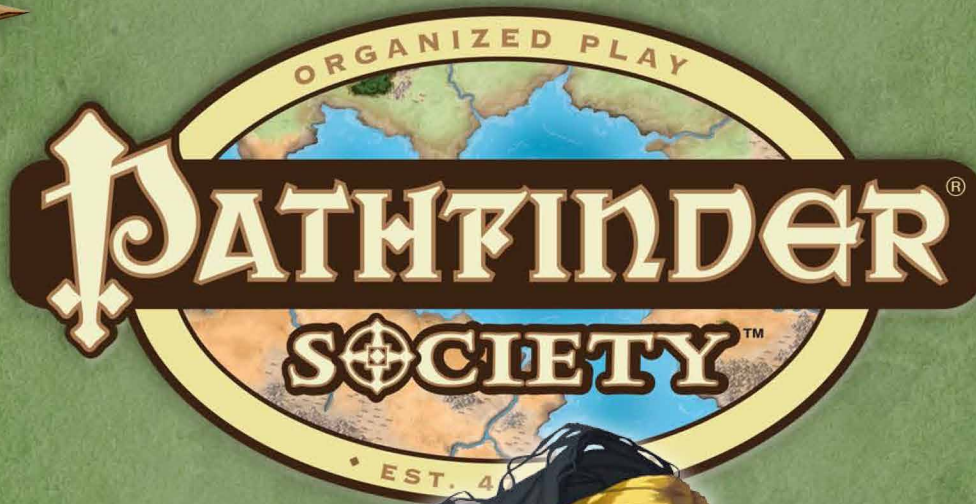


A Pathfinder Society Exclusive Scenario



THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

By Patrick Renie



THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

A PATHFINDER SOCIETY EXCLUSIVE SCENARIO

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This product makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*. These rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd.

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THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

BY PATRICK RENIE

The mysterious Thassilonian monument known as the Cyphergate has been an object of intense scrutiny since the founding of Riddleport beneath it, and the mostly indecipherable runes running across its length have posed numerous questions to those who study it. While research regarding the arch has been a slow effort, the gigantic artifact has spurred numerous sages to dedicate their lives to unraveling its secrets, creating an exclusive collaborative known as the Order of the Cyphers, headed by the learned crime lord and Speaker of the Order, Elias Tammerhawk, and populated by scholars who refer to themselves ostentatiously as cyphermages. Little has been discovered of the gate's purpose in past centuries, driving cyphermages in recent years to send out invitations to scholars in distant lands to come and examine the Cyphergate, in the hope that additional minds will reveal more of the landmark's mysteries.

The surge of scholars arriving in Riddleport Harbor has been a boon to the Order of the Cyphers and Elias Tammerhawk, but not everyone in the pirate haven has taken kindly to the increase in Thassilonian studies. A Vudrani vishkanya by the name of Alejia Netrav has been trying to bolster her influence in the criminal-run government of Riddleport by obstructing support for the existing crime lords, particularly Elias Tammerhawk. She believes that by subverting his efforts in studying the Cyphergate, she can reveal him to be incompetent and supersede his spot as first-in-line for the position of Overlord of Riddleport.

In her latest efforts to discredit Tammerhawk, Alejia and her band of pirates have been raiding incoming ships that bear the Riddleport flag, capturing the scholars and slaying the rest of the ship's crew before sailing back to the cove under the city's flag and masquerading as a law-abiding citizen. This is all in blatant opposition to the decree of the current overlord, Gaston Cromarcky, who has ruled that any ships bearing the Riddleport flag are immune to attacks from other ships who wish to call the pirate haven home.

Though the Order of Cyphers has taken notice of the attacks on their ships and has acquired a valuable lead in discovering the culprit's identity, Tammerhawk's

WHERE ON GOLARION?

The *Cyphermage Dilemma* takes place in the pirate city of Riddleport, one of the frontier region of Varisia's three most powerful city-states. Aside from being a haven for those criminals and ruffians who find living elsewhere undesirable or impossible, Riddleport also attracts some of the most ambitious scholars in the Inner Sea region, who come to study the massive and mysterious Cyphergate. This Thassilonian arch spans the harbor and features indecipherable runes that many believe hold ancient secrets beyond the understanding of modern magicians. For more information on Riddleport and the Cyphergate, check out *Pathfinder Adventure Path #13: Shadow in the Sky* and *Pathfinder Player Companion: Second Darkness Player's Guide*, available in bookstores or game stores everywhere, or online at paizo.com.



pride and his blatant rivalry with Cromarcky make it impossible to ask the overlord for his aid in the matter, and sending out his own agents would mean admitting his vulnerability in the eyes of rival crime lords. Thus, cyphermages are looking for a discreet solution to their problem from outside sources, a search made easier by a conjunction of motivations with the Pathfinder Society. Among the scholars scheduled to arrive in Riddleport in answer to Tammerhawk's call to grow the Order of the Cypher, is a particularly knowledgeable sage from distant Tian Xia—and ex-Pathfinder—named Hirako Gurukaza.

He is scheduled to arrive in Riddleport Harbor on the ship *Topaz Titan*, and the Pathfinder Society wishes to ensure his safe arrival. Thus both the Decemvirate and the Order of the Cyphers are aligned in their desire to quickly find Alejia and her crew of bandits and eliminate them before it's too late. The Venture-Captain of Varisia's only Pathfinder Lodge, Sheila Heidmarch of Magnimar, knows that research on the Cyphergate is an invaluable endeavor for both for Varisia and the Pathfinder Society, and has agreed to aid Tammerhawk in pursuing the pirates hindering his order's research, lest one of the Society's most esteemed scholars become the next victim of Alejia's piracy and secrets of the Cyphergate remain locked away forever.

SUMMARY

The PCs' first task is to find out who has been attacking incoming ships bearing the Riddleport flag and capturing scholars on their way to see the Cyphergate. In addition, the PCs must ensure that the Tian sage Hirako Gurukaza aboard the *Topaz Titan* makes it to port, as he is believed to be the raiders' next target. The PCs' best lead is a rumor that the pirates' hideout is in the Wharf District, where the pirates keep their stolen treasure, evidence of destroyed ships, and captured crew members and scholars who either washed up on shore or proved to be too valuable to kill just yet. Passersby are being paid off by shadowy pirates to keep quiet about what they see, and dockworkers have been hired to haul bodies and treasure from an unknown location to a derelict warehouse. Following up on this rumor, the PCs discover the whereabouts of the warehouse and confront the bandits, who hold a ragged-looking prisoner within, as well as relics and items clearly stolen from the transport ships being attacked as of late.

Upon apprehending the violent pirates in the warehouse, the PCs discover that the derelict building belongs to a gang of ruffians under the sway of Alejia, and the bound and gagged individual is a foreign scholar captured in the most recent raid, being held prisoner until Alejia comes back and decides what to do with her. The scholar remembers which ship she was taken aboard, and can identify it as the *Lionfish*, docked in port.

While investigating the *Lionfish*, the PCs discover that the ship is actually captained by Alejia's most trusted minion, a gripli by the name of Mumbuckle. Either by interrogating the captured gripli and his crew or by looking at some of the letters between Alejia and Mumbuckle, the PCs learn that Alejia and some of her crew are already on the *Topaz Titan*, having boarded the ship during its stop in Kalsgard disguised as guards. They plan on overthrowing the passenger ship's captain

and limited crew and sailing for a secret cove that Alejia uses as one of her bases. Mumbuckle has been ordered to pilot the *Lionfish* to the cove so that they can loot the *Topaz Titan* and take the remaining prisoners—including Gurukaza—to Okeno to be sold as slaves. The PCs also learn that if Mumbuckle and his crew fail to show up on the expected day, Alejia and her gang will simply kill their prisoners.

Alejia provided Mumbuckle with a map that details how to get to the pirate hideaway, located on a tiny island off the coast of Varisia Alejia has dubbed Viper Cove. Either by hiring a captain or piloting the ship themselves, the PCs steer the *Lionfish* out to sea and locate Viper Cove, intercepting Alejia and her gang before they can kill the prisoners. Once they've found the renegade pirates, the PCs must defeat them in combat, lest the rogues further prey upon Riddleport Harbor.

Getting Started

The light from the rising sun performs a splendid dance upon the windows of Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch's Magnimarian manor house as she pours the coffee. Her young servant brings in a platter of pastries and fruits before the Venture-Captain begins to speak about the mission at hand in her distinctively low, breathy voice. Read the following to get the adventure underway.

"As I'm sure you're well aware, much of the reason Riddleport was founded where it was is because of its easily defensible position as well as the enigmatic Cyphergate, which has baffled scholars since its discovery. The Pathfinder Society has a keen interest in the Thassilonian monument as well, since solving its mysteries would undoubtedly unlock a number of other secrets regarding that lost empire. The Order of the Cyphers has been amassing support from outside sources for some years now, and scholars from all over the Inner Sea have come to aid Elias Tammerhawk and the cyphermages."

Heidmarch takes a bite out of a chocolate-filled biscuit before continuing. "Just recently, however, we received word from Elias himself that several of the visiting scholars haven't arrived in Riddleport Bay as expected. It seems as though a band of raiders, led by the Vudran pirate Alejia Netrav, has been intercepting the ships at sea, killing the crews, and destroying the ships. While Riddleport is hardly a stranger to the likes of pirates, Overlord Cromarck has declared it illegal for any ships that wish to return to Riddleport Harbor to attack ships bearing the Riddleport flag. Alejia's ship is clearly coming from Riddleport—the attacks all took place just outside Riddleport Harbor—but attempts to identify her ship have been unsuccessful so far.

