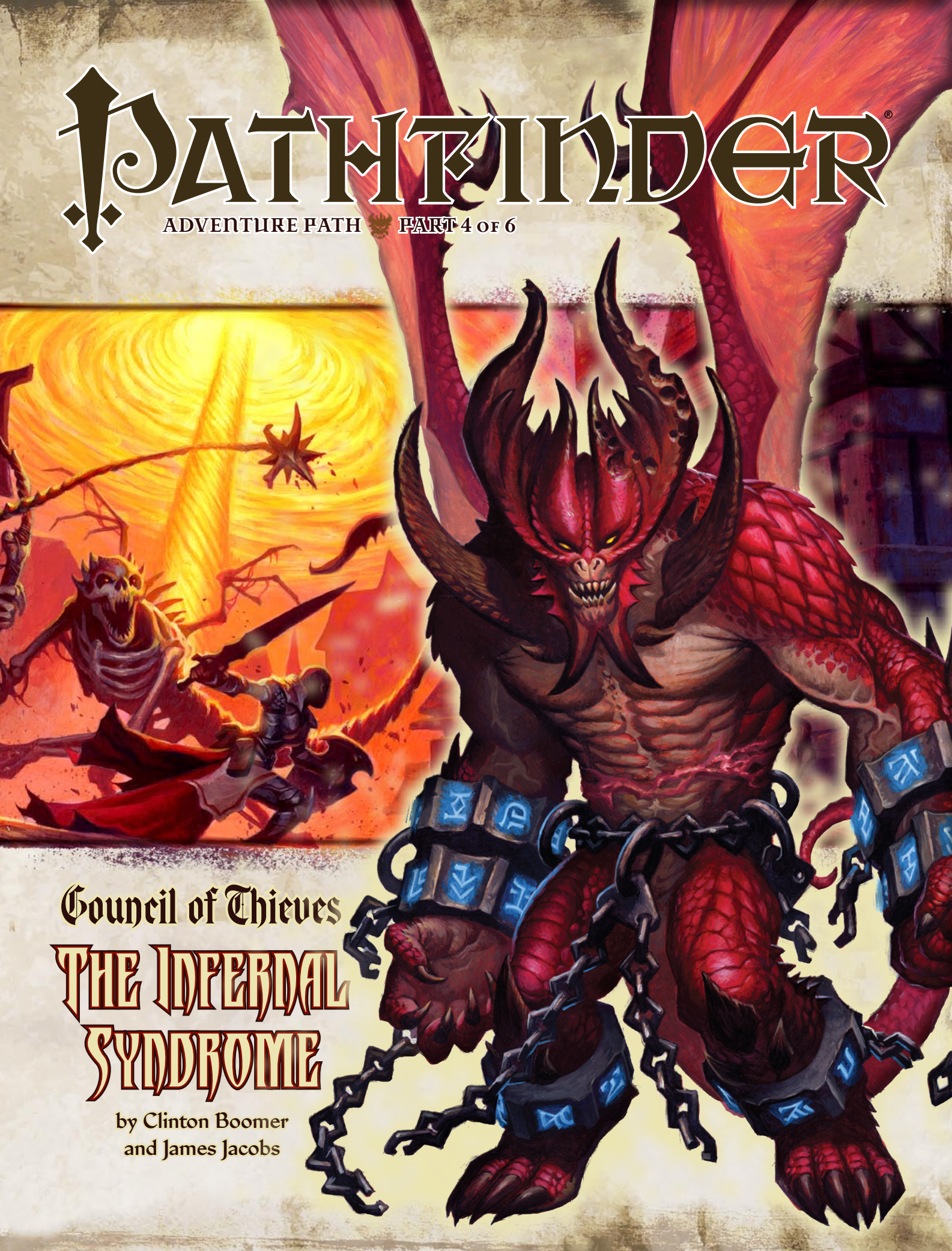


PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH  PART 4 of 6



Council of Thieves

THE INFERNAL SYNDROME

by Clinton Boomer
and James Jacobs

THE CITY OF WESTCROWN

N

Shrine of Aroden (safe house)

Vaneo Arvanxi (Aberian's Folly)



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ADVENTURE PATH PART 4 of 6



Council of Thieves **THE INFERNAL** **SYNDROME**

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Plugging in the Pit Fiends

This volume's adventure, "The Infernal Syndrome," wasn't always destined to be part of an Adventure Path.

When we first started producing adventures set in Golarion, the majority of my time was absorbed in getting *Pathfinder's* first Adventure Path, *Rise of the Runelords*, off the ground. But while I was eyebrow deep in goblins, giants, and Skinsaw Men, I had another idea bubbling around in the back of my head, an idea that, try as I might, I couldn't fit into the plotline for *Runelords* or the next several Adventure Paths we had planned.

In those crazy first few months of Golarion's creation, most of the campaign setting's locations were just ideas. Varisia was the only region that actually had a complete map done for several months—the full map of the Inner Sea location didn't come along until we were well into

Rise of the Runelords (the map's first incarnation was unusually "T" shaped, unlike its current, more classical rectangular shape). During a module brainstorm meeting, I threw the idea out there for the rest of the folks here at Paizo to mull over...

"So there's a decadent Chelish noble who imprisoned a pit fiend in his basement and is using it to give his manor hot water and self-lighting fireplaces, only something's gone wrong and the pit fiend is about to escape from his cage." The module idea was obviously inspired by the movie "The China Syndrome," in which a nuclear power plant suffers a meltdown, and hence "The Infernal Syndrome" seemed like a perfect name for it. Everyone seemed to like the idea, and it was put on the module schedule in official "In-House Freelancer Mode." That is to say, all I had to do was write the adventure and it would

Foreword

go on the schedule, but until it was done being written, it wasn't going anywhere.

As the months went by, accumulating into years, it became pretty obvious to me that I wasn't going to be able to carve out time to write the adventure. So when we decided to set the first *Pathfinder* RPG Adventure Path in Cheliah, I realized that here was a golden opportunity to get the adventure in print as part of an actual Adventure Path—I could kill two birds with a single stone, as they say in Clichetown. Since an adventure set in a fantasy version of a nuclear reactor powered not by radioactive materials but by a powerful devil was a pretty outlandish idea to begin with, it only made sense to assign it to one of our more outlandish freelancers. Clinton Boomer (rumors that he was one of the inspirations for the *Advanced Player's Guide's* alchemist base class remain unconfirmed) made a huge splash in RPG Superstar 2007 with his wild ideas and crazy creations, and having met him in real life I know now where those ideas come from! But being a greedy and precious author, I couldn't release complete control of my infernal baby—and so Clinton and I split the writing duties on this one. The result is one of the more unusual adventure sites that has appeared in a *Pathfinder Adventure Path*, a location uniquely Chelish and hopefully a memorable centerpiece to the Council of Thieves Adventure Path.

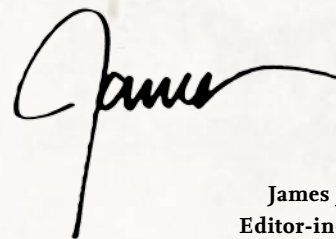
Turning the Tables

Every Adventure Path seems to have a turning point, when the PCs shift gears from being reactive and take up the mantle of being the driving force for the developing storyline. This transition generally seems to happen in the middle of an Adventure Path, when the PCs themselves finally exceed the average experience level of all those NPCs who've been ordering them around for the first few adventures. Council of Thieves is no exception. In the first three adventures, the PCs were encouraged by various NPCs (first Janiven and Aracl, then undercover *Pathfinder* agent Ailyn Ghontasavos) to rescue allies, infiltrate manors, and explore haunted dungeons, all in the hope of someday bettering Westcrown.

In "The Infernal Syndrome," no one immediately tells the PCs what to do—the adventure assumes that the PCs are proud of their burgeoning status in Westcrown as heroes, and that when one of the city's oldest buildings explodes and sends five persistent spirals of fire up into the air, they'll react quickly to the challenge and head out to investigate. Those handy NPCs are still around, of course, available for you to use as you need to spur the PCs on, but as this adventure begins, Westcrown's government is starting to crumble. By the end of the adventure, the town's mayor is likely to have fled, and the city guard may well be more interested in bickering and

fighting over jurisdictional rights with the Hellknights of the Rack than they are in protecting the people of the City of Twilight. Certainly Westcrown has been through some tough times before, and left to its own devices, it will survive these latest injustices—likely after the House of Thrune finally decides that the problems in the old and outdated capital city are too pressing to ignore. Unfortunately for Westcrown, though, this could well be as much an end to freedom as letting the Council of Thieves take control—if the House of Thrune has to come in and set things right, they're unlikely to leave the city in the state it was only a few months ago. The Thrune are nothing if not methodical, and they'll learn from their mistakes in allowing too much freedom, too many reminders of the old times. Things like the Arodenama, the nobility, and even the city's name itself only serve to remind citizens of a previous existence, and if the Thrune are forced to set things right, they'll leave the city changed in spirit, shape, and even name. Westcrown will have vanished, only to be replaced by a city without tradition, and without citizens who pride themselves in those traditions.

So while the PCs might not immediately realize it, there is more at stake for Westcrown than a few riots, an exploding manor, and the threat of a bunch of thieves taking control of the government. Like it or not, the PCs have become the defenders of Westcrown's history and tradition, and if they fail, one of the Inner Sea's most historic and important ports will begin a startlingly swift descent into obscurity. So as you run "The Infernal Syndrome," take the time to make the PCs start to feel this weight. Their fame is spreading, and their faces are known. When they go shopping for gear, the storekeepers greet them with smiles and by name (and might even grant them a 5% discount if the PCs are particularly friendly). When they pass guards in the street, they nod in silent approval and even step out of the way to let the heroes pass. They might even spy children on a street corner playing at "Heroes and Devils," in which the kids take on the roles of the PCs and hunt "devils" (typically alley cats, rats, or hung-over vagabonds) with thin sticks and hurled insults. Everywhere in Westcrown the PCs should see evidence of their work.



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The Infernal Syndrome

With the roar of thunder, a spiral of fire lances into the sky above Westcrown. Its heights scar the clouds above, while its base blasts and burns one of the most infamous manors in the city—the mayoral residence known locally as Aberian's Folly. As city guards rush to blockade streets leading into the blighted section of old Westcrown, panic grips the city by its tens of thousands of throats. It is not fear that the fires could spread that fuels Westcrown's terror, nor the idea of riots that could erupt in the wake of such unexplained devastation. What lies heavy and ominous in Wiscrani minds are those longstanding rumors of a powerful devil's prison being located below Aberian's Folly. It is not a fear of a city-wide inferno that spreads through Westcrown, but the fear that Hell itself is belching its rage and children into reality.

The Infernal Syndrome

Advancement Track

Characters should be 7th level when they begin “The Infernal Syndrome.” By the time they are ready to enter the Nessian Spiral, they should be 8th level, and should reach 9th level by the adventure’s end.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Deep under the mayoral manor of Westcrown, a horrific disaster lies in wait.

When the House of Thrune won control of Cheliah and ended the 30-year Chelish Civil War, they were swift in establishing their infernal new order. Looking to the machinations and traditions of Hell as a blueprint, the House of Thrune rebuilt Cheliah into a model of efficiency and prosperity, yet at the cost of its nation’s pride and respect. The citizens of Cheliah, once proud to support their government, now quake in terror and follow its laws out of fear. For the House of Thrune was successful in aping not only the efficiency of Hell, but also its notoriety.

Among the many infernally inspired “improvements” the House of Thrune made across Cheliah was the installation of numerous infernal engines—a practice Thrune wizards might claim as their own invention but which in fact was based on technology and rituals stolen from the ancient empire of Thassilon, which used imprisoned fiends to run their great machines, such as Skull’s Crossing in central Varisia. Thrune correctly surmised that the bulk of the nation’s people would balk at the concept of conjuring, imprisoning, and harvesting powerful devils as a source of power, and thus the program was kept relatively secret and small in scale. Only a select few of those in favor with Thrune would directly benefit from the installation of an infernal engine.

Among these few was the newly appointed mayor of Westcrown, a loyal worshiper of Asmodeus by the name of Anvengen Doskivari. Amid darkest night and great secrecy, priests of Asmodeus and wizards of Thrune converged in a newly created dungeon below the city’s mayoral manor, a place they called the Nessian Spiral. There, these spellcasters accomplished a tremendous feat: the conjuration, entrapment, and harvesting of one of Hell’s own infernal dukes, the pit fiend known as Liebdaga the Twin. The process was both taxing and deadly—fully a third of the spellcasters perished in the procedure as they bound Liebdaga into the infernal engine, and the Westcrown engine would become the most extensive and powerful of any that the House of Thrune helped create. (At least, in public—certainly even more powerful infernal engines lie under actual Thrune holdings.)

Anvengen Doskivari was placed in charge of tending this engine and maintaining its secrecy. He did this job well, using the energy provided by the imprisoned

pit fiend for creature comforts (such as hot water and automatic-lighting fireplaces in his home above) and other, greater works. The most impressive of these was the creation of an extraplanar complex and vault he called the Asmodean Knot (detailed in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #26). Twenty years later, an attempted expansion of the Asmodean Knot saw Anvengen’s untimely end as he was absorbed into the extradimensional fabric of reality in the Knot.

Thus did the office of mayor pass to a sadist by the name of Dargentu Vheed. A secretive man keen on conspiracies, Dargentu quickly earned a reputation in Westcrown as a dangerous man to cross. Thought by some to be a sorcerer who carried a particularly strong infernal bloodline and by others to be a wizard who had focused his studies in the art of conjuration, Dargentu put most of his energies into expanding and refining his home. Increased taxes and fines upon the city’s populace made up the primary source of funds for these projects, so when Dargentu joined the previous mayor in a mysterious disappearance (this time into the Nessian Spiral itself—see area F14), few Wiscrani mourned his loss. And while taxes didn’t go down when Aberian Arvanxi took up the mantle of mayor, at least he spent those funds on a wide range of opera houses, theaters, and other public works that some of Westcrown’s citizens could share in.

Yet while both of the previous mayors took an active role in the upkeep of the Nessian Spiral and the infernal engine itself, Aberian Arvanxi was made of much more squeamish stuff. He knew of the Spiral’s existence, and used the eastern part of the dungeons extensively as storage, prisons, and a treasury, but had very little interest in exploring much of the Spiral or the pocket dimension of the Asmodean Knot it maintained. His interest was limited to the creature comforts the imprisoned pit fiend provided and little more. In the 2 decades of neglect the Nessian Spiral suffered, its upkeep and repairs tended only by the dwindling staff of monsters and tieflings bound into eternal servitude by Thrune wizards nearly 70 years ago, the infernal engine has begun to show signs of wear already. Thrune was hasty and clumsy in its creation—left to its own devices, the Westcrown engine, unlike the engines created by Thassilon’s rulers thousands of years ago, would certainly not have lasted into its hundredth year without constant upkeep and care.

Unfortunately, events during Arvanxi’s recent Cornucopia hastened the engine’s collapse.

Fame Points

At various points in this Adventure Path, the PCs' exploits are significant enough to gain them fame and admiration among the people of Westcrown. This growing fame is tracked by the accumulation of "Fame Points." Certain encounters in "The Infernal Syndrome" indicate that you should award Fame Points to the party when they accomplish certain goals.

Although the truth of Liebdaga's imprisonment has been kept remarkably obscure in Westcrown, the Council of Thieves knows the reality. In particular, its treacherous scions Chammady and Ecarrdian Drovege know that, deep under the manor, a valuable potential ally languishes. If they can engineer Liebdaga's freedom, the two thieves hope to secure his aid in claiming control of Westcrown. Secretly using their growing resources in the Council, pulling strings and masterminding acts of sabotage, the Drovege siblings managed not only to blackmail Aberian's majordomo, a secret tiefling named Crosael, into helping them, but also to get a second tiefling named Sian Daemodus into the manor. A skilled rogue and killer, Sian succeeded in infiltrating the Asmodean Knot and seeking out a method to contact Liebdaga, but in so doing accidentally destroyed one of the infernal engine's power conduits within the Knot.

In the manor itself, this disruption was immediately noticeable as strange fluctuations in the functioning of the plumbing, fireplaces, and lighting. Yet in the shadow of the coming Cornucopia, Mayor Arvanxi simply didn't have time to look into a cause behind these malfunctions. He covered them up as best he could and went about the preparations for the party, but in the days and weeks after the Cornucopia, the malfunctions only worsened. Servants were burned to death when fireplaces spontaneously belched out hellfire, a guest was blinded when a light burst into overwhelming radiance, and sightings of increasingly large devils and other monsters lurking in the shadows of house illusions or nearby alleyways only grew. Arvanxi's aristocrat neighbors began to suspect something was going wrong as well, for imps, and in one case a barbed devil, kept popping up in the oddest places in the area surrounding Aberian's Folly. Strange tremors shook the ground, and patches of ground grew unusually warm, as if lit from below by some hidden source of heat.

Yet despite the mounting evidence that something was wrong, those signs were easier to cover up, explain away, or just ignore than tend to or actually solve. That is, until this adventure begins with a searing explosion of hellfire too blatant and horrifying to ignore.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure begins as Westcrown's mayoral mansion explodes—five columns of fire spiral into the clouds above, a hellish new addition to the city's skyline. When the PCs arrive at the site, they find Mayor Arvanxi himself, frightened and babbling about the Council of Thieves and corruption in the government. The terrified mayor informs the PCs that the pit fiend imprisoned below his home is about to escape, and that someone needs to fight his way past the devils and thieves that have moved in so swiftly to take control of the site, deactivate the infernal engine, and destroy the pit fiend before it can escape into Westcrown.

In their investigations, the PCs confront devilish minions come from Hell hoping to see their old master freed, vampires in the thrall of Ilnerik Sivanshen, sadistic agents of the Council of Thieves hoping to make their way into the Nessian Spiral to contact Liebdaga, and numerous monsters and denizens of the Spiral itself. Once they win their way to the failing infernal engine that lies at the Spiral's core, they must confront and defeat the weakened (but still quite powerful) Infernal Duke before he escapes and burns Westcrown to the ground.

PART ONE: STREETS GONE MAD

This adventure begins with the sudden eruption and explosion in southern Westcrown over the city's Priest Sector, Rego Sacero. You can time this explosion, and the adventure's start, as you wish. It might occur as the PCs are emerging from their final foray into Delvehaven, or it could occur several weeks later, after the PCs have had a chance to recover from the previous adventure and perhaps craft a few magic items or tend to political or romantic storylines. Assuming the PCs recovered the *Morrowfall* at the climax of "What Lies in Dust," a good time to start this adventure would be at the point when the PCs begin to seriously consider using the relic to actively combat the shadow beasts that rule Westcrown's nights.

The explosion, when it occurs, rattles every window in Westcrown. If it occurs at night, the plume of fire rising into the sky evokes new fears of the end of the world, fears still quite potent in the city where Aroden's death struck so close to home. Citizens rush to the streets, temporarily forgetting the peril of the shadow beasts that stalk its alleys and arterials, to gape in awe at the sight. During the day, the event draws business and trade to a halt, and no matter when it occurs, dread rumors and panic ripple through Westcrown with frightening speed.

Characters who rush out onto the streets when the event occurs are confronted with a ball of fire and smoke rising into a mushroom-shaped cloud to the south. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check places the site of the

The Infernal Syndrome

explosion more or less directly above Mayor Arvanxi's sprawling manor. A DC 20 Perception check is enough for a character observing the scene to notice something particularly disturbing—as the ball of fire and smoke rises into the sky, it seems at times almost to resemble a leering devilish face, with eyes of hellfire and teeth of white-hot ash. The initial explosion is over soon enough, but what remains behind is even more unusual and disturbing. Five pillars of fire, like stationary tornadoes of flame, spiral up into the sky around the explosion site, trailing into the clouds above and lighting the southern view with an infernal radiance.

No one directly asks the PCs to investigate this event, but if they aren't drawn to the explosion when it occurs, you can have their allies and contacts among the Children of Westcrown ask them to do so. Certainly if they tarry, the worsening conditions in Westcrown and the increasingly obvious fact that no one else is stepping up to deal with the situation should encourage the PCs to act. If they take too long, you can even have the bedraggled mayor escape his current situation and make it to the PCs' safe house to plead his case directly to them.

What the PCs encounter at the site in southern Westcrown where Aberian's Folly once stood is detailed in Part Two. The ruins around the Folly and the extensive dungeon beneath it hold enough encounters to keep a group busy for many days—this adventure assumes that they emerge from the dungeon and ruins multiple times to rest and recover, and it is during these “respite” that you can keep tensions high by describing to the PCs how the city of Westcrown reacts to the event. With ships hurriedly leaving port, Hellknights and dottari locked in an increasingly tense battle over jurisdiction, and steadily mounting whispers of devils stalking the streets by day, the PCs should always feel that things are progressing toward some catastrophic event and that they should not turn their attention from the burning pillars of fire and what lies beneath for long.

SIDE QUESTS

As the PCs work to stop Liebdaga's escape, you can complicate their lives by introducing several side quests, which give the PCs

additional goals in the Nessian Spiral or the ruins above, and serve to encourage the PCs to explore the dungeon and ruins more thoroughly than they might otherwise. Doing so not only gives the PCs more experience and loot, but increases their understanding of the adventure's backstory and helps to foreshadow events still to come. Feel free to introduce some or all of these side quests as the adventure goes on, or to make up more of them as you wish. Each time the PCs complete one of these side quests, award them 1 Fame Point and the listed XP. Additional random encounters are also listed on page 81.

Find the Mayor (3,200 XP): Mayor Arvanxi has gone missing! If he can be found and turned over to the dottari for safe keeping, the helpful parties are rewarded with tax-exempt status for 5 years. In order to claim this quest's XP and Fame Point award, the PCs must see to it that Mayor Arvanxi does not flee the city—a task that may well require them to physically restrain or even subdue the craven man for transport to “safety” in the care of the dottari. In any case, the Mayor manages to slip out of town not long after, leaving Westcrown without its mayor but the PCs with their XP and Fame Point award for this quest intact.

Missing Nobles (4,800 XP): Rumors of missing nobles spread quickly after the initial explosion. One of the missing nobles is Sascar Tilernos, a woman the PCs met at Aberian's Cornucopia in “The Sixfold Trial.” No one directly approaches the PCs with this quest, but rumor on the street is that House Tilernos has promised a reward of 5,000 gp for their daughter's safe return.

Vampire Panic (4,800 XP): The nobles of the Mhartis family fled the explosion of the mayor's home, but even before this event they had problems. Their manor, across the plaza from the mayor's, had become “cursed.” If someone can find out what's been causing the Mhartis guards and help to vanish, the family's promised a reward of 2,000 gp and a +2 mithral trident that's been in the family for several generations. To claim this reward, the PCs



must present the Mhartis family with evidence that they've been preyed upon by a vampire along with proof that the vampire has been destroyed or driven away.

PART TWO: SIEGE OF THE FOLLY

Things at the Aberian ruins are worse than they appear—and with five spiraling vortexes of fire arranged in a pentagram around a central crater where once stood the city's mayoral residence, things do indeed look bad.

When the energies in the infernal engine housed at the center of the Nessian Spiral in area **F37** finally reached critical mass, the device had a sort of meltdown. While Liebdağa the Twin remains confined within the cage at the core of the engine, his shackles and bindings are rapidly failing. The initial explosion above the manor that flattened much of the building and damaged several nearby estates was a manifestation of Liebdağa's anger, funneled through every single fireplace, light, and faucet in the once-grand manor. The crater left by this tremendous explosion measures 90 feet across, centered roughly on what was once the entrance to the manor grounds. Surrounding the central crater are the five pillars of fire, each 15 feet in diameter and extending out of a smoking hole in the ground, spiraling up into the sky above to a height of 500 feet (high enough that the tops are likely to be lost in the low stratus clouds that often loom over Westcrown). Yet despite the spectacle, no nearby buildings burn. There's plenty of damage—the estates to the north and east and south of Aberian's Folly in particular being partially collapsed, with the manor itself in complete shambles save for a single surviving wing to the east. But the five columns of fire seem curiously self-contained, and even at a distance of 10 feet, where the roaring flames are enough to make one's teeth shake, the heat seems only barely above normal. Only contact with a pillar of fire burns—and it burns fast. This area is detailed below in area **B**.

INTERESTED PARTIES

The bureaucratic and jurisdictional conflict between the Hellknights and the dottari leaves the bulk of Westcrown's citizens to fend for themselves during these uncertain and harrowing times. This is, of course, exactly what the Council of Thieves wants. Chammady and Ecarrdian Drovenge need time to manipulate things, and their agents need time to establish a safe route and contact with Liebdağa for the Drovenge siblings to treat with the devil (they certainly don't want to risk themselves or their favored allies on the dangerous act of establishing such contact!). Ensuring that Westcrown's government and law enforcement are stumbling over each other and bickering leaves the streets of the city open for them to do just this.

Of course, it also opens up a lot of similar freedom for the PCs as well.

Listed below are all of the interested parties in the coming adventure. Each faction is listed with an XP award—the PCs earn this award by meeting the faction's listed "completion condition," at which point the faction no longer plays a role in this adventure and its territory becomes unclaimed.

COUNCIL OF THIEVES (LOYALISTS)

XP 3,200

Commander Vassindio Drovenge (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volumes #26 and #29)

Agents Jalki (area **F9**)

Territory area **F9**

Completion Condition Aid Jalki in his escape so he can make his way back to the Council loyalists and warn them with news of what he's discovered.

DESCRIPTION

For much of this Adventure Path, a revolution has been building in the Council of Thieves. Led by Chammady and Ecarrdian Drovenge, these usurpers are behind all of the major plot threads in the campaign. Increasingly on the defensive against them are the dwindling number of loyalists. Realizing too late that a schism was forming, these loyalists know only that their enemies within are growing—they don't even know who the organizers of the usurpers are. Many certainly suspect the Drovenge siblings, but honor and tradition blinds aged patriarch Vassindio Drovenge, and as long as he steadfastly refuses to believe his granddaughter could be involved in such heinous treachery, the Council itself remains deadlocked. Certainly the loyalists don't want the usurpers to know that they've caught wind of the stewing rebellion before they learn enough to strike and excise this cancer from their own ranks. Led by Eirtein Oberigo (whom the PCs met during Aberian's Cornucopia after the production of *The Six Trials of Larazod*, and whom they are destined to meet again in the next adventure, "Mother of Flies"), the loyalists don't realize just how few in number they are. Of the Council of Thieves agents the PCs encounter in this adventure, only the low-rank cutpurse Jalki is a member of the loyalists, a deep-cover agent who has finally realized just how deep the corruption goes, and has paid for this discovery by becoming a captive of the Usurpers (see area **F9**).

COUNCIL OF THIEVES (USURPERS)

XP 4,800

Commanders Chammady and Ecarrdian Drovenge (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #30)

Sub-Commander Avahzi Serafian (area **F8**)

Agents Aberten (area **E4**), Crosael (area **E9**), various thieves

Territory areas **E1–E10**; areas **F1–F5**; areas **F7–F9**

Completion Condition By killing or driving off both Aberten and Avahzi, the PCs force the usurpers to abandon their operations in the area.

The Infernal Syndrome

DESCRIPTION

The Drovenge siblings had hoped to be able to take their time and be subtle in their approach to Liebdagga, but as their contact in Aberian's Folly (the majordomo Crosael) began to report an increasing amount of malfunctions in the manor's infernally powered amenities, they realized that things were coming to a head much more quickly. They have agents ready to move as soon as the explosion occurs, and by the time the PCs reach the ruins (likely after several delays from events in Part One), the usurpers have a strong presence in the area already. When Chammady and Ecarrdian Drovenge send many of their agents to Aberian's Folly, they do not remain idle. The Council of Thieves have numerous safe houses throughout Westcrown, and assuming that their agents are but days away from securing a safe parlay with Liebdagga, the siblings put into motion several other plans to seize control of the criminal organization. For the most part, this consists of a series of carefully planned and timed assassinations of key members of the Council of Thieves loyalists, intended to culminate with the murder of the ancient hag known as the Mother of Flies and their grandfather Vassindio Drovenge. In this adventure, the PCs face a large number of the siblings' agents, but none of their closest allies—these confrontations await them in the final two adventures of this campaign.

LIEBDAGGA'S FAITHFUL

XP 3,200

Commander Nyxervex (see area D6)

Sub-Commander Isavenda (see area B)

Agents lumbering lemures

Territory area B, areas D1–D6

Completion Condition By defeating or banishing Nyxervex and his erinyes ally, the devilish invaders of Westcrown are forced to abandon their active attempt to free Liebdagga and must wait and hope the pit fiend escapes on his own. Devils are no longer encountered in the streets of Westcrown for the remainder of this adventure.

DESCRIPTION

Although the infernal duke Liebdagga has been imprisoned below Aberian's Folly for nearly 70 years, and while the terms of his imprisonment are "legal" by Hell's convoluted rules, his minions have remained loyal. When his prison shuddered, they were poised to come to his aid. Now, led by a bone devil named Nyxervex who has already manipulated events and has been involved in a recent event in the manor, these devils have claimed an abandoned gatehouse near the site of the explosion. There they are preparing a ritual that, they hope, will finish the job of shattering Liebdagga's prison and allow their master to rise back to glory.

SIVANSHIN'S THRALLS

XP 3,200

Commander Ilnerik Sivanshin (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #29)

Sub-Commanders Jerusen (see area C5)

Agents dominated dottari lieutenants

Territory areas C1–C5

Completion Condition By slaying Jerusen, the PCs force Ilnerik to abandon his interests in the ruins.

DESCRIPTION

After the PCs stymied his thralls at Delvehaven and recovered the *Morrowfall*, the vampiric ex-Pathfinder Ilnerik Sivanshin has grown increasingly obsessed and afraid of them. When he learned from his Drovenge allies that an explosive event was soon likely to occur at the mayoral manor, Ilnerik realized that the PCs would inevitably be drawn to the site. While he continued to prepare his den for what he's come to think of as an inevitable confrontation, he sent one of his more powerful vampiric minions, Jerusen, to set up an observation post near to Aberian's Folly to wait for whatever fate was about to be unleashed on the manor to lure the PCs near—when they do arrive, Jerusen is under orders from Ilnerik to observe the PCs, find out what they're up to, and if the opportunity presents itself, either to kill them or capture the *Morrowfall*.

ABERIAN'S PLIGHT

At some point as the PCs draw near to the ruins of Aberian's Folly, they have an unexpected encounter with the mayor himself. When the infernal engine began its meltdown, the severity of the coming disaster manifested in the form of a sudden shaking and thunder throughout the manor. Gouts of fire spurted from fireplaces, and leering infernal faces and shapes stretched and surged from the shadows. Already aware that something was askew with the manor, the mayor went into a panic at the sudden severity of these new incidents. With the knowledge that a pit fiend was imprisoned below his house at his heels, Aberian decided to flee the manor and spend the next few nights elsewhere in the city, but as he gathered his things, the rumbling grew. He realized that this was going to be something major, and in a fortunate moment of clarity he recalled a hidden safe in his bedchambers and retrieved a singularly important document—a copy of the contract that bound Liebdagga into the Nessian Spiral. Yet when he arrived in his chambers to claim the contract, he caught his majordomo Crosael in the act of trying to rob him. A brief confrontation ensued, during which the mayor not only discovered that his majordomo was in fact a tiefling but also that she was much more dangerous than he'd thought—he was saved from a humiliating defeat at her hands only by the explosion that destroyed the greater portion of his home.

When the dust cleared, the mayor found himself alone in a partially collapsed chamber, with Crosael nowhere to be seen. He managed to clear the rubble from the safe and found it intact, and after securing the contract copy, he fled. Since escaping, the mayor has spent his time hiding in rubble, slinking through crumbling alleys, and avoiding contact with the various thieves, devils, guards, Hellknights, and others who have been poking around. With Crosael's unexpected treachery, he no longer knows

whom to trust, and after seeing so many agents of the Council of Thieves moving in to settle in the ruins of his home, he's realized that whatever the Council's up to, they had planned and practiced for this event. Thoughts of fleeing Westcrown entirely—of buying his way onto a ship bound for a distant port and starting a new life rather than risk the wrath of the House of Thrune for allowing such an event to occur—filled his mind. Yet as he begins making his way down toward the waterfront, fortune steps in and he spies the PCs.

A DESPERATE PLEA

Mayor Arvanxi should spot the PCs at some point before they actually reach the ruins of his manor. No fool, Aberian looked into learning more about the PCs in the weeks following his Cornucopia, especially when he began to suspect that they had used the Cornucopia as an excuse to steal about his home and perhaps rob him. He now suspects it was actually Crosael who had been unintentionally leaving clues that something was amiss, and that the PCs, who he knows are fast becoming heroes of the city, might actually be his best chance to salvage the situation. Although craven and untrustworthy, Mayor Arvanxi does have a legitimate love for Westcrown. While he still intends to flee the city, he hopes that by helping the PCs, he'll play at least a small part in its salvation.

Have the PCs make Perception checks. Whoever rolls the highest notices a large dark shape in a nearby alley that seems to be watching them. Before the PCs can react, the shape steps into the light and reveals itself to be the mayor of Westcrown. Aberian is in terrible condition—his clothes are filthy and torn, blood cakes his head and hands and stains his clothes here and there, and his expression is one of fear and persecution. He warns the PCs that he has something of dire importance to speak to them about before they take another step toward the ruins of his home. The mayor would like to find somewhere safe to speak with the PCs—their safe house or one of their homes will certainly do, but in a pinch, a retreat to deeper into the alleys of Westcrown will also suffice.

Once the mayor has the PCs' ear, he speaks in a swift but quiet voice, as if worried about eavesdroppers while at the same time eager to be on his way. Frazzled and nervous, his speech to the PCs is short but filled with intrigue.

"I'm talking to you because I love this city. I know I've not been the best mayor, and those who hate me have plenty of reason to, but what's happening up the hill will ruin everything. You've doubtless heard the rumors—that there's a devil imprisoned under my home and its infernal power is the source of my manor's extravagances. Those rumors are correct. The devil's name is Liebdaga the Twin—he's an infernal duke from Avernus, and the House of Thrune put him there. But now something's

gone wrong. I caught my majordomo, that bitch Crosael, trying to steal the contract that details the conditions of Liebdaga's imprisonment from a hidden safe in my chambers, and now the ruins of my home are crawling with devils, thugs, diabolists, and worse. Seems Crosael's more than she appeared—not only is she actually a damnable tiefling, but she's been working for the Council of Thieves all this time!"

Although he's eager to be on his way and make good his escape, Mayor Arvanxi remains long enough to answer a few questions the PCs might have. He can certainly fill in his brief description of events above, informing the PCs about what led up to his current situation as described in the Aberian's Plight section. Beyond this, you should use this encounter with Aberian not only to impress upon the PCs the very real peril that Liebdaga's imminent escape presents to Westcrown and everyone who lives therein, but also to warn the PCs about the other dangers surrounding the ruins and to give them focus and a few goals to seek in order to defeat the pit fiend. The points of information you should make sure to convey to the PCs, either as answers to their questions or unsolicited advice and warnings from Aberian, are as follows.

Infernal Engine: The infernal engine is running out of control, and while Aberian has no idea on how to fix it, he hopes the PCs will be able to figure it out once they reach it. He does know some information about the nature of the infernal engine, though, mostly learned from a reading of Liebdaga's contract.

Liebdaga: Aberian knows that Liebdaga is a pit fiend, and that the two previous mayors probably had ways to contact and communicate with him. The prospect frightens Aberian and he has never bothered attempting such communications. The mayor is certain that Liebdaga is still imprisoned in the infernal engine, since otherwise the pit fiend would certainly have emerged to destroy Westcrown already. And since the devil is still imprisoned, there's a chance to avert such a doom if someone can reach the engine and either defeat the surely weakened devil or repair the engine so he cannot escape. See page 30 for the results of Knowledge checks to learn more about the pit fiend.

Liebdaga's Contract: Although the contract is only a copy of the original, Aberian is willing to sign partial ownership of the contract over to the PCs with his signature. Doing so should grant the PCs a bit of leverage against Liebdaga when they confront him, and they might even be able to use their ownership of the contract to bypass some guardians or traps in the Nessian Spiral. Aberian points out a clause that quite clearly states, "The undersigned shall be considered bound by this contract, and shall be granted access to the Nessian Spiral's workings should the need for repairs or adjustments arise." A DC 25 Linguistics check is

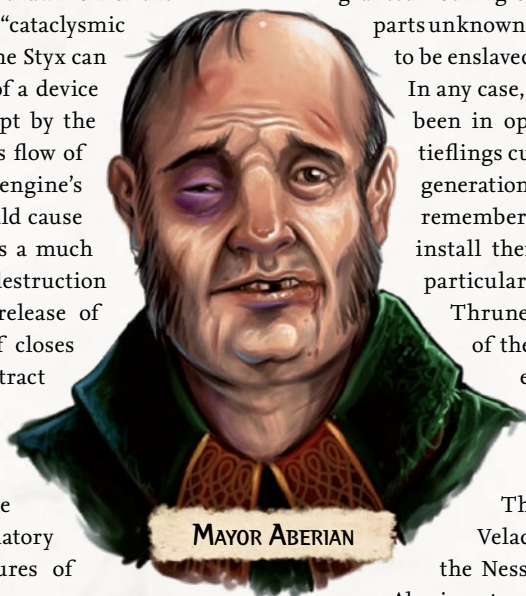
The Infernal Syndrome

enough to confirm that the contract has no hidden clauses that could be used against the PCs. Aberian also points out a section of the contract that mentions what could be a way to shut down the infernal engine safely—somewhere in the Nessian Spiral are five “cooling pools,” where waters from the River Styx are drawn in from the Great Beyond to regulate the infernal energies drawn off of the pit fiend, and in the event of a “cataclysmic failure,” the flow of waters from the Styx can be shut off with the application of a device called a Stygian Keyrod once kept by the Spiral’s Keepers. Shutting off this flow of unholy water should throttle the engine’s energy output, and while this could cause the engine to falter and fail, it is a much preferred solution than the destruction of the engine and subsequent release of its occupant. The contract itself closes with a notation that “This contract remains binding and legal for all perpetuity so as long as the consigned component of the infernal engine be a viable source of power, as witnessed here by Signatory Vaccha, Kolyarut of the Scriptures of Adamantine.”

The Nessian Spiral: Apart from knowing that somewhere within the Nessian Spiral, west of the chambers Aberian knows about, there’s a prison that contains an angry pit fiend, the mayor is unfortunately not very helpful providing actual advice about the dungeon itself. He can provide the PCs with a quick sketch of areas **F1–F5** and **F7–F12** (excluding the secret doors), but doesn’t know what currently lurks in those chambers and has never been deeper into the Spiral than area **F12**. The infernal engine always worked without a problem, so he never had a reason to delve deeper into the dungeon—he just made sure the tieflings who lived down there were kept happy with food scraps and were disciplined when necessary.

The Ruins: Of his home, the mayor has little more than tears to offer. He knows that the ground floor of the eastern wing mostly survived destruction and is now held by “that traitor Crosael and her Council of Thieves allies.”

The Tiefling Tunnel Rats: Liebdaga’s contract refers to the tieflings that lived in indentured servitude in the dungeons below the manor as the “Spiral’s Keepers,” but Aberian and his staff preferred to call them “Tunnel Rats.” These tieflings were responsible for cleaning the complex, making minor repairs and general upkeep, and guarding against intrusion. They took up the task semi-voluntarily, having been offered the job by the House of Thrune as a way to work off a “debt to society for being an otherwise inexcusable stain on the purity of the Chelish race.”



MAYOR ABERIAN

Tieflings who assumed the role of a Spiral’s Keeper and spent 20 years servicing an infernal engine were to be paid a healthy fee and be granted citizenship—otherwise, they would be kept as slaves for life by the House of Thrune. Of course, Aberian adds with only a hint of rue and shame, those tieflings who did serve their 20 year contracts were granted nothing of the sort—they were packed off to parts unknown by Thrune agents, Aberian assumes, to be enslaved elsewhere or simply exterminated.

In any case, the Westcrown infernal engine has been in operation for close to 70 years. The tieflings currently serving there are the fourth generation of Spiral Keepers, and Aberian remembers when Thrune agents arrived to install them and take the old ones away. In particular, he recalls the tiefling priest who Thrune had selected to be the commander of the Keepers—Veladness, a dark-eyed, evil-looking mongrel with glowing spidery stripes along the sides of his head and whose grating voice sent chills down the mayor’s spine.

The knowledge of this creepy tiefling Veladness, locked away for 20 years in the Nessian Spiral, was yet another reason Aberian stayed out of the inner workings of the place, and left the shipments of food and supplies to the tieflings to his majordomo, Crosael. He suggests to the PCs that the Stygian Keyrod they’ll need to help deactivate the infernal engine’s cooling pools is likely to be in Veladness’s possession, but warns them not to trust the tiefling. Something about that one still makes Aberian’s skin crawl.

The Final Word: In the end, Aberian’s advice to the PCs can be summarized as follows: “Avoid the thieves and devils and make your way into the Nessian Spiral, find the key rod to shut down the Stygian Cooling Chambers, and then make your way to the Spiral’s center to banish or even destroy the pit fiend, certainly weakened by its long imprisonment as a fuel source, before he can regain his power and escape.”

