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ADVENTURE PATH[™]

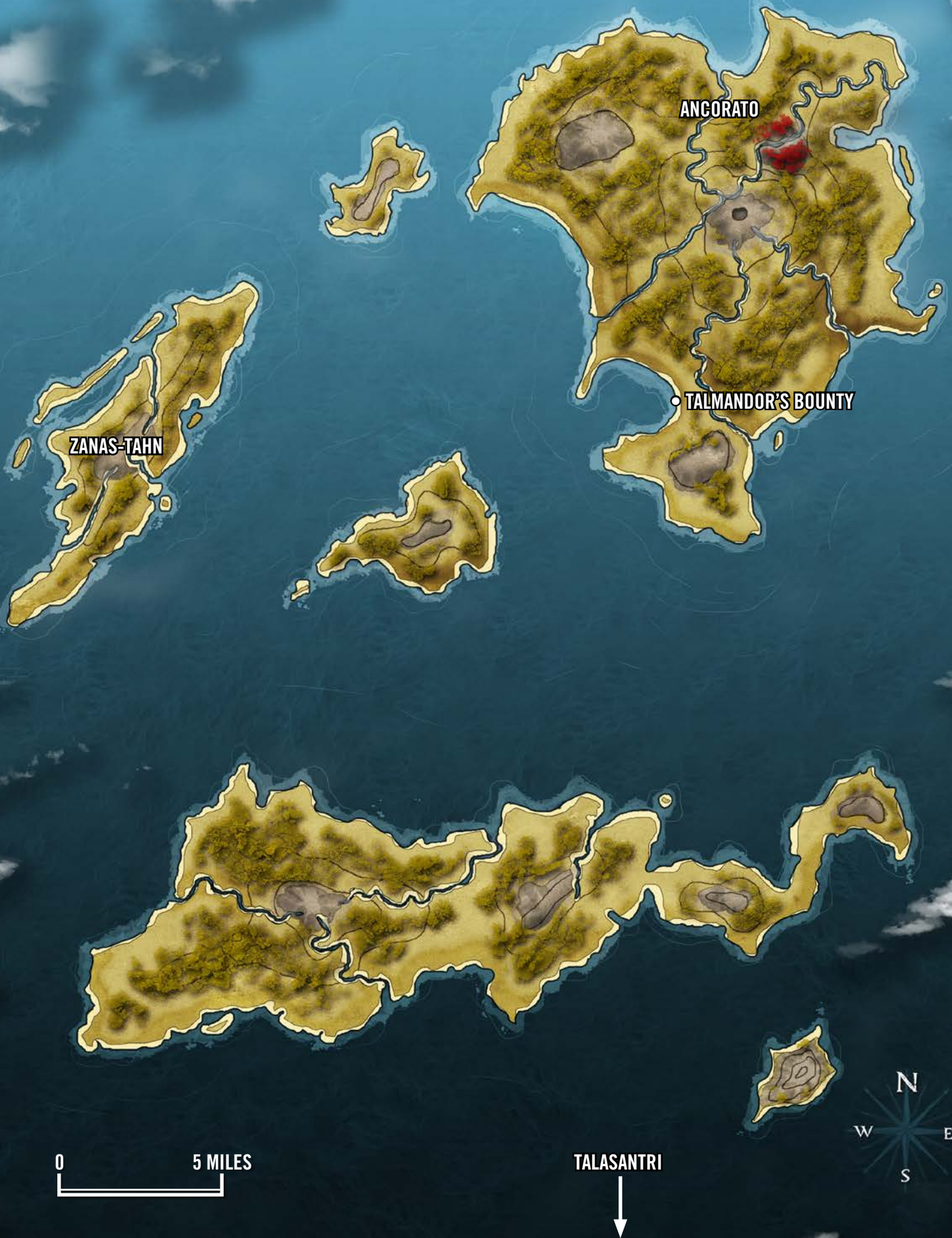


RUINS OF
AZLANT

CITY
IN THE
DEEP

by Amber E. Scott

RUINS OF AZLANT REGION



PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH

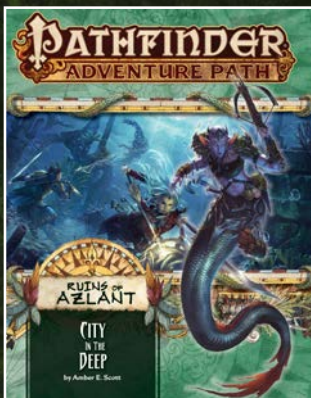
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ON THE COVER



The deep merfolk villain Naqualia graces Setiawan Lie's cover art, and in the background, Valeros and Merisiel face a deadly ambush while exploring an underwater city.



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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.

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Bestiary 5</i>	B5
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Inner Sea Races</i>	ISR
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Bestiary 4</i>	B4	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM



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LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER...

Or, like people out of air or something. Most of this adventure takes place underwater, and this is the first time that the PCs will be in such an environment for extended periods of time. Though they should have the resources for such an excursion by this point in the story, if they don't, they might have to gather some of this stuff before setting off for Talasantri.

Even with the proper magical equipment, an adventure that involves a large amount of time underwater can be extremely dangerous for adventurers who aren't native to aquatic environments. A successful *dispel magic* or *antimagic field* can be deadly when you're in a submerged building on the floor of the ocean. If that happens, you need a backup plan or a way to get to the surface quickly and safely, or you risk drowning.

In some of the previous adventures, you might have noticed higher treasure rewards than is normally expected.

This is by design for a couple of reasons. The first is that the PCs are pretty much stranded in the middle of the ocean, miles away from the comforts of cities where they can buy and sell gear. On Ancorato, the PCs are limited in their choices of a marketplace, having to either wait for another resupply ship or trade with the locathahs who roam the nearby waters.

The second reason for this additional treasure is to prepare the PCs for longer excursions underwater. Some of this gear costs a bit more than standard adventuring items due to their specialized nature and the ability to save a PC's life in a dangerous environment, but these kinds of things are crucial to excelling in (and perhaps surviving) this Adventure Path. By this point in the campaign, most characters (assuming a four-person party) should have something that helps them move around more easily underwater, whether it's a simple

bonus on Swim checks or an actual swim speed. Most characters should also have something that helps them breathe underwater. Some of these items might just be consumable magic items such as potions or scrolls, but some could be items that allow a character to survive indefinitely in a place where they normally couldn't breathe. Additional items the PCs had a chance to find during this campaign include weapons that circumvent the normal penalties on attack and damage rolls imposed by bludgeoning and slashing weapons while underwater.

UGH... UNDERWATER COMBAT

Nearly all of the restrictions of underwater combat can be mitigated by character choices eventually. This starts with the selection of the character's race and class, and a number of archetypes can further customize a character to provide a long adventuring life underwater without weakening them for other applications. There are a handful of feats that can help as well, but much of the heavy lifting is covered by magic, specifically spells and magic items. Many of these rules options appear in the recently released *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Aquatic Adventures* and *Pathfinder Player Companion: Blood of the Sea*, among other books in the Pathfinder library.

Some groups might enjoy the extra level of complexity underwater combat provides when it comes to adventuring, but others might find that thinking of things in three dimensions, having to attempt checks while swimming to get into tactical positions, or taking frequent penalties from fighting in an alien environment gets in the way of their enjoyment. If your group is one of the latter but the players are still interested in uncovering ancient Azlanti magic and lost lore from before Earthfall, consider lightening some of the restrictions or just ignoring the more complex underwater rules altogether. Some GMs might just hand out a *ring of freedom of movement* and a *necklace of adaptation* to every player character and hand-wave the rest of the issues of this challenging environment—and that's okay! I'm not going to show up at your table and tell you that the fun you're having isn't the right kind of fun. After all, a fun story in an exciting location that allows your character to develop in the way you want is the most important thing.

MORE AQUATIC ADVENTURES

Even though a few submerged adventuring locations appear in this Adventure Path, there can always be more. Just like how our world's oceans cover the majority of the planet and host a bounty of life in comparison to the dry parts of the world, Golarion's oceans hold a vast number of creatures—and not all of them are fish or whales. While based in Ancorato, the PCs had a chance to meet with a group of locathahs, likely their first encounter

AUTHOR SHOUT-OUT

This month's adventure comes from longtime contributor and fan favorite Amber E. Scott. I first became familiar with Amber's writing from reading *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazines, and I ended up meeting her the first year I went to Gen Con. She was part of a group of freelancers whom I met when I was getting started in writing, and when they brought me into the group, I got to know Amber much better. She helped me so much in my early freelance career, so after I started working here, it was somewhat surreal the first time I reached out to her to write for me. I was hiring not only a talented friend but also someone who had acted as a mentor to me.

Amber has written dozens of excellent things for us, from *Pathfinder Campaign Setting* books such as *Chronicles of the Righteous*, to *Pathfinder Player Companions* such as *Blood of the Sea*, to *Adventure Path* adventures such as "The Worldwound Excursion," "Secrets of the Sphinx," and this exciting adventure. Amber really has done it all. On top of all this skill, Amber remains a great friend, and I always look forward to seeing her at PaizoCon and Gen Con—or anywhere we happen to be at the same time. If you like this adventure, make sure you check out some of the other amazing things Amber has written.

with aquatic humanoids. In this adventure, the PCs have a chance to see a fully functioning city of aquatic humanoids thriving beneath the Arcadian Ocean. As the GM, you can add more locations like this in the region to increase the number of active aquatic humanoids in the campaign with whom the PCs can interact. Since PCs tend to head off in their own direction more often than GMs might want, it would be a good idea to develop at least one other settlement that you can plop down somewhere in the water on the map of the region printed on the inside front cover of this book. This gives the PCs another point of contact with allies, or it can give another challenging group of encounters if hostile creatures inhabit that settlement. Either way, it reinforces to the PCs that there is an entire vibrant and complex world that is normally unseen to those who live their lives above the surface.



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CITY IN THE DEEP

PART 1: ALONG THE CORAL STREETS 5

The heroes come to Talasantri, an underwater city inhabited by aquatic folk of all kinds. Rest and supplies can be had at Talasantri, but intrigue bubbles within the peaceful city.

PART 2: CRIES OF THE DOOMED 19

A group of merfolk doomcriers reach Talasantri to warn of an impending attack. They turn to the heroes, begging them to recover an enchanted spear that might save the city.

PART 3: RETURN TO LAND 29

On an island of lethal threats, the heroes must seek out the tomb of a fallen champion and claim his enchanted spear—but he does not rest quietly.

PART 4: ATTACK ON TALASANTRI 43

The heroes return to a city in chaos. There they discover the merfolk doomcriers are agents of the veiled master Ochymua and must confront the merfolk's leader.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"City in the Deep" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP advancement track.

10

The PCs begin this adventure at 10th level.

11

The PCs should be midway through 11th level by the time they venture onto Blood Lily Cay.

12

The PCs should be 12th level by the time they return to Talasantri in Part 4.

The PCs should be 13th level by the adventure's end.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Auberon, a wizard of ancient Azlant, foresaw the coming destruction of Earthfall, but the imminence of the cataclysm left him no time to fortify his tower beyond the magic with which it was built, and so he chose the path of lichdom as a way to survive the event.

The trauma of his transformation wasn't the only thing threatening Auberon's humanity: the wizard had long been on the path of cruel mania. In the aftermath of Earthfall, he decided that the elves of the Mordant Spire and the merfolk near his tower were to blame for the destruction of Azlant, despite his knowledge of the alghollthus. In the centuries that followed, he single-mindedly devoted himself to their eradication. He began raising an undead army to guard his tower and wage war on the elves and merfolk that had survived the cataclysm. Shadows whirled in dark clouds through the ocean, deathless creations marched tirelessly along the seabed, and Auberon grew ever more vengeful and less connected to reality.

When Ochymua discovered Auberon still existed, the veiled master realized the lich might know important information about the doomsday weapon it seeks. Ochymua itself journeyed to the lich's tower, but it sent one of its agents to the nearby city of Talasantri to uncover additional information about Auberon. This agent, a deep merfolk rogue named Naqualia, is looking for one of Auberon's former servants. She knows an assistant once worked with Auberon and may know the location of the Azlanti facility, called the Compass, which holds the dangerous weapon. Once she finds the assistant and extracts the information from him, she plans to mentally communicate the location to Ochymua. Naqualia had been brought into the same telepathic mesh that Ochymua had been a part of before Earthfall, and thus Ochymua remains in contact with Naqualia almost continuously. For a brief period during the deep merfolk's mission, the veiled master was infiltrating a demiplane located in the lich's tower; their connection winked out until Ochymua emerged on the Material Plane once again.

What Naqualia doesn't know is that the "assistant" who once worked with Auberon is actually a creature called a mezlan, a shapeshifting servitor created by Azlanti wizards to serve as specialized soldiers and spies. The mezlan calling itself Vallik approached Auberon 300 years ago, longing for what it remembered of ancient Azlant and searching to reacquire itself with the trappings of the society in which it once lived. The shapeshifter worked as an assistant in Auberon's tower, called the Alabaster Trident due to its color and design,

though eventually it tired of its life there among monsters and undead creations. And so, one day, when the lich was embroiled in his horrendous experiments, Vallik snuck away. It wandered the region for years, exploring islands and other Azlanti ruins before discovering the underwater city of Talasantri on the eve of a destructive event: a monstrous plankta emerged from a deep rift and set about smashing through the city. A hero from the surface saved the city, and the merfolk and aquatic elves eventually rebuilt using powerful magic. As Talasantri recovered from the event, Vallik insinuated itself into the city, taking the form of an aquatic elf and offering to lend a hand rebuilding. Since then, the mezlan has taken on over a dozen different forms and personalities, sometimes posing as a traveler only staying a few days and other times as a trusted citizen.

Divinations led Naqualia to Talasantri, but she's been unable to find Vallik—mostly because the questions she asked of the diviner presumed Vallik to be a living person. While this is technically true, the person that Vallik has become has nothing more than a distant memory of the mezlan who once carried that name. Naqualia knows Vallik is somewhere in the city; she simply needs time to find the shapeshifter. But when the PCs arrive in Talasantri, Naqualia realizes her time may be running out.

PART I: ALONG THE CORAL STREETS

In the previous adventures, the PCs learned that the veiled master Ochymua has been released from its prison and seeks a dangerous Azlanti weapon. Nieran Codali, an elven ranger of the Mordant Spire (see page 60 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #123: The Flooded Cathedral*), directed the PCs to the underwater city of Talasantri where they might gain information and assistance from the aquatic elves who live there.

REACHING TALASANTRI

Talasantri is approximately 40 miles southeast of Ancorato. The easiest way to get to Talasantri is to travel by boat to the area just above the city and then dive beneath the ocean to reach it; the city's coral dome can be found roughly 250 feet beneath the surface. If the PCs found the *apparatus of the crab* in the temple ruins (see page 48 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #123: The Flooded Cathedral*), they can use it to safely travel down to, and spend time in, Talasantri.

Making this trip by swimming alone would take at least a couple of days, and the characters run the risk

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of nonlethal damage due to fatigue. If the PCs have a swim speed or managed to obtain one during the course of this campaign through magic items, mutations, or spells, they can make the trip in a day and a half provided their swim speed is at least 30 feet.

Potions of water breathing or similar effects will be required for the PCs to swim down into the city and explore its streets for any considerable length of time. The PCs have likely found such magic items along their way, but if they are unprepared to spend long spans of time underwater, direct them to Koloshkora (see page 60 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #122) in order to obtain appropriate gear. In this case, the locathah trader is willing to take a loss on some of the necessary items in order to help the PCs keep the region safe from alghollthu machinations. Likewise, the elves of the Mordant Spire might be able to assist in getting the PCs any necessary resources to continue their quest to stop Ochymua before it can unleash a devastating weapon and reignite the alghollthus' war with humanity.

The ocean may be one of the most alien terrains the PCs might ever travel through, and they are sure to see unusual fish, tentacled monsters, glowing coral growths, and many other bizarre sights on their way. Even if the PCs have magic items that allow them to breathe water as if it were air, move naturally underwater, and fight normally beneath the waves, traveling through the ocean should still be a novel experience.

Traveling underwater is more difficult than traveling overland. The PCs may feel as though they aren't making progress because they can't see the scenery moving past. If the PCs don't travel on the surface or on the seafloor, they can also become disoriented from the lack of reference points. If none of the PCs are familiar with underwater travel, they should quickly realize that either sailing or swimming along the ocean floor is the safest method of travel.

The pressure and temperature of the depths will also be uncomfortable unless the PCs have items to protect them or take the time to adapt to the pressure. Anytime the PCs go below 100 feet deep (and every 100 feet farther), they must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC = 15 + 1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of damage per minute they are within that pressure zone. After five successful saves, the creature adapts to the new pressure. Regardless of the warmth in the air above, the water is cold even a few yards beneath the surface, and no sunlight penetrates as far down as Talasantri. Without darkvision or their own light sources, the PCs won't be able to see much in the dimly lit settlement.

RIDING THE CURRENTS

As the PCs make their way to Talasantri, whether above or below the water, they encounter natural hazards

common to this area. The first such encounter occurs about halfway to Talasantri, while the second occurs only an hour or so away from the city gates. If you want to increase the number of encounters the PCs come across during their trip to Talasantri, look on page 83 for suggestions of random encounters.

THE KILLER GARDEN (CR 12)

Halfway through their journey to Talasantri, the PCs pass through a stretch of ocean where vast patches of seaweed have floated to the surface. If the PCs are traveling along the seafloor, there is a chance they might not come across this encounter. If that's the case, save it for when the PCs next surface or come close to the surface.

Creatures: Two of the seaweed patches are not innocent plants. They're sargassum fiends, waiting for larger prey than the tiny fish, and the PCs look to be tasty meals.

If the PCs encounter the sargassum fiends while in a ship, the fiends try to lure the PCs (or whoever is steering the helm) into range with their mirage abilities before climbing aboard and attacking. Even if the PCs are underwater when they encounter the sargassum fiends, the plant creatures can still use their mirage special ability before they swim within reach and attempt to grab and squeeze the life out of the PCs. If the party is traveling in the *apparatus of the crab*, the sargassum fiends leave them alone unless provoked.

SARGASSUM FIENDS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 123 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 235)

Treasure: The sargassum fiends consume flesh but have no use for treasure. With a successful DC 30 Perception check, a PC can find some bones from a previous victim nestled in an underwater rock formation 100 feet below the surface where the sargassum fiends hunt. The straps of a *handy haversack* are caught within a ribcage. Within the haversack are 250 gp, a *scroll of freedom of movement*, and a *scroll of greater animal aspect*^{UC}.

SAHUAGIN RAIDERS (CR 13)

Creatures: About an hour from the city, the PCs can attempt DC 25 Perception checks. Any PC who succeeds notices a band of sahuagin have surrounded something and are jabbing at it with their tridents. The sahuagin haven't yet noticed the PCs, but if the characters continue on without concealing their approach, the sahuagin notice them and immediately attack.

If the PCs fail their Perception checks, they don't notice the sahuagin until the raiders have noticed them.

The sahuagin attack without mercy to defend their “catch,” which is in fact a merfolk druid.

SAHUAGIN BLOODRAGER

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female four-armed sahuagin bloodrager 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 239, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 15)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, –2 rage, +4 shield)

hp 106 (8d10+62)

Fort +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +2 bonus vs. spells cast by self or an ally

Defensive Abilities blood sanctuary, improved uncanny dodge

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +1 *underwater greatsword* +16/+11 (2d6+9/19–20), 2 claws +11 (1d4+2), bite +11 (1d4+2) or bite +13 (1d4+5), 4 claws +13 (1d4+5)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks blood casting, blood frenzy, bloodrage (18 rounds/day), multiweapon mastery, staggering strike

Bloodrager Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +8)

1st (2/day)—*magic missile*, *mirror strike*^{UC}, *protection from good*, *shield*

Bloodline aberrant

TACTICS

Before Combat The bloodrager casts *shield* and charges into combat. If she has time and it seems like a solid tactic, she casts *protection from good* (this effect is not incorporated into her statistics).

During Combat The bloodrager tries to fight with multiple enemies in reach. She casts *mirror strike* defensively if she thinks she can finish off two opponents simultaneously.

Morale In her frenzy, the bloodrager fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without the effects of the *shield* spell and when not raging, the bloodrager's statistics are

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural); **hp** 90 (8d10+46); **Fort** +11, **Will** +6; **Melee** +1 *underwater greatsword* +14/+9 (2d6+6/19–20) 2 claws +9 (1d4+1), bite +9 (1d4+1) or bite +11 (1d4+3), 4 claws +11 (1d4+3); **Str** 16, **Con** 18; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23; **Skills** Swim +14.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 22, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Multiattack^B, Toughness^B, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +12, Ride +5, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +5, Survival +6, Swim +16

Languages Aquan, Common; speak with sharks

SQ abnormal reach, fast movement

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other**

Gear +1 *hide armor*, +1 *underwater greatsword*, spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Underwater Weapon Attacks with this weapon don't take the usual –2 penalty for attacking underwater, and they deal full damage. The underwater weapon special ability originally appeared on page 63 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Aquatic Adventures*.

SAHUAGIN RAIDERS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Sahuagin ranger 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 239)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 92 each (9d10+43)

Fort +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +1 *trident* +14/+9 (1d8+5) or bite +13 (1d4+4), 2 claws +14 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks blood frenzy, combat style (natural weapon^{APG}), favored enemies (aquatic humanoids +4, humans +2)

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

2nd—*slipstream*^{APG} (DC 14)

1st—*magic fang*, *resist energy*

TACTICS

During Combat The raiders swim directly at the PCs to engage them in combat, using their superior swim speeds to close the distance. Two concentrate their attacks on the PC who looks the brawniest, while the third watches for spellcasters and then targets those PCs.

Morale If two of the raiders are killed, the third tries to swim away and escape.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Rending Claws^{APG}, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+7 when jumping), Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +14, Ride +7, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +10, Survival +10, Swim +15

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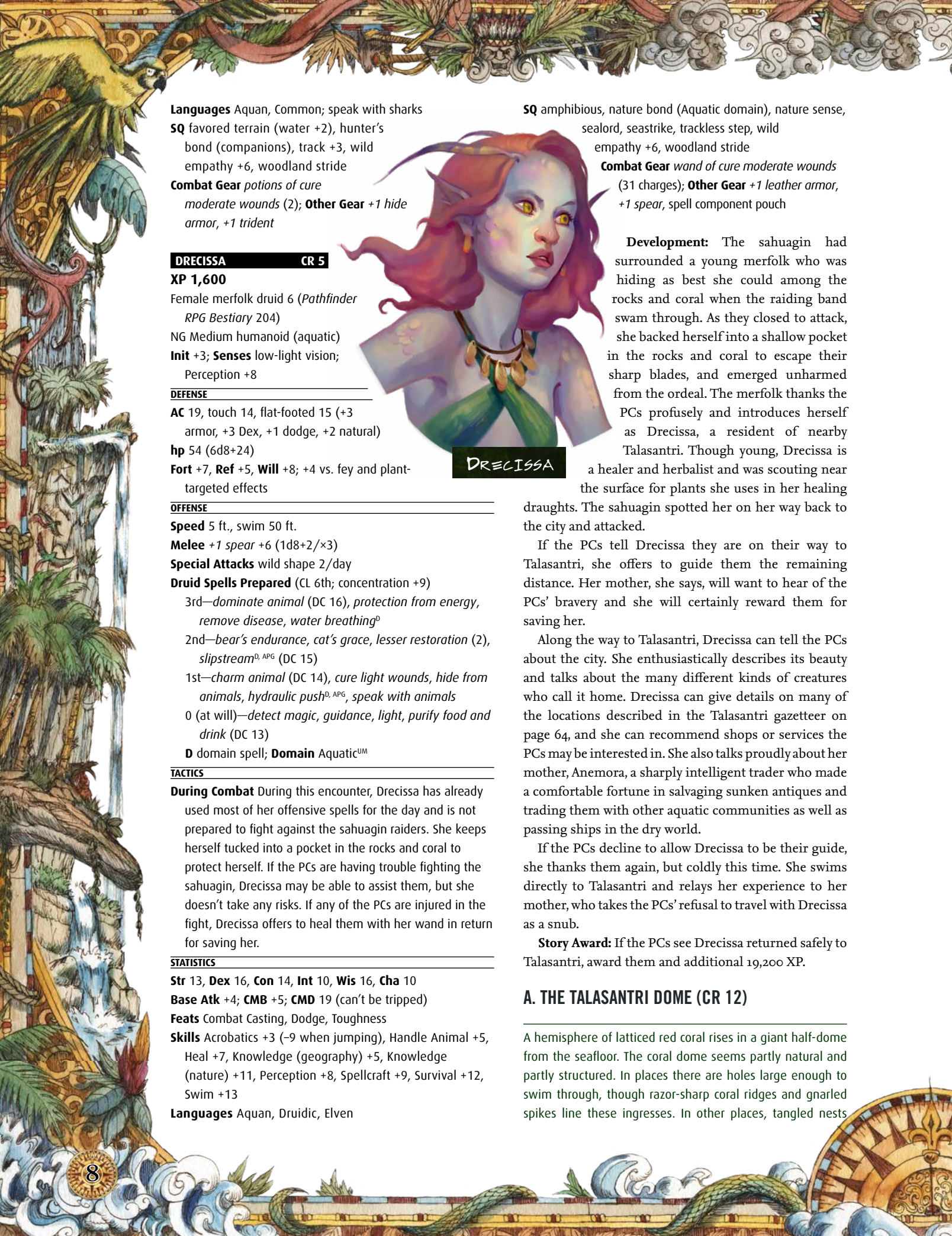
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Languages Aquan, Common; speak with sharks

SQ favored terrain (water +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +3, wild empathy +6, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 hide armor, +1 trident

DRECISSA **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Female merfolk druid 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 204)

NG Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 54 (6d8+24)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee +1 *spear* +6 (1d8+2/×3)

Special Attacks wild shape 2/day

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd—*dominate animal* (DC 16), *protection from energy*, *remove disease*, *water breathing*⁰

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *lesser restoration* (2), *slipstream*^{0, APG} (DC 15)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *hide from animals*, *hydraulic push*^{0, APG}, *speak with animals*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *purify food and drink* (DC 13)

D domain spell; **Domain** Aquatic^{UM}

TACTICS

During Combat During this encounter, Drecissa has already used most of her offensive spells for the day and is not prepared to fight against the sahuagin raiders. She keeps herself tucked into a pocket in the rocks and coral to protect herself. If the PCs are having trouble fighting the sahuagin, Drecissa may be able to assist them, but she doesn't take any risks. If any of the PCs are injured in the fight, Drecissa offers to heal them with her wand in return for saving her.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +3 (−9 when jumping), Handle Animal +5, Heal +7, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +8, Spellcraft +9, Survival +12, Swim +13

Languages Aquan, Druidic, Elven

SQ amphibious, nature bond (Aquatic domain), nature sense, sealord, seastrike, trackless step, wild empathy +6, woodland stride

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (31 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *leather armor*, +1 *spear*, spell component pouch

Development: The sahuagin had surrounded a young merfolk who was hiding as best she could among the rocks and coral when the raiding band swam through. As they closed to attack, she backed herself into a shallow pocket in the rocks and coral to escape their sharp blades, and emerged unharmed from the ordeal. The merfolk thanks the PCs profusely and introduces herself as Drecissa, a resident of nearby Talasantri. Though young, Drecissa is a healer and herbalist and was scouting near the surface for plants she uses in her healing draughts. The sahuagin spotted her on her way back to the city and attacked.

If the PCs tell Drecissa they are on their way to Talasantri, she offers to guide them the remaining distance. Her mother, she says, will want to hear of the PCs' bravery and she will certainly reward them for saving her.

Along the way to Talasantri, Drecissa can tell the PCs about the city. She enthusiastically describes its beauty and talks about the many different kinds of creatures who call it home. Drecissa can give details on many of the locations described in the Talasantri gazetteer on page 64, and she can recommend shops or services the PCs may be interested in. She also talks proudly about her mother, Anemora, a sharply intelligent trader who made a comfortable fortune in salvaging sunken antiques and trading them with other aquatic communities as well as passing ships in the dry world.

If the PCs decline to allow Drecissa to be their guide, she thanks them again, but coldly this time. She swims directly to Talasantri and relays her experience to her mother, who takes the PCs' refusal to travel with Drecissa as a snub.

Story Award: If the PCs see Drecissa returned safely to Talasantri, award them and additional 19,200 XP.

A. THE TALASANTRI DOME (CR 12)

A hemisphere of latticed red coral rises in a giant half-dome from the seafloor. The coral dome seems partly natural and partly structured. In places there are holes large enough to swim through, though razor-sharp coral ridges and gnarled spikes line these ingresses. In other places, tangled nests

of coral block the view within. Phosphorescent jellyfish drift within the dome, radiating their pale glow in luminous bubbles, first in teal, then pink, then yellow. The dome stretches hundreds of feet across, and the dark waters around it obscure even the glow of the jellyfish beyond a few dozen feet away.

Around the dome and within the red lattice, merfolk and aquatic elves travel in pairs, circling Talasantri with weapons in hand. A large opening near the seabed, flanked by three aquatic elves, seems to be the main way into the city. An arch of interwoven eels carved from the coral and set with precious gems sparkle in myriad shades around the portal, inviting entrance even as the guards on either side of the portal watch for intruders with steely eyes.

There are three main entrances to Talasantri, one leading into each district. While the PCs can attempt to enter the city through any of these entrances, most visitors to Talasantri enter through the archway found in the Whalefall District due to the concentrations of shops and entertainment attractions. Regardless of which entrance the PCs choose, the following event takes place.

Creatures: As the PCs near the dome's entrance, one of the archway guards swims toward them. The other guards remain where they are, seemingly willing to let their fellow do the talking but watching him closely. The approaching guard is a young aquatic elf, Argnos, who takes his job very seriously. He demands the PCs halt and state their names and their purpose within the city.

If Drecissa is with the PCs, she steps forward and, with an exasperated sigh, demands Argnos let them pass. "These surfacers saved my life," she says. Argnos does not look impressed by this bit of news.

In truth, Argnos's mother and Drecissa's mother are two influential citizens of Talasantri, and neither family has much love for the other. A PC can recognize that Argnos doesn't seem to like Drecissa with a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check. This explains why he brusquely orders the entire group, Drecissa included, to wait while his commander is summoned. "No surfacers are allowed in Talasantri without the city guard's approval," he says smugly.

On a successful DC 20 Perception check, a PC notices that Argnos's armor and tunic are brand new and spotlessly kept, while the other guards have worn armor and less elaborate weapons. With a successful

DC 25 Perception check, a PC catches the other guards surreptitiously rolling their eyes at each other as Argnos talks. The other guards believe Argnos got his position simply through his mother's influence, and Argnos is afraid this might be true. He's showing off to both irk Drecissa and gain respect from the other guards, though he is accomplishing neither goal.

Like most residents of Talasantri, Argnos begins the encounter with an unfriendly attitude. The PCs can approach this situation in a couple of ways. They can try to talk their way into the city by flattering Argnos, admiring him for staying true to his duty and keeping the city safe. With a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check, they mellow Argnos enough for him to grant them admittance, though Drecissa is now disgruntled by the PCs' seeming appreciation for the elf.

The PCs can also intimidate their way in by implying Argnos isn't powerful or important enough to vet them himself, suggesting perhaps that a "real guard" would decide for himself whether or not to allow them through. With a successful DC 16 Intimidate check, the PCs can embarrass Argnos into letting them pass, while the other guards chuckle at the easily swayed young guard. If this happens, Drecissa is gleeful as she sails through the arch and into the city.

The PCs might simply choose to wait for the commander, an older aquatic elf with a scarred face and a serious demeanor. He questions them closely about their business in the city but eventually lets them pass. If the PCs mention Rillkimatai, the guard gives them instructions on how to find the city leader.

If the PCs mention the veiled master or any aboleth threat, all of the guards (and Drecissa) show open concern on their faces and look to one another. One of the older guards demands the PCs give her more information to back up such a claim. Mentioning the alghollthus' plot grants the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks to gain entrance to Talasantri.

If the PCs flatter Argnos or otherwise gain his trust, he reports the experience to his mother. She later makes contact with the PCs and invites them into her home (see page 13).



ARGNOS

ARGNOS

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male aquatic elf fighter 6 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Races* 242)

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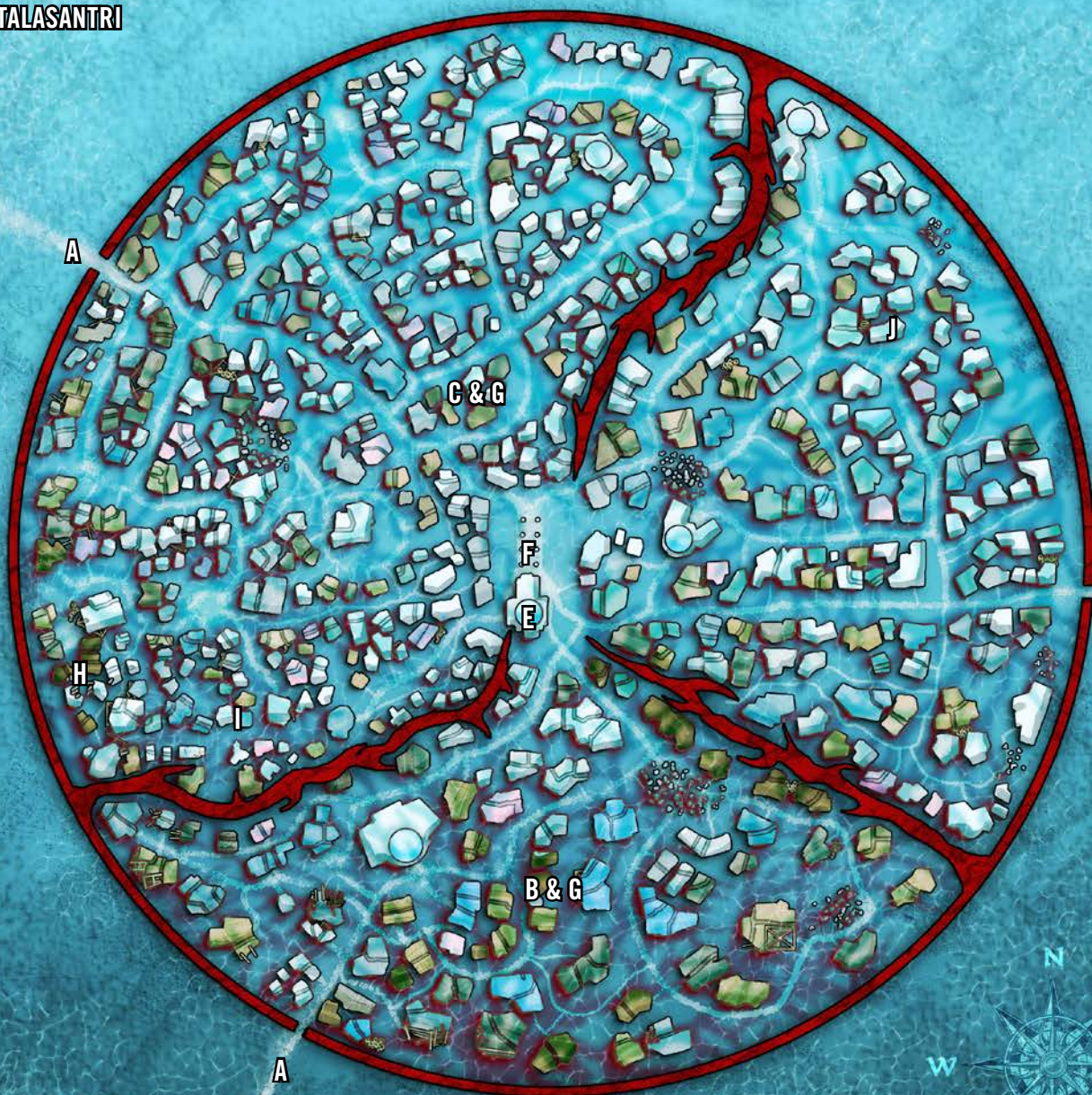
TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

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TALASANTRI



LN Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 55 (6d10+18)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (+2 vs. fear); +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee +2 *trident* +12/+7 (1d8+7)

Ranged mwk underwater light crossbow +11 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks weapon training (spears +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Argnos fights alongside his fellow guards if the PCs become aggressive.

Morale Argnos flees combat to get reinforcements if at least two other guards fall.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Cleave, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (trident, underwater light crossbow), Weapon Specialization (trident)

Skills Intimidate +5, Perception +7, Sense Motive +5, Swim +12; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +2 Spellcraft to identify magic item properties

Languages Aquan, Elven

SQ amphibious, armor training 1, elven magic

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other**

Gear +2 *scale mail*, +2 *trident*, mwk underwater light crossbow^{UE} with 20 bolts, signal bell

TALASANTRI GUARDS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Aquatic elf fighter 10 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Races* 242)

LN Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 89 each (10d10+30)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5 (+3 vs. fear); +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee +1 *trident* +17/+12 (1d8+8)

Ranged mwk underwater light crossbow +15/+10 (1d8+3/19-20)

Special Attacks weapon trainings (spears +2, crossbows +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Once the guards enter combat, they each square off with a single enemy, only teaming up on a foe once one has been incapacitated. The guards deal lethal

damage until an enemy is close to defeated and then use nonlethal damage in order to take their enemies alive.

Morale If more than half the guards are killed, the rest retreat into the city to summon reinforcements.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Toughness, Weapon Focus (trident, underwater light crossbow), Weapon Specialization (trident, underwater light crossbow)

Skills Intimidate +8, Perception +13, Sense Motive +5, Swim +14; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +2 Spellcraft to identify magic item properties

Languages Aquan, Elven

SQ amphibious, armor training 2, elven magic

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *scale mail*, +1 *trident*, mwk underwater light crossbow^{UE} with 20 bolts, *ring of resistance* +1 (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #123: *The Flooded Cathedral* 44), signal bell

Story Award: If the PCs deal with the guards and gain access to the city through the main gates, they receive 20,800 XP as if they defeated them in combat.

WITHIN TALASANTRI

The streets of Talasantri can disorient surface dwellers. Though some streets stretch along the ocean floor, other lanes veer up at all angles, created by the passages between coral growths, rock formations, and buildings. Many of the dwellings here rise 10 or more stories tall, and some are built down from the dome above, clinging to the red lattice.

The jellyfish lanterns that float through Talasantri provide dim light throughout the city (sufficient for most residents, as many have low-light vision), illuminating the beautiful stone buildings that fill the dome in gentle moving light as they float past. Carved representations of aquatic monsters, seashells, and tropical flowers adorn most of the residences, some inlaid with bits of shell or semiprecious gems that catch the light of the lanterns. Aquatic elves, merfolk, and other denizens of the sea swim along the streets, chatting animatedly among themselves but falling silent when passing any surfer.

Naturally aquatic races have also mastered the art of speaking underwater. Their voices are clear and understandable, and the water amplifies the distance sound travels. The DCs of Perception checks to notice sound increase by 1 for every 20 feet from the sound's source, but due to ambient noise in the city, fine details of sounds are hard to make out at a distance.

Despite the bustling nature of the city, the water here is relatively clear. Because of this, creatures can see a maximum distance of 200 feet. The city's inhabitants have no trouble seeing in the water, but surface

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creatures in Talasantri take the normal –4 penalty on Perception checks unless they wear goggles or other protective eyewear.

Rules for underwater combat appear in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, and more tips on underwater adventuring can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Aquatic Adventures*.

For the most part, Talasantri is home to aquatic elves, cecaelias, locathahs, and merfolk. Citizens get along with, or at least tolerate, each other, but are unused to seeing surfacers. Unless otherwise noted, citizens always begin interactions with an unfriendly or indifferent attitude toward the PCs. The DCs of the PCs' Diplomacy checks when interacting with citizens of Talasantri increase by 5, regardless of the resident's attitude, to represent the citizens' inherent distrust of surface dwellers.

The following encounters can happen in any order, based on the choices the PCs make. Unfold each encounter in a natural order, allowing the PCs time to rest and resupply as they wish. This section should be relatively unhurried while events behind the scenes slowly build. You can also give the PCs time to see the sights and get their bearings, resupply, and sell goods. You can learn more about the city of Talasantri, its inhabitants, and points of interest in the underwater city in the gazetteer on page 64.

Some of the following encounters are dependent upon which of the NPCs the party decides to become friendly with. The parents of Argnos and Drecissa likely both approach the PCs and invite them into their home. As the PCs can't stay with both at the same time, they'll have to choose between them. They can also refuse and find their own place to stay, but that means they'll miss out on some adventure and a chance to learn more about the people who live in Talasantri. This decision can play a bigger role in the adventure once the PCs meet the crime boss of the Undertow, a seedy part of town built in a cavern beneath the city. For now, encourage the PCs to make friends and allies in Talasantri as they try to find out more about the sinister veiled master Ochymua and its plans.

B. DRECISSA'S HOME

If the PCs traveled with Drecissa back to Talasantri, she invites them home with her. Her mother, she explains, will want to thank them for their deeds. If the PCs decline the offer, she reports the event to her mother, who interprets the PCs' refusal as a snub. If the PCs instead ask to postpone the meeting, Drecissa agrees and gives them directions to her home, with an invitation to drop in anytime.

Drecissa lives in an elegant coral home in the Seamount District with her brother Cassiux, her father

Toruun, and her mother, Anemora. Once the PCs arrive at her home, read or paraphrase the following.

