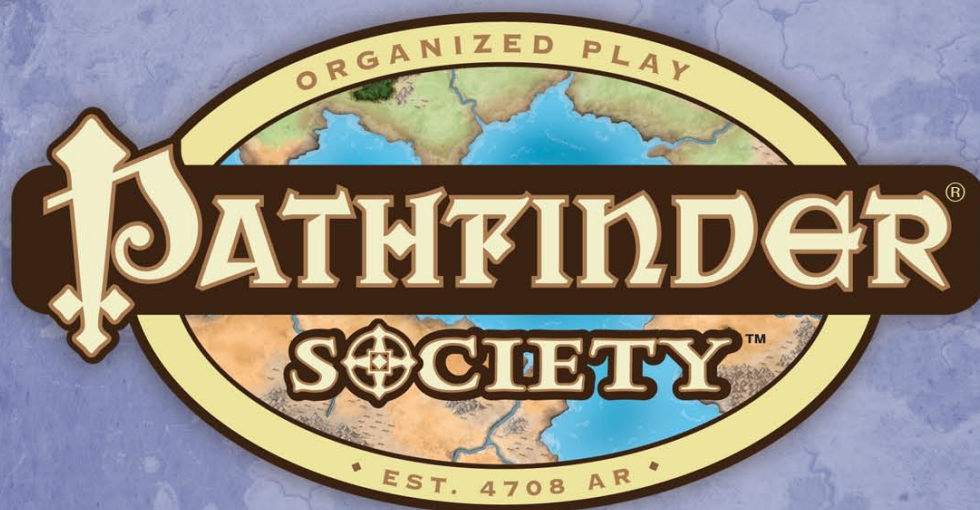


A PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO



THE MANTIS'S PREY™

By Michael Kortes



THE MANTIS'S PREY

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO 2–26

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Pathfinder Society Scenario 2–26: The Mantis's Prey is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 7th to 11th level characters (Tiers 7–8 and 10–11). 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 Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

The OGL can be found on page 26 of this product.

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THE MANTIS'S PREY

BY MICHAEL KORTES



Grandmaster Torch has long been a staple of Absalom's underground information brokering scene, and while his name and influence are ubiquitous in the City at the Center of the World, his past and true motivations are shrouded in mystery. But as with all secrets, time and enemies will out, and as Grandmaster Torch's life hangs in the balance, the price for his salvation may be the revelation of his true identity.

Before assuming the name Grandmaster Torch and building his empire of spies, smugglers, and information brokers in Absalom, the future spymaster was a simple Pathfinder named Ven Lorovox who often explored forbidden ruins and tombs in the deserts of Osirion. While on one such mission, Ven was horribly cursed and left for dead by his superiors. Pulling himself from the brink of death, Ven took advantage of his assumed demise to operate in the shadows, rallying other disillusioned Pathfinders to his cause—a secret sect of agents within the Society known as the Shadow Lodge, whose goal was to use the treasures and knowledge gained by the Decemvirate to increase their own power and ensure the wellbeing of those who have risked their lives to obtain them.

Apart from his guidance of the idealistic secret brotherhood of disenfranchised Pathfinders, Ven created an empire for himself under the ominous alias Grandmaster Torch. Within no time, Torch had built one of the most powerful networks of spies and information brokers in the Inner Sea, centered around the teeming metropolis of Absalom. From here, not only could the Grandmaster keep an eye on the goings on in and around the Grand Lodge, but he could cement his position as one of the Pathfinder Society's most valuable local allies. In fact, his primary motivation for establishing such a network was to amass a number of favors owed to him by the Decemvirate in the hope of bringing the Shadow Lodge to even greater prominence within the organization.

In the last few years, however, the Shadow Lodge has spun out of Grandmaster Torch's control. Several ambitious and unsavory members have even taken it upon themselves to strike a blow at the Pathfinder Society in the open. Inspired by inflammatory rhetoric from an agent known as the Spider in the Shadow Lodge's Almas

WHERE ON GOLARION

This adventure begins and ends in Absalom, Golarion's largest city-state, situated on the Isle of Kortos in the Inner Sea. The adventure kicks off in Crescent Manor, located in Absalom's wealthy Petal District, but shortly thereafter the PCs travel north, venturing just outside the city-state. They then infiltrate an abandoned mountain base hidden behind a massive waterfall known as Frothripper. The final act has the PCs back in Absalom, reporting secrets they have learned behind Frothripper, and finally confronting Grandmaster Torch.



cell, greedy and often wholly evil members throughout the Inner Sea initiated their own plots to begin an open war with the Pathfinder Society and bring it to its knees. Though the Grandmaster tried to reign these rebels, his efforts came to naught. Now the Spider and the Shadow Lodge's other more radical elements seek to remove him as the organization's head.

A man with as many eyes in and around Absalom as Grandmaster Torch is hard to surprise, and when the Red Mantis assassins that the Spider hired to kill Torch arrived in Absalom, the Grandmaster devised a plan that would not only ensure he would live, but that would also ensure his vision for the Shadow Lodge would come to fruition—he struck a bargain with the Decemvirate for amnesty.

Grandmaster Torch has returned to the fold of the Pathfinder Society, bringing along those still loyal to

him, in exchange for protection against their mutual enemy—the remaining radicalized elements who have seized control of the Shadow Lodge. While the Ten were dismayed that they were manipulated by Torch into owing him this much, they nevertheless know that they still need him—perhaps as much as Torch now finds he needs the Pathfinder Society. The end of the Shadow Lodge conflict that has caused such strife in the Pathfinder Society of late now seems to be a possibility, but someone needs to keep Torch alive in order for the rebels to fail. That task falls to the PCs.

SUMMARY

Venture-Captain Shevala Iorae sends the PCs to Grandmaster Torch's villa, the opulent Crescent Manor in the Petal District. She orders the PCs to aid the eccentric Torch as he requires. Though the Grandmaster's life is in danger, letting Torch handle the intrigue seems the best course of action. The PCs are to provide the support Torch needs to thwart the plot against his life.

Once the PCs arrive at Crescent Manor, Grandmaster Torch devises an impromptu test to ensure the PCs are as skillful as their reputation suggests. To impress Grandmaster Torch, the PCs must analyze and appraise a group of historical relics of questionable authenticity. Once the PCs complete his test, Torch sets them to their task. The Grandmaster tells the PCs that Red Mantis assassins have set up a base inside the remains of an abandoned bardic college. Not far outside the city, the Allegro College hides behind a massive waterfall known as Frothripper. Torch explains that he is the assassin's target, and instructs the PCs to preempt the assassination by defeating the Red Mantis in their lair. He also asks the PCs to bring him any proof they may find as to who hired the assassins in the first place.

The PCs must travel to the Allegro College and assault the Red Mantis agents hiding there. Once they defeat the guards in the outer cavern and bypass the college's ancient magical entryway, they can explore the college. The PCs must then face off against the bulk of the remaining Red Mantis assassins who have prepared a cunning ambush.

Meanwhile, the Red Mantis' leader, a master assassin named Vashian the Needle, has finished his reconnaissance inside the city and returned to Frothripper to discover the PCs' intrusion. The PCs must defend against Vashian's high-speed counterstrike if their mission is to succeed.

If the PCs defeat Vashian, they are free to investigate the assassin's base of operations unhindered. Once they do, the PCs uncover a code-bearing gemstone that conveys a startling allegation: Grandmaster Torch is in fact the secret leader of the Shadow Lodge, a covert cabal that has been seeking to take over the Pathfinder Society from within for the past year.

The PCs return to Torch's villa and confront the Grandmaster with this newfound knowledge. The Grandmaster confesses that his position as the Shadow Lodge's clandestine leader is in fact true—or rather, it was. As the PCs uncover these truths, at the last moment, a final surviving Red Mantis assassin throws off her disguise as one of the Grandmaster's guards and seeks to plunge her poisoned sabre into Torch's heart. If the PCs can protect Torch a final time, they will at last have saved the Mantis's prey and will have a chance to cement the new, tenuous alliance between the Shadow Lodge and the Pathfinder Society at large.



**Venture-Captain
Shevala Iorae**

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins in the Water Palace of the Grand Lodge of Absalom as Venture-Captain **Shevala Iorae** (NG female human sorcerer 8) quickly briefs the PCs on a rather important assignment. As agents of the Society, the PCs will know that Shevala herself is a Pathfinder of considerable repute, perhaps best known for decrypting and unsealing the legendary Spire of Nex. Read the following to get the adventure underway:

Shevala nods in greeting, then loses no time in explaining the mission at hand. "Your task is rather delicate. The Decemvirate has something of a love-hate relationship with one of Absalom's most notorious information brokers, a dastardly yet charming kingpin who goes by the name Grandmaster Torch. You have heard of him, yes? The Grandmaster's life is in danger. While the threat is likely well-deserved, it may be more than he and his guard can handle themselves. And since he can hardly look to the authorities, he's turned to us. Find out what the nature of the threat is and do what he asks. I have faith that the Grandmaster is one step ahead of any plot against him, but he needs help, and you will give it to him. Above all, keep him alive. While you would do well to withhold your trust from Ol' Torch, he has been of immense value to the Society and we have something of a... history. I'll see you again once you have resolved this little problem for us. Oh, and take my

wayfinder. He's expecting the team I send to come bearing it. And remember—I expect that *wayfinder* back!"

The PCs may wish to ask questions to clarify the mission. Shevala is impatient, but provides information on the following subjects.

Who is Grandmaster Torch? If the PCs ask this question, the venture-captain rolls her eyes, and wonders aloud whether the Society has found the right adventurers for this job, but she does go on to explain. "Grandmaster Torch is both strangely charming and influential. He often plays many angles and sides against one another, but the Pathfinders have found his services most helpful. You will recognize him by the scars on his body that will not heal, an injury sustained in some misadventure, as well as by his confident—some might say arrogant—demeanor. Listen to him, but never fully trust him."

