

PATHFINDER SOCIETY®

YEAR OF THE SERPENT



ALL FOR IMMORTALITY, PART 3: SERPENTS FALL

By John Compton



ALL FOR IMMORTALITY, PART 3: SERPENTS FALL

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #7-29

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ALL FOR IMMORTALITY, PART 3 SERPENTS FALL

BY JOHN COMPTON



For decades, the Pathfinder Society and the Aspis Consortium have clashed with one another. Usually these skirmishes occur far from either's headquarters, where a handful of daring agents might fight within an unexplored ruin beneath the veil of plausible deniability. It's a proud tradition that has kept the conflicts restricted to personal rivalries that rarely touch the rest of their respective institutions.

Of course, any tradition has its exceptions and iconoclasts. In recent years, the Society has surged in regional popularity and influence, emboldening it to foil Aspis plans of ever-greater consequence. Chief among these plans was the tapestry debacle of 4713 AR, when the Consortium broke into the so-called *Hao Jin Tapestry* demiplane to plunder its riches—only to be thwarted and have their back door captured by the Society. As bronze agents look to silver agents look to gold for guidance in arresting their rivals' ascension, the Consortium's shadowy council of Patrons has provided little support. In their place, Consortium agents and opportunists have organized their own resistance. As these increasingly daring vigilantes have proved victorious in increasingly risky schemes, a few have grown particularly ambitious.

Born to a farm family in Katapesh, Suliji Peshar was no stranger to the power of trade, yet she always lacked the capital to start a business that would measure up to her incredible ambitions. Rather than cultivate cacti, she became an apprentice at an auction house, where she learned to appraise even the rarest goods. During that time, she was exposed to a ring once worn by Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn, one of the founders of the Aspis Consortium. Something within the ring called to her, begging her to honor its legacy and wield its power. She acquiesced, not entirely knowing what she held, and before the next morning, she had stolen a fistful of other jewelry and made her way on board a ship bound for Cheliah.

The Aspis Consortium was happy to hire an industrious appraiser, and Suliji steadily built her credentials while also awakening her latent psychic abilities. For all the majesty that echoed from the ring, Suliji's new home

WHERE ON GOLARION?

Serpents Fall takes place in Ostenso, the seat of Cheliah's navy and the home of the powerful Aspis Consortium's headquarters. For more information about Cheliah and Ostenso, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Cheliah, The Infernal Empire*, available at your local hobby store and online at paizo.com.



of Ostenso showed virtually no sign that Alexayn had ever touched it. Even the Consortium had let his name rot in obscurity. For weeks, Suliji eyed the ostentatious mausoleum where he was buried. Only desperation—stoked by a team of auditors having discovered that Suliji was stealing relics with the strongest psychic attunements—drove her to finally break into the crypt with half a dozen Aspis cutthroats on her heels.

She had hoped for a hiding place. What she found instead was an indignant mummy who nearly struck her down before recognizing the ring on her hand. Wondering what had befallen his mercantile empire, the reanimated mogul Alexayn strode to his mausoleum's door to gaze upon the city—and was furious to find that the public institutions he had funded and the monuments that commemorated his philanthropy (admittedly bankrolled

GM RESOURCES

Serpents Fall makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* (ACG), *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* (APG), *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* (OA), *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* (UE), *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* (UI), *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* (UM), *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5*. This adventure assumes the GM has access to these sourcebooks. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Reference Document at paizo.com/prd, and the relevant rules from the *Bestiary* volumes are reprinted at the back of the adventure for the GM's convenience.

by underhanded business practices) were gone. As the thugs rushed into the crypt, they froze in fear of the mummy before them. He scowled and demanded to know if the name Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn still echoed in Aspis halls and commanded respect throughout Cheliah. The thugs professed ignorance, and for that they were swiftly pulverized by the former tycoon's inhuman strength.

With that, he turned to Suliji and began questioning her about the ring, how she secured it, what had befallen the world in his absence, and why he was forgotten. He learned that almost every testament to his success had been demolished, repurposed, or removed. Fury nearly drove him to destroy what he could of Ostenso before inevitably perishing, but Suliji sensed an opportunity and offered to serve as his agent—someone who could restore his fame while shielding the public from his undead form. He agreed, but his first priority was the brutal embarrassment of the Consortium's leadership, something so crushing that it would shame them into remembering the man who had made the organization great. Failing that, it would all burn—the city, the Aspis, everything.

This plan fit nicely into Suliji's open-ended ambitions, which quickly took a more concrete shape thanks to her new benefactor. Alexayn eagerly shared some of the Consortium's darkest secrets with her to use as blackmail, including the existence of Conference Z, the identities of past Patrons, and the hereditary curse that afflicted one of the leading Aspis families. He also allowed Suliji to take some of the lavish grave goods sealed throughout his mausoleum, many of which were merely fancy baubles to him but carried extraordinarily potent psychic resonances that Suliji could see (including two other rings that she always wears). Properly bankrolled, Suliji quickly advanced up the Consortium's ranks by sponsoring several successful ventures, greasing the right palms, planting suggestions at opportune moments, and

gathering a council of self-important dupes that she named the Korholm Agenda.

Simply put, the Korholm Agenda would not exist were it not for Suliji Peshar. She handpicked each of its members for their combination of skills and easily manipulated goals: ambitious-yet-immoral powerbrokers, forsaken operatives, vengeful vagabonds, and blackmailed specialists, all of whom hold grudges against the Pathfinder Society. Suliji knew that she could not pay off her debt to Alexayn without an impressive force to attack the Aspis Consortium. The Agenda was eager to attack the Pathfinder Society when the opportunity presented itself. No one was as eager as the gold agent Kitio Aspenathi, so Suliji let him take charge—all the better to paint a target on his back later. As predicted, the Society retaliated for the unprovoked attack, launching the two powers into a prolonged war. All the while, Suliji had begun selling Aspis secrets to the Society under the alias Three Rings to build her credentials as an informant and speed the Consortium's defeat by the Society's hand. When it became clear the Society had identified the Korholm Agenda as the real perpetrators, Suliji provided them the information they needed to find and defeat other Agenda members.

Suliji cares little for her Consortium allies. Having seen the lengths to which the members of the Consortium are willing to go to achieve their goals, she has little trouble justifying her own deeds as necessary. The one exception to her indifference was her halfling protegee Joliryn, who was utterly loyal to Suliji and the one person the half-orc could trust. Suliji always told herself that Joliryn was nothing more than another pawn, but when Aspis Patron Iaovin Ratarion sent a team that executed Joliryn, Suliji surprised herself by feeling genuine grief, remorse, and vengeful wrath. Suliji had been planning to sweep in as a savior after the Pathfinder attacks and take her place as one of the most influential Patrons. But at that moment, she decided to pursue the plan the mummy Alexayn had outlined for her, ironically just as the mummy became convinced she had no intentions of fulfilling it. She would storm the Aspis Building itself and confront the Patrons. Iaovin Ratarion would suffer, the Aspis would be crippled, and she could retire from the high-stakes life of crime and betrayal to live in luxury and continue studying psychically significant objects whenever she wished.

First, she played Kitio Aspenathi against Pashow, leaving him to take a fall for her own plots, and she jeopardized the secrecy of the clandestine research group Conference Z, allowing the Pathfinders to locate one of its bases of operations. All that remains is to finish off her plan to cripple the snake by cutting off its head, after which she figures she can give Alexayn credit to hide her own involvement and placate the mummy. She has returned to Ostenso with the last of her minions in tow. There, she has

dispatched them to set fires, provoke Aspis agents, and draw resources away from the Aspis Building while she infiltrates the headquarters and assassinates the Consortium's leadership. The only variable she hasn't accounted for is the Pathfinder Society. Until recently, the Society had acted on the intelligence she provided in their mutual self-interest, but now that plans have changed, the Society is a wild card. Suliji believes that her new plan is swift and silent enough that no one, not even the Pathfinders, will see it coming. However, she is always prepared for the unexpected, and if Pathfinders do crash her party, she hopes to convince them that the enemy of their enemy is their friend. Marcos Farabellus and his handpicked team of elite agents are wise to part of Suliji's plan. Both Suliji's fate and the Consortium's rest in these agents' hands.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs travel to the Chelish military port Ostenso to enter the mausoleum of Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn, one of the legendary founders of the Aspis Consortium. Upon breaking in, they find the deceased tycoon has risen as a mummy who loathes that his storied contributions are now largely ignored by his greedy successors. If the PCs are willing to look past his ghastly form, he shares much of the series' backstory, including how he helped the half-orc Suliji Peshar undermine the Consortium so that he might remind the forgetful Aspis of his legacy. He now is certain that Suliji has also betrayed him, and that she's performing a coup that would leave her in control. The PCs can instead fight him to acquire similar information from his personal records.

In order to stop Suliji—or at least to ensure that Aspis infighting ends in a result favorable to the Society—the PCs must break into the Aspis Building, the worldwide headquarters for the Consortium. Depending on which entrance they choose, they face either an Aspis agent and his muscle-bound guardians or a ferocious frogemoth. The PCs then navigate the Aspis Building, evading traps, patrols, and other threats—ideally without attracting additional attention—before finally reaching the Argent Atrium, a central hub that leads to the Consortium's innermost offices. There Mr. Khayn, the head of Aspis security, personally attempts to drive off the PCs with the help of a hateful spirit and any other forces he can muster.

Suliji Peshar has already cornered one of the Consortium's Patrons, its innermost circle of leadership, in a gallery known as the Hall of Blades. There she attempts to extract critical information from him until the PCs arrive. The PCs must choose to either fight off Suliji and protect the Patrons or ally with Suliji and kill the Patrons. Either way, the Society will have enormous leverage to use against the Consortium in ending a yearlong surge in hostilities.

A DANGEROUS MISSION

Beginning in Season 4, all scenarios operate under the assumption that there are six players in the group and provide notes for scaling down the adventures for smaller groups. *Serpents Fall* also provides the GM notes for scaling the difficulty up. Playing an even harder version of the scenario doesn't offer extra rewards; it's available solely to provide groups a legal way to face a greater challenge and win bragging rights. The GM should make this option available to the players before the game begins and should use the notes for scaling up only if all of the players explicitly agree to take on the extra challenge. Be cognizant of the players' desires; if even one is hesitant or has to be pressured into participating on "hard mode," don't use this option.

Also keep in mind that tougher battles take longer to finish. Using this option could cause the adventure to run considerably longer than a 4- to 5-hour slot.

GETTING STARTED

At the bidding of the Master of Swords Marcos Farabellus, the PCs set out from Diobel on the west coast of the Isle of Kortos toward the Chelish port of Ostenso. By that point, Farabellus had informed them that they are headed to Ostenso for a highly sensitive incursion into the Aspis Consortium's backyard, giving the PCs at least that much warning in case they want to make any purchases before departing. He also informed the PCs that he would meet up with them along their journey to Ostenso. Several dozen miles outside of the port, a Thuvian ship out of Merab hails the PCs' vessel, and Marcos Farabellus waves to the PCs from its deck. As the two ships approach, Farabellus activates a magic item and flies over to the PCs to provide more information about the task ahead. If the PCs use *teleport* or other means to travel to Ostenso, paraphrase the meeting below to fit with their circumstances.

Marcos Farabellus rests one foot atop a coil of rope while flicking open a thin leather bag to double-check the dozen pages inside. "I haven't traveled this much this quickly in a long time," he confides with a tired grin. "Fortunately, it's nearly at an end. Thanks to Professor Kramolag's testimony, we've identified the last of the Korholm Agenda's ringleaders. I recently dispatched a team to deal with the boss in Thuvia, but it sounds like there's far worse afoot in Ostenso. Kramolag seemed convinced that the lady we're after is a half-orc named Suliji Peshar, and she's gotten rich and powerful by smuggling coin out of the tomb of the Consortium's richest founder, Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn.

"I've tried to secure any information about her schemes, but had little luck. Kramolag seems convinced that Suliji is planning

some attack on the Aspis Consortium, which seems a little far-fetched, but after what we've seen the Agenda do so far, it's still within the realm of possibility." The Master of Swords rubs his beard with one hand in thought. "The Consortium may not be our friends, but they're a known quantity. Hell, even if such an attack only killed off a leader or two, that half-orc's proven canny enough that, for all we know, she might be planning to frame the Society for an attack against the Consortium's home turf—or all of Cheliax itself!"

He hands over the leather case. "The crux of the matter is that we don't have enough facts to decide how to proceed. Professor Kramolag's story seems to check out so far, and my usual inside informant Three Rings has disappeared altogether. Something momentous in the works, and the whole thing stinks of Aspis. But without more details, I can't tell you what to do. It's going to be up to you to figure out how best to serve the Society's short-term and long-term interests in the coming crisis. I want you to get to the bottom of it and confront Suliji Peshar. If, as we suspect, she plans to frame the Pathfinder Society, you need to stop her, and otherwise, you'll be well-placed to take decisive action to gain us leverage over the Consortium toward a peaceful resolution of hostilities. Our best lead at the moment is the mausoleum of Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn." Farabellus winces at the long name. "It's on Ostenso's outskirts, and I understand Suliji's visited it numerous times over the past year. Check it out, find what clues you can, and take whatever actions you deem appropriate. I've already sent your teams ahead to learn what news they can, so once you know more, consider them at your disposal."

The PCs likely have some questions for Marcos Farabellus. Likely inquiries and his answers are below.

Who was Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn? "If you associate the Aspis Consortium with being rich, it's because its co-founder Alexayn set that trend. He died just before Aroden did, and among his many monuments and public works in his hometown Ostenso was his immense mausoleum. He was both respected and feared in his time, but the Consortium's come a long way since his death. Everyone in Ostenso knows a building or two named after him, but otherwise he's just a little-known name in the history books."

Who is Three Rings? "Three Rings is an informant—maybe several informants—who appears in a different guise every time we talk to him or her. The only consistency is the three rings worn on one hand,

hence the nickname. Thanks to Three Rings's sudden disappearance, I'd say it's either one of Suliji's allies or one of her latest victims. Three Rings is a friend to the Society and has been invaluable in our efforts this year. If Suliji is allied with Three Rings, it might mean there's more to her actions than we understand, but if she's hurt Three Rings for betraying the Consortium's secrets to us, she has earned our ire."

Does the Aspis Consortium suspect Suliji Peshar is a threat? "I don't believe they do, and they don't appear to have taken my warning seriously."

What should we do if we face Aspis agents?

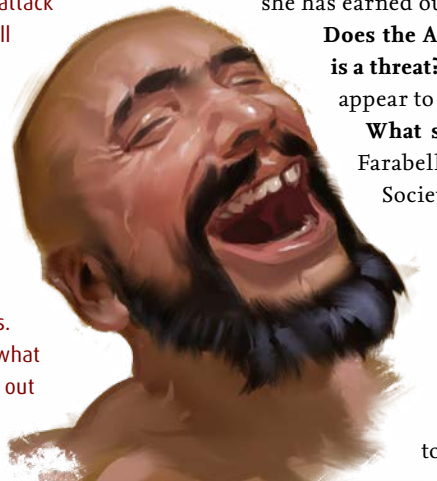
Farabellus exhales and furrows his brow. "The Society's maintained an uneasy alliance with certain elements the Consortium, particularly Three Rings, in order to eliminate the Korholm Agenda, but that information's been shared on a strictly need-to-know basis. Any Aspis forces you meet will likely consider you a foe. I ask that you keep harm to bystanders, even those in the employ of the Consortium, to a minimum, though given the circumstances, I understand that may not be possible. If Suliji is planning to stir up the Aspis against the Society, which as I said is one of the only

reasons I can think of for an attack, then the more Aspis you kill, rather than incapacitate, in her pursuit, the more you're playing right into that plan. We're trying to avert a catastrophe, not start one."

Is there anything we shouldn't do in pursuit of Suliji? Farabellus hesitates before saying, "If you need to take risks, just be sure that the payoff is worth the possible consequences."

Will you be accompanying us? "I'm bound for the Grand Lodge to coordinate what I hope are the last efforts to mop up the Korholm Agenda. If things go absolutely sideways, feel free to contact me magically."

The leather case contains several maps of Ostenso, including one marked with key sites like Alexayn's mausoleum. It also contains short dossiers on the 12 Pathfinders who have assisted the PCs since *Pathfinder Society Scenario #7–20: All for Immortality, Part 1: First Taste of Eternity* (see **Player Handouts #1** through **#3** on pages 43–45). Be sure to examine the players' Chronicle sheets and cross out the names of any NPC Pathfinders who perished during *First Taste of Eternity* or *All the Gods Beyond*. If the players played *First Taste of Eternity* and *All the Gods Beyond* separately and had different Pathfinder NPCs die, use the average number of deaths for each team (rounded up). If a player has not played one of these scenarios,



MARCOS
FARABELLUS

count that PC's performance as if one additional NPC on two of the teams died (determined randomly). If a player has not played either of the scenarios, treat it instead as if one NPC on each of the teams died.

Once the PCs have asked their questions, Farabellus clicks his heels together and flies back to the Thuvian vessel. The PCs are less than a day's travel away from Ostenso, and if any spellcasters want to change their prepared spells based on the briefing, they have enough time to do so.

KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY OR LOCAL)

Based on the result of Knowledge (history or local) check, the PCs might know more of Ostenso and its criminal underbelly. Each PC notes all of the information whose DC is less than or equal to the result of her check.

15+: Ostenso is Cheliox's easternmost major port, made all more strategically important due to its proximity to the nation's rival Andoran. As the homeport of the Chelish navy, Ostenso is well guarded, prosperous, and frequented by countless ships each year. In fact, nearly a quarter of the city is built over the water, creating entire districts of piers and wooden plazas that span between the natural rock pillars known as the Custodisce Break.

25+: Ostenso was not always so powerful. Before Andoran seceded from Cheliox, the city was "merely" a thriving port city. The Aspis Consortium chose Ostenso as its base of operations in part because of its considerable infrastructure but also because of the cofounder Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn's love of the city. By generously doling out gold and understated violence alike, he expertly earned his neighbors' admiration and his enemies' fear. Among the better-kept secrets is that Ostenso's sewers let out under the docks and create a navigable network of tunnels. Chelish authorities habitually sweep through the sewers to catch casual smugglers, but it's said the Aspis Consortium maintains a professional agreement that buys them free use of the tunnels.

35+: The smugglers in Ostenso must remain few and canny in order to dodge the city's vigilant guards, but even these criminals rarely risk traveling near the Aspis Building's foundation. It's said there's a series of alarms, traps, or wards that signal the Consortium leg-breakers above, and those who become too curious often disappear permanently.

ALEXAYN'S MAUSOLEUM

Traffic in Ostenso's harbor is brisk and efficient, and the PCs have little difficulty going through Chelish customs. However, if the PCs travel with bizarre animal companions or openly declare themselves as Pathfinders, they earn 1 Awareness Point unless they manage to smooth over the matter with a successful DC 30 Bluff check. It is dusk by

TRACKING AWARENESS

Ostenso displays a true slice of Cheliox's main traits and virtues; it's harsh but fair, unforgiving but efficient, and accessible yet suspicious. Even though the PCs have little difficulty traveling about the city and points of interest, sundry factions like Suliji's minions, Consortium spies, and Chelish authorities keep tabs on their movements. Over the course of the adventure, the PCs likely accumulate Awareness Points, which are an abstract measure of how much the PCs' rivals know of the PCs, their activities, and their location. The PCs begin with 3 Awareness Points. As they gain points, keep an ongoing tally. Several encounters and success conditions reference the PCs' total.

the time the PCs leave the harbor, and from there the PCs can head southwest to the mausoleum. The walk can be a good opportunity to present a few vignettes of Chelish life that emphasize its fairly strict rules and open promotion of Asmodeus without overlooking the city's general prosperity and safety. The PCs' teams of Pathfinder agents are busily at work gathering information undercover and have little to report at this time.

As the PCs arrive at their destination, read or paraphrase the following.

The mausoleum is a mansion of a crypt that towers more than 40 feet in height atop a low hill on the edge of the city. Surrounding the structure sprawls a modest park that has benefited from only infrequent maintenance. A broad set of stairs leads up to a looming, recessed stone door partially obscured by the forest of columns that circumnavigates the crypt's facade.

With a successful DC 18 Knowledge (engineering) check, a PC can identify that the mausoleum incorporates architectural flourish and motifs from throughout the Inner Sea region, though the architects managed to incorporate these into an overall flattering tribute to a world traveler rather than a gaudy display of cultural appropriation. Furthermore, the PC notes that the broad lines carved into the structure would have once been imbedded with precious metals that are now noticeably absent; as a PC can surmise with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (history) check, these were stripped away during the Chelish Civil War and never replaced. The looters respected Alexayn's legacy just enough to leave the interior untouched. Later would-be thieves, seeing how thoroughly their predecessors had stripped the outside, assumed that there was nothing of value left within.

The front door (hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 28) is locked (Disable Device DC 40). A PC who succeeds at a DC

20 Perception check notices weathered signs of tampering, including places where someone repeatedly attempted to force the door with a crowbar. As night falls, there are few witnesses to the PCs' breaking and entering. If the PCs manage to open the door with minimal noise, they enter without being seen. If they resort to repeated Strength checks or outright destruction of the door, a few passers-by report the incident. Such reports earn the PCs 1 Awareness Point. As Suliji launches her attack on the Aspis Building later in the adventure, the local guards never make it to the mausoleum in time to confront the PCs here.

The mausoleum has 10-foot-wide halls, 10-foot ceilings, three floors, a basement level, and more than a dozen rooms. Among these are painted chambers that commemorate his early adventuring life (including him slaying a blue dragon), later business successes, and greatest philanthropic works in Ostenso. Another room is covered floor-to-ceiling in effusive testimonials of Alexayn's accomplishments, credentials, and generosity from important figures of the age; several of these quoted names are scratched out with the word "Betrayer" or "Liar" inexpertly carved nearby. In some places, the tables and stands clearly once held grave goods or trophies but are now empty. Wherever Alexayn is depicted, he appears as a handsome Chelish man with shoulder-length hair (later with a receding hairline) and a rapier worn at his hip.

A. THE WYRM ROOM (CR 16 OR CR 18)

Among the few pristine chambers in the mausoleum is this trophy room, whose faded tapestries show Alexayn's greatest combat victories with more than a hint of artistic license. The preserved dragon head here is genuine, having once belonged to an old blue dragon that Alexayn helped slay with four comrades. In addition to the elegant weapons and chests of foreign coins scattered across the ground where the reanimated mogul has pored over them, a score of swords and shields from across Golarion hang from the walls. The PCs approach from the east, and the door to the west leads to Alexayn's burial chamber and sarcophagus, which he smashed after first reanimating.

Creatures: Shortly after Alexayn awoke to undeath and killed Suliji's pursuers, he saw with his own unholy eyes the city that had forgotten him. The half-orc only barely convinced him to remain in hiding while she acted as his agent among the living. He has spent the past few years prowling his mausoleum, taking inventory of his grave goods, remembering his past accomplishments, and defacing those reminders of friends who clearly let him down after he died—he believes it their fault that his name doesn't grace the lips of every Aspis agent every day. When the PCs arrive, the mummy is listlessly rearranging his Garundi coinage in small piles that make a crude political map of the continent from a century ago. As

the PCs approach, he stands, takes a reflexive swig from an empty goblet, and glowers at the PCs before saying, "So, has Suliji tired of working behind my back and has finally sent thugs to drive the dagger home?"

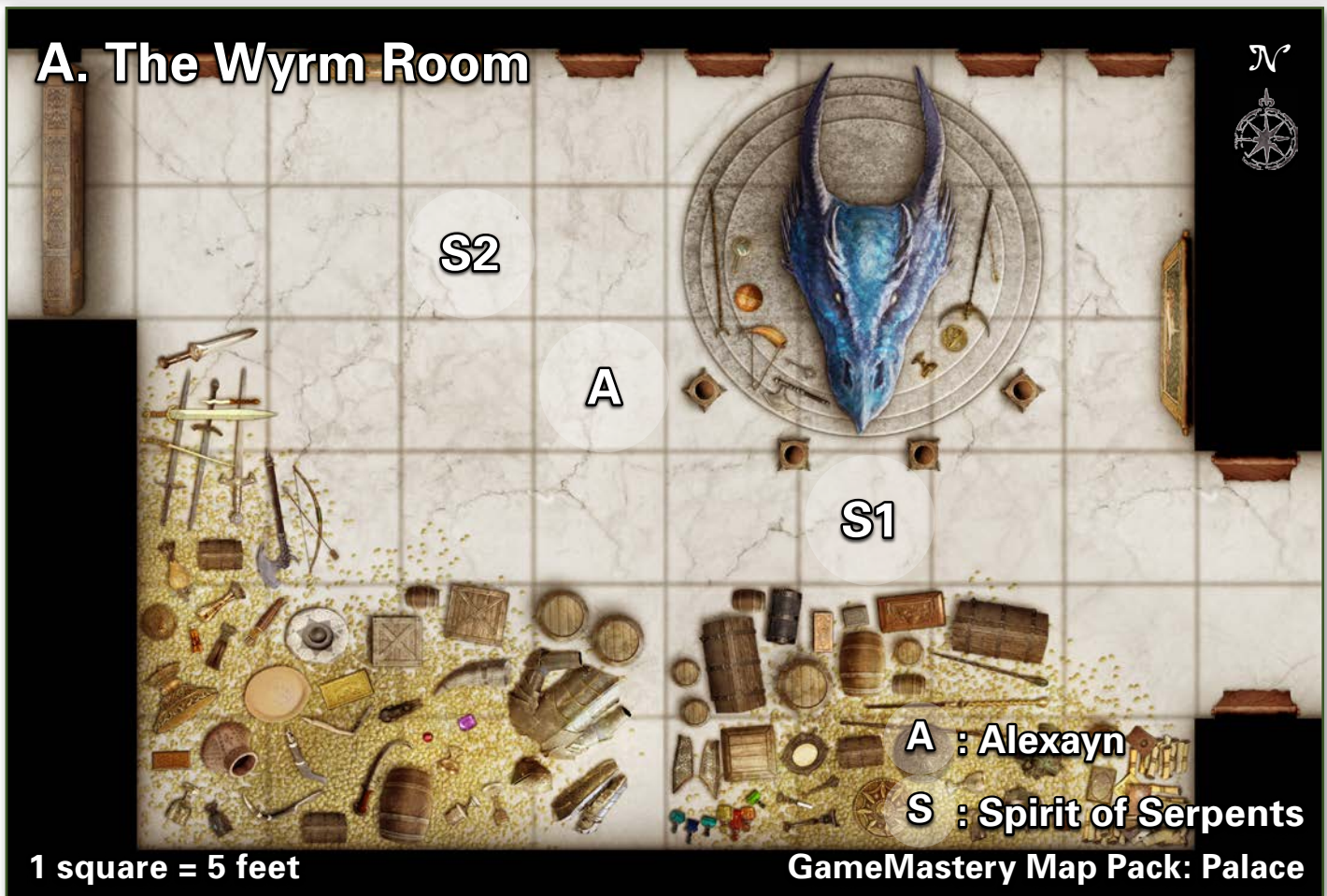
When Suliji made her last visit to Alexayn's tomb, the mummy lord finally realized that she had no intention of enacting his scheme of revenge and bringing about the resurgence of his fame to the extremes that he desires. At that time, she had been planning to use the attack on the Patrons to gain a place among them while working modestly to restore his name's prominence, rather than using the leverage to blackmail the Patrons into putting Alexayn's name first and foremost. Nonetheless, the former tycoon remains unable to walk the streets of Ostenso without being hunted down as an undead menace, and he has no idea her plans have changed. The mummy noble is bitter yet believes in doing things by the book, which is to say engaging in banter with intruders before ending their lives. In truth, this encounter need not involve combat at all; the PCs' and Alexayn's goals largely align, inasmuch as they both he and the PCs are no friends of the Aspis Patrons and they both seek Suliji Peshar, whom he makes a point of referring to only by epithets like "the wretch" or "the traitorous whelp."

Once introductions have concluded and he confirms the PCs are enemies of his enemies, he's amenable to wryly explaining much of the information found in this adventure's background; his knowledge of Suliji's exact plans and most recent accomplishments is relatively vague. He can also answer some of the PC's questions, including the likely ones below. Once the PCs' curiosity is sated, he proposes a deal (see Development below).

Where has Suliji gone? or What did you help Suliji plan? "The whelp was to be my hand, delivering a message to the Consortium's inane leaders: Remember Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn, and restore my legacy across Ostenso and beyond. Of course, they wouldn't listen to an upstart gold agent, but they would listen to an upstart gold agent who managed to sneak into the innermost offices, kill a few stakeholders, and spell out the message in blood! From what she reported to me, the Aspis Building's layout has changed little since I died, and she now knows how to bypass several of its defenses. However, when she last visited me, it was clear the foul turncoat intended not to truly restore my glory but to stage a coup and become a Patron herself. Wretch."

Could Suliji succeed at her plan? "The traitor is very capable, and she's taken much of my magical arsenal. Even if she doesn't succeed at becoming a Patron, she could kill countless stakeholders, wreck the Consortium's headquarters, and drive the surviving Patrons to cower inside their shells, afraid to act." He swirls his empty goblet in thought before adding, "Now if others can't do

A. The Wurm Room



me the dignity of remembering my deeds, understand I'd practically invite such destruction. In fact, Patrons' blood would be a most worthy ink for my message. I wanted her to make them suffer, not to worm her way into their ranks."

What magic items does Suliji have? "Bah, I hardly know what half of them did beyond give me the grim satisfaction of wearing something with an obscene price tag. The upstart laid claim to a Taldan dueling blade—far too clumsy for my tastes—a rather brutal gauntlet I picked up from a Yamasan vampire, General Coren's second-best breastplate worn as part of Taldor's Third Army of Exploration, and a handful of rings and other baubles. I found it very amusing when she took only one of the rings that links its wearer's life to that of someone who wears the other ring, but it seems the little miscreant stole the ring's partner during her last visit."

What's Suliji's fighting style? "What does it matter? She knows her way around a conspiracy, and she has a fine resume for lying to her betters. The turncoat has a knack for magic of all kinds, and she's a quick study with a sword. She can stay quiet when she needs to, and there are few barriers she can't overcome. Honestly, she would be an ideal agent were it not for her turning on me. Stab

her a few times, and I imagine she'll die. I can think of few times it hasn't worked for me."

Did Suliji ever mention the name Three Rings? Alexayn's laugh is as dry and mirthless as sepulcher. "Has the betrayer sunk to stealing my name as well as my jewelry? Three Rings was one of the aliases I used for behind-the-scenes work while creating the Aspis Consortium, though most who would remember that are likely dead now. I'd bet my finest Andoren wine-slave that whoever's calling herself Three Rings now is the backstabber herself." Alexayn only grumbles if informed that Andoran has both broken away from Cheliox and banned slavery since his death.

Did you kill that dragon? "Of course I did. I'm not some Pathfinder who takes credit for discovering other people's accomplishments."

There's a fair chance that the PCs find Alexayn's undead form repugnant and wish to destroy him entirely. If so, Alexayn wearily draws his rapier and apologizes for being out of practice; he notes it might make their deaths less painless than he'd normally manage. At the first sign of combat, one or more spectral guardians known as spirits of serpents emerge in his defense. Each appears to be a ghostly humanoid with delicate wings comprised

of ethereal serpents that lash out at enemies. Alexayn begins the encounter near the center of the room, and any spirits hide within the chamber's ceiling, listening for signs of conflict.

SUBTIER 12-13 (CR 16)

JHANDORAGE VAULDER ALEXAYN CR 15

Human mummy lord swashbuckler 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 176, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 56)

LE Medium undead (augmented human)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

Aura great despair (30 ft., DC 25)

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 18, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +5 Dex, +3 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 235 (14d10+154)

Fort +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +10 (+14 vs. attempts to command or control him)

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, charmed life 6/day, evasion, nimble +3, rejuvenation, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/—;

Immune cold, electricity, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 rapier +27/+22/+17 (1d6+11/15-20 plus 14 precision plus insidious mummy rot) or mwk dagger +25/+20/+13 (1d4+8/17-20 plus 14 precision plus insidious mummy rot) or slam +19 (1d6+4 plus insidious mummy rot)

Ranged mwk dagger +22 (1d4+5/19-20)

Special Attacks channel rot, deeds (bleeding wound, derring-do, dodging panache, evasive, kip-up, menacing swordplay, opportune parry and riposte, precise strike, subtle blade, superior feint, swashbuckler initiative, swashbuckler's grace, targeted strike), insidious mummy rot, panache (8), sandstorm wrath (8d8 fire and slashing, DC 25), swashbuckler weapon training +3, undead mastery (DC 25)

TACTICS

During Combat Alexayn relies heavily on his swordsmanship to strike down foes, deflect attacks, and disarm his enemies. Unless the PCs have expressed an unbending desire to destroy him, each time he gains a

significant advantage, he invites them to set aside their weapons and talk like civilized people. He suppresses his great despair aura until it seems clear that he has no recourse but to slay the PCs.

Morale Alexayn fights until reduced to 50 hit points, at which point he hastily asks if his surrender would spare his continued existence. If he believes the PCs would accept his terms and not destroy him, he submits. Otherwise he fights until destroyed, using every dirty trick he can to infect the PCs.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +19 (+21 disarm, +21 trip); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. disarm, 37 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Disarming Strike^{APG}, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Persuasive, Shadow Strike^{APG}, Staggering Critical, Toughness^B

Skills Acrobatics +22, Bluff +25, Climb +8, Diplomacy +29, Intimidate +37, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Linguistics +2, Perception +18, Perform (dance) +14, Perform (oratory) +14, Sense Motive +26,

Stealth +22, Swim +8; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Intimidate, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Osiriani, Varisian

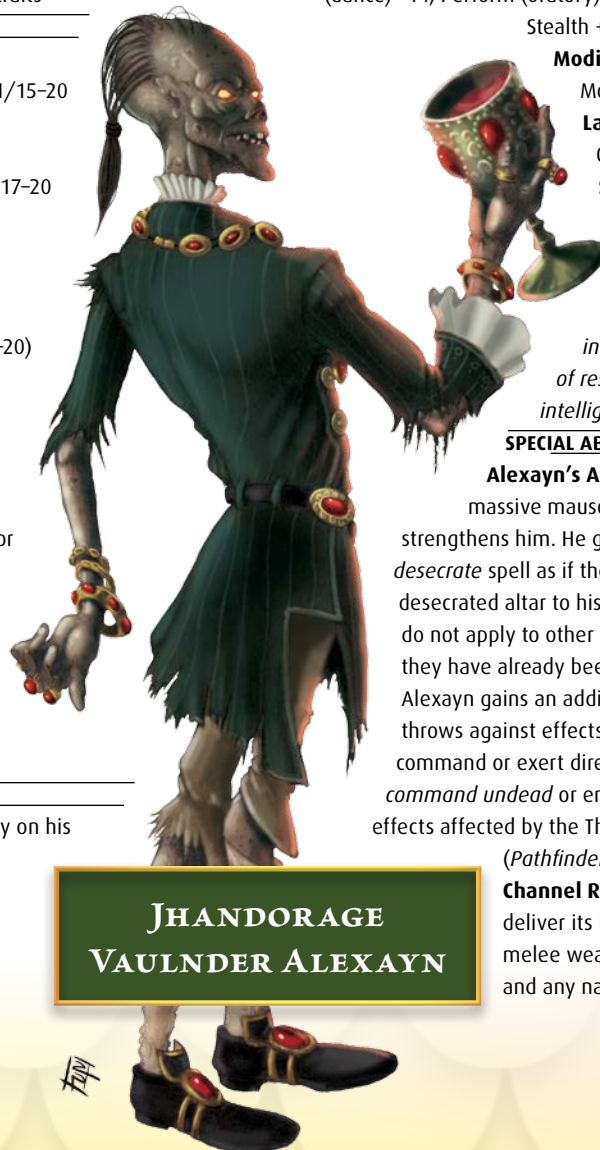
SQ Alexayn's arrogance, swashbuckler finesse

Other Gear +2 mithral chain shirt, +3 rapier, mwk daggers (3), belt of incredible dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, headband of vast intelligence +2, rod of splendor

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alexayn's Arrogance (Su) Alexayn's massive mausoleum to his own greatness strengthens him. He gains the benefits of the *desecrate* spell as if the mausoleum were a desecrated altar to his own pride. These bonuses do not apply to other undead in the area, and they have already been factored into his statistics. Alexayn gains an additional +4 bonus on saving throws against effects that would attempt to command or exert direct control him, such as *command undead* or enchantment (compulsion) effects affected by the Threnodic Spell metamagic feat (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 157).

Channel Rot (Su) A mummy lord can deliver its insidious mummy rot through melee weapon attacks, its slam attack, and any natural attacks it has.



JHANDORAGE
VAULDER ALEXAYN

Great Despair Aura (Su) All creatures within a 30-foot radius that see a mummy lord must succeed at a Will saving throw or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds, then shaken for the following 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the saving throw is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same mummy lord's great despair aura ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting paralysis and fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Insidious Mummy Rot (Su) Curse and disease—slam; *save* Fortitude DC 25; *onset* 1 minute; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 2d4 Constitution and 2d4 Charisma damage; *cure* —. Insidious mummy rot is both a curse and disease, and can be cured only by first removing the curse and then curing the disease. Even after the curse element of insidious mummy rot is lifted, a creature suffering from it cannot recover naturally over time. Anyone casting a conjuration (healing) spell on the afflicted creature must succeed at a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell is wasted and the healing has no effect. Anyone who dies from insidious mummy rot transforms into a pile of sand and cannot be raised by means other than *resurrection* or more powerful magic.

Rejuvenation (Su) One day after a mummy lord is destroyed, the necromantic energies that created the abomination begin to rebuild its body. This process takes 1d10 days. If the body is destroyed before that time passes, the process starts anew. After this time, the mummy lord awakens fully healed in its tomb. To permanently destroy a mummy lord, it must be destroyed and then its remains must be targeted by *consecrate*, *hallow*, and *dispel evil*, cast in consecutive rounds and in that order.

Sandstorm Wrath (Su) Three times per day as a standard action, a mummy lord can exhale a blast of superheated sand in a 40-foot cone. The blast deals 2d8 points of fire and slashing damage for every 3 Hit Dice a mummy lord has. A successful Reflex save halves this damage. Creatures that fail this save are blinded for 2d4 rounds.

Undead Mastery (Su) As a standard action, a mummy lord can attempt to bend any undead creature within 50 feet to its will. The targeted undead must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or fall under the mummy lord's control (the save DC is Charisma-based). An undead with an Intelligence score is allowed an additional save every day to break free of the mummy lord's control; for undead without an Intelligence score, the control is permanent. A creature that succeeds at its Will save cannot be affected again by the same mummy lord's undead mastery for 24 hours. A mummy lord can control 6 Hit Dice of undead creatures for every Hit Die it has. If the mummy lord exceeds this limit, any excess undead from earlier uses of this ability become uncontrolled, as per *animate dead*. If another creature is currently controlling an undead that fails its save against undead mastery, the mummy lord must roll an opposed Charisma check against the current controller. If the mummy lord succeeds, it wrests

away control of the undead. Otherwise, the mummy lord's undead mastery attempt has no effect.

SPIRIT OF SERPENTS

CR 13

Variant pharonic guardian (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 191)

LE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 23, flat-footed 19 (+5 deflection, +8 Dex, +4 shield)
hp 171 (18d8+90)

Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee +3 *ghost touch speed longsword* +22/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+8/17-20), incorporeal touch +16 touch (1d8 plus poison) or incorporeal touch +21 (1d8 plus poison)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with incorporeal touch)

Special Attacks insightful strike, poison, soul-rending wings

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +23)

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 18)

1/day—*greater command* (DC 20)

TACTICS

Before Combat The spirit resides just within the wall, emerging when Alexayn is threatened. The spirit can pick up a sword and shield as part of its movement to enter the chamber.

During Combat The spirit helps Alexayn by flanking his targets, impeding those who attempt to surround the mummy, or flitting through a wall to harass spellcasters and ranged foes.

Morale The spirit fights until destroyed or until Alexayn commands it to stop.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 27, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 36

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Stand Still, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Fly +16, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (religion) +22, Perception +24, Sense Motive +24

Languages Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ guardian sword and shield

Other Gear mwk light steel shield, mwk longsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Guardian Sword and Shield (Su) The spirit of serpents can imbue any sword and shield with the *ghost touch* and *speed* special abilities and a +3 enhancement bonus. This effect lasts for as long as the spirit wields them and for 1 minute thereafter. The spirit uses these items as if it had a Strength score equal to its Charisma score.

SCALING ENCOUNTER A

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Both Subtiers: Remove all spirits of serpents from the encounter.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Both Subtiers: If a spirit of serpent's soul rending wings ability hits a creature with death ward or another effect that protects against negative energy, instead of dealing negative levels to that creature, the ray attempts to dispel that effect, as per *dispel magic* (CL 18).

Subtier 12–13: Add an additional spirit of serpents to the encounter.

Subtier 14–15: Add two additional spirits of serpents to the encounter.

Insightful Strike (Ex) The spirit of serpents gains a +4 insight bonus on attack rolls against foes whose thoughts it has read via its judging gaze ability.

Judging Gaze (Su) The spirit of serpents' gaze attack allows it to read the minds of those within 30 feet, as per the *detect thoughts* spell with 3 rounds of concentration (Will DC 24 negates). This is a mind-affecting divination effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Su) Incorporeal touch—injury; *save* Fort DC 24; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Int; *cure* 2 saves.

Soul-Rending Wings (Su) As a standard action every 1d4 rounds, the spirit of serpents can flare its wings to fire rays of soul-cutting light in two 30-foot lines extending away from it. Living creatures in the lines take 1d4 negative levels (Reflex DC 24 negates). A creature whose thoughts the spirit of serpents has read via its judging gaze ability takes a –2 penalty on this save. The Fortitude save to remove these negative levels is also DC 24, though without the –2 penalty from judging gaze. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR 18)

JHANDORAGE VAULNDER ALEXAYN

CR 17

Human mummy lord swashbuckler 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 176, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 56)

LE Medium undead (augmented human)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

Aura great despair (30 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 35, touch 19, flat-footed 26 (+8 armor, +5 Dex, +4 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 268 (16d10+178)

Fort +18, **Ref** +20, **Will** +12 (+16 vs. attempts to command or control him)

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, charmed life 6/day, evasion, nimble +4, rejuvenation, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/—; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 *rapier* +29/+24/+19/+14 (1d6+11/15–20+16 precision plus insidious mummy rot) or *mwk dagger* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d4+8/17–20+16 precision plus insidious mummy rot) or *slam* +21 (1d6+6 plus insidious mummy rot)

Special Attacks channel rot, deeds (bleeding wound, derring-do, dizzying defense, dodging panache, evasive, kip-up, menacing swordplay, opportune parry and riposte, perfect thrust, precise strike, subtle blade, superior feint, swashbuckler initiative, swashbuckler's edge, swashbuckler's grace, targeted strike), insidious mummy rot, panache (8), sandstorm wrath (10d8 fire and slashing, DC 26), swashbuckler weapon training +3, undead mastery (DC 26)

TACTICS

Use the tactics in Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +21 (+23 disarm, +23 trip); **CMD** 38 (40 vs. disarm, 40 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Disarming Strike^{APG}, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Persuasive, Seize Advantage^{ACG}, Shadow Strike^{APG}, Staggering Critical, Toughness^B

Skills Acrobatics +24, Bluff +27, Climb +8, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +39, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Linguistics +4, Perception +20, Perform (dance) +15, Perform (oratory) +15, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +22, Stealth +22, Swim +7; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Osiriani, Varisian

SQ Alexayn's arrogance, swashbuckler finesse

Other Gear +4 *spiteful*^{ACG} *mithral chain shirt*, +3 *rapier*, *mwk daggers* (3), *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *rod of splendor*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alexayn's Arrogance (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Channel Rot (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Great Despair Aura (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Insidious Mummy Rot (Su) See Subtier 12–13. The saving throw DC is 26, and the DC of caster level checks for conjuration (healing) spells is 28.

Rejuvenation (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Sandstorm Wrath (Su) See Subtier 12–13. The blast deals 10d8 points of fire and slashing damage, and its save DC is 26.

Undead Mastery (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

SPIRITS OF SERPENTS (2)

CR 13

hp 171 each (see Subtier 12–13)

TACTICS

Use the tactics in Subtier 12–13.

Treasure: Every object in this room is valuable. The swords and shields lining the wall are each encrusted with gems or made of expensive materials, such as mithral or various skymetals. The tapestries of Alexayn's victories are masterfully made of silk and gold and woven with tiny gemstones to catch the light. Alexayn's coin collection is also worth far more than the coins' face value. It includes treasures such as a full set of coins from each of the seven domains of Thassilon at the time of Earthfall.

Development: Alexayn's goals are simple: having his name spoken by everyone in the Aspis Consortium and revenge against those who he feels betrayed him (either Suliji Peshar or the current Patrons who ignored his legacy, or both), in that order. He's not thrilled about working with the PCs, but he's willing to strike a deal in which he exchanges what he knows of the Aspis Building's layout, its defenses, and Suliji's likely targets within for the PCs' promise to both end a traitor's life (preferably Suliji, but a Patron at a minimum) and leave a clear message to the Consortium that it is to remember and honor its founder. He assures them that they need not return with any evidence of the deed; if they succeed, the proof should be apparent from his lonely refuge here.

If the PCs accept Alexayn's simple offer, he tells them what he knows, which translates as the PCs facing one fewer obstacle (minimum one) during the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge (see page 21). As the GM, also consider this an open-ended rationale for providing the players additional guidance and clarification as they plan their assault. Agreeing to the mummy's terms does leave the PCs beholden to him. Should they fail to fulfill both his conditions, his displeasure drives him to leave his mausoleum and destroy something precious to the PC. See the nearby sidebar for more details. Finally, the PCs can choose to refuse Alexayn's deal, in which case he admits that they already know what they must to chase after Suliji, even if they are blind not to accept good advice when it's offered. He does not menace them as they leave, knowing that at the least they're likely to slay Suliji or cause mayhem in the Aspis building even without his help.

If the PCs destroy Alexayn before he can convey the fundamentals of Suliji Peshar's old plans and the ramifications, they find his own personal notes recorded on cracking parchment. These musings detail his suspicions sufficiently to inform the PCs that the Aspis Building is their next objective if they wish to find the half-orc.

FULFILLING ALEXAYN'S DEAL

If the PCs agree to restore Alexayn's reputation in exchange for his help, the mummy holds them to their word. Exactly how the PCs fulfill the agreement is open-ended, but it should involve at least three significant acts or one exceptionally dramatic act that spreads word of Alexayn's glory and involvement. The PCs might decide to menacingly announce that Alexayn sent them at the beginning of combat, paint eerie messages like "Remember Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn" on the walls of the Aspis Building, or any number of other stunts. These actions rarely involve skill checks—rather, the PCs just need to remember to honor Alexayn's demands. Fulfilling this objective also makes it painfully obvious that someone has broken into the Aspis Building, earning the PCs 1 Awareness Point.

A mummy makes a terrible foe, and if the PCs neglect their part of the deal, Alexayn quickly realizes that the Pathfinders failed or forgot to uphold their end of the bargain. His hatred drives him to leave his tomb, hunt down something they hold dear, and destroy it. In this case, he seeks out one of the NPC Pathfinder teams shortly after the mission, kills 1d2 of the surviving members, and leaves a mocking message for the PCs explaining how their own negligence doomed their proteges. Count these deaths for the purpose of the scenario's rewards, but the deaths occur after the team returns any loaned items to the PCs.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat or negotiate with Alexayn, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 4,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 5,133 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 6,267 gp.

PLANNING THE ASSAULT

In the time the PCs spent in the mausoleum of Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn, Suliji made her move on the Aspis Building. Ostenso is on high alert following a coordinated string of arsons, murders, and break-ins associated with Consortium interests throughout the city—the work of Suliji's handful of remaining operatives to provide her cover as she broke into the estate. These incidents have drawn not only the local guards' attention but also that of the Aspis. To protect their property, the Patrons in the Aspis Building dispatched many of their operatives and mercenaries to search for the culprits, mitigate the damage, and prevent further incidents. This investigation has left the headquarters understaffed. However, even the skeleton crew that remains is a formidable force, and the PCs must take care as they follow Suliji Peshar.

Shortly after the PCs exit the mausoleum, their NPC Pathfinder teams find them and urge them to take cover

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER

Areas **B** and **C** present two different combat encounters depending on which route the PCs take to enter the Aspis Building, but they are optional encounters. If the PCs fought Alexayn in area **A** or otherwise have less than 165 minutes remaining in which to finish the adventure as they enter the Aspis Building, consider skipping these encounters. Instead move directly to the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge.

in a nearby building to report their findings. The teams can relay the general state of affairs in Ostenso, and while they are aware that many of the targets are Aspis properties, they are not sure who is responsible. One team also noticed that the Aspis Building, which earlier had several visible guards patrolling the grounds, now appears conspicuously abandoned.

The PCs' goal is to enter the Aspis Building, and between the information provided earlier by Marcos Farabellus the intelligence provided by their teams, and any secrets provided by Alexayn, the PCs can identify at least three principle means of entry: the front entrance, the shipping entrance, and the reporting entrance. In addition, if the PCs earlier learned of the Ostenso's extensive sewer network, they can choose that as an additional approach. The NPC teams can provide some qualitative information about each entrance to help the PCs make an informed choice.

Before setting off, the PCs can assign their teams to break into the Aspis Building from any of the other entrances. If the PCs wrap up the meeting before providing their teams any instructions, one of the NPC Pathfinders inquires whether the teams can help infiltrate the compound or create distractions at the other entrances to provide the PCs cover. This is a dangerous mission, and the PCs can ask one or more teams to perform less hazardous work like keeping watch or keeping open an escape route to the harbor; however, the PCs' infiltration becomes considerably more difficult for each team that isn't helping break into the estate. See **Appendix 2: Field Command** on page 48 for more details.

Should the PCs choose some means of entering the Aspis Building other than the ones listed (for example, scaling the exterior and breaking through a window), simply adapt one of the options below that best fits the PCs' strategy and its ramifications. The Aspis Building is warded against external teleportation effects, though it is possible to use teleportation effects normally once inside the building.

Front Entrance: A broad, impressive flight of stone steps leads up to the Aspis Building's front entrance—a pair of thick darkwood doors carved with serpent insignia. If

the PCs choose the front entrance, use the encounter in area **B**. In addition, the PCs earn 1 Awareness Point due to this entrance's visibility and heightened security.

Reporting Entrance: When visiting Aspis agents hope to enter quietly, they use this small door far from the front entrance. If the PCs choose this route, use the encounter in area **B**. The reporting entrance presents two challenges. First, the doorway is narrow and fairly low, so only Medium and smaller creatures (and at the GM's discretion some larger serpentine or otherwise flexible creatures) can move through it comfortably; a Large creature must succeed at a DC 25 Escape Artist check to enter through here, and a Huge creature cannot use this entrance at all.

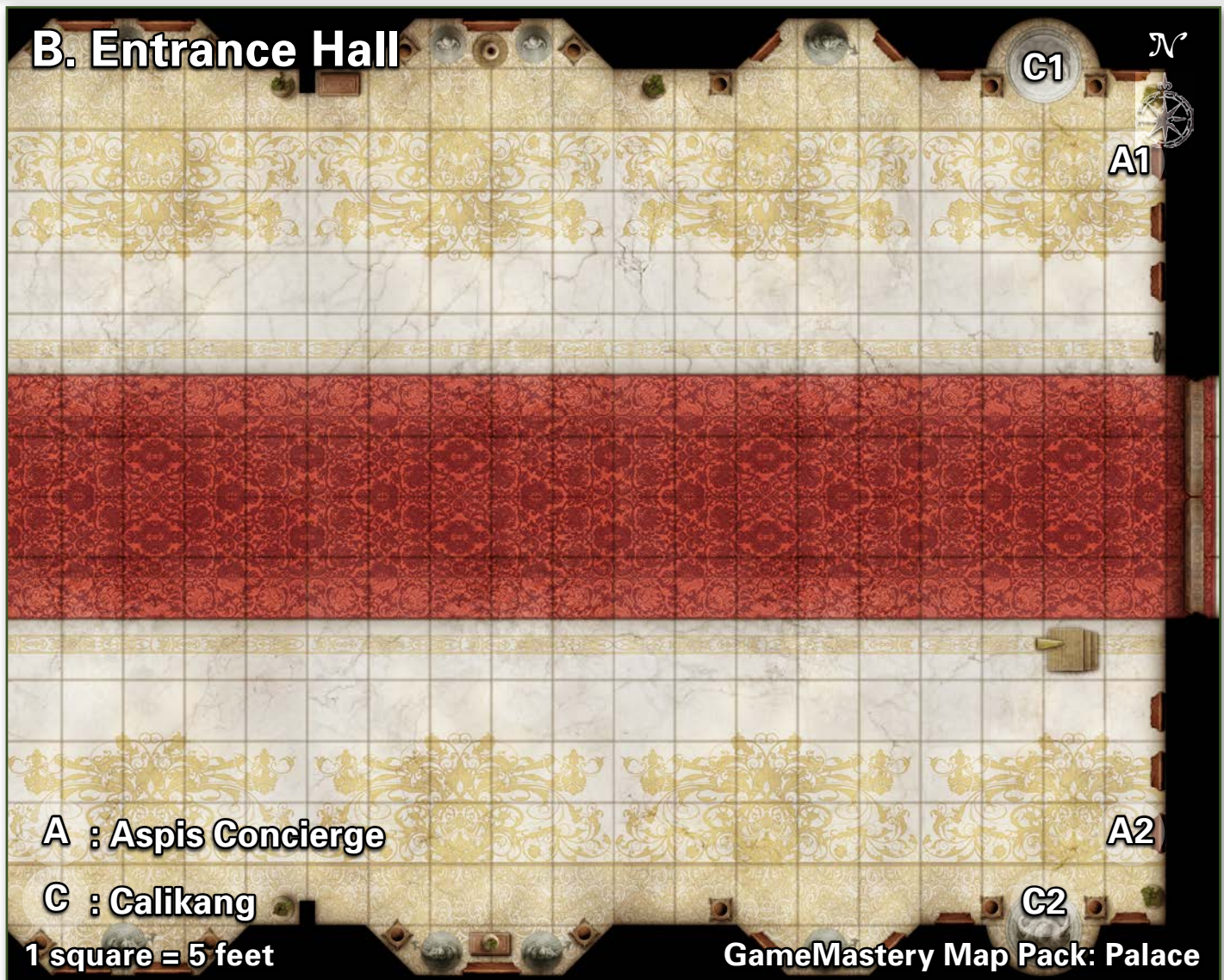
Second, the Consortium relies on magical and mechanical means to monitor whoever comes and goes through this entrance. These alarms signal several guardrooms throughout the building unless the PCs disable them first; the mechanisms are effectively a magical trap. A PC must examine the door and succeed at a DC 32 Perception check (DC 37 in Subtier 14–15) to find the alarms, and disabling them requires a successful DC 35 Disable Device check (DC 40 in Subtier 14–15) or for a PC to dispel the effect (CL 13th in Subtier 12–13 or CL 15th in Subtier 14–15). If the PCs disarm the alarms, they can use this entrance without any issues. If they trigger the alarm, they earn 2 Awareness Points but can otherwise use this entrance.

Sewer Entrance: The Aspis Building sits on prime real estate—both on the surface as well as in the sewers below. One of the NPC teams can readily secure several 15-foot-long boats for the PCs to punt their way from the harbor up one of the sewer tunnels. If the PCs choose this route, use the encounter in area **C**. In addition, the sewer entrance leads up to a room deep within the compound that is much closer to the building's central offices; the PCs encounter one fewer obstacle (minimum one) during the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge (see page 21).

Shipping Entrance: Far from the front entrance is an immense set of sliding doors and a portcullis that bar the way into the Aspis Building's warehouse. If the PCs choose this route, use the encounter in area **B**. The shipping entrance is at the far end of the compound and relatively distant from most other rooms in the Aspis Building, so the PCs encounter an additional obstacle during the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge (see page 21) if they choose this route.

B. ENTRANCE HALL (CR 15 OR CR 17)

Run this encounter only if the PCs chose to enter the Aspis Building through the front entrance, the shipping entrance, or the side entrance. As they traverse the



hallways, one of the first rooms they come across is an expansive entrance hall.

Plush red carpet crosses the painted floor of this fine hall. Display stands support wonders from the Inner Sea region and beyond, and statues of stone, wood, and bronze reflect a variety of artistic and cultural styles.

The Aspis Building contains numerous entry halls, ballrooms, and receiving areas designed to impress visitors. As the PCs wind their way through the towering structure, they come across one such room. For the purpose of this encounter, the PCs approach from the east.

Creatures: The Consortium employs scores of servants, each well versed in the arts of etiquette, hospitality, and casual espionage. Due to the ongoing crisis, most of these servants have taken shelter elsewhere in the compound. One of the chief concierges remains on duty, ensuring

that (at the minimum) ruffians don't wander in and steal all the silver. This managing butler is also a capable combatant and is authorized to command the calikangs that stand here. Calikangs are six-armed giants that serve as guardians, and they loyally attack if the PCs become hostile or if the concierge signals to them.

Ever a host, the concierge greets the PCs, informs them that the Aspis Building is closed for business until tomorrow morning, and prompts them to depart the premises. If they cooperate, he keeps tabs on them from a safe distance with the calikangs following out of sight to see that they do as they say. If the PCs instead try to trick their way past the concierge, they find him difficult to dupe. He has it on good authority that there is at least one deadly intruder on the premises, and he has little reason to assume the PCs aren't trespassing, too. In the likely event that the PCs initiate hostilities, he is prepared to fight.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 15)

ASPIS CONCIERGE

CR 12

Half-elf bard 13

LN Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, *see invisibility*; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

hp 101 (13d8+39)

Fort +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14; +2 vs. enchantments, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +11/+6 (1d4-1/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 33 rounds/day (swift action; countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate [DC 21], inspire competence +4, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, soothing performance, suggestion [DC 21])

Bard Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +18)

5th (2/day)—*greater dispel magic*, *song of discord* (DC 22)

4th (4/day)—*dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*, *zone of silence*

3rd (5/day)—*confusion* (DC 20), *glibness*, *good hope*, *haste*, *see invisibility*

2nd (6/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *heroism*, *suggestion* (DC 19), *tongues*, *whispering wind*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 18), *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *light*, *mage hand*, *open/close* (DC 15), *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat The concierge is aware that there is at least one active threat in the compound, so he has already cast *freedom of movement*, *heroism*, and *see invisibility* on himself. These are accounted for in his statistics.

During Combat The concierge uses his inspire courage ability and spells to augment the calikangs' combat abilities. He endeavors to keep at least one of the monstrous humanoids between himself and the PCs.

Morale If reduced to 30 or fewer hit points—or if faced with other evidence of his inevitable death—the concierge escapes to elsewhere in the compound using *dimension door*. Otherwise he surrenders unless the calikangs appear to have the upper hand.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 18

Feats Aspis Warden, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perform [oratory]), Spell Focus (enchantment), Still Spell, Toughness
Skills Knowledge (geography) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (local) +19, Knowledge (nobility) +19, Linguistics +13, Perception +22, Perform (comedy) +26, Perform (dance) +26, Perform (oratory) +32, Profession (concierge) +17, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +12; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal, Kelish, Osiriani, Shadowtongue, Skald, Tien, Undercommon, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +6, elf blood, jack-of-all-trades, lore master 2/day, versatile performances (comedy, dance, oratory)

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*, *scroll of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 glamerd studded leather, mwk dagger, *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of mind shielding*, 148 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aspis Warden The concierge has trained extensively to protect the Aspis Building, and has developed techniques for working more effectively with its other defenders. When fighting within the Aspis Building, the concierge's harmless spells and beneficial abilities (such as inspire courage) bypass his allies' spell resistance and immunities.

CALIKANGS (2)

CR 12

LN Large monstrous humanoid (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 307)

CALIKANG

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 157 each (15d10+75); fast healing 5

Fort +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities defensive slam, energy absorption, suspend animation; **Immune** electricity, mind-affecting effects, negative energy; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +18/+13/+8 (2d6+8/17-20), +1 *longsword* +18 (2d6+8/17-20), 4 slams +16 (1d6+3)

Space 10 ft., **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-foot line, 14d6 energy damage, Reflex DC 22 half, usable 1/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +15)

Constant—*air walk*, *magic weapon*, *true seeing*, *water walk*
3/day—*lightning bolt* (DC 16)

1/day—*chain lightning* (DC 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat The calikangs are in a state of suspended animation. They exit this state at the beginning of combat, granting them a +4 bonus on their initiative checks.

During Combat The calikangs endeavor to keep threats from harming the concierge while patiently cutting down their foes. When closing with targets, the calikangs use a combination of *chain lightning* and Vital Strike to soften up targets before performing full attack actions. They use their breath weapons if they have a good chance to do so without hitting the concierge. They deliberately catch each other in their electric attacks to trigger each other's energy absorption.

Morale The calikangs loyally attempt to drive off intruders until they are slain.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 35

Feats Critical Focus, Double Slice, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Staggering Critical, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vital Strike

Skills Intimidate +21, Perception +20, Use Magic Device +18

Languages Common, Giant

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Defensive Slam (Ex) A calikang gains a cumulative +1 shield bonus to its AC for each of its arms that does not wield a manufactured weapon, to a maximum of +4 for four hands. A calikang can make slam attacks with these arms without losing this AC bonus.

Breath Weapon (Su) A calikang can choose what kind of energy damage its breath weapon inflicts when it uses this ability, choosing from acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic energy. A calikang is particularly adept at using electricity in

SCALING ENCOUNTER B

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Subtier 12-13: Remove one calikang from the encounter.

Subtier 14-15: Remove one Aspis concierge from the encounter. Replace one of the calikang sentinels with a calikang from Subtier 12-13.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Subtier 12-13: The concierge has consumed an alchemical draught that grants him a +5 alchemical bonus on his initiative check. Replace both the calikangs with the calikang sentinels from Subtier 14-15.

Subtier 14-15: Each of the concierges has consumed an alchemical draught that grants him a +5 alchemical bonus on his initiative check. Add one calikang sentinel to the encounter. Each of the calikangs benefits from *greater heroism* (CL 13th), which a concierge who does not appear in this encounter cast before leaving to search elsewhere in the building.

this manner, and inflict 1 additional point of damage per die (+14 for most calikangs) when it choose to inflict electricity damage with its breath weapon.

Energy Absorption (Su) A spell that inflicts energy damage that is defeated by the calikang's SR or immunity to electricity is absorbed into its body, healing it for an amount of damage equal to the absorbed spell's caster level and granting an additional daily use of its breath weapon.

Suspend Animation (Su) As a full-round action, a calikang can enter a state of suspended animation, freezing in place and becoming motionless. It remains aware of its surroundings. In this state, the calikang is immune to disease, inhaled toxins, poison, starvation, and thirst, and receives a +4 bonus on all Fortitude saves. The calikang can exit this state as an immediate action—if it does so to attack a foe or initiate combat, it gains a +4 insight bonus on its Initiative check.

SUBTIER 14-15 (CR 17)

ASPIS CONCIERGES (2)

CR 12

hp 101 each (see Subtier 12-13)

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12-13. One concierge instead uses the inspire greatness or dirge of doom bardic performance.

CALIKANG SENTINELS (2)

CR 14

Calikang fighter 2 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 307)

LN Large monstrous humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 12, flat-footed 29 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +12 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 195 (17d10+102); fast healing 5

Fort +16, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12; +1 vs. fear

Immune electricity, mind-affecting effects, negative energy;
SR 23

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +22/+17/+12/+7 (2d6+10/17-20),
+1 *longsword* +22/+17 (2d6+10/17-20), 4 slams +20
(1d6+4) or
6 slams +25 (1d6+9)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-foot line, 14d6 energy damage, Reflex DC 23 half, usable 1/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

Constant—*air walk*, *magic weapon*, *true seeing*, *water walk*

3/day—*lightning bolt* (DC 18)

1/day—*chain lightning* (DC 21)

TACTICS

Use the calikang tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +27; **CMD** 40

Feats Critical Focus, Double Slice, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vital Strike

Skills Intimidate +25, Perception +21, Use Magic Device +20

Languages Common, Giant

SQ breath weapon, defensive slam, energy absorption, suspend animation

Gear chain shirt, +1 *longsword* (2), *aegis of recovery*^{UE}

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Defensive Slam (Ex) See Subtier 12–13.

Breath Weapon (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Energy Absorption (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Suspend Animation (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Development: The PCs earn 1 Awareness Point for each concierge that escapes. In the event that the PCs manage to trick or dominate a concierge, he can help guide them past a few known hazards; reduce the number of obstacles the PCs encounter by one (minimum one) during the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge (see page 21). Situations in which the PCs harm other Aspis employees or cause property damage are anathema to the concierge's interests, likely allowing him to attempt a new saving throw against ongoing domination effects. Should he break free, he attempts to feign compliance until he can best betray the PCs—likely during an upcoming encounter. However, even a charmed concierge's loyalties

and standing orders are too strong to allow him to lead the PCs deeper into the building.

Once the PCs complete this encounter, transition to the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge on page 21.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat or decisively bypass this encounter, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows. Ignore this adjustment if the PCs skipped this encounter due to time constraints or because they fought Alexayn.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 2,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 2,566 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 3,133 gp.

C. THE SEWER LANDING (CR 15 OR CR 17)

Run this encounter only if the PCs chose to enter through the sewer entrance. The PCs have as many 10- and 15-foot-long skiffs that they can paddle or punt through the sewer tunnels. The group should determine which PCs are in which boat (as well as the order in which the boats travel). The PCs' knowledge is sufficient to navigate to less than a few hundred feet from the Aspis Building, where a stone dock serves as one of the Consortium's many means of smuggling sensitive shipments into and out of the building. The water in the sewer tunnels is about 5 feet deep, and the water deepens to about 15 feet in depth in the subterranean harbor. The PCs approach from the south or the east.

Creature: The Aspis agents sent to steal dragon eggs in Varisia recovered what they thought to be a normal specimen, but it hatched into an aberrant draconic monstrosity on the voyage back to Cheliax. Suspecting that a frogemoth with green dragon blood would be hard to sell, the Consortium's beast handlers instead chose to raise the scaly creature and train it as a guardian. The frogemoth has since grown a little too big for the only home it has ever known, yet it remains fairly content to accept handouts from the Consortium in return for snatching up any trespassers who don't speak the right passwords. The frogemoth treats the entire area as a swamp for the purpose of attempting Stealth checks.

As the PCs approach, the frogemoth lies in wait underwater, intermittently spying on them with its eyestalk. The murky water hides the predator's form well, and the PCs do not spot it unless they succeed at a DC 36 Perception check (DC 39 in Subtier 14–15). If able to launch an ambush, the frogemoth waits until the first boat docks at the stone pier.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 15)

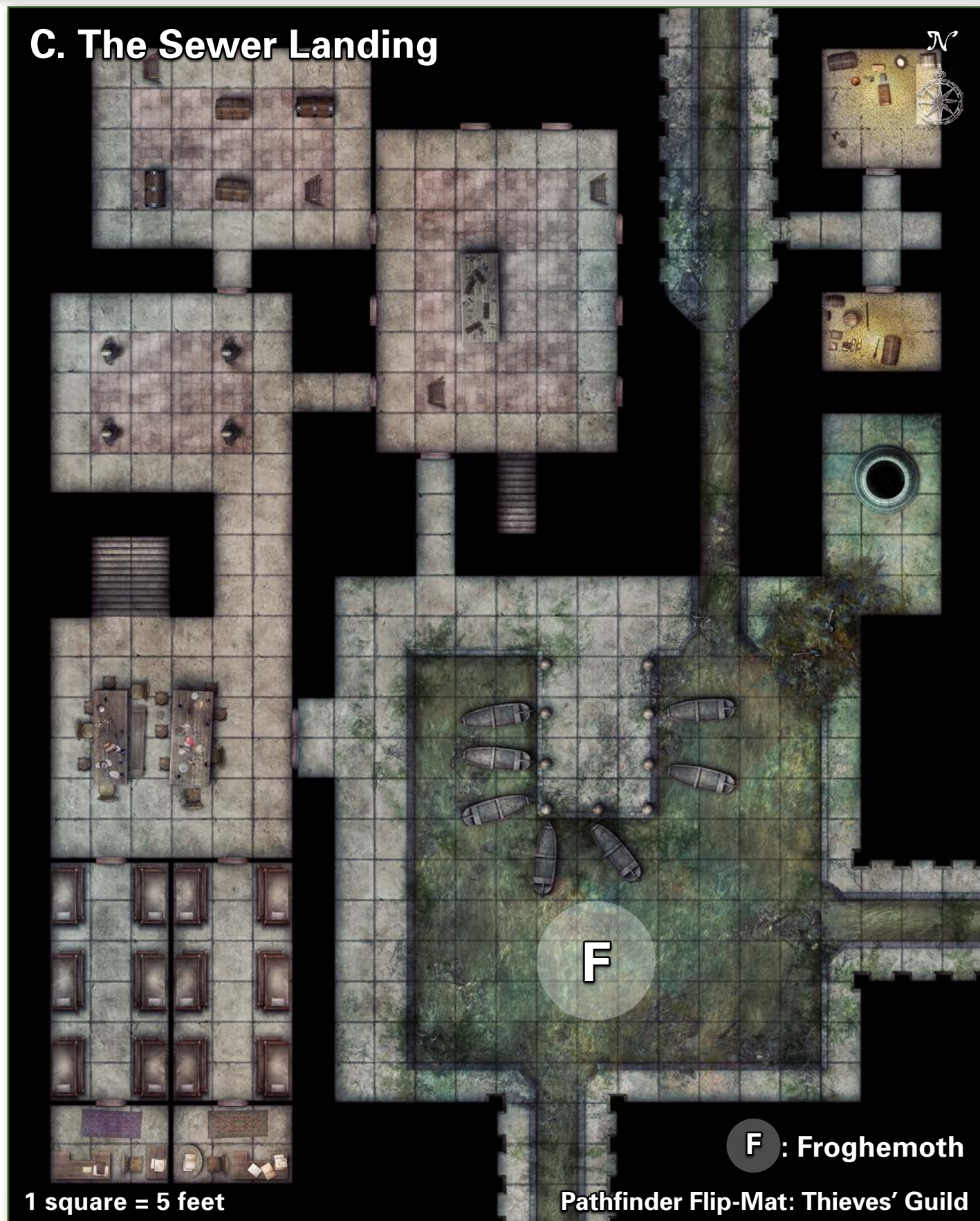
DRACONIC FROGHEMOTH

CR 15

Half-dragon frogemoth (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 170, 136)

N Huge dragon

C. The Sewer Landing



SCALING ENCOUNTER C

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Subtier 12–13: In the course of disciplining the froghemoth, the Aspis Consortium has amputated two of its tentacles (leaving it with only two tentacle attacks). This abuse also gives the froghemoth the sickened condition and reduces the save DC of its breath weapon to 24.

Subtier 14–15: Apply the adjustments in Subtier 12–13 above. In addition, the froghemoth has only two mouths (giving it only two bite attacks), and it must forgo both bite attacks when using its many maws ability to swallow an opponent.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Both Subtiers: The froghemoth loses its slowed by electricity weakness, and is completely immune to electricity. It uses the base saves of a dragon rather than an aberration, which grants it a +5 bonus on Fortitude and Reflex saves. Mental conditioning from Aspis agents has also granted it a +5 bonus on Will saves. Apply the agile mythic template (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 224) to the froghemoth. This increases its AC by 2, its hit points by 8, its base speed to 40 feet, and its swim speed to 60 feet. It also grants the froghemoth a +20 bonus on initiative checks, mythic rank 1, the evasion defensive ability (as the rogue class feature), and the dual initiative mythic ability.

Dual Initiative (Ex): The monster gets two turns each round, one on its initiative count and another on its initiative count – 20. For example, if the monster's initiative is 23, for its first turn it could make a full attack (and take a 5-foot step) at initiative 23, and for its second turn at initiative 3 it could take a move action and cast a spell. This allows the monster to perform two actions per round that normally take an entire round. For the purposes of spells and effects that have a duration of a round or longer or trigger at the beginning of the creature's round or the start of its turn such as saving throws against ongoing effects or taking bleed damage), only the monster's first turn each round counts toward such durations.

Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +28

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 9, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +23 natural, –2 size)

hp 232 (16d8+160)

Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

Immune acid, electricity (partial), paralysis, sleep; **Resist** fire 10

Weaknesses slowed by electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee bite +24 (2d6+14/19–20 plus grab), 2 claws +22 (1d8+7 plus grab), 4 tentacles +22 (1d8+7 plus grab), tongue +22 (1d4+7 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (30 ft. with tongue)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-foot cone of acid once per day, 16d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 28 half), constrict (1d6+14), swallow whole (3d6+14 plus 6d6 acid, AC 21, 23 hp)

TACTICS

During Combat The froghemoth lashes out with its natural attacks, saving its breath weapon until it can affect most of its targets and perhaps sink a boat. If it is not sustaining much damage, it attempts to swallow a PC or two.

Morale If the froghemoth is reduced to 40 or fewer hit points, its instinct is to hide underwater and hope that the PCs leave it alone; it's too big to flee this area without exposing itself to more attacks. If attacks continue or it is fighting one or more submerged foes, it fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 38, **Dex** 13, **Con** 30, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 39

Feats Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Intimidate +10, Perception +28, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +18 (+26 in marshes), Swim +22; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth in marshes

Languages Draconic (cannot speak)

SQ stunted appendages

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) The draconic froghemoth's stalked eyes allow it to see in all directions at once. It cannot be flanked.

Slowed by Electricity (Ex) Although a draconic froghemoth is immune to damage from electricity, whenever it would otherwise take such damage it is instead slowed for 1 round.

Stunted Appendages (Ex) The draconic froghemoth does not gain a fly speed from the half-dragon template, and its claws count as secondary natural attacks. Instead, its stomach churns with caustic juices, dealing additional acid damage to creatures it swallows whole. Its swim speed also increases to 50 feet.

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR 17)

THREE-MAW FROGHEMOTH

CR 17

Unique half-dragon froghemoth (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 170, 136)

N Huge dragon

Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +35

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 9, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +23 natural, –2 size)

hp 275 (19d8+190)

Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

Immune acid, electricity (partial), paralysis, sleep; **Resist** fire 10
Weaknesses slowed by electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee 3 bites +26 (2d6+14/19–20 plus grab), 2 claws +24 (1d8+7 plus grab), 4 tentacles +24 (1d8+7 plus grab), tongue +24 (1d4+7 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (30 ft. with tongue)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-foot cone of acid once per day, 19d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 29 half), constrict (1d6+14), swallow whole (3d6+14 plus 10d6 acid, AC 21, 27 hp)

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 38, **Dex** 13, **Con** 30, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +30 (+34 grapple); **CMD** 41

Feats Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Intimidate +10, Perception +35, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +21 (+29 in marshes), Swim +22; **Racial Modifiers** +12 Perception, +8 Stealth in marshes

Languages Draconic (cannot speak)

SQ stunted appendages

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) See Subtier 12–13.

Many Maws (Ex) If the three-maw frogemoth begins its turn with an opponent grappled and performs a full attack action, it can use its swallow whole ability on that creature as a free action in place of making a bite attack. It cannot swallow more than one creature per round in this way. When performing a full-attack action, the three-maw frogemoth can forgo all of its bite and tongue attacks in order to use its breath weapon as a free action.

Slowed by Electricity (Ex) See Subtier 12–13.

Stunted Appendages (Ex) See Subtier 12–13.

A series of tunnels and stairs lead to the Aspis Building's basement, and from there to the ground floor. Once the PCs complete this encounter, transition to the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge on page 21.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat the frogemoth, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows. Ignore this adjustment if the PCs skipped this encounter due to time constraints or because they fought the mummy Alexayn.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 2,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 2,566 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 3,133 gp.

TRAVERSING THE SERPENTS' DEN

Once the PCs have broken through one of the entrances, they must wind their way through the Aspis Building's interior, a many-story array of workshops, meeting

rooms, offices, storage, lounges, training facilities, visitor accommodations, and more. Although only a fraction of the Consortium's badge-holding members undergo complete training here, the Aspis pride themselves on maintaining the space and equipment necessary to conduct all aspects of their operations in their headquarters. There is far too much to explore in the course of a single adventure; fortunately, the PCs' objective doesn't require breaking into each and every room. Instead, the PCs face several obstacles as they wind their way up several floors and through impressive galleries. After each challenge, the PCs also might find a trove of useful information or gear (see Treasure below).

During this challenge, the PCs encounter three obstacles that the GM can select or determine at random from the table below. Receiving key intelligence from Alexayn in area A or using the Reporting Entrance reduce the number of obstacles the PCs must face by one each, and use of exceptional magic or skills such as *find the path* should likewise reduce the number of obstacles by one (minimum one). On the other hand, using the Shipping Entrance increases the number of obstacles by one.

Do not repeat any obstacle except Consortium Security, and even then avoid presenting that obstacle twice in a row if possible. Several of the PCs' choices can modify how many obstacles the PCs must overcome, though they must always face at least one obstacle. Aim to resolve each of these challenges in 5–10 minutes.

1d6	Obstacle
1–2	Consortium Security
3–4	Countless Barriers
5	Gallery of Fortune
6	Guards and Wards

Consortium Security: Although many of the Aspis Building's armed operatives have dispersed throughout Ostenso to handle the other crises instigated by Suliji, there are still groups patrolling the halls. A typical such group includes approximately eight 3rd- to 5th-level NPCs, which pose virtually no combat threat to the PCs at this level. Rather, they are a menace because they can raise the alarm and earn the PCs more Awareness Points. There are numerous ways in which the PCs might dispatch or deceive these patrols.

Combat: For a group of high-level Pathfinders, there's little more satisfying than knocking down a bunch of inferior Aspis goons. Rather than run an actual encounter, allow each PC to take a full round worth of actions, such as casting a spell, performing a full attack action, or the like. Treat the agents' AC as 18 and their saving throw bonuses as +4 each (increase these to 20 and +6 in Subtier 14–15). If the PCs' total damage dealt equals at least 50 points per PC (75 points per PC in Subtier 14–15),

they defeat the patrol before anyone can call for help. If the PCs do not meet that total, they defeat the agents but earn 1 Awareness Point. If they do not deal damage equal to at least half that value, many agents raise the alarm, earning the PCs 2 Awareness Points. For the purpose of this calculation, any damaging effects that could affect three or more targets increase their effective damage dealt by 50%. If the PCs use a spell that would severely hamper the agents' ability to flee or call for help (such as *silence* or *wall of stone*), treat that spell as though it had dealt damage equal to 10 times the spell's level.

Deception: The PCs might use any number of methods to trick or evade the patrols. In most cases, this should involve one PC taking the lead on a DC 25 skill check. Before the lead PC rolls the check, the other PC should each attempt the same check at DC 20 or an unrelated check at DC 25; for each failed secondary check, increase the lead PC's check DC by 5. For example, the lead PC might attempt a Bluff check with several other PCs attempting DC 20 Bluff checks to support her story, another attempting a DC 25 Disguise check to avoid suspicion, and another attempting a DC 25 Stealth check to avoid notice altogether. Let the players roleplay their deception for a few minutes, and consider awarding as much as a +10 bonus on the lead PC's check for exceptional circumstances, canny excuses, or other great ideas. Increase the primary check's DC by 5 and the secondary checks' DCs by 2 in Subtier 14–15.

If the lead PC fails the check, the patrol tries to raise the alarm. Treat this as the combat solution above, but each PC only receives a standard action with which to deal damage or cast spells.

Countless Barriers: The Aspis Building is no fortress, but it does sport scores of mechanical and magical barriers that can slow intruders. Believing that security has been compromised, Mr. Khayn has invoked several basic precautions, including locking down key passageways. As the PCs follow Suliji's trail to the restricted area, they must either overcome or find a way around mundane doors, portcullises, magical walls, and arcane locks.

Rather than describe and roll a new check for every barrier, this obstacle involves four of the following checks: Disable Device (DC 30), Escape Artist (DC 30), Intelligence (DC 18), Strength (DC 16), and Wisdom (DC 18). Alternatively, a PC can attempt a DC 16 dispel check using *dispel magic* or cast other spells that allow the group to negate a magical barrier or bypass it completely (e.g. *dimension door* or *passwall*). Only allow a single spell or roll for each of the four checks, and the PCs cannot use the same ability or skill check more than once; they inevitably encounter something with no lock to pick or that resists physical force. In Subtier 14–15, increase the DCs of the skill checks by 5 and the DCs of ability and caster level checks by 2.

If the PCs succeed at three or four checks, they easily bypass the obstacle. If they succeed at only two, they make progress but attract attention along the way, earning them 1 Awareness Point. If they succeed at fewer than two checks, they earn 1 Awareness Point and have to take a massive detour that increases the number of obstacles they must face during this scene by one.

Gallery of Fortune: Not every passage sees regular use, and some routes through the Aspis Building have insidious effects on all but a few operatives. Among these is the Gallery of Fortune, a high-ceilinged hallway lined with portraits and busts of the Consortium's greatest leaders, moneymakers, and innovators—at least those whose identities and involvement the organization hasn't kept secret. The area has a grim reputation for granting future prosperity to a rare few and afflicting all others with bad luck. As a result, agents-in-training sometimes use the Gallery of Fortune as a hazing ritual, pushing recruits to travel its length and gaze upon the deceased moguls. Those who don't look at the art at all tend to escape unscathed but earn the ridicule of their peers.

Word of this obscure hall and juvenile ritual rarely spreads beyond the Aspis Building, so knowing the information above requires a successful DC 30 Knowledge (local) check. In order to overcome this obstacle, the PCs must reach the other end of this 100-foot-long gallery, either traversing the hall or finding an alternate route that might expose the PCs to other perils. If the PCs elect to circumnavigate the challenge, they intuit an equally viable route with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (engineering) or Survival check (DC 35 in Subtier 14–15)—or with powerful abilities or magic such as *find the path*. If they fail the check, they wander for a time, earn 1 Awareness Point as they waste time, and otherwise successfully bypass the obstacle. If they fail by 10 or more, they only find more trouble, earning them 1 Awareness Point and increasing the number of obstacles they must face by one.

The depictions of Aspis leaders are not haunted or trapped in any traditional sense. Instead they bear a psychic resonance akin to a hazard that afflicts unfamiliar creatures with one or more curses; those disguised as a specific, well-regarded Aspis agent can potentially trick the portraits (Perception +20). A PC can sense this unnatural presence with spells like *detect psychic resonance*^{OA} and *detect undead*, and any defenses against psychic abilities and undead apply to this obstacle. Any PC who traverses the area is subject to a gaze attack (against which the PC can avert or close her eyes if warned ahead of time). Each affected PC must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or receive the curse of failure below. Those who fail the save by 5 or more also earn one of the secondary curses below: clouded vision, haunted, or lame. If an

oracle or other PC with the curse class feature is affected by the secondary curse, she also treats her effective oracle level as 1 for the purpose of calculating the benefits of her curse(s). Any creature wearing or carrying a *wayfinder* especially offends the spirits, increasing the save DC by 3. The curses last until removed by *break enchantment*, *remove curse*, or a similar effect. The effective caster level of the curse is 13th (or 15th, in Subtier 14–15).

Curse of Failure: Terrible luck follows the PC. She becomes unable to remove any magic items that grant her a luck bonus, and all luck bonuses instead apply an equal penalty to the affected rolls and statistics. She is unable to benefit from any effects that allow her to roll multiple dice and take the better result, and whenever she would reroll a die, she instead rolls two dice and takes the lower result. Finally, the PC always rolls initiative checks twice and takes the lower result; if she would normally roll multiple dice and take the better initiative result, she instead rolls a single die.

Clouded Vision: The PC's eyes are obscured, making it difficult for her to see. She cannot see anything beyond 30 feet.

Haunted: Malevolent spirits follow the PC wherever she goes, causing minor mishaps and strange occurrences (such as unexpected breezes, small objects moving on their own, and faint noises). Retrieving any stored item from her gear requires a standard action, unless it would normally take longer. Any item she drops lands 10 feet away from her in a random direction.

Lame: An unshakable malaise overtakes the PC, reducing her base speed by 10 feet if her base speed is 30 feet or more. If her base speed is less than 30 feet, her speed is reduced by 5 feet.

Guards and Wards: During a security incident, a *guards and wards* triggers in several main thoroughfares, ensnaring intruders and causing them to wander in circles. In order to proceed, the PCs must identify and overcome these magical defenses.

Rather than map, describe, and detail every twist and turn, this obstacle involves four of the following skill checks and saves: Knowledge (arcana, DC 30), Perception (DC 40), Spellcraft (DC 30), Reflex (DC 23), and Will (DC 23). With the exception of the Reflex saves, these rolls all involve compulsions, enchantments, and illusions, so if a PC has a bonus on checks against such effects, he can apply them here. Alternatively, a PC can attempt a DC 22 dispel check using *dispel magic* or cast other spells that allow the group to negate a magical barrier or bypass it completely (e.g. *dimension door* or *passwall*). Only allow a single spell or roll for each of the four checks, and the PCs cannot use the same ability or skill check more than once; the *guards and wards* effect presents sundry challenges that cannot all be disbelieved or thwarted

with arcane know-how. In Subtier 14–15, increase the DC of the skill checks by 5 and the DCs of saving throws and caster level checks by 2.

If the PCs succeed at four or five checks, they easily bypass the obstacle. If they succeed at only three, they make progress but attract attention along the way, earning them 1 Awareness Point. If they succeed at fewer than three checks, they earn 1 Awareness Point and have to take a massive detour that increases the number of obstacles they must face during this scene by one.

Treasure: Each time the PCs are done dealing with an obstacle, they find one of the following caches of important documents or obscure treasures if they didn't receive the worst possible result of that obstacle. They always find the Patrons' plans first. Afterward, either select a treasure at random or choose one that one or more of the PCs would find especially exciting. The PCs may chose to face additional obstacles to gain more treasures, at the risk of racking up more Awareness points. After the PCs have faced all of their required obstacles, inform them of this option.

Patrons' Plans: Although the Patrons craft most of their proposals in the secure heart of the Aspis Building, early versions of those plans must still reach the desks of critical intermediaries and high-ranking agents who would be responsible for executing those initiatives. The PCs come across a cluster of offices reserved for silver and gold agents, several of which have these drafts open atop desks for review. Even with a casual perusal, the PCs can assess that these are proposals for action in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings (Knowledge [geography]), in Mendev (Knowledge [local]), in the Mwangi Expanse (Knowledge [nature]), and somewhere beyond the Material Plane (Knowledge [planes]). If a PC succeeds at the region's DC 20 Knowledge check, she is able identify valuable supporting evidence and make better sense of that plan as detailed below, in turn providing the Society important forewarning.

A Patron named Stichalto the Cynic is attempting to get two campaigns off the ground. He has secured key contacts and potential turncoats along the border between Irrisen and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, enabling the Aspis Consortium to transport supplies to the beset Ulfen border towns. Once he has their trust and stable routes, he intends to poison their food shipments in advance of an Irriseni offensive—all in exchange for a generous payment from the White Witches. Stichalto has also lifted the moratorium on underhanded practices in Mendev, following the successful conclusion of the Fifth Mendevian Crusade. His plan to overcharge Nerosyan for shipments of staples while eliminating local competitors is partly underway, and he has identified a sizeable population of low templars as idle mercenaries willing to raid the reclaimed territories for Sarkorian goods—even if

it means undermining the Mendevian efforts to resettle those lands and construct fortifications against another demonic incursion.

The Patron Iaovin Ratarion has spent the better part of 10 years expanding Aspis operations in Bloodcove in the Mwangi Expanse, but the vigilant Ekujae elves and people of Nantambu have prevented the Consortium from freely exploiting the Expanse's riches. His proposal would weaken Nantambu's eastern defenses and simultaneously goad the charau-ka of Usaro to attack, buying local Aspis agents several years in which to snatch up resources without local resistance. The office's occupant has penned the question, "What happens if the charau-ka completely overrun the Expanse?" in the margins, but Iaovin has either not responded yet or believes that prospect is a non-issue.

Finally, the Patron Kaera Hightower reports good progress on the Plane of Earth, where the Consortium's investment in a mercenary company known as the Carnelian Corps has paid significant dividends. She cites her past successes tied to the *Hao Jin Tapestry* campaign to justify directing further resources to the Opaline Vault, the seat of the shaitan genie empire.

Badge of the Charlatan (CL 5th, *aura* none): This gold Aspis badge simultaneously provides all benefits of a *ring of invisibility* and a *hat of disguise*. As a standard action, the wielder can transform it into any other badge of authority with which she is familiar. The badge is under a constant *greater magic aura*^{UI} effect to appear nonmagical.

Belt of Many Forms (CL 8th; *aura* moderate transmutation): This flexible belt provides a +6 enhancement bonus to its wearer's choice of Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. The wearer can change the bonus to apply to a different ability score once per day as a standard action. Treat the ability score bonus as a temporary bonus for the first 24 hours after its type changes. The belt also grants additional benefits depending upon the ability score selected, granting all of the benefits of the one of the following magic items: *belt of the weasel*^{UE} (Dexterity), *elemental earth belt*^{UE} (Constitution), or *minotaur belt*^{UE} (Strength)

Headband of Mental Adaptability (CL 8th; *aura* moderate transmutation): This headband functions as a *belt of many forms* above, except that it grants its +6 enhancement bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma, and it grants the benefits of one of the following items: *headband of ponderous recollection*^{UE} (Intelligence), *headband of unshakable resolve*^{UE} (Wisdom), or *rod of splendor* (Charisma). The skills granted by the Intelligence option are fixed at the time of creation (one of which must be a Knowledge skill).

Development: Once the PCs overcome the obstacles, they reach the Argent Atrium (area D).

D. THE ARGENT ATRIUM (CR VARIES)

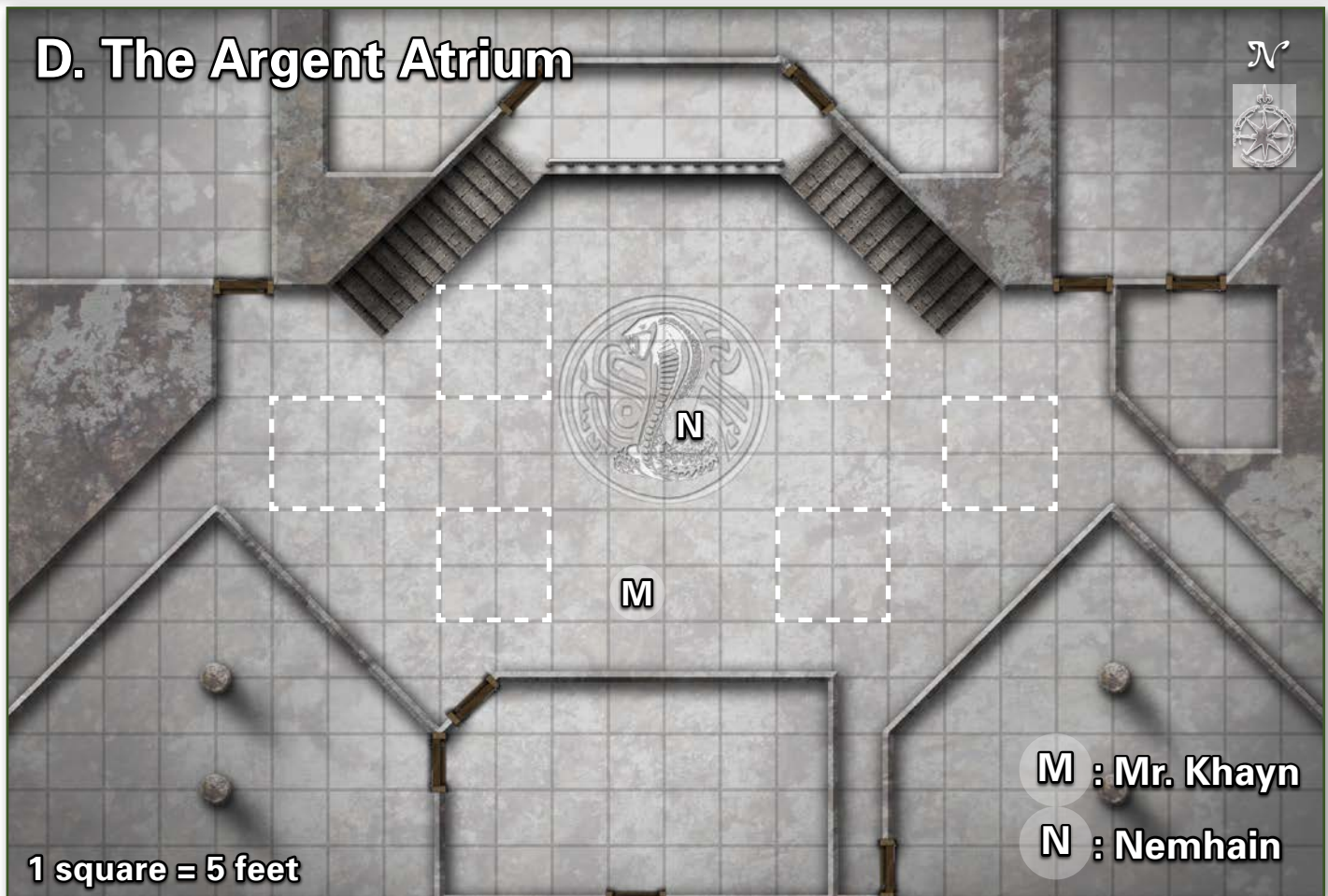
Most of the Consortium's higher echelons maintain offices in the upper half of the towering Aspis Building, far from any windows or other access points that would allow rivals to spy on their work. The only publicized means of accessing this restricted area is through the Argent Atrium, an interior plaza that serves as a meeting place for operatives of all stripes—especially those hoping to climb the ranks by attaching themselves to the high and mighty. Two sets of stairs lead up 10 feet to a security checkpoint to the north. Other doors lead to offices, scriptoriums, and meeting rooms.

Polished flagstones and meticulous masonry line the floor and walls of this atrium, whose mirrored ceiling and small skylights seem positioned to channel sunlight throughout the entire chamber. The floor bears an intricate serpent design inlaid with silver, and two sets of stairs ascend to a balcony and two heavy doors.

Creatures: The head of security is a grizzled veteran of countless heists named Mr. Khayn, and he has used his numerous channels to track the PCs' approximate position and likely destination over the course of their infiltration. Capable as he is, he is unaware that Suliji Peshar has already slipped past the checkpoint into the Patrons' offices beyond. He does, however, have ample reason to believe that whatever the PCs are up to they're not supposed to be here whoever they're with. Mr. Khayn's not normally one for flowery speeches, and recent events have put him in a sour mood, so after a brief and disapproving introduction and preamble, he offers the PCs one chance to show themselves out of the building. If they don't comply, he doesn't mind chatting for a while longer. After all, the more time they spend talking, the more time he has for his reinforcements to arrive; if the PCs spend a considerable amount of time trying to make their case to Mr. Khayn, they earn 1 Awareness Point. Convincing Mr. Khayn that there's another intruder who's a mutual enemy is not necessarily impossible, but even if he believes the PCs, the head of security believes that bringing armed, unapproved visitors into the restricted area is a very bad idea. It's far preferable handle one problem at a time by getting the PCs off the premises first. If the PCs don't cooperate, Mr. Khayn reluctantly but confidently attacks.

The silver insignia is not just a decorative feature denoting this area's importance; it's also the ritual focus for a nemhain, the spectral horror that arose when one of the Aspis Building's previous security directors willingly sacrificed herself to continue serving the Consortium. Mr. Khayn is loyal to the Patrons and has selected this atrium for this confrontation because of the undead ally,

D. The Argent Atrium



but even he considers her utter devotion unsettling. The insignia has hardness 8 and 60 hit points.

Finally, Mr. Khayn has called in a number of extraplanar allies who are on their way—namely several shaitans who belong to the Carnelian Corps mercenary outfit. In order to reach this area, they arrive outside the building and use their earth glide ability to travel straight up into the atrium, arriving at random in any of the six marked locations. See the Awareness Points sidebar on page 28 for more details on how many genies appear and when.

BOTH SUBTIERS

SHAITANS (UP TO 4)

CR 7

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 143; see page 46)

TACTICS

During Combat The shaitans prefer to cut down enemies in melee, using quickened *glitterdust* to mark enemies they can only sense with tremorsense. They enjoy pushing feeble targets into walls using their stone curse ability.

Morale The Carnelian Corps contract with the Consortium is important, and the shaitans fight bravely so long as Mr. Khayn does. If he falls, a shaitan flees if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points or faced with unbeatable odds.

SHAITAN PASHAS (UP TO 2)

CR 13

Advanced shaitan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 143)

LN Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 189 (18d10+90)

Fort +17, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15

Immune electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d8+5/18-20) or 2 slams +17 (2d6+2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks earth mastery

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +20)

At will—*plane shift* (willing targets to elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only), *meld into stone*, *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *veil* (self only)

3/day—quickened *glitterdust* (DC 14), *rusting grasp*, *stone tell*, *stoneskin*, *wall of stone*, *wish* (to nongenies only)

1/day—*earthquake*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*

SCALING ENCOUNTER D

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

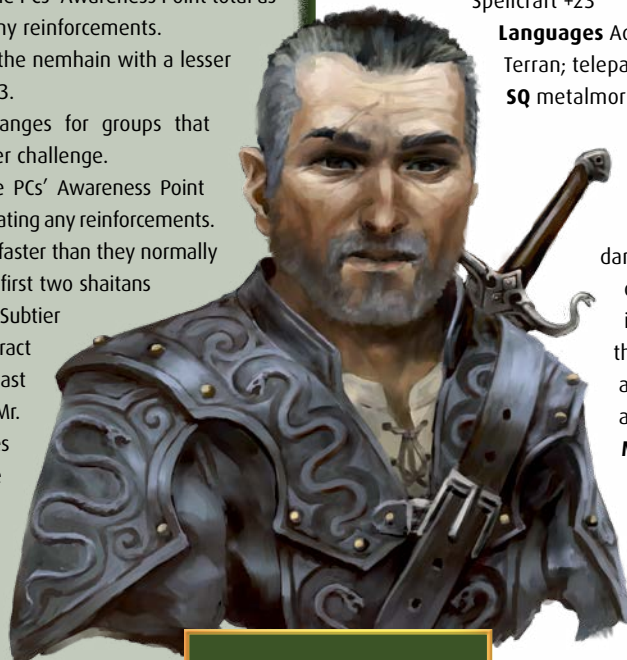
Subtier 12–13: When delivering a touch spell with its bound spirits, the lesser nemhain must first use a standard action to cast the spell. Remove the nemhain's profane regeneration ability. Treat the PCs' Awareness Point total as 2 lower when calculating any reinforcements.

Subtier 14–15: Replace the nemhain with a lesser nemhain from Subtier 12–13.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Subtier 12–13: Treat the PCs' Awareness Point total as 3 higher when calculating any reinforcements. All shaitans appear 1 round faster than they normally would. Replace each of the first two shaitans with a shaitan pasha from Subtier 14–15. The shaitans' contract authorizes the pashas to cast *wish* up to three times at Mr. Khayn's behest. These wishes do not directly harm the PCs but rather can create obstacles, heal Mr. Khayn, or enhance his combat abilities. Good examples include casting *reach greater polymorph* to turn Mr. Khayn into a girallon, casting *reach^{APG} heal*, or providing him the benefits of *righteous might*. Mr. Khayn need merely voice his desire, and the pasha casts the spell on its turn. The contracts also oblige them to use effects such as *resurrection* and *heal* to allow him to make further wishes if he is incapacitated.

Subtier 14–15: Treat the PCs' Awareness Point total as 3 higher when calculating any reinforcements. All shaitans appear 1 round faster than they normally would. Replace the first, second, and third shaitans with pashas. Each of the shaitan pashas is authorized to grant wishes, as detailed above. Add a lesser nemhain from Subtier 12–13 to the encounter; both nemhains use the silver insignia as their ritual focus. Mr. Khayn has consumed a *potion of strong jaw^{APG}* (CL 12th), increasing his unarmed damage to 6d8.



MR. KHAYN

Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative^B, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*glitterdust*), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +1 (–3 when jumping), Appraise +23, Bluff +23, Climb +34, Craft (gemcutting) +21, Knowledge (engineering) +23, Perception +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +23

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ metalmorph, stone curse, stone glide

Gear mwk scimitar

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Mastery (Ex) A shaitan gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls and a +2 bonus on opposed Strength-based checks if both it and its foe are touching the ground. It takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls against airborne or waterborne opponents.

Metalmorph (Su) As a standard action, a shaitan can touch a single metal object of no more than 10 pounds and transform it into any other metal for 1 day.

Stone Curse (Su) If a shaitan succeeds at a bull rush combat maneuver check by 5 or more

and pushes its target into a stone barrier, the target must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex save or be forced into the barrier as if the target had

cast *meld into stone* until the target succeeds at a DC 19 Fortitude save as a full-round action to exit the stone. The save DCs are Strength-based.

Stone Glide (Su) This functions as the earth elemental's earth glide ability, except the shaitan can move through stone, dirt, crystal, or metal.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR VARIES)

MR. KHAYN

CR 15

Human brawler (steel-breaker) 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 23, 88)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +3 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 132 (15d10+45)

Fort +16, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

TACTICS

Use the shaitans' tactics above.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +24 (+28 bull rush); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. bull rush)

Melee unarmed strike +25/+20/+15 (2d6+8/19–20) or unarmed strike flurry of blows +23/+23/+18/+18/+13/+13 (2d6+8/19–20) or mwk silver short sword +24/+19/+14 (1d6+5/19–20) or dagger +23/+18/+13 (1d4+6/19–20)

Ranged dagger +17 (1d4+6/19–20)

Special Attacks brawler's flurry, close weapon mastery, knockout 2/day (DC 23), martial flexibility 10/day, stunning fist (15/day, DC 20), sunder training (sunder +5, disarm +4)

TACTICS

Before Combat Mr. Khayn knows that there's at least one intruder nearby, so he drinks a *potion of barkskin* (CL 9th) and *potion of heroism* (CL 12th); their effects are already incorporated into his statistics. See the Awareness Points sidebar on page 28 for other actions he takes before combat.

During Combat On the first round of combat, Mr. Khayn activates his *boots of speed* and then spends a swift action to activate his martial flexibility to gain three feats. Good choices include Greater Disarm, Pummeling Style^{ACG}, and Pummeling Charge^{ACG}. He prefers to disarm or sunder his foes' gear, depriving them of what they need to fight him on an even footing. When possible, he prefers to use his brawler's flurry, interspersing combat maneuvers to put his foes at a disadvantage. He is mindful of arcane spellcasters and takes modest risks in order to reach and neutralize them.

Morale Mr. Khayn is a professional with a generous resurrection clause in his contract. He fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23 (+29 disarm, +25 grapple, +32 sunder, +27 trip); **CMD** 36 (42 vs. disarm, 38 vs. grapple, 43 vs. sunder, 38 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Greater Sunder, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stunning Fist, Tiring Critical

Skills Acrobatics +21, Climb +15, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (local) +16, Perception +23, Profession (bodyguard) +13, Ride +11, Sense Motive +23, Swim +15

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ brawler's cunning, exploit weakness, martial training

Gear +4 chain shirt, daggers (4), mwk silver short sword, amulet of mighty fists +2, belt of giant strength +2, boots of speed, cloak of resistance +3, headband of inspired wisdom +2, steelhand circle^{UE}, 118 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Best of the Best (Ex) Mr. Khayn ability scores are derived using 25-point buy, and he has the wealth of an NPC 1 level higher than normal. This increases his CR by 1.

LESSER NEMHAIN

CR 12

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 161 (14d8+98); profane regeneration 5

Fort +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +16 touch (2d8 plus 1d4 Con drain)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +18)

3/day—*slay living* (DC 21), *telekinesis* (DC 21)

1/day—*harm* (DC 22), *wall of force*

TACTICS

Before Combat The nemhain flits between the rooms south of the atrium, listening for signs of conflict and occasionally peeking through a wall to watch for intruders.

During Combat The nemhain uses its mobility and spell-like abilities to soften up targets and isolate targets—even sealing off a hallway to deny spellcasters and ranged specialist from participating in the encounter.

Morale The nemhain is sworn to defend the Aspis Building and fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 23, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 33

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Toughness

Skills Bluff +20, Diplomacy +20, Fly +31, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +23, Stealth +23

Languages Common; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ rejuvenation

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bound Spirits (Su) A nemhain is surrounded by a whirling cloud of spirits that are bound to her—often the spirits of close relatives or friends she had in life. As a swift action, she can direct these bound spirits to strike at any creature within 30 feet as a ranged touch attack (with an attack bonus of +16). These spirits can be used to cause damage as if the nemhain had touched the target with her incorporeal touch, or they can be used to deliver a *harm* or *slay living* effect. Using these spirits to deliver one of these spell-like abilities is a swift action; the nemhain does not need to take a standard action to cast the spell-like ability, but it still counts against the number of times per day she can use that spell-like ability. The nemhain can also send these spirits as a group up to 1 mile away to act as scouts; they have a fly speed of 60 feet (perfect). She can observe and listen through them, but as long as they don't share her space, she can't use them to deliver ranged touch attacks. These spirits are impervious to almost all attacks and magic, save the following: *dispel*

AWARENESS POINTS

The PCs' Awareness Point total heavily influences how much warning Mr. Khayn had to prepare for this confrontation as well as how seriously he takes the PCs as a threat when calling in backup. Make the following cumulative adjustments based on the number of Awareness Point total when combat begins. In Subtier 14–15, the replace the first shaitan and the third shaitan with a shaitan pasha.

0 or fewer: Make no changes to the encounter.

1: At the beginning of the second round, one shaitan arrives and acts immediately.

2–3: During this encounter, Mr. Khayn can reroll a single d20 roll after seeing the result and use the higher of the two results. Increase the number of shaitans to two.

4–5: Increase the number of shaitans to three. Any genies beyond the first two appear at the beginning of the third round of combat.

6–7: Mr. Khayn has consumed a special extract that grants him a +2 luck bonus on attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws as well as a +2 luck bonus to his AC during the encounter. His number of rerolls increases to two.

8: Mr. Khayn has consumed an extract that grants him *true seeing* during the encounter. Increase the number of shaitans to four.

9: Increase Mr. Khayn's luck bonuses to +4.

10 or more: Mr. Khayn gains an additional reroll for each additional Awareness Point the PCs have beyond 9.

evil, raise dead, or resurrection. Such spells cause the spirits to vanish and to be useless to the nemhain for 1 hour. *True resurrection* makes the spirits useless for 24 hours.

Profane Regeneration (Su) This ability functions like regeneration except the nemhain has it despite the fact that she lacks a Constitution score. A nemhain reduced to 0 hit points is staggered instead of destroyed while her profane regeneration is active. As long as her profane regeneration is active, a nemhain ignores all damage that would reduce her hit points below 0.

Rejuvenation (Su) All nemhains are tied to a ritual object used in their creation. This object is typically a large statue, pillar, or monolith. Until this object is destroyed, a destroyed nemhain automatically rejuvenates back to full hit points 1d4 days after she is destroyed, always appearing adjacent to her ritual object.

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR VARIES)

MR. KHAYN CR 15

Human brawler (steel-breaker) 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 23, 88)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +4 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 140 (16d10+48)

Fort +18, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +26/+21/+16/+11 (2d10+8/19–20) or unarmed strike flurry of blows +24/+24/+19/+19/+14/+14/+9 (2d10+8/19–20) or

mwk silver short sword +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d6+5/19–20) or dagger +24/+19/+14/+9 (1d4+6/19–20)

Ranged dagger +18 (1d4+6/19–20)

Special Attacks awesome blow, brawler's flurry, close weapon mastery, knockout 3/day (DC 24), martial flexibility 11/day, stunning fist (17/day, DC 21), sunder training (sunder +5, disarm +4)

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +24 (+30 disarm, +26 grapple, +33 sunder, +28 trip); **CMD** 38 (44 vs. disarm, 40 vs. grapple, 45 vs. sunder, 40 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Greater Sunder, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stunning Fist, Tiring Critical

Skills Acrobatics +22, Climb +15, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (local) +16, Perception +24, Profession (bodyguard) +15, Ride +11, Sense Motive +24, Swim +15

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ brawler's cunning, exploit weakness, martial training

Other Gear +4 chain shirt, daggers (4), mwk silver short sword, *amulet of mighty fists* +2, *belt of giant strength* +2, *boots of speed*, *cloak of resistance* +4, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *monk's robe*, *steelhand circle*^{UE}, 118 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Best of the Best (Ex) Mr. Khayn ability scores are derived using 25-point buy, and he has the wealth of an NPC 1 level higher than normal. This increases his CR by 1.

NEMHAIN CR 15

hp 225 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 182; see page 47)

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

Development: If the PCs defeat Mr. Khayn in such a way that they can question him, he is very frank about not being in any position to stop the PCs but also having a vested, professional interest in not assisting them in

whatever they're planning. After all, his maintaining his position and the Consortium's trust relies on his doing his job to the best of his ability, and even though he's now demonstrated that even the best of his ability was insufficient for this incident, his compliance could be grounds for termination and blacklisting. As far as he's concerned, using enchantment magic to make him break his vows would be akin to salting farm fields or making a paladin break her vows to add insult to injury. If the PCs instead use Intimidate or more mundane methods to interrogate him, he holds less of a grudge.

Mr. Khayn knows the layout of the inner offices to the north, and he carries a key to unlock the checkpoint doors that stand between here and there. He understands that three of the Patrons are currently in residence, though many of them maintain alternate means of entering and exiting the building that can occasionally circumvent Mr. Khayn's surveillance—as he notes with a shrug, “Magic.” He has no reason to believe that anyone unauthorized has entered the area, and even those authorized persons are all Patrons. He also knows that the Patrons' wing is beyond his jurisdiction for installing and maintaining traps and other stationary defenses, so each Patron might have his or her own tricks to repel attackers.

Should the PCs use compulsion magic to force Mr. Khayn to accompany them, he treats most actions past the checkpoint as actions against his nature for the purpose of attempting new saving throws. In the event that he breaks free in sight of a threatened Patron, he takes whatever actions seem necessary and most likely to save that Patron's life.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat Mr. Khayn, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 3,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 3,850 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 4,700 gp.

E. THE HALL OF BLADES (CR 17 OR CR 19)

The nearby checkpoint doors (hardness 5, hp 20, Strength DC 23, Disable Device 30) are more a formality than an obstacle

for high-level PCs. Before the PCs enter, they hear a magical message from Suliji, addressing each PC by name before adding, “I expected nothing less from you. Welcome, friends. We have much to discuss!” Beyond lies a much smaller series of halls leading to Patrons' offices, meeting rooms, and several showy galleries. Suliji began to abandon caution here, employing a few spells and attacks to neutralize the opposition. Her violent display leaves a sufficient trail for the PCs to find their way to the Hall of Blades, an immense lounge and display case for edged weaponry from across Golarion.

Hundreds, likely thousands of swords, knives, and other blades of nearly every size and curvature adorn this gallery, which includes both cases and stands as well as fireplaces and comfortable chairs, as if also serving as an ostentatious lounge. Edged weapons even comprise the frames of three chandeliers that cast cheery, magically sustained light throughout the hall.

Each of the central display cases is a 3-foot-tall wooden cabinet topped with a 1-foot-high glass-paneled case containing a variety of weapons. Several hardwood partitions (hardness 5, hp 20, Strength DC 20) stand

between the room's columns, breaking the hall into a variety of spaces. Each of the eight straight

partition panels bears a tall glass-fronted display cabinet containing yet more weapons; the two curved

partitions have no displays, only chairs. A number of glass cabinets line the room's perimeter, alongside numerous suits of armor.

As long as a creature is adjacent to a display case of any type, he can draw any masterwork heavy blade or light blade from that case as if picking it up off the ground. He can continue to do so within reason, and at the GM's discretion, a case might only contain a few daggers or a single exotic weapon of a particular type.

Hazard: Above, the three chandeliers are made of dozens of sharpened blades each, and they make deadly improvised weapons and hazards. If a



NEMHAIN

E. The Hall of Blades



creature destroys the brass chain holding one aloft, it falls, dealing 4d6 slashing damage and entangling any creatures occupying the 10-foot-square space beneath it (Reflex DC 18 negates). A fallen chandelier is treated as difficult terrain. A blade golem (see Creatures below) can also snap off a chandelier within its reach as a move action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity and wield it as an improvised weapon (chandelier +19/+14/+9/+4 [2d10+12]) that breaks after hitting three times.

Creatures: Suliji Peshar has cornered one of the Patrons, a crafty Chelish businessman named **Iaoivin Ratarion** (LE male human aristocrat 5/rogue 6). Iaoivin's richly embroidered jacket is rumpled and his normally dismissive countenance shaken from being manhandled by Suliji. He now slouches in a chair in a daze following her ongoing questioning. During any combat, Iaoivin behaves as a noncombatant, though he is nonetheless in danger. He has an effective Armor Class of 14, saving throw bonuses of +9 each, and 64 hit points.

Suliji is a far more effective negotiator than she is an interrogator, but Iaoivin finds her threats of physical violence more than sufficient to cooperate. Even if Iaoivin doesn't recognize the PCs or their affiliation, he identifies them as his potential saviors. He tries to send

subtle visual cues to the PCs that he is in need of help and that Suliji is a dangerous woman—Suliji easily notices these during any conversation, but such messages do not threaten her plans.

She's aware that Pathfinders have been shadowing her and thwarting several of her plans over the past weeks, and she can readily piece together the PCs' affiliation unless they've taken extraordinary steps to disguise themselves. She sees the PCs as former unwitting allies turned rivals whom she might convince to become accomplices. As a result, she capitalizes on their shared hatred of the Aspis Consortium and attempts to convince them to help her kill the resident Patrons, beginning with Iaoivin Ratarion. The PCs are likely to be skeptical of this offer, but Suliji is ready with reasons why they should help her assassinate the Consortium's powerbrokers while they can; she makes extensive use of her *glibness*-enhanced bonus on Bluff checks to convey her sincerity. Note that her ongoing *mind blank* prevents the PCs from detecting the *glibness*.

Suliji is a skilled negotiator who has used her tongue, wits, and talent for deception to turn a setback into a victory many times in the past. She identified the PCs as rising stars in the Pathfinder Society during her time

as Three Rings, and she knows enough about them to address them by name and reference their deeds. Use the PCs' Chronicle sheets as a guide to their most impressive accomplishments—she pays them compliments if the opportunity arises. While reviewing Chronicle sheets, also check to see if the PCs have played adventures in which they have benefited from her information (see *Are you Three Rings?* below). If any of the PCs are half-orcs, she also appeals to their shared racial adversities, in part spinning her actions as a way of defying stereotypes and ultimately elevating their kind beyond their neighbor's brutish stereotypes. Depending on the PCs' factions, Suliji adds more details that she thinks might interest them. If there are Dark Archive PCs, Suliji promises to explain secrets from the Hall of Blades. If there are Exchange PCs, she mentions all the opportunities for the Exchange to flourish as the Consortium's stranglehold shrinks (especially if the PCs ask questions about the power vacuum). If there are Grand Lodge PCs, she makes sure to mention her respect for the Society, her previous aid to the Society, and her desire to work with the Society in the future. If there are Liberty's Edge PCs, Suliji mentions that a weaker Aspis Consortium is one of the best possible ways to combat slavery in the Inner Sea region, emphasizing her targets' ties to slavery in the Mwangi Expanse (Iaovin Ratarion), Plane of Earth (Kaera Hightower), and Irrisen (Stichalto). If there are Scarab Sage PCs, Suliji plays up her admiration and respect for the sages as a fellow Garundi scholar of antiquities, and she tentatively agrees to a conversation with Tahonikepsu if a PC attempts to recruit her to the Scarab Sages for a faction journal card goal. If there are Silver Crusade PCs, Suliji emphasizes Stichalto's plans to harm Mendev for his own profits and the many evils the Consortium has pursued. If there are Sovereign Court PCs, she expresses her admiration for their organization's willingness to get things done behind the backs of the government bureaucracies that failed to do so, and offers her support in their future endeavors.

The PCs' likely questions and objections and Suliji's responses appear below for the GM to read or paraphrase as best suits the scene. Despite her precautions against truth-telling magic, Suliji's responses are a mixture of truth, exaggerations, and cherry-picking the fragment of the truth that she thinks the PCs are most likely to

agree with, rather than complete falsehoods—after all, statements with a kernel of truth are easier to defend. A PC with a Sense Motive skill formidable enough to oppose her Bluff skill believes that while she might be exaggerating to make a strong sell, Suliji is genuine in the offers that she makes. She is a consummate opportunist, and she rarely rejects a plan outright if it could prove profitable to her. If she reveals her feelings about Joliryn, such PCs realize that while she is a bit embarrassed about her emotional response to the halfling's death, Suliji is being genuine, perhaps the most honest she's been throughout the conversation.

Who are you? Suliji rolls her neck before answering. "I am Suliji Peshar, daughter of a cactus farmer, student of antiquities, ally of the Society, and thorn in the Consortium's side."

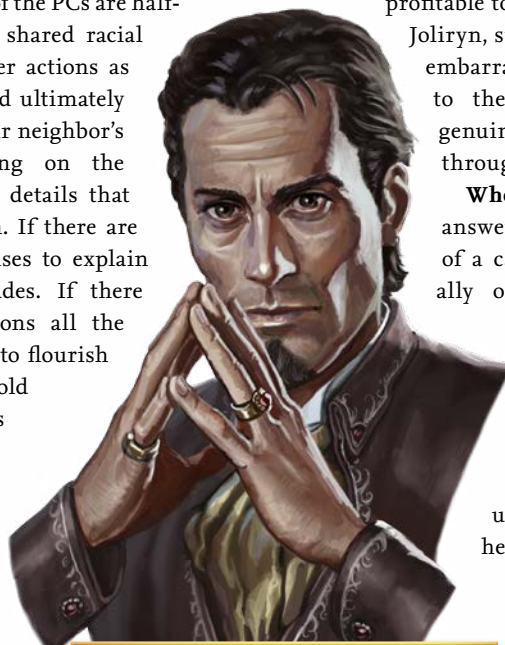
Who is your hostage? "This is the esteemed Iaovin Ratarion, a Patron of the Aspis Consortium. He cleans up nicely, so it is easy to overlook the blood of the innocent upon his hands. To his credit, though, he has delegated the lion's share of atrocities to his agents abroad."

Are you Three Rings? "I am indeed the person who has been providing the Society with crucial intelligence as of late. You have so many enemies that hide in the shadows. I caught the light upon my mirror to reveal them to you.

Think of all of the plots you could not have thwarted without my assistance." Check to see if any PC has a Chronicle sheet from #7–03: *The Bronze House Reprisal*, #7–07 *Trouble in Tamran*, #7–15: *The Deepmarket Deception*, or #7–22: *Bid for Alabastrine*. If they do, Suliji is likely to refer to the assistance she provided them in Magnimar, Nirmathas, Goka, or Druma, respectively, as a part of her argument.

Were you just manipulating the Society this whole time? "Were the Aspis agents whose plans you stopped in their tracks my opponents as well? Yes, but that does nothing to diminish the value of my contributions toward your cause."

We can't trust you. You betrayed even your allies (e.g. Professor Kramolag and Jhandorage Vaulnder Alexayn). "Ah, the ambitious Inphira Kramolag and Master Alexayn, queen and king of hypocrisy. The professor's experiments, as I'm sure you've seen, are abominations that twist, corrupt, and destroy. And our esteemed founder wasn't willing to accept renewed prominence if



**IAOVIN
RATARION**

it didn't come in exactly the way he wanted. I agree that I'm an iconoclast willing to end a few lives and break a few conventions to avert a disaster or overthrow a reviled regime. But of course, you're Pathfinders and have done the same, even if under a different banner and while telling yourself a less bitter story about why you've stolen, trespassed, and killed. Perhaps it's best to hold each other at arm's length, but that doesn't mean we cannot work together to accomplish something good."

We can't trust you. You've caused so much harm to the Society. Suliji offers a conciliatory shrug. "It is true that among my actions to assist the Society, I have dealt them harm as well. After all, there was no way to uncover the information I leaked to you about your biggest enemies within the Consortium without at least token participation on my part. Then again, you've thwarted a few of my side plans recently as well—most impressively, I might add. I am inclined to take that more as a token that you are worthy allies than an excuse for umbrage. The Aspis have harmed the Society, the Society has harmed the Aspis, and they both have harmed me. We're in a cycle that has continued for decades and will persist for centuries so long as the shadowy leaders continue to pit their pawns against one another. If you want to see an end to the tragedy, we must break that cycle by breaking the leaders." Suliji waves a hand consolingly. "I don't mean the Decemvirate, though I suppose I'm open to discussion if you insist. I mean the Patrons."

Killing the Patrons will ruin the Consortium and bring chaos to the Inner Sea region. "Yes, the serpent's body does thrash for a time once you cut off its head. Fortunately, no matter how you look at it, this does not spell disaster, nothing of the sort, really. If you love tradition, the nations of the Inner Sea are staunch, and their laws and cities are more than strong enough to withstand a temporary stir. If you love chaos, think of the new growth that might emerge once the towering tree falls and lets the sun shine upon the forest floor once more. The Aspis have been smothering all sorts of less deplorable businessfolk out of the market with their stranglehold on trade. Any vacuum will be relatively small and filled with healthy competition, including, I suspect, from the Society and its allies"

What do you get out of all of this? or Why are you doing this? "My goals are straightforward. Break apart the Consortium's monopoly, shatter its strength, and carve a niche for my own. I appreciate wealth and power, yet I don't have the stomach for much more violence. You can continue uncovering relics without Aspis interference, and I can retire out of the way to a prosperous shipping company along eastern Garund. I'll be happy to send any tips your way if I see something I think would interest you." If some of the PCs are good-aligned, despite Suliji's

embarrassment about her emotional reaction to Joliryn's death, she figures the truth may soften the PCs' view towards her and make them more likely to side with her, so she adds, "Truth be told, the Patrons killed someone I cared about recently. That's when I started to re-evaluate this life, and that's when I realized they needed to go." If any of PCs has the Spoils of the Siege (Joliryn) boon from #6–98: *Serpent's Rise*, she turns to Iaovin and adds "This is for Joliryn."

We want more than that from you. You say you're our ally, but will you prove it and officially join the Pathfinder Society? "I'm not up to becoming a field agent, but if the Society can produce agents as impressive as you, I suppose I would be a fool not to agree to act as a contact and ally. Even if the Consortium bore a grudge for that, I'd doubt they would have the nerve to pursue it."

We were told not to kill the Patrons or We shouldn't spark hostilities with the Aspis. "You are in the heart of their operation with a dagger to their throat. You can give this conflict a merciful death by eliminating some of the most depraved souls you'll likely ever meet, or you can let these battles continue, condemning hundreds more to die. Did someone ask you to stay your blade, or did they ask you to recognize an opportunity and seize it?"

It's better we keep the devil we know than leave a vacancy for an even worse organization. Suliji shakes her head slowly. "I have been forced to extremes to oppose the Consortium, yet hope to set my blade aside soon. The Patrons plot to poison countries just so that they might sell the antidote. This man alone is responsible for many of the Society's ills over the past decade. Besides, I dare say the Society's own Exchange faction would be an excellent group to fill that vacancy, and far more agreeably than the Consortium does, no?" If the PCs confront Suliji with their evidence that she was hoping to undermine Thuvia in order to exploit its *sun orchid elixir* trade, she smoothly tries to pin those actions—or at least the extent of that plan—on Kitio Aspenthi, the Aspis gold agent who oversees Thuvian operations and directed most of the Korholm Agenda's operations.

We're considering your offer, but we already promised Alexayn we would kill you for betraying him. "I have reason to understand our esteemed founder and the way he thinks more than any other living person. What he cares about are the end results, the better to convince himself that his charitable acts justified what he did to build his fortune. Given that I'm doing what he asked right now, I am certain he would accept the lives of the Patrons who obscured his legacy over my own."

What do you want us to do? "Two other Patrons—Stichalto the Cynic and Kaera Hightower—are in residence. Stichalto plans to undermine Mendev for profit and betray the Ulfen to the white witches, while

Kaera was the mastermind behind that entire Hao Jin Tapestry business four years ago. Eliminate them, and avenge the Pathfinders they killed. I will deal with this one and obscure signs of our passage. Kaera has few defenses, though I understand that Stichalto's dealings with the witches of Irrisen have granted him a powerful protector of some sort. If you're worried that they might have a way to return from the dead, I can provide you with the means to both prevent that and render poetic justice for your Master of Spells."

What happens after we help you? "We go our separate ways, and I scatter breadcrumbs implicating a savage, internal power struggle that resulted in dead Patrons. I didn't plan it this way originally, but there's no reason we couldn't give Alexayn what he wants and give him all the credit. Nobody need know of your involvement, if you wish it. Of course, if you would prefer to make the Consortium understand just what will happen if they dare to attack the Pathfinders again, we can easily send them that message instead." Suliji's affirmation is an exaggeration of both the effort she plans to take help the PCs hide their involvement and her faith in her own ability to outwit all of the resources the Aspis Consortium can bring to bear in an investigation.

Over the course of the *All for Immortality* series, the PCs have received multiple warnings about Suliji Peshar and the potential results of her plan. However, but this point in their careers, the PCs have become influential power players in the Society who make decisions that affect the entire Inner Sea region. It's up to them to decide how to proceed, and their decision here will have consequences for the Consortium for years to come. After all, as Marcos Farabellus likely noted at the beginning of the scenario, they might have to weigh the opportunities and decide what is best. If the PCs agree, see the Development section at the end of this encounter.

Even if the PCs ultimately refuse her invitation, Suliji is personally familiar with spell durations and pushes for the discussion to last at least 2 minutes to outlast the most ephemeral of enchantments the PCs might have cast before entering the room. All of her spells referenced in her tactics last for an hour or more except *shield* (16 or 18 minutes), so her spells likely outlast theirs. If she hears spellcasting outside, Suliji even casts *ghost sound* to create the illusion that someone's on the verge of executing a captive, goading the PCs to burst into the room before they can finish their spellcasting routines—at which point she begins her pitch. Note that as an occultist, her spellcasting has no verbal components, so the PCs can't hear it from outside.

Suliji's deep connection to ancient and exotic collections resonates with the Hall of Blades, and many of the weapons are temporarily attuned to her psychic

abilities. If combat begins, these weapons spring from their cases in her defense. Most accumulate into vaguely humanoid giants comprised of swords, behaving in many ways like clockwork golems. Once Suliji had cornered Iaovin here, she took a few minutes to linger over one of the most powerful blades, a *holy avenger*, which she imbued with a fraction of her mind. Her villainous focus has begun corrupting this blade, and it bears an ephemeral intelligence that animates it much like a *dancing* weapon that can fly and strike independently.

Should the PCs and Suliji fight, Iaovin Ratarion prioritizes his own safety first. If the PCs expressed an interest in ensuring he survives the encounter, he looks for low-risk opportunities to sneak to one of the side cases and retrieve one of the weapons he thinks could help the PCs (see Treasure below)—especially if one or more PCs is relying on a replacement weapon after Mr. Khayn or the corrupted avenger breaks their primary armaments.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 17)

SULIJI PESHAR

CR 16

Female half-orc occultist 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 46)

NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +5; **Senses** aura sight, blindsight 40 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 11, flat-footed 30 (+11 armor, +1 Dex, +5 natural, +4 shield)

hp 187 (16d8+112)

Fort +21, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16; +8 resistance vs. divination and mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity; **DR** 10/adamantine (150 points); **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee +5 *adamantine falcata* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+9/17–20/×3)

Ranged energy ray +15 touch (8d6+1)

Implement Schools

Abjuration (armor, 8 points [7 currently]) *Resonant*—warding talisman; *Focus*—energy shield, loci sentry, mind barrier, planar ward

Conjuration (mirror, 1 point) *Resonant*—casting focus; *Focus*—servitor (*summon monster VI*)

Evocation (gloves, 2 points) *Resonant*—intense focus (+1 damage for evocations); *Focus*—energy ray, light matrix, radiance

Illusion (ring, 4 points) *Resonant*—distortion (20% miss chance); *Focus*—cloak image, minor figment

Transmutation (falcata, 9 points) *Resonant*—physical enhancement; *Focus*—legacy weapon, mind over gravity, telekinetic mastery

Occultist Spells Known (CL 16th; concentration +22)

- 6th (2/day)—*cold ice strike*^{UM} (DC 22), *disintegrate* (DC 22),
heal, *permanent image* (DC 22), *project image* (DC 22),
repulsion (DC 22)
- 5th (2/day)—*false vision*, *interposing hand*, *overland flight*,
seeming (DC 21), *spell resistance*, *wall of stone*
- 4th (3/day)—*dimension door*, *echolocation*^{UM}, *fire shield*,
greater invisibility, *illusory wall* (DC 20), *stoneskin*
- 3rd (6/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*,
displacement, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19),
major image (DC 19)
- 2nd (6/day)—*blur*, *glitterdust* (DC 18), *mirror image*,
perceive cues^{APG}, *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 18)
- 1st (6/day)—*decrepit disguise*^{OA} (DC 17), *floating disk*, *magic*
aura, *mount*, *pass without trace*, *shield*
- 0 (at will)—*create water*, *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*
(DC 15), *message*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat Suliji has cast numerous spells, activated several scrolls, and consumed a few potions to ensure that her heist goes exactly as planned. She has cast *echolocation*, *overland flight*, *perceive cues*, *shield*, *spell resistance*, and *stoneskin*. She has also used a *potion of barkskin* (CL 12th), a *potion of heroism* (CL 12th), a *scroll of fickle winds*^{APG} (CL 15th), a *scroll of keen edge*, a *scroll of mind blank*, a *scroll of spell immunity* (CL 16th; choosing *dimensional anchor*, *enervation*, and any other two spells of 4th level or lower that the PCs are famous for casting), her *ring of spell turning*, and her *bracers of the glib entertainer*. Her allocated mental focus grants her a +6 enhancement bonus to her Constitution and a +4 resistance bonus on all saving throws. She has locked the gauntlet wielding her falcata and activated her radiance ability on the blade. Finally, she has expended 1 point of mental focus to create a loci sentry protecting the marked area. These effects—including a reduction in her remaining spells per day—are all calculated into her statistics.

During Combat Suliji is a flexible combatant with many possible strategies. She prefers spending a round or 2 casting more self-enhancing spells and activating legacy weapon or lobbing a damaging ray before wading into melee, but she happily adapts

depending on how effectively the PCs can get past her animated allies. She makes ample use of her swift actions and mental focus to shore up her defenses with energy shield and mind barrier.

Morale Suliji is willing to take considerable risks in order to see her plan through, but she knows to cut and run with *dimension door* if the fight seems unwinnable—such as if she's reduced to 35 or fewer hit points with little chance to turn the tide, lost her minions, or been affected with spells that remove her protections with little chance to turn the tide, or if she's lost her *contingency* and the PCs seem likely to disable her again before her next turn. If she has a good opportunity to finish off Iaovin Ratarion without hindering her escape (such as with a *cold ice strike*), she takes it.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 20, **Int** 22, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 27

Feats Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (falcata), Extra Mental Focus^{OA}, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness

Skills Appraise +18, Bluff +24 (+44 to lie), Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +15, Disguise +21, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana, history, planes, religion) +20, Linguistics +18, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +25, Use Magic Device +29; **Racial**

Modifiers +2 Intimidate

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Gnoll, Ignan, Infernal, Kelish, Orc, Osiriani, Polyglot, Undercommon

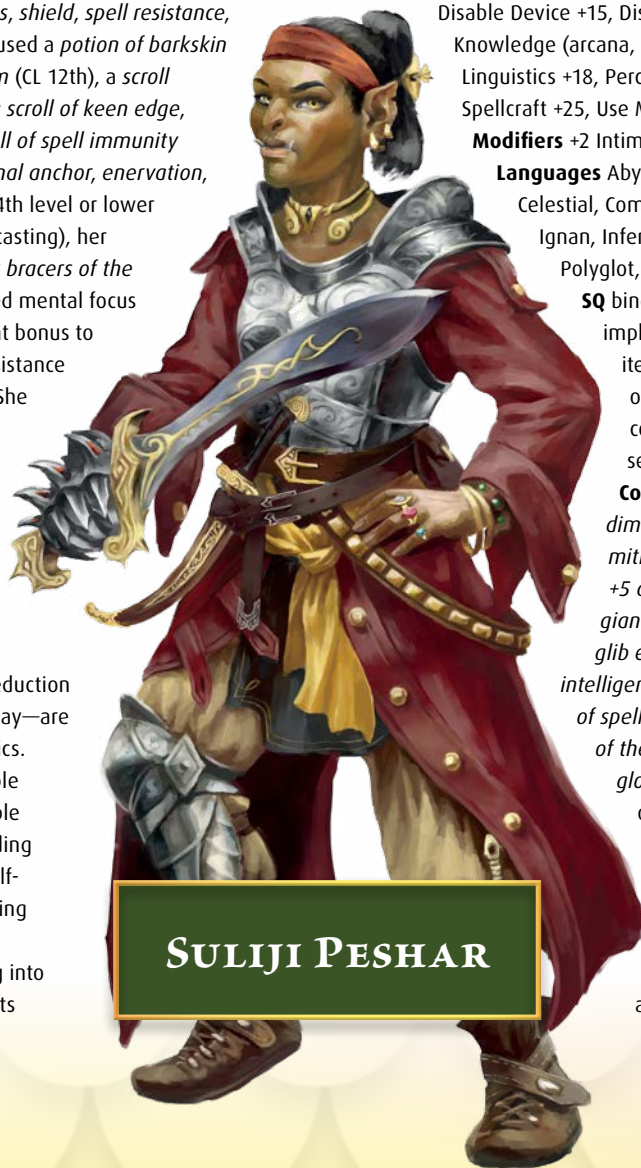
SQ binding circles, fast circles, implements 6, magic circles, magic item skill, mental focus (21/day), object reading, orc blood, outside contact (3 names, information or service), shift focus

Combat Gear *scroll of dimension door*; **Other Gear** +5 mithral breastplate of speed, +5 adamantite falcata^{UE}, belt of giant's strength +2, bracers of the glib entertainer^{UE}, headband of vast intelligence +4, ring of friend shield, ring of spell turning, sovereign glue, torc of the trifacta (see below), vampiric gloves^{UE}, mwk thieves' tools, occultist's implements^{OA} silver mirror, 207 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Able and Affluent (Ex)

Suliji's ability scores are derived using 20-point buy, and she has the wealth of a PC



SULIJI PESHAR

of her character level. This increases her CR by 1.

Contingency (Su) Suliji used a high-level *scroll of contingency* (CL 18th) to cast *heal* (CL 16th) when she would be unable to act due to a condition *heal* can remedy (including being unconscious from hit point damage).

Torc of the Trifecta Suliji wears this brass torc around her neck. It grants her the ability to wear and benefit from a third magic ring, much as though she were wearing a *hand of the mage*.

BLADE GOLEM

CR 12

Variant clockwork golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 137)

hp 118

TACTICS

During Combat The blade golem follows Suliji's telepathic cues, typically grabbing and binding a troublesome PC or transforming into a wall of blades in order to cordon off part of the battlefield.

Morale The golem fights until destroyed.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Eclectic Composition (Ex) A blade golem's natural attacks and special abilities are all treated as magic weapons and overcome damage reduction as adamantine, cold iron, and silver weapons. Its slam attacks deal both bludgeoning and slashing damage.

Versatile Strike (Su) Hundreds of masterwork and magical blades comprise the golem's body, and as a swift action it can shift several blades with a particular enchantment into its fists, adding one of the following effects to its natural attacks. If it uses this ability to gain a different ability, the previous benefit ends.

Eldritch Strike: The golem gains a +2 enhancement bonus on attack and damage rolls with its natural attacks.

Energy Attacks: The golem's natural attacks gain the *flaming*, *frost*, or *shock* weapon special quality.

Life-Drinking: The first time each round that the golem deals damage with a natural attack, the target gains 1 temporary negative level that lasts for 12 hours.

CORRUPTED AVENGER

CR 10

Unique animated object

NE Medium construct

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 86 (12d10+20)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee slice +23/+18/+13 (1d8+14/17-20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +16)

At will—*greater dispel magic*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +23 (+27 sunder); **CMD** 30 (32 vs. sunder)

Feats Cleave, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (slice),

Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Fly +21, Knowledge (planes) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6

TACTICS

During Combat The corrupted avenger flies toward the PCs and uses *greater dispel magic* either to indiscriminately strip away a random spell using the area dispel option or remove multiple spells from a target clearly benefiting from and reliant upon multiple spells. It then harasses vulnerable targets near the back of the group, moving strategically to stymie spellcasters, follow archers, and destroy enemy weapons.

Morale The corrupted avenger fights until Suliji Peshar is defeated, after which it falls to the ground at the end of its next round.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupted (Ex) This *holy avenger's* natural abilities are suppressed and twisted by Suliji. Certain spells and effects function differently against it, as noted below.

- A *protection from evil* spell cast on the corrupted avenger staggers the animated sword for 1d3 rounds (no save).
- A *dispel evil* spell—or any other spell or effect that can cast out an evil possessing entity—stuns the animated sword for 1 round (no save), and the sword must attempt a Will save against the spell or become utterly inanimate and return to its natural state: a *holy avenger*.
- A good-aligned divine spellcaster can expend one daily use of channel energy, judgment, or smite evil as a free action when maintaining a grapple against the animated sword. Doing so affects it as if it were targeted by *dispel evil* above. The save DC against this effect is 18 and increases to 22 if performed by a paladin.

Slice (Ex) The corrupted avenger's slice attack counts as a manufactured weapon attack that deals slashing damage and threatens a critical hit on a 19 or 20, as a longsword.

SUBTIER 14-15 (CR 19)

SULIJI PESHAR

CR 18

Female half-orc occultist 18 (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 46)

NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +5; **Senses** aura sight, blindsight 40 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +29

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 30 (+11 armor, +1 Dex, +5 natural, +4 shield)

hp 228 (18d8+144)

Fort +24, **Ref** +14, **Will** +19; +8 resistance vs. divination and mind-affecting effects

SCALING ENCOUNTER E

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Subtier 12–13: Remove the blade golem from the encounter.

Subtier 14–15: Remove one blade golem from the encounter, and replace the corrupted avenger with the corrupted avenger from Subtier 12–13.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Subtier 12–13: Add one blade golem to the encounter, and replace the corrupted avenger with the corrupted avenger from Subtier 14–15. Treat the PCs' Awareness Point total as 3 higher when deciding Suliji's actions.

Subtier 14–15: Apply the advanced simple template to the blade golems. Increase the corrupted avenger's fly speed to 60 feet, its critical multiplier to $\times 3$, and its hardness to 20; it is made of adamantine and overcomes hardness accordingly. Apply the agile mythic template (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 224) to Suliji Peshar. This increases her AC by 2, her hit points by 8, and her base speed to 60 feet. It also grants her a +20 bonus on initiative checks, mythic rank 1, the evasion defensive ability (as the rogue class feature), and the dual initiative mythic ability. Suliji also gains immunity to daze. Treat the PCs' Awareness Point total as 3 higher when deciding Suliji's actions.

Dual Initiative (Ex): Suliji gets two turns each round, one on her initiative count and another on her initiative count – 20. For example, if Suliji's initiative is 33, for her first turn she could make a full attack (and take a 5-foot step) at initiative 33, and for her second turn at initiative 13 she could take a move action and cast a spell. This allows her to perform two actions per round that normally take an entire round. For the purposes of spells and effects that have a duration of a round or longer or trigger at the beginning of Suliji's round or the start of her turn such as saving throws against ongoing effects or taking bleed damage), only Suliji's first turn each round counts toward such durations.

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee +5 human-bane spell storing adamantine falcata +24/+19/+14 (1d8+9/17–20/ $\times 3$ plus 2d6 vs. human)

Ranged energy ray +16 touch (9d6+1)

Implement Schools

Abjuration (armor, 10 points [9 currently]) *Resonant*—warding talisman; *Focus*—energy shield, loci sentry, mind barrier, planar ward

Conjuration (mirror, 1 point) *Resonant*—casting focus; *Focus*—servitor (*summon monster VI*)

Evocation (gloves, 2 points) *Resonant*—intense focus; *Focus*—energy ray, light matrix, radiance, shape mastery

Illusion (ring, 2 points) *Resonant*—distortion (10% mischance); *Focus*—cloak image, minor figment

Transmutation (falcata, 12 points) *Resonant*—physical enhancement; *Focus*—legacy weapon, mind over gravity, telekinetic mastery

Occultist Spells Known (CL 18th; concentration +25)

6th (4/day)—*cold ice strike*^{UM} (DC 23), *contingency*, *disintegrate* (DC 23), *heal*, *permanent image* (DC 23), *project image* (DC 23), *repulsion* (DC 23)

5th (3/day)—*false vision*, *interposing hand*, *overland flight*, *seeming* (DC 22), *spell resistance*, *wall of force*, *wall of stone*

4th (4/day)—*dimension door*, *echolocation*^{UM}, *fire shield*, *illusory wall* (DC 21), *greater invisibility*, *sending*, *stoneskin*

3rd (5/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *major image* (DC 20)

2nd (6/day)—*blur*, *darkness*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *mirror image*, *perceive cues*^{APG}, *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 19)

1st (6/day)—*decrepit disguise*^{OA} (DC 18), *floating disk*, *magic aura*, *mount*, *pass without trace*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *light*, *message*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat Suliji has cast numerous spells, activated several scrolls, and consumed a few potions to ensure that her heist goes exactly as planned. She has cast *echolocation*, *overland flight*, *perceive cues*, *shield*, *spell resistance*, and *stoneskin*. She has also used a *potion of barkskin* (CL 12th), a *potion of heroism* (CL 12th), a *scroll of fickle winds*^{APG} (CL 15th), a *scroll of keen edge*, a *scroll of mind blank*, a *scroll of spell immunity* (CL 16th, choosing *dimensional anchor*, *enervation*, and any other two spells of 4th level or lower that the PCs are famous for casting), her *ring of spell turning*, and her *bracers of the glib entertainer*. Her allocated mental focus grants her a +8 enhancement bonus to her Constitution and a +5 resistance bonus on all saving throws. She has locked the gauntlet wielding her falcata and activated her radiance ability on the blade. Finally, she has expended 1 point of mental focus to create a loci sentry protecting the marked area. These effects—including a reduction in her remaining spells per day—are all calculated into her statistics.

During Combat Use the tactics in Subtier 12–13.

Morale Use the tactics in Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 22, **Int** 24, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (falcata), Extra Mental Focus^{OA}, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness

Skills Appraise +19, Bluff +26 (+46 to lie), Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +17, Disguise +23, Fly +23, Knowledge (arcana, history, planes, religion) +21, Linguistics +18, Perception +29, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +29, Use Magic Device +32; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Gnoll, Ignan, Infernal, Kelish, Orc, Osiriani, Polyglot, Undercommon

SQ binding circles, fast circles, implements 7, magic circles, magic item skill, mental focus (24/day), object reading, orc blood, outside contact (3 names, information or service), shift focus

Combat Gear *potion of shield of faith* +5, *ring of delayed doom*^{UE}, *scroll of dimension door*, *vampiric gloves*^{UE}; **Other Gear** +5 *mithral breastplate of speed*, +5 *human-bane spell storing adamantine falcata*^{UE}, *belt of giant's strength* +2, *bracers of the glib entertainer*^{UE}, *coat of energy resistance* (see below), *headband of vast intelligence* +6, *ring of friend shield*, *ring of spell turning*, *sovereign glue*, *torc of the trifacta* (see below), *mwk thieves' tools*, *occultist's implements*^{OA}, silver mirror, 207 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

+5 Human-Bane Spell-Storing Adamantine Falcata Suliji has stored *dispel magic* (CL 18th) in this falcata.

Able and Affluent (Ex) Suliji's ability scores are derived using 20-point buy, and she has the wealth of a PC of her character level. This increases her CR by 1.

Coat of Energy Resistance Suliji's coat occupies the body slot and grants her resistance 10 to the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic.

Contingency (Su) Suliji cast *contingency* yesterday to grant herself the benefits of *heal* (CL 18) when she would be unable to act due to a condition *heal* can remedy (including being unconscious from hit point damage).

Torc of the Trifacta Suliji wears this brass torc around her neck. It grants her the ability to wear and benefit from a third magic ring, much as though she were wearing a *hand of the mage*.

BLADE GOLEMS (2)

CR 12

Variant clockwork golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 137, see Subtier 12–13)

hp 118

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

CORRUPTED AVENGER

CR 14

Unique animated object

NE Medium construct

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

AWARENESS POINTS

The PCs' Awareness Point total heavily influences how long Suliji has had to interrogate Iaovin Ratarion and prepare for their arrival. Make the following cumulative adjustments based on the number of Awareness Point total when combat begins.

1 or fewer: Make no changes to the encounter.

2–6: Suliji has used *sovereign glue* to attach her partnered *ring of friend shield* to Iaovin Ratarion's right ring finger. This ring splits the damage they take unless the PCs can suppress the ring's magic (CL 10th) or sever the Patron's finger with a melee slashing or piercing weapon (AC 24, 3 hit points). Severing his finger deals him 10 points of damage.

7 or more: Suliji has consumed her *potion of shield of faith* and begins the encounter with 30 temporary hit points.

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +14 natural)

hp 119 (15d10+20)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee slice +28/+23/+18 (1d8+17/17–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +19)

At will—*greater dispel magic*

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +28 (+32 sunder); **CMD** 36 (38 vs. sunder)

Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Flyby Attack, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (slice), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Fly +25, Knowledge (planes) +7, Knowledge (religion) +8

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupted (Su) See Subtier 12–13.

Profane Resistance (Su) The corrupted avenger gains a +5 profane bonus on all saving throws.

Slice (Ex) See Subtier 12–13.

Treasure: There are numerous bladed weapons that might outclass even what high-level PCs have acquired in their adventures thus far. This encounter already involves an exceptional amount of treasure that the PCs might claim, so the GM is advised to include only two to three of the following: *flame tongue* scimitar, a bastard sword *luck blade* (contains only a single *limited wish*), +1 *brilliant energy kukri*, a +3 *dispelling katana*^{UE} (contains *dispel magic*, CL 12th), a +1 *speed adamantine elven curve blade*, and

a *dagger of deadly venom* (functions as a *dagger of venom* whose poison save DC is 20). As long as the PCs are able to recover one or more of these blades, each PC earns the Innovative Blade boon on his Chronicle sheet; if the PCs destroy the corrupted avenger, cross the *holy avenger* off that boon.

Development: If the PCs agree to side with Suliji Peshar, she provides them verbal instructions for how to reach the other Patrons' offices, and, if they wish, the means to trap the Patrons' souls to prevent *resurrection*—a pair of gems, each one keyed specifically to one of the two targets.

Stichalto the Cynic and Kaera Hightower are hiding close to where Suliji said they would be. These Patrons are incapable of putting up much of a fight against high-level PCs, and the PCs can defeat Kaera without difficulty. She ordered her shaitan allies to reinforce Mr. Khayn, and does not have any current defenders. Allow the players to describe how they defeat this Patron. Stichalto, however, calls a powerful draconic ally to protect him. If the PCs pursue Stichalto, proceed to encounter F. In the time it takes the PCs to deal with these Patrons, Suliji executes Iaovin Ratarion, leaves them a hastily written note thanking them for their assistance, and uses a combination of magical and mundane means to escape the Aspis Building—and Ostenso soon thereafter.

If the PCs fight Suliji and capture her alive, she feigns cooperation and attempts to escape later. If she has no hope of escape and cannot whittle away at her captors' convictions enough to be set free, she resigns herself to imprisonment. Fearing that she may be executed for her crimes, she devotes her full attention to concocting schemes to trick more gullible guards into setting her free. While she'd rather not have to rely upon it, she has a fully grown clone waiting for her in a safehouse, so if it seems the PCs are considering a punishment that would prevent her from returning, she prefers to die and trigger her clone instead.

Should Iaovin Ratarion survive the encounter, he is briefly effusive in his gratitude before composing himself and attempting to recoup his dignity in the face of Pathfinders. He can help piece together any pieces of the story that the PCs did not learn earlier in the series or from Alexayn. He also invites the PCs to clean up "this mess" (referring to whatever remains of Suliji) and show themselves out without further incident. For all his poise and scowling, Iaovin knows that he is vulnerable and is safe only because the PCs see more value in keeping him alive. Although it would be bad form to physically abuse him or launch into a profane tirade, there's room for the PCs to have a little fun. After all, they've broken into one of the most secure buildings in Ostenso, thwarted an international scheme, defeated the assailant, and effectively concluded the series of adventures; let

the players get in a few good one-liners, plant a knife painfully close to Iaovin's head, and remind him that what the Society did once (i.e. break into the Aspis Building) they can do again if the Consortium crosses them again. The PCs have done something amazing, so give them a moment to revel before marching out.

If Iaovin dies during the encounter, Stichalto the Cynic, a tall but doughy Galtan exile, eventually emerges from hiding to survey the carnage, offer his restrained gratitude on behalf of the Consortium, and insist that the Pathfinders leave before they cause further offense.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat Suliji, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows. Do not apply this reduction if they instead team up with her to kill the three patrons.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 6,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 7,700 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 9,400 gp.

F. STICHALTO'S LAST STAND

The air inside this majestic parlor is frigid. A thin dusting of snow coats the furniture, including plush sofas, masterfully crafted tables, and statuary depicting fearsome beasts from throughout Golarion. A sphere of ice hovers over a small wooden stage. Within it, a portly Garundi man stands motionless.

Run this encounter only if the PCs decide to track down Stichalto the Cynic. Stichalto has locked and barricaded the door to his private parlor (hardness 5, hp 40, Strength DC 25, Disable Device 30). As the PCs approach, he triggers his contingency plan. He shatters a globe containing a raging snowstorm, encasing his body in an impenetrable sphere of ice and placing his body in a state of suspended animation, as per the spell *temporal stasis*. The sphere is an artifact, and it radiates an overwhelming aura of abjuration and a strong aura of transmutation. Any physical attacks made against the sphere simply bounce off, and any magical attacks targeting it rebound upon the spell's caster, using the caster's attack roll and saving throw DC. This sphere is connected to a three-headed dragon by an intangible strand of swirling snow (see *Creatures* below). If the dragon dies, the sphere shatters, dumping Stichalto unceremoniously on the ground and breaking him out of stasis. Otherwise, the protective effect expires after 1 day. In Subtier 14–15, both dragons are connected to the sphere, and the PCs must slay both of them to destroy it. See Development on page 40 for more details.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 17)

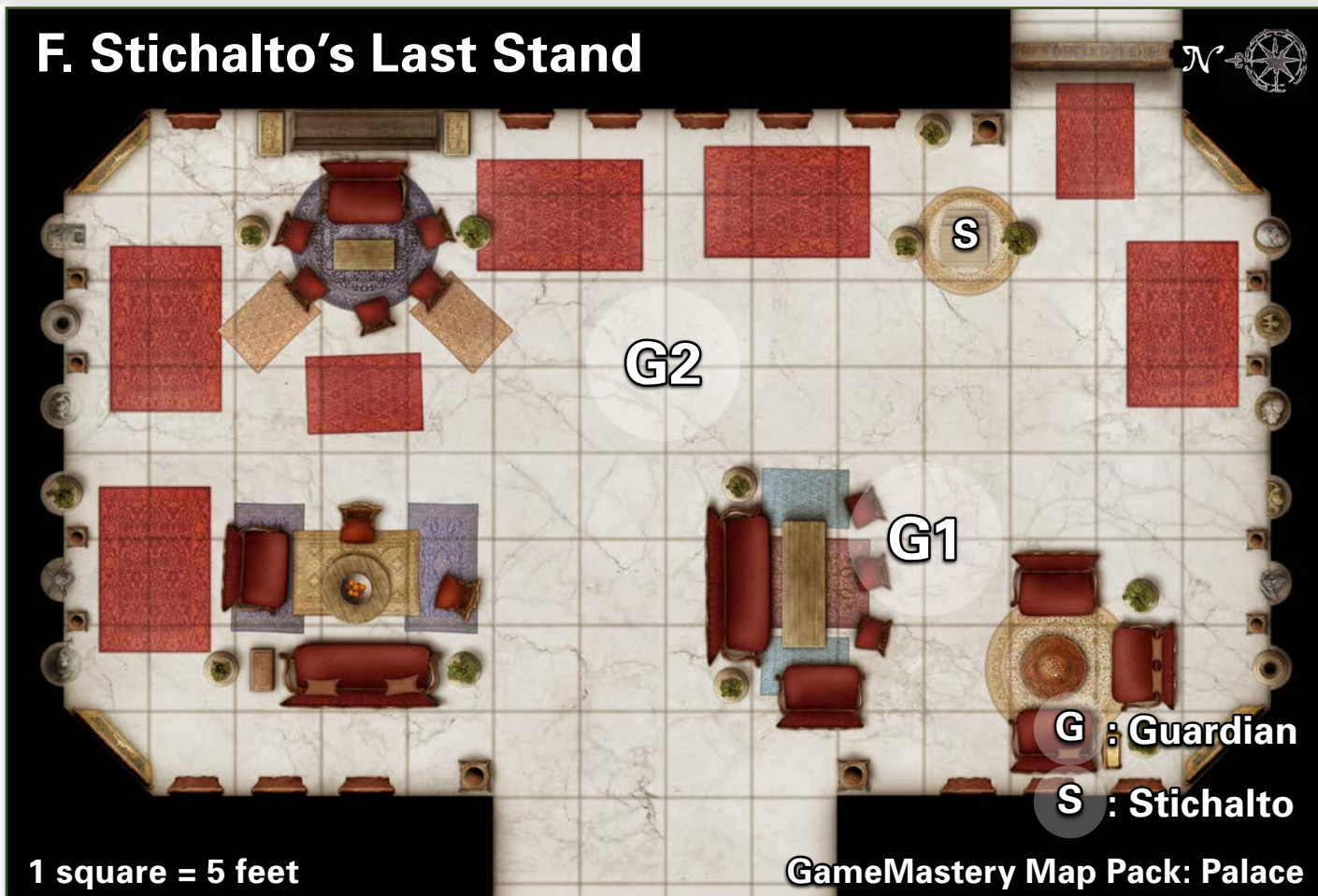
STICHALTO'S GUARDIAN

CR 17

Variant khala (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 151)

CE Large dragon (cold)

F. Stichalto's Last Stand



Init +10; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 15, flat-footed 25 (+6 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)

hp 261 (18d12+144)

Fort +19, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

Immune cold, disease, paralysis, sleep; **Resist** acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 28

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee 3 bites +27 (2d10+10/19–20 plus disease), tail +25 (2d8+10 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. line, 8d6 cold damage and 8d6 profane damage, Reflex DC 27 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), constrict (2d8+10), rend (2 bites, 2d10+15), tenacious grapple

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +25)
3/day—*fickle winds*^{UM}, *fire shield* (chill shield only), empowered *ice storm*, *incendiary cloud* (DC 25, deals cold damage)
1/day—*polar ray*

TACTICS

Before Combat The khala has already cast *fickle winds* and *fire*

shield before the PCs arrive.

During Combat The khala opens with its breath weapon before switching to full attacks. If the PCs do not appear to be resistant to cold, it uses its *polar ray* to soften one of them up.

Morale The khala fights to the death to protect Stichalto.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 22, **Con** 27, **Int** 22, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +29 (+33 grapple); **CMD** 45 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Critical Focus, Empower Spell-Like Ability (ice storm), Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical

Skills Appraise +27, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +29, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (geography) +27, Knowledge (local) +27, Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +30, Sense Motive +30, Stealth +23, Survival +26

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Draconic, Giant, Goblin

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) A khala can fire a jet of frigid liquid infused with unholy energy from one of its three mouths, dealing 8d6 points of cold damage and 8d6 points of damage that results directly from profane energy and is not subject to protections against cold damage (Reflex DC 27 half). Even if they succeed at the Reflex save, creatures

SCALING ENCOUNTER F

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Both Subtiers: A guardian has two heads instead of three. In addition, she loses her *polar ray* spell-like ability, and can only cast her 3/day spell like abilities once per day. Her Constitution score decreases to 23, which reduces her hit points by 36, her Fortitude save bonus to +17, and the DCs of her disease and breath weapon to 25 each.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Both Subtiers: Treat the PCs' Awareness Point total as 4 higher when deciding the benefits a guardian receives. A guardian's chillbane fever's onset becomes immediate. Her caster level increases to 22, and its SR increases to 32. She gains a +4 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, and she gains the ability to cast quickened *greater dispel magic* three times per day. In addition, she gains the block attacks and second save mythic abilities (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 226, 228).

Block Attacks (Ex) Once per round when a guardian would be hit by a melee or ranged attack, she can attempt an attack roll at her highest bonus. If this result exceeds the result from the attack against her, she is unaffected by the attack (as if the attack had missed).

Second Save (Ex) Whenever a guardian fails a saving throw against an effect with a duration greater than 1 round, she can keep trying to shake off the effect. At the start of her turn, if she's still affected, she can attempt the save one more time as a free action. If this save succeeds, the effect affects her as if she had succeeded at its initial saving throw. If the effect already allows another saving throw on a later turn to break the effect (such as for *hold monster*), this ability is in addition to the extra saving throw from the effect.

caught in the line who took any cold damage must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or be encased in ice. A trapped creature must succeed at a DC 25 Strength check or DC 26 Escape Artist check as a full-round action to break free.

Disease (Ex) Chillbane Fever: Bite—injury; save Fortitude DC 27; onset 1 day; frequency 1/day; effect 1d4 Con damage, sickened, and fatigued; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Tenacious Grapple (Ex) A khala does not gain the grappled condition if it grabs a foe with its tail, and it can maintain a grapple with its tail as a swift action.

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR 19)

STICHALTO'S GUARDIANS (2) CR 17
hp 261 (see Subtier 12–13)

Development: Once the PCs defeat Stichalto's draconic guardians, a terrible, feminine cackle echoes throughout the parlor, and then all of the snow in the room vanishes. Stichalto has no credible way of defending himself from the PCs. Allow the PCs to describe how they defeat this Patron.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat Stichalto's guardians, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount. Do not apply this reduction if they defeated Suliji Peshar.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 6,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 7,700 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 9,400 gp.

CONCLUSION

As the PCs conclude their infiltration of the Aspis Building, the chaos and carnage throughout Ostenso is coming under control of local authorities. The Pathfinders have enough time to slip away from the Aspis Building in order to dodge guard patrols, and even if the PCs run afoul of such officers, an Aspis representative or one of Suliji's agents (depending on whom the PCs ultimately aided) steps in to provide an alibi. The PCs can make it back to their ship out of the city, where they reunite with the NPC Pathfinder teams. The survivors are shaken by their trials, but as long as the casualties were fairly low, the teams are also proud of what they saw and accomplished. This is a great opportunity to briefly relay any optional encounters the PCs skipped, and it can also be a good opportunity for the NPCs to reference how the PCs' advice, equipment, or leadership helped the teams prevail even in the face of adversity.

The PCs likely meet Marcos Farabellus at the Grand Lodge in Absalom, though he's amenable to debriefing them elsewhere. When they join him, he is accompanied by Ambrus Valsin and a dark-skinned woman wearing a mask shaped like a steely whorl with three eyeholes—a member of the Decemvirate. Feel free to add any other Venture-Captains to the debriefing with whom you feel the PCs have an interesting relationship, either positive or negative (for instance a mentorship from the GM Star boon, or even one of your own PC Venture-Captains who has traveled with the PCs before). To Farabellus, the ideal outcome involves the PCs' protecting the Society's interests, preferably by preventing any Patrons' deaths while capturing or killing Suliji Peshar, making laudable use of their NPC teams with minimal casualties, avoiding killing too many other Aspis agents, making the Pathfinder Society look good while breaking into its rival's base, and acquiring any evidence of other Aspis plots or secrets—in approximately that order.

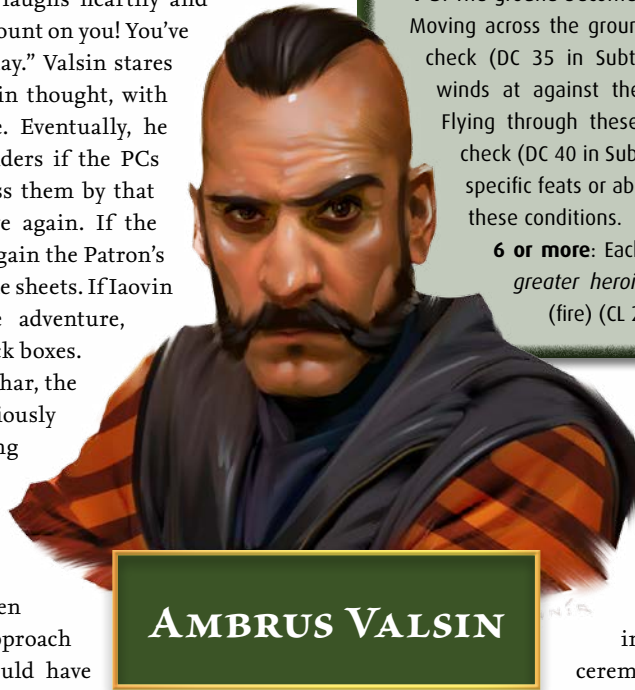
Valsin, on the other hand, still bears enough of a grudge from agents lost in the *Hao Jin Tapestry* conflict, as well as increasing resentment towards the Aspis after reconnecting

with his former pupil Magali Delroya, that he is happier if the PCs sided with Suliji and took down Kaera and Stichalto. Any other Venture-Captains you decided to include generally support with the PCs' decision if they had a particularly good relationship with the PCs or criticize it if they had an antagonistic relationship with the PCs.

If the PCs defeated Suliji, Farabellus is upbeat, cheerful, and relieved. He laughs heartily and proclaims, "I knew I could count on you! You've made the Society proud today." Valsin stares off into the distance, deep in thought, with a slight frown on his face. Eventually, he speaks, saying that he wonders if the PCs have let an opportunity pass them by that the Society may never have again. If the PCs chose this option, they gain the Patron's Debt boon on their Chronicle sheets. If Taovin Ratarion died during the adventure, cross off 8 of the boon's check boxes.

If the PCs aided Suliji Peshar, the Master of Swords listens anxiously to their reasons for doing so. If their explanation is sound, he bites his lower lip in thought and clenches and unclenches his hand a few times. He then tersely shares that their approach was likely not what he would have done, but it was a decisive act that may one day prove to have been in the Society's interest. For now, though, there's no going back, and the PCs have crippled the Consortium. Ambrus Valsin interjects a counterpoint, and he praises the PCs' actions, as brave, righteous, farsighted, and impressively adaptive to the situation, pointing out that each of these Patrons left alive would have been responsible for numerous deaths of Pathfinders and innocents. Far away, Suliji closes down what remain of her illicit operations and cashes out, disappearing with an immense amount of capital and a stockpile of powerful magic items. Whether she retires quietly or takes this as an opportunity to plot even bolder schemes remains to be seen; even Suliji herself needs to do some soul-searching before she is sure what's next for her. If the PCs chose this option, each PC earns the Beheading the Serpent boon on his Chronicle sheet.

Farabellus encourages the PCs to speak a few words in memory of each of the fallen. He shares that this is a practice he adopted early on in his career so that he could honor those who gave their lives and prove to himself that each Pathfinder is not a pawn in some game but a person with a name, a past, but no longer a future. If the PCs struggle to name and speak of their dead subordinates,



AMBRUS VALSIN

AWARENESS POINTS

The PCs' Awareness Point total reflects how long the draconic guardians have to absorb the power of the White Witches that is emanating from the icy sphere.

1 or fewer: Make no changes to the encounter.

2-3: Each of the dragons benefits from *heroism* (CL 20).

4-5: The ground becomes coated in perfectly sheer ice. Moving across the ground requires a DC 30 Acrobatics check (DC 35 in Subtier 14-15). Furthermore, chill winds at against the PCs, interfering with flight. Flying through these winds requires a DC 35 Fly check (DC 40 in Subtier 14-15). Either way, barring specific feats or abilities, the PCs cannot charge in these conditions.

6 or more: Each of the dragons benefits from *greater heroism* (CL 20) and *resist energy* (fire) (CL 20).

Farabellus solemnly shakes his head and shares something meaningful he had learned about each of the fallen from memory.

The member of the Decemvirate watches the PCs intently during this improvised ceremony but nods her masked head after each eulogy. If she is suitably impressed—indicated by the PCs' having fulfilled both their primary and secondary success conditions—she breaks her silence.

having fulfilled both their primary and secondary success conditions—she breaks her silence.

"The Society has endured for centuries and shall endure for many more—beyond the lifetimes of any of its members yet sustained by future generations and the organization's guiding principles: Explore the world's mysteries, report those findings, and cooperate to ensure one another's success. As evidenced by recent events, we must sometimes go beyond that call to ensure a future in which we can study the past. Even when agents fall in service to lore, we commemorate them and foster another to pursue her objectives." She reaches for a bag and withdraws an intricate helmet adorned with three gem-studded flanges. Cradling it in one arm, she continues.

"Even among the Ten, malady and misfortune inevitably claim everyone, and another must rise to ensure the Society lives on, immortalized in deed and legend. We watch for those who might accept—and be worthy of—that challenge. You have earned a rest, brave Pathfinders, but we hope to see your return to the field." She returns the helm to the bag and adds, "Perhaps then we shall meet again to discuss certain future opportunities to leave your mark on this age and beyond."

In the weeks and months to come, the Pathfinder Society and Aspis Consortium step back their hostilities toward one another, making several quiet concessions to one another to maintain the peace. It's only a matter of time before an Aspis agent fells a Pathfinder or a Society expedition thwarts a Consortium operation in the name of historical preservation. Even as hostilities gradually begin anew, both organizations prove increasingly careful not to let the conflict get out of hand—especially true for the Consortium's Patrons, who are painfully aware how decisively the Society could retaliate if it deigned to do so again.

If the PCs found at least one of the items other than the Patron's plans in the Traversing the Serpent's Den challenge on page 21, they each earn the Aspis Armory boon. Cross off any items they did not find.

A PC also earns the Incredible Protege boon if she meets the following conditions: She must possess all three chronicle sheets for the *All For Immortality* series, she must have earned the True to the Mission Boon from #7–20: *First Taste of Eternity*, she must not have had Alexayn kill a Pathfinder agent due to betraying a deal with the mummy, and she must have three or fewer deaths on her Field Commander boons across all three scenarios (it doesn't matter how many deaths the teams accrued from averaging with other PCs, only what appears on the PC's personal records).

REPORTING NOTES

If the PCs cooperated with Suliji Peshar and killed Stichalto and Kaera Hightower, check box A when reporting the scenario's results. If the PCs killed or otherwise apprehended Suliji Peshar, check box B. If the PCs kept Iaovin Ratarion alive, check box C.

PRIMARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The PCs should kill, apprehend, or otherwise thwart Suliji Peshar. Doing so earns each PC 1 Prestige Point. Alternatively, the PCs can fulfill this goal by allying with Suliji Peshar, sabotaging the Aspis Building, and killing Stichalto and Kaera Hightower.

SECONDARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The PCs' secondary goal is to protect the Society and their fellow agents as much as possible, including preventing collateral damage while the possibility remains that the attack is a smokescreen to blame the Society. They complete this objective by fulfilling three of the following five conditions: end the adventure with fewer than 4 Awareness Points, defeat Mr. Khayn without killing him in area D, defeat Suliji while keeping Iaovin Ratarion alive in area E, complete the Traversing the Serpents' Den challenge while encountering 2 or fewer obstacles, and complete the mission with no more than 1 casualty among the PCs' Pathfinder teams. If the PCs made an impressive effort to avoid bloodshed, abuse, or other criminal acts against Aspis employees and property (for example, regularly using nonlethal tactics to subdue witnesses, overcoming barriers without damaging the Aspis Building, keeping any verbal abuse of Iaovin Ratarion to a minimum, etc.) or to avoid or cover up any indication of the Society's complicity in their actions, treat them as having fulfilled an additional condition.



**DECENVIRATE
HELM**

PLAYER HANDOUT #1: THE AXE-FIXERS

This file provides information about the Pathfinders who call themselves the Axe-Fixers. These agents consider the Grand Lodge in Absalom their base of operations, and they have traveled beyond the Isle of Kortos for missions only rarely.

Garl and Shrade (CN male and female half-orc barbarians 5): Better known as the Boartusk Twins, these siblings earned field commissions for saving a group of Pathfinders in Lastwall. They accepted the invitation, not knowing quite what they were getting into. Since then, their reliance on brute strength has tarnished their reputation and earned them little work. Hoping to prove themselves as leaders, they founded a group and named it after their favorite motto: "There's nothing an axe can't fix."

Eskaravarn (CN female half-orc warpriest^{ACG} of Gorum 5): Eskaravarn grew up in the wilds of Nirmathas, where she learned to fight, plan raids, and soldier on when her comrades fell to Molthuni blades. She barely survived a disastrous ambush, and it was Venture-Captain Oraiah Tola who found her and healed her wounds. Eskaravarn has sworn seven years of her service to the Society as repayment.

Visbaron Adelum (LN male human magus^{UM} 4): Too hot-tempered to inherit his family's business in Taldor, Adelum found himself forcibly enrolled by his father in the Pathfinder Society as an impromptu finishing school. The hope is that Adelum would learn self-control and manners. Instead he's learned magic and swordplay, which he's all too eager to prove in the field. Fortunately, Eskaravarn's world-weary admonitions keep him in line.

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: THE KERNAUG GROUP

This file provides information on the team of Pathfinders who call themselves the Kernaug Group. These agents consider the Ustalavic city of Lepidstadt—famed for its university—as their base of operations. Most of them became Pathfinders after enrolling in the university’s small but robust psychic sciences program, headed by Doctor Aida Kernaug. In return for their regular reports from the field, she provides them university credit and a small stipend that supplements what they earn on Society missions. Doctor Kernaug is deeply invested in their success, and she is a regular correspondent with numerous venture-captains.

Maralyn Corwins (NG female human investigator^{ACG} [psychic detective^{OA}] 5): Haunted by terrible childhood memories that her family insists never happened, Maralyn believes that her research is vital to preventing a terrible fate from befalling her tiny hometown in Isger. She hopes to not only unveil this true threat but to also earn Doctor Kernaug’s approval by becoming an expert in her field.

Raphael Vasheen (N female human medium^{OA} 6): Doctor Kernaug’s graduate assistant and the nominal leader of the group, Vasheen has a desperate intellectual urge to learn how the Dark Tapestry might bleed into common arcane magic and vice versa. She believes that the archmage spirit she channels is strongly connected to alien forces. The Society is beginning to suspect that Vasheen intends her research to unlock the real reason her mother—also a medium—has gone mad.

Sophran Delgavar (N female human bard 6): Born in the holy city of Kavapesta, “Sophie” was raised by strict members of the Pharasmin Penitence—Pharasmins who believe in the virtue of suffering. In studying theology at the University of Lepidstadt her radical views have softened, though she remains a fiery orator. Sophran joined the group both to stay close to Veronik, but also to delay her graduation—and her inevitable return to Kavapesta.

Veronik Locnave (LN female human swashbuckler^{ACG} 5): One of the most accomplished fencers to come out of the Arbutus Blade dueling sorority in the last decade, Veronik has nearly completed her studies to become a surgeon. However, as the dueling doctors following her sorority’s traditions must, she’s postponed her graduation to travel and gain practical experience. She wears her Lepidstadt Scar in a vertical streak below her left eye.

PLAYER HANDOUT #3: THE SCROLL-SEEKERS

This file provides information on the team of Pathfinders who call themselves the Scroll-Seekers. These agents consider the Grand Lodge in Absalom their base of operations, though they represent several of the Society more ambitious and far-flung recruiting programs over the past few years.

Janira Gavix (N female halfling bard 5): Few up-and-coming Pathfinders are so well known around the Grand Lodge as Janira, who prides herself on her memory of Society history and its greatest heroes' exploits. Despite her well-intentioned helpfulness, some find the self-promotion she slips into her tales positively grating. Not so for the Master of Scrolls Kreighton Shaine, who trusts her as the leader of this motley band.

Athrax (LN male kobold alchemist^{APG} 5): Although allies of the Society, none of the Sewer Dragons tribe of kobolds had ever applied to become a Pathfinder—at least not until Athrax, an alchemical savant with a mean streak a mile wide. Training and mentorship has since softened his cruelty, and he now holds a provisional membership so long as he is accompanied by other Scroll-Seekers. His closest topside friend is Tarys, and her acceptance of his eccentricities is one of the strongest factors in his recent alignment change.

Ko Deschamp (CG male half-elf fighter 3/rogue 3): Born in the Tien state of Amanandar, Ko developed a reputation as a guildbreaker and infiltrator of bandit operations. For his services to the Lantern Lodge, he earned a field commission from the Society. His many successes give him reason to swagger, especially after traveling to Taldor, where his wild tales, distant origins, and skill with the naginata polearm make him the life of the parlors.

Tarys (LG female dwarf inquisitor^{APG} of Kelinahat 4): Tarys came of age in the sky citadel Kraggodan, where the wild Society stories of her uncle Gorm Greathammer encouraged her to strike out and see the world for herself. As a servant of the empyreal lord of spies and scouts, she has distinguished herself in the Society for the detail of her reports and her tenacious pursuit of facts.

APPENDIX 1: STAT BLOCKS

The following stat blocks are used in this adventure.

GENIE, SHAITAN	CR 7
<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 143	
LN Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)	
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +14	
DEFENSE	
AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, –1 size)	
hp 85 (9d10+36)	
Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +8	
Immune electricity	
OFFENSE	
Speed 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.	
Melee 2 slams +13 (2d6+5) or mwk scimitar +14/+9 (1d8+7/18–20)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attacks earth mastery, metalmorph, stone curse	
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)	
At will— <i>meld into stone, plane shift</i> (willing targets to elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane only), <i>soften earth and stone, stone shape, veil</i> (self only)	
3/day—quicken <i>glitterdust</i> (DC 14), <i>stoneskin, rusting grasp, stone tell, wall of stone</i>	
1/day— <i>transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud</i>	
STATISTICS	
Str 20, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15	
Base Atk +9; CMB +15; CMD 26	
Feats Combat Casting, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative [®] , Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (<i>glitterdust</i>)	
Skills Appraise +14, Bluff +14, Climb +25, Craft (gemcutting) +14, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +14	
Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.	
SQ stone glide	
DESCRIPTION	
This being resembles a towering human with skin of polished stone and glittering agate eyes.	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Earth Mastery (Ex) A shaitan gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls and a +2 bonus on opposed Strength-based checks if both it and its foe are touching the ground. It takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls against airborne or waterborne opponents.	
Metalmorph (Su) As a standard action, a shaitan can touch a single metal object of no more than 10 pounds and transform it into any other metal for 1 day.	
Stone Curse (Su) If a shaitan succeeds at a bull rush check by 5 or more and pushes its target into a stone barrier, the target must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex save or be forced into the barrier as if the target had cast <i>meld into stone</i> until the target succeeds at a DC 19 Fortitude save as a full-round	

action to exit the stone. The save DCs are Strength-based.

Stone Glide (Su) This functions as the earth elemental's earth glide ability, except the shaitan can move through stone, dirt, crystal, or metal.

GOLEM, CLOCKWORK	CR 12
<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 2 137	
N Large construct	
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0	
DEFENSE	
AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, +16 natural, –1 size)	
hp 118 (16d10+30)	
Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5	
DR 10/adamantine; Immune construct traits, magic	
OFFENSE	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee 2 slams +23 (2d10+8 plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attacks death burst, grind, wall of gears	
STATISTICS	
Str 27, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1	
Base Atk +16; CMB +25 (+29 grapple); CMD 36	
DESCRIPTION	
A vaguely humanoid shape made of metal lurches to life with the grinding whir and frantic ticking of hundreds of gears.	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Death Burst (Ex) When a clockwork golem is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, it explodes in a shower of razor-sharp gears and debris. All creatures within a 10-foot burst take 12d6 points of slashing damage—a successful DC 18 Reflex save results in half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.	
Grind (Ex) A clockwork golem deals an additional 2d10+12 points of slashing damage when it succeeds at a grapple combat maneuver check as razor-sharp gears and blades emerge from its body to grind and slice its foe.	
Immunity to Magic (Ex) A clockwork golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against a clockwork golem, as noted below.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A <i>grease</i> spell cast on the golem causes it to move quickly for 1d6 rounds, as if under the effects of <i>haste</i>. A <i>rusting grasp</i> spell deals damage to a clockwork golem normally, and makes the golem staggered for 1d6 rounds (no save). 	
Wall of Gears (Su) As a standard action, a clockwork golem can fold into a whirling wall of grinding gears measuring 10 feet by 10 feet or 5 feet by 20 feet. Anyone passing through the wall takes 15d6 points of slashing damage. If the wall appears in a creature's space, that creature can attempt a DC 18 Reflex save to leap to one side and avoid the damage. The clockwork golem can take no actions while in this form except to resume its normal form as a move action. A clockwork golem's AC and immunities remain the same while it is in this form.	

NEMHAIN

CR 15

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5 182

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 26, flat-footed 17 (+7 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 225 (18d8+144); profane regeneration 5 (electricity or good)

Fort +13, **Ref** +16, **Will** +20

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal;

Immune cold, undead traits; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +21 (3d8 plus 1d6 Con drain)

Special Attack bound spirits

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +22)

3/day—*harm* (DC 23), *slay living* (DC 22), *telekinesis* (DC 22)

1/day—*antilife shell*, *wall of force*

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 26, **Con** —, **Int** 23, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 39

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Mobility, Toughness

Skills Bluff +25, Diplomacy +25, Fly +37, Intimidate +28,

Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (religion) +27,

Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +27, Stealth +29

Languages Common; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ rejuvenation

DESCRIPTION

A cloud of translucent humanoid spirits whirls around this ghostly desiccated corpse.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bound Spirits (Su) A nemhain is surrounded by a whirling cloud of spirits that are bound to her—often the spirits of close relatives or friends she had in life. As a swift action, she can direct these bound spirits to strike at any creature within 30 feet as a ranged touch attack (with an attack bonus of +21). These spirits can be used to cause damage as if the nemhain had touched the target with her incorporeal touch, or they can be used to deliver a *harm* or *slay living* effect. Using these spirits to deliver one of these spell-like abilities is a swift action; the nemhain does not need to take a standard action to cast the spell-like ability, but it still counts against the number of times per day she can use that spell-like ability. The nemhain can also send these spirits as a group up to 1 mile away to act as scouts; they have a fly speed of 60 feet (perfect). She can observe and listen through them, but as long as they don't share her space, she can't use them to deliver ranged touch attacks. These spirits are impervious to almost all attacks and magic, save the following: *dispel evil*, *raise dead*, or *resurrection*. Such spells cause the spirits to vanish and to be useless to the nemhain for 1 hour. *True resurrection* makes the spirits useless for 24 hours.

Profane Regeneration (Su) This ability functions like regeneration except the nemhain has it despite the fact that she lacks a Constitution score. A nemhain reduced to 0 hit points is staggered instead of destroyed while her profane regeneration is active. As long as her profane regeneration is active, a nemhain ignores all damage that would reduce her hit points below 0.

Rejuvenation (Su) All nemhains are tied to a ritual object used in their creation. This object is typically a large statue, pillar, or monolith. Until this object is destroyed, a destroyed nemhain automatically rejuvenates back to full hit points 1d4 days after she is destroyed, always appearing adjacent to her ritual object.

APPENDIX 2: FIELD COMMAND

During each part of the *All for Immortality* series, the PCs are in charge of three teams of Pathfinder agents. The newly ordained field commanders are able to direct these teams as they see fit, though each adventure has several different sub-missions that these teams can complete to uncover additional background information, make later encounters easier, or perform other helpful deeds that can contribute to the scenarios' success conditions. This is a privilege befitting the PCs' growing prestige and accomplishments.

However, directing these teams is a balancing act. For all the benefits of leadership, the PCs must also deal with the likelihood that their orders could result in the death of one or more agents. Like all Pathfinders, these subordinates are voluntarily aiding their superiors under the assumption that their actions will result in glory, gold, and the preservation of knowledge. The more that the PCs can keep their minions alive and happy, the better those agents can serve the PCs in future adventures. These three teams—the Axe-Fixers, the Kernaug Group, and the Scroll-Seekers—represent a range of field agent specialties and approaches, detailed further in **Player Handouts #1** through **#3** on pages 43–45. The players might even recognize some of the agents from previous adventures!

During *Serpents Fall*, there are four likely tasks the PCs can assign their teams. Each team is able to perform one mission over the course of the adventure, representing the team's breaking into or causing distractions near a major entrance into the Aspis Building. For the GM, managing this phase is a tricky balancing act; it's important to give the players the reins, but there is also a list of assumed tasks to which they'll assign teams. If the players are veering far off course, it's okay to lay out the likely options. On the other hand, the players might propose a secondary mission that's so clever and productive that it could replace an existing mission.

Each mission notes key Knowledge skills and team affinities, each explained further in the Preparing the Teams section below.

Using the Main Entrance (Knowledge [history or nobility]; the Scroll-Seekers): The front entrance of the Aspis Building befits the Consortium's wealth and pomp, and under most circumstances, visitors are welcome to enter through here, conduct business, and petition the Consortium. The current crisis means that the building is closed for business, yet a suitably deceptive team could trick their way in, demand to speak with managers, or otherwise divert resources to handling these troublesome "clients."

Using the Reporting Entrance (Knowledge [arcana or local]; the Kernaug Group): Relatively few visitors use this entrance, so there might be traps, locks, or passwords that ward off routine thieves. Quickly canvassing the neighbors

to learn who enters this way and how might give the team an edge in surviving the mission.

Using the Sewer Entrance (Knowledge [dungeoneering or nature]): The sewers present the route best able to channel a team deep into the Aspis Building, where they might inflict the most damage and provide the most support. However, such a ploy would expose the team to more danger. Certainly knowledge of sewers and common threats that dwell beneath cities would benefit these Pathfinders. There is no ideal group for this task; the mission is equally dangerous for each team.

Using the Shipping Entrance (Knowledge [engineering or geography]; the Axe-Fixers): Heavy doors and a portcullis block this entrance, so those capable of muscling open the entrance are best suited to this assignment. Once inside, there are likely guards and other workers who would quickly sound the alarm if visitors didn't have an exotic shipment of goods in tow or at least the accents of foreign merchants. At the least, such a diversion would give the team a chance to launch a surprise attack and minimize its own casualties.

PREPARING THE TEAMS

During this adventure, there are five major ways the PCs can give their teams the best chance of success (see Calculating the Results on page 49).

Equipment: Although the NPC Pathfinders have the essentials to go adventuring, they expect that under these dangerous circumstances, their leaders will provide them with additional resources. If the PCs provide a team 1,500 gp worth of items (2,500 gp in Subtier 14–15), that team gains a +2 bonus on its check. The PCs can give a team double this amount to increase the bonus to +4. Rather than give a team resources, the PCs can instead lend the NPCs non-expendable gear, such as a *cloak of elvenkind*. Such gear is returned at the end of the adventure, assuming at least one member of that team survived the mission. The gear is lost if that team perishes, but a PC can pay 4 Prestige Points to recover all items that the PCs lent to a fallen team.

Mission Briefing: The PCs should provide a concise mission briefing for each team, establishing what the NPCs should accomplish. Each of the missions lists two Knowledge skills associated with the task, representing key information that the NPCs don't know but that could help them in the field. Before giving the briefing, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge check in one of these skills recalls helpful information that grants that team a +2 bonus on its check. A PC can also attempt a skill check of the second type, but the DC is 30. If this skill check succeeds, the PCs grant an additional +2 bonus to the team.

Play to their Strengths: Each of the teams is particularly adept at certain tasks, and assigning a team to a mission

that suits its strengths results in a better outcome; this grants the team a +4 bonus on its check. Each mission above notes which team is best suited for that task.

Rally the Wounded: Although one or more teams might be reeling from the loss of beloved comrades, the PCs can provide encouragement to the survivors during their mission briefing. As long as the PCs remain upbeat, and a PC succeeds at a DC 25 Perform (comedy or oratory) or DC 30 Bluff or Diplomacy check, that team's penalty from missing members (see below) is reduced by half. For each member dead or missing beyond the first, increase the check DC by 5 (e.g. Bluff DC 40 if only one member remains).

Send a Full Team: During the prior two adventures in this series, the PCs sent these teams to complete tasks in Thuvia and Nidal. If one or more team members died while assisting the PCs, it leaves that team weaker, demoralized, and less capable of handling the Aspis Building's defenses. For each team member who is missing or dead, the team takes a -4 penalty on its check. If the PCs desire, they can merge two or more incomplete teams to create one whole team. Treat this as the team with the greatest number of surviving members for the purpose of the team's mission affinity; if the number is tied, the team is treated as both teams for that purpose.

CALCULATING THE RESULTS

Once the PCs have assigned, briefed, and prepared their teams, let a different player roll a d20 for each team, applying any bonuses from the PCs' leadership (see Preparing the Teams above). A player can use a free reroll (such as that granted by wearing a Pathfinder shirt) to reroll the team's check, but miscellaneous bonuses from GM stars don't apply to this check; the NPCs aren't an extension of the player's character. If the PCs assign two teams to a particular task, let the player roll 2d20 and use the higher result. At the end of the adventure, reveal how the teams did when they report back to the PCs based on their respective checks' results.

These results also affect the number of Awareness Points that the PCs earn while traveling through Ostenso and navigating the Aspis Building. For each success, reduce the PCs' Awareness Points by 1 (minimum 0) when they first enter the Aspis Building. For each resounding success, reduce their Awareness Points by 2 (minimum 0). Finally, for each Catastrophic Failure, increase the PC's Awareness Points by 1.

Catastrophic Failure (1-9): Tragedy, accidents, and cruel coincidences befell the team, causing them to fail. In addition, 1d2 of the NPCs perished, disappeared, or otherwise returned unfit to continue adventuring.

Failure (10-14): The team didn't succeed at the mission and weathered considerable peril in the process. One of the

NPCs perished, disappeared, or returned in no condition to continue his adventuring career.

Success (15-19): The team succeeded at the mission, but there is a 50% chance that one of the NPCs perished, disappeared, or sorrowfully tenders his resignation following the adventure.

Resounding Success (20+): The team succeeded with flying colors and sustained neither life-threatening injuries nor psychological scars.

Character Death: When determining which NPC Pathfinder in a group dies, work in the opposite order that they are listed. For example, among the Scroll-Seekers, Tarys is the first to die, and Janira is the last.

DEBRIEFING THE TEAM

When concluding the adventure, give the PCs a chance to interact with their various teams—or what remains of them. This is a time to celebrate their teams' victories and face the cost of sending relatively inexperienced teams into dangerous situations. NPCs might return carrying the body of a cherished colleague, tearfully recount the death of a friend, or even correlate the team's failure with the PCs' management decisions. As the series continues, consider adapting the individual NPCs' attitudes to match their recent successes and failures. Pay special attention several of the relationships between team members.

Gauge the teams' responses based on your group of players. If the PCs were well intentioned, and their characters have always been considerate of their venture-captains, there's no need for a guilt trip. If you know the PCs have regularly been critical of in-game venture-captains and other volunteer leaders, ham it up and give the players a taste of their own medicine.

Tracking Deaths: In the event of a death, the PCs can choose to expend gold or other resources to cast *raise dead* on a fallen Pathfinder, but they must do so before concluding the scenario. No matter the exact outcome that befell an NPC, the cost to restore him to adventuring condition is always equivalent to *raise dead*.

If the players played *First Taste of Eternity* or *All the Gods Beyond* separately and had different number of NPC Pathfinders die, count up how many NPC Pathfinders died during this adventure and instead add it to that PC's death toll from the past two adventures. For example, if one member of the Axe-Fixers died during this adventure, a PC's Chronicle sheet should show that the number of dead Axe-Fixers now equals 1 plus the number that died on his watch during *First Taste of Eternity* and *All the Gods Beyond*.



Pathfinder Society Scenario #7-29: All for Immortality, Part 3: Serpents Fall

Event _____ Date _____

GM # _____ GM Character # _____

GM Name _____ GM Prestige Earned _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court
☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Character # _____ ☐ Prestige Points

Character Name _____
☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court

Character # _____ ☐ Prestige Points

Character Name _____
☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
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Character Name _____
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GM Pathfinder Society #