

## SKELETON MOON™ PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO 19

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Pathfinder Society Scenario 19: Skeleton Moon is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st to 7th level characters (Tiers: 1–2, 3–4, and 6–7). This scenario is designed for play in Pathfinder Society Organized Play, 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 3.5 edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game.

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# SKELETON MOON



#### BY BENJAMIN WENHAM

Andrax d'Aponte, set out for Osirion, leading an expedition to find the tomb of Razma the Sage. His motivation was his worsening health, due to a wasting disease called the pale shakes. He caught the disease during one of his many excavations of Osirian tombs and it resisted every attempt to cure it. The only relief he found was lanash dust, an Osirian folk remedy attributed to an ancient alchemist named Razma the Sage. The drug is a fine black powder, the main ingredients of which are dried cockatrice venom and charcoal. Whilst the drug was effective in slowing the progress of the disease, d'Aponte became increasingly obsessive and paranoid, as supposed cure after supposed cure failed.

D'Aponte took with him a collection of scholars and adventurers funded by the Pathfinder Society. Among them was Sefu, a mercenary bodyguard whom d'Aponte hired specially to ensure his safety in Osirion. The pair had worked together in the past, with d'Aponte relying on his bodyguard for numerous tasks, including feeding his pet cockatrices and preparing d'Aponte's daily dose of lanash dust. Unknown to d'Aponte was that Sefu had been offered a great deal of money by a representative of the Aspis Consortium to sabotage the dig and recover d'Aponte's journal. Sefu accepted readily.

Months of research followed until, eventually, they located the site of Razma's tomb. Spurred on by d'Aponte's ill health, the expedition rushed the excavation, leading to many deaths among the native diggers. All the while d'Aponte's paranoia worsened. He pushed away many of the other expedition members, trusting only Sefu. This was misplaced trust, given that the shifty warrior's true allegiance was to himself and his new employers. Unnoticed by d'Aponte, all around him relations between the expedition and the native diggers worsened, fueled by a mixture of colonialist racism on the one side and grief on the other. Two of the diggers died as a result of being bitten by one of d'Aponte's collection of pet cockatrices, further increasing their agitation. Sefu played upon these tensions, straining them intentionally and hoping that it would lead to the failure of the excavation.

Eventually they unearthed and breached the vault of Razma. Within lay many treasures of ancient Osirion, including numerous scrolls and large symbolic frescos peppered with hieroglyphs. As his fellow Osiriontologists worked to catalogue the treasures, d'Aponte feverishly labored to crack the alchemical ciphers.

As hetranslated the largest of the frescos, understanding dawned on him. This was not the cure he anticipated and hoped for, but a ritual that would allow him to become something other than human, a spirit which need not fear death. Screeching with relief, d'Aponte rushed to find his fellow Pathfinders and adventurers in order to tell them of his discovery. Before he could do so, the Osirian diggers took up their picks and fell on the expedition with brutal savagery.

The battle that followed left 27 people dead by Pathfinder steel, spell, or Osirian pick. The surviving diggers fled into the desert, as the remaining members of the expedition buried their dead and did what they could to secure the tomb before making ready to return to civilization and escape the repercussions of the battle.

D'Aponte returned to the Isle of Kortos and set up a laboratory in a lonely siege castle known as Flint Tower. He chose the site because it already contained all that he needed to make the wine that was the primary reagent required for the ritual. Brewing the wine from a variety of assassin vines locally called *Cailean's folly*, but known in alchemy as *dreamsgate*, he took the utmost care to follow the ritual to the letter.

With the rite underway, the assassin vine grew as though two seasons had passed in the space of hours. The vine bore fruit and ripened, allowing the brewing to begin. For a month, the wine sat and d'Aponte's days were filled with preparation for his transcendence. His time fully consumed, the alchemist left Sefu to the day-today running of Flint Tower. When local farmers came to investigate the activities at the tower, it was Sefu who set his master's pet cockatrices on the mob, as he did when a messenger arrived carrying the Pathfinder Society's correspondence. D'Aponte's plans slowly took shape and as the night of the skeleton moon drew close, the

#### Pathfinder Society Scenario

#### THE SIEGE CASTLES OF ABSALOM

The numerous empires scattered along the edge of the Inner Sea have long looked to the City at the Center of the World with envy. Throughout its history, many nations tried to possess Absalom by force. Their efforts left scars across the Isle of Kortos in the form of empty siege castles and haunted fortifications. Additional information about the siege castles can be found in the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* or the Pathfinder Chronicles *Guide to Absalom*.

Decemvirate considered how to deal with the wayward scholar.

#### SUMMARY

Venture-Captain Adril Hestram, on behalf of the Decemvirate, asks the PCs to recover the journal of famed Pathfinder and alchemist, Andrax d'Aponte, who has taken up residence in Flint Tower, one of the many siege castles that surround the City at the Center of the World.

When the PCs arrive at Flint Tower, d'Aponte's treacherous bodyguard Sefu sees an opportunity to steal d'Aponte's notes for his true masters, the Aspis Consortium, and resolves to force a conflict between d'Aponte (who he considers a doddering fool) and the Pathfinders, believing he will be able to recover the journal when the dust clears. To start the conflict, he sets his master's pet cockatrices on the PCs before he retreats into Flint Tower to inform d'Aponte that the PCs are assaulting the castle.

