

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



EXTINCTION BY COURSE

SIEGE OF THE DINOSAURS

By Kate Baker

Magical Myrrie

TRAITS:
MUSICAL, PROP



SHE KNOWS MUSIC! SHE KNOWS MAGIC!
SEE THIS MERRY PERFORMER DO
BOTH AT ONCE WITHOUT A SINGLE SPELL!

CHECKS: PERFORMANCE +19,
THIEVERY +22

LEVEL 12
(DC 30)

THE MYSTIC ARTISTS

TRAITS:
AUDIENCE, TEAM



ONE TWIN IS SEQUESTERED WITH PAINT
AND CANVAS WHILE THE OTHER BIDS THE
AUDIENCE FOR IDEAS. SEE YOUR DESCRIPTIONS
COME TO VIVID LIFE ON THE HIDDEN CANVAS!

CHECKS: DIPLOMACY +21,
OCULTISM +21

LEVEL 12
(DC 30)

Ginritz the Blademaster

TRAITS:
AGILE, INJURY



HE SWALLOWS SWORDS,
JUGGLES SWORDS, AND FIGHTS WITH
PANACHE LIKE NONE OTHER!

CHECKS: ATHLETICS +22,
REFLEX SAVE +20

LEVEL 12
(DC 30)

PATHFINDER

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SIEGE OF THE DINOSAURS

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The Circus of Wayward Wonders arrives in Willowside to find a desperate town beset by xulgaths and dinosaurs. The trade routes are cut off, and the locals have received no word from their primary outlet for entertainment, Fortune’s Hall, outside of town. The heroes must investigate Fortune’s Hall to discover the fate of those trapped there.

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As the xulgath attacks outside of Willowside threaten an outright siege, the heroes prepare to defend the town. Rumors of an ancient storehouse of relics in subterranean caves have already drawn the town’s established protectors, but they haven’t returned. The heroes must enter the caves to discover the protectors’ fate, bringing them face-to-face with an ancient evil from Willowside’s past.

Chapter 3: Breaking the Siege 42

Armed with information and equipment from beneath Willowside, the heroes can finally take the fight to the besieging xulgaths. Yet all is not as it seems in the massive siege tower the invaders are constructing. The heroes learn that the xulgath forces have been tricked into serving a new, aberrant master.

THE GROWING SIEGE

It’s no surprise that an adventure named “Siege of the Dinosaurs” involves a siege. But this adventure doesn’t start out with one. At the start of the adventure, the heroes have come to the isolated town of Willowside on their own. They’ve heard rumors—even as far back as during “Life’s Long Shadows”—that travel to Willowside along the Verdant Passage has become difficult. Troubles already afflict the town at the start of this adventure, but the siege doesn’t begin in earnest until the heroes have already performed a few vital tasks for the town: freeing townspeople held captive by malevolent fey and exploring caves beneath the town that harbor threats from an unsavory time in Willowside’s history. After this, however, the heroes must actively strike back against the besieging xulgath forces to keep Willowside from being overwhelmed. In the central camp of the xulgaths, the heroes learn that the siege of Willowside is part of an elaborate plan perpetrated by a cunning slave in the xulgath army. The heroes can choose to help this slave or not; either path has repercussions for Willowside and the surrounding region.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Siege of the Dinosaurs is designed for four characters.

- 12** The heroes begin this adventure at 12th level.
- 13** The heroes should reach 13th level by the start of Chapter 2.
- 14** The heroes should reach 14th level by the start of Chapter 3.

The heroes should reach 15th level by the time they complete the adventure.



CHAPTER 1: TROUBLES IN WILLOWSIDE

The small town of Willowside awaits the arrival of the Circus of Wayward Wonders as a distraction from the residents' many troubles. Rumors abound of dinosaurs attacking travelers on the roads, cutting the town off from the outside world. While the nervous townsfolk aren't sure whether the stories of dinosaur attacks are true, they know that xulgaths are indeed amassing near the town in unprecedented numbers. As bad as the pending xulgath situation is, it only adds to the town's ongoing problems: the growing threat of a blight called the Welt and the strange goings-on at an entertainment establishment called Fortune's Hall.

The Welt is Willowside's most obvious and long-term problem. A blight originating from the vast Dunmire, the Welt has been creeping toward Willowside over the last few years and has recently wholly overtaken the lands around the town, leaving the farming and ranching lands barren and the town on the brink of starvation.

The residents of Willowside know that the Welt's spread has accelerated in the last 10 years, but they're powerless to do anything about it, leading many residents to abandon Willowside entirely.

Out of desperation, the owners of Fortune's Hall, a gambling house and theater on the outskirts of Willowside, turned to fey of the First World for help. The owners summoned creatures called brughadatches, fey rumored to be able to conjure luxurious feasts upon command. But brughadatches are tricksters who rely on enchantment and illusion to pursue their twisted notions of fun. The townsfolk of Willowside don't know what's happened to Fortune's Hall, only that it has inexplicably closed, and no one has heard from any staff or patrons. The timing makes it seem likely that the mysterious dinosaur attacks are to blame, but recent clues lead Mayor Vandy to believe something else is going on.

The xulgath activity around the town is, in fact, the result of a carefully planned usurpation among the xulgath forces. The xulgaths, led by a powerful commander named Arskuva the Gnasher, had specific orders from their high priest, Sarvel Ever-Hunger, to destroy the *aeon orb* in the aeon tower outside of Willowside, then hold the tower and await further instructions. Sarvel intended Arskuva's force to be the largest on the Isle of Kortos, a powerful army that could confront the surface-dwellers in their fields and towns rather than skulk and hide as Sarvel's other forces had to do. But even this large army had to remain hidden until the *aeon orb* was destroyed. Arskuva's army thus invaded the surface secretly, an entire army with dinosaur mounts concealed within the blighted forest near the aeon tower.

It was during this stealthy invasion that a necromancer named Helg Eats-the-Eaters decided to strike. She murdered Arskuva in secret and animated the xulgath's corpse, making Arskuva a puppet leader who delivers whatever commands Helg chooses. Helg has no interest in the *aeon orb* or the aeon tower. She accompanied the army to the surface, masquerading as a slave, for a single purpose: to acquire an ancient statue of the Great Old One Bokrug within the sea caves beneath Willowside. The residents of Willowside don't even know the statue is there, as the underground cult of Bokrug in their town was violently eliminated generations ago. But Helg's visions have shown her the statue, and she aims to seize it.

Helg is playing a dangerous game. She can't stand against the might of the entire xulgath army, and redirecting the army to focus on Willowside rather than the aeon tower can't be done quickly without raising suspicions. Already, one of Arskuva's lieutenants—a zealous hardscale named Zashathal—suspects something is wrong with his commander. Helg is preserving her position by issuing orders that serve the original goal of assaulting the aeon tower while also ensuring that the people of Willowside remain sequestered in their town. Chief among these orders is the creation of an enormous siege tower at the center of the xulgath camp. The xulgaths believe they're building it to assault the seemingly impregnable aeon tower. In truth, Helg plans to use it to carry away the massive statue of her malevolent god.

None of the xulgaths—or even Helg—realize that their original orders from Sarvel were moot before they even arrived. The *aeon orb* has been missing from the aeon tower for a decade, removed by a cult of nature priests called the Circle of Stones. It is this removal that caused the Welt to advance with such startling rapidity in the past few years, putting Willowside on a path to destruction. But some members of the Circle of Stones considered the removal of the *aeon orb* an abdication of their oath to protect the natural world and therefore stayed in the aeon tower. This splinter group, called the Empty Stones, works to stem the blight of the Welt, but without the *aeon orb*, their successes have been very limited. The Empty Stones saw the xulgaths arrive, and they took the simple and expedient step of sealing up the aeon tower (now known as the Tower of Empty Stones) so the xulgaths can't get in. The mudbrick surface of the tower is remarkably resilient, having survived since Aroden's day, and the xulgaths have so far been utterly stymied by this defense. While their brute force has failed, they intend to bring yet more muscle to bear. They believe the siege tower will help them break through the aeon tower and get at the *aeon orb* they presume is kept inside—which is just what Helg wants them to believe, for now.

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The heroes arrive at the pier just outside the town of Willowside. While the residents are excited for the circus, there are immediate signs that things are amiss in the small town. Rumors of dinosaur attacks are confirmed when the heroes find dinosaur tracks during their short trip into town. During the heroes' first circus performance, xulgaths riding pterosaurs rip through their circus tent and attack. Seeking the only source for materials to repair the damage takes the heroes into the path of more xulgaths and dinosaurs. After the heroes deal with these threats, Mayor Vandy asks them to investigate a gambling hall outside of town that has mysteriously gone dark. The heroes find Fortune's Hall overrun by brughadatches, wicked fey who have been tormenting and killing the humanoid staff members. It's up to the heroes to either dispatch all the brughadatches or collect the ritual components to send them back to the First World.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows.

- +1 striking composite shortbow
- +1 striking halberd
- bag of holding type IV
- druid's vestments
- eye of fortune
- fade band
- gold nodule aeon stone (Sylvan)
- greater cognitive mutagen
- greater elixir of life
- greater primeval mistletoe
- moderate alchemist's fire
- pale lavender ellipsoid aeon stone
- scroll of haste (7th)
- scroll of stone to flesh
- slumber wine

WILLOWSIDE PIER
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



PIER ROAD



DENSIRT FARM



The Circus of Wayward Wonders enters a strange town in dire circumstances, many of which they don't even recognize as threats. It will take much more than the daredevil stunts and marvelous sideshows of the circus to bring Willowside back from the brink.

Arrival

At the end of "Life's Long Shadows," the heroes boarded a ship from Kerrick to the town of Willowside along the Isle of Kortos's north coast. Their passage was paid by Opper Vandy, the Kerrick mortician for whom they provided much assistance. Opper is eager for the heroes to meet his aunt, Estessa Vandy, mayor of Willowside. He knows his aunt is seeking entertainers to buoy the spirits of her troubled town, and he believes the Circus of Wayward Wonders is just what Willowside needs. In fact, he's already written to Mayor Vandy to let her know the heroes are on their way. This adventure begins with the heroes and their circus aboard the *Geode's Center*, one of the largest ships to regularly put in to the Willowside pier.

The heroes have already met the captain of the *Geode's Center*, an aquatic half-elf named

Tiratelle Uncrid. She wears an eye patch as an affectation, and is an honest captain with a good reputation, particularly among the merchants who regularly book passage on her ship. Other than the circus members, no one on the ship plans to remain in Willowside, though several merchants on board plan to disembark, sell their wares, then continue the journey to Escadar. Anyone on the *Geode's Center* can tell the heroes that Willowside has fallen on hard times and isn't what it once was, due to a creeping blight called the Welt. If the heroes ask about the strange rumors of attacks that prevented land passage to the town, the merchants confirm that they've heard the same rumors but don't know what's causing the attacks.

To get started, read or paraphrase the following.

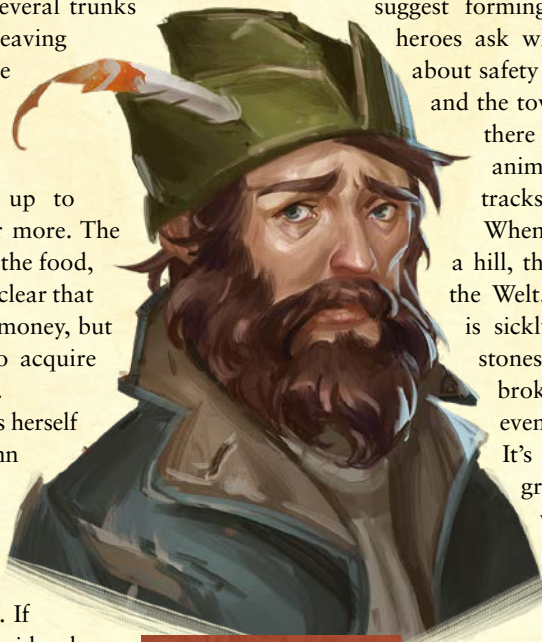
The *Geode's Center* arrives at a long pier extending from a hilly headland. It's the lone merchant vessel among a dozen small fishing boats crewed by hardworking fishers. A wiry, middle-aged human woman directs the ship into the pier with practiced ease. There's no evidence of a town in sight, but a small crowd waits on the land, just off the pier, eyeing the ship with undisguised eagerness.

The people in the crowd are dressed in fine but functional clothing, although all of them look thin and some look positively malnourished. One family waits to board: they have several trunks with them and appear to be leaving the town permanently. The merchants on the *Geode's Center* are quick to unload their wares, almost all of which are foods marked up to double their normal cost or more. The townspeople eagerly buy up the food, doing so in orderly lines. It's clear that the town still has plenty of money, but townsfolk's opportunities to acquire food are much more limited.

The dockmaster introduces herself to the heroes as Arglynn Pranson. She explains that the *Geode's Center* is always welcome, particularly in these hard times when food in Willowside is scarce. If the heroes ask about Willowside, she explains that tidal floodplains, sandy hills, and frequent storms make building near the pier unwise; the town is set back from the coast about a mile, along a well-used road. There used to be plenty of people living in surrounding farms, but not anymore.

Hiring Myrrie: One of the townspeople here isn't waiting for the merchants, but for the heroes. This is Myrtrine Mollern, an energetic halfling woman known in town as Myrrie. Although her family left Willowside on the *Geode's Center's* last visit, Myrrie stayed behind out of devotion to the town. In the intervening weeks she's realized her family was right to leave, but she wants to make her own way in the world before admitting to her family that they were right all along. When she heard the Circus of Wayward Wonders was coming, she resolved to join it. Myrrie is a skilled musician with a knack for stage magic; her best tricks involve playing musical instruments and transforming them into flowers, handkerchiefs, or even lines of sparkling light. It's all sleight of hand, but Myrrie has significant natural talent. Having a local in the circus can prove particularly useful, as Myrrie knows who tips the best, who has a tendency to overdrink, and so on. If the heroes hire Myrrie, give the players the Magical Myrrie trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if Myrrie joins their circus.



Gristarn Vrick

PIER ROAD DANGERS

LOW 12

When business with the *Geode's Center* is concluded and the circus is finally unloaded, the townsfolk suggest forming a convoy for safety. If the heroes ask why they would need to worry about safety while heading between the pier and the town, the townsfolk mention that there have been disappearances, large animals seen in the fog, and strange tracks crossing the road.

When the road from the pier rounds a hill, the heroes get their first sight of the Welt. The area's scrubby plant life is sickly and withered, and even the stones on the ground look brittle and broken. The land is quiet, without even insects or birds to make noise. It's clear that getting anything to grow in the Welt is a losing battle, which doesn't bode well for Willowside's future.

As the convoy continues the mile-long trek toward the town, an obvious set of very large tracks crosses the road. A hero who succeeds at a DC 25 Nature check recognizes the tracks as those of a huge quadrupedal reptile, and a hero who critically succeeds recognizes them as triceratops tracks. The townsfolk report that they didn't see these tracks on their way to the pier, so the dinosaur must have passed by recently and could still be nearby.

Creatures: Just after finding the tracks, the heroes hear cries for help from someone on the other side of a weedy hill. There, a small cluster of three giant flytraps have caught a hunter from Willowside named Gristarn Vrick. He strayed too far from the road and stumbled into the flytraps. If the heroes don't immediately rush to help, one of the townspeople in the convoy does, only to be snatched up by one of the flytraps. Ultimately, the heroes' skills are required to free the townspeople. The giant flytraps are just as hungry as everything else in the region; they attack aggressively and don't withdraw from a fight.

GIANT FLYTRAPS (3)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 160

Initiative Perception +17

Rescuing Gristarn: So long as the heroes are fairly quick about fighting the flytraps, Gristarn Vrick survives and thanks the heroes profusely for their timely assistance. Though he seems considerably embarrassed about getting himself caught, he introduces himself as

DREAMS OF BOKRUG

Willowside's underground shrine to the Great Old One Bokrug has a strange effect on the town, even though its residents haven't worshipped the Water Lizard in recent memory. Newcomers experience particularly vivid nightmares. Long-term residents are immune to the effect; they know that newcomers have these dreams, but they don't know their source.

Each hero must attempt a DC 30 Will save each night they sleep in Willowside. On a failure, the hero wakes remembering a terrifying dream with one of the following themes. On a critical failure, the hero also awakens fatigued. This is an illusion and mental effect.

- The hero stands in a field in a hurricane. The water is knee deep on the ground and rising fast.
- The hero stares up into the night sky as each star gradually disappears.
- The hero drowns in a lake while many underwater hands tug them downward.
- The hero is tied to a tree during a lightning storm as lighting darts toward the uppermost branch.
- The hero is squeezed by an enormous reptilian tail with three talons at its tip.
- The hero sees an enormous reptilian mouth filled with sharp teeth and opening with terrible slowness.

You should keep track of the number of saving throws each hero fails against the Dreams of Bokrug, as this affects the value of a penalty to saving throws required by the statue in area **B13**.

a hunter who lives near town. He thought he had seen an animal caught in the flytrap and—because hunting has become almost impossible due to the Welt—he attempted to retrieve it for himself. Some of the other townsfolk greet him as “the newcomer”; if the heroes ask, Gristarn tells them that he moved to Willowside from Andoran 12 years ago.

Following the Dinosaur Tracks: If the heroes want to leave the convoy and track down the dinosaur, they must succeed at a DC 32 Survival check to Track the triceratops across the sickly ground. After about 30 minutes, they find a single xulgath herd-tender (page 10) riding a triceratops (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 98). This xulgath fights aggressively if discovered, even though she isn't likely to present much of a challenge. If the heroes interrogate her, they can learn that there are many more xulgaths and dinosaurs in the area and that they're forming a loose cordon around the town of Willowside. The xulgath doesn't know why, as she's simply following the orders of her commander, Arskuva the Gnasher.

Welcome to Willowside

Once the heroes get moving after the excitement of the triceratops tracks and the flytraps, they soon arrive in Willowside. The mayor, Estessa Vandy, exuberantly greets them on the road.

“Oh, I'm so glad that you've come to perform here! This is just what the town needs right now. Who doesn't love the circus? Oh, I'm sorry—I'm Estessa Vandy, and I'm the mayor here. I know you met my nephew; he speaks very highly of you. Well, you just tell me what I can do to make your stay here perfect!”

Mayor Vandy has already arranged for the wide fields just west of town to host the circus—with the arrival of the Welt, the land has become unsuitable for crops anyway. She encourages the heroes to make any announcements or advertisements they'd like from the stage in the town square; she's reserved it for their use while the circus is in town. Finally, if the heroes don't already have accommodations with their circus camp, she's arranged to put them up at the Hooked Inn on the west side of town for free.

If the heroes try to bring up anything negative that they've witnessed near Willowside (such as the triceratops tracks, the flytrap incident, the marked-up food for sale at the docks, or the Welt itself), Mayor Vandy changes the subject, intentionally and firmly shifting the topic to more positive matters.

Willowside has plenty of people going about their business, but there is a palpable lethargy around town, as though everyone tries to conserve as much energy as possible. The overall populace has the same general appearance as the group who gathered at the dock: thin and malnourished. The average age of residents is older than one might expect, and there are fewer children around than in most towns of this size. Quite a few buildings are boarded up. There are almost no plants growing in town: no trees in the town square, no flowers in people's front yards, and no shrubs dividing properties. There are only occasional scraggly patches of weeds. The townsfolk are initially cold and standoffish, but quickly grow excited when they learn that the heroes are with the circus. Mayor Vandy has done so much work in promoting the circus that nearly everyone in town knows about it and is excited for its first performance.

The heroes' first few encounters with the people of Willowside likely include the following.

The Hooked Inn: If the heroes take Mayor Vandy up on her offer of rooms at the Hooked Inn, the mayor shows them the way. The innkeeper is an elderly half-elf named Vorinta Irrinesse, who seems

surprisingly cranky about having the rooms of the inn filled for what must be the first time in months. Vorinta's concern isn't with the business, but with the difficulty of feeding so many people. If the heroes directly address this concern—either by insisting they have their own food or offering to provide food for the inn—Vorinta perks up noticeably.

The Banyan Boys: The Banyan Boys, Willowside's only law enforcement, stop by to meet the heroes while the Circus of Wayward Wonders is setting up. Ledorick Banyan introduces himself to the heroes, noting his brothers Stirvyn and Tashlock as an afterthought. All three Banyans take seats on circus equipment as they talk, heedless of whether they've been invited to do so or whether someone needs to set up the equipment. Ledorick asks the heroes about their trip into town, although he's already heard about the dinosaur tracks and the flytrap incident from



Estessa Vandy

other townspeople. He interrupts as the heroes tell their tale, minimizing their accomplishments and making insulting digs at circuses in general and the heroes in particular. His brothers join in with the occasional rude wisecrack but let Ledorick do most of the talking. If the heroes attempt to put Ledorick in his place, or when they've run out of patience for the loudmouthed braggarts, Ledorick tells them that the Banyan Boys are the law enforcement around town, and that there better not be any trouble from the "circus folk." Ledorick manages to make the last two words sound like an insult.

Seeking Supplies: If the heroes need any supplies in town, residents direct them to Sauntille Caffron's general store for mundane supplies or to Trytalla Frynt at the Temple of Erastil for potions and scrolls. Sauntille, a human woman in her forties with very long brown hair, is glad for the extra business, and offers a 10 percent discount to circus members on goods up to 100 sp. Although she doesn't carry any magical equipment, she offers a surprising number of non-magical charms and wards "to keep bad spirits away." Trytalla is an elderly human woman who serves as the town's chief priest and historian. She offers the heroes a brief tour around Willowside. Trytalla has potions and scrolls of 5th level or lower available for sale at the Temple of Erastil.

The Tower of Empty Stones: The heroes might want to turn right to one of the reasons for their visit: exploring the aeon tower in the area. The people of Willowside know what the tower is—they call it the Marsh Stone Tower—but few of them have ever seen it. Most of the townspeople point the heroes toward Mayor Vandy for more information, and the mayor encourages the heroes to get settled first and prepare for a great show before they go chasing off into the dangerous wilds. If the heroes are insistent about getting information about the tower, Mayor Vandy sends for Gristarn Vrick. The hunter has the best information about the wilderness around Willowside, and he's even seen the tower himself, although it's been 5 or 6 years and he only saw it from a distance. If the heroes specifically bring up a light or beacon orbiting the top of the tower, Gristarn tells them there isn't anything like that there—it's just a lonely, old tower. Gristarn doesn't realize that the tower is occupied by the nature cult, and he isn't aware of the xulgath camp that has recently sprung up in that area.

If the heroes persevere in their plan to visit the tower, they should spot the xulgath camp long before they stumble into it. You can run encounters from Chapter 3 as appropriate, but the heroes should realize that taking on an entire camp of suspiciously well-entrenched xulgaths at this point is a bad idea.

Other Locations: If the heroes want to visit any other locations in Willowside (perhaps to look at the town's history in the Temple of Aroden or to have armor or weapons repaired by the blacksmith Wreda Glidser), refer to the Willowside Gazetteer starting on page 60.

The Circus in Willowside

Everyone in Willowside is eager for a circus performance. Although the circus rules presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #151: The Show Must Go On* assume the heroes will have 6 days to generate Anticipation for an event, Mayor Vandy and the people of Willowside expect a performance in only 3 days. The town is already eager for entertainment, primarily because of communications Opper Vandy sent to his aunt ahead of the circus's arrival. As a result, the circus starts with an Anticipation of 25 (but not more than the circus's maximum Anticipation). The heroes can still purchase advertisements to increase Anticipation

RIDING DINOSAURS

Xulgath dinosaur riders prefer to let the dinosaurs rampage about on their own and simply go along for the ride. Xulgaths who ride dinosaurs in this adventure can use the normal mounted combat rules, but they also have the Feral Directive ability, which they generally use in the first round of combat. Keep in mind that, just as with all dinosaurs and pterosaurs accompanying xulgaths in this Adventure Path, xulgaths have burned out their mounts' sense of smell while young, depriving them of the scent ability but rendering them immune to olfactory effects.

for their circus, and they have one opportunity to engage in the Promote the Circus downtime activity. Any heroes who aren't busy Promoting the Circus are instead likely to be practicing and preparing for the opening show.

The people of Willowside have been short on food for some time. For performances in the town, the confections circus upgrade provides the show with a starting Excitement of 1d6+6 (instead of the usual starting Excitement of 2d6).

OPENING NIGHT

MODERATE 12

On the first night of the circus, most of Willowside's population turns out. Mayor Vandy insists on giving an opening announcement.

"People of Willowside! As part of my entertainment initiative, I am pleased to introduce to you the Circus of Wayward Wonders! Fresh from their recent tour of Escadar and the Swardlands, they will amaze and astound you! Cast aside your worries for the evening and enjoy the mystery and whimsy of the circus!"

The mayor's speech gets a rousing roar of applause. The show goes according to plan for the first three acts. The townsfolk cheer loudly at every attraction, seemingly losing their troubles amid the fun the circus has brought to them.

Creatures: Just as the finale begins, the performance is interrupted by an attack from above. Four xulgath herd-tenders, each mounted on a pterosaur bred as a beast of war, have flown through the top of the circus tent. Their mounts rip great, jagged slits in the circus tent as they fly in. The xulgaths begin raining fire and destruction from above, seeking to cause as much damage to the assembled mass of townspeople as possible. If the heroes fight back, the xulgaths use their Feral Directive to command their mounts to

attack them. The xulgaths then attack the heroes as well, fighting until slain. A pterosaur without a rider flees through a slit in the tent when reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points.

Ledorick is the only one of the Banyan Boys to have attended the opening performance. He leaps into action to aid the townspeople against the attackers. He spends much of his time with his sword drawn, hurling insults at the xulgaths and doing his best to look heroic in front of the crowd. If the heroes insist that Ledorick actually help in the fight, he grudgingly obliges, sheathing his sword and attacking with his bow. As he does, he tells the townspeople around him that he's decided to defend them with his arrows rather than his blade, refusing to acknowledge it was the heroes' suggestion.

Ledorick prefers to take shots at the most wounded enemies, hoping he can drop them and take credit for the kill. Ledorick ducks out of melee if engaged, so he isn't likely to be hurt badly in this attack. However, if reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, he flees the tent while insisting he's simply getting panicked townspeople to safety (see page 88 for Ledorick's statistics).

XULGATH HERD-TENDERS (4)

CREATURE 8

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon


Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +18, Dinosaur Lore +11, Intimidation +16, Nature +17, Stealth +16, Survival +17

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

Items moderate alchemist's fire (4), +1 striking composite shortbow (20 arrows), hide armor, whip


AC 27; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +14

HP 135


Mounted Defense  **Prerequisite** The herd-tender is mounted; **Trigger** The herd-tender is targeted with a melee or ranged attack by an attacker they can see; **Effect** The herd-tender gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 26 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 2, and on a critical failure, the creature is also slowed 1 for as long as it is sickened. While within the aura, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgaths' stench for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet

Melee  whip +19 (disarm, finesse, nonlethal, reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 1d4+10 slashing

Melee  jaws +19, **Damage** 2d8+10 piercing

Melee  claw +19 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ *composite shortbow* +20 (deadly 2d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing

Ranged ♦ moderate alchemist's fire +20 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d8 plus 2 persistent fire damage and 2 fire splash damage

Feral Directive ♦♦ The xulgath attempts to Command an Animal on their mount, but instead of demanding a specific action such as Stride or Strike, the xulgath gives a general directive, such as to return to camp or to attack a small group the mount can see. The mount and the xulgath each retain 3 actions on their turns, but the mount doesn't change its general tactics until the xulgath uses Feral Directive or Command an Animal again.

Mounted Superiority A mounted xulgath's Strikes deal an additional 1d8 damage to creatures that aren't mounted.

ELITE QUETZALCOATLUSES (4) CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 272

Initiative Perception +17

Aftermath

The townsfolk are rattled after the attack on the circus. While there have been rumors of dinosaur attacks outside town, this marks the first time that such creatures have appeared within the town itself. It's also immediately clear that the dinosaurs aren't simply congregating on their own and attacking randomly; xulgaths trained these fearsome creatures and are guiding the attacks.

Stirvyn and Tashlock Banyan show up as soon as the fight is over (along with Ledorick, if he previously fled the fight). They all insinuate that the heroes are somehow to blame, insisting that the circus folk are bringing trouble. Although a few other townsfolk mutter in response to this, it's clear that virtually no one in town other than the Banyan Boys thinks the heroes are to blame for the surprise attack.

When the heroes evaluate the damage from the torn tent and the hurled explosives, they find that their circus tent needs serious repair. The general store lacks sufficient cloth or canvas to do the work, but Sauntille Caffron (or any other townsfolk) recommends the Densirts. The Densirt family lives outside of town, and they manufacture canvas in a workshop on their farm. Unfortunately, no one has seen the Densirts for many days, so it's possible something might have happened to them. Any resident can give the heroes clear directions.

DENSIRT FARM

MODERATE 12

The trip to the Densirt farm takes about 30 minutes by foot. Along the path to the farm, the heroes spot many more large tracks. As with the tracks near the Willowside Pier, these were made by a triceratops. This time, the tracks walk back and forth along the length of the road, rather than crossing it, going in both directions, as though on patrol.

The Densirt farm consists of a sturdy farmhouse with a connected workshop and a large barn. A few days ago, several xulgaths attacked, burning the barn down to its foundations, as well as the front porch of the farmhouse. The porch's collapse has left the doors to the workshop the farmhouse's only entrance. The Densirts are currently trapped inside their house, too terrified



Xulgath Herd-Tender

to leave because of the patrolling xulgaths and their dinosaurs. The xulgaths also dug an impromptu fire pit between the house and the barn, which contains the charred remains of the Densirts' herd of sheep.

Creatures: As the heroes draw close to the farm, they see the cause of the tracks along the road. Four xulgath herd-tenders, each riding a triceratops, patrol around the Densirt farm. If the xulgaths spot the heroes, they hide behind the remains of the barn or the workshop. Because the dinosaurs aren't particularly stealthy, this provides them with standard cover rather than a chance at a surprise attack.

As the xulgaths aren't expecting trouble, the heroes have a good chance at surprising them or catching them off guard while they're patrolling on different sides of the farm. The xulgaths fight to the death and compel their dinosaurs to do so too, but once the xulgaths are defeated, a triceratops reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points flees the area.

XULGATH HERD-TENDERS (4)

CREATURE 8

Page 10

Initiative Perception +20

TRICERATOPSES (4)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 98

Initiative Perception +15

Freeing the Densirts: Once the dinosaur patrol is handled, the grateful Densirts are free to leave their home. If the heroes explain why they've come out to the farm, the family offers to repair the circus tent. Using their remaining supplies of canvas and a few days of work, the Densirts provide the Circus of Wayward Wonders the next size of tent expansion at no cost (*Adventure Path #151* 69), regardless of the circus's Prestige. For example, if the circus had no tent upgrade, the Densirts provide a big tent; if the circus already had a huge tent, the Densirts produce a massive tent.

Hiring the Densirt Twins: The Densirts are excited to hear about the circus and ask several questions about it. Their oldest children, twin boys, show off their remarkable ability to communicate with each other without words or magic. One of the twins asks a hero to describe a scene while the other twin, out of sight in another room, deftly paints the scene on a large sheet of canvas. The twins are eager to join the circus. If the heroes offer them a role in the Circus of Wayward Wonders, give the players the Mystic Artists trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: In thanks for saving them, the Densirts give the heroes a *bag of holding type IV*. They first

dump out the prodigious amount of paints, inks, and other art supplies the twins have stored in the bag.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if the Densirt twins join their circus.

Bad Luck at Fortune's Hall

The day after the heroes return from the Densirt farm, the mayor asks to talk with them. She invites them to her office to speak.

"Thank you so much for coming to Willowside. Your circus has brightened things up in a way nothing has for a long time. Not since the Welt started taking over. And then the dinosaurs showed up. And they had xulgaths with them. But you've not only brightened our spirits with your shows, you've also protected our town."

The mayor recounts the heroes' recent victories, praising their skill against the giant flytraps, the xulgaths on flying dinosaurs, and the foes at the Densirt farm.

"I hate to ask this, but I must for the town's sake. I know the dinosaurs have killed some people and other folks just simply left town. But there's perhaps something else going on out in the swamp. A few hours east of town is a gambling hall and entertainment venue called Fortune's Hall. The owners, the Carristers, have been big supporters of the town, despite being so far outside of it. For the past few weeks, no one's heard from anyone there—not the Carristers, not their staff, not any of the regulars who were out that way. A few people went to check, but they didn't come back. That was about when the reports of dinosaur attacks started, so I assumed that dinosaurs got them—and the folks at Fortune's Hall for that matter. But a few days ago, one of the horses from Fortune's Hall showed up here in town. The poor thing had almost starved to death, and it had an unusual bite on its leg. Strangest of all, someone had written "The Fun Never Stops" on its side in purple paint. Gristarn Vrick got the horse cleaned up and fed, but it's too scared to head home. Something strange is going on at Fortune's Hall, and it doesn't seem related to dinosaurs or the Welt. I'm not sure Willowside can withstand yet another threat.

"Will you investigate it for us? I know that it's dangerous, but you're better able to look into this than anyone else but the Banyan Boys."

The heroes may have questions for the mayor.

Why is Fortune's Hall so far away? "Gambling is historically illegal in Willowside. Decades ago, an enterprising family built Fortune's Hall just far enough away to be outside Willowside jurisdiction. It's not

officially part of any town. They added a theater, and they served food and drinks. At this point, I don't care about the gambling. It was a fun place for people to go, and any trouble or hard feelings there didn't spill out into my town. They used to send a wagon in to pick up townsfolk from the town square and would bring them back after an evening of fun."

Who runs Fortune's Hall? "The owners of Fortune's Hall are Cynsa and Palben Carrister. Both Cynsa and Palben grew up in Willowside but enjoy the rebellious mystique of Fortune's Hall. They bought it about fifteen years ago, when the last owner retired, and they've lived out there since."

Why don't you have the Banyan Boys investigate? "I've asked, but they think the dinosaurs got everyone and it's too big a risk to go check it out. I won't pretend it's not risky, but I think there's something other than the dinosaurs threatening our town."

Can we see the horse? "Certainly. Tell Gristarn that I sent you." If the heroes head to Gristarn's place at the edge of town, they can find the horse tied to a fence post. It has mostly recovered from its malnutrition, but it bears a badly healed leg wound that looks like a bite from something with a wide mouth and many small teeth (one of the gahlepod in area A1 at Fortune's Hall). If the heroes can communicate with the animal, it describes being left in its stable to starve, and occasionally being taunted by big toads and toad-headed people. They never gave it any food and it became very hungry. It ran away when it got the chance, but a toad-creature bit at it when it did.

Treasure: For agreeing to investigate Fortune's Hall, the mayor loans the heroes a *pale lavender ellipsoid aeon stone*. She initially claims to want the item back, but when the heroes return with reports about the serious fey incursion at Fortune's Hall, she insists they keep it.

FORTUNE'S HALL RUMORS

The heroes may wish to ask around about Fortune's Hall before leaving. Mayor Vandy wants the heroes to investigate, but she doesn't insist on their immediate departure, so they have time to Gather Information in Willowside before departing. A hero who succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to Gather Information hears a true fact that they don't already know from the list below. Upon a critical success, a hero receives two facts, while a hero who critically fails hears one of the false rumors.

- "Fortune's Hall was built deep in the swamp to avoid anti-gambling laws in the town of Willowside. Its owners later added other kinds of entertainment, including a nice theater."

- "The last time the wagons came to pick up townsfolk was 4 weeks ago, just before a full moon. It's almost the full moon again now." (This rumor is true but may be misleading; the troubles there have nothing to do with the phase of the moon.)
- "The owners, Cynsa and Palben Carrister, have run Fortune's Hall for years. They've been acting somewhat desperate in the past several months, since business was down with the Welt ruining all the townsfolk's livelihoods. They are very worried about the town's future, as it affects their own livelihoods as well."
- "The Carristers have a deep interest in magic, fey, and the First World. They collect magical items and books on magic. They don't show them off to just anyone; only regulars at Fortune's Hall know about their hobby."
- "I went near Fortune's Hall a few days ago. I saw lights on and heard noises: music playing and water splashing. I heard an inhuman voice shout, 'The fun never stops!' I ran away, and I won't ever go back there."
- "The Carristers were acting very excited a few weeks ago, just before communication with Fortune's Hall ceased. Cynsa Carrister was saying that she had a solution to the town's problems, but she wouldn't say more. About that same time, a few people saw Palben Carrister carrying an old, strange book with illustrations of toad-like creatures surrounded by piles of food."
- *False Rumor:* "A wandering beggar who went near Fortune's Hall saw unusual animal-humanoid footprints and thinks that the owners of Fortune's Hall might be some kind of wercreatures now."
- *False Rumor:* "The owners, Cynsa and Palben Carrister, were working on a magical ritual to open a portal to an evil plane."
- *False Rumor:* "There's a lot of staff at Fortune's Hall, and the Carristers need to cut costs. They have been looking in their magic books for ways to create golems."

Consulting the Banyan Boys

The heroes might ask the Banyan Boys about going to investigate Fortune's Hall. Some questions the heroes might have for Ledorick and his likely responses are as follows.

Shouldn't you go out there to see what's going on? "No, of course we won't go out there to investigate. It was either the dinosaurs that got them, or they just split town like everyone else is doing. There's no point in us going out there and risking death just to find a bunch of dead bodies or an empty building."

FORTUNE'S HALL
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Aren't you responsible for the town? "We sure are. The town of Willowside. Fortune's Hall is outside town. They don't want to be subject to Willowside laws; they shouldn't get Willowside benefits. If we got killed heading out there, then we couldn't do our job protecting the town."

Don't you feel bad that we're going instead of you? "You're going out there? I guess you circus folk do like to live dangerously. Hey, maybe we'll take over your circus when you all get eaten by dinosaurs."

