

PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH[™]



IRONFANG  INVASION

FANGS OF WAR

by Ron Lundeen

SOUTHERN NIRMATHAS AND IRONFANG TERRITORIES



Radya's Hollow

Redburrow

LONGSHADOW

Ecrú

MARIDETH RIVER

DEEPCUT RIVER

PHAENDAR

Cavlinor

Emberville

Platter Township

Kraggodan

Gillet

Bluestone

MOLTHUNE

Buttermilk Creek

Oxbow

Valor

= Ironfang Legion Territory

PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH

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ON THE COVER



Trolls haunt the shattered remains of Fort Nunder, threatening to crush any heroes who investigate the fortress's sudden silence in this stunning cover art by Remko Troost.



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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.

Advanced Class Guide
Advanced Player's Guide
Monster Codex
Occult Adventures

ACG
APG
MC
OA

Ultimate Combat
Ultimate Equipment
Ultimate Magic

UC
UE
UM



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THE RIGHT TO BEAR BEARS

Early in the pitch process for Ironfang Invasion, Editor-in-Chief Wes Schneider laid out a mandate: we need an Adventure Path where players never leave their animal companions behind.

We've all been there. The paladin with her faithful horse, the ranger with his trusty wolf, the druid saddled with a codependent tyrannosaur. All of them feel like they leave a part of their classes behind when the adventure takes a left turn into city limits, or marches down a flight of stairs into a human-sized dungeon. While not every dungeon in Ironfang Invasion is dinosaur-sized, we've tried to make sure more than a few are, and that any settlements you visit along the way fall well within the "whatever" end of the animal-control spectrum. Nowhere in this Adventure Path is that more true than in *Fangs of War*, the most wilderness-y of our wilderness Adventure Path! There are still a few places where your horse or ape (ah yes, the famous Fangwood mossback) will have to squeeze to get by, but we've left plenty of open wilderness encounters, large courtyards, and oversized architecture for you *and* your pets to explore.

Given that Lini, Feiya, and Adowyn serve as our iconic adventurers for this adventure, it should come as no surprise that the Paizo team are big fans of Marc Singer's 1982 classic *The Beastmaster* (and, of course, its sequels, *Beastmaster 2: Through the Portal of Time* and *Beastmaster 3: The Eye of Braxus*, which in no way drives James Jacobs to rant). Developer Adam Daigle rolls with a druid and his faithful pet scorpion, Selcis, while Developer Amanda Hamon-Kunz's sorcerer would fall apart without her beloved companion, Stanley the Sneaky Snake. Project Manager Jessica Price (who has a real-life cat familiar that carries out her dark will) spins loving tales of her rogue's animal-companion-by-proxy, Furball. And Creative Director James Jacobs makes no effort to conceal his (completely justified) love for dinosaur tagalongs of all kinds. That's why there are so many ways to get an animal companion or a familiar.

Animal allies are fun and help refine characters' identities, giving them a constant friend and sidekick, but each one essentially becomes a new character added to the party, potentially unbalancing encounters or slowing down combat. GMs should look at the party composition

and potentially adjust challenges if animal companions start to make encounters too easy. You could give enemies animal companions of their own, or options to ward off animals (such as the noxious aromatic or *instant muzzle* from pages 13 and 27, respectively, of *Pathfinder Player Companion: Animal Archive* or spells like *charm animal*, *hide from animals*, or *hold animal*). Giving every enemy an instant counter to a major class feature can feel a bit like every enemy suddenly becoming immune to longswords, so use these options with discretion.

Remember that animals aren't extensions of their masters, and even the best-trained animals are reluctant to rush into combat with unnatural abominations (and training them to attack anything beyond humanoids, monstrous humanoids, and animals requires two tricks). Directing an animal to do anything but continue its current action requires a move action, pushing an animal to do a complex task or a trick it doesn't know requires a full-round action, and any injuries increase Handle Animal skill check DCs by 2. If the volume of animals starts to slow combat too much, consider making animal companions assistants rather than independent characters, simply rolling aid another checks each round to improve their masters' ACs or attack rolls. This option removes some of the versatility and appeal of the class feature but greatly speeds up combat, so it may be best to use it sparingly, rotate which animal companions act as assistants in any given fight, or simply present it as a faster option for players to use as they please.

NONANIMAL ALLIES

In "Trail of the Hunted," the PCs assembled a crew of NPC followers to help them survive in the wilderness, and those humble souls shouldn't be forgotten as they push on to new adventures. Each NPC kept alive represents effort on the PCs' part, and they should reap some small benefit from that effort.

Aubrin the Green: Aubrin is knowledgeable and patient, but age has tamed her youthful adventuring instincts. She recognizes that as the PCs leap into danger, someone should remain to protect and heal the Phaendar refugees. She happily aids the PCs when she can, offering advice and spellcasting. Aubrin defers to the PCs' leadership decisions—though she's always happy to offer an "I-told-you-so" when things go belly-up.

Jet: Wandering and surviving off the land is nothing new to Jet, and she remains resourceful and strict but personable. While some refugees find her attitude grating, most everyone still enjoys the stories she tells around the fire as she cooks.

Rhyna: Rhyna still projects a face of optimism, but she blames herself for the death of her friend and mentor, the priest Noelan. Her faith wavers; with some counseling from friends, though, she may regain it and blossom into a true cleric.

MEANWHILE, ON THE FRONT...

The first two volumes of the Ironfang Invasion Adventure Path are hyper-focused on a small area—the southernmost tip of the Fangwood Forest—but while the PCs struggle to survive in the woods, the Ironfang Legion continues its march across Nirmathas. Using Phaendar as a central hub, Ironfang troops launch raids against communities and pockets of defenders across the Nesmian Plains. By the time "Fangs of War" begins, Azaersi's forces control all of Nirmathas between the Marideth and Deepcut rivers, and forays further south easily overwhelm whatever resistance they encounter—both Nirmathi natives and Molthuni soldiers hoping to take the same land. For the Legion's northern offensive, Azaersi places command in the hands of the minotaur Kosseruk (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #117: Assault on Longshadow*), and Ironfang forces continue the steady march of conquest. From Phaendar, Ironfang troops maintain control over the Marideth River and the Tamran Highway connecting western Nirmathas to reinforcements to the east, and handily defeat the first exploratory militia force assembled by Tamran to investigate the rumors of monster activity in the west.

General Azaersi's interest in the Fangwood—at least for now—is limited. The disciplined hobgoblins see the fey-choked wilderness as more of a hazard to avoid than a resource to be controlled, and the forces dispatched to subdue the Chernasardo Rangers exemplify this. Rather than expend valuable resources, Azaersi assembles a fighting force of mercenaries, outcasts, and her own washouts to hold the alien landscape. For now, the PCs' actions within the wood remain nothing to the Ironfang forces but myth and legend from an uncivilized wilderness.

Smith Kining: Never a generous soul, the dwarven smith lost few friends in the invasion, but regrets the loss of her shop. She takes to hoarding resources and trading her services for additional supplies with other refugees.

Vane Orel: Once things settle down, Phaendar's former apothecary hopes to contribute what he can, but losing his family's shop shakes him. Busying himself with work helps keep his mind off the lost legacy, and he becomes a little obsessive, working late into the night.

Crystal

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TEFANGS OF OFE HUWARD

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PART 1: NIGHT OF THE IRON FANGS

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PART 3: CRACKERS OF STONE UNDER

PART 4: CAMP OF THE RED JAW NPC GALLERY NPC GALLERY THE CHERNASARDO PLAINS RANGERS

IRONFANG LEGION BATTLE TOOLBOX

BESTIARY BESTIARY

IRONFANG CAMPAIGN OUTLINE



FANGS OF WAR

PART 1: EXPLORING THE FANGWOOD

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To secure the area around their hideout and make contact with the elusive Chernasardo Rangers, the PCs investigate the Southern Fangwood and learn the location of Fort Ristin.

PART 2: REVEL AT RISTIN

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The PCs discover that a group of fey have moved into the devastated Fort Ristin and now hold a grisly celebration. By rescuing a Chernasardo Ranger named Cirieo, they learn the location of forts Nunder and Trevalay.

PART 3: SECRETS OF FORT NUNDER

30

In the remains of Fort Nunder, the PCs confront the Ironfang Legion's troll mercenaries—now exiled for insubordination—and explore the fort's well-protected underground vault.

PART 4: THE GORGE

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The PCs assault Fort Trevalay, a fortress built on a stone pillar within a deep gorge. The black dragon Ibzairiak and his hobgoblin minions occupy the fort, and the PCs must defeat them to free the remaining Rangers.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Fangs of War" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

5

The PCs begin this adventure at 5th level.

6

The PCs should reach 6th level during their exploration of Fort Ristin.

7

The PCs should be 7th level before entering the tower in Fort Trevalay.

The PCs should reach 8th level by the adventure's conclusion.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Many Nirmathi fight Molthuni invaders with skirmish tactics, but few are as consistently successful as the Chernasardo Rangers. This tight-knit group of freedom fighters patrols the southwestern portion of the Fangwood, taking its name from the region called the Chernasardo. The Chernasardo Rangers are highly mobile, self-sufficient, and elusive, but maintain three hidden fortresses where they exchange information, resupply, and unwind. Although the Rangers are rarely seen outside the Fangwood—as they don't abandon their skirmishes against Molthuni intruders for long—word of their vigilant defense of the forest has traveled far and wide.

When Azaersi planned her invasion of Nirmathas, centered as it was around the Southern Fangwood, she knew that she needed to eliminate the Chernasardo Rangers. To this end, Azaersi commissioned two violent natives of the forest—a feral hobgoblin druid named Jang and the malicious black dragon Ibzairiak—to lead a contingent of hobgoblins and trolls against the Rangers. Jang knew many of the forest's secrets, including the locations of the hidden Ranger forts, while Ibzairiak the Scar-Maker had earned a terrifying reputation for cunning and brutality along Nirmathas's eastern coastline. Azaersi used the *Onyx Key* to position several squads deep in the Fangwood under Ibzairiak's command without the Chernasardo Rangers' knowledge.

Ibzairiak and Jang did not let Azaersi down. They quickly overran the Rangers' most defensible stronghold, Fort Trevalay, with a surprise attack that left the freedom fighters reeling. Destructive attacks against the two other major strongholds—Fort Nunder and Fort Ristin—occurred before the Rangers could regroup. The Chernasardo Rangers trained to fight against organized human soldiers, and were caught off guard by the sudden assault of a dragon and a druid using their powers to subvert the Rangers' beloved forest and wield it against them. After demolishing the other two forts, Ibzairiak and Jang retreated to Fort Trevalay, ordering their hobgoblins to find and eliminate the remaining Rangers on the run throughout the Southern Fangwood.

The Ironfang Legion posted token forces at the ruins of Fort Ristin, and left Fort Nunder in the care of their overzealous troll mercenaries as punishment after they destroyed much of the structure. At Fort Ristin, a family of brutal fey noticed the carnage and compromised defenses, and decided to take over the ruined fort to hold a gruesome festival. At Fort Nunder, the bitter trolls sulk and plot revenge against their former masters.

Although the refugees from Phaendar seek aid from the Chernasardo Rangers, this assistance is not available. In fact, if the Ironfang Legion's forces in the Southern Fangwood aren't defeated, there may be no Rangers left to defend the forest at all!

PART 1: EXPLORING THE FANGWOOD

As “Fangs of War” begins, the PCs should be settled in at the hideout they established for the Phaendar refugees in “Trail of the Hunted.” Although the PCs defeated their immediate pursuers and made a temporary haven, they have little time to rest. Scouting reports from Phaendar reveal that—contrary to the usual hit-and-run behavior of raids so common in the Molthuni conflict—the hobgoblins are rebuilding the town into a fortress, and new hobgoblins are arriving by the hundreds. Isolated, the PCs find themselves in desperate need of allies in what looks to be the first stages of a very long war. Not only do the PCs need to spread the word about the threat posed by the Ironfang Legion, but they need more information about the Fangwood itself as the hobgoblin presence grows.

Clearing the Forest: Exploring the area around the troglodyte caves is a straightforward, if time-consuming, endeavor. The Fangwood is a dense, hilly forest with hidden gullies and fast-moving streams. If the PCs don't think to explore and secure the area around the caves on their own, the owlbear attack (see area A) compels the refugees to plead with the PCs to ensure the area is safe. While the PCs can explore nearby areas with quick trips, returning to the caves to rest, they soon find clues that encourage a wider search. The map on page 7 shows the Southern Fangwood region.

Learning about the Legion: If the PCs have any method of contacting allies outside of the Fangwood, or if they elect to send scouts on multiday journeys to investigate the area, they learn that the Ironfang Legion is spreading throughout the Nesmian Plains but has sent only a few small groups north of the river, all primarily focused on controlling the Tamran Highway—the primary artery connecting eastern and western Nirmathas. This means that the PCs, with some luck and assistance, might be able to defeat the Ironfang Legion forces remaining in the Fangwood.

Seeking Allies: Depending on their backgrounds (especially PCs with the Chernasardo Hopeful or Foxclaw Scout campaign traits—see the *Ironfang Invasion Player's Guide*), some PCs are likely already aware of the Chernasardo Rangers and their exploits. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check identifies the Chernasardo Rangers as a network of hunters and freedom fighters patrolling the Southern Fangwood. The Rangers keep the Fangwood clear of Molthuni intrusion and protect the few communities near the forest—such as Phaendar—from the forest's dangerous denizens. The refugees suggest finding the Chernasardo Rangers if the PCs don't think to do so themselves.

Specific information about the Chernasardo Rangers is virtually unknown outside of their ranks, as they conceal their movements and hideouts to discourage

FANGS OF WAR

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NPC GALLERY

THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

HOME SWEET HOME

Over the course of “Trail of the Hunted,” the PCs spent a good deal of time protecting a small band of refugees who escaped alongside them from the doomed town of Phaendar. While the events of the previous adventure left the refugees with a secure (albeit temporary) home and “Fangs of War” includes few events directly revolving around this merry band, you shouldn’t let these characters fade entirely into the background. The PCs risked life and limb to protect those they could, and should find some benefit from all their hard work. The cavern camp of Misthome serves as something of a hometown as the PCs continue with their adventures, and many of Phaendar’s artisans are able to resume their old trades and provide basic goods ranging from weapons and armor to alchemical goods and magic potions. As in the first adventure, the PCs can still assign various tasks to NPCs, letting them continue to hunt or scout out any area where they intend to adventure so they don’t go in blind. The fate of some of Misthome’s populace might also provide the PCs with motivations to continue exploring: for example, one or two members of a scouting expedition the PCs dispatch might be captured by the fey of Fort Ristin or find themselves trapped in the vault of Fort Nunder after fleeing the trolls.

Despite its temporary nature, Misthome still acts as a settlement, capable of attracting trade and where the PCs can buy and sell items (especially via the svirfneblin merchant Novvi; see page 46 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #115: Trail of the Hunted*). Misthome’s population and notable residents may vary greatly based on the events that take place during “Trail of the Hunted.”

MISTHOME

CG hamlet

Corruption -2; **Crime** -2; **Economy** -2; **Law** -3; **Lore** -4; **Society** +3

Qualities insular; **Danger** -5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population varies

NOTABLE NPCs

Aubrin the Green (CG female human cleric of Cayden Cailean 3/ranger 3)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,000 gp;
Spellcasting 2nd

Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** —; **Major Items** —

She explains that the Rangers are active all throughout the Southern Fangwood, that they wear distinctive ponchos of gray and green, and that they maintain three hidden bases in the Southern Fangwood. In the event Aubrin did not survive “Trail of the Hunted,” the PCs can learn this information from another NPC (such as the hunters Lirosa and Taidel) or recall it with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nature) check. If the result of a PC’s Knowledge check is 25 or higher, that PC recalls the names of the three hidden Chernasardo forts: Fort Nunder, Fort Ristin, and Fort Trevalay. Aubrin trained briefly at Fort Nunder, but is hesitant to guide all of the refugees through the forest to its secure location until the PCs can secure the area and ensure they won’t be tracked. She is ignorant of the other two fortresses’ locations.

Finding a New Home: The Southern Fangwood has no good natural location to harbor the refugees other than temporarily at the troglodyte caves, and these caverns—though secure—offer few resources for the refugees to establish any industry or farm. The PCs likely realize that a Chernasardo Ranger fort offers a much more defensible, permanent haven. As the PCs will learn, Fort Nunder and Fort Ristin have both been badly damaged, but Fort Trevalay is mostly intact and very defensible.

SOUTHERN FANGWOOD LOCATIONS

The map of the Southern Fangwood is marked with the locations described below. None of these areas are hidden or especially difficult to find; the PCs likely notice them just by traveling nearby. In some cases, this is because the location includes features that can be spotted at a distance (such as the charred trees in area E) or even cry for help (such as the trapped logger in area B), but in other cases, creatures in that area wander a bit and could come across—or perhaps even ambush—the PCs. Feel free to adjust or even relocate these encounters to fit your group’s travels and adventures.

A. OWLBEAR ATTACK (CR 6)

On the PCs’ first expedition out of the gully, they hear the crash of splintering wood and human-like screaming echoing through the Fangwood. These screams come from terrified rabbits, whose nearby home is being uprooted by a newly arrived predator.

Creatures: The two newly arrived owlbears are intent on unearthing an extensive rabbit warren they have discovered and take a -4 penalty on Perception checks to notice the PCs. As soon as the owlbears notice larger prey, they forget the rabbits and attack.

The arrival of these owlbears is not merely unlucky coincidence; the juvenile treant Longfrond (see area G) lured the owlbears into this area. Longfrond noticed the increased activity at the gully, and assumes that the refugees—whom she only spotted from a distance—are

Molthuni counterattacks. The guide Aubrin (see “Trail of the Hunted”) knows much about the Chernasardo Rangers, having briefly served with the group.

GHERNASARDO



FANGS OF WAR

FO WORD

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aiding the humanoid pillaging the Fangwood north of her domain. Longfrond guided the dangerous owlbeats to the area to eliminate the “new troglodytes,” assuming the massive beasts would soon discover the cave and attack. The PCs can clear up Longfrond’s mistaken assumption (or eliminate the treant for good) in area G.

OWLBEARS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 47 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 224)

Development: If the PCs do nothing about the owlbeats, the creatures eventually catch the scent of the refugees in the gully. The following dawn, the owlbeats rush down the gully and into the caves. If the PCs are present when the owlbeats attack, the refugees plead with the PCs to slay the owlbeats; otherwise, 2d4 refugees perish driving the owlbeats away and the PCs hear of the attack when they return.

Longfrond guides two more owlbeats to this area 1 week after the first pair is defeated. This time, however, Longfrond guides the owlbeats personally and inadvertently leaves a trail back to her glen. After this second attack, a successful DC 12 Survival check identifies the tracks of a large treelike creature leading back to area G. Longfrond thereafter continues to bring 1d3 owlbeats each week until the PCs confront her in area G or she has sent a total of 8 owlbeats.

B. TRAPPED LOGGER (CR 5)

Several large, felled trees litter the ground here, each cleanly cut and shorn of its branches.

This area is part of a logging expedition run by an Erages merchant, and the site of a recent attack by Ironfang soldiers from the north. When the PCs arrive in the clearing, an elf high atop a lone lodgepole pine shouts down to them, his voice cracked and hoarse: “Halloo! I need some help up here!”

Creature: The elf stuck in the tree is a desperate lumberjack named Vardalel Prennder. A few days ago, Vardalel’s team caught sight of a band of hobgoblins and fled the site, abandoning the elf high in the tree he was climbing. Vardalel tried to descend, but slipped, jammed his hand, and broke his wrist. Fortunately, the hobgoblins never noticed him high above, but the lumberjack is stuck and can’t get down. At this point, he has taken 5 points of nonlethal damage from thirst and is fatigued as a result.

The elf began to think he would die up in the tree and has been calling out to anyone nearby for aid. He pleads with the PCs to help him, explaining that he needs assistance to get down; his left wrist is broken and unusable. Vardalel is 60 feet above the ground amid a few scraggly branches of the narrow pine tree, and ascending or descending the tree requires a successful DC 15 Climb check. The tree

once grew even higher, but Vardalel felled the top of the tree shortly before his accident.

VARDALEL PRENNER CR 1/2

XP 200

N male old sailor (*Pathfinder NPC Codex* 260)

hp 11 (currently 5 points of nonlethal damage)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +8 (currently -2), Craft (carpentry) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +6, Perform (string instruments) +3, Profession (woodcutter) +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Survival +4, Swim +8

Trap: Vardalel doesn't realize the trunk beneath him has cracked on the inside; it snaps if more weight is added to the top 10 feet of the tree (such as someone climbing up to help free the elf). This weakened tree functions as a trap, dropping everyone atop the tree (including Vardalel) to the ground below. A successful Knowledge (nature) check can be used instead of a Perception check to identify this danger.

COLLAPSING TREE TRAP

CR 5

XP 1,600

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect 60-ft. fall (6d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in top 10 feet of tree); the treetop then falls upon a random target within 30 feet of the tree's base (Atk +5 ranged, 3d8 damage).

Treasure: Three human Chernasardo Rangers—dressed in gray-and-green ponchos now stained with blood—lie dead in the nearby dell. Although the Rangers have been stripped of most of their gear, the hobgoblin ambushers overlooked six +1 *merciful arrows* and a *potion of protection from arrows* on one of the bodies. The PCs find this ambush site automatically if Vardalel points it out to them; otherwise, a successful DC 23 Perception check is necessary to discover it.

Development: If rescued, Vardalel can tell the story of how his comrades abandoned him, and what he witnessed over the past few days from his high vantage point. He saw several groups of hobgoblins (in squads of four) patrolling the area, although he isn't sure he didn't just see one squad multiple times. Two days ago, Vardalel saw the hobgoblins lure several Chernasardo Rangers into a trap. Five hobgoblins hid in a shrub-ringed dell while another hobgoblin walked away. That

hobgoblin came sprinting back several minutes later with three Chernasardo Rangers in pursuit. Vardalel was afraid to shout a warning, for fear of being picked off by the hobgoblins, and watched helplessly as the hobgoblins ambushed and slaughtered the Rangers. Vardalel can point out the dell where this occurred, about 600 feet from his tree.

C. HOBGOBLIN PATROL (CR 6)

An Ironfang Legion squad patrols this region of the forest, killing any creatures it encounters. This location is marked multiple times on the map, as there are multiple patrols in the Fangwood, but you should also feel free to move this encounter around as necessary so the PCs learn the Ironfang Legion is actively hunting the Chernasardo Rangers. In addition to their

standard gear, each hobgoblin carries 1d3–1 bloodstained gray-and-green ponchos—evidence of their successful Ranger kills.

Creatures: This squad of four hobgoblins is specifically tasked with finding and killing Chernasardo Rangers, but they just as eagerly kill other humanoids for sport as well as animals for food. They are alert for danger and attempt to set an ambush if possible. Confident in their successes so far, they fight to the death.

IRONFANG PATROL LEADER

CR 4

XP 1,200

Hobgoblin fighter 2/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175)
hp 7

IRONFANG FOREST PROWLERS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Hobgoblin fighter 2/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175)
LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 31 (3 HD; 1d8+2d10+11)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk longbow +5 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Prowlers prefer to attack from ambush, often sending one of their own out alone to play at being lost and provoke victims into chasing him back to his concealed allies.

During Combat Prowlers pepper their foes with arrows, ideally from cover, but are adept melee fighters once



VARDALEL PRENNER

their prey closes in. They always use Power Attack in melee. They reserve their *potions of bull's strength* for fights against larger dangers or superior numbers.

Morale These forest prowlers fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Cleave, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +5, Intimidate +4, Perception +7, Ride +5, Stealth +9, Swim +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, alchemist's fire (2), fervor juice^{MC}, oil (4); **Other**

Gear mwk chain shirt, mwk longbow with 20 arrows, mwk longsword, backpack, bedroll, hooded lantern, mess kit^{UE}, waterskin, 9 gp

Development: Savvy PCs might capture and question one or more of these hobgoblins. A hobgoblin reveals information only under magical compulsion or if cowed with a successful DC 16 Intimidate check. This squad was part of the contingent that sacked Fort Ristin, and its members know that a freelancer is commanding the Ironfang Legion forces in the Fangwood—"some fanatical hobgoblin woman raised by wild beasts" and calling herself Jang. These hobgoblins can reveal the way to Fort Ristin, but they don't know the location of any other Ranger forts. Finally, they were supposed to meet up with a squad based out of a different fort, but that squad seems to have gone missing (having been ambushed by the fey at Fort Ristin; see area J).

The hobgoblins neglect to mention Ibzairiak unless magically compelled or a PC succeeds at her Intimidate check by 5 or more. Even then, they know little of the dragon, or even its name, having only seen it in the heat of battle. Different captives might even give different accounts of its coloration.

D. BEETLE WARREN (CR 6)

The dirt in this clearing is soaked with blood. Scraps of gray-and-green clothing litter the area along with several weapons, but no combatants remain. A single hobgoblin arm, still clutching a longsword, lies amid the gore. Drag marks lead from the clearing into a six-foot-wide fissure at the base of a nearby tangle of old oaks.

Four Chernasardo Rangers and five hobgoblins fought a running battle through the Fangwood the day before the PCs arrive here, meeting for their final clash in this clearing. Two slicer beetles lairing nearby waited as the fight wore on, emerging once a single combatant remained on each side. The beetles killed the wounded warriors and dragged all of the bodies back into their lair

to feed their young. Although the drag marks are easy to see, identifying the beetle tracks among them requires a successful DC 18 Perception or Survival check.

The fissure leads 20 feet into the hill, twisting and sloping slightly downward. The fissure opens into a small cave about 15 feet across and littered with a dozen cream-colored egg sacs, each the size of a human head. An irregular clacking noise issues from a larger, adjacent chamber. This adjacent chamber is 30 feet in diameter and contains the slicer beetles and their grisly food.

Creatures: Two adult slicer beetles live in this warren along with 11 immature larvae. The larvae writhe upon the corpses, enjoying their meal. The adult beetles immediately attack intruders, intending to provide more food for the larvae. They pursue opponents who flee, their compression ability allowing them to navigate the narrow fissure quickly despite their Large size. The larvae also wriggle toward intruders, but they have no meaningful attacks and don't pursue opponents that leave their feeding chamber.

SLICER BEETLES (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 39 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 44)

Treasure: Six longbows, 56 arrows, five daggers, and eight longswords lie scattered haphazardly around the clearing. Within the beetle warren, two dismembered half-elf legs each end in matching *boots of elvenkind*, and a hobgoblin corpse wears a necklace of small silver skulls worth 85 gp.

E. BURNED BLIND (CR 6)

The forest here suffered a severe but localized fire. Ash coats an area devoid of undergrowth, while the larger trees are badly scorched. At the center of the devastation is a large oak tree, killed by the fire and standing like a blackened skeleton. Two bodies are lodged in its branches, burned beyond recognition.

The bodies in the tree are two Chernasardo Rangers who had been hiding in the tree, 15 feet above the ground. Their equipment was destroyed by the fire and their bodies fused to the wood by the heat. The Rangers were using the tree as a blind, sniping at a large group of hobgoblins crossing a rocky ridge to the west. The Ironfang forces simply set fire to the tree, immolating the Rangers and a section of the forest approximately 250 feet in diameter. Afterward, the hobgoblins gathered their wounded and retreated from the blaze. After an hour or so, a wood giant named Herge came to the area, drawn by the fire. Herge extinguished the fire with his *quench* spell-like ability, but he believes—incorrectly—that the arsonists are still nearby.

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Careful examination of the area uncovers several clues regarding the events that transpired here. With a successful DC 12 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check, a PC determines that the fire occurred only 2 days ago. Anyone who examines the burned tree and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check uncovers several shattered flasks that contained alchemist's fire. By inspecting the ridge and succeeding at a DC 20 Perception check, a PC locates several arrows along a switchback path and identifies a clear line of sight between the burned tree and the arrows' locations. A successful DC 20 Survival check is required to notice boot prints descending from the path and then ascending it thereafter (although the tracks are lost on the stony surface of the ridge). If a PC exceeds the DC of this Survival check by 5, she also spots similar boot prints in the soil beneath the ashes. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Knowledge (arcana) check can tell that the fire here was quelled by magic. Note that Herge leaves no tracks due to his constant *pass without trace* spell-like ability.

Creature: Herge is still here, watching the area in case the arsonists return so he can capture them and force them to replant this section of the forest (or kill them if they are wholly unrepentant). Herge is stout and squat for a wood giant, with curly hair framing his wide face.

Herge watches from the edge of the burned area, 250 feet from the burned oak, using his *tree shape* spell-like ability to masquerade as a scorched tree. When he sees the PCs, he assumes they are the perpetrators and attacks as described below.

HERGE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male wood giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 132)

hp 67

TACTICS

During Combat Herge attacks with his *sleep arrows* and demands that the PCs surrender. If the PCs don't surrender, Herge continues to shoot *sleep arrows*, pausing to cast *spike stones* around his position if the PCs attempt to close into melee. Once out of *sleep arrows*, he uses regular arrows instead.

Morale Herge flees if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points. He immediately ceases attacking opponents that have surrendered to him.

STATISTICS

Combat Gear feather token (tree), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *sleep arrows* (10); **Other Gear** leather armor, longsword, mwk composite longbow with 40 arrows, bag of 32 acorns

Development: If the PCs surrender or otherwise convince Herge to stand down, they find the giant to be talkative. The PCs should quickly realize that Herge believes the PCs set the fire and killed the Rangers; once they explain their innocence, Herge apologizes for his

hasty attack and works with the PCs to find out what actually happened. Herge is good-hearted and loyal by nature, although he is quick to jump to conclusions and prioritizes the natural environment over humanoids or their structures. Herge is more angered by the damage to the forest than the murder of the Rangers. If asked about his background, Herge admits he is more of a forester than a warrior, sheepishly confessing that he was exiled from his clan in the northern Fangwood for an accidental longbow shot that killed a sacred boar.

Herge does not know anything about the Ironfang Legion, as he hasn't yet encountered it, but he is quick to consider the hobgoblins his enemies once he learns the danger they pose. As he prefers forestry to combat, Herge won't fight alongside the PCs. However, he agrees to watch over the refugees and to help them live in harmony with the forest—see the Concluding the Adventure on page 55 for more details about using Herge to defend the refugees.

Story Award: If the PCs befriend Herge, award them XP as though they had defeated him in combat.

F. PIXIE HUNTER (CR 7)

Low hills and tall trees surround this secluded glen where only a few patches of short, tough grass grow in the dirt. A human man in a gray-and-green poncho lies face down in the center of the glen, several small arrows protruding from his shoulder. The man rocks back and forth with something clutched in his hands, a grimace of pain on his face.

This glen is 30 feet long and 20 feet wide. The surrounding trees and hills cast deep shadows throughout the day; the illumination in the glen is never brighter than dim. If the PCs approach at all, they hear the hooded figure groaning and wheezing, "Please, take this, before it's too late..."

The figure in the glen is the corpse of a Chernasardo Ranger named Caydan, who was murdered by a blighted fey pixie named Malignant Nolly. But Nolly wasn't content to simply kill Caydan; she also infected his corpse with rot grubs (see Hazard below). Malignant Nolly then used her *permanent image* ability to make the dead man appear to plead for help to lure passersby while she watched from the trees. The PCs can't attempt a Will saving throw to disbelieve the illusion until they interact with it, which likely puts them in range of the rot grub explosion, but they might otherwise detect the ruse. The *permanent image* doesn't alter the corpse's smell or feel, so abilities such as scent and blindsense might indicate that all is not as it appears with the pleading man.

Creature: Once a normal pixie, Malignant Nolly fell victim to the Blight spreading in the central Fangwood and gained the blighted fey template. Sent out from the Blight to spread fungal rot and infection, she takes

a perverse joy in setting traps and murdering travelers. Malignant Nolly is a horribly disfigured pixie, with skin covered in bleeding lesions and her gossamer wings crusted with fungal growths. She wears dark-colored clothing with her hair shorn and her mouth set in a wicked grin.

Malignant Nolly might lure the PCs into this glen if they seem likely to travel around it, shaking branches while invisible or using her *dancing lights* spell-like ability to guide or threaten the party into the glen. If the PCs hang back while a lone character moves forward to investigate the corpse, Malignant Nolly manipulates the illusion to point beyond the group of PCs and moan, "It's behind you! Hurry!" Once the PCs cluster around the corpse, Malignant Nolly fires an arrow into the corpse to trigger the rot grub explosion and then attacks.



MALIGNANT NOLLY

MALIGNANT NOLLY

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female blighted fey pixie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 46, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 228)

CE Small fey

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, low-light vision; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 34 (4d8+16)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities fungal rejuvenation, invisibility; **DR** 10/cold iron and good; **Immune** disease, paralysis, poison, polymorph; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee punching dagger +8 (1d3/×3)

Ranged mwk longbow +9 (1d6/×3) or thorn throw +7 (1d3)

Special Attacks parasitic bond, special arrows

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

Constant—*detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*

1/day—*dancing lights*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *entangle* (DC 15), *lesser confusion* (DC 15), *permanent image* (visual and auditory elements only) (DC 20), *shield*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nolly casts *shield* on herself before firing at the corpse.

During Combat During the surprise round, Malignant Nolly shoots the infested corpse with a single arrow to trigger the rot grub explosion. She thereafter fires her bow from a distance while invisible, using her special arrows to incapacitate or infect her opponents. Being so far from the Blight of the central Fangwood, her fungal rejuvenation power doesn't function.

Morale Compelled to infect and murder others, Malignant Nolly fights to the death. She doesn't bother pursuing foes that flee as long as she was able to infect them; otherwise, she pursues her opponents until at least one victim is infected.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12 (+8 when jumping), Bluff +11, Escape Artist +12, Fly +18, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +11, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +18, Use Magic Device +11;

Racial Modifiers +2 Knowledge (nature), +2 Perception, +2 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin, Infernal, Sylvan

SQ blighted unity, tainted blood, thorn throw

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *wand of snare* (14 charges); **Other Gear** mwk longbow with 20 mwk arrows, punching dagger

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special Arrows (Su) When Malignant Nolly fires an arrow from any bow, she can decide to change the arrow's properties by sprinkling it with corrupted pixie dust.

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Doing so is a free action as long as she is the one to fire the arrow. Malignant Nolly can generate 18 uses of dust each day, but the dust is useless to other creatures. Once pixie dust is applied to an arrow, the chosen effect persists on the arrow for only 1 round. As long as an arrow is altered in this way, it does not deal damage when it hits—it only causes its new effect. Malignant Nolly can choose any one of the following three effects when dusting an arrow. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Blossoming Rot: The target must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or be affected as if by a *fungal infestation*^{UM} spell. This arrow consumes two uses of Nolly's pixie dust.

Fitful Sleep: The target must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or fall asleep for 1 minute. Its sleep is haunted by nightmares of trees draped in greasy black tendrils of rot; when the target awakens, it is shaken for the following minute.

Tainted Shot: The target is immediately affected by Nolly's unnatural toxins as if it had bitten her; see the tainted blood ability below.

Hazard: Malignant Nolly infested the Ranger's corpse with rot grubs (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 245). The rotting body has produced a bubble of gases and will rupture if disturbed, spraying grub-infested gore in a 10-foot radius. Any creature within 10 feet of the corpse when it is disturbed must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save (whether or not it is aware of the grubs) or become infested with a single grub.

ROT GRUB INFESTATION

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Onset immediate; **Frequency** 1/round

Effect 1d2 Con damage per grub

Treasure: The corpse Nolly infested carries a pair of matching masterwork short swords carved to look like leaping flames, as well as a pouch containing a dose of *dust of appearance*.

G. LONGFROND'S GLADE (CR 7)

At the center of this wide glade is a clear, rocky pond approximately twenty feet in diameter. Seven blossoming cherry trees lean inward from the edge of the pond like conspirators. Hundreds of small, sharp knots of wood cover the ground around the pond and the trees.



LONGFROND

This glade is the home of the young and remarkably bitter treant Longfrond, who has been sending owlbeats to attack the refugee enclave under the errant assumption that they work for the Ironfang Legion. The pond is a well-used watering hole for several creatures in the forest, all of whom Longfrond watches over attentively, and in particular seems especially attractive to owlbeats.

Creature: The smallest of the seven cherry trees around the pond is Longfrond; the others are ordinary trees. Longfrond is young, and she has never met a humanoid that wasn't out to cause trouble for the forest. From her early experiences with troglodyte hunters and Molthuni forest-burners to the more recent

hobgoblins of the Ironfang Legion, she considers all humanoids to be dangerous marauders. She has yet to meet any of the Chernasardo Rangers (who avoid her glade because of the owlbeats and makeshift caltrops), and therefore hasn't learned that some humanoids are well intentioned. To add to her confusion and mistrust, Longfrond has a hard time telling different types of humanoids apart.

The treant initially hopes visitors will ignore the glade and be on their way. If not, she animates two of the trees in an attempt to scare off trespassers (these animated trees, like Longfrond herself, use the statistics for young treants). If attacked, Longfrond hurls rocks pulled from the edge of the pond while her animated trees enter melee. Longfrond wants only to drive strangers away, and does not pursue opponents who flee. She ceases her attacks as soon as invaders stand down. If pressed, however, she fights to the death here in her home.

LONGFROND

CR 7

XP 3,200

N female young treant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 266)

hp 90

Hazard: Longfrond doesn't like visitors and has spread countless hand-carved spikes of wood throughout the glade, covering everything except the game trail leading to and from the edge of the pond. The ground in the glade effectively functions as though covered in caltrops. As they are made of natural wood instead of metal, these caltrops don't impede any creature with a natural armor bonus of at least +4 or creatures with the woodland stride class feature.

Development: The PCs might attempt to parley with Longfrond. If the PCs change the treant's initial attitude from unfriendly to friendly (Diplomacy DC 26), she asks

them to leave and begrudgingly agrees not to bother their refugees. She secretly watches the PCs from a distance for a few days to confirm they are not destructive or wasteful. If during this time she sees that they are active guardians and stewards of forest life, Longfrond apologizes for her mistaken preconceptions and offers to support the PCs with advice about the forest and supplies of food harvested from fruiting trees; doing so provides the refugees with all the food they could need for 1d4 months after the season ends. Longfrond is reluctant to enter combat on behalf of humanoids, making her a poor choice as a guardian, but she sees and hears many things from the forest and may offer the PCs insight and gossip if they provide her with a means of communicating with them. This may serve as a way to provide the PCs information or clues they miss throughout the adventure.

Story Award: If the PCs befriend Longfrond, award them XP as though they had defeated her in combat.

H. CAUTIOUS CHIMERA (CR 7)

This mile-wide slough is where the Sixjaws River drains into a lowland in the forest. The ground is muddy, with occasional pools of standing water several inches deep. The trees are sparse, but thick mist pervades this gloomy lowland, limiting vision to 90 feet even during bright days. No birds or animals remain here, as the area's current resident has thoroughly cleared it of even small prey. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check can see that this section of the Fangwood has been badly over-hunted.

Creature: This misty area is the home of a lean and cautious chimera named Kallikros. Driven from his home in the Hollow Hills a year ago by increasingly aggressive morlocks, Kallikros settled in this isolated region of the Fangwood. After a few unsuccessful attacks against Chernasardo Rangers, Kallikros learned to limit his hunting to this inhospitable slough—but now the region is devoid of prey and Kallikros is hungry. He has recently risked hunting a bit farther afield, so the PCs might meet Kallikros anywhere near this area. Regardless of where they encounter Kallikros, he attacks from the air, breathing a line of lightning from his blue dragon head before landing and entering melee. If reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, Kallikros flees to nurse his wounds in his lair.

KALLIKROS CR 7
XP 3,200
Male chimera (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 44)
hp 85

Treasure: The chimera's lair is hidden within a large clump of twisted trees in the middle of the slough, but can be found with a successful DC 25 Perception check. No tracks lead there, as Kallikros flies in and out, but

PCs who injure the chimera might be able to follow him back there as he flees. Within the lair are several cracked bones and Kallikros's meager hoard: 136 gp, 15 agates (worth 10 gp each), an *immovable rod* (currently used to prop Kallikros's bed out of the mud), and a *hand of the mage* clutching a blue sapphire worth 1,000 gp.

I. TROLL REJECTS (CR 6)

Six bedrolls mark this orderly campsite, alongside a few packs and a firepit containing only ashes and an iron pot. Two hobgoblin corpses lie askew in the dirt, slim arrows protruding from their throats. Four partially decayed hobgoblin bodies are scattered around the clearing, all missing one or two limbs but otherwise intact.

This Ironfang patrol camped near Fort Nunder 3 days ago to observe the trolls there and ensure they weren't interfering with the Legion's operations. Although careful and quiet, they made enough noise to attract the attention of a troll hunting party. Uncharacteristically clever, the trolls feigned civility long enough to put the soldiers at ease and enjoy a hot meal with their former allies, then fell upon the unsuspecting patrol. Already full from their meal, the troll hunters tore off a few limbs to bring back to Fort Nunder, but otherwise left the soldiers where they fell.

Several traces of troll activity can be found in the destroyed campsite. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds a large tusk broken in the fight, as well as several thick, green-black hairs. Tracks of three large humanoids can be uncovered with a successful DC 15 Survival check. With either of these clues, a PC can identify them as belonging to trolls with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check (finding both clues grants a +2 circumstance bonus on this check), suggesting the creatures may lair nearby.

Creatures: The dead hobgoblins have begun to rot, their carrion scent attracting a prickle of hungry giant porcupines. While the PCs examine the campsite, four giant porcupines lumber from nearby undergrowth to defend their food source. A giant porcupine flees if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, or if allowed to drag a corpse away into the bushes to eat in peace.

GIANT PORCUPINES (4) CR 2
XP 600 each
hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 222)

Treasure: The hobgoblins' gear is cleaned and set neatly next to each bedroll. PCs can recover six bedrolls, six mess kits, six waterskins, six heavy blankets, 36 days' worth of trail rations, and 200 feet of silk rope, in addition to six light steel shields, five longswords, five longbows, 70 arrows, and a +1 *scimitar*.

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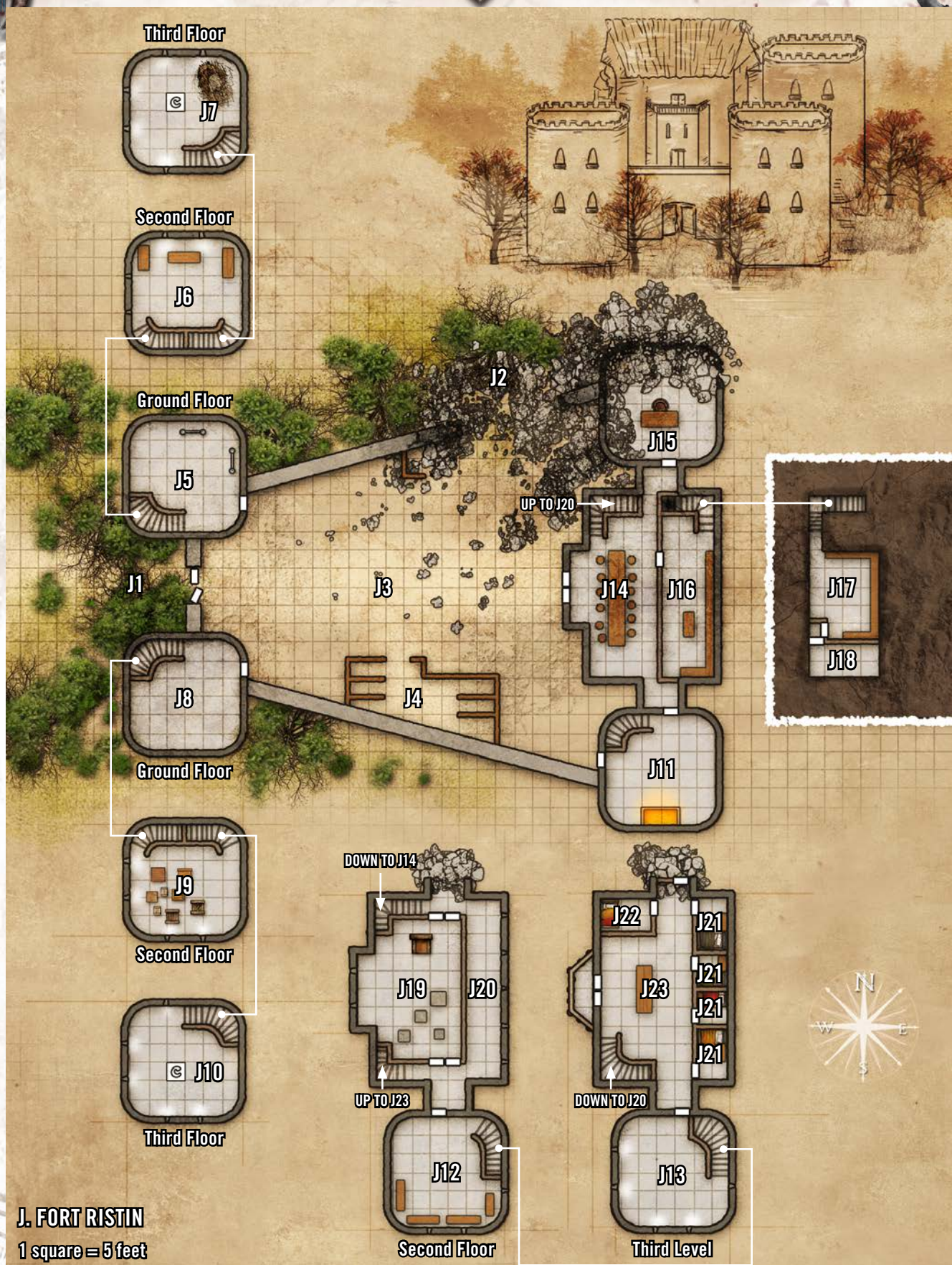
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J. FORT RISTIN

This one of the Chernasardo Ranger forts, but it is currently occupied by a group of celebrating fey. If the PCs investigate the fort, they can find the halfling survivor Cirieo Thessaddin, who can point them to the other two Ranger forts. Fort Ristin is described in Part 2.

K. FORT NUNDER

This now-demolished Chernasardo Ranger fort is built against a large, steep hill. The hill contains a cache of supplies protected by several traps. Fort Nunder is described in Part 3.

L. FORT TREVALAY

A wide, long gorge running for several miles reaches its widest point here. Fort Trevalay is built atop a column of stone in the middle of the gorge. The fort is occupied by hobgoblin defenders and the leaders of the Ironfang Legion in the Fangwood. Fort Trevalay is described in Part 4.

PART 2: REVEL AT RISTIN

Fort Ristin is one of the oldest structures in the Southern Fangwood. The large fort was constructed by a regional governor named Abdel Ristin during the Everwar as a show of force to the rebellious foresters who, even in those days, flitted stealthily beneath the Fangwood's canopy. To show they would not be cowed by this massive structure within their forest home, the rebels instead targeted supply trains, starving the fort's defenders into surrendering. The rebels then used the fort as their own supply depot, and it was ultimately forgotten by those outside the Fangwood.

The Chernasardo Rangers have occupied Fort Ristin for decades. The fort marks the easternmost edge of the Chernasardo region and provides an excellent staging area against Molthuni forces invading the Fangwood from the south. The Chernasardo Rangers are not experts at diplomacy, but they've realized that Fort Ristin's stately guest rooms are good for impressing potential allies, such as druids from Crystalhurst or influential representatives from the Nirmathi capital of Tamran.

The fort's four stout towers, large keep, and sturdy walls provide a formidable defense, but the recent siege by the Ironfang Legion was more than the Rangers could withstand. Hobgoblin engineers studied the fort from a distance, identifying its northeastern tower as the weakest point. A dozen hobgoblins stormed the fort's western gate, drawing the defenders' attention to allow the dragon Ibzairiak to sweep in from the east, scouring the northeastern tower with his acidic breath. Hobgoblin grenadiers hurled bombs at the tower's base, bringing the entire tower crashing down along with a portion of the north wall. The reserve hobgoblin forces then rushed

the opening and seized the fort. Although most of the Rangers at Fort Ristin were slain in the initial attack, Ibzairiak spared the surviving, injured Rangers to wallow in their defeat in the fort's small prison cell. Among them is the halfling ranger Cirieo Thessaddin, captured after mounting a desperate but ineffective attack against Ibzairiak. In retaliation, the dragon bit off the halfling's leg and devoured his owl companion before ordering Cirieo bandaged and jailed with the rest of the survivors.

Ibzairiak stationed a contingent of hobgoblins at the fort to occupy it permanently. The hobgoblins brought weeks' worth of food and other supplies, supplementing the Rangers' stores and the large shipment of wine brought by a guest of the Rangers who had died during the tower collapse. The dragon promised a share of his hoard to the squad that could collect the most Chernasardo Ranger ponchos, so the hobgoblins prioritized patrols of the forest over shoring up the north wall. Many patrols left Fort Ristin shortly after occupying it and haven't yet returned (such as the squad in area C).

The hobgoblins didn't hold the fort for long. The forest to the east of Fort Ristin is deep and well-traveled by many fey. A burly and brutal korred named Halk Grundlechar, self-appointed leader of the local fey (clubbing any that refused to acknowledge his dominance), had previously left Fort Ristin alone, but he was intrigued by rumors that the fort had changed hands. Finding Fort Ristin only halfheartedly guarded by overconfident hobgoblins, Halk decided to take over. He and his kin easily infiltrated the fort, teleporting through the tower's tumbled stones with their stone stride power, and murdered the hobgoblins.

When Halk realized how much food and wine was stored at the fort, he called for one of the korreds' most elaborate celebrations: the Red Rock Revel. Among most korreds, the Red Rock Revel is merely a week of dancing, drinking, and painting nearby stones in vibrant colors. Halk took the name of the Red Rock Revel more literally, hanging the murdered hobgoblins above the tumbled stones in the courtyard to douse the rocks with blood. Halk then called all his korred kin and fey allies to come to the fort for the party. At first, the fey were cautious and watchful, ambushing the occasional returning Ironfang squad, but as their wine-fueled shindig stretched on over the course of several days, the fey have grown complacent. Although the fey at the fort still occasionally drink and dance together for the ongoing revel—which shows no sign of ending before the wine runs out—they have fractured into factions. Each faction schemes against the others and plots how to best supplant Halk as the master and First Drinker of the Red Rock Revel.

FORT RISTIN FEATURES

Fort Ristin is constructed from weathered blocks of smooth, gray stone. The exterior walls are 3 feet thick, while the interior walls are 1 foot thick. The mortar

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FORT RISTIN RUMORS

The PCs have many opportunities to eavesdrop upon the fey of Fort Ristin and learn about the fort's current inhabitants. An undetected PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check learns one random rumor from the table below. For every 5 points by which the check result exceeds the DC, the PC overhears another rumor. The fey are just as likely to be speaking in Sylvan as Common, so a PC unable to speak Sylvan might not understand a rumor overheard.

d6 Rumor

- 1 "Halk Grundlechar is a brute, but he's doing a fine job as First Drinker of the Red Rock Revel. I cheer every time he comes out on the balcony with a command to open another cask. May the revel never end!"
- 2 "We need some more hobgoblins to redden up the courtyard rocks. I know Halk let the redcaps in the northeast tower borrow a few, but I don't think they're fool enough to kill 'em against Halk's say-so."
- 3 "I found a few scales on the ground; must have been from before we arrived for the revel. Black as blood, I'd swear they were."
- 4 "Grundlechar is the boss of things because his brothers back him up. I don't mind Linder Largehands down in the cellar, but that Bristle Billie up in the tower makes me nervous. He keeps stitching together creatures that ain't meant to be stitched."
- 5 "The stable? No, you won't catch me going near the place. There's iron horseshoes in there, and I don't want to even look at 'em. No one goes there, I tell you that."
- 6 "There's a little prison in the basement of the main keep with a one-legged halfling in it. Wanna go laugh at him later?"

between the stones is discolored by a dark, tenacious mold, and creeping vines crawl up the fort's exterior, particularly in the deep shadows between the western towers. The walls of the fort are 15 feet tall. Walkways run along the tops of the walls, accessible by tall ladders kept in area J4. The towers are each 45 feet tall, and each is topped with a crenellated battlement and a trap door leading down into the tower (the trap doors in areas J7 and J10 are usually bolted shut from the inside, although the one in area J13 is open). Climbing any wall within the fort requires a successful DC 20 Climb check.

The interior rooms are 15 feet high. Although sconces in each room hold unlit torches, many rooms contain arrow slits that let in natural light. These arrow slits

are 3 feet high, but only 4 inches wide. Rooms without arrow slits are unlit unless otherwise indicated. Many rooms contain evidence that the fort has changed hands more than a few times throughout its history: deep scoring along the walls, stone blackened from old fires, and so forth. The interior furnishings are all simple and functional.

The doors within the fort are strong wooden doors bound with iron bands (hardness 5, 20 hp, break DC 25). None of the doors have locks except where indicated, although all exterior doors have brackets to hold a wooden bar on the inside. A successful DC 25 Strength check is required to burst through a barred door.

J1. OVERGROWN ENTRANCE (CR 5)

Two massive towers on the western side of this fort are connected by a high wall with a gatehouse festooned in ivy. Mushrooms blossom amid ferns along the ground. The wooden double door of the gatehouse is banded with iron, but one door stands slightly ajar.

The gate wall is 20 feet high and contains the double doors leading into the fort. The fey don't use this main entrance, as the iron-banded doors make them uncomfortable. The fey instead come and go through the collapsed northern wall at area J2. This entrance has become overgrown in a short period of time from the spores cast off by the gatehouse's well-fed defender.

Although one of the doors leading to area J3 is a few inches open, the fey placed a stack of stones against it on the other side. Pushing open the door requires a successful DC 20 Strength check. The tumbling stones alert the revelers in area J3 to the presence of intruders, although they might not be in a state of mind to react immediately (or at all).

Creature: Halk lured a basidiron here as a guardian, and the blood it extracts from the occasional returning hobgoblin has trained it to lurk against the fort wall near the door until prey approaches. The basidiron is hiding (Stealth +5, including a +4 circumstance bonus for the concealing vegetation near the gatehouse) and attacks with its hallucination cloud once foes come within range. It chases after prey and fights to the death.

BASIDIRON

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 52 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 28)

J2. NORTH GAP ENTRANCE (CR 6)

The northeastern tower of the fort has collapsed onto the northern wall, scattering chunks of stone across the area and knocking a ten-foot-wide gap in the wall. A massive keep looms over the courtyard beyond the gap.

The fey of Fort Ristin use this gap as their entrance. The opening leads to the courtyard beyond (area J3). Because the northeast tower collapsed, the northern wall of the keep is plainly visible, including the door leading to area J23. Reaching the door requires scaling the 15 feet of crumbled stone above area J15 (Climb DC 15), and then climbing 15 feet up the side of the keep to the door (Climb DC 20). The loose stones are noisy footing, imposing a –2 penalty on Stealth checks

Creatures: Two korreds hide among the tumbled stones here. They're instructed to greet fey visitors but drive away anyone else. The two korreds are inebriated and aren't particularly watchful, taking a –4 penalty on their Perception checks. If they notice non-fey intruders, they attack, but they don't pursue foes that flee. Each hopes to prove himself the more successful combatant so as to be rotated out of guard duty (and back to the revel) before his companion. Bolstered by alcohol and ego, these korreds fight to the death.

KORREDS (2) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 33 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 173)

J3. COURTYARD (CR 8)

The fortress's courtyard of hard-packed earth and gravel is filled with large stones spilled from the tumbled northeastern tower. A building situated against the northern wall has been almost entirely crushed, while an intact stable stands against the southern wall. A wooden double door stands slightly ajar to the west, leading out of the fort. Another double door leads into the large keep to the east, and a balcony twenty feet above the keep's entrance overlooks the courtyard. A narrow wooden door stands at the base of each of the three remaining towers.

Of the stones scattered across the courtyard, the largest are as tall as a human and all are stained dark red. The source of the stains is no mystery: hobgoblin corpses with slit throats hang upside-down from crude gibbets above each of the gruesome stones.

This courtyard is where most of the Red Rock Revel celebrations take place. Halk doesn't personally participate in the celebrations any longer, but he occasionally appears on the balcony above (see area J23) to make pronouncements, such as to command another victim be murdered atop one of the stones to "redden it up a bit" or to declare another barrel of wine be opened. The double door to the west leads to the main entrance of the fort (area J1) while the double door to the east leads into area J14 of the main keep. The wrecked northern wall leads out to area J2, and the smaller doors lead to the bottom floors of the three intact towers (areas J5, J8, and J11).

The courtyard also contains some evidence of Ibzairiak's attack. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds a few black scales and several acid-pitted stones.

Creatures: Most of the time, a dozen severely inebriated korreds celebrate here, along with a handful of other fey from the surrounding woods. Their severe impairment is represented by the degenerate simple template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 288), but after a week of drying out and nursing hangovers, these revelers lose the degenerate template and revert to ordinary korreds.

The only consistent activity the korred revelers undertake here is drinking; their other activities are boisterous, disturbing, and erratic. They might be dancing while belting out traditional Red Rock Revel songs, pounding cacophonous rhythms on makeshift drums, racing drunkenly through the scattered stones with their stone stride ability, enacting impromptu puppet theater with the mangled hobgoblin corpses, or lifting rocks in contests of strength.

Avoiding these carousing korreds is easy, as the distractions of the revel impose a –8 penalty on their Perception checks (in addition to the –2 penalty on skill checks from the degenerate simple template). Even if a korred notices an intruder, he has a 50% chance of simply looking blearily at the intruder, muttering about how he won't fall for some prank or hallucination, and staggering back to the wine. These korreds only rouse themselves to attack if faced with an obvious threat, but even then, only six korreds attack at a given time while the remaining fey enjoy the show, cheer on one side or the other, or take advantage of the distraction to crack open a new wine cask.

KORRED REVELERS (6) CR 3

XP 800 each

Degenerate korreds (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 288, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 173)

hp 21 each

Treasure: A heavy wagon stands against the wall of the keep, stacked with 10-gallon wine casks of various vintages. More than a dozen open and empty barrels are scattered around the wagon, but the wagon still contains 15 full barrels of wine weighing 100 pounds each. Twelve of the barrels contain wine of fair quality and are worth 20 gp each. The remaining three barrels contain good wine and are worth 750 gp each. If the PCs retreat from Fort Ristin without taking these barrels, the fey consume one random barrel each day.

Development: As the Red Rock Revel is an ongoing, ever-changing celebration, the korreds here should be engaged in different activities if the PCs avoid them and pass through this area again. As the fey from the towers participate in the revel from time to time, some

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of the leprechauns from area J9, the atomies from area J13, or the satyrs from area J16 might relocate here. If so, the degenerate korreds are likely absorbed in their prodigious drinking or strange games, and avoid joining in a fight that could too easily overcome the PCs. If the PCs manage to defeat Halk and all his siblings, as well as the redcap Dearga Finlay, any undefeated fey here wander off in 1d4 days.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully avoid these korreds throughout their explorations of Fort Ristin, award them XP as though the PCs had defeated the rowdy fey in combat.

J4. ABANDONED STABLE (CR 3)

This wooden stable stands against the southern wall of the courtyard. Its large doors are open and askew, hanging drunkenly from damaged hinges. The rank smell of moldering hay emanates from the building.

This building has not sheltered a horse for several months and is now mostly unused. A few supplies are stored here, such as spare beams and the ladders used to access the fort walls, but the fey have no use for them. The only access into the stable is from the broken doors, which lead to the courtyard (area J3). As a result, the PCs might use this building as a retreat, although the cacophonous celebration throughout the courtyard might make sleep difficult.

Creatures: Four oxen pulled the wagonload of wine now sitting in area J3. Two of the oxen died from teasing and abuse from inebriated fey and became roasts for the party. The remaining two draft animals accidentally discovered the fey won't enter the stables, and now munch restlessly on moldering straw. While domesticated, the oxen are traumatized by their recent ordeal and their starting attitude is unfriendly; if approached carelessly, they attempt to trample anyone nearby.

OXEN (2) CR 1
400 XP each
N degenerate aurochs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 288, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 174)
hp 16 each

Treasure: This stable contains six long-discarded cold iron horseshoes and a single *lucky horseshoe*^{OA}. Although cold iron in any form makes korreds nervous, the korreds of the Fangwood harbor a superstitious fear of the metal forged in the shape of a horseshoe. Any PC openly carrying a cold iron horseshoe gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks against korreds in the fort. A PC knows as much with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nature) check.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to calm the oxen, award them XP as if they had defeated the creatures in combat.

J5. REDCAP TANNERY (CR 6)

The fort's northwestern tower is occupied by a nasty redcap matriarch named Dearga Finlay and her followers. The sole occupant of the tower's base, a redcap tanner named Ailsa, bars the door if she is aware of any attack against the fort. Otherwise, the door is unbarred.

Two weapon racks stand in this room, although they contain no weapons; instead, short strips of grayish leather stretch across them. A staircase ascends to the south, and a wooden door leads to the east. The stench of carrion fills this room.

A few days ago, Dearga Finlay asked to "borrow" a few hobgoblin survivors from Halk. The korred planned to use them to paint the rocks in the courtyard with their blood, so he turned them over to the redcap only on the condition that the hobgoblins remain alive. Dearga intended to keep this promise—she only wanted to flay strips of their skin to make a suit of hobgoblin-skin leather armor—but the hobgoblins died in the skinning room above. The grayish strips drying here are poorly cured hobgoblin skin. Basic tanning supplies, such as short knives and flensing boards, are lined up against the north wall. The stairs lead up to area J6.

Creature: A female redcap named Ailsa guards this room. Like all female redcaps, Ailsa appears elderly, with a wispy beard and a narrow, peevish appearance. She spends much of her time fussing over the strips of hobgoblin flesh and bemoaning the lack of a proper tannery. She takes out her frustrations on any intruders, attacking with a manic fury, pursuing opponents that flee, and fighting to the death.

AILS A CR 6
XP 2,400
Female redcap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 233)
hp 60

Treasure: A black +1 cold iron shortspear fell behind one of the weapon racks years ago. A successful DC 25 Perception check (or *detect magic* or a similar spell) is required to find it.

J6. SKINNING ROOM (CR 5)

The wooden floor of this large room is slick with blood. Three mostly flayed hobgoblin corpses are lashed to wooden tables and four dead redcaps lie on the floor. Stairs lead up and down on the south wall, and arrow slits pierce the north and west walls.

The stairs lead down to area J5 and up to area J7. Pools of blood make the floor slippery; a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check is required to run or charge across the floor in this room. Failure means the character can still act, but can't run or charge this round.

The Rangers once used this room for sewing, weaving, and knitting various supplies, but the redcaps living here found a more gruesome use for the space. They intended to carefully flay skin from hobgoblin prisoners for Ailsa the tanner in area J5, as Dearga and Halk had made it very clear that the hobgoblin prisoners must be kept alive. Drunkenness transformed their caution into overconfident carelessness, though, and the redcaps took too much skin from one of the hobgoblins, killing it. In an ill-advised attempt to resuscitate it, the redcaps quickly cut flaps of skin from the other hobgoblins, and thus killed the remaining prisoners as well. Fearing the wrath of their superiors, the redcaps fell to bickering about who was to blame. Their argument came to blows, and four of the five redcaps were slain.

A successful DC 12 Heal check indicates that the hobgoblins were slowly flayed to death; a separate successful DC 12 Heal check reveals that the redcaps' wounds were inflicted by large blades and that they were killed fairly recently.

Creature: The lone survivor is Young Keaken, a short-bearded redcap with red-rimmed eyes. If Young Keaken notices intruders coming, he realizes he can blame the hobgoblins' deaths and the redcaps' murder on them, and therefore hides under a table in this room. If discovered or surprised, the whippersnapper fights with desperate zeal, convinced that he will avoid blame if he

is able to overcome trespassers. If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Young Keaken attempts to flee out of the tower—but he doesn't flee upstairs, as he fears Dearga Finlay's wrath more than the PCs.

YOUNG KEAKEN

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male young redcap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 293, 233)

hp 44

Treasure: The four dead redcaps each wear Small leather armor and carry a Medium scythe. Each also carries a few dented coins, stolen jewelry, and gold teeth; altogether, these trinkets are worth 54 gp. A bloodstained basket on one table contains a healer's kit, six *potions of cure light wounds*, and eight *bandages of rapid recovery*^{UE}, which the redcaps were supposed to use to keep their charges alive.



DEARGA FINLAY AND SLOBBER

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J7. NORTH BARRACKS (CR 7)

A few bunks in this room have been pushed together and their mattresses ripped and stacked to make a rudimentary nest next to a table stacked with undercooked venison and half-full cups of wine. Arrow slits in each wall provide a view of the fort and the surrounding forest. A staircase descends along the southern wall and a large trap door in the ceiling is barred with a wooden beam.

This level held bunks for off-duty Rangers. The trap door leads up to an unoccupied battlement at the top of the tower, and the stairs lead down to area J6.

Creatures: The leader of the redcaps at Fort Ristin, Dearga Finlay reclines in this room with a trollhound left behind by the Ironfang forces. She tamed the best with a combination of snacks and harsh punishments, and has somewhat affectionately named it Slobber. Backed by her imposing pet, she now imperiously commands the redcaps of the Chernasardo region, and feels comfortable making a bid for Halk's position as bullying overlord of the local fey.

Dearga orders intruders to leave, shaking her scythe at them menacingly, but she knows that anyone able to ascend to this room has probably already dispatched her minions. If threatened, she fights viciously, flanking with Slobber when possible. Slobber fights to the death, but Dearga flees or surrenders if reduced below 20 hit points.

DEARGA FINLAY

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female redcap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 233)

hp 60

Melee Medium +1 scythe +11 (2d4+11/x4), kick +4 (1d4+6)

Combat Gear feather token (whip), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*; **Other Gear** leather armor, Medium +1 scythe

SLOBBER

CR 3

XP 800

Trollhound (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 274)

hp 30

Treasure: In addition to Dearga's equipment, a small stash of treasure has been stored here to reward Dearga's minions for their occasional successes. A small chest hidden in Slobber's nest (requiring a successful DC 20 Perception check to discover) contains 22 gp, 476 sp, a bracelet made from black jet (worth 200 gp), 13 chess pieces carved from soapstone (worth 5 gp each), a stylish cap made from albino beaver fur (worth 300 gp), and a strange sandalwood statuette of a bear eating a lion whole (worth 150 gp).

Development: If the PCs are willing to parley with Dearga, the redcap realizes that negotiating with them

may be her best option (particularly if she learns that the hobgoblins in area J6 have been slain, as Halk explicitly ordered they be returned alive). Dearga explains Halk's leadership of the fey at Fort Ristin as the First Drinker of the Red Rock Revel, and as one of the generally more powerful fey in the region. She also explains that the korred took over the large keep as his own domain. The scheming redcap has no loyalty to Halk, and if the PCs spare her, she offers them aid against their mutual enemy; if the PCs wave a red cloth from the balcony (see area J23), Dearga will join them for their confrontation with Halk. She doesn't volunteer her motives to the PCs, but Dearga knows that killing the korred allows her to become First Drinker and head off any retaliation for inadvertently killing the hobgoblin prisoners.

If the PCs accept Dearga's offer, she watches for their signal as agreed. When given, she climbs through the trap door, drinks her *potion of fly*, and soars over to the balcony to join the PCs. She fights alongside them against Halk as promised, but as soon as the korred leader is dead, she turns against the PCs.

J8. TRAPPED TOWER (CR 5)

Three leprechauns occupy the fort's southwestern tower. They don't enjoy consorting with brutes like korreds and redcaps; they accepted Halk's invitation primarily because they heard about the extensive stores of liquor at the Red Rock Revel and hoped to acquire some. The freely available wine, however, proved distracting enough that most of their plans trail off into drunken rambling and amount to nothing.

Several training dummies and archery targets stand scattered around this room, which has an ascending staircase to the north and an iron-bound wooden door leading to the east. A bench with four evenly spaced holes sits against the southern wall, partially visible behind a canvas curtain.

The ground floor primarily served as storage, but also contained a garderobe for Rangers to relieve themselves. The stairs lead up to area J9, and the door opens onto the courtyard (area J3).

Trap: The leprechauns inhabiting this tower don't want other fey—and particularly not korreds—overhearing their schemes to steal Halk's best liquor. They therefore stuffed the scattered training dummies with jagged pieces of cold iron (created by destroying a few cold iron weapons they discovered in this tower) and a potent alchemical brew. The dummies are connected via thin wires to the lowest step of the stairs up to area J9. As soon as a creature steps on the lowest stair, the shrapnel explodes from within the dummies. This trap can be detected by searching the stairs or any of the training dummies.

COLD IRON SHRAPNEL TRAP**CR 5****XP 1,600****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 23; **Disable Device** DC 20**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** none**Effect** Atk +10 ranged (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in area **J8**)

Treasure: When the leprechauns finished stuffing the dummies for their trap, they stuffed the remaining cold iron weapons down the room's garderobe. A masterwork cold iron greatsword, a cold iron short sword, an alchemical silver dagger, and 17 cold iron crossbow bolts can be discovered with a successful DC 18 Perception check, and while the weapons probably ought to be cleaned, they remain serviceable.

J9. MESS HALL (CR 5)

Several small casks are stacked around this room, each of them open and empty. Stairs lead up and down on the northern wall, and arrow slits pierce the southern and western walls.

The stairs lead down to area **J8** and up to area **J10**. The leprechauns here fabricated most of these casks with wood reclaimed from the tables and chairs they found in this room. Three water barrels still stand in one corner, next to two empty crates of rations the leprechauns long since devoured.

Creatures: Three leprechauns (Conor, Cullen, and Lacey) scheme behind the casks in this room, out of sight of the stairs. If they are surprised, they respond with *color spray* to incapacitate their opponents long enough to turn invisible. None of these leprechauns are particularly bloodthirsty or committed to combat; any leprechaun reduced to fewer than 10 hit points attempts to flee or surrender. If two of the leprechauns are killed, the third surrenders and begs for his life, offering his magic in exchange for freedom.

LEPRECHAUNS (3)**CR 2****XP 600 each****hp** 18 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 177)

Development: If the PCs succeed at a DC 18 Diplomacy check rather than fighting the leprechauns, the fey open up a bit. They find the violence of Halk's Red Rock Revel distasteful and distracting from what should be heavier drinking. They regret attending; however, the leprechauns are very interested in rumors that Halk stores "special spirits" in the main keep's cellar (area **J17**). If the PCs agree to bring at least four bottles of rare herbal liqueurs, the leprechauns agree to use their spell-like abilities (such as *fabricate* and *major creation*) to aid

the PCs. The leprechauns won't provide any assistance that requires leaving their tower, though, as they fear the rambunctious korreds and intend to wait out the Red Rock Revel.

Story Award: If the PCs befriend the leprechauns, award them XP as though they had defeated the trio of fey in combat.

J10. SOUTH BARRACKS

Narrow arrow slits in the walls overlook the fort and the surrounding forest. A staircase descends along the northern wall and a large trap door in the ceiling is barred with a wooden beam. The room is empty aside from disheveled bunks, but scratches marring the floor and the walls hint at a battle waged here long ago.

The trap door leads up to an unoccupied battlement at the top of the tower. The leprechauns rarely enter this room, and it is empty.

J11. FORGE (CR 5)

The fort's southeastern tower has been claimed by Halk's eccentric older brother, Bristle Billie. The other fey consider him dangerous and unpredictable, so they avoid this tower entirely.

A stone staircase ascends in the northwestern corner of this room and wooden doors lead out to the north and west. A makeshift forge, long cold, stands against the southern wall.

The stairs here lead up to Bristle Billie's workshop (area **J12**). The western door leads to the courtyard (area **J3**), and the northern door leads to the keep's entry hall (area **J14**). The Chernasardo Rangers used the small forge for metalwork and minor repairs, but it hasn't been used in weeks.

Creatures: Two badly preserved taxidermic grizzly bears stand motionless against the walls, rearing up in fearsome poses. Bristle Billie created these guardians to protect his privacy, and they lurch awkwardly to life as soon as any visitor touches them or approaches the stairs. Once animated, the taxidermic grizzly bears pursue their targets relentlessly—even out into the courtyard—and fight until destroyed.

TAXIDERMIC GRIZZLY BEARS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 63 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 240)

Treasure: The cold forge conceals a hidden niche (Perception DC 18 to locate) containing six +1 crossbow bolts, three adamantite bolts, and a single bolt of magical beast slaying.

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J12. WORKROOM (CR 7 AND CR 4)

The door leading to this room from J20 does not open, as the room's occupant sealed its edges with *stone shape*. The door must be destroyed to open it (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23). The stairs from area J13 have also been entirely sealed, preventing access to this room from above.

The stone of this room has been smoothed and reshaped like soft clay. A door stands to the north, but the stone wall flows over the jamb, blocking it shut. Stone rods crisscross arrow slits in the southern and eastern walls. A staircase descends on one side of the door, but the ascending staircase has been completely sealed at the ceiling.

Beakers and woodworking tools cover the low stone tables lining the walls, while the center of the room is filled with a six-armed wicker mannequin stretching from floor to ceiling. A wooden box the size of a footstool rests in an opening in the mannequin's chest.

This chamber has been claimed by Halk's erratic brother, Bristle Billie, and turned from a woodshop into an arcane combination laboratory. Demanding absolute

privacy to work, Billie sealed the entrances to this room other than the stairs down to area J11.

His latest creation is the tall mannequin in the center of the room, although he's not yet sure how to animate it. The mannequin is intended to someday deploy the puzzle box in its chest, but Bristle Billie hasn't yet worked out those details either. Despite the mannequin's immobility, the puzzle box is quite dangerous as it contains carefully stored green slime (see Hazard below). The wicker mannequin is dangerously flammable: any amount of fire damage (such as from Billie's spells) causes it to ignite. The mannequin burns up in 3 rounds. If the puzzle box hasn't been removed from the fire in that time, both the box and the green slime are destroyed.

The low tables contain several experiments and a series of wooden plates connected with wire. This is an rough prototype of the puzzle box in the mannequin's chest: studying this version gives a good sense of how the puzzle box fits together and provides a +5 circumstance bonus on any checks to open the puzzle box.

Creature: Bristle Billie is a squat korred with thick, wiry hair that sticks out from his head and ears. He rarely leaves this chamber, where he assembles bizarre constructs in frantic, days-long bouts of inventive inspiration. He pokes at the incomplete puzzle box with his hands while his animated hair shifts the pieces around. If he notices intruders, he shouts, "I said absolute privacy!" and hurls a handful of rivets in frustration. If the PCs immediately depart, Billie promptly forgets about them and continues with his work. Otherwise, he attacks. He hates the Red Rock Revel, but loves this new workspace, and will remain (quite happily) even if all the other fey in Fort Ristin leave.



BRISTLE BILLIE

BRISTLE BILLIE

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male korred transmuter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 173)
CN Small fey

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 98 (11d6+60)

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

DR 5/cold iron; **SR** 17

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee heavy mace +13 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks animated hair, rock throwing (100 ft.), stunning laugh

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +7)

At will—*animate rope*, *shatter* (DC 13), *stone shape*

1/day—*stone tell*

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +8) 6/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+2 bludgeoning)

Transmuter Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd—*blink*, *dispel magic*, *slow* (DC 16)

2nd—*acid arrow*, *blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *see invisibility*, *spider climb*

1st—*crafter's fortune*^{APG} (DC 14), *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic weapon*, *protection from law*

0 (at will)—*mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close* (DC 13), *prestidigitation*

Opposition Schools enchantment, illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat Billie rarely expects a fight, as he's generally too involved with his work to notice intruders.

During Combat Billie lashes out with *acid arrow* before thinking to protect himself, only casting *mage armor* after his initial attack. Afterward, he takes swings with the heavy wrench he wields as a mace, and casts *blink* on himself and *slow* on his opponents if reduced to fewer than half his hit points.

Morale Billie is too stubborn to call for help, and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 26

Feats Brew Potion, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Appraise +3, Bluff +10, Craft (leather, rope, sculpture, weapons) +12, Disable Device +15, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +10, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +18

Languages Aklo, Common, Gnome, Sylvan

SQ arcane bond (*ring of maniacal devices*), physical enhancement (Con +2), stone stride

Combat Gear *oil of magic weapon*, *potions of cat's grace* (2), *potion of protection from law*, *scroll of beast shape I*, *scroll of elemental body I*, *scroll of gaseous form*, *scroll of owl's wisdom*, alchemist's fire (2), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** heavy mace, *belt of giant strength* +2, *ring of maniacal devices*^{APG}, *stubborn nails*^{UE} (5), *traveler's any-tool*^{UE}, magnifying glass, mwk thieves' tools, spell component pouch, diamond dust (worth 200 gp), 112 gp

Hazard (CR 4): The puzzle box in the mannequin's chest is a wooden cube approximately 18 inches on each side and weighing 40 pounds (hardness 5, hp 5, break DC 8). The wooden cube surrounds a smaller ceramic cube packed full of magically augmented green slime. The exterior is not a solid piece, but consists of several pieces of wood fit snugly together. The pieces can move and shift in complicated patterns, but the box retains its shape (and does not reveal the inner ceramic cube) unless the pieces are slid and depressed in a specific sequence.

Discovering the sequence requires three consecutive successful DC 25 Intelligence or Disable Device checks, each made as a full-round action. Succeeding at all three checks causes the puzzle box to open and reveal the smooth ceramic cube within.

The ceramic cube is delicate. If the puzzle box is dropped, smashed, pried open, or shaken roughly, the inner ceramic cube cracks and frees the augmented green slime within. The slime immediately expands in size, consuming the wooden box and filling a 5-foot patch with ordinary green slime (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 416). If the box is shaken by or dropped onto a creature, the slime appears in that creature's space; otherwise, it appears in the 5-foot square where the box was broken. The green slime's augmented nature allows it to survive for 1d3 rounds in sunlight, but cold, fire, and *remove disease* kill it as normal.

If the ceramic cube is freed from the puzzle box, the PCs might discern its dangerous contents by the viscous sloshing. Any creature handling the ceramic cube can identify that its contents are green slime with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check. What the PCs do with this cube thereafter is left to their inventiveness.

Treasure: Bristle Billie has collected several alchemical treasures over the years. The tables in this room contain several pouches of powdered jade in a variety of colors (worth 150 gp in total), three 1-pound lumps of gold (worth 50 gp each), an *elixir of fire breath*, and a complete alchemist's laboratory. If the green slime is safely removed from its puzzle box without destroying its ceramic container, the PCs can keep it as well, and the wooden puzzle box is worth 250 gp.

Story Award: If the PCs free the ceramic cube without breaking it, award them XP as though they had overcome the green slime.

J13. ATOMIE AERIE (CR 5)

Arrow slits in the western, southern, and eastern walls look over the surrounding forest. A descending staircase in the northeastern corner ends suddenly, sealed over with stone a few steps down, and a large trap door in the ceiling is open. A cabinet leans against a wooden door in the northern wall. Several circular targets have been painted on the walls in vivid blue paint, but the room contains only a few chairs, a small desk piled with empty wine cups, and four large braziers.

The stairwell from area J12 is sealed by *stone shape*, so this room is inaccessible from below. In addition, the room's residents have shoved a heavy cabinet in front of the door to area J23, so that door requires a successful DC 25 Strength check to open from the north. The trap door leads up to an unoccupied battlement at the top of the tower.

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Creatures: This room is the home of four boisterous atomies: Arpellion, Brooten, Dart, and Gulber. These fearless bravos spend their days challenging each other to duels, spying on the other fey, and drinking. The atomies come and go through the open trap door in the ceiling, and they have blocked the only other remaining entrance to the room for fear of Bristle Billie below (see area J12). If the PCs gain entrance, the atomies accuse them of “most vile trespass” and imperiously challenge them to duel for their honor. If attacked, the atomies enter combat with gusto, alternating rounds spent turning invisible and rounds making sneak attacks. They fight until only one atomie remains, at which point the survivor flees out the trap door.

ATOMIES (4) **CR 1**
XP 400 each
hp 9 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 28*)

Treasure: A drawer in the desk contains six full vials of marker dye^{UE} and four empty vials, the dye from which the atomies used to make the targets on the walls.

Development: If the PCs agree to a duel, the atomies select a single champion (normally Gulber, though they are all mechanically identical) and ask the PCs to do the same. The duel is a battle in melee until one combatant yields or is rendered unconscious. The atomies first heap as many restrictions as they can get away with on the PC, under the guise of “compensating for an unfair size advantage,” such as agreeing to a *reduce person* spell, fighting with only one hand, picking a smaller champion, fighting while blindfolded, and anything else they can imagine. Once the PCs protest that the restrictions are becoming burdensome, the atomies relent and allow the duel to proceed. The atomie champion attempts sneak attacks against the PC, using *invisibility* often, and fights until defeated. If the atomie champion is slain, the others are disappointed but not unduly angry, as such is the risk of a duel.

If a PC wins a duel, the atomies freely share their wine and information about the other fey in the fort (none of whom they particularly like). As the atomies lurk near arrow slits, they have information about the inhabitants of areas J1, J2, J3, J6, J7, J9, and J12. They volunteer that Dearga Finlay wishes to supplant Halk, that the leprechauns want to steal Halk’s best liquor, and that Bristle Billie demands privacy while he works. Even if the PCs lose, the atomies are friendly enough, though they won’t share the castle gossip.

If the PCs are deferential (or at least polite), the atomies let them camp out in their aerie to rest and keep their presence a secret, whether they win or lose.

Story Award: If the PCs reach a friendly agreement with the atomies, award them XP as though they had defeated them in combat.

J14. FRONT HALL (CR 5)

This lofty entry hall contains a set of stairs ascending to the north, a double door to west, and a swinging door to the east. The odor of cooking meat wafts from the eastern door. Angled halls exit to the north and south, ending at stout wooden doors. Thick tapestries depicting forest scenes adorn the walls, but each tapestry is badly torn and stained with blood.

This large feasting hall has been used off and on by the revelers—especially during the rain—but most avoid it now that Bristle Billie has dropped one of his projects off as a guardian.

The stairs lead up to area J20, while the two halls lead to the ruined northeastern tower (area J15) and to the lower level of Bristle Billie’s tower (area J11). The swinging door leads into the kitchen (area J16), and anyone approaching that door without making noise can plainly hear the satyrs arguing beyond.

Creatures: One of Bristle Billie’s monstrous creations protects this room from intruders: a skinstitch constructed from the skin of several different creatures and clothed in tattered gray-and-green Chernasardo Ranger ponchos. The creation, nicknamed “Bughouse,” stands motionless under the staircase ascending to area J20. The skinstitch lacks any true intellect, but it ignores fey. As soon as Bughouse notices a larger creature, it lurches forward to attack and fights until slain.

Bristle Billie sewed a *wasp nest of swarming* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment 324*) into Bughouse’s stomach. Any round in which the skinstitch takes more than 5 points of bludgeoning or slashing damage from a single attack (after applying its damage reduction), the nest has a 50% chance of shattering, releasing a wasp swarm from the seams in Bughouse’s skin. The swarm emerges in Bughouse’s space, but thereafter attacks the nearest living creature. A PC can identify this hazard with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or Perception check.

BUGHOUSE **CR 5**
XP 1,600
Skinstitch (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 246*)
hp 52

Treasure: If the PCs defeat the skinstitch without shattering the *wasp nest of swarming*, they can recover it with ease.

J15. COLLAPSED GUEST TOWER (CR 6)

The door to this room from the keep hallway continually oozes a thin red fluid that puddles on the ground at the base of the door. The liquid is good wine, but it evaporates if touched or moved. This effect is an eerie manifestation of the ghost inhabiting the room beyond.

The ceiling in this room is only six feet from the floor, and consists of cracked beams and blocks of stone pressing down from the collapsed tower above. Chunks of wood and stone litter the room, with a particularly large specimen covering half of a once-fine writing desk.

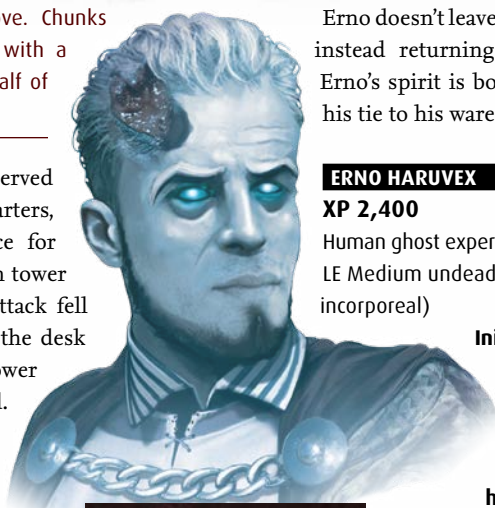
The Chernasardo Rangers reserved the northeastern tower as guest quarters, and offered this room as an office for visitors. The side of the northeastern tower that took the brunt of Ibzairiak's attack fell into this room. The large stone on the desk is an exterior stone from the tower that is scarred and pitted by acid. In addition, a few black scales are scattered throughout this room.

Creature: The only guest present when the Ironfang Legion attacked was a wealthy wine merchant named Erno Haruvex—the onetime owner of the wine fueling the celebration. The Rangers invited Erno to discuss donations of wine, ale, and other supplies, but the merchant misunderstood that he was being asked to part with some of his wares out of patriotic spirit. Instead, he arrived with as much product as he could haul through the forest in the hopes of a tidy sale. When Erno realized the misunderstanding, he attempted to salvage some profit from the long journey, and was caught in the office when Ibzairiak collapsed the guest tower. The extreme trauma of his death and his anger over his lost profits have caused Erno to rise as a ghost.

Erno is dimly aware he is dead, but he continues his calculations to determine how bad a loss he can accept on his spirits, constantly losing his place and starting over thanks to his inability to keep notes in his incorporeal state. He seems oblivious to the destruction in the room. If he notices intruders, he attempts to seize a physical body to complete his tabulations—a process that, in his current confused state, could take days. Once Erno has possessed a body, he wants nothing but to get back to work. PCs can defeat him any number of ways, but there are only two ways to permanently lay him to rest. The first is to pay him a fair price for his alcohol. He had hoped to sell the entire load for 3,000 gp, but will lower his price to 2,000 gp if a PC succeeds at a DC 22 Bluff or Diplomacy check; if the PCs supply such a payment, the ghost absorbs the coins into his ectoplasmic form and then vanishes with a satisfied sigh. Otherwise, a character must assist him in finding a profitable loophole with five successful DC 20 Appraise or Profession (merchant) checks. Erno's math from beyond the grave causes severe mental strain, and each attempted skill check deals 1 point of Wisdom damage whether it succeeds or fails. If allowed to inhabit a host, he can finish his own calculations in 1d4+1 days,

though he doesn't allow his host body to eat or rest during that time.

Erno doesn't leave this room to pursue intruders, instead returning to his endless calculations. Erno's spirit is bound to Fort Ristin because of his tie to his wares.



ERNO HARUVEX

ERNO HARUVEX **CR 6**

XP 2,400

Human ghost expert 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection)

hp 63 (6d8+36)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

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

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +4 touch (6d6)

Special Attacks malevolence (DC 19)

TACTICS

During Combat Erno hopes to possess a physical body with his malevolence power, and selects the cleverest-looking target first. If he fails to possess anyone and intruders refuse to leave him be, he lashes out with his corrupting touch.

Morale Erno fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19

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

Feats Ability Focus (malevolence), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness

Skills Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +13, Fly +14, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local, nobility) +10, Perception +15, Profession (merchant) +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +8; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven

Treasure: A drawer in the desk contains 1,060 gp. Although this drawer is normally locked, a falling rock cracked the surface of the desk and snapped the lock, providing easy access to this cache.

J16. KITCHEN (CR 6)

This functional kitchen has heavy, wooden shelves filled with utensils and basic supplies. A large stove occupies the southeastern corner of the room. Opposite it, a narrow set of stairs leads down.

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The Chernasardo Rangers kept this kitchen and the cellar below (area J17) very well stocked, and the hobgoblins brought additional supplies for their long-term occupation of the fort. The hobgoblins' four kitchen slaves attempted a revolt when the fey attacked the fort, but were swiftly killed by their overseer. The overseer dumped their corpses into a large bin near the stove to keep them out of the way. The corpses are still in the bin and wear shackles around the wrists and ankles. The fey have mistakenly assumed that the hobgoblins had intended the humans as food.

Although the kitchen contains a great deal of basic cooking supplies, the greedy korred Linder Largehands took all of the alcohol here—even cooking sherry—into the cellar.

Creatures: Two satyr cooks are arguing about how best to prepare their next meal. Their argument is heated and one of them waves a carving knife animatedly, but the two seem unlikely to come to blows. Because of their argument, the satyrs have a –4 penalty on their Perception checks and don't notice any intruders outside the kitchen. The satyrs attack intruders if they do notice, but their animosity means they don't fight together effectively. If one satyr is defeated, the other attempts to flee the fort and does not return.

SATYRS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 44 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 241)

J17. CELLAR (CR 5)

This low-ceilinged cellar is crammed with bags, boxes, and barrels. Stairs ascend along the northern wall, and a stout door leads to the southwest.

In addition to the food, spices, and other sundries stored here, a large chest contains all the alcohol in the fort other than the wine barrels in area J3. The chest is easy to find, and the words "Stay out! This means you!" are crudely carved on the lid in Sylvan. The chest has a heavy lock (Disable Device DC 25), and Linder Largehands has the only key. Smashing the lock or the chest destroys 1d4 bottles of the rare liqueurs inside (see *Treasure* below).

The door to the southwest leads to the fort's small jail cell (area J18). The door is barred from the outside, keeping prisoners contained. A ring of keys hangs on a hook near the cell door.

Creature: Halk's youngest brother, the greedy korred Linder Largehands, has taken the cellar as his own

personal domain. Although Linder shrewishly partitions food to the satyr chefs in area J16 to feed the fort, he is particularly stingy with alcohol. Halk specifically commanded that the wine in the courtyard must remain there for public consumption, and Linder won't directly oppose his elder brother on that issue. Instead, he appointed himself keeper of all spirits at the fort; he freely dips into the stores himself but otherwise only doles out his reserves when Halk directly commands him to do so.

Linder has a broad chest and a thin beard. His arms and legs are short for a korred, and his hands and feet are nimble but unusually small (Linder earned his moniker both from his greed and in mockery of his small limbs). If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, Linder falls to the ground weeping and begging for forgiveness,

but this is a ruse to get his opponents to drop their guard; if they do, he springs up and fights to the death.

Linder is in a constant state of inebriation, but is so accustomed to the effects that it causes him few difficulties beyond slurred speech and rash judgment.

LINDER LARGEHANDS

CR 5

XP 1,600

Advanced korred (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 173)

hp 45

Treasure: The chest contains cheap spirits, cooking sherry, watery ale, and six bottles of rare herbal liqueurs worth 125 gp each. The latter are the liqueurs sought by the leprechauns in area J9. The cellar also contains 100 Provision Points' worth of food (see page 23 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #115: Trail of the Hunted* for more information on Provision Points).

J18. CELL

Both of the doors leading into the cell have small openings, 6 inches square, at a human's eye level. The openings are inset with iron bars spaced 1 inch apart.

This broad cell reeks of death and filth. Several sets of manacles are bolted to the walls and ceiling, apparently much newer than the stone of the cell. Nine of the restraints hold only corpses, but a tenth set contains a weakly breathing halfling.

The Chernasardo Rangers didn't use this cell often, but the hobgoblins of the Ironfang Legion installed new manacles and promptly imprisoned their captives here. The keys to the manacles are hanging outside the cell



CIRIEO THESSADDIN

door in area **J17**. The dead bodies consist of humans and half-elves, all of whom died from horrific wounds incurred several days ago, including slashing wounds from hobgoblin longswords and acid burns from Ibzairiak's breath weapon. As only token efforts were made to bind these wounds before throwing the Rangers into this cell, they died of infection and blood loss over the following days.

Creature: The only prisoner left alive is a malnourished halfling Ranger named Cirieo Thessaddin. Although Cirieo is missing his left leg at the thigh, his terrible injury indirectly saved his life; the hobgoblins took more care in binding Cirieo's severe injury than with the those of the other Rangers, so Cirieo's wound began to heal while his comrades suffered infections and died. The hobgoblins at least remembered to feed the prisoners; the fey haven't done much more than to peep in at Cirieo and laugh drunkenly at his plight. As a result, the halfling is fatigued and has taken 40 points of nonlethal damage from thirst and starvation.

CIRIEO THESSADDIN

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (currently 40 points of nonlethal damage; see page 56)

Development: Cirieo has all but given up hope at being rescued, and watching his friends die alongside him has nearly broken his spirit. Nevertheless, if he spots the PCs, he quietly pleads with them for release and offers his aid, half expecting them to mock him just as the fey have. In the short term, Cirieo can provide a full description of Fort Ristin and information about the fey and their leaders. The resourceful halfling can also relate the details about the attack and the Ironfang forces, as well as the locations of the other Ranger forts. If fed, equipped, and healed, Cirieo can even offer some support in combat, and is willing to either accompany the PCs on their adventures or remain with the refugees as a guard while the PCs confront the Ironfang forces. His gear is stored in the westernmost officers' quarters (area **J22**), but he's happy to make do with anything the PCs lend him.

Cirieo is willing to answer any questions the PCs may have, likely including some of the following.

Who are you? "My name's Cirieo. Cirieo Thessaddin, and I appear at the moment to be the commanding officer of Fort Ristin, on account of my being the only Chernasardo Ranger left alive here."

What are you doing here? "Well, it's quiet and no one bothers me, and I think the dank air is clearing up my complexion. Also I was dismembered and chained by those bastard hobgoblins and their pet dragon, so there's that."

What happened to Fort Ristin? "Right now? Not sure. Sounds like a hell of a party, though, so I'm guessing

the hobgoblins moved on. Some two weeks ago, though, we were attacked by a horde of hobgoblins, along with a passel of trolls and forest animals. No idea where they came from; scouts never mentioned a force anywhere near that size. We held our own, though, until their dragon swooped in, spraying acid and ripping down the north wall. I got in a nice knock on his jaw, and he returned the favor by biting my leg off. The soldiers bandaged up the few of us who survived and tossed us down here."

What can you tell us about the Ironfang Legion? "I recognize the Ironfang Legion. They're a mercenary legion that works for Molthune. But this doesn't feel like a Molthuni operation. Too little regard for the fort's strategic value, and no follow-up from human forces. The Legion started stepping down their forces after that first attack, like they were withdrawing, and then a few days ago we heard some commotion, and that's when the fey moved in."

Who are these fey and what are they doing here? "If I had to guess from the charming, hairy gentleman who's been pointing and laughing at me the past few days, it's Halk Grundlechar. He thinks of himself as some kind of fey warlord, but we've spent the past few years liberating him of those illusions. Sounds like he and all the shiftless fey of the Chernasardo have made themselves at home."

Where are the rest of the Chernasardo Rangers? "The ones here are dead, except for me. Most everyone died defending the fort, and everyone else has been dropping from infected wounds or because these fey bastards keep forgetting to feed us. There might be others in the forest—probably at the other two forts we keep, but maybe just in hiding. I know we keep a secret stash of weapons under Fort Nunder, and I'm happy to share if you let me out of here. And maybe share a meal or six."

If we let you out, can you help us? "Well, I'm not here to woo the spiders, friend. Let me out and I'm happy to knock a few heads."

Story Award: If the PCs rescue Cirieo and gain the valuable information he knows about the Chernasardo forts, award them 2,400 XP.

J19. THRONE ROOM (CR 7)

A dozen bunk beds have been rearranged in this room. The straw mattresses have all been stacked to make a ludicrously high bed, and the metal bed frames have been pounded into uneven shapes and stacked to the north to create a dais surmounted by a metal throne. Scattered empty bottles, casks, and cups litter the surrounding area. Four squat stone blocks, each about two feet square, stand around the room, sealed to the floor.

This room was once the primary barracks of the fort. The arrow slits look over the courtyard (area **J3**), and the

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doors lead to the gallery (area J20). The stone blocks are the treasure boxes in which Halk keeps his various valuables (see Treasure on page 29). A Medium or smaller creature standing in the same square as one of these boxes gains partial cover (a +2 bonus to AC and a +1 bonus on Reflex saves), but its attacks and movement aren't impeded.

Creatures: Halk Grundlechar, leader of the fey at Fort Ristin and the First Drinker of the Red Rock Revel, claimed this large room and rearranged the furnishings to his liking. Halk is a burly korred with a thick torso, large facial features, and a wild profusion of matted head and beard hair. Halk usually splits his time between lounging on the throne with a drink in hand and sleeping off his latest binge. He occasionally staggers up to the balcony in area J23 to make imperious commands that keep the revel going.

When the PCs arrive, Halk entertains two spriggans who hope to win an invitation to the Red Rock Revel for their clan. Halk is drunk and obstinate, so keeps demanding the spriggans perform arbitrary and ridiculous tasks (such as changing their size as they leapfrog around the room, engaging in mattress-fluffing competitions, or balancing on each other's shoulders). One of the spriggans is Large, and the other is Small. If non-fey intrude upon his merriment, Halk offers the spriggans an invitation to the revel if they kill the interlopers. Glad to be done with Halk's silly

games, the spriggans leap eagerly into combat and fight to the death.

This fight could be particularly challenging, but there are several factors in the PCs' favor. First, Halk is intoxicated, giving him the sickened condition (as reflected in his statistics below) and reducing his Challenge Rating by 1. The PCs might also have gained allies in this fight from elsewhere in the fort, such as Dearga Finlay from area J7 or Cirieo Thessaddin from area J18. The PCs should be 6th level before they confront Halk—encourage them to explore other areas of Fort Ristin or arrange for drunken bands of korreds to interrupt their path if they seem to be headed toward this fight prematurely.

HALK GRUNDLECHAR

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male korred skald 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 173, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 49)

CE Small fey

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 73 (10 HD; 6d6+4d8+34)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron; **SR** 17
Weaknesses intoxicated

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *korrigan club* +14/+9 (1d4+10)

Range mwk dagger +8 (1d3+6/19–20)

Special Attacks animated hair, rage power (powerful blow +2), raging song 13 rounds/day (inspired rage, song of marching), rock throwing (100 ft.), stunning laugh

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +10)

At will—*animate rope*, *shatter* (DC 16), *stone shape*
1/day—*stone tell*

Skald Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +8)

2nd (2/day)—*enthrall* (DC 16), *mirror image*

1st (4/day)—*feather fall*, *grease*, *hideous laughter* (DC 15),
remove fear

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *flare* (DC 14), *light*, *message*,
open/close (DC 14), *summon instrument*

TACTICS

During Combat Halk is a vicious practical joker when drunk, and after beginning his raging song to goad the spriggans into action, he targets enemies with *grease* to make them fall, then targets an ally with *hideous laughter*, all while letting his *korrigan club* fight on his behalf. Afterward, he casts *mirror image* on himself and wades in for a good brawl. He ultimately would rather take any intruders prisoner to keep for entertainment, and readily accepts any surrenders.

Morale Halk is too drunk to consider his own mortality, and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perception), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +13, Craft (rope, sculpture) +11, Escape Artist +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +14, Perform (dance) +13, Perform (percussion instruments) +19, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +14, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SQ bardic knowledge +2, rage powers, stone stride, versatile performance (percussion)

Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance*, *scrolls of cure moderate wounds* (3), *scroll of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, *korrigan club* (see the sidebar), mwk dagger, mwk frame drum, red wool scarf (worth 15 gp), scroll case, silver tankard shaped like an old dwarven woman (worth 50 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Intoxicated (Ex) Halk has been drunk for days, and currently has the sickened condition (already applied to his statistics above). If he escapes or the PCs retreat, he requires 1d4 days to sober up, at which point his attack rolls, damage rolls, skill bonuses, and saving throws all increase by 2 and his Challenge Rating increases by 1.

KORRIGAN CLUB

Korrigan clubs are curved shillelaghs that korreds occasionally carve from the core of an oak that sprouts in inhospitable and rocky terrain. They are symbols of authority, often passed through the same clan for generations, and many bloodthirsty fey seek status by seizing one of these potent weapons.

KORRIGAN CLUB

PRICE
13,400 GP

SLOT none

CL 8th

WEIGHT 3 lbs.

AURA moderate transmutation

Etchings of small, hairy folk adorn this knotty +1 *thundering club*. Once per day as a standard action, a wielder can animate his own hair to wield the club without his hands for 4 rounds, as if the *korrigan club* had the *dancing* weapon special ability. A wielder's head hair or beard hair must be at least 2 feet long to activate this ability. Sundering the wielder's hair (hp 2) immediately causes the *korrigan club* to fall to the ground and renders the wielder unable to activate this special ability until the lost length regrows.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 6,700 GP

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate objects*, *blindness/deafness*

SPRIGGANS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 22, 34 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 257)

Treasure: Halk protects his treasures by piling them on the floor and using *stone shape* to form a stone box around them. Four such stone boxes are scattered around the room, and they must be smashed open (hardness 8, hp 10) or opened with another use of *stone shape* or a similar spell. One of the boxes contains 5,305 sp, another contains 1,403 gp, and a third contains two emeralds (worth 500 gp each) and a *pearl of power* (2nd level). The fourth box contains only a terrible odor, as Halk created it when he was drunk enough to try to "save" a particularly noisome belch.

J20. GALLERY

Doors and staircases cap both ends of this long, twisting hall. Several arrow slits look out on the forest along the eastern wall. The walls of this gallery are scratched, seared with fire, and stained with blood.

This gallery saw some of the fiercest fighting between the Chernasardo Rangers and the Ironfang Legion. The opening that once led to the northeastern tower

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is choked with rubble from the tower's collapse and is inaccessible. The northern stairs lead down to area J14, while the southern stairs lead up to area J23. The double door leads into area J19, and the single door to the south doesn't open at all—it is sealed from the other side with stone, as described in area J12.

J21. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

Once used by the leaders of the Chernasardo Rangers and then by officers of the Ironfang Legion, these rooms are now abandoned until a drunken korred picks one at random to pass out in. Each room contains a bed, a wardrobe, and a desk, but the furnishings have been vandalized by fey. There is a 25% chance the PCs find three miserable korreds sleeping here.

J22. EQUIPMENT ROOM

This room appears no different from the other officers' quarters (area J21), but the wardrobe is locked and the key is long gone. The wardrobe can be opened with a successful DC 22 Disable Device check or broken open with successful DC 25 Strength check. A hobgoblin officer used this wardrobe to store the equipment from the Rangers imprisoned in area J18, but never got the chance to distribute it. The fey haven't yet bothered to open the wardrobe.

Treasure: The wardrobe contains all of Cirieo Thessaddin's equipment (see page 27) as well as two masterwork cold iron short swords, a gray-and-green *cloak of elvenkind*, a leather bandolier with loops for six potion flasks, and a +1 *falchion* that always feels warm to the touch. The bandolier contains three *potions of barkskin*, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and an *oil of magic weapon*.

J23. STRATEGY ROOM (CR 5)

A heavy wooden table—scarred with fire and cracked in half—occupies the center of this chamber. A wide balcony to the west provides a commanding view of the courtyard, and several wooden doors are set into the walls.

This room was once the strategy room for Fort Ristin, and here the hobgoblin attackers defeated the Chernasardo fort commander. The heavy table was used to plan raids, but it was sundered during the fighting. The fey of the Red Rock Revel don't use this room except when Halk occasionally lumbers up here to make pronouncements from the balcony. The balcony doors are open, as Halk doesn't bother to shut them.

The door to the north no longer connects to any room, and instead opens onto a narrow ledge dropping 15 feet onto the remains of the northeast tower. The door is shifted from its hinges, requiring a successful DC 20 Strength check to open. From the inside, the PCs can use the aid another action to open the door, but from the

outside, the narrow ledge doesn't provide enough room for anyone else to assist on this check.

Creature: A one-eyed fey creature called an ohancanu climbed up the side of the keep and into this room a few days ago. This ohancanu, named Biello, wants to join the Red Rock Revel but doesn't have an invitation and fears Halk will kill him if he participates uninvited. Biello is considering how best to approach Halk and is otherwise lying low in this room (hiding in one of the adjacent officers' quarters whenever Halk stumbles through to make a pronouncement from the balcony). If Biello detects the PCs in this room, he attacks, certain that Halk will welcome him for killing intruders.

OHANCANU

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 52 (see page 88)

CLAIMING FORT RISTIN

Once Halk and his siblings are defeated, the redcap Dearga Finley (if still alive) immediately attempts to take over the Red Rock Revel to solidify her authority as the new fey ruler of the region. If the PCs have also dealt with the cruel redcap, any fey remaining in the fort slink off over the next 1d4 days, or sooner if threatened from Halk's private balcony. The PCs may consider moving their refugees into the structure, though the walls and primary keep are in shambles, stained with blood, and known to both the Ironfang Legion and many of the Chernasardo's crueler fey. If PCs do opt to move their band of followers into the ruin, it provides more space and more comfortable lodgings, which in turn grant all NPCs resting within a +1 morale bonus on one skill check each day. However, you should roll for a random encounter every 24 hours as other forest residents investigate the fort. Unless the PCs remain behind as guardians, they will need to hope one or more of their NPCs or possible allies are up to the task of protecting the location; you can allow players to step into the roles of various NPCs they've recruited or trained—such as Aubrin the Green, Cirieo, or the wood giant Herge—to confront any dangers, or simply adjudicate such encounters using your best judgment.

PART 3: SECRETS OF FORT NUNDER

The Chernasardo Ranger stronghold closest to the Nesmian Plains, Fort Nunder sits against the west side of a steep hill called Nunder Scarp. Intended as a location to rest and resupply rather than as a long-term habitation, Fort Nunder contained few barracks but several storerooms, smokehouses, and pantries.

Decades ago, the Rangers decided to construct a vault beneath the Nunder Scarp to secure the specialized weapons and equipment they would not need on a

day-to-day basis. The two best trapsmiths among the Rangers—a dwarf named Dargrit Foehewer and a human archer named Ekaterin Fletcher—quarreled about how to best protect the vault. Ekaterin preferred long, straight halls defended with an endless rain of arrows, while Dargrit favored isolated, brutal, bladed traps that mimicked his twin-axe fighting style. The feuding architects constructed two separate trapped passages leading to the vault, each convinced their traps would provide the defense the other's lacked. The two Rangers were so confident in their constructions that each asked to be entombed within the hill after their deaths. The equipment stored in the vault went unused for decades, and eventually the Chernasardo Rangers forgot much about the vault other than the famous rivalry between its two designers.

If the PCs rescued Cirieo, he warns them of the dragon assisting the Ironfang Legion, and recommends visiting Fort Nunder before chasing the beast. The Chernasardo Rangers battled a trio of vicious green dragons for nearly a decade two generations ago, and if they still have any dragon-hunting supplies, they are sure to be stored in Nunder's infamous vault.

Part of the mercenary forces recruited by the Ironfang Legion in the Fangwood operation included a tribe of trolls ostensibly led by the oracle Parthuk (see page 50). Seeing them as little more than bandits, Ibzairiak dispatched the trolls as shock troops to soften up the defenders of Fort Nunder, but he overestimated the Rangers' defenses. The trolls scaled Fort Nunder's walls and swiftly killed and ate the few defenders, working themselves up into such a frenzy that they took out their remaining aggression upon the fort itself, knocking over walls and towers and severely compromising the stronghold's value. By the time Ibzairiak and the hobgoblins arrived, rubble concealed the entrance to the vault, and the building itself was little more than a ruin, useless to the Legion as any sort of stronghold.

Angered by the waste, Ibzairiak gave the ruined fortress to the remaining trolls as a generous "payment" for their service. When the trolls' field commander Vugsar protested, the dragon dissolved him with a stream of acid and promoted Vugsar's daughter Nashgra to command before demanding she accept his generous compensation. She acquiesced, and the Legion departed, leaving the trolls to their pile of rubble. Parthuk—never especially tied to his followers—washed his hands of the crew as well, choosing to remain with the Ironfang Legion after hearing of his minions' brutish folly.

Now the trolls grumble in their new home, hunting in the area and dreaming of killing Ibzairiak while they stew. Nashgra has largely kept her forces from doing anything suicidal like attacking Fort Trevalay, but they attack any hobgoblin patrols they discover in the woods, dragging the prisoners back to Fort Nunder to be eaten.

FORT NUNDER FEATURES

This squat fort of stone and wood has been reduced to little more than rubble. The walls are collapsed into mounds of stones 15 feet high, while the former towers are nothing more than slightly taller piles; climbing these mounds requires a successful DC 15 Climb check; failure at one of these Climb checks causes a small landslide of debris audible throughout the ruined fort and attracting trolls to investigate. The fort is constructed in the lee of a tall, steep hill that towers another 10 feet above the fort itself. A wooden palisade atop the hill indicates that it was once used as a watch post, but the palisade is shattered and the post is unoccupied. The fort's gatehouse remains intact, although the rooms above it are now mere heaps of debris.

The only doors remaining in Fort Nunder are the locked, iron-shod stone doors in the vault complex beneath Nunder Scarp. The interior rooms and halls are 10 feet high and unlit except where indicated.

K1. GATEHOUSE (CR 6)

The gatehouse portcullis is raised and bent sideways beneath the heaps of stone filling the walkway above, providing a clear but shadowed passage to the fort's interior. On the other side of the passage, a lifelike statue stands with its arms forward and a welcoming smile on its face.

The arched entry weathered the troll rampage fairly well, and remains solid. The statue depicts the famed Chernasardo engineer Ekaterin Fletcher, and is the work of a gifted sculptor who joined the Rangers after his town and workshop were burned. A similar statue of Dargrit Foehewer once stood opposite this one, but is now buried under 1,000 pounds of rubble.

Creatures: Nashgra and her tribe breed vicious war beasts called trollhounds, and a trio of the monsters survived the fortress assault. Smelly and loud, the three pets lounge in the gatehouse, both to ambush intruders and to greet their masters when the trolls return home from a hunt. They viciously attack any strangers.

TROLLHOUNDS (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 274)

Treasure: The statue of Ekaterin is worth 50 gp for its fine artistry, if the PCs can find a buyer, but this statue and its buried mate also conceal emergency provisions for any Rangers who needed to flee in to midst of a crisis or attack. The statue is hollow (detectable with a successful DC 20 Perception check or automatically for any PC with stonecunning), having been opened up then resealed with *stone shape*, and can easily be broken open

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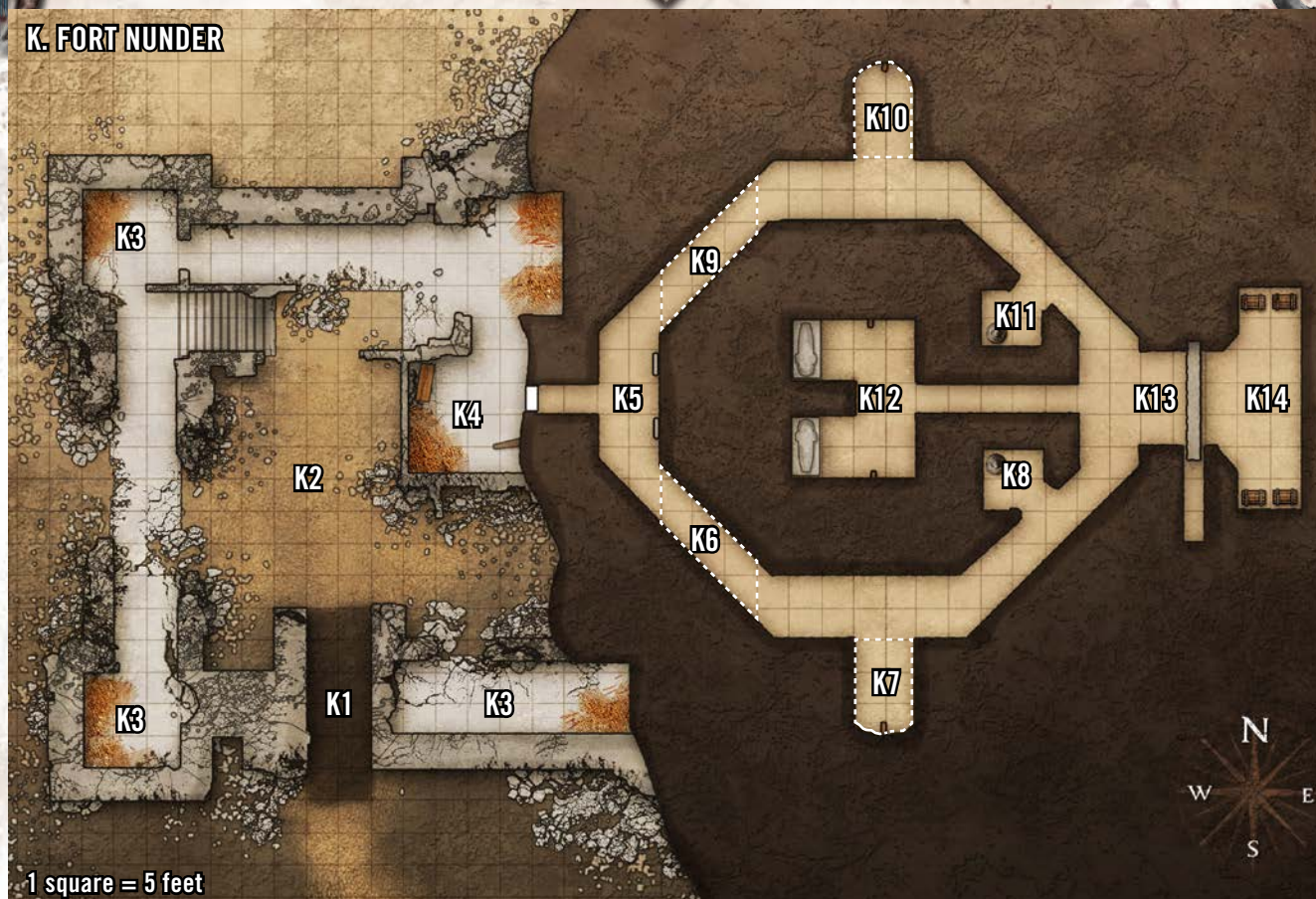
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with a solid blow (rendering it of no value). The interior contains a pouch of 150 gp, 30 days' worth of rations, a disguise kit, 10 masterwork alchemical silver arrows, and a *potion of gaseous form*. The statue's mate was also hollow, and if PCs surmise its existence (either from knowing the story of the infamous rivalry, or after visiting the vault) and dig it out (requiring 1 hour of work), the now-broken statue of Dargrit contains a pouch of 150 gp, 30 days' worth of rations, a forger's kit, an alchemical silver hand axe, and a *potion of rage*.

K2. THE COURTYARD (CR 8)

Within the tumbled walls of the fort, a courtyard roughly 50 feet wide lies choked with stone and timber debris. A mostly ruined roof still clings to the corners, providing a bit of shelter over a wooden staircase in the northwestern corner and a large collapsed building to the east against the escarpment. Vines and weeds have already begun to take root atop the fresh ruins. Bones litter the ground, and piles of stonework have been gathered into simple chairs and tables half again larger than any human might need.

Simple banners, constructed from torn green fabric and bright red paint, flutter from the toppled walls. Each hand-painted banner depicts a simple symbol: a large "X" and a pair of menacing eyes above it.

Fort Nunder's courtyard is now a troll lair, as the surviving mercenaries dismissed by the Ironfang Legion slowly refit it to their needs. A massive hole to the west is now the primary entrance the trolls use, and has been strung with chimes made from the bones and skulls of both Chernasardo Rangers and Ironfang hobgoblins as a warning to trespassers. The banners declare the tribe's new identity as a fearsome mercenary army to rival the Ironfang Legion (in their own minds, at least); Nashgra has been racking her mind trying to figure out what the banner depicts and what name to use, having constructed several banners she imagined looked intimidating before considering such questions.

Charcoal drawings on the wall depict several maps of the area, including Fort Nunder and Fort Trevalay, as well as Nashgra's scribbled thoughts for a plan of attack. All the plans so far depict storming across the northern or southern bridge, ignoring the western bridge (area L2) entirely, as the troll leader knows that route to be trapped. Observant adventurers studying her notes may likewise conclude that bridge to be more hazardous than the others.

The wooden staircase leads up to the walkway that once capped the fort's walls. Large sections of this walkway are now destroyed, especially along the eastern wall, and what remains is rough terrain.

Creatures: At any given time, half the troll forces are lounging here while the other half are out scouring the woods for meals, Rangers, or Ironfang scouts (the latter two to eventually become meals). The three trolls on “guard duty” around the fort usually lounge around the courtyard, but retire to the ruined interior (area K3) at night or in foul weather.

To cope with their boredom, the trolls of Fort Nunder have taken to gambling—a habit they learned from Ironfang soldiers. Without strong heads for strategy, they prefer highly random games, and pass the time playing twentybone (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 241), deciding who gets to be the house any given night based on who brought in the most impressive kill from their last hunt. The guards are amused enough by their game that they take a –5 circumstance penalty on all Perception checks. The trolls are even willing to gamble with strangers (though they plan to eat them later), and anyone who plays at least 2 rounds of twentybone with the trolls gains a +2 circumstance bonus on any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks against them for 10 minutes.

The guards often end up in fistfights over their games of chance, and so Nashgra rarely emerges from her room over the sound of combat unless the trolls here specifically cry for help. The guards only do so if one of their number is killed.

TROLLS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 63 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 268)

Treasure: In addition to the assortment of coins the trolls use for gambling (218 cp, 855 sp, and 61 gp), the trolls are using the former fort commander’s *lesser extend metamagic rod*^{UE} as a makeshift table leg.

K3. RUINED BARRACKS

Wooden interior walls and furniture have been smashed, leaving only a cave-like stone room and a floor lined with straw, splinters, and stinking feces.

Some of the fort interior remains standing, though the accommodations were too small for the new troll residents. They’ve taken turns gutting the interior to make Fort Nunder feel more like their former home much deeper in the forest. Several large beds have been dug out through the floorboards and lined with ponchos and animal furs.

Treasure: Though the trolls have smashed most of the valuables, a few odds and ends have survived, either because they were pretty enough to seem valuable or because they were small enough to be overlooked, including a set of masterwork sewing tools, a leatherbound book on Chelish history (worth 150 gp), several bolts of

fine cloth (worth 300 gp all together), a mithral dagger, a pot of *stone salve*, a *scroll of baleful polymorph*, and two *potions of delay poison*. The southwestern barracks still contain maintenance supplies—including hammers, lumber, nails, bolts of oilcloth, and two dozen pots of paint. A successful DC 18 Perception check uncovers a sealed jar of *marvelous pigments* stored inside one of the paint pots.

K4. COMMANDER’S QUARTERS (CR 7)

This area was once the bedroom and office of the fort’s elven commander, Garlielle Forsyth, a kind and patient sorcerer trained in both Kyonin and Crystalhurst. Forsyth slew four of the troll mercenaries herself before Vugsar tore her limb from limb. To heighten their own magical power, Vugsar and his daughter dined upon the commander’s remains and looted her belongings. Nashgra has since transformed the room into a comfortable den, heaping straw and expensive bedding together into a nest and lining it with the most attractive pieces of shattered darkwood furniture. Forsyth’s skull still lies in the corner, now painted with fake arcane symbols.

Creatures: Nashgra, like her father, believes herself to be a powerful wizard. Both mastered the skill of activating wands and similar magic devices after looting a crumbling wizard’s tower deeper in the woods, and don’t understand how much more talent true spellcasting requires. At first glance, she even appears to be a spellcaster, thanks to her bandolier of wands and magical gloves, and that appearance did much to cow the rest of her tribe before Parthuk moved into their territory and established his half-hearted dominance.

Nashgra is loud and angry—even more so now that her father has been killed by someone else. She wants revenge against Ibzairiak and Parthuk, but not enough to team up with humans. Still, the young troll easily works herself into a rant, and clever PCs might learn a great deal about what awaits them at Fort Trevalay if they keep her engaged. Nashgra knows about both the trapped bridge (area L2) and Ibzairiak’s trapped private entry to the tower (area L20), as well as the various commanders, including Jang, Parthuk, and the Ironfang commanders Eygara and Salokut.

Regardless of how long the PCs keep her talking, Nashgra ultimately plans to eat them, especially if she spots any obvious spellcasters.

NASHGRA

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female troll rogue (counterfeit mage) 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 268, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 109)

NE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

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DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)
hp 109 (10d8+64); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d8+5), 2 claws +11 (1d6+5)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+7), sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Nashgra relies heavily on her *wand of burning hands* and *wand of acid arrow*, assuming that because fire and acid are most dangerous to trolls, they are the best weapons in every situation. If reduced to fewer than half her hit points, she discards her wands and simply relies on her claws and bite to finish off any remaining enemies.

Morale Nashgra believes a wizard as powerful as she could never be slain, and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 18, **Con** 22, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 27

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)

Skills Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +10, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +8, Use Magic Device +13

Languages Giant

SQ magical expertise +2, rogue talent (combat trick), signature wand

Combat Gear *wand of acid arrow* (19 charges), *wand of burning hands* (42 charges), *wand of magic weapon* (11 charges), *wand of reduce animal* (8 charges), *wand of stinking cloud* (14 charges); **Other Gear** *apprentice's cheating gloves*^{UE}, *bandolier*^{UE}, spell component pouch, silver-and-onyx fox amulet (worth 100 gp)

Development: A door to the east of the former fort commander's office leads into the true treasure of Fort Nunder: the vault built into the Nunder Scarp. With the destruction of the fort, the doors are now partially buried under rubble and destroyed furniture. Finding the stone door (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28) requires a successful DC 15 Perception check, although the PCs find it automatically if Cirieo told them where to look. The door's sophisticated lock requires a successful DC 35 Disable Device check to open, but the key is sitting in a drawer in commander Forsyth's old desk—one of the few pieces of furniture Nashgra has left intact, as it made a comfortable chair. Opening the door without the key requires a successful DC 28 Strength check. Nashgra discovered the door, but she's not strong enough to open it and isn't convinced anything of value lies beyond it.

K5. TRAPSMITH PLAQUES

A short east-west corridor leads to a larger one that runs north and south. Two iron plaques are mounted into the stone of the east wall, each three feet above the flagstone floor. The northern and southern halls both curve to the east.

The southern plaque reads, "A whirlwind of blows assures victory. —Dargrit Foehewer," while the northern plaque reads "Strike safely, strike quietly. —Ekaterin Fletcher." These are the favorite aphorisms of the two



NASHGRA

Rangers who disagreed about how best to protect the vault here in the Nunder Scarp. They provide a clue that the traps in the southern hall were designed by an architect who favored melee attacks but the traps in the northern hall were designed by an archer.

If Cirio sees the plaques (or learns about them), he recalls that Dargrit Foehewer and Ekaterin Fletcher were well-respected engineers among the Chernasardo Rangers. Dargrit was a dwarf who fought with paired axes, while Ekaterin was a legendary archer. Both died before Cirio was born, so he didn't know either of them, but their rivalry remains legendary. Rangers still talk about the pair's rivalry, and their decision to create two separate passages. Cirio doesn't know the specifics about the traps, however, as the Rangers haven't accessed the vault in many years. If Cirio is not on hand to provide the information above, a PC can recall the same information with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check.

K6. LUNGING STRIKES TRAP (CR 6)

Foehewer's slashing blades and brutal overkill philosophy protects this southern hall.

Trap: The walls of this hall contain two oversized, greataxe-like blades that slice across the width of the hall when any of several pressure plates (as indicated on the map) are depressed by more than 25 pounds. The blades sweep in arcs parallel to the floor at 1 foot high and 3 feet high. After their attack, the mechanisms require a full minute to reset, after which the trap is ready to activate once again.

LUNGING STRIKES TRAP CR 6

XP 2,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 24; Disable Device DC 18

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 30 to locate)

Effect Atk +10/+10 melee (3d6/×3); multiple targets (all targets in marked squares of area K6). In addition, when this trap is triggered, there is a 50% chance that the wood golem in area K8 activates and comes to investigate.

K7. ADVANCING FORMATION TRAP (CR 5)

An iron hook juts from the center of the wall at the southern end of this hallway. A large steel key hangs from the hook.

The key is 18 inches long and weighs 6 pounds. It has an intricate series of grooves along each of its teeth, indicating that the lock it fits is particularly complex. This is one of the two keys required to open the vault door in area K13; the other key hangs in area K10.

Trap: Hair-thin wires crisscross the hall, detecting any movement in the air within 5 feet of the hook, even if

the creature is flying (but not an ethereal creature). When the trap triggers, a pair of spears pierce forward from the east and west walls to puncture anyone in the hall, and continue to do so for 4 rounds. A successful Reflex save allows a character to avoid the attack for a round and—if she desires—leap 5 feet back, potentially moving her out of the dangerous hallway. The key can be safely retrieved from a distance, such as with a long pole.

ADVANCING FORMATION TRAP CR 5

XP 1,600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 18; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (within 5 ft. of the key); **Duration** 4 rounds; **Reset** automatic

Effect concealed spears (1d8+2 piercing damage, Reflex DC 17 avoids); multiple targets (all creatures in area K7). In addition, when this trap is triggered, there is a 50% chance that the wood golem in area K8 activates and comes to investigate.

K8. AXE GUARDIAN ALCOVE (CR 6)

This nondescript alcove contains only a small dais and long-neglected woodworking tools.

Creature: A wood golem placed here is carved to appear as though it is holding an oversized wooden axe in each hand, although the axes are part of the creature and cannot be removed. This golem activates upon several different conditions: if it sees any creature not wearing a gray-and-green poncho (such as those the Chernasardo Rangers wear), if it hears the traps in area K6 or K7 go off (a 50% chance each time a trap activates), or if the wood golem archer in area K11 is damaged in any way. If either golem takes damage, the other golem immediately knows its location and moves to join it in combat. This golem will not target or attack anyone wearing a Chernasardo Ranger poncho.

The axe guardian is a straightforward combatant; it attacks the nearest opponent each round and fights until destroyed.

AXE GUARDIAN CR 6

XP 2,400

Variant wood golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 164)

hp 64

Melee 2 Large wooden battleaxes +12 (2d6+4/×3)

K9. HUNDRED ARROWS TRAP (CR 6)

This long, bare hall extends to the northeast, where it joins another hall leading east. Near this intersection, two large iron sconces jut from the walls up near the ceiling, one on each side of the passage. The sconces are carved to resemble taut longbows arrayed with dozens of arrows pointing at the space between them. A fire in each sconce burns merrily.

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A *continual flame* spell illuminates each sconce. The scenery they depict is intended to appear suspicious, as though the sconces might launch arrows at anyone walking between them. In truth, they are merely harmless ornamentation; the actual trap is instead triggered in the center of the hall, 15 feet southwest of the distracting decorations.

Trap: The center of the hall is lined with several pressure plates as indicated on the map. When any of the pressure plates is depressed by more than 25 pounds, several hidden hatches at the end of the hall launch a fusillade of arrows throughout all of area **K9**, targeting each creature in the hall with 2d4 arrows.

HUNDRED ARROWS TRAP

CR 6

XP 2,400

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 30 to locate)

Effect 2d4 arrows; Atk +12 ranged (1d8/×3); multiple targets (all targets in area **K9**). In addition, when this trap is triggered, there is a 50% chance that the wood golem in area **K11** activates and comes to investigate.

K10. CORNERED PREY TRAP (CR 5)

A large bronze key hangs from an iron hook in the center of this hallway's northern end.

The bronze key is 18 inches long and weighs 6 pounds. Like the steel key in area **K7**, this key bears intricate grooves that indicate it fits a complex lock. This is one of the two keys required to open the vault door at area **K13**.

Trap: Moving the iron hook—such as by removing the key—triggers a trap door in the floor, dropping any creatures in the area and trapping them until the nearby wood golem arrives to pick them off.

CORNERED PREY TRAP

CR 5

XP 1,600

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 23

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect 30-foot-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); DC 22 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-by-15-foot area). In addition, when this trap is triggered, there is a 50% chance that the wood golem in area **K11** activates and comes to investigate.

K11. BOW GUARDIAN ALCOVE (CR 6)

This area is identical to area **K8**.

Creature: This alcove contains a single wood golem carved carrying an oversized longbow, although the bow is part of the creature and cannot be removed. The golem uses long splinters from its own body as arrows, providing it with unlimited ammunition. This golem activates under similar circumstances as the one in area **K8**, but limits its activities to the northern hallway unless the its axe-wielding partner is damaged. Like the golem in area **K8**, this golem will not target or attack anyone wearing a Chernasardo Ranger poncho.

The bow guardian stops as soon as it has an opponent in sight and makes full attacks with its longbow against the closest opponent. If approached in melee, it retreats to continue firing arrows if possible, or uses its slam attacks if retreat is not an option.

BOW GUARDIAN

XP 2,400

Variant wood golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 164)

hp 64

Melee 2 slams +12 (1d8+4)

Ranged Large composite longbow +11/+6 (2d6+4/×3)

K12. CRYPT

A low stone wall bisects half of this large chamber. To either side of the wall rests a stone sarcophagus. The southern sarcophagus is carved with the image of a stout male dwarf holding two crossed handaxes. The northern sarcophagus bears the image of a sharp-faced human woman holding a longbow. Near each sarcophagus, an iron lever juts from a panel in the wall.

These trapsmiths asked to be buried within the halls they helped protect, to forever oversee their work and gloat when the other rival's traps were foiled. The engineers died within weeks of one another (though reports conflict as to who perished first), and rumors among the Rangers insist that without the other to argue with, the remaining engineer simply lost all passion for life.

Opening either sarcophagus requires a successful DC 20 Strength check.

This crypt also functions as a control room for the traps. Although the lever in each panel moves easily through three positions, the function of each position is not immediately apparent.

The panel near the southern sarcophagus is labeled "Lunging Strikes" in the top position and "Advancing Lines" in the bottom position. The lever is currently in the center position, indicating that both traps are active. Moving the lever down into the bottom position deactivates the trap in area K6, while moving it up into the top position deactivates the trap in area K7.

The panel near the northern sarcophagus is labeled "A Hundred Arrows" in the top position and "Cornered Prey" in the bottom position. The lever is currently in the center position, indicating that both traps are active. Moving the lever down into the bottom position deactivates the trap in area K9, while moving it up into the top position deactivates the trap in area K10.

Treasure: The southern sarcophagus contains the moldering remains of a stout dwarven male named Dargrit, who's wearing a masterwork breastplate and holding a masterwork handaxe and a +1 *handaxe*. Around Dargrit's neck is a locket worth 300 gp containing an exquisitely carved image of his wife. The northern sarcophagus contains the remains of a female human named Ekaterin. Her masterwork studded leather armor is intact, but her longbow is broken in half—evidence of the ferocity of her final battle. Her *efficient quiver* contains six +1 *human-bane arrows*, each carved with the words "One Less Molthuni."

K13. VAULT DOOR

This passage ends to the east at a wall-to-wall iron door with no handle or hinges. The stone wall to the north of the door is inset with a pair of large keyholes.

This door opens by sliding to the south once its two keys (the steel key from area K7 and the bronze key from area K10) are slotted into the keyholes and turned. The iron door is 8 inches thick (hardness 10, hp 240, break DC 42). The dual locking mechanism is particularly complex; opening the door without the keys requires a successful DC 40 Disable Device check. Opening the door with only one key is slightly easier, reducing the DC of this Disable Device check to 35.

Numerous warnings and curses are etched into the door, promising only misery and death beyond the portal or terrible fates that will haunt any who enter. These warnings are false—something of a joke that developed among officers station in Fort Nunder, who invented a tradition of labeling the door with the most reprehensible curses they could imagine. If Cieirio accompanies the PCs, the halfling insists the warnings are just "bored forest men inventing a bit of drama to fill time."

K14. VAULT

Tidily arranged boxes, chests, and sacks line the shelves of this low, stone room, while armor dummies and a weapon rack claim the floor space. A mural on the eastern wall depicts a host of green-and-gray-cloaked archers turning back a motley army of Molthuni soldiers, giants, and green-scaled dragons.

The sturdy vault door, the sole entrance to this room, cannot be opened from inside the vault, and it is also nearly impossible to close from within. Most of the shelves and chests are empty—commandeered by various Chernasardo Ranger agents in their ongoing conflicts—but a few useful treasures remain.

Treasure: A dozen longswords, two dozen short swords, three dozen spears, a masterwork greataxe, and two masterwork longspears fill the weapon racks, while the armor stands are dressed in two suits of masterwork hide armor, a suit of +1 *leather armor*, and a suit of green dragonhide banded mail. The shelves contain 300 days' worth of trail rations, a small lockbox with 400 gp, an iron pot containing four flasks' worth of *unguent of timelessness*, a +1 *adaptive*^{UE} *composite longbow*, and a green-stained box decorated with dragon's teeth (worth 200 gp) containing four *potions of remove fear*, a *minor ring of energy resistance* (acid), and 10 +1 *dragon bane arrows*. A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Perception check also discovers a single, dust-covered adamantite starknife in a dirty corner.

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FOREWORD

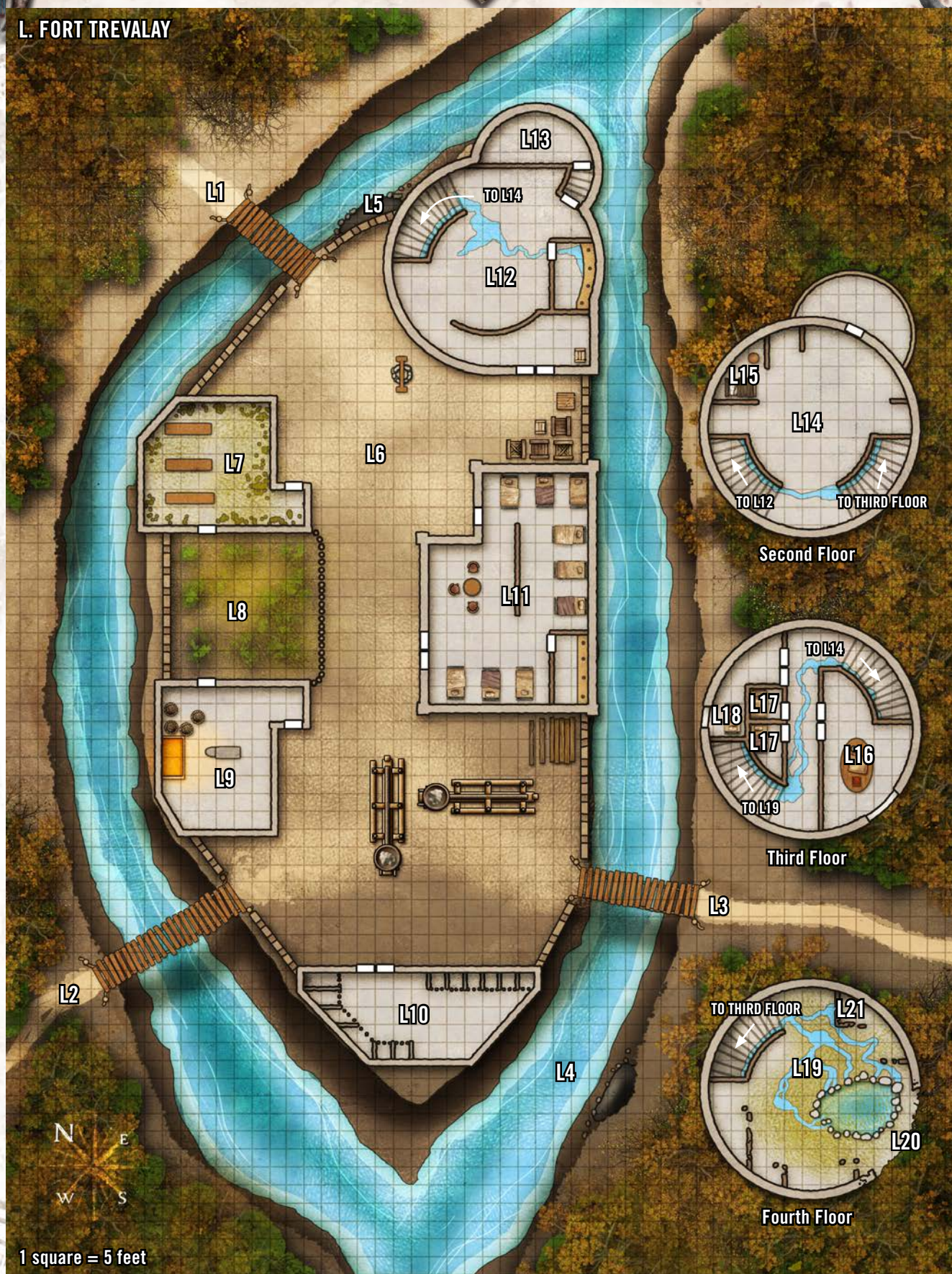
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CHERNASARDO
RANGERSBORN OF
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L. FORT TREVALAY



PART 4: THE GORGE

A wide river has carved a gorge fifty feet deep through the forest. The gorge splits around a pillar of dark rock three hundred feet long and over a hundred feet wide. Sprawling atop this pillar is a compound consisting of several stone buildings and a few partially assembled war machines, all enclosed by twelve-foot-high walls ringing the plateau. A tall, wide tower with small windows looms to the northeast. Water pours steadily from a massive hole smashed through an upper wall.

Three bridges made of thick ropes and heavy planks span the gorge: one to the north side of the gorge, a second to the west, and third to the south. These bridges lead to gaps in the stone wall surrounding the fort.

Fort Trevalay is the most defensible of the Chernasardo Ranger forts, and is often erroneously considered to be the organization's headquarters. Unfortunately, it was also the first fort to fall to the Ironfang Legion. The Sixjaws River flows through a series of high hills made of soft limestone, long ago cutting a deep gorge around a column of denser rock. This freestanding rock pillar is difficult to access, as the gorge surrounds it on all sides, and the Chernasardo Rangers saw it as an ideal defensive position. Thirty years ago, they constructed a wooden bridge out to the pillar, then built several low stone buildings on its surface. Over time, they expanded the largest building upward to form a tower, encircled the complex with a stone wall around the edge of the pillar, and added two more bridges that could be collapsed and dropped into the gorge to discourage invasion. The Rangers became a bit too secure behind their defenses; their vigilance in defending Fort Trevalay was lax, and the fort was often understaffed to supplement missions elsewhere.

Out of the three Chernasardo holdings, Jang wholeheartedly recommended sacking Fort Trevalay first, knowing it would be an unassailable stronghold from which the Ironfang Legion could wipe out the remaining forts. Although Fort Trevalay was well defended from the ground, a powerful strike from the air decimated the fort's defenders. Ibzairiak glided up the gorge out of sight of the fort's defenders, then crested the southwestern wall and blanketed the courtyard with his acidic breath weapon. With the defenders scattered, the hobgoblins stormed the bridge at area L3 and entered the fort. The surviving Rangers retreated into the fort's tower, but Ibzairiak and Jang anticipated this defense. The dragon smashed through the roof of the tower, killing the fort's commander and his entourage. When the hobgoblins burst through the tower doors, the surviving Rangers surrendered. These Rangers now serve the hobgoblins as slaves, plotting against their hobgoblin masters from the tower's prison (area L13).

FORT TREVALAY ON ALERT

Fort Trevalay is diligently guarded by the Ironfang Legion. The hobgoblins generally leave defense of the fort to the guards in areas L1 and L3. The sergeants in area L6 and their animal companions are also alert for danger, and any serious attack brings all three of these groups together to defend the fort (together, these defenders constitute a CR 9 encounter). The PCs might use the fact that all of these hobgoblins respond together to stage a diversion and sneak into the fort from another direction.

If necessary, the hobgoblins drop one of the bridges (area L1 or L3), but they are reluctant to collapse both bridges, as it would strand them in the fort. They keep the trapped third bridge in place as a lure to unsuspecting attackers.

If the defenders are outmatched and call for help, the hobgoblins in the barracks (area L11) respond. Lieutenant Eygara drinks her *potion of invisibility* and sneaks out to assess the danger immediately, but the other hobgoblins take 2 minutes to don armor and gather their weapons.

If the hobgoblins from the barracks are outmatched, one of them flees to the tower for aid. Jang brings her bodyguards, her troll ally Parthuk and his dire weasels, and the cougar in area L8. If Ibzairiak is present, he flies out long enough to intimidate intruders, then returns to the tower and assumes Jang will deal with the problem.

The other denizens of Fort Trevalay—such as the barghest Marrowcrack (in area L9) and the spectre (in area L10)—don't leave their areas unless the invaders happen to be near their locations.

Jang and Ibzairiak claimed the tower for themselves and their closest confederates, calling it "Fethak Salgu" in the Goblin tongue. Ibzairiak has spent much of his time since destroying interior walls to make more room and ordering Jang to reinvent the dour, stone building into something putrid and dank to comfort his black dragon sensibilities.

Now that most of the work of conquering the Chernasardo forts is done and the Ironfang Legion's main troops seem to have forgotten about the northernmost forces, the leaders at Fort Trevalay have sunk into routine. Ibzairiak lounges around the fort and fishes in the gorge below, rousing himself once every other week to fly north to the Blight in the central Fangwood. The arrogant dragon hopes to court a far older and more powerful black dragon—Naphexi—who dwells among the twisted forest. These journeys last 3 days; Naphexi doesn't allow Ibzairiak to stay more than a few hours, and always sends him away with demands for strange herbs,

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FORT TREVALAY RUMORS

Stealthy PCs might eavesdrop upon the hobgoblin defenders of Fort Trevalay to learn about the fort's current inhabitants. When eavesdropping on the hobgoblins, an undetected PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check learns one random rumor from the table below. For every 5 points by which the result exceeds the DC, the PC overhears another rumor. The PCs might also capture and interrogate a hobgoblin to learn the information below. In this case, use the rumor most relevant to the PCs' line of questioning. Due to the eclectic composition of the Ironfang Legion, the hobgoblins generally speak in Common.

d6 Rumor

- 1 "I don't understand how Ibzairiak is still in command of this operation. That dragon's got no rank, no discipline, and he keeps running off for three days at a time. And you know he's not going for orders; he flies off north, not south!"
- 2 "Jang's not even part of the Legion. That creepy forest witch is two steps from elf magic, and more beast than hobgoblin. Hadregash knows what she gets up to in that tower with the dragon and all those critters. Why isn't Eygara in charge of this operation?"
- 3 "Cougars and lizards and weasels. This isn't a fort, it's a zoo! We should've brought more slaves to clean up after all the pets. Those Rangers we took haven't been broken yet."
- 4 "Can't shake the feeling that Marrowcrack and her little pet have been eyeballing us when we sleep. I know Eygara confined that creepy goblin chaplain to the forge, but it wasn't some flu that turned Turgut to stone!"
- 5 "Every time I walk past that kennel, a chill runs down my back. I'm glad the lieutenant chained up the place after the trolls ate all the dogs."
- 6 "Nisa got reamed for insubordination last night. Eygara made her work off the demerits by sparring with her personally. Give me the lash, I say!"

fungi, or reagents. Details on Naphexi will appear in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #119: Prisoners of the Blight*.

Ignorant of alchemy, Ibzairiak hurries back to Fort Trevalay to explain the newest request to the druid Jang. For her part, Jang endures Ibzairiak's occasional demands and enjoys experimenting with both rebuilding the fort into a tiered marsh and the black dragon's nonsensical demands for fungal concoctions. She leaves most of the Ironfang operations to the senior-most representative actually trained by the Legion: Lieutenant Eygara, a hobgoblin not yet prepared for full command.

FORT TREVALAY FEATURES

Fort Trevalay is constructed from light gray stone atop the darker stone of the pillar at the center of the gorge. The buildings within the fort are 10 feet high except for the main tower, which rises to a height of 45 feet. Although the buildings are made of stone, their roofs are rough-hewn wood shingles. The stone curtain wall around the fort is 12 feet high and rises from the edge of the stone pillar upon which the fort is built. Although there is no walkway atop the curtain wall (unlike the other two Ranger forts), defenders can stand atop the fort's buildings to look out over the walls. The exterior walls are 2 feet thick, while interior walls are 1 foot thick. Climbing any wall within the fort requires a successful DC 20 Climb check.

The interior rooms are 10 feet high, with occasional lanterns hung on ceiling hooks—none of the fort's current residents need light in general, but the Ironfang Legion soldiers use it occasionally to read by or when they don't wish to rely on the limited range of their darkvision. A few rooms within the fort have windows, but these windows are only 1 foot square and crossed with iron rods set 4 inches apart. Doors within the fort are strong wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 20). None of the doors have locks; the few locked doors were destroyed by the hobgoblins in the attack and haven't yet been replaced.

L1. NORTHERN BRIDGE (CR 5)

A wide rope bridge ten feet wide spans the deep gorge and the lazy river flowing fifty feet below. The rope bridge leads to an opening in the fort walls. Thick ropes support evenly spaced wooden slats, with a thick chain running beneath the slats for support.

Made of stout shroud-laid rope and thick planks, this bridge is sturdy enough to support the weight of a fully loaded cart.

A metal mechanism with a lever and crank is built into the wall of the fort near the bridge, out of view from the far side. This mechanism is a last-ditch defense to prevent intruders from using the bridge. Pulling the lever immediately tightens the chain on the underside of the bridge, yanking out the iron posts on the far side and dropping the far end of the bridge into the gorge. The crank can be used to roll up the dangling bridge on the fort side, allowing the rolled-up bridge to serve as a thick wooden barricade across the gap in the fort's walls. Rolling up the bridge requires 1 minute. Repairing the bridge once it has been collapsed is a time-consuming endeavor, so the fort's inhabitants only use this defense when absolutely necessary. Identifying the purpose of the mechanism and chain requires a successful DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check.

Creatures: Two Ironfang soldiers stand on the far side of the bridge, alert for dangers from the forest and occasionally shooting rabbits and birds for meals. The hobgoblins, eager for combat to break the monotony of guard duty, fire their longbows at any unknown visitors approaching the bridge. If they have only one or two targets and the targets approach, the hobgoblins instead enter melee, but a guard reduced to fewer than half its hit points retreats across the bridge into the fort to sound the alarm and fight from the fort side of the gorge. If the guards spot intruders in a larger group, they retreat back across the bridge and shout for assistance. In this case, the sergeants in area L6 arrive in 3 rounds, and the hobgoblin guards from area L3 arrive 2 rounds later.

IRONFANG FOREST SOLDIERS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each**Hobgoblin warrior 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175)

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 44 each (5d10+17)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** mwk battleaxe +8 (1d8+2/×3) or
glaive +7 (1d10+3/×3)**Ranged** composite longbow +6 (1d8+2/×3)**TACTICS**

During Combat These rank-and-file soldiers use straightforward tactics, targeting distant foes with their longbows, and swapping to melee weapons when opponents close. Whenever possible, they attempt to form shielded ranks, with a forward soldier wielding a shield and battleaxe while a partner stands behind and attacks with a glaive.

Morale Ironfang soldiers fight to the death.

STATISTICS**Str** 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18**Feats** Alertness, Iron Will, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics -2 (-6 when jumping), **Climb** +3, **Handle Animal** +4, **Perception** +4, **Ride** +2, **Sense Motive** +2, **Stealth** +6, **Swim** +3; **Racial Modifiers** +4 **Stealth**

Languages Common, Goblin**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds* **Other**

Gear mwk breastplate, mwk light steel shield, composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, glaive, mwk battleaxe, *cloak of resistance* +1, backpack, bedroll, signal whistle, waterskin

L2. TRAPPED BRIDGE (CR 4)

This bridge appears to be identical to the bridge at area L1, but is unguarded. This isn't due to any laxness on the hobgoblins' part; the hobgoblins don't need this bridge and trapped it to collapse when crossed. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception or Survival check notes the dirt and scattered leaves on the bridge that indicate it is unused. The lever-and-crank mechanism on the fort side of this bridge has been sabotaged to create the trap.

Trap: Any weight greater than 50 pounds on the midpoint of the bridge causes the chain beneath the bridge to contract, yanking out the iron posts and dropping the far end of the bridge into the gorge, as described in area L1. Characters who fall drop into the shallow water below. A character within 5 feet of the end of the bridge

**IRONFANG FOREST SOLDIER**

who succeeds at her Reflex save can jump back onto solid ground; otherwise, succeeding at the Reflex save means a character has grabbed one of the wooden bridge slats and can use them like a ladder. Climbing the slats requires a successful DC 5 Climb check.

COLLAPSING BRIDGE TRAP

CR 4

XP 1,200

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect 50-ft. fall (5d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets on the bridge).

Development: Any Ironfang forces in the courtyard notice the bridge collapse (Perception DC 0). The sergeants in area L6 arrive in 2 rounds to investigate, and the guards from area L3 arrive 2 rounds later.

L3. SOUTHERN BRIDGE (CR 5)

This bridge is identical to the bridge at area L1.

Creatures: Two Ironfang soldiers guard this bridge, much like the guards in area L1, but they retreat across the bridge at the first sign of trouble. They know the kelpies below (see area L4) love to activate their captivating lure ability to coax prey to leap from the bridge.

IRONFANG FOREST SOLDIERS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 44 each (see page 41)

L4. SOUTHERN GORGE (CR 6)

A wide, slow-moving river winds its way through the bottom of the deep gorge.

The river that flows at the bottom of the gorge to the southeast of Fort Trevalay is slow-moving and 12 to 15 feet deep (unlike the river to the northwest, which is only a few feet deep and swift). The southern wall of the gorge contains a small hollow worn out of the rock by the river. The hollow is half-submerged and its ceiling glows dimly from a phosphorescent moss that grows overhead, casting strange shadows upon the river at night.

Creatures: A pair of kelpies lives in the water at the bottom of the gorge. Jang lured the fey to this spot with promises of prey on the express condition that they not attack any hobgoblins. The kelpies spend their time lazing in the water in equine form, catching fish. They don't range too far to the northeast, as they fear the wolf-in-sheep's-clothing that hunts at the northern fork, and the northwestern stream is too shallow and rocky for their liking. Although Jang initially fed these kelpies a few Chernasardo Rangers, they are now hungry and remain on the lookout for non-hobgoblin humanoids to devour.

Half the time, the kelpies relax in their hollow and only notice creatures in the river. Otherwise, the kelpies are in the gorge and watch for creatures at the edge of the gorge or on the bridge at area L3. If they spot any creatures other than hobgoblins, they use their captivating lures to coax the trespassers to leap down to them, posing as impossibly valuable steeds. A kelpie reduced to fewer than 15 hit points flees along the river to the southwest.

KELPIES (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 38 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 172)

Treasure: The kelpies' cave in the southern wall of the gorge contains the remains of several Chernasardo Rangers, as well as a masterwork warhammer, a +1 chain shirt, a *potion of jump*, a *potion of magic fang*, a *bead of force*, and a large, pink pearl (worth 200 gp).

L5. HIDDEN TUNNEL (CR 8)

A small stony beach hugs the northern edge of the rock column at the water level. A narrow crack leads into the column from the beach.

This small beach was formed long ago by gravel deposited by the rushing water along a crack into the column that connects to the well shaft in the column's heart. The well shaft descends another 5 feet into clear, clean water and ascends 50 feet to area L6. Climbing the rough shaft requires a successful DC 10 Climb check.

Creatures: A fat frog croaks regularly on a stump clinging to the beach near the crack. The stump is actually a horrid predator known as a wolf-in-sheep's-clothing. The creature uses the frog as a lure, but the kelpies in area L4 are aware of the creature and don't come near it. The wolf-in-sheep's-clothing has laired in front of the crack for years, feeding mostly on bears that sometimes fish in the river, but neither the Chernasardo Rangers nor the hobgoblins are aware of the creature's presence.

WOLF-IN-SHEEP'S-CLOTHING

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 97 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 285)

L6. COURTYARD (CR 7)

This large courtyard contains a pair of partially constructed trebuchets to the southwest and a stone well to the northeast. A wide, tall tower to the northeast dominates the courtyard. To the northwest, two low buildings flank an overgrown garden. A building to the southwest emits a rank, animal smell, and a double door provides access to a large building to the southeast. Wooden bridges exit the courtyard to the north, west, and south, spanning the gorge that surrounds the fort.

This courtyard connects all of Fort Trevalay's buildings, and therefore sees a lot of use.

The well has a large metal bucket on a long rope and descends to the water 55 feet below. Unknown to the residents of the fort, the bottom of the well has a narrow crack just above the water line that leads to area L5. Climbing the well shaft requires a successful DC 10 Climb check.

A hobgoblin engineer brought the parts to build these trebuchets, but before he could complete them, an argument with Jang resulted in the druid slaying the disobedient engineer and feeding her remains to Marrowcrack in area L9. Although the hobgoblins make occasional attempts to finish the siege weapons, they lack technical expertise to do so. The PCs might use these piles of wood and metal as cover while they explore the fort.

Creatures: Three hobgoblin sergeants (Grurik, Hardot, and Talfla) are experienced wilderness scouts and were among the Ironfang Legion's greatest experts on the forest prior to Jang's recruitment. Now they reluctantly play second fiddle to a freelancer and a foul-tempered lizard, and spend most of their time in this courtyard training their roc companions rather than securing the region.

The trio are skilled survivalists and have worked together for many years. They report to Eygara, who in turn reports to Jang, but their greatest loyalty is to each other. Their unit name—Ironwing Squad—comes from their iconic companions: young rocs the group raised from eggs after the hobgoblins slew the mother.

The hunters are eager for battle and rush to meet intruders if the alarm is raised. They call their rocs to fight as well, seizing the opportunity to further train their birds in a genuine combat situation. The rocs don't like traveling far from the hunters, and thus generally roost atop the barracks, waiting for signals from their masters. The rocs are trained to fight to the death.

Although the three hobgoblin hunter-sergeants and their roc animal companions spend most of their time here, any other residents of the fort might pass through this courtyard on business, or be training or drilling in the open space.

IRONWING SQUAD SERGEANTS (3) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Hobgoblin hunter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 26)

NE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 shield)

hp 41 each (5d8+15)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+4/19–20), mwk light pick +6 (1d4+2/×4)

Ranged composite longbow +6 (1d8+3/×3)

Hunter Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +6)

2nd (2/day)—*barkskin*, *flaming sphere* (DC 13), *hold animal* (DC 13), *summon nature's ally II*

1st (5/day)—*animal messenger*, *cure light wounds*, *resist energy*, *spek with animals*, *summon nature's ally I*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *flare* (DC 11), *guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat Before a fight, the sergeants chug their fervor juice to gain the ferocity ability, cast *barkskin* on themselves, and use animal focus (bull) to gain a bonus to Strength.

During Combat The Ironwing Squad works closely together, flanking tough-looking enemies and directing their rocs to harry spellcasters and ranged opponents.

Morale Loyal to each other and the Ironfang Legion, these sergeants fight until slain.

Base Statistics: Without *barkskin* or animal focus, Ironwing Squad sergeants' statistics are **AC** 18, flat-footed 15; **Melee** mwk longsword +6 (1d8+3/19–20), mwk light pick +5 (1d4+1/×4); **Str** 16; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19; **Skills** Climb +9.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Outflank^{APG}, Spirit of the Corps^{MC}, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +9, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +9, Stealth +6, Survival +9; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ animal companion (roc), animal focus (5 minutes/day), hunter tactics, improved empathic link, nature training, track +2, wild empathy +4, woodland stride

Combat Gear fervor juice^{MC} (2), smokesticks (2), thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, mwk light pick, mwk longsword, *cloak of resistance* +1, backpack, belt pouch, blanket, flint and steel, holly and mistletoe, mess kit^{UE}, spell component pouch, tindertwigs (5), trail rations (5), waterskin, 11 gp

IRONWING ROCS (3) CR —

Roc animal companions (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 236)

NE Medium animal

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 27 each (5d8+5)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

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PERIAPT OF PLACEBOS

The *periapt of placebos* is a common magic item among alchemists and plague doctors alike, many of whom erroneously believe it renders them immune to the dangerous conditions in which they work.

PERIAPT OF PLACEBOS

PRICE
3,600 GP

SLOT neck

CL 5th

WEIGHT 1 lb.

AURA faint enchantment

What at first appears to be a fine gem dangling from a long, silver chain is in fact a cut and polished bezoar. This necklace—often mistaken for a *periapt of health* or a *periapt of proof against poison*—inspires its wearer with the utter conviction that he has been rendered immune to both disease and poison. While the necklace imparts no genuine protections, the strength of belief it imparts nonetheless grants its wearer a +2 morale bonus to all Fortitude saving throws against diseases and poisons.

Unless the person identifying a *periapt of placebos* succeeds at her Spellcraft check by 5 or more, she mistakenly believes it to be a more powerful protective necklace rather than discerning its true nature.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 1,800 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *delusional pride*^{UM}



Jang took over this armory and transformed it into a private workspace to grow all the strange molds and fungi Ibzairiak has demanded of late. Jang's ledger—which details all of Ibzairiak's odd requests as well as her processes for hunting and growing the rare specimens—rests on the floor under one of the tables, but Jang's entries are in personal shorthand that incorporates her lifetime of experience with plantlife. A successful DC 15 Linguistics or Knowledge (nature) check is required to understand the journal (a character with ranks in both Linguistics and Knowledge [nature] gains a +4 circumstance bonus on this check). If decoded, the journal provides a listing of certain fungal concoctions that Ibzairiak has requested, along with Jang's theories about the dragon's requests. All she has concluded is that Ibzairiak has become fascinated with an aspect of something referred to as "the Blight," far to the north, unaware of the Blight's local reputation.

Hazard: The covered box contains a patch of yellow mold (*Core Rulebook* 416), which releases a cloud of spores if the canvas covering it is disturbed or lifted. Jang casts *delay poison* on herself whenever she needs to work with the yellow mold.

Treasure: A *periapt of placebos* (see the sidebar) rests on one of the tables; Jang uses this periapt when working with the fungi here to avoid contracting a fungal disease, having mistaken it for a more potent *periapt of proof against poison*.

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee bite +8 (1d6+1), 2 talons +8 (1d4+1)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Improved Initiative, Outflank^{APG}, Spirit of the Corps^{MC}, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +5 (+1 when jumping), Fly +10, Perception +6

SQ animal focus, tricks (attack, come, defend, fetch, heel, seek, stay)

L7. REPURPOSED ARMORY (CR 6)

This building clearly once served as an armory, but its hooks and weapon racks are empty and its long tables now hold boxes of soil sprouting several varieties of mushrooms and molds. One box at the rear of the room is covered with a sheet of canvas held down with bricks. A sour, earthy smell fills the air. A swinging door leads out to the southwest and a door in an alcove to the southeast leads out to the courtyard.

L8. GARDEN (CR 4)

This overgrown garden fills the space between the buildings to the northeast and southwest. The garden contains a profusion of vegetable plants, small fruit trees, and climbing vines. Doors into the adjacent buildings are just visible through the riot of vegetation.

Although the hobgoblins keep stores of hardtack and jerky in the barracks (area L11), Jang prefers fresher food. The Rangers established a productive garden here, but with the druid's *plant growth* spell and careful tending, its bounty has substantially increased. The hobgoblins enjoy supplementing their harsh diet of rations with food grown here, but Jang has placed a guardian to deter theft, only portioning out vegetables and fruits as rewards to soldiers who please her.

A successful DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check identifies that about a third of the plants in this garden are infested with some sort of fungus, rendering them inedible. A PC who succeeds at this check by 5 or more recognizes that the fungus is being intentionally cultivated.

Creature: Jang recently tamed a Fangwood cougar, a large breed of hunting cat that local lore claims escaped from the First World. The cougar normally lurks near the rear of the garden in the shade of the fort's high wall, or else naps in the sun atop the wall, but it keeps a constant eye out for intruders. The cat makes no distinction between hobgoblins and other creatures, savagely attacking anyone who enters the garden other than Jang. The massive cat likes the garden and does not pursue foes that flee, but if attacked from outside of the garden, it lunges out to defend itself.

FANGWOOD COUGAR

CR 4

XP 1,200

Variant tiger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 265)

hp 45

L9. FORGE (CR 7)

Broken blades and rent breastplates—all in desperate need of repair—lie in orderly stacks near a warm, glowing forge. A mostly disassembled suit of plate barding stands on two sawhorses in the western corner of the room. Two doors exit this room: one to the northeast and another in an alcove to the east.

After taking the fort, the Ironfang forces assigned a team of hobgoblins here to keep arms and armor in good repair, but the hobgoblins were soon displaced by a “goblin specialist” named Marrowcrack. Although the work is now piling up—as Marrowcrack is more inclined to sulk than do anything useful—the hobgoblins suspect that Marrowcrack is no mere goblin, and they give her and this forge a wide berth.

The door in the east alcove leads into the courtyard. The door to the north leads directly into the garden; Marrowcrack doesn't use that door except to swipe food from time to time.

Creatures: Marrowcrack is a thin, muscular barghest who once ruled the Bonesnappers goblin tribe in the Five Kings Mountains. A band of dwarves, fed up with the Bonesnappers' depredations, descended upon the goblins with righteous fury and slaughtered them all. Marrowcrack barely survived and thereafter descended into a deep funk. She drifted aimlessly for a few years before joining up with the Ironfang Legion as an assassin and scout, and assisted in softening up Fort Trevalay by quietly eliminating several watch commanders prior to Ibzairiak's frontal assault.

Marrowcrack remains polymorphed into a tall, brawny goblin most of the time—a form she grew accustomed to during her long years in command of the Bonesnappers. Only the highest ranks of the local Ironfang Legion forces (including Ibzairiak and Jang) know of Marrowcrack's true nature; to the rank-and-file soldiers she poses as

the unit's chaplain, though she offers no healing and few words of comfort, and in fact has eaten several slaves and an insubordinate engineer.

Marrowcrack made several attacks against the Chernasardo Rangers with only her charmed basilisk Manwatcher for company. Now that Jang believes the Ironfang Legion to be in control of the Southern Fangwood, she has commanded Marrowcrack to stay near Fort Trevalay. The wretched beast took over the forge as her domain as the heat reminds her of the planar home she has not seen in decades, but she has no real talent or interest in metalsmithing, and so repairs now pile up while she spends most of her time here moping and drinking.

Manwatcher has quickly become fat and lazy, and usually dozes under the disassembled barding in the corner. Lying nearby is a leather hood that Marrowcrack puts over the basilisk when hobgoblins arrive to give orders, request repair, or seek her halfhearted spiritual counseling. Neither Marrowcrack nor Manwatcher respond to any alarms in the fort, but they attack any non-hobgoblins entering the forge. So long as no other hobgoblins are in sight, Marrowcrack assumes her barghest form to fight. In any form, she casts *blink* on herself, then targets enemies with *crushing despair* and *charm monster* before closing into melee. Marrowcrack uses her *dimension door* ability to flee if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points (taking Manwatcher with her, if the basilisk is still alive) and then lurks outside Fort Trevalay looking for a chance at revenge.

Manwatcher is a ferocious combatant once roused, charging the first opponent she sees and then staring down anyone else. The basilisk indiscriminately attacks anyone in the vicinity that isn't Marrowcrack, and is especially aggressive without her master's oversight.

MARROWCRACK

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female barghest (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 27)

hp 55

Gear *lidless charm bracelet* (see the sidebar on page 46)

Growth Points (Su) Marrowcrack has 2 growth points, giving her a +2 bonus on attack rolls, combat maneuver checks, saving throws, and skill checks, and a +1 bonus to her caster level for the purpose of spell-like abilities.

MANWATCHER

CR 5

XP 1,600

Basilisk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 29)

hp 52

Treasure: The masterwork full plate barding in the western corner of the room is in good repair and can be reassembled to fit any Large quadruped given a half hour of work and a successful DC 12 Craft (armor) check.