So, where is Grandmaster Torch now? "He's holed up in one of his safe houses—the Crescent Manor, in the Petal District. Given that his life is endangered, that's not exactly the best hiding spot, if you ask me, but I'm told he's determined to stay put."

How will Grandmaster Torch know he can trust us and should let us inside Crescent Manor when we arrive? "Fair enough! I know I'd be pretty paranoid if I knew someone was out to kill me. He'll know I sent you as long as you carry my *wayfinder*. It has my *arcane mark* on the bottom, which Torch knows I have designed to be nigh impossible to duplicate."

ACT 1: THE FALSE RELICS OF CRESCENT MANOR

Grandmaster Torch is known to Absalom's underworld for conducting his business in a hideaway accessible from the Siphons (an ancient sewer system beneath the Puddles District of Absalom). However, once he discovered that the Red Mantis was on the hunt for him, he returned to Crescent Manor, his favored villa. From there, he doubled his guard and enhanced the protective wards in the courtyard. Torch has not moved since he first contacted the Decemvirate asking for help.

The Grandmaster's half-orc guards greet the PCs with suspicion when they arrive at Crescent Manor. Tension is clearly in the air, but once the PCs produce Shevala's *wayfinder* for inspection, the guards escort the PCs to the Grandmaster's receiving room. When the PCs first meet the Grandmaster in his chamber, he appears to be in a rather jarring state of denial. Rather than addressing the matter of the planned attack on his life, the Grandmaster is in the midst of conducting regular business. Seeing the PCs, he quickly waves them over to his infamous bathing tub. The Grandmaster recruits the PCs to aid him in his

THE SHADOW LODGE

This adventure reveals surprising new information regarding the Shadow Lodge, a clandestine organization that has appeared in several Pathfinder Society scenarios over the past year. While the Shadow Lodge has been the focus of this season's metaplot, it is not necessary for the PCs to have completed any of these adventures to partake in *The Mantis's Prey*. While this adventure contributes to the metaplot, it functions as a stand-alone adventure.

If you aren't familiar with the Shadow Lodge, it is a dangerous and covert cell of Pathfinders who seek to overthrow the Society's leadership (the Decemvirate). In this adventure the PCs have a chance to discover who actually founded the Shadow Lodge (Grandmaster Torch) and why, as well as who is secretly controlling it now (an agent in Almas called the Spider). The full ramifications of these discoveries will play out in subsequent adventures.

current dilemma, shrewdly recognizing that his current business problem provides him with an opportunity to test the PCs and take their measure.

The notorious Grandmaster Torch is once again soaking the burn scars that cover his body in a gigantic alabaster tub. He gestures for you to come forward. "Ah! There you are! Your timing is fortuitous." Pointing to a well-dressed associate at the side of his tub, he says, "This blubbering fool here has failed me. I recently acquired four relics from the north of historic import. But a source of mine has revealed that the seller has been bragging that he has secretly sold me replicas. He *will* pay for that. But first, to protect my source, I need to prove each of these items is a fake so that I can claim I uncovered the ruse independently. You would have thought my expensive sage here could help but no. You Pathfinders, however, always know just how to ferret out the truth. That's why I like you so much. Now, don't just stand there—take a close look at each of these and let's see what you can come up with."

If the PCs protest that they have come on other business (the more pressing business of the current threat to his life), Torch assures them such business can wait. If the PCs hint about or demand payment for aiding him in ferreting out his forgeries, the Grandmaster is not offended—he knows most adventurers are motivated by money. He promises a reward for each item they can prove is a fake. In truth, the Grandmaster is quite certain he could solve this dilemma on his own, but he is keen to observe the PCs tackle the problem. Will they work together? Just how clever are the adventurers the Decemvirate has sent him? He knows he will only get one shot to send a team against the Red Mantis in

their temporary base. If that team fails, the assassins will disappear and relocate. He may not get another chance to test them out before the strike. He wants to ensure these PCs selected by the Decemvirate are the right team for the job.

The four relics Torch wants the PCs to examine are the following.

1. The Shield of Varovan III

A successful DC 15 Knowledge (history) check reveals that Varovan III was an Ustalavic knight who fought alongside Mandraivus, the heroic soldier who defeated the blue dragon warlord Kazavon in the 41st century AR. This ruby-red shield with an Ustalavic crest is a plain, large steel shield enchanted with a *magic aura* spell. While the illusion is clever, the forgery's flaw is that the item itself is not of masterwork quality. A PC can discern this with a successful DC 20 Appraise check or DC 15 Craft (armor) check. A DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check reminds the PC that all magic armor must be of masterwork quality—something a PC with the Master Craftsman feat automatically knows. While this alone is enough to satisfy the Grandmaster, if a PC further casts an *identify* spell, a successful DC 12 Will save reveals the presence of the *magic aura*. While less powerful than *identify*, a *detect magic* spell in conjunction with a DC 16 Spellcraft check still yields a clue: the shield registers as having an aura of transmutation magic. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check reminds a PC that one would expect an enchantment or abjuration aura on a magic shield.

2. Shard of the Tarrasque

This foot-long, jagged fragment is allegedly a genuine piece of the impenetrable hide of a legendary Spawn of Rovagug, the Tarrasque. It weighs over 100 pounds and if tested, proves highly resistant to force (hardness 20).

Like the other items in the collection, it is a fake. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check knows that the true Tarrasque carapace has a unique magical property that enables the beast to effortlessly deflect all cones, lines, rays and *magic missile* spells. With this knowledge, the PCs can test the fragment by targeting it with any of the above attacks, such as a *ray of frost*. If the PCs do so, not only is the spell not deflected, but the shard shows traces of energy damage, which exposes the fragment as a fake.

3. The Cracked Skull of Nirmath

This skull is labeled as the recovered skull of Irgal Nirmath, the simple trapper who rose to unite the disparate peoples of the war-torn wilderness of Nirmathas during the Freedom War of 4648 to 4655. The jagged fractures

in the bone at the back of the skull bears testimony to Nirmath's violent end.

Just like the rest of the collection, the skull is a fake. A successful DC 15 Heal check reveals that the skull is a human skull, whereas a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check knows that Irgal Nirmath was a half-elf. If the PC's Knowledge (history) check exceeds 25, she also knows that Nirmath was killed by an assassin's blade to the heart, whereas a successful DC 15 Heal check indicates this poor fellow died instantly from a heavy blunt trauma to the back of his head.

4. The Bloodsworn Declaration

This ancient-looking scroll purports to set out the formal declaration of war initiating the months-long Battle of Bloodsworn Vale, and the resulting near-extirpation of the Shoanti in 4396. The scroll further bears 10 signatures and seals of Chelias's political elite including King Haliad of Chelias, Field Marshall Korvosa, and Duke Sopaerin.

While such a declaration does exist, this scroll is a forgery. Anyone who studies the scroll's signatures and makes a DC 20 Linguistic check spies telltale signs that several of the signatures were made by the same hand. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) check reveals that the declaration of war was made in 4396, whereas Duke Sopaerin (the final signatory) actually died several years earlier in 4391.

Development: Each time the PCs expose one of the artifacts as a fake, give the PCs the option of further increasing the dramatic impact of their revelations by making Perform (oratory) checks (a skill which may be used untrained). A score of 22 or higher causes the Grandmaster and his accompanying bodyguard to burst into applause. Otherwise Torch simply nods enthusiastically with approval while the half-orcs maintain their usual menacing glare.

The Sage, Jayorass: While each success by the PCs pleases Grandmaster Torch, their triumphs only act as an increasing source of embarrassment for his hired sage, **Irskin Jayorass** (N male human expert 5; Appraise +7, Knowledge [all] +7). A PC who succeeds on a DC 15 Sense Motive check detects Jayorass's anger silently boiling under the surface while the sage stands off to the side. If the PCs are stumped by one of the items, Jayorass sneers at them in front of Torch, who by this time ignores his hired man entirely. The PCs may choose to allow Jayorass to save face by consulting his opinion or otherwise involving him in their efforts (by first making a DC 15 Diplomacy check to win him over), or they can compound his humiliation by continuing to show him up. If the PCs include him, Jayorass makes Aid Another checks on any Knowledge skill

check the PCs attempt in an effort to help. The decision to include or exclude Jayorass impacts the PCs' Chronicle for this adventure and comes into play should the PCs encounter Jayorass in the future, but it does not otherwise alter the way this adventure plays out.

Failing the Test: If the PCs botch the tests, or can't seem to reach the right conclusions while examining the artifacts, Grandmaster Torch responds with exasperation, points out their mistakes, and grumbles his hopes that the PCs are better at combat than they are at deduction. For the rest of the adventure, the Grandmaster treats the PCs like a bunch of simple buffoons, but still tasks them with striking the Red Mantis holed up in Allegro College.

Treasure: Torch awards the PCs their choice of one the following items for each relic they are able to expose: a *potion of water breathing*, a *potion of resist energy (electricity)*, a *scroll of dimension door*, and a *scroll of freedom of movement*. If they expose all four fakes, Torch gives them all four items. Torch's reward is uncharacteristically generous, as he expects the PCs may well need these items in their task ahead. Once Torch's challenge has been resolved, he proceeds to weightier matters.

"All right. Time to get serious. As you know, I make my living keeping tabs on who's doing what in this city. A few weeks ago, my sources watched some new players move in north of the city: a team of Red Mantis assassins—nasty, bloody killers. Imagine my surprise when I learned I was their target. Me! I don't intend to sit around and wait for the Red Mantis to strike. I want to hit them in the sanctity of their little base. We'll only get one shot at this. If they survive, they'll relocate, become invisible, and find another way to strike at me."

If the PCs wish to ask any questions, Grandmaster Torch can provide the following answers.

Where are the Red Mantis now? "In the abandoned remains of Allegro College, a cloistered bardic college hidden behind the curtain of a waterfall called Frothripper. It's in the mountains just north of the city walls. I can sketch you a map. One of my people is camped there now. He has been watching the Mantis come and go from a hidden vantage point."

I think you'll be safest if you come with us so we can protect you. "Thank you, but not a chance. I've paid good coin to have the best wards placed on Crescent Manor. I'm staying here surrounded by my guards until you tell me this is over."

How many Red Mantis are there? "We estimate a dozen assassins but cannot be certain. So, how soon can you go? Now is good, right?"

Mission Notes: Taldor faction PCs should wish to uncover the identity of the merchant who sold Torch the false relics. He offers the information freely if asked—it was

a man from Cassomir named Elgar Tonoque. Taldor faction PCs who obtain this information earn 1 Prestige Award.

Rewards: If the PCs take on Torch's challenge and expose all the false relics, reward each tier as follows:

All Tiers:

Give each player 242 gp.

ACT 2: THE FORTRESS OF FROTHRIPPER

Decades ago, a devoted cadre of musicians and songwriters collectively withdrew from Absalom and established Allegro College. Their goal was to toil in secrecy and then emerge with the greatest symphony of their time. Concerned with the possibility that rivals might spy on their work, the bards built the chambers of their college behind a raging waterfall known as Frothripper. Once they were inside their soundproof chambers, those outside would never be able to hear them rehearse. Unfortunately, towards the end of their 7-year sabbatical, the cloistered musicians had a tragic falling-out that culminated in violence (see the sidebar on page 12). The surviving musicians each took claim to their individual parts of their magnum opus and they split up, never to combine again. Several of the fractured symphonies had middling success, but it was widely agreed that their true goal never reached fruition. The hidden halls of Allegro College remained in disuse until a few weeks ago, when the Red Mantis decided that the abandoned lair would be an ideal staging area outside of the city from which to plan their assassination of Grandmaster Torch.

Give the PCs an opportunity to buy anything they might need for the mission. When they are ready, they can reach Frothripper with just under an hour's travel from Absalom. Once near the waterfall, they meet one of Grandmaster Torch's henchmen, **Hraiken Bloodtrail** (N male half-orc ranger 6). Bloodtrail has been spying on Frothripper from hiding, watching the Red Mantis come and go. Bloodtrail explains to the PCs that there is a hollowed-out space behind the waterfall forming a cavern that leads to Allegro College. He has seen the Red Mantis—typically disguised in plain clothes—come and go from both ends of the fall.

1. Beyond the Water Curtain (CR 9 or CR 12)

When the PCs are ready to approach Allegro College, read the following text aloud.

The cavern is as dark as it is damp. The roar of the waterfall is omnipresent here. The cascading flow forms a dangerous, fast-moving wall of water to the south.

Allegro College

1 square = 5 feet



Frothripper



This close to Frothripper, the noise is deafening. Everyone in this cavern suffers a –10 penalty on sound-based Perception checks so long as they remain here. There is no south wall. Instead, there is a curtain of rushing water from the fall outside. Anyone who moves or is otherwise pushed into a square occupied by the waterfall (such as by a bull rush) is automatically swept away and dashed into the pool a hundred feet below. Any creature swept into the pool takes 5d6+6 points of damage (DC 18 Reflex save or Swim check for half) from the sheer force and protruding rocks. The victim is then trapped in the frothing pool until it can make a single DC 15 Swim check to exit the frothing reservoir. After five failed checks, the victim is pulled under by the force of the water and begins to drown.

Creatures: Regardless of whether the PCs approach from the east or the west the cavern is guarded by a patrol of Red Mantis assassins working together with their minions. They are also nearly deafened by the thunderous noise of the waterfall.

Tier 7–8 (CR 9)

RED MANTIS BEHEADERS (2) CR 5

Female human fighter (mobile fighter) 2/rogue (acrobat) 3/Red Mantis assassin 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 105, 132; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 282)

LE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 47 each (6 HD; 2d10+4d8+15)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2; +1 vs. effects that would cause the paralysis, slowed, or entangled condition

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sawtooth sabre +5 (1d8+3/19–20), mwk sawtooth sabre +5 (1d8+3/19–20) or dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

Red Mantis Assassin Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +2) 1st (2/day)—*disguise self*, *feather fall*

TACTICS

Before Combat If they detect PCs' approach, the assassins drink their *potions of bull's strength* and *heroism* (the effects of which are not included in the stat block) before they ambush the PCs.

During Combat The beheaders use sneak attack whenever possible. If necessary, they use the positioning attack rogue talent to maneuver into an optimal flanking position

without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Morale If their obedient enforcer minions are incapacitated and the beheaders are brought below 15 hit points, the assassins cast *feather fall* (negating the damage of the fall) and leap through the water curtain, trusting their foes will not follow.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre), Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre), Weapon Specialization (sawtooth sabre)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +10, Climb +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +8, Fly +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +8, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +12, Swim +3

Languages Aklo, Common, Infernal

SQ agility, expert acrobat, rogue talent (positioning attack*), sabre fighting 1, second chance (1/day)

Combat Gear *assisting glove**, *potion of bull strength*, *potion of heroism*; **Other Gear** mithral shirt, masterwork daggers (2), masterwork sawtooth sabres** (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, Red Mantis outfit with a nonmagical Red Mantis mask

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

** See *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

OBEDIENT ENFORCER (4) CR 3

Male human warrior 5

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 47 each (5d10+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +6 (1d4+1/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat The enforcers take positions alongside the Red Mantis beheaders to protect them. When required, they employ their Bodyguard, In Harm's Way, and Saving Shield feats to hinder the PCs and limit the PCs' attacks against their Red Mantis superiors.

Morale The enforcers fear the Red Mantis beheaders far more than the PCs. They fight to the death to cover the Red Mantis agents' escape if necessary.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

Feats Bodyguard*, Combat Reflexes, In Harm's Way*, Saving Shield*

Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +3, Perception +4, Stealth +6, Swim +6
Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** chain shirt, masterwork heavy steel shield, daggers (2), masterwork short sword

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Tier 10–11 (CR 12)

RED MANTIS BEHEADERS (3) CR 7

Female human fighter (mobile fighter) 2/rogue (acrobat) 3/Red Mantis assassin 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 105, 132; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 282)

LE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)
hp 59 each (8 HD; 2d10+6d8+19)

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3; +1 vs. effects that would cause the paralysis, slowed, or entangled condition

Defensive Abilities evasion, red shroud (2/day; 3 rounds)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sawtooth sabre +7/+2 (1d8+3/19–20) and mwk sawtooth sabre +7/+2 (1d8+3/19–20), or dagger +7/+2 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +9/+4 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks prayer attack (DC 18), sneak attack +3d6

Red Mantis Assassin Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +4) 1st (4/day)—*disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *magic weapon*

TACTICS

Before Combat If they detect the PCs' approach, the assassins drink their *potions of bull's strength* and *heroism* (the effects of which are not included in the stat block) before they ambush the PCs.

During Combat The assassins team up with their enforcer minions in groups of three to attack single targets in order to gain the benefits of the Gang Up feat. On their first successful hit, they use their positioning attack rogue talent to maneuver into an optimal flanking position without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Morale If their obedient enforcer minions are incapacitated and the beheaders are reduced below 15 hit points, they cast *feather fall* (negating the damage of the fall) and leap through the water curtain, trusting their foes will not follow.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre), Gang Up*, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre), Weapon

Specialization (sawtooth sabre)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +12, Climb +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +8, Fly +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +12, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +14, Swim +3

Languages Aklo, Common, Infernal

SQ agility, expert acrobat, red shroud (2/day; 3 rounds), rogue talent (positioning attack*), sabre fighting 1, second chance (1/day)

Combat Gear, *assisting glove**, *potion of bull strength*, *potion of heroism*; **Other Gear** mithral shirt, masterwork daggers (2), masterwork sawtooth sabres** (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, Red Mantis outfit with a nonmagical Red Mantis mask

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Prayer Attack (Su) To initiate a prayer attack, a Red Mantis assassin holds her sawtooth sabre (or sabres) out, point down, and weaves the blade in the air. She must be within 30 feet of and visible to her victim. Beginning a prayer attack is a standard action, and causes her victim to be fascinated by her unless he makes a Will save. She can maintain this effect by concentrating. The victim may attempt a new save to escape the fascination each time a threat (other than the fascinating assassin) appears. At any point after 3 rounds, she may make a coup de grace attack against the target, provided the target is still fascinated. Activating or concentrating on maintaining a prayer attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Red Shroud (Su) A Red Mantis assassin can create a veil of red mist as a move-equivalent action. The red shroud persists for 1 round per class level. It grants a +1 dodge bonus to AC and fast healing equal to the assassin's Constitution bonus. This mist cannot be dissipated by wind. If she is slain while this ability is active, she can choose whether to remain corporeal or to disintegrate into a cloud of red mist that leaves behind only her gear in order to deprive her enemies of access to her remains.

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

** See *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

OBEDIENT ENFORCER (6) CR 5

Male human warrior 7

N Medium humanoid

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)
hp 71 each (7d10+28)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +9/+4 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat The enforcers take positions alongside the Red Mantis beheaders to protect them. When required,

they employ their Bodyguard, In Harm's Way, and Saving Shield feats to hinder and limit the PCs' attacks against their leaders.

Morale The enforcers fear the Red Mantis beheaders far more than the PCs. They fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Bodyguard*, Combat Reflexes, In Harm's Way*, Saving Shield*, Toughness

Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +3, Perception +6, Stealth +8, Swim +8

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** chain shirt, masterwork heavy steel shield, daggers (2), masterwork short sword

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat the Red Mantis assassins, award each tier thusly:

Tier 7–8:

Give each player 1,222 gp.

Tier 10–11:

Give each player 1,818 gp.

2. Song of Five Faces (CR 8 or CR 11)

Read the following text aloud.

Five carvings of faces adorn the north cavern wall in a circular pattern at eye level. Each face is sculpted in bas relief and it the size of a human's head. At the center of the circle of faces juts out a strange pipe with a mouthpiece, like that of a wind instrument. To the south, the curtain of cascading water continues to fall with a deafening roar.

A puzzle lock with a trap guards the entrance to Allegro College. Examining the faces in the wall with a successful DC 10 Perception check uncovers that each of the five faces can be depressed into the stonework such that it becomes flush with the cavern wall. The faces are (starting at the top and moving around the wind instrument at the center in a counterclockwise fashion):

- A face with its hands cupped over its ears (the "Deaf Face")
- A sculpture of the immortal necromancer Geb, ruler of Garundi nation of the same name (the "Geb Face"). The likeness is identifiable with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (history) check.
- A mournful face looking out from the bars of a prison (the "Cage Face").
- A blurred face, as though the sculpture were worn-out or not completed (the "Fade Face").

- The face of a cyclops with a single eye (the "Ace Face").

If the PCs push the faces inward in the correct order, a 15-foot section of the cavern wall sinks into the floor, granting access to the tunnel beyond. The correct order is revealed by blowing on the pipe in the middle of the circle of faces. Every time the pipe is blown, it plays the same sequence of notes (see **Handout #1**). The letters that name the notes spell the names of the five faces in the correct order. Once the PCs begin blowing on the pipe, provide them with **Handout #1**. Players who can sight-read music may well decipher the puzzle on their own, but provide any PC who makes a successful DC 10 Perform (singing or any instrument) check with the letters that correspond to each of the notes (**Handout #2**):

"CAGEFACEFADEFACEGEBFACEDEAFFACEACEFACE"
(The song then ends.)

Separated appropriately, the notes spell out:

CAGE FACE/ FADE FACE/ GEB FACE/ DEAF FACE/
ACE FACE

Trap: Depressing any of the faces in the wrong order triggers a trap. The trap summons an ancient water elemental guardian named Grehoravin the Cascadian, which hides inside the waterfall behind the PCs, when the first wrong note is hit (Stealth +10 in Tier 7–8 or Stealth +17 in Tier 10–11). Each additional time the PCs depress



THE HISTORY OF ALLEGRO COLLEGE

When the PCs search the ruins of Allegro College, they may see signs that not all was well among the bards of the College. The College's breakup was both sordid and violent. While pushing the boundaries in their search for a new symphony of masterwork quality, several members grew fascinated by the idea of uncovering the legend of an undiscovered note: a previously unheard tone that could transform the boundaries of how listeners experience music. The pursuit of this "hidden note" triggered an obsession that ultimately descended into madness. Several members came to suspect that the hidden note formed part of the "Final March," a song heard only at the end of the world or during moments of great cataclysm. The musicians' search for the hidden note turned them towards the study of Groetus, the nihilistic god of end times. It was around this same period that the College's conductor began communing with a heresy devil known as Nehemalis, Holder of the Dark Key, who promised to reveal the secret of the hidden note. Nehemalis tantalizingly promised to share the secret in exchange for subtle levers of power within the College, which were in turn used to fuel the College's obsession even further. When an ex-paladin among the musician's membership discovered the diabolical depravity her colleagues had sunk to, she organized a rebellion and sought to lock them up in the cages in area 4 in the hope that they might be saved. A brief battle ensued, culminating in several members hurling their former friends into Frothripper, which dashed their bodies against the rocks below. The survivors fled their separate ways, all vowing never to return to Allegro College, a place now filled with nothing more than dark memories and the remains of what began as a noble attempt to make musical history.

an incorrect face, the elemental lashes out from the waterfall and strikes the nearest PC with a liquid slam. If possible, Grehoravin tries to snatch the PC and drag her into Frothripper, which dashes her onto the rocks 100 feet below (see area 1 for the consequences). If the PCs halt their study of the trap and defeat the water elemental (or exhaust its duration), the trap no longer impedes their work and they can decipher the puzzle at liberty or even complete it by way of trial and error, simply by depressing the faces in every possible combination.

Tier 7–8 (CR 8)

THE SUMMONING OF GREHORAVIN THE CASCADIAN CR 8

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); Reset none

Effect spell effect (summon monster VII, greater water

elemental [*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 127], duration 13 rounds)

Tier 10–11 (CR 11)

THE SUMMONING OF GREHORAVIN THE CASCADIAN CR 11

Type magic; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); Reset none

Effect spell effect (extended *summon monster VIII*, elder water elemental [*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 127] with grab [*Bestiary* 301]; CMB +32, duration 30 rounds)

3. Secret Cavern Door

The slippery cavern walls drip with moisture from the water curtain to the south.

This cleverly hidden door provides a second access to Allegro College. A PC searching the cavern walls detects it with a successful DC 26 Perception check. The secret door leads to a narrow cavern that exits into a wide corridor, which in turn connects to the college's inner sanctum, area 4. The corridor's ceiling has since collapsed, choking off the west end of the corridor with rubble.

4. Inner Sanctum (CR 9 or CR 12)

This once-grand chamber is now full of dust and cobwebs. A number of broken instruments such as harps and drums lie scattered throughout the room. A wide staircase ascends to the north, while nine metal cages line the walls.

Years ago, the musicians of Allegro College used this great hall to write and rehearse their great symphony. Although now decayed, magic once enhanced this room's acoustics to near perfection. Once the musicians sealed the entrance door (area 2), the chamber eliminated the roar of Frothripper outside. When the musicians of Allegro College finally ended their collaboration (see the sidebar on this page), the room's enchantment began to fade over time.

Creatures: When the PCs enter, several of the remaining Red Mantis assassins lairing inside Allegro College are here. If the PCs have blown on the pipe in area 2 and performed the Song of Five Faces, the Red Mantis are aware of the PCs' approach. However, they deduce that if the PCs have already defeated their patrols in the caverns of area 1, they are too strong a threat to face head on. Instead, the assassins resort to guile. The Red Mantis beheaders cast *disguise self* and pose as prisoners awaiting rescue. They tie each other up and lock themselves into the cages along the wall (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 24, Disable Device DC 20). Their plan is for the PCs to rescue them, whereupon

they will wait for the right moment to turn the tables on their would-be saviors. If the PCs do not rescue them, or they otherwise need to escape, the beheaders can slip off their poorly tied bonds with a DC 10 Escape Artist check. Each cage has a loosened bar that slides slightly over, enabling the beheaders to exit with a second DC 10 Escape Artist check.

One of the Red Mantis assassins is actually a medusa named Somasia (in Tier 10–11 she is joined by her sister, Inamorta Cold Snake). Her part in the plan is different than that of the others. She keeps her Red Mantis garb on, and pretends to guard the prisoners. Once the PCs arrive, she drops her sawtooth sabre in surrender. Garbed head to toe in a Red Mantis costume, she appears to be human, her hair-snakes hidden inside her Red Mantis mask. Her plan is to bait the PCs into unmasking her, whereupon she will ambush them with her petrifying gaze attack. If the time is right, the fake prisoners choose that moment to escape their bonds and attack as well.

Tier 7–8 (CR 9)

SOMASIA CR 7

Female variant medusa (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 201)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** all-around

vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17

(+4 armor, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 76 (8d10+32)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sawtooth sabre +10/+5

(1d8/19–20) and mwk sawtooth

sabre +10/+5 (1d8/19–20), snake

bite +5 (1d4 plus poison)

Special Attacks petrifying gaze

TACTICS

Before Combat Somasia

pretends to surrender as

described above—she

waits to be unmasked,

and then unleashes her

petrifying gaze.

During Combat After scooping up her blade, she

slashes away with sabre and bites with snakes.

Somasia tries to draw the PCs' attention

away from the disguised beheaders so her

companions can position themselves for sneak attacks.

Morale If reduced below 20 hit points, Somasia tries to negotiate her safe surrender, offering to reveal where she has hidden a *stone salve* (area 5). If her petrification has failed such that her offer is of limited value, she instead flees to area 6 and tries to escape with an air glissade, using her *scroll of feather fall*.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre)

Skills Bluff +10, Climb +7, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +6, Fly +7, Intimidate +13, Perception +16, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +13, Swim +7, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Common

Combat Gear *scroll of feather fall*; **Other Gear** mithral shirt, masterwork sawtooth sabres* (2), Red Mantis outfit with a nonmagical Red Mantis mask

* See *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

SARUKASH AND JAJESHRA (2) CR 5

hp 47 each (use the Tier 7–8 Red Mantis beheader stats on page 9)

TACTICS

Before Combat Jajeshra and Sarukash

use *disguise self* to disguise themselves as

prisoners of the Red Mantis (their total

Disguise bonus increases to +20). Jajeshra

poses as a captured and badly injured

male half-orc bodyguard of Grandmaster

Torch, while Sarukash pretends to be a

female human Wave Rider—a member of

Absalom's sea cavalry—who attempted

to tail the Red Mantis assassins back

to their hideout one evening but was

spotted and captured.

During Combat When discovered (or when an opportune moment strikes) they drop their illusions and attack. Whenever possible, they coordinate with Somasia to flank opponents.

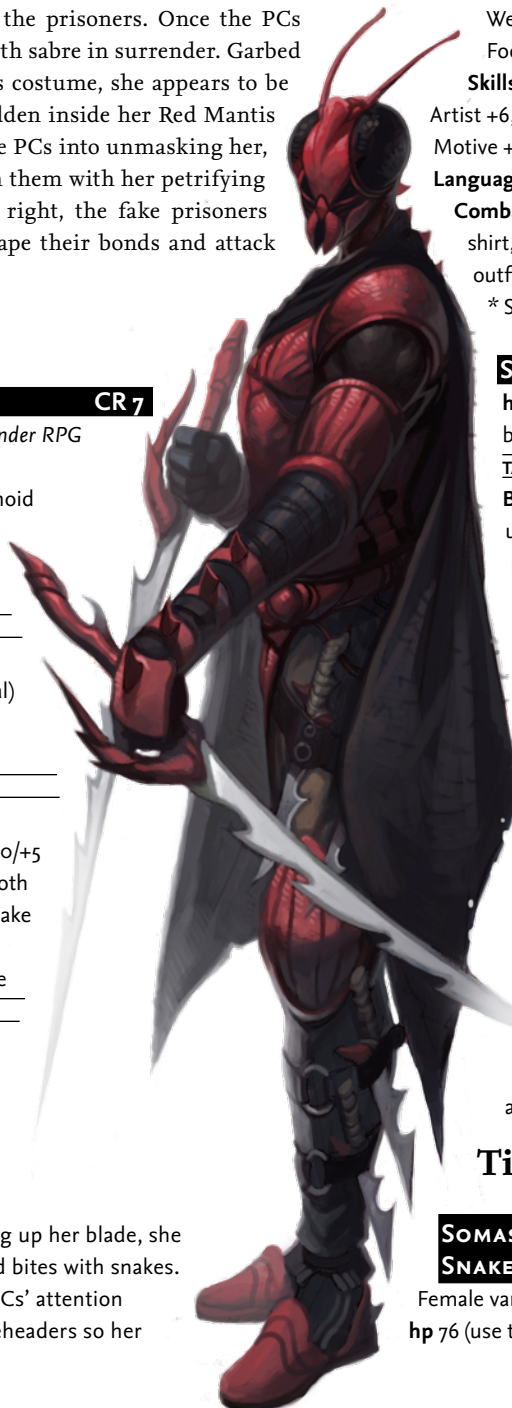
Morale Expecting no quarter from the PCs, if their ambush fails, they flee to area 6 and seek to escape on the air glissades.

Tier 10–11 (CR 12)

SOMASIA AND INAMORATA COLD SNAKE (2) CR 7

Female variant medusas

hp 76 (use the stats for Somasia in Tier 7–8)



**SARUKASH, JAJESHRA, VESS, AND
MUTE SCYTHE (4)****CR 7**

hp 59 each (use the Red Mantis beheader stats from Tier 10–11 on page 10)

TACTICS

Before Combat The four Red Mantis beheaders use *disguise self* to disguise themselves as prisoners (their total Disguise skill is increased to +22). Jajeshra poses as a captured and badly injured male half-orc bodyguard of Grandmaster Torch, while the others pretend to be female human Wave Riders—members of Absalom's sea cavalry—who attempted to tail the Red Mantis back to their hideout one evening but were spotted and captured.

During Combat When discovered (or when an opportune moment strikes), they drop their illusions and attack. Whenever possible, they coordinate with Somasia and Inamorata Cold Snake to flank opponents.

Morale Expecting no quarter from the PCs, if their ambush fails, they flee to area 6 and seek to escape on the air glissades.

Mission Notes: Any PCs who search the cages find that the most northeastern cage contains crude scrawls etched into its base. Anyone who speaks Infernal can read the writing, as can a PC who succeeds on a DC 22 Linguistics check. It says “*Release me Nehemalis, Holder of the Dark Key, and I will fulfill my pledge to you, even if it means the end of all we have built here.*” Cheliox faction PCs who uncover this should have enough information to deduce Nehemalis's role in Allegro College's fall and earn 1 Prestige Award.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat the Red Mantis agents in this room, award each tier as follows:

Tier 7–8:

Give each player 917 gp.

Tier 10–11:

Give each player 1,646 gp.

Questioning the Red Mantis

The PCs may capture one or more of the Red Mantis assassins during the adventure for interrogation. Each successful use of Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate yields one fact listed below in answer to one specific question:

- The beheaders and the enforcers know their leader is an assassin of legend known as Vashian the Needle. Vashian is not here; they believe he is in Absalom. (This later part is not quite correct, as by the time the PCs enter Allegro College, Vashian is already on his way back. He arrives in Act 3 of the adventure.)
- The source of Vashian's great speed is an alchemical affliction that grants him incredible speed. It is said that the alchemical concoction that afflicted Vashian was created by mixing alchemical reagents with quickling blood.

- The assassins' plan is to wait for a perfect wind and then fly over Absalom at night using their air glissades (wing-shaped gliders) in area 6. The assassins will then land on the roof of Crescent Manor, scale down the wall, enter through a window, and behead the Grandmaster.
- The beheaders reveal that they operate the air glissades in area 6 by casting *feather fall* just as they leap off the cliff, which explains why the gliders are so difficult to operate for anyone else.
- The Red Mantis have an assassin planted inside Crescent Manor who sends a signal whenever Grandmaster Torch is in residence. The assassins know he has been in his manor for the past several days. If this is revealed, the PCs' prisoner further alludes to the fact that if the PCs have defeated the Mantis here at Allegro College, their inside operative will complete the beheading in their stead. (If time is running short and you do not anticipate having time to run the optional encounter in Act 4, omit the last portion of this clue.)
- The Mantis's agents have also been deployed to Sothis, Osirion. There they plan to assassinate Dahnakrist Phi, first Speaker of Sothis's Council of Sun and Sky, in the next few weeks.

If any PC fails a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check at any time while questioning one of the assassins, the prisoner clams up, remembering that in death her dark god Achaekek will reward her for her fanaticism. The PCs may attempt to obtain more information from other prisoners, but they likewise fall silent if the PCs fail another check.

Mission Notes: Andoran faction PCs who learn the source of Vashian's preternatural speed earn 1 Prestige Award. Osirion faction PCs who learn the identity of the Red Mantis's target in Sothis earn 1 Prestige Award. Qadira faction PCs who learn the secret to flying the air glissades earn 1 Prestige Award.

5. Converted Temple

This chamber was once a storage room as well as a workshop for the repair of musical instruments. Someone has erected a portable altar along the southeast wall. Covered in blood, the small shrine pays homage to a strange insectoid god.

The shrine is non-magical. A PC who makes a successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the altar as a shrine to Achaekek, the mantis god of assassins, and patron of the Red Mantis cult. The door in the northeast corner leads to a short hall that ends in a 30-foot wooden ladder. The ladder leads to a cavern above, which connects areas 4 and 6.

Treasure: PCs who search the shrine and make a DC 15 Perception check find a hidden compartment under

the altar that contains Somasia's *stone salve* as well as the cipher stone (see page 15). In Tier 7–8, there is 1 dose of *stone salve*, while in Tier 10–11, there are 3 doses.

Rewards: If the PCs discover Somasia's cache of *stone salve*, award each tier as follows:

Tier 7–8:

Give each player 333 gp.

Tier 10–11:

Give each player 1,000 gp.

The Cipher Stone

This small crimson gemstone features tiny engravings along each of its facets. Placing the gem next to a light source such as a torch, a lantern, or a *light* spell projects the engravings onto a nearby surface in faint shadows. The letters read as follows.

VklrogLphhwdqxqwlphobghplvh,
hqvxuh wkdw Judggpdvwhu
Wrufk fdq qrw uhpdlq lq fkdujh
ri wkh vkdgrz orgjh – D.K.

Provide the PCs with **Handout #3**. The garbled text is a simple cipher in which the letters have been shifted three places. Permit the players to solve the cipher themselves using the aid, but a PC may also decode it with a successful DC 20 Linguistics check.

Vashian the Needle, who arrives in Act 3, wears a ring composed of the same crimson stone (see page 16). His cipher stone ring has been engraved with the clue to break the cipher. If a light is placed next to the stone in Vashian's ring, the shadow on the wall reads "A = D (+3)." If a PC makes the connection between Vashian's ring and the cipher stone, reduce the DC of the Linguistics check to DC 10.

If the PCs decode the cipher stone, provide them with **Handout #4**, which contains the translation: "Should I meet an untimely demise, ensure that Grandmaster Torch can not remain in charge of the Shadow Lodge. – A.H." This message should prompt the PCs to raise some rather pointed questions for Grandmaster Torch.

Mission Notes: Andoran faction PCs who decipher the Red Mantis's code, either with Vashian's key or through Linguistics earn 1 Prestige Award.

6. The Hangar

This airy cavern opens to the outside, providing a breathtaking view of the raging falls plummeting into the pool far below. Four strange contraptions crafted from a black gossamer fabric line the cavern walls. Two more have been unfolded

into pairs of triangular, bodiless wings and set at the edge of the cliff.

Although Vashian and his beheaders have woven multiple layers of plans to assassinate Grandmaster Torch, their primary strategy involves air glissades: specially designed, non-magical gliders that are stored here for launch. When the wind is right, the Red Mantis assassins will grab hold of the air glissades and cast *feather fall* to cancel their body weight. They plan to sail over Absalom in the dead of night and attempt to land on the center roof of Crescent Manor, thus avoiding the deadly wards protecting Grandmaster Torch's outer courtyard. The Red Mantis agents then plan to descend silently into the manor and kill their prey.

There are six air glissades here. Four are folded up. Unfolding the air glissades requires a full-round action. Once they are unfolded, the air glissades are ready to launch. Two are already unfolded, ready to fly, and angled towards the cavern's opening. If any of the Red Mantis manage to flee, they head to this room and seek to escape with an unfolded air glissade. If successful, they follow their assassination plan on an accelerated schedule, heading for Crescent Manor. The PCs might pursue if able to fly themselves, or they might attempt to give chase while riding air glissades of their own (a dangerous task without the aid of *feather fall*). See the sidebar on page 16 for rules on operating the air glissades. The PCs may also simply try to shoot the assassins down.

When the Red Mantis first moved in, Vashian used a scroll to cast *illusory wall* to cloak the cavern opening to viewers on the outside, but the figment is one-sided—those inside can see the outside sky and waterfall below.

Mission Notes: Qadira faction PCs who acquire an air glissade earn 1 Prestige Award. Each air glissade weighs 5 pounds, and is easily transported with one hand or strapped to a backpack when it is folded.

ACT 3: THE NEEDLE RETURNS

While the PCs are assaulting the Red Mantis's hidden lair, their leader, a powerful assassin known as Vashian the Needle, is in Absalom signaling instructions to Kissparu, the disguised assassin he has planted inside Grandmaster Torch's manor (see Act 4). When he returns to Frothripper, Vashian finds Torch's half-orc sentry, Hraiken Bloodtrail, and captures him. After torturing the half-orc, Vashian deduces that Grandmaster Torch has struck first. He kills Bloodtrail, dumps the half-orc's body into Frothripper, and then races inside Allegro College through area 3 to launch a counterstrike against the PCs. Vashian's attack should occur after the PCs have had a chance to explore the Allegro College and have

FLYING WITH AIR GLISSADES

A PC can successfully launch one of the air glissades (hardness 0, hit points 15, Speed 60, maneuverability average +0) in area 6 with a DC 15 Fly check if she casts *feather fall* to alter her natural rate of fall. Failure means both the air glissade and pilot plummet into Frothripper below (see area 1 for the consequences). Without *feather fall*, the DC increases to 25. In addition, for PCs without *feather fall*, also check the PC's total weight (including equipment and armor). Increase the Fly or Acrobatics DC by a further 5 for every 50 pounds of equipment or body weight over 200 lbs. Finally, reduce the DC by 5 for Small creatures. Large (or larger) creatures without *feather fall* automatically plummet like stones. Once successfully launched, air glissades are a means of flying for the purpose of the Fly skill and otherwise follow the rules on page 96 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

become familiar with its layout, but before they are ready to return to Absalom.

Tier 7–8 (CR 10)

VASHIAN THE NEEDLE

CR 10

Male alchemically quickened human fighter (mobile fighter) 2/rogue (acrobat) 3/Red Mantis assassin 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 105, 132; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 282)

LE Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 81 (10 HD; 2d10+8d8+33)

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4; +1 vs. effects that would cause the paralysis, slowed, or entangled condition

Defensive Abilities alchemically quickened, evasion, red shroud (2/day; 5 rounds)

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee +1 sawtooth sabre +14/+9 (1d8+6/19–20), dagger +12/+7 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged dagger +12 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks prayer attack (DC 16), sneak attack +4d6

Red Mantis Assassin Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +6) 2nd (2/day)—*bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *invisibility* 1st (5/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *reduce person*, *ventriloquism*

TACTICS

Before Combat Vashian casts *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, and *expeditious retreat*, all of which have been factored into his

statistics. He also casts *invisibility*.

During Combat Vashian hides with *invisibility* and then uses his fast stealth rogue talent to sneak up on an unaware opponent and score a sneak attack with his sawtooth sabre. He then uses Spring Attack and his considerable movement speed to distance himself from the PCs during the same round, preferably around a corner. He repeats this tactic as often as he can get away with it. He might cast *ventriloquism* to duplicate his villainous laughter in an area away from him to divert the PCs' search. He knows the college's layout and takes advantage of the secret door in area 3 and ladder in area 5 to attack from unsuspected directions.

Morale Unable to conceive of his defeat, Vashian ultimately fights to the death, whereupon he disintegrates his body into a cloud of red mist if his red shroud ability is active.

Base Statistics When not benefiting from his spells, Vashian has the following statistics: **Init** +3; **AC** 20, touch 14; **Ref** +10; **Speed** 40 ft.; **Melee** +2 sawtooth sabre +12/+7 (1d8+4/19–20), dagger +10/+5 (1d4+1/19–20); **Ranged** dagger +10 (1d4+1/19–20); **Str** 12, **Dex** 16; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23; **Skills** Acrobatics +17 (+23 jump), Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +9, Fly +8, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +17, Swim +4

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 27

Feats Desperate Battler*, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth sabre), Greater Weapon Focus (sawtooth sabre), Mobility, Spring Attack, Step Up**, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Specialization (sawtooth sabre)

Skills Acrobatics +19 (+35 jump), Bluff +14, Climb +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +11, Fly +10, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +12, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +19, Swim +6

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ agility, alchemically quickened, expert acrobat, rogue talent (fast stealth), resurrection sense, sabre fighting 1, sabre fighting 2, second chance (1/day), summon mantis

Gear +1 mithral shirt, +1 sawtooth sabre, dagger, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +2, mask of the mantis*, ring of protection +1, cipher stone ring

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alchemically Quickened (Ex) Vashian's speed increases by 10 feet, and each round in which he moves at least 10 feet, he gains the effects of a *blur* spell until the start of his next round.

Feats Vashian's Desperate Battle feat grants him a +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls when he is more than 10 feet from an ally and not benefiting from the aid another action.

Prayer Attack (Su) See the stat block for the Red Mantis beheader on page 10.

Red Shroud (Su) See the stat block for the Red Mantis beheader on page 10.

Summon Mantis (Sp) Once per day, Vashian can summon an advanced fiendish giant mantis, 1d3 fiendish giant mantises, or 1d4+1 giant mantises as if using *summon monster V*. He can mentally direct the actions of these summoned vermin as a free action. All mantises summoned by this spell-like ability are blood red, and gain no racial bonus on Stealth checks in forests.

* See *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

** See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Tier 10–11 (CR 13)

VASHIAN THE NEEDLE

CR 13

Male alchemically quickened human fighter (mobile fighter) 2/rogue (acrobat) 3/Red Mantis assassin 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 105, 132; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 282)

LE Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 102 (13 HD; 2d10+11d8+42)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +5; +1 vs. effects that would cause the paralysis, slowed, or entangled condition

Defensive Abilities alchemically quickened, evasion, fading (2/day), red shroud (2/day; 5 rounds)

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee +2 sawtooth *sabre* +19/+19/+14 (1d8+9/17–20), dagger +16/+11 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged dagger +16 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks prayer attack (DC 16), sneak attack +5d6

Red Mantis Assassin Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +10)
3rd (2/day)—*haste*, *hold person*
2nd (4/day)—*bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *rope trick*
1st (5/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *reduce person*, *silent image*, *ventriloquism*

TACTICS

Before Combat Vashian casts *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, and *haste*, all of which have been factored into his statistics. He also casts *invisibility*.

During Combat Vashian hides with *invisibility* and then uses his fast stealth rogue talent to sneak up on an unaware opponent and score a sneak attack with his sawtooth *sabre*. He then uses Spring Attack and his considerable movement speed to distance himself from the PCs during the same round, preferably around a corner. He repeats this tactic as often as he can get away with it. He might cast *ventriloquism* to duplicate his villainous laughter in an area away from him to divert the PCs' search. He knows the college's layout and takes advantage of the secret door in area 3 and the ladder in area 5 to run in loops and attack

ALCHEMICAL AFFLICTIONS

The transformative mutagens of experimental alchemy have caused many strange and unexplained conditions throughout Golarion's history. Although they often provide potent abilities, alchemical alterations invariably come with unwanted side effects. The method by which a creature becomes afflicted with an alchemical alteration should be unique for each creature. An alchemical alteration is treated as a simple template—the following is the alteration suffered by Vashian the Needle.

ALCHEMICALLY QUICKENED (CR +1)

A creature that is alchemically quickened also suffers from bouts of mania as a result of its condition.

Quick/Rebuild Rules: The creature's base speed increases by 10 feet, and each round in which it moves more than 10 feet, it also gains the effect of a *blur* spell until the start of its next turn.

from unsuspected directions.

Morale Unable to conceive of his defeat, Vashian ultimately fights to the death, whereupon he disintegrates his body into a cloud of red mist if his red shroud ability is active.

Base Statistics When not benefiting from his spells, Vashian has the following statistics: **Init** +3; **AC** 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; **Ref** +11; **Speed** 40 ft.; **Melee** +2 sawtooth *sabre* +16/+11 (1d8+7/17–20), dagger +14/+9 (1d4+1/19–20); **Ranged** dagger +14 (1d4+1/19–20); **Str** 12, **Dex** 16; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 26; **Skills** Acrobatics +20 (+24 jump), Climb +7, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +7, Fly +8, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +20, Swim +7

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 30

Feats Desperate Battler*, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sawtooth *sabre*), Greater Weapon Focus (sawtooth *sabre*), Greater Weapon Specialization (sawtooth *sabre*), Improved Critical (sawtooth *sabre*), Mobility, Spring Attack, Step Up**, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Specialization (sawtooth *sabre*)

Skills Acrobatics +22 (+38 jump), Bluff +18, Climb +9, Disable Device +8, Disguise +18, Escape Artist +9, Fly +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +15, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +22, Swim +9

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ agility, alchemically quickened, blood mantis form, expert acrobat, rogue talent (fast stealth), resurrection sense, *sabre fighting* 1, *sabre fighting* 2, second chance (1/day), summon mantis

Gear +2 mithral shirt, +2 sawtooth *sabre*, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +2, mask of the mantis*, ring of protection +1, cipher stone ring

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alchemically Quickened (Ex) Vashian's speed increases by 10 feet, and each round in which he moves at least 10 feet he gains the effects of a *blur* spell until the start of his next round.

Blood Mantis Form (Su) Vashian may transform into a blood-red giant praying mantis once per day as a standard action, as if using *vermin shape II* (caster level 8th). In addition to the normal adjustments to Strength, Dexterity, and natural armor provided by the spell effect, he gains the giant mantis's darkvision 60 feet, grab, lunge, mandibles, and sudden strike extraordinary abilities, but not its immunity to mind-affecting effects or its racial modifiers to Perception or Stealth. If he wields a magical sawtooth sabre in his hand when he transforms, the magical enhancements from that weapon apply to his corresponding claw attack.

Vashian's claw attacks deal 1d6 bleed damage on a hit, and he gains damage reduction 5/good when in this form.

Fading (Su) Vashian can become ethereal as a free action twice per day for an instant as he is attacked by a weapon or forced to make a Reflex saving throw. He must choose to activate this ability before the weapon's attack roll or the spell's effects are adjudicated. This ability grants Vashian a 50% chance to avoid taking damage from the attack or effect.

Feats Vashian's Desperate Battle feat grants him a +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls when he is more than 10 feet from an ally and not benefiting from the aid another action.

Prayer Attack (Su) See the stat block for the Red Mantis beheader on page 10.

Red Shroud (Su) See the stat block for the Red Mantis beheader on page 10.

Summon Mantis (Sp) See the stats for Vashian in Tier 7–8.

* See *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

** See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Mission Notes: If Vashian is slain and uses his red shroud ability to disintegrate into a mist, Osirian faction PCs may attempt to capture some of the mist in a jar or vial with a proper seal, such as an empty potion flask. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity or Sleight of Hand check. The PCs only have 3 rounds to succeed before the mist dissipates. An Osirian faction PC who collects some of the red mist earns 1 Prestige Award.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat Vashian, reward each tier as follows:

Tier 7–8:

Give each player 1,536 gp.

Tier 10–11:

Give each player 2,203 gp.



Grandmaster Torch

ACT 4: CONFRONTING THE GRANDMASTER

After their expedition to Allegro College to defeat the Red Mantis, the PCs likely have two reasons to return to Grandmaster Torch's manor. First, they may want to warn the Grandmaster that a Red Mantis has already infiltrated his home. Second, if the PCs decrypted the cipher stone, they likely also suspect that Grandmaster Torch leads the Shadow Lodge, and feel it is

time to get to the bottom of his role.

Torch happily gives the PCs an audience on their return, eager to learn of their success with the raid. If the PCs warn him that the Red Mantis has infiltrated his villa, the Grandmaster is grateful, but he assures the PCs that his men have already dealt with the threat. When the PCs confront him with the cipher stone or raise the matter of the Shadow Lodge, Torch suddenly grows somber. He pulls out a golden tallow candle (a *candle of truth*) and lights it in front of himself. He then answers the PCs questions, revealing the following.

- In his youth, Torch himself was actually a Pathfinder. PCs who succeed on a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check can encourage Torch to additionally reveal that the PCs can find references to him under his original name, Ven Lorovox, in the footnotes of Volume 38 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*.
- Decades ago, before Osirion's borders were opened to exploration, Torch was sent on a mission for the Decemvirate as a member of the adventuring group known as the Scarab Seekers. During the mission, his companions were killed and Torch himself was critically injured by a deadly curse (he gestures to his famed burn scars that will not heal). However, rather than extract and help him, the Decemvirate instead disavowed that he was even a member of their Society. The Decemvirate could not afford to have Osirion's royal family discover that the Pathfinders had violated Osirion's borders and raided its historical birthright.

- Outraged, the Grandmaster escaped Osirion on his own, unaided. Once he at last made his way back to Absalom, he took up the new identity of "Torch." He then built his own network of spies and agents, gradually becoming one of Absalom's most influential information brokers.
- In the years that followed, through his network, Torch gradually came to discover that there were actually many within the Pathfinder Society who, like him, were secretly offended by the callous disregard the Decemvirate continually demonstrated for ordinary Pathfinders, even those who risked their lives again and again in their work for the Society. He reached out to them.
- Before he knew it, Torch had founded a secret cell within the Pathfinders, one dedicated to standing up for its members by covertly opposing the high-handed leadership of the Decemvirate.
- The Grandmaster's Shadow Lodge, however, quickly took on a life of its own. It began to attract the ambitious and the greedy. The initiative finally flew out of control when several ambitious and unsavory members took it upon themselves to openly strike a blow at the Pathfinder Society.
- Torch tried to reign in the Shadow Lodge, but quickly found he was too late. The leader of the internal rebellion, a mysterious person called the Spider, opposed Torch. The true identity of the Spider is a mystery that even Torch could not unravel, a fact that infuriates the Grandmaster. By this time, the Spider was hell bent on accomplishing a complete coup of the Pathfinder Society and frustrated by the Grandmaster's unwillingness to act. The Spider threatened that if Torch continued to stand in the way of progress, he would be eliminated.
- When Torch first suspected that the Spider had hired the Red Mantis to assassinate him, the spymaster approached the Decemvirate with an olive branch, hoping they could help each other with their now mutual problem. He offered to bring the Shadow Lodge agents loyal to him back into the Society's fold in exchange for protection. The Decemvirate likewise acknowledged that the Shadow agents had a point, and promised to do more to honor the sacrifice that common Pathfinders make for the betterment of the organization as a whole. Torch had asked, however, that the Decemvirate not tell the adventurers they sent to help him about his history, for fear that their enthusiasm for the task of protecting him would be compromised.

Mission Notes: If the PCs persuade Grandmaster Torch to reveal his original identity, Taldor faction PCs earn 1 Prestige Award.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER

Act 4 contains a lot of exposition in which Grandmaster Torch reveals his history and that of the Shadow Lodge. Rather than simply reading the bulleted information out, it may be more impactful (and fun) if the PCs engage Torch in conversation and tease it out while the *candle of truth* slowly burns low. Some players though, do not take well to extended NPC interaction. If so, one way to spice the encounter up is to run the optional event The Last Gasp of the Mantis. Although you can spring the Red Mantis's final assassination attempt at any time, look for a dramatically appropriate moment to spring it. While the lone assassin is not a significant melee threat, the encounter's true challenge lies in dispatching Kissparu before she can strike at Grandmaster Torch.

Last Gasp of the Mantis (CR 5 or CR 7)

Creatures: With Vashian's help, one of the Red Mantis beheaders has infiltrated Grandmaster Torch's half-orc bodyguard using *disguise self*. At an opportune moment, she drops her disguise and dives for the Grandmaster, seeking to poison him with a slash of her sawtooth sabre. Give each PC the chance to make a Perception check opposed by her Disguise check (+20 with her *disguise self*). Any PC who succeeds can participate in the surprise round.

Grandmaster Torch sits at the head of the table, likely joined by the PCs. Kissparu begins 10 feet away from Grandmaster Torch and needs to close during the surprise round. She then needs to score a hit against AC 15. In truth, Torch is in another room entirely, using one of his favorite magic items, known as a *twinstone*, to create a convincing illusion of his form (as per the *project image* spell) to interact with the PCs while he observes events through a hidden peephole. If Kissparu successfully attacks Torch's image, he pretends to be injured, but a successful DC 25 Sense Motive check by the PCs detects his ruse while a DC 30 Perception check spies the blade pass harmlessly through him. Unless combat drags out unduly long, assume Torch's three remaining bodyguards (N half-orc warrior 6) react too slowly to participate in the encounter.

Tier 7–8 (CR 5)

KISSPARU

CR 5

hp 47 (use the Tier 7–8 Red Mantis beheader stats on page 9)

TACTICS

Before Combat Kissparu applies a dose of tears of death on each of her sawtooth sabres.

During Combat Kissparu focuses all her attacks on

Grandmaster Torch's Meeting Chamber

1 square = 5 feet

GameMastery Map Pack: Fortress

Grandmaster Torch.

Morale Kissparu knows she will not escape death. She intends to die finishing her mission for the glory of her assassin god Achaek.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) *Tears of Death*: contact; save Fort DC 22; frequency 1/minute for 6 minutes; effect 1d6 Con damage and paralyzed for 1 minute.

Tier 10–11 (CR 7)

KISSPARU

CR 7

hp 59 each (use the Red Mantis beheader stats from Tier 10–11 on page 10)

TACTICS

Before Combat Kissparu applies a dose of tears of death on each of her sawtooth sabres.

During Combat Kissparu focuses all her attacks on Grandmaster Torch.

Morale Kissparu knows she will not escape death. She intends to die finishing her mission for the glory of her assassin god Achaek.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) *Tears of Death*: contact; save Fort DC 22; frequency 1/minute for 6 minutes; effect 1d6 Con damage and paralyzed for 1 minute.

Treasure: Once the Grandmaster has revealed his sordid past with the Shadow Lodge (and, if applicable, the PCs have dealt with Kissparu), Torch provides the PCs with a modest reward of gold and gems. In lieu of greater wealth, he promises great influence within the Shadow Lodge should any member of the party wish to join his cause—if they aren't already Shadow Lodge sympathizers, that is.

Rewards: If the PCs receive Grandmaster Torch's compensation for saving his life, reward each tier as follows:

Tier 7–8:

Give each player 300 gp.

Tier 10–11:

Give each player 1,000 gp.

CONCLUSION

With Vashian's cell of the Red Mantis defeated, the threat to Grandmaster Torch is no more. Whether any Red Mantis assassins escaped impacts the PCs' Chronicle for this adventure and comes into play should the PCs encounter more Red Mantis agents in the future, but it does not otherwise alter the way this adventure plays out.

But now that the PCs know the truth behind the origin of the Shadow Lodge, they will certainly have a lot to consider. For now, Venture-Captain Shevala and the Decemvirate are happy that the PCs have kept Grandmaster Torch alive long enough for him to deliver the return of their wayward members back into the Pathfinder Society's main body. Successful PCs should have a new ally (the Grandmaster) as well as potentially a new enemy in the Red Mantis if any of Vashian's cell escaped.

FACTION MISSIONS

Andoran Faction: Andoran faction PCs who crack the Red Mantis communication code from the cipher stone in Act 2 or Act 3 earn 1 Prestige Award. Andoran faction PCs who also uncover the secret behind Vashian's speed in either Act 2 or 3 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Cheliox Faction: Cheliox faction PCs who reveal to the party that a devil was behind the fall of Allegro College sometime during their exploration of the college in Act 2 earn 1 Prestige Award. Cheliox faction PCs who also discover in Act 2 that the specific devil behind Allegro College's fall was Nehemalis, Holder of the Dark Key, earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Osirion Faction: Osirion faction PCs who successfully question a Red Mantis agent in Act 2 and discover that First Speaker Dahnakrist Phi is the Red Mantis's target in Sothis earn 1 Prestige Award. Osirion faction PCs who also capture and preserve some of Vashian's red mist in Act 3 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Qadira Faction: Qadira faction PCs who acquire an air glissade from area 6 in Act 2 earn 1 Prestige Award. Qadira faction PCs who discover that the Red Mantis agents use *feather fall* to successfully operate these winged gliders in Act 2 or Act 3 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Taldor Faction: Taldor faction PCs who uncover the name of the artifact dealer who sold Grandmaster Torch a set of false relics in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Award. Taldor faction PCs who also get Grandmaster Torch to reveal his former identity (Ven Lorumox) in Act 4 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

INVOLVING SHEVALA

While the adventure assumes the PCs will simply outright confront Grandmaster Torch with their newfound knowledge that he controls the Shadow Lodge, there is no telling what any given band of PCs might do.

They might instead, for example, take this information straight to Venture-Captain Shevala. If they do, she is initially skeptical but quickly accepts the PCs' word. She elects to confront the Grandmaster immediately, asking the PCs accompany her. If so, you will have an extra NPC to run for the final Act, but it may be helpful as she can ensure the PCs avoid bloodshed. (Aside from the fact that the PCs might not be a match for Grandmaster Torch's considerable resources, he is an important reoccurring NPC in Season 3 and needs to survive.) If the PCs are even more ambitious, they might even seek an audience with the Decemvirate directly to expose the Grandmaster to the Society's highest leaders. Unfortunately, should they arrive at the Grand Lodge, the Decemvirate is not in assembly and since the Decemvirate's identity is unknown, they will be unreachable for several days. (In actuality, the Decemvirate is already well aware of Torch's treachery and it has negotiated a satisfactory resolution to the problem.)

No matter what Grandmaster Torch tells the PCs, they may just want to rid themselves of the man who created the Shadow Lodge. If the characters decide the only way to end this threat is to put Grandmaster Torch to the sword, Venture-Captain Shevala and a force of other Pathfinders rush into the villa and order the PCs to stop the assault, explaining that the information Torch has about the Shadow Lodge is worth more than the grim satisfaction of his death. If the PCs persist, Torch's *twinstone* ultimately saves him from the PCs' assault, as he escapes the manor undetected while they attack his image.

Handout #1

Once blown, the strange pipe in the cavern sounds the following deep, reverberating notes.



Handout #2

The notes played by the pipe are as follows.

CAGEFACEFADEFACEGEBFACEDAEAFFACEACEFACE

Handout #3

When light is refracted through the gemstone, it reveals the following Common letters.

Vk|rog L phhw dq xqwlphob ghp|vh,
 hqvruh wkdw Judqgpdvwhu Wrufk
 fdq qrw uhpdlq lq fkdujh ri wkh
 vkdgrz orgjh - D.K.

Handout #4

When decoded, the letters carved into the gemstone form the following message.

Should I meet an untimely demise,
ensure that Grandmaster Torch
can not remain in charge of the
Shadow Lodge. - A.H.

Andoran Faction Handout

Defender of Democracy.

We have information for you concerning your next mission. It is the Red Mantis that hunt Grandmaster Torch. Take this opportunity to learn about those damnable assassins while completing your assignment for the Pathfinder Society at the same time. We are told the Red Mantis currently employ a cipher to communicate with their clientele, including a number of slavers operating off the coast of Garund we've been keeping our eyes on. It would be helpful if you could find an example of their code and learn how to decipher it. Second, we also believe that the leader of the Red Mantis cell dispatched to assassinate Torch is none other than a man named Vashian the Needle. They say he's one of the fastest killers on the continent. Find the secret behind his speed—is it a spell or perhaps a magic item?

Capt. Colson Maldris It is freedom we cherish.

Captain Colson Maldris



Cheliox Faction Handout

Delectable One,

Although not yet revealed to you, your assignment will take you to the ruins of Allegro College, an abandoned bardic project once run by foolish musicians. The bards brought about their own destruction two decades ago when the conductor of their orchestra tried to accelerate their musical research by enlisting the aid of a devil. At an appropriate—and dare I say it—suitably dramatic moment, reveal to your colleagues that a fiend was secretly behind Allegro College's fall. Let it be a vivid reminder to all of them that only the skilled devil binders of Cheliox can safely contract with such deadly creatures. However, we do not actually know which devil was actually behind the “orchestration” (ha, ha!) of Allegro College's damnation. I would be oh so pleased were you to uncover this for our records in Egorian.

Forever the object of your desire,


Paracountess Zarta Dralneen

Osirion Faction Handout

Servant of the Sands,

Our sources tell us the Society will soon send you and your allies to hunt the Red Mant is, a dangerous cult of assassins. The reach of the Red Mant is spreads far. Even now, while one cell is readying to strike in Absalom, a second cell travels to Got his, here in Osirion. But who is their target here in Got his? If you can discover this in the course of investigating the threat in Absalom, we would be able to neutralize them here at home. Second, we must study the Red Mant is that we may better combat them. The most powerful among them dissipate into a fine red mist when slain. What manner of creature disintegrates its own body such that it cannot be ritualistically embalmed by its family? Should you encounter and slay such a foe, capture some of that red mist in a jar or vial. Then we in Osirion can study the mist's magical properties and better understand the Red Mant is' power.



In the Ruby Prince's Esteemed Name,


Otoneraphim, Humble Scribe of the Ruby Prince

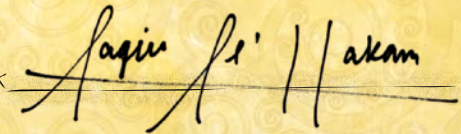
Qadira Faction Handout

Esteemed Servant of the Satrap,

Although not yet revealed to you, we understand your current mission will involve thwarting the assassin cult, the Red Mantis. This is fortuitous. We have received recent reports that the Mantis are employing a new winged flying device. We need not explain how valuable such a thing could be if mass-produced. First, if possible, secure one for study. Second, our agents tell us these devices may be flown only by the Red Mantis themselves. See if you can figure out why—we cannot profit from the design if we cannot make it work.

In furtherance of our mutual endeavors,

Trade Prince Aaqir Al'Hakam



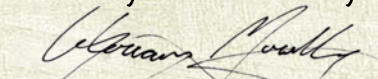
Taldor Faction Handout

Glorious Citizen of the Empire,

I hear you will be working with Grandmaster Torch. It may be awkward to hear that one of our merchants recently unloaded some rather poor merchandise on the Grandmaster. When Torch learns this, he will no doubt seek vengeance. We'll secret the fool away and ensure he survives the Grandmaster's wrath. You would do us a good turn though if you could get Torch to reveal exactly who he has been dealing with—there are so many merchants here in Oppara—no sense in protecting the wrong one! And as long as you are dealing with Grandmaster Torch, it is awfully difficult to get a leg up on a man with no past. Find out his real name for us so we can do some proper research and ensure the next time we deal with him we are on the right footing.



For Emperor and Empire,



Lady Gloriana Morilla

SCENARIO 2-26: THE MANTIS'S PREY

Event _____

Date _____

GM # _____

GM Name _____

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Andoran☐ Cheliah☐ Taldor☐ Osirion☐ Qadira

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Andoran☐ Cheliah☐ Taldor☐ Osirion☐ Qadira

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Andoran☐ Cheliah☐ Taldor☐ Osirion☐ Qadira

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Andoran☐ Cheliah☐ Taldor☐ Osirion☐ Qadira

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Andoran☐ Cheliah☐ Taldor☐ Osirion☐ Qadira

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Andoran☐ Cheliah☐ Taldor☐ Osirion☐ Qadira

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SCENARIO 2-26 THE MANTIS'S PREY

This Chronicle Certifies That

Player Name A.K.A. Character Name Pathfinder Society # Faction

Has Completed This Scenario.

Items Found During This Scenario

TIER

All

- ☐ **Jayorass's Admiration** You have impressed the sage Irskin Jayorass, and he holds you in high regard should you ever meet him again.
- ☐ **Jayorass's Ire** You have humiliated and angered the sage Irskin Jayorass, and he views you with contempt should you ever meet him again.
- ☐ **Word Gets Around** At least one member of Vashian the Needle's Red Mantis cell escaped and spread your description among the organization. You suffer a -2 penalty on all future Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, and Intimidate checks involving members of the Red Mantis.
- ☐ **Your Reputation Precedes You** Word that you completely wiped out Vashian the Needle's Red Mantis cell spreads through the secretive organization. You gain a +2 bonus on all future Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against members of the Red Mantis.

TIER

7-8

Assisting glove (180 gp; *Advanced Player's Guide* 300)
Cloak of resistance +1 (1,000 gp)
Cloak of resistance +2 (4,000 gp)
Mask of the mantis (6,000 gp; *The Inner Sea World Guide* 298)
Potion of bull's strength (300 gp)
Potion of cure serious wounds (750 gp)

Potion of heroism (750 gp)
Potion of resist energy [electricity] (750 gp)
Potion of water breathing (750 gp)
Ring of protection +1 (2,000 gp)
Scroll of dimension door (700 gp)
Scroll of freedom of movement (700 gp)
Stone salve (4,000 gp)

TIER

9-10

+2 mithral shirt (5,100 gp)
+2 sawtooth sabre (8,335 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

Scenario Chronicle #

TIER	7-8	4,550
TIER	10-11	7,909
TIER		

MAX GOLD

EXPERIENCE

Starting XP

+1 XP

Final XP Total

PRESTIGE AWARD

Starting PA

GM's Initial

PA Gained (GM ONLY)

Final PA Total

GOLD

Start GP

GM's Initial

GP Gained (GM ONLY)

Items Sold

Subtotal

Items Bought

Subtotal

Gold Spent

Subtotal

For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #