

# The Wardstone Patrol

**BY ALEX GREENSHIELDS** 



#### Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-02

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-02: The Wardstone Patrol is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 3rd- to 7th-level characters (Tier 3-7; Subtiers 3-4 and 6-7). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world.

The Wardstone Patrol makes use of the following Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products: the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook, the Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player Guide, the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary, the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3, the Pathfinder RPG Game Mastery Guide, the Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex, Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat, and Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment. These rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/prd.

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By ALEX GREENSHIELDS



or decades, the crusader nation of Mendev has stood as a bulwark against the ever-expanding demonic blight known as the Worldwound. Since the Abyssal portal first opened in the barbarian realm of Sarkoris over a hundred years ago, four separate crusades have been called. Warriors both devout and opportunistic have responded ever since by making the long trek to Avistan's far north.

The *wardstones*, built as the ultimate defensive line during the Second Crusade, are magical menhirs of tremendous power linked together to form an invisible wall that destroys any lesser demons that dare approach it. The recent failure of the *wardstones* was part of a series of attacks on Mendev's magical defenses that have characterized the battles of the current war known as the Fifth Crusade. The loss of this crucial defensive line has brought an understandable urgency to the war, and it's in this chaotic and quickly evolving environment that Pathfinders find themselves called to Nerosyan to stand against the demonic hordes.

A portion of this responsibility involves patrolling the border in small groups, such as the one led by Sir Ilivan, a half-elven crusader who hails from the half-elven town of Erages in the elven nation of Kyonin. Because of that nation's inherent discrimination toward its half-elven population, Ilivan grew up resenting his race's secondclass treatment-a sentiment shared by many of Erages' other citizens. As a youngster he rebelled and became involved in the town's smuggling trade, but was caught by the authorities and was to be made an example of by the elven magistrate. Instead of facing incarceration, Ilivan volunteered for the military, joining the fight against Kyonin's own demonic incursion: the centuries-old war against the demon lord Treerazer. Ilivan faced continued discrimination in the military, and was assigned to an all half-elven battalion where he would not rise out of the ranks of the enlisted. After an ill-timed remark led to an altercation with an elven officer, the young half-elf was court-martialed and relieved of his duty. It was then that he took on his self-imposed exile from Kyonin.

#### WHERE ON GOLARION?

The Wardstone Patrol takes place along the banks of the West Sellen River, which marks the border between the crusader nation of Mendev and the demonic Worldwound. The PCs travel on the river road between the capital of Nerosyan and Fort Portolmaeus, a defensive bastion 28 miles upriver. For more information about Mendev, the crusades, and the Worldwound, see Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide, Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Worldwound, and Pathfinder Player Companion: Knights of the Inner Sea. All of these are available at your local bookstore or hobby store, or online at **paizo.com**.



Ilivan drifted for a number of years, working as a smuggler on Lake Encarthan, but he grew tired of a life that lacked purpose and direction. When he met an eclectic group of warriors headed up the West Sellen River to the Third Mendevian Crusade, he seized the opportunity for a better life. That was 18 years ago. Ilivan found the acceptance and purpose he had sought all his life among the diverse soldiers of Mendev. His fellow crusaders cared nothing for his past deeds, valuing only his martial dedication, and the Iomedaean faith taught him that as long as he led a righteous life, his past crimes would be forgiven.

#### GMRESOURCES

This adventure makes use of the following Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products: the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook, the Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player Guide (APG), the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary (B1), the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 (B3), the Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide (GMG), the Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex (NPC), Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat (UC), and Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment (UE). These rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at **paizo.com/prd**.

Ilivan has achieved some fame among the crusaders of Mendev since then. Due to his bravery in battle, he rose in ranks to become an officer and was even knighted by Queen Galfrey in 4705 AR, but the never-ending fighting eventually began to take its toll. After 17 years of nearconstant combat, Sir Ilivan has lost more comrades that he can count and has endured scenes of carnage and depravity that would shake the strongest will. Having witnessed so much tragedy, he has withdrawn emotionally and is on the verge of losing the capability to feel empathy towards others. His superiors have noticed this condition, and though clerics had been able to help Ilivan for moments at a time, this emotional wounding runs too deep to be cured by their magic.

#### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Jorsal of Lauterbury, the venture-captain of the Mendevian capital of Nerosyan, tells the PCs that they are to assist the crusaders of Mendev on a scouting patrol of the Worldwound's border. Fort Portolmaeus, one of the border castles protecting the weakening *wardstones*, has come under increasing demonic attack in the past few days, and Queen Galfrey wishes to know if the road between it and the capital is still secure. The PCs are assigned to a decorated veteran named Sir Ilivan, a bitter and emotionally distant half-elf who has been fighting the demonic incursions for decades.

After resupplying, Ilivan leads the PCs along the West Sellen River to an abandoned Mendevian village. In the flooded fields on the outskirts of this settlement, the party encounters a small band of vermlek demons and captured Mendevian commoners. The PCs must quickly ascertain who are the demons disguised as humans and who are the still-living peasants.

The PCs complete their journey to Fort Portolmaeus after the battle, only to find that a larger demonic force has just attacked it, carrying off a number of soldiers as prisoners. Unable to spare any more troops, the garrison's commander pleads with the PCs to immediately follow their trail and save the captured crusaders from a terrible fate. Sir Ilivan accepts the mission, but once out of sight of Fort Portolmaeus, turns from the trail of the captured soldiers and heads south towards Nerosyan, ordering the PCs to follow. He's convinced that the soldiers are already lost, and that tracking them down is a suicide mission. The PCs must decide whether to follow Ilivan's command, or to try to save the soldiers.

No matter which path they choose, they next encounter an area suffused with primeval chaos that actively works to mislead them, leading them to an evil spirit that attempts to possess them (and then an optional encounter with a vescavor swarm). After handling these obstacles, Ilivan makes a plea to the PCs to turn back and abandon the mission.

If they chose the rescue mission, Ilivan is shamed by their courage and accompanies them. Over the next hill, the PCs sight the missing soldiers guarded by a small group of dretches and a brimorak demon, with a larger force fast approaching from the north. Ilivan volunteers to hold off the reinforcements by himself while the PCs rescue the soldiers.

If the PCs instead follow Ilivan back, he is wracked with guilt and remorse for having abandoned his fellow crusaders, but blames the PCs for not being powerful enough to save them. Rather than confront his own cowardice, the half-elf attacks the PCs.

#### GETTING STARTED

Read or paraphrase the following when you are ready to begin the adventure.

Mendev's Pathfinder lodge in the capital city of Nerosyan is housed within Starrise Spire, a defensive tower in the outer wall whose pinnacle glows with celestial light that shines out like a beacon, simultaneously giving comfort to Nerosyan's defenders and acting as a warning to any who might wish the city harm.

Venture-Captain Jorsal of Lauterbury calls a short meeting on a covered balcony overlooking the city. A middle-aged Mwangi man with greying hair, he closes the door to the spire's interior and takes a seat in one of the set-up camp chairs, gesturing for his guests to do the same.

"We Pathfinders of Mendev," he states, making a sweeping hand gesture that encompasses everyone present, "have our own agendas, but these must sometimes give way to the greater need: the protection of this land and its people from the horrors that dwell in the Worldwound.

"We are here by the grace of her majesty, Queen Galfrey of Mendev. Without her support, we would surely be run out of town by Hulrun's more fervent followers. Our agreement with her states that all Pathfinders are required to volunteer some of their time in the defense of the realm. As relative newcomers, I've recommended you to take part in a minor military mission

under the command of a veteran crusader named Sir Ilivan of Erages. Although he is not a Pathfinder, you would be wise to follow his advice, as he has been fighting the Abyssal spawn longer than some of you have been alive. I expect you will give him the respect he deserves."

Venture-Captain Jorsal stands and opens the heavy wooden door leading back into the lodge, revealing a tall half-elven man clad in heavy plate armor, wearing a red tabard typical of the Mendevian Crusaders, and carrying a cavalry helmet in his left hand. He gives a professional nod to Jorsal before striding to the front of the group, surveying everyone with poorly disguised disappointment.

"Pathfinders," he barks in quick staccato without further preamble, "our mission is simple. The recent attacks on the wardstones have compromised our defenses, and the

enemy presses its advantage. We have received word of attacks on Fort Portolmaeus to the north, but the crusader leadership suspects that other parts of the line may have been breached as well. We will proceed to Fort Portolmaeus tomorrow morning on horseback to assess the damage, using the passphrase 'That the Black Prince might be redeemed' to permit us entry. On the way there, we will scout for enemy movements and other signs of demon activity. Once we have completed our assessment, we are to return to Nerosyan and you will be relieved of your obligations to the Crown. Do you have any questions?"

The PCs have an opportunity to ask Sir Ilivan and Venture-Captain Jorsal questions about the mission, and below are questions and answers.

Are we required to follow Sir Ilivan's commands? Jorsal answers this question. "Our contract with Queen Galfrey requires you serve faithfully. While this does not explicitly state that you must follow orders to the letter, ensure that you don't recklessly threaten the mission or the lives of other crusaders with your actions. If you have an objection, voice it; crusaders arrive from all backgrounds, but they are united by a common cause and a faith in good."

What types of opponents are we likely to encounter? Sir Ilivan answers this question. "Since the last major attack, the demonic armies have retreated into the Worldwound's interior. We will most likely face minor demons sent to test the current efficacy of the *wardstones*. Expect dretches, brimoraks, and possibly schirs."

Allow the PCs time to buy equipment they might need for the journey. Sir Ilivan recommends everyone buy a cold iron weapon and cold weather outfit, as it drops below freezing at night in this part of Avistan. The Mendevian Crown grants each PC the use of a light, noncombat trained horse or pony, a saddle, bit and bridle, and saddlebags filled with two days of feed. Combat trained light and heavy horses and ponies are available for purchase.

#### Knowledge (History, Local, or Religion)

 $PCs\ may\ have\ prior\ knowledge\ of\ the\ Mendevian\ Crusades.$ 

10+ The Mendevian Crusades began almost a century ago when a rift to the Abyss opened in the barbarian kingdom of Sarkoris. The church of the goddess Iomedae called the First Crusade, and it was largely a success.

15+ The *wardstones* are magical menhirs of tremendous power first built during the Second Crusade. They

project a powerful field capable of destroying all but the most powerful demons. Built near the banks of the West Sellen and Moutray Rivers, they stopped the expansion of the Worldwound until very recently.

**20+** The *wardstones* recently failed, coinciding with a large attack on Nerosyan. No doubt the demons are at least indirectly responsible.

**25+** Even though the demons of the Worldwound have no central leadership,

their most powerful current warlords are the balor Khorramzadeh of Iz, also known as the Storm King, and the marilith Aponavicius, who controls the former crusader city of Drezen far to the north.

#### Diplomacy (Gather Information) or Knowledge (Local)

Even though Sir Ilivan is not a high-ranking officer, the PCs may have heard of him.

**10+** The half-elven soldier was a smuggler on Lake Encarthan before joining the Mendevian Crusades, a fact he is not ashamed to admit.

15+ Sir Ilivan rose from the ranks of the enlisted to become an officer and was knighted by Queen Galfrey.

**20+** The knight hails from the half-elven settlement of Erages in Kyonin, where he had to endure prejudice and segregation throughout his youth. He later joined Kyonin's military, but ultimately left his homeland after being discharged from this military for striking an elven officer.

**25+** Sir Ilivan has become increasingly distant in the past few years due to the horrors endured by all soldiers who fight in the Mendevian Crusades. His most

**VENTURE~CAPTAIN** 

JORSAL OF LAUTERBURY

#### TAKING ORDERS

In other scenarios, PCs are largely free to operate without direct supervision. In this adventure they are expected to follow the orders of a NPC who is a military officer, who stays with them throughout the adventure. Ilivan expects his commands to be obeyed, though he understands that the PCs are not soldiers and gives them some leeway. If the players don't seem comfortable taking orders from an NPC or feel that he is taking the lead in too many situations, the GM may want to reduce his command role and turn him into more of an advisor.

devastating experience involved killing a number of fellow soldiers while he was demonically possessed.

**Faction Notes:** The following factions have particular goals in this scenario.

Cheliax Faction: Zarta Dralneen sees the start of the Fifth Crusade as an excellent opportunity, for as the nations of Avistan send their good-hearted busybodies north, she's free to pursue darker plots to further her and her followers' agenda. She has no love of demons and has no wish to sabotage the crusade's long-term goal; however, being able to perpetuate this conflict by keeping the two sides evenly matched will give her more time to rebuild her power base by whatever means necessary.

As a result, Cheliax faction PCs should keep an eye out for the strengths and weaknesses of Mendev's defenses, and Sir Ilivan is an excellent source of praise for how the crusader nation combats demons and cynical speculation about what might eventually be its downfall. Unfortunately, the half-elf is reluctant to discuss his painful war record. Improving his attitude to friendly through Diplomacy gets the crusader talking openly, but the only way a PC can lead him to discuss specific military details is by succeeding at a Bluff check opposed by Sir Ilivan's Sense Motive check. A PC may retry this check, but at a –10 penalty due to the half-elf's growing suspicion.

Ideally, spread this information out over several scenes with Sir Ilivan, first disclosing the strengths and weaknesses of the demons—commonly known qualities such as overwhelming numbers, resistance to most forms of harm, and powerful extraplanar generals, but also less well-known facts such as the remarkably well-orchestrated attacks. Withholding the crusaders' strengths should keep the PCs interested in continuing the conversation with Sir Ilivan over the course of the adventure.

Learning about the strengths and weaknesses of both sides contributes to Cheliax faction PCs' success in this mission, but they must procure at least one other key piece of data later in the scenario (see area **B**).

Sczarni Faction: Guaril Karela has begun expanding his business interests beyond Varisia and Absalom, but he is unaware that his aggressive strategies have not only earned him a wealth of enemies; many of his enemies have united secretly to orchestrate Guaril's downfall. Sczarni faction PCs should try to secure one or more underworld contacts in Mendev, and Sir Ilivan maintains ties with several. As a devout follower of Iomedae, he believes in the healing power of redemption and that his past sins have been forgiven.

> Improving his attitude to friendly and asking questions about his life as a smuggler reveals that he still has numerous contacts among criminal Mendev's underground. Even though he knows it does not make him popular with his commanders, Sir Ilivan has gathered valuable information and procured helpful items for the war effort from his former associates.

A PC may encourage the crusader to reveal the name of his preferred contact

with a successful Diplomacy check, as though convincing him to reveal an unimportant secret. Naming the contact also reminds Sir Ilivan that he recently heard a man bragging that he was going to kill an important Karela. Though the crusader doesn't know who the man was or where he might be found, Sir Ilivan is of the sincere impression that this wasn't simply the drunken claim of a rabble-rouser; this man seemed competent and held the support of other unspoken allies.

#### **Playing Sir Ilivan**

Sir Ilivan is a central NPC in the scenario. Not only does he accompany the PCs throughout the adventure, but he is also a window into the side effects of decades of warfare against an inhumanly cruel enemy. Because of his role in this story, it's useful for GMs to understand his motivations and fears in order to portray him as a fully

SIR ILIVAN OF ERAGES

three-dimensional character. Some of this has already been addressed in the introduction, but is expanded upon here and throughout the adventure.

Sir Ilivan's everyday persona is that of a no-nonsense, veteran combat officer. He expects his subordinates to follow orders, but because of his own upbringing, he has a soft spot for misfits, ne'er-do-wells, and those who have overcome great personal odds. He has no patience for those who have had success handed to them. He doesn't reach decisions hastily, but if the situation calls for it, he can take quick can decisive action; that is, unless he in experiencing an emotional breakdown.

Sir Ilivan has experienced some truly horrific scenes in the past decade and a half, causing him to exhibit two conditions that trigger throughout this scenario: lack of empathy and fear of losing control. Lack of empathy triggers during the encounters in the Ruins of Bedis and Fort Portolmaeus (areas A1 and B1), and fear of losing control occurs in The Devil Within (area C1). No matter his attitude toward the PCs, during these scenes Sir Ilivan reverts to a starting attitude of indifferent.

Over the course of the adventure, the PCs have an opportunity to earn Empathy Points, which represent their befriending Sir Ilivan and helping him to shake his condition when he is at his worst. If the PCs act with compassion through roleplaying and succeed at a Diplomacy check to sooth, reason with, or convince Ilivan to do the morally right thing, the PCs earn 1 Empathy Point for the encounter; the DC for this check is 15 in Subtier 3–4 and 20 in Subtier 6–7. If the PCs instead insult, denigrate, or belittle Sir Ilivan—including using Intimidate on him—they might win his brief compliance but otherwise earn no Empathy Point for the encounter; the knight's psyche may be fragile at times, but he's mercilessly steeled against browbeating.

By the time the PCs reach the final encounter at area **D**, they will have had the opportunity to earn as many as 3 Empathy points, which determine how Sir Ilivan behaves at that encounter.

#### A. SCOUTING THE ROAD

The patrol takes the PCs along the River Road, a normally well-used thoroughfare that follows the eastern bank of the West Sellen River. It remains within sight of the river throughout most of the journey to Fort Portolmaeus, traveling inland for a few miles past the abandoned village of Bedis. Because of the recent increase in demon sightings, the PCs and Sir Ilivan are the only travelers along this route today.

#### A1. The Ruins of Bedis (CR 6 or CR 9)

Bedis was a small Mendevian fishing and farming village along the eastern bank of the West Sellen River, until the increase in demon attacks forced its inhabitants to relocate 40 years ago. The village has since been used as a rest stop where riders let their horses nibble on the apples and pears still found in its long-abandoned fruit orchards.

Sir Ilivan turns off of the River Road onto a small, overgrown path that cuts through drooping evergreens. He informs the PCs know that there is a long-abandoned village ahead, and that the enemy has used it as a staging ground in the past. He dismounts and ties his mare to a tree, motioning for the PCs to do the same. If a PC objects, Sir Ilivan shakes his head in exasperation, stating that the path to the village is too overgrown, and if combat erupts, the horse's tack will only get caught in the foliage.

He leads the PCs as quietly as he can up a nearby hill dotted with gnarled apple trees. Just before reaching the top of the hill, he motions for the PCs to drop prone and crawl the rest of the way. Once they reach the crest of the hill, read or paraphrase the following.

An abandoned village lies at the foot of the hill on the banks of the West Sellen River, its decaying structures slowly melting back into the landscape. Between the hill and the village proper lie flooded fields sectioned off by raised, earthen walkways that converge on a larger, dry area.

These fields were once watered via a system of sluices from a nearby brook, but over time the dykes and sluices failed, and the farmland long ago flooded completely. The water varies in depth, from only 2 feet in shallower spots to 10 feet at the deepest. The shallower areas are considered difficult terrain for Small and Medium creatures; the deeper parts require successful Swim checks to cross them.

Creatures: A group of six Mendevian commoners (seven in Subtier 6-7) have assembled on the larger, open dry patch in the middle of the fields. Two lie on the ground in obvious pain, while the rest stand in a circle, holding threshes, spades, pitchforks, and other farming implements. A small heap of bodies-dead by all appearances-lies near them. These commoners aren't all as they seem. Two of the standing villagers (three in Subtier 6-7) are worm-like vermlek demons inhabiting the bodies of the peasants they kidnapped from a nearby village a few days before. Unless the PCs can see through their Disguise checks (Perception DC 28 for Subtier 3-4, DC 33 in Subtier 6-7), they appear to be normal human farmers. An additional vermlek is in the pile of dead bodies at the beginning of this encounter, and is mere seconds away from concluding the use of its inhabit body ability on one of the deceased humans. It stands up, seemingly rising from the dead, and joins the others a moment after the PCs begin spying on them from the hilltop. A PC may identify the recently animate

### The Ruins of Bedis 1 square = 5 feet



 $\mathcal{N}$ 

**C** : Mendevian Commoner

V : Vermlek

 $V_1$  : Additional Vermlek

corpse as the handiwork of a vermlek with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (planes) check. The vermleks are distracted by the torture and don't pay close attention to their surroundings, giving them a -10 penalty (before applying any penalties for distance) to their Perception checks to notice the PCs.

The four other commoners are humans whom the vermleks brought here to be tortured and killed. The demons were able to convince the two standing humans to turn on their companions in exchange for their lives-a deal the demons are unlikely to honor. Unless the PCs intervene, the two coerced commoners begin to strike at their prone companions with their weapons causing only nonlethal damage; the demons wish to prolong this experience as long as possible.

Sir Ilivan adamantly refuses to intervene on the peasants' behalf. He assumes that the torturers are evil cultists, but doesn't see attacking them as part of his mission. He simply orders everyone to crawl back from the edge of the hilltop and return to the horses. Informing Sir Ilivan of the vermleks' involvement and abilities only confirms the half-elf's suspicions and reinforces his decision.

This is the PCs' first opportunity to witness Sir Ilivan's first emotional condition: lack of empathy. He treats the commoners as either willing collaborators or victims beyond his help-in his mind, neither category warrants his intervention. If the PCs ignore Sir Ilivan and attack, or attempt to use the Intimidate skill to get him to change his mind, he curses their foolishness and goes back to the horses, and the party doesn't gain an Empathy Point for this encounter. Should they succeed at intimidating him, he's taken aback, cursing them before going back to the horses but in a somewhat more cowed manner.

If the PCs try to reason with him and succeed at a Diplomacy check, he gains momentarily awareness of his callousness toward the helpless commoners. Even though he still doesn't take part in the combat, his growing awareness of his stunted emotions grants the party 1 Empathy Point for the encounter. If they fail at the Diplomacy check, he scoffs at them.

#### **Subtier 3–4 (CR 6)**

#### VERMLEKS (3)

CR 3

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos 54 CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar) Init -1; Senses blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, -1 Dex, +3 natural) hp 30 each (4d10+8) Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +5

#### SCALING ENCOUNTER A1

Make the following changes to the encounter to accommodate parties of four PCs.

Subtier 3-4: Remove one of the standing vermleks.

Subtier 6-7: Remove one of the standing vermlek hags.

Defensive Abilities abandon flesh, flesh armor, negative energy affinity; **DR** 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; SR 14 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft. Melee scythe +6 (2d4+3/×4) and bite +1 (1d6+1) or flail +6 (1d8+3) and bite +1 (1d6+1) Special Attacks inhabit body

Spell-like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +4) 3/day—mass inflict light wounds (DC 16), spider climb

1/day—gentle repose, summon (level 2, 1d4 dretches, 50%)

#### TACTICS

During Combat The vermleks telepathically command the two armed humans to attack the PCs. The demons then approach, wielding the barely-conscious peasants' bodies as shields to gain partial cover. The vermleks use mass inflict light wounds to harm the PCs and heal each other.

Morale The vermleks use the abandon flesh ability to revert to their natural form if brought to 10 hp or below. If later reduced to 8 or fewer hp, a vermlek burrows to safety.

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12 Base Atk +4; CMB +6 (+10 grapple); CMD 15 Feats Deceitful, Great Fortitude

Skills Bluff +10, Disguise +10 (+18 when inhabiting a corpse), Escape Artist +6 (+14 when not inhabiting a corpse), Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Use Magic Device +8; Racial Modifiers +8 Disguise when inhabiting a corpse, +8 Escape Artist when not inhabiting a corpse

Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

#### **SPECIAL ABILITIES**

- Abandon Flesh (Su) As a swift action, a vermlek can abandon an inhabited body, crawling hideously out of its host and leaving behind an empty sack of skin and bits of gristle. In so doing, it absorbs much of the body's flesh to heal itself, restoring 2d6+3 hit points. A vermlek cannot reclaim this body with its inhabit body ability.
- Flesh Armor (Su) When a vermlek wears a humanoid body (see inhabit body, below), it treats the dead flesh and muscle as armor, gaining a +3 armor bonus to its AC.
- Inhabit Body (Su) A vermlek can crawl into the body of any dead Medium humanoid, consuming and replacing the bulk of the humanoid's skeleton and internal organs as it does so. This process takes 1d4 rounds for the vermlek to complete, during which it's considered flat-footed. Once the process is complete,

the vermlek appears for all practical purposes to be a living but hideously obese version of the previous humanoid—it gains a +8 racial bonus on Disguise checks to appear as a normal humanoid while wearing a dead body in this manner, but does not gain any of the abilities that the dead creature possessed in life, including natural attacks, unusual movement types, or bonuses to natural armor. It loses its own burrow speed while inhabiting a body, but gains the ability to wield weapons or wear armor shaped for humanoids (although note that the armor bonus granted by wearing armor does not stack with the bonus granted by the vermlek's flesh armor ability).

**Negative Energy Affinity (Ex)** A vermlek is healed by negative energy and harmed by positive energy as if it were an undead creature.

#### ABDUCTED COMMONERS (4)

Pig farmer (Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex 256)

#### **hp** 9

TACTICS

- **During Combat** The two conscious commoners attack the PCs as commanded, terrified of angering their captors.
- **Morale** The standing commoners fight to the death, unless the vermleks are defeated. In that case, they stand down and offer forgiveness for attacking in the first place and thanks for their rescue.

#### STATISTICS

Gear scythe or flail

#### Subtier 6-7 (CR 9)

#### VERMLEK HAGS (4)

CR 5

CR 1/2

Vermlek witch<sup>APG</sup> 4 CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +0; Senses blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +13

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +3 natural)

**hp** 72 each (4d10+4d6+36)

Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +8

DR 5/cold iron or good; Immune electricity, poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; SR 14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

**Melee** scythe +9/+4 (2d4+4/×4) and bite +4 (1d6+1) or flail +9/+4 (1d8+4) and bite +4 (1d6+1)

**Special Attacks** hexes (cackle, charm [1 step, 3 rounds], evil eye [-2, 6 rounds])

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

3/day—mass inflict light wounds (DC 15), spider climb 1/day—gentle repose, summon (level 2, 1d4 dretches, 50%)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—flaming sphere (DC 15), hold person (DC 15), vomit

swarm

- 1st—ill omen, inflict light wounds (DC 14), obscuring mist, shocking grasp
- 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 13), detect magic, putrefy food and drink, touch of fatigue (DC 13) Patron Elements

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vermleks telepathically command the two armed humans to attack the PCs. The disguised vermleks then use their spells and spell-like abilities to cripple and harry the PCs. A vermlek uses evil eye on any PC who approaches within 30 feet.

**Morale** The vermleks use the abandon flesh ability to revert to their natural form if brought to 10 or fewer hp. If later reduced to 8 or fewer hp, a vermlek burrows to safety.

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 14 Base Atk +6; CMB +9; CMD 20

- Feats Alertness<sup>®</sup>, Arcane Strike, Deceitful, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude
- Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +15 (+23 when inhabiting a corpse), Escape Artist +11 (+19 when inhabiting a corpse), Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +13, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +3, Use Magic Device +10;
  Racial Modifiers +8 Disguise when inhabiting a corpse, +8 Escape Artist when inhabiting a corpse
- Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.
- SQ abandon flesh, flesh armor, inhabit body, negative energy affinity, witch's familiar (house centipedes named Hyzel, Murt, Toriq, and Wenk),

Gear scythe or flail, ring of protection +1

#### ABDUCTED COMMONERS (4)

hp 8 each (see Subtier 3-4)

**Development:** Following combat, any surviving Mendevian commoners fall to their knees, thanking Iomedae and the PCs for their rescue. Although they are happy to answer any questions they can, they want nothing more than to return home to their families, setting off at the earliest opportunity.

CR 1/3

**Faction Notes:** Silver Crusade PCs should be encouraged to realize that rescuing humans from a horrible death is the right and noble thing to do, and that demons deserve nothing but destruction. Saving at least one of the commoners in this encounter serves as the first requirements for obtaining the Hero of the Inheritor boon found on the Chronicle sheet.

**Rewards**: If the PCs fail to defeat or bypass the Vermleks, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce the gold earned by 407 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce the gold earned by 702 gp. Subtier 6–7: Reduce the gold earned by 997 gp.

#### **B. FORT PORTOLMAEUS**

The PCs and Sir Ilivan continue to Fort Portolmaeus without any further incidents, following the River Road that climbs inland into low hills. When they're few miles from the fort, have the PCs attempt a DC 20 Perception check; if successful, they spot a dark plume of smoke in the distance. Sir Ilivan can confirm that it's coming from the direction of Fort Portolmaeus.

As the River Road winds back down through the hills, Fort Portolmaeus comes into view.

Fort Portolmaeus sits on a tall rock outcropping in the West Sellen River, surrounded by rushing waters on three sides. A

stout, stone bridge connects the fort to the river's eastern bank, with a closed wooden drawbridge protecting the final approach. The keep itself is built of dark stone with tall curtain walls surrounding a squat central keep that peeks out above the outer fortifications.

Portolmaeus has been the scene of a recent battle. Soldiers dressed in the colors of Mendev move around it making repairs, while others use carts to remove the bodies of humans and demons slain in the recent attack.

As the PCs approach, a patrol of four horsemen from Fort Portolmaeus quickly approaches, arrows knocked in their bows. They stop 60 feet away and call out: "Halt in the name of the Queen!"

Sir Ilivan tells the PCs to keep their hands away from their weapons before raising both hands and calls out, "That the

Black Prince might be redeemed"—a reference to the eighth act of Iomedae. Upon hearing this passphrase, the soldiers lower their weapons and grimly beckon the party forward. **Sir Morgan** (LG male human fighter 3), the head of the patrol, introduces himself and asks the group's business at Portolmaeus. If asked about the dead, Sir Morgan states that the demons attacked the night before, though he doesn't go into further detail, insisting that the PCs first talk with Fort Portolmaeus' commander.

At the closed drawbridge, Sir Morgan calls up to its defenders, and a moment later a soldier peers over a battlement and quietly stares at the party. This is a paladin who uses his detect evil ability to scan the party. Any PC—including one who bears evil magic items or familiar who detects as evil is refused entrance into Fort Portolmaeus. This is a firm policy, and an otherwise unwelcome visitor may only negotiate his entrance with a successful DC 35 Bluff or Diplomacy check. Those denied entrance are asked to stand at least 50 feet from the gate and await the others' return.

The garrison then lowers the drawbridge and raises a heavy portcullis studded with cold iron spikes, after which a handful of soldiers lead the group through a narrow zigzag tunnel to the central courtyard. The fort's central building sits squat in its center, an impressive, monolithic edifice with few openings. A number of young stable boys come out from a side building to care for the PCs' mounts, quartering them in the stables until the party returns.

With the mounts taken care of, the PCs are led into the central building to meet Commander Manaria Wardroxan (NG female human expert 2/cavalier 3), a charismatic young nobleman with pale skin and black hair who is dressed in a mud-spattered uniform that hasn't been changed since the last battle. Newly arrived in Mendev from Taldor, she has more idealism than common sense. Standing at the bottom of a tall, amphitheater-like chamber carved into the bedrock the fort is built upon, she worriedly regards the fort's wardstone, a massive menhir 30 feet high that pulses slowly with dull purple light and emits a low buzzing sound, but her concerns are overshadowed by the last night's demonic attack.

> Commander Wardroxan relates the previous night's events with obvious regret. "The demons attacked in the

dead of night, a mixed group of dretches and schirs led by a terrifying brimorak, a creature of horn, claw, and fire. The wardstone had been buzzing like it is now, and it didn't seem to stop them. They captured a scout patrol alive and staked them out on the ground in front of the fort. There they tortured them close enough for us to hear. I am ashamed to say that we deliberated on whether we had the strength to retaliate, but as the screaming and begging continued, I sent our cavalry to put at end to the suffering."

She sighs heavily before continuing, "Of course it was a trap. A group of schirs wielding halberds met our cavalry and wasted no time in dragging them from their horses. The dretches then overwhelmed them with sheer numbers, clubbing them into submission. They slaughtered the horses and dragged off the soldiers while we looked on helplessly from behind the fort's wall. I sent out another party after that, but most of the demons had already withdrawn with our captured men."

COMMANDER

MANARIA WARDROXAN

Commander Wardroxan implores the PCs to rescue the captured soldiers from the Worldwound. The majority of her garrison had already been transferred to Nerosyan and other more strategically valuable locations before last night's attack, and that she simply doesn't have the reserves to send out on a rescue mission.

Manaria answers the PCs questions to the best of her ability.

How many soldiers were taken by the demons? "I sent out a dozen men on horseback to rescue the captured scouts. Three of them died in the initial assault, and I think the rest were captured alive. I don't know how many are still alive, but demons have been known to capture crusaders to be used as food, slaves, and 'examples.'"

How many demons captured the cavalrymen? "At least three score demons attacked last night, and we counted fourteen dead dretches and schirs among their fallen this morning. Our lookout reported seeing the chained cavalrymen heading westward into the Worldwound a mile north of here, surrounded by a small group of guards—no more than a half dozen strong."

Is there anything you can do to help us? Commander Wardroxan is happy to open Fort Portolmaeus' armory to the PCs if they volunteer for the rescue mission. Among the available supplies are 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, 3 potions of shield of faith (CL 6th), 10 flasks of holy water, and any simple or martial weapon from the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook. In Subtier 6–7, she also supplies 2 potions of cure serious wounds, 2 potions of barkskin (CL 9th), and a wand of haste (6 charges).

**Development**: After the PCs have finished asking the commander any remaining questions, she leaves them in the *wardstone* chamber to ponder their decision. Sir Ilivan quickly chimes in that this clearly a fool's errand, an ill-conceived endeavor dreamt up by an inexperienced commander wracked with guilt. He volunteers that the cavalrymen are surely already beyond their help, and most likely have already been killed for food or sport.

This is the second time PCs have the chance to experience Sir Ilivan's lack of empathy, although in this instance it may seem more like common sense. It should be made clear that the half-elf seems to feel no compassion for the captured soldiers, treating the thought of them being tortured and killed with as much consideration as the death of an animal or insect.

The PCs can attempt to convince him to attempt the rescue, through appealing to his conscience and using Diplomacy, or by brow-beating, mocking, or guilttripping him and using Intimidate. If they attempt the Diplomacy check and it succeeds, the party gains 1 Empathy Point for the encounter; their arguments have convinced him that perhaps the soldiers' lives are worth the risk after all. If they fail the Diplomacy check, the party does not gain the Empathy Point, but the halfelf still follows them into the Worldwound, scoffing at them and their fools' errand. The PCs can instead attempt to use Intimidate, which will not gain the party the Empathy Point regardless of the result. Successfully intimidating Ilivan will cause him to be surprised and momentarily quiet, whereas failing the check will cause him to mock the PCs, openly saying that he'll join them if only to be amused their foolish endeavor. Even though he does not care about the soldiers and is quite nervous about crossing the West Sellen River, he is still a creature of duty and will not leave his unit.

The other option is that the PCs follow Sir Ilivan's advice and don't attempt the rescue. In that case they receive no argument from the half-elf, and also do not receive an Empathy Point for this encounter.

At this point the scenario moves in one of two directions: into the Worldwound or back to Nerosyan. If the party attempts the rescue, Sir Ilivan begrudgingly suggests that they leave immediately. If they choose the return trip, the party can rest for the night at Fort Portolmaeus.

Faction Notes: Cheliax faction PCs have two more opportunities to gather intelligence on the defenses of the Mendevian crusaders. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) or Spellcraft check while examining Fort Portolmaeus can detect several locations where the fort is well built to withstand an external assault but actually creates several blind spots more easily exploited by a flying or teleporting creature. While inside the wardstone chamber, a Cheliax faction PC can also study the wardstone itself to better understand how it functions and why its power might have dissipated. Doing so requires a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana, planes, or religion) check to study it or a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to get Commander Wardroxan to speak about her theories: that the wardstone was drained of power, but there is still some remanence of magical power that can somehow be tapped by some more powerful source, no that she has any idea how to personally do that. Learning one or both of these pieces of information contributes directly to the success of the Cheliax faction mission.

It should be clear to PCs of the Silver Crusade faction that the rescue of the cavalrymen is a selfless and good act that will advance their cause and, if it succeeds, will raise the faction's profile in Mendev. Demons are also creatures of pure evil and should be eliminated whenever possible. Choosing to rescue the soldiers contributes directly to the faction PCs' success.

**Rewards:** If the PCs do not to attempt the rescue, they don't gain access to the items in Fort Portolmaeus' armory.

Subtier 3-4: Cross the potion of cure moderate wounds and the potion of shield of faith +3 off the Chronicle sheet.

Subtier 6-7: Cross the potion of cure serious wounds, the potion of barkskin +4, and the wand of haste off the Chronicle sheet.

#### C. EDGE OF THE WORLDWOUND

After making their decision, the PCs can leave Fort Portolmaeus to either head west into the Worldwound or back south to Nerosyan. Whether they choose to rescue the soldiers or turn back, the PCs must overcome the same obstacles in encounters **C1** and **C2** with one minor adjustment: if the party is following the tracks of the captured soldiers, these encounters happen in the Worldwound itself; if they're going back to Nerosyan, the madness and evil of the Abyss bleeds out between the malfunctioning *wardstones*, temporarily warping the Mendevian countryside to look like the Worldwound. Both selections are briefly introduced below.

Following the soldiers: Sir Morgan gives the PCs a small map that marks a shallow ford across the West Sellen River where they can cross with their mounts. From there it's quite easy to pick up the kidnapped soldiers' trail with a successful DC 10 Survival check, leading directly west into the Worldwound. A successful DC 15 Survival check reveals that three demonic captors are driving eight humans, and a successful DC 18 Knowledge (planes) check confirms that two of the demons are dretches (schirs in Subtier 6-7), while one is a fiery brimorak that leaves charred hoof prints in the ground. The demons and humans are moving slowly, so the PCs are able to catch up to them within the hour.

Returning to Nerosyan: The journey south is uneventful at first. A half-hour out from Fort Portolmaeus, a fierce dust storm blows up from out of the Worldwound, quickly enveloping the party in howling winds. Sir Ilivan and any PC who succeeds at DC 12 Perception check notices a nearby cave only 40 feet away where everyone might seek shelter. Each round the wind force increases by one level, starting at light and increasing to windstorm (following the rules on page 439 of the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook). Once the windstorm has reached full strength, it continues for approximately 5 minutes before calming over the course of 3 minutes more. Anyone taking shelter from the wind in the cave is completely protected from the wind's effects, whereas those who remain outside take 1d3 nonlethal damage each round that the storm continues. A successful DC 18 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check is sufficient to identify that this isn't a natural weather phenomenon.

Upon emerging from the cave, the PCs find that the landscape has changed. Not only does an inch-thick layer of tan dust and ash cover the ground, but landmarks seem to have moved or disappeared entirely, making it more difficult to determine direction of travel. This is particularly unnerving to Sir Ilivan, who tells the PCs that the land more closely resembles the Worldwound now, and postulates that the taint of that place seems to have spread out past its traditional borders; a PC who makes a successful DC 22 Knowledge (geography or planes) check can confirm this supposition. He states that he can still find the way back to Nerosyan and asks the PCs to follow him. The Worldwound's influence here is strong enough to scramble all sense of direction, though, and the PCs move on to the next encounters no matter the direction they are heading.

#### C1. The Demon Within

The Worldwound is a very dangerous place, and not only because it's filled with powerful, ruthless beings out to destroy mortals, body and soul. Here the border between Golarion and the Abyss grows thin, allowing the chaos, evil, and madness of that realm to spill forth and corrupt everything in its path. This corruption destroyed many plants and mutated others, giving rise to flora such as rageweed, whose pollen triggers short-lived but devastating allergic reactions.

Hazard: As the PCs continue their journey, they pass through an area rich in the airborne rageweed pollen. When the pollen alights on a moist or fleshy surface, such as being inhaled or touching skin, the pollen quickly germinates, inducing fits of paranoia, hallucinations, and violent rage. On the first round after germinating, an affected creature must attempt a DC 18 Will save (DC 21 in Subtier 6-7) or begin to hear her companions whisper derogatory things under their breath. Trying to focus on what any one person is saying only causes another's whispers to grow louder. Unless specially protected against the pollen, Sir Ilivan automatically fails his save, stops his horse, and slides from his saddle. After being exposed to the pollen, a PC can identify the hazard and its effects with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check.

On the second round, those affected must attempt another Will save at the same DC or feel powerful anger welling up directed at other party members—in particular at those who have slighted or angered the PC in the past. Sir Ilivan fails this save as well, but due to his past experiences, he reacts with paralyzing fear instead of hatred, curling up in the fetal position on the ground.

On the third round, anyone affected must attempt one more Will save at the same DC, whereupon the GM selects one affected creature that failed this save to enter a murderous rage at the beginning of the fourth round. This rage is identical to the "attack nearest creature" effect of the *confusion* spell and lasts for 1d3 rounds. For the remainder of the third round, the affected creature gnashes his or her teeth and growls at others

#### ADJUDICATING RAGEWEED

This encounter is designed for atmosphere and flavor, not as a deadly combat encounter. GMs are therefore strongly discouraged from picking a PC from among those who fail their final Will save who could single-handedly slay or cripple the entire party. As a result, avoid selecting a combat specialist with high damage output or spellcaster with high damage-output spells. Only choose an animal companion, familiar, or pet if no PCs failed the final Will save.

#### **OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER**

The Hive is an optional encounter and can be omitted if there are fewer than 90 minutes remain in which to complete the adventure.

in a threatening manner, giving others the opportunity to intervene.

The effects of the rageweed pollen is an evil, mindaffecting, compulsion effect, and those under the effects of *calm emotions*, *protection from evil*, or effects that would completely prevent the pollen from contacting their bodies are immune to the effect.

**Development**: After the encounter concludes, Sir Ilivan continues to lie on the ground next to his horse unless the PCs were able to somehow shield him from the effects of the rageweed. This is the first time players have a chance to witness one of the half-elf's other emotional condition: fear of losing control.

Casting *calm emotions* on him or talking to him in a non-aggressive manner for at least a minute is enough to snap him out of his condition, as will a successful DC 20 Heal check. Upon becoming alert, he straightens himself and shakily tries to mount his mare, slipping in his stirrup on the first try and nearly falling back on the ground. He waves off any attempts to help him, incoherently mumbling that he is fine.

Anyone who tries to calm him down or tries to find out what happened to him can make a Diplomacy check, and professed followers of Iomedae receive a +4 circumstance bonus on this roll. If the Diplomacy check is successful, Sir Ilivan tells them of being possessed by a shadow demon during the Fourth Mendevian Crusade and killed two members of his platoon before being restrained. It was only through the divine powers of clerics of Iomedae that the demon was cast out. Telling this story and confessing his past failures is therapeutic for the crusader; the party earns 1 Empathy Point.

If the PCs have acquired fewer than 2 Empathy Points, have each PC roll a Sense Motive check. This check, opposed by Sir Ilivan's Bluff, is used during encounter **D2** to determine whether or not the PCs sense anything amiss at the beginning of that encounter. By rolling now, the GM might avoid arousing suspicions later.

#### C2. The Hive (CR 5 or CR 8)

The taint of the Worldwound brings with it infestations of insects that are deadly reminders of the demon lord Deskari's influence. As the PCs continue their trek, the ground beneath them begins to blister and form sickly pustules as large as 3 feet in diameter, coinciding with a light rain of human teeth.

**Creatures:** Although the disturbingly flesh-like sores are nauseating to behold, the true danger here are the swarms of stinging insects that nest just beneath the ground. Stepping on such a nest causes the swarm to attack immediately in a surprise round. With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (planes) or Perception check a PC can identify the threat just in time to avoid stepping on it (though the swarm flies out nonetheless without the benefit of a surprise round).

Sir Ilivan knows he has nothing that can affect these swarms. He keeps himself and his horse out of their line of attack and shouts commands both helpful and unhelpful at the PCs throughout the combat.

#### Subtier 3-4 (CR 5)

TAINTED WASP SWARMS (2)	CR 3
Wasp swarm (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 275)	
<b>hp</b> 31 each	
TACTICS	
During Combat The wasps mercilessly sting anythin	g in reach,
though they abandon the chase once there are no	targets
within 200 feet.	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Vulnerable to Holy Water (Ex) Due to their having	spawned

directly from the Worldwound, these wasps take damage from holy water as though they were evil outsiders.

**CR 8** 

#### Subtier 6–7 (CR 8)

WOUND	VASP	SWARN	

Hellwasp swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 146) CE Diminutive vermin (extraplanar, swarm)

hp 90

TACTICS

**During Combat** The wasps mercilessly sting anything in reach, though they abandon the chase once there are no targets within 200 feet.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Vulnerable to Holy Water (Ex) Due to their having spawned directly from the Worldwound, these wasps take damage from holy water as though they were evil outsiders.

**Development**: Picking up the trail of the captured soldiers or finding the road back to Nerosyan is a simple matter once the PCs have dealt with the insect threat.

#### **D. CRUSADE'S END**

The scenario's final encounter depends on how many Empathy Points the party has acquired over the course of the adventure, and whether the party is attempting the rescue of the captured cavalrymen. If the PCs have collected at least 2 Empathy Points and are following the soldiers' tracks, Sir Ilivan realizes that the war has changed him irrevocably and that he's no longer qualified to make command decisions. He plans on resigning at the end of the mission, and vows to help the PCs as best he can in the meantime. The GM should run encounter **D1**.

If the PCs have gathered fewer than 2 Empathy Points or decided not to rescue the soldiers, Sir Ilivan has gained no special insight into his emotional state, instead convinced that he's perfectly fine. If the PCs are on their way back to Nerosyan, the half-elf begins experiencing intense feelings of shame for having abandoned the soldiers to their fate. Instead of facing his fears, however, his weakened emotional state makes it impossible for him to accept his responsibility, and he instead projects his shame onto the PCs. After traveling a few miles, Sir Ilivan decides to slay those who witnessed this shame. He convinces himself that if he succeeds, he can simply explain that the Pathfinders were slain by inhabitants of the Worldwound. Likewise, in the event of his death, he will be spared further torment. The GM should run encounter **D**<sub>2</sub>.

#### D1. Into the Valley of Death

A dry, narrow gulch follows a dried-up creek bed appears to have been the site of numerous battles. Rusted weapons, broken arrows, and the occasional skull are strewn about the landscape. The walls of the gulch narrow, creating a natural choke point.

The walls of the dry gulch are only 8 feet in height, and its walls are pocked with holes and other easy handholds. Scaling them requires only a DC 10 Climb check.

**Creatures:** A pair of demons led by a powerful brimorak demon named Savash stand around a huddled group of Mendevian soldiers clapped in manacles. The demons have driven their prized captives hard, and it was near here that several passed out from exposure and exhaustion. After dragging them half-conscious for several hundred more feet, Savash deigned to give the humans a rest—for his convenience, not for their sakesthough the crusaders have yet to regain their senses.

#### **SCALING ENCOUNTER C2**

Make the following changes to the encounter to accommodate parties of four PCs.

Subtier 3-4: Replace the two tainted wasp swarms with one advanced tainted wasp swarm.

*Subtier 6–7*: Replace the woundwasp swarm with two advanced fiendish tainted wasp swarms.

#### **GOOD INTENTIONS**

There is a chance that the PCs treated Sir Ilivan with compassion and decided to rescue the crusaders but were unable to successfully make the required Diplomacy checks to gather enough Empathy points. In this case, the PCs still catch up with the soldiers, but Ilivan slows the party down, as he feels no sense of urgency (he stops to let his horse water, for instance). They find that they have all been killed by the demons, who are now nowhere to be seen. At this point there is truly nothing to do but return to Mendev and make their final report. Sir Ilivan's guilt is compounded by this event, and he lays the responsibility for the soldiers' death at the feet of the PCs. The GM should then proceed to encounter **D2**.

Unless the PCs have taken extraordinary precautions not to be seen or heard, the demons spot them as soon as the PCs are within 100 feet and initiate combat. Otherwise, the demons are too busy tormenting the crusaders to notice the party. Sir Ilivan calls out a warning to the PCs on the first round of combat, pointing at a dust cloud approaching from the north. With a successful DC 12 Perception check a PC can spot discernible figures in the cloud—a gang of oncoming demons. He orders the PCs to face the brimorak while he holds off the reinforcements, after which he gallops away to meet the oncoming horde.

#### Subtier 3–4 (CR 6)

# DRETCHES (2) CR 2 hp 18 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 60) TACTICS During Combat One of the dretches stays with the prisoners, executing one each round using coup de grace unless doing so would provoke an attack of opportunity. The other dretch attacks the PCs. Morale The dretches fight to the death.

CR 5

#### SAVASH

Brimorak demon (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos* 56)

CE Small outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, fire)

D. Crusade's End 1 square = 5 feet

7.

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PCs Start Here

G : Crusader (D1 only)
D : Dretch or Schir (D1 only)
S : Savash (D1 only)
I : Str Ilivan (D2 only)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10 Aura smoke breath (5 ft., DC 17)

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size) hp 57 (6d10+24)

#### Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +3

Defensive Abilities boiling blood; DR 5/cold iron or good; Immune electricity, fire; Resist acid 10, cold 10; SR 16 Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

#### OFFENSE

#### Speed 30 ft.

- Melee longsword +11/+6 (1d6+3/19–20 plus 1d6 fire), hoof +0 (1d3+1 plus 1d6 fire)
- **Special Attacks** breath weapon (20-foot line of boiling blood, 5d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 17 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), burning hooves
- Spell-like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)
  - 3/day—dispel magic, heat metal (DC 14), produce flame 1/day—air walk, fireball (DC 15), greater teleport (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), summon (level 3, 1 brimorak, 50%)

#### TACTICS

- During Combat Savash stands his ground, using his breath weapon and spell-like abilities while waiting for his enemies to approach. He cackles every time one of his underlings slays a prisoner. If his opponents keep their distance, Savash closes to melee range and attack the weakest-looking PC first.
- **Morale** Savash has other ambitions, and uses *greater teleport* to flee if reduced to 10 or fewer hit points.

#### STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15

- Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 21
- Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword)
- Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +11, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +18, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +16; Racial Modifiers +8 Perception

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Ignan; telepathy 100 ft. **SQ** flaming weapon

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Boiling Blood (Su)** A brimorak's blood is boiling hot. A brimorak can cough out a hideous amount of this scorching fluid as a breath weapon, but the blood also serves the demon as a defensive ability. Any creature that damages a brimorak with a slashing or piercing melee weapon is sprayed by boiling blood, and takes 1d4 points of fire damage with each successful hit with such a weapon. Creatures using reach weapons are not subject to this damage.
- **Burning Hooves (Su)** A brimorak's hooves burn with fire, leaving scorched hoofprints on wood, stone, and most every other solid surface, yet this supernatural fire does not set alight surfaces the demon treads upon. It does make it easier

#### SCALING ENCOUNTER D1

Make the following changes to the encounter to accommodate parties of four PCs.

Subtier 3–4: Remove the dretch that would attack the PCs from the encounter. Savash has already used his *fireball* and *summon* spell-like abilities for the day.

*Subtier 6–7*: Remove the schir that would attack the PCs from the encounter.

to track a brimorak, though—Survival checks made to track a brimorak gain a +8 circumstance bonus. Brimoraks use their air walk ability to throw creatures off their trail, or to leave their prints in strange places (like atop roofs) so as to spread fear and terror. Against a prone foe, a brimorak can make two hoof attacks rather than just one.

- Flaming Weapon (Su) As a free action, a brimorak can infuse a wielded melee weapon (including a two-handed weapon, but not a second weapon held in the off-hand) with its fiery nature, allowing it to inflict an additional 1d6 points of fire damage with the weapon. This fire damage stacks with any additional fire damage that the weapon might also inflict. The weapon loses this ability if it leaves the demon's grasp.
- Smoke Breath (Su) A brimorak's breath manifests as clouds of foul-smelling smoke when it exhales. This breath surrounds the brimorak out to a radius of 5 feet—while the smoke isn't thick enough to obscure vision or choke foes, it is enough to sicken breathing foes who are not immune to poison. A successful DC 17 Fortitude save grants immunity to a particular brimorak's breath for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

CR 1

CR 5

CR 7

#### **HELPLESS CRUSADERS (8)**

Caravan guard (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 282) **hp** 16 each (currently 5 and 6 nonlethal) **Gear** none

#### Subtier 6–7 (CR 9)

#### SCHIR HUNTERS (2)

Advanced schir demons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 75, 290) **hp** 47 each

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** One of the schirs stays with the prisoners, executing one each round with a coup de grace unless doing so would provoke an attack of opportunity. The other schir attacks the PCs.

Morale The schirs fight to the death.

#### SAVASH

Giant advanced brimorak demon (see Subtier 3-4) **hp** 81

CR 1

#### TACTICS

- During Combat Savash stands his ground, using his breath weapon and spell-like abilities while waiting for his enemies to approach. He cackles every time one of his underlings slays a prisoner. If his opponents keep their distance, Savash closes to melee range with the weakest-looking PC first.
- **Morale** Savash has other ambitions, and uses *greater teleport* to flee if reduced to 15 or fewer hit points.

#### **HELPLESS CRUSADERS (8)**

Caravan guard (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 282) **hp** 16 each (currently 2 and 10 nonlethal) **Gear** none **Development:** After finishing off the demons, the PCs hear a distant battle cry and see Sir Ilivan charge lance-first at a nabasu demon. The other demons quickly surround him, tearing him from his horse within seconds as the scene devolves into a chaotic mess of claws, wings, and teeth that hide Sir Ilivan from sight. The GM should make it clear that the crusader is beyond the PCs' help, and unless they quickly assist any surviving captured soldiers escape, they will all be overrun. So long as the PCs don't engage in any reckless heroics that would surely get the surviving crusaders killed, they return to Fort Portolmaeus without further trouble.

Faction Notes: If Members of the Silver Crusade rescue at least half of the captive crusaders, that serves as the second requirement for obtaining the Hero of the Inheritor boon found on the Chronicle sheet.

**Rewards:** If the PCs fail to defeat the demons or succeed but rescue no crusaders, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce the gold earned by 873 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce the gold earned by 1,546. Subtier 6–7: Reduce the gold earned by 2,219 gp.

#### **D2. A Templar Brought Low**

**Creatures:** An hour after the previous encounter (either **C1** or **C2**), Sir Ilivan finally resolves to rid himself of his shame by slaying the Pathfinders traveling with him. As the group enters a dry gulch, Sir Ilivan signals for the PCs to halt then informs them that he needs to scout ahead. Those PCs whose Sense Motive checks beat Sir Ilivan's Bluff check at the end of encounter **C1** sense that there is something perceptibly wrong about the crusader's behavior, though it's clear that he's not charmed or dominated. With a shaky voice he angrily rebukes PCs who follow him.

If permitted to ride away, he moves 90 feet away from the PCs, turns his horse around, and addresses them in a nearly incoherent accusation that the PCs are the cause of his shame, that their weakness has been the source of the recent misfortunes, and that only in their death will his tortures cease. If one or more PCs insist on accompanying him, he instead quietly mumbles the same message, slowly crescendoing into an angry bellow. If the PCs interrupt him in either circumstance—by arguing with him, attacking, or approaching—he initiates combat and continues to rant as he fights.

#### Subtier 3-4 (CR 6)

#### SIR ILIVAN OF ERAGES

Male half-elf cavalier 4/rogue 1/low templar 2 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 280) LN Medium humanoid (elf, human) **Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

SAVASH

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield) **hp** 55 (1d8+6d10+14)

Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; +2 vs. enchantments Immune sleep

OFFENSE

#### Speed 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk cold iron lance +12/+7 (1d8+4/×3) or mwk cold iron longsword +11/+6 (1d8+4/19-20)

- Ranged mwk composite longbow +8/+3 (1d8+4/×3) Special Attacks cavalier's charge, challenge (+4, 2/day),
- crusader +1, dirty fighting, sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Unless the PCs draw weapons or move to intercede during his rant, Sir Ilivan feeds the *potion of haste* to his mount.

- **During Combat** Sir Ilivan has spent much of the past day traveling with the PCs and likely knows their strategies. Despite his distressed state, he's still a capable fighter and tactician. If the PCs earned at least 1 Empathy Point, Sir Ilivan refrains from using Power Attack or his challenge class feature until he has taken at least 10 points of damage. His preferred tactic is to charge a PC with his lance and then switch to his longsword as necessary. He rides away to gain distance and charge again if he's at risk of being overwhelmed in melee.
- **Morale** Sir Ilivan believes he has nothing to lose, and he fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

#### Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10 Base Atk +6; CMB +12; CMD 21

- Feats Horse Master<sup>uc</sup>, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Shield Wall<sup>APG</sup>, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Focus (lance)
- Skills Bluff +15, Climb +2, Disguise +7, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (nobility) +6 (+8 regarding Queen Galfrey), Knowledge (planes) +6, Linguistics +5 (+7 to create forgeries), Perception +9, Ride +5, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +1, Survival +5, Swim +2; Racial Modifiers +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Hallit

- **SQ** expert trainer +2, flag of convenience, mount (Hannah, horse), order of the lion (lion's call), tactician (1/day, 5 rounds, standard action), trapfinding +1, elf blood
- Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of haste, holy water (3), tanglefoot bag (2), thunderstone;
   Other Gear mwk full plate, mwk heavy steel shield, mwk cold iron lance, mwk cold iron longsword, mwk composite longbow with 20 cold iron arrows, everburning torch, bedroll, bit and bridle, military saddle, saddlebags, silver holy symbol of lomedae, waterskin

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Crusader (Ex) Sir Ilivan receives a +1 bonus on weapon attack and damage rolls and to Will saves against chaotic evil outsiders.
 Dirty Fighting (Ex) Sir Ilivan knows how to hold his own on

#### ONE MAP, TWO ENCOUNTERS

Encounters **D1** and **D2** both use the same map, since they can never both occur in the same adventure.

#### SCALING ENCOUNTER D2

To accommodate parties of four PCs, give Sir Ilivan the sickened condition. Adjust his tactics as though the PCs had earned at least 1 Empathy Point.

the jousting field as well as a barroom brawl. He gains a +2 bonus on all combat maneuver checks, and whenever he confirms a critical, may elect to deal normal damage and roll on the following table rather than dealing extra damage.

### d6 Result 1 Target is staggered for 1 round 2 Target is nauseated for 1 round

-	larger is hadseated for Fround
3	Target is deafened for 1 round
4	Target is blinded for 1 round
5	Target is sickened for 1 round
6	Target becomes fatigued

#### HANNAH

#### Horse animal companion N Large animal Init +2; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +6 DEFENSE AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size) hp 51 (6d8+24) Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +5 OFFENSE Speed 50 ft. Melee bite +8 (1d4+5), 2 hooves +3 (1d6+2) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. STATISTICS Str 20, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6 Base Atk +4; CMB +10; CMD 22 (26 vs. trip) Feats Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Run

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+15 when jumping), Perception +6, Stealth +2, Swim +9; Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics

when jumping **SQ** combat trained, tricks (attack [2], come, defend, down, fetch, guard, heel, stay)

Other Gear leather armor

#### Subtier 6–7 (CR 9)

#### SIR ILIVAN OF ERAGES

Male half-elf cavalier 4/rogue 1/low templar 5 LN Medium humanoid (elf, human)  $\rm CR-$ 

#### Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9 DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield) **hp** 77 (1d8+9d10+20)

Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; +2 vs. enchantments Immune sleep

#### OFFENSE

#### Speed 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 planar cold iron lance +15/+10 (1d8+5/×3) or mwk cold iron longsword +14/+9 (1d8+4/19-20)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +11/+6 (1d8+4/×3)

**Special Attacks** cavalier's charge, challenge (+4, 2/day), crusader +2, dirty fighting, sneak attack +2d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Unless the PCs draw weapons or move to intercede during his rant, Sir Ilivan feeds the *potion of haste* to his mount.

During Combat Sir Ilivan has spent much of the past day

traveling with the PCs and likely knows their strategies. Despite his distressed state, he's still a capable fighter and tactician. If the PCs earned at least 1 Empathy Point, Sir Ilivan refrains

SIR ILIVAN OF ERAGES

from using Power Attack or his challenge class feature until he has taken at least 15 points of damage. His preferred tactic is to charge a PC with his lance and then switch to his longsword as necessary. He rides away to gain distance and charge again if he's at risk of being overwhelmed in melee.

**Morale** Sir Ilivan believes he has nothing to lose, and he fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10 Base Atk +9; CMB +15; CMD 24

> Feats Horse Master<sup>uc</sup>, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Shield Wall<sup>APG</sup>, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Focus (lance) Skills Bluff +21, Climb +2, Disguise +7, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (nobility) +6 (+8 regarding Queen Galfrey), Knowledge (planes) +6, Linguistics +5 (+7 to create forgeries), Perception +9, Ride +8, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +3, Survival +6, Swim +2; Racial Modifiers +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Hallit SQ expert trainer +2, flag of convenience, live to fight another day, mount (Hannah, horse), order of the lion (lion's call), path of light, tactician (1/day, 5 rounds, standard action), trapfinding +1, elf blood Combat Gear potion of cure serious wounds, potion of haste, holy water (4), tanglefoot bag (2); Other Gear +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 planar cold iron lance<sup>uE</sup>, mwk longsword, mwk composite longbow, with 20 arrows, cloak of resistance +1, everburning torch, bedroll, bit and bridle, military saddle, saddlebags, silver holy symbol of lomedae, waterskin

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Crusader (Ex) See Sir Ilivan's entry in subtier 3–4.
Dirty Fighting (Ex) See Sir Ilivan's entry in subtier 3–4.
Flag of Convenience (Ex) See Sir Ilivan's entry in subtier 3–4.
Live to Fight Another Day (Ex) Sir Ilivan can use the withdraw action as a standard action. If he does, he moves at his base speed, not double it.

Path of Light (Su) Sir Ilivan has hewn to his oaths to Iomedae and her ethos of law and goodness. He may choose to ignore the lawful aspect of his alignment for determining alignment-based magical effects. He also gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks with creatures with the lawful or good subtypes.

#### HANNAH

Horse animal companion N Large animal Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +7 **DEFENSE** 

AC 27, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size) hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +6

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d4+6), 2 hooves +9 (1d6+3) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. STATISTICS

#### Str 22, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +6; CMB +13; CMD 26 (30 vs. trip)

Feats Endurance, Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Medium Armor Proficiency, Multiattack<sup>8</sup>, Run

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Perception +7, Stealth +0, Swim +6

**SQ** combat trained, tricks (attack [2], come, defend, down, fetch, guard, heel, stay, work)

Other Gear scale mail

**Development:** With Sir Ilivan killed or captured, the PCs have little else to do but complete their mission and return to Nerosyan. After another hour of trekking through the transformed landscape, they find the River Road again and complete the rest of their journey in peace.

**Rewards**: If the PCs fail to defeat Sir Ilivan, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce the gold earned by 873 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce the gold earned by 1,546 gp. Subtier 6–7: Reduce the gold earned by 2,219 gp.

#### CONCLUSION

Upon returning to Nerosyan, Venture-Captain Jorsal and a representative of the Mendevian military ask the PCs to give a full report. How these two respond depends in large part on the nature of the PCs' final encounter. If the PCs rescued the cavalrymen, the Pathfinder Lodge and the city at large hail them as heroes. When an expedition recovers Sir Ilivan's body a few weeks later, he is buried with full honors, and a high-ranking officer presents the late half-elf's weapons and armor to the PCs.

If the PCs are forced to kill or subdue Sir Ilivan, the military performs a brief investigation after which the Pathfinders are cleared of all responsibility; however, it's a long time before the Mendevian crown asks them to volunteer for another assignment. If Sir Ilivan survived, he submits himself to military justice and spends the foreseeable future in prayer and performing penance for his shortcomings. Although it will be some time before he can bring himself to accept his actions and those of the PCs, other crusaders appreciate that the PCs showed mercy even under difficult conditions.

#### **Primary Success Condition**

The PCs complete their mission simply by reaching Fort Portolmaeus, returning to Nerosyan, and reporting on what they observed. So long as the PCs completed the primary mission, they also receive the Mendevian Commendation boon on their Chronicle sheets.

#### **Secondary Success Condition**

To succeed at their secondary mission objective, the PCs must have gone above and beyond the call of duty. The PCs must either rescue at least five of the eight abducted crusaders in encounter **D1**, or they must spare the life of Sir Ilivan in encounter **D2**.

#### **Faction Notes**

Members of several factions have the opportunity to learn important information and strengthen their overall position in this scenario.

**Cheliax Faction**: Cheliax faction PCs must uncover wartime intelligence about the crusaders and demons: military strategies learned from Sir Ilivan, design flaws of Fort Portolmaeus, or weaknesses of the *wardstone*. Learning at least two of these three facts earns Cheliax faction PCs the Using Their Strength Against Them boon on their Chronicle sheets.

**Sczarni Faction**: Members of the Sczarni faction who learn of an assassination plot on Guaril Karela also are put in touch with a well-known fence and receive the A Fair Trade boon on their Chronicle sheets.

Silver Crusade Faction: If the party is able to save the life of at least one of the commoners in the Ruins of Bedis and rescue at least half of the captured soldiers in the Worldwound, members of the Silver Crusade faction are granted the Hero of the Inheritor boon on their Chronicle sheets.



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### Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-02: The Wardstone Patrol

Character Chronicle #

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