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LIDLESS CHARM BRACELET

The *lidless charm bracelet* is a rare wondrous item that grants its wearer some protection from the deadly gaze attacks of various monsters. They are crafted almost exclusively by medusa spellcasters, in demonstrations of good faith to allies.

LIDLESS CHARM BRACELET

PRICE
10,000 GP

SLOT wrists

CL 9th

WEIGHT 1 lb.

AURA moderate abjuration

This bronze, serpentine bracelet has five dangling charms, each depicting an open and staring eye. Once per day as a standard action, the wearer can touch the bracelet to a creature with a gaze attack (requiring a successful touch attack for unwilling creatures) and become immune to natural gaze attacks from all creatures of that kind for the following 24 hours. The wearer could, for example, touch the bracelet to a basilisk to gain immunity to the gaze attacks of all basilisks, but would not be immune to the gaze of a medusa. This ability does not grant immunity to gaze attacks from spells or magic items such as *eyes of doom*. For the duration of this immunity, the charms on the bracelet each appear to be closed eyes.

When the wearer fails a save against a gaze attack, she can expend a charm from the bracelet as an immediate action to reroll that saving throw, but must take the second result even if it is worse. An expended charm crumbles to dust. When the last charm is expended, the *lidless charm bracelet* loses all magical properties.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 5,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *blindness/deafness*, *lock gaze*^{UC}

L10. KENNEL (CR 7)

A heavy chain holds the doors of the old kennel shut, bound with a large but cheap padlock (Disable Device DC 20). Lieutenant Eygara (area **L11**) carries the only key.

A dozen cages line the western and northeastern walls of this wedge-shaped room, their doors bent and their floors crusted with dried blood. A double door is set into the northeastern wall, hanging slightly askew.

The Chernasardo Rangers stationed at Fort Trevalay had a long tradition of raising wolves and hunting dogs as trackers and scouts. When the Ironfang Legion took over Fort Trevalay, the troll mercenaries accompanying the legion broke into the kennel and ate all the dogs. This large room is now wholly unfit for habitation by civilized creatures; dried dog blood coats the floors in the cages, the large training area is littered with cracked bones and gristle, and the walls and ceiling are smeared with offal.

Creature: Not every member of the Chernasardo Rangers was a selfless crusader for freedom. Ota Gax was a violent and short-tempered monster who found that the Rangers' cause and isolationist operating procedure perfectly suited the bloodlust that saw her exiled from her homeland of Druma. As long as she limited her cruelty to Molthuni troops, her fellow Rangers grumbled but ultimately turned a blind eye to her depredations.

Gax was resupplying at Fort Trevalay when Ibzairiak attacked, and ultimately fled the combat to hide in the kennel, hoping to skulk away in the aftermath. Troll mercenaries uncovered her as they began ransacking the kennel and devouring the dogs, and showed her the same respects. Gax died cursing both the Rangers and the Legion for her fate, and her soul found no rest. She has since risen as a furious spectre, bound to the kennel by a dozen phantasmal collars and chains. Her violent spirit killed several of the Legion's hobgoblins when they attempted to reclaim the building, and the ever-practical Eygara simply chained the building shut. She has ordered Marrowcrack—as acting chaplain—to clear out the malevolent spirit, but the barghest has thus far proven too lazy and unwilling to confront the spirit.

OTA GAX

CR 7

XP 3,200

Spectre (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 256)

hp 52

Treasure: Gax buried a stash of trophies in the kennel's south corner. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check finds the loose stone in the floor, which conceals 512 gp, 14 Molthuni medals (worth 25 gp each), a *bead of force*, and two pairs of *assisting gloves*^{UE}.

L11. BARRACKS (CR 8)

Bunk beds fill this large building, each made with military precision. A round table stands to the northwest near a stack of crates and boxes.

This building contains a dozen bunk beds and a large round table for simple meals. The boxes and crates stacked near the table contain weeks' worth of bland-tasting rations such as hardtack and jerky. These rations were once stored in the main tower, but Eygara didn't trust her troops' rations near so many feral animals and so had them moved here.

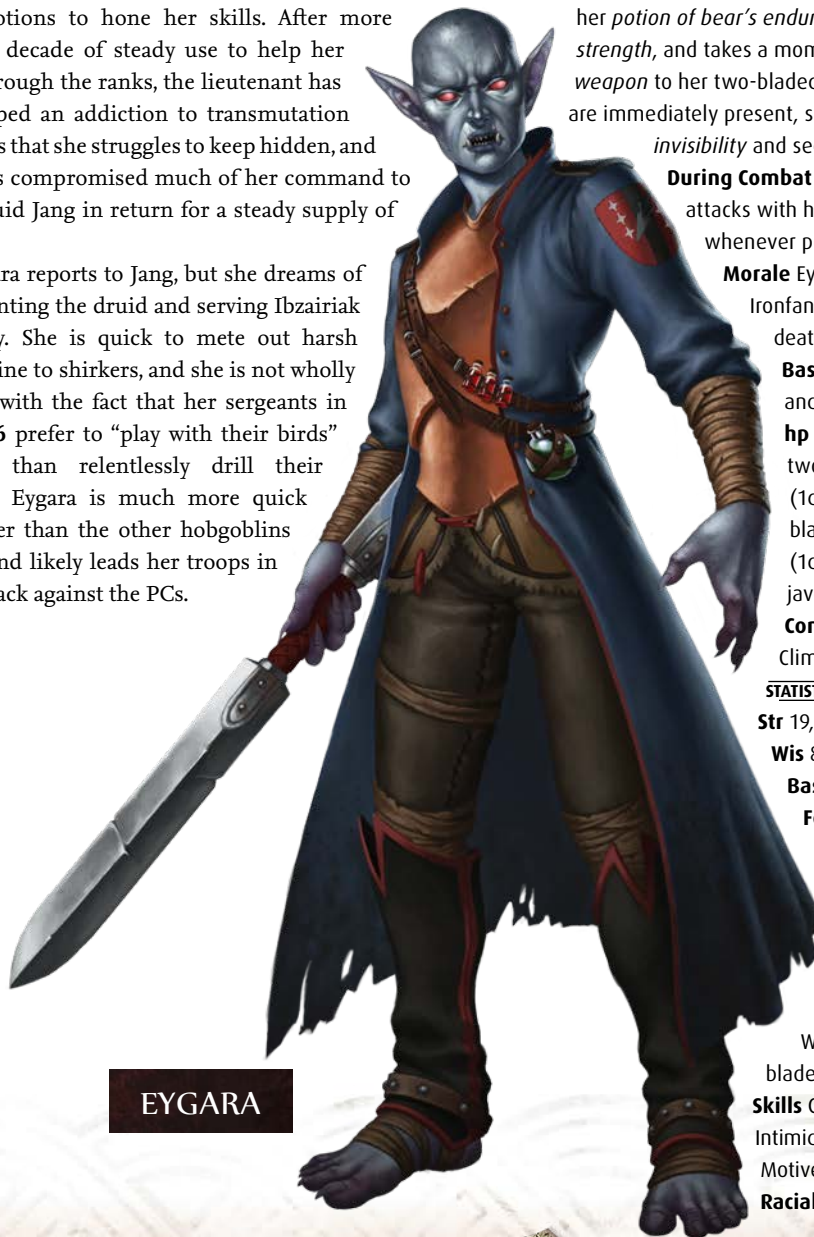
Creatures: The dozen or so remaining Ironfang troops bunk here (as opposed to the various freelancers such as Jang or the troll mercenaries). Much of the remaining Chernasardo invasion force was either stationed in the remaining two forts, or else recalled to rejoin the primary force via the *Onyx Key*. General Azaersi sees little point in maintaining a large standing force in the

middle of nowhere now that the Chernasardo Rangers have been neutralized.

At any given time, four hobgoblin forest prowlers are here, sleeping or cleaning their gear. These rank-and-file hobgoblins rotate out for guard duty in areas **L1** and area **L3**, as well as occasional patrols in the surrounding forest. They are not currently wearing their armor. If confronted here, they pick up shields and swords to defend themselves. If responding to trouble elsewhere in the fort, they take 2 minutes to don their armor and ready their gear before sallying forth.

The commander of the Ironfang forces at this fort is a stern hobgoblin woman named Eygara. Born to an overbearing commander, Eygara studied an ancient and difficult hobgoblin fighting style called *ajukjai*—wielding a distinctive twin-bladed sword—to stand out from her five sisters, eventually turning to ointments and potions to hone her skills. After more than a decade of steady use to help her rise through the ranks, the lieutenant has developed an addiction to transmutation potions that she struggles to keep hidden, and she has compromised much of her command to the druid Jang in return for a steady supply of elixirs.

Eygara reports to Jang, but she dreams of supplanting the druid and serving Ibzairiak directly. She is quick to mete out harsh discipline to shirkers, and she is not wholly happy with the fact that her sergeants in area **L6** prefer to “play with their birds” rather than relentlessly drill their troops. Eygara is much more quick to anger than the other hobgoblins here, and likely leads her troops in any attack against the PCs.



EYGARA

EYGARA

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female hobgoblin fighter 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175)

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

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

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 85 (7d10+42)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4 (+2 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 two-bladed sword +14/+9 (1d8+10/19–20) or

+1 two-bladed sword +12/+12/+7 (1d8+8/19–20)

Ranged mwk javelin +11 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

Before Combat If she suspects intruders, Eygara drinks her *potion of bear's endurance* and *potion of bull's strength*, and takes a moment to apply an *oil of magic weapon* to her two-bladed sword. If no enemies are immediately present, she drinks her *potion of invisibility* and seeks them out.

During Combat Eygara makes full attacks with her two-bladed sword whenever possible.

Morale Eygara is intensely loyal to the Ironfang Legion and fights to the death against intruders.

Base Statistics Without potions and oils, Eygara's statistics are

hp 71 **Fort** +6; **Melee** mwk two-bladed sword +12/+7 (1d8+6/19–20) or mwk two-bladed sword +10/+10/+5 (1d8+5/19–20); **Ranged** mwk javelin +11 (1d6+2); **Str** 15, **Con** 16; **CMB** +9, **CMD** 22; **Skills** Climb +5.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 10,

Wis 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24

Feats Alertness, Double Slice, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword), Iron Will, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword), Weapon Specialization (two-bladed sword)

Skills Climb +7, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +11, Perception +3, Sense Motive +1, Stealth +6, Survival +4;

Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth

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Languages Common, Goblin

SQ armor training 2

Combat Gear *oils of magic weapon* (5), *potions of bear's endurance* (2), *potions of bull's strength* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, alchemist's fire (4); **Other Gear** +1 *breastplate*, mwk javelins (5), mwk two-bladed sword, *cloak of resistance* +1, bandolier^{UE}, keyring (with keys to area L10, area L13, and Ageep's and Milla's shackles)

IRONFANG FOREST SOLDIERS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 44 each (see page 41)

Development: Two human slaves—Ageep and Milla—kept here are neophyte Chernasardo Rangers, captured by the Ironfang Legion and put to work cleaning and cooking. Both are malnourished and lack any gear. The pair are shackled together by 3 feet of iron chain (Disable Device DC 30; Lieutenant Eygara carries the only key), hobbling their movements. Despite their miserable situation, both are eager to aid any enemies of the Ironfang Legion, and offer to help the PCs hide or distract guards should the PCs need it. They can also provide some basic insight into the fort's layout and the Ironfang force stationed there, though they haven't been above the tower's first floor. Like the Ironfang troops, they know Ibzairiak leaves for 3 days every 2 weeks. Ageep and Milla use the statistics for Chernasardo recruits on page 49.

L12. TOWER ENTRY (CR 7)

The lowest level of the tower bears several large holes knocked through the brickwork walls. The floor is a mess of splintered timber and rubble. Water dribbles steadily down the staircase to the north, passing through an open doorway and joining a stinking, filthy mess inside a privy to the southeast. A sturdy door to the east is barred.

To support the tower above, this floor has been left relatively intact, and with the tower prison on this level, it is also the only floor Jang allows the rank-and-file Ironfang soldiers to access. Guard duty over the prison is the least desirable post, both due to the physical proximity to the creepy druid and the unstable dragon, neither of whom conform to sensible, hobgoblin protocol, and also because Jang uses this floor to raise pigs to feed her various pets, contributing to the stench and mess in the southeastern half of the building.

The barred eastern door leads to the tower's prison (area L13) and is locked (Disable Device DC 30). Watch Commander Salokut, Jang, and Lieutenant Eygara all carry keys.

Creatures: Watch Commander Salokut acted as unit chaplain before Marrowcrack's arrival (see area L9),

and oversees the prison guards personally, mostly as an excuse to keep a suspicious eye on Jang and Ibzairiak. He vainly hopes he can catch them in some treasonous plot that will convince the Legion to exile one or both and transform Fort Trevelay into a respectable military outpost. At any given time, three Ironfang soldiers stand watch with him, though they resent the "punishment" duty and are generally lax in their attentions (they take a –2 penalty on Perception checks) and leave all their weapons sitting on a table near the prison door.

Jang's pigs—two enormous sows and a dozen other pigs of varying ages—root around through the ruins, eating waste from meals, scraps from the garden, and the occasional Ranger as the prisoner numbers dwindle or they perish in questioning. Though ill-tempered, the pigs aren't confrontational and flee from combat.

SALOKUT

CR 3

XP 800

Male hobgoblin warpriest of Hadregash 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 60)
LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 shield)

hp 37 (4d8+16)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *light flail* +7 (1d8+3)

Special Attacks blessings 5/day (Law: axiomatic strike;

War: war mind), channel negative energy 2/day (DC 14, 1d6 damage), fervor 4/day (1d6), sacred weapon (1d6, +1, 4 rounds/day)

Warpriest Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*communal protection from good*^{UC}, *shatter* (DC 14)

1st—*command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds* (2), *remove fear*

0 (at will)—*guidance*, *mending*, *purify food and drink* (DC 12), *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat If Salokut expects trouble, he casts *communal protection from good* to grant himself and the remaining guards here the effects of *protection from good* for 1 minute.

During Combat Each round, Salokut alternates between attacking foes and assisting his troops, either using his war blessing to augment them in combat or healing them with his fervor.

Morale Salokut is a fanatic and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (light flail)

Skills Acrobatics –3 (–7 when jumping), Intimidate +6,

Knowledge (religion) +4, Ride +1, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +1; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

Combat Gear *feather token* (whip), alchemist's fire (5); **Other Gear** +1 *scale mail*, mwk buckler, mwk light flail, bottle of whiskey (20 gp), silver unholy symbol of Hadregash (worth 25 gp), adamantine chain necklace (worth 100 gp), key to the tower cells (area L13)

IRONFANG FOREST SOLDIERS (3) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 44 each (see page 41)

Treasure: Jang and the hobgoblins occasionally throw the bodies of fallen Chernasardo Rangers to the pigs to feed on, and a muddy assortment of equipment is now churned into the mess in the privy. A PC who digs through the muck and succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check uncovers 121 gp, a +1 *returning dart*, a *potion of sanctuary*, and a scroll tube containing a *scroll of black tentacles* and a *scroll of fly*. Any creature searching through this slop must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or contract filth fever (*Core Rulebook* 557).

L13. PRISON

This short hall leads to a barred door with a small inset window. Beyond is a mildew-stained barren room.

Although Jang and Ibzairiak wanted most of the interior walls of Fethak Salgu destroyed, they understood the value of keeping the tower's prison intact. The hobgoblins enslaved the Chernasardo Rangers who survived their attack and keep these slaves in this cramped, squalid prison when not at work. The barred door is locked (Disable Device DC 30) and Commander Salokut, Jang, and Lieutenant Eygara all carry keys.

Creatures: Over a dozen prisoners are still alive here, all former Chernasardo Rangers in varying stages of malnourishment. One of them—a broad, hatchet-faced man named Cobb Greenleaf—was one of the fort's subcommanders. The other 14 prisoners are a mix of trainees and more experienced soldiers who survived the fight. Ibzairiak devoured the most experienced Rangers and anyone too defiant. Those who remain are underfed, injured, and several are badly shaken by their ordeal. Their equipment is long gone, parceled out to hobgoblins throughout the Fangwood.

COBB GREENLEAF

CR 6

XP 2,400

CG male aloof archer (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 269)

hp 52 (currently 13)



PARTHUK

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (4) CR 2

XP 600 each

CG poachers (*NPC Codex* 129)

hp 30 each (currently 10 each)

CHERNASARDO RECRUITS (9) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

CG novice scouts (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 128)

hp 12 each (currently 4 each)

Development: Although they're malnourished and lack equipment, the Chernasardo Rangers who remain are loyal to whoever rescues them, especially now that their leadership has been slain and scattered. Several have injuries and infections that must be tended over several days, making the prisoners poor choices to assist in retaking Fort Trevalay, but if provided some basic food, healing, and equipment, they can hold the lowest level of the tower against any Ironfang forces the PCs left behind them. They will need rest and new equipment before returning to full fighting form, but with time and care they can be transformed into the foundation of a true army the PCs can use to strike back against the Legion.

Story Award: If the PCs free the prisoners, award them an additional 4,800 XP.

L14. TRAINING HALL (CR 8)

Most of the interior walls on this level have been knocked out and the resulting debris has been hauled away, leaving only a small room to the north. A stream of water pours steadily from the ascending staircase in the south end of the room to the descending stairs to the west. The only items here now are a few stools, an open chest containing raw meat, and a few coiled whips and spiked collars hanging on wall hooks.

This level of the tower once contained a dining hall, kitchen, and chapel, but the hobgoblins have converted it into a single space to train animals. Although the Ironwing sergeants in the courtyard (area L6) attempted to train Jang's feral animals, they had no success. One of Jang's oldest allies, an elderly troll named Parthuk, insisted that he could train any animal, and without using the hobgoblins' cruel punishments. Parthuk uses the raw meat in the chest to feed the animals and as an occasional snack for himself.

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Creatures: Parthuk, a troll oracle with deep green skin and small tusks, trains two dire weasels here. Parthuk found a curious confidence and inner peace after donning a decorative headband in his youth—a *headband of alluring charisma*, though he didn't know it then—and over time learned to hear the spirits of the natural world whispering all around him. Over many years, he learned to command beasts and interpret omens, and he enjoys using the powers these spirits impart, eventually using the forest itself to hunt for him.

Parthuk and Jang met many years ago, and each respects the other's ability to keep his or her inner savagery under control until needed. When the Ironfang Legion recruited Jang, she brought Parthuk with her so he and his reluctant tribe of trolls could assist the Legion as mercenaries. The old troll has no formal position in the Ironfang Legion, and dwells apart from the hobgoblins and even his own kind in a show of disdain. An uncanny animal trainer, Parthuk makes himself useful, and the hobgoblins grudgingly accept his presence so long as he continues providing guard beasts to compensate for their dwindling numbers. The hobgoblins particularly appreciate Parthuk's predilection for cleanliness.

Although Parthuk is a careful thinker and reasonable conversationalist, this heart is bestial. He might spend a few minutes speaking with polite PCs, but he doesn't converse for long before attacking. The PCs might lie to the troll; Parthuk doesn't know much about the Ironfang Legion, so PCs might convince him they are specialists hired by the Legion, or otherwise belong in the tower.

PARTHUK **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Middle-aged troll oracle 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 268, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

NE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 99 (10d8+54); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d8+5), 2 claws +11 (1d6+5)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+7)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd (4/day)—*barkskin*, *death knell* (DC 14), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 14)

1st (7/day)—*bless*, *charm animal* (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *inflict light wounds* (DC 13), *obscuring mist*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

Mystery nature

TACTICS

Before Combat Parthuk casts *barkskin* on both of the dire weasels. He uses natural divination each day to gain a +4 bonus to his initiative (included in his statistics above).

During Combat Parthuk prefers to take the brunt of attacks while the dire weasels harry opponents. He casts *command* before lumbering into melee to ensure he remains the focus of attacks. Parthuk casts *death knell* on the first creature to fall in combat, even if it is one of his weasels.

Morale Convinced of his own immortality thanks to his regeneration, Parthuk fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Animal Affinity, Combat Casting, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +2 (-2 when jumping), Handle Animal +11, Heal +2 (+5 to treat common animals, but +1 to treat other creatures), Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +11, Ride +4, Survival +9

Languages Giant

SQ oracle's curse (lame), revelations (natural divination, speak with animals)

Combat Gear *wand of charm animal* (27 charges); **Other**

Gear padded armor, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, animal calls (cougar, roc, weasel, and wolf)^{ACG}, animal harnesses^{APG} (4), canvas ball, veterinarian's kit^{UE}

DIRE WEASELS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 32 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 275)

Treasure: Four whips, left over from the hobgoblin animal trainers, hang on the wall here. One of them is a +1 *magical-beast-bane whip*.

L15. PARTHUK'S QUARTERS

This square room contains only an enormous pallet and a chipped wash basin.

Parthuk sleeps in this room. Although he attempts to keep it somewhat orderly, evidence of his troll nature is apparent upon close inspection: a partially chewed half-elf arm is tucked under the pallet and the wash basin bears old bloodstains and a troll tooth.

L16. WAR ROOM (CR 6)

A tall table in the center of the room holds a large map of the Southern Fangwood covered with marks and figurines, while a large cloth map—more recent and covered in heavy

notations—hangs on the northwest wall. A large window to the south looks out over the surrounding forest.

The Chernasardo Rangers maintained this large chamber as a war room, where they used a skillfully drawn map of the Southern Fangwood to coordinate patrols and predict movements of dangerous creatures. Jang was particularly impressed with the map's detail and accuracy, so she carefully preserved it here. The hobgoblins now use this map to organize their efforts to exterminate those Chernasardo Rangers who have gone into hiding. The locations of the three Ranger forts are clearly marked, along with a few secret blinds and caches (such as the blind in area E, or the blind in All-Eyes' Wood in "Trail of the Hunted"). Spots where the Ironfang Legion forces caught and killed Chernasardo Rangers (such as areas A and E) are marked with a stylized skull.

The figurines represent the locations of Ironfang Legion forces in the Fangwood, although most of these markers are out of date (for example, the figurines show a large contingent of hobgoblins at Fort Ristin and several trolls and hobgoblins occupying Fort Nunder).

The most unusual figurine on the map represents a stylized dragon in flight. The dragon figurine is positioned near the northern edge of the map, and is holding down a folded piece of paper. This folded page is torn from an atlas, and depicts the entire Fangwood with much less detail. Along the edge of the page are calculations about dragon flying speeds from Fort Trevalay over 12 hours, 24 hours, and 36 hours, with question marks next to each. The central Fangwood region labeled only as "The Blight" is circled, along with the note "Why here?"

Across from this room, doors lead to the personal chambers of Jang and Jang's bodyguards. Outside this room, a wide staircase descends to the east and another set of stairs rises to the west. Water flows in a steady stream down from the western stairs, through a carefully maintained channel of short clay embankments, and down the eastern stairs. The stairs up to Ibzairiak's lair are warded by an *alarm* spell, as described in area L19.

Creatures: The Ironfang Legion assigned the loyal monks Hessel and Kensa to act as Jang's bodyguards (as well as handlers and, if necessary, executioners—Azaersi has little faith in the wild woman's long-term loyalty). They initially attempted to guide Jang's interactions with Lieutenant Eygara and the other hobgoblins, but their relations with their superior quickly soured. Offended by their intrusive meddling, Jang has as little to do with the monks as possible.

Despite Jang's standoffishness, Hessel and Kensa take their duties seriously. If they think Jang is in trouble, or is likely to cause trouble, they rush to her side. Otherwise, they spend their time here, sparring and carefully copying notes on troop activities in the Fangwood.

Jang occasionally spends time in this room as well, updating her map and notes. When she does so, she exiles her bodyguards to their rooms (area L17).

HESSAL AND KENSA

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Female hobgoblin monk 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175)

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +2 natural, +2 Wis)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** disease

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +6 (1d8+2) or

unarmed strike flurry of blows +6/+6 (1d8+2)

Ranged dagger +6 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (5/day, DC 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat The bodyguards each drink a *potion of barkskin* before rushing to combat.

During Combat If Jang is present, these bodyguards do their best to interpose themselves between Jang and any enemies, then target the nearest opponent. If Jang is not present, they are much more mobile, flanking opponents to dispatch them one at a time. They spend their ki pool freely, hoping to drop opponents quickly with extended flurries.

Morale Loyal and dedicated, these bodyguards fight to the death.

Base Statistics Without *barkskin*, Hessel's and Kensa's statistics are **AC** 18, flat-footed 14.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7 (+9 grapple); **CMD** 23 (25 vs. grapple)

Feats Bodyguard^{APG}, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+20 when jumping), Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +7; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ fast movement, high jump, ki pool (4 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft.

Combat Gear *potions of barkskin* (3), *potions of cure moderate wounds*, antitoxin (2); **Other Gear** daggers (5), *ring of protection* +1, etched copper-and-iron bracers (worth 125 gp)

Treasure: The stylized dragon figurine is a variant bronze griffon figurine of wondrous power. It has the abilities and statistics of the original, but instead appears as a horse-sized dragon. Jang has already expended all of the

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figurine's charges for the week in scouting the area, and it requires 5 days to recharge.

Even with all the markings the hobgoblins have drawn on the map, its precision and detail make it worth 300 gp.

Development: The cloth map hanging from the northwest wall is less impressive than the table map, but by far more chilling. It depicts Nirmathas and northern Molthune, with labels tidily written in Goblin. A red "X" marks the town of Phaendar, and thick, red lines branch out from it across the Nesmian Plains and north up the Marideth River. A dotted line encircles the Nesmian Plains down past the dwarven Sky Citadel of Kraggodan, east through Molthune, and into the Fangwood. The map belongs to Lieutenant Eygara, and she uses it to track the progress of the Legion's war effort as they carve out a new homeland. The newest annotation, which can be spotted as such with a successful DC 15 Perception check, leads north along the river to the refining town of Longshadow, one of Nirmathas's manufacturing strongholds.

L17. BODYGUARD CHAMBERS

A door stands in the southeast wall of this tidy room. A bed lies against the northwest wall and candle burns steadily on a small table.

The hobgoblins don't need the candles that are burning on the tables to see in these two bedchambers; they use them as a meditation aid.

L18. JANG'S QUARTERS

This chamber looks more like a forest cave than a room. Piles of large stones heaped against the walls break up the straight lines and angles of the room, and pots and bowls sprout ferns and ivy. A large, badly torn pallet lies atop the stones up against the southwest wall, resembling a nest more than a bed. A double door leads out to the southeast and a small window in the northwest wall looks out over the forest beyond.

Jang found herself unable to sleep in a proper bed, but her duties at Fort Trevalay require her to maintain a room in Fethak Salgu. She worked hard to remake this room into something homey. The nest is where Jang and Ruanni both sleep, though she increasingly finds herself more comfortable in the marshy garden she has created for Ibzairiak upstairs. On any night when the dragon is gone, she sleeps in area L19; otherwise, she and Ruanni can be found here in the small hours of the night, sleeping restlessly.

Treasure: The room contains a *polymorphic pouch*^{UE}, a gift Azaersi sent to court Jang's service to the Ironfang Legion. The bag contains a block of *incense of meditation*

that Jang finds too pungent to use, and she has buried both the pouch and the incense under the room's mess. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check discovers this treasure beneath a pile of gravel and a gnome skull serving as a fern planter.

L19. THE DRAGON'S GARDEN (CR 11 OR CR 9 AND CR 10)

When present, Ibzairiak casts an *alarm* spell daily on the stairs leading up to this room from the third floor.

This level of the tower resembles a marshy, mist-shrouded cavern. Water cascades down from a strange rock formation in the ceiling, feeding an enormous, murky pool banked by hefty blocks of stone. Mud and shallow pools—all thick with swamp grass, cattails, and ferns—completely conceal the stone floors. A large, ragged hole punches through the southern wall, curtained by a thick tangle of moss and hanging vines. A flooded staircase leads down, while a small niche is tucked against the northeast wall.

The unmistakable sparkle of gold and silver twinkles from the fetid pool.

Like Jang, Ibzairiak found the military conditions of the tower alien and uncomfortable, and demanded the druid transform this uppermost level into something more befitting a black dragon. Using druidic magic (including a permanent *create water* spell embedded in the room's ceiling) and the rubble from many of the fort's destroyed walls, Jang rebuilt the uppermost level of the fortress into an enormous, swampy terrarium, complete with croaking toads, biting insects, and a huge array of colorful marsh plants.

Ibzairiak loves his soggy abode, but he has not realized how much protection the rubble piles provide smaller creatures. Medium and Small creatures anywhere in this room can gain partial cover (a +2 bonus to AC and a +1 bonus on Reflex saves) by taking a move action to crouch or duck alongside any of these rock piles until leaving the square. The rubble also provides ample places to hide, should the PCs desire to prepare an ambush for Ibzairiak here.

Creatures: Both Jang and Ibzairiak spend most of their time here, along with three Encarthan ridgetail lizards, massive reptiles known for hunting the marshy shores of Lake Encarthan, which Ibzairiak finds amusing pets.

Ibzairiak lounges in this chamber whenever he isn't deeper in the Fangwood courting Naphexi. The black dragon was central to the attacks against the Chernasardo Ranger forts, but now that the Rangers are scattered and hiding, Ibzairiak feels his job for the Ironfang Legion is at an end. He now spends his time pining over his rebuffed romantic overtures and encouraging Jang to hurry with the unusual fungal concoctions that Naphexi asks him to procure.

If the *alarm* is triggered while Ibzairiak is present, he immediately lets out a mighty roar and bellows, “Who dares intrude upon the Scar-Maker?” If there is no immediate response to his challenge, he suspects intruders. The dragon is supremely overconfident and prefers to taunt intruders before attacking them. He gloats about how quickly he was able to destroy the Chernasardo Rangers and how completely “his” hobgoblins have come to dominate the Southern Fangwood. He even gloats over Jang’s servitude in creating the fungal concoctions for his powerful and beloved mate-to-be Naphexi. Although Ibzairiak doesn’t actually know what Naphexi intends to do with these gifts (and he dismisses any theories the PCs propose), he’s certain he’ll gain greater stature and power by Naphexi’s side someday.

Jang spends most of her time here, tending the garden and wondering where Ibzairiak goes on his 3-day flights, but she can sometimes be found elsewhere. She usually spends a few hours each day performing experiments in the repurposed armory (area L7) or sleeping fitfully in her bedroom (area L18). If she identifies intruders, she attacks immediately. She doesn’t think to call for help right away, but the sounds of combat here bring her bodyguards from area L17 after 1d6 rounds.

This encounter can be extremely challenging if every possible opponent gathers here at once, creating a CR 11 encounter—challenging, but not necessarily impossible for PCs (especially given the dragon-hunting equipment recovered from Fort Nunder). If the PCs attack during one of Ibzairiak’s regular departures, Jang, Ruanni and the ridgetails are only a CR 9 encounter on their own. Defeating them first may provide the PCs with a day or so to plan an ambush for Ibzairiak when he returns.

IBZAIRIAK CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 126 (see page 58)

JANG CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 95 (see page 60)

RUANNI CR —

hp 52 (see page 60)

ENCARTHAN RIDGETAIL LIZARDS (3) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Young giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 194)

hp 45 each

Treasure: Ibzairiak’s hoard is scattered at the bottom of his shallow pool. It consists of 232 cp, 2,114 sp, 2,128 gp, a +1 *shock bastard sword*, a +1 *light crossbow*, a *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, a *potion of hide from animals*, two *potions of fly*, a *wand of fireball* (16 charges), a *wand of*

summon monster II (22 charges), a massive black pearl (worth 650 gp), a golden mantichore statue (worth 110 gp), a set of six silver dice (worth 75 gp), a gold holy symbol of Abadar (worth 100 gp), a silver scepter etched with eagles (worth 125 gp), a set of silver wind chimes embossed with writhing serpents (worth 60 gp), and a bent lance that once pierced Ibzairiak’s chest (broken and worthless).

L20. TRAPPED ENTRY (CR 8)

This opening leads through the exterior tower wall and is large enough to easily guide an entire horse through. Mosses, creeping vines, and ferns grow throughout, and a steady stream of water pours from the gap, creating a small waterfall along the tower’s southern face.

Ibzairiak wanted convenient access to his lair, but was concerned about thieves gaining access through the roof. He provided Jang with the necessary scrolls to craft a trap that could catch and kill thieves.

Trap: The wide opening is trapped with a pair of druid spells. When a creature passes through the hole, the plants and fungi in the area spring to life, entangling any creatures in the opening or within 5 feet to either side. One round later, a modified *produce flame* spell erupts through the opening, igniting the animated vines into a writhing mass of flame. The caster level for both spell effects is 8th.

At Ibzairiak’s direction, Jang crafted the trap so that it does not trigger when Ibzairiak passes through the opening. Unknown to Ibzairiak, the wily druid also excluded herself and all creatures of the animal type. Jang and Ruanni can therefore use the opening as an escape route if necessary without triggering the trap, as can any animal companions the PCs may have.

THIEF-ROASTING TRAP CR 8

XP 4,800

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effects (*entangle*, Reflex DC 14 avoids); spell effect (*produce flame*; 1d6 fire damage each round to all creatures in the area for 8 rounds); multiple targets (all targets within the passage or 5 ft. to either side)

Development: While the trap itself won’t necessarily slay thieves on its own, the gout of flame it produces also serves to warn the entire fort—particularly Jang and Ibzairiak—of intruders. The hobgoblins do not respond to the trap if Ibzairiak is present, as they assume the dragon will handle trespassers. If Ibzairiak is away, Jang’s bodyguards immediately rush to area J19 to confront intruders alongside their charge, arriving 5 rounds after the trap is triggered.

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USING THE MILITIA SYSTEM

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lands of Conflict introduces an optional militia system for managing large groups of NPCs and developing them from relative nobodies into a military force to be reckoned with. As of this adventure, the only limit on the rank of the PCs' militia is their own class level.

Several NPCs from this adventure may be recruited into the PCs' militia, granting specific benefits.

Cirio Thessaddin (unique ally): If Cirio survives his ordeals, he eagerly joins the PCs' militia and lends his expertise in ambush and misdirection. So long as Cirio remains with their organization, the militia can reroll one Secrecy check per week.

Herge (unique ally): The wood giant Herge is a patient educator and watchful scout. If the PCs ally with him, they may recruit him as a unique ally. Herge grants a +1 bonus on all Loyalty checks for the Drill Team action, and once per week he may reduce the gold cost to upgrade a team by half.

Atomie Scouts (unique team): If the PCs bested the atomie revelers in Fort Ristin but still showed respect, they can recruit the fey bravados with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check. The atomies act as a team of Informants, but are immune to the Disabled condition (though they may still go missing).

Greenleaf's Roughnecks (unique team): While the Chernasardo Rangers provide an ample pool from which the PCs can recruit militia teams, if Cobb Greenleaf survives and the PCs impress him, the elf volunteers his own squad of scouts and guerrillas to serve them. The Roughnecks are a band of Infiltrators (and can be improved with training) that also grant access to the Spread Propaganda and Secure Gold activities. The Roughnecks do not count against the militia's maximum number of teams.

L21. SHRINE

A large table lies in this niche. The rubble has been cleared away from around the table. A collection of scales, stones, and other oddments are arrayed upon the table around a humanoid effigy made of rotten twigs.

In this niche, Ibzairiak stores a few odds and ends he's purloined from Naphexi on his visits, assembled as a disquieting shrine to his beloved. The items aren't valuable except as sentimental tokens for Ibzairiak, but the collection provides some clues as to Naphexi's impending transformation. The collection includes several large black dragon scales—larger than Ibzairiak's scales—coated with a thin sheen of mold, a

few dead centipedes, and small, smooth rocks covered with black slime.

The tied bundle of rotted sticks is a symbol Ibzairiak has seen in and around Naphexi's lair. Ibzairiak isn't sure of its significance and doesn't have the symbol precisely correct, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies it as an approximation of the symbol of the demon lord of fungus Cyth-V'sug, though clearly crafted by someone who didn't know what the symbol was.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs defeat the major leaders of the Ironfang forces at Trevalay—Eygara, Salokut, Jang, and Ibzairiak—they break the Ironfang Legion's leadership in the Fangwood. Scattered forces (similar to those from area C) remain in the area for days or weeks—possibly providing additional challenges should the PCs lag behind in XP or treasure—but without a centralized support structure, these forces have no ability to resupply or regroup, and any survivors eventually make their way southwest to the steadily expanding Fort Phaendar. The Chernasardo—for now at least—has been reclaimed from the Legion's token efforts to subdue it.

The PCs' victory also prevents the extinction of the Chernasardo Rangers, important allies the PCs hoped to court at the outset of this adventure. In addition to the few Rangers they might have saved in this adventure—such as Cirio Thessaddin, Cobb Greenleaf, and the Rangers imprisoned in Fort Trevalay's prison—the PCs soon learn that many Chernasardo Rangers who were patrolling the forest went into hiding as their forts fell. These Rangers come forward once the Ironfang Legion's leadership is broken, trickling in to join the PCs' efforts to eliminate or chase away the pockets of hobgoblins remaining in the Fangwood. All told, nearly 50 Rangers emerge from the woods, ranging from 1st to 6th level, and with the Chernasardo Rangers' leadership in disarray, they look to the heroes for guidance for the time being. This may offer an excellent opportunity to introduce new NPCs or new PCs, or to provide recruits for PCs who select the Leadership feat.

The Chernasardo Rangers' role beyond this adventure is largely left up to you and your players. As the PCs have established themselves as the most powerful heroes in the vicinity, there is little hope that this tiny army will solve all their problems, but the Rangers can tackle many problems too small for the PCs to concern themselves with (such as remaining Ironfang forces in the forest). These recruits can likewise scout new areas for the PCs, potentially providing an easy way for you to seed in adventure hooks or point the PCs toward challenges to close any XP gaps. Rangers may also act as couriers, keeping the PCs in touch with their army and refugees



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while adventuring elsewhere, or delivering special materials or magic items ordered from larger cities.

One of the PCs' goals at the beginning of this adventure was to find a safe, permanent home for the refugees from Phaendar. Fort Trevalay makes the best choice, as it is the most intact of the Chernasardo Ranger forts, but any of the forts might be repaired with some hard work. The Chernasardo Rangers welcome the refugees and agree to work alongside them to make the Fangwood a safer place. The beginning of the next adventure, "Assault on Longshadow," covers some of the complications involved in transporting a large group of refugees through the untamed wilderness to the safety of whichever fort the PCs decide to call home.

Beyond the Chernasardo Rangers, the PCs might have acquired some powerful allies that are also able to protect and guide Phaendar's refugees. Chief among these are the wood giant Herge from area E and the treant Longfrond from area G. Herge agrees to teach the refugees improved forestry techniques. His tutelage allows the PCs to retrain any of their initial NPC followers from "Trail of the Hunted," possibly transforming characters the PCs saved from Phaendar into powerful cohorts or valuable leaders within their growing alliance. Retraining an NPC's class requires 7 days and 70 gp per level retrained (the cost to retrain is normally higher, but Herge's expertise reduces the expenses incurred; see *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate*

Campaign for additional rules on retraining additional features such as feats and skills). Herge can retrain only one NPC at a time, but he always considers druid, hunter, and ranger to be classes with retraining synergy, regardless of which NPC class a character begins with. Classes with retraining synergy require only 5 days and 50 gp to retrain.

Longfrond, grateful for the lesson that not all humanoids are wicked, becomes a staunch ally of the PCs and eventually the Chernasardo Rangers. She is a quiet, if irritable, observer by nature, and on good terms with many of the region's less aggressive fey. If the PCs established a friendly rapport with the young treant, she supplies them with all the scouting they desire across the Chernasardo region. While this does nothing to prevent potential retaliation by the Ironfang Legion or opportunistic bandits, she can offer the PCs 1d4 day's notice of approaching forces, and provide a +5 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (local) and Knowledge (nature) checks to identify any regional threats (including when they return to the forest in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #119: *Prisoners of the Blight*).

Overall, the Chernasardo becomes a far safer place, thanks directly to the heroes. But the Chernasardo region—and the entire Fangwood—play only a small part in the Ironfang Legion's plans for conquest. Even as the PCs liberate the forest, the hobgoblins move far greater forces against the rest of western Nirmathas.

CIRIEO THESSADDIN

Cirieo Thessaddin's wit and courage helped him survive the loss of his family and guided him to a life of adventure among the Chernasardo Rangers. In the wake of their defeat, he is eager for revenge on the dragon Ibzairiak.

CIRIEO THESSADDIN

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male halfling ranger (skirmisher) 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 128)

CG Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +11

DEFENSE

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

hp 42 (5d10+10)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4; +2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft.

Melee +1 halfling sling staff +8 (1d6+2/×3)

Ranged +1 halfling sling staff +11 (1d6+2/×3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +4, vermin +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Cirieo prefers to fight from a position of strong advantage, either ambushing his foes or leading them into a prepared trap. If surprised, he relies on his trusty sling staff long enough to slow his enemies and then falls back to allies or higher ground.