Gaining entry to Flint Tower, the PCs see before them a collection of animated manikins performing a play. The enactment reveals some details of what d'Aponte is trying to achieve. Upon learning of the invasion of his home from Sefu, d'Aponte flies into a rage and orders the manikins to attack the PCs. He then retreats to fortify his position and attempts to complete the rite. At this point, he discovers that Sefu has disappeared. The PCs arrive to confront d'Aponte, who will in all likelihood attack them, fighting to his death.

On d'Aponte's demise, the canopic jar that acts as the ritual's focus captures the alchemist's soul and shunts it into the assassin vine in the courtyard. The enraged alchemist's new body lashes out in confusion and frustration. His bid for transcendence thwarted, he begins to tear down the castle around the PCs. To escape, the PCs must kill the assassin vine that hosts d'Aponte. Finally, as the PCs set off for home, Sefu ambushes them with a collection of thugs, attempting to steal the alchemist's journal for the Aspis Consortium.

#### Flint Tower

Flint Tower is a tumbledown eyesore, a combination of flint and mortar. The walls have not stood the test of time. Piles of rubble and scree sit at the tower's base, where time, weather, and plants loosened the mortar. In places, entire sections of the old tower have collapsed inwards. In the weak afternoon light, some sections of the tower glint a faint green.

**1. The Approach**: Large boulders and statues clad with cloth garments cover the route up to the castle's gates. Great gates of thick oak bar entry to the castle. Northeast of the gates, about 10 feet off the ground, a ragged hole in the wall is testament to some ancient weapon of war.

2. The Breach: The breach in the wall of the castle leads into a corridor. To the north, rubble blocks what appears to be a stairway. A small room lies off the corridor to the west with a slit window that looks down into the courtyard (area 5). To the south, a set of spiral stairs leads downwards. The floors and steps are paved with limestone providing an even surface, but the walls and roof are of mortar and flint.

**3. Dormitory**: Once used by soldiers who staffed this siege castle, this largely empty room contains a few rotten bunks.

**4. Gate House**: This area houses the mechanism that controls the opening and closing of the gate. Opening the gate using the mechanism requires a great deal of force (DC 15 Strength check), given its corroded state. The process takes two minutes.

5. Courtyard: The courtyard is circular and 40 feet in circumference. The south and southeast exits lead into the gatehouse and an antechamber leading to area 2. A stairway leads counterclockwise up the inner wall to a landing, giving access to the laboratory (area 6). Huge, fallen stones block all other exits. A wine press dominates the western wall of the castle. Next to the press is a small stage with wine-making paraphernalia placed around its base. Between the entrances to the gatehouse and dormitory, an assassin vine of tremendous size creeps up the inner wall, burrowing its way into any crack or crevice. The assassin vine is dormant when the PCs first enter this area, but will come alive once d'Aponte finishes his ritual (see Act 4). On the stage, three manikins lean together, like drunkards, using one another for support.

**6.** Laboratory: This room is 20 feet square. On its western wall, a large bench is set out with an extensive collection of alchemical apparatuses. To the rear of the room, a doorway leads into a number of small bedrooms.

#### GETTING STARTED

Read the following to get the adventure underway:

#### Skeleton Moon

The Decemvirate has been locked in discussion for two hours, deciding what to do about Andrax d'Aponte. A previously well-respected member of the Pathfinder Society, d'Aponte broke off communication with the Society after recently returning to the Isle of Kortos. An alchemist by training, d'Aponte was in Osirion searching for the tomb of Razma the Sage for the last year. His refusal to report the results of his findings there is causing a great deal of consternation in the Pathfinder Society.

Eventually, a door opens and the bear-like form of Venture-Captain Adril Hestram steps from the meeting room. Adril grins his massive, bearded grin and motions to follow as he strides down the corridor. "Its done; the council has decided d'Aponte's fate. You're to head out to Flint Tower, a ruined siege castle we believe he's living in, check on his well-being, and gently nudge him to return to the fold. Even if he turns you away, I'm afraid that I must ask you to make sure that you return with his journal, though I'd take it as a kindness if you didn't hurt Andrax. We had more than our share of adventures when we were younger, he and I. It's fair to warn you that the messenger service we used to contact d'Aponte reported that their messenger never returned from Flint Tower. So, you may be walkin' into a trap of some sort."

After an hour's travel north of Absalom, the tumbledown form of Flint Tower looms ahead. The pale light of late afternoon

#### **RUNNING SKELETON MOON**

This scenario can be played in a number of ways. Regardless of which way the PCs go, start with Act 1 and the fight with the cockatrices. Once the PCs succeed at Act 1, they can either climb the rubble into area 2 or somehow breach the gates into area 4. From there, they have several options to explore Flint Tower and find d'Aponte. Once the conflict with d'Aponte is resolved, the PCs are ambushed as they leave Flint Tower by d'Aponte's crooked assistant, Sefu. Below is a short list of each area and which act they pertain to: Area 1 is Act 1 and Act 5 Areas 2, 3, and 4 are not tied to a specific encounter Area 5 is Act 2 and Act 4 Area 6 is Act 3

washes its face, revealing myriad shades of green, brown, and blue in the stone of its making.

## ACT 1: THE GATE OF STATUES (EL 2, EL 5, OR EL 8)

The approach to Flint Tower is a gentle slope, littered with boulders and strange twisted statues of painted men and women. Each statue is dressed in a set of cloth garments and



one even has a satchel slung across his shoulders. Ahead, a sudden shower of dust and pebbles leads back up to the presence of a dark-skinned man of Garundi descent on the parapet far above. He stands for a brief moment, silhouetted against the moon, which hangs in the late afternoon sky. His thickly accented voice calls down. "Greeting strangers, I hope you have not traveled far, for it is my duty and pleasure to turn your stinking hides away. We have have neither need nor want of vagabonds here. Now be gone!"

This encounter takes place in area 1. The Garundi man is Sefu, d'Aponte's treacherous bodyguard. If the PCs do not immediately turn to leave, Sefu calls one or more of his master's pet cockatrices with a long pulsating whistle. Sefu meets any attempts at communication with jeers and taunts. As the cockatrices approach, Sefu disappears from sight.

**Creatures**: The pet cockatrices are foraging for giant centipedes along the cliff edge to the east, squawking and occasionally fighting with one another. They rush to the gate when they hear Sefu's whistle and attack the PCs.

## Tier 1-2 (EL 2)

Juvenile Cockatrice (2)	CR 1
N Small magical beast	
Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +	3, Spot
+3	
DEFENSE	
AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11	
(+3 Dex, +1 size)	
<b>hp</b> 11 (2d10)	
Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +2	
Immune cockatrice petrification	
OFFENSE	
<b>Spd</b> 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)	
<b>Melee</b> bite +5 (1d4-2 plus paralysis)	
Special Attacks paralysis	
TACTICS	
During Combat The juvenile cockatrices move between the	ne
boulders and statues, using the terrain to make hit-and	l-run
attacks against the most vulnerable PCs.	
Morale The juvenile cockatrices fight to the death.	
STATISTICS	
Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9	
Base Atk +2; Grp +0	
Feats Weapon Finesse	
Skills Listen +3, Spot +3	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Paralysis (Su) Creatures hit by the bite attack of a juvenile	
cockatrice must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or insta	ntly

cockatrice must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or instantly become paralyzed as if under the effects of a *hold person* spell. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Tier 3–4 (EL 5)

#### COCKATRICE (2)

hp 27 (MM 37) TACTICS

**During Combat** The cockatrices move between the boulders and statues, using the terrain to make hit-and-run attacks against the most vulnerable PCs.

CR<sub>3</sub>

Morale The cockatrices fight to the death.

#### Tier 6-7 (EL 8)

As Tier 1–2, but increase the number of cockatrices to 5.

**Development**: D'Aponte truly loves his ghastly pets. If the cockatrices are unharmed by the party, then d'Aponte is considerably more likely to listen to what they have to say. This translates to a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks while dealing with d'Aponte. The statue with the satchel was a messenger sent to parlay with d'Aponte. Sefu set the adult cockatrices on him (as he'd done many times already to wandering farmers or others who came upon Flint Towers unaware of its new masters) and his body is now stone.

**Treasure:** The messenger's satchel contains a letter of credit destined for a noble estate further out in the countryside. This letter of credit is worth 600 gp at Tier 1–2, 800 gp at Tier 3–4, and 1,200 gp at Tier 6–7.

**Mission Notes:** The messenger's satchel contains documents that prove that d'Aponte used Hans Rorn to smuggle himself and his pets onto the Isle of Kortos.

**Rewards:** If the PCs defeat the cockatrices, reward each tier thusly:

Tier 1-2: Give each player 100 gp. Tier 3-4: Give each player 133 gp. Tier 6-7: Give each player 200 gp.

## ACT 2: THE MYSTERY PLAY (EL 3, EL 5, OR EL 8)

Suddenly the three manikins jolt, shift, and turn toward the front of the stage. They bow low, in delicate unison. The first has a skeletal form, with a face like a cresent moon and hands made from sickles. The second is a maiden made from white ash wood that carries a goblet made from white gold. The third is a vine-covered figure wearing a blank mask and carrying an empty bottle of wine. The vine-covered figure mimes the action of pouring wine into the goblet. The goblet is then offered up to the moon which mimes drinking from it. As the manikins act, a strange, high-pitched voice of an unseen woman narrates, "So the master of royal art decreed, never more shall this vulgar matter be, of better stuff shall I be wrought, never to suffer the princess's cruel gifts. In likeness of those beyond, may my form be as perfect as the winged host, as powerful as the horned fiend. May I be made anew beneath the skeleton moon."

As the PCs enter area 5, they trigger the next scene of the manikin's mystery play. This play as a whole details the symbolic transformation of the rite master into a spiritual entity. This scene depicts the blessing of the ritual wine under the skeleton moon. At the conclusion of the scene, ask for a DC 15 Knowledge (arcane) check. Success reveals that the scene is part of an alchemical mystery play, and part of an ongoing transmutation ritual.

Once the PCs have had a chance to investigate the courtyard, but before they start up the stairs to the laboratory, d'Aponte appears on the landing. He is dressed in well-tailored clothes now worn with age. His face is gaunt and he shows clear signs of illness. He starts to rant and rave at the PCs, accusing them of invading his home and trying to steal his journal. He orders his minions to attack before retreating to his laboratory.

Creatures: A selection of manikins clusters around the center of the small stage on the western wall. They are a key element of the ritual; the ritual's magic animates them. When d'Aponte orders his minions to attack, the manikins cease their dancing and attack the PCs. For Tier 3–4 and Tier 6–7, several laboratory assistants armed with flasks of alchemist's fire appear on the landing and join the manikins in their attack.

### Tier 1-2 (EL 3)

Small Animated Objects (3) hp 15 (MM 13)	CR 1
Tier 3-4 (EL 5)	
<b>Медіцм Аліматед Овјест (2)</b> hp 31 (ММ 13)	CR 2
Small Animated Objects (2) hp 15 (MM 13)	CR 1
Laboratory Assistants (2)	CR 1/2
Male human expert 1 LN medium humanoid	
Init +1; Senses Listen +4, Spot +2	
DEFENSE	
AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12	
(armor +2, Dex +1)	
<b>hp</b> 4 (1d6)	

Fort +0	, <b>Ref</b> +1,	Will +2
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OFFENSE	
<b>Spd</b> 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> short sword –1 (1d6–1/19–20 x2 )	
Ranged alchemist's fire +2 (1d6+1 plus splash)	
TACTICS	
During Combat The laboratory assistants stay at the top of the	
stairs where they can limit the ability of the party to attack	
them. They throw flasks of alchemist's fire at the party from	
their vantage point.	
Morale A laboratory assistant withdraws to the laboratory if hit	
but not killed. From there, he flees the castle if hit again.	
STATISTICS	
Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 9	
Base Atk +0; Grp -1	
Feats Magical Aptitude, Point Blank Shot	
<b>Skills</b> Appraise +4, Craft (alchemy) +5, Decipher Script +4, Gather	
Information +2, Heal +3, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcane) +4,	
Knowledge (history) +4, Use Magical Device +2	
Languages Celestial, Common	
Combat Gear flask of alchemist's fire (6); Other Gear leather	
armor, shortsword	
Tier 6-7 (EL 8)	
Medium Animated Objects (4) CR 2	

MEDIUM ANIMATED OBJECTS (4) hp 31 (MM 13)	CR 2
Large Animated Object hp 52 (MM 14)	CR 3
Laboratory Assistant (4)	CR 1/2

**hp** 4 (use stats from Tier 3–4)

Development: Although it is likely that the laboratory assistants will die from a single hit, it is possible that they will survive the fight. If so, they retreat to the Laboratory (area 6) and fight on at their employer's side.

Treasure: The collection of props used by the manikins is worth 40 gp.

Mission Notes: Among the winemaking materials, a lone bottle of Vino Asesino nestles among many empty bottles. Cheliax PCs can return this bottle to Absalom to achieve their faction mission. An Osirion PC who ensures that a member of the Cheliax faction returns it to Absalom succeeds in the Osirion mission.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat both the manikins and the lab assistants, reward each tier thusly:

Tier 1-2: Give each player 3 gp. Tier 3-4:

Give each player 27 gp. **Tier 6–7**: Give each player 50 gp.

## ACT 3: D'APONTE'S LABORATORY (EL 4, EL 7, OR EL 10)

Alchemical equipment fills this laboratory. A ritual circle has been chalked on the floor in the center of the room. Within the circle stands a gaunt man in his early fifties. There is a collection of canopic jars at his feet. His clothes were once fine, but have faded and been repaired many times. Around him stand a group of young and frightened men and women. Their stained hands and bookish looks place them as students and initiates of the alchemical arts. The older man in the circle finishes quaffing from a bowl. The smell suggests it contains a concoction made from spices and wine. He then stares for a long moment.

On entering the Laboratory (area 6), the PCs see d'Aponte drinking the last of the ritual wine, which starts the final stage of the rite. Around the outside of the circle, a number of laboratory assistants are gathered. They are chanting loudly in invocation, but are nervous and uncomfortable with their teacher's plans.

**Creatures**: D'Aponte and a number of laboratory assistants are here working hard to complete the ritual. Any survivors from the battle in the courtyard also gather here.

## Tier 1-2 (EL 4)

LABORATORY ASSISTANTS (2)	CR 1/2
<b>hp</b> 4 (use stats from Act 2, Tier 3–4)	•
TACTICS	
During Combat The laboratory assistants retreat to the the laboratory and throw bottles of alchemist's fire They do their best to avoid melee combat with the p	at the party party.
Morale A laboratory assistant flees the castle if he is h	it and
survives.	
Andrax d'Aponte	CR 3
Male human variant wizard (transmuter) 2/ rogue 1	
N Medium humanoid	
Init +2; Senses Listen +2, Spot +1	
DEFENSE	
AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 10	
(armor +4, Dex +2)	
<b>hp</b> 11 (2d4+1d6)	
Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +4	
OFFENSE	
<b>Spd</b> 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> dagger +1 (1d4/19–20 x2)	

Ranged flask of alchemist's fire +3 (1d6) Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)

1st—enlarge person (DC 14), mage armor (DC 14), color spray (DC 13), summon monster I

o—resistance (2), acid splash (DC 12)

Prohibited Schools Evocation, Necromancy

#### TACTICS

- **Before Combat** D'Aponte casts *mage armor* on himself just before he drinks the wine. He also uses his enhance attribute class feature to increase his Constitution score by 2. These bonuses are already figured into his stats.
- **During Combat** In the first turn of combat, the alchemist summons a fiendish dire rat to block the doorway from the landing to the laboratory. D'Aponte stays behind his summoned creature, using his *wand of cure light wounds* on it to ensure it remains a danger.

Morale D'Aponte fights to the death.

Base Statistics Con 8

#### <u>STATISTICS</u> Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +1; Grp +1

- Feats Augment Summoning, Spell Focus (Transmutation), Spell Focus (Conjuration)
- Skills Appraise +4, Bluff +2, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +7 (+9 when using laboratory), Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +3, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Jump +1, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (religion) +3, Knowledge (royaly & nobility) +3, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Locks +3, Spell Craft +5, Use Magical Device +2

Languages Abyssal, Common, Osiriani

 ${\bf SQ}$  trapfinding

**Combat Gear** flask of alchemist's fire (3), wand of cure light wounds; **Other Gear** dagger, d'Aponte's journal, shortbow (with 20 arrows), spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus magic weapon, reduce person, and shield), wayfinder

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Variant Wizard (Ex) As a wizard class variant, d'Aponte gives up his ability to summon a familiar in exchange for the Enhance Attribute ability.
- Enhance Attribute (Ex) Once per day, d'Aponte can add a +2 enhancement bonus to any one of his ability scores. This bonus lasts for a number of minutes equal to his wizard (transmuter) class level. Using this ability is a swift action.

## Tier 3-4 (EL 7)

Laboratory Assistants (2)	CR 1/2
<b>hp</b> 4 (use stats from Act 2, Tier 3–4)	
Andrax d'Aponte	CR 6

Male human variant wizard (transmuter) 5/rogue 1

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N Medium humanoid
Init +2; Senses Listen +2, Spot +1
DEFENSE
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 10
(armor +4, Dex +4)
<b>hp</b> 18 (5d4+1d6+3)
Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5
OFFENSE
<b>Spd</b> 30 ft.
<b>Melee</b> dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged shortbow +3 (1d6)
Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6
Spells Prepared (CL 5th)
3rd—lightning bolt (DC 17), summon monster III, slow (DC 17)
2nd—blur (DC 15), cat's grace, pyrotechnics (DC 16), web (DC 16)
1st—color spray (DC 14), enlarge person (DC 15), mage armor (DC
15), reduce person (2) (DC 15)
0—resistance (2), acid splash (2) (DC 12)
Prohibited Schools Evocation, Necromancy

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** D'Aponte casts *blur, cat's grace,* and *mage armor* on himself. He also uses his Enhance Attribute class feature to increase his Constitution.

During Combat In the first turn of combat, the alchemist casts summon monster III to summon a wave of fiendish dire rats to block the entrance. Following this d'Aponte stays behind his summoned creature, using web and pyrotechnics to hold up and weaken the PCs.

Morale d'Aponte fights until dead.

Base Statistics Dex 14, Con 8, Int 16

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +2; Grp +2

Feats Augment Summoning, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (transmutation), Toughness

Skills Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Concentration +6, Craft +9, Decipher Script +6, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +3, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Jump +1, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +3, Knowledge (royalty & nobility) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Locks +3, Spell Craft +7, Use Magical Device +2

Languages Abyssal, Common, Osiriani

#### SQ trapfinding

**Combat Gear** flask of alchemist's fire (3), wand of cure light wounds, pearl of power (2nd); **Other Gear** dagger, d'Aponte's journal, shortbow (with 20 arrows), spellbook, wayfinder

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Variant Wizard (Ex) As a wizard class variant, d'Aponte gives up his ability to summon a familiar in exchange for Enhance Attribute and his 5th-level bonus feat for Spell Versatility.

Enhance Attribute (Ex) Once per day, d'Aponte can add a +2 enhancement bonus to any one of his ability scores. This bonus lasts for a number of minutes equal to his wizard (transmuter) class level. Using this ability is a swift action.

**Spell Versatility (Ex)** D'Aponte has adapted magic of other schools to his own style of spellcasting. As a result, he can cast *lightning bolt* and treat it as if it were a transmutation spell.

#### Tier 6-7 (EL 10)

As Tier 3–4, but include one of d'Aponte's pet cockatrices. Also, increase d'Aponte's *pearl of power* (2nd) to a *pearl of power* (3rd).

CR<sub>3</sub>

#### COCKATRICE

hp 27 (MM 37)

**Development:** In the brief pause before combat commences it is possible that the PCs will attempt to talk through the situation with d'Aponte. The alchemist is angry and scared; consider him hostile for the purposes of Diplomacy checks. Due to his mental state, his attitude worsens one step every turn, unless his attitude is helpful, at which point PCs gain his trust. He does not attack the PCs on the first turn, but if they fail to move him beyond indifferent, or his attitude returns to hostile, he attacks immediately.

If made helpful, he explains that he is very ill and that he is trying to escape his imminent death from the pale shakes by becoming a spirit, after which he will no longer be subjected to the disease. He is able to explain that he only attacked the PCs because his bodyguard Sefu told him that Flint Tower was under attack. However, with Sefu fled, d'Aponte is now convinced his bodyguard was working against him. He agrees to let the PCs have his notes, but explains that he needs them to complete his ritual. D'Aponte says that if they are willing to wait, they can take them when he is done. If the ritual goes ahead, the PCs wait on the sidelines, only to see d'Aponte panic at the end as he realizes that he has made a horrible mistake. He attempts to end the ritual, only to be lashed by the arcane energies of the collapsing ritual. The backlash chars his body and it collapses, clearly dead.

Upon d'Aponte's death, the canopic jar at the center of the ritual circle starts to glow brightly and a bolt of light flashes from it, striking the assassin vine growing in area 5. This is the process that transfers d'Aponte's soul from the canopic jar into the closest appropriate host (namely, the assassin vine).

**Treasure**: 100 gp worth of sundries are divided between the bedrooms and laboratory. At Tier 6–7, the canopic jar remains largely intact and is worth 3000 gp.

**Mission Notes:** After d'Aponte's death (or during the ritual) PCs may take a little time to search though d'Aponte's papers. Among these are shipping invoices that detail his movement from Osirion to the Isle of Kortos.

Andre Crispin, the alchemist's indentured servant, is locked inside one of the bedrooms.

**Rewards**: If the PCs manage to retrieve d'Aponte's journal, reward each tier thusly:

Tier 1–2: Give each player 135 gp. Tier 3–4: Give each player 469 gp. Tier 6–7: Give each player 885 gp.

## ACT 4: THE TRANSMUTED ALCHEMIST (EL 3, EL 5, OR EL 8)

A low rumbling fills the air as the tower begins to shake. On the shelves, bottles of reagents start to dance across trembling surfaces. Out in the courtyard, small chunks of flint start to fall, clattering off the inner wall of the tower. Streams of dust fall from newly forming cracks in the ceiling. With an angry hiss and a foul sulphurous scent, a flask smashes on the floor and out in the courtyard an enormous network of vines pull free from the wall and land with a wet thump. A tremendous crash follows as a piece of the tower as big as a horse crushes wine making the equipment.

Give the PCs time to perform a quick search so they have a chance to find both d'Aponte's notes and the shipping invoice, and then start this act. As the PC's search, loot, and talk, d'Aponte's now utterly shattered mind has taken control of its host, the assassin vine. As he rips himself away from the structure in fury, he pulls chunks of loose rubble, which tumble to the ground below. One large chunk of rock crashes to the ground. It destroys the wine-making materials, washing the floor of the courtyard with an alcoholic broth of mud and rotting grape pulp. The courtyard ground is soaked and slippery and acts as rough terrain. If the PCs engage the assassin vine in combat, feel free to give the effect throughout the encounter that the tower is falling apart. Rocks and shale should clatter into the courtyard every round, the ground should rumble and shake, and very loud, violent noises should be heard from nearby as the already ruined north

> side of the tower disintegrates into rubble. These are largely scenic effects though—how they affect combat is entirely up to you.

> > **Creatures:** The assassin vine that houses d'Aponte rips loose from its perch in the courtyard, crashing to the ground below. The PCs will most likely need to deal with the vine in order to escape the crumbling tower.

**Traps:** For Tier 6–7, the first PC to head down the stairs is subject to a rock fall as the assassin vine pulls a creeper free from the wall above.

## Tier 1-2 (EL 3)

#### Assassin Vine CR 3 hp 30 (MM 20)

NOTES

For Tier 1–2, the courtyard is surprisingly devoid of plant life other than the vine. In combat terms, this means the assassin vine cannot use it's entangle ability. Also, since the assassin vine fell into the courtyard from above and immediately begins to move toward the PCs, it only takes a DC 10 Spot check to determine the assassin vine isn't an ordinary vine (per the camouflage ability).

#### Tier 3–4 (EL 5)

#### **Advanced Assassin Vine**

N Huge plant

Init +0; Senses blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1 DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (+0 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size) hp 114 (12d8+60) Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4 CR 5

Defensive Abilities plant traits; Immune electricity; Resist cold 10, fire 10 OFFENSE Spd 5 ft. Melee slam +16 (1d8+9) Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft. (30 ft with vine) Special Attacks constrict (1d8+10), entangle, improved grab TACTICS **During Combat** The vine attacks any PC that attempts to escape the tower. Morale The vine fights until destroyed. STATISTICS Str 28, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9 Base Atk +9; Grp +19 SQ camouflage Tier 6-7 (EL 8) As Tier 3–4, but add the following:

Falling Rocks Trap	CR 3
Type Mechanical; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20	
EFFECTS	
Trigger Location; Reset repair	
Effect Atk +10 melee (falling rubble; 4d6)	

Mission Notes: If neither the Cheliax or Osirion agents have successfully managed to retrieve the bottle of assassin vine wine from the courtyard by this point, it is destroyed by falling stone during this act.

Rewards: There are no rewards for this act.

## ACT 5: AMBUSH ON THE ROAD (EL 3, EL 6, OR EL 9)

From behind the boulders and rocky outcrops that cover the slope that leads away from Flint Tower, several armored figures emerge. Most carry shields with the easily recognizable serpent symbol of the Aspis Consortium emblazoned on them. Among them stands the Garundi man who spoke from atop the tower walls. "Thank you for your efforts, friends. I wondered how I would explain my master's sad death to the city guards. Your appearance is most beneficial. Now hand over the journal or I will be forced to do my civic duty to ensure you meet justice. It will be a pity that you die while I try to apprehend you, yes?"

Sefu attempts to steal his former employer's notes from the PCs for sale to the Aspis Consortium

Creatures: Sefu and several Aspis Consortium thugs.

## Tier 1-2 (EL 3)

Sefu CR 1
Male human warrior 2
CN Medium humanoid
Init +6; Senses Listen –1, Spot –1
DEFENSE
AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
(armor +5, dex +2)
<b>hp</b> 16 (2d10+5)
Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1
OFFENSE
<b>Spd</b> 20 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6+2 /18–20 x2)
TACTICS
Before Combat If Sefu has time to prepare for combat he drinks
his potions of bull's strength, haste, and shield of faith +2. These
spells have not been figured into his stats.
During Combat Sefu works with the thugs to flank single
opponents and bring them down one at a time.
Morale Sefu fights to the death.
STATISTICS
Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
Base Atk +2; Grp +4
Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness
Skills Climb +3, Intimidation +5, Jump +3, Ride +4
Languages Common
Combat Gear potion of bull's strength, potion of haste, potion of
shield of faith +2; <b>Other Gear</b> breastplate, masterwork rapier

#### ASPIS CONSORTIUM THUGS (3)

Aspis Consortium Thugs (3) CR 1
<b>hp</b> 16 (use the Tier 1–2 stats for Sefu with the following changes)
DEFENSE
AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17
(armor +5, dex +2, shield +2)
OFFENSE
<b>Melee</b> longsword +4 (1d8+2/19–20)
STATISTICS
Skills Climb +0, Jump +0
Gear bronze aspis consortium badge, chainmail, heavy steel

shield, longsword

## Tier 3-4 (EL 6)

Sefu	CR
Male human fighter 2/barbarian 1	
CN Medium humanoid	
Init +6; Senses Listen –1, Spot –1	
DEFENSE	
<b>AC</b> 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15	

3

(armor +5, dex +2)

**hp** 27 (2d10+1d12+9)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** −1

OFFENSE Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +7 (1d6+2/18–20) Special Attacks rage 1/day

TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Sefu has time to prepare for combat he drinks his potions of *bull's strength*, *haste*, and *shield of faith*. These spells have not been figured into his stats.

**During Combat** Sefu works with the thugs to flank single opponents and bring them down one at a time.

Morale Sefu fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; Grp +5

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +5, Intimidation +7, Jump +4, Ride +8

Languages Common, Osiriani

**Combat Gear** potion of bull's strength, potion of haste, potion of shield of faith +2; **Other Gear** breastplate, +1 rapier

#### Aspis Consortium Thugs (2)

CR 1

**hp** 27 (use the Tier 3–4 stats for Sefu with the following changes) **DEFENSE** 

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17
(armor +5, dex +2, shield +2)
OFFENSE
Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+2/19–20)
STATISTICS
Feats Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Climb +1, Jump +1

Gear bronze aspis consortium badge, chainmail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword

#### Tier 6-7 (EL 10)

As Tier 3-4, but increase the number of thugs to 7.

**Treasure:** At Tier 6–7, the Aspis consortium thugs and Sefu are carrying 4,000 gp in platinum and letters of credit.

**Rewards**: If the PCs defeat Sefu and the thugs, reward each tier thusly:

Tier 1–2: Give each player 181 gp. Tier 3–4: Give each player 716 gp. Tier 6–7: Give each player 1,251 gp.

## **CONCLUSION**

With d'Aponte dead and Sefu fled or killed, the PCs are able to return to Absalom. If d'Aponte is dead, Adril Hestram is distraught by the news of his friend's death and throws himself into studying the alchemist's journal with the aim of organizing a second expedition to find Razma's tomb.

## FACTION MISSIONS

Andoran Faction: PCs from the Andoran faction who aid the escape of Andre Crispin and advise him to contact Colson Maldris earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Cheliax Faction**: PCs from the Cheliax faction who retrieve a bottle of assassin vine wine earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Osirion Faction**: PCs from the Osirion faction who ensure that the assassin vine wine is returned to Absalom (thus aiding the Cheliax faction) earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Qadira Faction:** PCs from the Qadira faction who return to Absalom with the shipping documents from d'Aponte's Laboratory earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Taldor Faction:** PCs from the Taldor faction who ensure that a Qadira player returns with the fake documents earn 1 Prestige Award.

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#### Pathfinder Society Scenario

## Andoran Faction Handout

## Fellow Free Citizen,

May this missive find you in the best of health. This cursed city of lies strips so many of even simple rights. I am forced once again to ash that you do your duty for the cause of freedom. While I served in our beloved navy, I learned many things. Among them was the art of navigation, a science that, properly mastered, can decide the course of battles and the fate of nations.

It was while studying navigation that I learned respect for the power of hyowledge. I am no scholar, but I hyow the advice of a trustworthy advisor can be worth more that a fleet of ships. If this vile little dance of hyives is to be ended with the city a free ally of Andoran, the counsel of a few wise men will be needed. As luch would have it. I have discovered that a polyglot has recently arrived in the city, a man named Andre Crispin. This linguist is the indentured servant of an alchemist named Andrax d'Aponte. My investigations point to the fact that the Pathfinder Society will be censuring this man d'Aponte. If you are amongst those sent to deal with him, please do all you can to free Crispin and bring him into our service as a translator.

Capt. Colson Mald. Sincerely. Captain Colson Maldris

#### **Cheliax Faction Handout**

## My Dearest of the Vile,

1 am left wondering what possible use 1 have for you. Your excuses for your failure to attend the opera with me are pathetic. 1 have found a new toy to amuse myself with, one who isn't too busy with that rag-tag band of nobodies.

Let us call her 'Ari,' a very talented young woman with whom 1 have taken to playing chess. As 1 am sure you remember 1 am not easily impressed, but this girl's acumen in the courtly arts surpasses almost any other 1 have met. She is a fine courtesan and will make a marvelous asset for the Majestrix's plans for this city. If you wish to regain my favor, worm, you will find me a bottle of Vino Asesino, the wine distilled from the fruit of the assassin vine. Ari does so love it, and becomes so amenable after a few glasses.

Lante Doul

Paracountess Zarta Dralneen

## **Osirion Faction Handout**

## Honored Subject of the Ruby Prince,

It would seem that the temptress Zarta Dralneen has become enamored with one of the city's courtesans. In her opulence and arrogance, she has set some of her agents to tracking down a bottle of a variety of wine made from the berry of assassin vines. My spies have identified a source of the substance, a place called Flint Tower, one of the ruins that surround this city. I have arranged for you to be among those sent there on business from the Pathfinder Society.

The wine of the assassin vine has ... certain after-effects that we are keen to see come to fruition. Ensure any Cheliaxian dogs traveling with you succeed in their mission to return the bottle of wine to the vile temptress Dralneen and you will have done Osirion and your ancestors a great service.

In All Sincerity, Menophe

Amenopheus, The Sapphire Sage

### **Qadiran Faction Handout**

## Servant of the Satrap,

Trade is the lifeblood of katheer. It must be allowed to flow freely. Embargos, prohibitions, and excises are all abhorrent things. Recent piracy has taken a toll on our shipping, so it falls to you to find a new source of trade. The free captains who operate from Absalom have too long been beyond our control. It is known that one of them, a charismatic smuggler named Hans Rorn, brought your current prey, the alchemist d'Aponte, to the shores of kortos, along with a small number of breeding cockatrices. It would cost Rorn his ship and livelihood if news of this were to make it to the officials of the city.

I need you to find proof of this arrangement, so that we may encourage this smuggler to speak favorably of Qadira so that his fellow free captains will come to join our fleets.

kind Regards, Pasha Muhlia Al-Jakri Auhlie Al-Jaki

#### **Taldor Faction Handout**

Agent of the Glorious Empire,

Sometimes it is advisable to allow one's enemies to fight one another. A skilled foe is dangerous when tackled directly. While it may be honorable to wait and allow them to rest, in politics honor is rarely a virtue. The fleets of Qadira and Andoran stand ready to battle in the trade lanes of the Inner Sea as tensions we have promoted come to fruition and are aggravated by piracy. That spark can be fanned into the flames of conflict and would be proof that the Andoran government is behind the pirates that have been targeting Qadiran shipping.

Any Qadiran agents traveling with you will be seeking proof to stoke the flames of this naval engagement. Whatever you do, find proof that d'Aponte was delivered to the Isle of Kortos by the so-called free captains of Absalom and allow anyone who seems keen to recover that proof to do so—we can only hope Andoren and Qadiran blood will soon flood the Inner Sea.

Ay Sincerest Gratitude, Baron Jacquo Dalsine



## SCENARIO 19: Skeleton Moon

Scenario Chronicle #

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		_		TIER 6-7 2,38
Player Name A.K.A.	Character Name	Pathfinder Society #	Faction	EXPERIENCE
	——— Has Completed This	Scenario.	ſĠ	
tems Found During This Sce	nario		Le	Starting XP
TER L–2 Potion of bull's stre	ngth (Cost: 300 gp)			+1 XP
Potion of haste (Cos	st: 750 gp) wounds (Cost: 750 gp)			Final XP Total
				Prestige Award
				Starting PA
IER				PA Gained (GM ONL
Pearl of power (2nd) Scroll of blur (Cost: 1				
Scroll of cat's grace (C Scroll of lightning bo	Cost: 150 gp)			Final PA Total
Scroll of pyrotechnics Scroll of slow (Cost:	(Cost: 150 gp)			GOLD
	onster III (Cost: 375 gp)			Start GP
				+
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