Fortune's Hall

The directions to Fortune's Hall, about 2 hours east of Willowside, are very straightforward, as the wagons that once made frequent trips between Fortune's Hall and Willowside have left a wide, rutted road. The heroes find more dinosaur tracks along their journey, just as they did on the way back from the pier to Willowside, but they don't encounter any vulgaths or dinosaurs. The road keeps going past Fortune's Hall, ultimately winding through the Dunmire to the distant town of Pier's End, but it's clear that the road is most trafficked between Willowside and Fortune's Hall.

The townspeople are expecting that everyone at Fortune's Hall is dead, but the truth is far more sinister. Cynsa and Palben Carrister, desperate to find a solution to the hunger gripping Willowside, summoned rare fey creatures called brughadatches from the First World, the capricious realm of the fey. According to the Carristers' patchwork research, the brughadatches could conjure great feasts. This research was a cruel lie; brughadatches use illusory food to trick their victims into slowly starving to death. The Carristers realized their mistake too late and tried to reverse their ritual to send the brughadatches back to the First World, but the brughadatch elders killed the Carristers to preserve their new domain in the Material Plane.

The brughadatches love the colorful excitement, frenetic gambling, and nonstop entertainment at Fortune's Hall. They've been compelling the staff and patrons there to participate in a nonstop, weeks-long party. Under the brughadatches' enchantments, the staff and patrons of Fortune's Hall live in a dreamy daze, unaware of the amount of time that's gone by and only generally aware that "new management" is in charge of the building. They believe they're having

the time of their lives, but they are all gradually dying, victims of the Carristers' desperation and of their own growing hunger.

Features of Fortune's Hall: Fortune's Hall is an expansive gambling hall and theater made of sturdy wood, with several outbuildings, situated in a broad clearing amid a dense stand of trees in a swampy valley. The furnishings in the hall and theater are much more opulent than any building in Willowside, and the building itself rivals some of the more elegant structures of Absalom. The interior floors are covered with velvety red carpets, though a hero examining them carefully notices rugs covering threadbare sections. Large paintings, featuring various figures from Kortos's history, decorate the walls, although none of the paintings are more recent than 15 years old. The furniture is primarily mahogany with velvet upholstery. The ceilings in the hall are generally 10 feet high, though the ceiling is much higher in the theater (area A6). All the rooms are brightly lit with lanterns; at night, the light makes it clear that Fortune's Hall is occupied, even from hundreds of feet away. The sound of tinny music echoes around the nearby swamp at all hours. None of the doors within Fortune's Hall are locked, except where indicated. Fortune's Hall is far enough from Willowside that sleeping here doesn't inflict the Dreams of Bokrug (described in the sidebar on page 8).

A1. GAHLEPOD POND

LOW 12

Fortune's Hall stands on a low hill, surrounded by the lush greenery of a swampy valley. In front of the building, a large, scenic pond is surrounded by stone benches and a decorative wooden arch covered with roses and creeping vines. Water lilies cover the serene surface of the pond.

This pond is a popular site for hosting weddings or other elaborate ceremonies, though when the heroes arrive, the benches are empty.

Creatures: A hero looking carefully at the pond notices that it's teeming with hideous giant tadpoles. These creatures are young brughadatches, also called gahlepod, which attack anyone who comes near the pond they've claimed as their own. Gahlepod are nearly mindless and rarely withdraw from a fight, but they

can't move well on land and have difficulty pursuing heroes who move away from the pond. If there are no creatures within 30 feet of the pond, the gahlepod give up their chase and return to the water.

GAHLEPODS (8)

CREATURE 7

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Initiative Perception +13

Attracting Attention: If the heroes make a lot of noise outside Fortune's Hall, such as by fighting the gahlepod, one of the brughadatches in the foyer (area A3) comes to investigate. It politely invites the heroes inside, unless it's clear the heroes have been attacking the gahlepod. In this case, the brughadatch shrieks loudly to warn of hostile visitors and retreats to the front hall to prepare an attack with its companions there.

A2. STABLE

MODERATE 12

A large stable, 15 feet tall, stands near Fortune's Hall. Just outside the stable is the famous wagon painted with Fortune Hall's distinctive red and violet colors. Weeds growing around the wagon's wheels indicate that it hasn't been used in several weeks. Inside the stable, three starving and terrified horses neigh loudly when anyone enters.

Creatures: The last horse stall, where the horse who escaped to Willowside was living, now contains several human corpses. The brughadatch elders killed Cynsa and Palben Carrister weeks ago to keep them from sending the fey back to the First World. They've dumped the owners' bodies here, along with the corpses of several staff members and guests who have died of starvation. The spirits of the starved do not rest easily, and they rise up in an undead



Gahlepod

monstrosity called a gashadokuro as soon as anyone enters the stall. It fights until destroyed, pursuing foes out of the stable if necessary.

STARVED STAFF

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE NE HUGE UNDEAD

Elite gashadokuro (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #148: Fires of the Haunted City* 84)

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +29, Intimidation +26

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

AC 32; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +16, **Will** +21

HP 250, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, piercing 10, slashing 10

Starvation Aura (aura, divine, mental, necromancy) 60 feet. Any creature that ends its turn in the aura feels the intense pain of starvation and must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature becomes fatigued and takes 7d6 damage. The damage and fatigue a creature takes from this aura can't be healed until the affected creature has eaten a full meal.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +29 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+16 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ claw +29 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+16 slashing

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (divine, necromancy)

The gashadokuro breathes a spray of bone shards in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area takes 9d12 piercing damage (DC 36 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Corpse Consumption (divine, necromancy) If

the gashadokuro kills a creature with Swallow Whole, it immediately regains Hit Points equal to the swallowed creature's level. As long as the gashadokuro still exists, creatures consumed in this way can't be resurrected except by *wish* or a similarly powerful effect.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d10 bludgeoning, Rupture 26

Treasure: Several items remain on their deceased owners' corpses, which were discarded in the horse stall beneath the bodies that animate as the gashadokuro. Two of these are the former owners of Fortune's Hall. Cynsa Carrister has a *gold nodule aeon stone* (*Sylvan*) in her pocket and Palben has a *greater primeval mistletoe* wrapped around one wrist.

A3. FOYER

MODERATE 12

The large mahogany double doors that open into Fortune's Hall are decorated with elaborate carvings of fey creatures such as satyrs, sprites, and dryads. The front hall is designed to impress. A fully stocked bar takes up one side of the room. In sharp contrast to the deprivation of Willowside, tables throughout the front hall display a tantalizing buffet of food, from fresh bread to roasted

Starved Staff

meats and poultry to ripe fruits and decadent desserts. Heavenly aromas fill the room, and delicate music completes the setting.

None of the food here is real; it's all conjured with the brughadatches' Deceitful Feast ability, and heroes who partake must attempt a DC 29 Will save or be affected by the feast's magic (page 78). A *detect magic* spell of 6th level or higher reveals the supernatural nature of the feast, as does a successful DC 32 Arcana or Nature check. A critical success on either of these checks not only indicates that the food is illusory, but that it would taste filling but lack any nutritional substance—the eater would feel full even if starving.

Creatures: Four brughadatches welcome the heroes to Fortune's Hall where, they insist, the fun never stops. Believing the heroes to be more townspeople they can torment, the brughadatches are eager to put them at ease and tempt them to partake in the illusory food. Aware they look strange to humanoids, the fey introduce themselves as visitors from the First World here to help the people of Fortune's Hall. They explain that the owners of Fortune's Hall asked them to come and share their bounty with the starving people of the area. They are coy if the heroes press for too many more details. After a successful Perception check to Sense Motive against the brughadatches' Deception DC of 32, a hero knows that their benevolent invitation and apparent generosity is a sham.

The brughadatches prefer to trick the heroes and only start a fight if the heroes ask too many questions or mention they killed the gahlepod outside. During a fight, the brughadatches lead with effects to charm or confuse the heroes, resorting to physical attacks only if badly wounded. A brughadatch reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points flees to find a place to recuperate and join with other fey elsewhere in Fortune's Hall.

BRUGHADATCHES (4)

CREATURE 10

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Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: The drinks behind the bar are genuine, and two bottles of exceptional brandy are worth 150 gp each. A bottle marked "Forgetting" contains a dose of slumber wine and another bottle labelled "Remembering" contains a greater cognitive mutagen.

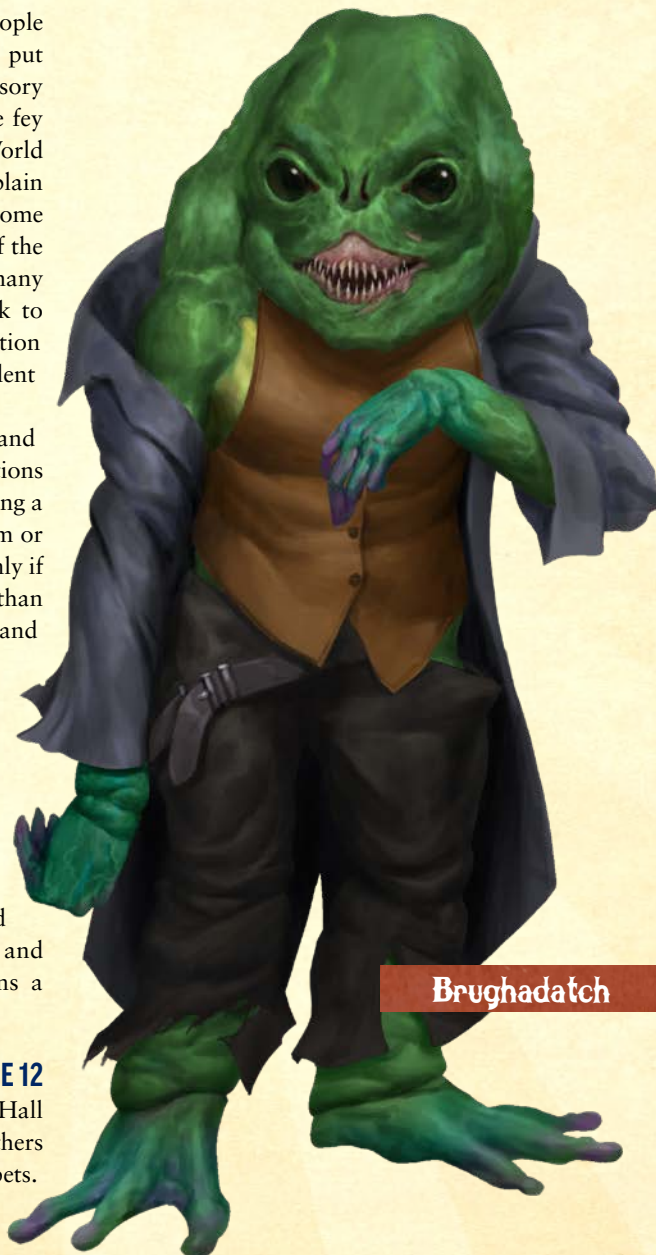
A4. GAMBLING ROOMS

MODERATE 12

The four rooms on the western side of Fortune's Hall hold gambling tables. Some have card games, others have dice, and one has a big wheel for placing bets. The rooms are lively, with several patrons in each

and staff members coming and going with platters of food, drinks, and gambling tokens. Although the atmosphere is festive, all of the people here are emaciated and many lack even the strength to stand fully upright for long. The food here is all illusory, just like the banquet in the foyer (area A3). Nevertheless, everyone is pleasant; the patrons ask the heroes to join them in the games, and the staff members ask if there's anything they can get for the heroes. All are charmed by the brughadatches and refuse to acknowledge that anything strange or suspicious is going on.

Even once the charm effect is removed, a patron or staff member is not automatically hostile to the brughadatches; the fey have been manipulative,



Brughadatch

but they haven't been actively hostile. Only when confronted with the horror of what's going on behind the scenes at Fortune's Hall, such as by seeing the corpses in the stable, does a patron or staff member panic and wish to flee the area. Unwilling to make the trek back to Willowside alone, people freed from the brughadatches' influence hide out wherever the heroes suggest (likely spots include the wagon by the stable or one of the staff bunkhouses) until the heroes have eliminated the brughadatch threat.

Creatures: In addition to the human patrons and staff, who are all noncombatants, each room has a single brughadatch enjoying the games and creating further Deceitful Feasts to share. These brughadatches try to ignore the heroes. If the heroes persist in trying to free the people from their enchantments or in disrupting the fun, the brughadatches attempt to charm the heroes as well. None of these brughadatches want to get into a fight on their own; if confronted with open combat, they attempt to flee and seek help from the brughadatches in the other gambling rooms.

BRUGHADATCHES (4)

CREATURE 10

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Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: Most of the wealth in these rooms is in the form of gambling tokens, which aren't valuable outside of Fortune's Hall. However, cashboxes in each room contains a total of 130 sp to cover cash bets.

A5. GARDEN TERRACE

MODERATE 12

This garden terrace is surrounded by a wrought iron fence covered with creeping vines. Blooming buttercups grow in pots ringing the terrace. The center of the terrace contains several broken theater seats piled in a heap.

Trap: The gimmerlings here set a trap in the pile of broken chairs removed from the theater (area A6). Any creature approaching within 5 feet of the trap causes sensitive wires keeping the furniture together to spring loose, creating a deadly spray of jagged wood and sharpened metal poles.

EXPLOSIVE FURNITURE TRAP

HAZARD 12

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

Description Wiring keeping the furniture together unravels, causing the spring-loaded pieces of furniture and wire to shoot outward.

Disable DC 34 Thievery (expert) to identify and harmlessly cut the taut wiring

AC 33; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19

Hardness 21; **HP** 84 (BT 42); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Unsprung Wires **Trigger** A creature moves within 5 feet of the pile of broken furniture; **Effect** The pile of furniture and entangling wires explodes outward. The trap deals 6d10+27 slashing damage (DC 32 basic Reflex save). On a failed save, the target takes a -10-foot penalty to all its Speeds for 1 round (1 minute on a critical failure).

Creatures: Two gimmerlings arrived at Fortune's Hall several days ago, lured by the scent of the hungry people there, but the brughadatches expressly forbade them from attacking anyone in the building. The gimmerlings therefore gravitated to this terrace, where they attempt to lure people out and attack them. Pretending to be children at play, they ask anyone who looks onto the terrace to come and play with them. The gimmerlings hide behind the buttercup pots, but they intentionally hide badly so the heroes come out to find them. Once they can start a fight, the gimmerlings don't surrender or back down, although they don't pursue anyone who retreats into the building.

GIMMERLINGS (2)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 177

Initiative Deception +25

Treasure: The gimmerlings are playing with a small leather ball with gold stitching. Close inspection reveals it to be a shriveled eyeball wrapped in an *eye of fortune*.

A6. THEATER

SEVERE 12

The center of Fortune's Hall features a beautiful theater with a large stage, red velvet seats that are only slightly threadbare, and more statues and reliefs of various fey creatures. Several staff are onstage enthusiastically performing a play, but the lines are nonsensical and the performers are emaciated and exhausted.

Creatures: The theater has an audience of only two creatures: a pair of toad-like doblagubs. Several seats on the main theater floor have been tossed out into the garden terrace to make room for them. They are using their mind-control powers to compel the performers to utter nonsensical lines in a convoluted performance that only the doblagubs understand.

The doblagubs' *Etheric Fibers* aura is active, but they aren't immediately hostile to the heroes. They prefer to ignore the heroes entirely, but attempts to disrupt the performance rouse the doblagubs' ire. Alternatively, if any brughadatches fleeing another encounter come here to alert the doblagubs to the heroes' interference, the doblagubs are prepared to fight.

In addition to their own combat abilities and spells, the doblagubs can compel the performers to launch from the stage and grasp at the heroes in a flailing mob. As long as there are controlled performers within 10 feet of a hero, a doblagub can attempt to Grapple, Shove, Trip, or Disarm any hero in the theater, using Intimidation instead of Athletics. The Escape DC of a Grapple made this way is the doblagub's Intimidation DC of 38.

Once roused to fight, the doblagubs don't surrender, although they don't pursue foes that flee the theater.

DOBLAGUBS (2)

CREATURE 13

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Initiative Perception +26

Hiring Ginritz or Imlander: When the heroes have freed the actors from their compulsions, either by killing the doblagubs or reversing the ritual in area A15, the two most talented of the performers come to thank them personally. These two have been bitter rivals throughout their employment at Fortune's Hall and, as a continuation of their rivalry, each tries to be first and the most effusive at thanking the heroes.

The first is the stout and oily-haired Ginritz Partroy. Ginritz used to act as a sword-swallower in a Taldan circus, and he came to Fortune's Hall to perform at their theater. He can still perform his old sword-swallowing act, but he's become a skilled juggler as well as a moving orator. He's now eager to move on and wants to join the heroes' circus. Ginritz can work in whatever capacity the heroes will use him, but he'd prefer to go by his old stage name of Ginritz the Blademaster. He knows the Professor from back in his former circus days, and the two are old friends.

Imlander Groost is a suave half-elf who is an exceptionally skilled dancer; they performed for many years in Absalom but had to suddenly leave the city years ago for a reason they don't discuss. Imlander has a magical ability to compel an audience to sway to their movements as well, making even a simple dance routine a lively crowd-pleaser. A creature who succeeds at a DC 30 Will save isn't compelled to sway along with Imlander's dancing, but even those who fail the save can still

use their regular actions; Imlander's dancing is uncannily but harmlessly catchy.

Ginritz and Imlander both vie for positions in the Circus of Wayward Wonders, but each conditions their joining on disallowing the other. The heroes might decide to stay out of this rivalry altogether or attempt the difficult task of convincing the performers to set aside their conflict. This requires two successful DC 35 Diplomacy checks, one with each of them; a single failure causes their rivalry to intensify and no further attempts at reconciliation can be made.

If the heroes take either performer on, give them the relevant trick on the inside cover of this adventure.



Doblagub

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if either Ginritz or Imlander joins their circus. If the heroes convince both to join, instead award them 80 XP.

A7. DRESSING ROOM

Both doors to this room are marked “Performers Only.” The room is outfitted with couches and a vanity, but the brughadatches have already ransacked it, leaving nothing of value.

A8. BACKSTAGE STORAGE

This room holds costumes and props for plays and instruments for musical acts. Like the dressing room, it has been thoroughly ransacked.

Treasure: The brughadatches overlooked a case marked “Nalven’s Stage Magic.” The case contains a *fade band* and a sheet of thin vellum studded with tiny diamonds worth 950 gp. The magician it belonged to departed Fortune’s Hall years ago.

A9. RESTROOMS

A set of elegant restrooms sits to the east of the theater. Marble floors and gold counters give the rooms a luxurious appearance, though a hero who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check recognizes the marble and gold as inexpensive fakes.

A10. KITCHEN

This large kitchen is well-stocked but looks all but abandoned. An unpleasant smell of rotted food lingers in the air.

Located discreetly in the back of the building, this kitchen should be bustling, with Fortune’s Hall filled with gamblers and theater attendees. It sits strangely empty now, its food weeks old. Perishable food like fish and fruit has all spoiled and emits an unpleasant smell. If the heroes haven’t already realized the food throughout Fortune’s Hall is illusory, the kitchen’s obvious disuse raises the question about where the bounteous feasts are being prepared.

A11. STAFF BUNKHOUSES

Five small cabins are arranged behind Fortune’s Hall, each with a single door and small window. A few willow trees between the cabins provide them some shade.

These cabins serve as living quarters for the staff, who still come here to rest when dismissed by the brughadatches. The doors don’t have locks, but they can be bolted from the inside. There are only a few staff members here at any time, and they spend their

time in the cabins asleep. If questioned, they talk in vague terms about the “new management,” but don’t seem to be entirely aware of what is going on. They are wholly unaware that they are starving to death. Staff members won’t help the heroes directly oppose the brughadatches, though they answer questions about the layout of Fortune’s Hall, including the Carristers’ living quarters upstairs. If the heroes offer food to the staff members, they eat only if the heroes insist—they genuinely aren’t hungry.

The staff don’t mention anything to the brughadatches if the heroes show up in the cabins, which makes this a relatively safe space for the heroes to rest or regroup while exploring Fortune’s Hall.

A12. BACK DOOR

Around the back of Fortune’s Hall, a weathered wooden staircase leads to the Carristers’ private suite. The door at the top of the stairs is locked with a good lock. It can be Forced Open with a successful DC 30 Athletics check or opened with five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock. If the heroes break this door down, the noise alerts the brughadatches in area **A13** to intruders.

A13. PARLOR

MODERATE 12

This parlor contains several couches and graceful wooden end tables. Landscapes hung on the walls show vistas of strange lands with impossibly tall trees, colorful meadows that stretch to the horizon, and marketplaces occupied by all manner of fey creatures. One of the couches has been torn open, its stuffing removed and pushed together in the shape of a large nest.

The northernmost room in the Carristers’ suite is a private parlor decorated with fanciful landscapes of the First World.

Creatures: Two brughadatches caught a cauthooj lurking near Fortune’s Hall and charmed it, with the intent of keeping the strange creature as a pet. They’ve been only mildly successful, as the cauthooj is happy to live in the parlor but is growing increasingly frustrated that the brughadatches won’t let it eat any of the humanoids in Fortune’s Hall.

When the heroes enter this room, or if the brughadatches hear the heroes nearby, the fey first send the cauthooj to attack and then rely upon their own spell-like abilities. The cauthooj uses its Warbling Song as soon as possible, even though the brughadatches don’t have any particular immunity to it. The brughadatches fight to the death to defend this area from intruders, but if the fey are defeated and the

cauthooj is reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points, the bird attempts to flee.

BRUGHADATCHES (2)

CREATURE 10

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Initiative Perception +19

CAUTHOOJ

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 55

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: A small end table contains a golden key worth 125 gp and a stoppered vial made of blown glass, crafted to look like a gourd, worth 300 gp. The vial contains a greater elixir of life with a distinct pumpkin flavor. The key opens the door to the library (area A15), and using it disarms the trap on that door.

A14. BEDROOM

The smallest room in the suite is the Carristers' bedroom. A few brughadatches have been sleeping here and have trashed it, but none are here now. The bureaus hold clothing that was designed to look expensive but is crafted from cheap fabrics, and the bed linens are similar. Paintings on the walls depict various fey creatures, and the brughadatches have defaced these with crude comments in Sylvan about the creatures pictured.

A15. LIBRARY

The last and largest room in the Carristers' suite is locked with an average lock, requiring four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock. Alternatively, the door can be forced with a successful DC 28 Athletics check or opened with the key from the parlor (area A13).

Trap: Attempting to open the door through any means other than its key triggers a trap on the door. The noise of this trap causes the brughadatches in the parlor to come running, goading their cauthooj in front of them. The brughadatches are reluctant to enter the library—they worry that their presence in the room where the ritual to summon them was performed might somehow force them to return to the First World. The cauthooj has no such hesitancy.

BUZZING LATCH RUNE

HAZARD 13

ELECTRICITY **MAGICAL** **SONIC** **TRAP**

Stealth DC 32 (master)

Description An invisible rune on the door begins emitting a very loud buzzing sound, potentially paralyzing an intruder.

Disable DC 34 Thievery (master) to disrupt the rune without triggering it or *dispel magic* (6th level; counteract DC 31) to magically counteract the rune

AC 33; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19

Hardness 21; **HP** 84 (BT 42); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Jolting Buzz ⤵ (electricity, evocation, primal, sonic)

Trigger A creature attempts to open the door without using the key; **Effect** The trap makes a loud buzz and deals 5d10 electricity damage and 5d10 sonic damage to the triggering creature (DC 32 basic Reflex save; this save applies to both the electricity damage and the sonic damage). Further, the creature must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save.

Critical Success No effect.

Success The target is paralyzed for 1 round.

Failure The target is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. At the end of each of its turns, it can attempt a new DC 32 Fortitude save to reduce the remaining duration by 1 round, or end it entirely on a critical success.

Critical Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, it can attempt a new Fortitude save to reduce the remaining duration by 1 round, or end it entirely on a critical success.

Reset The trap resets after 1 hour.

Ritual Evidence: Beyond the door is Cynsa and Palben Carrister's personal library. This room is filled with books and parchments, and magical diagrams hang on the walls. The focus of the library seems to be on fey and the First World, though there are general treatises on other types of magic as well. There are markings on the floor next to various burnt plants, flowers, and mushrooms. A hero who succeeds at a DC 28 Nature check (or a DC 32 check using Survival or an applicable Lore skill) recognizes the components for a *primal call* ritual, and additionally notes that the components are expended, indicating that the ritual was completed. On a critical success, the hero notices that the ritual performed here was a slight variant of the standard *primal call* ritual and designed to call only one specific type of fey and to bind the summoned fey to a specific location.

A large book lying open near the expended ritual components shows stylized pictures of brughadatches, complete with a sumptuous buffet of food, much like the bounty currently on display in the foyer. Annotations in one hand (Cynsa's) suggest modifications to the ritual, while notes in another hand (Palben's) identify various plants to use as components. The book provides details of the *primal call* ritual, and it also gives instructions on how to reverse the ritual—although it doesn't give specifics about what reversing the ritual does.

Reversing the Ritual: The reversal ritual uses the same components as the original ritual. As these were

expended in the original ritual, the heroes need to reacquire them. The specific items required are two lily pads (available in area A1), a handful of buttercups (available in area A5), willow bark (available in area A11), a few drops of blood from a brughadatch (available from any type of brughadatch they've already defeated), and 91 gp of precious stones. Only the precious stones are available here in this room; the heroes can find the other components elsewhere in Fortune's Hall. The ritual must be performed here, where the Carristers performed the original.

The reversal ritual is much faster and easier than the original; it takes only 1 hour and requires a successful DC 30 Nature check. Up to four other heroes can act as secondary casters; each attempts a DC 28 secondary check (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 408) using Crafting, Diplomacy, or Survival. There's no requirement for any number of secondary casters, and fewer than four people can act as secondary casters if the heroes prefer.

As soon as the ritual begins, the surviving brughadatches in Fortune's Hall understand that their hold on the establishment is becoming tenuous. Only the brughadatches in the parlor (area A13), if still alive, recognize that activity down the hall is to blame. They come running to disrupt the ritual.

Once the reversal ritual is complete, the brughadatches lose their connection to Fortune's Hall. While this does not immediately dismiss them, it causes the doblagubs to lose their Etheric Fibers ability and prevents them from reestablishing it. All Deceitful Feasts created by the brughadatches disappear, and anyone currently charmed or dominated by a brughadatch receives a new saving throw with a +4 circumstance bonus (rather than make a saving throw for each guest and staff member, you can simply decide that they all shake off the enchantments they've been under). All brughadatches in Fortune's Hall begin hunting for whoever reversed the ritual, fighting viciously and to the death. One day after the reversal ritual is completed, any remaining brughadatches are pulled back into the First World.

The human staff and patrons are in very poor shape physically and can't really fight the brughadatches themselves, even though they can now understand the nature of what's happened to Fortune's Hall. They nevertheless provide any assistance to the heroes that they can, such as causing a distraction, informing them of the building layout or the brughadatches' movements, or providing medical attention.

Treasure: Sequestered in small jars and cloth bags stashed around the library are 200 gp in gemstones, rare oils, and other ritual components. A set of *druid's vestments* hangs on a hook on the east wall. A folio

on a nearby bookshelf titled "Leaves of the Wisdom Tree" contains several rare, esoteric drawings of primal significance. The folio is worth 1,500 gp. It also contains a *scroll of haste* (7th level) and a *scroll of stone to flesh*.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for completing the reversal ritual. Additionally, provide them XP for each brughadatch sent back to the First World as a result of the completed ritual as if they had defeated them in battle.

AFTERMATH

Once the brughadatches are all gone, the human staff and patrons thank the heroes. Then they must decide what to do, both with Fortune's Hall and with themselves. One of the chefs goes immediately to the kitchen and starts preparing food with whatever ingredients are still good, and everyone eats heartily to rebuild their strength. If Ginritz Partroy or Imlander Groost haven't yet talked to the heroes about joining their circus, they do so now (each vying to be the first to take the heroes aside).

Quite a few of these people want to leave the Willowside area altogether, though a few talk about working to reopen Fortune's Hall. Regardless of what they want to do next, all 20 of these people need to recuperate back in Willowside. They ask the heroes to escort them back to town. It takes the staff several hours to pack their belongings in Fortune's Hall's wagon, giving the heroes time to rest if necessary.

XP Award: If the heroes agree to escort these people back to Willowside, award them 30 XP.

RETURN TO WILLOWSIDE

MODERATE 12

When the heroes make the journey back to Willowside, they quickly learn that the xulgaths have been very busy. A blockade of cut trees has been hastily erected across the road the heroes used to reach Fortune's Hall. It takes several minutes of effort to circumvent this blockade, whether by hauling the wagon through the blighted forest around the blockade or moving the heavy logs aside. You can use the East Road Blockade map on page 45 for this encounter, as it's the same stretch of road the xulgaths later work to destroy with their brontosaurus mounts.

Heroes who Scout as they travel automatically detect the blockade before reaching it. Other characters must succeed at a DC 30 Perception or Survival check to note the tracks of dinosaurs in the area. As the foes here are expecting trouble from the town rather than from the direction of Fortune's Hall, heroes have a +2 circumstance bonus when using Stealth for initiative.

Creatures: A xulgath roughrider on a tyrannosaurus

mount watches the road along with two xulgath herd-tenders on triceratopses. They converge quickly on any creatures they see, fighting from atop their mounts for as long as they can. The xulgaths take their directive to guard the road seriously and fight to the death, but a dinosaur that isn't being ridden by a xulgath flees when reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points.

XULGATH ROUHRIDER

CREATURE 11

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +22, Dinosaur Lore +16, Intimidation +18, Nature +21 (+23 to Command an Animal), Survival +19

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

Items +1 striking halberd, hide armor, javelins (6)

AC 31; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +23, **Will** +19

HP 195

Hasty Sacrifice ☞ (concentrate, move) **Prerequisite**

The roughrider is mounted; **Trigger** The roughrider is targeted with an attack from a creature they can see; **Effect** The roughrider's mount becomes the target of the attack instead. The roughrider must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or they fall off their mount and land prone. If the check is a critical failure, the roughrider also takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage in addition to the normal damage from the fall.

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath herd-tender (page 10), but DC 30.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ halberd +24 (magical, reach, versatile S), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +23, **Damage** 2d8+11 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +23 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+11 slashing

Ranged ♦ javelin +22 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 1d6+11 piercing

Feral Directive ♦♦ As xulgath herd-tender (page 10).

Mounted Superiority A mounted roughrider's Strikes deal an additional 1d10 damage to creatures that aren't mounted.

TYRANNOSAURUS

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 101

Initiative Perception +19

XULGATH HERD-TENDERS (2)

CREATURE 8

Page 10

Initiative Perception +20

TRICERATOPSES (2)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 98

Initiative Perception +15



Xulgath Roughrider



CHAPTER 2: SHRINE OF THE WATER LIZARD

When the heroes return to Willowside, most likely with a wagon full of former Fortune's Hall workers and patrons, they learn that the blockade they faced on the road was not an isolated incident. The xulgaths have grown increasingly aggressive over the last day and are cutting off all paths into and out of the town. People living in outlying communities—such as the Densirts—have moved into Willowside for safety, exacerbating the town's already-strained resources. These refugees include the dockmaster Arglynn Pranson, who saw monstrous sea serpents thrashing around the pier. During her flight to Willowside, she encountered enormous reptile tracks and heard roars closing in on the road. Willowside's path to the sea is now blocked.

The workers and performers of the Circus of Wayward Wonders are particularly unnerved at hearing the pier is blockaded, as it means they're truly stranded in Willowside. The heroes' most stalwart

supporters in the circus, such as the Professor, are keeping the other workers calm by pointing out the heroes have led the circus well until now and won't abandon them.

As soon as Mayor Vandy realizes the heroes are back, she asks to speak with them, ushering them into her office to ask about Fortune's Hall. She is shocked to hear that the Carristers would resort to summoning monstrous creatures, but she understands that people in desperate situations make terrible mistakes. With the Welt's relentless encroachment, she worries that bad decisions like this will occur more frequently.

If the heroes haven't already learned of the blockade around the town, Mayor Vandy explains what has happened. She's tasked several residents with putting together defenses to keep the town safe and asks the heroes to pitch in and help. The heroes might instead want to take the fight to the xulgaths directly;

Mayor Vandy finds this admirable, but she asks them to help with the town's defenses first.

Town Defenses

The extent of Willowside's defenses against the xulgath besiegers is represented by Defense Points. The higher the town's Defense Points, the less death and destruction the xulgath attacks in Chapter 3 inflict upon the town. Willowside begins with only 2 Defense Points, but there's no upper limit to the number of Defense Points the town can have.

By the time the heroes are done meeting with Mayor Vandy, the fear that pervades the town has turned to an attitude of grim determination. The leaders Mayor Vandy asked to organize the defenses have been talking with the townspeople and galvanized them to action. Several are now at work erecting defenses, and they welcome the heroes' help.

None of the villagers know when or where the xulgaths might strike, but they're committed to working hard to erect as many defenses as they can in the next 2 days (after that, they'll work on fortifying and improving the existing defenses without the heroes' help). Aiding in the town's defenses requires selecting and performing one of the following downtime activities. Each takes a day of effort. The heroes can split up to assist the town's defenders however they wish and don't need to perform the same activity. You can determine that an inventive idea for a task or use of a spell increases Willowside's Defense Points without need of a check, but any of these inventive solutions should take some time or coordination with the townspeople to enact.

BOLSTER MORALE

CONCENTRATE DOWNTIME LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Requirements Diplomacy (expert) or Performance (expert)

The undercurrent of fear among the townspeople is palpable. You can provide encouraging words throughout the town to raise morale or perform lively acts to keep the townsfolk's spirits up. Attempt a DC 30 Diplomacy or Performance check.

Critical Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point. Your efforts don't take much time at all; if this was your first downtime activity of the day, you can perform another downtime activity (including this one).

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

BUILD BARRICADES

DOWNTIME MANIPULATE

Quite a few townspeople are constructing barricades out of bricks, boards, metal scraps, and other materials at hand with the hope of building something strong enough to impede a charging dinosaur. You perform the heavy lifting to construct a functional wall or barrier. Attempt a DC 30 Athletics check.

Critical Success Willowside gains 2 Defense Points.

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Failure The defenses aren't strong enough to contribute any Defense Points.

Critical Failure As failure, and you are fatigued.

CONSTRUCT TRAPS

DOWNTIME MANIPULATE

Several townspeople are digging pit traps and covering them with leaves, setting up trip wires, and hoisting nets up into the dead trees that surround the town. Setting these traps to be effective against massive attackers is tricky work. Attempt a DC 30 Crafting or Thievery check.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The heroes return to Willowside and help the residents prepare the town for the coming siege. Once the town looks set defensively, the mayor asks the heroes to check up on the Banyan Boys, who ventured into underground sea caves to look for supplies hidden there by the town's forebears. The heroes discover that the sea caves hold not only many dangerous creatures, but also a shrine to the Great Old One Bokrug. The spirit of the dead Bokrug cult leader, Lyrt Cozurn, is now a dybbuk and has possessed Ledorick Banyan to seek centuries-overdue revenge.

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows.

- +1 rapier
- +1 resilient chain shirt
- +1 resilient leather armor
- +1 striking composite longbow
- +1 striking composite shortbow
- +1 striking ranseur
- +2 greater resilient rune
- +2 greater striking longsword
- dazing coil
- greater cloak of elvenkind
- greater explosive bolt
- invisibility potion
- lesser darkvision elixir
- major antidote
- major mentalist's staff
- moderate healing potion
- moderate sea touch elixir
- ring of sustenance
- scroll of false life
- storm flash

Critical Success Willowside gains 2 Defense Points.

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Failure The traps are too small or shallow to contribute any Defense Points.

Critical Failure The poorly set traps give clues to the attackers on safe ways to enter the town. Willowside loses 1 Defense Point.

ERECT MAGICAL WARDS

CONCENTRATE **DOWNTIME**

Requirements Arcana (master), Nature (master), Occultism (master), or Religion (master)

The few people in Willowside capable of simple magic are erecting alarms and magical traps to deter intruders or warn of their movements. You have sufficient skill to bolster these magical defenses. Attempt a DC 30 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check.

Critical Success Willowside gains 2 Defense Points.

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Failure The wards aren't strong enough to be effective.

Critical Failure Your failed wards create temporary magical backlash in the area; no creature can Erect Magical Wards again during the defense preparations.

PREPARE ARMS

DOWNTIME **MANIPULATE**

Requirements Crafting (expert)

The town's blacksmiths and hunters are getting everyone's weapons into shape for battle and ensuring that there is enough ammunition, such as arrows and bolts, to supply all the townspeople. You can demonstrate techniques to speed this process up. Attempt a DC 30 Athletics check.

Critical Success Willowside gains 2 Defense Points.

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Failure The weapons aren't numerous enough to contribute any Defense Points.

Critical Failure The weapons are downright shoddy and undermine Willowside's defense. Willowside loses 1 Defense Point.

RETRIEVE TOWNSFOLK

DOWNTIME

Requirements Stealth (expert)

Not all residents of Willowside's outskirts made it safely into the town. You try to seek out missing townspeople on farms, ranches, or solitary homesteads and sneak them back into town without alerting xulgath patrols. Attempt a DC 30 Stealth check.

Critical Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point, and your stealthy work was skillful and quick. If this was your first downtime activity of the day, you can perform another downtime activity (including this one).

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Failure The townspeople you return with are too exhausted from the terrifying ordeal of sneaking past xulgath patrols to contribute any Defense Points.

Critical Failure The xulgaths take notice of your movements; two gutragers are added to the first xulgath strike force you encounter (page 44).

TRACK PATROLS

CONCENTRATE **DOWNTIME**

Gristarn Vrick and Willowside's other skilled trackers are tracing the paths of the dinosaur patrols, trying to get a feel for their routes, timing, and movements. You can coordinate this tracking and get a good sense of how the patrols are most likely to converge on the town. Attempt a DC 30 Nature, Perception, or Survival check.

Critical Success Willowside gains 2 Defense Points.

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Failure You're unable to discern a pattern in the tracks.

Critical Failure You not only fail to see a pattern in the tracks, but the townspeople inadvertently obscure the traces of xulgath movement. No creature can Track Patrols again during the defense preparations.

DEFENSE OBSTACLES

The following encounters can occur anytime during Chapter 2 and might reduce the Defense Points the heroes earn. As exploration activities, these encounters don't take much time, and they work particularly well to break up the downtime activities.

Departing Brewers: Miltynne and Sindrick Birtrax, owners of Birtrax Brewing, are packing up and trying to leave Willowside on foot. They know that it's dangerous, but they are convinced that the xulgath army will overrun the town any day now, and their only hope of survival is to try to escape. If a hero succeeds at a DC 32 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression or a DC 32 Intimidation check to Coerce the brewers, they agree to remain in town. Otherwise, their demoralizing departure causes Willowside to lose 1 Defense Point.

Disheartening Absence: Townsfolk loiter outside the Banyan Clubhouse and look worried. No one's seen the Banyan Boys at all during the defense preparations. A hero who succeeds at a DC 32 Diplomacy check to Gather Information hears rumors that the mayor sent the Banyan Boys on a special mission to aid the town. On a failure, townspeople mutter that no one can find the Banyan Boys and that they must have left Willowside. This demoralizing rumor, despite being false, reduces the town's Defense Points by 1. If the heroes approach the mayor to ask about the Banyan Boys, she asks them to meet with her after the 2 days of preparations are over, as the Banyan Boys will have returned by then—hopefully with good news to share.

Hardworking Smith: Wrelda Glidser, the blacksmith, is working overtime to get weapons and armor made and repaired for the townsfolk, most of whom have never fought before. She has worked through all the spare metal at hand, and her production has stopped. She knows of a site outside town where she had discarded slag and scrap metal before, but now she realizes she needs even that discarded metal for her work. It's too dangerous for her to go and retrieve the materials herself, and she asks for help. Heroes making this trip must attempt a DC 32 Stealth check to Avoid Notice. Failure means the heroes are spotted by a xulgath strike force (page 44) but can quickly retreat to town before a fight. If the heroes succeed at the check to Avoid Notice or defeat the patrol, they must attempt a DC 32 Crafting check or relevant Lore check to find useful metal in the junk heap. If they're successful, Wrelda can forge more material; on a critical success, the superior metals increase the town's Defense Points by 1. On a failure, the lack of armor and weaponry reduces the town's Defense Points by 1; a critical failure reduces the Defense Points by 2 instead.

Vital Herbs: Gellra Shozur of Willowside Hospital needs more herbs and plants from the blighted forest, but she hasn't been able to leave town to collect them due to the xulgath patrols. The plants she needs are particularly hard to come by, she explains, because so little of the plant life in the Welt is healthy. But if she doesn't get them soon, she won't have enough time to make medicines to aid in the town's defense. She asks the heroes to sneak into the blighted forest and get the plants she requires. Heroes making this trip must attempt a DC 32 Stealth check to Avoid Notice. On a failure, the heroes are spotted by a xulgath strike force (page 44) but can retreat to town before a fight. If the heroes succeed at the check to Avoid Notice or defeat the patrol, they must attempt a DC 32 Nature check or relevant Lore check to find the correct herbs. If successful, Gellra has time to prepare the medicines; on a critical success, the potent plants increase the town's Defense Points by 1. On a failure, the lack of medicine reduces the town's Defense Points by 1; a critical failure reduces the Defense Points by 2 instead.

XP Award: If Willowside has at least 8 Defense Points at the end of the two days, award the heroes 80 XP. Award them 120 XP instead if Willowside has at least 12 Defense Points.

The Missing Banyan Boys

After 2 days of preparations, the mayor asks to speak with the heroes again. She thanks them for the work they've done on the town's defenses, but then explains

AVOIDING THE SEA CAVES

The heroes might heed Trytalla Frynt's warnings or simply decide on their own not to go down to the caves. In that case, the Banyan Boys return from the caves a few days later, but the dybbuk—the long dead Bokrug cult leader Lyrt Cozurn—possesses Ledorick and compels him to stalk and murder townspeople out of a twisted sense of revenge. He soon targets the heroes as his biggest threat. This should be enough to convince the heroes that something strange happened in the sea caves and that they should investigate.

that she needs another favor. If the heroes already asked her about the Banyan Boys, she lets them know this request is related.

"I hate to ask for more help when you just got back from looking into Fortune's Hall, but since you're trapped in town until we fight off these xulgaths, I imagine it's in your best interest as well. We need your help dealing with the xulgaths, but first, we need the Banyan Boys back. There are these caves underneath the town that have been here since before the town was built, and there's an entrance in the basement of the general store. Some old documents from the town's founding indicate that those caves were important, but I'm not sure why. A lot of stuff from that time is gone. Local legend has it that the town's founders might have left something special down there in case of emergencies. Well, if this doesn't count as an emergency, nothing does. The Banyan Boys went down there, and they should have been back by now. I worry that something happened to them. Can you go look for them? They're our town's best protectors."

The heroes might have questions for the mayor, which she answers as best she can.

What are the caves like? "No one's been down there in many years, as far as I know. They're old sea caves, so they probably lead out to the ocean somehow. They're supposed to be very dangerous, and town legends mention a collapse down there. There was an old map of the caves, but the Banyan Boys took it with them."

How long have the Banyan Boys been gone? "It's been nearly two days now. They were only supposed to be gone a few hours, or overnight if necessary, so they're long overdue."

What did the founders leave down there? "No one knows for sure. It's supposed to be something that can help the town in its time of greatest need. A famine and a bunch of dinosaur attacks at the same time sure seem like they meet that definition."

Can you give us any other help? “There’s not much that I have to give. We don’t know how deep the caves go, and they could be flooded. If you need help breathing underwater, you could go see Trytalla Frynt for potions. Let her know that I sent you, so she won’t charge you. I hope she has some left—I had her give some to the Banyan Boys as well.”

PREPARING FOR THE SEA CAVES

If the heroes expended resources while helping the town prepare their defenses or faced combat in some of the defense obstacles (page 26), they may need to rest before heading into the underground caves. The mayor indicates that speed is important, but the need is not so urgent that the heroes should dash right in without being ready. With faint hope obvious on her face, she says, “Perhaps the Banyan Boys will make it back on their own by the time you’re ready, anyway.”

If the heroes visit Trytalla Frynt at the Temple of Erastil, she provides them with a *scroll of water breathing* (4th level) or casts it on them herself if none of the heroes can use the scroll. But she tells them flatly that they shouldn’t go into the caves and, furthermore, that she told the Banyan Boys the same thing. If the heroes prod her further, she answers as follows.

“There’s nothing down there that’s worth the danger. The mayor thinks I’m full of nonsense, but I know the old stories. There are terrible things in those caves—things that ought to be dead but aren’t. I’m sure the poor Banyan Boys are dead now, too. If they couldn’t beat the things down there, I don’t know why you circus people think that you can.”

A hero who wants Trytalla to elaborate must succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy check to Request more information. Whether or not the heroes succeed at this check, Trytalla says the innkeeper, Vorinta Irrinesse, probably knows more. On a successful check, Trytalla adds the following.

“Our little town has a much darker history than Mayor Vandy is ever going to admit, or maybe even than she knows. Once upon a time, many of the people of Willowside worshipped something terrible. They were putting their faith into things they shouldn’t. But one night, the folks

who worshipped the evil thing all died. Their spirits are down there still. That was when people started having the dreams. Some of you have been getting them, haven’t you? Most of us don’t, anymore, but it always hits visitors hard.”

Vorinta Irrinesse, the half-elf owner of the Hooked Inn, is the oldest resident of Willowside and the only one with a real idea of what lies under the town. If the heroes ask her about the caves, Vorinta takes them aside to tell them what she knows.

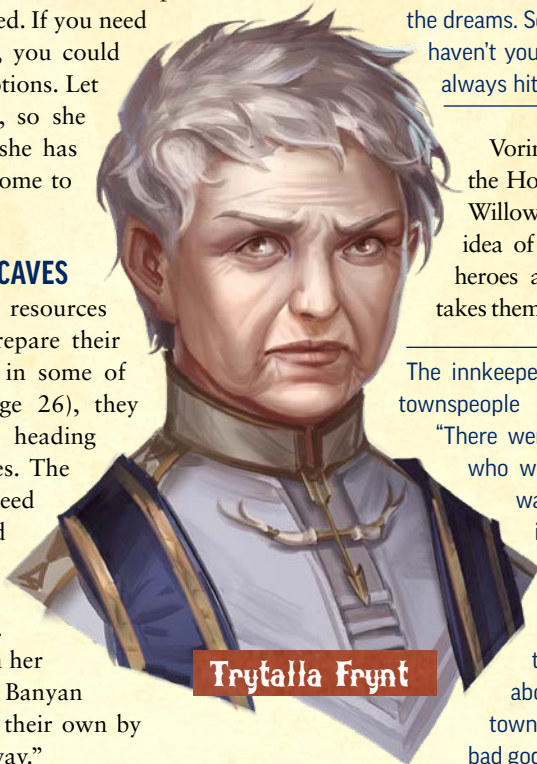
The innkeeper finds a private room, where the townspeople can’t overhear, before speaking.

“There were once people here in Willowside who worshipped a long-forgotten god. It was very old and very powerful, and it controlled the oceans. The ones who worshipped it kept their faith secret from the ones who didn’t. But the sheriff at the time, one of the Banyans’ ancestors, found out about it. She riled up the rest of the town, trapped all who worshipped the bad god, and killed them. I suppose she was doing what she thought was right, but I think it permanently affected the town. All that horror is still down there, in the caves that lead to the sea. I don’t think they even brought the bodies out. This was all long before my time, of course, but when I was young some of the old-timers would tell the stories they’d heard from their own grandparents. I don’t like to tell this story, you understand. It’s all best forgotten, and the Banyan Boys don’t need to know the hard, hard things their ancestor did.”

Once the heroes are ready to go down to the sea caves, Sauntille Caffron, the owner of the general store, lets the heroes into the basement. She is very worried about why the Banyan Boys haven’t come out yet and is glad the heroes are going down after them. She tells the heroes she gave the Banyan Boys her only key, so she hopes they left the basement door unlocked. She hangs charms from the basement door, hoping to ward off bad spirits from the caves.

The Sea Caves

In the distant past, most Willowside residents venerated Bokrug in a series of ancient sea caves below the town. Although there’s an entrance from near the pier that winds through a passage nearly a mile long, the easiest entrance is in the basement of Willowside’s general store. This entrance was built when the cult’s influence was at



Trytalla Frynt

its height, many generations ago. At that time, the general store's owner and high priest of the cult was a pompous man named Lyrt Cozurn. When Lyrt and the cult were slain and the killings hushed up by the local sheriff, the general store fell to the Caffron family. Sauntille Caffron is now the owner of the general store, and she grew up wholly ignorant of the caves beneath her family's business.

The secret was recently exposed when the Banyan Boys came to the general store with an old map and insisted that Sauntille open a door in a neglected corner of her basement. Sauntille reluctantly did so. She still isn't sure what's below her shop, but she knows the Banyan Boys descended into her basement 2 days ago and haven't returned.

Features of the Sea Caves:

The basement of the general store and the sea caves below are all dark, except where the Banyan Boys have brought light with them. The basement is cramped, with ceilings barely 7 feet high, but the sea caves' ceilings vary from 8 feet to 15 feet high. The walls are rough with natural rock features, requiring a successful DC 26 Athletics check to Climb. The few doors in the sea cave are made of old wood and are moldy and swollen with moisture. Seawater is at least ankle-deep throughout the sea caves and even deeper where indicated. The smell of seawater is strong throughout, and the entire area carries an indefinable, creeping sense of doom that presses on the mind like the pressure of being deep underwater.

B1. BASEMENT

The part of the basement Sauntille Caffron uses is filled with crates of goods. Everything is well-organized, and each crate is labeled in Sauntille's neat handwriting. The rear of the basement has an extremely dusty door with rusty hinges. An ornate metal padlock hangs open on the handle, with a similarly ornate key still inside. If the heroes think to go back and ask Sauntille, she confirms that this is the key she gave to the Banyan Boys. She also confirms that she has never opened the door herself, out of a vague but powerful fear that something sinister lurks beyond the door.

B2. OLD STOREROOM

MODERATE 13

The door from Sauntille's basement leads to another much-larger room filled with old boxes and crates.



Sauntille Caffron

Everything is covered in dust, and it's clear the room hasn't been used in many years. A broken wooden door leads north and a larger door hangs open to the west. Steep stairs carved into a natural rock passage descend from the larger doorway, which emits the smell of seawater. Dampness fills the room, making it cold and clammy.

The crates in this room are all labeled "Cozurn's General Store." As the Caffrons have owned the general store for several generations, it's clear that it's been a long time since anyone has used this room regularly. The plain tracks of the Banyan Boys disturb the dust on the floor, leading to the smaller door to the north (which they smashed open), then to the larger door. The tracks lead down, but don't come back up.

Creatures: When the Banyan Boys came through this room, they decided to investigate the side room for anything of value. The door was swollen shut with moisture and age, so they broke it open, releasing four tallow oozes. To escape them, the Banyan Boys quickly descended into the caves below. The tallow oozes remain in this storeroom and currently block the path to the door. They all fight until destroyed, but they don't pursue foes that leave this room.

TALLOW OOZES (4)

CREATURE 11

Page 63

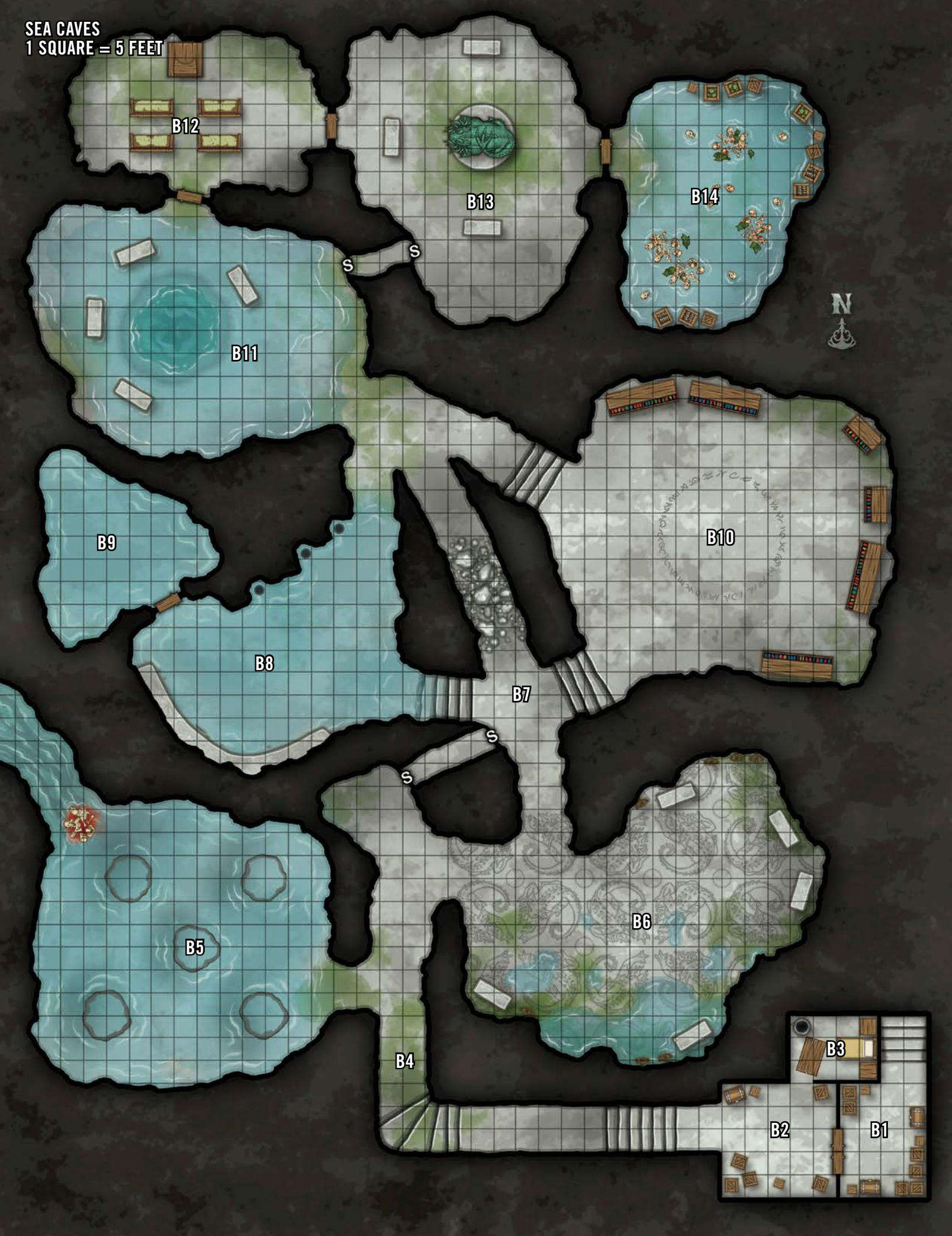
Initiative Perception +14

Treasure: The Banyan Boys took off as soon as they released the oozes, so they didn't have time to examine the room. The heroes discover a few interesting items if they Search here. One crate contains a battered greave etched with a +2 *greater resilient rune* and wrapped in old leather. Another contains 30 empty silver vials carefully packed in moldy straw; each vial is worth 15 gp. Slipped between two crates, as though inadvertently dropped, lies a platinum charm depicting a lizard with three tails. The charm is worth 520 gp.

Recognizing Bokrug

There are several references to the Great Old One Bokrug, also known as the Water Lizard, in the sea caves. When the heroes see one of these references, they have a chance to learn more about Bokrug.

SEA CAVES
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



B12

B13

B14

B11



B9

B10

B8

B7

B5

B6

B4

B3

B2

B1

A character who is trained in Occultism or Religion, or who succeeds at a DC 20 Occultism or Religion check to Recall Knowledge, knows about the Great Old One Bokrug, the Water Lizard. Bokrug is depicted as a huge lizard with a beard of tentacles and a long tail that splits into three stingers. As it's a distant and uncaring god of storms, the sea, and revenge, Bokrug is chaotic neutral.

A character who is an expert in Occultism or Religion, or who critically succeeds at the DC 20 Occultism or Religion check to Recall Knowledge, knows that Bokrug rules a desolate realm in the Dimension of Dreams. This underwater realm is populated by his amphibious subjects and is a place full of unspeakable dangers. Bokrug sleeps in his kingdom, but he is no less powerful for his slumber. He is venerated by secretive cults near sodden marshes or storm-lashed seashores. These cults are never benevolent; although Bokrug is alien and indifferent rather than truly evil, most of his cultists practice blood sacrifices or worse to appease him and are often evil themselves. His followers wield ranseurs with three spikes, like Bokrug's tail, and wear scale-patterned clothing during their rituals.

A character who is a master in Occultism or Religion knows that the largest shrines to Bokrug contain a statue of the Great Old One. Bokrug can see through these statues, and a cult can animate its statue with the appropriate rituals. The dreams of storms and drowning experienced by people in Willowside are consistent with a locus of Bokrug's power.

B3. TALLOW LABORATORY

This old laboratory contains a few bare tables, a cot, and an immense cauldron with cold ashes on the stone floor beneath it. The entire room is coated with a thin layer of slippery grease.

The grease in this room makes the floor uneven ground; a successful DC 28 Acrobatics check is required to Balance in the laboratory.

Lyrnt Cozurn performed unorthodox experiments in this side chamber and even slept here from time to time. He inadvertently created the tallow oozes while mixing strange chemicals together, then quickly cleared out the room and shut the door behind him when it became obvious he wasn't able to destroy or control them. The tallow oozes were trapped here for decades before the Banyan Boys released them while poking around.

Treasure: A *dazing coil* is covered in congealed grease near the cauldron in this room.

THE BANYAN BOYS' EXPEDITION

The Banyan Boys have the map from the mayor to guide their way through the treacherous caverns, which allowed them to bypass most of the sea caves' dangers. The map was actually made by Sheriff Banyan as she tried to put to rest the evils present in the caves and, failing that, to keep others from entering the caves. It eventually ended up in the mayor's office instead of with the Banyan descendants. Tashlock Banyan marked chalk arrows in each hallway to show the way to the exit, in case something happened to the map. The brothers opened the stuck door in the storeroom, releasing the tallow oozes, then fled into the caves below. They used the secret door in area **B4** then took the middle passage at area **B7**, but they inadvertently triggered the collapse that now blocks it. From area **B11** they took a second secret passageway that allowed them to avoid the shining children. Their proximity to the meditation pool, however, alerted the azure worm within it to the presence of intruders. The secret passageway took the Banyan Boys straight to the statue of Bokrug. The evil spirit, who was, in life, the cult leader Lyrnt Cozurn, had been lurking near the statue. He possessed Ledorick Banyan without his brothers realizing. Lyrnt, in the guise of Ledorick, recognizes Ledorick as a descendent of the sheriff who killed him so many years ago. He is keeping the Banyan Boys in area **B13** while he tries to learn all the information he can.

B4. SEA CAVE ENTRANCE

The rough-cut stone staircase leads to a hall flooded with several inches of water. The smell of seawater is strong here, as is a clammy, ominous pressure that feels like being deep underwater. This hallway has been worked so that its walls are fairly even. Passages lead out to the west and, a bit further north, to the east.

A hero Searching this area spots a small arrow recently marked in chalk on the east wall. The arrow points south, indicating the way out of the caves. Tashlock Banyan left this mark when the Banyan Boys recently passed through, so he and his brothers could easily find their way out.

The north end of this passage ends in a strange bulge, as though something behind the cave wall twisted and pulled at the stone. A hero Searching this area who succeeds at a DC 36 Perception check spots the secret passage in the north wall. This secret passage leads to area **B7**. The Banyan Boys' map of the cavern had this passageway marked, so they bypassed the undead lurking in area **B6**.

B5. GRIKKITOG CAVERN

SEVERE 13

A wide opening leads to a cavern with a foot of water covering the floor. The cave features several elaborate mounds of stone that look too uniform to be natural yet bear no marks of chisels or carving. The northwest end of this cavern contains the obvious source of the seawater in these caves: a partially flooded tunnel leads toward the sea. A gory pile of flesh and bones that reeks of decaying fish is piled near the tunnel opening.

The sea tunnel empties into a shallow pool that's slightly deeper than water in the rest of the room. The water in the flooded tunnel is about 3 feet deep, and the tunnel winds for nearly a mile to a sheltered opening near the Willowside pier. The water level of the tunnel changes with the tides, but the tunnel is never fully flooded and therefore makes a reliable, if watery, passage out of these caves. In fact, before Lyrt Cozurn excavated the staircase from his store's basement, this passage was the only way into the caves.

The pile of bones comes from the sea creatures that the grikkitogs in this cave have eaten; they leave their refuse in a neat pile by the tunnel to draw in additional scavengers. A hero who succeeds at a DC 31 Nature check identifies the pile as the remains of sea animals such as crabs and fish, but also identifies that they were gnawed upon by a creature with an utterly alien mouth.

Creatures: Two grikkitogs dwell in this cave; each hides itself as one of the many large, lumpy mounds of stone. These grikkitogs arrived in this chamber through the tunnel years ago and feed on the occasional sea creature that makes its way here by way of the tunnel that leads out to the ocean. If the heroes don't immediately recognize the grikkitogs as creatures (which requires a successful DC 41 Perception check), they each use Implant Core to attack using the stone of this cavern. A grikkitog reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points uses its earth glide ability to flee.

GRIKKITOGS (2)

CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Bestiary 195

Initiative Deception +31

B6. GATHERING ROOM

MODERATE 13

The cavern slopes slightly upward to the northeast, so half of the chamber has only a few shallow puddles on the floor, rather than being submerged. The floor has an elegant grooved pattern that resembles a stylized carving of a stout lizard with a long, curling tail and a beard of tentacles. Hooks stud the walls, with old overcoats of rotted leather hanging from them. Stone benches line the edges of the room.



Painting of Bokrug

This room served as a front entrance for the shrine, and cultists of Bokrug gathered here before and after services to chat. Here, cultists exchanged their outerwear for heavy overcoats—their religious vestments—to wear in the main shrine. A hero who examines the walls and succeeds at a DC 36 Perception check finds carvings in Aklo that read “Praise to the Water Lizard.”

Creatures: Five zombies stand against the east wall. These five townspeople all died in the fight against the cult. The bodies absorbed the ambient occult energy of the shrine over time and became powerful zombies, although—as living creatures haven't come through this room since—they've never animated. (The Banyan Boys bypassed this room using the secret passage in area A4.) When the heroes arrive, the zombies lurch forward. They pursue foes that flee, but they don't leave the caves.

SODDEN SENTINELS

CREATURE 11

RARE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Variant zombie (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 340)

Perception +15; darkvision

Skills Athletics +26

Str +8, **Dex** -1, **Con** +7, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2

Slow A sodden sentinel is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 28; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +14, **Will** +19

HP 320, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 15, slashing 15

Tainted Guts When a sodden sentinel is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it explodes, dealing 6d6 bludgeoning damage to each creature in a 10-foot emanation (DC 30 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails this save is also

blinded for 1d4 rounds (1 minute on a critical failure).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ fist +24, **Damage** 2d12+16 bludgeoning plus Improved Knockdown

Pummel the Fallen A sodden sentinel's fist Strike deals an additional 2d6 damage to prone creatures.

Seawater Retch ✦✦ (necromancy, occult, water) The sodden sentinel vomits up a supernaturally tainted wave of seawater in a 30-foot cone. Each living creature in the area takes 6d10 negative damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). It can't use Seawater Retch again for 1d4 rounds.

Treasure: One of the overcoats is in better shape than the others; it is a *greater cloak of elvenkind* but rather than the usual elven motif, it's decorated with patterns of lizard scales.

B7. FORKED PATH

The cavern splits off into three paths. The eastern and northern paths lead upward and the western path descends into deeper water. The middle passage is completely blocked by rubble.

The Banyan Boys took the middle path, not realizing that a mark on the map indicated a trap. They triggered the collapse as they passed through and only barely ducked out the other side before the middle passage became impassable.

A hero Searching this area spots two clues as to the Banyan Boys' passage. First, a small arrow is marked in chalk on the wall of the center passage, but it's partially obscured by dust from the collapse; this is a clue that the collapse happened after the chalk mark was drawn. Second, the end of a sword hilt protrudes from the rubble; this is Ledorick's sword, described in Treasure below.

The southwest wall of this intersection contains a secret passage that leads to area B4. A hero Searching this area who succeeds at a DC 36 Perception check spots the secret passage.

Treasure: Ledorick's +2 *greater striking longsword* is lodged in the rubble here; he dropped it while avoiding the collapse. Any hero who's seen Ledorick in a fight recognizes it as his sword.

B8. SACRIFICE PREPARATION

LOW 13

This flooded cave has a long counter carved into the wall. Several shallow alcoves stand along the north wall, one of which holds a wooden door crusted with mold. Bright light emanates through narrow cracks in the door. Passages lead southeast and northeast.

Grooves in the floor lead from the counter to the alcoves, which are simply deep pits filled with seawater and old bones. Sacrifices were once prepared on this counter and, afterward, pieces of the corpses were dumped into the pits. A hero examining the bones who succeeds at a DC 31 Occultism or Religion check realizes they were damaged in a manner consistent with ritual sacrifice. Some of the bones are human. The cult of Bokrug never killed anyone from the town of Willowside—out of self-preservation rather than neighborliness—but instead sacrificed strangers, such as drifters who had no apparent family or friends.



Sodden Sentinel

Only the cult's inner circle performed these sacrifices, as the other worshippers might have drawn the line at human sacrifice.

The light on the other side of the door leading to area B9 originates from the shining children there. If the heroes wait and observe the door, they can see light shifting slightly, as the shining children move around.

Creatures: Sheriff Banyan killed two cultists here years ago. They later arose as wights. The wights attack intruders and fight until destroyed.



Wight Cultist

WIGHT CULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 12

RARE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Variant wight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 332)

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +25, Intimidation +24, Occultism +17, Stealth +22

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** -1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Items +1 striking ranseur, platinum religious symbol of Bokrug worth 150 gp

AC 32; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +20, **Will** +22

HP 235, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Dreadful Spite **Trigger** The wight cultist is reduced to 0 Hit Points;

Effect The wight makes a Strike before being destroyed. It doesn't gain any temporary HP from drain life on this Strike. A creature hit by this Strike is also doomed 1 for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet

Melee **◆** ranseur +26 (disarm, magical, reach), **Damage** 2d10+13 piercing plus drain life

Melee **◆** claw +25, **Damage** 3d6+13 bludgeoning plus drain life

Divine Innate Spells DC 29; **6th** *crushing despair*; **5th** *confusion*, *downpour* (*Core Rulebook* 391); **3rd** *paralyze* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *shield*

Drain Life (divine, necromancy) When the wight damages a living creature with its claw or ranseur Strike, the wight gains 12 temporary Hit Points and the creature must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save or become drained 1. Further damage dealt by the wight increases the amount of drain by 1 on a failed save, to a maximum of drained 4.

Wight Spawn (divine, necromancy) A living humanoid slain by a wight's claw or ranseur Strike rises as a wight after 1d4 rounds. This wight spawn is under the command of the wight that killed it. It doesn't have drain life or wight spawn and becomes clumsy 2 for as long as it is a wight spawn. If the creator of the wight spawn dies, the wight spawn becomes a full-fledged, autonomous wight; it regains its free will, gains drain life and wight spawn, and is no longer clumsy.

Treasure: Among the bones in one of the pits is a slim metal case, which contains two *greater explosive bolts* inside.

B9. SACRIFICE RECORDS

MODERATE 13

The door to this room once had a lock, but the wood has swollen so much that it doesn't latch.

The walls of this irregular chamber are covered with small carvings that, seen together, form the shape of an immense bearded lizard stretching around the room. The chamber's only exit is a door to the southeast, and a few inches of water cover the floor

The leaders of the Bokrug cultists kept track of the cult's sacrifices in this room. Each small carving represents an animal or person sacrificed, and the carvings are arranged so that, taken together, they show Bokrug's monstrous shape; for example, Bokrug's eye is a carving of a sea-turtle and his beard tentacles are humanoid figures. This project took years, yet is incomplete; it shows only Bokrug's head and a rough outline of his body.

Creatures: Three shining children were drawn to this room because of the occult significance of the Bokrug image. They strive to know more about the image and its carvings. They occasionally ask the wight cultists in the next room about the meanings of this or that creature, but they are frustrated that the undead recall little of their mortal lives. The shining children fight to protect their territory and cast *spell turning* before combat if the heroes make too much noise in the adjacent room. They berate the heroes telepathically as they fight. Once two shining children are defeated, the last flees, casting *wall of force* to prevent pursuit and *dimension door* to get away.

SHINING CHILDREN (3)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 292

Initiative Perception +23

B10. LIBRARY

MODERATE 13

The two passages leading into this chamber both ascend so that the room has a completely dry floor, though dampness still permeates the air. High shelves stacked with books and parchment fill the edges of the room, and carvings of lizards decorate the walls.

This was once the cult's main library and research area. Some of the books were magically protected against water damage, and those survived best. Many of the books and texts are in Aklo, particularly those that detail the most esoteric or fearsome aspects of Bokrug's faith, but most are written in Common.

A hero who spends an hour reading these works learns the information in *Recognizing Bokrug* on page 29 as though the hero were a master in Occultism. Heroes who failed a saving throw against *Dreams of Bokrug* (page 8) and who look through the books or examine the displays on the walls recognize imagery from their nightmares.

Trap: Barely visible runes mark a ring 30 feet in diameter in the middle of the room. The faithful of Bokrug laid a trap here against any who would take their collected holy texts. Sheriff Banyan had little interest in books and certainly didn't want to learn more about the cultists' beliefs, so she never entered here—though she realized the faint circle on the floor could be dangerous and thus marked it on her map.

When a sapient creature enters the circle without uttering the words "Praise to the Water Lizard" in either Aklo or Common, the trap summons a fearsome and bizarre three-headed monster from the Dimension of Dreams.

MUKRADI SUMMONING RUNES


HAZARD 15

UNCOMMON COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +25 (master) to notice runes marked on the floor.

Description Barely visible runes are etched into the stone floor in a 20-foot diameter circle.

Disable DC 36 Acrobatics to approach without triggering the trap followed by DC 34 Occultism (expert) or DC 38 Thievery (master) to erase the rune, or *dispel magic* (8th level; counteract DC 34) to counteract the rune

Summon Monster  (conjunction, occult, summon)

Trigger A creature enters the circle without uttering the passphrase, "Praise to the Water Lizard"; **Effect** The trap summons a mukradi (*Bestiary* 239). The mukradi rolls initiative and remains for 1 minute, after which the spell ends and the mukradi disappears. The mukradi also disappears if someone disables the trap before the duration expires. The mukradi can use 3 actions each round and can use reactions, unlike most summoned creatures.

Reset The trap resets at the first high tide of each day.

Treasure: The shelves contain six rare books about Bokrug's faith that are worth 250 gp each to a collector. Two crude iron flasks shaped like Bokrug are used as paperweights. Each flask contains a moderate sea touch elixir.

B11. MEDITATION POOL

MODERATE 13

Several passages converge in a large cavern with a deep, dark pool. A few inches of water cover the rest of the cavern floor, but the edge of the pool is clearly marked by the small benches that surround it. Iconography of scales and teeth are carved in the room's walls. A large, water-swollen door leads north.

A prayer in Aklo is carved in large letters along the room's ceiling: "Blessed be the sleeping one, who lives on in our dreams. Blessed be the Water Lizard, who

gives us the oceans. Blessed be the vengeance giver, who helps us smite our enemies.”

Outside the doorway, another chalk arrow marks the way back to the caved-in passage, but it has an X marked through it. Tashlock Banyan made this mark, but then crossed it out when the passage collapsed behind them so they would know not to return this way.

Trapped Secret Door: A hero who Searches the walls and succeeds at a DC 31 Perception check notices a secret passage to the east. This passage bypasses the ruined nave (area **B12**) and goes right to the statue of Bokrug (area **B13**). This passageway is magically locked, so a hero casting *detect magic* automatically identifies it. The secret door requires a passphrase (“Willowside’s honor”) to open, and this passphrase was written on the Banyan Boys’ map. Unlocking the secret door without the passphrase requires a successful DC 31 Occultism or Thievery check, but also requires pressing three specific locations on the door. If these locations are not pressed, the door shoots poisoned darts at anyone opening it.

POISONED SECRET DOOR TRAP **HAZARD 14**

MAGICAL **MECHANICAL** **TRAP**

Stealth DC 34 (master)

Description Multiple tiny needles filled with poison are embedded in this secret door, spring-loaded to pop out.

Disable DC 34 Thievery (expert) to break the mechanism, or DC 39 Perception (master) to identify the three stones that, when pressed, prevent the trap from triggering

AC 36; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +19

Hardness 23; **HP** 92 (BT 46); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Spring ⤴ (attack) **Trigger** A creature tries to open the door, whether or not it is still locked, without first depressing three specific stones on the door’s surface; **Effect** Needles pop out of the door at the triggering creature.

Melee needles +32, **Damage** 1d12 piercing plus purple worm venom

Purple Worm Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 34 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 5d6 poison damage and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 2** 6d6 poison damage and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 8d6 poison and enfeebled 2 (1 round)

Reset If disabled, the trap resets after 1 minute.

Creature: The pool connects to a network of underwater tunnels, and an azure worm who was once doted on by cultists came here frequently. The worm was nearby when the Banyan Boys poked around in the water and assumed that the cultists were finally calling it back.

When the worm rises from the pool, a hero who succeeds at a DC 31 Nature check recognizes that it’s seeking food but isn’t aggressive. If it isn’t fed in the next 2 rounds, it decides to make a meal of the heroes and attacks. A successful DC 33 Nature check to Command an Animal is sufficient to get it to back down before a fight; after combat has begun, the DC increases to 37. If reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points, the worm retreats down into the flooded caverns and doesn’t return.

AZURE WORM **CREATURE 15**

Pathfinder Bestiary 57

Initiative Perception +22

XP Award: If the heroes deal with the azure worm peaceably, award them 80 XP, as though they had defeated it in combat.

B12. RUINED NAVE **MODERATE 13**

The doors leading into this room are swollen with moisture. Each door requires a successful DC 20 Athletics check to Force Open.

This room has seen significant wear. Rows of wooden pews have rotted and decayed, as have a wooden platform and podium. The fabric on the seats has molded. Only the stone walls remain unblemished, carved with scaly textures and images of long-tailed lizards.

Creature: This room hasn’t been used for religious purposes since the cultists were all killed, but it’s not uninhabited. A quelaunt is feeding on the psychic residue of the terrible, aberrant worship once performed here. It’s easily distracted by intruders who have their own emotions it can consume. The quelaunt attempts to flee if reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points, but if it doesn’t have a clear exit, it fights to the death.

QUELAUNT **CREATURE 15**

Pathfinder Bestiary 273

Initiative Perception +29

Treasure: The tattered remains of a pew contain a major antidote and an emerald brooch worth 450 gp. The wooden platform at the north end of the room has a secret niche that is now obvious because of the wood’s warping. This niche contains a *storm flash*.

B13. BOKRUG STATUE **SEVERE 13**

The central feature of this room is an enormous statue of an aquatic lizard with a strange beard of tendrils and a

three-pronged stinger tail. The statue is remarkably detailed, and its eyes seem to be looking everywhere in the room at once. The statue is surrounded by benches, and the walls are marked with dark stains that drip down to the floor.

