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## ADVENTURE PATH<sup>™</sup>



### RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS

PLAYER'S  
GUIDE





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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 [pfrd.info](http://pfrd.info).

<i>Adventurer's Guide</i>	AG	<i>Inner Sea Magic</i>	ISM
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Book of the Damned</i>	BoD	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM
<i>Inner Sea Combat</i>	ISC	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>	UW
<i>Inner Sea Gods</i>	ISG		

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The frontier nation of Varisia has endured much in recent years—uprisings of goblins and giants, disasters both natural and artificial in nature, tyrannical coups and desperate rebellions, and the ever-present threat of ancient Thassilon's legacy. Three adventure paths have taken place in Varisia, and two others have started in this land. Numerous adventures have chronicled other events on the frontier. Comics and novels alike have told even more tales. All of these have been leading to one final event—the return of the runelords.

Of all that has come before, the events of the *Rise of the Runelords* and *Shattered Star* Adventure Paths are central to the background of *Return of the Runelords*. This campaign assumes that the events chronicled in those two prior Adventure Paths have taken place and that, in each case, the heroes defeated Runelord Karzoug and then later recovered and rebuilt the ancient artifact called the *Sihedron*. Events set in motion by those campaigns come to fruition in *Return of the Runelords*, wherein the players take on the roles of new heroes who must stand against the latest threat to Varisia and the world of Golarion.

## THE SIHEDRON HEROES

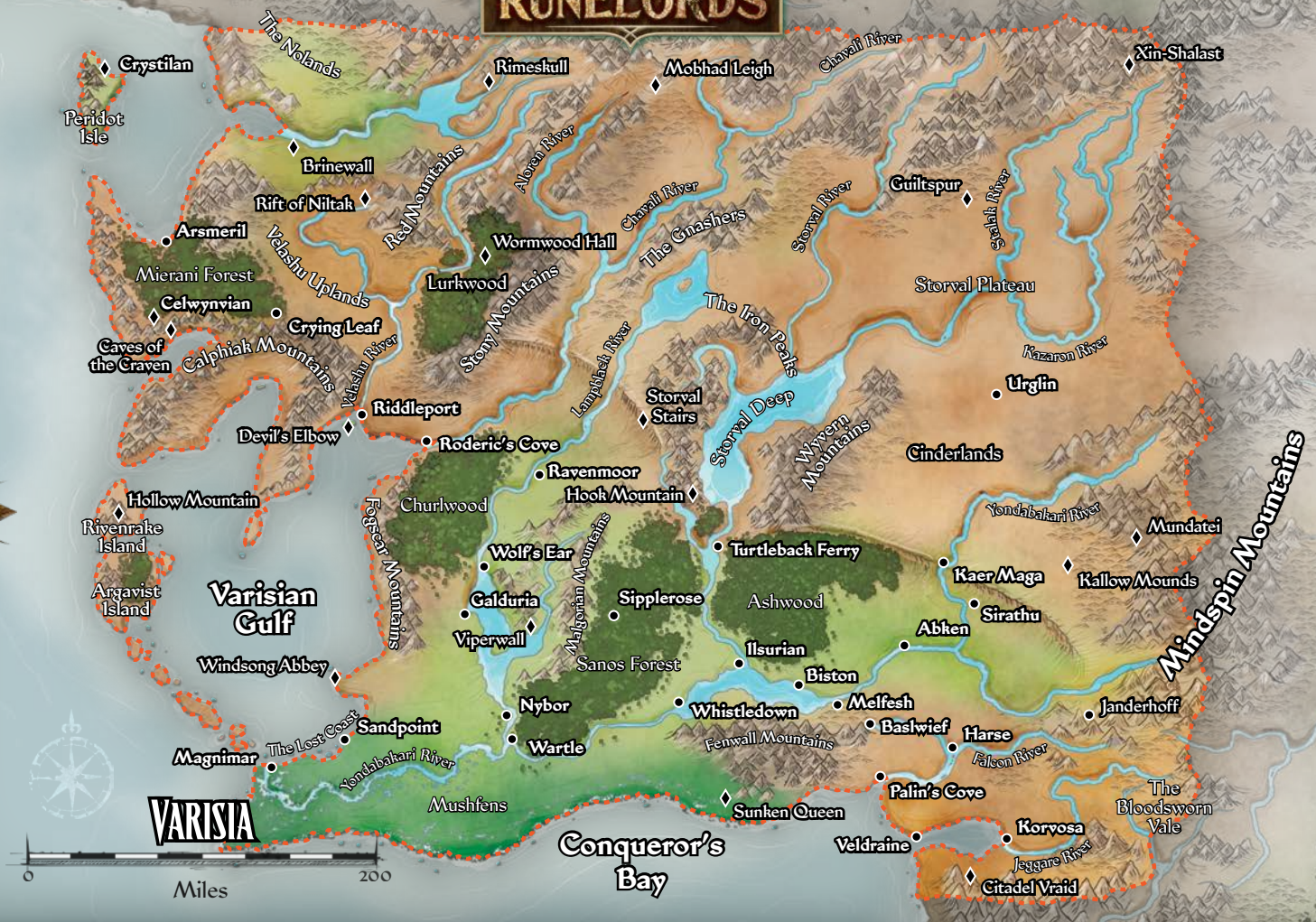
Although *Return of the Runelords* is written for a brand new party of 1st-level adventurers, it does not exist in a vacuum. This adventure path assumes that two previous groups of heroes have stepped up to the challenge of opposing Karzoug and recovering the *Sihedron*; their names and deeds are well known to the people of Varisia as recent legends, and are part of the region's recent history. These characters may even have been played by the people at your table!

The total number of heroes who took part in the *Rise of the Runelords* and *Shattered Star* Adventure Paths is variable, but regardless of their number, *Return of the Runelords* assumes that a subset of them have chosen to remain in Varisia to continue to serve as defenders of the realm. This subset of heroes—drawn from the two prior Adventure Paths—is referred to here and in *Return of the Runelords* as the “*Sihedron Heroes*.”

If you are playing *Return of the Runelords* with a group that hasn't played through *Rise of the Runelords* or *Shattered Star*, then the GM will need to determine the identities of the *Sihedron Heroes* as part of her preparation for running



# RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS



this Adventure Path—advice for doing so appears in “It Came From Hollow Mountain,” the second adventure in the campaign (the actual identity of the Sihedron Heroes is not relevant for the first adventure, which is very localized in scope).

But if you’ve played through Return of the Runelords, Shattered Star, or both, one of the Sihedron Heroes is one of your previous PCs!

## CHOOSING THE SIHEDRON HEROES

You, the other players, and the GM should work together to determine who the Sihedron Heroes are in your Return of the Runelords campaign. The total number of Sihedron Heroes who are famous in Varisia as Return of the Runelords begins should equal the total number of players taking part in the campaign. Each player should choose a character they played in one of those prior Adventure Paths to be one of the Sihedron Heroes—once you’ve chosen which one of your previous PCs you’d like to be included in that group, let your GM know. If your

GM for Return of the Runelords wasn’t the same one who ran the previous campaign, work with them to provide statistics and information about the previous character.

It’s possible that some of the players in your group haven’t played one of the previous adventure paths. If you haven’t done so, you should work with your GM to come up with a name, class, and personality for one of the Sihedron Heroes. You can even stat up this hero if you wish—the character should be 17th or 18th level, putting the hero on par with those who completed Rise of the Runelords or Shattered Star.

Any other PCs you may have played in a prior Adventure Path or campaign do not have a direct role to play in Return of the Runelords—it’s best if you determine the reason explaining why. Maybe the prior PC has retired from adventuring, or perhaps the PC has moved to other parts of the world or the Great Beyond. Maybe the PC is dead, or otherwise missing. The decision should be yours to make, but unless your GM is comfortable with having an additional number of heroes to incorporate into the storyline, it’s best to limit the Sihedron Heroes to one PC per player.



In any event, as *Return of the Runelords* begins, the Sihedron Heroes' current whereabouts are unknown—this is hardly unusual, as adventurers are prone to departing on unusual journeys at the spur of the moment, and PCs as powerful as the Sihedron Heroes are unlikely to feel the need to report every decision or departure they make. If you want your *Return of the Runelords* character to have a more direct tie to a prior character, work with your GM and consider taking the Scion of Legend campaign trait (see page 11) for your PC—but keep in mind that as this campaign begins, neither you nor your PC will know the current whereabouts and status of your prior PC. This absence serves two purposes: first, it preserves certain story elements that will be revealed as the *Return of the Runelords* Adventure Path unfolds; second, it keeps the focus of the game on your current character rather than having a prior (and quite powerful) PC “on call” to bail lower-level heroes out when the going gets tough.

In any event, the individual adventures in the *Return of the Runelords* Adventure Path contain ample additional information for GMs on what role the Sihedron Heroes play in the new campaign.

## COMING TOGETHER

*Return of the Runelords* begins in the small town of Roderic's Cove in the northeastern corner of the Varisian Gulf. While the first adventure focuses significantly on this town, keep in mind that this Adventure Path has an epic scope and your PCs will be traveling to numerous locations with no intent of returning to Roderic's Cove during the campaign. As such, when you create your character, it's best to aim for one who is invested in the region of Varisia as a whole rather than one who never wants to leave her hometown. That said, creating a resident of Roderic's Cove is a great way to give your character a reason to care for the wellbeing of the settlement and its citizens—including the other PCs.

*Return of the Runelords* assumes that all of the PCs begin play already knowing each other, so that you can jump right into the story; but if you, the other players, and the GM prefer, you can start a bit earlier to establish how the PCs met. Keep in mind that the campaign traits presented later in this Player's Guide assume that the PCs are all acquaintances who have been in Roderic's Cove for at least a month or so—your character doesn't have to be best friends with other members of the party, but all PCs should work together as a group.

## CHARACTER TIPS

Whether your character is a local who was born in Roderic's Cove, new blood who moved there from a neighboring city months or even years ago, or a traveler who's recently come to town in search of fortune, your PC should be ready and eager to embark on a career as an adventurer. This Adventure Path

## ABOUT THE MAPS

This Player's Guide reprints several maps—the region of Varisia (where the campaign takes place) and the four largest cities found therein. Visits to all four of these cities will take place at various points during *Return of the Runelords*, but those adventures generally do not reprint these maps. If either Player or GM wants more information about these four cities, check out the following books published by Paizo.com:

**Kaer Maga:** *City of Secrets*

**Korvosa:** *Guide to Korvosa*

**Magnimar:** *Magnimar, City of Monuments*

**Riddleport:** *Pathfinder Adventure Path #13: Shadow in the Sky*

relies, to a certain extent, on a group that actively seeks out adventure rather than one who waits for NPCs to approach them with tasks to perform. The first two adventures have a bit of “quest-giving,” but the plots and conspiracies the PCs uncover increasingly suggest next steps and adventuring goals without someone telling the PCs what to do. (Of course, if your group prefers a more guided framework, your GM can always adjust things—there are plenty of potential quest-giving NPCs to meet in *Return of the Runelords*.)

*Return of the Runelords* features a classic mix of adventuring themes. There are no assumptions about the specific themes of characters in this Adventure Path, other than that they should be eager to seek fame and fortune and should want to see Varisia protected from dangers out of its ancient past.

*Return of the Runelords* is a campaign for players who want to take part in an epic tale that closes out the “*Runelords Trilogy*” of Adventure Paths, who want to learn more about Varisia's ancient past, and who seek to become as powerful as they can—for if all goes well, your characters should manage to reach 20th level before this campaign comes to an end.

## ALIGNMENT

As long as the PCs work together, alignment isn't a central issue in this Adventure Path. Even evil characters can, in theory, function in *Return of the Runelords*, although as is always the case with evil PCs, you'll want to work with your GM and the other players to ensure that such a character isn't disruptive to the group's cohesion. Keep in mind that the individual plotlines in *Return of the Runelords* tend toward altruistic and helpful themes, so an evil character might have less motivation to participate in some story elements.

## CLASSES

Characters of any class will have ample opportunity to shine in *Return of the Runelords*, but remember that combat and exploration of ancient locations are the largest of this

# RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS

campaign's elements. While there are chances to explore wildernesses, enjoy urban-based intrigues, and take part in social challenges and role-playing opportunities, these elements aren't at the forefront of every adventure. There will be plenty of opportunities for downtime, relaxation, and other elements as the plot progresses, but each adventure's focus changes as the story moves forward. The PCs won't settle in a single location for long in Return of the Runelords.

A significant theme of Return of the Runelords is the uncovering of ancient lore and discovery of lost secrets, particularly regarding (although not limited to) the ancient nation of Thassilon. Any character with even a passing interest in learning hidden secrets of the world should have ample reason to take part in this Adventure Path.

The bulk of this campaign is focused on Varisia, a frontier region known for its diversity. The area has strong traditions around the most common classes (fighter, cleric, rogue, and wizard), but even obscure classes like samurai, arcanists, gunslingers, and kineticists aren't unknown in the land. Specific advice on certain class options can be found on the following pages, but you'll note that these suggestions are shorter than traditional offerings in Pathfinder Adventure Path Player's Guides—this is intentional, for Return of the Runelords has relatively broad themes that should be accessible to nearly any character type.

## ARCHETYPES

A huge number of archetypes are available to specialize your character but, regardless of the ones you choose, the classic themes of Return of the Runelords means that most archetypes will have moments to shine. In particular, archetypes that focus on the exploration of ancient ruins or lost kingdoms (such as the archaeologist bard<sup>UC</sup> or the occult historian occultist<sup>UW</sup>) or those that help make a character into a defender of a region (in this case, Varisia) should be particularly appropriate choices.

Some specific archetypes that are particularly associated with the region of Varisia include (but are not limited) to the following:

- Masked maiden vigilante<sup>AG</sup>
- Runesage wizard<sup>AG</sup>
- Shoanti burn rider barbarian<sup>ISC</sup>
- Sigilus magus<sup>AG</sup>
- Sister-in-arms cavalier<sup>AG</sup>
- Tattooed sorcerer<sup>ISM</sup>
- Varisian pilgrim cleric<sup>ISM</sup>

## ARCANE TRADITIONS

With the resurgence of Thassilonian lore and tradition into the modern day, an increasing number of wizards have chosen Thassilonian specializations as their method of

focusing their studies. Full rules for Thassilonian specialist wizards appear on page 63 of *Pathfinder RPG Adventurer's Guide*. While these traditions were created centuries ago by the runelords, the traditions themselves have no intrinsic ethical or moral elements that could compromise or give advantages to PC wizards who follow them.

**Bloodlines:** The following bloodlines are especially appropriate to this campaign: arcane and destined.

**Patrons:** The following witch patrons are particularly thematic for Return of the Runelords: ancestors<sup>UM</sup> and time<sup>UM</sup>.

## COMPANIONS

Character classes who travel with companions should consider the following advice, for these options are thematically appropriate for Varisia. Note that aquatic companions are poor choices for this Adventure Path.

**Animal Companions:** The following animals are found throughout Varisia and make thematically appropriate animal companions. From the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*: alligator, badger (and wolverine), bear, bird, boar, small cat (particularly firepelt cougar), dog, horse, pony, constrictor snake (particularly nightbelly boa), viper, and wolf. Good choices from *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Wilderness* include cattle, falcon, giant frilled lizard, giant porcupine, giant salamander, giant skunk, grizzly bear, moose, and saber-toothed cat. Any plant or vermin companion detailed in *Ultimate Wilderness* could be appropriate as well.

**Familiars:** All of the familiars listed in the *Core Rulebook* except monkeys can be found native to Varisia. The expanded list of familiars from *Ultimate Wilderness* also contain the following thematically appropriate choices: butterfly/moth, chicken, cockroach, creeper ivy, fire salamander, horned lizard, leopard slug, mole, osprey, peafowl, rabbit, ravenous tumbleweed, razor fern, shimmerwing dragonfly, and squirrel. Finally, good choices from *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* include donkey rat, fox, goat, greensting scorpion, hedgehog, house centipede, pig, scarlet spider, thrush, and turtle.

**Phantoms:** As Return of the Runelords is a sequel to other campaigns, this gives spiritualist PCs a unique opportunity—a spiritualist's phantom could be an NPC or even a PC who perished during Rise of the Runelords, Shattered Star, or any other adventure set in Varisia.

## RANGER OPTIONS

Your PCs will encounter a variety of opponents and travel through a wide range of terrains throughout the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path.

**Favored Enemies:** As a nation primarily settled by humanity, the option of humanoid (human) is a strong choice for a ranger's favored enemy, but the following choices should





be well served during the course of *Return of the Runelords* as well: aberration, construct, humanoid (goblinoid), magical beast, monstrous humanoid, outsider (chaotic), outsider (evil), outsider (lawful), undead, and vermin.

**Favored Terrains:** The best choices for favored terrains in *Return of the Runelords* are forest, underground, and urban. Later in the campaign, additional choices include cold, mountain, and planes (speak to your GM to determine if she's comfortable revealing which planes might be a good choice).

### LANGUAGES

Since *Return of the Runelords* takes place primarily in Varisia, learning the regional language of Varisian is an excellent choice. Additionally, with much of the campaign involving the legacy of ancient Thassilon, the language of Thassilonian is also a wise choice. Beyond these two options, the following languages should have varying levels of application throughout *Return of the Runelords*, although none of these are vital: Abyssal, Azlanti, Giant, Goblin, Infernal, and Necril.

Other languages may have uses as well, but not to a significant extent over the course of the campaign.

### RACES

All of the core races are appropriate options for characters in *Return of the Runelords*. Varisia is a diverse realm, and while you could play any race detailed in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Races*, the following have a native population or traditional presence in Varisia: aasimars, changelings, dhampirs, drow, goblins, and tieflings. In particular, you should get your GM's permission before playing a goblin PC, as it may make certain elements of this adventure path problematic, particularly in the early adventures.

### RELIGION

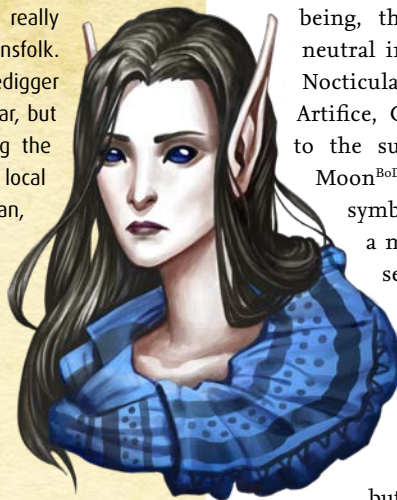
Any of the non-evil deities presented in the *Core Rulebook* are appropriate choices for worship in this campaign (if you wish to worship an evil deity, consult with your GM first). Beyond the core deities, numerous other deities are known to have an enhanced presence in Varisia and so make for thematically good



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## AUDRAHNI

The morose, lanky elf Audrahni has lived in Roderic's Cove for several years, but she never really seemed to fit in with the rest of the townsfolk. She's worked as a caretaker and gravedigger for the town's cemetery for the past year, but hasn't sought many friendships among the Cove's citizens—with the exception of a local priest of Pharasma named Desil Marphan, and you, the PCs. Not every one of the player characters needs to begin the campaign as one of Audrahni's friends, but you should at least strive to include in your character background some link to Audrahni—she's destined to be one of the party's first allies in Return of the Runelords, and it's best if she knows and trusts the PCs from the start.



choices to worship. These deities include Brigh, Milani, deities from the dwarven, elven, and halfling pantheons, empyreal lords (particularly Ashava, Black Butterfly, Soralyon, and Ylimancha), and Nivi Rhombodazzle. For more information on these other divinities, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*. A few additional notes for three deities whose presence is unusual in this campaign and might make for interesting and challenging choices appear below, as well as some advice on ancient Thassilonian faiths and options for oracles and shamans.

**Ashava:** One of the first allies you'll meet in Return of the Runelords is a woman named Audrahni, the caretaker of Roderic's Cove's graveyard and, it's rumored, a worshipper of the empyreal lord Ashava. A PC worshipper of Ashava might have some additional links to Audrahni and may have a few additional thematic elements to enjoy in the first third of the campaign. More to the point, the second volume of Return of the Runelords will feature an article on this empyreal lord, including expanded information on her divine boons.

**Nocticula:** Although the events of the Wrath of the Righteous Adventure Path don't directly impact those of Return of the Runelords, certain events set in motion in that campaign continue to move forward in this one. In particular, rumors among certain scholastic circles suggest that the demon lord Nocticula, long the patron of assassins, darkness, and lust, has abandoned her planar realm of the Midnight Isles. For the time being, her clerics continue to retain access to their spells and powers, but a sect of heretics has been growing in power as well. Known as the Cult of the Redeemer Queen, these heretics claim that Nocticula is on the cusp of abandoning her demonic legacy and ascending as a true deity—a goddess of artists,

midnight, and outcasts. With your GM's approval, your character could be one of these heretics. For the time being, these worshippers are universally chaotic neutral in alignment. If you're a heretical cleric of Nocticula, you are granted access to the domains of Artifice, Chaos, Darkness, Travel, and Void<sup>BoD</sup>, and to the subdomains of Exploration<sup>APG</sup>, Isolation<sup>BoD</sup>, Moon<sup>BoD</sup>, Night<sup>APG</sup>, Revelry<sup>BoD</sup>, and Whimsy<sup>ISG</sup>. The symbol of the Cult of the Redeemer Queen is a moon with a pair of lips at its center and a seven pointed crown behind it, and the cult's favored weapon is the dagger.

**Yog-Sothoth/Tawil at'Umr:** The theme of time, its passage, and of dangers emerging from the distant past help to make worship of any deity associated with time especially appropriate for Return of the Runelords, but worship of the Outer God Yog-Sothoth or his avatar Tawil at'Umr is of particular note, for the so-called Key and the Gate is one of the most obscure and powerful deities of the Great Beyond. His cult, whether they revere him as Yog-Sothoth or his more human-shaped (yet still fundamentally alien) incarnation as Tawil at'Umr, is not an organized religion, and those who venerate the Outer God tend to be loners who are just as prone to bicker and fight with others of their faith as they are anyone else. Followers of Yog-Sothoth or Tawil at'Umr can be chaotic good, chaotic neutral, or chaotic evil (see Alignment on page 5 for additional advice for evil PCs). If you want your character to worship Yog-Sothoth or Tawil at'Umr, speak to your GM first to make sure it's okay. Those who do venerate the Outer God will certainly have some interesting moments in Return of the Runelords.

**Ancient Thassilonian Faiths:** Worship of faiths and philosophies tied to ancient Thassilon, such as Lissala or the lost faith of the Peacock Spirit, are not appropriate choices for PCs to worship in this campaign.

**Mysteries and Spirits:** The oracle mysteries and shaman spirits with the strongest ties to the themes of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path are ancestor<sup>UM</sup>, lore<sup>APG</sup>, and time<sup>UM</sup>.

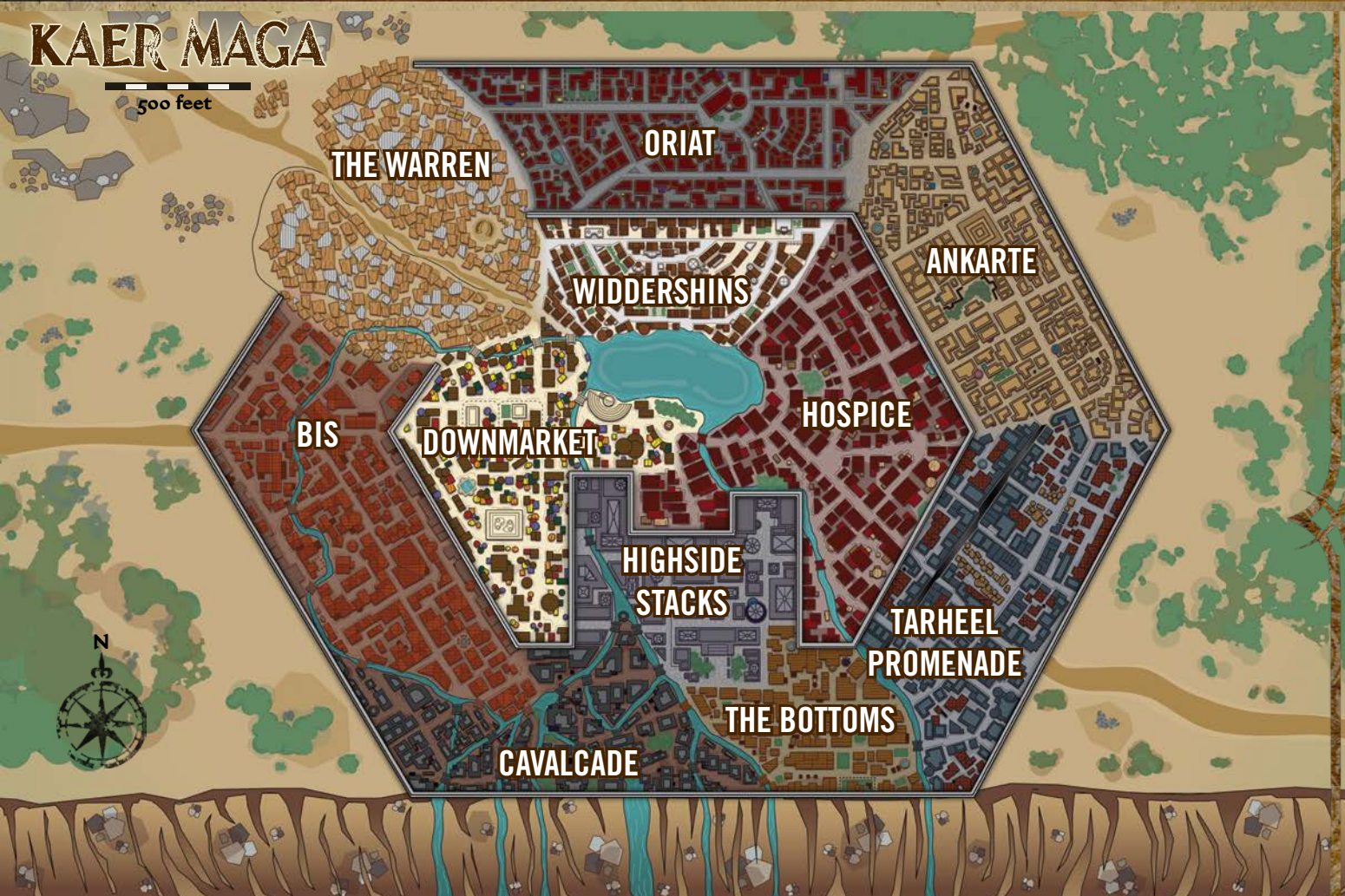
## SKILLS AND FEATS

A well-rounded mix of skills and feats is recommended for your party, but there aren't any skills or feats that are significantly more important than others in Return of the Runelords. The knowledge skills that are the most important in this Adventure Path are arcana, history, local, planes, and religion, but there will be opportunities to use all Knowledge skills at some point during the campaign. Skills used for downtime activities, such as Craft and Profession, won't have much opportunity to shine, especially since your party



# KAER MAGA

500 feet



will be on the move and won't be settling down in a single location long enough to do things like start businesses or build homes. Opportunities to craft magic items exist, particularly between adventures. If you want to build a character focused on magic item creation, you should work with your GM.

## CAMPAIGN TRAITS

The Return of the Runelords Adventure Path follows the PCs from humble beginnings in the haunted town of Roderic's Cove to an epic confrontation for the future of Varisia itself. The PCs should know each other and should begin in Roderic's Cove; beyond that, your character's history is up to you to decide.

The campaign assumes that each PC begins with one of the following campaign traits. In addition to giving you a minor boon for your character, these traits will also help to establish why your character is destined to take the role of one of Varisia's newest heroes. In addition, these traits link to additional events that unfold as the adventure path progresses,

and may unlock additional and unanticipated opportunities down the road. Your GM will have information about these opportunities as they present themselves in the adventures.

## ACCIDENTAL CLONE

Adventuring has been in your blood for as long as you can remember, and this urge to go out and explore the world left you recently in over your head when you (foolishly or bravely, depending on how you look at it) decided to explore an old Thassilonian ruin near your home town. The adventure ended in tragedy when you set off a devastating trap while investigating a statue of a beautiful woman—someone you believed to be one of the ancient runelords of Thassilon. The trap slaughtered your entire party—including you.

You woke from death some time later, your memories intact but your body transformed. No longer did you resemble your previous self—you instead looked like the woman depicted in the statue. Now, you've joined up with a new group of adventurers; despite your tragic first attempt at dungeon delving, your thirst for adventure has returned



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## RIDDLEPORT

280 feet

WINWARD DISTRICT

RIVER DISTRICT

FREE-COIN DISTRICT

Velashu River

WARF DISTRICT

LEEWARD DISTRICT

Cyphergate

ROTGUT DISTRICT

LUBBERTOWN

The Boneyard

The Burying Ground

stronger than ever. You're sure that this time you'll be able to keep your fellow explorers alive, and the strange dreams you've been having ever since you came back to life in your new body—a body that your research has revealed was originally intended to be a clone of none other than Sorshen, the Runelord of Lust—have only further solidified in your mind the fact that you and your companions are destined for greatness.

Your character must be human if you take this trait (though you may retain your previous gender identity). Your ethnicity is Azlanti, but you are not pure-blooded—you have the standard human ability score adjustments. Your resemblance to Sorshen may have unexpected side effects as the campaign progresses, for good or for ill. In any event, you gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks, and these skills are always class skills for you.

Once per adventure, you can retroactively apply a +20 trait bonus to a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect after you learn the outcome of the roll. A saving throw result of a

natural 1 still automatically fails, but if the +20 bonus adjusts the save so that it is successful, you treat the failed saving throw as a successful one.

Unless the GM approves, only one PC in the group can have the Accidental Clone trait.

### AUDRAHNI'S ALLY

While every PC should be at least passingly familiar with the elven gravedigger Audrahní, you are one of the few in town she counts as a true friend. Work with the GM to determine what sort of common ground you and Audrahní share. Perhaps you worship a deity whose teachings parallel her vocation (such as Ashava or Pharasma). Maybe you're a Forlorn elf and you sense a kindred spirit within her. With the GM's permission you may have known her in Magnimar before meeting her once again upon arriving in Roderic's Cove. Or perhaps you merely share a similar passion for arcana, dancing, history, magic, or religion. More details about Audrahní appear in the adventures, but she's a mysterious woman who's close-



lipped about her past—and so you'll need to work with your GM to have a stronger relationship at the campaign's outset.

Audrahni trusts you, and she's shared one element of her past with you since befriending you. Choose one of the following questions. At the start of the campaign, the GM will give you a brief answer about Audrahni's past. Once you know the answer, you should fashion a parallel event in your own PC's history, creating a shared misery or memory with Audrahni. The fact that you've met someone else who had a similar event in their past has bolstered your own resolve, and has granted you a +1 trait bonus to the saving throw determined by the question you select.

**"What happened to your parents?":** Grants a +1 trait bonus to Fortitude saving throws.

**"Where did you grow up?":** Grants a +1 trait bonus to Reflex saving throws.

**"What historical figure inspired you the most?":** Grants a +1 trait bonus to Will saving throws.

Once per adventure as a standard action, you may concentrate on the bond you and Audrahni share. The strong emotions brought on by these memories bolster your desire to forge ahead and remain alive, granting you the effects of one of the following spells at a caster level equal to your character level: *calm emotions*, *cure moderate wounds*, or *lesser restoration*.

### CLOSE ALLIES

You and another PC are close allies—friends, lovers, siblings, or even twins. Work with the other player to build a shared history—both you and the other player must choose Close Allies as a campaign trait, and both must agree to the nature of the relationship between the two characters. (At the GM's option, more than two PCs can be linked by this trait.) You and your close ally have always supported each other. You might have the tendency to complete each other's sentences, dress similarly, share the same religion or faith, or have endured a dangerous event together in the past. If you and the other player agree (and have chosen either the siblings or twins option below), you might not even particularly like your close "ally," yet you still respect them and can utilize this trait's benefits all the same.

If your relationship with your close ally ends (as a result of death, a parting of ways, or other catastrophe), you immediately lose this campaign trait and replace it with Spirit Touched (see below) as a result of your emotional distress.

When you and the other PC agree to take this shared trait, you must also agree on the nature of your characters' bond by choosing one of the following: friends, lovers, siblings, or twins. If you choose twins, both PCs must be of the same race. If you choose siblings, one or both of you are adopted if you aren't of the same race.

Whenever you are adjacent to your close ally, you gain a +1 trait bonus on all saving throws.

Once per adventure as an immediate action, you may grant your close ally a bonus equal to the result of 1d6 to a single d20 roll. You must have line of sight to your ally to use this ability. You may choose to grant this bonus after your ally has rolled, but must do so before the result of the roll is known.

### INTRIGUED BY THASSILON

The rediscovery of Thassilon's legacy several years ago was an eye-opener for many, including you. After living so long in the shadow of these enormous ruins, you were intrigued to find out that they were much older than anyone could have guessed and that the runelords who built them may still exist. You've made a promise to yourself to uncover all that you can about Thassilon, its runelords, and the mysterious history of that ancient civilization.

You gain Thassilonian as a bonus language, and at 1st level and every 2 levels thereafter, you gain a bonus skill rank that can only be applied to Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Linguistics, or Use Magic Device.

Once per adventure, you may either take 20 on a Use Magic Device check or activate a charged magic item without expending any charges.

### SCION OF LEGEND

Your character has a personal link or association with one of Varisia's established heroes. This hero should be a PC you played in a previous campaign (and could be, but need not be, one of the Sihedron Heroes). Your character could be a younger sibling, younger cousin, or even an apprentice of the hero. If enough time has passed, you might be the hero's child, or your character could have reincarnated from the soul of a hero that died before your character was born.

Choose two skills for which your associated hero has skill ranks. You gain a +1 trait bonus on checks with both of those skills, and those two skills are class skills for you.

Once per adventure as a free action, you can call upon a previously forgotten bit of advice or lore imparted to you by the hero to gain an insight bonus equal to your class level (minimum +10) to a skill check. You may choose to apply this bonus after you roll the skill check, but must do so before the result of the roll is known.

### SPIRIT TOUCHED

As a child, you were influenced by overwhelming emotional trauma associated with death or undeath, and that influence marked you for the rest of your life. You may have been possessed by a ghost, had strange dreams



# RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS





in a haunted house, or suffered from an affliction from an undead source. You might even have had a near-death experience, or actually died and been returned to life. Work with your GM to determine the details of how you became spirit touched; she may have suggestions for you to tie your experience more tightly into the themes of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path.

You gain a +2 trait bonus on all saving throws made against supernatural attacks, spells, or spell-like abilities from undead creatures.

Once per adventure, you may automatically succeed at a Constitution check to stabilize or a saving throw to remove a negative level.

### TIME LOST

You've always felt separated from the era into which you were born. Perhaps you feel that you were born too late, and that you and your interests are better suited to a previous age. Maybe you have the conviction you were born too soon, and that your true destiny lies in some distant future. You might be suffering from missing time—whether a few hours, a few weeks, or even several months—for which you have no memories. You might instead receive brief visions of friends or enemies much older or younger than their actual age. You've long since grown used to this strange condition, but have not yet determined why you suffer from it. Your GM will be provided with additional information about this trait's strange nature in the third adventure of Return of the Runelords.

You have a knack for knowing when to act a few instants in advance and gain a +2 trait bonus on Initiative checks.

Once per adventure as an immediate action, you may use your strange link to the flow of time to force the GM to reroll a single d20 roll. You must declare the use of this ability immediately after the GM rolls the d20, but you can choose to do so after learning the results of the roll.

### HUNTING FOR BARGAINS

The Return of the Runelords Adventure Path assumes that all of the PCs have been in the town of Roderic's Cove for at least a few weeks. The PCs have all heard of a recent and unexpected outburst of violence that took place in the town's civic center, a plaza known as the Circle. This event took place late at night a few weeks ago and involved a violent clash between rival gangs that left several men dead. As a result, tensions have been high in town and rumors have been flying—some say that provocateurs from Riddleport have infiltrated Roderic's Cove and are trying to destabilize the economy, while others hold that it's the restless spirit of Sir Roderic himself influencing certain folks in town.

### WANT TO READ MORE?

A number of other books provide information that complements the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path. Listed below are other resources that, while not necessary, can greatly enhance your experience playing through this campaign.

#### FOR GAME MASTERS

*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords*  
*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Shattered Star*  
*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts and Legends*  
*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Guide to Korvosa*  
*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: City of Secrets*  
*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms*  
*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar, City of Monuments*  
*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Sandpoint, Light of the Lost Coast*  
*Pathfinder Comics: Hollow Mountain*  
*Pathfinder Tales: Lord of Runes*

#### FOR PLAYERS

*Pathfinder Player Companion: Varisia, Birthplace of Legends*

Whatever the cause for the violence, it hasn't stopped the Cove's residents from performing their weekly tradition of organizing the Circle Market, a gathering of merchants and families in the town's central plaza where locals trade household goods, traveling merchants hawk their wares, and lucky shoppers can find unexpected bargains for sale. It's this event that your group is eager to attend as Return of the Runelords begins. Once you've started the game, the GM will give each player the chance to roll on the following table in order to determine what sort of bargains might be uncovered. (Note that the Circle Market is a weekly event, and as the first adventure progresses, you may have additional opportunities to visit the market and seek bargains, with your GM's approval.)

### CIRCLE MARKET BARGAIN HUNTING

d20 Roll	Result
1–6	A piece of adventuring gear, clothing, food or drink, or trade good of your choice (chosen from any in <i>Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment</i> ) at 10% its normal price.
7–12	An alchemical item of your choice (chosen from any in <i>Ultimate Equipment</i> ) at 10% its normal price.
13–16	A weapon of your choice (chosen from any in <i>Ultimate Equipment</i> ) at 10% its normal price.
17–19	A potion or scroll of your choice (chosen from any in <i>Ultimate Equipment</i> ) at 10% its normal price.
20	A magic item of your choice (chosen from any in <i>Ultimate Equipment</i> ) at 10% its normal price.



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