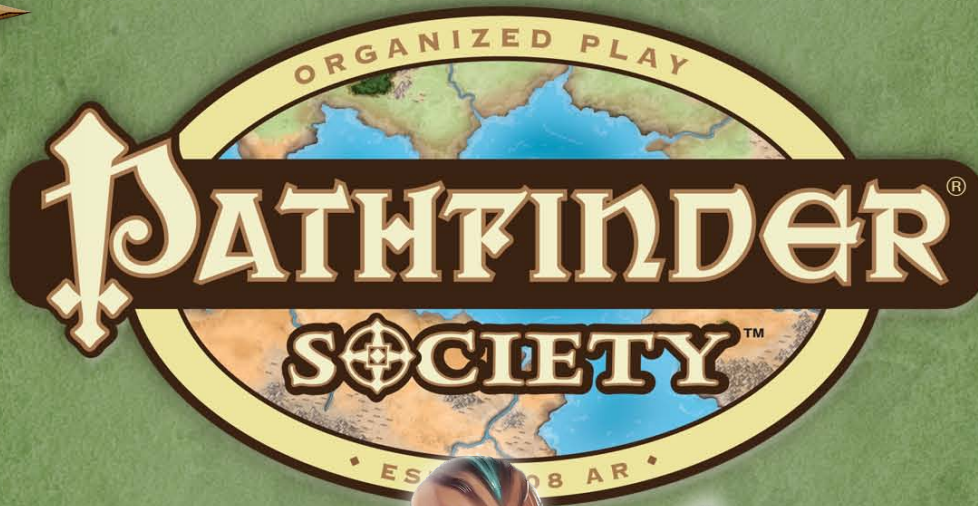


A Pathfinder Society Introductory Scenario



First Steps, Part III:
**A VISION
OF BETRAYAL**

By Larry Wilhelm



FIRST STEPS, PART III: A VISION OF BETRAYAL

A PATHFINDER SOCIETY INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO

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Pathfinder Society Introductory Scenario: First Steps, Part III: A Vision of Betrayal is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st-level characters (Tier 1). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. This scenario is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

The OGL can be found on page 18 of this product.

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FIRST STEPS, PART III: A VISION OF BETRAYAL

BY LARRY WILHELM

Ancient Azlant, the pinnacle of human civilization, lies shattered and abandoned to history, but her mysterious past and enigmatic artifacts cause modern scholars to scour Golarion for remnants of her forgotten magic. Devastated during Earthfall, the rare Azlanti ruins that remain today are thoroughly looted, carefully guarded, or lost to the ocean's depths entirely. One of Azlant's few surviving ruins within the Inner Sea region rests on the Isle of Erran within the city of Escadar. What makes these ruins unique is the presence of the Low Azlanti, a strange but handsome people with striking Azlanti features who dwell amid Escadar's populace. However, these well-formed men and women possess something the ancient Azlanti did not—gills. Long rumored to be the descendants of ancient Azlant, these gillmen ply the waters near the sites of their supposed ancestors, venerating their glorious past.

The gillmen of Escadar maintain a comfortable existence retrieving sunken artifacts from the Inner Sea's depths, which they often trade or sell to land-dwellers, including the Pathfinder Society. This practice wasn't a secret, however, and the sinister Aspis Consortium—an organization similar to the Pathfinders, but motivated by greed; wealth; and desire for power over the acquisition of knowledge, secrets, and lore—hopes to trick the Pathfinders into handing over a valuable Azlanti artifact from their own collection using an offer of trade from the gillmen as a cover.

A month ago, a gillman emissary approached the Decemvirate offering a trade. He explained that an underwater search off the coast of the Isle of Erran had unearthed a valuable relic the Society would likely want, but that the Low Azlanti embassy wanted a piece from the Grand Lodge's vault in exchange. In truth, this emissary was simply a gillman agent of the Aspis Consortium, and there was no relic to be traded. The venture-captain negotiating on the Ten's behalf quickly agreed, for the Society's goal of unearthing new discoveries far outweighed the price of losing an item that they had already studied.

The Aspis agent who masterminded the plan, herself a Low Azlanti named Ulionestia, hoped to draw the

WHERE ON GOLARION?

First Steps, Part III: A Vision of Betrayal takes place on the two islands that make up Absalom's holdings, the Isle of Kortos and the Isle of Erran. The adventure starts in the metropolis of Absalom and soon expands with a trek across the Isle of Kortos's wild interior. The PCs' journey ends in the naval city of Escadar, where they interact with the mysterious gillmen who maintain an embassy there. You can learn more about Absalom, the Isle of Kortos, and the gillmen of Escadar in the Pathfinder Campaign Setting books *The Inner Sea World Guide* and *Guide to Absalom*, both available at your local bookstore, hobby store, or online at paizo.com.



Society's relic away from the center of Pathfinder Society's resources in Absalom, and began spreading rumors of the Aspis Consortium's desire to obtain the same gillman relic. She employed an unarmed vessel to masquerade as a warship monitoring Absalom's harbor, threatening to intercept any Pathfinder vessel sent to Escadar, and made sure the Society heard that the Aspis Consortium would soon make a bid for the artifact themselves.

The Pathfinder Society took the bait, and believing the Aspis Consortium would concentrate on Pathfinders sailing from Absalom to Escadar, they employed a group of agents to accompany a relics broker into Absalom's hinterlands using a secret smuggling route across the island; from the fishing town of Pier's End, they are to hire

THE FIRST STEPS SERIES

The three-part *First Steps* series is intended to introduce new players and new characters from experienced players to the Pathfinder Society, the city of Absalom, and the 10 factions to which all members of the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign can belong. While each adventure in the series is a self-contained story, the series is intended to be played in order by brand new PCs without any experience or prestige. At the end of this scenario, after the PCs have met and done a favor for all 10 faction heads, they can choose their PCs' faction; the prestige PCs have earned in all three scenarios is then applied to their faction.

This series may only be played at the normal advancement rate of 3 XP per level, meaning PCs who complete the series will advance to 2nd level, making them better prepared for tiered adventuring in normal Pathfinder Society play.

a boat to ferry them across to Escadar. The Decemvirate are unaware, however, that the Aspis plot involves the very gillman they have already made a bargain with, and when the trap is sprung in Escadar, it will fall to the agents they selected to keep the organization from falling prey to a cleverly crafted swindle.

SUMMARY

The adventure begins at the Grand Lodge in Absalom, where Venture-Captain Drandle Dreng asks the PCs to escort a relics broker named Nester Rees across the Isle of Kortos to the Grindylow's Goblet in Escadar. Once in Escadar, the PCs must also ensure that Rees successfully negotiates a deal between the gillmen and the Pathfinder Society to exchange a Society relic for a more valuable relic in the gillmen's possession.

To get to Escadar, the PCs face an approximately 7-day-long journey across the Isle of Kortos's untamed interior. Along their journey, the PCs venture through dark forests, cold mountain passes, and fetid marshlands before once more reaching civilization, where they can hire a boat to carry them across the channel to Escadar.

During the first leg of their journey, the PCs enter a dark forest, and here a small band of centaurs warns them about a recent predator that stalks these once quiet woods. As the PCs pass through the woods, a 2-day-long journey, a krenshar stalks and eventually attacks them.

On the second leg of the PCs' journey, their path starts to climb steeply into the jagged tors of the Kortos Mounts. Travel through the mountain pass takes another 2 days, and the PCs must survive the harsh cold of the high altitude air.

As the PCs advance through the mountains, they spy a shrine resting on mountain ledge; those wishing to make the pilgrimage can pay their respects to a long-fallen hero with an important tie to the Isle of Kortos's history.

Even after they reach the end of the mountain pass and descend once more into the lowlands, the adventurers' circumstances do not improve, for they find themselves in a fetid bog. Bloodsucking leeches, disease-infested miasma, and an encounter with a crazy kobold druid mark the last leg of the heroes' wilderness travels before they reach the fishing village of Pier's End.

Arriving in Pier's End, the PCs must deal with the locals and hire a captain to take them across the strait to Escadar.

Once in Escadar, the PCs need only to arrange a meeting at the Grindylow's Goblet, a waterside tavern where the gillmen agreed to meet. Once there, the Aspis Consortium gillmen's plot comes to fruition, and they attempt first to swindle the Society with a fake relic in trade, and then to simply steal the Society's relic if their ruse is uncovered.

GETTING STARTED

In the heart of the Pathfinder Society's headquarters at Skyreach, Venture-Captain Drandle Dreng, a wiry old man with a wild gray beard and glinting eyes, sits on a large plush bench next to a finely dressed, full-figured woman who looks as though this entire meeting isn't worth her time. Dreng warmly greets the PCs and introduces them to the woman, Lady Gloriana Morilla; the Taldan woman tilts her head slightly in acknowledgement of the introduction, but otherwise makes no move to greet anyone. Oblivious to any social slight on the lady's part, Dreng goes on to explain the PCs' mission. Read the following to get the adventure underway.

"Recently, a contact from the Low Azlanti embassy in Escadar approached us with an offer. It seems they have discovered a unique relic of Azlanti origin on the Inner Sea's floor that we have a unique opportunity to add to our collection for study. In return, however, we must deliver one of our catalogued items to Escadar in exchange. The Low Azlanti drive a hard bargain, so we need you to escort a relics broker to Escadar so he can authenticate the Azlanti item and mediate a fair deal on the Ten's behalf.

Dreng warns the PCs that the Pathfinders are not the only group that looks to acquire this relic. It seems the Aspis Consortium has also tendered an offer, and the gillmen have decided to accept the Consortium's deal if the Society cannot finalize its agreement within 30 days. An Aspis-funded warship patrols the waters just beyond

Absalom's harbor, preventing Pathfinder agents from sailing to Escadar unmolested. Luckily, he and Lady Gloriana have come up with a solution.

Lady Morilla stirs from her silence and speaks in a strong, demanding voice. "I have used some of the Empire of Taldor's most skilled operatives to plant a false crew manifest and course plans with the harbormaster, ensuring that the Aspis Consortium spies who certainly keep an eye on such matters believe we are moving our relic to Escadar on a ship tomorrow morning. This decoy should occupy the Consortium sufficiently for you to travel overland to Escadar with plenty of time to make the final agreement with the gillmen before the Society's window of opportunity runs out."

Dreng laughs to himself absently, then instructs the PCs to go to the Siphons in the Puddles and meet with the Pathfinder Society's ally, information broker Grandmaster Torch. He'll give them a map for a smugglers' trail through the isle's center that should allow for relatively easy and secret travel overland to Escadar. The Society has hired an appraiser and relics broker named Nester Rees to verify the authenticity of the gillmen's relic; Rees will meet up with the PCs after their meeting with Grandmaster Torch.

