples can use their energy drain attacks.

Morale Acrietia fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +10 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 25 (27 vs. grapple)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+20 jump), Climb +11, Escape Artist +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (religion) +6, **Perception** +11, **Stealth** +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 **Stealth**

Languages Common, Necril

SQ fast movement, high jump, *ki* pool (5 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 30 ft.

Gear belt of giant strength +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any creature killed by a dread wight's energy drain ability rises as a dread wight in 1d4 rounds. A dread wight created in this manner is under the command of its creator and remains so until either it or the creator is destroyed.

Command Wights (Su) A dread wight can automatically command all normal wights within 30 feet as a free action. Normal wights never attack a dread wight unless compelled.

WIGHTS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 26 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276)

Treasure: On the ground beneath the map rests a small clay pot of *marvelous pigments*.

G. FELDGRAU TOWER

Overlooking the town square stand the battered remnants of what must have once been an impressive tower. Now only the tower's ground floor and half of its second floor still stand, and catapult balls lie scattered about the piles of broken stone and masonry at the tower's base. Of the top of the tower, only a jagged crest of stone remains; the tower's roof has been ripped off, and much of the rear portion lies buried in rubble.

Acrietia

At the far end of town rests the remains of Feldgrau's three-story watchtower. Today, only two-thirds of the tower still stands, the top floor having collapsed under a barrage from siege weapons as Neska's troops butchered their way through town. Although heavily damaged, the tower is still defensible, and its main entrance (area **G1**) provides the only access to the tower's interior. Auren Vrood has chosen the tower as his headquarters while the cult is in Feldgrau. See page 50 for a map of this location.

G1. TOWER ENTRANCE

Remarkably, a pair of massive stone doors still hangs within the entrance of the tower's battered facade.

Despite extensive damage, the tower's great stone front doors still hold fast, and are barred from within (hardness 8, hp 30, break DC 30).

Development: Anyone attempting to enter the tower attracts the attention of the skeletal archers on the second floor (area **G5**).

G2. FOYER

In relatively good shape, the walls of the entrance hallway display several stone sundials. A doorway to the southwest opens to a small, rubble-strewn antechamber, while a makeshift curtain of woolen blankets blocks another doorway to the northeast.

Whenever Vrood enters the tower, he casts a mental *alarm* spell on this area that alerts him if anyone else enters the tower.

G3. LOWER TOWER

Most of the floor above this central tower room has collapsed, leaving the room exposed to the sky. Two doorways, both with missing doors, lead to flanking antechambers, while a rickety set of stone stairs coils around the outer wall up to the second floor. Rubble and other debris clutter the floor.

The floor of the rubble-strewn chamber is considered difficult terrain.

Development: If not already defeated, the skeletal archers in area **G5** remain on the ledge above and fire down into this room when intruders arrive.

G4. NORTHERN ANTECHAMBER (CR 11)

This long chamber runs from the foyer to the rear of the tower, ending in a mountain of collapsed rubble. At the far end of the room stands a large pavilion.

The collapsed sections completely block the farther passage, creating a small, secure alcove where Auren Vrood has set up his tent to command the Whispering Way's agents in Feldgrau. The interior of the tent is lined with eight small vivisection tables, some still cruelly holding twitching animals pinned to the tables in various states of grisly surgical inspection. Near each is a small easel holding a stretched canvas on which is painted a masterfully executed watercolor of the subject matter. The paintings include detailed notes about operations performed upon the specimens and their reactions. Anyone bold enough to read the notes must make a DC 14 Will save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds due to their sadistically graphic nature.

The remainder of Vrood's possessions have already been packed into crates and transferred to the armory for transport when the cult leaves Feldgrau. In addition to his paintings, only a few of Vrood's personal items remain, spread out upon a table: some long steel pins; carving tools; a candle; paints and brushes; and a tray with ash, hair, bits of cloth, and other scraps of seemingly mundane items.

Creature: Auren Vrood was all of 8 years old when Count Neska's troops tore through the land, slaughtering his family, salting their fields, and leaving behind a wasteland of death and destruction. The young boy survived only by burying himself beneath the corpses of the fallen. When people came looking for survivors, he hid in the muddy trenches of the Furrows, and so was abandoned. For years, he lived as an orphan, scavenging what he could from the corpses and fighting with the rats for food, speaking only to the bones of the soldiers that lay in the muddy ditches. As the years passed, madness overcame him, and the dead began speaking back to him.

Heeding the spirits' whispers of vengeance, Vrood lurked beneath byroad bridges or in the trenches, stealthily laying traps to topple passing horses. When their riders fell, he slit their throats, took their possessions, and buried them in the fallows alongside his kin. When food was scarce, he ate his victims instead.

Each day, the whispers of the dead grew louder, until one day a rider came, halting her steed only moments before Vrood was set to strike. The rider was gray-skinned and withered like a corpse. In a dry and throaty whisper, the strange rider commanded Vrood to come out from hiding and face her judgment.

"Auren Vrood," the rider said. "The spirits of this place have told me about you. Worry not, for you have a greater role to play."

Vrood accompanied the rider, and the pair headed to the county of Virlych, and on to the ominous town of Renchurch. There Vrood took up the study of the dark arts of necromancy under the able tutelage of his ghoulish savior, known to him only as Yrasa Nine-Eyes.

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +15)

7/day—grave touch (4 rounds)

Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +15)

6th—*circle of death* (DC 21), *eyebite* (DC 21)

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 19), *telekinesis*, *waves of fatigue*

4th—*animate dead*, *enervation* (2), *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *protection from energy*, *ray of exhaustion* (2, DC 18), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *command undead* (DC 17), *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 17), *glitterdust* (DC 16), *spectral hand*

1st—*alarm*, *chill touch* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shield*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Opposition Schools Enchantment, Evocation

TACTICS

Before Combat Vrood casts *false life* and *mage armor* every morning. Before combat, he casts *stoneskin*, *shield*, *fly*, and *protection from good*, in that order.

During Combat Vrood tries to keep his undead allies in front of him, activating his negative energy conduit aura to bolster them, and making ranged touch attacks with *spectral hand*. If it looks like any enemies might reach him, he flies to the central part of the tower and threatens, “When next we meet, I shall spit your hearts upon the Gallowspire!” Contrary to these words, he then flies out of sight, casts *greater invisibility*, and flies back in to continue his attack, using his *lesser silent metamagic rod* to cast silent spells at foes.

Morale Vrood fights to the death. He asks no quarter and if captured refuses to talk to enemies, preferring death.

Base Statistics Without his spells, Auren Vrood’s statistics are AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; hp 69.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness^B, Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Wand, Dodge, Improved Familiar, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Toughness, Weapon Focus (ray)

Skills Bluff +16, Fly +16, Heal +15, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +18, Use Magic Device +12

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Necril, Varisian

SQ arcane bond (homunculus named Fleshwort), inspired necromancy, life sight (10 feet, 8 rounds/day), negative energy conduit, undead manipulator, unholy fortitude

Combat Gear *lesser silent metamagic rod*, *wand of animate dead* (10 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *quarterstaff*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +1, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, all 0-level spells, plus *arcane eye*, *create undead*, *mirror image*, and 1d6 random spells of levels 1–5), spell component pouch, Whispering Way amulet

DEATHGAG ELIXIR

Aura moderate necromancy [evil]; CL 7th

Slot none; **Price** 1,400 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Death cults such as the Whispering Way use this elixir to prevent their enemies from stealing their members’ secrets, even after death. Elite cultists typically imbibe *deathgag elixir* as part of an elaborate initiation ritual when they are promoted to high-ranking positions in the cult. Thereafter, should the imbiber fall below –1 hit point, the elixir triggers the release of a fatal poison that throws him into wild convulsions. The victim begins foaming at the mouth, and his eyes turn blood red. Soon after, the victim’s entire jaw dissolves, rendering him immune to *speak with dead* spells. Prior to the victim’s death, only a *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* spell can undo the effects of the elixir. Individuals that have imbibed *deathgag elixir* are noted as being “deathgagged” in the Defensive Abilities section of their stat blocks.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *contagion*; **Cost** 700 gp

FLESHWORT

CR —

Homunculus familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 176)

AC 18, touch 14, flat footed 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

hp 34 (11 HD)

GIANT CRAWLING HANDS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 59)

Development: A DC 15 Perception check made while searching Vrood’s tent finds a leather satchel beneath the table, which contains several pages of cryptic notes and an elaborately carved bone scroll tube. The scroll tube contains an enigmatically macabre poem (see Player Handout #3). See The Carrion Crown Poem on page 63 for more information on this document. The notes are written in a strange code, but a DC 30 Linguistics check deciphers enough of them to determine that they concern some sort of instructions to Auren Vrood from an unnamed superior. The orders instruct Vrood to steal the heart of the Shudderwood’s packlord, as well as construct a skull from the bones of corpses buried in Feldgrau. They also direct him to send the Seasage Effigy to the town of Thrushmoor as part of a trade for a second object whose nature remains undisclosed. Finally, Vrood

Upon the ashen pathways tread
Softly, as the whispered dead.
As mortal flesh doth rot and fail
To leech and maggot, ebbing frail.
Unhallowed words cannot be spoken.
With whispered oath, death lies broken.
Shed fear, shed life, shed pain, shed time,
Eternity seized shall soon be thine.
First spirit torn from Grave-Lady's grasp
Be rent and sown as soured ash.
Soft the spiral song reverses,
Judgment lost, damnation surges.
Keeper of the damned's soul take,
With packlord's heart the beast shall wake
And flesh be wrought in disarray—
Stillborn cocoon, to blessed decay.
A hundred slain lie innocent,
Grind bone and marrow to cement.
Craft now a skull of splintered graves,
Unmake life, unmake the slave.
Where history churns dream to blister,
Necrophagous secrets whisper
Through chronicles of Raven's tongue—
A legacy of fear unspun.
Blood spilt atop the Iron Thorn
Invokes that which cannot be born.
Arise the Tyrant now unbound,
Bearer of the Carrion Crown!

Player Handout #3

is commanded to raise an undead army in the Furrows for later use.

Treasure: A locked chest (DC 30 Disable Device check to open) in Vrood's tent contains 50 pounds of silver dust (worth 250 gp), 2,000 gp worth of onyx gemstones, and a *scroll of control undead* in a plain leather scroll case. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the silver dust and onyxes as material components for *desecrate* and *animate dead* spells.

G5. SECOND FLOOR (CR 8)

A jagged, battered opening exposes the tower's second floor. Only a narrow perimeter of rotten wood rings the

interior perimeter, the rest of the floor having collapsed completely into the room below. The extensively damaged exterior walls rise between 3 to 6 feet above the floor, providing cover to those behind them.

Creatures: Auren Vrood has posted a patrol of skeletal champions in the tower, outfitting them with longbows and silver arrows for use against the werewolves. They peer over the edges of the walls, opening fire on any creature approaching the tower.

SKELETAL CHAMPION ARCHERS (8)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 17 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 252)

Ranged longbow +3 (1d8/x3)

Gear breastplate, heavy steel shield, longbow with 40 silver arrows, masterwork longsword

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of Auren Vrood, it may seem like the Whispering Way has finally been defeated. However, the components they have gathered since their time in Ravengro are not in Feldgrau, and the question of what the cult wanted with such strange and various items still remains. In addition, the Carrion Crown poem found in Auren Vrood's possession hints that there may be more to the Whispering Way's plans. If any of the cultists are still alive, they refuse to divulge any of their cult's secrets, regardless of the method of interrogation used. If *Speak with Dead* is used on slain cultists (and they fail their Will saves), none of the cultists know exactly what the cult was working on. The only person who might know more is Auren Vrood, but his *deathgag elixir* prevents him from being questioned with *Speak with Dead*.

Fortunately, the PCs can bring Vrood's head to Ulcris Sedmir in area F8. As promised, the ghost performs a dark seance during which he pulls forth Vrood's memories from his severed head. The PCs experience these memories as a series of visions, each separated by flashes of bright light. Eerily, all perceive these visions as though looking through the eyes of Auren Vrood himself.

The visions open with a furiously darting ink quill that dashes out of a stream of words reading, "My Master, I shall stay in Feldgrau and build an army of corpses for our risen lord..." The sentence fades, and after a brief flash, hands place the letter in an envelope and strike it with a wax seal. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the symbol on the seal as that of the Whispering Way. Another flash comes and the scene changes. The PCs see cultists scurrying around in the town square, exhuming bodies and raising an army from the corpses of Feldgrau's dead. After another flash, Vrood's hands place three strange items into a chest—an iron-and-glass vial containing a swirling gray mist,



a bloody heart inside a glass bottle, and a fragile skull composed of hundreds of bone fragments. Into a second chest he places a strange statuette of murky green stone depicting a grotesque, tentacled creature. Another flash. The chests are given to two riders in dark cloaks on pale horses. “Ride to Thrushmoor,” the PCs hear Vrood’s voice speak. “Our agent will exchange the Effigy for the relic we need.” After a final flash, the visions fade.

Although the PCs may not understand the importance of all that they have just witnessed (that the Whispering Way have acquired three of the components they need for the *Carrion Crown* and have sent them on to Adivion Adrissant in Caliphas), they should at least realize that Auren Vrood is not the architect of the Whispering Way’s activities. Somewhere, he has a hidden master, and the components the cult has acquired have been sent on to Thrushmoor. If the PCs wish to find the Whispering Way and stop whatever nefarious plot they have devised, the town of Thrushmoor is their only lead.

THE CARRION CROWN POEM

Although the PCs will likely not know it at this point, the poem found in area **G4** is actually the metaphor-steeped formula for the *Carrion Crown* elixir, the *potion of lichdom* the Whispering Way hopes to use to bring back the Whispering Tyrant. The line “Keeper of the damned’s soul take” refers to the soul of Warden Hawkran from “The Haunting of Harrowstone,” while the phrase “packlord’s heart” clearly refers to the heart of Kvalca Sain in this adventure. Likewise, “A hundred slain lie innocent” refers to Feldgrau’s slain citizens, whose bone fragments Vrood used to form “a skull of splintered graves.” “Chronicles of Raven’s tongue” refers to the *Raven’s Head* mace, which the PCs will have the chance to acquire in the next adventure, “Wake of the Watcher.” Many of these clues will remain mysterious to the PCs for now, but they will have the opportunity to learn more about the clues and further decipher the formula as the Adventure Path continues.



The Whispering Way

Right now, I stand on the bridge between two worlds. I am on the cusp of life and unlife, my soul still in resplendent fervor, while my body tries clinging to its animating spirit. Without my soul, my body will fall into decay, but this is temporary, as it will continue to see rebirth. In my future state, I shall draw my soul close to my breast and keep it even from Pharasma's judgment. From this secret place, I shall live forever, devoid of bodily needs, able to further my will and continue my work upon the face of this world without the wastes of breath, emotion, or rest. Should my physical form prove unworthy, I will move as a free and intelligent spirit, choosing any vessel I desire when I require the luxury of a physical touch."

—Zahzenji, Whispering Way member and aspiring lich

Embracing the very antithesis of life, the Whispering Way calls the ambitious and unscrupulous to embrace a simple, fatalistic philosophy: life holds no value, and its extinction is the gateway to a golden age of order and immortality. Far more than nihilists, adherents of the Whispering Way view the passage into undeath not as a curse or a punishment, but rather the greatest transcendence a living creature can experience. To the Whispering Way, life is a drain on the ecology and a wasteful expense mortals must endure before passing beyond the veil of death.

The Whispering Way as a philosophy cannot be learned from tomes or demonstrated for new members; it can only be told, passed in breathless gasps from dusty mouths to the ears of those yet to transition beyond their fragile lives. At its most basic level, it is the exaltation of the path to undeath, primarily in the form of lichdom. Liches are idealized beyond all other undead because of the difficulty and potential lethality of the transformation, yet also because only those with the drive and genius to discover their unique path to lichdom can attain such grim immortality. Yet more than just seeking a path to personal power, the Whispering Way seeks to change the world, viewing Golarion as a chaotic, dangerous place, besieged by its own diversity of creatures, cultures, and possibilities. Under the rule of worthy undead princes, all the world might be cleansed, leaving it an ordered realm of death, but not of quiet rot. Rather, they see an eternal world unified by a united state, purpose, consistency, and peace.

No written doctrine or any one voice extols the Whispering Way. Just as the path to lichdom is unique for every individual, so too is the vision of the world to come and the path to that grim perfection. The group shuns written forms of their philosophies, and any reported tomes detailing their traditions end up being only the lies and ramblings of nonbelievers or exiled necromancers. The Whispering Way's followers actively seek this literature in order to destroy it. The philosophy's most precious secrets strictly pass from dry tongue to ears eager for enlightenment. Followers form sects within the greater philosophy, sharing their knowledge among peers and seeking to prepare the world for their unique visions of its inevitable demise. For centuries, many adherents of the Whispering Way have idealized their path's most infamous member, Tar-Baphon, known as the Whispering Tyrant. Although the legendary lich-king failed in his attempt to slay Aroden, patron god of humanity, and so begin the ruin of the world, the age since has seen the Tyrant's ambitions fulfilled. Thus, many of the Whispering Way's members believe they live upon the threshold of their dead utopia,

and no longer seek ways to bring ruin to the world, but rather aspire to elevate their own places in the inevitable promised land. Now, as the Way whispers through the shadows of ages, its proscriptions of death and undead perfection bear not just the fatalism of those prepared to die, but the eagerness of those committed to rising as rulers amid a new world of the dead.

FROM WHERE THE WAY WHISPERS

The origins of the Whispering Way are cloaked in shadows—the deepest of shadows, in fact, as the earliest evidence of this fatalistic philosophy stems from the Age of Darkness. None can say who first turned pursuit of a deathless immortality into the dogma of a morbid cult, and likely the Way evolved organically through generations of like-minded necromancers, their apprentices, vulnerable adherents, and brainwashed slaves. Few will ever know the atrocities committed under the veil of Golarion's darkest epoch, but the fact that depraved souls commanded such influence that their ghastly obsessions passed from the realm of delusion into doctrine, attracting the traumatized minds of the era and persisting through the ages, offers but a hint of that era's unrivaled terror.

The Whispering Way claims no founder, prophet, or divine muse; the Way merely is and exists as a realization to be grasped by those intelligent, realistic, insightful, and ambitious enough to fathom it. It needs history and mythology no more than do mathematical principles or physical laws, and by the same right, requires no belief to be true. Those who understand it accept it as fact and work to attain the stagnant utopia idealized at its heart. Those who don't instead fear it and the fundamental changes it means for the living world, being more willing to embrace death's ultimate oblivion than to divest themselves of the ephemeral comforts of a chaotic world. Such are the understandings of the Way, and its adherents require no greater pedigree or reason to pursue its objectives than the promise of the dark powers and immortal influence they'll wield in the idealized corpse-world of their dreams.

None can doubt the impact of the Whispering Way's most terrifying adherent, the Whispering Tyrant, upon the very philosophy he rose to power pursuing. During the Age of Enthronement, the wizard-king Tar-Baphon learned of the Whispering Way and wished to use their secrets for his own. Seeking these mysteries, he eventually



converted to the Way, becoming one of the most visible and well-known adherents in the history of the group. After his defeat by his greatest enemy, the living god Aroden, Tar-Baphon eventually returned to the world as a powerful lich, gaining the moniker the Whispering Tyrant. To this day, the Whispering Way continues to occupy the lands near the site of the wizard-king's imprisonment in Gallowspire, their most prominent bastion being the dreaded monastery of Renchurch nearby. While most adherents continue to seek their own unique paths to undeath and furthering the Way's goals, many see Tar-Baphon as the order's champion and believe his restoration to be the

surest way of hastening the world's end. Especially with the death of the god Aroden, many view the imprisoned Tyrant as a fallen king, and seek to release him to claim a world terrified by but grimly expectant of his return.

SEEKING THE WAY

Some seek lichdom strictly for the power of immortality, while for others it is simply a way to beat time, a way to complete their tasks before falling to the cruel judgment of unexpected death. The philosophy of the Whispering Way attracts cold, calculated, and relatively emotionless people. The path to immortality the Whispering Way offers also attracts megalomaniacal and power-hungry adherents. But either way, given the soul-deep dedication to the philosophy, there are no passive followers. The ties binding members of the Whispering Way are the secrets to an enlightened path to undeath.

Followers find the philosophy in various ways. Some follow the path after recruitment by current adherents seeking to turn their knowledge and power toward the veil of the grave, while others stumble across a reference in a dusty tome that leads them to inquire further. Others gravitate toward the Whispering Way after their passage into undeath, using the secrets of the philosophy to master their state and push their power to greater heights.

Joining the greater organization and becoming a follower of the Whispering Way is deceptively simple at the onset. An adherent begins by learning the primary secrets of life and death. These form the building blocks of the philosophy, and from there the adherent learns more of the long-running oral epic that ultimately includes instructions for successfully transforming into a lich. With each member holding different portions of the secret, followers form a network of specialized skill and theory pertaining to necromancy that makes the Whispering Way the absolute authority on undead.

Once followers begin learning the tenets of the Whispering Way, the power of the philosophy takes hold, weaving itself into their very souls and preparing those souls for a successful transfer at the chosen time of passing. As followers progress through the multitude of rites embedded in the philosophy, their bodies and souls become shackled to the Way. Initiates straying from the path rarely live longer than a year, and when they expire, their form dissolves into a gritty, gray ash.

Followers of the Whispering Way insinuate themselves into the great magic academies and other places of arcane learning throughout Golarion. In these places, they



hide their necromantic leanings and observe potential initiates, eventually making contact with candidates and tempting their inquisitive minds with offers of eternal life and vast power. While positioned in these places of arcane learning, adherents devour all available knowledge that might aid the philosophical organization, bringing this education to the cult's lorekeepers, who share it with the group as a whole as part of their memorized libraries. In addition to arcane colleges, the Whispering Way infiltrates influential groups and governments, always seeking to lure the powerful from their place in the world with promises of increased power and control once they make the passage beyond the grave.

Loosely structured, the Whispering Way has little in the way of hierarchical status. While many members deny the greater group even has a leader, rank within the Whispering Way is typically determined by two factors—age and power. Respect is granted to exceptionally old adherents, whether in leadership positions or not. Power, be it from cunning, knowledge, wealth, or a mastery of arcane or divine arts, always rises to the top of any system and seeks to control. Followers care little for exacting rules and regulations, finding anyone who adheres to the philosophy to be a suitable fit for the group. Failures tend to remove themselves from the organization—often by becoming the victims or undead slaves of more ambitious peers—and as such, the very philosophical backbone of the Whispering Way is a self-correcting system. Adherents have their own personal projects and interests and naturally congregate with other like-minded followers, forming specialized cells.

Like an academy, the Whispering Way is structured into departments. These factions typically form along lines of philosophy and manner of undeath. Some adherents find common goals and share their learning. These factions within the group typically focus on one particular method of undeath, spending years perfecting the creation of these creatures or unraveling the secret of transforming into one. Other popular factions in the group follow a particular deity. Though usually populated by clerics, the religious sects also attract lay members with strong faith to these evil deities.

While most adherents are greedy for power and self-centered, few followers of the Whispering Way are necromancers leading an army of undead. However, many within the Whispering Way produce scores of lesser undead, shackling them to mindless servitude. They view these creations as machines, pets, or even children. These prolific necromancers and clerics pride themselves in their design, going to the extent of decorating their creations—etching runes into bones, stitching trademark embroidery into flesh, and even embedding precious metals and stones into their bodies.

WHERE THE WAY WINDS

While adherents of the Whispering Way weave their foul path throughout the world, the greatest concentration of these vile cultists lurks in the nations of Geb and Ustalav. The first is due to its celebration and acceptance of the undead, while the latter is due to the location of the group's primary champion and most famous member, the Whispering Tyrant.

Those following the Whispering Way claim the mountainous Ustalavic wasteland known as Virlych as their sovereign territory, the unrecognized nation of their union. Most sane citizens want nothing to do with this haunted land, and thus many followers of the Whispering Way can find privacy here in their order's strongholds. In addition to the Whispering Tyrant's prison in Gallowspire, the monastery of Ghasterhall serves as the Way's headquarters, harboring members both still living and who have been shackled to the organization's path since before the rule of Tar-Baphon. Here prominent members scheme for the release of their fallen champion and seek their own paths to undeath, though such obsessions come and go. Yet for thousand of years the monastery has stood, a bastion against the necromancers' enemies, tended by a fraternity of blasphemous undead monks led by the baleful ancient known only as the Gray Friar.

Where undead find acceptance, the philosophy of the Whispering Way gains traction. In the twisted city of Kaer Maga, zombies act as attendants and servants within the Ankar-Te district, and a fair number of local necromancers count among the philosophy's adherents. In fact, some of the best-made zombies (the polite term in Ankar-Te is twice-born) hail from laboratories operated by agents of the Way. While the official claim is that no intelligent undead live in Ankar-Te, adherents to the Whispering Way are not so naive.

In Geb, the Whispering Way operates in the open, usually alongside the church of Urgathoa. In this environment of acceptance, members openly hold stations of office within the country, going beyond their typical operations to serve as advisors and nobles. In this country, the Whispering Way functions as an academic institution, instructing necromancers and operating laboratories that seek to further members' experiments regarding the veil between the worlds of life and death and imagining ever new undead abominations.

AGENT OF THE GRAVE

On their twisted route to immortality, adherents of the Whispering Way learn secret rites that aid them on their path. Every step brings a member that much closer to the final secret. Particularly promising members earn invitations to join an elite group within the organization.

AGENT OF THE GRAVE

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+1	+0	+1	Inspired necromancy, lich's touch, unholy fortitude	—
2	+1	+1	+1	+1	Undead manipulator	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+2	+1	+2	Negative energy conduit	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+2	+1	+2	Death's shroud, negative energy affinity	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+3	+2	+3	Secrets of death, undead initiate	+1 level of existing class

The caster level for this ability is equal to the agent of the grave's highest caster level.

Negative Energy Affinity (Ex): At 4th level, the agent of the grave, while still technically alive, reacts to positive and negative energy as if he were undead—positive energy harms him, while negative energy heals him. If the agent of the grave is already undead, this ability grants no additional benefit.

Secrets of Death (Ex): At 5th level, an agent of the grave draws upon secrets held by the Whispering Way to gain insights into necromancy. At the time he gains this ability, the character may add a number of necromancy spells that are not normally a part of his class's spell list to his spell list. The number of spells that the character may add is equal to his Intelligence modifier. For example, an agent of the grave with levels of wizard might choose to add spells like *death watch*, *inflict critical wounds*, and *slay living* to his spell list, while an agent of the grave with levels of cleric might choose to add spells such as *enervation*, *magic jar*, and *vampiric touch*. An agent of the grave may choose to add spells he cannot yet cast—this does not allow the agent of the grave to cast spells of a higher level than he normally could, but rather merely grants him access to those spells when he reaches the level required to cast them.