An elegant merfolk woman with brown skin and flowing green hair glides across the room. Scales of gold have been affixed to her teal-green tail in a pleasingly random pattern, and she wears a loose top of small, interlocking jeweled scales. "Welcome to my home," she says. Her voice is mellow, but her golden brown eyes glint as they take in every detail.

Anemora is well known in Talasantri for both her wealth and her ruthlessness. Though not an evil or violent person, Anemora cares only for herself and her family. She'll do almost anything to secure their position, and has become an expert at using the letter of the law to her advantage. She's pleased to hear the PCs helped her daughter and thanks them for their actions. "My family is my most priceless treasure. No reward I could offer would truly convey my gratitude, but I hope you'll accept this small token." She gives the PCs a pearl-encrusted jewelry box worth 500 gp. Within the box are two beautiful crystal lenses, which are a pair of *eyes of keen sight*^{UE}.

If the PCs snubbed Anemora, knowingly or unwittingly, she receives them coolly but graciously if they later pay her a visit. She thanks them for rescuing her daughter but doesn't offer a reward. If the PCs are direct enough to bring the matter up, Anemora raises an eyebrow and says, "I always understood good deeds to be their own reward."

Anemora can arrange a meeting with Rillkimatai (see area E) if she is favorably disposed toward the PCs. Socially, she can open other doors as well, such as helping the PCs find any rare items the local merchants might carry (and which they would not normally show to surface dwellers). If the PCs ask Anemora to help them find a specific item, she can arrange for a private sale for one item worth 25,000 gp or less. This is not subject to the constraints of Talasantri's purchase limit (as listed on page 65).

Anemora also knows many people in town and can introduce the PCs to anyone they wish to meet. She answers most questions about locals honestly, demurring only if the PCs ask for seriously personal or incriminating information on anyone. She knows who Jurix (see The Undertow on page 69) and Koramallis (see Argnos's Home on page 13) are and can give the PCs a clear, though somewhat biased, opinion. Anemora is wary of Jurix and respects her as a powerful figure in the city, whereas she dislikes Koramallis intensely and sees her as an upstart and social poacher.

Finally, Anemora offers the PCs lodging in her home if they made a good impression on her. There is only

one inn in town that caters to surface dwellers, and while it does have room available, it is expensive, and Anemora says the PCs will be more comfortable in her home. They can rest there safely and take their meals with the family, or not, as they wish.

It is unlikely she'll be involved in combat, but Anemora's statistics are listed below if they're needed for any social encounters.

ANEMORA **CR 3**
XP 800

Female merfolk aristocrat 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 204)

LN Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +3

DEFENSE

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

hp 27 (5d8+5)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee +1 *dagger* +3 (1d4/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Iron Will, Persuasive

Skills Acrobatics +1 (–11 when jumping), Bluff +10, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (history, nobility) +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +3, Profession (merchant) +9, Sense Motive +9, Swim +7

Languages Aquan, Draconic, Elven

SQ amphibious

Combat Gear brooch of shielding; **Other Gear** +1 *dagger*, ring of protection +1

C. ARGNOS'S HOME

If the PCs made a good impression on Argnos at the city arch, he invites them to visit his home to learn more about Talasantri. If the PCs agree, Argnos arranges to meet them at the arch when his shift is over in a few hours. He then leads them to the Threadfin District. While most of the homes here are small and unremarkable, one building stands out. It's a two-story residence, each story built from a different shade of coral, from deep purple on the bottom to pale green at the top. Strange art formations made from delicate fish bones, gems, and seashells decorate the building. Out front, a life-sized statue of an aquatic elf carved from pink limestone raises her arms to the surface above.



Once the PCs are inside, Argnos introduces them to his younger brother, Lamdarel, and his mother, Koramallis. When they enter the home, read or paraphrase the following.

An elven woman with golden hair swims up. She wears a gown made of multiple billowing layers in shades of pink, purple, and yellow, belted with a girdle of dark blue seashells. "Welcome to our home, travelers," she says in a musical voice. "I look forward to hearing your tales of life in the dry world."

Koramallis is an artist, as evidenced by the art pieces and sculptures around the home. She made her fortune through her artistic expression and is well respected within Talasantri and other aquatic elf settlements. She praises Argnos for having brought the PCs home, noting that their alien experiences will no doubt inspire her. She invites them to stay at her house whenever they need to rest.

Koramallis seems enthusiastic about having the PCs as her guests, but her motives are purely selfish. Her identity is tied tightly to her image as a creative, free-spirited artist, and she thinks befriending a group of surface dwellers will add to her cachet. Her desire to appear as a friend of the PCs can work to their advantage, as Koramallis's home provides a safe place to rest.

Koramallis can also introduce the PCs to some of the residents of the city, though she runs in different circles than Anemora. She doesn't know Rillkimatai personally but does know many of the artists of Talasantri. She can introduce the PCs to cartographers, gemsmiths, muralists, and sculptors. The PCs can negotiate for an extra 20 percent off the value of one piece of the jeweler Derrona's enchanted jewelry with Koramallis's help (see *Treasures of the Sea* in the *Talasantri Gazetteer* on page 68).

If the PCs want information on anyone in town, Koramallis is happy to share her knowledge. She's willing to descend into base gossip and occasionally reports speculation as fact. She knows who Jurix of the Undertow is (see *The Undertow* on page 69) and knows Anemora (see *Drecissa's Home* on page 12) and is eager to share her knowledge. Koramallis is rightfully intimidated by Jurix and mistakenly reports to the PCs that Jurix worships Dagon, demon lord of deformity, sea monsters, and the sea.

Koramallis is scornful of Anemora and criticizes the merfolk woman as being selfish, ruthless, and

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a snob. She sees Anemora as a shallow social climber without any real artistic talent, and she is ferocious in her takedown of the merfolk's character.

KORAMALLIS**CR 3****XP 800**

Female aquatic elf expert 5

*(Pathfinder Campaign Setting:**Inner Sea Races 242)*

CN Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)

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

Perception +10

DEFENSE**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11

(+1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 22 (5d8)**Fort** +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7;

+2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *dagger* +3 (1d4/19–20)**STATISTICS****Str** 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 8, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15**Feats** Alertness, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Craft [sculpture])**Skills** Bluff +9, Craft (painting) +10, Craft (sculpture) +13, Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (local) +8, Linguistics +4, Perception +10, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +6, Swim +11;**Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +2 Spellcraft to identify magic item properties**Languages** Aquan, Common, Elven**SQ** amphibious, elven magic**Gear** +1 *dagger*, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork artisan's tools**KORAMALLIS**

The death's head jellyfish is 60 feet away from the PCs and will inevitably sting one of the merfolk on its next action.

If the PCs don't notice the jellyfish, they still hear the merfolk cry out in pain as he is stung. The merfolk grabs at his neck and tries to say something, but within a few seconds his face is contorting into a rictus grin, his tongue protruding grotesquely from his mouth. *Detect poison* or a similar spell can diagnose the issue, as can a successful DC 20 Heal check.

Once the jellyfish stings one of the merfolk, it floats closer to its prey in an attempt to feed. The unaffected merfolk can easily escape and summon help, though the injured one is in serious distress.

DEATH'S HEAD JELLYFISH**CR 1****XP 400****hp** 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 155)

Development: If the PCs save the merfolk from being stung, or heal him after the fact, he and his companion are surprised and a little confused. Though normally suspicious of outsiders, the merfolk collects himself enough to thank the PCs, granted he is no longer suffering the effects of the poison, and asks what the PCs are doing in Talasantri.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 11 Knowledge (nature) check to identify the jellyfish, or if the PCs take the jellyfish to a contact in the city, they learn the death's head jellyfish is common in temperate or tropical waters, but extremely rare in this region. It's unlikely it swam into Talasantri on its own. No one in the area noticed anyone letting the creature free, but its appearance is definitely suspicious.

Story Award: If the PCs heal the injured merman or otherwise prevent him from dying, award the PCs 19,200 XP.

DESPERATION

This event can occur at any point when the PCs are exploring Talasantri.

Near the city's central plaza, the PCs notice a locathah floating in an alcove between two buildings. With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, a PC can tell the locathah appears distressed. She mashes her webbed hands together, curls into a drifting ball, and moans to herself.

If approached, the locathah becomes agitated. "Go away!" she commands in a burbling voice. "You can do nothing for me, outsiders!"

THE FACE OF DEATH (CR 1)

This event can occur at any point when the PCs are exploring the underwater city of Talasantri. As the PCs travel along one of Talasantri's avenues, have the players attempt Perception checks to see if they notice anything strange (or roll for them in secret before revealing this encounter). With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC notices that one of the jellyfish lanterns floating near a pair of conversing merfolk looks different than the surrounding ones. The jellyfish is a bit larger, glows more dimly, and has a strange mark on its surface.

With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check, a PC looking at the jellyfish identifies it as a death's head jellyfish, a stinging creature with toxic barbs. The jellyfish drifts toward the oblivious merfolk, reaching out with its poisonous tendrils.

Despite her strident words, the locathah, named **Debebedi** (N female locathah^{B2} rogue 5), is in desperate need of help. If the PCs persist (Diplomacy DC 15), the locathah tells her brief, sad tale. “I owe a debt, and had finally collected all the money I need. I was on my way to pay when one of the fishtailed folk brushed past me. His manner was strange, and when I checked my purse I found it gone. I chased after the fishtail but he had disappeared around the corner. Now I have to find a way to earn the money again—even more now, because I am late! I don’t know how I will do it!”

With a successful DC 25 Sense Motive check, a PC discerns that the locathah is holding something back. If the PCs press the locathah for the whole truth, she admits she owes the money to “Jurix, Queen of the Undertow. She may not believe me. Few like my people. She might think I’m lying to get out of the debt. Then...” The locathah trails off and then makes a disgusting gargling noise, indicating death.

The locathah owes the equivalent of 5,000 gp. Particularly good-hearted PCs might offer to pay off the debt, while more mercenary ones might pay off the debt in exchange for some favor. Debebedi borrowed the money from Jurix initially to fund an expedition to salvage a sunken ship (hoping to sell the finds to Anemora, Drecissa’s mother). Unfortunately, the expedition was a bust; Debebedi lost all her money and wound up with no salvage. She has been methodically saving for months to repay the loan, and is genuinely afraid Jurix might murder her.

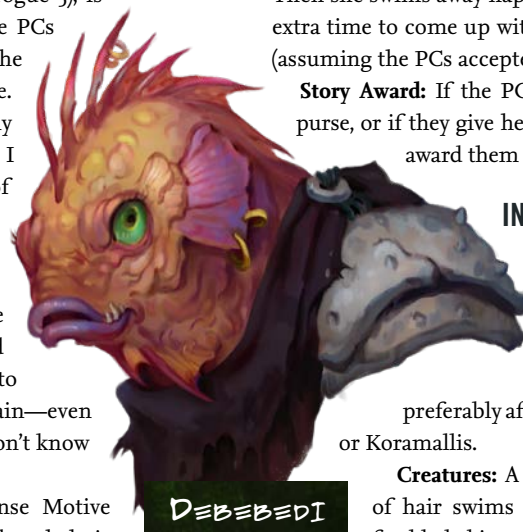
The PCs might also try to track down the light-fingered merman. The thief was one of Naqualia’s minions, disguised to look like a regular merfolk. He stole the purse and immediately threw it away, in case he was caught and searched. His goal was merely to sow further discord in the city, not claim a prize for himself.

Debebedi can show the PCs which way the thief went. He ducked through an archway made of leaning pillars and through a passage between two buildings. If the PCs travel through the arch and down the passage, they can attempt Perception checks to search for the stolen purse. With a successful DC 25 check, a PCs notices Debebedi’s purse wedged beneath some rocks at the base of one of the pillars.

Debebedi is confused as to why a thief would steal her money and then abandon it, but she’s too happy to care now that she’s reunited with her property. If the

PCs return the purse, she offers them 500 gp as a reward. Then she swims away happily, certain Jurix will give her extra time to come up with the final bit of the payment (assuming the PCs accepted the reward).

Story Award: If the PCs find and return Debebedi’s purse, or if they give her the money to repay her debt, award them 19,200 XP.



DEBEBEDI

INVITATION TO THE UNDERTOW (CR 13)

This event should occur after the PCs have been in the city for at least a few hours, or even a day,

preferably after they’ve met either Anemora or Koramallis.

Creatures: A woman with a long red plait of hair swims up to the PCs. She has pale, freckled skin and her lower body is that of an octopus with emerald-green tentacles. “Heard there were some surface dwellers in town,” she says as she surveys the party. “Looks like the rumors were true. Might you be interested in some trade?”

The woman is **Oona** (NE female cecaelia^{B3} rogue 3), a vendor in the Undertow, an informal market run by a cecaelia crime family dealing mostly in stolen goods and those claimed during attacks on ships (the Talasantri Gazetteer on page 69 has more information on the Undertow).

Oona tells the PCs a little about the Undertow, calling it a “specialty market for exclusive clients.” Talasantri rarely gets surface dwellers as visitors and Oona is eager to show the PCs what they can buy and sell at the Undertow. She offers to lead them to the market.

If the PCs accept, Oona leads them through a tangle of narrow streets in the Threadfin District, but not to the Undertow. Instead, she leads them to a prearranged site where a band of cecaelia thugs leap out to attack the PCs—why trade with surfacers when it’s easier to just take what’s valuable? When this ambush is sprung, Oona attempts to hide and look like it wasn’t part of her plan. She doesn’t engage in combat but defends herself if she is attacked, taking the total defense action to increase her AC and using her ink cloud ability as a last resort.

In the event the PCs decline Oona’s offer, she expresses her disappointment but lets them depart. As soon as the PCs leave, she circles back to her compatriots to redirect the ambush to overtake the PCs; in this event, she stays out of the fight so as to plead innocence later, perhaps dashing up to “intervene” once she’s seen how events play out.

CECAELIA RUFFIANS (4)
XP 6,400 each

CR 9

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BESTIARY

Female and male cecaelia rogue (thug) 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 49, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)
CN Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tentacle sense; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +6 Dex, +4 natural)
hp 123 each (13 HD; 7d8+6d10+59)

Fort +8, **Ref** +17, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities evasion, ink cloud, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; jet 200 ft.

Melee +1 *short sword* +19/+14/+9 (1d6+5/17-20), 2 tentacles +14 (1d4+2 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The cecaelia ruffians, activating their tentacle sense ability, hide using Stealth until the PCs pass by in order to take the party by surprise.

During Combat Two cecaelia ruffians try to flank the PCs nearest Oona. The other pair attempts to single out any spellcasters to attack.

Morale When three of the cecaelia ruffians are dead, the remaining one tries to flee or surrender.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword, tentacle)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +8, Disable Device +15, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local, nature) +5, Perception +16, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +23, Survival +9, Swim +16

Languages Aquan, Elven

SQ amphibious, brutal beating, frightening, rogue talents (assault leader^{APG}, finesse rogue, surprise attacks)

Combat Gear *elixir of hiding*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *leather armor*, +1 *short sword*, thieves' tools, 180 gp worth of gems and pearls in a leather pouch

OONA

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female cecaelia rogue 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 49)
NE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tentacle sense; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 76 (9 HD; 3d8+6d10+30)

Fort +6, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion, ink cloud, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; jet 200 ft.

Melee mwk shortspear +14/+9 (1d6+4), 2 tentacles +7 (1d4+2 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 23, **Con** 16, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12 (+16 grapple); **CMD** 29 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (shortspear)

Skills Appraise +4, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +7, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +14, Survival +9, Swim +11

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ amphibious, rogue talent (black market connections^{UC}), trapfinding +1

Gear mwk chain shirt, mwk shortspear, 129 gp worth of pearls and precious stones

Development: Neither Oona nor the ruffians expected the PCs to put up such a fight. As soon as two of the ruffians are killed or incapacitated, the third attempts to surrender while the terrified Oona apologizes to the PCs. "We thought you were ordinary travelers. Didn't expect... well, didn't expect this. No hard feelings, right? We're just trying to make a living. How 'bout I take you to the real market, no tricks? You can meet the boss. She'll want to hear about this."

The PCs may understandably distrust Oona and refuse her offer. If they don't kill her or otherwise impede her (such as by turning her over to the guard), Oona returns to the Undertow and reports the event to Jurix. A few hours later, Oona returns to the PCs with a black pearl worth 1,500 gp that she offers them as a gift. She tells them that Jurix has invited them to meet with her and promises no harm will come to them. The PCs can accept or decline as they wish and suffer no ill effects; they may yet find their way to the Undertow, and Jurix will take that opportunity to meet with them.

If the PCs kill Oona, Jurix finds out what happened and sends another cecaelia messenger with the pearl and the invitation to meet with her. She's disappointed to lose Oona and the ruffians but wants the PCs as allies more than she wants revenge.

PCs who turn Oona or any of the ruffians over to Argnos delight the young guardsman and he becomes unswervingly loyal to the group, overlooking past slights and any relationship they may have with Drecissa. Koramallis snips off Oona's braid before she's taken to prison, intending to use it in her next art piece.

D. MEETING WITH JURIX

A hole in the floor of a seemingly abandoned building leads down into a vast underwater cavern. Figureheads from countless ships have been mounted on the walls: hissing serpents, reaching skeletons, rearing horses, and weeping maidens loom over the market. Between the figureheads, glowing crystal formations emit a dim violet light.

On the floor of the cavern, market stalls have been fashioned from stone, shell, and salvaged materials. Vendors store their merchandise in crates fastened to the craggy floor, with one or two showpieces nailed or tied to their stalls for display.

Creatures: Though many vendors hawk their wares at the Undertow, a small group of cecaelias runs the market. Led by their matriarch, Jurix, who has overseen organized crime in Talasantri for over a decade, this group of cecaelias makes up a small but vicious crime family. Jurix runs many criminal activities, from petty theft to murder, and knows from experience how to remain just beyond reach of Talasantri's law. Recently, though, she's found too much attention focused on her as the guards make a push to root out the corruption in the city. Jurix is looking for a distraction to serve as a cover for several important jobs she has lined up.

Among her other resources, Jurix has a number of informants who bring her details of anything unusual happening in the city. Almost as soon as the PCs passed through Talasantri's arch, Jurix had heard about them. If the PCs have befriended either Anemora or Koramallis, Jurix sees an opportunity to sow chaos.

The PCs' guide brings them to Jurix's "throne room," a chamber built of barnacle-encrusted timbers and bits of broken stone statues. If the PCs find the Undertow on their own, Jurix swims over to meet them herself. Read or paraphrase the following.

A woman with the lower body of an octopus glides over. She has golden-tan skin covered in deep indigo tattoos, and she wears a headdress of flowing spikes. Her tentacles writhe lazily, glistening in shades of orange and red. "Welcome to the Undertow," she says. "I'm Jurix. I run the show here. I heard of your appearance in the city and I was intrigued. Tell me a little about what brings you here?"

The PCs can divulge as little or as much as they wish. Jurix doesn't really care about their mission; she simply wants a few minutes to evaluate them. Provided the PCs aren't hostile, Jurix follows up any conversation they make with an offer.

"I'm looking for someone to do a little job for me. It's not dangerous—it's not even illegal." Jurix smiles unpleasantly.

"I simply need someone put in their place, and you're in the perfect position for it. I'd reward you for your time, of course."

Jurix is willing to pay up to 3,000 gp per person in pearls and gems, though her initial offer is 2,000 gp per person. In addition, she can give the PCs any one item, worth 12,000 gp or less from the Undertow's merchandise. If the PCs have a specific item in mind, she agrees to give it to them. If not, choose an item appropriate to the PCs' skills and preferences.

The Job: The task Jurix has in mind is simple. She wants the PCs to humiliate one of two powerful citizens of Talasantri and frame the other. If the PCs have ingratiated themselves with either Anemora or Koramallis, they can easily disrupt their host's household and plant evidence suggesting the other family was responsible. The crime queen knows this will light a fuse that has been growing for some time and cause all-out war between the two houses. The spectacle of two powerful families clashing should provide the distraction she needs.

Jurix has two ideas for potential embarrassments (see area G). The PCs could sabotage an art piece Koramallis is working on, a gift for one of the city's leaders. Jurix recommends they add a frieze to the front base of the sculpture, a piece Jurix picked up from one of her traders. It depicts surface dwellers engaged in sexual acts and is sure to embarrass both Koramallis and the gift's recipient. Jurix asks the PCs to attach the frieze in 24 hours, just before the recipient comes to a formal dinner to view the statue. In this case, Jurix provides the PCs with *sovereign glue* to apply the frieze to the statue. Once the statue has been sabotaged, the PCs are to plant a jeweled scale on the scene; the same kind Anemora uses to decorate her tail.

Alternatively, the PCs can sabotage the food at a dinner party Anemora is about to throw. Anemora has called a number of important citizens to her home to meet the PCs and enjoy a meal together, but Jurix has a concoction that will cause immediate and intense stomach distress. The dinner party happens within 24 hours as well. Once the PCs have sabotaged the dinner, they're to plant a bit of colored fabric on the scene, the same rare fabric that makes up Koramallis's billowing gowns.

Of course, the PCs may refuse the job, either out of suspicion of Jurix or respect for their host. Jurix tries her best to convince the PCs to help her, but if they remain steadfast, she narrows her eyes at them and nods. "All right, then. Seems we've nothing more to discuss. On your way, and hope we don't meet again."

With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, a PC can soften the blow of their refusal. Jurix mellows slightly and says she understands their reasoning, though she is still disappointed. She asks them to return to her if they change their mind.

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If the PCs attack Jurix, they find her defenses to be substantial. Eight cecaelia ruffians (as on page 15) arrive to defend Jurix, who uses the chaos and her equipment to flee. She plots her vengeance on the PCs once she is safely out of harm's way.

JURIX

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 168 (see page 58)

Story Award: If the PCs come to an agreement with Jurix, either by agreeing to her plan or by diplomatically refusing her, award them 19,200 XP.

E. RILLKIMATAI THE ORACLE

Four enormous pillars of spiraling ivory mark the edges of a plaza in the center of the city. Sandstone tiles infused with specks of gleaming gold cover the ground. Along one side of the plaza stretches a stone building, its front decorated with a relief showing an alliance of aquatic elves, cecaelias, merfolk, and other underwater creatures battling an enormous sea dragon.

In the center of Talasantri stands the city hall, a long rectangular building fronted by a large plaza. Two rows of pillars lead up to the front doors of the hall. In the center of the plaza, an abstract coral sculpture has stood for hundreds of years. Designed by the late merfolk artist Thelkeniss, the sculpture serves as a provocative art piece as well as a landmark for citizens and visitors alike.

Creature: The ruler of Talasantri, Revered Seer Rillkimatai, lives inside the hall, though this is not a requirement of his position. Rather, Rillkimatai takes his responsibilities so seriously that he has become bound to the space and never travels more than a few hundred feet from the building. Nierdan Codali, the Mordant Spire elf the PCs rescued from the ruined temple of Amazen, instructed the PCs to meet with Rillkimatai to find more information about the recently released veiled master and its plans in the region. Alternatively, Anemora might have made the suggestion to seek out the seer.

When the PCs approach the hall, two Talasantri guards move to block them. The guards are suspicious of the PCs and initially refuse them access. They instruct the PCs to make an appointment instead to see Rillkimatai the following day. If the PCs agree to make an appointment, the guards inform the hall's scribe. When the PCs return the next day, they are admitted access.

With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, a PC can convince the guards to let them in to see Rillkimatai immediately. If the PCs show the guards the dolphin

brooch Nieran gave them in the last adventure, marking them as allies to the Mordant Spire, the DC of this Diplomacy check is reduced by 5.

Anemora can also obtain immediate access for the PCs personally. She sails past the guards without sparing them a glance and motions for the PCs to follow. The intimidated guards don't raise any objections.

Rillkimatai has long used his talents to guide Talasantri's development. When the PCs enter his office, they find an elderly aquatic elf floating behind a stone desk, peering at an inscribed tablet. His white hair floats around his head like a nimbus. Resting against the wall behind him is a tall wooden staff encrusted with a spiral of tiny golden seashells. A blue gem glows faintly at the tip of the staff.

Rillkimatai is intrigued by the PCs' appearance and welcomes them into his office. He listens closely to any details of their mission they wish to share, then speaks.

"Your words interest me greatly. It's possible that I have information that could be of use to you. However, I know nothing about you save that you appear to have made allies among the elves of the Mordant Spire. That speaks well to you, but the knowledge I bear is dangerous. I need to think on this matter before I speak further."

The PCs can try to assure Rillkimatai of their trustworthiness. Swaying the oracle requires one PC to succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy check (this includes the +5 penalty for interacting with the aquatic citizens of Talasantri). One other PC can attempt an aid another check to bolster this roll. In addition, the PC can gain a +2 bonus on the check for each of the following events they relay to Rillkimatai during their conversation: rescuing the merfolk Drecissa; stopping the death's head jellyfish or treating the merfolk man after he was stung; and retrieving the locathah's purse or paying her debt.

If the PCs are not able to convince Rillkimatai to trust them, he politely asks them to leave and return in a day. By then, he says, he will have consulted the fates and learned what action to take.

If the PC succeeds at the Diplomacy check, Rillkimatai acknowledges that the surfacers have proved their worth. He continues on.

"I'm afraid I have no certain information to offer you. However, I can say that there have been a number of odd occurrences in Talasantri of late. Nothing definite enough to cause real alarm, but I'm closely attuned to the city's heartbeat. There have been unexplained accidents... an increase in thefts... even the occasional disappearance. My guards have investigated and found no source to this disquiet, but I feel something is wrong in our city."

F. TALASANTRI PLAZA

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

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"These events may be somehow connected to your search. I have come across mention of this 'Ochymua' being that you seek. It is an ancient creature of incredible power, one believed to have been destroyed long ago with the fall of Azlant, but apparently that is not the case. Ancient records show that Ochymua and its brethren manipulated the Azlanti and orchestrated attacks against their civilization. If it survived Earthfall, then it has undoubtedly grown even more powerful—perhaps unstoppably so."

Before Rillkimatai can continue, a commotion arises outside. A guard appears at the door, telling Rillkimatai he's required on the plaza. Looking concerned, Rillkimatai gestures for the PCs to follow him. He picks up his staff and swims to the plaza. The commotion outside is caused by the merfolk doomcriers, outlined in the next section.

Development: At some later point, the PCs may wish to follow up on Rillkimatai's talk of vague disturbances in the city. If they ask for details, they learn the following.

- The head of the city guard found a swarm of poisonous anemones floating in his house and was nearly killed.
- A merchant who sold leather goods went missing from his shop 5 days ago.

- A local figure of note, a shark hunter, had his prize trident stolen from his home.
- The youngest daughter of a judge was at home when the spire atop her house snapped off and crashed into the lounge, causing major structural damage to her entire residence.

None of these events are further detailed in this adventure, but Naqualia and her deep merfolk saboteurs orchestrated all of these events to distract city officials away from her investigations. They can be expanded into side adventures or could simply lead to dead ends for the PCs.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully make contact with Rillkimatai and earn his trust during their conversation, they receive 19,200 XP.

PART 2: CRIES OF THE DOOMED

Naqualia, the deep merfolk agent of Ochymua, has been in the city for several weeks now in search of a



THE DOOMCRIERS

The deep merfolk known as the doomcriers are agents of Naqualia; statistics for all three appear in area **H4**. Both Rillkimatai and the PCs find it difficult to discern the deception behind the merfolk's words, as everything they say is factually true. The plankta is awakening and, if not stopped, it will be a threat to the city. However, the plankta will take weeks to fully awaken and emerge from its crevice, and even longer until it ventures toward Talasantri.

Naqualia knows Rillkimatai's powers and has taken advantage of them in a unique way. She's hired mercenaries and paid them in advance to drive or lure the plankta toward Talasantri once it has crawled from its lair. By doing so, she's ensured that the plankta will eventually attack Talasantri unless something happens to change this course of action. Thus, when Rillkimatai uses his oracle abilities to peer into the possible future, he verifies the doomcriers' claims.

Naqualia also had the foresight to order her agents to carry trade goods to the city, so that when they claim they were traveling to the city on trade business and saw the plankta stirring, their words are technically true.

mysterious assistant to the lich Auberon the Drowned, known only as Vallik, and is growing frustrated with her lack of success. She sent for reinforcements, a group of deep merfolk to sow discord while assisting Naqualia with her search. They arrive in the city in dramatic fashion to warn of a waking threat.

F. TALSANTRI PLAZA

This vast plaza stands at the center of Talasantri. The columns remain from an ancient Azlanti city, as does the city hall, but they have been carved and decorated with colorful coral in the time since. The people of Talasantri gather here to debate with one another, shop in nearby markets, and simply socialize, as this is where the city's three districts come together.

The following four events take place once after the other here in the plaza, and are numbered in the order in which they occur. If the PCs visited Rillkimatai, they begin while they are in his office. If they don't seek out Rillkimatai, Event 1 can happen anytime they are traveling through the city, in which case they hear the commotion and then notice the merfolk issuing their warning.

EVENT 1. A GATHERING CROWD

A group of three deep merfolk have clustered before the hall at one end of the plaza.

Creatures: Unlike most of the merfolk in Talasantri, these are gaunt with pale, almost bluish-white skin and red crests on their tails and fins. One of the merfolk, a woman, floats a few feet in front of her companions. She calls out, in a voice that carries across the plaza: "We come with a warning! An ancient threat awakens not far from here. Doom begins with tremors, and then powerful quakes that will tear the city apart. These are heralds of the creature, a plankta named Ruinquake, rising from its sleep!"

A group of citizens has gathered to listen to the doomcriers' warning. As Rillkimatai asks the merfolk for details, the crowd mutters and speculates. A siyokoy in the crowd points at the PCs and loudly says, "It's the surfacers! They bring poor luck." A ripple of agreement runs through the citizens around her.

The citizen attempting to pin the blame on the PCs is another of Naqualia's agents, Ayeussa, whom the PCs will encounter more directly in the future (see area **M** on page 43). She was planted to watch the doomcriers and lend support to their words, but she saw an opportunity to create more chaos by blaming the PCs. It doesn't take much for the crowd to agree with her. Their existing fear of Ruinquake and natural suspicion of outsiders make them quick to blame the party.

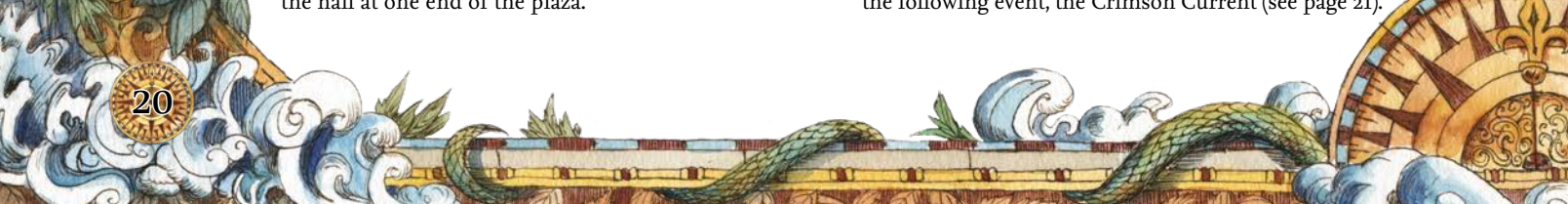
The PCs can attempt to calm the crowd, using a Diplomacy check to assure the residents they are not here to make trouble, a Perform (oratory) check to rally the crowd into thinking the PCs are good luck, or an Intimidate check to threaten the crowd with serious bad luck if they are accused of bringing misfortune to the city. The players might come up with other ways to mollify the crowd, such as a *calm emotions* spell or similar magic.

The base DC for these checks is 30. If the PCs were speaking with Rillkimatai when the doomcriers arrived, and now stand at his side, the DC of the check is reduced by 4. If the PCs are with either Anemora or Koramallis, the DC of the check is reduced by 2.

If the PCs succeed at the check, the crowd begins to dissipate. If the PCs fail, the crowd grows more hostile and two of the guards near the hall swim over to the PCs. They politely but firmly ask the PCs to leave, stating that this is "Talsantri business" and that surfacers need not get involved.

Any attempt made by the PCs to offer assistance at this point is rebuffed. Rillkimatai needs time to talk to the doomcriers and decide what to do about their message. If the PCs gained Rillkimatai's trust earlier, he asks them to return in a few hours. If they did not, he asks them to return in a few days. Should the PCs provoke a combat encounter, more city guards are drawn in to subdue them.

Before Rillkimatai departs, however, a strong current rushes across the plaza. This current is the harbinger of the following event, the Crimson Current (see page 21).





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Development: If the PCs succeed at their check to mollify or intimidate the crowd, the initial attitudes of citizens and merchants in Talasantri improve by one step. If the PCs fail, the initial attitudes of the Talasantri residents decrease by one step. (See the Attitudes in Talasantri sidebar in the gazetteer on page 67 for more details.)

The disguised deep merfolk planted in the crowd lingers until the Crimson Current occurs (see Event 2). He then reports back to Naqualia and informs her of the reaction to the PCs and how they handled the crowd's attention.

Naqualia decides to take advantage of the distrust building against the PCs. She investigates and discovers if the PCs are staying with either Anemora or Koramallis, and concocts a plan to cast even more suspicion onto the surfacers.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully defuse the crowd, regardless of the means they used to do so, award them 19,200 XP.

EVENT 2. THE CRIMSON CURRENT (CR 10)

This event occurs immediately after the doomcriers deliver their news and the crowd begins to settle. Some of the gathered crowd begin to trail off, resuming

their previous engagements, though many assemble in smaller groups talking about the events that just came to pass, unaware that a great danger looms.


A strong and unusual current rushes through the plaza, powerful enough to send people spinning in the water. The guards near the hall fan out, searching for the cause of the disturbance, while the crowd begins to disperse. Then a ribbon of crimson water snakes its way through the plaza and the crowd erupts into chaos.

"Flee!" shrieks an aquatic elf woman as she swims away. "It's a crimson current!"

The PCs can attempt a DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check to identify the crimson water. On a success, the PC knows the red tint comes from a poisonous type of algae. Contact with the algae causes sickness, and prolonged contact is deadly.

The crimson current might inconvenience the PCs, but it could easily kill some of the citizens caught in the plaza. The crowd breaks apart as panicked individuals swim off in every direction. Some are paralyzed with fear, while others try to dodge the clouds of crimson algae that now sweep into the plaza.

Six citizens are either cowering or panicked and are about to be engulfed by the algae. A PC can take a move action to reach a citizen and then a full-round action



CRIMSON CURRENT

Coastal communities have dealt with algae blooms called red tides since creation, but undersea dwellers must contend with a more dangerous phenomenon. Concentrations of toxic algae form and sometimes get swept up in rogue currents that don't disperse the dangerous collections of the minuscule creatures that make up the hazard.

The algae in the current are mildly caustic and burn exposed flesh. One patch of algae generally covers a roughly cubic area 20 feet to a side, but if disturbed, the current can carry the blooming algae into up to 10 additional such areas in the direction of the current. The current that runs through the Talasantri plaza enters the scene from the northwestern corner down to the southeastern corner of the map (see page 19), cutting the plaza in half. Anyone within a cloud of crimson current is considered to be in contact with the algae.

Anyone who comes into contact with an area of water affected by a crimson current must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude saving throw or become sickened. Every minute for the following 10 minutes, a creature who is sickened from the crimson current must succeed at another saving throw or become nauseated for the next minute and take 1d4 points of Constitution damage. Those who succeed at their initial saving throws against the sickened effect are immune to the crimson current's sickening effect for 10 minutes. A crimson current is a poison effect.

CRIMSON CURRENT

Type poison, contact; **Save** Fort DC 22

Onset 1 round; **Frequency** 1/minute for 10 minutes

Effect sickened; **Secondary Effect** nauseated for 1 minute and 1d4 Constitution damage; **Cure** 2 saves

to move that individual to safety. Three citizens have swum to the edge of the cloud but are already affected. A PC can take a move action to reach a citizen and then attempt a Heal check, cast *neutralize poison*, or take a similar action to help the infected individual. One aquatic elf has lost his child and is shouting frantically for the boy. With a successful DC 20 Perception check, a PC notices an elf child hiding at the base of a pillar. It takes a move action to reach the child and a full-round action to return him to his father.

The crimson current caught Talasantri by surprise; no scouts had reported an approaching algae cloud, because the tragic event was not a natural occurrence. One of Naqualia's agents carefully collected a patch of

the algae outside of the city and brought it in to release near the plaza, causing the toxic algae to sweep through the city without warning.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully rescue everyone in the plaza and cure the two infected citizens by the end of the fourth round, they receive 19,200 XP. If the PCs rescue or cure at least five citizens by the end of the fourth round, they receive 12,800 XP.

EVENT 3. THE BEAST FROM THE DEPTHS (CR 13)

Naqualia's agents have been busy causing disruptions inside and outside of the city. One of them found an ancient Azlanti explosive and set it off near the lair of a dangerous aquatic worm. If questioned at a later date, some citizens report hearing the explosion beyond the protective walls of the city's dome.

Creature: The detonation woke the king ragworm in its lair, and the angered creature swam into the city in pursuit of the deep merfolk who set off the blast. It swims into the plaza 1 minute after the crimson current sweeps through, knocking into buildings and chasing down terrified citizens.

KING RAGWORM

CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 187 (see page 86)

Development: If the PCs defeat the ragworm, they impress Rillkimatai and prove that they are not enemies of the city. He's more likely to trust the PCs in the future (for example, if they're framed for murder; see *When Plots Collide* on page 23). Due to the city's leadership accepting the PCs, the initial attitudes of merchants and citizens of Talasantri improve by one step (in addition to whatever changes they may have encouraged in Event 1).

EVENT 4. EVIDENCE OF A CRIME

This event occurs just moments after the PCs finish off the king ragworm and a crowd of excited citizens come to see the aftermath.

Creature: In the aftermath of the crimson current and the monstrous attack, the citizens around the plaza rush forward to thank the PCs. A cecaelia agent hired by one of Naqualia's agents ingratiates herself in the crowd and presses close to thank the PCs.

When she gets near enough, she attempts to slip some bits of bomb fragments into their clothing, though she aims to plant the fragments loosely so that they tumble out as soon as the PCs start to move around.

To place the bomb fragments, the cecaelia agent attempts a Sleight of Hand check (with a +16 bonus) opposed by the Perception check of the PC she targets. She aims for a fighter type with heavier armor, rationalizing

that the PCs will be less intelligent and perceptive than any spellcasters in the party.

If the PC's Perception check result equals or exceeds the agent's Sleight of Hand check, the character notices the agent trying to plant the bomb fragments. The agent attempts to flee immediately upon being discovered.

CECAELIA RUFFIAN

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 123 (see page 15)

Development: If the cecaelia agent succeeds in planting the bomb fragments, she quietly swims away. A moment later, the fragments come loose from the PC's garb and the surrounding crowd notices them. "What are those?" calls one of the gathered people, and another grabs for them.

One of the merfolk in the crowd is **Echono** (NE male merfolk bard 6), a researcher with a specialization in ancient Azlant. (More information about Echono can be found in the Talasantri Gazetteer on page 69.) He loudly identifies the pieces as part of an ancient Azlanti weapon that can cause destructive concussive force. "They probably set off the device to draw the creature here and set themselves up as heroes!"

The crowd quickly turns ugly and two guards arrive to question the PCs. The PCs can defend themselves with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check, potentially modified by the following circumstances. The bonuses from different circumstances stack.

- If the PCs saved at least five citizens during the crimson current (Event 2), they receive a +4 bonus on the check.
- If the PCs point out that they would not have time to detonate the device and swim back to the city in time to fight the ragworm, they receive a +2 bonus on the check. Some of the citizens point out that they could have used teleportation magic.
- If the PCs have Anemora or Koramallis at their side, their host defends them. The PCs receive a +2 bonus on the check.
- If the PCs point out that they wouldn't have bomb fragments on them if they detonated the bomb (the fragments would be at the explosion site), they receive a +4 bonus on the check.

If the PCs succeed at the Diplomacy check, the crowd and Echono grudgingly admit the PCs must have been framed. If the PCs fail, the guards disperse the crowd before violence occurs but warn the PCs that they could be in serious trouble. A few fragments of a device are not enough for the guards to arrest the PCs, but they will be investigating the matter.

If the PCs foil the cecaelia agent when she tries to plant the bomb fragments, the agent tries to flee. She

swims at full speed around a corner and attempts to hide (Stealth +23) as soon as she is out of sight of the PCs.

If the PCs capture the agent and question her, she can tell them only that a male merfolk gave her the fragments and paid her a large pearl worth 200 gp to plant them on the PCs after the battle. She can describe the merfolk, but she doesn't know his name, and the PCs don't see anyone who matches that description in the immediate area.

Story Award: If the PCs prove their innocence, or if they catch the cecaelia agent in the act of planting the bomb fragments, they receive 19,200 XP.

WHEN PLOTS COLLIDE

This event should occur no sooner than a few hours after the doomcriers arrive in Talasantri with their warning about the plankta.

The PCs join their host for dinner (if staying with either Anemora or Koramallis) or are invited to stop in for dinner, if the PCs are staying elsewhere. The invitation is formally issued, alerting the PCs that refusing the invitation would be considered rude.

The dinner is the same event Jurix wanted the PCs to sabotage in Meeting with Jurix (see area D on page 17). If the PCs agreed, they were given a task to humiliate their host during dinner. They will have to come up with a plausible excuse for one PC to leave the gathering long enough to accomplish the task.

Regardless of which act of embarrassment or sabotage the PCs engage in (if any), use the maps provided on page 24 to represent the chosen host's home. The home is described below in brief, as an actual combat encounter only occurs in one location when one of Naqualia's assassins murders an innocent dinner guest to further upset the city and pin the blame on the PCs.

G. HOST'S HOME

Made out of coral like other structures in Talasantri, this home features rough exterior walls that meet with a gentle curve rather than perfect right angles. The interior walls have been ground down and polished smooth. Magical lighting that can be hooded illuminates the rooms unless otherwise specified.

The interior and exterior doors are 2 inches thick and are made of compressed bits of shell formed into sheets and set on stone hinges (hardness 5, hp 30). None of the doors are locked unless otherwise noted. The domicile has no windows, and the only currents found in the home are the results of inhabitants moving about.

G1. Living Room: This well-appointed room features exquisite shell mosaics on the walls depicting schools of fish swimming through a reef. A sideboard stands along the western wall of the room, flanked on either side by

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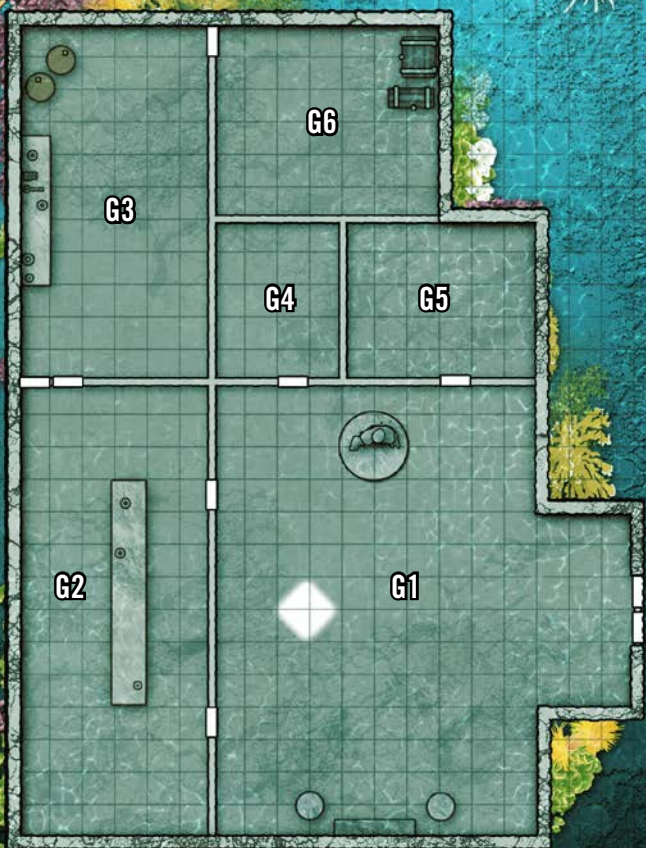
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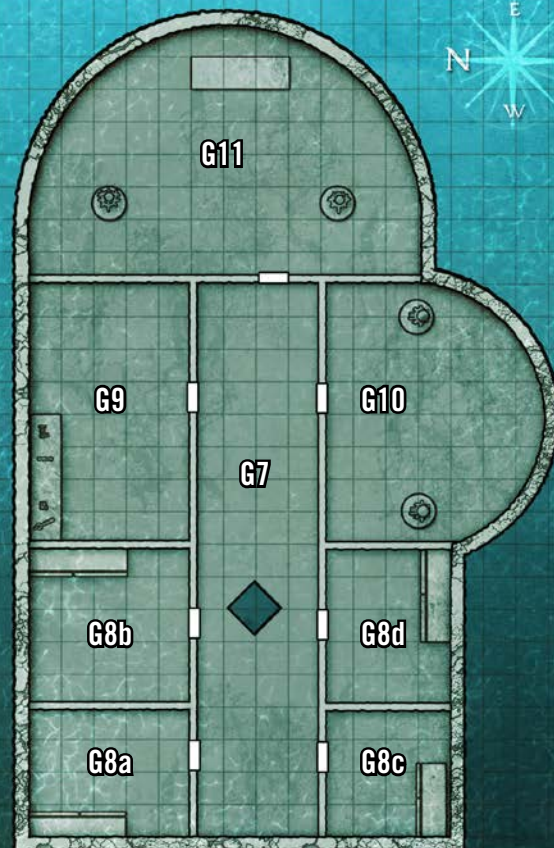
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G. HOST'S HOME



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

tall stone pillars that can serve as tables to gather around in conversation or pedestals for displaying works of art. A door on the south wall provides an exit to the city, and two doors exit to the north and two exit to the east. A diamond-shaped hole in the ceiling allows passage to the upper floor of the home. During the events of the dinner, most guests spend their time in this room or the dining room.

G2. Dining Room: A long, stone table, piled with platters and large scallop shells full of freshly cut fish and other undersea delicacies, fills the center of this rectangular room. Two doors in the south wall allow passage to the living room, and a door in the eastern wall provides access to the kitchen.

G3. Kitchen: Most food consumed in Talasantri is eaten raw, cured, or pickled, as reliable methods of heating food are hard to come by in an underwater city. This kitchen includes a long preparation table that holds fresh fish and shellfish, an array of sharp knives, and other implements used to prepare culinary delights. Two stone urns in the northeast corner hold small live fish and other foodstuffs until they are ready for preparation. A door exits the room to the south and to the west.

G4. Reclining Room: This small but comfortable room is provided to give guests and the home's inhabitants a place to relax and have quiet and intimate conversations. Refreshments are often brought into the room and set on a small folding table. A single door in the western wall provides an exit from this room.

G5. Parlor: Used in a similar way as the reclining room, this parlor can hold more people. Lively debates over drinks frequently occur in this room when people gather in the parlor. A single door in the western wall provides an exit from this room.

G6. Storeroom: The large, ground floor room holds stock for the kitchen and the rest of the domicile. Foodstuffs fill crates and barrels, while extra furnishings and other household goods are stored alongside them. Some of these containers are watertight to prevent the contents from leaking into the water in the home. When the host who lives in this house throws events, many of the servants will take their meals here in the storeroom or even sleep here if their services are required overnight or for extended lengths of time.

G7. Upper Hall: This wide hall runs nearly the entire length of the upper floor of the home. A diamond-shaped hole in the floor allows passage to the bottom

level of the home. Three doors line each of the north and south walls of the hallways and a single door provides entrance to the gallery on the eastern side of the upper floor.

G8. Bedrooms: Each of these bedrooms has a similar configuration. Depending on whose home this represents, these bedrooms can be for the family who resides here or some might be empty for receiving guests. Each room has a sculpted slab of stone to recline upon that is fitted with a heavy woven sheet of seaweed that prevents a sleeping person from drifting away in the night. Each of these rooms has a single door that can be latched from the inside for privacy.

G9. Office/Studio: The function of this room depends on whose house the event takes place in. In Koramallis's home, this is an artist's studio, which contains sculpting tools as well as a number of finished works and some still in progress. In Anemora's home, this is instead an office containing sales records and cargo manifests from her many merchant contacts. A single door on the southern wall allows access to the upper hall.

G10. Master Bedroom: The matriarch of the home retires to this room for rest. It is well appointed and decorated with art procured from within Talasantri and beyond. A single door in the northern wall of the room provides exit to the upper hall.

G11. Gallery: This semicircular gallery features a number of pieces, the most prominent of which are a pair of statues in the northern and southern corners of the room. A display along the eastern wall prominently displays the main attraction of the gallery as visitors walk through the door in the western wall of the room.

THE DINNER GUESTS

The dinner party is merely a backdrop for Jurix's plan and Naqualia's murder, but the players may be interested in roleplaying the party itself and meeting some of the guests. Use the Talasantri gazetteer for ideas on who might be in attendance in addition to the following people.

Merysyd (CN female merfolk expert 4) is an up-and-coming poet who all the best houses in Talasantri are looking to entertain. She's a quiet, rather sullen young woman with a habit of making small cynical asides, despite the fact that she writes beautiful and uplifting verses.

Osarte (LE male aquatic elf ranger 4) is a bounty hunter who works for the Talasantri government, hunting down criminals and threats to the city. He has many fascinating stories that he shares, and though he sticks to light and humorous tales, an eager gleam comes into his eyes when he describes stalking a target.

Tolajo (NG male aquatic elf bard 3) is a local storyteller and songwriter known for his historical epics. Tolajo is happy to recite some of his works at dinner, though he

often continues performing long after the other guests have grown bored.

The child of the PCs' host, either Argnos or Drecissa, should also be present at the dinner. The youth openly admires the PCs and relates as many details as they can about their initial meeting with the group. It should be obvious that the youth is struck with a case of hero worship.

SABOTAGING THE SCULPTURE

Koramallis's sculpture is kept in her studio on the second floor of her house. There are no guards present, though servants wander the house freely. A PC must succeed at a DC 20 Stealth check to make it to the studio without being seen. In the studio (area G9) is the sculpture and also the body of a murdered aquatic elf servant (see The Murder on page 26).

If the PCs remove the body and proceed with their plan, the evening culminates with Koramallis bringing her guests to the studio and proudly unveiling her creation. She's horrified to see the added frieze and tries to apologize through her confusion. Her guests awkwardly accept her apology but quickly leave the party one by one. In a few hours, the story is all over Talasantri and Koramallis refuses to leave her room for days. Once she does, she finds the planted scale and privately declares war on Anemora, beginning a feud that will last years.

POISONING DINNER

Anemora's kitchen (area G3) is relatively quiet in the hours leading up to the dinner party. Since merfolk don't use heat to cook their food, preparation involves slicing beautiful cuts of pristine fish and arranging them in weighted baskets, carving sea vegetables into beautiful flowers, and steeping a strong kelp tea in a sealed stone urn.

The kelp tea is easiest to poison, as it's a common dish everyone will partake of. The urn is kept in a small room that serves as a pantry. A PC can slip by the kitchen staff with a successful DC 20 Stealth check. Poisoning the urn requires a successful DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to avoid spilling the poison into the surrounding water.

In the storeroom (area G6), the PC also finds the body of a murdered merfolk chef (see The Murder on page 26). If the PCs hide the body and continue with their plan, it doesn't take long for the poison to do its job. The guests become increasingly ill and leave in a hurry. Anemora is bewildered, disgusted, and humiliated. Note that the PCs might choose to partake of the kelp tea and become sick themselves (or fake it well enough) to avoid casting suspicion on themselves. In a few hours, the rumor mill is buzzing about Anemora's disastrous dinner, and she has placed all the blame on Koramallis's head. The feud begins, to Jurix's delight.

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THE MURDER (CR 13)

Naqualia, learning that the PCs are part of a society event in the city, hired an assassin named Yutpan to murder someone within the household of the PCs' host and place a note on the body, one containing a single word: Vallik. Naqualia is running out of options and can't return to her master in failure. She's hoping that by pinning a murder on the PCs and revealing Vallik's name, details will emerge about her target and she'll be able to find him.

The deep merfolk assassin did his job quickly and well. The murdered target floats in a cloud of blood, with the waterproofed note placed inside his tunic. Yutpan took some initiative in framing the PCs as well. Floating near the body are a single hobnailed boot and a waterskin—items that he thinks only a surfer would own.

If a PC discovers the murder while carrying out Jurix's orders, the PCs must decide whether to raise an alarm (potentially incriminating themselves or failing their task, or both), or to ignore the body and wait for someone else to find it (potentially leaving a dangerous murderer on the loose). When the murder is discovered, the guards are summoned and immediately begin questioning the PCs. Even if there's no evidence to suggest the PCs would murder a servant (the lack of motive is a strong point in their favor), the guards remain suspicious of them.

Interrupting the Murder:

If the PCs listened to Jurix's proposal and then told their host about it, the household goes on alert that evening. The PCs' host continues with her plans, but hires extra security and asks the PCs to patrol the house from time to time and ensure Jurix hasn't hired someone else to sabotage their evening.

If the PCs agree to protect the house, they can attempt DC 25 Perception checks during one of their patrols. On a success, a PC hears a muffled cry from the nearby studio (area G9) or storeroom (area G6). If the PCs open the door to the room within the next round, they see Yutpan with his blade buried in his target. The assassin lets go of the servant and moves to attack the PCs instead.

YUTPAN

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male deep merfolk slayer 8/assassin 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 172, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 53)

NE Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +11; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20 (+25 in water)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 19
(+5 armor, +2 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 184 (16 HD; 8d8+8d10+104)

Fort +13, **Ref** +16,

Will +8 (+2 vs. *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and similar mind-reading magic); +2 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities deep dweller, semitransparent, uncanny dodge;

Resist cold 5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +1 sawtooth sabre +21/+16/+11 (1d8+6/19–20)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 15), sneak attack +6d6, sprint, studied target +2 (2nd, swift action), true death (DC 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat The assassin hides in the corner of the room until

his target enters. Then he quietly closes the door and attacks.

During Combat The assassin's first priority is to get out of the room. He tries to disable PCs until he has a clear line through the door, feinting to obtain a chance at a sneak attack.

Morale Rather than betray his mistress, the assassin fights to the death.



YUTPAN

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 24, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 39

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Aquadynamic Focus, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre)

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+8 when jumping), Bluff +20, Disable Device +12, Disguise +8, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +20 (+25 in water terrain), Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +14 (+18 to hide weapons on body), Stealth +26 (+31 in water terrain, +34 underwater), Swim +18; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth underwater

Languages Aquan, Elven

SQ hidden weapons, poison use, slayer talents (combat trick, finesse rogue, foil scrutiny^{ACG}, weapon training), stalker, track +4

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potions of invisibility* (2); **Other Gear** *stalking armor*^{ACG} (water), +1 sawtooth sabre^{UE}, ring of protection +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aquadynamic Focus: Yutpan doesn't take penalties on attack and damage rolls for fighting underwater with bludgeoning and slashing weapons for which he has taken the Weapon Focus feat. This feat originally appeared on page 57 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Aquatic Adventures*.

INTERROGATING THE ASSASSIN

If the PCs interrupted the murder, the servant is dying but not dead. If the PCs manage to provide healing, they can save his life, provided they do so in 5 rounds after discovering the body. The servant has no idea why he might have been targeted (which makes sense, given the target was selected randomly).

The PCs can attempt to subdue and interrogate Yutpan if they interrupt him. Unfortunately, Naqualia's minions have been kept mostly in the dark. Yutpan stayed outside the city and was called in only when Naqualia needed him for a task. The assassin resists any questioning, but with divination magic or intimidation tactics (such as a successful DC 30 Intimidate check), the PCs can learn the information listed below. In addition, they can find a note on him with the PCs' descriptions and names, written in a sharp hand and signed "Naqualia."

- Yutpan works for another deep merfolk, a woman named Naqualia.
- Naqualia often hires mercenaries such as Yutpan himself for her plots.
- Naqualia seems to serve another master, but Yutpan doesn't know who.

- Yutpan knows Naqualia has other mercenaries working for her in the city, but doesn't know where they're staying.
- Naqualia is searching for something in the city, or nearby, but the assassin doesn't know what.
- Yutpan was told to place the note with the name "Vallik" on the corpse, but doesn't know what the name refers to.

From the interrogation, the PCs can learn the name of their shadowy opponent, Naqualia, but not her motivations. Naqualia's magical defenses protect her from simple scrying attempts; the PCs will need to find another way to track her down.

If the PCs fight Yutpan but he escapes, they can possibly track him down using divination magic. The assassin tries to get out of the city, but if the PCs have befriended Argnos, he can help muster the guards to monitor all exits and hopefully spot the assassin as he flees.

If he successfully escapes from Talasantri, Yutpan hides in a shipwreck an hour or so from the city and waits for further word from Naqualia. When none comes, he takes the payment he had hidden in the shipwreck (5,000 gp worth of various coins and precious stones) and moves on, heading for another underwater city to look for work.

Story Award: If the PCs subdue the assassin and learn what he knows, they receive 19,200 XP.

H. DEEP SAFEHOUSE

Once the PCs discover the place where the deep merfolk are hiding, they can investigate the deep safehouse. This encounter location is detailed in Part 4.

I. LAST CHANCE AMBUSH

As the PCs make their way to find Naqualia, they get ambushed by some of her minions. This encounter location is detailed in Part 4.

J. LIONFISH GALLERY

Once the PCs deduce Naqualia's current location (and the person she's been seeking, named Vallik), they can make their way to the Lionfish Gallery and put an end to her meddling in Part 4.

SUMMONED TO RILLKIMATAI

With the party over, the murder committed (or prevented), and the evening in chaos, it may take some time for the PCs to sort everything out. Depending on their actions, the PCs could find themselves in any of a number of scenarios. However their individual choices play out, the PCs should eventually wind up with their host having dismissed the other guests, the assassin dealt with (escaped, killed, or in custody), and

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WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!

It's possible that the PCs will resist going to Blood Lily Cay. The trip will slow their progress without bringing them closer to their goal. In this case, Rillkimatai points out that without their help, the city will be in great danger. He has no reason to help surfacers who would be so callous to his people's safety and refuses to tell them what he knows of Ochymua.

Rillkimatai can also persuade the PCs by sharing some information about *Seaspike*. The enchanted weapon deals tremendous damage to all aberrant underwater creatures, not just planktas. This includes alghollthus, so by retrieving the weapon, the PCs could be helping themselves.

If the PCs were implicated in the murder or the bombing, Rillkimatai could also threaten them with arrest and imprisonment if they don't help the city. The oracle is reluctant to use such tactics, but he is willing to follow the letter of the law and imprison the PCs while the investigation is carried out. If the PCs recover the spear, however, it would speak to their character. In the end, the PCs should realize that traveling to Blood Lily Cay is the best way to advance their goals.

their plot of embarrassing their host having played out (or not).

As soon as the events of the night have been resolved, the PCs receive a summons: Rillkimatai wants to speak to them at city hall. Depending on the timing of the events, this summons might occur the following morning.

The elf leader welcomes the PCs into his office. On his desk sits a round stone tablet marked with a spiral of symbols. "Thank you for coming," Rillkimatai says with a weak smile. "I have heard some people of our city say that you are an ill omen, come to bring misfortune on us all. I believe the opposite. I think your appearance here is the best of luck, and that you might be able to save us from an impending disaster."

Rillkimatai shows the PCs the tablet and explains that it tells the story of a hero from the surface who saved the city of Talasantri almost a century ago. "The hero was a traveler and a stranger, much like yourselves," the seer says. "He gave his name as Wavewalker. He was here in Talasantri when a monstrous plankta named Ruinquake attacked. Have you seen one before? They are unnatural creatures born of stone and destruction. They form from the wreckage of islands and ruins devastated by cataclysms, and have a burning hatred for all things whole."

"We were caught off guard when the plankta attacked. Our guards fought against it but were quickly overwhelmed. Then Wavewalker appeared, a gleaming spear in his hand, and fought Ruinquake alone. He wounded the beast with his enchanted spear and drove it away, back to the depths, but his heroism came at a price. As the plankta retreated it struck a final blow against Wavewalker, and he died before our healers could reach him.

"Wavewalker deserved a tomb to honor his sacrifice. My predecessor, the former ruler of Talasantri, preserved Wavewalker's body until a passing ship could be hailed. The ship's crew was paid to construct a tomb on a nearby island, a place where Wavewalker could rest on the land he had come from. He was entombed with the spear, *Seaspike*, which he used to protect our city."

Rillkimatai sets down the tablet. "That tomb still stands on an island not far from here. The enchanted spear lies within. Messengers have come to tell us Ruinquake has returned, wakened from a century-long sleep. That spear may be the only thing that can stop it. Will you help us recover it so that we can hope to save the city again?"

Rillkimatai adds that when the PCs return with the spear, he will tell them everything he knows about Ochymua. His knowledge could be extremely helpful to their mission.

The PCs may be willing to help without any reward, or they might negotiate for one. In the latter case, Rillkimatai offers a collection of gems worth 10,000 gp. The PCs might also bring up the word "Vallik" that was found with the murder victim in their host's house. Rillkimatai doesn't know what it means, but Talasantri has many historical records and sages who might be able to help. If the PCs go after the spear, he promises to research the word and tell them anything he learns.

If the PCs have been implicated in the murder or the bombing, Rillkimatai can also point out that undertaking this mission for the city will go a long way to clearing their names. If the PCs return with the spear, he says, their names will be cleared and they will secure Rillkimatai's unwavering support.

A SIDE INTEREST

Once the PCs have finished speaking with Rillkimatai, the oracle gives them a waterproofed map showing the location of Blood Lily Cay. He doesn't know the exact location of the tomb, as surfacers were the ones who constructed it, but the island isn't terribly large. He wishes the PCs good fortune on their quest.

The PCs may wish to obtain supplies or make preparations before they leave. When they are ready to go and are beginning to leave the city, a locathah

interrupts them with a message that Jurix wishes to speak with them one final time (or urges a first meeting, should the PCs have so far evaded her). The messenger states that Jurix has business on Blood Lily Cay that the PCs might be able to help with, and that doing so could prove very profitable for them. If the PCs travel to the Undertow as part of their preparations, Jurix approaches them directly.

Either way, the cecaelia gets down to business immediately. "You might have noticed I run a brisk trade in salvage and antiques," she says while gesturing to the nearby goods. "An ally informed me that you're traveling to a nearby island, one that I know holds some hidden treasures. There's an ancient temple on the island, long abandoned, and I've learned of a secret cache of valuables and magic items beneath the ruins. Since you can move about on land easily, I thought I'd offer you a chance at a job. If you recover these for me—which might not be easy—I can reward you commensurately."

If the PCs declined Jurix's earlier offer, she implies that this task is another chance for the PCs to make an ally of her. She offers them second pick of an item from the treasure hoard and 12,000 gp or fair value for the rest of the items, whichever is higher.

If the PCs accepted Jurix's offer to humiliate their host earlier, and successfully carried out the task, Jurix offers them their pick of one item from the treasure hoard in the ruined temple and 20,000 gp or fair value for the rest of the hoard, whichever is higher. If the PCs accepted Jurix's offer but failed to deliver, Jurix is less enthusiastic about working with them, but she understands that the murder threw off the PCs' ability to complete their task. She offers them a pick of one item from the treasure hoard and 15,000 gp or fair value for the rest of the items, whichever is higher.

With a successful DC 30 Sense Motive check, a PC realizes that Jurix is holding something back. A PC can press for more information with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check or demand all the facts with a successful DC 30 Intimidate check. If the PC is successful, Jurix admits that the ruined temple was dedicated to Dagon, the demon lord of the sea. She assures the PCs she has no interest in Dagon's faith and is only interested in the treasure. This is the truth, though the PCs may not believe her.

Development: If the PCs strike a deal with Jurix and honor their agreement, she comes to their aid with her cecaelia ruffians in the Last Chance Ambush encounter (area I on page 27). If the PCs refuse to deal with Jurix or break their agreement, they make a serious enemy of the crime lord, and their actions may come back to haunt them later (though the specifics of such retribution are left to the GM to determine).

PART 3: RETURN TO LAND

After dealing with the political intrigue in Talasantri, the PCs might welcome a return to an environment they are more accustomed to. Rillkimatai pleads with the PCs to venture to Blood Lily Cay to retrieve the fabled spear once used by the hero Wavewalker to defeat the plankta that once again threatens the underwater settlement.

BLOOD LILY CAY

The island on which Wavewalker's tomb was built is roughly 12 miles from Talasantri. The PCs can swim the distance, travel in a ship, get there using flight, or arrive by any other means at their disposal. As the previous sections of this adventure relied mainly on roleplaying and interacting with the people of Talasantri, this section leans more toward combat and danger. To emphasize the switch in tone, the PCs could encounter aquatic hazards or wandering monsters on their way to the island. (A table of random encounters that might be suitable for this journey can be found on page 83.)

Because the PCs can approach the island from any direction, many of the following encounters can be placed anywhere on the island. Shipwreck Beach (see page 33), the ruined shrine to Dagon (area K) and the Wavewalker's tomb (area L) are the only encounter locations that are in a specific place. The other encounters in this section can happen at any point while the PCs are exploring the island, but likely should happen prior to the PCs exploring Wavewalker's tomb. If a PC searches for a place to camp and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check, they find the way to Glassrock Cove (page 33).

Use the maps on page 30 for these encounters.

THE ISLAND FLOWERS (CR 12)

A mostly rocky coastline, interspersed with intermittent stretches of coarse sand, rings the island. Patches of brilliant scarlet flowers stand out from the dense greenery farther inland. From the center of the island, a rocky peak rises sharply from the surrounding jungle. A small cove on the western edge of the island provides the safest spot for ships to anchor.

The island is home to two species of blood lilies. The first is a harmless, brilliantly colored flower that grows equally well on dry land and below the water. The second is a deadly plant species that feeds on the corpses of animals. Unfortunately, the two species are nearly identical. The harmless blood lilies are generally smaller, and a PC can differentiate between

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TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

THE MORDANT SPIRE

BESTIARY

BLOOD LILY CAY



Glassrock Cove

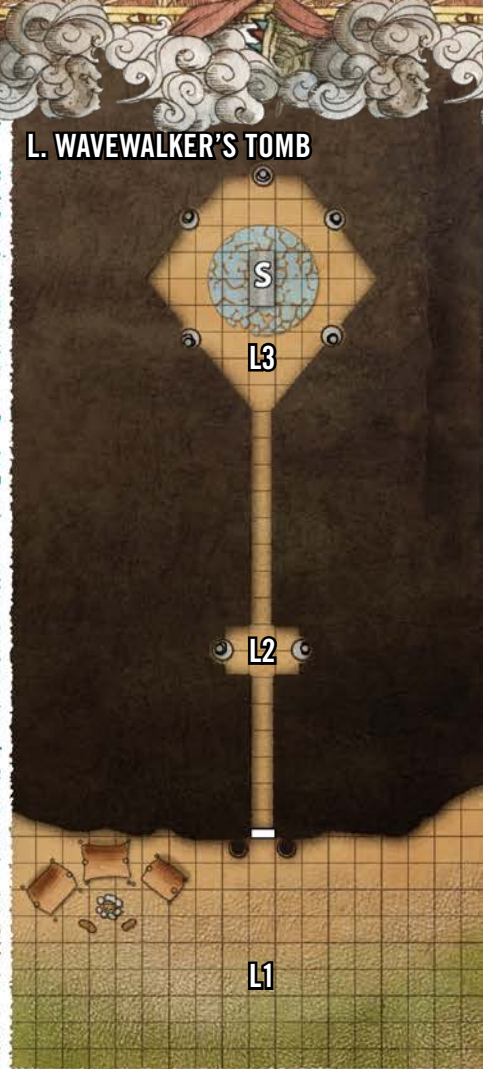
K

L

Shipwreck Beach

0 1 MILE

L. WAVEWALKER'S TOMB



L3

L2

L1

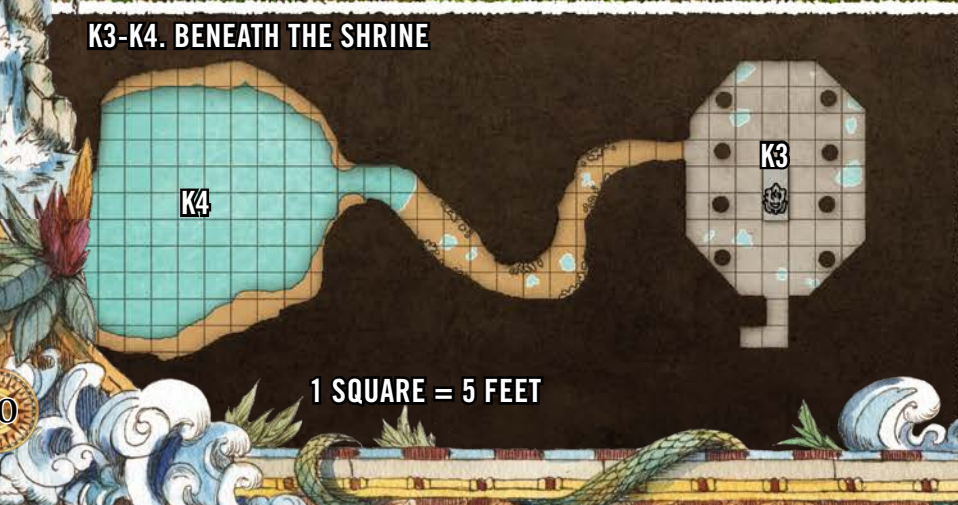
K1-K2. RUINED SHRINE



K2

K1

K3-K4. BENEATH THE SHRINE



K4

K3

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

L5

L4

the deadly and harmless versions with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check.

Creatures: Patches of blood lilies can be found across the island. As soon as the PCs land and begin exploring the island, they encounter a pair of the deadly variety. The blood lilies remain dormant until the PCs come close enough for them to attack.

BLOOD LILIES (2) CR 10
XP 9,600 each
hp 120 each (see page 84)

Treasure: With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC can find the bones of a previous victim lying in the greenery near the blood lilies. The victim was killed years ago and only a few fragments of bone and the grinning skull remain. On the remains the PCs find a spyglass, still in usable condition, near a few splintered finger bones and the threadbare remains of clothing. A black gem on a fine silver chain lies beneath the rotting cloth. This is a *periapt of proof against poison*.

THE LILIES' GRAVEYARD (CR 11)

A patch of bright red lilies, the same variety that is found around the edge of the island, grows near a thick clump of trees. Some blight seems to have affected the lilies and their heads droop from their stems, shedding curled petals on the ground.

The foliage overhead obscures this site. Flying PCs don't notice the wilting flowers unless they drop below the forest canopy. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC notices blotches on the petals and leaves that look like acid burns.

Creature: The blood lilies are damaged and unhealthy because a seps has taken to hunting in this area, and its acidic venom sprayed over the patch several days ago. In their current state, the nearby blood lilies are too injured to attack the PCs (they will die completely in a day or 2), but the seps still lurks nearby. It attacks from hiding 2 rounds after the PCs notice the blood lilies and begin investigating the location. If the PCs look around for the source of the acid burns, they might find the seps's hiding place, though discovering the enormous serpent isn't too difficult.

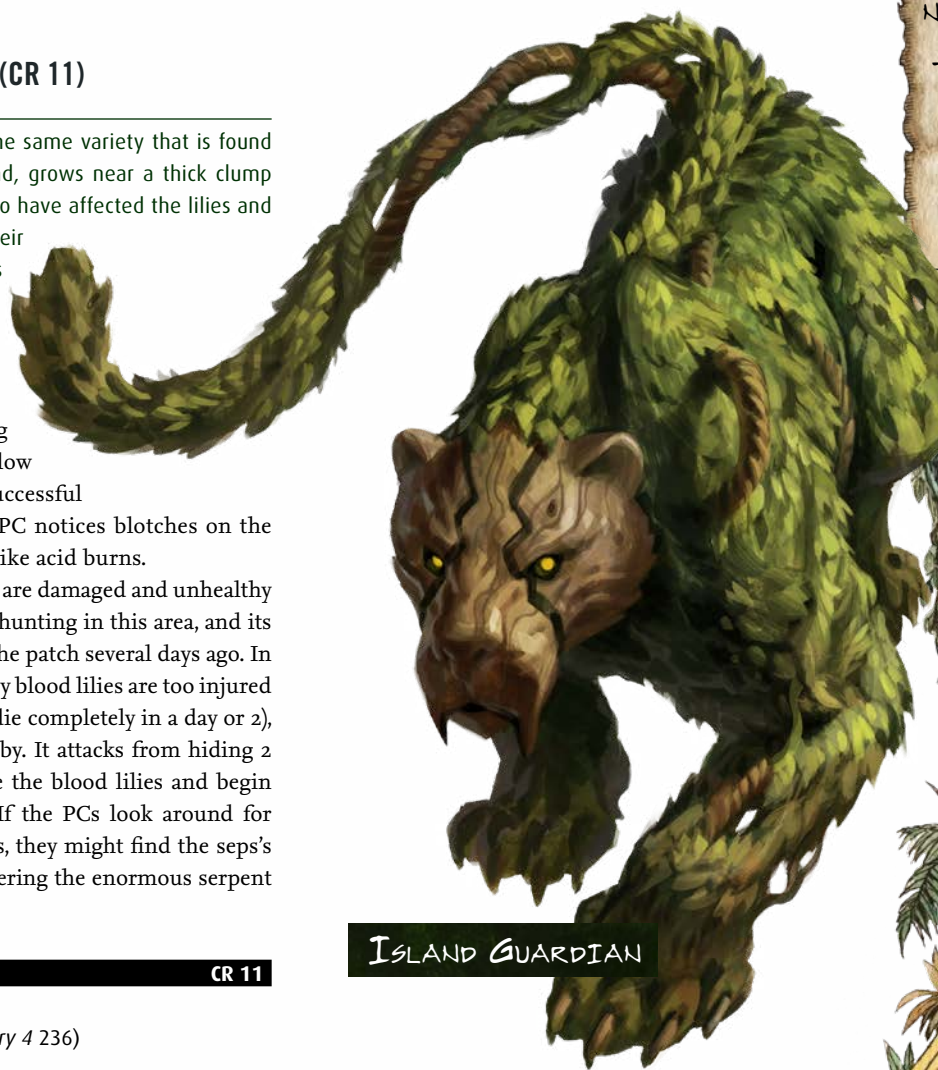
SEPS CR 11
XP 12,800
hp 147 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 236)

ISLAND GUARDIAN (CR 12)

A figure stirs amid the greenery of the jungle. It looks like a big cat, but emerald-green in color. It wears a wooden mask with catlike features carved upon it, and a thicket of green leaves grows along its spine.

Creature: One of the plants on the island is a boruta, a sentient plant creature that can change its shape. It's taken the form of a jungle cat to spy on the PCs, and tries to retreat if they notice it. The island guardian has a Stealth modifier of +19, making it difficult to spot. However, if the boruta witnesses the PCs defeating the seps or a patch of blood lilies, it waits until after the battle and then reveals itself.

The boruta speaks in a whispery voice, like rustling leaves and ocean waves mixed together. It explains that it has lived on the island for many years and knows many of the island's secrets. If the PCs bring up Wavewalker's Tomb, the boruta says it knows something of the tomb's construction and is willing to share its knowledge if the PCs perform a task.



ISLAND GUARDIAN

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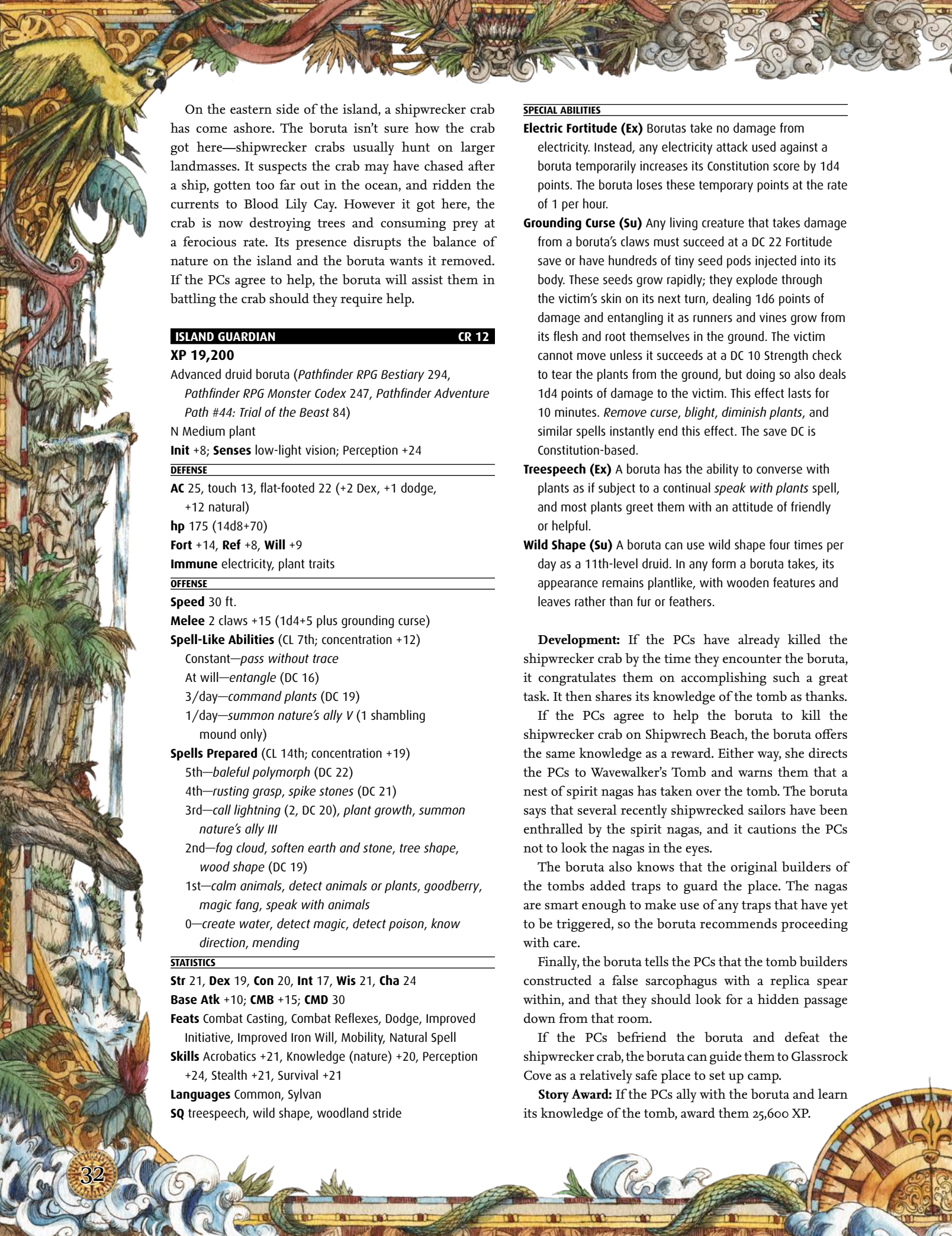
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On the eastern side of the island, a shipwrecker crab has come ashore. The boruta isn't sure how the crab got here—shipwrecker crabs usually hunt on larger landmasses. It suspects the crab may have chased after a ship, gotten too far out in the ocean, and ridden the currents to Blood Lily Cay. However it got here, the crab is now destroying trees and consuming prey at a ferocious rate. Its presence disrupts the balance of nature on the island and the boruta wants it removed. If the PCs agree to help, the boruta will assist them in battling the crab should they require help.

ISLAND GUARDIAN**CR 12****XP 19,200**

Advanced druid boruta (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, *Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 247, *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #44: *Trial of the Beast* 84)

N Medium plant

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural)

hp 175 (14d8+70)

Fort +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Immune electricity, plant traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d4+5 plus grounding curse)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +12)

Constant—*pass without trace*

At will—*entangle* (DC 16)

3/day—*command plants* (DC 19)

1/day—*summon nature's ally V* (1 shambling mound only)

Spells Prepared (CL 14th; concentration +19)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22)

4th—*rusting grasp*, *spike stones* (DC 21)

3rd—*call lightning* (2, DC 20), *plant growth*, *summon nature's ally III*

2nd—*fog cloud*, *soften earth and stone*, *tree shape*, *wood shape* (DC 19)

1st—*calm animals*, *detect animals or plants*, *goodberry*, *magic fang*, *speak with animals*

0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *know direction*, *mending*

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 17, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Mobility, Natural Spell

Skills Acrobatics +21, Knowledge (nature) +20, Perception +24, Stealth +21, Survival +21

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ treespeech, wild shape, woodland stride

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Electric Fortitude (Ex) Borutas take no damage from electricity. Instead, any electricity attack used against a boruta temporarily increases its Constitution score by 1d4 points. The boruta loses these temporary points at the rate of 1 per hour.

Grounding Curse (Su) Any living creature that takes damage from a boruta's claws must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or have hundreds of tiny seed pods injected into its body. These seeds grow rapidly; they explode through the victim's skin on its next turn, dealing 1d6 points of damage and entangling it as runners and vines grow from its flesh and root themselves in the ground. The victim cannot move unless it succeeds at a DC 10 Strength check to tear the plants from the ground, but doing so also deals 1d4 points of damage to the victim. This effect lasts for 10 minutes. *Remove curse*, *blight*, *diminish plants*, and similar spells instantly end this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treespeech (Ex) A boruta has the ability to converse with plants as if subject to a continual *speak with plants* spell, and most plants greet them with an attitude of friendly or helpful.

Wild Shape (Su) A boruta can use wild shape four times per day as a 11th-level druid. In any form a boruta takes, its appearance remains plantlike, with wooden features and leaves rather than fur or feathers.

Development: If the PCs have already killed the shipwrecker crab by the time they encounter the boruta, it congratulates them on accomplishing such a great task. It then shares its knowledge of the tomb as thanks.

If the PCs agree to help the boruta to kill the shipwrecker crab on Shipwreck Beach, the boruta offers the same knowledge as a reward. Either way, she directs the PCs to Wavewalker's Tomb and warns them that a nest of spirit nagas has taken over the tomb. The boruta says that several recently shipwrecked sailors have been enthralled by the spirit nagas, and it cautions the PCs not to look the nagas in the eyes.

The boruta also knows that the original builders of the tombs added traps to guard the place. The nagas are smart enough to make use of any traps that have yet to be triggered, so the boruta recommends proceeding with care.

Finally, the boruta tells the PCs that the tomb builders constructed a false sarcophagus with a replica spear within, and that they should look for a hidden passage down from that room.

If the PCs befriend the boruta and defeat the shipwrecker crab, the boruta can guide them to Glassrock Cove as a relatively safe place to set up camp.

Story Award: If the PCs ally with the boruta and learn its knowledge of the tomb, award them 25,600 XP.

GLASSROCK COVE

A pale, sandy beach stretches in a crescent around a sheltered cove. At the cove's mouth, tall green rocks stretch out of the water, tapered at the top like obelisks. The rocks are made of an unusual stone that shimmers like glass. A clearing a few dozen feet wide runs between the forest and the beach, covered in broken bits of rock and a few hardy shrubs.

The glassy rocks here are natural volcanic rocks with no magical properties, but they are beautiful objects nonetheless. The cove is free of threats and its layout makes it an ideal place to camp. Given the number of dangerous creatures on the island, the PCs may need to rest once or twice before they're ready to return to Talasantri. If they have no ship where they can rest, this cove provides a safe, sheltered location for a campsite.

Though relatively safe, the PCs might encounter a roaming threat during the night if they choose to sleep in this location. See the Island Encounters table on page 83 for ideas for such an event.

SHIPWRECK BEACH (CR 13)

Scattered fragments of smashed boulders litter this beach. Here and there, a fragment of bloody bone spikes up from among the rocks. Hugging the coast, the massive trees of the forest have been laid flat, as if a hurricane tore through.

A shipwrecker crab that drifted onto the island several days ago caused the destruction here. The island is too small to support the crab, and the creature has been destroying the jungle in search of more prey. PCs flying over this area can notice the destruction with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

The shipwrecker crab lurks in the deep water off the shore, watching for prey to wander out of the jungle. The shipwrecker crab attacks any living creature that comes on or near the beach.

SHIPWRECKER CRAB CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 189 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 60)

Treasure: The massive crab has detritus and debris from various shipwrecks wedged into its enormous shell. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC can spend 1 hour to extract the goods from the crab's shell. The time required to dig out the treasure can be divided between all PCs who succeed at the check (thus, if four PCs succeed, they gather all the treasure in 15 minutes).

Nested into spaces in the crab's shell are six luminous white pearls (worth 100 gp each); a padparadscha sapphire (worth 5,000 gp); a brass waterproof lantern^{UE}

engraved with images of sea dragons (worth 50 gp); a beautiful miniature tree carved from wood with leaves of silver and gold (a *sapling rod*^{UE}); a *pink rhomboid ioun stone*, and 325 pp.

K. RUINED SHRINE

Built years ago by a foul cult devoted to Dagon, this shrine came under attack by some worshipers of Ylimancha, who killed most of the inhabitants and tried to rid the place of evil, but they weren't entirely successful.

K1. SHRINE GROUNDS (CR 13)

A clearing of bare earth opens up amid the dense foliage of the forest. The clearing is perfectly circular, without a single blade of grass or tendril of vine sprouting from the dusty ground. In the center of the clearing stands a small building made of pitted, dark gray basalt interspersed with chunks of pale yellow crystal. An empty archway set in one wall affords entrance to the building.

A PC who investigates the strange clearing can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check. On a success, the PC realizes that the clearing has been methodically salted so that nothing can grow here. Judging from the dryness of the earth and the lack of dead plant matter, the salting must have taken place years ago, if not longer.

Creatures: Two blood lilies live at the edge of the clearing. They hide among ordinary blood lilies until the PCs approach, attacking just before the PCs step out into the barren zone.

BLOOD LILIES (2) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 120 each (see page 84)

Trap: There are no markings or symbols on the outside of the building, save one ornate rune inscribed above the archway. The rune is actually an old trap that has lingered here for decades.

SYMBOL OF STRIFE TRAP CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magic; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; **Duration** 180 minutes; **Reset** automatic (permanency)

Effect spell effect (*symbol of strife* [*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 242], Will DC 23 or attack nearest conscious creature for 9 rounds); multiple targets (all targets within 60 ft.)

Special As the trap is a symbol spell made permanent, it becomes inactive for 10 minutes if it is disabled, but then it can be triggered again as normal.

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DAGON'S EYE

Created to allow cultists with no skill in languages to read the profane texts of demon lords, this magic item bears retribution toward those reading from Celestial texts under its malevolent light.

DAGON'S EYE

PRICE
12,600 GP

SLOT none

CL 5th

WEIGHT 2 lbs.

AURA faint divination and evocation

This chunk of yellow crystal glows like a torch, shedding normal light in a 20-foot radius and increasing the light level for an additional 20 feet by one step, up to normal light. The crystal floats in the air 1 foot above any solid surface and can be moved with little effort.

Any form of Abyssal writing (books, scrolls, etc.) read by the light of *Dagon's eye* can be understood by any creature that perceives it, as if under the effects of a *comprehend languages* spell.

If any form of Celestial writing is placed in the light of *Dagon's Eye*, the words erupt into a searing fireball that deals 6d6 points of fire damage to all creatures within 20 feet of the writing. Creatures in the area take only half damage with a successful DC 14 Reflex save. This ability functions once every 10 minutes.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 6,300 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *comprehend languages*, *explosive runes*, creator must worship a demon lord

K2. UNHOLY NAVE (CR 14)

The interior of the building is a single chamber, empty save for an altar standing opposite the archway. Bas-reliefs of aquatic dragons, sea serpents, and other terrors of the depths decorate the walls. A misshapen lump of yellow crystal floats a foot above the altar, shedding dim, golden light. In the back of the room, a set of steps leads down into darkness.

The altar is covered with the same type of disturbing images that line the walls. With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check, a PC identifies the markings as those commonly found in temples to Dagon, the demon lord of the sea.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices scratches and slashes in the walls, as well as old bloodstains, that imply a battle took place here some time ago. The battle was between the cultists of Dagon and those of Ylimancha, the empyreal lord of coastal waters. The agents of Ylimancha slew the cultists and salted the earth as a warning to any who might imperil

the waters. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC notices small carvings of seagulls have been added to the corners of the room. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies these carvings as the holy symbol of Ylimancha.

After this attack, other cultists of Dagon found and used the shrine to offer sacrifices to the demon lord, which brought the attention of a couatl that was allied with the agents of Ylimancha and returned later to avenge them.

Creatures: A few months ago, a ship crashed on the beach and five sailors survived to swim to shore. Three were enslaved by the nagas and serve as their guardians outside Wavewalker's tomb; the other two unwittingly triggered the *symbol of strife* trap and murdered each other in a bloody battle. Their violent deaths prevented them from finding eternal rest, and some combination of their profession as sailors and the influence of Dagon caused them to rise as draugr. The unfortunate creatures have lurked there ever since, standing guard outside this blasphemous shrine for unknown reasons.

DRAUGR SAILORS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

Draugr fighter 6/rogue 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 110)

CE Medium undead (water)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 144 each (14 HD; 8d8+6d10+76)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7 (+2 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/slashing or bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee +1 *keen greataxe* +19/+14/+9 (1d12+11/19-20/×3 plus nausea) or

slam +16 (1d10+7 plus nausea)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6 plus 3 bleed, weapon training (axes +1)

TACTICS

Before Combat The draugr wait to see if the PCs fall victim to the *symbol of strife* trap before attacking.

They hide at the back of the shrine and charge the first person to enter.

During Combat The draugr try to flank the first PC to enter the shrine, making use of their sneak attack as well as their assault leader rogue talent.

Morale The twisted sailors fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 28

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

Skills Climb +9, Intimidate +21, Perception +18, Profession (sailor) +8, Stealth +16, Swim +15

Languages Common (can't speak)

SQ armor training 1, rogue talents (assault leader^{APG}, bleeding attack +3), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *stormlure*^{UE} (only one draugr has this item);
Other Gear +2 *breastplate*, +1 *keen greataxe*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1

Treasure: Hovering above the altar is a glowing yellow crystal. This floating chunk of crystal, called *Dagon's eye*, bears a sinister enchantment (see the sidebar on page 34).

K3. THE SEA'S SACRIFICE (CR 12)

The stairs lead down into an underground chamber. A few inches of dank, briny water cover the floor in the western side of the room. Pillars carved to look like twining sea serpents stretch to the ceiling, their eyes glittering with blue gems. In the center of the room stands a massive stone slab in the form of a gaping serpent's mouth.

The slab in the center of the room is stained with dried blood and surrounded with the moldering remains of seagulls. The chamber smells like damp, decaying flesh. This was a chamber in which the cultists sacrificed creatures to Dagon—land mammals mainly, but also aquatic elves and merfolk if they could catch them.

Haunt: With the defeat of the cultists, a curse intended to be an affront to Ylimancha fell over the shrine. Any seagull that flies over the shrine drops dead on the ground and animates a minute later, crawling into the shrine and down the stairs to congregate around the altar. The dead seagulls have crawled into the basement here and massed into a pile of moldering feathers and tiny hollow bones. Scraggly, dirty feathers still cling to most of the delicate bones.

DAGON'S SPITE

CR 12

XP 19,200

CE persistent haunt (altar and all adjacent squares)

Caster Level 12th

Notice Perception DC 22 (to hear the clattering of bones and clicking of beaks)

hp 54; **Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 minute

Effect When a creature that is not chaotic evil touches the altar, it feels a swirling rush of wind as the tiny bones and rotting seagulls animate and swarm around the altar,

forming a dangerous wall all the way to the chamber's ceiling. Each creature in the affected squares takes 12d6 points of slashing damage as the animated birds peck, bite, and slash in a whirlwind of bones. Creatures in the area that succeed at DC 19 Reflex saves take only half damage, though those voluntarily moving through the area receive no saving throw and instead take full damage. The churning remains persist for 12 minutes or until destroyed.

Destruction The haunt can be cleansed if all of the seagull bones and corpses are removed from the room and the shrine is subjected to a *consecrate* spell.

Treasure: The sacrificial slab conceals a compartment in which the cultists of Dagon hid their ceremonial weapon. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC notices the secret drawer. Within it lies a +2 *keen dagger* with two prongs on either side of the blade so that it resembles a trident. Two fish, one carved from sapphire and one from topaz, decorate the hilt.

K4. THE LENTIC HOLLOW (CR 13)

Beyond the sacrificial chamber, a tunnel slopes gently down. It opens into a natural underground cavern filled with the strong smell of brine and fish. Fish skeletons, some with clumps of rotting flesh still attached, lie in heaps along the shore of a still pond.

Though the underground pond is clearly seawater, there is no current to indicate where the water enters this chamber. It appears perfectly still and calm, and the will of Dagon keeps this chamber filled with stagnant, incredibly harsh and briny seawater despite the movements of the tides.

The water is only a few inches deep at the opening of the tunnel, but it drops to a depth of 5 feet by the time it reaches the cavern. The bottom of the pool is rounded like a bowl and is 15 feet deep at the center.

Creature: When the shrine's original cultists inhabited this foul place, they were attacked by a goodly couatl named Achol that sought to purge the island of demonic influence. Achol observed the shrine for a time, learning the cultists' strengths and weaknesses before launching its assault. During the battle the couatl was captured and tortured to the brink of death, but still managed to kill all of the cultists. As an obscene twist, the event drew the attention of Dagon, who corrupted the creature to serve as the shrine's guardian and transformed it to breathe both air and water.

Now, Achol exists in a maddened state, constantly feeling the torture of its final moments and zealously dedicated to protecting the shrine that it once sought to eliminate. The couatl can't leave the ring of salted

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earth surrounding the shrine without falling victim to the effects of leaving its sacred site.

Achol is found either flying through the stagnant air or lurking beneath the surface of the pond, regardless of what time of day the PCs enter the temple. The moment it senses their presence, it attacks.

ACHOL

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male broken soul divine guardian couatl (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 24, 60; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 49)

LG Large outsider (aquatic, chaotic, native)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, low-light vision; **Perception** +29

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -1 size)

hp 174 (12d10+108); fast healing 5

Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities ability healing; **DR** 5/-; **Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects, poison; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, sonic 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.

Melee torturous touch +17 (2d6 plus 1d6 Dex damage and convulsions) or bite +17 (1d8+9 plus grab and poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

ACHOL

Special Attacks agonized wail (DC 21), baleful gaze (DC 21), constrict (1d8+9), poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +4)

Constant—*detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*
At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *dimension door* (within sacred site only), *ethereal jaunt* (CL 16th), *invisibility*, *plane shift* (DC 22)

3/day—*alarm*, *knock*

1/day—*arcane lock*, *augury*, *clairaudience*/
clairvoyance, *commune*, *dismissal* (DC 20), *guards and wards*, *hold portal*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +4)

4th (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 19)

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *slow* (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure moderate wounds*, *scorching ray*, *silence* (DC 17)

1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 16), *grease*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *create water*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *guidance*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** 26, **Int** 11, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +19 (+23 grapple); **CMD** 33 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Diehard[®], Dodge, Empower Spell, Endurance[®], Eschew Materials[®], Great Fortitude[®], Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness[®]

Skills Acrobatics +3 (-1 when jumping), Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Fly +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana, religion) +10, Perception +29, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +14, Swim +14;

Racial Modifiers +8 Intimidate, +5 Perception, +5 Sense Motive

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ amphibious, blessed life, divine swiftness, sacred site, torturous touch

Treasure: At the bottom of the pond lie three large treasure chests, each bound with rusted iron bands and locked with superior quality locks. Due to their time in the salt water, though, the locks have almost rusted away.

A successful DC 20 Disable Device check opens the locks, or they can be destroyed relatively easily (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 15).

The chests contain the treasure of the cult of Dagon. With Achol slain, there is no one left to claim the treasure or even notice its absence, though it should become clear that this is the cache Jurix wanted the PCs to return to her.

Chest 1: A necklace of silver chains encrusted with diamonds that cascade like a waterfall (worth 1,500 gp); 2,000 gold pieces, many of which are coins from lost civilizations; a platinum crown with two swept-back emerald wings on each side (worth 1,250 gp); a silver ring set with a leaping shark formed from dozens of tiny black star sapphires with a diamond fin (worth 800 gp); and a golden brooch shaped like a flower with a red diamond set at its center (worth 1,200 gp).

Chest 2: A golden ewer inscribed with swirling clouds (worth 500 gp); a matching golden basin (worth 500 gp); a set of six crystal goblets with platinum lips (worth 100 gp each); scraps of silk (the remains of a heavy silk rug, worn away by salt and time); a decorative buckler made of gold and set with a dragon hammered from rhodium (worth 1,600 gp); and a delicate silver bracelet with four nonagonal platinum charms (a *bracelet of friends*).

Chest 3: A dull, ordinary-looking shortsword (a *sword of subtlety*) and a shining heavy mace with a head carved to look like a ram's (a *lesser mace of smiting*^{UE}).

Given the bounty here, the PCs may be tempted to go back on their deal with Jurix (if they made one). Should they honor the deal, though, Jurix compensates them fairly and allows them a choice of item as she promised. If Jurix takes first pick of the lot, she chooses the *sword of subtlety* for herself.

Jurix won't immediately sell other items in the hoard back to the PCs if they want any; she has buyers on the line that she thinks will pay more than a fair price for them. If the PCs remain friendly with Jurix until the end of the adventure, she then offers to sell them back any of the magic items they want before they leave for Auberon's tower.

Story Award: If the PCs recover the treasure and honor their agreement with Jurix, they receive an additional 25,600 XP.

L. WAVEWALKER'S TOMB

When Talasantri's leadership wanted to celebrate the hero that gave his life to save the city, they took from the city's coffers to have a suitable tomb built for their surfacer champion, unaware that he would have been perfectly content resting beneath the waves. Now the tomb has been inhabited by foul nagas who wish only to corrupt the hero's final rest in a misguided attempt to gain power.

L1. GUARDIANS OF THE NEST (CR 11)

A rectangular frame of solid stone blocks has been built into the base of the peak. Each stone bears an inscription in

graceful, flowing letters, but streaks of dried blood obscure much of the writing. A stone door fitted within the frame blocks entry to the tomb beyond. A symbol, three large ovals with tapered bases, like reversed raindrops, has been painted on the door in dried blood. Three ragged tents lean against the cliffside near a faintly smoking campfire.

The original writing on the doorframe is in Aquan. The writings are prayers for the spirit of the Wavewalker, thanks for his sacrifice, and a shortened version of the legend Rillkimatai told the PCs. The bloody symbols on the door make up a sigil the spirit nagas within invented; the marks represent the red scales on the nagas' bodies. The door's lock is broken, but the nagas employ guards to keep them safe.

Creatures: A few months ago, a ship capsized in a storm and five survivors managed to swim to Blood Lily Cay. They washed up on the eastern shore, battered but alive, only to fall victim to the island's dangers. Two were enslaved at the ruined shrine (area K) while the other three stumbled to the tomb here. The spirit nagas have enthralled the sailors with their charming gazes over the course of months, breaking the sailors' minds and bending their wills; the trio now patrols near the nest.

The spirit nagas have also used the sailors as part of their improvised, profane rituals. Jagged scars cover the sailors' bodies and bright red runic symbols stain their skin. The nagas invented these runes, so they mean nothing in any language, and used berries as ink. The sailors are ragged and unkempt, with tangled hair and wild eyes.

The sailors forage and hunt for the nagas while keeping watch for danger, and they attack the moment they spot the PCs approaching the door to the tomb.

SHIPWRECKED SAILORS (3)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Human fighter 8/rogue 4

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; Senses Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 110 each (12 HD; 4d8+8d10+44)

Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +2 (+2 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 rapier +19/+14/+9 (1d6+9/15-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6, weapon training (light blades +1)

TACTICS

During Combat The sailors coordinate their efforts and move about in combat trying to set up flanking positions.

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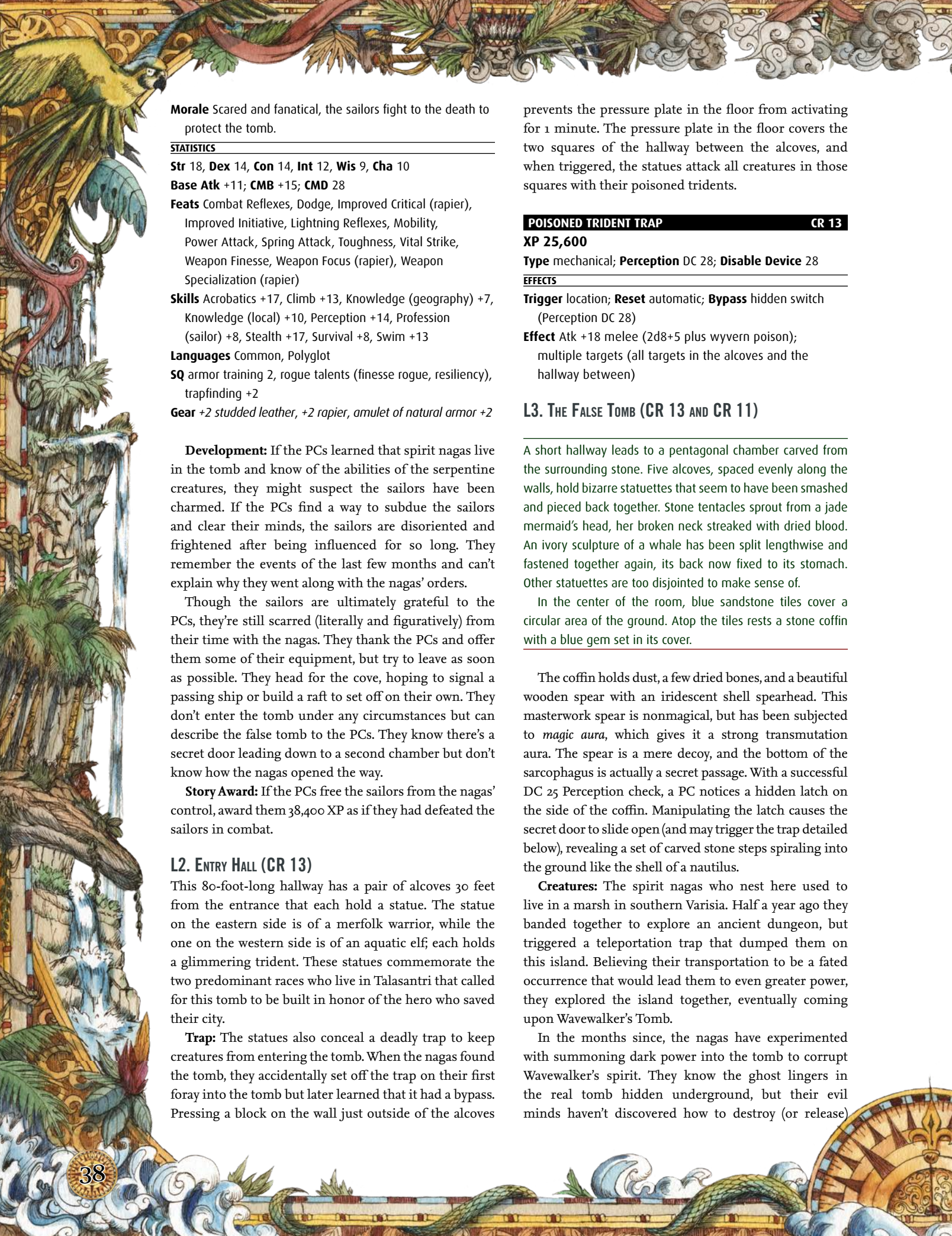
NPC GALLERY

TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

THE MORDANT SPIRE

BESTIARY



Morale Scared and fanatical, the sailors fight to the death to protect the tomb.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +17, Climb +13, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +14, Profession (sailor) +8, Stealth +17, Survival +8, Swim +13

Languages Common, Polyglot

SQ armor training 2, rogue talents (finesse rogue, resiliency), trapfinding +2

Gear +2 studded leather, +2 rapier, amulet of natural armor +2

Development: If the PCs learned that spirit nagas live in the tomb and know of the abilities of the serpentine creatures, they might suspect the sailors have been charmed. If the PCs find a way to subdue the sailors and clear their minds, the sailors are disoriented and frightened after being influenced for so long. They remember the events of the last few months and can't explain why they went along with the nagas' orders.

Though the sailors are ultimately grateful to the PCs, they're still scarred (literally and figuratively) from their time with the nagas. They thank the PCs and offer them some of their equipment, but try to leave as soon as possible. They head for the cove, hoping to signal a passing ship or build a raft to set off on their own. They don't enter the tomb under any circumstances but can describe the false tomb to the PCs. They know there's a secret door leading down to a second chamber but don't know how the nagas opened the way.

Story Award: If the PCs free the sailors from the nagas' control, award them 38,400 XP as if they had defeated the sailors in combat.

L2. ENTRY HALL (CR 13)

This 80-foot-long hallway has a pair of alcoves 30 feet from the entrance that each hold a statue. The statue on the eastern side is of a merfolk warrior, while the one on the western side is of an aquatic elf; each holds a glimmering trident. These statues commemorate the two predominant races who live in Talasantri that called for this tomb to be built in honor of the hero who saved their city.

Trap: The statues also conceal a deadly trap to keep creatures from entering the tomb. When the nagas found the tomb, they accidentally set off the trap on their first foray into the tomb but later learned that it had a bypass. Pressing a block on the wall just outside of the alcoves

prevents the pressure plate in the floor from activating for 1 minute. The pressure plate in the floor covers the two squares of the hallway between the alcoves, and when triggered, the statues attack all creatures in those squares with their poisoned tridents.

POISONED TRIDENT TRAP

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** 28

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 28)

Effect Atk +18 melee (2d8+5 plus wyvern poison); multiple targets (all targets in the alcoves and the hallway between)

L3. THE FALSE TOMB (CR 13 AND CR 11)

A short hallway leads to a pentagonal chamber carved from the surrounding stone. Five alcoves, spaced evenly along the walls, hold bizarre statuettes that seem to have been smashed and pieced back together. Stone tentacles sprout from a jade mermaid's head, her broken neck streaked with dried blood. An ivory sculpture of a whale has been split lengthwise and fastened together again, its back now fixed to its stomach. Other statuettes are too disjointed to make sense of.

In the center of the room, blue sandstone tiles cover a circular area of the ground. Atop the tiles rests a stone coffin with a blue gem set in its cover.

The coffin holds dust, a few dried bones, and a beautiful wooden spear with an iridescent shell spearhead. This masterwork spear is nonmagical, but has been subjected to *magic aura*, which gives it a strong transmutation aura. The spear is a mere decoy, and the bottom of the sarcophagus is actually a secret passage. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC notices a hidden latch on the side of the coffin. Manipulating the latch causes the secret door to slide open (and may trigger the trap detailed below), revealing a set of carved stone steps spiraling into the ground like the shell of a nautilus.

Creatures: The spirit nagas who nest here used to live in a marsh in southern Varisia. Half a year ago they banded together to explore an ancient dungeon, but triggered a teleportation trap that dumped them on this island. Believing their transportation to be a fated occurrence that would lead them to even greater power, they explored the island together, eventually coming upon Wavewalker's Tomb.

In the months since, the nagas have experimented with summoning dark power into the tomb to corrupt Wavewalker's spirit. They know the ghost lingers in the real tomb hidden underground, but their evil minds haven't discovered how to destroy (or release)

Wavewalker's ghost permanently. Occasionally, they battle the ghost to disperse it and spend the time before it reforms profaning the real tomb in hopes of inviting corruption within.

The nagas have taken great pleasure in coming up with sadistic, twisted rituals, but are growing frustrated with their lack of results. Lately they've begun bickering among themselves, and the PCs prove an excellent outlet for their anger.

If the PCs fight openly with the shipwrecked sailors outside, the spirit nagas may hear the noise of combat. If they do, they cast *invisibility* on themselves and prepare for battle.

SPIRIT NAGAS (4)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 95 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 213)

TACTICS

Before Combat The nagas each cast *invisibility*, followed by *cat's grace* and then *shield of faith*. They take cover behind the coffin.

During Combat On the first round of combat, one naga casts a *fireball* at the PCs, while another casts *summon swarm* to fill the hallway behind them. The remaining two nagas cast *displacement* and enter combat.

Morale The bloodthirsty nagas fight to the death.

Trap: The coffin in the center of the room is warded with a dangerous trap. The nagas discovered the trick of opening the coffin without triggering the trap, leaving it active as a threat to other intruders.

With a successful DC 34 Disable Device check, a PC can either open the coffin without disturbing the trap or disarm the trap normally. When triggered, the trap spews caustic salt in a 20-foot burst around the coffin. The salt eats away flesh and can cause temporary blindness.

SALT FLAY TRAP

CR 11

XP 12,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect caustic salt (20-foot burst; 10d6 acid damage and blinded for 1d4 hours; DC 20 Reflex for half damage and to negate blindness)

L4. UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR (CR 12)

The stone steps wind into the ground like the shell of a nautilus. The stairs end in a corridor below that leads to Wavewalker's true tomb.

Trap: To further protect the tomb, this corridor holds a pit trap. The

spirit nagas spotted the way to bypass the trap in their explorations of the area.

JAGGED PIT TRAP

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 30)

Effect 60-ft.-deep pit (6d6 falling damage; DC 25 Reflex avoids); shards of rock along the pit walls slice creatures falling in the pit (Atk +25 melee, 2 attacks per target for 4d4+10 damage plus 1d6 bleed); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

L5. WAVEWALKER'S REST (CR 14)

The long corridor opens into a roughly conical chamber with an arching ceiling. Thousands of tiny seashells, each no bigger than a copper piece, cover the walls, glimmering with iridescence when light strikes them. Opposite the door stands a vertical sarcophagus, its lid carved in the image of a noble hero. The stench of rotting meat and decay hangs heavily in the room, and the walls and floor are splashed with dried blood.

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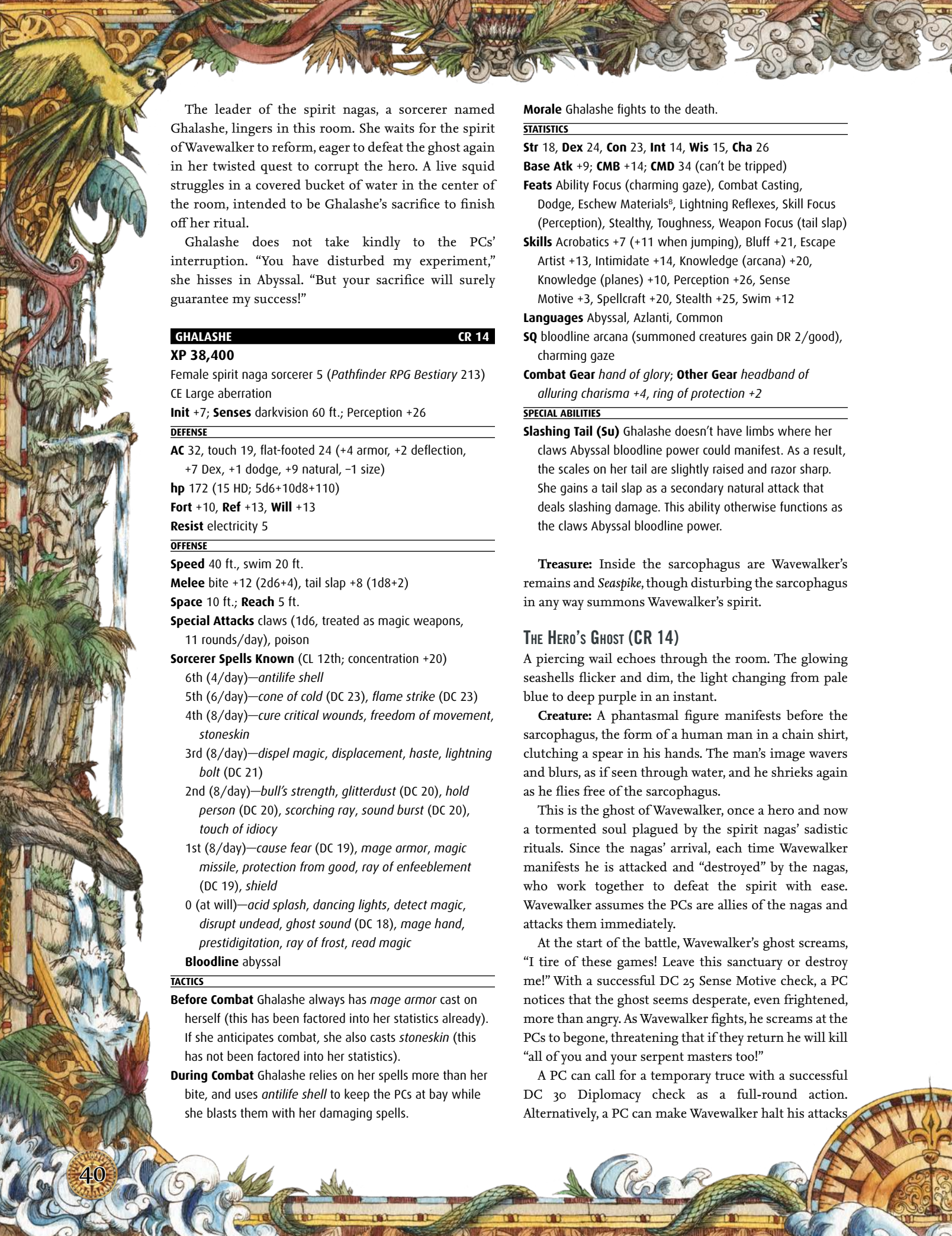
ECOLOGY
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GHALASHE



The leader of the spirit nagas, a sorcerer named Ghalashe, lingers in this room. She waits for the spirit of Wavewalker to reform, eager to defeat the ghost again in her twisted quest to corrupt the hero. A live squid struggles in a covered bucket of water in the center of the room, intended to be Ghalashe's sacrifice to finish off her ritual.

Ghalashe does not take kindly to the PCs' interruption. "You have disturbed my experiment," she hisses in Abyssal. "But your sacrifice will surely guarantee my success!"

GHALASHE**CR 14****XP 38,400**Female spirit naga sorcerer 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 213)

CE Large aberration

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +26**DEFENSE****AC** 32, touch 19, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural, -1 size)**hp** 172 (15 HD; 5d6+10d8+110)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13**Resist** electricity 5**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., swim 20 ft.**Melee** bite +12 (2d6+4), tail slap +8 (1d8+2)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** claws (1d6, treated as magic weapons, 11 rounds/day), poison**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 12th; concentration +20)6th (4/day)—*antilife shell*5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *flame strike* (DC 23)4th (8/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *freedom of movement*, *stoneskin*3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 21)2nd (8/day)—*bull's strength*, *glitterdust* (DC 20), *hold person* (DC 20), *scorching ray*, *sound burst* (DC 20), *touch of idiocy*1st (8/day)—*cause fear* (DC 19), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 19), *shield*0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound* (DC 18), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic***Bloodline** abyssal**TACTICS****Before Combat** Ghalashe always has *mage armor* cast on herself (this has been factored into her statistics already). If she anticipates combat, she also casts *stoneskin* (this has not been factored into her statistics).**During Combat** Ghalashe relies on her spells more than her bite, and uses *antilife shell* to keep the PCs at bay while she blasts them with her damaging spells.**Morale** Ghalashe fights to the death.**STATISTICS****Str** 18, **Dex** 24, **Con** 23, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 26**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 34 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Ability Focus (charming gaze), Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials^B, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tail slap)**Skills** Acrobatics +7 (+11 when jumping), Bluff +21, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +26, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +25, Swim +12**Languages** Abyssal, Azlanti, Common**SQ** bloodline arcana (summoned creatures gain DR 2/good), charming gaze**Combat Gear** *hand of glory*; **Other Gear** *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +2**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Slashing Tail (Su)** Ghalashe doesn't have limbs where her claws Abyssal bloodline power could manifest. As a result, the scales on her tail are slightly raised and razor sharp. She gains a tail slap as a secondary natural attack that deals slashing damage. This ability otherwise functions as the claws Abyssal bloodline power.**Treasure:** Inside the sarcophagus are Wavewalker's remains and *Seaspike*, though disturbing the sarcophagus in any way summons Wavewalker's spirit.**THE HERO'S GHOST (CR 14)**

A piercing wail echoes through the room. The glowing seashells flicker and dim, the light changing from pale blue to deep purple in an instant.

Creature: A phantasmal figure manifests before the sarcophagus, the form of a human man in a chain shirt, clutching a spear in his hands. The man's image wavers and blurs, as if seen through water, and he shrieks again as he flies free of the sarcophagus.

This is the ghost of Wavewalker, once a hero and now a tormented soul plagued by the spirit nagas' sadistic rituals. Since the nagas' arrival, each time Wavewalker manifests he is attacked and "destroyed" by the nagas, who work together to defeat the spirit with ease. Wavewalker assumes the PCs are allies of the nagas and attacks them immediately.

At the start of the battle, Wavewalker's ghost screams, "I tire of these games! Leave this sanctuary or destroy me!" With a successful DC 25 Sense Motive check, a PC notices that the ghost seems desperate, even frightened, more than angry. As Wavewalker fights, he screams at the PCs to begone, threatening that if they return he will kill "all of you and your serpent masters too!"

A PC can call for a temporary truce with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check as a full-round action. Alternatively, a PC can make Wavewalker halt his attacks

for a round or 2 by claiming the PCs will leave in peace and succeeding at a DC 30 Bluff check. If Wavewalker stops attacking, even momentarily, it gives the PCs an opportunity to quickly state they are not allied with the nagas and have no wish to harm Wavewalker. A PC can explain the party's purpose in the tomb and attempt a DC 25 Diplomacy check to calm Wavewalker and allay his suspicions long enough for a proper conversation. The PCs might find another way to deal with Wavewalker, such as by casting *calm spirit* (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 160).

WAVEWALKER CR 14

XP 38,400

Male human ghost bard (arcane duelist) 10/
horizon walker 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144,
Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 80, 265)
CN Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human,
incorporeal)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +3 Dex,
+1 dodge)

hp 166 (13 HD; 10d8+3d10+101)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

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

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +13 (14d6) or
Seaspike +14/+9 (1d6+4 plus 2d6 vs. aberrations)

Special Attacks bardic performance 28 rounds/day (move
action; bladethirst, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate
[DC 21], inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2,
inspire greatness, rallying cry), corrupting gaze (DC 22),
frightful moan (DC 22), telekinesis (DC 22)

Bard Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +16)

4th (2/day)—*freedom of movement*, *shout*

3rd (4/day)—*confusion* (DC 19), *dispel magic*,
see invisibility, *slow* (DC 19)

2nd (6/day)—*alter self*, *heroism*, *silence* (DC 18),
suggestion (DC 18), *tongues*

1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*,
feather fall, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *lock gaze*^{UC} (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*,
open/close (DC 16), *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Wavewalker has no time to prepare for
combat, unless the PCs leave the room and return later. If
they do, Wavewalker casts *heroism* and *eagle's splendor*
on himself before they return to the room.

During Combat Wavewalker casts *confusion* to disrupt
his enemies and then casts *slow* on the nearest target.

He uses his bladethirst ability to increase *Seaspike's*
enhancement bonus by 1 and to make it *ghost touch*, so
that he can wield it in battle.

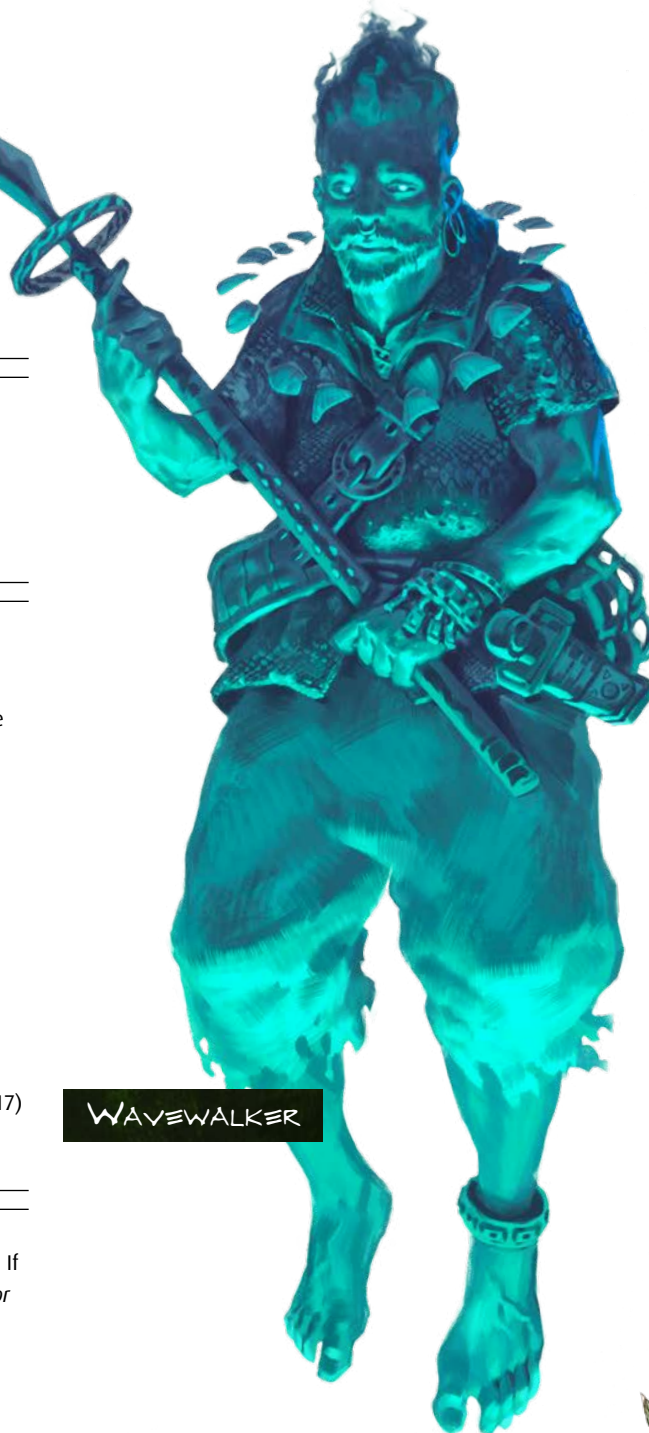
Morale Wavewalker fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 30

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Disruptive, Dodge,
Endurance, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot,
Spellbreaker, Toughness, Weapon Finesse



WAVEWALKER

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SEASPIKE

Once wielded by Wavewalker to drive back the plankta that threatened Talasantri, this spear deals deadly blows to aberrant creatures.

SEASPIKE

PRICE
70,338 GP

SLOT weapon

CL 12th

WEIGHT 3 lbs.

AURA strong conjuration and transmutation

This elegant, short-hafted spear has a razor-sharp head carved from a single piece of ivory. A twisting ring of ivory and jade tentacles hovers and slowly rotates just beneath the spearhead. Along the walnut haft sparkle tiny chips of peridot, each the size of a pinhead. *Seaspike* is a +3 aberration bane shortspear with three special properties.

First, the wielder of *Seaspike* can cast *fire shield* (chill) on herself three times per day as a 7th-level sorcerer. The chill shield takes the appearance of luminous blue and green flames that swirl around the wielder as if underwater.

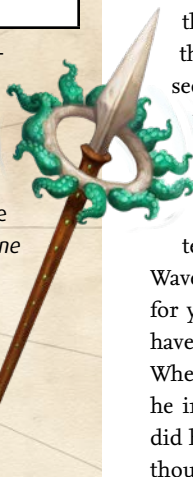
Second, *Seaspike* grants its wielder a swim speed of 30 feet when held. If the wielder already has a swim speed, *Seaspike* increases the swim speed by 10 feet.

Third, *Seaspike* is treated as a light weapon for purposes of the Weapon Finesse feat and other similar abilities.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 35,169 GP

Craft Weapon, *fire shield*, *magic weapon*, creator must have the Weapon Finesse feat, creator must have 5 ranks in Swim



take the spear under certain circumstances, described below, and he also can't prevent the PCs from robbing the tomb if his spirit has been set free.

Development: The PCs might destroy Wavewalker and take the spear and other equipment from his sarcophagus, or they may try to communicate with the spirit. If the PCs explain that the plankta is reawakening and could pose a threat to Talasantri once more, Wavewalker is suspicious but willing to listen. He asks the PCs to prove themselves with a simple but tedious task. If they reassemble the statues upstairs and replace them in their alcoves, clean the blood and filth from the nagas' foul rituals out of the tomb, and promise to secure the door when they leave, he will allow them to take the spear to aid Talasantri once again.

In life, Wavewalker was a bard from the north. When he was old enough, he left his home to travel across Golarion, singing and tale-telling for his supper. When he came to the coast, Wavewalker became smitten with the ocean. He sailed for years, working aboard any kind of ship that would have him, and eventually began questing underwater. When he came to Talasantri and learned of their plight, he immediately volunteered to defend them. Not only did he believe this was the right thing to do, but he also thought it would make an excellent story.

Now he lingers in his tomb, missing the sea and sad that his life of adventure is over. The people of Talasantri thought they were respecting Wavewalker by entombing him on land, but in truth the spirit would rather be under the waves.

Wavewalker doesn't know why he lingers in the mortal realm, but by speaking with him and learning his tale, the PCs may surmise that returning his body to the water might release the ghost. If they submerge the skeletal remains in the sarcophagus, a happy expression flickers over Wavewalker's ghostly face and he slowly fades from sight.

Story Award: If the PCs obtain *Seaspike*, they receive 25,600 XP. If the PCs also set Wavewalker's spirit to rest, they receive an additional 12,800 XP.

RETURN TO TALASANTRI

Once the PCs have claimed *Seaspike*, they can return to Talasantri in triumph, though they may choose to spend more time on the island. Blood Lily Cay has abundant plant life that alchemists or druids might be interested in, and the PCs might wish to take time to hunt some of the exotic wildlife on the island. This is a suitable time to introduce additional combats or short side quests if desired. Appropriate creatures to challenge the PCs include a nue, a pack of jungle drakes, a tick swarm, or a pair of therizinosaurs. Other potential encounters can be found on page 83.

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +17, Fly +11, Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, geography, local, nature) +10, Linguistics +5, Perception +25, Perform (sing) +15, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +27, Survival +10, Swim +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Aquan, Azlanti, Common

SQ arcane armor (medium), arcane bond (weapon), favored terrains (jungle +2, water +4), terrain dominance (terrain dominance [water]), terrain mastery (terrain mastery [water])

Treasure: Within the sarcophagus are *Seaspike*, a belt of incredible dexterity +2 made of braided blue silk, and a set of bracers of armor +2. Wavewalker objects to the PCs removing his equipment and attacks them again if they insist on robbing his tomb. He allows them to

If the PCs used a ship to reach Talasantri and have had the ship's crew sailing near the city ever since, they may also realize Blood Lily Cay has good natural harbors. Their crew could anchor the ship here and enjoy some shore time while the PCs finish up in Talasantri.

PART 4: ATTACK ON TALASANTRI

Upon returning to Talasantri, the PCs quickly learn that things are coming to a head in the underwater city as Naqualia grows more frustrated in her search for the elusive Vallik. The PCs must dodge attacks and track down the real threat to Talasantri to further their quest to find Ochymua.

M. GALVOS AMBUSH (CR 15)

While the PCs were at Blood Lily Cay, Naqualia's forces at work in Talasantri laid an ambush to await the party's return. These assassins launch their deadly strike as the PCs draw near the city.

A sunken ship on the ocean floor lies cradled by a coral reef. Much of the ship has rotted away, leaving the center of the ship nothing but broken and sodden ribs. The ship's mast is snapped at the base and now leans to the ocean floor near an ancient statue of an aquatic elf. Across from the sunken ship are more thick patches of sharp coral. Colorful fish swim about and sea anemones wave in the gentle current.

Creatures: Naqualia delegated this task to one of her strongest allies, a siyokoy named Ayeussa who chose five trusted galvos to join her team in the attack. One, a galvo she calls Creel, has worked with Ayeussa many times and is more powerful than the average member of his species. Together they make a dangerous team; with the addition of the four other galvos, Ayeussa believes these "heroes" won't stand a chance.

Ayeussa sets up the ambush herself, hiding the galvos among the ribs of the old shipwreck while she conceals herself in a thick coral formation. If the PCs don't travel along the seabed, Ayeussa instead lurks with her allies above Talasantri, waiting for the PCs to descend. She uses a *wand of minor image* to create a blind—an image of a dense fish school—to hide her team behind.

The PCs can attempt DC 35 Perception checks to notice the hidden ambushers if they are paying attention and specifically watching for trouble. On a success, the PCs notice Ayeussa and her allies just before they attack.

When the PCs enter range, Ayeussa and her allies charge to attack, entering melee as quickly as possible. Ayeussa researched the PCs' abilities beforehand and

knows if they have powerful spellcasters on their team. She targets a spellcaster first, hoping to stun the PC with her tail attack, while the galvos attack the rest of the party.

AYEUSSA

CR 11

XP 12,800

Female siyokoy rogue 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 246)

N Medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 18, flat-footed 20 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)

hp 154 (16d8+83)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1; **DR** 10/slashing;

Immune cold, electricity, poison

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +21 (1d6+10/19–20 plus grab), 2 claws +21 (1d6+10), tail slap +17 (1d6+5/19–20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail slap)

Special Attacks constrict (2d6+5), sneak attack +2d6, stunning shock, swim-by attack

TACTICS

Before Combat Ayeussa conceals herself and her allies.

During Combat Given that Ayeussa has researched the PCs' abilities, she targets any arcane spellcasters first, attempting to stun them with her tail attack. She targets divine spellcasters next.

Morale If the galvos are all slain, Ayeussa tries to surrender.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 25, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +21 (+27 grapple, +23 steal); **CMD** 39 (41 vs. grapple and steal)

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite, tail slap), Improved Grapple, Improved Steal^{APG}, Power Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (tail slap)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Disable Device +20, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +25, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +30, Survival +17, Swim +26, Use Magic Device +20

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ rogue talent (combat swipe^{APG}), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *wand of minor image* (47 charges), key to the safehouse (area H).

CREEL

CR 13

XP 25,600

Advanced galvo (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 288, 120)

NE Medium magical beast (aquatic)

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

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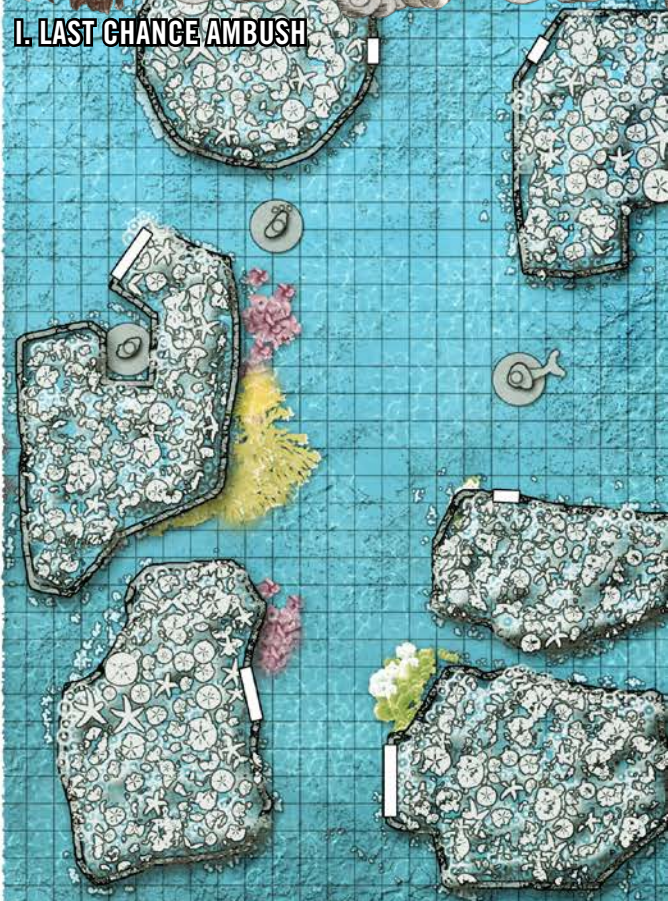
THE MORDANT SPIRE

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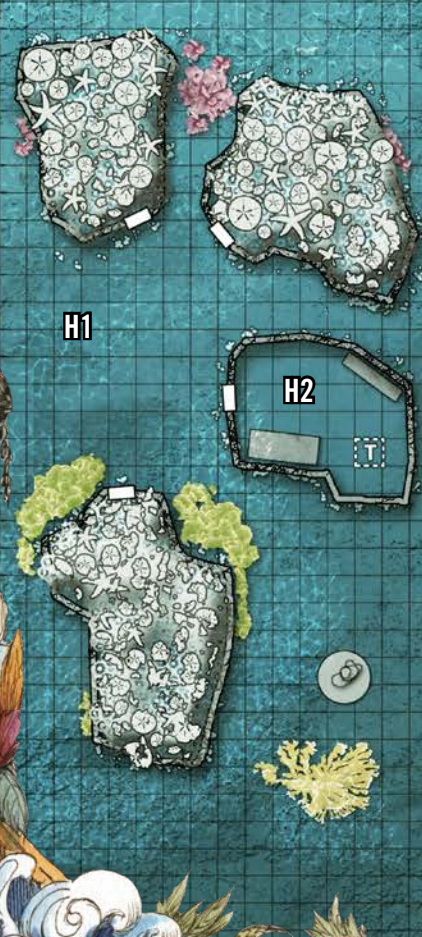
M. GALVOS AMBUSH



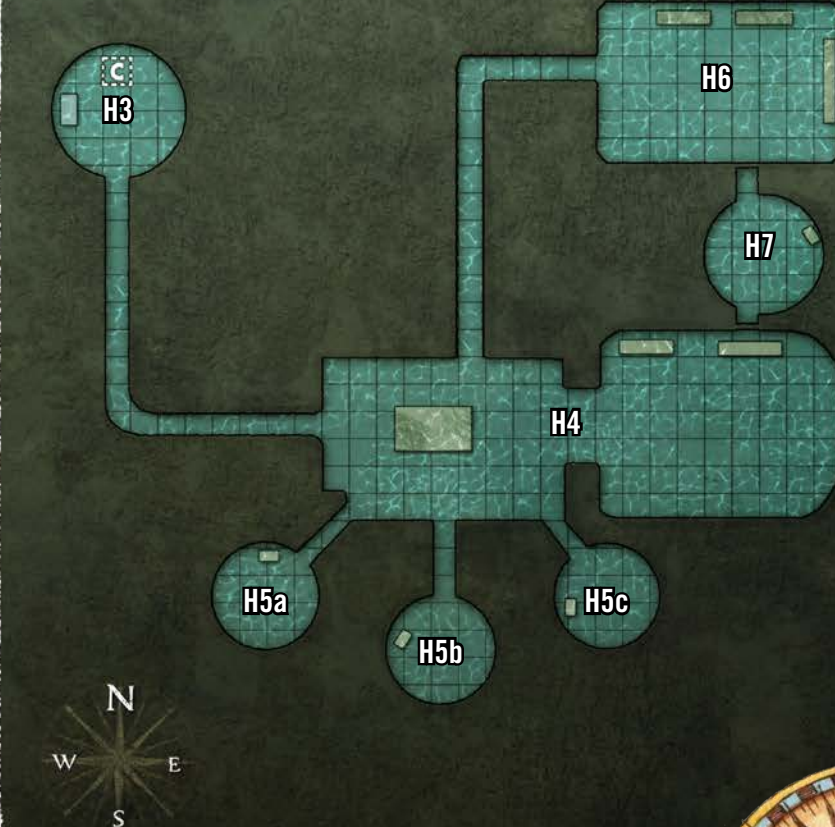
I. LAST CHANCE AMBUSH



H1-H2. DEEP SAFEHOUSE



H3-H7. DEEP SAFEHOUSE LOWER LEVEL



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)
hp 161 (19d10+57)

Fort +14, **Ref** +16, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities swarmlike; **DR** 10/slashing;

Immune electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +24 (1d6+3 plus 2d6 electricity), 2 slams +25 (1d6+3 plus 2d6 electricity)

Ranged eel dart +24 touch (1d6+3 plus 1d6 electricity)

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

TACTICS

Before Combat Creel waits for Ayeussa's order to attack.

During Combat If there are two or more spellcasters in the party, Ayeussa orders Creel to attack one while she takes another. Creel enters melee as quickly as possible, using his slams at their maximum reach whenever he can.

Morale The obedient galvo fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +19; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 38 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +20, Swim +15

Languages Aquan (can't speak)

SQ amphibious, compression, varied attack

GALVOS (4)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 127 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 120)

TACTICS

Before Combat The galvos wait impatiently for the signal from Ayeussa to attack.

During Combat The galvos charge into combat, positioning themselves in the thick of melee as they are unaffected by flanking. They attack eagerly, biting and nibbling at their opponents as they strike.

Morale Goaded into a fight by more powerful creatures, the hungry galvos fight to the death.

Development: Ayeussa is loyal, but not to a fault. When she realizes death is upon her, she tries to surrender. Her plan is to tell the PCs the bare minimum she has to in order to survive, hoping that if the PCs let her go she can make it back to Naqualia and warn her before the PCs can strike.

Naqualia has been close with information, but Ayeussa has learned some useful details. She can tell the PCs that Naqualia is a deep merfolk with a large number of deep merfolk allies—somewhere around 40 in all. Naqualia has pledged herself and her allies to someone she calls

DANGER BREWING

By the time the PCs arrive back at Talasantri, Naqualia has discovered the location of the elusive Vallik, and has learned why she had so much difficulty finding the "research assistant." Vallik is a mezlan: an intelligent, shapeshifting ooze that carries along the personality of the person who sacrificed their life to serve as an elite Azlanti agent. Vallik, the name the mezlan used when speaking with the lich, found Auberon's tower over a thousand years ago and served the undead Azlanti as a spymaster until leaving the tower a century ago.

The mezlan has been hiding in plain sight, taking the form of a new citizen of Talasantri whenever suspicions arose. Naqualia has tracked Vallik to an art gallery in the Whalefall District, and now she is on the move, ready to capture Vallik and learn the secrets it holds.

"the Master," but Ayeussa knows nothing more about this allegiance.

Naqualia met with Ayeussa and gave her the details of this mission in a safehouse in Talasantri. The safehouse (area **H**) is hidden beneath an innocent-looking residence near an entrance to the Undertow. The small stone key Ayeussa carries unlocks the back door. Several of Naqualia's deep merfolk agents guard the building around the clock, ever wary of the Talasantri guard or anyone else who lingers near the residence for too long.

Ayeussa also knows that Naqualia and her agents are behind the disturbances in Talasantri, including the murder at the PCs' host's house and the ragworm attack. These disturbances are meant as distractions, Ayeussa can explain, as Naqualia is looking for someone. Ayeussa knows this person has information the Master wants, but all Naqualia has to go on is a name—Vallik.

If the PCs let her go, Ayeussa proceeds with her plan to warn Naqualia. Clever PCs can follow Ayeussa back to the safehouse to ensure she's told the truth, although doing so means the next time they face her she will have a group of trained deep merfolk mercenaries at her side.

Story Award: If the PCs learn the safehouse's location, award them an additional 25,600 XP.

RETURNING THE SPEAR

Upon returning to Talasantri, the PCs might first want to bring the spear to Rillkimatai at the city hall. The oracle welcomes them and congratulates them on their success, but seems bemused.

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"I cannot express our gratitude enough," the oracle says. His words sound genuine, but puzzlement creases his brow. "I fear, though, that your heroic actions may have been, for the moment, unnecessary. When I learned of the plankta's awakening, I sent scouts to assess the situation. They have just returned, and while it's true that the creature is stirring, it is in fact miles away in a deep rift, and shows no intention of moving in this direction. I sought out the deep merfolk delegation to ask for more details, but they seem to have disappeared."

The PCs should know, or suspect, by now that the deep merfolk are working with Naqualia and her master, Ochymua. If they tell Rillkimatai what they've learned, he's horrified and asks what he can do to help. He offers to send the guard out to look for deep merfolk activity and to protect the more vulnerable areas of town. He also asks the PCs to keep the spear they worked so hard for. "It belongs in the hands of heroes, especially ones that will come to our aid should he need it."

If the PCs negotiated for a reward, Rillkimatai pays them the promised amount. He also presents the PCs with a scroll case. "This contains all the information I have of Ochymua and his race," he says. "May it help you on your quest." Inside the case are a number of waterproof parchments detailing general information about veiled masters. Studying these documents for 2 hours gives any PC who reads them a +4 bonus on Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks to recall information about alghollthus, especially veiled masters.

There are also several pages with notes on the empire of Azlant. Most of the information is dry and historical, and some of it is inaccurate, but it might be of help. Studying these documents for 2 hours gives a PC a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) checks to recall information about ancient Azlant.

A single page contains the same excerpt on Auberon the Drowned as Naqualia has in the safehouse (see area H7). Rillkimatai has added a handwritten note: "The lich creates endless undead forces to guard his tower. Though the way is perilous, there is none other who might know what Ochymua seeks and where it can be found. He lived prior to Earthfall and knows more history than we have forgotten." Rillkimatai has included a map showing the way to Auberon's tower as well.

Finally, Rillkimatai has divined some information about Ochymua specifically. On the last page of the documents he writes the following.

"Ochymua was a spy who infiltrated the Azlanti people. For its masters, it sought the location of a secret military base and the weapons it contained. The weapons were intended for use against the serpentfolk, but as the Azlanti became

aware of the alghollthu threat to the empire, they sought to turn the weapons against this new threat. This never came to fruition in any way, as Earthfall occurred and laid the empire low. However, I've discovered records that indicate that prior to Earthfall the Azlanti imprisoned this Ochymua you seek, and the divinations I've performed indicate that Ochymua still lives to this day and has resumed its old mission.

Story Award: If the PCs receive this information from Rillkimatai and learn the way to Auberon's tower, award them 25,600 XP.

RETURNING TO JURIX

If the PCs gathered the items the cecaelia crime lord was looking for on Blood Lilly Cay, they can venture back to the Undertow at this point to settle up with her. She responds true to her word as indicated on 28, though if the PCs have taken care of multiple tasks for her and did a good job of reclaiming the items she wanted, she might give them a bigger cut than they expected: as an example, she might allow a second pick from the items and an additional 10% increase in payment in gold and valuables.

THE MISSING SCION

This event can occur anytime after the PCs return to Talasantri, but it should be before the final encounter with Naqualia (area H).

One of people of Talasantri swims up to the PCs with an urgent look on his face. "Surfacers," he says, "I bring news. Someone has attacked a member of your gracious host's family. She asks that you come at once."

The messenger is an aquatic elf if the PCs allied with Koramallis, or a merfolk if the PCs allied with Anemora. If the PCs visit their host's house, they find it in an uproar.

The PCs' host is in serious distress. Anemora is coldly furious in her terror; Koramallis is hysterical. Either one explains that their child, in admiration of the PCs, decided to help the heroes by investigating the strange incidents in Talasantri. They left while the household slept and haven't been seen since.

The PCs can watch for Argnos or Drecissa during the rest of the adventure, but there is nothing to find. The child asked too many questions too publicly and fell afoul of the deep merfolk. Rather than kill the relatively helpless investigator, Naqualia ordered him or her to be captured with an eventual plan of bringing the captive to Ochymua to handle as the veiled master sees fit.

The PCs can find a personal item belonging to the kidnapped youth in the deep merfolk safehouse, but their ally has already been whisked away. The PCs will have a chance to rescue the youth later in the campaign (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #125: Tower of the Drowned Dead*).



CYREUS AND MALOOTH

H. DEEP SAFEHOUSE

Located in the western end of the Threadfin District, this small home doesn't stand out from the others. Naqualia rented the home from someone in town through a proxy a couple of weeks before she came to the city for her current mission. A couple of the other houses nearby are vacant as well as they await repairs or tenants. If the PCs question any of the other neighbors, they mention that they've seen deep merfolk in the neighborhood coming and going from the house, but they've never been any trouble. Those questioned look at the PCs with suspicion, wondering if they are seeing the deep merfolk in a bad light since they look different from other merfolk.

Use the maps on page 44 for the safehouse encounters.

H1. SAFEHOUSE ENTRANCE (CR 14)

A one-story residence made of white stone stands at the end of a cul-de-sac formed by homes made from arching coral, and few jellyfish lanterns float here. The residence has the ineffable air of a place abandoned.

This is the safehouse Naqualia uses to contact most of her team and give them a place to hide while they take care of things in town. She has other places in the city as well, more carefully hidden. This one is where she leaves messages and useful supplies and has the occasional face-to-face meeting with her allies.

The front door is locked with a superior quality lock (Disable Device DC 40). The key found on Ayeussa unlocks this door.

Creatures: One of the deep merfolk, a druid named Cyreus, uses wild shape to keep watch over the house in the form of a Tiny fish. If he spots the PCs approaching, he quickly swims through an opening in the roof to warn the others. Roll a Stealth check for Cyreus and ask the PCs for Perception checks to determine if they notice the druid. A PC who succeeds notices the fish suddenly

dive through the roof and into the house. In this case, the PCs can encounter Cyreus in area H2 after he has alerted the fighters within.

If the PCs stop the fish from escaping, the deep merfolk druid changes form and engages the PCs with his animal companion to drive the intruders away.

Cyreus's animal companion is a large barracuda that might be spotted more easily; it is named Malooth and uses statistics for a gar. It doesn't enter the home and instead lurks in the alley between two buildings, guarding the location as a dog would.

CYREUS

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male deep merfolk druid 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 172)

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 174 (17d8+98)

Fort +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

Defensive Abilities deep dweller, semitransparent;

Immune poison; **Resist** cold 5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +2 *spell storing scimitar* +19/+14/+9 (1d6+7/18-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6, sprint, wild shape 5/day

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +16)

7th—*heal*

6th—*greater dispel magic*, *summon nature's ally VI*

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5th— *baleful polymorph* (DC 18), *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*
4th— *ball lightning*^{APG} (DC 17), *freedom of movement*,
 strong jaw^{APG} (DC 17), *thorn body*^{APG}
3rd— *greater magic fang*, *poison* (DC 16), *protection from*
 energy, *stone shape*, *summon nature's ally III*
2nd— *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *chill*
 metal (DC 15), *heat metal* (DC 15)
1st— *entangle* (DC 14), *hydraulic push*^{APG}, *keen senses*^{APG}
(DC 14), *speak with animals*, *stone fist*^{APG}
0 (at will)— *detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat If the druid escapes into the base and has time to prepare, he casts *barkskin* and *stoneskin* on himself, followed by *greater magic fang* on his animal companion. These spells are not factored into his statistics.

During Combat Cyreus uses wild shape to take the form of a giant octopus and casts *thorn body* on himself before attacking.

Morale If Cyreus is reduced to 30 hit points or fewer, he tries to retreat to the next chamber for help.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32

Feats Aquadynamic Focus, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Natural Spell, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Wild Speech^{UM}

Skills Acrobatics +2 (–6 to jump), Handle Animal +15, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +20, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +16 (+24 underwater, +24 underwater), Survival +5, Swim +16; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth underwater, +8 Stealth underwater

Languages Aquan, Druidic

SQ a thousand faces, nature bond (giant barracuda named Malooth), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +14, woodland stride

Gear +1 *wild hide armor*, +2 *spell storing scimitar* (currently contains *poison*), spell component pouch, 315 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aquadynamic Focus Yutpan doesn't take penalties on attack and damage rolls for fighting underwater with bludgeoning and slashing weapons for which he has taken the Weapon Focus feat. This feat originally appeared on page 57 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Aquatic Adventures*.

MALOOTH

Giant barracuda animal companion

N Large animal (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, –1 size)

hp 104 (11d8+55)

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4 (+4 morale bonus vs. enchantment spells and effects)

Defensive Abilities evasion

Offense **Speed** swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +16/+11 (2d6+13 plus grab)

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

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 16, **Con** 19, **Int** 1, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Stealth +12, Swim +21

SQ devotion, tricks (attack, attack any target, defend, down, fetch, heel, seek, stay)

H2. DECOY INTERIOR (CR 10)

The interior of the building shows a few signs of habitation. A stone table sits against one wall, its surface carved with circular patterns. Several stone niches along the walls may have been used for storage, but they currently stand empty.

A well-hidden secret trap door near the table leads into a chamber beneath this room (area **H3**). A PC can spot the trap door with a successful DC 25 Perception check.

Trap: The trap door is warded with a magical trap, one that can be temporarily deactivated with the password “wakening.” All the deep merfolk who reside here know the password.

WAILING SIRENS TRAP

CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** password (deactivates trap for 1 minute)

Effect spell effect (*banshee blast*^{ACG}, visual effect is that of sirens instead of banshees, 11d4 damage and panicked for 11 rounds, Reflex DC 25 for half damage and to negate panic)

H3. SAFEHOUSE ANTECHAMBER

A cylindrical shaft descends 20 feet from a trap door and opens into a smooth-walled chamber. Judging from the seamless walls, this chamber was excavated magically. No light illuminates this chamber, but a dim glow can be seen at the end of an adjoining corridor.

If Cyreus made it inside, he alerts the two deep merfolk fighters, Leucothea and Ingemar, in area **H4**. The fighters wait in this corridor until the PCs arrive and attempt to ambush them. Cyreus hangs farther back in the corridor, supporting the fighters with his spells.

If the PCs triggered the trap in area **H2**, Leucothea and Ingemar hear the noise and swim to the area, waiting to attack any intruders who descend.

Treasure: A stone chest in one side of the room holds supplies and a few special items Naqualia leaves for her followers when they go out on missions. The chest is unlocked and contains two *potions of bear's endurance*, four *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *pearl of power* (2nd), and an *insistent doorknocker*^{UE}.

H4. SAFEHOUSE CENTRAL CHAMBER (CR 15)

The corridor leads to a larger chamber divided into two sections. The smaller section appears to be a meeting room with a large table that seems carved from floor. On one wall hangs a waterproofed map of Talasantri on which a number of locations have been marked. A blue jellyfish lantern drifts near the ceiling, casting faint illumination over the room.

The larger section looks like a common room area. Stone shelves jut from the north walls, and a few training dummies bob along the south side of the room, tethered in place with woven strands of kelp rope. A number of leather pouches drift from hooks fastened to the walls.

Naqualia used the map on the wall to track her investigations, marking off the locations where she searched for Vallik and found nothing. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC can realize green circles mark the locations of the various accidents and attacks that have plagued Talasantri, work of Naqualia's agents.

Creatures: Two deep merfolk fighters, Leucothea and Ingemar, and a deep merfolk skald named Laiken lounge in the common area of this room. Laiken was the deep merfolk in Talasantri Plaza responsible for warning of the impending plankta attack. The merfolk immediately attack any strangers who enter the chamber.

INGEMAR AND LEUCOTHEA

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

Female and male deep merfolk fighter (polearm master) 9
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 172, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 106)

NE Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;
Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +1 deflection,
+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 141 each (13 HD; 4d8+9d10+74)

Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities deep dweller, semitransparent;
Resist cold 5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +2 *ranseur* +24/+19/+14 (2d4+15/19-20/x3)

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

Special Attacks pole fighting -3, polearm training, sneak
attack +2d6, sprint, steadfast pike

TACTICS

During Combat When the PCs enter the chamber, the deep merfolk fighters charge out, positioning themselves to flank their nearest opponents. Due to their reach and their polearm mastery, they can make ample use of their sneak attacks. They first try to disarm their nearest enemy before attacking, watching for opportunities to cleave.

Morale If one fighter dies, the other attempts to flee to area **H6** to warn the sorcerer.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18 (+22 disarm); **CMD** 33 (35 vs. disarm)

Feats Cleave, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Greater Disarm, Greater Weapon Focus (*ranseur*), Improved Critical (*ranseur*), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*ranseur*), Weapon Specialization (*ranseur*)

Skills Acrobatics +0 (-8 when jumping), Intimidate +13,
Perception +14, Stealth +18 (+26 underwater), Swim +16;

Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth underwater

Languages Aboleth, Aquan

SQ flexible flanker

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2);

Other Gear +2 *shadow chainmail*, +2 *ranseur*, *ring of protection* +1, safehouse key, 140 gp worth of semiprecious stones and pearls

LAIKEN

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female deep merfolk skald 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 172,
Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide 49)

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;
Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +1 deflection,
+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 119 (13d8+61)

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

Defensive Abilities deep dweller, improved uncanny dodge,
semitransparent; **DR** 1/—; **Resist** cold 5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +2 *rapier* +18/+13 (1d6+8/18-20)

Special Attacks rage powers (animal fury, powerful blow +3,

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quick reflexes), raging song 22 rounds/day (move action; inspired rage, song of marching, song of strength), sneak attack +2d6, spell kenning 1/day, sprint

Skald Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +12)

3rd (4/day)—*confusion* (DC 16), *displacement*, *glibness*, *slow* (DC 16)

2nd (5/day)—*alter self*, *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *misdirection*, *tongues*

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *chord of shards*^{UM} (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *ear-piercing scream*^{UM} (DC 14), *saving finale*^{APG} (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *lullaby* (DC 13), *open/close* (DC 13), *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

During Combat The skald casts *displacement* on herself before entering battle. After casting *slow* or *confusion* to disrupt her enemies, the skald flies into a rage. She attacks the nearest enemy while chanting and singing tales of heroism.

Morale In her rage, the skald fights to the death. If not raging, Laiken tries a *confusion* spell to slow her foes before fleeing, if reduced to fewer than 40 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 31

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +2 (–6 when jumping), Knowledge (dungeoneering, history, local) +10, Perception +15, Perform (oratory, sing) +15, Stealth +6 (+14 underwater), Swim +17; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth underwater

Languages Aquan

SQ bardic knowledge +4, lore master 1/day, versatile performances (oratory, sing)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 mithral chainmail, +2 rapier, *ring of protection* +1, safehouse key, 480 gp worth of semiprecious stones and pearls

Treasure: The leather bladders hanging from the walls contain kelp tea in varying degrees of strength. One of the bladders instead holds a strong alcoholic drink made from fermented seagrass. In addition to the beverages, there are four leather bladders that hold potions. Two of them hold *potions of cure serious wounds*, and two hold *potions of displacement*.

H5. BUNKS

Magically carved from the seafloor, these rounded rooms in the deep safehouse serve as comfortable places for the deep merfolk to sleep when not causing trouble in Talasantri. Each is outfitted with a few wall

hooks to hold gear and a trunk to store other personal items. The trunks are empty save for a clean change of clothes.

H6. SAFEHOUSE LABORATORY (CR 14)

Shelves and tables carved out from the walls and floor hold beakers, stoppered flasks, jars of colorful liquid, odd tools, and other alchemical apparatuses. An ornate circle surrounded by faintly glowing runes has been etched into the floor in the center of the room.

There are no jellyfish lanterns in this room, but the glowing runes on the floor provides dim light out to 20 feet. Some of the deep merfolk use this laboratory to brew potions for the group's use while they have been in the city.

Creature: If alerted by one of the fighters in area **H4**, the sorcerer Thalem prepares for combat. Otherwise the PCs can find him working at one of the tables.

THALEM

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male deep merfolk sorcerer 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 172)

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +11; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+2 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 144 (17 HD; 13d6+4d8+81)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities deep dweller, fated (+3), semitransparent; **Resist** cold 5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +2 *spear* +14/+9 (1d8+5/+3)

Special Attacks it was meant to be 1/day, sneak attack +2d6, sprint

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +17) 7/day—touch of destiny (+6)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +17)

6th (4/day)—*disintegrate* (DC 20), *mislead* (DC 21), *true seeing*

5th (6/day)—*break enchantment*, *dominate person* (DC 20), *hold monster* (DC 20), *sending*

4th (7/day)—*confusion* (DC 19), *crushing despair* (DC 19), *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *stoneskin*

3rd (7/day)—*blink*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *protection from energy*, *suggestion* (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *knock*, *mirror image*, *touch of idiocy*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *color spray* (DC 16), *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*
 0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *read magic*

Bloodline destined

TACTICS

Before Combat If given time to prepare, Thalem casts *stoneskin*, *freedom of movement*, and *invisibility* before combat begins and hides in the laboratory. These spells are not factored into his statistics.

During Combat Thalem casts *lightning bolt* down the hallway as the PCs arrive. If he wasn't able to prepare his defenses, he casts *stoneskin* as early in the combat as possible. Thalem focuses on using his spells to disrupt the PCs' actions.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Thalem casts *dimension door* to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 31

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Spell Focus (enchantment, illusion), Toughness, Weapon Focus (spear)

Skills Acrobatics +7 (–1 when jumping), Knowledge (arcana) +14, Perception +18, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +12 (+20 underwater), Swim +15; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth underwater

Languages Aboleth, Aquan

SQ bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus on saves when casting personal-range spells)

Gear +2 *spear*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2, *shell of sending* (see page 56), spell component pouch, 698 gp worth of semiprecious stones and pearls

Treasure: The assorted equipment here functions as a masterwork alchemical lab. A case of completed potions sits on one of the tables, including a *potion of blur*, two *potions of bull's strength*, five *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of invisibility*, and three *potions of protection from energy*.

H7. HIDDEN CHAMBER (CR 12)

With a successful DC 15 Perception check, a PC notices a secret door connecting the laboratory with a smaller chamber. Ordinarily the door is harder to find, but when the deep merfolk brought their kidnap victim (either Argnos or Drecissa) down here, the quick-thinking prisoner wedged a bit of

shell into the hinge of the door, making a narrow crack where the door opens easily visible.

Trap: To guard against intrusion, this door bears another trap that can be deactivated with a password.



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Excerpt from "A Treatise on Ancient Azlant":

Auberon's power was legendary even among the great wizards of Azlant. The mage was known for his talent in infusing artifacts with immense destructive capabilities. Recovered writings suggest that Auberon worked in secret laboratories run by Azlant's military leaders, crafting weapons that could devastate the nation's enemies.

During Earthfall, Auberon sought to escape the cataclysm by performing a ritual of lichdom. In doing so, the wizard was able to sustain his life. His tower, known as the Alabaster Trident, still stands, now mostly submerged in the ocean, which lent the deathless wizard the moniker "Auberon the Drowned."

HANDOUT #1

It seems that one of Auberon's lackeys, a research assistant named Vallik, might know the information we seek. Divinations and research have led me to the city of Talasantri, where this Vallik apparently now resides. Why the lich allowed his servant to leave with such critical knowledge remains a mystery, though. I require your assistance in locating my target. Bring at least a dozen others with you, and arrive in small groups so as not to raise suspicions. I'll contact you once you've arrived.

HANDOUT #2

Ayeussa, Naqualia, and Thalem are the only ones who know this password.

ICE SHARDS TRAP

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (alarm); Reset automatic; Bypass password (vengeance, deactivates trap for 2 minutes)

Effect spell effect (*cone of cold*, visual effect is that of swirling shards of ice, 9d6 points of cold damage and 4d6 points of slashing damage plus 2d6 bleed, Reflex DC 22 for half damage and to negate bleed)

Treasure: This small chamber is used to store treasure, documents, and occasionally prisoners. Currently it holds only an ivory scroll case hanging from a hook on the wall and a broken shell bracelet. The PCs recognize the bracelet as one that Drecissa or Argnos wore. (One piece of the bracelet is wedged into the hinge of the door.) The youth has been taken by one of Naqualia's minions and was handed over to a group of scraggs to be brought to a location called the Alabaster Trident, the flooded home of the lich Auberon the Drowned. The PCs have a chance to locate and rescue the captured ally in the following adventure *Pathfinder Adventure Path #125: Tower of the Drowned Dead*.

In the scroll case are a number of waterproofed documents: instructions Naqualia has left for her minions and notes she used for her research. The PCs can examine the following documents.

With this information, the PCs can track Naqualia to her current location in the Lionfish Gallery (area J). She has already found the knowledge she sought and transmitted it to Ochymua, but the PCs can still stop her from reaching Auberon's tower and reinforcing Ochymua's position there—and she's not quite done with Vallik yet.

I. LAST CHANCE AMBUSH (CR 14)

This event takes place between the deep merfolk safehouse and the Lionfish Gallery in the Whalefall District where Naqualia is interrogating Vallik.

Never one to leave anything to chance, Naqualia placed her remaining agents on the streets of Talasantri to watch for the PCs or any other parties that might try to interfere with her work. She is finally done with them and just wants the PCs out of the picture. When the PCs are a few minutes from the gallery, one of the ambush parties spots them and attacks.

Creatures: These deep merfolk are the last agents Naqualia has in the city. They strike quickly and brutally, having instructions to kill the PCs. Such an open attack panics any nearby citizens, but the deep merfolk don't care. They're prepared to run the risk of capture, incarceration, or death as long as they succeed in their task.

The PCs have made allies in town as well, though, and find assistance from an unexpected corner. Shortly after the ambush begins (1d4 rounds), a band of agents from one of the PCs' allies joins the fray on the PCs' side. If the PCs have won Jurix's favor, it's a group of cecaelia ruffians that comes to their aid; if they instead have a

stronger relationship with either Anemora or Kormallis, Talasantri guards appear and provide their assistance.

DEEP MERFOLK FIGHTERS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 141 each (use Ingemar and Leucothea's statistics on page 49)

CECAELIA RUFFIANS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 123 each (see page 15)

TALASANTRI GUARDS (4)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 89 each (see page 11)

Development: When the fight is over, any surviving allies approach the PCs. The leader of the group, named Nyovess, explains that their patron (Anemora, Jurix, or Koramallis) was concerned about the escalating violence and chaos in the city. The patron asked this team to find the PCs and offer any support they needed to help bring the city back into balance.

These allies are willing to do almost anything the PCs ask. The aquatic elf guards balk at overtly illegal orders, such as murder, but otherwise the allies are happy to fight the PCs' enemies, carry messages, scout for trouble, or any other jobs the PCs require.

If the PCs use any of these allies in the final confrontation with Naqualia, adjust the encounter so that it isn't too easy. If all four of the Talasantri guards survive the ambush encounter, add one additional deep merfolk fighter to the final encounter with Naqualia for each surviving guard.

Story Award: If at least one ally survives and joins the PCs, each PC receives an additional 19,200 XP.

J. LIONFISH GALLERY

Standing in the northeastern end of the Whalefall District, the Lionfish Gallery is surrounded by a couple of other small galleries, a popular tavern, and some shops. The area gets plenty of traffic from Talasantri citizens out to shop or find entertainment in the district. The gallery has been in operation in Talasantri for over a hundred years, though it has lost its popularity to newer galleries and exhibition halls in the city in recent years. Some people in the city see it as old and out of date for the current tastes of the city. Despite this, the Lionfish Gallery has a fine permanent collection and newer shows that rotate through its halls with some frequency.

Vallik, having taking the shape of a merfolk and the name Myrddan for the last few years, has taken a job as a custodian and guardian for the Lionfish Gallery. The gallery's owner hired him to be at the gallery

My search continues, albeit slowly. I'm concerned about drawing too much attention to myself. Distract the city guard for me. Robberies, murder... I don't care what techniques you use. So long as the guards are after you and not me, I have a chance of succeeding. The Master won't tolerate failure.

HANDOUT #3

This is intolerable. I could almost believe a curse hampers my ability to find this Vallik. Those strangers who've made a name for themselves in the city, we can use them. Set them up and make sure Vallik's name is connected with whatever mischief you concoct. Perhaps they can do my research for me.

HANDOUT #4

Never mind the child. Send it along to the Master at Auberon's tower. I feel that the Master will appreciate the gift. Gather your forces and prepare to leave. I've finally located Vallik. I realize now why his identity and location eluded me for so long. I'm on my way now to the Lionfish Gallery in the Whalefall District. Once I'm finished there with Vallik I'll go directly to the tower. Soon the Master will have the location of facility and the plans can advance.

HANDOUT #5

when it is closed to clean up after events, make sure that the exhibits are maintained, and ensure that no one breaks in or steals or damages the art within. He sometimes even assists the people who serve refreshments during openings and other events held at the gallery. The owner used to lock him in during

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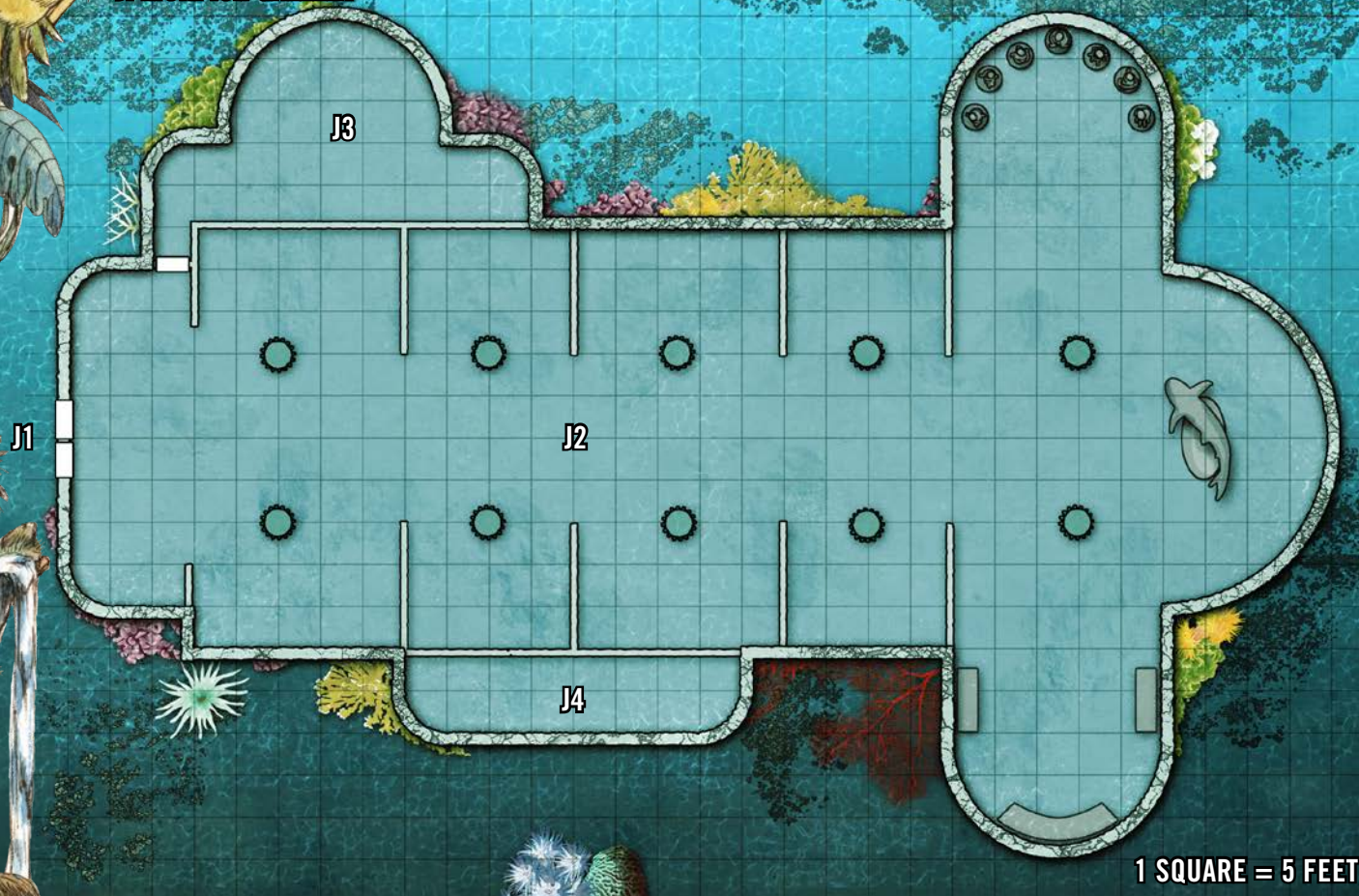
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these hours, but after a year of exceptional service, she gave him a second set of keys to come and go as he pleases, as long as he's on duty when no one else is there.

Naqualia finally tracked Vallik to the gallery after she found someone who claimed that Myrddan once talked about a person named Vallik, purportedly someone he knew at one point who happened to be a wizard's apprentice. She further investigated this gallery custodian and discovered that he was a mezlan, a rare shapeshifting ooze creature created by the ancient Azlanti to be used as specialized forces and spies. Vallik has changed its identity and form dozens of times since arriving in Talasantri, throwing off all but the best and luckiest attempts at finding him.

J1. GALLERY EXTERIOR

The Lionfish Gallery, like many buildings in Talasantri, is made completely of magically grown coral. Most of the walls join one another in organic curves rather than sharp right angles. Even the base of the walls curve into the city's stone foundations where sand gathers.

The building has no windows, and only the front doors on the western side of the building allow entrance. The

front doors are made from thin slabs of stone (hardness 8, hp 40, break DC 28) and are locked (Disable Device DC 25).

The gallery's owner, an aquatic elf named **Talponi** (CG female aquatic elf expert 8), has one set of keys, while Vallik, who is currently inside, carries the other set. Talponi lives a few minutes from the gallery in the Whalefall District. The PCs can find her residence by asking around, which takes 1d3 hours. If they find the house and ask her to open the gallery, she is resistant at first. The PCs must succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy check to convince her to return to the Lionfish Gallery with them to unlock the doors.

J2. MAIN HALL (CR 16)

The main hall of the Lionfish Gallery is composed of a foyer, a main hall, and a small special exhibits wing on the eastern end of the building. The foyer is a place to greet guests and allow people to mingle prior to openings. Access to area J3 is found in the northern wall of the foyer.

The main hall is lined with columns that support the building's 20-foot-high ceiling, which is covered in an intricate mosaic of overlapping patterns set with sparkling blue gems, stark red coral, gilded seashells,

and other materials. Magical lighting fixtures with directional hoods that can be raised and lowered dot the walls at regular intervals, and their light can be directed at individual pieces as they are on display. The lighting fixtures are hooded completely when the gallery has no guests. The main hall has eight short walls dividing the space into alcoves that hold different works found in the gallery. The alcoves here in the main hall hold the gallery's regular attractions.

The special exhibits wing at the end of the building typically holds the newest exhibits that rotate through the gallery, with the exception of the golden shark statue that fills the center of this space, its eyes glittering with exquisitely carved obsidian.

Art here in the Lionfish Gallery is made from durable materials that don't break down in seawater. Most of the pieces are sculptures, typically carved from coral, precious minerals, or stone, but some of the sculptures are mixed media assembled from various things. The sculptures that impress most visitors are those made from metal, as metalsmithing is difficult to achieve undersea. Other pieces in the gallery are jewelry, mosaics, colored sand paintings set with natural adhesives, and paintings made from pigments mixed with a thick and durable grease.

Creatures: When the PCs reach the Lionfish Gallery, Naqualia is already there. She wasn't certain that her thin lead on "Vallik" would be successful, but she had exhausted her other trails of investigation and is desperate to avoid botching her mission and bringing unknown retribution from Ochymua for her failure.

At last, she's found the mysterious Vallik—not truly a living person at all, but a shapeshifting ooze constructed at the height of the Azlanti empire. After the creature left Auberon's tower around a century ago, it wandered the region until it came to Talasantri. Coincidentally, it arrived just after the plankta had attacked the city and, in the chaos, it was able to insinuate itself easily into Talasantri life, ultimately replacing a fallen citizen. It has been there ever since, variously posing as a newcomer exploring Talasantri for a new place to live or taking the role of others who were already established in town.

Upon the PCs' arrival, Naqualia is engaged in conversation with the mezlan, who is in the same merfolk form it has been using since it began working at the gallery. She just got all the information she needed from the mezlan about the location of the secret facility and is alternating between seeding lies about the PCs hunting Vallik for their own purposes and pressing the creature for additional information in order to impress her dangerous master Ochymua. As Naqualia and Ochymua are part of the same

telepathic mesh, the veiled master immediately learns the information it seeks as Naqualia hears it from Vallik.

As the PCs enter the main hall, the mezlan uses the distraction to flee and hide, perhaps taking a different form to confuse both the PCs and Naqualia. As the PCs engage with Naqualia, the mezlan attacks from hiding using either its spells or the ranged version of its morphic weapons.

Realizing that her enemies in the city have caught up to her, Naqualia follows similar tactics, hiding behind cover and sniping at the PCs from behind walls



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SHELL OF SENDING

Even though Naqualia is in mental contact with Ochymua through the omnipath's telepathic mesh, she doesn't have the ability to communicate mentally with her entourage. To facilitate in sending messages between her various agents, Naqualia acquired this item before coming to Talasantri. Currently, the sorcerer Thalem has the other *shell of sending* (see area H6).

SHELL OF SENDING

PRICE
12,200 GP

SLOT none

CL 7th

WEIGHT —

AURA moderate evocation

This conch shell measures only a few inches long and shimmers with a delicate pink color. *Shells of sending* always come in pairs, with each shell attuned to the other. If pairs are mixed up or lost, a *shell of sending* can be attuned to a new *shell of sending* in a process that takes 24 hours.

Once per day, anyone holding a *shell of sending* can whisper up to 25 words into the shell. The sender's words emerge from the second shell, audible to anyone holding the attuned shell, as long as the receiver is on the same plane of existence. If the receiver wishes, she can send a return message of up to 25 words.

Anyone eavesdropping on either sender or receiver must attempt a DC 14 Will saving throw. On a success, an eavesdropper can hear the speakers normally. On a failure, the speakers seem to be relaying gibberish and nonsense words to each other. Creatures who fail this saving throw by 5 or more are deafened for 1d4 minutes.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *sending*

COST 6,100 GP

and statues, keeping the PCs on the move as she slips through the gallery. The mezlan knows about the secret doors in the gallery, but Naqualia doesn't know at first. She still tries to attack from cover, hoping to make sneak attacks with her crossbow.

This combat should be full of dynamic hit-and-run tactics, with neither enemy rarely sticking around against one PC for too long before disengaging and hiding again. While Vallik and Naqualia don't necessarily fight alongside one another, as the mezlan is frustrated that she discovered its ruse, Vallik sees the PCs as a more powerful threat. It focuses its attacks against the PCs, but if it has the opportunity, it might take a few shots at Naqualia if the PCs are occupied or neutralized. Ultimately, Vallik simply wants to get away and start a new hidden life in Talasantri or beyond.

NAQUALIA

CR 15

XP 51,200

hp 180 (see page 60)

VALLIK

CR 14

XP 38,400

Mezlan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 186)

hp 195

Special Attacks store spells (*chain lightning* [DC 19],
cure serious wounds, *shocking grasp*)

J3. SALON

This room on the north side of the building is typically used for when the gallery has smaller, more intimate events such as poetry readings or lectures, and people gather here to listen to the speakers. When the gallery has openings, servers prepare passable appetizers and drinks in this room, using the hidden service door on the north wall of area J2 to slip into the gallery for service and then back into the salon without disturbing the patrons. The door in the lobby of the gallery also provides access to this room.

The secret door is difficult to notice from inside the main hall itself (Perception DC 30) but is more easily noticed from within the salon (Perception DC 15).

Currently, the room holds old exhibits and other supplies used in the gallery, all pushed against the north wall of the room.

J4. SERVICE HALL

This hall is a hidden part of the gallery used by the curators and servers. When the salon is in use, the servers prepare and serve refreshments from this room. During events, Talponi, the gallery's owner, or one of the curators would often take patrons aside for private meetings in this concealed space.

From main hall, the doors to the service hall are difficult to notice, requiring a successful DC 30 Perception to see the thin outlines worked into the walls. Inside the service hall, the secret doors are obvious and require no Perception check to notice them. When opened, the doors silently pivot, a feature used so as not to distract the attendees and patrons of events in the main hall.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If Naqualia escapes, she flees directly to Auberon's tower. Ochymua has already left, but hasn't bothered to relay that information to Naqualia. It hopes that by



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leaving her there, she can put down the PCs without having to do so itself just yet.

If Naqualia dies, the PCs may try to interrogate her using *Speak with Dead* or other such magic. As much as possible, Naqualia's spirit resists answering any of their questions.

If she Naqualia and the PCs capture the deep merfolk, she resists answering as well, but if forced, she admits that Ochymua seeks a weapon with the power to devastate Golarion and that he believes Auberon can help him find it. She may also admit that Ochymua has been spying on Auberon in his tower, even spending time in a demiplane somewhere in the tower. She goes on to tell the PCs, in a haughty, laughing tone, that they will have to hurry if they mean to stop the veiled master.

After defeating Naqualia and putting an end to the "accidents" that have been occurring in Talasantri since the arrival of Ochymua's minions, things begin settling down. It takes a couple of days for word of the PCs' actions to spread throughout the city, but as it does they are openly hailed as friends of the city and are invited to numerous dinners and social events. If the PCs refuse these invitations so they can pursue their greater mission, the people of Talasantri accept that

reasoning, but invite them back to the city at a later date to properly fete the heroes.

After the events at the gallery, Rillkimatai is eager to speak with the PCs. If the PCs didn't return to the oracle after claiming *Seaspike*, they can do so now that things have been settled in town. He thanks the PCs for their heroic actions and presents them with the research he undertook regarding Ochymua, if the PCs hadn't already received it. He also pays the PCs any reward they are owed.

The PCs' host approaches them, still distressed over her missing child. She puts all her faith in the PCs and assures the group that, given their heroic deeds in Talasantri, they should find it easy to rescue a single youth. Anemora or Koramallis pleads with the PCs to find her child and wishes them the best of fortune before slowly swimming away.

The PCs can now continue their quest by traveling to the tower of Auberon the Drowned, as detailed in the next adventure, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #125: Tower of the Drowned Dead*. Either Argnos or Drecissa languishes in the lich's tower, and the PCs have to hurry if they are to have any hope of stopping Ochymua before it finds the Azlanti military base and uses its weapons to devastating effect.

JURIX

The Queen of the Undertow is a hard-bargaining smuggler with no qualms about fighting for what she wants. Jurix conceals her insecurities with a cool, dangerous facade, and few in Talasantri are willing to cross the crime queen.

JURIX

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female cecaelia rogue 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 49)
NE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tentacle sense;
Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +6 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 168 (16 HD; 10d8+6d10+90)

Fort +9, **Ref** +18, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge,
ink cloud, trap sense +3; **Resist** electricity 2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; jet 200 ft.

Melee +2 *short sword* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+4/17-20), +2 *short sword* +20 (1d6+3/17-20), 2 tentacles +15 (1d4+1 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks sneak attack +5d6 plus 5 bleed

TACTICS

Before Combat Jurix prefers to avoid battles before they start. With the benefit of her enchanted eel hide armor and her natural skill, she attempts to hide from potential attackers and then quietly slip away.

During Combat Jurix is never without a dozen thugs around her, whether or not they can be seen. She allows her thugs to wear out enemies before she enters combat, positioning herself to flank with her minions.

Morale Death is failure. Jurix is willing to negotiate for her life with her substantial fortune, though she fully intends to reclaim it at a later date.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 23, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 31 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Initiative, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword, tentacle)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +22, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +21, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +20, Perception +21, Profession (merchant) +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +30, Survival +11, Swim +10

Languages Aquan, Common, Elven

SQ amphibious, rogue talents (another day^{APG}, black market connections^{UC}, bleeding attack +5, finesse rogue, resiliency), trapfinding +5

Gear +3 *shadow slick eel hide*^{UE} *leather armor*, +2 *short swords* (2), *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of mighty constitution* +4, *mwk thieves' tools*, 7,760 gp worth of pearls, precious stones, and other valuables

Jurix grew up on the streets of a much larger aquatic city, hundreds of miles from Talasantri. Cecaelias were mistrusted there, seen as little more than thieves and scum. Most of the powerful cecaelias in the city were criminals, but not all of them. Jurix had no desire to join that life. Though she grew up orphaned, she was determined to make something of herself. She dreamed of becoming rich and powerful—influential and at home among the elite of the city.

Life had other plans. After a painful, unhappy childhood spent scrounging for a living and trying to find someone to give her a chance, Jurix found door after door closed to her. When, as an adolescent, she gained employment on a salvage expedition, she thought she had finally found the opportunity to change her life.

She had, but not in the way she imagined. Two days before the expedition was set to depart, one of the cecaelia smugglers in town approached Jurix. She offered the child a substantial payment to steal a few items from the shipwreck and report back its location. Jurix hesitated, but the sum offered was too tempting to resist.

To Jurix's surprise, her first theft went off smoothly. No one suspected her of lifting some small but expensive artifacts from the wreckage. Jurix turned over her take and received more money than she'd ever had in her life.

Eventually, Jurix grew too influential for her patron's liking, leading to an attack in her own home one night. Jurix realized that she had two options: She could gather her allies and fight back against her patron. If she succeeded, she would claim a vast territory as her own; if she failed, she would pay with her life. Or, she could pack up her savings and leave the city with one or two trusted allies to start over in a new place.

She chose the latter, and 8 years ago, Jurix came to Talasantri. The cecaelia didn't take long to put her life lessons to good use. She quietly learned of the weaknesses in the current crime lord's domain, wooed several of his unhappy minions to her side, and then led a brutal coup against him. When the water cleared of blood, Jurix was left triumphant among the bodies of the dead.

Jurix has ruled uncontested ever since. She revitalized the Undertow, the black market that does a brisk trade in illegal items, salvage, and stolen goods. She can call on dozens of thugs with a moment's notice and always has multiple plans in action.

Jurix takes great pleasure in her status. In public she has to maintain a low, unremarkable profile, but in the Undertow, she flaunts her position as crime queen. She loves beautiful jewelry and always wears at least one stunning piece when entertaining guests or meeting with her followers. Her custom-made weapons and armor are the envy of every cutpurse in the city. She keeps her hair shorn close because she likes the dramatic look it gives her, and she has a personal tattoo artist that keeps her ink bright and defined.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Jurix's primary role is that of a merchant. While the PCs can find low-priced ordinary magic items in Talasantri, Jurix can deliver quality goods. She can often track down powerful magic items or taboo goods, such as cursed items and poisons. Her prices are slightly higher than market value due to the dangerous nature of her business, but she's always willing to make a deal.

Jurix also has many plans in action and can always use hirelings to advance her goals. She can offer the PCs side jobs in addition to those mentioned in this adventure, ranging from guarding a cargo shipment to carrying trade goods to surfacer lands for a percentage of sales.

Jurix hears all the rumors in the city and can confirm or dismiss tales the PCs might have heard. She knows who the influential citizens are, and while many of them

don't know Jurix and wouldn't care to associate with her even if they did, she can at least point them out and offer a little background information.

If the PCs make an ally of Jurix, she might be able to assist them with special goods or hiring support when they return to Talasantri. If they make an enemy of her, they instead become the target of her forces on their return.

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TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

THE M RE BESTIARY



NAQUALIA

A devoted servant of the veiled master Ochymua, Naqualia makes use of her significant talents to carry out its will and goes to any lengths to complete her mission. Nothing frightens her more than the thought of failure.

NAQUALIA

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female deep merfolk rogue (poisoner) 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 172, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 134)

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +11; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +6 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 180 (16d8+108)

Fort +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities deep dweller, fortification 25%, improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, semitransparent; **Resist** cold 5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +20/+15/+10 (1d6+4/19–20) or mwk dagger +20/+15/+10 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged +2 distance underwater light crossbow +22/+17/+12 (1d8+2/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +8d6, sprint

TACTICS

During Combat Naqualia takes opportune shots with her light crossbow and poisoned bolts before hiding again to strike from the shadows and make sneak attacks against her enemies. She tries to stay mobile in the gallery to confuse the PCs while they are engaged with Vallik.

Morale Though devoted to her master, Naqualia tries to talk her way out of deadly situations. She asks to negotiate if she drops below 40 hit points but tries to keep the PCs talking for as long as possible while she looks for an opportunity to escape. If cornered, Naqualia fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 24, **Con** 20, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 32

Feats Deadly Aim, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot,

Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Skill Focus (Stealth),

Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (crossbow)

Skills Acrobatics +18 (+10 when jumping), Bluff +22, Craft (alchemy) +9 (+15 when working with poison), Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +20, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering, local) +13, Perception +20, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +32 (+40 underwater), Survival +12, Swim +16, Use Magic Device +22;

Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth underwater

Languages Aboleth, Aquan, Azlanti

SQ master poisoner, poison use, rogue talents (finesse rogue, honeyed words^{APG} 3/day, stealthy sniper^{APG}, surprise attacks, swift poison^{APG})

Combat Gear wand of cure moderate wounds (32 charges), wand of displacement (16 charges), wand of nondetection (22 charges), octopus venom (6 doses; treat as large scorpion venom); **Other Gear** +3 light fortification mithral chain shirt, +1 short sword, +2 distance underwater light crossbow^{UE} with 20 crossbow bolts, mwk dagger, belt of mighty constitution +4, ring of resistance +2 (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #123 44), ring of mind shielding, shell of sending (see page 56), mwk thieves' tools, 1,233 gp worth of pearls and precious stones

Raised at the bottom of an oceanic trench, Naqualia has lived a life in darkness. Though most deep merfolk are ordinary individuals with a variety of moral codes, Naqualia's clan had a sinister bent. She grew up as cold as the waters around her, but with a fierce curiosity. One day, one of her frequent investigations led her to an underground fortification near the trench—one hidden for thousands of years. In this ancient Azlanti research lab, she heard a voice in her mind. Naqualia slowly drifted through the facility, wondering at the strange devices and glowing panels. Evidently the place had been powered by magic, and some lingering enchantment remained.

In the final chamber of the compound, Naqualia discovered the source of the mental whispers. Against the

far wall stood a glass enclosure, cracked from top to bottom, that held the body of some monstrous, alien creature. It was an aboleth, long dead, whose last telepathic message had somehow gotten caught in the lab's magical equipment. The equipment had been broadcasting the aboleth's dying message over and over again since Earthfall. Naqualia stayed in the laboratory for weeks, staring at the body of the dead aboleth and listening to this repeating message.

When nothing remained for her to discover, Naqualia left and began investigating the haunting creature she had found. She spent years traveling from one Azlanti ruin to the next, learning about that ancient civilization and about aboleths.

On one of her expeditions, she encountered an omnipath, an alghollthu that serves as an information hub for its kind. The monstrous creature immediately dominated her and probed her mind to learn who she was and why she was there—answers Naqualia willingly provided. Thus satisfied, the creature added her to its telepathic mesh and ordered her from its lair to serve its needs, using her to explore places it couldn't, or wouldn't, go. After years of service to the omnipath, she was released from the domination.

When the veiled master Ochymua was freed from its prison after thousands of years, it made contact with the omnipath through the telepathic mesh. The omnipath sent Naqualia to serve Ochymua—an order the merfolk was pleased to follow of her own accord. Having only heard of their kind, she was terrified of the veiled master upon meeting it in the flesh. Trembling from head to tail, in a voice barely louder than a whisper, she recited the words she'd memorized years ago in the laboratory.

Ochymua's thoughts poured into her head, demanding to know where she had heard those words and why she was there. Naqualia replied as best she could to the psychic barrage, her mind fraying at the edges as she struggled to interpret the veiled master's demands. Then the torrent ceased and Ochymua drifted back, satisfied. It claimed her as one of its servants, and Naqualia was happy to serve. She has faithfully followed Ochymua's orders ever since, dreaming of the day when she proves her worth beyond any doubt and Ochymua devours her, adding her thoughts and memories to its perfect self.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Naqualia operates from the shadows, leading her mercenary forces with her impressive social skills. Everything Naqualia says sounds utterly believable, and she is adept at spotting the lies of others.

Though Naqualia won't confront the PCs directly until she absolutely must, they may be able to subdue and capture her, or magically compel her to aid them,

in the final encounter. If this is the case, Naqualia is a defiantly unwilling servant. She is pleasant to the PCs, speaking in gentle, reasonable tones, but her heart is like steel. She won't say anything about Ochymua or its plans, considering such admissions the ultimate betrayal of her master's trust. Even torture won't sway her; Naqualia would happily die for her master.



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ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

THE MORDANT SPIRE

BESTIARY

RILLKIMATAI

The leader of Talasantri for decades, Rillkimatai has oracular visions that warn him of danger before it strikes. Though his body grows frail, his mind is still sharp, and he will do anything to protect the city and its people.

RILLKIMATAI

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male old aquatic elf oracle (seer) 15 (*Pathfinder Campaign*

Setting: Inner Sea Races 242, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced*

Player's Guide 42, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 59)

LG Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)

Init -2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 deflection, -2 Dex)

hp 101 (15d8+30)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +14; +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee +3 dagger +12/+7/+2 (1d4+1/19-20)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 15th; concentration +19)

7th (4/day)—*dictum* (DC 21), *greater scrying* (DC 21),
mass cure serious wounds, *resurrection*

6th (6/day)—*forbiddance*, *heal*, *legend lore*, *mass cure*
moderate wounds, *symbol of persuasion* (DC 21)

5th (6/day)—*break enchantment*, *cleanse*^{APG}, *dispel evil*,
greater command (DC 20), *mass cure light wounds*,
true seeing

4th (7/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *holy*
smite (DC 18), *scrying* (DC 18), *spiritual ally*^{APG}, *tongues*

3rd (7/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *cure serious*
wounds, *dispel magic*, *locate object*, *magic circle*
against evil, *searing light*

2nd (7/day)—*aid*, *communal protection from evil*^{LC}, *cure*
moderate wounds, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *enthrall*
(DC 17), *hold person* (DC 17), *silence* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*bless*, *command* (DC 16), *comprehend*
languages, *cure light wounds*, *identify*, *remove fear*,
sanctuary (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*,
purify food and drink (DC 14), *read magic*, *resistance*,
stabilize, *vigor*

Mystery lore

TACTICS

During Combat Rillkimatai always has packs of guards at his side and counts on them to protect him. He uses his spells to bolster and heal his allies during a fight.

Morale Rillkimatai knows how valuable he is to the city and tries to flee if wounded.

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 7, **Con** 10, **Int** 17, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +17, Heal +16, Knowledge (arcana, local) +19, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nature) +17, Perception +19, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +21 (+23 when identifying magic item properties), Swim +10;

Racial Modifiers +2 Perception, +2 Spellcraft when identifying magic item properties

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Azlanti, Common, Draconic, Elven, Sahuagin; *tongues* (understands only)

SQ amphibious, elven magic, oracle's curse (*tongues* [Aklo, Aquan]), revelations (brain drain, gift of prophecy^{UM}, lore keeper, mental acuity, natural divination)

Combat Gear *staff of revelations*^{APG}; **Other Gear** *bracers of armor* +3, *ring of protection* +2, spell component pouch, diamond worth 10,000 gp, silver mirror worth 1,000 gp

Rillkimatai was young when his visions first began. He would start out of sleep haunted by impressions of fleeting dreams that vanished before he could make sense of them.

One day, while out hunting with a group of his peers, Rillkimatai suddenly recognized a unique rock formation from one of his trance dreams where he envisioned a massive shark hunting nearby. Gripped by sudden fear, Rillkimatai yelled for his friends to retreat, but it was too late. The beast darted in and devoured one of the elves while the others fled in fright.

Rillkimatai felt tremendous guilt over the death of his friend. From that moment on, he was determined to unlock the power of his trance dreams and learn to protect people properly.

A few years later, he slipped into a trance and was immediately seized with a vision of a massive tectonic event. The scene was as clear to him as if it was happening that moment; buildings collapsed, screaming people were trapped in their homes or impaled by flying rocks, and the ground tore itself apart.

When the trance ended, Rillkimatai swam straight to city hall. He relayed every detail of his vision to the city's leader, a respected warrior named Sylathia. Sylathia took the young elf's visions seriously and, after consulting with her sages, began evacuating the city.

Not an hour after Talasantri's people left the dome, the earth shook with a massive force that tore buildings apart and collapsed parts of the city. When the event was over, the destruction was horrendous but the city's inhabitants were safe. Rillkimatai became a hero and a respected member of the community.

Talasantri was rebuilt, and when Sylathia passed away, the people elected Rillkimatai as their new leader. He took the mantle of responsibility as seriously as he had his oracular gift. He moved into city hall and rarely left its walls save to attend to official city business.

Rillkimatai is an old elf now, and he has served as Talasantri's leader for over a hundred years. Though he feels his end drawing near, he's determined to use his visions to protect and support the city until he takes his dying breath.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Rillkimatai makes a powerful ally if the PCs can impress him. He has experienced centuries of history, and his sharp mind recalls events perfectly, even those that happened decades ago. From his lifelong dedication to meditation and study, Rillkimatai also has a bounty of knowledge on a variety of subjects. In addition to the information he has to offer on the subject of veiled masters and Ochymua, Rillkimatai can answer questions on the history of the area or local events. Most of his knowledge is limited to events that occurred beneath the waves; Rillkimatai admits that he knows little about surface life.

If the PCs offer to trade information, Rillkimatai is keenly interested in the idea. He willingly lectures on aquatic races, the history of the city, and memorable events in the area over the last few hundred years. He listens just as eagerly to tales of surface heroes,

information about the cities of Golarion, and even the mundane habits of land dwellers.

Rillkimatai's visions have hinted to him that the PCs play an important role in the city's future, and so he is interested in their pasts. If the PCs are willing, he asks them questions about how they started their adventuring lives and what adventures they have had on their way to Talasantri. He records everything the PCs share and keeps their stories among his collection of historical tomes, certain that they will be worth something to future generations.

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TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

In the cool waters 250 feet below the surface of the Arcadian Ocean, Talasantri shines her welcoming light. Originally a fortification where travelers could safely rest, hidden from the predators of the area, Talasantri has grown into a major trade hub for aquatic people over the last few centuries. Aquatic travelers of all races—so long as they are willing to follow the rules of the city—are welcome in Talasantri. Surface dwellers, however, are regarded with suspicion despite the riches they may bring from the dry world.

In 4541 AR, sahuagin forces claimed the area where Talasantri now stands. Patrols of vicious sahuagin warriors lurked in the dark waters, slaying those outsiders who tried to take advantage of the strong currents that swept through the region.

A merfolk community on the outskirts of sahuagin territory, led by the druid Seyskellin, fought against the sahuagin at every opportunity. A great coral bed lay between the two forces, and Seyskellin used a powerful artifact to shape a hidden bunker within the coral growth. The merfolk used the bunker as a place to conceal troops, and peaceful traders learned they could find shelter with the merfolk in their hold. The merfolk forces welcomed traders, offering them protection in exchange for weapons and supplies.

Skirmishes between the merfolk and the sahuagin continued for over a year, until a massive tremor interrupted the fighting. A huge rent opened in the seafloor several miles from the merfolk base, displacing a community of aquatic elves. The fleeing elves explained that the quake had released a terrifying living

ruin—a plankta—that could easily destroy all living creatures in the area. Seyskellin offered the aquatic elves sanctuary, and the two forces remained hidden while the plankta brought destruction down on the sahuagin.

When the plankta's rampage ended, the creature sank down into the rift once more, and the merfolk and aquatic elves emerged from their bunker. The sahuagin forces had been broken and scattered, and Seyskellin seized the opportunity to destroy the remaining troops in the area. With the region now secured, the merfolk and aquatic elves worked together to expand their bunker into a settlement.

By 4585, Seyskellin had, through the use of her artifact, shaped the small bunker into a giant mesh dome of coral to protect the growing city of Talasantri. The city's location on the strong currents between larger aquatic communities made it a prime location for trading, and the city's population boomed. Aquatic creatures of all types sought to live, trade, and work in Talasantri. Sahuagin were not allowed in the city—a ban that exists to this day.

When Seyskellin passed, an aquatic elf wizard took command of the city. Under his leadership, Talasantri grew even larger. The wizard devised a way to breed thousands of luminous jellyfish, further lighting up Talasantri and drawing more travelers to its gates. The glow of the city attracted predators as well, and the aquatic elf city guard formed to protect the dome from giant octopuses, sahuagin raiders, sharks, and other threats.

In 4606, the plankta awoke once more. Some researchers think that the death of Aroden sent shock waves through the world that resulted in strange effects such as the plankta's reemergence. The city guard rallied against the plankta, but their preparations proved to be woefully inadequate. Were it not for the appearance of a hero known as Wavewalker, Talasantri would have been destroyed.

Over the last 100 years, the city has rebuilt its defenses. Though its current ruler, the aquatic elf oracle Rillkimatai, and his advisors have been researching methods to fight the plankta they call Ruinquake should it threaten the city again, they have found no certain way to guarantee safety. The specter of the plankta remains one of the greatest concerns to Talasantri's people.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The locations in Talasantri of most interest to adventurers are detailed in this section, separated by district. Unlabeled buildings represent generic shops, private homes, and trading posts. Most of Talasantri's buildings are sculpted from coral, though some are constructed of seafloor stone and the foundations of an ancient Azlanti city lost to the waves during Earthfall.

Talasantri's coral dome keeps attackers out, but it does not impede the movement of the jellyfish lanterns, small fish, and other Tiny aquatic life-forms. Talasantri's

TALASANTRI

N small city

Corruption -1; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +2; **Law** +2;
Lore +4; **Society** -1

Qualities insular, prosperous, underbelly, underwater
Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government magical

Population 5,642 (2,053 merfolk, 1,890 aquatic elves^{SR}, 742 locathahs^{B2}, 277 cecaelias^{B3}, 193 tritons^{B2}, 179 siyokoys^{B3}, 168 deep merfolk^{B5}, 45 ceratioidi^{B3}, 35 selkies^{B4}, 26 ichthyocentaurs^{B5}, 2 adaros^{B3}, 32 other)

NOTABLE NPCs

Arcanic Researcher Vhenarryn (CN female merfolk wizard 9)

Crime Queen of the Undertow Jurix (NE female cecaelia rogue 7; see page 58)

Guard Commander Talstran (LN male aquatic elf fighter 8)

Revered Seer Rillkimatai (LG male aquatic elf oracle^{APG} [seer^{UM}] 15; see page 62)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 5,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 37,500 gp;

Spellcasting 7th

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

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Underbelly Despite being a fairly welcoming city with a strong guard and adherence to law, a criminal underworld operates with relative ease in Talasantri. The following modifiers come into play only in the Undertow District. (*Crime* +1; *Danger* +5; *increase base value by 20%*; *increase purchase limit by 30%*)

Underwater Due to being underwater, Talasantri is well protected from dangers from the surface world. The city may still face attack from massive aquatic monsters or armies of sahuagin, but the coral dome that protects the city hedges out most of those threats. Being an underwater city means that Talasantri doesn't cater to creatures from the surface, and many citizens distrust such creatures. (*Base value of items made specifically for surface creatures increases by 50%*; *the DCs of Diplomacy checks attempted by surface creatures increase by 5 when interacting with citizens of Talasantri.*)

streets swarm with colorful life, and fresh seafood is always available.

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THREADFIN DISTRICT

1. A BIT OF EVERYTHING
2. FIVE FINS
3. MARGELA'S BREWS
4. RESTFUL SHORE
5. SEAHORSE STAGE

WHALEFALL DISTRICT

1. ARCANICAL TOWER
2. BONEWORKS
3. LORLY'S BARTER
4. MANY TO ONE
5. SHELL & STYLUS

SEAMOUNT DISTRICT

1. CERULEAN COVE
2. CITY HALL
3. HOUSE OF CRYSTAL WATERS
4. STARGRASS HALL
5. TREASURES OF THE SEA

TALASANTRI

0 350 FEET



THE UNDERTOW

1. BLUE-RINGED TAVERN
2. BODD'S ODDS
3. FATHOM BAZAAR
4. QUEEN'S PALACE
5. SHADOW'S DEN

0 120 FEET



THREADFIN DISTRICT

The Threadfin District holds most of the common residences in the city. The few stores found there provide everyday goods and groceries to the residents.

As the Threadfin District combines a mazelike layout with a relative lack of law enforcement, the district also accommodates criminal activities in Talasantri. Most of these activities are concentrated in the Undertow, but entrances to the black market and rings of petty criminals can be found throughout Threadfin as well.

A Bit of Everything: This general store also serves as a pawnshop. Its owner, the stolid **Opuo** (NE male locathah rogue 2), buys and sells anything without asking questions. Petty thieves and pickpockets know they can bring their goods to Opuo for a reasonably fair price. Most of Opuo's customers have a need to move their merchandise quickly and don't want to take the time to fence the goods in the Undertow. Opuo pays a percentage of his profits to Jurix, Crime Queen of the Undertow, in order to stay in business. The close-mouthed locathah also knows all the city guards by appearance and maintains a mental list of customers too honest to sell his "special wares" to.

Five Fins: Five Fins is the most popular tavern in the district. Every night finds the coral building packed with drinkers and merrymakers, while even more patrons drift outside near the tavern. Songs, folktales, and friendly tussles can always be found at Five Fins, and if owner **Kelia** (CN female selkie rogue 3) takes a fancy to a patron, she might invite the lucky individual to the gambling room in the back. Kelia doesn't shy from inviting surfacers to join the games, but her cruel trickster nature leads her to set the surfacers against gamblers and hustlers willing to take them for everything they have.

Margela's Brews: Strangers traveling through the district easily mistake this unmarked shop for a mere residence. Locals know that this is the home of **Margela Duskcurrent** (N female old aquatic elf alchemist^{APG} 9), an elderly aquatic elf who makes a living serving specialty kelp brews in her parlor. Margela brews everything from light, floral seaweed draughts to hearty dark-green drinks with a strong vegetal flavor. She also maintains a small selection of magic potions for sale to trusted customers. Margela crafts some of the potions herself, but she acquires others through trade.

Restful Shore: One of the few inns in city that can provide comfortable accommodations to surfacers, the Restful Shore is a cozy two-story stone building with rounded walls that give it an organic feel. A night's stay in one of the hammocks fastened to the wall of the common room costs 3 gp. A night in a private room—with a locked stone chest, an extra-large hammock, and numerous wall hooks for fastening personal goods—costs 12 gp. The inn's proprietor, the friendly but businesslike **Minastalla** (CG female merfolk expert 5),

ATTITUDES IN TALASANTRI

For most aquatic races, Talasantri is a cosmopolitan and welcoming city. However, the residents of the city harbor deep-seated prejudices against sahuagin and nonaquatic races. Travelers from the surface find a cold, suspicious reception in Talasantri, and while these travelers are generally allowed into the city, they are encouraged to conduct their business and leave quickly.

Residents of Talasantri have a starting attitude of indifferent when dealing with surface dwellers, but the DCs of Diplomacy checks to make requests have a +5 modifier (in addition to the normal modifiers for making requests). The modifier to Diplomacy checks remains even if a citizen's attitude changes to friendly; the prejudices of the citizens are too deep seated to easily circumvent.

Merchants with an indifferent attitude charge 120% the normal price for goods and services to surface dwellers. Merchants with a friendly or better attitude charge the normal price, merchants with an unfriendly attitude charge 150% the normal price, and merchants with a hostile attitude will not sell to surface dwellers.

Residents of Talasantri have a starting attitude of hostile toward sahuagin. The vicious creatures are not welcome in the city, and Talasantri's guards attack sahuagin on sight. In exceptional circumstances, the guards may permit a single sahuagin to enter the city (for example, if a sahuagin prisoner is brought in by adventurers), but a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check is required to convince the guards to make this exception.

knows her prices are high, but given how infrequently surface dwellers travel to Talasantri and how few inns are equipped to host them, she feels the prices are fair.

Seahorse Stage: This small theater, run by **Quelyon** (CN male merfolk bard 5), provides a place for Threadfin residents to enjoy plays and concerts. Every month features a weeklong run of a different amateur production, and musicians usually play every other weekend. Artists can book the Seahorse Stage to display and sell their works. Quelyon has a reputation as an exacting theater director and a gifted singer, though his taste in artwork leans toward the gaudy. He collects surface art and has devised numerous innovative methods of preserving his collection.

SEAMOUNT DISTRICT

The wealthy and aristocratic citizens of Talasantri make their homes in the Seamount District. Here, the houses are larger than in Threadfin and have a more planned architectural style. Seamount homes are often made

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of fitted masonry blocks and decorated with artistic flourishes, such as graceful marble statues or mosaics made of seashell tiles.

Cerulean Cove: Only members, or those vouched for by members, are allowed into this luxurious drinking hall. Sculptures of deceased members stand in the corners, and original pieces of mosaic art decorate the walls. Silver lanterns glow with a dim blue light, illuminating a magically treated wooden bar carved from the bowsprit of a wrecked galleon. While Cerulean Cove is a favorite place for nobles and wealthy citizens to relax with a flask, it also serves as a meeting place for deal making. Whispered conversations in the private alcoves around the hall can form or break alliances, and meetings in Cerulean Cove can result in expeditions funded, marriages arranged, or assassinations booked.

House of Crystal Waters: Hundreds of sparkling crystals embed the walls of this temple to Gozreh's female form. Within the temple, elaborate murals of seascapes encircle an enormous chunk of raw crystal in the center of the room, which serves as an altar. Gozreh is the most popular deity among the faithful in Talasantri, and services are held at the temple every day. Funerals, weddings, and other rites are overseen by the temple's head priest, **Seraban** (N male aquatic elf cleric of Gozreh 7).

Stargrass Hall: The pillars that flank the doors to this enormous theater are completely covered in twining stargrass, delicate star-shaped yellow flowers sprouting from deep-green vines. Druidic magic sustains the stargrass, which normally fails to grow this deep underwater. Stargrass Hall features celebrated professional actors in six performances a year, and it sometimes also hosts traveling theater companies. The theater director, **Vatoya** (LN female cecaelia bard 4), recently hired a handsome triton actor named **Rudalthas** (CN male triton bard 5) to headline her plays. While Rudalthas captures hearts all over Talasantri, his mercurial personality is making him increasingly difficult to work with.

Treasures of the Sea: While most merchants have their shops in the Whalefall District, **Derrona** (LG aquatic elf rogue 5) opened her jewelry shop in Seamount. Her high-quality jewelry comes with a commensurate price tag, but the wealthy residents of the district are happy to pay for the beautiful, unique pieces Derrona sells. Wearing an "original Derrona" is a status symbol among the nobles of Talasantri. With her profits, Derrona purchases materials from traders and merchants in

the city, but most of her materials come from salvage. Though a skilled adventurer in her own right, Derrona prefers to pay others to retrieve precious gems and metals from shipwrecks and monster lairs.



WHALEFALL DISTRICT

Whalefall is the smallest of Talasantri's districts, but it is densely packed with stores, workshops, and artists' galleries. For a city of its size, Talasantri houses a surprising number of skilled artisans who craft exquisite and valuable items. The biggest limitation on the craftspeople of Talasantri is the lack of reliable high-temperature heat sources. Glassblowing and metalworking are therefore rare.

Arcanical Tower: This graceful stone spire rises like a narwhal's horn on the edge of the district where it borders Seamount. The tower is the home and laboratory of Vhenarryn, a talented wizard who has assigned herself the

title of Arcanic Researcher. Vhenarryn has a masterful knowledge of the ruins within 10 miles of Talasantri as well a collection of rare magic items, which she guards jealously. Only those she trusts completely (or she has a reason to impress) are allowed into the upper levels of the tower to view the collection. She's also been known to barter or sell these items if something catches her eye. Vhenarryn is usually willing to consult with other explorers or researchers, and she is notoriously susceptible to compliments about her intellect and skill.

Boneworks: The owner of this workshop and gallery, **Vesshyo** (NE female aquatic elf necromancer 8), works exclusively in bone. She specializes in graceful jointed pieces that drift and spin in currents much like wind chimes. Vesshyo occasionally carves larger works from the bones of giant sea creatures. She offers bounties on any such creatures, and she is currently interested in acquiring the skeleton of a narwhal. Though her work is artistic in nature, Vesshyo is also a necromancer. She animates the bones that don't make it into her art to help out in her workshop, though few in town are aware of this.

Loryl's Barter: The cecaelia **Loryl** (N female cecaelia hunter^{ACG} 3) was born in Talasantri but was orphaned at a young age. She made a living as an adventurer and scavenger until her group found a shipwreck with enough riches aboard to make them all wealthy. Loryl used her share to open a general store catering to adventurers and travelers. She makes regular trips to the surface to trade with passing ships, with an interest in alcohol and metal weapons (both difficult to manufacture underwater). Loryl's shop is a mishmash of general survival gear, minor

magic items, potions, and weapons. She keeps a handful of more powerful magic items hidden in a subterranean level beneath a secret door.

Many to One: This gallery displays the work of **Urmygh** (LN male deep merfolk expert 4), a popular artist whose work hangs in both city hall and Cerulean Cove. Urmygh breaks coral, gemstones, and seashells into shards and builds elaborate mosaics from the pieces. Though at first glance the mosaics appear as peaceful seascapes, the longer one looks at the pieces, the more unsettling details become visible.

Shell & Stylus: Much of the writing in Talasantri is engraved on stone tablets, but this technique is difficult and the results are unwieldy.

Echono (CN male merfolk bard 6) provides alternative writing supplies at his shop. In addition to bioluminescent ink and underwater paper (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Blood of the Sea* 18–19), his most popular product is a fine-tipped stylus treated with an alchemical mixture. When the stylus is scraped along the inside of a seashell, it leaves bright blue lines in its wake. Echono also knows several methods for waterproofing parchment. A scholar with great interest in ancient Azlant, Echono maintains a private research library related to all things Azlanti. He also pays well for any Azlanti artifacts that come his way.

THE UNDERTOW

The natural caverns beneath Talasantri were long ago decreed too unstable to build within. The entrances to these caverns were sealed, but several small, carefully concealed tunnels have since been reopened. The criminal organizations of Talasantri now inhabit the caverns, called the Undertow by those in the know. The existence of the Undertow is an open secret in the city, and travelers can usually find their way down.

Blue-Ringed Tavern: Named for the deadly blue-ringed octopus, this tavern is set in one of the smaller caverns off the Fathom Bazaar. The tavern's owner, **Cenath** (NE female siyokoy brawler^{ACG} 5), stocks the largest collection of surface liquor in the city, and she charges high prices for her rare libations. Anything goes in the Blue-Ringed Tavern other than murder. Cenath firmly insists that no one is to die in her taproom, and she backs up her rule with deadly force. This makes the tavern a popular meeting

place for criminals—although several assassins have realized that Cenath forbids killing in her business.

Bodd's Odds: This tiny pawnshop caters to the poorest of Talasantri, and its wares are little more than junk. The proprietor, **Bodderoh** (CE male aquatic elf rogue 2), is in the employ of Jurix. His shop hides a passage down to the Undertow, and he allows criminals and discreet adventurers and traders to pass through. While there are numerous entrances to the Undertow, Bodd's Odds is the best known among the criminals of Talasantri. The entrance is also known to Guard Commander Talstran, who keeps the shop under regular surveillance. Talstran doesn't believe the guard has the resources to shut down the Undertow at the moment—not without a big fight that could disrupt the city—but he keeps gathering information for when the time is right.

Fathom Bazaar: Most of the Undertow is a large bazaar in a central cavern. Illegal goods, including drugs, poison, stolen items, and cursed or particularly vile magic items are available to buy and sell. Ordinary goods are available too, sold by merchants who wish to avoid Talasantri's taxes and the cost of maintaining a storefront. Figureheads from dozens of shipwrecks are mounted on the walls of the cavern, looming out over the bazaar. A few of the figureheads have shifted and tilt at odd angles, a result of the cavern's inherent instability.

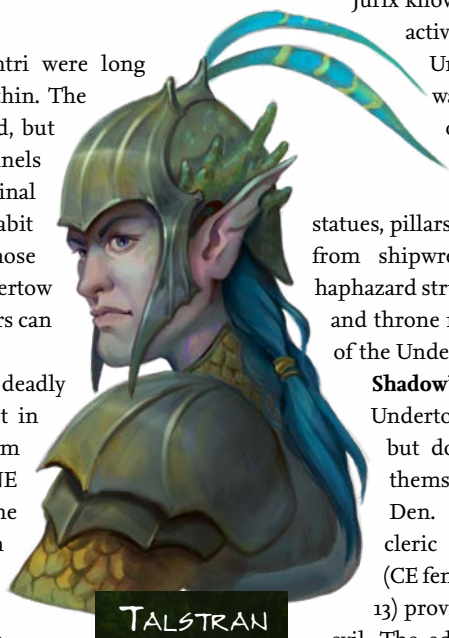
Jurix knows that seemingly minor seismic activity can cause collapses in the Undertow, and she keeps close watch on the figureheads for signs of a coming emergency.

Queen's Palace: Black coral, broken pieces of marble statues, pillars from ancient ruins, and timber from shipwrecks form the walls of this haphazard structure. This location—the home and throne room of Jurix, the Crime Queen of the Undertow—is detailed on page 17.

Shadow's Den: When denizens of the Undertow need the services of a cleric but don't want to draw attention to themselves, they visit the Shadow's Den. There, **Tirak** (CE male adaro cleric of Dagon 11) and **Ixena** (CE female adaro warpriest^{ACG} of Dagon 13) provide healing for the debased and evil. The adaros are the only two of their kind in Talasantri, and they almost never ascend to the city proper. They are demon worshipers, having sworn their souls to Dagon.



CENATH



TALSTRAN

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≡COLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

On our fourth day out of Magnimar, we heard 'em singing. I never heard anything to match it, nor likely will again. Their voices were so high an' sweet, like songbirds given lyrics. Everyone on deck heard 'em, and we all rushed to the gunnel to peer into the fog. The mists parted, and there they were, as beautiful as they sounded. Hair like silk, eyes like gems, prettier than any maidens with feet I'd ever seen.

They stopped singing straightaway and were under the water and gone with a flash of their tails. I almost asked the captain to wait, to give us a minute to lure them back out, but then one of them looked back at me before slipping 'neath the waves, and her eyes didn't look like sapphires no more. They were daggers of ice, set to skewer me clean through. We turned and hauled away as fast as fast, and I'll be glad if I never see them waters again.

—From the log of Cheriss Tar, swab on the *Westerly Swell*

Merfolk, the children of the sea, are well known in story and song, but their true nature remains hidden to most. Sailors and bards tell stories of the beautiful fish-tailed humanoids rising from the waves to sing their alluring songs, trade with passing ships, or drown unfortunate trespassers. Experienced crews know to avoid merfolk waters, as the reclusive race resents intrusion.

Despite their xenophobic nature, which leads them into conflict with those they consider trespassers, merfolk are generally peaceful. Among their own kind they are friendly and outgoing, forming strong community ties. When speaking with surface dwellers, though, merfolk remain aloof and reserved. It takes a great deal of effort for an outsider to gain the trust of a merfolk, and the friendship of one is a gift not to be taken lightly.

ECOLOGY

Merfolk have the upper bodies of humanoids and the lower bodies of fish. Their skin tone ranges from deep mahogany to paler brown, deep gold, and pearly white. Merfolk skin tends to glimmer and glisten when light catches subtle patches of iridescent scales on their humanoid half. Their hair can be of any shade and is usually worn long and straight.

Great variety exists among merfolk tails as well. Though surface artists commonly portray merfolk with a single tapered tail ending in a forked caudal fin, their tail fins can take the shape of a crescent moon, end in sharp points, or even be squared at the end. These tail shapes run along family lines and can identify members of a specific group or region. Other tail-fin styles include a single arrowhead-shaped fin, a forked but uneven fin with one prong longer than the other, and rounded tail fins that resemble flower petals. Merfolk occasionally also have pelvic and dorsal fins along the length of their tails. Merfolk tails are iridescent and come in many color combinations, most commonly greens and blues. Chartreuse, indigo, and violet are less common, and shades of coral, gold, and peach are rarer still.

Merfolk grow their young inside their bodies, just as most surface mammals do, with a gestation period of approximately 180 days. Merfolk infants are smaller than human babies at birth, sometimes measuring only 6 inches long, and they are born knowing how to swim. Multiple births, usually twins or triplets, are common among merfolk. On average, merfolk live about as long as humans do; merfolk reach adulthood at age 15 and can live into their nineties, and some merfolk have been known to live to over 100 years old. As merfolk age, their hair turns silver or white. Merfolk do not naturally shed scales, but the intensity of their pigment changes with the health and age of the individual. Scales can be lost through accidents or battle, and older

merfolk often have patchy tails, their missing scales having grown over with scar tissue.

Though merfolk can breathe air, they are most comfortable underwater. In the sea, they are graceful and beautiful, able to speed through the water with astonishing agility. On land, they must drag themselves by their arms, a process they find both uncomfortable and humiliating.

From head to tail, most merfolk measure 6 to 7 feet long, though some grow to 8 feet long.

GENESIS

Research suggests that merfolk are native to Golarion, their forms crafted through powerful blessings—or curses. Multiple cultures have legends of land dwellers transformed into merfolk shape by the gods. The most common variant of this legend is the tale of a ship filled with travelers searching for a home. When a violent storm arises, the good-hearted passengers pray for deliverance. The god to whom they pray is most commonly Gozreh, though this detail changes by region. As the tale goes, the Wind and the Waves takes pity on the ship and transforms the passengers into the first merfolk, who build their new home under the waves.

The persistence of such tales and the commonalities between versions of the tale in disparate cultures suggest that a seed of truth lies within these stories, but what little evidence that exists suggests otherwise. At some early point in Golarion's history, scholars believe, merfolk came into being as a result of a powerful force's early experimentation with creating an aquatic humanoid race. Given the reclusive—and some say sinister—nature of modern merfolk, this act of creation may have been not a benevolent gift from Gozreh but rather a curse from a more malign power.

Merfolk are also known to exist on the Plane of Water in both freshwater and saltwater regions. Planar sages have found evidence that entire colonies of merfolk emigrated from Golarion to the Plane of Water through portals. Ancient reliefs depict clusters of merfolk swimming through portals framed by giant coral formations and building new settlements within the Boundless Sea. The reason for this migration remains unclear, though researchers who specialize in merfolk lore speculate that some powerful entity may have compelled the merfolk to establish a presence on the plane.

Though deep merfolk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5172) are biologically similar to other merfolk, their differences in appearance—particularly their extremely long tails and transparent skin and scales—have led sages to speculate that they have a separate origin. The creatures' unsettling appearance has given birth to wild stories of unholy origins, but no evidence has been found to support any of these tales.

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SOCIETY

Among their own kind, merfolk are a friendly and talkative race, willing to work for the good of the community. They share songs and stories, help out in times of trouble, and form close bonds with their neighbors. Among strangers, however, merfolk become closemouthed and suspicious. They avoid ethical and philosophical debates, and they usually dismiss arguments based on moral duty to those beyond their shoal. They value the independence and safety of their communities above all else.

Merfolk live in family units consisting of one or more adults and their offspring. Though merfolk parents often stay together for years, their sense of community binds them more than individual affection. Merfolk parents may live separately while caring for their children, or live with other merfolk families in one building and share child-rearing duties. No stigma is attached to merfolk couples who live separately or carry on romantic relationships with other adults, so long as their obligations to the community and any children are met.

On occasion, merfolk live in more cosmopolitan communities with other races, such as aquatic elves or tritons. Even in such cases, merfolk families isolate themselves from other races, with parents and children all living in one home. Merfolk neighborhoods often arise as individuals seek out others like themselves, trusting merfolk over other citizens.

The deep sense of community merfolk have, combined with their lack of individual attachment, means they have many group-oriented rituals but few personal ones. A celebration is held when a merfolk child is born, with friends and neighbors taking turns holding the child and welcoming the newborn into the community. When a merfolk reaches the age of adulthood—typically 15, though the age varies with geographical location and custom—another ceremony is held, welcoming the individual into life as an adult and a full member of the shoal. When a merfolk dies, the community mourns the loss of a member. They wrap the deceased in a shroud of ceremonial netting, weighted with stones and shells, and release the body into a chasm or rift to be devoured by scavengers.

Song is a powerful component of merfolk traditions. Singing comes as naturally to merfolk as speaking, and their rituals are filled with music. Shoals tie specific songs to their rituals, and those versed in merfolk culture can tell merfolk's origins based on the songs they know. Songs that are well known across communities may be taught to outsiders—usually in exchange for a new tune—but ritual ballads associated with ceremonies are kept strictly private.

Merfolk don't have marriage rituals, nor do they celebrate birthdays or anniversaries. At most, merfolk in loving partnerships may celebrate their years together privately, but to do so publicly is considered vulgar.

Alghollthus: The nature of the relationship between merfolk and alghollthus remains widely unknown.

Most merfolk at least acknowledge the power and influence of alghollthus, believing them to be the oldest and deadliest aquatic race—and that to deny their



impact is folly. Merfolk appreciate alghollthus' power much in the same way surface races respect dragons and other ancient threats.

Aquatic Elves: Merfolk have been known to ally with aquatic elves, usually on a temporary basis against a shared threat. Merfolk find aquatic elves flighty and unpredictable but generally trustworthy—insofar as merfolk trust any other race. In cosmopolitan underwater cities, merfolk live peacefully with aquatic elves but often engage in petty rivalries, snubbing their elven peers and embarrassing them socially.

Ceratioidi: "Ally" may be too strong a word for the relationship between merfolk and ceratioidi, but a mutual respect exists between the races. The powerful ceratioidi keep to themselves, and merfolk identify with their reclusive nature. Communities of merfolk and ceratioidi that exist near each other maintain a peaceful neutrality, calling upon each other for assistance only in dire circumstances. Deep merfolk are more likely to live near ceratioidi settlements than other merfolk, as both races favor the deepest ocean trenches for their homes.

Dolphins: While merfolk distrust most other sentient races, they have no issue working with sea animals. Dolphins are among their favorites, and dolphin pods often live near merfolk settlements. Merfolk druids and rangers frequently befriend dolphin companions, and merfolk patrols bring trained dolphins with them to defend their shoals. Merfolk despise anyone who harms dolphins and seek revenge against ships that hunt these sensitive creatures.

Gillmen: Shoals of merfolk sometimes ally with gillmen who live most or all of their lives beneath the water. Gillmen who live mainly on land are less trusted by merfolk, though most merfolk would rather trust a gillman on dry land than any other surface race. Gillmen have a lingering link to alghollthus, and as such, merfolk view them with a wary respect. Gillmen allies are especially common in communities where merfolk supposedly serve alghollthu masters.

Humans: As with most surface races, humans are distrusted and dismissed by merfolk. Humans, though, often feel a special fascination toward merfolk, as the beauty and mystery surrounding these aquatic creatures proves irresistibly intriguing. Human folklore is filled with stories of merfolk falling instantly and madly in love with beautiful humans, particularly those with musical talent. Such relationships, when they do actually occur, burn brightly and then fizzle out, leaving behind deep emotional scars.

Sahuagin: Merfolk despise sahuagin for their brutality and their expansionism. Sahuagin raiders can overwhelm merfolk communities, slaughtering everyone save for a few unlucky prisoners. Merfolk usually refuse to ally with sahuagin and find their mere

presence intolerable. Meetings between the two races almost always end in violence.

LAIRS

Those surface dwellers fortunate enough to visit merfolk settlements, which are known as shoals, report elegant structures of coral and stone rising from plains and ridges beneath the ocean surface. Shoals are often situated in waters of sufficient depth for security, but not so deep that merfolk can't quickly swim to the ocean's surface and enjoy the bright glow of the upper world and dive back beneath the waves at the sight of a ship.

Water-soluble materials and objects are rare in most shoals; fabric, leather, and even wood disintegrate given enough time, and without parchment and ink, traditional writing is less common. Some merfolk have learned to engrave their language on the curve of shells or on tiles of stone, but written records are few. Instead, merfolk record their history via song and art. Elaborate reliefs, statues, and stone and shell mosaics all tell the stories of merfolk ancestors. Even these artworks must be maintained, though, lest the motion of currents erode details or lest barnacles and seaweed encrust and envelop the pieces. Historical artifacts that have been abandoned for centuries may be entirely eroded by the time researchers find them, their secrets forever lost.

Merfolk homes contain few pieces of furniture. Merfolk are comfortable floating in the water and have no need for chairs or beds. To avoid drifting too far while they sleep, merfolk affix hammocks to stone hooks in their sleeping chambers. Smaller net bags hang from hooks in other rooms to hold personal possessions such as combs, instruments, jewelry, and trinkets. Merfolk clothing is more adornment than fabric, usually little more than a woven vest decorated with gemstones and iridescent shells. Hammocks, net bags, clothing, and other woven items last for several years underwater before they must be replaced.

While merfolk's diet consists mostly of fish, kelp, and mollusks, they sometimes trade with surface dwellers to acquire seasonings and alcohol, which they keep in special flasks that they can drink from without allowing seawater in.

Privacy and security are the top priorities for any shoal. Patrols of merfolk warriors, sometimes accompanied by trained dolphins, circle the area around a shoal. These patrols watch for invaders but also keep note of changes to the area: altered currents, instability in ridges, unfamiliar sea creatures, and so on. This attention to detail allows shoals to predict some dangers, such as earthquakes or an approaching threat, and lessen the effect such disasters have on the community.

Merfolk are not particularly pious, and their shoals rarely include full-fledged temples. Most shoals instead

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MERFOLK MUSIC

Merfolk are known for their love of music, particularly song. Merfolk bards make use of masterpieces unique to their race and never share them with outsiders. Collectors would pay high prices for a transcription of merfolk music, such as the air "The Sea Is My Sky."

Almost all merfolk, whether bards or not, have beautiful, clear singing voices. A musically untalented merfolk is pitied by the shoal and may be left out of community gatherings in which songs are performed. Some shoals even consider unmusical merfolk to be cursed or unlucky and seek to exile them from the community.

Merfolk enjoy instrumental music as well, though not with the passion they have for song. Magical instruments are prized among merfolk, as they can be stored and played underwater. Specially constructed mundane harps with strings whose vibration is amplified by the water are particularly popular.

Merfolk sometimes store nonmagical instruments on islets or atolls. They surface to play their instruments in the dry air, favoring the conch, harp, and lute. Passing ships may be drawn by the beautiful music, but merfolk tend to grow angry when surface dwellers eavesdrop on their concerts.

have small shrines to Gozreh, Seramaydiel, or Shelyn, maintained by bards or druids rather than clerics. Bardic magic is highly valued in merfolk society, and bards often act as healers and historians for their people.

A common sight in shoals is a small stone building near the center of the community, protected yet isolated by an empty space around it. This building is often hexagonal and made of dark-gray or black stone, though it can take other forms. It is known as the Chamber of Silent Song, and it serves as a place for merfolk to meditate, perform private rituals, work in secret on new songs, and the like. Only one merfolk uses the Chamber of Silent Song at a time, and outsiders are never permitted within. Some researchers claim the structures hold a more sinister purpose—that of communicating with powerful, evil beings that the merfolk serve—but no serious evidence yet supports this theory.

MERFOLK ON GOLARION

While the Inner Sea, Obari Ocean, and Steaming Sea all hold merfolk settlements, the Arcadian Ocean is home to most of Golarion's shoals, particularly in its central temperate waters and along its coastlines. Reclusive and suspicious, merfolk keep to themselves unless they see an opportunity for trade. Merchant ships on the Arcadian

Ocean occasionally report merfolk patrols rising to the surface and offering food stores, jewelry, and treasures gleaned from shipwrecks in exchange for hemp fiber, leather, surface food, or metal goods. Very rarely, merfolk might trade information as well, singing of dangers in the water and receiving tales of pirate activity or other trade ships in the area.

For the most part, merfolk learn the major shipping lanes in their area and avoid them, save for when they want to trade. If a ship strays into merfolk-claimed waters, it may come under attack. Merfolk who interact more often with surface dwellers may warn the ship away, but more xenophobic shoals prefer to sink trespassers, reasoning that because a ship allowed to pass might return, killing the crew and bringing the ship beneath the waves is more likely to ensure the security of the shoal.

The Obari Ocean is known for storms and pirates, both of which work to the merfolk's advantage. Shoals cluster beneath areas of frequent storms, accepting the rough currents and darkness in exchange for security. Storm-torn vessels that cross over such shoals may find salvation from merfolk who take pity on them—or they may find their ship hastened to the bottom of the sea by merfolk attackers. Piracy on the Obari Ocean keeps most trade ships running their planned courses at all speed, which keeps them out of merfolk waters. Some pirate crews know where merfolk claim their territory, though, and may pose as the crew of a foundering ship lost at sea. When the merfolk rise to either assist or attack the ship, the pirates pounce, hoping to kill the merfolk and seize the treasure of shipwrecks past.

Merfolk in the Inner Sea tend to be less reclusive than their oceanic kin. The amount of trade and number of coastal settlements in and around the Inner Sea results in more contact between merfolk and surface dwellers. Merfolk are more likely to trade with outsiders in the Inner Sea, but they remain wary—overly comfortable surface dwellers might trespass more easily through merfolk waters or even try to visit their shoals. For this reason, merfolk keep a distance from even those they consider most trustworthy.

In the Steaming Sea, merfolk often clash with their most hated enemies, the sahuagin. The ferocious and cunning sahuagin enjoy capturing and tormenting merfolk, keeping them captive only as long as they prove amusing and slaughtering them when the game grows old. Sahuagin expansionism frequently pushes them into merfolk territories, sparking bloody battles between the two races. Sages speculate that another cause lies behind the merfolk-sahuagin conflict in the Steaming Sea. The deepest trenches of the sea are home to algholthus, evil piscine creatures of nefarious power. Researchers have claimed links between algholthus and merfolk, believing merfolk serve abyssal masters

out of obligation, as a result of some ancient pact, or in exchange for protection or power. Sahuagin consider alghollthus their greatest enemy, and if the sahuagin of the Steaming Sea intend to find and destroy the alghollthus, the merfolk may be intentionally (though not consciously) keeping the sahuagin occupied.

ADVANCEMENT AND VARIANTS

Merfolk advance by character class. Adventuring merfolk are most often bards, kineticists, rangers, skalds, sorcerers, and swashbucklers. They explore coastlines and sunken ruins, and they occasionally ally with surface dwellers who use magic to venture beneath the waves. Though adventuring merfolk are more outgoing than settled ones, they always maintain a slight reservation toward non-merfolk. Gaining the unhesitating trust and friendship of a merfolk is a rare accomplishment.

In shoals, merfolk usually advance as bards, druids, fighters, oracles, rangers, shamans, and skalds. Shoal leaders are often druids, oracles, or shamans with unmatched knowledge of the ocean's denizens and complexion. Leaders are usually referred to by name and hold no title, as they are considered servants, rather than masters, of their communities. Leaders are expected to protect and guide the shoal, keeping its people safe and prosperous. A leader who fails may be exiled or even killed for failing to live up to these expectations.

Merfolk witches are rare and powerful beings. Merfolk treat witches with respect but fear them for their link with unknown entities. Scholars who are concerned with the potential link between merfolk and an evil race consider merfolk witches to be the foremost agents of their hidden overlords. Merfolk witches are thought to commune with the supernatural beings they serve, carrying out their wishes with unquestioning loyalty.

Arctic Merfolk (CR +1): Arctic merfolk live in the polar regions of the world, swimming in the iciest waters. They have the same statistics as merfolk, except they have cold resistance 5 and a +2 natural armor bonus. Arctic merfolk tend to be paler than their temperate and tropical kin. Their skin tones are waxen brown, gray, or snow white, and their tails can be gray blue, gray green, ice blue, pearly white, periwinkle, or silver.

Deep Merfolk (CR 3): Deep merfolk (*Bestiary* 5172) live near the ocean floor in the cold and lightless depths. While they have humanoid torsos and fish tails akin to other merfolk, their skin is murky and translucent, giving them a ghoulish look, and their long, silvery tails have red fins. Their eerie appearance leads to rumors that deep merfolk are evil creatures and that they worship demons and slaughter innocents. These rumors are unfounded, though; deep merfolk have the same reserved nature as their kin and generally keep to themselves. While individual deep merfolk may lead evil lives, the race as a whole is peaceful and neutral.



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“We couldn’t believe our luck when we stumbled upon a half-sunken, long-abandoned stone temple in our search of that jungle-choked island. A day later, we cursed our luck—our cargo holds were full of treasure, but the winds had died down, a cold mist had risen, and our brimming caravel could only bob in the water. We weren’t going anywhere anytime soon.

“The lookout shouted a warning, and through the fog, we could see fast-moving silhouettes of sails. Moments later, the sharp-pointed bows of four slim boats pierced the mist, their keels cutting across the waves with ease.

“Weapons drawn, nine elves wearing ugly wooden masks boarded the *Shining Augustana*. They were shouting what sounded like threats in their strange tongue. They offered no explanation for why they were rummaging through our ship, but when they found the treasure we’d discovered in the ancient ruin, they took it and left as quickly as they’d arrived.”

—Andea Gorvan, captain of the merchant ship *Shining Augustana*

Located on an island at the westernmost tip of the Ironbound Archipelago, the Mordant Spire and its surroundings are home to an isolationist nation of elves. The spire is itself a living, sentient thing that observes anyone who enters it, and those who spend enough time within may hear its mysterious whispers. Unwelcome visitors are greeted with disturbing illusions, visions, and mind-bending magic.

The xenophobic elves who live on the island believe that they are responsible for the bizarre magic, dangers, and latent secrets that lurk within the blasted remains of ancient Azlant. They use scrying magic to watch over the ruins, and their quick skimmers patrol the sea, intercepting ships that sail too close to the spire or ruins that may contain ancient Azlanti treasures. The elves fear that if too many magical or technological secrets of ancient Azlant end up in the hands of the ambitious humans of the Inner Sea region, they will repeat the mistakes of the past, and the entire world will suffer for it.

Most outsiders find Mordant Spire elves unnervingly cold and alien. The pale-skinned elves wear intricately carved wooden masks and often become senselessly argumentative if visitors—even other elves—speak languages other than Azlanti to them, even though they know that very few other people can still speak the language fluently. The elves avoid eye contact, even with those with whom they converse. While speaking, they tilt and angle their heads much like birds listening to far-off sounds.

Most of the island's over 2,100 elves live in thatched huts and wicker houses built on the rocky beaches of the island or on floating platforms anchored to the island. Their society is self sufficient, and everyone on the island has a role that ensures the elves' long-term survival. The elves cultivate kelp forests in shallow waters around the spire, as the nutrient-rich seaweed is a staple in the elves' cuisine, serving as an important ingredient in salads, soups, tea, and other dishes and drinks. The elves also catch crabs, eels, fish, mollusks, octopuses, rays, sharks, and squids using many of the same weapons they use for war, such as the bow and arrow, crossbow, net, spear, and trident. In their closed economy, they have little need for currency or trade goods, but the elves do manufacture high-quality jewelry and other ornaments from feathers, fish scales, pearls, and wood. Mordant Spire clerics, druids, and wizards sometimes craft these objects into powerful magic items.

HISTORY

Over 10,000 years ago, troubled by Azlant's rapid advances in magic and technology, the elves of Celwynvian in northwestern Avistan built an island settlement of laboratories, libraries, and towers that secretly served as a base for elven spying on Azlant. At the center of the

island stood a magical observatory capable of scrying across the entirety of the nascent human empire. Using the information this scrying device provided, elven assassins and other covert operatives worked to keep dangerous secrets out of the humans' hands.

Their efforts were not enough, however. In -5293 AR, when Earthfall was imminent, elves from across Golarion used a magical network of *aiudara*, more commonly known as elf gates, to gather in Kyonin. There they joined a great procession and traveled to the fabled elven realm of Sovyrian, leaving Golarion before the cataclysm began. When the *Starstone* fell, the Azlanti goddess of the moon and battle, Acavna, perished trying to save Golarion from total annihilation. Acavna's body crashed into the observatory in the aftermath, completely destroying the elves' base.

When the elves returned in 2632 AR, they found that nothing of their former outpost remained and a bizarre tower now stood in its place. They quickly rebuilt their home around the tower, named it the Mordant Spire, and suddenly cut off contact with the rest of the world. Since then, little has changed on the island, and to this day, the elves stubbornly hold onto their ancient duties, grudges, and traditions.

ORGANIZATION

Though the masked elves of the Mordant Spire all seem alike to outsiders, many groups with different roles exist within their society. The following are some of the most prominent and influential organizations on the island.

Amaranthine Council: The secretive leaders of the island rule by decree and expect unconditional loyalty from their subjects. They never leave the tower, and they have little interest in the island's daily matters, but when the need arises, they are quick to issue cryptic edicts, which the elves try to follow to the letter. Even Mordant Spire elves know relatively little about their leaders, but according to a myth, purple vapor continuously billows out of the ancient elves' otherwise empty eye sockets.

Listeners: A group of masked, unarmed monks called the Listeners resides at the upper reaches of the Mordant Spire in a series of chambers known as the Vigilant Halls. The monks observe ancient Azlanti ruins through magical containers filled with seawater and join with the Mordant Spire's sentience. This allows them to hear the voice of the spire, which some believe to be whispers of the dead goddess Acavna. These whispers can warn the monks of peril and impart them some of the spire's power, enhancing their senses and physical abilities.

Mordant Censors: Highly trained spellcasters and warriors patrol the ocean both above and beneath the surface. When trespassers are detected, they use spells to conceal the approach of their unnaturally swift rune-

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carved boats. They take all Azlanti treasures they find and use powerful magic to wipe away any dangerous memories from the minds of the intruders, such as knowledge of the locations of the fabled ruins.

Shrouded Seekers: Sages and archaeologists who specialize in Azlanti items and lore often venture from the Mordant Spire to study the ancient ruins nearby. The Shrouded Seekers are usually accompanied by spire defenders (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic* 39), an elite unit of unarmored magi whose combat style combines magic and agile attacks.

Spire Envoys: A number of diplomatic envoys from the Mordant Spire work in the Andoren cities of Almas and Augustana, as well as other major port cities in Avistan. They use diplomatic channels and political forums to influence decision-making, trying to dissuade humans from exploring Azlant. The envoys appear far less alien or aloof than their kin back on the island, but cynics argue that they are simply better at hiding their quirks and loathing for humans. Not all Spire Envoys are staunchly opposed to humans—despite their background, some envoys have acquired a taste for the freedom that human cities offer.

Veiled Lanterns: A growing number of young and progressive elves in the spire think they could learn much from interacting with the humans of the Inner Sea. They fear that the Mordant Spire's isolationist stance is harming their enclave, and they believe that if the alghollthus or other threats arise, humans and elves should face them together as allies. Their views are unpopular with the island's rulers, and for this reason, these dissidents meet secretly in places where they can avoid the Listeners' magical surveillance. During their meetings, the Lanterns remove their masks and shed the cold, emotionless facade they must maintain at other times.

Vigilant Needle: The Mordant Spire elves have long since realized that merely watching the ruins of Azlant and chasing away those who chance upon them is not enough to deter the greedy and ambitious people of the Inner Sea region. Governments, trading companies, and wealthy individuals are capable of mounting expeditions into Azlant, and while the elves have been mostly successful at thwarting such endeavors in the past, they have learned that it is best to nip the problem in the bud. To this end, the Mordant Spire elves have many assassins, saboteurs, and spies collectively known as the Vigilant Needle operating in Absalom, Andoran, and other Avistani countries.

RELATIONS

During the heyday of the Azlanti Empire, the forebears of the Mordant Spire elves considered humankind their chief enemy, and they used an observatory on

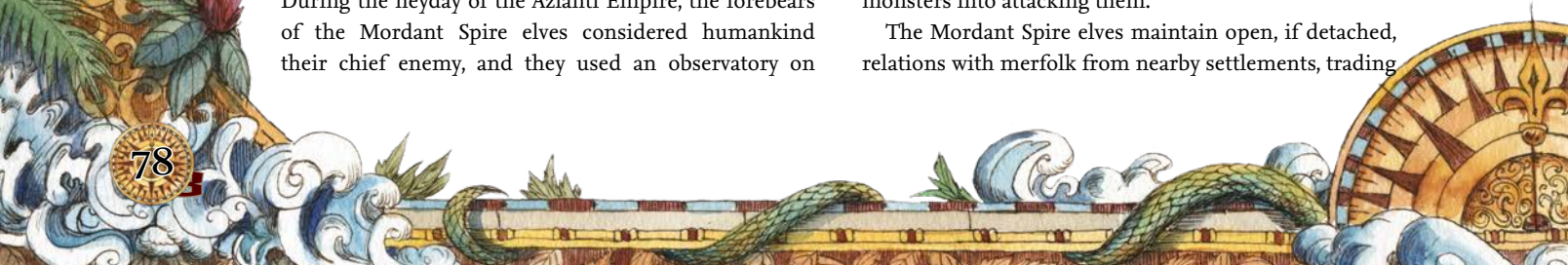
the island to spy on Azlant. After the fall of the empire, many of the magical and technological secrets of the Azlanti were largely forgotten, which meant that the human civilizations that survived were much less of a threat to the elves. The millennia since have seen many of these secrets rediscovered, and the Mordant Spire elves are increasingly concerned that humans' ambition and greed may once again lead to a catastrophe. Most Mordant Spire elves loathe interacting with humans, but when a greater threat emerges, the elves are willing to put aside their disdain, albeit grudgingly.

Ever since the alghollthus engineered Earthfall and the Mordant Spire elves returned to their ancient island home, the elves have plotted against the fishlike, alien creatures in an effort to ensure that a second Earthfall never comes. The elves' mistrust of the alghollthus extends to the wicked creatures' servitor races, including gillmen. The xenophobic elves and the gillmen aren't exactly mortal enemies, but the elves would never suffer a gillman in the spire's most secretive chambers, and most Mordant Spire elves assume gillmen are always up to nefarious and acrimonious plots. More severe is the Mordant Spire elves' view of the depraved creatures known as skum, also the alghollthus' creations. Even though few skum serve their ancient masters anymore, Mordant Spire elves consider them natural foes.

Through a combination of pointed diplomacy and outright force, the elves have cleared many aquatic humanoids from the waters and underwater ruins surrounding the Mordant Spire, including kapoacanth gargoyles, merrow ogres, sahuagin, and scrag trolls. From time to time, groups or even tribes of these creatures wander near the elves' territory, but it usually isn't long until the elves deal with the monsters in a decisive manner.

Aquatic elves are perhaps the closest thing to allies that the elves of the Mordant Spire have. Though self-sufficient, the Mordant Spire elves do some trading with their water-breathing cousins, and they are particularly interested in Azlanti treasures that the aquatic elves bring up from ruins on the seafloor. Aquatic elves also act as information brokers, bringing news and rumors from the underwater city of Talasantri, where people of many aquatic races meet. Not all aquatic elves consider the Mordant Spire elves their allies, however. An elven supremacist group based in Talasantri works to weaken the Mordant Spire elves' diplomatic relations with nations of the Inner Sea region, without realizing that much of the diplomacy is a smokescreen to hide the Mordant Spire elves' espionage, including covert operations to sabotage and sink ships or lure deadly sea monsters into attacking them.

The Mordant Spire elves maintain open, if detached, relations with merfolk from nearby settlements, trading



information and magic items. The elves rarely interact with deep merfolk, however, and consider the strange denizens of the depths much less reliable than their cousins living in shallow waters—perhaps due to rumors of the deep merfolk's origins as the creations of alghollthus. Tritons share the Mordant Spire elves' ancient enmity for the alghollthus, and the tritons of a small underwater settlement called Cheaurukai occasionally exchange news about alghollthu sightings with the elves.

A few nereids live in the underwater ruin of Kosken-Ti, an ancient Azlanti watchtower located some distance from the Mordant Spire. The capricious fey creatures have proven to be very efficient guardians of the ruin, and the elves have chosen not to evict them despite the nereids' habit of drowning surface dwellers who come too near their lair.

Although the Mordant Spire elves share a common history with other surface elves of Golarion, they usually treat their kin with the same coldness as everyone else. The elves look down on dwarves, gnomes, and halflings with pity, and they consider most other land-dwelling races to be beneath their notice altogether.

NEW RULES

The elves of the Mordant Spire differ from other elves in a number of ways. For instance, they're more in tune with the sea than woodlands, and their chief enemies include alghollthus and humans rather than orcs or goblinoids. This section presents new rules intended for GMs who build encounters set in or near the Mordant Spire, and for PCs—particularly elves—whose background involves the Mordant Spire in some way. Because the xenophobic elves jealously guard their secrets from outsiders and rarely become adventurers, players should consult their GM before selecting any of these new options.

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard elf racial traits.

Crossbow Training: Mordant Spire elves train with weapons that can be used underwater. An elf with this trait can reload a light crossbow as a free action and a heavy crossbow as a move action, provided that she is proficient with the weapon. If she

selects the Rapid Reload feat for a heavy crossbow, she can reload the weapon as a free action. This racial trait replaces weapon familiarity.

Natural Swimmer: Mordant Spire elves learn to dive and swim at an early age. Elves with this trait gain a +2 racial bonus on Swim checks and can always take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered when swimming. This racial trait replaces elven magic and keen senses.



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Tongue of the Sea: Mordant Spire elves speak the ancient languages of their ancestors, enemies, and other creatures native to the Steaming Sea. Elves with this racial trait begin play speaking Azlanti and Elven. Elves with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aboleth, Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Common, and Undercommon. This racial trait replaces an elf's normal languages.

SPIRE DIVER (SLAYER ARCHETYPE)

Peerless divers, assassins, and scouts, spire divers operate in and out of water using the same weapons and

equipment. Although the elves of the Mordant Spire originally developed the techniques that spire divers use, people living in coastal areas and archipelagos near the Mwangi Expanse and Tian Xia have similar, independently developed warrior and diving traditions.

Studied Target (Ex): A spire diver does not gain the ability to add her studied target bonus on Bluff and Survival checks against an opponent she has studied. At 7th level, she cannot add her studied target bonus on Disguise checks. Instead, when using any bow or crossbow against her studied target underwater, the spire diver ignores the normal penalty for shooting underwater and instead treats the weapon as though its range increment were 10 feet. At 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th levels, the range increment increases by 10 feet, to a maximum of 50 feet.

When using a bow or crossbow that already has an underwater range increment, such as an underwater crossbow (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 39–40), the spire diver adds the range increment gained from studied target as a bonus to the weapon's usual underwater range increment, though the combined range increment cannot exceed the weapon's normal range increment.

This alters studied target and stalker.

Hold Breath (Ex): A spire diver increases the number of rounds she can hold her breath before she is required to start attempting Constitution checks to avoid drowning by 2 per slayer level she has.

This replaces track.

Slayer Talents: A spire diver can select the strong stroke rogue talent (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 70) as a slayer talent.

Swift Swimmer (Ex): At 11th level, a spire diver gains a swim speed equal to her base speed.

This replaces swift tracker.

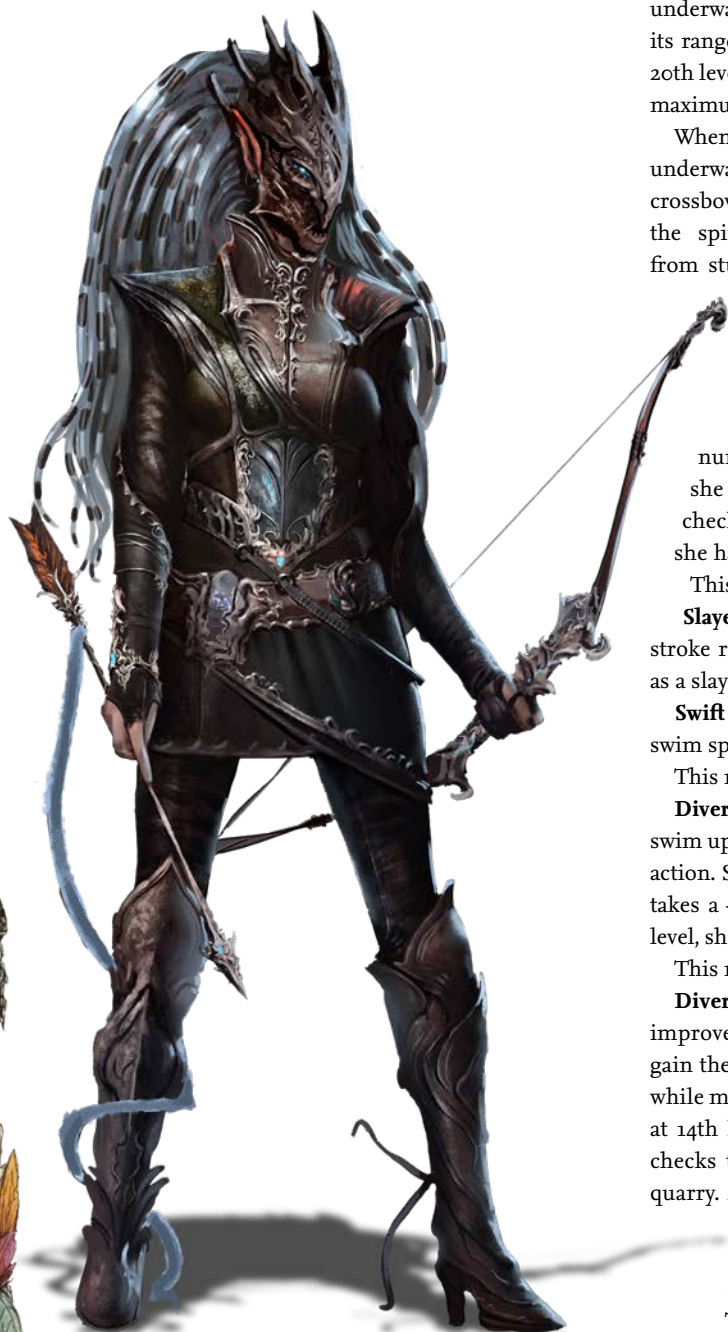
Diver's Advance (Ex): At 13th level, a spire diver can swim up to twice her swim speed once per day as a move action. She can use Stealth as part of this movement but takes a –10 penalty on her check for doing so. At 17th level, she can use this ability twice per day.

This replaces slayer's advance.

Diver's Quarry (Ex): A spire diver gains quarry and improved quarry as a normal slayer, but she does not gain the ability to take 10 or take 20 on Survival checks while moving at normal speed without penalty. Instead, at 14th level, a spire diver can take 10 on Knowledge checks to identify a monster she has selected as her quarry. At 19th level, she can take 20 on these checks

without spending extra time to do so. The spire diver must be trained in the appropriate Knowledge skill to use this ability.

This alters quarry and improved quarry.



FEATS

The following feats represent a fighting style that's popular among the elves of the Mordant Spire, particularly monks.

BARRACUDA DASH (COMBAT)

You use powerful, deadly bursts of speed to charge and attack an additional foe.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Barracuda Slam, Barracuda Style, Improved Unarmed Strike, Acrobatics 7 ranks, Swim 7 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a swim speed equal to your base speed. When you attack on a charge in water or on land and the attack hits, you can immediately make a second charge attack against a second opponent. All the normal requirements for making a charge, such as moving at least 10 feet and moving in a straight line, apply to this second attack. The total distance of the two charge attacks cannot exceed the normal maximum distance for a charge (usually double your speed).

The movement, including leaving the first target's threatened area, provokes attacks of opportunity as normally. You cannot use pounce or other abilities that grant extra attacks on your turn if you use Barracuda Dash to make a second attack.

BARRACUDA SLAM (COMBAT)

You learn to ram the whole weight of your body into an opponent to take it by surprise.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Barracuda Style, Improved Unarmed Strike, Acrobatics 5 ranks, Swim 5 ranks.

Benefit: With a successful Swim check, you can move half your speed as a move action or your full speed as a full-round action. You can run and charge underwater, though the maximum distance you can move while doing so is half the normal maximum distance. Further, while making a charge attack in water or on land, you can add twice your Strength bonus on the damage roll for your first unarmed strike on your turn.

Normal: You cannot charge or run underwater unless you have a swim speed. With an unarmed strike, you usually add your Strength bonus on damage rolls.

BARRACUDA STYLE (COMBAT, STYLE)

You study a combat style consisting of fluid, circular motions suited for moving and fighting underwater.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Improved Unarmed Strike, Acrobatics 3 ranks, Swim 3 ranks.

Benefit: Your unarmed strikes deal normal damage underwater, and you don't take penalties on attack rolls with unarmed strikes made underwater. You add your Wisdom modifier in addition to your Strength modifier on Swim checks.

Normal: Attacks with bludgeoning weapons (such as unarmed strikes) deal half damage and take a -2 penalty on attack rolls underwater.

MAGIC ITEMS

The elves of the Mordant Spire often use the following magic items on their clandestine missions in the Steaming Sea.

GAUNTLETS OF THE DEEP		PRICE 5,000 GP
SLOT hands	CL 7th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA moderate abjuration		

These gloves are covered in fish scales and always feel cold and wet to the touch. While wearing these gauntlets, after a 24-hour attunement period, the wearer can throw a weapon that deals piercing damage underwater without penalty, using the weapon's normal range increment. When the wielder attacks a target in water from land, regardless of the weapon the wielder is using, the target doesn't benefit from cover or total cover for being in water.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,500 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>freedom of movement</i>	

HOLLOW MASK		PRICE 3,000 GP
SLOT head	CL 5th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA faint conjuration		

This porous wooden mask fits against the wearer's face much more tightly than its bulky, abstract design suggests. The mask is capable of storing air; the wearer can breathe normally underwater for 5 minutes before he has to hold his breath. While underwater, so long as there is still air left in the mask, it converts speech into vibrations in the water and vice versa, allowing the wearer to speak normally and hear the speech of other creatures wearing *hollow masks* within 60 feet as though they were not underwater. After a wearer has used the mask underwater, the mask needs an equal amount of time (maximum 5 minutes) to replenish its air supply.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 1,500 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>air bubble^{UC}</i> , <i>message</i>	

WAVECUTTER'S FIGURINE		PRICE 6,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA faint transmutation		

This rune-carved wooden statuette of a fish feels very slippery. When placed at the helm of any Large water vehicle (such as a rowboat or ship's boat), the friction between the boat and water is reduced considerably, allowing the boat to glide through the water more smoothly and swiftly. The boat gains a +20-foot enhancement bonus to its maximum speeds.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 3,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>touch of the sea^{APG}</i>	

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“My travels have taken me to amazing and dangerous places all over the world and beyond, but nothing prepared me for the sights that I’d see beneath the surface of Golarion’s oceans. I’ve been to the frozen ends of the world, the darkest depths of the Darklands, the ugly sore known as the Worldwound, and even other planes of existence, but nothing has been so alien or dangerous. I first visited a settlement of aquatic elves off the coast of Cheliax and then set out for deeper waters. I’ve seen magically worked coral that provided safe settlement for hundreds of beings. I snuck around the cave openings bored into the side of a massive underwater trench, making sure not to arouse the notice of the devilfish that lived within. I even learned a secret way down the Braid, the massive inverted waterspout that leads to the Sightless Sea, though I don’t plan on venturing there anytime soon.”

—Marliss Nalathane, explorer

In this volume of the Ruins of Azlant Adventure Path, the PCs roam beyond the immediate region of Ancorato and Zanas-Tahn and venture to the underwater city of Talasantri. While there, the PCs are asked to mount an expedition to a nearby island where they must retrieve a powerful weapon buried with a legendary hero who once saved Talasantri, with the aim of using the weapon to once again turn back a cataclysmic threat to the city. The following bestiary contains monsters that can be found on islands, deep beneath the sea, and in waters in between. This volume's entries include a dangerous carnivorous plant, a collection of deep-sea monstrosities, a new alghollthu, and an oni derived from merfolk.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Most of this adventure takes place within the confines of Talasantri, but in the middle part of "City in the Deep," the heroes explore a remote island that holds the tomb of a lost hero. This requires the PCs to travel the open ocean for a while on their way there. The two tables included on this page cover the two different environments where the PCs can encounter additional threats during the course of this volume's adventure beyond the full encounters provided.

During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 30% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend exploring the island that holds Wavewalker's tomb. While traveling to or from Talasantri, the PCs have a 25% chance of a random encounter every 3 hours they spend traveling the open ocean. Regardless of where they are, the PCs should have at most three random encounters per 24-hour period.

In addition, the PCs could have a random encounter in Talasantri. The coral dome that protects the city keeps out most dangerous invaders, and the Talasantri guard is alert enough to stop almost anything else that slips into the city. However, this doesn't rule out the PCs encountering city toughs or agents of Naqualia while they investigate the current events of the underwater city. They have a 25% chance every 6 hours they are exploring the city to have one of these run-ins. Depending on the situation, the PCs can encounter a CR 11 challenge with 1d4 cecaelia ruffians (see page 15) or, if they've broken a law or are acting shady, 1d4 Talasantri guards (see page 11). For a CR 12 encounter, the PCs might come across 1d6 galvos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 120) or 1d4 siyokoys (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 246).

Since the adventure spans a range of character levels, some random encounters might be too simple or too difficult for the PCs, depending on where the party is 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.

ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-6	1 giant flytrap	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 134
7-14	1d8 giant mosquitoes	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 193
15-20	1 nereid	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 198
21-27	1d4 psychementals	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 197
28-34	1 tiberolith	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 259
35-40	1 aerial servant	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 11
41-45	1 carnivorous crystal	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 45
46-51	1d8 crypt flowers	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 67
52-56	1 mapinguari	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 183
57-62	1d3 tick swarms	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 265
63-67	1 clockwork golem	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 137
68-72	1 lorelei	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 184
73-75	1 rusalka	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 232
76-80	1 shining child	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 245
81-85	1d8 stymphalidies	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 257
86-90	1 kikituk	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 177
91-95	1 seaweed siren	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 235
96-99	1 titanoboa	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 185
100	1 deep walker	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 82

OPEN OCEAN ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-12	1 oceanid	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 208
13-25	1 whale	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 282
26-40	1d4 giant octopuses	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 219
41-50	1 cameroceras	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 49
51-65	Sahuagin hunting party	12	See below
66-75	1 cetus	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 54
76-82	1 charybdis	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 56
83-94	1 ketesthius	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 150
95-100	1 great white whale	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 282

Additionally, if the result rolled is inappropriate for the terrain the PCs are traversing or just doesn't make sense in the context of where the PCs might be, roll again or choose a different encounter.

Sahuagin Hunting Party (CR 12): Sahuagin prowl the oceans, looking for creatures to snatch up and ships to drag to their watery deaths. Some hunt for the kill, hoping to bring fresh meat back to their homes, while others prowl the seas in search of creatures to capture and use as slaves. Still other sahuagin hunters simply seek plunder. This particular hunting party consists of two sahuagin barons (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 194) and a sahuagin high priestess (*Monster Codex* 193). To increase the CR of this encounter to 13, add a dire shark (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 247) or five great white sharks (*Bestiary* 4 241).

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BLOOD LILY

Hundreds of long but thin blood-red petals form a spherical shape atop the central stem of this plant monster. A pair of stout vine-like appendages sprout from either side of its central mass.

BLOOD LILY

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large plant (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+4 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 120 (16d8+48)

Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities camouflage; **Immune** plant traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +16 (2d6+4 plus poison and trip)

Ranged 4 petal spikes +16 (1d8/19–20 plus bleed)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with slam)

Special Attacks bleed (1d8), petal spikes, poison, trip

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 2, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (petal spike), Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (petal spike), Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +12 (+20 when among vegetation), Swim +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth when among vegetation

SQ amphibious

ECOLOGY

Environment warm coastlines or underwater

Organization solitary or pod (2–5)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex) A blood lily can contract its distinctive scarlet spikes into a small bundle. By hiding the bundle within its vines, the blood lily can easily pass as an ordinary plant. This ability grants the blood lily a +8 racial bonus on Stealth checks when among vegetation.

Petal Spikes (Ex) A blood lily's petals are razor sharp, and as a standard action, the plant can launch up to four petals as a ranged attack (with a separate attack roll for each petal). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment; the range is halved underwater. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The blood lily can launch only 16 spikes in any 24-hour period.

Poison (Ex) Slam—injury; *save* Fort DC 23; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Con damage and sickened; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A blood lily's poison causes the victim to bleed copiously from its pores. Each time the victim fails its save against the blood

lily's poison, it becomes sickened as blood coats its entire body and trickles into its mouth. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Many an unsuspecting victim has been lured to a blood lily by its large radiant blossom—a ball of scarlet spikes reminiscent of a sea urchin. Those who live near blood lilies know to be wary of the plants, but as nonanimate blood lilies also grow in such areas, it can be difficult to tell the dangerous plants from the inert ones. To complicate matters, blood lilies have learned to hide their scarlet petals when hunting. A favorite trick of these plants is to disguise themselves next to ordinary blood lilies, using their harmless kin as a distraction. When travelers pass by, the predatory blood lilies then attack from concealment.

Blood lilies commonly grow in tropical areas near coastlines, where they hunt both in and out of the water. Fish and other aquatic creatures are drawn to the blood lily's brilliant petals, sometimes mistaking them for colorful tropical fish. Blood lilies can slaughter and consume dozens of small fish in under a minute if a school draws close enough. Though blood lilies devour such prey whole, the masticating action of the edges of a blood lily's digestive orifice leaves clouds of blood in the water. Their blossoms also attract giant insects, which can be dangerous and damaging to the plant creatures. Blood lilies can easily defend against most of these vermin, but they almost never eat insects, preferring warm-blooded prey above all others.

Blood lilies have an animalistic cunning and can use surprisingly sophisticated tactics for plants. Blood lilies that grow near the settlements of intelligent creatures (such as humans on land or merfolk underwater) keep their petals hidden and hide among other plants to better ambush their prey. When they grow in remote areas far from any settlements, they keep their petals exposed to draw in animals. Blood lilies remember the location of fertile hunting grounds and adapt their tactics based on the prey they seek. Surprisingly mobile, they sometimes travel long distances to hunt and feed at these fertile locations. A few naturalists have recorded rare blood lilies that never remain in the same area for long, roaming far and wide until they mature enough to enter a transformative hibernation (see page 85).

A blood lily is composed of a thick trunk plated with extremely tough but flexible green bark. An orifice lined with large thorns splits the trunk about halfway up its length. The blood lily uses this opening to devour its prey. Potent acids inside the creature's trunk dissolve fleshy organic matter quickly, allowing the lily to eat much more than would seem possible given its size.

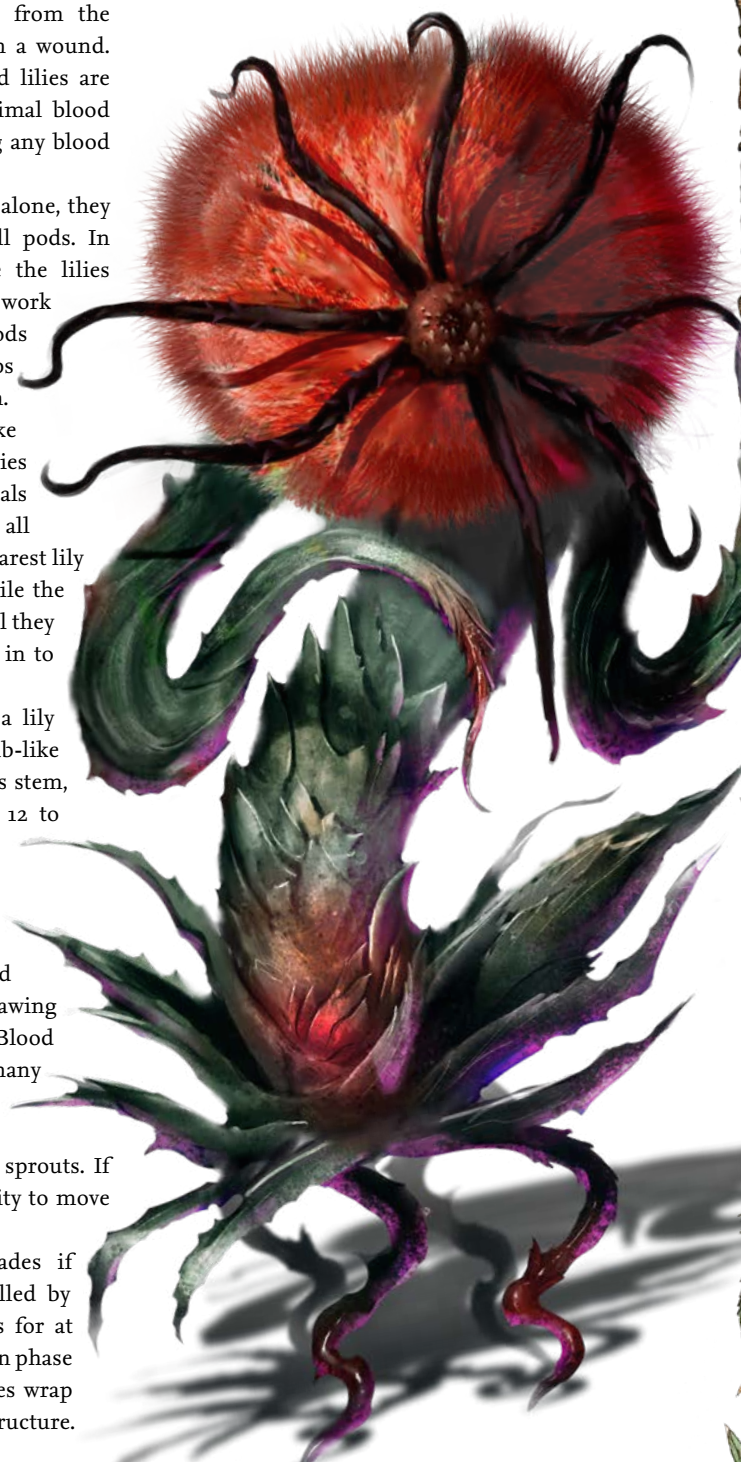
A lily's vines are covered in the same hard bark as its trunk, and the vines are lined with tiny thorns that seep poison. The blood lily gets its name not only from their vivid coloring but also from the disturbing effects of their toxin. Creatures affected by a blood lily's poison bleed from their pores, coating their skin in a light sheen of crimson. The blood lily focuses its attacks on bleeding victims, assuming they have been weakened by its toxin. However, a blood lily cannot distinguish between a creature bleeding from the blood lily's poison and one bleeding from a wound. Individuals traveling in areas where blood lilies are common sometimes carry bladders of animal blood to splash nearby during combat, confusing any blood lilies as they attack.

Though most blood lilies live and hunt alone, they occasionally come together to form small pods. In particularly rich hunting grounds where the lilies don't have to compete for prey, they work together in pods to bring down victims. Pods are adept at felling large creatures or groups of smaller creatures by working in tandem. Though a pod's tactics are simple, it can take on even dangerous creatures. The blood lilies in a pod spread out and conceal their petals until their target is in range, and then they all unleash their petal barrages at once. The nearest lily then moves to attack with its vine lash while the other lilies continue to fire petal spikes until they deplete their reserves. All lilies then move in to finish off their victim with vine lashes.

Blood lilies reproduce asexually. Once a lily matures, it begins to grow a small bulb-like structure called a bulbil near the base of its stem, protected by its foliage. The bulbil takes 12 to 18 months to mature, at which point it drops off the parent plant and grows into a mature blood lily within a year. If released on land, a bulbil takes root in the soil, from which it draws sustenance; if released underwater, it drifts with the currents, drawing sustenance from the water as it grows. Blood lilies don't protect their released bulbils; many are consumed by predators, and in areas where hunting is poor, adult blood lilies might even consume their own immature sprouts. If a sprout reaches maturity, it gains the ability to move under its own power and begins to hunt.

Mature blood lilies can live for decades if hunting remains good and they aren't killed by other predators. A blood lily that survives for at least 10 years sometimes enters a hibernation phase during which its petals fall off and its vines wrap around its trunk, forming a cocoon-like structure.

After a season of dormancy, the blood lily sprouts larger, darker petals that carry the same toxin as the thorns in its vines. The blood lily's vines undergo a growth spurt, gaining an extra 5 feet in length. These blood lilies are hardier than their lesser kin and can challenge even the deadliest predators. They have the advanced creature simple template, they add their poison to attacks with their petal spikes, and their reach with slam attacks increases by 5 feet.



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TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

THE MORDANT SPIRE

BESTIARY

DEEP SEA MONSTROSITIES

Bizarre and resilient creatures make their homes in the inhospitable depths of the world's oceans.

FISH, GIANT STARGAZER

This fish lies beneath the sand with only its bulbous eyes and upturned maw full of jagged teeth protruding.

GIANT STARGAZER

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Medium animal (aquatic)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

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

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities venomous spines; **Resist** electricity 10

OFFENSE

Speed swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+3 plus 1d6 electricity and grab)

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

Special Attacks fast swallow, gulp, poison, shock, swallow whole (1d8 bludgeoning damage, AC 11, 3 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 19, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 3

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +9 (+19 when buried), Swim +15;

Racial Modifiers +10 Stealth when buried

ECOLOGY

Environment any oceans

Organization solitary, pair, or school (3–6)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Gulp (Ex) A stargazer can open its giant mouth in a fraction of a second, creating a vortex that draws a target into its maw. When underwater, a stargazer gains 5 additional feet of reach with its bite attack and a +2 bonus on combat maneuver checks to grapple.

Poison (Ex) Venomous spines—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* sickened for 1d4 rounds; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Shock (Ex) A stargazer delivers an electrical shock with each successful bite attack, dealing an additional 1d6 points of electricity damage.

Venomous Spines (Ex) A stargazer has two large venomous spines situated behind its head. The stargazer reacts swiftly to attacks, stabbing at any creature that attempts to harm it. Each time a creature attacks a stargazer with a natural weapon, unarmed strike, or weapon attack that doesn't have reach, it must succeed at a DC 16 Reflex save or be hit by one of these spines. Each time a creature is hit by a spine, it takes

1d4 points of piercing damage and is exposed to the stargazer's poison. A creature that grapples a stargazer is automatically hit by these spines. The save DC to avoid the spines is Dexterity-based.

A giant stargazer is an ambush predator with a speckled, flattened body that hunts by burying itself in the sand, leaving just its eyes and mouth uncovered. A typical giant stargazer is 6 feet long and weighs 250 pounds.

SEA WORM, KING RAGWORM

This enormous segmented worm shimmers with iridescent colors, and large bristles run along its sides.

KING RAGWORM

CR 13

XP 25,600

N Gargantuan vermin (aquatic)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+9 Dex, +13 natural, –4 size)

hp 187 (15d8+120)

Fort +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee bite +20 (2d8+13/19–20 plus grab), slam +20 (2d6+13 plus poison), tail slap +15 (2d8+6 plus poison)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (25 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks eversible pharynx, fast swallow, poison, swallow whole (4d6 bludgeoning damage, AC 16, 18 hp), vortex attack

STATISTICS

Str 37, **Dex** 28, **Con** 27, **Int** —, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +28; **CMD** 47 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Critical[®] (bite)

Skills Swim +21

SQ compression

ECOLOGY

Environment any oceans

Organization solitary

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Eversible Pharynx (Ex) The king ragworm's jaws sit deep within its throat. When making a bite attack, the ragworm turns its throat inside out and extends its jaws with surprising speed. This not only extends the ragworm's reach with its bite attack, but it also gives it a +4 bonus on attack rolls with its bite during surprise rounds.

Poison (Ex) Slam or tail slap—injury; *save* Fort DC 25; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex damage and 1d2 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vortex Attack (Ex) Three times per day as a standard action,

a king ragworm can undulate its body inside its burrow to create a vortex, drawing anything within a 15-foot cone toward the burrow's entrance. Large and smaller creatures caught in this vortex must succeed at a DC 26 Reflex save or be pulled into the ragworm's burrow, potentially provoking attacks of opportunity. Attacks of opportunity caused by this ability can't be avoided with Acrobatics (though attacks of opportunity provoked in other ways, such as by moving out of one of the ragworm's threatened squares, can be avoided as normal). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

The giant king ragworm, found in the far depths of the ocean, is among the largest of the sea worms. It creates a slime-lined burrow in the ocean floor, where it resides most of the time.

TULLIMONSTRUM

This small cylindrical creature has two eyestalks extending straight off to each side.

TULLIMONSTRUM

CR 1



XP 400

N Tiny animal (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

hp 11 (2d8+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities all-around vision

OFFENSE

Speed 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d3–3 plus attach)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks attach, blood drain (1d2 Constitution)

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 1, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 9 (can't be tripped)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +15, Swim +5

ECOLOGY

Environment any oceans

Organization solitary, pair, group (3–5), or school (6–20)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When a tullimonstrum hits with a bite attack, it automatically grapples its foe, dealing automatic bite damage each round. The tullimonstrum loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but it holds on with great tenacity. While attached,

a tullimonstrum has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe. An attached tullimonstrum can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself—if its prey manages to succeed at a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the tullimonstrum is dislodged.

A tullimonstrum is strange, blood-drinking, deep-sea creature displaying features of both fish and invertebrates. While tullimonstrums are relatively weak individually, a group or school of the creatures poses a lethal threat to nearly any target. A typical tullimonstrum is 14 inches long and weighs 6 pounds. Tullimonstrums can serve as familiars for spellcasters, granting their masters a +3 bonus on Perception checks.



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LARY

ENISYSIAN

Three lidless eyes with vertical pupils stare out from a small umbrella-shaped creature. It moves about using squirming tentacles, each moving independently in a mesmerizing motion.

ENISYSIAN

CR 4

XP 1,200

LE Small aberration (aquatic, shapechanger)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +10

Aura mental disarmament (100 ft., DC 17), mucus cloud (5 ft., DC 14)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

Immune mind-affecting effects; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles +4 (1d4 plus grab and slime)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks alghollthu's bane, grab (Large)

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

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 12), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 13)

3/day—*unwilling shield*^{APG} (DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2 (+6 grapple); **CMD** 16 (can't be tripped)

Feats Ability Focus (mental disarmament),

Dodge, Toughness

Skills Bluff +4, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge

(dungeoneering) +5, Perception +10, Spellcraft +8,

Stealth +14, Swim +13

Languages Aboleth, Aquan; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ change shape (Tiny or Small animal; *greater polymorph*), symbiotic bond

ECOLOGY

Environment any water

Organization solitary or with 1 veiled master

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alghollthu's Bane (Su) As a standard action, an enisysian can make a touch attack against another alghollthu—creatures including aboleths, omnipaths (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 204), and veiled masters (*Bestiary* 6 270), among others. On a hit, the target's immunity to mind-affecting effects is completely suppressed as long as it remains within 50 feet of the enisysian (no save).

Mental Disarmament (Su) An enisysian emits a constant telepathic barrage that lowers the mental defenses of nearby creatures. Anyone within 100 feet of an enisysian must succeed at a DC 17 Will saving throw or take a -4 penalty on Will saving throws while in range. A creature that succeeds at this saving throw is immune

to the enisysian's mental disarmament for 24 hours.

The enisysian and any creature bonded with it via its symbiotic bond are immune to this ability. An enisysian can suppress or reactivate this ability as a swift action. Mental disarmament is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Mucus Cloud (Ex) An underwater enisysian exudes a cloud of clear slime extending 5 feet from itself in all directions. Any creature in this area must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw each round or it loses its ability to breathe air (but gains the ability to breathe water) for 24 hours. Renewed contact with the mucus cloud and failing another saving throw extends the effect for another 24 hours. An enisysian can suppress or reactivate this ability as a swift action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Slime (Ex) A creature hit by an enisysian's tentacles must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw or have its flesh and skin transform into a clear, slimy membrane over the course of 1d4 rounds. The creature's new flesh is soft and tender, reducing its Constitution score by 4 as long as the condition persists. If the creature's flesh isn't kept moist, it dries quickly and the victim takes 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. *Remove disease* and similar effects can restore an afflicted creature to normal, but immunity to disease offers no protection from this attack. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Symbiotic Bond (Su) An enisysian is able to form a symbiotic bond with another willing, living creature. This amplifies the host creature's mental abilities and boosts its ability to control others. To do this, the enisysian must successfully grapple the target, after which, instead of pinning or maintaining the grapple, it can burrow into the skin as a standard action that deals 10 points of damage; this damage cannot be healed until the enisysian detaches or dies. If the host is Large or larger, the enisysian (but not the host) is considered to have the grappled condition while thus attached. If the host is Medium or smaller, both are considered to have the grappled condition while attached. Over the next 24 hours the enisysian and the host form a mental and mystical bond, after which the host gains the following bonuses: a +2 enhancement bonus to its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, and a +2 bonus to the caster level and DC of spells and spell-like abilities with the mind-affecting descriptor.

Of all the races of alghollthus, none are as poorly understood by the scholars of the surface world as the enisysians. Their very existence is only a rumor, kept a closely guarded secret by an elite group of veiled masters known as the Fifth Dictum. These individuals coexist with enisysians in an asymmetrical physical and

psychic symbiosis. In exchange for their protection, the much weaker enisysians grant their veiled master hosts not only increased mental capacity but also the ability to use their powers to influence other alghollthus. This relationship is far from equal, however, as the enisysians have been bred to be subservient to their masters for thousands of years, directly in opposition to the second dictum of their people: an alghollthu is to control. It should therefore never be controlled. Members of the Fifth Dictum rightly fear that should it become known that they created a race of alghollthu slaves, their kind would quickly turn against them.

Enisysians were first created during the Age of Darkness from aboleth stock by the Fifth Dictum as a response to the cataclysm of Earthfall. These veiled masters had been vocal opponents of the human experiment (as they called the Azlanti civilization) from the beginning, believing that the humanoids were too free willed and unpredictable to be of lasting use. The destruction that Earthfall caused not only to the surface races but also to the alghollthu civilization at the time confirmed their worst fears. In the ruins of their broken cities, the Fifth Dictum began secretly fleshwarping the enisysians in order to give themselves the power to intervene against their own kin and prevent such a disastrous decision from ever being made again. Over the following millennia, however, members of the Fifth Dictum have grown arrogant, and they now believe themselves to be the true masters of alghollthu culture.

A typical enisysian is about 3 feet in length and weighs approximately 40 pounds.

ECOLOGY

An enisysian appears as a small tentlike creature with gray skin and trailing tentacles that end in small hooks. Its upper body resembles that of a jellyfish, but with three large, lidless eyes with vertical black pupils arrayed in a line. On the underside of its body is a small double-hooked beak used for eating and attaching to its host. While on land, four of its tentacles act as legs while two of them are used for defense or to manipulate tools. In the water, the enisysian propels itself with its tentacles like a squid.

An enisysian is custom-bred to serve a single veiled master for its life. Like other alghollthus, an enisysian is basically immortal, able to repair almost any damage to its body over time or even enter a chrysalis state to wholly regenerate itself. Designed and bred to be subservient, an enisysian allows itself to be attached to the underside of its veiled master host at a young age. Once the bond between the alghollthus forms, the enisysian disguises its shape to appear as a remora

or any other species of suckerfish common in its biome, reverting to its true shape only when it dies. It remains attached throughout its life, drawing its nutrition from the veiled master's blood and by filtering micronutrients from the water around it.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Until very recently, enisysians have had no cultural or even personal identity separate from that of the veiled masters they served. Genetically bred for dedication and obedience, they communicated telepathically only with their bonded veiled masters, not even acknowledging others of their kind. This has begun to change over the last several centuries, as natural genetic mutations have decreased the enisysians' inbred subservience and enhanced their self-awareness. Individual enisysians have begun to secretly communicate with one another, slowly awakening others of their kind to their enslavement while reaching out to alghollthus beyond their masters' control for support. Although the process of their emancipation has been very slow due to the Fifth Dictum's paranoia and secrecy, knowledge of their existence has begun to spread among the other alghollthu races, and surface-dwelling scholars have even theorized about the existence of the enisysians in certain works.



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TALASANTRI GAZETTEER

ECOLOGY OF THE MERFOLK

THE MORDANT SPIRE

BESTIARY

ONI, KIGYO

This humanoid has the lower body of a giant seahorse and a round, colorful face dominated by wide, staring eyes and hideous fangs.

KIGYO

CR 6

XP 2,400

LE Medium outsider (aquatic, native, oni, shapechanger)

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

Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 66 (7d10+28); regeneration 5 (electricity or good spells)

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

Immune cold; **SR** 17

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee mwk trident +13/+8 (1d8+4)

Ranged mwk trident +11 (1d8+4)

Special Attacks grasping eddy

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +10)

At will—*invisibility* (self only)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 13), *enthrall* (DC 14),
hydraulic push^{APG}

1/day—*freedom of movement* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack,
Weapon Focus (trident)

Skills Bluff +12, Intimidate +12, Perception +11, Sense
Motive +11, Stealth +12, Survival +11, Swim +22

Languages Aquan, Infernal

SQ amphibious, change shape (Small or Medium humanoid;
alter self), trident mastery, underwater grappler

ECOLOGY

Environment any water

Organization solitary, pair, or band (3–12)

Treasure standard (mwk trident)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Grasping Eddy (Su) As a standard action, a kigyo can create a powerful underwater eddy that holds its enemies in place. The oni selects a grid intersection within 30 feet on or beneath the surface of a body of water as the center of the eddy. The oni can attempt an immediate grapple combat maneuver check against any enemies within a 10-foot radius of this point, as though the targets were within its reach. As a swift action in each subsequent round the eddy remains in place, the oni can maintain the grapple on those targets caught within the eddy's grasp (attempting a separate combat maneuver check for each target). In order to pin a target or deal damage with this effect, the oni must take a standard action as normal. The eddy persists as long as the kigyo continues to take

at least a swift action on its turn to maintain a grapple.

The effect immediately ends if all targets escape the eddy or if the kigyo does not spend any actions to use this ability, falls unconscious or dies, or moves more than 30 feet from the eddy's center. The kigyo can maintain only one grasping eddy at a time.

Trident Mastery (Ex) Kigyos are experts at employing tridents as deadly weapons. The oni gains Weapon Focus (trident) as a bonus feat and treats a trident as having a range increment of 20 feet when underwater, even though throwing weapons underwater is normally ineffective for most combatants.

Underwater Grappler (Ex) Kigyos are skilled grapplers and know how to use their underwater environs to their advantage when in close combat with their foes. A kigyo gains a +4 racial bonus on grapple combat maneuver checks while it or its target is at least partially underwater. This bonus also applies to grapple combat maneuver checks the kigyo attempts while using its grasping eddy ability. The kigyo gains no bonus to its CMD against grapple attempts.

Oni are most often found in Tian Xia on the opposite side of the world from ancient Azlant, though some, such as the powerful ogre mage, have expanded their influence to include other continents including Avistan and Garund. Not all oni live on land, however, and the vengeful spirits have been known to take the form of humanoid species that dwell mostly or entirely underwater. While most oni are rare, those that take aquatic forms are scarcely ever encountered by terrestrial folk, though locathahs, merfolk, and other aquatic races are more likely to encounter these sea-dwelling oni than they are to meet ogre mages or other land-borne spirits. The most common submarine oni is the kigyo, which adopts a form resembling a corrupted parody of a merfolk.

Like merfolk, kigyos have a torso and arms, with an aquatic lower body that allows them to maneuver lithely through the water. Unlike a merfolk, however, a kigyo has a monstrous face and its body more closely resembles that of a seahorse.

A typical kigyo is 7 feet long from its head to the tip of its curved tail and weighs 190 pounds.

ECOLOGY

As with many types of oni, kigyos are hateful, vengeful creatures that prey upon mortals not out of necessity but out of spite and malice. Kigyos enjoy seeing their victims drown, and they are said to be drawn to the sites of shipwrecks or tragic deaths at sea where mortals met their end in the unforgiving ocean. While this may not be true, plenty of kigyos have been the cause of such deaths, either in combat or by manipulating their

victims into dangerous situations from which they could not escape. Kigyos have the ability to create powerful underwater currents that swirl in tight eddies, latching on to multiple creatures and holding them in place until they either drown or fall victim to the oni's other attacks.

In the same way that a kigyo draws a sense of accomplishment from drowning a victim, it also feels a sense of superiority at making an enemy willingly give up something of incredible value in exchange for its life or that of a loved one. To oni, life and mortality are foreign concepts, and they can derive only so much pleasure out of seeing a living creature's essence snuffed out by death. As jealous and possessive beings, however, kigyos can more easily comprehend the sacrifice of giving up something other than one's life. Many kigyos develop obsessions with a single type of ransom they demand, such as firstborn children, spouses, a victim's reproductive or sensory organs or lungs, or even (in rare cases) pure material wealth. Those who hunt kigyos or research kigyo activity across the world can sometimes follow a single oni from nation to nation and from ocean to ocean by the specifics of what it demands of its victims. Thus have specific kigyos developed almost mythic status while victims across both distance and time suffer the same sadistic fate at the oni's hands.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Kigyos rarely congregate with others of their kind, preferring instead solitary lives in the forms of aquatic elves, gillman, locathahs, merfolk, or other aquatic or shore-dwelling humanoids. In these forms, kigyos attempt to seduce unsuspecting mortals, and trick them into bringing the oni—who usually pretend to be castaways or injured victims—onto their vessels or into their seaside communities. Once in these societies, kigyos bed unsuspecting mortals who take pity on them and then abscond with items of value while their partners are sleeping. After amassing particularly valuable or numerous prizes, a kigyo reveals itself to its victims and demands a ransom of something far more precious for the items' return.

Like all oni, kigyos are filled with hatred, especially for their uncorrupted kami counterparts. Kigyos see *suijins* in particular (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #52: *Forest of Spirits* 88) as contemptible, and they are known to form elaborate hunting parties to seek out the benevolent nature spirits and destroy them and the untainted waters they protect. These raiding bands constitute the few large groups of kigyos on Golarion, and they can present deadly threats to those who

encounter them, be they kami or other creatures. The oni fight tactically in tandem, half of the kigyos using their grasping eddy abilities to hold their foes in place while the other half surround and stab at them with their tridents. Even when encountered alone, a kigyo presents a formidable challenge to even the most adept underwater fighters, as it can hold an entire party in one of its powerful whirlpools, reducing its foes' ability to conduct their own group fighting tactics.



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JOURNAL



NEXT MONTH

TOWER OF THE DROWNED DEAD

By Ron Lundeen

After learning that a powerful and ancient enemy is planning to steal a doomsday weapon and use it against humanity, the adventurers visit a ruined undersea tower belonging to an undead survivor of the cataclysm that destroyed ancient Azlant. In pursuit of the veiled master they believe has infiltrated the tower, the heroes make their way through the submerged ruin, battling the tower's defenses and undead occupants only to realize that the veiled master has already slipped out with the lich's phylactery and the location of the devastating weapon. Can the heroes also learn the location of the facility and escape alive to confront the veiled master, or will they end up entombed in the drowned tower?

SECRETS OF AZLANT

By Erik Mona

The shattered continent of Azlant holds many more secrets than are uncovered over the course of the Ruins of Azlant Adventure Path. Explore some additional mysterious locations to add to any campaign and expand

on the lore of this iconic civilization. See what remains of these forgotten sites and gain hints of their past glories prior to Earthfall!

AZLANT IN THE INNER SEA

By Isabelle Lee

In its heyday, Azlant's influence stretched far beyond its own borders. Today, ruins of the great empire's former holdings in the Inner Sea region remain—ripe for exploration and plunder. Four such sites are detailed here, complete with a map, history, potential plot hooks, and encounter guides for each. Delve into the past with these exciting places of power and wonder!

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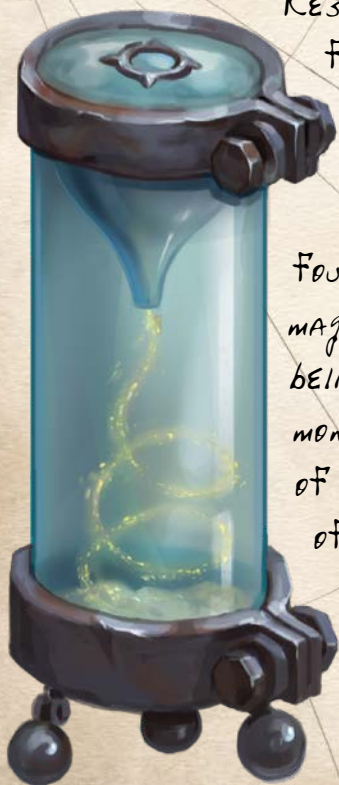
PRISMATIC ANALYZER

It is clear from the reports made by explorers digging into the surviving ruins of Azlant that the ancient Azlanti recognized and harnessed various types of magical energies. So far, only one of these devices has been recovered (and unfortunately it is nonfunctioning), but scholars believe that it acted as a vessel for magic and that by activating the runes on the side of the device, the Azlanti were able to analyze collected magical energies to determine their type and potential function. Some even believe that this device could convert one type of energy to another.



GRAVITY GAUGE

Researchers who have examined magical devices extracted from the ruins of Azlant discovered that the ancient Azlanti experimented with magic that could manipulate gravity, and eventually learned to use gravity for various applications. Explorers have found metal and glass devices in research facilities and magical laboratories that scholars call gravity gauges, believing that these devices helped Azlanti researchers monitor the potentially dangerous fluctuating effects of gravity in these locations. When near an area of gravity that was different from the normal terrestrial levels or in a place where gravity was unstable, the golden dust stored in the upper chamber would fall in different ways.





DEATH IN THE DEPTHS

On the trail of an ancient enemy, the heroes seek more information in a merfolk city teeming with intrigue just beneath the waves. They arrive to find a group of deep merfolk claiming that the city is in the path of a destructive sea monster. But this warning is nothing more than a ruse for the campaign's villain to uncover the location to a secret Azlanti military laboratory. The adventurers must carefully maneuver the social currents of the underwater city and unravel dangerous intrigue to get to the bottom of the merfolk's plot and discover where the ancient enemy is headed so they can stop it.

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path continues the Ruins of Azlant Adventure Path and includes:

- "City in the Deep," a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 10th-level characters, by Amber E. Scott.
- A gazetteer of Talasantri, an underwater city populated by aquatic elves, merfolk, and other aquatic humanoids on the floor of the Arcadian Ocean, by Amber E. Scott.
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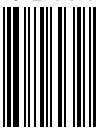
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