Dreng has arranged lodgings for the PCs at an Escadar tavern called the Grindyflow's Goblet, where the gillmen have agreed to meet with them. Once the PCs arrive, they only need to send word to the Low Azlanti embassy, then have Master Rees conduct the negotiations at the tavern on the Society's behalf. Dreng emphasizes that the PCs are responsible for Rees' safety and for the success of his negotiations.

Before leaving Skyreach or Dreng's presence, the PCs may wish to ask questions to clarify the mission. The answers to some likely questions are given below.

Who is Nester Rees? / What does he look like? "Master Rees is an appraiser and relic broker and friend of the Pathfinder Society; he is a middle-aged man of Garundi descent who has worked with us for some time now. While he tried going on field missions as a Pathfinder in his youth, his weak constitution limits his ability to travel. He has a very sharp mind, however, and the ability to identify genuine Azlanti relics."

Can we trust Rees? "We have used Rees's expertise on many occasions, and he has always come through."

Does anyone else know about the plan? "Only myself, Lady Morilla, Grandmaster Torch, and Rees. Well, and of course, the Decemvirate."

What are the two relics involved? "The relic we are giving up seems to be part of a collective, or perhaps a fragment of a larger object. Without its companion pieces it is worthless. As for the Low Azlantis' relic, I am not entirely sure, but our diviners believe obtaining it is in our best interest."

What do we do if we encounter the Aspis Consortium? "Use as much force as needed to keep the mission safe. If they want to talk, then talk, but if they interfere with our deal in any way, I authorize—and encourage—the use of deadly force."

What do we do once we have the gillmen's artifact? "Take the same route back and bring it here as fast as possible."

What if the Apsis complete the deal first? "Then we fail. It should take you no more than 7 or 8 days to reach Escadar, giving us at least another 20 days to complete the deal. If we cannot agree on a deal by then, we never will and the Consortium has already won."

What if we cannot agree on a deal or negotiations break down? "We have ample time and many resources. I am confident in your abilities to get the job done."

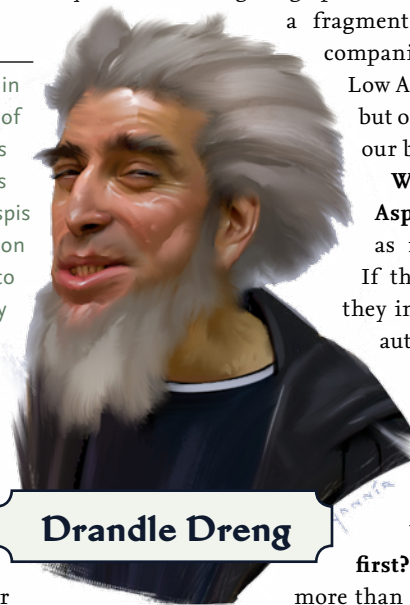
Who is responsible for the relic we carry? "You all are, but as long as the deal gets done, and the gillmen's relic makes it back to us safe and sound, I couldn't care less who carries it."

As the PCs are preparing to leave, Lady Gloriana starts to stand up, and reaches her arm out for assistance from one of the Pathfinders. As whichever PC volunteers to assist the noblewoman pulls his hand away, he finds that the lady slipped a small piece of paper into his palm while he assisted her. Give the PC in question **Player Handout #1** (see page 22).

The Siphons

Before the PCs can leave on their journey to Escadar, they must meet with Grandmaster Torch, the mysterious information broker, ex-Pathfinder, and leader of the Shadow Lodge faction of the Society, who operates out of a network of subterranean tunnels beneath the water-logged Absalom district of the Puddles. Finding the Siphons requires no special skill but does take the Pathfinders though the Puddles' rough-and-tumble, flooded streets and into the sewers below.

A gruff half-orc guard grants the PCs entry into Torch's audience chamber in the Siphons, a large stone room that has been magically rid of all standing water or even airborne moisture. Torch, a dark-haired, burn-covered



Dreng Dreng

man in his late-middle years sits in a large bathtub, and two attendants continually pour cool water over his cursed, festering wounds. His half-orc bodyguards eye the PCs warily as the Grandmaster rises to greet them and speaks.

"Well met, Pathfinders. I see you have survived as the Decemvirate's pawns thus far, and for that I commend you. This next task they have for you is more dangerous than the venture-captain may have told you, so let me give you a word of warning. I have made it my life's work to ensure Pathfinder agents are given all the tools they need to return home from their myriad adventures, and this map is the tool I give you. Follow the directions on my map as strictly as you can. Deviate from this path and you may encounter challenges far beyond your abilities. Many would paint me and those who believe like I do as betrayers of the Society, but it is the corps of the organization that I am completely loyal to. Each and every one of you.

"If you believe you have been mistreated by the Ten or their representatives, don't hesitate to let me know upon your return from Escadar. My network of agents and spies is vast, and I am a powerful ally to have on your side.

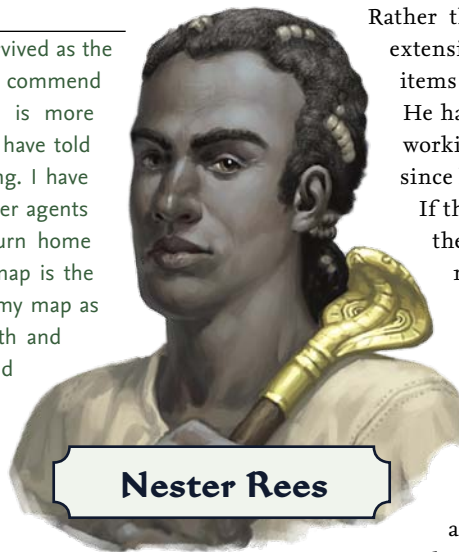
"Now be off. You have a long journey ahead of you. And remember, don't deviate from this map—it's designed to get you there and back safely!"

Give the PCs **Player Handout #2** (see page 23). The Grandmaster answers any questions the PCs may have, but knows little beyond what he and Drandle Dreng have already told them. He carefully explains any symbols or references on the map the PCs may have questions about, but has never taken the smuggler's trail it depicts himself.

Nester Rees

Once the PCs have their overland map from Grandmaster Torch, allow them ample time to prepare for their upcoming journey and purchase any supplies. During this time, **Nester Rees** (LE human expert 5) approaches the PCs and introduces himself. Rees agrees to depart whenever the PCs are ready to do so, and suggests that they travel light to speed their journey across the island to the village of Pier's End.

Rees is a man of Garundi descent who walks with a cane, claiming he suffers from a malady of the heart that has left his right side weakened. Rees struggles to keep up with the PCs on their journey but never complains, and always gives a warm smile and thanks if any PC assists him.



Nester Rees

In reality, Rees has no physical limitations, but puts on the act as he feels people are more willing to acquiesce to the bargaining demands of a cripple. If asked about his background, Rees shares that he tried his hand in adventuring, but never had the knack for it.

Rather than waste his talents, he put his extensive knowledge and ability to value items to good use working as an appraiser. He has had no problem earning a living working with the Pathfinder Society since hanging up his adventurer's cloak.

If the PCs are suspicious of Rees, allow them DC 15 Sense Motive checks to recognize that he's a shady character and perhaps hiding something. Rees never outright lies to the PCs during their journey, as he avoids any questions that might require him to do so. His backstory and history with the Pathfinder Society are all completely true. A Sense Motive check of 17 or higher allows a PC to

recognize that Nester doesn't actually have a limp, and a DC 20 Perception check identifies his cane as a sword cane (see page 179 of the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*). If they call him out on either of these deceptions, Nester pretends his ruse was merely a test, and commends the PCs for their keen eyes. Any time he's caught in a lie, he lets that lie drop, but continues to maintain any other deceptions until the situation calls for him to do otherwise.

Nester tries to stay out of danger along the trip, but he can be a valuable tool for GMs. If the PCs get in over their heads, he can come to their aid if they need another combatant, or he can serve as an additional target to dilute the amount of damage dealt to the PCs. While the adventure assumes he survives to assist in the negotiations in Escadar, if he dies along the way, it simply makes it harder for the PCs to recognize that the Aspis Consortium's artifact is a fake.

NESTER REES

CR 1

Male middle aged human expert 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 17 (3d8)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sword cane +1 (1d6–1)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Deceitful, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Skill Focus (Appraise)

Skills Appraise +11, Bluff +7, Disable Device +7, Disguise +7, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Linguistics +8, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Use Magic Device +5

Languages Azlanti, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Osiriani, Polyglot, Sylvan

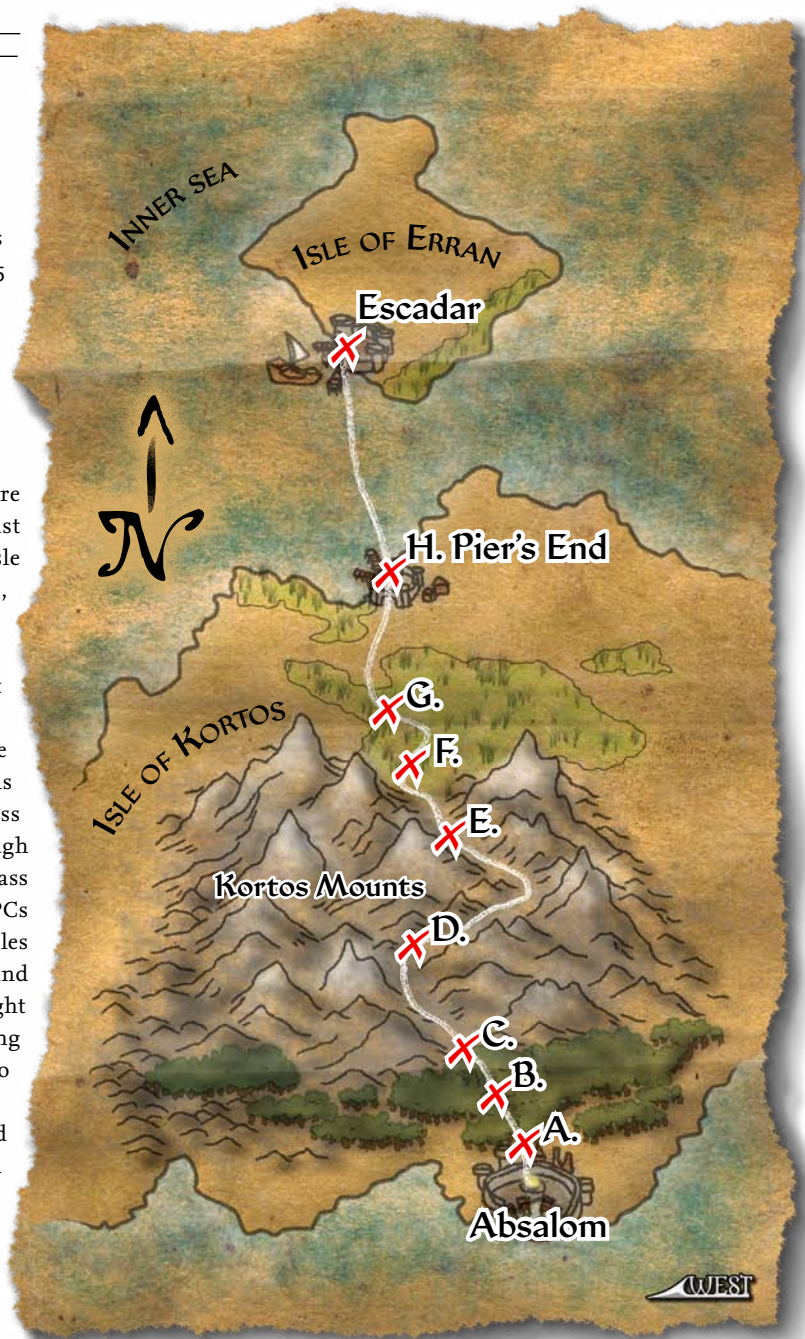
Gear leather armor, sword cane

ACT 1: JOURNEY OVERLAND

Before the PCs reach the village of Pier's End, where they can hire a boat to ferry them to Escadar, they must travel 84 miles across the untamed interior of the Isle of Kortos. The PCs must trek through dense forests, frigid mountain passes, and fetid swamps before arriving in the modest village. The average overland speed of a walking party with 30-foot movement speeds is 24 miles per day.

Three of the areas marked on the map alter this base travel speed as follows. The dense forest in the foothills of the Kortos Mounts is considered trackless wilderness filled with difficult terrain; reduce movement through this forest to 6 miles per day. Treat the mountain pass that winds through Kortos Mounts as a trail; the PCs may move through this region at a speed of 18 miles per day. Finally, treat the fetid bog as trackless, and furthermore a thick mist pollutes the bog at a height of 1 foot in a foul miasma. This miasma makes footing treacherous, and thus slows travel through the bog to 6 miles per day.

The following table outlines the distances and travel times between each of the encounter areas in the scenario, assuming a speed of 30 feet (save for the distance between encounter areas H and I, which are aboard a ship traveling 2 miles per hour). If any members of the party have speeds slower than 30 feet, Nester Rees offers to rent them a pony mount



TRAVEL TIMES

Start	Destination	Distance	Travel Time
Absalom	A. Centaur Hunting Party	9 miles	3 hours
A. Centaur Hunting Party	B. River Crossing	6 miles	1 day
B. River Crossing	C. Krenshar Attack!	6 miles	1 day
C. Krenshar Attack	D. Frozen Wagon	18 miles	1 day
D. Frozen Wagon	E. Hero's Shrine	18 miles	1 day
E. Hero's Shrine	F. Fogshroud Leeches	6 miles	1 day
F. Fogshroud Leeches	G. Bog Mother's Log	6 miles	1 day
G. Bog Mother's Log	H. Pier's End	15 miles	5 hours
H. Pier's End	I. Escadar	24 miles	12 hours

A CR 6 ENCOUNTER?

The PCs' first encounter is intended as an opportunity for them to converse with one of the Isle of Kortos's most civilized non-humanoid inhabitants—the centaurs. GMs should present the centaurs as non-combative, creating a chance for the PCs to both roleplay and learn about what to expect during their travels. Even bloodthirsty PCs should have ample opportunity to avoid conflict with the centaurs (as outlined in their tactics), but PCs intent on a conflict should soon find that they are in over their heads. Regardless, as the centaurs' stat block states, they are not interested in a fight and always attempt to withdraw from combat, even against a relatively low-threat foe like the PCs.

to prevent them from slowing the party down. For more information on overland movement and the various conditions that affect a party's speed, see pages 171–172 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

In all, the route from Absalom to Escadar runs just over 108 miles, with an estimated travel time of just under 7 days (accounting for rest each night). The PCs may take longer if they decide to rest longer than overnight along the way to nurse their wounds from any of the encounters during the journey.

A. Centaur Hunting Party (CR 6)

The Cairnlands, a broken landscape of blood-salted earth and the ruins of countless failed assaults on Absalom's walls, soon yields to open fields and fertile ground. Ahead, a vast forest covers the foothills of large range of snow-capped mountains. The well-trodden road soon ends at a tall wall of trees, signaling the end of civilization.

Recently, a mysterious predator has entered the woods here, threatening a centaur tribe's food supply, so the tribe has sent three of its most skilled hunters to defeat this beast. The centaurs believe they hunt a large cat, more specifically a panther, but unknown to them, the predator is a magical beast known as a krenshar.

Creatures: Three centaurs patrol the edges of the wood seeking to end the krenshar's spree of killings. The hunters are surprised that the PCs journey so far from Absalom, and become curious as to their intentions. As the PCs approach the woods, the centaurs' leader, Urdel Thunderhoof, calls out to the travelers to warn them of the predatory threat once they enter the woods. Treat the centaurs' initial attitude as indifferent.

CENTAURS (3)

CR 3

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 42)

TACTICS

During Combat The centaurs look to avoid combat with the PCs if it breaks out, and only attack if faced with no alternative. The centaurs fight defensively while yelling about the foolishness of the PCs' actions.

Morale Looking to save their resources for the inevitable battle against the "panther", the centaurs withdraw from combat using their superior speed.

Development: If made friendly, in addition to warning the PCs about a dark cat stalking the forest, the centaurs provide the PCs with 8 berries enchanted with a *goodberry* spell as well as a masterwork long spear to help them on their journey to Escadar. These berries hold their enchantment for 4 days, as the centaurs make known. Furthermore, Urdel Thunderhoof suggests this cat is no simple animal, for just two days ago they felt the cat's presence as if it were herding them into an ambush. Thunderhoof asks that the PCs kill the predator if they encounter it, but under no circumstance do the centaurs offer to accompany them into the forest, stating that the PCs' business is their own.

Rewards: If the PCs make the centaurs friendly, give each PC 28 gp.

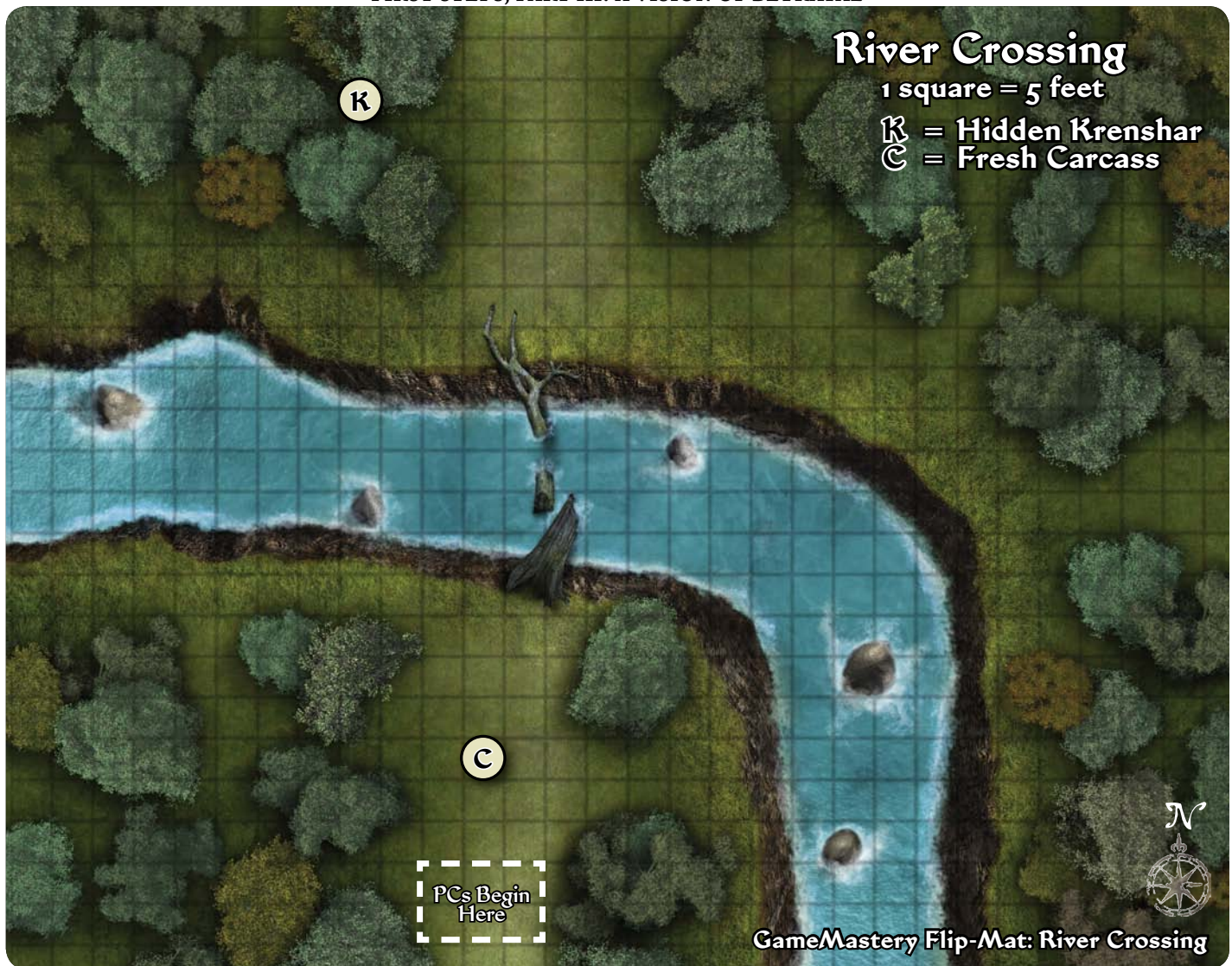
B. River Crossing

The sound of running water echoes ahead, and several muted beams of light pierce the thick forest canopy. Soon the dense forest opens, revealing a river that blocks the way forward. A large felled tree trunk offers a way over the swift moving river. With the exception of the rushing sound of the water, an eerie silence pervades the area, as does the fresh smell of death.