Undeath Initiate (Ex): At 5th level, an agent of the grave has prepared his body and mind for the transition into undeath. He gains a +5 bonus on any ability check, skill check, or saving throw related to the process of transforming into an undead creature. This bonus can be used on any check related to becoming a creature like a lich (the process of which is largely left up to the GM's discretion). Additionally, if slain by an undead creature with the create spawn ability, the agent of death retains his Intelligence (regardless of the type of undead he is transformed into) and free will (he is never under the control of the creature that killed him). Unless otherwise noted by the undead creature's create spawn ability, the newly created undead

agent of the grave loses all of his class levels. This makes transformation into a lich and vampire among the most appealing options for an agent of the grave seeking undeath.





Ecology of the Lycanthrope

Ya, you call them beasts, but I ask: What makes you better than a beast? What hope do you have of surviving in the forest? Can you track meals by the scent of their blood? Can you hear enemies' footsteps over the sound of trees? Can you run all night with only the moon to light your path? Ya, you spit and call them beasts, and you are right. But to these beasts, you are the food."

—Rogeif Yharloc, Ustalavic werewolf hunter

The moon rises, blood boils, and the creature stalks its prey. If the beast's victims are lucky, they are torn apart by savage claws. If fate is unkind, then the curse of its blood spreads to them, and the savage circle widens.

In the heart of both forest and city festers the mysterious affliction known as lycanthropy. In once-quiet villages, this stain of savagery consumes neighbors and sows fears, spreading suspicion and ruin. In shadowed sewers creep verminous kings, feeding off the waste of the populace above and ever increasing their own monstrous ranks. In eldritch forests, whole tribes of half-beasts run with their animal brethren, slaying those who dare trespass upon their territories or who eavesdrop on the praises they howl to the full moon. Even in the most rustic settings, storytellers tell tales of those who transform into monsters in the night and spread their insidious curse to victims who face their fangs. But far more than a disease, lycanthropy is a tenacious, varied, and deadly magical affliction, just as terrifying as fireside tales relate and yet the most mundane fact of life for many who inherit the blood of the beast.

As both the unwilling infected and a racial identity for the hidden multitudes born with lycanthropic blood, lycanthropes are many things to many people—monsters to be hunted, disease-bearers to be cured, packmates and fellow hunters, and terrors capable of spreading their horrifying affliction to any who cross their paths.

THE CURSE OF LYCANTHROPY

The mystery of lycanthropy and the fear that surrounds most were-creatures stems in part from misunderstandings and misinformation regarding the affliction that prompts this bestial change. Few folktales concerning lycanthropes omit mention of the terrible curse that causes them to change into beasts, or the strange disease they bear that allows them to spread their bestial transformations to their victims. Yet the mystery truly begins with the question of what exactly lycanthropy is—disease, curse, or something else.

At its most basic level, lycanthropy is an ancient magical affliction that can transform even the most peaceful and passive into ravenous animals and half-beast monsters. While those suffering the affliction of lycanthropy can potentially transform into a beast or half-beast hybrid at any time (requiring a DC 15 Constitution check), during the nights of the full moon, all those who bear this affliction involuntarily must attempt to change (making a DC 15 Constitution check with a +5 morale bonus). While in this form, most who possess the curse of lycanthropy lose control of their bodies and go on violent, vicious rampages of which they rarely have any memory (see *The Mind of the Lycanthrope* sidebar). While natural lycanthropes might attempt to change back to their natural humanoid forms, this often proves difficult (requiring a DC 20

Constitution check to make the change), and the difficulty is compounded by the presence of a full moon (which imposes a –5 penalty on this check). Afflicted lycanthropes, who lack control over their bodies, never attempt to return to their natural humanoid forms, and thus only return to normal with the rising of the sun or after 8 hours of rest. Typically someone afflicted by lycanthropy has no memory of the acts she committed during her rampage, and might undergo transformations for months or years, never even realizing—or refusing to accept—that she is actually a lycanthrope. Most, however, awaken with some evidence of their rampages, be it a ruined domicile or the blood of one who spent the night nearby.

The greatest question baffling healers and those plagued by lycanthropy is how to treat the affliction. In most stories of creatures that kill under the full moon, lycanthropes are monsters and shapeshifters who infiltrate villages to sow chaos and murder—menaces ended by fire and steel. While there is some truth to this (see below), such is not always the case. Many lycanthropes are merely normal people faced with a terrible affliction. Thus, many among the afflicted or who seek to aid those so cursed hunt for ways to return lycanthropes to their natural states. But lycanthropy is both a disease and a curse, owing its notorious resilience not to a lack of cures, but to the tenacity with which it grips its victims. Healers can treat the affliction and fend off its hold by treating those exposed fast enough. A *remove disease* or *heal* spell cast by a cleric of 12th level or higher can cure lycanthropy, but only if cast within 3 days of the disease being contracted. If the victim is not treated within this timespan, the disease takes a hold on her very being, resisting all future attempts to remove it with disease-affecting magic. At that point, only magic such as *remove curse* can end the affliction, and not without inherent danger. The curse of lycanthropy is actually only in effect when the victim is fully transformed into a were-creature. Thus, such magic requires the healer to come face to face with the monster trapped within his patient, potentially risking his own infection. Only if the spell is successfully cast can the affliction be ended once and for all.

Folktales also tell of other potentially dangerous cures for lycanthropy. These include such mystical remedies as the kiss of a dryad or the blood of a unicorn; some are patently false or blatantly lethal, such as cutting out the second beast heart alleged to grow with the afflicted's chest or being bitten by a were-creature a second time. Blurring the line between the miraculous and the lethal is the herb wolfsbane. Many claim that this dangerous toxin can cure both the disease and curse of lycanthropy afflicting a creature. Such a treatment is risky, and is by no means an assured cure, as the victim must consume the poison and thus be exposed to its effects. Should she survive the poison, she is allowed a second saving throw to resist

lycanthropy at the same DC as when she first contracted the affliction. If she succeeds, the taint is expunged from her body. If she fails, the wolfsbane has no affect; though this cure might be attempted again, the health-sapping nature of wolfsbane has led many to die of self-afflicted poisoning in the search for their affliction's cure.

Factored into many theories and folktales of cures for lycanthropy is the well-documented effect of silver on lycanthropes. At the most basic level, the touch of silver discomfits a lycanthrope, even one who is unaware of her condition. This effect is the root of certain peasant myths such as "trusting strangers with silver," the act of giving a silver coin to a stranger, as lycanthropes are thought likely to recoil from the coin. The legitimacy of this technique is disputed, though, as many claim silver acts more like an allergen to lycanthropes, affecting them swiftly and severely if introduced into their bodies via a weapon, but having little or no visible effect if contact is restricted to a momentary touch. Occasional attempts to develop a silver potion that drives the affliction from the body also regularly meet with failure, leaving silver's primary use against lycanthropes as a weapon capable of overcoming their impressive heartiness and bestial resilience.

Yet for many lycanthropes, there is no hope for a cure of any type. These are natural lycanthropes, lycanthropes born from parents who were either natural lycanthropes themselves or who bore the affliction of lycanthropy. For these creatures, lycanthropy is not an affliction, but rather

a fundamental part of their being from which they will never know respite. At the same time, though, their control over their curse is as natural as their mastery of their limbs, and they may shift between their humanoid, hybrid, and beast shapes with ease rather than being slaves to the moon and its phases. These lycanthropes are as much their own race as are other shapechangers. Some blend in among the societies of other creatures, exploiting them as they will. But many natural lycanthropes are born to tribes of their kin, who often form brutal societies that mimic those of the creatures they can transform into. In either case, natural lycanthropes typically hold a racial grudge against other humanoids, whom they usually view as weak, hateful, and greedy for calling them monsters and relegating their people to the wilds, all for the crime of their birth.

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Lycanthropes are found all across Golarion. Afflicted lycanthropes are often encountered alone. A man bitten by a wolf becomes a monster; terrified, he stumbles into the woods, where his uncontrolled transformations and attacks are determined by the beast's hunger and the pull of the moon. Natural lycanthropes, by contrast, are a strange, hidden race. An isolated village may be the abode of werewolves by night; the caliph of a desert city prowls the dusty streets in the skin of a tiger when she hungers. Each lycanthrope has its own habitat and customs.

Lycanthropes cannot escape the beast within. Their animal nature manifests in unexpected ways, even when they try to disguise it. A werewolf



inevitably has something of the wolf about his appearance—unusually wiry hairs, unnaturally sharp teeth, or flaring nostrils. The beast also affects the creature's behavior and mannerisms, even if the afflicted victim fights against its influence. The communities and settlements formed by natural lycanthropes therefore mirror the social structure of the animals they become. The strongest and most powerful wolf, for example, is the alpha of the pack. Therefore, in a werewolf settlement, the strongest werewolf will be the chieftain or mayor.

One trait common to every lycanthropic community is secrecy. In almost every culture (excepting the Ulfen of the north), lycanthropes are feared, so they must hide from the prying eyes of outsiders. Lycanthropes generally make their homes in the wilderness, far from other settlements. Visitors are made to feel unwelcome in the hope that they will leave before the full moon. Often, the lycanthropes spread rumors of disquieting things lurking in the area—diseases, evil spirits, monsters in the woods—to drive outsiders away.

The majority of natural lycanthropes are predators. In their bestial form, lycanthropes are unusually powerful and resilient examples of their base species. A werewolf hunts like a great and savage wolf hunts; a werebear stalks the same forests as a common bear. A were-creature is almost indistinguishable from its mundane kin, much to the chagrin of hunters.

The hunger of the lycanthrope is usually proportional to its largest form. A werebear in human form has the appetite of a much larger ursine. Gluttony is a mark of such lycanthropes. Oddly, the reverse is true for creatures whose were-form is smaller than their human shape. A wererat or wereraven can sustain itself on a small handful of scavenged food. Wererats thrive in times of famine, and there are rumors of whole villages willingly embracing the curse of the rat to make their supplies last longer.

BREEDS OF LYCANTHROPE

Werewolves and wererats are the most successful and thus most common forms of lycanthrope, and across varied countries and continents, tales of lycanthropes most frequently tell of these creatures, or their kin like wereboars, werebears, werabats, and weretigers. These six most feared and whispered of types of lycanthropes are very different creatures, with varied methods of hunting, living, and interacting with non-lycanthropes. Each is discussed at length in the following sections.

There are other, rarer breeds of lycanthropes, but these are typically restricted to a single geographical area. Legends tell of werebadgers and werefoxes, aquatic weresharks and wererays, reptilian werecrocodiles and weresnakes, and even stranger lycanthropic manifestations, yet few accounts of such creatures have been verified.

THE MIND OF THE LYCANTHROPE

The true horror of lycanthropy goes beyond the savagery the curse unleashes in victims. It's the mindless rage, the primal urges unleashed and given not just deadly form but total control. Victims of lycanthropy are no longer themselves while under the affliction's control, but rather embodiments of vicious wills not truly their own. This results in two little-understood effects when the curse takes hold, one on victims' fundamental being and another on their minds.

Lycanthropes and Alignment: A village baker of neutral good alignment is afflicted with lycanthropy. In the nights following, she slaughters several of her neighbors. Is this murderer still neutral good? Yes. But only in her natural form. During the change, she transforms into a chaotic evil monster.

Part of the struggle with lycanthropy is that the victims are forced to commit acts they would never perform in their day-to-day lives. When an afflicted lycanthrope transforms, she no longer has her normal alignment, instead taking on the alignment common to the were-creature (as noted in the lycanthrope's statistics). During this time, the victim loses control of her body and acts as the monster she becomes. While there have been accounts of afflicted lycanthropes managing to retain their intellect during the change, such instances prove exceedingly rare.

Lycanthropes and Memory: After a night's rampage, a victim of lycanthropy awakens in the tattered remains of her blood-soaked bed, remembering nothing. This is not uncommon for lycanthropes. As a murderous personality takes over during an afflicted lycanthrope's change, her natural personality and memories are subsumed. At the same time, the victim is not privy to the memories of what occurred during her rampages unless she succeeds at a DC 20 Will save to recall the events. While not knowing what deeds she committed while out of control might be considered a blessing by some, the experience of missing time and evidence of terrible acts are no less unnerving.

WEREBATS

Werabats are found only in a few places, typically near dense forests and jungles with openings to elaborate underground cavern systems. They have the gregariousness of wererats, but coupled with the savagery and aggression of werewolves. Werabats are often encountered in flocks numbering dozens of individuals. Unlike the equally numerous wererats, they are less likely to hide from the uninfected, preferring to gradually take over whole communities. Those who search

for some sign of a vanished victim may find footprints that end abruptly, as if the victim had been plucked off the face of the earth. Prey that werabats can't kill they wound and infect, until slowly an entire area becomes their territory. Typically, members of a wererat community have a place where they gather, such as a cavern, a barn, a decaying castle, or some other large and ill-omened ruin. Werabats flocks exhibit a form of group compulsion—an afflicted wererat feels an overwhelming urge to take flight with his fellow lycanthropes, to become part of their wheeling darkness. The flock is typically dominated by a single powerful wererat or another flying creature that has taken control of the group. They are the breed most likely to serve a master, and are frequently employed as couriers, assassins, and mercenaries for other powerful creatures of the night.

WEREBEARS

Unlike wereboars, with whom they share a common habitat, werebears are typically not content to withdraw from the world. Most natural werebears are taught that they are the chosen guardians of the wilderness, and frequently form respectful, if not particularly intimate, alliances with druids and priests of Erastil and other nature deities. Where isolation or prejudice make such associations untenable, werebears act alone to defend their chosen territories. Among those who follow the tradition of protecting nature, each werebear has a specific territory, whose borders are often marked by small stone cairns, symbols clawed into tree bark, or scent-traces.

Werebears are overwhelmingly solitary, and are almost never encountered with others of their kind—largely due to their rarity. As the least malicious of lycanthropes, werebears avoid infecting others with their curse merely out of cruelty. They know full well the burden of their affliction and only pass it on in the direst of circumstances or through their children—and sometimes only grudgingly even then.

As few werebears are afflicted, these lycanthropes rarely face the uncontrolled rampages so many of their were-creature brethren do under the full moon. Those few who are susceptible usually travel deep into the wilderness so they are alone when they change. Although they prefer to avoid harming those around them, when forced to change, werebears still transform into wild and potentially dangerous animals. Fortunately, bears are inclined to avoid large humanoid settlements, and so tend to be a danger only to those wandering the woods late at night.

But just as rare members of other lycanthropic breeds sometimes demonstrate integrity and regrets atypical of their race, so too are some rare werebears monstrous brutes with a taste for blood. In regions where such creatures rampage, the number of afflicted werebears is much higher, and those living nearby treat werebears more akin to their dangerous cousins.

WEREBOARS

Stubborn, foul-tempered, and destructive, wereboars do their best to avoid places where they aren't in complete control. Tending to isolate themselves from sizable humanoid settlements, wereboars prefer to set themselves up either as lone brigands, preying upon those who pass through their territories, or as petty despots of villages or weak humanoid tribes. Wereboars are slow to make decisions, and stubborn and slow to change once they've set upon a course of action or found a tactic they favor.

While hateful toward all other races—even other lycanthropes—wereboars often go out of their way to create families. In natural wereboars, this rarely means seeking out more of their kind, but rather finding spouses they favor and afflicting them with lycanthropy, hoping that doing so will bind their would-be spouses to them. Such unions rarely end well, though in some cases it does result in small wereboar families living as loners in hills or forests.

More than any other lycanthropes, wereboars tend to be embarrassed by their ability to change. Where other lycanthropes turn into fearsome werewolves or stealthy wererats, their change brings with it all the grotesquery but little of the natural grace or deadly elegance. Thus, despite their typically pompous, wrathful natures, most wereboars avoid transforming, and show their bestial forms only to others of their kind or those they're about to slaughter.

WERERATS

Wererats are quite unlike other lycanthropes in several ways. First, wererats are among the cleverest and most ambitious of lycanthropes, as their bestial and hybrid forms are weak in comparison to other were-creatures. Thus, they must be stealthy and cunning to survive. Secondly, their communities are much larger, and groups of several dozen wererats are not uncommon—some large cities contain groups of hundreds. But of perhaps the greatest benefit to these insidious lycanthropes is that their animal form is an unremarkable one. People tend to notice wolves or tigers, but rats are commonplace. Wererats can therefore hide in plain sight. Every slum, market, sewer, tomb, and tenement could be a wererat lair.

Wererats' make excellent spies and thieves, so many wererats operate as gangs or thieves' guilds in large cities. They can sneak into their target's house to pilfer his secrets and gold, or to spread disease among his household. They still have to be careful, though—if a wererat infestation is discovered, it is invariably disastrous for both rats and citizens alike. Many wererats will be destroyed, but the city typically tears itself apart in a paroxysm of paranoia and distrust. The most successful and long-lived wererat dynasties are therefore extremely conservative. They are ruled by a head wererat, who dictates who can be infected and who must be killed to protect the family secret.

WERETIGERS

Weretigers do not form communities—they rule them. Those who live under the cruel claws of a weretiger live in terror of the tyrannical beast. Anyone who reveals the true nature of their ruler to outsiders is devoured by the lycanthrope. A single weretiger might rule over a village or tribe, or even a whole region. Natural weretigers are sometimes encountered as a mated pair, but larger gatherings are extremely rare. Afflicted weretigers are created by accident or as guards; often, a weretiger ruler creates more of her kind when needed, and then kills them or drives them out when they have served their purpose.

Immensely egotistical, weretigers believe themselves to be lords by divine right. In their eyes, all others are prey, permitted to exist solely to serve the tiger. In civilized lands, weretigers are drawn to the aristocracy, and across jungle and desert lands, there are tales of caliphs and princesses who walked the jungle in tiger form by night. Most weretigers are utterly and unashamedly evil, but a few use their animalistic strength to defend their subjects, if only to jealously protect their slaves from the depredations of foes.

Weretigers rule by terror. Instinctively, they know how to sow paranoia and fear among their subjects. They might attack every few months, devouring a victim at random just to instill fear, or eliminate anyone who might be organizing resistance against their bloody reign. A weretiger's domain is limited by the creature's ability to enforce this regime of terror. A lone weretiger, ruling through personal might alone, can only dominate a few hundred people. A weretiger prince who commands a loyal army can bring a whole city under her claws.

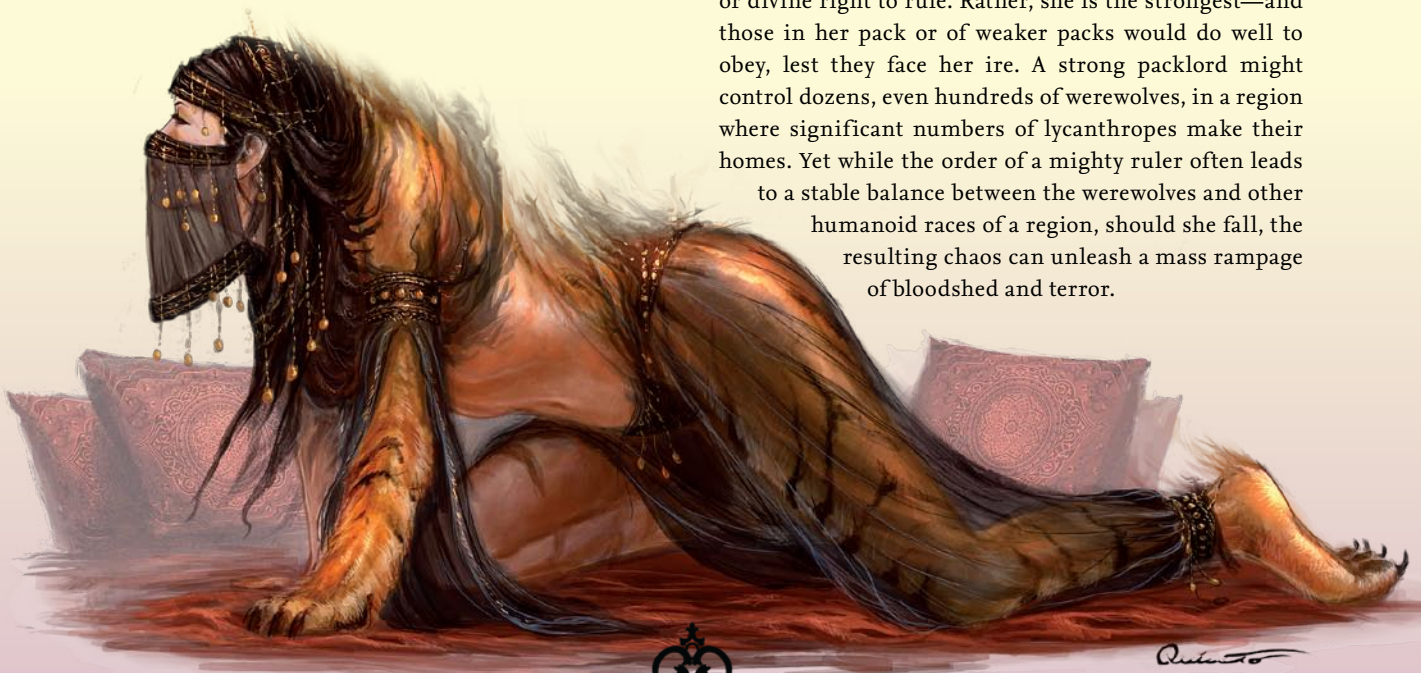
WEREWOLVES

Werewolves live and hunt in packs. The pack is usually a single extended family, with a few “adoptees”—afflicted werewolves who run with the pack. Werewolves are seminomadic by nature, which helps them escape the consequences of their moon-driven rampages. A werewolf pack might be a gypsy caravan, a band of traveling players, or a band of adventurers. The pack stays within the same territory, but moves around within it, and a single pack may claim hundreds of miles as its domain.

Wolves are opportunistic killers and scavengers, identifying weak prey and harassing it until it falls. Werewolves share this trait. They do not attack large groups unless threatened, but lone travelers and isolated farmsteads are easy marks. They shy away from large towns or heavily settled areas, preferring to circle around the borders, never straying too far from the wilderness.

Werewolf packs create afflicted werewolves as a means of recruitment—a trusted friend or relative might be bitten to bring him into the pack, as might a useful ally. Werewolves are not above forced recruitment; if the pack needs a healer, they might abduct a village priest, bite him, and hold him prisoner until the change makes him one of them forever.

Multiple packs of werewolves sometime occupy the same region. Often such packs fall under the leadership of a single patron or alpha, who guides those related to her and interacts with the leaders of other nearby packs. Just as the werewolves within a pack respect the most powerful wolf, so do a group of packs with overlapping territory pay deference to the most powerful pack. The leader of such a group possesses significant respect and the influence to see her will meted out, but holds no legal or divine right to rule. Rather, she is the strongest—and those in her pack or of weaker packs would do well to obey, lest they face her ire. A strong packlord might control dozens, even hundreds of werewolves, in a region where significant numbers of lycanthropes make their homes. Yet while the order of a mighty ruler often leads to a stable balance between the werewolves and other humanoid races of a region, should she fall, the resulting chaos can unleash a mass rampage of bloodshed and terror.





Guilty Blood, 3 of 6

The Lost Prince

The mad cackle sliced through the rotting manor, shrill like the shriek of a rusty hinge, but one without a wall to halt its opening scream. The tooth-needling whine rose and tittered, unleashing some insane hilarity, stretching on and on rather than reaching a crescendo. A chorus of nails on slate would have been more welcome.

That first impression remained throughout and long after the meeting.

The combination of razor-edged noise and the reek of animal rot had forced me back from the open door, a one-two punch to the head and gut that momentarily disoriented me and knocked me to the brink of retching.

A quick clench of my eyes and gorge brought me back to myself. Straightening, I turned back into the room to face the source of the noise.

Were the library the manor's mind, it would certainly be an appropriate one for this rotten, broken-backed body. The remnants of a shattered skylight admitted a gray haze, but also copious leaves, invading ivy coils, and mold-ringed rainwater puddles. The bookcases lining the walls gaped. What few shelves weren't snapped or sagging bore pointlessly few volumes, the majority being strewn upon the floor or reduced to pulp and loose pages by weather and pointless destruction. Everywhere else were the ruins of a once-noble collection, with scholarly busts, high-backed

reading chairs, and the curiosities of forgotten studies wrecked and dashed haphazardly about the room.

But none of this was the source of the room's reek. Instead, the grotesquely tempting sweetness of rotting flesh spilled from horrible dissections nailed upon rotten walls and shelves repurposed as splintered frames. Pigeons, rats, snakes, and less identifiable base creatures hung blasphemously naked, their insides rearranged, recombined, or removed at the insane whim of some probing sadist. I had no more than a moment to sneer my disgust and seek the object of my instant loathing before, like some hellish genie, the source of that deranged laugh jolted up from the floor to sprawl upon a cluttered table, in doing so sending dozens of battered tomes to finally loose their muddy pages across the floor.

After the encounter with that horrible dog-thing, some part of me expected to find Mr. Barttley dead. As usual, my pessimism didn't disappoint. What I hadn't anticipated was just how lively a corpse he would be. For the second time that day I was silently screaming curses to myself, wondering if the living even outnumbered the wandering dead in this damnable city.

Regardless of the answer, I wasn't about to switch from one side to the other today. My knife reassuringly solid in my white-knuckled grip, I prepared to test my reflexes against those of the corpse, ready to stick the thing and dash out of the manor should it prove as senselessly ravenous as its rotting pet.

With some effort it peeled itself from the table, listing awkwardly as it took me in, volleys of that lunatic noise blaring from the snaggletoothed remains of its face.

"Oh ho ho! A ripe one! Too long since we've had a guest—a real guest," the dead thing cackled. Rigor locked its jaw in place, causing it to toss its head with every word, nodding like a frantic puppet. Its words were an obscene coo, like a cruel child trying to lull a small animal with its tone even as it promised tortures. "Is it a talking one? Or do its sounds hide inside?"

My curiosity got the better of me once more. "Mr. Barttley?" I asked, disgusted and apprehensive.

Its rotten mouth flew open and the shrill asylum choir exploded forth. "Delightful! What a polite guest. Come in! Come in and visit. It's such a thrill to hear words again."

I held my ground. Accepting the invitation of a corpse seemed like a path fraught with webs of irony, and I wasn't prepared to bungle into them just yet.

"You're Barttley?" I repeated, cautiously.

"A scrap of him. A morsel of him. All that the mold didn't want. Yes, I was Oljid Barttley." His voice trailed off. For a moment a haze of nostalgia seemed to cloud the corpse's dull eyes, but the jaundiced orbs brooked little distraction to their manic rolling. I was quick to pounce, hoping to exploit a fleeting moment of lucidity.

"Someone told me you might know something about a corpse in Evercrown. Somebody buried with a dagger in his chest."

"You can't expect me to know just anybody. I used to know plenty of somebodies. But the problem is that after you die, even nobodies turn into some bodies." More shrill laughter. Damn—so much for that moment of lucidity.

"Yes. But someone special," I persisted over the cackling. "A body buried in the Venacadahlia crypt. One with a gold and ruby dagger stuck in his chest."

"If I had a treasure like that, I'd put it in a chest too!" Even more hysterics. Why couldn't he have just moaned and lurched onto my knife? I could have been out of this stinking wreck by now.

I gave him his moment to cackle. Unfortunately, the dead seem to have a completely skewed sense of time to compliment their twisted sense of humor, and the corpse's tittering went on and on. I was preparing to leave the insane thing to jabber till its jaw fell off when its unnatural mirth started to sound like words once more.

"You... you found the prince," Barttley screeched through his glass-shattering glee.

"What?" I asked firmly, tiring of the lunatic corpse.

"The prince! Leiralt. The Lost Prince. You found where they stashed him. And what a perfect hiding spot! No one would look in a graveyard for a murder victim—especially not in the count's family tomb. And even if they did find him there, the backlash on the count would be delicious!" The dead man's hysterics got the better of him once more.

"Who is Leiralt?" I shouted, not willing to let Barttley get his full insane enjoyment out of what sounded like a very old joke.

"The prince! Your some body! Don't they teach you peasants anything?" With a dry scoff, the corpse pulled itself fully off the floor, trailing bursts of dusty gargling laughter. Its stiff limbs carried it unsteadily, like a legless man on crutches, teetering in cautious steps and half-controlled tumbles across the room to a pile of pulped tomes mostly hidden by dry brown vines. Rooting amid the parchment mash, Barttley recovered the back cover of what had obviously once been a sizable leather-bound volume, but was now nothing more than a few dozen torn pages clinging to a dismembered spine. Knife still in hand, I warily watched him make the arduous return trek of eight steps. Nearing the desk, he tumbled upon it like a drunk, tearing loose several more pages as he crushed the book's remains under his equally desiccated chest. Rearing up, he leafed through the crumbling collection as swiftly as his brittle finger bones allowed. Finally he jammed a claw-like yellow nail into a page, threatening to tear the abused parchment.

"Come learn something," Barttley said like a stodgy old professor, his wasted frame seeming to inflate a bit with this new pompousness.

I edged closer, still wary, yet feeling a bit foolish for it at the same time. Had the dead man's insanity merely been an affectation to lure me close with some shred of trivia, I'd have been shocked and grimly impressed before meeting my end. At the same time, though, I wouldn't skip to the summons of a living lunatic, so I saw no reason to give a dead lunatic any more benefit of the doubt.

Craning my neck to peer at the page—and to remain far enough out of the corpse's reach to avoid his clutches should he grab for me—I looked upon a family tree, one sprawling, over-tall, knotting back on itself unnaturally and well in need of pruning. The surname at the bottom was "Odranti," the nation's ruling family.

"This. This here!" The corpse prodded the page, leaving a score amid a cluster of names with dates from just over a century ago: "Prince Knoldaman Odranti, 4537-4604" then, reaching beyond him, "Leiralt Odranti, 4577-4604" and "Queen Maraet Odranti, 4584-4658." Below Maraet the line stretched and diverged in raucous tangles. Leiralt, however, proved a dead branch.



"Lord Halboncrant had little interest in warnings."

"So the prince and his son died together?" I guessed. The tangled affairs of the aristocracy had never been of much interest to me, despite my own family name.

"What a pleasant little package that would make, all wrapped up with ribbon for Harvest Feast," he mocked, looking at me without blinking. It was difficult to read whatever rancid emotions still lingered behind his moldy features, but hate is a hard sentiment to miss.

"Murdered, then? Or should I start guessing all the ways royals might die?"

"Murdered indeed, like most would-be princes," he said in a hissed chuckle. "But that's the irony. This one didn't want to be prince, he wanted to be common."

"What's the point of murdering him, then? If he didn't want the crown, why not just foist it off to his sister and be done with it?"

"That wasn't good enough. It wasn't just that he didn't want the crown, he wanted to break the crown. Not only didn't he want to be prince, he didn't want there to even be a prince."

"What? Why wouldn't he want that?" I instantly realized the ridiculousness of my question, having lived my entire life under the rule of impotent counts and princes. "I mean, why wouldn't *he* want to rule?"

"Some people are leaders, some people are dreamers," Barttley explained whimsically. "And some people have dreams and try to lead people into them, but they usually turn out to be nightmares when they realize no one else wants to live in their dreams."

I was catching on. "No prince means no princess. So then his sister had him murdered?"

Barttley gaped, his smoldering eyes squinting at me. "What a grim place the world's become if that's what you expect of family."

Apparently I wasn't catching on. My unamused glower prodded him on.

"No prince doesn't just mean no princess; it means no counts, no court, no nobility, nothing. It means generations of titles, properties, favors, allowances go down in a burning wreck. Utter chaos!" The corpse threw up his claws for effect, sending up a cloud of flaking skin and startling me enough to leap back. If he had actually been lashing out at me, I would have been just a moment too late. Grinding my jaw and suppressing a frustrated shout, I glared at him. The scabby remains of lips pulled back, displaying a jagged row of mismatched black and yellow teeth. There was a joke here, and he seemed too pleased to know I was in on it.

"So, they murdered him," he finished matter-of-factly, punctuating the sentence with a mirthful croak.

"The nobles?" I clarified. He nodded stiffly. "And threw his body in the Venacdahlia family mausoleum?"

"So you say. No one ever knew. It was some business in its day. Everyone put on quite the show of being distraught and

vowing justice. All the best sleuths and seers and whatnot went on the trail, but the culprits never turned up." He leaned toward me conspiratorially, continuing in a hoarse whisper. "The truth of the matter, though, is that they were all in on it. The best investigators were paid to find out what happened, but then were paid even more to turn around and go home. Very few people ever knew who the actual murderers were, or how Leiralt was killed, but everyone knew he had to die, and in the end were quietly relieved that someone had gone and done it. Except for Maraet, that is."

"The princess." I followed cautiously and was ignored.

"Without ever seeking the court's advice, she had the church do what they could. The bishop of Ardis took the task on himself, promising to call the prince's spirit back from the Lady's grasp. He tried. And he failed." Something about a disappointed priest obviously tickled the dead man, his new cackle nastier than all the times before.

This was starting to sound like some folk story. If anyone knew something about the dead and bringing them back or putting them down, it was the clergy of Pharasma. "How's that even possible?" I said, not bothering to keep the incredulity out of my voice.

"That's the best part," he snickered. "Nearly no one ever knew. And then after the tears and veils there was a new queen with a crown on her head and things were as they always were. Leiralt became the Lost Prince, just another royal mystery—just another story for the taproom."

"Nearly no one?" I asked. He was baiting me with this and his mention of "murderers," but for the moment I was content to indulge the withered wreck.

"We Barttleys have always had an interest in magic. When old Prince Knoldaman died, I was studying with a mystic who called himself Kirrahjah and claimed to be from Qadira—even though he spoke with a Chelish accent. Although foremost a showman and quite popular in Ardis at the time, he did truly know something about the arcane. I was there when the messenger first came with a bag of platinum and a request to solve a very strange puzzle: how to cut short a man's life and any life he might have thereafter. Kirrahjah mused on this for many nights, and then I didn't see him for nearly a month. Soon after the prince was killed, and I knew my mentor was involved. It took many years to be sure, but I finally found my proof." Barttley tried to nod proudly, an absurd lurching of his too-stiff neck.

"After Kirrahjah's death, I bought all of his possessions and papers—many of which I still keep in my library today." He gestured around him to the ridiculous wreckage. Had Kirrahjah's papers truly held any secrets they were long lost.

"The old wizard had grown poor in his dotage, but worse, forgetful. Among his works I found four names—names that could have made him the richest man in Ardis had he remembered who they were: Ferendri, Geirais, Halboncrant, and Troidais, four of the oldest and most

esteemed families in the city. They'd paid Kirrahjah to find a way to kill an unwanted prince and keep him dead, and he found a way—and he didn't. The old charlatan was never as skilled as his performances led most to believe, so there was no way he could actually do what his patrons asked. At the same time, he was a greedy coot, and the first bag of coins came with the promise of more of the same. So he conned them in a way only a better wizard would be able to reveal—and he knew they didn't have a better wizard. He created a dagger, and made it as grim and fabulous as only a showman could. I only saw the sketches, but I'm sure the murderers were quite delighted with his work. Truly, it was a weapon to kill a prince. But that's all it would do. Souls are sturdy things, you see—just look at me!" he spread his arms wide in a momentary burst of cackles.

"Kirrahjah couldn't conceive of a way to actually destroy a soul, but he was clever enough to trap one. So that's what he did—built a cage for a soul. A cage shaped like a dagger. That way, when the prince was slain, his spirit would be locked into the dagger and nothing, not even the bishop of Ardis's magic, could call him back from the Boneyard, because he wouldn't be there. Clever fool!"

For the past day I'd been beset by dread: of the rotting thing in front of me, of a patchwork dog, and especially the murderous spirit I'd unleashed on Ardis. Now, I found myself actually starting to pity it.

"Then the spectre is the spirit of this Prince Leiralt," I mused absently, "and we set him free."

As soon as I looked upon Barttley's face I realized my mistake.

"You unleashed the Lost Prince's spirit. Then you have Kirrahjah's dagger!" A greed beyond death replaced the hate in the dead man's eyes. "I must have it! You must give it to me!" The corpse was scrabbling across the table toward me, eyes locked on my knife, broken yellow nails stretching out for me.

The damnable thing was faster than I'd expected, and again I lurched away too late. One of Barttley's dead gray hands had wrapped around the knife's blade and he was trying to wrestle it away from me, mistaking the crude dockworker's tool for his former mentor's masterpiece. I heaved back, but the corpse was far stronger than I had imagined his atrophied frame would have made possible. A black ichor—not quite blood, but more of a running clot—oozed down the blade, over the hilt, and, to my revulsion, beneath my grip. I could feel my hand slipping, yielding to the dead man's wrenching, but I'd be damned if I was going to be without a weapon in the corpse's lair. Jamming the ball of my left hand against the pommel, I shifted my momentum and thrust the blade directly into the corpse's grip. The half-sharp knife tore through the flimsy gray flesh, slamming the twitching claw back, pinning it to Barttley's hollow chest.

The blow had brought me intimately close to the dead thing, so when he screamed, he did so directly into my face, the full foulness of his decomposed bowels breaking over me along with the terrible, breathless noise. The dead man's scream was somehow even more profane than his laughter, a sound of agony that seemed to come from beyond bodily pain. Forcing the knife deeper, I met Barttley's furious gaze, but there was more than hatred of the living in those dead orbs. A noxious yellow flame burned within, an unnatural light that swiftly filled the corpse's eyes and exploded forth, filling my vision and consuming the library around me. Blind, my head echoing with the scream of a damned soul, I felt a gut-wrenching vertigo, and then all went silent.

Something incredibly large struck me, something wet and cold. I blinked and tried to clear my head. The realizations came gradually. I was on the ground. Mud was oozing between my fingers. A whippoorwill was rambling nearby, with the sound of water farther away. I hadn't been struck then, I'd fallen. But, the manor—how?

Kneeling, I looked around. I was outside the house, sprawled on its marshy, furniture-strewn lawn. I didn't think I'd blacked out. It was something Barttley did, some defense after I'd stabbed him. That sickly light had somehow magically flung me outside. Well enough for me. It seemed that the cordial part of my visit with the dead man had ended, and I wasn't eager to think of how our scrape might have ended otherwise. There were also other matters at hand.

"Leiralt," I murmured, testing the name. Somewhere out there was the spirit of a murdered prince, alive—or something like that—after a century of who knows what hell. Thinking back, it had been we who had attacked upon seeing the apparition. Could he have merely been defending himself? And when he killed Garmand...

Ferendri. Garmand Ferendri. Leiralt had said his last name. Had the prince mistaken Garmand for one of his killers?

The questions rushed past me, and I wasn't about to find their answers crouching in the mud, waiting for Barttley to chase after me. The dead man's recollections had left me with far more questions than I'd had before I'd come. Now I had a ghost to find, and I had a few leads on where he might be.

"Just a moment more, Lord Halboncrant!" I tried to explain, doing my best to ignore the glares of the affronted house staff and the bluster of the corpulent nobleman who refused to hear how his life might be at risk. I'd had to make claims to get past the stodgy butler, claims he'd taken to his master as promises, and now that I'd thrice explained my deception and true reason for intruding I was suddenly—bafflingly—unwelcome.

"I've no times for jokes, girl. On your way, or I'll call for the guard." He dismissed me with a wave of his hand, which in turn set most of his upper frame waggling. The butler took an insistent step forward, wielding his disapproval like a pike.

"Your life is at risk!" I said as plainly as I could, not for the first time. "If you'd only listen for a moment I—"

"I'm quite sure I know better than some street trollop whether or not my life is in jeopardy. I don't know what you think you've heard or what reward you think you'll swindle with your lies, but you'll have to find some other mark. Ginieus Halboncrant is no dupe. Now good night!" He turned his attention to the butler. "Collis, see her out now. And we will discuss this later."

Nodding his obedience, the butler took another step toward me, guiding me with his gestures back toward the entryway. He was already gesturing for a footman to open the heavy front doors, as if at any moment he might pick me up by my coat and heave me though like a sailor offloading his bundle. My quick glower dissuaded any parting indignity he might have tried as an attempt to get back into his master's good graces.

In the next moment, I was past the barred outer fence surrounding the Halboncrants' overwrought townhome, the metallic echo of the slammed gate the only immediate sound on the dark avenue.

It had taken me the better part of the afternoon to sate my curiosities and eventually seek out Lord Halboncrant. I only passed through the city on my return from Merridweigh Gardens, knotting up my courage and returning to Evercrown Cemetery—by way of the road and front gate this time. The grave tenders paid me absolutely no mind, leaving me to suspect that our decision not to enter through the main road the night previous had been grossly overcautious. I found the Venadahlia mausoleum easily in the afternoon light. It was in perfect repair—the door closed and without a sign of our disturbance or the other tragedies I knew had happened within. The great stone door was still unlocked, though. With a few bolstering breaths I had them open and was back inside.

It was just how I'd left it. The charred bones and ashes of a dozen counts scarred the mausoleum floor, the cold body of Sayn the boatman among them. Garmand was there too, a look of wide-eyed terror frozen on features that looked withered and wasted, as though he hadn't just died, but had every spark of vitality drawn from him. I looked away quickly. What wasn't there was both an immediate relief and a new mystery. Liscena, Garmand's sister, who had found the body with the remarkable dagger, was nowhere to be seen. Neither was that dreadful weapon. But most obviously, neither was the spectre of what might be Prince Leiralt. In the dust, the few flakes of his tattered corpse remained, crumbled to near nothingness with the spirit loosed from its rotten confines.

I departed swiftly and was back in the city before dark. With no idea where a century-old prince might go, or even generally how the dead might while away the daylight hours, I sought out what I could about the four families Barttley had mentioned. Most gossip surrounded Ginieus Halboncrant, the only scion of the Halboncrant line residing in Ardis, a lecher who seemed to personally consume most of the profit—and product—of his family's local fisheries. I had hoped to probe him on what he might know of his ancestor's crime, or at the very least warn him that a murderous spirit might bear him ill will, but my audience did not go as well as I had hoped.

Here and there along the avenue, shadowy travelers made their way through the night, drifting through irregular islands of yellow light as the ill-tended street lamps flickered and guttered in the chill evening breeze. The whole day had been a debacle, and a near-deadly one at that, serving only to remind me why I so purposefully avoided the company of the city's so-called nobility. It'd had been nearly two days since I'd had an honest sleep, and though the house I'd been squatting in was no palace, it was warm, dry, and relatively safe. With a long sigh, I cut into an alley, plotting the shortest path home.

I made one turn in the dark and he was there.

Royal and terrible, his severe features girded in the imposing finery of a bygone Ustalavic lord, he was like something from legend, a being that had lost his own life but won a greater existence for the reputation that persisted past his death. A crown adorned his head, one similar to that of royal heirs, but twisted and made morbid in death, transformed into a symbol of dread. He was as I had seen him the previous night, but somehow even more real, more present than before, though still his extremities grew transparent and faded away on ethereal eddies, making it impossible to mistake him for a living man. The squalor of an Ardis alley was no place for this creature, and the filth-smearred walls seem to shudder in dread of his very presence. I'd nearly run into him, and my flesh recoiled at the thought of his touch, both at the unnatural collision of

flesh and soul and at the knowledge that everything I'd seen him encounter had died. He looked down at me, gripping me with his gaze, judging the shocked expression upon my face. I waited for the blow to come, the touch that meant death, tensing in preparation—but it didn't fall.

With grim intent he was around me and moving silently away, fixed on some purpose of which I was not a factor. I gasped, releasing the breath I'd momentarily clung to, thinking it was my last. I hesitated only an instant, knowing I might never have the chance again.

"Prince Leiralt!" I called after the spectre, trying to keep fear's waver out of my voice. The spirit came to a slow halt, and turned to fully face me. A ghostly blade that hadn't been there a moment ago now shimmered in his hand—the same blade he had slain Sayn and Garmand with. His gaze was his only response, a swordsman's challenge to a potential adversary.

I hadn't thought this far ahead—being honest with myself, I'd half expected to be dead by now.

"Your highness. I was among those in the crypt last night—those who released you. I know it must have been a shock, but we meant you no harm, and any who did are long dead. Is there some way I can help you find your rest?"

Again his gaze locked me in place, his insubstantial features ever in motion, flickering like a silent blaze between expressions of hatred, rage, fear, confusion, and sorrow, all faster than the eye could follow. When his voice came, it was hollow and from a great distance, as if his being were merely the aperture through which the sound escaped.

"You would do well to be away from me, my lady. There is no rest. I am doomed. And so will those around me be doomed." With that, he was moving away again.

I pursued him out of the alley, halting in the street as he reached the iron bars of the Halboncrant home and passed through as though they were so much fog. For long minutes I waited, watching the darkened house through the foliage. But I fled when the screaming began.

"The squalor of an Ardis alley was no place for this creature."





Bestiary

The people of Gillamoor returned that day. Into their homes and places of work they went, into temples and into taverns, into their yards and into streets. The town knew motion and activity it hadn't since the stranger first began peddling in the town square, passing his silent sickness along to any who dared bargain or browse. The survivors of Gillamoor had their tearful wishes granted that day; their loved ones were restored, and—in death—their families would never be separated again."

—Report on the Gillamoor Plague

Errors of nature and civilization take root in this month's Bestiary, revealing just a few of the menaces known to haunt the Shudderwood and the Furrows, two key settings of "Broken Moon."

CROSSING COUNTIES

In the PCs' adventures this month, they find themselves needing to travel more than 130 miles across Ustalav (see page 45 for details). How the PCs journey is largely up to them, but if the GM has the *Carrion Crown Poster Map Folio*, he might present the map of Ustalav and allow the PCs to chart their own course. Along the way, there are three settlements they might pass through. These communities are summarized here, along with stat blocks (explained in the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*). More details can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Rule of Fear*.

Berus: This community boasts strange abundance, enjoying year-round bounty. The residents pay thanks to their newly "rediscovered" local goddess, Mother Sighle, for their prosperity, but are becoming increasing insular.

Chastel: Although the largest settlement in the county of Lozeri, Chastel retains much of the feel of a frontier trading post, boasting a sizable market, stockyards, and lumber mills run and frequented by the town's rough residents.

Morcei: The simple folk of Morcei lived quiet lives until they felled the ancient tree called "Daemon Hand." The gigantic bats that flew forth now inhabit the community's church house at the will of some terrible winged lord.

BERUS

N small town

Corruption +2; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +0; **Law** +2; **Lore** +2; **Society** -2

Qualities insular, pious (Mother Sighle)

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 414 (398 humans, 9 halflings, 7 other)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 5th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6

CHASTEL

NE large town

Corruption +1; **Crime** -4; **Economy** +2; **Law** +2; **Lore** -1; **Society** +6

Qualities prosperous, strategic location, superstitious

Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 2,385 (2,298 humans, 68 halflings, 19 other)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 15,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

ENCOUNTERS IN THE SHUDDERWOOD

d% roll	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-8	1d4 grizzly bears	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
9-20	1d6 hunters	6	GMG 257
21-23	1 will-o'-wisp	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 277
24-33	1d8 werewolves	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 198
34-47	1d6 dire wolves	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
48-55	2d6 Varisian wanderers	7	GMG 290
56-59	1d6 werebats	7	see page 88
60-67	2d6 ettercaps	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 129
68-71	1 giant tarantula	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 256
72-74	3 green hags	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 167
75-81	1 quickwood	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 228
82-83	1 weaverworm	8	see page 86
84-96	2d8 werewolves	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 198
97-100	1 witchfire	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 284

ENCOUNTERS IN ARDEAL

d% roll	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-3	1 spring-heeled jack	3	<i>Pathfinder</i> #43 88
4-18	2d6 farmers	4	GMG 309
19-21	1 nightmare	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 216
22-23	1 mothman	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 194
24-36	2d6 Varisian wanderers	7	GMG 290
37-42	2d6 ankhegs	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 15
43-46	2d6 chupacabras	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 57
47-49	2d6 derros	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 70
50-53	1d6 Large animate objects	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #43 80
54-61	1d8 mandragoras	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 185
62-71	1d8 scarecrows	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 238
72-79	2d8 werewolves	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 198
80-84	2d10 apocalypse zombies	9	see page 90
85-89	1d4 hangman trees	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 152
90-95	2d10 giant bumble bees	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 43
96-100	1d4 gorgons	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 165

MORCEI

NG hamlet

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

Society -3

Qualities pious (Pharasma)

Danger +15, **Disadvantages** hunted

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 58 (57 humans, 1 half-elf)




MARKETPLACE

Base Value 160 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd

Minor Items 1d6

VILKACIS

Within a swirling mass of frigid air manifests the form of a bestial specter. Claws the size of daggers lash menacingly before its half-bestial, half-humanoid form, and its narrow eyes glow with a smoldering malevolence.

VILKACIS	CR 7	  
XP 9,600		
CE Medium undead (incorporeal)		
Init +10; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +15		
DEFENSE		
AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 13 (+3 deflection, +6 Dex)		
hp 85 (10d8+4)		
Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +9		
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, incorporeal, rejuvenation; DR 10/silver; Immune cold, undead traits		
Weaknesses vulnerability to silver		
OFFENSE		
Speed fly 50 ft. (perfect)		
Melee 2 incorporeal touches +15 (1d8 plus 2d6 cold)		
Special Attacks bestial possession, curse of lycanthropy (DC 18)		
STATISTICS		
Str —, Dex 23, Con —, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 17		
Base Atk +7; CMB +13; CMD 26 (30 vs. trip)		
Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness		
Skills Fly +14, Intimidate +16, Perception +15, Stealth +19		
Languages Common		
SQ lycanthropic empathy		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any land		
Organization solitary		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		

Bestial Possession (Su) A vilkacis is a spirit of savagery and can take control of other beings, afflicting them with its savage nature. Once per round, the vilkacis can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th), except it does not require a receptacle and lasts for up to 3 hours (or a number of hours equal to the vilkacis's Charisma modifier, whichever is greater). To use this ability, the vilkacis must be adjacent to the target. The target can resist the attack with a successful DC 18 Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same vilkacis's bestial possession for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Upon being possessed by a vilkacis, the target takes on a number of bestial features, most notably growing claws and vicious fangs, and flies into a savage rage. The victim gains two claws and a bite natural attack appropriate to its size (1d4 and 1d6 for Medium creatures; see Table 3–1 on page

302 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*), and gains a barbarian's greater rage class ability (see page 31 of the *Core Rulebook*). This rage lasts for as long as the victim is being possessed by the vilkacis. After the possession ends, the victim is fatigued for a period of time equal to double the duration of the possession. The victim also gains low-light vision and scent. The possessed creature loses all of these natural attacks and abilities immediately when the vilkacis leaves its body.

Curse of Lycanthropy (Su) Any humanoid who is bitten by a creature possessed by a vilkacis must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or be infected with lycanthropy as if bitten by a werewolf. If the victim's size is not within one size category of the possessed creature's, this ability has no effect. The save DC uses the vilkacis's ability scores and is Charisma-based.

Lycanthropic Empathy (Ex) A vilkacis or creature possessed by a vilkacis can communicate and empathize with wolves and dire wolves. It can use its Diplomacy to alter such an animal's attitude, and when so doing gains a +4 racial bonus on the check.

Rejuvenation (Su) A vilkacis that is destroyed in combat restores itself after 2d4 days. The only way to permanently do away with a vilkacis is to locate its *canopic stone*, the occult artifact that binds it to the Material Plane, and then destroy the artifact in the presence of the vilkacis's mortal remains. Once the *canopic stone* is destroyed, the vilkacis can no longer rejuvenate and can be destroyed as normal.

Vulnerability to Silver (Su) Vilkacis are particularly susceptible to silver. A vilkacis struck with a silver weapon takes an additional 2d6 points of damage. If a creature under the effects of a vilkacis's bestial possession is damaged by a silver weapon, it also takes this extra damage and receives another saving throw to resist the bestial possession. If successful, the possession ends, and the vilkacis is driven into an adjacent square and cannot use its bestial possession ability again until the following day.

Beings of pure malevolence and destruction, vilkacis arise from the souls of the most desperate and brutal werewolves as spirits burning with the need for bloodshed and vengeance. Specters of savagery escaped from remains tainted by lycanthropy, vilkacis desire to wear mortal flesh and again revel in the vicious ecstasy of hunting and killing. Some see these beings as malign manifestations of the lycanthropic curse—the spirits of the infamous affliction itself—while others know them as the deathly continuance of lives consumed by lycanthropy. In either case, these ravenous spirit-beasts seek only to garb themselves in the skins of deadly hunters and revel in bloodshed once more.