Once he has told the PCs all he is comfortable sharing with them, and assuming that the PCs don’t cause him to panic and flee prematurely, Mayor Arvanxi makes ready to depart. If the PCs request aid or some monetary compensation, the mayor is taken aback—he had no intention of paying the PCs anything, especially as he is planning to flee Westcrown and never return. He does tell the PCs that they’re welcome to anything they can scavenge from the ruins of his home or the treasury.

If he is allowed to depart peaceably, Arvanxi quickly flees into the city and makes his way down to the docks, where he pays the first captain he finds a fair amount of

What to do with Arvanxi?

Some PCs, even lawful- and good-aligned ones, may feel justified in killing Aberian at this point; a justifiable execution, especially considering the man's culpability in the eminent destruction of Westcrown and perhaps all of Cheliox. Certainly, the Mayor is a wicked man, and he shows no remorse at his actions; his concerns are only with regret for his own loss and rage at his betrayal and misfortune. Still, he is the lawful head of government for Westcrown—pressed or cajoled, he makes it clear that he is departing the city, under armed escort, immediately upon completion of this interview.

Less scrupulous PCs may feel no such dilemma, hoping only to retrieve as much information out of Arvanxi as possible before quickly disposing of him. If the mayor is slain, the Adventure Path can continue as if he had merely fled the city, but PCs involved in the mayor's assassination may find themselves in trouble with the Chelish government after the Council of Thieves Adventure Path is over. In any event, if it becomes public knowledge that the PCs murdered Aberian, they lose 5 Fame Points—while the mayor was a craven, he was the friendliest mayor Westcrown has had since the fall of Aroden, and his murderers are not hailed as saviors.

gold for both his silence and his promise to smuggle the man out of Cheliox to a distant port—likely Absalom. This adventure assumes that the cowardly mayor makes good his escape, he has no further role to play in this campaign, and his flight from Westcrown (leaving the city without a leader) plays a major role in the city's slippage into chaos over the course of the remainder of this Adventure Path.

ABERIAN ARVANXI		CR 6
XP 2,400		
Male human rogue 7		
NE Medium human		
Init +3; Senses Perception +10		
DEFENSE		
AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+3 armor, −1 Dex)		
hp 42 (7d8+7)		
Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4		
Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft.		
Melee +1 dagger +8 (1d4+3/19–20)		
Ranged +1 dagger +5 (1d4+3/19–20)		
Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6		
TACTICS		
During Combat Aberian is a coward. He prefers to only make		

attacks when he thinks he'll be able to use his sneak attack, spending all other actions in combat trying to find a hiding space or feinting to set up such opportunities.

Morale If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, Aberian drops his dagger and begs for his life, offering all of his belongings as a payment to let him flee.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 8, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Skills Appraise +11, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Perception +10, Perform (act) +13, Profession (politician) +10, Sense Motive +10

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ rogue talents (combat trick, rogue crawl, surprise attack), trapfinding

Gear +1 leather armor, +1 dagger, handy haversack, copy of Liebdaga's contract, tattered noble's clothing, 460 pp

RUIN FEATURES

The ruins of Aberian's Folly and the nearby estates lie at the southern end of Westcrown. Aberian's mayoral manor is all but destroyed, while the surrounding estates all show at least some partial damage. Unless the PCs arrive on the scene minutes after the explosion (unlikely unless they drop everything and teleport directly to the site, since a more traditional journey through the streets presents the PCs with numerous problems as presented in Part One above), the legal residents of these manors have fled their homes, locking them up and seeking shelter with family and friends elsewhere in Westcrown while they hope for the dottari to get the situation under control. With the exception of the guardhouse for the Mhartis manor (area C) and the gatehouse to the Rasdovain grounds (area D), these other estates are not detailed in this adventure—besides an opportunity for unscrupulous PCs to get in some looting, there's nothing therein to advance the plot of "The Infernal Syndrome."

A. BARRICADES (CR 5)

A hastily erected barricade of lumber, wagons, rain barrels, and crates blocks off the street leading into the ruined plaza beyond. Numerous spears and sharpened lengths of wood protrude through the barricade to aim at the plaza, and a stack of wooden boxes and blocks on the left side allow access to the top of the wall should someone wish to drop down into the plaza on the other side.

Although a jurisdictional nightmare with the Hellknights mires the bulk of the dottari leadership for

The Infernal Syndrome

the duration of this adventure, and the majority of the rank-and-file guards are busy trying to keep order in the city streets, a token amount of guards has been dedicated to watching the ruins from these two barricades erected across the two surviving streets leading into the Mayoral Plaza. The barricades can be climbed from the outside with a DC 5 Climb check, but climbing them from the plaza side is a DC 15 check, with a failure of 5 or more indicating the climber takes 1d4 points of damage from one of the numerous spears protruding from the barricade's face.

Creatures: At each barricade, a group of six dottari led by a single captain stand guard. The rank-and-file guards are nervous and jumpy, standing at various points along the length of the barricade in 8-hour shifts. The lieutenant who commands the group keeps a small office in a tent erected on the side of the street about 30 feet away from the barricade, to which he retires each hour to record the previous hour's observations of the ruined plaza and the fires within.

The guards are jumpy and have no real interest in conversing with the PCs, although if the PCs can make them helpful with a DC 14 Diplomacy check, they might be able to give them one or two helpful rumors. More likely, a guard asks the PCs to speak with the lieutenant, who retires to his tent to meet with the PCs in such a case.

Both lieutenants look haggard and worn out, as if they haven't had any sleep. In fact, this is the case, for both are dominated by Jerusen, the vampire hidden in area C5. Before he took up residence in the Mhartis guardhouse, Jerusen took the time to seek out several dottari lieutenants and dominate them, giving them orders to volunteer for duty here when the time was right. In all, there are only two dominated lieutenants, and thus they've been forced to work grueling hours at their true master's insistence. They're fatigued and short tempered as a result. Jerusen's orders are to keep an eye out for the PCs, and should they arrive, the lieutenants are to try to determine what the PCs are here for and prevent them from entering area C5. They're also interested in finding out if they have the *Morrowfall* with them, but won't question the PCs directly about the relic. If the PCs seem intent on entering the plaza and exploring the ruins, the lieutenant suggests they begin with the Rasdovain gatehouse, saying that there's been a lot of suspicious activity up there with devil sightings and the like. In truth, he hopes that the PCs will be confronted by the bone devil that lairs there and that the two will kill each other, solving two problems with one stroke. If he sees the PCs entering area C, though, he excuses himself from duty and moves to aid the master.

At the first opportunity after speaking with the PCs, the lieutenant drinks one of his *potions of invisibility* in order to sneak off to area C to report to Jerusen or his agents in

C4, letting the vampire know that the PCs have arrived. The lieutenants try to keep tabs on the PCs' comings and goings so that Jerusen can stay informed. If the PCs discover their dominated condition and confront the lieutenants, they panic and order their dottari to arrest the PCs. The guards, confused and hesitant, can be convinced their lieutenant is compromised if the PCs offer any hard proof or (more likely) convince the guards with a DC 29 Diplomacy check. If presented with overwhelming odds or if the PCs convince the guards of the truth, the lieutenant drinks a *potion of invisibility*, flees to area C4, and waits for the opportunity to speak with Jerusen for new orders. In this case, the enraged Jerusen is likely to simply kill the failed thrall and drink his blood, perhaps even transforming him into a vampire spawn to be sent out to attack the PCs.

If the PCs kill the guards posted here and word of their criminal act gets out, they'll certainly face legal action (arrest pending a trial) at a later date once the dottari and Hellknights work out their jurisdictional problems. Whether or not this occurs before or after the end of this campaign is up to the GM. Word that the PCs slew several dottari reduces their Fame Point total by 1, in any event.

The best solution, of course, is to lift the domination effect from the lieutenant, at which point he breaks down in tears and reveals all to the PCs, begging them to travel to the Mhartis guardhouse to destroy the vampire that did this to him. Jerusen was careful not to reveal much of his or Ilnerik's plans to the dominated victims, but they can warn the PCs that the vampire was not only keen to learn the location of an eagle-headed relic called the *Morrowfall*, but is himself but an agent, a minion of an even more powerful vampire that Jerusen never spoke of but to call him "The Master of Midnight."

DOTTARI GUARDS (6)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Human fighter 1

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; Senses Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 16 each (1d10+6)

Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee longsword +5 (1d8+2/19–20)

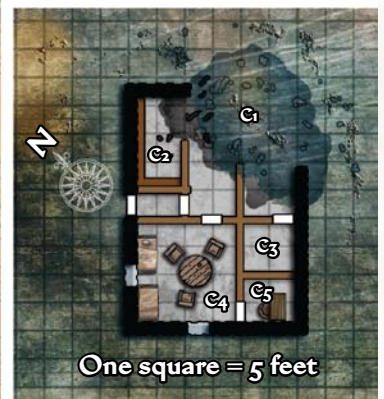
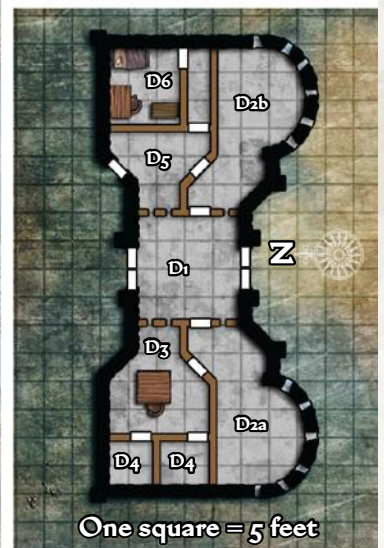
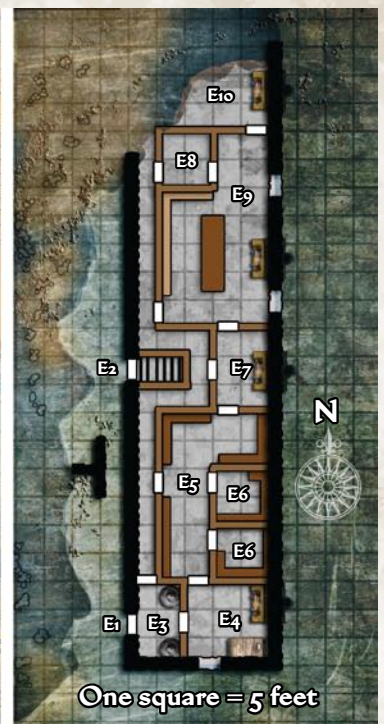
Ranged longbow +2 (1d8+2/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Dottari guards fight together, flanking foes and, unless lethal force is used against them, striking to subdue foes with nonlethal damage.

Morale These guards are brave, but if reduced to less than 3 hit

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points, they panic and attempt to flee. Once a third guard flees, all remaining guards flee as well.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +1, Swim +2

Languages Common

Gear breastplate, heavy steel shield, longsword, longbow with 20 arrows, 10 gp

DOMINATED DOTTARI LIEUTENANT

CR 2

XP 600

Human fighter 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 36 each (3d10+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +4 (1d8+2/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat A dominated lieutenant prefers to open a fight with his longbow, entering melee only against single foes or if he has a group of dottari to aid him.

Morale A dominated lieutenant drinks a *potion of invisibility* and attempts to flee to area C if reduced to 10 or fewer hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Swim +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potions of invisibility* (2); **Other Gear** +1 breastplate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, 10 gp

B. PILLARS OF FIRE (CR 8)

Where once stood the eccentric reaches of the mayoral manor, a strange house known locally as Aberian's Folly, now stand only ruins. Much of the manor has been reduced to rubble, although to the east it appears that the ground floor of the house may have survived. A vast crater, strewn with rubble and what appears to be melted rock, sits in the center of what was once the building's grounds, ninety feet across and twenty feet deep. Surrounding the crater are five churning pillars of fire, arranged in a pentagram shape around the central crater and each rising from a point about fifteen feet off the ground

directly above a scorched pit. While the roaring of the flames is nearly deafening, no apparent heat radiates from the five towering vortexes.

The central crater lies directly above the infernal engine itself in area F37, while each of the pillars of fire churns above one of the five Stygian Pits (areas F15, F19, F21, F22, and F24). The explosion that destroyed Aberian's Folly originated not in the infernal engine itself, but here, above ground, where the engine's energies were concentrated. While the layout of these pillars of fire and the central crater provide a hint as to the location and layout of the infernal engine, this shouldn't become apparent until after the PCs have explored much of the Nessian Spiral. Even then, no physical route exists through the solid rock that separates the bottom of the crater and the roof of area F37. Note that attempts to teleport into the Nessian Spiral expose the PCs to certain dangers (as detailed on page 29).

The ring of ejecta around the central crater is partially melted but now-cool rock and bits of charred timber. The sides of the 20-foot-deep crater are steep, and must be navigated with a DC 10 Climb check. While the ground of the crater floor is strangely smooth, simply being within the crater exposes a creature to Liebdaga's influence. Every round spent within the crater, a creature's mind is filled with horrific visions of a burning, roaring pit fiend wearing a pair of strange shackles festooned with runes—these visions are frightening, and each round they persist, a creature must succeed on a DC 19 Will save or become increasingly terrified. On the first failed save, a creature is shaken; the second failed save increases the effect to frightened; and on the third (and final) failed save, the creature becomes panicked. These states of fear persist for as long as the creature remains in the pit and for 1d6 rounds thereafter. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

The five roaring pillars of fire are manifestations of the raw infernal energies being leached from Liebdaga and transmitted up into the manor ruins. With nowhere to go and the mechanism used to throttle the energy output destroyed, these raw gouts of flame extend up into the air to a height of 500 feet. The fires themselves create a tremendous roaring (Perception checks made to hear sounds suffer a –6 penalty within 50 feet of these pillars) and provide normal light to a radius of 120 feet, but strangely, they do not radiate any noticeable heat unless someone approaches within 10 feet, at which point the heat suddenly becomes blisteringly obvious, inflicting 1d6 fire damage per round. Contact with a pillar inflicts 4d6 points of fire damage, and passing through a pillar inflicts 10d6 points of fire damage. A DC 15 Reflex save halves this damage unless a creature spends a full round in contact with the pillar, in which case there is no save to reduce the effects.

Creature: The bone devil Nyxervex (see area D6) is not the only devil loyal to Liebdaga that has managed to make the journey from Hell to Westcrown in an attempt to finish the job of freeing the pit fiend. An erynies named Isavenda, technically an ally to the bone devil but eager to be the one to secure Liebdaga's gratitude for being the key architect in his release, lurks in the vicinity of the crater ruins. Nyxervex's plan to break open the infernal engine involves a large ritual in which he hopes to burn alive dozens of living creatures in the pit while invoking Asmodeus to extend his divine aid to weaken the engine enough to release Liebdaga. The erynies has taken it upon herself to guard the crater so as to ensure that nothing happens to the intended sacrifice spot, watching carefully for any sign of curiosity on behalf of the numerous mortals who seem so interested in the area. She lies in wait in the ruins of the manor directly east of the pit, and when she notices intruders approaching the area, she attempts to summon a pair of bearded devils to attack the foes, then hits them with an unholy blight before taking to the air to rain down flaming arrows until the intruders flee or die. She does not pursue foes beyond the immediate area.

ISAVENDA

CR 8

XP 4,800

Erynies (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 75)

hp 94

C. HOUSE OF THE DEAD

The Mhartis family, one of three of Westcrown's noble families to owe allegiance to the Arvanxis, had problems even before their liege's home exploded.

In the days before the event, a vampiric minion of Ilnerik Sivanshen, the near-feral but cunning rogue Jerusen, arrived in the area under the cover of a moonless night. He chose the Mhartis guardhouse as his vantage point to lie in wait for the arrival of the PCs, whom he hoped to be able to ambush and murder for his master when they inevitably arrived to investigate the coming explosion. He dominated several of the guards and fed on several of the help, and when the explosion came, the remaining Mhartises who weren't under Jerusen's domination were only too eager to flee a home they'd come to think of as cursed.

The entire complex appears to be abandoned, but in truth, this partially collapsed guardhouse is far from empty. At night, Jerusen assumes dire bat form and patrols the skies above the area, flapping silently from rooftop to rooftop, spending much of his time perched in shadows waiting and watching for the PCs to arrive. As dawn approaches, he generally swoops down to find a victim to feed upon before returning to his lair in area C5.

C1. RUINED CORNER

The eastern corner of this one-story wooden guardhouse has collapsed, exposing a hallway and a pair of storerooms. The twisted and mangled remnants of what was once an iron gate lie in a heap in the middle of the rubble.

The iron gate was once the entry gate to Aberian's Folly's grounds—the Westcrown mayoral crest is still somewhat visible amid the ruin. When the explosion occurred, much of the Arvanxi gatehouse was propelled into the corner of this wall here. The rubble filling this area creates difficult terrain. If approached at night before midnight, a DC 20 Perception check is enough to notice a thin sliver of light under the door to area C4 and to hear the quiet sound of murmured conversation from beyond the same door.

C2. STORAGE (CR 2)

This looks to have once been a storage room, but the collapse of the wall and the door that once provided access to the shelves within has exposed the room to the elements. Judging by the large number of droppings and the musty smell, some form of vermin has already moved in here.

Creatures: During the day, a large colony of bats, drawn from their normal nesting grounds in the sewers and cliffside caves by the lure of the vampire's presence, nest in this room, the ceiling and upper shelves alive with their tiny furry bodies. Every evening, the cloud of bats swarms out of the building, a few flashing into oblivion when they flap a little too close to the nearby pillar of fire. The swarm returns at dawn—or sooner, if Jerusen summons them to his side. If the PCs enter this room during the day, the angry bats swarm to attack, the noise of their thousands of wings and tiny shrieking voices enough to put the dominated guards in area C5 on alert.

BAT SWARM

CR 2

XP 600

hp 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 30)

C3. STORAGE

The door to this room is barricaded from the inside—opening it requires a DC 24 Strength check.

Whatever this storage room was originally intended for, it's now obviously being used as a cache for stolen goods. Jewelry, silverware, fine crystal, and all manner of expensive decor is heaped on the shelves here. Several large crates have been used to secure the door from the inside.

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This room is used by Jerusen to store loot he's robbed from the Mhartis estate over the past several days; he enters and leaves the room via gaseous form, so the barricade he's erected on the inside to keep out curious eyes is hardly a barrier to his comings and goings.

Treasure: The Mhartises weren't as rich as Arvanxi, but they were certainly far from poor. Jerusen's amassed the majority of the portable valuables the family left behind when they fled here, amounting to a total of 1,250 gp in silverware, crystal, statuary, paintings, jewelry, and various art objects. In addition, the collection of treasure includes a *circlet of persuasion*, *horn of fog*, and *ring of jumping*—Jerusen is unaware that any of these items are magical.

C4. GUARDROOM (CR 6)

A pair of double bunks sits against the northwestern wall of this room. A round oak table with three chairs sits in the middle of the room, while a door to the south has been boarded over with numerous planks of wood. Several crates of food and a few barrels of water sit against the walls. The room itself reeks of oil, and the walls and floor of the chamber shine with a layer of the stuff.

The walls of this room are soaked with flammable oil. Any area-effect fire attack (including splash attacks like alchemist's fire) used in this room causes it to immediately burst into flames. Note that while the burning building drives out the bats in area C2 and likely kills the guards here, it won't really harm Jerusen if he's slumbering in his earthen grave in area C5.

Creatures: A group of four House Mhartis guards, all dominated by the vampire Jerusen, wile away the time in this chamber. Leaving only when necessary to relieve themselves, the guards have been ordered to watch and protect the only entrance into area C5 during the day and night—but particularly during the day, when Jerusen sleeps.

As long as they remain dominated, the guards are violently loyal to the vampire, and immediately attack anyone who enters the room. If at least two of them are slain, the remaining guards use their alchemist's fire against the PCs, which also serves to ignite the room.

If freed from their domination, the guards thank the PCs and want only to flee the area; they certainly take the time to warn the PCs about the vampire, though, and know that he sleeps under the soil in area C5.

DOMINATED MHARTIS GUARDS (4) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 33 each (see page 17; same stats as Dottari Lieutenant)

Combat Gear alchemist's fire; **Other Gear** as Dottari Lieutenant

C5. OFFICE (CR 9)

This small office features a single desk and chair. A strange scent, like that of thick loamy soil, fills the room.

The smell of rich soil comes from below the floorboards of this room, as a DC 20 Perception check can attest. Ripping up the boards reveals a small crawlspace with no other exit but a freshly dug grave-shaped hole in the ground filled with rich, dark soil.

Creature: The vampire Jerusen was, in life, a nearly feral vagabond who lived in the northern ruins of Westcrown—a place that just happens to be one of the favored hunting grounds of Ilnerik Sivanshen. When the vampire attempted to catch and feed on Jerusen, he was startled by the vagabond's speed and reflexes, leading the vampire on a chase that lasted all night long. Ilnerik was forced to return to the ruins the next night to finish the job, but when he found Jerusen sleeping in a partially collapsed butcher's shop he chose to turn him into a thrall rather than feed on him.

Since then, Ilnerik has used Jerusen as a scout and assassin—the skills at moving unseen through society the man developed in life served him quite well in undeath. And with the likely destruction of Ilnerik's other thralls at the end of "What Lies in Dust," Jerusen is also the oldest of the master vampire's minions, and thus the one Ilnerik trusts the most to be able to handle the PCs.

Jerusen spends his days sleeping under 3 feet of soil in a pit he dug under the floorboards here. He comes and goes from the soil via gaseous form, sifting through the floorboards and into the deep, rank dirt every dawn to sleep the day away, emerging at night to take up his typical watch post among the rooftops of the buildings in the area. As soon as he learns the PCs are in the area, he tracks them down and observes them from the shadows, likely in gaseous form. You should have Jerusen strike against the PCs when one of them is distracted or separated from the group, or alternatively, the vampire could be a bit more opportunistic and attack while the PCs are engaged in a fight against another foe.

Note that if the wooden structure above burns to the ground, Jerusen is more than protected in his 3-foot-deep hole in the ground, and that evening he simply wafts up through the rubble in gaseous form to seek out a new lair (likely another nearby building, particularly if the PCs have cleared one of its denizens already).

JERUSEN CR 9 XP 6,400

Male human vampire rogue 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

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DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 19 (+1 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 95 (8d8+56); fast healing 5

Fort +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion, trap sense +2, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 45 ft.

Melee slam +12 (1d4+5 plus poison)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +13 (1d4+1/19–20 plus poison)

Special Attacks blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 19), energy drain (2 levels, DC 19), sneak attack +4d6 plus 4 bleed

TACTICS

During Combat Jerusen prefers to strike from hiding. A battle against the vampire should be a frustrating and harrowing experience, with the vampire making a sneak attack on a target (using vital strike with a slam attack) and then fleeing into the shadows to hide and await a chance to strike again.

The vampire's speed and Spring Attack feat make this a

particularly effective tactic.

Morale If destroyed, Jerusen becomes gaseous and flees to his lair in area **C5** to recover. If he suspects the PCs know where his lair is, or if he knows they've already ruined it, he instead seeks out another of his many hideaways in northern Westcrown's ruins—if he manages to escape the PCs and recover, he can become a recurring villain and return to track them through the Nessian Spiral—he has no further role to play in the Adventure Path, so you can use him as you see fit to continue to vex and haunt the PCs.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 27

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fleet (3), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spring Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +24, Disable Device +16, Disguise +16, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +23, Sense Motive +23, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +24

Languages Common, Shadowtongue

SQ change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, rogue talents (bleeding attack, fast stealth, surprise attack, weapon training), shadowless, spider climb, trapfinding

Combat Gear Medium spider venom (5 doses); **Other Gear** masterwork hand crossbow with 10 +1 bolts (all poisoned with a dose of Medium spider venom), *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) *Medium Spider Venom*—injury, *save* Fort DC 14, frequency 1/round for 4 rounds, effect 1d2 Str, cure 1 save.

JERUSEN

D. RASDOVAIN GATEHOUSE

Like the Mhartis family, the Rasdovian family is beholden to the Arvanxis. And like the Mhartis, the Rasdovians have fled the region while the area is under siege by thieves and vampires and devils. The Rasdovians, being a larger family with more help and guards, managed to gather the majority of their valuables and left little of value behind in their manor—with the exception of its value as a shelter and hideout. It is to this end that the bone devil Nyxervex claimed the Rasdovian Gatehouse.

Nyxervex is a long-time loyalist and minion of Liebdaga the Twin. Since the pit fiend “promoted” him from a mass of several lemures to his current standing as a bone devil several hundreds of years ago, Nyxervex has seen in his master's imprisonment an opportunity to further his own evolution. He hopes that by engineering Liebdaga's escape, he will prompt the pit fiend to promote him even further, perhaps even to the vaunted role of malebranche among the horned devils. Nyxervex has explored the



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conditions around the infernal engine for many years, from studying the details of the binding contract (using the copy stored in the Fallen Fastness of Dis) to making risky trips to the Material Plane itself to study the site in person. Without the ability to travel the planes, though, Nyxervex has been forced to the humiliating necessity of “doing favors” for mortal conjurers. His latest favor was to the Council of Thieves diabolist Avahzi, who tied Nyxervex to a runecurse then given to the tiefling Sian Daemodus to use as a weapon (see “The Sixfold Trial”). In return for this servitude, Nyxervex not only secured from Avahzi the promise to be conjured back to the Material Plane at a later date for reasons of his own, but also was able to learn something of the Council’s plans for Liebdaga. When Nyxervex cashed in on Avahzi’s favor after the ripples of the infernal engine’s partial meltdown alerted the bone devil to Liebdaga’s changed condition, he swiftly took up residence here in the abandoned Rasdovain Gatehouse, and from here has been gathering and storing the sacrifices he hopes will give him the mortal souls needed to secure Liebdaga’s freedom.

In the unlikely event that Nyxervex was slain in “The Sixfold Trial,” this bone devil is instead a close associate of the slain devil by the name of Noxervox, a “brother” formed from lemures at the same time that Liebdaga created Nyxervex.

NYXERVEX CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 105 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 74)

TACTICS

Before Combat If Nyxervex has time before entering combat, he casts *invisibility* on himself.

During Combat Nyxervex needs several more sacrifices before he can act on his plan to free Liebdaga. As such, he avoids killing foes if he can, softening them up with his attacks but relying on his poison sting to eventually paralyze enemies. Against spellcasters, his first act is generally to try to prevent them from fleeing via magic by using *dimensional anchor* on them.

Morale The first time he’s reduced to 30 hit points or less, Nyxervex teleports to area D6 to rest and recover, using the cache of healing magic he’s secured there as needed. Subsequent encounters that reduce him to 30 hit points or less cause him to teleport instead to other hidden areas throughout Westcrown (although these have no healing cache stashed)—Nyxervex’s goal is to remain alive as long as possible, and his habit of teleporting to safety can make him an excellent recurring villain.

D1. GATEHOUSE

A one-story gatehouse stands at the edge of the ruined plaza, its stone walls having weathered the recent explosion quite well.

Arrow slits line the walls of the gatehouse to either side of a pair of iron gates that block entry into a gravel-floored barbican—a second pair of gates opens into the manor courtyard in the opposite wall.

Both iron gates are locked (Disable Device DC 30 or Strength DC 25 to open).

D2. GUARDPOSTS (CR 7)

This chamber seems to be a hastily abandoned guardpost. A few scattered arrows lie on the floor along with some overturned and damaged furniture. Arrowslits in the walls allow an archer to look out upon the plaza to the south and the central barbican of the gatehouse.

Creatures: Nyxervex has placed one of his immense lumbering lemures in each of these guardposts.

LUMBERING LEMURES (3) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Advanced HD lemur (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 79)

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size)

hp 63 each (6d10+30)

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

DR 5/good or silver; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects, poison;

Resist acid 10, cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6+7)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The lemures have orders to remain silent and still unless anyone other than Nyxervex attempts to enter the gatehouse, at which point the lemures move to attack the first foe they notice.

Morale The lemures fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** —, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 25

D3. OFFICE

This large office may have once been a place to interrogate visitors to the estate, but now the furniture in the room has all been pushed around and damaged, as if something large has moved through the room multiple times. What appear to be fresh bloodstains spatter the room, concentrated near two heavy doors to the west that have been barricaded with bits of heavy furniture.

Clearing the rubble in front of either of the doors to the west takes 2d4 rounds of work.

This is one of two areas in the gatehouse where the PCs might stumble upon Nyxervex. If they do, they find the bone devil either enjoying a spot of relaxing torture with one of his paralyzed victims, or in the act of opening or closing one of the storerooms to drop off a new victim.

D4. STORAGE ROOMS

This partially emptied storeroom still contains a few jars of preserves and some firewood. The chamber reeks of filth, obviously having served recently as a prison of sorts.

Nyxervex uses these storage rooms for his own sort of horrific repository—stowing the victims here for use in his eventual attempt to sacrifice many good souls in order to convince Asmodeus to free Liebdağa. Although the bone devil has no special knowledge regarding the nature of sacrifices, nor does he possess any divine powers granted him from Asmodeus by virtue of cleric or other character levels, he understands the nature of worship and sacrifice enough from his knowledge of how the planes work that he hopes to succeed nevertheless. Whether or not he has any chance to succeed at this plan is up to the individual GM—in theory, the PCs will take care of both Nyxervex and Liebdağa before the bone devil gets the chance to try. Gathering appropriate victims is taking the devil longer than he'd thought—he's looking for kind-hearted and gentle victims, but the combination of his lack of ability to detect good and the fact that most of Westcrown's denizens are neutral or even evil are frustrating the devil's hopes to have two dozen victims.

Each of these storage rooms currently contains five of these victims, strewn haphazardly about the room on top of each other in a heap. Reduced to 0 Strength by the bone devil's poison, the effectively paralyzed victims are all low-level Wiscrani (with one or two dottari thrown in), but if the PCs are seeking a particular missing ally or friend, they could be found here as well. Starvation and thirst are already beginning to take their toll on these poor souls. Rescuing them requires physically transporting them to safety or using magic to cure enough of their Strength damage so they'll be able to move on their own.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Although none of these victims are rich enough to provide any substantial monetary award to the PCs, rescuing them from their horrific fate awards the PCs 3,200 XP once they're all safe and sound.

D5. ARMORY

This room contains several empty armor stands and an empty weapon rack.

Treasure: The Rasdovain guards emptied this armory before they fled, but they missed a few items in their haste to get away. A single masterwork spear lies against the wall behind the weapon rack, along with 16 +1 *merciful arrows*.

D6. COMMANDER'S BEDCHAMBER

What may have once been a relatively cozy and comfortable bedchamber is all but ruined, as if some huge creature had chosen this room as its lair. Most of the furniture has been crushed and pushed to the corners of the room, with a partially destroyed bed having weathered the destruction with the least damage.

Nyxervex uses this room as a place to hide when he needs solitude or privacy. The devil is large, and generally uses *teleport* to come and go rather than enduring the uncomfortable squeeze of passing through the hallway and doors. If he's encountered here, he takes up the entire room, making it impossible for others to enter. He prefers to snatch up his hidden cache of magic and then teleport to the roof of this building, whereupon he becomes invisible and waits for the PCs to emerge before attacking again.

Treasure: The devil has stashed a small cache of treasure, mostly loot he's taken from his victims, behind the partially crushed bed. This cache can be found with a DC 20 Search check, and consists of 350 gp, seven pieces of jewelry (four rings, a bracelet, a necklace, and an anklet) worth 100 gp each, and four *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

E. ABERIAN'S FOLLY RUINS

The ruins of Aberian's Folly are, for the most part, little more than that—ruined shells of rooms and crumbled roofs. The manor's numerous fireplaces, even when half collapsed, are in most parts of the ruins the only indication of where rooms once stood. Even the entrance to the Asmodean Knot has been destroyed—the fate of the Knot itself is left to each GM to determine, but the assumption this Adventure Path makes is that the Asmodean Knot was entirely destroyed in the explosion. In any event, the Asmodean Knot has no further role to play in this campaign.

The only portion of the manor to have escaped utter destruction is the ground floor of the eastern wing—and this section of the building has been claimed by the Council of Thieves. The thieves are spread between this section of the manor and the first few rooms of the Nessian Spiral below. Those on the ground floor are tasked with guarding the entrance to the Nessian Spiral and keeping an eye on activities in the ruined plaza, while those below are actually tasked with exploring the Spiral and finding a safe way to contact Liebdağa the Twin.

Here above ground, the thieves are led by a halfling sorcerer named Aberten, a reluctant leader forced into the role after their previous leader, a rogue named Lozendi,

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was destroyed when the erinyes attacked him and threw his body into one of the pillars of fire in area **B**. A replacement has yet to arrive, so Aberten now orders and leads the thieves as best he can, despite the fact that as a sorcerer his thievery skills are not quite up to par.

GATHERING INTELLIGENCE

While the rank-and-file thieves in this adventure know little about the Drovenges, this is not the case for their commanders (or for the one member of the loyalists currently imprisoned in area **F9**). If the PCs can establish a friendly parlay with Aberten, Avahzi, Crosael, or Jalki (an easier task with some than others), they can learn much about their enemies. In fact, part of this adventure's goal is to ensure that the PCs learn this information, so if they manage to blast through all five of these potential informants, consider letting them discover a note or letter carried by the last NPC to fall under their swords that reveals this information. As the PCs interrogate their informant (or read the note), make sure that they learn the following:

- The Council of Thieves is alive and well—rumors that it long ago disbanded are false.
- There's a schism building in the Council between the traditionalists and a new group that wants to have more direct control over the fortunes and citizens of Westcrown.
- The schism is led by the son and daughter of one of the Council's oldest and most respected leaders, Vassindio Drovenge.
- Vassindio's granddaughter, Chammady, is a beautiful but dangerous assassin and an accomplished swordfighter.
- Vassindio's grandson, Ecarrdian, is the more dangerous sibling, a charismatic and brilliant charmer who is also, much to the Drovenge shame, at the very least a tiefling—some whisper that he is actually a half-fiend, and others that he is actually the son of the archdevil Mammon.
- The Drovenges and their followers have entered the endgame—they're making various power plays now throughout Westcrown to seize control of the Council and, soon thereafter, will attempt the same of Westcrown's government.
- There exists a handful of powerful enemies whom the Drovenge siblings particularly want to see murdered—these include most of the loyalist leaders of the Council of Thieves, a semi-legendary swamp hag known as the Mother of Flies said to know the secret (and weakness) of Ecarrdian's bloodline, and the PCs themselves.
- The Drovenge siblings hope to make peaceful contact with Liebda the Twin and, in exchange for freeing him, hope to recruit his aid in taking control of Westcrown. Even if the thieves currently attempting this are defeated, as long as Liebda remains alive or in Westcrown, the danger of such an alliance being forged remains.

- Before the Drovenges' agents can contact Liebda, they are struggling to master the deadly dungeon that imprisons him in order to reach him. This is the Nessian Spiral below the ruins of Aberian's Folly. Research and divinations have indicated that successful navigation of the Nessian Spiral would be made vastly easier for the one who manages to gather three important items—a copy of the contract used to imprison the pit fiend Liebda, a Stygian Keyrod used to manipulate and control the machinery that maintains the devil's prison, and Liebda's devil talisman. The thieves suspect that the only copy of the contract was either destroyed in the explosion or (more likely) is in the possession of the now-missing mayor of Westcrown—they have agents scouring the city but have not yet found him. Liebda's talisman itself has, apparently, been recovered from the treasury below, and is in the possession of the diabolist Avahzi, the commander of the thieves attempting to navigate the Spiral. Only the Stygian Keyrod has so far eluded discovery, but divinations indicate that it should be hidden somewhere in the Nessian Spiral.

E1. RUINED MANOR (CR 7)

Little remains of Aberian's Folly but mounds of smoking rubble and several partially collapsed fireplaces. Here and there, a bit of furniture or decor survives, casting a reminder of the once-rich appointments of the destroyed manor. Only at the far eastern end does any of the building seem to have survived—a wing of the ground floor framed in rubble.

Creatures: The ruins surrounding the surviving wing of the manor are patrolled by a group of four thieves, men and women armed with rapiers and hand crossbows who keep an eye out for intruders in the area. If they spot intruders, one of the thieves splits off from the main group and attempts to sneak into the remaining wing of the manor to warn Aberten in area **E4**, while the remaining three stay in hiding and watch the PCs, trying to learn what they can.

The Drovenges, even at this late stage in their plans, are trying to keep their plans hidden, even from their help. These thieves suspect that their commanders are up to something that might not be 100% condoned by the Council, but trust their leaders enough to go along with the plan for now. Certainly, the prospect of picking up a bit of loot from the ruins of the mayor's home is attractive enough. If charmed or otherwise made helpful (such as with a DC 41 Diplomacy check, modified by +15 from its base DC of 26 for asking for aid that could result in punishment), these thieves know only that their leader was recently slain by the erinyes who guards the area surrounding the crater and the

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pillars of fire, that their current leader Avahzi is down in the dungeons below the ruins on a secret mission about which even they don't know the details, and that Aberten (their upstairs commander) is no replacement for Lozendi. They might also mention Crosael as an agent who works for the Council but who, the thieves suspect, has plenty of secrets of her own. Finally, the thieves know that one of their number, a man named Jalki, recently did something to enrage Avahzi, but no one knows what it was, only that Jalki's not been seen in some time.

THIEVES (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Human rogue 4

NE Medium humanoid

Init +8; Senses Perception +8

DEFENSE

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

hp 29 each (4d8+8)

Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +9 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat If the PCs attempt to enter the door at area E2 or enter area E3, the thieves swiftly move to attack, calling out an alarm after attempting sneak attacks with their crossbows. They focus their attacks on the same target, preferring obvious healers to other foes.

Morale The thieves fight to the death individually, but as soon as only one remains standing, he attempts to flee into the city.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 19

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

Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Disable Device +11, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, masterwork rapier, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts, stolen coins and jewelry worth 300 gp

E2. ENTRANCE TO THE SPIRAL (CR 4)

The once-grand banquet hall lies in ruins, shattered chandeliers and crushed tables cluttering the floor under the

fragmentary remains of a roof. Yet to the west, the wall of the manor's easternmost wing still stands, and in the middle of this wall looms a towering black stone door, six feet wide and fourteen feet tall.

This massive stone door was, until recently, locked both physically and via an *arcane lock* maintained by the infernal engine. When the engine began its meltdown, though, the *arcane lock* on this door failed, leaving only a mundane (but still complex) lock in place—child's play for the now deceased Lozendi. With no key handy for this lock, and not trusting their remaining skill at re-picking it open should it lock again, the thieves have disabled the lock so that it's not quite as tricky to unlock anymore. The door is locked, but it only takes a DC 30 Disable Device check to open it now.

The door itself is not only also trapped, but warded by an alarm spell cast by Aberten—the password “Spiral” is required to be able to touch the door without triggering a silent mental alarm that alerts Aberten. If the halfling is alerted in this manner, he casts his preparatory spells as detailed on page 26 and then seeks out allies to lead up to this area to investigate.

Trap: The primary defense the thieves rely on to keep undesirables out of the Nessian Spiral is a *glyph of warding* placed on the door recently by Avahzi. The trap itself is keyed to allow members of the Council of Thieves to pass by unharmed, and is loud enough to alert any thieves lying in wait in areas E1–E10 and area F1.

GLYPH OF WARDING

CR 4

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger attempting to open the door; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding*; 4d8 sonic damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (creature that attempts to open the door and all creatures within 5 feet

E3. SHRINE

A pair of man-sized statues in the corners of this room have been covered by sheets.

Even when Mayor Arvanxi lived here and the manor was complete and whole, this small shrine to Asmodeus was seldom used. Avahzi covered both statues as a subtle way to honor her own chosen devil, Mammon.

Aberten Vittershins has secured the door between E3 and E4 with an *arcane lock*. It's a DC 40 Disable Device check to pick this lock—when thieves need to come and go from the ruins outside to their barracks in area E5, they simply knock a short code on the door (three knocks, pause, two knocks) and Aberten lets them in.

E4. THE DEALER'S POST (CR 9)

This well-appointed room seems to have been recently cleaned and organized. Cracks in the wall, and a particularly large crack on the side of the fireplace to the northeast, are the only testament to the ruins to which the rest of the house has been reduced. The rest of this bedroom seems quite well lived-in.

Once a bedroom used by a house priest, this chamber was unoccupied during Mayor Arvanxi's reign as mayor. The bed's headboard contains a hidden compartment (DC 25 Perception to locate), but it is empty (either because the PCs already looted the contents the first time they were in this room back during "The Sixfold Trial," or because the thieves found the stash of magic and already sent it on to their guild house).

Creature: Although Aberten Vittershins is one of the more powerful members of the Council of Thieves, he never really made it that far in the Council's hierarchy due to his tendency to get fed up with following orders and his lack of skill in areas classically needed by a thief. For the last several years, he's served the Council primarily in identifying stolen magic items and providing divinatory advice. Recently, he's also been called upon to use *lesser geas* as a way to ensure loyalty of those who seek the Council's aid, or to punish members whose loyalty may have "slipped." Known among the thieves as "The Dealer," both because of his skill at dealing cards and for his growing reputation as the guy who deals out punishment to thieves who need it, Aberten is well aware of the fact that the rank-and-file thieves hate him. So when the Droveng siblings approached him to join in their insurrection, he readily agreed, seeing this as a chance to spit in the eye of the Council's actual leadership and hoping that the siblings would secure for him a better spot in the coming changes to the pecking order. So far, though, Aberten's been unimpressed with how he's been treated—stationed here on the ground floor in, as he sees it, "marm-duty for the whelps." The fact that the thieves have to pass through his assigned quarters in order to get to their barracks, and thus effectively treat his room as a hallway, has not been lost on the bitter halfling. With the recent death of the thief Lozendi, Aberten's seen his responsibilities rise—as the only other surviving officer on site is locked downstairs and faces the problem of navigating the Spiral, Aberten has increasingly become the primary point of contact between the Drovenges and the agents stationed here. Yet his attitude is festering, and he's all but actively looking for a reason to betray the Council again.

When the PCs arrive, Aberten realizes that if he's able to capture them and present them, dead or alive, to the Drovenges, his commanders will have no choice but to reward him with a promotion and greater respect. As soon

as the alarm is raised, he prepares himself with magic as detailed in his stat block and then moves to intercept the PCs, gathering the thieves from area **E5** first to aid him before he seeks the PCs out.

Yet at the same time, if the PCs end up being tougher than he expects them to be, the opportunistic halfling hopes to strike a deal with them. He might even turn on the other thieves and strike against them, helping the PCs kill them and in so doing removing any witnesses to what he's about to offer the PCs. Assuming the PCs accept his offer of a truce, Aberten is willing to give them a fair amount of information about what the Council of Thieves are up to. See "Gathering Intelligence" on page 23 for details. After he informs the PCs, he even offers to help them in the future, suspecting that, eventually, they'll be striking against a Council safe house. If they let him escape, he promises to lie low while things in the Nessian Spiral play out, then indicates that he plans to return to the Council with a story of his narrow escape from the PCs, and some false information as to how the Council can prepare for them. When the PCs make their move on a safe house or against the Drovenges, Aberten promises he'll try to provide what aid he can. Of course, Aberten's not completely trustworthy—he'll always side with the group that, at that particular moment, seems to be the most able to provide what he desires. Still, allowing the halfling to return to the Drovenges to serve as a double agent could give the PCs some unique opportunities in the next adventure, "Mother of Flies." Details on how to use Aberten in that adventure appear in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #29.

ABERTEN "THE DEALER" VITTERSHINS CR 9

XP 6,400

Male halfling sorcerer 7/harrower 3 (*Pathfinder Chronicles*

Campaign Setting 224)

NE Small humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 shield, +1 size)

hp 74 (10d6+37)

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

Defensive Abilities fated (+2 luck bonus on saves and to AC in surprise round)

OFFENSE

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

Melee +1 punching dagger +4 (1d3/x3)

Ranged mwk dagger +9 (1d3–1/19–20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

7/day—*touch of destiny*

Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

4th (5/day)—*enervation*, *lesser geas* (DC 18)

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3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *protection from energy*, *tongues*
 2nd (7/day)—*arcane lock*, *blur*, *darkvision*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *scorching ray*
 1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*
 o (at will)—*detect magic*, *dancing lights*, *light*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*
Bloodline destined

TACTICS

Before Combat Aberten casts *alarm* each morning at area E2. If Aberten suspects that trouble is afoot, he casts *blur*, *fly*, *shield*, and *tongues*.

During Combat Aberten prefers to avoid melee combat, using flight to remain at range, and spells like *enervation*, *scorching ray*, and *magic missile* to attack while his underling thieves keep the enemy busy in melee. Forced into melee, Aberten avoids casting spells, instead enhancing his attacks with Arcane Strike.

Morale If Aberten is reduced to 35 or fewer hit points, he switches his attacks to any surviving thieves and tells the PCs he wants to parlay. He also immediately lowers his attacks to parlay if all of the thieves in sight are slain and he's got any wounds at all. If the PCs aren't interested in talking with the Dealer, he tries to flee through the ruined wing of the manor, delaying pursuit where he can with *arcane locks* on doors as he passes through them. He hopes to emerge on the other side into area

E10 after slowing the party down on a chase through the building so he can flee by flying through the alleyways to somewhere he can hide out for the remainder of this adventure's events—in this case, he can become a recurring villain, and can encounter the PCs again in the adventures to come as you see fit.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

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

Feats Arcane Armor Training, Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Light Armor Proficiency, Toughness

Skills Bluff +17, Fly +13, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +7, Spellcraft +14

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

SQ blessing of the Harrow, bloodline arcana, harrow casting (towers of intelligence and strength)

Combat Gear *wand of invisibility* (19 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (33 charges); **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, +1 punching dagger, masterwork daggers (3), *ring of protection* +1, illuminated Harrow deck worth 250 gp, pouch of gold dust (100 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blessing of the Harrow (Ex) Once per day,

Aberten can perform a Harrow reading for himself and all allies within 20 feet—this takes 10 minutes. After the reading, count up the suits that appeared in the reading; whichever suit had the most cards showing grants a +1 bonus to all the affected creatures for 24 hours. The bonuses granted are as follows: Strength (+1 on attack rolls); Dexterity (+1 to AC); Constitution (+1 on weapon damage rolls); Intelligence (+1 on all skill checks); Wisdom (+1 on all saving throws); Charisma (+1 on all caster level checks). All of these bonuses are insight bonuses. If you don't have a Harrow deck, you can simply determine which bonus applies to Aberten and his allies for the day by rolling 1d6.

Harrow Casting (Su) Up to three times a day as he casts a spell, Aberten can draw three cards from his Harrow deck. This adds a somatic component to the spell if it didn't have one already, and also adds a focus component, but does not add to the spell's casting time. For each card from the suit of Intelligence he draws, he gains a +1 bonus on caster level checks made to penetrate spell resistance. For each card from the suit of Strength he draws, the spell he casts deals +1 point of damage per die (provided the spell inflicts damage). Cards from other suits provide no bonuses, and cards that match his alignment grant twice the bonus. These bonuses stack with each other and are insight bonuses. You can randomly determine the suit of a card drawn by rolling 1d6 for each of the abilities; there's a 10% chance that a card drawn is neutral evil.

E5. LIBRARY (CR 7)

Once a library, the majority of the books on the walls here have fallen from their shelves. Most of them seem to have been burnt in a dented cauldron sitting in the middle of the room. Half a dozen bedrolls lie on the floor here.

This room is used now as a barracks for the various thieves here to aid the Council officers. At any one time, four thieves are resting here, waiting for a shift either outside in the ruins or downstairs in the Spiral. Encountered here, there's a 50% chance that 1d4 of the thieves are sleeping. If the alarm hasn't been raised and they are caught unprepared for defense, the thieves split up when they're attacked—two fleeing to area E9 to seek help from Crosael, and two fleeing to E4 to seek help from the Dealer.

THIEVES (4)

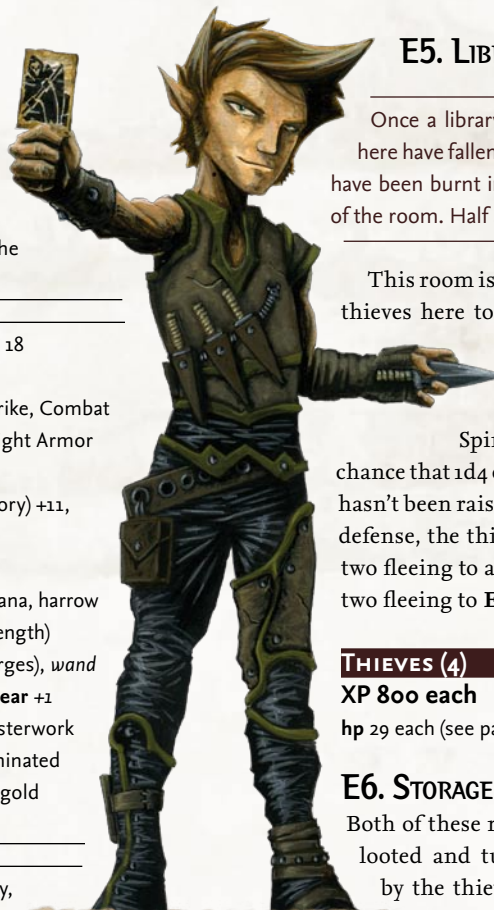
CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 24)

E6. STORAGE

Both of these rooms, once storage rooms, have been looted and turned into waste disposal chambers by the thieves. Garbage, bones from meals, and



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other rank waste lie heaped in each chamber—the thieves don't intend to be shackled up in the ruins long enough for these middens to get on their nerves and haven't bothered to find a more sanitary solution to hiding the evidence of their presence from casual observation yet.

E7. DRINKING WATER

A large fireplace in the east wall of this room overlooks a large marble bath set in the floor, filled with clear water.

The thieves use this room to store their drinking water, a supply replenished each day by Avahzi, at dawn, with a *create water* spell. This self-replenishing supply helps to prevent the thieves having to make multiple trips out of the area, thus keeping their presence more hidden.

E8. EMPTY BEDROOM

The contents of this storage room have been removed, leaving behind nothing but empty shelves. An old bedroll and a stained sack sit on the floor.

Until his untimely demise, the thief Lozendi used this room as his own, preferring the privacy and spartan decor over something more comfortable, such as those afforded Crosael in area E9 or Aberten in area E4. When he was slain, his body and gear were destroyed, so the thieves never thought of searching this room for more. The sack contains spoiling bread and cheese, and the bedroll is unremarkable, but a DC 30 Perception check reveals a loose floorboard near the northern wall that can be pried up to reveal a hollow area.

Treasure: Hidden under the floorboard is a small stash of treasure, loot that Lozendi has gathered up on the sly while exploring the ruins and casing Aberian's manor in the days before the explosion. Two small but bulging leather bags contain 2,500 gp each in silverware, candlesticks, crystal, and other valuables scavenged from Aberian Manor before or after its ruin. Under the bags lies a plain-looking scabbard that contains a +1 *axiomatic mithral longsword*, a valuable magic weapon that Lozendi stole only days before being sent here. Unable to wield the weapon without comfort, he had several agents looking for a buyer so he could sell the weapon surreptitiously without letting the Council of Thieves get their cut, but had not closed any deals at the time of his death.

E9. PRIVATE LOUNGE (CR 8)

All four doors into this room are warded by a silent mental alarm that warns Crosael as soon as anything larger than a Tiny creature touches the door—even other Council of Thieves agents.

Despite cracks in the wall, a sunken section of floor where the foundation has partially collapsed, and a few other signs of the devastation surrounding the area outside, this comfortable lounge is clean and almost comfortable looking. A private bar runs along the western wall, and a long divan that someone seems to have been using as a bed sits in the middle of the room facing a large, ornate fireplace.

Creature: Once the majordomo of this manor and one of Mayor Aberian's most trusted servants, the treacherous woman Crosael has taken up this room as a temporary home until her new benefactors, the Council of Thieves usurpers, can make good on their promise to provide her with a new place to live in reward for the services she provided them in preparation for this invasion. Crosael is, in fact, a heartless and calculating tiefling, and she retains no guilt over the fact that she betrayed the mayor—if she has any regrets at all, it is that she was unable to secure the copy of Liebdaga's contract from the mayor's hidden safe before the disaster struck. She fled the confrontation with the mayor when the explosion occurred, and by the time she made it back to the ruins of his chambers to check his safe, she found it empty—she assumes the mayor has the contract now.

Crosael is an oddity among the predominantly devil-spawned tieflings of Cheliah—her fiendish heritage comes from a heavy dose of rakshasa blood that she traces back to Korvosa's Arkonas. She escaped that city as a child on a trade ship bound for Westcrown, and was able to pass herself off as a human. She joined Mayor Arvanxi's staff a year after he took office, and has been his majordomo for most of those years. Yet despite that time, she never lost sight of how Cheliah treats tieflings—she has no illusions about her lot in this nation, and no loyalties to its government.

The tiefling has spent the last several hours setting up this lounge to be as comfortable a home as possible. She hopes to be able to track down the mayor and secure the contract from him, but hasn't bothered to start her search yet. She still doesn't quite trust her new allies, and spends a fair amount of time invisibly spying on the other thieves, hoping to learn more about what they think of her or have planned for her. She spends the majority of the rest of her time relaxing here, enjoying what, for her, are the first few "days off from work" she's had in years.

CROSAEL

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female tiefling bard 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264)

LE Medium outsider (native)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1

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dodge, +2 shield)
hp 71 (9d8+27)
Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8
Defensive Abilities well-versed; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +6/+1 (1d8–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +6/+1 (1d6–1/x3)
Special Attacks bardic performance (move action; dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate [DC 19], inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, inspire greatness, suggestion [DC 19])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

1/day—darkness

Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +14)

3rd (4/day)—*confusion* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *summon monster III*

2nd (5/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *summon monster II*, *tongues*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *summon instrument*

TACTICS

Before Combat Every evening before bedtime, Crosael places a silent mental *alarm* on each of the four doors leading into her room. She also casts *unseen servant* every morning. If she's warned that someone's about to enter her room, she casts *invisibility*.

During Combat If Crosael starts combat invisible, she remains silent and watches her foes, trying to determine what they want. She orders her *unseen servant* to open doors and then uses one open door that is unguarded to slip out of the room to gather up the thieves from area **E5** or perhaps to let in the shadows from area **E10**. She won't initiate combat, if she can help it, until she has allies. If she has the chance in a surprise round, she starts casting *summon monster III* to conjure 1d3 lemures—when the summoned creatures appear on the first round of combat, she orders them to attack and uses inspire courage. She then attempts to stay at range to use spells to vex foes, avoiding melee as much as she can.

Morale Crosael is headstrong and stubborn—she fights to the death as a result, but if reduced to 10 or fewer hit points and offered a chance to surrender, she takes the mercy and could become a valuable informant to the PCs if they can assure her that they'll let her go once she tells them what she knows of the Council of Thieves... which is a lot (see Gathering Intelligence on page 23).

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Fiendish Facade, Iron Will, Mobility

Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +17 (+20 as human), Knowledge (nobility) +16, Perform (dance) +17, Perform (sing) +10, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +4

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ bardic knowledge, lore master 1/day, fiendish sorcery, rakshasa-spawned, versatile performance (Acrobatics, Bluff, Fly, Sense Motive)

Combat Gear *wand of sound burst* (23 charges); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 buckler, masterwork rapier, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, *gray bag of tricks*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Feats Crosael's Fiendish Facade feat (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #25) grants her a +5 racial bonus on Disguise checks to impersonate humans.

Rakshasa-Spawned (Ex) As a rakshasa-spawn tiefling, Crosael's ability score modifiers are +2 Dex, +2 Cha, and –2 Wis, unlike standard tieflings.



CROSAEL

E10. RUINED FOYER (CR 7)

This ruined foyer is exposed to the elements—much of the ceiling has fallen away, and the northern and eastern walls are open to the ruins of the surrounding destruction.

Once the entrance to the East Wing's upper floors, this partially collapsed foyer now serves as an alternative entrance to the mostly intact lower floor. Rubble covers the floor of this area completely, rendering the area difficult terrain.

Creatures: Rather than waste resources by posting living guards at this entrance, Avahzi decided to place several undead minions here. She went out one night and found a couple of shadows and commanded them to guard this location from all who attempt to enter the area, with the exception of Crosael and Aberten. She allowed each shadow to create one spawn from a few unfortunate vagabonds she provided them with but has forbidden them to create any more—she doesn't want to run the risk of one of her shadows building a small army and then slipping from her control.

SHADOWS (4)

CR 3

XP 800

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

PART THREE: INTO THE SPIRAL

The Nessian Spiral is both the basement to Aberian's Folly (a place where the mayor can store treasure and imprison enemies) and a structure that serves as a prison and an engine. To use a modern analogy, the Nessian Spiral is akin to a nuclear power plant—many of its chambers are designed to support a complex and dangerous source of power, and when things go bad with that power source, the rooms themselves begin to break down and things become deadly. This is the situation in the Nessian Spiral—with the power source (the pit fiend Liebdaga) about to break loose, and the checks and balances that once tempered that power and prevented it from ballooning out of control damaged or gone, it's only a matter of time before the entire complex floods with hellfire and outflow from the River Styx, unleashing a terrific menace upon the city of Westcrown.

The timing of this event, though, is left to the GM. Unless the PCs decide to take several days or weeks off from adventuring in the Spiral, you shouldn't punish them by having Liebdaga escape. Periodically describing the tremors that shake the area, or the sudden and mysterious off-gassing of haunted steam or hellfire, can keep the PCs on their toes and make the adventure seem like it's on a

countdown when it's actually not. Certainly the Nessian Spiral is a large place with a lot of dangerous encounters, and the adventure is designed with the assumption that the PCs will periodically retreat from the dungeon to rest and recover. Areas of the dungeon they've cleared should, as a general rule, remain empty when they return (although you can certainly have more creatures like steam mephits move in to occupy empty rooms if you wish)—nothing frustrates game play more than the impression of a countdown and having to replay through the same rooms over and over!

NESSIAN SPIRAL FEATURES

The Nessian Spiral consists of three sections—the eastern dungeon (areas **F1–F12**), the engineworks (areas **F13–F24**), and the containment (areas **F25–F37**). Specific features of these three sections are detailed below, but all three areas share one important feature—teleportation magic is somewhat unpredictable in the Spiral. Before the infernal engine was damaged, the entire complex was warded to block such travel, but now that things are breaking down, teleportation spells sometimes function. When someone attempts to use a teleportation effect, he must make a DC 20 Caster Level check. Failure by 5 or fewer indicates that the spell doesn't work, but is not expended. Failure by 5 or more indicates that the spell malfunctions. When a teleport effect malfunctions in the Nessian Spiral, the caster must make a DC 20 Will save. Success indicates that he merely teleports 1d6 × 5 feet away from his starting position in a random direction (if this would place the target in a solid object, he instead appears in the closest available spot to that location) and takes 3d6 points of damage from being wrenched and twisted by the malfunctioning magic. Failure indicates that the teleporter simply vanishes for 1 round, during which time the unfortunate spends what, to him, seems like an eternity floating in a void of nothingness—conscious the entire time but unable to move or take any action. He reappears in the same spot he vanished from (or in the closest available spot if something has been placed in his departure spot), but takes 1d10 points of Charisma damage from the perceived maddening solitude and helplessness he endured in the space of what was actually only a few seconds of time.

Arrows on the map of the Nessian Spiral indicate downward slopes or the direction of stairway descents.

Eastern Dungeon: These chambers are unlit unless otherwise specified. Walls are of reinforced masonry, and doors are made of strong wood. Secret doors (unless otherwise specified) can be located with a DC 30 Perception check. Ceiling height in halls is 8 feet, while in rooms this rises to 10 feet. As the infernal engine in **F37** shudders and churns, light tremors periodically shake this area and

Learning about Liebdaga

When the PCs learn that a pit fiend named Liebdaga is imprisoned under the manor, they may wish to learn more about the dangerous foe. Knowledge (planes) checks can reveal the following information. Alternatively, a Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (local), or Knowledge (nobility) check can be made to learn this information, but since these skills are less appropriate to learning about the devil, they suffer a –10 penalty when used for this purpose. If the PCs wish to consult libraries or other experts, they can gain up to a +10 bonus on these checks as you see fit.

DC 30: Pit fiend are generally the most powerful of Hell's non-unique devils, but Liebdaga the Twin is even more powerful than most of his brethren, he is an infernal duke—a unique pit fiend. He once served on Avernus as a guardian to the entrance to Erebus.

DC 32: The body and soul of most outsiders are one, but in Liebdaga's case, his soul is separate from his body, similar to a mortal's soul in this way. Legends hold that this granted Liebdaga life after death, and while he has been slain several times, he swiftly rises from death to slay his would-be killer. The fact that he has, essentially, a dualistic existence is the source of his title, "The Twin."

DC 34: Liebdaga is likely weakened from his long imprisonment and his use as a source of power, but if he escapes from the Nessian Spiral, he will likely be able to regain his full strength within days—or even faster if he's able to consume a few fresh mortal souls.

the sound of muffled bursts of noise or strange shrieking sounds can periodically be heard.

Engineworks: These chambers served to distribute the infernal engine's power, maintain its output within safety limits, and allow for adjustments to the flow of energy. In most of these rooms, glowing crystals set at regular intervals in the ceiling provide normal illumination, as if by *continual flame*. Walls are of magically treated hewn stone, and doors are made of iron. Ceiling height in hallways is 8 feet, but in larger rooms is generally 15 feet. The tremors continue here, but the bursts of noise and shrieks are more violent. Each time the PCs enter a new room or hallway, there's a 10% chance that a burst of steam, blast of fire, or some other sudden outburst of energy flashes out of a wall or pipe or crystal. Semi-directed by the wrath of Liebdaga, these blasts of fire or steam target only one creature, determined randomly from all available targets (PC or enemy alike). The target takes 1d10 points of fire damage

if he fails a DC 13 Reflex save—note that all of the denizens of the engineworks are resistant or immune to fire. Some rooms in this area do not have fire bursts like this, or have different types of energy bursts—they are noted in the text as appropriate.

Containment: These central rooms are all unique chambers, each with its own features described in the text. The containment chambers all serve a different goal in keeping Liebdaga within his prison, and as such draw upon a wide range of differing magical powers. Walls here are made of magically treated hewn stone, and doors are made of magically treated iron. No bursts of fire or energy occur here, except as noted in the text.

F1. GUARDROOM (CR 7)

A flight of steep stone stairs ends at an empty square room, the walls decorated with banners hanging from ceiling to floor and depicting the circled crimson cross of Cheliaz. A single lantern hangs from a peg in the wall to the east.

The flight of stairs leading down to this room from area E2 are rather steep and descend a full 20 feet into the ground to this room—navigating them is difficult terrain.

Creatures: Four thieves guard this room—if the alarm is raised, they douse the lantern and hide along the walls of the room behind the banners. When the PCs enter, the thieves move out one at a time to make sneak attacks, hoping to confuse the intruders by adding a new foe to the combat every few seconds. As soon as only two thieves remain standing, one opens the door to the south and defends it to the death while the other flees to area F7 to warn the thieves there.

THIEVES (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 24)

F2. ARMORY

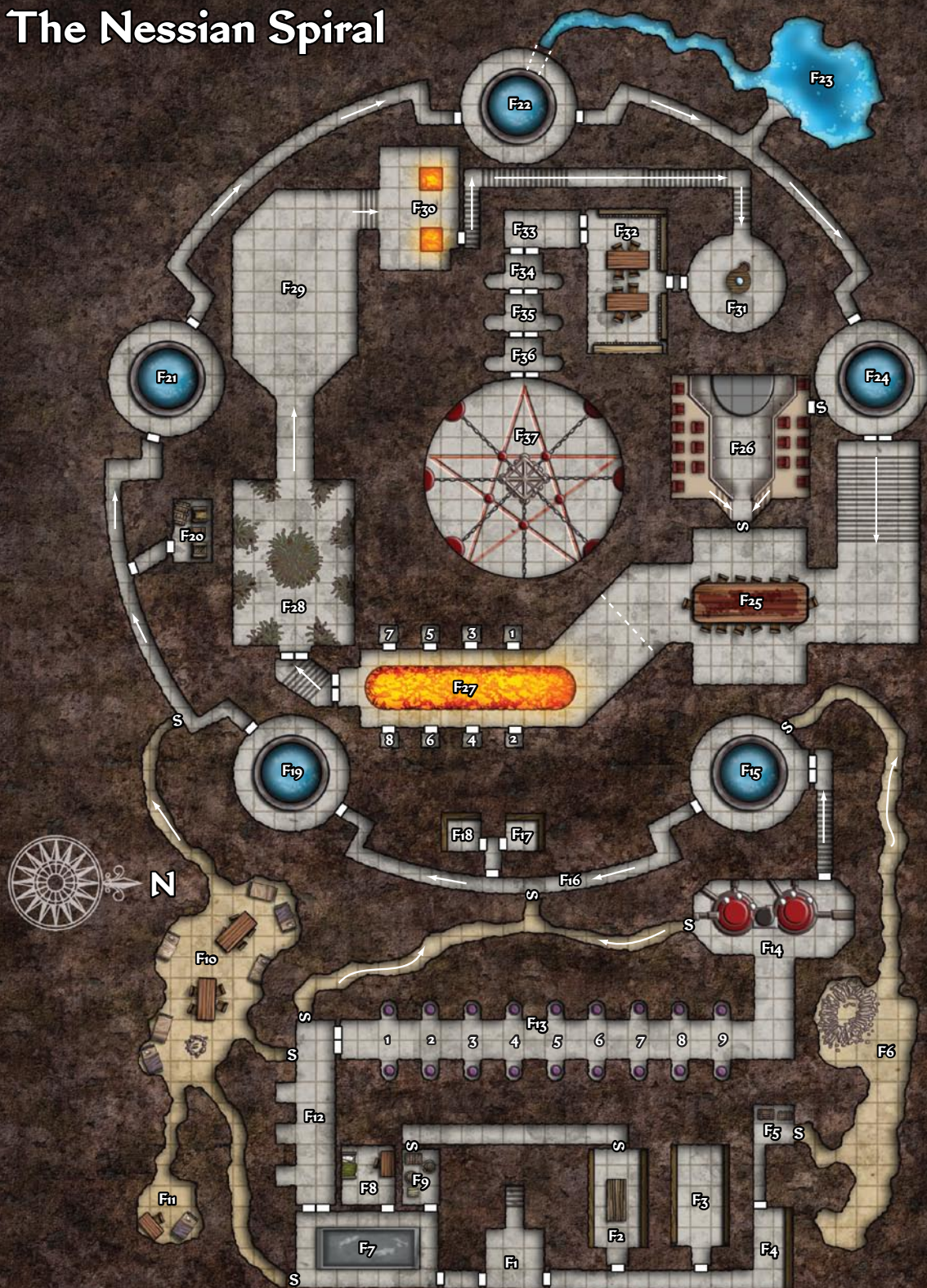
Weapon racks line the north and south walls of this armory, while even more weapons and suits of armor lie on a long, low table that runs down the room's center.

The secret door to the west, unknown to the thieves, opens to a passageway that connects the armory with area F9—an emergency route to and from the room.

Treasure: This armory was utilized to store additional weapons used by manor guards; the mayor rarely felt the need to arm his guards from these supplies. In all, this armory contains 20 longswords, 20 short swords, 20 longbows, 500 arrows, and 10 suits of chainmail—none of them of particularly fine workmanship.

The Infernal Syndrome

The Nessian Spiral



F3. WINE CELLAR

Two walls of wine racks face each other in this large, damp wine cellar. The contents of the racks are limited to about a dozen scattered bottles.

The thieves have already raided this wine cellar and sent the choice bottles on to fences throughout Westcrown—the bottles that remain are the dregs of what was once a fine selection.

F4. GUARDROOM (CR 8)

An empty weapon rack lines the northern wall of this otherwise empty room.

Creatures: Avahzi used two *planar ally* spells to call upon Mammon for aid in taking the Nessian Spiral—the two three-headed cerberi that answered her calls are a bit more violent and frightening than Avahzi had anticipated. She placed them on guard here so they could watch over the loot the thieves have been gathering (and dissuade anyone from sneaking into the treasury to skim a bit off the top). The cerberi howl madly if they see foes, alerting the thieves if they weren't already on edge; they fight intruders to the death.

CERBERI (2)	CR 6
XP 2,400	
hp 76 (see page 84)	

F5. TREASURY

Two heavy chests made of iron and bearing complex-looking locks sit against the west wall of this room.

The secret door in the north wall is particularly difficult to locate—a DC 35 Perception check is required to discover its location. None of the thieves know about its existence yet.

Although Aberian's Folly had a smaller treasury hidden in a secret room on the ground floor (a treasury that was destroyed during the explosion), this room always served as the mayoral residence's proper treasury. The thieves have, of course, already thoroughly looted this room (although the extent of their focus on the treasure they found here blinded them to the presence of the secret door in the north wall), yet while they've sent much of the treasure they found here on to their fences elsewhere in the city, this room is not empty. They still use the room to store some of the larger or more unusual treasures they've recovered from the area so far.

Treasure: The southern chest contains a fair number of miscellaneous objects of value that the thieves have recently turned in to Avahzi for storage—this collection

of silverware and jewelry and art is worth 2,400 gp. The northern chest contains several looted magic items that none of the thieves can (or want to) use and will eventually be sold: a +1 *dwarven waraxe*, a *wand of quench* (11 charges), and a *phylactery of positive channeling*.

F6. BLOODY FOX IN THE DARKNESS (CR 8)

This large, damp cavern has a low ceiling thick with hanging cobwebs and strings of mold. To the west, the cavern widens a bit, and something has used the extra room to build a filthy nest of rags, rubble, and bones.

The ceiling in this cave is only 4 feet high—Medium creatures treat moving through this room as difficult terrain.

Creature: When Dargentu Vheed entered the Nessian Spiral 2 decades ago on his ill-fated attempt to rework the infernal engine's power distribution, he brought with him his latest and favorite minion—a once-kindly vulpinal agathion (a fox-like member of the chaotic good race of outsiders native to the plane of Elysium) whom the sadistic mayor subjected to several years of torment and psychological torture in the Asmodean Knot. This broken soul, Jezeletrix, became even further ruined with the death and necromantic transformation of the cruel man she'd come to see as her father and tormentor. Adrift and confused, she fled through the secret tunnels of the Nessian Spiral until she found this cavern, where she made a lair of sorts for herself and began the long and (unknown to her) endless wait for Dargentu to appear to her again and give her a new task. Aimless and hopeless, the ruined, fox-like agathion has dwelt in this cave for nearly 2 decades, venturing forth only rarely when her haunted dreams trick her into thinking she hears Vheed's voice calling to her.

When the PCs enter this cave, Jezeletrix becomes invisible as soon as she hears them. She knows about the tiefling tunnel rats and the thieves (having spent some time listening at the secret door to area F5 while they tinkered with the chests there), but has not interacted with them. While her torments have left her insane and evil, she doesn't immediately attack when the PCs show themselves. Instead, she uses *major image* to create an illusion of Dargentu as he appeared in life, and through this illusion she aggressively interrogates the PCs, demanding to know why they've entered "his" home and asking for answers to the strange thunderous noises that have plagued the area. Using this illusion, Jezeletrix might even offer to pay the PCs handsomely if they bring "him" proof that the thieves have been wiped out—but when presented with proof, Jezeletrix's capricious mood swings compel her to "reward" the PCs with death, and she attacks.

Depending on how the PCs interact with the insane vulpinal, you can use a conversation here to give the PCs more information about the Nessian Spiral as you see fit.

The Infernal Syndrome

JEZELETRIX

CR 8

4,800 XP

Vulpinal agathion broken soul (*The Great Beyond* 62)

CE Small outsider (agathion, extraplanar, good)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 100 (8d10+56)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9; +4 vs. poison

DR 5/—; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **Resist** acid 5, cold 10, fire 5, sonic 10; **SR** 16

Weaknesses tormented

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +11 (1d3+2), bite +11 (1d4+2) or
torturous touch +11 touch (2d6 plus 1d6 Dex plus pain)

Special Attacks agonized wail, baleful gaze, pounce,
torturous touch

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +0)

Constant—*detect evil*, *mage armor*, *speak with animals*, *tongues*

3/day—*invisibility* (self only), *remove disease*, *teleport* (self plus
50 lbs. of objects only)

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 16), *dispel evil*, *flame arrow*, *holy
smite* (DC 16), *major image* (DC 15)

TACTICS

Before Combat If she hears intruders approaching her den,
Jezeletrix becomes *invisible*.

During Combat Jezeletrix lost all of her gear, and without
something to use *flame arrow* on, she opens combat with *holy
smite*, followed by *charm monster*, in an attempt to neutralize
the most heavily armored PC. She saves her agonized wail to
use whenever she's surrounded, and in melee abandons her
spells to focus on using her torturous touch.

Morale Jezeletrix fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Reflexes, Diehard,
Endurance, Improved Initiative,
Lightning Reflexes, Toughness,
Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +13,
Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +16,
Knowledge (planes) +19, Perception
+14, Perform (oratory) +13, Sense
Motive +14, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +17, Use
Magic Device +13; **Racial Modifiers**
+8 Intimidate

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal;
speak with animals, *tongues*

SQ bardic knowledge, lay on hands

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Agonized Wail (Su) As a standard action, Jezeletrix can

unleash a terrifying shriek. This affects all creatures with fewer
than 8 Hit Dice within a 120-foot burst. Affected creatures
must make a DC 16 Will save or become shaken until they
move more than 120 feet away from Jezeletrix. Those who
successfully save are immune to this attack for 1 minute. This is
a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Baleful Gaze (Su) Any creature within 60 feet who meets
Jezeletrix's gaze must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or
take 1d4 points of Strength drain, 1d4 points of Constitution
drain, and 1d4 points of Charisma drain. Whatever the result
of the saving throw, a creature cannot be affected by the same
broken soul's baleful gaze more than once per minute. The save
DC is Charisma-based.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex) Jezeletrix gains a +4 bonus on all
Knowledge checks, and can make Knowledge checks untrained.

Lay on Hands (Su) Once per day, Jezeletrix can heal 4d6 points of
damage by touch (a standard action, unless she targets herself,
in which case it's a swift action). This ability otherwise functions
like the paladin's lay on hands ability.

Torturous Touch (Su) As a standard action, Jezeletrix can attempt
this touch attack. The creature touched must succeed on a
DC 16 Fortitude save or take 2d6 points of slashing damage
and 1d6 points of Dexterity damage. In addition, the touched
creature collapses to the ground in pain, falling prone and



JEZELETRIX

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writhing on the ground, helpless, for 1d4 rounds. All of these effects are negated with a successful save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tormented (Ex) Jezeletrix takes a –10 penalty on concentration checks due to her wracking pain. Her wracking pains have also removed her vulpinal calm emotions aura.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Jezeletrix's cursed existence as a broken soul (a permanent transformation through a vile process of torture) can be ended with a *miracle* or *wish*—it's unlikely that the PCs will be able to rescue the vulpinal, as a result, but if they do, award them 19,200 XP. Jezeletrix is likely to pledge her eternal loyalty to the PC who redeems her in this manner as well.

F7. TORTURE CHAMBER (CR 7)

The central portion of this large chamber consists of a shallow, sunken pit-like area, almost like an amphitheater. Several drains in the pit indicate that it may have once been a reflecting pool—now drained and containing several bedrolls.

The thieves moved the contents of this room, once used as a torture chamber (the drains were for easy cleanup of blood and other remains), into the storeroom in area F9 in order to turn this into a barracks. Four thieves are resting here when the PCs first enter the area—if the thieves suspect trouble, they've each retreated to the corners of the room to hide amid the shadows and opened the door to F8 so their commander can aid in the battle to come.

THIEVES (4) **CR 3**
XP 800 each
hp 29 each (see page 24)

F8. TURNKEY'S HOME (CR 8)

A single bed and a wooden desk decorate this room. Hanging on the north wall is an impressive collection of knives, pliers, hooks, prods, and other implements of torture.

Creature: Once the barracks of Aberian's Folly's torturer and turnkey, this room is now the barracks and base of operations for the diabolist Avahzi Serafian, promoted so recently to commander of the Council agents here in the Nessian Spiral after the recent unfortunate demise of her own commander. While Avahzi certainly appreciates finally being in command, she's not necessarily the best leader—she's taken with the power, but cares little for the comfort and happiness of those who serve her. Perhaps as a result of her domineering personality or her years of experience commanding and controlling outsiders, Avahzi

is far from loved by the thieves who work for her. Yet while she is not loved, she is certainly feared.

Avahzi is a stern and humorless forlorn elf who only recently came to be allied with the Council of Thieves—although “recently” is a relative term for an elf. She's served the Council for nearly a decade now, and in those 10 years has grown to resent and despise the human organization's adherence to tradition (especially the custom of preventing non-humans from rising to positions of true command). She joined the Drovenge siblings' cause when Ecarrdian promised her a place of power in the new order, and she's willing to do whatever it takes, include sacrificing her thieves when necessary, to see that the Drovenges succeed. Already, Avahzi has sent nearly a dozen of her thieves to their dooms in attempts to penetrate the traps and guardians of the Nessian Spiral—they've only managed to secure these few eastern rooms so far.

AVAHZI SERAFIAN	CR 8
XP 4,800	
Female elf cleric of Mammon 7/diabolist 2 (<i>Princes of Darkness</i> 44)	
LE Medium humanoid	
Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +6	
DEFENSE	
AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +3 Dex, +3 deflection, +1 shield)	
hp 69 (9 HD; 7d8+2d6+27)	
Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +10; +2 vs. enchantments	
Immune sleep; Resist acid 10	
Weaknesses damned	
OFFENSE	
Speed 20 ft.	
Melee +1 shortspear +6/+1 (1d6)	
Special Attacks channel hellfire, channel negative energy 5/day (4d6, Will DC 15)	
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)	
7/day—acid dart, touch of evil	
Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)	
5th— <i>flame strike</i> (DC 19), <i>wall of stone</i> ^D	
4th— <i>air walk</i> , <i>cure critical wounds</i> , <i>freedom of movement</i> , <i>unholy blight</i> ^D (DC 18)	
3rd— <i>bestow curse</i> (DC 17), <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>magic vestment</i> , <i>stone shape</i> ^D , <i>summon monster III</i>	
2nd— <i>bear's endurance</i> , <i>extended shield of faith</i> , <i>resist energy</i> , <i>soften earth and stone</i> ^D , <i>sound burst</i> , <i>status</i>	
1st— <i>command</i> (DC 15), <i>cure light wounds</i> (2), <i>divine favor</i> , <i>protection from good</i> ^D , <i>sanctuary</i> (DC 15)	
0 (at will)— <i>bleed</i> (DC 14), <i>detect magic</i> , <i>light</i> , <i>purify food and drink</i>	
D domain spell; Domains Earth, Evil	
TACTICS	
Before Combat Avahzi casts <i>status</i> on two randomly determined thieves every morning (often one stationed in area E1 and one in F1), along with <i>magic vestment</i> on her armor. The <i>status</i>	

The Infernal Syndrome

effects serve as early warnings—if the PCs kill or harm one of these thieves, Avahzi knows to prepare. If she has time to prepare for a battle (such as if she notices intruders entering area **F7**), she casts *air walk*, *bear's endurance*, *freedom of movement*, and *shield of faith* on herself.

During Combat Avahzi hangs back in battle as long as she can, using her ranged spells to blast foes. She moves out into area **F7** as soon as possible, and takes care to try to position herself so that she's between the PCs and the doors to **F12** at all times (see *Morale*, below).

Morale If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, Avahzi casts *wall of stone* between herself and the PCs to block off their easy access to area **F12**. She then flees to that area, casts *sanctuary* and *resist energy* (fire), and trusts to this to allow her a desperate flight through area **F13**. She hopes to race to the center of the Nessian Spiral, reach Liebdağa, and beg his aid before the PCs reach him themselves—how far she gets is left up to you.

Base Statistics hp 51; Fort +6; Con 10

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 14

Base Atk +6; CMB +5; CMD 21

Feats Channel Smite, Combat Casting, Command

Undead, Extend Spell, Selective Channeling

Skills Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Spellcraft +13

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal

SQ elven magic, imp companion, infernal bargain, infernal charisma +2, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

Combat Gear *scroll of sending*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (15 charges), *wand of spiritual weapon* (7 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, light steel shield, +1 *shortspear*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, gold holy symbol worth 120 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Damned (Ex) If Avahzi is slain, her soul immediately travels to Hell. A character who attempts to return her to life must make a DC 12 caster level check or the spell fails.

Infernal Charisma (Ex) Avahzi gains a +2 bonus on all Charisma-based checks when interacting with devils.

Infernal Bargain (Ex) Avahzi can halve the price of servitude when she casts *planar ally* (or a similar spell) by successfully making an opposed Charisma check against a called (but not summoned) devil.

Channel Hellfire (Su) As a free action twice per day, Avahzi can alter a spell she casts that deals energy damage so that it instead deals hellfire damage. Spells altered in this way gain the lawful and evil descriptors. Hellfire damage is half fire damage and half damage from unholy energy. Evil-aligned creatures and creatures with the evil subtype take no damage from the unholy energy part of hellfire damage, but good-aligned creatures and creatures with the good subtype take double

damage from the unholy energy. *Protection from evil* prevents all damage caused by the unholy damage portion of hellfire, but offers no protection from the fire damage.

NOVANKIA

CR —

XP —

Female imp companion (*Princes of Darkness* 47)

LE Tiny outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +5; Senses Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 19 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, +2 size)

hp 60 (8d10+16)

Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +7 (+11 vs. enchantment)

Defensive Abilities evasion, devotion

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee sting +13/+8 (1d4+1 plus poison)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

Constant—*detect good*,
detect magic

At will—*bleed* (DC 12), *invisibility*
(self only), *prestidigitation*

1/day—*grease* (DC 13), *suggestion* (DC 15)

1/week—*commune* (CL 12th)

TACTICS

During Combat Novankia is aggressive in battle, eager to flap in to sting foes with Flyby Attacks. She returns to Avahzi's side to seek healing whenever reduced below 30 hit points.

Morale Novankia follows Avahzi's lead, fighting as long as her mistress continues to do so, and fleeing only when she does.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14

Base Atk +6; CMB +4; CMD 20

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +28, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +12

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 50 ft.

SQ change shape (raven, *beast shape I*), link, share spells

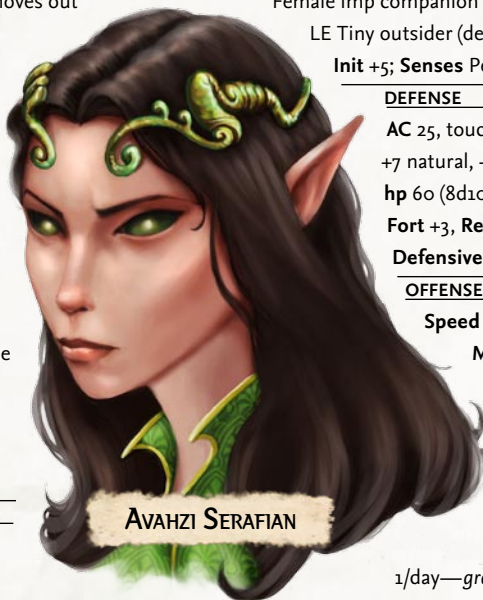
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Injury—sting, save Fort DC 14, frequency 1/round for 6 rounds, effect 1d2 Dex, cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

F9. STORAGE (CR 3)

This storeroom is filled with partially deconstructed implements of torture—cages, a stretching rack, iron maidens, and other violent equipment lie amid crates and boxes and other more mundane stores.

The secret door in the western wall is partially hidden by stacked crates and torture tools—this increases the



AVAHZI SERAFIAN

Perception check to DC 35 to locate it from this side of the door. It opens inward into the hall beyond, so the barricade doesn't much prevent it from being opened once it is discovered.

Creature: When rumors that the Council of Thieves usurpers were preparing their coup reached the ears of Vassindio Drovege, he ordered Eirtein Oberigo to place double agents among the various groups suspected of being traitors. Oberigo did just this, placing well over a dozen of these agents in various groups operating throughout Westcrown. His accuracy wasn't perfect—some usurper groups are still completely unknown while others have been successfully infiltrated. The thieves here at the Nessian Spiral were one such group, until the agent in question, a blond man named Jalki, accidentally revealed his true allegiances. Rather than execute him on the spot, though, Avahzi decided to lock him in this room so she could properly interrogate him at a later date.

Jalki is currently unconscious and bound tightly to a partially deconstructed stretching rack leaning against the eastern wall. A foul-mouthed, unattractive man with a persistent case of adult acne and poor hygiene, Jalki is hardly pleasant company, but if he can be revived, the frightened thief can be a gold mine of information for the PCs (see page 23). And if the PCs help him escape, he might be able to help the PCs against the Council in the next adventure—certainly, aiding in his escape earns the PCs some extra XP (see page 10).

JALKI **CR 3**
XP 800
hp 29 (currently stable but unconscious at 0 hp; see "Thief" on page 24)

F10. TIEFLING GHETTO (CR 7)

The air in this cavern is thick and muggy, reeking with body odor and rotting food. Filthy bedrolls and slumped straw mattresses line the walls of the cavern, while a pair of rickety tables covered with moldy food sits in the center of the room. The cave is lit by a single sputtering fire pit just east of the tables.

Creatures: The tiefling tunnel rats have long been forced to serve as slave labor, residing in this reeking cave while they maintain the cleanliness of and conduct minor repair work for the Nessian Spiral. Events since the eruption have not treated the tunnel rats well, alas. When things began to go bad, the tiefling leader Veladness, secretly a cleric of Nocticula, the demon lord of darkness and lust, saw the event as a chance to throw off the shackles of slavery. Using a *scroll of planar ally* he'd secured at great expense and smuggled into the Spiral long ago, Veladness beseeched his treacherous demonic

matron for aid. She sent a sadistic succubus cleric named Joriavah in reply to the call, and the tiefling priest was unprepared for the realities of controlling the dangerous outsider. Joriavah slew Veladness, assumed control of the tunnel rats, and has treated them as a combination of pets and food for the past several days. As a result, the six surviving tieflings are even more desperate and feral—they react to the PCs with shrieks and howls of hunger and madness, then attack in a flurry of improvised weapons and thrown rocks.

TIEFLING TUNNEL RATS (6) **CR 2**
XP 600
Tiefling fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264)
CE Medium outsider (native)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 33 (3d10+12)
Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear
Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee sharpened tool +5 (1d8+3)
Ranged rock +5 (1d4+2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)
1/day—darkness

TACTICS

During Combat The tieflings attack random targets—their madness and fear robbing them of the ability to coordinate sensible tactics.
Morale These tieflings fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17
Feats Catch Off-Guard, Dodge, Throw Anything, Toughness
Skills Bluff +0, Climb +6, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Stealth +2, Survival +7
Languages Common, Infernal
SQ armor training 1, fiendish sorcery
Gear hide armor, sharpened tool, throwing rocks (10)

F11. JORIAVAH'S DEN (CR 9)

This cavern has been outfitted as a combination bedroom and study. The entire cave has been decorated with hanging black curtains, paintings and tapestries, thick swaths of black carpets and rugs, and a large number of guttering black candles, filling the cavern with a thick, intoxicating odor. Bits of jewelry lie scattered throughout the chamber, and what appear to be dozens of fresh, polished skulls decorate the area around the rumpled bed. Mounted on a stiletto driven up through the back of the bed's headboard is a tiefling's severed head.

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Creature: Once the lair of the tiefling tunnel rats' leader, this cavern is now the lair of the succubus Joriavah. A priestess of Nocticula, Joriavah was able to murder the foolish tiefling who summoned her in an attempt to gain an ally to lead his oppressed followers to freedom. In the days since this murder, Joriavah has looked at this as a delightful vacation from the Abyss, alternatively stalking the streets of Westcrown in human form looking for delicious victims to feed on, using her teleportation and ability to become ethereal to rob noble houses of their art and sons and daughters, and passing the time here in grisly and lecherous debauches with unfortunately charmed victims. Once one such victim is "used up," the succubus has taken to having her tieflings dispose of the bodies by dumping them in area **F19**.

Joriavah is a raven-haired gothic beauty who enjoys morbid and grisly decor. She is also the source behind the rumors of a killer walking among the nobility, abducting sons and daughters and leaving black, bloodstained candles at the points where the missing nobles have vanished—all part of Joriavah's twisted entertainment and need for the city of Westcrown to notice her work. If the PCs are seeking to rescue one of the more recently abducted nobles, they find that noble here, suffering from enough negative levels and general abuse to be barely conscious and, perhaps, only a few hours away from joining the other headless bodies in area **F19**.

Joriavah is enjoying her stay in Westcrown, and while she might invite one of the more attractive PCs to join her for an "honest romp," she doesn't immediately attack them on sight. She's intelligent and experienced, and has had run-ins with so-called heroes before. If the PCs challenge her, though, her ego and pride won't let her resist the chance to discipline them.

If the PCs ask her about Veladness, she nods to the head impaled on the stiletto above the bed and says, "He's right here, watching over me when I sleep. Unfortunately, he's not really up to doing much else these days." If they ask her about the Stygian Keyrod, Joriavah feigns ignorance for a moment, then playfully retrieves the strange-looking object from behind the bed—"Oh, you must mean *this!*" Joriavah learned what the strange item was for from Veladness, and not conceiving of a reason she'd need to keep it around at the time, she tossed it aside. When she realizes that the keyrod is of great importance to the PCs, though, she becomes very possessive of it. Aside from killing or banishing her, the only way to get the crafty succubus to part with the device is to bribe her with at least 10,000 gp in magic items or jewelry—she's willing to drop this to 2,000 if one of the more handsome or beautiful of the PCs (preferably a paladin or a good-aligned cleric) agrees to accept her profane gift so that she'll be able to influence the target at a later date—the ramifications of accepting this gift are left to you to expand upon.

JORIAVAH

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female succubus cleric 3 (Nocticula)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +134; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*; **Perception** +23

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +7 natural)

hp 123 (11 HD; 8d10+3d8+66)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

DR 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d6+3)

Ranged +1 *frost hand crossbow* +12 (2d4+7/19–20 plus 1d4 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks channel energy 11/day (2d6; Will DC 19), energy drain (1 level, DC 22), profane gift

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +11)

7/day—dazing touch, touch of darkness

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +20)

Constant—*detect good*, *tongues*

At will—*charm monster* (DC 22), *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *vampiric touch*

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 23), *summon* (level 3, 1 babau 50%)

Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*calm emotions*^D (DC 15), *bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *obscuring mist*^P, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*

D domain spell; **Domains** Charm, Darkness

TACTICS

During Combat Joriavah tries to dominate one of the PCs on the first round of combat (preferring to select a heavily armored character or an obvious healer) and orders that character to attack his friends. She then teleports away to an abandoned house elsewhere in Westcrown (one of many such locations she's already explored), where she takes the time to try to summon a babau and cast *bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, and *shield of faith* before she teleports back to area **F10** to attack the PCs with her crossbow at range (using *Shot on the Run*, *Vital Strike*, and *Deadly Aim* to full effect to maintain ranged superiority). In melee, she relies on *vampiric touch* each round.

Morale If brought below 30 hit points, Joriavah teleports to one of her abandoned houses to recover; once she's healed up, she returns to the Nessian Spiral, becomes ethereal, and seeks out the PCs for revenge, repeating her fight-and-retreat tactics until the PCs are dead or they prevent her escape and kill her.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 19, **Con** 22, **Int** 16, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 27

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

Feats Blind-Fight, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hand crossbow), Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +27, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +19, Escape Artist +15, Fly +15, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +23, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +15

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; *tongues*, telepathy 100 ft.

SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

Gear +1 studded leather armor, +1 frost hand crossbow with 20 bolts

Treasure: Joriavah has decorated this chamber with 2,000 gp in jewelry and silks stolen from noble villas she's burgled over the past several days. The stiletto upon which she's impaled unfortunate Veladness's head is the dead tiefling's weapon, a +1 *keen mithral dagger*. Yet to the PCs, the Stygian Keyrod may be the most important object here. One end of this strange 4-pound, 2-foot-long, rod-like device is a weird twisting knot of metal branches and coils. This device radiates moderate transmutation magic, but it's really not much more than a strange key that can be used to activate or deactivate the cooling chambers (areas **F15**, **F19**, **F21**, **F22**, and **F24**). While carried, the Stygian Keyrod provides its wielder with immunity to the effects of the diluted Stygian water in those areas and a +4 bonus on saves to avoid pure Stygian water. The Stygian Keyrod is worth 4,000 gp—but to those who wish to control the infernal engine in this Spiral, it is all but priceless.

F12. PRISON CELLS

Three prison cells sit along the southern wall of this hallway—each contains a mound of dead bodies in various stages of rot and destruction.

The bodies disposed of here are the remains of those thieves who have perished in the attempt to find a way through to Liebdaga—their gear has long since been stripped and returned to various Council guildhalls.

F13. POWER DISBURSEMENT HALL

This long hall flickers with unsettling purple light—the source of this stomach-churning illumination is the eighteen alcoves that run opposite each other along the walls. Within each stands a pillar of rough purple crystal, flickering with what appears to be violet fire. An ominous rumbling and high-pitched wail comes from around the hallway's corner far to the north.

The crystal pillars in this hall are conduits that gathered the focused infernal energy from the capacitors in area **F14**, then dispersed it through the house and Asmodean Knot

above as needed. With the explosion and destruction of the hall above, the stored energy in here has grown unstable. Every round, blasts of violet fire erupt out of some of these crystals, filling the 5-foot-wide path between each pair of pillars with direct fire and the 10-foot-long, 5-foot-wide strip to the left and right of the central path with indirect fire. Each round, roll 3d10—the resulting numbers indicate which pairs of crystals blast fire, with a 10 indicating a null result. If multiple numbers are generated, they overlap and thus reduce the total amount of fiery bursts for that round. For example, results of 1, 3, and 10 would indicate that the pillars at positions 1 and 3 immolate only, while a result of 2, 2, and 5 would result in immolations at positions 2 and 5.

Creatures caught in direct fire between the pillars take 8d6 fire damage. Creatures caught in an indirect burst take 5d6 fire damage—if two adjacent pillars immolate in the same round, the fire damage overlaps for a total of 10d6 fire damage. A DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage inflicted. *Quench* cast on one of a pair of crystal pillars extinguishes that pillar permanently, making that position safe.

F14. INFERNAL CAPACITORS (CR 7)

A thunderous roaring and shrieking fills this large chamber. Two huge crystal tanks stand in the center of the room, each filled with what appears to be boiling blood infused with periodic blasts of violet electricity. A complex series of metal pipes, struts, and violet crystal tubes shrouds and cradles these tanks, connecting to the walls and ceiling of the chamber in dozens of spots.

This room is not prone to the bursts of fire that plague the engineworks (see page 30). The strange machine in this room makes up the capacitors for the infernal engine—energies siphoned from Liebdaga and then “cooled” in the five cooling chambers is stored in these tanks of blood, eventually to be directed as necessary to disbursement in area **F13**. The explosion has resulted in the energy from the cooling chambers being redirected into the five pillars of fire in the ruins above, but the capacitors still contain a large amount of energy that is slowly being drained away by the pillars in **F13**—and also more violently being expelled as bolts of arcing violet electricity in this chamber. Each round, 1d4 bolts of electricity arc through the room, targeting random creatures each time. No more than one arc can hit a single target—each arc inflicts 1d10 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 12 negates).

The capacitors are a powerful magic item. They can be shut down manually with a DC 40 Disable Device check (although using the Stygian Rod to turn some of the gears grants a +10 bonus on this check)—failure by 5 or more inflicts 8d6 points of electricity damage on the character (DC 15 Reflex halves). Destroying the capacitors also shuts them down—the capacitors have hardness 5 and 100

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hit points, but each time something inflicts damage to them, the violet electricity reflexively arcs out to strike the source of the damage, inflicting 4d6 electricity damage (DC 15 Reflex negates). The capacitors function at Caster Level 20th—a successful *dispel magic* spell causes them to fall dormant and disperses their energy safely and permanently, as does an antimagic field. Once the capacitors are neutralized, the dangerous electrical arcs in this room cease, as do the blasts of fire in area **F13**.

Note that deactivating the capacitors immediately alerts Dargentu Vheed that intruders are in his domain. The lich shade's reactions are detailed in area **F16**.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Deactivating the capacitors grants a story award of 3,200 XP.

F15. FIRST COOLING CHAMBER

This circular chamber looks similar to a silo, the floor and ceiling dropping away for twenty feet in either direction. Above, the ceiling appears to be scorched stone, while twenty feet below, the chamber ends in a pool of boiling, steaming dark water. A five-foot-wide walkway around the edge of the silo allows passage between doors on either side. The walls of the room are a complex tangle of purple crystalline pipes and metal tubes, many of which steam with heat. A complex-looking metal and crystal valve, its face a twisted clot of slots and nodules, glows softly on one wall just above the walkway.

Five of these cooling chambers exist in the Nessian Spiral—each containing a large well of water drawn in and circulated regularly via tiny portals to the River Styx in the outer planes. The infernal, dangerous waters cooled the infernal energy harvested from Liebdaga, both in temperature and in evil by removing the taint of the pit fiend's influence in a way similar to how the waters remove living memories. Without these cooling chambers doing their job, the infernal engine would suffer a series of cascading failures that would ultimately result in Liebdaga's release—this series of catastrophic failures is, in fact, what is occurring during this very adventure.

Of the five cooling chambers, this one is among the safest. Yet there is still opportunity for peril—a fall from the ledge into the 20-foot-deep pool of boiling Stygian water deals no falling damage, but does cause 10d6 points of fire damage per round of immersion. Being splashed by Stygian water causes a creature to lose memories, effectively gaining 1 negative level. Immersion results in 2 negative levels per round. A DC 15 Will save negates the negative levels, and is the DC to remove the negative level 24 hours later. (Note that the Pathfinder Module *Beyond the Vault of Souls* presents a more complex method of modeling memory loss from Stygian water—feel free to use that module's rules if you prefer.)

It's a DC 10 Climb check to scale a cooling chamber's walls.

The cooling chambers are all damaged—the explosion has destroyed their ability to defuse the infernal energies, and there's no time to repair the complex chambers before the infernal engine is lost. Yet as long as the damaged chambers try in vain to function, the engineworks portion of the Nessian Spiral remains dangerous and unstable—worse, the more cooling chambers that are left on, the more powerful Liebdaga himself becomes. Each cooling chamber that is shut down inflicts a permanent negative level on Liebdaga, so that if all five are shut down, the pit fiend suffers 5 negative levels, making him a much less dangerous foe to challenge at the end of the adventure.

Each cooling chamber that's shut down causes the corresponding pillar of fire in area **B** above to wink out of existence. Once all five chambers are shut down, the noises and steam bursts in the engineworks (see page 30) vanish.

Shutting down a cooling chamber requires 1 minute of work if the Stygian Keyrod is used—the rod is fitted over the glowing valve and used as a lever to turn the entire valve several rotations until the chamber grows quiet. Without the Stygian Keyrod, shutting down the chamber requires a DC 40 Disable Device check (this takes 10 minutes per check) or a *mage's disjunction* spell. Damaging or destroying the cooling chamber will have no real effect as long as the infernal engine itself in area **F37** still functions.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 1,600 XP for deactivating this cooling chamber.

F16. THE SPIRAL WALK (CR 9)

The walls of this gently sloping, five-foot-wide hallway are thick with rumbling metal and crystal pipes and tubes that periodically spout out blasts of steam.

Creature: The Spiral Walk is a several-hundred-foot-long tunnel that winds down and around the Nessian Spiral's central compound, connecting the five cooling chambers. Originally the primary highway for the tiefling tunnel rats to move from chamber to chamber to perform upkeep, the Spiral Walk has, for the past 2 decades, been haunted by the shambling undead remnants of Westcrown's previous mayor, Dargentu Vheed.

In life a powerful wizard, Dargentu met his end when he tried to modify the capacitors in area **F14** to give the Asmodean Knot more power. The feedback of magical backlash and Stygian steam not only killed him, but transformed him into a dangerous undead remnant—a lich shade. Normally created when a spellcaster fails to successfully make the transformation into lichdom, this lich shade is the result of a powerful spellcaster being destroyed

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by equally powerful magical energies. Now, while still a powerful entity, Dargentu is but a shadow of his former strength. No longer does he seek to expand his power—his prodigious intellect is crippled by an overwhelming insanity and necromantic link to the Nessian Spiral.

Normally, Dargentu simply slowly stalks the outer ring of the Spiral—the tieflings have long since learned to time their duties to occasions when the lich shade spends his hours in contemplation along the route. The lich shade has no issue with the denizens of the cooling chambers, but reacts to the intrusion of anyone else with violence. He views the Nessian Spiral as his empire now, and the penalty for trespass is death.

Dargentu appears as a long-dead human, his skin rotting away, his eyesockets empty, his entrails hanging thick and foul from his frame. His magical gear (with the exception of his rings) was destroyed in the accident that slew him, but he still wears tatters of his *black robe of the archmagi* and his mayoral badge of office (an amulet around the neck).

DARGENTU VHEED

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male lich shade (*Tome of Horrors III* 117)

NE Medium undead

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., spell sense 100 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +3 deflection, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 104 (11d8+55)

Fort +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, **DR** 10/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d6+7 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks chill, death throes, spell leech

TACTICS

During Combat As soon as Dargentu notices intruders (either with his spell sense, by someone shutting down the capacitor at area F14, or by sight), he moves at once to attack—moving to area F14 if no obvious foe can be pinpointed. He focuses his attacks on non-spellcasters, hoping to give spellcasters more opportunities to cast so he can use his spell leech powers and revel in the act of once again being able to cast spells. In most cases, Dargentu opts to cast spells he absorbs unless there's no use for them, in which case he heals (if he's damaged) or uses an eldritch bolt.

Morale Dargentu fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 19, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge

(religion) +18, Perception +17, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +20, Use Magic Device +16; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Sense Motive, +2 Stealth

Languages Common, Infernal

Gear ring of protection +3, ring of wizardry I

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chill (Su) Dargentu's claws inflict an additional 1d6 points of cold damage on a hit, and any creature that takes this additional cold damage must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be staggered for 1 round by the numbing chill. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Death Throes (Su) When Dargentu is destroyed, he explodes into a burst of choking dust. All creatures within 10 feet must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage from the violent choking and necromantic scouring of this supernaturally vile dust. Those who fail the save are also nauseated for 1d6 rounds, while those who succeed are merely sickened for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell Leech (Su) Whenever a spellcaster within 50 feet of Dargentu casts a spell, the spellcaster must make a DC 20 Will save or the spell is lost, as if it were counterspelled. The lost spell's energy is transferred to Dargentu, who can use the magical energy in one of the following three ways. Dargentu can only store the energy of one spell at a time.

Cast: Dargentu can cast the spell on his turn at caster level 11th. When casting spells in this manner, he ignores the spell's material component requirements, but not its focus requirements.

Eldritch Bolt: Dargentu can release the spell as an eldritch bolt of pure magic energy as a standard action (range 50 ft., ranged touch +12, 1d6 damage per 2 levels of the spell used to create it).

Healing: Dargentu can absorb the spell's energy to heal hit points equal to the spell's level ×4. Hit points in excess of his maximum are instead gained as temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for 1 hour before fading.

Spell Sense (Su) Dargentu can automatically pinpoint the location of any spellcaster within 100 feet who has cast a spell within the previous round. He can also identify spells as they are being cast and all existing spell effects as if he were under the effects of *greater arcane sight*.

F17. STORAGE

A large number of tools, cleaning supplies, and lengths of crystal and metal tubing are stored in this fifteen-foot-high chamber.

This room was used to store supplies for the Spiral's keepers. There is nothing of interest here.

F18. STORAGE (CR 7)

The walls of this fifteen-foot-high storeroom, as well as the tools and repair supplies on its shelves, are coated with condensation. The air is wet with clouds of steam.

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Creatures: Like area **F17**, this room was used to store tools and repair materials. Faulty tubing has resulted in this chamber being flooded with steam—while not hot enough to damage creatures, the air's quite pleasant to a batch of what passes for infesting vermin in the Nessian Spiral—a gang of steam mephits. The creatures shriek and howl angrily if anyone opens the door, partially because of the escaping steam but primarily out of territorial wrath.

STEAM MEPHITS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202)

F19. SECOND COOLING CHAMBER (CR 8)

This chamber is identical in appearance to area **F15**, and can be deactivated in the same manner. The air in this room is much more foul, a result of a hideous stew of decapitated bodies that float and putrefy in the water below. These bodies are remains dumped here over the past several days by Joriavah (see area **F11**).

Creatures: A group of six steam mephits caper and play in this room—like those in area **F18**, they take exception to intruders and swoop to attack on sight.

STEAM MEPHITS (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202)

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 1,600 XP for deactivating this cooling chamber.

F20. STORAGE

The walls of this large storeroom are decorated with a bewildering array of schematics, diagrams, and strange words and mathematical equations.

This third storage room for tools and repairs is one of Dargentu Vheed's favorite places to meditate—the mad lich shade has done what he can to turn the place into a study. The markings on the walls are his attempts to fully comprehend the inner workings of the infernal engine, capacitors, and other elements of the Nessian Spiral. The notes are written in Infernal—anyone who takes at least 10 minutes to study the diagrams can attempt a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check to understand some of what Dargentu was trying to puzzle out. On a successful check, the character learns that the spiral's outer section (the engineworks) are dedicated to processing and dispersing power, while the central section (containment) is dedicated to both harvesting the power and containing the imprisoned devil by providing chambers that engage his mind and distract him from his condition while serving double duty as security. Any character that

successfully studies these notes gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all saving throws made against environmental effects and hazards from the Nessian Spiral (such as the periodic steam blasts or the dangers present in many of the rooms themselves).

F21. THIRD COOLING CHAMBER

This chamber is identical in appearance to area **F15**, and can be deactivated in the same manner. The air in this room is much thicker with steam, obscuring vision like an obscuring mist spell. Worse, every round, there's a cumulative 5% chance that defective machinery fills the entire chamber with a scalding cloud of steam. The sound of pressure building sounds eerily like an increasing amount of wailing and shrieking, culminating in a blast that inflicts 10d6 points of fire damage to everyone in the room. Once the steam explodes, the chance of another explosion drops to 0% the next round, only to start building up by 5% per round again thereafter. These semi-regular steam explosions cease if this cooling chamber is deactivated.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 1,600 XP for deactivating this cooling chamber.

F22. FOURTH COOLING CHAMBER (CR 8)

This chamber is identical in appearance to area **F15**, and can be deactivated in the same manner. The water in the pool below looks different than that in the other four cooling chambers—subsidence combined with a tiny flaw in one of the Stygian portals in the base of this cooling chamber resulted in a sudden collapse nearly a month ago, causing a 5-foot-wide section at the base of the pool along the western side to fall away. As a result, this cooling chamber's connection to the Styx suddenly surged, spewing out into the nearby fissure in the bedrock to the west and north and filling a chamber there before the portal finally failed completely. This cooling chamber has been offline for weeks as a result, and the water within this chamber has lost its magical properties.

Creature: When this cooling chamber failed, it drew in something quite a bit more dangerous than mere waters of the River Styx. Along with the initial flood of Stygian waters came a single huge fiendish water elemental—a hideous mass of cold dark water that appears as a mass of frothing human skulls made of foam and fluid. The immense elemental is immune to the effects of Stygian water—worse, it remains infused with Stygian water even though the water it dwells in now is normal. A hit by the elemental inflicts a negative level (it's a DC 19 Fortitude save to remove this negative level) in addition to normal damage.

STYGIAN WATER ELEMENTAL

CR 8

XP 4,800

Fiendish water elemental (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 126, 294)

Containment and Illusions

Areas **F25–F30** serve a specific but dual purpose: they helped to keep Liebda's imprisoned mind distracted with clever use of illusions and creatures bound to the Spiral, and helped serve as security to any who would dare attempt to reach the infernal engine itself.

Two spell effects are used often in these areas—*binding* (a hedged prison that also serves to sustain the guardians without food and water) and *permanent image* (DC 19 Will save negates)—both of these effects were placed by powerful Thrune spellcasters and function at CL 16th.

DEFENSE

Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Melee 2 slams +15 (2d6+7 plus 1 negative level)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day (+10 damage)

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 1,600 XP for deactivating this cooling chamber.

F23. RUINED WORKROOM

It's impossible to tell what purpose this room may have once served, for the walls and floor have fallen away into an immense sinkhole. Muddy, dark water floods the sinkhole at a depth of ten feet below the edge of the overlooking ledge.

The pool of water in here is 30 feet deep at the center of the room. Rubble and broken furniture litter the pool's floor—before the room was consumed by the sinkhole, it was a workroom the tieflings used to work on repairs and other upkeep projects.

Treasure: A DC 30 Perception check made by someone searching the submerged floor of this chamber reveals a *lyre of building* amid the rubble, a tool once used by the tieflings to perform various heavy and emergency maintenance work.

F24. FINAL COOLING CHAMBER

This chamber is identical in appearance to area **F15**, and can be deactivated in the same manner. The eastern doors are made of reflective red metal, with no apparent hinges, handles, or keyholes.

These doors mark the entrance to the containment wing of the Nessian Spiral—the doors swing open silently at the slightest touch, closing automatically after the last PC passes through them. They can be opened in the same way from inside area **F25**.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 1,600 XP for deactivating this cooling chamber.

F25. THE FALLING BANQUET (EL 8)

A flight of stairs leads down to a stone archway that opens onto an incongruous sight indeed—a ten-foot-wide, thirty-foot-long banquet table floating in the air five feet above a black cobblestone plaza in the middle of a bustling city under some sort of infernal martial law, as armies of devils dressed in iron march to and fro through the streets along the plaza's edges. The sky above is red with dark clouds, while the surrounding cityscape is composed of sharp iron towers and spires—a view obscured only to the south of the table, where a churning wall of fire blocks the only street leading away from the plaza.

This chamber contains an eternal debauch and banquet amid floating chairs and tables in a cityscape stolen from Hell's iron city of Dis. Liebda often sat at the head of this table as host, engaged in pleasant banter with the noble devilish guests who attended him at the table over feasts of virgins' hearts, holy men's flesh, and other diabolic meals.

Although the chamber looks like it's part of a huge plaza in Dis, the actual size of the room is as indicated on the map—only the floating banquet table and chairs are real. The ceiling arches to a height of 30 feet.

The "wall of fire" to the southeast (indicated on the map as a dotted line) is actually nothing more than an illusory wall that separates this area from the chamber beyond; characters who step through the fire feel no heat from it as they enter what appears to be a towering cathedral (area **F27**).

Creatures: Seated at the table in an eternal argument as they feast on the illusory food that never seems to run out are what appear to be four diabolic creatures that, while they argue and eat with all the grace and decorum of aristocrats from high society, betray their bestial natures in their craggy visages. A projection of Liebda's body once sat at the head of this table, where he was perpetually distracted by the food and conversation, but now that he's left the table, the gargoyles have reverted to arguing politely among themselves, blithely unaware of the passage of time. Only when they notice the PCs do they stop, inviting them to join the feast and conversation (currently an argument over whether or not one can actually taste the difference between a virgin's and a trollop's heart). A character who joins the grisly meal and partakes of the hideous banquet must make a DC 15 Will save or become nauseated by the foul-tasting repast. A failure is interpreted as an insult, and drives the gargoyles to attack.

GARGOYLES (4)

XP 1,200 each

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 137)

CR 4

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F26. LIEBDAGA'S THEATER (EL 9)

Soft lighting illuminates this chamber, a vast amphitheater-like theater at the center of which is a recessed pit dominated by a small circular stage. A tier of high-backed elegant chairs sits to the left and right of the central stage, while countless more ever-widening tiers of chairs rise to seeming infinity all around the hall. Softly murmuring, indistinct shapes sit in these upper chairs, as if waiting patiently for the play to begin.

This chamber served to keep Liebdaga's thirst for entertainment slaked, distracting him with a never-ending production of all manner of plays, operas, and productions. The productions themselves were nearly entirely illusory affairs, all directed and performed via the machinations of a single imprisoned creature—a rakshasa named Apurva Arkona.

The upper, infinite tiers of seats are part of this room's illusions; the room's actual dimensions include only the first tier of seats. The ceiling is 30 feet above the floor of the room (20 feet above the upper tier of seats).

Creature: A vulture-headed female rakshasa in a tattered dress and once a member of Korvosa's Arkona family (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #9), Apurva Arkona has been bound to servitude here for decades. The binding spell that keeps her in this chamber, unlike most of the other monsters in the Nessian spiral, manifests as a long chain from the rakshasa's neck to a bolt in the floor. The chain magically lengthens and retracts as necessary to give her full access to the room, but not beyond its borders.

Apurva has all but forgotten her history and now thinks of herself as the personal artist and director of a powerful fiend. Liebdaga's been missing from her audience for several days now, and she has grown fearful that she's insulted him—she sees the arrival of the PCs as her chance to prove

to him that her talents at providing entertainment have not waned.

Apurva herself becomes invisible if she realizes someone is about to enter her theater. Even if caught visible, she greets the PCs cordially, thanking them for attending the latest of her creations—a play she announces as “The Birth of Death.” She then becomes invisible and begins the play by casting *major image* to cause a towering cowed skeleton wielding a scythe to step out of the wall onto the stage and point out a single foe. Next, she begins using suggestion or charm person to “direct” the players to attack Death, trying to force them to speak clichéd and overwrought challenges and lines as they battle the illusion for 3 rounds. After this, she repeats the process, creating increasingly hideous incarnations of death for the PCs to waste resources on.

APURVA ARKONA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female rakshasa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 231)

hp 115

TACTICS

During Combat Apurva ignores attacks on her until she's brought below 70 hit points, at which point she shrieks and abandons her play to fight back, favoring her attack spells after she casts *shield* to protect herself further.

Morale Apurva fights to the death.

F27. HALL OF HELLSCAPES

A brilliantly glowing, fifty-foot-long pool of molten gold bubbles in the floor of this immense cathedral-like space. The walls rise high on either side to a vaulted ceiling thick with carvings of leering devils, while to the south a towering pair of glowing stained-glass windows depicting a huge devil with a hideous scar across his midsection stands before a bloodstained altar. To either side, towering arched mirrors reflect eight different hellscape, each more dismal and harrowing than the last.

This church-like chamber distracted Liebdaga by presenting him vistas upon which he could look out upon the first eight layers of Hell (the ninth, the realm of Nessus, being the only realm missing from the views in



APURVA ARKONA

deference to Asmodeus). The stained-glass windows to the south are actually a cleverly crafted set of double doors.

The pool of molten gold in the room is partially real—a 10-foot-deep pool of boiling water masked by the illusion of molten gold. Any creature that views the gold must make a DC 15 Will save to resist the urge to rush to the pool's edge and scoop up handfuls of gold—anyone who succumbs to this compulsion takes 1d6 points of fire damage and must make a second DC 15 Will save to resist the urge to leap into the pool to swim in the gold. Full immersion in the boiling water causes 10d6 fire damage, after which the compulsion to remain in the “gold” vanishes and leaves the character to his own devices as to how he might best escape his boiling peril. The lure effect itself is a mind-affecting compulsion enchantment effect. Once a character makes a save or takes full immersion damage, he is immune to further compulsions from this pool.

A DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check is enough to identify one of the regions depicted in the illusory hellscape. A character who studies any of these hellscape realizes with a start that he sees himself being tormented by a towering pit fiend with a horribly scarred belly in the hellscape reflection. The viewer must make a DC 16 Will save—failure indicates that Liebdağa's reflection notices the viewing PC and in an instant, the pit fiend's face fills the mirror and unleashes a blast of despair and hopelessness into the viewer's mind. This causes ability damage or another effect before the mirror itself vanishes for 24 hours to reveal a 5-foot-square alcove beyond that contains a small relic or item that Liebdağa once valued in life. Entering an alcove to retrieve an object gives a character a brief flash of emotion that should provide a hint as to how that hellscape relates to Liebdağa. A character who carries Liebdağa's contract automatically makes his saving throw when he looks into a mirror.

The contents of each of these alcoves can be accessed in ways other than attracting the attention of Liebdağa's reflection. A character under the effects of *true seeing* gains a +6 bonus on Will saves to resist a mirror's effect. The

mirrors can be broken with enough damage (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 26), but each unsuccessful attempt to break a mirror instantly attracts the reflection's attention and forces the resulting saving throw. A

successful *dispel magic* spell targeted on a mirror (CL 15th) or a *dispel law* or *dispel evil* spell renders the mirror inert for 24 hours as if it had been triggered normally. And of course, effects like *passwall* or *dimension door* can provide access to the chambers beyond (although the mirrors reflect their image into the alcoves as well, so the dangers of looking into a mirror persist).

The effects of each mirror, the realm each one depicts, the sensation one gets upon entering the alcove, and the object hidden in the alcove beyond are detailed on the table on the adjacent page.

Treasure: Several of the objects hidden in the alcoves are valuable, and a few are unusual.

The *Talisman of the Twin* behind mirror #1 was Liebdağa's—it still radiates overwhelming conjuration but now that Liebdağa is imprisoned, the talisman is mostly useless. Possession of the talisman grants a significant advantage over Liebdağa—see area F37.

The *bag of holding* behind mirror #3 contains a significant amount of coins—96,000 sp, 12,500 gp, and 960 pp.

The iron ring hidden behind mirror #4 is decorated with Terran runes—a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies it as a guardian ring (a nonmagical ring that a specific stone guardian recognizes, forcing that one construct to allow the ring's wearer and all within 10 feet to pass unharmed). This ring is keyed to the burning guardian in area F30.

F28. THE ROUTE TO HELL (EL 9)

Ripples of heat rise from the sand-covered ground, where thorny metallic plants grow in heaps and mounds. The desert stretches away in all directions, while in the distant sky fly titanic, winged horrors, draped in scales and pale leather, that periodically dip down to whip with long, thin tails at legions of distant trains of staggering figures on an endless trek through this burning realm. Now and then, immense four-legged bird-



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Hellscape Mirrors

Mirror	Realm	Description	Sensation Object
1 Avernus	Apocalyptic metal wasteland	Homesickness	<i>Talisman of the Twin</i>
2 Dis	Sprawling devilish city of iron	Insignificance	<i>Rod of splendor</i>
3 Erebus	Endless dark sewer and dungeon	Greed	Type IV <i>bag of holding</i>
4 Phlegethon	Ragged realm of endless slavery	Oppression	Rune-etched iron ring
5 Stygia	Reeking poisonous swampland	Nausea	<i>Staff of swarming insects</i>
6 Malebolge	Training ground for Hell's legions	Bloodlust	+2 <i>returning mithral trident</i>
7 Cocytus	Frozen world of razor-sharp ice	Lethargy	<i>Minor ring of cold resistance</i>
8 Cania	Prison realm of chains and spires	Hopelessness	<i>Rope of entanglement</i>

like creatures dart among these legions to pluck up a meal in immense razor-sharp beaks.

This room depicts the route that the souls of the damned take through Avernus. The chamber served to give Liebdaga the comfort of the constant influx of new souls to Hell. The actual ceiling above is 30 feet high.

The clumps of strange metallic vegetation are thick and real where they exist in the confines of the room—not only do they count as difficult terrain, but their thorny branches are razor sharp. Each square that a person moves through these barbed plants causes 1d6 points of damage.

Creatures: While the whip-tailed dragons are all part of the room's illusion, not all of the four-legged bird-like monsters that prey upon the wandering souls are. Four of these strange infernal predators are quite real, bound as guardians into this room. These four achaierais stand at the four corners of the room, and they immediately shriek and rush to attack any intruders that they notice entering the room. The creatures' long, scaly legs allow them to walk through the strange thorny bushes with ease and without taking damage.

ACHAIERAIS (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600

LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed

18 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge,
+9 natural, –1 size)

hp 52 (7d10+14)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4

SR 20

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d6+4), bite +10 (2d6+4)

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

Special Attack black cloud

TACTICS

During Combat The achaierais open combat with their black clouds, then close to engage the PCs in melee. They are smart enough to try to pin down foes within the confines of the razor sharp thorns when they can.

Morale The achaierais fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 16

Base Atk +7; CMB +12; CMD 24

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +14, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +7, Swim +14

Language Infernal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Black Cloud (Su) An achaierai can exhale a cloud of choking, toxic smoke three times per day. Any non-achaierai within 10 feet of the achaierai immediately takes 2d6 points of damage as its tissues burn and melt and rot away. The cloud erodes sanity as well as flesh, and anyone who takes damage from the black cloud must also make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become confused. Every round, the victim may attempt another DC 15 Fortitude save to recover from the confusion; otherwise it persists, lasting indefinitely until the condition is removed or the victim eventually makes his saving throw. The confusion element of a black cloud is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.





F29. HALL OF TOIL (EL 8)

The walls of this large chamber are supported by wooden beams. Several pick axes and other mining implements lie on racks near some walls. To the north, the walls drop away to give a stunning view of an impossibly immense cavern—a vast underground mine populated by countless toiling miners at work extracting glittering ore from the walls. Burning devils flap through the air, descending now and then to encourage productivity with strikes from glittering barbed whips, while amid the miners slither and crawl great many-legged serpents that spew lightning from their draconic jaws. A narrow ledge runs down into the mine below to the northwest.

This room was designed to give Liebdaga's mind a place to loom and gloat over a legion of endless toil, a place that mirrors one of the devil's many holdings in Hell. The edge of the room to the north that appears to be an opening into a vast mining cavern is in fact the northern wall—the ceiling is 40 feet high. The “ledge” to the northwest leads not into this vast mine but to area **F30**.

The mining tools are all heavy picks—there are a dozen in all, and all of them are –2 *cursed heavy picks* (treat as –2 *cursed swords* save that they're different weapons).

Creature: One of the lightning-breathing behirs is in fact real, a coiled monster that serves as a guardian for the chamber. As the PCs enter, it rears up in rage, bellowing to the PCs to drop their weapons, pick up mining tools, and get to work. Part of this room's infernal features empower the behir's command, treating it as if the monster were employing a *mass suggestion* (save DC 17). The behir may only use this power once per day—it moves to attack foes whether or not they succumb to the effect and take up a cursed heavy pick. The behir fights to the death.

BEHIR

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 105 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 34)

F30: GALLERY OF BURNING LOVERS (EL 8)

A pair of fiery pools churn and burn at the far side of a clearing within a vast garden of metallic trees that bear brass-colored fruit. Gaps in the densely packed trees reveal barely visible glimpses of bestial couplings between devils and the damned. Mingled cries of agony, pain, and darker passions resound and echo through the sickly sweet and cloyingly warm air.

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This chamber appealed to Liebdaga's sexual desires, tormenting him with an endless opportunity of debauchery just out of reach. The metallic trees and their fruits are illusions, and the tree trunks and branches mark the room's actual boundaries. The ceiling is 30 feet high.

The two fire pits are each 1 foot deep and filled with perpetual flames. A creature within a pit takes 8d6 points of fire damage per round, and any creature within 5 feet of one of the pits takes 2d6 fire damage per round (Reflex DC 13 negates).

Creature: This final chamber of the rooms built to distract and vex Liebdaga also contains a potent guardian—a towering stone statue of a minotaur wreathed in flames. The burning guardian grinds to life, taking a defensive posture before the door in the north wall—it lets no one pass unless he bears the ring from area F27.

BURNING GUARDIAN

CR 8

XP 4,800

Advanced HD fire infused stone guardian (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 220, *Advanced Bestiary* 111)

N Large construct (fire)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see invisibility; Perception -2

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17 (-1 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 96 (12d10+30)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities fire healing, light fortification; **Immune** fire, construct traits; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.; firewalk

Melee 2 slams +20 (2d6+9)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-foot cone, 6d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 16 for half, usable once every 1d4 rounds)

TACTICS

During Combat The burning guardian makes sure to stand so that at least one square of its space is one of the shallow fire pits—these pits are difficult terrain for the guardian to walk through, but grant it fast healing as long as it remains within the area.

Morale The burning guardian fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 3

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 31

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Healing (Ex) The burning guardian gains fast healing 1 each

round it remains in contact with fire. When struck by a magical fire effect, it heals 1 point of damage per 10 points of damage the fire effect would otherwise deal.

Firewalk (Su) The burning guardian can climb on an object on fire as though it had a climb speed of 20 feet. It can fly at a speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability so long as it remains in contact with fire, and can walk on flames at normal speed as though walking on air via the *air walk* spell.

Light Fortification (Ex) The burning guardian has a 25% chance to ignore additional damage caused by critical hits or sneak attacks.

Ring Link (Su) The burning guardian is linked to a magic ring (see area F27). The construct will never attack any creature that wears this ring, nor any creatures within 10 feet of the ring-wearer, unless one of those creatures attacks the guardian first.

See Invisibility (Ex) The burning guardian constantly sees invisible creatures and objects, as per the spell *see invisibility*.



BURNING GUARDIAN

F31. FORGE OF THE BLOOD-BARGAIN (EL 12)

A domed, 20-foot-high ceiling set with countless sparkling gems rises above this circular chamber. A round table stands in the middle of the room, a single chair sitting before it and a cracked *crystal ball* sitting on the table's center.

Creature: When the House of Thrune first captured Liebdaga and imprisoned him within the infernal engine, they sealed the deal in this room, drafting and signing the contract in the presence of Signatory Vaccha, a powerful guardian of law known as a kolyarut inevitable. This towering outsider, a living man-shaped creature made of metal and gears and parts, remains here. The kolyarut is bound to remain here as long as Liebdaga's contract is set to last—according to the contract, the terms are set to persist for a hundred hundred years. This vast length of time is meaningless to the kolyarut, who stands here awaiting challenges to the contract, ready to protect the chambers beyond from being entered by any who would seek to break the contract's scriptures.

If the PCs do not have a copy of Liebdaga's contract, the dangerous inevitable moves to attack the PCs without

word—doing its best to prevent them from entering the infernal engine core to the south.

If the PCs carry a copy of the contract, though, Signatory Vaccha's reaction to the PCs is quite different. The inevitable rises up to its full 7-foot height as the PCs enter and then bows to them before requesting the "carrier of the contract" to present himself for inspection. The inevitable wants simply to examine the contract—if it is allowed to view the amendment that names the PCs as cosigners under Mayor Arvanxi's hand, the inevitable nods and steps aside to let the PCs pass.

Signatory Vaccha is a GM resource—you can use the inevitable as a way to answer any lingering questions the PCs may have about Liebdaga, the infernal engine, or other events in this adventure. Use these answers as a way to spur the PCs on or to fill them in on elements of the backstory, but not as a way to provide them with answers to key problems. Certainly the inevitable will warn the PCs that if they seek to deactivate the engine, they would be well advised to first shut down the cooling chambers and secure the Twin's talisman—the inevitable knows that the talisman is stored behind the "mirror to Avernus" if the PCs ask, and that the Spiral Keepers are the ones who hold the Stygian Keyrod. It can also warn the PCs that one final guardian—a creature the inevitable knows only as "the Librarian"—will challenge them in the next chamber, and that they might be able to negotiate safe passage without fighting the Librarian if they can both convince the Librarian they are agents of the current mayor and display proof that they should be in the Nessian Spiral by displaying their knowledge of the dungeon and its workings.



SIGNATORY VACCHA

SIGNATORY VACCHA

CR 12

XP 19,200

Kolyarut inevitable

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, inevitable, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 Dex, +12 natural)

hp 161 (14d10+84); fast healing 5

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

DR 10/chaotic; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +20 (2d6+6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +16)

At Will—*discern lies* (DC 17), *disguise self* (DC 14), *enervation*, *fear* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 16), *invisibility* (self only), *locate creature*, *suggestion* (DC 16), *vampiric touch*

1/day—*hold monster* (DC 18), *mark of justice*, quickened *suggestion* (DC 16)

1/week—*geas/quest* (DC 19)

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TACTICS

During Combat The kolyarut doesn't necessarily want to slay intruders—merely drive them off. It relies on *fear* and quickened *suggestions*, switching to more deadly methods such as its slam or vampiric touch to destroy foes who prove resistant to mental effects.

Morale Signatory Vaccha fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 23, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 34

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*suggestion*)

Skills Diplomacy +20, Disguise +20, Knowledge (planes) +17, Linguistics +17, Perception +24, Sense Motive +24

Languages truespeech

SQ constructed

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Constructed (Ex) Although a kolyarut is a living outsider, its body is constructed of physical components—in many ways, it functions as a construct rather than a living creature. For the purposes of a ranger's favored enemy and bane weapons, a kolyarut is treated as both an outsider and a construct. It is immune to death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, necromancy effects, paralysis, poison, sleep, stun, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless). It is not subject to nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. It is not at risk of death from massive damage.

Truespeech (Su) A kolyarut can speak with any creature that has a language, as if using a *tongues* spell (caster level 14th). This ability is always active.

Treasure: The cracked crystal ball on the table is a broken *crystal ball* that could once be used to communicate with Liebdaga. When the infernal engine began its meltdown, the devil's link to this *crystal ball* caused it to crack. The broken *crystal ball* could, in theory, be repaired by a spellcaster with enough time and resources.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs negotiate peaceful passage through this room, award them XP as if they had defeated the inevitable in combat—if they later kill the inevitable, they do not gain any additional XP for that battle.

F32. WHISPERS AND SECRETS (EL 10)

The walls of this pleasantly warm chamber are lined with bookshelves heavy with tomes and scrolls. A pair of large tables surrounded by chairs stand in the middle of the room—each table is cluttered with a wide array of alchemical gear, magical crafting tools, and other devices one might expect to find in a wizard's laboratory.

This chamber served both of Westcrown's previous mayors as a personal laboratory—Mayor Arvanxi not only had no need of the equipment stored here, but doesn't even know the chamber exists, having never entered the Nessian Spiral to this extent. An examination of the equipment here reveals all manner of raw materials for creating magic items (see *Treasure*, on the following page), as well as an extensive library about the construction of items that rely upon some element of infernal power to function. Given time, a person could learn much about how the infernal engine powered the Asmodean Knot and various other elements in Aberian's Folly above. At the very least, 10 minutes of research and a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals the theoretical three-step procedure to perform an emergency shutdown of the infernal engine (see the *Shutdown Procedure* sidebar on page 51). The extensive collection of books also grants a +4 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (planes) checks made using them as references. If you wish, you can provide clues to the PCs on how to bypass the four locks in areas **F33–F36** here, although they'll need to spend time and Knowledge checks to do so.

Creature: The sole denizen of this room is Zovarue, a medusa sorcerer who was bound into service in the same manner as the guardians of the outer rooms of the containment chambers (see page 30). The medusa's role here is as a guardian, a caretaker, and as required, an assistant in creating magic items. No one has visited her in the last 20 years ever since Vheed's death, and those years have not been kind to Zovarue. She now thinks of herself as the true mayor of Westcrown and spends much of her time refining an increasingly complex series of laws she hopes to enact when she escapes from her servitude here—laws aimed squarely at seeing to her personal comfort and well-keeping. The recent explosions and instability in the engine have excited the medusa, who hopes that if the engine is destroyed or shut down, she'll be able to escape (this isn't true, alas—the *binding* spell that holds her here operates independently of the engine itself).

When the PCs arrive, Zovarue obscures her face (and thus her gaze weapon) with a black veil—she expects a single mayor to come down to reestablish his or her presence in the Nessian Spiral. She stands at attention near the western table (one hand atop a large stack of papers) and bows deeply, introducing herself and asking how she may be of service. If a PC claims to be the mayor of Westcrown, he'll have to defeat her Sense Motive with a Bluff check—every additional person the medusa sees brings a cumulative –4 penalty to this Bluff check since it's uncharacteristic for a mayor to bring anyone else into this room. Alternatively, presenting Liebdaga's contract and claiming to be the mayor's agents will work to keep the medusa from attacking.

Council of Thieves Part 4 of 6

As long as she believes the PCs to be the mayor or his assistants, she maintains a calm and deferential attitude and continues to suppress her petrification gaze by keeping her veil on. Her knowledge is limited to the contents of this room, unfortunately, so she's not very helpful in revealing the secrets of the Nessian Spiral itself—her knowledge is mostly theoretical. Her amiable attitude persists as long as she's not attacked, as long as no one attempts to remove any of the objects from this room, or until someone takes an interest in the large stack of papers near the table of which she seems so protective. These papers are her manifesto and list of laws—she hopes to destroy the pages as soon as she can and doesn't want the “mayor” to see the papers. Her madness is powerful enough that, if someone forcibly attempts to examine the papers, she flies into a rage, shrieking, “You’ve waited too long! Westcrown is mine now!” as she attacks.

ZOVARUE CR 10

XP 9,600

Female medusa sorcerer 7

LE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 120 (15 HD; 8d10+7d6+60)

Fort +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13; +2 vs. poison

Resist fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 mithral dagger +16/+11/+6 (1d4+4/19–20), snake bite +15 (1d4+3 plus poison)

Special Attacks petrifying gaze (30 ft., DC 18), poison (DC 18, 1/round for 6 rounds, 1d3 Str, cure 2 consecutive saves)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

8/day—corrupting touch

Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +12)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *water breathing*

2nd (7/day)—*acid arrow*, *resist*

energy, *scorching ray*, *spider climb*

1st (8/day)—*feather fall*, *floating disc*, *grease* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *silent image* (DC 16)

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

Bloodline infernal

TACTICS

Before Combat Zovarue casts extended *mage armor* when she wakes each day.

During Combat In combat, Zovarue lifts her veil (a free action) and casts *displacement*. She follows up with her offensive spells or melee attacks using Arcane Strike.

Morale Zovarue fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26

Feats Arcane Strike, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +16, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Perception +17, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +15

Languages Common

SQ bloodline arcana

Combat Gear *wand of make whole* (CL 10th, 16 charges); **Other Gear** +1 mithral dagger, headband of alluring charisma +2, amulet of natural armor +1

Treasure: Although there are no magic items kept here save for the gear carried by Zovarue, the raw materials and reagents found on the tables and scattered about on the shelves are worth 5,800 gp if used to craft magic items. In all, the materials weigh 1 pound per 100 gp of value (approximately 50 pounds).

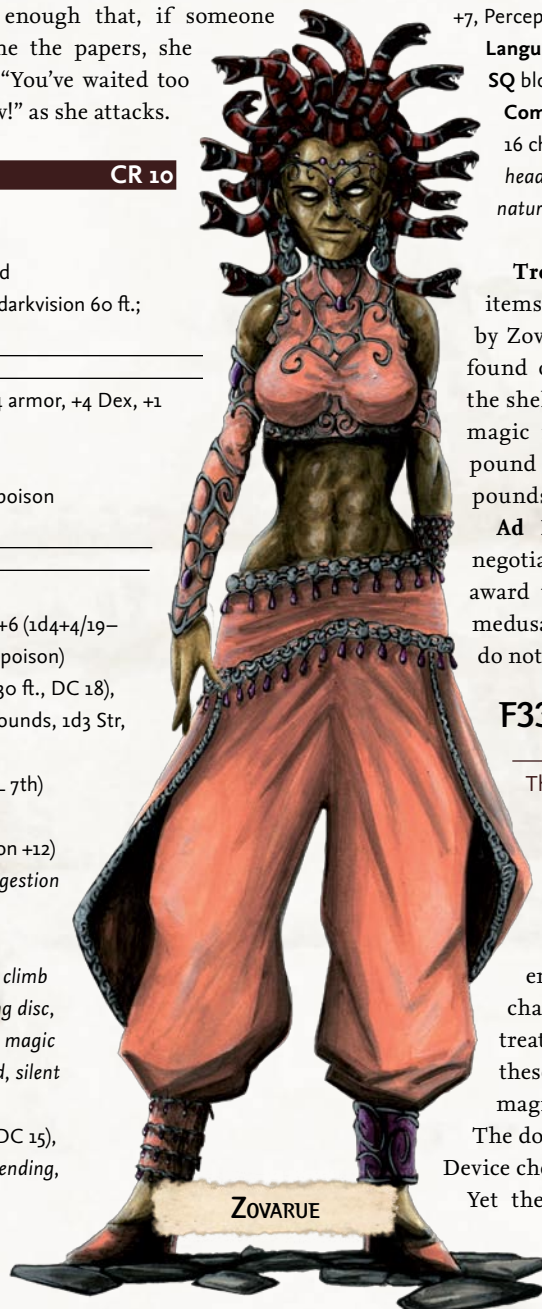
Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs negotiate peaceful passage through this room, award them XP as if they had defeated the medusa in combat—if they later kill her, they do not gain any additional XP for that battle.

F33. THE FIRST LOCK

This short hall is dominated at the southern corner by an immense double door made of polished iron and inscribed with a single glowing phrase.

Four sets of immense doors bar entrance into the infernal engine's core chamber. Made of iron and magically treated (hardness 20, hp 120, Break DC 48), these doors are locked both physically and magically with *arcane lock* spells (CL 16th). The doors can be picked with a DC 40 Disable Device check.

Yet there is an easier route through these doors—a series of passwords. These passwords are linked in various



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ways to Liebdağa himself, and inscribed on each door is a phrase that gives a hint as to what these passwords are. The placement of these inscribed clues and the password system were a necessary part of the procedure put in place to strengthen the bindings and other spell effects—the House of Thrune and Mayor Doskivari both hoped that the Nessian Spiral's other wards and guardians would be more than enough to make up for this security flaw.

The inscription on this first set of doors is, like those on the other three to the east, written in Infernal. It says, "Split in twain in life and name—call upon the One within." The doors open if "Liebdağa" or "The Twin" are spoken.

F34. THE SECOND LOCK

The inscription on this door reads, "Placed in iron by ruling hands—call upon the crafter's name." They open to the response of "Thrune" or "House of Thrune."

F35. THE PENULTIMATE LOCK

The inscription on this door reads, "Under watchful eye on high—call upon our crown and liege." They open to the response of "Majestrix" or any name that contains that word.

F36. THE FINAL LOCK

The inscription on this door reads, "From molten metal sea to ragged rusted fortress—call upon his onetime home." They open to the response of "Avernus."

F37. INFERNAL ENGINE CHAMBER

A fifty-foot-high domed ceiling rises above this massive room, the air of which is blisteringly hot. An immense, fiery pentagram, inlaid in the floor with strange glowing gems and metals, reaches out to touch the walls. Suspended in the center of the room by seven immense chains is a ten-foot-diameter adamantine cage. Crimson crystal ribs extend up from the walls to the ceiling above where they connect to pillars of what looks like crystallized blood that descend down to surround the center of the room and the dangling cage therein. A discordant humming fills the air of this room, causing everything to vibrate and shake. Every few seconds, a blast of heat washes over the room as a wreath of fire washes over the cage and then slithers like fiery lightning up along the chains to be absorbed by the blood-red crystal ribs.

This room contains Liebdağa's prison, the heart of the mayhem and fire and thunder that wracks the Nessian Spiral and the source of the pillars of fire above. The heat in the room is extreme—breathing the air in here inflicts 1d6 fire damage per minute, and a character must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage (those wearing

Guessing Games

The passwords in the four locks are intended to reward players who have been paying attention to the adventure, but as with all passwords, the heat of the moment and frustration can turn these into aggravations. If your players seem to be stuck on a password, don't just sit there quietly and let them grow more frustrated if their trains of thought and guesses are leading them astray. After 5 minutes or so, feel free to give the players Knowledge (arcana or planes) checks to gain a hint from you, or perhaps even the answers. The library in area F32 should allow even characters who aren't trained in these Knowledge skills a chance to look up the answers—divination spells can help as well.

And of course, if it comes to it, the PCs can always just bash the doors down. PCs are pretty good at that.

—James Jacobs

Shutdown Procedure

The PCs can either guess the proper procedure for shutting down the infernal engine or discover it (most likely from the library in area F32). Once shut down in this manner, the infernal engine must be rebuilt before it can function again—thus, the House of Thrune hoped never to have to take these steps.

The proper procedure follows these steps.

Step 1: Shut down the five Stygian cooling chambers. This neutralizes the central chamber's fiery defenses and hinders the engine's capacity to self-repair.

Step 2: Destroy the physical structure of the infernal engine cage. This causes the outsider trapped within the cage to phase into solidity and reality.

Step 3: Kill or banish the energy source kept within the cage. This removes the engine's power supply, but might have unforeseen and unpredictable side effects.

In the end, either killing or banishing Liebdağa (both his physical and his spiritual form) shuts the engine down—how the PCs reach this stage is up to them.

heavy clothing or armor take a –4 penalty on their saves). Worse, searing blasts of fire fill the room every 1d6 rounds, inflicting 10d6 fire damage per round to any creature in the room (Reflex DC 20 for half damage). For each of the five Stygian cooling chambers that are deactivated, these blasts of fire are correspondingly less violent as the cooling chambers draw off proportionally less energy—each deactivated chamber reduces the damage caused by 2d6. If all five are deactivated, the fiery explosions cease—the infernal energy has been allowed to remain caged within the infernal engine.

Creature: Liebdağa the Twin is imprisoned within the cage, forced into a fetal position and unable to move in the

constraints of his adamantine cage. The pit fiend's body seems only partially physical—flickering between flesh and fire and smoke with rapid fluctuations. In order to save Westcrown, the PCs must deactivate the infernal engine, then slay or banish Liebdaga before he can escape.

SHUTDOWN STAGE ONE (CR 8)

Liebdaga's cage is itself a dangerous foe—as soon as the PCs enter this room, the spherical cage rattles and shakes in place. An instant later, the cage lurches into life, sprouting three smaller chains with which it can smash and grab foes. If the PCs flee before destroying the cage and return later, they can essentially pick up this battle wherever they left off.

LIEBDAGA'S CAGE	CR 8
XP 4,800	
Advanced animated object (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 14)	
N Medium construct	
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception –3	
DEFENSE	
AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)	
hp 52 (4d10+30)	
Fort +1, Ref +2, Will –2	
Defensive Abilities hardness 20; Immune construct traits, fire	
OFFENSE	
Speed 30 ft.; chained	
Melee 3 slams +11 (1d8+8 plus 1d6 fire plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attacks constrict (1d8+8 plus 1d6 fire)	
TACTICS	
During Combat The cage cannot leave this chamber, and remains animated as long as there are visible targets. The cage itself is red hot, and inflicts additional fire damage on each hit. In addition, for every cooling chamber left active, the cage gains 2 points of fast healing—the stats here assume all five cooling chambers are deactivated.	
Morale The cage fights until destroyed.	
STATISTICS	
Str 26, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 5, Cha 5	
Base Atk +4; CMB +13 (+17 grab); CMD 24	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Chained (Ex) Liebdaga's cage can effectively move at a speed of 30 feet as if under the effects of <i>air walk</i> , as it moves by shifting its position in the room by lengthening or shortening the chains that hold it in the room. It cannot leave area F37 at all.	

SHUTDOWN STAGE TWO (CR 12)

Once the PCs destroy the cage, it undergoes a shocking transformation—the adamantine bars glow and steadily become transparent, transforming into glass while Liebdaga himself grows solid within the cage. Do not start a new combat when this occurs—the PCs essentially have

a “free round” of attacks they can direct against Liebdaga if any of them still have actions to take in this round, during which the pit fiend is considered to be flat-footed (but has cover from the cage, resulting in a +4 bonus to his AC) until he takes his first action the next round.

When Liebdaga's turn in initiative comes up the next round, he roars in combined anger and exaltation, stretches his arms and wings violently, and shatters the glass cage. Every other creature apart from Liebdaga in area **F37** takes 4d6 points of slashing damage from the glass, with a DC 15 Reflex save halving the damage. After this, the pit fiend attacks the PCs using the tactics described in his stat block. Fortunately for the PCs, the devil's long imprisonment has drained much of his power—rather than a full-powered CR 20 pit fiend, Liebdaga is a still-dangerous but not hopeless-to-face CR 12 foe.

Liebdaga is a towering monster of a devil. An angry pink scar runs across his abdomen, a wound that he can never fully heal that was inflicted upon him eons ago by a solar—the wound slew the pit fiend but the solar was unprepared for Liebdaga's soul to resurrect him on the spot, and in the battle that immediately followed, Liebdaga returned the favor to the doomed angel. This battle earned him such notoriety in Hell that he ascended in power to the role of infernal duke—a ruler among pit fiends. For ages, he served on the uppermost layer of Hell, Avernus, as the lord of an Iron Citadel that guarded the hellmouth entrance into the realm of Erebus. His recent capture by powerful Thrune wizards and his imprisonment within the Nessian Spiral has humiliated the devil, and while he's eager to return to Hell and seize control of his Iron Citadel from whatever usurper has claimed it in his absence, he nonetheless intends to spend a week or so razing Westcrown to ashes.

As long as the PCs still retain a copy of Liebdaga's contract, though, he cannot physically leave this chamber. Even if the contract is destroyed or lost, the echoes of his long servitude here keep him locked in this chamber for 24 hours, after which time he'll be able to leave the room and vent his wrath on the city above. Although risky, giving Liebdaga his contract can gain the PCs a valuable round of breathing room, as the pit fiend spends an entire round destroying and burning the contract. The PCs just need to make sure they finish him off if this occurs—if they keep his contract safe, they'll be able to retreat and return to challenge Liebdaga numerous times. Of course, while Liebdaga can't physically leave this chamber, he certainly can contact others and work through proxies. He can use *greater scrying* to spy on the PCs, and eventually a member of the Council of Thieves or another creature within the Nessian Spiral is bound to stumble in range of the pit fiend's persuasive tongue. PCs who tarry too long in this

The Infernal Syndrome

situation will invariably find themselves under siege by agents of the devil eager to destroy his contract.

Finally, the *Talisman of the Twin* from area F27 gives the PCs one final advantage over the pit fiend. As long as the talisman is within a mile of his position but not in his control, Liebדaga gains the staggered weakness as detailed below. A PC who brandishes the talisman forcefully as a move-equivalent action while within 30 feet of the devil further hounds him, sickening him and preventing him from being able to gather his wits to perform full-round actions at all. If Liebדaga gains possession of his talisman, he loses the staggered weakness and, over the course of 24 hours, returns to his full power as an infernal duke.

LIEBDAGA THE TWIN CR 12

XP 19,200

Male weakened pit fiend duke (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 80)

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +15 natural, -1 size)

hp 137 (13d10+91); fast healing 5

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities tenacious soul; **DR** 10/good or silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 22

Weaknesses negative levels, staggered

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (2d8+8), 2 wings +10 (2d6+4), bite +15 (4d6+8 plus poison and disease), tail +15 (2d8+8 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks constrict 2d8+12, devil shaping,

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +9)

At Will—*greater scrying* (DC 20)

1/day—*fireball* (DC 16), *greater dispel magic*, *scorching ray*, *wall of fire*

TACTICS

During Combat Liebדaga opens combat by casting *fireball* at the densest group of PCs. On the second round of combat, he takes a round to focus his thoughts so that on the third round of combat he can make a full attack action. He repeats these tactics, saving his spell-like abilities to use against foes if he can't engage them in melee.

Morale Liebדaga has no choice as long as he remains imprisoned or bound to area F37, and fights to the death as a result.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 25, **Int** 16, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Fly -5, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (planes) +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +14
Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Negative Levels (Ex) Every cooling chamber the PCs shut down imparts a permanent negative level upon Liebדaga. This stat block assumes that all five cooling chambers are shut down, and that the pit fiend has five permanent negative levels.

You should adjust his stats as appropriate if this is not the case.

Staggered (Ex) Liebדaga is staggered, but as a standard action, he can focus his thoughts so that

on the round immediately following he can act as if not staggered. The round after he acts as if not staggered, he becomes nauseated for 1 round, after which he returns to his normal, non-nauseated staggered condition. While focusing his thoughts, Liebדaga is considered flat-footed.

Tenacious Soul (Su) As an infernal duke, Liebדaga possesses an additional power beyond most pit fiends—his tenacious soul. This grants Liebדaga complete immunity to mind-affecting effects, but more impressively it allows him to recover from even the most devastating of wounds. If reduced to -25 hit points, the pit fiend dies, but a smoky, ghostly devilish form rises from his wounds—the pit fiend's soul. On the pit fiend's next action, his soul targets the body with a *breath of life* spell effect (CL 12th), healing the downed pit fiend 5d8+12 points of damage. If this healing brings his hit point total back up to -25 or higher, his fast healing kicks in—if it restores him to positive hit points, he revives and can continue to fight. If his soul is unable to restore the body to at least -25 hit points, the pit fiend is truly dead. At this point, the soul shrieks in frustration and rage—all creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 19 Will save or suffer 1d6 points of Charisma damage from this soul-shattering, madness-inducing howl (the save DC is Charisma-based), after which Liebדaga's soul moves on to Hell and must begin anew as a mass of mindless lemures—this effectively ends Liebדaga for good, preventing him not only from returning to Westcrown to seek revenge, but from ever returning to power in Hell itself.



LIEBDAGA THE TWIN

Council of Thieves Part 4 of 6

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: ZOL (CR 10)

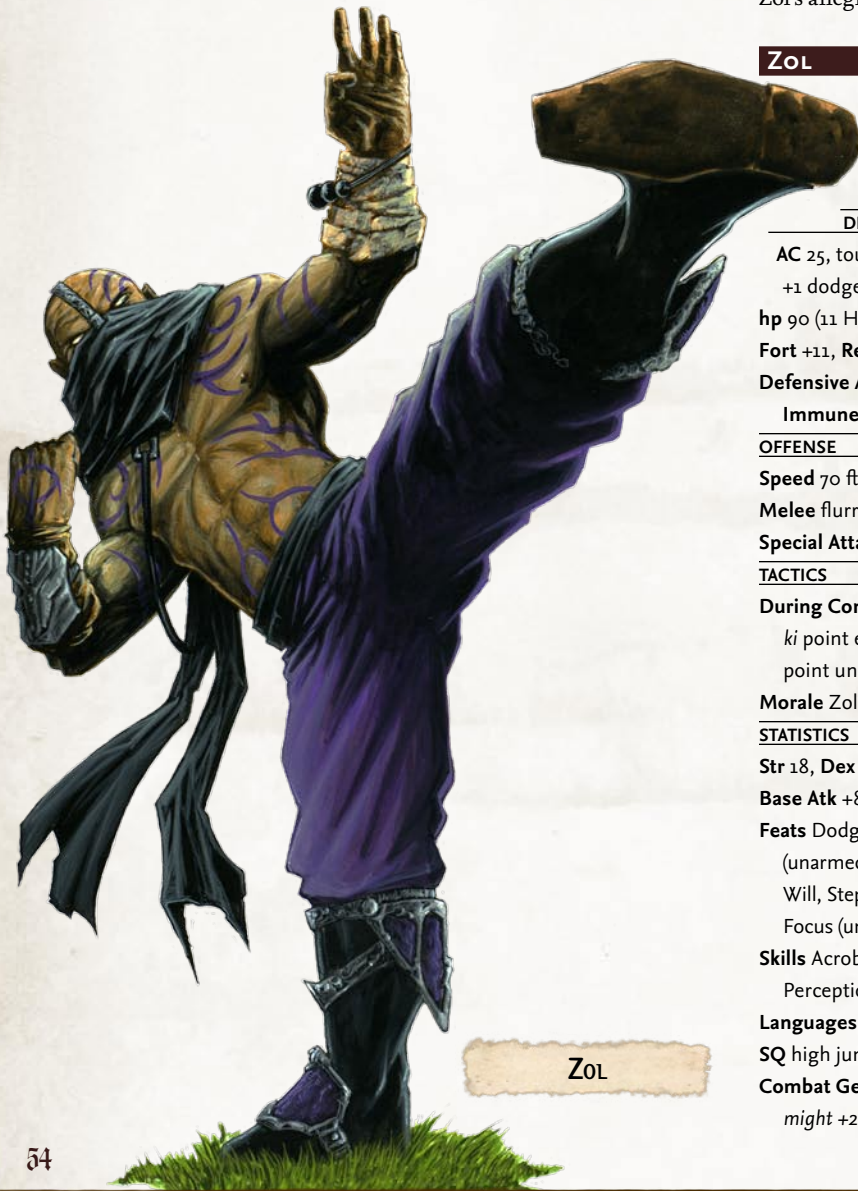
Once the PCs defeat the Council agents in this adventure, Chammady and Ecarrdian realize that their hopes for contacting Liebdağa are in great jeopardy. Unable to abandon their current (and more important) tasks of seizing actual command of the Council of Thieves, they do the next best thing—they send but one of their most dangerous “cleaners” out to handle the situation—a deadly Shoanti ex-barbarian monk named Zol.

Zol came to Westcrown a slave, a captured barbarian already exiled from his tribe on Varisia’s Storval Plateau for murdering a brother (although tribal prejudice over his mongrel lineage played a large role in his exile as well). Initially filled with hatred for his captors, Zol was overwhelmed by the bustle and power he saw first in Korvosa and then in Westcrown, and in time came to realize that the order and overwhelming law fit his domineering

personality more than the chaos and adherence to what he saw as outdated traditions among his people.

Chammady Drovenga met Zol during a visit to his monastery, where she arranged for him to be released from his duties to the church. She took him into the Council and showed him many secrets—and Zol realized that here was the perfect organization to fuel his need for domination and control.

The PCs are his latest assignment. When word comes that the thieves stationed at the Nessian Spiral are defeated, Zol comes to finish things off, as much an instrument of revenge as anything else. Zol’s orders are to remain hidden, track down the PCs, and follow them, but not to strike until they near the center of the Nessian Spiral. In large part, you can use Zol as you wish—he can strike the PCs whenever you wish to up the challenges they’ll be facing, or you can give the PCs a chance to learn more about their enemies by winning Zol’s allegiance with diplomacy or magic.



ZOL

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male half-orc barbarian 1/monk 10

LE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

AC 25, **touch** 20, **flat-footed** 21 (+1 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 monk, +4 natural, +2 Wis)

hp 90 (11 HD; 1d12+10d8+33)

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +11; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities improved evasion, orc ferocity, slow fall 50 ft.;

Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee flurry of blows +13/+13/+8/+8 (1d10+4/19–20)

Special Attacks ki pool (9 points), Stunning Fist 10/day (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat Zol moves in to fight foes in melee, spending a ki point each round to increase his AC by +4 but leaving his last point unspent for emergencies.

Morale Zol fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12 (+14 trip); **CMD** 33 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Combat Reflexes, Extra Ki, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Step Up, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+27 jump), Climb +18, Intimidate +15, Perception +16, Stealth +16

Languages Common, Orc

SQ high jump, maneuver training, orc blood

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +4 (2); **Other Gear** *belt of physical might* +2 (Str/Con), *bracers of armor* +1, *ring of protection* +2

The Infernal Syndrome



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure's climax in the infernal engine of the Nessian Spiral marks the first major public victory for the PCs. As they adventure in the ruins of Aberian's Folly and below in the Spiral, the dottari, Hellknights, and citizens of Westcrown are aware as never before that the PCs are heroes of the city. In addition to Fame Points the PCs might earn for smaller side missions (see page 9), deactivating the infernal engine, extinguishing the pillars of fire, and ending the threat to the city earns them 3 Fame Points.

Of course, if the PCs fail to deactivate the infernal engine and Liebdaga escapes, you don't have to scrap your campaign. Assuming the PCs survived their failure, you can continue with the Council of Thieves Adventure Path by simply having Liebdaga emerge from his prison and destroy a sizable section of Westcrown along the southwest coast. The next two adventures take place in other regions of the city, so if the pit fiend destroys a swath along the southwest coast before returning to Hell, you can impress upon the PCs a powerful sensation of failure without a total loss. The Council of Thieves, in any event, should

fail to secure Liebdaga's aid—the rest of this Adventure Path assumes this, and whether this is because the PCs successfully defeated the pit fiend or because the pit fiend escapes, vents his wrath on a section of the city, and then leaves for Hell is irrelevant. Of course, allowing Liebdaga to torch a significant section of the city wreaks havoc on both city morale and the Wiscrani impression of the PCs—this unfortunate turn of events costs the PCs 5 Fame Points.

In any event, the Council of Thieves can no longer afford to ignore the PCs. The Drovenge siblings are making their moves elsewhere in the city while this adventure goes on, and behind the scenes as the PCs are defeating Liebdaga, Chammady and Ecarrdian pass the point of no return in their coup by murdering their grandfather, Vassindio Drovenge. His death creates a schism in the Council, one that gives the PCs a unique chance to strike at one of Westcrown's greatest plagues. When the Drovenge siblings move against one of the Council's oldest allies, the sinister hag known as the Mother of Flies, they unwittingly give the PCs the opportunity not only to secure the aid of those who know Council secrets, but to expose their vampiric ally Ilneric Sivanshen to the righteous wrath of Westcrown's newest heroes.



In the Fiend's Grasp

Fiends prey upon the people of Golarion, slaughtering mortals, catching them in their nets of betrayal, and turning allies against one other. From the abyssal pit of the Worldwound to the diabolical nation of Cheliah, the encroachment of fiends upon mortal lands, minds, and livelihoods has reached staggering heights within the past age. While encounters with these manifestations of true evil typically come in the form of desperate battles, heretical summons, or plane-spanning manipulations, the denizens of the outer planes' most horrifying reaches know no end of corruption, possessing ways to twist the very truths of existence and physicality to defile the mortal realm. Fiends with the power to loose themselves from their forms to prey upon the minds and souls of the living practice a terrible blasphemy known as possession.

Fiendish possession allows horrors from realms beyond to encroach upon specific locations, objects, and creatures, tainting their victims with fundamental evil and reshaping natural life to their terrible whims. The motivation for

such possessions differs among the fiendish races, though even upon shedding their forms, evil outsiders operate and seek to defile mortality just as bodied members of their kind. While a devil might utilize the powers of possession to corrupt and manipulate, daemons typically seek to sow death and destroy lives, with demons spreading dramatic terror and ruin. Yet while such fiends might be directly combated and slain in their bodily forms, possession grants such evils the shield of innocence and the mask of virtue as their corruption spreads not from a nightmarish abomination, but from a familiar face.

This article describes the methods and powers of possession in a variety of forms, as well as powers utilized by the living to combat such affronts. Possession is a supernatural ability.

While this article uses the word "fiend" extensively, it should be noted that fiends are not the only creatures that might attempt to forcibly manipulate mortals to their whims. Other extraplanar creatures—good or evil—

In the Fiend's Grasp

I fear my recent studies into the evils of the Great Beyond have left me with a strange affliction... some malady my soul refuses to even name. Even now writing this, I feel unearthly forces pulling at my hand, attempting to interrupt my work. She identifies herself as Gavriel and claims to want nothing more than to grant knowledge and experience that my books—or indeed any book—could never yield, but I doubt those advances. Sleep has been difficult as I am plagued with exhaustive dreams, and in waking, I hunger only for... unspeakable things. I pray that in the capital I might find a way to rid myself of this influence, even as I wonder if salvation can indeed be purchased by mere coin.

—Final legible entry in the journal of Gregor Vistia, Sage of Logas



various forms of undead, unknowable entities from the depths of space, and other even less fathomable beings all might seek to take control of frail mortal bodies or other base physical shells. As such, GMs might easily alter or add to these rules to use them for any manner of possession-like effect they require.

POSSESSION FEATS

Rare among common fiends, those capable of possession stand out in power above others of their kind. Mastering the ability to disincorporate their forms and influence creatures and materials around them, such body thieves are masters of terror and manipulation. Typically only the most extraordinary and perverse fiends can make use of the powers of possession, learning such secrets from blasphemous masters or dark secrets of the multiverse. To represent this, fiends who increase in power beyond the common representatives of their kind gain access to the Possess Creature, Possess Location, and Possess Object feats and the host of terrible abilities they might provide. Using these powers, even a relatively weak fiend can come to possess an area or object, while more powerful horrors might overwhelm a mortal body. Despite the similarity to mind-affecting effects, fiendish possession has more to do with the spiritual hijacking of a body or the physical corruption of objects, and thus, creatures immune to mind-affecting effects are not immune to possession (although several possession actions themselves are mind-affecting). Creatures where the body and spirit are indivisible, as is the case with most outsiders and incorporeal undead, are immune to possession effects.

Possess Creature

A fiend gains the ability to merge its physical form with another creature's body, spreading its foul influence from within a living vessel.

Prerequisites: Cha 20, any evil outsider with 10 or more Hit Dice.

Benefit: Once per day, as a full-round action, a fiend can disincorporate into a malign presence and target a creature

within 15 feet. The creature targeted must succeed at a Will save equal to 10 + half the fiend's Hit Dice + the fiend's Charisma modifier or be possessed (see below). Targets under the effects of *protection from evil*, or related spells, gain a bonus to this save. Should a target succeed at its Will save, the fiend is forced back into its natural form and is stunned for 1 round.

A fiend that successfully possesses a target enters its space and merges with it. While possessing a creature or object, a fiend's body and abilities are unavailable. Once a fiend merges with its target it cannot be harmed until it leaves or is forcibly removed. While possessing a target, a fiend shares the senses of its host and can communicate with it telepathically. A fiend also gains a number of possession points per day equal to its total Hit Dice. These points can be spent to utilize special bodily possession actions detailed on the following pages. A fiend may expend these points as it pleases, with each possession action taking a full-round action.

Each day, the victim of a possession is allowed a new Will save at the original DC to force the possessing fiend to leave its body—objects and areas do not receive daily saves. Should a victim make this save or be killed, the fiend is ejected, retakes its original form in an adjacent space, and is stunned for 1 round. A fiend may not possess a new target for 24 hours after being ejected from a victim. *Dispel evil* (or *dispel chaos* or *dispel law*, depending on the fiend) can eject a fiend, but the caster must succeed at a caster level check with a DC equal to 10 + the HD of the possessing fiend + the fiend's Cha modifier. *Banishment* and *dismissal* immediately eject a fiend from a target if it fails to save against the spell.

Possess Location

A fiend learns to disperse its essence over an area, gaining mastery over features and structures there and tainting the place with its wickedness.

Prerequisites: Cha 16, any evil outsider with 8 or more Hit Dice.

Benefit: Once per day, as a full-round action, a fiend may attempt to possess a structure or small area (like a pool,

Possession in Our World

Throughout the span of real-world history, many cultures have included various forms of spiritual possession in their societies, from the most common malign possession associated with demons and evil spirits to the animist belief that all natural creatures and objects have a spirit that can merge with a person. Sumerians believed that demons called *gidim* were the cause of sickness and exorcized those spirits in order to heal. Vodou priests perform rites that invite powerful spirits called *loa* into their bodies to guide their actions or glean important prophesies, and in so doing, hope to acquire a higher spiritual state.

Thought to be possessed, many people with mental disorders historically underwent exorcisms and more destructive attempts at cleansing demons from their bodies. Acting on the belief that certain people were possessed by demons or other evil spirits, witch hunts blazed across 17th-century Europe. A mass exorcism in France during that time reportedly drew a crowd of 7,000 spectators. In the 1970s, a German woman named Anneliese Michel reportedly suffered demonic possession. Her health deteriorated and psychiatrists treated her shortly before undergoing an exorcism. She died after the failed exorcism and the government charged the priests involved with negligent homicide. This event helped usher in a number of pop culture references to fiendish possession.

More recently, *The Exorcist* popularized the Catholic Rite of Exorcism, a possession perpetrated in that case by the Babylonian demon Pazuzu. *Days of Our Lives*, a popular American soap opera, even had a short storyline dealing with possession in the 1980s. Possession also figures in a number of films like *Evil Dead*, *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*, *The Amityville Horror*, and *Paranormal Activity*.

grove, or ruin) of a diameter equal to 10 feet per Hit Die. This area is spherical, so a fiend possessing a particularly large structure might only have power over a certain number of rooms. An area receives no save against fiendish possession unless creatures or magical items occupy the space, in which case the area makes a Will save equal to 10 + half the fiend's Hit Dice + the fiend's Charisma modifier using the stats of the occupant with the highest Will save. An area within the effects of a *hallow* spell cannot be possessed. A fiend possessing an area operates similarly to one using the Possess Creature feat, except that locations do not receive daily saves to escape the fiend's influence and the fiend's possession points can only be spent on location possession actions.

Should a possessed location be destroyed, the fiend is ejected, retakes its original form in a space adjacent to the area it previously possessed, and is stunned for 1

round. *Dispel evil* (or *dispel chaos* or *dispel law*, depending on the fiend) can eject a fiend, but the caster must succeed at a caster level check with a DC equal to 10 + the HD of the possessing fiend + the fiend's Cha modifier. *Banishment* and *dismissal* immediately eject a fiend from an object if it fails to make its saving throw against the spell's effects.

Possess Object

A fiend gains the power to bind its malign essence to a single object, corrupting it into a relic of undeniable evil.

Prerequisites: Cha 18, any evil outsider with 9 or more Hit Dice.

Benefit: Once per day, as a full-round action, a fiend can possess a Large or smaller object. Unattended, a mundane object receives no saving throw against possession, while an attended object uses its owner's saving throw to make a Will save equal to 10 + half the fiend's Hit Dice + the fiend's Charisma modifier. Magic items save as if they were subject to a spell. Items within the area of effect of a *hallow* spell cannot be possessed. This effect is similar to that detailed in the Possess Creature feat, except that objects do not receive a daily save to escape the fiend's influence and the fiend's possession points can only be spent on object-possession actions.

Should a possessed object be destroyed, the fiend is ejected, retakes its original form in an adjacent space, and is stunned for 1 round. *Dispel evil* (or *dispel chaos* or *dispel law*, depending on the fiend) can eject a fiend, but the caster must succeed at a caster level check with a DC equal to 10 + the HD of the possessing fiend + the fiend's Cha modifier. *Banishment* and *dismissal* immediately eject a fiend from an object if it fails to make its saving throw against the spell's effects.

POSSESSION ACTIONS

A variety of actions are available to fiends who possess creatures, objects, or locations. GMs are encouraged to use these abilities as guidelines and create similar abilities for their own fiendish villains and extraplanar plots. Each possession action is presented in the following format.

Name: The name of the action in question. The number in parentheses after the name lists the number of possession points ("PP") the action costs to perform.

Expression: This indicates whether or not the action has a visible effect when it manifests (physical) or if it happens entirely within the host's head (spiritual). The listed DC indicates the Perception or Sense Motive check required by those nearby to notice the fact that the target is possessed. Note that a possessed creature does not automatically realize that it is possessed, but it gains a +10 bonus on all Perception or Sense Motive checks to notice that it is indeed possessed when the fiend uses a possession action.

In the Fiend's Grasp

Duration: This lists the duration of the effect once the fiend activates the possession action. Durations listed as directly tied to HD use the possessing fiend's HD to set the duration.

Saving Throw: This indicates what sort of saving throw the possessed creature, location, object, or target of the action can make to negate or reduce the effects of the action. In all cases, the DC for this saving throw is DC 10 + the HD of the possessing fiend + the fiend's Cha modifier.

Bodily Possession

A fiend possesses a creature's body not only to torture its victim, but to torment the possessed creature's loved ones. More often than not, a fiend aggressively inhabits a host, but sometimes a misguided mortal might call a fiend into his body in search of otherworldly power. This rarely works to the mortal's advantage, as bodily possession is essentially an abduction of one's self. Occasionally fiends might grant a taste of power in order to bribe the mortal into compliance with its own wishes and punish actions deviating from their desires, but few fiends possess victims for any other reason than absolute control.

DEFILE BODY (3 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude partial

The possessing fiend, when displeased, can cause physical harm to the target. This damage manifests in a number of ways, from searing pain to limbs physically wrenched in agonizing ways. Each fiend delivers this damage in a different way, but the damage done always bypasses any damage reduction, resistance, or immunity to damage that the host might possess. If the host fails to resist this ability, it takes 1d6 points of damage for every 2 Hit Dice the fiend possesses. If it makes the Fortitude save, the painful spasms only sicken the host for 1 round.

ELUSIVE PRESENCE (3 OR 1 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 35)

Duration 1 hour or instantaneous

Saving Throw none

A fiend may use this action to hide itself from *detect* spells or to pass through a *magic circle against evil* or

the effects of a *forbiddance* spell. The fiend must make a Will save equal to 10 + the caster level of the spell + the caster's relevant ability modifier. If it succeeds, the spell only detects the host and in no way hinders or reveals the fiend. If the fiend fails, though, the spells treat the host as if it were the fiend, providing information or barring the host as such.

Alternatively, a fiend may spend an additional possession point as a swift action when activating any other possession action to make that action elusive. This suppresses that possession action's expression, increasing the DC to notice the effect by +10.

FIENDISH MANIFESTATION (3 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

The possessing fiend causes its host to undergo a terrible change. Any creature subject to the alter appearance action must succeed on a Will save. If the host fails, the possessing fiend manifests a hint of its presence, perhaps in the form of glowing eyes, an inhuman growl, a ghastly stench, or spontaneous bleeding. This manifestation is obvious to anyone looking at the host. As long as the manifestation persists, the host creature suffers a -2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks.

SUBVERSIVE (3 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 45)

Duration 1 hour/HD or until completed

Saving Throw Will negates

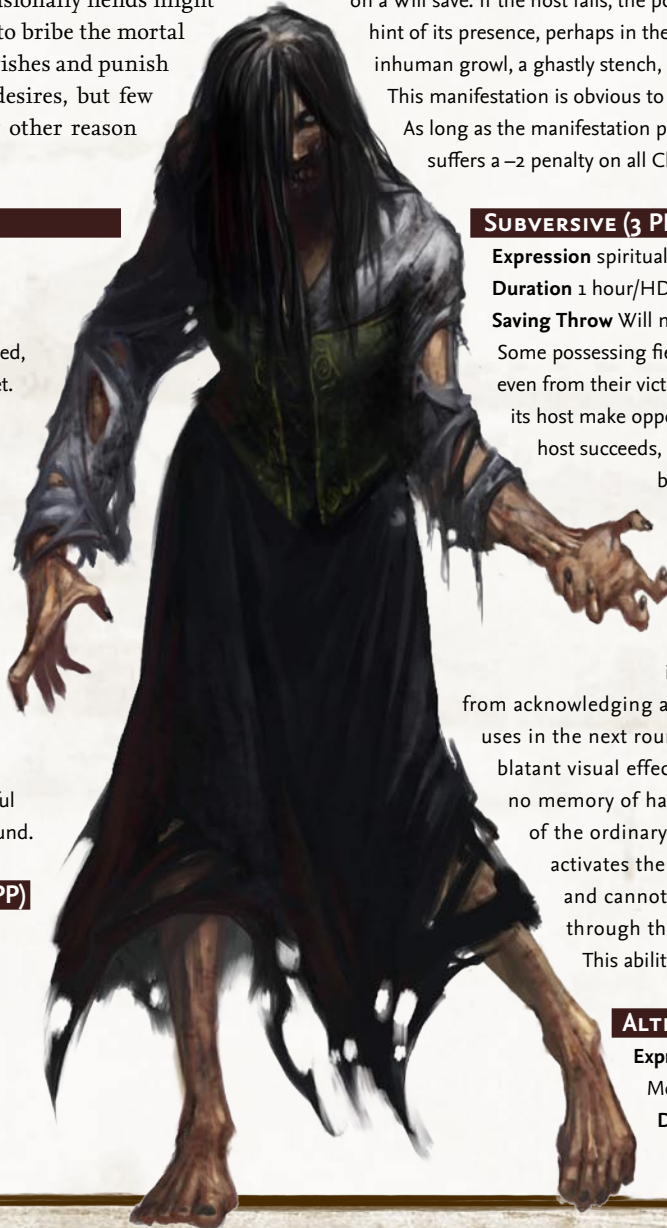
Some possessing fiends wish to remain hidden, even from their victims. To do so, a fiend and its host make opposed Wisdom checks. If the host succeeds, it is aware that some force beyond itself is manipulating it. If the fiend succeeds, it may communicate a simple idea to its host via telepathy, as per the spell *suggestion*. Alternatively, it may prevent its host

from acknowledging a possession action it uses in the next round, even if such has a blatant visual effect—the host simply has no memory of having done anything out of the ordinary. This ability automatically activates the elusive presence ability and cannot be made further elusive through the use of elusive presence. This ability is a mind-affecting effect.

ALTER MOOD (5 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 25)

Duration 1 minute/HD



Council of Thieves

Saving Throw Will negates

The possessing fiend twists positive moods and feelings toward a foul temperament. A fiend using this action forces its host to make a Will save or experience despondent or depressive emotions. A host affected by this ability becomes sickened for the duration of the effect. This is a mind-affecting effect.

FIENDISH FORCE (5 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

The possessing fiend causes its host to rise into the air, manifesting a degree of its malign control over its victim's body. This effect is similar to the spell *levitate*, which the fiend has complete control over and may end at will. The host may make a Will save to resist this effect.

READ THOUGHTS (5 PP)

Expression spiritual (DC 25)

Duration concentration, up to 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

The possessing fiend taps into the mind of the creature it possesses. Like the spell *detect thoughts*, a fiend may peruse the surface thoughts of the host. Unlike the spell, a fiend automatically skips the first and second round results and immediately reads the target it possesses if the host fails a Will save.

VILE GOUT (5 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates, Reflex half

The possessing fiend causes a blast of unnatural force to explode from its host's body. This takes the form of a 15-foot cone of acid, fire, cold, or sonic energy—typically mixed with bodily fluids or unnatural expulsions—that deals 1d6 points of damage for every 2 Hit Dice the fiend possesses. The host may make a Will save to negate this effect. Those within the area of the gout can make a Reflex save to take half damage.

READ MEMORIES (7 PP)

Expression spiritual

Duration instantaneous or 1 round/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

A possessing fiend can use this action to learn more about its host's past experiences. Fiends using this action

essentially ask a question of a host's mind, forcing the host to make a Will save. If the fiend succeeds, it gains the answer to its question if the host possesses such information. Alternatively, a fiend might merely seek painful memories or vague details pertinent to an event, location, or individual. If the host fails its save, the painful memories stagger him for 1 round per HD of the possessing fiend.

DRAIN HOST (7 PP)

Expression physical (Perception DC 10)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude negates

The possessing fiend decreases its host's ability scores. If the host fails to resist this ability, it takes 1d4 points of ability damage to an ability score chosen by the fiend. A fiend cannot reduce a single ability score below 1 by using this ability. Typically, a fiend uses this ability to punish unfavorable actions its host takes.

EMPOWER HOST (7 PP)

Expression physical (Perception DC 20)

Duration 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless)

The possessing fiend enhances its host's prowess by granting a +2 profane bonus to one of its host's ability scores chosen by the fiend. A host can resist this benefit by making a Will save. A possessing fiend may grant this bonus multiple times to either the same or different abilities (additional profane bonuses to the same ability stack when granted by a possessing fiend). Typically, these bonuses also cause some subtle side effect, such as writhing veins rising from one's muscles or a subtly forked tongue. These expressions of fiendish influence have no additional effect and are only noticeable to those who closely examine the host.

DOMINATE BODY (9 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 15)

Duration 1 round/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

The possessing fiend takes control over its host's body and actions. If the host fails to resist this ability, the fiend can direct the creature to attack, cast spells, or otherwise perform any other action so desired. Every round, a dominated host may attempt an additional Will save to break the fiend's control. A fiend cannot dominate a creature more than 4 Hit Dice higher than itself. This is a mind-affecting effect.



In the Fiend's Grasp

ERASE MEMORIES (9 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 35)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates

This powerful ability allows a possessing fiend to selectively alter a host's memories. When using this action, a fiend can manipulate the memories experienced by the host as per the spell *modify memory*. The host may make a Will save to avoid this effect. This is a mind-affecting effect.

MAKE PACT (9 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 35)

Duration see below

Saving Throw none

A possessing fiend and its host constantly struggle for mastery of the body they both possess. Sometimes, though, these two opposing spirits reach an accord, coming to at least a temporary understanding and degree of shared control. In such cases, a fiend and its host may agree to a pact. Both parties must agree to the terms of a pact, usually taking the form of an arrangement where the host allows the fiend to perform some act without his resistance and the fiend allows the host freedom to undertake some act without its interference. This effect takes the form of two *geas/quest* effects, both affecting the same body but under different terms—one stated by the host and one by the fiend. The host and fiend decide in advance in which order their goals will be pursued. As this arrangement must be voluntary, no save is required. This is not a spell effect and cannot be removed by spells that normally affect *geas/quest*; rather, the fiendish or mortal personality compels the body to a certain stated course. When both parties have completed their goals, the pact ends. Fiends typically attempt to mislead or confuse their host with the terms or weight of their side of a pact, but so long as the host agrees to a pact and the stated goals of the pact remain the same, the host cannot renege due to specifics. A pact does not necessarily represent cooperation between a fiend and its host, however, as some fiends use this action as a contract in order to ensure the host fulfills obligations.

TRANSFER SPELL-LIKE ABILITY (9 PP)

Expression Physical (Perception DC 30)

Duration 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless)

The possessing fiend grants its host a taste of its unnatural powers. The fiend imbues its host with the ability to utilize one of its spell-like abilities (chosen by the fiend) for the ability's duration. Utilizing this spell-like ability is a standard action for the host, but is treated as being used by the fiend for the purposes of determining caster level and save DCs. A host might be able to utilize this ability multiple times, but cannot use it more times per day than the fiend itself could. Typically a fiend uses this action as a way to endear the host to its presence or as a way to show the greater power of its fiendish ways.

Exorcism

Combating possession ranks among the most unusual and dangerous acts heroes might ever have to perform.

Detecting Possession: Spells like *detect evil* reveal contradictory information when targeting the victim of fiendish influence, revealing multiple auras emanating from one being. Skilled exorcists might also detect a possession. Both Perception (for physical effects) and Sense Motive (for spiritual effects) might reveal a fiend as its possession actions influence an individual, though they do nothing to detect a dormant fiend.

Ending Possession: The most direct way to expel a possessing fiend is via *banishment*, *dismissal*, or *dispel evil* (or *dispel law* or *dispel chaos*, depending on the type of fiend). These spells drive the fiend from its host, but do not return the creature to its home plane, typically causing the monstrosity to manifest in its true form nearby. Many fiends, however, find this kind of exposure counterproductive to their ultimate goals and flee to seek another suitable host, while others might become enraged and attack the meddling exorcist.

A far riskier method of ending a possession involves an invitation by the exorcist to the possessing fiend to leave its current host to take up residence in the exorcist's body (or in the body of a nearby volunteer). An exorcist can force a possessing fiend to leave its current host and attempt the new possession by making a successful Intimidate check to demoralize the fiend. Typically, the exorcist taking such a bold risk hopes to make his own saving throw to resist the possession or protects himself with magic before making this risky attempt. If the fiend fails to possess the exorcist, it can immediately try to repossess its original host, who can attempt to resist this possession by making a Will save. If the fiend fails to return to its host, it manifests in its physical form in a space adjacent to the host, and is typically infuriated.

Object Possession

A fiend possesses objects either as a way to control them or as a way to infiltrate a body in a clandestine manner. A fiend in possession of an object can perform the following possession actions. Unless otherwise specified, these actions take a full-round action. While possessing an object, a fiend retains its normal senses, and may sense in every direction around the object, but otherwise perceives its surroundings as normal. Often a possessed item exhibits unusual characteristics, such as an unnatural tarnish, an accumulation of greasy film on its surface, or an unnaturally temperature. Even when these effects are not present, a creature can detect something strange about the item by utilizing spells like *detect evil*.

Council of Thieves

SEED (3 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive 30)

Duration 1 hour

Saving Throw none

The fiend weakens the will of a creature in contact with the object it possesses. This action causes a creature holding the possessed object to gradually become more vulnerable to the possessing fiend's influence. Upon using this ability, a fiend subtly invades the mind of a creature touching the item it possesses. After 5 minutes, if the same creature has remained in contact with the possessed object, the target takes a -4 penalty on Will saves made to resist attempts by that fiend to possess its body. This effect lasts for 24 hours. The target does not receive a saving throw against this effect.

READ USER (5 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive 15)

Duration concentration, up to 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

The fiend taps into the mind of a creature in contact with the object it possesses. This action mimics the *detect thoughts* spell, except that the possessing fiend immediately picks up on the surface thoughts of the creature touching the object. The target may attempt a Will save to block the fiend from its mind. This effect continues for as long as the target remains in contact with the possessed object.

ANIMATION, MINOR (7 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration 1 round/HD

Saving Throw none

A fiend possessing an object can cause that object to move at its command. This allows a fiend to cause any object of Large size or smaller to function as an animated object for a number of minutes equal to its Hit Dice. Alternatively, a fiend can merely cause the object to *levitate*, as per the spell, for the same amount of time.

CORRUPT USER (7 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 30)

Duration 1 hour/HD or until completed

Saving Throw Will negates

The fiend influences the actions of a creature in contact with the object it possesses, telepathically implanting a suggestion (as per the spell *suggestion*). While acting upon this suggestion, the target's alignment is detected as being the same as the fiend's. This does not change the way in which the target acts, merely how alignment-revealing magic perceives him. This is a mind-affecting effect.

DISPEL ENHANCEMENT (7 PP)

Expression physical

Duration 1 hour/HD

Saving Throw none

A fiend possessing a magic item can suppress the imbued magic

of the object for a short period. To use this action, the fiend makes a special dispel check (1d20 + the fiend's HD, maximum +10) against the caster level of the magic item. If the fiend succeeds, all magical properties of the item are suppressed for a number of hours equal to the fiend's Hit Dice, or until the fiend chooses to end the effect.

REINVIGORATION (7 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration 1 hour/HD

Saving Throw none

A fiend possessing an object may transpose a portion of its being into a corpse within 10 feet per HD of the object's possessing fiend. This allows the fiend to raise skeletons and zombies as per the spell *animate dead*. The possessing fiend's Hit Dice serve as the caster level for the purposes of this effect. This use of *animate dead* does not require a material component, but the undead created are not permanent, collapsing back to corpses as soon as the ability's duration expires.

ENHANCE (9 PP)

Expression physical (Perception 20)

Duration 1 day

Saving Throw none

A fiend possessing an object can imbue the item with its profane energies to mimic magical enchantment. When a fiend uses this action, it grants the possessed item magical properties equal to 1,000 gp per Hit Die the fiend possesses. This action is typically used on weapons and armor, though a fiend can duplicate other magic items if it possesses an appropriate item. The possessed item does not need to be of masterwork quality for the fiend to bestow these magical properties. For example, a 9-HD erinyes can imbue an item with up to 9,000 gp worth of magical properties. Thus the erinyes can make a normal longsword perform as if it were a +2 *longsword* or even a +1 *vicious longsword*. Likewise, the same erinyes could possess an amulet and cause it to act as an *amulet of natural armor* +2.

The fiend, and not the user of the object, is in control of the properties of the item, even if it has been forced into possessing the item via a spell like *planar ally* or *planar binding*. Each use of this ability lasts for 24 hours or until the fiend dismisses the effect. The fiend can remove these properties at will, and when the fiend leaves the item, the magical properties immediately vanish. A fiend cannot cause an item to take on properties other than those typical to its shape (one could not create a +1 *vicious helmet*, for example).

ANIMATION, MAJOR (13 PP)

Expression physical (automatic)

Duration 1 round/HD

Saving Throw none

A fiend possessing an object can cause that object and those around it to move at its command. This effect is identical to the *animate objects* spell, except that the object the fiend possesses

In the Fiend's Grasp

must be included among the items to be animated. The possessing fiend's Hit Dice serve as the caster level for the purposes of this effect. In addition, all animated objects gain a fly speed equal to the fiend's highest movement speed with perfect maneuverability.

Possessed Locations

A fiend can nestle itself within a location in order to taint the place with evil and potentially corrupt or assault a number of targets. Fiends possessing places generally choose locations already welcoming of evil, or mundane sites with little worry for matters otherworldly. A fiend possess a distinct, roughly spherical space based on its Hit Dice. This location might be as simple as a single room in a building, or an entire castle. An imp spy might possess the town's well, while a maralith might influence an entire demon-tainted grove. While in possession of a location, a fiend can perform a small number of actions, usually in the interest of finding a suitable creature for bodily possession. Some fiends possess their lairs as a way to maintain awareness throughout an area and more easily enslave interlopers and minions.

A fiend in possession of a location can perform the following possession actions. Unless otherwise specified, these actions take a full-round action. While possessing a location, a fiend sees everything within the area it possesses, using its own senses. It perceives areas outside of this space as if it were a viewer standing at any edge of its possessed area. Often a possessed area exhibits unusual characteristics, such as strange temperature shifts, eerie noises, or noxious scents. Even when these effects are not present, a creature can detect something strange about the location by utilizing spells like *detect evil*.

SEED AREA (5 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 30)

Duration 1 hour

Saving Throw none

A fiend possessing a location weakens the willpower of those within its area, allowing an easier path to bodily possession. Upon using this ability, a fiend subtly invades the mind of a creature within the location it inhabits. After 5 minutes, if the same creature has remained within the possessed area, the target takes a –2 penalty on Will saves made to resist attempts by that fiend to possess its body. This effect last for 24 hours. The target does not receive a saving throw against this effect.

READ INHABITANTS (7 PP)

Expression spiritual (Sense Motive DC 15)

Duration concentration, up to 1 minute/HD

Saving Throw Will negates

A fiend can tap into the mind of creatures in the area it possesses. This action mimics the spell *detect thoughts* with a caster level

equal to the fiend's Hit Dice. The targets of this action can attempt Will saves throw to resist this effect.

DOMINION (VARIABLE PP)

Expression physical (Perception DC 20)

Duration see below

Saving Throw see below

A fiend possessing a location can manipulate the area it controls to terrifying ends. At will, the fiend can make use of any of the following spell-like abilities to affect creatures within the area it possesses. It can "cast" these spell-like abilities from any physical point within the area of its possessed location.

o (1 PP)—*dancing lights, ghost sound, open/close, prestidigitation, whispering wind*

1st (3 PP)—*animate rope, grease, hold portal, hypnotism, obscuring mist, sleep, silent image, unseen servant*

2nd (5 PP)—*command undead, darkness, gust of wind, magic mouth, make whole, misdirection, phantom trap, shatter, sound burst*

3rd (7 PP)—*dispel magic, major image, nondetection, suggestion*

In every case, the caster level for these spell-like abilities equals the possessing fiend's Hit Dice and the cost in possession points equals 1 + the spell's level. None of these effects, regardless of its potential range or space, extends beyond the space of the fiend's possession.





Path of the Hellknight

Beyond grim armor and merciless action, the Hellknights stand as emblems of discipline and dedication to unquestionable law. Forsaking their own personalities and individuality in the crusade to tame the world for civilized beings, Hellknights strive to stamp out the chaotic and wild natures rampant in the souls of the lands they patrol, seeking to create a future cleansed of man's innate savagery. More than a mere knighthood of vigilantes, these ebon-armored warriors assault the violence and madness of the world, arming themselves with the shields of disciplined, emotionless minds and the harsh weapons and mercilessness of the infernal realm. They care nothing for circumstance or technicalities, only for their ironclad vision of justice, which stands as the razor-thin bulwark between survival and the eradication of their kind at the claws of a world rampant with enemies and monstrosities.

The mind of a Hellknight proves greater than that of other fanatic or legitimized brutes. Theirs is a philosophy

steeped in the laws of one of Golarion's greatest empires and honed by grand virtues, martial genius, and exemplars of one of the greatest orders in all existence. With a pedigree reaching back more than a century and influence spanning continents, the Hellknights' ways and philosophies strike upon a fundamental truth dormant within all mortal souls, a path welcoming to those with the control to claim mastery over themselves, and who would selflessly strive for a world greater than poorly masked barbarity.

Presented here are the secrets behind the grim knighthood known as the Hellknights. The specifics of their orders' shared history, their dour keeps, and their rigid philosophy, while known in degrees by their members, remain mysterious to the majority of their wards and targets. This is the second installment in a series on Hellknights, with the details of their specific orders and the fearful Hellknight prestige class appearing in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #27.

"You are not being expected to sell your soul—we care not for your needs of faith or piety so long as they don't interfere with your duty. During this test, we expect you to know fear, to feel pain, and to learn. Before you stands a legionnaire drawn bodily from its place among the very hordes of Hell. In this creature you will find unquestionable, unrelenting evil. Yet look closer and you will discover a skill refined over countless mortal lifetimes and a discipline beyond your comprehension. This terror is both opponent and teacher. Fight past your cowardice and emulate its ways, and you will have nothing to fear from mere mortal opponents. Fail, and know in death the weakness of your mettle."

—Paravicar Acillmar, Speech before Hellknight armigers' first trial



HISTORY OF THE HELLKNIGHTS

The origin of the Hellknights stretches back over 130 years, to a time when the wickedness of a single city and the losses of one man gave rise to a knighthood whose influence today holds entire realms within its iron grip.

The White Plague

- 4573 The White Plague—regular murders and suicides perpetrated and encouraged by an organization known as the Path of Grace—sweeps Westcrown. The Path of Grace recruits from among noble, wealthy, and entitled Aroden worshipers, hiding its true devotion to Sifkesh, demon lord of heresy and suicide.
- 4575, Pharast Lileia Ruel, the wife of the well-known and notably pious veteran Daidian Ruel, is publicly murdered at the edge of the Miratanza, Westcrown's floating market. Her killers are never identified, though the Path of Grace is implicated.
- 4575, Lamashan Eris Ruel, Daidian's son, commits suicide, overdosing on pesh at the urging of Path of Grace cultists. Distraught, Daidian Ruel publicly renounces Aroden.
- 4575, Neth Ruel organizes a group of former soldiers and guardsmen to hunt the Path of Grace.
- 4576, Abadius Ruel and his men prove exceptionally effective in hunting down cultists, yet the influence held by numerous cult members sees many released within hours of their arrest.
- 4576, Gozran Ruel's men resort to acts of increasing severity and vigilante justice. Although the group is widely praised among the populace, the dottari reject their methods.
- 4576, Desnus Six of Ruel's men are imprisoned for publicly beating three members of the Path of Grace, maiming two and killing one.
- 4576, Sarenrith Daidian Ruel is arrested after two confessed cultists of Sifkesh are publicly scourged

to death. Ruel spends less than 6 hours imprisoned before his men, against his wishes, break him from jail. The outlaws flee Westcrown to take up residence with Ruel's family near the Taldan ruin of Fort Rivad.

4576, Sarenith Ruel returns to Westcrown to explain his case before King Gaspodar and face his just punishment. On the eve of the Feast of Founder Dotara, Ruel gives his famed "Merciless" speech before Gaspodar's court. Inspired by Ruel's discipline and selflessness, the king pardons the veteran and commissions him to form a new knightly order, broadly mandated with the task of hunting down those who would confound the efforts of civilized men—largely in an effort to set the capital to rights before the arrival of the god of civilization. Ruel accepts his king's command, but fervently rejects the consecration of Aroden's church.

4576, Erastus Aroden's faithful denounce Ruel and his new knightly order, granting them the title "Hellknights." Ruel un.masks members of the Path of Grace among the church of Aroden's most esteemed benefactors, followed swiftly by their dramatic public executions.

4576, Arodus The newly formed Hellknights lay siege to the Wiscrani underworld.

4577, Desnus By the spring of 4577, the Hellknights succeed in stomping out the cult of Sifkesh. Ruel lays the head of the false cleric Attromia at King Gaspodar's feet, so ending the White Plague.

The Coming of Hell

4577, Sarenrith Delighted with Ruel's efforts, King Gaspodar authorizes the restoration of Fort Rivad as the knights' permanent home, as well as funds for greater arming and recruitment.

Council of Thieves

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|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| 4580, Neth | Citadel Rivad completed. | 4607, Calistril | Gaspodar orders Hellknights to Molthune and Andoran to keep order. |
| 4581, Gozran | Ruel quietly begins investigations into the afterlife, particularly the fate of suicides. | 4608, Rova | Hellknights ordered to Galt and outlying reaches of the empire. |
| 4581, Rova | Ruel enlists the aid of wizard and political ally Sheel Leroung in his research. | 4609, Kuthona | With royal allowance, Lictor Thels organizes the Hellknights into orders, creating the Orders of the Chain, Gate, Pyre, Scourge, and Thorn, each capable of autonomous action. Thels retains control over the Order of the Scourge in Westcrown. |
| 4581, Kuthona | Ruel becomes convinced that his son's spirit has been condemned to Avernus, the first layer of Hell. His research turns toward matters of death, damnation, and devilkind. | 4611, Sarenith | Hellknights ordered to Sargava. |
| 4582, Rova | Ruel calls upon Leroung to summon forth a devil, beginning a lengthy series of such interrogations. Impressed with his discoveries, yet respectful of the dangers and temptations of fiends, Ruel gradually incorporates examples gleaned from the Outer Spheres' oldest and most effective legions into his own teachings and disciplines, and eventually into the Hellknights' bylaws. | 4616, Gozran | The Hellknights' effectiveness as agents of the crown leads a desperate King Gaspodar to mandate additional orders without the consultation of the existing lictors. These new Hellknight orders operate largely outside of the Chelish heartland and lack the discipline of older orders. |
| 4586, Erastus | Coerced by the gelugon Voulgarghas, Ruel begins seeking methods to recover his lost son's soul. | 4619, Abadius | Hellknights of the Order of the Chain slay Admiral Glettz and his supporters among the Serterrian family at the Battle of Shatter Hull. |
| 4589, Calistril | Citadel Rivad is nearly consumed in flames as the library catches fire. The same night, Ruel, now a man of nearly 70, rides unaccompanied to the northwest, leaving behind the body of Leroung's most ambitious apprentice. The founder of the Hellknights is never seen again. | 4622, Neth | The senile King Gaspodar is mysteriously slain within his safe rooms at the heart of the Korradath, his palace in Westcrown. His left ring finger and royal seal go missing. |
| 4589, Pharast | Following Ruel's disappearance, Aligois Thels, one of Ruel's first two-dozen Hellknights and a brilliant naval veteran, steps forth to lead the knighthood. | 4623, Arodus | Seldinin Choaz, Order of the Pyre master of blades and former paladin of Aroden, leads four of his brethren to aid the First Mendevian Crusade. After significant victories abroad, they are unofficially dubbed the Order of the God Claw. |
| 4589, Arodus | Thels envisions the Hellknights eventually replacing Chelixa's tired, inheritance-based military. He launches a restructuring within the knighthood, adding a hierarchy of ranks and duties modeled after the ancient legions of Jistka. | 4627, Rova | The people of Almas slaughter the Hellknight pretenders calling themselves the Order of the High Crown after their ransacking of the temple of Aroden. |
| 4590, Rova | King Gaspodar approves the creation of two new Hellknight fortresses: Citadel Demain near Egorian and Citadel Krane near Ostenso. | 4629, Neth | Lictor Thels dies of natural causes. Lictor Ardaot succeeds him. The Scouge's influence over the other orders significantly declines. |
| 4596, Neth | Military dissension results in a contingent of Hellknights being ordered to Corentyn. The foundations of Citadel Gheradesca are laid later that year. | 4634, Arodus | The capture of a spy at Citadel Demain opens a dialogue between the Order of the Thorn and House Thrune. |
| 4599, Lamashan | As an unprecedented favor to Sheel Leroung, Lictor Thels grants the wizard leave to take 20 Hellknights into the western reaches of the Menador Mountains on a private venture. In return, the nobleman funds the creation of a new Hellknight fortress there, Citadel Enferac. | 4634, Rova | Two dozen House Thrune supporters and lesser scions are slain by the Order of the Thorn during a misunderstanding as their leaders attempt to meet. |
| | | 4634, Neth | Lictor DiLavos of the Order of the Thorn and Agahman of House Thrune meet in Egorian, beginning a series of such meetings and political debates. |
| | | 4635, Abadius | Lictor DiLavos—seeing parallels between Thrune's infernal interests and those of the Hellknights—agrees with Agahman Thrune |

The Infernal War

- 4606, Arodus Aroden dies, leaving the Empire of Chelixa without a divine mandate. Chelixa gradually slides toward civil war.

Path of the Hellknight

- that if any remnant of Chelish law is to survive it must be in a country at peace with itself.
- 4635, Pharast Lictor DiLavos organizes the Council of Lictors, assembling the other Hellknight leaders of the Chelish heartland, and broaches the near-heretical topic of allying with House Thrune. After initial suspicion of DiLavos's loyalty and motives, a lengthy series of debates follows.
- 4635, Gozran The Council of Lictors ends with Lictor Ihonudayn of the Order of the Pyre storming from the proceedings in an unprecedented fit of rage. The Orders of the Scourge, Chain, Gate, and Thorn reach agreement to ally with House Thrune.
- 4635, Desnus Four Hellknight orders make clear their intentions to support House Thrune. Many of their former allies among the embattled imperialists brand them as betrayers. The Order of the Scourge battles its former Wiscrani allies in what comes to be known as the Dospera Massacre.
- 4635, Sarenith The siding of the Order of the Chain with the Corentyn rebels contributes to events precipitating the Battle of a Hundred Kings.
- 4635, Arodus The Order of the Pyre lays siege to Citadel Demain outside Egorian. The Siege of Demain lasts nearly 2 weeks, with the Order of the Thorn losing more than half their number, including Lictor DiLavos.
- 4635, Rova Hellknights of the Chain and Scourge arrive in Egorian to end the Siege of Demain. Seeing his impending defeat, Lictor Ihonudayn launches a brazen assault, igniting a fire that claims more than half the fortress and the lives of most of the remaining Thorn Hellknights. The battle ends with Lictor Ihonudayn's head piked amid the smoldering remains of Citadel Demain.
- 4635, Lamashan Citadel Krane taken by the Order of the Scourge without loss of life.
- 4640, Calistril The Chelish Civil War officially ends. Queen Abrogail I of House Thrune ascends the throne.
- 4640, Pharast Queen Abrogail I invites the Order of the Scourge to serve as her personal guard and police force, with similar roles proposed for the other orders. Lictor Jaisade of the Scourge bluntly declines, explaining that the Hellknights will continue to serve the empire and spread their vision of law, but as their code alone deems fit. The queen nearly orders the imprisonment of Jaisade, but acquiesces, declaring her house's debt to the knights fulfilled by this mercy.
- 4663, Desnus The Order of the Scourge destroys the long rebellious Order of the Crux in Nidal, slaying all members and burning Citadel Gheisteno.
- 4665, Kuthona The Order of the God Claw abandons the Leaden Cathedral in Medev at the start of the Third Mendevian Crusade. Returning to Chelias, the Order of the Pyre sponsors the small but wealthy order. Construction of Citadel Dinyar begins soon after.
- 4682, Abadius Queen Domina courts the Order of the Nail, convincing them to move from Citadel Draythe near Remesiana to Varisia. Construction of Citadel Vraid begins.
- 4688 Pharast Graveknights calling themselves the Order of the Crux appear along the boarder of Nidal and Molthune.
- 4693 Neth The Pathfinder Dairus Blansmier attempts to infiltrate Citadel Enferac, home of the notoriously reclusive Order of the Gate. He is found in Kintargo months later, a mute and seemingly mindless living zombie.
- 4695 Neth The Order of the Pyre attempts to create a second citadel in Sargava. It is destroyed by natives during construction. The Pyre abandons the country, leaving a few vengeful members to form the Order of the Coil.

The Modern Hellknights

- 4636–4640 The Hellknights aid House Thrune in the reclamation of Chelias.
- 4638, Abadius Those Hellknights mandated by King Gaspodar to defend the empire's frontiers are disbanded by order of the heartland. Members are invited to seek readmission into different orders, leading to the reestablishment of the defunct Order of the Pyre and the creation of the Orders of the Nail, Rack, and Vice, along with several smaller orders.
- 4639, Sarenith The Order of the Scourge relocates to Citadel Demain, reconstructing and expanding it to
- 4701 Arodus The outlying Order of the Scar prevents the assassination of Chul al'Khawaht, first minister of internals at Venicaan College of Medicaments and Chiurgery in Katheer. Agents of the church of Norgorber are implicated.
- 4706 Lamashan The noble scion Baidair Sarini attempts to join the Order of the Scourge and is rejected. She and several companions are slain soon after attempting to ambush a lone Hellknight in Egorian. Furious, House Sarini entreats House Thrune to abolish the order, but is ignored.



*Citadel
Enferac.*

100%

HELLKNIGHT CITADELS

The ominous citadels of the Hellknights serve as invincible bastions, infernal training grounds, and cold refuges from the vehemence of a world that rages in defiance of order. More than capable of defending against vast numbers of invaders, each citadel also serves the unique needs of its resident order, some being mere martial bastions, others holding their own vast libraries, galleries, chapels, or even more unusual features. Over the course of decades, many of these fastnesses have become the centers of fearful tales, laden with menacing reputations by the fearful whispers and vengeful tales of a wary populace.

Citadel Demain

Order: Order of the Scourge

Location: West of Egorian

If the Hellknights were to have one true center of command, it would be Citadel Demain. Located at the heart of the Chelish empire, a mere stone's throw from the capital itself, Demain serves as the home of the original order of Hellknights. Although the modern Order of the Scourge holds no special influence over its brethren, Demain's reconstruction in 4639 added vault-like meeting halls to host and protect the leaders of every faction during the knighthood's rare conclaves. Since the end of the Chelish civil war, the lictors of the Scourge have warily eyed their supposed allies among House Thrune, watchful for signs of treachery. Rumors hold that the Scourge has long labored in secret to create an underground highway between Demain and a redoubt deep in the Barrowood, as insurance should Cheliah's capricious rulers ever turn their ire upon the knighthood. The walls of Citadel Demain prove noteworthy in two regards. Much of the innermost curtain was built using the ruins of the fortress that burned in the same location over 50 years ago. These stones, of a darker rock and still bearing the scars of the fire that felled the keep, are said to hold a strange warmth and, in some cases, traces of fallen Hellknights—rent armor, blade scratches, or fused bone. In addition, three moats ring the rising fortress, each connected by cascades and ascents allowing strange, rarely seen shadows to slip through the curtain walls. Great submerged moat gates protect the citadel from water-bound trespassers, but also what might live within the Hellknights' moats, few dare to speculate.

Citadel Dinyar

Order: Order of the God Claw

Location: Northern Aspodell Mountains

Cathedral-fortress to the Order of the God Claw and their private pantheon of deities, Citadel Dinyar straddles the line between martial function and spiritual monument.

Here the steeples and cloisters of a mountain monastery rise in grim fortification, appearing more as a stronghold that has been embellished by devotion than a temple posing as a castle. The grim visors of the order's five helmeted deities stare down from sculpted ramparts, judging both those within and any who would seek to defile their holy ground. Gates festooned with great chains and the corpses of cultists and heretics block passage through the inner and outer walls, as well as the gate to the Ardant Fist, the citadel's unconquerable chapel-keep. Within, a mustering ground of polished stone glimmers darkly beneath a vaulted ceiling, steel and broken metal hang upon the high walls creating ironclad images that other faiths depict in weak glass, creating a harsh sanctuary for the God Claw's daily devotions. High above, shrouded amid buttressed steeples, hide the five Empyrean Edicts—five great bells, each devoted to one of the order's deities—that boom out both calls to prayer and bellicose commands with their unmistakable tones. Far below, locked away beneath the halls and garrisons of their brethren, lie the chambers of the God Claw's feared inquisitorial knights. These crimson-clad Hellknights seek to guard their brethren's souls and prevent any from wandering from the core tenants of their faith. Faltering knights are chastised, but those who cross the line into true heresy, to the extent that they would normally be expelled from the order, instead vanish into the inquisitors' nightmare-haunted dungeons, never to be seen again.

Citadel Enferac

Order: Order of the Gate

Location: West Menador Mountains

Little is known of the mysterious Citadel Enferac—just as the clandestine Order of the Gate intends. Constructed by inhuman hands, a portion of the fortress rises upon the slopes of Mount Nyisaid, though the majority lies within, spread through great caverns and claustrophobic halls, protected from even the most zealous assaults by walls of eternal stone and potent spells. The smoke of untold forges, laboratories, and strange devices rise from the fortress like eerie pennants, while spiked towers and precarious walkways mar the higher slopes. At the mountain's summit, the iron statue of a gigantic Hellknight stands bold and battle-ready, guarding an entryway for visitors more accustomed to traveling the skies than the land. Within, all the garrisons, training halls, armories, libraries, and fortifications of a true Hellknight citadel sprawl alongside the halls and workshops of signifiers and allied mages. Tales escaping from the secluded bastion tell of a prison for terrible creatures, a pit into a black eternity, a passage to a realm of which none dare speak, and secrets both stranger and darker lurking within the holdings of the Hellknights' most esoteric order.



Citadel Gheradesca

Order: Order of the Chain

Location: North of Corentyn

The lictors of the Order of the Chain have long touted Citadel Gheradesca as the most perfect prison in all of Avistan, and indeed such claims may be true. Perched upon a sharp spear of land just off the storm-scoured Orneian Reach, Gheradesca can only be reached by land at low tide, connected to the mainland by a quarter-mile-long bar of natural stone. All other times, travelers must brave the notoriously rough seas and dagger rocks near the Straits of Aroden, a short but treacherous voyage made all the deadlier by rumors of cliff-dwelling terrors and scavenging “sea wyrms” drawn to the area by the prison-citadel’s discarded dead. Upon achieving the isle rock, visitors are greeted by broad stairs endlessly lashed by stinging salt and freezing waves that circle the jagged cliffs, winding past hidden guard posts and ambush sites. Those dedicated few who reach the citadel itself find a tower just as foreboding and unwelcoming as the violent cliffs it rises upon. Within lie the halls and refuges of the Order of the Chain, yet above—and some say, deep into the earth and past even the waves below—stretches a prison considered inescapable by many of the powers across Avistan. The Order of the Chain welcomes rightfully jailed prisoners—even the occasional outcast seeking a spartan refuge from unjust pursuit—as long as they are regularly paid for such grim curatorship. Over the decades the Chain has created holdings to contain the most unusual, sensitive, or unkillable prisoners, with the citadel’s depths rumored to be more akin to a Hellish menagerie than a perfectly run penitentiary.

Citadel Krane

Order: Order of the Pyre

Location: South of Ostenso

The seaside fortress of the Order of the Pyre coils around a natural harbor, its foundations built into the rising shore cliffs to grant it command over both nearby land and sea. The only Hellknight citadel to host its own fleet of warships, Citadel Krane watches over nearly three-dozen black-sailed vessels, heavy ships shod in dark metal and crewed by lightly armored Hellknights. Apart from its harbor, Krane hosts what’s become known as the Godless Gallery, a museum of unholy artifacts and cultic writings that either defy destruction or hold the potential to be turned against their blasphemous creators. Priestly signifiers well guarded against incursions of the mind and soul protect the collection, granting access only to the order’s lictor, master of blades, and paravicar. The order’s signifiers also maintain “undoctrination halls” within the fortress’s bowels, which the order claims can liberate even the most zealous heretic or savage from the bonds of

their delusions and backward beliefs. The Order of the Pyre typically has little interest in redeeming those who practice corrupt faiths, yet special exceptions to the policy of swift execution occasionally arise, typically among useful foreign figures or within their own ranks.

Citadel Rivad

Order: Order of the Rack

Location: West of Westcrown

Cloaked in the ashes of heretical scrolls, inflammatory quartos, and tomes of dangerous lore, Citadel Rivad stands as the oldest and most esteemed bastion of the Hellknights' cause. Crowning a rise amid the gloomy Turanian Hills, Rivad spent its earliest days as a holding of Taldan explorers, and for long ages a ruin. The citadel's rise came with the formation and mandating of the Hellknights in their earliest days, where it long served as the headquarters of the original Order of the Scourge, resurrected from dilapidation by the gold of the old Chelish Empire and remade as a symbol of absolute law. The model to which every following Hellknight citadel would adhere, Rivad stands as an embodiment of the virtues of discipline, mercilessness, and law, its walls of black and gray granite having weathered the storms of southern Chelias remarkably well over the decades. As the second fortress to rise upon its location, though, Citadel Rivad still bears the original foundations of the Taldan Fort Rivad, and claims occasionally arise of passages and entire catacombs hidden within secret subbasements. Even stranger tales come from the keep's reconstructed Duskmoor Tower, which nearly burned to the ground in the wake of Hellknight founder Daidian Ruel's disappearance, and sightings of a door opening into an entire spectral library. No word or inquiry into such reports has ever been permitted by the Order of the Rack, however, as such fanciful tales and wild imaginings embody exactly the kind of distracting and potentially destructive knowledge the order seeks to quell.

Citadel Vraid

Order: Order of the Nail

Location: South of Korvosa

Nearly 30 years old, the youngest Hellknight citadel stands as a monument to dashed colonial hopes and the misconceptions of a desperate queen. Yet, despite being built by Korvosan coin and the labor and artifice of non-Hellknights, the fortress stands as fearsome and daunting as any of its Chelish kin. Citadel Vraid owes its defensibility more to the ruggedness of the Menador Mountains and its steep ascent than particularly ingenious construction, yet the elaborate demonic faces leering down from its ramparts and the numerous steel-shod towers jutting like pikes from the citadel's heart do their own part to

deter even the most fleeting thought of attack. Despite the stalwartness of Order of the Nail Hellknights, though, Citadel Vraid has long distressed its occupants. Reports tell of strange veins of emerald tracing the fortress's walls during violent storms and a tradition of swiftly hushed murders within seemingly impregnable inner chambers. While tales of vengeful Shoanti spirits and the curses of disappointed Korvosan royalty often arise as explanations, the commanders of the Nail have come to fear a stranger truth, as evidence exists that the foundations of their keep were constructed from the monolithic stones of a displaced Thassilonian ruin that formerly lay among the foothills of the Menadors. What ancient magic or dislocated spirits this act might have awakened remains largely mysterious, though on more than one instance the lictor of the Order of the Nail has spent considerable time weighing the importance of their work in Varisia against the familiarity and sanity of returning to Chelias.

Ruined Citadels

Over the course of the Hellknights' existence more than one holding has risen and subsequently fallen. Whether to the hands of enemies, other Hellknights, or stranger events, the ruins of the knighthood linger on, in many cases surviving past the death of the orders that constructed them.

Citadel Darvhage: Exemplars of the Measure and the Chain, the Order of the Vice was wiped out and its fortress, Citadel Darvhage on the north shore of Lake Sorrow, reduced to rubble. None can say what enemy annihilated the order (though the eerie transformations that afflict the ruins may offer clues), but the order's interest in defending Chelias from corruptive forces from beyond the mortal realm harkens toward some manner of extraplanar retaliation.

Citadel Gheisteno: The home of the traitorous Order of the Crux died along with its cruel leaders in 4663, consumed by a hellish conflagration south of the Nidaleese city of Ridwan. When the Crux seemed to reappear in 4688 under the command of three murderous graveknights, so too did a grim parody of their former fortress. Now lurking in a valley on the southern Nidal-Molthune border, this new Citadel Gheisteno greatly resembles its destroyed namesake, though countless charred skulls grin from the mortar of the fortresses jet-black walls.

New Krane: The attempted secondary, Garundi base for the Order of the Pyre, New Krane was hardly popular among the natives of Sargava. When a union of tribes besieged and destroyed the citadel midway through its construction outside Eleder, the Pyre abandoned its holdings, leaving a small retinue of diehards to form the Order of the Coil in 4695.

HELLKNIGHT PHILOSOPHIES

Firmly believing that the only way society can hope to survive itself is by the strict and unflinching application of law, Hellknights seek to enforce order not as a courtesy or social option but as an imperative. Viewing mankind as innately drawn to chaos and self-destruction, the harsh knighthood posits that only by firm guidance and willingness to expunge the sickest elements of the social body might the whole survive and ultimately strive toward utopia. They are hardly high-minded idealists, though, seeing themselves as tools and exemplars that, should their ideals take hold, will one day no longer be necessary. Thus, each Hellknight is a tyrant, exacting his order's strictures in the hopes of reordering society one soul at a time.

The Hellknight vision of justice proves far stricter than that of most societies, being based upon the centuries-old legal codes of Cheliox and ancient Taldor, as well as drawing from what its founders viewed as the best of infernal organization. Through the decades, this Hellknight code has become known as "the Measure and the Chain." This vast, regularly amended body of dictums serves a two-fold purpose: the Measure consolidating thousands of strictures into a single massive codex of laws by which all crimes might be proscribed and punished, while the Chain delineates disciplines all Hellknights are expected not just to obey, but to embody.

The Measure

Presenting a guide to a strict and ordered society, the Measure is contained within dozens of tomes kept in each Hellknight citadel, with most knights keeping personal abridgments. The crimes presented within number in the thousands, each highly specific and described in detail, along with cold, unquestionable reasoning for castigation. The code wastes little time suggesting methods of punishment for the acts it proscribes, yet when these edicts are viewed through the lens of the Chain, few Hellknights allow for punishments less severe than physical chastisement or death. The Hellknights path is, after all, one of justice—or perhaps more accurately, justness—not righteousness, and examples prove far more effective deterrents than warnings.

The Chain

Ruling over the hearts and minds of every Hellknight, the Chain seeks to bind the animalistic, destructive urges of the heart. At its core, this philosophy encourages discipline through physical trials, be they recitation, memorization, and meditation upon the Measure or exposure to extremes of stress, fear, and pain that threaten to break all but the most devoted souls. At its more philosophical level, the Chain concerns itself with three virtues: order, discipline, and mercilessness, each divided into twin dictates. These

virtues rule over every aspect of a Hellknight's life—the personal, the societal, and the practical.

Order: Above all things, Hellknights strive for order. Through the lens of order Hellknights envision a future free from fear, waste, or want. Every step a Hellknight takes is a step toward the reordering of the world into a tamed, precise, and civilized society.

Obsolescence: All Hellknights understand that their goal of a rigid, lawful world is far-reaching and likely unattainable within their lifetimes. However, each knight strives for a day when the knighthood is no longer required, when he might lay down his arms, and society might be relied upon to police itself. All Hellknights dream and work toward a world wherein they are unneeded, and in that distant age, have attained true victory.

Every Man a Tyrant: Just as Hellknights claim the right to exact law upon the land, so must every man. All owe it to themselves and those around them to enforce order and, if need be, punishment. Those who do not are either silent accomplices to mayhem or weaklings fit only for lives of quiet and ignominious obedience.

Discipline: Hellknights seek discipline in all things, but most strictly from themselves and those within their charge. Only through a rigidly regimented mind, body, and soul might one seek to impose order upon the world. If a knight cannot bring order to one body, or to those he oversees, he cannot hope to right the injustices of the realm. The self is the wilderness every Hellknight must conquer—and from that fortress, the world.

Emotion Is Weakness: In the Hellknight mind, all emotions stand in the way of logical thought and clear decisions. A mantra that varies by need, knights state this dictum matter-of-factly as situations dictate, with "fear," "greed," "love," and "sorrow" often replacing the general term. Only by purging one's mind and soul of tempestuous desires and mastering one's baser reactions might a knight rise above the rabble into a master of his world.

Execution by Flame: No achievement occurs without loss, and only by casting off something does one become greater. As a blade is tempered by fire, so too do Hellknights seek to face hardships, scouring themselves of their innate weaknesses and in so doing steeling themselves for ever-greater trials and triumphs. This dictate holds a dual edge, as it also suggests the flames of Hell, which all knights must face and in so doing loose either their fear or their lives.

Mercilessness: The law by which all Hellknights act and seek to achieve their grand vision, this virtue divides the pretender from the true knight and strikes fear into the hearts of the unjust. Not an allowance for cruelty, this dictum stands as a responsibility for all Hellknights, demanding controlled, decisive, and severe action in all things. A Hellknight must make judgments and hold

Path of the Hellknight

no regret, as the path to order is not paved by pity and leniency. By the same token, none are above reprimand, and for one's vices and mistakes a knight can hold no mercy, even for himself.

Society Cannot Survive Mercy: For every canny criminal or onetime thief there lies an exemption, a well-meaning reason, or an excuse, and by such exceptions society mires itself in an ever-deepening bog of anarchy. Law holds no allowances, and there is no such thing as partial justice. As such, criminals are punished for their crimes, not granted allowances for their intentions. A bleeding heart is a wound that sickens all society, and in judgment, the heart is but a vulnerability to be excised.

None Are Innocent: Every man has committed a crime or harbored insidious thoughts at some point in his life. Thus, in the application of law, none are above reproach. Even Hellknights must account for their own sins and face punishments for their misdeeds. At the same time, should an innocent fall in the meting out of justice, such is an injustice that must be atoned for—yet so great is the rightful cynicism of the average Hellknight that this possibility is rarely considered seriously, and those who seem innocent to the outside eye are merely those who have yet to come under scrutiny.

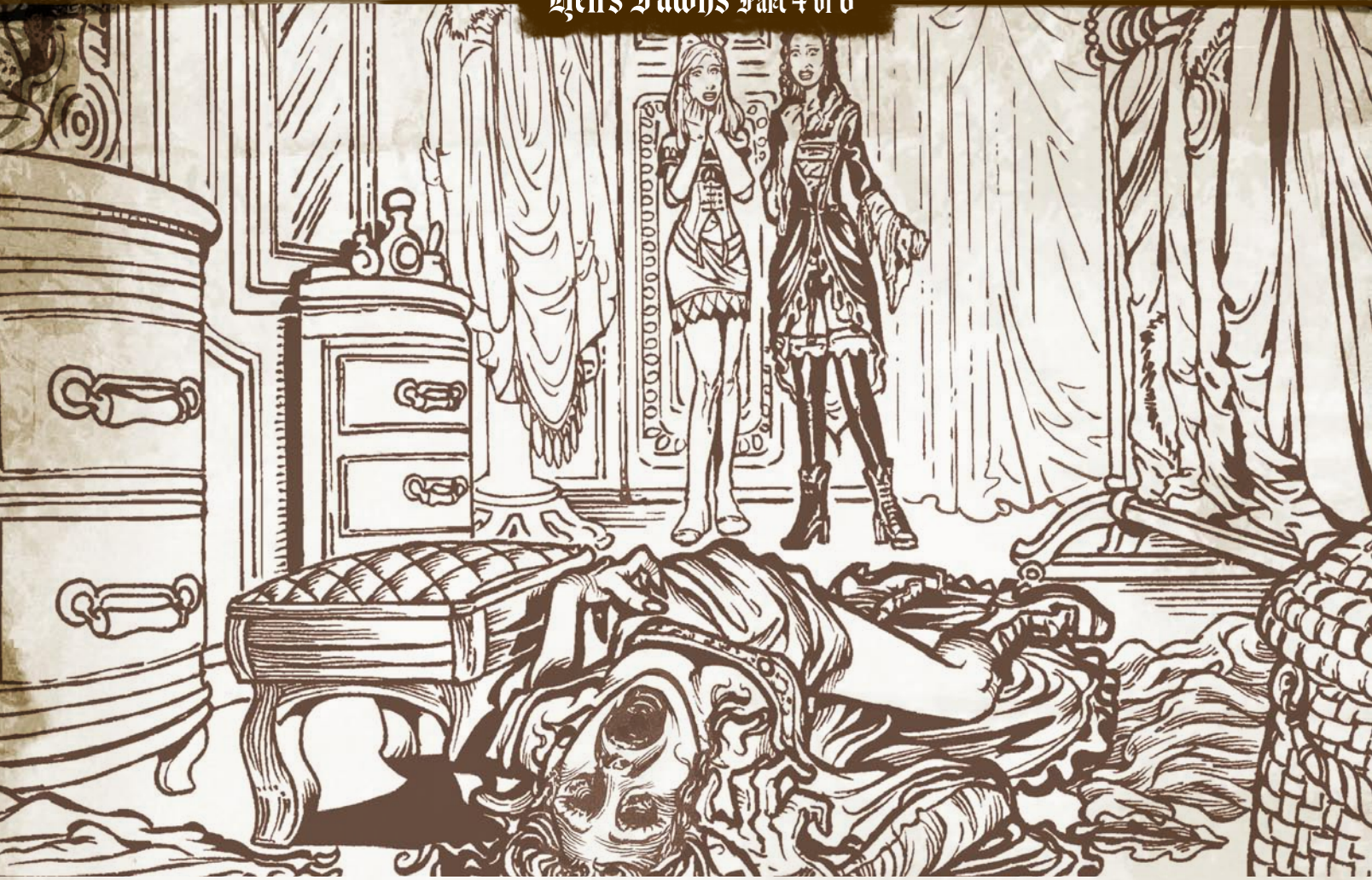
In Action

Most would-be Hellknights cannot endure the crushing weight of the Measure or the dictums of the Chain and thus abandon their goals. Additionally, many impassioned and zealous armigers lacking in mental or physical fortitude are driven insane or even to their deaths in their strident attempts. The ultimate test of the Hellknight philosophy comes in the form of confrontations with devils summoned forth from the depths of Hell. Under the control of signifiers, these fiends reveal the secrets of infernal stratagems and grim realities of the cosmos. Through these encounters, knights learn dire realities of existence and the terrible price of failure. At the end of a Hellknight's training, after numerous tests of discipline and loyalty, an initiate must actually do battle with a summoned devil. Those who fall, die. Those who slay their opponents, however, have faced a terror beyond anything born upon the mortal plane and might now venture into the world, confident that even the most terrible acts of men hold no unexpected terror.

Through such trials and desensitization, Hellknights learn to embrace and exemplify a mindset alien to most mortals—an emotionless, cold existence wherein each member offers

himself in sacrifice to a goal greater than any individual. At the same time, Hellknights make a lesser demand of the world, enforcing their vision upon those who would flout the ways of civilized society while serving as a fearful warning to others of the price of anarchy. Their mindset is that of conquerors holding an inhospitable realm, always watchful of a defiant populace and never questioning the necessity of bringing them to heel. Theirs is a battle of wills against the very world, with the reward being nothing less than the survival of all civilization. Thus, no cost proves too great and no act too severe when fighting a war both for and against a civilization that hangs by a thread.





The Palace of Jubilations

Atop its colossal fountain, the statue of Mad Prince Haliad peers down at us like a boy inspecting insects as the boss orders the driver once around the Sargavan Plaza.

This detour from the short route between the Scions Academy and House Henderthane is my cue to scan for pursuit. I always tell the boss it would be easier to shake off tails if he traded the red carriage for one of the black coaches so ubiquitous south of Five Favors, but he's sentimental about his father's legacy. When I'm satisfied none of Paralictor Ivo Elliendo's informants are in our shadow, I rap the all-clear from my perch on the footman's step. Jeggare orders the carriage to a halt and cracks open the panel to beckon me inside. Once I'm in, the slip driver slaps the reins and turns the coach north, toward the Triumph district and House Henderthane.

"You noticed something odd about the students at the Scions Academy?" says Jeggare.

"They're a bunch of bastards," I say, remembering the strange uniformity in the students' appearance, as

well as the complete lack of similarity between the two boys we knew and their fathers. A faint smile creases the boss's long face, but it's serious business. If it could be proven that these sons of Egorian's most powerful families were illegitimate, an entire generation of Chelish elite would falter.

"Quite possible," he says, "but before making such an accusation, one would want a great deal more evidence than we have seen." Jeggare must have been on to the question of Morvus Henderthane's parentage since he saw the boy standing beside his late father's portrait, but I was too busy staring at Morvus's sister to notice. "What else did you notice?"

"They are all about the same age," I say.

"Almost certainly they form a cohort," he says, "born within the same year, or near to it."

"What does that mean?" I ask.

Rather than answer, he steeples his fingers and rests his thumbs against his chin, forefingers on the tip of his nose.

The Palace of Jubilations

"There's something else you should know." I tell him that Zandros claims one of the Henderthanes is indebted to him.

"Ah," says the boss. "Young Lord Henderthane is seldom if ever without a chaperone."

I know what he's thinking, because I've thought it too. It's more likely Pavanna who Zandros has hooked. "Maybe he means Drulia."

"There is more value in a loan proffered to a favored child of a wealthy lord, less so in one granted to his abandoned wife," he says. He looks out the carriage window, and I see we've reached the gates of House Henderthane.

At the door, the butler informs us that Miss Henderthane is not at home and that he doesn't know when she'll return. We drive back through the gate and around the corner, where I jump out and climb the locked gate to the servants' entrance. I lurk there for almost half an hour before the giggler I met in the kitchen yesterday comes out to dump the rubbish. It takes the little smile to lure her over, the hint of a nocturnal return to fluster her, and two of the boss's shiny gold coins to secure the information we want. A peck on her slender neck, and a minute later I'm back in the red carriage.

"She left over an hour ago to visit her mother," I say. Jeggare orders the driver back toward Dice End.

As we approach the Palace of Jubilations, a woman runs out the saloon doors hugging a dressing robe shut around her body. Even through her mask of kohl-stained tears, I recognize her as one of the performers we saw yesterday.

Inside, the patrons gabble with the barmaids, the cook, the bartender, and a fellow I take to be a stagehand. Jeggare heads for the back rooms, and I intercept the bouncer who tries to intercept him.

"It's all right," I say. "Pandarus called for us."

A trio of worm-like scars flush pink under the big man's short hair, and I can tell he's not buying it.

"If I were you," I say, "I'd make sure none of these rum sponges leaves before your songbird brings back the guard."

The bouncer's determination falters, and he moves away to whisper a warning to a couple of his buddies. They scarper off, but not before I sketch their faces into memory. The bouncer plants himself at the front door to prevent the rest from leaving, and I follow the boss to the dressing room.

Pandarus, the proprietor of the Palace of Jubilations, stands in the middle of the little room pulling at his fingers. He lifts his feet like a little boy who has to piss but doesn't have permission. Beyond him, Jeggare draws a sobbing woman away from the prone body of Drulia Henderthane and presses her into the arms of another singer.

"Would you be so kind?" Jeggare nods toward the outer rooms. The singer leads the crying woman out of the dressing room, and I shut the door behind her.

Drulia's eyes bulge open, and scorch marks darken her lips and nostrils. The dark ligature of a strangling cord rings her neck. Jeggare closes her eyes with a soft stroke of his hand. He shuts his eyes for a moment and then stands to face the other occupants of the room.

"Who else was backstage?" he asks Pandarus.

Pandarus stammers out a few names. I count them and compare the result with the number of non-customers I saw out beside the stage. It adds up, except for the woman we saw fleeing the Palace—one Sorcia, who found the body five or six minutes earlier—and Pavanna Henderthane.

Jeggare continues the questions while I step out to have a look at the rear entrance. The rubbish-strewn alley behind the Palace shows no signs of recent passage, so I return to the front room when I hear a commotion at the entrance.

A young guardsman stands sentinel at the door while his older partner orders the staff and patrons to sit where he can see them. The veteran scowls at me, but I jerk a thumb toward the dressing room and say, "Back here."

He doesn't protest when I accompany him to the dressing room. There he sees the boss and bows, "Count Jeggare."

The boss returns the greeting with the military nod that always sets the right tone with the city guards. "We arrived seven minutes ago," he says. "The deceased is Drulia, former wife of the late Einmarch Henderthane."

The guard whistles low in appreciation of the name. He sends Pandarus out with the others and listens as the boss relates a brief but thorough summary of what we've learned so far.

"Look here," the boss beckons to the guard. Together they kneel beside the corpse, and Jeggare indicates the marks on her lips and nose. He takes a candle from the dressing table and directs the guard to hold it up while he pries open Drulia's jaw. A lump of what looks like red-black stone tumbles out of her mouth, seething with a vermillion haze. The guard reaches for it, but Jeggare stops his hand.

"Don't touch it," he says. "That appears to be a hell coal."

The guard recoils from the stone. "A what?"

The boss peers into Drulia's mouth, and I briefly glimpse the raw, meaty pit that has been seared out of her skull before he lays her head back. "A tool used by certain devils, or their servants, to destroy the eternal spirits of mortal beings."

The thought that anyone would want Drulia Henderthane not just dead but utterly destroyed weighs down my belly like a lump of cold lead. Sure, she had married into a great house, but she had left all that

behind without a fuss. She was nobody special anymore, nobody that anyone would need to obliterate.

The same thought must have occurred to the guard, whose face seems to age as I watch.

"My lord," says the guard, "would you be so gracious as to remain here and continue your examination while I send my junior to summon our captain?"

"In truth," says Jeggare, "I had hoped to speak with—" A new disturbance erupts out front. I take a few steps down the hall, but when I see the hulking silhouette of a Hellknight.

"Bring them to me," snaps the voice of Ivo Elliendo from the salon.

What the hell is he doing here? I wonder. One glance at the boss tells me he is thinking the same.

The Paralictor has two of his Hellknights and four other agents with him. They have already divided the patrons and employees of the Palace into groups at the four corners of the large outer salon. Elliendo's lips whiten when he sees us emerge from the backstage door.

"Keep those two separate from the others," he orders a man wearing blood-colored robes, a studded shoulder guard, and a light helm adorned with spiraling goat horns. He sneers at me as if we're acquainted, but I don't recognize him. I notice a wand secured in a leather holster on his thigh, as well as a half-dozen small leather pouches arrayed on either side of his belt. He's one of Elliendo's signifiers, a spellcaster specializing in interrogations. He points at me, then toward the kitchen. He waves his hand in a somewhat more polite gesture to invite Jeggare along. With a snap of his fingers he summons one of the Hellknights to follow.

As a nod to the boss's title, the signifier finds a tall stool and swipes it with his sleeve before departing with a bow barely this side of insolence. Jeggare takes the seat, leaving me to lean against a dirty counter on which the cook has left a neat row of fish fillets beside a pan of brown flour. Grease hisses and pops on a skillet on the nearby stove, and the air smells like scorched fat. I move the hot skillet off the stove—it takes more than a stove fire to burn me—and try not to think about the burned-out interior of Drulia's skull.

We wait in silence for the better part of an hour while Elliendo questions the

others. When the guard captain arrives, the Paralictor makes it clear that he has assumed authority over the scene. The captain, whose voice sounds more wise than meek, does not remind Elliendo that murder investigations are the purview of the Egorian city guard, not the Order of the Scourge.

"There's a lesson in that for you," the boss says, reading my expression, "although I am not unappreciative of your earlier efforts to spare me a thrashing, misguided though they were."

That's close enough to thanks to suit me, and any time the boss voices his appreciation, my next pay purse is a little heavier. Much as I might have liked to bloody my spurs on Elliendo's skull when I saw him tossing the boss around at the Scions Academy, it would have been more or less an act of suicide. His attack on Jeggare

was socially dangerous, but Elliendo wouldn't have ended up hanging on the Judgment Day scaffold for it, as I would if he charged me with assaulting him.

"Be that as it may," says Jeggare, "never again speak of the Paralictor's wife."

Professional rivalry alone doesn't account for the mutual disdain I've always seen between the boss and Elliendo, not to mention the savagery of the Paralictor's reaction to seeing Jeggare in the headmaster's office. "What is it between you two, anyway?"

Jeggare glances at the Hellknight standing guard at the kitchen door. If he ever answers me, it won't be while one of Elliendo's men is hanging around.

We spend hours in the cramped kitchen before Elliendo comes for us. He gets one whiff of the greasy fish stink and orders the

Hellknight to seat us at one of the little tables near the stage, where it smells more of hot lime dust, stale beer, and cheap Taldan cigars.

The presence of Elliendo and his Hellknights reduces the city guards and their captain to the role of lackeys. I'd heard them searching the upper

rooms earlier, but now two stand beside a stretcher laid across a couple of the other tables. Drulia's body lies there covered in a patchy remnant of purple velvet curtain. The young guard I saw earlier

**"Gruck's a good kid.
It's a shame he's
mixed up in this."**



The Palace of Jubilations

stands beside the front door, while his elder partner and the captain linger by the backstage door, watching silently as two of Elliendo's Hellknights take places behind us while the Paralictor faces us across the little table. Beside him sits his signifier, sketching sigils on the table in a gleaming blue powder and taking notes on a crisp parchment scroll. Two more of his armored behemoths stand behind the Paralictor, forming a perfect cage.

"Where did you go after leaving the Scions Academy?" asks Elliendo.

"To House Henderthane," says Jeggare.

Elliendo pauses for an elaboration. When Jeggare offers none, he continues with the usual inquiries: Whom did you see? What did you discuss? Where did you go then? The boss summarizes our actions since we left the Scions Academy with truthful answers just succinct enough to irritate the Paralictor. Eventually Elliendo reaches the only question he really wanted to ask.

"So you admit that you expected to find Pavanna Henderthane here?"

"I do not admit it," says the boss. "I state it."

Elliendo's eyes glitter. "Excellent," he says. "Order a search for the Henderthane girl, captain."

"You can't think she killed her mother," I say.

Elliendo ignores me and speaks to the guardsmen. "She is our prime suspect in the murders of both Einmarch and Drulia Henderthane. I want her in custody before morning."

"That's ridiculous," I say. "Pavanna had nothing to gain by her father's death, or by her mother's."

The boss shoots me a warning glance, but I've already stepped in it. The Paralictor gives me the condescending smile of a tutor instructing a particularly dim student. "She could not know she had been disinherited until after her father was dead," he says. "At that point, her only chance of any inheritance came from the death of her mother."

"But that's—" Now that someone has said it aloud, I realize it's perfectly possible, but I don't want believe it.

"Assist my men," Elliendo says to the city guards. "Report directly to my adjutant."

The captain salutes and bows his head. He must know that Elliendo is overstepping his legal authority, but he also knows the Paralictor's power extends far beyond his legal authority.

"And you, Count Jeggare, are to cease your investigations immediately. I don't want to see you or your henchman until this matter is concluded to my satisfaction."

The boss does not reply. It is one thing to awe a guard captain, quite another to intimidate a count of Cheliox.

"Am I understood, Jeggare?"

With a barely audible sigh, the boss replies, "You are, Paralictor."

As we drive away from the Palace of Jubilations, Elliendo's signifier whistles up a pair of agents and sets them to follow us. I see no signs that they also are mages, and they don't even make an effort at subterfuge. Garden-variety goons.

"What the hell is he doing?" I ask the boss.

Jeggare waves me off of the rear seat of the coach and lifts it up to rummage in the compartment below. "He desires a speedy end to the Henderthane investigation."

"What's it to him?"

Jeggare removes a long footman's raincoat and lets the coach seat drop shut. "In itself, perhaps nothing. But it is the reason we visited the Scions Academy, which his son attends."

"I get that," I say. "But why go after Pavanna?"

Jeggare shrugs on the coat. It's too broad for his narrow shoulders, so he cinches the belt tight. "Because it is a logical approach. Unlike us, he is not interested in settling the matter discreetly, only quickly," he says. Then he looks me in the eye. "And also because he knows it will hurt you."

I snort, but it's an unconvincing dismissal.

"Do not underestimate the Paralictor, Radovan. He is smarter than you credit him, and far more cruel. He remembers every slight."

I realize what Jeggare is really telling me. It's my fault Elliendo is going after Pavanna.

"I shall return to House Henderthane," he says, rapping a code to the driver on the front panel. "You shall lead Elliendo's men on a leisurely drive down to Riverside and back."

"Listen, boss, I can help fix this."

"Stay in the carriage," he says, turning to close the curtains on the back window. "Keep them occupied for at least an hour, two if you can manage it." He puts a hand on the carriage door and glances out the window. The driver makes a sharp right turn.

"Boss, you need me to watch your back."

"Fetch me at Henderthane in two hours," he says. "No less." He leaps out of the carriage and darts into the open doors of a cheap wine shop.

I shut the door and peer out through the back curtains. Elliendo's men turn the corner and follow without a glance at the boss's escape route.

I can't waste a couple of hours playing tag with Elliendo's thugs. The boss wants me to stay away from House Henderthane, that's fine. That's the last place Pavanna would have gone if she knew her mother had been killed. I open the driver's panel and say, "Eel Street."

The slip shoots me a look of exasperation, but he slaps the reins and heads toward the waterfront.

We're a couple of streets away from the Goat Pen, and I'm still trying to figure out how to finesse Zandros into helping me locate Pavanna, when a clot of dirt hits the side of the carriage.

"Hey!" shouts the driver. I peek out the window to see him shooting the tines at someone in a nearby alley. Our assailant lingers long enough for me to catch a glimpse of him before he beckons to me and retreats down the alley. It's Gruck.

Through the front panel I tell the driver to take the next left and let me off, then to pick me up after that trip down to Riverside. I hop out and shout to the empty carriage, "Back in an hour. You got it, boss." As the driver pulls away, I step into a sleazy little gambling den and pretend not to notice Elliendo's men coming around the corner, close enough that I'm certain they heard me. One will follow the carriage, the other me.

The occupants of the shack barely glance up from their cards as I pay the dealer the toll and head through the back door. When my tail follows me, he'll have a long negotiation to get into the "upstairs game," by which time I'll be gone.

Gruck waits for me in the alley. "Miss Pavanna," he says, gesturing for me to follow him. The thought of another Goatherd trap crosses my mind, but it's worth the risk. Besides, I've got a good feeling about the kid.

I follow him through the back alleys to an old tenement variously employed by squatters and fugitives from the city guard. We take the rear stairway up to the second floor, pause for a look around, and climb in through a garret window. Inside are four dirty mattresses, a few pieces of salvaged furniture, and a door barred from the inside, leaving the window the only entrance and exit. Pavanna Henderthane rises from her seat on one of the lumpy mattresses. Her eyes are red, but she's dressed like she was when I first met her, so I've never seen anything lovelier.

"I didn't kill my mother," she says.

Gruck's wide eyes tell me this part is new to him, and if I'm right about him, the last thing I want to do is get him more involved.

"Can you get us some food?" I hand him a few coins, plenty enough for a meal, but not so much as to seem like I'm brushing him off.

He looks reluctant to leave, but Pavanna flashes him a smile, and he gives her back a confident nod. He slips over the window sill, and I lean out to take his arm.

"Find a pie shop in Dice End," I whisper, "then come back around Long Market. Take your time."

He hesitates.

"In case someone spots you," I add. "You've been around enough now to be recognized."

His nods with a confidence I know he doesn't yet feel, then slides out the window and clambers down the stairs.

When we're alone, I turn back to Pavanna. "I believe you," I say, and it's mostly true. "Unfortunately, not everyone shares my high opinion."

"Count Jeggare doesn't believe I killed her, does he?"

"No," I say. "I don't think so. But Paralictor Elliendo has ordered you arrested for questioning."

"The Order of the Scourge!" She pales, bringing her freckles into sharp contrast. She knows as well as anyone what methods the Hellknights employ in their interrogations. "Why are they involved?"

"I don't know," I say, again only partly lying. "But I think it's time you came clean with me."

"About what?" she says. I can see by the flicker of her glance that she's stalling, deciding how much I already know.

Keeping the rest of their secrets safe is the reason most Egorian nobles call on Count Jeggare to deal with one that's gotten out. Still, in this case I don't like it, especially since I'm the one who brought this case to the boss, and it's turning out to be more than I expected.

"For starters," I say, "you can tell me how you met Zandros."

"You can probably guess," she says, trying but not quite succeeding in hiding the relief in her voice.

"Spare me the effort."

"Dice, cards, the sticks," she says. "I was always careful not to lose more than I brought with me."

"Yeah," I sigh at the familiar story. "Until that one night."

"More like a bad run of ten or twelve nights."

"How long ago?"

"Five, maybe six months," she says.

"And you've kept up with the interest all that time?" Zandros never lets a month go by without collecting at least the interest, and I shudder to think of how the scabrous old Szarni collected from Pavanna.

"Yes," she says, but then she sees the assumption in my face. "Not like that. Dark Prince forbid! Have you seen Zandros? I'd sooner sell myself in a Qadiri market."

"So how did you pay off your debt?"

"Calligraphy."

I hit the side of my head with the heel of my palm as if to knock water out of my ear. "Sorry. I thought you said 'calligraphy.'"

"It is a stupid thing, I know, what a second daughter receives instead of a proper education. But I have a certain knack for it, as you saw the day we met."

I remember the scroll she used to conjure the sound of a hunting cat, scaring off the wererat who was trying to gut me. "That's a little more than calligraphy."

"Well," she says with phony modesty, "I have a little more than a knack."

"Magic," I say.

The Palace of Jubilations

"Only enough to get me into trouble," she says with the rhythm of a favorite aphorism. But hearing herself say it, she turns somber. "And I thought enough to get me out, too."

The cold lead ball reappears in my stomach. "What did Zandros have you do?"

"He had me rewrite contracts and restore the magical seals."

"Oh, hell."

"I know."

"Do you?" I smack the top of a faded cabinet, causing an explosion of dust. "Haven't you seen what they do to forgers on Judgment Day?"

"I knew it was dangerous, but what else could I do? Everything I've done since then was to try to fix my own mistake."

"It's not that easy," I say. "Did you think Zandros would forget what you had done for him? Even if you ever managed to pay your debt, the secret of what you've done is just another coin he can spend later."

"That's why I came to you." She puts a warm hand on my arm, but I pull away. "I need your help."

"What you need is a long boat ride to Saragava," I say. For a second I wonder whether the Chelish authorities would send an agent to such a distant rebel province to punish a forger. If there is one thing the worshipers of Asmodeus hate, it is a flouter of contracts. Without realizing it, I've been backing toward the door.

"Don't leave me," she says. Before I know what she's doing, she's in my arms. Without her makeup, she smells sweet as spring pollen mingled with the faint tang of fear, her body's musk overpowering even that Andoren perfume the boss smelled on me after our first meeting. Her naked lips brush the line of my jaw. My arms, slightly against my will, encircle her waist.

"Listen," I say, but then she is kissing me. Before my brain can protest, I'm kissing her back, and then her fingers find the buttons on my shirt. She pulls my hands toward the laces of her own, and I don't need any further encouragement.

I know it's dangerous, but what else can I do?

A creak from the stairway outside the window tells me Gruck has returned. We've

just finished putting our clothes back in order, and I speak as if that's all we've been doing in his absence.

"What's important now is that you stay out of sight while I find out what's going on back at your home."

"You mean you and Count Jeggare, yes?" she says. "He will continue to investigate, won't he?"

"The Paralictor has warned him off," I say. "But yeah, that won't stop him."

Gruck comes in through the window and sets down a couple of covered pails in front of Pavanna. She opens one and takes out a steaming hot stuffed bun while Gruck finds a couple of tin cups and wipes them with his shirt tail. From the second pail he fills the cups with dark red ale and offers one to Pavanna and the other to me. I wave it back to him. "You first," I say. "You brought supper."

We sit a while and eat without talking, sharing the two cups among us three like a peasant family.

"You need to be anywhere tonight?" I ask Gruck.

He shrugs and says, "Nowhere I'll be missed."

"Can you look after her then?"

He nods, chest expanding at the implied compliment.

"After I leave, I want you to find another place," I tell Gruck. "Somewhere the Goatherds don't use. You understand?"

"Yeah." He frowns a bit, trying to think of such a place.

"Don't tell me where," I say. I hand him the boss's expense purse. "Once you're settled, send a message to Greensteeples in Sorrowside.

Don't go yourself. Send someone else, and have him tell the butler his order is ready at that place. Got it?"

"Got it," says Gruck.

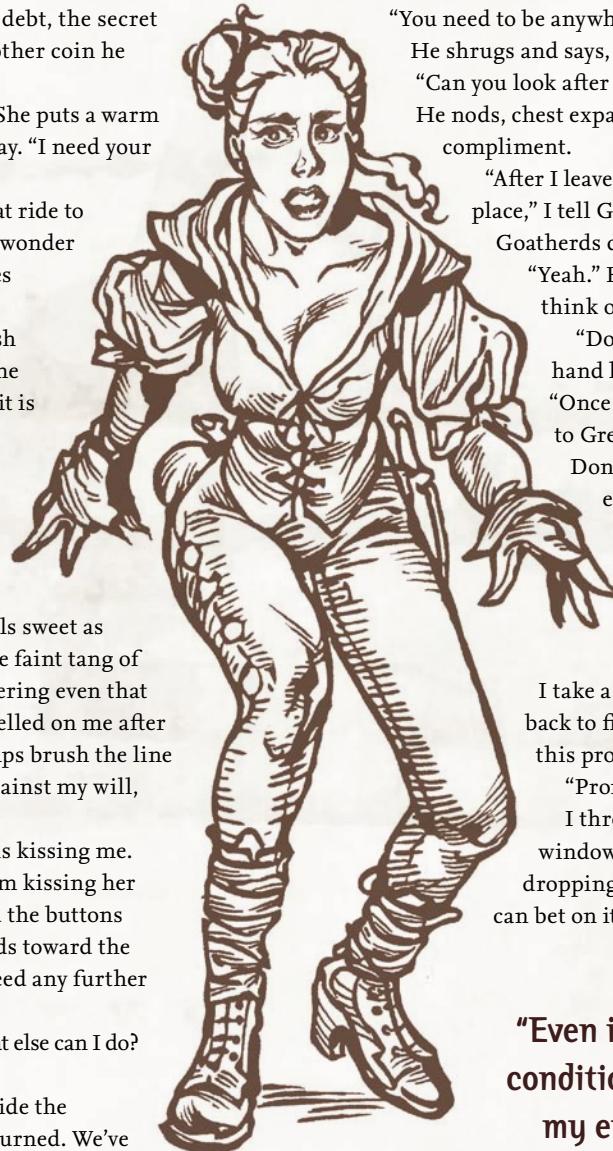
"What about you?" says Pavanna.

I take a last swig of ale. "I'm going back to find Jeggare and help him fix this problem of yours."

"Promise?" she asks.

I throw one leg over the windowsill and pause before dropping down onto the stairs. "You can bet on it."

"Even in her current condition, I can't take my eyes off her."





BESTIARY SYMBOLS

Creature Type

- Aberration
- Animal
- Construct
- Dragon
- Fey
- Humanoid
- Magical Beast
- Monstrous Humanoid
- Ooze
- Outsider
- Plant
- Undead
- Vermin

Climate

- Cold
- Extrplanar
- Temperate
- Tropical

Environment

- Desert
- Forest/Jungle
- Hill
- Mountain
- Plain
- Ruins
- Swamp
- Sky
- Underground
- Urban
- Water

Bestiary

I ran, O children—ran
and fast upon my heels
I bore the threefold mouths
the sixfold eyes that shone.
For in that darkened place
from which I sought to steal
the breath of life, the hounds
did rip me to the bone
and in the sacred twilight
bespoke me as a meal
then in a threefold whisper
did claim me as their own.

—from "The Death Song of Arasneus," trad.

