TIER 1~5



## UNGROUNDED BUT UNBROKEN

By Jenny Jarzabski



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#### HOW TO PLAY

Pathfinder Society Scenario #8–05: Ungrounded But Unbroken is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st- through 5th-level characters (Tier 1–5; Subtiers 1–2 and 4–5). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Roleplaying Guild, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at **paizo.com/pathfinderSociety**.



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#### **GM R**esources

Ungrounded but Unbroken makes use of the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary, Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment (UE), Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue (UI), Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide, and Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex. This adventure assumes the GM has access to these sourcebooks. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at **paizo.com/prd**. The statistics from the Bestiary, GameMastery Guide, and NPC Codex are reprinted in an appendix at the back of this scenario for the GM's convenience.



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or untold ages, the shaitans of the Peerless Empire have controlled vast swaths of the Plane of Earth, using the rich mineral wealth found there to fill their virtually boundless coffers. About 500 years ago, the empire's sultan perished in a clash against the City of Brass, and his daughter and heir Sultana Ashadieeyah bint Khalid took the throne. She has furiously dedicated resources to avenging her father's death, straining the Peerless Empire's treasuries and populace over the centuries. In recent years, the mounting costs of her burgeoning military have grown so large that they cannot be ignored, and the sultana's advisors have explored ways to economize. Among these is an initiative to recruit, train, and direct a unit of sellswords from the Material Plane, who are not nearly as expensive to maintain as shaitan troops—a unit known backhandedly as the Ungrounded. The Ungrounded's hierarchy accommodates non-native leaders as captains, but a small group of shaitan generals ultimately oversees the entire operation and ensures that it meets the high standards that the empire demands.

The Pathfinder Society recently assisted a shaitan named Reyshal ik Jalman, whose entire family had been exiled or imprisoned after a debacle in which a famous trio of the sultana's diamonds known as Sairazul's Tears went missing while in their possession. With the Society's help, Reyshal recovered enough information to prove that his family was not at fault. Reyshal was allowed to return to the Plane of Earth, although by the time he returned, the empire had already absorbed most of his family's wealth and lands. Despite his relative destitution, he has sincerely worked to gain the Society a toehold on his home plane. When he learned of the Ungrounded, he recommended it as a way for Pathfinders to build their local reputation in service to the empire-no doubt opening up countless other opportunities. Following Reyshal's advice, the Society's Master of Spells Sorrina Westyr plans to send a team of Pathfinders to the Peerless Empire's capital, the Opaline Vault, to train with the Ungrounded.

The Pathfinder Society is not the only organization with an interest in the Plane of Earth, however. The Aspis

#### WHERE ON GOLARION?

Ungrounded but Unbroken begins in Absalom but quickly shifts to the Opaline Vault, the capital of the shaitan empire on the Plane of Earth. This metropolis occupies the edge of a 30-mile-wide geode and is known for its stunning architecture and colorful lake of acid-melted gemstones. For more information about the Opaline Vault and the Plane of Earth, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Planes of Power*, available in bookstores and games stores everywhere and online at **paizo.com**.



Consortium began carving out a small niche in the Opaline Vault several decades ago, and they now control one of the hundreds of enclaves maintained by various Material Plane conglomerates. The mysterious silver agent Krayler Cauchemar, an accomplished assassin and spy rumored to be descended from a night hag, heads the operation. Cauchemar pounced on the Ungrounded as an opportunity to build Aspis clout and connections. One of his trusted associates, the veteran mercenary and bronze agent Marlene Othis, currently supervises the training of new recruits.

Krayler Cauchemar's vast network of plane-shifting spies recently informed him of the Pathfinders' bid for allies on the Plane of Earth. Cauchemar contacted Captain Marlene Othis and instructed her to use her position and resources to orchestrate the Pathfinders' failure. Sorrina Westyr

#### SUMMARY

Master of Spells Sorrina Westyr sends the PCs to the Opaline Vault with Reyshal ik Jalman, who vouches for the PCs' character and potential as members of the Ungrounded mercenary company. The PCs undergo basic training under the watchful eye of Captain Marlene Othis, an officer charged with training new recruits who has secret ties to the Aspis Consortium. The PCs must participate in a series of grueling trials to impress their superiors.

First, the PCs must survive an obstacle course designed to test their physical strength and endurance. Unfortunately, the obstacles set before the PCs are rigged—a greased log and a dangerous trap hidden in the climbing wall may hamper their performance. They must also prove their knowledge of the challenges that soldiers on the Plane of Earth may face.

Second, the PCs prove their mettle by sparring with a team of rival recruits. Captain Othis secretly persuades the other recruits to fight with poisoned weapons, once again stacking the odds against the PCs.

If the PCs manage to survive their initiation, they graduate to a set of on-the-job training tasks. Captain Othis first sends the PCs to act as hired security at the new Glitterfang Halls. Resourceful PCs may discover

that Othis provided bad intelligence about

the job, triggering a potentially embarrassing situation involving the Ungrounded's shaitan overseer. The PCs attempt to avoid this debacle while apprehending a crafty con woman determined to swindle the casino on its opening night.

Next, Captain Othis assigns the PCs to guard a caravan transporting jewels to a pasha's estate outside the Opaline Vault. Unfortunately, the captain has also arranged for an elemental crime cartel to ambush the shipment during the journey. The PCs must defend the caravan's contents and safely deliver the goods to their rightful recipient.

Finally, shaitan overseer General Faiza bint Hanif demands an audience with the mercenary recruits who have been at the heart of so many problems in the past weeks. The PCs have the opportunity to present evidence against Captain Othis and defend their own reputation, thereby gaining General Hanif's trust in further dealings with the Pathfinder Society and exposing the Aspis Consortium's machinations.

#### **GETTING STARTED**

The PCs begin the adventure in the Pathfinder Society Grand Lodge in Absalom. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure underway.

The courtyard outside of Sorrina Westyr's office is a tribute to the element of earth. Large, dark boulders jut from a carpet of smooth pebbles. Wildflowers and moss spring from the cracks between the stones. The Master of Spells' slategray skin seems to blend into the rock she lounges on in the sun-dappled courtyard, her face upturned to the cloudless sky. Sorrina stretches luxuriously before turning to smile.

> "Enjoy the open air while you can, Pathfinders," she says. "You are to be among the first agents sponsored to explore the planes—the Plane of Earth, to be exact. Reyshal ik Jalman, the Society's contact on the Plane of Earth, recently alerted us to a rare opportunity. The Sultana's constant war with the City of Brass means the shaitan empire needs more soldiers, and they have begun recruiting off-world mercenaries to train alongside their military. That's where you come in." Westyr leaps to her feet in a fluid motion, pulling an amethyst crystal wrapped in copper wire from her pocket.

> > "Please travel with Reyshal to the Opaline Vault. He can pull some strings to get you in with the mercenary company known as the Ungrounded.

Complete the basic training and prove to your superiors that the Pathfinders are useful allies. Reyshal and I believe that working with the Ungrounded will lay the foundation for an alliance with the Peerless Empire. What's more, this is an excellent means for you to establish your own professional credentials and connections." Westyr pauses to brush a fallen leaf from her hair. "I'll contact Reyshal as soon as you're ready."

The Master of Spells often sets aside time from her busy schedule to meditate and relax in this courtyard, which is visible from her office window. The long years she spent trapped in the Crystal Womb have left her starved for sunlight and fresh air, yet tied to the touch of stone and soil. She called the PCs to meet with her in this special place, where she has access to both. Sorrina Westyr does her best to answer the PCs' questions before contacting Reyshal.

Tell me about Reyshal ik Jalman. "Reyshal is, for the lack of a better term, an old friend of mine. He is a shaitan noble whose family was framed for the theft of the Sultana's diamonds. I first met him when he was in exile in Orv, deep in the Darklands. The Society helped him put to rest the serious accusations against his family, and he used this reprieve to return home to the Opaline Vault. Now, he's agreed to help us gain a foothold in the city. He's a proud man, and he enjoys driving a hard bargain, but he's reliable."

What is the Peerless Empire?/What is the Opaline Vault? "The Peerless Empire is a magnificent and expansive shaitan civilization. Its capital is the Opaline Vault, a metropolis home to over six million. Words do not do its splendor justice, but you will soon see it for yourselves."

Who are the Ungrounded? "The Ungrounded is an eclectic mercenary company run by newcomers to the Plane of Earth, but ultimately managed by shaitan generals. I think the name is a bit of an insult, honestly, but the company is invaluable to the empire."

How do we get back to the Material Plane? "Reyshal has agreed to transport you back to Absalom after you complete your basic training with the Ungrounded."

How long must we stay? "Completing your basic training should be enough to attract the interest of powerful allies in the Opaline Vault, not to mention ingratiating the Society with the Ungrounded. You need not make a long-term commitment to the company after that—unless, of course, that's what you desire."

#### **KNOWLEDGE (PLANES)**

Based on the result of a Knowledge (planes) check, the PCs might know more about the Plane of Earth and the Opaline Vault specifically. Each PC knows all of the information with a DC less than or equal to the result of her check. If the PCs express the desire to research the location, Sorrina Westyr allows them to spend the remainder of the day in the Grand Lodge library before contacting Reyshal. Spending 4 hours researching the Plane of Earth grants a PC a +2 bonus on her Knowledge (planes) check.

10+: The Plane of Earth is fixed in location and comprised of a vast network of tunnels and caverns. Though the plane itself is generally suitable for humanoid life, common hazards include cave-ins, poisonous gasses, and pockets of molten rock near its border with the Plane of Fire. **15+:** Creatures indigenous to the Plane of Earth include crystal dragons, earth elementals, mephits, oreads, shaitans, xiomorns, and xorns.

**20+**: The Opaline Vault, also known as the Rainbow Metropolis, is the breathtaking capital of the shaitan's Peerless Empire, and a planar hub for entertainment and trade. Sultana Ashadieeyah bint Khalid rules from a gemstudded palace that towers over the city's skyline. The Vault's diverse population includes a small percentage of noble shaitans known as pashas, as well as dwarves, elementals, elves, and oreads.

**25+:** Sultana Ashadieeyah bint Khalid is driven by the desire to avenge her father, causing her to pour everincreasing resources into her war with the efreet. In recent decades, the gorgeous and prosperous capital has declined, and corruption is at an all-time high. Efreet and ifrits are treated with contempt or open hostility in the Opaline Vault.

30+: In addition to being the seat of the Peerless Empire's power, the Opaline Vault is a hub for extraplanar visitors. Many organizations hoping to forge alliances within shaitan society establish headquarters there. The Aspis Consortium set up a small outpost on the

outskirts of the city in recent years and has already infiltrated the empire's military.

## JOURNEY TO THE PLANE OF EARTH

Once the PCs are ready, Sorrina Westyr uses the amethyst and copper wire to cast sending, telling Reyshal, "Preparations are complete. We are ready." A few moments later, **Reyshal ik Jalman** (LN male noble shaitan) arrives. Read or paraphrase the following.

> The boulder opposite Sorrina Westyr's seat ripples like water. What appears to be a towering stone statue of a muscular man clad in gold-lacquered armor emerges from the stone. He bows dramatically to the Master of Spells.

> > "Well met, Trail Seekers," he grins wryly as Sorrina frowns in irritation. "Of course, I mean Pathfinders. Just a jest between friends." The shaitan steps forward and inclines his head in a shallow version of the bow he just performed for Sorrina.

> > "I am Reyshal ik Jalman, humble servant of Her Radiance, Ashadieeyah

Reyshal ik Jalman

bint Khalid, and sworn ally to the steadfast Master of Spells. Today I am honored to escort you to the Opaline Vault, the glorious home of my ancestors. I hope that together we can cement the bonds between our peoples, dear Pathfinders. But first, please, introduce yourselves!"

Reyshal ik Jalman listens courteously to each PC's introduction, asking questions about their families and homelands. Reyshal is noticeably curt with dwarven and ifrit PCs, but maintains a polite veneer. He is especially interested in the tales of oread and suli PCs.

Immediately following the pleasantries, Reyshal invites the PCs to stand in a circle and join hands as he casts *plane shift*. The PCs experience a distinct feeling of vertigo and an unpleasant but not-quite-painful tugging sensation within their stomachs. Read or paraphrase the following.

A spinning tunnel of shimmering crystals gives way to the inside of an immense geode, a cavern so vast that the walls and ceiling appear as a distant night sky. Multicolored twinkling lights hang in the air like stars, painting shifting auroras across the geode's walls. At the heart of the city, radiant spires of gold and platinum emerge from a churning lake of liquefied gemstones, connected by soaring bridges. "Welcome to the Rainbow Metropolis," Reyshal whispers.

The PCs materialize several miles outside the city. The walk takes about 2 hours, and the PCs are in no danger of becoming lost with Reyshal as their guide. As they approach the metropolis, Reyshal excitedly points out locations of interest, including the Peerless Embassy, which hosts diplomats from all over the multiverse, and the Slab, a mile-long barracks that hosts the largest portion of the Sultana's

shaitan army. Ifrit PCs who walk the streets of the Vault without attempting to disguise or conceal their appearance are met with reactions ranging from rude stares to thrown stones and yelled insults, but are not openly attacked.

Finally, the group arrives in the Outer District, a bustling area characterized by crowded streets, shabby domiciles, and buildings sporting the flags of various nations and organizations, some recognizable of which the PCs recognize as indigenous to the Material Plane. The permanent residents of this district are merchants and slaves, as well as their families. Reyshal explains that many off-world organizations conduct business and diplomatic missions here, all seeking the pashas' favor. A PC who succeeds a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recognizes a banner with a serpent emblem associated with the Aspis Consortium. If the PCs identify this banner, Reyshal truthfully states that he knows nothing of the Aspis Consortium.

#### THE UNGROUNDED BARRACKS

Founded 4 decades ago in an effort to funnel soldiers into the empire's constant war against the efreet, the Ungrounded mercenary company maintains a facility resembling an interconnected network of squat stone warehouses. The windowless buildings rise to a uniform height of 20 feet. Banners bearing the company's sigil, a crossed scimitar and spear on a field of yellow, mark the main entrance to the company's headquarters.

The Ungrounded headquarters receives prospective recruits and houses the offices of the company's higherranking members. The building's interior is drab and sparsely furnished. A few engraved plaques and portraits of famous Ungrounded soldiers adorn the walls.

Covered passageways connect the headquarters to the adjoining buildings: the mess hall and the bunks. At least a dozen Ungrounded mercenaries of varying rank mill about the barracks at any given time, full members designated by a cloak pin bearing the Ungrounded sigil.

Reyshal and the PCs wait for a few minutes before a young mercenary greets them and leads them down a short hallway to the training captain's office. Read or paraphrase the following.

А

heavy wooden door opens to reveal an immaculate office barely large enough to house the writing desk and bookshelf within. The unpainted stone walls are devoid of windows or decoration. A stern, middle-aged human woman with darkly tanned skin and close-cropped salt-and-pepper hair sits in a rigid pose behind the desk as she studies an open ledger. She lifts her chin and glares at the open door.

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Reyshal produces a paper-thin, intricately chiseled stone tablet and hands it to the woman, Captain **Marlene Othis** (LE female human fighter 6; if necessary, use the statistics for the cavalry from page 287 of the *GameMastery Guide*), introducing it as a letter of recommendation describing the Pathfinders' distinguished character and potential. Captain Othis studies it for several minutes, pausing occasionally to frown at the PCs.

Captain Othis stands and thanks Reyshal with a servile bow, promising to take the Pathfinders under her wing and begin their accelerated training program. Once Reyshal exits the office, Captain Othis crushes the tablet with her bare hands, shattering it into dozens of pieces.

"So, you think you have what it takes to be Ungrounded?" the captain bellows,

circling the PCs combatively. "I'll be the judge of that. You look softer than night soil to me. Your friends in high places won't help you when you're down in the trenches, or when there's an efreeti scimitar at your throat. Now, get out of my sight. Your trials start tomorrow. Dinner is at six o'clock sharp. If you're late, you can starve."

A nervous recruit named **Dell Darkblade** (LN male oread warrior) waits at the office door, flinching as Captain Othis barks orders at him to take the "fresh meat" to the "meatlocker." See the Sequence of Events section on page 8.

#### BARRACKS LOCATIONS

The following sections describe the key locations of the barracks the PCs visit during their basic training.

#### BUNKS

The building that houses new recruits has space for up to 300 occupants, but most of the rooms are currently empty. These rooms are set up like dormitories, each with three stone bunks topped with thin mattresses and sharing a bathroom with one adjoining room. Several communal showers are located at regular intervals throughout the hallway. PCs seeking a place to hold private conversations can easily find an empty room far from the other recruits.

#### **CAPTAIN'S OFFICE**

Captain Othis summons the PCs to her office several times throughout the course of the scenario. As the adventure progresses, the PCs may wish to secretly return to her

#### DEMERITS

Throughout the scenario, the PCs' actions may result in a formal reprimand from Captain Othis. If the PCs fail one of their trials or shirk the duties outlined in the basic training schedule, for instance, the group receives one demerit. Each section details the circumstances in which Captain Othis assigns a demerit to the PCs. Take note of how many demerits the group receives. If they earn four or more

demerits, they take penalties in the final encounter (see page 18).

> office to collect evidence of her duplicity. When she is not busy conducting drills or supervising the PCs' training, Othis spends most of her day in the office, leaving only to take dinner and rest in her private chambers in the evening. During these periods the office is locked (Disable Device DC 20).

Inventive PCs may devise a distraction to lure Othis out of her office during normal hours, or attempt a Bluff check to trick another Ungrounded officer into loaning them the spare key.

Regardless of which strategy the PCs use, it should require them to succeed at a relevant DC 15 skill check (DC 19 in Subtier 4–5). If the PCs attempt to search the office before dinner, they have 1d8 rounds to search before Othis discovers them and gives the PCs a demerit (see the sidebar above) and extra cleaning duty for poking around her personal belongings.

The office is cramped and contains a walnut desk, a hard-backed chair, and a bookshelf. PCs who succeed a DC 16 Perception check while searching the desk (DC 20 in Subtier 4–5) find a letter addressed to Othis thanking her for the tip about the caravan (**Player Handout #2**). The letter bears an etching of three stony hands grasping a roughly spherical faceted gemstone. Each of the hands has three fingers.

If the PCs search the room carefully and succeed at a DC 18 Perception check (DC 22 in Subtier 4–5), they find a hidden compartment in the stone wall of the office containing a vial of dusk agate extract (see the sidebar on page 12). If the PCs search the bookcase and succeed at a DC 18 Perception check (DC 22 in Subtier 4–5), they discover a hollowed-out copy of *Tactical Engagement* that contains a bronze Aspis Consortium badge and a missive from Krayler Cauchemar (see **Player Handout #1**).

## Captain Othis

**Treasure**: The PCs find several calligraphy pens, a pot of invisible ink, and two scrolls of lesser restoration scattered among the papers on the captain's desk. A gray fur cloak worth 50 gp hangs from a hook on the wall. In Subtier 4–5, the cloak is a *cloak of resistance* +1, and the hidden wall compartment contains *bracers of armor* +1.

**Rewards**: If the PCs do not search the office, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 35 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 137 gp. Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 239 gp.

#### **MESS HALL**

New recruits and veteran members alike take their meals in this institutional cafeteria-style dining hall. Several dozen stone tables surrounded by stools occupy the spotless room. A partial wall separates the kitchens from the dining area, providing space for two separate serving lines, though only one line is currently in use. Many of the Ungrounded are deployed, so while a hundred or so mercenaries attend each mealtime, several tables always stand empty.

#### **TRAINING YARD**

This training yard is designed to accommodate a variety of drills, demonstrations, and gatherings. It consists of stone viewing stands encircling a large, oval-shaped area of flat ground, from which rise four stone pillars. More information about the training yard appears in the Trial by Combat section on page 10.

#### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The following sections outline the basic sequence of events the PCs experience during their time at the barracks.

#### A WARM WELCOME

Dell Darkblade leads the PCs to their room in the bunks. The chamber is in shambles from the previous occupants, and there are only enough bedrolls and sheets for five PCs. Dell seems startled by the state of the room, and warns the PCs that Captain Othis hates a mess. If asked, Dell gives the PCs a brief tour of the facility, but is eager to get back to his duties.

At 6 o'clock, an enticing dinner of roast meat and potatoes is served in the mess hall. A group of seasoned mercenaries accost the PCs as they attempt to join the serving line. Lieutenant **Larssok** (N male half-orc fighter 3) explains that the Ungrounded have a tradition: new recruits have to entertain the rest of the company on the first night: "If you won't party with us, you won't fight with us." The nature of the entertainment is up to the PCs. Song, dance, jokes, or an acrobatic performance all suffice—encourage players to be creative and play to their characters' strengths. If a PC succeeds at a DC 15 Perform or other applicable skill check (DC 19 at Subtier 4–5), the mess hall erupts in wild cheers and applause, and the performer receives an extra ration of ale. The crowd heckles a failed performer, but Larssok resolutely claps the PC on the back and welcomes him to the Ungrounded regardless. PCs who refuse to perform are served gruel.

At midnight, Captain Othis barges into the PCs' room banging a soup ladle against a metal pot. She continues the noise until all the PCs wake and stand at attention. She then inspects their bunks. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Profession (soldier) check realizes that the captain likely expects them to make their beds, even though she has not directly instructed them to do so. The captain harangues any PC who failed to make her bed, saying, "You can't even make a bed. How can I trust you to oil a sword or maintain armor, let alone fight for the empire?" Captain Othis then confiscates the bedding in question. A PC who sleeps without bedding on the hard bunk is fatigued the next day.

#### **BASIC TRAINING SCHEDULE**

New recruits of the Ungrounded Company adhere to the following schedule. The GM should play out this routine for the first day, to give the PCs a sense of daily life as a new recruit, but after that the details can be hand-waved. PCs caught shirking their duties face a demerit from Captain Othis. See the Demerits sidebar on page 7 for more information.

**6:00 A.M.** Wake up call. Captain Othis wakes the PCs with a makeshift drum (the pot and ladle from the night before) and loudly comments on their laziness until they stand at attention. Once the PCs make their beds and dress, they are allowed a bowl of gruel from the kitchens.

**6:30 A.M.** Labor. This task usually involves unloading deliveries for the armory and kitchen as well as weapon and armor maintenance.

**9:30** A.M. *Cleaning*. New recruits use small brushes and harsh soap to clean their living quarters, the mess hall, and other common areas. This is tiresome labor and PCs must succeed at a DC 10 Fortitude save (DC 13 in Subtier 4–5) or become fatigued. Two hours into the process, Captain Othis stomps through the area the PCs are cleaning wearing muddy boots. If the PCs yell at her for doing so or otherwise behave disrespectfully, they receive one demerit.

12:00 P.M. Lunch. Lunch consists of bread, salt pork, and lentil stew.

12:30 P.M. Marching Drills. The PCs are led to the yard to practice forming ranks, marching, responding to various commands, and learning chants and cadences. The PCs must prove their mastery of these tasks with a successful DC 12 Perform (oratory) or DC 10 Profession (soldier) check. In Subtier 4–5, increase the DC of the

skill check by 4. If none of the PCs succeed the check, the group receives one demerit.

**3:00 P.M.** *Training.* On the first day, the PCs complete the Obstacle Course event and the Trial of Knowledge event (see page 10). For the following week, the PCs spend this time slot practicing additional marching and combat drills until they complete their Trial by Combat and are promoted to practical training.

**6:00 P.M.** *Dinner.* This is usually roasted or stewed meat, bread, and a cup of ale.

**9:30 P.M.** Evening Inspection. Captain Othis checks the PCs' room for cleanliness and lectures them soundly for any demerits incurred during the day's events. If the PCs are caught leaving their bunks after evening inspection, the group receives one demerit.

#### **OBSTACLE COURSE (CR 2 OR CR 5)**

Captain Othis escorts the PCs to a rocky field just outside the city, where the Ungrounded have set up an obstacle course. Established members often use this course for training, but the captain recently sabotaged it with the help of the recruit Dell Darkblade. She demands that every PC attempt the course, even those who are not suited to its challenges. She requires PCs to attempt two skill checks against an obstacle before allowing them to give up on that obstacle, though she mocks them for their weakness and failure if they do so. After five failures, she orders the PC to cease attempting that obstacle.

**Balancing Act**: A 10-inch-wide log spans a 10-foot-deep pit gouged into the rock. Crossing the log requires a PC to succeed at two consecutive DC 12 Acrobatics checks. In Subtier 4–5, the log is only 4 inches wide, increasing the DC of these checks to 17. A PC who fails an Acrobatics check must succeed at a DC 12 Reflex save (DC 15 in Subtier 4–5) or fall into the pit, taking 1d6 points of damage. If the PCs succeed at a DC 15 Perception check, they realize that the log is covered in a greasy substance. The PCs may remove the grease to decrease the DC of the Acrobatics check by 2.

**Bear Crawl**: The area beyond the pit is covered in a tangle of metal wire scattered with glass, sharp rocks, and broken bricks. A crawlspace 2 feet in height is the only passage through the detritus. A PC must succeed at a DC 12 Escape Artist check (DC 16 in Subtier 4–5) to wriggle through the opening, and a second check at the same DC to traverse the obstacle completely.

**Climbing Wall**: A 15-foot-tall stone wall faces the PCs once they emerge from the second obstacle. In Subtier 4–5, this wall is 30 feet high. The sheer rock wall has few handholds (Climb DC 20). If the PCs use a rope or magic to bypass the wall, Othis berates them for being too weak to scale the wall unassisted, pointing out that such cheap tactics do not count as successfully conquering the obstacle.

#### SUCCESS POINTS

As the PCs face Captain Othis's challenges, they have opportunities to prove themselves, earning Success Points. Keep track of how many Success Points the PCs earn over the course of the scenario. The eight opportunities to earn Success Points are summarized below.

- A PC completes the obstacle course (see this page).
- The PCs correctly answer enough questions in the Trial of Knowledge (page 10).
- The PCs defeat the Ungrounded recruits in the Trial by Combat (see page 10).
- The PCs stop Inysha at the door before she enters the Glitterfang Halls members' lounge (see page 16).
- The PCs convince Inysha not to return to the Glitterfang Halls (see page 13).
- The PCs defeat Slagcrusher's minions (see page 18).
- The PCs stop the agrawgh from fleeing the caravan without killing it (see page 20).
- The PCs present additional evidence against Captain Othis beyond what is necessary to clear their names (see page 22).

**Sink or Swim**: The climbing wall overlooks an abandoned quarry filled with muddy water that is 15 feet deep. Swimming to the other side of the quarry requires two successful DC 10 Swim checks (DC 14 in Subtier 4–5). A PC who fails a swim check by 5 or more begins to drown. If any PC is at risk of death from this obstacle, she sends an NPC recruit to drag the PC back to the shore, saving the PC's life.

**Traps**: Captain Othis placed a trap 10 feet up the climbing wall, designed to let loose a barrage of rocks and pebbles when triggered. In Subtier 4–5, she has placed the trap 20 feet up. PCs with stonecunning receive a +2 bonus on their Perception checks to spot this trap.

#### SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 2)

# ROCKFALL TRAPCR 2Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20EFFECTSTrigger location; Reset manual

**Effect** Atk +12 (2d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.square area); creatures who are hit must succeed at a DC 15 Acrobatics or Climb check or fall off the rock wall, taking an additional 1d6 falling damage.

#### SUBTIER 4-5 (CR 5)

#### **ROCKFALL TRAP**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

CR 5

#### EFFECTS

#### Trigger location; Reset manual

**Effect** Atk +15 (4d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.square area); creatures who are hit must succeed at a DC 20 Acrobatics or Climb check or fall off the rock wall, taking an additional 2d6 falling damage.

**Development**: As long as at least one of the PCs completes the entire obstacle course, the PCs earn 1 Success Point for the encounter. If none of the PCs completes the obstacle course, the PCs receive one demerit.

#### **TRIAL OF KNOWLEDGE**

After the PCs complete the obstacle course, Captain Othis orders them to stand in a line, and yells, "Listen up, roaches. You need more than strength and agility to succeed in battle. You need to know what you're up against and how to fight it. Let's see how stupid and unprepared you really are."

Captain Othis peppers the PCs with questions about creatures native to the elemental planes, as well as military tactics. The captain's questions center around information that is relevant to the armies of the shaitan, such as anti-efreeti tactics, effective ways to handle being set on fire, the immunities of fire elementals, and how to counter the typical fighting style of salamanders. If you wish to create detailed questions for the PCs, consider using the entries for the referenced monsters in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.

She first asks each PC a question that requires the PC to succeed at DC 15 Knowledge (planes) or Profession (soldier) check to answer correctly (DC 18 in Subtier 4–5). Each PC who answers correctly receives a more difficult question, which requires a successful DC 18 Knowledge (planes) or Profession (soldier) check (DC 22 in Subtier 4–5). Each PC may choose which skill she wants to use for these checks, as either skill provides enough information to craft a satisfactory answer. The captain is furious at the PCs who also answer this harder question, and she reminds those PCs of any failures they had in the obstacle course before dismissing them back to the barracks to peel potatoes.

PCs who answer the first question incorrectly receive a stern mocking from the captain, as well as an easier question (DC 10 Knowledge [planes] or Profession [soldier]). If a PC also fails this skill check, she asks him a question designed to be insultingly easy, such as "Which elemental plane do earth elementals come from: the Plane of Earth or the Plane of Fire?" or "What is the name of the unit you are unsuccessfully trying to join?"

**Development**: If every PC correctly answers at least one of Captain Othis's first three questions, the PCs earn 1 Success Point. The PCs can still earn the success point even if a PC failed to answer all three of these questions: for every PC who correctly answered Othis's second, more difficult question, one PC may fail all three skill checks.

#### A. TRIAL BY COMBAT (CR 3 OR CR 6)

Just outside the mess hall, an oval of hard-packed dirt surrounds four columns made of black stone. Gray stone benches encircle the training ground, providing a clear view for nonexistent spectators. A raised balcony made of blue and purple crystal emerges from the stands. Dummies made of stuffed burlap sacks affixed to posts are scattered throughout the field, some wearing crudely painted smiles and posed in offensive gestures. Captain Othis stands in the crystal balcony, a mischievous grin on her usually stern face.

After a week of basic training, Captain Othis orders the PCs to fight another group of recent recruits in controlled combat. She explains that the use of spells or combat-enhancing items, such as potions or flasks, is forbidden, and both groups should refrain from using lethal force or "face the consequences." Othis allows PCs to select a blunted weapon of choice from the armory. The collection includes all martial and simple weapons. PCs using these weapons do not take a penalty on attack rolls for dealing nonlethal damage. Captain Othis instructs the combatants to fight until their foes surrender or are knocked unconscious. Breaking Othis's rules results in a demerit. If a PC kills another recruit, Captain Othis calls an immediate end to the exercise and has the offending PC jailed (see Development below).

Throughout the brawl, Captain Othis criticizes the PCs' tactics. When a PC or one of the rival recruits falls in battle, Othis pronounces them "unworthy" or "disappointing."

**Creatures:** The recruits waiting to spar against the PCs are the Ungrounded's newest members, a group of friends who dreamed of becoming accomplished soldiers. Their shared vision of a promising and exciting mercenary career crumbled under the captain's iron fist. For weeks, the constant verbal abuse has whittled away at their resolve, leaving most of them almost completely broken.

When the captain ordered them to help test potential recruits, they didn't ask questions. Dell Darkblade, the unofficial leader of the group, is secretly thrilled that the captain's attention shifted to the PCs. He's afraid his friends can't take much more before they break. When the captain ordered him to cheat, Dell refused, only to watch one of his friends get dragged into the captain's office and severely beaten. Dell quickly recanted to spare his friends from further harm. He stoically carries the secrets of the rigged obstacle course and the poisoned weapons, but the burden weighs heavily on his heart. Dell and his friends do not wish the PCs to share their downtrodden fate, but don't feel as though they have a choice in the matter.

## UNGROUNDED BUT UNBROKEN



#### SCALING ENCOUNTER A

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

**Both Subtiers**: One of the recruits is too exhausted from the day's chores and drills to fight.

#### **DUSK AGATE EXTRACT**

This poison coats the Ungrounded recruits' blades.

DUSK AGATE EXTRACT					
ortitude DC 13	TYPE poison (contac	(contact)			
EFFECT unconsciousness for 1 minute SECONDARY EFFECT 1 Wisdom damage					
	gc				

#### SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 3)

UNGROUNDED RECRUITS (4) CR 1/2
Oread warrior 2
LN Medium humanoid
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2
DEFENSE
AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)
<b>hp</b> 16 each (2d10)
Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0
Resist acid 5
OFFENSE
Speed 20 ft.
Melee scimitar +4 (1d6+2 nonlethal)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +1)
1/day magic stone
TACTICS
Before Combat The recruits apply a dose of dusk agate
extract to their weapons (see the sidebar above).
During Combat The recruits frequently change position in
battle, attempting to flank PCs whenever possible. They
deal nonlethal damage as instructed.

**Morale** The recruits fight until knocked unconscious, but if PCs deal lethal damage to the recruits, they yield when reduced to 10 hit points or fewer. They also accept the PCs' surrender.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 9 Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 15 Feats Improved Initiative Skills Perception +2 Languages Common, Terran **Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (2), antitoxin; **Other Gear** chain shirt, dagger, practice scimitar

#### SUBTIER 4-5 (CR 6)

UNGROUNDED RECRUITS (4)	CR 2
Oread warrior 4	
LN Medium humanoid	
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4	
DEFENSE	
AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1	shield)
<b>hp</b> 25 each (4d10)	
Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2	
Resist acid 5	
OFFENSE	
Speed 20 ft.	
Melee scimitar +6 (1d6+2 nonlethal)	
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +3)	
1/day <i>magic stone</i>	
TACTICS	
Before Combat The recruits apply a dose of dusk ag	gate extract
to their weapons (see the sidebar on this page).	
During Combat The recruits frequently change posi	
battle, attempting to flank PCs whenever possible	e. They dea
nonlethal damage as instructed.	
Morale The recruits fight until knocked unconscious	
deal lethal damage to the recruits, they yield wh	
to 10 hit points or fewer. They also accept the PC	s' surrender
STATISTICS	
<b>Str</b> 15, <b>Dex</b> 13, <b>Con</b> 10, <b>Int</b> 9, <b>Wis</b> 10, <b>Cha</b> 9	
Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 17	
Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack	
<b>Skills</b> Climb +3, Intimidate +3, Perception +4	
Languages Common, Terran	
Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, ant	
<b>Other Gear</b> chain shirt, buckler, dagger, practice cloak of resistance +1	scimitar,

**Development**: The captain bristles with poorly disguised anger if the PCs manage to defeat her team of recruits. If Dell's team wins, Othis gloats as if she won the brawl herself. If the PCs resorted to lethal force and any of the opposing team were slain, the captain immediately has the PC responsible escorted to a holding cell by a squad of four Ungrounded soldiers and detained for the remainder of the scenario. Use the statistics for the grizzled mercenary (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 268) for these soldiers if necessary.

If the PCs question Dell's team about the poisoned weapons, Dell attempts to deflect all the blame for the incident onto himself. The PCs can attempt a Sense Motive check to realize that he's lying. Dell refuses to talk to the PCs about the issue in front of the captain, but may be convinced to speak to them elsewhere. The PCs can convince Dell to reveal the truth about the poisoned weapons and the sabotaged obstacle course with a successful DC 12 Diplomacy check (DC 16 in Subtier 4–5) or a DC 20 Intimidate check (DC 24 in Subtier 4–5). Obtaining a signed statement from Dell or securing his promise to act as an official witness against Othis requires the PCs to succeed at a second check at the same DC.

If the PCs defeat their rival recruits, they earn 1 Success Point, and Captain Othis grudgingly announces their promotion to practical training beginning the following day. If the PCs lose the fight, Othis sentences them to another week of drudgery before assigning them to guard the casino.

**Evidence**: The PCs can convince Dell to testify against Othis. In addition, a careful search of Othis's office (page 7) reveals vials of the same poison Dell's team used.

**Treasure**: Dell's team offers the PCs two of their potions of cure light wounds (or one potion of cure moderate wounds in Subtier 4–5) as a gesture of goodwill after the fight.

**Rewards:** If the PCs do not defeat the rival recruits, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 114 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 289 gp. Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 465 gp.

#### PROMOTION

The morning after the PCs fight the recruits (or 1 week later, if they lost the fight), Dell Darkblade interrupts the PCs' breakfast to bring them to the captain's office for an assignment. Captain Othis explains that while the Ungrounded's primary source of income is a perennial contract with the Peerless Empire, the company often provides hired security for the various business and guilds of the Opaline Vault. The Glitterfang Halls, an upscale establishment owned and operated by the adult crystal dragon Cestranell, hired the Ungrounded to provide extra security for tonight's grand opening. Othis warns the PCs to be on the lookout for a notorious cheater known as Inysha, a master of disguise who's been kicked out of other casinos in the past. Othis gives the PCs a crude sketch and written physical description of the con artist. In truth, this image is a sketch of General Faiza bint Hanif, commander of the Ungrounded. Captain Othis instructs the PCs to report to the casino a few hours before its 7 o'clock opening.

#### B. GLITTERFANG HALLS (CR 2 OR 5)

An impressive structure even among the many wondrous sights in the Opaline Vault, the Glitterfang Halls is built into an excavated series of stalactites suspended 400 feet above the city's sprawling Inner District. Deposits of multi-colored crystals peek out from the stalactite's black-and-cream marble exterior. Most of the city's native inhabitants can easily access the casino using earth glide, but a towering stone shaft houses a glass elevator to assist extraplanar visitors. The elevator ascends lazily to a marble platform connected to the group of stalactites, its glacial pace allowing for a breathtaking view of the city below.

All the rooms in the casino are circular and showcase the natural marble and crystal that composes the stalactites. Tunnels carved into the rock allow nonelementals passage between these rooms. Magically suspended, iridescent crystals provide dim, ambient light throughout the casino. The rooms of the casino are presented below, followed by sections describing the actions of both General Hanif and the real Inysha in the casino. Both of these NPCs arrive about an hour after the casino opens.

**Creatures**: The PCs are likely to interact with Inysha during their time at the casino.

#### SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 2)

INYSHA	CR 2
Female human ro	gue (sharper) 3 (Pathfinder RPG Ultimate
Intrigue 47)	
CN Medium huma	anoid (human)
Init +7; Senses Pe	erception +5
DEFENSE	
<b>AC</b> 17, touch 13, f	lat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)
<b>hp</b> 23 (3d8+6)	
Fort +3, Ref +7, W	/ill +1
Defensive Abiliti	i <b>es</b> evasion
OFFENSE	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee mwk dagg	jer +6 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged dagger +	5 (1d4+1/19-20)
Special Attacks	sneak attack +2d6
TACTICS	
During Combat I	nysha does her best to flee to the elevator. If
the PCs corner	her, or if any PCs follow her onto the falling
elevator, she a	ttacks.
Morale If cornere	ed and reduced to 5 or fewer hit points,
Inysha surrend	ers.
STATISTICS	
Str 12, Dex 17, Co	on 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14
Base Atk +2; CME	<b>3</b> +3 (+5 steal); <b>CMD</b> 16 (18 vs. steal)
Feats Improved In	nitiative, Improved Steal <sup>B</sup> , Quick Draw, Weapo
Finesse	· · · ·
Skills Acrobatics	+8, Bluff +9, Craft (traps) +10, Diplomacy +8,
Disable Dovice	+10, Disguise +10, Perception +5, Profession

Disable Device +10, Disguise +10, Perception +5, Profession (gambler) +7, Sleight of Hand +9

#### Languages Common

SQ lucky save +1, scam artist +1

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, potion of pass

### PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO



*without trace;* **Other Gear** mwk chain shirt, daggers (4), mwk dagger, *ioun torch<sup>UE</sup>*, *traveler's any-tool<sup>UE</sup>*, concealable thieves' tools<sup>UI</sup>, courtier's outfit, disguise kit, mwk tool (Craft [traps]), mirror, perfume, superior loaded dice<sup>UE</sup>, 100 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Concealable Thieves' Tools** These set of tools functions as a standard set of thieves' tools, except that Inysha gains a +4 circumstance bonus on her Sleight of Hand check to conceal these tools on her body.
- Lucky Save (Su) Inysha gains a +1 luck bonus on saving throws. Scam Artist (Ex) Inysha gains a +1 bonus on her Bluff and
- Sleight of Hand checks. **Sticky Fingers (Ex)** Inysha receives Improved Steal as a
- bonus feat.

#### SUBTIER 4-5 (CR 5)

#### INYSHA

#### CR 5

Female human rogue (sharper) 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* 47)CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; Senses Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 42 (6d8+12) Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4 Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

- **Melee** mwk dagger +9 (1d4+1/19-20)
- **Ranged** dagger +8 (1d4+1/19-20)
- Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

#### TACTICS

- **During Combat** Inysha does her best to flee to the elevator. If the PCs corner her, or if any PCs follow her onto the falling elevator, she attacks.
- **Morale** If cornered and reduced to 9 or fewer hit points, Inysha surrenders.

#### STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; CMB +5 (+9 steal); CMD 19 (21 vs. steal)

- Feats Greater Steal<sup>8</sup>, Improved Initiative, Improved Steal<sup>8</sup>, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse
- Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +14, Craft (traps) +13, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +14, Disguise +13, Perception +8, Profession (gambler) +10, Sleight of Hand +15

#### Languages Common

SQ audacious overconfidence, lucky save +1, scam artist +2

**Combat Gear** potions of cure moderate wounds (2), potion of pass without trace; **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, daggers (4), mwk dagger, concealing pocket<sup>uE</sup>, ioun torch<sup>UE</sup>, traveler's any-tool<sup>UE</sup>, concealable thieves' tools<sup>UI</sup>, courtier's outfit, disguise kit, mwk tool (Craft [traps]), mirror, perfume, superior loaded dice<sup>UE</sup>, 202 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Audacious Overconfidence (Ex) After failing an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw, Inysha can remove her saving throw bonus from lucky save for 24 hour in order to reroll the failed roll.
- **Concealable Thieves' Tools** These set of tools functions as a standard set of thieves' tools, except that Inysha gains a +4 circumstance bonus on her sleight of hand check to conceal these tools on her body.
- Lucky Save (Su) Inysha gains a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws.
- Scam Artist (Ex) Inysha gains a +3 bonus on her Bluff and Sleight of Hand checks.
- **Sticky Fingers (Ex)** Inysha receives Improved Steal and Greater Steal as bonus feats.

#### B1. Elevator Room (CR 1/2 or CR 2)

This room houses the casino's elevator, an elegantly designed marble-floored contraption whose glass walls are surrounded in a decorative silver cage. When the elevator leaves this room, a glass panel automatically emerges to cover the circular opening in its center, preventing patrons from tumbling to the city below.

**Trap**: Inysha has secretly rigged a trap into this elevator, which can only be triggered if a creature presses a narrow object, such as a stick or the heel of a high-heeled shoe, into a small gap in the floor.

#### SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 1/2)

#### FALLING ELEVATOR

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20 EFFECTS

- Trigger pressure plate (tiny button); Reset automatic (whenever the elevator enters area B1)
- **Effect** One round after the trigger button is pressed, the elevator falls at an accelerated pace of 120 feet. It falls at this speed for 3 rounds, after which point it reaches the ground below. Creatures on the falling elevator are flat-footed unless they possess the uncanny dodge ability. While the elevator's pace is unpleasant, it is not dangerous; creatures do not take any falling damage from riding the elevator.

#### SUBTIER 4-5 (CR 2)

#### FALLING ELEVATOR

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

Trigger pressure plate (tiny button); Reset automatic (whenever the elevator enters area B1) Effect See Subtier 1–2.

#### **B2.** Foyer

On the western wall, a 20-foot-high archway flanked by platinum and gold pillars leads from the elevator room into the casino's foyer. This room serves as the entrance for visitors who can glide through dirt and stone. A desk constructed from the same mixture of precious metals stands in front of the southern wall.

**Creatures**: An oread attendant bedecked in fleshgems greets the PCs and escorts them through the casino to meet the manager in area **B7** (see area **B7** for details).

#### **B3.** Lounge

Brilliantly colored formations of natural crystal grow from the floors, walls, and ceiling of this room. Teardrop-shaped lights hang from the ceiling 100 feet above, shimmering and reflecting from a majestic statue of a crystal dragon emerging from a pool of melted gemstones. Jewel-encrusted metal chairs and sofas strewn with velvet cushions surround the pool at a safe distance, providing cozy seating for the casino's patrons.

This lavishly furnished anteroom leads to the casino proper. The gemstone pool is a miniature replica of the lake at the Opaline Vault's center, and the dragon is an idealized, larger-than-life depiction of the casino's owner Cestranell.

**Creatures:** Shaitans, oreads, and other humanoids of all types lounge in the chairs in small groups, talking and laughing in hushed voices. A few mephits and elemental patrons frolic in the molten pool.

#### **B4. Gaming Room**

A pillar of amethyst crystals juts from floor to ceiling in this expansive room flanked by bars carved from the black-and-cream marble found throughout the casino. Enormous sheets of polished crystal cover the walls, dancing with refracted, moving images of creatures and scenery. Pleasant music played upon unfamiliar instruments fills the chamber. Rectangular slabs of marble rise from the floor to provide surfaces for gambling, each table supporting a small crystalline structure in its center.

The most popular game in this casino involves rolling a polished crystal shard that scintillates between different colors and patterns. Players win a round when the shard matches the color and pattern of the crystals at the center of their table. The game is simple enough to play, but participants only have a 15% chance of winning a given round. In another popular game, players attempt to form specific patterns by stacking partially transparent tiles. A hidden tunnel on the south side of the room leads to the office (area **B7**).

**Creatures:** Earth mephits flit back and forth behind the bar from shelves of colorful bottles to waiting customers, preparing and serving drinks. More mephit employees tend stacks of gemstone and metal chips used for betting, and several xorns lumber around the round carrying trays laden with drinks and hors d'oeuvres. Customers "tip" the xorn waitstaff by dropping gems directly into their mouths.

#### **B5. Main Stage**

The ceiling in this cavernous room varies in height, ranging from 50 to 300 feet. Stalactites and stalagmites flattened and ground to a smooth surface serve as dining tables. A stone platform built into the southeastern wall acts as a stage.

**Creatures:** The crystal dragon Cestranell perches on a ledge 150 feet up the northern wall, where he has a perfect view of the stage and V.I.P. area. In spite of this spectacular vantage point, Cestranell spends most of his time preening in the reflective crystals that surround his booth or obsessively counting a pile of coins and gems. The manager and casino employees strongly caution the PCs against bothering Cestranell. If the PCs still wish to speak to the dragon, they must first find a way to scale the sheer rock wall to his perch. If engaged in conversation, Cestranell is dismissive and rude toward the PCs, saying he hired mercenaries for security, not entertainment.

#### **B6.** Members' Lounge

Marble stairs blocked off by red velvet ropes lead to a 20-foot-high stone booth containing tables and chairs for the casino's preferred customers. Typically, those who wish to enter this area must present a token inlaid with an image of a crystal dragon. However, the casino staff knows that the PCs are here to provide security, so they allow the PCs to enter and exit this area freely.

**Creatures:** If the PCs fail to apprehend Inysha at the door, she cons her way into the members' lounge and begins ordering food and drinks she has no intention of paying for.

#### **B7.** Office

A desk, bookcases, and wooden cabinets occupy this unglamorous room.

**Creatures:** A hassled-looking oread man, referred to simply as **Boss** (N male oread expert 3) by his employees, discusses final preparations for the grand opening with a group of mephits when the PCs enter the office. Boss fully expects the mercenaries he hired to be capable of completing the job on their own. If the PCs ask him to confirm the description of Inysha, he bursts out laughing. "You don't recognize your own *general*? You must be new on the job. That's the spitting image of General Faiza bint Hanif." Boss then provides the PCs with an accurate description of Inysha, but warns that she's known for crafting convincing disguises. If the PC ask what they should do with Inysha, he shrugs, and says, "I don't need to know the details. Just make sure she doesn't come back."

#### THE FALSE INYSHA

An hour after the casino opens, a woman matching the description Captain Othis provided enters the casino, passing through the foyer into the gaming room before sitting down for a night of drinks and modest-stakes gambling. The woman is actually General Faiza bint Hanif (LN female noble shaitan; if necessary, use the statistics from Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 143) dressed in civilian clothes, hoping to enjoy an off-duty evening. The general is annoyed if the PCs attempt to detain her or accuse her of being Inysha, and they must succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check (DC 25 in Subtier 4-5) to explain themselves or be penalized in their encounter with General Hanif later in the scenario. If the PCs mention being Ungrounded recruits, she lets out a startled laugh and demands to know the name of their superior officer. Regardless, she stalwartly refuses to leave the casino. One of the casino staff eventually overhears the exchange, and pales when she sees Hanif. She confirms that Hanif is an expected guest of honor tonight, and apologizes profusely to the general.

#### THE TRUE INYSHA (CR 2 OR 5)

The real **Inysha** (see page 16); arrives while the PCs are talking to Hanif, or shortly after they have seen Hanif and decided not to talk to her. Inysha is disguised as an oread and is using the false name Ladahlia. She is wearing an ornate courtier's outfit with long sleeves and several voluminous skirts. Unless the PCs stop her, she strides confidently into the members' lounge (area **B6**) and begins scouting the area for people who seem easy to con.

If the PCs succeed at a DC 18 Perception check while searching for suspicious patrons (DC 21 in Subtier 4–5), they notice that she is wearing a disguise. While wearing a disguise is not illegal, Inysha does not want anyone drawing attention to the fact that she is wearing one. If the PCs confront her, she spins a false story about being burned badly as a child when her family came under attack from efreeti forces. She claims that she wears the disguise to conceal her injuries, so that she can forget about them for a while. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Sense Motive check (DC 24 in Subtier 4–5) discerns that this story is a complete fabrication intended to garner sympathy. If that lie fails and the PCs mention her name, she tries another tactic—admitting that she is Inysha, but swearing that she has reformed her ways and deserves a second chance. While the PCs may disbelieve this second story regardless, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Sense Motive check (DC 19 in Subtier 4–5) is certain that her claim of being reformed is false.

Even if the PCs do not see through Inysha's disguise, they have a chance to notice her cheating. Inysha is methodical about fleecing her targets, but as the evening wears on, she becomes less and less careful about hiding her suspicious behavior. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Profession (gambler) check, a DC 15 Perception check, or a DC 15 Sense Motive check while surveying the casino notices her unusual stroke of luck, particularly on highstakes bets. A PC who succeeds at this check by 5 or more actively catches her cheating by sneakily replacing some of her tiles with others hidden in the sleeves of her dress. In Subtier 4–5, increase the DCs of all of these skill checks by 3. Inysha is furious if the PCs accuse her of cheating.

Regardless of the circumstances that lead to a verbal confrontation between the PCs and Inysha, nearby patrons notice the heated conversation. Within a minute, pieces of paper start circling around the room, each of which says "Fight or no Fight? Place your bets now! Odds are 2:1 in favor of a purely verbal argument over a physical confrontation!" A PC who can read Terran can read the papers without a skill check, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Linguistics check catches the gist of the message.

The PCs have several options for convincing Inysha not to return to the casino. They can attempt to persuade her with a DC 18 Diplomacy check (DC 22 in Subtier 4–5) and an argument for why returning to this casino is a poor decision. The PCs gain a +4 circumstance bonus on this skill check if they either succeeded at both Sense Motive checks against her lies or actively caught her cheating. Either of these methods secures her promise that she will not return. If the PCs fail this check, she still promises not to return, but the promise is a lie (Sense Motive DC 18 to detect, or DC 22 in Subtier 4–5).

The PCs may decide to arrest Inysha, or attack her outright without explanation. Some casino patrons cheer and others curse as casino employees begin dealing payments to those who bet in favor of a fight. Inysha, however, would much rather flee if she can. She attempts to run back to the elevator and use the heel of one of her shoes to trigger the trap there so she can make a quick getaway. Along the way, patrons of the casino may attempt to hinder Inysha or the PCs. If the PCs attempt to arrest or attack Inysha but did not succeed at the skill check to convince her to leave the casino for good, all squares with tables in them are difficult terrain for the PCs but not for Inysha. These squares also serve as threatening for the purpose of allowing Inysha to flank PCs if she chooses to attack. Conversely, if the PCs succeeded at a skill check to

#### SCALING THE TRUE INYSHA

To accommodate groups of four PCs, reduce the DCs of all skill checks against Inysha by 2. Additionally, if the PCs decide to arrest or attack her, she is taken aback, and takes a –4 penalty on her initiative check.

convince Inysha not to come back, squares with tables in them are difficult terrain for Inysha and not the PCs, and they provide the PCs with the flanking benefit.

**Development:** If the PCs convince Inysha not to return to the casino, they earn 1 Success Point. If they noticed Inysha's disguise and confronted her before she entered area **B6**, they earn 1 additional Success Point.

**Treasure:** If the PCs stop Inysha from returning to the casino, Boss rewards them for their trouble, handing each PC a sack of gems. The PCs gain access to all of the items in Inysha's stat block on their Chronicle sheets.

**Rewards**: If the PCs do not prevent Inysha from returning, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 119 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 269 gp. Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 360 gp.

#### **RETURN TO THE BARRACKS**

The day after the PCs return to the barracks from the casino, Captain Othis summons them to her office once again. Read or paraphrase the following.

"You're still here?" Captain Othis growls, without looking up from the pile of missives on her desk. "I thought you'd find a path out of here by now. Well, maggots, it's your lucky day. I have another easy job for you to screw up." Othis rifles through her stack of papers and holds up a scroll bearing a bronze seal.

"Zuhair Issawa needs someone to babysit a shipment of gems. Our *real* troops have more important things to do, so I'm sending you. All you have to do is get the caravan to his estate a few miles outside the city. Any questions?"

If questioned, Captain Othis provides little in the way of useful information other than where to find the caravan. If the PCs stick around to ask questions, she becomes increasingly frustrated, finally ordering them to get out of her sight. Captain Othis claims that the guard duty will be little more than a formality, as the caravan's route is a wellused thoroughfare and generally known to be safe.

The PCs can easily locate the caravan outside a warehouse in the outskirts of the city. Four stocky rock beetles carry the heaviest goods, and an agrawgh—a 25-foot-long bronze-ringed serpent with horns, silvery skin, and deadly fangs—carries the bulky material. **Nef** and **Annie** (N dwarf experts 2) are in charge of the caravan.

#### SCALING ENCOUNTER C

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

**Subtier 1–2:** Falling onto the agrawgh injures the earth elementals, who begin the encounter with 9 hit points remaining. Lower the DC of the Diplomacy check to calm the agrawgh by 2 and lower its starting hit points to 8.

**Subtier 4–5**: Remove one Medium earth elemental from the encounter. Lower the DC of the Diplomacy check to calm the agrawgh by 2 and lower its starting hit points to 30.

The journey to the Issawa estate is slow going, as the overworked beetles frequently stop to rest and must be coaxed to continue. The PCs can attempt to assist Nef with a DC 12 Handle Animal check (DC 16 in Subtier 4–5) to encourage the beetles. If they succeed at this check, one of the beetles provides assistance against the ambush that occurs along the road (see the Creatures section of encounter C).

#### C. QUARTZ PATH

After 4 hours of stop-and-go travel through a forest of stalactites and stalagmites, the caravan reaches a narrow bridge made of magically-shaped quartz spanning the vast geode walls surrounding the Opaline Vault. A waterfall tumbles from the ceiling nearby, an influence from the Plane of Water that fills the air with a perpetual mist, though the mist has no effect on Perception checks against creatures within 200 feet. Stalactites grow down from the low ceiling, the longest of them reaching all the way down to the bridge itself. Beneath the bridge, the "floor" of the geode is made up of jagged crystals that sprout from the ground 10 feet below. A creature that falls off the bridge takes 1d6 points of damage from landing on the crystals (2d6 in Subtier 4–5). The crystals are relatively easy to climb—ascending back to the bridge requires only a successful DC 15 Climb check.

Creatures: Two Small earth elementals (two Medium earth elements and an earth mephit in Subtier 4-5) hide in the low ceiling above the pass. The elementals belong to a notorious elemental cartel led by the xorn bandit king Slagcrusher. Slagcrusher commands a gang of elementals and mephits who steal gems and ore from mining operations and caravans around the Vault. His agents bring him the pilfered goods, and he provides them with a share of the profit, as well as protection from other gangs and refuge from the shaitans. A day before the mission, Captain Othis contacted Slagcrusher, informing him of the opportunity to steal choice gems from a poorly guarded caravan. Far too greedy to ignore the opportunity, Slagcrusher sent a few thieves to investigate. The elementals bear Slagcrusher's mark, an inlay of precious metals similar to a tattoo. The mark depicts three hands grasping at a single faceted gemstone. They begin the encounter by dropping out of the ceiling on to the agrawgh's head, injuring and enraging the creature (see the Hazard below). At initiative rank 10, Nef and Annie flee along with the four rock beetles. However, if the PCs succeeded at a Handle Animal check to encourage the beetles along the road, one of

the beetles overruns an earth elemental in its path, knocking it prone.

#### SUBTIER 1-2 (CR 3)

#### EARTH ELEMENTALS, SMALL (2)CR 1

**hp** 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 122, see page 26)

#### TACTICS

Before Combat On the surprise round, the earth elementals drop out of the ceiling onto the caravan's agrawgh, injuring it. The stalactites that reach down to the bridge allow them to sense the caravan's approach with their tremorsense, so they begin the ambush on the other side of 5 feet of stone, making them effectively impossible to detect

## UNGROUNDED BUT UNBROKEN



(Perception DC 60), though PCs with an ability to act in the surprise round may still do so.

- **During Combat** The earth elementals are organized, and prefer to flank targets whenever possible. They attempt to bull rush the PCs into a more advantageous position, or off the edge of the bridge if possible. The earth elementals take advantage of their earth glide ability to reposition on the field of battle and confuse the PCs.
- **Morale** The earth elementals fight until reduced to 4 hit points or fewer before retreating into the ceiling or floor.

#### SUBTIER 4–5 (CR 6)

#### EARTH ELEMENTALS, MEDIUM (2)

**hp** 34 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 122, see page 26)

#### TACTICS

CR 3

- **Before Combat** On the surprise round, the earth elementals drop out of the ceiling onto the caravan's agrawgh, injuring it. The stalactites that reach down to the bridge allow them to sense the caravan's approach with their tremorsense, so they begin the ambush on the other side of 5 feet of stone, making them effectively impossible to detect (Perception DC 60), though PCs with an ability to act in the surprise round may still do so.
- **During Combat** The earth elementals are organized, and prefer to flank targets whenever possible. They attempt to bull rush the PCs into a better position to use Cleave, or off the edge of the bridge if possible. The earth elementals take advantage of their earth glide ability to reposition on the field of battle and confuse the PCs.
- **Morale** The earth elementals fight until reduced to 8 hit points or fewer before retreating into the ceiling or floor.

#### EARTH MEPHIT

CR 3

**hp** 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202, see page 27)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The earth mephit drops down from the ceiling and casts *soften earth and stone* on the area directly under the PCs, creating an area of thick mud.

During Combat The mephit uses its breath weapon, attempting to catch PCs stuck in the mud. It uses its change size ability to become Medium and enters combat, attacking with its teeth and claws. If the mephit is reduced to half its hit points, it burrows into the ground to heal and emerge at a different location. It also burrows or flies away to gain a better vantage point whenever its breath weapon is usable.

**Morale** If the elementals are destroyed or flee, the mephit burrows into the ground and flees.

Hazard: The injured agrawgh flails around in pain, exhaling drops of acid that fall to the ground as acid rain. This acid deals 1d4 points of damage each round to all creatures within 20 feet of the Large creature (Reflex DC 13 half). In Subtier 4–5, the damage increases to 2d4 and the DC of the Reflex save increases to 16. This acid is a diluted form of the acid it uses for its breath weapon, and does not harm creatures with the earth subtype. Assume that the agrawgh rolled a 10 on initiative, but that it acts after Nef, Annie, and the rock beetles.

The PCs can neutralize the hazard by calming the agrawgh. The agrawgh stops flailing if the PCs heal any of the damage it has taken or if they succeed at a DC 18 Diplomacy check to soothe it (DC 22 in Subtier 4–5). Attempting this Diplomacy check is a standard action. Any number of PCs may assist as long as they also spend a standard action.

If the PCs attack the agrawgh, Nef and Annie frantically entreat the PCs not to kill it. As soon as the PCs deal damage to it, the serpent turns its attention toward the attackers, targeting them with its bite. While it is attacking the PCs, the acid rain stops. Use the standard statistics for an agrawgh (see page 26), except that it cannot use its breath weapon. In Subtier 1–2, it has the sickened condition and it has sustained serious injuries from the falling elementals, causing it to begin the encounter at 12 hit points. Additionally, its bite deals 1d6 acid damage instead of 2d6. In Subtier 4–5, the agrawgh's injuries are less severe, and it begins the encounter at 40 hit points.

If the PCs do not calm the agrawgh or knock it unconscious within 1 minute of the start of combat with Slagcrusher's minions, it drops the merchant's goods and burrows away.

**Development:** Nef thanks the PCs profusely, explaining that while marauding elemental gangs are fairly common outside the Vault, they normally work further afield and are too cautious to attack so openly. The PCs can attempt a DC 16 Knowledge (local) check to identify the precious metal inlays on the elementals' bodies as Slagcrusher's mark.

The remainder of the journey is uneventful and takes about an hour. When the PCs arrive at the Issawa estate, Nef and Annie begin unloading their cargo. The bronzeskinned and businesslike **Zuhair Issawa** (LN male noble shaitan) introduces himself and inspects the contents of the wagon. After the inspection, Zuhair dismisses the PCs. If the PCs mention the elementals' strange markings to Zuhair, he tells them that the members of elemental gem cartels often bear such symbols.

As long as the PCs defeat Slagcrusher's minions, they earn 1 Success Point. If they also stop the agrawgh from fleeing without killing the creature, they earn 1 additional Success Point.

**Evidence**: The PCs may identify the elementals' inlays or take an etching of the marks to compare with the symbol found on the note in Othis's office.

**Treasure**: The elementals carry a small cache of stolen gems worth 500 gp. Zuhair Issawa thanks the PCs for safely

transporting his gems by gifting them a silver signet ring bearing the Issawa family crest that is worth 100 gp. In Subtier 4–5, this ring functions as a *ring of protection* +1.

**Rewards:** If the PCs do not defeat the ambushers, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 100 gp. Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 183 gp. Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 266 gp.

#### HONORABLE OR DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE

The PCs return to the Ungrounded barracks to an official summons from General Faiza bint Hanif, the shaitan officer who oversees the Ungrounded and acts as liaison between the mercenaries and the Sultana's armed forces. A veteran of both the mercenary company and the Empire's military, she is a hard but fair woman, and has little patience for nonsense. Give the PCs **Player Handout #3**.

#### THE HEARING

When the PCs arrive, General Faiza bint Hanif and Captain Othis are seated on opposite sides of a mahogany desk in a spacious, immaculate office. Glass cases along the walls display medals, ceremonial armor and weapons, and framed commendations granted to former and current members of the Ungrounded, including General Hanif herself. The general begins by greeting the PCs politely but wastes no time on idle chatter before delving into the list of complaints against their unit.

General Hanif compliments the PCs for moving quickly through basic training, but then notes how many demerits the group incurred. She then orders the PCs to describe their version of the scenario's events, beginning with the brawl between recruits. For each event, General Hanif knows only the official version provided by Captain Othis, which highlights the PCs' failings. Captain Othis wove a tale of herself as a harsh but reasonable drill sergeant testing recruits that she had reason to believe would be deficient because of their connections to the Pathfinder Society. She referred to the Pathfinder Society as "a nest of

#### SCALING THE HEARING

To accommodate groups of four PCs, make the following adjustment to The Hearing: General Hanif allows each PC to present two pieces of evidence before insisting upon hearing from the next PC.

roaches," and then suggested that given the number of incidents surrounding these new recruits, they should be dismissed as a liability.

During the hearing, the PCs can present evidence against Captain Othis as they explain their actions. General Hanif wants to hear from all of the PCs, not just the most charismatic. Before the PCs present their case, she informs them that she has no interest in hearing the tale from a "truth-spinning silver tongue," and as

such, each of the PCs must speak in their group's defense. She does not allow a PC to present a second piece of evidence until every PC has attempted to present one piece, and PCs cannot use aid another to assist each other.

> This encounter relies on a series of Diplomacy checks, one for each piece of evidence the PCs present against Othis. If the PC succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy check (DC 25 in Subtier 4-5) while presenting a piece of evidence, the general accepts the argument; otherwise, she sides with Captain Othis. If the PCs accrued 4 or more demerits, the DCs of all Diplomacy checks in this encounter increase by 2. Additionally, if the PCs accused the general of being Inysha in the casino and did not explain themselves sufficiently, the DCs of all Diplomacy checks increase by 2. These two DC increases stack.

Each piece of evidence grants the PCs a circumstance bonus on their Diplomacy check; the specific bonuses are listed below in parentheses. Whenever a PC successfully

a piece of evidence, they all gain a cumulative +2 bonus on all future Diplomacy checks to present evidence. For example, if the PCs have already successfully presented Dell Darkblade's testimony and the false description of Inysha, the total

General Faiza bint Hanif circumstance bonus they receive on the Diplomacy check to present the poison samples is +7. If the players appear at a loss of who should speak first, consider reminding them that while their opening arguments might be difficult, the stronger their case becomes, the easier convincing the general should be.

The six pieces of evidence that the PCs are most likely to present are listed below. The PCs may come up with additional evidence beyond these examples; feel free to reward a bonus up to +4 for other legitimate evidence. Additionally, if you feel the players do a particularly good job roleplaying their argument, feel free to grant up to a +4 bonus on one Diplomacy check per PC to reward them for getting into the story.

After the PCs successfully present three pieces of evidence, the general is sufficiently convinced of the evidence against Captain Othis to suspend her from office pending an official investigation (see Development below).

Aspis Badge/Cauchemar's Note (+4): The PCs may attempt this Diplomacy check if they present Cauchemar's note and Othis's Aspis Consortium badge as evidence. Captain Othis counters that her membership in the Aspis Consortium in no way interferes with her fulfillment of her duties to the Ungrounded, but that it has taught her the valuable lesson that Pathfinders are not to be trusted.

Dell Darkblade's Testimony (+6): The PCs may attempt this Diplomacy check if they bring forth Dell Darkblade or his signed statement to testify against Captain Othis. Dell confirms that his team used poison provided by Othis to gain an unfair advantage in the second trial, and that the PCs followed the rules. He also recounts assisting Captain Othis in sabotaging the obstacle course. Captain Othis counters that Dell's recruits were not up to the task of providing an adequate challenge to the PCs without assistance. Because Pathfinders are notorious for lacking humility and respect for their superiors, she needed to provide them with challenges that would "wipe the smug grins off their faces."

Poison Samples (+3): The PCs may attempt this Diplomacy check if they present the vial of poison found in Othis's office. Captain Othis counters this piece of evidence by downplaying the poison's danger provides, calling to attention that it is as harmless as salt to superior beings with a connection to earth, such as the general herself, and that it merely renders humans temporarily unconscious.

False Description of Inysha (+3): The PCs may attempt this Diplomacy check if they present the sketch and written description of Inysha that Captain Othis gave them before sending them to the casino. Captain Othis counters that the false description should have been obvious. She insists that soldiers must always be wary for false information the treacherous efreet slip into legitimate channels, and that providing a description of the esteemed general was a way of teaching that lesson which should humiliate only the most incompetent of recruits.

Slagcrusher's Note (+5): The PCs may attempt this Diplomacy check if they present Slagcrusher's note to Othis as evidence. Captain Othis alleges that the Pathfinders, who obviously speak fluent Common, could have easily forged the note.

*Elemental Tattoos* (+3): The PCs may attempt this Diplomacy check if they present the bodies of Slagcrusher's elemental minions or an etching of their tattoos. If the PCs present this piece of evidence before Slagcrusher's note, Captain Othis counters, "I don't see what bandits attacking a caravan has to do with me. Attacks on that route may be rare, but they still happen often enough for caravans to hire guards." If the PCs provide this evidence after Slagcrusher's note, Othis accuses them of fabricating evidence to fit a convenient narrative.

**Development:** After the PCs successfully present three pieces of evidence, General Faiza bint Hanif crisply thanks them for their honesty and aims an icy glare at Captain Othis. Othis begins her rebuttal, but Hanif raises a hand to cut her off, then replies flatly, "Silence, Othis. You will waste no more of my time." A pair of shaitan officers moves in to escort Othis out of the office, and the general orders them to secure Othis while she launches a formal investigation. Once the captain is out of the room, the general instructs the PCs to present any other evidence they have collected. If the PCs successfully present at least one more piece of evidence, they earn 1 Success Point.

If the PCs cannot convince the general of Othis's intentional sabotage, she dismisses Othis and speaks to the PCs alone. She admits that their argument, while insufficient to prove wrongdoing, has raised questions in her mind about Othis's position as a training officer. She assures the PCs that she will keep an eye on Othis going forward.

As long as the PCs earned at least 4 Success Points during the scenario, General Hanif grants them honorable discharge from their obligations to the Ungrounded and expresses interest in working with the Pathfinder Society in the future. If the PCs failed to earn at least 4 Success Points, General Hanif dismisses them from service, remarking that an alliance with the Pathfinder Society may not be in her organization's best interest.

**Treasure:** If the PCs earn an honorable discharge, the shaitan rewards each PC with a jeweled cloak pin bearing the Ungrounded sigil (worth 120 gp each). She also presents them with three masterwork scimitars. In Subtier 4–5, she instead gives the PCs only a single +1 glamered scimitar.

**Rewards:** If the PCs do not earn an honorable discharge, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount. *Subtier* 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 138 gp. *Out of Subtier*: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 362 gp. Subtier 4-5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 586 gp.

#### CONCLUSION

True to her word, General Faiza bint Hanif launches a formal investigation into Captain Othis's activities, ultimately removing Othis from her position as training officer. If the PCs successfully presented four or more pieces of incriminating evidence to the general, Othis is stripped of her rank and sentenced to a period of imprisonment for her crimes. If the PCs did not present enough evidence to condemn Othis, the captain retains her rank but is transferred to a more suitable post. Dell Darkblade stands trial for his part in the training incidents, but receives a lightened sentence due to Captain Othis's influence. As long as the PCs received an honorable discharge, all PCs earn the Ungrounded boon on their Chronicle sheets. All PCs who successfully complete enough encounters to earn experience for this scenario earn the Earth Affinity boon.

After the hearing, the PCs may return to Reyshal's estate. He offers the PCs congratulations if the mission was successful and does little to conceal his disappointment if the PCs failed. Reyshal magically transports the PCs back to Absalom, where Master of Spells Sorrina Westyr listens with interest to the PCs' full report. Regardless of the scenario's outcome, the Pathfinders leave their mark on the Opaline Vault.

#### **REPORTING NOTES**

If the PCs convince General Hanif to strip Captain Othis of her rank, check box A. If they do not, check box B.

#### PRIMARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The PCs fulfill their primary goal if they earn at least 4 of the 8 possible Success Points. Doing so earns each PC 1 Prestige Point.

#### SECONDARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The PCs fulfill their secondary goal if they present enough evidence to convince the general that Captain Othis set them up for failure throughout the scenario. Fulfilling the secondary success condition earns each PC 1 additional Prestige Point.

#### FACTION NOTES

Sovereign Court PCs complete a faction goal by earning an honorable discharge from General Faiza bint Hanif. If they achieve this goal, give them **Player Handout #4**; additionally, all Sovereign Court PCs earn the Wish Exposure boon on their Chronicle sheets.

#### PLAYER HANDOUT #1: CAUCHEMAR'S MISSIVE

#### **Crusted** Agent,

As always, the Pathfinders are sticking their meddlesome noses into our business. I received word that the damned Society's interest in the Plane of Earth is more than just idle talk among the Decemvirate. Somehow one of their venture-captains forged an alliance on this plane and conned a shaitan into transporting some grunt agents to the Opaline Vault. Hilariously, these agents intend to join the Ungrounded. The Pathfinders cannot be allowed to gain a foothold here. I'm sure you can handle it.

Cauchemar

#### PLAYER HANDOUT #2: SLAGCRUSHER'S THANK YOU NOTE

OTHIS,

THANKS FOR TASTY GEM LOCATION. FRIENDS PICKING UP GEMS AT PASS. STUPID MERCS WON'T SEE IT COMING. WILL HELP SERPENTS SOMETIME IF GEMS GOOD LIKE YOU SAY. QUESTION! WHY HELP SLAGCRUSHER?

#### PLAYER HANDOUT #3: GENERAL'S SUMMONS

#### Recruits,

Captain Othis and I have been in communication about several incidents that occurred surrounding your unit in the past weeks. Due to this operation's ties to Her Imminence's military and our nation's sensitive political climate, I take these allegations very seriously. Report to my office at dawn for a formal hearing. Be prepared to present a case defending your actions in training.

> Sincerely, General Faiza bint Hanif

#### PLAYER HANDOUT #4: MORILLA'S MISSIVE

Trusted Agents,

Word of your success in gaining the trust of a shaitan general has reached my ears. Congratulations and thank you, on behalf of our common cause. As allies, genies promise power and influence in ways few mortals could ever offer. The next steps of our plans are considerably ambitious, but with the world-shaping power of wishcraft on our side, as well as steady and experienced hands to wield it, doors that seemed inexorably sealed may open to us at last.

> Sincerely, Lady Gloriana Morilla

#### STAT BLOCKS

The following statistics appear in this scenario.

#### AGRAWGH

This bronze-ringed serpent has silvery skin and razor-sharp teeth that barely conceal the acid bubbling at the back of its mouth.

#### AGRAWGH

CR 5

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Planes of Power 52 N Large outsider (earth, extraplanar) Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 100 ft.;

## Perception +9 DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+9 natural, -1 size) hp 59 (7d10+21)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Immune acid

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 60 ft.

Melee bite +11 (2d6+6 plus 2d6 acid)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attack breath weapon (30-ft. line, 6d4 acid damage, Reflex DC 16 half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

#### STATISTICS

#### Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 7

Base Atk +7; CMB +12 (+14 bull rush); CMD 22 (24 vs. bull rush, can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Lunge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Intimidate +8, Perception +9, Stealth +6, Survival +9 **Languages** Common, Terran

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Burrow (Ex)** An agrawgh can burrow through solid stone at half its normal burrow rate. When traveling using its burrow speed, as a free action an agrawgh can choose to leave a 10-foot-by-10-foot tunnel in its wake. As long as the agrawgh does not encounter any non-dirt or non-stone substances along its way, it digests dirt and stone with its stomach acid at a rate equal to its burrow movement speed. An agrawgh cannot run or perform combat maneuvers while burrowing. If an agrawgh encounters any creature while burrowing (such as one using *meld with stone*), it can't enter that square.

#### EARTH ELEMENTAL

This hulking, roughly humanoid creature of dirt and stone is faceless, save for two glowing gemstone eyes.

#### SMALL EARTH ELEMENTAL

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 122

N Small outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (-1 Dex, +7 natural, +1 size)

<b>hp</b> 13 (2d10+2)	
Fort +4, Ref -1, Will	+3

**Immune** elemental traits

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., earth glide Melee slam +6 (1d6+4) Special Attacks earth mastery

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11 Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 13 Feats Improved Bull Rush<sup>8</sup>, Power Attack Skills Appraise +1, Climb +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +1,

Knowledge (planes) +1, Perception +4, Stealth +7

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Earth Glide (Ex)** A burrowing earth elemental can pass through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. If protected against fire damage, it can even glide through lava. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.
- Earth Mastery (Ex) An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. These modifiers apply to bull rush and overrun maneuvers, whether the elemental is initiating or resisting these kinds of attacks. (These modifiers are not included in its statistics).

#### MEDIUM EARTH ELEMENTAL

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 122
N Medium outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)
Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;
Perception +7
DEFENSE
AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +9 natural)
<b>hp</b> 34 (4d10+12)
Fort +7, Ref +0, Will +4
Immune elemental traits
OFFENSE
Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., earth glide
Melee slam +9 (1d8+7)
Special Attacks earth mastery
STATISTICS
Str 20, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11
Base Atk +4; CMB +9; CMD 18
Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush <sup>8</sup> , Power Attack
Skills Appraise +1, Climb +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2

Knowledge (planes) +2, Perception +7, Stealth +3

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Earth Glide (Ex)** A burrowing earth elemental can pass through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. If protected against fire damage, it can even glide through lava. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.
- Earth Mastery (Ex) An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. These modifiers apply to bull rush and overrun maneuvers, whether the elemental is initiating or resisting these kinds of attacks. (These modifiers are not included in its statistics).

#### **MEPHIT, EARTH**

This small humanoid creature has thin, leathery wings, small horns, and a mischievous smile.

#### EARTH MEPHIT

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 202 N Small outsider (earth) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 19 (3d10+3); fast healing 2 (while underground)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3

**DR** 5/magic

#### OFFENSE

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

Melee 2 claws +5 (1d3+1)

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (15-foot cone, 1d8 bludgeoning damage, Reflex DC 13 half)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*soften earth and stone*, summon (level 2, 1 earth mephit 25%)

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 14

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

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Bluff +8, Fly +10, Perception +6, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Terran

sq change size

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) An earth mephit can unleash a cone of rocks that deals 1d8 points of bludgeoning damage every 4 rounds as a standard action. The DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

**Change Size (Sp)** Once per day, an earth mephit can enlarge its body by 1 size category, as *enlarge person*. This power acts as a 2nd-level spell.

## PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO



Pathfinder Society Scenario #8-05: Ungrounded but Unbroken							
Event	Date						
GM #	GM Character #						
GM Name  Dark Archive Scarab Sages A B	GM Prestige Earned						
Character #	Prestige Points						
Character Name Dark Archive Scarab Sages Silver Crusade	☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge ☐ Sovereign Court						
Character #	Prestige Points						
Character Name Dark Archive Scarab Sages Silver Crusade	☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge ☐ Sovereign Court						
Character #	Prestige Points						
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Character #	Prestige Points						
Character Name Dark Archive The Exchange Scarab Sages Silver Crusade	☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge ☐ Sovereign Court						
Character #	Prestige Points						
Character Name Dark Archive Scarab Sages Silver Crusade	☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge ☐ Sovereign Court						
Character #	Prestige Points						
Character Name Dark Archive The Exchange Scarab Sages Silver Crusade	☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge ☐ Sovereign Court						
Character #	Prestige Points						
Character Name  Dark Archive  Scarab Sages  Silver Crusade	☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge ☐ Sovereign Court						

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## Pathfinder Society Scenario #8-05: Ungrounded but Unbroken

#### Core Campaign

لو						են	SUBTIER	Slow	Normal		
				-			1–2	253	506		
	Player Name A.K.A. Character Na	2000		Pathfinder Society #	Faction	-			_		
Ъ		anne		Fatimidel Society #	raction	Ъ	SUBTIER	Slow	Normal		
	This Chronicle sheet g	grants	s access	s to the following:			Out of Subtier	606	1,211		
							Subtier	 	_		
	Earth Affinity: Your connection to elemental e						SUBTIER	Slow	Normal		
	dventures. This boon has no mechanical effect a role in future adventures—especially those set			-	boons or play	7	4–5	958	1,916		
ſ	<b>Ungrounded Veteran</b> : While your time			-	se to face the	2		 			
	challenges that Captain Othis threw in your w						SUBTIER	Slow	Normal		
	he skills you reinforced through your training		-	-			—	_	_		
	following skill checks: an Acrobatics check to ba								ليسم		
	a Knowledge (planes) check to identify creatures you are not trained in the skill, you may instead										
	skill. You must choose to apply this bonus before							Starting	ХР		
	off your Chronicle sheet.		U	1			+ + XP = XP =		GM's Initials		
	Wish Exposure (Sovereign Court): The Sover			01	-			<b>Gained</b> (G	M ONLY)		
	vishcraft of their genie allies. The first of these you gain the benefits of a <i>wish</i> spell again, it pro				-						
-	boon off your Chronicle sheet when you would b		-	-			=				
	e.g., increasing the amount of gold you earn on						I	otal			
e	earned by 50%.								٣		
		CE	7				Initial P	restiae Ir	itial Fame		
	DUSK AGATE EXTRACT							j	GM's Initials		
	SAVE Fortitude DC 13 TYPE poison (contact)						+	<i>.</i> .			
ļ	EFFECT unconsciousness for 1 minute						Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)				
	SECONDARY EFFECT 1 Wisdom damage						FA I				
	CURE 1 save						Р	restige S	pent		
	All Subtiers			Subtier 4–5			Curre		Final		
					1		Prest	ige	Fame		
	concealable thieves' tools (190 gp; <i>Pathfinder RPG</i> <i>Ultimate Intrigue</i> 233)		-	ŋlamered scimitar (6,315 gp; Pathfin Iltimate Equipment 142)	der RPG				۳ ۲		
	dusk agate extract (75 gp; limit 4)			cers of armor +1 (1,000 gp)				Starting	GP		
	invisible ink (simple, 2 gp; Pathfinder RPG Ultimate		cloa	nk of resistance +1 (1,000 gp)					GM's Initials		
	Equipment 103)			cealing pocket (1,000 gp; Ultimate Ed			+	<b>Gained</b> (G			
	ioun torch (75 gp; Ultimate Equipment 305) scroll of lesser restoration (150 gp)		-	ion of cure moderate wounds (300 g of protection +1 (2,000 gp)	jþ)		GP	Gallied (G	GM's		
	superior loaded dice (50 gp; Ultimate Equipment 92)		inig				(10) +				
	traveler's any-tool (250 gp; Ultimate Equipment 323)						De De	а <b>у Јоb</b> (дм	ONLY)		
								Gold Spe	nt		
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Ъ						Ъ		Total	F		
Fo	or GM Only										

EVENT