Morale Cirieo flees combat if it's going poorly—if he lives through a fight, he can return to solve the problem later. If doing so means abandoning allies, he returns as soon as possible to free any captives and tend to the wounded.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot

Skills Acrobatics +6 (+2 when jumping), Climb +8, Handle Animal +8, Heal +9, Knowledge (geography, nature) +5, Perception +11, Stealth +14, Survival +9, Swim +5; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (animal companion), hunter's tricks (hobbling attack), missing leg, track +2, wild empathy +5

Gear mwk studded leather, +1 halfling sling staff with 30 bullets, dagger, cloak of resistance +1, backpack, bedroll, coffee pot^{UE}, crutch, healer's kit, mess kit^{UE}, silk rope (50 ft.), sunrods (3), wire^{UE} (10 ft.), wrist sheath^{UE}, 25 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Missing Leg (Ex) Cirieo's left leg has been severed at the thigh. Cirieo has a speed of 5 feet. If he uses a wooden crutch or his sling staff to assist his movement (either of which requires one hand), his speed increases to 15 feet.

Cirieo Thessaddin was born 25 years ago, the youngest of a large ranching family on the Nesman Plains. The boy loved exploring, often shirking his farm chores to delve into a dense thicket or investigate a neighbor's barn. Although his parents, Benina and Harper, often grouched that Cirieo's true talent was evading work, they loved their son dearly, and the family was very close.

The Thessaddin family met a sudden end in Cirieo's eleventh year. A Molthuni patrol crossed into Nirmathas, raiding local farms and slaughtering livestock to prepare food for a larger force following a day behind them. The soldiers spotted the ranch's well-fed sheep and butchered them. Startled by the massacre, the Thessaddins struck back. Although the Thessaddins were not warriors, their small frames and intimate knowledge of the land allowed them to fell four Molthuni soldiers before the patrol could muster a response. The family fell to Molthuni swords, and Cirieo was soon the only Thessaddin left alive. The sergeant took pity on the child and set him free with a waterskin and a warning to never return.

Cirieo fled to a fetid pond he knew, where he emptied his waterskin and filled it with putrid water. He crept back to the ranch as night fell, evaded the soldiers on guard, and doused the fresh meat with rancid water, thoroughly fouling the meat stolen from his family and eventually causing sickness among the invading force that followed. That night Cirieo learned that a clever plan was far more dangerous than a drawn sword.

As Cirieo grew up, he learned guerrilla techniques from other Nirmathi freedom fighters and honed his skills against Molthuni soldiers crossing the Inkwater and Marideth Rivers. The loss of his family left Cirieo distant from even potential allies, though. He migrated north and then east, into the Chernasardo region of the Fangwood, and his heavy heart finally lightened when surrounded by so many new places to explore. He felt like a young boy again.

Cirieo lived alone in the Fangwood for several months before meeting a pair of Chernasardo Rangers named Haviello and Thrumond. Cirieo joined the Rangers soon after, and the group became the family Cirieo had lacked for so long. He became well known for his unorthodox plans and eager curiosity. Cirieo, Haviello, and Thrumond became inseparable.

Cirieo was stationed at Fort Ristin when Ibzairiak and the Ironfang Legion attacked. At that time, the Rangers at Fort Ristin had no idea that the hobgoblins had arrived in such great numbers or that they were led by a dragon. Realizing he was unlikely to make it out of the fort alive, Cirieo made a daring surprise attack, toppling a hefty stone onto the dragon's skull before ineffectually leaping upon him. Rather than kill the halfling outright, Ibzairiak bit off Cirieo's left leg, momentarily amused by the idea of turning the would-be assassin into a docile pet. A hobgoblin surgeon sewed up the wound and threw Cirieo into the Fort Ristin prison with the few other surviving Rangers—where he once again watched his family die one by one.

Cirieo is muscular for a halfling, and his body retains a toned and athletic build despite his malnourishment. He is a clever soul and deals with his grim life through jokes and constant asides, though recent events have blackened his humor into a dry, sharp wit. An old scar, courtesy of a Molthuni longsword, stretches from his left brow to his jaw. Cirieo's left leg is missing at the upper thigh, so he loops his left pant leg up through his leather belt to keep it out of the way. If given time to whittle, Cirieo carves himself a comfortable crutch of smooth, dark wood. Since his green-and-gray Chernasardo Ranger poncho



was taken by the hobgoblins when they imprisoned him, he attempts to recover another one as soon as possible to display his dedication to the people who became his second family.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Once rescued, Cirieo is the PCs' close ally throughout the adventure. His most important role is to provide directions to the remaining Chernasardo fortresses and to suggest searching for dragon-hunting equipment at Fort Nunder before engaging Ibzairiak. He can provide some information on the Ironfang Legion, such as Ibzairiak's presence or the legion's use of monster mercenaries such as trolls.

As the PCs impress Cirieo with their deeds in cleansing the Fangwood of evil, he comes to rely upon their guidance and sees in them much of the same ambition and hope he saw in the Chernasardo Rangers. After this adventure, he elects to join the PCs' crusade if they'll have him. Though slowed by his injury, the halfling has a keenly tactical mind and is able to keep track of several operations at once. He also demonstrates himself to be a

stalwart and loyal guardian of the refugees under the PCs' care, allowing the PCs to strike back against the Ironfang Legion or travel further afield without concern for their charges' safety. Cirieo takes this obligation very seriously; he provides the PCs with regular updates as he is able, and remains a vigilant guardian.

Cirieo's injury doesn't prove an especially serious hindrance in the long run, given that many of his tactics rely on stealth and patience over mobility, and he happily joins the PCs in the field if they would rather have him as a companion. He may also develop some amorous fondness for one or more of his new leaders; despite the horrors of his life, the charming halfling remains an optimistic—if jaded—romantic.

A *regenerate* spell can restore Cirieo's leg completely, but after several months of adapting to a crutch or prosthetic (if the PCs provide him with one) and bragging of losing his leg in single combat with a massive dragon, Cirieo might need some convincing before he'll agree to give up his favorite icebreaker.

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IBZAIRIAK

Equal parts arrogant and malevolent, the black dragon Ibzairiak—known in the Fangwood as Scar-Maker—has been paid well by the Ironfang Legion to eliminate the Chernasardo Rangers.

IBZAIRIAK

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male young adult variant black dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 92)

CE Large dragon (water)

Init +6; **Senses** dragon senses; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +15 natural, –1 size)

hp 126 (12d12+48)

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

DR 5/magic; **Immune** acid, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d6+8), 2 claws +17 (1d8+6), tail slap +12 (1d8+8), 2 wings +12 (1d6+3)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (80-ft. line, DC 20, 10d6 acid)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +13)

Constant—*Speak with animals* (reptiles only)

At will—*darkness* (50-ft. radius)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st (4/day)—*alarm*, *silent image*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 11), *message*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ibzairiak loves guile and misdirection.

He casts *alarm* each day on the stairs leading up to his lair. If alerted to a trespasser, he bellows a threat but quietly hides in one corner of the room, out of view of the stairs, and casts *silent image* to create an illusion of himself sitting in his pool. He hopes intruders will waste resources attacking this illusion before he strikes.

During Combat Ibzairiak hates a fair fight. He begins any confrontation by unleashing his breath weapon and then casting *darkness* to confuse and terrify his opponents. He takes advantage of his speed and reach to strike with a powerful bite and then fall back, even dragging

a fight with especially tenacious foes into the courtyard. If he injures an opponent so badly that it seems a single melee attack might drop her, he ceases attacks against that foe and bellows, "Flee, whelp, to nurse the wounds the Scar-Maker gave you." If a gravely injured foe chooses to fight on, the dragon shows no mercy.

Morale Ibzairiak arrogantly fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 31 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +2 (+14 when jumping), Bluff +16, Climb +14, Fly +11, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana, local) +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +19, Swim +22

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ speak with reptiles, spry, swamp stride, water breathing

Gear *amulet of mighty fists*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spry (Ex) Ibzairiak is faster and leaner than most young adult black dragons, increasing his Dexterity score by 2 but lowering his Strength score by an equal amount.

Ibzairiak hatched in the marshy coastlands of the eastern Fangwood, along the shores of Lake Encarthan. The tiny dragon soon learned caution and fear among the far larger swamp predators of the region. He lurked among tree roots or high branches, motionless, when other creatures came near. The weak or careless became prey, while the rest never knew he existed. As Ibzairiak grew in size and cunning, his speed and might enabled him to fell far more dangerous game. The few travelers through the region spoke of acid-spattered trees and bones picked clean of meat, but thanks to Ibzairiak's care and stealth, none suspected a black dragon at work. Although Ibzairiak harbored a sadistic desire to maim—typical of black dragons—his caution kept his bloodlust in check.

A group of trophy seekers, the Griffon's Sons, heard tales of the attacks. These canny hunters pieced together

the clues and concluded that a cunning but cowardly dragon stalked the lake and sheltered in the forest. The Griffon's Sons prepared an expedition with the lofty goal of capturing the dragon. On the first day of summer in 4701 AR, their expedition left Tamran for the swamps.

As 30 hunters marched into his territory, Ibzairiak realized he had been discovered at last and had no choice but to fight. With a roar, he leapt to the attack, spraying goutts of acid through the party's ranks. The Griffon's Sons, convinced that the dragon was a coward, were unprepared for his sudden onslaught. The retainers scattered, screaming, while the more experienced hunters closed ranks to defend themselves.

As he nursed his wounds and fed upon the Griffon's Sons, Ibzairiak realized how much he relished the thrill of battle. A scant few of the Griffon's Sons yet lived, though they bore horrific burns. Ibzairiak spared them, demanding that they carry the story of their defeat back to civilization. To emphasize his message, the dragon spent the next 3 days tracking down the fleeing retainers, maiming and scarring each in turn. These unfortunates trickled back into civilization with suppurating wounds, acid-blinded eyes, and extensive burns, and each told tales of the "Scar-Maker."

Word of the black dragon reached General Azaersi. The Ironfang leader offered glory and generous payment—along with a small army of hobgoblins and trolls—for him to destroy the Chernasardo Rangers and claim their territory as his own. His cruelty, greed, and ego all equally kindled, the dragon eagerly accepted.

Ibzairiak recently learned that a larger and more powerful black dragon named Naphexi lives within the Blight. Ibzairiak presented himself as a potential mate, but the elder battered the presumptuous suitor, and so, once again, Ibzairiak turned to cunning. Learning of Naphexi's fondness for fungi and her need of rare mushrooms and molds, he set his druid "servant" to cultivate the rarest and presented them as a gift. The grand dame of the Blight now tolerates Ibzairiak's eager visits so long as he provides her with the reagents she requires. Ibzairiak now concerns himself more with courting Naphexi than leading the hobgoblins or finishing off the Chernasardo Rangers. He journeys to the Blight for 3 days every other week, and the hobgoblins of Fort Trevalay are now used to his regular, but unexplained, absences.

Ibzairiak is long and lean for a young adult black dragon. An injury

sustained while attacking the Griffon's Sons knocked part of his jaw askew, so that he often drools acidic saliva. Ibzairiak wears much of his wealth as jewelry and prefers gem-studded necklaces.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Ibzairiak is the primary antagonist in this adventure. Although he is only a mercenary in the employ of the Ironfang Legion, he presents a clear danger to the Chernasardo region, and he shelters Ironfang forces stationed there. Ibzairiak's ego likely compels him to fight to the death against the PCs, but the cunning dragon might survive. If so, he carries a long and vicious grudge and assists the Ironfang Legion in setting future traps or ambushes for the Fangwood Champions, or he teams up with his love Naphexi when the PCs finally confront her in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #119: *Prisoners of the Blight*.

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JANG

A cruel hobgoblin druid raised by cougars, Jang bartered her expertise to the Ironfang Legion. Still unsure whether tying herself to a civilized army was wise, Jang delights in opportunities to unleash her feral savagery.

JANG

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female hobgoblin druid 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175)
NE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 95 (8d8+56)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +10/+5 (1d6+3/18-20)

Ranged mwk sling +10 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks wild shape 4/day

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*flame strike* (DC 17), *freedom of movement*

3rd—*aqueous orb*^{APG}, *call lightning* (DC 16), *dominate animal* (DC 16), *greater magic fang*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *hold animal* (DC 15)

1st—*cure light wounds*, *entangle* (DC 14), *faerie fire*, *hydraulic push*^{APG}, *speak with animals*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mending*

TACTICS

Before Combat Jang casts *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, and *freedom of movement* on herself, and *barkskin* and *greater magic fang* on her cougar companion, Ruanni.

During Combat Jang opens up fights by casting *flame strike*. She casts *aqueous orb* to trap and gather up enemies, and casts *call lightning* if she encases multiple opponents in the orb, striking it to electrocute everyone trapped within. She targets any animal companions with *dominate animal*, and uses her wild shape ability to transform into a dire lion for melee.

Morale Jang fights until reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, at which point she attempts to flee with Ruanni. If Ruanni is dead or trapped, Jang fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without *bear's endurance* and *bull's strength*,

Jang's statistics are **hp** 79; **Fort** +9; **Melee** mwk scimitar +8/+3 (1d6+1/18-20); **Ranged** mwk sling +10 (1d4+1); **Str** 12, **Con** 16; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16; **Skills** Climb +3.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Natural Spell, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +0 (−4 when jumping), Climb +5, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +14, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +4, Survival +12, Swim +3; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Druidic, Goblin

SQ nature bond (cougar named Ruanni), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Combat Gear antiplague^{UE} (2), troll oil^{UE}; **Other Gear** mwk lamellar armor^{UE}, mwk scimitar, mwk sling, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *beast-bond brand*^{UE}, *druid's vestment*, gardening shears, holly, mistletoe, spell component pouch

RUANNI

CR —

Cougar animal companion

NE Medium animal

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3 (+4 vs. enchantments)

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.; sprint

Melee bite +10 (1d6+5), 2 claws +11 (1d3+5)

TACTICS

Base Statistics Without *barkskin* and *greater magic fang*, Ruanni's statistics are **AC** 21, flat-footed 15; **Melee** bite +9 (1d6+4), 2 claws +10 (1d3+4).

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 25 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+18 when jumping), Climb +9, Escape Artist +7, Perception +6, Stealth +11 (+15 in undergrowth);
Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth in undergrowth

SQ devotion, tricks (attack, come, defend, down, fetch, guard, heel, stay, track)

Jang's earliest memories are of her adoptive mother—a Fangwood cougar she came to call Raruun—protecting her from the claws of Raruun's animal children. At 4 years of age, Jang was much older than the other cubs, but also much weaker, unable even to tear off her portion of meat after a family hunt. Keenly aware of her differences, Jang learned to watch more than act and eventually realized that her family spoke to each other in a language just beyond her comprehension. She longed to be more like them, and this desire to communicate with her family prompted Jang's first druidic stirrings.

From that moment of clarity, Jang's druidic powers blossomed. She eventually forged a strong bond with her sister Ruanni. Ruanni's hunting skills helped the child survive for a time, but as Jang's magic blossomed, the pair fattened themselves on the prey she enchanted.

Deep feelings of inferiority haunt Jang and underpin her practice of druidic magic. Jang favors spells that make her stronger, tougher, and more animalistic, and those that call down the wrath of the natural world. She spends much of her time transformed into a cougar.

When the Ironfang Legion began recruiting experts on the Fangwood, Jang offered her services not out of kinship with her fellow hobgoblins, but out of a desire to demonstrate her strength. Her deep knowledge of the forest and her many animal allies led to her assignment as a senior strategist and second-in-command to the dragon Ibzairiak. Jang finds this authority uncomfortable; she finds pleasure in eliminating the Chernasardo Rangers, but has no interest in her hobgoblin "kin," finding their militaristic camaraderie off-putting.

Jang likes Ibzairiak, in no small part because she sees him as a kindred spirit. Although it isn't formally part of her duties, Jang assists Ibzairiak's courting of Naphexi by collecting the herbs, fungi, unguents, and oddments that he delivers to the female dragon. Jang doesn't yet understand the connection between these components, but she

knows Naphexi must have some greater scheme in mind than Ibzairiak comprehends.

Jang is a short and muscular hobgoblin, standing only 5 feet tall. Until she joined the Ironfang Legion, Jang wore only a sleeveless green tunic. Now she wears this linen shirt under expensive new armor.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Jang suppresses her hatred of humanoids as she interacts with the hobgoblins in Fort Trevalay. She provides the Ironfang Legion with her extensive knowledge of the Fangwood, information about the despised Chernasardo Rangers, and the services of her feral allies.

Depending on when the PCs assault Fort Trevalay, Jang may either be their final obstacle and one of the fort's toughest combatants, or she may serve as a sidekick to the fearsome Ibzairiak. If she flees or is allowed to live, she retains no loyalty to the Ironfang Legion. She may even meet the PCs when they return to the Fangwood much later, and may prove willing to serve as an advisor or guide through the Blight (where she has begun studying Naphexi). If the PCs kill Ruanni, however, she brands them as enemies and calls upon other beasts of the forest to harry and harass them at every turn.



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I hear the awed whispers of the new recruits. “Whenever you think you’re facing ten, you’ll find a hundred,” they say. “When you think you have the high ground, they strike from the skies. If you attack them with the delusion that you have the advantage, you’ll find an arrow in your neck before you even know what happened.” To hear them speak, you would think we were fighting a heavenly host rather than rabble hiding in tree houses.

A few troops from Groden’s battalion attempted to desert their posts and flee west last night. This morning, my scouts found them dead, stripped of armor and weapons, and left to feed the beasts of the forest. The tree climbers were far kinder to them than I would have been. Nevertheless, their bodies served as a suitable reminder to the rest of the soldiers—retreat is not an option.

—Journal of Molthuni Commander Dredik Loor

Nirmathas is a nation born from conflict and revolution. Throughout most of its recorded history, the people of the region were given no choice but to rebel in order to survive.

Beneath the Fangwood's canopy, they learned not only how to rely on the forest for protection, but how to turn it into a battlefield they could dominate.

The southernmost region of the forest, the Chernasardo, is overgrown with towering fir trees older than memory and thick brambles that give pause to even the most sure-footed. Here, soldiers who have grown accustomed to the bedlam of combat are unsettled by the overbearing stillness and quiet of the forest. The dim light and shifting shadows play tricks on their eyes. Traditional tactics and battle plans meant for open engagement are useless against an enemy they cannot see, and their armor becomes more hindrance than protection in the difficult terrain. To Molthuni officers' frustration, their armies falter in the face of foresters barely organized enough to be called a militia.

The Chernasardo Rangers have defied expectations throughout history for one simple reason—for them, surrender has never been an option. They consider any loss a mere setback and any defeat an opportunity to refine their strategy. As long as they are alive, they continue to find better ways to fight back, developing new subversive maneuvers as old ones are found out.

HISTORY

The Fangwood has produced unmatched hunters and trackers for millennia. In the Chernasardo region, even common trappers and bandits have skills that would rival those of any ranger from a less forgiving land. Thus has the term Chernasardo Ranger long carried with it the prestige of nearly peerless hunting prowess, survival instinct, and woodland skill.

It wasn't until the last century that the Rangers formed anything resembling the organization that uses their name today. For centuries, Nirmathas was part of Molthune, itself a vassal of the continent-spanning empire of Cheliah. During this time, the people of the Chernasardo were insular and independent, but generally lived free of conflict with the greater political forces in the empire. In 4632 AR, however, this changed abruptly. Cheliah had descended into a fractious civil war, and Molthune declared its independence from its longtime liege state. The newly empowered Molthuni governor, Kellon, maintained order in the new nation with militaristic rule, and continued the

exploitation of the Fangwood that the forest's inhabitants had endured under Chelish rule for so long.

As tensions rose between Canorate and the people of the Fangwood, the disorganized groups of Chernasardo Rangers began working more in concert with one another to disrupt trade, expansion, and the influence of the Molthuni government in the resource-rich Chernasardo region. Forest Marshal Irgal Nirmath eventually united disparate bands of the Chernasardo Rangers under a common banner for the first time in history, as part of the larger campaign that established the borders of modern Nirmathas.

Through their combined efforts, they drove off the Molthuni and finally won their independence in 4655 AR.

This unity was short-lived, however; since Nirmath's untimely death, no other individual has been able to effectively lead the Chernasardo Rangers as a cohesive unit. Though the Rangers answer the call of Nirmath's successors in times of need, they largely act according to their own whims. Fortunately, Forest Marshal Nirmath's leadership left a lasting impact, and the Chernasardo Rangers are now more effective and motivated than ever before.

CODES AND PHILOSOPHIES

Like most Nirmathi, Chernasardo Rangers value personal freedom and independence. Among them are aspiring heroes who seek personal glory, idealists who wish to end the conflict for the sake of peace, and racketeers who profit from stolen Molthuni supplies. To an outsider, one band of Rangers may seem so different from another that it would be difficult to believe they claim the same title. However, to all of them, the safety of the Fangwood has always been paramount. In times of crisis, even the most rebellious of their number set aside individual agendas for the sake of defending their home.

Secrecy is vital to the organization's survival. Their greatest advantage comes from keeping their fighting strength, strongholds, and tactics hidden from enemies. Nearly all messages are delivered verbally, while those that must be written down are recorded in various codes, many of which can only be deciphered by fewer than a dozen individuals. Supply routes and meeting places are moved constantly, often at a moment's notice. Every possible fail-safe is put in place to ensure nothing of value is revealed to the enemy.

In order for the Chernasardo Rangers to function under such a strict code of secrecy, they have fostered



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incredible loyalty to one another. They are prepared to give their lives for their comrades without a second thought—especially if it means taking down a few of the enemy along the way. While most Nirmathi are quite particular about their word choices in order to avoid any misunderstandings, Chernasardo Rangers are often as brief and to-the-point as possible, trusting their comrades to interpret their messages favorably.

APHORISMS

Members of the Chernasardo Rangers commonly use the following phrases when communicating with both themselves and outsiders.

I'll be free as a bird, or free as an arrow. To an outsider, the Chernasardo Rangers' dedication to their cause may seem to contradict their desire for independence, but these are one and the same to the freedom fighters. A life of combat and subterfuge is perilous, and often seems as brief as the flight of an arrow. However, those who embrace such a lifestyle ensure the freedom of countless others.

Every road has a fork if you can move through the trees. The Chernasardo Rangers are experts at flexible thinking, and it shows in nearly all facets of their lives. Whether it's attacking enemies from unexpected angles, finding solutions to seemingly intransigent problems, or even highly creative interpretations of certain verbal agreements, there is always a path aside from the most obvious—provided one is clever enough to see it.

STRUCTURE

The Chernasardo Rangers have an incredibly diverse organization; while most of their members are humans and elves, it's not uncommon to encounter dwarves, halflings, or even half-orcs among their number. The Chernasardo Rangers likewise espouse a wide number of religions and faiths. The druids and shamans of the group typically worship Desna, Gozreh, or the Green Faith, while inquisitors and warpriests favor Erastil and Iomedae. Many members are inspired by the vengeful and chaotic nature of Calistria, while others are enamored of the free-spirited Cayden Cailean or revolutionary Milani.

There are few real leaders among the Chernasardo Rangers and even fewer followers. Most members will ignore a well-meaning suggestion if it sounds like a command, even if it is one they otherwise would have agreed with. Only those Rangers who have proven themselves over many encounters and earned the title of warden can issue orders and reliably expect them to be followed. For everyone else, the Rangers consider it something of a sport to see just how egregiously they can defy their orders while still achieving favorable results.

The Rangers typically arrange themselves in bands of six or fewer, with each band operating independently. Many act as assault squads, scouts, or smugglers, but there are just as many who have no particular role, taking on

whatever mission is in front of them. There is little actual planning among the Rangers, since most view anything other than taking direct action as bureaucratic nonsense. As such, the quartermasters, who act as administrators, tactical advisors, and commanders of the few permanent Ranger forts, are among their least popular members. Still, no one would deny the importance of these positions, since without them, the freedom fighters would certainly not have found such success.

There is no true hierarchy among an individual band of Rangers. Those with the most wisdom and foresight—however loosely that's interpreted from Ranger to Ranger—are looked to as unofficial captains. While these captains may not be leaders in the traditional sense, their comrades trust their judgment enough to allow them to make snap decisions when there is no time for discussion. Captains often take on a support role in combat, watching the battlefield from a distance or offering cover and advice from above.

OPERATIONS

The Chernasardo Rangers act as border patrols, escorts, scouts, and smugglers, and also as a makeshift organized militia to assist in the nation's war with Molthune.

Scouts have the most important role, as superior information is often the determining factor in skirmishes with the Molthuni army. Inquisitors, rogues, and slayers typically take on missions beyond the Nirmathi border, moving quickly and quietly to collect intelligence without being seen. They operate under cover of night, stealing Molthuni battle plans, sabotaging equipment, and—when possible—assassinating key Molthuni officials. An effective scout team can disable an entire battalion before the enemy even sees the border. Those enemies foolish or stubborn enough to advance despite this are met by ambush squads that have already been informed of their movements and formations.

Smugglers have the task of creating and maintaining supply lines in those areas where Molthuni troops may try to disrupt them. Other nations in the region are hesitant to trade openly with Nirmathas, as doing so would make them enemies of Molthune, so the Chernasardo Rangers have become rather adept at negotiating with racketeers. Since Nirmathas lacks the means to manufacture advanced metalwork, they trade for armor and weapons—typically with brokers from Lastwall and Ustalav eager to get their hands on the medicines and poisons that can be made only by Nirmathi druids and alchemists. The recipes for these are highly guarded secrets.

Civilians rely on Chernasardo Rangers to escort them between villages and protect them from both natural threats and Molthuni troops. It is rather rare that the Rangers have to deal with the kind of criminal activity typical in other regions. When the war with Molthune began, Irgal Nirmath formed an agreement with the

bandits of the Chernasardo region: so long as the bandits attacked only enemy caravans and none of their nation's own citizens, Nirmath's fighters would let them act as they wished. Each forest marshal since has honored this truce, as they know the value of having the brigands on their side.

The Rangers who embrace what might be the most perilous missions are the self-proclaimed "chain breakers." Slavery is one of the most abhorrent crimes imaginable to a Nirmathi; for any being to enforce its will on another in such a way goes against everything they believe in. In the early days of the Nirmathi rebellion, many Molthuni officers brought slaves to accompany them on long marches. During that time, Chernasardo Rangers considered it a priority to free those slaves, even at great cost to themselves. Many of those former slaves became vital assets to the revolution, and some went on to become Chernasardo Rangers themselves.

These Rangers travel further south than any of their allies, disguised in stolen Molthuni gear and using information from the freed slaves among them to infiltrate Molthuni cities. Without the advantages of the forest, and deep within enemy territory, any encounter with soldiers or city guards could be fatal, and these missions involve a degree of subtlety and social nicety that not many can effectively master. But every time they return home with even a single freed slave in tow, they are emboldened to go back for more.

HEADQUARTERS

The Chernasardo Rangers do not operate out of any single location. Grouping together for any extended time would prove dangerous if a large enough enemy force found them. Instead, they spread out among various bases, meeting up just long enough to rest and share information and resources. Some Rangers think of these bases as homes, though most prefer to remain mobile, relying on what exists in nature for shelter and protection.

As the Chernasardo Rangers grew, they required stronger, more permanent defenses against invaders. Scattered throughout the Fangwood are strongholds built long before the nation found its name, when

Cheliax—and Taldor before that—laid claim to the land. Though the forest long ago overran many of these forts, their foundations still stood strong. The freedom fighters thought it fitting to reclaim these forts as their own, another act of rebellion to help bolster their morale.

Fort Ristin is one of the oldest and most impressive of these strongholds. Its sturdy walls and high towers make it a formidable stronghold, and its location near the edge of Chernasardo territory makes it an ideal base for border patrols. While the fort's architecture is distinctly Chelish, the freedom fighters have gone to great lengths to scour it of all other signs of its previous owners, though they still take advantage of its more opulent features.

Fort Nunder is more of a storehouse than a fortress. Built into the side of a steep hill called Nunder Scarp, the fort is so inhospitable that it serves as merely a brief stop where freedom fighters and weary travelers can rest and resupply. A handful of barracks are available, but the bulk of the fort is dedicated to storage space. Fort Nunder also houses a vault constructed by a pair of competitive, perhaps overzealous trapsmiths. Both designed their own paths into the hill defended by an array of deadly traps. The vault is said to store specialized weaponry meant for emergencies, but it hasn't been accessed in decades and is now largely forgotten.

Fort Trevalay is the one true stronghold built entirely by the Chernasardo Rangers. While the other bases boast impressive architecture, none of them fully met the rebels' needs. Built atop a massive stone column in the center of a wide gully, this fortress is accessible only by collapsible rope bridges. It was constructed from the same stone that it rests upon, rendering it nearly indistinguishable from the natural rock formations at a distance. While most Nirmathi bases have undergone several rounds of renovations to suit various improvised uses, Fort Trevalay was designed from the start with a training hall, war room, and fully functional forge, as well as many other necessary accommodations.

In addition to the larger forts, there are several smaller hideouts secreted throughout the Fangwood. One such outpost is Fort Ozem, named for the Taldan crusaders who once used the area as a staging post in their war against the Whispering Tyrant. Some even say the fort



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was once home to Iomedae herself. While the interior is still serviceable, the outer walls have worn smooth with age and become overgrown with vegetation, such that the fort appears completely ruined from the outside. Unlike other forts, this is not a location meant to be defended—rather, it is meant to give the appearance that there is nothing and no one inside worth investigating. Still, the area surrounding the fort is littered with traps both magical and mundane. If enemies ever do draw near, the fort can be evacuated at a moment's notice, leaving nothing of value and an indefensible position for anyone foolish enough to claim the fort for themselves.

Each fort is managed by a small staff of about a dozen quartermasters. These Rangers are typically older or less physically fit, but still wise, decisive, and

tactically brilliant. They are responsible for most of the work the other rebels would consider tedious. Unlike most of the Chernasardo Rangers, they don't act as individuals, but make decisions by committee and collectively advise the wardens. They are responsible for gathering and compiling intelligence delivered by scouts, putting it to use in planning the large-scale operations that require several bands to cooperate closely. Their decisions often involve harsh and heated debates, but they almost always arrive at consensus quite quickly.

Those Rangers who are opposed to spending longer than necessary in any base are resourceful enough to fend for themselves. Some use tavern basements and cellars as secret meeting places. Others hide medicine, weapons, and other equipment deep in the forest's underbrush, disguising these caches with fallen trees and animal burrows. It is also common practice to create temporary, mobile shelters, never leaving one in the same place for longer than a few days. Those who can use items like a *hunter's tree fort* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 231) do so, while druids and sorcerers craft complex hideaways within trees and stones.

JOINING THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

None are barred from taking on the title of Chernasardo Ranger, so long as they embody the spirit of freedom that all Nirmathi carry. However, the title alone is worth little. Due to the disjointed and secretive nature of the organization, there is no official process to join, nor is there a comprehensive record of members. Instead, deed and reputation are the most important factors in determining who is truly a Chernasardo Ranger.

There is some amount of deference to those who have proven themselves in combat, but also an immense respect for skilled healers, traders, and tacticians. An individual of great renown may be scouted as a candidate without realizing it. Members often approach a skilled civilian as a friend or seeking an apprenticeship, waiting weeks or even months to reveal their true motivations. Not everyone who is scouted this way makes it through the recruitment process, but those who do tend to become exemplary members.

Conversely, there are those who grew up hearing stories of the Chernasardo Rangers who want nothing more than to become one. Usually young and ambitious, these are often the first to strike out against Molthuni soldiers in an attempt to make a name for themselves. While they may not always have much discretion at first, they make up for it with raw talent and unorthodox strategies that catch enemies off their guard. These eager rebels



rarely aspire to the upper echelon of the Chernasardo Rangers, instead remaining closer to the border, putting themselves in harm's way for the sake of others.

It is common for a band to act independently for years before ever seeing a base or organizing with other members. When they do meet with others Chernasardo Rangers, they may briefly cooperate and exchange information before parting ways again. Over time, these informal connections become an expansive network of allies. In this way, new Rangers and Ranger bands gradually integrate themselves into the larger organization.

However, those who have yet to be fully initiated are rarely given explicit information. Over time, they may receive bits of a code from one contact and half of a cipher from another. Clues and hidden messages are concealed throughout the Fangwood, but very few know where to look. It takes dedication and patience to piece these hints together, but those who do are given all the tools they need to find a Chernasardo Ranger fort that will welcome them—and once they've found the first fort, other secrets become readily available.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Chernasardo Rangers often employ the following rules options in defending their forest home.

NEW FEATS

The guerrilla tactics of the Chernasardo Rangers are represented in the following new feats developed by the forest defenders.

Delayed Spell (Metamagic)

You can set a spell to trigger on a delay.

Benefit: A delayed spell can be activated as a standard action anytime within 1 minute per spell level of being cast. Only spells that target one or more squares or grid intersections can be affected by Delayed Spell, and the target (as well as any other variables determined at the time of casting) cannot be changed once the delayed spell is cast. You can have as many delayed spells as you wish at any given time, but only one spell can be triggered in a single standard action. Though a delayed spell does not manifest until it is triggered, it emits a magical aura as normal and can be identified with Knowledge (arcana) as a spell effect in place. A delayed spell uses up a spell slot 1 level higher than the spell's actual level.

Quick Trapper

Your trap-making proficiency improves greatly.

Prerequisites: Learn Ranger Trap^{UM} or trap class feature, Survival 5 ranks.

Benefit: When setting a ranger trap (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 64), you can do so as a standard action rather than a full-round action. If you do so, the trap DC is reduced by 5.

NEW SPELLS

Chernasardo Rangers have developed the following spells, which have begun to see use by the Rangers' allies as well.

SPECTRAL SCOUT

School conjuration (creation); **Level** bard 3, druid 3, ranger 3, shaman 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S

Range 1 mile

Effect one incorporeal animal of size Tiny or smaller

Duration 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You summon a spectral creature in the shape of the Tiny or smaller animal of your choice, which always appears in your square. The creature emits a faint glow of a color you choose at the time of the spell's casting, providing the illumination of a candle. It has the same statistics as the creature after which it is modeled (including ability scores, Armor Class, feats, senses, skills, and speed), but is incorporeal and has only 1 hit point. A spectral scout cannot attack, but can otherwise follow any basic instructions that could be given to a pet or animal companion of similar intelligence but without the need to make Handle Animal skill checks.

A spectral scout can communicate verbally with the caster but can't be understood by others. A spectral scout can relay information it has directly witnessed with perfect clarity, including sights, sounds, and smells, but it cannot further interpret that information. For example, a spectral scout can report on how many individuals it sees, the direction they are going, and what equipment they carry; it can't tell the caster whether the people were friend or foe, or their objective.

SYLVAN HIDEAWAY

School conjuration (creation); **Level** druid 3, ranger 3, shaman 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (one pound of unworked stone or wood)

Range touch

Target one 5-foot square of touched earth

Duration 2 hours/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

When this spell is cast on a natural, unworked surface, it creates an extradimensional underground space large enough to comfortably hold two creatures of any size per caster level (maximum 12). The room is sealed by a 5-foot-square camouflaged trap door that can be locked from within. (This trap door has hardness 10 and 20 hit points per caster level; the Perception DC to see the hidden trap door equals the spell's save DC.) The door and room are made of the same material of the material component used to cast the spell. You can choose the shape and configuration of the room when you create it; however, any furnishings (tables, beds, etc.) in the room are made of the same material as the room and cannot be moved once created. When the spell ends, anything inside the space is ejected to the surface in the nearest available square.

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NEW PRESTIGE CLASS: CHERNASARDO WARDEN

Chernasardo warden is a title that few can reasonably hope to earn. Among the freedom fighters, wardens have proven themselves again and again, taking on enemies that threaten the fate of Nirmathas. With their unmatched martial prowess and tactical skills, Chernasardo wardens are masters of the forest. They specialize in neutralizing enemies without being seen, but they are not a threat to be taken lightly even in close-quarters combat.

This title is earned only by those who have overcome insurmountable odds and survived unimaginable danger. There are just a handful of wardens alive at any given time, as it is a position that places one in constant peril. Wardens set themselves apart by wearing crests or armor fashioned from trophies won in battle. Traditionally, these were made from the horns or hide of great beasts of the Fangwood, but in recent years, regalia of high-ranking Molthuni officials has become more common. Only the Nirmathi forest marshal commands more respect than a warden among the Chernasardo Rangers.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Chernasardo warden, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonevil and nonlawful.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Stealth 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks.

Special: You must defeat an evil enemy of a CR 5 levels higher than your character level. This victory must be witnessed by a Chernasardo Ranger.

CLASS SKILLS

The Chernasardo warden's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Acrobatics (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Perception (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Stealth (Dex), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Ranks per Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Chernasardo warden prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Chernasardo wardens are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and light armor and bucklers.

Forest Magic (Sp): A Chernasardo warden is one with the forest and gains a number of spell-like abilities due to this arboreal affinity. She uses her Chernasardo warden level as her caster level. She can select one of the following spells to gain as a spell-like ability at 1st level, usable once per day: *alarm*, *detect snares and pits*, *endure elements*, *entangle*, *jump*, *longstrider*, or *pass without trace*. Spell-like abilities selected from this list can be used three times per day at 3rd level and five times per day at 5th level.

At 3rd level she gains a second spell-like ability and adds the following spells to her available choices: *fog cloud*, *snares*, *spider climb*, and *spike growth*. Spell-like abilities selected from this list can be used once per day at 3rd level, three times per day at 5th level, and five times per day at 7th level.

At 5th level she gains a third spell-like ability and adds the following spells to her available choices: *barkskin*, *cure light wounds*, *darkvision*, *gravity bow*^{APG}, *lead blades*^{APG}, *plant growth*, and *spectral scout* (see page 67). Spell-like abilities from this list can be used once per day at 5th level, three times per day at 7th level, and five times per day at 9th level.

At 7th level she gains a fourth spell-like ability and adds the following spells to her available choices: *commune with nature*, *cure moderate wounds*, *nondetection*, *sylvan hideaway* (see page 67), and *tree shape*. Spell-like abilities selected from this list can be used once per day at 7th level and three times per day at 9th level.

At 9th level, she gains a fifth spell-like ability and adds the following spells to her available choices: *cure serious wounds*, *discern lies*, *freedom of movement*, and *tree stride*. Spell-like abilities selected from this list can be used once per day.

Unchained Heart (Ex): A Chernasardo warden's free spirit goes far beyond simple stubbornness. At 1st level, she gains a +2 bonus on Will saving throws made against compulsions and mind-affecting effects. If she succeeds at this saving throw, the Chernasardo warden gains a

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Forest magic 1, unchained heart +2
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Aligned class, bonus feat
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	Forest magic 2, guerrilla tactics
4th	+3	+1	+2	+2	Aligned class, unchained heart +3
5th	+3	+2	+3	+3	Bonus feat, forest magic 3
6th	+4	+2	+3	+3	Advanced tactics, aligned class
7th	+5	+2	+4	+4	Forest magic 4, unchained heart +4
8th	+6/+1	+3	+4	+4	Aligned class, bonus feat
9th	+6/+1	+3	+5	+5	Forest magic 5, second tactic
10th	+7/+2	+3	+5	+5	Aligned class, phantom strike

+1 bonus on attack rolls against the source of the spell or effect for 1d4 rounds. The bonus on saving throws increases to +3 at 4th level and +4 at 7th level.

Aligned Class (Ex): Chernasardo wardens come from all walks of life, each offering a unique perspective and skill set. At 2nd level, a Chernasardo warden must choose a class she belonged to before adding the prestige class to be her aligned class. She gains all the class features for one additional level of her aligned class as if she had gained a level in it. She gains the class features of an additional level of her aligned class at 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th levels. She still retains the Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, and skill ranks of the prestige class.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 5th, and 8th levels, a Chernasardo warden gains a bonus feat. She must meet the bonus feat's prerequisites. She can choose one from the following list (feats marked with an asterisk [*] appear on page 67; those marked with a dagger [†] can be found in *Pathfinder Player Companion: Weapon Master's Handbook*): Broken Wing Gambit^{UC}, Combat Expertise, Combat Patrol^{APG}, Delayed Spell*, Greater Dirty Trick^{APG}, Improved Dirty Trick^{APG}, Learn Ranger Trap^{UM}, Overwatch Style†, Overwatch Tactician†, Overwatch Vortex†, Paired Opportunists^{APG}, Quick Trapper*, Shot on the Run, Silent Spell, Spring Attack, Still Spell, Target of Opportunity^{UC}, Weapon Trick†, and Whirlwind Attack.

Guerrilla Tactics (Ex): A Chernasardo warden is an expert at hit-and-run attacks, sabotage, and subterfuge. At 3rd level, she can use the following tactics in combat. She can gain the bonus of only a single tactic at a time, but can switch between them as a swift action. If the Chernasardo warden becomes confused, frightened, panicked, or shaken, she cannot gain any bonuses from guerrilla tactics for as long as the condition persists.

Exploit Weakness: When flanking an enemy, a Chernasardo warden can forgo the +2 bonus on attack rolls from flanking until the start of her next turn in order to further punish the foe. On a successful hit against a flanked enemy while forgoing the attack bonus, the Chernasardo warden can perform a disarm, sunder, or trip combat maneuver against the target as a swift action at her full base attack bonus. This action still provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

Sneak Attack: A Chernasardo warden gains sneak attack +1d6. This increases to +2d6 at 6th level and +3d6 at 9th level.

Sniping Prowess: The Chernasardo warden takes advantage of any available cover. Her penalty on Stealth checks to snipe changes to -16. The penalty changes to -12 at 6th level and -8 at 9th level.

Sprite Step: When moving through wooded terrain, the Chernasardo warden gains a +4 competence bonus on Acrobatics and Climb checks. While climbing, she does not lose her Dexterity bonus to AC and does not take a penalty for climbing quickly.

Advanced Tactics (Ex): At 6th level, a Chernasardo warden adds the following tactics to her list of choices.

Preemptive Strike: The Chernasardo warden strikes before her targets can react. When acting during a surprise round, she can take one move action and one standard action. She cannot take a full-round action during a surprise round, as normal.

Trick Shot: This tactic allows the Chernasardo warden to attempt Dirty Trick combat maneuver checks with a ranged weapon at a -4 penalty. At 9th level, this penalty changes to -2.

Second Tactic (Ex): At 9th level, a Chernasardo warden is able to benefit from two tactics at a time. She can change one of these at a time as a swift action.

Phantom Strike (Ex): At 10th level, a Chernasardo warden becomes a true master of the battlefield. She can always move at her full speed across nonmagical difficult terrain and does not take movement penalties due to poor visibility.

A number of times per day equal to her Intelligence modifier, when the Chernasardo warden deals weapon damage to an opponent who is unaware of her presence, she can deal an additional 2d6 points of precision damage or cause the target to cower for 2d6 rounds. The target receives a Will saving throw to negate the cowering effect (DC = 10 + half the Chernasardo warden's character level + her Intelligence modifier).



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“When we heard the alarm bell ringing from the temple in town, we feared the worst—but our fears didn’t come close to the fate that awaited us. We knew they were coming for us when we saw the red flicker of flames illuminating the rising smoke at the Weatherby farm over the ridge. There was nowhere to hide, no defense we could mount to save ourselves or all that we’d built. I let the horses out of the barn, hoping they could at least flee to safety. The invaders’ arrows cut them down before they got a hundred yards along the road. The monsters came at us silently, without so much as a war cry. They just slowly marched out of the trees and set the fields, the house, and barn alight. The thought of losing all that, harrowing as it is, pales in comparison to the memory of their chains. Cayden help me, those chains...”

—Eldus Vorrin, on the Goblinblood Wars

Of all the races making their homes in the Inner Sea region, few are as brutal, disciplined, and organized as hobgoblins, whose militarized society carries the threat of war, subjugation, and suffering wherever it spreads. Hobgoblins rarely form permanent political entities; the Tian nation of Kaoling stands out as a solitary realm where hobgoblins maintain a stable government, fixed borders, and a thriving capital city. Most hobgoblins live in roving war bands; these armies make their homes on the ruined battlefields of their most recent conquests, always looking to the horizon for more victims to enslave and more settlements to burn and plunder. But not all hobgoblin organizations are familial military units. Despite relishing being at odds with other civilizations and rarely setting down permanent roots, hobgoblins still have myriad guilds, orders, and religious cults that stand apart from the perceived norm.

HOBGOBLIN ORGANIZATIONS

Many non-hobgoblins see hobgoblin culture's militaristic nature as a hindrance, a fixation holding the race back from becoming more than its current state. What such observers fail to grasp are the lengths to which hobgoblins are willing to go to impose their sense of order upon the world around them. In most cases, this drive takes the form of traditional military conquest—hobgoblins seek to force the world to adapt to their will by sheer might and threat of death. In other, lower-profile instances, however, the visionaries of the hobgoblin race work to bring about revolutionary change within their own society and in the world beyond.

BLOOD'S LEGACY

In the wake of the Goblinblood Wars in Isgar, the goblinoid armies fled to other parts of the Inner Sea region to regroup, retreated to underground warrens beneath the Chitterwood to lick their wounds, or were eradicated by the joined forces of Andoran, Cheliah, the Five Kings Mountains, Isgar, and Molthune. Morale among hobgoblins and their goblin and bugbear kin reached a nadir unmatched in their collective memory. However, a small group of hobgoblins, led by the charismatic **Dtrung** (LE male hobgoblin skald 12), was inspired by this defeat to unite not only the goblinoids of the Chitterwood and greater Isgar, but those of the entire Inner Sea region. Seeing the conquest of Avistan and beyond as an inevitability for goblinkind, Dtrung and his most trusted envoys travel far and wide to unite the Chitterwood diaspora and goblinoids who took no

part in the Goblinblood Wars behind the shared vision of goblin superiority.

Blood's Legacy has found the most success in this endeavor with other hobgoblin tribes, especially ones based elsewhere in Avistan, in western and southwestern Casmaron, and in northern Garund. Bugbears often scoff at the concept of such large-scale, coordinated efforts, preferring a more solitary existence, and few are open to working with others. But even bugbears seem amenable compared to the frenetic goblins, who are just as likely to attack and try to eat Dtrung's envoys as they are to give them an audience.

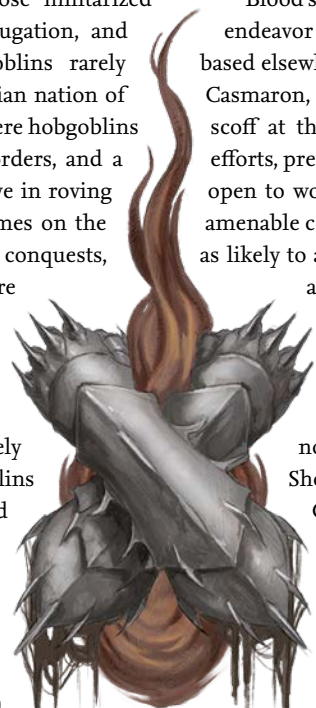
There is still much work for Dtrung and Blood's Legacy to do to bring the goblinoid peoples of Avistan, Casmaron, and Garund together, but they are nothing if not persistent and single-minded in their task. Should they succeed in their ultimate goal, the Goblinblood Wars may look like merely the initial salvo in a generations-long conflict that could engulf much more of the world than Isgar and its surrounding lands.

CANTORIAN SUPREMACY

Hobgoblins see themselves as the epitome of goblinkind—the result of magical evolution by the legendary artifact known as the *Cantorian Spring*. This long-lost relic was used by cultists of the infernal duke Canzoriant to mutate weak and undisciplined goblins into the larger, stronger, and more focused hobgoblins that exist today. While the *Cantorian Spring* is no longer in hobgoblin hands, many in the proud race wish to recreate its wonders by continuing to evolve both themselves and goblins into even more perfect killing machines.

Using a combination of alchemy and divine magic, the members of the cabal known as the Cantorian Supremacy conduct experiments on volunteers and slave test subjects in an effort to engineer the perfect soldier. Hobgoblins are given more strength, speed, and stamina, while goblins are granted extraordinary size, intellect, and focus. Members of each race may have their natural senses augmented, including extended darkvision and more exotic forms of perception like blindsense, tremorsense, and scent. Other racial tendencies—such as pyromania—are encouraged, as are goblins' and hobgoblins' natural pendants for stealth.

Despite major advances in the evolution of both goblins and hobgoblins, the Cantorian Supremacy faces stern opposition from traditionalists, who believe the alchemists and clerics working on the eugenics project are tampering with forces beyond their ability to control. Some detractors call the Supremacy's work heresy and accuse the cabal's members of practicing elf magic disguised as something more benign. Still others fear



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that the Cantorian Supremacy will somehow gain control over other goblinoids, just as the hobgoblins' original creators controlled them with the *Cantorian Spring*. Whether or not the Cantorian Supremacy's efforts amount to a sea change within goblinoid evolution across the world largely depends on how well its members can convince their fellow hobgoblins of the potential of their work. Until that day, the other races of the world can only hope this effort never succeeds.

FISTS OF FEILONG

Some hobgoblins in the Inner Sea region look east to Kaoling and see it as proof that hobgoblins can stand alongside the region's other races with a homeland of their own. One organization, the Fists of Feilong, strives to establish just such a land—a kingdom built not on conquest but on holding what is theirs with strength and discipline. Founded a decade ago by General **Feilong** (LE male hobgoblin samurai 9), the Fists rampaged across central Avistan in search of a land they could claim as their own.

Finding most lands in the region protected by established sovereignties, Feilong eventually set his sights on the River Kingdoms, where even the strongest existing borders are negotiable and the weakest are barely suggestions. In this fertile land he saw the potential to raise a new kingdom for goblinkind, a nation to rival Kaoling in its greatness and influence. Rather than stir up unneeded resistance among the allied extant River Kingdoms by waging war on established settlements, Feilong and his best scouts searched the wild regions not yet claimed by humans and chose a defensible forest glade in which to plant the seed of their new kingdom.

Construction began on Fort Feilong, a work of inspired engineering and inventive castle design, around which a growing village has sprung up. To date, the fort's neighbors have watched warily from a distance but have not provoked the burgeoning hobgoblin nation, in part because Feilong and his followers have made none of the expected aggressions against them. Over 2,000 hobgoblins from across the Inner Sea region, many of them refugees from the vanquished armies of the Goblinblood Wars, have joined emigrants from Kaoling in growing Fort Feilong. The Fists of Feilong comprise an inordinate number of cavaliers (as well as samurai, both expatriated from Kaoling and native to Avistan), and their breeding of yzobu has greatly

increased the number of the so-called battle yaks in the Inner Sea region.

Though still in its infancy, Fort Feilong could pose a very real threat to the other River Kingdoms and the region at large if it continues to grow at its current rate. Neighboring kingdoms have already begun seeking a means of disrupting the Fists' growth, either via political influence or military action, and the heroes capable of stopping the threat from evolving further stand to make both a name for themselves and a sizable bounty for their efforts.

THE IRON RING

Slavery is as ingrained in hobgoblin society as much as war, yet hobgoblins are not known for participating in the slave trade in the same way as duergar, gnolls, or even evil humans. Hobgoblins take slaves to impose their order on others, assert their dominance, and spread suffering. Most hobgoblin armies leave dangerous

or menial tasks to these prisoners, allowing the hobgoblins to more efficiently focus on martial endeavors. When slaves fall ill or no longer serve their purpose, they are simply killed or are crippled and left for dead.

The primary exception to this rule is the hobgoblin slaving organization known as the Iron Ring. These slavers participate in and promote the slave trade as a business instead of simply a means of exploiting prisoners of war. They believe that slaves are as much property as they are tools of the corps, and they recognize that an army is stronger with full coffers with which to improve its arsenals. The Iron Ring trades slaves primarily with other monstrous entities—the gnolls of Katapesh and southern Osirion, the Darklands' duergar, and the undead of Geb—and they rarely interact with human traders. The hobgoblins, who take mainly humans as chattel, do not trust other humans to betray their own kind by honoring hobgoblin trade agreements, and thus prefer to deal in humans rather than with them.

Hobgoblins are not generally a seafaring people, but the Iron Ring maintains a small fleet of slave galleys that ply the waters of the Obari Ocean, making port in Katapesh, Katheer, and Okeno and trading with their gnoll counterparts and desert-dwelling hobgoblin kin in the Meraz Desert. This naval slaving operation has garnered the attention of Andoran's Gray Corsairs, who are closely observing the increased hobgoblin activity upon the open seas.

SHADOWMASKS

Hobgoblins do not tend to worship Zon-Kuthon, but the Shadowmasks of the Uskwood are a notable exception. A cult of fanatical Kuthites, its worship centers on the Midnight Lord's influence over darkness (though its members are not opposed to pain, torture, and other areas of concern of their patron deity).

Primarily comprising clerics, monks, and warpriests, the Shadowmasks number roughly 200 members who live in the Uskwood. The people of Nidal recognize that the cult venerates Zon-Kuthon and thus permit the hobgoblins to live in such close proximity to the capital of Pangolais out of respect for their faith. Both groups mostly stay to themselves and interact only in cases of unplanned encounters in the dark forest, preferring a laissez-faire relationship instead of more formal treaties, pacts, and inevitable betrayals.

The cult's high priestess, **Prihruk** (LE female hobgoblin monk 15), has led the Shadowmasks for decades and is said to have been one of the original acolytes of the order's founder, an enigmatic shadow shaman from whom the cult took its name. What Prihruk lacks in magical ability (for she cannot channel the power of the Midnight Lord), she makes up for in discipline and influence over those clerics and adepts who do her bidding. Prihruk alone holds the secrets of the Nighteye Dance, a ritual passed to her from Shadowmask that grants participants the ability to see in all forms of darkness (as if through a devil's eyes), a rite she reserves for only those of her followers who prove themselves obedient and devout enough to meet her high standards.

The spellcasters among the cult specialize in effects that use or employ blindness, cold, darkness, emptiness, shadows, silence, and heightened senses and awareness. Shadowmasks who lack magical ability train in controlling their emotions, using the spiked chain in battle, and embodying the ideals of kytons (in the same way Hellknights take inspiration from devilkind and the legions of Hell). In rare instances, summoned or called kytons are even used as sparring partners for the cult's most elite members, a practice that has resulted in as many unfortunate deaths as mastered martial skills.

SILENT SANDS

The vast deserts of Qadira are home to nomadic tribes of myriad races, from desert giants and genies to humans and ratfolk. Among the most aggressive of these desert-dwellers are the hobgoblins known as the Silent Sands, a loose alliance of tribes that prey upon caravans traversing the Zho Mountains and Meraz Desert and whose members hire themselves out as mercenaries to protect travelers who can afford their services.

The Silent Sands are masters at desert ambushes, and are known to lie in wait for a chosen target, partially buried beneath scorching dunes, for hours, even days.

Each raiding party typically includes at least one sand shaman or desert druid who provides battlefield control, including weather manipulation, terrain alteration, and mirage-like illusions. Silent Sand warriors are trained to fight in the most violent of sandstorms and in conditions of unsure footing.

While the Silent Sands are known to attack caravans for their own gain, they are more often hired to ambush travelers by scheming business rivals who wish to eliminate competition without being linked to the attack. Thus, the Silent Sands are incredibly discreet when it comes to their employers, patrons, and allies. A caravan may be waylaid by a hobgoblin raiding party, its survivors none the wiser that the goods stolen from them ended up in the hands of their own corrupt employer who used the raid as grounds for a lucrative insurance claim.

The Silent Sands, for their part, care little about who employs them or what their motives are so long as the tribe receives its agreed-upon fee. Those who renege on their contracts with the hobgoblins find themselves the target of even more vicious attacks and often end up in chains, sold by the Silent Sands to other unscrupulous parties far from the reaches of Qadira's laws.

WARTONGUES

Made up of equal numbers of diplomats and saboteurs, the Wartongues aim to sow discord in otherwise peaceful regions. While many humans are suspicious of hobgoblins who seem peaceful, diplomatic, and reasonable, others recognize the unique perspective the Wartongues can bring to their courts. Members of the organization serve as advisors to generals, demagogues, and regional rulers, using their influence to promote violence, war, and slavery in order to foster societies in which hobgoblin ideals and ways of life are the norm. After all, in a world torn apart by war, who better to rise to the top of the power structure but a race bred and trained from birth for battle?

Unlike most of their kind, the Wartongues are masters of subtlety, and rarely do they tip their hands to reveal their true intentions. Couching their promotion of conflict in sound military advice, pragmatic tactics, and manipulative power plays, the order's members have insinuated themselves into even the most resistant human organizations from central Garund to the heart of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh to the noble courts of Brevoyn and Taldor.

Meanwhile, the Wartongues' hidden saboteurs work to set the tinderbox of political tension and warmongering aflame by staging uprisings, spurring the downtrodden into sedition, and creating the appearance of treachery where there is none. The Wartongues are drawn to regions where the conditions are already conducive to conflict, such as Galt, Molthune, Sargava, and the border between Taldor and Qadira.

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ESTIARY

LONE HEROES

All humanoid races have living legends and honored heroes among their number, and hobgoblins are no exception. While they tend to stick to their own kind—both out of a sense of racial loyalty and because they are unwelcome in the cities of humans, elves, dwarves and their ilk—the renown of some hobgoblin heroes transcends societal barriers. Two such hobgoblin heroes are described below.

GAUGAGH

This hulking female hobgoblin has a mohawk of bone piercings on her bald scalp, and is covered from head to toe in a collection of weapons of varying ages, styles, and condition.

GAUGAGH **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Female hobgoblin medium 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175, *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 30)

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 71 (8d8+32)

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

Weaknesses taboo

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *bastard sword* +12/+12/+7 (1d10+8/19–20) or
mwk light flail +12/+12/+7 (1d8+7) or
spear +11/+11/+6 (1d8+8/×3)

Ranged mwk shortbow +13/+13/+8 (1d6+5/×3)

Special Attacks haunt channeler (4d6), shared seance, spirit (champion, 1 influence), sudden attack

Medium Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +11)

2nd (2/day)—*bull's strength*, *haste*, *inflict pain*^{OA} (DC 15)

1st (2/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *enlarge person* (DC 14),
protection from good, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*,
prestidigitation, *resistance*, *virtue*

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21

Feats Barroom Brawler^{ACG}, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +8 (+4 when jumping), Climb +6, Intimidate +14, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +4, Swim +6;

Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ champion's prowess (bastard sword), connection channel, location channel (8 rounds), spirit bonus (+3 on attack rolls, non-spell damage rolls, Strength checks, Strength-based skill checks, and Fortitude saves), spirit surge +1d6, taboo (eschew arcane power)

Combat Gear acid (2), alchemist's fire (3); **Other Gear** +1 hide armor, +1 bastard sword, battleaxe, daggers

(3), mwk light flail, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, spear, *lesser talisman of arrow protection*^{OA}, *lesser talisman of healing power*^{OA}, *lesser talisman of warrior's courage*^{OA}, 114 gp

Hobgoblins pride themselves on their military prowess, and often wear trophies and talismans to remember their greatest individual victories and to indicate their status among others in their armies. But few hobgoblins draw power from their fetishes in the same way as the infamous mercenary Gaugagh.

Gaugagh is a veteran of the Goblinblood Wars, having served as an infantry soldier in dozens of battles. Eager to advance through the ranks and make a name for herself, she collected bones, ears, fingers, hair, and teeth of the most formidable of her fallen foes: dwarven defenders, Eagle Knights of the Golden Legion, Hellknights, and Iseri commanders all contributed to her growing array of trophies. Along with these gruesome mementos, Gaugagh also partook in the hobgoblin tradition of improving her personal arsenal from the corpses of her vanquished foes.

Unlike her compatriots in arms, however, Gaugagh found that her trophies, blades and bones alike, spoke to her. At first she thought the battle cries were those of her allies, for the din of pitched combat was often chaotic. Yet she soon realized that they spoke in languages no hobgoblin would utter on the field of war. The voices spoke in whispers she could understand, and told her the tactics and techniques she needed to overcome her most challenging obstacles. When she needed a swift and keen blade, she became the greatest sword fighter in her unit. When faced with a stealthy sniper, she gained the sight and skill with a bow to eliminate the hidden threat. When she needed to step in and cover for her unit's fallen battlefield medic, she discovered that with enough meditation, she could do even that.

Through careful contemplation on the baubles she wore and drove through her flesh, Gaugagh could tap into untold power that lingered in the wake of her victims. Even those she killed off the battlefield increased her potential—the scholar who refused to abandon his books as Gaugagh set his library aflame, the halfling abolitionist she caught trying to free slaves from a hobgoblin encampment in the Chitterwood, the ancient druid healer she killed for food while it was in the form of a great boar.

Equipped with a spirit army only she could access, Gaugagh rose quickly through the hobgoblin ranks, eventually commanding her own battalion. But the soldiers who served her were wary of her strange powers, and rumors spread that she was haunted by an elven curse. Fearing that one of her lieutenants would jump on the perceived weakness of her “affliction” and eliminate her, Gaugagh abdicated her position and deserted the greater hobgoblin army engaged in the war. She struck

out on her own, no longer fitting in among her kind and drawn to increasingly powerful enemies whose prowess and expertise she hoped to add to her repertoire.

In the intervening decade and a half, Gaugagh has kept herself busy serving as a hired sword in over a dozen mercenary companies throughout Avistan and northern Garund. Her tenure at each is typically cut short by her obsession with finding and facing greater foes. While her versatility and experience are initially boons for each unit she serves in, the patience of her commanders wears thin when Gaugagh defies orders or goes rogue to fulfill her self-appointed quest for more grim trophies.

Gaugagh is currently between employers, and travels under cover of darkness along the Inner Sea region's more desolate roads in search of new opportunities. When she encounters travelers, she dons her most diplomatic front to ingratiate herself into their company, either to determine who among them is most worthy of challenging to a duel or to earn herself a commission as a hired blade. Gaugagh can be especially deceptive with adventurers as she makes both a valuable ally and a deadly enemy; which role she plays can shift as quickly as she can meditate on new skills. Even with friends, Gaugagh is merely a seance away from finding a new enemy—and a potential addition to her macabre collection.

Gaugagh revels in her reputation, and challenges the greatest of her enemies to single combat as the champion of her mercenary company or hobgoblin unit, or as a solitary racial paragon. Among other hobgoblins, she often invokes the tradition of *kalech-mar*, an honor duel between a subordinate officer and her superior to display the latter's weakness. While this is a common means of promotion within hobgoblin military units, Gaugagh sees the tradition less as a path to a higher rank than as a legal, accepted excuse to fight those in her society who are supposedly better strategists and more skilled warriors than she is. She is just as likely to defeat a superior and then change units, abandoning her newly attained position, as she is to simply challenge the next commander in the

long chain of command, moving herself up the ranks with ferocity and alacrity.

In combat, she draws on the spirit of the fallen enemy most likely to provide her with an advantage—elves when battling other elves, great duelists when facing a formidable blade, and brutish bludgeoners when encountering hulks capable of shrugging off incredible wounds. She most often channels the champion spirit, which allows her to use the trophy weapons she carries from battlefield to battlefield. In times of particular need, however, she is not above channeling the guardian, hierophant, marshal, or trickster. She does not channel the archmage, who she sees as carrying the taint of elf magic. When she encounters arcane spellcasters, Gaugagh takes special care to kill them via the most brutal means necessary, preferring to eliminate their bodies completely rather than carry mementos with her and risk corruption from their foul spirits. This superstition leaves the hobgoblin champion vulnerable to magical attacks, and if faced with an arcane enemy capable of surviving her onslaught, she could someday meet her match on the battlefield.

Despite her overactive ego and unrelenting confidence, Gaugagh is smart enough to know when she's beaten, and she does not fight to the death unless it was a specific term of her challenge against an opponent (a term she rarely agrees to when she isn't certain of victory).

Gaugagh can be hired for her mercenary services for a negotiable fee, usually starting at 100 gp per day. She knows that her abilities make her a valuable asset to any potential employers and she does not settle for less than she's worth. When she sees the opportunity, she raises her rates significantly, either due to increased danger in her assignment or because she recognizes that her employer has more funds to spare.



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ESTIARY

QA'AL

This male hobgoblin wears a red leather duster, a wide-brimmed hat, and a bandolier. He wields a pistol sylized to look like a dragon.

QA'AL

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male hobgoblin gunslinger 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 175, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 9)

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 20, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +5 Dex, +4 dodge)

hp 106 (12d10+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities fortification 25%, nimble +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +13/+8/+3 (1d8/19-20)

Ranged +1 reliable dragon pistol +19 (1d6+6/19-20/x4) or mwk musket +18 (1d12+5/x4)

Special Attacks deeds (bleeding wound, dead shot, deadeye, expert loading, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, lightning reload, pistol-whip, quick clear, startling shot, targeting, utility shot), grit (3), gun training +5 (dragon pistol, musket)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 32

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Gunsmithing^{UC}, Improved Critical (dragon pistol), Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (dragon pistol)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Climb +9, Craft (alchemy) +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +18, Ride +10, Stealth +24, Survival +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin, Kelish

SQ gunsmith

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*, alchemical cartridge^{UC} (dragon's breath) (50), alchemical cartridge^{UC} (entangling shot) (20), alchemical cartridge^{UC} (flare) (20), alchemical cartridge^{UC} (paper) (50); **Other Gear** +1 light fortification studded leather, +1 reliable dragon pistol^{UC}, mwk longsword, mwk musket^{UC}, belt of incredible dexterity +2, deathwatch eyes^{UE}, ring of protection +1, 181 gp

The nomadic, desert-dwelling hobgoblin tribes of Qadira interact primarily with trade caravans making their way between Katheer and other points on the Obari Ocean and the eastern heart of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh. These isolated goblinoids rarely make contact with others of their kind unless it serves their strategic needs. Such was the case when the young Qa'al was sent

at the behest of his commander to the Garundi city-state of Alkenstar to bring back the alchemical secrets of gunpowder and firearms.

Qa'al traveled alone across the Meraz Desert and booked passage to Quantum by way of Jalmeray, keeping to the cargo ship's hold so as to be undetected (and so the captain could plausibly claim the hobgoblin was a stowaway if Qa'al were discovered). Inland from Quantum, as he made his way up the Ustradi River to Alkenstar, Qa'al found that the Spellscar Desert, while much more chaotic and primal in nature than the Meraz Desert in Qadira, was more to his tastes. In particular, the locals' trepidation about magic due to the roaming primal and magic-free pockets that plagued the Mana Wastes mirrored his own aversion to the "elf magic" so widely practiced by non-hobgoblins.

In Alkenstar, Qa'al found information on guns, gunpowder, and other alchemical advances hard to come by, despite the ubiquity of such technology in the Grand Duchy. While he was more welcome in the shops of apothecaries, alchemists, and weapons dealers than he was used to being in human settlements, Qa'al found little of the information he sought. Those dealing in firearms were tight-lipped about their sources, and those who worked in the heavily guarded Gunworks were suspicious of even the most benign line of questioning from the inquisitive hobgoblin. After months of queries, Qa'al was no closer to uncovering the secrets of gunpowder than he had been before reaching the city.

Eventually, Qa'al found a desperate mercenary captain named Nekiz in the city's shady underbelly willing to hire the hobgoblin on for a short assignment guarding a warehouse. Despite his monstrous heritage, Qa'al was an exemplar of professionalism. As a result, he received additional assignments in increasingly high-profile locations, including some he believed held secrets of gunsmithing. Over the course of 3 years of service to various masters of even more varied levels of integrity, Qa'al finally secured a position protecting the Gunworks itself.

This, he knew, was too good an opportunity to pass up. While patrolling the facility at night, he immersed himself in its workings, absorbing all the knowledge of firearms, gunpowder, and similar technologies he had set out to obtain. Secreting away small samples of ammonia, ammunition, saltpeter, and unassembled gun parts, he cobbled together his own gunsmithing workshop in the modest tenement rooms he had made his home. Through trial and error, he experimented with these new materials, eventually crafting his own gun and making increasingly advanced forms of ammunition.

After 6 months on the job, however, Qa'al's time at the Gunworks came to an abrupt and unexpected halt. Alkenstar's elite Shieldmarshals, responsible for ensuring the security of the Grand Duchy and the secrecy of the

technological advances that kept its economy thriving, had discovered that gun and gunpowder components had gone missing and initiated an investigation into the affair. Unknown to Qa'al, Nekiz—the same man who gave him his first job guarding that simple warehouse years earlier—had been smuggling much larger quantities of even more valuable material out of the Gunworks with the help of coconspirators holding Qa'al's position during other shifts. When the Shieldmarshals started asking questions, Nekiz skipped town, but not before leaving a trail of evidence implicating Qa'al in the larger heists.

The Shieldmarshals took the bait and came to arrest Qa'al with little beyond a cursory investigation. The hobgoblin was not home when the Shieldmarshals raided his apartment, but they found the modest workshop he had built there. Qa'al was as good as guilty on this basis alone, and when he learned what had transpired, he fled Alkenstar with nothing but the clothes on his back.

Qa'al had learned what he sought, and would have fulfilled his mission had he fled back across the Obari Ocean to his tribe, but he was furious at Nekiz's cowardice and betrayal. Rather than let the slight against him stand, Qa'al vowed to use the skills he had learned in the preceding months to exact revenge on Nekiz and his associates, wherever in the Inner Sea region they might have fled.

His new quest for vengeance has taken him across the Mwangi Expanse to the Shackles, as far north as Kalsgard, and to cities as varied as Whitethrone and Absalom. The trail has grown cold many times in the course of his pursuit, but Qa'al sees periods of delay as opportunities to refine his craft. He has already developed new ways of combining his tribe's penchant for efreeti-inspired flame alchemy with firearms, and he has developed a knack for firing goutts of searing flame from the muzzle of his signature dragon pistol.

Alkenstar's Shieldmarshals saw Qa'al's flight from the Grand Duchy as a tacit admission of guilt, and they have pursued the hobgoblin with the same dedication with which he has tracked Nekiz. Thus far, Qa'al has avoided confrontation with the gun-hunters, but he knows that he has as much to fear from capture as he stands to lose by allowing Nekiz to live after his betrayal.

Qa'al's quest for revenge can take him anywhere in the Inner Sea region, and he is more than willing to work with others if their goals align with his. After Nekiz's betrayal, Qa'al is understandably suspicious of potential allies, but is generally trusting of

anyone who shares his motivation of revenge against the scoundrel. The Shieldmarshals are equally willing to work with others who seek Qa'al, however, and adventurers are just as likely to cross paths with the hobgoblin's pursuers as with Qa'al himself. In either case, the renegade gunslinger is a potent combatant with a strong sense of justice and an unrivaled survival instinct.



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APPENDIX



BESTIARY

“‘Beware of trolls,’ they said. ‘Look with caution on caves and in the shadows beneath bridges. These are the lairs of your worst nightmares.’

You’re bloody right, ‘beware of trolls,’ but they won’t come at you from the ground. Underfoot foes and enemies on your level are easy to deal with. The real danger’s the one that comes from above. And don’t think trolls can’t climb trees, neither. No, they become part of the tree, these little monkey trolls do, swinging from branch to branch like they were some invasive vine attached to the plant and siphoning strength from its very roots. They’ll whack you good, whip you with their tails, hit you with the force of falling timber, I say. Pick you right up into the treetops never to be seen again—or to be dropped on your friends like a deadfall trap. Beware *those* trolls, my friend!”

—Mettiss Rand, Fangwood guide for hire

This Ironfang Invasion Adventure Path bestiary features a deadly sap ooze, two new fey creatures, some new forest vermin, and a small, tree-dwelling variant of troll sure to beguile even the most experienced adventurers.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

The Chernasardo is among the most untamed regions of Nirmathas, an old-growth forest unwelcoming to all but the hardest natives. As the player characters explore the region, they are likely to encounter some of the dangers that have kept this portion of the Fangwood so isolated from both the Nirmathi and would-be Molthuni invaders. The random encounter table presented here features dangers the PCs can confront beyond those in the adventure itself. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 30% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend exploring the Chernasardo during the day, and a 40% chance of a random encounter at night. They should not have more than two random encounters in a 24-hour period.

Since the adventure spans a range of levels, some random encounters might be too simple or too difficult for the PCs, depending on where they are in the course of the adventure. If the result rolled is outside the Challenge Rating range appropriate for the PCs, roll again on the table or choose a different encounter.

Ironfang Legion Patrol (CR 7): This patrol of Ironfang Legion soldiers has broken off from the larger corps sent to take Fort Trevalay, and can be encountered anywhere in the Chernasardo. The patrol consists of four Ironfang forest soldiers (see page 41), all alert and ready for a fight. Alone as they have been in the deep forest, the hobgoblins have allowed the rumors of the Chernasardo Rangers' ambush tactics to get the better of their emotions, and they are particularly edgy. If the PCs can get the jump on the Ironfang Legion patrol, the hobgoblins are shaken during the surprise round and first round of combat as they regain their nerves.

Leshy Patch (CR 7): Leshys are sometimes very social creatures, and they form bonds both with others of their kind and members of other species. This small patch of leshys consists of three lichen leshys (Billo, Rej, and Steff) who have thrown in their lots with the charismatic snapdragon leshy, Hessilda (see pages 86–87 for statistics for both types of leshy). The leshys are not hostile, but rather curious about the PCs, and they are quick to start up a conversation about the adventurers' past, motivations, and ambitions. They may tag along with the PCs out of a shared enthusiasm for exploration, but the leshys are not keen on fighting; if the PCs lead the leshys into combat, the plants fight alongside them but then part ways, hoping to avoid further violence in the PCs' presence.

CHERNASARDO ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1d3 cicada swarms	4	See page 84
6–9	1 grizzly bear	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
10–14	1d3 anhanas	5	See page 82
15–20	2 snallygasters	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 247
21–24	1d3 twigjacks	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 274
25–30	1d6 tatzlwyrms	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 261
31–35	1 ambergrim	6	See page 80
36–41	1d6 venomroaches	6	See page 85
42–46	Suspicious Rangers	6	See below
47–50	1 shambling mound	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 246
51–57	1 tendriculos	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 259
58–65	Leshy Patch	7	See below
66–71	1d3 ohancanus	7	See page 88
72–79	1d6 canopy trolls	7	See page 90
80–84	Ironfang Legion Patrol	7	See below
85–90	1d6 forest drakes	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 107
91–94	2d6 spriggans	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 257
95–97	2 deathwebs	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 65
98–99	1d3 delgeths	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 71
100	1 tick swarm	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 265

Suspicious Rangers (CR 6): Despite the presence of the Ironfang Legion in the Chernasardo, the wooded region's namesake Rangers still protect their portion of the Fangwood. While the PCs have the opportunity to befriend and aid the Rangers during the adventure, not all members of the loosely organized militia are aware of this tenuous alliance. As the PCs explore the Chernasardo, they run into a small team of suspicious Rangers who question their motives and take up arms against the adventurers should they fail to convince the Rangers of their motives. This band is composed of four Chernasardo Rangers (use the statistics for a poacher on page 129 of the *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex*). The Rangers employ stealthy surveillance to assess the PCs' intentions, ambushing them if the PCs pose an overt threat to the Rangers or the Chernasardo at large. If they instead give the PCs the benefit of the doubt, two of the Rangers reveal themselves and attempt to parley (their initial attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly), while the other two remain hidden with their bows trained on the PCs nearest the revealed Rangers. If made helpful, the Chernasardo Rangers offer the PCs survival advice, directions, or other information to aid them in their journey, but refuse to work with the PCs beyond this, believing themselves sufficiently equipped to defend the Chernasardo without outsiders muddling their ranks. If they instead fight the PCs, one Ranger flees the battle before being killed or captured to gather reinforcements.

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BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

AMBERGRIM

A crown of rough gems encircles the top of this sleek, orange-brown glob as it rolls forward, the detritus of the forest churning within.

AMBERGRIM

CR 6



XP 2,400

N Medium ooze

Init -5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** -5

DEFENSE

AC 5, **touch** 5, **flat-footed** 5 (-5 Dex)

hp 103 (9d8+63)

Fort +10, **Ref** -2, **Will** -2

Immune bludgeoning damage, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6+3 plus grab), slam +9 (2d4+3 plus grab)

Special Attacks swallow whole (AC 10, 10 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 1, **Con** 24, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 14 (can't be tripped)

Skills Climb +11, **Perception** -5

SQ preserve

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary or cluster (2-4)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Preserve (Ex) An ambergrim can preserve a creature paralyzed by its swallow whole ability by spending 1 hour motionless to harden the soft resin shell into a gemlike case. A creature can attempt a DC 21 Fortitude saving throw at the end of the hour-long process to avoid being preserved; if successful, it remains entangled, but the ambergrim must start the process anew to preserve the creature. Dead and nonliving materials are preserved as if under the effects of an *unguent of timelessness*. Living creatures are held in stasis, unable to move and no longer needing to eat, drink, or breathe. A living creature can survive in this state for 1 day for each point of Constitution it has, after which it suffocates but remains preserved indefinitely as if by a *gentle repose* spell. Each day, a preserved creature can attempt a Strength check (DC = 10 + the ambergrim's Constitution modifier) to break free of the amber shell. The shell has hardness 8 and 20 hit points; submerging it in strong alcohol for 1 hour can also dissolve the shell.

Swallow Whole (Ex) An ambergrim can use its swallow whole ability to swallow a creature of its own size category (usually Medium) or smaller. A swallowed creature is entangled, but instead of the Dexterity penalty normally imposed by the entangled condition, it takes a cumulative -1d6 penalty to its Dexterity score

each round as the ambergrim coats it in thick resin. If this penalty exceeds the creature's Dexterity score, it is paralyzed until the resin is removed.

An ambergrim normally spits out paralyzed prey so it can target a new creature. A paralyzed creature outside the ambergrim that is not affected by its preserve ability can attempt a Strength check (DC = 10 + the ambergrim's Constitution modifier) each round to free itself, but the entangled condition remains as long as any Dexterity penalty persists. The Dexterity penalty decreases by 1 every hour as the resin becomes brittle, or vanishes completely in 1d4 rounds if the resin is doused in strong alcohol.

Creeping masses of honey-colored slime, ambergrims are scavengers and collectors of the forest, rolling up unwanted bits of undergrowth and unsuspecting animals to preserve for later in timeless stockpiles hidden throughout their domains. Little more than aggressive, human-sized globs of sap and resin, they hunt by the twin graces of surprise and their incredibly sticky bodies, which naturally adhere to other creatures and draw them deeper into the ambergrims' bulk. The oozes' name describes both their rich, warm coloration as well as their ability to immobilize their prey within soft, amber-like capsules, which they can harden into tough cocoons to preserve food for later. Anything from rabbits to unwary human travelers is fit fodder for these oozes' endless hunger.

Ambergrims vary immensely in size and coloration depending on their environment and parentage, but the most common are roughly 4 feet across and weigh around 200 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Ambergrims are aberrations born from a relatively common blight that infects a variety of temperate and arctic trees. The fungus creates large, resinous bulges in the trunk, but upon infecting a treant or similar ambulatory plant, the growth inherits some measure of its parent's mobility and eventually hatches into a newborn ambergrim. Already full-grown and hungry, it wanders away—often ignored by its relieved, erstwhile parent—to begin hunting immediately.

Ambergrims do not reproduce, making them rare except in cases when blight-obsessed druids cultivate them or groves of treants grow them as guard beasts. Each ooze is effectively immortal, living and hunting until it is destroyed or slowly starves to death.

With every movement, ambergrims leave a film behind, slightly diminishing themselves with every undulating motion. To make up for this continual loss, they are ravenous, feeding slowly on twigs, leaves, and insects as they creep through the underbrush, but they prefer larger prey. They digest what they can, but

in times of plenty they eagerly engulf and preserve additional creatures to store for leaner periods. This hoarding leads many to assume ambergrims possess some rudimentary intellect; however, much like squirrels, the oozes simply stockpile as much food as possible, increasing their odds of coming across a cache months or years later. Desperate wanderers in the forest may be blessed to stumble into an ambergrim's territory and discover its ample stores of food—providing they can escape the notice of the hunter.

Ambergrims' bodies are made of a sticky, sap-like substance, making them natural grapplers. In quiet times, they hunt passively by sitting motionless and attracting insects and small animals to the sweet scent they exude, trapping such creatures in their adhesive mass. These oozes' cytoplasm hardens into an especially dense crystal, allowing them to coat prey in an impenetrable shell for later consumption. Bits of an ambergrim's surface harden from ordinary exposure to the air when the ooze remains still, forming tough crystalline protuberances that stud its surface. Ambergrims use these as rudimentary teeth to "bite" and hold prey as they attempt to engulf it. These same gems also focus light, forming simple eyes that grant the ambergrim unsophisticated vision rarely possessed by other oozes. Able to identify colors and movement, they are among the few oozes that actively hunt, attacking sleeping or otherwise motionless prey that would be invisible to predators that rely wholly on blindsense to locate and target potential meals.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Treants show a variety of reactions to an ambergrim infection, though most are as repulsed by them as any human might be by a parasite. Many attempt to remove the warty growths before they burst open, but this is a painful process that creates deep and easily infected scars. Rare groves of treants instead form a symbiotic relationship with ambergrims, letting the oozes reproduce in their bodies and using them to keep the treants' forest homes clear of smaller parasites and predators. These groves are then free to engage in to long periods of quiet introspection akin to hibernation, depending on their ambergrim pets to defend their territory as the treants quietly muse and communicate with one another and the trees around them.

Ambergrims are unintelligent and solitary creatures born by circumstance, but they attract strange attendants.

A variety of scavengers follow in their wake, preying on the preserved leftovers the oozes stash in their gemlike cases. Human scavengers flock to ambergrim territory as well, selling the creature's preserved sap as true amber—though it has none of the magical or alchemical properties of true amber—or harvesting those preservative cysts as a valuable ingredient in tanglefoot bags and alchemical glue. Some scholars find use for the ambergrim's preservative powers, either using captive subjects to preserve valuables or else extracting humors from the creatures to mix elixirs and poultices to extend life. On rare occasions, sickly or aging druids or fey actively seek out an ambergrim, hoping its preservative cocoons can sustain them in hibernation to offset their inevitable demise. Though a creature preserved in an ambergrim's preservative gems typically suffocates within a few weeks, the safety of the gem preserves its remains well enough for the creature to be easily resurrected—provided the ambergrim does not return later to make a meal of it.