Hellspawn and the damned crawl forth to populate this month's entry into the bestiary. Fiends such as the diabolical uniila with their veiled ways, and the twisted twin adhukaits—and their greater insights into the ways and powers of all asura-kind—add to the ranks of fiends teeming within the Pit. The cerberi, three-headed canine inheritors of a mythical infernal charge, also come snarling from the depths, eager to drag souls back to their endless torments below. The battle-tested spartoi, too, rise to the world of the living once more, ready to serve mortal masters. Whether as fearful villains or insidious slaves, these menaces embody the deadly grimness of the Great Beyond, and threaten to ensnare even the wariest summoners with their infernal might.

WANDERING MONSTERS

With the opening of “The Infernal Syndrome,” a hellspawned chaos rages upon the streets of Westcrown. Terrors mere mortals have little hope of defending against and the impossibly cruel depredations of the infernal break upon the city, heralded by a pillar of flame rising from the city's rotten heart. As the PCs seek the source of the madness besieging the city, they find themselves beset by numerous deadly confrontations with the legions of Hell and encounters with Wiscrani citizens struggling to keep order or flee the chaos. While panicked city folk, guardsmen, and fiends constitute the majority of these encounters, numerous other factions—including the Council of Thieves, the Hellknights, and the Children of Westcrown—have interest in further provoking the chaos, reestablishing order, or keeping the citizenry safe. While Part One of “The Infernal Syndrome” presents adventurers with a variety of goals they might meet in the service of various Wiscrani factions, GMs are encouraged to create their own hectic encounters with such characters as they see fit.

Cityfolk & Dottari: The predominantly human natives of Westcrown are currently in a panic over the events tearing through the city. While many of the dottari guardsmen struggle to establish order, some are little better than thugs and looters, beating down anything that moves on the streets. At the same time, everyday cityfolk struggle to escape the chaos, with children becoming separated from their families, the elderly falling amid the rush, and desperate citizens coming to all manner of trouble. Parties that take to defending the populace of Westcrown with particular zeal or manage a particularly impressive public display of heroics might even be rewarded with a bonus Fame Point or two. The dottari and most of the average citizens have the same statistics, found on page 15.

Devils: Although the majority of the encounters on the Infernal Chaos in Westcrown random encounter

Infernal Chaos in Westcrown

d%	Encounter	Avg. EL	Source
1–4	1 imp	2	<i>Bestiary</i>
5–10	1d8 dottari	3	see text
11–17	1d8 cityfolk	3	see text
18–21	1d4 imps	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 78
22–27	1d4 tieflings	4	see text
28–31	2d6 dottari	4	see text
32–33	1d4 hell hounds	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 173
34–36	1d4 lemures	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 79
37–40	1d6 imps	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 78
41–44	1d6 tieflings	5	see text
45–52	2d6 cityfolk	5	see text
53–55	1 cerberi	6	<i>Pathfinder</i> #28
56–62	1d6 looters	6	see text
63–67	2d6 lemures	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 79
68–71	1d4 ukobachs	6	<i>Pathfinder</i> #25
72–75	1d6 lesser host devils	6	BotD 58*
76–77	1 greater host devil	6	BotD 58*
78–82	1d4 rat swarms	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 232
83–85	1 salikotal	7	<i>Pathfinder</i> #26
86–87	1 warmonger devil	7	BotD 60*
88–90	1d4 bearded devils	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 73
91–94	2d6 tieflings	7	see text
95–96	1d4 cerberi	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #28
97–98	1 erinyes	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 75
99–100	1 chertov	9	<i>Pathfinder</i> #27


* *Book of the Damned* Volume 1: *Princes of Darkness*

chart are with the denizens of Hell, the current problems in the city should not make it seem like the infernal floodgates have opened. While fiends seeking to carve out sections of the city for their own have entered the world, the potential encounters here are not meant to suggest the ranks of a hellish army invading the city. GMs should make sure to offer a mixture of encounters upon the riotous Westcrown streets, and avoid testing their PCs with wave after wave of hellspawn.

Tieflings & Looters: A number of tieflings have taken to the streets around Aberian's Folly, taking this opportunity to loot and avenge themselves against the prejudiced city. These tieflings use the same stats as the tiefling tunnel rats presented on page 36 of this month's adventure. The tieflings aren't the only ones taking advantage of the temporary anarchy, though. During the chaos, dozens of opportunistic looters also attempt to make off with anything not bolted down. These looters use the same stats as thieves found on page 24. Although similar to some of the factions with plots in Aberian's Folly, by and large both of these groups of criminals have nothing to do with the adventure's better-organized villains.

ASURA, ADHUKAIT

Twin pallid fiends twist in a dance of daggers, brandishing deadly, crackling kukris that spark and flash as they spin between their warped bodies. As the thorn-covered, misshapen terrors weave their blades over and about one another, it becomes clear that their two figures are joined, both by links of chains and by bridges of stretched flesh, binding them as one.

ADHUKAIT	CR 7	
XP 3,200		
LE Medium outsider (asura, evil, extraplanar, lawful)		
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19		
Aura elusive aura (30 ft.)		
DEFENSE		
AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)		
hp 76 (9d10+27); regeneration 5		
Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +9		
Immune curses, disease, flanking, poison, DR 5/good; Resist acid 10, electricity 10; SR 18		
OFFENSE		
Speed 40 ft.		
Melee 2 mwk kukris +15/+10 (1d4+5/18–20), 2 claws +9 (1d4+52)		
Special Attacks dance of disaster		
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)		
At will— <i>greater teleport</i> (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), <i>feather fall</i> , <i>spider climb</i>		
3/day— <i>blink</i> , <i>blur</i> , <i>mirror image</i> , <i>spike growth</i>		
1/day— <i>summon asura</i> (level 4, 1 adhukait 35%)		
STATISTICS		
Str 20, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 16		
Base Atk +9; CMB +14; CMD 28		
Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Nimble Moves		
Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +21, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +19, Perform (Dance) +10, Stealth +15; Racial Modifiers +6 Escape Artist, +4 Perception		
Languages Common, Infernal, Vudrani; telepathy 100 ft.		
SQ dual minds		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any (Hell)		
Organization solitary or pair		
Treasure standard (2 masterwork kukris)		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
All-Around Vision (Ex) An adhukait sees in all directions at the same time, giving it a +4 racial bonus on Perception checks. An adhukait cannot be flanked.		
Dance of Disaster (Su) Every time an adhukait deals damage with a melee attack, it can move an additional 10 feet and attack again, should it have additional attacks remaining. This ability functions similarly to the Spring Attack feat, but is limited not by how far the asura can move, only by its number of attacks. Thus an adhukait can move, attack, move, attack, and so on until it fails		

an attack roll or all six of its melee attacks are spent.

Dual Minds (Su) Although an adhukait is a single creature, it possesses two minds. As such, adhukaits are allowed to make two saving throws to resist any mind-affecting effects. Should either of these saving throws succeed, the asura is not affected by the effect.

Elusive Aura (Su) An adhukait constantly sheds an aura that blocks detection by magical scrying. All items and creatures within 30 feet of the asura, including itself, are treated as being under the effects of the spell *nondetection*. A caster must succeed at a DC 20 caster level check to overcome this effect.

The first adhukaits rose from the shattered bodies of two god-like brigands who, in a time forgotten to the multiverse, attempted to steal a great treasure from some ancient unnamed deity. The villains were caught in their crime and destroyed for their sin. Their destruction had unforeseen ramifications, however, as they shattered into 12 great pieces that fell upon the world, causing great quakes and tsunamis, killing thousands in an unpredicted catastrophe. As the dismembered corpses melted away, the first adhukaits crawled from their mangled ruins.

The wily adhukaits revel in the pain of the innocent and the failures of deities. Adept thieves, kidnappers, and ambushers, these twisted, twin-like asuras delight in undermining goodly acts and stealing the relics of the divine, hiding away such treasures so none might find them. While their bodies appear as two fiends warped into an eternal, writhing embrace, adhukaits have but one personality, driven by hatred and sinister schemes. Knowing how their mangled bodies unnerve mortals, they delight in performing wild, deadly dances, bringing their victims low with their lethal, hell-forged blades.

A typical adhukait stands just under 6 feet tall and, with the combined bulk of two fiends, weigh nearly 250 pounds.

Habitat & Society

Adhukaits make their homes throughout the hinterlands of Hell, favoring forgotten vaults of Erebus and lonely crags in Caina. Like most asuras, though, many find their ways to other planes and to mortal worlds, hiding in dark, secret places and fashioning terrible trophy halls for planned thefts and abductions. Proving easily contented upon taking a single captive or successfully performing an ideal heist, adhukaits typically retire to their grim redoubts, rarely straying far from their stolen spoils, keeping them eternally hidden under the shroud of their mysterious auras.

Rarely do adhukaits work together, each fixating on selfish goals and glories they care not to share even with others of their kind. Only the will of a more powerful asura might convince them to put aside their blasphemous plottings, directing them toward the targets and coveted treasures of evils even greater than themselves.

Known Adhukaits

Several adhukaits eye Golarion in their schemes to spread hopelessness and disaster. While most work their evil among the faiths and faithful of Vudra, some target the realms of the Inner Sea for their blasphemy.

Caiiac: Crowned with blue thorns, the adhukait Caiiac haunts the Voxfang, a bent spire twisting from the depths of Caina. At the peak of the spire languishes a crazed soul whose name has been long forgotten but who knows many blasphemous secrets of the goddess Shelyn's faith. The asura regularly crawls up from his lair within the spire's crevices to torment the soul, seeking ever more details on a heretical treasure the mad spirit claims lies at the seat of the "Titan's Mind" somewhere on Golarion.

Kaisadvaisad: Having clawed additional grim crypts beneath the deepest catacombs of the Tomb of the Thousand Tusks, the asura Kaisadvaisad wheels and cackles over its decade-old victory. Deep below the defiled vault of bones and ivory lies the fiend's labyrinth cathedral, at the heart of which stands an altar crafted from a gigantic elephant skull. Within the cavity at the skull's center, smeared with deadly poison, lies a heavily trapped but entirely empty chest. Below the altar, however, hides a hollow wherein lies the ageless head of Shei Five Dawns, the lost oracle of Sinashakti. Kaisadvaisad gloats and revels daily over his gruesome prize, taking terrible delight in the knowledge that the followers of the empyreal lord still mourn and seek their lost prophet.

ASURAS

A race of fiends populating the wilderness of Hell, asuras are terrible beings risen from the mistakes of the gods. Living blasphemies, each breed of asura traces its genesis to some godly misdeed or misstep, given form by divine power, mortal disillusionment, hatred, and bitterness. Among them rise the asura ranas, unique and terrible fiends like Aghasura, Daissiad, Holika, and Vritra, born from some of the most terrible divine accidents in the multiverse's unfathomable history. While asuras typically seek to bring the gods and their hosts low and to torment their worshipers, some have sought redemption. Such redeemed asuras make the lies of their cunning brethren all more believable yet dangerous, as the words of most asuras are poison and their intents ruinous.

Asura Traits

Asuras are lawful evil outsiders that make their homes amid Hell's wildernesses. Twisted beings, they are accidents of the gods, seeking to sow doubt among mortals and ultimately revenge themselves against the weak deities of good for their accursed existences.


- Immunity to curses, disease, poison.
- Resistance to acid 10 and electricity 10.
- *Summon Asura (Su)* Asuras share the ability to summon others of their kind, typically another of their type or a small number of less powerful asuras.
- Telepathy.
- Except where noted otherwise, asuras speak Infernal, Common, and Vudrani.
- An asura's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as lawful and evil for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.



Council of Thieves


CERBERI

Amid a chorus of snarls and a mist of blood-flecked foam, a monstrously powerful hound lopes forth. Yet, like the victim of some monstrous torture, every strip of the beast's hide has been peeled away, leaving wet sinew and bulging tendons exposed. Most terrible, though, is the creature's head—or rather, heads—bone, fangs, and flame uniting in three identically terrible canine visages.

CERBERI	CR 6	
XP 2,400		
LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)		
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., soul scent; Perception +15		
DEFENSE		
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)		
hp 76 (8d10+32)		
Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +4		
OFFENSE		
Speed 40 ft.		
Melee 3 bites +11 (1d6+3 plus cerberus's jaws)		
Special Attacks rend (2 bites, 1d6+4 or 3, bites 1d6+6)		
STATISTICS		
Str 16, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 9		
Base Atk +8; CMB +11; CMD 23 (27 vs. trip)		
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Stand Still		
Languages Infernal (cannot speak)		
Skills Acrobatics +13 (+17 jumping), Perception +15, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +13, Survival +13; Racial Modifiers +4 Survival when tracking undead		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any (Hell)		
Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–9)		
Treasure incidental		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Cerberus's Jaws (Su) Curse—bite; save Fort DC 18; effect forbidden to leave plane. Any creature afflicted by this curse is affected as if by a more potent and persistent version of the spell <i>dimensional anchor</i> . This effect is treated as the spell, though it has no visual expression. Spells attempting to move multiple creatures from a plane that also target those affected by Cerberus's jaws work normally for all but the cursed. In addition to spells, the cursed cannot make use of portals or similar extraordinary methods of leaving a plane, finding themselves either physically barred from such passages or having the effect simply fail to function for them. <i>Remove curse</i> ends this effect as normal. The save DC is Constitution-based.		
Soul Scent (Su) This ability functions as the scent ability, except that cerberi gain a +4 bonus on Survival checks made to find or follow the tracks of the undead. In addition, they can detect the passage of soul stuff with this ability, allowing them to track incorporeal undead just as normal creatures.		

MALBOLGIAN CERBERI

A beast leapt forth from the flames of Hell, this gigantic, three-headed hound howls a sound like the cacophony of a raging wildfire. Large enough to heft a horse in its monstrous maws, this terror bears no flesh, its body merely a thing of exposed bone and charred musculature. From its three fanged mouths leap tongues of flame, and crimson saliva leaks from the terror's skeletal jaws.

MALBOLGIAN CERBERI	CR 12	
XP 19,200		
LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)		
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., soul scent; Perception +23		
DEFENSE		
AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, +16 natural, –1 size)		
hp 161 (14d10+84)		
Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +6		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft.		
Melee 3 bites +20 (1d8+7 plus 1d8 fire plus cerberus's jaws)		
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.		
Special Attacks rend (2 bites, 1d8+10 or 3 bites, 1d8+14)		
STATISTICS		
Str 24, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 8		
Base Atk +14; CMB +22; CMD 33 (37 vs. trip)		
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Stand Still		
Languages Infernal (cannot speak)		
Skills Acrobatics +18 (+22 jump), Perception +23, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +14, Survival +19		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any (Hell)		
Organization solitary		
Treasure incidental		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Cerberus's Jaws (Su) Curse—bite; save Fort DC 23; effect forbidden to leave plane.		

The mythical watchdogs of Hell, cerberi bear the bodies of terrible, powerful hounds and the essences of fiends. Relied upon by villains and frightful beings as guardians and gaolers, these three-headed canine abominations possess far greater cunning than their flensed, bestial appearances would suggest—a terrible intellect they pour largely into malice and enjoyment of their victims' tormented ends.

Cerberi draw upon a legendary pedigree, all reputedly tracing their lineage to a single primordial evil beast said to still guard the foundations of some forsaken, deathly realm. Brethren to hell hounds, cerberi loathe their distant kin, viciously attacking such hellspawn if not kept at heel by a tyrannical master. Such are the cruel devices of Hell, though, that brazen hatred breeds

ingenuity and new evils. Thus, within the depths of the infernal realm, amid the indomitable pits and fortresses of Malbolgia, devils work at nightmarish beast pens, forcibly breeding monstrous hybrids. Born in fury and profanity, Malbolgian cerberi rage forth, ferocious three-headed hell hounds the size of bulls and more than willing and capable of slaughtering their loathed Nessian warhound kindred.

A typical cerberi stands a broad 4 feet tall and weighs over 200 pounds, while a Malbolgian cerberi can reach over 6 feet in height and weigh upward of 400 pounds.

Ecology

Denizens of Hell, cerberi embody the ferocity and covetousness of that realm. Bent to service as watch beasts or guardians at the gates of the Pit, cerberi possess unique abilities predisposing them to such grim service. Bearing some measure of mastery over souls and their fundamental ability to shift between planes, these infernal hounds easily trap their victims, preventing them from escaping to the safety of more favorable realms. This ability allows the beasts to prey upon both spirits and the denizens of the outer planes, which every so often attempt to leap between realms to avoid danger.

Physically, cerberi appear akin to mortal canines, though in truth they hold little in common. As natives of Hell, they resemble devils more than the wolves and hounds of the Material Plane, their fleshless figures and three monstrous heads making this obvious at anything less than extreme distances. Despite the differences in physiology between mortal beasts and these keen hunters of souls, cerberi frequently find themselves treated like unthinking animals—largely due to their inability to speak. Such a mistake often proves deadly, as cerberi possess alert minds and genuine cunning. While most willingly accept the commands of more powerful masters and gory compensations for their efforts, cerberi are intelligent enough to know when they've been slighted and viciously turn on creatures who mistakenly think themselves their masters.

Habitat & Society

In their natural infernal environments, cerberi might be found anywhere powerful fiends have need for guardians. This makes them frequent fixtures among the dark vaults of Erebus, the estates of Dis, and the fortresses of Avernus. Capable trackers, especially adept at detecting the scent of wayward souls, cerberi also might be found among the legions of the first layer of Hell hunting the freshly arrived damned alongside other devils. Yet, beyond all other tasks, these three-headed hounds excel

as captors and minders of the dead, assuring that none of Hell's charges escape their eternal fates.

Cerberi's incredible ability to trap victims on planes and track the dead make them highly coveted servants across the multiverse. The live markets of Dis teem with cerberi for sale, both ravenous pups and tested hunters. Daemons and night hags especially covet cerberi and pay high prices for whole packs of the soul-hunting hounds. The hounds' bestial appearances and love of slaughter often cause those who consider themselves cerberi owners to forget the deviousness of their allies, a development that often ends poorly, if not bloodily, for the unwary and the weak.

Outside of the devil-tamed reaches of Hell and other foul extraplanar wildernesses, small groups of cerberi gather in harsh, pack-like communities. Typically dominated by the strongest or wildest member, such packs form swift and deadly tides, stalking trespassers upon their vast hunting grounds and doggedly pursuing any scent of lost souls. Although cerberi gain no sustenance from attacking the dead, as befits their infernal nature, all gain a vicious satisfaction at the feeling of an immortal essence discorporating forever within their deadly jaws.



DEVIL, CABAL (UNIILA)

The curves of a shapely maiden define the outline of a mysterious figure wrapped in mist and strips of ancient robes. From beneath the rune-embroidered tatters stretch four, corpse-pale arms, each bearing either a blade or some mysterious arcane device. Hidden within the cowl of its hood shimmer the faintest outlines of a veiled face and a pair of eyes flickering with barely restrained energy.

UNIILA

CR 10



XP 9,600

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal, lawful)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 95 (10d10+40)

Fort +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +7

DR 10/good; **immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 4 +1 daggers +17 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged 4 +1 daggers +17 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks dread magic

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—*augury*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *true seeing*, *unseen servant*

3/day—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *blink*, *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *invisibility*

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 22), *mark of justice*, *summon devil* (level 4, 2d4 imps 55%)

Spells Known (CL 8th)

4th (3/day)—*summon monster IV*

3rd (5/day)—*fireball* (DC 18), *gaseous form*

2nd (6/day)—*fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *mirror image* (DC 17)

1st (6/day)—*disguise self*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shield*

0—*arcane mark*, *bleed* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 22, **Con** 19, **Int** 22, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 32

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Scribe Scroll^B, Weapon Finesse, Wind Stance

Skills Appraise +16, Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +18, Fly +14, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (planes) +19, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17, Sleight of Hand +16, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +19

Languages Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ infernal arcana, scroll mastery, witch token

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell)

Organization solitary, pair, or cabal (3–9)

Treasure double (4 +1 daggers, other treasure as magic scrolls and writings)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dread Magic (Su) All spells an uniila casts draw upon terrible infernal eddies and the torment of damned souls. As such, all of an uniila's spells (not her spell-like abilities) are strange and terrible to behold. This increases the Spellcraft DC required to identify an uniila's spell as it is being cast by +5. In addition, at will, an uniila can choose to make a spell she casts particularly frightening. Any creature forced to make a saving throw to resist a spell cast by an uniila must make an additional Will save at the same DC or be shaken for 1 round. This effect can potentially increase the severity of other fear effects. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Infernal Arcana (Su) Once per day, after spending a minute whispering strange formulas and cosmic truths, an uniila can grant an adjacent mortal spellcaster additional profane insight into the ways of magic. This counts as a bonus spell prepared or spell per day of 6th level or lower, which is immediately accessible by the target in addition to all its regular spells. The uniila chooses what spell to grant the target. It need not be a spell already known by the target, though it must be of 6th level or lower and of a level he can cast or from his class's spell list. This spell remains available to the target for 24 hours. The spell can be any arcane or divine spell. An uniila can never use this ability on herself or non-mortal targets.

Once a target chooses to make use of this spell, it is cast at the uniila's caster level (typically 8th) and is treated as having the evil subtype. In addition, as the uniila chooses, she may spontaneously add the effects of any metamagic feat to the spell (without the spell being treated as though it were of an increased spell level). Typically, uniilas use this ability to compel magic users to rely on them for more powerful magic, though they might also use effects like Widen Spell to affect unintended targets.

Scroll Mastery (Su) All uniilas possess Scribe Scroll as a bonus feat. An uniila is treated as knowing all spells of 6th level or lower in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and can create scrolls of any of those spells. Whether an uniila knows rarer magic is decided by the GM.

Summon Devil (Su) Once per day, an uniila can attempt to summon 2d4 imps with a 55% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

Witch Token (Su) By spending an hour in concentration, an uniila can create a token of arcane power. This token may take any form that takes up an item slot, and typically appears as a subtly fiendish ring, amulet, or similar piece of jewelry. While it is worn by a mortal, all of the DCs of any spells the wearer casts increase by +1 (this effect stacks with Spell Focus). However, while wearing a witch token, the bearer takes a –5 penalty on all saves made to resist spells and effects cast by the token's creation. Also, while the token is being worn, the uniila

can effectively scry through the token at will and without the wearer's knowledge as long as he remains on the same plane. Spells and effects that typically bar or confound scry also affect the witch token.

As a standard action, an uniila can cause her witch token to erupt in a burst of destructive magic that deals 10d6 points of damage to the wearer. An uniila can only ever have one witch token in existence at a time and must destroy a previously created token before creating a new one. The damage of this effect is based on the uniila's Hit Dice.

All witch tokens are also under effects similar to *magic aura*, and are detected as possessing auras of moderate universal magic. Those who use *identify* or a similar spell must succeed at a DC 20 Will save to receive correct information (that the token sheds an aura of strong divination). *Detect evil* reveals no aura from a witch token. The saving throw is Charisma-based.

The tools devils use to ensnare the minds and ultimately the souls of their victims vary incredibly, from the most blatant of infernal corruptions to enticements that seem not like temptations at all. The elusive cabal devils, or uniilas as they are known by diabolists, employ one of the most seductive drugs in existence in their snares: magic. Mistresses of the arcane with an understanding of the cultic arts—both arcane and divine—that rivals even that of many greater fiends, these mysterious and aloof sages haunt the most ancient ruins and moldering depths of Stygia, the fifth layer of Hell, researching arcana and puzzling over formulae destined to shake the cosmos. When conjured forth or left to their own devices upon the Material Plane, uniilas make no untoward offers or forceful demands of their mortal hosts; they merely offer greater magical power in any of the various ways they might do so. Should the ease with which such might is granted pollute a mortal's ambitions or lead him to rely upon a devil for his power, such ultimately proves the student's fault, not the eager teacher's. So too does the resulting damnation at the end of the mortal's short life prove more of his own doing than any overt diabolical trap, making uniilas' methods all the more sinister for their subtlety.

Summoning Cabal Devils




Uniilas eagerly seek passage to the Material Plane and as such welcome summons by mortal casters. Whether to experiment with spells, seek out new magic, or corrupt mortals with their knowledge, what plots an uniila holds often prove inscrutable and of secondary interest to a summoner. Tempering their desire to reach the mortal plane, an uniila's vanity prevents it from serving a witless or hopeless summoner. Thus, uniilas turn the act of

summoning about on those who call upon them via a *planar binding* spell, requesting that such mortals demonstrate their spellcasting prowess. If the mortal effectively casts a spell the uniila does not know (not one of those spells she possesses as a sorcerer spell or spell-like ability), or performs a spell of 5th-level or higher, the caster gains a +2 bonus on the opposed Charisma check made to bind the devil. Occasionally, an uniila purposefully remains to serve an inferior spellcaster, or one that fails his opposed Charisma check. Granting the inept tools they should never possess amuses the devils, and even the most incompetent "masters" might prove useful in seeking out components of an uniila's ongoing projects in Hell.



SPARTOLOS

A skeleton clad in tarnished armor clatters in its grim march. A polished bronze breastplate, greaves, and helmet dutifully remain to protect this felled warrior, while its naked, skeletal hands still clutch a short spear and a round bronze shield. Yet, beneath its decrepit armor and moldering bones, a deftness and deadly intent linger on, embodied in a hellish light smoldering in its shadowed eye sockets.

SPARTOLOS	CR 6			
XP 2,400				
NE Medium undead				
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13				
DEFENSE				
AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 shield)				
hp 76 (8d8+40)				
Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +8				
Defensive Abilities united resistance; DR 10/bludgeoning;				
Immune cold, undead traits; SR 17				
OFFENSE				
Speed 30 ft.				
Melee spear +10 (1d8+4/x3) or 2 claws +10 (1d4+4)				
STATISTICS				
Str 19, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 19				
Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 22				
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Toughness				
Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +10, Perception +13, Stealth +8; Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth while using disjoint				
Languages Common (cannot speak)				
SQ deadly ally, disjoint				
ECOLOGY				
Environment any				
Organization solitary, pair, troop (3–18)				
Treasure standard (breastplate, buckler, spear)				
SPECIAL ABILITIES				
Deadly Ally (Ex) Spartoi cooperate exceptionally well in battle. A spartolos flanking a target with another spartolos gains a +4 flanking bonus instead of +2.				
Disjoin (Su) As a move action, a spartolos can crumble into a pile of bones and tarnished weaponry. While in this state, the undead gains a +8 racial bonus to its Stealth check and its DR rises to 10/bludgeoning. As a move action, a spartolos can reform itself, jolting into its armored skeletal form even if its pieces have been scattered.				
United Resistance (Su) A spartolos ignores 5 points of damage caused by channel energy. This resistance rises by 5 for every other spartolos within 10 feet to a minimum of 0 damage.				

Raised from the corpses of famed warriors and legendary legionaries, spartoi (singular “spartolos”) walk again, dragged from death to do battle once more. Greater than

mere unthinking corpses, like skeletal champions spartoi carry with them some vestige of their past lives and experiences. Yet what sets them apart from lesser undead are their retained caginess and knowledge of tactics, allowing them to function with deadly efficiency in troops of their brethren. Sometimes called the “sown men,” spartoi hold a fundamental connection to the near-mythical magical items known as a *spartoi seeds*, teeth that when planted in the earth summon forth these undead, fully armed and ready for command. Although ancient versions of these items prove especially rare, the well-known nature of their myth has led to dozens of modern versions being created and, with them, a rise in the appearance of spartoi.

A typical spartolos stands about 5-1/2 to 6-1/2 feet tall, weighing approximately 70 pounds with its full compliment of equipment.

Ecology

As undead beings, spartoi have no need for food or shelter and have little effect on their environments. Yet despite being obedient undead, all spartoi seem to favor resting as disjointed piles of bones rather than standing corpses. Although the undead know no sensations of exertion, spartoi left to their own devices or without commands to do otherwise collapse into scattered remains. Whether such is a matter of tactics and subterfuge or fulfills some other need, the animate corpses give no hint.

Spartoi detect as being of evil alignment merely because the powers animating them prove fundamentally foul. In some cases, spartoi raised from the corpses of particularly goodly or otherwise forceful individuals might retain the alignment they possessed in life.

Habitat & Society

The spartoi are undead skeletons—albeit much more powerful than other versions—designed for war. They have no wants or desires other than to serve their masters, and they carry no fear. Though they have some defense against channeled energy, the spartoi are just as susceptible to divine spellcasters as any other undead.

All spartoi spring into being with weaponry, typically a spear, buckler, and breastplate, though some rare individuals have been known to arise with more unusual armaments. In such cases, short swords, punching daggers, glaives, and great clubs prove most common. Only the rarest of spartoi have been known to arise brandishing ranged weapons, their undead forms seeming to lack the coordination for such arms. In any case, spartoi weaponry and armor typically bear the markings of ancient cultures, often appearing to be from lands near where the undead (or its *spartoi seeds*) were created.

Despite their skill and cooperation in battle, spartoi have little interest in one another. Even spartoi apparently risen

from rival nations or cultures seem to forget all past rivalries in death. The mind of a spartolos is a mind possessed by a will to do battle and a skill or instinct seemingly inherent in the bones of great warriors, actual vestiges of personality lingering on only in the rarest cases. Even those spartoi retaining some hint of their former personalities seem interested only in completing their master's will and swiftly returning to their rightful place in death. Such causes many concerned with the necromantic arts to ponder over whether their magic draws forth an actual spirit to its bones, or merely causes a corpse to act with a hint of the personality that was bound to it in life.

Creating a Spartolos

A spartolos might be created in a number of ways. Most simply, a *create undead* spell cast by a magic-user of caster level 16 or greater can infuse a dead body with a heroic spirit, resurrecting it as a spartolos. Alternatively, one might seek out rare items known as *spartoi seeds*. Although relatively rare, the oldest seeds might summon forth the corpses of legendary heroes rather than typical spartoi. These slain champions, while possessing the same statistics as normal spartoi in death, possess the ability to speak and often bear great insight into the ways of battle or memories from their lives.

Mythic Seeds

Numerous myths across Golarion tell of legendary, magical fangs that summon forth the spirits or corpses of powerful warriors. The most pervasive of these tales comes from the ancient myth of the Jiskan hero Strada, though countless variations exist in dozen of cultures across Avistan.

Legends tell of the mythic hero Strada tasked by the devil Alichino with the impossible charge of besieging an unconquerable city. Seeking out the oracle of Gorum, god of battle, the hero was gifted the thousand fangs of the dragon Kathalphas, who was said to have grown an additional tooth with every champion she had slain. Told to sow these fangs into the dust surrounding the city, the hero praised Gorum and departed graciously. Upon reaching the city, he did as the priest had advised, and to his astonishment, the skeletons of the dragon's thousand victims leapt from the ground, clad in all the finery of epic warriors, and arrayed to do battle in Strada's name. The unconquerable city fell in an hour, much to the fury of capering Alichino, and for 90 splendid years Strada ruled as king with an army of the world's greatest warriors ever guarding his palace gates.

See the *spartoi seeds* sidebar for rules on using the magical teeth drawn from this myth.

SPARTOI SEEDS

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** varies

Slot none; **Price** 3,300 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Spartoi seeds appear as teeth stained by ash. The teeth themselves typically take the form of tiny dragon teeth, though some appear to come from a serpent, wolf, or human. When a tooth is cast upon the earth as a standard action, a spartolos under the user's command erupts on the following round. The spartolos lasts for 1 hour or until destroyed. A spartolos's equipment vanishes if its owner is destroyed or after an hour.

These seeds are typically found in simple pouches of leather or velvet containing 2d4 teeth. Up to six seeds can be sown by a single standard action.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead*; **Cost** 1,650 gp



Council of Thieves



LEM

MALE HALFLING

DEITY Shelyn
HOMELAND Cheliah

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Bard 7
ALIGNMENT Chaotic Good
INITIATIVE +4
SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 8
DEXTERITY 18
CONSTITUTION 13
INTELLIGENCE 12
WISDOM 8
CHARISMA 20

DEFENSE

HP 49
AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 dodge, +3 shield, +1 size)
Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +6; +2 vs. fear, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, sonic effects

SKILLS

Acrobatics +13 (+11 to jump), Climb +1, Disable Device +5, Knowledge (local) +13, Perform (comedy) +12, Perform (wind instruments) +17, Perception +11, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +14

FEATS

Dodge, Extra Performance, Spell Focus (illusion), Weapon Finesse

OFFENSE

Melee +1 short sword +11 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged dagger +10 (1d3–1/19–20)
Base Atk +5; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 19
Special Abilities bardic knowledge +2, bardic perform 27 rds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire comp. +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion), lore master 1/day, versatile performance (comedy, wind instrument), well-versed
Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +12)
3rd (2/day)—*charm monster* (DC 18), *major image* (DC 19)
2nd (4/day)—*alter self*, *cure moderate wounds*, *minor image* (DC 18), *mirror image*
1st (6/day)—*cure light wounds*, *disguise self* (DC 17), *feather fall*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *silent image* (DC 17)
o (at will)—*d. magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *sum. instrument*

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (25 charges); **Gear** +2 leather armor, +2 buckler, +1 short sword, daggers (4), *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of protection* +1, backpack, mwk flute, mwk thieves' tools, spell component pouch

Although Lem was raised in the lap of luxury, his childhood was anything but comfortable. Born into slavery, Lem was sold a half-dozen times to different nobles before he reached the age of 2. Always quick to side with the underdog, Lem has learned that his most powerful trait is his optimism and sense of humor—skills that more than make up for his small stature and impulsive nature.



SELTIEL

MALE HALF-ELF

DEITY Asmodeus
HOMELAND Cheliah

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Fighter 1/Conjuror 5/Eldritch Knight 1
ALIGNMENT Lawful Evil
INITIATIVE +3 SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 12
DEXTERITY 17
CONSTITUTION 13
INTELLIGENCE 15
WISDOM 8
CHARISMA 10

DEFENSE

HP 46
AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; +2 vs. enchantment
Immune sleep
Senses low-light vision

SKILLS

Craft (alchemy) +9, Fly +8, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +10, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +12

FEATS

Alertness, Arcane Armor Training, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Extend Spell, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (longsword)

OFFENSE

Melee +1 longsword +7 (1d8+2/19–20)
Ranged +1 composite longbow +8 (1d6+2/x3)
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 21
Special Abilities acid dart (5/day), diverse training, summoner's charm

Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)
3rd—*fireball* (DC 15), *stinking cloud* (DC 15)
2nd—*bull's strength*, *glitterdust* (DC 14), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*
1st—*burning hands* (DC 13), *enlarge person*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *summon monster I*
o—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 12), *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *read magic*

Familiar bat named Dargenti

Combat Gear *scroll of scorching ray*, *scroll of summon monster III*, *scroll of web*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 40 charges); **Other Gear** +2 leather armor, +1 longsword, dagger, +1 composite longbow (Str +1) with 20 arrows, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +2, everburning torch, flask of fine absinthe worth 50 gp, gold holy symbol (75 gp), spellbook, 8 gp

Seltyiel grew up surrounded by shame and disgrace. Before he came of age, his stepfather attempted to kill him, but after Seltyiel turned the tables, he fled into the wild. Since then, his life has been a cruel series of betrayals and pain. Recently escaped from a period of imprisonment after his true father, a notorious bandit, set Seltyiel up to take the blame for his crimes, the half-elf longs for revenge against both his fathers.

Pre-generated Characters



SEELAH

FEMALE HUMAN

DEITY Iomedae
HOMELAND Katapesh

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Paladin 7
ALIGNMENT Lawful Good
INITIATIVE +0
SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 16
DEXTERITY 10
CONSTITUTION 14
INTELLIGENCE 8
WISDOM 13
CHARISMA 16

DEFENSE

HP 64
AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+11 armor, +4 shield)
Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +10
Immune disease, fear

SKILLS

Knowledge (religion) +9, Sense Motive +11

FEATS

Cleave, Extra Lay On Hands, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword)

OFFENSE

Melee +1 longsword +12 (1d8+4/19–20)
Ranged +1 comp. longbow +8 (1d8+4/x3)
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20
Special Abilities aura of courage, aura of good, channel positive energy (4d6, DC 16), detect evil, divine bond (weapon), divine grace, divine health, lay on hands 8/day, mercy (diseased, sickened), smite evil 3/day (+3 to attack roll, +7 damage)
Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)
2nd—*bull's strength*
1st—*cure light wounds, divine favor*

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +2 full plate mail, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 longsword, +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, cloak of resistance +1, headband of alluring charisma +2, backpack, rations (4), silver holy symbol, 20 gp

When a group of Iomedae's knights arrived to save Seelah's hometown of Solku from gnolls, Seelah knew where her destiny lay. Atoning for her misdeeds as a child, she devoted her life to Iomedae. Over the years, guilt over her misspent youth has changed into a powerful faith and conviction. Today, she sees the good in everyone, and hopes that by leading by example, she can help other wayward souls (such as Seltiyel) find their way.



SEONI

FEMALE HUMAN

DEITY Pharasma
HOMELAND Varisia

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Sorcerer 7
ALIGNMENT Lawful Neutral
INITIATIVE +6
SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 8
DEXTERITY 14
CONSTITUTION 12
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 13
CHARISMA 20

DEFENSE

HP 41
AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)
Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6

SKILLS

Bluff +15, Climb +2, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +10

FEATS

Alertness, Dodge, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation)

OFFENSE

Melee quarterstaff +2 (1d6–1)
Ranged dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17
Special Abilities arcane bond, metamagic adept (2/day)
Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +11)
3rd (5/day)—*dispel magic, haste, lightning bolt* (DC 20)
2nd (7/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility, scorching ray, web* (DC 17)
1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 18), *enlarge person, mage armor, magic missile, identify, shield* o (at will)—*acid splash, detect magic, disrupt undead, flare* (DC 17), *light, prestidigitation, read magic*
Bloodline arcane

Familiar blue-tailed skink named Dragon

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *scroll of fireball, scroll of fly, wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 50 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, quarterstaff, amulet of natural armor +2, headband of alluring charisma +2, ring of protection +2, backpack, sunrod (5), rations (4), 14 gp

Seoni is something of an enigma—quietly neutral on most matters, bound by codes and mandates she rarely feels compelled to explain, the beautiful sorcerer keeps her emotions tightly bottled. Extremely detail-oriented, Seoni is a careful and meticulous planner who frequently finds herself frustrated by the improvised plans of her more impulsive companions.



THE INFERNAL SYNDROME

by Greg A. Vaughan

Westcrown's criminal underworld lies in shambles, several of its most prestigious leaders lying dead or captives of their own followers in the wake of a cunningly implemented coup. With the Council of Thieves shattered, two new crime lords dub themselves rulers of Westcrown's gangland, with their eyes upon the wayward city in its entirety. Only the crimes of generations past and the counsel of a fickle witch can aid the PCs in revealing the heart of Westcrown's corruption and saving the city from a new age of chaos and tyranny.

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by Sean K Reynolds

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by Kevin Carter

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The Infernal Syndrome Dramatis Personae

Aberian Arvanxi	(decadent mayor of Westcrown)
Aberten Vittershins	(Council of Thieves sorcerer and harrower)
Apurva Arkona	(rakshasa imprisoned in the Nessian Spiral)
Avahzi Serafian	(Council of Thieves diabolist, leader of thieves at ruins)
Ailyn Ghontasavos	(undercover Pathfinder agent, ally and supporter of the rebels)
Arael	(leader of Children of Westcrown)
Chammady Drovenge	(Ecarrdian's sister, wants to rule Council of Thieves and Westcrown)
Crosael	(ex-major-domo of Aberian's Folly, allied with Council)
Dargentu Vheed	(previous mayor of Westcrown, now a lich shade)
Ecarrdian Drovenge	(Chammady's brother, wants to rule Council of Thieves and Westcrown)
Ilnarik Sivanshin	(ex-Pathfinder, now a vampire allied with Council of Thieves)
Isavenda	(erinyes minion of Nyxervex, loyal to Liebdag)
Jalki	(Council of Thieves loyalist, captured by usurpers)
Janiven	(second-in-command of Children of Westcrown)
Jerusen	(near-feral vampire thrall of Ilnarik)
Jezeletrix	(insane fallen vulpinal agathion, once allied with Dargentu)
Joriavah	(succubus priest of Noctacula, leader of tunnel rats)
Liebdag the Twin	(infernal duke imprisoned in the Nessain Spiral)
Novankia	(Avahzi's imp companion)
Nyxervex	(bone devil, loyal minion of Liebdag)
Signatory Vaccha	(kolyarut inevitable, enforcer of Liebdag's contract)
Vassindio Drovenge	(prominent member of Council of Thieves)
Zol	(reformed barbarian, Council of Thieves "cleaner")
Zovarue	(medusa librarian and sorcerer)

All Hell Breaks Loose

In the bowels of one of Westcrown's most esteemed halls of power lies an unfathomable evil, a terror beyond all reason and sanity, shackled and broken by the magic of a lost archmage. For years this menace has laid fuming, endlessly testing the bars of its prison, gathering its hatred and planning its revenge. Now the machinations of a deadly conspiracy have weakened the chains of this nightmare's bonds, and in their growing cracks rise the flames of the damned and the promise of Westcrown consumed in hellfire. Can the PCs infiltrate the labyrinth of a madman to put an end to an evil beyond even the heroes of legend? And what foulness would seek to ruin all of Westcrown by gambling with its very soul?

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* continues the Council of Thieves Adventure Path, and includes:

- ▶ "The Infernal Syndrome," a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 7th-level characters, by Clinton Boomer and James Jacobs.
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