The half-eaten carcass of a large deer stains the forest's foliage near a fast moving river. A DC 12 Perception check identifies several rake marks scar the carcass, suggesting a powerful feline felled this animal. Further, a DC 10 Survival check reveals fresh paw indentations in the forest's dirt floor leading to a large oak tree trunk that bridges the gap over the river.

To cross the river, one only needs to walk over the tree trunk bridge and succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check. Since the PCs aren't threatened in any way, they can take 10 on this check.

If any PCs wish to enter the river instead of using the natural bridge, they must make a DC 13 Strength check to avoid being swept away by the water's current. Any PC who fails this save moves along the river at a speed of 20 feet per round. Fortunately the river is only 5 feet deep, but for every round a PC is caught in the current, she must either make a DC 15 Strength check or a DC 10



Swim check to avoid crashing into sharp rocks. A PC who fails this check takes 1 point of nonlethal damage and continues traveling down the river. Once the PC exits the map's boundary, assume the current slows enough for her to freely exit the water. The river flows east before turning south. PCs who make either skill check can immediately pull themselves safely to shore. Additionally, PCs on the riverbank may assist any swimming PCs to shore using loose branches, ropes, or other items; doing so grants the affected PCs a +2 bonus on their Strength or Swim checks to exit the river.

Creatures: The krenshar about which the PCs were warned watches from the thick undergrowth as the PCs cross the river. A DC 25 Perception check allows any PC to notice a black cat with violet eyes watching them. Otherwise, allow the PCs a DC 15 Sense Motive check each round after they interact with the deer carcass. If successful, that PC feels a piercing presence, as if something is watching them. After the PCs detect the

krenshar (whether by Perception or Sense Motive), the magical beast runs off into the dense woods to prepare its attack on the PCs (see area C).

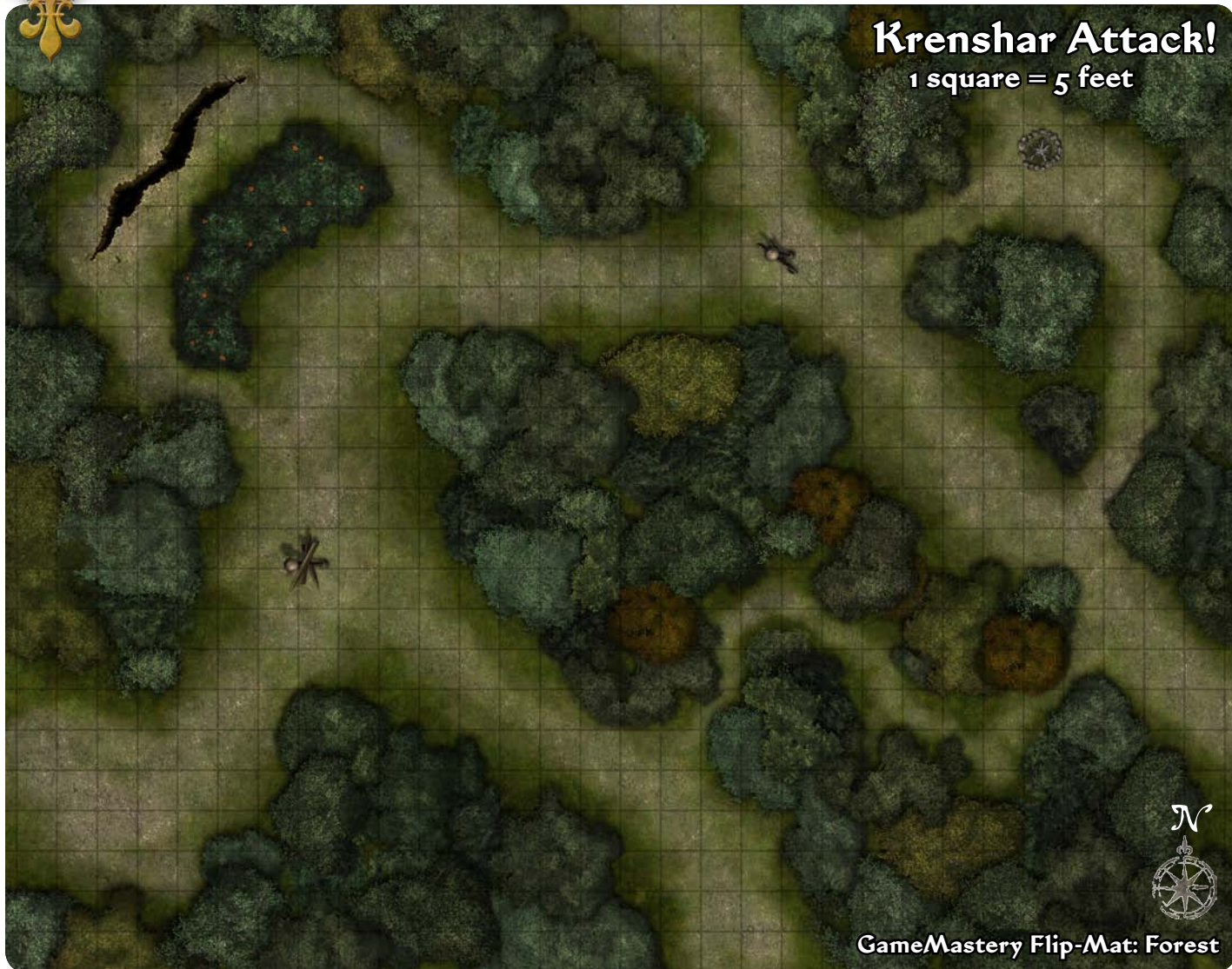
C. Krenshar Attack! (CR 1)

After the PCs cross the river, the krenshar prepares to attack the PCs the next time they set camp (most likely on the PC's second night in the woods). If the PCs camp at the river, use the map from area B; if, however, the PCs camp anywhere else, use the map for area C to represent the wooded scene around their camp. Treat the portions of area C covered with trees as heavy undergrowth (see page 426 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

Creatures: The krenshar waits until nightfall to attack, using its superior Stealth skill to approach the PCs' campsite from the heavy undergrowth. Once the krenshar believes some of the PCs have bedded down for the night, it attacks, hoping its darkvision grants it the upper hand during the nighttime battle.

Krenshar Attack!

1 square = 5 feet



KRENSHAR

CR 1

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 174

N Medium magical beast

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 13 (2d10+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d6), 2 claws +2 (1d4)

Special Attacks skullface

TACTICS

Before Combat The krenshar uses the heavy undergrowth to best position itself for its nighttime assault.

During Combat The krenshar silently approaches the nearest sleeping PC hoping to get an unsuspecting victim. After its initial assault the krenshar uses its skullface ability to

demoralize any awake PCs. If faced with PCs using ranged attacks, the krenshar reenters the heavy undergrowth and tries to reposition itself for another attack.

Morale Desperate for a meal, the krenshar fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14 (18 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Intimidate +1 (+5 to demoralize), Perception +5, Stealth +10; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Intimidate to demoralize, +4 Stealth

Languages Sylvan (can't speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Skullface (Su) As a standard action, a krenshar can pull the skin back from its face, revealing the musculature and bony structures of its skull. This counts as using Intimidate to demoralize an opponent, and is an extraordinary ability. The krenshar can emit a loud screech while peeling back its skin, causing potent fear in a single creature within 100 feet that can see the krenshar. The targeted creature must succeed

at a DC 12 Will save or become frightened (if the target has 6 or fewer Hit Dice) or shaken (if the target has more than 6 Hit Dice) for 1d4 rounds. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same krenshar's skullface ability for 24 hours. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Development: After the PCs defeat the krenshar, Urdel Thunderhoof bursts into the forest clearing. Seeing that the PCs have defeated the threat to his forest home, he offers to provide the PCs with valuable fur pelts in exchange for the krenshar's corpse. As the centaur gives the PCs the furs, he warns them about the deadly cold found in the high areas of the Kortos Mounts, and suggests the PCs use the furs to help protect themselves the elements. These pelts can be used to fashion one makeshift cold weather outfit with a DC 15 Craft (clothing) or Survival check. Urdel Thunderhoof thanks the PCs once more before moving off into the woods toward his tribe's camp.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat the krenshar and accept Urdel Thunderhoof's gift, give each PC 25 gp.

D. Frozen Wagon

Whenever the PCs set up camp after their first day of traveling through the mountain pass, they spy a covered wagon half buried in the snow. Investigation of the wagon uncovers three frozen humans who have obviously succumbed to cold exposure. These explorers foolishly attempted to cross the mountain pass during the cold season and paid with their lives. Fortunately the weather is not as cold now, but during the night the temperature still drops below 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 4 hours (1 a.m. to 5 a.m.). During this time all PCs must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15 +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage for each failed save. Luckily, several items in the covered wagon can help the PCs survive the freezing night.

If the PCs choose to make camp in the wagon, doing so grants them a circumstance bonus against the cold, high-altitude winds that blow throughout the night. The wagon can hold 5 Medium creatures, and everyone in the wagon gains an additional +2 bonus on Fortitude saving throws against exposure. Additionally, the wagon has a wood-burning stove that the PCs can discover with a DC 10 Perception check, and enough wood to burn throughout the night, granting a further +2 bonus on Fortitude saving throws versus cold exposure. Finally, PCs with the Survival skill can enhance their own chances to last until the temperatures rise above 40 degrees (at 5 a.m.). If such PCs succeed at a DC 15 Survival check, they gain a +4 bonus on the Fortitude check; they may provide

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER

The leeches and disease in area F are optional. If more than 2 1/2 hours remain to complete the scenario, run area F as normal. If less than 2 1/2 hours remain, skip area F and move straight to area G.

this bonus to one additional PC for each point above 15 by which their checks succeed.

Treasure: The three corpses each wear a cold weather outfit that grant those who wear the garments a +5 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saving throws against exposure to cold weather.

Rewards: If the PCs discover the cold weather outfits, give each PC 2 gp.

E. Hero's Shrine

As the pass winds around a large mountain, the PCs spot a light glinting from a ledge some 50 feet above their current location. Any PC who wishes to climb the icy rock face must succeed at a DC 10 Climb check or harmlessly slide back down to the path.

A small statue of a woman complete with a nearby shrine rests on the ledge. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Knowledge (history or nobility) check identify the figure in the statue as Lady Kayle, a Taldan adventurer who sacrificed herself so her comrades could defeat the great dragon Maejerex, who terrorized the Isle of Kortos until 4592 AR. The glinting light seen from the path is the sun's reflection off a number of coins and gems in the shrine's offering bowl.

Treasure: The coins and gems in offering bowl are worth a total of 585 gp. A PC who takes any of this wealth from the shrine must make a DC 14 Will save or suffer a -1 luck penalty on all saving throws until the end of the adventure. Any PC who pays respect to the shrine, either through prayer or an offering of at least 1 gp worth of items or coins, feels a surge of warmth rushing through her body and receives Kayle's blessing, granting a +1 luck bonus on saving throws to resist the effects of a dragon's breath weapon up to three times in the future.

Rewards: If the PCs receive Kayle's blessing or take the existing offerings from her shrine, give each player 98 gp.

F. Fogshroud Leeches (CR 1)

Thick blobs of fog dance in between large tickets as the foul stench of swamp gas pollutes the air. Several exotic species of vines twist along the vapor-shrouded path, creating an ethereal seeming tangle. At random intervals, a splash of fetid water sounds in the distance, signaling the presence of frogs or other bog creatures.



Travel through this 6-mile portion of the bog takes 1 day. Here a thick fog coats the ground and marsh waters to a height of 1 foot. The fog does not affect visibility, but because of the thick muck and the many snags and shallow pools hidden by the fog, the PCs face a hazardous journey. During their travels through the bog, each PC must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check for each hour of travel (8 hours total) or lose his footing and trip on one of the many snags and twisted roots that jut up under the fog. Each time the PCs fall, they inhale the fog that blankets the ground, and risk contracting a disease, for this thick miasma is full of all manner of filth. Treat each PC who falls into the fog as being exposed to fogshroud miasma. Once any PC contracts fogshroud miasma, he cannot contract it a second time. Furthermore, for those PCs who fall, there is a 25% chance they fall into a shallow bog filled with leeches.

Creatures: Thousands of leeches infest the swamp's pools, and anytime a PC falls into a shallow bog, 1d2

leeches attach themselves to the PC. Because of the anesthetic secreted along with a leech's bite, a PC must succeed at a DC 10 Perception check to notice a leech attached to him. Each leech deals 1 point of Constitution damage that is recovered as soon as the PC is healed in any way (a DC 12 Fortitude save negates this damage). Once a leech deals damage, it becomes bloated and falls off. Leeches can be pulled or burnt off (which deals 1 hp of damage to the host), or can be rubbed with salt until they drop off (which deals no damage to the host). Any creature with at least 1 point of natural armor can ignore the effects of the leeches.

Hazard: Anyone falling into the fog blanketing the swamp floor risks contracting fogshroud miasma.

FOGSHROUD MIASMA

Type disease, inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 13

Onset 1d3 days; Frequency 1/day

Effect 1 point of Wis damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

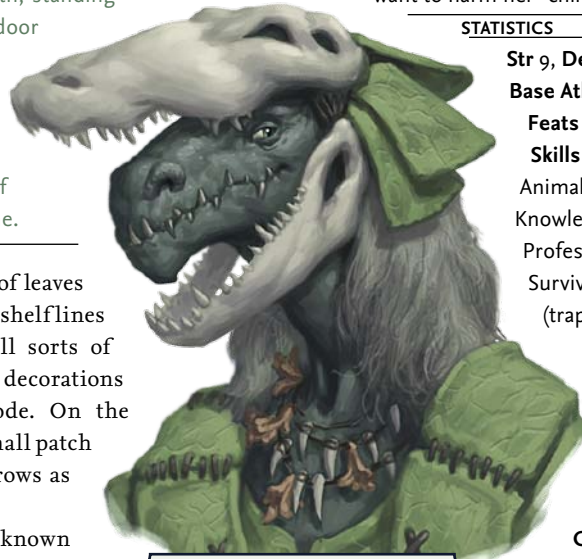
G. Bog Mother's Log (CR 1)

As the PCs progress through the bog, the thick rolling fog begins to disperse, allowing the PCs to see where they step. Despite the increased visibility, this area of the swamp is difficult terrain, as the muck and vegetation thicken further.

A large log rests across a dirt path, standing five feet tall. A moldering wood door covers one of the hollow ends of the log, and a makeshift mud chimney emits a thin wisp of blue smoke. From behind the crude house come the sound of someone humming an off-key tune.

Inside the hollow log, a pile of leaves acts as a bed, and a long wooden shelf lines the eastern wall filled with all sorts of potted mushrooms—the only decorations in this otherwise barren abode. On the north side of the log-house, a small patch of thistles grow in haphazard rows as if planted to resemble a garden.

Creatures: The kobold druid known as Bog Mother tends to a patch of green-flowered thistles near her fallen log house, and busily hunches over each plant, speaking in draconic to them as if she were praising a small child for good behavior, occasionally humming a little song to herself as she tends to her garden. Her crocodile animal companion, Snapjaw, lies submerged in the bog at the edge of the garden, watching the mire for potential prey.



Bog Mother

BOG MOTHER

CR 1

Female kobold druid 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 183)

NE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 15 (2d8+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +1 (1d4–1)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

1st—*cure light wounds*, *entangle* (DC 13), *shillelagh*

o (at will)—*create water*, *detect poison*, *flare* (DC 12), *guidance*

TACTICS

During Combat Bog Mother casts *entangle*, hoping to snare as many of the PCs as she can, though she leaves a path in

front of her log free so Snap Jaw can attack unimpeded. On the second round of combat, Bog Mother casts *shillelagh* and enters melee combat. If she has taken no damage herself but Snap Jaw is defeated, she spontaneously casts *summon nature's ally I* to summon a poison frog; otherwise, she heals herself as necessary.

Morale Bog Mother fights to the death, believing the PCs want to harm her “children.”

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 16, **Con** 8, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** –1; **CMD** 12

Feats Toughness

Skills Craft (trapmaking) +1, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +8, Profession (miner) +4, Stealth +8, Survival +8; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Craft (trapmaking)+2, Perception+2, Profession (miner)

Languages Draconic, Druidic

SQ nature bond (animal companion), nature sense, wild empathy +3, woodland stride

Combat Gear *wand of cure*

light wounds; **Other Gear** club, 8 amethysts worth 150 gp in total

SNAP JAW

CR —

Crocodile (alligator) animal companion

N Small animal

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d6+3)

TACTICS

During Combat Snap Jaw violently bites the opponent closest to Bog Mother; if more than one creature threatens the kobold, it attacks the smallest foe.

Morale While Bog Mother lives, Snap Jaw fights to the death. Once Bog Mother is defeated, Snap Jaw fights until its hit points are reduced to 5 or fewer, at which point it flees into the swamp.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15 (19 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +10, Swim +14

SQ hold breath

PIER'S END

N village

Corruption +1; **Crime** -5; **Economy** -1; **Law** +3; **Lore** +1; **Society** +2**Qualities** insular, superstitious**Danger** +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy**Population** 78 (67 humans, 8 halflings, 2 dwarves, 1 gillman)**Notable NPCs****Mayor Regis Coombs** (N male human expert 3)**Harbor Mistress Namia Ruan** (LN female human rogue 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp;**Spellcasting** 1st**Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** —

Development: Although Bog Mother makes her home in the hollow log, there is nothing of value here. If the PCs spare her, she speaks only in Draconic (or Druidic if that allows her to communicate with a PC) and talks nonsensically about her “children,” which is what she calls her semi-domesticated thistles. If the PCs linger here too long, Rees urges them on to Pier’s End so they can arrange passage to Escadar.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat Bog Mother, give each PC 88 gp.

H. Pier’s End

The sleepy fishing village of Pier’s End offers a warm inn, a hot meal, and a way for the PCs to travel to the Isle of Erran. Here the PCs find three captains capable of ferrying them to Escadar. With so little in the way of economy to support residents in Pier’s End, the three look to make as much money from the PCs as possible. The three captains and their bartering techniques, are detailed below. Besides obtaining sea transport, there is not much here for the PCs, but those looking to resupply can refer to the Piers End marketplace.

Darice Sumore (N female human expert 2) is a surly-looking young woman, but if her sea-weathered face were softened, she could be considered pretty. Darice finds the presence of Pathfinders in Pier’s End revolting, for her estranged father held membership within the organization. Never knowing her father, she grew up resenting the Society, but the one gift her father left her mother after their brief tryst was a *wayfinder*, which has served Darice well.

Because of her troubled upbringing, Darice’s initial attitude is unfriendly, and she outright refuses to allow any Pathfinders on her boat. But if the PCs can make

Darice friendly, she sails them to Escadar for 35 gold pieces, and if the PCs can make her helpful, she sails them there for free, as she already plans on making the trip herself. If any PCs play up their fatherly nature, either through their actual relative age or via a well-placed disguise, the party receives a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy rolls to negotiate with Darice. If any PC attempts to Intimidate Darice, she states coldly that she expected no less from members of the Pathfinder Society, and she refuses to deal with the PCs.

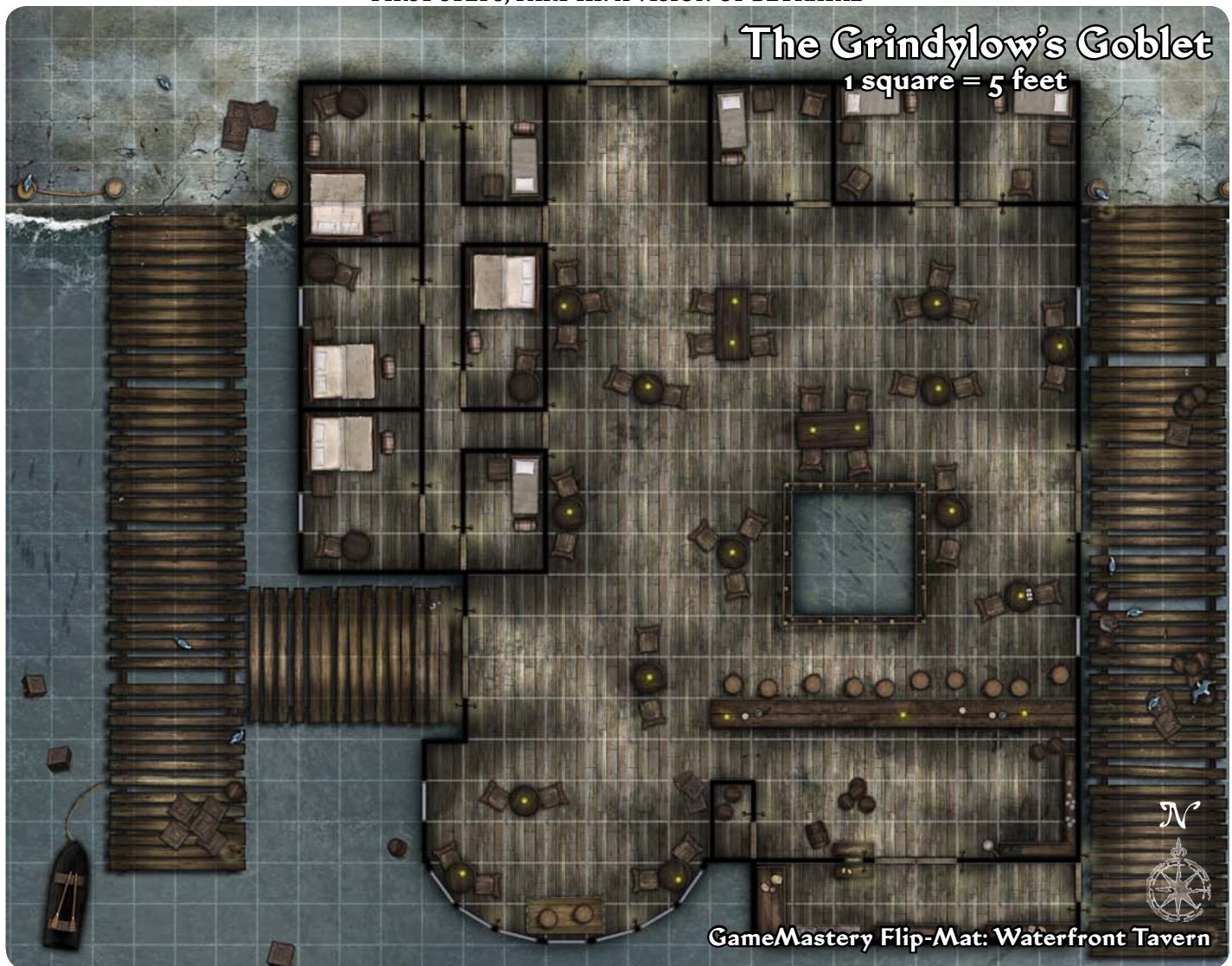
Small Otti (LN male halfling rogue 1) is a fat halfling who constantly states that his plump stature helps with buoyancy at sea. Well-groomed and always eating, Small Otti initially offers to ferry the PCs to Escadar for 55 gold pieces. Luckily Otti has his vices, and if any PC offers to have discussions over fine food or drink, the party gains a +5 circumstance bonus on their Diplomacy check to influence his attitude. Otti’s initial attitude is indifferent, but if the PCs can make him friendly he agrees to charge them only 25 gold pieces. If made helpful, he reluctantly settles on the fee of 15 gold pieces. If any PC attempts to intimidate Otti, he complains of losing his appetite and does not budge from his highest fee.

Crazy Old Tanner (CN old male human ranger 2) is a disheveled, fish-smelling, and wild-eyed man who constantly talks out the side of his mouth while blowing thick gout of grey smoke from an aromatic pipe. He is fit to yelling at the sea, accusing it of being an unfaithful mistress and talking about how things were better when he was much younger. While he appears mad, Tanner enjoys the respect his feigned lunacy gives him. While the townsfolk would argue that it is fear and not respect that gets Tanner good deals on local commodities, they do not deny his ability at sea.

He asks for 35 gold pieces to sail the PCs to Escadar, and while it is the cheapest opening price offered, his lowest price only falls to 25 gold pieces. Tanner’s initial attitude with the PCs is indifferent when the negotiations begin, but if he can be made friendly, he offers the PCs his best price, 25 gold pieces. Changing Tanner’s attitude to helpful does not reduce his price beyond 25 gp. If any PC offers Tanner tobacco weed, the party gains a +2 circumstance bonus on their Diplomacy checks. Any PCs who use the Intimidate skill to persuade Tanner for a better deal finds themselves at the end of a spittle-filled tirade about the honesty of folk back in the good old days.

Diplomacy (gather information) or Knowledge (local)

If the PCs take the time to ask about local captains before beginning their negotiations, they can learn the following information.



15+ Darice never knew her father, and many villagers whisper that he was a member of the Pathfinder Society. Small Otti values his coin, for he has many mouths to feed—most importantly, his own. Tanner's skill at sea is unmatched, but so is his lunacy; take a boat ride with him and you might ride straight into a squall.

20+ Darice resents never knowing her father and some say she longingly caresses the trinket he left behind for her. Small Otti has a weakness for fine food and drink, and any deal with him is made sweeter if food is involved. Some whisper that Tanner is not actually crazy, but no one is brave enough to find out.

25+ Darice often lends a hand to the town's elderly male residents, and some suggest that she longs for a father figure. Otti often asks for the moon in payment, but if he's treated properly, he sometimes settles for much less. Tanner enjoys his tobacco, and merchants often give him tobacco before they negotiate with him as it seems to relax him.

Development: Once the PCs have found a captain willing to sail them to Escadar, the scenic and uneventful journey takes 12 hours.

ACT 2: ESCADAR

Escadar is the war port of Absalom, located on the Isle of Erran north of Kortos. It houses Absalom's navy and is strategically placed away from Absalom's treacherous Flotsam Graveyard. Furthermore, those nations intent on blockading Absalom must also deal with Escadar, for word spreads quickly, and Escadar's armada can come to Absalom's aid on short order. Along with the primarily military population, Escadar is also home to many gillmen (or Low Azlanti, as they call themselves). These amphibious humanoids have set up an embassy within the town, and it is with this organization the Pathfinder Society plans to trade Azlanti artifacts. The gillmen have agreed to meet the PCs at a waterside tavern called the Grindylow's Goblet.

Once the PCs send word of their arrival to the embassy, the gillmen prepare to meet them there.

I. Betrayed at the Grindylow's Goblet! (CR 3)

The sounds of a busy tavern echo off the wooden walls of this unusual building. Resting precariously over Escadar's harbor, the Grindylow's Goblet offers an unequaled view of the water. In the bar's center, a thick glass aquarium presents a striking display. Within the tank, a coral statue of a goblin with the lower body of an octopus hosts a school of colorful fish that flit about the nooks and crannies of its tentacles.

The Grindylow's Goblet is a busy tavern that offers entertainment and drink to those visiting Escadar. Thick wooden planks support the tavern floor as it stretches out into the harbor, offering a splendid vista of Escadar's harbor. Wooden walls and doors make up the tavern's construction, and several torches fill sconces that cast the tavern in normal illumination. At the tavern's heart rests a 15-foot-by-15-foot aquarium crafted from alchemically strengthened glass and full of clear water. The bottom of the aquarium is also made of glass, and offers a view of the harbor waters, which are 10 feet below the glass bottom at the current tide.

Creatures: Two human servers busily provide food and drink to the tavern's half-dozen patrons, and a striking woman tends the bar. A DC 15 Perception check allows the PCs to notice the bartender is a gillman, as her tied-back hair exposes the thick gills on both sides of her neck. This woman is Ulionestia, the Aspis Consortium agent behind the gillmen's betrayal.

After the PCs have had a chance to settle in and perhaps have a drink or two, the gillman party arrives. Smaller and more low-key than the party the Pathfinder Society sent, the gillman contingent consists of only two Low Azlanti, a man and a woman. The male bears a delicately wrapped bundle of cloth, apparently around the Azlanti relic, while the woman acts as bodyguard.

The gillmen greet the PCs and the man carrying the bundle introduces himself as Shoalo; the other, a muscular female gillman named Ahrmisa, remains silent and stoic. Shoalo sits at a table and places his package before them, offering the seats opposite him to Nester Rees and one PC. Ahrmisa stands behind him, eyeing the rest of the party suspiciously.

Shoalo invites the PCs to place their item on the table for inspection and offers his as well. He takes only a cursory glance at the Pathfinders' offering, as he's more concerned they'll recognize his fake than that they are attempting to swindle the gillmen. Allow the PCs a DC 18

Appraise check to recognize that the gillman artifact is a fake. If they don't make the check, permit Nester Rees to make his own attempt using his stats on page 6.

If the PCs or Rees discover the fake and call the gillmen on the deception, Ulionestia drops a glass as a signal to the other two and initiates the surprise round. If the PCs fall for the ruse and Nester fails to uncover the fake as well, allow the trade to happen as planned. In that case, as the gillmen are walking away with the Pathfinders' genuine artifact, Rees finally recognizes that they've been duped and yells for the PCs to stop the gillman deceivers. If Rees didn't survive the journey and the PCs fail to recognize the fake, they fall for the Aspis swindle.

However combat starts, Ulionestia begins by breaking a glass to signal her allies, alerting them to close their eyes, then casts *pyrotechnics* as outlined in her tactics.

ULIONESTIA

CR 2

Female gillman transmuter 3 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 310)

NE Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

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

hp 22 (3d6+9)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantment

Weaknesses water dependant

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4/19–20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

5/day—*telekinetic fist* (1d4+1 bludgeoning)

Transmuter Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*pyrotechnics* (DC 15), *shatter*, *web* (DC 14)

1st—*animate rope*, *grease* (DC 13), *hold portal*, *mage armor*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *message*, *ray of frost*

Opposition Schools Illusion, Necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Knowing this operation was set to happen today, Ulionestia put her physical enhancement in Constitution (this has already been included in her stats). She cast *mage armor* before the PCs arrived.

During Combat Ulionestia initiates combat by dropping a glass as a free action to signal her allies of her oncoming assault and then casts *pyrotechnics* on the bar's torches to blind the PCs. She follows up with *web* and *grease* to hamper their movement while they pursue Shoalo as he attempts to escape with the Society's artifact. If she needs to make an escape, she casts *shatter* on the aquarium and dives into the harbor through the hole in the floor of the broken tank.

Morale Ulionestia fights until Shoalo makes his escape or until she is reduced to fewer than 8 hit points. She flees through the shattered aquarium into the harbor if possible; otherwise, she leaves by whatever means she can.

Base Statistics When not under the effects of *mage armor*, Ulionestia has AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (transmutation)

Skills Appraise +8, Disguise +3, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Perception +3, Spellcraft +8, Swim +8

Languages Aboleth, Azlanti, Common, Elven

SQ amphibious, arcane bond (amulet), physical enhancement +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of spider climb*, *wand of magic missile* (25 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, aquamarine amulet worth 50 gp, spell component pouch, 22 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Enchantment Resistance (Ex) Gillmen gain a +2 racial saving throw bonus against non-aboleth enchantment spells and effects, but take a –2 penalty on saving throws against aboleth enchantment spells and effects.

Water Dependant (Ex) A gillman's body requires constant submersion in fresh or salt water. Gillmen who spend more than 1 day without fully submerging themselves in water risk internal organ failure, painful crackling of the skin, and death within 4d6 hours.

SHOALO AND AHRMISA

CR 1/3

Male and female gillman warrior 1 (*Pathfinder Campaign*)

Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide 310)

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 6 (1d10+1)

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** –1; +2 vs. enchantment

Weaknesses water dependent

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee spear +2 (1d8+1)

Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8+1/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat The gillmen's first goal is to escape with the Pathfinders' artifact, and once they have it in hand, they withdraw until they get out the door, jumping into the water and swimming away. If the PCs block their exit or hold onto the artifact, the two focus their attacks on whoever stands in their way or possesses the relic.

Morale If the gillmen haven't managed to grab the relic or can't escape, they fight to the death. As soon as they have the Azlanti artifact in hand, they attempt to flee.

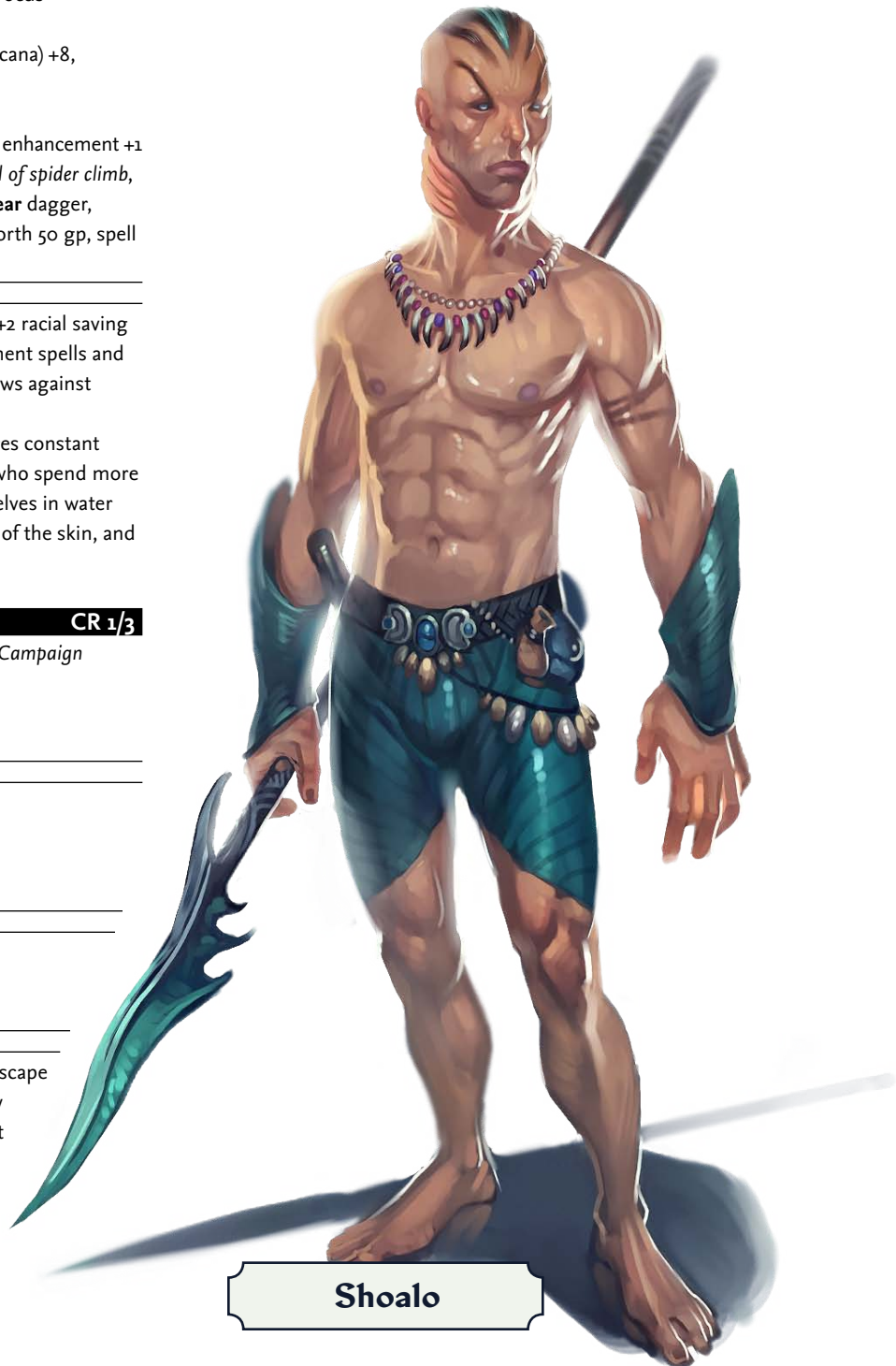
STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 13, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +2, Swim +13



Shoalo

Languages Aboleth, Common

SQ amphibious

Gear light crossbow with 10 bolts, spear, small sharkskin pouch with Aspis Consortium emblem containing 30 pp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Enchantment Resistance (Ex) Gillmen gain a +2 racial saving throw bonus against non-aboleth enchantment spells and effects, but take a –2 penalty on saving throws against aboleth enchantment spells and effects.

Water Dependent (Ex) A gillman's body requires constant submersion in fresh or salt water. Gillmen who spend more than 1 day without fully submerging themselves in water risk internal organ failure, painful cracking of the skin, and death within 4d6 hours.

Development: On Ulionestia's body, the PCs can find a letter she had written to her superior in the Aspis Consortium outlining the gillmen's plans, written in the past tense, as if she planned to send it immediately after the con was completed.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat the gillmen, give each PC 160 gp.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs stop the gillmen from escaping with the genuine Pathfinder artifact, they can return it safely to Absalom and the vaults of the Grand Lodge, and may even travel by sea, knowing from Ulionestia's letter that the Aspis Consortium's plan never involved stopping naval transport of the relic. Venture-Captain Dreng thanks them for their efforts and apologizes for sending them on a fool's errand, but commends them for uncovering the ruse and preventing the Society's enemies from gaining control of a true Azlanti artifact.

Before the PCs leave Escadar, they may wish to speak with the gillman embassy. They find the Low Azlanti

there completely unaware of the activities of Ulionestia and her allies, and somewhat put off by any accusations the PCs may make against them. If the PCs are diplomatic and don't offend the gillman ambassador they speak with, the Low Azlanti ambassador accepts Gloriana Morilla's letter, though when he opens it, he simply smirks to himself and shakes his head at a silent joke he doesn't share with the PCs.

If the PCs fail to stop the Aspis con, they are met with disappointment upon their return to the Grand Lodge, but Drandle Dreng admits that it wasn't just the PCs who were duped. He says that the Decemvirate is not pleased, but places the blame more on himself than on the PCs. Dreng warns the PCs that the Aspis Consortium is the greatest threat to the Pathfinder Society and that they should be ever vigilant against the organization in their ongoing careers.

Additionally, at the scenario's conclusion, each player should choose a faction for her PC to work with in future scenarios. A PC who has played through all three parts of the First Steps series should have met all 10 faction heads and likely has an idea of which faction is most in line with her motivations and methods. Once a player chooses a faction, give her the invitation handout from the faction leader of the chosen affiliation—all of the handouts can be found on pages 20–22.

Success Conditions

In order for the PCs to earn a Prestige Point for completing the adventure, they must have reached Escadar and met with the gillmen.

Faction Missions

There are no faction-specific missions in this scenario, as PCs playing through the First Steps series have not yet chosen their factions. A PC earns 1 Prestige Point for this scenario upon choosing a faction at the conclusion to the adventure.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO: FIRST STEPS, PART III: A VISION OF BETRAYAL

Event _____	Date _____
GM # _____	GM Character # _____
GM Name _____	
☐ Andoran	☐ Cheliah
☐ Qadira	☐ Sczarni
☐ Grand Lodge	☐ Shadow Lodge
☐ Lantern Lodge	☐ Silver Crusade
☐ Osirion	☐ Taldor

Character # _____	☐ _____ Prestige Points
Character Name _____	
☐ Andoran	☐ Cheliah
☐ Qadira	☐ Sczarni
☐ Grand Lodge	☐ Shadow Lodge
☐ Lantern Lodge	☐ Silver Crusade
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PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

Andoran



Worthy Pathfinder,

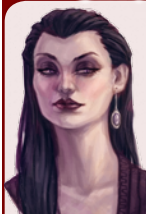
Your recent exploits as an adventuring Pathfinder have greatly impressed me, and I wish to make you an offer. Clearly you value the freedom of every sentient creature and will be a great asset to the Eagle Knights and Andoran as we work to spread democracy throughout the Inner Sea. By defying tyranny and promoting freedom and self-government, we can rise to be the most powerful and influential nation in the world. Look for word from me before your next mission; I will inform you of opportunities to be of further assistance to Andoran while conducting Pathfinder business.

In the name of freedom and democracy,

Colson Maldris

Major Colson Maldris

Chelax



Delectable Plaything,

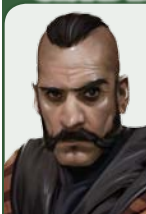
While I have ambitious agents lined up outside my boudoir hoping to be of service to Chelax and earn my good favor, your recent actions warrant special attention. The agents of the House of Thrune are ever looking for those willing to promote Chelish dominance and ensure that law is maintained—even on the backs of the weak. Only through strict adherence to the codices of Hell can we exert our power throughout the Inner Sea. Your position as a Pathfinder will serve Her Infernal Majestrix well. If you do as I ask in future letters, you will know great rewards, both from our great empire and of a more personal nature.

Until we meet again,

Zarta Draldeen

Paracountess Zarta Draldeen

Grand Lodge



Loyal Pathfinder,

I see hundreds of new agents rise from mediocrity to find their names scribed upon the very pages of the Pathfinder Chronicles, and I expect you to be among them. Your dedication to the ideals of our esteemed organization and your obedience of the word of the Decemvirate are laudable. In the course of your long and illustrious career, I may ask certain favors of you above and beyond those of your fellow agents. Do these tasks and you will earn not only my favor and that of my fellow venture-captains, but even the notice of the Ten themselves. You will be well rewarded for your allegiance to the Pathfinder Society above all else.

By the will of the Ten,

Ambrus Valsin

Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Lantern Lodge



Most Esteemed Pathfinder,

Though I know that not all Pathfinders may share my homeland or even plan to travel beyond the Wall of Heaven Mountains to the continent beyond, I recognize a kindred spirit when I see one. While you work within our organization as explorer and chronicler, please consider the concerns of those of us who belong to the Lantern Lodge. Ensure our interests are represented in the Inner Sea, and strengthen the tie between Pathfinders on both sides of the world. For these efforts you will be rewarded as much as I and others within the Lodge can afford. Most of all, you will earn our respect and increase your honor—such rewards can not be measured in any amount of wealth.

For the east and all it holds,

Amara Li

Venture-Captain Amara Li

Osirion



Seeker of Knowledge and Truth,

As representative to the Pathfinder Society of the Ruby Prince of Osirion, it is my distinct honor of asking you to join our time-honored cause. The work of a Pathfinder is intertwined with the exploration of lost ruins and the uncovering of ancient secrets. While most of these will likely not be Osirian in nature, they nevertheless increase our power. The more we learn from those who came before, and the more of our strength we keep hidden from those who oppose us, the more strongly and swiftly we can strike while their guard is down. Along your travels, I may ask you to procure information or relics for the Ruby Prince. In return, the nation of Osirion will ensure that you never go wanting. I hope you see the benefit of this arrangement to both of us.

Amenopheus
Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage

In Service to Lore,

Qadira



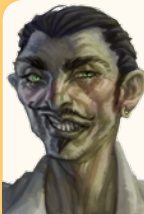
Most Honored Pathfinder,

As an agent of the Decemvirate, your travels will take you throughout the world, and you will have access to wonders and treasures beyond your imagination. The potential for profit along the way is even more unbelievable. As you go about your duties, I—on behalf of the satrap of Qadira and the Padishah Empire of Kelesh—may ask some favors of you to increase our and your mercantile dominance within the Inner Sea. Do these tasks, and I will see that you earn a sizable bounty for your efforts. Together we can fill our coffers with enough wealth to ensure our dominance in all things.

Aqir al'Hakam
Trade Prince Aqir al'Hakam

For profit,

SCZARNI



Trusted Friend,

While I may not have official ties to the Pathfinder Society, I have many friends in the organization, and I hope you will be among them. The oft-maligned affiliation of Varisian entrepreneurs to which I belong can be of great assistance to an agent like yourself, who is working to earn a living while traveling the world. If, from time to time, I ask you to do some favors for me, I will ensure that the resources of our world-spanning brotherhood are at your disposal. As long as you're fine with bending the rules here and there to ensure our mutual benefit, I believe we have a bright future together. Our lines of work overlap more than you may anticipate—expect word from me soon, and let me know how we Sczarni can assist you and the Society.

Guaril Karela

To reciprocated favors,

Guaril Karela

Shadow Lodge



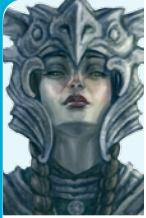
Servant of the Society,

You doubtless know by now what being a Pathfinder entails, and have seen the danger into which the Decemvirate and their venture-captain lackeys are so willing to send you. I was once a Pathfinder like you, and ever since I was left for dead by my so-called allies after being cursed, I've worked to ensure that ordinary Pathfinders are given the rights and respect they deserve. Help us to rub out rogue Shadow Lodge agents who seek only their own gain and power. Make the Shadow Lodge a safe haven for all who have suffered because of the masked few who steer the Society. Work with me and the Shadow Lodge for Pathfinders the world over, and we will ensure that you reap the benefits of your deeds. You will hear from me soon.

In the shadow of the masked ones,

Torch
Grandmaster Torch

Silver Crusade



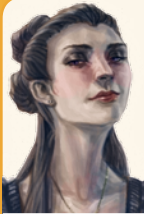
Bastion of Good,

With so many sects of Pathfinders working around the world, it is hard to understand how so few use the resources at their disposal to uplift the downtrodden, heal the sick, and spread the teachings of all who preach goodness and light to the darkest and most depraved corners of Golarion. We at the Silver Crusade work to do just that, however, and your help will be vital in seeing our mission through. For your vigilance, selflessness, and commitment, we promise to reward you as best we can before your ultimate reward in the next life. Until then, use your travels, contacts, and resources to do good always, and our silent war against evil will know true victory.

For love, peace, and goodness,

Ollysta Zadrian

TALDOR



Noble Pathfinder,

You know of Taldor's glory and the influence we have had on the history of the world. You are also likely aware of the losses we've suffered in the scope of our Empire. No longer can we be satisfied with past—and long abandoned—laurels while we allow even more of our destined greatness to slip away. Through your efforts, Taldor can once again reach its former glory and reclaim the Empire that civilized the Inner Sea after the Age of Darkness! Your assistance will be greatly rewarded, both monetarily and socially. I can get you into the greatest soirees from Absalom to Yanmass and even have the ear of the Grand Prince on important matters of state. Together we can ensure Taldor is not merely a name read in history books but a force to be reckoned with in the ages to come.

To reclaimed destiny,

Lady Gloriana Morilla

PLAYER HANDOUT #1

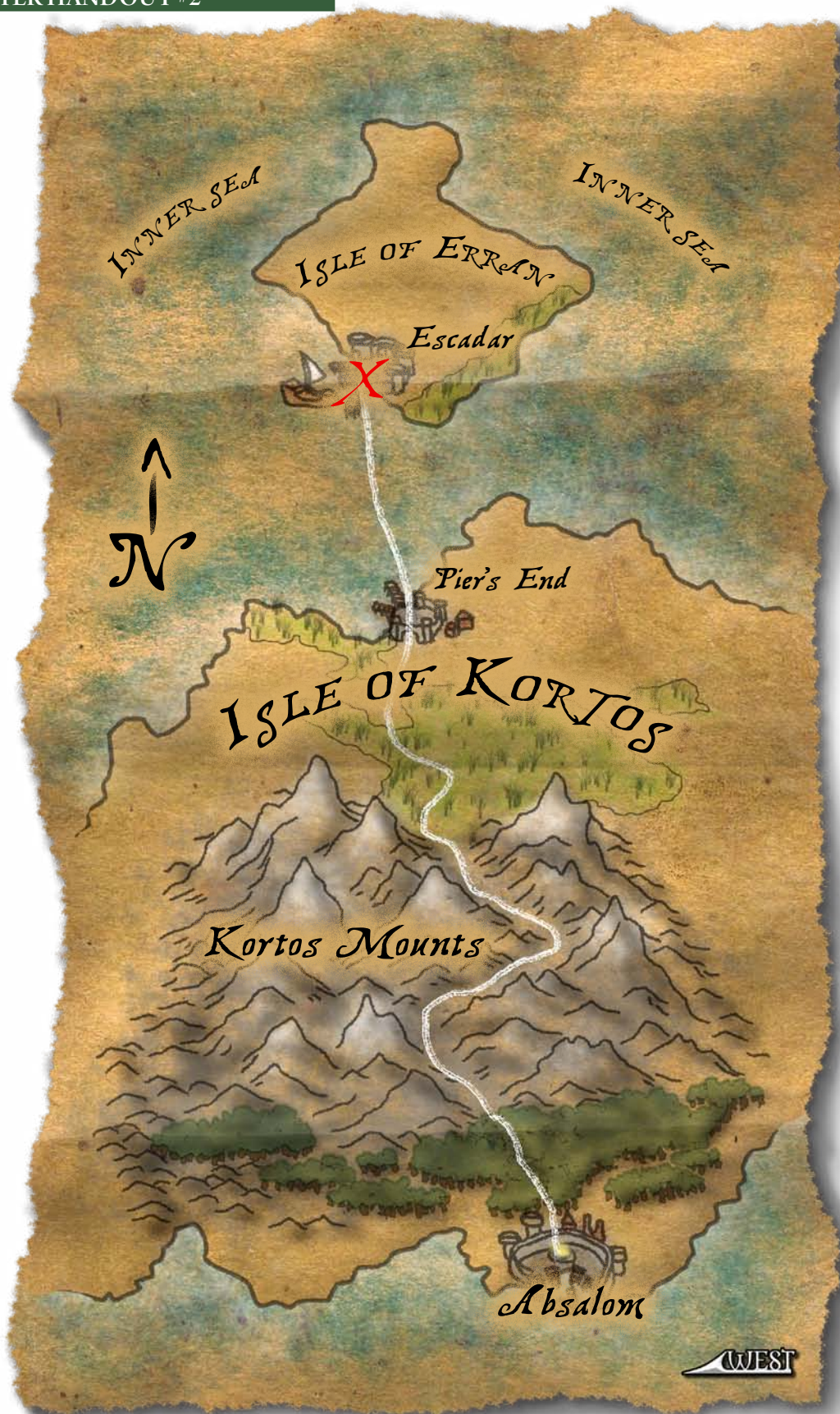
Dearest Pathfinders,

As you know, the people of Taldor share a proud history that traces their blood to the ancient Azlanti who founded our great nation. I have a letter that I ask you to deliver to the gillman embassy in Escadar, so my request requires no additional effort on your part other than carrying a simple envelope and delivering it when you reach your final destination. I have no hesitation in telling you the letter asks the gillmen to consider an alliance with the nation of Taldor—if the letter finds its way into an influential gillman's hands, it would please me greatly.

A new dawn will rise over Taldor,

Lady Gloriana Morilla

PLAYER HANDOUT #2



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ROLEPLAYING GAME[™]

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PATHFINDER SOCIETY INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO

FIRST STEPS, PART III: A VISION OF BETRAYAL

Scenario Chronicle #

☐ Slow ☐ Normal

SUBTIER	—	401
1		
SUBTIER		
—		

MAX GOLD

This Chronicle Certifies That

Player Name	A.K.A.	Character Name	Pathfinder Society #
Has Completed This Scenario.			
Faction			

EXPERIENCE

Starting XP	
+	GM's Initial
XP Gained (GM ONLY)	
Final XP Total	

FAME

Initial Fame	Initial Prestige
+	GM's Initial
Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)	
—	
Prestige Spent	
Final Fame	Current Prestige

GOLD

Start GP	
+	GM's Initial
GP Gained (GM ONLY)	
+	GM's Initial
Day Job (GM ONLY)	
+	
Items Sold	
=	
Subtotal	
—	
Items Bought	
=	
Total	

Items Found During This Scenario

SUBTIER
1

☐☐☐ **Kayle's Blessing** You gain a +1 luck bonus on any saving throw against a dragon's breath weapon. This bonus can be applied after a roll is made but before the results are determined. You may only use this ability once per saving throw. This ability may be used three times.

Cloak of resistance +1 (1,000 gp)

Scroll of spider climb (150 gp)

Wand of cure light wounds (750 gp)

Wand of magic missile (25 charges; 375 gp)

Items Sold / Conditions Gained

TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS SOLD
Add 1/2 this value to the "Items Sold" Box

Items Bought / Conditions Cleared

TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT

For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #