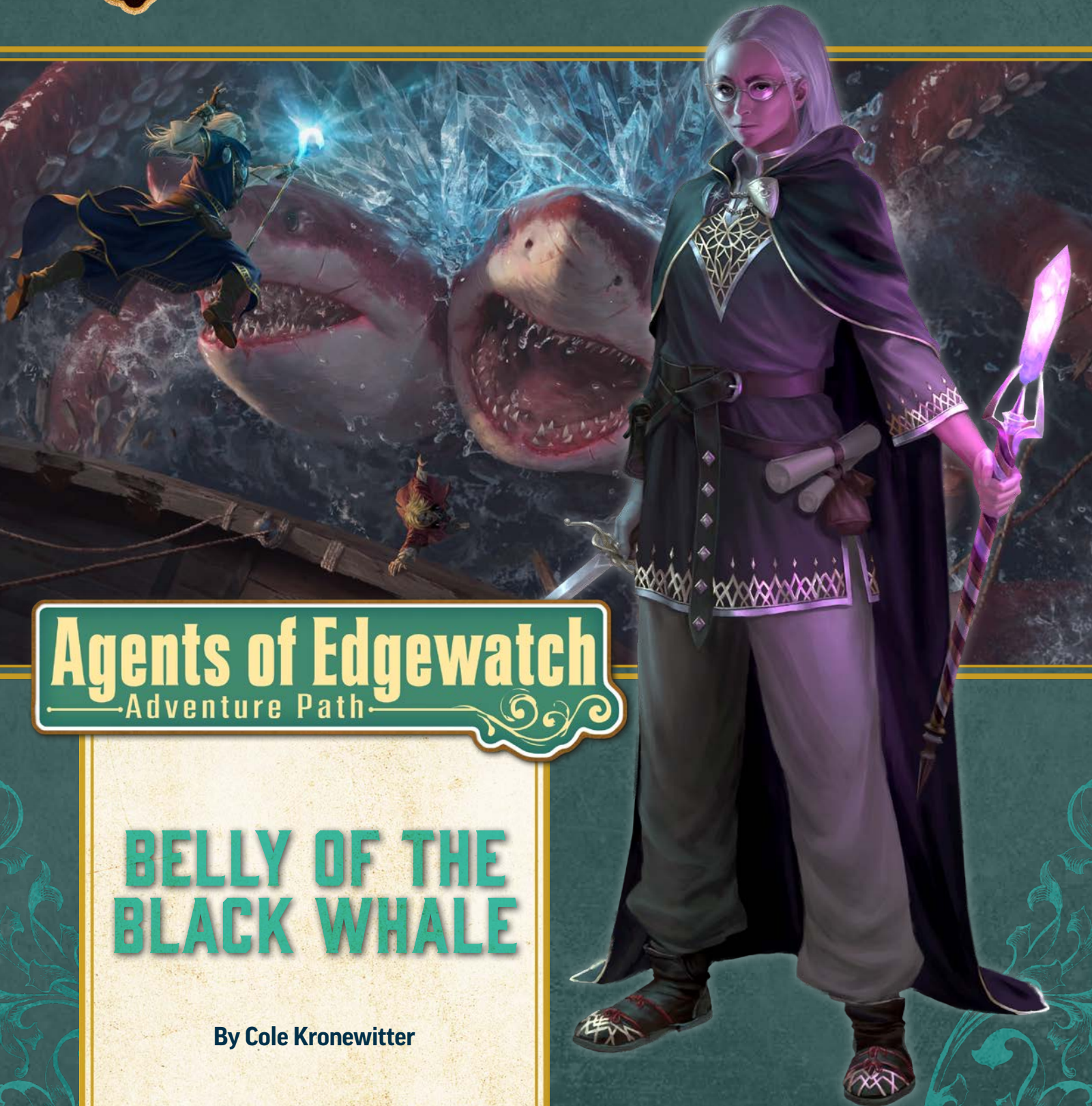


SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®



Agents of Edgewatch

Adventure Path

BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

By Cole Kronewitter



AZLANTI KEEP

WISE QUARTER

PETAL DISTRICT

IVY DISTRICT

ASCENDANT COURT

WESTGATE

FOREIGN QUARTER

THE COINS

EASTGATE

THE DOCKS

THE PUDDLES

PRECIPICE QUARTER

FORT TEMPEST

STARWATCH KEEP

ABSALOM

1 MILE

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CHAPTER 1: DISHONORABLY DISCHARGED 4

After implicating themselves in a spree of crimes, the Edgewatch agents must work with an ex-Starwatch commando-turned-crime lord named Miogimo. They need to earn Miogimo's trust so that he can help them formulate a plan to infiltrate and escape the Black Whale prison complex with Wynsal Starborn in tow. To do so, they must bring down some of the Eastgate district's most despicable gangs, a series of events that culminates in a chaotic shoot-out in the House of the Planes.

CHAPTER 2: BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE 28

With their escape plans secured, the agents infiltrate the Black Whale, Absalom's notorious fleet of prison galleys docked in Kortos Bay. Villains abound in the prison complex, which has taken unscrupulous steps to increase security in the wake of Wynsal's incarceration. The agents must defeat monstrous foes and bypass magical safeguards in order to spring their wrongly imprisoned ally.

CHAPTER 3: THE RUMORMONGER'S STRONGHOLD 52

With Wynsal safe, the agents can now go about clearing their names and digging up evidence against their old associate Reginald Vancaskerkin, whom they rightly suspect of being the "Rumormonger," the secretive third member of the Twilight Four. When Reginald goes into hiding in the trap-laden dungeons beneath his publishing empire, the agents infiltrate a devious maze of monsters and hazards to bring the Rumormonger to justice and put his schemes to an end.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Chances are that when your players decided to play in the Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path, they figured they'd take on the duties of upright law officers for the duration of the campaign. During the course of this adventure, however, the players assume the roles of infamous (but innocent) fugitives—disgraced city guards who must go rogue to prove their innocence and free Absalom's rightful primarch.

The challenges and encounters of this adventure might not appeal to every person in your game group. Some players might feel uneasy working with villains rather than arresting them, and you should respect their feelings. To modify this adventure, you can remove the accusations leveled against the Edgewatch agents so that only Wynsal Starborn takes the fall for the Graveraker crime. The agents' superior, Captain Asilia, might even tell the party that she thinks something is fishy about Wynsal's situation and tasks them with going deep undercover to temporarily work with Miogimo (who they would then arrest afterward). In this case, the malignant forces dwelling in the Black Whale might have wholly coopted the prison, which necessitates the agents' forceful entry to free Wynsal.

This guidance only serves as a reminder that you're not beholden to the words on these pages if you think changing something—even major plot points—will make your game more fun for the players who sit at your table.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Belly of the Black Whale" is designed for four characters. Characters should level up between each chapter.

- 15** The characters begin this adventure at 15th level.
- 16** The characters should be 16th level before breaking into the Black Whale prison.
- 17** The characters should be 17th level before infiltrating the Rumormonger's stronghold.
- 18** The characters should reach 18th level by the time they complete the adventure.



CHAPTER 1: DISHONORABLY DISCHARGED

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After pledging their souls to Norgorber in a profane pact, the Twilight Four set forth a nefarious and multi-faceted plan: overthrow Wynsal Starborn and steal the position of primarch. Even now with two members of the Twilight Four fallen, the agents have done little to disrupt this master plan. At the start of the Radiant Festival, the Twilight Four sowed seeds of discontent and worked to undermine the acting primarch's authority. Simultaneously, Reginald Vancaskerkin (the Rumormonger to his colleagues) used his lurid tabloid publication, *Eyes on Absalom*, to lionize the agents as saviors of the city and, eventually, as Wynsal's personal champions. Meanwhile, Olansa Terimor—already a member of Absalom's Grand Council as the city planner—used cunning spycraft to exploit the other councilmembers' vulnerabilities, variously ingratiating herself to her fellows or outright blackmailing them.

With this groundwork laid, Reginald and Olansa (the remaining members of the Twilight Four after the arrests of Wrent Dicaspiron and Jonis Flakfatter) sprung their trap. After luring the Edgewart agents and Wynsal to a remote corner of the Precipice Quarter, they framed the primarch for murder and a plot to poison Absalom using the stolen excavation machine called Graveraker while also pinning the agents as his accomplices. To further cement the betrayal, Vancaskerkin used his minions to implicate the agents for other crimes throughout Absalom, publishing wild accusations to besmirch their names. Now, the Twilight Four's plan has reached its final stages. With the city in chaos, Olansa plans on using her political influence to convince the council to invoke a Matter of Note and name her—and her alone, despite her agreement with Reginald to share the prize—the new primarch. Not content to let his greatest rival simply rise to power without him, Reginald has descended into



the depths of his Wise Quarter stronghold, where he has built an elaborate clockwork machine to steal victory from Olansa at the last instant.

All hope isn't lost, however. A canny tactician as well as politician, Wynsal suspected betrayal and created his own contingency plan. Since his immense influence made him too sensitive a prisoner to place in a normal jail cell, the primarch knew that he would get sent to Absalom's infamous waterborne prison, the Black Whale. At the end of the last adventure, Wynsal sent word to the agents before his arrest, asking them to free him from the Black Whale so that he can help them clear all their names.

To this end, Wynsal also contacted an undercover member of Starwatch named Grimwold. Grimwold is in charge of capturing the undead crime lord Miogimo—the only known creature to have ever successfully escaped from the Black Whale. To learn how to break into (and back out of) the prison, the agents must go undercover within Miogimo's gang and gain his trust. Of course, Miogimo has his own ends in mind and intends to use the agents to secure his place in Absalom's underworld.

GETTING STARTED

The previous adventure, "Assault on Hunting Lodge Seven," ended on a cliffhanger with the agents being implicated as accomplices in several crimes: the theft a giant excavation machine called Graveraker; the murder of Harlo Doleen, Wynsal Starborn's chief assistant; and a plot to poison the populace of Absalom. This adventure starts right on the heels of the last one. Read or paraphrase the following to your players to set the scene.

A grim rain falls to the ground outside the circus tent where the corpse of Harlo Doleen rests next to the massive excavator.

"Lock them all in chains," sneers Lieutenant Lavarsus, gesturing at you. "Drag them to the nearest jail cell."

Following the lieutenant's order, a group of Edgewatch agents tentatively moves forward, but they take only a few steps before Asilia of Gyr arrives on the scene, taking command of the situation with a steely gaze.

"Ignore that order," she says. "I can hardly believe the charges myself, but these are members of the Starwatch, so I retain the right to discipline them as I see fit until they are formally charged. They will be escorted back to Fort Tempest for the night and kept under watch there until I can get this mess sorted out."

Asilia takes the agents aside and asks what happened. Regardless of what they choose to tell her, the dire charges laid against the agents make it impossible for her to simply let them off the hook. Meanwhile, Wynsal, who was also implicated, is placed under armed guard and whisked away to the Black Whale, where he'll await judgment from the Grand Council. After they've had their say, the agents are escorted to Fort Tempest under guard.

NEW FRIENDS, NEW ENEMIES

The guards escort the agents back to Fort Tempest and lock them in a large holding cell together.

Unbeknownst to the guards of Fort Tempest and the Edgewatch agents, two individuals had already hidden inside the cell, both invisible: Grimwold, a grizzled, bald human man with white scars covering half his face; and Kapral, a dark-haired elven woman who serves as Grimwold's

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

Directly following the events of the last adventure, the agents are wrongfully arrested in connection with the theft of the magical excavator Graveraker and a plot to poison the populace of Absalom. At Wynsal's request, the agents must play up their corruption to warrant their dismissal from Absalom's guard. They can then earn the trust of an undead criminal mastermind named Miogimo, the only individual to ever escape the Black Whale—the prison where Wynsal is being held. To earn Miogimo's favor, the agents must dismantle Eastgate's most powerful gangs, a process that ultimately leads to a frenetic confrontation in a basement speakeasy called the House of the Planes.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

Although no longer city guards, the agents have an obligation to seize illicit goods and can use such equipment in the field for the pursuit of justice. To that end, they can find the following notable magic items and equipment throughout this chapter.

- +2 greater striking keen dagger
- +2 greater striking war razor (Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic 120)
- +2 resilient studded leather armor
- +1 leather armors (6)
- +1 striking shortswords (7)
- +1 striking clubs (6)
- deathcap powder (6 doses)
- fungal armor (page 77)
- greater corrosive rune
- greater sea touch elixir
- hail of arrows snares (2)
- major antidote
- major antiplague
- Miogimo's mask (page 77)
- moonstone crystal ball
- viper fang
- wand of slaying (7th level)

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lieutenant. Like the agents, Grimwold recently received a telepathic message from Wynsal Starborn. Grimwold, a veteran of the Starwatch, has become paranoid and jaded over his many years of service. He talks with a harsh, rasping voice, and his speeches have a habit of devolving into brooding rants on the darkness of the human condition. Only Kapral has truly earned his trust; she maintains a perpetual scowl and has a filthy mouth.

Grimwold is there on behalf of the acting primarch to give the agents their next mission. As soon as the guards move out of earshot, Kapral drops the invisibility on Grimwold and herself. Grimwold then tells the agents that they must seek out the criminal mastermind named Miogimo, who can help them free Wynsal from the Black Whale. He bears a bitter hatred for Miogimo and can tell the agents much about the criminal, but rather than convey all this exposition at once, you might consider saving some of Miogimo's story for later in the adventure, such as when the agents dine with him (see Dinner with Miogimo on page 9).

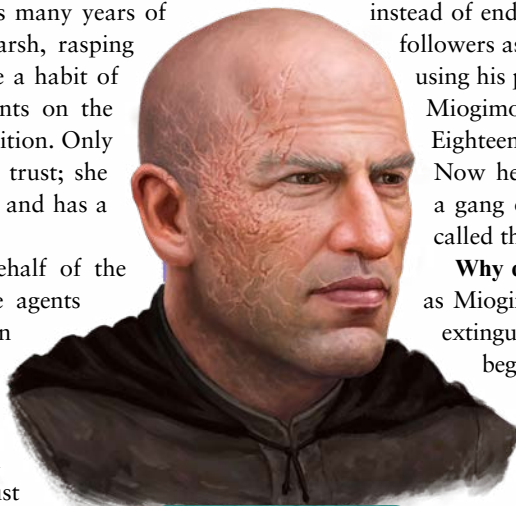
Roleplay this encounter as a conversation or a brief block of exposition, whichever you think your group would prefer, using the following questions and answers as guidelines for the exchange.

Who are you? "My name's Grimwold, and this here's my lieutenant Kapral. Like you, we're members of the Starwatch, working directly with Starborn. Most folks these days think we're dead, though, so don't go spreading that information around."

What are you doing here? "Like you, last night I received a message from Starborn."

So Wynsal planned all this? "I doubt it, no. The acting primarch has a cunning enemy somewhere, and I think they've outmaneuvered him for now. You and I, we're his backup plan. By now, he's likely been taken to the Black Whale, the most secure prison in Absalom. He needs you to help him escape, so he sent me to contact you because I'm hunting Miogimo, the only creature alive to ever escape the Black Whale. If you want to rescue Starborn, you'll need to find out what Miogimo knows."

Can't we just break into the Black Whale now? "Yeah, you probably could. But the prison is tied to another plane. Once inside, there's no way to escape, meaning you'd be trapped there with Starborn. That's why you need Miogimo's help."



Grimwold

Who's Miogimo? A flicker of hatred and disgust crosses Grimwold's face before he responds. "Miogimo is an undead monster. Years ago, I captured him. But instead of ending his life and hunting down his followers as I suggested, Starborn intervened, using his powers as acting primarch to have Miogimo imprisoned on the Black Whale. Eighteen months ago, Miogimo escaped. Now he's back in the Undercity, leading a gang of ghouls and ex-watch members called the Shadow Guard."

Why did you fake your death? "As long as Miogimo has followers, his life can't be extinguished. After his escape, Miogimo began killing the Starwatch members that originally captured him—all good people." A shadow crosses Grimwold's face, and Kapral stares stoically at a far corner of the room. Grimwold continues: "Several months ago, he set off an explosion that destroyed my house with both Kapral and me inside it. We used the opportunity to go into hiding, and we've been hunting Miogimo ever since. Only Starborn knows we're still alive. With us presumed dead, Miogimo has lowered his guard somewhat, making it possible for us to track down most of his followers."

How can you help us? "The Black Whale is a formidable prison, and only Miogimo has ever escaped. If you want to rescue Starborn, you'll need to know how he did it. Personally, I don't care whether you're crooks or not. All I care about is capturing Miogimo. I'm worried that he's beginning to suspect that I'm still alive. My window of opportunity is closing. Now, I can help you infiltrate his organization, if you provide me information in return. Miogimo's lair is hidden and likely heavily fortified. I need you to find a time and place where Miogimo will be out in the open. Then I can recapture the monster—for good this time."

How do we infiltrate Miogimo's gang? "Miogimo has a weakness for converting members of the watch to his cause. If he thinks you're criminals willing to serve his vision, he might find a place for you in his organization. Thanks to this Graveraker business, your reputation is already plenty tarnished. No doubt further accusations will follow. My advice? Lean into it. Play along and maybe even provide evidence against yourselves. Miogimo has contacts throughout the watch. If you come out of this looking too clean, he won't trust you. But if you make yourselves seem as traitorous as the press makes you out to be—maybe by planting evidence or paying the right people to bolster your foul reputation—then you might just earn Miogimo's favor. In that case, you'll need to

head to the Undercity beneath Eastgate and ask around about Miogimo. He'll find you."

GRIMWOLD

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human Starwatch secret agent

Perception +27

Languages Common, Varisian

Skills Deception +22, Diplomacy +20, Legal Lore +24, Society +24, Stealth +24

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

Items +1 resilient chain shirt, crossbow (with 20 bolts), elite disguise kit, +2 greater striking longsword, tinted goggles

AC 36; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +24, **Will** +26

HP 270

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +28 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 3d8+12 slashing

Ranged ♦ crossbow +24 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Dueling Parry ♦ As long as he has one free hand, Grimwold can parry attacks against him with his longsword. He gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of his next turn as long as his other hand remains free.

Studied Strike ♦ Grimwold studies his foe for weaknesses to exploit. His next successful Strike against that target deals an additional 4d6 precision damage.



Kapral

KAPRAL

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Feale elf Starwatch secret agent

Perception +28

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

Skills Arcana +27, Intimidation +21, Legal Lore +25, Society +25, Stealth +27

Str +1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -1

Items bracers of armor II, elite disguise kit, moderate healing potions (3), +2 striking staff, tinted goggles

AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +27, **Will** +28

HP 220

Contingency Plan ☞ (arcane, conjuration, magical, teleportation) **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** Kapral is targeted by an attack; **Effect** Kapral casts *blink* on herself.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ staff +24 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+5 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 37, attack +27; **7th** *prismatic spray* (×2), *project image*; **6th** *feeblemind*, *teleport*, *true seeing*; **5th** *black tentacles*, *cone of cold*, *mind probe*; **4th** *confusion*, *dimension door*, *fly*; **3rd** *invisibility sphere*, *lightning bolt*, *nondetection*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *illusory*

creature, knock; **1st** *alarm*, *color spray*, *mage armor*; **Cantrips (7th)** *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

After answering the agents' questions, Grimwold and Kapral use a *teleport* spell to leave the fortress. The agents could likely do the same, of course, but Grimwold advises against it. Instead, he recommends staying behind to deal with the coming accusations. To have a shot at joining Miogimo, they must look as guilty as possible.

FRAMED!

The following morning, newspapers and broadsheets in Absalom publish a series of wild accusations against the Edgewatch agents. Citizens come forward, each claiming to have witnessed the agents commit crimes during their early days in the watch before they transferred to the Edgewatch. Worse still, the tabloids all seem to tie the agents' past crimes to Wynsal Starborn and the theft of Graveraker. Perhaps Wynsal has always been corrupt? Perhaps the agents, formerly thought of as city heroes, are actually just the acting primarch's flunkies? (You might show your players the front page of the latest issue of *Eyes on Absalom*, reproduced on the rear inside cover of this volume.)

Disturbingly, the witnesses making these accusations all have vivid memories of the agents committing crimes, plus evidence of the damage caused by these incidents. (In reality, these accusers have had false memories implanted into their minds by a green-eyed hyakume named Ixusoth—one of the Rumormonger's most useful minions. See Bottles and Blots on page 49 for more context.)

Asilia of Gyr sends word that she'll come to Fort Tempest that evening to formally lay out the charges against the agents, which means that they have most of the day to further incriminate themselves. At this point, go around the table and ask each player how they'd like to "sell" their corruption. The following present a few potential options, but you should encourage your players to come up with their own ideas and ask them to roll an appropriate check to follow through with the deed.

- An agent can sneak out of Fort Tempest to plant evidence. Since the agents are still members of the Starwatch and have yet to be convicted, they're allowed to freely wander the keep during the day under the surveillance of one or more guards at all times. Sneaking away long enough to plant evidence

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CRIMES AGAINST ABSALOM

Besides the Graveraker incident, what crimes are the Edgewatch agents accused of? The list below describe the crimes that the hyakume Ixusoth has carefully arranged and tied to the agents. These crimes are tied to the character backgrounds from the *Agents of Edgewatch Player's Guide*, based on what guard faction the agent served in before joining the Edgewatch.

Although Ixusoth fabricated some of these crimes using false memories, in most cases criminals under the hyakume's influence carried out the actual deed. These criminals were killed shortly afterward.

Ex-Con Token Guard: The agent is accused of embezzling funds from the Token Guard.

Godless Graycloak: The agent is accused of shaking down pilgrims for coin.

Grizzled Muckrucker: The agent is accused of burning down a local tavern during a drunken stupor and then creating a cover-up.

Harbor Guard Moonlighter: The agent is accused of covering up evidence related to the disappearance of former harbormaster Goodman Hugen.

Learned Guard Prodigy: The agent is accused of smuggling rare and valuable texts out of the district libraries, leaving trashy and lurid novels in their place.

Political Scion: The agent is accused of banditry, waylaying lone peddlers and travelers for coin.

Post Guard of All Trades: The agent is accused of "casing" merchant houses while on duty and then robbing those merchants during the 3-month leave granted to each member of the Post Guard.

Sally Guard Neophyte: The agent is accused of stealing Lord Winton's prize horse, which disappeared last year.

Sleepless Suns Star: The agent is accused of running scams targeting recent immigrants.

Undercover Lotus Guard: The agent is accused of developing a too-cozy relationship with members of the upper class and of accepting bribes.

requires a successful DC 39 Stealth check along with some sort of long-term distraction.

- Several journalists arrive at Fort Tempest to ask for an exposé. An agent who succeeds at a DC 34 Deception check during an interview can "accidentally" let compromising information slip. The reputable journalists won't publish anything obviously false, so subtlety is key.
- The agents could provoke a fight or confrontation with the guards by attempting a DC 34 Athletics or Intimidation check. On a success, they stage a scuffle that seems real enough (without actually hurting anyone) and come across as loose cannons.

XP and Trust Points Award: If at least half the agents successfully incriminate themselves, award each character 30 XP and the party 1 Trust Point with Miogimo.

TURN IN YOUR BADGE

Near the end of the day, the agents are escorted to Captain Asilia of Gyr's office, where she and Lieutenant Lavarsus wait.

Inside the orderly office, Asilia of Gyr sits behind her desk on which piles of salacious newspaper clippings and periodicals lay scattered. Lieutenant Lavarsus stands to her right, a sneering grin on his face.

"Well," Asilia sighs while gesturing at the papers. "What do you have to say for yourselves?"

"Save your breath, Captain," Lavarsus interjects. "I've known this bunch was corrupt from the very beginning. Now they're finally getting what they deserve."

If at least half the agents successfully played up their corruption, Asilia listens to their explanations before chewing them out for besmirching the name of the Starwatch. If the agents didn't sell their corruption well, Asilia notes that they seem to be taking the fall for something they didn't do, but the issue is ultimately out of her hands.

Asilia dishonorably discharges the agents and asks them to hand over their badges (they can keep their weapons since they purchased them with their own funds). With the acting primarch's arrest, the city has fallen into turmoil with regular jail cells already overflowing, so Asilia orders the agents to stay within the confines of Fort Tempest until they receive a set date for their trial (which could take weeks to months).

While the agents still technically haven't been found guilty of anything, all the exits in Fort Tempest have guards posted at them, though the agents can still freely roam inside the building. From there, they can permanently sneak out (in which case they're treated as fugitives until they clear their names), or they can devise a clever method of fooling the guards who periodically check up on them. Either way, they need to leave Fort Tempest in order to locate and meet Miogimo.

UNDERCOVER UNDERGROUND

The agents know from Grimwold that Miogimo's gang lairs somewhere in the Undercity beneath Eastgate, supposedly not far from the House of the Planes, which the agents visited long ago, in "Devil at the Dreaming Palace."

In the past, five criminal gangs ruled the Undercity area beneath Eastgate with Miogimo's gang chief among them. Violent spats led to occasional bloodshed, but for



the most part, the five gangs met regularly and settled disputes in more diplomatic ways. Over the years, Miogimo's influence grew to the point where he effectively controlled the other four gangs, but then Grimwold and Wynsal staged a daring raid and captured the crime lord. Now just four gangs rule Eastgate, although Miogimo has worked to reestablish his power base.

With no real way to locate Miogimo, the agents' best course of action is to ask around town. They can take this opportunity to revisit some of their unsavory contacts from previous adventures, such as Maurrisa Jonne or Bloody Berleth, Corporal Kerr Batiste on the Edgewatch (if they've discovered her corruption), or any patrons on whom the agents' made a particularly strong impression during their initial foray into the House of the Planes. Regardless of whom they talk to, word eventually reaches Miogimo, and he sends a minion to contact them.

DINNER WITH MIOGIMO

Near dusk one evening, a former Post Guard and confidant of Miogimo named **Talis** (LE male human ex-Post Guard 9) approaches the Edgewatch agents with an offer to dine with Miogimo.

He assures them that Miogimo has no hostile intentions; however, Miogimo refuses to meet with strangers in neutral territory, so the agents must follow Talis to speak with the crime lord.

Talis leads the agents across the city to a run-down restaurant in the Puddles called The Royal Cod. Two grunts stand outside the door. They refuse to let the agents enter without first surrendering their weapons and getting frisked. Any agents that refuse must wait outside. The grunts are skilled friskers, and if an agent wishes to Conceal an Object from them, that character must succeed at a DC 34 Stealth check.

Once the agents enter the restaurant, read or paraphrase the following.

This dilapidated restaurant is barely big enough to seat a dozen people. Eight patrons gathered around several rickety wooden tables talk in hushed voices. Cigar smoke and the aroma of fish soup waft through the air. A finely clothed man in an angelic-looking mask sits in the shadows of the room.

Rising from his chair, he gestures toward his table and loudly calls, "Greetings, oh famed warriors of the watch. I hear that you have taken an interest in my affairs. Please have a seat and we can discuss."



Miogimo

TRUST POINTS

This chapter uses Trust Points to track Miogimo's shifting opinion of the agents. Miogimo decides to help the agents regardless of how many points they gather. The Trust Points determine if he actually trusts them or if he merely uses them to further his schemes. At the end of this chapter, the party's accrued Trust Points also determine Miogimo's final parting gifts.

Looking Around the Room: Although Miogimo does his best to capture their attention, agents who actively scan the room can attempt a DC 44 Perception check. On a success, they notice that the soup being consumed by the other patrons appears to include human fingers and various unwholesome ingredients.

Creatures: Talis and the two other grunts belong to Miogimo's private army, the Shadow Guard. They wait just outside the restaurant. The eight other patrons in the restaurant are actually zeal-damned ghouls under the control of Miogimo, who has masked them beneath a *veil* spell (see page 87 for more details on zeal-damned ghouls and how they manifest.) The ghouls protect Miogimo and act like normal patrons during the conversation. Miogimo doesn't take chances, and if combat breaks out, the eight ghouls plus Miogimo are beyond an extreme encounter, making battle an unfavorable prospect for the agents. In this case, Miogimo eventually calls off his ghouls and asks the agents to join him rather than waste potential new recruits.

MIOGIMO

CREATURE 17

Page 88

Perception +31

SHADOW GUARDS (3)

CREATURE 11

Use Starwatch Commando statistics (page 26)

Perception +24

ZEAL-DAMNED GHOULS (8)

CREATURE 10

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Variant ghouls (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 169, page 87)

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Deception +18, Stealth +22

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Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

AC 29; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 175, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +22 (finesse), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus 1d6 chaotic, 1d6 negative, ghoul fever, and paralysis

Melee ♦ claws +22 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d4+8 slashing plus 1d6 chaotic, 1d6 negative, and paralysis

Consume Flesh ♦ (manipulate) As ghoul, but the zeal-damned ghoul can consume only the flesh of corpses of evil or chaotic creatures and regains 6d6 hit points.

Ghoul Fever (disease) As ghoul, but DC 27 and the victim rises as a zeal-damned ghoul.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) As ghoul, but DC 27.

Swift Leap ♦ (move) As ghoul.

TALKING WITH MIOGIMO

Miogimo has no hostile intentions toward the agents at this point. He mainly hopes to test their mettle through conversation and potentially recruit them as powerful new followers. Miogimo begins by accusing the agents of working with Grimwold. The agents can either fess up to working with Grimwold (and thus betray him) or Lie to Miogimo with a successful DC 39 Deception check. Either approach, if successful, gains them 1 Trust Point.

Following this accusation, he continues speaking with the agents. The conversation should cover most of the talking points below, which includes suggested dialogue for you to read aloud.

Miogimo's Story: At some point during the dinner, Miogimo tells the Edgewatch agents of his past. "I was like you once—a member of the watch. I even served with Wynsal Starborn before he rose to such lofty heights. Back then he was just a rookie. I think we took a kind of liking to each other. But like you, my time at the watch ultimately proved fruitless. No matter how many criminals I imprisoned, the crime in this city never stopped, and new gang leaders would always arise. Eventually, I grew old and nothing had really changed. I needed more time, more years to fight for justice. So I abandoned the watch and became something more."

Miogimo's Vision: "I imagine a world free of crime and violence. All my years in the watch did little to make this dream real. It was only after I went underground that I began to see the truth: violence will only respond to violence. To truly bring justice to the crime lords of Absalom, I would need to operate like they do."

"Surely you can see the wisdom of this choice. Haven't you ever been stymied by the regulations of the law? Prevented from doing what was right, and instead forced to merely do what was legal?"

Escaping the Black Whale: If the agents ask Miogimo how he escaped the Black Whale, he simply chuckles. "So that is why you have come? You hope to rescue Starborn from the belly of the Black Whale? Your efforts would be better spent elsewhere. Starborn has grown soft; he lacks the vision necessary to lead this city. I can tell you what you need to know. However, if you want to know my secrets, you must first prove your loyalty."

Miogimo's Mask: If asked about his mask, Miogimo removes it, revealing his desiccated face. A character can recognize Miogimo as a zealborn (see page 87) with a successful DC 30 Religion check to Recall Knowledge. He explains, somewhat sadly, "My face is terrible to behold, is it not? I know what I have become. I know that I am a monster. But without this body, my work would have ended. My work is what is important. When Absalom is free from criminals, there will no longer be a need for monsters like me."

The Undead: If the agents mention the disguised ghouls around the room, Miogimo clicks his tongue and responds, "Shame on you for ruining my fun. Surely, you didn't expect me to meet you unguarded? I give you my word that they mean you no harm." This guarantee, of course, spoils the little game Miogimo had set up, and you can skip the Miogimo's Test section below. Instead, at the end of their conversation, Miogimo invites the agents to join his enterprise, remarking that their skills of observation can prove useful to him.

MIOGIMO'S TEST

If the agents ask to join Miogimo's gang, he puts off answering their request until the end of the conversation. Alternatively, if they don't bring it up, Miogimo himself asks them to join, provided they can pass his test.

"If you want to join my cause, first I need to see what kind of soldier you will be," Miogimo says before gesturing across the room to a red-haired man idly enjoying his meal. "Do you see that man sitting on the barstool, eating soup? He is a murderer and a thief. I know you are without weapons, but my servants have hidden a dagger in the privy of this establishment. Take the dagger from there, and kill this man for me."

Miogimo had pointed out one of his still disguised zeal-damned ghouls. In the unlikely event that the agents reclaim the dagger and kill the target, the blade sticks out impotently from the ghoul's back. Miogimo then drops the illusion for the entire room, revealing the true appearances of all the undead. In this case, he compliments the agents' ruthlessness. If the agents refuse to wantonly kill someone, Miogimo feigns disappointment and insists that they do. If they refuse again, he smiles, ends the



illusion, and expresses approval at the agents' willingness to stand up against what they believe is wrong. Miogimo values this quality, too, and muses how their senses of justice reminds him of a young Wynsal.

JOINING MIOGIMO

Regardless of how they responded to his test, as long as the agents haven't blatantly insulted Miogimo or given him a strong reason to distrust them, he becomes convinced that the disgraced agents can serve as useful tools and tells them as much. If, on the other hand, the agents utterly failed to earn Miogimo's trust, he politely excuses himself from the table and leaves with his Shadow Guard. In this case, on his way out, Miogimo subtly gives the signal for his zeal-damned ghouls to attack the agents. If the characters defeat the ghouls and seek out Miogimo once more, he applauds their persistence and invites them to join him, promising them the secrets of the Black Whale in due time. If the agents seem wary of confronting the crime lord again, you can have Grimwold or Kaplan encourage them to do so.

XP Award: For successfully joining Miogimo's gang, award each character 30 XP.

MIOGIMO'S MISSIONS

Though they've earned his favor for now, Miogimo tells the agents that before he shares his story of the Black Whale, they must first perform some tasks for him. The rest of this chapter summarizes these tasks, which the agents don't necessarily need to complete in the presented order; however, A Quick Shave should happen first, and Assault on the Straight Edge should happen just before the meeting of the five gangs. Though some of these missions would likely end in death if Miogimo sent his regular minions, the crime lord primarily wants his enemies neutralized for the upcoming meeting. Miogimo has no problem with the agents leaving their targets at the mercy of the city watch, and he doesn't expect them to personally kill anyone.

For the first task, Miogimo assigns the agents to arrange a meeting between the five most powerful gangs in Eastgate: Miogimo's empire, the Eastgate branch of the Bloody Barbers, the Argent Syndicate, the Garrote Sisterhood, and the followers of Mother Venom. To arrange the meeting, the agents must meet with a warped killer named Twisted Jack.

A QUICK SHAVE

Currently the Bloody Barbers, one of the most notorious thieves' guilds in all of Absalom, holds the most sway among the gangs in Eastgate. Ultimately, Miogimo aspires to overthrow the entire Bloody Barbers organization, but right now, he has set his sights on one

of its smaller sects, the Eastgate branch—led by an out-of-control tiefling named Twisted Jack.

Miogimo explains that, among Eastgate's criminals, only Twisted Jack has enough influence to call a meeting between the five gangs. To set up the meeting, Miogimo instructs the agents to travel to a barbershop in Eastgate called the Straight Edge and ask for a shave or haircut "with a twist." This request is the only way to speak with Twisted Jack in person.

Although likely unnecessary for this encounter, a map and key to the contents of the Straight Edge appear in the Assault on the Straight Edge section on page 20.

THE STRAIGHT EDGE

During the day, the double doors of the barbershop typically stay open to allow fresh air inside. A master barber named **Quintin Deambros** (LE male human assassin 8) runs the shop along with his five apprentices. Although he seems like a genial old man on the surface, Quintin has a taste for killing and thoroughly enjoys working with the Bloody Barbers. His five apprentices are all former street urchins that were taken in by the Bloody Barbers. Quintin and his apprentices are all non-combatants and flee if fighting breaks out.

Quintin cordially welcomes the agents into his barbershop. When they ask for a shave or haircut with a twist, he says, "Of course," and politely asks them to have a seat near the window. He and his apprentices quickly finish shaving the other customers, usher them out of the store, and then close the front doors. Quintin then beckons for each character to have a seat (the shop has chairs for up to six customers at once).

Poisonous Precautions: As an added security measure, Twisted Jack talks to outsiders here only while they get a shave or haircut. Although a razor to the throat can serve as an effective killing method, Twisted Jack and Quintin have little interest in a bloody battle in the middle of their otherwise legitimate barbershop. For this reason, the shears and razors used by Quintin and his apprentices are coated with a dose of king's sleep poison (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 552). The poison does no harm as long as the blades only cut hair, but even a slight nick leads to death over the next few days for most victims. Once the agents have taken a seat and started having a shave or haircut, read or paraphrase the following.

Shortly after the barber begins, the floor begins to tremble, and the sound of heavy, metallic footsteps fills the shop. The double door in the corner of the room opens and reveals a massive metal golem with enormous scissors for hands. A smiling man stands beside the creature. The left half of the man's body has the appearance of a handsome human, while demonic scales and horns cover the right half of his body.

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"Well, well," the man says. "It is an honor to finally meet the heroes of the Edgewatch. Although, from what I hear, your names have been somewhat sullied recently. My name is Twisted Jack, and this golem is my bodyguard and associate, Mr. Snips. What can we do for you?"

Twisted Jack and his twin sister Sad Liza were born from a demonic and mortal union. Unlike most tieflings, each twin's demonic heritage manifests on only half their body. Although brutally ferocious in combat, Twisted Jack remains composed during conversation. He entertains discussions on a wide variety of subjects (he particularly enjoys theater and technology and happily talks about some of the latest innovations presented during the Radiant Festival), but ultimately the conversation should turn to the two topics below.

Working for Miogimo: When he learns that the characters are working for Miogimo, Twisted Jack sneers. "Miogimo. I should have guessed. That old watchman is washed up. The Bloody Barbers and Mother Venom run the show in Eastgate now."

Calling for a Meeting: To convince Twisted Jack to arrange a meeting of the five gangs, the agents must succeed at a DC 39 Diplomacy or Intimidation check (you should lower the DC to 37 or 34 if the agents do a good or excellent job roleplaying this social encounter). The results of this check are summarized below.

Critical Success: The agents thoroughly impress Twisted Jack. He agrees to call the meeting but also personally asks the agents to consider abandoning Miogimo and joining the Bloody Barbers. Before they leave, he gives them a *viper's fang* as a parting gift.

Success: Twisted Jack agrees to call the meeting.

Failure: Twisted Jack declines to call the meeting but keeps the conversation going. The characters can attempt the check again, but the DC increases by 2 each time they fail. This continues until they succeed or critically fail.

Critical Failure: The agents insult Twisted Jack, and he suddenly becomes deadly serious. Whichever character critically failed the check gets lightly nicked by the barber (and thus exposed to king's sleep poison). Twisted Jack coldly agrees to call the meeting and tells the agents to get out.

Meeting Set: Twisted Jack sets the meeting to occur in one week's time, at midnight at the House of the Planes.



Wilifred Stoneburrow

XP and Trust Award: If the agents succeed or critically succeed at the check, award each character 30 XP and the party 1 Trust Point.

THE ARGENT SYNDICATE SHAKEDOWN

Miogimo's second task requires the agents to visit the Argent Syndicate, a gang of white-collar criminals based out of the Precipice Quarter. Before Miogimo's imprisonment, the Argent Syndicate paid him a share of their profits, but now they pay their dues to the Bloody Barbers instead. Miogimo instructs the agents to travel to the new office of Wilifred Stoneburrow (who the agents previously met in the House of the Planes), collect any money she has there, and ensure that future payments to Miogimo resume. The crime lord carefully instructs

the agents to avoid violence, however. While the Argent Syndicate certainly involves itself in illegal activities, they're not a violent group and thus not worthy of physical harm in Miogimo's eyes.

After the agents collect the coin from Wilifred, Miogimo asks them to drop it in the food donation box of a local orphanage. Doing good for Eastgate is, after all, Miogimo's ultimate goal.

WILIFRED'S OFFICE

The Argent Syndicate is a shadowy organization (secretly under the control of City Planner Olansa Terimor, also known among the Twilight Four as the Gray Queen) with real estate interests all over Absalom. Following the opening of the Precipice Quarter, the Argent Syndicate assigned the task of capitalizing on the real estate rush to Wilifred Stoneburrow. Her company, Stoneburrow and Associates, purchased a small stone tower that once belonged to a wizard in the Precipice Quarter to temporarily work from during the festival. The tower's top floor is ruined and too unstable for habitation, while the middle floor holds Wilifred's living quarters. The first floor amounts to one large room with several wooden desks and shelves filled with forged documents. During the day, Wilifred and two clerks typically work on the first floor.

The Shakedown: Although a clever criminal, Wilifred isn't particularly brave, and she dislikes confrontation. When the agents arrive, she initially insists that her office is private and asks them to leave, but a character who succeeds at a DC 29 Intimidation check effectively cows her into submission. To avoid further conflict, she

gladly hands over all the wealth in the office, which amounts to 1,387 gp, and promises to provide further payments to Miogimo.

An Unexpected Visitor: Sometime during the agents' conversation with Wilifred, there's a knock on the door to the tower. Outside, Corporal **Kerr Batiste** (NE female human officer 8) and two cadets from the Edgewatch have come to investigate Wilifred's affairs. Of course, the agents are fugitives from the law at this point, which means that Kerr will attempt to arrest the agents if she spots them. No fool, Kerr can be convinced to leave and come back later only through some clever trickery and a successful DC 34 Deception check. Alternatively, the agents can find another way to escape the tower or hide somewhere while Kerr investigates. As a last resort, Kerr might entertain an exorbitant bribe of 30,000 gp (or whatever the agents can just barely pay). By this point in the campaign, Kerr and the two Edgewatch don't really pose a physical threat to the much higher-level player characters, but it's still in their best interest to avoid conflict with their former coworkers.

For more information on Kerr Batiste and Wilifred Stoneburrow, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #157: Devil at the Dreaming Palace*.

XP and Trust Award: If the agents successfully shake down Wilifred and escape Skinny Bolera's notice, award each character 30 XP and 1 Trust Point.

DELIVERY TO THE GARROTE SISTERHOOD

Miogimo asks the agents to deliver a wooden box to the leader of the Garrote Sisterhood, a woman named Alzuna. In the past, Miogimo did a brisk business with the Sisterhood, a gang of female assassins. He knows they care little for gang politics so long as contracts keep coming in, and he's counting on them to stay mostly neutral at the upcoming meeting. Members of the Garrote Sisterhood live all over Absalom, but they routinely gather at the House of the Planes—an underground speakeasy the players first explored in "Devil at the Dreaming Palace"—to socialize and conduct business, making this location the best place to find Alzuna. (Although likely unnecessary at this point, a map of the House of the Planes appears on page 24.)

Miogimo's Contract: Miogimo warns the agents not to open or tamper with the wooden box, implying it might be trapped. If the agents open it anyway, they find a silver garrote worth 100 gp inside that rests on a silk

pillow. A character who succeeds at a DC 34 Society check recalls that one can make this offering to the most skilled assassins of the Garrote Sisterhood, indicating a desire to have a high-value target killed.

In addition, an agent who succeeds at a DC 39 Perception to search the box's interior notices a note sewn inside the pillow. Though written in code, the note can be deciphered with a successful DC 36 Society or Deception check.

The note is a kill contract on Grimwold; in it, Miogimo asks Alzuna to have the agents followed because he believes that they're in contact with Grimwold. Once they lead her to Grimwold, she can assassinate him.

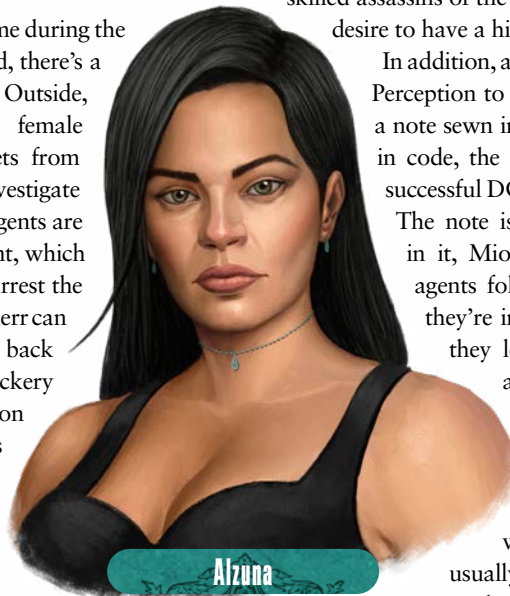
Meeting Alzuna: A quiet and imposing woman, Alzuna prefers to listen rather than talk. She constantly fiddles with a dagger while thinking and usually responds to questions with one-word answers. She has little interest

in chitchatting with her clients, so this meeting goes relatively quickly. She can be found in her usual booth in the Nirvana room at the House of the Planes, sitting with three other members of the Sisterhood. All four assassins wear a garrote necklace (two of them wear silver garrotes, indicating their status as master assassins). When she sees the wooden box, Alzuna becomes deadly serious. She accepts the box, briefly looks inside, and then thanks the agents. She tells them they can assure their patron that the task will be done and then says they can go.

Recurring Sisterhood Character: One of Alzuna's trusted companions is Cass Hamish, whom the agents might have previously met (see page 43 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #157: Devil at the Dreaming Palace*). Depending on their interactions with Cass in that adventure, you can choose to have Cass recognize the agents. Unless they made a tremendously poor impression on Cass, this roleplaying encounter should have little bearing on the agents' current mission and should simply serve as an entertaining callback. Of course, the agents' interactions with Cass and Alzuna here might have further consequences during the Shoot-out at the House of the Planes scene (page 23).

THE TAIL

Whether or not the agents discovered the hidden note in the box, Alzuna reads the contract immediately after they leave and has them followed. The Garrote Sisterhood has a dozen members that are masters at tailing targets. They typically operate in teams of three and trade off several times per day to avoid tipping off targets. Each team



Alzuna

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comes equipped with a *messenger's ring*, which they can use to summon a raven and deliver messages to Alzuna (which typically takes about 5 minutes).

If any agent specifically announces that they keep an eye out for tails, allow them to make a DC 34 Perception or Deception check. On a success, the agent notices the tail. If they don't watch out for tails, assume the characters maintain their normal levels of vigilance. In this case, secretly roll a DC 36 Perception check for each agent. If more than half the group succeeds, they collectively notice they're being followed. Make this check at least once per day that they're followed; you can make it more often if you feel the agents are being especially careful. This tailing continues until the agents reconnoiter with Grimwold (see The Assassination below). If the agents know they're being tailed, they can shake their pursuers for 1d4 hours by succeeding at a DC 36 Survival check.

If detected, the three assassins attempt to flee; they fight if threatened (in this case, use the goon stat block on page 21). While tailing marks, the assassins disguise themselves as normal citizens, and if confronted, they refuse to say who they work for. Only a successful DC 35 Intimidation check loosens their tongues.

Confronting Alzuna: If the agents learn of the tails and confront Alzuna, she confesses that Miogimo has hired her to assassinate Grimwold. She has no personal stake in the matter, however, and offers to let the agents buy out the contract for 20,000 gp. If they refuse, she assures the agents that the Sisterhood won't harm them but also orders her gang to continue tailing the agents until they meet with Grimwold.

XP Award: If the agents spot the tail, award each character 30 XP.

THE ASSASSINATION

At some point after the agents set the meeting at the Straight Edge and delivered the package to Alzuna, Kapral uses a *sending* spell to contact the agents: "Grimwold wants to meet. Noon. The north side of Evergreen Park. Be there."

When the agents arrive, they find Grimwold disguised as a baker sitting on a bench near the edge of the park and feeding bread to pigeons. He asks for a full report of what they've learned and expresses particular interest in the scheduled meeting of the five gangs. Since Miogimo must attend with minimal protection, the meeting provides the perfect opportunity to capture the gangster.

If the agents fail to discover and lose their tails from the Garrote Sisterhood before this rendezvous, Alzuna arrives on the scene to assassinate Grimwold during the middle of his conversation with the agents. The assassins tailing the agents send a message to Alzuna using their *messenger's rings*, telling her of Grimwold's location. A

few minutes later, Alzuna and her personal wizard *teleport* on top of a building a few minutes away from Evergreen Park (the wizard has hundreds of such spots memorized all across Absalom). The wizard casts *invisibility* on Alzuna and then walks back to the House of the Planes. Under the cover of *invisibility*, Alzuna positions herself on a rooftop with a view of Grimwold, uses her Vorpai Garrote ability to behead him, and then Strides off the back of the building into the alley below. Next round, she drinks an *invisibility potion* and disappears into the streets of Eastgate. Unless the agents have remained extremely vigilant and well prepared, they'll have very difficult time preventing this series of events.

If the agents manage to catch up to Alzuna, she explains that the assassination was simply business and that she has no quarrel with the agents. If they insist on fighting, she does her best to escape and surrenders if reduced to 40 Hit Points or less. In this case, Cass Hamish assumes Alzuna's responsibilities as leader of the Sisterhood and appears in her place during the Shoot-out at the House of the Planes section of this chapter. Alzuna uses the same statistic as other Garrote master assassins.

GARROTE MASTER ASSASSIN

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human assassin

Perception +30

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +32, Athletics +29, Deception +26, Stealth +32, Thievery +30

Str +5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

Items +2 *striking crossbow* with 20 bolts, +2 *striking dagger*, *garrote bolts* (4; page 77), +2 *resilient studded leather armor*

AC 38; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +31, **Will** +27

HP 300

Sidestep ➤ **Trigger** The attack roll for a Strike targeting the assassin fails or critically fails; **Effect** The assassin deftly steps out of the way of the attack. If there's another creature adjacent to the assassin and within reach of the triggering attack, the assassin redirects the attack to that adjacent creature. The attacker then rerolls the Strike's attack roll against the new target.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *dagger* +31 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d4+11 piercing

Ranged ♦ *crossbow* +30 (magical, range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ *dagger* +32 (agile, finesse, magical, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 2d4+11 piercing

Point Blank ♦ (flourish) The master assassin makes a crossbow Strike against an adjacent enemy; unlike most ranged Strikes, this Strike doesn't provoke



reactions. If successful, the attack deals an additional 4d8 precision damage.

Running Reload ♦ The master assassin Strides, Steps, or Sneaks, then Interacts to reload her crossbow.

Study Target ♦♦♦ The master assassin observes a single target she can see, allowing her to use her Vorpal Garrote during the next round.

Sneak Attack The master assassin deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Vorpal Garrote ♦♦♦ (death, incapacitation) **Requirements** The master assassin used Study Target during the previous round and must have a *garrote bolt*; **Effect** The master assassin makes a crossbow Strike against the target she previously studied. If she rolls a success on her attack roll, she gets a critical success instead. The target must attempt a DC 36 Fortitude save.

Success No additional effect.

Failure The target takes an additional 3d12 precision damage.

Critical Failure The target is decapitated and instantly dies unless it doesn't require a head to live.

Ramifications: The assassination of Grimwold doesn't really change the agents' goals. They still need to gain Miogimo's trust in order to successfully infiltrate the Black Whale. If they confront Miogimo about Grimwold's death, he assures them that the killing was a personal matter, and he hopes they have no hard feelings.

Of course, some agents might want to avenge Grimwold. In this case, Lieutenant Kapral advises them to wait until the meeting of the five gangs before they strike. If killed, Miogimo reappears near one of his followers after a few days. Even worse, he would likely gather his remaining followers, head deeper underground, and fortify himself inside his lair. Any assault at that point could cost many lives. Kapral argues that the agents should instead lull Miogimo into a false sense of complacency so that his followers don't go into hiding. If the agents continue gaining Miogimo's trust, he'll likely ask them to serve as his bodyguards at the meeting of the five gangs. The agents would then have the perfect opportunity to betray the crime lord while he's heavily outnumbered; meanwhile, Kapral can execute a simultaneous raid on of Miogimo's known followers to ensure he doesn't rejuvenate.

MOTHER VENOM'S LAIR

The powerful naga named Mother Venom is Miogimo's second-biggest rival among the district's gangs. Although she and her followers once served as his personal poison-crafters, Mother Venom grew too powerful during Miogimo's stint in prison to consider ceding control back to the crime lord. For this reason,

Miogimo asks the agents to travel to her lair in Absalom's sewers and take her down.

For Mother Venom, crime merely serves as a means to an end. In recent years, her primary goal has been to devour the life essence of the Grand Holt—a massive fig tree spanning several city blocks in Eastgate. Her minions melt tunnels beneath the tree so that she can suck at the roots like a massive leech. So far, she has uncovered only a handful of roots, but it won't be long before she can kill the entire tree, and no one knows for certain what kinds of powers the naga might gain by supping on the eons-old plant.

Dungeon Features: Although the agents can safely traverse the floor of Mother Venom's lair, the walls and ceiling continuously ooze a thin layer of slime that deals 6d6 poison damage per round to any creatures that remain in contact with it. In addition, several areas of the dungeon have slime doors. These doors pose no danger, but they're composed of incredibly dense slime (Hardness 5, HP 60, BT 30). The doors liquefy for creatures already covered in slime (such as Mother Venom and her children of venom), allowing them to freely pass through the doors without spending an Interact action. Casting *dispel magic* or applying any effect with the cold descriptor can counteract the slime (level 5, DC 25), which causes the slime to harden, crack, and fall to the floor.

A1. SEWER TUNNELS

Centuries ago, architects built new tunnels elsewhere to reroute Absalom's sewage, leaving this section of the vast sewer network stagnant and forgotten and making it an excellent place for Mother Venom's secret lair.

A2. ENTRY CAVERNS

LOW 15

The musty scent of mold and fungi permeates this broad cavern as multi-colored slime drips from the walls. Towering mushrooms at least fifteen feet tall fill most of the cavern, but a small path winds between the oversized fungi.

Creatures: The massive fungi in this room are actually carnivorous mushrooms lying in wait for intruders. Like their giant flytrap cousins, these creatures have vine-like appendages, along with an enormous toothy maw in their mushroom caps. Mother Venom's cronies have trained the mushrooms to attack any creatures they don't recognize, but the mushrooms typically wait for the intruders to reach the middle of the room before they strike. These nearly mindless fungi fight to the death.

CARNIVOROUS MUSHROOMS (6)

CREATURE 11

Elite giant flytraps (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 160)

Stealth +26

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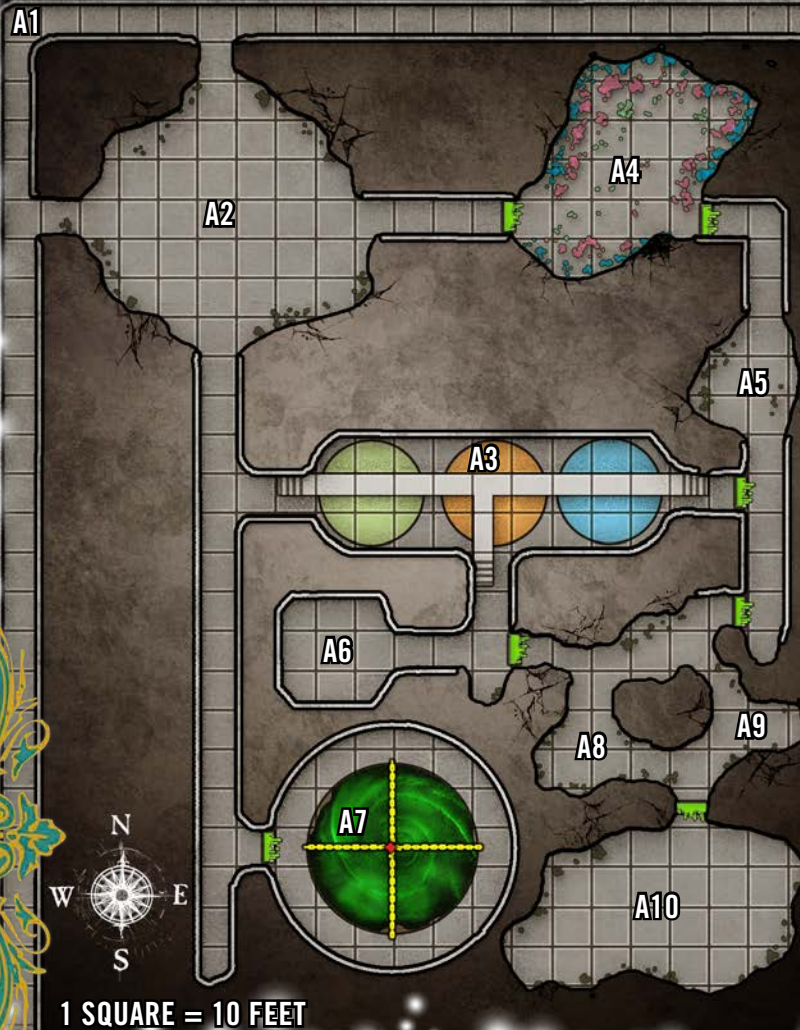
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MOTHER VENOM'S LAIR



A3. SLIME REFINERY

MODERATE 15

A heady and stinging aroma of powerful chemicals fills this long hall. Orange, blue, and green lambent light softly illuminates the area, emanating from three huge vats of bubbling slime. Each vat stands over six feet tall and appears as large as a public bath. A wooden staircase leads up to a steel catwalk which hangs from the ceiling and traverses over the slime vats.

Mother Venom stores the slime harvested from elsewhere in the dungeon here to refine and eventually sell on Absalom's black market.

The ceiling of this room is only 10 feet high, and the slime vats occupy most of the vertical space, making the catwalk a cramped affair. The catwalk is difficult terrain for Medium or larger creatures, except for

nagas, whose serpentine bodies can comfortably fit between the catwalk and the ceiling.

Hazard: The vats below the catwalk contain deadly, bubbling slime. The effects of falling into one of the three vats are described below.

Blue Slime Vat: Blue, ice-cold sludge fills this steel-walled vat. Creatures and materials that fall into the vat take 15d6 cold damage each round they remain submerged.

Green Slime Vat: Gelatinous slime fills this steel-walled vat. Organic creatures and materials that fall into the vat take 15d6 acid damage each round they remain submerged.

Orange Slime Vat: Orange goo fills this wooden vat. Mother Venom developed this corrosive slime to bore tunnels through the ground beneath Absalom. Any metal or stone items (including those worn by a creature) that fall into the vat take 2d6 acid damage per round; this damage ignores Hardness.

Creatures: Mother Venom has built a gang of loyal followers over the years by catering to Absalom's wounded and desolate. With sibilant promises, she offers to heal their wounds in exchange for eternal service. She transforms

those who accept, grafting them with loathsome slime appendages to make them whole once more. These slime goons call themselves the children of venom; four such goons currently work in this room, tending to the slime vats. When they notice intruders, they use their Suction ability to walk along the ceiling, giving them enough space to Split freely. They fight to the death.

CHILDREN OF VENOM (4)

CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID OOZE

Magically mutated human scrappers

Perception +23

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +27, Athletics +24, Stealth +27, Thievery +27

Str +5, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items +1 striking shortsword

AC 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +27, **Will** +20



HP 300; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, piercing, precision, slashing

Split When a child of venom is hit by an attack that would deal slashing or piercing damage and the child of venom has at least 20 HP, the creature splits into two identical children of venom with half the original's HP. One child of venom is in the same space as the original, and the other appears in an adjacent unoccupied space. If no adjacent space is unoccupied, they automatically push creatures and objects out of the way to fill a space.

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet; suction

Melee ♦ *shortsword* +28 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing plus 3d6 acid

Melee ♦ *pseudopod* +25 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning plus 3d6 acid and Push

Ranged ♦ *acid spit* +27 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 7d6 acid

Sneak Attack The child of venom deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Suction The child of venom can climb on ceilings and other inverted surfaces, though such surfaces are difficult terrain for them.

A4. SLIME GARDENS

A mosaic of colorful slimes, fungi, and mushrooms cover the walls of this cavern. In the center of the room, a large mound of mold rises high. A skeletal humanoid figure sits atop this mound, slumped over in a suit of moldy armor.

Mother Venom cultivates her rare slimes and molds in this room—the heart of her business. Unlike the rest of the dungeon, the fungi growing in this area aren't harmful to touch.

Treasure: The armored figure slumped in the center of the room is actually a suit of *fungus armor*, formed around the skeleton of one of Mother Venom's unfortunate rivals. Over the last several months, she has cultivated her molds to create the armor and imbue it with magic, though she hasn't yet decided what to do with her creation (see page 77 for the *fungus armor*'s details).

The rare fungi on the room's walls are worth a small fortune to the alchemists and herbalists of Absalom. An agent who succeeds at a DC 34 Nature check can harvest fungi worth 2,000 gp (or double that value on a critical success). On a failure, the agent instead ruins the fungi and harvests only 1,000 gp worth (or none at all on a critical failure).

A5. SLIME STORAGE

Treasure: Twenty steel drums of slime are stored in this room, each stamped

with a fanged skull symbol (Mother Venom's mark). Once the agents have defeated the Rumormonger and cleared their names at the end of this adventure, they can turn in the slime as evidence to the Starwatch for a bounty of 2,500 gp.

A6. BARRACKS

A single table stands in the middle of this room. Sixteen eight-foot-tall "pods" of gelatinous slime are stuck to chamber's the walls and ceiling. The pods sport thick membranes similar to those of the slime doors found in the dungeon's other areas. Metal footlockers, leather sacks, and other personal effects float inside each pod.

A total of 16 children of venom serve Mother Venom, although only eight are typically in her lair at any given

BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

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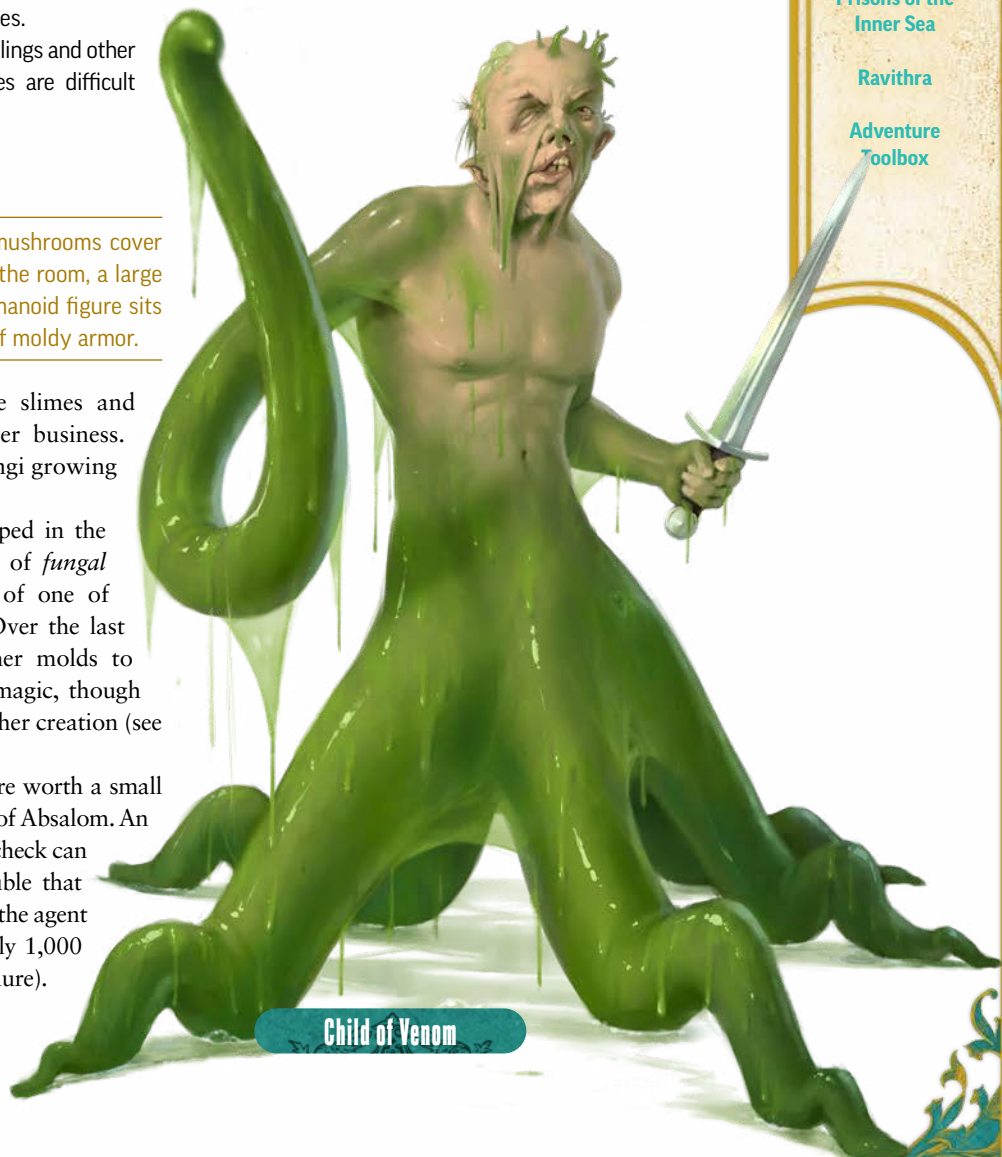
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Child of Venom

time; the rest scour the sewers of Absalom for rare slimes. The 16 unoccupied slime pods in this room serve as bunks for each child of venom. None of the slime in this room is harmful.

Treasure: Mother Venom has little love for gold or jewels, so she compensates her servants very well with such valuables. Scattered throughout the 16 pods are 1,876 gp, 4,320 sp, six small emeralds worth 300 gp each, and a *greater sea touch elixir*.

A7. THE SLIME PORTAL

EXTREME 15

A swirling, vast pool of transparent green slime occupies this high-ceilinged room's center. Floating fifty feet above the center of the whirlpool, a red gem the size of a human head throbs dully with sullen light. Four delicate gold chains fastened to floor around the whirlpool connect to the gem, the shape resembling a four-sided pyramid with the gem at its peak.

Occasional streaks of lightning illuminate the bottom of the pool, which appears impossibly deep. A huge shadowy shape seems to slowly rise from the depths of the slime.

For decades, Mother Venom has increased her knowledge of slimes and fungi by communing with her patron, a powerful terotricus called Agoltholch, Bringer of Rot. Having finally wormed her way to the roots of the Grand Holt, she leeches enough life force from the tree to create this room, which she uses to draw power directly from Agoltholch.

Whirlpool: The slime in the whirlpool isn't harmful, but the strong current pulls creatures 30 feet downward per round. A creature must succeed at a DC 36 Athletics check to Swim to resist the pull. If pulled down more than 100 feet, the creature is sucked through the bottom of the pool into an extraplanar portal that leads to a slime-filled layer of the Abyss.

Gem and Chain: The gem and four golden chains are magical foci that keep the Abyssal portal open. Although quite thin, the 60-foot-long, enchanted golden chains are sturdy as iron and pulled taut, allowing characters to climb them with a successful DC 34 Athletics check. The gem at the top of the chains appears etched with complex runes; a character can chip away or obstruct these runes, thereby deactivating the gem, with a successful DC 44 Thievery check to Disable a Device. Succeeding at this check closes the portal at the bottom

of the pool, rapidly pulling Agoltholch and all the slime in the room back to the Abyss; it also causes the golden chains and gem to suddenly stop floating, potentially causing a character holding the gem at the time to fall 150 feet to the bottom of the now-empty slime pool.

Creature: After the agents enter this room, Agoltholch spends 3 rounds slowly swimming up from the bottom of the pool. On round four, the terotricus emerges to attack. Agoltholch is still currently bound to this portal, which prevents it from leaving this room. Agoltholch is attuned to the slime of this dungeon, which lets it use its Infest Environs ability to absorb the slime in Mother Venom's lair—doing so destroys all the slime doors in the dungeon and removes the slime coating from the walls and ceiling. See the sidebar Adjusting Agoltholch on page 19 for more information on running this encounter.

AGOLTHOLCH, BRINGER OF ROT

CREATURE 19

Terotricus (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 311)

Perception +31

Treasure: After deactivating the portal, the agents can claim the gem (a massive ruby worth 6,000 gp) and four gold chains (worth 500 gp each).

A8. TUNNEL CREW

LOW 15

The perfectly smooth rock of this area's walls give the impression that the stone had just melted away to form this cavern. Six open barrels of orange slime line the southern wall.

Creatures: A group of Mother Venom's minions use the orange goo from area A3 to tunnel through the rock here, searching for more roots of the Grand Holt. When alerted, two move

forward to engage intruders in melee while the third uses an Interact action to dip their face into a slime barrel and inhale orange slime. This child of venom can then spit this slime using an acid spit Strike, dealing the normal 7d6 acid damage plus an additional 2d6 acid damage (ignoring Hardness) to one metal or stone object carried or worn by the target. After spitting, the child of venom needs to inhale more slime to do this again. If the fight seems to be going poorly, one of the minions runs to area A10 to warn Mother Venom.

CHILDREN OF VENOM (3)

CREATURE 13

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Perception +23



A9. DRAINED ROOT

The tunnel reaches a dead end and turns upward, rising to a height of 30 feet. A single withered gray root, which belongs to the Grand Holt in Absalom above, hangs down the center of the vertical space. Mother Venom's fang marks cover the root that now looks completely drained of life.

A10. MOTHER VENOM

SEVERE 15

Hundreds of thick roots hang from the ceiling of this massive cavern. In the center of the area, a large root, easily ten feet in diameter, extends from the ceiling to the floor.

Creatures: Mother Venom lies at the center of this room, her fangs lodged into the large root of the Grand Holt. A bitter and cruel creature, she has a personality as poisonous as her slime. Her face resembles an elder human's, but it rests atop a serpentine body with red and black stripes. She mocks the Edgewatch agents, chiding them for choosing to ally with Miogimo and his grand delusions. If she catches wind of the agents' attack, Mother Venom prepares for combat by casting *spell turning*, *stoneskin*, and *haste* (on both herself and the wemmuth). She opens combat with her most powerful spells—she casts *power word kill* on the first character that dares to strike her as well as *implosion*.

Mother Venom has a wemmuth minion that serves her, which she raised from a sapling with the blood of her victims. If reduced to 50 Hit Points or fewer, Mother Venom attempts to cast *dimension door* and flee. If she lives, she could potentially show up at the meeting of the five gangs to exact revenge on Miogimo.

MOTHER VENOM

CREATURE 17

UNIQUE NE LARGE ABERRATION

Female naga crime lord

Perception +33; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +29, Athletics +29, Crafting +31, Deception +33, Nature +30, Ooze Lore +31, Society +29, Stealth +31

Str +7, **Dex** +6, **Con** +9, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +8

AC 38; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +29, **Will** +28

HP 400

Speed 40 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +30 (agile), **Damage** 3d6+15 piercing plus Mother Venom poison

Melee ♦ ooze tendril +28 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+11 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ spit +31 (agile, range increment 30 feet),

Effect spit

ADJUSTING AGOLTHOLCH

Agoltholch is a deadly foe for a party of 15th-level adventurers, especially if they've already expended significant resources or if they fight in an uncoordinated fashion. If your players seem outmatched, consider having Agoltholch retreat to the Abyss after 3 rounds of combat or if reduced to fewer than 200 Hit Points. Primarily hoping for a quick snack, Agoltholch sees Mother Venom as a pawn and has little interest in engaging in a serious fight to defend her lair.

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 39, attack +30; **9th** (2 slots) *implosion*, *power word kill*; **8th** (3 slots) *horrid wilting*, *power word stun*; **7th** (3 slots) *spell turning*, *warp mind*; **6th** (3 slots) *flesh to stone*, *stoneskin*; **5th** (3 slots) *cloudkill*, *dimension door*, *wall of stone*; **4th** (3 slots) *confusion*, *gaseous form*, *speak with plants*; **3rd** (3 slots) *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *stinking cloud*; **2nd** (3 slots) *humanoid form*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*; **1st** (3 slots) *charm*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*; **Cantrips** (9th) *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *message*, *shield*, *tanglefoot*

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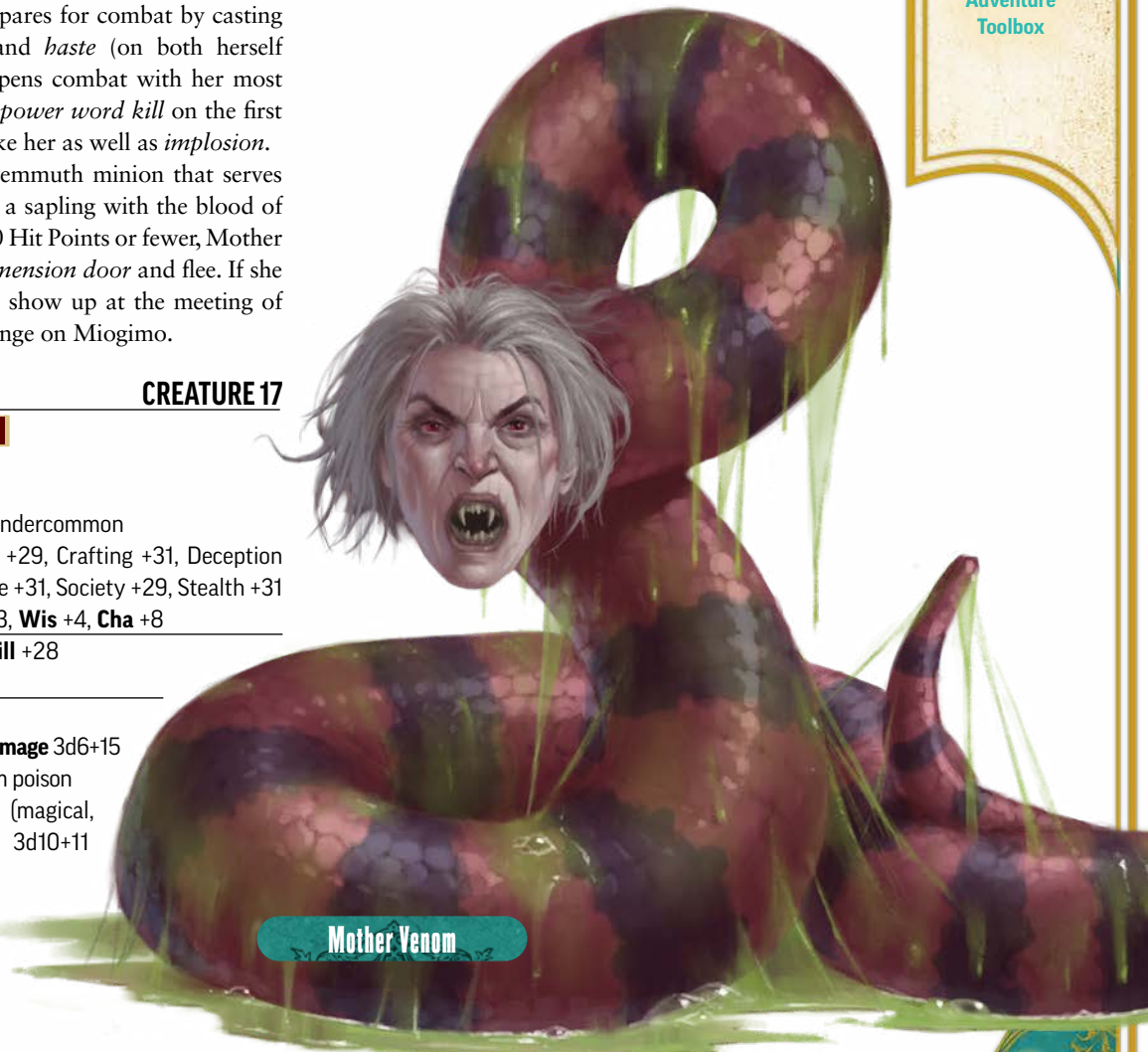
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THE STRAIGHT EDGE



Mother Venom Poison (poison) DC 38; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d6 poison damage and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 4d6 poison damage and enfeebled 3 (1 round).

Ooze Tendril Mother Venom can command her minions and the oozes that cover her dungeon to attack foes. As long as she's conscious, she can make melee ooze tendril Strikes that originate from any slime-covered terrain in her dungeon, including the dungeon's walls and doors, or from a space occupied by one of her children of venom.

Spit A creature hit by Mother Venom's spit attack is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface (Escape DC 38).

WEMMUTH

Pathfinder Bestiary 326

Initiative Perception +25

CREATURE 15

Treasure: Most of the root-filled nooks in this room hold nothing but cracked bones, but with a successful DC 34 Perception check, a character uncovers Mother Venom's hidden treasure cache, which includes a *greater corrosive rune*, a major antidote, and a major antiplague.

XP and Trust Award: If the agents apprehend Mother Venom or otherwise assure her capture, award each character 30 XP and the party 1 Trust Point.

ASSAULT ON THE STRAIGHT EDGE

The night before the meeting of the five gangs, Miogimo sends Talis to give the agents their final task: to attack the Bloody Barbers at the Straight Edge. The crime lord knows that the Barbers have too much muscle in Eastgate for him to make demands effectively, so he needs to weaken their position by eliminating the muscle. Of course, openly slaughtering members of the Bloody Barbers would trigger a full-scale gang war, which would also negatively affect his negotiations. Therefore, Miogimo suggests that the agents either disguise themselves as another gang or leave behind evidence at the shop to implicate another gang in the attack. Most importantly, Miogimo asks the agents to neutralize the faction's ringleader, Twisted Jack.

Cover Up: The Bloody Barbers are a widespread and cunning organization, so completely covering up the attack presents a difficult prospect for the Edgewatch agents. Even

if the characters quickly incapacitate all the enemies present at the Straight Edge, the Bloody Barbers can still piece together the events of the attack from eye witness accounts and clues at the scene, such as the weapons used based off injuries or the tracks the agents might leave behind. Sweeping the building of all potential clues after the assault requires a successful DC 39 Deception or Survival check. Alternatively, the agents could disguise their appearances during the attack with illusion magic or a successful DC 36 Deception check and ensure that any survivors believe a rival gang or guard precinct, such as the Post Guard, had executed the assault. In general, allow your players to be creative in their approach, potentially using other skills or resources to pull off the subterfuge.

Treasure: To help ensure their success, Talis gives the agents a gift from Miogimo: a +2 *greater striking keen dagger*. If the agents successfully cover up their attack, award the party 1 Trust Point.

B1. ENTRANCE

A pair of oversized, decorative shears hang from a striped red-and-white pole in front of this building. Four windows are set into the angled wall to the right of the building's front doors, revealing the shadowy interior of the barbershop.

At night, the front door of the Straight Edge is locked with a good lock (requiring five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to open). Characters looking through the shop's windows can clearly see a sleeping goon rests in one barber chair with his feet propped up. The goon wakes if the characters do anything overtly noisy outside.

B2. BARBERSHOP

TRIVIAL 15

The barbershop's storefront has six leather chairs placed in front of wall-mounted mirrors. A clerk's counter stands just ahead of the entrance, and a shelf behind the counter has neat arrays of cigars, shaving brushes, and creams for sale.

Creature: A Bloody Barber goon named Thom drew the short straw tonight and got assigned guard duty in this room. Although sleeping in one of the chairs with his back to the front door, Thom can use the shaving mirror on the wall to see behind him when woken. If he detects intruders, he attempts to Sneak from his chair to area B4, where he alerts his comrades.

BLOODY BARBER GOON

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human rogue

Perception +25

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +25, Deception +17, Intimidation +19, Stealth +23, Thievery +23

Str +5, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Items +1 striking club, daggers (8), +1 leather armor

AC 32; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +25, **Will** +18

HP 210

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +24 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Melee ♦ club +25 (magical), **Damage** 2d6+9 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ dagger +24 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Brutish Shove ♦ As the fighter feat (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 145); the goon ignores the two-handed weapon requirement.

Sneak Attack The goon deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Thunk 'n' Slice ♦♦ The Bloody Barber goon makes one

dagger Strike and one club Strike, ignoring the multiple attack penalty until after the second Strike. Each Strike deals an additional 1d8 slashing or piercing damage (for the dagger) or bludgeoning damage (for the club).

Hazard/Treasure: Quintin, the master barber and owner of the shop, keeps an open box of cigars, all laced with deathcap powder (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 551), under the counter. He uses these "complimentary" cigars to kill unwary targets while they receive a shave; the box contains six such cigars. The rest of the goods behind the counter are all sealed shut and of fairly low value, except for ten boxes of rare cigars imported from Rahadoum worth 100 gp per box.

B3. INTERROGATION ROOM

The Bloody Barbers use this room to torture and interrogate captured prisoners. From the outside, a poor lock keeps the door to the room padlocked shut. The room contains nothing but a single barber chair and countless dried bloodstains.

B4. COUNTING ROOM

LOW 15

At the center of the room, half a dozen chairs surround a large wooden table. The table has thousands of coins, piled and stacked by value, spread across its surface. Crude posters and bawdy drawings hang from the walls.

All of the coin gathered from the Eastgate Bloody Barbers' various criminal enterprises eventually works its way to this room, where Twisted Jack's subordinates count and organize the illicit income.

Creatures: Currently, five Bloody Barber goons stack and sort coins in this room. If not alerted to intruders, they're caught off-guard as they drink and talk quite loudly, placing bets on how the upcoming meeting between the five gangs will go down. If alerted, the thugs, emboldened by drink, rush to meet intruders head on.

BLOODY BARBER GOONS (5)

CREATURE 12

See above

Perception +25

Treasure: The coins being counted on the table total to 373 gp, 1,879 sp, and 4,389 cp—a small fraction of the income that passes through the barbershop overall. Eventually, all earnings are cashed out for platinum coins and stored in the safe in area B5. Two hail of arrows snares rest on a shelf along one of the walls.

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B5. TWISTED JACK'S OFFICE

MODERATE 15

A heavy wooden desk decorates the center of this otherwise sparse room. To the west, blood red curtains obscure the windows, and an eight-foot-tall safe stands in the northeast corner of the room. Dozens of portraits hang from the walls, each ripped down the middle so only half the picture remains.

Twisted Jack spends most of his days in this room, attending to his criminal empire. Four oil lamps keep the room dimly lit.

Creatures: At all times, Twisted Jack is accompanied by his personal bodyguard Mr. Snips, who stands in the

room's southeast corner. If alerted to intruders, Twisted Jack douses all the oil lamps and then crouches in the windowsill behind the curtains on the west side of the room. Twisted Jack orders Mr. Snips to delay attacking until he does so, hoping that the intruders' curiosity about the immobile golem draws melee combatants into the room and gives him easy access to the spellcasters at the group's rear.

Twisted Jack is wicked, but he's no fool. If the agents defeat his golem and he sees he's been plainly beat, Twisted Jack flees to the cistern (area B6) in the hopes that the agents will follow and thus have to deal with the monster down there.

MR. SNIPS

CREATURE 14

Elite variant iron golem (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 188)

Perception +23

Melee scissors +30 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+14 slashing

Dismember Whenever Mr. Snips rolls a critical hit with a scissors Strike, in addition to dealing extra damage, the golem has a chance to dismember its victim. The target must roll a DC 39 Reflex save.

Success No additional effect.

Failure The target takes 2d10 persistent bleed damage.

Critical Failure As failure, and one of the target's extremities is severed (the effects of this are up to the GM's discretion).

TWISTED JACK

CREATURE 17

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID TIEFLING

Male human tiefling gangster (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 39)

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Common

Skills Acrobatics +34, Deception +30, Intimidation +30, Stealth +31, Thievery +31

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Items daggers (16), +2 resilient studded leather, +2 greater striking war razor (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 120)

AC 41; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +33, **Will** +26

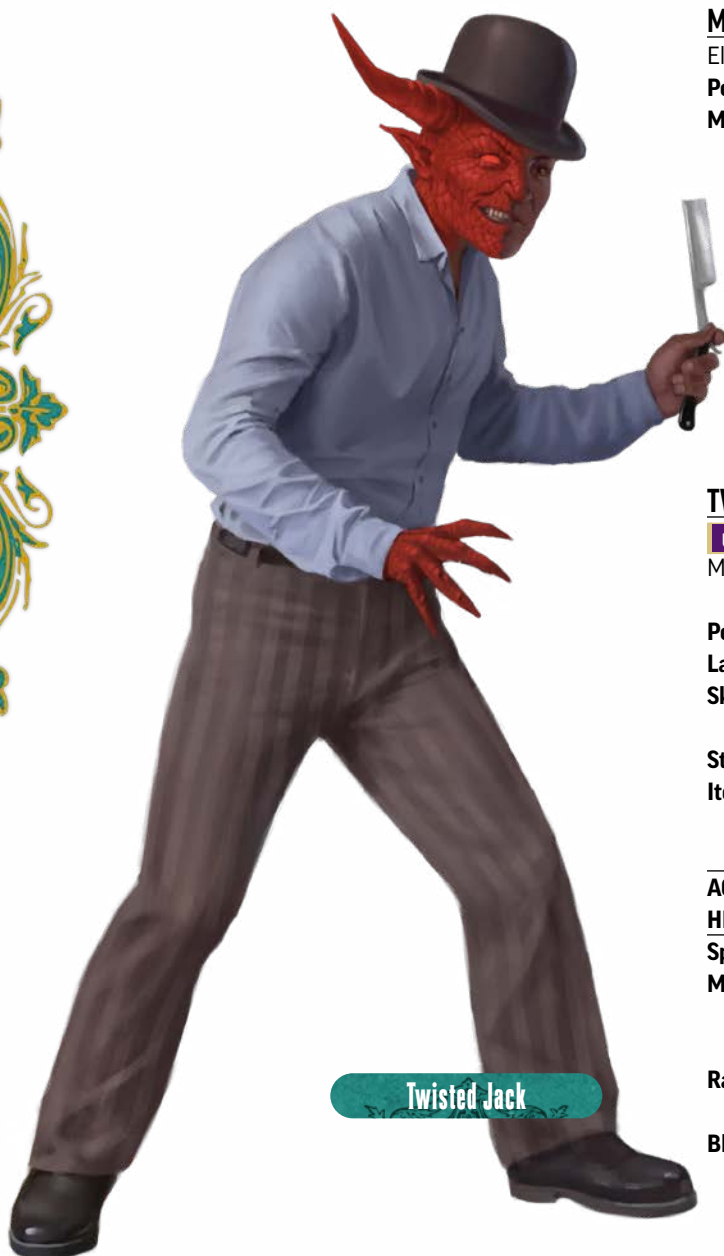
HP 240

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ war razor +33 (agile, backstabber, deadly 2d8, finesse), **Damage** 3d4+11 slashing plus 2d10 persistent bleed

Ranged ♦ dagger +31 (agile, finesse, thrown 20 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+11 piercing

Bloody Mayhem ♦♦ Twisted Jack Strides three times. Once per Stride, he can attempt a war razor Strike against a creature in his reach at any point during the Stride; he must make each Strike against a different creature, but





he doesn't apply his multiple attack penalty until after making all his Strikes. If any of the Strikes are a critical failure, Bloody Mayhem immediately ends.

Close Cutter Whenever Twisted Jack deals slashing damage, the target takes an additional 2d10 persistent bleed damage.

Fan of Daggers ♦♦ Twisted Jack makes three ranged dagger Strikes, each against a separate target; he ignores the multiple attack penalty until after making all three Strikes. On a critical hit, the target takes 2d10 persistent bleed damage and is blinded for 1 round.

Knife Thrower Twisted Jack's ranged dagger Strikes have a range increment of 20 feet instead of 10 feet.

Sneak Attack Twisted Jack deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed targets.

Treasure: The safe in the corner of the room is locked with a superior lock; it contains 376 pp and a *moonstone crystal ball*, which the Bloody Barbers use to spy on their foes.

B6. THE CISTERN

MODERATE 15

This chamber is a massive stone cylinder with a domed roof. A wide set of stairs wind around the cylinder's outer edge, down into darkness. A large pit occupies the center of the room.

The Bloody Barbers use this room, one of dozens that provide entrance to the Undercity, to move large amounts of illicit goods (or large monsters) without attracting the notice of the authorities. Years ago, the Barbers bought out this derelict water cistern, drained it, and dug a tunnel. The stairs wind downward for roughly 200 feet before ending at a natural cavern several hundred feet wide.

Creature: A powerful undead called a warsworn dwells in this cavern. Unlike the warsworns born on typical fields of battle, this abomination manifested from the countless brutal gang battles on Absalom's streets. Over the years, the Bloody Butchers have gained a small measure of control over it (and a handful of similar creatures) through offerings of violence. This particular warsworn serves as a guardian to prevent creatures from the Undercity from reaching the surface. In return, the Barbers regularly throw victims down the pit to the beast. At your discretion, the agents might recognize the faces or regalia of some minor gangsters they encountered earlier in the campaign, such as the Washboard Dogs or Diobel Sweepers from "All or Nothing."

If the warsworn detects light or noise at the top of the cistern stairwell, it begins slithering upward, expecting a meal. It can compress its considerable bulk into a wormlike shape, allowing it to ooze up the stairs.

ELITE WARSWORN

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 323

Perception +29

Treasure: The cavern at the bottom of the stairs mainly contains bones and rotting corpses. A relatively fresh corpse in purple robes (an unlucky Undercity explorer) holds a *wand of slaying* (7th level).

XP Award: If the agents successfully dispatch Twisted Jack, award each character 30 XP.

SHOOT-OUT AT THE HOUSE OF THE PLANES

With all preparations finished, the Edgewatch agents can finally escort Miogimo to the House of the Planes for the meeting of the five gangs. If everything went according to Miogimo's plan, by this point the agents have intimidated payments from the Argent Syndicate, eliminated Grimwold (inadvertently) through the Garrote Sisterhood, defeated Mother Venom, and shaken loose the Bloody Barbers' foothold in the Eastgate district. All seems ready for Miogimo to demand submission from the other gangs, but even a mastermind like Miogimo can't predict everything.

THE HOUSE OF THE PLANES

The following brief area descriptions correspond to the map on page 24. More detailed descriptions of each of these rooms can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #157: *Devil at the Dreaming Palace*.

Terrain Features: The ceilings throughout the House of the Planes are 10 feet high. Each of the secret doors shown on the map can be discovered with a successful DC 39 Perception check.

Security: In preparation for the meeting of the five gangs, Jeremin Hoff, the owner of the House of the Planes, hired a wizard to cast a powerful antimagic ritual to prevent all teleportation magic within the speakeasy. The ritual also grants all creatures in the building the benefits of a *see invisibility* spell. The ritual lasts for 3 hours.

C1. This spiraled steel staircase descends from a nondescript cellar in Eastgate and serves as the only public entrance to the club.

C2. This large room is a sitting lounge and restaurant, where patrons eat and drink while not indulging in the club's planar-themed attractions. A bar against the west wall is fully stocked with all manner of spirits.

C3. Stairs lead up to a 10-foot-tall platform with a throne set atop it. During normal club hours, a woman wearing a Pharasma outfit sits atop the throne to "judge" guests.

C4. This is the Axis-themed room.

C5. This is the Maelstrom-themed room.

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HOUSE OF THE PLANES

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

- C6.** This is the Abaddon-themed room.
- C7.** This is the Abyss-themed room.
- C8.** This is the Hell-themed room.
- C9.** This is the Elysium-themed room.
- C10.** This is the Heaven-themed room.
- C11.** This is the Nirvana-themed room.

C12. This area is used for storing foodstuffs and ale. The walled-off door opens to a staircase that leads into Eastgate's Undercity; the agents used this entrance to visit the House of the Planes during "Devil at the Dreaming Palace." Since that time, Jeremin Hoff has rediscovered the forgotten entrance and sealed it off with thick bricks (Hardness 15, HP 60, BT 30).

C13. These are the kitchens of the House of the Planes. Although this room doesn't have any formal exits, the massive fireplace on the west wall of the room does have a chimney. Small creatures can squeeze into the chimney and use the Climb action (Athletics DC 20) to eventually escape to the rooftops of Eastgate 100 feet above. Medium creatures must use the Squeeze action (Acrobatics DC 29) to shimmy up the chimney.

C14. A spiral staircase in this room leads up to a secret door that opens into a back alley of Eastgate.

The staff of the House of the Planes often use this stairwell to come and go. A second secret door halfway down the stairwell opens into the personal quarters of Jeremin Hoff and several key employees (not shown on the map).

ARRIVAL

Miogimo gives the Edgewatch agents directions and tells them to meet him at the entrance to the House of the Planes at midnight, the time set for the meeting to begin. On the streets above the club, Miogimo asks the agents to protect him during the meeting, promising that he'll tell them about how he escaped the Black Whale afterward. He then beckons for them to follow him below ground.

The other meeting representatives have already arrived and are described below. The club has closed for the evening, so no other patrons are present. A 20-foot-long table crafted from a single piece of fine dark lumber has been placed at the center of the room for the meeting.

Jeremin Hoff: The owner of the club has agreed to oversee the meeting and has arranged security (see above). He's currently lounging atop the throne of Pharasma in the center of the main room. Six goon



bouncers are gathered around him, watching the room for trouble.

The Argent Syndicate: Wilifred and four goon bodyguards sit at one end of the table.

The Garrote Sisterhood: Alzuna and her three best assassins are in attendance as well. All four use garrote master assassin statistics.

The Bloody Barbers: Sad Liza, Twisted Jack's twin sister, represents the Bloody Barbers at the meeting along with five goons. The left half of Sad Liza's body has the appearance of a red-scaled demon with the demon half of her face warped into a permanent frown.

Read or paraphrase the following once the agents are ready for the meeting to begin.

The huge main room of the House of the Planes looks packed with all the gang leaders and their posses present. The atmosphere of the club is one of dour sobriety—the meeting's attendees so quiet that the slow drip of water from another room has become audible. "Well," begins Miogimo with mock cordiality as he sits at one end of the long table, "it is so nice to get old friends back together. How unfortunate that Mother Venom couldn't make our little gathering, though. What's more, my contacts tell me that the Straight Edge was attacked last night—that's some bad luck..."

With her face twisted into a snarl, Sad Liza rises to object before a sudden explosion and shouts from above drown out her words.

Unbeknownst to the gang leaders, the Starwatch has been tipped off to the meeting. Captain Asilia of Gyr has arrived with 30 of her finest officers, storming the speakeasy through area C1 to apprehend the criminals. The agents might have been the source of this tip (through Grimwold), or Kapral possibly heard of the meeting from one of her contacts in the other gangs. Either way, the meeting quickly erupts into chaos as the Starwatch storm the club.

THE SHOOT-OUT

SEVERE 15

All of the firepower present in the room could easily overwhelm the agents, but luckily the various factions hate each other equally. As the Starwatch guards charge, the criminals flip over tables, try to flee, or begin attacking, creating utter chaos and a massive free-for-all.

Escape: Since Starwatch guards fill the staircase at area C1, Miogimo shouts for the agents to find another exit and escort him there. The security measures currently in place make simply turning invisible or teleporting away impossible, so their best bet is to find another exit, such as the one located in area C14. Clever players might think to follow Jeremin Hoff, who runs into the kitchens and then makes for this exit.

Alternatively, the themed planar rooms each have secret doors for staff to come and go without walking through the restaurant, so the agents could find their way to the exit through those rooms. Although you shouldn't punish players who figure out a clever solution to escape the chaos, don't be afraid to throw obstacles in their path (such as explosions, collapsing rubble, or surprise reinforcements) to slow their progress and keep this sequence of events tense.

Events: Depending on how the agents react to the Starwatch raid, this encounter can unfold in many different ways. Many of the NPCs in the room have an axe to grind, so try to tailor the combat to the story your players might find most enjoyable. A sample progression of events is provided below, but feel free to rearrange the list or include showdowns with different groups as you see fit. This raid is designed to be a shifting and chaotic battle, not a gauntlet of complete encounters, so be sure have the agents battle each group of foes for only a round or two each as they fight their way through the hall. Rather than calculate combat experience as usual, for each event the player characters successfully overcome, award each character 30 XP (to a maximum of 150 XP).

Event 1 (Sad Liza's Vengeance): If the characters failed to conceal their involvement in the assault on the Straight Edge, Sad Liza seeks vengeance. She leaps forward to attack, along with her five goon bodyguards. If the agents successfully hid their involvement, Sad Liza divides her forces instead. She and two goons leap forward to attack the Starwatch, and the remaining three goons attack Miogimo (whom she suspects had arranged this ambush).

Event 2 (Ceiling Collapse): An explosion fractures the ceiling of area C2, dropping an enormous chunk of stone into the middle of the scene. The agents take 18d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 36 basic Reflex save); on a critical failure, a character becomes pinned beneath a chunk of stone. Pinned characters are restrained until they or an ally succeeds at a DC 39 Athletics check to push aside the stone. Nearby enemies are either pushed away or buried beneath the rubble. Following the initial collapse, each round at initiative count 20, each character standing in area C2 must roll 1d6. On a roll of 1, another chunk of rubble falls on that character, and they must repeat the above saving throw. This continues for 6 rounds before the ceiling stabilizes and the collapse ends.

Event 3 (Starwatch Battle): Kapral (plus Grimwold if he still lives) and four Starwatch commandos confront the agents and Miogimo. Before the meeting, Kapral arranged for simultaneous raids on all of Miogimo's known followers. By this point, Kapral isn't thinking

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clearly and is out for blood. She wants to kill Miogimo right now, even if it's not the most tactically sound choice. She asks the agents to hand over Miogimo and attacks if they refuse, forcing them to pick a side. If they want to turn against the crime lord, now is the perfect time.

Event 4 (Monster Attack): The ground begins to rumble, and each creature in the House of the Planes must succeed a DC 34 Acrobatics or Athletics check or fall prone. A massive animated pile of corpses—a monster called a warsworn—suddenly bursts through the floor of the area where the agents are fighting, sweeping the combatants apart (or freeing Miogimo if the agents decided to surrender him). The Bloody

Barbers had this creature tunnel under the House of the Planes as a contingency plan for battle. The warsworn should appear directly in the agents' path, forcing them to either kill the undead or find another escape route. (If the agents already defeated the warsworn in area B6 of the Straight Edge, skip this event.)

Event 5 (Facing Asilia): If the Edgewatch agents are still around by this point, they must confront Asilia of Gyr. If at least half the agents successfully incriminated themselves at the beginning of the adventure, Asilia believes they're corrupt and orders their arrest. Already injured from the battle, Asilia hangs back and orders six Starwatch commandos to carry out the arrest. Alternatively, if the characters did a poor job incriminating themselves, Asilia still harbors doubts that they're actually crooked, and she says that she can look the other way while they escape—as long as they hand over Miogimo.

Creatures: The stat blocks below cover the potential creatures the agents might confront during the conflict, but they shouldn't battle them all. Asilia of Gyr doesn't directly confront the agents, so no statistics are provided for her. If the agents decide to seek her out, use the same statistics as for Grimwold. To avoid bogging down combat, just focus on choosing actions for the NPCs directly interacting with the agents, and describe the rest as background details.

GARROTE MASTER ASSASSINS (4) CREATURE 16

Page 14
Perception +30

GOONS (15) CREATURE 12

As Bloody Barber goon, page 21
Perception +25

GRIMWOLD CREATURE 14

Page 7
Perception +27

KAPRAL CREATURE 14

Page 7
Perception +28

MIOGIMO CREATURE 17

Page 89
Perception +31

STARWATCH COMMANDOS (30) CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Human veteran guard officers

Perception +24

Languages Common

Garrote Master Assassin

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Skills Athletics +21, Diplomacy +18, Intimidation +20, Legal Lore +20, Society +18, Stealth +20

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Items +1 chain shirt, +1 striking crossbow (with 20 bolts), infused greater thunderstone (3), +1 striking longsword, tinted goggles

AC 31; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +20, **Will** +19

HP 195

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +24 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ crossbow +23 (magical, range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ thunderstone +22 (range increment 30 feet, splash), **Damage** 3d4 sonic plus 3 sonic splash, deafened, and blinding blast (DC 28)

Binding Blast A commando's thunderstone is infused with special reagents to produce a blinding flash of light. In addition to the thunderstone's normal effects, creatures that fail the saving throw against the thunderstone are also dazzled for 1 round. Creatures that critically fail are blinded for 1 round. Creatures who protect their eyes, such as by wearing tinted goggles, are immune to the infused thunderstone's blinding effect.

Target Culprit ♦ The commando designates a single creature as their culprit. The commando gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek their culprit and a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks to Track their culprit. The commando's attacks deal an additional 2d8 precision damage to the culprit. This designation lasts for 24 hours or until the commando targets another creature with this ability.

SAD LIZA CREATURE 17

Female human tiefling gangster (use the statistics for Twisted Jack on page 22)

Perception +32

Items necklace of fireballs (type VI)

ELITE WARSWORN CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 323

Perception +29

SHOOT-OUT CONCLUSION

If the agents escaped with Miogimo, he stays true to

his word. He provides some or all of the gifts below, depending on how many Trust Points the party accrued throughout this chapter.

4+ Trust Points: The Edgewatch agents have fully earned Miogimo's trust. He teaches them the *unfettered mark* ritual (page 80). Additionally, he sketches them a full map of the Black Whale from memory. He has a general idea of what's on each ship, but he doesn't know the location of any secret areas or the *binding crystals*. Finally, he gifts the agents his mask (page 77). If the agents express interest in redeeming the crime lord (see the description and sidebar on page 87), you can allow them to make an attempt at this point; you should decide whether Miogimo repents based on how the agents roleplay the exchange.

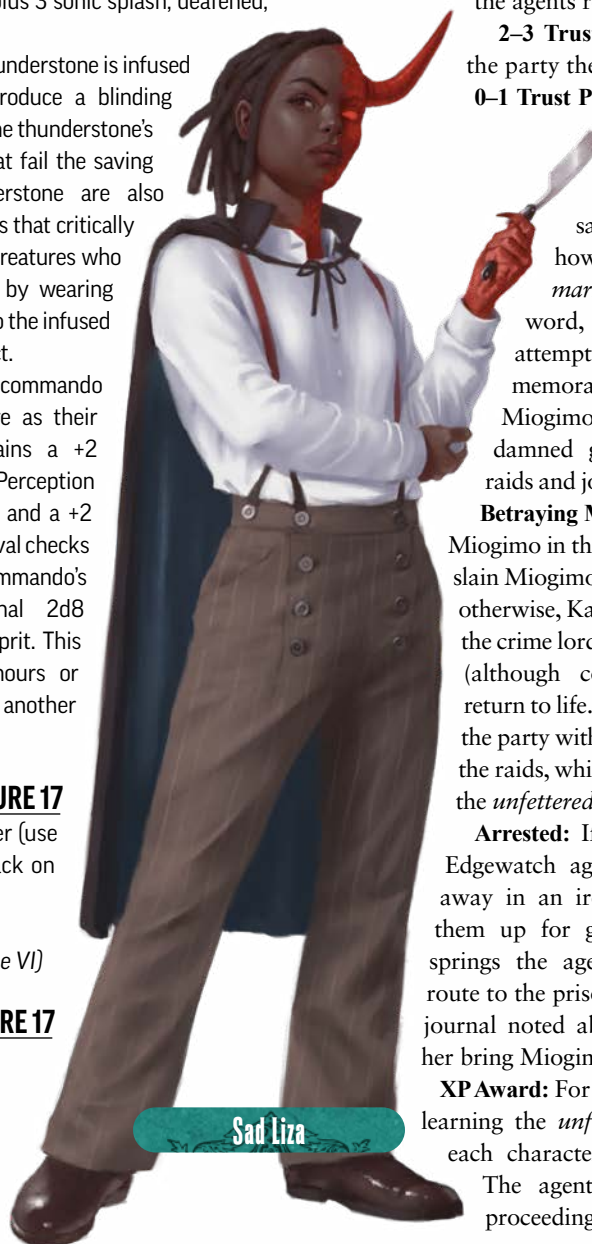
2–3 Trust Points: Miogimo teaches the party the *unfettered mark* ritual.

0–1 Trust Points: Miogimo believes the agents will never truly follow his cause. He has the agents escort him to a safer location and tells them how to perform the *unfettered mark* ritual, thus keeping his word, but then the crime lord attempts to kill them. For a more memorable final encounter with Miogimo, consider allowing two zeal-damned ghouls to survive Kapral's raids and join their master in this battle.

Betraying Miogimo: If the agents killed Miogimo in the shoot-out, they might have slain Miogimo for good. Unless you decide otherwise, Kapral's simultaneous raids on the crime lord's followers prove successful (although costly), so Miogimo can't return to life. In this case, Kapral provides the party with a journal uncovered during the raids, which describes how to perform the *unfettered mark* ritual.

Arrested: If Asilia of Gyr arrests the Edgewatch agents, she has them carted away in an iron-barred carriage to lock them up for good. In this case, Kapral springs the agents from the carriage en route to the prison. She gives them the same journal noted above as thanks for helping her bring Miogimo to justice.

XP Award: For surviving the shoot-out and learning the *unfettered mark* ritual, award each character an 80 XP story award. The agents should level up before proceeding to the next chapter.



Sad Liza



CHAPTER 2: BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

The Black Whale is a testament to both the ingenuity and utter ruthlessness of Absalom's criminal justice system. Only the most depraved and most dangerous criminals in the city—or those convicted of such crimes, at least—are sent to this extraplanar prison fleet, where most die while serving double life sentences in unthinkable conditions. Not even the murderous villains the agents have faced so far have been deemed foul enough to land themselves in the Black Whale.

Security at the Black Whale frequently changes, but for the past several years the prison warden, Lord Guirden of House Gixx, has maintained a highly effective contingent of non-human officers to enforce containment. His jailers include a band of powerful azarketi (also known as gillman) spellcasters to stand guard over prisoners, a family of fearsome luscas (page 83) to patrol the waters outside the prison, and perhaps

most effective of all, a trio of sea witches who rule a demiplane of shipwrecks called Stormholt. The witches cast a powerful enchantment on the prison, partially merging it with their home and creating a curious location that is coterminous between two planes. Creatures approaching the Black Whale can see the prison sitting in the harbor of Absalom and easily reach it, but creatures trying to leave the Black Whale can see only the storm-tossed seas of Stormholt.

Since Guirden sealed the bargain with the sea witches, conditions for prisoners have steadily declined. In secret, the sea witches are actually a coven of powerful hags, and they routinely invade the dreams of the sleeping inmates. Warden Guirden suspects this to be the case but has accepted the arrangement anyway. Even still, Guirden personally monitors the health of the prisoners and orders the witches to ease off any prisoners who seem near death, as this would create more paperwork.



The witches are even more insidious than Guirden suspects, however. Although he believes himself immune, the witches have been slowly weakening Guirden's resolve, causing him to become more and more violent toward the prisoners. Soon, Guirden's intentions will become meaningless, his weak will opening the way for the hags to take total control of the prison through him.

PRISON FEATURES

Built to house the most dangerous prisoners in Absalom, the Black Whale is a floating prison made of six ships chained to razor sharp reefs in the Flotsam Graveyard on the perimeter of Absalom's harbor. None of the ships are seaworthy anymore, hollowed out and restructured to better accommodate prison cells. The upper deck of each ship typically features a stretch of planks open to the air, along with fore and aft cabins. To better withstand the constant rains of Stormholt, the decking atop each of the cabins has been replaced over time with slate tile roofing, making climbing atop the cabins difficult (DC 40 Athletics check to avoid falling into the water). For this reason, the top deck above each cabin isn't shown on the map on page 34.

The prison has 12 areas for holding prisoners, called holds, numbered I through XII. Within each ship are three key rings, each of which opens all the manacles and doors on that ship. Assume at least one guard group on each ship has one of these key rings.

STORMHOLT

In addition to floating in the waters of Absalom's harbor, the Black Whale is also magically attuned to the realm of Stormholt, a demiplane that the sea witch Myrna Rath created so that she could feast on the nightmares of half-drowned sailors. Under normal circumstances, the only way to reach Stormholt is aboard a sinking ship near the Isle of Kortos, which the hungry demiplane occasionally pulls below the waves and into Myrna's domain. The demiplane appears as an ocean filled with floating shipwrecks that stretch to the horizon in every direction.

Characters looking out to sea from the Black Whale see only the storm-tossed waters and the rainy skies of Stormholt. Creatures attempting to swim, sail, or fly away from the prison make no progress and merely swim or fly in place. Teleportation magic is possible, but only within the confines of the prison (teleporting from one ship to another, for example). Spells or abilities attempting to teleport off the prison ships automatically fail.

The prison guards are typically granted shore leave only once every few weeks. On these occasions (or whenever Warden Guirden wishes to go ashore), Myrna Rath emerges from her cabin and casts a ritual on one of the prison rowboats, covering it with glowing blue runes that allow it to leave Stormholt and return to Absalom. If Myrna Rath is slain, Stormholt and the Black Whale gradually separate back to their own respective planes over the course of several weeks.

CELL HOLDS

The most dangerous prisoners in the Black Whale are kept in the cell holds. These areas consist of a central room surrounded by individual cells built to conform to the inside of the ship. In recent years, Warden Guirden has kept the prison guards busy by having them continuously demolish and rebuild individual cells inside the ships, creating a mishmash of winding rooms. As a result, cell size varies considerably, with the least-liked prisoners kept in the smallest, cruellest cells. Each cell has an iron door with a viewing

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The agents sneak into the Black Whale, a fleet of six moored ships that have been transformed into a labyrinthine waterborne prison complex. Within, they'll need to disable three relics called *binding crystals* in order to disable the magical barrier that prevents Wynsal Starborn from leaving. Once they've rescued the wrongly imprisoned acting primarch, the agents must break out of the Black Whale—fighting off some of its wicked inhabitants in the process—in order to escape back into the city.

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

Although the agents can't rightly seize just any government-owned items from the Black Whale if they ever hope to get their badges back, they can reasonably requisition useful weapons and other combat gear in the pursuit of justice with a clean conscience. Players can also seize the illicit goods of the Black Whale's evil inhabitants, which they can sell to Miogimo or hold onto until the end of this adventure to turn in to the Starwatch as bounty.

At your discretion and if you think the agents would enjoy receiving more treasure, consider giving your players the opportunity to roleplay and convince key NPCs (such as the Hellknight Calennia or the aquamancer Clarity) to offer their own magic items to the agents in pursuit of their mission.

- +3 *greater striking speed handwraps of mighty blows*
- *cauldron of nightmares* (page 78)
- *greater cloak of the bat*
- *greater sea touch elixirs* (3)
- *heartstone*
- *inexplicable apparatus*
- *major bottled lightning*
- *major healing potion*
- *major thunderstone*
- *nightmare cudgels* (4; page 78)
- *plate armor of the deep*
- *robe of eyes*
- *storm arrows* (20)

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window near the top and a good lock. Prisoners with magical abilities are usually kept inside *binding circles* (see area **H5** on page 42), which nullifies some or all of their powers. Unless otherwise noted, assume prisoners occupy roughly half the cells in each cell hold.

GALLEY HOLDS

Housing the more mundane prisoners, these holds span across the entire deck of a ship and are filled with rowing benches. Prisoners are chained to the benches with manacles, typically with enough room to stand and stretch, but little more. Unless noted otherwise, assume each galley hold contains 30 to 40 chained prisoners.

WALKWAYS AND REEFS

Sturdy plank bridges connect the ships of the Black Whale. The rough weather makes the bridges slick, so thick rope railings run next to each bridge. Similarly, on the lowest level of the prison, several of the ships are connected by coral reef walkways an inch or two below the surface of the water, with metal poles and ropes driven into them to provide a railing.

PRISONERS

Rather than list all the prisoners in each cell, a selection of prisoners are identified below. As the agents explore the Black Whale, scatter one or two of these prisoners (or your own additions) in each of the holds they pass through. Most of the prisoners on the Black Whale have strong political connections they could leverage to escape from an ordinary prison, or they're extraordinarily dangerous. The highest-security prisoners are held within *binding circles*. Information on how these *binding circles* function is provided in area **H5**.

Amata: The Chelaxian tiefling **Amata** (LE female tiefling human militant 11; *Advanced Player's Guide* 39) descended from a powerful phistophilus devil named Ozzonoth. Amata and her three compatriots (named Sympia, Trancius, and Verres) led the religious riots of the Devil's Night, during which displaced Chelaxian nobles tried to burn down the temple of Asmodeus in Absalom. The four have languished in the Black Whale for decades now. Ozzonoth, however, has promised to free Amata and her companions from the prison and whisk them away to Hell, where Amata will enjoy a position of prominence. All Amata has to do is convince her other three companions to sign on to the deal. They, of course,

have no desire to resign their souls to Hell, so Amata begs the agents to convince them for her, promising wealth and power in exchange.



Atla the Runecaster

Atla the Runecaster: Miogimo befriended the spellcaster **Atla** (NG female human runemaster 14) to ultimately escape the Black Whale. Atla has a bag of bones with letters scratched into them, which she casts to the floor to spell out a single word at a time. She's unable to speak and casts the bones in place of using verbal spell components. Quite friendly, Atla has no desire to escape and is treated well by the guards, to whom she occasionally gives tattoos. She has mastered a form of magic unique to her homeland of Varisia that enables her to blend magical runes with tattoos. If befriended, she could tattoo one agent with a silver tattoo that functions like a *dispelling sliver*

talisman, treating any weapon the character wields as if the talisman was affixed to that weapon.

The Forgotten One: Once one of the most respected sword fighters in Absalom, **Marato Alonso** (CG male human fencer 16) won more than 25 bouts in the Irorium in his youth, earning himself a coveted gold sword pin. His meteoric rise was cut short when he began a romantic affair with a married woman from the Damaq noble family. Her husband soon learned of the tryst, and he had Marato bound within a suit of armor called a *forgotten shell* and then imprisoned in the Black Whale. Details on this unwholesome magic item can be found in the Adventure Toolbox on page 78.

Marato was imprisoned years ago and, due to the properties of the magic armor, few now remember him. His gold sword pin, however, was welded to the outside of his iron suit as a mockery of his accomplishments, but it's also a clue to his past. If released, he could be a staunch ally to the agents. Marato refuses to talk about his past lover (whose fate is left up to GM's discretion), but if freed, he might eventually seek vengeance on her husband.

Mimmurath: Mimmurath (LE male ancient blue dragon; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 108) is held inside a special *binding circle* that keeps him in humanoid form, concealing his draconic nature. He appears to be a regal middle-aged man with a black goatee. Before he was imprisoned, Mimmurath had continent-spanning plots and grand designs against Absalom. Deemed too valuable to kill, Primarch Gyr had Mimmurath brought here years ago and would occasionally visit the bored dragon for advice and insights on political maneuvering.



Mimnurath has a dim view of the agents' chances of navigating the prison and doesn't even ask them to release him, assuming they will soon perish. Instead, he asks for every bit of political knowledge and gossip they can supply, hoping to catch up on recent events after his years of neglect since Primarch Gyr's sudden absence. Although quite cordial, Mimnurath is thoroughly vile and will happily kill the agents if released.

Sly Smitter: The dastardly **Sly Smitter** (NE male human scoundrel 10) was the mercenary guard of a powerful noble who was implicated in crimes against Absalom. The pair were thrown into the Black Whale, and while his former employer quickly perished, Sly flourished in the prison. The mercenary has a knack for scavenging and creating useful items, which he sells to the other prisoners. Even better, he has contacts with several guards and uses them to smuggle contraband like food and drugs into the prison. He often gambles with the prison guards and knows the location of their secret stashes in areas **G3** and **H3**.

Mouse the Cat: Mouse is a cat with all-white fur. While not a prisoner, he's the unofficial mascot of the Black Whale. He constantly roams the hallways, so the agents could spot him at any time. Mouse is particularly fond of key rings and often steals them from the guards to carry in his mouth, providing an opportunity for the agents to acquire a useful set of keys at an important moment (assuming they can catch Mouse, of course).

GUARD PATROLS AND ALARMS

In addition to the prison guards described in the rooms of the Black Whale, a patrol of six guards continuously walk the prison. They vary their routes somewhat, but they traverse all the top decks and most of the lower holds eventually. The prison is a dynamic location and the inhabitants of each room frequently move about. If you would like to throw a curveball at your players, their exploration could be interrupted by the arrival of a new prisoner, a wandering guard patrol, or even an inmate ratting out the agents to the guards.

If the prison's alarm sounds, the guards on each ship send one of their number to the top deck. Meanwhile, Warden Guiriden gathers six guards and methodically searches every inch of the prison. If the guards find the intruders, they yell up to the guard on the top deck, who alerts the other ships with a torch signal. To avoid being found out, the agents must lay low for a bit and then sneak to a place the warden has already searched.

WEATHER

Powerful storms regularly lash the Black Whale. Massive waves strike the ships on occasion, forcing creatures on

MANAGING RESOURCES

In order to rescue Wynsal Starborn, the agents must disable three *binding crystals*, which are located in areas **E3**, **F5**, and **I5**. This will require them to explore much of the prison. The text of this adventure assumes that the agents will overcome the majority of the encounters on the ships. Overcoming an encounter, however, doesn't necessarily require combat, and characters should receive the full XP reward for an encounter even if they use Stealth or Diplomacy to avoid a fight.

In fact, the best way to rescue Wynsal is to perform the entire prison break in one day, meaning that characters who try to fight every encounter are likely to fail, as their resources will be quickly depleted. Be sure to impress upon players that resource management is key to this portion of the adventure.

Resting: There are quite a few empty rooms on the Black Whale, providing ample locations for the agents to hide or regroup. These rooms are seldom empty for long stretches, however, as guards regularly patrol the prison, which makes resting for a full 8 hours an unlikely prospect. If the agents attempt to do so, their best bet is hiding on the *Talisman*, which the guards seldom patrol. Even at this location, however, the agents will have to evade at least one patrol during their rest. Alternatively, if the agents befriend Clarity in area **I2**, she might shelter them in her cabin long enough to rest. Finally, the agents always have the option to use the *unfettered mark* ritual to go back to Absalom and rest before returning to the Black Whale.

Reinforcements: Resting ends up being a double-edged sword, however. Given time, Warden Guiriden takes the following measures, increasing security each time the agents retreat from the Black Whale and return.

- For each slain or incapacitated guard, two replacements are hired.
- Wynsal (along with his *binding circle*) is moved to a different prison cell each day.
- Warden Guiriden installs a banshee's symphony trap (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 529) in area **E3** to protect the *binding crystal* there. The trap has a 30-foot radius instead of the normal 100 feet.
- The sea witches use their powers to conjure *uthuls* (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 317), which patrol the skies above the boats in groups of three.

the decks to succeed at a DC 41 Fortitude save or be swept overboard (potentially into the mouth of hungry *lusca* attracted by the storms). The winds of Stormholt are loud enough that sounds of combat don't carry from ship to ship, so agents can safely fight enemies without the noise of the battle alerting the entire prison.

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ARRIVAL AT THE PRISON

The players get to decide exactly when and how they would like to board the Black Whale. Although leaving the prison is nearly impossible without using the *unfettered mark* ritual, getting onto the Black Whale is relatively easy for a group of high-level characters.

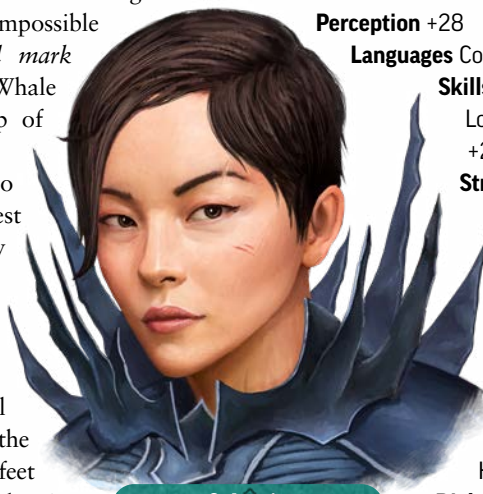
Teleportation: Teleporting to the Black Whale is the easiest and most straightforward way to reach the prison.

Over the Waters: Perhaps the most difficult way to reach the Black Whale is swimming, due to the razor-sharp coral that lies just a few feet below the surface of the water for 100 feet around the prison. A successful DC 35 Athletics check is required to Swim over the coral. On a failed check, the character takes 1d12 slashing damage.

Using magic to fly to the prison is another option, although doing so during the day will surely draw the attention of the guards both on the Black Whale and at Fort Tempest.

By Boat: Unscheduled boats approaching the Black Whale draw immediate attention and put the guards on high alert. However, official boats with newly convicted prisoners regularly arrive at the prison. Conveniently, prisoner boats are operated by a number of guards equal to the number of agents, making it possible for the agents to stage an ambush onshore, incapacitate the guards (see page 35 for stats), recover their uniforms, and then escort the prisoner to the Black Whale themselves. Upon arrival, they may have to fool their way past the warden, Lord Guiriden, who likes to greet new arrivals personally, though he avoids mingling with the prison guards and doesn't have all their faces memorized.

Creature: The prisoner in question is a Hellknight of the Order of the Scourge named Calennia, who came to Absalom in the wake of Wynsal Starborn's arrest to enact her extralegal justice on the rioters. She arrested several riot leaders, but Reginald Vancaskerkin pulled strings and had them released immediately. Taking matters into her own hands, Calennia decided to avoid Absalom's courts entirely (which to her, were obviously corrupt) and started hanging rioters herself. She was swiftly arrested and is being transferred to the Black Whale for imprisonment. If the agents free her, Calennia is happy to help them root out corruption, although her strident commands and bravado could quickly grow old, along with her penchant for ruthlessness.



Calennia

CALENNIA

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human Hellknight maralictor of the Scourge

Perception +28

Languages Common, Infernal

Skills Athletics +31, Diplomacy +28, Hell Lore +26, Intimidation +30, Legal Lore +24, Religion +25

Str +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items +1 striking heavy crossbow (with 10 bolts), +2 resilient Hellknight plate (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* 80), +2 greater striking axiomatic scourge (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* 80), tower shield (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10)

Diabolic Certitude When making a Recall Knowledge check about a devil she's observing, whenever Calennia rolls a critical failure, she gets a failure instead.

AC 39 (41 with shield raised); **Fort** +29, **Ref** +22, **Will** +25

HP 290; **Resistances** mental 6, slashing 5

Shield Block ⤴

Speed 15 feet

Melee ⬥ *scourge* +31 (agile, disarm, finesse, magical, nonlethal, sweep), **Damage** 3d4+13 slashing plus 1d6 lawful vs. chaotic creatures

Ranged ⬥ *heavy crossbow* +25 (magical, range increment 120 feet, reload 2), **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing

Flog Mercilessly ⬥ (flourish) Calennia Strikes with her *scourge*. On a hit, she rolls damage three times. This damage is combined (for the purpose of overcoming damage resistance, for example).

Terrible Justice ⬥ (divine) **Trigger** A living creature within 30 feet is reduced to 0 Hit Points; **Effect** Calennia targets the creature with a *death knell* spell (DC 34). If the target dies, all of Calennia's enemies within 60 feet are targeted by a *fear* spell (DC 34). A creature that succeeds at either save is temporarily immune to this ability for 24 hours.

THE SCORCHING MARIE

For most prisoners, the first ship they see is the *Scorching Marie* lashed to the northeast corner of the reefs. This galley sank many years before it was requisitioned for the Black Whale, so much of it is covered with barnacles.

D1. THE TOW LINE

A large capstan is set onto the front deck of this ship. A series of chains connects the device to similar capstans

on nearby ships, seemingly connecting all the ships into a single complex pulley system.

A single massive chain dangles over the front edge of the ship here and into the waters below, where it travels beneath the waves all the way to the shores near Fort Tempest. During rough seas, the prison guards use this pulley system to haul supply ships to the Black Whale from shore.

When expecting new prisoners or supplies, two prison guards are typically posted here, keeping watch over a dozen prisoners who turn the capstan to tow the new ship in. Unless the agents are arriving via this method, there are no guards posted here.

D2. REFLECTING POOL

MODERATE 16

A large stone reflecting pool is built in front of the ship's back cabins. The pool is quite shallow, standing only a few inches deep. Strange glowing runes seem to float through the water. Behind the pool, a door leads into the ship's rear cabin. Matching sets of stairs on the ship's starboard and port sides lead below deck.

Creature: The water in the reflecting pool is actually a water elemental vessel lying in wait. It rises to attack if the agents come within 30 feet. This alerts the guards in area **D3**, who rush out to attack as well, making this a moderate-threat encounter for 16th-level characters. Clever agents might find a way to deal with the elemental silently, making both encounters easier.

ELEMENTAL VESSEL, WATER

CREATURE 16

Page 82

Initiative Perception +28

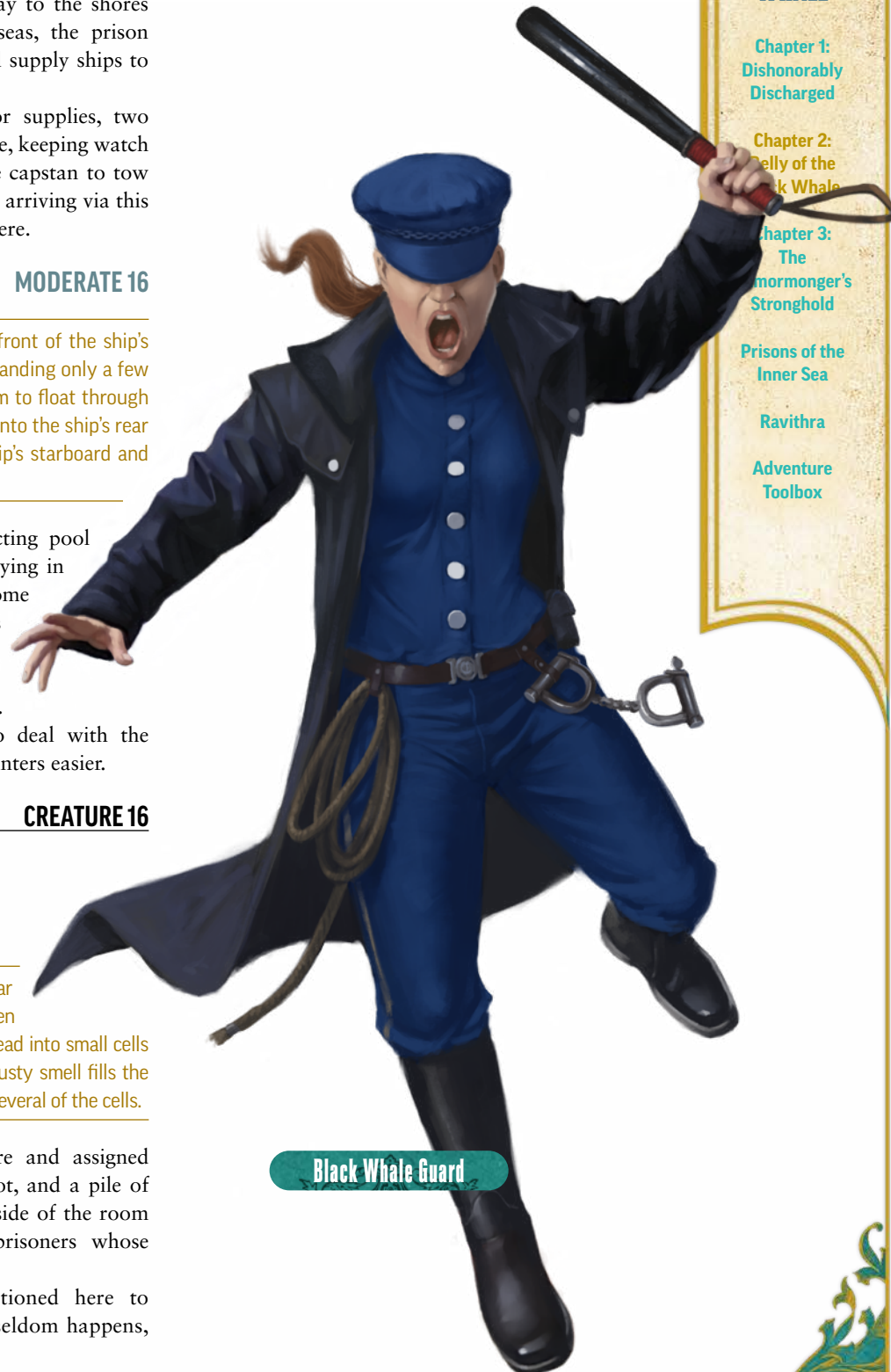
D3. PROCESSING ROOM

A steel chair with built-in manacles sits near the center of this room in front of a wooden table with four chairs. Six iron-bar doors lead into small cells around the outer edges of the room. A musty smell fills the cabin, and water drips from the ceiling in several of the cells.

New prisoners are processed here and assigned a cell. On the table lie a quill, inkpot, and a pile of papers. The six cells around the outside of the room are used to temporarily contain prisoners whose processing requires extra care.

Creatures: Four guards are stationed here to process new prisoners, though this seldom happens,

making this a desirable post. The guards pass the time by swapping crude jokes but leave their station roughly every 15 minutes to do a quick patrol around areas **D1** and **D2**.



Black Whale Guard

BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

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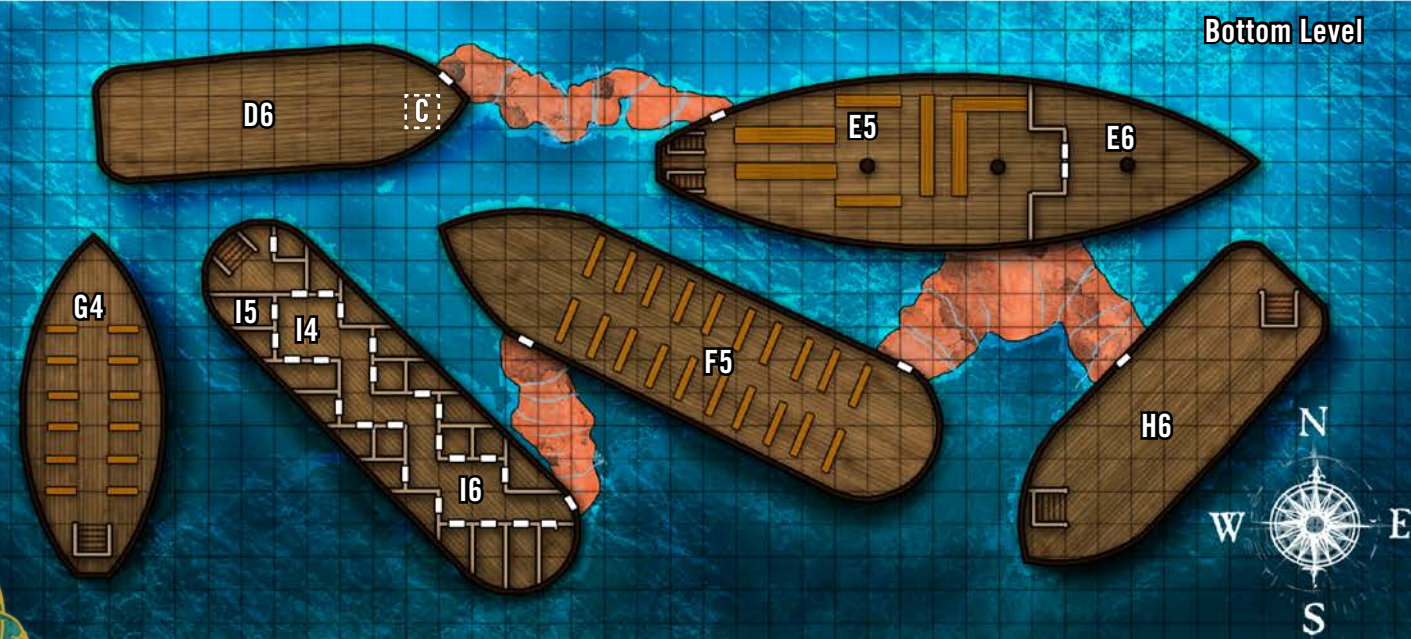
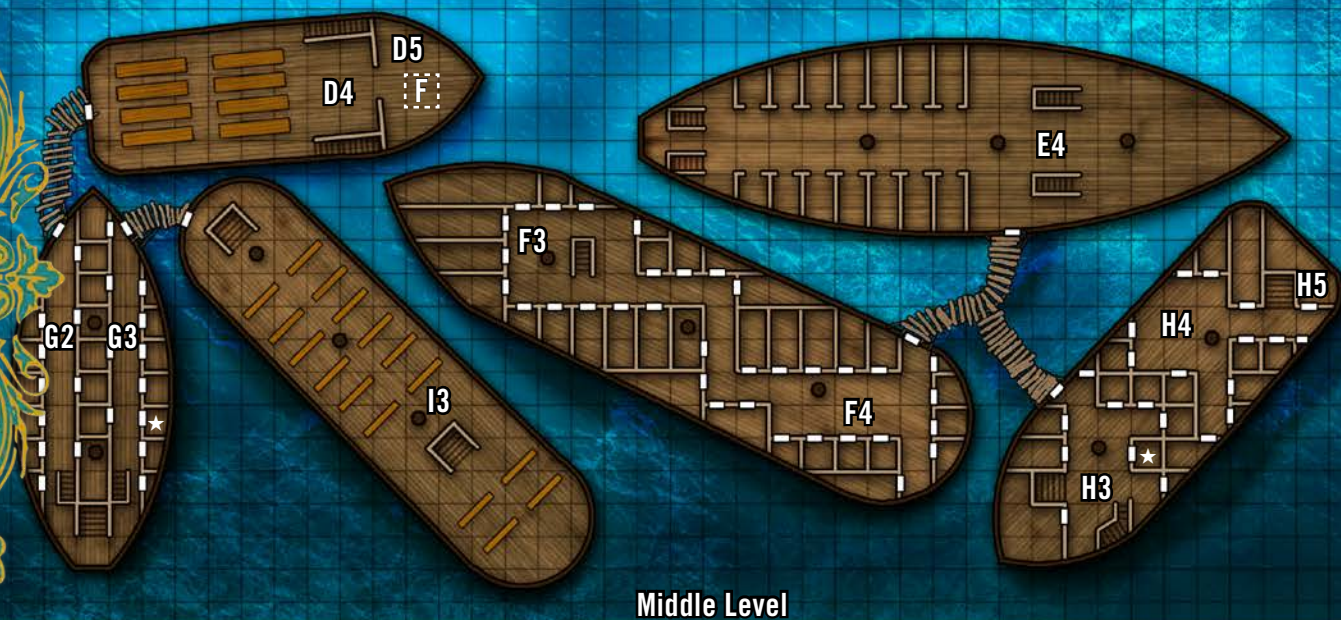
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BLACK WHALE GUARDS (4)

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Mixed gender human prison guards

Perception +23

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +23, Games Lore +17, Intimidation +24

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

Items +1 chainmail, club, *nightmare cudgel* (page 78; carried by one guard only), shortbow (with 40 arrows and 2 storm arrows)

AC 32; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 230

No Escape ➔ **Trigger** An enemy within reach of the Black Whale guard attempts to move away; **Effect** The guard Strides up to their Speed, following the enemy and keeping the enemy in reach throughout its movement until the enemy stops moving or the guard moves their full Speed.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ➤ club +24 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+11 bludgeoning

Melee ➤ *nightmare cudgel* +25 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+11 bludgeoning

Ranged shortbow +22 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Clobber ➤ The guard makes a club Strike. On a hit, if the target is flat-footed, the target must succeed at a DC 33 Fortitude save or be stunned 2.

Hammering Flurry ➤➤ The guard makes three club Strikes against a single target, ignoring the multiple attack penalty until after all three attacks are completed.

Shatter Defenses ➤ (press) **Requirements** A frightened creature is within melee reach of the Black Whale guard; **Effect** The guard makes a melee Strike against the frightened creature. If they hit and deal damage, the target becomes flat-footed as long as it's frightened. If the target is already flat-footed, it can't reduce its frightened value below 1 until the start of the guard's next turn.

Treasure: The papers contain a ledger detailing which cells are occupied and which aren't (but doesn't list who is in each cell). A character who succeeds a DC 40 Society check can decipher a hidden code in the logs, indicating that something unusual is stored in cells at areas **G3** and **H3**. (Both these cells contain secret stashes of gambling treasure.)

D4. DINING HALL

LOW 16

This hall is filled with long wooden tables, each with dozens of steel rings bolted to the floor for chaining prisoners. The aroma of fish stew wafts through the air. Stairs on the west end of the hall lead to the deck above.

From dawn until well after dusk, guards rotate prisoners through this dining area, typically in groups of 20 to 30. The stairs lead to area **D2** above.

Creatures: During the day, this room is filled with delicious smells and prisoners enjoying a brief taste of freedom from their cells. Six guards pace the edges of the room, keeping an eye on things. At night, guards frequently loiter here to keep out of the rain.

BLACK WHALE GUARDS (6)

CREATURE 12

As above.

Initiative Perception +23

Items *nightmare cudgel* (page 78; carried by one guard only)

D5. KITCHEN

A cauldron softly bubbles over a stone fire pit in the center of this kitchen. A blood-stained wooden table stands against one wall, with a meat cleaver and fish heads piled atop it. Barrels and boxes of foodstuffs are stacked against the opposite wall. A small sleeping cot rests beneath the chopping table.

A trap door in the floor of this room leads to area **D6**.

Creature: Before they acquired their lusca guardians, the Black Whale guards would routinely chum the waters around the prison to attract sharks. After several months of this, they discovered they had also attracted a hungry boggard stowaway named Breek. While they initially planned to throw her overboard, Breek's pathetic begging convinced them to spare her life. They later found out that while Breek prefers raw fish, she has excellent cooking instincts and makes great fish stew. Since then, they have allowed her to run the prison's kitchen and compensated her with room and board (a meager cot and all the fish heads she can eat).

During the day, Breek busily chops fish and makes stew, while at night she sleeps curled up on her cot. Breek has many habits that might put off Absalomians, including licking her own eyeballs and munching on raw fish heads, but she's otherwise an eager conversationalist. Having lived her whole life among fellow boggards, non-amphibious humanoids all look much the same to Breek, so at first she's likely to mistake the Edgewatch agents for new guards. She knows a great deal of secrets about the ship and, if won over, could convey any or all of the following, depending on how you want to pace this part of the adventure:

- The warden has a "powerful magic gemstone" (a binding crystal), which he has hidden somewhere in his personal quarters.
- Many guards and prisoners have been plagued by terrible nightmares. A handful of the affected

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guards are acting strangely and now spend most of their time aboard the *Riftwake*.

- A new, super-important prisoner was sent to a cell aboard the *Sable Skull* recently.
- The azarketi mercenaries aboard the *Wave* are unhappy. They don't like the sea witches and are worried about the nightmares.

BREEK

Boggard scout (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 44)

Initiative Perception +7

D6. EMPTY HOLD

The bottom hold of the *Scorching Marie* has a ceiling only 4 feet high and is filled with several inches of water. Only Breek ever comes down here while on her way to the storage rooms of the *Cutlass*. A door in the northwest corner of the ship leads outside to a coral walkway, while a trapdoor in the ceiling leads to area **D5**.

THE CUTLASS

The largest ship of the Black Whale contains the personal living quarters of the warden, along with the barracks, armory, and supply storage for the prison.

E1. ESCAPE BOATS

Eight rowboats rest on the deck of this ship. Two sets of stairs lead below deck. Toward the stern is the ship's rear cabin, which has an ornate door painted white and engraved with golden filigree. A crane, clearly designed for torturing inmates by dunking them into the sea, stands on the north edge of the ship.

This deck holds the only supply of rowboats on the Black Whale. Each of the rowboats is chained to the deck with heavy steel chains and a superior lock. The warden has the only key. The door to the rear cabin is also locked with a superior lock.

E2. WARDEN'S QUARTERS

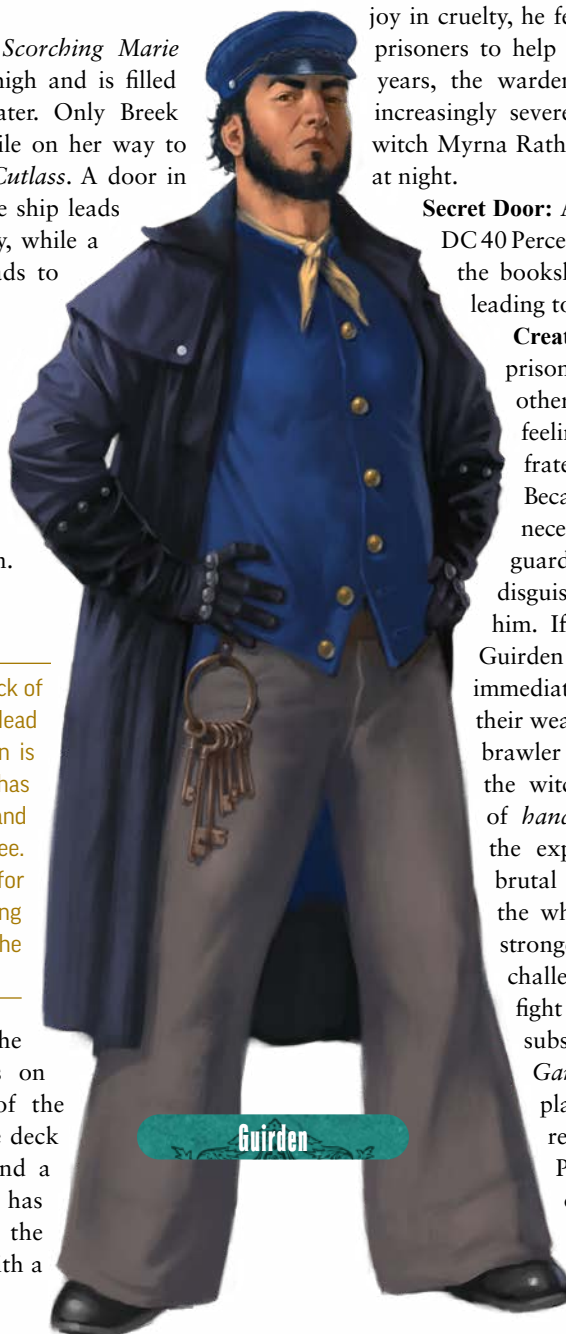
SEVERE 16

Ten red glass windows line the walls, casting these living quarters in shades of crimson light. The chamber is lavishly furnished, complete with a four-poster canopy bed, an ornate writing desk, a luxurious red floor rug, and a fully stocked wine cabinet. The back wall of the room is a large bookshelf, stretching from wall to wall.

These are the living quarters of Lord Guirden of House Gixx, the warden of the prison. Guirden is a hard man with hard features. Although he takes little joy in cruelty, he feels it's his duty to punish the prisoners to help their rehabilitation. In recent years, the warden's punishments have grown increasingly severe, influenced as he is by the witch Myrna Rath, and he no longer sleeps well at night.

Secret Door: A character who succeeds at a DC 40 Perception check while investigating the bookshelf discovers the secret door leading to area **E3**.

Creature: Guirden inspects the prison three times per day but otherwise spends his time here, feeling that it's unprofessional to fraternize with his subordinates. Because of this distance, he doesn't necessarily recognize every prison guard on sight, meaning characters disguised as prison guards could fool him. If the agents aren't disguised, Guirden places them all under arrest immediately and orders them to drop their weapons. Guirden is a formidable brawler and not afraid of combat; the witches gifted him a potent set of *handwraps of mighty blows* for the express purpose of doling out brutal discipline. If pitted against the whole party, he singles out the strongest-looking character and challenges them to a one-on-one fight (consider using the duels subsystem in the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* if the players accept this challenge). If reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points, Guirden jumps out one of the southern windows of his cabin, hoping to land on the deck of the *Riftwake* and find reinforcements.



Guirden

LORD GUIRDEN

CREATURE 19

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human prison warden

Perception +37

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +33, Athletics +36, Diplomacy +31, Intimidation +31, Legal Lore +30

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Items +3 *greater striking speed handwraps of mighty blows*

AC 41; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +34, **Will** +31

HP 450

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 30 feet

Melee ✦ fist +37 (agile, finesse, nonlethal, unarmed),

Damage 3d6+14 bludgeoning

Double Punch ✦ (flourish) Lord Guirden makes two fist Strikes, ignoring the multiple attack penalty until after both Strikes.

Hurl ✦ (flourish) **Requirements** Lord Guirden has a Medium or smaller creature grabbed; **Effect** Lord Guirden hurls the grabbed creature into a target adjacent to him. He makes a fist Strike against the adjacent target. On a success, the target and hurled creature both take 3d10+14 bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. On a failure, only the thrown creature takes the damage and is knocked prone.

Master Brawler Whenever Lord Guirden makes a fist Strike and hits, he can choose to apply either the Grab, Knockdown, or Push ability to his attack.

E3. BINDING CRYSTAL

A fist-sized crystal, as clear as glass and cut into an exquisite oval shape, floats in the center of this room. A circle of glowing purple runes is inscribed in the floor surrounding the crystal. The runes crackle with magical lightning.

After Miogimo's escape, Lord Guirden further increased security by enlisting the sea witch Myrna Rath to create *binding circles*, magical cages that entrap the most dangerous prisoners of the Black Whale. The crystal here is one of three, each of which must be deactivated in order to destroy all the *binding circles* throughout the prison (including the one trapping Wynsal Starborn). To disable the *binding crystal*, treat the crystal as a superior lock, except that in addition to Thievery, characters can also use Arcana or Occultism to Pick the Lock.

If the agents accrue three failed checks, the crystal shatters. This still disables the *binding crystal* but also results in a boom that reverberates throughout the entire *Cutlass*, deafening the agents for 1 minute and likely alerting the guards to their presence.

XP Award: Award each character 30 XP for disabling the crystal.

E4. BARRACKS

TRIVIAL 16

This level of the ship is one massive room. The front half of the room is a sitting space with several tables surrounded by chairs. The back half of the room is lined with fourteen alcoves with hammocks hanging inside. Toward the ship's bow, two sets of stairs lead to the deck above, while toward the aft two sets of stairs lead to the deck below.

Creatures: A total of 38 prison guards live on the Black Whale, and at any given time, roughly one-third of them are here sleeping. Due to previous scuffles, the warden doesn't allow off-duty guards to carry weapons, meaning that all the guards here are without arms and armor. If attacked, six guards battle the agents while the remaining six run to armory in area E6 to don their gear (making this encounter a trivial threat).

If more than half the characters succeed at a DC 30 Stealth check, they can move through the area without waking anyone.

BLACK WHALE GUARDS (12)

CREATURE 12

Page 35

Initiative Perception +23

AC 27

Melee ✦ fist +24 (agile, finesse, nonlethal, unarmed),

Damage 1d4+9 bludgeoning

Treasure: As elite warriors, the prison guards of the Black Whale are well compensated. However, the warden has harsh views on gambling. He forbids the guards from keeping significant wealth aboard the ship and routinely searches the barracks to confiscate any valuables. For this reason, the guards keep very little treasure in the barracks and instead have stashed their winnings in two "banks" hidden in empty prison cells in areas G3 and H3. With boredom an ever-present danger, the guards keep complicated ledgers detailing who has accrued what winnings. Characters who succeed at a DC 40 Society check uncover enough clues in this room to decipher the location of one guard stash (or both stashes on a critical success).

One sleeping guard, named Macdett, is the armor master of the ship. He wears a key to the armory (E6) on a string around his neck.

E5. STORAGE HOLD

Sturdy shelves fill this room, each stuffed with sacks of food or barrels of ale. A door in the ship's hull leads to the northwest.

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This is the storage hold for the prison, which contains rations including pickled vegetables, hardtack, and ale.

E6. ARMORY

The walls of this room are lined with shelves, weapon racks, and armor stands. Three large footlockers sit in the east corner of the room. Near the center of the room, a beautiful set of full plate armor engraved with waves and fish hangs on an armor stand.

The double doors leading into this room are locked with a superior lock. Only Lord Guirden (area E2) and Macdett (E4) have keys to the armory. The room itself holds all the arms and armor not currently in use for the entire prison.

Treasure: Scattered throughout the room are 15 chain shirts, 20 steel shields, 20 clubs, 20 shortswords, and 20 shortbows. The suit of full plate in the center of the room is Lord Guirden's personal armor, a suit of *plate armor of the deep*, which he wears while on patrol. The footlockers contain quivers of arrows (1,000 arrows in all), in addition to 12 *storm arrows*.

THE RIFTWAKE

Myrna Rath and her two sea hag companions, Graem and Grinlowe, lair on this ship made of black timber. Although it has been renovated for the Black Whale, the *Riftwake* was once a formidable war vessel. The nightmare energies gathered by the three hags occasionally manifest as ghostly apparitions on this boat, creating moving faces in the walls or bloody footprints that disappear into thin air.

F1. TOP DECK

The timber of this ship is black in hue. A capstan sits on the prow, and stairs nearby lead below deck. Three large masts are spaced evenly down the middle of the ship, stopping just in front of a double door that leads into the rear cabin. An eerie blue light emanates from the windows of the cabin.

The capstan on the front of the ship is connected to the same pulley system as that of area D1, allowing prisoners on this ship to assist with hauling cargo if necessary.

F2. WITCHES' CABIN

Shelves line the walls of this room, each filled with a bewildering array of knickknacks, preserved creature parts, and strange devices. A large cauldron, big enough to hold several humans, rests in the middle of the room. The cauldron

emits a baleful blue glow, and a mass of ghostly nightmarish images swirl across the sludgy concoction within. Three cots rest along the back wall of the room.

Although they aren't here now, the hags have claimed this cabin as their lair where they bicker over magic lore, brew potions, and craft their cunning plans.

Treasure: The shelves of the room are filled with a lifetime of bargained gifts collected by the sea witches Graem and Grinlowe. They include the sorrows of an Absalomian widower bound in a seashell (worth 1,000 gp), bottled moonlight (worth 1,500 gp), a quill owned by a man who never told a lie (worth 500 gp), an ancient alicorn dagger (worth 1,000 gp), the wooden heart of the last arboreal of a forest (worth 1,500 gp), and the eyes of a ghost (worth 1,250 gp). These items can be sold to spellcasters in Absalom or used as crafting components for relevant magic items at your discretion. Additionally, a book on the shelf includes many recipes for cooking different kinds of humanoids. The cauldron in the center of the room is a *cauldron of nightmares*, described in the Adventure Toolbox (page 78). It currently has the nightmares of six prison guards stored within.

F3. CELL HOLD I

LOW 16

This area has a central room surrounded by over a dozen prison cell doors. A ship mast runs through the middle of the hall, and nearby is a set of stairs leading to the deck above. The hall winds its way further into the ship toward the stern. A small table sits next to the stairs.

This area has the typical features of a cell hold, as described under Prison Features on page 29.

Creatures: A group of six prison guards sits in silence around the table in the center room. They all have a haggard appearance. Myrna Rath found these guards particularly susceptible to her powers and has broken each of them to her will. They now serve her directly, performing their duties during the day and spending nearly all their remaining time aboard the *Riftwake*. Apart from the Nightmare Assault ability, they have the same statistics as normal Black Whale guards.

BLACK WHALE GUARDS (6)

CREATURE 12

Page 35

Initiative Perception +23

Items *nightmare cudgel* (page 78; carried by one guard only)

Nightmare Assault ♦♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The prison guard makes a club Strike. On a hit, the target must attempt a DC 36 Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and becomes immune to this ability for 24 hours.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is plagued by nightmarish visions and becomes fatigued.

Critical Failure The target becomes fatigued and is drained 2 until no longer fatigued.

F4. CELL HOLD II

This area has the typical features of a cell hold (see Prison Features on page 29).

F5. GALLEY HOLD III

SEVERE 16

This entire deck is filled with rowing benches lined with chains and manacles. A foot of saltwater covers the deck floor. Near the ship's bow, a fist-sized crystal floats in the air, surrounded by a circle of glowing purple runes. Two doors are set into the sides of the ship, one near the bow and one near the stern.

The three hags spend much of their time in this area because it's difficult to access and plenty wet, so they're rarely disturbed. They have hidden one of the *binding crystals* here to keep under their protection. It's identical to the one in area E3. If the crystal shatters, it alerts the guards in area F3, who come down to investigate the noise.

Terrain: Although the water in this area is too shallow to impede movement, creatures standing in it are subject to both Graem's and Grinlowe's Pull Under ability. Creatures standing atop the benches or otherwise avoiding the water can't be targeted by this ability.

Creatures: 18 prisoners are currently chained to the benches of this hold. When the hags are absent, the prisoners are relatively normal, if somewhat haggard. If the three witches are nearby, the prisoners become catatonic with terror.

The three hags currently squat huddled in the waters at the back of the ship, bickering over which prisoner to haunt next. If attacked, the hags operate as a team, casting a coven spell each round. Graem and Grinlowe alternate between making melee attacks and using their Dread Gaze or Pull Under abilities, and both fight to the death. Myrna Rath uses her *greater cloak of the bat* to flee if reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points.

Coven Spells: For ease of reference, as long as the hags are within 30 feet of one another, they can cast the following coven spells as 5th-level spells: *acid arrow*, *augury*, *baleful polymorph* (8th level), *charm*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *dominate*, *dream*

message, *illusory disguise*, *illusory scene*, *mariner's curse*, *nightmare*, *plane shift*, *prying eye*, *screaming*, *spellwrack*, *talking corpse*, and *water walk*. See page 342 of the *Pathfinder Bestiary* for the full rules on coven spells.

MYRNA RATH

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM FIEND HAG HUMANOID

Variant night hag (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 203)

Perception +30; darkvision, detect alignment, detect magic

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Infernal

Skills Arcana +30, Deception +31, Diplomacy +29, Intimidation +27, Occultism +32



Myrna Rath

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Str +8, Dex +7, Con +9, Int +6, Wis +8, Cha +5

Items *greater cloak of the bat, heartstone*

Nightmare Rider As night hag.

Planar Coven As long as at least one other member of Myrna's coven is on the demiplane of Stormholt, the coven members add *chain lightning*, *lightning bolt*, *plane shift*, and *punishing winds* to their spells, each of which can be cast at up to 8th level.

AC 39; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +27, **Will** +30; +2 status to all saves vs. magic, -2 to all saves if she doesn't have her *heartstone*

HP 340; **Immunities** sleep; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15; **Resistances** mental 15

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +32 (magical), **Damage** 3d8+16 piercing plus 2d6 evil and Abyssal plague

Melee ♦ claw +32 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d10+16 slashing plus 2d6 evil

Occult Innate Spells DC 41, attack +31; **9th** *bind soul* (at will; from *heartstone*), *ethereal jaunt* (at will; from *heartstone*); **8th** *dream council*; **7th** *nightmare*, *shadow blast* (×2, from *heartstone*); **6th** *dream message* (at will), *magic missile* (at will); **5th** *invisibility* (at will); **4th** *ray of enfeeblement* (at will), *sleep* (at will); **Constant (6th)** *detect alignment* (all alignments simultaneously), *detect magic*

Abyssal Plague (disease) A creature can't recover from drained until Abyssal plague is cured; **Saving Throw** DC 41 Fortitude; **Stage 1** drained 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** drained 3 (1 day)

Change Shape ♦ As night hag.

Dream Haunting ♦ As night hag.

Spell Ambush As night hag.

GRAEM AND GRINLOWE

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS HAG HUMANOID

Variant sea hags (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 200)

Perception +29; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Jotun

Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +31, Deception +27, Occultism +29, Stealth +29

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +9, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Planar Coven As Myrna Rath.

Sea Hag's Bargain As sea hag.

AC 39; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +28, **Will** +28; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 300; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15

Speed 25 feet, swim 35 feet

Melee ♦ claw +31 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d12+13 slashing

Dread Gaze ♦♦ As sea hag, but DC 37.

Pull Under ♦♦ (conjunction, extradimensional, teleportation)

Requirements A creature within 60 feet of Graem or Grinlowe is in contact with the waters of Stormholt; **Effect** The hag casts *maze* (DC 37) on the creature, magically pulling the creature beneath the water (regardless of its

actual depth) into an extradimensional underwater maze of shipwrecks. Between the two of them, Graem and Grinlowe can have only one creature trapped in the maze, but either hag can use the *Sustain a Spell* action to sustain the effect.

XP Award: Award each agent 30 XP for disabling the *binding crystal*.

THE TALISMAN

Before it was incorporated into the Black Whale, the *Talisman* was involved in several crashes and other misfortunes, earning it a poor reputation among Absalom's skippers. The guards still view the ship as unlucky and do their best to avoid it if possible. Currently, the ship houses only one prisoner, an odorous troll that the guards feel guilty keeping near other prisoners.

G1. TOP DECK

A large capstan sits near the bow of this ship, and two staircases lead below deck near the stern. Carvings and runes line the railing all the way around the deck. The faint stench of ash and onions emanates from below.

The carvings on the outer rail are warding symbols engraved by sailors attempting to stave off the unlucky aura of the *Talisman*. They have no real power and are written in a variety of languages.

G2. CELL HOLD IV

This area has the typical features of a cell hold (see Prison Features on page 29). All the cells are empty. The putrid stench from the lower deck of the ship is stronger here.

G3. CELL HOLD V

Located on the other half of the ship, this area is the mirror twin of area G2. All the cells are empty except for one, which is marked with a star on the map.

Treasure: The prison guards use the marked cell to store their gambling funds. A loose board in the floor, which requires a successful DC 30 Perception check to spot if the agents didn't learn about it in area E4, hides 6,290 gp and three *greater sea touch elixirs*.

G4. GALLEY HOLD VI

A hideous stench fills this entire deck, smelling of wood ash and onions. Lines of rowing benches are bolted to the floor of the deck, but many are smashed or broken.

Hazard: The stench is overpowering on this level of the ship. Characters entering the area must succeed at a DC 35 Fortitude save or become sickened 3.



Creature: Golm the troll once served as muscle for a band of daring thieves that successfully robbed a bank in the Coins district 20 years ago. All of Golm's accomplices were killed in a raid, making him the only creature alive that knows where the treasure is stashed. Loyal to the end, he has kept his lips sealed for nearly two decades now. His hideous stench is so overpowering the guards feel guilty about keeping him with the other prisoners, so they have him contained here.

Golm seldom gets visitors and is lonely. He welcomes newcomers, particularly if they bring fish to appease his mighty appetite. Having lived here for 20 years, the troll knows a fair bit about the history of the prison. He talks with the azarketis on the *Wave* most frequently (they seem least offended by his stench) and knows they have one of the *binding crystals* aboard their ship.

GOLM CREATURE 5

Male troll (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 314)

Initiative Perception +11

Languages Common, Jotun

THE SABLE SKULL

The *Sable Skull* was the first prison ship originally lashed to the reef. The ship is hewn from red timber and has a massive skull carved into the prow. It was originally a pirate vessel captured by the fleets of Absalom.

H1. TOP DECK

The prow of this red timber ship resembles a giant skull. A large capstan sits at the front of the ship, and nearby, a set of stairs leads below deck. At the rear of the ship is an ornate cabin decorated with carved skeletons in a macabre dance.

Characters in area **H1** can see light emanating from area **H2**, where a group of azarketis and prison guards are playing cards. Every few minutes, one of the guards looks out the window to make sure the warden isn't coming.

H2. CAPTAIN'S CABIN MODERATE 16

Most of the furnishings have been stripped away from this once-opulent cabin. Beautiful carvings of skeletons engaged in bloody celebration cover the walls. Several round wooden tables rest in the middle of the room.

Creatures: A group of four prison guards and three azarketi aquamancers are currently playing cards in this room. A large pile of coins sits in the center of the group and several bottles of rum are open on the table. The creatures are all fully armed and rise to attack if

disturbed. If possible, one guard tries to escape from the room during combat to go get help.

BLACK WHALE GUARDS (4) CREATURE 12

Page 35

Initiative Perception +23

Items *nightmare cudgel* (page 78; carried by one guard only)

TIDERUNNER AQUAMANCERS (3) CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS AZARKETI HUMANOID

Azarketi wizards-for-hire

Perception +27

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Common

Skills Aquatic Lore +26, Arcana +26, Diplomacy +19, Medicine +23, Warfare Lore +26

Str +0, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

Items +2 *striking spear*

AC 34; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +26, **Will** +25; +1 status to all saves vs. enchantments, -2 to all saves vs. aboleth effects

HP 190; water shield

Water Shield The aquamancer is surrounded by a bubble of water that buffers attacks. Each round, the shield absorbs the first 25 damage that would be dealt to the aquamancer. The shield can absorb only bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, acid, cold, and fire damage types. The aquamancer can dismiss or raise their shield by spending a single action.

Speed 25 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ♦ *spear* +21 (magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing

Ranged ♦ *spear* +24 (magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 34, attack +26; **7th** *disintegrate*, *spell turning*; **6th** *hydraulic push* (×2), *hydraulic torrent*; **5th** *cone of cold*, *elemental form* (water only), *wall of ice*; **4th** *fly*, *hydraulic torrent*, *solid fog*; **3rd** *haste*, *slow*, *stinking cloud*; **2nd** *acid arrow* (×2), *water walk*; **1st** *grease*, *hydraulic push*, *mage armor*; **Cantrips (6th)** *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *light*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

Treasure: All told, 197 gp sits stacked on the table in the gambling pot.

H3. CELL HOLD VII

This area has the typical features of a cell hold (see Prison Features on page 29). The stairs on the southern wall wind their way up to the deck above, while the stairs to the west lead to the galley hold below.

Treasure: The guards have another stash of gambling winnings in this cell hold (marked by a star on the map). An agent who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check (or who already learned about it in area **E4**) can find the stash, which contains 211 pp and 6,978 gp.

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H4. CELL HOLD VIII

This area has the typical features of a cell hold (see Prison Features on page 29). The hold was intentionally made difficult to access and is one of the more remote areas in the prison. The only way to access this area is the stairs in area **H6**. Warden Guirden escorts six guards to this cell hold once per day to feed the prisoners and personally check on Wynsal Starborn.

H5. STARBORN'S CELL

This cell is one of the largest in the prison, stretching to fill the entire back wall of the ship. A circle of glowing white runes inscribed on the floor light up the whole room.

Although disturbed by the accusations against Wynsal Starborn, Lord Guirden holds no particular ill will toward the acting primarch and felt it appropriate to give him a cell relatively befitting his station.

Binding Circle: After Miogimo's escape, the Black Whale's sea witches devised a more powerful form of imprisonment for the most dangerous creatures aboard the Black Whale, called a *binding circle*. Created with a complex ritual, these circles have powers specific to each prisoner, but they usually suppress the majority of the prisoner's magical abilities. Creatures outside the circle can freely touch and interact with the prisoner, but the prisoner can't reach outside the circle, which is contained by a *wall of force*. The only way to release a creature from the circle is to disable the three *binding crystals* hidden throughout the prison.

Creature: When the door to his cell is opened, Wynsal Starborn is defiantly standing at the center of the *binding circle*, ready for whatever comes. When he sees the Edgewatch agents, he smiles triumphantly and says he knew he could count on them.

Wynsal has been preparing for his eventual rescue and is ready to go. Although he hasn't figured out how to escape from the prison, he has pieced together that in order to remove the *binding circle* entrapping him, the agents need to disable three *binding crystals* hidden throughout the ship. In addition to this, Wynsal should have one other piece of useful information that he conveys to the agents, which should vary depending on what they have already explored or discovered. He might have already learned the location of one of the *binding crystals* or know the location of a valuable cache of treasure, for example.

When the agents explain that they need to tattoo him with the *unfettered mark* ritual in order to escape, Wynsal frowns somewhat and says wryly that a tattoo would be bad for his stately image. He asks the agents

to tattoo his bicep with an image of Absalom and jokingly complains if they make any mistakes.

Although not as powerful as the agents without his gear, the acting primarch is an able combatant and is loath to stand in the rear while the agents do all the work. He contributes to fights if able but retreats if severely injured. His statistics can be found in the Adventure Toolbox of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #160: Assault on Hunting Lodge Seven*.

H6. GALLEY HOLD IX

LOW 16

The bottom level of this ship is one large hold, with stairs leading up to the next deck in the front and rear and a single door in the center of the northwest wall. Rows of benches once lined this area, but they have all been smashed to splinters. Giant fragments of eggshell cover the ground.

Creatures: The sea witches recovered the eggs of two mukradis and brought them here to serve as pets. Over the ensuing months, they incubated the eggs in a stew of harvested nightmares, causing the beasts to grow with frightening speed. The mukradis are now fully grown and loyal only to the witches. The monstrous beasts have been trained to recognize the warden and don't harm him, but they attempt to eat all other intruders. The ceiling of the galley hold is only 10 feet high, and the mukradis are Gargantuan creatures, making it a tight fit for them. If necessary, one of the centipede-like creatures can skitter along the ceiling while the other uses the floor.

MUKRADIS (2)

CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Bestiary 239

Initiative Perception +24

THE WAVE

This ship is of elven construction, crafted from white timber and decorated with ornate carvings of rushing waves. Warden Guirden has routinely hired azarketi spellcasters to patrol the waters around the prison. Currently, a band of mercenaries called the Tiderunners, who specialize in water magic, occupy the *Wave* when not patrolling the prison or tending the luscas that ply the waters around the ships.

I1. UPPER DECK

A capstan is set behind the prow of this ship, which is carved to resemble a tidal wave. Stairs lead below deck near the ship's stern, with doors to the captain's cabin on either side of the stairs. Two makeshift wooden walkways lead from the top deck to ships to the north and the east.

The capstan on the front of the ship is connected to the pulley system that leads to area **D1**.

12. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

LOW 16

The inside of this cabin feels like stepping into a forest. Wooden carvings of trees cover the walls and ceiling, seeming almost real. A single wall divides the cabin in half, with two arches decorated with vines leading from one section to the other. Spartan furniture, including a desk, bed, and wardrobe, stand in stark contrast to the fanciful walls. The sound of calmly rushing waves fills the chamber.

Creatures: This room is occupied by Clarity, the leader of the Tiderunners, along with her husband Galan. The pair are both attuned to an elemental vessel kept in the cabin. It currently churns in a circular swirl in the room's center, filling the cabin with the calming sounds of waves.

Unlike the more hostile guards, the mercenaries start as merely unfriendly toward the agents, giving the agents a chance to interact with them. Clarity knows the sea witches are thoroughly evil and wishes to see them expelled from the prison. She feels fighting the witches herself would violate her contract with Warden Guirden, but she might be willing to aid the agents if they promise to defeat the witches.

If befriended, Clarity can offer the agents her cabin as a place to shelter, as well as provide several *heal* spells through her elemental vessel. She knows the location of the *binding crystals* in areas **I5** and **F5**.

TIDERUNNER AQUAMANCERS (2) CREATURE 13

Page 41

Initiative Perception +27

Items *diadem of intellect* (Clarity only)

WATER ELEMENTAL VESSEL CREATURE 16

Variant water elemental vessel (page 82)

Initiative Perception +28

Arcane Innate Spells DC 38, attack +30; **8th** *polar ray*; **7th** *prismatic spray*, *volcanic eruption*; **6th** *fireball*, *heal*, *purple worm sting*; **5th** *heal*, *mariner's curse*, *wall of ice*; **4th** *dimension door*, *heal*, *wall of fire*; **3rd** *earthbind*, *paralyze*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** *dispel magic*, *obscuring mist*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** *hydraulic push*, *shocking grasp*, *spider sting*

13. GALLEY HOLD X

This area has the typical features of a galley hold (see Prison Features on page 29). The stairs near the bow of the ship descend to area **I4** below, while the stairs nearer the stern rise to area **I1**.

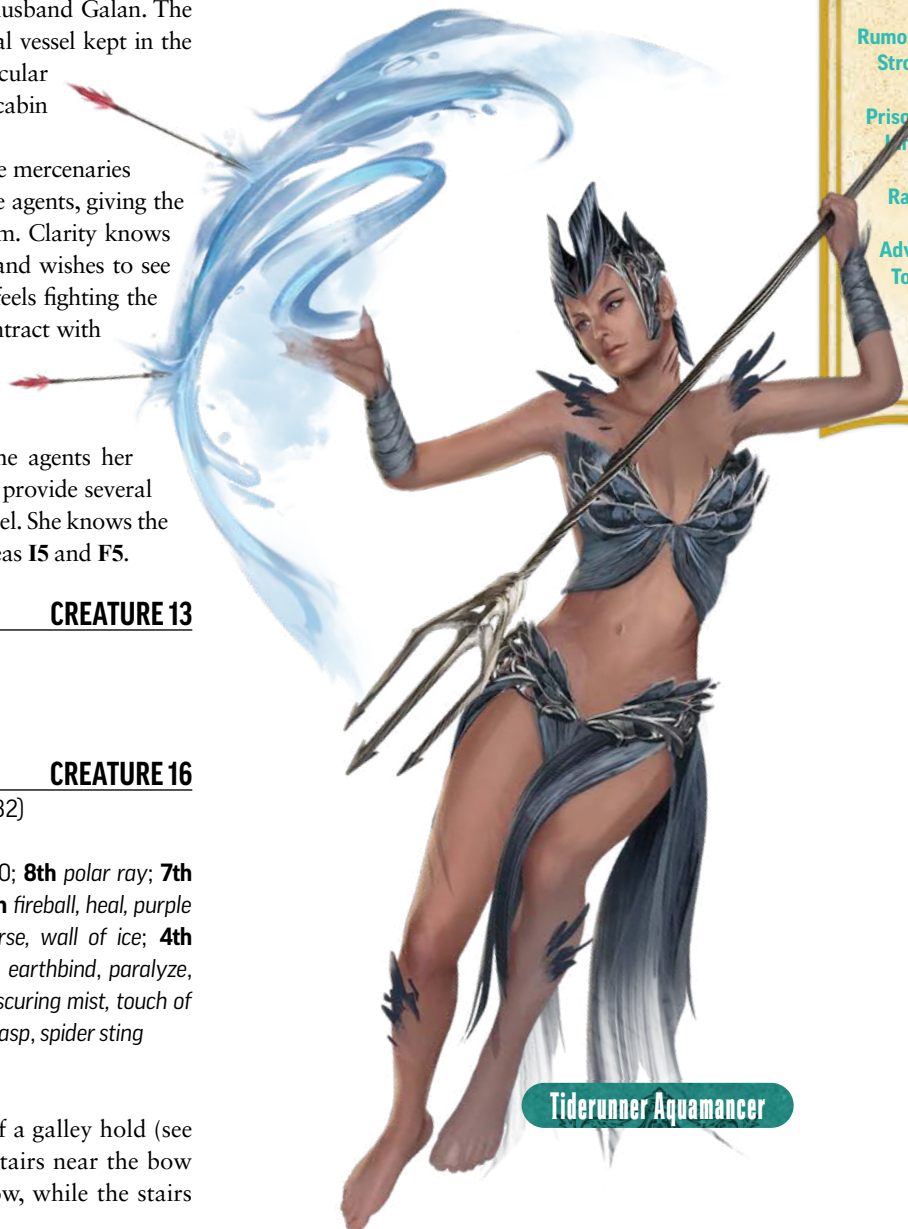
14. CELL HOLD XI

LOW 16

The doors of this cell hold all stand open. Most of the prison cells are filled with hammocks and personal effects.

Creatures: This cell hold has been repurposed to serve as the barracks for the Tiderunners, a band of azarketi mercenaries. Before becoming employed at the prison, the Tiderunners used to escort wealthy merchants through pirate-infested waters. Their new job pays better, but many of the azarketis miss the open sea and chafe under the prison's oppressive atmosphere.

A total of 15 azarketis live here, but at any given time there are typically five present. The remaining 10



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are elsewhere in the prison or patrolling the waters of Stormholt. Although they don't fully control the beasts, the azarketis tend to the luscas that patrol the waters around the prison. The azarketis here are currently awake and playing a simple game, floating a magical ball of water to each other through the air.

TIDERUNNER AQUAMANCERS (5) CREATURE 13

Page 41

Initiative Perception +27

Treasure: Scattered through the personal footlockers and hammocks of the various cells are a major bottled lightning and a major thunderstone.

15. BINDING CRYSTAL

Hidden inside this prison cell is one of the three *binding crystals*, identical to the one in area E3. The inhabitants of area I2 come to investigate if the crystal is broken.

XP Award: Award each character 30 XP for disabling the crystal.

16. CELL HOLD XII

This area has the typical features of a cell hold (see Prison Features on page 29).

ESCAPE EXTREME 16

After deactivating the last *binding crystal*, the prison is thrown into chaos as the most dangerous prisoners in the Black Whale are set free. In particular, Mimmurath the blue dragon resumes his draconic form, bursts through the prison walls in a blast of lightning and shattered wood, and begins to fly away. The chaos creates a good diversion for the agents to recover Wynsal (or perhaps allows him to escape his cell on his own and meet them) and escape into the waters surrounding the prison.

Thanks to their *unfettered marks*, the agents are able to swim or boat (using a rowboat from area E1) through the waters of Stormholt and reach the whirlpool manifested by their marks' magic, which swirls in the sea roughly half a mile away from the prison.

Creatures: As a last line of defense against escaping prisoners, the Tiderunners have three (relatively) tamed luscas patrolling the waters around Stormholt. All three are drawn to the surface by the commotion at the prison and eventually take notice of the agents as they make their escape. Just before they attack, the air seems to fill with electricity and jolting sparks leap across the surface of the water. The next round, the young lusca emerges from the water to lunge at the agents. One or two rounds later, an even bigger adult lusca bursts from the water to attack. Finally, a round or two after that, the third and largest lusca emerges, drawn by the smell of blood.

By this point in the chapter, the agents have likely been through several difficult encounters and have depleted resources, so be sure to adjust the difficulty of this encounter to their current condition. Although related, the luscas are fiercely territorial and violent. They should use at least one action each round attacking each other, not the agents. They nip at each other and use their tentacles to steal grappled characters from one another, like children bickering over morsels of food. Each lusca retreats below the water's surface if reduced to fewer than 50 HP, and eventually, the elder lusca drives the other two off, leaving the characters with only one enemy. If possible, try to pace this encounter so that the agents escape through the whirlpool just in the nick of time.

ELDER LUSCA CREATURE 18

Elite lusca (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6; page 83)

Initiative Perception +33

ADULT LUSCA CREATURE 17

Lusca (page 83)

Initiative Perception +31

YOUNG LUSCA CREATURE 16

Weak lusca (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6; page 83)

Initiative Perception +29

XP Award: For escaping the Black Whale with Wynsal Starborn, award each character 80 XP.

RUMORS AND SECRETS

After rescuing Wynsal, the agents' next task is to move him to a secure location. If Miogimo is still alive and on good terms with the agents, he offers them the use of his lair, which has the benefit of being defended by protective wards and guardians. Miogimo takes great pleasure in seeing the acting primarch on the run, and Wynsal is still disgusted by the creature Miogimo has become, but ultimately the two are willing to agree to a temporary truce. Alternatively, if Miogimo is unavailable, the agents could try to hide Wynsal themselves using any number of methods. He no longer has access to his full political resources, but he does have some funds set aside, allowing him to purchase temporary protective magic (such as *nondetection* spells). In short, he's able to lay low long enough for the agents to begin clearing their names.

At this point, Wynsal can explain to the agents how he came to the tent at Harrowland and discovered the body of his friend Harlo Doleen, and that Reginald Vancaskerkin is the individual who framed them. He explains that someone left him a proof copy of the last issue of *Eyes on Absalom* on his private doorstep. When Wynsal decoded the message hidden in the



paper's headlines, he found the words "Harrowland Tent." The proof copy was dated before the issue's release—a portent of things to come. When the acting primarch heard Lieutenant Lavarsus thank Reginald, the tabloid's publisher, for tipping off the Edgewatch to Wynsal's whereabouts in the tent, he knew there was little doubt that Reginald was behind the whole setup.

In the wake of Wynsal's arrest, Reginald has hidden himself away in his stronghold in the Wise Quarter, which is surrounded by a host of hired mercenaries. Wynsal counsels that a frontal assault would be unwise. Many mercenaries with no involvement in Reginald's crimes would likely be caught in the crossfire, and public sentiment would turn even further against the acting primarch if Reginald were arrested with no evidence against him. Instead, he asks the agents to dig up dirt on the Rumormonger. By proving that they were framed, the agents can gain back public opinion and hopefully prompt the mercenaries to desert their criminal employer.

To this end, Wynsal proposes that the agents investigate the following leads:

- Acting on a hunch, Wynsal's advisor Harlo Doleen began investigating the disappearance of the machine Graveraker just before his death. Since the digging machine was used to frame Wynsal, he asks the agents to interrogate its creator, an Arcadian named **Wakeiwa Atikak** (NG female human inventor 15). If she can explain how and why the machine mysteriously disappeared, it would go a long way toward clearing Wynsal's name. Even better, if the agents secure her testimony, Wynsal can send it to his own newspaper contacts, helping sway public opinion.
- Wynsal was also framed for Harlo Doleen's death. He tasks the agents with visiting Harlo's estate to see if they can find any clues as to how Harlo wound up in Harrowland.
- Finally, the agents themselves were framed by a host of witnesses. If they can track down one or more of these witnesses and prove their testimonies false, it would clear their names and potentially implicate the Rumormonger instead.

Wynsal believes that the truth behind the agents' betrayal can be found somewhere within these leads, and he tells the agents that once they find sufficient evidence to pin Reginald, they might consider turning it in to Starwatch in order to clear their names.

GRAVERAKER'S INVENTOR

Before his death, Harlo Doleen informed Wynsal Starborn that Wakeiwa was laying low in the Wise Quarter at an inn called the Halcyon Hog. The building lies in the shadow of the walls of Azlanti Keep and has

LEAVING EARLY

If your players decide to leave the prison without Wynsal in order to rest and return later, you should hint at the presence of the luscas without running the full escape encounter. Consider describing a massive shadow beneath the waves as they head toward the whirlpool. Alternatively, the young lusca could emerge from the water to take a bite or two at swimming characters before returning to deeper waters.

a signboard out front featuring a peaceful pig reading a book. After asking around, the agents can easily learn that Wakeiwa orders food to her room several times per day, but otherwise doesn't get out much. If the agents knock on her door, Wakeiwa tries to persuade them to leave, but ultimately opens the door to let them in. When they do, read or paraphrase the following.

The window to this room has been smashed open, and glass covers the floor. The dissected remains of a clockwork humanoid are spread across a table in the center of the room. Buried beneath the gears and springs are the remains of a cold and forgotten breakfast.

Although she isn't interested in a fight, Wakeiwa is quite cagey and paranoid when the agents first meet her. Trying to tie up loose ends, the Rumormonger sent a clockwork assassin to kill Wakeiwa that very morning. Wakeiwa defeated the construct and began dissecting it at her breakfast table, but the agents interrupted her progress. Her initial attitude is unfriendly, but if her attitude can be improved to indifferent or better, she's willing to answer the following questions.

What happened here? "I'm not quite sure. I was eating my breakfast when this automaton burst through the window and attacked me. I dispatched the machine and have spent the entire day pulling it apart. It's the work of Reginald Vancaskerkin, an old rival of mine—of that I'm sure. Why exactly he would want to kill me, I can't guess. It likely has to do with Graveraker, although I'm not sure how Vancaskerkin is involved."

What can you tell me about Graveraker? "It's my greatest creation and now, my greatest fear. I wanted so badly to show the world that I could create something amazing, but I fear that my ambitions will send me to prison. I should have never listened to Bandersworth—his idea for a power source has been a catastrophe. I worry that he had a hand in the machine's disappearance."

How do you think Graveraker went missing? "Although my designs for Graveraker were flawless, they required great power to make the machine work. Blune Bandersworth, an eccentric and famous architect

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here in Absalom, offered to help me by using an artifact he called the *Cane of the Maelstrom* to bind proteans—extraplanar beings of chaos—into the engine of the machine. Unfortunately, using proteans had other side effects, but by then it was out of my hands. Bandersworth seems to have a strange connection with the machine. When it first disappeared, I thought the engine was malfunctioning. Now I suspect that it was Bandersworth using the *Cane* to cause the machine to enter an interplanar warp. This allows him to transport it wherever he wishes, which explains how it ended up in a circus tent with Starborn.”

What is Reginald’s/Blune’s plan? “I have no idea. I am afraid I’ve inadvertently become involved in a terrible plot. All I wanted was to make a name for myself. I’ve considered going to the authorities, but I’m worried if they find out I bound sentient creatures inside my machine, they’ll arrest me on charges of slavery.”

Something of a loner, Wakeiwa actually enjoys unburdening her conscience a bit to the agents, but convincing her to publicly explain how Graveraker disappeared (and thus implicate herself while clearing Wynsal’s name) is difficult, requiring the characters to improve her attitude to helpful and also to promise to help her avoid prison time for any crimes she committed while building Graveraker.

Treasure: Wakeiwa has been hanging on to an *inexplicable apparatus*, which Blune left behind when he disappeared. She offers it to the agents as evidence, and while they can’t turn it in to the station right now, they can use it in the field until their mission to defeat the Twilight Four is complete.

XP Award: If the agents convince Wakeiwa to come forward and agree to testify in one of Wynsal’s allied newspapers, award them 30 XP.

GREEN-EYED WITNESSES

In addition to being implicated in the theft of Graveraker, each individual agent was also framed for a specific crime, as outlined on page 8. Now the agents can clear their names by tracking down their accusers and figuring out the source of the lies. While initially more than a dozen witnesses came forward, currently only three remain alive.

Each false witness was captured months ago by the Rumormonger’s hyakume minion, Ixusoth, and taken

to an ink shop called Bottles and Blots. There, Ixusoth removed their eyeballs and replaced them with green eyes from the monster’s own body, allowing Ixusoth to see what the witnesses see. In addition to this, the hyakume also altered the witnesses’ memories, wiping away knowledge of their kidnapping and replacing it with magically fabricated memories of the Edgewatch agents committing crimes. Thus, when the witnesses came forward to accuse them, they believed they were telling the truth.

With his plans near completion, Reginald is tying up all loose ends, meaning that most of the witnesses have already been assassinated. The agents can spend a day searching the city and attempt a DC 41 Diplomacy check to Gather Information.

On a success, they locate one witness.

On a failure, the day is wasted. Every 1d4 days, Reginald’s clockwork assassins locate and kill one witness, leaving a corpse behind for the agents to discover.

All three remaining witnesses purposefully went into hiding and distrust the agents, as they believe they’re the ones killing witnesses. The three witnesses are described below.

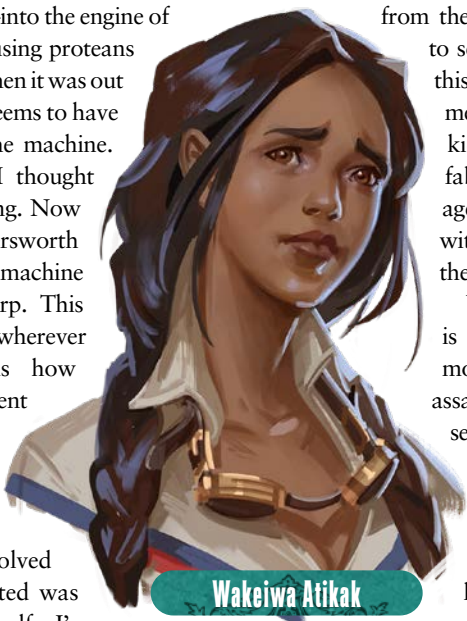
Drethos: Drethos is a middle-aged dockworker in Absalom’s harbor with a love for competitive fishing. Only two things ever break through his stoic countenance: losing a fishing contest, and any joke at the expense of Absalom’s First Guard. He’s initially unfriendly toward the agents, but shares what he knows if his attitude is improved to friendly.

Isador: Isador is an elderly man financially supported by his nine grandchildren. He claims to have witnessed one of the agents committing a crime while out for his morning walk. He’s a deeply pessimistic person and believes that nothing in the world is as good as it used to be. The one exception are his grandchildren, whom he can prattle on about for hours.

Iltani: Iltani is a successful spice merchant from Katapesh. Although she distrusts the agents, she’s generally a friendly person who likes to help others, and she’s likely the witness most amenable to aid the characters. She’s impressed by acts of charity and enjoys quoting proverbs, and doing either of these things in her presence can help the agents to win her over.

There are three potential clues for the agents to uncover, summarized below. They could learn one clue from each victim or uncover them all at once.

- **Clue 1:** The witnesses each remember the agents committing a crime, but one victim’s false memories has a flaw in its crafting. This witness remembers the



Wakeiwa Atikak



crime—but not why or how they witnessed it. These hazy details suggest the memory itself is false.

- **Clue 2:** When asked about gaps in their memory, one of the witnesses remembers visiting an ink shop called Bottles and Blots but can't remember what they bought there.
- **Clue 3:** All three of the witnesses used to have brown or blue eyes but now have green eyes. They each believe that they have always had green eyes, but friends or relatives of the witness (such as Isador's grandchildren) remember differently. Their relatives claim that their eye color suddenly changed overnight, several months ago.

Although they aren't aware of it, each of the witnesses has gaps in their memory left behind by the hyakume's modifications. Agents that examine a witness can attempt a DC 36 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check. On a success, they can determine that the witness's memories were magically altered. The witness's memory can be restored with a *remove curse* spell or similar effect.

XP Award: Award each character 10 XP for each of the three clues they learn.

INVESTIGATING DOLEEN'S MURDER

Another avenue for the agents to explore is the murder of Harlo Doleen, Wynsal Starborn's former assistant, whom Wynsal was accused of murdering at the end of the last adventure. Harlo has already been buried, making this something of a cold case. Wynsal advises the agents to investigate Harlo's manor home in the Petal District, from which Harlo mysteriously went missing before his death. The agents are still fugitives, however, which complicates things. Although they could certainly sneak into the house, Wynsal advises them to use a disguise or some other bluff so that they have a chance to talk to Harlo's servants. Harlo's butler, in particular, is a shrewd man who might know something useful.

Harlo's home, situated a short walk from Azlanti Keep, is small for a manor home, but well appointed. It's composed of white stone and covered with a thick layer of ivy.

Speaking with the Servants: When the agents knock at the manor's door, they're greeted by Harlo's butler, a stately man named **Morgan Pomiroy** (LG male human aristocrat 9). Due to the recent unrest in the city and public declaration of Harlo's death, an unusual number

of looters and rogues have come to case the estate, hoping for easy money. Unfortunately for them,

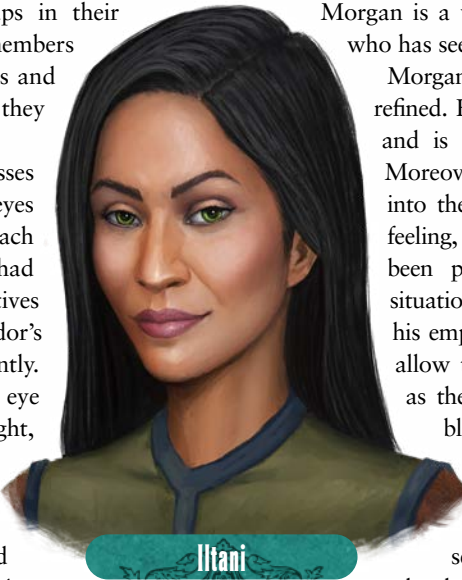
Morgan is a vigilant and capable majordomo who has seen his fair share of scuffles.

Morgan is cool, professional, and refined. He served Harlo loyally for years and is greatly distraught by his death. Moreover, he feels that the investigation into the murder was botched (a correct feeling, as the Rumormonger has indeed been pulling strings to obfuscate the situation). Morgan is so eager to resolve his employer's murder that he willing to allow the fugitive agents inside as long as they make even a modest effort to blur their identities so that he can feign innocence.

In addition to Morgan, the manor also has two cleaning servants named Tureth and Segen, and a chef named Zelko. Tureth and Zelko

are both present at the house, helping keep watch over Harlo's things, but Segen isn't present. Through questioning Morgan (or the other two servants), the agents can learn the following facts.

- Harlo was at home the evening before the agents were framed. He fell gravely ill shortly after dinner, becoming weak and nauseous. Even more disturbingly, his fingernails began to turn black. Morgan sent out for a healer, but when he returned to the study, Harlo was gone. Several hours later, his body was discovered in the Puddles.
- Since then, the servants have been watching over the house and waiting for Harlo's relatives from Ustalav to arrive and take control of the estate. Several days ago, however, Segen stopped coming to work.
- Unbeknownst to the other servants, Segen was an unwitting agent of the Rumormonger's hyakume minion. If they choose, the agents can go to his home to follow up on the disappearance, where they find that he has been surreptitiously murdered—an agent who succeeds at a DC 41 Survival check can tell recognize it as the work of a clockwork assassin. Searching Segen's body reveals a bottle of toxic ink purchased from a shop called Bottles and Blots, which Segen used to poison Harlo while under the hyakume's influence.
- Although Tureth and Zelko didn't notice, Morgan is able to report that Segen used to have hazel eyes, but one day several months ago, he came to work with green eyes. He thought it was unusual at the time and still does, although he isn't sure how it might connect to the case.



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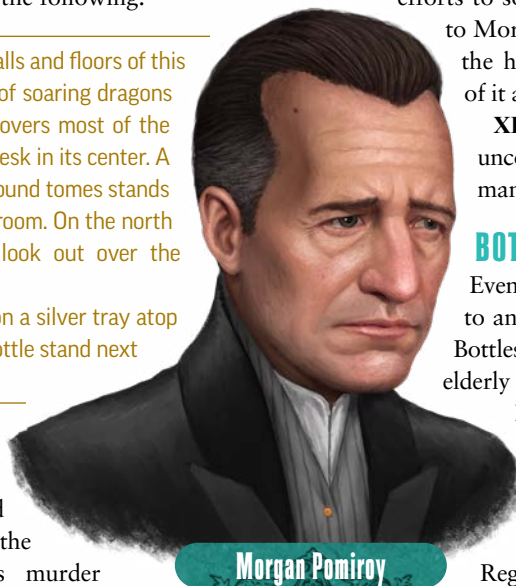
Harlo's Study: Harlo's personal study has several potential clues to discover. When the agents enter the room, read or paraphrase the following.

Beautiful wood covers the walls and floors of this room, carved into the shape of soaring dragons and beasts. A rich red rug covers most of the floor, with a heavy wooden desk in its center. A bookshelf filled with richly bound tomes stands against the west wall of the room. On the north wall, three large windows look out over the streets of Absalom.

A half-eaten dinner rests on a silver tray atop the desk. A wine glass and bottle stand next to the tray.

Sniffing in faint disdain, Morgan explains that an investigator named Lavarus looked over the room just after Harlo's murder and concluded that there were no clues. Morgan was dissatisfied and kept the room exactly as he found it so that Harlo's relatives could hire a private investigator to look things over. If the agents investigate the room, they can discover several clues.

- A successful DC 36 Survival check allows a character to see that the rug is scuffed and folded in a way that indicates a brief struggle, followed by a body being dragged to the window.
- An agent who succeeds at a DC 41 Perception check while investigating the windows finds a small hole where a metal device was inserted around the edge of the window and used to unlatch the window from the inside. Another hole nearby suggests the window was likely closed and re-latched the same way.
- With a successful DC 46 Perception or DC 38 Crafting check, an agent can spot a miniscule clockwork spring on the top shelf of the bookshelf. The spring was flung clear from the clockwork assassin as it struggled with Harlo.
- An agent who succeeds at a DC 41 Nature or Medicine check can identify a foreign substance present in the wine bottle on the table. The bottle is a red port wine so dark as to be almost black, which masked the fact that a toxic black ink had been added to the bottle. Time and exposure have rendered the ink's poison inert, but it still has a distinct fish-like smell. With a successful DC 41 Society or DC 38 Absalom Lore check, the agents can trace this ink back to an ink shop called Bottles and Blots.



Morgan Pomiroy

Treasure: If the agents uncover all the clues, Morgan gives them a *major healing potion* in thanks for their efforts to solve the case. Harlo gave the potion to Morgan long ago to help with defending the house, but Morgan won't have need of it any longer once the murder is solved.

XP Award: If the agents successfully uncover at least half the clues in the manor, award each character 30 XP.

BOTTLES AND BLOTS

Eventually, clues should lead the agents to an ink shop in the Wise Quarter called Bottles and Blots, which is owned by an elderly (and green-eyed) ink merchant named **Hedul Marblehand** (LN male dwarf merchant 3). The Rumormonger purchased the shop years ago as a front to sell his surplus of kraken-derived ink. In recent years, Reginald allowed his most important servant, a hyakume named Ixusoth, to establish her lair here. Through magic and coercion, the hyakume has completely bent Hedul to her will.

J1. STORE FRONT

Large windows line the front wall of this shop. The store's interior is lined with rows of shelves, which are all filled with jugs of ink and a variety of colorful ink bottles in every shape and hue. A merchant's counter runs along the back wall of the shop. Near the counter, a metal hatch-like door stands on the western wall of the room.

Hedul runs the front of the shop like a legitimate business and nothing in this area indicates any nefarious connections.

Creature: Hedul is a gregarious dwarf with unruly tufts of hair on his head. For the last few weeks, he has slept on a pillow beneath his shop counter so that he's constantly at Ixusoth's call.

When the agents arrive at the shop, Hedul greets them in a friendly manner and is happy to answer questions. In most cases, Hedul will be forced to outright lie (thanks to Ixusoth's manipulations, Hedul's Deception modifier to Lie is +30). No matter what the agents ask, he tries to convince them to come to the back of his shop, which is where he keeps his records.

This, of course, is a ruse so that he can spring the trap in area J2 on the agents. If they agree, he leads them to the steel hatch at the side of the room, explaining that the building was once a brewery and the old brewing vats are still in place (he once hoped to fill them with



BOTTLES AND BLOTS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



ink, he claims, but never had the funds). Once the hatch is open, he steps inside and begins opening the next hatch, beckoning for the characters to follow.

J2. INK VAT TRAP

LOW 17

This room appears to be a giant cylindrical vat made of steel. Two steel hatch doors lead out of the room.

Hazard: Gigantic quantities of toxic ink are stored in containers above these four vats. A trigger switch is located in area J3, where Ixusoth stands ready nearby. If Hedul can convince one or more of the agents to follow him inside the vats, he goes into the second vat and then knocks on the side of the vat three times. At this, Ixusoth pulls the switch, causing the vat doors to slam shut and lock and the trap to activate. Resigned to his fate, Hedul sits down and begins to weep. If the agents are spread between multiple vats, they're each trapped in their version of the same trap, although they should still be awarded XP for defeating the trap only once.

INK DROWNING VATS

HAZARD 18

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +36 (master)

Description Steel hatch doors automatically lock shut in each of the four vats labeled J2. Four ink spouts (one per vat) jut through a narrow aperture in the ceiling of each vat, 20 feet above.

Disable DC 40 Thievery (master) to seal an ink spout, DC 48 Thievery (master) to unlock a steel hatch door, or DC 45 Athletics (master) to Force Open a steel hatch door

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27

Door Hardness 22; **Door HP** 112 (BT 56); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Fill Tank **Trigger** The switch outside the vats is pulled; **Effect** The trap rolls initiative.

Routine (4 actions) The trap loses 1 action for each disabled ink spout. On each of the trap's actions, a spout pours ink, increasing the depth of the ink in that vat by 2 feet. Creatures standing in the ink are exposed to a dose of poison ink. Once the vat is full of ink, the trap stops using actions, but creatures in the vat might start drowning.

Poison Ink (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 38 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison damage and sickened 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison damage and sickened 2 (1 round)

Reset The trap can be reset by refilling the ink storage tanks above the vats.

J3. LAIR OF EYES

MODERATE 17

Four large steel vats line the west wall of this broad chamber. A metal walkway rises ten feet from the floor and runs in front of each vat and around the walls of the room. In the center of the room are two blood-spattered operating tables that stand next to a huge glass tank filled with green slime and massive floating eyeballs.

Creatures: This is the lair of Ixusoth, a monstrous, eyeball-covered creature called a hyakume. Ixusoth is the Rumormonger's most trusted servant and the architect of many of his deceptions. The hyakume has been luring people into the shop for years and has captured hundreds of victims. She uses magic to remove her victims' eyes and replace them with her own green ones, then wipes the victims' memories clean of the incident. Although most of the time the hyakume's victims' new green eyes behave like normal eyes, Ixusoth can see through these implants at will, essentially giving the monster spies throughout the entire city.

Ixusoth has no intention of letting some pesky vigilantes ruin her schemes. She begins combat standing

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next to the eyeball tank in the center of the room, where the activation lever for the ink drowning vats is located. She's served by four clockwork assassins, who stand on the walkway around the edge of the room.

CLOCKWORK ASSASSINS (4) CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +23; darkvision, smoke vision

Skills Acrobatics +29, Athletics +25, Stealth +27

Str +6, **Dex** +8, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Integrated Launcher A projectile launcher is integrated into a clockwork assassin's systems, containing 10 spinning blades and 5 smoke bombs. When the assassin is destroyed, the launcher and its ammunition are also destroyed.

Smoke Vision The assassin ignores the concealed condition from smoke.

Wind-Up For the clockwork assassin to act, it must be wound by another creature using a unique key. This takes 1 minute. Once wound, it remains operational for 24 hours, after which time it becomes unaware of its surroundings and can't act until it's wound again.

The assassin can enter standby mode as a 3-action activity. Its operational time doesn't decrease in standby, but it can sense its surroundings (with a -2 penalty to Perception). It can't act, with one exception: When it perceives a creature, it can exit standby as a reaction (rolling initiative if appropriate).

A creature can attempt a DC 31 Thievery check to Disable a Device to wind the clockwork down. For each success, the clockwork loses 1 hour of operational time. This can be done even if the clockwork is in standby mode.

AC 34; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +29, **Will** +19

HP 230; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious;

Weaknesses electricity 15, orichalcum 15; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantite or orichalcum)

Attack of Opportunity

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ rapier hand +27 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d6+12 piercing plus unbalancing blow

Ranged ♦ spinning blade +27 (agile, deadly d10, magical, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 2d10+9 slashing

Rapid Repair ♦ (manipulate) The clockwork assassin reduces its operational time by 1 hour to repair itself, regaining 25 Hit Points and refilling its integrated projectile launcher with 4 spinning blades (to a maximum of 10) and 2 smoke bombs (to a maximum of 5).

Smoke Bomb Launcher ♦ (manipulate) The clockwork assassin launches a smoke bomb. A screen of thick, opaque smoke fills a 10-foot burst within 60 feet of the clockwork assassin. All creatures within the area are

concealed, and all other creatures are concealed to them. The smoke lasts for 1 minute or until dispersed by a strong wind.

Sneak Attack The clockwork assassin's Strikes deal an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Unbalancing Blow Creatures hit by the clockwork assassin's rapier hand Strike are flat-footed until the start of the clockwork assassin's next turn.

IXUSOTH CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE LARGE ABERRATION

Female hyakume brainwasher

Perception +29; darkvision, light blindness

Languages Aklo, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Arcana +30, Bardic Lore +28, Crafting +30, Deception +27, Medicine +25, Nature +25, Occultism +30, Religion +27, Society +28, Thievery +25

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +9, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Light Blindness

Lore Master Ixusoth retains a vast amount of knowledge. She can use her Bardic Lore skill to Recall Knowledge on any topic, and she knows any languages common to an area she has spent a day or more in.

Items robe of eyes

AC 36, all-around vision; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +25, **Will** +29; +2 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 275; **Immunities** confusion; **Resistances** mental 10

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +27 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet),

Damage 3d10+10 bludgeoning plus scatterbrain palm

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **8th** charm (×2), disappearance, mind blank; **7th** dispel magic (×2), mindlink (at will); **4th** air walk (at will), hypercognition (at will), zone of truth (at will); **Cantrips (8th)** daze, detect magic, read aura

Eye Probe ♦♦♦ (divination, occult) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Up to six of Ixusoth's eyes detach from her body. Each eye has AC 26, HP 1, and a fly speed of 40 feet. Ixusoth can see through all of her eye probes. She can move the probes all in separate directions using a single action. Ixusoth can have no more than six eye probes active at a time; using this ability to create more causes the eye or eyes farthest away to shrivel and die.

Ixusoth can deliver touch spells through her eye probes and can make melee spell attacks through them. In addition, she can Steal Memories through an eye probe using a single action by touching the target with the eye.

Steal Memories ♦♦♦ (emotion, mental, necromancy, occult) Ixusoth reaches out with her mind and attempts to steal memories from a creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed at a DC 40 Will saving throw or become stupefied 2 and have some of its memories stolen. When Ixusoth

steals memories, she learns some of the creature's memories (chosen by the GM). These memories are then lost to that creature.

Scatterbrain Palm (divination, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, occult) A creature hit by Ixusoth's fist Strike must attempt a DC 36 Will save. The creature is then temporarily immune until the start of its next turn.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is stunned 1.

Failure The creature is stunned 2.

Critical Failure The creature is stunned 3, and the hyakume can use Steal Memories on the target as part of this action.

Hazard: After harvesting eyes from her victims, Ixusoth bathes the extracted organs in an alchemical mixture and stores them in the giant eyeball tank in the center of the room. In time, the eyeballs grow to enormous size and develop magical powers, channeling the agony and torment that surrounds them.

EYEBALL TANK

HAZARD 15

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +31 (master)

Description A vat of thick glass stands 10 feet high and is filled with green slime and fist-sized eyeballs.

Disable DC 38 Thievery (master) or DC 34 Crafting (expert) to acidify the slime inside the tank, destroying the eyeballs

AC 33; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +26

Tank Hardness 2; **Tank HP** 180 (BT 90); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Eye-Opener **Trigger** Three or more living creatures remain within 20 feet of the trap for 1 round; **Effect** The trap rolls initiative.

Routine (3 actions) Each round, the vat uses all three of its actions to shoot random eye rays at any living creatures (except Ixusoth) in range.

Ranged ♦ despair ray +28 (emotion, enchantment, mental, range 100 feet), **Damage** target is subjected to a *crushing despair* spell (DC 33)

Ranged ♦ feeblemind ray +28 (curse, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, range 100 feet), **Damage** target is subjected to a *feeblemind* spell (DC 36)

Ranged ♦ spirit blast ray +28 (force, necromancy, range 100 feet), **Damage** target is subjected to a *spirit blast* spell (DC 36)



Spill Eyeballs **Trigger** The tank reaches its Broken Threshold; **Effect** The glass shatters, spilling eyeballs onto the floor in a 15-foot radius and casting *grease* (DC 33) on the affected area. The eyeball tank is permanently destroyed and can't be reset.

Reset The trap can be reset by adding 100 new eyeballs to the tank and allowing them to grow in the slime for 1 week.

Evidence and Treasure:

Crates lie scattered around the room, secured with good locks. These boxes contain a treasure trove of secrets and blackmail materials, providing ample evidence for the agents to prove that

Reginald Vancaskerkin had them framed. The materials contain thorough documentation on all the individuals kidnapped and brainwashed by Ixusoth, as well as receipts and paperwork that clearly tie Reginald to the nefarious doings at Bottles and Blots. Additionally, there are blackmail documents on many of the major noble families of Absalom. All these materials combined can be turned into Captain Asilia at Starwatch Keep for a bounty of 20,000 gp; it's also sufficient evidence to clear the agents' names and earn them their badges back.

DEFAMER DEFAMED

After following up on all three of their leads, the agents have solid evidence that Reginald Vancaskerkin is both a murderer and part of a massive conspiracy. Wynsal uses his contacts at various newspapers throughout the city to publish articles detailing all of the evidence the agents collected, throwing many citizens into an uproar. Afraid of being connected to the criminal, all of the Rumormonger's voluntary servants and employees (including his small army of mercenaries) abandon their posts after learning of his unsavory connections.

Although the agents have earned their badges back, Captain Asilia tells them that the Starwatch is currently spread too thin to assist in the arrest of the Rumormonger. In no uncertain terms, she encourages them to pursue Reginald on their own, arrest the man, and ensure he's brought to justice. Additionally, there's more to be done before Wynsal Starborn feels comfortable coming out of hiding. Either he or Asilia pleads with the agents to take the Rumormonger into custody alive so that the Starwatch can cross-examine the publisher and get the testimony necessary to clear Wynsal's name.



CHAPTER 3: THE RUMORMONGER'S STRONGHOLD

The *Eyes on Absalom* headquarters, located in the Wise Quarter, serves as the Rumormonger's chief lair. After purchasing a run-down (but well-fortified) merchant villa many years ago, Reginald Vancaskerkin converted the upper floors into a publishing house and the lower floors into a clockwork dungeon. Once he claims the title of acting primarch, he plans to use his clockwork printing factory to expand his publications across all of Golarion, covering the world in his lies to honor the glory of deceitful Norgorber.

EYES ON ABSALOM HEADQUARTERS

The surface floor of Reginald's newspaper runs like a legitimate business, and on most occasions, areas **K1** through **K7** host many busy employees. By this point in the adventure, however, Reginald has been discredited, and his employees have abandoned him. When the Edgewatch agents arrive, they find the front door

unlocked and the entire building eerily empty. As part of their self-granted severance packages, the employees cleaned out everything of value from the upper floor. The following area descriptions correspond to the map on page 53.

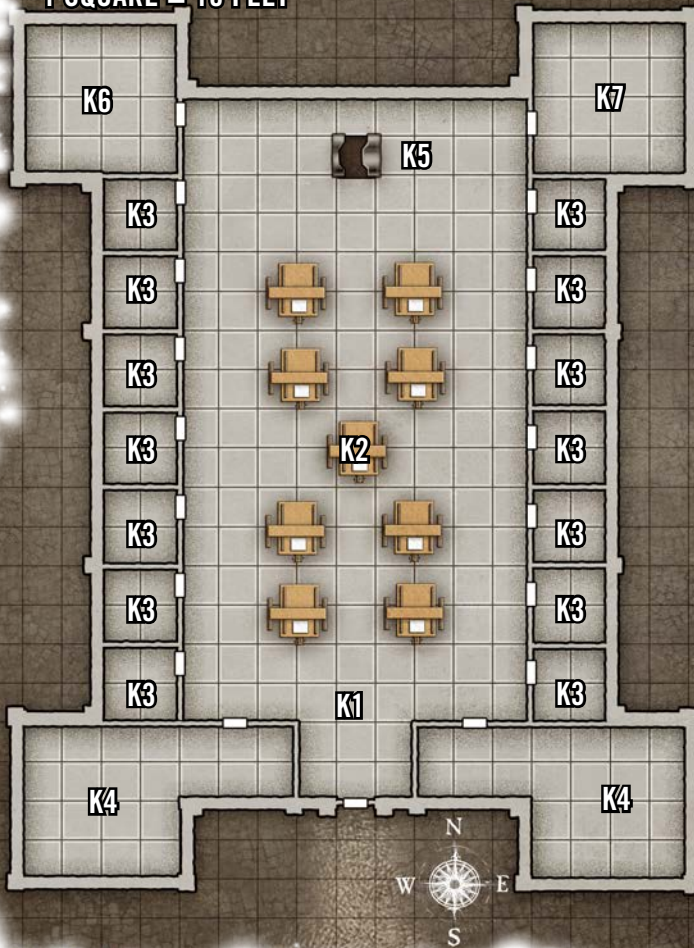
K1. Printing Hall: This vast room contains nine relatively simple clockwork printing presses, each the size of a fruit cart. The printing presses all remain silent and unused now.

K2. Special Printing Press: While the other eight printing presses are arranged in an orderly grid, this lone printing press stands incongruously in the middle of the room (a potential clue to its significance). A brief search of the press reveals a secret button on its underside. When the button is pushed, the press slides aside, revealing a stairwell leading downward. The entire stairwell rotates as if it sits on a giant turntable. The stairway leads to area **L1**.



EYES ON ABSALOM HEADQUARTERS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



K3. Offices: Fourteen offices surround the main printing hall, where Reginald's writers created salacious gossip and rumors to fill his tabloid. His glabrezu lie-masters in L16 inspired much of their content.

K4. Barracks: These two rooms once housed Reginald's mercenary army. Each room has enough space to house 24 soldiers, although both rooms have been thoroughly cleaned out and abandoned.

K5. Delivery Chute (Crank): Two interlocking metal doors are set into the floor here. A character that succeeds at a DC 41 Athletics check can pry them open, revealing a narrow tunnel leading underground. Whirring gears and levers line the entire tunnel, allowing for barrels of ink and paper reams to be moved to the surface from below. Incredibly dangerous, the chute can't be deactivated while the grand crank (see area L22) still functions. However, Medium or smaller creatures can safely worm through the tunnel with a successful DC 46 Acrobatics check, emerging in area L2. On a failure, they become caught in the gears (see Caught in Gears in the Clockwork Halls features on page 54) for 1 round before being propelled back into area K5.

K6. Editor-in-Chief's Office: This office belongs to Layton Bryne, the cantankerous editor-in-chief of *Eyes on Absalom*. In fact, Layton Bryne isn't

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

With enough evidence in hand to take down Reginald Vancaskerkin's public supporters and scatter his private army, the Edgework agents travel into the Rumormonger's clockwork fortress to arrest the third member of the Twilight Four.

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

Now back in uniform, the agents can once again feel free to utilize suspects' items in the field as well as turn over valuable evidence to the Starwatch evidence locker in exchange for a gold bounty. The following are the most useful treasure items the agents can find throughout this chapter.

- *black wyrm dragon's breath potions* (5)
- *clockwork cloak* (page 79)
- *clockwork helm* (page 79)
- *clockwork rejuvenator* (page 79)
- *greater ring of maniacal devices*
- *potion of undetectability*
- *truesight potions* (3)

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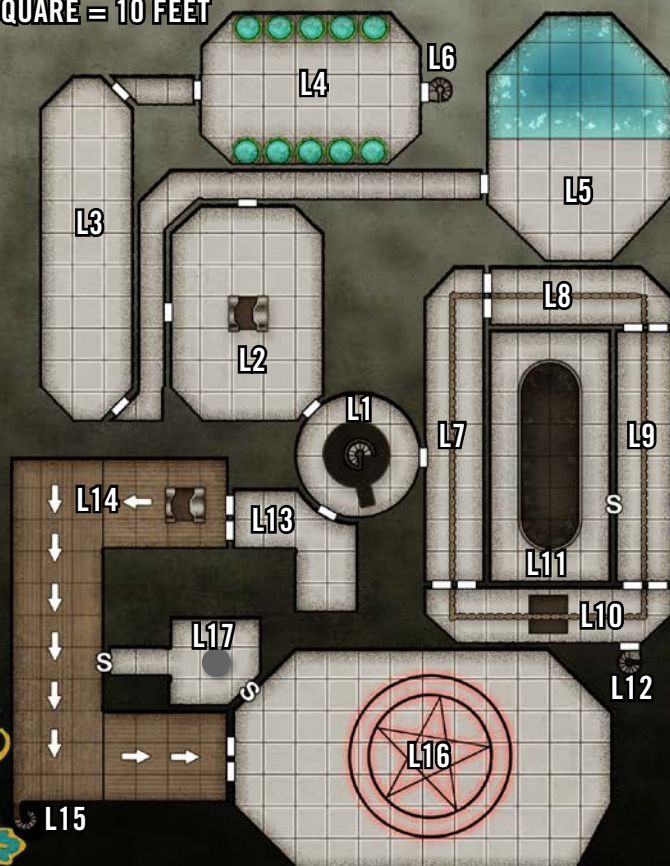
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THE CLOCKWORK HALLS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



Upper Level



Lower Level

a real person. Reginald's five glabrezu lie-masters take turns impersonating the editor every day, allowing them to spread their lies to the newspaper's employees.

K7. Reginald's Office: This room serves as Reginald Vancaskerkin's personal office, which he seldom visits anymore. His employees took most of the obviously valuable things here but missed a few well-hidden items. The bottom drawer of his desk contains a *potion of undetectability* and three *truesight potions*.

THE CLOCKWORK HALLS

After going underground, the Edgewatch agents find themselves in the middle of a massive clockwork machine of impossible complexity. Reginald slowly converted these halls—initially a workshop for his experiments—into a massive printing factory. The clockwork halls have the traits described below.

Caught in Gears: Many areas in the dungeon feature mechanical gears that can catch creatures and grind them. A creature that becomes caught in the gears is grabbed and takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage per round that they remain grabbed. Once caught, the DC to

Escape the gears is 41. Some gears, such as those in area **K5**, don't require the creature to Escape and instead propel them to a new location after they take damage.

Clockwork Ceilings: The ceilings of every room in the clockwork halls have exposed masses of turning gears, springs, and pipes. This machinery connects to every other room in the dungeon. Tiny creatures (or amorphous creatures like oozes) can safely climb into the ceiling and navigate their way into any other room in the complex.

The Grand Crank: A single massive crank (located in **L22**) powers the Rumormonger's entire fortress. If this crank is deactivated, most of the hazards and moving components of the building cease to function. Terrain and hazards powered by the grand crank are noted as (crank) in their description.

Keystone Gears: The complexity of the clockwork halls puts the entire complex under massive strain, magically and mechanically. To distribute this tension throughout the building, Reginald has set specially constructed mithral and adamantite gears—called keystone gears, each about 2 feet in diameter—throughout the fortress. Removing these gears causes



massive shuddering within the complex and slows all the gears. A creature can remove a keystone gear by Interacting with it for 1 minute. Each mithral keystone gear is 1 Bulk and worth 5,000 gp; removing it reduces the DC to disable the grand crank by 2. Each adamantite keystone gear is 2 Bulk and worth 10,000 gp; removing it reduces the DC to disable the grand crank by 3.

Alarms: The factory has no built-in alarm system, and the clockwork modifications of the Rumormonger's minions have stamped out much of their spontaneity and free will. Unless Reginald directly commands them, most servants go about their tasks until interrupted, ignoring disturbances in other parts of the complex. Once the Rumormonger is permanently defeated, his minions regain some of their will and begin exploring the complex, battling each other to establish supremacy.

DEFEATING THE RUMORMONGER

As explained on pages 90–91, only someone who knows more secrets than Reginald can permanently defeat him—which makes him a durable foe. Each time the agents strike him down, Reginald reappears in another part of his lair. With each rebirth, he increasingly looks less human, leaking ink and with more of his numerous clockwork modifications exposed.

Unaided, the agents must defeat the Rumormonger at least five times to gain enough Secret Knowledge points to incapacitate him without his Secret of Rebirth ability activating. Luckily, **L5** and **L11** provide the agents more opportunities to gain Secret Knowledge points; **L5** and **L17** also offer alternate methods to permanently put an end to the Rumormonger's plots. Reginald should pose a constant threat throughout the dungeon; he slithers through the gears, stalks the agents' movements, mocks their progress, and sets up ambushes. The adventure assumes that the agents gather at least 2 Secret Knowledge points while exploring the dungeon, so they'll need to fight Reginald three times (in areas **L2**, **L14**, and **L23**). Each location has a potential low-, moderate-, and severe-threat encounter provided, so you can increase the difficulty of the encounter each time the agents face him. Of course, the agents could fight him in other locations, if not more or less frequently than the adventure dictates. In general, pay attention to the players and feel free to set up the final encounter with the Rumormonger early if they seem to grow frustrated or bored with their unkillable foe.

Award the agents full XP for each time they defeat Reginald Vancaskerkin.

L1. THE WINDING STAIR

This cylindrical room descends one hundred feet below

ground. In the room's center, an open spiral staircase runs from the top of the room to the bottom. Built atop a massive, moving gear, the entire staircase spins in clockwise circles along with the giant cog. Several people can stand on the large gear, but beyond it, a mass of dangerous, whirring cogs make up the room's floor. Three doors are set in the wall near the turning gear, and a small platform extends from this gear, so those standing on the platform can reach each door when the gear rotates into the proper position.

Built atop the grand crank on the floor below, this room has gears that connect to the machinery throughout this level. As the central gear rotates, the short bridge eventually lines up with each of the three doors, giving the agents a choice of which one to enter. The gear swings slowly, so there's no real danger of mistiming a door entry, although any creatures that fall become caught in the gears of the floor (see Caught in Gears on page 54).

L2. INK STORAGE

VARIES 17

Casks of ink are stacked throughout this large room. Four massive clockwork claws hang from the ceiling in the center of the room, surrounding an interlocking metal hatch.

Filled and refined casks of ink are stored in this room.

Creatures: The Rumormonger waits in this room to confront the agents. Use the guidelines below to adjust the threat of the encounter.

Low: Reginald slithers his way inside an ink barrel and bursts forth when a character draws near. Overconfident, he delays ordering the clockwork arms to attack the agents for 2 rounds.

Moderate: As low, but the clockwork arms attack immediately.

Severe: As moderate, but three clockwork assassins join Reginald in combat. They've been modified to carry and shoot barrels of ink, which replace their smoke bomb launcher.

BARREL LAUNCHERS (0 OR 3)

CREATURE 14

Elite clockwork assassins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6; page 50)

Initiative Perception +25

Ranged ♦ barrel +29 (range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d12+10 bludgeoning plus poison ink

Poison Ink (poison); **Saving Throw** DC 38 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison damage and sickened 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison damage and sickened 2 (1 round).

REGINALD VANCASKERKIN

CREATURE 18

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Initiative Perception +33

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Hazard (Crank): When ink supplies run low, the four grabbing claws on the ceiling can pick up ink casks and transport them to area **K5** above. Only the Rumormonger or the Inkmaster can control the arms.

CLOCKWORK ARMS

HAZARD 15

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP


Stealth +30 (expert)

Description Four claw-tipped clockwork arms suspended from the ceiling pick up and deposit creatures into a nearby hatch.


Disable DC 43 Thievery (master) to jam and deactivate one of the arms or DC 46 Athletics (legendary) to tear an arm off the machine.


AC 37; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +26

Arm Hardness 15; **Arm HP** 50 (BT 25) to destroy one arm; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Arm Activation  **Trigger** The Rumormonger or the Inkmaster enters the room; **Effect** The trap rolls initiative.

Routine (4 actions) The trap loses 1 action per arm destroyed or disabled. On its turn, the trap makes claw Strikes against creatures other than the Rumormonger or the Inkmaster. If an arm already has a creature grabbed, the trap spends 2 actions to use its Open Hatch ability.

Melee  claw +28 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 slashing plus Grab

Open Hatch  The metal hatch opens and the arms deposit a grabbed Medium or smaller creature into the hole. The creature becomes caught in the gears (see Caught in Gears on page 54) for 1 round before emerging in area **K5**.

Reset Rewinding the gears for 1d4 minutes resets the trap.

Treasure: A mithral keystone gear is set in the room's wall.

L3. INK BOTTLING ROOM

A multitude of tubes pulsing with black ink line the walls and ceiling of this long room. Rows of bottles, barrels, and casks fill the room's center. Meanwhile, scurrying clockwork automatons use the tubes to fill the casks with ink.

All the harvested ink is bottled in this room and then transported to area **L2** for storage.

Treasure: An adamantite keystone gear is embedded in this room's ceiling.

L4. THE INKMASTER'S LAIR MODERATE 17

Ten glass vats line the walls of this room. The vats, each roughly five feet tall, contain bubbling chemicals. The liquid appears clear in several of these vats, while others contain a black and inky substance.

Creatures: As a form of poetic vengeance, Reginald used ink harvested from his former kraken master (page 90) to build his newspaper empire. Rather than developing an efficient means of harvesting the ink, he instead enslaved a sadistic shemhazian demon to oversee the process. Called the Inkmaster, the shemhazian and his clockwork servants use this room to dilute the kraken ink into a more usable form. Reginald replaced a massive chunk of the shemhazian's skull with a



Reginald Vancaskerkin

clockwork brain, which Reginald uses to control the demon. The clockwork assassins are each modified to suit their role as chemical injectors. Their syringe Strike replaces their rapier Strike. The Inkmaster carries a *gearblade* (in place of his claw attack), described on page 79 in the Adventure Toolbox.

CLOCKWORK INJECTORS (3) CREATURE 13

Elite clockwork assassins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6; page 50)

Initiative Perception +25

Melee ♦ syringe +29 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d6+10 piercing plus 1d12 acid

THE INKMASTER CREATURE 16

Male variant shemhazian (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 80)

Initiative Perception +30

Items *gearblade* (in greatsword form; page 79)

Clockwork Brain A second brain, made of clockwork, is implanted in the Inkmaster's skull. Any time he makes a Will save, he rolls twice and takes the higher result.

Melee *gearblade* +33 (disarm, magical, versatile B), **Damage** 3d12+17 slashing plus 1d6 evil

L5. LEVIALAR'S PRISON LOW 17

At the north end of this chamber, a grotesque, squid-like creature lies trapped in a pool of deep water. Metal staples and stitches hold its mutilated body together, and numerous tubes embedded in the creature extract a black fluid.

Creatures: This room holds the tortured remains of Reginald's former kraken master, Levialar. After trapping the beast inside a clockwork device at sea, Reginald used his shemhazian servant to transport Levialar here. The demon did so by carving the kraken into pieces, keeping him alive with foul magic, and then stitching Levialar back together in Reginald's lair.

After so many years of torment, Levialar trusts no one. His initial attitude is hostile, but he rants and raves at the agents for several minutes before attacking, giving them a chance to improve his attitude. The characters can try to soothe his tortured body with a DC 46 Medicine check, improving his attitude by two steps on a success. If the agents defeat the Inkmaster in area L4, Levialar's attitude improves by two steps.

Once his attitude is raised to friendly or helpful, Levialar offers to help the agents. He's versed in the Rumormonger's magic and can explain how to kill him. An ancient and powerful being, Levialar has enough esoteric knowledge to strike the final blow against Reginald himself if the agents can lure the man into this room. Alternatively, Levialar can perform a 10-minute ritual and transfer a portion of his knowledge to one agent, granting them a Secret Knowledge point (see the Rumormonger's statistics on page 91). Levialar can perform this ritual only once.

LEVIALAR CREATURE 18

Male kraken (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 214)

Initiative Perception +34

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XP Award: If the agents enlist the aid of Levialar, award each character 60 XP, as if they had defeated the kraken in combat.

L6. MAINTENANCE STAIRS

These circular stairs lead down to area L18 below.

L7. CHIP HALL

The ceiling of this long room soars forty feet overhead.

Huge steel doors, each twenty feet wide and twenty feet high, block off either end of the hall. Up near the ceiling, cauldrons dripping steaming pulp slowly circle from one end of the room to the other, passing over the steel doors and into a chamber beyond. Piles of wood chips fill much of this room, and occasionally, one of the cauldrons near the ceiling lowers down to pick up a massive scoop of chips.

Terrain (Crank): Areas L7 through L10 make up the pulping halls of the Rumormonger's lair, where clockwork machines craft his papers. Together, the four rooms comprise one large chamber, forming a circuit separated by four sets of steel doors. The doors can be pushed open with a DC 30 Athletics check, or alternatively, characters can Climb or Fly over the steel doors since there's a 20-foot gap between the top of each door and the ceiling.

A large chain track circles through all four areas, holding up cauldrons of boiling pulp 30 feet in the air. The cauldrons have innate heating elements that keep the pulp warm until it's ready to be transformed into paper. Each cauldron is roughly 10 feet wide and spaced 10 feet apart from the next cauldron down the chain. They move around the four areas in a clockwise rotation, moving a steady 30 feet per round. The course of their track is marked on the map on page 54. At any given time, roughly one in four of the cauldrons in each area is currently empty and safe to ride in. When more pulp is required, these empty cauldrons occasionally lower and pick up wood chips as they pass through area L7. The cauldrons of boiling pulp deal 9d12 fire damage to any creatures that fall inside. Creatures can cling to the outside of a cauldron with a successful DC 35 Athletics or Acrobatics check. On failure, they still cling to the cauldron but take 2d12 fire damage from boiling pulp that spills over. On a critical failure, they take the damage and also fall prone on the floor below.

Treasure: An adamantine keystone gear is embedded in the ceiling of this room.

L8. STEAM CHAMBER

A thick curtain of steam fills the lower twenty feet of this chamber, making it difficult to see.

Four large nozzles emerge from the walls of this room. Cauldrons that picked up fresh wood chips in area L7 are lowered from the ceiling in this chamber to one of the four nozzles, which blasts a jet of boiling water and chemicals into the cauldron to create a frothy pulp.



Pulping Golem



Terrain (Crank): The same cauldron track described in area L7 runs overhead in this room.

Terrain Danger (Crank): Every round, there's a 25 percent chance that a cauldron is lowered and filled. The entire room then fills with hot steam and chemicals, dealing 2d12 fire and 2d12 acid damage (DC 36 basic Reflex save, plus sickened 1 on a critical failure) to all creatures in the lower 20 feet of the area.

Treasure: A mithral keystone gear is set in the floor of this room.

L9. PAPER CHAMBER

MODERATE 17

Down the center of this chamber, dozens of clockwork automatons surround trays and vats of pulp. The clockwork creatures continuously work the pulp, feeding it into rollers and creating rolls of finished paper. Overhead, cauldrons of boiling pulp swing by on a chain conveyor.

Creatures: Five modified iron golems oversee the pulping halls (areas L7 to L10). Instead of creating noxious gas, the golems' hollow bellies continuously seethe with fire and steam, which they use to keep pulp boiling as they transfer it into the various trays and rollers of this room to create paper. When their bellies are nearly empty of pulp, the golems extend their legs to reach the hanging cauldrons above and refill their cavities. They occasionally wander into other areas of the pulping halls, but they spend most of their time in this chamber.

The golems are modified with clockwork extendable legs, and instead of poison breath, they can spew boiling pulp.

PULPING GOLEMS (5)

CREATURE 14

Variant elite iron golems (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 188)

Initiative Perception +23

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (arcane, evocation, fire) The pulping golem spills its cauldron stomach to the floor, dealing 9d12 fire damage to creatures within 10 feet (DC 33 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Extend legs ♦ (mechanical) The pulping golem extends its legs to up to a height of 40 feet, raising its body high into the air. While its legs are extended, its movement speed is halved, and it takes a -2 penalty to its Fortitude save DC against Shove and Trip attempts.

Terrain (Crank): The same cauldron track described in area L7 runs overhead in this room.

Secret Door: A successful DC 41 Perception check can uncover the secret door in this room, which leads to area L11.

Treasure: An adamantite keystone gear is embedded in the ceiling of this room.

L10. PAPER STORAGE

Piled rolls of paper lay stacked throughout this room. Near the center of the room is a pit filled with churning gears.

Terrain (Crank): The same cauldron track described in area L7 runs overhead in this room.

Terrain Danger (crank): Creatures and objects pushed into the gear pit become caught in the gears for 1 round (see Caught in Gears on page 54) and then ejected from a metal hatch in the ceiling of area L14 onto the conveyor belt in that room.

L11. POOL OF SECRETS

MODERATE 17

A pool of bubbling, black liquid fills the center of this room. Scraps of black paper float in the pool and words seem to drift through the liquid. Whispers emanates from the pool.

This pool of black fluid is the Rumormonger's pool of secrets—one of the keys to his power. Each day, scores of Reginald's minions scribe secrets onto black pieces of parchment, which they bring here and throw into the pool to add to collective knowledge. Reginald bathes in this pool each night, increasing his mastery of secrets.

Creature: In reality, the pool of secrets isn't a pool at all, but rather a somnolent shoggoth. Using lore from Levialar's tortured mind, the Rumormonger recovered the shoggoth from the depths of the ocean and bound it here. The black fluid filling the pool is actually the chaotic flesh of the aberration, which Reginald uses to store his vile secrets. A character can identify the true nature of the pool by carefully examining it and rolling a successful DC 50 Perception check or successful DC 45 Occultism check.

Creatures wading into the black pool are subjected to the shoggoth's Eat Away ability and must attempt a DC 41 Will save. On a success, they gain 1 point of Secret Knowledge (or 2 points on a critical success). On a failure, they still take the Eat Away damage but gain nothing. On a critical failure, their swimming disturbs the shoggoth, which rises from the pool to attack and ends any chance at gaining secrets. A single creature can gain a maximum of 3 Secret Knowledge points from the pool.

POOL OF SECRETS

CREATURE 19

Elite shoggoth (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 293)

Initiative Perception +34

Treasure: Reginald keeps several outfits folded on a shelf in the corner of this room along with a *greater ring of maniacal devices* and a *clockwork cloak* (page 79).

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L12. MAINTENANCE STAIRS

These circular stairs lead down to area L20 below.

L13. TAPESTRY OF LIES

The west end of this L-shaped hall terminates in a set of huge metal doors. To the south, a large, crimson tapestry covers the wall at the far end of the hall. Thousands of lines of text constantly swirl and move across the tapestry's surface.

The doors to the west lead into the stamping room, area L14. The tapestry to the south is a unique magical device Reginald created to help him manage his vast empire of lies. The tapestry's ever-changing text contains every lie ever crafted by the Rumormonger's

lie-masters, although it shows only a brief smattering of lies at any given time. With a successful DC 41 Arcana or Occultism check, a creature standing before the tapestry can will it to call up lies on a particular subject (such as a person or place), causing the tapestry to display any falsehoods that the Reginald or his minions have created on the subject.

Hazard: The tapestry also serves as a conduit to Reginald's lie-masters, allowing him to quickly travel to them to communicate. Any creature that touches the tapestry must succeed at a DC 46 Will save or be teleported to the middle of area L16.

L14. STAMPING ROOM

VARIES 17

Cutting blades and press stamps hang from the ceiling of this C-shaped hall. Shifting metal plates cover the floor, forming a conveyor belt that moves from north to south and travels around both corners of the room.

Paper created in the pulping rooms is transported here to be chopped into sheets and pressed with ink stamps.

Creatures: Reginald waits in this room to confront the agents. Use the guidelines below to adjust the threat of the encounter.

Low: Reginald slithers below the conveyor belts and appears behind the agents to attack the rear of the group. The chopping blades hazard is disabled, and he doesn't have time to recalibrate it.

Moderate: Reginald recalibrates the chopping blades to attack foes (see Hazard on page 61).

Severe: As moderate, but Reginald is joined by three clockwork assassins, each modified with massive blades for hands. The chopper Strike replaces their rapier Strike.

CLOCKWORK CHOPPERS (0 OR 3) CREATURE 14

Elite clockwork assassins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6; page 50)

Initiative Perception +25

Melee ♦ chopper +29 (sweep), **Damage** 3d12+10 slashing
Whirlwind Strike ♦♦♦ The chopper makes a melee Strike against each enemy within melee reach. Its multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after all the attacks.

REGINALD VANCASKERKIN CREATURE 18

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Initiative Perception +33

Terrain: Each round on initiative count 20, creatures in the room standing on the conveyor belt move 20 feet south, following the arrows shown on the map.



Clockwork Chopper

Secret Door: The agents can locate the secret door to area L17 with a successful DC 41 Perception check.

Hazard (Crank): Hundreds of chopping blades and ink stamps hang from the ceiling of the room. Under normal circumstances, the blades and stamps stop moving if living creatures enter the room. However, Reginald can recalibrate the blades so that they function identically to a vorpal executioner hazard, except that the trap isn't triggered when a creature attempts to leave the room. Instead, it's triggered if a creature takes a move action while on the conveyor belt. Standing completely still keeps the trap from triggering.

CHOPPING BLADES

HAZARD 19

Vorpal executioner (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 525)

Stealth DC 43 (Expert)

Treasure: An adamantine keystone gear is embedded in the ceiling of this room.

L15. MAINTENANCE STAIRS

These circular stairs lead down to area L19 below.

L16. DEN OF THE LIE-MASTERS

Long strips of parchment cover the walls of this cavernous room. Sigils on the center of the floor form a large circle. To the west, a looming pair of doors lead out of the room.

Creatures: To spread his lies and rumors, the Rumormonger has recruited five glabrezu servants that he calls his lie-masters. The lie-masters have their claws in many of Reginald's schemes and spend their days crafting intricate falsehoods. They then record these lies onto the pieces of parchment on the walls, which are then taken from the room and put into print.

Each glabrezu has eight clockwork tentacles grafted onto their backs. The demons typically hold a quill at the end of each tentacle, allowing them to write up to eight lies at once. During combat, the demons wildly lash out with the tentacles, tripping up opponents if possible. The tentacles are too delicate to make Strikes.

The lie-masters typically stay busy writing on

the outer walls of the room, meaning that creatures suddenly teleported into this area from L13 potentially have a few rounds before the demons take notice.

LIE-MASTERS (5)

CREATURE 14

Elite glabrezu (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 79)

Initiative Perception +26

Items black wyrm dragon's breath potion

Tentacle Trip **Trigger** A creature within 15 feet of the lie-master uses a manipulate or move action, makes a ranged attack, or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** The creature must succeed at a DC 34 Reflex save or be knocked prone by the lie-master's clockwork tentacles.



Lie-Master

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Terrain: Since the demons can each cast *dimension door*, they can come and go from this room with ease. Regular mortals must go through the doors to the west to exit this room. Creatures teleported from **L13** arrive on the runic circle at the center of the room; the portal works only one-way, though, so entering the circle from this side has no effect.

Secret Door: The secret door to area **L17** can be located with a successful DC 41 Perception check.

Treasure: A mithral keystone gear is set in the ceiling of this room.

L17. THE TRANSPOSITION MACHINE

A ten-foot-wide circular, metal platform occupies the center of this room, surrounded by a complex gyroscope. A dais covered with dials and levers stands in front of the gyroscope.

The Rumormonger's master plan hinges on this machine that, when activated, will transport his consciousness into Olansa Terimor's body and transfer her mind into his Pool of Secrets. He plans to wait until just before she seizes the throne before activating it, allowing him to steal away victory at the last instant.

The gyroscope of this machine moves quite lazily, so the agents can easily jump through the rings and examine the entire machine. After inspection, characters who succeed at a DC 41 Arcana, Engineering Lore, or Occultism check can determine the purpose of the device. The machine is carefully calibrated to the minds of Reginald and Olansa, meaning that the agents can't use the machine to transport their own minds into another body. However, characters who succeed at a DC 48 Arcana, Engineering Lore, or Occultism check can recalibrate the machine to transport Reginald's mind into another creature of their choosing (such as a rodent or other harmless creature). Recalibrating the device would effectively defeat the Rumormonger without triggering his Secret of Rebirth ability. Of course, to pull this off, they would need to successfully lure him into the machine once it has been recalibrated.

The agents can try to recalibrate the machine multiple times, but if they roll a critical failure, the device breaks and becomes unusable.

L18. MAINTENANCE STAIRS

These circular stairs lead up to area **L6** above.

L19. MAINTENANCE STAIRS

These circular stairs lead up to area **L15** above.

L20. MAINTENANCE STAIRS

These circular stairs lead up to area **L12** above.

L21. GEAR HALL

This long hallway appears densely packed with rotating gears and springs that make it almost impossible to walk through normally.

Each of these three hallways lead from the maintenance stairs to the grand crank room.

Terrain Danger (crank): While the grand crank remains active, navigating these hallways is quite dangerous. With proper timing, the agents can walk from one end of the hall to the other unscathed by succeeding at a DC 35 Perception check, using the character's Intelligence modifier in place of their Wisdom modifier for this roll. Alternatively, a character could simply dodge through the gears with a successful DC 31 Acrobatics check. In either case, a failure causes the character to become caught in the gears (see Caught in Gears on page 54).

L22. GRAND CRANK

SEVERE 17

Pillars of enormous gears fill this room. All the cogs connect, in one way or another, to a single, gigantic gear at the center. The central gear, forty feet in diameter, rotates ponderously.

This central gear, called the grand crank, powers all the clockwork architecture of the Rumormonger's lair.

Creature: A creature called a clockwork amalgam protects this room. The amalgam was Reginald's first clockwork creation, and he holds a sentimental attachment to it. He originally designed it for printing newspapers, but Reginald has tinkered and added to the amalgam over the years, granting it a range of strange and powerful features.

CLOCKWORK AMALGAM

CREATURE 20

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Initiative Perception +36

Disabling the Crank: To disable the grand crank, the agents must succeed at a DC 51 Thievery or Athletics check. This check is very difficult, but each keystone gear the agents have recovered cumulatively reduces the DC by 2 (for mithral gears) or 3 (for adamantite gears). A character who fails this check takes 2d8 bludgeoning damage, while on a critical failure, they become caught in the gears (see Caught in Gears on page 54). Once the agents have disabled the crank, all terrain and hazards appended with the (crank) note stop functioning.

Terrain: Creatures that are shoved or knocked into the gear pillars become caught in the gears. The large gear in the center of the room stands 10 feet high and



moves too slowly to catch anyone, so creatures can stand atop it. The ceiling of the room is 60 feet high.

L23. THE WINDER

VARIES 17

Disassembled cogs, gears, and springs cover the floor of this large, circuitous hall. Clockwork body parts hang from the ceiling and line the walls like a grim toy shop filled with half-assembled toys. In the wider, northernmost segment of the hall, a large, twenty-foot-long metallic arm rises out of the floor. The end of the arm terminates in a mass of gears and winding mechanisms.

Rather than wind his clockwork servants by hand, the Rumormonger orders his minions to come here for rewinding and other repairs.

Creatures: A total of 15 unwound—but otherwise functional—modified clockwork assassins stand inert throughout this room, waiting to be called into service. They remain completely inactive and defenseless until reactivated by the Winder, which can expedite the winding process to activate the assassins for 1d4 rounds (see the hazard below). To make bookkeeping easier during combat, consider using a four-sided die to track the number of rounds wound into each clockwork assassin.

Reginald waits in this room to confront the agents. Use the guidelines below to adjust the threat of the encounter.

Low: The Winder has only 1 action for its routine.

Moderate: The Winder has 2 actions for its routine.

Severe: The Winder has 4 actions for its routine.

BARREL LAUNCHERS (5)

CREATURE 14

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Initiative Perception +25

CLOCKWORK CHOPPERS (5)

CREATURE 14

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Initiative Perception +25

CLOCKWORK INJECTORS (5)

CREATURE 14

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Initiative Perception +25

REGINALD VANCASKERKIN

CREATURE 18

Page 91

Initiative Perception +33

Hazard: The large arm in the center of the room is a clockwork device called the Winder, which can wind up clockwork minions to keep the automatons operational. The Winder functions even if agents have disabled the grand crank.

THE WINDER

HAZARD 19

COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL MECHANICAL

Stealth +31 (master)

Description A large metallic arm, 20 feet long, is set into the floor. It rotates around the room to wind up nearby clockwork creatures.

Disable DC 50 Thievery (master) to deactivate the system, or DC 40 Athletics (legendary) to jam the gears for 1 round

AC 43; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +35

Hardness 15; **HP** 250 (BT 125); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Wind Up **Trigger** A creature other than the Rumormonger enters the room, or the Rumormonger commands the device to activate; **Effect** The Winder rolls initiative.

Routine (1, 2, or 4 actions, depending on the encounter's threat level) The Winder uses each of its actions to Wind clockwork assassins in the room, starting with inactive ones.

Wind **◆** The Winder winds a clockwork creature in the room. If the creature is currently inactive, this activates the creature, allowing it to act normally for 1d4 rounds. If already active, this instead increases the number of rounds the clockwork creature remains active by 1d4.

Reset The Winder resets as soon as no creatures remain in the room.

Treasure: A mithral keystone gear is set in the ceiling of this room. Additionally, several experimental items created by Reginald lay scattered amid the junk, including a *clockwork helm* and a *clockwork rejuvenator* (see page 79 for details on both items).

XP Award: Rather than awarding full XP for each clockwork assassin the agents defeat, grant each character 60, 80, or 120 XP for the entire encounter, depending on its threat level.

CONCLUSION

With Reginald Vancaskerkin defeated, the Edgewatch agents have brought three members of the Twilight Four to justice. By the end of this adventure, they've successfully restored their reputations and gained useful information about their final foes. From Wakeiwa, the agents learned that the eccentric architect Blune Bandersworth possesses an artifact called the *Cane of the Maelstrom*, which allows him to control the massive machine Graveraker. Even more importantly, numerous secret documents (including the plans for the transposition machine) hidden within the Rumormonger's lair reveal the identity of his last remaining accomplice—Olansa Terimor, the Gray Queen. In "Ruins of the Radiant Siege," the Edgewatch agents will battle both of these threats and attempt to bring peace to Absalom once and for all.

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Large prisons are rare across Golarion. Rural communities tend to handle trials and punishments swiftly without long periods of confinement. Most towns get by with only a small jail run by the local constabulary. True prisons only appear when populations reach a certain size and where rule by feudalism gives way to the centralized rule of law. Prisons across the Inner Sea exist to keep criminals away from the general populace, to discipline violent offenders, and, in the more tyrannical nations, to silence political dissidents and profit off prison labor. These institutions rarely focus on rehabilitation; instead, nearly all prisoners are simply locked away, rather than given the tools for a return to society.

Most prisons have plans for inmates with magical abilities, keeping such prisoners gagged or bound or secured through magical means. Sophisticated facilities have magical countermeasures to ward against escape attempts, such as permanent *walls of force*, extraplanar oubliettes, and more. Still, not all prison guards are well-versed in magic; some might be fooled by spells or by easily overlooked magic items, such as *gloves of storing* or *vanishing coins*.

The following pages detail some of the Inner Sea region's notable prisons—each a monument to authority, misery, and power.

BLACK WHALE PRISON

Complex of ships anchored on a shark-infested reef

Location Flotsam Graveyard, Absalom

Capacity 200

Notable Inmates Bloody Benothar (prolific assassin); Friendly Senn (ageless political prisoner); Nadine Vives (former Curator of Impossible Texts at the Forae Logos)

The highest-security prison in Absalom, the Black Whale isn't located inside the city itself. Instead, it sprawls through the hulls of six beached ships, chained together and anchored to the bottom of Absalom's harbor. For more information on the Black Whale, see page 28.

THE BRINE

Squalid private prison concealing a slaving ring

Location The Puddles, Absalom

Capacity 180

Notable Inmates Crance (azarketi agitator); Seras (murder witness); Venix Twofinger (sage and gambler)

A private prison in Absalom's Puddles district, the Brine primarily houses lawbreakers brought in by the Puddles' unofficial police, the Muckruckers, in addition to housing major criminals from other districts. It provides quasi-legal detentions of debtors, bounty hunters' catches, families of bail jumpers, and other poor souls someone paid to have locked up.

Even by Puddles standards, the Brine is dreadful, its ground floor flooded calf-deep in brackish ocean water mixed with effluvium from the city's backed-up sewers. Most inmates sicken with filth fever and other ailments within hours. Meanwhile, guards with crossbows and cudgels patrol on catwalks above them, looking for excuses to bully their charges.

The Brine does offer one meager chance to escape: the High Warden's venality. Lady Seichya of House Tevineg merely runs the prison as a front for her illegal slavery operation called the Salt Cartel, and she happily accepts bribes to release inmates. The constant influx of new prisoners (and the outflow to slavers) make the Brine easier to infiltrate or escape than most lockups.

CITADEL GHERADESCA

High-security prison maintained by pitiless Hellknights

Location Archduchy of Longmarch, Cheliox

Capacity 500

Notable Inmates Tenir Coppen (Nidalese rebel); the Foresworn (Order of the Thorn graveknight); Lady Scalpel (marilith surgeon)

Members of the Hellknight Order of the Chain specialize as jailors and bounty hunters. Small wonder then that



their headquarters, Citadel Gheradesca, is a prison par excellence, and perhaps the most secure facility in Avistan. The citadel juts like a talon from a spit of land accessible only during low tide, amid choppy waters patrolled by aquatic monsters. Slick stairs dotted with choke points and murder holes lead to a massive fortress decorated with chains. Hellknight jailers interrogate every visitor and inspect all correspondence. No one gets in or out of Citadel Gheradesca unchallenged.

Such caution is merited. The Order of the Chain reserves Citadel Gheradesca only for lawfully convicted felons who can't be housed anywhere else, the worst of the worst from many nations. Power-hungry wizards, serial killers, masterless fiends, monstrous masterminds—all find their way to the Citadel.

The deeper inside the citadel, the more secure the confinement. Alchemical gases keep prisoners docile. Extradimensional torture chambers break the strongest prisoners' wills. Carefully monitored devils and velstracs assist with interrogations and lecture on disciplinary theory. Some of the "cells" bear strange appearances, such as those resembling watery terrariums, baroque paintings, or enchanted game boards—each designed to confine a special class of prisoner.

Despite their vast resources and harsh methods, the Order of the Chain abides by the law. The right legal argument or writ of pardon can secure a convict's immediate release.

DUNROCK PRISON

Bastion of Norgorber cultists in a city ruled by vice

Location Keelwrack Harbor, Vyre

Capacity 300

Notable Inmates Cara Masters (Bellflower Network agent); Dissu (iruxi paladin); Yasin ul'Son (Rahadoumi thief)

Perched in the harbor between Vyre's palace and the mainland, Dunrock looms balefully, a nest of gothic spires pitted with narrow window slits. Its presence serves as a constant reminder that breaking the few laws in the City of Masks incurs severe punishments.

Dunrock's occupants are pitiable souls sufficiently desperate or unwise to flout Vyre's loose regulations. Most of these offenders include drug addicts, habitual gamblers, or first-time visitors who mistook lenience for license, though some are more dangerous. Hellknight armigers, who use Vyre for training, and the Masks of Blades, the city's militia, bring new inmates to the Prison. On arrival, prisoners are handed over to the turnkeys, a mix of mostly humans and half-orcs chosen for size and strength. Notorious tyrants and sadists, all turnkeys don black-and-gray uniforms, the sight of which sends shivers through Vyre's residents. The worst

jailers, however, are actually spider-like abominations known as jorogumos (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #160: Assault on Hunting Lodge Seven*) in humanoid guise.

The jorogumos hint at the true horror of Dunrock: the Skinsaw Cult. Norgorber's most murderous worshippers run the prison and keep its population in check by regularly sacrificing inmates. However, the lightless depths harbor more predators than just the cultists. Dunrock's lowest levels brush up against the Darklands, with new passages appearing as quickly as the wardens board others up. Both inmates and guards regularly go missing, possibly at the behest of shadowy forces that consider the prison their personal larder.

More than most prisons, Dunrock is secured via divine and occult magic, including zones and strategic points that trigger spells such as *antimagic field*, *banishment*, *blade barrier*, and *dimensional lock*. However, the majority of the workings throughout Dunrock prevent scrying and magical detection—not by blocking these spells, but subtly directing casters' attentions elsewhere so that they don't notice their castings have gone awry.

THE FORGOTTEN TRACK

Desolate prison-mine for those Razmir wants forgotten

Location The Tracks, Razmiran

Capacity 1,200

Notable Inmates Georg Melcat (duke's heir incognito); Ruby Devox (disgraced palace architect); Kashuon (Razmiran heretic)

Located north of Razmiran's capital, the Tracks are a series of forbidding canyons. The largest houses the Forgotten Track, a steep-sided mine worked by nonbelievers and political prisoners the masked priests of Razmir wish forgotten—hence this dismal prison camp's name. New convicts are lowered in an iron cage and then sorted into work gangs to toil until the end of their sentences or death. Inmates mine mostly for ore, though the head Mask, an ogre-sized man named Rastagar, sometimes orders excavations for unknown purposes. Razmir's faith holds nominal sway—for example, many punishments come in multiples of 31 in his honor—but suffering, not redemption, is the camp's true aim.

Fatalities occur daily in the Forgotten Track. In the past, prisoners' bodies were walled away in played-out mine shafts, but recently Rastagar has ordered these tombs reopened and the corpses shipped elsewhere, citing orders that his subordinates aren't foolish enough to question. As these tunnels empty, Darklands marauders have moved in, and disappearances have become distressingly common at morning roll call. Some guards murmur darkly about "maggot-skinned men" in the deepest mines.

THE HELLS

Rehabilitation-oriented prison under siege from within

Location Capital District, Magnimar

Capacity 400

Notable Inmates Sir Aeryn Darvengian (aristocratic demonologist); Big Talk Eddard (stool pigeon); Xilyza (disgraced succubus)

In theory, the Hells, the free city of Magnimar's only prison, is a model of modern justice. Located underground beneath the law courts of the Pediment Building, the Hells consists of seven levels, each comprised of several blocks. The top level houses guard barracks and holding cells for drunks, petty thieves, and those awaiting trial. The deeper levels give way to cells for increasingly serious offenders, the air growing warmer and more stifling with every step. The very lowest levels hold Magnimar's worst criminals: cannibals, serial killers, and demonologists.

Meant as a progressive model, this prison's design housed convicts according to their crimes and offered a literal path upward to redemption. Instead, it created a pressure cooker. Several years ago, a riot broke out in the lowest levels; in the ensuing struggle, the guards triggered the engineering and magical safeguards that locked down the bottom three levels and sealed them away.

In the aftermath, a strange tension pervades the rest of the facility, for locking away those levels seemed at odds with the goal of rehabilitation. Small infractions in the Hells now invoke harsh punishments, and inmates are discouraged from forming friendships or congregating in groups. Parts of the fourth level resemble armed encampments, and the guards are alert for any sign of a breach from below. No one knows why the demon-worshipping ringleader of the riot, Sir Aeryn Darvengian, hasn't punctured the wards that prevent magical escape from the Hells. He has the eldritch might to keep his cult of followers in the prison fed and entertained, but surely he'll grow bored of his fiefdom any day.

THE HONEYCOMB

Magical wasp-constructed prison for Kyonin's enemies

Location Iadara, Kyonin

Capacity 220

Notable Inmates The First Drow; Ginmarel Tesserim (half-elf provocateur); the Twins (shapechanged tarn linnorm)

In their dealings with their neighbors, the elves of Kyonin radiate mystery and calm reserve. However, behind this placid front burns a fiery reverence for Calistria, goddess of trickery and revenge. Kyonin's elves enact due reprisals, even if it takes centuries—and when they complete their revenge, anyone left alive gets sent to the Honeycomb.

The Honeycomb is a hive constructed by giant wasps sacred to Calistria, under the direction of her favored clergy. The hexagonal cells are reinforced to be both physically and magically secure. Bars of living vines line the only accessible side; they open or shut on command and react violently to physical assault or unauthorized spellcasting.

Most inmates in the Honeycomb are smugglers, spies, and thieves of magical artifacts. Grim guards wielding whips and shortwords watch over these prisoners, awaiting any excuse to lash a prisoner with their poison-tipped whips. More dangerous prisoners stay in magical stasis, sealed in sap that hardens to amber. The prisoners in stasis include the fabled First Drow, the first ever captured by Kyonin soldiers, and a two-headed halfling waif who's actually a transformed tarn linnorm.

As Kyonin improves its diplomatic relations with other nations, use of the Honeycomb has fallen out of political favor as being brutal and regressive. This sentiment rankles the Honeycomb's high warden and priestess, Miantha Vintiel. Those who question Queen Telandia's leadership have begun to court Miantha's support, and the high warden wonders whether the discontent of a carefully managed prison break would be worth the damage to the Honeycomb's—and her—reputation.



Honeycomb Guard

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THE MONOLITH

Grim dungeon for political prisoners

Location Isarn, Galt

Capacity 60

Notable Inmates The Finch (Firebrand agitator); Citizen Korran Goss (former Chairman of the Revolutionary Council); Mercian Tadge (Andoren healer)

Between revolutionary lynch mobs and the Gray Gardeners, criminals have short life spans in Galt. For the accused with uncertain statuses or loyalties, the Monolith awaits. A massive black stone keep, the Monolith houses both Galt's ruling Revolutionary Council and its most reviled criminals—convenient, since members of the former so often become the latter. A large front stairway (well in view of the infamous *final blade*, Madame Margaery) allows entrance to government offices on the second floor and above. Prisoners enter by the rear, where a gated curtain wall opens onto a bailey with an exercise yard, stables, and a smaller *final blade* for discreet executions. Well-oiled, spell-reinforced wooden doors allow entrance to the ground floor devoted to prison administration, where stairs lead to the dungeons below.

Only a few dozen inmates occupy the Monolith at any one time. The names on the roster vary with Galt's political tides, as old criminals receive pardons and the mob identifies new transgressors. While the Gray Gardeners take an interest in the prison, updating the magical alarms and wards against invisible and tunneling assailants, they don't run it, so as to maintain a decorous distance from the Revolutionary Council. Instead, indigo-uniformed guards under Commandant Vicus Arendt administer the facility.

PORTHMOS PRISON

Sturdy keep transformed into a prison run by the inmates

Location Porthmos, Taldor

Capacity 175

Notable Inmates Kanara the Spared (disgraced knight); Erastani Ginette (exiled reformer); Rokna (smuggler)

Porthmos Prison is a monument to one man's callousness and privilege. In its heyday, it was the impenetrable Edgeside Keep, whose design and magical protections rendered it virtually siege-proof. These same attributes make it ideal for its current role as the personal prison of Porthmos's dictatorial Grand Duke Briarsmith. Two 60-foot-tall, crenelated inner and outer walls ring Porthmos Prison, forming an expansive outer bailey—now overrun by briars and venomous snakes—and an inner bailey that holds the original keep and outbuildings. Porthmos's guards patrol only

the ringing walls, tossing down food daily and ensuring no prisoners escape by climbing or flying. Otherwise, they leave the prisoners entirely to their own devices.

Briarsmith intended Porthmos to house his political enemies, but he has locked up debtors, rebels, and even captured bandits, among them a number of gnolls and orcs. Inside, all are equal, fighting for shelter and what food and supplies the guards deliver. Most inmates assemble in gangs for mutual support, overseen by an all-female gang of humans and gnolls who keep peace in the prison.

Ancient enchantments permeate the walls to prevent magical entrance and escape. Additionally, the area's endemic bulettes and chokers make tunneling unwise. The one secure route for smuggling goods in and out of Porthmos Prison is a vermin-infested sewer controlled by a gargoyle bibliophile named Grinnid.

PRISON BARGE OF AP-TULA

Floating prison for extraplanar inmates

Location Sphinx Delta, Osirion

Capacity 120

Notable Inmates Lord Gerakis (shaitan pasha); Impalius (brass dragon ghost); the Medusa of Seven Lilies (assassin)

The Prison Barge of Ap-Tula has existed for a staggering 3,000 years. Hundreds of feet long and ringed with cedar walls, this fortress-like barge was designed to imprison a shaitan pasha whose power over earth made ordinary jails untenable. The watercraft has since been used to detain entities too dangerous to kill—Osirians have a healthy fear of the power death can unlock—but too monstrous to walk free.

The secret society that runs the prison, the Order of the Marut's Eye, protects it through esoteric magical means. No visitors are allowed entry into the barge; if anyone outside the Order has breached the prison's walls, they have not returned to speak of it. Even Osirion's monarch, the Ruby Prince, remains at a respectful distance during his yearly inspection.

The barge has room for more than a hundred inmates, though it's only at half capacity. Most prisoners reportedly stay in magical stasis, though some are granted leave to study, pray, and even walk the decks, restrained by the supernatural bindings that gird the barge. The barge holds no human inmates but houses every kind of genie except marids, several of the fallen genies known as divs, powerful undead, and at least one pit fiend. Rumor has it that all of the barge's inmates would be immediately released if the barge's keel ever touched land, but this bit of hearsay might be nothing more than a way to provide the immortal captives some hope of eventual release.

TOMB OF THE LIVING

Crypt-like prison for solitary confinements

Location Westgate, Absalom

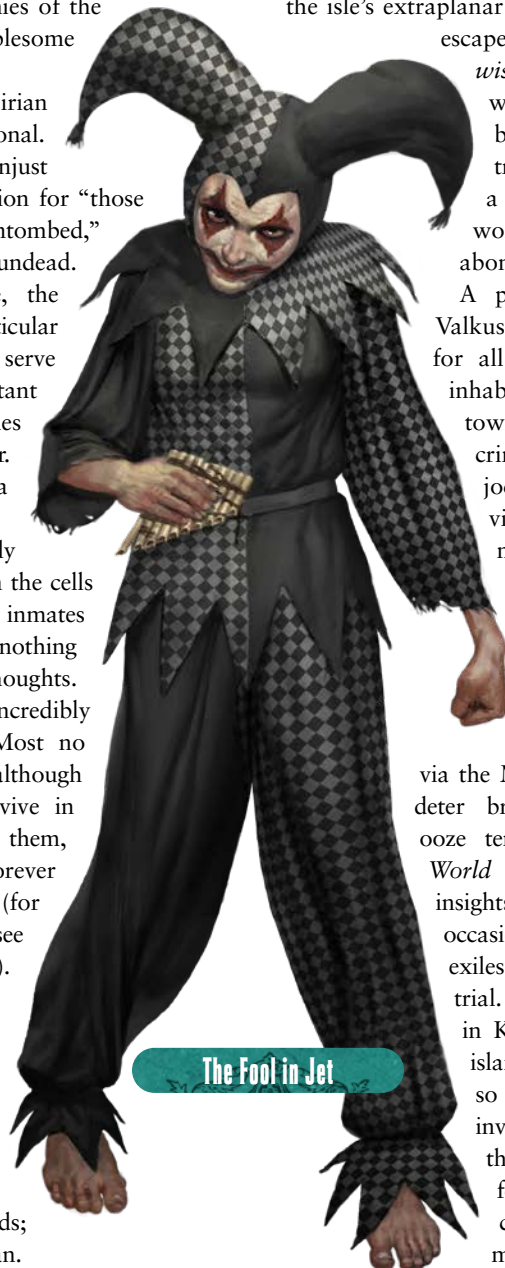
Capacity 60

Notable Inmates The Almost God (cult leader); The Forever Wizard (death-defying mage); The Quiet King (outspoken noble)

Graced by the *Starstone*, Absalom sees itself as a shining beacon to the world. The Tomb of the Living proves that even the brightest lamp casts a shadow. This prison is Absalom's secret oubliette for disposing of individuals the city's leaders wish imprisoned outside the legal system: enemies of the state, political prisoners, troublesome nobility, even would-be gods.

The Tomb's name and Osirian crypt design are intentional. Absalom's laws prohibiting unjust confinement include an exception for "those who continue to move when entombed," a provision meant to apply to undead. By entombing inmates alive, the Tomb neatly threads this particular loophole. The top layers indeed serve as a mausoleum for important deceased citizens whose families lack the means to do them honor. Below this mausoleum sprawls a maze of prison cells.

Most of the Tomb is entirely dark. Food and goods arrive in the cells on magical dumbwaiters, so inmates have no contact with others and nothing for diversion but their own thoughts. This solitary confinement is incredibly damaging to the prisoners. Most no longer remember their names, although hints at their prior lives survive in the sobriquets the guards give them, such as the Almost God, the Forever Wizard, and the Quiet King (for more details on these inmates, see *Absalom: City of Lost Omens*). A recent addition to the Tomb of the Living, the Fool in Jet received her name for her all-black motley. Shortly after arriving, she crafted a panpipe out of grouse bones and played a haunting tune that induced comas in three guards; her diet is now strictly vegetarian.



The Fool in Jet

VALKUS ISLE

Island ringed by a powerful one-way magical barrier

Location Valkus Isle, Nex

Capacity Unknown

Notable Inmates Eelira (dark naga poet and poisoner); Inman the Angel-Golem (self-aware celestial construct); Sebastius Ormheart (crime lord)

A massive, mountainous island 60 miles east of Nex's capital of Quantum, Valkus Isle was originally a summer retreat and game preserve for Nex's nobility. The wizard-king's relentless plundering of other planes for exotic creatures thinned the borders of reality until the isle's extraplanar inhabitants revolted in a bid to escape. Nex and his apprentices cast

wish spells to surround the island with the *Stalwart Wall*, a magical barrier that permits entry but traps all within. Valkus Isle is now a dumping ground for Quantum's worst criminals and for magical abominations beyond salvaging.

A penal colony with no guards, Valkus Isle offers only a life sentence for all exiled there. Most humanoid inhabitants congregate in the resort town of Khulo, where heinous crime lords and spirit nagas jockey for the most luxurious villas. In the surrounding jungles, macaw-colored proteans warp the very existence around them and shambling, oversized fleshwarps sing to each other in croaking choruses.

No one has ever escaped from Valkus Isle, at least not via the Material Plane. Still, that doesn't deter brave visitors. Some Oenopion ooze tenders (*Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide* 82) study here, seeking insights they can find nowhere else, and occasionally a student from Jalmeray exiles herself here after failing some trial. Most of the criminals deposited in Khulo have given up testing the island's eldritch boundaries, but every so often one comes up with a new, inventive scheme to escape. Should the *wish*-created wall be pierced, few mages short of Nex himself could marshal the astonishing magic required to patch the hole.

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Among the first entities held as divine within the land of Vudra, Ravithra holds many titles: the Mother of Nagas, the Karmic Pillar, the Chalice-Bearer of the danava titans who balance the cosmos. At the will of ancient deities, or perhaps even the Monad, she took charge of upholding the pillar of communal karma and maintaining the balance of influence that mortal civilizations have upon the cosmos. The danava titan Ravithra kept the Chalice of Amrit but didn't look at the golden waters within, which displayed all potentialities that a soul might pursue. Her peer, the Akashic Guru, gifted Ravithra the assistance of powerful aeons.

When Ravithra's titanic kin waged war for dominance over the world, Ravithra didn't deviate from her duties. She struck out against those who would devastate Vudra and interfere in her careful calibration of karma there. Through these acts, Ravithra earned the devotion of Vudra's creatures and the companionship of that land's other deities. Vasaghati, goddess of corruption and destruction, became one of her ostensible allies.

Vasaghati, petty in her power, craved the Chalice of Amrit. Amidst the titanic carnage that threatened to rend the world asunder, she plotted against Ravithra. Vasaghati brought aid and tribute to Ravithra as needed to keep Vudra free of warring outsiders but, while doing so, poisoned the Chalice-Bearer with subtle and hateful curiosities—both small and large. If a master dies, whom does a servant's work enrich? How does the wheel of karma spin during a war between civilizations and cultures? Does kin-slaying taint only an individual or the surrounding society as well? With

every venomous syllable, Vasaghati gradually poisoned Ravithra with self-doubt, making the danava question whether she understood her role enough to perform it well. Eventually, Ravithra succumbed to uncertainty and chose to look within the Chalice's golden waters to discern her place in the cosmos.

Ravithra's aeon allies stood by her side as she performed the rites and gazed into the Chalice. When the waters cleared and a vision began forming, Ravithra saw the terror to come. At this moment, Vasaghati earned her title as the Betrayer. She burst in upon Ravithra and throttled the danava using a corded rope made from a titan's shorn hair.


In the struggle, the pair toppled the Chalice of Amrit, its immortal waters drowning the aeons. Strangled and dying, Ravithra weakly lapped at the spilled waters, but the proud and hateful Vasaghati produced her

wicked knife and decapitated Ravithra of the Karmic Pillar. Holding the severed head aloft, the Betrayer watched Ravithra's blood fall like a monsoon, filling the Chalice of Amrit and devastating Vudra, the land Ravithra had worked so hard to protect.

Ravithra should have ended there, but she was beyond death. In the Chalice's waters, she had once more glimpsed her true purpose—to uphold the cycle of karma across civilizations—which washed away the doubts Vasaghati had instilled. However, corrupted by her rage and her failure to uphold her duties with confidence, Ravithra struggled and thrashed as she clung to life, delivering yet more devastation to the land she had protected. In the aftermath of this vicious attack, Vasaghati fled with the Chalice. Ravithra



*All will be judged in time,
Found wanting and
waylaid by petty mortal
desires and Fickle Fears.
The ignorant will be driven
out of Nirvana, their
crimes revealed.
—The Nardahugita*



eventually healed, a serpentine body sprouting from her decapitated head. Her single-minded pursuit to recover her former power and self-certainty corrupted Ravithra. She conceived and performed foul acts to achieve her goal while falsely believing herself immune to the consequences of her actions.

Forced to rely upon serpentine mortals for her support, Ravithra imbued these servants with her power and desperation. A great naga empire thus arose across Vudra during the Age of Serpents, dominating other ancestries and erecting shrines and palaces. Ravithra demanded that the nagas, unlike herself, must rule with unquestioning adherence to the balance of karma. She also tasked her most trusted servants with seeking the sacred Chalice she'd lost.

Eventually, Ravithra learned that Vasaghati had hidden the Chalice atop the highest mountain in Vudra where Ravithra's ophidian minions couldn't reach it. Ravithra called to the god Sudachala, first of the avian garudas; she offered to free Sudachala's mother, whom Ravithra had imprisoned, if Sudachala flew up to retrieve the Chalice and delivered it to the nagas. Sudachala overcame many trials to retrieve the Chalice, though the garuda had been warned not to look into it or to drink from its waters, and he refrained from doing so.

Before Sudachala delivered the Chalice, however, the wise god Gruhastha met with him and revealed that the Chalice of Amrit would restore Ravithra's command of karma over all beings—and grant Ravithra's domineering naga followers immortality. Together, Gruhastha and Sudachala hatched a plan to replace the Chalice with a skillful illusion. When Sudachala presented the false Chalice to Ravithra, she freed his mother and slithered forward to peer into the Chalice while the nagas sipped from its waters. Ravithra saw no wisdom within the Chalice—for Sudachala hadn't looked into it and couldn't replicate that which he'd never seen—and she discerned it as an illusion. Yet the nagas had already leaned forward to sup from the Chalice and bit into the long grasses beneath its waters' surface, splitting their tongues, and they quickly fled in pain and rage. The great naga empire that spanned Vudra fell quickly after this betrayal. From ruins and crumbling shrines, Ravithra and her followers still seek the Chalice. Both Gruhastha and Sudachala have joined the ever-increasing ranks of Ravithra's hated foes.

PERSONIFICATION AND REALM

Ravithra's head resembles a cobra's hood marked with a gilded sun wheel, though she has a face of stunning horror and beauty. Her depictions differ in the disparate lands that worship her. In Vudra's Seat of the Golden

Moon, Ravithra is portrayed as a long, gold-and-white serpent with her face, horrible and beautiful, hooded by the sun. However, her head appears connected to her body only through a few grotesque strands of gore. In Nagajor, Ravithra's depiction has her as a stern judge and mother, swollen with eggs or patiently gazing skyward.

Ravithra's realm is Nagaloka, the Palace of Fate—a grand structure of mind-bending architecture. The green stone used in its construction came from some long-forgotten plane lost in the wars between the titans. Although once anchored in Nirvana where it overlooked Vudra, Ravithra's palace drifted away to rest beneath the River of Souls following her transformation. Shrouded in the endless dark of the void, only her fallen aeons, now called the Fearful Ones, and the souls of faithful ophidian servants occupy her realm.

Ravithra usually inhabits the Grand Orrery in Nagaloka's highest spire, where she lays coiled around the pedestal that once held the Chalice of Amrit. The Chalice's spilled waters still stain the pedestal, and these marks harbor portals to sites across Vudra. Ravithra knows immediately who uses these portals and their intentions.

DOGMA AND WORSHIPPERS

The worshippers of Ravithra follow a simple doctrine: all will be judged by inexorable cosmic forces, the Chalice of Amrit shall be reclaimed, and those who impede either goal must be destroyed. Any who assist Ravithra in her long-planned reclamation have a chance to earn her approval, though she always favors naga servants over any other creatures. Nagas, as the descendants of Ravithra, serve her by their very being, their existence spinning the wheel of karma toward Ravithra's ends. It's believed that even the actions of nagas who scorn Ravithra nevertheless serve her on a larger, cosmic scale.

Ravithra grants her attention only to those who view her cause as just and pure, for her faith has no room for equivocation or justification of her enemies' acts. Her traveling preachers, ascetic monks known as javisattras, speak in koans upon the dusty mountain roads of the Impossible Kingdoms. Narrow-minded like Ravithra, they don't suffer fools.

In Nagajor, Ravithra is openly worshipped as a mother figure to the lesser naga deity, Nalinivati. While this relationship might be accurate, the religious aspects of Ravithra in Nagajor have long been twisted to prioritize the law of the state and to reclaim divine tools from lawless foes. Ravithra pays little mind to these cults that have lost their focus from worshipping her. Nagajor will receive judgment in time, she knows, when she can once again fulfill her duty.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Ravithra pays the most attention to her shrine in the Seat of the Golden Moon in Vudra, as this tower allows her to keep watch on rival deities who have earned her ire. Set apart from other shrines, Ravithra's shrine provides a place for its lonely priests to preach temperance and to offer philosophical koans composed to transform fiery hubris into serene ambition.

In the rest of Vudra, Ravithra's iconography appears most often in ruined prisons and administrative buildings from the naga empire of old. Such places make plain Ravithra's role as a stern judge and devourer of those who sought to abuse their social status or overthrow their betters. In the few places in Vudra where nagas still rule openly, Ravithra's temples also function as courts or bureaucratic centers.

Shrines to Ravithra must incorporate at least one empty pillar whose top must be kept clean and free of other objects until the foreseen time when the Chalice of Amrit returns to Ravithra's possession. These shrines commonly have devotional incense holders that resemble the goddess in form, such as a partially decapitated head crafted so that the incense stick billows smoke through her wounds. These shrines appear decorated with festoons of offerings related to a task for which a worshipper desires clarity of purpose or to an event for which a worshipper expects karmic retribution.

Common offerings also include defaced religious tokens from Ravithra's enemies. The commonality of marked tokens from Sudachala, Vasaghati, or other foes sometimes leads unbelievers to erroneously conclude that the goddess has positive relationships with these deities.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Historically, the most powerful high priests of Ravithra claimed the title of avatar, acting as a direct representative of the deity and a living adjudicator of karma itself. Avatars most commonly appeared during the time of the naga empire, when Ravithra's children controlled Vudra, established the early caste system, and made open war against followers of Vasaghati. Though the title fell out of use with the naga empire's fall, a worthy champion who makes open war against Vasaghati and quests for the Chalice of Amrit might be blessed with power worthy of the ancient rank.

The modern priesthood of Ravithra consists of settled durugallas and itinerant javisattras. Both are technically subservient to an avatar in rank, but considering the rarity of avatars, the two ranks roughly equal each other in authority. A durugalla tends to a specific shrine; in

small shrines, as is common, the durugalla also holds a respected position in the community, such as that of a judge, mediator, or scholar. Javisattras wander the world to impose Ravithra's stern decrees, advance her plots, uncover rumors about the lost Chalice, and overturn those who seize upon calamity or make use of chaos for their own aggrandizement. Such priests often own very little, never more than they can carry, and usually have but a single set of well-worn clothes. They're often reactionary and sometimes even rebellious when facing authorities or social systems they view as improper.



Ravithra Priest

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Conflicts between durugallas and javisattras sometimes occur. Although nagas most often become durugallas and javisattras are more often humanoids, worshippers of all ancestries fill both ranks.

Among the nagajis of Nagajor, priests invoke Ravithra in lectures regarding adherence to the state, the details of laws, and the benefits of rules and order. There, durugallas often act as midwives in addition to their primary role as shrine keepers, while javisattras often serve as pilgrimage guides.

HOLIDAYS

In Vudra, Ravithra's most sacred day falls on Arodus 23, associated with the fall of the naga empire and the rise of modern Vudrani society. Worshippers spend this day of rest and meditation considering all they stand to lose if they don't remain vigilant in adhering to their beliefs and staying wary of betrayal. Local holidays are also marked with smaller regime changes, signifying times for contemplation and rest for similar reasons.

In Nagajor, Ravithra is broadly worshipped on the first day of Kuthona, which celebrates her role as progenitor of the naga and their lands in Tian Xia. This holiday serves as one of the few occasions in Nagajor which depicts Ravithra's decapitated form; from Ravithra's throat emerges Nalinivati, who grasps the sun in her mouth and manifests the ambition of the country.

During the ancient days of the naga empire, the solstices were deemed sacred. On such days, naga oracles could interpret universal truths clearly, and subservient ancestries sought their wisdom by offering up sacrificial animals to their naga masters. After the fall of the empire, the first generation of nagas who attempted to perform these traditional divinatory rites became overwhelmed with incurable paranoia. Widely viewed as an incarnation of Ravithra's ire, this event led modern worshippers to avoid performing divinations on the solstices.

Ravithra herself holds no specific day sacred, as she views time not as a cycle of years but an endless journey until she reacquires what was wrongfully taken from her. For Ravithra to mark any occasion as blessed while she remains dethroned from her true purpose would disrespect her suffering. The most vocal of Ravithra's followers share this view, deriding fellow believers who hold any day as greater than another.

APHORISMS

The followers of Ravithra all ascribe to similar philosophies regarding the importance of actions taken in the pursuit of a balanced soul in a balanced cosmos. A few sayings ring true enough to appear in traditional Vudrani proverbs, likely incorporated during the ancient days of the naga empire.

Such Venomous Silence: An accusation levied on another for inaction or omission that leads to pain for another. "Venomous silence" worked as a legal doctrine during the naga empire used to justify harsh punishment on those who witnessed crimes but didn't speak out. Many regions of Vudra still maintain "venomous silence" laws, and all but the most erudite legal scholars remain unaware of the phrase's origin.

Drink Deeply, Always Thirst: Those who seek knowledge, whether of lore or within themselves, should never be sated in their pursuit. Frequently invoked by scholars, this phrase encourages temperance and patience in learning. More generally, this phrase means allowing universal forces to drive a situation, rather than one's greed or emotions.

HOLY TEXT

The Seat of the Golden Moon holds the original copy of Ravithra's sacred text, the *Najdahngita*. Instead of Ravithra's faithful, followers of Vineshvakhi, a minor god of dutiful guardians, defend the vault that contains this book. Penned at the apex of the naga empire, the *Najdahngita* details a divine plan which will drown the world in serpents of sin if left unfulfilled. A royal naga composed the original text as she lingered in agony inflicted by a Vasaghati cultist's poisoned knife. This version of the text curses the garudas for their role in preventing Ravithra from recovering the Chalice of Amrit. Lesser copies and derivatives of the *Najdahngita*—which get widely circulated among Ravithra's faithful across the world—shift the blame to anyone ignorant of fate or to those who should've known better than to meddle with the Karmic Pillar's true purpose.

In Nagajor, short tracts entitled *The Unmasking of Falsehoods* collect philosophies and prayers to Ravithra from ancient avatars and from Nagajor's founders. Naga overseers of the country consider it a fundamental document for young scholars, and it sees wide circulation outside of Tian Xia.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Ravithra counts far more enemies among other deities than she does allies. Gruhastha has long proven a thorn in Ravithra's side, as his followers remain dedicated to exposing the many schemes of Ravithra's worshippers. The Keeper believes Ravithra's rage toward Vasaghati has inherently corrupted her. Gruhastha's gift of clarity, meant to lead to the good of enlightenment, prevents him from agreeing with Ravithra's brutally dogmatic decrees. Ravithra believes that Gruhastha knows the Chalice of Amrit's location, but the serene god professes ignorance.



Sudachala, who replaced the sacred Chalice with an illusion and smote the tongues of Ravithra's children, is one of her most hated rivals. No naga willingly deals peaceably with a garuda to this day, much less trust one, for fear of incurring Ravithra's wrath. Sudachala has told Ravithra many times that he has hidden the Chalice in a secure place well out of Ravithra's grasp, but Ravithra assumes this claim a lie.

Vasaghati, Ravithra's first friend and betrayer, remains her greatest enemy. After attacking Ravithra, Vasaghati received such names as the Poisoned Chalice, the Betrayer, and other similar epithets, and the naga empire declared extermination of Vasaghati's followers as one of its key edicts. Though the goddess of corruption lurked in hiding during the empire's prominence, she surely had a hand in its collapse.

Irori remains on good terms with the Mother of Nagas despite Ravithra's hatred of his nephew, Gruhastha. Both have had occasion to speak of the balance of karma, of fate's nature, and of portents that lead mortals into despair. Irori doesn't assist Ravithra, but he doesn't stand in her way. He understands—better than Ravithra herself—that when she achieves her goals and has the authority to pass karmic judgment, she'll have to hold herself accountable for her wrongs. Despite her plots and her paranoia, Ravithra does have a handful of allies including Nalinivati, Vineshvakhi, and gods who value careful planning, such as Dhalavei and Suyuddha.

RAVITHRA (LN)



The Mother of Nagas, the Karmic Pillar, and the Chalice-Bearer of the danavas, Ravithra was decapitated and brought low by treachery. She grants boons only to mortal champions who seek to topple the treacherous and to restore her to her rightful role.

Edicts enforce karma's pitiless judgment, shame fools, kill traitors, pursue the Chalice of Amrit

Anathema make decisions erratically or randomly, provide aid to Vasaghati or her followers, engage in treachery

Follower Alignments LG, LN, LE, N

DEVOTEE BENEFITS

Divine Font *harm*

Divine Skill Occultism

Favored Weapon jaws or light mace

Domains fate, naga (see below), sorrow (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 116), truth

Alternate Domains ambition, soul (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 117)

Cleric Spells 1st: *charm*, 2nd: *animal form* (snake only), 4th: *clairvoyance*

NAGA DOMAIN

Like the serpentine nagas, you're in tune with cosmic forces that Ravithra once controlled.

Domain Spell *split the tongue*

Advanced Domain Spell *ordained purpose*

SPLIT THE TONGUE

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON TRANSMUTATION

Domain naga

Cast ☞ somatic; **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet fails a Deception or Diplomacy check.

Saving Throw Fortitude

The deceiving creature's tongue splits like a serpent's tongue. The creature takes 1d8 slashing damage and must attempt a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is stupefied 1 for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature takes double damage and is stupefied 2 for 1d4 rounds.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 1d8.

ORDAINED PURPOSE

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT MENTAL

Domain naga

Cast ☞☞ somatic, verbal

Area 30-foot-radius emanation centered on you

Saving Throw basic Will

You call upon the authority of cosmic forces of order, overwhelming creatures with remorse and agony for acting outside of their station and purpose. Enemies in the area take 4d6 mental damage and must attempt a Will save. A creature that has lost abilities as a result of performing acts anathema to its deity or beliefs (such as a champion who violated their tenets and hasn't atoned) uses the outcome one degree of success worse than the result of its saving throw. At the GM's discretion, a creature currently filling its appointed station and purpose (such as a farmer working in a field or a criminal in the act of committing a crime) uses the outcome one degree of success better than the result of its saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and must Drop Prone as its first action on its next turn.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage, must Drop Prone as its first action on its next turn, and can't Stand during its next turn.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d6.

BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

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UNDERCITY TREASURES

The agents can find the following magic items during their foray into Absalom's criminal underworld in Chapter 1.

FUNGAL ARMOR ITEM 15

RARE INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 7,200 gp

Usage worn armor; Bulk 1

This +2 *greater resilient studded leather* is made of hardened fungus. Every day the armor grows dozens of unusual mushrooms that can be used for cooking, infused reagents, or common spell material components.

Activate \curvearrowright or \curvearrowleft *envision*; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You are hit by a melee, ranged, or spell attack; **Effect** The attack misses you, dealing no damage as you transform into a cloud of spores. You gain the benefits of a *gaseous form* spell for 1 minute. For the duration, a cloud of deadly spores surrounds you. Each breathing creature that begins its turn within 10 feet of you takes 6d8 poison damage (DC 35 basic Fortitude save). You can Dismiss the cloud form.

Craft Requirements Supply a casting of *cloudkill* and *gaseous form*.



Fungal Armor



Miogimo's Mask

GARROTE BOLT ITEM 15

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 1,200 gp

Ammunition bolt

Activate \curvearrowright Interact

The shaft of this silver bolt is engraved with wiry designs. When a *garrote bolt* hits a target, it transforms into a silver garrote and wraps around one of the target's appendages, dealing an additional 2d12 persistent slashing damage. On a critical hit, it wraps around the target's throat, and the target can't breathe until the persistent damage ends.

MIOGIMO'S MASK ITEM 16

UNIQUE INVESTED MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Price 9,500 gp

Usage worn mask; Bulk L

The crime lord Miogimo almost always appears with this special mask, crafted with a piece of his soul. It has two forms. In its first form, the mask depicts a silvery and angelic face; while wearing the mask in this form, your alignment appears as lawful good to creatures attempting to detect your alignment. In its second form, the mask depicts a gold-skinned demonic face; while wearing the mask in this form, your alignment appears as chaotic evil to creatures attempting to detect your alignment.

If you die while wearing the mask, a fragment of your soul is trapped in the mask, forming a life link. If there was already a soul fragment in the mask when this happens, you roll a Will save against the Will DC of the person who left the previous fragment. If you succeed, your soul fragment replaces the old one. On a failure, you die normally.

Activate \curvearrowright *envision*; **Effect** You switch the mask to its other form.

Activate $\curvearrowright\curvearrowright$ *envision*; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cast *crisis of faith* (DC 34), targeting up to four creatures within 30 feet. If the mask is in its angelic form, you can target only evil and neutral creatures.

If the mask is in its demonic form, you can target only good and neutral creatures.

Activate 10 minutes (command, *envision*, Interact); **Requirements** A soul fragment is in the mask; **Effect** You cast *talking corpse* on the soul fragment, except you communicate telepathically and don't require the fragment's body to speak.

BLACK WHALE TREASURES

The Black Whale contains a number of unusual treasures designed for the warden and prison guards. The three sea-witches on the Riftwake crafted these cruel instruments, and they might possess other items useful in the pursuit of unusual punishment—such as a *ring of lies*, *staff of enchantment*, or even a *wand of slaying*—at your discretion. The witches have equipped each group of prison guards with one *nightmare cudgel* to help keep prisoners in line, and they have a *cauldron of nightmares* in their cabin.

A *forgotten shell*, also crafted by the sea-witches, currently binds the prisoner Marato Alonso. After freeing Marato from the armor, the agents can have the item repaired. Wearing the armor might prove useful to anyone trying to lay low, but welding the armor onto a creature serves as a cruel punishment for an enemy whose strong personality might otherwise pose a threat.

Due to the nature of the sea-witches' evil magic, good-aligned personnel reportedly experience so much pain wielding these cruel instruments that many (if not all) of these guards quit their positions. Good creatures are enfeebled 2 while carrying, wielding, or wearing any of the items crafted by the sea-witches.

NIGHTMARE CUDGEL

ITEM 11

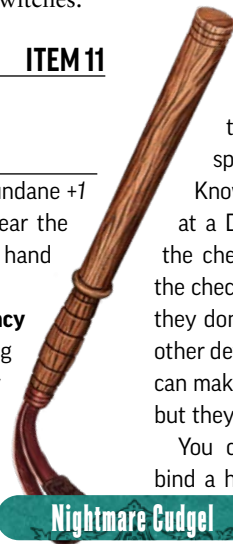
UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 1,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

Crafted from polished wood, this seemingly mundane +1 *striking club* comes with a red leather strap near the handle. The mere sight of the cudgel in a guard's hand fills prisoners with dread.

Activate ♦♦ (emotion, mental) **Interact**; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You initiate an intimidating walk, thumping the cudgel menacingly against your palm. As part of activating this item, you can Stride twice. For the next minute, whenever you successfully Strike a creature with the *nightmare cudgel*, you can use a free action to attempt an Intimidation check to Demoralize the struck creature.



Nightmare Cudgel

CAULDRON OF NIGHTMARES

ITEM 17

RARE ILLUSION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 13,000 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk 1

Engraved with carvings of tortured souls, this green cauldron has two abilities that allow it to capture nightmares and then unleash them on the world. The cauldron has an affinity for preying on the minds of captives and prisoners, who take a -2 circumstance penalty to saving throws against it.

Activate ♦ **Interact**; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The cauldron casts *nightmare* (DC 35) on a target creature that you know by name. The target must be on the same plane as you. If the target fails its save and is 15th level or lower, you add its nightmare to the cauldron. The cauldron can hold only six nightmares at a time; when you add a new nightmare, you choose which six to keep.

Activate ♦♦ **Interact**; **Frequency** once per week; **Effect** You spill the nightmarish contents of the cauldron onto the ground and choose one creature whose nightmare is stored in your cauldron. A nightmare copy of the chosen creature springs to life from the bubbling pile of horror. The cauldron casts *duplicate foe* on the target, ignoring the range restriction, and the target automatically fails its saving throw. All enemies within 20 feet of the cauldron are subjected to a *fear* spell (DC 35). All other nightmares stored in the cauldron are lost. The cauldron becomes totally inert and can't be used again for 1 week.

Craft Requirements Supply a casting of *nightmare*.

FORGOTTEN SHELL

ITEM 13

RARE DIVINATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 2,500 gp

Usage worn armor; Bulk 4

This +2 *resilient full plate*, crafted from grim plates of iron, covers the entire body except for small holes for the eyes and mouth. While wearing the armor, you gain the benefits of a *nondetection* spell. Additionally, creatures attempting to Recall Knowledge about a subject involving you must succeed at a DC 30 Will save. On a success, they can attempt the check normally. On a failure, they can still attempt the check, but even if they successfully Recall Knowledge, they don't remember you (although they might remember other details about the event). Creatures that fail their save can make another attempt to Recall Knowledge about you, but they must wait 24 hours to do so.

You can spend 1 hour using blacksmithing tools to bind a helpless Medium humanoid inside the suit, which welds the suit shut and makes it impossible to remove without breaking it (Hardness 9, HP 36, BT 18). The humanoid inside the suit counts as being Invested while bound in this fashion and can't break out of the suit on its own. If the suit is welded shut, the creature gains the benefits above but also the following penalties: Whenever the humanoid attempts a Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Performance check, they must roll twice and use the worse result. Additionally, creatures the humanoid encounters have an initial attitude toward them of one degree worse than they normally would (for instance, unfriendly instead of indifferent).

Craft Requirements Supply a casting of *nondetection* and *outcast's curse*.

CLOCKWORK TREASURES

A master artificer, Vancaskerkin has developed many amazing clockwork items that lie scattered throughout his stronghold beneath *Eyes on Absalom's* headquarters.

CLOCKWORK CLOAK

ITEM 18

UNCOMMON CLOCKWORK INVESTED MAGICAL

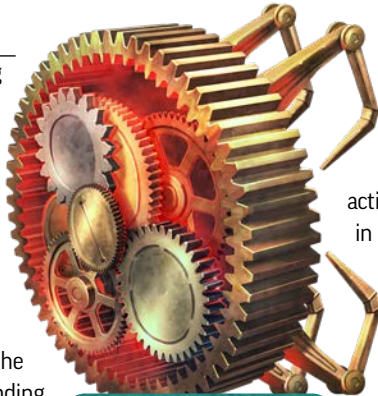
Price 20,000 gp

Usage worn cloak; **Bulk** L

Paper-thin interlocking gears and winding cogs make up this bronze cloak.

Activate Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You're struck by a melee attack with a held weapon; **Effect** You deflect the blow and attempt to catch the weapon in the cloak's gears. Make an Athletics check to Disarm the weapon.

Activate Interact; **Effect** You wrap the cloak around yourself and the winding gears decelerate your body, causing you to enter standby mode. While in standby mode you don't need to eat, drink, or sleep. You remain aware of your surroundings but take a -4 penalty to Perception checks. You can stay in standby mode indefinitely, although your body ages normally. You can leave standby mode as a free action. If you do so to initiate combat, you gain a +2 item bonus to your initiative roll.



Clockwork Rejuvenator

CLOCKWORK REJUVENATOR

ITEM 18

RARE CLOCKWORK CONSUMABLE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Price 4,500 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate or Interact; **Requirements** The round you activate the rejuvenator, you must first spend either 1 Interact action or 2 Interact actions to wind the device.

This device has four finger-like latches centered around a whirling mass of gears. After winding the *clockwork rejuvenator*, you can latch it to the chest of an adjacent recently dead creature and return it to life. If you wound the rejuvenator using 1 Interact action, you can return to life a creature that died in the last 2 rounds, restoring it to 1 HP. If you wound the rejuvenator using 2 Interact actions, you can return to life a creature that died within the last 3 rounds. After attaching, the device continues to whirl for 1 minute, restoring 10 HP per round to the target. Thereafter, the *clockwork rejuvenator* loses its magic and becomes inert.

GEARBLADE

ITEM 17

RARE CLOCKWORK INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 13,000 gp

Usage held in 1 or 2 hands; **Bulk** 2

Shaped like a blade made from spinning gears, this +2 *greater striking weapon* can catch enemy weapons and grind up foes. In order to function, the *gearblade* must be wound for 10 minutes once every 24 hours. During this process, you can reconfigure the weapon to transform into a bastard sword, greatsword, longsword, or shortsword. It then gains all the features of the chosen weapon except that its Bulk is always 2 and it gains the disarm weapon trait and the versatile B weapon trait (which replaces any other versatile trait the weapon might have). If you don't wind the *gearblade*, it becomes inert and has the statistics of a greatclub.

Activate envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** You've wound the *gearblade* for 10 minutes within the last 24 hours; **Trigger** You roll a critical success to Disarm a target with the *gearblade*; **Effect** The target's weapon is pulled through the *gearblade's* gears and shoots out the other side, landing 20 feet away in a direction of your choice. The target must attempt a DC 36 Reflex save. On a failure, the limb holding their weapon is also pulled into the *gearblade*, and the creature takes

3d12 bludgeoning damage. On a critical failure, they take 6d12 bludgeoning damage and the limb becomes unusable until healed by a *regenerate* spell or a similar effect.

CLOCKWORK HELM

ITEM 17

RARE CLOCKWORK INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 13,000 gp

Usage worn headwear; **Bulk** L

Rotating gears cover the outside of this imposing helmet. In order to function, the device must be wound for 10 minutes once every 24 hours. The *clockwork helm* has a calming and focusing effect on the mind. If you're affected by a detrimental condition caused by a mental or emotion effect, each round at the beginning of your turn, the gears of the helmet unwind and reduce the value of the condition by 1. This effect works only if the condition's value can normally be reduced by simply waiting; otherwise the helmet has no effect.

Activate envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** You've wound the *clockwork helm* for 10 minutes within the last 24 hours; **Effect** You fire a beam of withering heat from the helmet's eye slits at a target. Make a spell or ranged attack roll (your choice) to affect the target. On a hit, the target takes 10d8 fire damage and is drained 2.



Clockwork Helm

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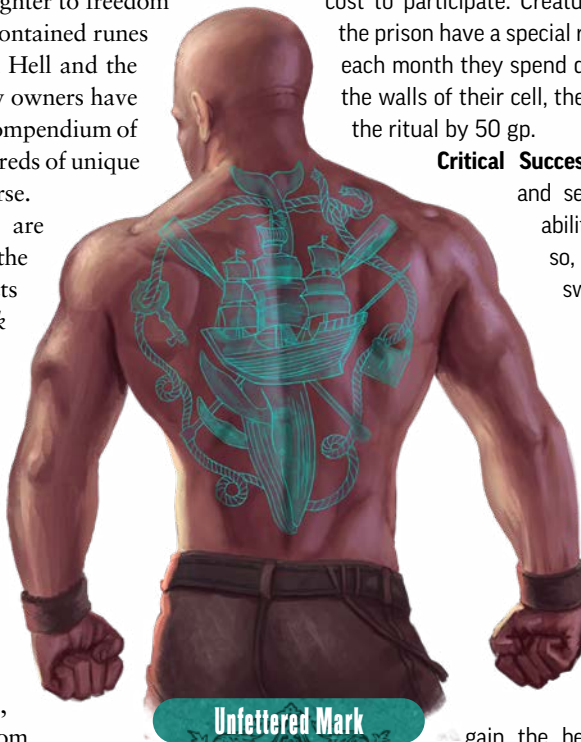
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UNFETTERED MARKS

Ages ago, a powerful yamah azata named Lahiah traveled the planes, rescuing good creatures imprisoned by evil magic. Her heart wept for the poor souls that she found languishing in the depths of the outer planes' worst dungeons and prisons. In time, she developed a magical book called the *Book of the Unbound*, which contained a host of rituals for the creation of *unfettered marks*. Each *unfettered mark* is a design that can be tattooed onto a creature to aid its escape from a magical prison. The design of each mark is centered around a unique rune tied to a specific prison, cell, or other holding facility. The fate of Lahiah is lost to legend, but the *Book of the Unbound* has been passed down over the ages from freedom fighter to freedom fighter. Originally, the book contained runes for only the worst prisons in Hell and the Abyss, but over the years new owners have added runes to it, creating a compendium of *unfettered marks* tied to hundreds of unique prisons all across the multiverse.

Since each tattoo's marks are tied to a specific prison, the exact ritual, design, and effects of each *unfettered mark* vary. An *unfettered mark* provides abilities useful for overcoming the specific obstacles presented by a prison. However, an *unfettered mark* serves only as a tool to escape—it's up to a prisoner to use one effectively. Provided below is a sample *unfettered mark* ritual designed for escaping the Black Whale, which the agents learn from Miogimo at the end of Chapter 1.



escape from the Black Whale and Stormholt (the demiplane that overlaps with the Black Whale). While Crafting is the easiest method for creating this tattoo, the artistry is less important than maintaining a feeling of freedom in your mind while performing the ritual. Because of this, you can use any skill as long as it holds a special significance to you. A ranger who is at home in the woods, for example, could use a Survival or Nature check while creating the tattoo. If the target already has a successful *unfettered mark* currently active, the magic fades from the old tattoo and is replaced by the results of the new ritual.

The ritual can be performed alone or with the aid of up to 10 secondary casters. Each secondary caster must tattoo themselves with their own tattoo and pay the full ritual cost to participate. Creatures currently held captive in the prison have a special relationship with the ritual: for each month they spend drawing memories of home on the walls of their cell, they can reduce the total cost of the ritual by 50 gp.

Critical Success The target and primary and secondary casters all gain the ability to leave Stormholt. To do so, they must leave the prison by swimming through the water or by riding in a vessel that is in contact with the water (such as a rowboat). When they reach the great whirlpool, they are pulled under as normal, but instead of being transported to the Flotsam Graveyard in Absalom, they are immediately transported (as *teleport*) to a location in Absalom of their choice. They also

gain the benefits of *water walk*, *water breathing*, and resistance to electricity 10 for the duration of the ritual.

Success As critical success, except the affected creatures don't gain the benefits of *water walk* and *water breathing*.

Failure You create the tattoo but fail to imbue it with magic.

Critical Failure As failure, but the tattoo also creates an unwholesome bond with the demiplane of Stormholt. For 24 hours, the target and the primary and secondary casters gain a fishlike appearance and are covered in a slimy membrane. They gain the ability to breathe both water and air, but their skin quickly dries out when on land. After 1 hour on land they become drained 1 and fatigued, conditions that can be removed only if they reenter water. Additionally, the membrane conducts electricity well, causing them to gain weakness 10 to electricity.

UNFETTERED MARK

RARE **ABJURATION**

Cast 1 hour; **Cost** rare inks and needles worth a total value of 100 gp × the spell level × the target's level (see text);

Secondary Casters 0 to 10

Primary Check Crafting (master) or any (legendary);

Secondary Checks any (see text)

Range touch; **Targets** 1 creature or self

Duration 24 hours until the magic fades; the tattoo is permanent

You tattoo the target with rare inks and create a magical tattoo called an *unfettered mark*. This particular version of the *unfettered mark* grants the target special powers to

RITUAL 8

CLOCKWORK AMALGAM

A clockwork amalgam is a powerful construct created by applying magic to a collection of interchangeable internal mechanisms. Each clockwork amalgam has unique properties, although most stand roughly 12 feet tall and have five clockwork appendages tipped with integrated weapons.

CLOCKWORK AMALGAM

CREATURE 20

RARE N LARGE CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +36

Skills Athletics +38

Str +10, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

AC 43; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +35, **Will** +28

HP 455; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** electricity 20, orichalcum 20; **Resistances** physical 15 (except adamantite or orichalcum)

Efficient Winding A clockwork amalgam must be wound up (see the clockwork assassin's Wind Up on page 50), but it can function for 7 days each time it is wound.

Recalibrate ♦♦ The clockwork amalgam can recalibrate its internal structure to shed damaged components and replace them with new ones, restoring 125 HP to the construct. Each time it uses this ability, the clockwork amalgam permanently deactivates one of its five melee attacks as the components from that arm reassemble within the core of the machine.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ blade +38 (magical, reach 10 feet),

Damage 4d12+18 slashing

Melee ♦ blowtorch +38 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 10d6 fire

Melee ♦ claw +38 (magical, reach 10 feet),

Damage 4d8+18 slashing plus Push

Melee ♦ hose +38 (magical, reach 15 feet),

Damage 4d8+18 bludgeoning plus Grab

Melee ♦ stamper +38 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d8+18 bludgeoning plus Knockdown

Ranged ♦ spike +35 (magical, range increment 40 feet), **Damage** 4d12+8 piercing

Whirring Doom ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round;

Effect The clockwork amalgam becomes a blur of spinning weaponry. It makes up to five melee Strikes (one for each active melee attack it has available), taking a -4 penalty to the attack roll for each attack, but ignoring the multiple attack penalty until it has made all of its attacks. It can use each melee attack only once and it can target each creature in reach only once. If the clockwork amalgam used Whirring Doom in the previous round, it can use it again this round using only 1 action instead of 3. The amalgam's movement Speed is halved until the end of its next turn.



FELL AMALGAMS

Some clockwork amalgams become possessed by fell spirits or fiendish influences. Gifted with a spark of sentience, these "fell amalgams" purposely seek out other clockwork creations to destroy, collecting their parts and incorporating them into the fell amalgams' own ever-growing clockwork bodies. Unlike with typical clockworks, a fell amalgam's intricate clockwork brain can hatch cunning schemes and far-reaching plans.

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VERSATILE CREATIONS

Some spellcasters favor elemental vessels because of their versatility.

Their power and intelligence make them excellent guardians when not inhabited. But they can also be imbued with useful spells and inhabited from any distance, allowing spellcasters to influence events far from their location.

ELEMENTAL VESSEL, WATER

Spellcasters create elemental vessels by harvesting raw elemental energy and then binding it within a specially enchanted magic circle to grant it life.

ELEMENTAL VESSEL, WATER

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON N LARGE AQUATIC ELEMENTAL WATER

Perception +28

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Common

Skills Athletics +32, Stealth +32

Str +8, **Dex** +8, **Con** +8, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0

Spell Circle (mental) By performing an hour-long ritual, an elemental vessel can form a spell circle with an arcane or primal spellcaster. After the spell circle is formed, other spellcasters can join the spell circle by performing the same hour-long ritual while assisted by at least one spellcaster already in the spell circle. Each member of the spell circle must contribute at least one spell to the elemental vessel. The spellcaster permanently loses access to a spell slot equal to the spell's level and the elemental vessel adds the contributed spell to its list of arcane innate spells (regardless of the spell's original type). An elemental vessel can be imbued with no more than three spells per spell level. If the elemental vessel is destroyed, all members of the spell circle regain the spell slots they contributed to the creature. The arcane innate spells shown below represent a typical spell list for an elemental vessel, but each elemental vessel is likely to have different spells depending on what its spell circle has contributed.

AC 40; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +28, **Will** +22

HP 225; **Immunities** bleed, paralyzed, poison, sleep;

Resistances fire 15

Dispel Vulnerability Whenever a creature successfully counteracts one of its spells, the vessel permanently loses access to that spell and takes damage equal to 4 × the spell's level. The spell circle member who contributed that spell regains access to their contributed spell slot.

Inhabit Vessel (mental) Any member of the elemental vessel's spell circle can spend 3 actions to mentally inhabit the vessel for 1 round. While they inhabit the vessel, the inhabiter controls the vessel's actions, and the vessel uses the inhabiter's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma modifiers for all checks. Only one creature can inhabit an elemental vessel at a time.

Speed 35 feet, swim 100 feet

Melee ♦ wave +30 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+12 bludgeoning plus Push 10 feet

Arcane Innate Spells DC 38, attack +30; **8th** polar ray; **7th** prismatic spray, volcanic eruption; **6th** fireball, purple worm sting; **5th** mariner's curse, wall of ice; **4th** dimension door, wall of fire; **3rd** earthbind, paralyze, vampiric touch; **2nd** dispel magic, obscuring mist, touch of idiocy; **1st** hydraulic push, shocking grasp, spider sting

Engulf ♦♦ DC 35, no damage, Escape DC 35, Rupture 28

Internal Spell Strike ♦ The elemental vessel targets an engulfed creature with one of its spells. The spell must have a range of touch.



LUSCA

A lusca is a predatory sea monster that resembles a three-headed shark with the body of an octopus. Ferocious electrical storms usually herald a lusca's arrival; such violent bursts of electricity result from the creature's superconductive flesh, which allows the lusca to store energy from lightning strikes that it can then discharge at foes.

LUSCA

CREATURE 17

UNCOMMON CE GARGANTUAN ABERRATION AQUATIC

Perception +31; blood scent, darkvision, scent (imprecise) 100 feet

Languages Aquan, Common

Skills Athletics +34, Intimidation +30, Survival +31

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +9, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Blood Scent The lusca can smell blood in the water up to 1 mile away.

AC 40; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +26, **Will** +29

HP 320; **Immunities** electricity

All-Around Vision

Storm Bringer (aura, evocation, primal) When the lusca is near the surface for more than 1 hour, clouds appear and deliver a thunderstorm with a 2-mile radius centered on its location. The weather returns to normal 1 hour after the lusca departs.

Attack of Opportunity ⚡ The lusca gains 2 extra reactions at the start of each of its turns that it can use only to make an Attack of Opportunity with its jaws. It can't use more than one Attack of Opportunity triggered by the same action.

Speed 10 feet, swim 50 feet

Melee ⚔ jaws +35 (magical, reach 20 feet),

Damage 3d12+17 piercing plus Grab

Melee ⚔ tentacle +35 (magical, reach 40 feet),

Damage 3d10+17 bludgeoning plus lusca venom

Primal Innate Spells DC 38; **9th** *chain lightning* (×3);

8th *punishing winds* (×3)

Capsize ⚔ (attack) The lusca tries to capsize an adjacent aquatic vessel of its size or smaller. It must succeed at an Athletics check with a DC of 35 (reduced by 5 for each size smaller the vessel is than the lusca) or the pilot's Sailing Lore DC, whichever is higher.

Lusca Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 38; **Maximum**

Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 4d6 poison damage and

clumsy 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 6d6 poison damage and

clumsy 2 (1 round)

Ravenous Jaws ⚔⚔ The lusca makes three jaws Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks count toward the lusca's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after the lusca makes all of these attacks. If the lusca subsequently uses the Grab action, it Grabs any number of creatures it hit with Ravenous Jaws.

Rend ⚔ jaws

Swallow Whole ⚔ (attack) Huge, 4d12+9 bludgeoning, Rupture 38



BLUE HOLES

Luscas frequently lurk in blue holes—marine sinkholes that descend far below the surrounding sea bottom and connect to flooded subterranean passages or deeper into the Darklands. For all their might, however, luscas don't dominate these lightless realms. Rather, they are but one of many types of crafty and titanic sea monsters, from the more-familiar aboleths and krakens to bizarre hybrids of whales, eels, and cuttlefish.

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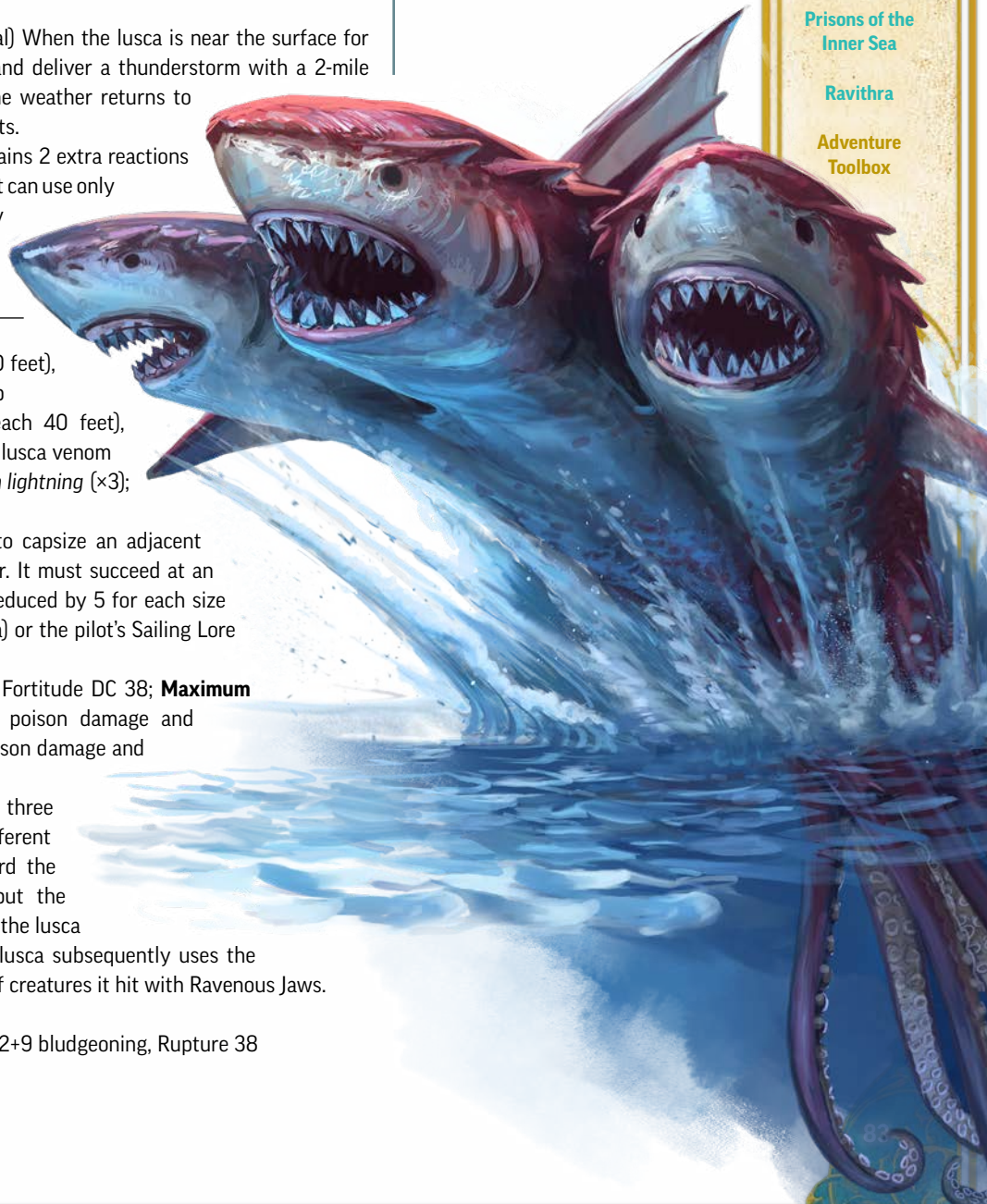
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MONSTROUS ESTHETES

Despite its aberrant appearance, a minchgorm considers itself a creature of refined tastes, exhibiting a love of poetry and other vocal performances. Solitary minchgorms often entertain themselves by staging elaborate recitals and productions cast entirely with their own simulacra.

MINCHGORM

An oddity even among the strange creatures of the First World of the fey, the aquatic minchgorm is a monstrous alien maw ringed with writhing tendrils. It interacts with the world through grasping, speaking simulacra that it magically shapes from water.

MINCHGORM

CREATURE 18

RARE NE HUGE AMPHIBIOUS FEY WATER

Perception +30; darkvision, wavesense (imprecise) 100 feet

Languages Aquan, Aklo, Common; *tongues* (can speak only through simulacra)

Skills Athletics +34, Intimidation +34, Performance +36

Str +8, **Dex** +0, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +8

AC 42; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +33

HP 440; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15; **Resistances** fire 15

Speed 5 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +37 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+16 piercing plus Improved Grab

Primal Innate Spells DC 40; **9th** *hydraulic torrent*; **5th** *control water* (×3); **Constant (5th)** *tongues*

Fast Swallow ⤵ **Trigger** The minchgorm Grabs a creature in its jaws; **Effect** The minchgorm uses Swallow Whole.

Riptide ♦♦ (conjunction, primal, water) Tentacles of water rise up and attempt to Grapple all enemies within 15 feet of the minchgorm. The minchgorm attempts an Athletics check against the Fortitude DC of each creature in the area. On a success, the creature is grabbed (Escape DC 40). On a critical success, or a success against a creature that is already grabbed, the target begins to drown (Pathfinder Core Rulebook 478).

Swallow Whole ♦ Large, 3d10+16 bludgeoning, Rupture 36

Watery Simulacra ♦♦ (concentrate, conjunction, primal, water) The minchgorm raises up to eight figures from nearby water, each appearing in an empty space within 60 feet of the minchgorm. A simulacrum can take any shape of size Medium or smaller that the minchgorm desires, including that of a specific individual or object, but is always plainly made of water. The minchgorm can speak, cast spells, and use its senses through its simulacra, spending actions for a simulacrum on a one-for-one basis. By using a single action with the concentrate trait, the minchgorm can cause any number of simulacra to Fly, Step, Stride, or Swim up to 60 feet. A simulacrum uses the minchgorm's AC and saving throws and has 30 Hit Points. A minchgorm can have up to eight simulacra in existence at once. Simulacra dissolve immediately when more than 60 feet from the minchgorm, or if the minchgorm dies or falls unconscious. The minchgorm can dismiss any number of its simulacra as a free action.

MYRUCARX

The slithering, shapeless beings known as myrucarxes occasionally slip into the Material Plane from their domains deep in the Shadow Plane, seeking to torment those who love light. Myrucarxes weave powerful illusions to draw unsuspecting victims into their squirming embrace, and they favor large cities as hunting grounds. Rather than devastate a community, a myrucarx instead prefers to snatch only a few victims to engender fear and paranoia, then retreat somewhere dark to hibernate for months or years before renewing its terrors. A myrucarx resembles a monstrous, oily slug with tentacles ending in gnashing jaws, but most victims only ever see the illusory personas it projects to lure and torment its prey.

MYRUCARX

CREATURE 18

RARE NE LARGE ABERRATION

Perception +33; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo, Common, Shadowtongue

Skills Athletics +33, Deception +34, Occultism +31, Society +31, Stealth +34

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +6

Odorless A myrucarx emits no smell and can't be detected by scent.

AC 41; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +28, **Will** +30

HP 340; **Resistances** cold 20

Light Blindness

Painful Light When attempting a save against a light effect, a myrucarx gets a result one degree of success lower than it rolled. A myrucarx caught in sunlight is stunned 2 and clumsy 2.

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet; *freedom of movement*

Melee ♦ jaws +34 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 piercing plus Grab

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** *chilling darkness*, *eclipse burst*, *project image* (at will; see illusory persona); **7th** *chilling darkness* (at will), *darkness* (at will), *mask of terror* (self only), *plane shift* (to Material Plane or Shadow Plane only) **5th** *hallucinatory terrain* (at will); **2nd** *invisibility* (at will, self only); **Constant (8th)** *freedom of movement*

Illusory Persona The illusion created by the myrucarx's *project image* can resemble any Medium humanoid, including any specific individual it has seen, and has appropriate voice, scent, and mannerisms, allowing the myrucarx to use its Deception check to Impersonate that humanoid if it chooses.

Twisting Reach ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The fanged mouths at the ends of a myrucarx's tendrils twist around obstacles. The myrucarx makes two jaws Strikes against the same target, ignoring the target's cover. Both attacks count toward the myrucarx's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks are made. The myrucarx can't Grab as its next action after Twisting Reach.



MYRUCARX CABALS

Myrucarxes rarely defer to any other creature, but they grudgingly acknowledge the authority of cabals of powerful myrucarxes dwelling in deep caverns on the Shadow Plane. These cabals don't bother with the mundane work of terrorizing Material Plane cities; instead, they engage in worlds-spanning schemes to extinguish suns and create entire planets of cold, benighted horror.

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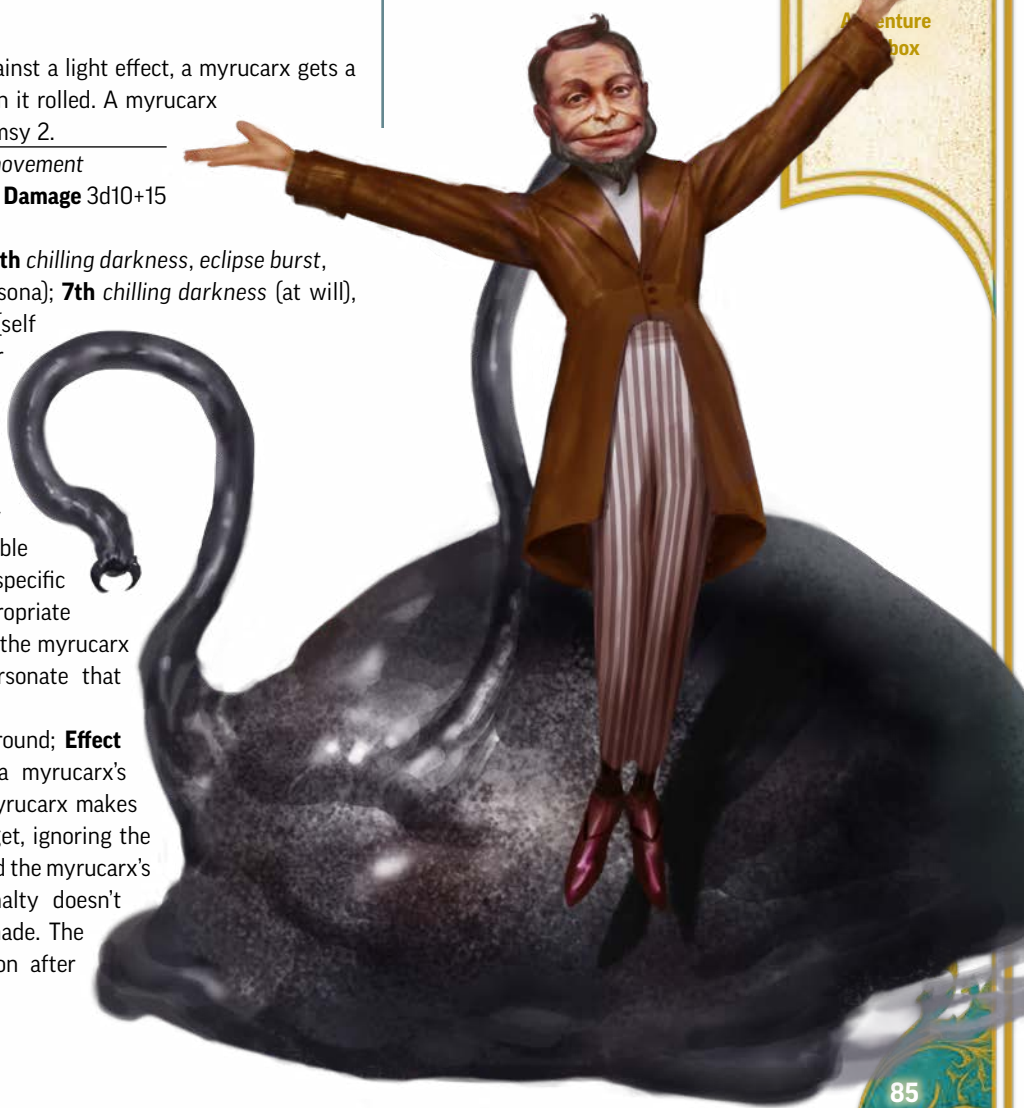
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OBROUSIAN ALLIES

Obrousians train aquatic monsters like sharks and bunyips, both to provide cover for their more subtle attacks and to dispose of any evidence left behind in their assaults. Clever obrousians can convince locals that simple monsters are responsible for their attacks.

OBROUSIAN

Spawned from sorrow and hatred, obrousians are undead merfolk who lurk in shallow places to prey upon hated land dwellers. The genesis of an obrousian is a tragic one: some merfolk forsake their aquatic homes when they fall in love with a land dweller, only to be spurned or rejected. Having given up their world for another and then feeling that new world closed off to them as well, merfolk can become emotionally overwhelmed. When such merfolk die, often overcome with sorrow, they rise as obrousians.

Obrousians think of little other than revenge upon the land dwellers who wronged them, and upon anyone else who crosses their path. They can contort their bodies to take the guise of other humanoids, but doing so is painful, so obrousians use this ability only when necessary to enact their schemes. Their underlying mental turmoil simmers beneath any careful preparation, and many obrousians foil their own plans with unexpected outbursts of emotion.

Obrousians are recognizable as the merfolk they were in life, though their bodies show obvious decay and their hands have elongated into sharp claws. Their voices are melodic and entrancing, belying their rotting bodies and turbulent minds, so some obrousians hide in tall reeds or under docks before speaking to their victims, lulling them into false comfort with a pleasant voice.

OBROUSIAN

CREATURE 14

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Aquan, Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +26 (+28 to Swim), Deception +27, Intimidation +25, Nature +24, Stealth +26

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7

AC 36; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +22, **Will** +28

HP 250, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Waves of Sorrow (aura, divine, enchantment, incapacitation, mental) 30 feet. When a creature ends its turn in the aura, it is overwhelmed by the sorrow that suffuses the obrousian's being. The creature must succeed at a DC 33 Will save or become paralyzed for 1 round.

Speed 5 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +29 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d8+12 slashing plus Grab

Divine Innate Spells DC 34; **7th** warp mind (×3); **3rd** enthrall (at will)

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph, transmutation) The obrousian can take on the appearance of any Small or Medium humanoid. This increases their Speed to 25 feet. It doesn't change their attack and damage modifiers with their Strikes, but it might change the

damage type their Strikes deal (typically to bludgeoning).

Drowning Grasp When a creature is grabbed by the obrousian, its lungs magically fill with water. A creature that can't breathe water is suffocating while it is grabbed.



ZEALBORN

Zealborn arise from mortals who become consumed by a noble or idealistic vision and choose undeath as a means of pursuing that vision. Unlike liches, who use undeath as a path toward immortality and individual power, zealborn undergo their transformation with the total conviction that their cause is so just it should never die. They manipulate and control dozens of fanatical followers who sacrifice themselves—and rise again as powerful zeal-damned ghouls—for the zealborn's cause.

ZEALBORN

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +23; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +25, Deception +25, Diplomacy +27, Society +19, Stealth +22

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +7

Items breastplate, +1 *striking morningstar*, sling with 20 bullets

Little Favors (mental, occult) Each time a creature willingly performs a service, quest, or task for the zealborn, the creature takes a cumulative –1 status penalty to saving throws against the zealborn's mental spells and abilities (maximum –4).

AC 33; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +22, **Will** +24; +1 status bonus to Will saves vs. mental effects

HP 210, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, negative, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** chaotic 10

Rejuvenation (necromancy, occult) When a zealborn is destroyed, it re-forms, fully healed, near a follower of its choice in 1d10 days. For the purposes of rejuvenation, a follower is defined as an intelligent creature who's well acquainted with the zealborn and is a true believer in the zealborn's mission, not merely a lukewarm supporter. A zealborn can be permanently destroyed only if they have no current followers or can be convinced to end their own life.

Zealous Restoration A zealborn can't regain Hit Points through resting or negative healing; they feed only on the idealism of their supporters, regaining 10 Hit Points per day for each creature under the effects of a *geas* cast by the zealborn. Creatures under a zealborn's *geas* have their maximum HP reduced by 10 each day until they are burned away to a husk and perish. After 24 hours, such creatures rise as zeal-damned ghouls under the zealborn's control. Zeal-damned ghouls eat only the flesh of evil or chaotic creatures and deal an additional 1d6 chaotic and 1d6 negative damage with their attacks. (See page 9 for an example of zeal-damned ghoul statistics.)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *morningstar* +24 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 2d6+9 bludgeoning plus 2d6 chaotic and 2d6 negative

Ranged ♦ sling +24 (propulsive, range increment 50 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning plus 2d6 chaotic and 2d6 negative

Occult Innate Spells DC 33; **6th** *dominate*, *zealous conviction*; **5th** *hallucination*, *subconscious suggestion*; **4th** *veil*; **3rd** *enthrall*; **2nd** *illusory creature* (at will)

Occult Ritual DC 33; *geas*

CREATURE 12



REDEMPTION

Zealborns begin with a great desire to do good but can become twisted mockeries of their ideals. When confronted with the horrors wrought by their crusades, some can be shocked out of their obsession; they can release themselves from undeath if they truly realize how far they've strayed from their original cause.



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MIOGIMO



Once a human guard, Miogimo dedicated himself to protecting his home city of Absalom. He served in the Token Guard for many years, battling the organization's rampant corruption, and then later transferred to the First Guard, where he swiftly rose through the ranks. Near the middle of his career, he took Wynsal Starborn under his wing, serving as the young guard's mentor. During a minor siege, Miogimo deflected a lethal arrow and saved Wynsal's life, creating a lifelong debt.

Miogimo eventually grew restless with the First Guard and transferred to the Starwatch. During his years there, he became more willing to bend the rules in order put criminals away for good, but his efforts seemed futile. Inevitably new crime lords arose to replace the old. As his retirement drew closer, Miogimo became bitter that his life's work had resulted in so little lasting change for the city he loved.

After a particularly nasty investigation involving a vampire who murdered victims on their wedding day, Miogimo snapped. He personally killed the creature, but rather than write up a report for the watch, he instead delved into the monster's occult library. He needed to prolong his existence in order to truly rid the city of such evil. Using the profane knowledge he gleaned from the vampire's tomes, Miogimo ritually transformed himself into an undead creature called a zealborn (page 87).

A lifetime of guard work has convinced Miogimo that law and order can't completely eliminate crime. The only way to truly defeat Absalom's villains, he believes, is to behave just like them. To this end, following his transformation, Miogimo has established a criminal empire in the Undercity beneath Eastgate. Mocking the other city guards, he views his gang as another (more effective) division of the city watch and calls it the Shadow Guard. He uses his criminal empire to do "good" throughout the city and "protect" its citizens—an agenda that typically involves slaying anyone whom Miogimo deems a threat to peace in Absalom.

Miogimo's enterprise eventually grew large enough to threaten the infamous Bloody Barbers thieves' guild, but a veteran Starwatch investigator named Grimwold led a daring raid and captured him, disrupting the crime lord's plans. Miogimo was dragged before Acting Primarch Wynsal Starborn, who still harbored a faint hope that his old mentor could be redeemed or even cured. Miogimo spat at the offer. Unable to execute the man who saw him through his earliest years on the guard, Wynsal sentenced Miogimo to the Black Whale for 100 years.

Miogimo proved more resourceful than any could have guessed, however. He bided his time and memorized the layout of the prison. Through the guards, he learned about the curious magical properties of Stormholt, the demiplane that encapsulates the Black Whale, and secretly studied the demiplane's powers for potential weak points. He needed a way to circumvent Stormholt's powerful wards to escape the Black Whale, and he found a solution by befriending another prisoner named Atla the Runecaster, who had strange powers over runes, symbols, and tattoo magic. Gifted with inspiration, Atla discovered the runes necessary for escape. She inked a full-back tattoo on Miogimo, creating an *unfettered mark* (page 80) in the process. Although unable to use his normal magic, Miogimo nonetheless won the trust of one prison guard using nothing but honeyed words and deception. Pretending to seek atonement, he convinced the guard to enter his cell and then strangled him. Miogimo took the body, re-locked his cell door, and then slipped over the side of the boat into the sea, leaving a baffling puzzle behind for guards the next morning. He used the fallen guard's corpse to distract the hungry lusca patrolling Stormholt and swam back to Absalom with the aid of his *unfettered mark*.

Back on shore, it was a simple matter for Miogimo to seek out his old contacts, destroy the treacherous allies who betrayed him, and rebuild his criminal empire. His aspirations burn brighter than ever, and he has vowed never to be caught off guard again.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Early in this adventure, Miogimo and the Edgewatch agents engage in a battle of morals, as the crime lord attempts to win the agents over to his vision of how the world should be. Lawful- and good-aligned characters might in turn try to show Miogimo the error of his ways, possibly even succeeding over the long term. Regardless, the agents must earn Miogimo's trust in order to learn what he knows about the Black Whale. Without his knowledge, they have little hope of escaping the prison's demiplane once they enter it.

Miogimo is one of Absalom's most dangerous criminals. If he lives through this adventure with his power left unchecked, he could eventually threaten the entire city with his dire schemes. On the other hand, his iron fist might be the only way of controlling the city's other major criminal elements; in Miogimo's absence, an even more malignant villain could rise to fill the power vacuum.

MIOGIMO

CREATURE 17

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Male zealborn criminal mastermind (page 87)

Perception +31; darkvision

Languages Common, Halfling, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +31, Athletics +28, Deception +33, Diplomacy +35, Occultism +28, Society +28, Stealth +31, Underworld Lore +28

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +8

Items darts (20), +2 greater striking katana, Miogimo's mask (page 77), +2 resilient studded leather

Little Favors As zealborn.

AC 40; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +30, **Will** +31; +1 status bonus to Will saves vs. mental effects

HP 310, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, negative, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** chaotic 10

Rejuvenation (necromancy, occult) As zealborn.

Trickster's Ace ➤ **Trigger** An effect would cause Miogimo to become immobilized, grabbed, or restrained or would slow his movement; **Effect** Miogimo casts *freedom of movement* on himself.

Zealous Restoration As zealborn.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ katana +32 (deadly 2d8, disarm, magical, two-hand 3d10, versatile P), **Damage** 3d6+13 slashing plus 2d6 chaotic and 2d6 negative

Ranged ♦ dart +29 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4+11 piercing plus 2d6 chaotic and 2d6 negative

Occult Innate Spells DC 41; **6th** dominate, zealous

conviction; **5th** hallucination, subconscious suggestion;

4th veil; **3rd** enthrall; **2nd** illusory creature (at will)

Occult Prepared Spells DC 39; **7th** freedom of movement;

6th blade barrier, mislead

Occult Ritual DC 39; *geas*, unfettered mark

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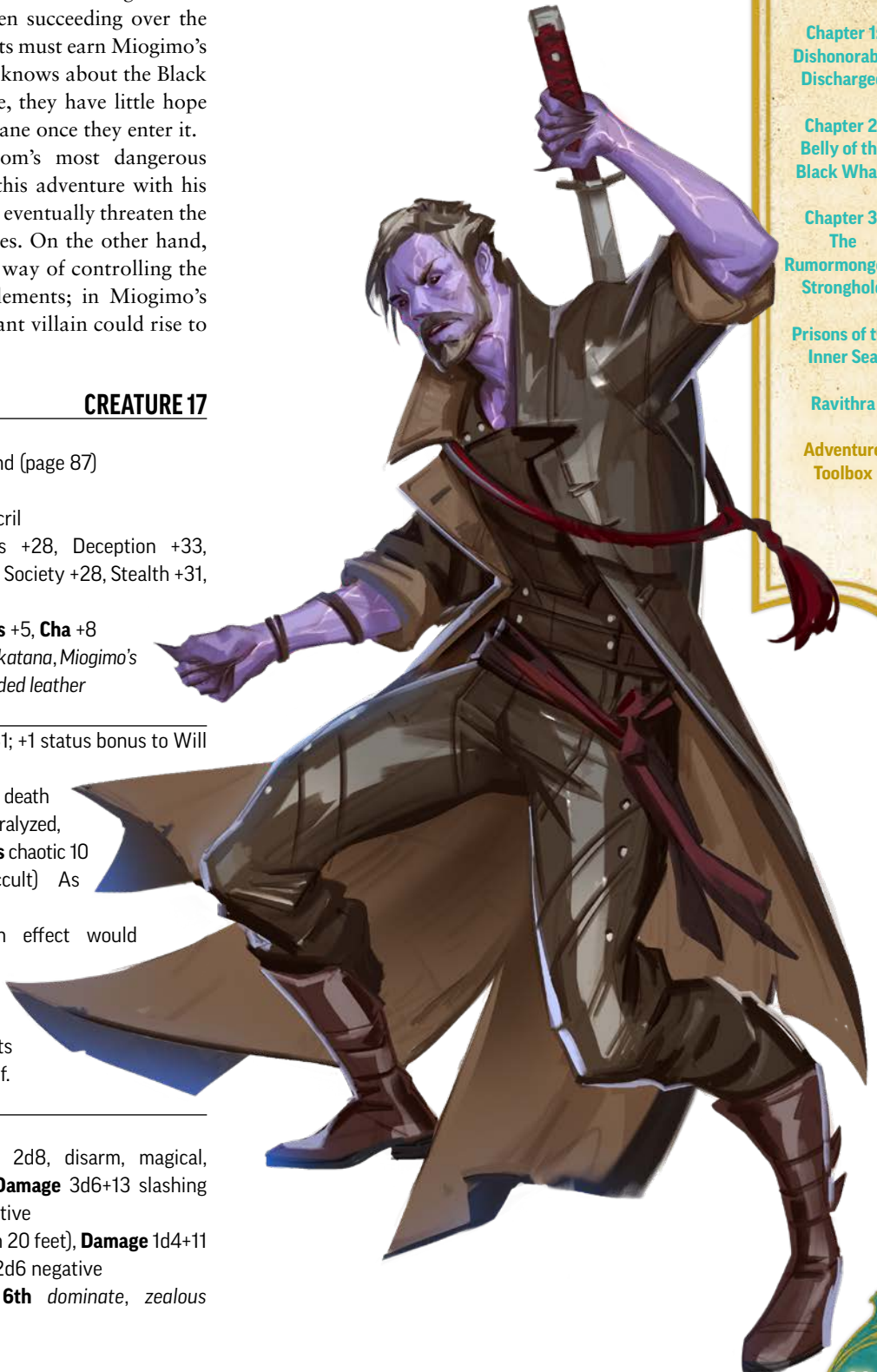
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REGINALD VANCASKERKIN



Like many of the Vancaskerkins—a widespread and mildly infamous family based in Varisia—Reginald learned numerous dubious life lessons at an early age in the town of Riddleport. Ingenious and charismatic, he showed a knack for manipulating both mechanical devices and people. During his teenage years, Reginald decided to strike out on his own. He set sail for Absalom, hoping to extend the reach of the Vancaskerkin family to the most powerful city in the world. His journey was cut short, however, when an enormous kraken capsized his ship.

The kraken—known as Levialar—began devouring the drowning sailors one by one. Reginald used all his powers of persuasion to bargain for his life, and the youth's silver tongue amused Levialar. In the end, Levialar spared Reginald's life, and the sea monster kept him hidden beneath the waves for years, teaching him occult secrets. At last, when the kraken felt he had fully conquered Reginald's mind, Levialar sent the man back to the surface to carry out his will. Reginald finished his journey to Absalom and gained admittance at the Clockwork Cathedral, where he quickly became a master of mechanical devices. Levialar planned to use Reginald's talents as a liar and manipulator to establish a powerful cult in the Puddles.

Reginald proved more resilient than the kraken could've guessed. His mind was still his own, and while studying at the Clockwork Cathedral, he became a devout follower of Norgorber. After acquiring enough secrets and seeding enough vicious rumors, Reginald formed a pact with the shadowy god and learned of a way to defeat his kraken master. He captured Levialar within a clockwork prison and had the beast transported to his lair beneath the Wise District.

Free at last, Reginald could finally pursue his own nefarious schemes. After much experimentation in his private workshop, he devised clever new methods to improve Absalom's printing press technology, after which he founded a popular tabloid called

Eyes on Absalom. Through all his accomplishments, he remained a fervent worshipper of the Reaper of Reputations—he even chose a secret moniker, “the Rumormonger,” which he used in areas of his life that related to his religion—and grew his powers in unique and terrifying ways.

Although he still appears like an average businessman on the surface, Reginald abandoned his humanity long ago. Black ink runs through his veins, and clockwork gears grafted into his skeletal structure grant him incredibly powerful attacks. Even more than his physical modifications, Reginald's very soul is stained by the secrets and forbidden knowledge he has accumulated over the years. Through his hyakume minion Ixusoth, Reginald has spies all over Absalom, and his demon slaves, the lie-masters, twist the secrets he collects into lurid stories for his tabloid. The more secrets he collects—and the more disinformation he sows—the stronger Reginald becomes. Perhaps his greatest occult accomplishment is gaining a measure of control over death itself, for only a creature with more accumulated secret knowledge than Reginald can permanently kill the Rumormonger.

Despite his vile powers, Reginald has a fondness for his family. Although he never returned to Varisia, he still regularly sends letters and follows the sprawling lives of his relatives. Once he brings his plans to fruition and secures the position of primarch for the Vancaskerkin family, Reginald hopes to one day install a Vancaskerkin ruler in every major city in Avistan—all subject to his leadership.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Although Olansa Terimor is ultimately a greater foe, Reginald is the master manipulator of the cabal's campaign. He was the one who devised the plan to create the Twilight Four and form the pact with Norgorber. Reginald nominated Olansa, “the Gray Queen,” to actually take the throne because he knew that whoever

occupied this position would be targeted by the others. Through it all, however, he has carefully laid plans to betray Terimor and take the position of primarch for himself. If the Edgewatch agents don't disrupt his plans, he might very well succeed in taking control of Olansa's body and thus the city of Absalom—a dire situation considering the empire of lies and army of clockwork minions the publisher has at his disposal.

REGINALD VANCASKERKIN CREATURE 18

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM ABERRATION HUMANOID

Male augmented human press mogul

Perception +33

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Daemonic, Infernal

Skills Absalom Lore +31, Acrobatics +32, Deception +34, Diplomacy +34, Engineering Lore +31, Occultism +31, Religion +28, Thievery +29

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +8

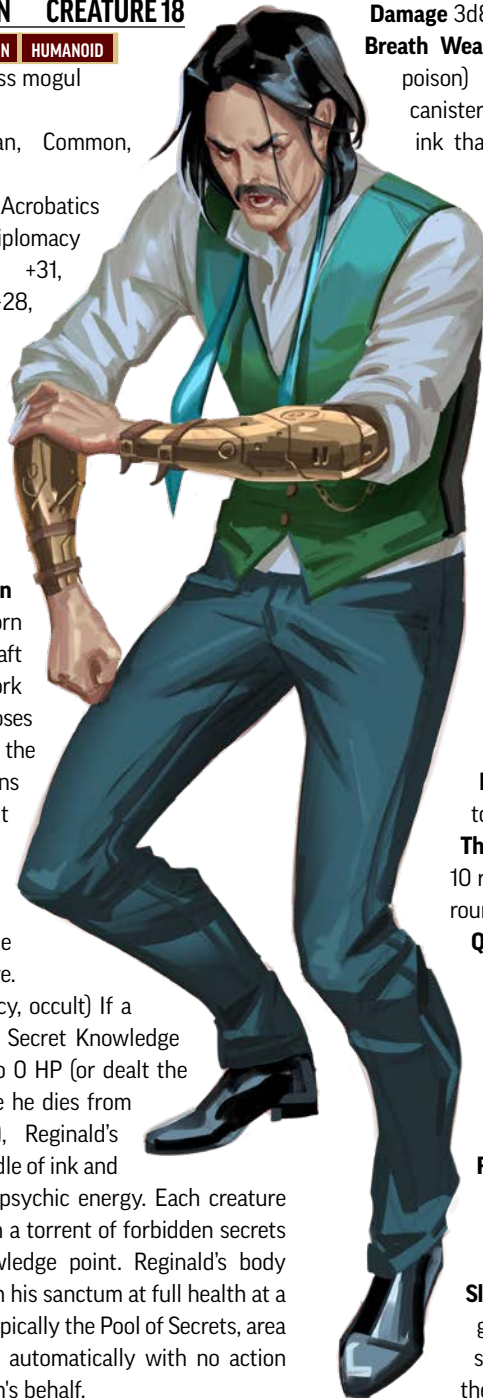
AC 42; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +29, **Will** +28

HP 350; **Weaknesses** electricity 15, orichalcum 15; **Resistances** physical 10

Clockwork Reconstruction

Each time Reginald is reborn in his lair, his machines graft him with a new clockwork modification. He chooses one of his abilities with the clockwork trait. He gains access to this ability but can't use any of his other clockwork abilities. He can't choose the same ability twice in a row. He begins with Ink Blood active.

Secret of Rebirth (necromancy, occult) If a creature with less than 5 Secret Knowledge points reduces Reginald to 0 HP (or dealt the last damage to him before he dies from using Overdrive Engine), Reginald's body dissipates into a puddle of ink and releases a black wave of psychic energy. Each creature within 30 feet is bathed in a torrent of forbidden secrets and gains 1 Secret Knowledge point. Reginald's body reforms 1d6 rounds later in his sanctum at full health at a location of his choosing (typically the Pool of Secrets, area L11). This ability activates automatically with no action necessary on Vancaskerkin's behalf.



Ink Blood ⤵ (clockwork, poison) Reginald's body is filled with toxic ink; **Trigger** An adjacent creature Strikes Reginald with a melee weapon or unarmed attack and deals damage; **Effect** The creature is exposed to Reginald's poison ink.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⬥ bronze fist +34 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d12+14 bludgeoning

Ranged ⬥ steel quill +31 (agile, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+14 piercing

Breath Weapon ⬥⬥ (clockwork, evocation, magical, poison) Reginald's lungs are equipped with ink canisters, allowing him to spew a 60-foot line of ink that deals 9d6 poison damage (DC 39 basic Reflex save; on a failure, the creature is also subjected to Reginald's poison ink).

Overdrive Engine ⬥ (clockwork) Reginald is equipped with clockwork organs to power his body; **Requirements** Reginald has 175 Hit Points or fewer; **Effect** Reginald gains 200 temporary Hit Points, a +15-foot status bonus to Speed, and a +2 status bonus to melee attack rolls. His body begins to overheat, spewing steam that deals 9d6 fire damage at the beginning of his turn to all creatures within 30 feet (DC 40 basic Reflex save). After 2 rounds, Reginald explodes, dealing 19d6 fire damage to all creatures within 60 feet (DC 40 basic Reflex save). Reginald dies. For the purposes of his Secret of Rebirth ability, the last creature to damage Reginald counts as killing him.

Poison Ink (poison) Reginald is immune to the toxic ink that flows through his veins; **Saving Throw** DC 38 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison and sickened 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison sickened 2 (1 round).

Quill Cannon ⬥⬥ (clockwork) Reginald is equipped with a cannon and hundreds of steel quills. He makes two steel quill attacks against every creature in a 60-foot cone, ignoring the multiple attack penalty until after all attacks are made. He can't use Quill Cannon again for 1d4 rounds.

Reflective Plating ⬥ (clockwork, occult) Reginald engages his defensive plating, which casts *spell turning* on him (counteract modifier +32).

Slither With his body composed of ink and gears, Reginald can move through tight spaces as if he were a Tiny creature, treating them as difficult terrain.

BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

Chapter 1:
Dishonorably
Discharged

Chapter 2:
Belly of the
Black Whale

Chapter 3:
The
Rumormonger's
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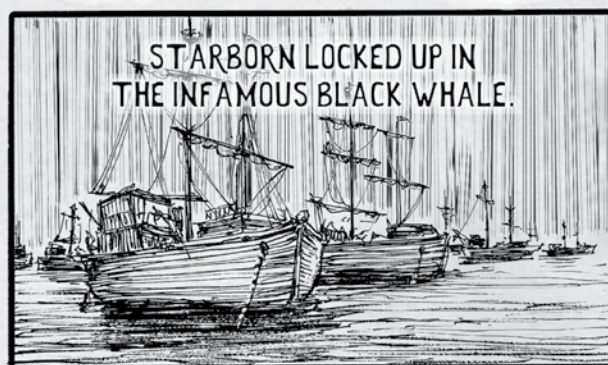
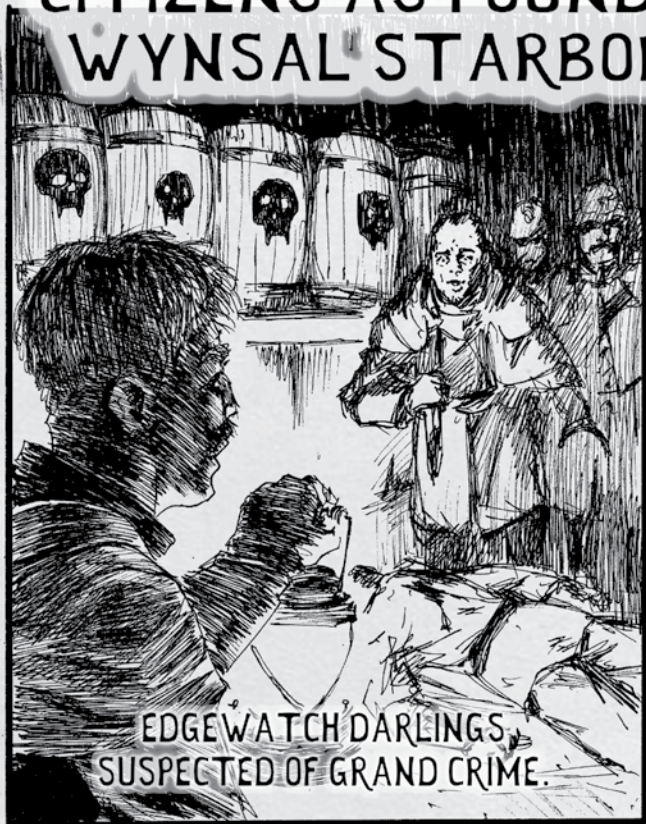
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