"I needn't explain to you that the Pathfinder Society is also very much interested in the secrets of the Cyphergate, and

that the deaths of these knowledgeable scholars have severely hindered progress in unraveling the artifact's mysteries. The unexplained attacks are beginning to wear on the other sailors of Riddleport as well, and if something isn't done about the matter soon, there will be no shortage of civil unrest, if not anarchy.

"In a few days, a ship called the *Topaz Titan* is scheduled to arrive in Riddleport Harbor from Minkai, bearing the acclaimed Tian scholar Hirako Gurukaza—who is also a former member of our Society. We fear that he may be Alejia's next target, and your task is to prevent her assault at all costs, both ensuring Hirako's safety and shoring up our relationship with Tammerhawk. I have heard rumors that some of Alejia's cronies have been storing their stolen goods somewhere in the Wharf District, so that might be a good place to start your investigation. Regardless, there is little time to waste, as there is no knowing exactly when the pirates will choose to strike the *Topaz Titan*."

After Sheila fills the PCs in on their mission, they may have some questions for the venture-captain. Here are answers to some of the most likely questions the PCs may ask.

Why is Alejia specifically targeting scholars? "When I spoke to Elias, he was very cryptic about why someone would want to hinder his efforts as Speaker of the Order of the Cyphergate so much, but if I had to take a guess, I'd say this is a direct attack against Elias, rather than the scholars themselves."

Is there anyone else who might be able to help us? "Elias is a powerful figurehead in Riddleport, but his rivalry with Overlord Cromarcky is well known, and few would seek to get involved in their complicated feud. Cromarcky's direct underlings and the peacekeepers of the town, the Riddleport Gendarmes, know of the troubles the Order of the Cyphers has been facing as of late, but they are hesitant to do anything about it, as they fear punishment for helping Elias. Elias himself wishes to keep this investigation as discreet as possible, and have it dealt with immediately."

Does Alejia have any allegiances we should know about? "While she is a lowly pirate, Alejia possesses more enemies than friends in Riddleport, having backstabbed many business partners to get to where she is now. Her sudden disappearance and recent activities have only spurred public resentment of her, and many would like to see her dead. In any case, don't be surprised if your investigation gets you entangled with some of her less savory ex-associates."

How should we get to Riddleport? "Trade between Magnimar and Riddleport is strong at present, and there are ships leaving several times a day to traverse the Varisian Gulf for the City of Cyphers. I have arranged passage for you on a Taldan cargo ship called the *Opparan Opal* that will be leaving within the hour. Hurry to the docks, and you'll be in Riddleport before you know it."

Investigating Alejia

While Alejia does not possess the reputation of a renowned crime lord, her influence in Riddleport and her unlawful doings have bolstered knowledge of her presence. The PCs may learn the following fact about their adversary by making Diplomacy checks to gather information or Knowledge (local) checks once they start the adventure in Riddleport.

10+ Before they took to their latest unlawful deeds, Alejia and her crew were well known among the pirate gangs of Riddleport.

15+ Alejia's crew is known for its ruthless tactics and efficiency in commandeering and sinking targets.

20+ While she appears human from a distance, Alejia is actually a vishkanya from distant Vudra, making her blood and spit deadly poison against foes.

25+ In addition to her charming wiles, Alejia is known for her elaborate disguises and magical ability to alter her appearance.

Finding the Warehouse

In order to learn more about Alejia's influence in the Wharf District, some PCs might seek out local gossip and rumors in Riddleport. The following clues will help lead the PCs to the warehouse in which Alejia's minions are located, and may be uncovered with a successful Diplomacy check to gather information or a Knowledge (local) check.

15+ Though the dockside Wharf District was once one of the most prosperous parts of Riddleport, in recent years the district has declined into a state of shabbiness, and crime is rampant throughout many of the run-down shops and warehouses.

20+ Shady folk have been paying locals in the Wharf District to keep quiet about anything they might see or hear, and some mercenary dockhands have found work hauling oddly-shaped cargo to what was thought to be a derelict building.



**Venture-Captain
Sheila Heidmarch**



25+ Recently, some pirates paid dockworkers to look the other way as they led a gagged and blindfolded person from a large crate into a derelict warehouse on the edge of the Wharf District.

ACT 1: FINDING ALEJIA

From the time the PCs arrive in Riddleport, they have 2 days before the *Topaz Titan's* scheduled arrival in port, which they can discover with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy check.

Making some of the Knowledge or Diplomacy checks in the Getting Started section above should be enough for the PCs to locate the warehouse where Alejia has been hoarding the spoils of her operation. If the PCs were unable to successfully learn enough to go on with their mission, they spend the day searching for clues to no avail, and the next morning, Venture-Captain Heidmarch sends word that she has located the warehouse Alejia is rumored to be operating out of (information equal to a successful DC 20 check on the above tables), which should enable the PCs to jump into the rest of the scenario.

A. The Warehouse (CR 2 or CR 5)

Read the following when the PCs arrive at the warehouse.

The foul, mucky weather is enough to make any possible source of refuge look at least a little more hospitable, but the tattered sides of this rundown building have clearly seen

better days. The waterlogged boards that hold it up have numerous holes that have been boarded over with newer planks. The warehouse's few windows are high off the ground and intermittently broken; those still intact are far too grimy to see through anyway. While the building itself hardly looks like a viable base of operations, a flicker of light can be seen from within. The east and west loading doors are closed, as well as the narrower south door, which has a sliding peep hole built into it at eye level.

Alejia and her gang of pirates store their bounty and anything else they may not need while at sea. The warehouse's windows are too high up to peer into, and the filth that's accumulated on them over the years hardly allows light in, let alone wandering eyes. The loading doors, despite being years old, are sturdy and barred from the inside, requiring a DC 22 Strength check to break down. The side door looks like it sees considerably more traffic, and the flimsy lock holding it from the inside hardly holds the thing shut. A PC must succeed at a DC 15 Disable Device check to pick the lock, or a DC 15 Strength check to break the lock and push the door open.

Creatures: Several of Alejia's lowest-ranking crew members guard the warehouse and its stores. While lazy, they fear their leader's wrath if she should find them slacking off, so they busy themselves by cleaning up the dilapidated building and sorting the crates.

The grunts' current priority is to keep an eye on a prisoner they captured from their latest raid, an Andoren

theologian named **Iatha Oedricius** (N female human adept 3) whose vast knowledge of ancient Thassilonian religions spurred the Order of the Cyphers to seek her out. The ship she was traveling aboard to reach Riddleport, the *Starfire*, was raided by the *Lionfish* nearly a week ago with a tactic similar to the one Alejia plans to use on the *Topaz Titan*—Alejia herself was already aboard the *Starfire*. After slaying the crew and capturing Iatha, Alejia commandeered the *Starfire* and set sail for Kalsgard, where she scuttled the *Starfire* to erase her tracks and made for the mainland by rowboat. Alejia ordered the pirates to watch over Iatha until she returned and decided what to do with her captive. Since Alejia isn't due back until after her crew captures the *Topaz Titan*, her minions have kept Iatha weakened, gagged, and bound for the time being, awaiting their leader's return.

The guards inside the warehouse have been ordered to keep any intruders out of the building, using force if necessary but not if it draws significant attention. They use the sliding peephole on the side door to deter any strangers who knock, though the dark, gloomy weather makes it difficult to tell friend from foe. If the PCs speak to the warehouse guards through the sliding peephole and make a successful Bluff or Intimidate check (by either claiming to be fellow pirates under Alejia's banner, Riddleport Gendarmes sent to investigate, or some other believable lie), the guards hastily hide Iatha Oedricius's unconscious body in one of the crates, and hesitantly allow the PCs in. Once they realize the jig is up or if they detect anyone attempting to break in, however, the grunts prepare to defend their base, getting into tactical positions to protect their hard-earned loot and prisoner.

The grunts use the terrain to their advantage, and hide around corners to disguise their numbers. As a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, one of the guards may push the topmost crate on a stack of cargo boxes over onto unsuspecting victims on the other side of one of these makeshift barriers (the barrier cannot be more than 2 squares deep in order to do this). Anyone in the square where a cargo box would fall must succeed at a DC 14 Reflex save or take bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. In Subtier 1–2, a falling box deals 1d4+3 points of damage. In Subtier 4–5, a falling box deals 1d6+3 points of damage. A successful Reflex save halves damage and negates the prone effect. The falling box breaks open and the square it landed upon is treated as difficult terrain for the rest of the encounter.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 2)

LIONFISH GRUNTS (3) **CR 1/2**
Human rogue (swashbuckler) 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 10 each (1d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee cutlass +3 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat If the grunts in the warehouse are given time to prepare for a fight against intruders, they get into tactical positions around the warehouse, hiding around corners and using their thunderstones and smokesticks to disorient opponents.

During Combat In addition to flanking and making sneak attacks whenever possible, the guards use the boxes of cargo as weapons, pushing them onto unsuspecting PCs from the other side of the makeshift barriers (see above).

Morale Being the lowliest of Alejia's crew members, the warehouse grunts have no wish to die for their cause, and each grunt surrenders when brought to 3 hit points or fewer, or when the last one standing is brought to fewer than 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +3, Disable Device +6, Disguise +3,

Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +3, Perception +4, Sense

Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ martial training

Combat Gear smokestick, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone;

Other Gear masterwork studded leather, light crossbow with 10 bolts, cutlass, thieves' tools, 35 gp

Subtier 4–5 (CR 5)

LIONFISH GRUNTS (3) **CR 2**

Human rogue (swashbuckler) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

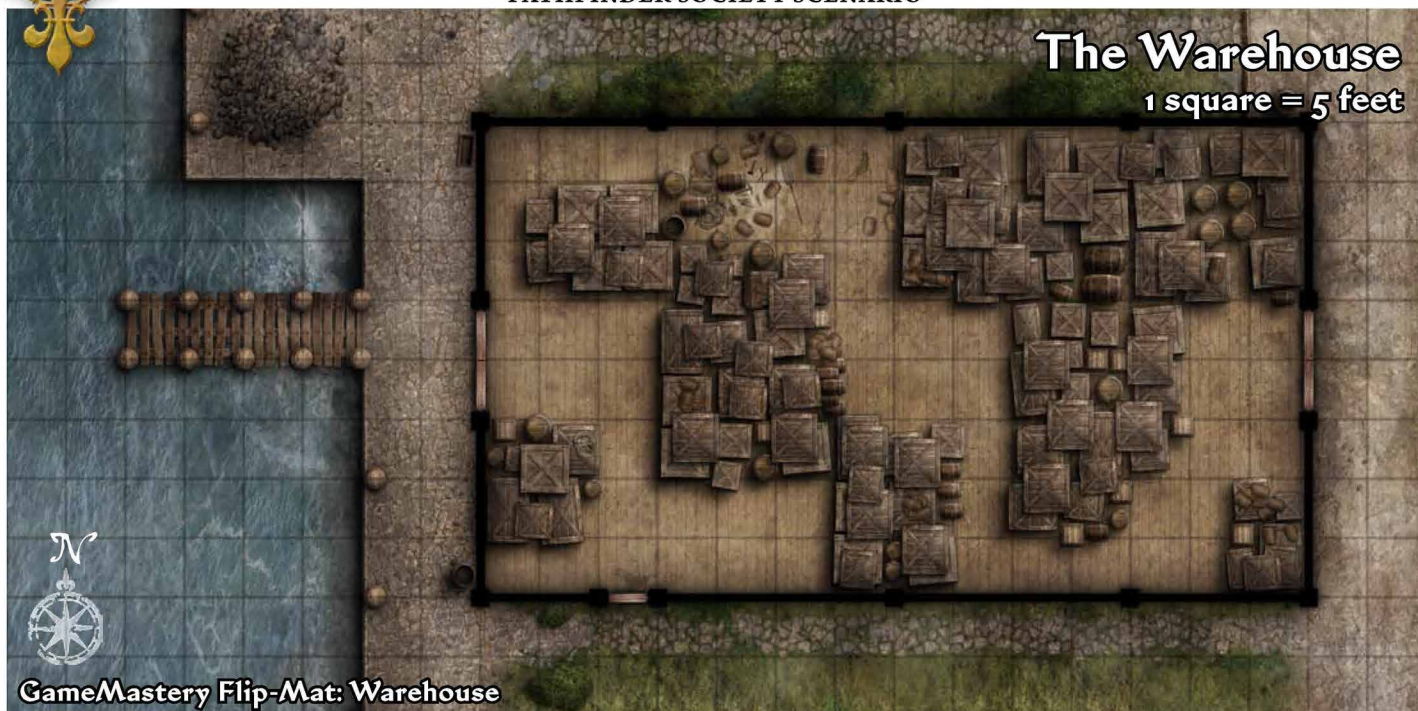
hp 23 each (3d8+6)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.



Melee mwk cutlass +6 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

Before Combat If the grunts in the warehouse are given time to prepare for a fight against intruders, they get into tactical positions around the warehouse, hiding around corners and using their thunderstones, smokesticks, and potions of invisibility to disorient opponents and gain sneak attacks against them on the first round.

During Combat In addition to flanking and making sneak attacks whenever possible, the guards use the boxes of cargo as weapons, pushing them onto unsuspecting PCs from the other side of the makeshift barriers (see the Subtier 1–2 tactics).

Morale Being the lowliest of Alejia's crew members, the warehouse grunts have no wish to die for their cause, and surrender when brought to 5 hit points or fewer, or when the last one standing is brought to fewer than 8 hit points.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Precise Strike

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +5, Disable Device +8, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +5, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ daring, martial training, rogue talents (bleeding attack +2)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, smokestick, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork cutlass, masterwork thieves' tools, 45 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Precise Strike (Ex) When two *Lionfish* grunts flank the same creature, both grunts deal an additional 1d6 points of precision damage on all melee attacks against the flanked target (this damage stacks with sneak attack). See page 167 of the *Advanced Player's Guide* for more information.

Development: While apprehending the grunts and examining the storeroom, PCs who search some of the most prominent cargo boxes inevitably stumble upon the unconscious but stable body of Iatha. After she is healed enough that she can speak, she tells the PCs everything she can about the bandits who commandeered the ship she was on and captured her, revealing the information from Investigating Alejia on page 5 up to DC 25. She recalls that the ship's name is the *Lionfish* and can succinctly describe it, but she refuses to go to the docks, as she has had quite enough of pirates and only wants to get on with her business at the Cypher Lodge. The PCs may choose to interrogate the pirates who attacked them in addition to or instead of interviewing Iatha, in which case they reveal the same information. Either way, if Iatha is healed enough to move about, she thanks the PCs for their aid and puts in a good word for them with Tammerhawk, then leaves the Wharf District and seeks the hospitality of the cyphermages in the Cypher Lodge.

Treasure: While most of the goods stored in this warehouse are either ancient beyond repair or spoiled foodstuffs, PCs who search the warehouse and succeed at a DC 15 Perception check find several noteworthy items from Alejia's previous raids. In Subtier 1–2, the cargo includes three acid flasks and one masterwork longsword; in Subtier 4–5, the PCs

find the same treasure as in Subtier 1–2 with the addition of a full box of six tar bombs (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea* 21). In both subtiers, a successful DC 20 Perception check also uncovers a secret compartment in the warehouse floor in which the smuggler's have hidden a crate of ornate silk flags worth 100 gp.

Mission Notes: Andoran faction PCs who apprehend at least one of the crew members in charge of watching over Iatha Oedricius and who free the bound scholar receive 1 Prestige Point.

Grand Lodge faction PCs may search for the book on Azlanti architecture that was stolen in one of the *Lionfish's* raids. Finding the book takes a DC 15 Perception check, and its cover is written in a language thought to resemble Azlanti, requiring a DC 15 Linguistics check to make out the pseudonym Diresome Kretchens. Retrieving the book earns Grand Lodge faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Taldor faction PCs who discover and retrieve the silk flags in the secret compartment (see *Treasure*, above) earn 1 Prestige Point.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat or negotiate with the pirates in charge of the *Lionfish's* warehouse, reward each subtier thusly:

Subtier 1–2:

Give each PC 148 gp.

Subtier 4–5:

Give each PC 335 gp.

B. The Docks (CR 2 or CR 5)

Alejia has garnered many enemies in Riddleport over the past few months, and among them are the gang members of Boss Croat, one of Riddleport's eight crime lords. Some of Boss Croat's half-orc enforcers have been seeking to control more of the city through intimidation and providing businesses with their "protection." These enforcers hope to bolster their leader's dastardly reputation and earn his praise, and their latest coercions have been centralized in the Wharf District. Most recently, some of Boss Croat's gangsters have tried to lean on the guards assigned to watch over Alejia's warehouse, but Alejia's crew have largely ignored the bullies, locking them out of the building and not entertaining their threats. In response to this, the brutes have started watching the building more intently, and plan on attacking any who walk out of it to teach them a thing or two about respecting Boss Croat.

Creatures: As soon as the PCs are done with their business in Alejia's warehouse and make their way toward the *Lionfish*, several of Boss Croat's half-orc thugs tail them, as they happened to be walking by the warehouse at the time and are fed up with being disregarded by the guards of the warehouse. The enforcers follow the PCs for several minutes on the way to the docks, and attack them

when no one else is around, gathering more of their fellow gang members on their way and surrounding the PCs on both sides. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check notice the brutes before they are attacked during a surprise round. If the thugs are spotted before they can ambush the PCs, they continue with their attack, not wasting time on words. In Subtier 1–2, there is only one enforcer and his pet, a dog that has recently contracted rabies. In Subtier 4–5, two of Boss Croat's enforcers attack the PCs, led by one of the crime lord's favored thug leaders.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 2)

BOSS CROAT ENFORCER CR 1

Half-orc fighter 2

LE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 21 (2d10+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear,

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sap +7 (1d6+3 plus nonlethal)

Ranged sling +3 (1d4+3)

TACTICS

Before Combat The thug attempts to sneak up on the PCs and attack them in a surprise round along with his dog.

During Combat Ordering his dog to attack the other opponents, the half-orc enforcer uses his sap to incapacitate individual PCs, targeting the weakest looking ones first.

Morale The thug has no wish to die, and attempts to flee if brought to fewer than 6 hit points.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (sap)

Skills Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +6; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate

Languages Common, Orc

SQ orc blood, weapon familiarity

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear**

masterwork studded leather, masterwork sap, sling with 5 bullets, ornate brass knuckles (30 gp), 14 gp

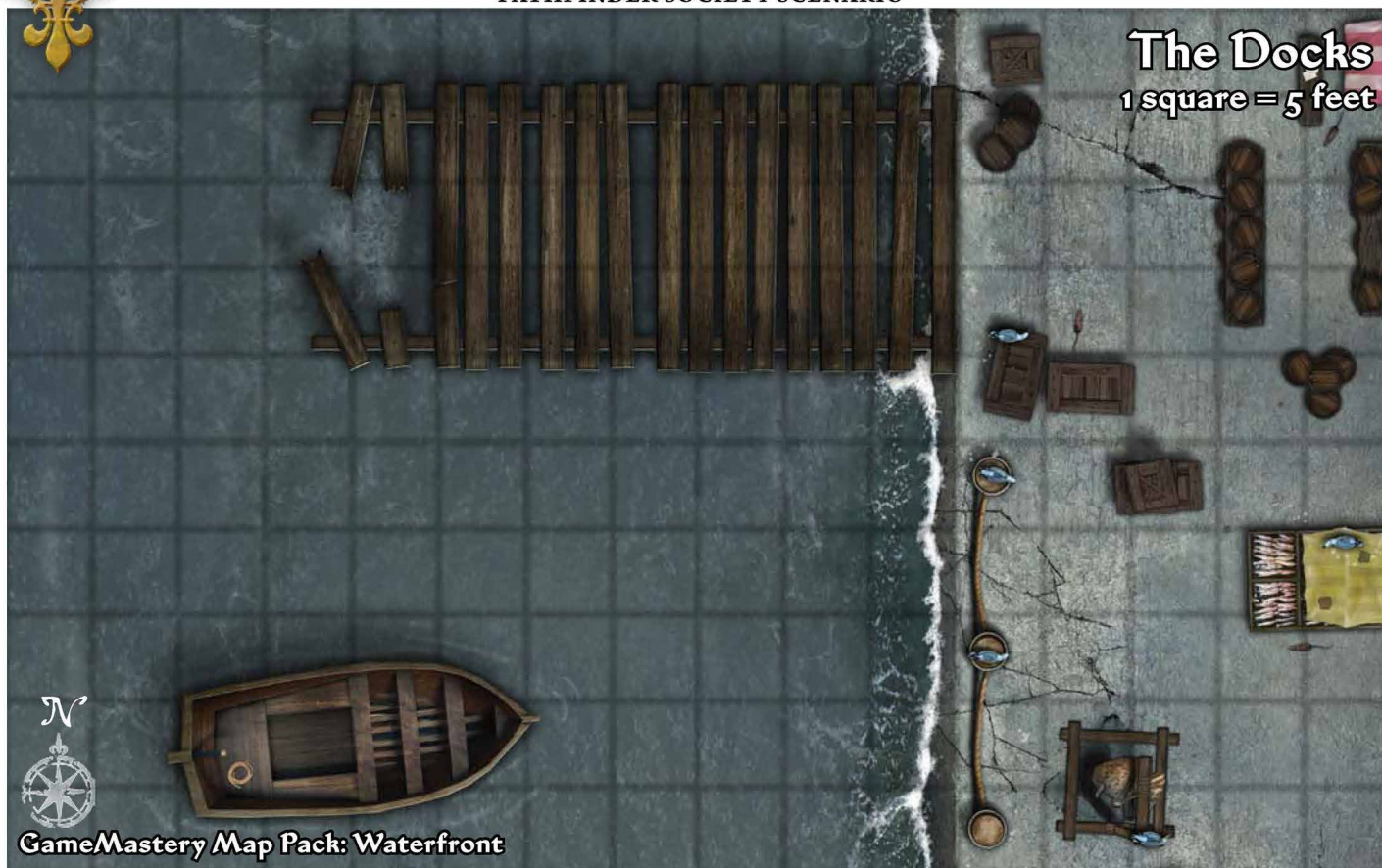
RABID DOG CR 1/2

Dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

hp 6

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) *Rabies*: Bite—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 14; *onset* 2d6 weeks; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1 Con damage plus 1d3 Wis damage (minimum reduction to 1 Wis); *cure* 2 consecutive saves.



Subtier 4–5 (CR 5)

BOSS CROAT ENFORCERS (2)

CR 1

hp 21 each (use the stats from Subtier 1–2)

BOSS CROAT THUG LEADER

CR 3

Half-orc fighter 4

LE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 38 (4d10+12)

Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk heavy mace +10 (1d8+4)

Ranged light hammer +5 (1d4+4)

TACTICS

Before Combat The thug leader commands the enforcers to hide behind a jumbled pile of crates and wait there for a chance to jump their foes.

During Combat The thug leader barks orders to the enforcers and strikes the toughest-looking PC with his heavy mace.

Morale Knowing that she will be reprimanded if he and the enforcers are beaten, the thug leader fights until both of the

enforcers flee, at which point he does so as well.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; CMB +8; CMD 19

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Power

Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy mace)

Skills Intimidate +13; Racial Modifiers +2 Intimidate

Languages Common, Orc

SQ armor training 1, orc blood, weapon familiarity

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, alchemist's fire (2), tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** +1 scale mail, light hammers (3), masterwork heavy mace, ornate brass knuckles (30 gp), 32 gp

Development: The thugs attack the PCs on a relatively quiet stretch of the docks, where there are just enough witnesses to spread word of the attack but not so many as to interfere. If subdued and interrogated, the thugs tell the PCs that they followed them from the warehouse because they're extorting businesses around the Wharf District to spread the name of Boss Croat. They've heard rumors of the *Lionfish*, and can provide information from the Investigating Alejia section on page 5 up to DC 25.

Mission Notes: Each of the half-orcs has a set of fancy brass knuckles on the off-hand, and Sczarni faction PCs will be able to spot the items with a single look, as the

weapons are quite gaudy, and have “Croat” written across them in capital letters. While loath to part with the items, the half-orc enforcers hand them over if successfully intimidated (DC 13 against Boss Croat Enforcers and DC 15 against the Boss Croat Thug Leader). Taking a pair of ornate brass knuckles from the half-orc enforcers earns Sczarni faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Silver Crusade faction PCs who make sure none of the thugs escape earn 1 Prestige Point.

Rewards: If the PCs successfully defeat Boss Croat’s thugs, reward each subtier thusly:

Subtier 1–2:

Give each PC 48 gp.

Subtier 4–5:

Give each PC 301 gp.

ACT 2: THE LIONFISH’S NEW CREW

After dealing with the troublesome thugs who mistook them for the guards of the warehouse, the PCs are able to continue to the *Lionfish* unhindered.

C. The Lionfish (CR 3 or CR 6)

The dinghy vessel bobbing in the water looks like it’s in dire need of a new paint job, its maroon paint having faded to a grimy puce and peeling away where the water laps at the hull. The planks appear sturdy though, and the boat’s sails are carefully mended. The word “Lionfish” is painted across the side of the ship in clumsy blue letters, and a light on the ship’s deck illuminates the work of several figures hustling to and fro.

The *Lionfish* is an old sailing ship that despite relative neglect has remained in good shape over the years. Its crew members are not the most learned sailors in the Inner Sea, but they replace rotting wood and patch the sails when necessary, and their raids ensure that they are well fed and have plenty of rum. Alejia has ordered that the ship be anchored at least 100 yards out from shore at all times in order to decrease investigation of its cargo. As the harbor is quite popular, this is not unusual activity—many boats are anchored relatively far from the docks, especially bigger vessels with wealthy captains. In order to get to the ship, the PCs need to traverse the perilous waters of Riddleport’s Inner Harbor to reach the ship, either via rowboat or some other means.

Several small rowboats are tied to the docks of the Wharf District, and can be commandeered to aid PCs in crossing the treacherous waters. Four PCs can fit in one of these standard rowboats, and two must succeed at a DC

DISEASE: HARBOR GUT

The water in Riddleport’s Inner Harbor is heavily polluted with the runoff and refuse from the city’s sewer systems, making it unsafe to drink, let alone swim in. If any PCs fall in the water below the *Lionfish* (most likely by failing a Climb check by 5 or more), they are exposed to harbor gut, which tightens the muscles of the abdomen in tortuous pain.

HARBOR GUT

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

Onset 1d3 days; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect 1d2 Dex damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

10 Strength check in order to navigate the water and reach the *Lionfish*. This DC increases to 15 if one PC is doing the rowing. During the short voyage, PCs who look overboard can see the polluted waters of the Inner Harbor. Upon reaching the ship, PCs must climb up the side in order to board it by making successful DC 20 Climb checks for every 5 feet they try to progress. The deck is 10 feet above the water, meaning two Climb checks are needed in order to successfully reach the ledge. A grappling hook and rope reduce the DC of the Climb check to 5.

If the PCs take the more lawful route and pay someone to ferry them to the ship, they need to succeed at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy check to gather information in order to find a person willing to row them to the *Lionfish*. PCs who succeed at either of these checks inevitably run into **Smulwarts Gultrock** (N female dwarf expert 4), a dwarven angler who offers to ferry them to the *Lionfish* for 5 gp. She requires little explanation as to why they want to board the ship, and remains quiet throughout the trip. Once the skiff quietly glides up next to the boat, she might silently offer the PCs a grappling hook and rope if they seem to be struggling to get back up, but she’ll charge them an additional 5 gp for the loan. Associating with Gultrock will help PCs find a lieutenant captain for the *Lionfish* if they need one after commandeering it (see Act 3).

Creatures: The crew of the *Lionfish* patrol the perimeter frequently, with the three crew members taking shifts, and PCs who reach the deck might alert the pirates to their intrusion (PCs can make Stealth checks opposed by the pirates’ Perception checks, but they each take a –4 penalty due to the difficulty in climbing over the ledge of the boat and the limited light, respectively). One grunt patrols the ship lazily, going about her duties on the deck, while the other deckhand tends to things below deck (see area 3b). Alejia’s lieutenant captain, a gripli named Mumbuckle, resides in the captain’s quarters studying the most recent nautical charts Alejia provided him.

GameMastery Map Pack: Boats & Ships

The Lionfish
1 square = 5 feet

Subtier 1–2 (CR 3)

LIONFISH GRUNTS (2)

CR 1/2

hp 10 each (see page 7)

MUMBUCKLE

CR 1

Male gripli alchemist 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 149)

LE Small humanoid (gripli)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)**hp** 14 (2d8+2)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** –1; +2 vs. poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.**Melee** mwk rapier +8 (1d4/18–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +7 (1d6/19–20)**Special Attacks** bomb 4/day (1d6+2 fire, DC 13)**Alchemist Extracts Known** (CL 2nd)1st—*bomber's eye**, *enlarge person*

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as Mumbuckle hears trouble outside on deck, he swallows his extract and readies his crossbow before rushing out the door to protect the ship.**During Combat** Mumbuckle throws tanglefoot bags with little regard for his own crew and attacks from the quarterdeck with his bombs and crossbow. If drawn into melee, he draws his rapier and fends off foes as best as he can, calling to his crew to help him.**Morale** Mumbuckle may be cowardly, but he is dedicated to his captain, Alejia. He fights until all of his fellow crew members are defeated and he is reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, at which point he surrenders, blubbing for his life.**Base Statistics** Without the mutagen, the alchemist's statistics are **Init** +3, **AC** 16; **Ref** +6, **Will** +0; **Melee** mwk rapier +6 (1d4/18–20); **Ranged** light crossbow +5 (1d6/19–20); **Dex** 16, **Wis** 10; **CMD** 13; **Skills** Acrobatics +5, Perception +5, Profession (sailor) +5, Sense Motive +2, Stealth +7 (+11 in marshes or forested areas)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 15, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 15**Feats** Brew Potion, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Climb +8, Craft (alchemy) +7, Perception +4, Profession (sailor) +4, Sense Motive +1, Stealth +9 (+13 in marshes or forested areas), Swim +2; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in marshes or forested areas**Languages** Common, Gripli, Polyglot, Sylvan**SQ** swamp stride, alchemy (alchemy crafting +2, discoveries (precise bombs [2 squares]), identify potions), mutagen (+4/–2, +2 natural, 20 minutes), poison use**Combat Gear** tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, light crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork rapier, formula book (contains all prepared extracts plus *cure light wounds* and *true strike*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Swamp Stride (Ex) Mumbuckle can move through difficult terrain at his normal speed while within a swamp. Magically altered terrain affects him normally.* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Subtier 4–5 (CR 6)

LIONFISH GRUNTS (2)

CR 2

hp 23 each (see page 7)

MUMBUCKLE

CR 4

Male gripli alchemist 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 149)

LE Small humanoid (gripli)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)**hp** 36 (5d8+10)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +0; +4 vs. poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.**Melee** +1 rapier +10 (1d4+1/18–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +9 (1d6/19–20)**Special Attacks** bomb 8/day (3d6+3 fire, DC 15)**Alchemist Extracts Known** (CL 5th)2nd—*fire breath*, *invisibility*, *levitate*1st—*bomber's eye**, *cure light wounds*, *enlarge person*, *shield*, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as Mumbuckle hears trouble outside on deck, he swallows his extract and readies his crossbow before rushing out the door to protect the ship.

During Combat Mumbuckle throws tanglefoot bags with little regard for his own crew and attacks from the quarterdeck with his bombs and crossbow. If drawn into melee, he draws his rapier and fends his off foes as best as he can, calling to his crew to help him.

Morale Mumbuckle may be cowardly, but he is dedicated to his captain, Alejia. He fights until all of his fellow crew members are defeated and he is reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, at which point he surrenders, blubbering for his life.

Base Statistics Without the mutagen, the alchemist's statistics are **Init** +7; **AC** 17; **Ref** +7, **Will** +1; **Melee** +1 rapier +8 (1d4/18–20); **Ranged** light crossbow +7 (1d6/19–20); **Dex** 16, **Wis** 10; **CMD** 15; **Skills** Acrobatics +8, Disable Device +11, Perception +8, Profession (sailor) +8, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +7 (+11 in marshes or forested areas).

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

Feats Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +8, Craft (alchemy) +11, Disable Device +13, Perception +7, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +9 (+13 in marshes or forested areas), Swim +5;

Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth in marshes or forested areas

Languages Boggard, Common, Grippli, Polyglot, Sylvan

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +5, identify potions), discoveries (frost bomb, precise bombs [3 squares]), mutagen (+4/–2, +2 natural, 50 minutes), poison use, swamp stride, swift alchemy

Combat Gear tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 rapier, light crossbow with 20 bolts, formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as *see invisibility*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Swamp Stride (Ex) Mumbuckle can move through difficult terrain at his normal speed while within a swamp. Magically altered terrain affects him normally.

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

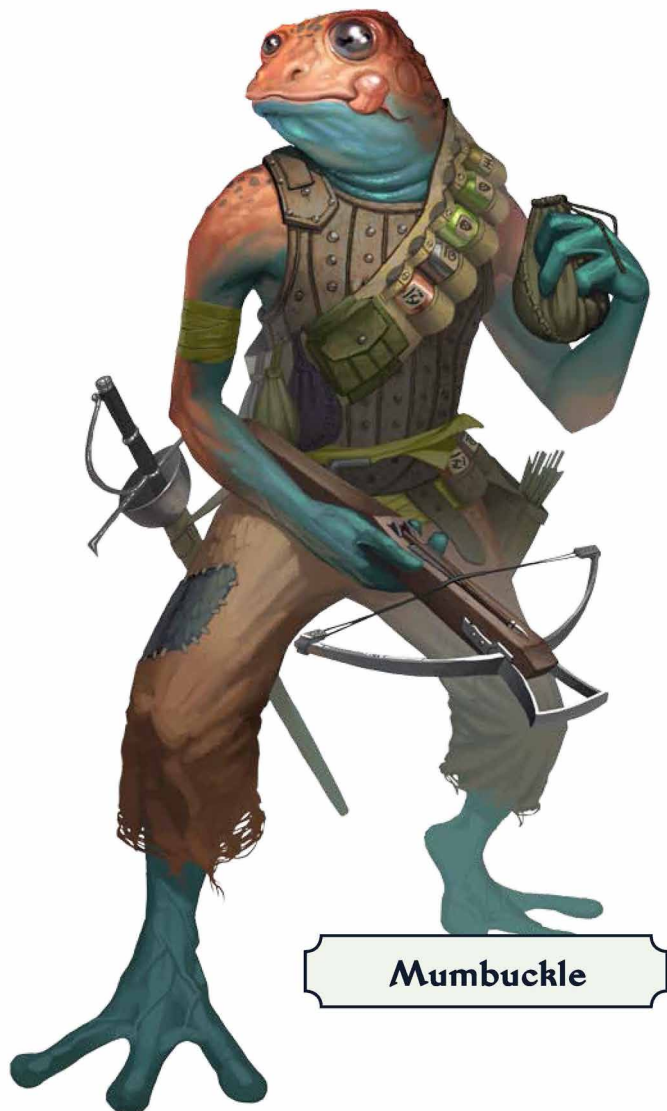
Development: If the patrolling deckhand on the *Lionfish* notices the intruding PCs, she immediately shouts to her companions for help. If she is taken out or rendered silent in a surprise round, however, neither the other deckhand nor Mumbuckle notices the noise of battle, attributing the sounds to the waves or neighboring ships.

If the PCs capture or interrogate any of the deckhands, they tell the PCs that Alejia is aboard the *Topaz Titan*, and that she deferred her regular duties as captain to Mumbuckle for the time being. Mumbuckle fears

retribution from his captain, but he fears the edge of the PCs' swords more; he divulges as little information as he can get away with, answering questions briefly yet precisely, but tells everything he knows if the threat of death is a possibility.

Mumbuckle tells the PCs that he was put in charge of the *Lionfish* while Alejia infiltrated the *Topaz Titan*, and that he was instructed to sail the ship out to sea to rendezvous with her after she takes the *Topaz Titan*. If he doesn't show up, however, she'll execute the plan anyway, simply scuttling the *Topaz Titan* once she brings it near a harbor instead of allowing her crew members to loot the cargo.

Treasure: Once the PCs apprehend the *Lionfish's* crew, they may search the ship and stumble across its stores of rations and weapons. In Subtier 1–2, their goods include a masterwork hook hand (310 gp; *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea* 19), 5 barrels of cheap rum (25 gp per barrel), and a Large, ornate treasure chest



(45 gp) with a sextant in it (500 gp). In Subtier 4–5, the *Lionfish* is stocked with the same gear, except the hook hand is instead a +1 *hook hand*. In addition, in the captain's quarters are the nautical charts that Alejia entrusted Mumbuckle with, which plot the planned coordinates of the *Topaz Titan*. Several notes to Mumbuckle from Alejia, delivered via carrier raven, inform the PCs that Alejia has boarded the *Topaz Titan* at Kalsgard and that the *Lionfish* is to meet her at sundown on Moonday, which may be in 1 or 2 days depending on how long the PCs took to find the warehouse in Act 1.

Mission Notes: Shadow Lodge faction PCs might choose to seek out the angler Smulwarts Gultrock at this point to deliver the package to her. Such PCs gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks to gather information and Knowledge (local) checks to locate a small vessel to take them out to the *Lionfish*, since they have the dwarf's name. Delivering the package (a high-quality, hollow bronze peg leg) and tipping the dwarf at least 10 gp earns Shadow Lodge faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

PCs who go into the captain's quarters on the *Lionfish* and make a successful DC 10 Perception check notice the various etchings on the walls—dozens of inscriptions carved into the planks. Osirion faction PCs will be interested in finding these inscriptions, which speak of ancient shipbuilding techniques of various cultures. A DC 15 Knowledge (history) check allows an Osirion faction PC to identify which of the planks describes Osirian shipbuilding techniques. Osirion faction PCs who identify the correct plank and copy its text down to take back to Amenopheus earn 1 Prestige Point.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat the pirates aboard the *Lionfish*, reward each subtier thusly:

Subtier 1–2:

Give each PC 208 gp.

Subtier 4–5:

Give each PC 505 gp.

ACT 3: VIPER COVE

After the PCs defeat the pirates aboard the *Lionfish* and find the documents detailing Alejia's plan, they must commandeer the ship in order to intercept the *Topaz Titan* before Alejia slays everyone aboard it. Depending on how long it took the PCs to acquire information about Alejia and the warehouse on the first day, this leaves the PCs with either 1 or 2 nights to acquire the aid and the resources they'll need to pilot the *Lionfish* out of harbor and into the Varisian Gulf.

In order to get to Viper Cove before Alejia kills the prisoners she's captured from the *Topaz Titan*, the PCs must sail the *Lionfish* out past Riddleport's harbor and

get to the pirate island using the nautical map Alejia provided Mumbuckle. This means that the PCs need a formidable captain to sail the ship, a task which could be easy or challenging, depending on whether any of the PCs have training in the Profession (sailor) skill. Any PC with ranks in this skill can read the nautical map and pilot the relatively small ship for the half-day's journey to Viper Cove.

If none of the PCs possess ranks in Profession (sailor), they'll have to hire someone from Riddleport to sail the ship to the hidden island, a feat that shouldn't be too difficult in one of the most esteemed pirate havens of the Inner Sea. If the PCs interacted with Gultrock earlier in the scenario, they'll have a fine lead for a captain, as the lame dwarf is more than capable of sailing with a crew willing to follow her orders. If the PCs haven't encountered Gultrock, now would be a fine time to introduce the NPC, after the PCs make the appropriate Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy checks, of course. If the PCs fail these checks, they shouldn't automatically fail the scenario, but there should be an added sense of urgency to them getting to Viper Cove, either by elaborating on the setting sun and difficulty in finding a hidden island at night or through other creative means.

Alternatively, the PCs might simply order Mumbuckle to pilot the ship, though how trustworthy the gripli is remains questionable. Though the lieutenant captain is spineless, he is not completely disloyal, and you should make it clear that he is not a trustworthy option should the PCs keep him alive long enough to consider allowing him to captain the ship.

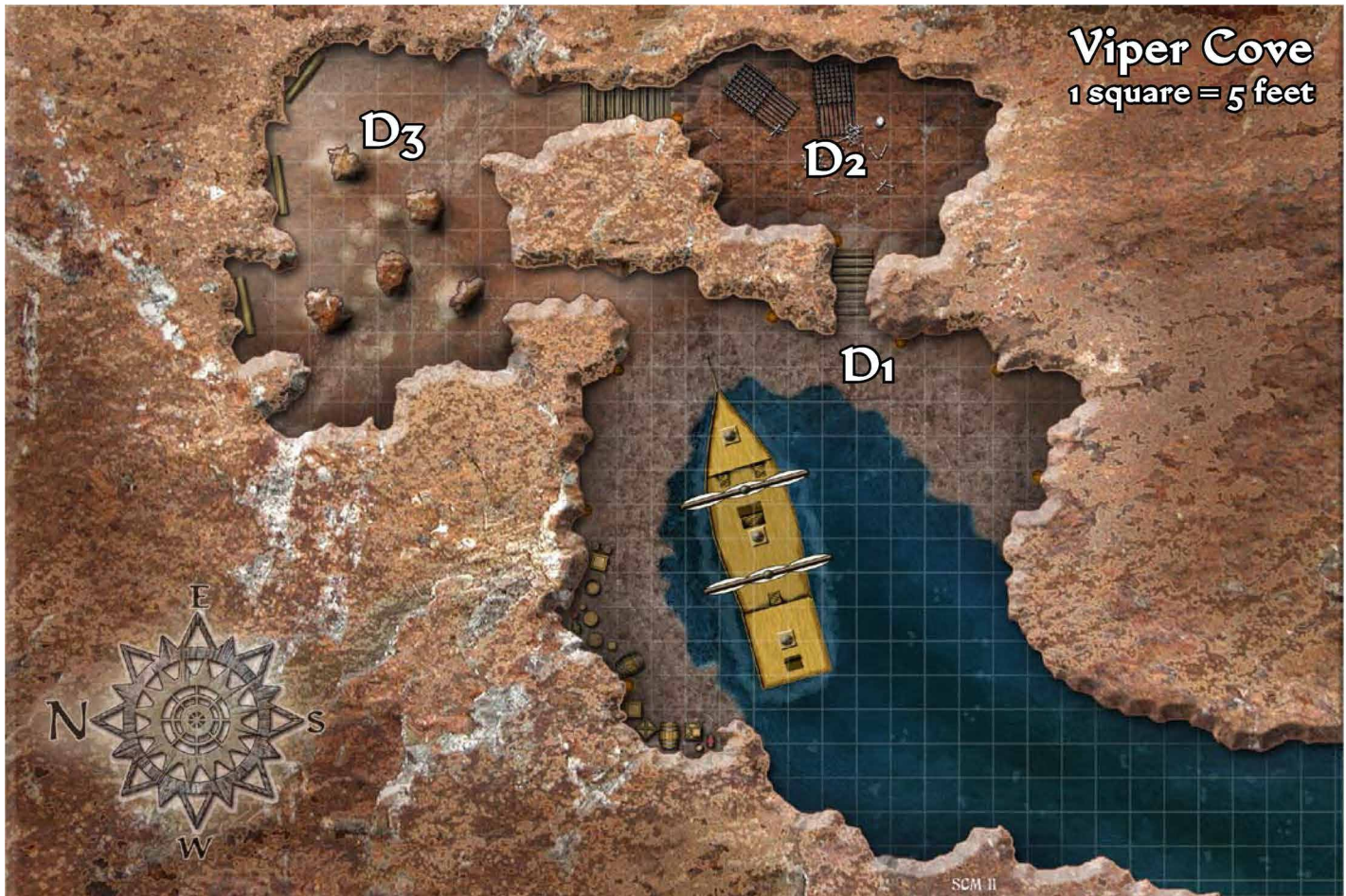
Regardless of how they do so, getting to Viper Cove allows the PCs to continue with the scenario, the remainder of which takes place in the cavernous cove of the pirate island itself, just hours before Alejia and her crew members are scheduled to kill off the prisoners.

D1. Entry

Read the following when the PCs arrive at Viper Cove.

The only landing point on the rocky islet called Viper Cove seems to be through a cavern entrance that leads to a shallow cove concealed within the island itself. The walls of the cavern are lined intermittently with torch-adorned sconces, and another ship is already moored on the northeastern side of the embankment—*Topaz Titan* is emblazoned across its hull in orange letters that shine brilliantly even in the limited light. On the eastern side of the large cavern, two exits lead further into the cave complex.

The PCs may exit their ship either by docking in the only available docking spot left or jumping out early and swimming to the cave's rocky shore. Either way, there are



no inhabitants keeping guard over this area, as Alejia and her crew have already unloaded the cargo and captives and are waiting in area D3.

Mission Notes: Qadira faction PCs who make a DC 15 Perception check find the rare salt their faction leader asked them to take back to Qadira. The salt is extremely cold to the touch, and gloves are required to safely handle it. Without some sort of protection, anyone touches the salt with their bare skin must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1d3 points of cold damage. Successfully stowing the salt and taking it back to their faction leader earns Qadira faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

D2. The Feeding Pit (CR 2 or CR 5)

A series of wooden planks set into the soft sediment of the cavern's floor lead down into this chamber, the last plank laying before a sheer drop which ends 5 feet below. The chamber resembles a pit more than anything else, and bones of various kinds of animals—including humanoids—litter the floor near the cages. Several sconces with burning torches adorn the walls, and two empty cages stand at the eastern side of the room.

This room is where Alejia keeps her pets when she's hiding in the cove, taking them with her on voyages as added insurance against particularly formidable

opponents. The two cages on the far wall usually keep the beasts penned up during trips, but Alejia lets them out while in Viper Cove so they can walk around the feeding pit and get some exercise. It takes a successful DC 10 Climb check to climb up the two exits in this room, as they have a series of hand- and footholds carved into the dirt that have been only slightly worn away with time.

Creatures: In Subtier 1–2, there are three rabid dogs in the feeding pit. In Subtier 4–5, there are two trollhounds. The beasts are vicious and often kept hungry, Alejia only occasionally feeding them either extra food stores or insolent crew members. The beasts are ruthless and attack anyone on sight except Alejia, and PCs look as good a meal as any to the starving creatures.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 2)

RABID DOGS (3)

CR 1/2

Dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

hp 6 each

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) Rabies: Bite—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 14; *onset* 2d6 weeks; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1 Con damage plus 1d3 Wis damage (minimum reduction to 1 Wis); *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER

If less than 1 hour remains for the PCs to finish the scenario, remove the creatures from the feeding pit in area D2.

Subtier 4–5 (CR 5)

TROLLHOUND

CR 3

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 274

N Medium magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 30 (4d10+8); regeneration 3 (acid or fire)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d10+6 plus disease and trip)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19 (23 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +5, Survival +1 (+5 scent tracking);

Racial Modifiers +4 Survival while scent tracking

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) A trollhound's saliva is an infectious brew of contagion. Creatures bitten by a trollhound are often afflicted with bloodfire fever, a disease characterized by deep internal pain, as if the victim's blood were on fire. Additional symptoms include loss of muscular coordination, pus-filled blisters, and overall lethargy and fatigue. Trolls and trollhounds alike are immune to bloodfire fever, even though trollhounds often exhibit the pus-filled blisters that come with the disease.

Bloodfire fever: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Str damage, 1d3 Dex damage, and target is fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Mission Notes: Cheliox faction PCs who note the design of the cages in the feeding pit and bring sketches or notes back to their faction by succeeding at a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check receive 1 Prestige Point.

D3. Holding Room (CR 3 or CR 6)

Read the following when the PCs enter D3.

Three sets of wooden stocks hang from the northern wall of this room, pitons chaining the devices to the rock. Light flickers into the room from the water out in the cavern's main

chamber to the west, and small holes in the ceiling act as skylights, ensuring that the room needs no torches to light it during the day. Several natural stone columns break up the center of the cavern, sending shafts of shadow across the dimly-lit chamber.

This chamber is where Alejia holds her prisoners while she waits for Mumbuckle to arrive.

Creatures: Alejia and her favored crew members wait in this room, prodding the scholar Gurukaza for whatever information he knows about the Cyphergate and its scholars so they can figure out where best to strike next in their pursuit to undermine Tammerhawk and his efforts with the Order of the Cyphers. If they detected the intruders from either area D1 or D2, they prepare to ambush the PCs when the party enters the cavern, hiding behind the various stone pillars in the chamber to avoid being seen. While Alejia ultimately doesn't care whether Gurukaza lives or dies, she knows his value as a hostage, and attempts to use him as leverage to save her own skin. The pirate captain keeps her allies between herself and the PCs, and moves her bound and gagged prisoner toward the *Topaz Titan* at blade-point as long as she can maintain a standoff. She avoids killing Gurukaza unless the PCs take offensive actions against her or her grunts, or if they block the trio's egress from the chamber. Once Gurukaza is dead, she fights for her life, knowing she has nothing with which to bargain.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 3)

LIONFISH GRUNTS (2)

CR 1/2

hp 10 each (see page 7)

ALEJIA NETRAV

CR 1

Female vishkanya magus 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 281,

Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic 9)

LE Medium humanoid (vishkanya)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

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

hp 16 (2d8+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2; +2 vs. poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk cutlass +4 (1d6+2/18–20)

Ranged hand crossbow +3 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks poison, spell combat (–2 attack), spellstrike

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

1st—*burning hands* (DC 13), *corrosive touch**, *magic missile*

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*

TACTICS

Before Combat Alejia hides from the PCs when she hears them in either adjacent chamber, positioning herself next to

her prisoner and readying her hand crossbow to fire in the surprise round.

During Combat Alejia fires her hand crossbow at the first PC to step amid the stone columns, then draws her cutlass and threatens to execute her prisoner if not allowed to leave on the *Topaz Titan* without being followed. If not permitted to leave with her prisoner, she kills him with a coup de grace on the following round. Once injured, Alejia smears her sword along her open wound to apply her venom to the weapon before making her next attack, and uses spell combat and spellstrike in following rounds.

Morale Alejia has come too far to see her plan crumble into ashes, and she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +5, Perception +1, Profession (sailor) +4, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +4, Swim +7;

Racial Modifiers +2 Escape Artist, +2 Perception, +2 Stealth

Languages Common, Varisian, Vishkanya, Vudrani

SQ poison use, toxic, arcane pool (3 points, +1)

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, hand crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork cutlass, spell component pouch, spellbook

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Toxic (Ex) Once per day, Alejia can envenom a weapon she wields with her toxic saliva or blood (using blood requires Alejia to be injured at the time) as a swift action.

Vishkanya Venom: Injury; save Fort DC 12; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dex damage; cure 1 save.

* See *Ultimate Magic*.

HIRAKO GURUKAZA

CR 4

Male venerable human bard 5

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init −1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (−1 Dex)

hp 21 (5d8−5); currently 3

Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +1 (1d3−2)

Special Attacks bardic performance 22 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2)

Bard Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +9)

2nd (3/day)—*animal messenger*, *misdirection*, *tongues*

1st (5/day)—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *identify*, *unseen servant*

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *message*,

open/close, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 8, **Con** 9, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 10

Feats Extra Performance, Iron Will, Magical Aptitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana])

Skills Appraise +9, Diplomacy +12, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (planes) +11, Linguistics +9, Perform (oratory) +12, Spellcraft +3, Use Magic Device +14

Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal, Minkaian, Thassilonian, Tien, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +2, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (oratory)

Subtier 4–5 (CR 6)

LIONFISH GRUNTS (2)

CR 2

hp 23 each (see page 7)

ALEJIA NETRAV

CR 4

Female vishkanya magus 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 281, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 9)

LE Medium humanoid (vishkanya)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 cutlass +7 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged hand crossbow +5 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks poison (DC 14), spell combat (−2 attack), spellstrike

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd—*acid arrow*, *bull's strength*, *frigid touch**

1st—*burning hands* (DC 13), *color spray* (DC 13), *corrosive touch**, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13)

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Alejia hides from the PCs when she hears them in either adjacent chamber, positioning herself next to her prisoner and readying her hand crossbow to fire in the surprise round.

During Combat Alejia fires her hand crossbow at the first PC to step amid the stone columns, then draws her cutlass and threatens to execute her prisoner if not allowed to leave on the *Topaz Titan* without being followed. If not permitted to leave with her prisoner, she kills him with a coup de grace on the following round. Once injured, Alejia smears her sword along her open wound to apply her venom to the weapon before making her next attack, and uses spell

combat and spellstrike in following rounds.

Morale Alejia has come too far to see her plan crumble into ashes, and she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (cutlass)

Skills Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +8, Perception +1, Profession (sailor) +7, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +4, Swim +10; **Racial**

Modifiers +2 Escape Artist, +2 Perception, +2 Stealth

Languages Common, Varisian, Vishkanya, Vudrani

SQ arcane pool (4 points, +2), magus arcana (pool strike +2d6), poison use, spell recall, toxic

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *scroll of blur*; **Other Gear** +2 studded leather, +1 cutlass, hand crossbow with 20 bolts, spell component pouch, spellbook

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Toxic (Ex) Twice per day, Alejia can envenom a weapon she wields with her toxic saliva or blood (using blood requires Alejia to be injured at the time) as a swift action.

Vishkanya Venom: Injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save.

* See *Ultimate Magic*.

HIRAKO GURUKAZA

CR 4

hp 21 (currently 3; see Subtier 1–2)

Development: If the PCs allow Alejia and her minions to leave, she takes Gurukaza as far as the boat, and remains true to her word, leaving him tied and gagged on the beach while she and her crew board the *Topaz Titan* and quickly pull up anchor to leave. Whether Alejia lives or dies, the rescued Gurukaza is eternally grateful for the PCs' efforts to rescue him, and he promises to send the best possible report of their bravery and dedication back to their superiors.

Mission Notes: Lantern Lodge PCs who safely rescue Gurukaza and provide him with any form of magical healing receive 1 Prestige Point.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat Alejia and her favored crew members, reward each subtier thusly:

Subtier 1–2:

Give each PC 128 gp.

Subtier 4–5:

Give each PC 799 gp.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs defeated Alejia—either by killing or capturing her—the assault on the Order of Cyphers ceases, and business returns to normal rather quickly for Tammerhawk and his academic associates. Word spreads quickly through Riddleport of the PCs' defeat of Alejia's gang, and the Pathfinders develop a reputation as a formidable force within the town. As long as Alejia does not escape at the end of the scenario, each PC earns the Riddleport Respect boon on his or her Chronicle sheet.

Should the Pathfinders rescue Hirako Gurukaza, Venture-Captain Heidmarch expresses her thanks, as does the rescued sage. Gurukaza promises the PCs any aid he can offer should they ever be in need of his assistance in the City of Cyphers, and vows to do his best to ensure that Tammerhawk and any allied to the crime boss know the extent of the PCs' deeds. Rescuing the former Pathfinder earns each PC the Debt of Cyphers boon on his or her Chronicle sheet.

Success Conditions

The PCs' mission in Riddleport is twofold, but they needn't succeed at both tasks to consider the scenario a success. As long as the party rescues Gurukaza or puts an end to Alejia's piracy, each PC earns 1 Prestige Point. If the party completes both tasks, each PC still earns only 1 Prestige Point for completing the scenario, though completion of both tasks does earn each PC two boons on his or her Chronicle sheet (as explained above).

Faction Missions

Player characters of each faction have additional criteria that must be met for them to earn their second Prestige Point for the scenario.

Alejia Netrav

THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

Andoran Faction: If the PCs free the imprisoned scholar in area **A** and capture at least one of his captors alive, Andoran faction PCs earn 1 Prestige Point.

Cheliox Faction: Cheliox faction PCs who take notes on the design of the cages in area **D2** earn 1 Prestige Point.

Grand Lodge Faction: Grand Lodge faction PCs who retrieve the book on Azlanti architecture in area **A** and verify it is the same one that was stolen earn 1 Prestige Point.

Lantern Lodge Faction: Lantern Lodge faction PCs who rescue Gurukaza and provide him magical healing earn 1 Prestige Point.

Osirion Faction: Osirion faction PCs who copy the Osirian inscriptions written on the planks in area **C** earn 1 Prestige Point.

Qadira Faction: Qadira faction PCs who take the rare cold salt from area **D1** in Viper Cove earn 1 Prestige Point.

Sczarni Faction: Sczarni faction PCs who take the ornate brass knuckles from the half-orc enforcers in area **B** earn 1 Prestige Point.

Shadow Lodge Faction: Shadow Lodge faction PCs who deliver the package to Smulwarts Gultrock in area **C** earn 1 Prestige Point.

Silver Crusade Faction: Silver Crusade faction PCs who make sure none of the thugs in area **B** get away earn 1 Prestige Point.

Taldor Faction: Taldor faction PCs who retrieve the silk flags stored in the secret compartment in area **A** earn 1 Prestige Point.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY EXCLUSIVE SCENARIO: THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

Event _____		Date _____	
GM # _____		GM Character # _____	
GM Name _____		GM Prestige Earned _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Andoran	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheliah	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Lodge	<input type="checkbox"/> Lantern Lodge
<input type="checkbox"/> Qadira	<input type="checkbox"/> Sczarni	<input type="checkbox"/> Shadow Lodge	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Crusade
		<input type="checkbox"/> Osirion	<input type="checkbox"/> Taldor

Character # _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prestige Points _____
Character Name _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Andoran	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheliah	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Lodge
<input type="checkbox"/> Qadira	<input type="checkbox"/> Sczarni	<input type="checkbox"/> Shadow Lodge
		<input type="checkbox"/> Lantern Lodge
		<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Crusade
		<input type="checkbox"/> Osirion
		<input type="checkbox"/> Taldor

Character # _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prestige Points _____
Character Name _____		
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Character # _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prestige Points _____
Character Name _____		
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Character # _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prestige Points _____
Character Name _____		
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Crusade
		<input type="checkbox"/> Osirion
		<input type="checkbox"/> Taldor

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THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

Andoran



Hail Fellow Chainbreaker!

I have heard that you will be stopping in Riddleport soon. While the pirate port is hardly known for its lawfulness, it has come to my attention that a particularly dastardly group of pirates have taken to destroying inbound ships carrying knowledgeable individuals and holding these noble sages prisoner. The most recent ship to be waylaid in this manner was carrying a renowned Andoran theologian, and our free country cannot stand to see its own people captured and held against their will! The scholar's name is Iatha Oedricius; if you find her, ensure her safety and make sure her captors are turned over to what constitutes the law in Riddleport.

Freedom precedes prosperity,

Colson Maldris

Major Colson Maldris

Cheliax



Pretty Pawn,

I have recently acquired several pet hellhounds that I've absolutely fallen in love with, but the damnable things burn through almost any cage I put them. I'm looking to start from scratch now, and must find a new cage that would fit such magnificent beasts and provide protection against their unique powers. If you find any cages that are able to hold remarkable hounds such as mine, do bring back sketches or notes on their design, and I promise you will be greatly rewarded...

I'll be waiting,

Zarta Dralneen

Paracountess Zarta Dralneen

Grand Lodge



Loyal Pathfinder,

While investigating the business of Alejia and her raids on the ships inbound to Riddleport Harbor, I came across info that one of the inbound vessels was carrying a scholar of Azlanti ruins, a subject that the Grand Lodge is quite interested in. While I'm quite sure she's dead by now, the ancient book which she undoubtedly had on her person—a tome written under the pseudonym Diresome Kretchens—may still be safe with the rest of Alejia's hordes of stolen goods. The book would be an invaluable addition to the libraries of the Grand Lodge, and should you find and return it, the Decemvirate would be most thankful for your aid.

Good luck,

Ambrus Valsin

Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Lantern Lodge



Honorable Pathfinder,

Word has come to me that you are headed to Riddleport in Varisia to investigate the disappearance of several Cyphergate scholars, and that you aim to prevent the kidnapping of one of our own. It is vitally important that you succeed. The next scholar expected to arrive in the City of Cyphers is named Hirako Gurukaza, and he did much for the Lantern Lodge during his career as a Pathfinder in his homeland of Minkai. Not only is he an expert on the arcane—especially translating esoteric runes—and thus a valuable asset to the Society, but he is also a close friend of mine. Ensure he is safe and provide him healing should he be injured when you find him. I'm counting on you, friend.

May benevolent fate find you,

Amara Li

Venture-Captain Amara Li

Osirion



You Who Hunger for Knowledge,

I have heard that you will be traveling to Riddleport Harbor in the coming days. The pirate haven has long been a subject of Osirion's studies not only for its ancient architecture belonging to dead civilizations, but for the numerous ships from varying cultures that make the harbor their home. I have heard that some of the ships that journey to such well-visited coves have long histories scribed into their very bulkheads, particularly the secrets of the shipbuilders who constructed the boats themselves. If you come across any particularly old-looking ships, do be on the lookout for any such inscriptions that may be of future use to Osirian shipwrights.

Keep your ear to the sands,
Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage

Qadira



Loyal Servant,

The trade that goes on in Riddleport Harbor is an astounding affair, and I have heard merchants from all over the world may find goods that would normally be impossible to acquire in the stores of the ships that go in and out of port. One item in particular interests me: a rare type of salt said to keep food stores fresh for years. Such a preservative would be invaluable to our trade efforts, enabling us to ship valuable delicacies to distant markets. Find this valuable salt, and you will be greatly favored by Qadira. And if you find it, do be sure to take care when handling it; it is said to be deathly cold to the touch.

Safe journeys,

Trade Prince Aaqir al'Hakam

SCZARNI



Comrade,

I hear that you're going to Riddleport soon. As it turns out, I have some old acquaintances in that fine town, and the last time I was there I lost a set of brass knuckles in a game of Towers to some oafish lout I met at a tavern. You'll recognize them because they have the initials of Boss Croat—one of the local crime lords of that city—engraved on them. He gave them to me as a gift, and the thought of some thug running around with them on his grubby fingers just makes me sick. Do what you must to retrieve them for me.

Talk to you soon,

Guaril Karela

SHADOW LODGE



Fellow Vengeance-Seeker,

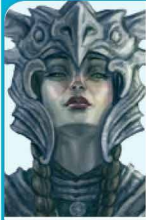
In Riddleport, there is a dwarf by the name of Smulwarts Gultrock. She was once a Pathfinder like you and I, but when her leg was taken by a sea serpent during one of her missions, she never fully recovered from it, in no small part because the Decemvirate never fully compensated her for her loss, giving her a second-rate peg leg in place of her limb. I've enclosed a little something that may brighten her spirits if you run into her—I believe she now works as an angler, occasionally ferrying people about if they're willing to pay her. Give her a tip as well and I'm sure she'll be more than helpful in your escapades.

Justice be served,

Grandmaster Torch

THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

Silver Crusade



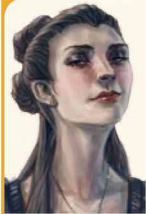
Stalwart Warrior,

The crime lords of Riddleport Harbor have many pawns under their thumbs, usually mercenary thugs with little concept of virtue or honor. As of late, some of the crime lords have sought to increase their territorial holdings by intimidating citizens living in districts they have their eyes on. They rough up innocents and demanding exorbitant prices for the gang's "protection." Such exploitation must be stopped if law is to ever function in Riddleport. One of the worst of these is Boss Croat, who often uses half-orcs to do his dirty work. If you encounter any such thugs in your endeavors in Riddleport, make sure to take them off the streets and you will have done a good thing.

Always look toward the light,

Ollysta Zadrian

TALDOR



Executor of Glory,

As a well-traveled adventurer, you've no doubt had the chance to see numerous other ships on their voyages throughout the Inner Sea, as well as our empire's own Imperial Navy. That being said, you've probably also noticed the rather unfortunate state our pennants have been in lately. While you're in Riddleport, I want you to find me a suitable set of flags that I might be able to use as a model for our own ships in the upcoming assembly tasked with redesigning the emblems of our fleet.

For the Empire,

Lady Gloriana Morilla



PATHFINDER SOCIETY EXCLUSIVE SCENARIO: THE CYPHERMAGE DILEMMA

Scenario Chronicle #

☐ Slow ☐ Normal

SUBTIER			
1-2	266	532	
SUBTIER			
4-5	970	1,940	

MAX GOLD

This Chronicle Certifies That

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

EXPERIENCE

Starting XP

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

XP Gained (GM ONLY)

Final XP Total

FAME

Initial Fame	Initial Prestige
--------------	------------------

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)

Prestige Spent

--	--

Final Fame Current Prestige

GOLD

Start GP

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

GP Gained (GM ONLY)

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

Day Job (GM ONLY)

+	
---	--

Items Sold

=	
---	--

Subtotal

-	
---	--

Items Bought

=	
---	--

Total

Items Found During This Scenario

SUBTIER
ALL

- ☐ **Debt of Cyphers:** You rescued ex-Pathfinder and Cyphergate scholar Hirako Gurukaza from the hands of pirate kidnappers. In thanks, he has spread your name among the Order of the Cyphers. When in Riddleport, you gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (arcana) and Linguistics checks when you consult Gurukaza before making the check. In addition, the Order's connection to some of Riddleport's more powerful criminal elements also provides you a future benefit in the form of a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made in the city to gather information.

- ☐ **Riddleport Respect:** Word of your defeat of pirate captain Alejia Netrav has spread throughout Riddleport, and you've earned the respect of the criminals and thugs that call the city home. When you flex your muscle, folks in the City of Cyphers pay attention. You receive a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks made in Riddleport as a result.

SUBTIER
1-2

Potion of cure moderate wounds (300 gp)

SUBTIER
4-5

+2 studded leather (4,175 gp)
Potion of cure serious wounds (750 gp)
Potion of invisibility (300 gp)

Items Sold / Conditions Gained

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

Items Bought / Conditions Cleared

TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT

For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #