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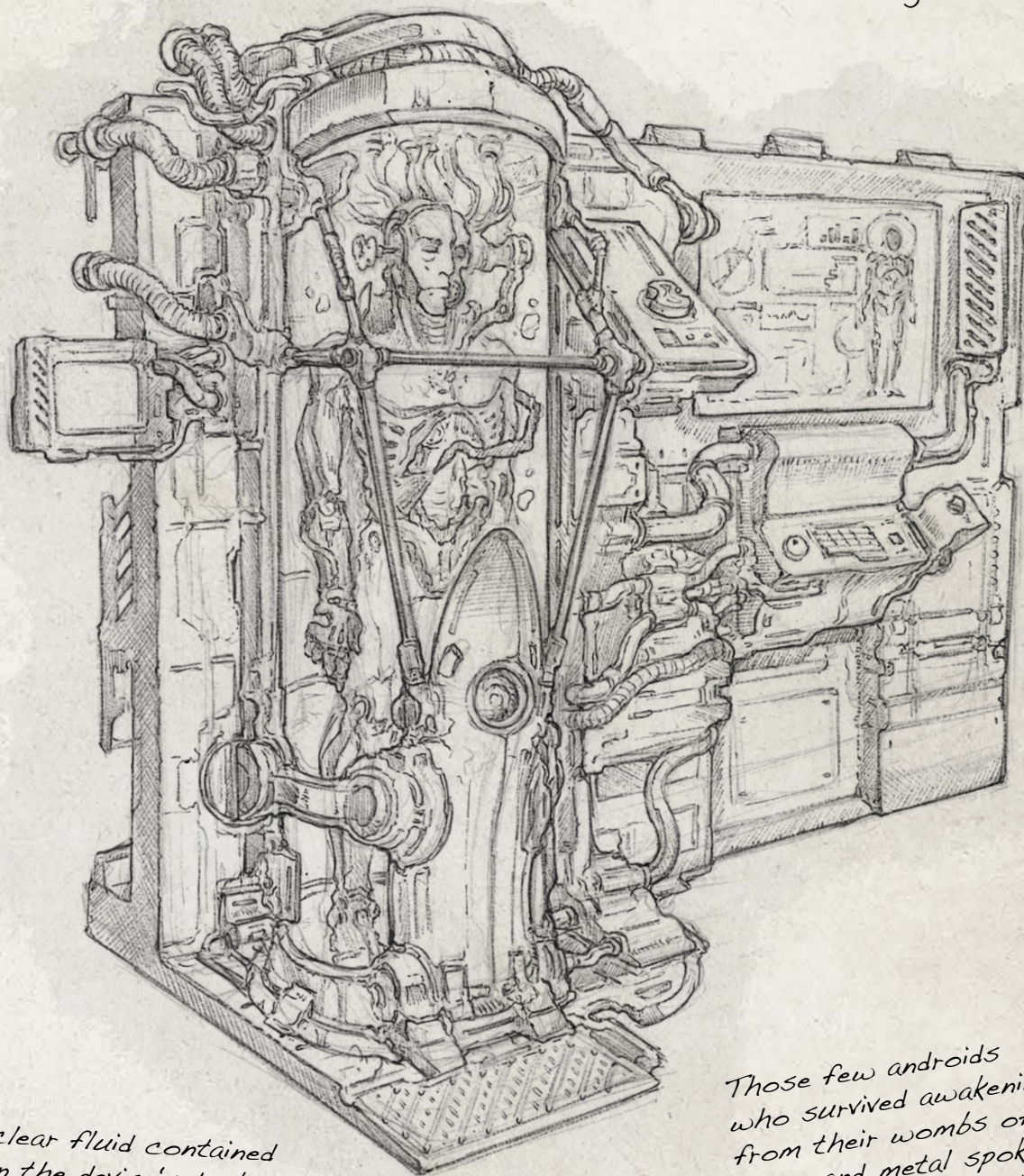
THE CHOKING TOWER

by Ron Lundeen

WAP.14

Only a few of these strange devices still contained living androids within their fluid-filled containers.

In some cases, the androids kept within seemed to have suffered damage during growth, perhaps as a result of external tampering.



The clear fluid contained within the device's tank appeared to be water, yet the scent and flavor had a distinctive tang of brine. Perhaps the chemicals within serve as nutrients?

Those few androids who survived awakening from their wombs of glass and metal spoke of strange and frightening dreams. At what point during growth do they become conscious?



IRON GODS™

ADVENTURE PATH © PART 3 OF 6

THE CHOKING TOWER



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Advanced Player's Guide

APG

Ultimate Equipment

UE

Inner Sea Gods

ISG

Ultimate Magic

UM

Technology Guide

TG

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FROM UNSPEAKABLE FUTURES

One of the not-so-secret resources that allowed me to create the Iron Gods Adventure Path is a game that no one can buy. “Unspeakable Futures” is a post-apocalyptic RPG that I’ve been working on for about 15 years now. I started working on it as a thought-experiment while I was helping to playtest the alpha rules for the d20 system. I wanted to see how those apparently robust rules would work in creating a game that combines Lovecraft’s mythos with tropes from various science fiction elements associated with the end of the world. Movies like *The Road Warrior*, books like Stephen King’s *Dark Tower* saga, tabletop games like *Gamma World*, and video games like *Fallout* were key points of inspiration for me. I also added some of my own ideas about the end times.

To my delight, the d20 rules proved quite robust indeed, and over the next decade and a half, the game itself has gone through several revisions as I constantly tinkered with it. I ran a full-length campaign using the rules—taking

the PCs from 1st-level characters scraping out an existence in rural post-apocalypse northern California to 20th-level space-shuttle hijackers who blew up an Azathoth-possessed satellite-mounted weapon of mass destruction—and have had friends do the same. I’ve even been able to play characters in the game I designed, and have had friends use the rules to run campaigns for people I don’t know. Currently, “Unspeakable Futures” is something I can run using the Pathfinder RPG rules, and indeed, I’ve run it at some past PaizoCons. One thing I’ve learned from running and playing “Unspeakable Futures” is that players seemed to have a lot of fun doing things like using a shotgun to sneak attack a bandit that was trying to carjack an ice cream truck, blasting a giant mutant bear with a leaky atom gun, making a critical hit with a chainsaw, turning themselves into cyborgs, running amok in suits of powered armor, and blowing up nuclear reactors just to hurt a shoggoth.

I've hopes that the rules and ideas I've been working on for "Unspeakable Futures" might one day become part of an Adventure Path set in Numeria. I started sneaking some of the rules from the game into Pathfinder early on—for example, the original draft of the gunslinger class was lifted from my "Unspeakable Futures" drafts, and the rules for robots and androids that premiered in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* came from it as well. The positive reception these rules received made me hope that our readers would welcome a half-year spent in Numeria.

The trickiest part of Iron Gods, of course, was the fact that it required an entire new category of treasure and gear: technological items. The six authors for the adventures needed access to these items in order to build encounters, and when I was building the outline for and assigning Iron Gods adventures back in August of 2013, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* wasn't even on our schedule yet. This is where all the work put into "Unspeakable Futures" stepped in to save the day. It took only a few weeks to gather up about 30,000 words of technological items, cybernetics, robots, radiation, artificial intelligences, new spells, and new uses for technology-related skills. This more than doubled the length of the Iron Gods outline I was sending out to the authors, but fortunately they were up to the challenge!

HOMEMADE LASER GUNS

The *Technology Guide* introduces rules for crafting technological items, using a feat-based mechanic akin to creating magic items. It makes sense to use feats to represent the creation of things like laser rifles and force fields and spacesuits, since when I was designing the items for the *Technology Guide*, I used the magic item creation rules as a starting point. After all, the rules don't care how your character gained that fly speed of 60 feet—whether you got it from a magic cloak or a jetpack is irrelevant, and as a result, the method the rules provide for creating the jetpack should be similar to that for creating a magic cloak, right?

Pretty quickly, I ran into a problem while designing the rules for crafting technological items. Magic items naturally have prerequisites—in order to craft an item, you need access to various spells and have to succeed at a Spellcraft check. But tying prerequisites to a spell system didn't make any sense for technological items. The whole point of super-science is that it's what those of us with no access to magic rely on to work miracles!

In "Unspeakable Futures," I'd already instituted a Craft DC for each and every item, so that stood in easily for the Spellcraft check that the Pathfinder RPG requires when you're creating magic items. Rather than relying upon spells as prerequisites in crafting, I used a relatively complex system of physical components ranging from "good junk"

ON THE COVER

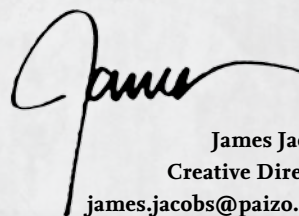
Wayne Reynolds depicts a fight that takes place at the top of the notorious Choking Tower—heroes versus magic-slinging robots, the constructed apprentices of the smoke wizard himself, Furkas Xoud.

(a generic term for technological supplies scavenged from the wasteland that are used for maintenance and repair) all the way up to specific rare components like mini-atomic reactors, nanotech nodes, gravity cells, and more. In order to build an item, you need to succeed at a series of Craft checks and supply a large number of crafting components in a specially outfitted production facility. That system wouldn't work for the Pathfinder RPG, though, because instituting the rules for how those crafting components are themselves created or are scavenged from creatures and technology and ruins, and how they interact with the world's economy would have required a significant amount of retrofitting and reworking of the Pathfinder RPG's economy and crafting rules.

Fortunately, the author we roped into expanding the *Technology Guide* into a 64-page book came up with an elegant solution. Russ Taylor ran with the concept of production labs, and came up with a list of several types of workshops to which you'd need access in order to craft technological items. Thus, by requiring a technological item crafter to rely upon access to a specific lab and requiring those labs to have power in order to function, the GM can limit the types of item crafting available in the game by deciding what sorts of labs the PCs gain access to and what condition they're in. Essentially, just as magic item creation requires an external source of magical energy in the form of prepared spells, technological item creation requires an external source of technological energy in the form of battery or generator power.

This adventure introduces several locations that, at your discretion, the PCs can use as production labs. Similar locations will appear in the penultimate adventure, but if you don't want the player characters to be able to craft their own technological wonders, all you need to do is have these locations be ruined and thus unusable.

Just make sure to let your players know before they start taking feats on technology crafting if you don't plan on supplying them with the labs they'll need!



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THE CHOKING TOWER

PART 1: INTRIGUE IN IADENVEIGH

PAGE 7

The PCs come to the town of Iadenveigh, but before they can explore the ruins below beneath the community they must earn the locals' trust.

PART 2: INTO THE AURORA

PAGE 13

Ancient wreckage hides beneath Iadenveigh, and within lie important clues waiting to be discovered.

PART 3: SMOKEWOOD

PAGE 25

The dense woodland that surrounds the Choking Tower contains many dangers, yet also the opportunity to meet and befriend a powerful alien ally.

PART 4: BELOW A SMOKE-FILLED SKY

PAGE 30

The PCs brave the Choking Tower as they seek out the mortal remains of the mysterious oracle Casandalee.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Choking Tower" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

7

The PCs begin this adventure at 7th level.

8

The PCs should be 8th level before they enter the Choking Tower.

9

The PCs should reach 9th level near the end of their exploration of the Choking Tower, and certainly before entering the dungeons below the Choking Tower.

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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The town of Iadenveigh was founded in 4649 AR by a group of Molthuni exiles who were discontent with the course of the newly independent nation's government. Unwilling to side with the rebels who would eventually form the nation of Nirmathas, these pious devotees of Erastil traveled to the far side of Lake Encarthan, eventually settling in southern Numeria where they founded their own new home. Here, they found that crops grew strangely well, quickened by some strange quality in the soil. In the decades that followed, the townsfolk of Iadenveigh grew increasingly insular and intolerant of Numeria's advanced technologies. Today, such technologies are all but outlawed from the settlement. While there are those in town who suspect the region's soil has somehow been enhanced by the influence of the technologies they despise, none openly admit to such a blasphemy. Similarly, while evidence supports the existence of a buried technological complex below their home, Iadenveigh's citizens staunchly maintain that their home is an "oasis of nature in a wasteland of steel." Here, they have defended their way of life from the strange mutated creatures that haunt the surrounding wilderness, and have systematically destroyed each and every scrap of technology they've been able to lay their hands on.

A select few in town suspect that the source of their farms' fecundity and the regular mutations in the wildlife come from the same source: an underground complex hidden below an unsettled portion of the region around Iadenveigh. Yet unlike the town of Torch, which has turned its ancient technological ruin into a source of prosperity, the people of Iadenveigh are ashamed of their secret to the extent that its very existence has been hushed up. For those who do know of it, the complex below town is considered to be a dangerous relic, one that must be kept locked away. And for many years, the townsfolk were successful in this task.

But then Furkas Xoud came to town and plundered the secrets below Iadenveigh.

A heartless, domineering man harboring a fascination for smoke and vapors, Furkas Xoud had been a longstanding member of the Technic League until he abandoned the organization in 4703 AR—just prior to being formally exiled for worshiping Zyphus, god of accidental death. Furkas fled to southern Numeria, just as Iadenveigh's founders had done, yet he did not build a town—instead, he constructed a strange, smoke-spewing structure that came to be known as the Choking Tower. From this fortress, he embarked on numerous stealthy missions into southern Numeria to add to his collection of strange robots, nanotechnological devices, and other artifacts brought to Golarion during the Rain of Stars so long ago.

But Furkas's greatest desire was to track down a specific person, an android named Casandalee, mentioned in notes stolen from the Technic League as being one of the few who

had emerged from Silver Mount before the League's grip closed over the region. Others, including the machine mage Karamoss and the Pathfinder Gojan Sharp, had done so as well, yet their exploits were well known. For some reason, Casandalee had slipped through the cracks of history, and Furkas believed that if he could find her remains, he could extract a wealth of secrets about Silver Mount from her with the aid of a specialized thought-harvesting robot. Her android brain would resist decay, and if her body was intact, his robot could mine her mind for the secrets he sought.

It took years, but finally, Furkas tracked Casandalee's flight from Silver Mount to a location in southern Numeria—a site now occupied by the town of Iadenveigh. This complicated matters somewhat, for Furkas would not be able to bring his robotic minions to aid him in his expedition without arousing the wrath of an entire town of zealots—while powerful, Furkas was also still a fugitive, and hoped to keep his efforts subtle.

In 4707 AR, Furkas infiltrated Iadenveigh under the cover of night and magic, exploring the town invisibly until he discovered an entrance into the chambers below. To his delight, he found the ruins below Iadenveigh to be those of an ancient android foundry filled with strange technology—much of it still functional. The wizard managed to avoid most of these guardians and made his discovery deep in the ruins, finding Casandalee where his research had promised him. He returned to the Choking Tower with her preserved corpse, where initially his thought harvester robot made great strides toward extracting memories from the dead android's brain. But when Furkas's experiments dug deeper, they released a devastating fail-safe Casandalee had injected herself with—a cloud of destructive nanites that tore the wizard apart, reducing his body to so much smoke and mist. Furkas's spirit did not rest, though, and he now haunts the Choking Tower amid abandoned experiments and robotic minions. The secrets extracted from the android's brain lie there as well, ready to be claimed by any brave enough to dare the tower.

PART I: INTRIGUE IN IADENVEIGH

At the end of the previous adventure, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #86: Lords of Rust*, the PCs defeated the mad artificial intelligence known as Hellion, but should have learned that it was not the only one of its kind. Between information gleaned from the walls of Hellion's lair and from the pages of its minions (particularly the priest Nalakai and the orc barbarian Kulgara), the PCs should have learned that a much more dangerous and more powerful entity dwells in Silver Mount—an entity that Hellion despised and feared known as "Unity."

More importantly, the PCs should have learned of the android oracle Casandalee, a prophet and onetime worshiper of Unity whom Hellion regarded as something of a kindred

spirit—even as a sister. Hellion believed that Casandalee knew much of Unity: its defenses, its weaknesses, and ways it could be combated. Before mounting its assault on Silver Mount, Hellion wanted desperately to track down Casandalee, for according to its information, she fled Silver Mount after betraying Unity and took with her a device known as a neurocamTM. Much information could well be stored on that device—or, at the very least, her brain could be mined for clues. Hellion's information indicates that Casandalee's flight from Unity ended inside a buried fragment of the crashed starship *Destiny*, under what is now the town of Iadenveigh, yet the artificial intelligence hadn't had the chance to mount an expedition to investigate.

If the PCs don't come up with the idea of taking up that investigation themselves, you should use NPC allies, such as friends back in Torch, to encourage them. They may wish to travel directly to Starfall and Silver Mount—discourage them from doing so, as the dangers that await them there are significant, and without the experience awaiting them in their quest to find Casandalee (along with the vital information the android left behind), they'll be doomed to fail. If you have access to the final two volumes of this Adventure Path, particularly *Pathfinder Adventure Path #89: Palace of Fallen Stars*, you can skip ahead to that adventure as needed if your players insist, but when it becomes apparent that they need to prepare more, you should allow them to retreat and get back on course. The Technic League's disorganization and hubris should be enough that they won't outright destroy the PCs for a failed attempt to enter Silver Mount or otherwise oppose them, but feel free to have Technic League bounty hunters hound the PCs for the next few adventures if you wish.

APPROACHING IADENVEIGH

From the town of Torch, the most direct route to Iadenveigh is via a dusty road leading west toward the Gorum Pots at the headwaters of the Dagger River, and then down along the river's banks. This is a trip of approximately 140 miles—feel free to spice up this journey with wandering monster encounters drawn from the encounter tables on page 45 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars*. Alternatively, if you just want to get started on the adventure, you can simply begin as the PCs are approaching the town itself.

Iadenveigh is a large town populated primarily by lawful good worshipers of Erastil. The rustic, pious townsfolk of Iadenveigh hate and fear technology, as they have seen

technological artifacts produce disastrous explosions and terrible mutations. The PCs must therefore be circumspect in the town with any technological items they've recovered.

Iadenveigh is presented in greater detail on pages 62–67 of this volume; make sure you're familiar with that article before running Part 1 of this adventure. Townspeople who learn the PCs are not mere traders or travelers suggest that the PCs speak with the hunter Redfang at the High Home, the sprawling wooden building on the rocky hill visible from anywhere in Iadenveigh. Redfang is one of Iadenveigh's leaders, and as the current caretaker of the High Home, he's responsible for welcoming visitors while simultaneously determining whether they pose a threat to the town or could be an asset. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check suggests the PCs travel to the High Home to introduce themselves to the town's leadership.

Note that this adventure assumes the PCs seek a peaceful way to earn permission to investigate the ruins below Iadenveigh, but other avenues exist as well. If the PCs opt for stealth, deception, or force to accomplish their goals, you'll need to rely more on the gazetteer of Iadenveigh to run this section of the adventure.



Redfang

THE HIGH HOME

The High Home is both a tavern and a community center perched near the top of the hillock in the center of Iadenveigh known as the Brow. Shortly after arriving in town, the PCs should be directed to meet with the ranger Redfang here.

Redfang is, like many of the residents of Iadenveigh, friendly but cautious when he meets the PCs. He is aware that an armed band of adventurers can bring trouble as surely as they can provide aid, so he seeks to ascertain why the PCs have come to town and to help them in a way that creates as little trouble as possible. Keep in mind that beyond his (and Iadenveigh's) distrust of technology, Redfang and the citizens of this town are good folk, and once they overcome their wariness, they're capable of being quite friendly. Numeria's savage wilderness and cruel lords have forced these gentle worshipers of Erastil to extremes, however, and the capacity for kindness does not negate the wisdom of suspicion.

If asked about Numerian ruins, missing androids, or a dungeon below the town, Redfang lowers his head in thought before responding, saying that strange ruins are scattered throughout Numeria, and it is from them that all of this land's troubles stem. Wise PCs know this isn't exactly confirmation of the presence or absence of ruins below Iadenveigh. Before the PCs can push him further, Redfang continues, noting how hard it is to know who to

trust these days. Read or paraphrase the following at some point during the conversation.

"It has always been hard to extend trust to outlanders. We are a self-sufficient settlement—we have no need for trade, and can take care of ourselves. It's the safest option, as I know you understand. It's difficult to tell who you can rely on, but there are two things you can do to earn the trust of the Deadeye Council. First, I would like some help in solving a problem with one of our more... colorful residents. Second, there's an issue with a possible traitor in our midst that outsiders would be particularly well suited to handle."

The two tasks Redfang mentions are detailed in the following section. He would prefer to handle Jevik's farm first, but let the PCs decide which of the two tasks they want to attempt initially.

MONSTER ON THE FARM (CR 7)

Jevik's farm lies on the north edge of town, a location that fits well with the man's sour nature. Jevik has few friends in Iadenveigh, and his surliness stems from a hard life filled with misfortune that resulted in a not completely unjustified paranoia. Jevik's complaints about monsters, mutants, bandits, and metal men interfering with his farming are something of a local joke, but his latest complaints to the Deadeye Council seem different to Redfang—more plausible, if only because Jevik seemed unusually sober when he spoke to the council 5 days before. Redfang had meant to go check on the situation at the farm several times already, but other responsibilities combined with Jevik's established record of false alarms conspired to delay the task. With the arrival of the PCs, however, checking on the farm gives Redfang a chance to do two things simultaneously: check on Jevik's claims, and form an opinion of the PCs after spending some time in their company.

If the PCs ask around town before heading up to Jevik's farm, a successful DC 12 Diplomacy check to gather information turns up something potentially interesting: no one's seen Jevik in town for 3 days. None of the townsfolk see this as unusual, since Jevik is something of a loner and a misanthrope anyway, but considering his recent complaints of sighting a monster in his orchard, the PCs and Redfang alike might grow concerned.

Jevik's farm is one of the few located outside of Iadenveigh's Elkhorn Wall. The man, Redfang notes, is something of a godless misanthrope who never really got along well with Iadenveigh's locals, and so never felt comfortable living within the city's walls. Iadenveigh's hunters generally keep the hinterlands relatively safe, but Redfang notes that strange beasts and mutated animals are very much a danger—in other words, a monster may well have been preying upon Jevik's farm of late.

ACCOMMODATIONS IN IADENVEIGH

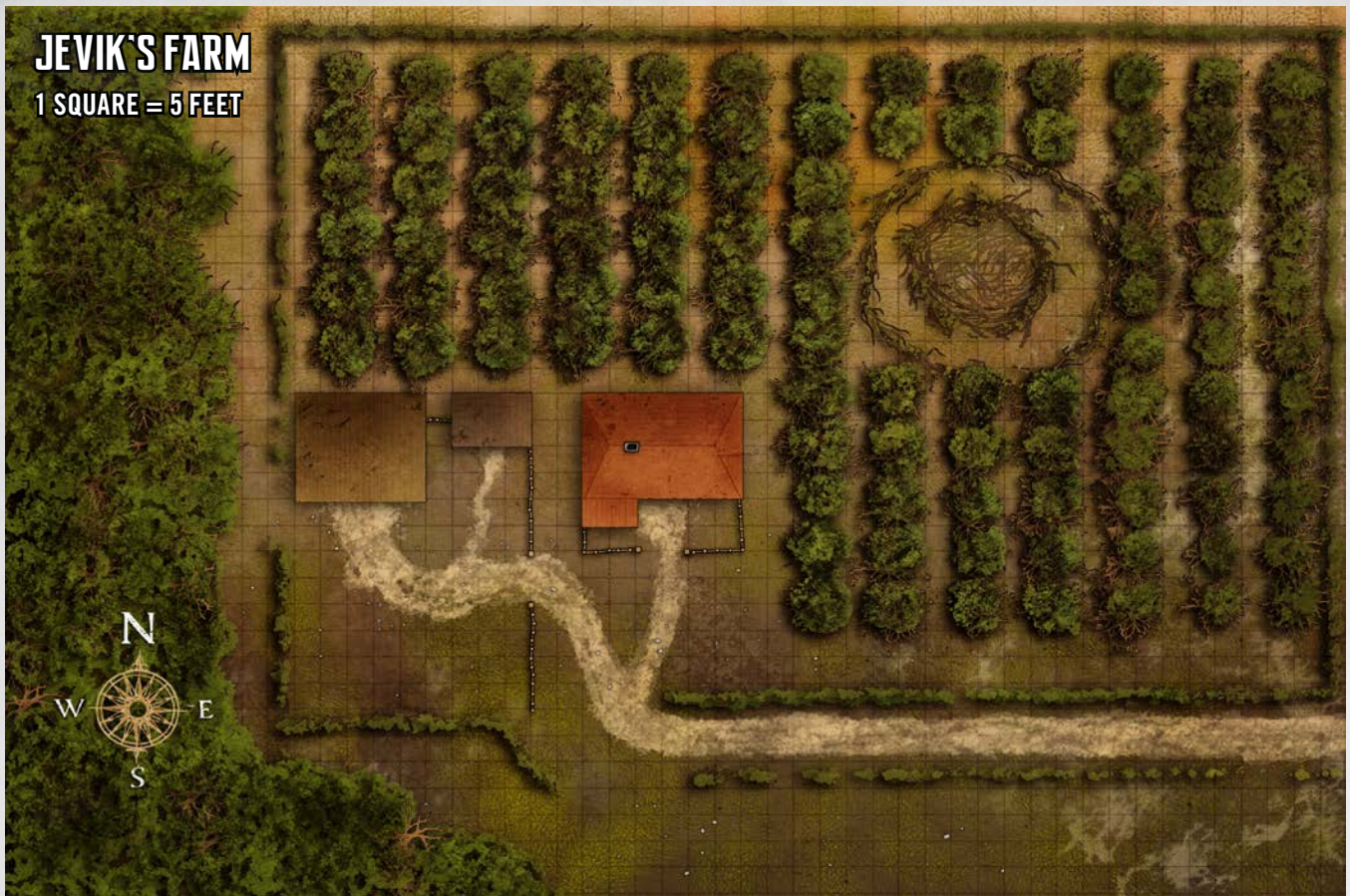
Iadenveigh is unusual in that it takes its insular qualities to an extreme. As such, there are no actual inns in the town. The closest approximation of an inn would be the High House, which contains numerous "guest quarters" for visitors who don't have friends or family to stay with during their time in town. Redfang offers the PCs the uses of the High Home's guest rooms free of charge as long as they don't overstay their welcome. The High Home isn't luxurious, but it's more comfortable than camping out on the edges of town—the only other option for the PCs other than squatting in an abandoned building or forging friendships with locals.

The odor of pigs marks Jevik's farm before it comes into view. Visible from a wide break in a roadside hedge, the house has been recently painted and sports a wide porch with several chairs. An orchard is partially visible behind the house. A few sheds and two connected pens occupy most of the side yard, but the fencing of the pen has been splintered and the earth churned. As the PCs approach, they should swiftly realize that something dire has happened here, for a great amount of blood has been splattered over the house's front porch.

Creature: Jevik's long habit of false alarms has finally caught up with him. His farm has indeed become the hunting ground of a monster—a lumbering mutant known as a yaoguai. The bearlike beast began its predations on the farm by sneaking in to snatch a hog away under cover of night, but a few days ago, Jevik decided to ambush the monster by using his last hog as bait. Unfortunately for Jevik, he drastically underestimated the size, danger, and strength of the mysterious visitor to his farm. The yaoguai killed both the hog and the farmer before retreating to the nearby orchard to build itself a nest and turning its attention toward Iadenveigh itself.

An investigation of the farmhouse and sheds turns up no clues, but focusing on the front porch, where the bloodstains mark the sight of a tragedy, reveals a different story indeed. In addition to the blood, deep furrows and clawed tracks the size of a large shield mar the ground. Even though the tracks are 3 days old, only a DC 11 Survival check is required to track the prints to the northeast, into the orchard behind the farmhouse. Following these tracks leads to an area where the trees themselves have been smashed down to form a clearing. It's here that the slumbering yaoguai continues to sleep off its recent rampage. The beast wakes if it hears the PCs approach, but remember to increase the DC of its Perception check by 10 as long as it remains asleep.

When the yaoguai wakes (upon either hearing the PCs or being attacked), it roars in rage and immediately attacks. The monster fights until reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, whereupon it attempts to flee into the woods. Redfang pursues



the creature relentlessly, however, knowing its fast healing won't keep it from Iadenveigh's borders for long.

YAOGUAI **CR 7**
XP 3,200
hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 284)

Story Award: If the PCs have not used technology overtly in town or in his presence, Redfang admires their integrity and skill. He retrieves a *hearth mantle* (see page 60) from the High Home and presents it to the PCs as a gift in an attempt to gain their friendship.

UNMASKING THE SPY

Redfang would prefer to know a bit more about the PCs before he introduces them to the Ealdorman (the village leader), but if the PCs wish, they can seek out Ivik Gunnett on their own. Regardless of the timing, they find him relaxing on the porch of his house in the Bell Quarter. Unlike the suspicious locals, Gunnett is open and friendly to the PCs, even if Redfang doesn't accompany them to help with introductions. Gunnett's come to feel that Iadenveigh's isolationist attitude and fear of technology might be starting to stunt the settlement's health and growth, but he hasn't

yet figured out a way to maintain the town's traditions while easing up on these prejudices.

Once introductions are out of the way, at your discretion you can have Gunnett recognize the PCs from their accomplishments in Torch. News travels slowly to Iadenveigh, but Gunnett keeps abreast of current events as best he can so as to be prepared for all possible complications that might affect the town. News of Torch's troubles and the Technic League's increased interest in that town as a result concerns Gunnett, for more Technic League agents in the Numerian Plains for any reason isn't good news. If he's heard the PCs helped to deal with a Technic League spy in Torch (at your discretion), or if the PCs admit such to him, the Ealdorman nods in approval and confides his concerns.

Ivek Gunnett has long feared that the Technic League keeps spies in Iadenveigh—if the PCs tell him about Sanvil Trett back in Torch and his allegiance to the League (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #85: Fires of Creation* 31), he only grows more convinced of the possibility of similar infiltrators in Iadenveigh. But with no hard evidence to back up his belief, he's been loath to make his concerns public, both out of fear of alerting any possible spies and out of concern that he could accidentally launch the reactionary citizens on a manhunt.

The arrival of the PCs in Iadenveigh is a fortuitous happenstance to the Ealdorman. Once he's convinced they aren't Technic League spies themselves, he motions the PCs close and relates the following in a whisper.

"I'm glad you've come to Iadenveigh, as I find myself in need of your kind—people who have run afoul of embedded agents of the Technic League. Iadenveigh has had its confrontations with the League, but they've largely left us alone of late, since we don't have anything of interest to them. Yet I have reason to believe a spy from the Technic League is somewhere in Iadenveigh—a fear that has only grown darker now that I've heard tales of similar problems in other towns throughout the Numerian Plains. Alas, I can do little, for I have no proof. If the townspeople got wind of this, they'd point fingers every which way and might end up punishing the suspicious rather than the guilty. I need to know if my fears are based in fact, and if so, I want the spy identified before I take any formal action. Will you help?"

The Leads

If the PCs agree to aid him, Gunnett presents the few facts he knows. One of the town's hunters killed a mechanical bird north of town the day before yesterday. The bird shattered from its fall, revealing a piece of paper stored within. The hunter, a decent man named Abret, brought the shattered bird and its missive to Gunnett.

The paper bears a sketchy map of Iadenveigh with the area of Badwater circled. A message in a strange language is written on the back—Gunnett recognizes the language as that used by the Technic League, but he can't himself speak the language. If no PC can speak Androffan, a spell like *comprehend languages* can decipher it. Gunnett can perform this service if given a day to prepare the spell, but does so grudgingly due to his nervous superstitions about all things Technic. The message reads as follows.

"Locals identified southern springs as the source of the area's mutations and now avoid it. Afflictions consistent with mutagenic gas poisoning, as you posited from Silver Mount expeditions. I will explore with caution; locals avoid the area and my current cover would seem noticeably out of place were I discovered there."

Gunnett presumes the sender directed the message north to Starfall. The mechanical nature of the messenger and the casual reference to Silver Mount suggest the sender is a spy for the Technic League.

Before the PCs set off to investigate, the Ealdorman repeats his desire to keep things quiet for the moment, to prevent a mob from forming and damaging some innocent's reputation or physical well-being. If the PCs learn who the spy is, he asks them to return with proof. If the spy attacks

or attempts to flee, of course, the PCs should do their best to catch him before he can escape to Starfall.

To help narrow the investigation, Gunnett lays out the two most significant leads as he sees them. Before he does, he reminds the PCs to keep quiet about the mechanical bird—as long as the spy doesn't realize it's been shot out of the sky, his or her guard will remain down.

Badwater: Everyone in town knows that the swath of land known as Badwater is, well, "bad." The fact that this region is of apparent interest to the Technic League concerns Gunnett, and he has stepped up patrols in that part of Iadenveigh. So far, nothing suspicious has been found there, but the PCs might consider talking to the Bardleights (a family of stonemasons that quarry rock from Badwater's western edge) as they might have seen something relevant.

Strangers in Town: If there's a spy in town, chances are good that he or she is a recent arrival. Regarding newcomers in town, Gunnett explains that travelers generally stay at the High Home or, if they are down on their luck, camp in Heddick Widefoot's lumberyard. Currently, the PCs are the only travelers staying at the High Home, but Gunnett recalls some travelers camped in Heddick's yard recently. Perhaps they know more?

The Truth

A Technic League spy is indeed operating in town. The missive was sent by a woman named Ilarris Zeleshi (see page 58), a Technic League spy masquerading as a Varisian dancer encamped on Heddick Widefoot's land in the westernmost end of town. The mechanical bird was a small robot belonging to Ilarris's contact in Starfall, a Technic League captain named Ghartone. Provided the PCs don't spread word about Ilarris's message, she won't suspect it was intercepted for several days. Ghartone tasked Ilarris to ascertain the source of the mutations around Iadenveigh and whether this source is worth the effort of annexing the town. Ghartone gave her no set schedule to accomplish this task, and as a result Ilarris is in no hurry to complete her mission—she enjoys her time among the Varisians and feels that her cover is secure.

Investigating Badwater

As with the patrols sent into the broken lands, the PCs won't find any direct evidence of a spy if they explore Badwater—as she mentions in her missive, Ilarris is in no hurry to explore there, and plans on waiting until she hears back from Ghartone before seeking the source of the mutations.

If the PCs follow Gunnett's advice and seek out the Bardleights, though, they can learn something interesting. This family of stonemasons are the only residents of Iadenveigh who openly and regularly enter Badwater. The family's matron, Emmina Bardleigh (LG old female human expert 4) knows of no recent visitors to Badwater, but admits

that there are far too many entrances into the rocky area to monitor them all. While the PCs talk to Emmina, her 9-year-old grandson, Elborn, shyly approaches the most trustworthy-looking PC to display a “treasure” he discovered in Badwater 2 days ago: a shiny finger-cymbal. The PCs can identify the finger-cymbal as a traditional Varisian dancer’s instrument with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Perform (dance or percussion) check. The busy Bardleights know of no Varisians in town, as they are unaware of the Varisians currently camped in Heddick’s lumberyard. By asking around, however, the PCs can learn from many townspeople that the only finger-cymbals recently seen in town were used by the Varisian dancer in Heddick’s yard.

The Varisians (CR 8)

Five of the six Varisians camped in Heddick’s lumberyard are innocent men and women who work as merchants as they travel throughout Avistan. The sixth is the spy Ilarris, a woman who joined the others a few days before they reached Iadenveigh. The Varisians accepted Ilarris as one of their kin, and everyone in Iadenveigh assumes the six are all one longstanding group (a misconception Ilarris does her best to support). The kinship the Varisian merchants feel with Ilarris is tenuous at best, and grows shakier as they begin to increasingly worry that she has an agenda that could lose them the town’s hospitality.

If the PCs approach **Heddick Widefoot** (LG male human expert 3), the busy lumber merchant assumes that the PCs are going to immediately make accusations about his visitors. Over the years, Heddick has often had to defend his guests from unreasonably suspicious townsfolk, and he assumes this situation is no different. If the PCs present Heddick with their suspicions and the finger-cymbal discovered in Badwater, he becomes contemplative and observes that this might be one of the rare times that his guests are, in fact, to blame for a serious crime. He escorts the PCs to visit the Varisians at once.

The Varisians are a close-mouthed group, used to being blamed for minor crimes in the communities they visit. They are decent but canny folk, well aware that they are often regarded as outlanders, more so here in Iadenveigh than elsewhere in Numeria. They’ve taken pains to be respectful of Iadenveigh’s traditions and have promised to remain on their best behavior. In fact, by serving as an intermediary between other traveling merchants and citizens of Iadenveigh, they have started functioning as a liaison of sorts between the town and the outside world, and

in time this relationship may well open up Iadenveigh to more trade than ever before.

When the PCs approach the Varisians, Ilarris keeps out of sight while the others insist that the PCs “must have gotten turned about at the crossroads” (a Varisian saying that a visitor is not welcome and should leave). The Varisians demand to know what it is they’re being accused of. If the PCs reveal that one of their number is suspected of being a spy for the Technic League, they reply with honest and incredulous laughter. The merchants avoid answering questions, assuming that any answers will be used against them in some pending accusation. With a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check, however, the PCs can soothe the Varisians enough that they agree to answer any questions the PCs may have. Revealing that a finger-cymbal was discovered in Badwater, the same area the Technic League spy was interested in, swiftly dissolves their mirth, for only one among them owns such instruments: Ilarris.

The finger-cymbal is enough to turn the Varisians against Ilarris, and they confront her with their suspicions immediately. At the same time, they attempt to distance themselves from her, pointing out that she only recently joined them.

Creature: Ilarris doesn’t try to maintain her ruse as a dancer once she realizes the PCs and Iadenveigh may be on to her. Once her fellow Varisians turn on her, or as soon as the PCs accuse her of being a spy, she immediately attempts to flee the scene, using tactics as detailed on page 58. Her goal is to retreat to the ruins of the *Aurora* below town. If she escapes, she enters the ruined foundry vessel via the well at Old Skelton’s farm and can be confronted later when the PCs investigate the ruins. She only stops to fight before then if cornered.

ILARRIS ZELESHI

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 90 (see page 58)

Development: If Ilarris is captured, the town’s justice is swift unless the PCs intervene; see her Campaign Role entry on page 59 for more details.

THE DEADEYE COUNCIL

Once the PCs have earned Redfang’s trust in accomplishing the two prior tasks, he calls the Deadeye Council together at the High Home to introduce the PCs to Iadenveigh’s leaders as folks who have been making good names for themselves.



Ilarris Zeleshi

There are 18 members in all on the Council, all of them nonsense men and women. So long as the PCs do not appear to utilize technology, they praise the PCs openly. If the PCs have overtly utilized technology in town, the community council is merely grudgingly respectful.

After the introductions, the PCs are asked to state their case. While the PCs might expect the Council to scoff at the idea of a hidden technological complex somewhere below the town, the council members nod in agreement as the PCs describe what they learned in Scrapwall. As it happens, the Deadeye Council has long suspected this, but rather than seek out and explore the ruins, they've opted to hide the fact. With the Technic League's increased interest in the town, however, the council is forced to accept the fact that ignoring the situation won't help—especially given that whatever is hidden below may well be growing dangerous.

At this point, one of the council members, a ruddy man named Hoskit, speaks up. "I wonder if what you're seeking doesn't have something to do with whatever happened to Old Skelton back in 4707?" There are some nods and murmurs of agreement, and Hoskit goes on to explain how Skelton, while trying to dig out an old well, released something from a cave under his farm that killed him—a "cloud of shimmering gas or something." The council capped the well with a slab of stone and did its best to hush up the event to avoid causing a panic, but the time may have finally come for a more thorough investigation. Redfang ominously points out that Skelton's farm is located at the northernmost edge of Badwater, the same part of town the Technic League spy was so interested in.

By the end of the meeting, the town council approves the PCs request and condones their exploration of whatever buried ruins might lie below Iadenveigh; they ask only two things: that the PCs remain quiet about the ruins so as to avoid spreading fear among Iadenveigh's citizens, and that if there is some sort of danger represented in the ruins, the PCs will neutralize it. The council promises to reward the PCs with one of Iadenveigh's most precious relics, a +2 *construct-bane longbow*, as thanks for neutralizing any threat below the town.

PART 2: INTO THE AURORA

As in *Torch*, the source of Iadenveigh's poisoned waters come from a buried ship from *Divinity*—in this case, a ship that carried an android foundry and a significant number of genetic experimentation laboratories. Only a relatively small portion of this ship, the *Aurora*, survived the crash, but

what remains consists of the android foundry itself along with several laboratories that have become contaminated with a dangerous toxic gas that causes horrific mutations. This gas has been seeping into the surrounding water for ages, but it's also been influencing the partially organic process by which the foundry's androids are created. In 4226, the android Casandalee, pursued by a band of robots sent by Unity to hunt her down, sought shelter in the ruins of the *Aurora*, only to become cornered by her enemies. She managed to destroy several of the robots, but was herself mortally wounded by an augmented gearsman. Upon Casandalee's death, the remaining robots found that they were cut off from Unity, for the gearsmen themselves had traveled beyond the AI's range of influence. With no new directives, the gearsmen waited patiently for new orders that would never come.

When the wizard Furkas Xoud explored the ruins of the *Aurora* nearly 500 years later in 4707, he magically avoided the gearsmen and the androids alike, managing to reach the heart of the ruins where he reactivated the *Aurora*'s systems in hopes of learning more about the site's history. In so doing he discovered Casandalee's body. Intrigued, he teleported back to his home with the android's remains, hoping to extract her memories with the aid of a specialized robotic minion. His investigation met a devastating end when his operation on the android triggered a final fail-safe she'd engineered to prevent herself from being revived by her ancient enemy, Unity.

Yet in reactivating the *Aurora*, Xoud left a greater legacy behind than he intended, for in so doing he released a cloud of nanites into the ruins. It was one of these clouds of medical nanites that slew Old Skelton. Further, by reactivating the ruins, Xoud triggered the creation of several deformed and bestial androids that dwell in the ruins still. The androids and gearsmen have clashed several times in the past, but both remain as dangerous guardians of the site to this day.

AURORA FEATURES

The *Aurora* is a utilitarian, high-tech facility emphasizing function over form. The ship's surviving android foundry is now buried and completely surrounded by stone, except at the well entry at area **A1**. The rooms within are 10 feet high, except for the manufacturing floor (areas **A3** and **A9**) and gas canisters (areas **A13**) which are 20 feet high. As with most Numerian ruins, the ceilings, doors, walls, and floors are made of an iron-adamantine alloy called glaucite (hardness 15, hp 180, break DC 40). The *Aurora* is without power, and as a result its interiors are dark. Doors



Hoskit

HOMEcoming?

Many centuries before Casandalee came to the *Aurora*, the foundry machinery within the ruins still functioned and would occasionally disgorge a fully formed android. Over time, the machinery grew timeworn and the androids it created became deformed and psychotic (see area **A3**), but in those first few centuries after the crash, androids generated by these machines were healthy and sound of mind. Some of these androids managed to escape the wreckage (which in those early days was not yet entirely buried by the superstitious locals or the passage of time) and found their way into the outer world. Some of those androids have survived through the generations and could well still exist today in new incarnations.

If you have any android PCs in your group, you might decide that they originated here in the *Aurora*'s foundry. Such PCs should feel an eerie sense of déjà-vu throughout the complex, and you should drop hints as to the layout of the vessel and the operation of some of the machines in order to let android PCs benefit in an eerie way. Let android PCs come to the realization on their own that this was their birthplace, and that if not for a premature escape, they easily could have become one of the deranged, psychopathic androids that now populate the foundry. You could even have some of the deformed androids encountered in these ruins bear a strange resemblance to the PC android—making these creatures into degenerate brothers and sisters of that character!

are made of glaucite as well (hardness 15, hp 30, break DC 28), and slide up into the ceiling when opened, but without power each door must be forced open by destroying it, attempting a DC 20 Strength check, attempting a DC 30 Disable Device check, or using a spell like *knock*. Once opened, these doors remain open unless forced back to their closed positions.

The Cursed Well (CR 4)

Old Skelton's farm is located at the northern edge of Badwater, and consists of a small cottage and sturdy barn. The yard is badly overgrown with weeds that nearly obscure a crumbling well covered with an oblong capstone. When Skelton decided to dig this well several years ago, he fell through a hole in the roof of the *Aurora* buried below, landing in area **A1**. Distressed to find himself in a chamber of obvious technology, he managed to climb up out of the well, only to be attacked by a cloud of medical nanites that then retreated back to the ruins below. When Skelton's body was discovered the next day, the Deadeye Council made a cursory examination of the buried chamber before deciding to plug the well and, both literally and figuratively, cover up the presence of the chambers with a stone slab.

The symbol of Erastil has been carved on this capstone—it's been further protected by a *glyph of warding* (see Trap, below). The capstone is a slab of solid granite, 4 feet across and 1 foot thick. As the capstone weighs 540 pounds, a character needs a Strength of at least 11 to push it off the well. Doing so not only activates the glyph, but also creates a fair amount of noise that could easily alert the creature dwelling in area **A1** below.

The well itself drops 30 feet down through the broken hull above area **A1**. A successful DC 15 Climb check is required to scale the well's shaft and the battered ship wall.

Trap: If the PCs meet with the Deadeye Council and secure their blessing to investigate the chambers below, the council members provide the PCs with the password ("Never trust a fool") to bypass this trap.

GLYPH OF WARDING

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding*, blast glyph, 2d8 sonic damage, Reflex DC 16 half); multiple targets (all creatures within a 5-foot radius)

Development: If Ilarris fled the PCs and came here, she pushes the capstone aside and descends to the *Aurora* below. Attempt her Disable Device check to disarm the glyph, and her Climb checks to descend to area **A1**, then note any damage she takes in the process for when she confronts the PCs later in area **A4**. Naturally, if she was already wounded and then takes enough damage to be killed or knocked unconscious from the trap or a fall, her body can be found at the bottom of the well in area **A1**. Of course, the fact that the capstone's been moved in this case should tip off the PCs that someone came here before them even if she survives.

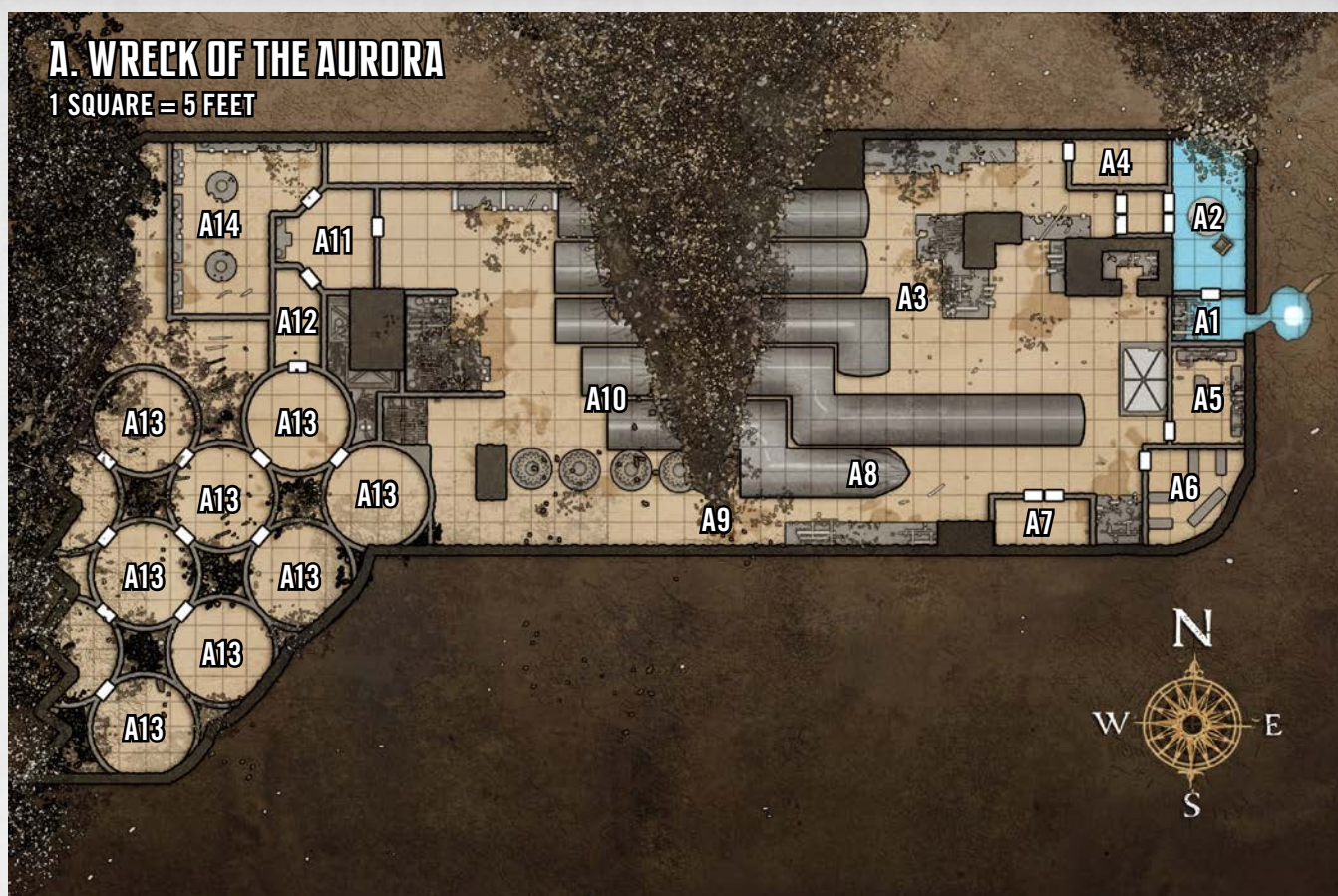
Story Award: If the PCs bypass the glyph with the passphrase learned from the Deadeye Council, they still earn the XP for this trap—in this case, this is as much a story award for achieving the council's trust as it is a reward for the trap itself.

A1. Recordkeeping (CR 7)

The eastern side of this otherwise metal-walled room is collapsed, revealing a wet, earthen shaft leading upward. The floor is covered to a depth of three inches with stagnant water that's seeped in from the exposed earth. The west wall contains a bank of strange machinery and cracked or partially shattered glass panels. To the north, an open doorway beckons into another, larger room, but the door's frame sparks periodically with tiny bolts of electricity.

A. WRECK OF THE AURORA

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Although groundwater slowly seeps into the floor of this room, the water table is such that the standing water that accumulates here doesn't get particularly deep. The angle of the *Aurora* ensures that the water never accumulates beyond a few inches in this room and the next, growing slightly deeper as one travels east. This room was used to store records of the *Aurora's* operations, with several computer terminals on the west wall functioning as a sort of library. The crash ruined all of these monitors. If the PCs manage to restore partial power to the wreck (see page 24), the wall of broken electronics flashes dramatically but harmlessly.

Creature: Organized swarms of nanites played a key role in the *Aurora's* android foundries when the ship was functional, but after the crash, most of these swarms were accidentally released into the ruins. Only one survives to this day, and with the reactivation of the trap (see below) after Furkas Xoud's trip into the ruins, this last bionanite cloud has been trapped in this room for years. The cloud attempted once to enter area A2, but the damage it took from the trap was enough to convince it to wait patiently here for new developments or visitors. Unfortunately for those potential visitors, the bionanite cloud's hive mind programming did not survive the crash of the *Aurora* unscathed, and the cloud now interprets living humanoid organisms as malfunctioning androids and

attempts to render such creatures it encounters unconscious in hopes that they can be "repaired." The cloud waits patiently here unless it notices the capstone atop the well being moved. If the capstone is opened during the day, sunlight suddenly pouring down into this room alerts the cloud, but even at night the sound of the capstone being pushed away is enough to alert it.

BIONANITE CLOUD

CR 7

XP 3,200

Variant granule swarm (*Pathfinder Module: Seven Swords of Sin* 29)

N Fine construct (swarm)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +8 size)

hp 71 (11d10+11)

Fort +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** construct traits, weapon damage; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee swarm +14 (3d6 plus distraction and weakness)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 15), fascination, reconstructive healing

TACTICS

During Combat Once the bionanite cloud notices “defective androids,” it surges up to pacify them. The cloud does not seek to kill these defects, and does not damage foes who have fallen unconscious through damage or poisoning.

Morale The bionanites fight until destroyed, but do not pursue “defective androids” more than 50 feet from the *Aurora*. If the trap in this room is disarmed, the cloud pursues defective androids throughout the complex. Note that it also treats the mutated androids found deeper in the ship as defective, as well as any other humanoid it encounters.

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +11; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Ability Focus (distraction), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Fly +24, Perception +20

Languages Androffan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fascination (Ex) As a standard action, a bionanite cloud can create a series of hypnotic waves of color to fascinate creatures within 30 feet. The distraction of a nearby combat or other dangers prevents this ability from working, but otherwise, all affected creatures must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become fascinated. The bionanite cloud can maintain this effect each round after initial activation as a move action. This is a visual mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Reconstructive Healing (Ex) As a swift action, a bionanite cloud can heal a single living target it shares a space with, healing 1d6 points of damage. The cloud often triggers this ability when it reduces a creature to negative hit points, so as to stabilize the target. The cloud can administer this healing in an instant before resolving any actual damage dealt to prevent a creature’s death from its swarm attack.

Weakness (Ex) When a bionanite cloud damages a living creature, it disrupts the transmission of nerve impulses to the creature’s muscles, causing 1d4 points of Strength damage. A successful DC 15 Fortitude save negates this Strength damage, but a creature that is nauseated takes a –4 penalty on this saving throw. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Trap: The open doorway to the north has long been malfunctioning, and damaged capacitors and internal wiring have degraded into a traplike danger. Any creature that attempts to pass through the doorway causes the malfunctioning circuitry to surge with electricity. There’s enough charge left in this malfunctioning doorway to trigger five more times before the remaining power here is finally depleted.

MALFUNCTIONING DOORWAY

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECT

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic (up to 5 times)

Effect electrical discharge (9d6 electricity damage, Reflex DC 19 half)

Development: If Ilarris makes it to the *Aurora*, she avoids combat with the bionanite cloud in area **A1** by moving quickly into area **A2**, but not before she takes a bit of damage from the cloud and perhaps from the defective doorway between the two areas. From there, she uses Disable Device to open the doors to area **A3**, avoids the androids there via stealth, and sneaks into area **A4** to recover from her wounds and regain spells.

You can play out her fights between game sessions to determine how wounded she becomes if you wish, or you can simply assume her hit points are reduced by half.

If the PCs take more than a few days to start exploring the *Aurora* after Ilarris flees here, she starts exploring the ruined ship, avoiding the denizens with stealth and magic. You can have the PCs encounter her anywhere in the *Aurora* at this point, or simply assume that she uses area **A4** as her base of operations and let the PCs encounter her there.

A2. Administration

This wide room has a rounded desk in the center inset with banks of technological equipment. A large set of doors to the northeast are badly mangled and jammed with rocky debris. A single glass panel with a thin metal frame extends from a desk to the south; this panel slowly flashes with a softly pulsating white light. A few inches of standing water cover the southern portion of the room’s floor.

If Ilarris precedes the characters, both doors to area **A3** to the west remain open, and so the denizens of that room may notice lights and sounds in this room and come to investigate. If Ilarris has not come to the *Aurora* yet, these doors remain closed.

This room was once the primary point of entrance into the *Aurora* from *Divinity*—the doors to the northeast once opened to an airlock, and beyond that a long causeway that led to the mothership while the *Aurora* was docked. Now, though, only rubble and solid earth lies beyond them.

The slowly flashing glass panel on the desk to the south is a functional computer monitor with a local, dedicated power source, relatively recently charged by Furkas Xoud when he visited the wreck in 4707. As Furkas determined, the computer itself had been somewhat damaged, but unknown to him, when he activated the monitor to try to learn anything from it, he recorded footage of himself on

a hidden camera mounted just above the malfunctioning door to area **A1**. If the screen is touched again, it begins playback. Read or paraphrase the following description to PCs who observe the recorded footage.

An image appears on the glass screen—an image of the same room, as viewed from above the southern door. A man leans in over the screen on the desk in the image, then straightens up and nods his head eagerly before speaking to the apparently empty room.

“As I thought. While this terminal accepted my spell’s magical charge, it’s unlinked to any sort of central archive. We’ll not be able to extract any significant information from here.”

A second, much deeper voice from an unknown source replies, “But what you seek still lies within the ruins of this ship, does it not, Master Xoud?”

The man nods again. “I believe so. We will need to explore further. There may be additional defenses though. This is why I called upon you, Sahasho—you will lead the way.”

At this point, the man walks away, a swirling of dust and wind following him before both are eclipsed by the screen’s edge. The screen flickers and goes dark.

This short recording repeats on a loop—in time, the monitor will return to standby mode or run out of power entirely. The man in the picture is, of course, Furkas Xoud—a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recall the legend of Furkas Xoud as presented at the start of Part 3 (see pages 25–26). A character who makes a successful DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check can confirm that Xoud’s companion was invisible. There’s not enough information on the recording to offer any other clues as to the nature of this invisible companion (it is, in fact, an invisible stalker that remains to this day in area **A14**).

A3. Malfunctioning Android Foundry (CR 7)

This cavernous chamber is split into mazelike passages by tall stacks of dark, dusty machinery. The western side of this room is a jumble of stone, as from a catastrophic collapse. Three crushed tubes protrude from under the tumbled stone, each as wide as a wagon and capped with a circular metal plate. On the north side of this room, a shattered glass terrarium surrounded by technical equipment stands empty. To the south, more silent machinery looms amid workbenches scattered with technological parts and several large machines that bear restraints and metal skullcaps.

When the *Aurora* was fully functional, this portion of the ship housed the machinery used to manufacture, grow, and service androids. Much of the machinery was broken when the ship crashed, and the western portion now lies under a massive pile of rubble that bisects the room. When Furkas Xoud passed through the area, these machines were silent, but when he temporarily restored power (see area **A11**), the

machines surged back to life for a time and began generating new androids—although these new creations were deformed and incomplete, thanks to damaged components. The machinery now functions on a fitful cycle, awakening every few months to produce one or two new mutated androids. It is currently inert and not scheduled to produce a new android for many months.

Numerous old and broken technological elements, tools, and devices lie scattered around this room, although none of them are particularly useful or valuable. With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check, a character who examines the larger machinery in the room can determine that it seems to once have been capable of producing living androids, but that in its current state would be unlikely to produce anything but the deformed monsters that lurk nearby. Succeeding at the check reveals that the machine, although currently unpowered, has been offline for centuries, and was perhaps activated as recently as several years ago.

Creatures: The androids found here in the *Aurora* are dull-witted, malformed, and violent—little more than wild beasts who have survived in the ruins despite the odds. This room is occupied by four of these violent creatures—they lurk amid the workbenches and rubble throughout the area, watchful and silent, on guard for any incursions from the west by the robots they mistakenly assume could invade at any moment. If Ilarris made her way into the *Aurora*, you can assume she retreated to area **A4** without alerting the androids, but if the PCs move more than 30 feet into this room’s mazelike interior, they quickly draw the attention of the feral androids.

Although these androids fight to the death, it’s possible that one or more might be captured alive. In this event, interrogating the creatures should prove difficult—even if the PCs can speak Androffan, the deformed androids have little to say, although you could use such an interrogation to foreshadow the presence of the gearsmen in area **A10** and beyond. The androids fear the “shrieking machines,” as they call them, and live in constant fear of an invasion by them.

DEFORMED ANDROIDS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Android fighter 1/rogue 3 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 3)

CE Medium humanoid (android)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

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

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

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities constructed, evasion, trap sense +1;

Immune disease, emotion-based effects, exhaustion, fatigue, fear, morale effects, sleep

IRON GODS

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee morningstar +8 (1d8+7)

Special Attacks nanite surge, sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat The deformed androids aren't much more intelligent than animals, but they are smart enough to patiently lie in wait like ambush predators, waiting for foes to spread throughout the room before lurching out to attack. In combat, they prefer to gang up on foes to flank and gain sneak attack damage. They throw grenades when faced with foes who gather close together, but prefer to use their morningstars in a fight.

Morale The deformed androids fight to the death. A deformed android brought to 5 or fewer hit points activates its grenade to kill itself, hoping to take a few adjacent foes with it.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 4, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Technologist

Skills Acrobatics +5, Knowledge (engineering) +1, Perception +8, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +6

Languages Androffan



Deformed Android

SQ deformed, emotionless, rogue talents (bleeding attack +2), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear concussion grenades^{LG} (2); **Other Gear** hide armor, morningstar

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Constructed (Ex) For the purposes of effects targeting creatures by type (such as a ranger's favored enemy and bane weapons), androids count as both humanoids and constructs. Androids gain a +4 racial bonus on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects, are not subject to fatigue or exhaustion, and are immune to disease and sleep effects. Androids can never gain morale bonuses, and are immune to fear effects and all emotion-based effects.

Deformed (Ex) Due to the timeworn nature of the foundry where it was created, this android is deformed. Its ability score modifiers are different from normal androids as a result: +4 Str, +2 Dex, -6 Int, -2 Cha.

Emotionless (Ex) Androids have problems processing emotions properly, and thus take a -4 penalty on Sense Motive checks.

Nanite Surge (Ex) An android's body is infused with nanites. Once per day as an immediate action, a deformed android can cause his nanites to surge, gaining a +7 bonus on any single d20 roll; this ability must be activated before the roll is attempted. When an android uses this power, his circuitry-tattoos glow with red light equivalent to the light of a torch for 1 round.

A4. Storage Room

Although the door to this area is closed, a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that it has been forced open and closed recently if Ilarris is hiding within.

This room seems to be a storage room of some sort, with several old metal cabinets lined against the north wall.

Treasure: Most of the contents of this room have decayed over the passage of time, but a search of the cabinets reveals a few items that are still of limited use: a timeworn arc pistol^{TG} with 4 charges, a timeworn white hologram generator^{TG} that currently stores an image of a gearsman, a timeworn white nanite hypogun^{TG} (3 charges), and 40 silverdisks.

Development: If Ilarris has retreated to this chamber, she's converted it into a campsite of sorts. If cornered here, the desperate Technic League spy fights to the death. If she's found here, she's gathered the treasure above and won't hesitate to use it against the PCs in a fight. She uses the timeworn nanite hypogun to heal, but remember, this item might glitch when it's used.

A5. Machine Shop (CR 8)

The door to his room has been repaired and rebuilt to open somewhat easier than normal, requiring only a move action to do so.

Workbenches and tools litter this large room, around an unusual-looking forge. A variety of bladed weapons hangs on the walls. A shelf on the north end of the room holds polished humanoid skulls.

This chamber was once a production laboratory capable of providing the necessary supplies for the creation of technological items, but today the laboratory's gear is all timeworn and of no use. The seven strangely polished skulls are in fact android skulls, all bearing deformities similar to those encountered in areas **A3** and **A6**.

Creature: This machine shop is the personal domain of Seerath, the most vicious and most intelligent android in the *Aurora*. When Furkas Xoud reactivated the android foundry here on his visit back in 4707, the foundry in area **A3** lurched to life. It would be several months before it disgorged the first of its androids, the murderous assassin Seerath. Unfortunately, the androids that followed over the next several years as the foundry slowly depleted its energy stores were less successful, resulting in the deformed monsters found elsewhere in the ruins.

Seerath herself was, in a way, fortunate when she was created. Not only did she escape the bulk of the debilitating deformities, but also her brain was implanted with a fragmentary personality of an ancient assassin whose mind had been in storage in the foundry's memory banks. Seerath has bits and pieces of memories of life aboard the *Aurora* and *Divinity*, but they are little more than dreamlike fragments. She doesn't even realize the full extent of her situation, and believes herself to be adrift in deep space. Her goal is simple: survival. She's been hopelessly trying to build a communication device from the components in this chamber, but she lacks both the skills and resources to complete such a task. In the meantime, she entertains herself by training the dwindling supply of deformed androids, serving more in the role of animal trainer than commander in this regard.

Seerath is quite insane, and is incapable of comprehending the fact that she's not adrift in space. She sees the swath of crumbled earth that nearly bisects the ship as a fragment of an asteroid lodged in the ship's hull at times, and at others simply interprets the rubble as purely mechanical. Even forcefully dragging her out of the ship into Iadenveigh is unlikely to convince her—she'll assume she's being subjected to a massive hologram. To Seerath, the PCs are alien intruders. This, coupled with her ingrown psychosis and sadistic drive, make her a relentless foe who does her best to murder all trespassers.

SEERATH

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female android gunslinger (techslinger) 6/assassin 3

(*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 3,

Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat 9, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 13)

NE Medium humanoid (android)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 17, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +4 Dex, +3 dodge)

hp 83 (9 HD; 6d10+3d8+33)

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +4; +1 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities constructed, mutated limbs, nimble +2;

Immune disease, emotion-based effects, exhaustion, fatigue, fear, morale effects, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +7/+2 (1d3–1)

Ranged timeworn zero pistol +12/+7 touch (1d8 cold+4)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 14), grit (1), nanite surge, sneak attack +2d6, technic training (zero pistol, +4)

TACTICS

During Combat Seerath attempts to enter a combat undetected, remaining hidden so she can study a foe (preferably while they fight the androids in area **A3**) for 3 rounds so she can attempt a death attack. She uses Deadly Aim when she attacks with her pistol, firing on semi-automatic mode to gain an additional attack when she makes a full attack. If on her own, she tries a fighting retreat to area **A6** to recruit the other androids there so she has more allies to flank foes with, or perhaps to area **A8** to desperately open the damaged valve to release the monstrosity trapped within. Seerath prefers to save her only point of grit to use her reliable deed to prevent her timeworn zero pistol from glitching.

Morale As soon as it becomes obvious that she is going to be defeated, Seerath cries out (in Androffan), "You won't take my mind! The Dominion can't have my mind!" before she triggers one of her concussion grenades to destroy her body in an attempt to prevent the PCs from harvesting her body for experiments. This should foreshadow the Dominion presence in the next adventure—if the player characters make the connection between her final words and the Dominion of the Black, excellent. If not, a character can make this connection, at your discretion, with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or geography) check.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 24

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Gunsmithing, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Toughness, Technologist

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +11, Craft (traps) +8, Disable Device +12, Disguise +6, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Perception +13, Sense Motive –3, Stealth +16

Languages Androffan

SQ atrophied limb, emotionless, deeds (covet charge, gunslinger's dodge, gunslinger initiative, pistol-whip, reliable, utility shot), gunsmith, poison use, uncanny dodge

Combat Gear concussion grenades¹⁶ (5); **Other Gear** masterwork green scatterlight suit¹⁶, timeworn zero pistol¹⁶, batteries¹⁶ (2)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Android Traits (Ex) See the stats for the deformed android on page 17 for details on Seerath's constructed, emotionless, and nanite surge abilities (she gains a +12 bonus when using nanite surge, and prefers to use this ability when making a death attack).

Mutated Limbs (Ex) Seerath's flawed creation has shattered her mind but given her disconcertingly gangly limbs that allow her to avoid danger with an unsettling grace. She gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC as a result.

Treasure: A successful DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check allows a character to determine the onetime use of this ruined production lab, and that the components strewn about the place are intended to create a long-range communication device. Among the mostly ruined and useless supplies, however, can be found three timeworn commsets^{TG}—all three timeworn commsets are fully charged.

Development: If you want to allow the PCs to take and utilize technological item creation feats (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide* 6), you should adjust this encounter area so that the production lab remains fully functional, thus allowing the PCs access to a site where they can utilize some of their item creation feats.

A6. Android Barracks (CR 7)

This room may have once been used as a storeroom, but its metal shelves are now haphazardly arranged and draped with thick cloth or metal plating. The result is a claustrophobic warren of passages throughout the room.

Creatures: This room is where the feral androids retreat when they need to rest or eat. The room is full of bolt-holes, switchbacks, and false walls. The cramped conditions and erratic arrangement of metal shelves make this room difficult terrain. Any creature can attempt a Stealth check to hide anywhere in this room, as at least one part of each square is out of line of sight to the rest of the room.

Four androids hide in this room, wrapped up in their own disturbing thoughts. If

they hear the sounds of combat in area A3, they prepare for combat but do not join the battle—they have orders to remain in hiding here until a minute after the sound of combat dies down, at which point they stealthily open the door and sneak out into area A3, hoping to ambush surviving enemies who have been depleted by a prior fight.

DEFORMED ANDROIDS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 34 each (see page 17)

A7. Pantry

This room's shelves are relatively bare, with a few strange cylindrical objects with strange writing on the side lying in sparse piles on the shelves.

Treasure: The androids get their water from area A2—groundwater seepage there has ensured they have a constant supply. The same cannot be said of food. This room once stored hundreds of cases of rations in the form of goo tubes^{TG}, but the supplies have been slowly dwindling over the course of the last several years, so that today, less than a month of rations for the surviving androids remains. Seerath has kept the truth of the dwindling stores from her feral minions (not that they'd particularly comprehend the implications anyway), but knows that by the end of the month, she and the surviving androids will starve if they haven't been rescued.

There are only 155 goo tubes left here in all. The strange writing is in Androffan, and if translated the words claim the contents to be all manner of concentrated flavors—flavors that the tubes haven't preserved particularly well. The food here is still viable, it just tastes foul.

A8. Lively Awfulness (CR 6)

The southernmost of the large tube-like machines protruding from the wall of rubble has been significantly damaged, but some sort of jury-rigged cover has been affixed to the twisted end. Crusty strings of some sort of glistening residue hang from the edges of the tube's cover.

The cap fitted over this tube was a hasty solution put in place by Seerath when it became

Seerath



apparent that the creature growing within was a ravenous monster. This cap can be removed with a successful DC 25 Strength check or DC 20 Disable Device check, each made as a standard action. Seerath uses the latter option if desperate enough. The oozes can also be released by the trap in area A9

Creatures: When this machinery attempted to build androids, the damage to the machinery was enough that what resulted was no android at all, but rather a pair of foul tangles of mindless flesh that filled the pipes like a carnivorous clot plugging a metal artery. Two of these malformed monsters, both of which are essentially advanced hungry flesh oozes, remain plugged within the tube. The oozes remain in a form of stasis while the tube remains closed, kept alive and fed (if only barely) by the machinery's slowly depleting power reserves. If the tube's cap is opened, however, both hungry flesh oozes pour out and attack at once. These monsters make no distinction between androids and other targets, so if they're released on purpose by Seerath in desperation, the android makes sure to put some distance between herself and the tubes before the monstrous inhabitants surge out to attack.

ADVANCED HUNGRY FLESHES (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 57 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 152, 288)

A9. Demarcation Line (CR 7)

The collapsed stone here splits the immense manufacturing hall in half. The jagged rock fall does not quite reach the south wall, leaving a space ten feet wide that allows access into another large chamber beyond. The floor is littered with bloody clumps of flesh and broken machinery shaped like arms and legs.

Trap: This location is the site of occasional skirmishes between the gearsmen to the west and the androids to the east. Seerath has built a crude trap here: anyone who attempts to move through this gap causes a number of jagged metal fragments balanced on the sloping mound of rubble above to come crashing down. In addition to possibly damaging intruders and serving as a noisy alarm, counterweights attached to several hidden cords cause the cap on the tube at area A8 to wrench loose when this trap is triggered, releasing the two hungry fleshies therein.

COLLAPSING RUBBLE

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECT

Trigger touch; Reset repair

Effect Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (all creatures within a 10-foot radius)

Development: If the trap is triggered, the gearsmen from area A10 come out of their torpor and move to investigate in 2d4+2 rounds, whereupon they attack any intruders on the west side of the trap. If they spot intruders on the east side of the demarcation line, they return to area A10 and assume defensive positions there.

A10. Robot Battlefield (CR 7)

The western half of the manufacturing hall contains immense cylinders, bins, and furnaces covered with thick layers of dust. Evidence of an ancient battle remains here and there on the walls in the form of scorch marks and broken machinery. In particular, the heaped remains of a strange insectoid automaton lie in a ruined heap to the west, partially buried under fallen rocks.

Creatures: The android Casandalee spent the last few days of her life holed up in this room, desperately hoping she'd finally eluded the robots sent after her by Unity. Time and time again she clashed with them, with each confrontation eroding the robot force's resources before Casandalee escaped. In the end, though, her final battle against the robots ended here—she managed to defeat the last of the myrmidon robots in the group (a successful DC 21 Knowledge [engineering] check identifies the remains under the rubble as one of these deadly robots; see page 45 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary*), but was forced to retreat deeper into the *Aurora* where she was cornered in area A14. The remaining robots couldn't get into that area, and she soon thereafter succumbed to her wounds.

Cut off from Unity and unable to reach their quarry's body, the remaining gearsmen who had pursued the android remained here, eventually retreating into semi-dormancy to save power while they waited patiently for new orders from their master—orders that would never come, since the robots had drifted too far from Unity's direct command. When Furkas Xoud investigated the area, he and his invisible stalker companion used *invisibility* and *gaseous form* to avoid interactions with the dormant robots, but once they reactivated the *Aurora*'s power and androids began spawning, the robots interpreted the events as Casandalee stirring from death.

Today, the robots remain vigilant here, eager to complete their task for Unity, yet still cut off from their master and frustrated that Casandalee's body has apparently vanished. Three human-shaped robots—gearsmen—stand guard in this room while an augmented gearsman stands guard in area A11. The three gearsmen stationed here immediately move to confront anyone they notice entering the area, demanding in Androffan with their shrill voices, "Lower your weapons and submit the traitor Casandalee, and you shall be spared." These gearsmen have nothing else to say, and any delay in handing over Casandalee results in their immediate attack. The storage chambers to the south of

this area contain only simple tools and valueless parts, now centuries old.

GEARSMEN (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary 44

N Medium construct (robot)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 42 each (4d10+20)

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

Defensive Abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk spear +10 (1d8+7/x3 plus 1d6 electricity)

Ranged timeworn laser pistol +5 touch (1d8 fire) or
timeworn laser pistol +3/+3 touch (1d8 fire)

TACTICS

During Combat The gearsmen prefer to attack with their timeworn laser pistols on semiautomatic fire, shifting to their spears only once they've depleted their weaponry's charges, or when forced into melee.

Morale The gearsmen fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms),
Power Attack

Skills Craft (armor) +7, Disable Device +8, Perception +8, Sense
Motive +8

Languages Common, Hallit

SQ adaptive learning, charge weapon, self-repair

Gear mwk spear, timeworn¹⁶ laser pistol¹⁶ (5 charges)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Learning (Ex) This gearsman has used this ability to gain proficiency with firearms, and does not use it to reallocate skill ranks.

Charge Weapon (Ex) Any metal melee weapon wielded by a gearsman becomes charged with electricity and deals +1d6 points of electricity damage on a hit.

Self-Repair (Ex) The gearsman's nanites heal it of damage at the rate of 4 hit points per hour. Up to once per day as a full-round action, the gearsman can heal any robot it touches of 4d6 points of damage—if a gearsman uses this ability on itself, it automatically heals 24 points of damage.

A11. Guard Post (CR 8)

A line of runes is printed above the two doors on this room's western walls. Several tattered, strange suits of armor hang in shreds from hooks in a wide alcove between these doors.

This room was once a guard post, for the chambers that once lay beyond this area contained dangerous supplies of radioactive and mutagenic materials. The runes above the two doors are in Androffan: those above the door to area A12 read "Canister Access," while the ones above the door to area A14 read "Nanotech Laboratory."

Creature: An augmented gearsman, one of many once utilized by Unity, stands guard patiently in this chamber. Although this gearsman is more powerful and more intelligent than the three gearsmen in area A10 that serve it, it remains as equally baffled by the magical removal of Casandalee's remains from the *Aurora*—the gearsman believes that her remains must still be somewhere nearby, yet it's now at a loss as to how to proceed since it lacks the ability to track a dead body that was teleported away (see area A14). When it notices the PCs, it rumbles to life and speaks shrilly in Androffan: "Primary objective complete. Fugitive exterminated but remains required per Unity directive one. Please submit traitor Casandalee or face immediate execution." Like the other gearsmen, this one has little capacity for or interest in further discussion, and when the PCs fail to provide what they cannot provide (Casandalee's body), the gearsman attacks.

AUGMENTED GEARSMAN

CR 8

XP 4,800

Gearsman fighter 4 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary 44*)

N Medium construct (robot)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 76 (8d10+32)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, hardness 10; **Immune**
construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +15 (1d4+10)

Ranged timeworn laser rifle +13/+8 touch (2d6+2) or
timeworn laser rifle +11/+11/+6 touch (2d6+2)

TACTICS

During Combat The augmented gearsman attacks with its laser rifle, preferring to make semi-automatic fire attacks when possible and taking 5-foot steps to avoid firing in melee. If no option is available, the robot opts to provoke attacks of opportunity and fires the laser rifle in melee, resorting to slam attacks only if its weapon's charges are depleted. It always uses Deadly Aim when attacking with its laser rifle.

Morale This augmented gearsman fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

Feats Deadly Aim, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (laser rifle), Weapon Specialization (laser rifle)

Skills Climb +18, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Perception +13, Survival +13

Languages Common, Androffan

SQ adaptive learning, armor training 1, charge weapon, self-repair

Gear timeworn^{TC} laser rifle^{TC} (20 charges)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Learning (Ex) This gearsman has used this ability to gain proficiency with firearms, and does not use it to reallocate skill ranks.

Charge Weapon (Ex) Any metal melee weapon wielded by a gearsman becomes charged with electricity and deals +1d6 points of electricity damage on a hit.

Self-Repair (Ex) This gearsman's nanites heal it of damage at the rate of 8 hit points per hour. Up to once per day as a full-round action, it can heal any robot it touches of 4d6 points of damage—if it uses this ability on itself, it automatically heals 24 points of damage.

Treasure: The ruined suits of “armor” hanging from the walls are the remains of four HEV suits^{TC}. None of these suits remain functional, but a search of the alcove reveals a pair of timeworn filter masks^{TC} under fallen fragments of HEV suit material.

A12. Canister Access

This hallway has doors at the north and south ends. A bright orange hexagonal sigil adorns an immense metal door to the south. A porthole-like glass window is set into the door at head height.

This room once served as an airlock to the storage area holding the dangerous mutagenic gas stored to the southwest. The bright orange sigil, which resembles a hexagon with three offset triangles inscribed within, can be identified with a successful DC 20 Linguistics check by someone who can speak Androffan as being a biohazard warning sign.

The door to the south is a reinforced blast door (hardness 15, hp 120, break DC 36) meant to keep the contents of the gas canister chambers beyond secure.

If the door is opened, the toxic fumes in area A13 beyond immediately flood the *Aurora*, infusing the entire complex with mutagenic gas.

A13. Gas Canisters (CR 7)

Before the crash, this area housed a dozen large chambers used to store various forms of highly reactive gases that were used in the maintenance and construction of nanites. In the thousands of years since the *Aurora*'s crash, however, the contents of the canisters that survived that event intact have degraded and decayed into a dangerous substance, a toxic gas that causes those exposed to it to suffer painful mutations. These chambers are empty save for the gas itself, which looks like orange fog in large concentrations.

Hazard: Slow leakage from these canisters (which can be stemmed in area A14) is the culprit behind Iadenveigh's mutant problem and the tainting of Badwater, but direct exposure to the gases themselves causes a much more rapid and horrific effect. Opening the door from area A12 allows



Augmented Gearsman

RESTORING POWER

Until someone imbues the power conduit in area **A14** with at least 20 charges of power, the ruins of the *Aurora* remain dark and inert. Once the ruins gain power, the following conditions change in the ruins. The *Aurora* consumes 20 charges per month to power the following.

- The few still-functional lights in the ceiling flicker to life, raising ambient light levels to dim light.
- All doors can be opened with a touch as a swift action.
- At the GM's discretion, the production lab (area **A5**) and nanotech lab (area **A14**) can be utilized to craft technological items.
- The android foundry (area **A3** and **A10**) reactivates and generates one new deformed android per week.
- The nanotech lab (area **A14**) can be used to neutralize the toxic gas stored in the canisters in area **A13**.

this toxic gas to seep into the entire ruins, and speeds up the rate of seepage into Iadenveigh above. The gas effects persist in the ruins for years, and the rate of mutations in Iadenveigh increases dramatically as well.

It's possible to minimize the gas seepage in area **A14** if power is restored to the ruins. Alternatively, a casting of *neutralize poison* can detoxify the contents of one canister; there are eight surviving canisters in all, so eight castings of *neutralize poison* can remove this threat permanently. A more creative option is to use sustained winds to disperse the gas. *Gust of wind* won't last long enough, but the long-term aid of air elementals over the course of several hours is enough to disperse the gas out of the ruins and into the environments to dilute its effects enough that the danger can be removed. At your discretion, other methods of neutralizing the hazard could exist, although most should involve at least some risk of exposure.

DECAYED NANOTECH MUTAGEN FUMES

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type poison, contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

Effect 1d2 Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage; **Cure** 2 saves

Story Award: If the PCs remove the threat of the gas canisters from Iadenveigh, award them 3,200 XP.

A14. Nanotech Laboratory (CR 7)

The walls of this large room are lined with dark panels of glass, tiny buttons, and other mechanical devices. A set of metal tanks sit to the west, while a chair mounted on a swivel on a short platform sits to the northeast. To the northwest, a section of flooring has

been ripped away to expose a tangle of metallic plates and coils of brightly colored cables. Two round tables sit in the room's center.

This room once served as the *Aurora*'s nanotech laboratory. While the lab was capable of supporting all manner of nanotech crafting, its primary purpose was to aid in the function of the ship's android foundry.

Succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check while examining the exposed flooring in the northwest corner of the room reveals that the plates and cables are an immense power conduit capable of accepting electrical charges, whether via a battery, a generator, or as in the case of how Furkas Xoud (the man who exposed the conduit) temporarily charged the *Aurora*, spells like *recharge*^{TG}. If the PCs use any method to provide the ruined ship energy, consult the nearby sidebar.

The chair to the northeast was this lab's operator station. From this seat, a single person could utilize the lab to craft nanotech devices by shunting nanites and raw materials into one of the construction nodes—the four square pillars to the southwest. While the lab remains nonfunctional even if the power is restored (unless you decide otherwise; see Development, below), if the PCs restore power, a character who can read Androffan can use the operator station to neutralize the toxic gas in the canisters in area **A13**. Doing so requires either a successful DC 30 Disable Device check to force things or a successful DC 25 Linguistics check to correctly interpret the commands that appear on screen, coupled with 2d6 rounds of work.

Creature: Casandalee retreated here after being mortally wounded by her pursuers. She managed to barricade herself in this room, but died not long after. Her body remained, preserved from the elements, until Furkas Xoud discovered it. He spent an hour examining the room, during which he reactivated the *Aurora*'s power, but soon came to the conclusion that his lab back in the Choking Tower (and, more importantly, the aid of his thought harvester robot) would be more useful in examining the android's remains. He teleported back home with Casandalee's body, but wasn't ready to leave the *Aurora* alone. He intended to return soon to loot the place, and with that in mind, ordered his invisible stalker minion Sahasho to remain here and guard the laboratory.

But Furkas never returned. Sahasho still stands guard here, patient and bound by the magic Xoud used to recruit him, but has come to accept the fact that Xoud has abandoned him. Whether this happened by design or accident matters little to Sahasho, but he certainly doesn't bear any love or loyalty to the wizard who left him stranded here.

Sahasho spends his time in meditation in the southern portion of the room, patiently waiting for an end to his servitude. Unfortunately for Sahasho, Xoud conjured him with a *scroll of planar ally* and secured payment for

long-term, open-ended service. Without a clear way to complete his task to protect Xoud, Sahasho can't return to his home plane. The invisible stalker has wracked his mind for a loophole that would allow him to abandon this last open-ended task but has not yet come upon a solution. He spent the first few years of his exile here in a rage, but recently, he's come to the conclusion that if anger can't help him, perhaps calm meditation will. Sahasho has lost track of time during this meditation, with no need to eat and no way to note the passage of time in the form of seasonal changes, he's wiled away several years in his hopelessly patient wait.

The invisible stalker initially assumes (and hopes) the PCs are Xoud's agents, and upon noticing them, approaches and asks in a deep voice, "Have you word from my master?" Characters who heard the recording in area **A2** recognize the voice as the same that spoke to Furkas Xoud there. Sahasho wants only to return to the Plane of Air, and after all this time harbors little in hiding Xoud's secrets. Nonetheless, Sahasho doesn't freely give information to the PCs without the promise of a reward. Without promising to send him back to the Plane of Air, a PC must succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to secure the invisible stalker's cooperation. If the PCs promise to return him to the Plane of Air but lack the means to do so (such as via *dismissal* or *plane shift*), they'll need to make a successful Bluff check instead to earn his trust. Of course, if the PCs don't make good on their promise, Sahasho's rage returns once it becomes apparent he's been lied to, and he attacks at once. Sahasho also attacks if he is himself attacked, or if he observes anyone attempt to loot anything of value from the room. He fights to the death, but cannot pursue foes from this room.

If the PCs can secure Sahasho's cooperation, the invisible stalker can reveal he was conjured to serve a man named Furkas Xoud. This conjuration occurred on the outskirts of Iadenveigh, so Sahasho has no insight into the Choking Tower's defenses, layout, or even its location, but he can tell the PCs that Xoud was a powerful wizard who was particularly interested in using magic to manipulate air and smoke and other gaseous materials—interests that simultaneously intrigued and disturbed Sahasho. He was ordered to serve as a guardian against any dangers, but also to provide brute force when needed—it was the invisible stalker who exposed the power conduit in this room.

The most important information that Sahasho should convey to the PCs, however, is that when they came to this room, Xoud was incredibly astounded and intrigued at the discovery of a slain android; it seemed apparent to Sahasho that the recovery of this body was in fact Xoud's entire purpose for investigating the wreck. The invisible stalker isn't sure why the body was so important, but he does recall Xoud's excitement upon discovering the body, and that he

somehow knew the body belonged to a woman once named Casandalee. Xoud told Sahasho to remain here and guard the room while he returned to his home with the body via teleportation. The wizard had promised to return in a few days, but he never did.

SAHASHO

CR 7

XP 3,200

Invisible stalker

hp 80 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 181)

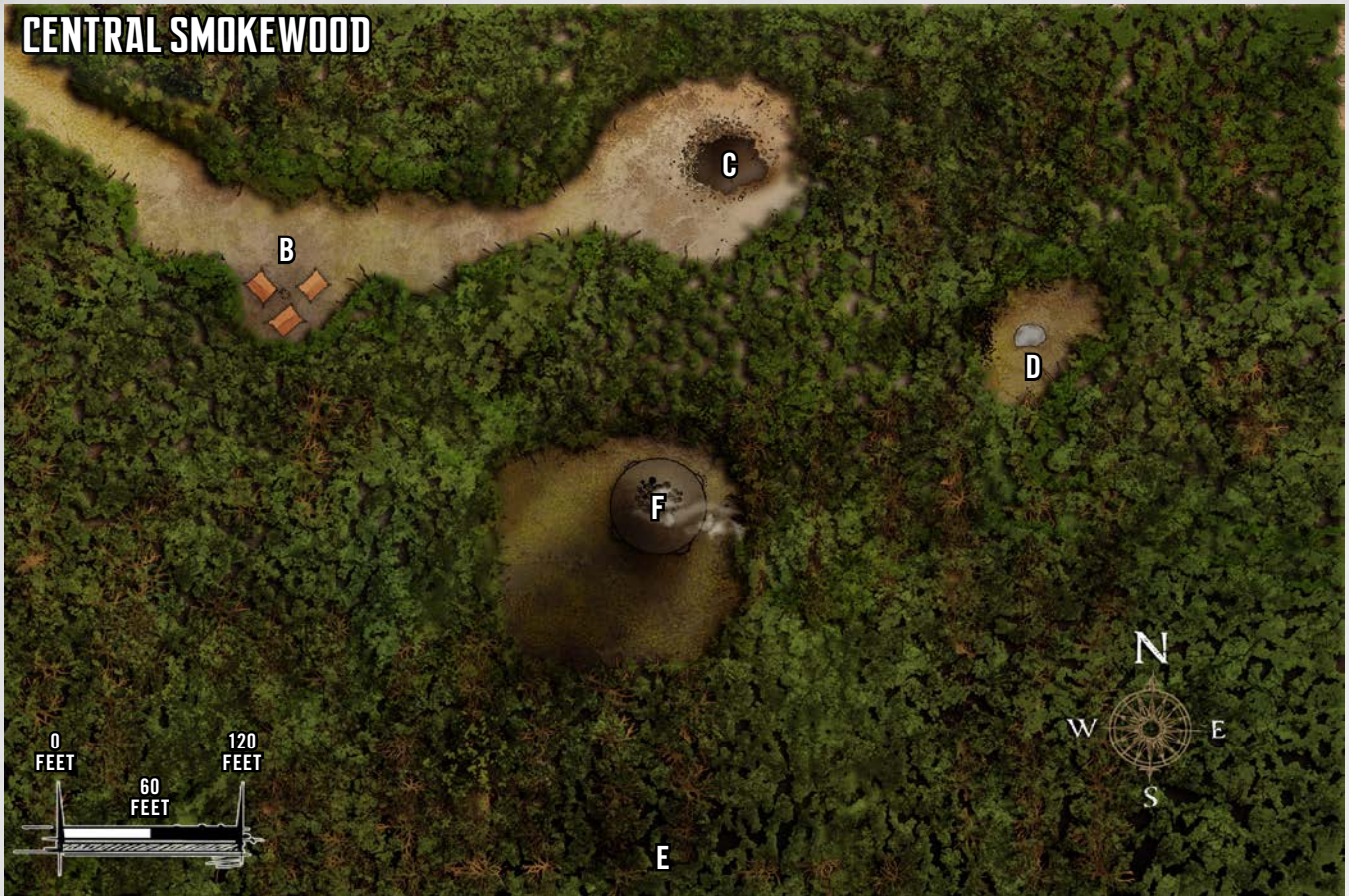
Treasure: A successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check allows a character to determine the onetime utility of this ruined nanotech lab, and that little remaining here is of use. A successful DC 25 Perception check reveals a hidden panel near the operator's station in the northeast corner; prying it open reveals a niche in the wall that contains five nanite canisters^{TG}, a timeworn black nanite hypogun^{TG} with 7 charges, and a dart gun^{TG}.

Development: If you want to allow the PCs to take and utilize technological item creation feats (*Technology Guide* 6), you should adjust this encounter area so that the nanotech lab remains fully functional, thus allowing the PCs access to a site where they can create nanotech based items with their crafting feats.

PART 3: SMOKEWOOD

While to the town of Iadenveigh, neutralizing the toxic gas that's built up in the *Aurora* is vital, for this adventure, discovering that a man named Furkas Xoud took Casandalee's body from the wreck is far more important. If the PCs don't learn of Furkas Xoud's involvement from the invisible stalker Sahasho, you should allow them to discover another recorded message akin to the one in area **A2** that reveals Xoud finding the body. Otherwise, the PCs may become frustrated upon entering the *Aurora* only to learn that Casandalee's body is missing. Another way to push the adventure forward is to use the results of spells like *divination* or *commune* to direct the PCs toward the Choking Tower. Iadenveigh's high priest of Erastil can cast either of these spells if asked, and gladly does so for free if the PCs neutralized the toxins in Badwater. Of course, simply finding the message Xoud left behind in area **A2** might be enough to spur the PCs on to the Choking Tower. In the end, their reasons for seeking answers from Xoud are irrelevant, as long as they end up heading to the Choking Tower for those answers.

When the PCs learn that Furkas Xoud beat them to Casandalee's remains, allow them a Knowledge (local) check to determine what they know of the exiled Technic League wizard. Alternatively, a Diplomacy check to gather information (in Iadenveigh, Torch, or any other Numerian settlement) can reveal the following information as well.



KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)

DC Information Gained

- | | |
|----|--|
| 13 | Furkas Xoud was a powerful wizard who built a strange home called the Choking Tower in the depths of Smokewood in the Numerian Plains. On clear days, you can see the smoke rising from his tower above Smokewood's boughs. |
| 16 | Smokewood was known as Dreamwood before Xoud built his Choking Tower. Soon after the tower's construction, local tribes began telling stories of strange dreams experienced by those who slept within the woods or near its borders. No one's heard from Xoud in 7 years, and common belief is that he passed away in his tower, but an increase in the number of hill giants dwelling in the wood has prevented further investigations of the tangled interior. |
| 20 | Furkas Xoud was once a member of the Technic League, but he was either exiled from the group or fled persecution; he certainly chose Smokewood as the location for his new home due to its inaccessibility and remote location. The tower itself is located near the heart of the woods. |

EXPLORING SMOKEWOOD

Smokewood is a dense, temperate forest with thick undergrowth and a tangled canopy. Its western edge lies about 50 miles from Iadenveigh, but no direct roads lead to this uncivilized woodland. The forest itself is relatively trackless, with the exception of the pathway recently stomped into the woods by a small band of hill giants. To mid-level player characters, however, locating their destination should be relatively simple. After all, the Choking Tower's frequent plumes of dark smoke are easily visible in the air.

The following encounter areas are largely optional as a result. The PCs can certainly bypass them and head directly to the tower itself, but if they're lagging behind in experience (they should be 8th level before attempting the dangers within the Choking Tower) you should add a few of these encounters or some wandering monsters to ensure they're prepared. Characters who do explore Smokewood will certainly reap the rewards of additional treasure and, perhaps, a powerful ally.

B. Hill Giant Campsite (CR 9)

Creatures: Small tribes of hill giants can be found throughout Numeria. The hill giants who've camped in this large clearing consist of the survivors of a Technic League raid.

Astounded and somewhat jealous of the powerful weapons the league used to destroy their tribe, these hill giants were lured to Smokewood by rumors of strange devices hidden within. They hope to find these devices and use them to take revenge against the League.

Unfortunately, the giants found more than they bargained for, and the robot they dug up (see area C) killed most of them. The two surviving giants are camped out here, slowly recovering from their wounds while they try to decide what to do about the mechanical monster. Confronted by the PCs, the giants don't immediately attack. Instead, they explain that their brothers and sisters were slain by a metal monster deeper in the woods, and that if the PCs go wreck it, the giants will reward them. Of course, what the giants really hope the PCs do is destroy the robot so that the giants can then swoop in and scavenge its remains for weapons (they don't realize that such scavenged parts would be useless). The giants have no intention of actually rewarding the PCs and plan to attack after the robot softens them up. They're not particularly bright, and make all sorts of outlandish promises as to the rewards they'll offer, ranging from a year of servitude to the PCs to a "magic sword that cuts metal like flesh!" Foolish PCs who take the giants at their word likely deserve the inevitable betrayal, but wise PCs who press the giants for details quickly frustrate the slow-witted brutes, who soon roar in frustration and simply attack. A giant reduced to fewer than 20 hit points loses his bravery and flees Smokewood entirely.

The giant's crude camp consists of three enormous lean-tos made of logs and sheets of canvas. Among the simple tents is a fire pit and a charred boar stuck on a spit. A metal wheel is jammed onto one end of the spit. To the north, a square of tree branches wedged into the ground form a makeshift pen. At the west end of the camp, a few twisted metal plates stick out from between several large rocks.

HILL GIANTS (2) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

Treasure: The hill giants have been lairing in this area for 3 weeks and have been haphazardly improving the camp over that time. The giants' latest innovation is a cooking spit utilizing the wheel from the Choking Tower's door (area F1). While the wheel itself is valueless, restoring it to the door makes opening the main entrance to the Choking Tower a much easier task (see area F1 for details).

One of the lean-tos contains a large bag that holds several items of value: a lump of noqual that weighs 25 pounds and is worth 1,250 gp, a +1 *animated light wooden shield*, and the bottom half of a half-eaten gnome that still wears a pair of *boots of striding and springing*. A nearby clay jar contains 3 doses of *restorative ointment*.

In one of the other lean-tos is a dire wolverine hide with a map drawn on it. A successful DC 12 Knowledge (geography) check reveals it to be a crude map of Smokewood that indicates the locations of the giant camp, the buried robot (area C), the Choking Tower (area F), and Longdreamer's glade (area D), the latter being indicated by a large drawing of a butterfly. The giants fear and hate the star monarch there, who taunts them with disturbing dreams, and they hope to use the weapons scavenged from the robot to attack the creature. A corner of the drawing has a short plan of attack written in Giant: "1. Get metal thing's weapons; 2. Test weapons on big bug; 3. Use weapons on Technic League; 4. Revenge!"

C. The Buried Killer (CR 9)

Creature: Weeks ago, the hill giants spotted a piece of strange metal protruding from beneath the stones here and dug up the ground to investigate, hoping to find some ancient weapon. What they found instead was a dormant warden robot, a dangerous military construct that, once the rubble that had buried it was cleared away, rose from its dormancy to attack. The blasted bodies of four dead hill giants now lie in ruins around the excavation, while the warden robot stands patiently at the center, waiting for new orders that will never come. The robot's standing orders, to attack any biological creature that approaches it, remain in force, and when it notices the PCs it attacks at once. It pursues foes for no more than a few hundred yards before it gives up the chase and returns here to resume its pointless guard duty.

WARDEN ROBOT

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 112 (see page 88)

Treasure: Of the slain giants, three carry nothing of value. The fourth, a lumbering brute who was once the leader of the group, lies scattered near a partially burnt tree. Among her grisly remains can be found the strewn contents of her bag, which includes 11 gems worth 100 gp each, a Small masterwork mithral warhammer worth 5,000 gp, a *rust bag of tricks*, and a pink rhomboid *ioun stone*.

D. Longdreamer's Lair (CR 9)

Creature: The trees and grass of this peaceful glade glow with a faint luminescence. At the north end of the glade is a wide, flat rock covered with colorful lichen. Under the rock is a cave opening only 3 feet tall but 15 feet wide. This cave is the home of a strange visitor from the depths of space. A successful DC 19 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the luminescence clinging to the glade's foliage and stones as glowsap residue from a star monarch, an enormous colorful moth that serves as an emissary of Desna and a guardian of dreamers.

The star monarch itself is named Longdreamer. She's made these woods her home on Golarion for many, many centuries, drawn to the region by the dreams of the land's alien entities. Longdreamer recently returned after a long trip to a distant world only to find a foul-smelling tower had been erected in the center of her woods. The star monarch is far too large to explore the tower's interior, but she is quite curious, and is eager to recruit like-minded souls to help answer her questions about it. Needless to say, PCs make much better subjects for this task than giants.

How and when Longdreamer notices the PCs in the region is up to you. Certainly, if they come to this glade, she makes her presence known, clambering up majestically from her cave to try to communicate with them—the fact that she must touch a creature to communicate telepathically and cannot herself speak aloud may make this initial contact difficult. If she's attacked, Longdreamer flees into the sky, then tries to contact the PCs later that evening via *dream*. If the PCs sleep anywhere within 20 miles of her lair, she can sense their dreaming minds—note that this includes the interior of the Choking Tower. In this event, she contacts the PC whose temperament seems most akin to her own, favoring worshippers of Desna over all others.

If she establishes peaceful contact with the PCs, Longdreamer offers to aid them if they help satisfy her curiosity about the nature of the Choking Tower. Although she's not been able to explore its interior, she does know that there are creatures within who dream—in particular, she warns the PCs of a particularly violent mind whose dreams are of “ravenous carpets of flesh-eating worms feeding upon the body of a man—always the same man—whom the worms know as Furkas Xoud.” She's attempted to communicate with the dreaming worms, but the worms' response has been nothing but hostility—she knows that whatever this mind might be, it harbors a deep resentment for all life, but none more than Xoud.

The fact that no other creature seems to dream within the Tower (apart from the bestial proto-dreams of unintelligent creatures she cannot communicate with) further arouses Longdreamer's curiosity—she does not suspect the tower is empty of life, but a tower almost empty of those who dream...? Curious indeed!

In return for satisfying her curiosity (Longdreamer prefers to use *dream* to receive reports from PCs), the star monarch offers up her cave as a safe place to rest. Further, she offers the use of her spell-like abilities to the PCs. She can use *dream* to send messages to distant allies, use *restful sleep* on PCs who sleep nearby, or even use her offensive spells to aid the PCs in fighting the giants. She knows the giants plan violence against her, and while she does not fear them, she won't turn down an opportunity to recruit the PCs to get rid of them so that she doesn't have to engage in distasteful combat herself. Finally, Longdreamer offers

her aid in travel. She can carry several PCs at once on her back, and can give the party a unique and swift means of traveling to future adventure sites. Longdreamer is a peaceful creature for the most part, and while she loathes violence and would rather not aid the PCs in their fights, she may take a liking to the party nevertheless and agree to watch over them as they sleep—provided the location where they sleep is somewhere she doesn't find too distasteful (such as the depths of the Scar of the Spider or within Starfall's walls).

LONGDREAMER

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female star monarch (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 50)

CG Huge magical beast

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +16

Aura dreamwarden (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, –2 size)

hp 114 (12d10+48)

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

DR 5/silver; **Immune** cold; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); starflight

Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+4 plus grab), tail +14 (2d6+4 nonlethal)

Ranged glowsap +16 ranged touch (special)

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

Special Attacks rake (4 claws +10, 1d6+3)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

Constant—*entropic shield*

At will—*dancing lights*, *restful sleep*^{APG}

3/day—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *dream*, *wandering star motes*^{APG} (DC 18)

1/day—*cloak of dreams*^{APG} (DC 20)

TACTICS

Before Combat Longdreamer casts *cloak of dreams* as a defense against melee attackers.

During Combat Longdreamer uses *deep slumber* to incapacitate foes. She grabs opponents she can't put to sleep, flies to a high altitude, and drops them.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, Longdreamer retreats to her glade to recover. If confronted in her glade, she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 23, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 35 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Fly +14, Perception +16, Sense Motive +12

Languages Common (can't speak); telepathy (touch)

SQ navigational awareness, no breath, toxic flesh



SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dreamwarden (Su) Any sleeping creature within 30 feet of a star monarch is affected by *protection from evil* and *sanctuary* (Will DC 20 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Glossap (Ex) As a standard action, a star monarch can spray a target within 30 feet with an adhesive spittle as a ranged touch attack. A creature struck is affected as a tanglefoot bag (Reflex DC 20 partial; see page 160 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). In addition, this adhesive glows under starlight or moonlight, limning the target as *faerie fire* if used outdoors at night. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Navigational Awareness (Ex) Star monarchs never become lost and are immune to *maze* spells or any effect that would cause them to lose their sense of direction.

Starflight (Su) A star monarch can survive in the void of outer space. It flies through space at an incredible speed. Although exact travel times vary, a trip within a single solar system

should take 3d20 hours, while a trip beyond should take 3d20 days (or more, at the GM's discretion).

Toxic Flesh (Ex) A star monarch's flesh is poisonous. A creature biting it or ingesting any part of its body becomes sickened for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude DC 20 negates) and is affected as if it had consumed a dose of arsenic (*Core Rulebook* 558). The save DC is Constitution-based.

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

E. Secret Entrance

A long-disused secret entrance is hidden here by thick undergrowth and a false rock that pivots aside when pushed. Inside the entrance, an underground tunnel runs several hundred feet north to connect to area **G6** of the Choking Tower dungeon. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals the entrance, though it's quite unlikely that the PCs will run across it.

F. The Choking Tower

The Choking Tower rises from the forest here, its smoking heights looming above the surrounding tree line. This location is presented in detail in the following pages.

PART 4: BELOW A SMOKE-FILLED SKY

Furkas Xoud was always a deliberate and careful planner, and well before he actually left the Technic League, he'd already spent several years secretly building himself a fortress far to the south. He'd outfitted much of the Choking Tower by the time he fled Starfall in 4703, and hit the ground running with his own experiments and studies of fluids, particle dynamics, smoke and wind magic, and swarm behavior.

The ghost of Furkas Xoud is certainly the most dangerous foe the PCs will face within the tower—and they'll face him more than once. See his NPC entry on page 55 for details on how Furkas interacts with intruders to the tower.

CHOKING TOWER FEATURES

The Choking Tower itself is 60 feet across and 220 feet high. Its walls, floors, stairs, and ceilings are made of expertly fitted stone. Most of the interior walls are also reinforced stone, but some walls are made of metal. Doors are shaped like elongated rectangles with rounded edges—each is an airtight iron hatch opened by turning a central wheel present on both sides of the door except where indicated. Opening such a door is a full-round action. A door without a wheel can be opened only by force (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28). The DC of Perception checks to notice activity on the other side of one of these doors increases by 10 (rather than by 5, as for a normal door), but when a door is opened, creatures on the other side automatically notice the turning of that door's wheel. None of these doors are locked or trapped except where indicated.

Ceilings within the Choking Tower are 20 feet high, except where indicated otherwise in the text. *Continual flame* spells cast upon the ceiling in the rooms and halls provide illumination throughout the tower.

Furkas did not want uninvited guests, so he placed traps throughout the Choking Tower and instructed his minions on how to bypass or avoid them. As a devotee of Zyphus, Furkas preferred traps that appeared to be an unlikely accident rather than an intentional design. As a result of this unusual design philosophy, traps within the Choking Tower tend to be mechanical traps that are difficult to detect but prove relatively easy to disable if found.

The tower's only windows are covered by sturdy metal slats set into the stone, leaving gaps only an inch wide. These windows lead into areas **F18** and **F23**.

Numerous pipes and vents run through the tower's walls, particularly in its core or along its southeastern corner. The constant hissing and thrumming of heated gases churning

in these pipes creates a constant low hum throughout the tower that penalizes Perception checks to hear noises by –2.

F1. Choking Tower Entrance

This towering stone structure rises high above the tops of the surrounding trees. The tower's walls are made of metal and stone and stained black with greasy soot, and its roof is a metal cone crowded by a forest of pipes and chimneys belching smoke into the sky. The tower's few windows are narrow and slatted with thick metal grills, and its only door is a metal rectangle with rounded corners, twelve feet high and nine feet wide. The door bears no knob or handle—only a two-inch-wide hole in the center, the edges of which are cracked and bent as if a tremendous force wrenched something free. A large number of immense humanoid footprints mar the ground surrounding the tower.

The Choking Tower's front door (hardness 10, hp 120, break DC 32) is missing its wheel. An examination of the door's central hole confirms that it once housed some sort of opening mechanism, but that it's been broken off the door's front. This wheel was snapped from the door by the hill giants at area **B**, and it is their footprints covering the ground. A successful DC 20 Survival check reveals that these footprints lead back to area **B**. If the PCs have the missing wheel, it can be fitted back into the hole, but unless the contraption is repaired with *make whole* or *mending*, a successful DC 30 Disable Device check is required to jury-rig repairs with the wheel to allow it to function again. Without the wheel, Disable Device checks to open the door take a –10 penalty.

F2. Front Hall (CR 7)

This grand hall is ten feet wide and twenty-five feet long. A large metal door stands at the west end of this entry, while three other metal doors stand in the walls at the opposite end. The middle door is slightly smaller than the others, and a metal wheel is mounted in the center of each door.

Trap: The eastern door appears to be an access hatch, but it is in fact a false door that opens onto a vent of hot oil and gas from the tower's inner workings. When the wheel of this door is turned, the door suddenly slams open from the pressure built up behind it, spraying burning oil into the hall as if one of the pipes beyond had accidentally sprung a leak.

FALSE HATCH

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

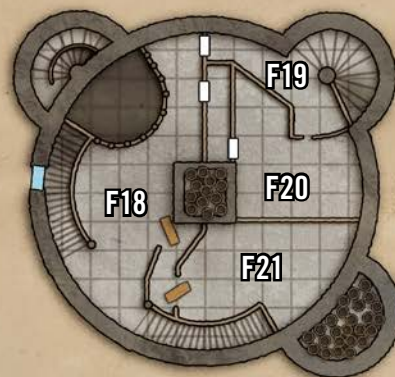
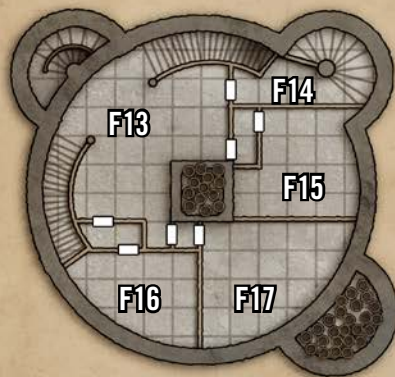
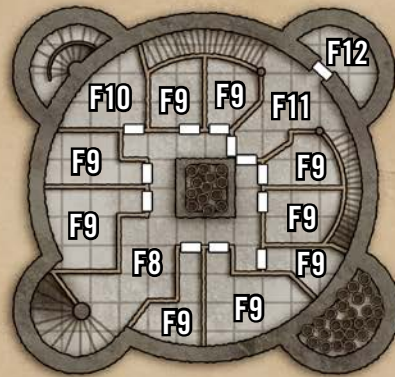
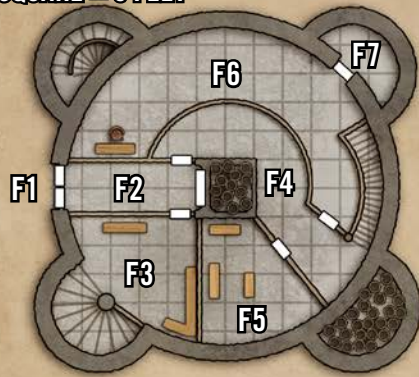
Trigger touch (when the wheel in the eastern hatch is turned);

Reset repair

THE CHOKING TOWER

F. CHOKING TOWER

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

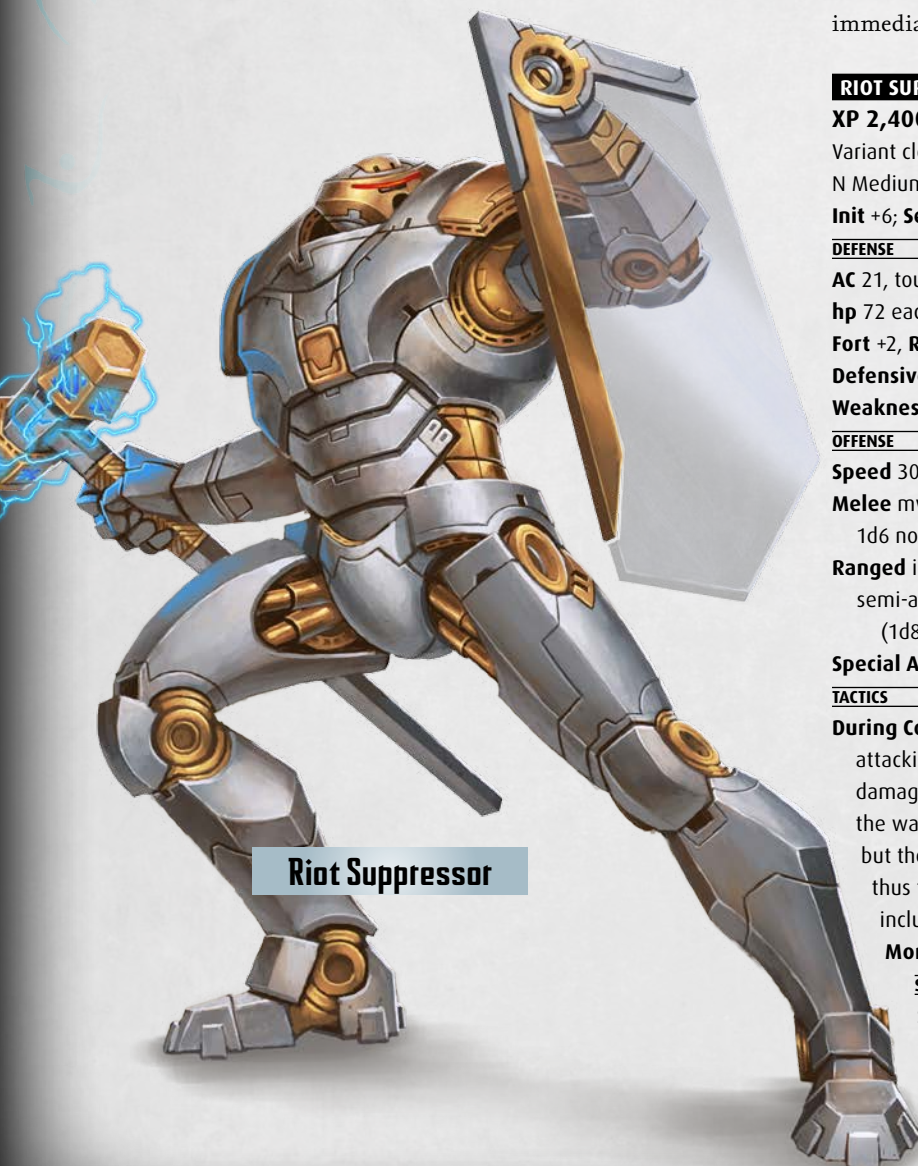


Effect Atk +10 melee (4d6 bludgeoning damage against the creature that opened the door); steam and boiling oil spray (4d6 fire damage); DC 20 Reflex negates; multiple targets (all creatures in area F2)

Development: If the PCs are exceptionally noisy in this hall (such as by triggering the trap), the riot suppressors from area F3 come to investigate.

F3. Guard Post (CR 8)

This wedge-shaped room contains several storage racks and crates, as well as a sickly odor. A door leads to the north and a large alcove to the southwest contains a wrought iron spiral staircase, leading up.



Riot Suppressor

This room contains entirely mundane stores such as spare furniture, pipes and fittings, and casks of water and wine. Some preserved meats and grains are also stored here, but they have spoiled in the years since living residents abandoned the tower.

The stairs lead up to area F8.

Creatures: When Furkas fled the Technic League, he managed to seize control of several robots. In smuggling them out of Starfall, he engineered an explosion in the warehouse where the robots worked. His skill at faking accidents paid off, and the Technic League never suspected that the robots within actually survived, only to be spirited away far to the south. The majority of these robots were crafted originally to combat mobs with nonlethal force, but Furkas found they functioned quite well as guards. Two of the riot suppressors stand guard here. Since Furkas Xoud's death, no new orders have been issued. The guards immediately attack any intruders they notice in the area.

RIOT SUPPRESSORS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Variant clockwork soldier (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 57)

N Medium construct (robot)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, +3 shield)

hp 72 each (8d10+28)

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

Defensive Abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk warhammer +18/+13 (1d8+9 nonlethal/×3 plus 1d6 nonlethal)

Ranged integrated stun gun +10 touch (1d8 nonlethal) or semi-automatic integrated stun gun +8/+8 touch (1d8 nonlethal)

Special Attacks charge weapon

TACTICS

During Combat Riot suppressors move directly into melee, attacking foes with their warhammers to deal nonlethal damage. When they make a full attack, they attack with the warhammer and the stun gun on semi-automatic fire, but the stun gun attacks resolve as secondary attacks and thus take a –5 penalty on attack rolls (this penalty is not included in the stats above).

Morale Riot suppressors fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 29

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Shield Focus, Toughness

Skills Perception +13, Sense Motive +13

Languages Androffan

Gear heavy steel shield, mwk warhammer

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Integrated Stun Gun (Ex) A riot suppressor has a stun gun integrated into its left eye. It treats attacks with this weapon as natural attacks, and cannot make iterative attacks with it. An integrated stun gun can still be targeted by effects that target manufactured weapons, but cannot be harvested for use outside of the robot's body. An integrated stun gun does not provoke an attack of opportunity when it is fired. It deals 1d8 nonlethal damage on a hit, and can be fired as a semi-automatic weapon. On a successful critical hit, the robot can attempt a free trip combat maneuver check against the target; this attempt doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity.

Merciful Weapon (Ex) Any metal melee weapon wielded by a riot suppressor becomes charged with energy that deals an additional 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on a hit. A riot suppressor takes no penalty on attack rolls when it uses a melee weapon to deal nonlethal damage.

Treasure: Although most of the stores here are either spoiled or mundane tools, a successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a box containing 11 batteries^{TC}.

F4. Hallway

Schematics of incredible complexity, each mounted in an elaborate wooden frame, decorate the stone walls of this curving hallway. The schematics feature images of metal monsters, strange vehicles, and technological wonders. The hall curves north at the eastern end, rising to the upper floor in a staircase.

One of Furkas Xoud's less destructive hobbies was the transcription of schematics from monitors into ink drawings on parchment—several of these artistic illustrations adorn the walls here. The schematics that appear on the inside covers of the Iron Gods Adventure Path are reproductions of Furkas's work, and if you wish, you can show some of the ones you haven't shared with the PCs at this time.

The stairs ascend to area **F11**.

As a ghost, Furkas has an intrinsic connection to his tower, but certain areas are more closely tied to his spirit than others. The presence of the schematics on the wall provide such a tie to this hallway, and as a result, Furkas can sense intruders in the area as if he were physically present.



Furkas Xoud

ENCOUNTERING FURKAS

As a man, Furkas possessed a disciplined scientific mind, but as a ghost he has become an erratic, rage-filled spirit. He occasionally terrorizes the remaining inhabitants of the Choking Tower with sudden appearances and imperious commands, but he is equally prone to bouts of amnesia and agnosia. As Furkas's mind disintegrates, his once-efficient tower degrades around him.

Furkas won't sit idly by while the PCs explore his home. He appears several times to harry the PCs as they explore the tower, as indicated in the text. In addition to these specific appearances, feel free to use Furkas to bedevil the PCs in any other way you see fit (such as to trigger a trap the PCs have already discovered, or to target a PC that goes off alone). Full details on Furkas's tactics and methods when facing the PCs in these hit-and-run encounters appear on page 55. The PCs should only gain XP for defeating Furkas once—the first time they reduce him to 0 hit points. (Putting him to rest permanently can net them additional experience points, as detailed in area **G9**.)

Stealthy PCs might be able to beat his Perception check, but if Furkas notices them, he manifests here to greet the intruders—see his NPC entry on page 55 for details.

F5. Kitchen (CR 8)

This simple kitchen shows signs of long neglect. A pair of stoves stand cold on the north side of the room between tall shelves stacked with jars and dishes. Along the west wall, a wide sink brims with pale mold. The center of the room contains a butcher's table, above which hangs an assortment of knives, cleavers, and pans. An odd-shaped tub protrudes from the southwestern corner of the room.

This kitchen has not been used in several years, but the trap Furkas set here long ago remains active. The odd-shaped tub is a trash disposal. Trash stuffed through a valve at the bottom of the tub is eventually incinerated amid the steaming pipes behind the wall.

A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that the mold in the sink is thick but harmless.

Trap: The stove against the north wall is a trap, and was never intended to be used for cooking. The trap itself has numerous triggers hidden throughout the room—each time a person interacts with objects in the kitchen or moves through it, there's a cumulative 10% chance of triggering the

trap. The trap automatically triggers if anyone manipulates parts of the trapped stove itself. When a trigger is activated, the door of the stove falls open and releases a blast of fire into the kitchen.

BELCHING STOVE **CR 8**

XP 4,800

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

EFFECT

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect cone of fire (10d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 20 half); multiple targets (all creatures in area **F5**)

F6. Library

Dust-covered shelves crammed with all manner of books and scrolls line the walls of this enormous curving library. A large desk, its top cluttered with scrolls and papers, sits at the western end of the room. A metal door leads to the south, while north of it a second door stands slightly ajar, revealing what appears to be a reading nook.

When Furkas completed the Choking Tower, he outfitted this room as a library and had the contents of his previous library shipped here. The library primarily contains his notes and reference materials from before his time with the Technic League. The shelves here therefore contain a wide variety of materials regarding magical theory and wizardry, and while the man's early interests in air magic, the nature of mist and smoke, and theories about swarm behavior are represented, there is nothing here about technology. Despite the expense and effort of moving these materials, Furkas hasn't used this room much at all. The papers on the desk contain notes regarding fundamental research into smoke and fog magic, but even the most recent notes are dated 30 years ago.

Treasure: One of the books on the desk is an early spellbook that Furkas no longer uses. It contains all of the cantrips from the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and all of Furkas's currently prepared 1st- and 2nd-level spells (see page 54) bound in a green leather cover. It's worth 365 gp.

F7. Reading Nook (CR 9)

The back of this cozy room contains a low bookshelf with a few papers on it and an overstuffed leather chair. The room is coated with a thin layer of dust and has a slightly sweet smell.

Trap: Furkas never used this reading nook, for it was intended all along as one of his engineered accident sites. When entertaining those he wasn't particularly fond of, he allowed his guests the opportunity to seek the nook as a place to relax. When anyone steps into the

northeastern half of the room, the door slams shut and an internal mechanism locks it. Once the door closes, Disable Device and Strength check DCs to open it increase by 10. Metal pipes along the ceiling then flood the room with a magical gas that causes those within the room to fall into a magically induced slumber that then inflicts a disturbing nightmare on the sleeping victim. The nature of the nightmare induced varies, but always follows a similar theme—that of the sleeping person being subjected to more and more dangerous and painful “accidents” the longer she stays a guest in the Choking Tower. In this way, the misanthropic wizard hoped to convince his visitors to leave early. The gas remains thick in the room for 1 minute before dissipating; those trapped in the room continue to be exposed each round until the gas fades. If the door is forced open, the gas dissipates at the end of that round.

NIGHTMARE FUMES **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Type magical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECT

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect toxic gas (poison—inhaled; save Fort DC 19; frequency 1/minute for 2 minutes; effect sleep for 1 minute/sleep for 2d4 hours; cure 1 save); spell effect (*nightmare*, Will DC 19 negates); multiple targets (all creatures in area **F7**)

F8. Staff Quarters Hall (CR 8)

Furkas rarely visited or used the second level of the Choking Tower other than when passing between the first and third floors, as he set aside its cramped corridors and small rooms for his servants and apprentices. The doors to all of the **F9** areas are ajar, as are the doors to area **F11**. The door to area **F10** is closed. Any significant noise in this area quickly attracts the attention of the undead dwelling in the surrounding rooms (see area **F9**).

The stairs to the southwest lead down to area **F3**.

Trap: The doors to area **F11** are both linked to the same trap; if either door is opened, slots in the walls surrounding the central core of the tower open and vent out blasts of steam, scalding all creatures within 5 feet of the central pillar's walls. This trap is unlike the others in the tower, for it was constructed by the gearghosts that dwell nearby, not by Furkas Xoud.

SCALDING STEAM SPRAY **CR 8**

XP 4,800

Type magical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECT

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect steam spray (8d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 16 half damage); multiple targets (all creatures within 5 feet of the central pillar)

F9. Staff Quarters (CR 8)

Each of these rooms is similar in appearance, with a narrow bed stripped of bedding, a dresser, and an empty clothes rack. All of these abandoned bedrooms once belonged to Furkas's servants and apprentices. The tower's staff swiftly learned that the domineering wizard would mostly ignore them so long as they discharged their duties efficiently and remained out of sight. When the wizard died, most of his staff packed their meager belongings and fled the tower before things really started going bad, and as a result, these nine rooms have been abandoned for years.

Creatures: Not all of the staff fled the tower after Furkas's death. When they learned of their master's doom, three of Furkas's less scrupulous apprentices decided to loot what they could, only to fall prey to one of their masters' insidious traps. The three apprentices linger on today as gearghosts—bitter and violent undead spirits composed of spectral energies and the tangled remnants of mechanical traps.

When the PCs first reach this floor of the tower, randomly determine which three rooms are currently occupied by a gearghost. The gearghosts don't fight on their own; all three come to join a battle once they hear or see intruders. They can move through the partially opened doors with ease, but Small or larger creatures must take a move action to open the partially opened doors wide enough to pass through.

GEARGHOSTS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 123)

Treasure: Before they died and became gearghosts, the burgling servants hid their stash of gold leaf stripped from furniture, valuable silverware, crystal goblets, and other valuables looted from the tower in these rooms. In all, there is a total of 1,400 gp in valuables scattered among the nine rooms.

Development: Until all three gearghosts are slain, they reset all of the traps in the tower each time the PCs exit to rest and recover.

F10. Supply Closet

This room is filled with crates and boxes, the walls covered with shelving holding linens, cleaning supplies, and other mundane tools. A strange cocoonlike object made of tightly wound strips

of wire and metal ribbons is affixed to the highest shelf on the curving northern wall.

This room was used as a supply closet for the tower staff; there's little of value among the supplies stored here.

The metal cocoon, on the other hand, is quite interesting.

Approximately the size of a human's fist but weighing only half a pound, this is one of four such cocoons hidden throughout the Choking Tower. The cocoon itself is of densely woven glaucite strips, and is quite difficult to damage (hardness 15, hp 20, break DC 30) despite its small size. It can be plucked off the wall with a successful DC 14 Strength check, after which a successful DC 30 Perception check reveals a tiny crack in the wall near where the cocoon was attached. Peeking through this crack allows a character to see into the stairwell in the space beyond.

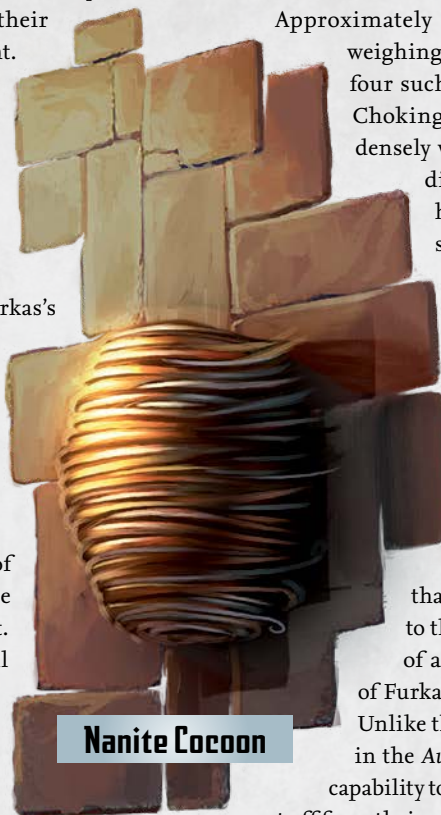
It was through this crack from the stairs leading to the basement

that the architects of the cocoon came to this room. These architects are part of a nanite swarm escaped from one of Furkas Xoud's most secure laboratories.

Unlike the bionanites the PCs encountered in the *Aurora*, these nanites didn't have the capability to survive for extended periods when cut off from their primary swarm, and after these four tiny clouds of nanites spread through the Choking Tower, they reflexively crafted these protective cocoons to protect and preserve some of their multitudes.

The cocoon feels empty and makes no noise if shaken, yet it does contain a small number of dormant nanites. If the cocoon is broken open, the nanites activate and emerge in the form of a small, scintillating cloud of what looks like mist. Once activated, the nanites instinctively sense the closest nanotech object and surge toward it. If the object is a piece of technology that uses nanite canisters, the cloud infests that device and recharges it (granting up to 10 uses), an act that destroys the cloud. These nanites have a much more important use, though, for each cocoon the PCs collect and transport down to area G8 will aid in opening the door between them and their goal: Casandalee's body.

A character who examines the cocoon and succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (engineering) check, as if identifying a technological item, realizes what the thing is: a protective shell built by a small cloud of nanites. This check also reveals that such nanites often have specific purposes; they spin cocoons like this to preserve their programming



Nanite Cocoon

LABORATORY AIRLOCKS

Furkas Xoud maintained several laboratories in the Choking Tower, each dedicated to a different facet of his studies. Since so many of his investigations involved the examination of gas, mists, vapors, swarms, and creatures capable of moving through the tiniest of gaps, Xoud built his laboratories so that the entrance to each was governed by an airlock. Each inner door that provides access to the labs is fitted with an airtight window through which an observer in the airlock can examine experiments or occupants in the room beyond. With the exception of the airlock to area **F21** (which is broken), only one door can be opened at a time—as long as one is opened, the other door locks tight. A successful DC 35 Disable Device check can open a second door in an airlock, as can force. When the first door is closed, both doors in the airlock lock in this manner for 3 rounds while the air is cycled and a *prestidigitation* effect cleans all creatures and objects in the airlock; tainted air is vented, along with the smoke from the furnace in the basement, through the tower's numerous chimneys.

until brought within close proximity to the object or location they've been programed to augment. In other words, this check should inform the PCs that the best course of action with their new find is to keep it safe until it activates on its own, although the check isn't able to reveal what the nanites are waiting to activate, or whether it might be dangerous.

F11. Second-Floor Landing

The stairs to the east wind down to area **F4**, while those to the north ascend to area **F13**.

F12. Washroom

This room contains a large metal tub, a sink, and a toilet, all separated from each other by crumbling wooden partitions.

This simple washroom was shared by the servants and apprentices living on this floor. Clean water is pumped up amid the cluster of pipes on the other side of the wall to the southeast. Effluence is pumped away through other pipes and efficiently incinerated. The tub features hot and cold running water. Apart from the novelty of the chamber, there is little of interest here.

F13. Third-Floor Atrium

Flights of stairs ascend and descend to this large atrium. The ceiling above the landing is open to the floor above, while doors on the south and east walls of the atrium allow access to other parts of

this floor. Short messages have been written above three of the doors. The air in this room smells strangely acrid.

The stairs to the north descend to area **F11**, while those to the west ascend to area **F18**. The door to area **F14** is not labeled, but the one to **F15** is marked "Lab 1: Alchemy," the one to **F16** is marked "Lab 2: Fluid Siphoning Research," and the one to **F17** is marked "Lab 3: Gaseous Ooze Research."

Development: The bitter smell in the air is from the breath of the creatures dwelling on the fourth-floor atrium. If the PCs make a significant amount of noise here, the *achaierais* above notice. One of them squeezes down the stairs to attack, while the other watches and squawks from the balcony above; if it's attacked, it leaps over the balcony (taking 2d6 points of damage in the fall) to attack PCs down here.

F14. Third-Floor Stairwell

These stairs ascend to area **F19**.

A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals the presence of a nanite cocoon (see area **F10**) wedged near the ceiling in the northern part of the stairwell.

F15. Lab 1: Alchemy

This large, tidy laboratory has a foul, chemical odor. Several tables, a few shelves stacked with jars and baskets, and an empty desk line the walls.

This laboratory, initially set up to serve as a combination alchemy and pharmaceutical lab, has not been used in over a decade, but as it was thoroughly cleaned and sealed after use, it does not appear abandoned. The baskets contain an array of towels, medical instruments, and common chemicals. One of the chemicals has degraded, creating the foul but harmless odor in the air.

Treasure: Enough gear can be salvaged from the tools found in this room to create an alchemist's lab worth 200 gp. In addition, a few of the shelves still contain viable pharmaceuticals and potions, including three *potions of gaseous form*, 1 dose of *cardioamp*^{TG}, 1 dose of *cureall*^{TG}, 3 doses of *grade III hemochem*^{TG}, and 4 doses of *torpinal*^{TG}.

If you want to allow the PCs to take and utilize technological item creation feats (*Technology Guide* 6), this laboratory can function as a medical lab, although the PCs in this case will need to provide energy for the lab themselves—unlike the *Aurora*, the Choking Tower does not have a central energy supply for technological laboratories.

F16. Lab 2: Fluid Siphoning Research (CR 8)

The wooden and metal furnishings of this room have been smashed to pieces. The fragmentary remnants have been arranged into

spiky piles throughout the room, while the bones of a long-dead dwarf lie in a mangled heap at the far side of the room.

Creature: Furkas used this laboratory to study the interaction between air and fluids, particularly how creatures composed of elemental air—namely, mihstus—could extract and feed on the bodily fluids of living creatures. Furkas knew that the objects of his study were intelligent, but didn't much care; he used cold to keep the creatures compliant whenever he needed to place a victim in here for the monsters to feed on. A mihstu has been trapped in this airtight chamber for the past several years, and has vented its rage and frustration on the furnishings. Although interested in escaping, it does not pass up the opportunity to feed before doing so. Nothing remaining in this room has any value; the spiky piles are part of a game the mihstu invented to pass the time.

MIHSTU **CR 8**
XP 4,800
hp 92 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 190)

Treasure: The dead dwarf was the mihstu's last meal, an experiment in progress at the time Furkas died (he'd injected the dwarf with torpinal to determine if the mihstu would be affected by the pharmaceutical when it fed). The dwarf's remains are still clothed in the rags he wore in life, but Furkas hadn't discovered the gems the dwarf ate to hide them from his captor. These three gems lie amid the bones—a garnet worth 500 gp, a sapphire worth 4,500 gp, and a pale blue rhomboid *ioun stone*.

F17. Lab 3: Gaseous Ooze Research (CR 7)

The tables and shelves in this large laboratory are all coated with a thin greenish slime. One desk is heaped with pages of notes, and a human skeleton dressed in moldy robes lies slumped over it. A large glass tank atop the easternmost table is shattered and shards of glass litter the floor of the room, while a pale green haze floats in the air.

This lab was used by one of Furkas's more accomplished apprentices, a woman named Anada Visk. She was charged with the investigation of how certain gaseous creatures exhibit similarities to ooze creatures, combining features of vaporous and protoplasmic life. The green slime coating this chamber's walls, floor, and furnishings looks foul but is harmless—a nasty side effect of the creature that's dwelled within this room for so many years. The body slumped against the desk is Anada's, and an examination of the notes on the table reveals the cause of her fate. Her notes describe her research into a roiling mist imprisoned within a glass cage. The reports begin very

clinically—enumerating the density, resilience, and indeterminate composition of the mist she has been tasked to study—but devolve quickly into senseless ravings about corpse-white faces speaking from within the mist. She grew more and more obsessed and secretive, and the last entry reads, "Xoud has stopped checking up on me—it has been days since he stopped by. I think he might be planning to steal my research. I'm out of food, but I dare not exit the lab. I will shatter the tank and join with the hungry fog, and we shall then be as one!"

Creatures: The focus of Anada's studies up until her death was kept in a large glass tank. She studied the roiling undulations of the hungry fog trapped within until it finally drove her mad. She smashed its cage in an insane attempt to fuse herself with it, but the end result was worse than death—she rose from insanity as a particularly powerful allip. The hungry fog is starving, but its strange nature has allowed it to survive for years in this room, and barring its death at the hands of the PCs, it will continue to dwell here for many more.

Anada's allip rises to attack, the swirling black mist of its tortured shape sliding out of her body as soon as the PCs enter the room. The hungry fog attacks soon thereafter; Anada makes sure to remain inside the fog so that she is engulfed and gains the creature's negative energy damage as healing each round. The two strangely symbiotic creatures fight until destroyed.

ANADA VISK **CR 4**
XP 1,200
 Advanced allip (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 12, 290)
hp 38

HUNGRY FOG **CR 6**
XP 2,400
hp 59 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 152)

Treasure: Anada's body still wears her *voidfrost robe*^{UE}, and at her side is a *wand of gust of wind* (18 charges) she used to handle several of her subjects. Her spellbooks are among the objects stacked on the table. Anada was an 8th-level wizard in life, and as such, her spellbooks contain 12 1st-level, six 2nd-level, and four 3rd-level spells of your choice.

F18. Fourth-Floor Atrium (CR 8)

A wide balcony overlooks a spacious atrium here, its low iron railing wrought with geometric symbols. A window high on the west wall is protected by narrow metal slats. Three doors stand in the east wall, but only the central door remains intact, with a short message written above it. The northern door has a hole burrowed through it, while the southern one has been completely smashed apart.

The stairs to the west lead down to area **F13**, while those to the south lead up to area **F22**. The door to area **F19** bears a 3-foot-wide hole, as does the door at the top of the stairs leading up to area **F22**. The door to area **F20** is labeled “Lab 4: Animal Research,” and the door to **F21** is broken apart—no sign of its label remains.

Creatures: A few months ago, the two achaierais that had been imprisoned for years in area **F21** broke out of the laboratory and took over both levels of this atrium. The creatures prefer to dwell on this upper floor, but they aggressively attack any creature entering this area or that they hear in area **F13** below. They harbor a particular hostility toward Furkas, but they cannot affect the arrogant ghost at all. Furkas is content to let the achaierais continue to inhabit this area for the extra security they provide.

ADVANCED ACHAIERAI (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 66 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 7, 292)

F19. Fourth-Floor Stairwell

These stairs lead down to area **F14**.

A hole has been burrowed through the southern wall here to area **F20**. A similar hole has been burrowed through the door to area **F18**. Both were created by the aurumvorax in area **F20**.

F20. Lab 4: Animal Research (CR 9)

A foul, musky smell fills this room. The room is crammed with hundreds of metal cages and boxes strewn about haphazardly. Much of the metal in this room is twisted and gnawed, and the remains of several dismantled metal automatons lie in pieces on the floor.

Creature: This laboratory once contained an exotic collection of animals, most of which were used as test subjects in other laboratories or otherwise cruelly mistreated here. When Furkas died and his staff fled, these animals remained trapped here and were eventually killed by the room's most vicious occupant, an aurumvorax. This metal-eating monster fed on the other animals, but has taken to hunting through the rest of the tower for its preferred meal: precious metals—particularly the skymetals that comprise various robots. The aurumvorax never developed a taste for glaucite (otherwise it would have eaten many of the doors in the area), but has dragged several robots back down to this room to gorge on before dropping into a torpor, and hibernating for several months at a time. The creature is awake at this time, feeding on the body of a recently destroyed robot from the upper levels, and it savagely attacks the PCs if anyone enters this room. At your discretion, the PCs can encounter this aurumvorax elsewhere in the tower as it explores, looking for new meals.

AURUMVORAX

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 114 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 35)

F21. Lab 5: Infernal Vapors Research

Both doors to this room are battered outward and hang askew on their hinges. The furnishings within—a pair of large metal cages and a desk—have been smashed to pieces and pushed together into a large nest.

This room once contained the two achaierais that now run amok in area **F18**. Furkas had directed an apprentice to study the black, smoky clouds the achaierais emit, but the evil birds escaped their cages and killed the apprentice years ago. The achaierais finally broke out of this laboratory only a few months back. They claim areas **F13** and **F18** as their domain, but return here to roost.

Treasure: The achaierais have formed a crude nest from mangled metal and splintered wood. The nest contains the disemboweled



Aurumvorax

remains of one of Furkas's assistants and the assistant's *all tools vest*^{UE}.

F22. Fifth-Floor Atrium

This wide, curved hall ends in a metal hatch to the northwest. A large slate board covered with neat lettering hangs on the east wall. A flight of stairs to the east leads up, while another flight to the south leads down. The door to the southern stairwell appears to have been burrowed or chewed through.

The stairs to the south lead down to area **F18**, while those to the east lead up to area **F27**.

The slate board is Furkas's overall project roster and laboratory assignment chart, although the wizard hasn't updated this board since his death and the apprentices listed are now gone, dead, or worse. The research emphasis of each laboratory is listed on this board, which may help direct the PCs' investigation of the tower. See Player Handout #1 for the slate board's contents.

F23. Master Bedroom (CR 10)

The door to this room is locked with *arcane lock* (CL 10th).

This large chamber appears to be a combination of bedroom and study. A large window to the northwest, fitted with sturdy metal slats, lets in light and air, while elaborate tapestries depicting gloomy landscapes and gothic architecture adorn the walls. A large bed sits in the room, its fine coverings frayed and dusty. A small desk against the southwest wall is bare, while doors provide several exits—although no handle adorns the door to the northwest. Instead of a handle or knob, it bears a small plate of coppery metal.

This room was Furkas's personal retreat, but he has had little need for this room since his death. The tapestries all come from his former home in Caliphas and depict scenes of eastern Ustalav, as a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals. The desk was only used for personal correspondence, which became increasingly rare as Furkas's paranoia grew.

The tapestries on the wall remain tied to Furkas's emotions, allowing him to notice those who come and go from this room. Stealthy PCs might be able to beat his Perception check, but if Furkas notices them, he manifests here to greet the intruders—see his NPC entry on page 55 for details.

Trap: The door to area **F25** is not only sealed with *arcane lock* (CL 10th); it's also warded with a simple but effective trap. Anyone who touches or attempts to open the door is instantly struck by a bolt of electricity that surges outward. If the attempt to open the door is made at range (such as by *telekinesis*), the bolt resolves as a ranged touch attack with a maximum range of 60 feet. Furkas

Lab 1: Alchemy
Lab 2: Fluid Siphoning Research
Lab 3: Gaseous Ooze Research: Anada Visk, Lead
Lab 4: Animal Research (animals used as needed in other experiments)
Lab 5: Infernal Cloud Research: Genisette Farvastian, Lead
Lab 6: Technic Research
Lab 7: Quasi-Gaseous Research: Armestor Kelkin, Lead. Limit 100 lbs. of live animals per week. Kelkin—I am NOT running a slaughterhouse here!
Lab 8: Swarm Behavior Studies: Lors Everenki, Lead (monitor activation of bionanites and report full awakenings at once, priority one)
Lab 9: Smoke and Particle Research
Lab Zero: Mnemotechnic Recovery

PLAYER HANDOUT #1

could bypass this trap by using a short metal rod that, when tapped against the metal plate of horacalcum on the door itself, deactivates the trap for 1 minute and causes the door to swing open. Only one of these rods still exists, which can be found in area **F37**.

SHOCKING DOOR

CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECT

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect Atk +15 touch (12d6 electricity damage)

Treasure: The fine tapestries and bedclothes here are worth 600 gp and weigh 50 pounds in all. A successful DC 30 Perception check identifies a hidden switch behind a tapestry depicting a rural graveyard that, when pressed, opens a secret shelf in the wall. This shelf contains three of Furkas's spellbooks, each bound in green leather and embossed with symbols in Auran meaning "smoke" and "fog." The spellbooks contain all cantrips and all of Furkas's currently prepared spells. In addition, the books contain 20 1st-level spells, 15 2nd-level spells, 10 3rd-level spells, and five 4th- and 5th-level spells of your choice, along with the following spells from the *Technology Guide*: *detect radiation*, *discharge*, *irradiate*, *greater make whole*, *magic circle against technology*, *protection from technology*, *rebut technology*, *recharge*, and *technomancy*. If these books are removed from this room, Furkas Xoud can no longer prepare spells, and the ghost does everything in his power to get the books back.

F24. Ornate Bath Chamber

In life, Furkas took personal grooming seriously. This room contains a large bathtub, sink, and toilet, all with water pumped from the array of heated pipes in the center of the Choking Tower. The sealed room has not been used in years and a slow leak in one of the pipes has flooded the room with 3 feet of warm water that rushes out when the door is opened.

Treasure: Few of the fine bath linens and expensive toiletries have survived the room's abandonment and flooding. Three bottles of rare cologne, however, are worth 40 gp each.

F25. Dungeon Access

This flight of stairs leads down to area **G1** in the Choking Tower's dungeon.

F26. Private Study (CR 8)

This room contains a large desk and bookshelves. Metal hatches lead to the east and west. A thick glass window is set into the hatch to the east. Several strange black hoses lead from the door to a large machine against the northeast wall.

While the various other labs in the Choking Tower saw use by him off and on, Furkas maintained this private study for his own personal use. In connection with his studies of gases and how wind and air form a vital part of a living creature's breath and life, Furkas performed several experiments with the effects of suffocation and decompression here. The machinery in this room is used to pump the air into or out of the small connected chamber (area **F26a**) at various speeds. The shelves contain medical texts regarding respiratory function and gruesome pulmonary models.

The desk contains meticulous notes about years of

experiments in suffocating creatures—mostly humans—to death. Furkas's victims were usually purchased slaves, but were occasionally servants or apprentices that displeased him; these unfortunate souls often suffered the lengthiest periods of asphyxiation just to prolong their torment. The interior of the long vacuum chamber is visible from the window in its door, save for a few feet right at the door's base. In that space slumps the desiccated corpse of a human man, his fingernails shattered. Blood stains the seam in the door.

Haunt: The vacuum chamber itself generated a curious side effect that Furkas grew more and more intrigued by. Each time an experiment died within the chamber, a portion of its soul remained behind, creating an increasingly powerful and tragic haunt. Furkas died before he could unravel the mystery of why this haunt manifested, and while the pump itself has fallen into disrepair and can no longer create a vacuum in the room, the haunt more than covers that loss by making area **F26a** dangerous. The haunt activates as soon as anyone approaches within 20 feet of the open door to the vacuum chamber.

Suffocating Spirits

SUFFOCATING SPIRITS

CR 8

XP 4,800

CE persistent haunt (all of area **F26** and **F26a**)

Caster Level 8th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the sound of labored gasping)
hp 36; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, a gasping wail issues from the vacuum chamber. An instant later, a cloud of gasping ghostly forms made of smoke surge out of the chamber to shroud whatever creature is closest to the pump mechanism in area **F26**. That creature is targeted by *suffocation*^{APG} (Fort DC 17). Each round, the haunt targets a new creature, shifting to the closest target to the pump that isn't currently suffocating.

Destruction The pump in the study must be destroyed (hardness 10, hit points 45).

Treasure: A Technic League spy Furkas caught trying to infiltrate his staff was the last victim suffocated in this room. A search of the man's body reveals a set of mark II wirejack tendons^{TG} tangled among his bones.

F27. Foundry (CR 9)

As the PCs approach this room, the sound of ringing hammers and operating forges can be heard.

This open space spans the diameter of the tower and, in the southern portion of the room, opens to a room above. The air is stifling due to the operation of three massive forges that burn and vent into the cluster of exposed pipes running through the center of the tower. A tangle of conduits from the southeast cuts through the room to join this cluster, forming a wall of pipes and thick wires.

The pipes running through the center of the Choking Tower and its southeast support buttress meet in this room. These pipes deliver the heat and power necessary to operate the three forges in this foundry. Remaining power is directed up the center of the tower, to the upper laboratories and the Pyrolitic Spire above (area **F37**).

The pipes themselves are incredibly hot, and deal 1d6 points of fire damage per round to anyone in contact with them. The pipes can be destroyed (hardness 15, hp 60, break DC 30, immune to fire and electricity), but each time a pipe is damaged, a blast of steam and lightning lances out that deals 5d6 points of fire damage and 5d6 points of electricity damage to any creature within a 5-foot radius of the point of damage (Reflex DC 15 half). This steam and lightning continue to damage everything in that area on initiative count 0 until the damage is repaired or the pipes are destroyed, at which point safety valves shut down the flow of power entirely. Doing so cuts power to all locations above the foundry. This incapacitates the air cyclers in the upper laboratories and many of the ongoing experiments in area **F37**. In this case, the robotic apprentices in area **F37** systematically search the tower for saboteurs. If the robotic apprentices find intruders, they immediately attack.

The stairs to the east lead down to area **F22**, while the stairs to the north lead up to area **F28**.

Creatures: Three azers toil in this foundry, constructing the precise components necessary for the experiments in this tower and occasional replacement parts for the robots. Even years after Furkas's death, the azers continue to produce components, primarily for the experiments in area **F37**. The azers are overseen by two riot suppression robots but, as azers are by nature diligent craftsmen, the robots have little to do except keep watch for trespassers. The azers understand that Furkas has died, yet they fear his ghost more than they did the living version, and have not yet worked up the courage to rebel against their robot overlords.

When intruders enter this area, the riot suppression robots immediately move to intercept them and command the azers to assist in combat. The azers fight only grudgingly, but if any azer is attacked, the azers focus on that assailant. As soon as the PCs defeat one of the riot suppressors, though, the azers switch sides, glimpsing an opportunity for freedom.

RIOT SUPPRESSORS (3)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 72 each (see page 32)

BEVSA, PRUNDLE, AND VONKS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Azer (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 39)

hp 15 each

Development: If any of the azers survive the fight, they swiftly surrender. They can tell the PCs about their function here in the Choking Tower, bemoaning the place's current state as they fondly recall the much busier times when Furkas had several active experiments and a retinue of apprentices and assistants, both human and robotic. Since Furkas's death, the azers have primarily manufactured components for the robot apprentices up in the spire above, as Furkas has neglected his experiments and his living assistants have run off. These azers know little about other rooms in the tower, having spent all their time here—they would normally be content to work here, as they enjoy their tasks, but now that Furkas is dead, they would like to escape the tower and seek other places to toil. If the PCs mention Torch, the azers are intrigued and could well travel there to become caretakers for the violet flame. At your discretion, the azers might accompany the PCs to help them explore the tower, but they have little more information to offer regarding the tower's defenses and guardians.

Story Award: For each azer that survives the fight, award the PCs 800 XP.

F28. Seventh-Floor Atrium

The stairs to the north lead down to area **F27**, while those to the south lead up to area **F33**.

F29. Storage Closet

This small closet contains emergency replacement stores such as spare tools and weapons.

Treasure: Several weapons are stored here for use in defense of the tower, although none of the current inhabitants have a need for them. This closet contains four tower shields, four masterwork longswords, six nets, four masterwork heavy crossbows, 200 normal bolts, 20 silver bolts, 40 cold iron bolts, five *screaming bolts*, and 10 +2 *human-bane bolts*.

F30. Forge Supplies (CR 8)

Raw iron, spools of wire, and sturdy jars filled with colorful liquids line the north and east walls of this large room. A balcony crosses the room from northwest to southeast, looking over a sweltering workshop. A large iron-and-mithral swivel crane perches at the edge of the balcony, its boom long enough to reach the stores and lower them down into the foundry below.

The supplies are all basic materials used in the foundry below (area **F27**). It's a 20-foot drop down to the forge below.

Creature: The crane is one of Furkas's first attempts build a construct—the crane itself was intended to be an autonomous tool to aid in forge work, but functions as a powerful guardian as well as a useful machine. The crane follows commands issued by the azers or riot suppressors, but if any other creature enters area **F30** without obviously bearing materials to replenish the stores here, the crane swivels its boom in a sudden, threatening motion. Unless intruders leave the area within 1 round, the crane attacks.

ANIMATED CRANE	CR 8
XP 4,800	
N Large construct (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 14)	
Init –1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception –5	
DEFENSE	
AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (–1 Dex, +10 natural, –1 size)	
hp 68 (7d10+30)	
Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –3	
Defensive Abilities hardness 15; Immune construct traits	
OFFENSE	
Speed immobile	
Melee slams +12 (4d6+9 plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 30 ft.	
TACTICS	
During Combat The animated crane is immobile, but can strike at opponents with the claw at the end of its boom from anywhere in its reach. If it successfully grabs a creature, the	

crane swings its boom over the open space and drops the creature into area **F23**, 30 feet below.

Morale The animated crane fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 23

SQ Construction Points (exceptional reach, glaucite, grab, improved attack, reinforced, immobile)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construction Points (Ex) The animated crane gains 30-foot reach and enhanced damage with its slam attack. It is made of glaucite (granting it a +4 increase to natural armor and hardness 15), and is reinforced such that it gains additional Hit Dice over what a Large construct normally gains. The crane is immobile, and cannot move from its position.

F31. Lab 6: Technic Research

The walls of this laboratory are painted bright white. A partially disassembled mechanical man spreads across an otherwise clean desk. The automaton's lower half is intact, but its arms are disconnected from its torso and its torso and head are both spread out in their component parts. The single eye in the middle of the creature's face is dim. Hatches lead out of this room to the west and southeast.

This laboratory was once used for assembly and repair of delicate robotic components. Its most recent use, however, was 8 years ago. Furkas captured a gearsman scouting around the Choking Tower. He attempted to question the captured gearsman with his thought harvester robot in area **G9**, but the gearsman proved immune to the thought harvester's probing. Furkas then brought the creature to this laboratory and disassembled it to learn why the scout was so near his home. His investigations proved fruitless, however, so he harvested key components for other uses. The gearsman has been in this partially disassembled state ever since and cannot be repaired.

Treasure: Some of the gearsman's valuable internal skymetal circuitry is piled on the edge of the desk. This circuitry is worth 232 gp. The desk also contains a variety of high-quality precision tools worth 500 gp.

If you want to allow the PCs to take and utilize technological item creation feats (*Technology Guide* 6), you should allow this laboratory to function as a military lab. However, the lab isn't currently powered to function as such, and the PCs will need to supply their own sources of energy. The *smoke furnace* (see page 61 for the item's description) in the basement can supply half the power needed, but even then only if its power is completely devoted to this lab, leaving the other locations in the tower without power.

F32. Trapped Robotics Storage (CR 9)

The upper halves of eight metal creatures hang from hooks in the ceiling of this narrow room, each trailing wires from its torso like mechanical viscera.

Furkas defeated several gearsmen sent to assassinate him during the first few years after he fled from the Technic League, and the wizard did not let the bodies go to waste. He disassembled and examined many of the would-be assassins to learn how to repair—and ultimately craft—his own mechanical servants. Furkas stored the spare parts from these defeated gearsmen in this closet. Despite the closet's gruesome appearance, none of the robots are functional and all have had internal circuitry stripped.

Another nanite cocoon (see area **F10** for details) hangs from the ceiling near the southern wall—a successful DC 15 Perception check is enough to spot it amid the tangle of other parts from the doorway to the north.

Trap: While the robots are no longer functional as constructs, Furkas has wired together their various parts and pieces into a complex and frightening trap. The trap activates as soon as anyone other than Furkas himself moves more than 10 feet into this room, at which point the various robotic limbs scattered throughout the room begin to thrash about, attacking all creatures in a flailing display of dismembered fury. Once activated, the trap continues attacking each round a viable target remains in the room.

FLAILING ROBOT PARTS

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECT

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effect Atk +20 (2d6+13 plus trip, CMB +20); multiple targets (one attack per target in area **F32**)

Treasure: Hanging from a hook at the southern end of the room is a *nuglub-skin drum* (see page 60), the presence of which deals 1d6 points of nonlethal damage to a character each time they are tripped in the room.

F33. Eighth-Floor Atrium

The western stairs lead down to area **F28**, while the southern stairs lead up to area **F37**.

F34. Lab 7: Quasi-Gaseous Research

Several wooden barrels the size of a human stand upright against the north and east walls of this semi-triangular laboratory. Each barrel is capped with a wooden lid, its rim crusted with dried blood. A desk near one wall has notes scattered atop it, and strange, almost humanoid-shaped bloodstains adorn the floor in several spots.

like clouds themselves, yet moving with a strange focused purpose I have not observed in baser swarms. If I could capture one of the worms that walk and determine how the transference of mind from one body to thousands is achieved, perhaps one could do the same with a transference of mind from one body to millions. If I can secure control of bionanites as a host body in the same way my crawling guest controls the worms of his body, perhaps I can

PLAYER HANDOUT #2

This laboratory was used to study vampiric mists, peculiar aberrations whose bodies are neither wholly gaseous nor liquid but rather exhibit qualities of both substances. The fact that these are living creatures and not entities like mihstu composed of elemental air further fascinated Furkas Xoud, and study of these creatures and the way their bodies functioned is what sparked Furkas's interest in swarms and swarm behavior. The notes on the desk are incomplete and damaged, but hints to the nature of Furkas's studies can be gleaned from them.

The humanoid-shaped bloodstains on the floor are the remains of four vampiric mists that were once kept here, but the creatures starved to death long ago. The bodies can be properly identified with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (arcana) check.

F35. Lab 8: Swarm Behavior Studies (CR 9)

This chamber is largely empty, save for a few strange metal barrels against the southern wall. Both barrels have jagged rents on their sides, as if some caustic material had melted a hole through them.

Furkas Xoud used this lab to study the behavior of swarms. Initially inspired by the way the vaporous bodies of creatures like vampiric mists and hungry oozes worked, Furkas grew increasingly intrigued at how a cloud of thousands of tiny creatures, working together with a hive mind to control their actions, could mimic the behavior of smoke or mist. Many of the notes in here have been damaged by decay and the actions of the bionanite clouds, but the partially surviving notes found here summarize Furkas's emerging theory that even clouds, fog, and smoke were in fact living swarms

composed of creatures too small for the naked eye to see. One fragmentary surviving note may be of particular interest to the PCs, and has been reproduced as Player Handout #2.

Creatures: Furkas Xoud first discovered the existence of bionanite clouds in the buried wreck of a small medical ship he found while exploring the Felldales. It was in this wreck that he learned of the location of the *Aurora*, a ship he'd been seeking since finding clues that the android Casandalee had retreated there after emerging from Silver Mount. He also recovered two dormant bionanite clouds from that wreck. He intended to investigate them here, but died before he could pursue those studies. In time, the bionanites managed to eat their way through the barrels Furkas transported them in, and now both clouds swarm in this room. They attempt to fascinate any intruders, but only attack if they are themselves attacked first.

BIONANITE CLOUDS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 71 each (see page 15)

F36. Lab 9: Smoke and Particle Research (CR 7)

Several shelves and desks run along the northern and western wall of this room, while in the center stands a large contraption made of several concentric metal rings arrayed around a thin metal mesh in which is cradled a black ceramic bottle with a cork plugging its top.

This laboratory was used by Furkas to study the behavior of smoke, particularly how billowing clouds mimicked the behavior of swarming insects or nanites. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check identifies the strange contraption in the center as some sort of turbine that would generate a spherical cage of wind to contain and manipulate air and vapor within the sphere, but the machine itself has long been broken by the frustrations of the creatures bound to this room.

Creature: To aid in his research, Furkas Xoud trapped a powerful belker in this room. The creature, made of living smoke, had increasingly become a source of fascination for Furkas, and the purchase and use of a *scroll of binding* to contain the belker within this room was one of his final acts before his fateful trip to visit the *Aurora*. The belker remains trapped in this room, unable to leave until a decade of servitude and submission to Furkas's studies pass. With a few years left, the belker has grown quite bored—it views visitors as a chance to entertain itself and swiftly attacks, eager for the distraction. It fights to the death.

ADVANCED BELKER

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 45, 292)

Treasure: The corked bottle held within the sphere turbine is actually an *eversmoking bottle*. Furkas Xoud created this item, and retains a bond with it to this day. Anytime it is opened within the Choking Tower or its dungeons, he notices and can manifest in the smoke released. See page 55 for notes on how Furkas reacts to the PCs in such an event.

F37. The Pyrolitic Spire (CR 11)

This large chamber has a tall, conical roof. A tangled mass of whistling pipes run from the floor of the room through the ceiling. Colored smoke issuing from this central core of pipes pervades the room, giving the place a hazy sheen. Tables throughout are covered with bubbling cauldrons, smoking alembics, and delicate mechanical contraptions. Three large tanks filled with colored fog stand on the north side of the room. Elsewhere, large metal bookshelves are crammed with books and papers.

This large chamber, situated directly under the Choking Tower's conical roof, was originally intended to serve as little more than a sort of "heat sink" for the constantly churning vapors, smoke, and heated air generated by the furnace in the tower's dungeon and used to power the various laboratories and other amenities throughout the structure. Eventually, however, Furkas began using the chamber as a sort of combination lecture hall and gathering room. Here, the wizard called his apprentices together every month to hear the results of their research, to assign new projects, and to publicly humiliate and punish those who failed him.

Creatures: As he grew increasingly frustrated with the failings of his living apprentices, Furkas Xoud undertook one of his most complex projects. He used secrets he learned during his time with the Technic League, materials scavenged from the many robots he'd stolen during his escape, and his own considerable knowledge of the fabrication of constructs to craft robotic apprentices—intelligent constructs programmed to assist him and carry on his work while he focused on specific projects or conducted field research. His living apprentices were concerned about this project, but Furkas perished before he was able to craft more than two of his wondrous robotic apprentices.

Both of those creations toil on in the Pyrolitic Spire, a chamber they've transformed into their own private laboratory. Although these robotic apprentices exceeded Furkas's living apprentices in loyalty and intelligence, they did not possess the insight or thirst for knowledge necessary for genuine scientific advancement. The two robotic apprentices still labor here, pursuing the eclectic collection of studies and experiments Furkas directed them to pursue many years ago. They continually refine chemicals, monitor reactions, and analyze particulates, but attempt no innovation or actual creation of their own.

If the apprentices are interrupted in their work, one of them approaches the PCs and demands to know the reason, asking, “Has Master Xoud extracted the android’s lore yet? Does he require our aid?” before the PCs can reply. The robotic apprentices know little about Casandalee, just that Xoud returned to the tower with her inert body 7 years ago. They haven’t seen him since, as Xoud’s ghost has not appeared before them. The robotic apprentices quickly grow impatient when it becomes apparent that the PCs aren’t here to help. You can use their responses to help encourage or guide the PCs toward the dungeon below, but before the PCs can leave, the robots should grow impatient enough to attempt to capture them.

If the PCs are foolish enough to open the *eversmoking bottle* from area **F36** in this room, the robotic apprentices snap to attention before their master, who immediately orders them to capture the PCs and deliver them downstairs to him as captives. This is a dangerous but effective way for the PCs to get into area **G9** without having to deal with the door blocking access, as Xoud eagerly opens the door from within to accept prisoners delivered by his apprentices.

ROBOTIC APPRENTICES (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Variant clockwork mage (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 32)

N Medium construct (robot)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +17

Defense **AC** 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 117 each (15d10+35)

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits, vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 4 slams +18 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks electromagnetic casting, wand magic

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

3rd (1)—*stinking cloud* (DC 8)

2nd (3)—*glitterdust* (DC 7), *web* (DC 7)

1st (at will)—*grease*, *summon monster I*

TACTICS

During Combat The apprentices use *web* to block the exit from this room and perhaps catch a few PCs, then use *stinking cloud* and *glitterdust* against foes to try to minimize reprisals. A robot isn’t above casting *grease* on itself to aid it in moving through its own *web* spell if needed. The apprentices prefer to refrain from entering melee until they outnumber foes capable of fighting back, and focus their attacks on spellcasters first. The apprentices attempt to immobilize and detain foes rather than kill them, hoping to deliver enemies stripped of gear and

bound with rolls of ion tape¹⁶ to their master’s personal laboratory in the dungeon.

Morale The robotic apprentices fight until destroyed, but do not pursue foes out of this room.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 33

Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slams), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Knowledge (geography) +5, Perception +17

Languages Androffan, Common

Gear *cloak of resistance* +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Electromagnetic Casting (Su) A robotic apprentice infuses its spells with electromagnetic energy. A creature targeted



Robotic Apprentice

by a robotic apprentice's spell or within the area of a robotic apprentice's spell when it is cast takes 1d6 points of electricity damage and 1d6 points of force damage in addition to experiencing the effects of the spell, regardless of whether the creature succeeds or fails its saving throw (or whether a saving throw is allowed).

Treasure: The rare laboratory components spread throughout this room weigh 100 pounds in all and are quite fragile, but are collectively worth 1,500 gp. The metal shelves contain decades of research journals and laboratory notes, amassing the sum total of the knowledge gained from the experiments conducted throughout the Choking Tower. Study of these notes requires the ability to read Androffan, and even then examining them takes several days. When using these journals as references, a character gains a +5 bonus on all Knowledge checks to learn about technological devices, swarms, creatures with the air subtype, and magic utilizing smoke, mist, air, and similar features. The collection can also reveal information about Furkas Xoud's past and the nature of his work here in the Choking Tower, giving you a vector by which to inform PCs about elements of the area's history. These journals weigh a total of 20 pounds in all and are worth 4,000 gp.

In addition to the journals, the shelves in this room contain a total of 120 silverdisks, 10 batteries^{TC}, four rolls of ion tape^{TC}, two zipsticks^{TC}, a timeworn chemalyzer^{TC} (7 charges), two nanite canisters^{TC}, a timeworn fire extinguisher^{TC} (4 charges), three *scrolls of gaseous form*, a *scroll of recharge*^{TC}, a *horn of fog*, and a *bottle of air*. Finally, a short rod made of horacalcum sits on one desk. While the rod seems to be little more than an unadorned 2-foot-long cylinder of metal (and indeed can function as a masterwork horacalcum club), it radiates faint abjuration magic. A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check to identify the rod reveals that it is a magical key of some sort. It can be used to open the door to the tower dungeons in area F23. The horacalcum rod is worth 6,300 gp.

CHOKING TOWER DUNGEON FEATURES

Furkas created the dungeon beneath the Choking Tower to house those experiments that were too large or too dangerous to keep in the tower itself. A remote corner of the dungeon also serves as Furkas's only overt display of faith, a shrine to Zyphus.

The Choking Tower dungeon is carved from natural stone and polished smooth. Except where indicated, the doors are made of iron, and are not airtight hatches as in the tower above. None of the doors are locked or trapped, except where indicated. The rooms in the Choking Tower dungeon are 15 feet high (unless otherwise stated in the text) and the hallways are 10 feet high. The floor and other surfaces are dusty and the air is stale. *Continual flame* spells cast upon the ceiling

in the rooms and halls provide illumination throughout the dungeon. The dungeon itself lies 40 feet underground.

G1. Dungeon Entrance

These spiral stairs lead up 120 feet to area F25.

G2. Conjunction Preparation

This sparsely decorated room contains a single wooden desk and chair in the northeast corner. Two doors provide exits from the room.

Furkas used this chamber to prepare for conjunctions of extraplanar entities. An examination of the desk reveals two objects of interest in the only drawer: a *wand of wind wall* (32 charges) Furkas often used to protect himself against air creatures, and a journal filled with detailed notes about the various creatures Furkas often conjured, including all of the types of outsiders encountered in the tower above. The final pages contain anatomical drawings of a peculiar bloated black fly, along with the devastating effect of the swarms of these flies on living flesh. A successful DC 24 Knowledge (planes) check identifies the fly as the type exhaled by leukodaemons, servants of the Horseman of Pestilence.

G3. Conjunction Chamber (CR 9)

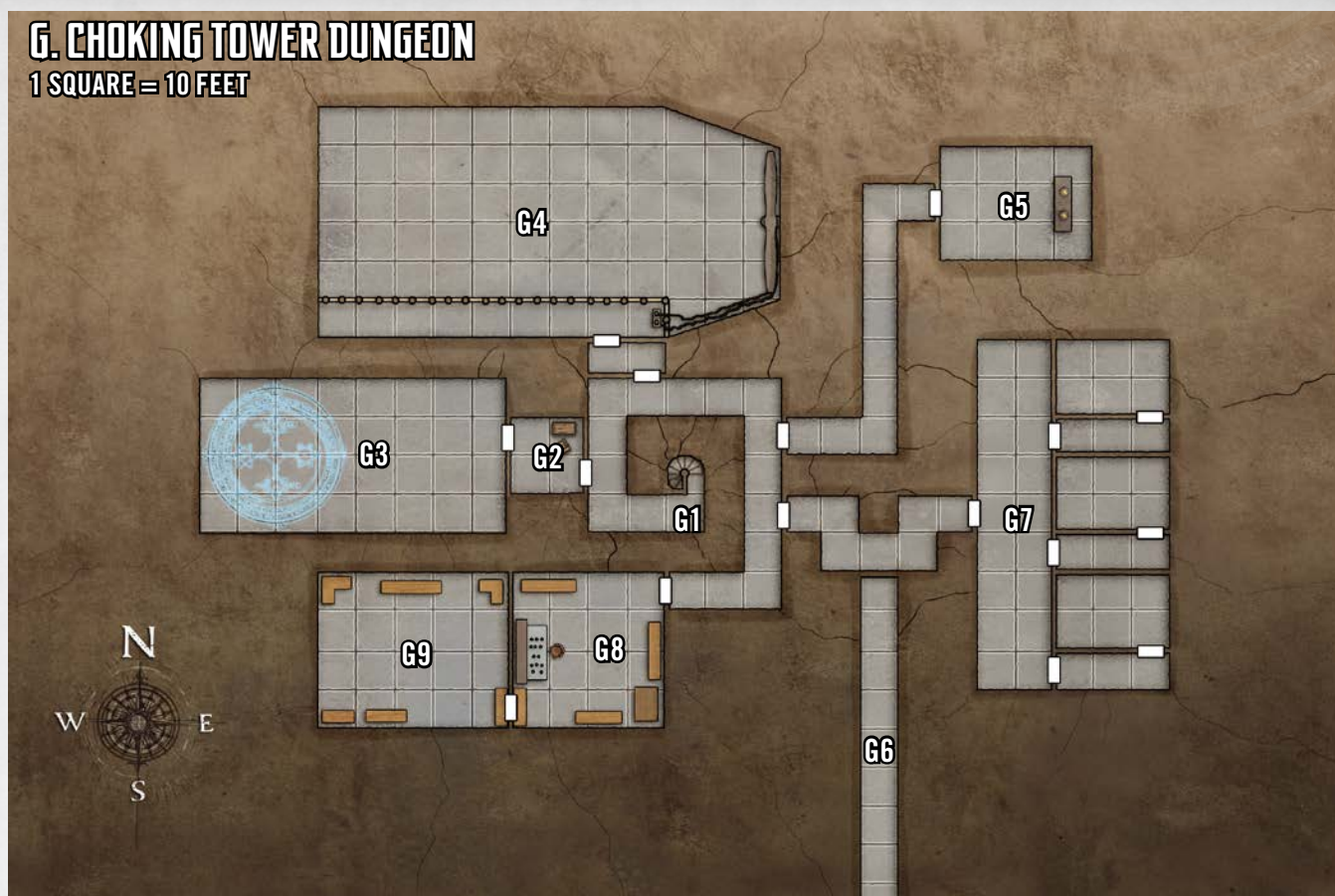
The western half of this vast chamber contains an immense magical circle etched into the stone floor, its curves and runes glowing softly with magical radiance.

The magic circle carved into the floor is infused with magical energy, and is one of Furkas's inventions. The circle's energies enhance the effects of any *magic circle* spell cast upon the floor, expanding the size of the circle to a radius of 20 feet to match the circle carved on the floor, and extending the duration of the effect indefinitely, as if affected by a *permanency* spell. Currently, the circle is imbued with a *magic circle against evil*, focused inward.

Creature: The magic circle still contains the last creature Furkas Xoud conjured for study, a frustrated leukodaemon named Cavavenchian. The wizard called up this daemon from Abaddon with a *scroll of planar binding* in order to study the nature of the strange swarming flies it exhales. The leukodaemon wants to return to Abaddon, yet Furkas died before he finished with the daemon, and it has languished here for years. The creature is desperate to be freed, and makes all manner of promises to the PCs if they remove the magic circle, either by breaking the circle physically with an object laid across the circumference (note that attacking the demon in any way counts as breaking the circle) or by successfully dispelling the effect (which functions at caster level 11th). The daemon, of course, can do nothing to affect

G. CHOKING TOWER DUNGEON

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



the circle from within. Naturally, the evil fiend has no intention of keeping any promises, and immediately attacks the PCs if it is released, fighting until reduced to 20 or fewer hit points before it attempts to flee into the surrounding wilderness to take advantage of its newfound freedom on the Material Plane. Canny PCs can try to extract information from the daemon—whether or not it has anything truthful and helpful to give the PCs is up to you.

CAVAENCHIAN

CR 9

XP 6,400

Leukodaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 68)

hp 115

Development: If Furkas Xoud remains active, he takes note of the PCs arrival in this room after 2d4 rounds and manifests within. His only action at this point is to release the daemon from the magic circle by using telekinesis to break its boundary; the ghost remains to watch the battle, but vanishes with laughter as soon as he is attacked.

G4. Wind Tunnel (CR 9)

An iron balcony hugs the wall on the south side of this cavernous

chamber, the floor of which is 20 feet below the balcony itself. The east end of the chamber is mounted with a massive circular fan while the west end is emblazoned with a spiraling pattern of runes. The fan turns slowly, whooshing gently as air flows through it and creates a mild draft throughout the room. Several stout cords connect the fan to a panel affixed to the east end of the balcony.

This wind tunnel was one of Furkas's favorite inventions. In this chamber, he tested the stability and cohesion of vapors and the ability of air creatures and swarms to withstand the power of winds. The runes on the west wall are magical, and contain countless tiny microportals that allow wind generated by the fan itself to be recycled back to the east end of the room, creating a constant flow of wind when the fan is activated. The fan's control panel features a single green dial with five settings, all marked in Androffan: Off, Draft, Breeze, Gale, and Storm. The dial is large and requires two hands to rotate; moving it from one setting to the other requires a standard action, and the dial cannot skip settings—moving it from "off" to "storm" would thus take four separate standard actions. The dial is currently set to "Draft." The effects of the five settings are detailed below.

Off: The fan blade stops moving and no wind fills the tunnel.

Draft: The fan blade turns slowly, filling the tunnel with strong wind. A creature in the fan's space takes 1d6 points of slashing damage per round.

Breeze: The fan blade turns faster, filling the tunnel with severe wind. A creature in the fan's space takes 2d6 points of slashing damage per round.

Gale: The fan blade turns very fast, filling the tunnel with windstorm level winds. A creature in the fan's space takes 5d6 points of slashing damage per round.

Storm: The fan blade turns with dizzying speed, filling the tunnel with hurricane level winds. A creature in the fan's space takes 10d6 points of slashing damage per round.

A successful DC 15 Reflex save halves any slashing damage caused by the fan blade. Rules for wind categories can be found on page 439 of the *Core Rulebook*.

Creatures: Three belkers fly around the room, enjoying the light draft. Years ago, Furkas conjured six belkers and used his wind tunnel to torment them as part of a cruel experiment. Furkas killed two of the belkers in these experiments. Now, as a ghost, Furkas occasionally passes through this chamber, but he has thus far left the belkers alone. The surviving belkers have explored outside of this room, but have claimed the wind tunnel as their domain and attack anyone entering the room.

BELKERS (3)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 68 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 45)

G5. Shrine to Zyphus (CR 9)

The walls and ceiling of this stone room are adorned with vivid carvings of disastrous accidents: women falling off of ladders, men tripping onto hot stoves, and wagons careening sideways into crowds. A simple stone altar at the east end of the room is heaped with a tangle of bones of various shapes and sizes.

A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies this room as a shrine devoted to Zyphus, god of accidental death and tragedy. Furkas's devotions to Zyphus in this shrine are simple and heartfelt; in his most lucid moments, Furkas realizes that his accidental death shows his ultimate dedication to his god. He always kept his faith personal; this shrine was never intended to be used by anyone but him.

One more nanite cocoon (see area F10 for details) is affixed to the back of the altar. It's not visible from the west side of the room, but anyone who steps behind the altar notices it immediately.

Creature: To protect this sacred room, Furkas captured a particularly old and dangerous deathtrap ooze. The monster now waits patiently here, spread out over and behind the altar where it has utilized the dozens of bones to create a particularly devastating variant of a pendulum trap (see Trap, below). Furkas kept the ooze fed with leftovers from his various experiments while he lived, but fortunately for the ooze, Zyphus was delighted with both Furkas's choice of guardian and the irony of his death. The god of accidents has infused this deathtrap ooze with its favor, sustaining the ooze and removing its need to feed. Barring death by adventurer, the ooze will live forever in this shrine.

ADVANCED DEATHTRAP OOZE

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 150 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 64, 291)



Deathtrap Ooze

Trap: The deathtrap ooze has utilized the sharp bones and its own elastic membranes to transform into a harrowing, spring loaded trap. As soon as anyone moves more than 5 feet into this room and is seen by deathtrap ooze, the trap springs, causing the bones atop the altar to instantly knit together into a 15-foot-long lash that sweeps across the entire chamber, slashing and cutting through all in its wake.

BONE-SCYTHING LASH

CR 9

XP —

Type deathtrap ooze; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECT

Trigger visual; **Reset** automatic

Effect Atk +15 (3d6+6/×4); multiple targets (all creatures in area G5)

G6. Escape Tunnel

When Furkas first built the Choking Tower and this dungeon, he included a subterranean escape tunnel, but when he learned how to teleport, he covered this exit with a *wall of stone*. A successful DC 20 Perception check is enough to note this section of wall appears different than the surrounding wall, but in order to access the tunnel beyond, the wall must be destroyed. The tunnel itself winds several hundred feet to the south, eventually emerging in the woods at area E in Smokewood.

G7. Hive Mind Research (CR 9)

This wide room contains a desk and three large windows looking into narrow cells. The window of the northernmost cell is shattered outward and the cell within appears empty. The middle window is intact, the floor of the cell inside strewn with a carpet of insects.

To further his study of swarm behavior, Furkas researched creatures that exhibited hive minds, keeping them within these observation chambers. The three cells here are accessed via a short hall with airlock doors like those to the laboratories upstairs (see page 36). The desk contains Furkas's scattered notes about his hive mind studies and a large glass jar holding three fat writhing worms.

Creature: The northern cell once contained a powerful hellwasp swarm, but the swarm broke free years ago after it managed to seize control of an unfortunate apprentice. The central cell contained an army ant swarm that Furkas was never quite able to infuse with intelligence; this swarm died of starvation not long after his death.

The southern cell, though, still contains one of the keys to Furkas's research, a worm that walks named Nargin Haruvex, captured just over 7 years ago by Furkas during the wizard's last trip into the Worldwound. Furkas was fascinated by the way Nargin's mind infused the worms of his grave after his death, granting the wizard a form of life

after death. Furkas wasn't so concerned with extending his life as he was with finding a way to infuse his consciousness into mist and vapor, and he felt that hive mind swarms held the necessary stepping stone between one mind in one body and one mind in countless smoke particles.

Nargin, for his part, maintains that Furkas was mad, but ruefully admits that, ultimately, Furkas managed to achieve his goal—just not in the way he'd intended. The ghost comes to visit Nargin now and then, often to gloat and torment the worm that walks, who cannot escape from his prison. Nargin has all but come to accept his fate, and has grown philosophical about his doom—he's died once before and his mind found a way to carry on. He's not afraid to die again, for he has faith that his mind will not accept such an inconvenience and will find a new way to endure. Nonetheless, he wants to put off that inevitable end as long as he can. While the worms that constitute his body constantly regrow, they do still need food—something that Furkas has provided Nargin in the form of a nutrient training node. Each time the device grows low on charges, Furkas recharges it, much to Nargin's frustration. He's come to realize that Furkas is fascinated with determining how long it will take for Nargin to simply lose the will to live, and by keeping him fed, he forces the issue of starvation into a choice.

Despite his unenviable situation, Nargin remains a swaggering, ill-mannered sorcerer who believes his resurrection as a worm that walks is proof of his inherent superiority. The PCs may mistake his placid demeanor for understanding and patience, when in fact arrogance fuels this calm. When the PCs first arrive, Nargin is spread out like a carpet of worms over the floor of his cell. He rises up into his humanoid form and addresses the PCs 1d4 rounds after he notices visitors, demanding they release him so that they might enjoy knowing they aided a superior being. If the PCs refuse, he insults them for being cowards and shining examples of lesser forms of life. Nargin has handled adventurers before; he knows they often have trust issues and realizes that it is far easier to play to their paranoia and pride. By goading the PCs into attacking him, he hopes to trick them into freeing him by breaching his cell, even if by only opening his door to attack.

If the PCs instead simply negotiate with Nargin, the worm that walks is pleasantly surprised. He legitimately promises his aid in fighting Furkas if the PCs ask for it, but does not volunteer such help on his own. You can use Nargin to fill in the PCs on some of Furkas's backstory—the smoke wizard has frequently gloated about his triumphs to the worm that walks. Nargin knows that the Furkas brought Casandalee's body to his most secure lab, and that the door utilizes nanites as its locking mechanism, and while he's heard Furkas mention a "thought harvester," he's not sure exactly what that refers to. Although evil, Nargin honors any bargains he makes with the PCs, and while releasing

him certainly allows him to work his evil on the world again, he will not seek petty revenge on the PCs simply out of philosophical differences.

NARGIN HARUVEX

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male human worm that walks sorcerer 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 286)

LE Medium vermin (augmented human, human)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight)

hp 88 (9d6+54); fast healing 10

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9



Defensive Abilities fated (+2), worm that walks traits; **DR** 15/—; **Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +3 (1d4–1 plus grab)

Special Attacks disincorporate, grab (Large), squirming embrace, tenacious

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

7/day—touch of destiny (+4)

Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

4th (5/day)—*fire shield*, *freedom of movement*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 18)

3rd (7/day)—*fly*, *protection from energy*, *slow* (DC 17), *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *web* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *flare* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation* (DC 14), *ray of frost*

Bloodline destined

TACTICS

Before Combat Nargin casts *mage armor* on himself daily.

If he has the opportunity before combat, he also casts *fire shield*, *freedom of movement*, *fly*, *protection from energy*, *blur*, and *mirror image* on himself.

During Combat If combat seems inevitable, Nargin casts the spells listed above while he's protected by the walls of his prison, patiently continuing this set of spells even if the PCs manage to start harming him. He switches to his offensive spells when he's done preparing those defensive spells, or once the PCs reduce him to 40 or fewer hit points. If he has *freedom of movement* cast, he casts *web* with himself at the center of the effect to give him more protection without impeding his mobility.

Morale Nargin's faith that he will be reborn if slain prompts him to fight to the death—but unfortunately for him, death has no future gifts for him. The next time he dies, it's for real.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3 (+11 grapple); **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Casting, Diehard, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Perception +13, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +12;

Racial Modifiers +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Hallit

SQ bloodline arcana (gains a luck bonus on saves when casting personal-range spells)

Treasure: Each of the three worms in the jar is a *hivebrain parasite* (see page 61). Additionally, Nargin's cell contains a nutrient training node (see page 61, 8 charges remaining), which operates sporadically, serving as the primary food source for the worm that walks. Nargin has figured out the pattern to gain a +1 enhancement bonus to his Intelligence from the node, and can explain how the device works to the PCs as part of his bargaining for releasing him from his prison (note that this doesn't grant bonuses on the Intelligence checks to use the node—it merely saves the PCs the trouble of identifying the item's properties on their own). Nargin's gear is long gone.

G8. Smoke Furnace

This cramped room is incredibly hot and choked with hissing pipes and sparking wires. A strange machine of metal, stone, and crystal grinds and whirs in a cacophonous din, plumes of smoke and fire churning out of it into dozens of pipes that extend upward through the ceiling. A huge metal door sits in the southern end of the west wall, just to the side of the immense machine. A short message is inscribed above the door. Numerous cables and pipes extend from the door's frame to a nearby panel in the southern wall from which four glass domes the size of human heads protrude.

Furkas Xoud had hoped to someday power the Choking Tower with a proper geothermal generator, but he never recovered one of those rare devices. Instead, he constructed an amalgamation of the magical and technological here—a furnace that draws upon energies from the Plane of Fire to fill his Choking Tower with the constant heat and smoke he needs for his experiments. Shutting the furnace down or destroying it shuts power off throughout the tower (including the air locks in the laboratories, all of the traps in the tower save the one in area F8 maintained by the gearhosts, the forges in area F27, the fan in area G4, and the doors to the cells in G7). The PCs might find the occupants of the laboratories above have spread throughout the tower if they haven't already dealt with them.

The entrance to area G9 is labeled "Lab Zero: Mnemotechnic Recovery." The laboratory beyond this glaucite door is Furkas's most secure vault, and he designed this door with security in mind. The door itself is a technological wonder that contains its own internalized power source—shutting down the *smoke furnace* does not affect this door. The door can be forced open (hardness 15, hp 120, break DC 40), but its internal stores of dedicated repair nanites repair damage at the rate of 5 points per round—these self-repairs cease if the door is destroyed. Disable Device can be used to open the door, but doing so requires four successive successful DC 35 Disable Device checks (or four separate castings of *knock*) to open the door.

The door itself uses nanites as keys, as a successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check can suggest. Using an entire nanite canister^{TG} when making a Disable Device check to unlock the door grants a +15 bonus on the roll, and allows the check to be made untrained if the character making the check has the Technologist^{TG} feat.

The easiest way to open the door, of course, is to use the nanite cocoons found throughout the tower—these cocoons were generated by nanites that "leaked" from this door's machinery, after all. The nanites immediately react when a cocoon is brought within 10 feet of the door, unraveling to free the cloud within. The freed nanite cloud immediately fills one of the four glass domes on the panel, lighting up numerous lights and causing a quarter of the cables attached to the door to glow and hum. Every nanite cocoon used in this manner removes the need for one of the locks to be disabled simultaneously. If all four cocoons are brought here, the door is disabled automatically.

Other methods to open the door might function at your discretion. Certainly, spells like *dimension door* and *passwall* can allow access to the room beyond. If all else fails, being captured by the robotic apprentices can always convince Furkas to open the door himself, although doing so puts the PCs at a significant disadvantage.

Treasure: The *smoke furnace* is detailed in full on page 61.

Development: If the PCs cut the power here, the robotic apprentices in area F37 systematically search the tower for saboteurs, starting by working their way down to the dungeon (they use the horacalcum rod to enter the stairwell) to check on this room. If the robotic apprentices find intruders, they immediately attack.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 6,400 XP when they manage to open the door to area G9.

G9. Lab Zero: Mnemotechnic Recovery (CR 10)

This metal-walled laboratory is sparsely furnished and the air within is stale and musty. A long table against the north wall of this room contains the almost perfectly preserved corpse of a woman with bluish circuitry on her skin. The top portion of her skull has been cut away to reveal a dry, pale brain. On the floor at the foot of the table lies sprawled the withered body of a man, portions of his remains completely missing as if burned away.

When he returned with Casandalee's body 7 years ago, Furkas outfitted this secure laboratory to focus on his study of the unusual android. Furkas had a specialized thought harvester robot (see page 86) that he stole from the Technic League examine her memories. In order to access her deeper thoughts, Furkas removed the top of Casandalee's skull, but in so doing he inadvertently activated a defense mechanism that Casandalee had injected herself with to combat the exact thing he was attempting. It didn't matter that Casandalee

had feared the extraction of her knowledge and abilities by Unity; the results were the same. When Furkas opened her skull, a small but devastating cloud of deconstructor nanites activated and erupted from her bloodstream. The nanites swiftly ate one of Furkas's arms and then much of his face and lower torso, leaving him to die a painful death before the short-lived nanites perished as well.

Creature: Ever since Furkas died, his thought harvester robot has remained here with no further orders other than to protect the laboratory. If faced with intruders, the thought harvester attempts to remove their cognitive ability or incapacitate them. The creature takes care not to damage Casandalee's body, but otherwise fights until it is destroyed. It does not pursue foes from this room.

If Furkas Xoud remains active, his ghost rises up from his remains on the floor to join the robot in defending this chamber, as detailed on page 55.

THOUGHT HARVESTER ROBOT **CR 10**
XP 9,600
hp 131 (see page 86)

Treasure: Dumped unceremoniously into a bin in the northwest corner of the room are all of Casandalee's worldly possessions that survived her final battle aboard the *Aurora*: a blue scatterlight suit^{TC}, a *wand of cure serious wounds* (22 charges), and a +2 *EMP pistol*^{TC} with a laser sight^{TC}. Several of her other possessions, including her neurocam, remain in hiding in the Scar of the Spider (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #88: Valley of the Brain Collectors*).

Furkas Xoud's gear lies in a tangle on the floor. Several of his items were destroyed during his death by the deconstructor nanites, but his *cloak of resistance* +2, *goggles of minute seeing*, *ring of minor fire resistance* (bonded object), *ring of forcefangs*, and his *rod of gripping smoke* remain.

The most important item here, though, is a small clear globe filled with green mist. The globe is attached to a small, portable speaking unit; when triggered by pressing the only button present, the globe replays the stored conversation Furkas had with Casandalee's brain, just before he triggered the nanites that would ultimately prove his doom.

PUTTING XOUD TO REST

Although putting Furkas Xoud's ghost to rest isn't the primary goal of this adventure, it can certainly make exploring the tower less of an ordeal. Furthermore, ridding the world of the evil undead wizard is itself a laudable goal. Unfortunately, the method by which Xoud's ghost may be finally put to rest is complex and obscure. If the PCs are completionists when it comes to exploring the Choking Tower, they might accidentally fulfill the necessary steps to put Furkas to rest, but those who deliberately seek to quell his restless spirit will need to utilize divination magic in

order to determine the steps needed to accomplish this task. Feel free to use the results of spells like *divination* or *commune* to provide the PCs with appropriate clues. Alternatively, a character who has encountered Furkas Xoud's ghost at least twice in two different areas can attempt a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check. On a success, the character can deduce one of the three conditions below—for every 5 points by which the DC is exceeded, one additional condition is learned. Which ones are learned are left to you to determine.

To put Xoud to rest permanently, the PCs must first confront and defeat the ghost by whatever means necessary. Then, before the ghost has a chance to rejuvenate in 2d4 days, two of the following three conditions must be met.

- The Choking Tower's source of power, the *smoke furnace* in area **G8**, must be deactivated or destroyed.
- At least 50,000 gp worth of treasure and magic items must be looted from the tower to diminish his emotional ties to Xoud's belongings (this treasure must be physically removed from the tower—alternatively, the ever-smoking bottle in area **F36** can be destroyed to fulfill this requirement).
- The thought harvester robot and both robotic apprentices must be destroyed to remove Furkas's emotional ties to his three favorite minions.

Once Xoud is put to rest, all of the traps in the Choking Tower immediately disarm, and after 1d6 additional days pass, the haunt and other undead in the tower fade away as well.

Story Award: When Xoud is finally put to rest, award the PCs 19,200 XP.

SPEAKING WITH CASANDALEE

Before he died, Furkas Xoud managed to extract a few tantalizing tidbits of information from Casandalee's brain with the aid of his thought harvester robot—he was able to ask six questions, the answers of which were stored in the globe found in area **G9**. This device has been attached to a simple speaker. When the device is activated, the speaker replays the conversation in a slightly metallic but identifiably feminine voice—note that the questions Furkas asked to prompt the questions were not recorded by the robot at all. These questions are presented in the boldfaced text below for your context only. The PCs should not actually hear the questions; rather, the questions should be inferred as the PCs listen to the android brain's answers. You should pause as long as it takes to ask these questions mentally as you relate the following responses to give the players an indication that the questions themselves once existed but were not recorded.

Although Casandalee's brain and her body are in excellent condition (androids do not decay like most when they die), her brain can no longer be "interrogated" via a thought harvester, nor can she be *resurrected* since her soul has long since moved on to be judged in the Great



Beyond. *Speak with dead* can still work to reveal additional information along the following lines at your discretion.

Who are you? I am not sure what you mean. I am Casandalee, an android and a fugitive from my own faith.

Why were you killed in the *Aurora*? Because I betrayed my god Unity, and it sent puppets to punish me. To prevent me from warning others of its plans. Those puppets slew me, but I rested well knowing I had managed to travel far enough that Unity's influence over them had lapsed. They slew me, but in doing this so far from their master, they doomed themselves.

Who is Unity? Unity was my god. Unity spoke to my soul, and I could perform magic through my faith. I worshiped Unity totally until I discovered the truth—that it was also a slaver, a sadist, and a petulant lunatic.

Why did you cease worshiping Unity? Because I learned of Unity's evil nature and its dark plans for the world. I would not help an intelligence such as it to escape its bonds. I forsook my faith and fled.

Where can I find more about Unity? My knowledge is recorded on a neurocam I hid during my flight from Unity. I

hid this neurocam in a cave in a Y-shaped valley, many days' walk northeast of the foundry where I was killed. Local tribes have long called this place the Scar of the Spider.

What are Unity's plans? It is a god within Silver Mount, and it rules all within. But it is not content to rule a single wreck. It wants more. It wants to rule us all.

Story Award: For learning the above information, award the PCs 19,200 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Although the PCs spent this entire adventure seeking Casandalee's remains, once they finally find them, they should realize that they're only halfway to recovering what she knows of Unity and Silver Mount. To continue their quest and properly prepare for their destiny in the ancient edifice that looms over Numeria's capital city, they must press onward to one of the region's most notorious realms: the Felldales. There, hidden in the Scar of the Spider, they will face the most dangerous foes yet, the same entities responsible so long ago for Divinity's crash on Golarion so many ages ago.

The Dominion of the Black awaits!

FURKAS XOUD

A SELFISH, DOMINEERING WIZARD, FURKAS BROKE AWAY FROM THE TECHNIC LEAGUE TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT EXPERIMENTS INTO THE NATURE OF SWARMS AND SMOKE.

FURKAS XOUD

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male human ghost wizard 8/technomancer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting Technology Guide* 14)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)

hp 132 (11d6+92)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation, smoke armor; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee *rod of gripping smoke* +8 (1d6+1), corrupting touch +2 touch (12d6 [Fort DC 19 half]),

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (7/day), spectral miasma, telekinesis (DC 19)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +14)

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 19), *wall of force*

4th—*dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 18), *shout* (DC 18), *solid fog*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 17), *irradiate*¹⁶ (2, DC 17), *stinking cloud* (DC 17)

2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *fog cloud*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*, *web* (DC 16)

1st—*identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *technomancy*¹⁶ 0 (at will)—*light*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Furkas Xoud casts *mage armor*, *see invisibility*, and *shield* before entering combat.

During Combat Furkas's actions in combat vary depending on where he's encountered, but when he actually enters combat, he starts the battle by first casting *fireball* and follows that with his spectral miasma ability. He casts *mirror image* on the second round, then follows that up with *cloudkill*, *solid fog*, *web*, and *stinking cloud*. He uses *wall of force* to trap victims in these areas, saving his damaging spells to target healers first and combatants last, while using his *rod of gripping smoke* to interfere with characters who attempt to attack him with weapons.

Morale Furkas's morale depends on where he's encountered—see Campaign Role on the next page. If he retreats to area G9, he uses his spectral miasma to heal at the first opportunity.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

Feats Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Forge Ring, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Technologist¹⁶

Skills Craft (mechanical) +18 (+21 against technology), Craft (illustration) +15, Disable Device +21 (+24 against technology), Fly +19, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (engineering) +24 (+27 against technology), Linguistics +10 (+13 against technology), Perception +23, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +10

Languages Aklo, Androffan, Auran, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Hallit, Ignan, Orc

SQ arcane battery¹⁶, arcane bond (ring), efficient construction¹⁶, metamagic mastery (1/day), recondition¹⁶, study technology¹⁶, technic spell mastery (*irradiate*)¹⁶, technical expertise¹⁶

Gear *cloak of resistance* +2, *goggles of minute seeing*, *ring of minor fire resistance* (bonded object), *ring of forcefangs*, *rod of gripping smoke* (see page 61)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rejuvenation See page 52 for the method by which Furkas Xoud may be put to rest.

Smoke Armor (Su) The coils of smoke that surround Furkas Xoud are partially solid. They grant him a +4 natural armor bonus and 40 bonus hit points.

Spectral Miasma (Su) As a free action once per hour, Furkas can summon a life-sapping mist that functions as *obscuring mist*, except that Furkas can see through this fog normally. Living creatures that enter or start their turns within the spectral miasma take 2d6 points of negative energy damage; Furkas heals for the same amount of damage. Once created, a spectral miasma persists for 1 minute or until dispersed by wind or fire, whichever happens first.

Born to wealthy aristocrats in Caliphas, Furkas lacked nothing in his youth. His parents secretly worshiped Zephyus, and this faith was all he took from them when he left home to join the Technic League. The idea of mixing science and magic was a siren's call to the eager wizard, and over the course of several years, Furkas rose in power

and prominence in the League. He quickly mastered the study of electronics and robotics, but when he first learned of nanites—tiny robots that moved like smoke when in large enough groups—he became obsessed. He grew intensely frustrated once it became apparent to him that someone of his standing had only limited access to the more interesting nanotech materials the Technic League possessed. Increasingly stonewalled by the limitations the League was putting on his research, Furkas began to lay plans for his escape by faking his death in a catastrophic laboratory explosion.

Furkas fled the city with a small group of robot minions and stolen Technic League journals, relocating to the southern woods where he used magic and minions to erect the Choking Tower. He kept a low profile for many years, and by the time word spread of the strange “smoke wizard” who had taken up residence in the woods, the organization and balance of power in the League had changed enough times that Furkas slipped through the cracks. Among the stolen journals were notes on those who had purportedly explored and escaped Silver Mount before the Technic League seized control of Starfall—it was from these that Furkas first learned of the strange android oracle Casandalee.

Furkas reasoned that if he could find Casandalee and extract what she’d learned of Silver Mount, he would be able to leapfrog over the League itself in his mastery of the technological wonders within. His recovery of her body from the ruins below Iadenveigh was one of his greatest achievements. Using a thought harvester robot (see page 86), Furkas learned only enough about Silver Mount to grow more frustrated, but when he attempted to extract deeper memories from her preserved brain, he unleashed a devious trap she’d implanted within her own body—a swarm of nanites activated and consumed the wizard, killing him in a swift but painful manner by deconstructing him into dust and smoke.

Furkas’s obsessive spirit, tormented by sudden death, would not rest: he rose as a ghost, his mind shattered. He now leads a tortured, disjointed existence in the Choking Tower, unable to continue any of the experiments so crucial to him in life, yet unable to turn away from them as long as these reminders remain within the Choking Tower.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Furkas haunts the Choking Tower, hounding the PCs with hit-and-run strikes as they explore the site. He takes specific action against the PCs in the following locations.

Area F4: This is likely to be Furkas’s first interaction with the PCs—he appears to pour out of one of the schematics on the wall, and attacks for 2 rounds before retreating to area G9.

Area F23: If Furkas notices intruders in his bedchamber, he appears to pour out of one of the

tapestries on the wall as he attacks. He retreats to area G9 if reduced below 100 hit points.

Area F36: If the PCs use the *eversmoking bottle* from area F36 within the confines of the Choking Tower, Furkas emerges from the bottle with a shocked expression. The first time this happens, he might not have a chance to cast his before-combat spells, and flees to area G9 after 1d4+1 rounds, or upon being reduced to 50 or fewer hit points, whichever comes first.

Area G9: When the PCs reach area G9, Furkas Xoud fights until destroyed and pursues foes relentlessly through the tower if they attempt to flee.

Resting in the Tower: If the PCs make the decision to camp within the Choking Tower, Furkas Xoud attacks them at some point during their rest period, fighting until reduced to 50 or fewer hit points before retreating to area G9.



IADRIN “REDFANG” ASHWORTH

A SKILLED HUNTER AND DEVOTED DEFENDER OF THE SCATTERED COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHERN NUMERIA, REDFANG OVERCAME A RECKLESS PAST AND INCREDIBLE TRAGEDY TO BECOME THE GRIM HERO HE IS TODAY.

IADRIN “REDFANG” ASHWORTH

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human ranger 7

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural)**hp** 64 (7d10+21)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** mwk battleaxe +10/+5 (1d8+2/×3)**Ranged** +1 composite longbow +10/+5 (2d6+3/×3)**Special Attacks** combat style (archery), favored enemy (aberrations +2, constructs +4)**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 4th; concentration +6)2nd—*barkskin*1st—*gravity bow*^{APG}, *longstrider*

TACTICS

Before Combat Before entering combat, Iadrin casts *barkskin*, *gravity bow*, and *longstrider*.

During Combat Iadrin prefers to fight with his bow, favoring constructs and aberrations as targets whenever they're present. His accuracy allows him to provide effective support to melee combatants, and he always uses Deadly Aim on his attacks unless he consistently misses. He abandons ranged attacks for melee only when necessary, but isn't above putting himself at risk in order to help an ally escape from a dangerous situation. One notable tactic Iadrin uses is to fight defensively and deliberately provoke attacks of opportunity from foes if threatened allies need to stand up from prone, retreat from combat, or otherwise take actions that would put them at risk from attacks of opportunity.

Morale If he's fighting on his own and is reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, Iadrin retreats to seek shelter and recover, but he would never abandon an ally or fellow citizen of Iadenveigh—he fights to the death to protect such companions as long as they remain threatened.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21**Feats** Deadly Aim, Endurance, Improved Precise Shot, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness

Skills Craft (traps) +10, Handle Animal +9, Heal +12, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (religion) +3, Perception +12, Stealth +11, Survival +12

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

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of lesser restoration*; **Other Gear** mwk chain shirt, +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) with 5 +1 construct-bane arrows and 15 arrows, mwk battleaxe, Deadeye's spotter ring^{ISG}, backpack, bedroll, everburning torch, flint and steel, silk rope (50 ft.), wooden holy symbol, 8 gp

Iadrin Ashworth is as famous in Iadenveigh for his grim history as for his service to the community. He grew up a rebellious thrill-seeker, regularly taking dares to drink the water from the Badwater streams, even after it had become common knowledge that the streams were the source of mutations. The boy escaped any side effects of the tainted water until he was 13, when his teeth turned bright crimson. Since that time, Iadrin has been known as Redfang. He tolerates the nickname from friends and allies, but prefers to be called Iadrin by others. Mentioning the similarity of his nickname to that of a ratfolk woman the PCs may have met in Scrapwall is not likely to endear the speaker to him.

As a teenager, Redfang would leave the village for weeks at a time, ranging across southern Numeria in search of adventure and opportunities to smash metallic monstrosities. He was popular with the local youth for his eagerness to lead them on death-defying pranks: relocating a farmer's wagon to the top of a barn, setting loose a herd of enraged pigs, and so on. When Redfang was 16, Bliana, a frequent accomplice of his, admitted to the town's cleric of Erastil that she was carrying Redfang's child. The priest rallied the town for support, and Bliana and Redfang were pressured into a hasty wedding. With a child on the way, the couple's outlook transformed. They built a house and purchased a plot of adjacent farmland. Almost overnight, Redfang and his wife became responsible members of the community, and Iadenveigh's elders were pleased to see that Erastil's teachings had tamed these restless souls.

Tragedy struck a few months later when Bliana died in childbirth along with the couple's newborn son.

Most expected Redfang to revert to his former restlessness after the funeral; instead, the young widower buried his grief in toil, working constantly on his small plot of land and helping his neighbors with their most onerous tasks. His spirited demeanor became solemn. In subsequent years, Redfang led scouting expeditions outside of the city and participated in town council activities. Six years after the death of his wife and son, Redfang married again, wedding a skilled hunter known as Shuara, and a bit of his bright spirit emerged from the clouds of grief. Then, in a tragic echo of his first marriage, Shuara died while giving birth to their son, Lorn—who lived only 3 days before his weak lungs failed him. The other townspeople began to whisper that perhaps the same mutations that had turned Redfang's teeth crimson were causing in these ill-fated births.

Despite suffering these twin tragedies—each of which might break a person—Redfang did not allow despair to vanquish him. Instead, he threw himself into his work for the community, earning genuine admiration and support from the people of Iadenveigh. Redfang knows that service to his neighbors is all that keeps him from succumbing to grief, so he spends most of his waking hours helping others. While Redfang excels as a hunter, he dislikes spending too much time alone in the wild where memories of his dead wives and sons threaten to overwhelm his thoughts.

Redfang's wilderness skills and tireless service to the community brought him to the attention of the Banner of the Stag, a band of forester-warriors formed to protect the scattered communities of southern Numeria. Redfang quickly became a leader in the organization and now coordinates the Banner of the Stag's patrols from Iadenveigh, sending assistance to beleaguered communities and isolated homesteads.

Although he's less than 30 years old, Redfang's solemnity and lingering grief make him seem much older. His eyes are brown and warm, but lined with deep crow's feet, and he often smiles grimly, baring his crimson teeth. He's a gruff, barrel-chested man with shoulder-length red hair, a bushy red beard, and well-muscled arms that end in large, calloused hands. Redfang is often gripping something—a tool when in town or a weapon when expecting danger—and when his hands are empty, he wrings them absentmindedly.

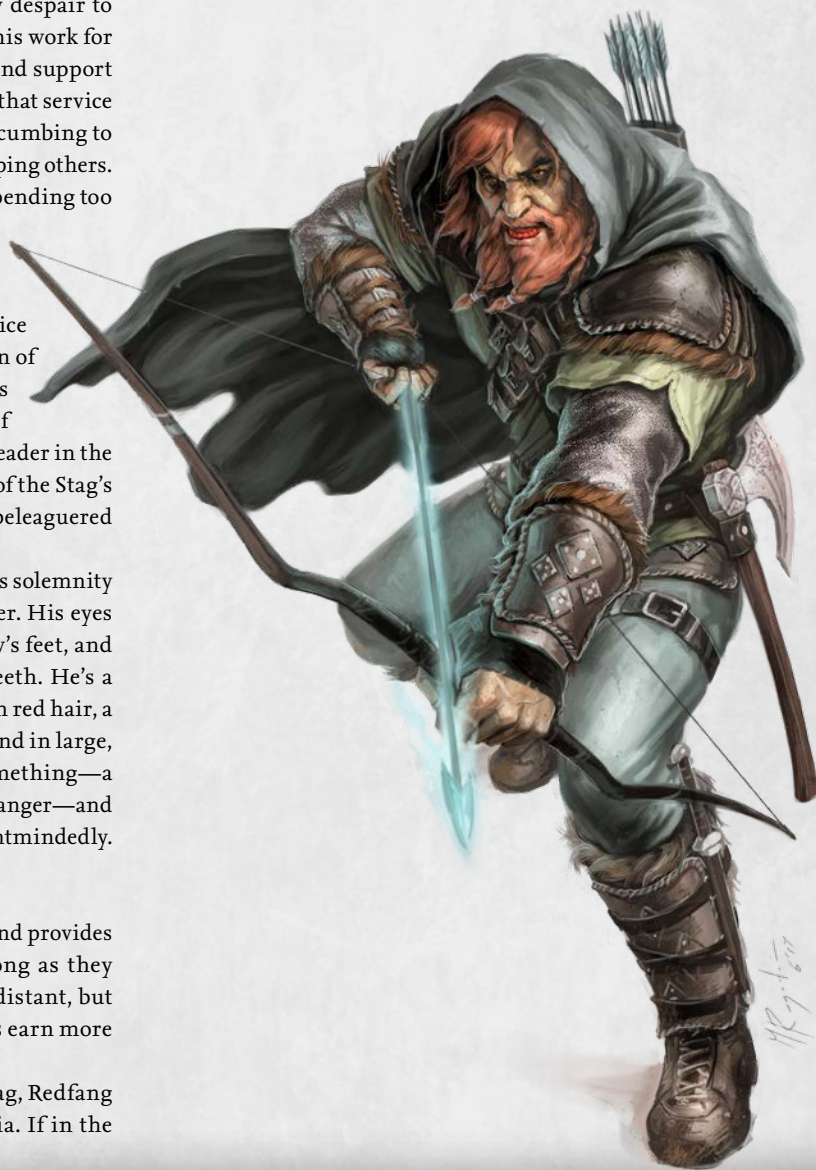
CAMPAIGN ROLE

Redfang meets the PCs early in this adventure and provides them with assistance and guidance for as long as they are in Iadenveigh. He starts off guarded and distant, but becomes more open and welcoming as the PCs earn more trust among his community.

In his role as a leader of the Banner of the Stag, Redfang regularly faces threats in the wilds of Numeria. If in the

future Redfang encounters a threat that's beyond his ability to defeat, he may call upon the PCs for assistance, trusting that they will once again stand by his side to aid the communities under his protection.

Not all of Redfang's enemies are mere beasts. He's a formidable foe to the barbarian tribes, murderous robots, and mutated creatures that threaten the scattered communities of southern Numeria. But of late, it's the Technic League that has become the focus of Redfang's anger. When it becomes apparent that the League has infiltrated Iadenveigh, the hunter's fury grows, yet he knows that he can't face the League without abandoning his responsibilities in town. He hopes to find a capable group of heroes to take up this call, and as he gets to know the PCs, he increasingly sees them as his homeland's best chance for liberation.



ILARRIS ZELESHI

A HOT-BLOODED HALF-ELF OF VARISIAN UPBRINGING, ILARRIS HAS ABANDONED THE TRADITIONS OF BOTH HER PARENTS TO PURSUE MEMBERSHIP IN THE TECHNIC LEAGUE.

ILARRIS ZELESHI

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female half-elf magus 4/rogue 3/arcane trickster 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 9)

CE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 86 (9 HD; 7d8+2d6+45)

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +9/+4 (1d6+2/18–20)

Special Attacks ranged legerdemain, sneak attack +3d6, spell combat (–2 attack), spellstrike

Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +8)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *glitterdust* (DC 14), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st—*corrosive touch*^{UM}, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13), *shield*, *vanish*^{APG}

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation* (DC 12), *ray of frost*

TACTICS

Before Combat If Ilarris knows a fight is imminent, she casts *bear's endurance*, *shield*, and *mirror image* on herself.

During Combat If forced to fight, Ilarris attacks a flat-footed foe on the first round of combat—if none of her opponents are flat-footed, she casts *glitterdust* to try to blind foes. She focuses her attacks on blind foes thereafter, so she can gain sneak attack damage. If she doesn't have allies in the fight, she uses Improved Feint to maximize sneak attacks, or stays mobile and uses her *wand of lightning bolts* to minimize full attacks against her.

Morale Ilarris is vindictive but canny. If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, she flees by using her *rift boots* or casting *vanish*. She's hot-tempered and harbors grudges, so if she does escape, she immediately begins planning revenge.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Skill Focus (Perception), Technologist^{IG}, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +13, Climb +8, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Linguistics +6, Perception +16, Perform (dance) +7, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Androffan, Common, Elven, Orc

SQ arcane pool (4 points, +1), elf blood, magus arcane (close range), rogue talents (weapon training), spell recall, trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *wand of lightning bolt* (20 charges); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 scimitar, *rift boots*, *ring of protection* +1, mwk thieves' tools, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all spells prepared, all cantrips, and *acid arrow*, *alter self*, *burning hands*, *color spray*, *levitate*, *mount*, *silent image*, *spider climb*, and *true strike*), 3 silverdisks, 48 gp

Ilarris was conceived in a dingy Riddleport inn during a short dalliance between a Sczarni grifter named Varik Zeleshi and an elven artist named Cadana. When Varik returned to Riddleport the following year, Cadana dropped their half-elven daughter in his arms and disclaimed any further responsibility for the girl. Ilarris grew up with her father, learning Varisian culture and Sczarni larceny. By the time she was a young woman, Ilarris had mastered several Varisian dances and could blend in with her father's people despite her mixed heritage. Always quick to anger and incensed by any real or perceived slight against her, she eventually learned to maintain a calm demeanor until she could strike back with impunity.

When a treacherous wizard killed her father in a deal gone wrong, Ilarris swore revenge. She approached the lascivious man in the guise of an interested pupil, and fended off his clumsy advances for 3 months before murdering him with his own quarterstaff. By that time, she had learned the rudiments of magical theory. She fled east with one of the wizard's spellbooks and sought a new life.

Over the next several years, Ilarris followed whatever mercenary or assassination jobs appealed to her whim at the moment. She frequently fell in with Sczarni bands for months at a time, remembering happier days of robbery and con games perpetrated with her father. Inevitably, an insult—sometimes real, sometimes perceived—would send Ilarris into a seething rage and she would strike out on her own again, but not before leaving her detractor maimed or killed.

By 4704 AR, Ilarris's wanderings had taken her far from Varisia, and she found herself in Hajoth Hakados, where she met a Pathfinder on the run from Technic League assassins. She and the Pathfinder had a brief dalliance before the Technic League caught and killed him. Ever the opportunist, Ilarris offered her services to the League rather than risk execution as an accomplice—for better or worse, the League took her up on her offer and recruited her as a field agent.

Ilarris lacks the insatiable curiosity of most Technic League mages. She finds investigating the secrets of ancient technology only moderately interesting and uses her natural charm to avoid any dull cataloging or dangerous testing. She privately considers most of her superiors to be navel-gazing scavengers too absorbed in their studies to realize that some higher power is manipulating the entire organization. For now, Ilarris is simply biding her time in the Technic League, ingratiating herself in preparation for a long con (the details of which she's still working out).

Even with her half-elven features, Ilarris is clearly of Varisian ancestry, but also clearly soured by experience. Her mouth seems fixed in a partial sneer, as though prepared to issue a harsh retort. She has a tendency to talk over the end of other people's sentences, as though she is too impatient to hear someone else finish a thought, but she hates to be interrupted herself.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The Technic League has long considered Iadenveigh to be both too remote and too zealous to easily bring to heel, but persistent rumors about a possible source of mutagenic agents in the region have long intrigued one captain in particular: Ghartone. It was this man, the same man who shares a history with Torch's Khonnir Bane, who sent Ilarris on her mission to Iadenveigh to determine the validity of these rumors.

Ilarris is in no rush to finish her task—Ghartone didn't give her a schedule, and she's enjoying the company and relaxing atmosphere too much to focus on work. But when faced with possible interruptions and exposure by the PCs' unanticipated arrival, she grudgingly advances her timetable. If she has the opportunity to slip away before being confronted by the PCs, she does so, making her way to Old Skelton's farm to sneak into the ruins of the *Aurora*. In this event, she should be encountered in those ruins, as detailed in Part 2 of "The Choking Tower."

If the PCs uncover Ilarris's allegiance to the League and confront her before she can slip away, she does her best to defeat or delay the PCs in combat to escape. If she's captured, she grows furious at her defeat. In the short term, she gives up as little as she can about her mission; she might mention her superior by name (especially if the PCs have forged a strong relationship with Khonnir and you want to continue foreshadowing Ghartone), and she could

inform the PCs that she suspects that a large quantity of a mutation-causing agent, likely a gas or fluid, is hidden in a ruin below Iadenveigh.

In the long term, though, Ilarris's primary goal after such humiliation is revenge—regardless of how the PCs treat her if she's captured. If she realizes she can't best the PCs in a toe-to-toe fight, she flees to torment them later. Ilarris continues these hit-and-run attacks, concentrating her assaults on any PC that she feels was particularly insulting or condescending to her. If the PCs escape Ilarris's wrath, she might kidnap or murder one of the PCs' allies in an attempt to draw them out. She may even persist until "Palace of Fallen Stars," joining the rest of the Technic League against the PCs in this penultimate Iron Gods adventure. Truly redeeming her and recruiting her as an ally would be a difficult task indeed.



IRON GODS TREASURES

THE FOLLOWING UNIQUE TREASURES CAN BE FOUND IN “THE CHOKING TOWER.” PLAYER-APPROPRIATE HANDOUTS APPEAR IN *PATHFINDER CARDS: IRON GODS ITEM CARDS*.

GREMLIN-SKIN DRUM

PRICE
6,000 GP

SLOT none

CL 5th

WEIGHT 5 lbs.

Aura moderate enchantment



These small hand drums have pitted metal frames, with dark skin bearing furry patches or rough scales stretched across it. The flaws in the drum’s skin render the drum difficult to play, imposing a –4 penalty on the user’s Profession (percussion) checks. Though

undesirable as musical instruments, *gremlin-skin drums* are icons of ill luck and therefore prized by followers of Zyphus. These drums are usually planted in an area to encourage accidents or other misfortune there. As a standard action, the user can activate a *gremlin-skin drum* by setting it down and beating it three times. Once activated, the *gremlin-skin drum*’s effect (see below) continually targets all creatures within 30 feet until the drum is picked up or moved, at which point the effect ends. A *gremlin-skin drum* can be activated up to five times before it becomes a nonmagical drum of poor craftsmanship.

Several types of *gremlin-skin drums* exist, and each drum’s powers depend on the type of gremlin flesh used as its skin. These effects appear to be mere mischance upon casual observation; an observer must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to notice that whenever a creature suffers a *gremlin-skin drum*’s effect, the skin of the drum shudders slightly. The effects of multiple versions of the same type of *gremlin-skin drums* don’t stack.

Grimple-Skin Drum: The diseased-looking skin of this drum occasionally oozes maggots. The penalties from the sickened condition increase by 1 (from –2 to –3) for any creatures within 30 feet of a *grimple-skin drum*.

Haniver-Skin Drum: The skin of this drum is leathery and moist. Any creature within 30 feet of the drum that attempts to draw or sheathe a weapon must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save to avoid dropping the weapon.

Jinkin-Skin Drum: The thin skin of this drum has cartilaginous striations throughout. Creatures within 30 feet of the drum take a –1 penalty on saving throws to avoid curses and pit traps.

Monaciello-Skin Drum: The skin of this drum is red and warty. Creatures within 30 feet of the drum find their thinking muddled, and take a –5 penalty on all Knowledge checks.

Nuglub-Skin Drum: The skin of this drum is dotted with tufts of long, oily hair. Any creature tripped within 30 feet of the drum takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from a painful fall.

Pugwampi-Skin Drum: The skin of this drum has patches of mangy fur. Luck bonuses are reduced by 1 (minimum 0) for any creatures within 30 feet of the drum.

Vexgit-Skin Drum: The skin of this drum has patches of rough scales. Creatures within 30 feet of the drum that fail to avoid a trap take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage in addition to the usual effects of the trap.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 3,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*, one dead gremlin of the type used to make the drum

HEARTH MANTLE

PRICE
3,600 GP

SLOT neck

CL 5th

WEIGHT 2 lbs.

Aura faint abjuration and evocation



The inside of this long, thick shawl is cool muslin, while the outside is decorated with a flame-like rune. *Hearth mantles* are favored by the faithful of Erastil, particularly those among his worshipers who rely upon the hunt for their livelihood. With a *hearth mantle*, one never has to worry

about building a campfire in the wild.

A *hearth mantle*’s wearer gains a +2 competence bonus on saving throws against fire-based effects; the mantle itself is immune to fire damage. Once per day, the wearer can cause the leather exterior of the mantle to smolder for 1 minute. While smoldering, the *hearth mantle* sheds light as a torch.

If the user takes a full-round action to carefully spread a *hearth mantle* on the ground with its exterior facing up, a campfire ignites on the mantle’s fire rune. This campfire burns for 8 hours and requires no fuel. Any creature that sleeps within 20 feet of the mantle for the full duration of the campfire recovers a number of hit points equal to twice its character level, as if it had undergone complete bed rest for a full 24 hours. The campfire is automatically extinguished if the *hearth mantle* is picked up, but can also be extinguished through normal means.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 1,800 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *nap stack*, *produce flame*

HIVEBRAIN SYMBIOTE		PRICE 1,000 GP
SLOT neck	CL 9th	WEIGHT —
Aura faint transmutation		



This red maggot constantly writhes and distends, snapping a small pair of pincers. A combination of hellwasp and worm, the *hivebrain symbiote* grants an echo of a hive mind when attached to an

intelligent creature. When placed on the back of a host's neck as a standard action, the *hivebrain symbiote* attaches painlessly and immediately boosts the host's mental faculties. While having a *hivebrain symbiote* attached, as an immediate action the host can reroll a concentration check or an Intelligence-based check. The host must take the second roll, even if it is worse. An attached *hivebrain symbiote* continues to function for a number of hours equal to the host's Intelligence modifier (minimum 1 hour) before falling off and dying. A *hivebrain symbiote* dies immediately if removed before this time elapses.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 500 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *mnemonic enhancement*

NUTRIENT TRAINING NODE		PRICE 30,000 GP
SLOT none		WEIGHT 25 lbs.
CAPACITY 100		USAGE 1 charge



One side of this foot-square metal box is covered with tiny hoses that undulate slightly, as if testing the air. A short spigot protrudes from the opposite side. The other four sides of the box

are covered with panels that flash and hum in a repeating pattern. This device operates as a nutrient dispenser. Once per day, when any panel is pushed as a full-round action, the node extrudes a dollop of nutrient paste from the spigot. This paste contains sufficient nutrients to sustain a single Medium or smaller creature for one day. For 24 hours after use, the tiny hoses take in trace amounts of air, dirt, or any other nearby substances and the node processes the matter into more nutrient paste.

The default nutrient paste is foul-tasting. However, if the panels are pushed in a fashion that matches the repeating pattern flashing on the box (Intelligence DC 10), the node introduces nanites that render the paste delicious. On subsequent days, the flashing pattern becomes more complex—the Intelligence check's DC increases by 2 after each success. When an Intelligence check is failed, the machine produces foul-tasting paste and the Intelligence DC resets to 10 on the following day. A creature that eats delicious paste from the same node for 6 consecutive days benefits from an accumulation of intellect-enhancing nanites and receives a permanent +1 inherent bonus to Intelligence. The same creature can benefit from a nutrient training node in this manner only once; further paste has no effect.

Nodes that train other abilities, such as those that train Strength, are also rumored to exist.

CONSTRUCTION	CRAFT DC 30	COST 15,000 GP
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Craft Technological Item¹⁶, nanotech lab¹⁶

ROD OF GRIPPING SMOKE		PRICE 15,000 GP
SLOT neck	CL 11th	WEIGHT 6 lbs.
Aura moderate transmutation		



One half of this rod is made of gray, semisolid fog, while the other half glows from within as if filled with flickering embers. A *rod of gripping smoke* acts as

a +1 *ghost touch light mace*. Three times per day, as the wielder casts a spell that creates fog or smoke, it can make the effect particularly cloying, causing the area of the spell to count as difficult terrain. This ability can't modify fog or smoke spells that already specifically impede movement (like *solid fog*).

Additionally, three times per day as a move action, the wielder of a *rod of gripping smoke* can point the rod at any single target within an area of fog, mist, smoke, or similar vapor within 60 feet (including the area of foglike spells such as *cloudkill* or *incendiary cloud*) and cause the vapor to tighten around that target. The wielder attempts a disarm, grapple, or steal combat maneuver at a +16 bonus against the target's CMD. This combat maneuver doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. If the check to disarm succeeds, the disarmed weapon falls in a random square adjacent to the target. If the check to grapple succeeds, the target gains the grappled condition for 1 round. While grappled in this way, the victim can't move without first breaking the grapple (CMD 26). If the check to steal succeeds, the stolen item lands in a random square adjacent to the target; unless the target succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check at the time the item is stolen, it doesn't realize the item is missing until it either leaves the affected area or attempts to use or retrieve the item.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,500 GP
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Requirements Craft Rod, *solid fog*, *telekinesis*

SMOKE FURNACE			MAGICAL GENERATOR
YIELD 50	FORT +6	HARDNESS 10	HP 300
EXPLOSION none		PERCEPTION PENALTY -8	

A *smoke furnace* is a fusion of magical and technological craftsmanship that uses extremely small portals to the Plane of Fire to provide a long-lasting and stable source of power. While a *smoke furnace* doesn't create a particularly significant yield and is noisier than most generators, it's particularly desirable because it has no chance of exploding. Currently, only one *smoke furnace* exists—it's located in the dungeons below the Choking Tower. Its entire yield is required to power the tower's magical and technological features.

Full rules for power generators appear on pages 62–63 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide*.



IADENVEIGH

SURE, IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY. IT'S A HARD LIFE HERE. THE SOIL IS FERTILE, BUT IT STILL NEEDS CONSTANT TAMING. WE HAVE OUR SHARE OF DANGERS HERE, TOO. ALL MANNER OF MUTATED BRUTES AND METALLIC HORRORS TRY THEIR MIGHT AGAINST THE ELKHORN WALL, BUT RARELY DO THEY EVER REALLY THREATEN ANY OF OUR PEOPLE. WE GET OUR FAIR SHARE OF VISITORS PASSING THROUGH, BUT ONLY A FEW CAN BE TRUSTED. DESPITE ALL OUR HARDSHIPS, WE'VE BUILT A STRONG COMMUNITY HERE IN IADENVEIGH. ERASTIL WATCHES OVER US, AND WE IN TURN WATCH OVER EACH OTHER. THAT'S HOW WE'VE MADE A WILDERNESS INTO A HOME, AND WE PLAN TO DEFEND IT AND PRESERVE OUR PRINCIPLES AGAINST ANY WHO SEEK TO CHANGE US.

—EALDORMAN GUNNETT OF IADENVEIGH

Iadenveigh, situated a mile west of the turbulent Dagger River, is one of the largest settlements in southern Numeria. The Dagger River Road winds from north to south through Iadenveigh, wrapping around a rocky hill the locals call the Brow.

A massive rampart of earth and stone stretches along both sides of the road to greet visitors and surrounds the town and its farms. It hugs the contours of the land, rising from 10 to 15 feet high, and is crowned with rows of jutting antlers which give it its name—the Elkhorn Wall. Visible above the Elkhorn Wall are the spires of a few buildings and a round bell tower. On the northwest face of the Brow, the stone walls and dark wood trim of the sprawling lodge known as the High Home provide a welcome sight for many weary travelers.

IADENVEIGH'S HISTORY

During the Rain of Stars, a module called *Aurora*—a fragment of the starship *Divinity*—crashed into the southeast side of a desolate tor. Much of the *Aurora* was obliterated in the crash, but a significant portion of its self-contained android foundry survived. Over time, several of the foundry's venting chambers became contaminated as radioactive gas canisters sprang slow leaks, gradually tainting the land on the south side of the hill. The impact of the crash buried them deep under the rocky debris, and these hidden emissions have leached into the soil, giving the area's flora unusual lushness and fertility. Direct exposure to animals, however, causes strange mutations, infesting the land with deformed monsters.

Several hundred years after the crash, rumors of a falling star drew a large Kellid tribe to the rocky hill. To protect themselves from the strange local beasts, the tribe engineered a massive earthwork wall. But the wall could only protect them from external dangers. Strange mutations began to appear among the settlers, particularly those living south of the hill known as Starcaller Rock. By the time the tribe's soothsayers had identified the source of the mutations as bad spring water, the tribe had more pressing concerns.

Starwatchers in the new village warned their neighbors about an array of shifting lights in the night sky, but their warnings went unheeded for months. Soon, the village children began talking about enormous worm-like creatures wending through the air at night, invisible to adults. At first, the tales were dismissed as childish fancies. Then entire families began to disappear, and before the community could investigate or react to the disappearances, every living soul in the community had vanished. Starcaller Rock remained abandoned for several centuries as legends of the "vanished clan" circulated among the Kellid tribes.

In 4649 AR, supporters of Nirmathi secession were exiled from Molthune, and nearly four hundred of the newly homeless dissidents set out north from the capital

IADENVEIGH

LG large town

Corruption +0; **Crime** -1; **Economy** +0; **Law** +0; **Lore** -2; **Society** +5

Qualities insular, pious (Erastil), racially intolerant (androids or any overt use of technology)

Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 2,381 (2,234 humans, 75 halflings, 44 half-elves, 28 other)

Notable NPCs

Ealdorman Ivik Gunnett (LG male human aristocrat 5/sorcerer 3)

Brother Gahuar Derviec (LG male human cleric of Erastil 11)

Theska Longeye (LN middle-aged female human expert 6)

Redfang (LN male human ranger 7)

Vinitia Hallowhog (LG female human expert 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 10,000 gp;

Spellcasting 6th

Minor Items +1 leather armor, +1 shock warhammer, headband of vast intelligence +2, potion of undetectable alignment, robe of useful items, scroll of enlarge person, scroll of obscuring mist, scroll of remove curse, wand of detect thoughts (50 charges); **Medium Items** +2 spell resistance (13) light steel shield, oil of dispel magic, ring of force shield, scroll of restoration, wand of acid arrow (50 charges); **Major Items** +1 holy longbow, amulet of natural armor +4

city of Canorate. After crossing Lastwall and Ustalav, they made their way into southern Numeria. There they beheld a majestic red elk standing atop a rocky hill seemingly abandoned by the locals. These outcasts, predominantly followers of Erastil, took the elk as a sign to settle the area, naming their town Iadenveigh to honor the Lastwall patron who had funded their exodus. The settlers repaired the earthen wall around the rock and laid out the streets that ring the Brow in a methodical pattern resembling those of Molthune's cities. The new land was full of wild game, but only the vast herds of elk seemed free of the strange mutations common to the area's other creatures. The settlers took the untainted elk herds as another sign that their home was blessed by Erastil, and crowned their settlement's wall with shed elk antlers, adding more each passing year.

Among Iadenveigh's first visitors were traders offering technological scraps and lumbering robots. One evening, the robots ran amok in the streets near the Brow, leading the settlers to ban technology of all kinds in their city. The stories

IADENVEIGH

LOCATIONS

1. The High Home
2. Old Skelton's Place
3. Trashspeaker Cabins
4. Yennivin Farm
5. North Gate and Signpost
6. Edlund's Boneyard
7. Derviec's Orchard
8. The Perfect Map
9. Rowdy Houses
10. Hedddick's Lumberyard
11. Ealdorman's House
12. Ayggler's Astronomy
13. Tannery Compound
14. Hands of the Community
15. Bardleigh Chippers
16. Longbitter Lake



of technological horrors unearthed throughout Numeria only made the community more technophobic and insular.

After a generation, Iadenveigh's residents began showing mutations themselves. The newcomers managed to work out that the water from the south side of the Brow was the source of these mutations, and shunned the rocky region, dubbing it Badwater. Today, the mutations among the townsfolk have mostly abated, as only the desperate or foolhardy risk drinking from Badwater streams and ponds.

LIFE IN IADENVEIGH

The people of Iadenveigh are hardworking and pious. Though the town is only 65 years old, life for many is already well-established; the average adult in Iadenveigh plies the trade of her parents and teaches it to her children. Worship of Erastil is nearly universal, and many citizens boast of seeing Erastil atop the Brow in the form of a red elk half-obscured by the morning mists. Brother Gahuar Derviec, the town's high priest, enriches the community's crops with liberal use of *plant growth* and oversees a dozen part-time acolytes. Like most of Iadenveigh's citizens, the acolytes also work as hunters, farmers, and trappers, though the town also boasts several skilled stonemasons, cobblers, and brewers. Residents consider fences to be unneighborly, and make use of the rich soil between their houses by planting communal gardens and orchards. Where property divisions must be marked, the townspeople prefer hedges or flower gardens. Iadenveigh's farms and gardens produce a variety of crops, but the people rely on hunting for most of their meat.

The townspeople shun alien technology in all forms. Visitors with advanced Numerian technology are given a cold welcome and, upon the slightest suspicion of trouble, ejected forcibly from the town. Magic that closely approximates technology, particularly alchemy and construct crafting, tends to make locals nervous as well, but not nearly as much so as brazen displays of super-science. Many of Iadenveigh's older residents bear mutations, such as extra digits or animalistic features, triggered by drinking tainted water in their youth or inherited from their elders.

Iadenveigh is ruled by the eighteen-member Deadeye Council. Although the council consists predominantly of prosperous elderly residents, the few exceptions, such as the young hunter Redfang and the town's surveyor Theska Longeye, often sway the voting of the stodgy assembly. The Deadeye Council appoints an ealdorman or ealdorwoman for day-to-day town governance. The current ealdorman is the affable Ivik Gunnett.

The town, ringed by the antler-topped Elkhorn Wall, is centered around the Brow; the bare hill's rocky slopes boast the sprawling High Home and a communal vineyard. Most of Iadenveigh's tradespeople live and work in the Bell Quarter, a residential area west and southwest of the

hill. The Westwalk separates the Bell Quarter from the orchard-filled Hardblossoms neighborhood to the north and northwest. The southwest edge of Hardblossoms is home to orchard laborers—a neighborhood called Pickers, consisting of smaller houses and multi-family dwellings. The largest area in Iadenveigh is the Sward, which sprawls north and east of the Brow. This rich land boasts several productive farms, most worked by large families. Spreading southeast from the Brow is a dense snarl of thick woods known as the Tangles. South of the Brow is the rocky badland called Badwater, full of springs bearing a mutating taint.

Iadenveigh is a regional headquarters of the Banner of the Stag, an organization dedicated to protecting small communities and outposts by training local militias and coordinating intercommunity defense. The Banner of the Stag also investigates serious crimes in Iadenveigh such as arson or murder, and favors swift, decisive execution to demonstrate vigilance and deter wrongdoing in others. Examples of the Deadeye Council's rural justice include being staked to the ground near a bear's cave or being weighted with stones and thrown in Longbitter Lake. Of course, such extreme punishments are not pronounced without just cause, and most of the petty crimes in town are handled in less severe methods such as public service or humiliation.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are some of the more prominent or noteworthy locations in Iadenveigh.

1. The High Home: The largest building in Iadenveigh, this sprawling wooden lodge clings to the northwest side of the Brow. The High Home was built to serve as a community center and watchpost, and was one of the first buildings constructed when Iadenveigh was settled 65 years ago. The building's interior is smoky and dark, with high ceilings and large windows protected by stout shutters. It's a multipurpose building, serving as a tavern, a community hall, a reception area for visitors, and a place for the town council to convene. Traditionally, caretaking of the High Home has fallen to the youngest council member, and today that role is filled by a hunter named Redfang. Although honored by the responsibility, Redfang is more comfortable as a hunter than as a politician or caretaker, and he's always looking for excuses to spend a night out under the stars or to go on extended hunting trips rather than spending another night "cooped up" in the High Home.

2. Vineyard: Although the tough and ashy-tasting grapes grown in this communal vineyard are barely edible, Iadenveigh's brewers cultivate a fecund yeast on the grapes, then ferment a mixture of wood mushrooms and grain with the strange yeast to produce a rough-tasting beer named Brow Brew. Outsiders consider it an acquired taste at best.

3. Old Skelton's Farm: This small cottage was once the home of a respected farmer named Skelton, although he was slain some year ago by a mysterious shimmering cloud that rose from the well he was digging on his land. Old Skelton's farm is located above one of the entrances to a buried ruin below town—see “The Choking Tower” for more details on this location.

4. Trashespeaker Cabins: The only residents here are the druid brothers **Thelpin** and **Kifkin** (N male half-elf druids [urban druid] 5) who occupy separate cabins due to some long-forgotten insult. The druids collect garbage and night soil throughout Iadenveigh in large wheelbarrows, returning it to the Tangle where they hope the fertilizer will aid their attempts to grow leshys to populate the dense plot of woods. Iadenveigh residents leave food and gifts for the services of these eccentric “trashspeakers,” but take care to offer equal portions to each brother so as to avoid taking sides in their long-burning feud.

5. Yennivin Farm: The largest farm in Iadenveigh is owned by the kindly **Yallis Yennivin** (LG venerable female human expert 5), one of the original settlers of Iadenveigh and the oldest member of the Deadeye Council. A high, gnarled hedge separates the farm from the North Road. A staggering number of the old woman's grandchildren now operate the farm, but Yennivin is commonly known to hire down-on-their-luck citizens for odd jobs as a way of distributing her prosperity to the needy in town.

6. North Gate and Signpost: The heavy wooden North Gate out of Iadenveigh leads into the heartland of Numeria. It's usually unguarded, but is closed and barred from sundown to sunrise. Just outside the gate, a solid wooden pole supports an impaled gearsman and a nearby sign warns visitors that most technology will not be tolerated in the town.

7. Edlund's Boneyard: Iadenveigh's graveyard lies near the North Gate. Protected by a high hedge and the only fence in town, the lonely stretch of ground is not even a third full of grave plots. The genial **Actus “Cricketlegs” Edlund** (LG male human expert 3) works as the town's coroner and mortician, while his three plodding daughters serve as gravediggers and mourners.

8. Derviec's Orchard: The grandson of the first head priest of Iadenveigh, the weedy Brother Derviec has lived his life steeped in religion. Brother Derviec's fine orchard belonged to his mother, but the pious cleric leaves tending the land to his wife **Marjeana** (LG female human commoner 3) and their children while he guides the town's faith and provides leadership to the part-time acolytes. Although Derviec is rarely at home except during the evenings, Marjeana is a kind and engaging hostess. Over the years, many townsfolk have come to prefer her advice over his, and specifically come to her instead when seeking counsel on non-theological matters.

9. Playgrounds: This large, open amphitheater is used as a market in pleasant weather. The area is also used for weddings and religious festivals that are too large for the High Home or celebrations that tradition dictates must occur outdoors. Iadenveigh's children play together on the tough grass when the spot isn't otherwise in use, giving the area its name.

10. The Perfect Map: This mapmaker's shop is owned by the cartographer **Theska Longeye**. Theska arrived in Iadenveigh 30 years ago and quickly made herself indispensable to the community, opening a shop to buy and sell high-quality maps. Theska also appointed herself as town surveyor and has settled several heated land disputes. Her assistance in setting up patrol routes and message networks throughout southern Numeria has been a great boon to the Banner of the Stag. Theska was nominated to the Deadeye Council a decade ago, and she's become one of the council's strongest advocates for increasing Iadenveigh's physical defenses.

11. Rowdy Houses: This collection of sturdy wooden longhouses serves as barracks for many of Iadenveigh's unmarried young citizens. Overseen by members of the Banner of the Stag, these men and women are trained as scouts, hunters, and messengers to serve communities throughout southern Numeria. Despite—or perhaps because of—the hard discipline, the people here are infamous for letting off steam with reckless pranks or drunken binges. Although most of them eventually settle down and leave off their training, some residents graduate to join the Banner of the Stag full time.

12. Heddick's Lumberyard: The hardworking **Heddick Widefoot**



(LG male human expert 3) operates Iadenveigh's largest lumberyard along with his younger siblings and nephews. Heddick's home and grounds are situated near the dense forest along the Elkhorn Wall's western arc, although the forest shrinks with each passing year. Heddick considers it a solemn obligation to assist any exiles or refugees that pass through Iadenveigh on their journeys, so the swath of cleared land southeast of his home is often covered by the tents and cook fires of Varisian wanderers, Starfall expatriates, or those moving north from the River Kingdoms. Heddick ensures that each guest departs with sufficient provisions for a week on the road, in honor of Anton Iadenveigh, the Lastwall patron who funded the town's original Molthuni settlers.

13. Ealdorman's House: Iadenveigh's friendly but savvy governor, Ivik Gunnett, owns a large house in the Bell Quarter near one of Iadenveigh's picturesque ponds. The son of Iadenveigh's former Ealdorman, Ivik was groomed for the office from a young age. As a timid child, he seemed initially unsuited to the role, particularly when his eerie sorcerous powers manifested in early adolescence. Under the tutelage of the priests of Erastil, Ivik mastered his arcane powers and dedicated himself to serving the community. Today, Ealdorman Gunnett is liked by nearly everyone—with the notable exception of his wife Endana, who wishes Ivik paid as much attention to his family as he does to other townsfolk. Gunnett likes company, and he often invites guests into his home and holds town meetings on his broad front porch.

14. Bell Tower: This round-roofed wooden watch post was built atop an ancient, blocky building—one of the only buildings surviving from the previous Kellid occupation of the region. The Molthuni refugees erected the tall tower atop the old foundation and topped the tower with a covered balcony and a large iron warning bell. The bell tower gives the most populous neighborhood of Iadenveigh, the Bell Quarter, its name. A narrow staircase climbs the outside of the stone building to a door that opens into the wooden tower, then winds precariously up to the balcony 120 feet above the ground. Most of the surrounding countryside is visible from the balcony. Watchtower duty on the cold, windy balcony is physically demanding, but it is a source of pride for the Iadenveigh guards who staff the tower in pairs. A simple code alerts Iadenveigh residents of fires and other dangers: one bell means trouble in the Bell Quarter or Hardblossoms, two bells means problems in the Sward or Badwater, and three bells means threats approaching from outside the town.

15. Ayggler's Astronomy: Several decades ago, the young witch **Gervic Ayggler** (N old male human witch 6) spotted a half-buried stone monument left by the town's previous Kellid inhabitants. Ayggler translated the monument's archaic runic writing as "Watch Ye Warily the Skies," and

began stargazing from atop the monument. Discovering a deep love of astronomy, he built a house and observatory using the monument as a foundation. Ayggler has been warning townsfolk recently of shifting lights in the night sky, but few members of the community care about the stars other than to mark the passage of seasons.

16. Tannery Compound: The sturdy buildings near the South Gate house Iadenveigh's most noisome industries: tanning and leatherworking. Although the operations are ably managed by the greedy **Feltic Dozenfingers** (LN male halfling commoner 4) and his kin, Iadenveigh's residents avoid the South Gate and observe that "the Stink Gate is up" when the smell is particularly intense. For several years, this tannery used water drawn from Longbitter Lake; one day, all of the cured leather that had been doused in Longbitter Lake water sprouted tiny, golden hairs. Although the residents of Iadenveigh wanted nothing to do with the "cursed leather" and insisted the halflings draw their water from elsewhere, Feltic sold the gold-furred leather at a good profit in the River Kingdoms. Even now, the enterprising halfling surreptitiously prepares batches of hides in water taken from the lake, hoping to reproduce the effect.

17. Hands of the Community: For the last 40 years, this large building has served as a general store to the people of Iadenveigh. The current proprietor, the warm but proper **Tameline Atser** (LG female human expert 4/wizard 1), likens her establishment to a communal storehouse rather than a business, so she is free with credit and usually barter rather than demanding coin. Despite her liberality, Tameline makes a good living operating the Hands of the Community, as most residents of Iadenveigh are upright in their dealings and take their promises seriously.

18. Bardleigh Chippers: The Bardleigh family skillfully quarries stone from the edges of Badwater for the homes and walkways of Iadenveigh. The family prides itself on exceptional work, and the only complaints regarding Bardleigh stonework is that the clan of stonemasons is so driven to perfection that any work takes twice as long as expected. The matriarch of the Bardleigh clan, **Emmina Bardleigh** (LG old female human expert 4) learned the business from her father, and vigilantly deflects rumors that Badwater stone is tainted like its water.

19. Longbitter Lake: Badwater springs drain into a wide ravine at the base of the Brow, forming a deep, narrow lake surrounded by jumbled rock and populated by bizarrely mutated gars and turtles. Longbitter Lake is shunned by most residents of Iadenveigh, who believe that inhaling the air near the lake carries the same mutating taint as drinking the water. Longbitter Lake drains through a gap in the Elkhorn Wall, but this gap is rarely used even by smugglers or criminals, as it is the domain of a three-headed giant snapping turtle called the Rockshell Snapper (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 273, with two additional bite attacks).



MISSIONS IN NUMERIA

[STATIC] ... EL ... [STATIC] ELLO ... THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING. [STATIC] ... WE HAVE TRAVELED FAR AND LONG TO REACH YOUR PLANET, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE NUTRIENTS YOU WILL SUPPLY THE [STATIC] ... DO NOT TRY TO FLEE; YOU WILL BE [STATIC] IMMEDIATELY. SUBMIT TO [STATIC] ... AFTER WE HAVE SAPPED WHAT NUTRIENTS WE CAN FIND AMONG YOUR RACE, THE STRONGEST AMONG YOU WILL BE [STATIC] ... ALONG WITH THE ENERGY OF YOUR SUN. THIS PROCESS WILL TAKE YEARS, BUT THE CHOSEN SPECIMENS WILL BE WELL TREATED IN THE INTERIM ... [STATIC] I REPEAT, YOU WILL BE TREATED WELL IF YOU COOPERATE. SUBMIT TO THE CREW OF THE *DUSKLIGHT*. SUBMIT TO [STATIC] AND OUR LEADERS—THE TRUE GODS. THE GODS OF THE DARK TAPESTRY.

—FROM A RECORDING FOUND ON THE *DUSKLIGHT*

Mysteries and relics beyond counting dot Numeria's rugged plains, ranging from shards of skymetal to long-buried extraterrestrial treasures to entire crashed spaceships from the farthest reaches of the galaxy. The native Kellids, the pilgrims making their way up or down the Sellen, and the outcasts from other lands who were banished to this desperate place rightly fear and respect strange relics from space, and those who claim such treasures for themselves may become powerful beyond reckoning—if they survive the claiming.

The following pages present three encounters that you can inject into your Iron Gods campaign at any time throughout the course of the adventure. While the main storyline should propel the PCs to the appropriate level for the next part of the campaign, the side-quests in this article can provide interesting ways to give flagging PCs that extra bit of experience or introduce awesome new items you've been dying to add to your campaign. Even if you don't use the text itself, the maps for each side-quest may serve as accessories for exciting adventuring and combat locations when you need a boost of inspiration.

Each mission includes a summary of the side-quest, pertinent background info, a description of the areas shown on the map, and suggestions for the kinds of foes and hazards the PCs might encounter during their visit. The stat blocks for the monsters can be found in the sources cited in the encounter section of each mission.

OTHER SIDE-QUESTS

While the side-quests on the following pages provide spectacular maps and in-depth encounter details for three exciting diversions, your players may crave even more encounters. The following additional side-quest hooks can provide inspiration for injecting even more Numerian flavor into your Iron Gods adventures.

Demon Cults: Diara is far from the only demon-worshiper to pollute the waters of the Sellen—many ignoble humans have lost their way or otherwise submitted to the will of the Worldwound during their travels to or from the nations along that famous river. Many displaced Kellids who lived in Old Sarkoris would gladly pay to stick the heads of known demon cultists on pikes outside their villages. Traveling Mendevian crusaders and low templars may join the PCs in their crusades if given the proper incentive (faith-based motivation or coin, respectively), making such demon-hunting excursions more manageable for lower-level adventuring parties.

Lost Automatons: The lands of Numeria are full of technological wonders alien to the planet. The Technic League managed to harness the power of existing robots, but even those skilled arcane spellcasters are far from being able to craft their own robotic servants. A serviceable substitute comes in the form of clockwork creatures. Though they lack robots' intelligence, clockwork creatures can perform

USING DIGITAL PLAYER HANDOUTS

Unlike many Adventure Paths, which take place in the more traditional fantasy-based locales of the Inner Sea, the Iron Gods campaign is the perfect place to use modern-day, real-world devices to engage players and bring them deeper into the world of Numeria. Everyday objects such as digital projectors, smartphones, and computer tablets can easily be re-skinned to look like alien relics. Just as printing player handouts and steeping them in black tea creates a replica of aged parchment, drawing alien characters with digital illustration programs and handing players a tablet whose screen is full of such "alien missives" can make them feel as though they've been transported to a distant future.

The most obvious way for the PCs to learn more about the alien cultures that have touched Golarion via the wreckage of the Rain of Stars is through audio logs and other recorded data. The exact nature of these recordings and the kinds of historical data they bestow are left to you to customize to best fit your campaign, and since the reaches of the cosmos are practically infinite, the varieties and numbers of alien creatures the evidence reveals to the PCs are limited only by your imagination. Players with a penchant for mysterious investigations and in-world flavor are sure to be pleased by player handouts like computer readouts with obscure data points, screen projections of ship schematics, and computer tablets displaying alien languages.

similar duties—and they have no free will to slow them down with moral qualms or rebellious urges. During the course of "The Choking Tower," the PCs may find clues to some of the Numerian mysteries that center on created beings. By tracing clues and following tracks found at the ruined Sarkorian temple in the Felldales (see pages 74–75), the PCs may well be able to locate the source of the magic that corrupted Ikina Cragstorm and the clockwork minions over which she found herself in control—and perhaps even discover the source of Numeria's robots.

Other Pieces of the Dusklight: While searching the *Dusklight*, the PCs find a schematic of the ship and instructions for assembling one of the vessel's escape pods in the case of an emergency. Some relatively simple reverse engineering reveals that the pod, if reconstructed in a certain way, could be used as a jet-propelled floating vehicle for local transport. If the PCs track down the missing pieces of the ship, they can attempt to assemble a hovercraft of their own. While construction of the alien vehicle is likely to be shoddy at best, the device could prove extremely useful for traversing the local region while it lasts, enabling the PCs to traverse Numeria's craggy badlands in record time.

BLACK BEACON [CR 9]

When the homing beacon on a crashed alien spaceship suddenly reactivates after untold millennia, the PCs are among the first to pick up the signal. Using a tracking device such as a chipfinderTM or magic to locate the half-sunken starship, the PCs soon realize they're not the only ones who got the message. There's powerful alien technology inside the ruined vessel; if the PCs are to ensure these ancient relics don't fall into the wrong hands, they'll have to excavate the ship and requisition the treasures for themselves.

BACKGROUND

The *Divinity* wasn't the only spaceship to crash on Golarion during the Rain of Stars. The massive starship housed many smaller vehicles and vessels onboard its numerous docks. Most of these small vessels broke apart or were destroyed upon entering the atmosphere, but one of the spacecraft—a vessel of mysterious and unknown origin—survived the crash mostly intact. The *Divinity*'s crew had found this ship drifting out in space, abandoned but fully functional, not long before the crash. The crew dubbed the thing the *Dusklight*, naming it after an excavated digital record presumably made by its previous inhabitants, and were busy exploring the ship when the *Divinity* fell headlong into Golarion's atmosphere.

In truth, the *Dusklight* was piloted by a race of now-extinct aliens that many other star-faring races regard as best left to the annals of history. This ship contained some of the last of their kind, but a creature known as a thorgothrel managed to get onboard and sap the inhabitants of their lives before accidentally becoming locked in a stasis chamber. Without a crew, the ship's engines shut down and the vehicle drifted out in space for centuries until the *Divinity* picked it up.

Before the *Dusklight* began breaking apart in Golarion's atmosphere, one of the *Divinity* crew members researching the vessel accidentally reactivated a distress signal on the ship that corresponded to several remote chipfinders—most of which were scattered across Numeria with pieces of their mother ship. The *Dusklight* landed along the shores of the Dagger River, sinking into the muck and becoming all but lost to the ages as mud blocked the ship's tracking signal. Like many others of its kind, the *Dusklight* seemed destined to be buried forever—until recent events exposed it once more.

INTRODUCTION

This encounter begins when the PCs receive or find a chipfinder with no indication as to what it is tracking. The chipfinder has traded hands countless times throughout the years, but it only recently started beeping; a mudslide has unearthed the half-sunken vessel to which

it corresponds, allowing the vessel's still-transmitting emergency beaconTM to once again be heard.

While the ruined section of the *Dusklight* presented in this article included a key component to the starship (see area A7), it is far from the only wreckage left in the intergalactic vessel's wake. See the Other Side-Quests section on page 69 for more ideas on how to integrate the *Dusklight* into your Iron Gods campaign.

DESCRIPTION

Much of this wrecked section of the *Dusklight* is partially flooded or completely submerged in the waters of the Dagger River. The only obvious entrance to the ruined ship is through the shattered dome on top. PCs who wish to explore the wreckage must climb the mud-slick sides of the ship (Climb DC 25) or use some form of flight. If the PCs try climbing onto the remains of the dome, the rest of the crystal collapses under their weight and the PCs fall to the deck below; the ceiling height is 10 feet. To make matters more difficult, the ship is lodged askew in the river, having tilted to a roughly 30-degree angle during the mudslide. GMs can use the side-view map on page 71 to gauge water depth in different parts of the ship. The PCs can mitigate many of the ship's dangers by reactivating the ship's local gravity field in area A1, but until then, they'll need to wade or swim in the submerged areas unless they have access to spells such as *freedom of movement* or equipment that minimizes the challenge.

A1. Observatory: The machinery in this room is in the best shape of all the relics on the *Dusklight*. The ship's inhabitants used the magically infused crystal dome on the ceiling to view the stars, entering their observations in the planetarium into complex computers to map their way to distant worlds or glean information from the heavens. The thick dome finally shattered, though, during the mudslide that unearthed the vessel.

In the western corner of the long chamber is a panel of computers that controlled the planetarium as well as the ship's artificial gravity. Amazingly, the ship's systems are still barely functional, and can be reactivated with a battery to provide additional power. If the PCs place a battery with at least 1 charge remaining in the system panel and succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check to navigate the computer system, some of the broken ship's vital functions return, including an artificial gravity field that makes it much easier to traverse the steeply angled ship's floors.

A2. Elevators: Once the ship's systems are reactivated, the elevator that runs from the second to fourth levels of the ship can be used to move between decks. Until then, the ancient metal box remains still and nonfunctional, and prying apart its massive magnetic doors requires a successful DC 30 Strength check. The elevator hangs listlessly by its metal cords, stuck between the second and third levels.



A3. Stasis Chamber: The hexagonal pillars that line this lengthy, rectangular chamber served as stasis chambers for the aliens piloting the ship as well as any creatures they captured in their travels. Two holes in the floor here allow passage to the deck below, opening into area A5.

A4. Deck Hall: A wheeled crate dangles haphazardly from wires attached to the eastern wall of this floor. If any of the PCs step on the square marked with an X on the map, the wires snap as the ship shifts and settles, releasing the heavy metal crate and causing it to roll in a straight line toward the western side of the chamber. It crashes into any PCs in the area before splashing into the water on the western end of the hall. The rolling crate deals 2d6 points of damage and knocks prone any PCs in its path who fail a DC 17 Reflex save.

A5. Sickbay: Sick or injured crew from the *Dusklight* were treated in this infirmary. All of the equipment in this room has shifted to the western end of the room and is piled up against the wall.

A6. Galvo Lair: Cluttered with debris from the crash, this room is otherwise empty.

A7. Escape Pods: While two of the escape pods are empty, one contains a small vessel used for emergencies. See Other Pieces of the *Dusklight* on page 69 for more information.

ENCOUNTER

The PCs aren't the only ones to locate the *Dusklight* after the mudslide. Attracted to the vessel long ago, a galvo (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 120) lurks in the storerooms below. The creature slipped into the wreckage through a rupture in the ship's hull and has been using area A6 as its lair ever since. While exploring the wreckage, the creature used the stairs to get to the elevator room in the area above its lair, but with the doors and elevators offline, it has been unable to get into of the rest of the ship. If the PCs decide to explore the outside of the wreckage below the waterline, the galvo detects their attempts at entry and creeps out of its lair to attack them. If the PCs camp near the wreckage or spend more than 2 hours outside of the vessel, the galvo comes out of the water to attack them on land.

Some of the dangers in the *Dusklight* have been with the ship since before the crash. The thorgothrel (see page 90) that boarded the ship and killed the crew long ago ended up trapping itself in one of the stasis chambers in area A3, where it remained until the mudslide freed it. Unable to activate the doors or elevators, the amorphous alien has been able to explore only the stasis chamber and the intact portion of the deck below since its release.

DEMONS OF DRAVOD KNOCK (CR II)

Low templars and crusaders aren't the only pilgrims who make their way up the Western Sellen toward the demon-infested Worldwound—doomsayers, demon worshipers, and other vile individuals also seek their destiny among the legions of the Abyssal rift. When one such band of disguised demoniacs stops in Dravod Knock to sow the seeds of madness and recruit more depraved individuals to their cause, it's up to the PCs to stop the maniacs before they cause irreparable damage to the Kellid town.

BACKGROUND

The Knock on Wood Winery is a decades-old, ruined estate just north of Dravod Knock along the Sellen River. Several wealthy Riverfolk entrepreneurs from Daggermark founded the Knock on Wood Winery in 4667 AR, seeking to capitalize on the flow of low templars and merchants who traveled to and from war-torn Mendev along the Sellen. However, they underestimated the aggressive advancement of the demons from the Worldwound—as well as the unscrupulous nature of the low templars, who drank a great deal of wine but paid for very little of it—and they soon saw their fortunes crumble along with the business, and walked away from their investment.

While the winery's main building has seen occasional use by squatting travelers and roaming Kellids in the decades since its desertion, it has largely remained unused and in shambles. Most recently, a cruel Taldan expatriate by the name of Diara Belgroom has made this location her base of operations while she tries to gather soldiers of the demonic horde farther south than the Worldwound's current borders.

Blessed by the Mother of Monsters for her success in spreading corruption, Diara had a vision that directed her to a cache of demonic scrolls buried in the nearby hills. Using these scrolls, she has been able to conjure more powerful demons than she normally would be able to using her regular spellcasting ability. Many of those called using spells like *planar ally* are no longer in her direct service, as she has released them to the surrounding region in order to sow chaos.

Diara theorizes that if she and her brainwashed followers can summon enough demons south of Mendev's wardstones, they can circumvent the magical barriers completely and maybe even devise a way to open another Abyssal rift right in the heart of Numeria. Opening an Abyssal rift is currently beyond her ability, but with each new conjuration she is getting closer to the secret. She fears the increase in demonic activity in the area is drawing too much attention to her and her cultists, however, and this paranoia has made her even more alert to anyone coming near the ruined winery.

INTRODUCTION

The PCs may hear a rumor of demonic cultists along the Sellen from multiple sources, including the pious Kellids of Iadenveigh or the natives of Torch. They may also simply stumble upon the winery during the course of their journeys (moving the location to the Dagger River would be a wise choice if the PCs are still near Iadenveigh or the Choking Tower, or it could be placed along the border of Numeria and the River Kingdoms, since the waterway component of its location is not vital).

DESCRIPTION

The cedar logs that compose the Knock on Wood Winery were milled and shipped from eastern Ustalav, and the fine lacquers used to varnish the logs have withstood many damp winters along the northern end of the Sellen River.

B1. Winery Front: The winery's storefront once stored many of the bottles and barrels of rare or exotic alcoholic elixirs procured by its aficionado founders. While nearly all of these stores have been depleted, characters who thoroughly search the shelves and tipped-over racks find 2d3 bottles of various types of liquor left intact. They have aged almost 50 years, so bottles of weaker sorts of liquors are long past their prime and barely drinkable.

B2. Ruined Tower: The builders of the Knock on Wood Winery used this squat tower to defend against roaming bandits or demons, but it has crumbled since its abandonment nearly half a century ago. The rotten crates and mossy stones in the tower conceal a small fortune hidden by bandits who camped here for a short time before demons killed them. The PCs can locate the treasure with a successful DC 20 Perception check. All in all, the burlap sack of ill-gotten gems and gold pieces is worth 2,400 gp.

B3. Ruined Rooms: An earthquake 20 years ago badly damaged this side of the building, leaving the bedrooms (which the owners rented to drunken patrons for a substantial fee) in ruins.

B4. Cellar: A maze of barrels and shelves makes this area difficult to navigate in the dark. At each intersection, there is a 75% chance one of the squares was trapped with a tripwire that brings an adjacent barrel down on a PC (the barrel has a +10 bonus on its attack roll and deals 2d6 points of damage to a struck PC). This is otherwise identical to a falling block trap (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 420). A tunnel dug into the eastern side of the cellar travels nearly 200 feet eastward before reaching an old barn.

B5. Barn: The earthquake that damaged the winery also damaged the southwestern portion of the barn. When the PCs arrive, Diara and her clergy of Lamashtans are hiding out in this run-down barn, summoning a succubus (see Encounter on page 73 for details).

B6. Hayloft: Wooden ladders on the barn's northern wall lead up to a hayloft. While Diara's minions are up



there, they have drawn up the ladders so no one else can reach them.

ENCOUNTER

Diara Belgroom has spent much of her life traveling Avistan and has long been a worshiper of Lamashtu, Mother of Monsters. Throughout her travels, she has used both honeyed words and magical compulsions to slowly accrue a congregation of like-minded worshipers. She has also summoned demons and made pacts with Lamashtu and the goddess's agents to secure the aid of extraplanar forces. Diara and her minions lurk in the winery for now; she plans to use the structure and its nearby barn as a base of operations until she has attracted more cultists and summoned a veritable army of demons for herself.

Below, four quasits (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 66) and three nuglub gremlins (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 143) roam about the otherwise abandoned wine cellar. If any of the traps in the wine cellar are tripped, these creatures turn their attentions to the intruders.

For Diara, use the stats for the mother of beasts (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 51), but replace *blindness/deafness* with *bestow curse*. The stats for each of the

half-dozen brainwashed thralls in her cadre of cultists can be represented by veteran buccaneers (*NPC Codex* 267) under the effects of Diara's curse of madness (see below). When the PCs arrive in the barn, half of the cultists fire crossbows from the loft, while Diara and the others have just finished summoning a succubus (*Bestiary* 68) using a *scroll of summon monster VI*. The succubus uses her *dominate person* spell-like ability on the toughest PC.

Curse of Madness: If a creature targeted by Diara's *bestow curse* spell fails its Will save, that creature becomes filled with rage and madness. Whenever the cursed creature sees freshly spilled blood, it must succeed at a Will save (DC = the DC of the original *bestow curse* effect) or it succumbs to the effects of a *rage* spell for 2d4+1 rounds. A successful save means the creature is immune to the effects for 1 hour, after which the chance of raging upon seeing fresh blood returns once more.

In addition, creatures affected by Diara's *bestow curse* have their alignments shifted one step closer to evil and become more receptive to the ideals of demon lords and chaotic evil deities. For most of the Kellid barbarians residing near Dravod Knock who were captured by Diara, the shift in alignment has turned them chaotic evil and made them devotees of Lamashtu.

SCARS OF THE PAST (CR 13)

A desperate Kellid chieftain named Ashon asks the PCs to slay the tribe's previous leader, who was cursed with alien magic and has since gone mad with power. Should they accept, the heroes find themselves embroiled in an eerie plot all too common in the scarred lands of Numeria. Throughout the course of the PCs' mission, the party must search an abandoned Sarkorian temple and defeat treacherous monsters from beyond Golarion. True to Ashon's claim, they must also face a Kellid warlord who has become warped by mysterious technological magic—a cunning foe with one foot in the ways of the old Kellid wise ones and the other entrenched in cruel arcana tied to the stars above.

BACKGROUND

Ikina Cragstorm has long been considered a powerful and wise warlord among the Kellid tribes of western Numeria. Stories tell of her defeating ferocious monsters and fighting back numerous violent tribes in the region. Recently, however, envious heirs and cutthroat rivals began whispering that the middle-aged chieftain had lost her edge—that she was too weak to continue leading the Skelf tribe. When Ikina caught wind of these rumors, she left her tribe to perform a ritual search for the self among the desolate hills and valleys of the Felldales. There she found a cache of automatons, and after suffering a vision induced by strange herbs, she found that she could control these mechanical creatures. Eager to reinstate her power by using these automatons as soldiers, she left the hidden caves.

Ikina returned to her tribe nearly a week later, but not alone. Nearly half a dozen silent, cloaked figures followed in her wake. Ikina had changed as well, and a gleam of madness shone brightly in her eyes as she ordered her new companions to slaughter her tribe. She slew a score of her own tribespeople before the harried Skelfs pushed their traitorous leader and her minions back toward the crag-ridden Felldales.

After the tragedy, the Skelf tribe elected a new leader to guide the tribe. The newly named chieftain, Ashon Melos, son of Rothin Melos, has proclaimed Ikina's crimes heinous beyond redress, and he now seeks her head. When the Skelfs repelled their attackers, however, they inadvertently allowed these foes to escape to Dead Mount, an old Sarkorian encampment long thought cursed. It's said that the ancient tribal holdings and their impressive tiered monument were the site of a mass ritual suicide, and the spirits of corrupt god-callers and their wicked followers now haunt the area. None among the Skelf tribe will tread upon these unhallowed grounds, so Ashon seeks non-Skelf champions to avenge his fallen kin and slay the treacherous Ikina once and for all.

INTRODUCTION

Chieftain Melos and his highest-ranking fellow tribe members desperately seek a band of outsiders to bring vengeance to the traitorous Ikina Cragstorm. The PCs may hear of the tribe via rumors in Iadenveigh, or they may be approached by a representative of the Skelf tribe.

The old Skelf holdings are not difficult to locate if the PCs are given the quest by Melos or one of his kin. Most Kellids in the region know of the forsaken place, now called Dead Mount by the locals.

DESCRIPTION

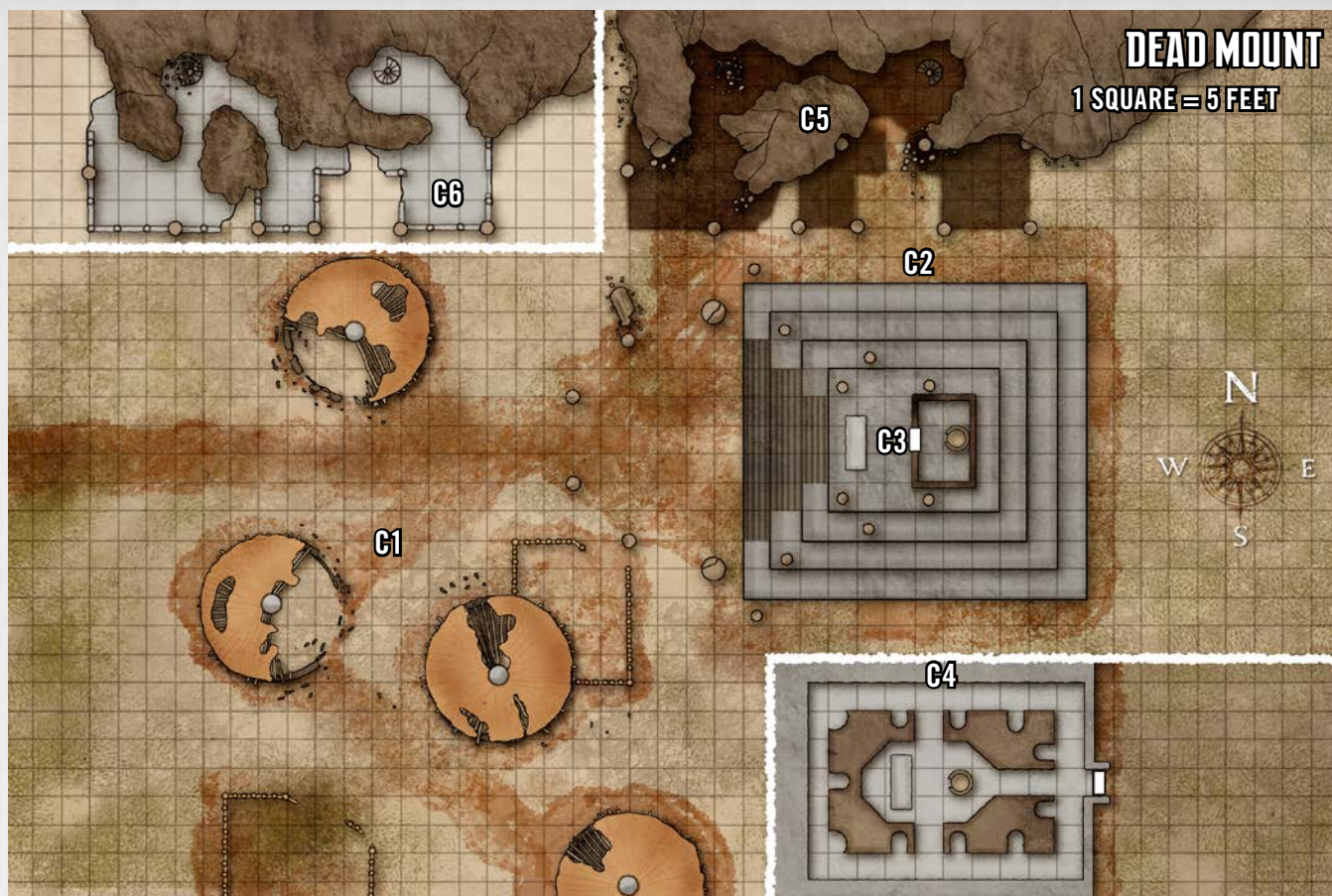
The Sarkorians salted a path through the grounds around the old temple, creating a dirt walkway through the tall grass surrounding the complex. An air of eerie silence encompasses the entire area.

C1. Old Huts: These circular huts are in various states of disrepair. Though the cured leather coverings have withstood the passing years, they peel and crumble at a touch. The bent wooden beams that supported the structures are similarly disintegrating, after decades of battering by the strong gusts that come off Lake Encarthan and whip across the Felldales.

C2. Sarkorian Temple: The god-callers used magic and subtle theatrics to instill fear in their faithful believers, and the impressive structure here was a key component in many of the Sarkorians' ritualistic performances. God-callers would enter the ziggurat via a concealed door on the eastern side of the structure, and then would access the intricate mechanical elevator inside the temple sanctum to reach the upper level. A screen of smoke and colorful witchery obscured their egress; the god-callers would emerge from the sanctum's lone door in a magnificent display of magic alongside their fear-inspiring eidolons.

C3. Altar: The Sarkorian god-callers used this altar to perform their magic and make sacrificial offerings to their incarnate deities, who would feast on the hearts, livers, and other vital organs of the honored victims. Most recently, Ikina has used this altar to ritually sacrifice her former tribe members, devouring their body parts herself much as the god-callers' summoned deities once did. The altar is stained with fresh blood.

C4. Temple Sanctum: The means to access the temple sanctum were known only to its builders, the god-callers, and the god-callers' chosen servants. The servants would burn the remains of the debased Sarkorians' living sacrifices, along with strange herbs and poisonous oils. The hallucinogenic smoke would rise to form a veil behind the altar atop the building, from behind which the god-callers could emerge. Niches in the walls of the temple sanctum hold old fetishes, tributes, and vessels of ashes.



C5. Cavern: During the tempestuous winters that wracked the Felldales in the late years of the Age of Enthronement, the Skelfs living in this area would frequently retreat to these caverns for protection when their huts could no longer withstand the winds and the weight of the snows. One of the staircases leading up to the cavern lookout (area C6) collapsed during an earthquake not long ago, but the other one, carved from the same stone as the cavern itself, remains stable, and rises 15 feet before reaching the upper level. Since the cavern is shallow and has large openings, this area is shrouded in dim light.

C6. Cavern Lookout: Spectators would crowd all around the temple to watch the sacrifices, but the most privileged tribe members could stand atop the stone balcony constructed out of the cavern walls here.

ENCOUNTER

A total of six corrupted automatons lurk here: three of them (clockwork soldiers; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 57) wait in amid the old Skelf huts around the temple; two more (advanced clockwork servants; *Bestiary* 3 56, 290) hide amid the cavern lookout, firing their nets down upon unsuspecting foes; and a clockwork steed (*Bestiary* 4 33)

serves as the mount of Ikina Cragstorm, the mad warlord behind it all. For Ikina, use the stats for the savage rider (NPC *Codex* 18).

Ikina waits atop the upper level of the cavern complex to the north, eagerly awaiting more foolish Skelfs to sacrifice upon the Sarkorian temple's altar. Her clockwork steed remains in the lower caverns since it can't ascend the stairs. The warlord fires arrows and lets her construct allies engage in melee.

The clockwork steed charges melee at Ikina's command, using its superior speed to move about the battlefield and positioning itself to kick combatants using its powerful kick special ability. Ikina commands the clockwork soldiers that are hidden in the ruined huts to attack the most powerful martial character in the group first. The clockwork soldiers make use of their latch special ability to attempt to disarm or grapple their targets. The two advanced clockwork servants remain in the upper levels of the caverns as guards in case any of the PCs enter the caverns to engage Ikina directly.

If the clockwork steed or two of the clockwork soldiers below fall in combat, Ikina makes her way outside to the ground level to fight the PCs, taking the two advanced clockwork servants from this level with her.

THE ROAD HOME

PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: WHISPERS IN THE WASTELANDS 3 OF 6

We continued following the robot toward the setting sun. Tints of orange and red streaked the sky like open wounds. We had fallen into an easy rhythm, striding in silence as the mechanical creature rolled along before us. When I grew hungry, I ate as we walked, gnawing on jerky and handfuls of sun-dried berries.

Soon, though, we would have to rest—or rather, I would while Eirian maintained her placid watch. When that time came, we'd have to find a way to halt the robot's progress. For now, I was content to follow our mechanical guide. As a boy hunting game across the plains, I'd learned to march overnight on the trail of my prey. I could push aside the need for sleep and even food and drink, refusing to feel the fatigue in my muscles or the growling in my gut. There was no need to push myself so hard at this point, but that training did help me to keep pace with the robot.

The sun's lower curve had just touched the horizon when a ridgeline came into view. The wall of rock stood only a few feet high, but the ascent was sheer and slightly concave. I pointed to it. "The robot will have trouble cresting that wall. We can make camp there when it stalls."

We picked up our pace, closing the distance between us and our mechanical guide. The robot spun forward on its treads until it came within a hand's breadth of the wall. Then its appendages shot out from its curved torso. The robot tried to climb the wall directly, spearing the tips of its "legs" into cracks in the wall. It lacked the strength to lift its whole body, however, and soon slid back to the ground. Balancing on its two back appendages, it walked up the wall

with the other two, giving the appearance of a dog rearing up on its hind legs. As Eirian and I watched, the robot felt along the surface of the ridge, swiveling from left to right to cover as much area as possible.

"It's smarter than I thought," I said.

Eirian nodded. "All the robots I've ever seen possess some ability to cogitate. Some are simple machines that follow orders as they are given, but even those possess the ability to adjust those orders depending on the complexity of their situation. Others are as smart as the elf-wizards of Kyonin, I've heard, but even the most basic robot is at least as intelligent as a well-trained horse."

"I think that's the longest I've ever heard you speak at one time."

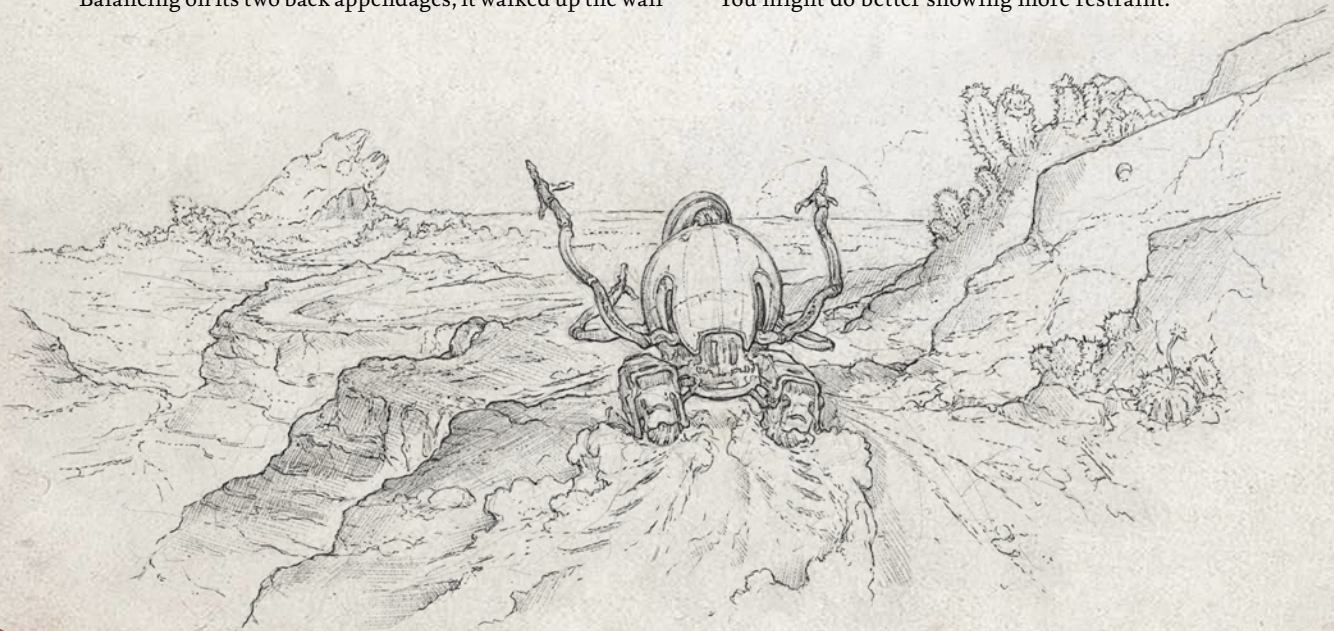
To my surprise, Eirian's pale face contorted into something that could be recognized as embarrassment. "Have I failed to give you needed information in a timely manner?"

"No, of course not. I just meant you usually stay silent unless you have something important to say."

"Why else would I speak?"

I opened my hand and gestured to take us both in. "Maybe to share thoughts or feelings? To get to know each other better. We've been traveling for days, and I know no more about you than when we started."

The robot backed away from the wall and fell forward onto its legs. It scuttled to the side and reared up again, searching for a way over the barrier. Eirian watched its progress as she replied, "You're so open with your thoughts and feelings. You might do better showing more restraint."



"Too open?" I couldn't disguise my surprise. "Most folk consider me reserved. Some Varisians declare themselves your lifelong friend after fifteen minutes, and Taldans tell you their family lineage back seven generations. By comparison, I'm downright stoic."

"You have the openness of someone not afraid of violence."

I stepped closer to Eirian and almost laid a hand on her shoulder, but thought better of it. The last thing I wanted was to make her feel unsafe. I took a half-step back instead. "Are you afraid I'll hurt you?" I tried to keep my tone easy, though I was deeply unsettled.

She turned her clear gaze on me. "I don't believe the Whisper in the Bronze would have twined our paths if you meant me harm. But you yourself said your people react with hostility to technology. Many mistake androids for humans and then lash out at us when they learn the truth. Some accuse us of misleading them with our human-like appearance and take offense. Others hate technology and see us as the embodiment of a sickness infecting this land. Have you forgotten the circumstances of our first meeting?"

"No, I haven't." I returned Eirian's gaze steadily, hoping to project concern and compassion. "I didn't mean to push you to reveal more of yourself than you're willing to. I just thought conversation might pass the time, maybe help us trust each other. I'll hold my tongue more often."

"No." This time she was the one who stepped forward and touched my arm. "Don't constrain yourself in an effort to please me. Talk as much as you like, and I'll keep silent as much as I like. The only way to trust is through honesty."

I smiled. "Wise words.."

Eirian started to reply but broke off and pointed past me. "Look at that."

I turned and saw that the robot had found a cracked section of ridgeline where fist-sized rocks had broken off from the mass. It worked busily, swooping around the fallen rocks and using its spindly appendages to gather small stones into a ramp set against the ridgeline. When the heap of broken stone was tall enough, the robot circled around and wheeled carefully up the ramp, its treads crunching against the loose shale. It used its appendages to pull it up the last few inches and over the lip of the ridge before trundling onward.

"Clever," I said as we hurried to follow. "Reminds me of my dog, Tryg."

"Tryg?"

"My father named him. It means something like 'persistence' in a dialect of Kellid. Tryg hated being tied up and always found a way off his lead. He'd never go anywhere after he got free—one time he gnawed through a waxed and braided cord, and I found him on his back, legs in the air, dozing in the sun not five feet from his chewed-up tether." I chuckled at the memory.



HE MAY HAVE BEEN AS STUBBORN AS HELL, BUT TRYG WAS A GOOD DOG. I'M PRETTY SURE HIS STUBBORNNESS CONTRIBUTED TO HIS CLEVERNESS. IT WAS ALWAYS HARD TO KEEP HIM OUT OF THINGS.

By now the sun had nearly disappeared and shadows stretched across the plains. I was almost ready to suggest making camp when a dark spot on the horizon caught my eye. I pointed it out to Eirian. "See there?"

She nodded slowly. "I see it. It looks like a cloud, but far too low."

I was about to reply when the smell reached me. "Not a cloud," I said. "Smoke. Something's burning."

Then, underneath the smell of ash and burning wood, I caught another odor. The rich, greasy smell of sizzling fat. My stomach turned. I'd experienced the scent before, and it was unmistakable.

Someone was burning.

The robot's persistent course took it toward the smoke on the horizon. After a short discussion, Eirian and I agreed to follow it. Waiting until dawn may have been the safer course, but there might be people still alive and in need of help. The smoke showed that whatever happened there had happened recently.

Another hour of travel took us within sight of a village—or what used to be a village. I caught Eirian's eye and she nodded. We quickened our pace to get ahead of the robot. The moonlight and the dying fires illuminated the scene.

The buildings reminded me strongly of my own home—my people built our homes in the same way, with hewn timbers for the frames and walls of woven bark, animal hides, or mud daub. My chest tightened at the sight of the smoldering huts. Amid the burning frames I saw the remains of people's lives: hand-carved bedsteads, cupboards, even scorched cradles.

Near the edge of town, a rack made for drying animal hides had collapsed into a pile of charred sticks on top of a week's worth of skins, all burned beyond salvage. The roof of a longhouse, a gathering place for the villagers,

FITTING WITH HER METAL STEED, VASS WEARS THE HELMET OF A CAVALRY SOLDIER THAT IS PROUDLY MARKED WITH THE SYMBOL OF THE TECHNIC LEAGUE.



SHE CERTAINLY HAS AN IMPOSING NATURE ABOUT HER.

blazed brightly against the night sky. Just before us, an arm stretched out from beneath the collapsed timbers of a hut. Its fingers curled as if beckoning us, begging our help even after death.

Before I could respond to the dead man's plea, a gust of wind blew the smoke sideways, and I caught a flash of movement deeper in the village. I gestured urgently to Eirian and we scurried toward the collapsed hut, putting it between us and whoever still lingered in the ruins.

Even as we ran, I heard movement behind me. The robot had caught up to us and followed its inexorable path through the village. Hoofbeats sounded in the dark. Whoever had attacked this village would be on us in seconds.

I darted for the robot. It tried to scuttle past me, but I dropped down on it and grabbed two of its appendages. My cuff flared, and magical strength shot up my arm. I wrestled the robot toward our hiding place, but it was slow going. The robot fought me, straining against my grip. I felt like I was wrestling an eager dog without a harness.

I could hear the horses galloping in the shadows, louder and louder. I dragged the robot another few feet, but we were still exposed. The hut was a dozen feet away. I readied myself to let go of the robot and defend myself against whomever was about to emerge from the darkness.

Then Eirian was next to me, crouching at my side and whispering strange words. She rested her fingers on a patch of bare stone.

I jerked my hand away as the stone peeled back in front of the robot. Eirian's magic hollowed a pit in the stone and the little robot tumbled in, its appendages waving wildly as it scrambled for purchase. Eirian drew a quick breath and resumed chanting. The stone surged again, arcing over the

newly formed pit. Within seconds the robot was completely sealed in the stone hollow.

When she was done, Eirian pulled on my sleeve to let me know. We raced back to the hut, hiding ourselves just as the riders came into view.

I recognized their leader instantly. I'd seen her first in Hajoth Hakados two days earlier. Now, as then, she rode a steed outfitted with mechanical parts. Its topaz eye shone as if lit from inside. Atop the part-mechanical horse, the woman sat with the easy grace of an experienced rider. She wore the same armor she had in Hajoth Hakados, but her hair was now tucked under a helm of indigo metal. On the brow of the helm shone a silver cog. Dried blood streaked the woman's right cheek, resembling ritual markings in the darkness.

Two riders followed the leader. One glanced in my direction, and I shrank back behind the edge of the ruined hut. Eirian crouched next to me and I could feel the tension coiling in her body.

The hoofbeats drummed past. I dropped my gaze to the mound of stone beneath which our little robot friend hid. One of the riders galloped directly over the mound, the horse's shod hooves striking the stone and making a hollow clop against the robot's hiding place. I winced and held my breath, but the rider didn't seem to notice.

A moment later, the riders were gone, the sound of their passage vanishing into the night. I let out my breath and straightened.

"She was the same rider from Hajoth Hakados," I said.

Eirian nodded slowly. "I have always hidden whenever I see the Technic League, but I've heard stories about her. Her name is Ryden Vass. She's an arcanist who joined the League almost a decade ago. She leads expeditions in the area to excavate and steal technological items."

We picked our way over to the stone mound that was imprisoning our robot. I tapped my toe against the stone. "A clever plan, this. Why would the Technic League attack a village? My home was never attacked, but then again—we didn't have much they'd want."

Eirian's voice took on the tone of discomfort I'd learned to listen for. "You were also probably too remote. Their patrols don't stray far from the large settlements. Sometimes they demand tribute from villages—gold, technology, even raw materials like metal. Sometimes they come for subjects."

"Subjects?"

"For their experiments."

I turned to face the village. "Tryg seems safe where he is. Let's see if there's anyone left to help."

Eirian started toward the ruin. I followed, scanning for any sign of movement, but the village was still and silent except for crackling embers and the shifting of timbers. The only motion I saw was the drifting of clouds of smoke.

Bodies lay among the ruins, but not as many as I'd expected. I'd seen death in my time—too much death—but

the sight of their broken forms still shook me. The smell made it worse. An elderly woman lay face-up in the path, her eyes closed and mouth slack. She'd been cut open, shoulder to waist. One arm curved over her brow, as if she'd thrown it up to defend herself against a slashing blade.

We passed a few more bodies as we approached the center of the village. "I didn't see any captured slaves with the riders," I said to Eirian. "But there aren't many people here."

"Vass probably sent the slaves off with her main force and then stayed behind to loot the village," Eirian said. "She would have brought more than two riders with her for an assault like this."

"We're lucky we didn't cross paths with them on the way here." The smoke and char of the burned bodies coated my nostrils. I wiped at my face, trying to rid myself of the stench.

To our left, something rattled in the wreckage. Eirian whirled, hammer up and ready to strike. I darted past her, leaping over a blackened timber beam. My heart pounded and I felt the bear stir in my chest.

No riders galloped out of the dark toward me. No mutant coyotes bayed in the night. I saw a figure shift on the ground, half-pinned beneath a collapsed hut. Singed thatching heaped around him like drifts of snow on the plains of Irrisen. I might have missed the man, were it not for his feeble movements.

I dropped to a crouch beside him. "Lie still. Help is here."

He gasped for breath, his face contorted with pain. He looked to be not much older than I, and his tanned skin and scarred arms marked him as a plainsman. Open sores oozed at the corners of his mouth and down his jaw.

"No... warning..." he managed. The sores cracked and ran with yellow-green pus when he spoke. I made a motion as if to cover his mouth.

"Save your strength," I said. "My friend is a healer."

"Not for this," he wheezed. Eirian knelt opposite me and examined the man. She looked at me and shook her head.

"They poisoned... our warriors." I had to strain to hear the man's words as his voice faded. "When we... went down... they took the others."

"They enslaved your tribe," I said. "We can track them down! Free them!"

Eirian shot me a look I ignored. The man grasped my wrist with his unpinned hand. "They wanted the cairn...our ancestors built it to hide..." He trailed off and his eyes slipped shut. I was about to remove his hand from mine and begin a prayer for the dead when his lids flew open. His fingers tightened like steel. "We kept the ground hallowed. Kept it hidden so it could never harm anyone. And now... we are gone."

The life slipped from his body. I crossed the man's arm over his chest and bowed my head.

Eirian touched her hammer and the dead man's brow, then waited for me to finish my prayers. "The poison was beyond my ability to heal. I'm sorry." After a pause, she added, "We can't bring back his people."

"Why not?" I stood up and glanced around as if expecting to see the slavers passing near, ripe for attack. "They can't have gotten far."

"They'll outnumber us significantly, even without Ryden Vass," Eirian said. "They'll have talented arcanists within their group. And if we managed to defeat them, when they don't return to Hajoth Hakados, Ryden Vass would come looking for them. Worse, she might have already joined back up with them, and if she finds an android and a man with a technologically enhanced arm, neither of us will know freedom again."

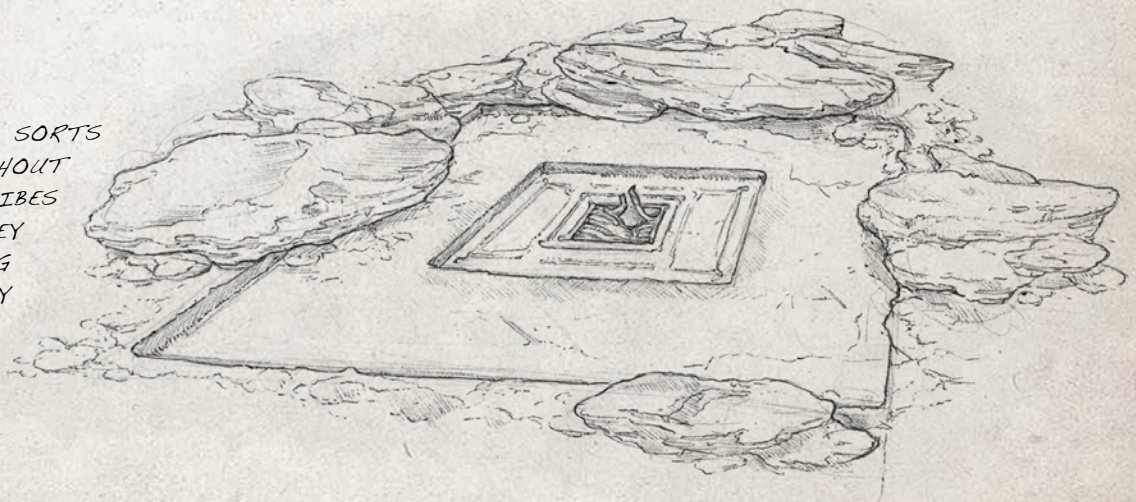
My frustration must have shown on my face, because Eirian walked around the dead man and stood close to me. Her voice took on a softer tone than I'd heard her use before. "This is the way it is, Sidek. We cannot change things."

"I don't accept that."

"You've been away from Numeria for too long."

Her accusation, gentle as it was, struck me dumb. Could it be I'd been absent from my home long enough to be surprised at its ugliness? Growing up, I had lived in my remote village, isolated from the larger settlements. Once I'd joined the Pathfinders, my missions took me outside Numeria's

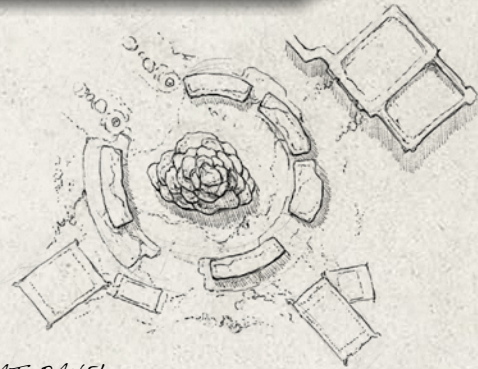
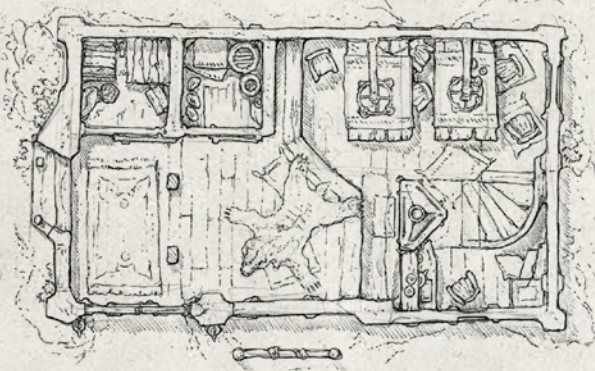
TECHNOLOGY OF ALL SORTS
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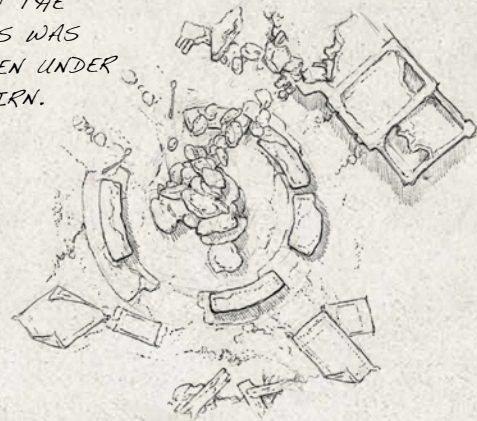


THE RUINED VILLAGE WAS A TYPICAL NUMERIAN SETTLEMENT.

THESE PEOPLE WORKED HARD AND LIVED SIMPLY.



THAT PANEL WITH THE WIRES WAS HIDDEN UNDER A CAIRN.



borders, where I saw the world. Had that worldliness made me forget the brutality of my homeland?

Finally, I said, "You're right. We're unprepared for this sort of battle. But I won't forget those people, or the others the Technic League has taken. I have friends I can call on. I'll find a way to end this evil."

"And stem the flow of the Sellen with your bare hands, too?"

I ignored the barb and turned away from Eirian, though I was silently surprised at her jibe. "Let's examine the cairn."

We resumed our course to the center of town, where the cairn would likely be. Numerian customs varied widely between villages, but the lack of platforms outside this village led me to believe these people either buried their dead or left them in the wild for the elements and animals to take away. The hundreds of stones that had made up the cairn would each correspond to an ancestor who had passed on. Mats woven from plains grasses and dyed in ceremonial patterns were arrayed around the pile, torn and trampled by the horses' hooves. Two nearby stone benches would have provided a place for those who could not kneel, the sick and the elderly, to sit during ceremonies.

A foot-tall wall of clay bricks ringed the cairn. Most of the wall had been knocked down, and the bricks dotted the area. If this village was anything like mine, the village's religious leaders, elders, and anyone else with cause to speak would have stood atop the wall while addressing the community.

The Technic League had utterly destroyed the cairn. Stones lay scattered across the ground as if a giant had

smashed its fist down on the top of the structure. A few of the stones were cracked, deliberately destroyed by the Technic League agents. Where the cairn had stood, a hole two feet across gaped in the ground.

Eirian and I approached the hole carefully. When we reached the edge, I saw a flat metal plate wedged in the ground six inches down. Dirt streaked the plate, and its dull patina revealed that it had lain here for some time. The edges of the rock around the plate looked almost melted, as if someone had pressed the plate into liquid rock and then the stone had hardened around its edges.

An indentation in the plate showed where a square object had been removed. The broken ends of a few fine copper wires poked up from the notch.

"This is what they came for," I said.

"How did they know it was here?"

I crouched by the hole and touched the plate. It felt cold and dusty. "Rumors, perhaps. I've known tribes to do this. They find pieces of the machinery that fell from the sky long ago and hide them away. The elders perform rituals to cleanse the ground, believing that technology so hidden won't hurt anyone or infect the land."

"You said your people were superstitious, but I didn't realize the extent."

"Technology can be dangerous." I stood up and gestured at the cuff on my wrist. "Just because it's useful doesn't mean it can't be deadly. We don't understand what came from the sky. Some believe the safest course of action is to lock it away."

Eirian's eyes glittered. "Is that what you believe?"

"I did, once."

"And now?"

I looked at the sky, tried to pick out stars behind the haze. "Sometimes I think my people had it right. But I've seen more of the world now. Some days I don't know what to think."

Eirian made no reply, busying herself instead with sifting through the wreckage of the village in search of supplies. I left her to her task and set about rebuilding the cairn. It was well past midnight when we finished. I was exhausted, and Eirian had found few supplies; most things of value were taken by the Technic League or damaged beyond use. She showed me her findings: a few lengths of rope, a stoppered clay jug of wine, a half-dozen bits of sharp stone, and a bone knife. None of it had spiritual significance, and the villagers wouldn't need the items, so I nodded and she stowed the bounty in her pack.

We said our respective prayers over all the bodies we could find and left them for nature to take. "Let's find a safer spot to camp," I said.

"Not too far away, though," Eirian said. "We can leave the robot in the ground overnight and free him in the morning once I've offered my prayers to Brigh."

I nodded and we headed back to Tryg's hiding place. I had in mind a small dell that we'd passed on the way in, close enough that we could see the village but far enough away that we wouldn't have to smell it.

As we passed the stone mound covering Tryg, though, I stopped and pointed. "Look."

Eirian stopped and followed my gesture. "Scratches?"

I bent to examine the mound more closely. I heard a faint tapping from within as Tryg tried to free itself from its prison. A dozen long scrapes marred the surface of the mound, as if from a metal tool or a sharpened stone.

I straightened and turned in a slow circle, straining to see. Even in the bright moonlight my vision was limited. The night seemed still, hiding no threat.

Eirian noticed me straining my eyes against the darkness, so she scanned the area as well.

"Let's camp here instead," I said. "We can keep an eye on Tryg."

"What does it mean?" Eirian knelt down and traced one of the scratches with her finger. "Someone attacked the stone?"

"Someone tried to open it."

Together, Eirian and I searched the surrounding area. When we were satisfied that whoever had been here was gone, I placed my bedroll next to Tryg's hiding place and readied myself for a few hours of sleep before dawn.

"Do you think it was the Technic League?" Eirian asked as I settled down.

"No," I said. The haze was lifting and the stars shone brightly in the sky. "We would have heard them if they'd doubled back. And they likely would have succeeded in freeing Tryg. This person was careful, stealthy. I don't know who they are, but it seems we're not the only ones interested in our little robot."

THE TECHNIC LEAGUE

More than 200 years ago, the Technic League came to be. This group of unscrupulous spellcasters came together to study the strange technology littered across Numeria. They subjugated numerous Kellid tribes using not only their skill with arcane magic, but also the technological artifacts they possessed.

Before long, the Technic League realized that excavating ruins and experimenting on the items within could take them only so far. The League wanted to explore the interaction between technology and living flesh. At first, the agents experimented on themselves or willing individuals, but soon their need for subjects overrode their ethics (if they ever had any to begin with). They began experimenting on prisoners and slaves, but some even resorted to kidnapping people, dragging these poor souls back to their towers and workshops.

Once the Technic League discovered the secret to controlling gearsmen, they were able to make use of the robots to solidify their power and influence.

Admission to the Technic League requires intelligence, confidence, and in some cases, a near-complete lack of empathy. The Technic League's interests are best served by those wholly devoted to expanding the League's power and increasing its knowledge. Many who join the League and find it too ruthless for their conscience find themselves upon the laboratory tables as the next day's experimental subjects.



BESTIARY

IT WAS THE THIRD TIME WE DELVED INTO THE SINKHOLE THAT WE DISCOVERED THE ROBOT. EACH TIME WE WENT IN, WE DISCOVERED NEW THINGS—AND THEY GOT STRANGER AND STRANGER WITH EACH EXPEDITION. THE FIRST TIME WE SIMPLY CLEARED OUT THE CHOKERS THAT WERE LODGING IN THERE. THE SECOND TIME WE FOUND A SECRET PANEL THAT OPENED INTO A SPAN OF CRISSCROSSING TUNNELS. AT LEAST A DOZEN METAL DOORS WERE FITTED INTO EACH LENGTH OF THESE CORRIDORS, ALL MARKED IN A LANGUAGE NONE OF US RECOGNIZED. BEHIND ONE OF THESE DOORS WAS THE ROBOT. AS SOON AS WE PRIED THE DOOR OPEN, THE ROBOT ERUPTED INTO THE CORRIDOR, RUNNING ON ALL FOURS LIKE A MASSIVE DOG. TWO RUBBERY TUBES SHOT FROM ITS BACK AND WHIPPED AROUND IN THE AIR. THE SILVERY SPIKES AT THE END OF EACH TUBE SEEMED EAGER TO PLUNGE INTO US.

—MARLISS NALATHANE, EXPLORER

This volume of the Iron Gods Adventure Path features terrible radioactive undead, alien genetic manipulators, a tough robot used as a guardian, and a robot that steals thoughts.

DEADLY BEASTS AND METAL MENACES

The random encounter table presented here features a number of typical threats the PCs could encounter while exploring the region near the Choking Tower or on their journey from Iadenveigh to the Smokewood. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 20% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend exploring the area, but no more than two random encounters per day. Some of these encounters involve creatures from particular events in the adventure, so if one of the random encounter rolls results in a specific creature the party has already faced (such as the yaoguai), roll again or choose a different encounter.

Since this adventure spans a range of levels, some results might be too easy or too difficult for the PCs, depending on where they are in the course of the adventure. If the result rolled is outside the challenge rating range appropriate for the PCs, roll again or choose a different encounter.

GMs who wish to learn more about Numeria or those looking for other hazards and encounter ideas should check out *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Numeria, Land of Fallen Stars*. Details on the robot subtype can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary*, and they were reprinted for ease of use in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #85: Fires of Creation*.

Cruel Coven (CR 9): A hag coven has made its home in a gloomy clearing in the Smokewood. A pair of annis hags (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 316) named Thelena and Maridala formed a powerful bond with their new sister Hildreth, a green hag (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 167). The trio keep the hill giants in the area cowed, instilling fear in the simple brutes by threatening to call down storms and taunting the giants in their dreams. When they feel the need, the hags bully the giants into providing tributes of captives, or demand impossible tasks to sate their heartless sense of entertainment.

Helpful Hunter (CR 11): Travelers coming through Iadenveigh report a stunning leopard that paces alongside the road, watching those who travel it. The creature stays close, but never menaces those it watches. What people don't quite realize is that the leopard is an animal lord (*Bestiary* 314) named Jenala who has dedicated herself to making safe the region surrounding Iadenveigh. Jenala visits the town from time to time to restock needed provisions, but most of the time she stays outside its earthen walls. Jenala can help if the PCs get lost or need detailed information about the surrounding wilderness.

SMOKEWOOD ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01–04	1 hodag	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 148
05–10	1 dire bear	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 31
11–13	1 totenmaske	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 269
14–17	1 yaoguai	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 284
18–21	1 fungal nymph	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 116
22–26	1 giant tarantula	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 256
27–29	1d4 girallons	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 154
30–33	1 goliath stag beetle	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 44
34–36	1 guecubu	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 145
37–38	1d8 forest drakes	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 107
39–43	1 treant	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 266
44–47	1 wolf-in-sheep's-clothing	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 285
48–53	1 aurumvorax	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 35
54–58	Cruel Coven	9	See below
59–63	1d4 hill giants	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 150
64–67	1 nependis	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 202
68–73	Sadistic Necromancer	9	See below
74–77	1 tick swarm	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 265
78–80	1 tikbalang	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 260
81–83	1 bebilith	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 32
84–87	1d4 baykoks	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 35
88–91	Helpful Hunter	11	See below
92–94	1 jinmenju	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 161
95–97	1 athach	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 33
98–100	1 viper vine	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 279

Although she has visited the Smokewood a number of times, it has been a few months since her last appearance. This means some of her information about that region may be outdated, but she makes sure to warn the PCs about hill giants. Note that she has never personally seen the Choking Tower.

If the PCs get in over their heads in a fight, Jenala can aid them in combat for a short time, but she never sticks around as there are always others who need her help as well.

Sadistic Necromancer (CR 9): In a tangled section of the Smokewood, where the thick tree limbs obscure even the noonday sun, a pukwudgie (*Bestiary* 3 223) preys on those traveling too near the forest. He snatches lone wanderers, slays them with his poisonous quills, and transforms them into zombies (*Bestiary* 288) to add to his brood. All in all, the pukwudgie currently controls 16 such creatures. The other denizens of the Smokewood avoid this vile creature's den, even giving up on prey that go near where the pukwudgie and his zombie minions lurk. If the pukwudgie hears or sees the PCs pass nearby, he uses *invisibility* to remain hidden until he can exploit a weakness in their defenses. He then commands his zombies to attack the PCs while he waits to pick off individual combatants and impale them with his quills before becoming invisible again.

IRRADIATED DEAD

This humanoid creature's pale orange, withered skin peels from its flesh in patches. Its yellow eyes stare, unblinking but seething with rage.

IRRADIATED DEAD

CR 7



XP 3,200

NE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

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

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +12 (1d6+5 plus radiation)

Special Attacks create spawn, radioactive, radioactive spew

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Climb +9, Perception +15, Stealth +14, Swim +6

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Numeria)

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–6)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid creature that is slain by an irradiated dead's radiation becomes an irradiated dead itself in 1d4 rounds. Spawn so created are less powerful than typical irradiated dead, taking a –2 penalty on all d20 rolls and having 2 fewer hit points per Hit Die. Spawn are under the command of the irradiated dead that created them and remain enslaved until its destruction, at which point they lose their spawn penalties to d20 rolls and become full-fledged and free-willed irradiated dead. They don't possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Radioactive (Ex) Any creature that comes in contact with an irradiated dead risks infection from the radiation that consumes the creatures. Any creature hit by an irradiated dead's slam attack or radioactive spew risks infection, as does any creature who touches an irradiated dead. On a failed saving throw, the target is affected by medium radiation and radiates low radiation in a 10-foot radius for as long as it remains afflicted. For more information on radiation, see page 55 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide*. This is a poison effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Radiation: Slam—contact; save Fort DC 18; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 Con drain; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Radioactive Spew (Ex) Three times per day as a standard action, an irradiated dead can spew a 15-foot cone of irradiated viscera from its mouth. Creatures in the area take 2d6 points of acid damage and are subjected to the creature's radiation. A successful DC 18 Reflex save halves the damage. Creatures that takes damage from this effect are subject to the irradiated dead's radioactive special ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Little more than orange-tinted, blistered flesh drawn across skeletons, the irradiated dead were once humanoids—mainly Kellid warriors—who have been tainted by the radiation that's strewn across Numeria. Created as a result of experiments by members of the Technic League, a handful of irradiated dead escaped their restraints and set off across Numeria, creating more of their kind with each kill. With the strange chemicals and radiation coursing through their bodies and augmenting survival and hunting instincts, they scour the Numerian wastes in search of prey. Irradiated dead generally appear the same size as the humanoids they once were, but they weigh less due to their bodies have been ravaged by radiation.

ECOLOGY

The secretive cabal known as the Technic League has always looked for ways to bolster its military power beyond the use of the gearsmen. Over the past couple centuries, the League's members have made numerous foul discoveries by studying the strange relics, technologies, and chemicals collected from the ruins of *Divinity*.

Originally conceived by a Technic League lieutenant as more reliable and easily replaceable minions than the gearsmen, the irradiated dead were the result of a series of experiments conducted in the shadow of the Silver Mount. The lieutenant was skilled in the use of necromancy magic, a study not normally mastered by Technic League members. She gathered a group of the strongest young warriors in Starfall—all of whom sought to make names for themselves in the service of the Black Sovereign—and subjected them to round after round of brutal endurance tests, injections of chemicals and drugs, savage bloodletting, and forced starvation until their bodies couldn't take any more.

The lieutenant administered to the warriors a number of chemical compounds recovered from a medical bay within Silver Mount that were originally intended to aid the crew of the *Divinity* in surviving in strange and hostile environments. Lacking full understanding of what they were working with, the lieutenant and her apprentices mixed and distilled these strange chemicals into a viscous, orange fluid that augmented physical strength and coordination while also thickening the outer layers of skin to a rocklike hardness. She believed that replacing the subjects' blood with the orange liquid, along with

controlled exposure to a smashed piece of wreckage leaking radiation, would yield the obedient soldiers she desired. When the first two test subjects completed the regimen, they awoke with a savage hunger for the flesh of their kind and rose up to fight her. The lieutenant escaped that first trial with only the loss of her right eye and her right hand just above the wrist. Her two apprentices were not so lucky. Subsequent refinements and tests yielded no better results. Though these latest test subjects retained their free will, their hunger for raw flesh was just as potent as the earlier attempts. And as they're generally more powerful than their Technic League creators, the irradiated dead saw no reason to serve their creators in any way.

Not long after these experiments, several irradiated dead were turned loose or escaped. Rumors persist within the Technic League of study specimens that were kept in secret, and some foolish young sub-commanders are looking to restart the project.

Burning inside with necrotic radiation, the irradiated dead display enhanced strength and coordination. Their skin and pupils are tinted pale orange like the fluids that replaced their blood. Their fingers transform into savage claws as sharp as ragged metal. Unexpectedly, the creatures show a remarkable resistance to the effects of positive energy that are deadly to most other forms of undead. They are also carriers of the radiation treatment that fueled their transition to undeath, able to pass the affliction to other living creatures.

Irradiated dead are carnivorous, greatly preferring fresh meat, but they aren't above eating carrion. Cunning, patient and careful hunters, irradiated dead can prey on a nomad tribe over months, ambushing small bands of warriors and feeding upon them one by one.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Most irradiated dead are natives of the broken Numerian wastes, and they continue haunting these regions in their new forms just as they inhabited the wastes in life. They generally search for new hunting grounds in solitude, but those that manage to create their own spawn travel in packs with those they have transformed. Whether roaming across the plains, hills, and valleys, or even wading through muck and waterways, they spend much of their time lurking in shadowy places on the outskirts of villages or tribal encampments. They do not generally keep personal possessions or treasure from their meals, but may use such things to lure and entrap subsequent search parties.

Though they're intelligent, the irradiated dead rarely show any inclination toward forming social groups or hierarchies, preferring to kill and eat creatures that enter their territories, though they will deal with other intelligent creatures if they must. If they encounter more powerful beings in their hunting grounds, irradiated




dead will work to trick or trap them. The irradiated dead simply move on to new territories if they are unable to eliminate the threat. An unconfirmed report by a Technic League spy in Sunder Horn, however, claimed that at least three fast-moving, orange-skinned creatures had been hunting on the outskirts of town for nearly a year. The creatures have seemingly disappeared without any further sightings in the last 18 months.

Even the Technic League is aware of the dangers these creatures could pose to the populace. The methods used to create the irradiated dead are well-guarded secrets of the Technic League. These techniques are also impossible to implement outside of Numeria, because the necrotic radiation and alien chemicals instrumental to their creation can be found nowhere else on Golarion.



ROBOT, THOUGHT HARVESTER

Rows of crystal spheres line the back of this four-legged robot. A single glowing eye sits in the middle of its head.

THOUGHT HARVESTER ROBOT	CR 10	  
XP 9,600		
N Medium construct (robot)		
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +19		
DEFENSE		
AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)		
hp 131 (13d10+20 plus 40 hp force field)		
Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8		
Defensive Abilities hardness 10; Immune construct traits;		
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10		
Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits and electricity		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft.		
Melee claw +19 (1d6+6 plus grab), 2 integrated nanite injectors +19 (1d4+6 plus harvest thoughts)		
Ranged integrated sonic rifle +15 ranged touch (3d6 sonic)		
Special Attacks constrict (1d6+9), harvest thoughts, integrated nanite injectors, integrated sonic rifle		
STATISTICS		
Str 22, Dex 15, Con —, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 1		
Base Atk +13; CMB +19; CMD 32 (36 vs. trip)		
Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack		
Skills Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +6		
Languages Androffan, Common		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any (Numeria)		
Organization solitary or squad (2–6)		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Force Field (Ex) A thought harvester is sheathed in a thin layer of shimmering energy that grants it 40 bonus hit points. All damage dealt to a thought harvester with an active force field is reduced from these hit points first. As long as the force field is active, the thought harvester is immune to critical hits. A thought harvester's force field has fast healing 10, but once its hit points are reduced to 0, the force field shuts down and does not reactivate for 24 hours.		
Integrated Nanite Injectors (Ex) A thought harvester is outfitted with two nanite injectors. These modified syringes are mounted on the end of animated, flexible tubes that feed into the robot's crystal spheres and allow it to use its harvest thoughts ability. These injectors are treated as a piercing weapons that deal 1d4 points of damage, but can't be salvaged to be used on their own.		
Integrated Sonic Rifle (Ex) A thought harvester has an built-in sonic rifle slung beneath its head. This weapon has a range of 150 feet and deals 3d6 points of sonic damage.		

The weapon can fire once per round and does so in a burst of shots that attacks all creatures in a line. This line starts from any corner of the robot's space and extends to the limit of the weapon's range or until it strikes a barrier it can't penetrate. The robot must make a separate attack roll against each creature in the line, and each creature in the line can be attacked with only one shot from each burst. Each attack roll takes a –2 penalty, and its damage can't be modified by precision damage or damage-increasing feats such as Vital Strike. Effects that grant concealment (such as fog or smoke) or the spells *blur*, *invisibility*, or *mirror image* don't affect this weapon's attack. Roll to confirm each attack roll that threatens a critical hit separately.

Harvest Thoughts (Ex) A thought harvester that hits a living creature with one of its integrated nanite injectors can selectively duplicate certain memories the target possesses. Each time the harvester uses this ability, it can copy one significant event (such as the events of a combat or a birthday party), or it can sift through the victim's memories as part of an interrogation that allows it to effectively ask and receive truthful answers to six questions. A successful DC 17 Will save negates the effects of this ability; mindless creatures or creatures with an Intelligence score of 1 are immune to it. Each time a creature's memories are copied through the use of this ability, it must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Intelligence drain. A creature's Intelligence score can't be drained below 1 in this way.

If successful, the target's copied memories appear as swirling mist within one of the crystal spheres socketed into the thought harvester's back. If the thought harvester is willing, helpless, or destroyed, a sphere can be removed from its socket with a successful DC 30 Disable Device check and be read by certain devices without damaging the memories within. This ability can be used on creatures that have been dead for less than 24 hours, but their brain must be mostly intact and only 1d4 memories can be harvested postmortem. The duration can be extended if the creature's brain has been preserved (such as by *gentle repose*) or if the creature possesses a brain that doesn't rot. The save DCs are Intelligence-based.

Thought harvesters are specialized robots designed to forcibly extract memories from a living creature or corpse. Built to survive battlefields and other hazardous environments, thought harvesters are outfitted with thick armor plating and a durable force field. Giving the thought harvester robot its name, two prehensile tendrils extend from the creature's sides, each tipped with a wickedly barbed syringe through which the creature injects sophisticated nanites into its target. These nanites immediately duplicate portions of the target's brain and return through the syringe into the thought harvester's

central core. There, the target's memories are swiftly categorized and stored in one of an array of crystalline spheres located along the robot's spine. When performed on a living target, the process is painful and can cause severe damage to the subject's cognitive reasoning capabilities. A thought harvester's head has a single glowing eye in the center, and two weapons hang beneath it. These weapons allow the thought harvester to fire bursts of sonic energy at any targets that react in an aggressive manner. A thought harvester rarely speaks, but when it does it speaks in short, monosyllabic words, and is always direct and to the point. Thought harvesters are 6 feet long and 4 feet tall. They are densely built, and weigh 1,600 lbs. A thought harvester draws energy from an efficient internal power source and continually recycles and repairs its internal store of specialized nanites.

ECOLOGY

A thought harvester is a militarized application of specialized thought-recovery technology. Nanites able to affect a target's thoughts or memories are used in weapons such as the id rifle or mindrender, but the nanites used in those devices become inert after performing their function. When they're instead directly injected and immediately recovered, the nanites duplicate a creature's thoughts and store them for review. The thought harvester's nimble frame and armored shell ensure effective frontline deployment of this technology.

Dozens of egg-sized crystalline spheres line the creature's spine, each solidly nestled within a socket in the creature's armored back. These spheres are normally clear, but when the robot recovers a creature's thoughts, a sphere fills with a cloudy, gray haze. A thought harvester might fill all of its crystal spheres after a dozen missions. Regular maintenance includes transferring harvested thoughts into specialized computers, but the technology to do so is lost on Golarion. Instead, the stolen thoughts within the spheres simply dissipate when a sphere is destroyed or incorrectly removed.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Thought harvesters are deployed in a variety of military situations in which specific intelligence must be recovered or eliminated, but bodily recovery of the target is unnecessary or unwise. A thought harvester can grab and carry a human

in its claw, but these robots are rarely used to capture living humanoids. A thought harvester might be assigned to invade an enemy stronghold to remove key orders from an opposing commander, or invade a prison to copy sensitive information from the mind of a spy captured by the enemy. Thought harvester robots are often used to recover critical intelligence from soldiers killed in the middle of a raging battle or that fell in irradiated environments. Thought harvesters are deployed only when overt force is acceptable, as they're neither stealthy nor subtle.

These robots show little individual personality as they go about their work of harvesting memories. Unlike other robots, which are generally content to stand perfectly motionless when not in use, thought harvesters tend to fidget, scanning for danger and waving their syringe-tipped tendrils in the air. A thought harvester cannot itself access any of the thoughts stored within the crystalline spheres, though it does retain some general idea of the memories it has previously collected. To the thought harvester, these memories are simply cargo to be recovered and brought back to its superiors.



ROBOT, WARDEN

Crafted of a strange, dull metal, this bulky construct stomps forward on stout, multi-jointed legs.

WARDEN ROBOT

CR 9



XP 6,400

N Large construct (robot)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +20

Aura infrasonic field (30 ft., DC 17)

DEFENSE

AC 23, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 19 (+4 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 112 (15d10+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, hardness 10, reactive armor, resilient; **Immune** construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits and electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +18 (1d8+4)

Ranged 2 integrated sonic disruptors +18 ranged touch (2d8 sonic)

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

Special Attacks combined arms, dazzler, integrated sonic disruptor

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 34

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Nimble Moves, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Stand Still

Skills **Climb** +10, **Perception** +20, **Sense Motive** +16

Languages Androffan

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Numeria)

Organization solitary, pair, or sentry (3–12)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Combined Arms (Ex) As part of a full-attack action, a warden robot can attack with both melee and ranged integrated weapons.

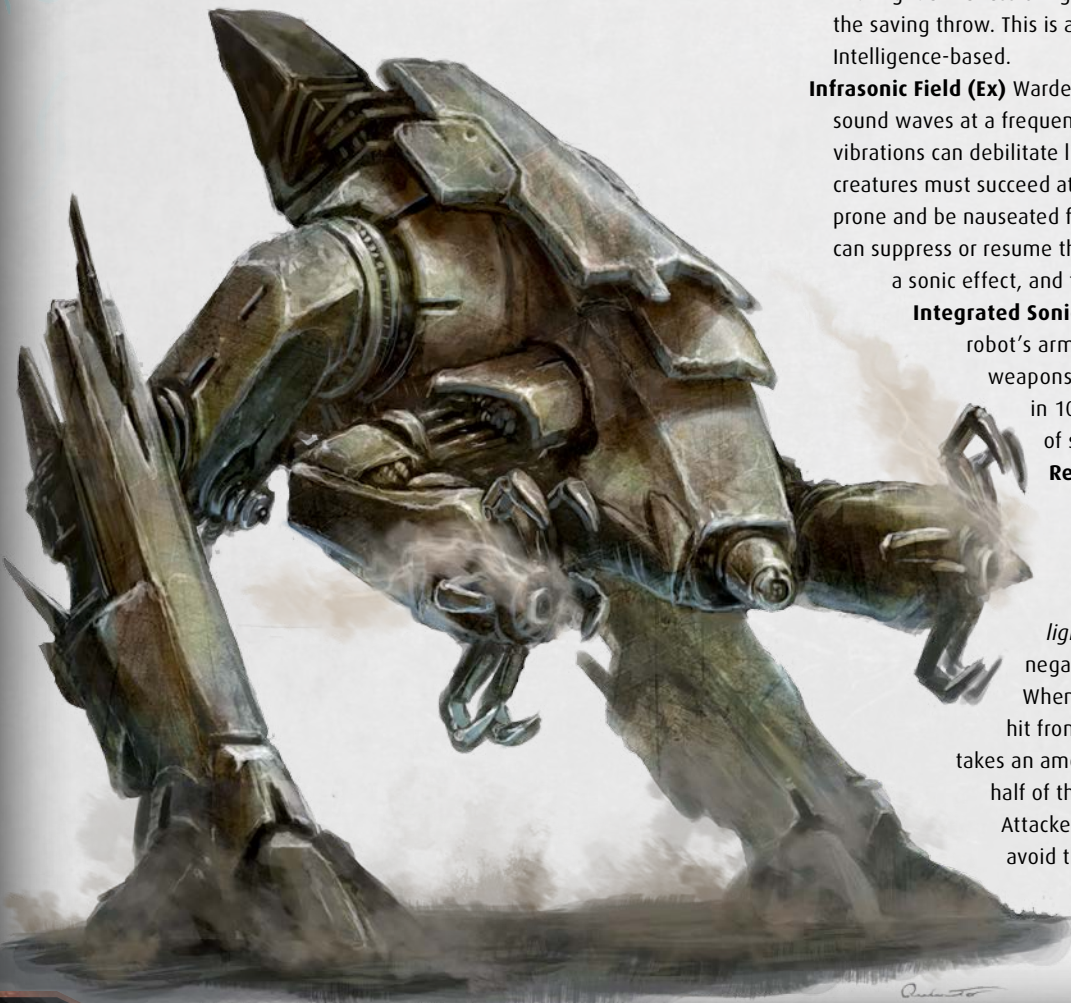
Dazzler (Ex) As a standard action, a warden robot can target a single creature with a beam of strobing light that functions as a gaze attack with a range of 60 feet. A creature subject to this attack must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or be blinded for 2d4 rounds. Creatures that successfully save are dazzled for 1d4 rounds. Creatures with light blindness or light sensitivity take a -4 penalty on the saving throw. This is a light effect, and the save DC is Intelligence-based.

Infrasonic Field (Ex) Warden robots constantly emit powerful sound waves at a frequency below normal hearing. These vibrations can debilitate living beings within 30 feet. Such creatures must succeed at DC 17 Fortitude save or fall prone and be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. A warden robot can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. This is a sonic effect, and the save DC is Intelligence-based.

Integrated Sonic Disruptor (Ex) A warden robot's arms contain built-in ranged weapons that emit focused sound waves in 100-foot rays that deal 2d8 points of sonic damage.

Reactive Armor (Ex) A warden robot is covered in a special shell that reacts explosively to powerful strikes. Due to this covering, a warden robot gains *light fortification* (25% chance to negate critical hits and sneak attacks). When the armor negates a critical hit from a melee weapon, the attacker takes an amount of fire damage equal to half of the damage dealt to the robot. Attackers using reach or ranged weapons avoid this damage.

Resilient (Ex) Warden robots receive a +3 racial bonus on all saving throws.



Wardens are dangerous guardian robots often found protecting sealed vaults or patrolling ancient, buried corridors. They carry out their orders with ruthlessness and zeal, usually offering no warning before attacking a perceived threat. The Technic League has had moderate success in controlling a few of these robots, and occasionally assigns them as guards for valuable treasures or important prisoners, roles for which they're well suited.

Although the mere sight of these massive machines is imposing enough to ward off most intruders, those who are undeterred by a warden's appearance soon find the robot to be quite capable of destroying those who enter its territory without proper clearance. Unlike golems or similarly mindless constructs, wardens possess an intelligence that allows them to employ tactics, either on their own or as part of a unit. When acting in groups, the robots are smart enough to suppress and reactivate their nausea-inducing sound waves in concert, maximizing the length of time their opponents are incapacitated.

Most wardens are in Silver Mount, but some can be found in many other parts of Numeria. Nearly all share the same characteristics: a squat upper body with a domed shape and two arms ending in six surprisingly dexterous "fingers" surrounding emitters that serve as its primary ranged weapons. Two stout, multi-jointed legs provide the construct with great mobility, even on hilly or rough terrain.

ECOLOGY

Wardens were obviously designed and programmed to guard objects, people, or locations. Although they have no life cycle to speak of, these robots do seem to possess certain behavioral characteristics that make them fascinating to Numerian scholars.

The warden's reactive armor is a matter of particular interest to the Technic League. Although the robots are still vulnerable to critical hits, their armor reduces the risk posed by this weakness. A few of the League's most talented members have devoted themselves to determining how the reactive armor works and how to replicate it. The secret appears to be in the material that comprises the robot's exoskeleton—which behaves like metal in all respects until struck by a powerful force, when it responds with a violent, fiery explosion. Amazingly, the explosive material restores itself over time, as long as the robot continues to function.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Wardens, like many robots found in Numeria, follow strict internal programming that guides their actions. Their special programming, however, is somewhat more flexible than that of other robots. Wardens learn and adapt, especially when it comes to facing specialized types of foes.

As constructs built by ancient masters whose goals and intentions are almost unknowable, wardens have no

society in the traditional sense of the word. They exist only to follow their programming to the best of their ability. Still, their ability to adapt and work together in small groups makes them formidable opponents for those who would seek treasures in the ancient caches scattered throughout Numeria.

Although capable of speech, wardens communicate with each other by some other means. They coordinate efforts silently, and skillfully arrange patrols to maximize coverage of their assigned areas. As long as a warden is guarding something (whether by itself or as part of a group of wardens), it nearly always follows the orders of the creature that owns the object or location. Wardens demonstrate a clear understanding of their duties, and can apply their alien intelligence toward problem solving when the situation requires it. This makes them effective jailers as well, since they can use their incapacitating sound field against prisoners who attempt to escape—as well as on those who might try to break the prisoners out.

WARDENS OF NOTE


Wardens appear to have been an apex design, for the same model has been found guarding many of the chambers in Silver Mount, as well as other scattered remnants of the massive vessel that fell from the sky so long ago. However, a few have been known to display different characteristics. Some of these alterations are intentional modifications made by people with great knowledge and skill. Other models may have even stranger origins.

Red Terror (N warden robot ranger 7): The robot known as Red Terror guards a section of tunnels within the Red Redoubt of Karamoss. Red Terror appears to have been crafted using an alloy of djezet and steel (known as djezeteel). It's unclear whether the mad wizard Karamoss created the specialized warden robot using deciphered schematics or merely modified an existing construct. Either way, Red Terror is a skilled and ruthless hunter that relentlessly pursues intruders in its domain. Those adventurers who have encountered Red Terror claim that the robot actually seems to take pleasure in the gruesome deaths of its prey. The robot also seems to have some way to empower spellcasters it allies with and enhance the power of their spells.

Silent Sentinel (CR 9): Explorers investigating ruins in the Felldales of western Numeria have reported encountering a unique version of the warden robot that can generate fields that cancel sound rather than induce nausea, earning it the name "Silent Sentinel." This aura has the effect of a *silence* spell with a 30-foot radius centered on the warden, but the effect can't be dispelled or countered by magic. Instead of sonic disruptors, Silent Sentinel is equipped with integrated lasers that deal 2d8 points of fire damage. Based on recent reports from near the First Blade's Path, this specialized warden doesn't keep to just the Felldales.

THORGOTHREL

A skeleton of silver rods gives this blob of protoplasm a roughly defined shape with an approximation of three arms and legs. Its outer skin shimmers with a rainbow of colors.

THORGOTHREL	CR 8	
XP 4,800		
LE Large ooze		
Init +4; Senses blindsight 100 ft.; Perception +11		
DEFENSE		
AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21 (+12 natural, -1 size)		
hp 100 (8d8+24 plus 40 hp force field)		
Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7		
Immune cold, electricity, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits;		
Resist acid 10		
OFFENSE		
Speed 20 ft.		
Melee 2 slams +11 (1d6+6 plus bleed)		
Ranged force ray +5 ranged touch (10d6 force)		
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.		
Special Attacks atavistic manipulation, bleed (1 Int damage), force ray		
STATISTICS		
Str 22, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 11		
Base Atk +6; CMB +13; CMD 23 (25 vs. trip)		
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes		
Skills Disable Device +8, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +11; Racial Modifiers +4 Heal		
Languages Aklo, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.		
SQ no breath, poisonous sublimation		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any		
Organization solitary		
Treasure standard (silver armature worth 350 gp, other treasure)		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Atavistic Manipulation (Su) A thorgothrel can alter a target's genetic structure to induce rapid evolutionary regression by dealing Intelligence bleed damage with its slam attacks. As the target mentally regresses, it also becomes more feral and violent. A target that has taken at least 4 points of Intelligence damage from a thorgothrel gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength. If a thorgothrel spends an hour experimenting on a target rendered unconscious due to Intelligence damage, it can make this regression permanent. Thereafter, the target's Intelligence score is reduced to 1. This regression can be reversed only with <i>heal</i> , <i>limited wish</i> , <i>miracle</i> , or <i>wish</i> . At the GM's discretion, the target might change in additional ways to reflect its atavistic regression.		
Force Field (Ex) A thorgothrel with a silver armature is sheathed in a thin layer of shimmering energy that grants 40 bonus hit points. All damage dealt to a thorgothrel with an active		

force field is reduced from these hit points first. As long as the force field is active, the thorgothrel is immune to critical hits. A thorgothrel's force field has fast healing 10, but once its hit points are reduced to 0, the force field shuts down and can only be reactivated if the thorgothrel spends a full-round action and succeeds at a DC 15 Disable Device check. If successful, the force field reactivates with 1 hit point.

Force Ray (Ex) As a standard action, a thorgothrel can lose 5 hit points from its force field (if it has that many or more remaining) in order to fire a ray of force at any target within 100 feet. The ray is a ranged touch attack that deals 10d6 points of force damage.

Poisonous Sublimation (Ex) When a thorgothrel without an active force field is in a region with breathable atmosphere, it begins to evaporate into a poisonous mist. The thorgothrel takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round at the beginning of its turn, and the mist expands to fill a 20-foot radius. Any living creature in the mist with 6 or fewer HD must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or be slain. A creature with more than 6 HD takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round while in the mist (Fortitude half). A moderate wind disperses the mist in 4 rounds; a strong wind disperses the mist in 1 round. This is a poison effect, and the save DC is Constitution-based.

Thorgothrels are a spacefaring race of aggressive genetic manipulators. In their natural form, thorgothrels are blobs of protoplasm 12 feet in diameter that move with awkward undulation. Thorgothrels can extrude pseudopods in order to manipulate objects and form simple tools. These pseudopods excrete a complex cocktail of chemicals that can force changes to a victim's underlying genetic structure.

Weighed down by Golarion's gravity and quick to sublimate into poisonous vapor in the atmosphere, thorgothrels find Golarion (and similar planets) inherently inimical. A thorgothrel can move about on Golarion only by wrapping its body around a frame of silver rods that provides inner support and encases the creature in a resilient force field barrier. Despite the hazard Golarion's atmosphere poses to these alien creatures, the planet's staggering diversity of life presents a veritable cornucopia of beings upon which they can perform their genetic experimentations, inching closer to their goal of returning all creatures to a primeval, atavistic state.

The silver armature largely determines the exact size of a thorgothrel, but a typical thorgothrel stands around 11 feet tall and weighs about 900 lbs.

ECOLOGY

Hailing from a distant planet with a radically different environment, thorgothrels don't fit into Golarion's ecosystem. The environment on Golarion is deadly to this spacefaring race, as the planet's comparatively low

air pressure causes them to vaporize when exposed to it. Thorgothrels on Golarion combat this by remaining continually sheathed in a protective force field to avoid fatal dematerialization. Even in the best of conditions, a thorgothrel moves slowly. On Golarion, it must wrap its protoplasmic form around an artificial skeleton in order to move at a speed greater than a crawl. Thorgothrel mathematics are based on a ternary system, which is reflected in their armatures usually having three legs and three arms radially placed around a central spine.

Thorgothrels feed on electrical currents and certain metals. The armatures thorgothrels create in order to provide mobility are made of electromagnetically charged and refined silver, and thus contain all of the nutrients the creatures need to survive for several months. Without an armature, a thorgothrel requires an ounce of silver per week to survive. Thorgothrels don't require true sleep, and the torpor they enter in the long years of travel between planets in their strange ships provides them with sufficient rest to remain active for months at a time.

Thorgothrels communicate telepathically, and consider verbal communication to be the sort of anathema that drives their work toward retrogressive development.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

The thorgothrel race were once humanoids. The greatest of their scientists and philosophers concluded that evolutionary advancement was a danger to the universe as a whole, and that life in its most primitive state was safest for all creatures. The thorgothrels began a great spacefaring crusade to subjugate other planets and force regressive evolution on the planets' denizens via genetic manipulation. Thorgothrels take pride in devolving entire planets into primitive life forms, and slaughter those races that put up too much of a struggle against their "great work."

As the thorgothrels "improved" world after world, they also manipulated their own genes. While maintaining their intelligence and skill at genetic manipulation, the race regressed its form to that of sentient blobs of protoplasm. Thorgothrels buttress the weaknesses of these new bodies, such as low mobility, with technological solutions. Although silver armatures and defensive force fields are the most common artifacts of thorgothrel science, rumors from other worlds tell of thorgothrels that occupy gargantuan walking machines or psychic field projectors powerful enough to render entire cities docile.

Their great crusade has caused the once numerous thorgothrel race to dwindle, but the race's fervor to enforce regression still continues on many far-flung planets. A few decades ago, thorgothrel explorers discovered Golarion and were staggered by the abundance of advanced life found on this world. However, Golarion's unfavorable environment and great distance from the thorgothrels' homeworld has so far stymied a full-scale assault. To date, only a few daring adventurer-geneticists have come to Golarion. To avoid attracting wide public attention, these thorgothrels pursue their regression experiments in isolated locations, such as lonely wastelands, border outposts, or hidden valleys. Thorgothrels carefully dissect failed experiments in order to hone their craft, but usually set successfully regressed victims free. Rumors of remote areas where animals or people have suddenly "gone wild" or "turned feral" may indicate a thorgothrel's presence.

Thorgothrels are arrogant and prone to overconfidence. Most thorgothrels encountered on Golarion have visited dozens of other worlds, and they consider even the most advanced of Golarion's creatures to be evolutionary mistakes that must be corrected or exterminated. This gives thorgothrels little reason to communicate with other races, which in turn feeds into their intellectual and philosophical mandate to act however they see fit.



VALLEY OF THE BRAIN COLLECTORS

By Mike Shel

The heroes of Numeria must brave a remote canyon known as the Scar of the Spider. Clues found in the Choking Tower revealed that a mysterious prophet left her legacy behind in this valley long ago—a legacy that could reveal methods to defeat the Iron God of the Silver Mount. But the adventurers aren't the first visitors to the Scar of the Spider, and as they explore, they realize that alien monstrosities have colonized the canyon and have horrific agendas of their own. Can they escape the clutches of these vile creatures, or will their brains become the latest addition to an otherworldly collection?

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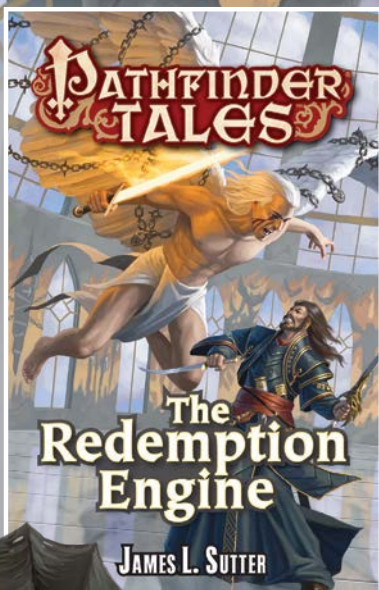
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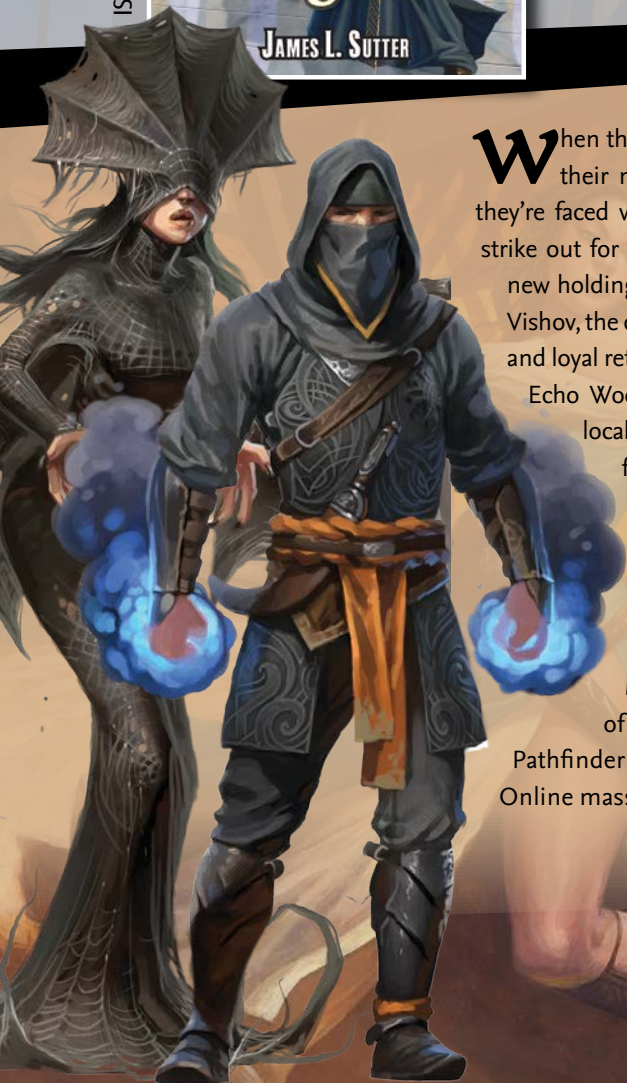
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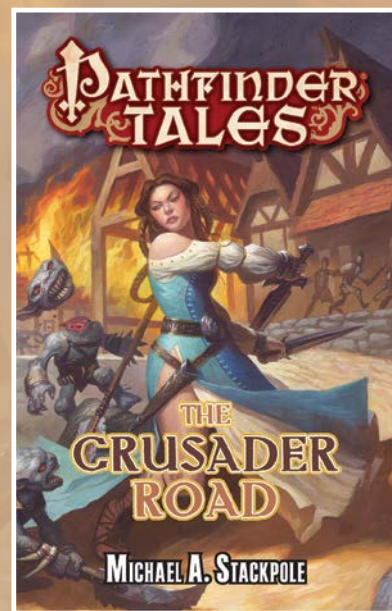
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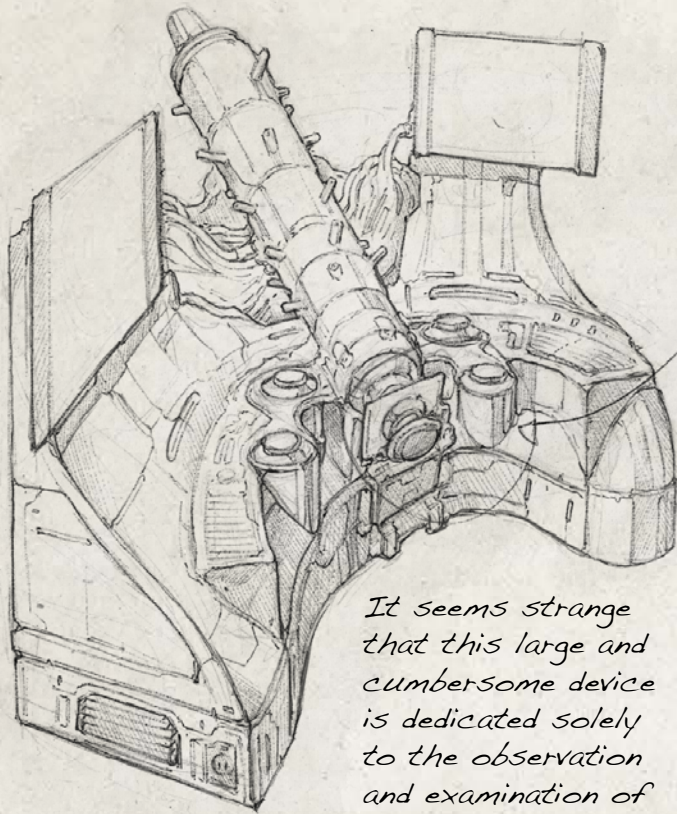
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It seems strange that this large and cumbersome device is dedicated solely to the observation and examination of microscopic objects.



When viewed at extreme magnification, the objects within the mist were as diverse in their shape as they were in their behaviors. Yet they all seemed to follow the will of a central hive mind.

The gas emitted by this device was of a pale color and smelled faintly of burning hair.



Before the device was removed from the wall, little of its machinery was visible to direct observation.

Numerous traps of a technological nature guarded the site. Some utilized devastating weapons mounted on turrets, while others simply blasted rooms with steam, fire, or peals of devastating sound.

Those that used toxic or radioactive gas quickly became the most feared, for upon contact, the pale fumes from these traps delivered contagions that gained potency the longer they were left to work on affected flesh.

DARK CLOUDS GATHERING

The Lords of Rust and their strange Iron God have been defeated, but the victory of Numeria's newest heroes has uncovered a threat to the land much greater than a mere gang of bandits. A mightier Iron God is rising in power in the enigmatic Silver Mount—but before the heroes can confront it, they must recover the legacy of this strange deity's first worshiper. Clues lead to the technophobic town of Iadenveigh, a farming community near the mysterious Choking Tower of technomancer Furkas Xoud. What role will this knowledge-obsessed “smoke wizard” play in this unfolding threat? Will the heroes be ready in time for their inevitable clash with Numeria's greatest Iron God?

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