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NPC GALLERY

THE CHERNASARDO FANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

ANHANA

This miniature young woman has white skin; long, braided hair festooned with ribbons; and large, slanted eyes of deep violet. She wears flowing, diaphanous clothing and carries a pair of delicate gardening shears.

ANHANA

CR 3



XP 800

CG Small fey

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

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

hp 27 (5d6+10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

DR 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shears +7 (1d8+1/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9)

Constant—*Speak with animals*

At will—*ghost sound*

3/day—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *entangle* (DC 15), *hideous laughter* (DC 16)

1/day—*thorn body*^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Diplomacy +12, Fly +13, Perception +12, Perform (sing) +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +15, Swim +8

Languages Common, Sylvan; *Speak with animals*

SQ *Speak with water*

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary, pair, or sisterhood (3–15)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shears (Su) An anhana carries a pair of gardening shears about 10 inches long. In the hands of an anhana, these shears deal damage as per a +1 *short sword* two sizes larger than the anhana. An anhana can use its Weapon Finesse feat with its shears. If an anhana's shears are lost or destroyed, it can make another pair with a week of work and a few scraps of metal.

Speak with Water (Sp) Once per day, four anhanas who are working together can speak with any body of standing or flowing fresh water at least as large as an anhana. This ability functions like *stone tell*. Flowing water can generally speak about events happening upstream (even distantly upstream), but not events happening downstream.

Peaceful and kindly woodland creatures, anhanas tend to forest trees and befriend animals and foresters. Although an anhana has the general appearance of a young halfling woman, her unnatural eyes and erratic demeanor mark

her as a fey creature. Anhanas are wise, clever, and helpful. They use their magical shears to tend to the forest, encouraging its growth and development so that nature and civilization can exist in harmony. Anhanas return kindness with generosity, but they use their otherworldly abilities to confound and delay enemies of the forest.

An anhana stands between 2 and 3 feet tall and weighs about 30 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Anhanas are never children; they step fully formed from mature oak or maple trees in deep forests. Although an anhana forms at her full—if small—size, she is unclothed and her skin is covered with wedges of bark matching the tree that produced her. A newly sprouted anhana has the Hit Dice and abilities presented above, but cannot speak and has only an unformed impulse to aid others and protect the natural world. The anhana's tree produces a low, celebratory thrumming for a few days after the anhana sprouts. This noise carries far, but is audible only to fey and plant creatures. Mature anhanas recognize the thrumming and seek out the new arrival to welcome her into their sisterhood. Anhanas share clothing and other gifts with their new sister and teach her music, kindness, and woodcraft. Most anhanas absorb their bark-like coverings within a few weeks, but all anhanas can temporarily extend sharp wedges of bark from their skin to deter foes.

A tree that produces an anhana is usually one with a benevolent history or divine connection, such as having shaded a weary saint or growing where a nature goddess once stepped. Hamadryads (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4148) hint that they have the ability to tend a tree with magic so that it sprouts an anhana, but they keep the precise process secret.

All anhanas are friends of the natural world. They speak freely and softly with animals, attempting to befriend even predators. They prune flowers and trees to encourage growth rather than harm or cull the plants. Anhanas in a sisterhood can amplify their understanding of the natural world and communicate with streams and lakes.

Although benevolent in their stewardship of the forest, anhanas understand that nature preys upon itself. An anhana does not mourn a fat rabbit captured by an owl or a creeping vine that kills a host tree. Similarly, an anhana does not begrudge a woodcutter his livelihood, but instructs the woodcutter how to harvest wood with the least impact on the forest.

Anhanas subsist on a diet of nuts and berries. They prefer not to spend all their time gathering sustenance, so they carefully prune and tend berry bushes and nut trees to maximize their yield. Lacking any particular connection to these particular bushes and trees, however, anhanas are likely to wander to some other part of the forest and leave the nuts and berries for another to find and enjoy.

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THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

Anhanas can live to be several centuries old. As their physical appearance does not change as they age, it is nearly impossible to distinguish an old anhana and from a young one. If an anhana does not die of disease or misfortune, she eventually feels a calling to return to nature. The anhana—aided by her sisters if possible—journeys to a deep stream or lake, sinks below the surface of the water, and permanently diffuses her essence into the water itself.

Anhanas can sprout in any climate, but they are most common in temperate forests. In boreal forests, anhanas sometimes retain their woody skin (these anhanas have a +2 natural armor bonus, but lack the *thorn body* spell-like ability). Jungle anhanas are skilled climbers and often live their lives among the canopies of great trees instead of on the ground (these anhanas have a climb speed of 30 feet, but they lack the speak with water spell-like ability).

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Anhanas are uncommon, but several groups inhabit the Verduran Forest and the Duroth Wood of Iobaria. Those few anhanas that live in the Fangwood are susceptible to the Blight, and most anhanas who sprout there have the blighted fey template (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 6).

Although these kindly fey originate in deep forests, they enjoy helping civilized folk who have good hearts and intentions. Anhanas often loiter near well-traveled paths or on the outskirts of settlements that abut an old forest. They spend their days tending to the forest so that it exists in harmony with people, and can be seen pruning back overgrown thornbushes, explaining directions to lost travelers, and entertaining local foresters with their cheerful songs. Though generally peaceful, they use their abilities to confound and oppose those who would destroy or irreparably harm forests.

Unlike many fey, anhanas are not shy. They eagerly approach strangers on forest paths to

say hello and offer assistance. Believing that it is impolite to startle others, they often announce their presence by rustling bushes or using *ghost sound* to simulate the sound of a tinkling bell or babbling river. Anhanas don't seem to understand that this "courtesy" is sometimes alarming to others.

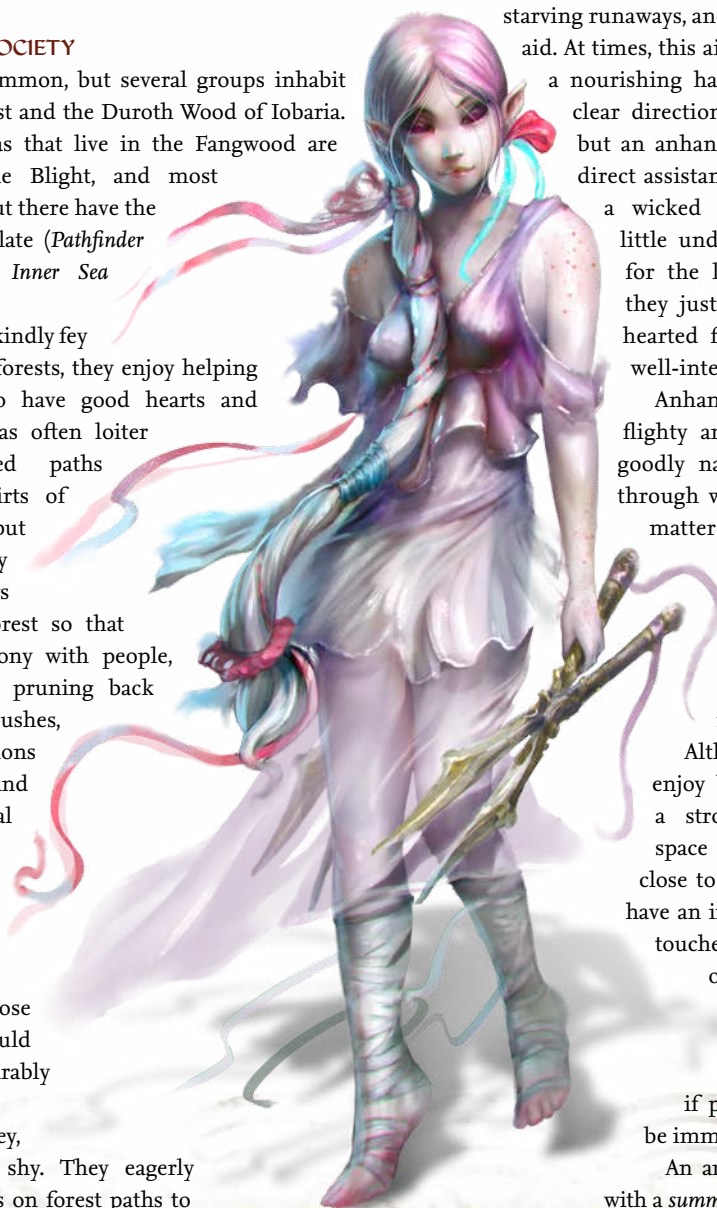
Anhanas prefer to congregate in groups of their own kind called sisterhoods. Sisterhoods sometimes occupy a single grove or glen for decades, earning a reputation as kindly forest spirits, while other sisterhoods wander throughout their forests. Sisterhoods dissolve when individual members disagree about whether or where to travel, although the members separate peaceably.

Anhanas have a sixth sense for the emotions of others. They hide from angry or hateful people but are attracted to happy travelers. Anhanas are also drawn to the scared or desperate, such as lost children or starving runaways, and do their best to provide aid. At times, this aid is as simple as sharing a nourishing handful of nuts or giving clear directions back to a main road, but an anhana might also offer more direct assistance, such as confounding a wicked pursuer. Anhanas have little understanding of or regard for the laws of civilization, and they just as eagerly aid a good-hearted fugitive as they would a well-intentioned sheriff.

Anhanas are fundamentally flighty and erratic, despite their goodly nature. They rarely carry through with long-term plans, no matter how sincerely agreed to, and they are prone to wandering away from an area for no reason at all, even if they have carefully tended to it for months or years.

Although most anhanas enjoy being helpful, they have a strong sense of personal space and don't like being too close to people or animals. They have an irrational phobia of being touched by any creature besides other anhanas, and they almost reflexively activate their *thorn body* ability if physical contact seems to be imminent.

An anhana can be summoned with a *summon nature's ally IV* spell.



FOREST VERMIN

Insects are among the most plentiful organisms in the world; some grow to immense sizes, turning simple pests into dangerous threats to other forms of life.

CICADA SWARM

A loud droning buzz accompanies this mass of flying insects.

CICADA SWARM CR 2   

XP 600

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

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

hp 18 (4d8)

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

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee swarm (1d6 plus distraction and song)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks song (DC 12)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 16, **Con** 11, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +3; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Climb +3, Fly +13, Perception +9; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary or infestation (2–8)

Treasure none



SPECIAL ABILITIES

Song (Ex) Any creature in a cicada swarm's space must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw or be deafened for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

At times, particularly during warm months, mundane cicadas amass in roiling, buzzing clouds. When they swarm, cicadas can strip vegetation from trees in seconds.

GIANT GROUND CRICKET

Long spines jut from the legs and back of this enormous cricket.

GIANT GROUND CRICKET CR 2   

XP 600

N Medium vermin

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

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

Defensive Abilities spines; **Immune** mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d8+3)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17 (25 vs. trip)

Skills Acrobatics +2 (+10 when jumping), Climb +10; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Acrobatics when jumping

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3–12)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spines (Ex) Any creature attacking a giant ground cricket with a natural attack or unarmed strike must succeed at a DC 14 Reflex save or take 1d4 points of piercing damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

As large as a wolf, this bulky, massive cricket has spines on its legs, back, abdomen, and head. These crickets are generally not hostile, but they protect their burrows against invasion. When agitated, a giant ground cricket secretes yellowish-green blood from its joints. This blood has a foul odor that wards off predators. Giant ground crickets stand about 2-1/2 feet tall, are approximately 5 feet long, and weigh roughly 80 pounds.

GIANT CICADA

Trim wings fold along the back of this oblong, iridescent insect.

GIANT CICADA CR 1   

XP 400

N Small vermin

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 15 (2d8+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee bite +2 (1d4)

Special Attacks song (DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 11 (19 vs. trip)

Skills Acrobatics +0 (+8 when jumping), Climb +8, Fly +3;

Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics when jumping

ECOLOGY

Environment any temperate or tropical land

Organization solitary, pair, or brood (3–12)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Song (Ex) As a move action, a giant cicada can flex membranes in its abdomen to produce a loud and distracting sound. After starting its song, a giant cicada can maintain its song in subsequent rounds as a free action.

Any creatures within 30 feet of the giant cicada must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw or be deafened for the duration of the cicada's song. Being deafened in this way doesn't make a creature immune to this effect, but creatures that were naturally or magically deafened prior to encountering this effect are unaffected. This is a sonic effect and the save DC is Constitution-based.




These arboreal insects are best known for leaving behind nearly perfect exoskeletons when they molt. Giant cicadas have a signature song that can be heard reverberating through forests in the evening hours. This song can be heard for miles and can be overwhelming up close.

Giant cicadas live most of their life in nymph form underground, emerging as adults only after around 13 years. Sometimes an enormous brood of these creatures emerges at once, causing trouble for humanoids living in those areas. Some creatures that share territory with giant cicadas collect their molted exoskeletons and make armor and other items from the material.

Giant cicadas are nearly 3 feet long and weigh up to 20 pounds.

VENOMROACH

The brown and black exoskeleton of this roach gleams when exposed to the light.

VENOMROACH	CR 3	  
XP 800		
N Large vermin		
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5		
DEFENSE		
AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)		
hp 31 (3d8+18)		
Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +2		
Immune mind-affecting effects		
Weaknesses light sensitivity		
OFFENSE		
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)		
Melee bite +3 (2d6+3 plus poison)		
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.		
Special Attacks poison		
STATISTICS		
Str 15, Dex 13, Con 22, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 2		
Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 16 (24 vs. trip)		
Feats Diehard ^B , Endurance ^B		
Skills Climb +10, Fly -5, Perception +5, Stealth +1; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Stealth		
SQ hold breath		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any land		
Organization solitary, pair, or intrusion (3-12)		

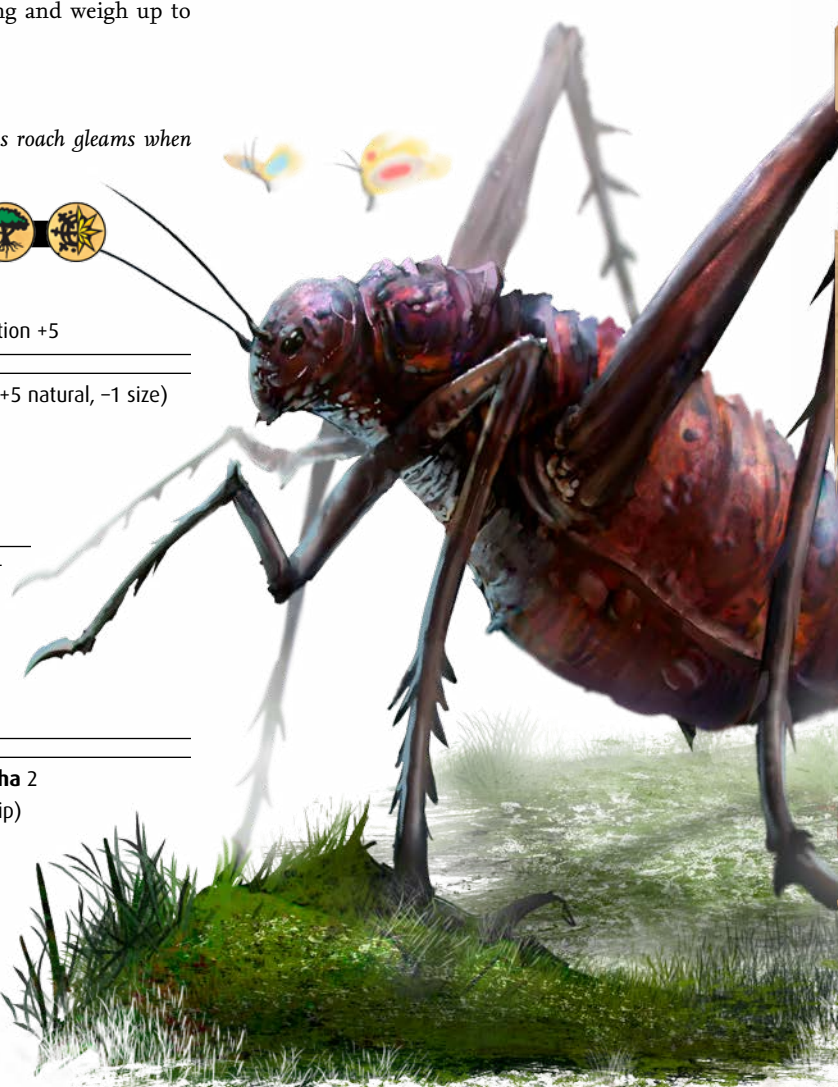
Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Like their smaller and more mundane cousins, venomroaches lurk along the fringes of humanoid civilization, skittering through the dark corners of the world. Dangerous denizens of sewers and alleyways, venomroaches have a pair of traits that set them apart from most of their kin. As their name would suggest, these vermin generate a potent toxin that withers tissue and poisons the blood. Unlike their smaller cousins, venomroaches also have enlarged mouthparts that give them a potent bite attack.

Venomroaches are 8 feet long and weigh 120 pounds.



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THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

LESKY, LICHEN

This miniature plant person has a body composed of lichens and a rain cape woven from leafy growths.

LICHEN LESHY

CR 3



XP 800

N Small plant (leshy, shapechanger)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

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

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

Immune electricity, plant traits, sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee slam +4 (1d4 plus degradation)

Ranged filaments +5 (1 plus degradation)

Special Attacks constrict (2d4 acid)

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

Constant—*endure elements, pass without trace*

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Endurance, Skill Focus (Knowledge [geography]), Toughness

Skills Climb +8, Knowledge (geography) +5, Perception +10, Stealth +10 (+14 in hills and mountains), Survival +3 (+7 in hills and mountains); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth and Survival in hills and mountains

Languages Druidic, Sylvan; plantspeech (lichens)

SQ change shape (Small lichen; *tree shape*), expert climber, verdant burst, weathering

ECOLOGY

Environment any hills or mountains

Organization solitary or patch (2–16)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Degradation (Ex) The lichen lesly's attacks envelop the target in a lattice of delicate digestive growths. As a standard action, a creature can tear away any such growths. If a creature ends its turn without having removed the growths, the tendrils fall away as they release acid that deals 2d4 points of acid damage, and the victim must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become staggered for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Expert Climber (Ex) A lichen lesly can adhere to nearly any surface, as though constantly under a natural version of *spider climb*.

Filaments (Ex) A lichen lesly can spit a tangle of filaments as a standard action. If it hits, this attack deals 1 point of damage (this damage is not modified by Strength) and affects the target with the lichen lesly's degradation ability. The filaments have a range increment of 20 feet and a maximum range of 100 feet.

Weathering (Ex) A lichen lesly can release a slow-acting acid that dissolves stone and organic material. By remaining in contact with a 5-foot-square area for 8 hours, the lesly can deal 3d6 points of acid damage to the surface, ignoring hardness less than 10.

Like the curious plantlike organisms from which they're composed, lichen leslys are rugged creatures able to survive in unforgiving climates. Unlike most leslys, lichen leslys are rarely content to stay in one place for long, instead using their survival skills to reach the grandest vistas, harshest environs, and most daring heights. There, they rest in quiet contemplation and awe, slowly breaking down inhospitable rocks into nutrient-rich soil that can sustain new plant life.

Lichen leslys almost always wear cozy rain cloaks that they use to blur their outlines and better camouflage their forms. They often secret away tiny mementos within their garb to remind them of their greatest achievements, and one can earn a lichen lesly's ready assistance if willing to listen to its rambling tales of how it found each trophy. This mossy clothing functions as masterwork padded armor for a lichen lesly, but not for any other creature.

GROWING A LICHEN LESLY

A lichen lesly can grow nearly anywhere that's exposed to clean air, though most creators prefer large, rocky escarpments. The creator prepares an unguent of spores, aromatic salts, and pure rainwater, which she uses to paint an image of the lesly-to-be on the growing surface. Once the lesly has matured, it peels itself off the prepared surface. Left to its own devices, it can construct its rain cloak and other gear from available materials within a day.

LICHEN LESLY

CL 10th; Price 4,500 gp

RITUAL

Requirements Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, *plant growth, soften earth and stone, summon nature's ally III*; **Skill** Knowledge (nature) DC 15; **Cost** 2,250 gp

LESKY, SNAPDRAGON

Verdant stalks entwine one another to create a humanoid shape with a giant snapdragon blossom for a head.

SNAPDRAGON LESLY

CR 4



XP 1,200

N Small plant (lesly, shapechanger)

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

DEFENSE

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

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

Immune electricity, plant traits, sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d6–1)

Ranged bloom lasso +7 (1 plus crippling hysterics)

Special Attacks bardic performance 13 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 15], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +1), bloom lasso, crippling hysterics

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +15)
Constant—*pass without trace*

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +5, Perception +6, Perform

(comedy, oratory, sing) +5, Stealth +10 (+14 in hills and

urban areas), Survival +2 (+6 in hills and urban areas); **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Stealth and Survival in hills and urban areas

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan; plantspeech (snapdragons)

SQ change shape (Small flower patch; *tree shape*), greenspeaker, verdant burst

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate hills or urban

Organization solitary, patch (2–8), or entourage (1–3 plus 2–16 other leshys)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bardic Performance (Su) A snapdragon leshy has the bardic performance ability of a 4th-level bard, granting it access to that ability's countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence, and inspire courage aspects.

Bloom Lasso (Ex) A snapdragon leshy can create and throw a tendril as a standard action. If it hits, this attack deals 1 point of damage (this damage is not modified by Strength) and affects the target with the leshy's crippling hysterics ability. This attack has a range increment of 20 feet and a maximum range of 100 feet.

Crippling Hysterics (Ex) The snapdragon leshy's bloom lasso drapes the target in clinging blossoms that release intoxicating pollen. Any creature struck by the lasso must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw or giggle uncontrollably for 1d4+1 rounds. This condition imposes a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks; while the effect lasts, the target must succeed at another DC 14 Fortitude saving throw at the end of its turn each round or fall prone in hysteria. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Greenspeaker (Su) A snapdragon leshy's bardic performances can affect plants as though they were not immune to mind-affecting effects. In addition, the bonuses granted to plants by the leshy's inspire competence and inspire courage increases by 1.

Whereas most leshys are reclusive and content to quietly nurture the natural world, snapdragon leshys are consummate extroverts. They often find their way into settled areas, where they caper and gab at those around them. When their neighbors are slow to laugh, snapdragon leshys sometimes resort to juvenile pranks to elicit a reaction. These escalating exploits often prompt townsfolk to chase off the plant people, which the leshys are quick to forgive so long as nobody comes to harm.

GROWING A SNAPDRAGON LESHY

Snapdragon leshys grow best in rocky, well-drained soil. To grow a snapdragon leshy, the maker must plant the seeds and visit several times a day to tell stories and jokes. The leshy emerges at last only if it has an audience of at least a dozen bystanders to applaud its arrival.

SAPDRAGON LESHY

CL 10th; **Price** 6,500 gp

RITUAL

Requirements Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, Perform (comedy, oratory, or sing) 1 rank, *plant growth*, *speak with plants*, *summon nature's ally IV*; **Skill** Knowledge (nature) DC 18; **Cost** 3,250 gp



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THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

OHANCANU

This brutish, one-eyed giant carries a large, well-made axe and wears a simple tunic. He has a head of shaggy hair, and the lower half of his face is obscured by a bristly, dark beard.

OHANCANU

CR 5



XP 1,600

CE Large fey

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 52 (7d6+28)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

DR 5/cold iron

Weaknesses white hairs

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk greataxe +10 (3d6+9/x3)

Ranged rock +5 (1d8+6)

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

Special Attacks rock throwing (100 ft.)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 7, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

Skills Climb +16, Intimidate +12, Perception +12, Swim +16

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary or hunting party (2-6)

Treasure standard (mwk greataxe, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

White Hairs (Su) An ohancanu has 2d4 white hairs that connect not only to its head, but to its essence. If one of these hairs is plucked with a successful steal combat maneuver (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 322), the ohancanu gains 2 negative levels. The ohancanu automatically regrows the lost white hair and recovers the negative levels after 24 hours.

Ohancanus are massive, brutal forest creatures that delight in destruction. Appearing as giant humanoids, ohancanus are thick and powerfully muscled, with simian arms that reach nearly to the ground. Although ohancanus have a single eye in the center of their foreheads, they are fey creatures and unrelated to the ancient cyclops race. Ohancanus have wide noses and large mouths filled with blunt teeth. All ohancanus are hirsute; males have full, thick beards and the rare females (called ohancanas) have long, unruly hair on their heads. All ohancanus have dark hair with a few white strands; on males, these white strands grow in their beards, while on females, they sprout from their heads. The white strands anchor the ohancanu's essence, so pulling out these strands causes the fey to weaken and die.

An ohancanu stands 10 feet tall and weighs about 800 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Ohancanus are rapacious and destructive, befouling the forests in which they live. They block up streams in order to grab trapped fish, cause rockslides to wound prey, and hew down healthy trees just for the joy of killing. Ohancanus like to hunt, but they don't have the patience to set traps or wait in ambush; instead, they charge at their prey with their axes held high. Ohancanus kill far more game than they eat and leave the carcasses to rot.

Ohancanus often live for centuries, spending their years ranging throughout large forests. They prefer to keep on the move and rarely stay in one location for more than a few days unless a need arises, such as manufacturing a new axe or waiting out a fierce and lengthy storm. Because they are so long-lived, ohancanus develop good instincts for where to find the easiest prey and how to avoid the few predators they can't simply slaughter.

Despite their brutal disregard for the forest and its creatures, ohancanus' life cycle is inherently tied to old trees in deep forests. Ohancanus do not conceive or bear young. Instead, they murder the old and feeble among their kind and carve out their organs to bury among the roots of the oldest tree they can find. A year later, a young ohancanu bursts free from the earth in the same spot. If the burial tree is particularly vigorous, it might spawn twin or triplet ohancanus. Ohancanus emerge with rudimentary survival skills and the ability to speak; most dimly recall learning these skills from the spirit of their butchered "parent" while developing underground.

Ohancanus are born with a full head of hair (and, for males, a beard), including the white hairs that are so debilitating when plucked. Ohancanus emerge with only a few white hairs, but an ohancanu that survives a near-fatal experience (such as a long fall or a lightning strike) might sprout an additional white hair. An ohancanu with many white hairs is called a "death dodger" by admiring companions. Pulling out an ohancanu's white hair is not only enervating, but also painful and demoralizing; an ohancanu with a plucked hair is likely to flee to a place of safety until the white hair regrows.

Ohancanus are surprisingly nimble, given their great size, and are naturally athletic. They are agile climbers, can swim well, and can walk at a constant, plodding pace for days without tiring.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Ohancanus inhabit old-growth forests such as the Verduran Forest and the Fangwood. They wander the forest throughout their lives, searching for civilized

structures to destroy, creatures to terrorize, and food to sate their prodigious appetites. Ohancanus prefer a diet of nuts, berries, and fresh meat (particularly humanoids and game animals such as deer and rabbits), but they can draw sustenance from most organic matter, including bark and carrion.

Though they wander too much to establish true lairs, ohancanus sometimes form campsites in shallow caves or on small islands. These sites are marked by years of occasional occupation by wandering ohancanus and often contain old bones, forgotten trinkets, and simple whetstones to keep axes sharp. A traveler discovering an unoccupied ohancanu campsite is well advised to move on, as one of these itinerant brutes might return to the campsite at any time.

Ohancanus take great joy in destroying things, particularly things built by humanoids. They eagerly demolish bridges, cottages, fences, and other structures with a compulsion that borders on fanaticism. They gleefully attack humanoid defenders as well, in order to fill their bellies after the effort of wanton destruction. If a structure is too well defended for an ohancanu to overcome alone, he retreats only long enough to gather allies before returning to attack again.

Despite their brutish malevolence, ohancanus are social creatures and enjoy the company of their own kind. Ohancanus often congregate to form small hunting groups, although such groups rarely work well together. If the group corners appetizing prey, such as a large deer or a plump gnome, the ohancanus often fall to bickering over who claims it. Willy prey can turn the greedy ohancanus against each other long enough to flee. In the face of serious danger, ohancanus value their own lives over all other concerns, trampling their companions in a rush to escape. The only time ohancanus collaborate well is when destroying a large structure such as a dam, fort, or small settlement.

Once every 4 years, the ohancanus of a forest gather in a large moot to exchange information, settle grudges, butcher the elderly, and participate in brutal sports. Although wrestling and sparring are popular pastimes, no ohancanu will pull the beard or hair of another. Pulling out the white hair of another ohancanu, even by accident, is one of the few taboos among these brutal fey.

Ohancanus are not religious, but they have a deep respect for dramatic natural phenomena such as thunderstorms, tornadoes, and forest fires. When a storm approaches, ohancanus collect prisoners to “sacrifice” to the storm by lashing them to the tops of windblown trees or pinning them beneath boulders in the path of flash floods.

Ohancanus particularly enjoy riddles, although their limited intellect means that they have difficulty making up new riddles and that even their hardest riddles would be generally considered quite simple. Ohancanus typically see other creatures as prey to consume or predators to avoid, but a canny traveler can offer a riddle to an ohancanu to quell its bloodlust. Ohancanus’ patience for exchanging riddles only extends so far, though, as they get frustrated when they cannot answer a riddle and angry when their simple riddles are easily answered. Most travelers seek to distract an ohancanu just long enough to plan an escape or lure the creature into squatting low enough to yank out one of his white hairs and send him fleeing. Discovering just the right level of difficulty to appease ohancanus without frustrating them enough to trigger their attacks is a puzzle of a higher order than most riddles!



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THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

TROLL, CANOPY

Prominent tusks and unruly green fur mark this fearsome creature as a troll despite its small size. It hangs overhead, swinging between its oversized forearms and lashing, claw-tipped tail.

CANOPY TROLL

CR 3



XP 800

CE Small humanoid (giant)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +4

DEFENSE

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

hp 30 (4d8+12); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d4+1), 2 claws +5 (1d3+1), sting +5 (1d3+1 plus poison)

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

Special Attacks poison, swarming

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 4, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3 (+6 grapple); **CMD** 17 (20 vs. grapple)

Feats Improved Grapple[®], Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +5 (+13 when jumping), Climb +10, Perception +4; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Acrobatics when jumping

SQ cradling

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or warm forests

Organization pair, gang (3–4), or troop (5–12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cradling (Ex) Thanks to their massive hands, prehensile feet, and dexterous tails, canopy trolls are treated as if they were one size category larger for the purposes of grappling. They gain Improved Grapple as a bonus feat.

Poison (Ex) A canopy troll's tail sting injects a single tumorous lump of its own regenerating flesh into its target. On a failed Fortitude save, this tumor grows beneath the victim's skin, sprouting bristly hairs and stubby teeth that cause debilitating pain for its host. The sickened condition lasts 2d4 days before the mass dissolves, though a host can attempt a Fortitude saving throw each day to overcome the pain and ignore the condition. Alternatively, the tumor can be removed with a successful DC 20 Heal check.

Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 3 rounds; *effect* sickened for 2d4 days; *cure* special.

Swarming (Ex) Canopy trolls live and fight in tangled piles and are adept at swarming foes. Up to two canopy trolls can share the same square at the same time. If two canopy trolls in the same square attack the same foe, they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares.

One of the most ravenous dangers of the Fangwood are the arboreal canopy trolls, who bound through the treetops in great troops, scavenging fruit and nuts and descending on much larger prey to tear it limb from limb. They share the legendary durability of larger trolls, and plummet fearlessly from great heights to take prey by surprise, often breaking bones only to heal by the time they begin to feed. These injuries rarely set properly, leaving most canopy trolls in constant pain, worsening their already vicious attitudes. Often underestimated, canopy trolls rely on great numbers and their ability to coordinate en masse, overwhelming prey by sheer numbers as they drag it kicking and screaming into their chaotic, howling maws.

Canopy trolls stand 3-1/2 feet tall, and have prehensile tails nearly twice that length. Their densely muscled bodies weigh as much as 150 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Small and quick, canopy trolls possess a number of strange adaptations to help them survive. Like most trolls, their massive jaws can easily rend flesh, and their prehensile feet and oversized hands—nearly as large as a full-sized troll's—help them grapple much larger prey or swing between distant branches with ease. Rather than the vestigial tails most trolls sport, theirs are long and flexible, allowing a canopy troll to hang from a branch, and the tail sports a sharp claw on the end capable of delivering the troll's unusual venom.

Popular lore in the Fangwood claims that canopy trolls grow from the limbs and other bits of flesh cut from full-sized trolls by clumsy adventurers, but in truth, these agile offshoots are simply another example of the vast variety found among troll species. Though small in stature, these child-sized cousins of the forest's more common trolls retain the ferocity, hunger, and regeneration endemic to their kind. They are omnivores and survive on fruit, leaves, and insects during lean times; like all trolls, though, they vastly prefer fresh meat to help fuel their legendary regeneration. Left unchecked, a troop can strip a forest valley of animal life within a few months—or depopulate a small town—before moving on.

Female canopy trolls give birth to twins after a 3-month pregnancy and select the stronger of the pair within the first few days, eating the second to ensure they provide ample nutrition for the remaining, nursing child. Young cling to their mother's back for the first 6 months of life, after which they are fast and coordinated enough to keep up with the rest of the troop as they swing through the trees. Canopy troll cannibalism isn't limited to newborns; the creatures' preferred method of dealing with old or sickly members of the troop is to fall upon them and feast on the regenerating morsels.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Canopy trolls are strictly arboreal, living in the thick branches high above the forest floor. Like the similar moss troll, they rarely set foot on solid ground; many canopy trolls exhibit a mild phobia of the surface, retreating to the trees if knocked groundward in a fight. Their similarities to moss trolls end at their shared terrain, however, as the smaller brutes lack the cunning and innate magic of their larger kin. Though somewhat common west of Lake Encarthan, canopy trolls are rare beyond the Fangwood Forest and smaller woods in the immediate vicinity. They are sensitive to both heat and cold, and quickly fall ill in drier climes. Some rangers insist the creatures hail from the First World, but nearly all strange happenings in the Fangwood are attributed to the mysterious fey realm, and canopy trolls are simply highly specialized for their very specific environment. Rumors place a similar breed of small, arboreal trolls—chimney trolls—in Ustalav, and a more robust cousin of the canopy trolls, called vavanis, terrorizes the jungles of Vudra.

Despite their barest semblance of intellect, canopy trolls show unusual curiosity, and love to pull things apart—animals and humanoids included—to see what may be inside. They find mechanisms and musical instruments especially fascinating, and an entire troop may take to fighting with each other over a newly discovered harp or horn. They also like to adorn themselves with finery, though any treasures they gather rarely last long as the creatures swing through the branches and pile into their filthy nests. Generally, only magical treasures and small pieces of jewelry retain any value after more than a day in the hands of a canopy troll. This same curiosity makes the creatures especially vulnerable to so-called monkey traps, as once they take hold of a valuable, they rarely willingly let go; clever hunters can snare the monsters simply by dropping shiny coins into a hole just large enough to slide a troll hand into—and too small to pull a coin-filled fist back through. They speak a pidgin of Giant, composed largely of insults and vulgarities, as well as a number of words for food.

Canopy trolls are simpleminded even compared to average trolls, living more like animals than humanoids in apelike troops. A troop selects the largest tree in its territory as a nest site, building rough nests of leaves and grasses and dangling ugly dolls tied from animal bones into the branches. Canopy trolls have little concern for one another, flocking together simply because their preferred hunting tactic—piling onto a single creature until the poor

beast can barely move or breathe under the weight—requires large numbers. They hash out a rough pecking order through constant bullying, and after large meals the troop generally falls to infighting to more formally determine the leader for the next few days. Affection and compassion are alien concepts, with each member of the group constantly sniffing out weaknesses to exploit in its neighbors. Troops sometimes gather around an outsider—usually a larger troll but occasionally another large predator—deferring to that individual as temporary leader until they grow restless, hungry, or bored, whereupon they turn their provisional leader into a meal.



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THE CHERNASARDO RANGERS

BORN OF BATTLE

BESTIARY

NEXT MONTH

ASSAULT ON LONGSHADOW

By Benjamin Bruck and Thurston Hillman

Having rescued what remains of the Chernasardo Rangers, the heroes have their first chance to take the offensive against the Ironfang Legion when rumors emerge of the monstrous invaders massing to siege the refinery town of Longshadow. If the Ironfang Legion succeeds in claiming Longshadow, its grip will tighten on western Nirmathas, and the mines and refineries will fuel its war machine. But the Legion's heavy focus on Longshadow leaves its flanks vulnerable to a campaign of sabotage and harassment! Can the PCs end the hobgoblin siege and prove they're the heroes who can save not just Longshadow, but all of Nirmathas?

HADREGASH

By Jason Keeley

More so than the other three goblin hero-gods, Hadregash is revered by hobgoblins for his dominion over goblin slavery, supremacy, and territory. Learn of the Greatest Supreme Chieftain Boss's dogma, traditions, and worshippers, and prepare to serve him in chains!

LONGSHADOW

By Thurston Hillman

Explore the industrial river town of Longshadow, site of this volume's exciting adventure. In addition to featuring a full gazetteer of this Nirmathi town and its history, inhabitants, and prominent locations, this article also presents details on the surrounding hinterlands, providing countless opportunities for adventures that can take place both in the settlement and beyond its walls. No Game Master's arsenal is complete when running the Ironfang Invasion Adventure Path without this must-have gazetteer!

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IRONFANG RECRUIT MANUAL

ENTRY 3-12: ELFTRAPS

ON THE LAST PAGE, YOU LEARNED HOW TO SET ANIMALS SNARES TO HELP YOU EAT ON THE MARCH. NOW YOUR TRAINING ADVANCES TO ELFTRAPS. DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE NAME—THESE TRAPS WORK JUST AS WELL FOR HUMANS AND ORGS. YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE A FEW ADJUSTMENTS IF YOU SUSPECT THE ENEMY HAS HAIFLINGS, TOO!

WHETHER DESIGNED FOR AN ELF OR A BOAR, A TRAP IS A TRAP. REMEMBER THE THREE T'S: TENSIONER, TRIGGER, AND THREAT. ALL YOU NEED IS SOMETHING TO STORE THE FORCE, SOMETHING THAT TELLS YOUR TRAP A WARM BODY IS NEAR, AND SOMETHING THAT DELIVERS THAT FORCE AS PAIN. BE CREATIVE.

LOOK AT YOUR ENVIRONMENT TO SEE WHERE YOUR PREY WILL WANT TO TRAVEL, AND LAY YOUR TRAPS ACCORDINGLY.



TREADING TRAPS

A SIMPLE PIT LINED WITH ARROWS OR STAKES USES YOUR FAT, LAZY ENEMY'S OWN BODY AGAINST ITSELF. THIS TRAP IS RARELY LETHAL ON ITS OWN, SO RUB IT DOWN WITH THE ENTRAILS FROM DINNER OR—if YOU'RE A RICH BASTARD—POISON.

SWING-ARM TRAPS


SWING-ARMS ARE EVERY HOBGOBLIN'S FAVORITE! WARRIORS—EVEN IF ELVES OR HUMANS—SHOULD DIE ON THEIR FEET, STRUCK DOWN BY A SOLID BLOW. EVEN A SIMPLE TREE BRANCH IS A FITTING Foe FOR THESE COWARDS. SET SWING-ARM TRAPS ACROSS OBVIOUS TRAILS AND YOUR ENEMIES WILL STRIKE THEMSELVES DOWN.



THESE SIMPLE DEVICES STAND GUARD EVEN WHEN YOUR SAGGY BODY CAN'T STAY AWAKE ANY LONGER, SO NEVER MAKE CAMP WITHOUT ALSO MAKING A FEW TRAPS. KEEP TRACK OF WHAT YOU SET AND WHERE, THOUGH. IF YOU FORGET WHERE YOU SET YOUR OWN TRAPS, YOU DESERVE THE PAIN YOU'LL GET!



BLOOD ON THE GREEN



Even as the adventurers find sanctuary in the Fangwood Forest, dire threats encroach on their woodland haven. The black dragon Ibzairiak the Scar-Maker, leading a contingent of Ironfang troops, has broken the back of the legendary Chernasardo Rangers who once defended the woods—and he has claimed the southern Fangwood as his own. With the Chernasardo Rangers gone, all of Fangwood Forest's deadliest inhabitants are again free to stalk and revel as they please, with the adventurers and their vulnerable refugees trapped in the middle. Alone and desperate for allies, the adventurers must siege the Rangers' fallen fortresses one by one, taking them back from the monsters that now infest them. Can they rescue what remains of the once-unstoppable freedom fighters, or will they too fall to the ravages of Ibzairiak?

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path continues the Ironfang Invasion Adventure Path and includes:

- “Fangs of War,” a Pathfinder adventure for 5th-level characters, by Ron Lundeen.
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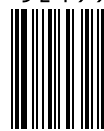
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