Vilkacis typically look like more savage versions of the werewolves they were in life, appearing in their hybrid forms with exaggerated fangs and claws.

ECOLOGY

Although a vilkacis exists only in a spectral form, its *canopic stone* permanently binds the spirit to the Material Plane. So long as the stone exists, the creature remains stuck between life and death, its spirit strangling on its own rage.

When a vilkacis seizes possession of a victim, the host takes on an altered appearance reflective of the beast within its body. The victim undergoes severe physical dysmorphia. Musculature enlarges, posture becomes stooped, and hands curl into gashing claws. The face takes on a bestial appearance. The victim's jaws extend and grow into jagged, wolfish fangs, while the brow thickens and the pupils widen to black pools that radiate a mad, feral stare. In this state, the vilkacis-possessed creature froths with the curse of lycanthropy and can pass the curse on as though it were a werewolf. Although such a possessed creature might pass on the infamous disease, its own transformation typically lasts only a matter of hours. A vilkacis is ever searching for stronger and more vicious hunters to use as tools in slaking its eternal bloodlust; if it finds a particularly promising host, it might visit and possess the favored body again and again for its rampages.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Vilkacis most commonly appear in areas where human settlements border or stand within wildernesses. While they are commonly associated with werewolves, the folklore of many nomadic and nature-worshipping societies contains stories of creatures whose descriptions bear strong resemblance to vilkacis. Most haunt the territories where they were created, staying within range of their *canopic stones*, and hunting within the lands they prowled in life. However, those with the ability to summon vilkacis usually attempt to direct them toward specific prey. This often proves a dangerous or even fatal proposition, however, and few reports exist of anyone successfully mastering a vilkacis.

CREATING A VILKACIS

While many vilkacis spontaneously arise under the light of the full moon from the remains of the most savage werewolves, some foul spellcasters seek out the corpses of such bestial murderers, attempting to enslave their spirits and harness their capacity for brutality to fulfill the spellcasters' dark whims. To do this, a spellcaster must prepare a *canopic stone*, a talisman that typically takes the form of a ceramic totem or amulet bound in silver. Upon creating this object, the bearer can summon a vilkacis once per day. The stone grants no control over the vilkacis, but the creature will not attack or attempt to possess the stone's bearer. Upon being summoned, the vilkacis turns its attention to the nearest creature other

than the summoner, attempting to possess the creature's body and go on a murderous rampage. Using a *canopic stone* to summon a vilkacis is considered an evil act.

Although many vilkacis are purposefully created and employed by evil spellcasters, some manifest spontaneously. These beings wander and rampage as they please, but still are bound to a talisman similar to a *canopic stone*. This spontaneously created artifact can be utilized by those who discover it and discern its importance in the same way as can a *canopic stone* created specifically to summon and control a vilkacis, and typically takes the form of the dead werewolf's skull, the silver weapon that killed the werewolf, or a talisman it bore in life.

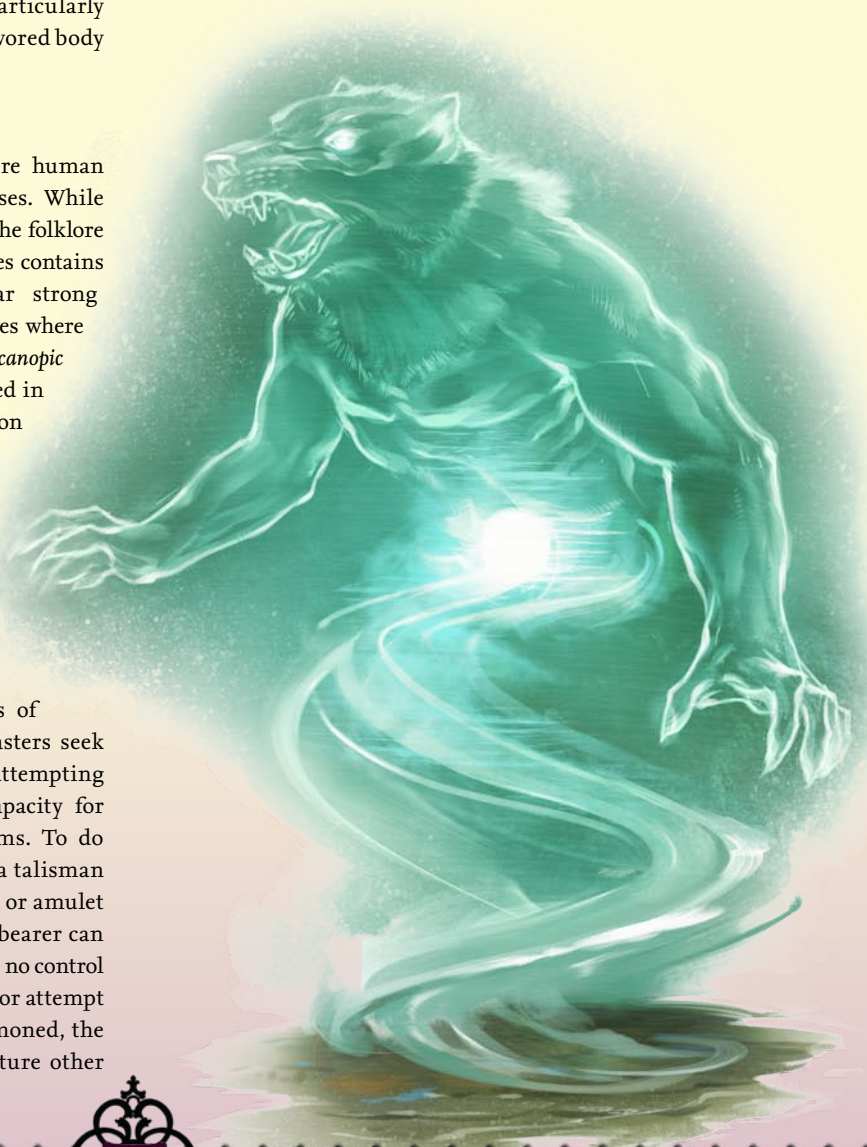
CANOPIC STONE

CL 12th; Price 28,800 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, create undead, rage;

Cost 14,400 gp



WEAVERWORM

The bloated white segments of a maggot's body erupt in a torso of mixed feminine and insectile features. Pale humanoid skin and carapace meld together beneath a face with segmented eyes and mandibles chittering a song of discordant alien clicks and hisses, as overlong carapace claws weave cords of thick webbing between them.

WEAVERWORM

CR 8



XP 4,800

NE Huge aberration

Init +18; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;

Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)

hp 95 (10d8+50)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee 1 bite +9 (2d6+7), 2 claw +9 (1d8+7 plus paralytic nails)

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

Special Attacks drag, weaver's song, paralytic nails, web (+11 ranged, DC 19, 10 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 30 (can't be tripped)

Feats Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +8, Climb +19, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Perception +10, Perform (string) +14, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +6

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any forests or hills

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Drag (Ex) A weaverworm that successfully entangles a victim with its web attack can retract the web, dragging the victim into its clutches. Each round, the entangled victim can attempt a CMD check to escape. Upon a failed check, the weaverworm forcibly drags its victim 20 feet toward it.

Paralytic Nails (Ex) A weaverworm's nails secrete a potent paralytic agent. Any creature damaged by its claw attacks must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1 round. In addition, the weaverworm's nails break off in the bodies of those it paralyzes. A paralyzed creature must make another save to avoid being paralyzed again at the beginning of its round, doing so every round until the nail is removed as a full-round action. A weaverworm's nail can be removed with either a DC 12 Strength check, which removes the nail and deals 1d4 points of damage to the

victim, or a DC 14 Heal check, which deals no damage. A weaverworm's paralytic nails don't affect any creature that is immune to poison. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Weaver's Song (Su) A weaverworm can play its webs like a grotesque musical instrument. When doing so, all non-weaverworms within 300 feet must make DC 18 Will saves. Those who make their saves are unaffected. Those who fail are fascinated, and on their turn, move toward the weaverworm by the most direct means available. If the path leads into a dangerous area, such as through fire or off a cliff, that creature receives a second saving throw to end the effect before moving into peril. A victim within 5 feet of the weaverworm simply stands and listens. This effect continues for as long as the weaverworm performs and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. Whether or not the save is successful, the victim is immune to the same weaverworm's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Foul servants of the goddess of disease and gluttony, weaverworms—or simply “weavers,” as they are often called—are terrifying abominations, combining the features of predatory insects, monstrously huge larvae, and deathly pale humanoids. Creations of Urgathoa forgotten by their cruel mistress long ago, these horrors seek out the dark places of the world, sowing murder and fear from the darkness, and all the while raising unnatural songs in praise of the goddess of gluttony.

Weaverworms typically measure 18 feet long, though the most bloated weigh upward of a ton.

ECOLOGY

A weaverworm's lower body is approximately 3 feet in diameter, and is divided into numerous segments that secrete a viscous film. The creature moves by expanding and contracting these segments, giving it an incredible range of motion, as well as the capability to scale surfaces with an ease equal to that with which they move across the ground.

Weaverworms are also known for their claws' deadly nails, which function more like the stingers or barbs of many insects than weapons alone. These nails contain a potent paralytic fluid that passes into the bloodstream of a weaverworm's victim, leaving it vulnerable to slaughter and ready for consumption. The nails often break off while embedded in the victim's body, where they continue pumping the weaverworm's toxins, filling potential meals with dose after dose of paralytic excretions. Occasionally, those who encounter a weaverworm and flee find themselves paralyzed well after they think they've escaped, again falling into the deadly clutches of the pursuing abomination.

The flesh of the creature's underbelly is relatively soft and slightly rubbery, running in shades of sickly brown

flesh to pale blue. The exposed carapace is tougher and dotted with thousands of short bristles. Over time the weaverworm adjusts to match whatever environment it dwells in. The upper portion of the creature has a female body, but one disfigured by insectile traits. Such monstrous malformations vary between weavers, though all have deadly claws and heads with a terrible assortment of mandibles, pincers, spines, and segmented eyes. Typically, these appearances are similar to the faces of predatory insects common to the region the weaverworm inhabits, with spider features proving most prevalent, but the visages of horrible mantises and monstrous annelids also arise in warmer climates.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Much like larger arachnids, weaverworms are chiefly ambush hunters. They live in solitary burrows, near or within old ruins and similar places that tend to attract prey. While they tend to avoid colder climes, they prove resilient to most extremes of weather and terrain, tending to choose somewhat isolated areas where their hunting goes unnoticed. Typically, once a weaverworm claims a burrow, she remains there for life. In this manner, weaverworms are largely consistent, enough so that they frequently catch the attention of primitive humanoids such as goblins, orcs, or, in particular, ettercaps who believe them the embodiment of various gods or fiends and pay them worship. The relationship between weaverworms and their worshipers tends to be brutal, as weaverworms have few qualms about eating worshipers who come too close.

ORIGINS

Among the vast libraries of mysteries and ancient legends documented and passed on by the faithful of Pharasma is the tale of Lamia of Avalos, a seer of Pharasma from a distant land who blasphemed against the goddess and was transformed into a beastlike creature denied the judgment promised sentient beings in death, as were her sister sibyls. Yet this punishment unleashed greater terror than even the Lady of Graves might have imagined. Unknown to the furious goddess and her false worshipers, another divinity had noticed the tragic drama. Urgathoa, goddess of disease and undeath, watched and laughed at the terror wrought by the goddess of prophecy upon her vicious servants. Delighted and inspired, Urgathoa went into the world to wreak a similar horror.

The Pallid Princess searched the world over, and among her servants living and undead, found none who displeased her enough to curse as Pharasma had her priestess. So she turned her mind toward granting a rare

and terrible blessing. Deep in a tangled forest she happened upon a brood of maggots and lowly worms, and in them found all she delighted in—filth and disease, hunger and life amid the dead. Momentarily delighted, she raised up this terrible swarm and molded them and gave them a single body, terrible but not unlike her favored daughters. The result was a monster, a servant of hungers and foul dooms, part grotesque insect, part poisonous fanatic. And the goddess was pleased.

Yet Urgathoa is a fickle goddess; her momentary pleasure soon passed, and she left her terror in the forest, content to let it praise her, yet unwilling to care for its needs or safety. So the weaverworm crawled through the forest, insane and terrifying, preying upon what she could and sowing new generations in fits of atrocity—all the while plucking out Urgathoa's praises upon strands of deadly webbing.



WEREBAT

This sharp-featured, angular humanoid has protruding fangs, a scruffy-haired body, and thin, membranous tissue connecting its arms to its sides.

WEREBAT (HUMAN FORM)

CR 3



XP 800

Human natural werebat fighter 3

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 29 (3d10+12)

Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk bastard sword +7 (1d10+2/19–20)

Ranged mwk longbow +6 (1d8/x3)

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 17

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Skills Climb +2, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Survival +7, Swim +1

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, change shape (human, hybrid, and bat; polymorph), lycanthropic empathy (bats and dire bats)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or hills

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–5)

Treasure NPC gear (chainmail, light steel shield, masterwork longbow with 20 arrows, masterwork bastard sword, other treasure)

WEREBAT (HYBRID FORM)

CR 3

XP 800

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 29 (3d10+12)

Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, DR 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +7 (1d6+4 plus curse of lycanthropy), 2 claws +7 (1d4+4)

STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD 18

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Skills Climb +3, Fly +4, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Survival +7, Swim +2; Racial Modifiers +4 Fly

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, change shape (human, hybrid, and bat; polymorph), lycanthropic empathy (bats and dire bats)

Fusing the primal thirst of the ravenous bat and the unique abilities of individual humanoids, the werebat is a hybrid creature constituting both bloodlust and cunning. As opposed to vampires, who share some similar abilities with werebats and are often confused with them, these lycanthropic beings are often more savage in their behavior and far less calculating than the shapeshifting undead. As though to prove a point, some werebats go out of their way to take down powerful vampire lords and commandeer the vampires' higher position—though many also become slaves to such undead after underestimating their prowess.

Natural werebats typically look like normal members of their race, though they often have dark hair, slight frames, severe features, and slightly pointed ears. They typically stand slightly taller than normal for their race, but weigh significantly less.



ECOLOGY

Werebats exalt in the freedom of flight and delight in the taste of flesh. Whereas some lycanthropes try to maintain some sense of humanity while living with their condition, werebats are less inclined to do so and tend to abuse their powers. Their hunger for blood and the chaos often resulting from such impulsions tend to make wholesome living difficult for werebats, and so most simply give in to their bestial natures.

Those who wish for a less gruesome and more respectable lifestyle are in constant struggle with forces both internal and external to themselves. Natural werebats can control their primal urges, but are subject to the corrupting atmosphere that is werebat society, always under pressure to submit to the influence of a werebat master. Afflicted werebats have it far worse, their bodies in constant conflict with themselves in addition to the external forces urging them to give in.

One of the most telltale signs of a werebat is blindness—about half of natural werebats are born with poor vision and need strong spectacles, and some are even completely blind. They make up for this deficiency with other heightened senses, however, and possess sharp hearing as well as strong senses of taste and smell. In cultures where it does not behoove one to have a lycanthropic background, werebats with poor vision tend to simply go without glasses, as their keen ears are more than able to compensate.

Of course, the most obvious sign of werebat lycanthropy appears beneath the full moon, when an afflicted werebat cannot help but transform into its bestial shape. Werebats in animal form are far more savage looking than average bats, and resemble their dire cousins to a greater extent.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Werebats possess a pack mentality akin to their bestial kin's, and are able to fly in large, coordinated packs and execute complex maneuvers easily and agilely. This instinctual group dynamic manifests itself in both lycanthropic and humanoid form, the surrounding society reflecting this pack mentality in legal as well as civil configuration. Entire packs of werebats often live in close proximity to one another, and sometimes even entire towns fall to the power of the winged lycanthropes.

Almost always serving a higher master and subscribing to an unspoken understanding of "one for all," werebats place great importance on meetings and gatherings, holding such events at barren locations such as caves and abandoned castles where the horde will be undisturbed. These gatherings are largely ornamental in purpose and merely provide the afflicted individuals with some sense of unity rather than being a means to any constructive end. Nevertheless, it is a great taboo in werebat culture to show any disrespect toward collaborative efforts or to each other during assemblies, and any infighting is met with harsh punishment.

WEREBAT MASTERS

Werebats are instinctually inclined to participate in a group mentality, taking flight with other lycanthropic beings in pursuit of a singular goal set forth by a werebat master. Werebat masters are often simply the strongest of the werebats in the region, though in werebat culture—where physical strength is the key determiner of social standing—this means a great deal.

When a rogue werebat steps out of line to challenge a werebat master, a short period of chaos is sure to follow, with loyal followers of the reigning master eagerly seeking to show their dedication by swiftly removing the renegade and any allies he may possess.

Of course, a werebat master, having so many eyes and ears at her disposal, is never caught by surprise when a rebellious individual seeks her out, and often welcomes the challenge should the dissenter live long enough to make it to her doorstep. A werebat challenger who has defeated loyalist assassins has already proven himself as a worthy adversary, and long-standing werebat masters revel in the thrill of a deadly battle, so mundane has their life of leisure often become.


Sometimes non-afflicted humanoids seek to challenge a werebat master. Whether these self-proclaimed heroes are hunters of fortune, power, or freedom, they are greeted with far less respect than a rebelling werebat, and werebat masters do what they can to immediately rid themselves of the nuisances. Far more vicious and eager in their pursuit of these unturned individuals, werebat assassins waste little time in exterminating them, so such "heroes" are few and far between.

Turning an individual into a werebat is not ritualistic or organized by any means, unlike other facets of werebat culture. Werebats themselves feel indifferent about transforming unaffected individuals into afflicted werebats; the disease is spread more often because a werebat doesn't have enough time to finish slaying her victim before she is caught mid-act or her prey has otherwise escaped her, carrying a cursed scratch as a memento of the occasion. Only later does the individual realize what has happened, and usually too late. In paranoid societies, the horror upon realizing one's own transformation is usually matched with self-loathing and sometimes even drastic measures such as suicide—for in certain regions werebat-hate is so strong that it is easier to simply end it oneself than face the imminent and almost always malicious persecution of one's peers.

ZOMBIES

Still bearing the dirt of the grave and the wounds that meant its death, this rotting corpse shambles forth, limbs slack, eyes dead, but driven on by a unholy need to kill.

The following is a toolbox of stat blocks and new rules for GMs to use anytime they wish to represent the menace of the walking dead, presenting the threat of individual shambling corpses, undead plagues, lifeless behemoths, and zombie lords ready to threaten adventurers of any level. More details on and options for creating zombies can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Horrors Revisited*.

ZOMBIE WOLF
CR 1



XP 400
Fast zombie wolf
NE Medium undead
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE
AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 16 (3d8+3)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE
Speed 60 ft.
Melee bite +4 (1d6+3 plus trip), slam +4 (1d6+3)
Special Attacks quick strikes

STATISTICS
Str 15, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17 (21 vs. trip)
Feats Toughness^B

ECOLOGY
Environment cold or temperate forests
Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)
Treasure none

APOCALYPSE ZOMBIE
CR 2


XP 600
Relentless brain-eating plague human zombie
NE Medium undead
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +0


DEFENSE
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 22 (4d8+4)
Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE
Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +6 (1d6+3 plus disease and grab), slam +6 (1d6+3 plus disease and grab)
Special Attacks brain-eating, create spawn, death burst, quick strikes

STATISTICS
Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 18
Feats Toughness^B
Skills Climb +11, Survival +0 (+4 to track by smell)

ECOLOGY
Environment any
Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)
Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES
Brain-Eating (Ex) After killing an opponent, the zombie's ravenous nature takes hold and it uses its next turn to break open its victim's skull and eat the brain. This prevents others from raising the body from the dead by any method that requires an intact corpse.
Create Spawn (Su) Anyone killed after being bitten by an apocalypse zombie rises as an apocalypse zombie 2d6 hours later unless the corpse is blessed or similar measures are taken.
Disease (Su) The zombie's natural attacks carry the zombie rot disease. *Zombie rot*: Bite or slam—injury; *save* Fort DC 12; *onset* 1d4 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d2 Con, this damage cannot be healed while the creature is infected; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. Anyone who dies while infected rises as an apocalypse zombie in 2d6 hours.

GIANT ZOMBIE
CR 8


XP 4,800
Storm giant zombie
NE Huge undead
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE
AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural, –2 size)
hp 126 (23d8+23)
Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13
DR 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits




OFFENSE
Speed 35 ft. (50 ft. base), swim 30 ft. (40 ft. base)
Melee mwk broken greatsword +29 (4d6+22) or slam +30 (2d6+22)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

STATISTICS
Str 41, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +17; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 45
Feats Toughness^B
Skills Swim +19
SQ staggered
Gear breastplate, masterwork broken greatsword

ECOLOGY
Environment any warm
Organization solitary, pair, or band (3–6)
Treasure none

ZOMBIE LORD

Gore stains this zombie's tattered bridal gown, a grimly appropriate garment for the rotting corpse inside.

ZOMBIE LORD	CR 3			
XP 800				
Female zombie lord human monk 3				
NE Medium undead				
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10				
DEFENSE				
AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +2 Wis)				
hp 30 (5 HD; 2d8+3d8+8)				
Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; +2 vs. enchantment				
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion; DR 5/slashing; Immune undead traits				
OFFENSE				
Speed 40 ft.				
Melee unarmed strike +6 (1d6+3) or flurry of blows unarmed strike +5/+5 (1d6+3)				
Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (3/day, DC 13)				
STATISTICS				
Str 17, Dex 16, Con —, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 10				
Base Atk +3; CMB +7; CMD 22				
Feats Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Nimble Moves, Power Attack, Step Up, Stunning Fist, Toughness ^B				
Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +11, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +10, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +11				
Languages Abyssal, Common				
SQ fast movement, maneuver training, still mind				
ECOLOGY				
Environment any				
Organization solitary, pair, or cult (3–6)				
Treasure NPC Gear				

CREATING A ZOMBIE LORD

Zombie lords are the fleshy counterparts of skeletal champions. “Zombie Lord” is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature (other than an undead) that has a minimum Intelligence of 3. This corporeal creature is referred to hereafter as the base creature.

CR: A zombie lord's CR is +1 higher than that of a normal zombie with the same HD.

Type: The creature's type becomes undead. It keeps subtypes save for alignment subtypes and subtypes that indicate kind.

Alignment: Any evil.

Armor Class: Natural armor as per zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288).

Hit Dice: Change all of the creature's racial HD to d8s, then add 2 racial Hit Dice to this total (creatures without racial HD gain 2). HD from class levels are unchanged.

Saves: Base save bonuses for racial Hit Dice are Fort +1/3 HD, Ref +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD + 2.

Defensive Abilities: A zombie lord gains DR 5/slashing and channel resistance +4, in addition to undead traits.

Speed: As standard zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288).

Attacks: As standard zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 289).

Abilities: Str +2, Dex +2. As undead, it has no Constitution score.

BAB: A zombie lord's BAB for racial HD is equal to 3/4 its HD.

Skills: Gains skill ranks per racial Hit Die equal to 4 + its Int modifier. Class skills for racial HD are Climb, Disguise, Fly, Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (religion), Perception, Sense Motive, Spellcraft, and Stealth. Skills gained from class levels remain unchanged.

Feats: A zombie lord gains Toughness as a bonus feat.

Special Qualities: A zombie lord does not gain the staggered special quality.



WAKE OF THE WATCHER

by Greg A. Vaughan

The trail of the Whispering Way leads the PCs to the puritanical fishing community of Thrushmoor, where the death cultists were recently sighted. But the cult's interest lies beyond Thrushmoor, in the infamous village of Illmarsh. Should the adventurers dare the marshy coast, they'll find a place gone terribly wrong, where years of inbreeding and unholy devotion have invited a terror from the edges of madness. Can the PCs discover Illmarsh's secrets without losing their sanity? Or will they become the first victims in a war between horrors from beneath the seas and nightmares from beyond the stars?

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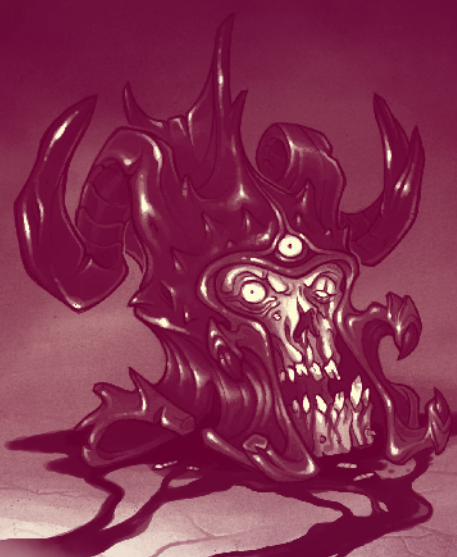
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Eye of Judgment

Tales of werewolves, lycanthropes, and stranger shapeshifters are numerous and well known among the people of Ustalav, as is folklore for warding off and slaying such creatures. Among such tales is the story that the full moon is in fact the unblinking eye of the goddess Pharasma, observing all who she will inevitably judge in death. It's said that, under her scrutiny, all is revealed for what it truly is, and while the righteous retain their forms, the evil are revealed for the beasts they truly are. Thus, there is little sympathy among Ustalav's people for werereatures of any sort, for to them, these beings' bestial forms are merely glimpses of the savagery inherent in their hearts.



The Head of Lecit Ghazts

Historians will never know the sum of the atrocities committed during the War without Rivals, the conflict that resulted in the wastes known as the Furrows. But Lecit Ghazts knows. An officer among Barstoi's knights, the greedy Ghazts took it upon himself to raid local noble estates. Eventually Ghazts came to the House of Ensland, where he found something unexpected: a devil with a deck of cards. While accounts of their game vary, in the end Ghazts lost, having wagered his very body. Now the undying head of Lecit Ghazts rolls across the Furrows, eternally seeking someone bold enough to win back his body—or to con others out of theirs.

Blood Moon Madness

Among the shadows of the infamous Shudderwood lurk deadly beasts, savage madmen, and monsters that blur the line between the two. Into this fearful wilderness the heroes follow the path of the Whispering Way's nefarious necromancers. But when the cultists' passage throws the forest's tenuous peace into chaos, the adventurers find the only island of safety amid the savage wilds transformed into the killing grounds of a shapeshifting monster. Can the PCs escape the terror-plagued wilderness and unveil the death cultists' true plot at last? Or will the lycanthropic curse claim them as well?

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* continues the *Carrion Crown* Adventure Path and includes:

- "Broken Moon," a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 7th-level characters, by Tim Hitchcock.
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