

# PATHFINDER<sup>®</sup>

## ADVENTURE PATH<sup>™</sup>



HELL'S VENGEANCE<sup>™</sup>

### THE INFERNO GATE

by Patrick Renie



# CHELIAX





# PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH

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## ON THE COVER



Once more, Wayne Reynolds gives us a look at the latest nefarious villain for the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path on this volume's cover—the iconic assassin, Emil Kovkorin!



ADVENTURE PATH 3 OF 6

# THE INFERNO GATE

<b>Foreword</b> by Rob McCreary	2
<b>The Inferno Gate</b> by Patrick Renie	4
<b>NPC Gallery</b> by Patrick Renie	56
<b>Meet the Villain: Emil Kovkorin</b> by Joe Homes	60
<b>Roads to Hell</b> by F. Wesley Schneider	62
<b>Moloch, the Ashen Bull</b> by F. Wesley Schneider	68
<b>Pathfinder's Journal: Cowards and Crows 3 of 6</b> by Josh Vogt	74
<b>Bestiary</b> by Benjamin Bruck, Jason Keeley, Jeffrey Swank, and Mike Welham	80

## REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at [paizo.com/prd](http://paizo.com/prd).

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i>	ISWG	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM



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# RITUAL AND BETRAYAL

**T**he first two adventures of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path took place chiefly in urban environments. Both were set in small towns, and most of the action took place within the confines of Longacre and Kantaria or in locations just outside town. "The Hellfire Compact" and "Wrath of Thrune" were also two sides of the same coin, so to speak—in one, the PCs prevent an uprising against Thrune's rule, while they foment discontent with the Glorious Reclamation's governance and reassert Chelish control in the other.

This month's adventure, "The Inferno Gate," changes the focus by taking the evil PCs out of town and into the wilderness. There is still some urban excitement to be had, this time in the city of Senara, but the PCs won't be lingering there long. The Glorious Reclamation now rules Senara, and unlike in Kantaria, the PCs aren't

going to be able to take back the city by themselves. Instead, their patron, Archbaron Fex, has a different job for them. They'll be asked to leave the Glorious Reclamation alone and focus their efforts on collecting components for a ritual to close a portal to Hell—the Inferno Gate.

This quest turns "The Inferno Gate" into much more of a sandbox than the previous two adventures, which have relatively linear plots. The PCs must gather a variety of ritual components from locations scattered throughout the Whisperwood and in Senara. There is no set order to most of the encounters in this adventure; it is up to the PCs where they go to find these components and in what order. GMs will need to keep careful track of what information the PCs have learned, whether it's true or just rumors, where they have gone, and where they still want to go, as well as which components they



have and which they still need. GMs' primary task should be to ensure that the PCs have the opportunity to acquire all of the items they seek by the time they get to Fort Arego in Part 3 and to help guide them to the right areas if necessary (depending on the PCs' actions and movements, GMs might need to modify the location or timing of some encounters so the PCs have everything they need). At the same time, the open nature of this adventure also means that GMs should have plenty of opportunities to expand on the content provided in the adventure or add their own to it.

But this sandbox also has another subplot that won't play out until the very end of the adventure: Archbaron Fex's betrayal. The clues pointing toward this event—which the PCs can find while searching for the ritual components—are just as important as the components themselves, and GMs should be equally vigilant about keeping track of these clues and ensuring that the PCs discover them in time.

Archbaron Darellus Fex was introduced in the first Hell's Vengeance adventure as the PCs' patron, and his guidance has helped keep the evil PCs on track for the first three adventures. But no one wants to be a hired thug forever, and eventually, the time comes for the apprentice to replace the master. It's no fun being evil if you always have to follow orders, and most Pathfinder players want the chance for their characters to tell their own stories. At the beginning of "The Inferno Gate," the PCs are rewarded for their earlier efforts by promotions to Thrune Trusted Agents—the next rank in the Thrune hierarchy. It won't be long (if it hasn't already begun to happen) before they start to see Archbaron Fex as an obstacle to their own goals and ambitions. Unfortunately for them, Fex has realized this fact as well, and he has put a scheme into motion to take out his upstart minions so they can't threaten his own plans—preemptively betraying the PCs before they can turn on him.

Fex's betrayal is a major plot point in this adventure, but it will require finesse to give the PCs hints of their patron's treachery while still preventing them from learning the full details of Fex's plan before the time is right. Ideally, the PCs shouldn't be taken completely by surprise when Fex springs his trap, but neither should they confront the archbaron too early, before the adventure's conclusion.

Of course, players always do the unexpected, and though we've tried to address the most likely scenarios for the adventure's final encounter, it's impossible to anticipate every possibility. It is up to GMs to respond to the actions of their own players and tailor the conclusion of the adventure to them. With a little flexibility and creativity, GMs should have no problem giving their players a satisfying finale and placing the PCs on the path that leads to them becoming villains in their own right, rather than just someone else's pawns.

## THE GLORIOUS RECLAMATION'S PROGRESS

Throughout the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path, the Glorious Reclamation enjoys a variety of successes in its war against Cheliah and House Thrune, but if the PCs are successful in their endeavors during the campaign, the knights should also suffer some devastating defeats. The inside front cover of each volume of the Adventure Path displays a map of Cheliah with symbols of House Thrune and the Glorious Reclamation that tracks each side's progress in the wider conflict.

Following the actions of the evil PCs in "Wrath of Thrune," the town of Kantaria should once more be under Thrune control. While symbolically significant, Kantaria has no real strategic value at this point in the conflict, so the Glorious Reclamation is forced to surrender the town once the PC Thrune agents overthrow the new government established there by the Iomedean order.

However, as "The Inferno Gate" begins, the Glorious Reclamation has offset its loss of Kantaria with another major territorial conquest: the city of Senara. Close to the battlefields of the Sirmium Plains, Senara sits in the heart of the Whisperwood astride the Iseld and Malvesa Rivers, giving the Iomedaeans access to the forest's lumber as well as control of vital trade routes between Remesiana, Misarias, and the eastern Menador Mountains. Senara also provides a good staging point for the Glorious Reclamation's efforts to find the Inferno Gate, which lies hidden somewhere within the Whisperwood.

While the armies of both House Thrune and the Glorious Reclamation continue maneuvering against each other on the wide plains of Sirmium, the Iomedaeans are looking to secure their north flank by also taking the town of Misarias. Its position on the Isgeri border would strengthen the knights' lines of communication and supply between Senara and Citadel Dinyar; however, Cheliah has more troops stationed there to guard the border than would typically be found in a town of that size, making the conquest of Misarias more difficult than the Glorious Reclamation would like.

For now, however, Senara is likely to remain in the Glorious Reclamation's hands. It's not important enough for the Chelish army to worry about at this point, and local Thrune agents—the villainous PCs—have more important things to attend to right now than taking back another city from the Glorious Reclamation.

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### THE INFERNO GATE

#### FOREWORD

#### PART 1: CITY OF HELLSPAWN

#### PART 2: RITUAL PREPARATIONS

#### PART 3: THE DEVIL'S GATE

#### NPC GALLERY

#### MEET THE VILLAIN: EMIL KOVKORIN

#### ROADS TO HELL

#### MOLOCH: THE ASHEN BULL

#### PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL

#### BESTIARY





# THE INFERNO GATE

## PART 1: CITY OF HELLSPAWN

5

The villainous player characters continue to rise in service to House Thrune, becoming Thrune Trusted Agents. Tasked with retrieving an infernal talisman from the city of Senara, now in the hands of the Glorious Reclamation, the villains must contend with the tiefling thieves' guild that has stolen the item.

## PART 2: RITUAL PREPARATIONS

25

To close down an uncontrolled portal to Hell called the Inferno Gate, the villains must scour the depths of the Whisperwood for components for a magic ritual, facing celestials, a bandit prince, and virtuous forest denizens—possibly discovering clues to a traitor in their midst.

## PART 3: THE DEVIL'S GATE

39

Ritual components in hand, the Thrune agents must fight their way through knights of the Glorious Reclamation to reach the Inferno Gate. When they arrive at the portal, the villains face betrayal from a powerful ally, but have the opportunity to make a deal with a devil to gain control of the gate themselves.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Inferno Gate" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 7** The PCs begin this adventure at 7th level.
- 8** The PCs should reach 8th level while exploring the Whisperwood in Part 2.
- 9** The PCs should be 9th level before they enter Fort Arego's dungeons.

The PCs should be 10th level by the end of the adventure.



## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In 4305 AR, Cheliox began its period of imperial expansion now known as the Everwar, but the inhabitants of neighboring regions did not surrender to the Chelish invaders without a struggle. Many prisoners of war were interned in various prison camps set up along the borders of Cheliox's ever-growing sphere of influence.

At the fortified prison camp called Fort Arego, in the forbidding Whisperwood, prisoners labored long days cutting and loading timber for shipment down the River Iseld. When one inmate's show of defiance sparked an all-out riot in the prison, the outnumbered guards desperately sought any means possible to regain control. In their moment of need, a heresy devil named Visperthul appeared to the beleaguered Chelaxians and offered them aid in the form of infernal reinforcements. All the devil asked for in return was that the soldiers swear their allegiance to his patron, the archdevil Moloch, lord of Malebolge, the sixth layer of Hell.

The guards hastily agreed, and to finalize their covenant, Visperthul opened a portal to Malebolge in the dungeons beneath the prison. Multiheaded cerberi, hell hounds, and other infernal denizens flooded into the Material Plane through the gate and easily cut down the rebellious prisoners. But the guards' victory celebration soon turned sour as they began to realize the gravity of their bargain, for the portal to Hell remained open even after the riot had ended. When they attempted to back out of their deal with the heresy devil, Visperthul used the power of Moloch to transform them into undying, infernal soldiers of the General of Hell.

In the 4 centuries since, Fort Arego has been lost to the depths of the Whisperwood. The prison guards-turned-Hell-soldiers have guarded the portal—now known as the Inferno Gate—ever since their deal went awry, repelling those who would seek to close the gate and luring in anyone foolish enough to bargain with the devil Visperthul.

Darellus Fex, Archbaron of Longacre, first learned of the Inferno Gate while studying historical records of Cheliox's centuries-old conquests. In order to learn more about the portal and how he could use it to summon his own powerful minions, Fex summoned a heresy devil—a Hellish scholar and powerful summoner in its own right—and the devil that answered was none other than Visperthul, the ayngavhaul that originally opened the Inferno Gate beneath Fort Arego. After careful negotiation and discussion, Fex ended up swearing his soul to Visperthul in exchange for fiendish power. But the devil did not stop there; Visperthul further tempted the archbaron into heresy against Asmodeus and House Thrune by suggesting that Fex take control of the Inferno Gate himself, promising to give Fex the secrets of controlling the portal—under Visperthul's continuing guidance, of course—in exchange for four additional

souls that Fex must sacrifice to the devil. Once he learns how to operate the gate, Fex plans to take advantage of the current unrest in Cheliox to carve out an independent kingdom for himself using an army of hellish minions brought through the Inferno Gate.

For his sacrifices to Visperthul, Fex has chosen his newest agents—the unwitting player characters, who are already well on their way to becoming paragons of villainy. Fex has grown concerned that the PCs might soon attempt to supplant him, so he plans to use them to both carry out the final requirements for controlling the gate and serve as the final sacrifice to Visperthul. But Fex intends to betray not only the PCs, but his diabolic patron as well. After making his deal with Visperthul, Fex successfully researched the devil's true name and acquired a rare devil talisman called a *phlegmatic talisman*. Armed with Visperthul's true name and the talisman, Fex plans to bind the devil to the Inferno Gate to gain complete control of the portal, something Visperthul would never agree to willingly.

Meanwhile, the Glorious Reclamation has conquered the Chelish city of Senara, which puts a slight kink in Archbaron Fex's plans. He left his *phlegmatic talisman* in his Senara townhouse for safekeeping, but with Iomedean soldiers now patrolling the city's streets, Fex must send his patsies—the PCs—to retrieve the talisman for him. At the same time, the Glorious Reclamation has sent its own force into the Whisperwood, under the leadership of a knight banneret named Viona Kadarius, to search for the Inferno Gate and prevent House Thrune and its allies from making use of the portal. As multiple groups comb the Whisperwood for the location of the Inferno Gate, the heresy devil Visperthul waits beneath Fort Arego for the souls he has been promised.

## PART 1: CITY OF HELLSPAWN

The adventure starts in the town of Kantaria, which the player characters recaptured from the Glorious Reclamation in the last installment of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path, "Wrath of Thrune." While the PCs wait for members of House Narikopolus to return to Kantaria from Egorian and resume their rightful rule of the town, the PCs can run Kantaria as they see fit. This may take several days, or even weeks, depending on how interested they are in lingering in Kantaria, giving them time to resupply and gather their bearings before they get involved in the events of this adventure.

Sooner or later, however, House Narikopolus arrives in Kantaria to relieve the PCs of their station. At the same time, the accuser devil Razelago appears in town to deliver a missive to the PCs from their patron Archbaron Darellus Fex, recalling them to the town of Longacre for their next mission. The journey to Longacre is not detailed in this adventure, but it can be expanded upon at your discretion.

### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



## CLUES TO FEX'S TREACHERY

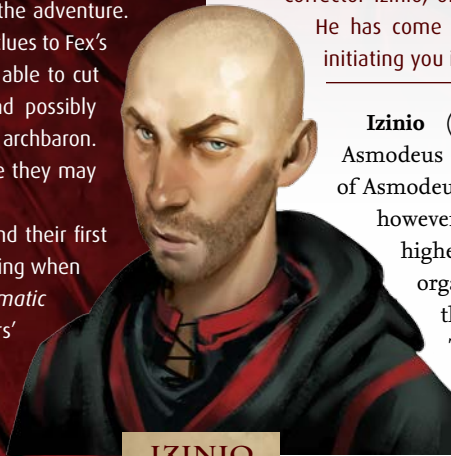
Archbaron Fex's scheme to lure the PCs to the Inferno Gate—with components of their own unwitting sacrifices in hand—is complex. But though Fex is cunning, he is not infallible, and his plot has left several loose threads that the PCs can pick up on throughout the adventure. If the PCs can discover any of these clues to Fex's impending betrayal, they might be able to cut their own deal with Visperthul and possibly turn the heresy devil against the archbaron. These clues and the locations where they may be found are summarized below.

**E4. River Cavern:** The PCs can find their first clue that Fex might be up to something when they retrieve the archbaron's *phlegmatic talisman* in the Black Daggers' guildhouse, for along with the talisman are Fex's notes concerning the item's powers, as well as hints about the heresy devil guarding the Inferno Gate.

**L6. Feign Prince's Hut:** The PCs can learn the location of the Inferno Gate within Fort Arego from the bandit-sorcerer Lairsaph, as well as the nature of the devil that lairs in the dungeons beneath the fort.

**O. Barbazu Messengers:** As the PCs explore the Whisperwood in search of the Inferno Gate, they can encounter a pair of bearded devils in Visperthul's service. The devils are on their way to deliver a missive to Fex, but if the PCs intercept and decipher the message, they'll gain their strongest clue yet that Fex plans to betray them.

**P5. Outer Bailey and Barracks:** Warden Korva Ferrini's journal details the original deal that the guards of Fort Arego made with the devil Visperthul, and how the heresy devil betrayed them and opened the Inferno Gate. The journal also mentions the human sacrifices the devil took to open the portal.



IZINIO

then turns to introduce his mysterious guest, who has been quietly listening to the PCs' account.

"Through your actions, you have proven yourselves worthy as Loyal Agents of House Thrune, and your success in Kantaria has attracted notice in the capital. Allow me to introduce Corrector Izinio, one of the Bound in service to Thrune. He has come here from Egorian to reward you by initiating you into the ranks of the Trusted."

**Izinio** (LE male human inquisitor of Asmodeus 13) is a corrector of the Inquisition of Asmodeus. Izinio is here in another capacity, however, as a Bound Agent of Thrune—the highest level of agent within the Thrune organization—to promote the PCs to the next level in the family, that of Thrune Trusted Agent. To advance to this rank, the PCs must swear their minds to Queen Abrogail II by accepting an infernal brand that prohibits them from betraying House Thrune. In exchange, the PCs will enjoy even greater authority and prestige than they did as Thrune Loyal Agents, and gain a boon in the form of a bonus feat. Only PCs who are already Thrune Loyal Agents may be promoted to Trusted Agents; if a PC chose not to accept that honor in "Wrath of Thrune," she may not become a Trusted Agent, though at your discretion, you may allow such a character to join the ranks of the Loyal at this time.

Assuming the PCs agree, Izinio officiates the initiation ceremony, with Razelago as a witness. Izinio withdraws a specially crafted branding iron from a black silk pouch and touches it to the invisible *arcane mark* each PC received upon becoming a Thrune Loyal Agent, announcing, "By the grace of House Thrune and the favor of Asmodeus, I name you one of the Trusted." The branding iron is not hot and the ritual is painless. Upon completion of the ceremony, each PC gains Thrune Trusted Agent as a bonus feat (see the sidebar on page 7) and his *arcane mark* now functions as a *mark of justice* (CL 13th). If a branded PC willingly attempts any action that would betray House Thrune, the *mark of justice* activates, cursing the character with the following effects:

- The PC immediately loses the Thrune Trusted Agent bonus feat.
- The PC's Charisma score decreases by 4 (minimum score of 1).
- Izinio is immediately notified of the PC's betrayal as if by *sending*.

If the point hasn't yet been driven home in previous installments of this Adventure Path, then this ritual should illustrate to the PCs that it is well within their best interests to remain in House Thrune's favor.

## TRUSTED AGENTS OF THRUNE

When the PCs arrive in Longacre, they are once again summoned to Archbaron Fex's manor, Scarlet Crown. Fex waits for them in his office, seated in his throne-like chair beneath his coat of arms of two warring stags with bloodied antlers. Razelago hovers nearby, wings buzzing, and a tall, thin man with a shaved head and stubbly beard, dressed in the red-and-black robes of an Asmodean inquisitor, sits in a chair in front of the archbaron's desk. Although Fex is aware (through Razelago) of most of the PCs' activities in Kantaria, he asks for a personal report of their time there. When the PCs have finished their report, the archbaron commends them for their deeds,



**Development:** Izinio has no further role in this Adventure Path, though you may choose to integrate the inquisitor into the campaign's plotline as you see fit. However, the PCs are only likely to meet the Bound Agent again if they commit an act of betrayal against House Thrune. Upon learning of any such betrayal, Izinio forms a party of Hellknights, inquisitors, and other Thrune agents to hunt down and capture the traitor (and any allies still associating with the traitor) by any means necessary. A traitorous PC who is captured is sent to prison (likely the Order of the Chain's Citadel Gheradesca outside of Corentyn) and subjected to indescribable torture. It is possible for a PC who has betrayed House Thrune to regain the organization's trust, but the process is long and arduous, and likely involves an *atonement* spell or similar act of repentance. In any case, the further repercussions of a betrayal are beyond the scope of this adventure.

## FEX'S ERRAND

Following the initiation ceremony, Izinio takes his leave and Archbaron Fex briefs the PCs on their next task.

"Somewhere in the Whisperwood, not far from the city of Senara, there is a portal to Hell. The locals call it the 'Inferno Gate,' an apt name if their harried descriptions of the site are true. The portal connects to the sixth layer of the Pit, Malebolge, the realm of Moloch and his infernal armies. As I'm sure you can imagine, House Thrune is not interested in uncontrolled devils roaming the Whisperwood and dragging Chelish citizens to Hell—not without the queen having a say in the matter, that is. Unfortunately, the complexities of our beloved governance prevent Thrune from handling the matter directly.

"Which brings me to why I've summoned you. I want you to go to the Whisperwood, locate the Inferno Gate, and shut it down. Such a bold deed committed by my most favored agents, so close on the heels of our successes here in Longacre and in Kantaria, is certain to impress House Thrune and increase both my own prestige and yours in the eyes of our superiors.

"I've already done extensive research on the portal, and the ritual to close the gate requires a number of components that you'll need to gather. I have already acquired the first component, an infernal talisman, which I left in my townhouse in Senara for safekeeping. Unfortunately, while you were busy in Kantaria, Senara fell to the knights of Iomedae and their Glorious Reclamation. As a titled noble of Cheliah, I would probably be arrested on sight if I showed my face in town, but I have no doubt that you can get in and out of the city with minimal effort. I'm not interested in retaking Senara—it's far too well defended for even a group such as yours to have much success, but we need my talisman.

"Once inside the city, you can retrieve the talisman from my townhouse. It's a quaint little manor on the hill that you can't miss. My butler—her name is Bessie or Billie or

## ADVANCING THROUGH THE RANKS

Those who work for the imperial government of Cheliah and the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune are commonly known as Thrune agents. Among these agents, however, are those who serve House Thrune directly, often working for the best interests of Cheliah's ruling family rather than for those of the nation (though these interests often overlap). These agents swear their bodies, minds, or souls (or all three) to Queen Abrogail II herself.

The second level of sworn Thrune agent is Thrune Trusted Agent (referred to within the Thrune organization as simply "the Trusted"). Having already sworn their lives to House Thrune, Trusted agents swear their minds—in other words, their absolute loyalty—to Queen Abrogail II. In exchange, they gain a bonus feat: Thrune Trusted Agent.

### THRUNE TRUSTED AGENT (TEAMWORK)

Your supernatural bond to other Thrune agents strengthens your resolve and allows you to bolster your allies.

**Prerequisite:** Thrune Loyal Agent trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are within 30 feet of an ally who also has this feat, you gain a +1 profane bonus on Reflex and Will saving throws. In addition, once per day as a swift action, you can forfeit the saving throw bonuses granted by this feat to increase the effectiveness of the aid another action. For a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), when you use the aid another action to aid an ally who also has this feat, the bonus you grant to an ally's AC, attack roll, or skill check is increased to +4 instead of the usual +2. You don't benefit from the feat's saving throw bonuses for 24 hours, though you still qualify as having this feat for the purpose of other characters gaining the bonuses.

something, I believe—will meet you and give you whatever you need. You're welcome to stay there, but don't linger in town too long—you still need to find the other components for closing the gate."

When he's finished, Fex hands the PCs a list of the components they'll need to gather (see Handout #1). The archbaron also informs the PCs that, as usual, Razelago will act as an intermediary and handle any communications between the PCs and Fex. Allow the PCs to ask Fex any questions they have about Senara or the Inferno Gate at this time. Some of the most obvious questions and Fex's answers to them are listed below.

### What does the ritual to close the Inferno Gate entail?

"In order to close the portal, we need the hearts of four different celestials—agathion, angel, archon, and azata.

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FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## RITUAL COMPONENTS

*Infernal talisman**One (1) agathion heart**One (1) angel heart**One (1) archon heart**One (1) azata heart**Four (4) unicorn horns*

## HANDOUT #1

A summoned celestial—along with its heart—will just return to its home plane when killed, so these must be from celestials physically present on this plane. Each of the hearts must then be impaled on the horn of a unicorn, so we need four of those as well. Razelago will inform me once you have all of the components, and I will join you at the Inferno Gate to complete the ritual.”

**How do we find the Inferno Gate?** “The portal to Malebolge is somewhere in the depths of the Whisperwood, but its exact location is a mystery. However, the Hellknights of the Order of the Pike have a citadel not far east of Senara. They are expert trackers and monster hunters, and probably know more about the Whisperwood than anyone else. At the very least, they should be able to point you in the right direction.”

## TRAVELING TO SENARA

The city of Senara sits in the northeastern reaches of the Whisperwood, about 190 miles east-northeast of Longacre. However, travel through the depths of the untamed Whisperwood can be dangerous, so most travelers take the safer route of the Whisperwood Way, a road that passes near the Whisper River north of Longacre. The 225-mile journey along the Whisperwood Way takes about 9 days on foot, or 5-1/2 days on horseback. The PCs’ journey to Senara is not detailed in this adventure, but you can use the information on the Whisperwood (see page 25) and the Whisperwood Encounters tables on page 81 to expand upon the trip as you see fit.

## THE CITY OF SENARA

Senara is a small forest city of 5,200 people built around the confluence of the River Iseld and River Malvesa. Infamous for its population of devil-tainted humans and hellspawn tieflings, Senara is scorned by the rest of Cheliox as an experiment in fiendish fraternization gone too far—a fact that may have contributed to the Glorious Reclamation’s recent success in conquering the city.

Senara’s geography divides the city into three main quarters. The High District, an affluent trading quarter occupied by well-to-do villains and visited by unscrupulous merchants from eastern Cheliox and Isger, sits north of the rivers’ confluence. It includes Castle di Lauro, the largest structure in Senara, which stands in full view atop Paulus Hill, overlooking both the High District and the rivers, though the fortress was mostly destroyed during the Glorious Reclamation’s siege of the city. On the west bank of the rivers sprawls the Low District, a densely populated, rundown neighborhood rife with drug dens and vile rakes. To the southeast, the Farmlands dominate the razed landscape between the River Iseld and the fringes of the Whisperwood.

The settlement stat block below represents the city of Senara as it currently exists, under the rule of the Glorious Reclamation.

## SENARA

LN small city

**Corruption** +3; **Crime** -1 (-3 at night); **Economy** +1 (-1 at night); **Law** +4 (+2 at night); **Lore** +2; **Society** +1 (-1 at night)

**Qualities** insular, nocturnal danger, notorious, racially tolerant  
**Danger** +15 (+25 at night)

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** overlord

**Population** 5,200 (3,079 humans, 1,499 tieflings, 343 halflings, 279 other)

## Notable NPCs

**Deposed Mayor Gaugellio Belken** (LN male human expert 4/ranger 5)

**Duxotar Abrittia Fessellin** (LN female tiefling fighter 6)

**Governor and Knight Commander Danvrey Piluxo** (LG female human paladin of Iomedae 12)

**Prelate Sinza Corsini** (LE male tiefling cleric of Asmodeus 11)

## MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 5,200 gp (2,600 gp at night); **Purchase Limit** 37,500 gp (18,750 gp at night); **Spellcasting** 6th

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

## NOTES

**Nocturnal Danger** The neighboring Whisperwood is wild and untamed, even haunted, and is home to bandits, evil fey, and uncontrolled devils. These dangerous creatures sometimes enter Senara under the cover of darkness, making the city’s streets unsafe at night—for both law-abiding citizens and criminals. (*At night only: Crime, Economy, Law, and Society* -2; *Danger* +10; *decrease base value and purchase limit by 50%*)

**Racially Tolerant** Although tieflings are reviled and treated with contempt elsewhere in Cheliox, the citizens of Senara hold no such prejudices, and tieflings are welcomed as equal members of the community. (*Society* +2)



## A. ARCHBARON FEX'S TOWNHOUSE

The PCs' first stop in Senara should be Archbaron Fex's townhouse, a tall manor in the High District just east of the ruined remains of Castle di Lauro. Fex spends the majority of his time in his baronial seat of Longacre, leaving the townhouse in the care of his halfling butler, Blissly, for most of the year.

Archbaron Fex's two-story townhouse, on a small hill east of the ruins of Senara's castle, is as grandiose and morbid as the man himself.

Fex's butler, **Blissly** (LE female halfling commoner 3/expert 3), greets the PCs with a deep bow at the house's front door. An older halfling woman with a solemn gaze, Blissly knows why the PCs are here. Inside, the house's other servants, all halfling slaves, are lined up to welcome their master's visitors. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check gets a hunch that something is bothering the servants, and that they're deathly afraid.

If the PCs sense the servants' fear and bring it up to Blissly, or ask about Fex's infernal talisman, a dark look crosses the halfling's face, and she takes them into the house's parlor for a private conversation. Otherwise, Blissly leads them first to the dining room, where she has already set a table for them to eat dinner and rest a bit after their travels. When the PCs are ready, Blissly cleans up the dishes and invites the group into the parlor to discuss the archbaron's business.

Once there, Blissly takes a deep breath before speaking.

"His Lordship instructed me to give you an amulet he kept here when you arrived, but there's been... a complication. Burglars broke in to the house last night, and among the valuables they stole was His Lordship's talisman.

"I had nothing to do with it. Nor did anyone else in the house. The Glorious Reclamation freed all of the slaves in the city, but no one here left. We all stayed—every single one of us. You make sure you tell His Lordship that. We're all loyal servants, and proud to serve House Fex.

"As for who is responsible, there is only one group in Senara brave—or stupid—enough to steal from the Archbaron, and that's the Black Daggers, a local thieves' guild led by a pair of hellspawn sisters. They're pretty good at keeping their activities and their hideout secret, but surely someone in the city knows. If nothing else, you can probably buy the information at Senara's black market. And even if the Black Daggers weren't responsible, they probably know who was, if you can find them."

The PCs can ask more questions, but Blissly has no further information, and neither do any of the other servants. If the PCs are particularly distrustful, they might suspect Blissly is lying, but a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check is enough to realize that she is telling the truth,

## COMPONENT LOCATIONS

The components for the Inferno Gate ritual can be found in various locations throughout the adventure. A brief summary of the components and their locations is presented below for the GM's reference.

**Infernal Talisman:** Black Daggers' guildhouse river cavern (area E4)

**Agathion Heart:** Senara's black market (area F)

**Angel Heart:** Old Boneyard (area C)

**Archon Heart:** Fort Arego stream crossing (area P3)

**Azata Heart:** Shrine of Picoperi (area I)

**Unicorn Horns:** Blessing of Unicorns (area K)

about both the loyalty of Fex's servants and their lack of involvement in the crime. If the PCs ask to search the house, Blissly acquiesces, as long as they are chaperoned by a member of the house staff, but the only clue they can find is the footprints of the thieves (see Finding the Black Daggers' Hideout on page 10 for more information).

If the PCs ask what the servants are so afraid of, Blissly responds as follows. If the PCs don't bring it up themselves, Blissly mentions it before she's done speaking with the PCs.

"There is one last thing I feel I must mention. His Lordship is a good master, but he does not bear disappointment well, and some of the staff are afraid he might take out his displeasure on them. It goes without saying that I would never question His Lordship's decisions regarding... disciplining... his staff, but if I can mitigate his temper in any way, then I feel duty bound to do so. To that end, I have some information that I would ask you to pass on to the Archbaron. It in no way proves our innocence, but I hope it serves to demonstrate our loyalty to him."

Blissly goes on to say that she was recently approached by an agent of the Bellflower Network, the underground society that seeks to free halfling slaves in Cheliox, who tried to convince her to betray Fex and join their organization. Blissly initially expressed interest in the scheme, but she used the opportunity to instead gain information about the organization's operations. In particular, Blissly managed to uncover evidence of an active Bellflower Network cell in Egorian, the imperial capital, a city so firmly in the grasp of House Thrune that the Bellflower Network has supposedly been unable to infiltrate it. In addition, Blissly has a description of one of the Bellflower Network's top agents in Egorian, a human woman known only as "the Barrister" who is missing her left hand, as well as details on how to make contact with this agent. With the abolition of slavery in Senara following the arrival of the Glorious Reclamation,

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





Blissy has had no more dealings with her Bellflower Network contact, whom she believes has left the city, but she provides all of this information to the PCs, hoping to assuage any suspicion that they or Fex might have regarding her involvement with the theft of the archbaron's infernal talisman.

**Development:** Blissy has prepared a room in the manor for each of the PCs, should they wish to stay in the townhouse. She prepares meals for them as well, acting at all times like a deferential servant, but she still makes it clear that the PCs are guests in her master's house, and subtly pressures them to finish their business in Senara and leave as soon as possible.

What the PCs do with Blissy's information about the Bellflower Network is up to them. They can certainly pass along the intelligence to Fex, but he will not take any action on it before the PCs face him at the end of this adventure. However, the PCs can make use of this knowledge themselves in the next adventure, "For Queen & Empire," where they will have the opportunity to eradicate the network in Egorian and potentially gain the notice and esteem of Queen Abrogail herself.

### FINDING THE BLACK DAGGERS' HIDEOUT

The guildhouse of the Black Daggers thieves' guild (area E) lies beneath an orphanage in Senara's Low District called Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths, which serves as the front for the guild's activities. In order to recover Fex's infernal talisman, the PCs must find the guildhouse, infiltrate the hideout, and steal the item back.

The PCs can learn of three entrances to the guildhouse: Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths (area B); a secret tunnel in Senara's cemetery, the Old Boneyard (area C); and an abandoned aqueduct (area D) beneath the Low District. Only the aqueduct entrance is currently in regular use; the entrance from the orphanage itself was recently sealed off, and recent events in the Old Boneyard have curtailed the gang's use of the secret tunnel there. However, PCs exploring the orphanage can find clues pointing to the tunnel in the graveyard, which is still a viable entrance. Using this entrance is a stealthier option, while entering through the aqueduct is a more straightforward assault.

There are multiple ways for the PCs to learn the guildhouse's location. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check knows the Black Daggers operate out of Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths, while a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 check knows the abandoned aqueduct leads to the guild's hideout. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information can also learn of the orphanage, while a result of 30 or more reveals knowledge of the secret entrance in the Old Boneyard. Alternatively, the PCs might try to track the burglars from the scene of the crime. This requires a successful DC 20 Survival check to follow the thieves' trail from Fex's townhouse to the abandoned aqueduct. Lastly, the PCs can follow Blissy's advice and visit Senara's black market (area F) in the city's Low District in hopes of learning the hideout's location.

The PCs might also want to attempt to contact the Black Daggers directly, perhaps under the auspices of



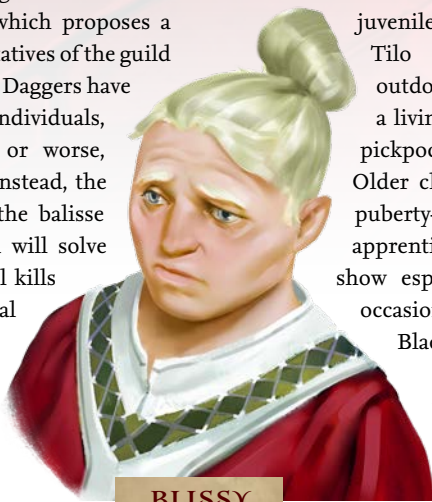
doing illicit business with the guild. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Bluff check can pass a secret message to the guild requesting a meeting. The Black Daggers respond with a hidden message of their own, requiring a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check to decipher, which proposes a meeting between the PCs and representatives of the guild at the Old Boneyard. In truth, the Black Daggers have no interest in meeting with unknown individuals, suspecting they are criminal rivals or worse, agents of the Glorious Reclamation. Instead, the guild hopes the PCs will encounter the balisse angel Orimos in the cemetery, which will solve one of two problems—either the angel kills the PCs, thus removing the potential threat they represent, or the PCs kill the angel, allowing the guild to once more make full use of their secret tunnel (see area C for more details).

## B. TILO'S HOME FOR WAYWARD YOUTHS

The Black Daggers use an orphanage called Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths as the front for the guild's activities. Until recently, the building was a brothel called the Forbidden Sisters' Ballroom, run by a pair of tiefling sisters named Donara and Vicelli Gedraedius. In addition to hosting bawdy soirées and debaucheries in the brothel, the sisters also managed the operations of the Black Daggers from the building's basement and nearby river caverns.

Things changed, however, when the Glorious Reclamation conquered Senara. The knights of Iomedae quickly caught wind of the infamous Black Daggers guild, and stormed the Forbidden Sisters' Ballroom in a bloody raid. They gutted the building and sealed the entrance to the caverns below, planning to burn the den of debauchery to the ground. But a silver-tongued bard named Tilo of Braganza managed to convince the knights to reconsider. Would it not be more useful, Tilo reasoned, to transform the brothel into a place of charity and good, rather than simply raze it? After all, the Glorious Reclamation's siege of Senara had left hundreds dead. The children of the fallen needed a place to go, and this brothel could serve as a perfect home. The knights, believing the charismatic bard to be a good man, gave Tilo permission to turn the building into Senara's first and only orphanage.

True to his word, Tilo did transform the brothel into a home for orphaned children, but he also wanted in on Donara and Vicelli's criminal operation. The sisters agreed, and together, the trio opened new entrances to the Black Daggers' river caverns and revitalized the guild's activities with a new source of income—impressionable children who would unwittingly pilfer gold from wealthy Senarans and easily duped travelers.



BLISSY

Senara's new Glorious Reclamation leaders believe Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths to be a diligently run orphanage for displaced children, when in fact it is more of a training academy for aspiring juvenile rogues. Every day after breakfast, Tilo ushers the youngest orphans outdoors and encourages them to make a living either begging on the streets or pickpocketing travelers for "fancy toys." Older children—those at or approaching puberty—are either enrolled in legitimate apprenticeships around town, or, if they show especial promise and aptitude, are occasionally recruited as members of the Black Daggers.

Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths is an unassuming, narrow building on the banks of the River Malvesa in Senara's Low District (see the map on page 13). There are four entrances to the building: the

main street entrance to the west, a side door to the north, a back door into the kitchen to the east, and doors to the south leading to the building's basement (area B7). These good wooden doors are usually locked (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18, Disable Device DC 20), night and day, except the front door, which is normally kept open during the day. Mama Lopelia (see Creatures below) has keys for the orphanage's ground-floor doors, but only Donara, Vicelli, and Tilo have keys to the cellar doors.

The PCs need not explore the entirety of Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths; the important areas are in the basement, where the PCs can find the (now-barricaded) entrance to the Black Daggers' underground hideout. As a result, only brief summaries of the orphanage's ground-level rooms are given on page 12, followed by full descriptions of the basement rooms.

**Creatures:** When the PCs first visit the orphanage, Tilo, Donara, and Vicelli are not present; they are currently below engaged in guild business (see areas D and E). During such times, they leave the orphanage in the care of the housemother, **Mama Lopelia** (N old female human expert 1/rogue 1). A retired prostitute who once worked at the Forbidden Sisters' Ballroom, Mama Lopelia knows the orphanage's owner, Tilo, and its two "benefactresses" Donara and Vicelli, but she is not a member of the Black Daggers and knows nothing of the guild's operations. She is aware of the now-closed secret entrance to the river caverns in the orphanage's basement (area B10), but does not know anything about the other entrances to the thieves' guild. If necessary, use the statistics for a prostitute on page 301 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* for Mama Lopelia.

Currently, 26 orphans (N young human commoners 1) live at Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths. During the day,

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## RUMORS IN SENARA

At any time while the party is in Senara, if a PC questions the townsfolk and succeeds at a DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information or a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, the PCs hear one of the following rumors, determined randomly.

### d6 Rumor

- 1 "Did you know there's an angel living in the Old Boneyard? It set up shop there after the Glorious Reclamation took the city. It says it'll take anybody's confession, but what are we supposed to confess? It may be an angel, but I'm sure not gonna be the one to talk to it."
- 2 "Some people say there are walking dead in that old aqueduct running under the Low District. That's why it was abandoned—it ran too close to the Old Boneyard, and opened up some of the graves. Now there're zombies, ghouls, and worse running around down there!"
- 3 "I overheard some of those so-called 'Glorious Reclamation' soldiers saying one of their commanders is looking for some sort of portal in the Whisperwood. If it's the Inferno Gate, maybe we'll get lucky and one of the devils'll get her while she's out there."
- 4 "Don't mess with Knight Commander Piluxo. She brooks no villains in Senara under her watch. Duxotar Fessellin may have kept her post, but the governor personally locked up Mayor Belken, and he hasn't been seen since, so you know she means business."
- 5 "Everyone knows about the black market. You can get anything there—drugs, stolen goods, even banned books and maps—you just have to look the part. Doesn't hurt to have an unsavory reputation around town, either."
- 6 "Keep your coin purse close and out of sight—there are thieves all over Senara. Even the kids are little devils who'll stab you in the belly for your gold."

they are out on the streets, leaving the orphanage empty except for Mama Lopelia, but they are usually all back home by dark.

**B1. Foyer:** Most visitors to the orphanage enter through this lobby. The stairs in the northern portion of the room lead down to the playroom below (area B7).

**B2. Tilo's Office:** Tilo of Braganza (see area E4) is a meticulous businessman, and keeps the forged records of the orphanage's finances well organized. All of the notes, ledgers, and budgets on Tilo's desk appear completely legitimate, and he keeps nothing in here that might

give away the Black Daggers' secret operations. When necessary, Tilo sleeps on a cot in the back of this room.

**B3. Dormitory:** The orphans all sleep in bunk beds in this large hall, where they also eat their meals.

**B4. Kitchen:** Mama Lopelia prepares breakfasts and dinners for her charges here. During the day, the orphans are responsible for feeding themselves.

**B5. Mama Lopelia's Room:** Mama Lopelia stays in this room, where she occasionally entertains a few loyal "private guests."

**B6. Sisters' Room:** Donara and Vicelli (see areas D1 and E2) stay in this room when at the orphanage, but are more often found in the guild's hideout below.

## B7. PLAYROOM

Several brightly patterned shag rugs cover the floor of this large basement room, though aside from these, the stone floor is practically bare. Small, colorful wooden crates and chests line the walls and fill the corners of the chamber.

The younger orphans play inside this room on rainy days or in the evenings after coming home from the streets.

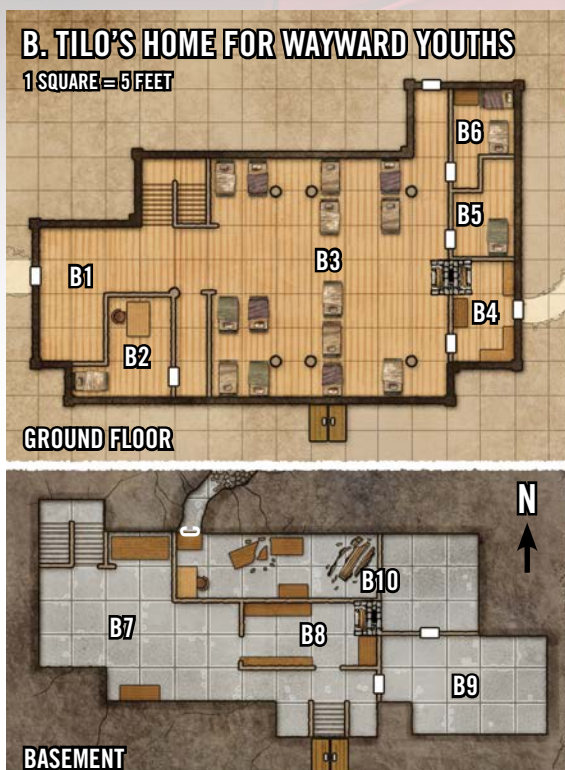
To the northwest, stairs lead up to the foyer (area B1), while a short flight of steps to the southeast climbs up to the exterior cellar doors. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception or Survival check notices an old trail of dried dirt leading from these steps to the door to area B9.

A large wooden chest sits against the northern wall of the room. A wooden sign above the chest reads, "Toy Box. Put away ALL toys before bed!" Stuffed inside the box are the orphans' toys: dozens of straw-stuffed dolls, musty storybooks, wooden doodads, and jumbled miscellany. The chest is affixed to the floor. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check while looking through the box discovers a false bottom. Beneath the warped wooden boards is a metal grate and long chute that leads down to area E4. The chute is too narrow for anything larger than Diminutive size to fit inside it.

Once a week or so, after the children have gone to bed, Donara or Vicelli comes to the playroom and takes out the chest's false bottom, allowing anything that fits through the metal grate to tumble into the river caverns below the orphanage. There, Black Dagger thieves rifle through the junk to find any valuables (Tilo's "fancy toys") that the orphans may have brought back from their excursions outdoors—just one of the many procedures the Black Daggers perform to keep their illicit operations well funded and out of sight.

**Treasure:** A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Appraise or Perception check while sorting through all of the items in the toy box finds some of the goods pilfered by orphans over the past week, including a *feather token* (bird), a pair of gold cuff links worth 25 gp, and a chipped topaz ring worth 50 gp.





## B8. LARDER (CR 1)

The shelves of this cramped larder are stocked with preserved foodstuffs such as jarred jams, pickled vegetables, and tins of salted butter.

**Trap:** Donara set up a small trap here, consisting of several large brass chimes attached to a tripwire. The purpose of the trap isn't to harm intruders, but to deter children who might sneak out of their beds at night to pilfer sweets or dried fruits from the larder.

### CHIME TRAP CR 1

XP 400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

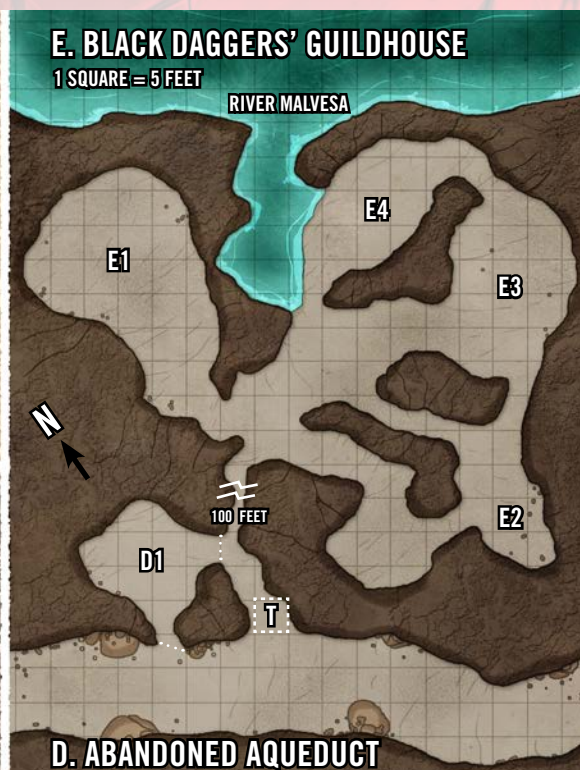
**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual

**Effect** loud chimes (noise can be heard up to 60 ft. away, -10 ft. for each interposing closed door, -20 ft. for each interposing wall); Reflex DC 15 negates

**Development:** The trap is not loud enough to reach the ears of anyone in the orphanage above, but if triggered, the chime does alert the spectre in area B10, which snaps out of its trance and prepares to face intruders.

## B9. DISUSED CELLAR

During the building's days as a brothel, this cellar was filled with bottles of cheap wine and distilled liquor. Since the Glorious Reclamation ransacked it, however,



the cellar has remained empty, serving only as a bitter reminder to Donara and Vicelli of their former business.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception or Survival check notices that the trail of dried dirt in area B7 continues in this chamber, running between the doors to the west and north. The door to the north (leading to area B10) has been jammed shut and boarded up (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18).

## B10. ABANDONED STOREROOM (CR 7)

Loose soil and dirt cover the stone floor of this cobwebbed chamber, piled with discarded furniture and debris. Strewn across an ornate carpet on the floor are a worn wooden coffin and its badly broken lid, both caked with dirt.

This room once provided access to the Black Daggers thieves' guild in the caverns below (area E), but when the Glorious Reclamation raided the Forbidden Sisters' Ballroom, they sealed the tunnel and boarded up the entrance to this chamber. One of the dressers leaning against the northern wall conceals the tunnel, which can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Perception check, but the Glorious Reclamation collapsed the passage, filling it with large stones and thick layers of soil. The tunnel is completely blocked, making the orphanage's basement a dead end for the PCs.

**Creature:** Unknown to any of the residents of Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths, a stoic undead creature now quietly lairs in this blocked-off room. When the Black

## THE INFERNO GATE

### FOREWORD

### PART I: CITY OF HELLSPAWN

### PART 2: RITUAL PREPARATIONS

### PART 3: THE DEVIL'S GATE

### NPC GALLERY

### MEET THE VILLAIN: EMIL KOVKORIN

### ROADS TO HELL

### MOLOCH, THE ASHEN BULL

### PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL

### BESTIARY



Daggers exhumed a grave in the Old Boneyard and converted it into a secret escape tunnel (see area C), they dumped the coffin in this chamber and forgot about it. Little did they realize that such a callous act would come back to haunt them—literally. The grave belonged to a woman named Melany Voddarin, an old resident of Senara who died long ago, but the desecration of her grave caused Melany's spirit to return as a spectre that now haunts the site where her body was abandoned.

Thus far, Melany has been content to remain in this room, close to her remains and lost in memories of her previous life. Any living creature entering this room, or the sound of the chime trap in area B8, breaks her from her reverie, however, and she attacks with the anger of undeath.

**MELANY VODDARIN****CR 7****XP 3,200**Female spectre (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 256)**hp 52**

**Treasure:** The Black Daggers didn't even bother to loot Melany's coffin when they dug it up, figuring her for just another peasant. In truth, the Voddarins were quite wealthy, and they laid Melany to rest with a number of bracelets, necklaces, and rings, which still remain draped on her corpse inside the coffin. The jewelry is worth a total of 900 gp.

**Development:** If the PCs set off the chime trap in area B8, but don't explore this room, Melany's curiosity eventually prompts her to pass through the walls and she attacks the PCs before they leave the basement.

The presence of the spectre here can give the PCs a valuable clue to the guild's new secret tunnel in the Old Boneyard, since an unearthed coffin and spectral horror are hardly commonplace sights in an orphanage basement. The age of the coffin certainly points to it having been unearthed from the Old Boneyard (area C), and carved into the center of the coffin's lid, hardly discernible among the dirt caked on the wood, is the name "Melany Voddarin."

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 1,600 XP if they discover the obstructed passageway to the Black Daggers' hideout, and an additional 1,600 XP if they learn Melany Voddarin's name and the origin of her displaced coffin.

**C. OLD BONEYARD (CR 8)**

Located atop a small rise overlooking a tributary of the River Iseld, Senara's original burial ground is a gently sloping field of green grass dotted with stone grave markers, packed with the remains of thousands of townsfolk who have lived and died in the city over the years. Due to this overcrowding, a new, larger graveyard was constructed on the northern outskirts of the city, where most of Senara's deceased citizens are now

buried, and the locals refer to this cemetery as simply the "Old Boneyard."

During the tumultuous years after Senara's founding, goblin raids and monster attacks on the fledgling town were frequent. To make it easier to flee in times of violence, Senarans constructed narrow escape tunnels connecting to the aqueducts beneath the city. Most of the tunnels have collapsed or fallen into disrepair in the years since, but some time ago, the Black Daggers discovered one of the passages leading from the abandoned aqueduct near their hideout to the Old Boneyard. The Black Daggers dug up one of the graves to access the tunnel, creating a secret escape route they could use if they needed a quick getaway from their guildhouse.

The secret tunnel saw frequent use until several weeks ago, when the balisse angel Orimos (see Creature below) took up residence in the graveyard. The Black Daggers soon discovered that they could not use the route without confronting the vigilant celestial, so have mostly stopped using this entrance for the time being. The thieves didn't bother blocking off the secret tunnel, however, as Tilo argued that it would be better to face an angel while trying to escape than to die with their backs against the wall if the guildhouse was ever compromised. For now, the Black Daggers are more or less just hoping that someone else will take care of the celestial so they don't have to.

The PCs likely come to the Old Boneyard either in search of the Black Daggers thieves' guild following information they gathered or from finding Melany Voddarin's coffin in the basement of Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths, or after hearing some of the rumors about the angel residing in the cemetery (whose heart they'll need to complete their ritual at the Inferno Gate).

The false grave that leads to the secret tunnel once belonged to a woman named Melany Voddarin. Her remains, and the undead creature this desecration of her grave spawned, now inhabit the basement of Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths (see area B10). Though many of the tombstones and grave markers in the Old Boneyard have been vandalized over the years, Melany's flat, 2-foot-by-2-foot granite grave marker is noticeably more defaced than most. Centered among the scratches and markings on the rough slab is a black, cross-shaped alchemical stain burned into the stone. Though it looks heavy, the grave marker can be easily lifted, revealing an excavated shaft in the earth containing a wooden ladder. At the bottom of the shaft, a narrow tunnel leads to the abandoned aqueduct (area D) that eventually connects to the Black Dagger's river cavern hideout (area E). Of course, disturbing this or any other grave ignites the ire of Orimos, the balisse angel watching over the graveyard (see Creature below).

**Creature:** Shortly after the Glorious Reclamation conquered Senara, a balisse angel named Orimos



appeared in the city and proclaimed they had been sent from Heaven to take the confessions of Senara's citizens and guide them toward the path to righteousness. In particular, Orimos has focused on the city's tiefling population, but the angel is willing to hear the confession of anyone seeking redemption. The angel often wanders the city's streets ministering to the townsfolk, but took up residence in the Old Boneyard, where anyone can find them if necessary. With no need to eat or sleep, Orimos monitors the cemetery from a hillock in the field's northwest corner, and stalwartly defends the Old Boneyard's graves against those who would defile them.

The PCs and other visitors may walk freely among the graves, but the angel immediately moves to confront intruders who disturb any of the gravesites (including the false grave that leads to the Black Daggers' hideout). Able to sense the presence of evil with their constant *detect evil* spell-like ability, Orimos gives only a single warning before launching into a full-on attack against the PCs, whom the angel considers irredeemably evil and unworthy of mercy. Orimos fights to the death in defense of the Old Boneyard.

#### ORIMOS

CR 8

XP 4,800

Balisae angel (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 22)

hp 95

**Development:** Orimos pursues any foes fleeing the Old Boneyard, but returns to the cemetery after defeating or losing the intruders. The angel's primary goal is to be available for those seeking guidance and to protect those interred here, and Orimos pursues this mission single-mindedly. If the PCs slay Orimos, they can harvest the angel's heart to use in the Inferno Gate ritual.

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 4,800 XP if they successfully acquire the angel's heart.

### D. ABANDONED AQUEDUCT (CR 2)

Long, flat, rectangular slabs of stone form the walls and roof of this long tunnel, which runs in a straight line beneath the streets of the city above.

This subterranean aqueduct once fed water from the River Malvesa into Senara's Low District, but part of the tunnel was destroyed during an ogre attack in 4698 AR. The city's mayor never bothered to repair the partially collapsed tunnel, instead

diverting water to other, smaller aqueducts and forcing many Low District residents to collect their daily water straight from the river. Parts of the aqueduct still fill with water during the winter months or periods of heavy rainfall, but most of the year it contains only a shallow layer of stagnant water. Now, the aqueduct is used by the Black Daggers as the main entrance by land to their hideout beneath Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths.

The main tunnel of the abandoned aqueduct runs in a straight line from the escarpment on the south bank of the River Malvesa in a south-southeasterly direction beneath the Low District, before turning southwest toward the Old Boneyard. The aqueduct connects to wells in the city above at various points, but most of these conduits have been sealed or long abandoned. The aqueduct is 8 feet high and 15 feet wide for most of its length.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



The PCs may investigate the abandoned aqueduct due to information they've gathered about the Black Daggers or rumors they've overheard. They may also arrive here through the false grave in the Old Boneyard (see area C). Otherwise, they'll need to find the entrance themselves by searching the banks of the River Malvesa on the northeast side of the Low District.

There are two areas in the aqueduct of interest to the PCs. The first is a cramped tunnel at the far southwestern terminus of the aqueduct, which leads to the false grave in the Old Boneyard (area C). The second is a tall, narrow gash in the northeastern wall of the aqueduct, about halfway down the aqueduct's primary tunnel. This narrow passage winds for about 100 feet before reaching the Black Daggers' hideout (area E), and its entrance is trapped (see Trap below). Part of the aqueduct wall, 10 feet northwest of the hideout entrance, is an *illusory wall* (DC 16 Will save to disbelieve if interacted with) covering an entrance to the watch cave (area D1).

Use the map on page 13 for this encounter area.

**Trap:** The Black Daggers have warded the entrance to the branch tunnel that leads to their hideout with a simple *alarm* trap. Any Tiny or larger creature entering the tunnel triggers the trap, which alerts anyone in the adjacent watch cave (area D1) and the guild hideout (area E). The Black Daggers themselves use a pass phrase ("the night is my knife") to bypass the trap when using this entrance.

#### ALARM TRAP

CR 2

XP 600

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

#### EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; Reset none; Bypass password

Effect spell effect (audible *alarm*)

**Development:** If the PCs set off the *alarm* trap, it alerts Donara Gedraedius and the Black Dagger thieves in area D1. They immediately exit the watch cave into the aqueduct tunnel to confront the intruders.

### D1. WATCH CAVE (CR 8)

The Black Daggers dug out this small side cavern to watch over the entrance to their hideout. Guild members are posted here in shifts with orders to intercept any unauthorized visitors to the guildhouse. In practice, this means the guards usually don't take any action unless the *alarm* trap in area D goes off.

Two short passages exit the watch cave, one leading to the abandoned aqueduct to the southwest, the other leading to the hideout's entrance tunnel to the southeast. Both of these entrances are hidden with *illusory walls* (DC 16 Will save to disbelieve if interacted with).

**Creatures:** Donara Gedraedius and two Black Dagger thieves wait in this chamber. They're a bit more aware than the guards usually posted here—they've been

expecting company ever since an initiate came back to the guildhouse with a stolen bracelet worth far too much, and it was only a matter of time before the bracelet's original owner sent mercenaries to come looking for it. The thieves immediately exit this room to confront intruders if the *alarm* trap in area D goes off.

Donara is the elder Gedraedius sister and one of the Black Daggers' three guildmasters. The tiefling woman has silvery horns and a diamond pattern on her skin. She has become only more beautiful with age, though her humorless scowl and militaristic attire are evidence that her patience has greatly diminished since she was a madam. Donara cruelly leads members of her guild into battle with little regard for their safety, and savors shedding her enemies' blood with a carnal fervor.

#### BLACK DAGGER THIEVES (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Tiefling rogue 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264)

LE Medium outsider (native)

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

#### DEFENSE

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

hp 33 each (4d8+12)

Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge;

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20 plus black whinnis) or

dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20 plus black whinnis)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6 plus 2 bleed

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

1/day—darkness

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The Black Daggers have poisoned their short swords and one dagger each with black whinnis, and they drink their *elixirs of hiding* in preparation for battle.

**During Combat** The Black Daggers stick to the shadows at first and throw poisoned daggers at intruders. If these tactics don't drive off the trespassers, the thieves launch a more lethal assault, using their Feint Partner teamwork feat to bluff opponents and make sneak attacks.

**Morale** If Donara and one of the Black Daggers are knocked unconscious or killed, the remaining thief flees to area E.

#### STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 18

Feats Combat Expertise, Feint Partner<sup>UC</sup>, Improved Feint

Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +8, Climb +10, Disable

Device +13, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge

(local) +9, Perception +6, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of

Hand +9, Stealth +23



**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Halfling, Infernal  
**SQ** rogue talents (bleeding attack +2, combat trick), trapfinding +2

**Combat Gear** *elixir of hiding*, *potion of cure light wounds*, black whinnis (2; see page 18), smokesticks (2), tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather*, daggers (5), mwk short sword, antitoxin, climber's kit, thieves' tools, 55 gp

#### DONARA GEDRAEDIUS

CR 7

#### XP 3,200

Female tiefling slayer 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 53)

NE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 72 (8d10+24)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +2

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk handaxe +11/+6 (1d6+2/x3)

**Ranged** +1 *composite longbow* +14/+9 (1d8+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6, studied target +2 (2 targets, swift action)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +7)  
1/day—*darkness*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Donara sticks to the shadows, studying targets and using Stealth to snipe at them from afar with her bow. She takes great pains not to reveal her position while the thieves accompanying her engage opponents directly.

**Morale** If an opponent detects Donara's position, or if the Black Dagger thieves with her are slain, Donara drinks her *potion of invisibility* and attempts to flee down the hideout entrance tunnel to area E to warn Vicelli and Tilo. If cornered, captured, or defeated, Donara does not betray her sister or their guild unless magically compelled.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Bluff +12, Climb +8, Disguise +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (local) +13, Perception +10, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +21, Survival +8, Swim +6

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Halfling, Infernal

**SQ** slayer talents (deadly range, ranger combat style [archery], slowing strike, snap shot<sup>APG</sup>), stalker, track +4

**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *shadow chain shirt*, +1 *composite longbow* (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, mwk handaxe, *cloak of resistance* +1, antitoxin, 120 gp

## E. BLACK DAGGERS' GUILDHOUSE

The Black Daggers run their illicit activities from their hideout in forgotten river caverns beneath Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths, sneaking stolen goods and human cargo out of the caves at night and shipping them downriver to buyers throughout the Inner Sea. Adherents of Zon-Kuthon originally held secret worship ceremonies in these caves, but few Senarans (if any) know this, and the Black Daggers have had exclusive use of the caverns for the past few decades.

Depending on how the PCs approach the guildhouse, they may have very different experiences dealing with the Black Daggers. If the PCs marched through the abandoned aqueduct (area D) with a brute force assault, the guild is most likely on high alert for intruders, and

### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

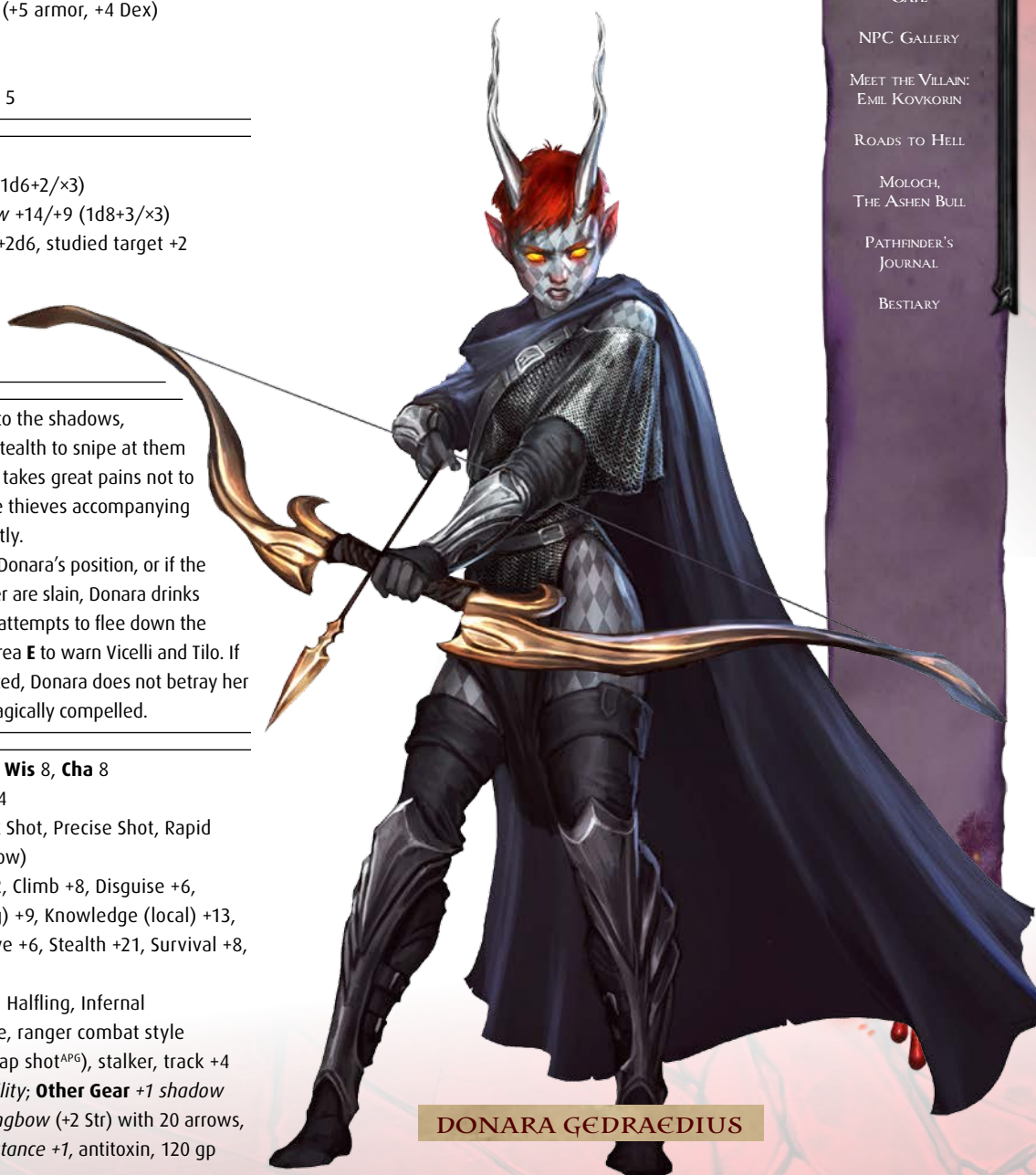
MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



DONARA GEDRAEDIUS



## BLACK WHINNIS

Black whinnis is a poison made from the same red creeper vine that produces the better-known blue whinnis poison, but the distilled sap from the blue whinnis thorns is further refined using a slightly more volatile process. Vicelli Gedraedius (see area E2) mastered the crafting of this homegrown poison several years ago, and has made it a staple among Black Dagger thieves. One dose of black whinnis costs 200 gp.

### BLACK WHINNIS

**Type** poison, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 14

**Frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds

**Initial Effect** 1 Con damage; **Secondary Effect** nausea for 1d4 rounds; **Cure** 1 save

the PCs will have a tough time sneaking through the caverns or surprising enemies. On the other hand, if the PCs manage to infiltrate the guild without alerting any of the thieves inside, likely by sneaking past or defeating all of the guild's guards in the aqueduct, they may have an easier time of it, and may be able to surprise some of the thieves inside or avoid certain encounters entirely.

Unless otherwise noted, the floors of the Black Daggers' guildhouse are of hewn stone, slippery with accumulated water, requiring a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check to run or charge across, and increasing the DC of other Acrobatics checks by 5. The walls are unworked stone, and ceilings average 10 to 15 feet high. All rooms are unlit. Use the map on page 13 for this area.

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to sneak past any of the inhabitants of the Black Daggers' guildhouse in the following encounter locations, thus avoiding confrontations with the thieves, award them the appropriate amount of experience as if they had defeated these foes in combat.

## E1. Common Room (CR 6)

The muted roar of flowing water echoes through this moist, high-ceilinged cavern, filled with bedrolls, chairs, tables, and other furniture flanked by iron candelabra. At the northeast end of the cavern, a black cloth is draped over a human-sized, rounded cylindrical shape on a low stone dais.

The Black Daggers have repurposed this cavern, once the primary ritual chamber of the Kuthites who originally inhabited these caves, into a common room for the guild's members. While most of the Black Daggers have homes elsewhere, they occasionally stay here when on duty in the guildhouse or to lie low after a dangerous job.

The cloth-draped object on the low dais to the northeast is an iron maiden. It is embellished with the image of a flayed human impaled with a variety of spikes and nails, but is heavily rusted due to the moisture in the cavern. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check can recognize the iron maiden as a representation of Zon-Kuthon commonly used as an object of veneration in secret Kuthite shrines. The Black Daggers removed all of the other torture implements from this chamber when they moved into the caverns, but the iron maiden is bolted to the floor, so the thieves simply covered it to avoid looking at it. The ceiling is 25 feet high here.

**Creatures:** Two Black Dagger sorcerers are taking their ease here between jobs. The sorcerers attack intruders as soon as they enter the chamber, unless the trespassers have made an effort to disguise themselves.

### BLACK DAGGER SORCERERS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Tiefling sorcerer 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264)

LE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 30 each (5d6+10)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6; +2 vs. poison

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk dagger +3 (1d4/19–20)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +7)

1/day—*darkness*

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +8)

6/day—*corrupting touch* (2 rounds)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +8)

2nd (5/day)—*ghoul touch* (DC 15), *mirror image*,  
*scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 14), *charm person*  
(DC 16), *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *vanish*<sup>APG</sup>

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *flare*  
(DC 13), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *read magic*

**Bloodline** infernal

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If aware of intruders, the Black Dagger sorcerers cast *mage armor* and *mirror image*, and drink their *potions of blur* before entering battle.

**During Combat** The sorcerers target opponents with spells such as *scorching ray*, *ghoul touch*, *burning hands*, or *magic missile*, and summon lemures or fiendish wolves with their *wands of summon monster II*.

**Morale** The sorcerers are less afraid of death than most members of their guild. A Black Dagger sorcerer continues to fight until it is the sole remaining Black Dagger left in battle, at which point the sorcerer casts *vanish* and flees to regroup.



## STATISTICS

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

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

**Feats** Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative

**Skills** Bluff +9, Craft (alchemy) +5, Perception +3, Stealth +9

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**SQ** bloodline arcana (+2 DC for charm spells), fiendish sorcery

**Combat Gear** *potion of blur*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of alarm*, *scroll of mage armor* (3), *scroll of spider climb*, *wand of summon monster II* (13 charges), alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *dust of tracelessness*, skeleton key<sup>UE</sup>, 53 gp

**Treasure:** Tilo keeps two *potions of eagle's splendor* tucked in a hollow behind the iron maiden in case he needs some liquid courage while speaking to his guild members.

**Development:** If the PCs interrogate any of the sorcerers about Fex's talisman, they readily betray their guildmaster in exchange for their lives. They tell the PCs that their boss, Tilo, has been wearing the accessory fondly ever since some of his best recruits brought it to him as a part of their initiation into the guild. The sorcerers can also tell the PCs they might be able to avoid a fight with Tilo by bargaining with the guildmaster.

## E2. UNDERGROUND LAB (CR 8)

Glass vials filled with viscous liquids, jars of preserved animal parts, and piles of dried herbs cover broken bookshelves and haphazard tables in this makeshift laboratory.

**Creatures:** Vicelli Gedraedius, younger sister of Donara and one of the Black Daggers' three guildmasters, devises and crafts new alchemical recipes and poisons in this room. A thin, bookish tiefling woman, Vicelli keeps her brown hair in a long, single braid to conceal the sharp bone spurs that protrude from her spine. When the PCs arrive, she is training two Black Dagger sorcerers in how to make black whinnis poison. The thieves attack intruders on sight, unless taken by surprise, or if the PCs captured Donara in area D1 (see Development on page 20).

### BLACK DAGGER SORCERERS (2)

CR 4

**XP** 1,200 each

**hp** 30 each (see page 18)

### VICELLI GEDRAEDIUS

CR 6

**XP** 2,400

Female tiefling rogue (underground chemist) 7

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 264, Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide 109)

LE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

## DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 49 (7d8+14)

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

**Defensive Abilities** trap sense +2, uncanny dodge;

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk punching dagger +9 (1d4-1/x3 plus black whinnis)

**Ranged** thrown splash weapon +9 touch (by weapon) or mwk hand crossbow +9 (1d4/19-20)

**Special Attacks** chemical weapons, precise splash weapons, sneak attack +4d6



VICELLI GEDRAEDIUS

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Vicelli has poisoned her punching dagger with black whinnis.

**During Combat** Vicelli uses her chemical weapons and precise splash weapons abilities to make sneak attacks with her wide variety of alchemical weapons. She leaves most of the damage dealing to her Black Dagger allies, but if cornered in melee combat, Vicelli fights with her poisoned punching dagger (which remains for two attacks due to her lasting poison rogue talent).

**Morale** If she has allies to fight alongside when reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, Vicelli drinks her *potion of cure moderate wounds*, but if outnumbered, she drinks her *potion of invisibility* and flees.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Dodge, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Appraise +10, Bluff +11, Climb +6, Craft (alchemy) +17, Disable Device +16, Disguise +11, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception +11, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +9

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Halfling, Infernal, Orc  
**SQ** rogue talents (finesse rogue, lasting poison<sup>APG</sup>), trapfinding +3, variant tiefling ability

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, acid (2), alchemist's fire (2), black whinnis (2; see page 18), bottled lightning<sup>UE</sup> (2), fuse grenade<sup>UE</sup> (2), ghastretch flask<sup>UE</sup> (2), iron pellet grenade<sup>UE</sup> (2), liquid ice<sup>APG</sup> (2), oil of taggit (2), tangleburn bag<sup>UE</sup>, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone (2); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk punching dagger, *ring of protection* +1, alchemy crafting kit<sup>APG</sup>, antitoxin (2), disguise kit, thieves' tools, 57 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Variant Tiefling Ability (Ex)** Vicelli possesses fiendish luck, allowing her to reroll one die roll once per day. She must take the result of this second roll. This variant tiefling ability appears in *Pathfinder Player Companion: Blood of Fiends* and replaces the tiefling's spell-like ability racial trait.

**Treasure:** The alchemical gear in this chamber composes a complete alchemist's lab.

**Development:** If the PCs captured Donara in area D1, Vicelli's tactics change immediately, and she offers to bargain for her sister's life. If the PCs mention Fex's talisman, Vicelli instantly recognizes it from its description. In exchange for her life and Donara's, Vicelli tells the PCs that their "partner" Tilo in area E4 wears the talisman, and promises not to intervene in their attempt to get the talisman back. If pressed, she offers her remaining doses of black whinnis to use against Tilo. Likewise, capturing and interrogating Vicelli can reveal the same information about Tilo and the talisman.

## E3. STORAGE CAVERN

Wooden crates, barrels, and a pile of large boxes fill up most of this cavern's floor.

The Black Daggers use this area to store excess goods they're still waiting to load onto boats to fence in settlements downriver.

**Treasure:** Being relatively mundane trade goods, most of the items stored here are likely of little interest to the PCs. However, if the PCs scan the crates and succeed at a DC 25 Appraise check, they can find the most valuable item in the collection, an engraved platinum scarab worth 800 gp. If they take at least an hour to search the boxes more thoroughly, they can find 5 doses of black whinnis poison (see page 18), three chests full of fine garments worth 400 gp each, seven silver unholy symbols of Asmodeus, and four 50-foot-long bundles of hemp rope.



TILO OF BRAGANZA



## E4. RIVER CAVERN (CR 8)

A large pool of dark water fills the north end of this high-ceilinged cavern, connecting to a waterway to the northeast, from which the sound of running water can be heard. A battered wooden raft and two rowboats lean against the northeast cavern wall, and a collection of dirty toys and garbage is piled against a wall to the south. A narrow chute bores upward through the ceiling above the garbage pile.

The waterway to the northeast connects to the River Malvesa outside; the Black Daggers use the boats in this chamber to smuggle goods into and out of their hideout. The shaft in the ceiling leads up to the playroom in Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths (area B7), where the orphans place their pilfered "toys" in the false-bottomed toy box, unwittingly providing the Black Daggers with stolen valuables to sift through.

**Creatures:** The Black Daggers' newest guildmaster, Tilo of Braganza, is currently here sorting through the rubbish that falls down from the chute above with three Black Dagger thieves. Tilo is a tiefling, but as far as infernal blood goes, his heritage is less obvious than other devilspawn—curly golden locks frame a handsome, bronzed face and deep brown eyes, fine leather shoes conceal his cloven feet, and he keeps his short, scaly tail tucked down the legs of his trousers. Tilo's most obvious fiendish features are black stigmata that look like scorch marks on the fronts and backs of his hands. Tilo takes an almost perverse pride in the blasphemous markings, and doesn't hide them except in front of Glorious Reclamation soldiers. An exile from Molthune, Tilo weaves grandiose (and almost entirely fabricated) stories in and out of conversation as deftly as he wields his whip. His favorite topics include his heroically tragic beginnings as a bastard orphan, his extraordinary travels to exotic locales, and a countless number of benevolent or noble deeds he's undertaken for the less fortunate.

Tilo is nothing if not diplomatic, and unlike his new partners Donara and Vicelli, he does not attack the PCs on sight. He asks what brought the PCs to his humble operation, feeling out how they managed to sneak into the hideout and what they hope to accomplish by doing so. If the PCs reveal that they are looking for an item that the Black Daggers stole, Tilo patiently nods as if expecting as much, then announces that he is willing to negotiate a trade for the talisman. Tilo himself offers one possibility: if the PCs kill the angel currently inhabiting the Old Boneyard (see area C), thus allowing the Black Daggers full use of their secret tunnel, he'll give them the talisman. He'll also accept payment of no less than 2,000 gp in exchange for the talisman. The PCs can also make their own offer; for example, if Vicelli betrayed Tilo in exchange for her life (see area E2), one

possibility is to hand over the traitor to Tilo, who views it as a fair trade for the talisman. Of course, the PCs can also simply decide to fight Tilo and his goons and take the talisman for themselves.

### BLACK DAGGER THIEVES (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 33 each (see page 16)

### TILO OF BRAGANZA

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male tiefling bard (daredevil) 5/rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 32)

LE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 40 (7d8+5)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3; +1 vs. mind-affecting and fear effects

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk whip +10 (1d3+1 nonlethal) or

mwk whip +8 (1d3+1 nonlethal), +1 *short sword* +8 (1d6+1/19–20)

**Ranged** dagger +9 (1d4+1/19–20)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance 14 rounds/day (countersong, derring-do [+2 AC and Reflex saves, +4 on Dexterity-based skill checks], distraction, fascinate [DC 14], inspire competence +2), canny foe +2 (trip), sneak attack +1d6

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd (3/day)—*blur*, *hold person* (DC 14), *silence* (DC 14)

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 13), *grease*, *hideous laughter* (DC 13), *undetectable alignment* (DC 13)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *message*, *prestidigitation*, *sift*<sup>APG</sup>, *unwitting ally*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 12)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Tilo casts *undetectable alignment* on himself at the start of every day. If aware of approaching intruders, he uses a *scroll of cat's grace* on himself.

**During Combat** Tilo casts *blur* on the first round of battle and tries to stay out of direct combat. He uses his derring-do bardic performance to bolster his allies while casting spells or tripping foes at a distance with his whip.

**Morale** If reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, Tilo throws the *phlegmatic talisman* in the pool of water and attempts to flee, using a smokestick to cover his escape.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 15, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +9 (+13 trip); **CMD** 20 (24 vs. trip)

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Appraise +8, Bluff +16, Climb +8, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +6, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +9, Perform (oratory) +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +16

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Halfling, Infernal

**SQ** agile +2, dauntless +1, rogue talent (finesse rogue), scoundrel's fortune (1/day), trapfinding +1, variant tiefling ability

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scrolls of cat's grace* (2), *wand of glitterdust* (11 charges), alchemist's fire (2), smokestick (2), thunderstone; **Other Gear** +1 *glamered chain shirt*, +1 *short sword*, daggers (4), mwk whip, *phlegmatic talisman* (see page 23), masterwork thieves' tools, 31 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Variant Tiefling Ability (Ex)** Tilo has a fiendishly cunning tongue, granting him a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy checks. This variant tiefling ability appears in *Pathfinder Player Companion: Blood of Fiends* and replaces the tiefling's spell-like ability racial trait.

**Treasure:** Regardless of whether they negotiate for it or defeat Tilo in combat, the PCs should finally be able to get their hands on Fex's *phlegmatic talisman* (see page 23). If the PCs try to identify the properties of the *phlegmatic talisman*, they can learn the talisman's abilities, how to use the item, and the fact that a devil has not yet been bound to the talisman, but not the specific devil the talisman was crafted to bind. However, they can discover more information elsewhere in this chamber (see below).

Picking through the pile of "garbage" on the floor results mostly in sticky hands and dirty knees, as the Black Daggers have already fenced the latest collection of "toys" from the orphanage above, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 17 Perception check while searching the pile finds a bundle of parchment. The pages are covered with writing in Infernal, and contain Fex's notes about the *phlegmatic talisman*—notes that the Black Daggers stole along with the talisman and that Fex never intended for the PCs to see.

The papers identify Fex's particular infernal talisman as a *phlegmatic talisman*, which is used to bind a devil to a specific location, provided the bearer of the talisman knows the devil's true name. They also contain a sketch of a corpulent devil seated on a floating throne of iron skulls along with a drawing of some sort of esoteric glyph or symbol. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Knowledge (planes) check recognizes the depicted devil as an ayngavhaul, or heresy devil. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (planes) check identifies the strange symbol as an infernal sigil, something like a unique signature that defines an individual devil.

A result of 25 or greater on this check (or a second successful DC 25 check) allows a character to recall some information on how infernal sigils are used and how they

relate to true names. A true name is the quintessence of a devil in verbal form; an infernal sigil is the written representation of this name. However, an infernal sigil cannot simply be read to learn a devil's true name, as such a symbol is essentially an abbreviation that does not directly correspond to the intricate syllables of the true name. Together, a true name and infernal sigil embody the totality of a devil's being, much like a mortal soul, and knowledge of a devil's true name and/or infernal sigil can give a summoner great power over that fiend. As a result, most devils work very hard to keep their true names and sigils secret from those who would use them against them.

With these notes, the PCs can easily surmise that Fex may very well be planning to bind a heresy devil to the Inferno Gate, and that the archbaron likely knows the devil's true name. Why Fex would want to bind the devil to the gate is unclear, but the PCs might infer that their patron wants to take control of the portal himself rather than close it. In any case, the notes are likely the PCs' first clue that Fex is planning something different from what he told the PCs, or at the very least, has not shared all of his information with them.

Lastly, the raft and pair of rowboats in this chamber are perfectly serviceable vessels, if any of the PCs are practiced river travelers.

**Development:** If the PCs encounter with Tilo is an amiable one and they recover the talisman peacefully, the guildmaster knows little about it. Tilo appreciated the talisman mainly for its aesthetics and cares little for the object's value; as a collector of rare objects, he was more interested in the talisman as a fashionable curiosity than as a show of wealth. However, Tilo does give them the papers found with the talisman in Fex's townhouse (see Treasure above).

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 4,800 XP if they successfully recover Fex's *phlegmatic talisman*. If they manage to do so without resorting to violence, award them an additional 4,800 XP, as if they had defeated Tilo and his thieves in combat.

### PHLEGMATIC TALISMAN

A *phlegmatic talisman* is a type of devil talisman—a magic item created by the infernal lords that supposedly binds a devil to a mortal's whims, but also allows the devil to tempt the mortal and corrupt his soul. Unlike other devil talismans, *phlegmatic talismans* do not actually have devils bound within them. Instead, they are used to bind devils to specific locations.

The price of a *phlegmatic talisman* varies depending on the power of the devil to be bound to it, equaling the bound devil's CR × 8,000 gp.

More information on devil talismans and true names can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness: Book of the Damned*, Vol. 1.



## PHLEGMATIC TALISMAN

PRICE  
96,000 GP

SLOT neck

CL 12th

WEIGHT —

AURA strong conjuration

This turbid blue, teardrop-shaped devil talisman binds a particular devil to a specific location, trapping the fiend in a manner similar to *planar binding* but without the need for a *magic circle* and with no chance of the devil escaping. Once bound, the devil cannot move farther than 100 feet from the location it is bound to, and the devil is considered helpful toward the talisman's wearer for the purposes of any request related to the location it is bound to (thus negating the need for an opposed Charisma check to convince the bound devil to perform such a service). A creature must be wearing the *phlegmatic talisman* to make requests of the bound devil.

When within 100 feet of each other, the wearer of the *phlegmatic talisman* and the devil bound to it cannot attack or take offensive actions against one another, even if magically influenced (such as by *charm monster* or *dominate monster*). In addition, when within 100 feet of each other, the wearer and the bound devil each gain a +4 profane bonus on Will saves against spells and effects that possess or exercise mental control over a creature (including effects with the charm or compulsion descriptors).

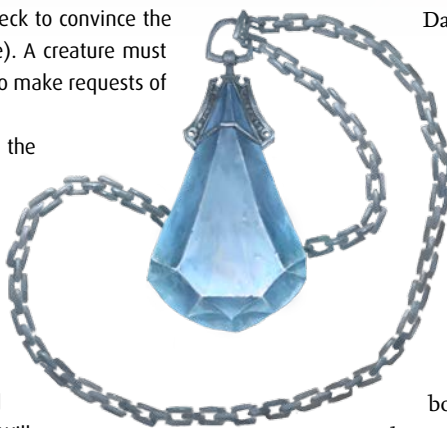
A *phlegmatic talisman* is crafted to bind a specific devil, and is not capable of binding any other creature. Any mortal who meets the construction requirements can craft a *phlegmatic talisman* as long as she knows the true name of the devil to be bound to the talisman, which must be spoken during the item's creation. In order to finally bind the devil to the talisman, the wearer of the talisman must touch the talisman to the devil in the location the devil will be bound to (so the wearer and the devil must both be physically present in the binding location) and speak the devil's true name. If the devil bound to a *phlegmatic talisman* is destroyed on the same plane as the talisman, the talisman breaks and loses its magic. Conversely, if the *phlegmatic talisman* binding the devil is destroyed, the devil is freed.

Archbaron Fex's *phlegmatic talisman* is tied to the heresy devil Visperthul (see page 53) and was crafted to bind Visperthul to the Inferno Gate (see area Q16).

### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 48,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *planar binding*, *protection from evil* or *protection from law*, must know the true name of the devil to be conjured and bound



Low District. Now, the black market hides in plain sight in the dirty alleyways branching off of the town's main bazaar. With the Glorious Reclamation now patrolling the streets and cracking down on crime, the black market dealers only sell their illicit wares to customers they recognize or unscrupulous-looking strangers not obviously affiliated with the Glorious Reclamation. Known felons and wrongdoers have the easiest time of acquiring black market goods, since word travels fast in the Low District's gossipy alleyways.

The PCs might come here following Bliss's advice to find information about the Black Daggers, after learning of some of the "disreputable" ritual components for sale at the market from the Order of the Pike (see area G), or following up on rumors they may have heard. In order to discover the black market's location, a PC must succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information. Characters with the black market connections rogue talent (*Ultimate Combat* 69) gain a +2 bonus on the check. Failing this check by 5 or more attracts unwanted attention or turns up a false lead, and the check cannot be retried for 1 day.

The PCs can acquire a variety of illegal wares at the black market, but they're likely seeking specific items or information. Details on tracking down these particular resources are presented below.

**Black Daggers:** Asking around about the location of the Black Daggers' hideout points the PCs toward a freelance thief named **Cael** (NE male human rogue 7), a dealer in confidential information. Cael offers to sell the guildhouse's location for 2,500 gp, but the PCs can negotiate a lower price. A successful DC 24 Diplomacy check or DC 17 Intimidate check reduces the price to 1,875 gp; exceeding those DCs by 5 or more reduces the price to 1,250 gp, the lowest price Cael is willing to accept. Cael can tell the PCs that although the Black Daggers operate out of Tilo's Home for Wayward Youths (area B), their guildhouse is actually located beneath the orphanage, and must be accessed from the abandoned aqueduct (area D). If necessary, use the statistics for a freelance thief on page 147 of the *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* for Cael.

**Ritual Components:** If the PCs have come to the black market in search of Fex's ritual components, they quickly find that celestial hearts are difficult to acquire, even in a place such as this. They can learn that an angel has recently been seen in the Old Boneyard (area C), if they want to acquire an angel's heart themselves. Otherwise, the PCs are directed to a woman named Ginevra, who might have

## THE INFERNO GATE

### FOREWORD

### PART I: CITY OF HELLSPAWN

### PART 2: RITUAL PREPARATIONS

### PART 3: THE DEVIL'S GATE

### NPC GALLERY

### MEET THE VILLAIN: EMIL KOVKORIN

### ROADS TO HELL

### MOLOCH, THE ASHEN BULL

### PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL

### BESTIARY



## F. BLACK MARKET

Before the Glorious Reclamation conquered Senara, the city's black market traders openly displayed their wares alongside legitimate merchants on Caravan Street in the



more information (see *The Agathion's Heart* below). Any other inquiries about the ritual components, including the unicorn horns, elicit a negative response and a suggestion to talk with the Hellknights of the Order of the Pike at Citadel Ordeial (see Part 2).

**Other Items:** Besides the specific items detailed above, Senara's black market also offers a variety of other proscribed goods. The following are just some of the goods available for sale; additional items and services may be available at the GM's discretion.

**Assassin Contract:** Customers can hire an assassin to kill a target of CR 6 or less for a price of 2,000 gp  $\times$  the target's CR. The success or failure of the assassination (and the specifics of how it is accomplished) is left to the GM to determine.

**Cursed Magic Items:** Among the more questionable wares available at Senara's black market are cursed magic items. Their prices are equivalent to the ordinary magic items they were originally meant to be. There is a 75% chance that any cursed magic item with a value of 5,200 gp or less is for sale during the day (this value decreases to 2,600 gp or less at night due to the city's nocturnal danger quality). Sample cursed magic items can be found on pages 538–543 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

**Drugs:** A variety of drugs are for sale at the black market. See pages 236–237 of the *GameMastery Guide* for a list of sample drugs and their prices and effects.

**Poisons:** Black market dealers also carry several poisons among their wares. Any poison costing less than 1,000 gp is usually available, including black whinnis (see page 18), which costs 200 gp per dose. In addition, there is a 75% chance that any poison costing 5,200 gp or less is for sale during the day (2,600 gp or less at night). See page 559 of the *Core Rulebook* for a list of common poisons and prices.

**Slaves:** With the Glorious Reclamation's abolition of slavery in Senara, the city's slave trade has been forced underground, into the black market. The cost of slaves varies with quality, but average prices are as follows: 50 gp for a menial or household slave (human commoner 1), 100 gp for a slave able to perform hard labor (human commoner 1 with Str 15), 100 gp for a slip (halfling commoner 1), and 500 gp for a slave with a specialized skill (halfling or human expert 1). The specifics of slave purchasing and interactions is left to the GM's discretion.

### THE AGATHION'S HEART (CR 8)

PCs asking around the black market for celestial hearts or other components for Fex's ritual eventually learn of a merchant named Ginevra.

**Creatures:** Ginevra is a withered old woman accompanied by four shifty-looking halfling bodyguards.



Ginevra's body may be decrepit, but age has not diminished her razor-sharp perceptiveness. She talks slowly but candidly, in contrast with the smooth-talking swindlers and con artists that otherwise populate the black market.

Initially, Ginevra claims to have no knowledge of what the PCs are seeking—she's never seen these people before, and has no idea what their true purpose is. Her initial attitude is indifferent, but Ginevra can be made friendly with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check, or a successful DC 22

Intimidate check (the DCs include a +5 modifier due to Ginevra's suspicion and the ignominious nature of dealing in the body parts of sentient creatures).

Once made friendly, however,

Ginevra admits that she currently has only one such item in stock—the heart of an agathion (an avoral's heart, to be precise)—that she offers to sell for the price of 8,000 gp. Ginevra is no newcomer to the way of underworld dealings, and she is willing to trade for the heart if the PCs don't have the money, though she only accepts magic items of equal or lesser value to the heart in exchange. She is also willing to take a combination of cash and magic, though she's not interested in any magic items worth less than 2,000 gp and refuses to accept them in trade. If the PCs need time to acquire the needed funds, Ginevra agrees to hold the heart for them until they have the money.

Alternatively, the PCs might attempt to steal the avoral heart from Ginevra. This requires a successful DC 20 Sleight of Hand check, but Ginevra and her bodyguards can attempt opposed Perception checks to notice the theft.

If the PCs threaten or attack Ginevra, or she notices an attempted theft, she warns the PCs that such actions risk attracting unwanted attention. The old woman shows no desire to fight, but her halfling bodyguards quickly move to defend their employer, fighting to the death.

#### GINEVRA

CR 5

XP 1,600

Traveling merchant (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 285)

hp 31

#### HALFLING BODYGUARDS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Murderous halfling (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 81)

hp 30 each

**Treasure:** If the PCs successfully cut a deal with Ginevra or slay her and her bodyguards, they acquire the agathion's heart for use in Fex's ritual.



**Development:** Assaulting or killing Ginevra or anyone else in the black market attracts the attention of Glorious Reclamation guards patrolling the bazaar, if the PCs linger too long. Four Knights Inheritor of the Glorious Reclamation (see page 41) arrive on the scene in 9 rounds, creating an additional CR 8 encounter. Regardless of whether or not the PCs confront the guards, starting a fight here makes the other merchants unwilling to deal with the PCs, and they may no longer purchase items from the black market.

**Story Award:** If the PCs acquire the avoral heart without fighting (through trade, theft, or otherwise), award them 4,800 XP, as if they had defeated Ginevra and her bodyguards in combat.

## LEAVING SENARA

The PCs may leave Senara at any time, though they are most likely to do so after recovering the *phlegmatic talisman* from the Black Daggers thieves' guild. If they didn't acquire the heart of the balisse angel Orimos in the Old Boneyard (area C) or the avoral heart from the Black Market (area F), they'll need to come back to Senara at a later point in the adventure, before heading to the Inferno Gate in Part 3.

## PART 2: RITUAL PREPARATIONS

Eventually the PCs will leave Senara and venture into the Whisperwood in search of the other components needed for Archbaron Fex's ritual, as well as for the Inferno Gate itself. Rather than blindly wandering through the forest, however, the PCs would be better served by enlisting the aid of local expert monster hunters—the Hellknights of the Order of the Pike at Citadel Ordeial (area G). If necessary, Razelago can make an appearance to remind the PCs of this fact.

## THE WHISPERWOOD

An ancient woodland thousands of years old, the Whisperwood has an ominous reputation. Widely believed to be haunted and perilous for travelers, the Whisperwood is primarily composed of thick stands of ash, beech, and oak. Senara is the only settlement of substantial size within the bounds of the wood, though several towns and villages huddle along its edges. A network of roads traverse the Whisperwood, most connecting Senara with other communities, though all but the most major of highways receive only minimal upkeep, and are only marginally safer than travel through the trackless depths of the forest.

Most Chelaxians divide the Whisperwood into five unofficial regions, described briefly below.

**Hellspawn Dale:** Named for the high population of tieflings in Senara, located just to the east, this small swath of central forest is one of the most developed (and theoretically safest) regions in the Whisperwood.

## WHISPERWOOD LORE

If the PCs want to know more about the Whisperwood, they can learn the following information about the forest with successful Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (geography) checks.

### DC Lore

- 10** The Whisperwood is full of monsters of all kinds, including giant vermin and animals, magical beasts, and, more recently, celestials who watch over pure-hearted travelers. Savvy travelers do not brave the Whisperwood at night, when even the established roads and trails become dangerous routes patrolled by monsters and dastardly highway bandits.
- 15** Locals divide the Whisperwood into five distinct regions, each with their own terrain types, unique hazards, and predominant inhabitants. From west to east, the five regions are tangled Scarhurst, the bandit-infested Murmurs, boggy and devil-haunted Perdition Reach, the relatively tame Hellspawn Dale, and the bramble-filled Iron Snarl.
- 20** The Order of the Pike Hellknights keep a close watch on the beasts of the wood from their headquarters at Citadel Ordeial in the Iron Snarl, but they've had trouble keeping all of the threats contained.

The Glorious Reclamation has increased patrols in Hellspawn Dale, assisted by good fey and otherworldly celestials, though plenty of dangers still lurk beneath the trees in this region. Both the Whisperwood Way and the northern stretch of the Sirmium Throughway, connecting Senara to Taggun Hold, pass through Hellspawn Dale.

**Iron Snarl:** One of the least-explored regions in the Whisperwood, the Iron Snarl lives up to its name; thorny bushes and rugged creepers strangle much of the flora here, and the beasts that wander its tangled ravines are equally hardy. The Whisperwood Way runs along the banks of the River Iseld from Senara to Misarias on the southern edge of the Iron Snarl, but only one road, the poorly maintained Alda's Flank, actually crosses through the region, joining the Sirmium Throughway to the north and south of Senara.

**The Murmurs:** The Whisperwood Way is the safest bet for travelers headed through the southwestern region of the Whisperwood, known as the Murmurs. This well-maintained road links Senara to Dekarium and Egorian to the west, while the smaller Longacre Road heads south along the fringes of the wood, leading to Longacre and Remesiana. Off these roads, however, the Murmurs are just as wild as the rest of the Whisperwood, and home to many bandits who plague travelers.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

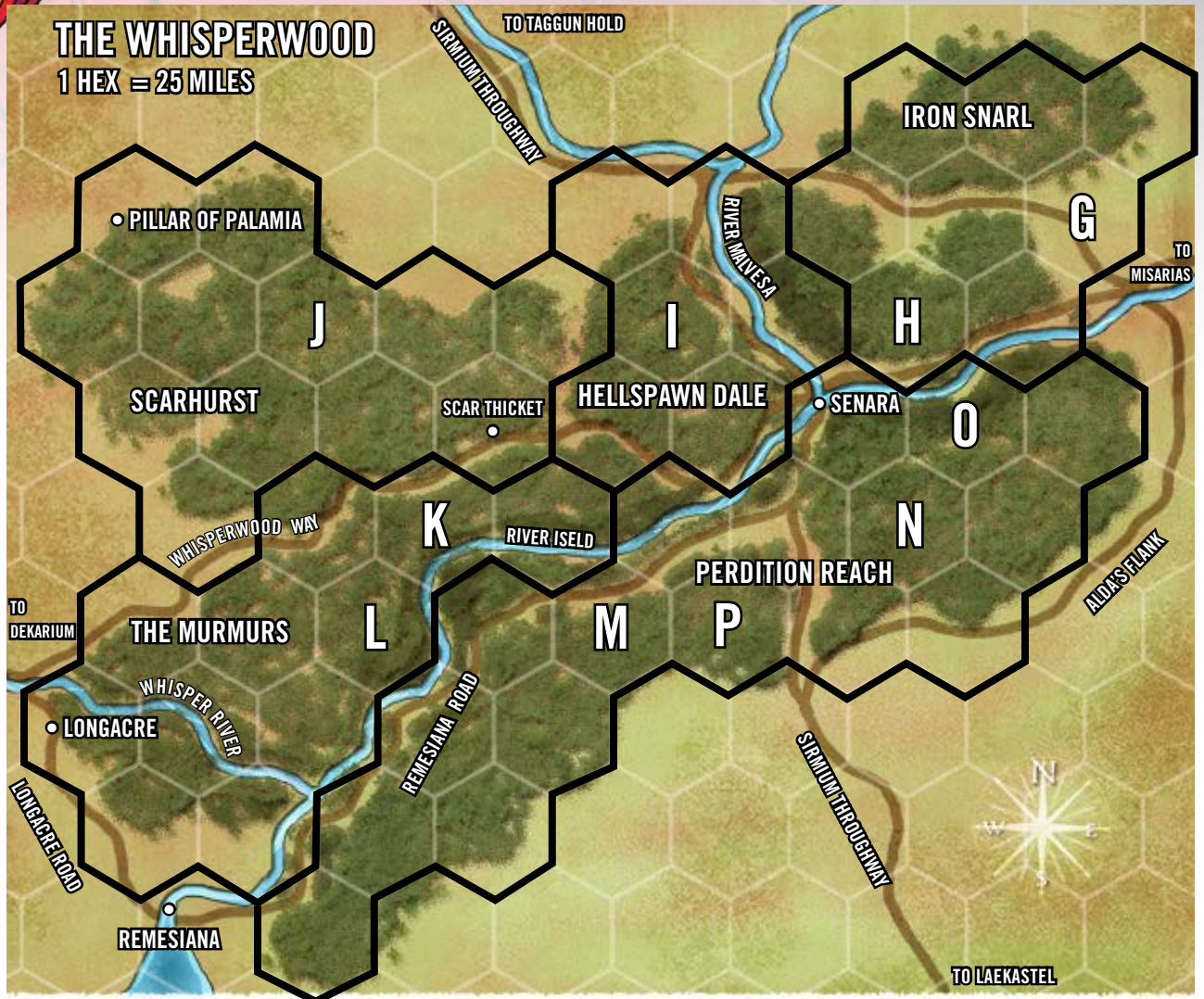
PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



# THE WHISPERWOOD

1 HEX = 25 MILES



## I. SHRINE OF PICOPERI



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

## K. BLESSING OF UNICORNS



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



**Perdition Reach:** Named for the large number of devils and infernal outsiders encountered in the region, presumably spawned from a portal to Hell located somewhere within its bounds, Perdition Reach contains dense oak groves and boggy lowlands, creating a harsh terrain difficult to navigate even on the clearest of days. The Remesiana Road is the main thoroughfare through Perdition Reach, connecting Senara and Remesiana along the banks of the River Iseld. The Sirmium Thoroughway also passes through the region on its way to Laekastel, while the road known as Alda's Flank wraps around Perdition Reach to the east.

**Scarhurst:** The Whisperwood's northwest arm takes its name from Scar Thicket, a tangled region of fungus-choked woods that supposedly contains an entrance to the Darklands. Scarhurst is also infamous for the Pillar of Palamia, an ancient basalt obelisk that stands near the wood's northern edge. Because of the danger these two locations pose to travelers, no roads venture into the depths of Scarhurst. Full details on Scar Thicket and the Pillar of Palamia can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Cheliax, The Infernal Empire*. Exploring these locations is beyond the scope of this adventure, but GMs can use them to expand their campaigns as they see fit.

## EXPLORING THE WHISPERWOOD

The PCs can begin exploring the Whisperwood at any time, though the first stop should probably be at Citadel Ordeial (area G) to get some guidance from the Order of the Pike Hellknights. The map on page 26 shows the entire Whisperwood, divided into hexes roughly 25 miles wide. Use the overland movement rules from Chapter 7 of the *Core Rulebook* to determine how far the PCs can travel in a day, taking into account whether they're on foot or mounted, and whether they're traveling along a road, trekking through the trackless forest, or sailing down a river (perhaps using one of the boats from area E4).

Once per day (or once per hex if the PCs enter multiple hexes in a single day), roll for a random encounter on the Whisperwood Encounters tables on page 81, using the table for the specific region of the forest the hex occupies. If the hex contains a lettered location tag, refer to the corresponding encounter location instead.

## G. CITADEL ORDEIAL

Citadel Ordeial, headquarters of the Hellknight Order of the Pike, stands sentinel on the eastern edge of the Iron Snarl. Citadel Ordeial is likely the first place the PCs stop as they embark upon their explorations of the

Whisperwood. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs approach the citadel.



LUCAN ORCELANI

The spiked steel and granite tower of Citadel Ordeial looms high above a flat, grassy clearing. The gleaming metal keep's curving, mathematically precise architecture contrasts starkly with the Whisperwood's endless acres of trees.

The Order of the Pike dedicates itself to protecting civilization from the beasts and monsters that roam the wild places of the world, making them ideal potential partners for hunting down any celestials that may have found their way into Cheliax. Unfortunately for the PCs, however, when they arrive at

Citadel Ordeial, they find the fortress's gates shut and its Hellknight guards unwilling to open them, even if the PCs identify themselves as agents of House Thrune.

Up to this point, the Order of the Pike has stayed out of the growing conflict between Cheliax and the Glorious Reclamation; the Hellknights' concern is with dangerous monsters that threaten everyone, so as long as they don't get involved in politics, the Glorious Reclamation is willing to leave them alone. Knowing that their relatively small order would be no match for the full might of the Glorious Reclamation (especially after seeing what happened to the Order of the Godclaw), the leaders of the Order of the Pike are not interested in rocking the boat and have adopted the policy of refusing to parley with either side of the conflict, preferring to make peace with whoever emerges triumphant from Cheliax's latest civil war.

As a result, the PCs must convince the Hellknights to grant them an audience. The Hellknight armigers guarding the gates of Citadel Ordeial are under strict orders to not open the doors for anyone, so Intimidate has no effect, but the PCs can attempt a DC 25 Diplomacy check to gain entry. Characters with levels in the Hellknight prestige class gain a +5 circumstance bonus on this check. Alternatively, the PCs could try to inveigle their way in with a successful DC 25 Bluff check.

However, there is a much easier way to gain an audience with the Order of the Pike, if the PCs rescued the captive Hellknight Zara Orcelani in Kantaria in the previous adventure. Zara is the sister of Lictor Lucan Orcelani, who commands the Order of the Pike and could make a powerful ally for the PCs if they manage to get on his good side. If the PCs tell the guards at the citadel's gates that they rescued Zara (or better yet, if she is still accompanying the PCs when they visit to the citadel), the PCs are immediately allowed inside and ushered to meet with the lictor.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## TALKING WITH THE HELLKNIGHTS

Once inside the citadel, the PCs are granted an audience with the Order of the Pike's lictor, **Lucan Orcelani** (LE male human ranger 7/Hellknight<sup>ISWG</sup> 4). Lictor Orcelani is a keen, humorless commander who has seen mortal combat countless times, and might appear to be a dandy if not for his long, crooked nose (which has been broken in three different places on three separate occasions) and deep, sunken eyes.

The lictor greets the PCs soberly, but if the PCs rescued Zara, he shows more warmth and thanks them for their efforts in freeing her, before asking what he and the Order of the Pike can do for them. The following are likely topics the PCs might ask about, along with the information (if any) the Order of the Pike has about such topics.

**The Glorious Reclamation:** Due to his order's staunch commitment to refrain from participating in the conflict between House Thrune and the Glorious Reclamation, Lictor Orcelani does not know much more than the PCs about the Iomedaeans and their crusade. However, he may be used to pass along any information about the Glorious Reclamation that the GM feels the PCs should know, or that they might have missed earlier in the campaign.

**The Inferno Gate:** Lictor Orcelani doesn't know the exact location of the Inferno Gate, but believes it to be located somewhere within Perdition Reach. The Order of the Pike is more concerned with the dangerous creatures that come through the gate; actually dealing with portals are more the purview of the Hellknight Order of the Gate.

However, there has been a recent development that is relevant to the PCs' mission: the arrival of Knight Banneret Viona Kadarius, whom the lictor talks about with some level of respect. Along with a squadron of knights and sergeants, Kadarius has entered the Whisperwood in search of the Inferno Gate. She and her commanders in the Glorious Reclamation believe that House Thrune might try to use the portal to summon infernal minions to bolster the Chelish army, and she aims to seal the gate to prevent such a possibility. Orcelani knows that Kadarius rides a half-celestial unicorn as her mount, but can say little else about the knight.

**Ritual Components:** If the PCs ask about any of the components needed for Archbaron Fex's ritual, Lictor Orcelani has plenty of information. Within the Whisperwood, the Order of the Pike knows a pair of azatas guards a shrine to an empyreal lord in Hellspawn Dale (area I), and a blessing of unicorns has been spotted near the Whisperwood Way in the Murmurs (area K). In addition, the Hellknights have posted a bounty for hound archons spotted in Scarhurst (though this is a red herring; see area J on page 30). Reports also indicate that some archons accompany Knight Banneret Viona Kadarius in her search for the Inferno Gate. Lastly, the

lictor has heard of the angel that has taken up residence in Senara's Old Boneyard (area C), if the PCs are not already aware of its existence. The Hellknights have no further information about the whereabouts of more celestials, but Orcelani can recommend inquiring at Senara's black market (area F), which is known to occasionally deal in such "unsavory" merchandise.

**The Whisperwood:** Lictor Orcelani can also give the PCs information about other threats lurking in the Whisperwood, specifically those that have killed innocents or caused havoc somewhere in the forest within the last month. This information takes the form of an Open Bounties list, which is posted alongside a large map of the Whisperwood on the fourth floor of Citadel Ordeial (see Handout #2). The list details each potential quarry's name, its last known whereabouts (also marked on the map accompanying the bounty list), whether it's wanted dead or alive, and the bounty offered for the creature. The Hellknights use the list and map to track the movements of known monsters and coordinate hunting excursions, earning bounties for successfully slaying those monsters. If the PCs are interested, Orcelani offers the same bounties to them for hunting any of the posted monsters.

Four creatures currently have bounties posted for their capture or death. The PCs will have to search the forest to find them, likely based on the creatures' last known whereabouts (or stumble upon them by chance), but their actual locations are as follows: bearded devils (area O), hound archons (area J), Lairsaph (area L), and the Savage Mistress of Beasts (area M).

## H. BEAST CARCASS (CR 6)

The mutilated carcass of some great beast lies on the ground not far from a wide game trail.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Knowledge (arcana) check can recognize the carcass as that of an owlbear. Two bearded devils traveling from Fort Arego (area P) encountered and killed the creature, but not before taking a few slashes from the owlbear's claws. A smaller game trail, obviously belonging to the owlbear, branches off the main trail nearby.

**Creatures:** Following the side trail leads back to the dead owlbear's den, approximately 300 feet away, where three owlbear cubs expectantly wait for their mother. Any loud noises at the site of the dead owlbear cause the cubs to emerge from the cave after several rounds to investigate. Almost starving, the cubs attack any creatures they find or any creatures entering the 20-foot-diameter cave.

## OWLBEAR CUBS (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Young owlbear (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 224)

hp 37 each



## OPEN BOUNTIES

By order of Lictor Lucan Orcelani, all Hellknights of the Order of the Pike shall be on the lookout for the following criminals and monsters known to lair in the Whisperwood. Proof of a successful hunt must be brought to Citadel Ordeal to receive the posted bounty.

### LAIRSAPH, A.K.A. THE FEIGN PRINCE

Location: At large; last seen on the Whisperwood Way in the Murmurs.

Wanted: Alive.

Bounty: 5,000 gp.

### SAVAGE MISTRESS OF BEASTS

Location: At large; last seen near the Remesiana Road in Perdition Reach.

Wanted: Dead or alive.

Bounty: 3,000 gp.

### BEARDED DEVILS

Location: At large; one killed along the River Iseld in the Iron Snarl

Wanted: Dead.

Bounty: 1,000 gp each.

### HOUND ARCHONS

Location: At large; last seen in Scarhurst.

Wanted: Dead.

Bounty: 600 gp each.

**Treasure:** Several days before she was slain by the bearded devils, the mother owlbear chased off some bandits operating on the Whisperwood Way. During the fight, the owlbear chomped off the hand of a thief named Snedar, consuming the magical signet ring on his finger in the process. She later regurgitated Snedar's half-digested hand and his ring of swarming stabs (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 175) inside her den, where it can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Perception check. The ring is engraved with the symbol of a broken crown split by a bolt of lightning. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check can recognize the symbol as the sigil of Lairsaph, the Feign Prince, a powerful bandit-sorcerer who leads a gang of brigands in the Whisperwood (see area L for more details).

**Development:** Tracking the bearded devils from here is a relatively simple task, since the fiends left a faint trail of infernal blood leading away from the scene. A successful DC 16 Survival check allows the PCs to follow the blood trail directly to the devils (see area O).

## I. SHRINE OF PICOPERI (CR 8+)

A raised dirt path weaves through stands of ash, which peel away to reveal a low, grassy glade where the steady drone of insects and wildlife hushes to a quiet murmur. The path leads down to a squat, open-air shrine made of interwoven hemlock and beech in the center of the clearing.

Natives of eastern Chelias built this shrine to the empyreal lord Picoperi centuries ago, and it has weathered the elements for all those years thanks to the god's magic and celestial guardians sent to watch over it.

The clearing lies 20 feet below the trail and is approximately 100 feet across. A simple archway of interwoven branches leads into the roofless shrine in the middle of the glade. A thick, knobby tree stump with fresh green vines and offshoots growing out of its flat top sits in the center of the shrine, the new growth supporting a crystalline serpent, impossibly entwined in the leaves and branches. The stump serves as the shrine's altar, and the crystalline serpent is the shrine's sacred focus. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the altar and serpent as being dedicated to the empyreal lord Picoperi.

Use the map on page 26 for this location.

**Creatures:** Two of Picoperi's azata servants—a bralani named Phythoras and a lillend named Issaya—guard the shrine, protecting it from miscreants and hosting good visitors who stumble upon the spot. There is a 10% chance that Issaya is not present when the PCs arrive here, as she occasionally leaves the glade to play her harp and lead weary travelers to the shrine. Thanks to the shrine's *hallow* effect (see Hazard on page 30), the azatas know whether any creatures entering the clearing are evil, and attack such creatures immediately. If Issaya is not present, the lillend arrives at the shrine 2d4 rounds after the PCs confront Phythoras.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY

HANDOUT #2





**ISSAYA****CR 7****XP 3,200**Female lillend (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 26)**hp** 73**PHYTHORAS****CR 6****XP 2,400**Male bralani (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 24)**hp** 66

**Hazard:** The shrine is protected by a *hallow* spell and an associated *detect evil* effect (CL 20th) emanating from the altar in a 40-foot radius.

**Treasure:** Aside from Issaya and Phythoras's otherworldly gear and the crystal serpentine ornament on the shrine's altar (worth 2,000 gp), there is nothing else of obvious value in the shrine. However, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while inside the shrine can discover a *wand of fly* (16 charges) woven among the branches of the shrine's walls.

**Development:** The PCs can obtain the azata heart they need to complete the ritual at the Inferno Gate by slaying either Issaya or Phythoras.

The crystalline serpent on the altar is the source of the divine magic that preserves the shrine and the focus for its *hallow* effect. Casting *desecrate* on the altar or removing the serpent, which requires breaking the altar's wooden growths (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23), causes the magic of the site to slowly fade, and ends the *hallow* effect 24 hours later.

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully acquire an azata heart, award them 4,800 XP. Award them an additional 4,800 XP if they desecrate the shrine or removing the serpent.

**J. HOUNDS OF HEAVEN (CR 8)**

There is a 20% chance of encountering these creatures any time the PCs enter a hex in Scarhurst; entering the hex marked J on the map automatically triggers this encounter. This encounter occurs only once; after the PCs have dealt with these creatures, there is no further chance of encountering them.

**Creatures:** The hound archons sought by the Order of the Pike (see page 28) are a red herring for PCs in search of an archon heart. The Hellknights who first encountered these creatures assumed they were hound archons in canine form, but they are actually good magical beasts—celestial blink dogs—and not true archons at all. This pack of seven blink dogs are natives of Heaven who came to the Material Plane to give what aid they could to the Glorious Reclamation, contributing to the Iomedaeans' success in the region.

**ADVANCED CELESTIAL BLINK DOGS (4)****CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 28 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 47)

**Development:** If the PCs slay the blink dogs and bring proof of a successful hunt to Citadel Ordeial, they can collect the bounty offered by the Order of the Pike for the "hound archons": 600 gp for each slain blink dog.

**K. BLESSING OF UNICORNS (CR 8)**

A trickling stream forms a small waterfall as the ground dips low to meet a serene pond in this tranquil forest grove. Glowbugs and moths float lazily above the shallow body of water, and a small island of earth peeks out of the center. On the island stands a magnificently tall white oak, its bark covered with emerald green moss and its abundant branches spanning the entirety of the pond.

The pond is at most only 3 feet deep, and the streams flowing in and out of the clearing are 1 foot deep. Heavy undergrowth surrounds the pond, while light undergrowth covers the ground beneath the trees (*Core Rulebook* 426). Earthen walls held in place with thick roots border the pond to the north and west, and are 15 feet tall at their steepest.

Use the map on page 26 for this encounter.

**Creatures:** This blessed grove is home to a family of five unicorns—a powerful stallion, a mare, and their three fully grown offspring, who protect the glade, especially the sacred white oak that stands at its center, from evildoers.

**ADVANCED UNICORNS (2)****CR 4****XP 1,200 each****hp** 42 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 269)**UNICORNS (3)****CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 34 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 269)**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The unicorns detect evil creatures as soon as they approach within 60 feet, and they rally to charge at the intruders. The unicorns can teleport anywhere within the mapped area, and do so if they become cornered or need to help one of their kin on the other side of the pond.

**Morale** The blessing of unicorns fights to the death to fend off intruders who would despoil the oak or the forest.

**Hazard:** The white oak growing on the small island in the center of the pond radiates a magical effect throughout the forest grove, the result of a half-celestial druid who was buried beneath the tree long ago. The tree has an aura of good and of strong abjuration and conjuration magic. Any creatures within 300 feet of the white oak must succeed at a DC 18 Will save (harmless) or be subject to the following effects while in the area (CL 15th):



- *Death ward*
- Nonmagical disease, fatigue, nausea, and sickened effects are suppressed.
- Conjuraton (healing) spells are cast at +1 caster level.
- Necromancy spells are cast at –1 caster level.

*Dispel magic* or *dispel good* only suppress the tree's magic for 1d4 rounds. If damaged, the tree eventually heals itself, unless it is fully cut down (hardness 5, hp 600) or destroyed (such as with *blight* or *disintegrate*), which causes the magic effects of the tree to cease immediately.

**Treasure:** The most important items of value in the grove are the unicorn horns needed to complete the ritual at the Inferno Gate, but the PCs only need four. If they slay all of the unicorns, the fifth unicorn's horn is worth 1,600 gp.

In addition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (local) or DC 30 Knowledge (nature) check recalls a legend of a powerful druid who was buried beneath a mighty white oak. The druid's body has long since decomposed and become one with the tree, but such is not true of some of the druid's possessions. Digging up the earth beneath the oak is a time-consuming task, but with several hours of work and a successful DC 25 Perception check, excavators can eventually find a dirty *druid's vestment* and *goggles of elvenkind* (*Ultimate Equipment* 225).

**Story Award:** If the PCs slay the unicorns and collect at least four of their horns, award them 4,800 XP.

## L. HIDEOUT OF THE FEIGN PRINCE

The brigand-sorcerer Lairsaph, the so-called Feign Prince of the Whisperwood, is a well-known danger on the roads through the forest, particularly along the Remesiana Road and the Whisperwood Way. Lairsaph and his bandits prey on travelers, merchants, Chelish soldiers, and Glorious Reclamation knights alike, launching their attacks from a secret hideout in the Murmurs.

The PCs may find Lairsaph's hideout after encountering some of the Feign Prince's bandits and tracking them back to their lair (or torturing one of them for the hideout's location). They might also simply stumble upon the Feign Prince's hideout by chance, though they may still overlook the hidden entrance to the bandits' den (see area L1).

If the PCs don't attempt to slay Lairsaph outright and instead gain the Feign Prince's respect, they have an opportunity to learn more about the Inferno Gate, which Lairsaph has had intimate dealings with in the past.

**General Features:** The Feign Prince's hideout lies in a hidden dell behind steep embankments. The slopes are covered with thorny bushes that have been enhanced with *plant growth*, creating a thick barrier of entwined, thorny branches and making it extremely difficult to climb the hill unnoticed (increasing the DC

of Stealth checks by 2). The combination of steep slopes and overgrown vegetation reduces speed to 5 feet per round, and requires two move actions to enter 1 square. Flight is one option to overcome this barrier, though the thick canopy of oak trees overhead makes it difficult to infiltrate stealthily in this way as well.

Use the map on page 34 for this location.

## L1. TREE DOOR

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check discovers a faint path of trampled grass here that abruptly ends at a lonely fig tree growing out of the side of a steep embankment shrouded in impenetrable thorny bushes. The hearty tree's trunk is more than 2 feet wide and is covered with intertwining branches and thick roots that conceal the entrance to Lairsaph's hideout. A successful DC 20 Perception check and simple deductive reasoning reveals some intertwining branches that can be moved aside to reveal a subterranean tunnel burrowing beneath the embankment.



ISSAYA

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## L2. BRANCHING TUNNEL (CR 7)

This earthen tunnel forms a nearly perfect cylinder through the roots and dirt of the steep embankment around it.

The tunnel splits about 40 feet from the tree door (area L1), sloping slightly downward toward the east and upward to the south. A character who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check can notice a fist-sized carving of a broken crown split by a bolt of lightning on a thick root pointing toward the eastern tunnel like a gnarled finger. Recognizable with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check, the broken crown symbol is the Feign Prince's sigil, and while it may seem like a waymark, it is actually a decoy designed to send intruders down the wrong tunnel.

**Trap:** At the far end of the eastern tunnel, a tripwire triggers a frame of sharpened and poisoned wooden stakes that violently snaps up behind a creature entering the marked square on the map. In addition to potentially injuring the creature who triggered the trap, the frame also blocks the tunnel behind the victim, likely separating them from the rest of their party until the barrier is broken down (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 14) and possibly subjecting them to attacks from the creatures in area L3.

### SPIKED TUNNEL BARRIER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect Atk +15 melee (1d6+1 spikes for 1d6+1 damage each plus giant wasp poison)

**Development:** Triggering the trap alerts the dire badgers in the den outside the tunnel (area L3), who immediately come to investigate fresh prey.

## L3. DIRE BADGER DEN (CR 7)

Several dog-sized burrows pepper the floor of this debris-ridden forest hollow, which stinks of animal musk. Steep slopes covered in thorny bushes make it all but impossible to climb the surrounding embankments. A flat-topped escarpment juts from the hillside to the south, while a narrow tunnel opens in the embankment to the west.

**Creatures:** A family of six dire badgers lives in this small ravine. Lairsaph's bandits keep the badgers around by regularly throwing food scraps into their hollow. Intruders who fall for the decoy waymark in the entrance



tunnel (area L2) often get trapped in this area and eviscerated by the badgers before ever finding the Feign Prince and his bandits.

#### DIRE BADGERS (6)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 40)

**Treasure:** The PCs aren't the first to stumble upon the badgers' lair, a point made clear by the human remains scattered about the den. Among the bones and scraps of equipment are a broken suit of studded leather armor, a masterwork rapier, a *grim lantern* (*Ultimate Equipment* 301), and a *ring of sacred mistletoe* (*Ultimate Equipment* 173).

**Development:** If the PCs fight the badgers here before facing the bandits in the adjacent encampment (area L4), they can hear a voice from the camp saying, "Sounds like the badgers got themselves another meal," followed by laughter 1d4 rounds after the combat begins. On the following round, one of the bandits peers over the edge of the escarpment dividing the camp from the badger den and warns his fellow brigands of the PCs' presence, unless they have taken some means of concealing themselves.

#### L4. BANDIT ENCAMPMENT (CR 8)

Several green-and-brown tents sprawl across this flat span of secluded hillside. To the south, a hammock hangs from two trees outside a small hut made of timbers and sheets of oak bark. To the north, large, flat rocks next to a narrow tunnel through the bushes mark the edge of a ravine. Trees and steep slopes border the vale on all sides.

**Creatures:** Most of the Feign Prince's band of brigands live in this humble encampment, but at any given time, at least half of the bandits are away robbing travelers on the Whisperwood Way or Remesiana Road, leaving only six brigands here when the PCs arrive. One of the brigands is Lairsaph's second-in-command, Snedar, who is missing one hand. Having lost the hand to the owlbear in area H, Snedar has replaced the bandits' standard-issue light crossbow with a trio of spears for throwing.

If the bandits spot the PCs in area L3, they drink their *elixirs of hiding* and set up an ambush here. Otherwise, they attack as soon as intruders enter the camp. Once the first brigand is killed, the rest quickly realize that they need reinforcements to fend off the party, and Snedar yells to a fellow brigand to "release the bear." One of the brigands then takes a full round to unfasten the chains keeping the dire bear restrained in the cave (area L5).

#### FEIGN PRINCE'S BRIGANDS (5)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Human fighter 1/rogue 3

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6 (+8 in forest); **Senses** Perception +6 (+8 in forest)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

**hp** 34 each (4 HD; 3d8+1d10+11)

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

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk scimitar +7 (1d6+3/18-20)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The brigands first attack from a distance with their crossbows, attempting to sneak attack if within range. Once engaged in melee combat, the bandits draw their scimitars and attempt to flank with each other to set up more sneak attack opportunities whenever possible.

**Morale** The brigands have committed countless crimes throughout Cheliax, and have no interest in facing "justice" at the hands of agents of House Thrune. They fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

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

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Reload (light crossbow)

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Climb +7, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +6 (+8 in forest), Ride +7, Stealth +9 (+11 in forest), Survival +4 (+6 in forest), Swim +7

**Languages** Common, Elven

**SQ** favored terrain (forest +2), rogue talent (terrain mastery<sup>AC6</sup>), trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *elixir of hiding*, *potion of cure light wounds*, bottled lightning<sup>UE</sup>, burst jar<sup>UE</sup>, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, mwk buckler, daggers (2), mwk light crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk scimitar, *cloak of resistance* +1, thieves' tools, tindertwigs (3), bottle of fine wine, 1d20 gp

#### SNEDAR

CR 3

XP 800

Male Feign Prince's brigand (see above)

hp 34

**Ranged** spear +5 (1d8+3/×3)

**Gear** spears (3)

**Treasure:** Snedar has hidden a pair of *poisoner's gloves* (*Ultimate Equipment* 239) in the bedroll in his tent, which can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check while searching the tents.

**Development:** Once the PCs have defeated or dispatched the bandits here, Lairsaph himself emerges from his hut (area L6) to personally greet the PCs, assuming they haven't already entered the hut by this point.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





### L. HIDEOUT OF THE FEIGN PRINCE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

#### L5. BEAR CAVE (CR 7)

Thick oaken posts clumsily wrapped with iron chains and rope cordon off a cave in the eastern hillside.

**Creature:** When Lairsaph's scouts decided on this remote hillside for their gang's base of operations, they failed to notice the den of a dire bear that had already made its den in this neck of the Whisperwood. When he arrived, Lairsaph ordered the bear to be kept as an additional guardian, so the brigands subdued the animal with tranquilizers and quarantined it in its cave. Although the brigands do make efforts to feed the bear, the beast is not at all happy with its confinement, and attacks anyone entering its den.

If the brigands in area L4 release the bear to help fend off the attacking PCs, they find it a dangerous ally at best, as the bear attacks the closest foe, whether a PC or a brigand. The bear fights to the death.

#### DIRE BEAR

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 95 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 31)

#### L6. FEIGN PRINCE'S HUT (CR 11)

Thick posts of dark wood form the frame of this humble forest hut, while sheets of woven bark serve as its roof and walls. A woven curtain of dried cattails hangs in the hut's narrow doorway.

Trophies and prizes from the Feign Prince's many infamous exploits line the walls of this shack, which contains a small desk and chair, a large chest, and a luxurious, oversized bed that seems more suited to a lord's bedchamber than this woodland hovel.

**Creatures:** Lairsaph, the self-styled Feign Prince of the Whisperwood, resides in this hut along with his two consorts, a pair of half-elf siblings named Quith and Sifhain. Lairsaph doesn't immediately attack the PCs, whether he encounters them in the encampment outside or here in his hut. The Feign Prince has not eluded capture and survived for as long as he has by initiating battles he might not win, and he reasons that any intruders bold enough to take down his brigands and captured beasts is worthy of at least a short conversation.

Instead, Lairsaph greets the PCs, welcoming them to "the lair of the Feign Prince." He recognizes the PCs as agents of House Thrune and claims that "whispers on the wind" have told him they're seeking the Inferno Gate (very little happens in the Whisperwood that does not eventually reach the ears of the Feign Prince). Lairsaph informs the PCs he can help them in their quest, provided they are willing to treat with him, "as one group of professionals to another."

If the PCs do not immediately attack, Lairsaph offers to share his information with the PCs, provided they agree to leave him and his gang (or what's left of it) alone and allow them to continue their brigandage in the Whisperwood. The Feign Prince has no interest in the conflict between House Thrune and the Glorious



Reclamation, and refuses to take a side, though he does pledge, with a wry smile, to prey equally on both factions. If necessary, Lairsaph sweetens the pot by offering the PCs a sum of 5,000 gp (the same amount as the bounty offered for his arrest by the Order of the Pike) as well as the possessions of any bandits they've already killed ("They clearly don't need them anymore," he reasons).

Assuming the PCs agree to allow the Feign Prince to keep his freedom, he tells them that a ruined keep called Fort Arego stands in Perdition Reach west of the Sirmium Throughway. Lairsaph has been to this fort, and he has seen the hellish portal, the so-called "Inferno Gate," in the dungeons beneath its halls. There, the Feign Prince met a heresy devil whose name he never learned. Had he been more foolish, Lairsaph says, he might have been tempted to bargain with the fiend, but the devil's demands of mortal sacrifice were far too rich for Lairsaph's blood. Even though the fiend promised infernal power, Lairsaph knew that he would gain only misery if he struck a deal with the devil. Lairsaph left the ruined fort immediately, and has given it a wide berth ever since.

Lairsaph can give the PCs a general description of Fort Arego (area **P**) and the dungeons beneath it (area **Q**), though it has been so long since his last visit that his details are imprecise. As for the location of the Inferno Gate itself, Lairsaph says only, "All the way down, in the Pit," hinting at the dungeons' deepest sublevel (area **Q16**).

If the PCs refuse to parley with Lairsaph and combat does break out, the bandit lord and his consorts fight their attackers, but the Feign Prince flees as soon as victory seems unlikely (see his **Morale** entry below)—Lairsaph is not going to risk his own life for no gain.

#### LAIRSAPH

CR 10

#### XP 9,600

Male elf sorcerer 10

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 102 (10d6+65)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11; +2 vs. enchantments

**Defensive Abilities** stormchild; **Immune** sleep; **Resist** electricity 5, sonic 5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 longspear +8 (1d8+4/x3)

**Ranged** +1 composite longbow +8 (1d8+3/x3)

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +14)

7/day—thunderstaff

1/day—thunderbolt (10d6, DC 19)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +14)

5th (3/day)—teleport

4th (6/day)—ball lightning<sup>APG</sup> (DC 19), greater aggressive thundercloud<sup>ACG</sup> (DC 19), shout (DC 19)

3rd (7/day)—displacement, lightning bolt (DC 18), slow (DC 17), spiked pit<sup>APG</sup> (DC 17)

2nd (7/day)—aggressive thundercloud<sup>ACG</sup> (DC 17), bear's endurance, bull's strength, false life, gust of wind (DC 16), scorching ray

1st (7/day)—charm person (DC 15), grease (DC 15), magic missile, obscuring mist, shield, shocking grasp

0 (at will)—arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound (DC 14), light, mending, message, ray of frost, read magic

**Bloodline** stormborn<sup>APG</sup>

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Lairsaph casts *false life* and uses his *wand of mage armor* every morning and afternoon. If he is alerted to intruders in the encampment, Lairsaph casts *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, and *shield* on himself.

**During Combat** Lairsaph casts *displacement* on the first round of combat, then attacks foes with his spells, favoring electricity spells. He uses a *scroll of fly* or *potion of invisibility* to avoid being pinned down in melee combat, and casts *slow* and *obscuring mist* to hinder opponents, using the blindsense granted by his stormchild ability to continue targeting foes in the mist.

**Morale** The Feign Prince is not willing to die to keep the location of his hideout secret, and if reduced to 75 hit points or fewer, or if one of his consorts is slain, Lairsaph casts *teleport* and flees into the Whisperwood, having no qualms about abandoning any surviving members of his gang.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +13, Fly +8, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Perception +6, Spellcraft +11 (+2 to identify magic item properties), Stealth +10, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +13

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Sylvan

**SQ** bloodline arcana (+1 to save DC of spells with electricity or sonic descriptor), elven magic, exceptional resources

**Combat Gear** +1 corrosive<sup>UE</sup> arrows (5), *potions of cure moderate wounds* (3), *potions of invisibility* (2), *scrolls of dimension door* (2), *scrolls of dispel magic* (2), *scrolls of fly* (2), *scrolls of mount* (2), *scrolls of wall of fire* (2), *wand of mage armor* (33 charges), *wand of plant growth* (12 charges); **Other Gear** +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, +1 longspear, amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of resistance +3, handy haversack, headband of alluring charisma +2, ring of protection +2, ring of spell knowledge II<sup>UE</sup> (*false life*), unfettered shirt<sup>UE</sup>, 220 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Exceptional Resources (Ex)** Lairsaph has had a long, successful career in banditry, and his equipment is

## THE INFERNO GATE

### FOREWORD

### PART I: CITY OF HELLSPAWN

### PART 2: RITUAL PREPARATIONS

### PART 3: THE DEVIL'S GATE

### NPC GALLERY

### MEET THE VILLAIN: EMIL KOVKORIN

### ROADS TO HELL

### MOLOCH, THE ASHEN BULL

### PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL

### BESTIARY



testament to this. The Feign Prince has the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC, increasing his CR by 1.

### QUITH AND SIFHAIN (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Male and female con artist (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 29)

hp 30 each

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** One of the con artists uses bardic performance to inspire courage while the other uses *suggestion* to compel opponents to leave the fight.

**Morale** In love with Lairsaph, both Quith and Sifhain fight to the death to defend the Feign Prince.

**Development:** If the PCs reach an agreement with Lairsaph or otherwise have a mostly amicable encounter with him, he asks a special favor of

the party. Before the PCs leave the Feign Prince's hideout, Lairsaph sends his consorts away to speak with the PCs in private. "When I fled Fort Arego those many years ago," he says, "I left something important behind in the dungeons—a locket given to me by someone dear. If you find the locket and bring it back to me, I'll give you a reward for your trouble." If the PCs ask for more details, he tells them they'll know the item when they see it: "It's an exquisite piece of jewelry, and its beauty should surely stand out in the gloomy depths of Fort Arego."

If the PCs find Lairsaph's locket in Fort Arego's torture chamber (area **Q14**) and come back here to return it, the Feign Prince smiles wickedly before throwing the locket into a nearby fire pit without explanation, letting the flames burn the piece of jewelry to ashes. He thanks the PCs for bringing the locket to him and gives them an incandescent blue sphere *ioun stone* as a reward. Lairsaph does not explain his action, the meaning of the locket, or his relationship with the beautiful woman depicted inside under any circumstances.

If the PCs arrest Lairsaph and bring him back alive to Citadel Ordeial, they can claim the bounty of 5,000 gp offered by the Order of the Pike. They receive no reward for killing the Feign Prince.

**Story Award:** If the PCs allow Lairsaph to live and learn about Fort Arego and Visperthul from him, award them 12,800 XP, as if they had defeated the Feign Prince and his consorts in combat.

In addition, if the PCs bring back Lairsaph's locket from Fort Arego, award them 4,800 XP.

### M. MYSTIC GROVE (CR 8+)

For many decades, a nymph known to the humans of the Whisperwood as the Savage Mistress of Beasts has lived in Perdition Reach. While normally content to remain among the willow trees in her sacred grove, not interfering with the other denizens of the forest, the recent arrival of the Glorious Reclamation in the area has galvanized the nymph and spurred her to combat the evil forces that have long held sway in Perdition Reach, drawing the ire of the Order of the Pike in the process. The PCs encounter the Savage Mistress when they enter the hex marked **M** on the map.

**Creatures:** The Savage Mistress has had several friendly encounters with soldiers of the Glorious Reclamation in the past months, and thus she does not immediately hide from the PCs as they approach her grove. Unless they take pains to hide their ill intentions and evil affiliations, however, the nymph quickly realizes that the party is not the usual band of well-meaning knights. True to her name, the Savage Mistress of Beasts is frequently accompanied by some of the Whisperwood's wild animals. When the PCs first encounter the nymph, a black bear and two giant eagles join her in battle against the PCs.



LAIRSAPH



**BLACK BEAR CR 3****XP 800**Young grizzly bear (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 31)**hp** 32**GIANT EAGLES (2) CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 26 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 118)**SAVAGE MISTRESS OF BEASTS CR 7****XP 3,200**Nymph (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 217)**hp** 60**TACTICS**

**During Combat** While her animal allies engage foes in melee, the Savage Mistress tries to stay out of direct combat, using her blinding beauty, stunning glance, and spells such as *call lightning*, *entangle*, and *summon nature's ally IV* to support them.

**Morale** If her animal allies are all slain, the Savage Mistress attempts to flee using *dimension door*, but she returns to her grove the following day.

**Development:** The PCs may bring the Savage Mistress (or merely her head) to Citadel Ordeial to collect the bounty of 3,000 gp from the Order of the Pike.

**N. LOST KNIGHTS (CR 8)**

The PCs have a 20% chance of encountering these lost soldiers of the Glorious Reclamation anytime they are exploring Perdition Reach. Alternatively, they initiate this encounter automatically upon entering the hex marked “N” on the map. This encounter occurs only once; after the PCs have dealt with the knights, there is no further chance of encountering them.

**Creatures:** While searching Perdition Reach for clues of the Inferno Gate, a group of Glorious Reclamation soldiers—a knight inheritor and three sergeants—got lost in the dense forest, and they’ve been searching for the road since. By the time the PCs come across them, the soldiers are bedraggled and hardly up for a fight; they all have the fatigued condition. The knights recognize the PCs as enemies, but don’t rush headlong into a confrontation, instead hoping to parley if possible.

Knight Inheritor Torpin Harrowhart, a paladin of Iomedae and the group’s de facto leader, hails the PCs from a distance, making his diplomatic intentions clear from the outset.

“I recognize you as agents of House Thrune,” Torpin explains, “and as a knight of the Glorious Reclamation, I am sworn to capture or slay you. But my comrades and I have lost our way in this wretched forest, forcing me to beseech your aid.”

Torpin tells the PCs that if they agree to guide his party back to the nearest road, he will give them the remaining

supplies from the chest the knights are lugging along with them. In addition, Torpin asks if the PCs are looking for the Inferno Gate. If they respond affirmatively, or at least don’t deny it, the knight continues:

“Take us back to the road, and I will contact my fellow knights to reduce the forces currently searching for the Inferno Gate, ensuring you will face much lighter resistance when you meet them.” If the PCs doubt his offer, he reasons with them using flattery: “We both want the gate closed. Why should I risk spilling my comrades’ blood in a feud against such clearly capable enemies when your aims are essentially the same as ours? Take me at my word—if you can get us out of here, your mission will be much easier.”

Of course, Torpin is lying. He hates to do so, but the paladin believes his lie will serve the greater good, and he fears that in their fatigued state, he and his soldiers will be unable to defeat the PCs at this time. His code prevents him from surrendering to the PCs, but he feels duty-bound to get his comrades to safety. Torpin can atone for his falsehood later, but he has no intention of actually betraying the Glorious Reclamation (see Development on page 38).

If the PCs ask Torpin the exact location of the Inferno Gate, the paladin cannot help them, as his group split off from the main Glorious Reclamation force before it located the portal. He is willing to reveal that the knights believe the gate is located in Perdition Reach, but he can’t give the PCs more specific directions even if he wanted to.

Although he would prefer to save the lives of the soldiers under his command through diplomacy, Torpin will fight if he needs to. If the PCs respond aggressively, or diplomacy fails, the paladin tries to rally his troops and launches an attack against the PCs. Both Torpin and the Glorious Reclamation sergeants are fatigued; they cannot run or charge, and take a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity.

**GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SERGEANTS (3) CR 3****XP 800 each**

Human fighter 4

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +3**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)**hp** 42 each (4d10+16)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4 (+1 vs. fear)**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk greatsword +9 (2d6+6/19–20)**Ranged** mwk shortbow +6 (1d6/x3)**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The sergeants use Power Attack on all their melee attacks, switching to their shortbows if ranged combat is preferable.

**THE INFERNO GATE**

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWNPART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONSPART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULLPATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, a sergeant drinks a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, but bound by their code, the sergeants fight to the death.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

**Skills** Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Perception +3, Profession (soldier) +8, Ride +4

**Languages** Common

**SQ** armor training 1

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, holy water; **Other Gear** +1 *scale mail*, mwk greatsword, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, antitoxin, wooden holy symbol of Iomedae, 43 gp



SAVAGE MISTRESS  
OF BEASTS

**TORPIN HARROWHART****CR 6****XP 2,400**

Male human paladin of Iomedae 7

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +0

**Aura** courage (10 ft.)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +1 Dex)

**hp** 71 (7d10+28)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

**Immune** disease, fear

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *keen longsword* +11/+6 (1d8+3/17–20)

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

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 2/day (DC 15, 4d6), smite evil 3/day (+2 attack and AC, +7 damage)

**Paladin Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +9)

At will—*detect evil*

**Paladin Spells Prepared** (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*resist energy*

1st—*bless*, *bless weapon*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Torpin calls upon his divine bond to add the *keen* special ability to his longsword before speaking with the PCs.

**During Combat** Once battle begins, Torpin casts *bless* to bolster his troops, then enters combat, using his smite evil ability against foes.

**Morale** A loyal soldier of the Glorious Reclamation, Torpin fights to the death rather than surrender to agents of House Thrune.

**STATISTICS**

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

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lunge, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Diplomacy +8, Heal +5, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Ride +1, Sense Motive +6

**Languages** Common

**SQ** divine bond (weapon +1, 1/day), lay on hands 5/day (3d6), mercies (diseased, sickened)

**Combat Gear** *arrow magnet*<sup>UE</sup>, *potion of aid*, *potion of eagle's splendor*; **Other Gear** +1 *banded mail*, +1 *longsword*, mwk light crossbow with 10 bolts, *campfire bead*<sup>UE</sup>, silver holy symbol of Iomedae

**Treasure:** The chest of supplies carried by the soldiers holds an *efficient quiver* that contains 50 +1 arrows, 15 silver javelins, three longbows, and three shortbows. In addition, the chest holds an *instant bridge* (*Ultimate Equipment* 305), two *scrolls of true seeing*, an everburning torch, 12 tindertwigs, 8 days of trail rations, and 200 gp.

**Development:** If the PCs agree to help Torpin and guide the soldiers to the road, the knight makes good on his



promise to give them the chest of supplies. He does not, however, send word to Fort Arego to reduce the Glorious Reclamation forces at the Inferno Gate. Instead, he sends a warning to Viona Kadarius that agents of House Thrune are closing in on the gate's location, and tells her to reinforce their position and prepare for an attack. Viona gets Torpin's warning 1d4 days after the PCs encounter the lost knights here (see area **P** for more details).

## O. BARBAZU MESSENGERS (CR 7)

The PCs automatically trigger this encounter if they follow the blood trail from the owlbear carcass in area **H** or when they enter the hex marked **O** on the map. This encounter occurs only once; after the PCs have defeated the barbazus, there is no further chance of encountering them.

**Creatures:** Although Archbaron Fex uses *sending* to pass information to Visperthul, the heresy devil must rely on other means to communicate with his mortal agent: Visperthul summons a bearded devil, gives it a message for Fex in *illusory script*, and sends the devil through the Inferno Gate so it can teleport to Fex to give him the message. Visperthul has sent a pair of barbazus from Fort Arego with a new message for Fex, but the devils have embarked upon a side mission of their own in hopes of currying favor with the ayngavhau. The two bearded devils have taken it upon themselves to search for the PCs in the Whisperwood, intent on weakening them before they get to Fort Arego. They've already stumbled across an owlbear that gave them more trouble than they were expecting (see area **H**), but they hope to run into the PCs on the outskirts of Senara before they finally complete the task they were given.

The devils recognize the PCs at first sight and immediately attack. If a devil is slain, its corpse remains behind, as it arrived on the Material Plane via the Inferno Gate rather than being summoned. As soon as one of the devils is killed, the other immediately flees, using *greater teleport* to return to Fort Arego and report back to Visperthul.

### BEARDED DEVILS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 57 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 73)

**Development:** Both barbazus carry a copy of Visperthul's latest missive to Archbaron Fex in the form of strips of tattered parchment tied to the devils' glaives. If the PCs kill at least one of the bearded devils, they can intercept this communication, though the letter is written in *illusory script* (Will DC 18), and appears to



TORPIN HARROWHART

be some unintelligible foreign language. The *suggestion* effect keyed to the *illusory script* instructs unauthorized readers (anyone other than Fex) who fail their Will saves to drop the parchment and forget about its existence. If the PCs find a means to read the *illusory script* (such as by dispelling the effect or using one of the *scrolls of true seeing* found in area **N**), give the players a copy of Handout #3.

The PCs can claim the Order of the Pike's bounty of 1,000 gp each for bringing proof of each bearded devil slain to the Hellknights at Citadel Ordeial.

**Story Award:** If the PCs find and successfully decipher Visperthul's message to Fex, award them 4,800 XP.

## P. FORT AREGO

This ruined, fortified prison is the site of the Inferno Gate. It is fully detailed in Part 3.

## PART 3: THE DEVIL'S GATE

Once the PCs have collected all of the components necessary to perform the ritual at the Inferno Gate (with the exception of an archon heart, which can be found in area **P3**) their final task is to actually get to the infernal portal, located beneath the ruins of the former prison called Fort Arego. While Fex obviously knows the location of the gate, he wants the PCs to find it themselves, hopefully keeping them in the dark about his true plans until the very last minute. As a result, the PCs will likely stumble upon Fort Arego while exploring the Whisperwood, but they may also learn clues to its exact location from the Feign Prince Lairsaph (see area **L6**).

If the PCs arrive at Fort Arego before acquiring all of the components needed for the ritual, they will need to go back into the Whisperwood to collect them. If necessary, use Razelago to help guide the PCs toward the missing components and discourage them from attacking the knights currently at the fort (see below). Razelago reasons that attacking the Glorious Reclamation before all of the ritual components are in hand will just give the knights time to reinforce their position, so why fight the same foe twice when once will suffice?

If the PCs did not learn from the Hellknights of the Order of the Pike that there are archons accompanying the Glorious Reclamation forces at Fort Arego, Razelago can report the existence of the archons in area **P3**, which he saw while reconnoitering the ruined fort.

## P. FORT AREGO

The former Chelish prison of Fort Arego sits deep within the Whisperwood's southeastern expanse, Perdition Reach. The presence of the Inferno Gate in the dungeons

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





Darellus,

You have done well so far in leading your agents to me, and Razelago has informed me that they're well on the way to collecting most of the items needed to perform the ritual. I should inform you that some of the Inheritor's knights have been combing the Whisperwood for the gate as well, but I don't foresee any problems. I can always bring more minions through the portal to stop them.

All will be in readiness when your agents arrive with the components. The taste of infernal power I have given you thus far will pale in comparison to that which you will enjoy once you can control the Inferno Gate, and I will relish the four new souls added to my collection—especially since they will be the unwitting instruments of their own demise.

—Visperthul

#### HANDOUT #3

beneath the fort, and the devils and other infernal creatures that occasionally pass through the portal, have kept most explorers away. As a result, the prison's location has been lost to history, leaving the stronghold deserted by all save its undying defenders—and more recently, additional infernal guardians brought in by Visperthul.

Fort Arego is divided into two main areas: the aboveground keep, visible from outside and currently the site of a Glorious Reclamation siege, and the dungeons beneath the fort's watchtower, where the Inferno Gate lies. Once, multiple tunnels connected the dungeons to the outside world, but now, the crumbling watchtower is the dungeons' only reliable entrance and exit.

When the PCs first arrive at Fort Arego, it is in the midst of a siege. Having finally found the fortress, soldiers of the Glorious Reclamation, led by Knight Banneret Viona Kadarius, attempted to enter the keep, but they were met by dozens of devils crawling out of the depths of Fort Arego's dungeons. The knights are fighting desperately to storm the fort and reach the Inferno Gate, but their efforts are proving difficult in the face of seemingly innumerable infernal foes, and they have been unable to push past the inner bailey (area P6).

If the PCs are going to take control of the Inferno Gate before the Glorious Reclamation seizes it and potentially closes or seals the portal, they must battle their way through waves of crusading Iomedean knights, including Viona Kadarius herself, as well as a host of devils and the fort's undead defenders. Of course, the PCs could potentially just teleport into the fort's interior, or even directly to the Inferno Gate itself, but that would leave them surrounded by Glorious Reclamation knights

who might then interrupt the ritual to take control of the gate. As such, defeating the besieging knights before beginning the ritual would be a more prudent course.

The PCs are not expected to fight the entirety of the Iomedean force besieging Fort Arego, but they must battle some Glorious Reclamation soldiers and their allies as they make their way toward the fort's inner bailey and the ruined watchtower. During this time, you should describe the chaos of the surrounding siege: swooping host devils snatching up human soldiers to drop them from high above, mounted knights matching blades with glaive-wielding bearded devils, and anything else you feel might add to the location's flavor. Eventually, the PCs must face Viona Kadarius herself in area P6—defeating her effectively ends the siege, allowing the PCs to explore the fort's dungeons and find the Inferno Gate.

#### REINFORCEMENTS

If the PCs helped Knight Inheritor Torpin Harrowhart in area N in exchange for his promise to reduce the Glorious Reclamation's troops here, they soon discover the opposite is true. Instead, the paladin sends word to Viona Kadarius to strengthen their forces, and the Glorious Reclamation soldiers besieging Fort Arego are on alert for the arrival of Thrune agents. If this is the case, make the following adjustments to the listed encounters.

**P1. Cavalry Picket:** Add two additional knights inheritor of the Glorious Reclamation and combat-trained heavy horses, making this a CR 10 encounter. In addition, the knights have set up an ambush for the PCs, who must succeed at a DC 14 Perception check to act in the surprise round.



**P3. Stream Crossing:** Add an additional legion archon, making this a CR 10 encounter.

**P5. Outer Bailey:** Add two additional knights inheritor and advanced hippogriffs, making this a CR 10 encounter.

**P6. Inner Bailey:** Add a legion archon, making this a CR 11 encounter.

## P1. CAVALRY PICKET (CR 9)

The trail narrows slightly here and turns west as a crumbling fortress of gray stone and decaying timber comes into view to the south, situated atop a steep embankment of dirt and stone bordered by a narrow forest stream. Dark smoke leaks into the sky from the keep's ruined stone tower, and the sound of clashing steel echoes from within the fortress walls.

The forest trail that leads to Fort Arego ends in a bottleneck perfect for an ambush here.

**Creatures:** Four knights inheritor of the Glorious Reclamation guard the trail leading to Fort Arego and the Glorious Reclamation encampment (area P2). Mounted on heavy horses, the knights are in plain sight on the trail, letting their horses graze, but they immediately confront any intruders coming down the path or through the woods.

### KNIGHTS INHERITOR (4) CR 4

#### XP 1,200 each

Human fighter (dragon) 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 46)

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

**hp** 42 each (5d10+10)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1 (+1 vs. fear)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft. mounted (20 ft. on foot)

**Melee** +1 lance +12 (1d8+9/x3) or  
mwk scimitar +10 (1d6+4/18-20)

**Ranged** javelin +8 (1d6+6)

**Special Attacks** spear training

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The knights apply *oil of bless weapon* before entering battle.

**During Combat** The knights charge into the fray with their lances, using Ride-By Attack and Spirited Charge to gore their opponents from horseback.

**Morale** The knights fight valiantly to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

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

**Feats** Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Skill Focus (Ride), Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (lance), Weapon Specialization (lance)

**Skills** Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Ride +10 (+12 to stay in the saddle)

**Languages** Common

**SQ** armor training 1

**Combat Gear** *oil of bless weapon* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** mwk chainmail, mwk light steel shield, +1 lance, javelins (3), mwk scimitar, banner of the Glorious Reclamation, silver holy symbol of Iomedae

### COMBAT-TRAINED HEAVY HORSES (4) CR 2

#### XP 600 each

Advanced horse (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 177)

**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +2 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 19 each

**Melee** bite +5 (1d4+5), 2 hooves +0 (1d6+2)

**Feats** Light Armor Proficiency, Run<sup>B</sup>

**Gear** chain shirt barding, bit and bridle, military saddle

## P2. KNIGHTS' ENCAMPMENT (CR 8)

Tents, wooden supply crates, and a large fire pit make a military encampment of this otherwise cozy forest clearing.

Once they located the Inferno Gate, the knights of the Glorious Reclamation set up their campsite in this clearing outside the fort.

**Creatures:** When Knight Banneret Viona Kadarius led her finest soldiers to assault Fort Arego, she left her second-in-command, Knight Inheritor Emmeleine Flemmard, in charge of the knights' camp. Flemmard is a coward whose success and rank in the Glorious Reclamation are only due to dumb luck and her affluent family's influence. Three Glorious Reclamation sergeants and three trained war hounds accompany Flemmard, but she posted the cavalry picket in area P1 in hopes that they can take care of any opposition so she doesn't have to. If invaders enter the encampment, however, the craven knight and her troops take up their arms to repel the attack.

### EMMELEINE FLEMMARD CR 5

#### XP 1,600

Female human fighter 6

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +3 shield)

**hp** 61 (6d10+24)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3 (+2 vs. fear)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *shock longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+5/19-20 plus 1d6 electricity) or

mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4+3/19-20)

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

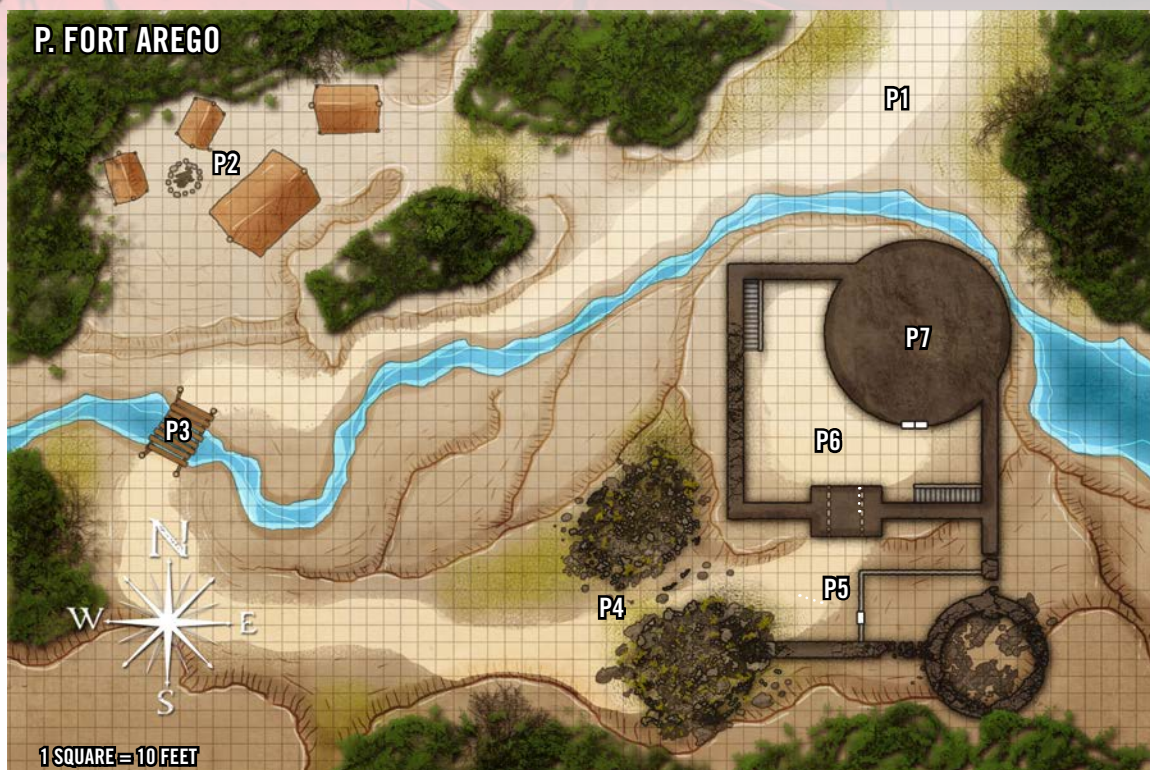
MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY







**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +7/+2 (1d8+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +1)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Primarily concerned with her own safety, Flemmard tries to stay out of melee, using her longbow as long as she is able, but switches to her longsword when necessary, making use of Combat Expertise. The sergeants accompanying Flemmard actively cry out for their leader's guidance and help, but the haughty, shallow knight ignores their pleas in favor of mid-combat flourishes using Dazzling Display and cocky dirty trick and disarm maneuvers that do little more than illustrate her lack of wisdom.

**Morale** Flemmard tries her best to lead her troops in battle, but if two or more sergeants or war hounds are defeated in battle, the knight inheritor drinks her *potion of invisibility*, grabs her *handy haversack* from her tent (see Treasure below), mounts one of the horses tethered nearby, and flees in cowardice, leaving her fellows to fend for themselves.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9 (+11 dirty trick, +11 disarm); **CMD** 19 (21 vs. dirty trick, 21 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dazzling Display, Improved Dirty Trick<sup>APG</sup>, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Bluff +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Perception +5, Ride +3

**Languages** Common, Halfling

**SQ** armor training 1

**Combat Gear** +1 devil-bane arrows (10), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** gem-encrusted +1 half-plate (worth 3,000 gp), +1 heavy steel shield, +1 shock longsword, mwk composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, mwk dagger, *cloak of resistance* +2, antitoxin (2), gold holy symbol of Iomedae (worth 100 gp), signet ring (worth 75 gp), ornate gold-and-silver scabbard (worth 500 gp)

#### GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SERGEANTS (3)

CR 3

**XP** 800 each

**hp** 42 each (see page 37)

#### WAR HOUNDS (3)

CR 1

**XP** 400 each

Riding dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 13 each

**Gear** studded leather barding

**Treasure:** Flemmard is a poor excuse for a knight of the Glorious Reclamation, but onlookers wouldn't guess it based on her extravagant armor and equipment. In addition to her emerald- and ruby-bedecked armor and gold-and-silver scabbard, Flemmard keeps a *handy haversack* in her luxuriously appointed tent. The haversack holds a *noble's vigilant pillbox* (*Ultimate Equipment* 312) a croquet set (*Ultimate Equipment* 92), four different noble's outfits, polo gear



(*Ultimate Equipment* 93), 10 sunrods, 20 tindertwigs, five bottles of fine wine (worth 10 gp each), and a small coffer containing 50 pp.

**Development:** If the PCs capture Flemmard, she wails and loudly demands to be released, blasting the PCs for being “cowardly devils who have sold their souls to Hell.” It doesn’t take much to quiet her blustering—she is easily intimidated and all too willingly sells out her commander (and reveals the location of her own treasures in the encampment) in exchange for a promise of release. “You want to know about Viona?” she offers. “She rides an angelic unicorn, and some sort of winged lion fights by her side. She’s up there on the hill, trying to fight her way into the tower.” Aside from this basic information, Flemmard has little else of value to add to the PCs’ mission.



EMMELEINE FLEMMARD

### P3. STREAM CROSSING (CR 9)

A narrow footbridge crosses over a burbling stream that winds around the hill to the east and trickles westward.

The stream’s flow is not quick enough to sweep creatures’ feet out from beneath them, but anyone who enters the water must succeed at a DC 13 Acrobatics check to balance on the slippery rocks of the streambed. A creature that fails this check must end its turn in that square and succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or fall prone.

**Creatures:** Two veteran hound archons and a legion archon guard this bridge, with orders to stop anyone attempting to break through the Glorious Reclamation’s lines. With their constant *detect evil* ability, the archons immediately recognize the PCs as threats and move to engage them in battle. The hound archons focus their attacks on warriors, while the legion archon takes to the air, targeting obvious spellcasters at range. All of the archons fight to the death to defend the bridge.

#### VETERAN HOUND ARCHONS (2) CR 5

**XP 1,600 each**

Advanced hound archon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 19)

**hp** 51 each

#### LEGION ARCHON CR 7

**XP 3,200**

**hp** 76 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 19)

**Story Award:** The PCs can obtain the archon heart they need for the Inferno Gate ritual from one of these celestials. Award the PCs 4,800 XP if they successfully acquire the heart.

### P4. GATEWAY OF TREES (CR 8)

Two mounds of earth and stone, possibly the overgrown ruins of collapsed towers, form a gateway of sorts, bracketing the trail as it winds upward to the fort proper.

The two mounds are nearly 20 feet high, with gradual slopes covered in dense rubble (*Core Rulebook* 427–428).

**Creatures:** Knight Banneret Viona Kadarius befriended a treant named Timbercrown while she and her troops were scouring the forest for the Inferno Gate, and the monstrous tree creature has aided them since. Timbercrown currently perches

on the southernmost mound, while two oak trees he has animated with his animate trees ability are trying to down the western walls of Fort Arego. Timbercrown hurls rocks at the PCs as they approach the fort and commands the animated trees to attack them in melee combat. All of the plant creatures are large enough that dense rubble on the mounds does not affect their movement. If Timbercrown is killed, the two animated trees immediately take root and become normal trees again.

#### TIMBERCROWN CR 8

**XP 4,800**

Male treant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 266)

**hp** 114

#### ANIMATED TREES (2) CR —

**hp** 114 each (see treant, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 266)

### P5. OUTER BAILEY AND BARRACKS (CR 8)

A squat stone building sits in one corner of the fort’s outer courtyard. The walls to the west have collapsed, and wind whistles through cracks in the remaining crumbling walls. A small gatehouse provides passage deeper into the fort through a wall to the north.

When Fort Arego was operational, the prison’s warden and her top guards lived in the barracks building in the fort’s outer ward. When Visperthul opened the Inferno Gate and cast the prison into chaos, the warden blockaded herself inside the barracks in hopes of surviving the infernal onslaught, but was crushed when part of the building’s roof collapsed on top of her. Inside the dimly lit ruins of the barracks, rotted wood furniture leaning against once-sturdy doors hint at the structure’s final purpose and its subsequent decades-long neglect.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL’S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER’S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





**Creatures:** Three knights inheritor of the Glorious Reclamation riding trained hippogriffs patrol the outer bailey. The knights are intent on preventing evildoers from compromising their goal of closing the Inferno Gate, so they swoop down to fight any intruders.

**KNIGHTS INHERITOR (3)****CR 4****XP 1,200 each****hp** 42 each (see page 41)**ADVANCED HIPPOGRIFFS (3)****CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 28 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 156)

**Treasure:** A rusted iron lockbox is tucked in the southeastern corner of the barracks building, noticeable at a glance with a successful DC 15 Perception check. The heavy lockbox is secured with a rusty padlock (Disable Device DC 20), but can be easily broken open (hardness 7,

hp 10, break DC 16). Inside are over two dozen books, remarkably well preserved considering their age. Most of these are historical in nature, including exhaustive records of every individual imprisoned and executed at Fort Arego over the years, as well as several journals kept by the prison's wardens. The books weigh a total of 60 pounds in all, and are capable of fetching 6,000 gp if sold to a historian or book collector. In addition, a 2nd-level *page of spell knowledge* (*Ultimate Equipment* 314) lies among the more mundane volumes (the GM should choose the exact spell contained on the *page of spell knowledge* to customize it for her group).

Details found within the wardens' journals can be as mundane or as fascinating as the GM likes, but one of the journals in particular should interest the PCs—that of Korva Ferrini, the last warden of Fort Arego before it was overrun by a prisoner riot and the prison's guards made their ill-fated bargain with Visperthul. If the PCs look through the journals, give the players a copy of Handout #4 (see page 46).

**P6. INNER BAILEY (CR 10)**

Mounds of dirt, debris, and loose stone litter this open courtyard, which is bordered on all sides by the crumbling walls of the fort. To the northeast, chunks of rubble have been moved to reveal an entrance to the interior of a massive, ruined tower, blocked by double doors.

The fighting to take Fort Arego is heaviest in this area. Dead Glorious Reclamation soldiers and slain devils litter the ground, but the knights are close to breaking through. When the PCs arrive, the siege has mostly drawn to a close, though a few soldiers are still fighting isolated battles with devils on the periphery of the courtyard.

**Creatures:** Knight Banneret Viona Kadarius, the leader of the Glorious Reclamation's

efforts in the Whisperwood, leads the siege from here. Sitting astride her noble half-celestial unicorn mount, Laissis, she rallies her remaining troops in the bailey for the final push to enter the fort's ruined watchtower. In addition, Iomedae has sent a lammasu named Ibnian to aid the Glorious Reclamation in their quest to close down the Inferno Gate. As the PCs enter the inner bailey, the knight banneret and her allies turn to repel the intruders so they can finally complete their mission.

Both Ibnian and Laissis gain a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear and a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls made as part of a charge as long as Viona's banner is visible. They gain increased bonuses on their saving throws when adjacent to Viona once she uses her tactician

**KNIGHT INHERITOR**



ability to grant them the Shake It Off feat. Viona Kadarius is described fully in the NPC Gallery on page 58.

#### IBNIAN CR 8

XP 4,800

Lammasu (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 175)

hp 94

#### LAISSIS CR 5

XP 1,600

Advanced half-celestial unicorn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 169)

hp 50

#### VIONA KADARIUS CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 72 (see page 58)

**Development:** The death or capture of Viona Kadarius breaks the morale of the few remaining Glorious Reclamation soldiers, who flee the confines of the fort to regroup with any other survivors.

### P7. FORT AREGO TOWER

Originally consisting of three aboveground levels, Fort Arego's watchtower was mostly destroyed in the prison riot that left the fort abandoned and in ruins. Looters and treasure hunters cleared rubble from the tower's entrance and stole the most precious relics decades ago, but few braved the dungeons beneath the tower, which remain intact. It would take a mighty effort to excavate anything of value from the wreckage of the tower's upper levels, and such an act is beyond the scope of this adventure, but the tower's subterranean levels are fully detailed in area Q.

### Q. FORT AREGO DUNGEONS

Although most of Fort Arego Tower has collapsed, its ground floor and the five sublevels beneath it are still accessible. The heresy devil Visperthul, who has been consorting with Archbaron Fex for several months, dwells far below in Fort Arego's dungeons, where he keeps watch over the ever-burning Inferno Gate, ushering scores of fiendish servants through the portal to guard the fort's upper levels and terrorize the surrounding Whisperwood.

**General Features:** Unless otherwise specified, the dungeons of Fort Arego have the following general features. Ceilings are 8 feet high on the ground floor and sublevels 1, 2, and 4 (areas Q1–Q12, Q14, and Q15), but are dramatically higher in the Funnel (area Q13) and the Pit (area Q16). Floors consist of flagstone tiles, but rubble (noted on the map) creates difficult terrain in some areas and obstructs other areas entirely. Unless otherwise noted, corridors and rooms are unlit—the dungeons'

infernal and verminous denizens have no need for light, so they haven't bothered replacing the torches in the sconces that line the prison's walls.

### Q1. ENTRYWAY (CR 8)

Cracked stone columns support what's left of the crumbling ceiling of this wide foyer. A flight of stairs descends to the east, and a long hallway continues to the north. Ahead, two doors provide access to other chambers.

**Creatures:** A pair of three-headed cerberi guards the tower's entryway, attacking any mortal creature that dares to step inside.

#### CERBERI (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 76 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 51)

### Q2. LIBRARY (CR 9)

Broken and rotting bookshelves stand in various states of disarray throughout this chamber. Books, scrolls, and miscellaneous papers are scattered across the floor, giving the room the appearance of a ransacked old library.

This half of the tower's ground floor was a repository for book collections stolen by Cheliox during the Everwar. While most of the tomes have decayed in the centuries since Fort Arego's abandonment, a few finely preserved volumes have survived over the years.

**Creature:** A single bone devil that came through the Inferno Gate at Visperthul's command currently occupies this chamber, busily consuming the lost lore in the moldering books and scrolls piled high on the library's shelves. The devil attacks intruders as soon as it notices them, eager to practice some of the torture techniques it's been reading about on living subjects.

#### BONE DEVIL CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 105 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 74)

**Treasure:** Scattered among the disintegrating papers and books in this room are three *scrolls of dispel magic*, a *scroll of see invisibility*, a *wand of stone shape* (23 charges), six black onyx gems worth 100 gp each, and what appears to be a strikingly boring compendium of 500-year-old Chelish legal precedents, but is actually a spellbook protected by a *bookmark of deception* (*Ultimate Equipment* 284). Removing the bookmark reveals the true nature of the spellbook, which contains 3d4 sorcerer/wizard spells of 1st through 3rd levels (the GM should select the specific spells or determine them randomly).

#### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



The murders continue, even after the hanging of Bartleby Crispin. Just this morning, Officer Hyla found both Sergeant Logan and Marshank the Varisian cut from ear to ear, splayed out in the assembly room on sublevel 2. So much for the killer being confined to the Funnel or the Pit—it seems that whoever our murderer is, he's got some way of sneaking out of his cell and between floors. I've locked down the cell blocks and stationed additional guards on sublevels 2 and 4, but I'm afraid there is little else we can do to fend off the killer lurking in the shadows until reinforcements arrive from Westcrown.

## HANDOUT #4

We had no idea of the devil's power when we made our foolish bargain. True to his word, Visperthul put a stop to the riot but only by making matters worse. Most of the guards are already dead, claimed as sacrifices by the fiend, or have been turned into infernal soldiers by the devil's fell magic. I hide within these walls for now, but I fear the worst for my soul. Our supposedly promised us salvation, but none of us knew he would open a portal to Hell itself!

## HANDOUT #5

## Q3. GUARD BARRACKS (CR 9)

Broken stone blocks and rubble create an uncertain path through this maze of half-ruined sleeping quarters. Gold coins are scattered across the floor as though spilled from a purse, and several rusty weapons hang from a rack in the corner of the room.

This area (and rooms on the now-collapsed levels above) housed the majority of Fort Arego's garrison when the prison was operational.

**Creatures:** Six of Fort Arego's original guards agreed to Visperthul's infernal bargain during the prison riot and were transformed into flaming undead monstrosities called Burning Knights of Moloch. They have guarded the dungeons of Fort Arego ever since. The Burning Knights resemble animated corpses garbed in armor smoldering with hellfire. Their skin has melted away, leaving only their fiery, grinning skulls visible.

Two of these undead horrors currently stand guard in this room to keep intruders from delving further into the tower. Visperthul has ordered all of the Burning Knights to attack the PCs on sight; he wants to make sure that the souls Fex has acquired for him are worthy of his efforts, and he also doesn't want the party to grow suspicious if the infernal conscripts let them through unharmed.

## BURNING KNIGHTS OF MOLOCH (2)

CR 7

## XP 3,200 each

Human variant graveknight fighter 6 (*Pathfinder RPG*)

*Bestiary* 3)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

**Aura** hellfire aura (1d6 hellfire), sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 17)

## DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 85 each (6d10+48)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7 (+2 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation;

**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, undead traits; **SR** 18

**Weaknesses** inferno bound

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 longspear +16/+11 (1d8+13/x3 plus 1d6 hellfire) or slam +13 (1d4+7)

**Ranged** mwk spear +12/+7 (1d8+10/x3 plus 1d6 hellfire)

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

**Special Attacks** channel destruction (1d6 hellfire), devastating blast (4d6 hellfire, DC 17, 3/day), undead mastery (30 HD, DC 17), weapon training (spears +1)



#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Burning Knights unleash their devastating blasts, then leap into melee with their longspear. The knights throw spears at opponents beyond melee range.

**Morale** The Burning Knights of Moloch fight until they are destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Furious Focus<sup>APG</sup>, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Ride-By Attack, Stand Still, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longspear), Weapon Specialization (longspear)

**Skills** Climb +12, Intimidate +21, Perception +17, Profession (soldier) +9, Ride +14

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**SQ** armor training 1, graveknight armor, ruinous revivification (hellfire)

**Gear** +1 breastplate, +1 longspear, mwk spears (4)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Hellfire Aura (Ex)** Creatures adjacent to a Burning Knights of Moloch take 1d6 points of hellfire damage at the start of their turn. Anyone who strikes a Burning Knights of Moloch with an unarmed strike or natural attack takes 1d6 points of fire damage. This replaces the graveknight's phantom mount ability.

**Inferno Bound (Su)** The Burning Knights of Moloch are tied to the powers of the Inferno Gate. Each hour a Burning Knight spends farther than 1 mile from the Inferno Gate, it takes a cumulative –1 penalty to its Charisma score.

**Ruinous Revivification (Su)** A Burning Knights of Moloch is ablaze with hellfire, and its channel destruction, devastating blast, and hellfire aura abilities deal hellfire damage, half of which is fire damage and half of which is damage from unholy energy. Evil-aligned creatures and creatures with the evil subtype take no damage from the unholy energy, but good-aligned creatures and those with the good subtype take double the normal damage from it. Creatures under the effects of spells like *protection from evil* are unaffected by the unholy energy, though they still take fire damage.

**Treasure:** The guard barracks have been already picked mostly clean by treasure hunters exploring the most easily accessible areas of Fort Arego, but the weapons rack in the corner of the room holds three broken martial weapons (GM's choice), and a total of 66 gp, 36 sp, and 12 cp are scattered across the floor.

In addition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check while investigating the weapons rack can spot a small iron key poking out from beneath the rack, which opens the northern door to the guardroom two floors below (area Q9).

#### Q4. MAIN STAIRWELL (CR 7)

This wide stairwell once connected all of Fort Arego's dungeon levels, allowing guards and escorted prisoners access between each floor, although portions of it are now blocked by fallen rubble. From the ground floor, the stairs connect to the commons on sublevel 1 (area Q6).

**Creature:** A single Burning Knight of Moloch stands watch halfway down the steps of the main stairwell, attacking any intruders on sight.

#### BURNING KNIGHT OF MOLOCH

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 85 (see page 46)

#### Q5. AUXILIARY STAIRWELL

This spiral stairway connects the ground floor of Fort Arego Tower to the two sublevels below (areas Q1, Q6, and Q8). A rotting wooden door on each level separates the stairwell from the rest of the dungeon chambers.

#### Q6. COMMONS (CR 9)

Shattered clay pots, dented tin mugs, and crumbling wooden utensils lay scattered across the broken tables and floor tiles of this communal dining area.

The stairs in the northeast portion of this chamber climb up to area Q1. A staircase to the west that once led to the level below is now filled with earth and rubble and is impassable.

**Creatures:** Visperthul has posted two warmonger devils in this chamber to defend against deeper incursions into the Fort Arego's dungeons. The two devils, known as levalochs, yearn to fight against the knights aboveground, and attack any intruders on sight, pursuing them throughout the fort if need be.

#### WARMONGER DEVILS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 81)

#### Q7. KITCHEN AND LARDER (CR 7)

These two chambers appear to have been a kitchen and an adjacent larder. Dirt and rubble have spilled from the chimney of the kitchen's fireplace and filled the cauldron in the hearth. The shelves of the larder are bare save for dust and the dried remains of long-spoiled foodstuffs.

**Creatures:** Two achaierais have sought refuge in the kitchen (area Q7a), where they hide from the hellcats who have been hunting them throughout the tower's dungeons (see area Q12). The multilegged, birdlike creatures are infernal predators in their own right, however, and immediately attack any living thing that

#### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



enters either of these chambers, filling the rooms with black clouds of toxic smoke before lashing out with their claws.

**ACHAIERAIS (2)****CR 5****XP 1,600 each****hp** 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 27)

**Treasure:** A knocked-over shelf in the larder (area Q7b) obscures a loose flagstone, which can be noticed by anyone who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check (characters specifically searching the floor gain a +4 bonus on the check). Underneath the loose tile is a bag containing a *figurine of wondrous power* (serpentine owl), an adamantine wire saw (*Ultimate Equipment* 75), 10 garnets worth 60 gp each, and 322 gp.



**BURNING KNIGHT  
OF MOLOCH**

**Q8. ASSEMBLY ROOM (CR 9)**

Four cracked stone columns support the ceiling of this central chamber, while several doors provide access to other rooms. Two stairways exit this area to the south.

Fort Arego's guards assembled prisoners selected to labor in the adjacent workshops (areas Q11 and Q12) in this chamber before putting them to work. The southwestern stairway once climbed up to the level above, but is now blocked by fallen rubble and dirt. The southeastern stairs remain intact, and descend to area Q13 below.

**Creatures:** Two more Burning Knights of Moloch have taken up position in this room. They attack any creatures trying to pass through to the lower levels.

**BURNING KNIGHTS OF MOLOCH (2)****CR 7****XP 3,200 each****hp** 85 each (see page 46)**Q9. UPPER GUARDROOM**

The northern door to this chamber is locked (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18, Disable Device DC 25); the key can be found in area Q3. In addition, the western double doors are blocked from within the room.

A line of wooden cots stands against the western wall of this room, which contains the remains of a table and several chairs. Broken stone pillars lean against the eastern wall, blocking a set of wooden double doors.

This chamber served as a combination guardroom and break room for the guards posted inside the prison. The treasure hunter whose corpse now lies in area Q10 fled through here, locking the northern door behind him and pushing over some crumbling pillars to block the double doors to the east.

**Q10. STOREROOM (CR 8)**

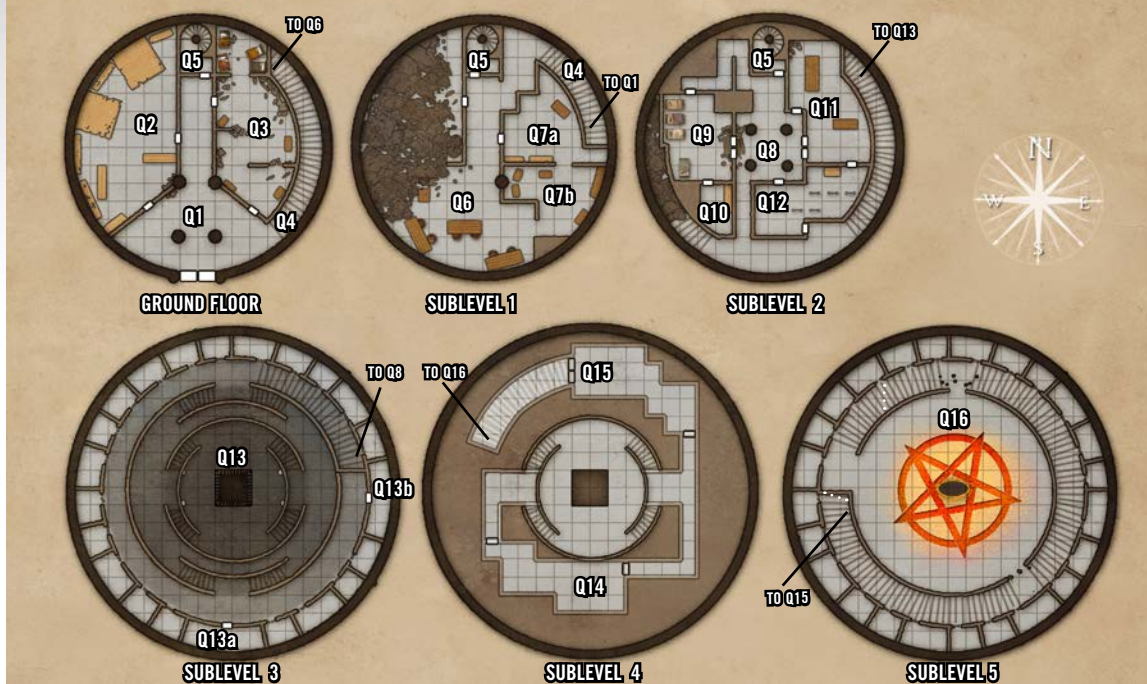
A lone humanoid corpse slouches in one corner of this chamber. Shelves covered in rusty tools and junk line the walls, and several open chests contain nothing but dust.

**Trap:** A few years ago, a treasure hunter named Garman worked up the courage to explore the dungeons of Fort Arego. He managed to reach the dungeons' second sublevel before running afoul of the Burning Knights of Moloch. He hid from the infernal guardians in this room, setting a crossbow trap that would launch a +1 *holy crossbow bolt* poisoned with shadow essence at whoever opened the door. Although Garman eventually succumbed to his wounds, his expertly crafted trap remains intact.



## Q. FORT AREGO DUNGEONS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



### POISONED HOLY BOLT TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 27; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d10+1/19-20 plus 2d6 damage vs. evil creatures plus poison [shadow essence])

**Treasure:** Although the prison relics in this room are long gone (the shelves and chests were already empty when Garman searched the room), the corpse of the treasure seeker has a number of useful items on it, including a suit of masterwork padded armor, a +1 darkwood club, a vial of *abjurant salt* (*Ultimate Equipment* 276), a *potion of cat's grace*, a climber's kit, a crowbar, a skeleton key (*Ultimate Equipment* 72), and a sack containing 255 gp.

In addition, if the PCs avoided triggering Garman's trap, they can recover his masterwork heavy crossbow and the +1 *holy bolt* from the trap.

### Q11. WOOD WORKSHOP (CR 8)

Broken furniture and discarded, rotting lumber take up most of the floor space in this long-abandoned workshop. The floor is covered in a slurry of old sawdust and stagnant water dripping from the ceiling.

The wardens of Fort Arego were unwilling to let any potential labor go to waste, and those prisoners not healthy enough to cut timber in the forest outside were

required to toil in prison workshops such as this one, where they crafted wooden furniture pieces for sale in Senara or Remesiana.

**Creature:** A swarm of hellwasps that came through the Inferno Gate has constructed a nest in the rotting lumber in this room. The swarm attacks any living creatures that enter the room, eager to inhabit a mortal body.

### HELLWASP SWARM

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 90 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 146)

### Q12. TEXTILE WORKSHOP (CR 9)

Half-broken looms are arranged in clumsy rows throughout this workshop. Moth-eaten blankets, rotted clothing, and other textiles in various states of disarray litter the floor and drape precariously on the room's sparse furniture.

More prisoners were forced to work on over a dozen looms in this room to produce finely woven blankets, scarves, tunics, and leggings.

**Creatures:** Two hellcats pursued the achainers in area Q7 through the Inferno Gate, and are currently resting in this room before resuming the hunt. The hellcats' invisible in light ability grants them partial concealment (20% miss chance) in the normal darkness of this room, but they may become more or less visible depending on any light sources the PCs bring with them. The hellcats attack any other living creatures entering the room.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



**HELLCATS (2)****CR 7****XP 3,200 each****hp** 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 153)

**Treasure:** A *tunic of careful casting* (*Ultimate Equipment* 223) lies beneath some disintegrating cloth in the southern portion of the room, seemingly forgotten.

**Q13. THE FUNNEL (CR 11)**

This huge cylindrical chamber is divided into three tiered levels of flagstone walkways that encircle the room's perimeter, connected to adjacent levels by stone staircases. The topmost tier is the largest in diameter; the next lower tier is smaller, with steps circling down to the lowest tier, an empty circular area in the center of the room. Dozens of prison cells line the walls of each tier. A large staircase climbs from the top tier to the dungeon level above. On the bottom level, two open archways lead east and west under the tiers. Four long iron chains dangle from the high ceiling, hanging over a large square hole in the floor at the bottom of the chamber.

Most of Fort Arego's prisoners were housed in the dozens of shared cells lining the walls of this chamber, called "the Funnel" due to its shape and its position over "the Pit" below.

The ceiling is 40 feet high in this chamber; each tier is 10 feet above the tier below it. The cramped cells are only 8 feet high, each secured with a door of iron bars (hardness 10, hp 30, break DC 28). All of the cells can be locked or unlocked with a lever located in the control room, located in one of the top-tier cells to the south (area Q13a). The open archways on the bottom tier lead to chambers beneath the stacked tiers of the Funnel (areas Q14 and Q15).

The square opening in the center of the room once held a wooden elevator platform that connected this chamber with the dungeons of the Pit below (area Q16). Prisoners would raise or lower the lift by means of a winch located in a small room on the top tier to the east (area Q13b). The lift was broken long ago; the wooden platform was destroyed, the chains that supported it are badly rusted, and the winch is frozen and no longer functional. The floor of the Pit lies 80 feet below the opening, but the shaft ends in a 2-inch-thick, flat wall of stone 20 feet below the Funnel's floor. Fex was uninterested in letting any would-be heroes or intruders find the Inferno Gate and possibly interrupt his grand scheme, so he walled off the shaft using a *scroll of wall of stone* several weeks ago. If the PCs break through the wall (hardness 8, hp 30, break DC 24 per 5-foot-square section), they can reach the Inferno Gate in the Pit below.

**Creatures:** One might expect the cells in this prison to be long vacant, but such is not the case, as more than two

dozen petitioners—the souls of mortals damned to an eternity in Hell—paw at the iron bars, pining for release. The petitioners retain their human forms, but have been horrifically scarred after untold centuries of torment in Hell. They unwittingly came to the Material Plane from Malebolge through the Inferno Gate, and Visperthul has imprisoned them here for the time being. The heresy devil could just send the petitioners back through the Inferno Gate, but he is stockpiling them until the market price in Hell for the return of escaped souls increases, and until he has enough to use as a bargaining chip with a more powerful devil.

The "wardens" of the prison are three host devils that Visperthul has put in charge of the petitioner "prisoners." When the PCs first arrive in this chamber, the host devils see an opportunity for some morbid entertainment. On the first round of combat, one of the devils pulls the lever in the control room (area Q13a), opening all of the cell doors. "Bring us the heads of these intruders," one of the devils intones telepathically, "and you may finally be rewarded with a new infernal form!"

The petitioners, eager for any chance to escape their future of eternal torment, heed the devil's instructions and attack the PCs with reckless abandon. Their desperation is nearly palpable—the petitioners violently clamber over each other to reach the PCs, pushing each other down the stairs or even leaping headlong from the rails of higher tiers to reach any PCs on lower levels.

**HOST DEVILS (3)****CR 6****XP 2,400 each****hp** 59 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 53)**MALEBOLGIAN PETITIONERS (25)****CR 1****XP 400 each**LE petitioner (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 208)**hp** 16 each**Immune** fire

**Treasure:** The host devils have scoured the ruins of Fort Arego for any missed or forgotten treasures, which they have collected in the disused winch room (area Q13b). The valuables include a mithral shirt, *oil of magic weapon*, two *scrolls of slow*, a *shield cloak* (*Ultimate Equipment* 268), a *wand of hold person* (33 charges), miscellaneous gemstones worth 1,200 gp total, 43 pp, and 566 gp.

**Q14. TORTURE CHAMBER (CR 8)**

Torture implements and other devices of cruelty are strewn throughout this room, including hanging chains and manacles, an iron maiden, a rusty rack, spiked iron chairs, blackened branding irons, bloodstained scalpels, and hundreds of rusty iron nails.



Fort Arego's original guards tortured particularly heinous criminals or misbehaving prisoners in this well-equipped room, which they also used for interrogations and cruel sport.

**Creature:** A Burning Knight of Moloch—actually the undead corpse of Fort Arego's last warden, Korva Ferrini, now cursed to an eternity of infernal unlife—sits stoically on one of the broken torture chairs in this room, hunched over and seemingly unaware of her surroundings. When the intruders enter the room, however, the Burning Knight stands, regards them silently for a moment, then launches into an attack.

**ADVANCED BURNING KNIGHT OF MOLOCH CR 8**

**XP 4,800**

**hp 97** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, see page 46)

**Treasure:** A tattered piece of cloth hangs from one of the spikes of the iron maiden in this room—a remnant of Lairsaph's cloak, which snagged on the iron maiden as the Feign Prince fled from the Inferno Gate years ago. If the PCs succeed at a DC 20 Perception check while searching the torture chamber—or if they specifically search the tattered cloak hanging from the broken iron maiden—they find a small gold locket hanging from a fine mithral chain. Inside is a moonstone and bloodstone cameo engraved with the finely detailed portrait of a human woman. The locket is worth 300 gp as a piece of jewelry, but is far more valuable if returned to Lairsaph (see area L6 for details).

## Q15. LOWER GUARDROOM (CR 11)

A few scattered pieces of dilapidated furniture decorate this otherwise bare dungeon room.

Guards for both the Funnel above (area Q13) and the Pit below (area Q16) were posted in this chamber. The doors to the west open onto the long stairway that descends to the bottom of the Pit.

**Creature:** A barbed devil guards the doors to the western staircase. This devil is likely the final obstacle between the PCs and the Inferno Gate in the Pit below. Visperthul has ordered the devil to attack the PCs on sight, but not kill them; he wants to weaken them for Fex's betrayal and the sacrificial ritual, but the heresy devil has no use for dead sacrifices. As a result, the barbed devil only fights until it is reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, at which point it teleports to the Pit and flees through the Inferno Gate, pausing briefly to report to the heresy devil on the PCs' status.

**BARBED DEVIL CR 11**

**XP 12,800**

**hp 138** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 72)

## Q16. THE PIT (CR VARIES)

Intense heat and the stench of sulfur fill the air of this immense circular chamber. A wide stone staircase, broken in places, spirals around the perimeter of the massive room, linking the level above to the floor below. Dozens of dungeon cells line the walls alongside the staircase, secured with thick iron bars. At the very bottom of the room, an oval portal like a gash in the air itself hovers a foot or so above the floor, ablaze with crimson flames and crackling with arcs of black lightning. A hellish landscape of vast, spiked walls under a constant rain of ash is visible through the gate. Around the portal, a floor-spanning pentagram of molten lava smolders with hellfire.

The most dangerous or wretched prisoners of Fort Arego served their sentences in this massive prison hall, called "the Pit" because of its soaring, cylindrical shape and its location at the very bottom of Fort Arego's dungeons. The name took on additional meaning when the Inferno Gate appeared in this chamber.

The ceiling is 60 feet high in this chamber. The staircase leads up to area Q15; in addition, a shaft in the middle of the ceiling connects to the Funnel (area Q13) above, but it is currently sealed by Fex's *wall of stone*.

The Inferno Gate burns in the center of the room, an open portal to Malebolge, the sixth layer of Hell. When the Inferno Gate first opened, a 30-foot-diameter pentagram of hellish molten rock ripped across the floor's flagstones, surrounding the portal with a moat of fiery lava (see Hazard on page 52). The Inferno Gate is 15 feet wide and 30 feet high, and sheds as much light as a hooded lantern or sunrod (normal light in a 30-foot radius, dim light in a 60-foot-radius), but radiates heat like a large bonfire. It has overwhelming auras of conjuration, evil, and law.

**Creatures:** Razelago has been invisibly tailing the PCs for some time, and as they approached the location of the Inferno Gate, he apprised the archbaron of their impending arrival. Fex then informed Visperthul that everything was ready via *sending*, so the heresy devil came through the portal and Fex teleported to the Pit to join the PCs for the ritual. As a result, when the PCs arrive in the Pit, they find Archbaron Darellus Fex, his accuser devil Razelago, and the heresy devil Visperthul waiting for them next to the Inferno Gate. Visperthul makes quite a sight sitting on his levitating throne in front of the massive, burning Hell portal, and the corpulent devil is eager to meet the souls that will soon be sacrificed to him.

Depending on the clues the PCs may have gathered during the adventure and what information they have learned, this final encounter can transpire in different ways, but they all involve Fex betraying the PCs and attempting to sacrifice their souls to Visperthul to take

### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





control of the Inferno Gate. See Fex's Betrayal below for details on how this event can play out.

**Hazard:** The pentagram surrounding the Inferno Gate is formed of lava from Hell itself. Touching the lava deals 2d6 points of hellfire damage, half of which is fire damage and half of which is damage from unholy energy. Evil-aligned creatures and creatures with the evil subtype take no damage from the unholy energy, but good-aligned creatures and those with the good subtype take double the normal damage from it. Creatures under the effects of spells like *protection from evil* are unaffected by the unholy energy, though they still take fire damage. Damage from the lava continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but is only half normal (1d6 points of hellfire damage per round).

### FEX'S BETRAYAL (CR 12 OR CR 14)

Eventually, the PCs and Archbaron Fex are going to come to blows. The adventure assumes that the PCs have uncovered at least some hints that Fex is going to betray them. They may not know all of the details, but they are likely suspicious when they arrive at the Inferno Gate. In this case, the PCs might very well decide to attack Fex first (after all, by attempting to take control of the Inferno Gate for himself, Fex is a traitor to House Thrune, and the PCs can further their own careers by removing him from power as well as closing the portal).

Alternatively, the PCs may have learned nothing about Fex's betrayal, or they could decide to wait for him to make the first move. If this is the case, neither Fex nor Visperthul gives anything away. The archbaron appears outwardly friendly, greeting the PCs and verifying that they have gathered all of the necessary components for the Inferno Gate ritual. Once he has confirmed that everything is ready, Fex asks the PCs to assist him in performing the ritual to close the portal (see The Inferno Gate Ritual on page 53).

Lastly, if the PCs have surmised that Fex is also planning on betraying Visperthul as well as them, they might to try to talk with the heresy devil and strike their own deal with Visperthul instead (see Bargaining with Visperthul on page 53). The PCs won't have much time for discussion, however, for as soon as Fex realizes that they're trying to turn Visperthul against him, he makes his move.

**Creatures:** If the PCs suspect Fex's betrayal and attack him before he turns on them, the timing is up to them, but combat is pretty straightforward. The instant the PCs make any hostile moves, Fex and Razelago respond in kind.

Otherwise, Fex waits to double-cross the PCs until after they've begun the ritual to supposedly close the Inferno Gate. As soon as the PCs impale the last celestial heart on the fourth unicorn horn, Fex and Razelago launch a full attack against the party. Now that he has come this far, all Fex needs to do to gain full control over the portal is to kill the PCs, sacrificing their souls to Visperthul, before using the *phlegmatic talisman* to bind the heresy devil to the Inferno Gate. At this point, however, the Inferno Gate is energized, potentially making combat more challenging (see The Inferno Gate Ritual on page 53).

In either of these two cases, Visperthul stays largely out of the fight. His contract with Fex means he'll get the archbaron's soul regardless of what happens, so the heresy devil mainly stands by during any confrontation between Fex and the PCs. At most, Visperthul uses defensive magic such as *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, or *invisibility purge* to support Fex without directly attacking the PCs. However, if the PCs inform Visperthul that



VISPERTHUL



Fex is planning to betray him as well, the devil gives no aid to Fex at all, waiting to see who triumphs in the confrontation between Fex and the PCs.

The worst-case scenario occurs if the PCs utterly botched their investigation of the Inferno Gate and did not discover any clues about Fex's true motives, arriving at the Inferno Gate completely unprepared. In this circumstance, Fex begins the ritual with the PCs (as described in The Inferno Gate Ritual below), and when he turns on them, Visperthul joins Fex in the attack, making this a brutally difficult CR 14 encounter—but that's the consequence of the PCs failing to acquire the clues during the adventure.

Archbaron Fex is fully detailed in the NPC Gallery on page 56.

**DARELLUS FEX** **CR 12**  
**XP 19,200**  
hp 139 (see page 56)

**RAZELAGO** **CR 3**  
**XP 800**  
Male accuser devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 84)  
hp 30

**VISPERTHUL** **CR 12**  
**XP 19,200**  
Male heresy devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 80)  
hp 175

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Summon Devil (Sp)** Visperthul is a more accomplished devil summoner than most of his kind. Once per day, he can summon 2d6 imps or 1d4 bearded devils with an 80% chance of success, two bone devils with a 100% chance of success, or a contract devil with a 70% chance of success.

**Development:** If the PCs attack Fex first and successfully defeat him, or if they defeat Fex after performing the ritual and energizing the Inferno Gate, they must still contend with Visperthul and the Inferno Gate, which remains open. See Bargaining with Visperthul below for the possibilities the heresy devil now provides.

If the PCs end up facing Fex and Visperthul together in combat and defeat them both, then they can attempt to close the Inferno Gate as planned. See The Inferno Gate Ritual below for how they can accomplish this task. If the PCs kill Fex first in this scenario, however, and it seems likely that they might defeat Visperthul as well, the heresy devil attempts to save his own life by offering the PCs a deal of their own (see Bargaining with Visperthul below).

### THE INFERNO GATE RITUAL

The ritual to close the Inferno Gate is also the first step for Fex to take control of the portal. If the PCs are still

working with Fex (or are waiting for him to make the first move), the archbaron directs them to stand around the Inferno Gate and skewer the four different celestial hearts onto the unicorn horns they collected. Tall iron candleholders around the edges of the pentagram make for nice unicorn horn holders. If the PCs lack any of the required components, they cannot begin the ritual.

**Hazard:** As soon all four celestial hearts are pierced by unicorn horns, the Inferno Gate becomes energized. The earth around Fort Arego shakes violently as the Inferno Gate belches forth unholy flames, bolts of eldritch lightning, and lesser devils onto the Material Plane. Every 1d3+1 rounds for 10 minutes, the Inferno Gate pulses with infernal energy, which manifests in one of several ways (roll 1d6 on the Inferno Gate Effects table on page 54 to randomly determine the effect).

**Development:** If the PCs are still working with Fex at this point, he and Razelago attack the PCs as soon as the Inferno Gate is energized (see Fex's Betrayal above for details).

If the PCs defeat both Fex and Visperthul without making a deal with the heresy devil, they can attempt to close the Inferno Gate as originally planned (without Visperthul's help, there is virtually no way for the PCs to take control of the portal themselves). They must first perform the ritual to energize the gate as detailed above, then succeed at a DC 25 Use Magic Device check to shut the portal down. If the check fails by 9 or less, the gate remains open. If the check fails by 10 or more, the gate stays open and releases additional infernal energy. Roll 1d6 times on Inferno Gate Effects table; all of the resulting effects occur in a single round. In either case, the PCs must wait 24 hours before trying to close the portal again.

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully close the Inferno Gate on their own, award them 6,400 XP.

### BARGAINING WITH VISPERTHUL

It's likely that the PCs will attempt to talk to Visperthul at some point, either before or after they confront Archbaron Fex. If the PCs try to tell the devil of Fex's planned betrayal before they've defeated the archbaron, give them a small opportunity to do so. Visperthul listens attentively to what the PCs have to say, but he does not fully believe them unless they present evidence such as the *phlegmatic talisman* or Fex's notes from area E4. Of course, Fex won't just stand by while the PCs unravel all his plans: he immediately attacks the PCs the moment such damning evidence of his treachery is revealed (see Fex's Betrayal above).

Otherwise, the PCs will probably face Visperthul once they have defeated Fex. Rather than fight the PCs (or to avoid being slain if they're already engaged in combat), Visperthul proposes another option—a deal of their own with the devil.

Fex's original deal with Visperthul was five souls in exchange for control of the Inferno Gate: Fex's own soul,

### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## INFERNO GATE EFFECTS

## d6 Effect

- 1 The ground quakes violently for 1 round; creatures standing on the floor must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save or fall prone.
- 2 Crimson waves of unholy flames deal 4d6 points of hellfire damage to all creatures within 20 feet of the Inferno Gate (Reflex DC 20 half; see page 52 for details on hellfire damage).
- 3 A bolt of black lightning lashes out at one random creature within 40 feet of the Inferno Gate; the target gains 1d4 temporary negative levels (Fortitude DC 20 negates after 24 hours).
- 4 A cloud of driving ash pours out of the Inferno Gate, blocking all sight (including darkvision and see in darkness) and creating difficult terrain on the floor in area **Q16** for 1 round.
- 5 One or more random extraplanar monsters come through the portal (roll on the Inferno Gate Monsters table below).
- 6 Nothing happens.

## INFERNO GATE MONSTERS

d%	Monster	Avg. CR	Source
01–05	1 bearded devil	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 73
06–15	1d4 hell hounds	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 173
16–25	1 cerberi	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 51
26–35	1 kyton	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 185
36–45	1d4 achaierais	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 7
46–55	1 hellcat	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 153
56–65	1 warmonger devil	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 81
66–75	1d4 host devils	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 53
76–85	1 hellwasp swarm	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 146
86–95	1 Nessian warhound	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 173
96–00	1 bone devil	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 74

plus the souls of the PCs. With the archbaron's death, Visperthul has already claimed Fex's soul, but not the other four. So he offers the PCs the same deal he gave Fex: if the PCs sacrifice four souls to him, the devil will give them control of the gate. Visperthul reasons that if closing the gate would be a prestigious act, then gaining control of it for House Thrune would be even more impressive—going above and beyond the call of duty, so to speak.

The PCs can certainly agree to this deal to take control of the Inferno Gate for themselves, or they can refuse, fight the heresy devil, destroy him, and close the gate once and for all (see Development below for the consequences of both of these actions). But the PCs have a third option as well: Fex's *phlegmatic talisman*.

The PCs could try to use the talisman the way Fex had planned and attempt to bind Visperthul to the Inferno Gate, but they probably don't have Visperthul's true name, dooming any such attempt to failure. However, as long as the talisman remains in mortal hands, its existence is a threat to Visperthul, a fact that the heresy devil knows all too well. Therefore, if the PCs make the existence of the *phlegmatic talisman* known, Visperthul offers to take the talisman as payment instead of the remaining four souls, allowing the PCs to "buy" control of the gate without collecting additional sacrifices.

Regardless of the nature of whatever deal the PCs may make with Visperthul (if any), they cannot gain complete command over the Inferno Gate as Fex had planned to do with the *phlegmatic talisman*, but instead control the portal through Visperthul. In other words, the PCs must continue to deal with the heresy devil to use the Inferno Gate.

**Development:** If the PCs agree to Visperthul's deal in exchange for four replacement souls, they must first find four suitable creatures for sacrifice, which must be equivalent to the PCs (at least 9th-level characters or CR 8 creatures) and capture them. These encounters are not detailed in the adventure, but should be relatively easy for the GM to create—there might be surviving knights of the Glorious Reclamation still outside Fort Arego, for example, and there are probably plenty of suitable candidates in Senara. Once the PCs capture these creatures, they can bring them back to the Pit and sacrifice them to Visperthul. True to his word, the heresy devil takes possession of the sacrifices' souls and gives the PCs control of the Inferno Gate with his guidance.

If the PCs decide not to make a deal with Visperthul, their only remaining option is to close the Inferno Gate as originally planned, but they'll have to fight the heresy devil first. Once Visperthul is defeated, the PCs can attempt to close the portal (see The Inferno Gate Ritual above).

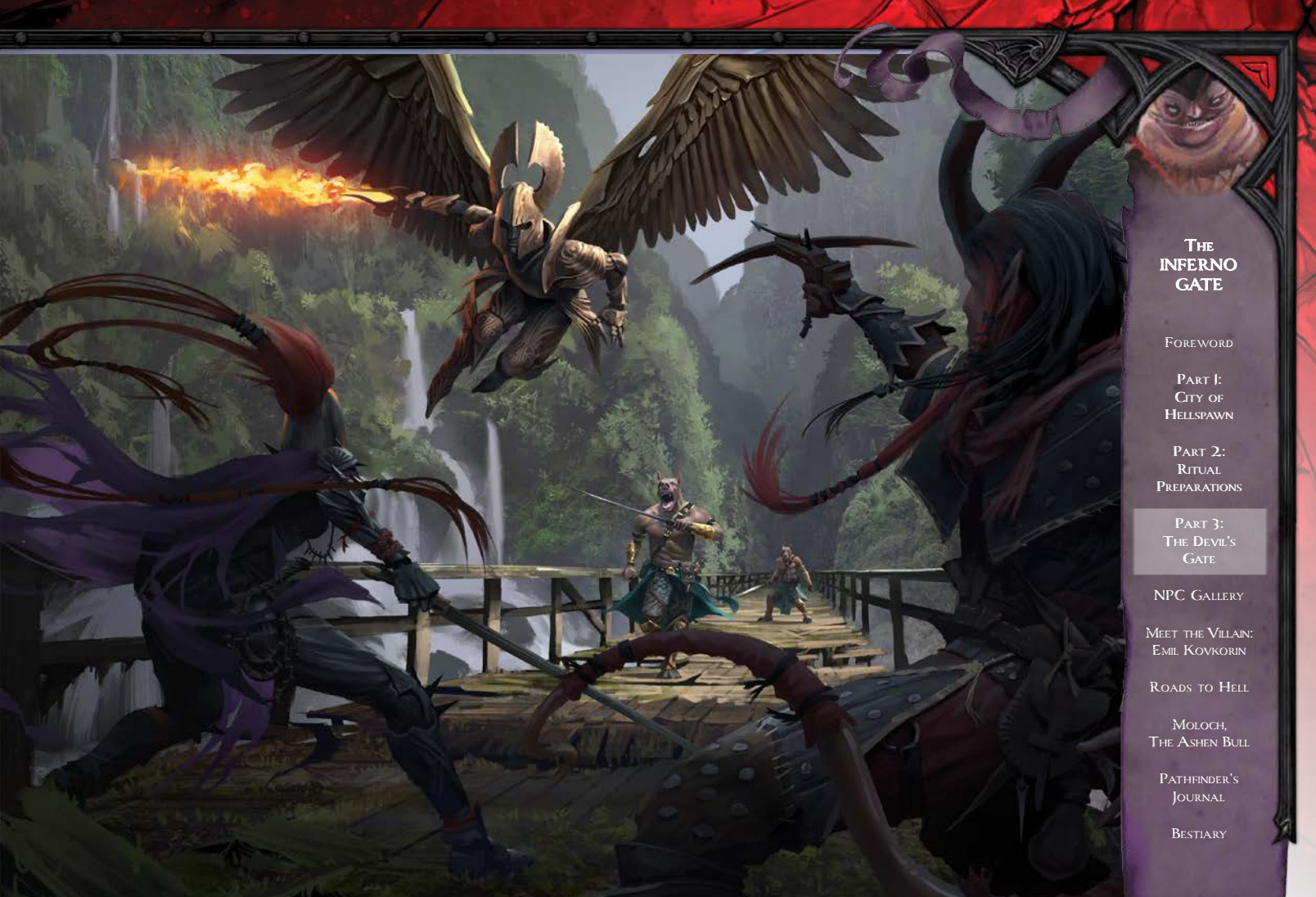
**Story Award:** If the PCs make a deal with Visperthul, award them 9,600 XP for gaining control of the Inferno Gate.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After defeating Archbaron Fex, the PCs have lost a powerful patron, but depending on the outcome of the final encounter, they may have suddenly gained access to an infamous portal to Hell and possibly a relationship with a formidable infernal ally. Regardless of what the PCs ultimately do at the Inferno Gate, their mission is considered complete once they have defeated Fex and have either closed or gained control of the portal.

What the PCs do with their newfound resources is up to them (and likely Visperthul as well), though it would of course be in their best interests to use such assets in support of House Thrune. The *marks of justice* the PCs received when they became Thrune Loyal Agents should serve as reminders of this fact, and turning over control





## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY

of the Inferno Gate to Thrune would certainly go a long way toward mitigating any concerns about the fact that the PCs probably killed not only their patron but a titled noble of Cheliax. If they wish, the PCs can contact the Thrune Bound Agent Izinio (see page 6) and report Fex's treason to him. Provided they have evidence (such as Visperthul's testimony, Fex's notes, or the *phlegmatic talisman*, if they kept it), then there should be little doubt regarding the truthfulness of their account and the justification for their actions. Of course, the PCs may have a much easier time proving Fex's treachery if they captured him alive instead of killing him. Any further repercussions of Fex's death for the PCs are left to the GM to develop.

In any case, as sworn Thrune agents, the PCs will soon be summoned to the imperial court in Egorian. There, they just might have the opportunity to gain the notice and patronage of Her Infernal Majestrix Queen Abrogail II herself, in the next volume of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path, "For Queen & Empire."

### USING THE INFERNO GATE

The Inferno Gate is a permanent extraplanar portal joining the Material Plane to Malebolge, the sixth layer of Hell. The secrets of controlling the portal are currently known only to Visperthul, which means the PCs must

negotiate with the heresy devil to activate any of the Inferno Gate's powers. In practice, this can be achieved with a successful Charisma check opposed by Visperthul's Charisma check, similar to compelling a creature called by a *planar binding* spell to perform a service.

The Inferno Gate functions a permanent *gate* spell, and may be used either for planar travel or to call creatures through the *gate*, following all of the rules for that spell, including the material costs for calling a particular being or kind of being. As Visperthul controls the Inferno Gate, his caster level (13th) is used to determine the total Hit Dice of creatures he can control that are brought through the portal.

Anyone stepping through the Inferno Gate is immediately transported to Malebolge. Details on the sixth layer of Hell can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness: Book of the Damned*, Vol. 1, though any explorations of Hell are far beyond the scope of this Adventure Path.

Finally, the controller of the Inferno Gate can automatically close the portal as a full-round action, causing the gate to wink out of existence in a blinding burst of white fire. As long as Visperthul retains control of the gate, however, he refuses to close it without lengthy negotiation and significant payment (likely in the form of multiple mortal souls).





# ARCHBARON DARELLUS FEX

As archbaron of Longacre, Darellus Fex was a loyal servant of House Thrune for many years, but all that changed when the traitorous noble swore his soul to the heresy devil Visperthul in exchange for the power to control the Inferno Gate.

**DARELLUS FEX****CR 12****XP 19,200**

Male heresy-devil-bound human conjurer 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 456)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +14

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 28, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +6 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 139 (12d6+95); regeneration 5 (good spells and weapons)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14; +4 vs. poison

**DR** 10/adamantine (120 points); **Resist** fire 30

**Weaknesses** contract bound

**OFFENSE**

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

**Melee** +1 darkwood planar quarterstaff +8/+3 (1d6)

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

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +14)  
3/day—*invisibility purge*, *telekinesis* (DC 17)

1/day—*summon* (level 6, 1 lemur, 1 bearded devil, or 1 erinyes 100%)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +18)

At will—*dimensional steps* (360 feet/day)

9/day—*acid dart* (1d6+6 acid)

**Conjurer Spells Prepared** (CL 12th; concentration +18)

6th—*acid fog*, *chain lightning* (DC 22), *quicken invisibility*, *summon monster VI*

5th—*acidic spray*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 22), *sending*, *summon monster V*, *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th—*acid pit*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 21), *greater false life*<sup>UM</sup>, *shout* (DC 20), *stoneskin*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *summon monster III*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *darkness*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (2), *web* (DC 19)

1st—*grease* (DC 18), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *protection from evil*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *shield*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

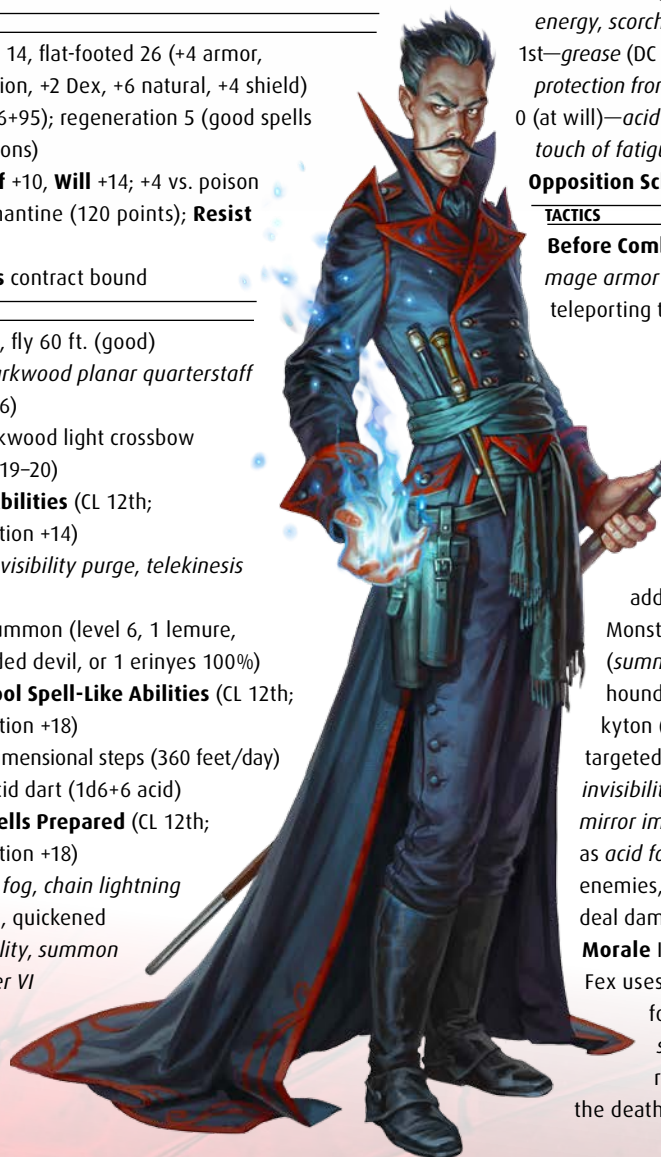
**Opposition Schools** divination, enchantment

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Fex casts *greater false life* and *mage armor* at the beginning of each day. Before teleporting to the Inferno Gate, Fex casts *fly*, *protection from evil*, *shield*, and *stoneskin*, and uses his *wand of heroism*.

**During Combat** Fex casts *displacement* on the first round of combat, then uses his *summon spell-like ability* to conjure an erinyes. He then continues to *summon* additional allies, using his *Summon Evil Monster* feat to *summon* a bearded devil (*summon monster V*), a hell hound or yeth hound (*summon monster IV*), or an augur kyton (*summon monster III*). If successfully targeted by opponents, Fex casts *quicken invisibility* to reposition himself, followed by *mirror image* from his wand. He uses spells such as *acid fog* and *wall of force* to divide and hinder enemies, relying on his summoned minions to deal damage for him.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, Fex uses a *scroll of slow* to impede his closest foes before imbibing a *potion of cure serious wounds*. Fex has pooled all his resources into this betrayal, and fights to the death to ensure his scheme succeeds.





## STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 23, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjunction), Summon Evil Monster (see sidebar), Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Appraise +8, Bluff +16, Climb +1, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Fly +21, Heal +2, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (nobility) +17, Knowledge (planes) +23, Perception +14, Ride +4, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +23, Stealth +4, Survival +2, Swim +1, Use Magic Device +16

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Halfling, Infernal, Shadowtongue

**SQ** arcane bond (+1 darkwood planar quarterstaff), summoner's charm (6 rounds)

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *scroll of black tentacles*, *scroll of hungry pit*<sup>APG</sup>, *scroll of planar binding*, *scrolls of slow* (2), *wand of heroism* (12 charges), *wand of mirror image* (22 charges); **Other Gear** +1 darkwood planar<sup>UE</sup> quarterstaff, darkwood light crossbow with 10 bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2 (Use Magic Device), *ring of arcane signets*<sup>UE</sup>, noble's outfit, spell component pouch, gold and silver necklace with bloodstone pendant engraved with the arms of House Fex (worth 500 gp), signet ring (worth 50 gp)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Heresy-Devil-Bound** Archbaron Fex has bound himself to the heresy devil Visperthul, gaining a +2 bonus to Constitution, Intelligence, and Charisma, and gaining the following spell-like abilities 3/day: *invisibility purge* and *telekinesis*.

House Fex rose to prominence during the Thrune Ascendancy. One of countless minor noble houses with the luck to back the winning side in the Chelish Civil War, they were granted the town of Longacre and the title of archbaron for their service to Thrune.

The current archbaron of Longacre is Darellus Fex, an only child and the last of his line. A lifelong bachelor, Fex leads a chaste life. He is staunchly devoted to the art of conjuration, sparing no time for courtship or friends. His only romantic dalliances have all been dangerous trysts with summoned succubi—nerve-rattling affairs that so far have only reinforced Fex's asexual propensities. Never one for explaining himself, Fex doesn't entertain questions regarding his personal life (or lack thereof), and allows bystanders to think whatever they may about his strange interpersonal habits.

Fex's closet companion is the accuser devil Razelago, who has served the archbaron as a deputy and spy for more than a decade now. The zebub is well aware of Fex's plans, and his role within them: spying on Fex's agents, the PCs, and regularly reporting their progress to the archbaron.

## SUMMON EVIL MONSTER

Archbaron Fex can summon the aid of creatures driven by their very nature to destroy goodness. This feat originally appeared in *Pathfinder Player Companion: Champions of Corruption*. See Fex's Tactics on page 56 for the monsters the archbaron typically summons in combat. For the full list of monsters that can be summoned with this feat, refer to *Champions of Corruption*.

**Prerequisite:** Any evil alignment.

**Benefit:** When casting *summon monster*, you also have access to a list of additional evil monsters. When you're summoning a creature from this list, your debased nature allows you to cast the spell as a standard action. The summoned creature appears as normal for the spell, but can't act until your next turn. It is not flat-footed, however, and it can make attacks of opportunity as normal. These effects don't apply to creatures from the standard list that aren't also on this list.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Archbaron Fex serves as the PCs' patron from the moment they embarked upon their careers as Thrune agents in "The Hellfire Compact" until they finally discover his traitorous intentions in the course of this adventure. During this time, Fex has been lawful evil, but once he puts his plans to betray the PCs in motion at the beginning of "The Inferno Gate," his alignment shifts to neutral evil. Fex reveals his betrayal at the Inferno Gate deep beneath Fort Arego (see page 52). Ostensibly, he is there to lead the PCs in the ritual to close the portal; instead, he attacks the PCs, planning to sacrifice them to Visperthul before turning on the heresy devil and binding him to the gate with the *phlegmatic talisman*.

If the PCs defeat Fex, they lose a powerful and influential patron, but gain a measure of freedom and independence, enabling them to come into their own as Thrune agents for the rest of the campaign. If the PCs manage to capture Fex and turn him over to House Thrune—Corrector Izinio (see page 6) would certainly be a good choice to take possession of the prisoner—they should have gathered more than enough evidence during the adventure to convict the treasonous archbaron. Fex is taken to Egorian, swiftly tried, and immediately sentenced to excruciation. If the PCs are interested in getting revenge on their former patron, they might even be invited to carry out the sentence themselves.

Fex has used much of his personal wealth to fund his scheme of betrayal, but if the PCs search his manor in Longacre, Scarlet Crown, after his defeat, they can find Fex's spellbook (which contains at least 35 spells of 1st through 6th level), as well as any additional treasures the GM might wish to place there for the PCs to discover.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



# KNIGHT BANNERET

## VIONA KADARIUS

A solemn cavalier of the Glorious Reclamation, Viona Kadarius masks the pain of her tragic past with bravery on the battlefield and bold leadership even in the face of mortal peril. She has been charged with finding and destroying the Inferno Gate.

### VIONA KADARIUS

**CR 7**
**XP 3,200**

Female human cavalier 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 32)

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield)

**hp** 72 (8d10+24)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft. (60 ft., fly 120 ft. mounted)

**Melee** +1 *longsword* +13/+8 (1d8+4/19–20) or  
mwk lance +12/+7 (1d8+4/x3)

**Special Attacks** banner +2, cavalier's charge, challenge  
3/day (+8 damage, +3 to saves while threatening), for the  
faith 1/day (+2), tactician 2/day (Shake It Off, 7 rounds)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Viona uses her *Inheritor's breastplate* to cast *bless weapon* on her lance before entering battle.

**During Combat** On the first round of combat, Viona uses her tactician class feature to grant the Shake It Off feat to her unicorn and lammasu allies and challenges one opponent as a swift action. She fights from the back of her unicorn mount as long as possible, focusing on the target of her challenge and using her cavalier's charge ability and Spirited Charge feat. Once both she and her allies are engaged in combat, Viona uses her for the faith ability to grant them all bonuses on attack rolls. In close-quarters combat, she resorts to her longsword and dismounts from Laissis to allow the unicorn to fight beside her.

**Morale** Viona fights to the death to uphold her oath, refusing to flee or surrender to the forces of Hell or House Thrune.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Shake It Off<sup>UC</sup>, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +9, Heal +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Knowledge

(religion) +7 (+11 if involving Iomedae's faith), Perception +6, Ride +8, Sense Motive +7

**Languages** Common

**SQ** calling 4/day (+2), expert trainer +4, mount (see below), order of the star

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** *Inheritor's breastplate* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #103 73), +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *longsword*, mwk lance, *cloak of resistance* +2, *phylactery of faithfulness*, banner, silver holy symbol of Iomedae

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mount (Ex)** Viona's original mount died several months ago in a battle against Chelish soldiers, and the cavalier has not finished mourning her fallen partner. Currently, the half-celestial unicorn Laissis allows Viona to ride it, but it does not function as a mount for purposes of the cavalier's mount class feature.

Anyone who knew Viona Kadarius as a youth would never have guessed that the headstrong tomboy would ever be military material. The daughter of Taldan aristocrats who had relocated to the Andoren town of Alvis, Viona resisted authority and bucked the trends of "proper" society well into her formative years. Viona's parents quickly realized she would not grow into the demure noblewoman they had hoped for, and all but gave up on raising the rebellious girl.

But where Viona's parents saw a lost cause, the girl's loving and wise paternal uncle, Artibus, saw promise. Viona frequently visited her uncle's horse ranch south of town and marveled at the strong, hardy beasts that roamed his vast acres. She regarded her stately uncle with all the respect she refused her parents, and the two shared a special bond rooted in their love for horses.

When Viona turned 13 years old, Artibus gifted her a young Taldor jennet from his stables so she could more easily travel to and from his ranch. She named the skittish, wiry excuse for a horse Shynbel. Viona's father repeatedly expressed his ire over his brother's gift, but to Viona, Shynbel was a majestic steed, and before long she had trained the horse to answer her call and allow bit and bridle.



In addition to teaching her all he knew about horses, Artibus instilled Viona with a strong faith in his patron goddess, Iomedae. Viona admired the Inheritor's acts of bravery and selflessness, and she grew into young adulthood with all the reverence for divinity that her childhood had lacked. Her parents could hardly believe Viona's transformation, and when she told them she planned on joining the clergy of the church of Iomedae, they practically wept in support of her noble decision.

But Viona's faith and resolve were sorely tested on a cold winter's day when she rode Shynbel to visit her uncle as usual, only to find Artibus dead, his seaside estate in ashes, and his horses stolen. The raiders had already fled across the border into Cheliah. Why they killed her uncle, Viona did not know, nor did she care—her only thoughts as she rode back to Alvis that snowy eve were of taking vengeance on the vile marauders who had slain her beloved uncle.

The church of Iomedae no longer appealed to Viona; the Inheritor could not offer the revenge she so desperately sought. Instead, she enlisted in the Andoren army alongside her trusted steed, Shynbel. Viona quickly excelled at military life, and her skill on the battlefield and many examples of strong leadership gained her a position of command. Viona continued to investigate her uncle's murder, eventually discovering that the horse thieves who had killed Artibus were Chelish soldiers stealing mounts for the Chelish army. Unfortunately, her pursuit of vengeance was constantly stymied by her superiors, who, for fear of sparking a larger conflict between Andoran and Cheliah, forbade her from crossing into Cheliah to seek justice.

When the Glorious Reclamation announced its holy crusade against Cheliah and House Thrune, Viona experienced a reawakening of her faith in the Inheritor, seeing the renewal of the opportunity she had long sought as Iomedae's blessing. Viona renounced her commission in the Andoren army and swore herself to the Glorious Reclamation.

Her noble birth and martial prowess earned her the rank of knight banneret, and she soon began to lead Iomedaeans in battle against Cheliah under her own banner, proudly displaying the Kadarius coat of arms.

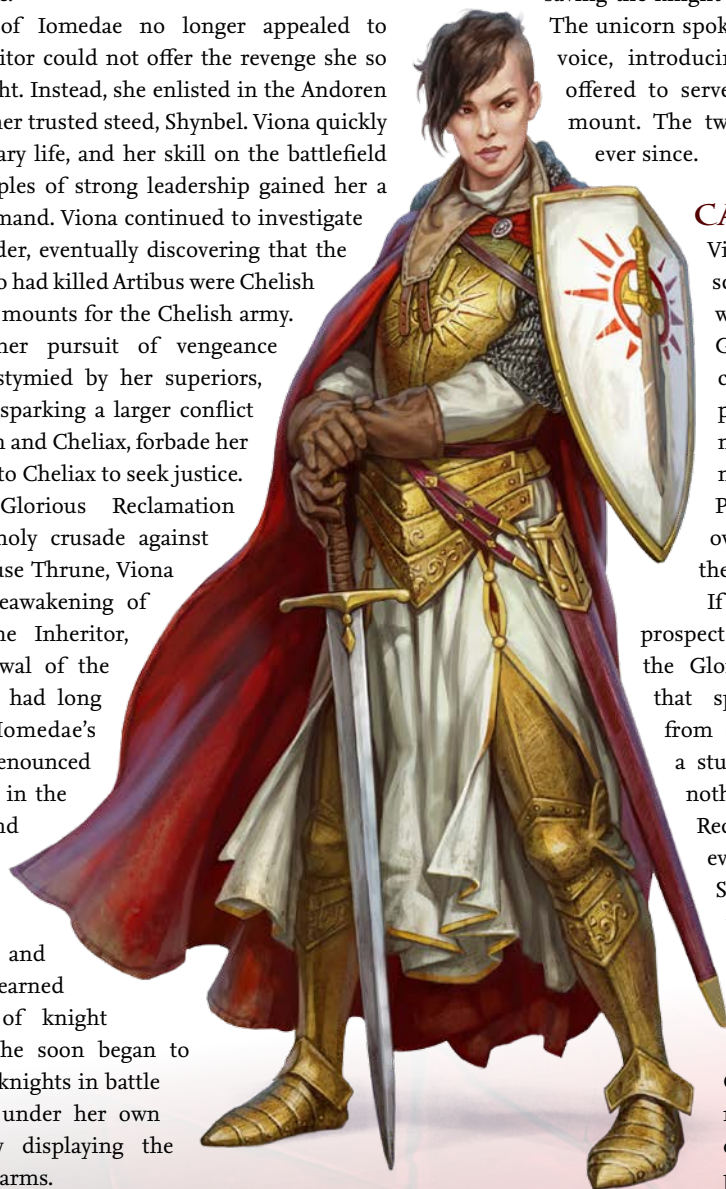
But not all of Viona's missions were destined to be successful or glorious. One day, the cavalier and her squadron chased a group of Chelish soldiers fleeing into the Whisperwood, only to find themselves lured into an ambush. The Chelish troops surrounded Viona and her knights, and in the ensuing battle, Viona was dismounted and knocked unconscious. When she came to, her companions were dead and the Chelaxians had trapped Shynbel in a ring of pikes. Viona watched, helpless, as the soldiers speared her steed to death before turning to her. As she realized this was how she would die—alone and dazed, clutching her holy symbol of Iomedae and thinking of her uncle—a glimmer of light in the forest appeared behind her assailants. The light became a dazzling array of colors, and an ivory-white horse with angelic wings and a silver horn charged from the woods, scattering the Chelish soldiers and saving the knight banneret from her doom.

The unicorn spoke to Viona in a handsome voice, introducing itself as Laissis, and offered to serve her in lieu of her lost mount. The two have been inseparable ever since.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Viona Kadarius leads the squadron of knights tasked with finding the Inferno Gate, and if possible, closing or destroying the portal to Hell. Viona is noble to a fault, and does not back down against the PCs, even if outnumbered, overwhelmed, or if death is the most likely outcome.

If the PCs capture Viona—a prospect made more difficult by the Glorious Reclamation's code that specifically prohibits her from surrendering—she proves a stubborn prisoner, revealing nothing about the Glorious Reclamation's future plans, even if magically compelled. She has not been involved in any large-scale strategic planning thus far, and she and her squad know relatively little about the nature of the Inferno Gate. Likewise, they know nothing at all of Visperthul or Archbaron Fex and his plans to betray the PCs.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





# MEET THE VILLAIN: EMIL KOVKORIN

Emil is the iconic assassin for the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path. Although he does not appear as a character in the campaign, he can be used as an NPC or pregenerated player character. Note that his CR is 1 higher than normal because he has PC wealth.

**EMIL KOVKORIN****CR 7****XP 2,400**

Male tiefling assassin 2/rogue 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264)  
NE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +10

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

**hp** 47 (7d8+12)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4; +1 vs. poison

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *punching dagger* +10 (1d4+4/×3) or

**Ranged** +1 *hand crossbow* +8 (1d4+1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** death attack (DC 12), sneak attack +4d6

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (punching dagger)

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Craft (poison) +8, Disable Device +14, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +8, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +10; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Bluff, +2 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**SQ** poison use, prehensile tail (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide* 169), rogue talents (finesse rogue, weapon training), trapfinding +2

**Combat Gear** *potions of invisibility* (2), *wand of alter self* (12 charges), *wand of cure light wounds* (22 charges), deathblade, oil of taggit (2), sassone leaf residue (3);

**Other Gear** +2 *studded leather*, +1 *hand crossbow*, +2 *punching dagger*, crossbow bolts (10), dagger, short sword, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +2, belt pouch, disguise kit, masterwork thieves' tools, 89 gp

Emil became the source of great scandal when he was born to a pair of affluent merchants in the Andoren capital of Almas. Normally a tiefling in Andoran wouldn't raise many eyebrows; however, Emil's parents were former nobles who had refused to face exile and instead

grudgingly capitulated to the growing zeitgeist that gripped Andoran during the People's Revolt. Though they had never roused enough ire to warrant a visit from the Eagle Knights, the Kovkorins were quite vocal about their dissenting opinions on the eradication of the aristocracy, often clashing with their nation's lofty, democratic ideals.

Emil's parents tried to hide the boy's fiendish nature from the public, but the young tiefling's distinctive tail—and the smoke that poured out of his differently colored eyes whenever his emotions got the better of him—made their attempts futile. Convinced that the old money in Andoran took part in seditious practices against the government, rabble-rousers pointed at Emil as proof that the former nobility were truly loyal to themselves, House Thrune, and even Hell itself. Enemies of Emil's family used the boy as a rallying point for those who shared their views about Andoran's overthrown class system, and fingered the family for being part of the Seven Houses, a conspiracy of one-time nobles who still used their wealth to influence the nation.

In truth, Emil's parents did indeed belong to the Seven Houses, and had recently accepted a large sum of money and promises for security from House Thrune in exchange for swaying votes in the People's Council in favor of laws that might benefit Cheliox and delivering information on Eagle Knight activities. At first, these accusations hardly mattered to the furious noble couple, who had faced the same opposition before. However, they saw their Hell-spawned son as a political liability and locked him away in a cellar beneath their impressive manor house. But when the Eagle Knights finally came calling to their estate, Emil's parents chose exile over death, and abandoned their 8-year-old son along with their other gifts from House Thrune.

The estate fell to the government, and a few weeks later, the bureaucrat who came to catalog the new assets—an elderly minister of trade and commerce from the Demarchy Assembly—discovered Emil in the basement, sitting in a cloud of smoke and tears. Whether in an act of egalitarian charity or wily foresight, the minister adopted Emil as his ward, taking the boy back to his home.

For the first time in his life, Emil freely walked the streets of his home city, though he soon learned that his noble heritage attracted as much negative attention as his



fiendish one. He quickly became deft with disguises—much more so than his parents had been. He found that he enjoyed the feeling of power that came with anonymity and a changeable identity in these undercover excursions, though he struggled to find an identity that fit him. Under various guises he fought in brawls down in Portside, spied on the logging operations in Timberfell, and snuck in to performances in the Theater District.

He also had a taste of his parents' former high-class lifestyle, thanks to his mentor. The old man groomed the lad for a landscape of political intrigue, paying for a swordfighting trainer and bringing Emil along to dinners, balls, and other high-society functions in Almas. Emil never wore a disguise at these events, at his mentor's request; the crafty politician liked how the tiefling's eerie eyes unsettled his political opponents.

Emil delighted in this as well, and soon began finding other ways to subtly advance his mentor's agendas—in secret, of course. A rival politician might lose an important document, for example, or an uncooperative union organizer might get in a fight with a stranger on the street and end up with a broken jaw. Emil never cared much about the actual politics involved, but thrilled to see his power displayed in his targets' suffering. With each misdeed, Emil's schemes grew increasingly cruel, vindictive, and enjoyable.

All this came to a head one day when Emil returned home to find his mentor fretting about international trade negotiations. A Drumish diplomat apparently had some incriminating evidence against Emil's patron, and threatened to expose everything unless Druma received extraordinarily generous terms. With sudden inspiration, Emil excused himself calmly and walked down the hall to his chamber, his eyes wafting trails of smoke in barely contained excitement.

Later that night, a half-elven Eagle Knight approached the Drumish embassy—which had once been the mansion of Emil's parents—with an urgent message for the diplomat to be delivered to his hands only. The earnest young Eagle Knight was granted audience, and as soon as he and the diplomat were alone in the mirror-trimmed parlor, the disguised Emil pounced, driving a dagger up through the man's jaw. As the would-be blackmailer bled out in the tiefling's arms, Emil caught his reflection in one of the large silver mirrors on the wall. Smoke coursed from his eyes—one black, one red—and the warm blood flecking his skin made his sharp-toothed grin all the wider.

As he dropped the lifeless body to the ground, he realized he'd been searching for this identity all along, the mask he would wear forevermore: he would be the face of death in Almas.

Since that night, Emil has claimed dozens of unsuspecting lives—sometimes for gold, sometimes

for fun. He has never lost the thrill of walking in public disguised, knowing he possesses the power to end the life of any person he meets on the street unnoticed. Nor has he forgotten the exhilaration of watching a victim die, not even when he took a bag of gold from a Lumber Consortium officer to end the life of his adopted father.

Emil doesn't frequent state events anymore unless he is working, but he is intimately familiar with the already-rotting underbelly of the ruling class in the young nation of Andoran, and takes contracts from government officials as often as from those with more private interests. Each time he kills, he lingers to watch death take hold of his new victim before vanishing back into the night, leaving nothing more than a few wisps of smoke.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## ROADS TO HELL

**W**e don't know why they came, and I suspect we never will. On that day, though, the air shattered like glass. There was screaming, such screaming, but we couldn't make out what they were saying. It wasn't any familiar voices or in any tongue we knew. Then the smell—burning, rotting, and fresh blood. If terror made a sound, if dread had a smell, then both engulfed our village. Peace died in that instant.

"I saw our captain—the same man who had drilled us farmers into a proper garrison, who had convinced us all to serve and die in defense of our homes—sit down in the mud, head in his hands. I couldn't blame him. Our bodies knew it was over, even if our souls still clung to hope.

"We were defeated even before the first of Hell's butchers stepped forth from beyond."

—From *An Account of the Ruin of Gladsparr*



**R**eligions warn of sin as the path to Hell. In truth, the way is not so long.

Contrary to the beliefs of most of the Material Plane's inhabitants, reality is not the reliable, reassuring certainty their limited experiences suggest. Rather, existence is moth-eaten cheesecloth, riddled with tears and holes. Some of these imperfections are dangerous rents, torn by incredible forces and erupting like extraplanar volcanoes. Others are deliberate gateways, through which hidden threads unite distant worlds and realities. These pathways provide connections across the planes, secret trails and back doors between the realms of life and death, used by celestials and fiends alike. These passages are, for the most part, not friendly to mortals, but neither are they forbidden. For those who know where to find the doors, the paths to the planes stand open. But what might sound like a route to wonder is more often a lethal slide into despair.

## TYPES OF PORTALS

Portals come in a variety of forms, and each type has a different method of use. Several of the most common types of portals are described here.

### ELEMENTAL NEXUS

A type of planar tear especially common on the Material Plane, these portals connect an Elemental Plane with a site of intense elemental energy. In much the same way that stars often connect to the Positive Energy Plane, a planet's deepest sea trench, the stormy heights of a towering mountain, the depths of a lightless cavern, or the core of an endlessly erupting volcano all may hold connections to a corresponding Elemental Plane—though most do not. Usually, only creatures immune to the dangers of the plane beyond can access elemental nexuses. A preponderance of elemental beings around an obvious natural landmark often suggests the presence of an elemental nexus.

### ELF GATE

Called *aiudara* by their elven creators, these portals were forged using powerful magic in ages past. Elf gates typically appear as empty, ancient arches. While some ceased functioning long ago, others occasionally open spontaneously, or can still be activated through the use of a specific (and sometimes metaphorical) key. An elf gate's key could be anything—a physical object, a password, a spell, a planetary alignment, or another specific circumstance. Upon passing through an elf gate, a traveler appears at another elf gate, almost always on the same world. The elf gates are linked to the legendary *Sovyrian Stone*, which once provided a connection between Golarion and the elven nation of Sovyrian on the planet Castrovel. Similar permanent magical passages may have been created by other exceptionally ancient races or

powerful individual magic users, but none now known were as perfected and widely used as elf gates.

### GATE

The effect of the spell of the same name, gates are temporary links formed between planes for the purposes of travel or calling creatures to other realms. A gate usually remains open for mere moments. While some purist scholars argue that only a portal between planes can truly be called a gate, some gate-style portals offer teleportation effects rather than plane-shifting, allowing users to step instantaneously between locations on a given plane. A few exceptional magic items, such as *lintel stones* (see *Pathfinder Tales: The Redemption Engine*), even allow both uses within certain constraints. In rare cases, gates might be made permanent by fantastically powerful magic.

### PLANAR BREACH

A temporary planar tear, planar breaches are often no more than a few meters wide. They typically exist for just a matter of days or hours, and tend to be caused by some dramatic magical event, extraplanar confluence, or the release of powerfully aligned forces. The death of a particularly powerful outsider could create a planar breach that connects to the outsider's home plane, but likely only if its death occurs in an area of considerable planar weakness.

### PLANAR TEAR

Every plane is full of countless portals formed by the stresses of existence rather than magic or design. These permanent planar imperfections most often connect similarly aligned or coterminous planes, but might provide passage between any two planes. Most form as the result of dramatic cosmic events, such as the multiverse's creation, the formation of a planet, or some terrestrial cataclysm, making new tears exceptionally rare. They're often found in secluded places that are known for strange magical storms or home to unusual creatures. Planar tears are most common on the Astral Plane, Ethereal Plane, and in the Maelstrom, perhaps because of those planes' role as a sort of connective tissue between other planes. Planar tears in prominent regions of the Outer Planes or between oppositely opposed planes are dangers that often draw the attention of aeons or other extraplanar forces. Ancient tears, however—ones to which the surrounding regions have adjusted or that pose no considerable danger—are generally ignored or used for planar travel. Tears on the Material Plane rarely attract attention, as the plane is already a hodgepodge of alignments and conflicting forces. Most were formed by the birth of stars, whose explosive celestial fires ripped passages to the Positive Energy Plane. On Golarion, the Worldwound is an example of a relatively recent planar tear, a rarity in that it was created by mortal tampering.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





### SOULGATE

Also known as planar braids, soulgates are links between planes that are hidden in plain sight. These portals typically exist within naturally formed or exceptionally old archways, doors, or other closed geometric shapes. One might walk past a soulgate every day and not realize that it links to another plane, as for the majority of their existences, these portals are closed. Tales of strange feelings or rumors of hauntings might surround an area containing a soulgate, but little reveals one's existence—not even *detect magic* or similar spells. These portals often can be recognized only by non-native outsiders or other creatures with unique planar sensitivity (see below). Every soulgate connects to a specific spot on another plane, and typically has an alignment matching that of the plane on the opposite side (those that connect to the Material Plane or other unaligned planes are neutral). In rare cases, a soulgate might have an alignment different than the plane beyond, suggesting its deliberate creation or use by a specific type of being. Those with an alignment

similar to a given portal might notice it and potentially coax it open for a moment, only to have it close again soon after (see Mastering Portals below). Few in all the planes know how soulgates came to exist; theories range from deliberate installation to naturally occurring ripples or imperfections left in the wake of outsiders' *plane shift* abilities. Unlike planar tears, however, their locations don't seem to be random. In planar metropolises such as Axis or Dis, or hubs such as the Boneyard, thousands of soulgates are well documented and lead to destinations across the planes.

### MASTERING PORTALS

While many portals can be used by anyone who knows the proper magic or who meets the necessary requirements to pass through, portals such as soulgates can be employed only by those who possess a special sensitivity to them. Most mortals are ignorant of such portals' existence, yet some who study planar lore or who have had brushes with extraplanar forces can learn to unlock these passages to the multiverse.

### PLANAR SENSITIVITY

You can sense and manipulate connections between the planes.

**Prerequisite:** Knowledge (planes) 3 ranks.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the gatefinder and gatekeeper skill unlocks (see below).

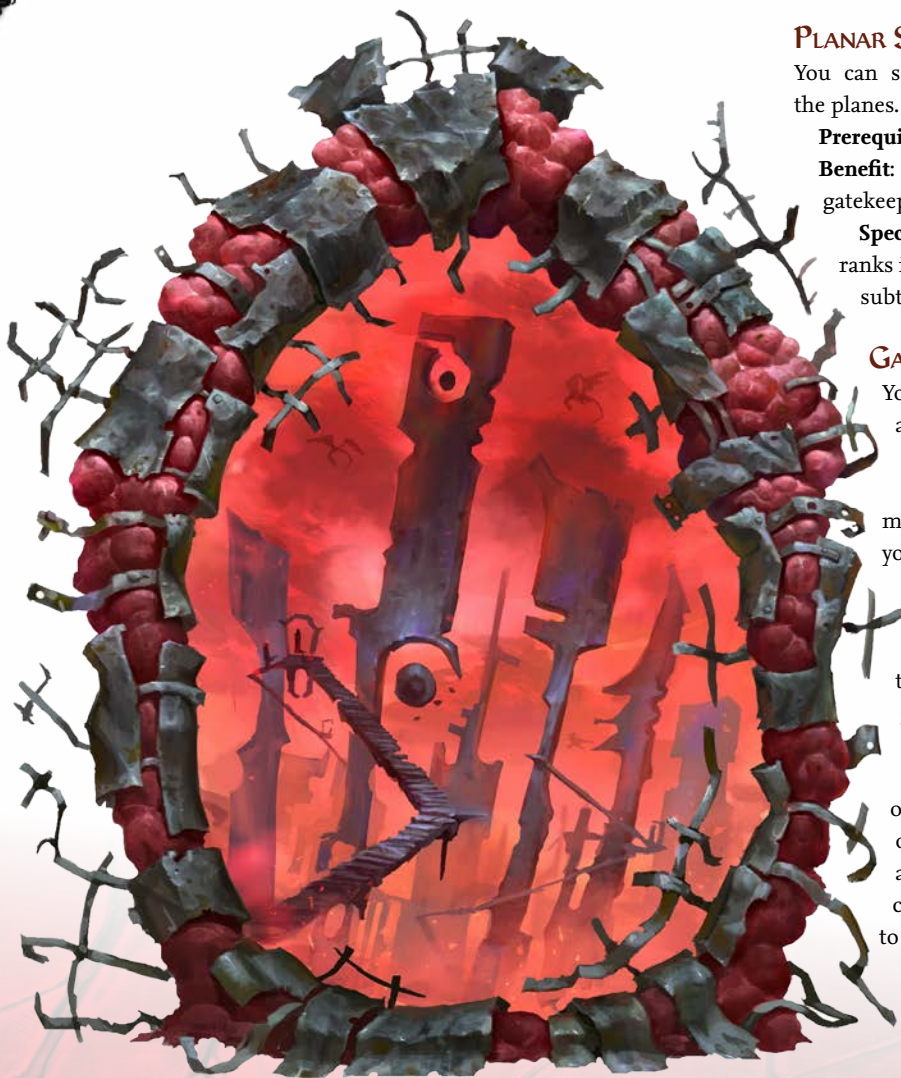
**Special:** Sentient outsiders who have one or more ranks in Knowledge (planes) and who lack the native subtype are treated as having this feat.

### GATEFINDER (PERCEPTION)

You can notice soulgates compatible with your alignment.

**Check:** You are familiar with soulgates and might notice those with an alignment matching your own. To notice a soulgate that you're not already familiar with, you must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check—this DC could be higher if the portal is obscured or damaged, or at the GM's discretion. If the soulgate shares your exact alignment, you gain a +5 bonus on your check to notice the portal, feeling an instinctual draw toward it. If your alignment and the portal's share none of the same components, you take a –5 penalty on your check to notice the portal. If your alignment is neutral with no other alignment components, you take no penalties on checks to find soulgates.

For example, a lawful good character would gain a +5 bonus on her Perception checks to find lawful good soulgates, but would take a –5 penalty on checks to find chaotic evil,





chaotic neutral, and neutral evil soulgates, as she has no chaotic, neutral, or evil components to her alignment. A neutral character, however, gains a +5 bonus on checks to find neutral gates, but gains no bonus on checks to find chaotic neutral, lawful neutral, neutral good, and neutral evil soulgates. Additionally, she takes no penalty on checks to notice chaotic good, chaotic evil, lawful good, or lawful evil soulgates.

Once you are aware of a soulgate, you never need to succeed at a Perception check to find that particular gate again, as long as some remarkable event doesn't change its appearance or location.

### GATEKEEPER (KNOWLEDGE [PLANES])

You can attempt to open soulgates compatible with your alignment.

**Check:** Once you are aware of a soulgate, you can use your knowledge of the planes and your place as a child of the multiverse to attempt to open the portal. This attempt takes 1 minute to perform. The DC of the Knowledge (planes) check to open a soulgate is 30. If your alignment perfectly matches that of the soulgate, you gain a +5 bonus on this check. You can also attempt to open a soulgate with an alignment that is within one step of your own. However, unless you are neutral, you cannot open a soulgate with an alignment two or more steps away from your own.

For example, a lawful evil character would gain a +5 bonus on her attempt to open a soulgate connecting the Material Plane to Hell (lawful evil) or other planes of lawful evil alignment. She can also attempt to open soulgates to Abaddon (neutral evil), Axis (lawful neutral), and other planes that share those planes' alignments, because their alignments are one step away from lawful evil. She can never open a soulgate to the Abyss (chaotic evil), the Boneyard (neutral), Elysium (chaotic good), Heaven (lawful good), the Maelstrom (chaotic neutral), Nirvana (neutral good), or any other plane with those alignments.

If your alignment is neutral with no other alignment components, you can open soulgates with an alignment two steps away from your own, but you take a -10 penalty on attempts to do so.

Once opened, you can keep a soulgate open for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier. An open soulgate closes at the end of that time, or you can close it earlier as a standard action.

### PASSAGES TO HELL

Across the Inner Sea region, dozens of portals connect Golarion with destinations across the planes. While many connect to pleasant sites, planar hubs, or strange destinations, some lead into the bowels of Hell. Whether recorded in tomes of planar lore or used by diabolical agents with agendas upon Golarion, the following are just a few of the secret gates that link the Inner Sea region with the nightmare that is the Pit.

### THE BLACK BRICK

**Location:** The city of Katapesh in Katapesh

**Destination:** Coultharic's Boudoir, Erebus

The Brokered Marbles lies within sight of Katapesh's temple of Abadar, the Immaculate Repository. This market's vendors provide wares and services for organized religions, from custom ceremonial vestments and gilded holy symbols to statuary and works in stained glass. Religious layfolk find little of interest among the shops and stalls, though one cramped, back-alley idol carver's shop called Small Gods offers an unusual, largely unadvertised service. Near the bottom of its menu of services, the shop offers "auguries—2 gold pieces." Those who pay the clerk are quietly taken to a beaded alcove behind the rear workshop. Inside is a blank, ancient-looking stone wall, part of the larger structure that now makes up the market block. At floor level, there's a missing brick. Anyone who bows and asks a question into the gap receives an answer that is cryptic but proves to be insightful and true more often than not.

While many suspect a magical scam, few know that behind the wall is a hollow no larger than a few bricks. Inside is a stable, colorless planar tear, a gash hardly a foot long that connects the shop with the personal chamber of the contract devil Coultharic in Erebus. Coultharic provides petty prophecies and plain advice, attempting to motivate mortals into relying upon her wisdom. Over time, she tries to subtly deepen her victims' distress, pushing them to seek dramatic resolutions. At the height of their desperation, she demonstrates that her peephole into the mortal world is just large enough to slip a contract through.

### THE BOILING WELL

**Location:** Scrawny Crossing in the River Kingdoms

**Destination:** The Finishing Knot in Avernus

It has been a long time since anyone used the Boiling Well, a novelty and a mystery that was once a source of curious pride for the residents of Scrawny Crossing. Since the ferry crossing's desertion a decade ago, the roadside well has stood forgotten, nothing more than a pile of stones next to a dilapidated smithy. But the well was once remarkable for providing body-temperature water. Most assumed it was fed by a hot spring, but determined investigators debunked that theory, finding the water in the well's depths as cool as that from any other spring. Somehow, in raising a bucket, the user inexplicably heated the water. The baffled townsfolk never attributed the strange heat to the band of ancient, rusty metal that served as part of the well's foundation. Far older than any could imagine, the 5-foot-diameter band is a soulgate that connects to Avernus, the first layer of Hell. Planar agitations from the link to that sweltering plane cause the well water to increase in temperature—residents

#### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





never knew their tea was steeped in water heated by the fires of Hell. Those who coax the soulgate open emerge from a pool choked with soaked ropes and braids. This small basin lies at the foot of the Finishing Knot, the enormous tapestry depicting suicides that makes up the demesne of the infernal duke Eaqueo, demigod of depression, nooses, and sad stories.

### CITADEL ENFERAC

**Location:** Mount Nyisaid in the West Menador Mountains of Cheliah

**Destination:** The Razor Stair in Stygia

Deep within the fortress of the Hellknight Order of the Gate lies what is perhaps the order's namesake gate. Two uniila devils (also called cabal devils; *Pathfinder Adventure Path #28: The Infernal Syndrome* 86) consult with the signifiers who quietly slip between the mortal realm and Hell's fifth layer, Stygia. The uniilas, Mahshoka and Sister Drove, know the lands beyond the portal well, but

are experts—librarians of sorts—on the Razor Stair. This structure is a leaning, 2-mile-high tower constructed of books of all shapes and sizes. The tomes share no obvious common theme or order, but numerous uniilas have claimed landings upon the stairs, declaring that their platforms hold valuable secrets. Despite decades of control, the Hellknights have not explored far beyond this permanent gate, in part because the portal opens near the stairs' top, and the staircase has proven difficult to navigate, being fraught with book avalanches and dangerously sharp pages. Yet even with this limited exploration, the Order of the Gate has learned fantastic secrets and collected powerful weapons as a result of members' interplanar sojourns. A few hollow-eyed non-Hellknights who have survived covert missions into Citadel Enferac claim the portal to Hell is no longer the only planar connection within Mount Nyisaid—nor is it the most terrifying.

### CRAGFIRE

**Location:** Hargun Peak, in the Tusk Mountains between the Hold of Belkzen and the Worldwound

**Destination:** The Prototypes in Phlegethon

High in the mountainous no-man's-land between orc-held Belkzen and the demon-infested Worldwound stands the monastery-forge of Cragfire. Staffed primarily by terse dwarven monks, many of whom were born in the monastery and have never left save to hunt wyverns and other peak-dwelling food sources, the cliffside monastery is renowned for creating some of the best magic weapons in the region, particularly *demon-bane* weapons and ingenious siege engines for use in various nations' wars against the Worldwound. Adventurers of all races and creeds are welcome to purchase the monastery's wares—provided they can survive the treacherous route there through the mountains, including a final hundred feet scaling a massive iron chain—and crusaders seeking tools against the demons find the dwarves' prices surprisingly reasonable.

This emphasis on combating demons is not simply due to the monks' sense of righteousness. Deep within the cliff face, behind the fiery bellies of Cragfire's forges, stands a tunnel that leads not into rock, but into a back room in the Prototypes, Duke Sabnach's workshop on Phlegethon. With orders to help undermine the Abyss's power and staunch the Worldwound's demonic invasion, Sabnach's hamatula minions regularly provide Cragfire with ingenious new demon-slaying devices, taking only the occasional sacrifice in return.





## DRINK OF TEETH

**Location:** Black Flow River in the Sodden Lands

**Destination:** Dis

Narrow water tupelo trees covered in pale lichen line the length of the Drink of Teeth, a tributary of the Black Flow River. Only 8 miles long and flowing to and from nowhere, the stream is easy to ignore. Aside from its riblike trees, its only remarkable feature is a centuries-old, half-sunken dock that doesn't connect to any land. On the night of the new moon, during the months of Calistril, Desnus, Lamashtan, and Neth, a skiff arrives at the dock at 3:20 in the morning and waits 10 minutes. If no one approaches, it sails on. If anyone does, Grivangaul, the skiff's thanadaemon pilot (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 274) offers passage to the city of Dis for the price of 3,000 gp worth of opals or tourmalines—or all of a passenger's teeth. The daemon's skiff can carry only three other passengers at a time. Once the price has been paid, the 3-day-long journey to Dis begins; the skiff travels along secret currents of the River Styx and passes from Golarion, through the Maelstrom, to the outskirts of Dis, and finally into the metropolis itself. At the docks of Dis, Grivangaul is met by Holitthepis, an ancient ghoulish artisan who is deeply disappointed if the daemon hasn't brought her any teeth.

## HALL OF THE SHRIEK

**Location:** Thunder Steppes in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords

**Destination:** Far above Phlegethon

A rent within the Thunder Steppes cuts deep into the earth, creating a series of narrow canyons and claustrophobic tunnels. Those who listen outside one human-sized crack at the bottom of a gorge littered with cat skulls hear a distant screaming. Most who seek the source of the screaming become lost in the echoing tunnel maze. A few, though, discover the Hall of the Shriek, a downward-sloping tunnel that ends in a horizontal floor of glowing volcanic smoke. Those who pass through the gas emerge in the sky far above Phlegethon and fall for miles. In the minutes before striking the flinty slopes below, plummeting mortals realize the Shriek isn't one scream, but the cacophony of millions of damned souls working the mines and furnaces of Hell's factory-plane.

## MAGREVORE

**Location:** Darklands beneath the town of Khoka in Qadira

**Destination:** Arsenic Vault in Malebolge

Mardehzuk, a pit fiend servant of Moloch, guards a portal to Malebolge in a magma pit deep beneath the Qadiran desert. While posted there to prevent any but Hell's servants from using the portal, the devil doesn't bide his time in idleness. A network of wicked duergar funnel him a stream of slave-sacrifices from the surface. These souls undergo a trek through darkness before they

face the pit fiend and are impaled upon the horns of an altar to Moloch. Their souls then become trapped in the magma pool that hides the Magrevore. Those few who have managed to pass through the portal enter the bolgia known as the Arsenic Vault, a metallic mountain sculpted by eons of diabolical work into a vast fortress. In Hell, the Magrevore manifests as a geyser of magma that spills from the mouth of a gigantic, diabolic bull sculpture. For more details, see page 48 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Hell Unleashed*.

## RING OF FROZEN SANDS

**Location:** Near Aspenthar in Thuvia

**Destination:** Tichaim in Cocytus

A steep-sided sand pit, like the lair of some gigantic antlion, lies 40 miles southeast of the city of Aspenthar. Besides the pit itself, only the skeleton of a mighty but long-dead behir marks the strange sands. Those who allow themselves to slide into the pit fall more than 60 feet into a hidden chamber below. Piled against the wall of the chamber is a 20-foot-tall heap of sand, upon which leans a ring of supernaturally frozen black ice. This soulgate opens into the seventh layer of Hell, Cocytus—specifically a tundra plain with whip-thin trees that lash the air during the frequent, unpredictable gales. Those who walk straight outward from the soulgate's mouth reach a strange sort of settlement, a community of mortals allowed to survive—just barely—within the icy hellscape. The residents call the ring of drafty huts and igloos Tichaim. Most residents keep to themselves, but a few—including Riga the Fly-Eater—struggle to make more of their lives, hunting the monstrous, frozen-eyed insects that stalk the wastes. No sane person would come to Tichaim—which is exactly what makes it such a perfect hiding place.

## SHATTERGATE

**Location:** Isle of Terror on Lake Encarthan

**Destination:** Spire of Alistonach in Caina

A vault beneath the ruins of Xin-Grafar, hidden within the Isle of Terror, holds a soulgate that connects with the prison realm of Caina. The gate takes the form of a savage starburst, set in a wall of dark marble and ornamented with lapis lazuli. Centuries-old bars of thick, magically enhanced adamantite cover the gate, leaving openings of no more than an inch. The seal to the room holding the gate stands open, its massive chains burst as if by some great force. The dust within is also frequently disturbed. Most unsettling is the gate's frequent, random activation. None have witnessed what might toy with the Shattergate, or know exactly what Tar-Baphon chose to lock away behind the portal's bars. In any case, something powerful and foul has slipped through onto the Isle of Terror, perhaps seeking to inspire that place's fearful name once more.

### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## MOLOCH

### THE ASHEN BULL

Before he became the General of Hell, Moloch tended the furnaces of Heaven: the Heresy Ovens hidden in the Vault of Correction beneath Heaven's Great Library. There black-robed archons and angels put to the torch those ideas and knowledge too evil and dangerous to be allowed to exist. For eons, the ancient archon who would one day become one of Heaven's greatest enemies tended the flames alongside legions of excinders, entrusted with disposing of the multiverse's most profane secrets. In all those ages, not once did the upstanding archon read a word of the forbidden texts. Neither pride nor ambition led Moloch from his duty. Nor did some idle curiosity or stray secret, or even the fell influence of some magical tome. In the end, Moloch's undoing was the same trait which had for so long garnered him Heaven's grace—his obedience.



In the hours before Asmodeus's rebellion against Heaven, Baalzebul entered the Great Library and used his station to force his way into the library's depths, reaching the repository of blasphemies due for destruction. Had he asked to view some foul scripture or for possession of an evil relic, the archons there would have suspected some deceit. Yet Baalzebul requested only a piece of the Great Library's flame.

With no obvious evil in the directive, there was no reason to deny the angelic hero. Yet the power to control the library's flames was a boon granted specifically to Heaven's censors, and could not merely be transferred to another, even one as mighty and demanding as Baalzebul. Angered but unable to argue, Asmodeus's champion instead led one of the kiln-keepers from the library, an archon who carried with him a single cinder burning upon an ancient page.

Asmodeus was not pleased, but sought advantage in the development. A legend among the heavenly host, Asmodeus knew no archon would deny him. He embraced his captive, drawing him into his plots. Rather than Asmodeus or Baalzebul wielding the blasphemy-tainted flames, the archon himself became the bearer of that unconventional weapon. Asmodeus armed the former censor and, when the war began, sent him into battle.

Perhaps it was simple obedience, or some corruption of the flames he bore. Perhaps it was a longing for glorious battle. Whatever the case, when Asmodeus commanded, the archon fought—and, more impressively, won. It would have been easy to dismiss his victories, attributing them to the flame he wielded, yet the archon's battle prowess proved considerable, as did his mind for tactics. In battle after battle, against foes celestial and otherwise, his abilities kept his weapon well fed.

Maybe the archon didn't realize at first that the flames were feeding off of his own essence. Maybe not even Asmodeus did. Yet it soon became clear to Asmodeus that the fire-bearer and his flame had become one and the same. From the charred spoils of past victories, the Archfiend produced plates of blackened armor and girded the archon's burning form. No longer merely one among the ranks of Heaven's rebels, the fallen soldier earned the privilege of command, and, along with it, a new name: Moloch.

## PERSONIFICATION AND REALM

Easily the most martial of the archdevils, Moloch is known as the General of Hell. His other epithets, such

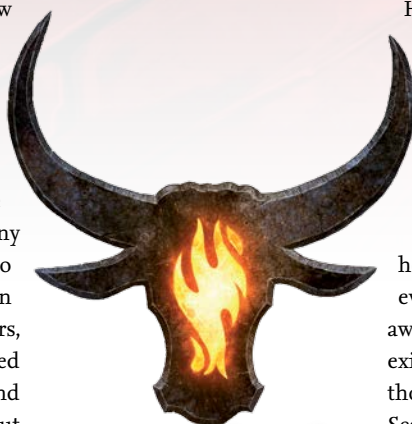
as the Ashen Bull and God of Fires, originate from his favored animal and his power over flames, respectively. When personified, Moloch appears as a gigantic suit of horned armor wielding a massive weapon in both hands.

His favorite weapons are the whip *Forest of Razors*, the horned battleaxe *Goreleth*, a warhammer of solid flame called *Halethate*, the bloody sword *Ramithaine*, and the javelin *Vothadiel's Spine*, any of which he can produce at a moment's notice.

Within Moloch's armor blazes a hellish inferno. If the former archon ever had some other form, it burned away ages ago. As with many who began existence as angels, Moloch is genderless, though most cultures around the Inner Sea view him as male. He cares not how his followers refer to him, so long as they offer the proper obedience.

Moloch's symbol is a tongue of flame within the silhouette of a bull's head. His unholy rituals and celebrations take place around hollow metallic statues of bulls and bull-headed humanoids, known as molechs (see the sidebar on page 72).

Moloch dominates Malebolge, the sixth layer of Hell, having reshaped the patchwork demesne into his own impossible fortress. Countless disparate hellscape, or bolgias, cover Malebolge. Some are predictably infernal vistas, like burning forests or broken mountains, while others are more alien, like scorpions the size of islands drifting upon seas of bile or gulfs wherein float monstrous skulls. Many are wilderness, some untouched, but others serve as training grounds for Hell's diabolical legions or breeding realms for slave-beasts like achainerais and cerberi. Among the most dangerous are the lands of foul divinities, such as the infernal dukes Caacrinolaas and Eligos the Winged Rider, or the undead court of Ruithvein, third of all vampires. Dividing these expanses are massive walls patrolled by countless legions of levalochs, Moloch's favored devils. One viewing all of Malebolge would realize that each bolgia is a courtyard of an infinitely spiderwebbing fortress: Citadel Ba'al. Within the depths of the layer hides the citadel's heart, Melqart Keep, a gigantic fortification from which Moloch directs Hell's endless campaigning. Impossible numbers of devils congregate here, readying themselves for initiatives on billions of fronts across the planes. Even the burgeoning infernal dukes known as malebranche—Hell's commanders, who persecute wars throughout the Material Plane—take their commissions and orders from the depths of Melqart Keep. This activity makes Moloch's citadel one of the most vital nerve centers in all of Hell, and also one of the most viciously impregnable.



### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## MOLECHS

Moloch's most important rites involve sacrificial idols called molechs. They're usually made of metal, and some molechs are even magical items, as detailed below.

## MOLECH

**PRICE**  
10,000 GP

**SLOT** none

**CL** 12th

**WEIGHT** 2,000 lbs.

**AURA** strong enchantment and evocation [evil]

This statue takes the form of a bull or a bull-headed humanoid. A hatch in the idol's chest or side allows access to a hollow inside the statue—this hatch can be opened only from the outside. This hollow is typically large enough to accommodate one Medium creature, though larger idols might accommodate more. One round after a creature is placed inside, the idol's interior blazes with hellfire, which deals 6d6 points of damage per round to any creature inside. Half the damage is fire damage, but the other half results directly from unholy power and is therefore not subject to reduction by resistance to fire-based attacks. Pipes inside the idol amplify the screams of those within, making them sound like the bellows of an enraged bull. A creature inside the idol can break out through the locked door by succeeding at a DC 30 Strength check, or by dealing enough damage (hardness 15; hp 90; immune to fire damage). If a creature dies within the idol, all lawful evil creatures within 100 feet gain the benefits of the spell *bless* for 1 hour.

## CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

**COST** 5,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *bless*, *produce flame*, *unholy blight*

followers typically use their powers to solve such a community's problems, perhaps staving off a natural disaster or defeating a monstrous foe. Responsibility for the population's salvation is then credited to Moloch, or simply to the "God of Fires." Once his faith has a foothold, Moloch's religion spreads, and his clergy seek to make him the people's sole deity. Only when firmly entrenched do Moloch's priests reveal the violent, burning rites the archdevil favors.

As a result of this approach, Moloch's followers are often warlike tribes and wild raiders. His faith rarely has a place in more civilized lands, except in cultures with dominant martial traditions.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Moloch has few temples. As a martial faith, the deity's worship is often conducted in the field or amid war camps, making permanent structures impractical. The rare temples of Moloch that exist are usually built around molechs (see the sidebar) situated within massive caves, hidden canyons, or open-air pavilions decorated with brass. More typically, Moloch's worship consists of stern evangelists extolling the virtues of faith, obedience, and giving one's life in the god's service. Only during festivals and rituals do they raise the visage of Moloch over his followers, erecting bull-headed totems, brazen bull idols, or similar effigies.

In times of war, Moloch's armies carry images of their god with them. Often a particular wagon bears a molech or metal bull idol. When traveling through lands where Moloch's image might be met with hostility, such carts are usually covered. These idols are often positioned at the heart of a war camp; before battle, the army's priests gather the soldiers there to whip them into a frenzy and bestow the god's blessings upon them.

In the Inner Sea region, Moloch's faith is strongest in the Realms of the Mammoth Lords, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, and the mountains of the Mwangi Expanse. Numerous mercenary companies, like the Circle of Flame and Company of Bakthatal, invoke Moloch's name before battle, as do many pious Hellknights.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Some warriors will do anything to achieve victory, wanting nothing more than glorious conquest. For these fighters, the worship of Moloch seems a natural choice, as Hell's army stands among the strongest. Seeking to embody the strength and discipline of Hell, Moloch's most martial followers attempt to emulate their god, doing everything they can to become stronger and win glory. These champions do little to spread Moloch's faith, except by furthering the archdevil's conquests.

The strategists and evangelists of Moloch's religion seek to raise devout, unquestioning armies. Through fiery speeches, the threat of sacrifice, the weight of tradition,

## DOGMA AND WORSHIPERS

For Moloch, there is only war—not as a blind, bloodthirsty pursuit, but as a means to spread Hell's order across the planes. While his fellow archdevils might further diabolical schemes through lies and manipulation, Moloch favors the simple effectiveness of force. A master strategist, the General of Hell is capable of sophisticated strategies and might wait centuries for them to bear fruit.

Moloch knows the necessity of maintaining troops of various natures and origins, especially those familiar with the lands he seeks to conquer. His armies are filled with both devils of all kinds and his mortal worshipers. The latter include not just Moloch's clergy, but whole communities brought into the archdevil's thrall. Followers of Moloch, whether devils or mortals, seek vulnerable groups—typically those at or beyond the frontiers of civilization—that know nothing of the archdevil. They often target cultures with totemistic or animistic beliefs or ancestor worship, or those that might be open to the inclusion of one more fire spirit. Moloch's



and the lash, Moloch's priests force the weak to raise praises to the Ashen Bull. In times of war, they are crusader generals, spurring their armies on to battle with promises that victory brings glory, while cowardice brings the fires of sacrifice. Priests with significant followings have the opportunity to claim what they please, whether the spoils of battle or the possessions of their congregations. Moloch does not care how his servants indulge themselves, as long as they remain competent soldiers. Those who fall prey to vices and lose their edge, though, eventually face his wrath.

Warpriests outnumber clerics among the ranks of Moloch's most faithful. Other martial classes, particularly barbarians and bloodragers, are also common among his followers, as are those who adopt the sentinel prestige class (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods* 202). Regardless of their class, many faithful take the Leadership feat to attract contingents of soldiers and acolytes. Moloch's true followers are typically lawful evil, though those forced into his religion might be of any alignment. Worshipers of Moloch often excel at Bluff, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Knowledge (religion), and Perform (oratory).

## HOLIDAYS

Moloch's worshipers—especially those who live close to nature—celebrate a variety of seasonal changes, memorials of great battles, and the accomplishments of great heroes. One of these, often tied to the summer solstice, includes a grisly display meant to avert Moloch's wrath.

**Feast of Flame:** At least once per year, every worshiper of Moloch is expected to take part in an elaborate sacrifice. Several hours of chanting, marching, drumming, and dance evoking the motion of wild flames transpire before a special statue called a molech (see page 72). This statue is typically hollow, cast in metal, and situated over a sizable fire. At the ceremony's climax, a sentient humanoid is sacrificed by entering (or being forced into) the molech. Priests of Moloch claim to hear their god's voice in the resulting screams or crackling flames, which they interpret to divine portents for the coming year.

## APHORISMS

Moloch's followers aren't poets and don't mince words.

**Obey or Burn:** Moloch's followers would forcibly conscript every mortal soul into their master's fell army. Those who don't yield and who refuse to serve have no role in the Ashen Bull's merciless vision of order—save as kindling for his army's war fires.

## HOLY TEXT

Moloch's holy text is *The Iron Script*, a series of dictums that are typically etched on bars of blackened iron or pieces of armor. *The Iron Script*, in its entirety, is as follows.

"What begins in glory ends in Hell. His tithe: five of every seven. All blessings come in fire. Flesh burns, iron bows. Victory begets victory. Consume cowardice. Obey."



### THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Moloch's devotees often infiltrate ancestor- and nature-worshipping cultures, where his faith might be synthesized with that of great heroes or forces of fire. While this gradual process might take generations, those suffering from hardship might accept increasingly warlike aspects to their religion more quickly if victories follow displays of faith. Moloch knows the importance of morale among his followers, and might provide centuries of protection and prosperity before demanding greater proof of faith.

In Hell, Moloch's greatest allies are Dispaten and Asmodeus himself. As two of the Prince of Darkness's oldest followers, Dispaten and Moloch share the experiences and resentments of ancient veterans. Dispaten knows he can call on Moloch to defend Dis, should the need arise, while Moloch never wants for conscripts or new war machines from Dispaten's garrisons and prisons. As for Asmodeus, Moloch serves the Archfiend

with almost unquestioning obedience. He has never expressed any dissent, and so Asmodeus trusts him with command of nearly all Hell's forces. Moloch is also one of the few archdevils who willingly deals with the Lord of the Flies, seemingly immune to Baalzebul's stings and barbs. Although Baalzebul once outranked Moloch, such a hierarchy no longer exists, and today, Moloch might be one of the only devils with the patience to listen to Baalzebul's endless, buzzing lies.

Torag openly loathes Moloch. Concerned with strategy, protection, and the forge, the dwarven god sees all he cares for corrupted by Moloch's warmongering and vicious flames. As a result, Torag's servants often seek to disrupt Moloch's rites and campaigns. In return, Moloch actively seeks dwarven followers and numbers Torag's dwarven priests among his favorite sacrifices.

Moloch's interests beyond Hell are in potential conquests, with one exception. At seemingly random intervals, heavily armed messengers carry missives from Malebolge to the Cinder Furnace on Abaddon, domain of Szuriel, Horseman of War. What their relations might entail remains a mystery.

## SPELLCASTING

Clerics of Moloch can prepare *pyrotechnics* as a 2nd-level spell and *flame arrow* as a 3rd-level spell. Moloch's priests have created the following occult ritual.

### BURNING SACRIFICE

**School** evocation [evil]; **Level** 6

**Casting Time** 1 hour

**Components** V, M (fire, a sentient being), F (a prominent symbol or idol depicting either Moloch or a bull), SC (up to the Charisma modifier of the primary caster)

**Skill Checks** Knowledge (religion) DC 30, 3 successes; Intimidation DC 30, 3 successes

**Range** 10 ft. + 10 ft./caster level of the primary caster

**Duration** see text

**Saving Throw** none; **SR** yes

**Backlash** The primary caster takes 6d6 points of fire damage and catches fire (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444).

**Failure** All evil creatures within range take a -2 penalty to Strength and Constitution, a -1 penalty on Will saves, and a -2 penalty to AC for 24 hours.

### EFFECT

The primary caster performs an elaborate public sacrifice wherein a sentient being is burned to death. The sacrifice must be killed by fire damage, usually a result of being burned at the stake, by fire magic, or within a molech (see page 72). Regardless of the method, the sacrifice's body is reduced to ashes and its soul is damned to Hell. A nonevil spellcaster attempting to bring the sacrifice back from the dead must succeed at a caster level check (DC = 10 + the primary caster's caster level) to succeed; failure means the





spellcaster cannot try again for 1 day. Evil spellcasters can raise the sacrifice normally, without a check.

Upon the sacrifice's death, all evil creatures within range of the primary caster gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws for 10 minutes per caster level (maximum 10 minutes per Hit Die the sacrifice possessed). If the sacrifice had the chaotic or good subtype, all evil creatures within range instead gain the benefits of *heroism* for the same duration.

## OBEDIENCE

The following describes the ritual a worshiper of Moloch must perform to take full advantage of the Deific Obedience feat, as well as the boons for the evangelist, exalted, and sentinel prestige classes found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*.

### OBEDIENCE (MOLOCH)

Heat an iron bar, tool, or weapon in an open flame while speaking prayers to Moloch. At the end of this time, snuff the fire with your hand or let the fire burn your flesh before extinguishing it (taking 1 point of fire damage). You gain a +4 profane bonus on saving throws against fire effects.

#### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Enkindler (Sp)** produce flame 3/day, pyrotechnics 2/day, or rage 1/day
- 2: Voice in Flames (Su)** For a number of minutes per day equal to your Hit Dice, you can gaze through a fire at least the size of a torch in order to perceive the surroundings of another flame of equal or greater size within line of sight, as if using *clairaudience/clairvoyance*. While doing so, you can cause your voice to emanate from that flame, either as your normal voice or as a crackling, inhuman one. Once per day while using this ability, you can cast *mass suggestion* as a spell-like ability, but the spell originates from the distant flame rather than from you.
- 3: Face in Flames (Su)** A number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier, you can reshape a campfire-sized flame to produce the effects of *major image*. Whatever shape you create appears to be made of flame and occupies roughly a 5-foot cube, even if it is part of a larger fire. You can end the effect as a free action, causing the flames to erupt in a 5-foot-radius burst that deals 1d6 points of fire damage if you so choose. This damage increases by 1d6 for every additional round you maintained the *major image*, but can deal no more than 1d6 points of fire damage per Hit Die you have. Causing a flame to erupt in this way extinguishes the flame. You can use this ability in tandem with Voice in Flames.

#### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Fire Starter (Sp)** produce flame 3/day, heat metal 2/day, or flame arrow 1/day
- 2: Mark of Flame (Su)** By dealing fire damage to a creature using a spell or spell-like ability, you can temporarily brand that creature with a coin-sized, smoldering image of

## CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Moloch's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the creatures listed in the spell. The creatures below have bull-like features, such as horns or hooflike feet.

### Summon Monster III

Phantom armor, guardian (always lawful evil; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 213)

### Summon Monster VI

Devil, warmonger (Levaloch; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 81)

### Summon Monster VIII

Tophet (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 271)

Moloch's unholy symbol for 1 minute. While marked, the creature takes a –2 penalty on saving throws against all fire effects. A creature can remove this brand with *erase* or *remove curse*.

- 3: Accept the Flame (Su)** Three times per day, you can gain immunity to fire for a number of rounds per day equal to your Wisdom modifier. Track any fire damage you take during this time. For 1 minute after you end the effect, your body becomes uncomfortably warm, and once as a standard action you can use a melee touch attack to deal an amount of fire damage equal to the damage your immunity prevented (maximum 10 points of fire damage for every Hit Die you have) and cause the attack's target to catch fire (*Core Rulebook* 444). A successful Fortitude save halves the damage ( $DC = 10 + 1/2$  your Hit Dice + your Wisdom modifier). If you do not touch another creature before the end of this minute, you take all of the damage your immunity prevented—neither fire resistance nor fire immunity can reduce this damage.

#### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Pyrebrand (Sp)** produce flame 3/day, flame blade 2/day, or phantom steed 1/day
- 2: Ceremonial Pyre (Su)** Once per day as a swift action, you can cause all creatures within 15 feet of you to catch fire ( $DC = 10 + 1/2$  your Hit Dice + your Charisma modifier, Reflex negates); they burn for 1 minute or until the flames are extinguished. Each round that they're on fire, affected creatures take an additional 1d6 points of fire damage per 6 Hit Dice you have (maximum 4d6). If you begin your turn within 15 feet of a creature taking damage from this ability, you gain fast healing 10 for 1 round.
- 3: Sacrificial Pyre (Su)** When you confirm a critical hit against a foe, it must succeed at a Reflex saving throw ( $DC = 10 +$  your base attack bonus) or catch fire. While the target is on fire, caustic smoke obscures its vision, and it treats all other creatures as though they had concealment. Creatures killed while on fire from this ability are immediately reduced to ashes, leaving behind no remains.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



# IN SPIDER'S SILK

## Pathfinder's Journal: Cowards and Crows 3 of 6

**K**hem grumbled as I walked up. "This is humiliating."

I flashed a grin, trying to allay my own trepidations about our upcoming journey by keeping his spirits aloft. "How did you think I was going to keep you from falling into the dust along the way? Strap you over the back of a horse or hoist you onto my shoulders?"

The boy grunted as he shifted in place, trying to get comfortable despite swollen joints. With Jevlia's coin, I'd secured a tiny cart and mule, which now stood out in front of the small provisions store I'd just exited.

A few supply bundles sat under a tarpaulin along one side, and Khem took up the rest of the space in the back. He sulked, looking like an old tomcat, ready to hiss at every little disturbance. I imagined he had wanted to stride out from the city gates, head held high as he ventured forth in rescue. Well, beggars couldn't be picky about their bearings, and our dealings with Jevlia definitely put us in that category.

"It's either this or walk." I patted the side of the rickety cart, trying not to dislodge a splintered board. "And at the rate you waddle, it'd be well into winter before we got outside the settlement. Speaking of which..." I gestured vaguely north. "I reread your friend's message, but it doesn't seem to contain any clue as to where she or your mother might actually be—assuming they're even together still. The Anferita Wood holds plenty of room for two lugs like us to get lost. I'm guessing you've an idea as to how we might divine their location?"

Khem pulled out the raven figurine again. It glinted in the afternoon sun, a blend of harsh angles and smooth surfaces.

"This is designed to deliver messages back and forth," he said. "It got to me and now should be ready to return to the sender."

"So all you have to say is 'please'?"

"In essence. Liset was the original messenger, so it should be a simple matter of activating it."

He tied one end of a leather strap around the raven's talons and the other end around his own wrist. Then he

held the bird close to his lips and whispered something I couldn't quite catch.

With a shimmer, the statuette fluttered to life and took flight—but the cord went taut as the enchanted statuette reached the end of its makeshift leash. It pointed north, a direction that'd take us across the waters beneath the Arch of Aroden, through Corentyn, and beyond, into the heart of the Anferita Wood. I'd already secured cheap passage across the narrow strait. The trader's boat would leave within the hour, with or without us.

Silver feathers fluttered in the corner of my vision as I thought of venturing out beyond Khari, leaving the safety of the life I'd built up around myself there.

A false life, I had to admit. Yet comfortable enough. Had I softened so much that I couldn't even go beyond the walls without bolting for the nearest latrine?

Khem reeled the bird back in. He turned it inanimate with another whisper. "We'll check again every so often to make sure

we're on the right path."

"Should work well," I said. "It's not the strangest compass I've ever used."

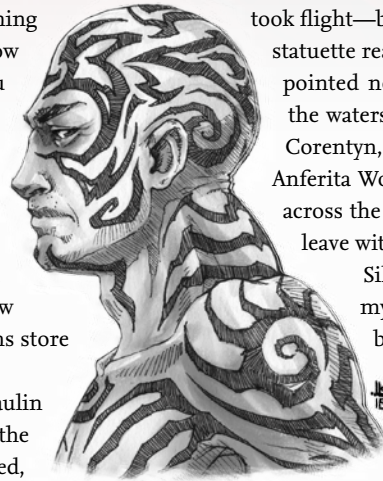
He looked at me questioningly, but I left the options up to his imagination. I checked over the supplies once more, including the daggers under my vest. Pity to be traveling in my finer set of clothes, but I didn't dare go home to change in case anyone watched for my return, which was likely.

Satisfied we wouldn't die of thirst or starvation—though I could hardly rule out other possible causes—I sat on the wooden slat in front of the cart and slapped the reins to set the mule in motion. We trundled through the streets of Khari, beggars and urchins darting from our path while I navigated carefully around any guard patrols. Few took notice of one old man hauling another along.

As we swung around the corner to the nearest dockside gate, I spotted two figures waiting just down the road.

I groaned, trying to pull us to a stop—but it was too late. "What is it?" Khem asked.

A soot-covered halfling pointed at me. His companion, a muscled man covered in wriggling tattoos, grinned



*Thugs such as Ewitt like to get tattoos to look more threatening. Yet whenever he talks or moves, the effect is more distracting than intimidating to me.*



nastily as he fixed on me. Garrol and Ewitt, Tolomuk's enforcers who'd been hounding me just that morning. How did they know to wait for me here? It couldn't be mere luck on their part.

They'd already singled me out, so attempts to disguise or hide myself wouldn't help. This whole situation must've addled my wits, thrown off my instincts for slipping away unnoticed. If I'd thought through our exit properly, I would've had Khem drive us out of town while I disguised myself as just another sack of supplies.

The two debt collectors darted my way, looking determined. I remained seated, back straight so I could slip out a dagger or two if absolutely necessary. The gate guards at the far end of the street paid us no heed, though this also meant Tolomuk's boys could cause a decent ruckus before they stood any chance of being interrupted.

"Master Atrius?" Khem rocked the cart as he shuffled. "What's wrong? Why've we stopped?"

"I've... er... spotted a couple friends I didn't expect to bump into.

Hopefully this should only take a minute or two."

"Friends?"

"Just let me do the talking, hear?"

Garrol and Ewitt arrived, closing in on either side of me, within easy reach of the reins I still held.

"Hello, boys," I said. "Didn't get lost earlier, did you?"

Ewitt crossed his arms, making them look like twining tree roots. "Atrius. Not thinking of skipping town before you're paid up, are you?"

I pressed a palm over my heart. "Me? Attempting to swindle Tolomuk, whose graciousness knows no bounds? It wounds me you'd think I'd ever stoop to such deplorable depths." I cocked my head Khem's way. "This is merely an outing for the boy and me, heading off on a little adventure. But don't fear. We'll be back as soon as we can to settle matters."

"Boy?" Garrol peered at Khem.

"Ah, forgive my lack of introductions." I reached back to pat Khem's shoulder. "Surely you've heard of Khem the Cursed. Worker of enchantments and maker of majestic trinkets and fabulous finery. A powerful wizard in his own right who's not to be trifled with. I am currently in his employ as both guide and bodyguard, so I must be about my business."

Ewitt snorted. "All I see's a man shuffling to his grave. And we've business of our own with you unless you want to end up in one as well. So get down off that cart and

let's go talk to the boss." A hand went to the long dagger at his waist.

"Nonsense," I said. "Abandon my client when he's obviously unfit to fend for himself? What sort of scoundrel do you take me for?"

"A shifty one," Garrol said as he snatched the reins from me. I let him guide the cart out of the middle of the road, over beside a squat home. It took us out of sight of the main thoroughfare, which I assumed they thought would cow my defiant spirit.

Perhaps they didn't consider what it might let me get away with as well.

Ewitt tapped his dagger hilt. "Down. Now. No tricks."

How could I resist fooling with two such fools? I thought.

A mutter snagged my ear and I glanced back to see Khem flexing crooked fingers while speaking to himself. The hair on my forearms prickled. The boy must be attempting a spell of some sort! But his pained expression suggested the casting might not be going quite right.

"Wait, boy, that might not—"

Khem growled and flung out his hands. One of his elbows popped loud enough that I winced. He cried out and snatched his arm back. A puff of smoke and flash of lightning burst into being in front of him, making Garrol and Ewitt jump back, but otherwise nothing happened.

Khem moaned as he clutched his arm to his chest. Tolomuk's thugs scowled and both drew daggers.

"What'd I say about no tricks?" Ewitt produced another blade from somewhere within his shirt, this dagger with nasty hooks protruding from the edge. "The boss said to bring you to him alive. Didn't say you had to be all in one piece. Wonder how much I can carve up and still keep you breathing."

I reached to tug at my vest, fingers brushing my punching daggers. I didn't want more blood on my hands, if it could be helped. But if it came down to survival...

A soft voice wove between us. "Is this any way for gentlemen to behave in front of a lady?"

A slim figure in a purple robe stepped in behind Ewitt. A deep hood hid the newcomer's features.

Ewitt spun, daggers raised. "Now who—"

Golden-gloved hands caught his wrists and continued his spin, throwing him off balance so he spiraled down to one knee. He let go of one dagger to catch himself.

In a surprisingly acrobatic move, Garrol vaulted over the back of the mule. Fortunately for him, it paid him no heed.



*This devious halfling often disguises himself with grime and rags to blend in with the urchins running through the streets, avoiding extra attention from town guards.*

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





The halfling lashed out at the stranger, who shifted back and to the side as if floating over the ground rather than walking. Ewitt rose and came alongside Garrol, and the pair worked to back the robed figure into a corner. However, the person moved in a fluid manner unlike any I'd ever seen before. Each dagger slash parted nothing but air. Pale blue ribbons secured the person's robe, keeping the cloth tight to the body so it moved freely but didn't trail any material enemies could snatch.

The stranger struck with presses of the palms, brushes of the forearms, bumps of the hips, and other subtler moves to turn the attackers' cuts aside or avoid them altogether. Then the newcomer redirected a more violent motion in a whole new direction, leaving Ewitt and Garrol stumbling about like drunken fools.

I felt odd, perched on the cart while the fight went on just a pace away. Should I add a blade or two to the exchange?

Better to ensure our squabble wasn't drawing too much undue attention, I decided. Fortunately, a look about showed no one else but Khem paying attention. The boy looked amazed, injured arm utterly forgotten as he watched.

When I refocused on the fight, Ewitt and Garrol had managed to get on either side of our helper. The halfling hacked at the lower legs while Ewitt stabbed at the chest. Yet it looked like the person dodged in two directions at once. The stranger then glided out from between the two men, spun, and caught their wrists in either hand just as they lunged for twin attacks. Their momentum drove them in so Ewitt's blade took Garrol in the shoulder while Garrol's caught the meat of Ewitt's thigh.

The men lurched away, shouting, but their cries grew hoarse within moments, and then abruptly ceased. They mirrored one another in a slow collapse that left them facedown in the dirt.

The robed figure stood over them and sighed. "Poisoned blades. A temporary paralytic, it seems, meant to keep one breathing while removing any chance of resistance."

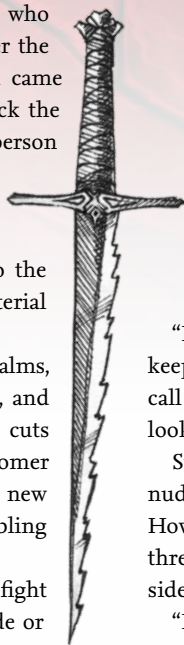
I at last recognized her voice. And dare I say, for the first time, I stared entirely out of disbelief rather than any admiration.

"Jevlia."

Jevlia drew her hood back to reveal her dusky features and spiky hair—though the latter had been washed of its chalky accents from earlier.

"I didn't intend to intervene so soon," she said, "but I did say I'd need to protect my investments in you."

The cart rattled as Khem tried to rise. "Lady Jevlia? What're you doing here?" His gaze went to the bodies. "What did you do to them?"



*Depending on what poison laces the thugs' blades, a single cut could leave you sickened, paralyzed, or breathing your last. And even if you survive the fight, an infected wound could still prove deadly.*

"I'm here because you boys obviously need help keeping to a schedule," she said. "As for them, you might call it a form of persuasive discouragement. They've been looking for you."

Still trying to recover from her befuddling presence, I nudged Ewitt's body with a boot toe. "I don't understand. How did they know where to find me? With the way I threw them off my trail, they should've been on the other side of Khari until nightfall."

"I told them," said Jevlia. "That is, I had one of my contacts alert Tolomuk to a likely route you might be taking out of Khari this evening."

I once more stared at her.

"Why'd you do that?" Khem asked.

"Hold on, boy." I held a hand up. "This is between me and her, so if you don't mind..." I cleared my throat and leaned in to murmur. "Why in the name of Lamashtu did you do that?"

She replied in a stage whisper. "I know how many credit slips you've signed your name to, Atrius, and the rather impressive debt you've tallied. Do you realize how many times those two or their associates have come calling, wanting to use your parlor visits to entrap you? They promised me bountiful favors if we'd help them carve coin out of your flesh."

I frowned at Ewitt's prone form. "I hardly think him the sort to use phrasings such as 'bountiful favors.'"

She chuckled. "True. But I wanted to spare your delicate ears."

"But if they've been trying so long, why sic them on us now?"

"Because now I can be assured they won't follow you out of the city and ambush you on the road." Jevlia swept a hand at the scene. "This prodded them to confront you so they could be dealt with more directly, and in more manageable confines. Now they're out of the way and you won't have to keep checking over your shoulder the whole journey."

Logical, I had to admit. Devious, but logical. Help me, but I might truly love this woman after all.

"Let's get moving," she said. "I can explain more as we go. Don't want more of Tolomuk's men to find you. Besides." She eyed Khem. "Your friend wouldn't want you wasting a minute if she's to be helped. We've a ways before we reach the wood."



"Hold on." I took her elbow. She tugged back just enough for me to sense the strength in her frame. I'd felt it there before in the brief touches and embraces we'd enjoyed while chatting over tea and cakes, but now I noted it in a whole new context. "We? Since when are you going with us?"

"Since I've decided you boys can't look after yourselves. And," she pulled free and looked to the docks, "there's a devil to attend to. I doubt you could handle it on your own."

"But you can?" I asked.

Her smirk had enough guile in it to accomplish another stunning thing: render me speechless. First she became our patron, then she hinted at my bloodstained past and dredged up a name I'd not used in ages. Then she became our rescuer, and now an apparent hunter of devils. I prided myself on keeping secrets—especially my own—but now almost felt out of my league. I at least realized if she meant to join us, there was little I could do to stop her.

I stepped aside and swept a bow.

"After you, m'lady."

"As it should be." Jevlia led the way as I once more got the mule in motion.

Khem gave me a curious look, but I just shrugged. "Another lesson to learn," I said. "Know when arguing is just going to be a waste of breath."

Instead of driving, I walked alongside her, guiding with the reins as we made our way to the docks. I noticed something new to her.

Oh, the robe and fearsome fighting skills were readily evident surprises. No. This other thing shifted about her. If I could read auras, I'd bet hers would've had a thorny look to it. She possessed a sharpness in the way

she walked. The way she kept shooting glances like barbs to all sides.

She's nervous, I realized. And whatever could make the slightest crack in her flawless poise... well... it didn't help the prickling in my gut one bit.

Fortunately, aside from the buffoons she'd dispatched, no troubles materialized as we boarded the small cargo ship. We were to take it to Corentyn, disembarking before the crew continued along their coastal trading route.

Night crept over our heads by the time we set off. Khem slept in the cart, which had been lashed to the deck. His snores buzzed faintly above the splash and slosh of our progress.

I, for one, stood vigilant by the railing, a tireless guard defending my pride against the moment when my stomach might empty itself of what little food I'd had that day. Let's just leave it that I traveled via water as little as possible in my younger years.

Jevlia joined me at my post, though I doubted for the same reason.

I noted how the faintest lines around her eyes eased as Khari drew farther away across the waves. Twilight dusted the air purple as torch and lantern lights dotted the shoreline in both directions.

"Something sticking a bramble in places that would get me slapped if I mentioned them?" I asked.

To my surprise, she only looked more serious. "I risked more than you realize saving you back there. It's possible, after this, I may not be able to return." She sighed and braced hands on the railing. "At least not as anyone recognizable as Jevlia."

I turned to her. "Whatever do you mean, as Jevlia? You can't return as yourself?"

That got me a mocking glance.



*Not the noblest of steeds or kingliest  
of chariots, but sometimes one must  
eschew comfort and grace for the sake of  
reliability... as well as the regrettable lack  
of coin.*

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





You're a coward and a fool, Atrius, I thought. Sometimes tea houses and brothels ran informant networks for extra coin... and sometimes informant networks posed as the former. I should've realized the game was being played both ways far earlier.

The revelation rushed out in a whisper. "You're a spy."

She bowed her head so the hood covered her face again. "Not like you're thinking."

"And how do you know the inconceivable ways of my thinking?"

"With lots and lots of tea." She straightened, eyes dark under the hood. "I'm no Andoren anti-slavery dissident or running any political cloak-and-kukri operation. I'm dealing with devils."

"That happens a lot in Cheliah, you realize? Seems like these days, you can't even empty your chamber pot without hitting a devil in the street. Accidentally, of course. So why the secrecy?"

"I once belonged to an order known as the Sisters of the Golden Erinyes."

I tugged at my chin. "I've heard of it. The Devil Nuns. Part of the Church of Asmodeus."

She hummed in agreement, still gripping the railing. "Have you then heard of the Children of the Upper Reach?"

After trying to strike a pose of deep musing, I surrendered with a shrug. "That knowledge, I fear, is beyond even my vast intellect."

She made the daintiest snort I'd ever heard. "The Devil Nuns train in the art of hamatulatsu, mimicking the deadly fighting of barbed devils. My parents left me with them when I was a girl. A sacrifice of sorts, I think, either to pay off a debt or perhaps to further their fortune and status." She held a hand out, fingers crooked to look like talons. "So training and fighting to maim and cripple and destroy became my life."

"The way you fought back there," I pointed back to Khari, "wasn't anything like I've heard hamatulatsu to be."

That elicited a soft smile. "Let's leave it that I had a crisis of faith. I tried to escape the monastery three times. Three times I was caught and punished. But each failure only made me more determined."

"One night, while recuperating from my latest punishment, I woke to find a woman in purple standing over me. I lashed out, thinking her another tormentor. Yet she turned my every blow aside and never once struck me back. Once I exhausted myself, she told me she belonged to the Children of the Upper Reach, founded to combat the Devil Nuns themselves. And she could get me out if I swore to join their order as well."

"So you traded one master for another?" I asked.

Her glare cut as sharp as ever. "I couldn't stay there. I would've rather died. But if I escaped, I needed protection. Anyone who abandons the Church of Asmodeus is

hunted down mercilessly and made an example of. On my own, I would've been helpless. With them, I could gain a new sort of strength."

She spun and suddenly stood behind me, her voice stirring my neck hairs. "Children of the Upper Reach practice melekatha, designed specifically to counter hamatulatsu. For a time, I trained with them, abandoning my former teachings. Yet I couldn't hide forever, and my new order needed my help in return. They were not strong enough yet to risk direct confrontations."

I turned to face her again, closer than ever. She met my gaze, unflinching.

"So I became Jevlia. Slipped into silk and sipped dainty drinks while learning every dark secret I could and passing it on to my masters. I helped uncover devils of all sorts and exposed their dealings so they could be..." She smirked. "Dealt with."

Before I could conjure a response, Khem's voice floated over, bleary in sleep and confusion.

"Master Atrius? Where are we?"

Jevlia caught my arm as I moved to the boy.

"You're going to have to tell him sooner or later," she said. "He trusts you."

I frowned and pulled free. "Then why don't we let him keep that trust as long as possible, hear?"

After docking the next morning, we prepared to push on as fast as we could. Khem woke, bleary-eyed, as we disembarked and headed into Corentyn. He soon went wide-eyed at all the new sights, and I realized he'd not seen anything beyond Khari his whole life. The sheer size of the place must've been overwhelming, and I wished I could've given him a grand tour, but we couldn't spare the time.

"I know it's quite a lot to take in at once," I told him, "but try not to gawk overly much. That sort of overwhelmed look is quick to attract those who'd like to take advantage of strangers in the city. I'd rather not deal with any more delays."

He closed his mouth and grinned wryly. "It's that obvious, is it?"

"I'm afraid so," said Jevlia. "You look like a fresh-faced acolyte visiting Calistria's temple for your first joyful communion."

He flushed, but she winked, which drew his smile back out. Khem patted his sagging cheeks. "Not quite as fresh-faced as I'd like to be."

I waved at the road ahead. "Which path do we tread today?"

He performed his quick trick with the raven, which pointed us to the northern gate. We passed as swiftly as we could through trading caravans from across the continent. Diabolic priests shrieked prayers from atop bloody pillars. A slaver hollered out the virtues of various captives who stood naked and chained atop an auction block. Khem's expression darkened as we passed by this, but he held his tongue.





*While offering a few of the more direct trade routes out of Corentyn, and populated by lumber teams, small settlements, and druids alike, the Anferita Wood has swallowed its share of souls who wandered beneath its boughs unprepared. I hope we don't encounter one of the packs of fiend hounds for which the forest is infamous.*

Fishermen and farmers hawked their wares in vast open markets, while noble processions flounced by with lavish shows of wealth—most likely accrued through the mercantilism that made the city famous. I pointed out a minor temple to Abadar as we passed, its arch marked with a key motif.

Fortunately, the gate guards quickly saw we had no goods to be taxed and let us out into the fertile fields beyond the city's fifty-foot limestone walls.

Khem stared behind us for a long while until I poked his shoulder to make sure he hadn't died sitting upright from shock.

A day's journey brought us within sight of the Anferita Wood. As we followed the main road into the first thick groves, I knew if I continued, there was a good chance I wouldn't come back. None of us might.

My pace slowed. Did I dare this? Was it worth it? Would I simply be leading others to their deaths again?

Then Khem interrupted my thoughts. "Do you smell smoke?"

Jevlia sniffed about. Her nostrils flared. "You're right. Something reeks of sulfur. Don't know why I didn't notice before."

An angry rasp made us halt. A woman stepped out from behind a tree just up ahead. She wore a crimson dress, patterned with black-and-white sigils of Asmodeus.

An emerald cowl lay on her shoulders, revealing her thin face, pale blond hair, and a pair of horns curling from her forehead.

The devilborn poised like a noble, hands on hips, head tilted at an angle that let her stare down at us in jilted fury.

"Are you savages? Do you know nothing of manners? You're supposed to compliment a lady's perfume."

Her voice. She was the woman who'd been outside Khem's shop—the one who'd kept launching fiery attacks at us. The one who'd stolen his amulet.

Clearing my throat, I stepped forward and bowed, though not deep enough that I'd throw my back out.

"M'lady, forgive our discourtesy. We are but a humble lot of travelers, simply stunned to behold such beauty here in the wild woods. Pray, grace us with your mercy."

The heat in her eyes contrasted with her icy smile.

"Oh, since you've been so sweet, I think I'll grant you a kiss."

She flared her hands and thrust her head forward, mouth gaping. A crackling grew behind her catlike hiss and a wisp of smoke escaped her nostrils. A flame appeared in the back of her throat, growing bigger and brighter.

Fire spewed from between her lips, straight at me.

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY







## BESTIARY

When I was a kid, I never put much stock in the stories. A bad man comes to hurt little ones who don't listen to their parents, dragging them from their homes and cooking them in stews and all that. It was just a way to get us to behave, right? Well, I've seen a lot of things since I became a guard, but I never thought I'd see those stories come to life. I figured the boy had just run away—but when I rounded the forest path and saw that greasy thing standing over what was left of his body, I knew it wasn't just a fairy tale. It was real, and by the looks of the disgusting, quivering pile of fat beside the creature, not to mention the number of poor children who had gone missing from the area, it had been going on for a long time."

—Guard Captain Merina Woolum



This volume of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path takes the player character villains into the depths of Cheliax's Whisperwood in search of components for the ritual to close the Inferno Gate.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE WHISPERWOOD

The random encounter tables presented here feature dangers the PCs can encounter as they explore the five regions of the Whisperwood. See page 25 for more details on these regions and rolling for random encounters.

The following are descriptions of the relevant entries listed in the Whisperwood Encounters tables.

**Feign Prince's Brigands (CR 8):** Rogues loyal to the brigand-sorcerer Lairsaph, the Feign Prince of the Whisperwood, waylay travelers along the Remesiana Road and Whisperwood Way. Four Feign Prince's brigands (see page 33) mounted on combat-trained horses (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 177) attack anyone they come across, doing whatever's necessary to rob their victims of their hard-earned coin. Fleeing bandits can be followed back to their lair in the Murmurs (area L), or the PCs can interrogate a captured bandit to learn the location of the Feign Prince's hideout, as well as details of the hideout's secret entrance (see area L1).

**Glorious Reclamation Patrol (CR 9):** The Glorious Reclamation regularly patrols Hellspawn Dale from its base in Senara. A typical patrol consists of two Knights Inheritor of the Glorious Reclamation, each mounted on a combat-trained heavy horse (see page 41), along with four Glorious Reclamation sergeants (see page 37) on foot.

**Vegepygmy Tribe (CR 7):** Several large tribes of vegepygmies inhabit the fungus-choked Scar Thicket in Scarhurst. This tribe consists of 14 vegepygmies (*Bestiary* 273) led by an advanced vegepygmy chieftain infested with russet mold spores (*Bestiary* 273). The vegepygmies try to capture any intruders in their territory and infect them with russet mold to spawn more vegepygmies and grow their tribe.

### HELLSPAWN DALE

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1-25	No encounter	—	—
26-35	1d4 boars and 1d4 dire boars	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
36-45	1 dire bear	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
46-52	2 giant owls	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 213
53-59	Issaya	7	See page 30
60-64	1 kirin	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 168
65-74	1d6+2 dire wolves	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
75-80	2 swan maidens	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 257
81-90	Glorious Reclamation Patrol	9	See above
91-100	2 legion archons	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 19

### IRON SNARL

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1-2	No encounter	—	—
3-13	1d4 owlbears	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 224
14-24	1 shambling mound	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 246
25-35	1d4 boars and 1d4 dire boars	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
36-46	1 dire bear	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
47-57	1d6+2 dire wolves	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
58-68	1 quickwood	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 228
69-78	1 aurumvorax	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 35
79-89	1d4+2 leucrottas	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 178
90-100	8 twigjacks	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 274

### THE MURMURS

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1-10	No encounter	—	—
11-20	1d4 boars and 1d4 dire boars	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
21-30	1 dire bear	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
31-39	1d4+2 unicorns	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 269
40-49	1d6+2 dire wolves	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
50-58	1d6+2 dryads	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 116
59-68	4 ettercaps and 1d8 giant spiders	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 129, 258
69-82	Feign Prince's Brigands	8	See above
83-91	1 bogeyman	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 42
92-100	1d4 treants	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 266

### PERDITION REACH

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1-5	No encounter	—	—
6-12	1d4 boars and 1d4 dire boars	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
13-19	1 dire bear	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
20-34	1d4 cerberi	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 51
35-41	1d4+2 korreds	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 173
42-56	Lost Knights	8	See page 37
57-63	1d6+5 bog nixies	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 201
64-70	2 hangman trees	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 152
71-85	2 warmonger devils	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 81
86-100	2 erinyes	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 75

### SCARHURST

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1-5	No encounter	—	—
6-15	1 shambling mound	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 246
16-25	1d4 boars and 1d4 dire boars	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
26-35	1 dire bear	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
36-45	Vegepygmy Tribe	7	See above
46-55	1d4 cave giants	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 127
56-65	1d6+2 dire wolves	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
66-75	2d8 fungus leshys	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 177
76-90	Hounds of Heaven	8	See page 30
91-100	1d4+2 redcaps	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 233

## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



## AZATA, NUALIDU

*Clear, flowing water forms the arms and the lower half of this angelic, elflike being.*

## NUALIDU

CR 5



XP 1,600

CG Medium outsider (azata, chaotic, extraplanar, good, water)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +11

## DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)**hp** 51 (6d10+18)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4**DR** 5/cold iron or evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification;**Resist** cold 10, fire 10

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 30 ft., jet 150 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +10 (1d6+4)**Ranged** cascade +9 ranged touch (3d6)**Special Attacks** cascade, drench**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +7)At will—*create water*, *hydraulic push*<sup>APG</sup>, *purify food and drink* (water only)3/day—*slipstream*<sup>APG</sup>1/day—*control water*, *hydraulic torrent*<sup>APG</sup>

## STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Dodge, Mobility**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+16 when jumping), Escape Artist +12,

Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +11, Sense

Motive +11, Survival +8, Swim +21; **Racial Modifiers** +4

Acrobatics when jumping

**Languages** Aquan, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** aqueous

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any water (Elysium)**Organization** solitary, pair, or pod (3–6)**Treasure** standard

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aqueous (Ex)** Because of nualidus' partially elemental nature, whenever a critical hit or sneak attack is scored against a nualidu, there is a 25% chance that the extra damage is negated and damage is rolled normally.

**Cascade (Su)** As a full-round action, a nualidu can expel a cascade of water from their body to batter an opponent within 80 feet as a ranged touch attack that deals 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage. Creatures struck by this disorienting attack must also succeed at a DC 16 Reflex save or be unable to make attacks of opportunity for one round. Whether or not the target succeeds at this saving throw, the nualidu can ride this cascade of water forward, immediately appearing in the nearest unoccupied square adjacent to the target, as if using *dimension door*.

**Drench (Ex)** The nualidu's touch puts out Large or smaller nonmagical flames. The outsider can dispel magical fire they touch as *per dispel magic* (caster level is equal to the nualidu's Hit Dice).

Though among the most capricious and mercurial of azatas, nualidus are strongly protective of natural waterways across the multiverse. They despise polluters and those who use water to cause pain and suffering, such as the captains of slave ships. This attitude remains constant, despite nualidus' tendency to make and break relationships with others in moments.

These azatas are constantly on the move, rarely staying in one place for very long. Their persistent need to travel makes it difficult for nualidus to complete any but the simplest of tasks in an amount of time most mortals would find acceptable, but nualidus have long memories. An individual nualidu might return to a location hundreds of years later to finish a job they started, even if everyone else involved long ago forgot or died of old age. Nualidus also act similarly in combat, flowing between opponents and across the terrain, only to flee if they become bored. They rely heavily on their natural powers and spell-like abilities to shove foes around the battlefield.

Nualidus are made recognizable by the elemental water making up much of their lithe, sylvan forms, which draw down into long, serpentine tails. This water constantly churns; no matter what kind of surface a nualidu travels across, their waters remain clean and fresh. A nualidu's hair color ranges from the sparkling blue of tropical waters to seafoam green, and matches that of their twinkling eyes. A typical nualidu stands a little over 5 feet tall and is quite slender, weighing only 130 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Nualidus form from the souls of virtuous members of aquatic races, or else from the souls of moral people who spent the majority of their lives near or on water, such as kind dockworkers, sailors, and lighthouse keepers. Little remains of their mortal traits or memories upon their creation, aside from hazy memories of sunsets upon the waves and familiar ports of call, which nualidus might spend the entirety of their immortal existences trying to locate. Their bodies are clear and cool upon creation, but darken considerably with age, until their roiling forms resemble the blackest oceanic trenches.

Nualidus generally spring from the waters of Elysium, in the strongest concentrations of chaotic influence, and it is no coincidence they are extremely capricious and impermanent. From their personalities to their long tails, the aquatic outsiders resemble proteans as much as they do their fellow celestials, and whispers up and down the planes claim that they are the children of some ancient god's dalliance with a protean lord. Proteans are widely varied in their relations to the curious azatas, with



many considering nualidus distant kin while others see them as a mockery of proteans' ideally chaotic forms.

### HABITAT AND SOCIETY

When not on Elysium, nualidus travel natural waterways and oceans, experiencing the extremes of the natural world. They tolerate manufactured canals to a much lesser extent, as such courses are often polluted by the mortals who created them. If the source of the contamination seems readily apparent, a nualidu usually attempts to rectify the problem regardless of locals' needs or wishes. In most cases, though, the issue is endemic of civilization, and no nualidu can stand to remain in one place long enough to change an entire society.

A nualidu has no permanent place of residence and generally eschews shelter, preferring to rest under the stars on beaches or in underwater caves. Despite their mercurial and transient nature, these celestials are very community-oriented, forming small pods of like-minded individuals who travel together to pursue a common interest or goal. Nualidu pods fluctuate constantly as members find other interests or new members join, but when together, pods are as protective as any human family. To threaten or insult one nualidu in a group is to threaten or insult the entire pod.

More so than other azatas, nualidus relish courtly titles, and often invent grandiose new ones, accumulating a long list of honorifics as time passes. Most eventually grow bored with titles they've accrued and shed them without a second thought, only to collect new ones during their next journeys. The more bombastic and flamboyant a title, the longer it holds a nualidu's interest and remains part of their name. While their epithets tend to reference their exploits and triumphs, nualidus are no strangers to exaggeration. Some particularly pretentious titles include "the Marquis of a Thousand Waves," "the Exalted Maharajah of the Unstoppable Current," "the Jubilant Savior of the Laughing Stream," and "the Grand Caliph of Inundations, Bane of Droughts." A nualidu's titles might be both masculine and feminine, as their attitudes toward gender are as fluid as their personalities.

Nualidus despise anything they see as a perversion of their treasured water, especially human drinks such as coffee, tea, and alcohol. They look down on all who drink such abominations, considering them classless at best, and directly insulting at worst. Depending on the nualidu's mood, the outsider might either politely refuse such an offered libation or launch into a screed demonizing the substance and all the harm it has caused mortalkind. A particularly incensed nualidu may even go so far as to

seek out the nearest brewery or winery and destroy it. This attitude rarely extends to naturally derived fluids, such as fruit juices and plant nectar.

### CALLING A NUALIDU

A nualidu can be called with *lesser planar ally*, although it is very difficult to call the same nualidu more than once. The azatas prefer tasks that contribute in some way to the protection or cleaning of a body of water, and generally accept payment with gems or valuable stones that have been eroded by flowing water into unique and organic shapes. They also demand at least a token amount of respect from their callers, and most nualidus require their callers to treat them politely and to memorize, if not directly use, at least a handful of their myriad titles.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## BAGMAN

This pale, pudgy humanoid is clad in a greasy traveling cloak and a wide-brimmed hat. A bloodstained burlap sack hangs over its shoulder.

### BAGMAN

CR 4



NE Medium fey

**Init** +2; **Senses** find children, low-light vision; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)**hp** 45 (7d6+21)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6**DR** 5/cold iron

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +8 (1d4+4 plus grab) or  
handaxe +7 (1d6+6/x3)**Special Attacks** bag prey

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7 (+9 bull rush, +11 grapple); **CMD** 19  
(21 vs. bull rush)**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Step Up, Weapon  
Focus (claw)**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Bluff +13, Craft (alchemy) +12,  
Disguise +13 (+17 to appear human), Knowledge  
(local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +11,  
Spellcraft +9, Use Magic Device +13; **Racial Modifiers**  
+4 Disguise to appear human**Languages** Common, Sylvan**SQ** fat extractor

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban**Organization** solitary, pair, or gang (3–5)**Treasure** standard (*potion of infernal healing*<sup>ISWG</sup>, *potion of  
youthful appearance*<sup>UM</sup>, cauldron, flint and steel, sack,  
sewing needle, other treasure)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Bag Prey (Su)** If a bagman begins its turn with a creature grappled in its claws, as long as the creature is size Small or smaller, it can stuff the target into its sack as a swift action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. A bagman can stuff a grappled Medium creature in the sack, but doing so is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. A creature in the sack can try to cut its way free with any light slashing or piercing weapon. The sack has AC 12 and 15 hit points. If a creature cuts its way out of the sack or the sack is damaged enough to allow a victim to escape, the bagman cannot use the sack to bag prey again until it has spent 1 hour mending it.

The sack has other special qualities while in the bagman's possession. The weight of creatures in the sack do not count against the bagman's carrying capacity, and the bagman can fit up to two Small creatures or one Medium creature in the sack at a time. If used by

any creature other than the bagman that owns it, this container functions as a mundane sack. If a bagman's sack is lost or destroyed, it can craft a new sack with proper materials and a week of work.

**Fat Extractor (Su)** A bagman can use the fat of intelligent humanoid creatures to create *potions of infernal healing* and *potions of youthful appearance* as if it had the Brew Potion feat. These potions are created at caster level 3rd, and the fat from one humanoid creature of any size is enough to make a single potion. Creating each potion takes 2 hours, and requires the bagman to flense the fat from its victims' flesh with its claws, place the fat in a cauldron over an open fire, and mix it with whatever free ingredients are at hand. Unlike brewing a potion normally, creating these potions has no cost. A bagman can carry only four potions created in this way at a time, even if another bagman made them, but it can sell or give away an unlimited number of potions. Knowingly consuming one of these potions is an evil act.

**Find Children (Ex)** A bagman has the scent ability, but only with respect to humanoid children. Thus, it could sniff out a human child's hiding place, but not the child's parents.

Some monsters feed on humans, while others torture humans for their own sadistic pleasure, but few creatures go to such perverse lengths as to murder humans and then sell the processed remains back to their victims' unwitting families. Bagmen are such monsters—degenerate fey creatures who specialize in kidnapping humanoid victims and harvesting their fat to produce potions. Bagmen disguise themselves as traveling peddlers and apothecaries, often selling the products of their depredations to the very communities from which they steal their victims. An average bagman stands 5-1/2 feet tall and weighs close to 300 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Bagmen are nomadic creatures, traveling from town to town to peddle their disgusting wares. They prefer to travel by lesser-used roads, or even through stretches of wilderness, the better to happen upon lone travelers. Bagmen are opportunistic hunters, and rarely bother to set up ambushes or execute convoluted plans. If one happens upon an individual it thinks it can kidnap without repercussions—especially if that individual is sleeping or otherwise unable to properly defend himself—it simply snatches that person up and adjourns to a more private location to kill the person and harvest his fat.

Children are an exception to this rule. Bagmen greatly value the fat of children, and employ a variety of tricks and threats to lure children away from the safety of their homes and families. When a group of children is traveling with just one or two adults, bagmen delight in attacking the group and bull rushing the weakest children away



from their protectors; once the children have scattered, the bagmen find it much easier to snatch them and abscond with them to their lairs. Despite being far stronger and tougher than the average human, bagmen are quite cowardly. They eschew fighting with armed creatures, and hesitate to attack when outnumbered by combatants.

Many claim that bagmen consume the fat they harvest from their victims for sustenance, and in many cultures the name for bagmen directly translates to “fat-eater” or “fat-stealer.” However, this accusation is largely false, and is most likely based on bagmen’s waxen flesh and greasy complexions. In truth, fat is the one part of a creature a bagman almost never eats, having far greater use for it as an ingredient in horrifying potions it lures unsuspecting customers to imbibe. The rest—muscles, bones, organs, and all—the bagman consumes with unnatural rapidity in order to dispose of any evidence of its crime.

It is unclear whether bagmen are capable of reproduction, or even how new bagmen come into being in the first place. Some scholars suggest that bagmen are the result of unnatural unions among fey, or between fey and a variety of evil outsiders. A few believe that new bagmen arise when evil energies permeate a bagman’s cache of humanoid fat that hasn’t already been turned into potions. Others claim that bagmen spontaneously manifest as a representation of the society’s willingness to consume itself, such as when the rich and powerful profit at the expense of the poor and meek.

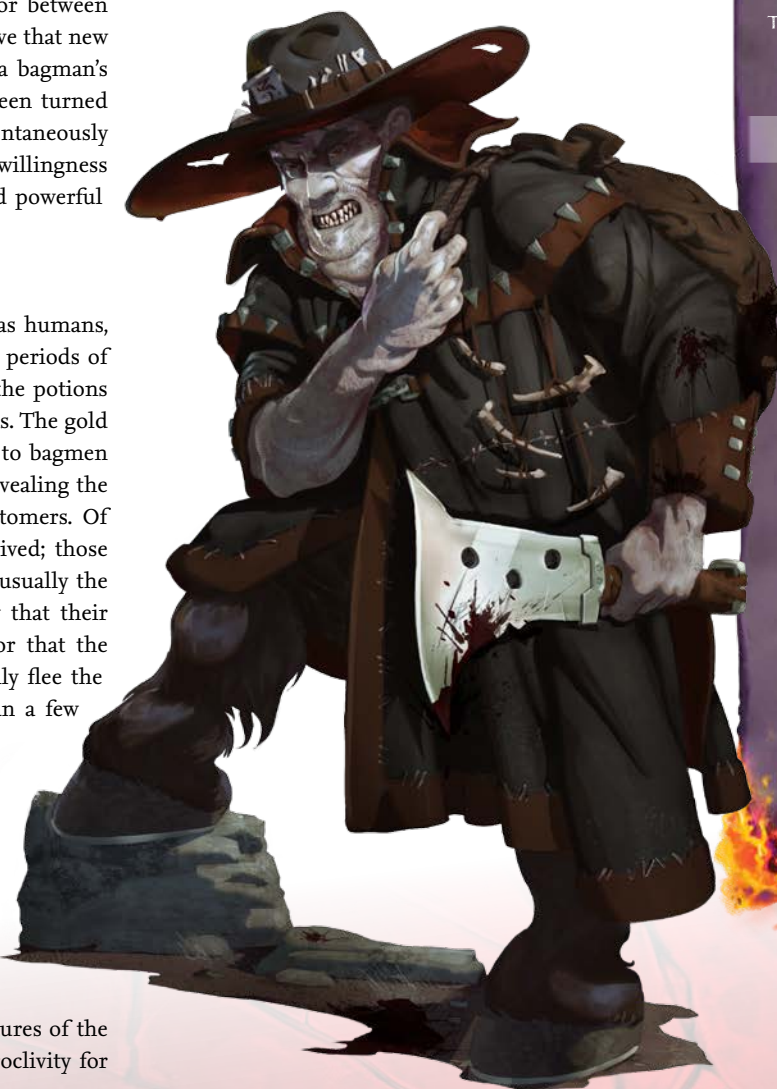
## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Bagmen are adept at disguising themselves as humans, and they use this ability to spend prolonged periods of time in human settlements. Here, they sell the potions they’ve produced using the fat of their victims. The gold they earn from these sales is less important to bagmen than the perverse pleasure they gain from revealing the nature of their wares to their horrified customers. Of course, customers’ disgust is usually short lived; those who discover a bagman’s terrible secret are usually the next ones into its bag. Bagmen who worry that their secret has spread throughout a populace, or that the public is suspicious of their activities, usually flee the area immediately. This has led to more than a few hastily abandoned merchant stalls, leaving the requisite authorities to eventually discover, to their horror, the true nature of the strange being who was once living and committing terrible crimes in their midst.

While bagmen primarily delight in horrifying customers, they don’t scorn the profits they garner. Indeed, bagmen are profligate spenders, and exploit their ability to pass for human to partake in all the pleasures of the flesh available in human cities. Bagmen’s proclivity for

gluttony often brings them into contact with cultists of Urgathoa, and alliances between bagmen and Urgathoans can be particularly fruitful. Bagmen provide potions and scouting services to Urgathoans at a steep discount, and in return they get to join the cultists in their dark feasts and rituals.

Associating with Urgathoans has other benefits for bagmen, as well. Those who are afflicted by plagues sometimes make pleas to the Pallid Princess, and bagmen are happy to answer those prayers, albeit for a price. Bagmen relish this chance to offer *potions of infernal healing*<sup>SWG</sup> or *potions of youthful appearance*<sup>UM</sup> as false cures; many potential victims see through the ruse immediately, but some of the most desperate fall for the bagmen’s lies. The unluckiest ones are even willing to give in to the bagmen’s demands, which may go so far as to include the lives of the afflicted person’s loved ones or children, taken by the person’s own hands at the bagman’s urging. Other times, bagmen simply request information about their customers’ families, and eventually use that information to terrible effect.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## LYTHIRIUM

*This wolflike creature's body is composed of thick vines, fine vegetation that almost resembles fur, and enormous thorns. Its eyes shine with a green glow, and prickly vines cover the immense, antlerlike growths on its head.*

### LYTHIRIUM

CR 11



XP 12,800

NG Large plant

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 136 (16d8+64)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**Immune** plant traits; **Resist** cold 10

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** gore +21 (2d8+9 plus rampant growth), bite +21 (2d8+9)

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

**Special Attacks** powerful charge (gore, 4d8+13), rampant growth

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +15)

Constant—*speak with plants*

At will—*detect evil*

3/day—*command plants* (DC 16)

1/day—*tree stride, wall of thorns*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 37

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (gore)

**Skills** Acrobatics +8 (+12 when jumping), Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +22, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +5, Survival +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics when jumping

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**SQ** thorny body, verdant glide

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** cold or temperate forests

**Organization** solitary, pair, or pack

**Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Rampant Growth (Ex)** A lythirium's antlers teem with constantly growing thorny vines that can entangle creatures and make them bleed. When a lythirium hits a creature with its gore attack, that creature is entangled for 1d4 rounds and takes 1d6 points of bleed damage. A successful DC 22 Reflex saving throw negates the entangled condition and reduces the bleed damage to 1d3 points. The save is Constitution-based.

**Thorny Body (Ex)** A creature that strikes a lythirium with a natural weapon or an unarmed strike takes 2d8 points of piercing damage and is exposed to the lythirium's rampant growth. A creature that successfully grapples a lythirium takes 2d8 points of damage and is exposed to its rampant growth at the start of the grapple each round it maintains the grapple.

**Verdant Glide (Ex)** A lythirium can move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at its normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. It ignores any magically manipulated overgrowth with thorns, briars, or other natural growth that would normally impede its motion.

Savage hunters of those who would harm their habitats, lythiriums prowl Golarion's densest forests, seeking to protect the wild, untouched natural growth they hold sacred. While they have lived on the Material Plane for millennia, lythiriums are actually descended from primordial beasts native to the First World—creatures that fused plant and animal so seamlessly they seemed both and neither simultaneously. Peering out of seedpod eyes that radiate a soft green glow, lythiriums have exceptionally keen senses; they are not shy about preserving their forests, and they deliver their warnings in rasping voices reminiscent of leaves blowing across the earth.

At its haunches, a lythirium measures 6 feet in height, with thorns, vines, and flowering blossoms inching ever higher. Its massive body is a matrix of vines, roots, and fine, furry moss and lichens. Immense branches shape its powerful chest and limbs. From thorny head to tail, a lythirium measures 9 feet in length; it can weigh as much as 900 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Scholars believe the first lythiriums wandered onto Golarion through a breach to the First World in the nation now known as Kyonin or through a long-healed breach in the Barrowood or Whisperwood in what is now Cheliax (though the latter is considered less likely). Lythiriums' First World progenitors are believed to have been even more massive than the beasts that exist today. Most posit that they had even stranger physical qualities than do Golarion's lythiriums, such as the ability to infuse victims of their gore attacks with various poisons or diseases. The folktales that tell of such creatures in the First World are ancient and contradictory indeed, but one detail never wavers: these creatures were always said to take the forms of antler-bearing wolves, and to have senses appropriate to such pack hunters, despite having features of both elks and plants. These tales have died out among modern peoples, though, leading scholars to believe that—for



whatever reason—lythiriums native to the First World no longer exist. However, the creatures' descendants live on in the densest forests of Golarion, patrolling their territories and acting as friends and allies to those who share their goals of keeping forests safe.

Perhaps owing to their odd origins on the First World, lythiriums have a strange physiology. Foliage and reedy roots intertwine to form the creatures' shape and size, and their central roots pump greenish, saplike fluid throughout their bodies. The small seedpods that constitute a lythirium's eyes are opaque, fluid-filled sacs that emit a greenish glow. These give the creatures sharp vision, even in the dimmest light. In extreme darkness, the pod-eyes extend outward from the sockets like antennae, and sense subtle vibrations in the air. This allows lythiriums to see even in total darkness.

Lythiriums survive by absorbing sunlight through their leaves and by scavenging the meat of animals that died naturally. However, despite their canine appearances, lythiriums don't hunt creatures for food, and kill only if they are attacked first.

### HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Considering their immense size, lythiriums are able to move swiftly through the underbrush and foliage of the forested regions they inhabit. Though their native habitats are full of thick, dense forest that would impede the movement of any other beast of a similarly bulky size, lythiriums' unique ability to pass through plants unhindered enables them to continue their unyielding hunts against those who would harm their homes. It also ensures that they can use their own nature-manipulating abilities without being negatively affected themselves.

When the season changes and temperatures drop, lythiriums' colors deepen to fiery red, burnt orange, and plum. Their leaves begin to fall as winter approaches, and lone lythiriums seek out caves or other sheltered places in which to hibernate during the winter, when they go dormant.

Perhaps driven by instincts their kind developed on the First

World, lythiriums often seek out wolf companions and sometimes even attempt to supplant an entire pack's hierarchy. Despite their peaceful nature, though, lythiriums are shunned by most wolf packs because of their disturbing appearance and pungent scent of earth and vegetation, which wolves tend to find both strange and unappealing.

Lythiriums are rare and seldom encounter others of their kind. When chance meetings occur, lythiriums bond quickly. Although they seek to dominate the few wolf packs that accept them, lythiriums are remarkably egalitarian when living among their own. They have a complex communication system ranging from barks and whines to growls and howls, all tinged with the sound of rustling leaves.

While in its territory, a lythirium assists good-aligned adventurers and creatures against evil foes when it sees

such fights break out. If adventurers approach a lythirium respectfully with news of threats against its territory, the creature does whatever is necessary to help end the menace. Lythiriums'

intelligence and protective nature make them useful confederates for good fey creatures, though they also usually consider elves and gnomes to be natural allies.

Though the dense terrain in which lythiriums live is enough to keep most intruders away, they constantly patrol their surroundings. A lythirium's vigilance grows if virtuous folk make their homes within its territory.

Many communities of forest-dwelling elves refer to lythiriums as vinewolves and usually welcome their presence when settling a new region, going as far as to hollow out dead, massive trees in the hope that lythiriums might hibernate nearby and protect them.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## MEDERACH

This towering spider has multifaceted, shining eyes, eight legs that are each tipped with silver, and massive mandibles.

### MEDERACH

CR 9



XP 6,400

CG Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, good)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., detect evil; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 9, flat-footed 23 (+14 natural, -1 size)

hp 114 (12d10+48)

Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +11

DR 10/evil; SR 20

#### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d8+5 plus poison), 2 claws +16 (1d6+5)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks poison, web (+11 ranged, DC 20, 12 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

Constant—detect evil

At will—plane shift (self only)

3/day—calm emotions (DC 16), glitterdust (DC 16)

1/day—break enchantment (DC 18), hold monster (DC 18)

#### STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 19

Base Atk +12; CMB +18; CMD 28

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+19 when jumping), Climb +28, Diplomacy +19, Heal +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +5

Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal

SQ change shape (Medium or Large animal only; *beast shape II*), peaceful intent, silver claws

#### ECOLOGY

Environment any (Elysium)

Organization solitary, pair, or team (3–6)

Treasure standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Peaceful Intent (Su)** A mederach seeks peaceful and nonviolent solutions to confrontation unless facing mindless undead or evil arachnids. For all other creatures, the DC of saving throws attempted against a mederach's *calm emotions* and *sanctuary* spell-like abilities increases by 2 (this increase is not included in the DCs listed above). A mederach can use its claws to deal nonlethal damage without taking a penalty on its attack rolls.

**Poison (Ex)** Bite—injury; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect daze; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Silver Claws (Ex)** Because of the coating on them, a mederach's claws count as both silver and good for purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Natives of Elysium, mederachs are the kind and good counterparts to the bebiliths that lurk in the Abyss and prey upon demonic flesh. Mederachs once spent all of their time on their home plane, serving as healers and teachers to the azatas, angels, titans, and others creatures alongside which they lived; among themselves, mederachs delighted in discussing the nuances of the honest virtues they held in such high esteem, including kindness, charity, and mercy.

As societies formed on the Material Plane, mederachs heard tales of mortals' changeable morality with interest and concern. Mortals, they came to believe, have souls that are inherently good, but that are also easily corrupted when exposed to prolonged suffering or extraplanar evil forces. During the Age of Darkness, mederachs heard of the various misfortunes and evils that had descended upon the lands of Golarion, including the falling of the *Starstone*, the collapse of major empires, and the rampages of the nascent demon lord Treerazer. Believing that these events would imperil the souls of all the world's mortals, mederachs began experimenting with plane-shifting; once they honed this ability, they began making regular forays to Golarion to aid good creatures in the fight against overwhelming evil. Now, in addition to embarking on these missions, mederachs also sometimes travel to the source of such evil plots—often the Abyss—and work on mortals' behalf there. However, no matter where their journeys take them, mederachs always keep in mind their belief that most evil can be redeemed, and so they seek to subdue their enemies and turn them toward good whenever possible instead of destroying them outright.

Mederachs are typically 10 feet tall and weigh about 2,000 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

On Elysium, mederachs still occasionally serve as teachers and mentors for their native neighbors. In recent millennia, however, they've spent their time at home honing their hunting skills, for their experiences working with virtuous partners on the Material Plane has taught them they must be skilled hunters and combatants if they wish to effectively fight evil. They find plenty of creatures on Elysium willing to participate as the prey in mock hunts. Mederachs rarely remain in Elysium for extended periods, preferring to put their skills to use on the Material Plane or even in the Abyss once they feel comfortable doing so.

To their credit, mederachs use peaceful methods to subdue their targets whenever they can. However, they have an instinctive, burning hatred for evil arachnid creatures, reserving the greatest enmity for bebiliths, whose malevolence mederachs believe is a mockery of the good they themselves try so ardently to accomplish.



They also have no qualms about destroying unintelligent evil creatures, especially mindless undead, reasoning that these monsters serve as mere shells for the forces of evil and deserve no quarter.

Mederachs hunt like typical web-spinning spiders, leaving a nigh-invisible web in the path of potential targets. They often elect to deal nonlethal damage to foes they think they can reach through dialog. During combat with such foes, they relate grand tales of supposedly irredeemable tyrants who saw the error of their ways and became benign rulers.

Mederachs acquired the ability to change their appearance, which they use when they travel among those who might fear their true forms, or who might mistake them for evil bebiliths. Although they can change shape into many types of animals, they tend to choose familiar forms, such as horses with golden manes or riding dogs with golden coats. Their arachnid nature subtly manifests while they're in alternate forms, usually represented by eight toes on each paw, or scarlet dots on their heads representing extra eyes.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

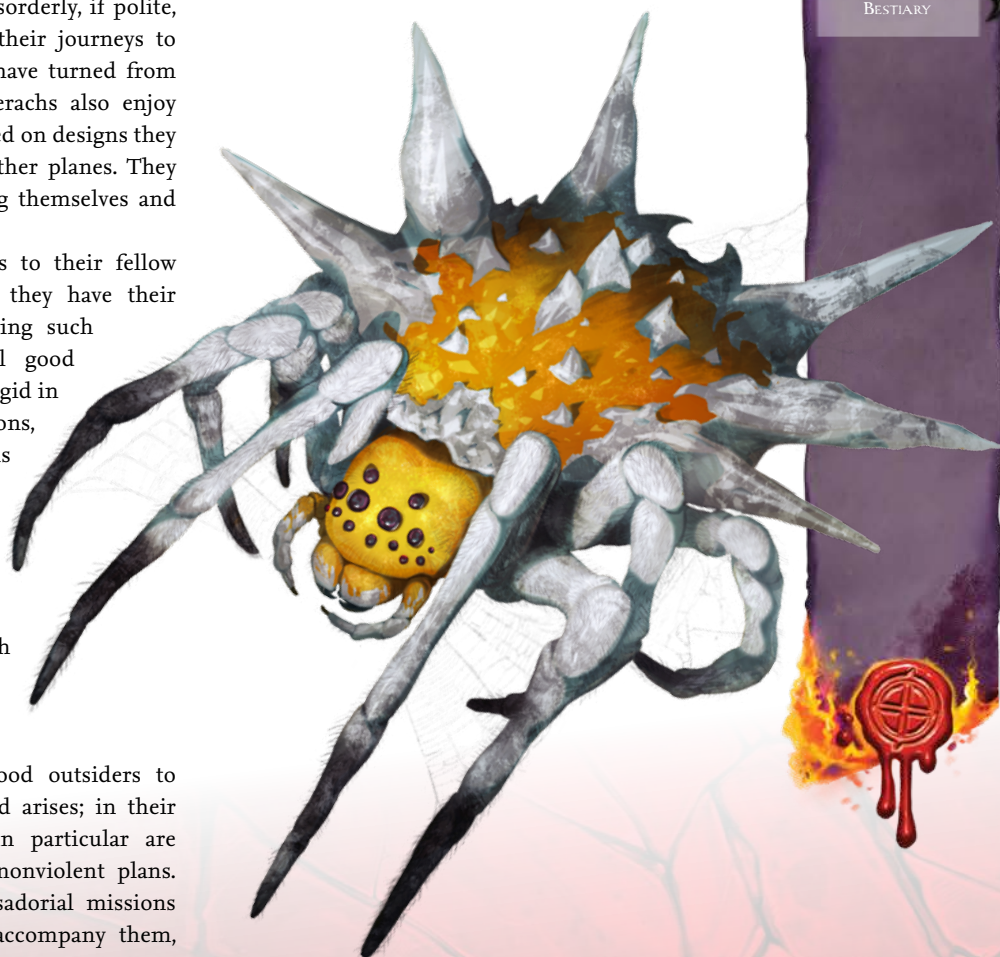
Around others of their kind, mederachs are especially conversational and friendly; a convening of mederachs is often a talkative and somewhat disorderly, if polite, affair. They enjoy relating tales of their journeys to other planes and of creatures they have turned from evil or, regrettably, destroyed. Mederachs also enjoy discussing intricate web patterns based on designs they have witnessed in the stars or on other planes. They establish no formal hierarchy among themselves and regard each other as equals.

Mederachs' egalitarianism extends to their fellow good-aligned outsiders. Of course, they have their own biases and preferences regarding such creatures. They view many lawful good outsiders, especially archons, as too rigid in their pursuit of righteousness. Archons, on the other hand, view mederachs as powerful but overly idealistic and optimistic fighters. The lawful good celestials still seek alliances with mederachs, however, when doing so would benefit their plans. Mederachs are usually open to such offers, but these collaborations tend to dissolve quickly once the creatures achieve their mutual goal.

Mederachs find many neutral good outsiders to be eminently helpful when the need arises; in their own pursuit of good, agathions in particular are open to assisting mederachs with nonviolent plans. When agathions embark on ambassadorial missions to other planes, mederachs often accompany them,

both to further their own schemes and to cement the friendships they often have with their allies. Mederachs also frequently work with angels, although when they do, it usually involves the angels intimidating the powerful evil creatures mederachs hope to turn to good. Of course, their angel allies tend to have their own inscrutable aims in mind when they go along with mederachs' plans, which can sometimes lead to minor discord between the celestials.

Of all the other good outsiders, mederachs have the most in common with azatas, who are also natives of Elysium. While azatas can be aimless in their pursuit of championing good wherever they tread, mederachs are more focused architects of such plans, and so the two make excellent partners in many situations. In such relationships, the strong-willed azatas may insist on taking the lead when carrying out plans or suddenly change their minds about the best ways to achieve the partnership's collective goals. Yet they are surprisingly willing to admit their errors in judgment or personality flaws, leading to friendships and partnerships that rarely truly sour despite minor setbacks. Beyond threatening one of their own, the best way to truly rile mederachs is to harm their azata companions.



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART I:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY





## WALDGEIST

An expression of intense malevolence crosses the face of this small, insubstantial spirit, which looks unsettlingly like that of a gnome.

### WALDGEIST

CR 8



XP 4,800

NE Small undead (incorporeal)

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 21, flat-footed 16 (+5 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 104 (11d8+55)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits;  
**SR** 19

**Weaknesses** compelling knock, nature dependent

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** incorporeal touch +15 (6d8 negative energy plus lignify)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +13)3/day—*entangle* (DC 16)1/day—*plant growth*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved  
Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (touch)

**Skills** Fly +21, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (nature) +12,  
Perception +19, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +17

**Languages** Common, Gnome, Sylvan**SQ** possess tree

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any forests**Organization** solitary**Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Compelling Knock (Su)** A waldgeist is preternaturally drawn to the sound of knocking on wood. If a waldgeist is within 15 feet of a creature that knocks on a wooden object (for example, a tree or an item primarily made of wood, such as a wooden shield), it must succeed at a DC 20 Will saving throw or it is compelled to move toward the creature for as long as the knocking persists. While the waldgeist is moving toward the knocking creature, each time the waldgeist is attacked or is the target of a harmful effect, it receives a new saving throw. Once it is adjacent to the knocking creature, the waldgeist can act freely. Whether it succeeds at or fails its initial Will saving throw, a waldgeist is immune to that creature's knocking for 24 hours. Knocking on wood can draw a waldgeist out of a possessed tree, but not more than 50 feet from the edge of a forest or other large, wooded area.

**Lignify (Su)** When a waldgeist deals damage to a living non-plant creature with its incorporeal touch, it also deals

1d4 points of Dexterity damage as it begins to transform the target to wood. A creature reduced to 0 Dexterity in this way is permanently transformed into a nonmagical tree, as per the *flesh to stone* spell, but the wooden creature has hardness 5 and vulnerability to fire. In addition to *stone to flesh*, a *restoration* spell can reverse this effect.

**Nature Dependent (Su)** A waldgeist cannot travel more than 50 feet from the edge of a forest or other large, wooded area. A waldgeist that is forced outside of this boundary is instantly destroyed. A waldgeist receives a +4 racial bonus on saving throws to resist teleportation or other effects that would force it outside of its forest.

**Possess Tree (Su)** Once per minute as a standard action, a waldgeist can possess a Large or smaller nonmagical tree and animate it as if using *animate objects*, except the waldgeist merges with and controls the tree. The waldgeist cannot speak, move, or use its own attacks or special abilities while possessing the tree. When the tree is destroyed, or when the waldgeist ends the possession as a free action that provokes attacks of opportunity, the waldgeist appears in a square of its choice adjacent to the tree. (See page 91 for an example of a tree animated in this way.)

A waldgeist arises when a gnome who was a woodlands dweller or who had a deep spiritual connection with such an area dies while in a large forest. The gnome's spirit is twisted and bound to the trees, infused with hatred of living intruders and a need to protect the area that sustains it. A waldgeist appears as a translucent gnome-like figure surrounded by a faint, green glow, its facial features full of anger and malice.

Waldgeists become incredibly violent when faced with creatures that intrude upon their homes or that they see as threats. In combat, waldgeists attack using the forest itself, entwining despoilers' legs with roots and vines, and animating nearby trees to smash intruders with thick branches. A waldgeist is typically 3-1/2 feet tall.

## ECOLOGY

Gnomes who exult in woodland life are often just as fascinated with new and exciting experiences within their demesnes as others of their kind. Unfortunately, given the dangers inherent in many primeval forests, such an outlook can be dangerous. When a woodland gnome's fanciful tree-climbing expeditions or unprepared sylvan explorations lead to disaster, sometimes her soul becomes heavy with melancholy and bitterness, and she arises again as a waldgeist. If a gnome's death can be blamed on an intruder—perhaps she was tracking an interloper when her fatal accident occurred—this undead fate is nearly assured.

Though animated by negative energy, a waldgeist must constantly remain within its forest home to maintain



its form. To a waldgeist, nothing exists outside of the forest in which it died. If it is somehow transported away from a wooded environment, it completely disintegrates with an anguished howl. A waldgeist's connection to the forest grants the spirit a measure of power over its surroundings, including the ability to possess trees and bring to them a measure of life.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Because of the highly specific circumstances required for their formation, waldgeists are rare and found only in large, old-growth forests, where the trees grow tall enough to block out the sun. Even more rarely, a tragedy of unthinkable proportions happens to a group of gnomes, and multiple waldgeists arise simultaneously. When this happens, the spirits often drift away from one another to haunt separate areas of the forest. Waldgeists are solitary creatures, hiding their presences from the other creatures of the woods, especially fey such as dryads. Although both creatures exhibit a certain protective possessiveness over nature, dryads see the undead waldgeists' capacity for violence as terribly brutish.

While waldgeists tend to shun forest natives, they hate and hunt down creatures they see as intruders in their woods. In reality, such individuals might be innocent travelers simply passing through the forest, or they may be loggers who pose a legitimate threat to the natural surroundings. To waldgeists, such distinctions are nonexistent; they view any creatures not native to their homes as enemies. In battle, waldgeists are cunning. If a waldgeist faces a group of enemies, it tends to use its magic to enhance the surrounding foliage, entangling creatures with the plants that heed its call. While its enemies are distracted, the waldgeist then possesses the nearest tree and uses its branches to wreak havoc on any within its reach.

Luckily for most adventurers, though, these wicked creatures can be easily distracted. Waldgeists are attracted to sound of knocking on wood, as it reminds them of the possibilities of interesting visitors, opening doors, or other things that once intrigued them in life. A waldgeist that fails to resist the temptation of this noise ceases its current actions in order to "greet" the knocker, even going as far as abandoning the tree it had been possessing. Usually, this allows the other individual whom the waldgeist was previously harassing a chance to escape. In rural communities near forests haunted by

waldgeists, the practice of knocking on wood for luck arises from ancient tales of waldgeist encounters.

## POSSESSED TREES

The following is an example of a possessed tree under the control of a waldgeist. For more information, see the text of the *animate objects* spell.

POSSESSED TREE	CR 5
N Large construct	
<b>Init</b> -1; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 14, touch 8, flat-footed 14 (-1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)	
<b>hp</b> 52 (4d10+30)	
<b>Fort</b> +1, <b>Ref</b> +0, <b>Will</b> -4	
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> hardness 5; <b>Immune</b> construct traits	
<b>Weaknesses</b> vulnerable to fire	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 0 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> 2 slams +9 (2d6+6 plus grab)	
<b>Space</b> 10 ft.; <b>Reach</b> 15 ft.	
<b>Special Attacks</b> constrict (2d6+6)	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
<b>Str</b> 22, <b>Dex</b> 8, <b>Con</b> —, <b>Int</b> —, <b>Wis</b> 1, <b>Cha</b> 1	
<b>Base Atk</b> +4; <b>CMB</b> +11; <b>CMD</b> 20	
<b>SQ</b> construction points (additional attack, grab, constrict)	



## THE INFERNO GATE

FOREWORD

PART 1:  
CITY OF  
HELLSPAWN

PART 2:  
RITUAL  
PREPARATIONS

PART 3:  
THE DEVIL'S  
GATE

NPC GALLERY

MEET THE VILLAIN:  
EMIL KOVKORIN

ROADS TO HELL

MOLOCH,  
THE ASHEN BULL

PATHFINDER'S  
JOURNAL

BESTIARY



## NEXT MONTH

## FOR QUEEN &amp; EMPIRE

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

To address the threat of the Glorious Reclamation, Queen Abrogail II summons her Thrune agents to the city of Egorian, where the nefarious adventurers soon find themselves swept up in the cutthroat politics of the imperial court. To impress the queen, the wicked characters must scour Egorian to eradicate the Bellflower Network, a secret organization that works to free halfling slaves. And to truly earn Queen Abrogail's trust, the villains must perform a sacrifice to renew House Thrune's contract with Hell. But there are many—both within the court and without—who wish to see the queen dethroned.

## EGORIAN

By Dave Gross

Explore Egorian, the City of Thorns, seat of power of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune. Find out how this simple fishing village became the bustling capital of the Empire of Cheliah and learn more about its inhabitants, society, and sites of interest.

## THE BELLFLOWER NETWORK

By Crystal Frasier

Find out more about the Bellflower Network, the secret society dedicated to freeing Cheliah's halfling slaves, including its organization and clandestine operations.

## AND MORE!

Face down fire-wielding foes in the Anferita Wood in the *Pathfinder's Journal*, by Josh Vogt! Plus, an exciting selection of all-new monsters in the *Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path* bestiary.

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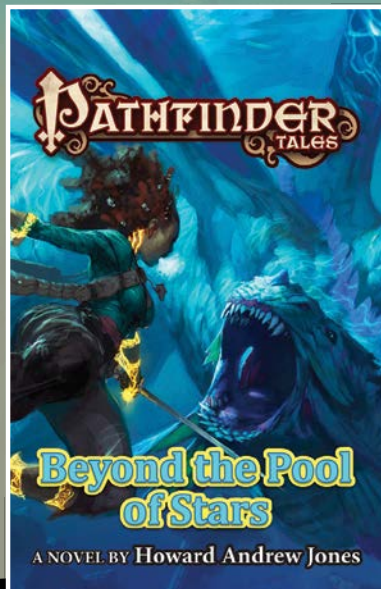


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## Bone Devil

Most plentiful in Stygia, osyluths serve as tireless inquisitors. They are skilled torturers and excel at upholding Hell's laws, but beware their way of subtly twisting words should you call upon them. Osyluths recall everything, and show no loyalty to mortals.

## Lillend

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