This site has long been haunted by a dybbuk—a malevolent form of incorporeal undead—who in life was Lyrt Cozurn, leader of the cult of Bokrug and owner of the Willowside general store. Sheriff Banyan killed Lyrt here while he was beseeching Bokrug to animate the statue and kill the sheriff. The walls still run with spectral remnants of Lyrt’s blood and do so until Lyrt is destroyed. If touched, the bloodstains fade away, only to return a few moments later.

A hero who Searches the walls and succeeds at a DC 31 Perception check notices a secret passage leading to area **B11**. This end of the secret passage is neither locked nor trapped.

The Statue: The vividly lifelike statue is extremely unnerving and has an aura that echoes Bokrug’s unspeakable presence. All creatures within 15 feet of the statue become frightened 1 and unable to reduce their frightened condition value below 1 while in the sea caves (DC 31 Will save). Non-chaotic creatures have a circumstance penalty on this saving throw equal to the number of their failed saving throws against the Dreams of Bokrug (page 8), to a maximum of –10. Chaotic creatures take only half this penalty (–1 for every two failed saving throws). On a successful save, the creature is temporarily immune to the aura for 1 minute; on a critical success, this temporary immunity lasts 24 hours instead. On a critical failure, the creature is frightened 2 and can’t reduce their frightened condition below 2 while in the sea caves. This is an emotion, enchantment, fear, and mental effect.

The statue is supernaturally resilient to damage and far too heavy to move without enormous effort. They heroes therefore have little choice other than to leave the statue where it is. However, they might return here during Chapter 3 to move it if they negotiate with the gug Helg Eats-the-Eaters.

Creatures: The Banyan Boys are in this room when the heroes arrive, considering the statue thoughtfully. Ledorick doesn’t have his longsword but instead carries a three-pronged *ranseur*. Tashlock and Stirvyn keep looking nervously to Ledorick for guidance, yet it is not Ledorick who looks back at them.

When the Banyan Boys arrived, the lurking dybbuk Lyrt used his malevolent possession upon Ledorick. Tashlock and Stirvyn have noticed that Ledorick is acting oddly but have no idea that he is possessed. Lyrt hasn’t harmed his host’s brothers yet, as they might prove useful.

While Lyrt does not have access to Ledorick’s memories, the dybbuk has worked out from conversations with Tashlock and Stirvyn that the Banyan Boys seek supplies for a big fight against xulgaths. Lyrt retrieved the *ranseur* that he used in life from the storeroom; this is *Bokrug’s Lashing Tail*, a +2 *keen greater striking ranseur*. Lyrt has convinced Tashlock and Stirvyn that the statue itself is the thing that they were meant to find, insisting that the statue can come to life and fight the xulgaths for them. Tashlock and Stirvyn can’t quite believe that the creepy statue is what they’re in the caves to retrieve, but they’re too used to letting Ledorick lead the way to argue about it. Lyrt hasn’t had any luck in getting the statue to animate and is growing increasingly



Bokrug Statue

frustrated at the thought that Bokrug might have abandoned him.

When the heroes arrive, Lyrt wants to figure out who they are. He observes quietly and lets Stirvyn and Tashlock do the talking, which is in sharp contrast to previous interactions between the heroes and the Banyan Boys. Some questions the heroes might ask, and the responses, are as follows.

What are you doing in here? “Ledorick says that this statue is supposed to come to life or something and protect the town. We’re trying to figure out how to make it work. It’s a scary-looking thing, isn’t it?”

How did you avoid all the monsters and traps? “We have this map! It showed us where to go to avoid trouble. It was our great-great-great grandmother’s or something. It says Banyan on it.” Stirvyn is happy to let the heroes see the map, but he won’t let them keep it.

What happened in that hallway with the cave-in? “Oh, we didn’t realize there was a trap there. We made it out, but Ledorick lost his sword. But he found a really nice ranseur in here! I wonder if that belonged to our ancestor too.”

The townsfolk are really worried about you; you should go back. “Has it really been that long? I suppose we lost track of time. We can go, but it would be nice to figure out how to make the statue work first. We did come down here to find anything that might help the town, after all.”

Did you search in the back (area B14)? “Ledorick did. He found that ranseur but says that there’s nothing else good back there. The statue has to be what we’re here for.”

Do you even realize who Bokrug is? This statue is dangerous! “Never heard of him before, but it sure looks like the town used to worship him a long time ago! Some kind of lizard god?” If the

heroes persist in explaining Bokrug’s nature, the brothers brush them off as mere superstitious circus people.

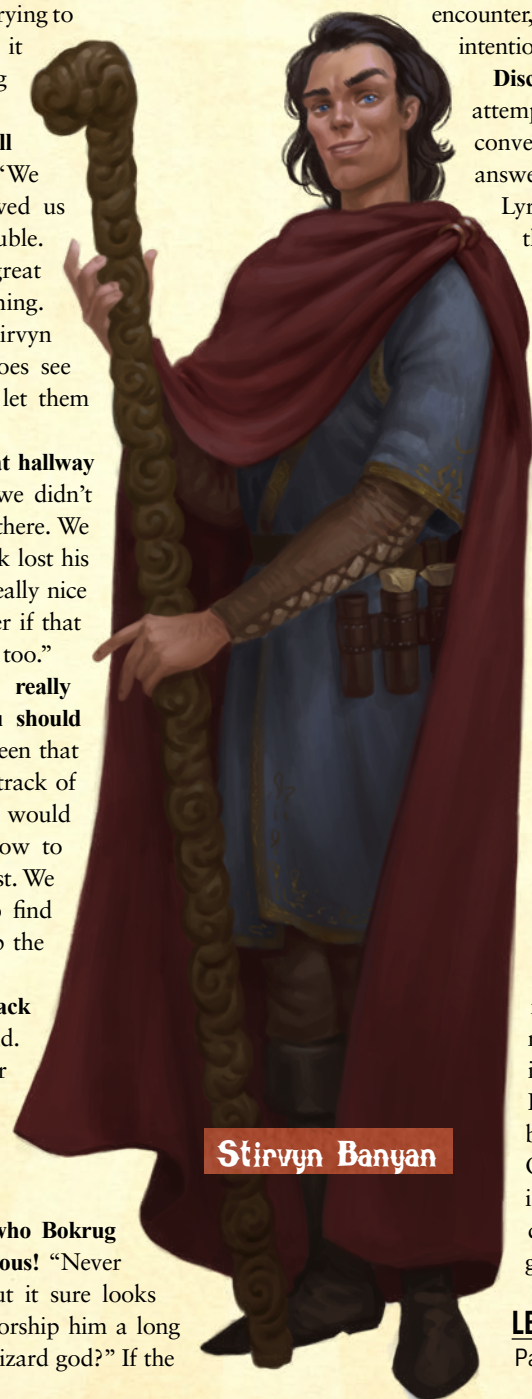
After a few minutes of conversation, “Ledorick” interrupts, claiming there is nothing else useful in the shrine, since the Banyan Boys can’t get the statue to work, so they should all head back to town as they’ve wasted enough time already. The dybbuk knows the dangers of the sea caves, and on the way back he deliberately leads the heroes into as much danger as possible. With a successful DC 31 Perception check at each such encounter, the heroes recognize that Ledorick is intentionally putting them in danger.

Discovering Lyrt: Even if the heroes attempt to engage “Ledorick” in conversation, Lyrt keeps responses brief and answers any questions with other questions.

Lyrt doesn’t have any memories of the heroes, although he’s certain Ledorick does and doesn’t want to raise suspicions. Nevertheless, the difference in the loudmouthed braggart’s behavior is striking.

The heroes might force Lyrt’s hand or provoke his ire. If they raise suspicions that Ledorick might have been possessed or replaced, or if they attack the Bokrug statue, disrespect Bokrug, or attempt to search the storeroom (area B14), Lyrt attacks. He orders the other Banyan Boys to attack as well. Tashlock and Stirvyn are confused but trust Ledorick and fight as directed. Lyrt doesn’t cast spells while possessing Ledorick so as to not expose his ruse. If Tashlock and Stirvyn are defeated, Lyrt uses his spells freely.

Lyrt is significantly more durable than Ledorick when possessing him, as Lyrt takes only half the damage the heroes inflict on Ledorick and further reduces that damage with his resistances. If Ledorick is defeated or if Lyrt is reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, Lyrt leaves Ledorick’s body and flees to area B14 for aid. Once free of the possession, Ledorick immediately surrenders, confused and disoriented. Ledorick’s brothers also give up if he surrenders.



Stirvyn Banyan

LEDORICK BANYAN **CREATURE 14**
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Initiative Perception +26

Items *Bokrug's Lashing Tail* (+2 keen greater striking ranseur)

Melee ♦ *ranseur* +29 (disarm, magical, reach), **Damage** 3d10+13 piercing

Possessed Ledorick is possessed by the dybbuk Lyrt Cozurn, and he is controlled by the dybbuk. However, Ledorick's personality is strong; each time Ledorick takes Hit Point damage, Lyrt takes half of this damage as well (reduced by his Resistances, if applicable).

STIRVYN BANYAN

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human town protector

Perception +21; *detect magic*

Languages Common

Skills Arcana +20, Deception +23, Diplomacy +21, Intimidation +23, Society +20

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

Items *major mentalist's staff*, *scroll of false life*, Sheriff Banyan's map of the sea caves

AC 31; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +22, **Will** +21

HP 230

Duck Away ↻ (concentrate, move) **Trigger** Stirvyn is targeted with an attack and is adjacent to an ally; **Effect** Stirvyn and the ally swap places, and the ally becomes the target of the attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *staff* +24 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 32, attack +24; **6th** (4 slots) *disintegrate*, *mislead*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*; **5th** (4 slots) *cloak of colors*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *prying eye*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *outcast's curse*, *suggestion*; **3rd** (4 slots) *enthral*, *haste*, *meld into stone*, *mind reading*; **2nd** (4 slots) *blur*, *dispel magic*, *hideous laughter*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *illusory disguise*, *lock*, *magic missile*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (6th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *shield*; **Constant (6th)** *detect magic*

Sorcerer Bloodline Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 32;

6th *ancestral memories* (Core Rulebook 402), *arcane countermeasure* (Core Rulebook 403), *extend spell* (Core Rulebook 404)

Bloodline Magic When Stirvyn casts a bloodline spell, a surge of ancestral memories grants either him or a target of the spell a +1 status bonus to skill checks for 1 round.

Dangerous Sorcery When Stirvyn Casts a Spell from a spell slot, if the spell deals damage and doesn't have a duration, he gains a status bonus to that spell's damage equal to the spell's level.

Steady Spellcasting If a reaction would disrupt Stirvyn's spellcasting action, he attempts a DC 15 flat check. On a success, the action isn't disrupted.

TASHLOCK BANYAN

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human town protector

Perception +20

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +23, Athletics +19, Deception +19, Diplomacy +17, Intimidation +19, Society +16, Stealth +23, Survival +16, Thievery +21

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

Items *chalk*, +1 *striking composite shortbow* (20 arrows), *lesser darkvision elixir*, *invisibility potion*, +1 *resilient leather armor*, +1 *rapier*

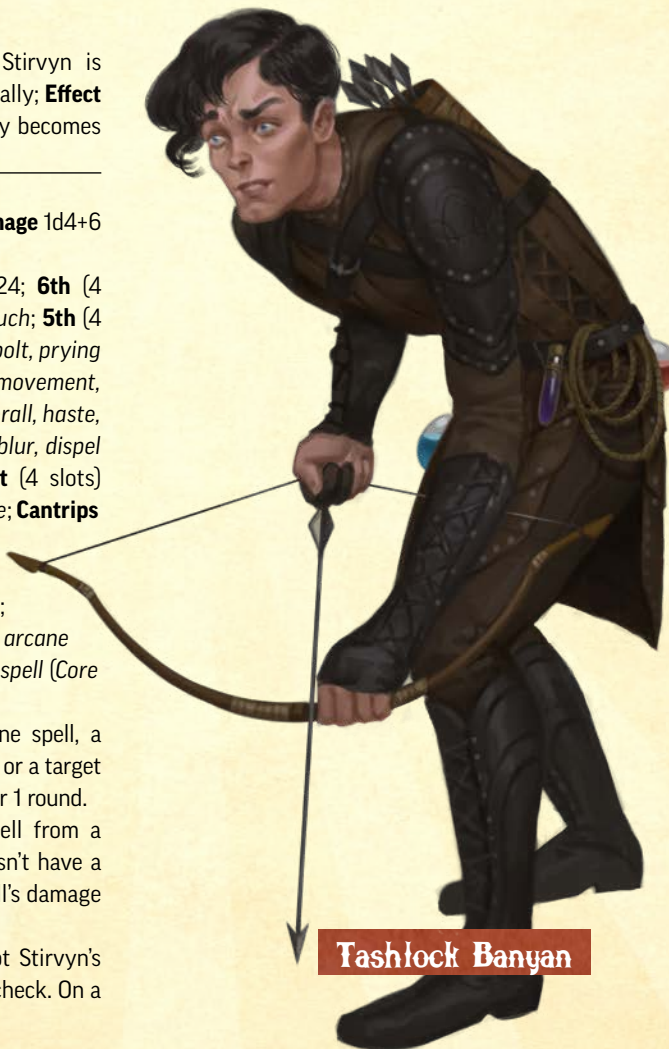
Swift Sneak Tashlock can move his full Speed when Sneaking.

AC 33; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +24, **Will** +19

HP 215

Deny Advantage Tashlock isn't flat-footed to creatures of 12th level or lower that are hidden, undetected, flanking, or using surprise attack.

Nimble Dodge ↻ **Trigger** Tashlock is targeted with a melee or ranged attack by an attacker he can see;



Tashlock Banyan

Effect Tashlock gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *rapier* +24 (deadly 1d8, disarm, finesse, magical),

Damage 1d6+11 piercing

Ranged ♦ *composite shortbow* +26 (deadly 2d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 2d6+11 piercing

Pierced Tendon When Tashlock deals damage to a target on a critical hit, the target is slowed 2 until the end of Tashlock's next turn.

Quick Draw ♦ Tashlock Interacts to draw a weapon, then Strikes with that weapon.

Sneak Attack Tashlock deals an extra 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Sneak Savant When Tashlock rolls a failure on a Sneak action, he gets a success instead.

Surprise Attack On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are flat-footed to Tashlock.

Treasure: In addition to carrying *Bokrug's Lashing Tail*, Ledorick wears a platinum charm around his neck depicting a three-tailed lizard. The charm is worth 1,200 gp. Lyrt picked up this item (which was once the insignia of his leadership in the cult) while getting the *ransour* from the storeroom. He wears it under Ledorick's clothes so his brothers don't see it. Once the possession ends, Ledorick expresses surprise at finding it and doesn't want to keep it.

XP Award: The heroes earn XP for defeating Ledorick Banyan if they force Lyrt to abandon the possession. They only gain XP for defeating Lyrt in this encounter if they vanquish him here; otherwise, they must catch him in the storeroom to defeat him for good.

B14. STOREROOM

SEVERE 13

This cave is a jumbled storage room. Open crates hold figurines of giant lizards and ornate lizard masks. Ornamental daggers hang on the walls over boxes of candles. Twenty rotted corpses lie sprawled on the ground in murky, ankle-deep water, remnants of flesh and scale-patterned robes still stuck to their bodies. The smell of rot and decay is strong, and the floor is thick with discarded detritus, mold, and muck.

The cult of Bokrug filled this room with religious paraphernalia for their secret services, as well as valuables stolen from travelers and drifters they sacrificed to the Water Lizard. The stores here are nearly all sodden and destroyed, however, and the mass has decayed into soggy detritus that makes the room difficult terrain.

Sheriff Banyan dragged the corpses of the cultists here once the cult had been defeated. One of these bodies is a human man dressed in more elegant robes: this was Lyrt Cozurn. Like all the vestments here, though, Lyrt's clothing is now rotted and valueless.

Creatures: Lyrt retreats here if ejected from Ledorick Banyan's body. The three cultists most loyal to Lyrt Cozurn in life are now wights who rise to defend the dybbuk when he retreats here. These undead creatures all fight until destroyed, but they don't pursue enemies who flee beyond area **B12**.

This is an extreme-threat encounter if Lyrt is at full health, but it's expected that he is badly injured from his earlier confrontation with the heroes.

LYRT COZURN

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Male dybbuk cult leader

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +28, Deception +31, Diplomacy +27, Intimidation +29, Stealth +28

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +8

AC 35; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +28, **Will** +29

HP 280, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious;

Resistances all damage 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Frightful Presence (aura, divine, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 33

Speed fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ pain touch +28 (agile, evil, finesse, magical),

Damage 8d6 negative plus 2d6 evil

Occult Innate Spells DC 35, attack +31; **6th** *dominate*, *feeblemind*, *telekinetic maneuver* (at will); **5th** *chilling darkness* (x2), *fear*; **4th** *modify memory*; **3rd** *fear* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** *telekinetic projectile*

Inhabit Object ♦ Lyrt possesses a Large or smaller object within 20 feet, making it an animated object (*Bestiary* 20). This animated object's level can be no higher than Lyrt's level - 2. If the target object is being held by a creature, the bearer can attempt a Will save to prevent the possession. This possession ends when the object is destroyed or Lyrt leaves it. At this point, Lyrt reappears in the object's square and can't Inhabit an Object again for 1d4 rounds.

Malevolent Possession ♦♦ Lyrt attempts to possess an adjacent corporeal creature. This has the same effect as the *possession* spell with an unlimited duration, except since Lyrt doesn't have a physical body, he is unaffected by that restriction. When Lyrt departs, the target has only confused and incoherent memories of the period during which they were possessed. If a creature dies while possessed by Lyrt and its corpse remains intact, Lyrt can immediately inhabit

the corpse (see Inhabit Object) as a reaction, in which case the corpse acts like an animated object.

WIGHT CULTISTS (3)

CREATURE 12

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Perception +22

Town Defense: Several crates contain goods Lyrt concealed here to equip an uprising or defense, and these stores are the source of the rumors of useful items in the sea caves that brought the Banyan Boys here. The crates contain several dozen weapons (mostly ranseurs), steel shields, and *minor healing potions*. This room also contains the many shovels, picks, and other tools used to expand and smooth the sea caves many years ago. All of this equipment can be put to use in defending Willowside from attack, increasing Willowside's Defense Points by 4.

XP Award: For recovering the equipment to aid the town's defense, award the heroes 30 XP. If they got XP for defeating Lyrt in **B13**, they don't gain that XP here.

Returning to the Surface

When the heroes have vanquished the dybbuk and collected any of the Banyan Boys who survive, they can make their way back out of the underground caves, potentially with some useful supplies. Any creatures the heroes didn't defeat still remain, but the Banyans' map allows the heroes to avoid dangers they don't wish to confront.

Once the heroes return, it isn't long before rumors start flying about the dangers beneath the town (most likely originating from the surviving Banyan Boys). Soon, everyone in town knows that a shrine to a Great Old One had been beneath their feet for generations, and that some of their ancestors might have even been cultists. Most people, including Mayor Vandy, had no clue as to the shrine's presence. Trytalla Frynt isn't surprised, as the shrine's presence explains the disturbing dreams that afflict newcomers. If the heroes didn't already get the story out of Vorinta Irrinesse, then the priestess tells them the story of Willowside's Bokrug cult from *Preparing for the Sea Caves* (page 28).

People are distraught and demoralized if any of the Banyan Boys were killed, especially Ledorick. General despair causes the town to lose 1 Defense Point each if either Tashlock or Stirvyn died; if Ledorick was killed, the town loses 2 Defense Points. The heroes can attempt a DC 33 Diplomacy check in front of any large

group of townspeople to reassure them that the town can still protect itself with one or more of its defenders gone. On a success, the town regains the Defense Points it lost; on a critical success, the town also gains an additional 2 Defense Points as they resolve to avenge the fallen. On a critical failure, the town loses twice as many Defense Points as on a failure.

While the heroes were in the sea caves, the townsfolk were hard at work both continuing to prepare the town's defenses and scouting out the xulgath strongholds. Although Mayor Vandy insists the heroes rest after their subterranean excursion, she wants to meet with them soon to share what she's learned.



Lyrt Cozurn



CHAPTER 3: BREAKING THE SIEGE

The xulgath army encamped near the Tower of Empty Stones has continued to make increasingly aggressive strikes toward the town, and its siege begins in earnest the day after the heroes emerge from the sea caves. Residents of Willowside now recognize the echoes of tyrannosaurus footsteps on patrol, and leaving town invites vicious and fatal attacks. Passage both by land and sea is blocked, cutting the town off from the outside completely.

Farmers, ranchers, hunters, and everyone else who lived outside Willowside have fallen back into the town or are presumed dead. The Hooked Inn and the Myratch Boarding House (page 63) are packed, and the town's abandoned buildings have been reopened to hold displaced residents. A palpable sense of tension suffuses the entire town. Food is in short supply, and fishers can't put out into the sea because of the sea serpents at the pier.

Both the hospital and the Temple of Erastil are filled with people who narrowly survived run-ins with xulgaths or simply got injured in the hectic defense preparations. Both Trytalla Frynt and Gellra Shozur are stretched to their limits trying to tend to everyone.

Mayor Vandy meets with the heroes after they have rested. She realizes at this point that the heroes are more capable combatants than any of the Willowside residents—even the Banyan Boys, as was just made clear by how events unfolded in the underground caves. She apologizes to the heroes for the town's disparaging comments about circus folk, and she assures them that everyone now understands not to underestimate the Circus of Wayward Wonders. She even drags in Ledorick Banyan, if he is still alive, to apologize for his earlier rudeness. While Ledorick is somewhat sullen about being forced to apologize, he has genuinely softened since his experience of being

possessed by the dybbuk Lyrt, and he offers the Banyan Boys' help to the heroes. They can best be of use, he believes, by keeping an eye on the town's defense while the heroes make strikes against the xulgath forces.

Mayor Vandy has been collecting reports about xulgath activity while the heroes were exploring the sea caves. The reports are sparse and sometimes contradictory, but she's compiled the following information about the xulgath forces concentrated around Willowside, and Gristarn Vrick provided a map of the area with the various hot spots marked. The hot spots of xulgath activity are as follows.

East Road Blockade: The xulgaths and their dinosaurs have erected a barrier on the road to Fortune's Hall that ultimately leads to Pier's End, the next community to the northeast. Though the road is not nearly as well-traveled as the Verdant Passage to the south, this barricade is a gathering point for xulgath forces east of town.

Verdant Passage Blockade: Rumors of xulgath and dinosaur attacks on the Verdant Passage have circulated for weeks, but the xulgaths have finally erected permanent blockades across the road to keep residents of Willowside from leaving. As with the blockade on the east road, it's a rallying point for xulgath forces.

Pier Road Disappearances: The mile-long road to Willowside's pier has been dangerous since before the heroes arrived, but more recent rumors point to strange disappearances along the road; tracks simply end, with no sign of any struggle or any attacker. Even more worrying, the hunter Gristarn Vrick (whom the heroes likely rescued from trouble along this very road several days ago) seems to be the latest person to simply disappear.

The Pier: Two sea serpents have been seen near the pier. When coupled with the pier road disappearances putting people on edge, fishers can't work the town's only reliable source of food. In addition, the *Geode's Center* is due back any day now, and the sea serpents are likely to sink the vessel if they aren't dispatched before it arrives.

Dinosaur Corrals: The xulgaths have a special pen for their dinosaur livestock. Several different kinds of dinosaurs live in a large structure with subdivisions to keep carnivores and herbivores apart. Sabotaging this structure to free the dinosaurs is likely to limit the animals available for the siege.

Fiend Enclosure: Another structure contains several strange creatures that look like demonic versions of dinosaurs and xulgaths. What these forces might be used for is anyone's guess, but they are undeniably more monstrous and dangerous than dinosaurs.

Gug Huts: The scouts spotted a makeshift camp holding giants with wide, vertical maws and arms that split at the elbows to end in two clawed hands each, whom the xulgaths use as slave labor. Defeating or even freeing these slaves is likely to impair the xulgath operations. A hero who succeeds at a DC 27 Occultism check identifies the creatures as gugs.

Main Xulgath Encampment: The primary xulgath camp surrounds the Marsh Stone Tower and sprawls over a square mile. The xulgaths are constructing a massive siege tower in their camp, but it's currently incomplete. Because of the xulgath presence, no one has gotten close to the Tower of Empty Stones to see whether the xulgaths have taken it, but the fact they're building a siege tower far larger than anything needed to conquer Willowside suggests they haven't. The leaders of the xulgaths appear to be in or near this siege tower, but the townspeople haven't learned any specifics.

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The heroes return from the underground shrine to Bokrug to find Willowside deep in preparations for a siege. The heroes should strike at each of several key locations before moving on to the xulgaths' main camp. In the siege tower at the heart of the camp, the heroes learn that the xulgath commander is being controlled by one of her gug slaves, a necromancer named Helg. Helg has her own objective: acquiring the statue of Bokrug in the sea caves. She doesn't care about the destruction of Willowside, and the heroes can convince her to stand down in exchange for the statue. Once the xulgath besiegers are dealt with, whether through violence or negotiation, the path is clear to the Marsh Stone Tower. There, the heroes learn the *aeon orb* is gone, but the nature cult that has taken up residence in the tower offers a solution. Before the heroes can prepare for this mission, however, the xulgaths' second-in-command makes one last attempt at revenge.

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 3 are as follows.

- +1 resilient breastplate
- +1 striking halberd
- +1 striking warhammer
- +2 greater striking greater flaming war flail
- *ankylostar*
- greater bravo's brew
- *iron cudgel*
- *lesser sturdy shield*
- *mending lattice*
- moderate elixir of life
- *noxious jerkin*
- *potion of greater fire resistance*
- *scroll of entrancing eyes*
- *scroll of felsic blade curse*
- *scroll of sharpstone*
- *stone bullet*
- *stoneraiser javelin*
- *wand of continuation of true seeing*

DEFENSE POINTS

The townspeople have done their best to prepare for the xulgath attacks, but no matter how good their preparations are, they can't hold out forever. The xulgath hot spots each take their toll, either through direct attacks or gradual demoralization. They reduce Willowside's Defense Points at a certain rate, beginning a certain number of days from when the heroes return from the sea caves (which is Day 1 of the siege). The heroes have more time to address the hot spots if they've earned a lot of Defense Points and if they quell urgent hot spots quickly. The heroes don't initially know how long Willowside's defenses can last, as reports from anxious townspeople are incomplete and contradictory. Players can discover the rate of Defense Point reduction, however, if the heroes undertake the following exploration activity.

SCOUT HOT SPOT

CONCENTRATE **EXPLORATION**

You secretly observe one of the hot spots to get a sense of how quickly and how fiercely the xulgaths will mobilize. Attempt a DC 32 Perception, Stealth, or Survival check. This activity takes 2 hours unless scouting the main xulgath camp, which takes 12 hours.

Critical Success You know how long before the hot spot begins to reduce Willowside's Defense Points, and how many Defense Points it reduces the town's Defense Points by each day. Your information earns Willowside 1 additional Defense Point.

Success You know how long before the hot spot begins to reduce Willowside's Defense Points, and how many Defense Points it reduces the town's Defense Points by each day.

Increasing Defenses

The heroes don't have the time to erect additional defenses once the siege is underway, but they can still increase Willowside's Defense Points with rallying speeches and exhortations of bravery and community. Once each day, the heroes can attempt the following exploration activity. This activity won't save the town if many hot spots are still active, but it can help prolong the siege.

RALLY WILLOWSIDE

CONCENTRATE **EXPLORATION** **LINGUISTIC** **MENTAL**

Frequency Once per day

Requirements Diplomacy (expert) or Intimidation (expert)
You exhort the townspeople to remain steadfast with stirring words or predictions of the doom that awaits those who shirk. Attempt a DC 32 Diplomacy or Intimidation check. This activity takes an hour.

Critical Success Willowside gains 2 Defense Points.

Success Willowside gains 1 Defense Point.

Critical Failure Willowside loses 1 Defense Point as your ill-timed words dishearten the townspeople.

Willowside's Destruction

When Willowside's Defense Points reach 0, the xulgath hordes have unfettered access to rampage through the town. They are too numerous for the heroes to confront every invader. At this point, Willowside can't gain more Defense Points, and the xulgaths kill a third of the town's residents each day. Three days after Willowside's Defense Points reach 0, there's no town left to save.

XULGATH STRIKE FORCES

During the siege, the heroes might encounter xulgath strike forces multiple times. Feel free to use either of the strike forces provided below.

Show of Force

Low 14

The most common strike force consists of xulgaths riding on their most ferocious mounts to strike fear into their enemies.

Creatures: Two xulgath roughriders ride on tyrannosaurus mounts. They are accompanied by a gutrager who scouts ahead for danger or likely targets.

These xulgaths attack aggressively and without much strategy. A xulgath roughrider retreats if reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points, or if their mount is reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points, as they realize that delivering reconnaissance information back to their camp is as important as fighting the heroes. The gutrager fights to the death, using Self-Detonate if grievously injured.

XULGATH ROUGHRIDERS (2)

CREATURE 11

Page 23

Initiative Perception +21

TYRANNOSAURUSES (2)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 101

Initiative Perception +19

XULGATH GUTRAGER

CREATURE 10

Page 85

Initiative Perception +19

Rapid Response

Low 14

When the xulgaths need to respond quickly to events during the siege, such as to catch up with heroes they realize are active in an area, they send a group of riders on speedy mounts.

Creatures: Three xulgath roughriders each ride on a carnotaur, which resembles a smaller, more agile tyrannosaurus with stubby horns and a faster gait.

These foes remain mobile and avoid being bogged down in a protracted melee, darting forward and back to target weak or injured foes. The carnotaurs are too aggressive to flee from a fight, but a xulgath whose mount is killed darts off if reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points.

XULGATH ROUGHRIDERS (3) CREATURE 11

Page 23

Initiative Perception +21

CARNOTAURS (3) CREATURE 9

Weak tyrannosaurus (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 101)

Initiative Perception +17

Speed 45 feet

Hot Spots

The following hot spots are the most critical places the heroes can affect the xulgath siege. Each hot spot imparts a daily reduction on the town's Defense Points, beginning the indicated number of days after the heroes return from the shrine of Bokrug beneath the town. The heroes can address the hot spots in whatever order they choose, although taking the Scout Hot spot exploration activity allows them to plan their attacks more effectively. Mayor Vandy suggests they assault the siege tower last, but even that is up to them.

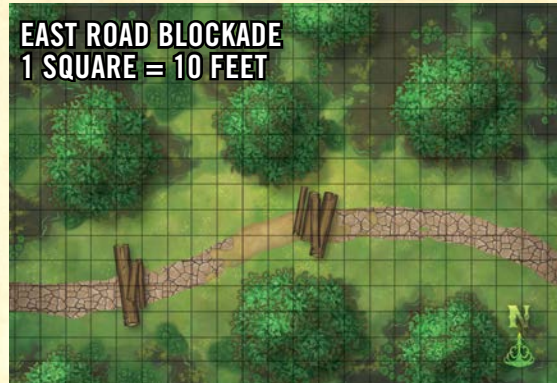
Each of the hot spots are within an hour from Willowside except for the camp, which is 15 miles away through the swamp, and therefore takes about 6 hours to reach. Many of these hot spots are severe-threat encounters, but the heroes should be able to handle them at their own pace and rest between the encounters if they choose.

EAST ROAD BLOCKADE SEVERE 14

Defense Points: Willowside loses 1 Defense Point per day, starting on Day 3, until all the xulgaths at the blockade are defeated.

Fallen logs block the road to Fortune's Hall, which ultimately leads into the Dunmire and to the town of Pier's End. This road hasn't been used much in recent years due to the Welt, but the xulgaths are occupying it nonetheless, using it as a central meeting point for their forces east of Willowside. The xulgaths dropped a few logs across the road and are using their brontosauruses to crush and drag away the stones that make it up, working to obliterate the road entirely.

Creatures: Six xulgath roughriders, mounted in pairs atop three brontosauruses, keep watch near



this barricade. The xulgaths fight to the death, but any brontosaurus without a roughrider on its back quickly loses interest in the fight and stamps off into the swamp.

XULGATH ROUGHRIDERS (6) CREATURE 11

Page 23

Initiative Perception +21

BRONTOSAURUSES (3) CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 99

Initiative Perception +16

Reinforcements: If the heroes attack this area and don't defeat all the xulgaths, two more roughriders on a brontosaurus arrive 24 hours later.

VERDANT PASSAGE BLOCKADE SEVERE 14

Defense Points: Willowside loses 2 Defense Points per day, starting on Day 3, until all the creatures at the blockade are defeated.

Fifteen-foot-long wooden barricades studded with sharpened stone wedges block the Verdant Passage leading southwest to Kerrick. The xulgaths here are training a specialized kind of ankylosaurid called sauropeltas, and they often race their war sauropeltas up and down the road.

Traps: The wooden barricades are no mere roadblocks but cunningly crafted traps that spring out to hobble creatures who venture too close. The sauropeltas attempt to knock foes into the barricades to trigger the traps.

SPIKED BARRICADE TRAPS (3) HAZARD 13

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 32 (expert)

Description Spring-loaded wedges of sharpened stone pop out of the wooden barricade.

Disable DC 33 Thievery (expert) to suppress the spring mechanism for one 5-foot segment of the barricade



AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +18

Hardness 22; **HP** 88 (BT 44); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** fire 10

Spike Jab ⤴ (attack) **Trigger** A creature enters the area adjacent to a barrier; **Effect** Wedges of sharpened stone extend from the barricade in all directions and attack all creatures within 10 feet.

Melee spike +31 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 6d12+24 slashing; no multiple attack penalty

Reset The trap must be manually reset by pushing the wedges back into place.

Creatures: Three xulgath roughriders atop war sauropeltas patrol this road, careful to avoid triggering the trapped barricades. They charge after any trespassers and fight to the death. The aggressive sauropeltas aren't well-trained; if reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, they try to buck off their riders.

VERDANT PASSAGE BLOCKADE

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

Initiative Perception +21

WAR SAUROPELTAS (3) CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON N LARGE ANIMAL DINOSAUR

Perception +23; low-light vision

Skills Athletics +25

Str +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +7, **Int** -4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

AC 34; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +22

HP 220; **Immunities** olfactory

Buck ⤴ DC 32

Dogged Persistence ⤴ **Frequency** once per minute;

Trigger The war sauropelta would be affected by the immobilized, paralyzed, slowed, or stunned conditions, or by an effect that would give it a penalty to its Speeds, from a source of 14th level or less; **Effect** The war sauropelta negates the triggering condition or effect.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⤴ tail +24 (backswing, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d8+13 bludgeoning plus Push and punishing tail

Melee ⤴ foot +24, **Damage** 3d6+13 bludgeoning

Punishing Tail A creature struck by the war sauropelta's tail must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save. On a failure, it's stunned 1; on a critical failure, it's stunned 3.

Trample ⤴⤴ Medium or smaller, foot, DC 32

Reinforcements: If the heroes attack this area and don't defeat all the xulgaths here, another xulgath roughrider and war sauropelta arrive in 24 hours. They reset the barricade traps if they have been triggered.

PIER ROAD MODERATE 14

Defense Points: Willowside loses 1 Defense Point every third day, starting on Day 2. This loss continues until the heroes defeat the faceless butcher stalking the road to the Willowside pier.

Unlike the other hot spots, the disappearances along this road don't have anything to do with the xulgaths. They are instead the work of a malicious killer called the Vanish Man. The Vanish Man is a faceless butcher (page 80) who has roamed the Isle of Kortos for years. The recent bloodshed around Willowside has drawn his malevolent curiosity, and he's come to participate. He's only taken a handful of victims so far, but his latest victim is the hunter Gristarn Vrick, whose disappearance has been noticed by the town in desperate need of his skills.

You can use the map of the pier road on page 6 for this encounter.

Creatures: The Vanish Man lurks along the pier road, watching traffic from the other side of a scrub-covered hill. He doesn't normally bother anyone coming and going to the pier, so heroes making their way directly to the Willowside Pier hot spot aren't likely to encounter him. He takes a particular interest in anyone searching the area for tracks, as he knows his ability to obscure tracks isn't foolproof.

The Vanish Man first puts on Gristarn Vrick's face, which he keeps in his bag, and stands up to gesture for help. Although the Vanish Man doesn't have any way of knowing that the heroes once rescued Gristarn Vrick from this spot, the heroes are likely to notice the coincidence. The Vanish Man points to one of the heroes and gestures that hero forward, pointing at something on the other side of the hill. He waves the other heroes back, feigning worry if more than one of them attempts to approach. If the heroes wonder why "Gristarn" doesn't speak, the Vanish Man simply points to his throat and makes a vague chopping motion with his hand.

The Vanish Man would prefer to attack only one victim at a time, but he believes himself powerful enough to take on all the heroes at once if his ruse doesn't work.

He doesn't like to leave any survivors who might alert other prey to his presence, so he fights until slain.

THE VANISH MAN

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Variant faceless butcher (page 80)

Perception +28; darkvision

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +29, Athletics +33, Deception +33, Intimidation +29, Stealth +31

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7

Items bag of faces, cleaver

Vanished Alignment The Vanish Man doesn't have an alignment aura and cannot be detected by spells such as *detect alignment*.

AC 39; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +28, **Will** +27

HP 265; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 10 feet, DC 33. This aura is suppressed while the Vanish Man is using *Change Shape*.

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ cleaver +32 (deadly d12, forceful, sweep), **Damage** 3d12+9 slashing

Melee ✦ fist +32 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 3d10+9 bludgeoning

Ranged ✦ cleaver +30 (deadly d12, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+9 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 34; **4th** *invisibility* (self only); **2nd** *invisibility* (×3); **Constant (8th)** *pass without trace*

Change Shape ✦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation)
As faceless butcher (page 80).

Remove Face ✦✦ As faceless butcher (page 80).

Sudden Slices ✦✦ As faceless butcher (page 80).

Gristarn's Gruesome Fate: The Vanish Man stashed Gristarn's faceless corpse in the tangle of vegetation on the other side of the hill. His body is recognizable by his clothing.

WILLOWSIDE PIER

LOW 14

Defense Points: Willowside loses 2 Defense Points per day, starting on Day 1. This loss continues until the heroes defeat the sea serpents and reestablish ready access to the pier.

The Willowside pier is nearly a mile outside of town, and this area is not only the hunting grounds of the Vanish Man, but also patrolled by the xulgaths. Unless each hero

Avoids Notice (or Follows the Expert) and succeeds at a DC 31 Stealth check when they approach the pier, they draw the attention of a xulgath strike force (page 44). The heroes might instead reach the pier by following the sea caves' tunnel from area B5, which leads to the pier without encountering any xulgaths or the Vanish Man.

However the heroes arrive, they see that the *Geode's Center* is early. It currently bobs a few hundred feet out from the pier, heavily damaged and under attack by two sea serpents. The ship would be in worse shape were it not for the efforts of an energetic gnome just visible on the ship's prow who's making sweeping motions with her arms that conjure waves to distract the sea serpents. This is Javi Nalami, a passenger on the ship whose unusual talents have proved very useful in preventing much harm from the sea serpents, although she can't keep them away indefinitely.

The shattered remains of a few of Willowside's fishing boats bob in the water, and several undamaged fishing boats have been pulled up onto the beach.

You can use the map of the pier on page 6 for running this encounter.

Creatures: The xulgaths lured two massive sea serpents here with food, but the creatures aren't domesticated animals like the xulgath's dinosaurs. To create a lair in this area permanently, they



War Sauropelta

need to capsize a large enough vessel to serve as their shipwreck home, and they've fixated on the *Geode's Center* for that purpose.

As soon as the heroes attack either of the sea serpents (which might require swimming or rowing out into the sea to get close to them), the sea serpents both turn their attention to the heroes. A sea serpent reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points flees the area and doesn't return.

ELITE SEA SERPENTS (2)

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 288

Initiative Perception +24

CREATURE 13

Restoring the Food Supply: The *Geode's Center* has some mundane goods available for Willowside, but it must be repaired—a task likely to take the crew a week or more of work—before making further trips. As long as the siege lasts, the overland route from Willowside to the pier remains too dangerous for either the *Geode Center's* merchants or the fishers of Willowside to use without being escorted by the heroes. However, people can come and go via the tunnel leading into the sea caves beneath the town, so long as the heroes have cleared them out. Sauntille Caffron is happy to allow anyone into her basement to access the tunnel.

Hiring Javi: Once the *Geode's Center* docks, the heroes can meet the gnome whose magically created waves distracted the sea serpents. She introduces herself as Javi, the daughter of river druids on the Sellen River seeking a new life on the Isle of Kortos. She has a family talent of making hypnotic whorls and patterns with water, a gift with limited practical value but good potential in the Circus of Wayward Wonders. A hero who offers a position in the circus to Javi and succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check convinces her to join. If the heroes hire Javi, give the players the Javi's Water Wheels trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: In thanks for their bravery in saving her vessel, Captain Tiratelle Uncrid gives Javi and each of the heroes a fine waterskin containing a dose of greater bravo's brew.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if Javi joins their circus.

DINOSAUR CORRALS

SEVERE 14

Defense Points: Willowside loses 1 Defense Point per day, starting on Day 3. This loss continues until the heroes defeat the xulgaths here and either disperse or eliminate the dinosaurs.

Sturdy fencing of wood and stone, hundreds of feet across, holds a breathtaking variety of dinosaurs. Interior fences keep different kinds of dinosaurs separated, especially the



vicious carnivores. Some parts of the pen hold stacks of hay and dry leaves while others are littered with bones.

Most of the xulgath's dinosaurs are in use around the area as mounts or guard animals, but those dinosaurs that require more training, are caring for young, or are badly injured are kept here. Among all the corrals, there are more than 40 dinosaurs of various kinds present.

As there is a risk of the carnivorous dinosaurs attacking the others, the fencing is particularly strong between the two dinosaur types. Eight xulgath skulkers (*Bestiary* 336) tend to these animals and the fencing. They don't engage in combat with the heroes, instead fleeing if threatened.

Creatures: These corrals are defended by two xulgath roughriders atop war sauropeltas. These sentries immediately attack intruders.

As soon as any combatant takes damage, the scent of blood is too much for five corralled tyrannosaurus to bear. They burst their fencing and join in the attack, trampling any nearby xulgath skulkers to death in their haste. The tyrannosaurus attack random creatures in the fight, although a roughrider can attempt a DC 29 Nature check to Command an Animal to get a tyrannosaurus to fight on their side against the heroes (the heroes can't do the same, as they don't have an

existing rapport with the tyrannosaurus). All of these foes fight to the death.

XULGATH ROUGHRIDERS (2) **CREATURE 11**

Page 23

Initiative Perception +21

WAR SAUROPELTAS (2) **CREATURE 12**

Page 46

Initiative Perception +23

TYRANNOSAURUSES (5) **CREATURE 10**

Pathfinder Bestiary 101

Initiative Perception +19

Dealing with the Dinosaurs: Denying the xulgaths these dinosaurs reduces their ability to mount an effective siege. How the heroes go about this is up to them. Perhaps the easiest methods are to set all the animals free or to remove the fencing between the herbivores and the carnivores, resulting in a ferocious battle that leaves all involved too battered to be of use to the xulgaths. Training the dinosaurs for the heroes' own use takes too long to be useful in the siege, although the heroes might find smaller reptiles useful as animal companions, as described on page 73.

Hiring Keppip: After the heroes have dealt with the dinosaur, a single stegosaurus remains behind. If it's approached or harmed, a kobold named Keppip leaps out from between its legs to try to scare the heroes away. Keppip is the sole survivor of a small kobold clan wiped out by the xulgaths. While trying to flee, Keppip came across the dinosaurs here and felt an immediate bond with a lonely stegosaurus that Keppip calls Bongo. Keppip has been lurking in the pen, unseen by the xulgaths. Now, Keppip wants only to take his dinosaur and be on his way. The heroes might consider Keppip and Bongo good additions to their circus. Given the opportunity, Keppip's plan is to put several drums on Bongo's dorsal plates and run up and down them, banging out a rousing tune as he goes. Convincing Keppip to join the Circus of Wayward Wonders requires a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check. If he joins, give the players the Dinosaur Drum trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: The carnivore enclosure contains the bloody and shredded remains of a wooden shield that, oddly, still has an intact *mending lattice* attached to it. Keppip knows it's there and can point the heroes to it.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if Keppip and Bongo join their circus.

FIEND ENCLOSURE **SEVERE 14**

Defense Points: Willowside loses 2 Defense Points per

day, starting on Day 4, until all the creatures here are defeated.

A thick netting of vines and debris joins several tall trees to form a large enclosure, subdivided to create a small entry and a large, swampy paddock. Both have gates made of long, wriggling creepers. A heavy beam across the top of the enclosure looks suitable for an immense bird or bat to roost. The structure is covered in a thin, greenish haze that reeks of sodden leaves and decay.

This enclosure houses fiends summoned from Gluttdark, Zevgavizeb's Abyssal realm. Even the most devout xulgaths find the fiends unnerving, and so the fiends dwell together in this enclosure, set apart from the other xulgath forces. The large paddock contains repulsive crustaceans called aukashungis. Although most aren't yet big enough for the xulgaths to ride, two enormous specimens tower over the others. The smaller partition of the enclosure is the lair of the aukashungis' handlers, two Gluttdark fiends known as xilvireks.

The haze surrounding the enclosure is leakage from Gluttdark; it reduces vision in the area to 60 feet. Its odor is unpleasant but harmless.

The wriggling creepers around the enclosure expand and contract to open the gates to the smaller partition or the large paddock. Any creature other than an aukashungi touching a gate causes it to swing open; the aukashungis can burrow under the enclosure walls, but they don't do so unless the xilvireks order them to.

The smaller partition has crude nests for eight xilvireks, though only two are present. The others are in the main camp or out on patrol.

The heavy beam is the roost for a bat-like monstrosity called a qurashith. It isn't currently here in the enclosure, but the heroes will encounter it later in this adventure (in the Xulgath's Vengeance encounter on page 59). Heroes who investigate this beam realize that a huge, bat-like creature roosted here. Sticky gobbets indicate the creature has a strangely gummy skin.

Creatures: The xilvireks' psionic sense allows them to detect creatures much further away than they can see through the haze, but they simply monitor intruders to see what they do. If intruders seem hostile, the xilvireks rush from their enclosure and shout at the aukashungis to attack as well; if the intruders don't seem hostile, the xilvireks assume the intruders are displaying weakness and attack anyway. These creatures are consumed with bloodlust in battle and fight to the death.

GIANT AUKASHUNGIS (2) **CREATURE 14**

Page 77

Initiative Perception +24

XILVIREKS (2)

CREATURE 12

Page 84

Initiative Perception +23

AUKASHUNGI SWARM

CREATURE 10

UNCOMMON CE HUGE ABERRATION AMPHIBIOUS SWARM

Perception +18; greater darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise)
30 feet

Skills Athletics +20

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2

AC 28; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +24, **Will** +13

HP 210; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind; **Weaknesses** area damage 10, splash damage 10; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5, piercing 10, slashing 10

Speed 35 feet, burrow 35 feet

Burrowing Agony ◆ The swarm deals 4d6 piercing damage and 2d4 persistent bleed damage to every creature in its space (DC 29 basic Reflex save). The first time per round that a creature is affected by an aukashungi swarm's Burrowing Agony, the creature is also exposed to expeditious evolution.

Expeditious Evolution (curse, disease) This affliction can't be reduced below stage 1, nor the damage from it healed, until successfully treated with *remove curse* or a similar effect; the affliction can then be removed as normal for a disease. **Saving Throw** DC 27 Fortitude; **Stage 1** The aukashungi swarm chooses two of the victim's ability modifiers (such as Strength and Charisma). The victim gains a +1 status bonus to any skill checks that use those ability modifiers. The victim takes a -1 status penalty to all other skill checks (1 day); **Stage 2** The status penalty increases to -2 (1 day); **Stage 3** The status bonus

FIEND ENCLOSURE 1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



increases to +2, and the penalty increases to -3 (1 day); **Stage 4** The status penalty increases to -4 (1 day).

Treasure: The xilvireks' partition contains a *stone bullet* stained with acrid bile and blood, which is hidden in one of the nests. Any hero who Searches the partition discovers it.

GUG HUTS

MODERATE 14

Defense Points: Willowside loses 1 Defense Point per day, starting on Day 4, until the gugs in the camp are defeated or dispersed.

A clearing in the forest holds four simple shelters made of bone and hide arranged in a semicircle. A pile of fungi and mold sit in the middle, along with a few scraps of bone. Twitching corpses are impaled upon several long, sharpened poles around the perimeter of this camp.

This camp is a prison for the xulgath's labor force of gug slaves. The stakes each



Aukashungi Swarm

bear ghouls who are badly injured but still dangerous enough to keep the gugs—who harbor an unnatural fear of ghouls—confined to the camp until needed. A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Religion check recognizes the impaled creatures as ghouls. Each has only 5 Hit Points remaining and is unable to move, although they can attack creatures that approach within their reach. A successful DC 32 Athletics check is required to remove a ghou from its post, a feat the ghouls are unable to accomplish on their own. Once the heroes realize that these creatures are ghouls, a hero who succeeds at a DC 32 Occultism check remembers that gugs have an inexplicable fear of ghouls, and realizes that the “fence” is designed to keep the gugs inside.

Creatures: The eight gugs idly feast on the fungi and bones in the center of their camp, warily eyeing the ghouls. They retreat into their huts if attacked from outside the circle of ghouls, but viciously attack anyone entering the circle. Each gug is hobbled by good manacles binding its legs, reducing its Speed to 25 feet.

Heroes who speak Undercommon can attempt to parley with the gugs. The gugs sullenly admit to being slaves of the xulgath army. They know there is one other gug slave who doesn't live here, a spellcaster named Helg who arrived only recently. Helg serves the leader of the xulgaths, Arskuva the Gnasher, in a siege tower at the center of the xulgath encampment. The gugs know the way there, although they have no particular insights about how to cross the xulgath camps safely. The gugs want to get free and eagerly agree to any arrangement that allows them to escape. This requires destroying at least two adjacent ghouls in the circle, or simply lifting the poles out of the ground with a successful DC 25 Athletics check and setting them aside. The gugs also want to be free of their manacles, but freedom from the encircling ghouls is the higher priority for them.

The gugs don't intend to honor any agreements they make, however, and viciously attack the heroes once they're free of the camp. A gug reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points who can flee the area does so, planning to terrorize the countryside after establishing a suitable lair.

The ghouls can't be reasoned with and simply attack any creatures they can reach.

GUGS (8)

Pathfinder Bestiary 198

Initiative Perception +19

CREATURE 10

IMPALED GHOULS (13)

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

CREATURE 1

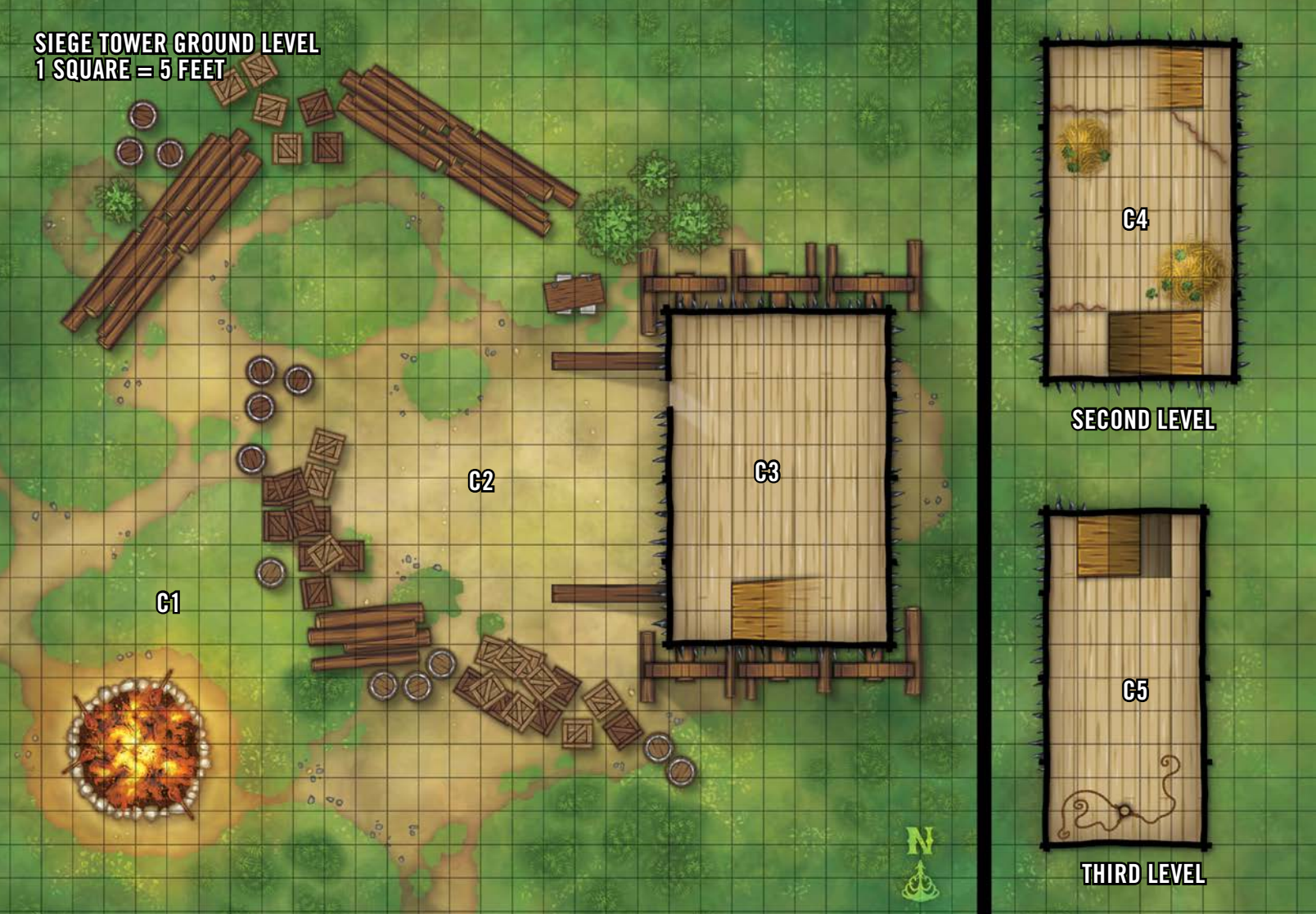


Xulgath Encampment

The main xulgath encampment is deep in the sickly, dying land known as the Welt. It consists of several small camps stretching for nearly a mile in a half-circle around the Tower of Empty Stones. None of the camps are within a quarter mile of the structure; the defenders of the Tower of Empty Stones have thus far resisted the xulgath attacks and the xulgaths are hesitant to get too close for fear of the unknown powers the tower's defenders might command.

Each small camp is controlled by a single calm, or smaller unit of xulgaths who work together and share a camp. Camps vary in size from six to 15 tents, with a few cook fires and piles of bones or hides as gruesome decorations. Each calm has its own specialty, such as carving weapons, butchering meat, or training dinosaurs, and their camp hold the tools for the calm's chief function. Pens holding sheep, goats, and lizards are shared communally but are in reality a source of friction. The calms constantly bicker and fight with each other, squabbling over resources, making the entire camp noisy and chaotic.

SIEGE TOWER GROUND LEVEL
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



The center of the encampment, which is claimed by the xulgath sub-commanders rather than any particular calm, contains a massive fire pit filled with charcoal and bones. This fire is reserved for special victims or disloyal xulgaths, and its black, greasy smoke is visible from miles away. Near this main fire pit is a massive construction site where an enormous siege tower of bone, wood, and obsidian is under construction.

The stench of the encampment is overwhelming. The acrid smell from dozens of xulgaths permeates every square inch, and the smell of charred flesh and bone from the fire pit combines with the xulgath odor in a nauseating stink. The entire camp has the stench aura of a xulgath warrior (*Bestiary* 336), but with a Fortitude DC of 32.

NAVIGATING THE CAMPS

Reaching the siege tower at the heart of the xulgath encampment is a daunting task: there are hundreds of warlike xulgaths here. However, the calms are so fractious that a simple disguise, stealth, or trickery allows the heroes to pass by without a fight. You should allow the players to come up with whatever

plan or ruse they'd like to make it through the camp. Some recommendations follow. Heroes who fail at a disguise or ruse must simply retreat before being spotted and can try again. On a critical failure, a xulgath strike force (page 44) identifies the heroes as a threat and attacks just as they make their escape.

Agitate Animals: By agitating dinosaurs or even ordinary livestock in the camp, the heroes can create enough pandemonium to reach the siege tower. Doing so requires a successful DC 32 Nature check.

Inflame Rivalries: The frequent bickering between calms is obvious. A hero who speaks Draconic or Undercommon and succeeds at a DC 34 Deception check to Lie can cause a fight to erupt, providing enough of a distraction to reach the siege tower.

Stealth: The heroes can sneak through the camp by Avoiding Notice (or Following the Leader). Each hero must succeed at a DC 32 Stealth check to reach the siege tower.

Use Special Movement: High-level heroes have many options, such as flight, invisibility, or teleportation, to reach the siege tower. So long as these options can traverse a half-mile, they are automatically successful.

Other Solutions: You should allow other reasonable plans. If a plan requires a skill check, set the DC between 32 and 34.

XP Award: If the heroes successfully navigate the camp to reach the siege tower, award them 10 XP.

C1. THE FIRE PIT MODERATE 14

The fire pit near the siege tower is the domain of the xulgath sub-commanders, or hardscales. They stoke the flames day and night, adding more carcasses to char. The thick smoke makes it easy to sneak up on the xulgaths tending the fire pit. Heroes who wish to ambush these xulgaths can use Stealth for initiative, and they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to initiative whether or not they use Stealth. Heroes who wish to simply pass by these xulgaths can do so, but any fight in area C2 causes these xulgaths to come running, which might be more than the heroes can handle.

The fire pit is a shallow depression in the ground filled with roaring flames. A creature that starts its turn in the fire pit takes 5d6 fire damage and 2d6 persistent fire damage (DC 32 basic Fortitude save; a success or critical success also negates the persistent fire damage).

Creatures: Three xulgath hardscales and a xilvirek tend to the fire. As they are surrounded by the xulgath camp, they don't expect trouble but are quick to draw their weapons and fight any intruders they see. Because the xulgaths and the xilvirek frequently fight among each other, no one responds to the sounds of combat from around the fire pit. The hardscales attempt to Shove foes into the fire pit, hoping to expedite the process of killing them first and tossing their bodies into the fire pit later. These foes fight to the death, knowing that failure to stop intruders who have made it this far will result in painful punishment.

XILVIREK CREATURE 12

Page 84

Initiative Perception +23

XULGATH HARDCALES (3) CREATURE 12

NE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +21 (+23 when using Perception for initiative); darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +23, Diplomacy +19, Intimidation +21, Nature +19, Stealth +19, Survival +21

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

Items +1 resilient breastplate, moderate elixir of life, javelins (3), necklace of bone and gems worth 100 gp, lesser sturdy shield (Hardness 10, HP 80, BT 40), +1 striking warhammer

AC 32 (34 with shield raised); **Fort** +25, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 215

Hardscale Shield Stance A hardscale always has their shield raised as if they had used the Raise a Shield action, as long as they meet that action's requirements.

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath herd-tender (page 10), but DC 32.

Shield Warden If the hardscale has their shield raised, they can Shield Block when an attack is made against an adjacent ally. If they do, the shield prevents that ally from taking damage instead of the hardscale.

Aggressive Block **Trigger** The hardscale uses the Shield Block reaction, and the opponent that triggered Shield Block is adjacent to the hardscale and is not more than one size larger than it; **Effect** The hardscale makes an Athletics check to Shove the opponent. This Shove doesn't increase the hardscale's multiple attack penalty. If they roll a critical failure, they get a failure instead. If they roll a success, they get a critical success instead.

Attack of Opportunity **Reaction**

Shield Block **Reaction** At the beginning of each of their turns, the hardscale receives an additional reaction that they can use only for Shield Block.

Speed 25 feet

Melee **Weapon** *warhammer* +24 (deadly 2d8, magical, shove), **Damage** 3d8+11 bludgeoning

Melee **Weapon** *jaws* +23, **Damage** 3d6+11 piercing

Melee **Weapon** *claw* +23 (agile), **Damage** 3d4+11 slashing

Ranged **Weapon** *javelin* +21 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+11 piercing

Hammer Mastery The hardscale deals an extra 1d8 damage with weapons with the shove trait, and weapons with the shove trait gain the deadly 2d8 trait when the hardscale uses them (both the extra weapon damage die and the deadly trait have already been included in the hardscale's *warhammer* Strike above).

C2. CONSTRUCTION GROUND MODERATE 14

Once the heroes make their way through the main camp and past the fire pit, they catch their first good look at the xulgaths' siege tower. The tower is larger than any building in Willowside, and it's clear that, once finished, the town won't stand a chance of repelling it.

This enormous tower of wood, bone, and hide rests atop six huge stone wheels held in place with hewn logs. Poles jutting from the front of the siege tower attach to harnesses that would allow dinosaurs to pull it. The tower rises three stories tall, resembling three nested baskets atop one another, but the highest level appears only partially finished. Only some of its wall of wood and hides is complete, and a bare superstructure shows where other walls and a heavy roof will be.

Several piles of logs and debris litter the construction area around the siege tower. An entrance to the tower's interior stands open, the unfinished stone door lying across two slabs of stone nearby.

The construction area is mostly empty when the heroes arrive, as a lack of cured hides has currently stalled completion, but one of the army's most ruthless hardscales, Zashathal Head-Taker, uses the open yard for training his protégés.



Xulgath Hardscale

The tower is covered with jagged shards of obsidian to impede attempts to climb it. A successful DC 30 Athletics check is required to Climb the tower, and the wall deals 5d6 slashing damage to any climber who doesn't critically succeed at an Athletics check. Alternatively, a character with master proficiency in Athletics can avoid the shards and doesn't take damage except on a failure or critical failure.

Creatures: Zashathal is highly regarded among the xulgaths for his prowess in battle, and he's eager to prove his capabilities as Arskuva's successor. While Zashathal respects Arskuva, he has quietly questioned her recent directions to besiege Willowside. He knows that Sarvel's orders are to assault the Marsh Stone Tower and, while he knows the siege tower will ultimately prove useful in that endeavor, he's suspicious of Arskuva's fixation on the town. However, he can't resist the chance to prove himself in battle and enthusiastically participates in battle preparations.

Zashathal has recently selected the two most devout xulgath hardscales to succeed him and he is relentless in schooling them not only in military techniques but in the doctrine of Zevgavizeb. The xulgaths are currently sparring in front of the siege tower's only entrance.

As soon as Zashathal realizes the heroes are present, he shouts a warning to the siege tower in Draconic: "Defensive positions! Devourer Arskuva, the meddlers from the village have arrived!" At this warning, Helg peeks over the battlements in area C4 and prepares for the heroes' arrival. A hero who succeeds at a DC 34 Perception check notes the gaping maw of a gug who is observing them from this upper story.

The hardscales fight to the death to protect the siege tower, but Zashathal makes a tactical retreat into the siege tower if reduced to fewer than 150 Hit Points.

ZASHATHAL HEAD-TAKER CREATURE 15

Page 90

Initiative Perception +27

XULGATH HARDCALES (2) CREATURE 12

Page 53

Initiative Perception +23

Zashathal's Flight: If he's able to get away, Zashathal hurries through the siege tower, alerting the xilvireks in the staging area (area C3) and ascending to Arskuva's chamber (area C4). There, he spots Helg magically mending the flesh of the plainly deceased Arskuva and realizes the extent of the gug's duplicity. Helg cast *vampiric touch*

on Zashathal, forcing him to flee after he critically fails on his save against her Enervating Tug ability, which drains away much of the hardscale's strength. Zashathal ascends to the top of the siege tower (area C5), looking for escape. Fortunately for him, he spots the qurashith flying nearby and calls the beast to carry him. The heroes will meet Zashathal again at the end of the adventure.

The heroes might have any number of ways to prevent events from playing out this way, however, such as by defeating Zashathal very quickly or blocking his escape. In this case, let the combat with Zashathal play out; they'll encounter a different (and weaker) xulgath at the end of the adventure instead of facing Zashathal.

C3. STAGING AREA

MODERATE 14

The siege tower's lowest level is a large room made of wood, carved stone, and bone. The interior of the siege tower is reinforced with arcing bone supports, making it feel like the inside of some enormous beast.

Narrow wooden shutters near the room's ceiling allow for attackers to fire out, but they're nearly 10 feet from the floor and thus unusable for Medium creatures without some sort of stool or bench to stand on. The benches haven't yet been installed, so it's currently very difficult for anyone in this staging area to look out of the siege tower.

Creatures: Four xulgath hardscales are stationed in this tower to defend it. They allow only Zashathal and gug slaves to ascend the stairs leading up to Arskuva's chamber. They fight to the death to defend it from anyone else.

XULGATH HARDCALES (4)

CREATURE 12

Page 53

Initiative Perception +23

Treasure: One of the hardscales proudly wears a satchel emblazoned with the symbol of the Pathfinder Society, taken as a trophy from an explorer she killed. The satchel contains several mission notes intended for a contact named Hoskarta in Diobel, an *iron cudgel*, and a *greater potion of fire resistance*.

C4. ARSKUVA'S CHAMBER

MODERATE 14

Shrouds of canvas subdivide this large room, although nests of hay and moss are visible in the corners. Ramps lead up and down from opposite sides of the room.

This is where the xulgath commander Arskuva dwelled, and where Helg Eats-the-Eaters keeps up

the fiction that Arskuva is still actively commanding the army. In her guise as Arskuva's personal slave, the gug insists that no one can see Arskuva except when invited—and when Helg has an opportunity to prepare Arskuva to relay her commands to visitors.

Like the staging chamber below, this room has narrow slits that allow attackers to look out. Several wooden benches below these slits allow anyone in this room to observe the area around the siege tower, although Helg is tall enough that she doesn't need to stand on them to peer out.

Creatures: Helg Eats-the-Eaters spends all her time here with Arskuva's animated body. Helg uses her magic to give Arskuva the semblance of life, and the xulgath usually looks alive, if a little dry. Arskuva lacks the usual xulgath stench, but the *noxious jerkin* she wears emits just enough xulgath odor to fool all but the most discerning visitors. Unfortunately for Helg, though, she is unable to restore Arskuva before the heroes arrive.

Helg attempts to remain concealed behind the hanging canvas and out of melee as long as possible, instead telepathically ordering Arskuva to fight in melee. The biggest clue that Helg is no mere gug slave is the religious symbol of Bokrug she wears around her neck. The heroes recognize this immediately, as it matches so many of the symbols found in the sea caves beneath Willowside.

Helg turns the full might of her necromantic magic against the heroes once they destroy Arskuva or if they focus their attacks on Helg herself. But Helg has no wish to die here. If the heroes express a willingness to talk, or if Helg is reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, she offers to negotiate.

HELG EATS-THE-EATERS

CREATURE 15

Page 86

Initiative Perception +26

ARSKUVA THE GNASHER

CREATURE 12

NE MEDIUM MINION UNDEAD

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +25, Intimidation +20

Str +7, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items *noxious jerkin* (page 76), +2 *greater striking greater flaming war flail*

Minion Arskuva can't use reactions. If Helg issues a mental command as an action with the concentrate trait, Arskuva can use 2 actions on her turn. Otherwise, she can use only 1 action to Stride or Strike.

AC 31; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +18, **Will** +22

HP 270; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 15

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *war flail* +25 (disarm, magical, sweep, trip),

Damage 3d10+11 bludgeoning plus 1d6 fire

Melee ♦ jaws +23, **Damage** 3d8+11 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +23 (agile), **Damage** 3d4+11 slashing

Parley with Helg: Helg offers the heroes a deal. She admits to controlling the xulgath army in secret for the past few weeks, and she uses her ability to bring the entire xulgath army against the heroes or Willowside

as a bargaining chip. She has no specific desire to destroy Willowside, though she doesn't particularly care about the collateral damage to the town or its residents. Helg simply knows that the heroes value Willowside and offers to spare it if the heroes acquire something in the town on her behalf.

Helg explains that she's a follower of Bokrug and has seen his shrine in her dreams. The only thing she wants in Willowside is the statue, which she intends to relocate to this siege tower and take away to the Darklands. She plans to establish a great temple to the Great Old One in the Darklands, with herself as Bokrug's high priest.

Helg's offer is straightforward and genuine: if the heroes retrieve the Bokrug statue for her and bring it here, she'll command the xulgaths to retreat. Their entrance to the Darklands is deep in the Kortos Mountains, and they won't trouble any other surface dwellers on the way there. As a show of good faith, she's willing to suspend the siege on Willowside for a day while the heroes acquire the statue for her.

Helg shares the *statuette* ritual she knows (page 75), which should allow the heroes to easily transport the enormous statue. If the heroes balk about making their way through the xulgath camp to return the statue to her, Helg reluctantly agrees to meet the heroes on the outskirts of the camp at a time of their choosing. If they push her on this, Helg pointedly observes that she can bring the siege tower right to Willowside in the middle of an army, if they prefer.

If the heroes destroyed Arskuva, Helg can't easily command the retreat or even lift the siege on Willowside. She blames the heroes for Arskuva's loss and insists that the heroes bring her the body of one of the other xulgath leaders so she can take command by proxy again. She says Zashathal Head-Taker is the best candidate for this, but any xulgath hardscale will serve her purposes.

Treasure: Arskuva's nest is bare, but Helg's contains several treasures. It includes a *scroll of enchanting eyes* and a roll of treated bark containing a *scroll of felsic bladecurse* and a *scroll of sharpstone*.

XP Award: If the heroes negotiate with Helg, award them XP as though they had defeated Helg in combat (and defeated Arskuva as well, if they negotiated with Helg before defeating Arskuva).

Arskuva the Gnasher

C5. TOWER TOP

The top of the siege tower is unfinished. Most of

its walls are complete and covered with hides and jagged obsidian shards, but a wooden superstructure to support a roof isn't yet covered. The three coils of knotted rope tied to this superstructure provide an easy way down the outside of the tower. They're currently looped around a post here.

Lifting the Siege

With Arskuva neutralized—whether defeated by the heroes or held in check by Helg because of her agreement with the heroes—and Zashathal slain or missing, the rest of the xulgaths are leaderless. They still defend themselves against the heroes' direct attacks, but with no one coordinating the siege, the various clans quickly devolve into squabbles and infighting. At this point, the heroes have no problems returning to Willowside or going on to the Tower of Empty Stones without further trouble. The people of Willowside have plenty of time to reinforce their town and push the scattered xulgaths back. Although xulgaths and their dinosaurs will be an ongoing problem in the Welt, Willowside is safe for now.

If the heroes provide Helg with the Bokrug statue (and, if necessary, a replacement puppet commander), their victory is more apparent. The xulgaths disperse entirely, either to accompany the siege tower back into the Darklands or to scatter to other parts of the Isle of Kortos.

The Tower of Empty Stones

The xulgath encampment sprawls around the Tower of Empty Stones, a structure once called the Marsh Stone Tower. None of the xulgaths dare venture within a quarter mile of the tower unless ordered to do so.

The aeon tower has been occupied for more than a generation by secretive members of a nature cult called the Circle of Stones. The cultists kept their presence so secret that even the folk of Willowside didn't realize they'd moved into the tower. The Circle of Stones labored to unlink the *aeon orb* from the tower, and a decade ago they succeed. Members of the circle took the tower's *aeon orb* away to deliver it to their leader in Absalom. A disagreement about whether to abandon the tower resulted in a polite schism, and those members of the Circle of Stones who believed they had an obligation to help preserve the land around the Marsh Stone Tower stayed behind to tend it. This offshoot, called the Empty Stones, has done their best to curb the advance of the Welt, but the desolation is far more powerful and tenacious than the nature priests can forestall. Without the *aeon orb*, they're losing the battle to the Welt, and even the stubborn cultists here must admit that they will need

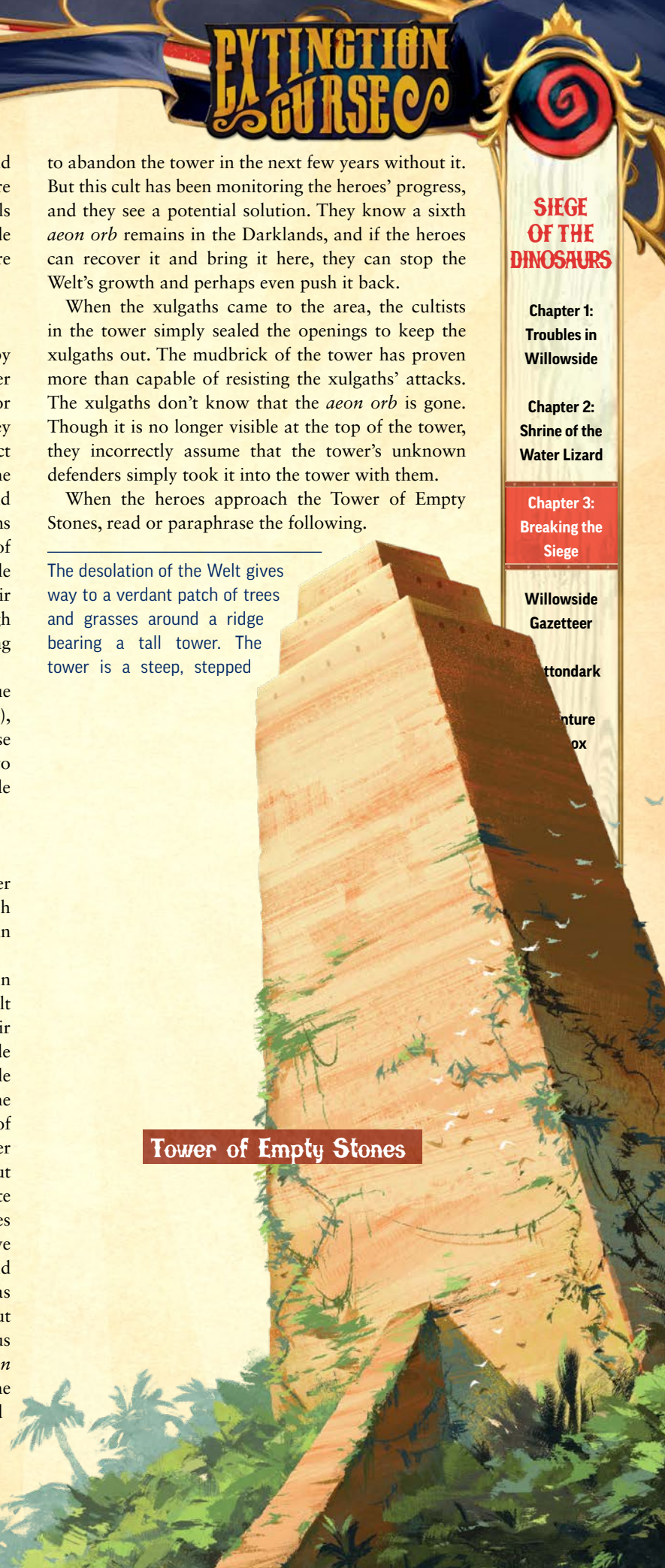
to abandon the tower in the next few years without it. But this cult has been monitoring the heroes' progress, and they see a potential solution. They know a sixth *aeon orb* remains in the Darklands, and if the heroes can recover it and bring it here, they can stop the Welt's growth and perhaps even push it back.

When the xulgaths came to the area, the cultists in the tower simply sealed the openings to keep the xulgaths out. The mudbrick of the tower has proven more than capable of resisting the xulgaths' attacks. The xulgaths don't know that the *aeon orb* is gone. Though it is no longer visible at the top of the tower, they incorrectly assume that the tower's unknown defenders simply took it into the tower with them.

When the heroes approach the Tower of Empty Stones, read or paraphrase the following.

The desolation of the Welt gives way to a verdant patch of trees and grasses around a ridge bearing a tall tower. The tower is a steep, stepped

Tower of Empty Stones



pyramid made of smooth mudbrick without any doorways or openings at all. Although it resembles the other aeon towers, no *aeon orb* orbits its pinnacle. A narrow ramp ascends the tower's eastern face but leads only to a blank wall. Some pitted holes and scorch marks show evidence of recent attacks, but these attacks made little headway against the tower's resolute strength.

If the heroes haven't yet dealt with Arskuva and Zashathal, the tower is impregnable. If the heroes persist in attempting to breach it, one of the nature priests opens just enough of the stone at the top of the tower to call a bird with *animal messenger* to deliver this message to the heroes: "Your efforts enable the xulgaths, which we cannot abide. Turn your attentions to them. When the region is safe from their depredations, we will open to you. At that time, we will have much to discuss."

Once the heroes have explored the siege tower and neutralized the xulgath threat, they find the ramp up the side of the aeon tower leads to a hallway and a series of three small rooms with simple and functional furniture. (The aeon tower has many more rooms than these, but the cultists keep them sealed when meeting with the heroes.) Four human nature priests await the heroes with refreshments and gratitude for putting an end to the xulgath threat. The nature priests introduce their leader as Elder Unakite, a middle-aged half-elf woman with brown skin and short salt-and-pepper hair. Unakite offers a tea made from local herbs and plates of fresh fruits and dry breads. She sits to share this food with the heroes and waits for them to speak first. Unakite is reluctant to let the heroes know how much she has already learned about them, since she doesn't want to make them uncomfortable at being spied on. She therefore lets the heroes direct the conversation. Questions the heroes might have and Unakite's answers or as follows.

Who are you? "We are members of a group of nature priests called the Empty Stones. We protect natural life, and this aeon tower is our home."

What are you doing here? "We are trying to hold this place against the Welt. We know that to be overtaken is the tower's fate, but we seek to hold it back as long as we can."



Unakite

Why aren't you helping the town? / Why aren't you fighting the xulgaths? "Civilization can fend for itself, and the people can stay or go as they see fit. We don't deign to tell them what to do. Yet the plants and animals lack that choice, so we are here for the them."

What is the Welt? "Something is very, very wrong with the land. It's not really a natural place, Kortos. Aroden brought it up from the sea, as you know. But that wasn't enough to bring life to it. He also installed the *aeon orbs* and added his own magic to turn Kortos into the land we all enjoy. But the island is dependent on them. With the *aeon orb* gone from this tower, the Welt quickly encroaches and the land dies."

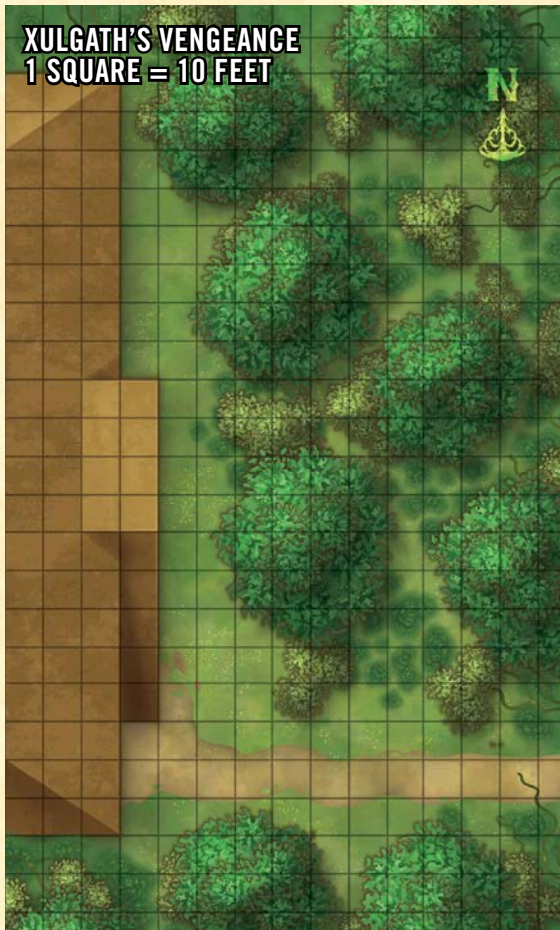
If the life here isn't natural, then why do you protect it? "The plants and animals didn't ask to be here. Even if the life here came from magic, it's all part of the natural world now, and it's our duty to protect it."

What happened to the aeon orb that was here? / Where can we find the aeon orb? "We were once part of a larger group of nature priests called the Circle of Stones. Members of that order took the orb from this tower ten years ago. We don't know where, although we trust that their use for it serves the land." Unakite grimaces, and it's clear this issue brings up painful memories for her. "But we know you seek an *aeon orb* here, and we know your need also serves the land. So we will help you. We cannot recover the *aeon orb* from our circle, but we know of a sixth orb. According to records here in this tower, Aroden took the *aeon orbs* from a subterranean vault deep in the Darklands, but he took only five of six. The sixth he left behind, so its energies could continue to nurture the vault. Yet he erred. One orb was not enough to sustain the land there, and it came to be known as the Vault of the Black Desert. It is months or more away by foot, but we can help you reach it very quickly with only a short time for preparation. You can then claim the final *aeon orb* and bring it here."

Why don't you make your group put the original aeon orb back? "We can't do that. The Circle of Stones suffered a schism when the orb was removed. Most of the Circle wanted to leave this tower but we felt it important to stay and defend the land here. That's why we call our circle the Empty Stones. We know

XULGATH'S VENGEANCE

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



only that the Circle of Stone's current use of the *aeon orb* is very important, and we can't and shouldn't get it back. Retrieving the final *aeon orb* from the Darklands is the only way." Unakite suspects that the Circle of Stones took the *aeon orb* to Absalom, but she isn't certain, and she doesn't give this lead to the heroes—she wants them to recover the sixth *aeon orb* from the Darklands, not fight against the Circle.

Why haven't you gone to get this other *aeon orb* yourselves? "There are many reasons. If we leave, the forest will lose our protections, and the Welt will expand even faster. Also, we know that the Vault of the Black Desert is exceptionally dangerous, and we don't know whether we can overcome these dangers to find the orb. Finally, we feel the Circle of Stones has caused enough trouble already through our meddling. It is right for someone else to do this."

Unakite invites the heroes to stay in the *aeon tower's* rooms and rest for as long as they'd like.

Treasure: The cultists reward the heroes for eliminating the xulgath threat to their tower with a *wand of continuation* (*true seeing*) or with its value in gems, if the heroes don't want the wand.

XULGATH'S VENGEANCE

EXTREME 14

The heroes must overcome one final attack at the Tower of Empty Stones. Zashathal Head-Taker escaped on the most powerful of the army's Gluttondark monsters, a bat-like qurashith. Seeing that the tower is open, Zashathal waits for the heroes to emerge and makes his attack. If the heroes haven't emerged from the tower within a day, the qurashith swoops near the opening and emits its psychic howl, which compels the nature priests to ask the heroes for their help.

Creatures: The heroes' final foes are Zashathal Head-Taker and a qurashith. While this encounter might normally be overwhelming for the heroes, Zashathal is fatigued from Helg's *Enervating Tug* ability. He therefore can't Rage and can't use any of his rage abilities. He also shouldn't have healed from any damage the heroes inflicted on him in their prior confrontation. If the heroes already defeated Zashathal, then a xulgath hardscale accompanies the qurashith instead. These foes fight to the death against the heroes.

ZASHATHAL

CREATURE 15

Page 90

Initiative Perception +27

Fatigued Zashathal is fatigued and therefore can't Rage or use any of his rage abilities.

QURASHITH

CREATURE 17

Page 82

Initiative Perception +33

Conclusion

The aid provided by the Empty Stones in reaching the Vault of the Black Desert is described in detail in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #155: Lord of the Black Sands*. For now, the heroes can return to Willowside and make sure that the town is safe. They can also shop for any additional equipment they would like, thanks to the safe arrival of the *Geode's Center*. Mayor Vandy thanks the heroes profusely for all the assistance that they've given to her town.

The heroes can even put on additional performances with the Circus of Wayward Wonders if they'd like. Unlike with prior adventures in this Adventure Path, there isn't a maximum Prestige for their circus. The people of Willowside continue to clamor for entertainment, and they still have coin to spend.

In short, there's no hurry for the events of the next adventure to begin. Once it does, it's clear that the heroes and their circus must part ways for the time being. The circus workers understand; they've all seen enough of the region's ecological decline to understand the importance of the heroes' mission.

SIEGE OF THE DINOSAURS

Chapter 1:
Troubles in
Willowside

Chapter 2:
Shrine of the
Water Lizard

Chapter 3:
Breaking the
Siege

Willowside
Gazetteer

Gluttondark

Adventure
Toolbox



WILLOWSIDE GAZETTEER

**SIEGE
OF THE
DINOSAURS**

**Chapter 1:
Troubles in
Willowside**

**Chapter 2:
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**Chapter 3:
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**Willowside
Gazetteer**

Gluttdark

**Adventure
Toolbox**

The town of Willowside on the north side of the Isle of Kortos is nearly as old as the island itself, taking its name from the large number of willow trees that separate the Dunmire from the forest that, until recently, surrounded the town. The residents of Willowside lead simple and peaceful lives, primarily as fishers and farmers. They trade mostly with nearby cities Escadar and Pier's End, with some trade routes going all the way to Absalom. Many sailors who worked around Kortos have retired to the seaside town, enjoying the scenery and preferring the quiet life to the bustle of Diobel or Absalom. The town has unusual weather, with far more storms than other communities in the Starstone Isles, but the residents are accustomed to the frequent rain, and their buildings are constructed to keep them warm and dry.

Things have gone horribly wrong for Willowside in the past several years. A terrible blight, known as the Welt, originated in the western edge of the Dunmire and gradually spread into the forest sheltering Willowside. The willows that gave the town its name have all but vanished, and the Welt has destroyed both wild forests and cultivated farmland. These days, the town barely gets by on fishing, foraging, and what little farming the townsfolk can still eke out. Dangers lurk in the Welt, so Willowside has relied more and more heavily on its docks to obtain the goods it needs via sea trade. The travel from the dock to Willowside—situated a safe distance inland to avoid occasional flooding from the region's fierce storms—formerly brought visitors through bountiful fields and lush forest. Now, it passes through only blighted lands consumed by the Welt.

It is difficult to overstate the impact of the Welt on the town. More people leave Willowside with each ship that docks, food is increasingly scarce, and the residents who remain must skip meals to make ends meet. The most reliable source of food in Willowside today is fishing; fish accompanied by dried imported food and spices form the staple meal for most people in town. The few folk who manage to keep livestock do

so only for milk, so meat other than fish is extremely rare. Several industries have dried up completely, and none have replaced them, leaving shops out of business and many residents unemployed.

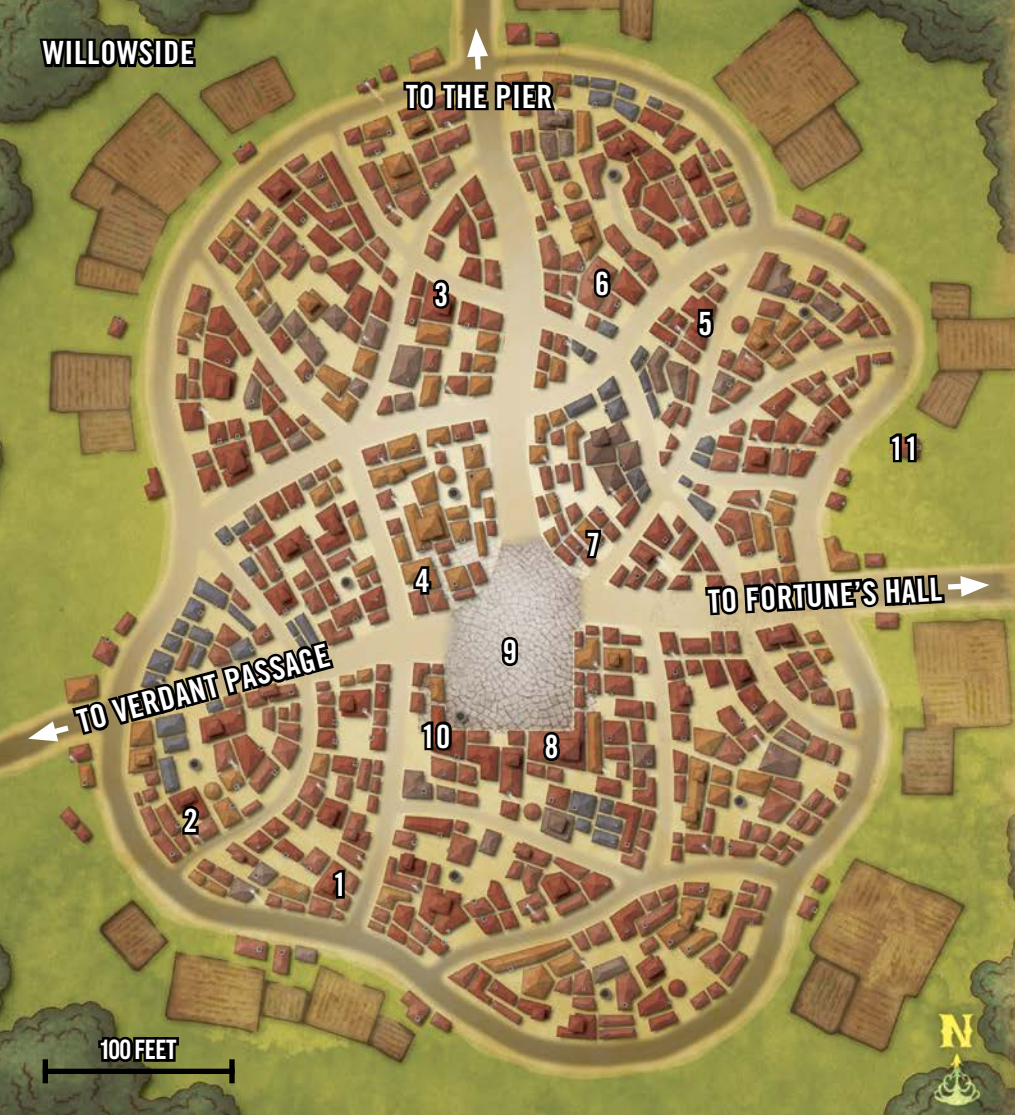
Yet people in Willowside aren't entirely miserable all the time. They enjoy music, gossip, and gambling with the coin that's now more plentiful than food. Willowside's elected mayor serves for life (or until retirement), and the elderly but energetic Estessa Vandy has held the position for over 20 years. She works hard to make the town a viable and pleasant place to live, though she must fight a difficult battle against both the Welt and the despair of her townspeople.

Willowside had about 2,500 residents at its peak, though recent emigration has reduced that number to fewer than 2,000. Humans make up the vast majority of residents, though some half-elf and halfling families have been in Willowside for generations. Immigration to the town has never been common: the people of Willowside are insular and usually slow to accept outsiders, and newcomers also complain of terrible nightmares featuring storms, drowning, or immense reptiles. Long-term residents are immune to these dreams, and speculate—incorrectly—that such nightmares are probably not unusual in an old town populated by fishers and sailors.

History

The ancient town of Willowside has a long history with its fair share of unpleasantness. When Aroden pulled Kortos out of the sea, he created disturbances in the waters that drew the attention of many powerful creatures, including the Great Old One Bokrug. This strange entity—or perhaps only a reflection of its true essence, which slumbers in the Dreamlands—then visited the island under cover of night. Bokrug's faithful thereafter congregated on the north of Kortos, where their dread god had purportedly touched the land. As the town grew, the cultists of Bokrug kept their faith a secret from unknowing sailors, fishers,

WILLOWSIDE



Locations

1. Banyan Clubhouse
2. Birtrax Brewing
3. General Store
4. The Hooked Inn
5. Myratch Boarding House
6. Temple of Aroden
7. Temple of Erastil
8. Town Hall
9. Town Square
10. Willowside Hospital
11. Wrelda's Forge

farmers, and woodcutters, and their power waxed and waned over the intervening millennia. They met in the sea caves beneath town, making the slick and treacherous passage from a hidden opening near the docks. Like most sites dedicated to the Water Lizard, the Willowside shrine centers around a hyperrealistic statue of Bokrug, which the cultists regard as their most sacred and treasured icon.

A few generations ago, the leader of the cult was Lyrt Cozurn, who also owned Willowside's general store. Lyrt made the cult's worship easier by carving a new entrance right from the basement of his store. This entrance also allowed the cultists to more easily whisk away a kidnapped drifter or merchant for sacrifice to the Water Lord. Over the years, the town's perceptive peace officer, Sheriff Banyan, realized something was afoot at the general store and followed the cultists into the caves. Shocked at what she saw, the sheriff and several townspeople she trusted confronted the cult at their next meeting. Lyrt led a vicious counterattack. At the base of the Bokrug statue, Sheriff Banyan and her crew killed all of the cultists, and they then sealed up the caves. The sheriff gave strict orders to the survivors

to say nothing about what they saw on that bloody night, and forbade the people of Willowside from attempting to access the caves, insisting that a terrible collapse had led to many unfortunate deaths. Sheriff Banyan and the surviving members of her posse kept the secret, but all became plagued with terrible dreams and died within two years, paranoid and miserable.

Bokrug's influence pervades Willowside to this day, drawing uncommonly strong weather to its shores and afflicting visitors with nightmares. Although no one in town knows the details of that night, there remains a residual paranoia among the townsfolk, as no one ever wholly trusted Sheriff Banyan's story, and rumors of some supernatural disaster spread throughout town. The Banyan family continued to protect Willowside for many years, and the current generation—the siblings Ledorick, Stirvyn, and Tashlock, known as "the Banyan Boys"—take their roles seriously, but they are completely unaware of their ancestor's role in the town's dark history.

The Welt, however, has a different source. Until recently, the nearby aeon tower known as the Marsh Stone Tower bathed the countryside in the nutritive

glow of the *aeon orb* that circled above it. As with the other *aeon orbs*, the one atop the Marsh Stone Tower began fading in power upon Aroden's death, although few noticed it. Ten years ago, a nature cult called the Circle of Stones came to inhabit the tower and study the diminishing orb. As the tower was so far from the town, the residents of Willowside never discovered the presence of the Circle of Stones. The nature cult learned how to remove the *aeon orb* and took it away to their leaders elsewhere. The Circle of Stones was split about this decision, however, as this theft accelerated the environmental degradation known as the Welt, which now advances a mile or more with each passing year. An offshoot of that cult—called the Empty Stones—still resides within the aeon tower (which they now call the Tower of Empty Stones), trying to stem the worsening decline as best it can.

Notable Personalities

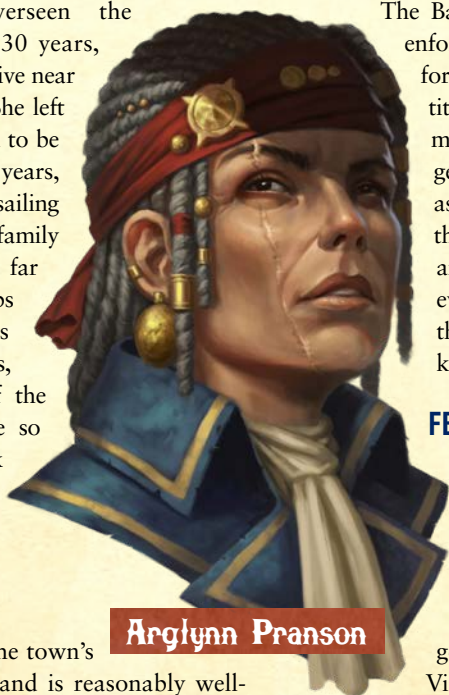
The people of Willowside are cliquish and insular, and only a few rare exceptions—such as the town's current mayor—actively try to recruit newcomers to the community. A resident who's lived in Willowside for a decade or even longer might still be referred to as a "newcomer" by locals who've never been more than a mile from the village.

ARGLYNN PRANSON

Arglynn Pranson has overseen the Willowside pier for the last 30 years, and she is the only resident to live near the pier rather than in town. She left Willowside as a young woman to be a merchant sailor, but after 10 years, she grew disillusioned with the sailing life and returned to take up the family business. Willowside's pier is far from busy, but Pranson keeps ship traffic moving, oversees disputes among the fishers, and arranges maintenance of the pier. Though she's sad to see so many of her fellow townsfolk leaving Willowside through her harbor, she would never dream of trying to stop them.

MAYOR ESTESSA VANDY

Estessa Vandy has served as the town's mayor for the last 20 years, and is reasonably well-liked among the residents. Mayor Vandy is desperate to keep the townsfolk from leaving Willowside for other cities, and the announcement board at



Arglynn Pranson

WILLOWSIDE

SETTLEMENT 5

LN TOWN

Insular community dying in a blighted forest

Government elected leader (mayor)

Population 1,831 (77% humans, 7% halflings, 5% half-elves, 11% other ancestries)

Languages Common

Religions Abadar, Erastil, Iomedae

Threats blighted vegetation, odd nightmares, xulgaths

The Welt A spreading blight known as the Welt afflicts local vegetation and chokes local industry.

Estessa Vandy (LG female human mayor 7) Open to outside aid, Mayor Vandy grasps at any hope to save the town she's seen decline around her.

Ledorick Banyan (N male human folk hero 14) Dashing and vain, Ledorick Banyan leads the Banyan Boys, the town's peacekeeping force.

Trytalla Frynt (LG female human priest 5) This elderly priestess of Erastil also serves as town historian.

Town Hall often showcases her latest plan to make the town more desirable, posted over the scraps of previous plans. Her latest effort involves attracting the Circus of Wayward Wonders to bolster town morale.

THE BANYAN BOYS

The Banyan family has taken charge of law enforcement in the town of Willowside for many generations. Eschewing formal titles such as "sheriff" or "deputy," which might limit their authority, the current generation of Banyans are known simply as the Banyan Boys. Ledorick Banyan is the oldest and leads his brothers, Tashlock and Stirvyn. The trio is beloved by almost everyone in Willowside, and they take their job seriously—though Ledorick is known to be bit full of himself.

FERDAN AND VIRDIMIR MYRATCH

The two owners of the Myratch Boarding House opened the boarding house when they retired from fishing. Alas, their venture has been far less idyllic than they anticipated, leaving the men disillusioned. Ferdan makes general repairs while his husband Virdimir does the cooking. Virdimir heads out to the sea when their food supply runs low, and Ferdan worries that one day Virdimir might decide not to come back.

Chapter 1:
Troubles in
Willowside

Chapter 2:
Shrine of the
Water Lizard

Chapter 3:
Breaking the
Siege

Willowside
Gazetteer

Gluttdark

Adventure
Toolbox

GRISTARN VRICK

The hunter and woodsman Gristarn Vrick dwells in a large cabin just outside of town, and no one from Willowside knows the surrounding forests better than him. He is one of the few transplants to Willowside, having come from the Carpenden Plains of Andoran 12 years ago. Rumors abounded at the time regarding why he left Andoran, including speculation that he had committed murder. Gristarn is a middle-aged human man with a large bushy beard. A hunter by trade, he has made his living by selling meat, furs, and other products made from the animals he catches. Unfortunately, the Welt has killed or driven away most animals, and Gristarn has been struggling along with the rest of the town.



Vorinta Irrinesse

SAUNTILLE CAFFRON

The general store is the main place in town to buy goods, and Sauntille Caffron's family has owned it for several generations. A human woman in her forties, Sauntille cheerfully minds the till and does her best to fill special orders for her customers, even though such orders can take a few weeks. Sauntille is notoriously superstitious, and various charms dangle from the ceiling of her shop for protection.

TRYTALLA FRYNT

An elderly human woman devoted to Erastil, Trytalla Frynt was born in Willowside and has served as the town's principal priest for the last few decades, as well as the most knowledgeable town historian. Children of Willowside know that it's easy to get out of doing chores at the temple by asking "Old Talla" questions about the town's past. The natural storyteller often gets so caught up in describing the town's history that she forgets that her audience is supposed to be cleaning the pews or sweeping out the church.

VORINTA IRRINESSE

The innkeeper Vorinta Irrinesse is one of Willowside's few half-elves. She's been around longer than just about anyone else in town and often mistakenly calls people by their parents' names. She is gruff but kindly, and she does her best to provide quality food at the Hooked Inn for her lodgers and the locals, despite the impact of the Welt.

Locations in Willowside

Key sites of interest in Willowside include the following.

1. BANYAN CLUBHOUSE

This odd-shaped building near the edge of town is where the Banyan Boys can usually be found. An old manor that has been in the Banyan family for many generations, the Banyan Clubhouse has an unusually large number of doors, hallways, and secret passageways. Even the Banyan Boys aren't sure if they've found every secret entrance, though they won't admit that publicly.

2. BIRTRAX BREWING

While barley doesn't grow well since the Welt took over, Miltynne and Sindrick Birtrax somehow keep their brewing operation running. Their operation keeps the Hooked Inn stocked with alcohol, and they sell bottles of their brew at the general store.

3. GENERAL STORE

Residents come to Sauntille Caffron's shop to buy whatever they need between visits from ships with traveling merchants. This is thought to be the oldest building in Willowside. Sauntille lets Willowside residents sell their own stock on consignment, and her shop is often filled with handmade clothing, jams, toys, and other goods.

4. THE HOOKED INN

The light-hearted name of this inn is somewhat at odds with demeanor of its gruff innkeeper, the elderly half-elf Vorinta Irrinesse. This is one of the few places where Willowside residents can go out to eat, and while nearly every room of the Hooked Inn has sat vacant since the Welt began, Vorinta's dining room is usually packed. It's often one of the more upbeat establishments in town, with musical groups performing on alternating nights.

5. MYRATCH BOARDING HOUSE

This three-story building is a boarding house for town residents. While the Hooked Inn's rooms are generally empty, the Boarding House is completely full; many farmers who formerly lived outside town have given up on trying to grow anything on the Welt-infested land. They've moved into the central Willowside area and typically try to pick up odd jobs, often only until

they can afford ship's passage elsewhere. The boarding house's residents get meals, but the Myratches have a strict policy against non-residents eating at the property, since they have a hard time feeding their boarders.

6. TEMPLE OF ARODEN

No one has worshipped at this Temple of the Last Azlanti since the god's death, but a rotating group of residents keep the temple clean and in good repair. Periodically, Willowside attracts traveling scholars interested in the old building, which is filled with books and art about Aroden. The priestess of Erastil, Trytalla Frynt, gives the best tours of the place.

7. TEMPLE OF ERASTIL

The only place of communal worship in town, the church of Erastil is a large building with heavy beams and solid construction. In addition to spiritual guidance, the priestess Trytalla Frynt sells potions and scrolls.

8. TOWN HALL

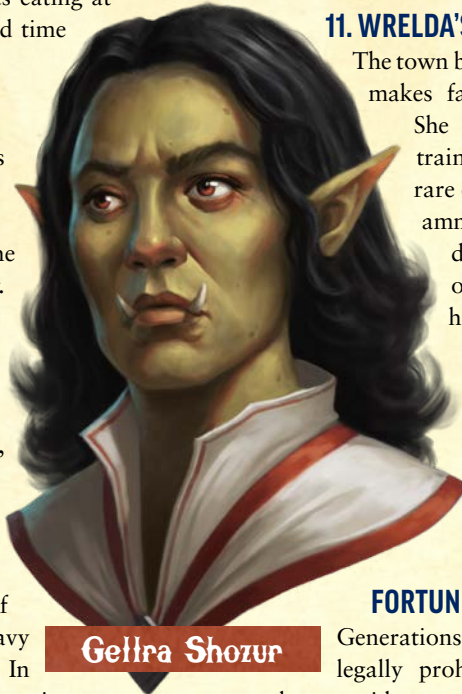
One of the nicest buildings in town, the Town Hall is where the residents of Willowside come to take care of government business. Mayor Vandy holds regular office hours to hear concerns and disputes. The Town Hall has a jail downstairs that doesn't see much use, though the Banyan Boys sometimes throw a troublemaker in a cell for a while to cool off.

9. TOWN SQUARE

Most of Willowside's big events are held in the town square, from Mayor Vandy's speeches to town celebrations and dances. Mayor Vandy has arranged for increasingly large performances here, and even built a large stage for that purpose. The Circus of Wayward Wonders is too large to set up in this town square, but it makes a good place for advertisements.

10. WILLOWSIDE HOSPITAL

Although "hospital" may be too grand a name for this small building with eight patient beds, the officious half-orc Gellra Shozur keeps her facility as clean and professional as she can. Although Trytalla offers magical healing at the Temple of Erastil, Gellra provides medical treatment for things that magic can't fix or would be too expensive to heal. Gellra attends to



Gellra Shozur

most of the community's births and deaths here, where she keeps a large store of useful herbs.

11. WRELDA'S FORGE

The town blacksmith, Wrela Glidser, mostly makes farm equipment and horseshoes. She grew up in Willowside but trained in Absalom, and enjoys the rare opportunity to work with armor, ammunition, and weaponry, like she did in the city. She is suspicious of outsiders, but that doesn't stop her from taking their coin.

Willowside Hinterlands

These locations are outside Willowside, but they're near enough to be considered part of it.

FORTUNE'S HALL

Generations ago, one of Willowside's mayors legally prohibited gambling in town, but a clever resident spotted a loophole and built the Fortune's Hall on the eastern road to Pier's End, mere feet outside the town's jurisdiction. Fortune's Hall sends its colorful horse-drawn wagon into town to pick up clientele several evenings each week, only to return them after a night of gaming and drinking. Subsequent owners added more attractions to Fortune's Hall, including a theater offering stage plays and musical numbers. The current owners, Cynsa and Palben Carrister, grew up in Willowside and take pride in the hall's racy past.

TOWER OF EMPTY STONES

This mudbrick aeon tower is nearly as old as the Isle of Kortos itself. The Circle of Stones removed the *aeon orb* shining from its top a decade ago, but a splinter group of nature priests that broke away from the Circle of Stones, called the Empty Stones, still resides there. The Tower has a mystical and dangerous reputation, so residents of Willowside stay far away from it. Most residents know how to get there, but none know it's currently occupied.

WILLOWSIDE PIER

The ancient, often-repaired pier a mile north of Willowside serves a critical function, as the Welt has devastated most other avenues of travel and food production. Dockmaster Arglynn Pranson keeps the pier running smoothly.



GLUTTONDARK

The layers of the Abyss are myriad and terrible, each a unique nightmare of destruction, pain, and survival. Despite their ever-shifting geographies and monstrous inhabitants, many of these realms are relatively well studied, such as Lamashtu's Kurnugia and Pazuzu's High M'Vania, and some—such as Noctacula's now-abandoned Midnight Isles—are relatively cosmopolitan and perhaps even welcoming for some, despite their horror. However, mortals should not assume the less-explored layers are any less terrible or less a threat to the Material Plane. True danger festers when the door to it has been left closed for too long, and Zevgavizeb's realm of Gluttondark is a potent example of this axiom.

In the minds of Zevgavizeb's faithful xulgaths, Gluttondark is a paradox: it is both the primeval realm of their patron where those who obey will exist in glory after death, and also a place of darkness and horror made manifest in their nightmares, where the unworthy and weak will be dragged to be devoured by their god. Xulgath songs and myths about Gluttondark are informed not only by their holy texts and priests' communions with Zevgavizeb, but also by the dreams that fill worshippers' sleeping minds during sporadic ravenings—the periods when Zevgavizeb awakens in Gluttondark and indulges his rage and hunger. During these periods, the demon lord sends psychic shock waves throughout the multiverse, inspiring Zevgavizeb's devotees on the Material Plane to indulge in senseless bloodshed, indiscriminate cannibalism, and internecine warfare in the name of the Lord of Reptiles. Meanwhile, many of Zevgavizeb's most faithful travel to their master's realm through their own powerful magic, via portals revealed in their dreams, or trapped between the claws of merciless demonic kidnappers. These select visitors to Gluttondark feast and engage in sacrifice on a gargantuan scale, always under the eyes of their master, and the few who return from their journey are forever changed, their accounts garbled and nonsensical.

Because its features are so alien and mind-altering, Gluttondark defies conventional means of exploration and documentation. The denizens are ravenous and xenophobic, the hazards profound and numerous, and portals to and from the realm are comparatively rare. Despite these obstacles, a few interplanar chroniclers have visited Gluttondark and returned mostly unscathed, though their accounts are decidedly difficult to obtain. These include Tabris the Chronicler's *Book of the Damned*, the un-redacted *Riftwarden Chronicles: Abyssal Realms Vol. 9*, the Blackfire Adepts' *Dreams of the Depths*, and the xulgath holy text *Screams of the Verdant Moon*.

Drusilla of Gremory, a high priestess of Trelmarixian who has explored much of the Abyss by infecting proxies with a sliver of her consciousness, cautions in her writings: "Not every would-be explorer of Gluttondark has the sense or the means necessary to explore the realm. For mortals especially, the excursion is decidedly one way and terribly brief." The account of a Taldan knight, Alexis Corcondonir, supports Drusilla's claim. Sir Alexis was the lone survivor of an adventuring party that descended into Gluttondark; upon reemerging from the Abyss, he subsequently grew fiendish features and developed a taste for living flesh. Three years later, the knight was executed in Oppara after committing a string of brutal, cannibalistic murders. During his trial, his jailors reported that he babbled in his sleep, whispering in fear about "the beast of Gluttondark." Similarly, a ganzi Riftwarden adventurer and sorcerer named Vestrivinia Kalithar vanished during assignment in the Abyss and reemerged three centuries later. Finding the Material Plane too alien for her warped sensibilities, Vestrivinia relocated to Galisemni in the Maelstrom and retired from public life, so shaken by her experience that she considered penning her name upon the city's memory-erasing Lethe Wall. She remains in Galisemni in relative seclusion and rarely speaks of the experience; when she does, her descriptions consist primarily of guttural utterances and incomplete thoughts.

Cavern-Worlds of Gluttondark

Gluttondark is among the deepest and oldest of the cataloged Abyssal layers. The realm is made up of at least 19 major caverns, though divinations hint that up to double this number exist—some intentionally sealed off, others simply unexplored, and still others seemingly impossible to reach by traditional means of planar travel. Some are the size of continents and others the size of planets. They all are roughly spherical in shape, and each has a burning, artificial sun at its heart. Each sun rotates on its own unique cycle, resulting in vastly different environments across the cavern-worlds. Gravity within each cavern pulls objects away from the sun in the cavern's center, so residents dwell on the interior surface of these hollow worlds. Some have skies reminiscent of the Material Plane, but others are far more alien—at least two caverns are filled with oceans that filter the harsh light of their suns. Time is relative to each cavern; a carnivorous flower in one realm might take millennia to bloom from the vantage of an adjacent cavern, and entire empires might rise and fall before the end of a single day in yet another cavern-world. Travel between accessible caverns is restricted to a handful of tunnels and portals connecting the worlds.

Each of Gluttondark's cavern-worlds hosts a broad spectrum of creatures, many of them the petitioners, demons, and half-fiend

or demon-touched mortals that make up Zevgavizeb's congregation. Throughout the cavern-worlds, every drop of spilled blood and every scream of rage is given in glory to Zevgavizeb, and he in turn culls the weak and empowers the survivors in an ongoing sequence of progressive transformation—a process far more efficient than natural evolution, directed as it is by the malignant hand of an unpredictable demigod. At the end of these violent periods of slaughter and enhancement—the so-called ravenings described in xulgath holy texts—Zevgavizeb himself personally descends into one of the cavern-worlds and devours its inhabitants. The Lord of Reptiles then ignites the cavern's central star, causing it to explode and reducing every living thing inside to ash. In time, these decimated worlds flourish with yet another generation of corrupt, fiendish life, only to be destroyed again by their ruler. With each new cycle of Zevgavizeb's ravenous hunger and the selective destruction of his realm, the demon lord grows stronger and his inscrutable agenda advances one earthshaking step at a time.

The following pages detail but a few of Gluttondark's terrible cavern-worlds, based on the accounts of the handful of powerful explorers who managed to return from the nightmarish realms with their psyches mostly intact. For more information on Zevgavizeb himself, see the article in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #153: Life's Long Shadows*.

XULGAVOOR

One of the largest of Gluttondark's cavern-worlds, Xulgavoor epitomizes the common xulgath conception of Gluttondark as a whole—an endless underground wilderness where only the strongest survive for long. This hollow world contains a brilliant yellow pseudo-star that burns hot and bright over a vast jungle interlaced with several prominent and winding rivers. While the jungles of Xulgavoor run wild and dense, populated by dinosaurs and all manner of demon-touched terrestrial predators, the cavern-world's humanoid settlements are dominated by three powerful xulgath empires and the ruins of a fourth now-destroyed kingdom. The warring states' populations are functionally identical, neither fractured along ethnic lines nor driven into genocidal conflict by theological divisions. The rivals are differentiated only by the colors of their banners and war paints: the Clutch of Heart-In-Fangs in crimson, the Clutch of Razor-Claw in indigo, and the Clutch of Burning-Third-Eye in orange.

From the jungle floor, Xulgavoor's sun appears a faint, dusky red—the result of the native xulgaths' nearly continuous slash-and-burn campaigns. The deforestation results from the world's denizens' continual struggle to beat back the surrounding jungles so that the foliage doesn't choke their roads, snarl their armies' movements, and reclaim the xulgaths' massive and sprawling stone cities. From the ashes of burned jungles, the xulgaths extract all manner of demonic life, both fauna and flora, to fuel their violent aspirations. Dinosaurs are especially prized commodities, and xulgaths have domesticated (or at least magically yoked) a wide variety of them for use in constructing cities and fortifications or as beasts of war.

The Heart-In-Fangs clutch is led by the half-succubus xulgath sorcerer Xeverius Glaze-Eye, who is prone to possessing dinosaurs and leading suicidal charges into rival territory. The Clutch of Razor-Claw is ruled by the xilvirek (page 84) Corzof the Maimed, named for the absence of one of his arms, which he claims was devoured millennia ago by a great fiendish dragon elsewhere in the Abyss. Finally, the Clutch of Burning-Third-Eye is ostensibly ruled by a figure known simply as “the Feaster,” whose wishes are made known to the clutch by a group of three-eyed xulgath oracles, who are the only creatures allowed within the depths of the simmering volcano upon whose slopes the nation's capital city, Dusk-Mount, is built. The xulgaths of Burning-Third-Eye also presently control access to the only known natural portal leading out of Xulgavoor, a narrow aperture that is the holy grail each nation in the eons-long internecine conflict desperately desires.

GATHA'SHAL

The most diversely populated of Gluttondark's sub-worlds is a brackish, shallow ocean speckled with continent-sized swamps, salt marshes, and bogs. Gatha'shal's blazing white sun rarely penetrates the thick cloud cover that enshrouds the realm's interior surface, which is further insulated by thick forest canopies above the swamplands or dense aquatic vegetation in more inundated regions.

The seas are shallow and choked with thick layers of plants adapted to the salty brine. Travel is slow and treacherous through Gatha'shal; seemingly stable layers of silt are prone to sudden collapse, plunging walkers into the watery depths, and entangling vegetation

makes travel by boat all but impossible. The waters are hunted by giant demonic crocodiles, an entire ecology of unique dinosaur species, and primordial, naturally armored bull sharks that plague the waters' deepest reaches. Further compounding these dangers is the prevalence of an intelligent species of viper vine known to the layer's natives as “boggard's tangle,” as well as a species of bottom-dwelling isopods called aukashungi, which occasionally rush onto land from the depths like benthic scavengers gone rabid in their own version of a ravening.

In spite of the tremendous natural hazards and native predators, Gatha'shal swarms with intelligent creatures, including amphibious xulgaths, boggards, lizardfolk, and saurians—both mortal and petitioners—as well as xilvireks and other demons. Massive population centers rise up from the swamps and on islands in the shallow seas; the latter are mostly artificial, made from layers of corpses deposited into the waters.

In stark contrast to the majority of Gluttondark's cavern-worlds, Gatha'shal is largely free of the perpetual self-destructive warfare that infects the others. This is because a century ago, a massive interplanar rift opened above one of Gatha'shal's oceans, linking it directly with a world on the Material Plane. Interpreting this as an event of divine providence, the residents of the cavern-world united in an effort to swarm through the portal to ravage and conquer, led by an ancient half-balor xulgath deepmouth named Veleshavoth Cinderstench. From the Material Plane, the forces of Gatha'shal dragged back millions of enslaved mortals to serve as both sacrifices and feedstock.

The world's capital, Azdrevendis, is a landmark to this brutal alliance, situated near the still-active planar rift, which is 10 miles long and fills the city streets and surrounding swamplands with a dull, iridescent glow. Enriched by conquest, the city has swollen to triple its original size, with an influx of demons and demonic xulgaths marching to and from the rift alongside countless mortal prisoners. Most of these enslaved mortals are exported to Gluttondark's central cavern-world, Zevgessos, for sacrifice to Zevgavizeb; a few others are sacrificed in Azdrevendis atop a thousand-foot-tall pyramidal temple carved from one solid piece of obsidian. Where the precious obsidian came from in this waterlogged realm is known only to the temple's keepers, the mysterious Seers of the Black Stone.

“A deliberate, obfuscatory haze hangs over Gluttondark like a shroud, feeding a surface knowledge of the layer's interior but hiding its most nefarious aspects. It takes profound effort to stay the desire to study the properties of its noxious atmosphere—or the temptation to make a personal visit. I leave the latter to more reckless persons.”

—Astrid Noxamilla,
Riftwarden, Guildmaster of the
Archivist's Guild in Galisemni

UROTHESS

The cavern-world of Urothess is a land filled with savannas of tall, razor-sharp purple and white grasses populated by countless packs of demonic raptors and other small dinosaurs. Rocky red mesas with vertical cliffs break up the flat landscape and can be seen from miles around. Flight is the main method to avoid the dangers of the predator-plagued grasslands, though the skies are likewise filled with flocks of carnivorous fiends. The seasoned extraplanar explorer (and itinerant drinker) Il'setsya Wyrmtouched of Galisemni offers some travel advice, as was recently overheard in the taproom of Jensintantan Brews and More: "Teleportation is useful, invisibility even more so. But unless you have a *ring of feather fall*, I'd strongly advise skipping a visit to Urothess altogether."

The skies and mesas are ruled by Yoma Whipwind, a gargantuan vavakia—a demon with the lower body of a dinosaur, a humanoid torso, and massive, draconic wings—with avian features and a hypnotic, mind-altering stench. Her rule extends across the mesa-top cities and the realm's population of xilvireks, but not the savannas. In fact, the demons, petitioners, and demonic xulgaths under Yoma's rule have all evolved wings or are otherwise capable of magical flight.

The sky-scraping mesas are not Urothess's only topographical irregularities. Great and seemingly bottomless chasms crisscross the savannas and are the epicenters of frequent world-shaking earthquakes. On occasion, these chasms also disgorge tides of warped and twisted monstrosities only vaguely recognizable as qliploth. Along with swarms of vermicular nyogoth and serpentine gorgoros, the chasms will even belch forth the occasional elephantine cataboligne, heavily mutated and sickly. The qliploth climb up the cliffsides and attack the mesa-cities to the exclusion of all else, unrelenting in their destruction. The origins of these qliploth and the reason for their appearance remains a mystery. Astrid Noxamilla posits in her journals that the Urothess swarms may be possible remnants of the primeval wars between demons and qliploth: "[The qliploth's] frequent recurrence suggests either a connection to an adjacent qliploth-held Abyssal layer, Yhidothrus's Spiral Path, or a sealed cavern-world populated solely by their kind. Further Riftwarden excursions are needed to validate any of these hypotheses."

VORAT'KUL

Gluttdondark's smallest explored domain is a windswept wasteland of multicolored sandstone hoodoos and rocky badlands, all situated beneath a flickering, ruddy central star that casts deep purple shadows across the land. Despite the resourcefulness of the demonic xulgaths who dwell here, Vorat'kul's long nighttime cycles—marked by a massive blue moon that eclipses the cavern's sun at regular intervals—preclude the residents from conquering much territory. During these months-long

times of darkness, xulgath enclaves descend into panic and horror as flocks of qurashith (page 82) emerge to feast on anything they can find. During the daylight months, the qurashith slumber in the dark, hidden crevasses of the realm's labyrinthine karsts and winding cliffsides, making it all but impossible for the xulgaths to root out their predators before the next nightfall. The qurashith's cyclical feasts produce a sporadic carpet of bones and half-digested soul-stuff strewn about the cavern-world's meandering chasms, above which Vorat'kul's residents dwell within hidden and heavily fortified cliffside keeps and in cities carved deep into the rock.

"Gluttdondark? Of course I've been there! I rather poignantly recall that the flora is toxic to most non-demons, with a rage-inducing, hallucinogenic quality when tinctured or smoked. I should state that the same effect is found in the liquid quintessence of the Scarlet Ragewaters. Speaking of which—if you're headed that way, maybe you could bring back some boggard's tangle for a friend in need?"

—Il'setsya Wyrmtouched, arcanist and planar adventurer

Amid the desolate and deadly wastes of Vorat'kul lies the Whispering Hollow, a massive fossilized skull of a titanic and nameless qliploth or qliploth lord, and the empty, hollow impression of its squid-scorpion-sponge body left absent within the surrounding sandstone matrix. The xulgaths view this site as a monument to Zevgavizeb's power, believing that it represents a molt stage of their master's transition from qliploth lord to demon lord. Thus, despite the dangers of traveling in the open in Vorat'kul, the Whispering Hollow attracts devout xulgath pilgrims from adjacent cavern-worlds eager to worship there while their master yet sleeps. Drusilla of Gremory has witnessed these pilgrimages firsthand, as detailed in one of her innumerable travel journals: "The xulgath worship, but from afar, never physically nearing the Hollow, but certainly close enough to experience the irrational nightmares that its aura inspires. Within a mile of its periphery, the skull emits a wailing, psionic echo, not of triumph, but of fear and betrayal. Within a hundred yards, the screams are lethal by implosion of the cranium and destruction of the soul. The interior of the Whispering Hollow remains a profound and deadly mystery, one of many within Gluttdondark's depths."

ZEVGESSOS

Every cavern-world in Gluttondark connects directly to Zevgessos, the Land of the Verdant Moon. As befits the home realm of the master of Gluttondark, Zevgessos dwarfs all the other cavern-worlds in size. No sun dots the center of the cavern-world; instead, a massive, flickering moon hangs in the sky, forever full and somehow emitting a faint light all its own. On the surface of this moon, a lush jungle tinges the moonlight a pale green, a visual cue that compliments the baleful, burning radiation that emanates from the orb's core. This radiation suffuses Zevgessos and seeps into the cavern-worlds around it, leeching through the stone itself. Curiously, while natural darkvision would normally show Zevgessos only in shades of black and white, some property of the radiation causes it to be perceived in color—specifically a nauseating shade of green that inspired the name of Zevgavizeb's original holy text, *Screams of the Verdant Moon*.

So overwhelming is the radiation that permeates this cavern-world that Zevgessos harbors almost no permanent settlements; even its massive collection of demons, petitioners, and fiendish xulgaths are wholly transient populations. Moving in and out of Zevgavizeb's metaphorical throne room from their own cavern-worlds and other places beyond, visitors to Zevgessos come for one of only two possible reasons: to sacrifice or to be sacrificed. Beyond the gory altars to the Beast of Gluttondark, Zevgessos is a place awash in blood, terror, and the horrific detritus of eons of qliploth and demonic conflict—remains that reveal a rough timeline extending back to the days of Zevgavizeb's origins as a qliploth lord.

The Land of the Verdant Moon is subdivided more or less equally by a network of boiling, sorcerous “rivers” known as the Scarlet Ragewaters. These sanguine tributaries originate from the bases of monstrous, miles-high sacrificial platforms—urban hellscape in their own right—that serve as the ultimate destination of both visiting Zevgavizebian pilgrims and their countless, unfortunate mortal offerings. Sacrificial victims vary in origin: a mix of wartime prisoners from Zevgessos's satellite cavern-worlds, outsiders dragged into the domain from other Abyssal layers, and innocents from the Material Plane captured by devotees to the Lord of Reptiles. All are slaughtered by the thousand under the omnipresent and uncaring watch of Zevgavizeb.

Having visited and witnessed the slaughter during one of the ravennings, the blind saurian oracle and priest of Zevgavizeb, Aezhelsis Gloom-Eye, describes the experience in a picture of sound and smell that has made its way into various Zevgavizebian apocrypha:

The odor of blood is overwhelming, the metallic tang palpable on the tongue—each breath here is like sipping on a flowing wound. There is terror in the air, which plays like a master's hands upon the harp strings of the brain. There are screams, the sound of a blade on flesh or teeth on snapping vertebrae. And then there is silence, but only for a moment, before the next in line falls to sate great Zevgavizeb.

The seat of Zevgavizeb's power, the Verdant Moon, is almost entirely unexplored, as tidal waves of psionic agony assault the minds of any who approach the slumbering demon lord. Tabris the Chronicler provides the only details, cryptic as they are, of the Verdant Moon in his *Book of the Damned*: “Even here the Seven sing / echoes of chrysalis and cataclysm / promise and paradox.” Tabris indicates that the surface of the moon hides a hollow interior, and that the entire moon revolves around something known as the “Font of Corrosive Whispers,” a relic or location that predates the rest of Gluttondark and was claimed by Zevgavizeb during his existence as a qliploth lord. Tabris is evasive as to exactly what this “font” is, but the angel strongly suggests that it may have been responsible for Zevgavizeb's transition from qliploth to demon lord, and that it possibly empowers him and his designs even now, much to the lament of an ignorant cosmos.





ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

SIEGE OF THE DINOSAURS

Chapter 1:
Troubles in
Willowside

Chapter 2:
Shrine of the
Water Lizard

Chapter 3:
Breaking the
Siege

Willowside
Tzetteer

Gl...

Adventu
Toolbox

Animal Companions

Heroes who defeat the xulgaths in “Siege of Dinosaurs” find a variety of well-trained geckos, lizards, and pterosaurs ready to serve as loyal companions. While these companions are all uncommon, the heroes gain access to them by the end of the adventure.

CAVE GECKO (UNCOMMON)

Your companion is a sticky-footed lizard like a gecko or anole.

Size Small

Melee ♦ jaws (finesse), **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 6

Skill Stealth

Senses low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Support Benefit Your cave gecko helps you stay afoot, leaning into you and propping you up as you maneuver your opponent. Until the end of your next turn, as long as you are adjacent to your cave gecko, if you attempt to Disarm, Shove, or Trip an opponent and roll a critical failure, you get a failure instead.

Advanced Maneuver Tongue Pull

TONGUE PULL ♦

ATTACK

The cave gecko snaps out its tongue, attempting to pull a foe within 10 feet toward it. The gecko attempts an Athletics check against the foe's Fortitude DC. On a success, the cave gecko pulls the foe next to it. This movement is forced movement. On a critical success, the foe is also grabbed until the beginning of your next turn.

MONITOR LIZARD (UNCOMMON)

Your companion is a stocky-limbed lizard with a long, almost serpentine body.

Size Medium

Melee ♦ jaws, **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Str +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 8

Skill Survival

Senses low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Speed 30 feet

Special mount

Support Benefit The monitor lizard distracts an adjacent opponent with snapping jaws and rapid movements. Until the start of your next turn, if your Strike damages a foe, any time



the foe attempts an action with the manipulate trait until the end of your next turn, it must attempt a DC 5 flat check. On a failure, the action is disrupted.

Advanced Maneuver Lurching Rush

LURCHING RUSH ◆◆

The monitor lizard Strides and then makes a jaws Strike. If it moved at least 20 feet away from its starting position, it gains a +2 circumstance bonus to this attack roll.

CAVE PTEROSAUR (UNCOMMON)

Your companion is a flying prehistoric creature, such as a dimorphodon or pterodactyl, that has adapted to life in the cavern vaults beneath the ground.

Size Small

Melee ◆ beak (finesse), **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Melee ◆ talon (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d4 slashing
Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 4

Skill Thievery (Palm an Object or Steal only)

Senses darkvision

Speed 10 feet, fly 60 feet

Support Benefit Your pterosaur expands its wings and makes distracting flapping motions. Any creature that would gain lesser cover from the pterosaur gains standard cover instead.

Advanced Maneuver Pterosaur Swoop

PTEROSAUR SWOOP ◆◆

The pterosaur Flies up to its Speed and makes one beak Strike at any point during that movement.

Spells

BLOOD FEAST

SPELL 5

UNCOMMON NECROMANCY

Traditions arcane, divine, occult

Cast ◆◆ somatic, verbal

Range touch; **Target** 1 creature

Your head splits vertically into an enormous maw, which feasts upon the target's blood, dealing 12d6 piercing damage, depending on your spell attack roll. After the spell, your head sews back together as if it had never split apart. You gain temporary Hit Points for 1 minute equal to half the piercing damage the target takes.

If you are a gug, increase the piercing damage by 2d6 and increase the persistent bleed damage you deal on a critical hit by 1d8. This spell doesn't alter a gug's appearance.

Critical Success The creature takes double damage and 1d8 persistent bleed damage.

Success The creature takes full damage.

Failure You miss and the creature takes no damage.

Heightened (+1) The piercing damage increases by 2d6, and the persistent bleed damage on a critical increases by 1.

ENTRANCING EYES

SPELL 7

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT MENTAL VISUAL

Traditions arcane

Cast ◆◆ somatic, verbal

Area 30-foot emanation centered on you

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

Your eyes glow with an entrancing radiance that captivates those who meet your gaze. Any creature that ends its turn within the emanation must attempt a Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and becomes immune to this particular casting of the spell.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure Until the end of its next turn, the target is stupefied 2 and fascinated.

Critical Failure Until the end of its next turn, the target is stupefied 4, fascinated, and can't take reactions. In addition, all creatures and objects other than you are concealed from the target.

During any round you Sustain the Spell, you can use a single action, which has the manipulate trait, to focus your *entrancing eyes* on a single creature you can see within 30 feet. This creature must immediately make a Will save against the spell as if it were ending its turn in the emanation. If the creature was already fascinated by your *entrancing eyes* before its save, a failed save causes it to be paralyzed for 1 round. You can't use this action to focus on the same creature more than once per round.

NECROTIC RADIATION SPELL 4

UNCOMMON NECROMANCY NEGATIVE

Traditions arcane, divine, occult

Cast ◆◆ material, somatic

Range touch; **Target** one object or one 10-foot-square area

Duration 24 hours

You imbue the touched object or space with slow-acting necrotic radiation. If you cast the spell on an object, any creature ending its turn holding or carrying the object takes 2d6 negative damage. If you cast the spell on an area, any creature ending its turn in the area takes 2d6 negative damage. You can attempt to use this spell on an attended object by touching the object. If you do, the creature attempts a Reflex save to reduce the effect.

Critical Success The object is unaffected.

Success The creature pulls the object away quickly. The spell only lasts 1 minute.

Failure The creature manages to slightly protect the object. The spell lasts 10 minutes.

Critical Failure The spell lasts the full 24 hours.

Heightened (+2) Increase the radiation's negative damage by 1d6.

STATUETTE RITUAL 6

RARE POLYMORPH TRANSMUTATION

Cast 1 hour; **Secondary Casters** 2

Primary Check Arcana (expert); **Secondary Checks** Crafting, Occultism

Range 10 feet; **Target** 1 freestanding, non-magical object no larger than 3,000 cubic feet (the size of a Huge creature)

This ritual is a variant of the *shrink item* spell that allows



for the transformation of significantly larger items. You transform the object into a tiny statuette of itself that is 1/8 Bulk. The ritual does not shrink any creatures inside or on top of the item when it is transformed. The item remains in statuette form until the ritual's duration expires or until a creature places it on a stable surface and uses a 10-minute activity to Interact with the item to enlarge it. When restored to its normal size, the object simply pushes other creatures and objects aside or harmlessly contains them, as a magic item with the structure trait (Core Rulebook 596).

Your Arcana check determines how long the object remains in statuette form.

Critical Success The object remains a statuette for 1 week.

Success The object remains a statuette for 1 day.

Failure You fail to shrink the object.

Critical Failure You fail to shrink the object, and the highest-level item you carry of light Bulk or more

shrinks to a tiny, unusable figurine of itself, weighing negligible bulk, for 1 week.

Magic Items

ANKYLOSTAR ITEM 13

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 2,800 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This hefty spiked club is made from the fossilized tail-club of a young ankylosaurus. It can be wielded as a +2 *greater striking morningstar*.

Activate ◆ command; **Effect** The *ankylostar* grows and transforms into a +2 *greater striking greatclub*, but it retains the versatile (piercing) trait of a morningstar. While in this form, the *ankylostar* has Bulk 2 and requires two hands to wield. It can be returned to its morningstar form with another 1-action command.

Activate ◆◆ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** The *ankylostar* is in its greatclub form; **Effect** The *ankylostar's* length extends as you swing the club in a wide arc. You Strike up to three creatures in a 15-foot cone; this counts as one attack for the purpose of calculating your multiple attack penalty. Alternatively, you Shove up to three creatures in a 15-foot cone, rolling a separate Athletics check for each creature.


JAWBREAKER SHIELD ITEM 12

UNCOMMON ABJURATION MAGICAL

Price 1,650 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This heavy bone shield is composed of a massive plate of dinosaur bone with jagged, tooth-like ridges ringing its edge. It has Hardness 12, HP 48, and BT 24. The ridges are unremovable +1 *striking shield spikes* that deal slashing damage instead of piercing damage. While holding the *jawbreaker shield*, you gain a +3 item bonus to your Reflex DC to resist Swallow Whole attacks.

Activate  **Interact**; **Trigger** A creature attacks you with a jaws or fangs Strike or similar Strike using its mouth; **Effect** You make a shield bash Strike as a reaction against the attacker. If the shield bash hits, the target takes damage and must attempt a DC 31 Fortitude saving throw. The effects of the saving throw are determined after the effects of the triggering Strike are resolved.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure You wound the target's mouth. It takes 1d6 persistent bleed damage and takes a -2 status penalty to attack and damage rolls with jaws, fangs, or similar Strikes for 24 hours.

Critical Failure You break the target's jaw. As failure, and the creature can't make Strikes using its mouth for 1 minute. At the end of its turn, it can attempt a Fortitude save to regain the ability to make Strikes using its mouth.




NOXIOUS JERKIN ITEM 13

RARE EVOCATION MAGICAL

Price 2,800 gp

Usage worn; Bulk L

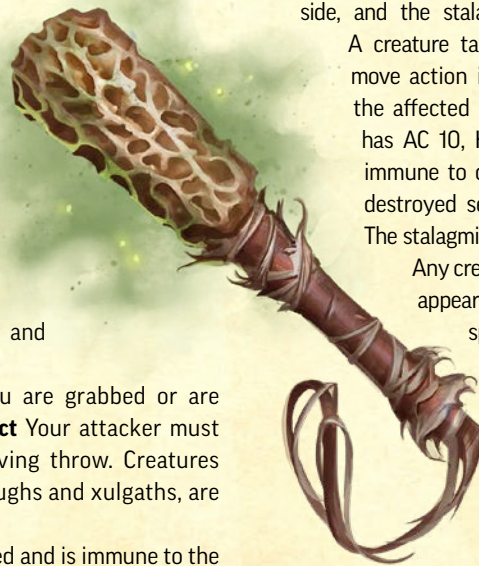
This +2 *resilient padded armor* is woven from many strands of gut cord strung with dried organs and preserved xulgath scent glands. When worn, it infuses your body with a ghastly and nauseating flavor.

Activate  **envision**; **Trigger** You are grabbed or are hit by an unarmed attack; **Effect** Your attacker must attempt a DC 28 Fortitude saving throw. Creatures with a stench aura, such as otyughs and xulgaths, are immune to this effect.

Success The creature is unaffected and is immune to the effects of the *noxious jerkin* for 1 minute.

Failure The creature is sickened 1.

Critical Failure The creature is sickened 1 and is slowed 1 for 1 round.




SPORE SAP

UNCOMMON EVOCATION FUNGUS MAGICAL

Price 1,250 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

This flexible +2 *striking sap* is crafted from the stalks of cave fungi and bound around a mesh of spore-infused gills. Demon-worshipping xulgaths use *spore saps* to capture spellcasters alive for later sacrifice.

Activate  **Interact** (poison); **Frequency** three times per day; **Trigger** You successfully Strike a creature with the *spore sap*; **Effect** The *spore sap* releases a puff of stupefying fungal spores. The target must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or become stupefied 1 for 1 minute (stupefied 2 on a critical failure).


STONERAISER JAVELIN

UNCOMMON CONJURATION EARTH MAGICAL

Price 1,200 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

This stone-headed +2 *striking returning javelin* draws forth the power of the earth itself to strike at enemies.

Activate  **Interact**; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You hurl the *stoneraiser javelin* at an unoccupied space within 30 feet. The javelin's power flows into the ground, which erupts in a 5-foot-radius burst of razor-sharp stalagmites. The stalagmites are 10 feet tall. Everything on each side of the stalagmites has cover from creatures on the opposite side, and the stalagmites' spaces are difficult terrain.

A creature takes 4d4 piercing damage for every move action it takes that enters at least one of the affected spaces. Each 5-foot-by-5-foot section has AC 10, Hardness 14, and 30 Hit Points. It's immune to critical hits and precision damage. A destroyed section can be moved through freely. The stalagmites crumble to dust after 1 minute.

Any creature in the area when the stalagmites appear is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space of its choice; this movement is forced movement. Pushed creatures must attempt a DC 28 Reflex saving throw or take 4d4 piercing damage.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is knocked prone.

Aukashungi

These massive isopods are native to the Abyssal realm of Gluttondark, in the acidic oceans of the realm's many cavern-worlds. Aukashungis are sometimes summoned to the Material Plane by Zevgavizeb-worshipping cultists, who favor aukashungis for their mindless obedience and sheer destructive potential.

GIANT AUKASHUNGI

The strongest individual in an aukashungi swarm (page 49) eventually grows to monstrous proportions.

GIANT AUKASHUNGI

CREATURE 14

UNCOMMON CE HUGE ABERRATION AMPHIBIOUS

Perception +24; greater darkvision

Skills Athletics +29

Str +7, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -2

AC 36; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +25, **Will** +21

HP 300; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10, piercing 15, slashing 15

Flippable When flipped on its back, a giant aukashungi can't move and its soft underbelly becomes exposed. Whenever a creature critically succeeds at a melee attack roll to Strike a giant aukashungi, the attacking creature can forgo the bonus damage to flip over the giant aukashungi (all other critical hit effects apply normally, such as critical specialization effects). While flipped over, the giant aukashungi can't use reactions, can't Stride or Strike, takes a -2 circumstance penalty to AC and saving throws, loses its resistances, and gains weakness 10 to physical damage. The aukashungi can right itself by using the Roll Up activity and then using an action to unroll.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 25 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +29 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+13 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee **◆** horn +27 (deadly 2d8, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+13 piercing

Acidic Effluence **◆◆** (acid) The giant aukashungi releases an acidic gas from its ventral glands in a 30-foot burst. Each creature that starts its turn in the area takes 10d8 acid damage plus 2d8 persistent acid damage (DC 32 basic Fortitude save). The gas moves 10 feet away from the giant aukashungi each round and lasts for 1 minute. The giant aukashungi can't use Acidic Effluence again for 1 minute.

Roll Up **◆◆** The aukashungi protects its soft underbelly by rolling into a tight ball. The aukashungi gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC while Rolled Up, but it cannot Stride or Strike, and it rolls downhill if on a slope. If the aukashungi is grappling a creature when it Rolls Up, that creature must succeed at a DC 35 Fortitude save or become Swallowed Whole. The aukashungi can unroll with a single action (this action has the move trait).

Swallow Whole **◆** (attack) Large, 15d6+6 bludgeoning, Rupture 27



CARCASS FULL OF TREASURE

Aukashungis can't digest non-organic materials, which gradually accumulate in the first of their three stomachs. Giant aukashungis that have had long, successful lives hunting prey often bulge with the spoils of their victims, and those swallowed by the creatures can sometimes cut themselves free with a weapon discovered in the monster's gut.





STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Brughadatches of all life stages tend to cohabitate, since their abilities naturally synergize and tip the odds of survival in their favor. A single brughadatch elder—known as a doblagub—leads a clan, while midlife brughadatches serve as scouts, hunters, and laborers. Gahlepod dwell in large, stagnant ponds and bogs around the brughadatches' holdings, so they are often the first to interact with creatures that carelessly wander into their domain. Adventurers who make it past these bogs often fail to realize the connection between the gahlepod and the amphibious tricksters further on in the swamp until they encounter the doblagub, who is now roused and commands their brethren in battle.

Brughadatch

Brughadatches are malevolent fey tricksters with distinct stages of life: they spawn from the First World's primal energies as esurient tadpoles, grow into humanoids capable of creating enticing illusions, then finally evolve into huge, slothful toads that warp their environs with mere thoughts.

GAHLEPOD (JUVENILE BRUGHADATCH)

The youngest brughadatches resemble overlarge tadpoles about 2 feet long.

GAHLEPOD

CREATURE 7

CE SMALL AMPHIBIOUS FEY

Perception +13; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Sylvan (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +17, Survival +14

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

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +19, **Will** +14

HP 140; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

Churning Frenzy **Trigger** The gahlepod becomes adjacent to at least one other gahlepod; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The gahlepod is spurred into a frenzy by the others. For the rest of the round, their jaws Strike deals 1d6 persistent bleed damage in addition to the listed damage.

Speed 10 feet, swim 35 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +17, **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing

BRUGHADATCH (MIDLIFE BRUGHADATCH)

The biggest difference between a gahlepod and a grown brughadatch isn't their humanoid appearance, but the powerful magic they gain as they mature.

BRUGHADATCH

CREATURE 10

CE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS FEY

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Athletics +19, Deception +22, Intimidation +22, Nature +22, Survival +20

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

AC 30; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +16, **Will** +20

HP 210; **Weaknesses** cold iron 10

Speed 25 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +21, **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing plus Grab

Melee **◆** claw +19 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+5 slashing

Primal Innate Spells DC 28, attack +22; **4th** *charm* (at will), *confusion*; **3rd** *enthrall* (x3); **2nd** *faerie fire*, *hideous laughter*; **1st** *fear* (at will); **Cantrips** (4th) *detect magic*, *produce flame*

Deceitful Feast (illusion) The brughadatch conjures a decadent, enticing feast void of nutritional substance. This conjuration takes 1 minute and lasts for 24 hours. For each item of illusory food a creature eats, it must attempt a DC 29 Will save.

Critical Success The creature sees through the illusion and becomes immune to the effects of Deceitful Feast for 24 hours.

Success The creature doesn't see through the illusion but is unaffected by the food.

Failure The creature takes a -1 circumstance penalty to Will saves against any of the brughadatch's spells or abilities. The penalty increases with each failed save, to a maximum of -5.

Critical Failure As failure, plus for 1 hour, the creature's attitude becomes helpful to the brughadatch, and the creature can't use hostile actions against them.

Psychic Sip ♦ **Requirements** Targets must have critically failed a save against a brughadatch's Deceitful Feast or *charm* innate spell; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The brughadatch feasts on the souls of the creatures they've tricked. They target up to five creatures within 30 feet and feast on their ambient brainpower, dealing 4d10 mental damage (DC 26 basic Will save) to each creature. Unless a target succeeds at the Will save, this damage does not end the *charm* effect or the effect of Deceitful Feast as a hostile action normally would.

DOBLAGUB (ELDER BRUGHADATCH)

Elder brughadatches command groups of fellow brughadatches, who placate the doblagub with fresh meals and trophies of the group's grisly catches.

DOBLAGUB

CREATURE 13

CE LARGE AMPHIBIOUS FEY

Perception +26; darkvision, *true seeing*

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Athletics +25, Deception +28, Intimidation +28, Nature +26, Survival +24

Str +8, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +7

AC 35; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +18, **Will** +26

HP 250; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15

Etheric Fibers (aura, enchantment, mental) 40 feet. **Requirements** A doblagub has bonded with their current location by being called there via a ritual or by remaining in one place for 10 years; **Effect** The doblagub grows etheric fibers that they can use to psychically keep prey close. Any time a creature tries to move within this aura, it must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or the movement fails and the action is wasted.

Speed 10 feet, swim 10 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +27 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d8+14 bludgeoning plus Grab

Melee ♦ tongue +27 (reach 15 feet), **Effect** Grab and Pull 10 feet

Primal Innate Spells DC 33, attack +27; **6th** *crushing despair*, *dominate*; **5th** *confusion*, *enthrall* (×2), *illusory scene* (at will), *wall of stone*; **4th** *charm* (at will), *lightning bolt* (×2), *paralyze* (×3); **3rd** *faerie fire* (×2), *fear* (at will), *hideous laughter*; **Cantrips (6th)** *detect magic*, *produce flame*; **Constant (6th)** *true seeing*

Etheric Tug ♦ **Requirements**

The doblagub's etheric fibers aura is active; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** All non-brughadatch creatures within the aura must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save or be pulled 10 feet toward the doblagub.

Magical Tongue A doblagub can use their tongue to make spell attacks with spells that have a range of touch.

Swallow Whole ♦

(attack) Medium, 4d10+8 bludgeoning, Rupture 24



BRUGHADATCHES ON GOLARION

Brughadatches are commonly encountered in wetlands near interplanar portals to the First World, such as in the River Kingdoms, the Mushfens of Varisia, or the Swardlands on the Isle of Kortos. Since they prefer to feed on humans and other similar humanoids, brughadatches often congregate near remote bayou villages and boggy riverside towns, where they can lure in unsuspecting travelers with illusory food and drink. Many a unlucky traveler has fallen victim to the predations of a brughadatch clan after wandering into a spectacular (albeit illusory) banquet, only to realize the ploy too late.





BOONDOCKS KILLER

Among small villages where locals whisper stories of the faceless butcher, one can never be sure if the local fisher or trapper who returns from an unexpectedly long trip upriver is who they have always been, or if something far more sinister has returned in their stead.

Faceless Butcher

The deformed flesh on this humanoid horror's head bears grim holes where their eyes, nose, mouth, and ears should be, and little else. Stories of faceless butchers always center on the monstrous murderer's preferred weapon: a wicked and bloodstained meat cleaver, which the butcher uses to carve flesh from skull to add to their collection of stolen faces. Once they've taken a victim's face, the faceless butcher can wear it, transform into an exact replica of the deceased, and begin stalking their next victim.

FACELESS BUTCHER

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Common, one regional language (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +24, Deception +24, Intimidation +22, Stealth +24

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items bag of faces, cleaver

Suppressed Alignment When using their Change Shape ability, the faceless butcher loses their alignment and thus cannot be detected by spells such as *detect alignment*.

AC 31; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +22, **Will** +20

HP 175; **Resistances** bludgeoning 8

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 10 feet, DC 26. This aura is suppressed if the faceless butcher is using Change Shape.

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ cleaver +24 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 2d12+7 slashing

Melee ✦ fist +24 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 2d10+7 bludgeoning

Ranged ✦ cleaver +22 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+7 slashing

Change Shape ✦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) The faceless butcher can take on the exact form of any Small, Medium, or Large humanoid whose face they carry in their bag of faces, changing their shape and physical features to precisely match that of the victim whose face they wear. This doesn't change the butcher's Speed or attack or damage bonuses with their Strikes.

Remove Face ✦✦ (attack) **Requirements** The faceless butcher is within reach of a dying, immobilized, or unconscious creature; **Effect** The faceless butcher attempts a cleaver Strike or an Athletics check against the creature's Fortitude DC. On a success, the faceless butcher deals damage as if they had made a successful cleaver Strike against the creature and removes the creature's face. On a critical success, the damage doubles and the creature takes 4d6 persistent bleed damage. Once its face is removed, the creature takes a permanent -4 status penalty to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks. This penalty can be removed only if the victim recovers its face from the faceless butcher and has a *restoration* spell cast on it.

Sudden Slices ✦✦ **Requirements** The faceless butcher is undetected by their target; **Effect** The faceless butcher Strides once and makes two cleaver Strikes against the target. During the Stride, they gain a +10-foot circumstance bonus to their Speed.



Harrow Doll

Harrow dolls are unique constructs that can make predictions about the future. The more elite circuses and traveling shows frequently feature a harrow doll, and many use the doll's abilities to learn more about locals to better customize shows to their tastes—or to find easy marks for later cons. Upset patrons that try to harm a harrow doll or reclaim their payment quickly learn that the construct is more than capable of defending itself.

HARROW DOLL

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON N LARGE CONSTRUCT

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Fortune-Telling Lore +16

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

Items metal harrow deck

Uncanny Divination A harrow doll can cast *augury* as part of a harrow reading, which takes the usual 10 minutes. When casting *locate*, the harrow doll doesn't need to have previously observed a specific object to learn its direction, but instead can detail the direction only vaguely, using such phrases as "beside a weeping mound" or "beneath the lost sky." When the harrow doll casts *mind reading*, there is no effect if the target critically succeeds its save. Each time a harrow doll makes a harrow reading, it also changes which saving throw is affected by its fortune's favor ability.

AC 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +16, **Will** +17

HP 120; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 5 (except adamantite)

Fortune's Favor (fortune) Whenever the harrow doll attempts a specific type of saving throw, it rolls twice and takes the higher result. The type of saving throw is determined by the suit that featured most prominently in the doll's most recent harrow reading: Fortitude (Hammers or Shields), Reflex (Keys or Books), or Will (Stars or Crowns). If the suit of its latest harrow reading is unknown, roll 1d6 at the beginning of combat to randomly determine it.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ fist +17 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d12+6 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ✦ harrow card +18 (magical, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d8+6 slashing plus harrowing misfortune

Arcane Innate Spells DC 27; **3rd** *locate*, *mind reading*; **2nd** *augury* (at will)

Harrowing Misfortune (curse, misfortune) A creature struck by one of the harrow doll's cards must attempt a DC 25 Will save or be cursed with misfortune, which forces the creature to roll twice and take the lower result on its next roll of a specific type, determined by the card's suit (roll 1d6 to randomly determine the suit). A creature can be cursed with only one effect from harrowing misfortune at a time, with a new curse overriding any previous curse. The curse ends after 1 minute or after the specified roll is made, whichever comes first. The suits and their effects are: Hammers (melee attack roll), Keys (Reflex save), Shields (Fortitude save), Books (skill check), Stars (Will save), and Crowns (spell attack roll).



FORTUNE TELLING PRICES

A harrow doll's box container usually has a coin slot for customers to pay for divinations. The price for a harrow doll to cast *augury* is typically 1 sp. Harrow dolls can also cast *locate* for a price of 5 gp.





MANY-MINDED BEINGS

Despite having no organized civilization, qurashith flock and lair together and occasionally even hunt in packs, communicating horrifically through the compelled, agonized voices of the victims grafted onto their bodies.

Qurashith

Qurashith—or “gluttonwings” in the Common tongue—are fearsome, bat-like predators that haunt the upper reaches of Gluttondark’s cavern-worlds. These monstrosities are no mere beasts. A qurashith does not simply devour its victims; once it kills its prey, it physically subsumes the creature into its own body, metabolizing the prey’s spiritual essence.

Close inspection of a qurashith reveals that its body is an amalgamation of the fiend and its extraplanar and mortal victims, bound together by webs of demonic scar tissue and sticky acidic pus. While the individual personalities of a qurashith’s victims gradually metabolize and diffuse into its very substance over time, a particularly charismatic or magically powerful victim might exert some influence over the qurashith’s mind for a short time.

QURASHITH

CREATURE 17

RARE CE HUGE ABERRATION FIEND

Perception +33; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet, *true seeing*

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 120 feet, *tongues*

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +32, Deception +29, Stealth +32, Survival +28

Str +9, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** -1, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

AC 40; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +30, **Will** +28

HP 340; **Weaknesses** good 15, lawful 15; **Resistances** acid 15

Adhesive Body Any creature that Strikes the qurashith with a melee weapon must attempt a DC 37 Reflex save. On a failure, the creature is disarmed of its weapon, which becomes stuck to the qurashith’s body; if the Strike was an unarmed attack, the creature’s limb sticks to the qurashith’s body and the creature becomes immobilized. A creature must succeed at a DC 31 Athletics check to retrieve a stuck weapon. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 acid damage and the weapon remains stuck, and on a critical failure, the creature also becomes stuck to the qurashith and becomes immobilized. A stuck creature takes 2d6 acid damage each round it remains stuck to the qurashith and can use an Escape action to try to free itself from the monster (DC 31).

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 33

Speed 20 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +34 (chaotic, evil, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d12+17 piercing plus paralytic spittle

Melee ♦ claw +32 (agile, chaotic, evil, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 slashing

Ranged ♦ spittle +30 (range 60 feet), **Damage** 6d6 acid and paralytic saliva

Divine Innate Spells DC 35; **6th** *teleport* (at will, self only); **Constant (6th)** *true seeing*

Paralytic Saliva A creature that takes damage from a qurashith’s jaws or spittle must succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude save or be slowed 1 for 1d4 rounds (slowed 2 on a critical failure). If a creature is already slowed when it fails its save, it becomes paralyzed for 1 round.

Psychic Howl ♦♦ The qurashith unleashes a debilitating psionic scream. Creatures in a 60-foot cone must succeed at a DC 35 Will save or become stupefied 2 (stupefied 4 on a critical failure) for 1 minute. A creature that critically succeeds at its Will save is immune to the qurashith’s Psychic Howl for 24 hours. The qurashith can’t use Psychic Howl again for 1d4 rounds.

Rend ♦ claw



Tallow Ooze

Pale yellow and smelling of meat, this unnatural, globular monster is composed entirely of rendered animal fat. A tallow ooze typically results from magical mishaps during the creation of enchanted candles or soaps, or while rendering the fat of a magical beast, though occasionally spellcasters create these beings intentionally.

A tallow ooze hunts other creatures to subsume them into its own body and absorb their fat. Since tallow is solid at room temperature, tallow oozes must metabolize their own bodies to produce enough heat to remain gelatinous. A tallow ooze that cannot replenish itself with absorbed fat will either consume itself or solidify, though a tallow ooze exposed to too much heat might melt entirely.

TALLOW OOZE

CREATURE 11

N MEDIUM MINDLESS OOZE

Perception +14; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Athletics +23

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

Motion Sense A tallow ooze can sense nearby motion through vibration and air movement.

AC 19; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

HP 270; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, mental, piercing, precision, slashing, unconscious, visual; **Weaknesses** fire 10; **Resistances** cold 10

Congealed Whenever the tallow ooze takes fire damage, it becomes quickened for 1 round (it can only Stride or Strike with the extra action). Whenever the tallow ooze is dealt cold damage (even if that damage is prevented by its resistance), it becomes slowed 1 for 1 round and can't use its Engulf ability (but creatures already engulfed are still engulfed).

Greasy Seepage (aura) 10 feet. Any creature that starts its turn in or enters a square in the area must attempt a DC 30 Acrobatics check to Balance. A creature that takes a Step doesn't need to roll this check.

Speed 20 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee pseudopod +23, **Damage** 2d10+10 bludgeoning plus residual grease

Engulf DC 30, 4d10 bludgeoning,
Escape DC 26, Rupture 25

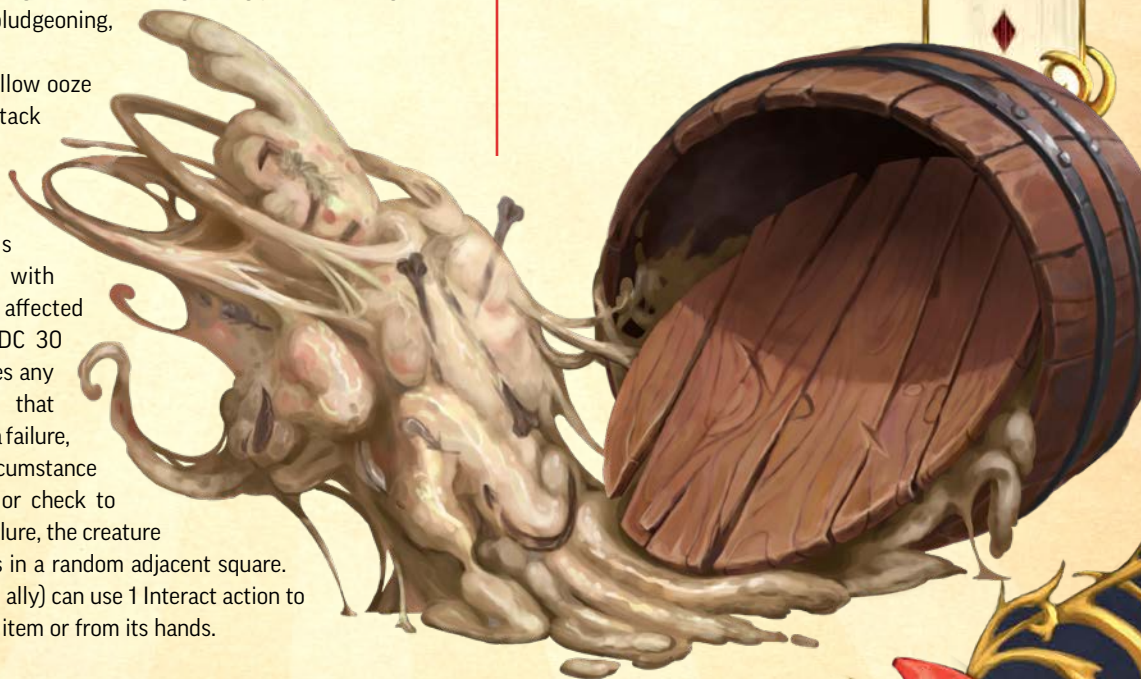
Residual Grease When the tallow ooze critically succeeds at an attack against a creature or a creature escapes from being engulfed by the ooze, that creature's hands and gear become slick with grease. For 1d4 rounds, the affected creature must attempt a DC 30 Reflex save whenever it uses any item (including weapons) that must be wielded or held. On a failure, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to any attack roll or check to use the item; on a critical failure, the creature drops the item, which lands in a random adjacent square. The creature (or an adjacent ally) can use 1 Interact action to wipe off the grease from an item or from its hands.



SAPONACEOUS TALLOW OOZE

Exposure to a sufficient quantity of alkali (such as from ash) may cause a chemical reaction in a tallow ooze, turning it into a mass of living soap. Such saponaceous tallow oozes leave residual glycerol in their wake instead of grease (though the effects are the same) and gain the following ability.

Soapy Effluence When a saponaceous tallow ooze is exposed to at least a gallon of water, takes damage from an ability with the water trait, or fails a saving throw against an effect with the water trait, it releases a cloud of bubbles that fills a 10-foot burst around the ooze's current space for 1 minute. Creatures within the area are dazzled.





XILVIREKS ON THE MATERIAL PLANE

Despite their origins within Gluttdark, xilvireks have been encountered with increasing frequency in the deepest depths of the Darklands, perhaps as a result of botched summonings by vulgath clerics of Zevgavizeb. Whether by chance or through the intent of their creator, xilvireks have begun to stretch their reach beyond the evolutionary nightmare of the Abyss.

Xilvirek

Xilvireks are the result of the strange evolution that takes place in Zevgavizeb's Abyssal realm. These fiends resemble their dread demon lord and claim to be living embodiments of the Lord of Reptiles's snapping jaws.

XILVIREK

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON CE LARGE FIEND

Perception +23; darkvision, psionic scent (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Abyssal

Skills Athletics +25, Intimidation +22, Stealth +23, Survival +25

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +0, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Psionic Scent A xilvirek can sense the presence of creatures with an Intelligence of at least -3. Creatures that have silenced their thoughts through magic or other means can potentially counteract this sense at the GM's discretion.

AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +21, **Will** +19

HP 215; **Weaknesses** good 10, lawful 10

Hypnotic Stench (aura, emotion, enchantment, incapacitation, mental) 30 feet. A creature that begins its turn in the area must succeed at a DC 32 Will save or become fascinated with the xilvirek. If the creature is already fascinated by the xilvirek and fails its save, the creature is compelled to approach the xilvirek and allow itself to be grabbed, which ends the fascination.

Attack of Opportunity

Speed 40 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ✦ jaws +25 (chaotic, evil, magical), **Damage** 3d10+13 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +27 (agile, chaotic, evil, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+13 slashing plus Grab

Melee ✦ tail +25 (chaotic, evil, magical, reach 15 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 3d6+13 bludgeoning plus Knockdown

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **6th** *teleport* (self only); **4th** *dimension door* (at will); **2nd** *darkness* (at will)

Disgorge Bile ✦✦ (acid, inhaled) The xilvirek retches a small pool of debilitating, acrid bile onto itself. All creatures within 30 feet take 4d6 acid damage as they inhale the bile's noxious fumes (DC 32 basic Fortitude save; on a failure, the creature is sickened 1, or sickened 2 on a critical failure). The xilvirek can't Disgorge Bile again for 1d4 rounds.

Feasting Tentacles The xilvirek has two tentacles on its back that it can use to suck the life from its prey. A creature that starts its turn grabbed by the xilvirek becomes drained 1, and the xilvirek regains 20 HP. The drained value increases by 1 on each subsequent round that the creature starts its turn grabbed, but the xilvirek doesn't regain additional HP from draining the same creature more than once per day.



Xulgath Gutrager

Xulgath gutragers exhibit more extreme developments along the same physiological path as their bilebearer cousins (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #151: The Show Must Go On*). They are stockier and faster, with necks and limbs corded with muscle. They are also denser, with multiple stomachs full of fluids even more caustic than those of the bilebearer. Like the bilebearer, gutragers lack the distinctive stench typical of most xulgaths.

A gutrager's torso conceals its most disturbing feature—a densely coiled esophagus. Pressurized bladders and a muscular throat allow the gutrager to propel its esophagus outward in an explosion of yellow flesh and acidic bile; caustic stomach acid coating the esophagus makes even brief physical contact with the organ dangerous. As a last resort, the gutrager can intentionally accelerate the corrosion in its esophagus, releasing vile acid in a burst that also ends its life.

XULGATH GUTRAGER

CREATURE 10

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

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

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -1

AC 28; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +22, **Will** +17

HP 190; **Resistances** acid 10

Caustic Fog (acid, aura) 10 feet.

Whenever a gutrager is within another xulgath's stench aura, a fog appears around the gutrager; creatures in the fog (including the gutrager) can see as normal, but they are concealed from creatures outside the fog. Non-xulgaths that begin their turn in the fog take 2d6 acid damage. Strong winds suppress this ability.

Self-Detonate ◆◆ (acid) **Requirements**

The gutrager has 45 or fewer HP;

Effect The gutrager compresses its gut and explodes in a burst of viscera, dying instantly and dealing 8d8 acid damage to creatures and unattended objects in a 20-foot emanation centered on the gutrager (DC 31 basic Reflex save).

Speed 40 feet

Melee ◆ jaws +21, **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus 2d6 acid

Melee ◆ claw +23 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

Ranged ◆◆ bile jet +23 (acid, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 4d8+7 acid

Corrosive Kiss ◆◆ (acid) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The gutrager propels its esophagus out of its body to deliver an acidic blow. It makes an unarmed Strike against a creature or unattended object within 30 feet with a +23 attack bonus. On a hit, the target takes 2d6+8 bludgeoning plus 4d6 acid damage. On a critical hit, the target also takes 2d6 persistent acid damage. The gutrager is clumsy 1 for 1 round as it re-coils its esophagus.



GUTRAGER ORIGINS

Gutragers have been part of xulgath society for millennia. One xulgath legend suggests that xulgaths developed the material-strengthening art of inflection in order to safeguard clutch walls from gutragers' powerful acid. Gutrager acid is also used to etch designs onto xulgath scales and, in difficult times, can be carefully used in place of fire to cook food.

Chapter 1:
Troubles in
Willowside

Chapter 2:
Shrine of the
Water Lizard

Chapter 3:
Breaking the
Siege

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HELG EATS-THE-EATERS

A crafty gug with a command of necromantic powers, Helg has turned the tables on the xulgath slavers and now indirectly commands their forces through the animated corpse of their murdered leader, Arskuva.

While most humans have difficulty telling one gug from another, Helg Eats-the-Eaters is fairly distinctive. She is slimmer than most of her kind, though just as tall. She always wears a large religious symbol of Bokrug around her neck, depicting a bearded lizard with a curled tail.

Helg's primary devotion in life is to serve Bokrug. She began dreaming of the Water Lizard as a whelp, and it took her years to understand the visions that she was receiving. She finally found a gug savant who could explain her visions to her and teach her more about Bokrug's faith, as well as certain necromantic magic. One night after the savant had died and left Helg on her own again, she began dreaming of an undersea cavern with a large and incredibly lifelike statue of her patron, which turned to look at her and beckoned. When she awoke, Helg knew that she had to find that statue, and she left her home in the Darklands. Through her ongoing dreams, she triangulated the location of the old and forgotten shrine to the caves beneath the town of Willowside. She felt compelled to take it to a deeper, safer place beneath the earth.

As Helg approached the shrine from her dreams, she noticed xulgath troops gathering nearby in the forest, near an old tower. Knowing that such creatures were rare on the surface, especially in such numbers, Helg investigated. The xulgaths' gug slaves proved to be Helg's easiest way into the camp: no one, not even the other browbeaten gugs, noticed or questioned an extra slave. While eavesdropping on the xulgaths' leader, Arskuva, Helg learned that the xulgaths weren't interested in Willowside at all, but in the aeon tower just outside of town. She decided to take matters into her own claws.

Helg murdered the unsuspecting Arskuva and animated her body, and now commands the xulgath army by proxy. Yet Helg understands that her surreptitious command is precarious—a dramatic change to the xulgaths' mission might raise suspicions.

Helg faces two obstacles in recovering the Bokrug statue and relocating it to someplace safer and deeper than its current shrine. First, although the townspeople

of Willowside are individually weak, even compared to a xulgath (much less a gug), surface-dwellers have a distressing tendency to defend one another and seek help from other communities. Helg needed to isolate Willowside, so she has slowly maneuvered the xulgaths into besieging the town. Bored with the dull work of camping near a sealed tower, the xulgaths are eager for action.

Second, Helg needs a way to transport the statue in secret, as the Zevgavizeb-worshipping xulgaths aren't likely to approve of a statue to another god in their midst. Helg hit upon the idea of a mobile siege tower, which could move in secret amid the protection of a xulgath army unlikely to question a construction useful in their assault on the aeon tower. Helg drafted the plans and had Arskuva present them. Fortunately, the xulgaths bought her ruse and now work diligently to complete the three-story siege engine.

When the tower is complete, Helg will put the rest of her plan into motion. She'll recommend testing the siege tower against Willowside, and in the confusion, she'll slip into the sea caves, shrink the statue to a manageable size with her *statuette* ritual, and hide it in the siege tower before it regains its normal mass. Arskuva will then receive further instructions to return to the Darklands with their siege tower (and, along with it, Helg's precious statue).

Helg generally hides in the shadows rather than confront her enemies directly, preferring deceit and subtlety even when directness might be more effective. Helg is thus happy using Arskuva to command the army rather than openly attempting to take control.

Campaign Role

The heroes might see Helg as merely another monster to overcome, but they can also negotiate with her. Helg's driving goal is to acquire the statue of Bokrug from the shrine. While she has no compunction about attacking Willowside, its destruction isn't necessary to her plans, so she's willing to call off the xulgath siege in exchange for the statue. She sees no useful purpose

in making an enemy of the heroes if she doesn't have to. Helg doesn't have a further role to play in this adventure path, but heroes who get into trouble in the Darklands in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #155: Lord of the Black Sands* might need to visit the closest thing to a friendly face they have in the region.

HELG EATS-THE-EATERS

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE CE LARGE ABERRATION

Female gug necromancer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 198)

Perception +26, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +26 (+30 to Squeeze), Arcana +29, Athletics +28, Deception +21, Occultism +27, Stealth +24, Survival +22

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +6, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items religious symbol of Bokrug, spellbook

AC 37; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +26

HP 275

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ✦ jaws +30 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d12+13 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +30 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+13 slashing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *horrid wilting* (×2), *maze*; **7th** *entrancing eyes* (page 74), *vampiric exsanguination*, *warp mind* (×2); **6th** *acid arrow*, *phantasmal calamity*, *purple worm sting*, *wall of force*; **5th** *blood feast* (page 74), *cloudkill*, *lightning bolt*, *prying eye*; **4th** *confusion*, *false life*, *freedom of movement*, *resilient sphere*; **3rd** *blindness*, *glyph of warding*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *grim tendrils*, *hideous laughter*, *see invisibility*; **1st** *fear* (×2), *mending*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (8th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *read aura*

Arcane Rituals DC 36; *create undead*, *inveigle*, *statuette* (page 75)

Wizard School Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 36; **8th** *call of the grave*, *life siphon*

Eerie Flexibility Despite her size, Helg's multiple joints allow her to fit through tight spaces as if she were a Medium creature. While Squeezing, she can move at her full Speed.

Enervating Tug ✦ (necromancy) **Frequency** once per turn; **Requirements** Helg's most recent action was to cast a non-cantrip necromancy spell; **Effect** Helg drains away the life force from a creature targeted by the spell, with a result depending on its Fortitude save (DC 36). This effect is magical and can be counteracted with *dispel magic* (Level 15, DC 36). This ability cannot affect a creature that critically succeeded at the spell's saving throw, if any.

Critical Success No effect.

Success Enfeebled 1 for 1 round.

Failure Fatigued.

Critical Failure Fatigued, and rest does not remove the creature's fatigued condition for 1 week.

Furious Claws ✦✦ Helg makes up to three claw Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks all count toward Helg's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after she makes all her attacks.

Rend ✦ claw



LEDORICK BANYAN

The handsome Ledorick Banyan leads the Banyan Boys and serves as Willowside's primary protector. Although beloved by his town, Ledorick's first priority is always his own ego, and the xulgath siege has put him in over his head.

A human man in his late twenties, Ledorick is tall, broad-shouldered, and incredibly handsome. His long, flowing brown hair and rakish grin form a striking impression of Willowside's primary protector. He has a habit of wearing his chain shirt unfastened to show off his muscles. He radiates health and vitality, in striking contrast to most other residents of Willowside, who have a gaunt appearance from insufficient food.

Ledorick Banyan has known his role to play in life almost from birth. The Banyan family has held the position of Willowside's protectors going back for generations. While early Banyans held titles like "sheriff," "sergeant," or "chief guard," the role has simply become known as "protector" in recent years. Ledorick is the oldest child of his generation, and when his mother retired from serving as protector, Ledorick happily took over. Along with his two younger brothers, Stirvyn and Tashlock, the trio is commonly known as "the Banyan Boys" around town.

Knowing that he would one day be called into service for the town, Ledorick trained hard from an early age and became comfortable with a variety of weapons. He showed a particular talent for the blade, and quickly established himself as a master swordsman, outpacing his instructors in the small town. Unfortunately, the combination of natural talent, trained skill, and a birthright position of authority combined to give Ledorick an insufferable ego. While he genuinely cares about protecting the town of Willowside, he talks about himself constantly and belittles others almost as often. Worse, he takes perceived insults to himself as seriously as attacks on the town, throwing people in cells overnight simply for doubting his ability, his dedication, or even his looks.

Ledorick loves to be the center of attention, and he takes umbrage with anyone else who spends time in the spotlight. This creates a natural rivalry with the Circus of Wayward Wonders that even the most understanding and openhanded intermediaries can't resolve. Ledorick therefore greets the heroes only with sarcasm and disdain, bragging about how he could do

half the acts better than the real circus does. Even so, he's quick to help the heroes if the town is at stake, though he is unlikely to let them forget his assistance.

Ledorick resents the Welt and its detrimental effects on Willowside, and he is bitter toward the residents who choose to simply leave town. This animosity primarily stems from the fact that there is a major threat to the town that he can't simply hit with his sword or send running with a few bold words.

Everyone in town knows of the iconic Banyan family longsword Ledorick carries in battle, but he secretly keeps a second family heirloom to himself: a *ring of sustenance*. This ring is why he's remained hale and strong even as most of the residents of the town slowly waste away.

Campaign Role

When Ledorick learns there might be resources available in the sea caves under the town, his braggadocio compels him to enter the caves with his brothers without much preparation. While the map from Mayor Vandy enables the Banyan Boys to bypass most of the cavern's dangers, they inadvertently trigger a collapse and Ledorick loses his family's sword in the rubble. Angry at this setback, he recklessly leads the Banyan Boys toward Bokrug's shrine without any caution, putting himself in danger from the dybbuk, Lyr't Cozurn, who still haunts the site. The dybbuk recognizes the descendants of Sheriff Banyan who killed him so many years ago and possesses Ledorick before Stirvyn or Tashlock even realize what's happened. Ledorick's critical failure against Lyr't's possession means the dybbuk is in complete control of Ledorick's body. By the time the PCs arrive in the caverns, the dybbuk is using Ledorick to manipulate the other Banyan Boys to find out what has happened with the town since his death and plot his revenge.

It's possible that Ledorick doesn't survive this adventure, as the dybbuk possessing his body doesn't hold back from using lethal force and doesn't much care if his vessel survives. The heroes may not realize

the possession or just might not be able to resist taking out their rival. If the heroes slay Ledorick but Tashlock or Stirvyn survives, one of them takes on the official role of town protector, and either or both develop a bitter hatred toward the heroes for killing their brother.

If Ledorick survives, he is substantially changed by the experience of being possessed. He deeply thanks the heroes for freeing him from the dybbuk's control, and pledges himself to help them. Even if the heroes don't end up on good terms with Ledorick, he nevertheless strives to protect Willowside.

LEDORICK BANYAN

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human folk hero

Perception +24 (+26 when using Perception for initiative)

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +25 (+27 to Disarm), Deception +23, Diplomacy +25, Intimidation +25, Society +20, Willowside Lore +18

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

Items +1 resilient chain shirt, +1 striking composite longbow (40 arrows), moderate healing potion, +2 greater striking longsword, ring of sustenance

AC 36; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +26, **Will** +22

HP 260

Juggernaut When Ledorick rolls a success on a Fortitude save, it is a critical success instead.

Attack of Opportunity Ledorick gains an additional reaction at the beginning of each of his turns that he can use only for an Attack of Opportunity.

Dueling Riposte **Requirements** Ledorick is using Dueling Parry; **Trigger** A creature within Ledorick's reach critically fails a Strike against him; **Effect** Ledorick makes a melee Strike against the triggering creature or attempts to Disarm the triggering creature.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ *longsword* +29 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 3d8+13 slashing

Melee ◆ *fist* +27 (agile, finesse, nonlethal, unarmed), **Damage** 1d4+11 bludgeoning

Ranged ◆ *composite longbow* +27 (deadly 2d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+11 piercing

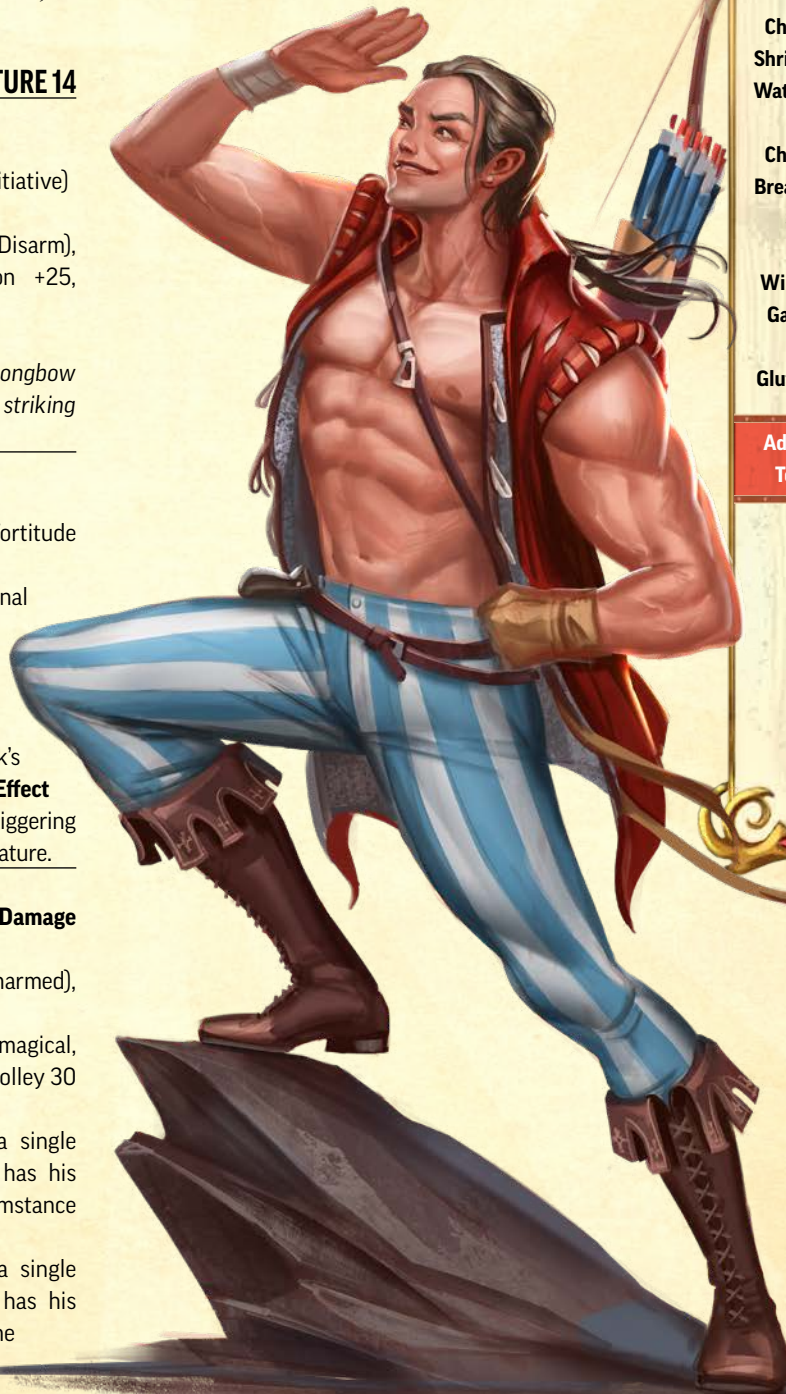
Dueling Parry ◆ **Requirements** Ledorick has a single one-handed melee weapon in one hand and has his other hand free; **Effect** Ledorick gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of his next turn.

Guiding Finish ◆ **Requirements** Ledorick has a single one-handed melee weapon in one hand and has his other hand free; **Effect** Ledorick Strikes with the required weapon. On a hit, he moves

the target up to 10 feet into a space he can reach, even moving the target through his own space. On a failed Strike, Ledorick can still move the target 5 feet in this way. This action can be used only if Ledorick has a multiple attack penalty.

Show-Off When Ledorick can see and be seen by at least two allies, his attacks deal 3d6 extra precision damage.

Sudden Charge ◆◆ Ledorick Strides twice and makes a melee Strike.



ZASHATHAL HEAD-TAKER

The most devout and fervent subcommander in the xulgath forces is the fearsome zealot Zashathal Head-Taker. He has started to suspect that something is wrong with his leader, and the truth drives him into a dangerous fury.

Rising almost a full head and shoulders above most other xulgaths, Zashathal is a proud and powerful warrior. He forgoes armor, and nearly all his skin is covered with scars from a life of violence. He has an impressive spiked crest in which he's burned Zevgavizeb's symbol, a twisted tentacle with talons. His cruel grin reveals a mouth of sharp teeth, and he wears bones taken from his fiercest foes.

Alongside half a dozen siblings, Zashathal grew up in a calm headed by Deepmouth Kartakine, a high priest of Zevgavizeb for a whole clutch. Zashathal began making traditional xulgath art early, carving stories of Zevgavizeb into the bones left after meals.

When Zashathal was an adolescent, his calm came under attack by a larger clutch who wanted its territory. Most of his calmkith were slain, including Kartakine. Zashathal killed over a dozen xulgaths from the attacking clutch, whose survivors spared and recruited him, naming him "Head-Taker."

As Sarvel Ever-Hunger began to gather forces for his assaults on the aeon towers, Zashathal clamored for a leadership position. He was rewarded with a role as hardscale, or subcommander, in a large clutch beneath Arskuva the Gnasher for an important mission: to destroy the *aeon orb* at the Marsh Stone Tower and guard the site until Sarvel's greater plan came to fruition. Believing Sarvel speaks the will of Zevgavizeb himself, Zashathal dedicated himself to the mission with a fervent intensity. Unlike many of the xulgaths in the clutch, Zashathal feels no discomfort around the fiends and aberrant monsters drawn from Gluttondark to aid their assault, and he is even on good terms with the terrifying, bat-like qurashith.

From the beginning, the course of the mission confounded Zashathal. The orb atop the tower was long gone when the xulgaths arrived, and Zashathal is among those xulgaths who mistakenly believe the tower's defenders took it inside to better defend it. Zashathal was surprised when Arskuva ordered the troops to cease preparations to attack on the tower

and instead begin assaulting a nearby human town. Zashathal was at least grateful for the chance at action, but he couldn't quite shake his confusion.

Over the last several days, Zashathal has noticed more odd things about Arskuva. Where she previously conferred with him and the other hardcales, she now makes proclamations unilaterally. She was previously social, but now spends most of her time either alone or attended to by a single gug slave. She doesn't bother undercutting and bullying her hardcales either, something all xulgaths leaders must do to preserve their commanding positions. Even her smell is off. Her once-powerful stench has faded, becoming barely noticeable. For a time, Zashathal suggested that priests attend to Arskuva, but she turned them down and insisted on her solitude.

Zashathal is strong and canny on a battlefield, but he is cautious and not very intuitive when out of his depth. Without understanding why Arskuva is acting oddly, he has been hesitant to challenge her leadership.

Campaign Role

When the heroes intrude on the xulgath camp, Zashathal calls on his most experienced warriors, singing praises to Zevgavizeb as he fights. Zashathal retreats to alert Arskuva if the heroes prove too powerful, and when he barges in on Arskuva and Helg together, he finally figures out that his leader is an undead puppet. Helg wastes no time in overpowering Zashathal and sending him away. Even though his leader is a sham and Helg's necromantic magic has weakened him, Zashathal is unwilling to give up Sarvel's sacred mission, and so he faces the heroes at the adventure's conclusion.

ZASHATHAL HEAD-TAKER

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Male xulgath zealous hardscale

Perception +27; coward sense (imprecise) 60 feet, darkvision

Languages Common, Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +29, Intimidation +25 (+27 to Demoralize), Religion +25, Stealth +22, Survival +25

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items *ankylostar* (page 75), religious symbol of Zevgavizeb, *stoneraiser javelin* (page 76)

Coward Sense Zashathal's disgust for cowardice is so powerful that he can detect the presence of frightened creatures, even if he can't see them.

AC 36; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +26; fanatical juggernaut

HP 250; **Resistances** physical 14 (from weapons only)

Fanatical Juggernaut When Zashathal rolls a success on a Fortitude save, it is a critical success instead. Zashathal halves damage he takes from failing a Fortitude save.

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath herd-tender (page 10), but DC 34.

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 35 feet

Melee ✦ *ankylostar* +30 (backswing, magical, shove, versatile P), **Damage** 3d10+12 bludgeoning

Melee ✦ jaws +28, **Damage** 3d8+12 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +28 (agile), **Damage** 3d6+12 slashing

Ranged ✦ *stoneraiser javelin* +25 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 2d6+12 piercing

Intimidating Strike ✦ (rage) **Trigger** Zashathal hits a creature with a melee Strike; **Effect** Zashathal makes an Intimidate check to Demoralize the target creature. If the target creature was reduced to 0 Hit Points by the triggering Strike, Zashathal can instead Demoralize all opponents within 30 feet by comparing the result of his Intimidation check to each creature's Will DC. Zashathal doesn't take a penalty to these Intimidation checks for not speaking a target's language.

Rage ✦ (concentrate, emotion, mental)

Requirements Zashathal isn't fatigued or raging; **Effect** Zashathal gains 20 temporary Hit Points that last until the rage ends. While raging, he deals 12 additional damage with melee attacks and takes a -1 penalty to AC. Zashathal can't use concentrate actions except Seek and rage actions. The rage lasts for 1 minute, until there are no enemies Zashathal can perceive, or until Zashathal falls unconscious. Once the rage ends, Zashathal can't Rage again for 1 minute.

Renewed Vigor ✦ (concentrate, rage) Zashathal gains 12 temporary Hit Points.

Sudden Charge ✦✦ Zashathal Strides twice and makes a melee Strike.

Whirlwind Strike ✦✦✦ Zashathal makes a melee Strike against all creatures within his reach. Each attack

counts toward his multiple attack penalty, but his multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until he's made all his attacks.



Next Month

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by Mikko Kallio

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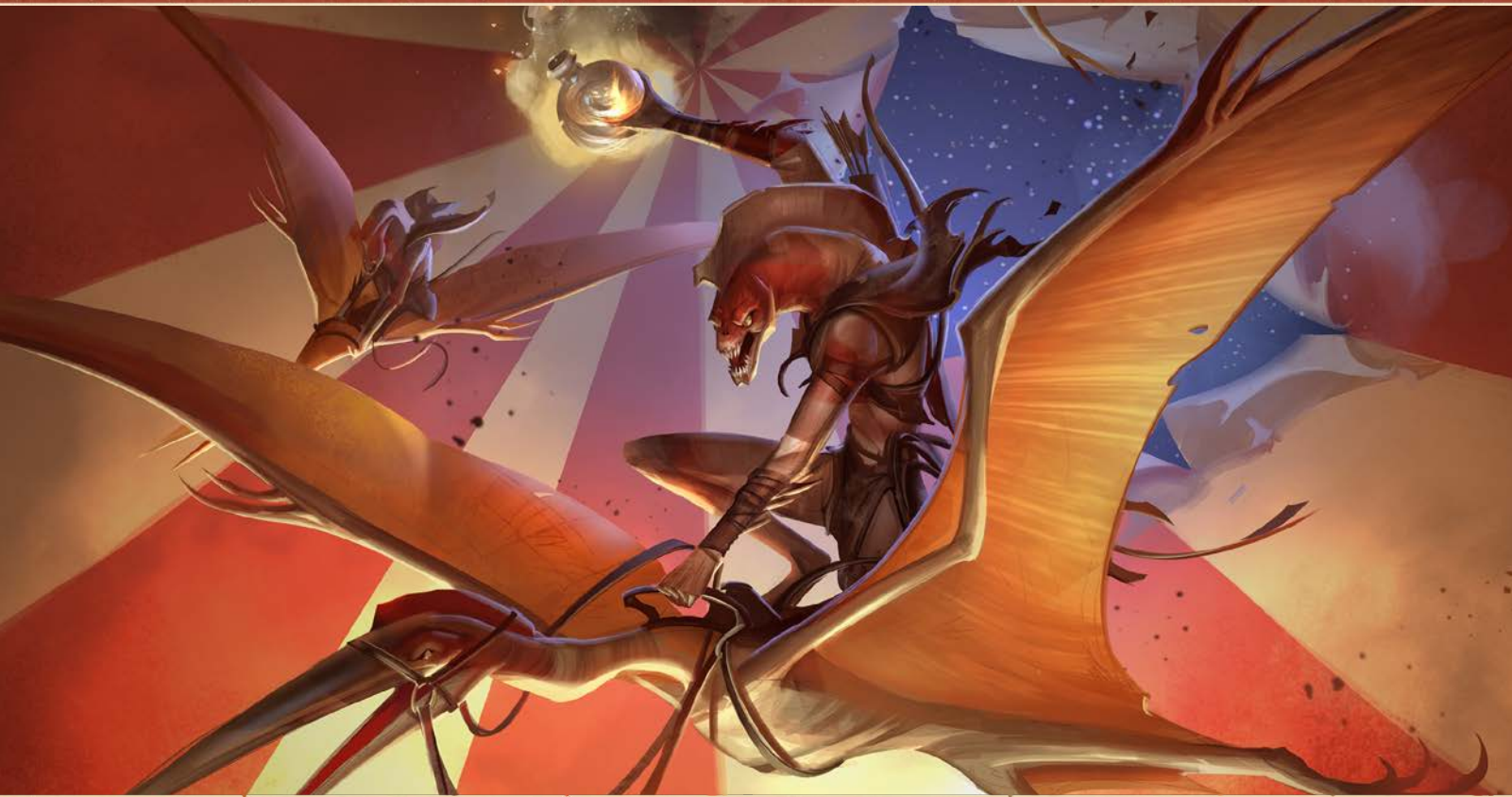
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