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ADVENTURE PATH

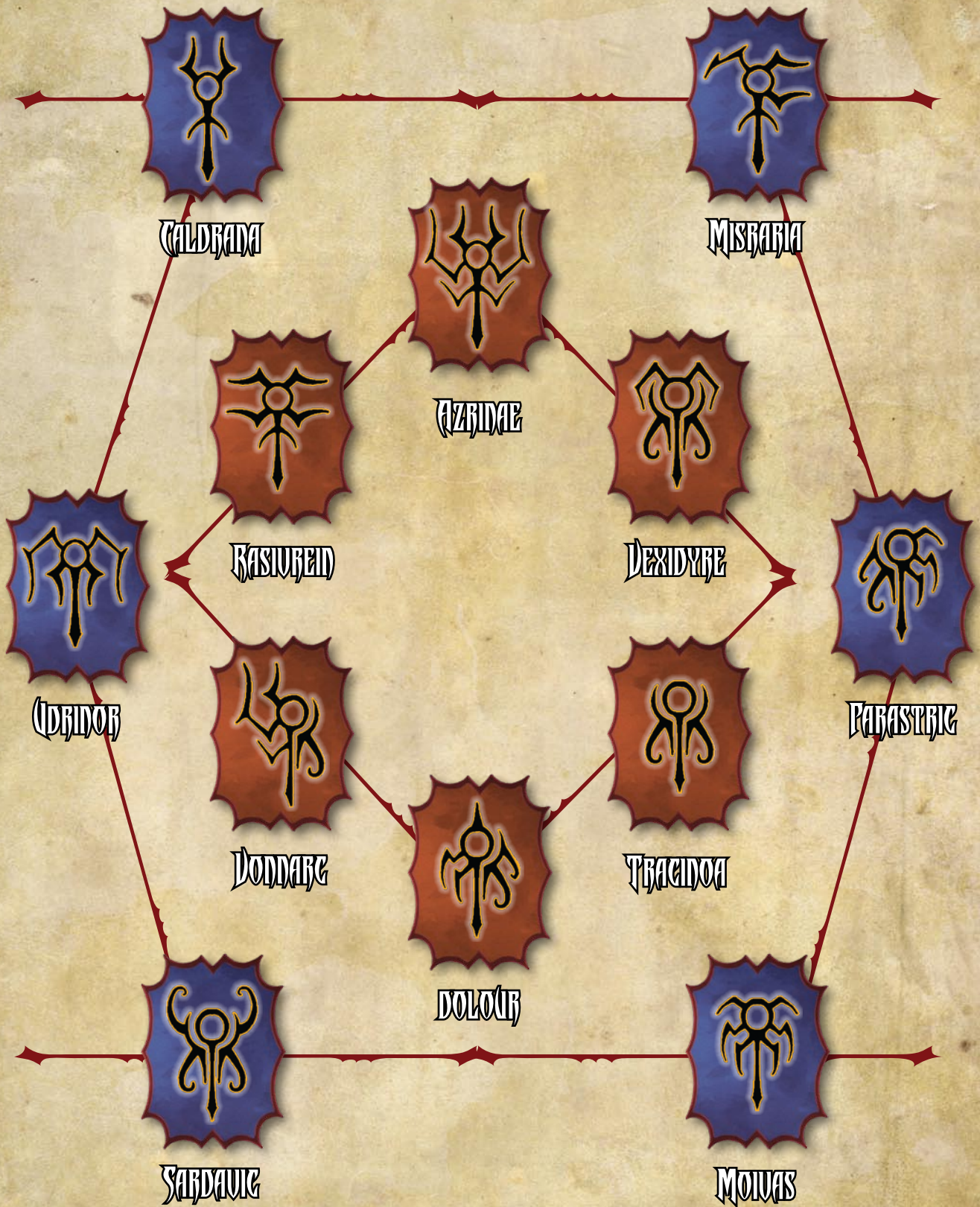


*Second Darkness*

DESCENT INTO  
MIDNIGHT

By Brian Cortijo

# DROW RINES

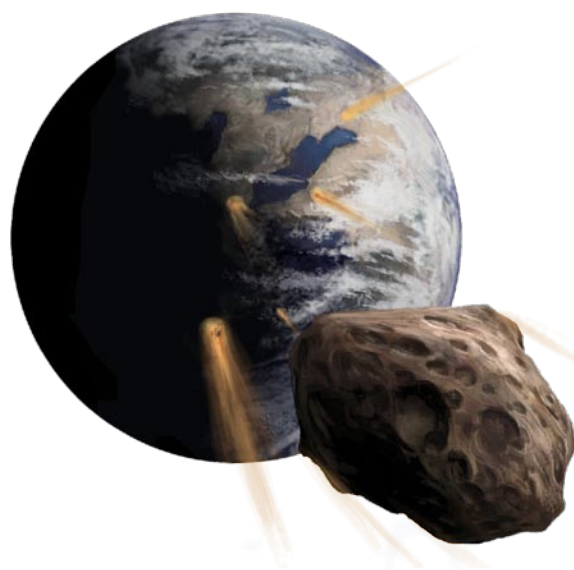


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ADVENTURE PATH  PART 6 of 6

*Second Darkness*

## DESCENT INTO MIDNIGHT



# PATHFINDER™

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## Coup De Grace

The final installment of an Adventure Path is traditionally a tough one to pull off. Not only are you wrangling the highest-level NPC stat blocks in the series and juggling encounter balance against a pretty wide range of assumed player character capabilities, but you've got to make sure that you tie together all the loose ends in a nice, neat package.

"Descent into Midnight" could have been all that and much, much more—when the original author had to bow out of writing the adventure, it looked like someone here at Paizo (AKA me) would have to hook an IV line of coffee up to the brain and sacrifice sleep to write the remaining tens of thousands of words of a partially completed adventure. After I had a few panic attacks and contemplated moving to the North Pole without leaving a forwarding address behind, though, Wes Schneider came up with a name: Brian Cortijo.

I'd never really worked on a project with Brian before. I knew who he was, and had chatted with him at several Gen Cons, but back in the magazine days he was much more a staple author for that other magazine (the one I didn't edit; its name rhymed with wagon or something

like that). Normally, I'm a little wary handing over Adventure Path installments to authors I've never worked with before, but Wes was all, "No, really; he's a good guy! He can do it!"

"It," of course, was "crank out 22,000 or so words in 3 weeks." And to Brian's credit, when I contacted him and asked him if he'd be interested in a "writing project with a deadline that would ruin an entire month of your life," he seemed really positive and excited about it. Three weeks later, when I got in his words for "Descent Into Midnight," I was pretty positive and excited as well.

You see, Brian pretty much swooped in like a superhero and, working off of a detailed outline, ended up with a really fun climax to the Second Darkness Adventure Path. Even better, he came up with some really cool elements and ideas of his own, such as the mechanic for the Doomsday Score, the stat block format for the various focus glyphs, and Denrelwe's fun little deception when the PCs first show up at the Shrine of Bound Earth.

So thanks, Brian! Second Darkness is all the better for the 3 weeks of crazy writing you went through!

## Yet More Demons

After publishing a pretty demon-heavy Adventure Path (*Dungeon's Savage Tide*), I was a little leery of doing another with lots of demons in it. Not because I'd run out of demonic ideas, of course (demons have been and still are my favorite bad guys in the game), but because I was worried that they were getting a bit overexposed. So when we were casting about for ideas on who Golarion's drow should worship, demons weren't the first nominees on the list. At one point, we had them being minions of Rovagug, incarnations of destruction made flesh. At another they had their own sub-pantheon of weird drow deities. But none of those choices seemed right, and when we decided to give them a pantheon of demon lords, everything fell into place like it was meant to be.

Which gave me an excuse to figure out how demon lords work in Golarion. I'd written a lot about them elsewhere, but always had to make sure not to contradict something that had already been established in a previous product. And although several of Golarion's demon lords are familiar names, there are a lot of newcomers as well. It's pretty exciting for me to be able to tackle it from the starting line, though. I can't wait to see how this mostly brand-new batch of demon lords grows up!

## The Sandpoint Campaign

One of the weird parts about working on several lines of monthly RPG products is that you live and breathe the game pretty much every day... but you rarely get a chance to play it. It's a sinister trap, too—if a game designer goes for too long without playing the game, he loses touch with what's fun, I think. And that's not a good place to be—one of the most important things about designing games is to keep in mind that they're supposed to be fun!

So if all goes well and according to plan, by the time you read this, I'll have started up a new office campaign set in Golarion. I'm pretty excited about this, in fact—I've been running and playing in a few other games lately, but this upcoming one will be the first one I've been in (as a GM or a player) that's actually set in Golarion! After spending a year and a half writing and developing and editing material set in our world, it's going to be fun actually playing in it. Jason Bulmahn's been making noises like he might be starting up a new campaign too, which means that if everything works out, I'll not only get to GM a game set in Golarion, I'll also get to play in one!

I've already put in my dibs on playing Merisiel in Jason's game, so that part's covered. But preparing to play in a game and preparing to run one are two different things. I've been batting around ideas on what I want to see happen in my campaign for almost a month now, and since we're probably only a week or two away from its launch date, I've more or less decided what I want to do

with it. Since the players in this upcoming campaign are pretty much going to be a lot of the same folk who'll be editing and proofing this foreword, I'll avoid going into the juicy details of what I've got planned for them but I can say this: it'll be set in Sandpoint, and it's going to use the Pathfinder RPG Beta rules—because I can't think of a better way to get used to the new rules than to run a campaign with them. I've got something of an idea of where I want to see the campaign go, but for the most part I'm going let the players lead the way to start with. Hopefully one of them will keep a journal at our message boards on [paizo.com](http://paizo.com)!

## Leaving Varisia

Varisia has been pretty good to *Pathfinder*, overall. The first three Adventure Paths took place there, and even though that amounts to a year and a half of material (well over 1,500 pages, in fact!), good old Varisia never ran out of surprises or new places to visit. We've barely even scratched the adventure sites here, really—locations like Hollow Mountain, Viperwall, Guiltspur, Crystilan, Brinewall, Ravenmoor, and the Mobhad Leigh could each easily support an adventure of their own (and given time, I'm sure some of them shall—I know at least two of those sites will play key roles in the Sandpoint Campaign). But there's more to Golarion than Varisia. A lot more.

So, as foreshadowed by Second Darkness's drift away from Varisia into Kyonin and the Darklands, *Pathfinder's* fourth Adventure Path, which starts next month, is leaving Varisia. This will be the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path, and it's already looking to have a much different feel than what's been going on up in Varisia. Set in the nation of Katapesh, Legacy of Fire takes its inspiration from the best traditions of the Arabian Nights tales and all those great old Ray Harryhausen movies. I'm not going to give away any major spoilers here, in case you're lucky enough to be getting ready to play in the next Adventure Path rather than run it, but it should be no big surprise to discover that there'll be plenty of genies, ancient temples, whirling dervishes, exotic markets, jilted lovers, crazy gnolls, and poorly worded wishes therein.

And because I couldn't resist, there'll be a certain number of chupacabras next month, too.



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## Second Darkness

### CHAPTER SIX

# Descent into Midnight

It all began with a strange shadow in the sky over the city of Riddleport—an eerie precursor to a cataclysmic falling star that shook western Varisia. Yet this falling star was no natural event; it had been plucked from the sky by the drow using ancient glyph magic, the same magic that the aboleths used ten thousand years ago to destroy the continent of Azlant and bring about the Age of Darkness. Now, with this destructive magic at their hands, the drow of House Azrinae are preparing an ultimate act of destruction. The dawn of the Second Darkness is at hand.



## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Over the course of the Second Darkness Adventure Path, the PCs have helped reclaim a lost elven ruin, infiltrated the drow city of Zirnakaynin, and discovered the truth of the Dark Fate—that when an elf is wicked enough he can spontaneously transform into a drow. Such was the fate of Allevrah, an elven cleric of Nethys who turned to sources both dire and vile in her search for a solution to the embarrassing blight of drow hidden deep underground. Her faith is already faltering due to the perception that Nethys's dogma was too obsessed with the balance of magic, and a reticence to utilize all the tools at one's disposal to solve a problem. That certain rituals and avenues of research were considered taboo to the faith enraged her, and increasingly she turned to these forbidden texts. In one such nameless tome, she came upon the first hints of the *earthfall glyph*, and in pursuing this line of clues, she not only reconstructed the magic the aboleths used to destroy a continent so long ago, but she fell into the clutches of the one who had taken pains to see such destructive secrets preserved in the first place—Abraxas, the demon lord of forbidden knowledge.

In following the teachings of Abraxas, Allevrah quickly found that the demon lord's approach to magical secrets very much mirrored her own greed for power. Her fall from Nethys's grace was subtle, and her kin in the Winter Council, absorbed as they were with their own projects, had no warning of the change in her demeanor. When she finally cracked the glyph codes and comprehended the construction of the *earthfall glyphs*, Allevrah presented her findings to the Winter Council and suggested they use the magic to strike at the portions of Golarion where drow cities were hidden to collapse their cities and disrupt their worlds. While one of the other councilors—the wizard Hialin—seemed to be intrigued by her plan, the rest were shocked and sickened that she could be so blasé about sacrificing such significant portions of Nirmathas, Varisia, Cheliax, Druma, and Andoran. With Allevrah's burgeoning devotion to Abraxas, the resulting argument swiftly developed into bloodshed, and the enraged Allevrah struck down the leader of the Winter Council with a *destruction* spell, an act that proved to be the final tipping point that triggered the Dark Fate—Allevrah transformed into a drow. Stunned into paralysis by these turns of events, the remaining councilors did nothing while Allevrah deactivated the wards that protected the Council's fortress of Thorn's End from the demons in the surrounding forest. In the chaos that followed, Allevrah gathered much of her research and fled. At first traumatized by her transformation, Allevrah swiftly came to see it as a gift from Abraxas. A gift, and an omen. She was not placed on Golarion to destroy the drow, but to destroy those who had been, however inadvertently, responsible for creating them. By leaving so many elves

behind, the elven nation had damned the survivors of Celwynvian to this fate, and they had weathered the Age of Darkness whereas the elves had fled—the drow, Allevrah realized, were the true heritors of Golarion, not the elves. And armed with her knowledge of the *earthfall glyphs*, she knew she could seize a position of power among their kind and give them the revenge they so deserved.

## Adventure Summary

The PCs, armed now with the knowledge of how to defeat Allevrah's *earthfall glyphs*, delve into the deepest reaches of the Darklands where she has retreated to finish off her devastating plan. Yet the realm she has chosen as her bastion is the mysterious Land of Black Blood, a place about which relatively little is known on the surface world. The PCs seek out a shaitan genie said to dwell in the Land and to serve as its caretaker, only to find this genie has been captured by Allevrah's drow. After rescuing the genie, the PCs can learn where the six *earthfall glyphs* are hidden. One by one, they must deactivate the five *focusing glyphs*, and only then can they assault the Blood Basilica of Abraxas, a fortified temple at the heart of the Land of Black Blood and Allevrah's final redoubt. There, they confront their enemy and must destroy the *master glyph* to prevent the coming of the Second Darkness to Golarion.

## PART ONE: PREPARATIONS

At the climax of "A Memory of Darkness," as the PCs confronted the Winter Council in the fortress of Thorn's End, they witnessed one of the deepest, darkest secrets of the elven people—a secret so well hidden that even among the elves there are only a few who know the truth. This secret is the Dark Fate—that, given the exactly right conditions, a particularly wicked elf can spontaneously transform into a drow.

The aftermath of the events at Thorn's End could mean drastic changes to the empire of Kyonin, and while these ramifications are explored in the Continuing the Campaign section, there should be very little time for the PCs or the elves to consider them when this adventure begins. Information the PCs recovered from Zirnakaynin, combined with the recovery of Allevrah's notes from the highest tower of Thorn's End, paint a bleak and terrifying picture. In a very short time, a tremendous falling star will strike Kyonin, destroying the elven homeland and plunging Golarion into a second Age of Darkness.

Fortunately, that same information the PCs have recovered contains hope. And after the events at Thorn's End, any surviving Winter Councilors are forced to put aside their own self-interests in the face of this clear danger. The survivors elect one of their number to escort the PCs back to Iadara to meet once again with the queen to speak about what must be done to prevent what is to come.

## A Queen's Apology

The route by which the PCs return to Iadara is left to them—teleportation from just outside of Thorn's End is the suspected route, and if no PC can achieve this feat, one of the surviving councilors could help (Arlindil the druid could use transport via plants, or Perelir could use word of recall) or, if the PCs can contact the queen (perhaps via sending), she'll send a wizard to teleport them back to her hall. At the very least, the PCs could simply take the elf gates back to Kyonin.

Whatever their methods, their greeting in Iadara is very different this time than last. They are met by the queen herself, along with her honor guard and any other elves the PCs may have befriended during the campaign (such as Kwava or Shalelu)—these old friends have been brought to Iadara by the queen to serve as character witnesses for the PCs, even though she's already convinced of their intentions if they've undone the Winter Council. The greetings are swift, and Queen Telandia quickly ushers the PCs into a small but extravagant meeting room where they are given healing, food, and whatever else they may require to recover from their recent trials.

After apologizing to the PCs profusely for not being able to fully take them into her confidence, Queen Telandia explains to them why secrecy was so important to the mission. Nearly two dozen powerful nobles once allied with the Winter Council have either left Kyonin to flee into exile or have confessed their new loyalty to the queen in the hours since the Council's fall. Had the queen gone public with her plans for the PCs, these nobles would certainly have risen up against her to create a political firestorm. With the support of the Winter Council, they would have easily been able to disrupt the plans or at least delay them long enough that it wouldn't matter.

In any event, the queen reminds the PCs, there are more important things to worry about now. Her diviners and advisors have informed her that the story the PCs brought to her about Allevrah Azrinae and her plot to bring down the sky seems to be truth. The next step is to stop her.

## Averting the End of the World

A study of the notes recovered from Thorn's End reveals much about the process that the aboleths, and now Allevrah, use to call down meteors and asteroids to strike the world. The process requires powerful magic runes called *earthfall*

*glyphs*. The larger the destruction required, the more glyphs are needed. The creation of these glyphs is a long and time-consuming process, and they must be placed at or below the point of impact. As the PCs learned in Zirnakaynin, Allevrah has taken many of the Azrinae forces down into the legendary Land of Black Blood. According to the notes of elven explorers or a DC 30 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or bardic knowledge check, this land lies directly below Kyonin, making it a perfect place to create the *earthfall glyphs* in secret. A comparison of what the PCs know about Allevrah's progress and the notes themselves indicates that certainly the glyphs have been completed and are in place. Worse, the queen reports that elven astronomers have actually spotted a faint new star in the sky that seems to be moving slowly across the horizon. Time is growing short—it's impossible to tell how much time is left, but the time to strike against Allevrah is now. (See Final Countdown on page 17 for a discussion on the timing of this adventure.)

The same notes indicate that for large events, multiple *earthfall glyphs* are required—one *master glyph* surrounded by a number of smaller *focus glyphs*. Each of the *focus glyphs* serves as a power source for the *master glyph*, and each *focus glyph* offers some sort of different protective ward to the *master glyph*. Destroying the *master glyph* isn't possible until all of its *focus glyphs* are gone. Unfortunately, the types of wards Allevrah's chosen for her *focus glyphs*, as well as the number of them she's built in the Land of Black Blood, aren't indicated in these partial notes. And although the notes mention some methods by which *earthfall glyphs* can be destroyed (various spell combinations seem to work, as does physical destruction—but at a much increased risk of dangerous magical backlash), until Allevrah's specific glyphs can be studied up close, the exact methods will remain unknown. The only option, it seems, is to send someone down into the Land of Black Blood to find the *earthfall glyphs*, destroy them, and defeat Allevrah. This is, of course, where the PCs come in.

Queen Telandia doesn't want to cause a panic. If the PCs can defeat Allevrah and destroy the glyphs, Golarion can continue on its way in oblivious safety. If the PCs cannot, sending a large army down into the Land of Black Blood would be a foolish move—the logistics of such a journey boggle the mind, and Allevrah would doubtless learn of the mobilization with plenty of time to raise an army of her own to defend her interests. While Queen Telandia is certain that, given time, her elves could defeat Allevrah—she's much less certain that they could do so swiftly enough



Queen  
Telandia

to stop the coming apocalypse. By sending a small group of heroes down, they'll retain the element of surprise and speed required to pull off this desperate mission. If the heroes fail, Queen Telandia is ready to send an army down anyway—once the element of surprise is gone, desperate times would call for such desperate measures. Yet when she does, she'll also set into motion plans for both a mass exodus through the *Sovyrian Stone* portal and a number of warnings to the other nations of the world to prepare for the event—but she hopes it doesn't come to that.

Assuming the PCs agree to the dangerous mission, Queen Telandia can offer them a little more advice on how best to reach the Land of Black Blood. She has a map created many decades ago by an elven Pathfinder who had decided to attempt a grand mapping of the Darklands. The Pathfinder broke his oath with his organization to provide Telandia a secret copy of his maps, and she keeps his identity secret to protect him from possible backlash as a result. His maps are good and accurate. Furthermore, the Pathfinder's notes indicate that, while the Land of Black Blood isn't ruled by any one creature, there does exist a place of note in the eastern limit of the region several miles from the entrance he used. This place is something he calls the "Shrine of Bound Earth," a strange temple amid a grove of statues wherein a shaitan genie, a creature from the Elemental Plane of Earth, dwells. The Pathfinder's notes indicate the genie's name is Haiten Bhaq, and that she is a sort of "caretaker" for the Land of Black Blood. For the right price (a flawless gemstone), she was willing to offer much advice to the Pathfinder about the mysterious realm. Queen Telandia has selected just such a gemstone from her treasury, an emerald worth 5,000 gp, for the PCs to secure advice from Haiten Bhaq if they desire.

Although Queen Telandia doesn't want to send an entire host of soldiers down to support the PCs' mission since each additional soul adds to the complexity of the mission, she'll agree to sending some allies with the PCs if they truly wish them. In this case, she'll have a few priestesses of Calistria each use *planar ally* to call upon a ghaele to go with the PCs. How many she sends with the PCs depends on how much aid you think the PCs will need.

Finally, as the PCs make ready to leave on their mission, Queen Telandia tells them she is opening Iadara's treasuries to them, partially as reward for their services so far against the Winter Council, and partially to help outfit them for the dangerous journey ahead. Effectively, this gives each PC 20,000 gp in purchasing potential to buy magic items and other items they may wish to secure for the journey. Feel free to prohibit the purchase of items you don't want the PCs to have, stating simply that while Iadara's treasury is large, it is not infinite, and not all items are available. Likewise, feel free to adjust the total

gp allowance as you see fit—the 20,000 gp allowance above was chosen to give the PCs the purchasing power to acquire something along the power of a +3 weapon or a +4 stat-boosting item. If your characters are low on gear, consider increasing this reward; if they're well stocked, consider lowering the reward or limiting them only to purchasing potions, scrolls, and other one-shot resources.

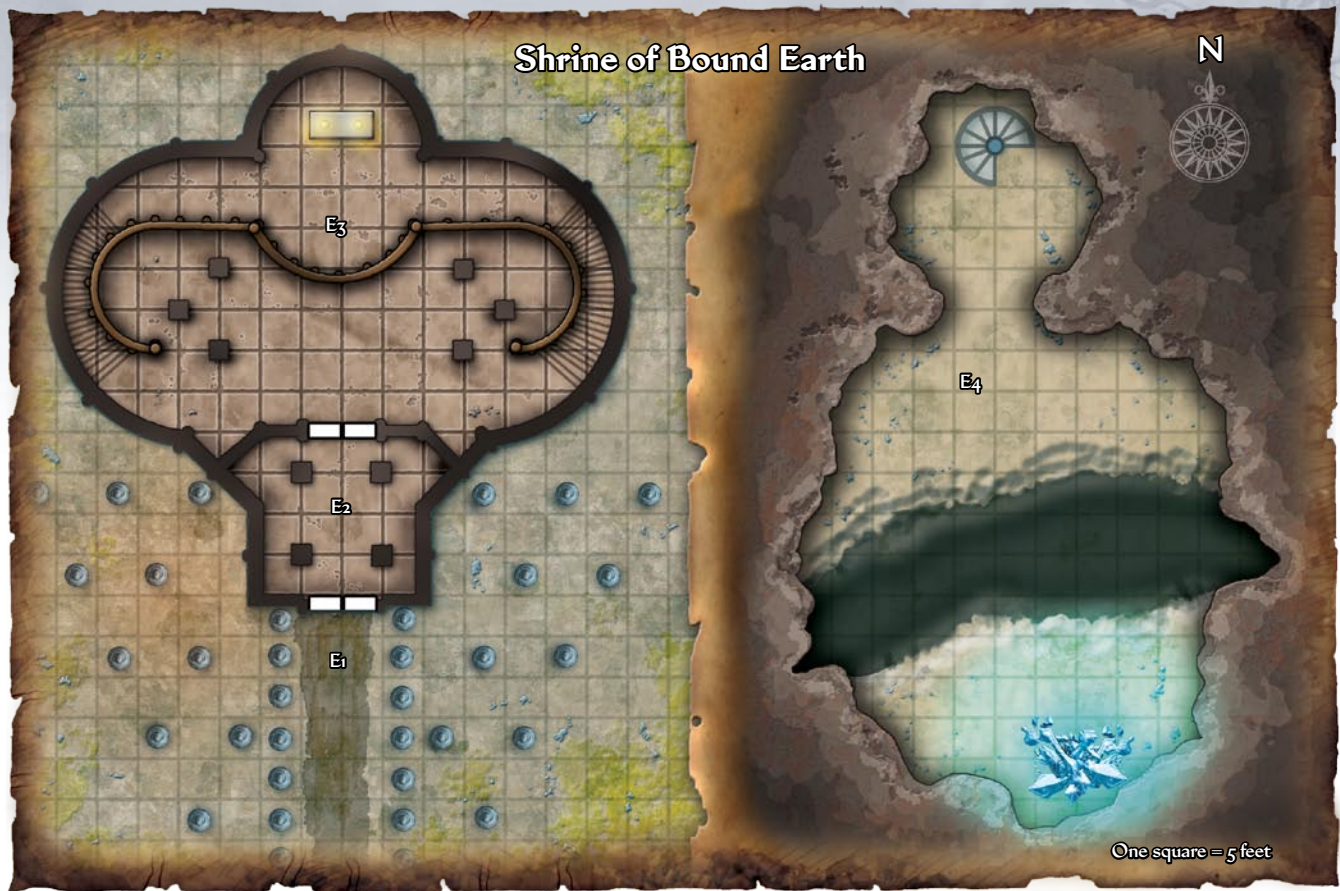
## PART TWO: PRISONER OF EARTH

The Land of Black Blood is hidden in a dark, forbidding corner in the deepest reaches of the Darklands, a place known as Orv. Details on this eldritch realm are presented beginning on page 48 of this book.

The journey to the Land of Black Blood is not covered in this adventure. If you have *Pathfinder Chronicles: Into the Darklands*, you can use the maps, wandering monster charts, and details in that book to round out this section of the adventure as you wish—if the PCs still aren't quite 14th level, this is a great chance to give them a few more encounters to gain some badly needed experience points. If you don't have *Into the Darklands*, or if you simply wish to gloss over the long journey underground, the easiest route for the PCs to follow is to take the Siavenian elf gate (the same one they used to escape the Darklands at the end of their flight from Zirnakaynin) and then follow the Pathfinder's map down into Orv—a route that does not appear on most other maps of the Darklands, and follows a series of secondary and tertiary tunnels that wind all the way from deep under Nirmathas to even deeper under the southwestern River Kingdoms, where a 500-foot-deep crack barely over half a foot wide at its widest point drops down into a Primary tunnel that leads back to the southwest to area A of the Land of Black Blood. The route, while seemingly circuitous and difficult for humanoids to traverse, was made easier for the Pathfinder who used two *wind walk* spells to make the 900-mile journey in a mere 15 hours. When the PCs are ready to go, Queen Telandia has four scrolls of *wind walk* for the PCs to use to follow the Pathfinder's route exactly. If no PC can cast *wind walk* from scrolls, she'll have a 15th level Calistrian priest cast a *wind walk* spell on the group instead. Each casting can target up to four PCs; the priest may need to cast multiple spells as a result.

Of course, this is but one route the PCs can take to reach the Land of Black Blood. Feel free to let them make their own decisions for the journey, and use the information presented in the article that begins on page 48 of this volume (and that given in *Into the Darklands* if you use that book in your campaign) to aid in describing their journey.

The remainder of this adventure assumes that the PCs follow the queen's advice and seek out the Shrine of Bound Earth and its genie caretaker for guidance, but if they



wander off this assumed path, that's okay. The order in which they take down the *earthfall glyphs* is something the PCs control. When the PCs reach the Land of Black Blood, refer to the article on page 48—when they arrive at the Shrine of Bound Earth (area E on the map of the vault) or one of the glyph sites, proceed with the appropriate section in this adventure.

## The Shrine of Bound Earth

By the time the players reach the Shrine of Bound Earth, matters have changed dramatically from what the Pathfinder reported in his notes. The genie Haiten Bhaq still resides within the Shrine, but she has been captured and replaced by the Azrinae drow—one of Allevrah's first acts on arriving in force in the Land of Black Blood, since she suspected that the Shrine of Bound Earth would be one of the first places her enemies would visit if they came to the region. Allevrah was reluctant to kill the genie, though, fearing the legends of retribution that surround the shaitan race, and hoping to tap into the powers of earth that Haiten could call upon once her meteor reshaped the world. Instead, she subdued the genie and used a binding scroll to trap Haiten within a large crystal in a cavern under her shrine, then installed one of her most powerful minions, the drow illusionist Denrelwe, to replace the genie.

## E1. Approaching the Shrine

A wide building of lighter stone rises from the dark stone here. A grove of statues stands before the building, each form contorted and with some of their features unfinished or broken off. A pathway leads through these statues to a large set of doors in the building's facade.

Most of the statues in the courtyard of the Shrine are stone, offerings of other inhabitants of the Land or crafted in memory of one of Haiten Bhaq's favored servants over the years—mostly jann, all of whom were created as monuments by the shaitan after their deaths. A thorough search of the area reveals nothing of interest.

The door into the shrine bears a silent, mental alarm placed by Denrelwe; if it is triggered, she prepares to meet the intruders as detailed in area E3.

## E2. Entrance Hall

The walls of the entrance hallway open outward, suggesting a much wider space within the main shrine. Blood stains the marble tile, and the bodies of two drow lie crumpled on the

floor—one crushed as if by a great weight, the other slammed into the far right pillar and folded in half around it.

Both bodies here were victims of the initial drow attack on the Shrine of Bound Earth. Every few weeks, Denrelwe places a *gentle repose* spell on both bodies to keep them fresh. She leaves them here as dressing to set up the scene in area E3. Canny PCs who recognize that the bodies bear *gentle repose* spells can use the information as a clue that not all is as it seems here. If the alarm in area E1 was triggered, the muffled sounds of battle in area E3 are audible through the doors.

**Treasure:** Each of the two dead drow still wears a +1 *mithral shirt* and has a +1 *hand crossbow*, +1 *rapier*, and +1 *dagger* at hand.

### E3. Central Shrine (EL 15)

This wide, oblong room is constructed of the same pale stone as the rest of the shrine. Clear crystals and pale gems create and reflect light around the high-ceilinged chamber, standing from the stone of the walls like ageless sconces. Staircases on either side of the room lead up to an altar platform on the far side.

Once a meeting room and meditation chamber for the shaitan genie, this room is where the Azrinae drow first encountered and defeated Haiten Bhaq. Traces of that battle have been cleaned and removed, but with a DC 30 Search check, old bloodstains and other clues might turn up under close inspection.

The stone altar on the pulpit area is a single block of polished granite. Not dedicated to any one deity in particular, Haiten Bhaq uses it as a focus for her meditations. A DC 20 search of the altar reveals its true purpose—it can be swiveled to the side with a DC 20 Strength check to reveal a flight of spiral stairs leading downward to area E4.

**Creatures:** The drow illusionist Denrelwe uses her magic to assume Haiten's form to deceive intruders. She drinks a *potion of glibness* and orders her six drow soldiers to attack her once the alarm in area E1 is triggered—partially to heighten the deception, and partially because she enjoys tormenting her subordinates—knowing she can always requisition replacements if any of these guards fall. When the alarm isn't active, her six drow guards stand at the corners of the room, patiently standing sentinel while Denrelwe passes the time studying or reading the books she carries in her *bag of holding*.

Assuming she's on alert, a battle is in full swing when the PCs enter the room. Denrelwe, disguised as Haiten (a beautiful scimitar-wielding giant of a woman seemingly made of dark and polished stone), stands atop the upraised pulpit to the north, using her magic to fight off a group of

drow soldiers that fire crossbow bolts from behind the stone pillars on either side of the room. As she sees the PCs, she cries out to them in Terran, "Uplanders! Defend me from these elven demons and you shall be justly rewarded!"

The drow immediately turn their attentions to the PCs on their arrival, ignoring the shaitan genie entirely. After she sees that the drow are attacking the party, Haiten continues to direct her own attacks at the drow, doing as much to kill them as the PCs in an attempt to further convince them she is not one of the enemy. If the PCs see through her disguise and attack her, she snarls in rage and orders her drow to kill them all—she in turn shifts her destructive attentions away from her unfortunate minions to the PCs and does her best to destroy them.

If the drow are dispatched and Denrelwe's disguise and deception seem to be working, she descends to the ground to thank the PCs and provide what aid to fallen or wounded characters she can, and gives the following speech.

"I thank you for your assistance in dispatching these vermin, and will thank you further when you remove them from my sight. The cursed drow are a plague on my land, and even now they deface these caverns, carving wounds into the earth to bring ruin down on the Land of Black Blood and open it to the sky. I would have you stop them—but something tells me you are well ahead of my requests. How can I aid you in your quest?"

Denrelwe plans to divert the PCs as best she can from the task before them in order to give Allevrah the time and focus she needs to complete the ritual to speed along the coming starfall. To this end, Denrelwe uses the conversation to try to learn what the PCs know, and what their plans are to oppose her mistress. Roleplay this as a standard negotiation—feel free to have the players roll Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks, as normal. If the players notice that something is not as it seems (such as by beating Denrelwe's Bluff checks with their own Sense Motive checks), Denrelwe tries to hurry along the negotiation as best she can. Her hope is to send the PCs on a wild goose chase to the Livid Sanctum (see this volume's Set Piece adventure on page 64), claiming that the first *earthfall glyph* is hidden within. She doesn't think the PCs will be defeated by the denizens of that location (although that would be nice!), only that it'll give her mistress time to reinforce her position and the defenses of the *focus glyphs*.

If the PCs fall for the deception and spend time at the Livid Sanctum, Denrelwe abandons the Shrine of Bound Earth and returns to Allevrah's side—the PCs will face her again in area R7. Allevrah places a *glabrezu* and two *vrocks* in this chamber to greet the PCs with violence should they return here (maintaining a *status* spell on them so she



knows when and if they die or are defeated) and increases the alarm stage at the five *focus glyphs* by one (see page 17 for details on the alarm stages).

If the PCs see through her disguise or attack her, Denrelwe fights back as described in her tactics.

## DENRELWE AZRINAE

CR 15

Female drow illusionist 14

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses darkvision; Listen +14, Spot +12

### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 15

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex)

hp 63 (1d4+28)

Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +9 (+11 against spells and spell-like abilities)

Immune sleep; SR 25

Weakness light blindness

### OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *dagger of venom* +7 (1d4+1 plus poison) and

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

1/day—*clairvoyance/clairaudience, dancing lights, darkness, detect magic, discern lies, dispel magic, faerie fire, feather fall, levitate, suggestion* (DC 15)

### Spells Prepared (CL 14)

7th—*greater shadow conjuration* (2) (DC 26), *limited wish, mass hold person* (DC 24)

6th—*acid fog* (DC 23), *disintegrate* (DC 23), quickened *invisibility* (2), *shadow walk*

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 22), *mind fog* (DC 22), quickened *color spray* (DC 20), *shadow evocation* (DC 24), *wall of stone*

4th—*illusory wall* (2) (DC 23), *phantasmal killer* (2) (DC 23), *solid fog* (2)

3rd—*displacement* (2), *fly, gaseous form, hold person* (DC 20), *major image* (DC 22), *stinking cloud* (DC 20)

2nd—*blur, invisibility, hypnotic pattern* (DC 21), *mirror image* (2), *see invisibility, resist energy*

1st—*color spray* (2) (DC 20), *disguise self, expeditious retreat, mage armor, shield, unseen servant*

0—*daze, detect poison, ghost sound* (DC 19), *mage hand, mending*

Prohibited Schools *evocation, necromancy*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Given time to prepare, Denrelwe casts *greater invisibility* (from her wand), *displacement* (just in case her opponents can see invisible creatures), and *resist energy*.

**During Combat** Denrelwe begins combat by casting *greater invisibility* if she isn't already invisible. She likes to use fog illusions and harmful fog spells to force her opponents to be cautious with any fogs or clouds they encounter. If combat goes well for her, she'll play with her opponents, "disintegrating" one of them—casting *hold person* followed by quickened *invisibility* on the same target—especially if they've seen her use her actual *disintegrate* spell.

**Morale** Denrelwe doesn't want to die, and if brought below 30 hit points she attempts to flee with her *wand of dimension door*. If that doesn't work or she has to flee again, she uses her spells to slow and fool pursuit (such as casting *solid fog* then *gaseous form* to blend in, or *illusory wall* followed by *wall of stone*, or leaving behind a *hypnotic pattern* or *persistent image* of herself that begs for mercy).

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**STATISTICS**


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**Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 24, Wis 10, Cha 15**

**Base Atk +7; Grp +6**

**Feats** Alertness, Craft Wand, Dark Adept, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Lightning Reflexes, Quickened Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion), Umbral Scion

**Skills** Concentration +15, Decipher Script +22, Escape Artist +5, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (geography) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +14, Search +9, Spellcraft +24, Tumble +5

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elf, Terran, Undercommon

**SQ** summon familiar (Sureen the bat)

**Combat Gear** *cloak of the bat*, *dagger of venom*, *wand of dimension door* (6 charges), *wand of greater invisibility* (6 charges); **Other Gear** *amulet of health* +4, *bag of holding type II*, *headband of intellect* +4, *ring of protection* +1, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, all wizard illusion spells from the PH up to 5th level, and four other spells of your choosing of levels 1 through 5), 200 gp.

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**DROW SOLDIERS (6)**

Male drow fighter 7

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

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**DEFENSE**


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**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

**hp** 57 (7d10+14)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (+4 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment

**Immune** sleep; **SR** 18

**Weakness** light blindness

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**OFFENSE**


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**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 rapier +10/+5 (1d6+4/18–20) and  
+1 dagger +10 (1d4+1/19–20)

**Ranged** +1 hand crossbow +11 (1d4+1 plus poison /19–20)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *detect magic*, *faerie fire*,  
*feather fall*, *levitate*

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**STATISTICS**


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**Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10**

**Base Atk +7; Grp +8**

**Feats** Dark Adept, Mounted Combat, Two-Weapon Defense,  
Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus  
(rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

**Skills** Climb +11, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Ride +15



Denrelwe

## DROW FEATS

Some drow draw upon the weird powers of the Darklands to warp their innate elven abilities, manifesting powers beyond those of typical dark elves.

## DARK ADEPT

You gain several additional spell-like abilities from your dark elven heritage.

**Prerequisites** Drow, character level 3rd

**Benefit** You gain three new spell-like abilities, each usable once per day. These spell-like abilities are *detect magic*, *feather fall*, and *levitate*. Your caster level for these spell-like abilities equals your total character level.

## UMBRAL SCION

You develop more advanced spell-like abilities related to your drow heritage.

**Prerequisites** Drow female, Dark Adept, character level 7th

**Benefit** You gain four new spell-like abilities, each usable once per day. These spell-like abilities are *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *discern lies*, *dispel magic*, and *suggestion*. Your caster level for these spell-like abilities equals your total character level.

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, drow poison (5); **Other Gear** +1 mithral shirt, +1 hand crossbow with 10 drow poisoned bolts, +1 rapier, +1 dagger

## E4. Beneath the Shrine (EL 15)

A thin mist flows through the air in this spacious cavern. Strange, purplish-blue light emanates from a number of large crystals jutting from the walls, illuminating the fog and creating a disorienting display of lights. To the south, a wide chasm bisects the cave, and on the far side the crystals grow much more enormous in size.

The crevice that runs across the middle of the cavern is 50 feet deep, ending in a jagged bed of broken stone. The walls of the crevice are slick

with moisture, but have sufficient handholds to allow for climbing (Climb DC 20).

**Creature:** Haiten Bhaq is imprisoned in the largest crystal at the far end of the chamber via a binding spell placed by Allevrah via scroll. In a fit of wry humor (and to increase the potency of the spell), Allevrah set a release clause into the binding—if the light of the sun shines upon the crystal, Haiten may go free. Allevrah intended this to reference the fact that when her plan comes to fruition, the ceiling of the Land of Black Blood may well be laid open to the light of the sun for a brief moment, but in fact, a spell such as *sunray* or *sunburst* will suffice to release Haiten as well.

Haiten is bound via a variant of the *minimus containment* version of *binding*—the gem she is imprisoned in is nearly 6 feet tall, yet still smaller than her actual form. This variant allows the trapped genie to see and observe the world around her but prevents her from leaving her prison. When she sees the PCs, she calls out to them telepathically for aid, explaining how to release her. Even if the PCs can't cast *sunray* or *sunburst*, though, she'll swiftly agree to aid them if the PCs promise to come back and free her when they are done. If she thinks the PCs need more encouragement, she'll even promise the PCs a wish for rescuing her, but she won't volunteer this extra incentive unless she has no other choice.

Haiten Bhaq is a lovely being of stone and earth, an exotic beauty made of polished obsidian. Yet despite her beauty, she is a shaitan genie, and as such is not to be trusted if she has the upper hand. In her current predicament, Haiten most certainly does not have the advantage, and the PCs are in a good position to bargain with her—generous PCs might offer her gems in



Haiten Bhaq



payment for her aid, but this is not required. All she really wants is to be free of her prison.

Once she learns the PCs are here to oppose Allevarez or seek to destroy the *earthfall glyphs*, Haiten Bhaq's attitude grows even more friendly. She has long thought of herself as the "guardian" of the Land of Black Blood, and even though none have officially granted her this title, she has dwelt in this realm for hundreds of years. She finds the Black Blood to be soothing in the ways it interacts with the surrounding stone, and Allevarez's presence here is an unpleasant taint to that soothing sensation. She can relate to the PCs how Allevarez arrived at the Shrine of Bound Earth several months ago and demanded Haiten's obedience. A fight ensued, and the shaitan was defeated and imprisoned here.

Although she's been imprisoned here for the last several months, her close bond with the surrounding stone has not completely isolated her. She's been receiving whispers from the stone, and as a result is somewhat well-informed about the situation in the Land of Black Blood. She knows, for example, that Allevarez has chosen the island in the Caltherium as her fortress, and has taken to calling the site the "Throne of Abraxas." She also knows the locations of the five *focus glyphs*, even though she's not really sure what the glyphs are—if told of what Allevarez intends to do, the concept of destroying so much of the surrounding earth and transmuting it to hated lava infuriates the genie to an extent that she agrees to provide further help at no cost.

Haiten can warn the PCs about the dangers they'll face at the five *focus glyph* sites (ropers at the Weeping Cliffs, the abyssal harvester at the Crystal Plaza, the drow at the Bloodforge, the Moldering Emperor at the Fetid Palace, and the chardas that dwell under the Rotstone Hollows), but has little information about what awaits the PCs on the Throne of Abraxas. She gladly sketches out a map of the Land of Black Blood and indicates these locations, using *stone shape* on a tablet of rock. The one thing she refuses to do, though, is accompany the PCs on their journey. She claims that her place is here in the Shrine of Bound Earth, but in fact she simply doesn't want to face Allevarez again—she was beaten once by the drow and her minions, and does not itch to be beaten by her again. She will extend to the PCs the hospitality of a safe harbor here at the shrine, though, promising them that this will be a safe place to rest and recover as they need the time.

#### HAITEN BHAQ

CR 15

Female shaitan pasha (see page 84)

LN Huge outsider (earth, extraplanar)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +24, Spot +24

#### DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 23

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 180 (19d8+95)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

**Immune** electricity

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *speed scimitar* +22/+22/+17/+12/+7 (2d6+12/15-20) and slam +15 (3d6+7)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** metamorph, *plane shift*, stone curse

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 18th)

At will—*meld into stone*, *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *veil* (self only)

3/day—quicken *glitterdust* (DC 15), quickened *stoneskin*, *wall of stone*, *wish* (to non-genies only)

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

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Haiten Bhaq activates a *stoneskin* if she can, just before combat begins.

**During Combat** Haiten Bhaq prefers to fight in melee, using quickened *glitterdusts* each round for the first 3 rounds and making 4-point Power Attacks. She avoids using *earthquake* near her home if she can.

**Morale** Haiten *melds into stone* if reduced to less than 30 hit points and waits for her foes to leave if possible.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +19; **Grp** +34

**Feats** Combat Casting, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*glitterdust*, *stoneskin*), Weapon Focus (scimitar)

**Skills** Appraise +24 (+29 against gems, metal, and stone), Bluff +24, Concentration +24, Craft (gemcutting) +29, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +29, Listen +24, Profession (miner) +29, Search +24 (+29 in stonework), Sense Motive +24, Spot +24

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Ignan, Terran

**SQ** earth mastery, stone glide

**Gear** +1 *speed scimitar*, *bracers of armor* +4, *ring of protection* +1

## PART THREE: THE FOCUS GLYPHS

In order to prevent Allevarez Azrinae's plan to bring an asteroid crashing down on Kyonin, the PCs must confront her in the Blood Basilica and destroy or deactivate the *master glyph* located there. Yet breaking the magic of this glyph is not as simple as striding in and pushing a button, for this glyph is supported by five *focus glyphs* placed around the *master glyph* in different areas in the Land of Black Blood, all of which must be destroyed before the

*master glyph* can be harmed. And of course, each *focus glyph* has its own defenses and guardians.

Each of the *focus glyphs* can be deactivated in one of three ways. They can be physically destroyed with damage or disrupted by the application of a specific pattern of spells or via a procedure of manipulation and modification to the magic of the glyphs themselves. The glyphs themselves provide clues to their resistances and mysteries—through investigation, one can use skill checks to decipher each glyph's unique weaknesses by studying them up close.

All glyph effects function at CL 16th unless otherwise specified. All *focus glyphs* are circular in shape and resemble complex spirals of glowing purple beams of light decorated by tiny, slowly rotating words written in magical script. A character can read these glyphs with *read magic* or a DC 25 Decipher Script check. Studying these glyphs is essential to understanding each glyph's true key. The *focus glyphs* are vertically aligned and hover in the air, sometimes close enough to a wall that they look painted on. A character that stands on the far side of a *focus glyph* and looks though its center is (perhaps unknowingly) looking toward the unseen *master glyph* dozens of miles away on the Throne of Abraxus. Each glyph is presented as a stat block when it appears, using the following format.

## GLYPH NAME

*The entry begins with a short description of the glyph.*

**Ward** Each *focus glyph* powers a specific magical effect that is reflected in every other *focus glyph*. These wards, working together, help protect the glyphs from those who would do them harm. Once a glyph is destroyed, its ward is removed from the remaining *focus glyphs* so that each glyph becomes successively easier to destroy. A glyph's ward has an enhanced effect on itself; this enhanced effect is described here.

**Incantation** A short phrase that is telepathically imprinted into the mind of any creature that touches the glyph.

**hp** This is the glyph's hit point total. For the purpose of spell effects, a glyph should be treated as a creature rather than an object—it does not have a hardness rating, nor does it possess any particular resistance to energy attacks.

**AC** The glyph's armor class with the defense ward active; if the defense ward is down, the glyph loses its +5 deflection bonus. **Saves:** The glyph's saving throw modifier for Fortitude, Will, and Reflex saves. This number includes the +5 resistance bonus granted by the defense ward; if this ward is down, the glyph loses this bonus to its saves.

**Resistances** Any immunities and resistances the glyph possesses, including damage reduction, appear here.

**Weaknesses** Vulnerabilities to particular energy types, weapon damage, or specific spells appear here.

**Spell Keys** Each glyph has a spell or group of spells that aids in its deactivation. These spells, and their particular effects, appear here. Unless otherwise stated, application of any

spell key deactivates the glyph's aura for 1 round.

**True Key** Each glyph also has a "true key"—a specific series of actions that can shut the glyph down until the appropriate empowering ritual is performed. This ritual takes weeks to perform, and for the purposes of this adventure, deactivating a glyph via its true key effectively destroys it. Only Allevrah can perform the empowering ritual—if she is slain, the glyph cannot be reactivated until another creature spends the years necessary to learn the ritual from Allevrah's notes.

**Deactivation** When a glyph is deactivated, a burst of magical energy occurs at the glyph site. The effects of that wash of magical energy are detailed here. Deactivating a glyph earns the PCs experience as if they had defeated a CR 12 creature in combat—but only once per glyph. Glyphs that are restored earn no additional XP awards if they are later destroyed again. Glyphs cannot be dispelled, and antimagic only suppresses them as long as the antimagic effect lasts. A *rod of cancellation* or a *mage's disjunction* can deactivate a glyph immediately if it fails its save to resist the effect.

## Glyph Wards

Each *focus glyph* powers a different ward. When all five *focus glyphs* are active, the following five effects function at each *focus glyph* and at the *master glyph* in area **R7**. By destroying a *focus glyph*, the corresponding ward vanishes from the remaining glyphs.

**Fury:** The *focus glyph* at the Weeping Cliffs (Part Four) powers the fury ward. This ward causes any *earthfall glyph* to inflict 3d6 points of electricity damage (no save) to anyone who touches or attempts to damage a glyph as long as the *glyph of fury* remains active.

**Renewal:** The *focus glyph* at the Crystal Plaza (Part Five) powers the renewal ward. As long as this glyph is active, any other glyph that is destroyed is automatically restored to full functionality 24 hours later.

**Defense:** The *focus glyph* at the Bloodforge (Part Six) grants all glyphs a +5 deflection bonus to AC and a +5 resistance bonus on saving throws.

**Vigilance:** The *focus glyph* at the Fetid Palace (Part Seven) alerts Allevrah whenever an attempt is made to tamper with one of the *focus glyphs*.

**Watching:** The *focus glyph* at Rotstone Hollows (Part Eight) allows Allevrah to stand in the center of the *master glyph* and then, as long as she concentrates on an active *focus glyph*, project an image to the center of that glyph. This functions as the spell *project image*, allowing her to aid in the glyph's defense with spells. If the projected image is dispelled, Allevrah must wait 1 minute before forming a new one. From the time she becomes alerted to a glyph's peril (most likely via the vigilance ward), it's 2d6 rounds before she can step into the *master glyph* to manifest an image.

## Getting Around

Travel in the Land of Black Blood can be accomplished through a number of means. Walking, riding, teleportation, flight, wall-climbing, even travel by boat are all viable methods of transportation. The methods the PCs choose to move from glyph to glyph are up to them, but the Land of Black Blood is a rather large place. Use the map on page 50 of this book to track the PCs' journeys—as they travel, feel free to liven things up by checking for wandering monsters. There's a 10% chance of an encounter occurring each hour—a Land of Black Blood wandering monster table appears on page 81.

## Azrinae Defenders

Allevarez and her servants do not sit idly while the PCs travel around the Land of Black Blood ruining their plans. While the Azrinae priestess is content to remain in her temple to protect the *master glyph* and to continue the ritual that will call the heavens down on Kyonin, she has sufficient guardians and allies within the Land of Black Blood to contend with the party as they move from glyph to glyph. Her concern is rated in three stages—each one representing an increasingly heightened state of alarm. When this adventure begins, the alarm stage is set at 0. Each time Allevarez learns that the PCs have destroyed a glyph, the alarm stage rises by 1 up to a maximum of 3. Other events (such as allowing Denrelwe to report to Allevarez that she sent the PCs on a wild goose chase, or each time the PCs attempt to invade the Throne of Abraxus before all five *focus glyphs* are destroyed) can raise the alarm stage as well. Once the alarm stage is raised, it takes 1d4 hours for additional troops to arrive at each active *focus glyph* site. The alarm stage is automatically reduced by 1 every week that passes that the PCs don't trigger a new alarm.

The following reinforcements are not cumulative.

**Alarm Stage 1 Reinforcements:** 6 drow soldiers (EL 13)

**Alarm Stage 2 Reinforcements:** 4 drow soldiers led by 1 drow priestess (EL 14)

**Alarm Stage 3 Reinforcements:** 6 drow soldiers led by 2 drow priestesses with 1 hezrou minion (EL 15)

## Guiding the PCs—Order of Operations

Either by using divination spells, interrogating creatures that know something about the *focus glyphs*, or by directly studying a *focus glyph*, the PCs can start to develop an idea on the best order in which to deactivate the glyphs. Despite the freedom that the party has and the other obstacles they might face, there is a distinct order in which the PCs should deactivate the glyphs to minimize Allevarez's responses and the difficulty in handling future glyphs. You can use the information presented here to reward PCs with clues as to what to attempt next if they take actions to research their options as you see fit. Note that as each glyph is deactivated, energy from the glyph echoes along the mystic ley lines that connect the glyphs, incidentally pointing to the "correct" next target along the series.

1. The *glyph of renewal* restores a destroyed glyph after 24 hours, so it should be disabled first to prevent the PCs from having to retrace their steps.
2. The *glyph of vigilance* alerts Allevarez to any tampering with a glyph. Disabling it allows the PCs more freedom to operate.
3. The *glyph of watching* lets Allevarez observe the PCs as they engage her guardians. Disabling it leaves Allevarez completely blind to the movements of the party.
4. The *glyph of defense*, despite its ability to bolster the defenses of guardians, is less important than the other glyphs in terms of Azrinae patrols. Disabling it will, however, let the PCs face the ropers guarding the *glyph of fury* on better terms.
5. The *glyph of fury* is best left for last, when the party should be concerned more with the guardians than the glyph itself.

## Final Countdown

Although the PCs should feel like they're on a timer in this adventure, racing to defeat Allevarez before she sees her destructive plan through, you don't need to bother keeping track of the exact time for this adventure. Instead, you should track the progress of the falling star by tracking the PCs' successes and failures in this adventure.

## CHARTING FAILURE

Event	Doomsday Points Awarded
The PCs follow Denrelwe's false lead	+1
The characters assault one of the glyph locations but have to retreat before they deactivate the glyph	+2
Each time the party assaults the Blood Basilica before destroying all <i>focus glyphs</i>	+1
The characters leave the Land of Black Blood for longer than a day	+2
The characters spend a day doing nothing but resting	+1
A <i>focus glyph</i> is regenerated by the <i>glyph of renewal</i>	+1
The entire party is killed, and new PCs have to be generated	+2
The party confronts Allevarez and is forced to retreat before she is slain	+5
The PCs disable a <i>focus glyph</i>	-1

When the PCs first arrive in the Land of Black Blood, they have a Doomsday Score of 5. As they accomplish goals or make poor decisions, adjust this score as described in the Charting Failure sidebar.

Upon reaching a Doomsday Score of 20, Allevrah completes her ritual and calls down a falling star—consult “What if Allevrah Wins?” at the end of the adventure for ramifications of this sad event.

## PART FOUR: THE WEeping CLIFFS

Against the southern edge of the Land of Black Blood rise the Weeping Cliffs, a swath of vertical drops coated in the slime and muck of the great cavern. Here, the legendary black blood oozes raw and thick from a number of fissures among the cliffs, and it is here that Allevrah placed the *glyph of fury* to take advantage of the natural inhabitants that dwell nearby.

### The Glyph of Fury (EL 15)

The *glyph of fury* is carved along the sheer cliff wall, 1,000 feet above the ground below. Unlike the other glyphs, the *glyph of fury* is quite visible from a great distance; its

near constant blasts of lightning make it almost appear as a strobe light visible to a distance of 40 miles. Allevrah chose such a visible surface for the glyph for a particularly sly reason—this is the glyph that she can do without the most, and if it lures her enemies near, she’ll learn of their presence while the more important glyphs are still active.

Of course, reaching this glyph presents the PCs with a harrowing vertical climb, and the rock is coated with moisture, guano, and slippery fungal residue—climbing here requires a DC 30 Climb check as a result. Fortunately, 5- to 10-foot-wide ledges every 150 feet or so give climbers a reprieve: either a place to rest or a place to land if they fall.

**Creatures:** Ropers infest the slopes of the Weeping Cliffs, enjoying no shortage of bats, lizards, and other small prey that skitter and fly past, engaging in strange debates and philosophical arguments about the nature of evil and cruelty. They enjoyed the additions Allevrah made to these discussions, and enjoy her promise to send out larger and more delicious meals here every few days even more. As a result, the cliffside here is particularly littered with the partially eaten remnants of derro, chardas, drow, and other creatures Allevrah’s minions have brought out here to feed to the ropers. The ropers assume, of course, that the PCs are just the latest offering.

No matter what approach the PCs take up the cliffside, they’ll be confronted by small groups of ropers—never more than three at a time, but you should have them encounter at least three groups unless they’re flying or otherwise moving quickly up the surface. In this case, the area surrounding the *glyph of fury* is guarded by three ropers—remember that they’re immune to electricity and don’t mind the periodic bolts of lightning the *glyph of fury* emits.

#### ROPERS

hp 85 each (MM 215)

CR 12

#### GLYPH OF FURY

*Lightning crackles angrily from the carved face of the cliff, lashing out in all directions every few breaths. Rage flows from the wounds cut into the rock, as though the walls themselves are protesting the glyph’s presence.*

**Ward** The glyph unleashes a 60-foot-long lightning bolt (10d6 damage; Reflex DC 18 half) in a random direction once every 1d4 rounds at Initiative count 15.

**Incantation** “Bask in secrets once concealed, unleashed magics now revealed. Raging fury, boiling wrath—no calm ere the aftermath.”

hp 500

AC 35; Saves +14

**Immune** Electricity; **Resistance** acid 10, fire 10; **DR** 15/bludgeoning



**Weakness** takes 150% damage from sonic attacks

**Spell Keys** *Calm emotions* and spells of the charm subschool will deactivate the glyph's ward for 1 round if cast within 10 feet of the glyph. If cast directly at the glyph, it suffers 50 points of damage in addition to losing its aura for 1 round.

**True Key** A character that touches the *glyph of fury* feels the rage emanating from the magical symbol. If a character spends a minute studying the glyph's runes, he can attempt a DC 25 Diplomacy check. If the character succeeds, the glyph reveals what is necessary to disable it—it must be calmed. As a full round action, a character touching or adjacent to the glyph may attempt a DC 30 Diplomacy check to calm the glyph. This deactivates the aura as if a spell key had been cast. Three consecutive successful Diplomacy checks made to calm the glyph over the course of 3 rounds by the same character deactivates it permanently.

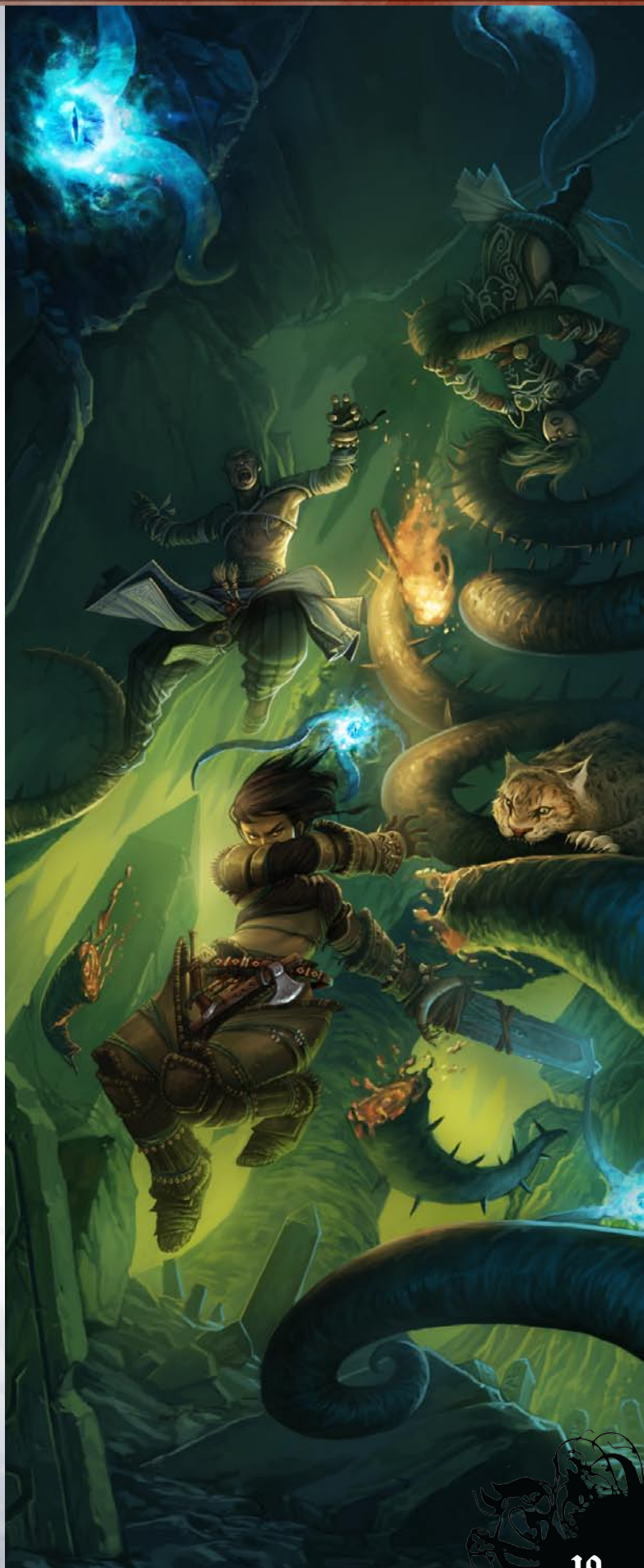
**Deactivation** A creature that deactivates the *glyph of fury* using its true key becomes infused with its fury, and becomes immune to mind-affecting effects for 24 hours as a result. If the *glyph of fury* is deactivated by any other means, it explodes in a 60-foot burst of energy. All creatures in this area take 20d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 20 half). As the glyph is deactivated, a bolt of energy hurtles toward the Throne of Abraxas.

## PART FIVE: THE CRYSTAL PLAZA

The *glyph of renewal* is, in Allevrah's eyes, the most important of the *focus glyphs*, for it is this glyph that allows the others to self-restore in the event of a disaster. As such, she chose this strange plaza of towering crystals as the site for this glyph, as the creature that uses the crystal plaza as its hunting ground is deadly indeed.

### The Glyph of Renewal (EL 17)

Located only a few hundred yards east of the stretch of beach known locally as the Aboleth Landing, the Crystal Plaza is all that remains of an outcast wizard's attempt to create a thin spot between the Material Plane and the Abyss to facilitate his conjuration experiments. He raised the eerie crystals here in a henge to focus his magic, but he succeeded far earlier in the process than he'd planned. His crystals drew the attention of a deadly predator known as an abyssal harvester, a hideous mass of tentacles arrayed around a toothless, ever-hungry maw that can reach through the dimensions to hunt for food. That wizard fell victim to the harvester, and ever since, it has used this spot as an easy place to hunt for food. The abyssal harvester's presence here is well known to those who dwell in the Land of Black Blood, and they avoid the region as a result. They call the creature the Feasting Damnation, and it is one of the Land of Black Blood's most notorious denizens.





The Crystal Plaza itself consists of several 30-foot-tall crystal archways set in a rough circle. Several of the crystals have fallen, but the thin spot between the Material Plane and the Abyss remains. The *glyph of renewal* shimmers in the space under the largest of the crystal arches, its purple glow dimly illuminating the region and reflecting off the countless surrounding facets.

As the players enter the plaza, have each one make a DC 25 Spot check to notice an unusual rippling in the air amid the crystal arches, almost as if a thin layer of water were superimposed vertically between some of the arches. If none succeeds, the PCs may well be surprised when the Feasting Damnation attacks.

All abyssal harvesters have the ability to send their tentacles through the dimensions to attack foes on other planes. The thin spot created by the Crystal Plaza makes this region particularly easy for this tactic—the Feasting Damnation’s far reaching ability can be used here without depleting its daily limit of 12 per day, and it need not inject its tentacles within 20 feet of each other as long as they appear on the area shown in the map of the Crystal Plaza. Likewise, the thin spot allows a character who is grabbed by the harvester and pulled into the Abyss a chance at returning to the Material Plane—for 1 minute after he

is pulled into the Abyss, a non-distracted character can attempt a DC 20 Will save as a full-round action to return through the thin spot to the Crystal Plaza. If he is being grappled by the Feasting Damnation, he must first escape its clutches to attempt this escape.

### THE FEASTING DAMNATION

CR 17

Abyssal harvester (*Tome of Horrors III 6*)

CE Gargantuan aberration (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +29, Spot +29

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 6, flat-footed 28

(+22 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 283 (21d8+189); fast healing 10

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

**DR** 15/cold iron; **Immune** poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft.

**Melee** 6 tentacles +26 (3d6+15/19–20)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

**Special Attacks** debilitating constriction, far reaching, harvest, improved grab, *plane shift*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Once combat starts, there is no negotiating or even communicating with the Feasting Damnation.

It attempts to grab anything coming within reach (which includes PCs trying to disable the glyph). Sickly looking eyes peer out of the rips in the fabric between dimensions, examining the battlefield and trying to recognize threats. The Damnation seeks to eliminate spellcasters and large-weapon wielders (who might banish or wound it) before dealing with ranged opponents or frailer-seeming threats.

**Morale** The Feasting Damnation abandons the hunt if reduced to less than 30 hit points, but after it heals, it is certain to return to this site again.

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 41, **Dex** 10, **Con** 29, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +15; **Grp** +42

**Feats** Alertness, Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (tentacle), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

**Skills** Listen +29, Spot +29

**Languages** Abyssal

**SQ** tentacle regeneration

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Debilitating Constriction (Su)** On a successful grapple check, an abyssal harvester deals 3d6+15 points of damage plus 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

**Far Reaching (Su)** Up to 12 times per day, an abyssal harvester can, as a move-equivalent action, extend a tentacle across the dimensions and into the Ethereal Plane, the Astral Plane, Hell, or the Material Plane. All of its tentacles must be injected into the same plane and appear within 20 feet of each other. It can sense the surrounding area via its tentacles and can attack normally, but cannot move from its current location. It can withdraw its tentacles as a move action and re-inject them into the same plane (or a different plane) on its next turn. *Dismissal*, *dispel chaos*, or *dispel evil* can force a single tentacle out of an injected plane, while *banishment* can affect all of the tentacles.

**Harvest (Su)** A creature grappled by an abyssal harvester's tentacles while it is using far reaching who has 20 or fewer hit points or 4 or fewer Constitution must succeed on a DC 21 Will save or be drawn through the planes to the abyssal harvester in its lair on the Abyss. The opponent remains grappled on arrival. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, an abyssal harvester must hit a foe with a tentacle attack. If it does, it can attempt to grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Plane Shift (Sp)** An abyssal harvester can enter the Astral Plane, the Abyss, Hell, or the Material Plane using this spell-like ability. It can bring up to six other willing creatures in its grasp; unwilling creatures may resist the effect with a DC 18 Will save. This effect functions at CL 18th.

**Tentacle Regeneration (Ex)** An abyssal harvester regrows lost tentacles in 1 week.

#### GLYPH OF RENEWAL

*A soothing purple light dances within the etched cracks of this sigil. Approaching it grants a feeling of warmth and healing, as though all troubles have been washed away.*

**Ward** The glyph grants fast healing 10 to any drow or evil extraplanar beings (including the Feasting Damnation) within 100 feet.

**Incantation** "And so spoke Abraxas: give unto me your faith, and I shall grant to you a cleansing unlike any you have witnessed or conceived."

**hp** 350

**AC** 30; **Saves** +16

**Resistance** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10, sonic 10; **DR** 15/bludgeoning

**Weakness** none

**Spell Keys** Inflict spells, *enervation*, and *energy drain*, if targeted directly at the glyph, deactivate its ward for 1 round.

**True Key** A character that touches the glyph is filled with healing warmth. If that character succeeds on a DC 20 Heal check, he realizes that the glyph is filled with life and must be tampered with by an expert healer in order to deactivate it. As a full round action, a character adjacent to the glyph may attempt a DC 30 Heal check to divert the flow of life through its runes. This deactivates the aura as if a spell key had been cast. Three consecutive successful Heal checks made on the glyph deactivate it permanently, requiring a new ritual from Allevrah to restore its power. These checks must be made in consecutive rounds, by the same character. If any damage is done to the glyph, the character must start the process over from the beginning.

**Deactivation** Deactivating the *glyph of renewal* by means of its true key causes the deactivating character to become infused with purple light identical to *faerie fire* for 1 round. That character gains fast healing 5 for 24 hours. Deactivating the glyph in any other way causes life to be leached from the surrounding area—all creatures within a 60-foot-radius burst must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or gain 1d6 negative levels. A character who saves gains only 1 negative level. As the magic of the glyph dies, a ribbon of energy arches toward the Hanging Forest—an indication to observant PCs that this should be their next destination.

## PART SIX: THE BLOODFORGE

Hidden on a tiny island along one of the many rivers of black blood is a small ring of towers surrounding a wide, tent-filled courtyard. Within, Allevrah's trusted lieutenant supervises a mustering point and experimentation known as the Bloodforge—an outpost for running foul alchemical tests on samples of black blood.

This site is run by a drow named Drexinis, who in the past has served Allevrah as bodyguard, advisor, and lover after he shamed the wizard Nolgeniss out of the position. Drexinis hopes to discover a way to manually trigger the transformation into a black-blooded creature by using a single draft of black blood, and has made several unsuccessful attempts on his followers, drider slaves, and several captured chardas over the past several months. He recently joined forces with another scholar of the black blood—a ghoulish priestess named Atendri from the distant ghoulish city of Nemret-Noktoria who traveled to the Land of Black Blood on a pilgrimage. With her aid and advice, Drexinis has made some exciting progress, but the final discovery still eludes him. He's accepted his charge of defending the *glyph of defense* begrudgingly, but since Allevrah allows him to continue his experiments here he hasn't been very vocal about being forced to spend so much time apart from the woman he lusts for.

Despite his influence in the plans of the drow priestess, Drexinis holds no illusions about his own value in the Azrinae hierarchy or in Allevrah's sight; he is a valued servant and welcome plaything, but ultimately expendable, of no more worth than any non-drow slave that might be hurled forward as a fleshly shield against enemies. Still, Drexinis does not rebel, viewing his station as already as firm and high as he can hope to gain. He seeks to prove his continued value by forging servants useful to his mistress's cause.

Each of the towers surrounding the Bloodforge courtyard is 40 feet tall, with 10-foot-wide walls connecting them all on the second floor. The upper level of each tower is a simple, open landing that allows access to the stairwell to the floor below, and exits to the wall-parapets connecting the towers.

The players might not find a direct approach to be the most advantageous to their success. Except where otherwise noted, the stone walls of the Bloodforge are uneven stonework, with small handholds making it a DC 25 Climb check to scale.

## K1. Entrance (EL 14)

A pair of sturdy iron gates, thirty feet high and nearly twenty across, bars entrance into this large fortress. The bars are thick as an arm, and stand in paired rows to keep anyone from passing between them. To either side stands a large tower and through the bars a wide courtyard is visible, with more towers beyond.

Despite its forbidding appearance, the gate to the Bloodforge is not locked. It is, however, closed, and has a simple latch mechanism that must be lifted manually in order to allow the gates to swing open. There is a very obvious lock on the gate, a lure for unfamiliar or unwelcome visitors to trigger one of Drexinis's favorite

traps—a cloud of black blood which has been alchemically enhanced to cause Dexterity damage in addition to causing cold damage to those caught within. Of course, if the trap is triggered, the loud hissing sound is enough to alert the denizens within of trouble at the gates.

## CLOUD OF BLACK BLOOD

CR 14

Type magic device; Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

### EFFECT

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect all creatures within a 20-foot burst; hissing cloud of freezing black mist (1d6 cold damage plus 2d6 Dexterity damage; DC 20 Reflex save half)

## K2. Courtyard (EL 14)

More than a hundred yards across at its widest, the courtyard is empty save for three tents along its northern wall, each large enough to sleep four or more soldiers. Across the yard, two more towers rise out of the earth, with a third rising behind the largest tower to the left. For all its camp-like feel, no fires burn in the courtyard, and no jests of camaraderie can be heard.

This central courtyard is where most of the drow rest when not on patrol elsewhere in the Land of Black Blood. Given that drow don't need the same quantity of rest as other races, a guardman's day is much longer than most, consisting of 14 hours of patrol, 5 hours of free time, and 5 hours "bedroll."

**Creatures:** No matter what time of day the players arrive at the courtyard, there are six drow and four driders in the area. Any battle within the courtyard alerts Drexinis, Atendri, and any remaining drow guards to the presence of intruders within the Bloodforge, removing the possibility of surprise for any of the areas and calling them all out into the courtyard to attack the PCs. If the entire Bloodforge is roused in this way, the PCs face a combined threat equaling an EL 17 encounter.

If the PCs manage to eliminate the guards, it takes 1d12+2 hours before reinforcements from the Throne of Abraxas or patrols arrive.

## DROW SOLDIERS (6)

CR 8

hp 57 each (see page 13)

## DRIDERS (4)

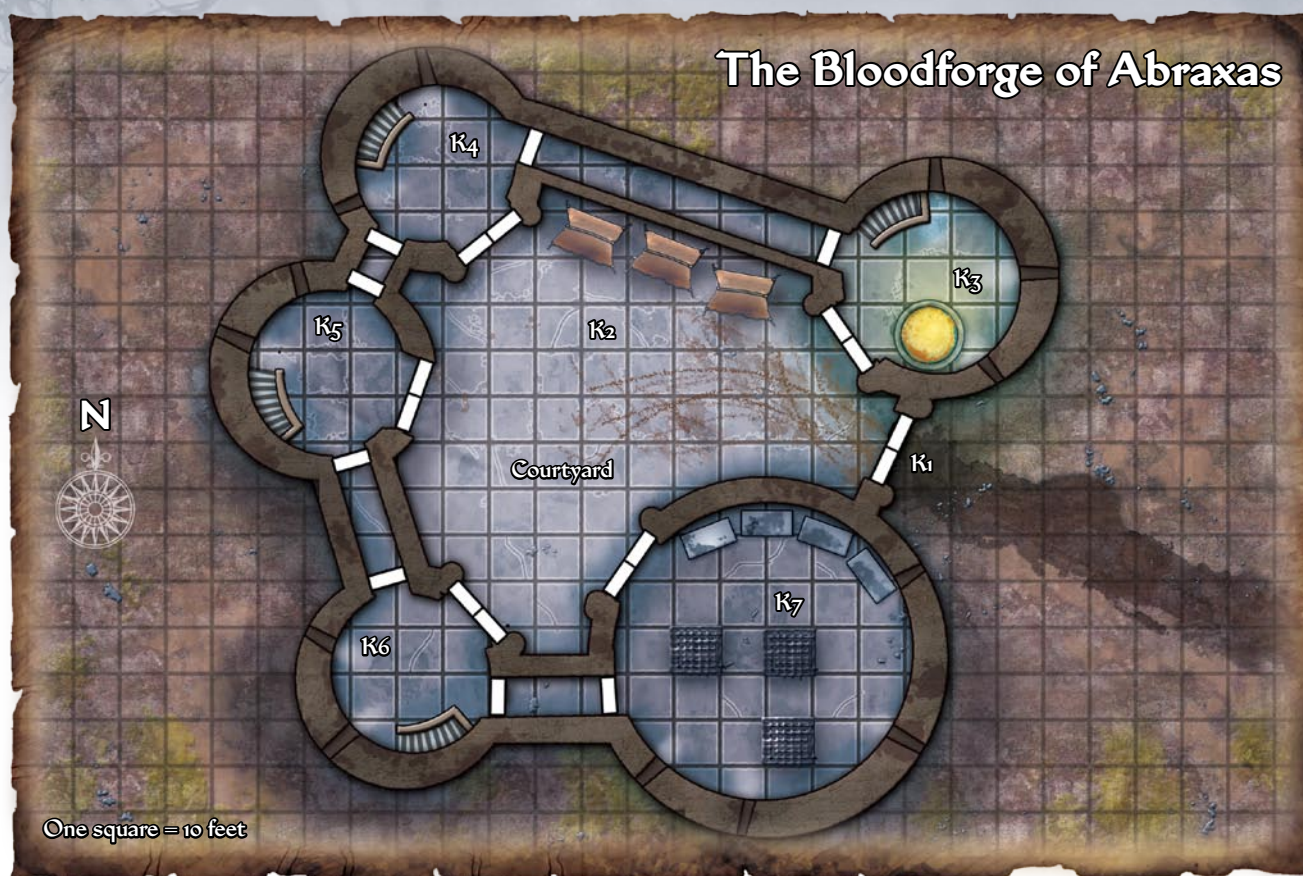
CR 7

hp 45 each (MM 89)

## K3. Kitchen

A large fire pit dominates the southern wall of this circular room, with a number of small stools and a couple of tables filling the remainder of the space. Sacks of an unidentifiable, flour-like





powder rest against one of the walls, next to a pair of empty barrels that stink of some pickled and preserved goods. A flight of stairs leads up to the tower roof.

This tower is where the food for the Bloodforge's residents is prepared. While most patrols subsist on meals of lichen, fungi, and hunted beasts while wandering the Black Blood, the guards of the Bloodforge, its more permanent servants, and Drexinis (when present) all depend on the poor fare from this small kitchen for sustenance. There's a 20% chance of encountering 1d3 of the drow soldiers from area K2 here if the PCs haven't already encountered them all there already—an unusual occurrence unless the party has proven exceptionally stealthy.

#### K4. Guest Tower (EL 13)

This tower is spare and barren, with racks for vials and a few bundles of empty parchment cases, and a single, open chest with opulent robes trimmed with gold thread. No bed adorns these chambers, though the state of the clothing and the lack of any storage suggest that someone must be staying here.

**Creature:** Drexinis's ghoulish advisor, the priestess Atendri, uses this room as a "bedchamber" when she is visiting the

Bloodforge. Although she has no need for sleep, the ghoulish priestess uses this area for feeding, silent contemplation, recording notes, and offering prayer to Kabriri, the demon lord of ghouls and graves.

If the PCs don't raise the alarm outside, they can encounter Atendri here as she looks over several pages of alchemical notes and chews idly on a severed, well-aged drow hand. She reacts calmly to the intrusion, regarding the PCs curiously and perhaps with a little hunger. She attempts to reason with the PCs, offering them the blessings of Kabriri in exchange for their service, but is entirely unconcerned with Allevrah's greater plans for calling down her meteor. The deaths of the living only mean easier—if less interesting—meals for her and her kin. She'll agree to remain silent on the PCs' presence and will quietly slip out of Bloodforge to begin her journey back to Nemret-Noktoria without staying to provide assistance to Drexinis in defending the site if the PCs can adjust her starting attitude of indifferent to helpful—or if they offer her a rare and exotic meal (such as a dead surface dweller) as a bribe.

#### ATENDRI

Female ghoulish cleric of Kabriri 12

CE Medium undead

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +16

CR 13

## DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 17

(+4 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 95 (2d12+12d8+28)

Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +15

Immune undead traits; Resist +2 turn resistance

## OFFENSE

Spd 30ft.

**Melee** bite +10 (1d6 plus paralysis) and

Mwk light flail with *greater magic weapon* +11 (1d6+3) and claw +8 (1d3 plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** ghoul fever, paralysis, rebuke undead 4/day

**Spells Prepared** (CL 12th)

6th—*antilife shell*, *find the path*<sup>D</sup>, *harm*

5th—*greater command*, *righteous might*, *teleport*<sup>D</sup>, *slay living*

4th—*cure critical wounds*, *dimension door*<sup>D</sup>, *divine power*, *greater magic weapon*, *lesser planar ally*\*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*<sup>D</sup>, *meld into stone*, *protection from energy*, *speak with dead*, *water walk*

2nd—*death knell*\*, *desecrate*<sup>D\*</sup>, *hold person* (2), *silence*, *summon monster II*

1st—*command*, *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *longstrider*<sup>D</sup>, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*

0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *mending*, *read magic*

**D** domain spell; \* evil spell; **Domains** Evil (+1 caster level for evil spells), Travel (freedom of movement 12 rounds per day)

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** If expecting a fight with a cleric or paladin, Atendri uses her rebuke undead ability to bolster herself (increasing her effective level against turning) and *desecrate* to make turning more difficult. Otherwise, she casts *protection from energy* (fire), *righteous might*, and *shield of faith*. She casts *greater magic weapon* on her flail every day (already included in the above totals).

**During Combat** The ghoul uses *silence* to negate enemy spellcasters and *command* to divert tough opponents.

**Morale** Atendri flees if brought to 40 hp or lower, using *antilife shell*, *teleport*, *water walk*, or *obscuring mist*.

## STATISTICS

Str 11, Dex 17, Con —, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 14

Base Atk +10; Grp +10

**Feats** Alertness, Brew Potion, Multiattack, Stealthy, Unholy Fortitude

**Skills** Balance +7, Climb +4, Concentration +17, Craft (alchemy) +20, Diplomacy +7, Heal +9, Hide +14, Jump +4, Knowledge

(religion) +14, Move Silently +14, Spellcraft +10

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Necril (ghoul), Undercommon

**Combat Gear** masterwork flail; **Other Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +2, *mithral chain shirt* +2, 100 gp worth of silver dust (for *desecrate*), 4 unholy water, alchemist's lab, 130 gp.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

### K5. Aerie (EL 8)

This high-ceilinged chamber is filled with numerous rafters and ledges storing dried logs harvested from immense mushrooms. The place stinks of filth and is littered with discarded husks of what seem to be inedible insects of unusual size. Immense mounds of white residue that can only be guano stain the floor in reeking heaps.



Atendri

**Creatures:** The drow of the Bloodforge use dire bats to patrol the Land of Black Blood and to travel quickly between here and the Throne of Abraxas. They stable these mounts here, but allow them to feed while out on duty, so the only things in the area other than the cages are a few piles of untended guano. At any one time, seven dire bats hang from the rafters here. They're constantly hungry, and attack any non-drow they spy. They may not be a challenge to the PCs, but they make enough noise when they attack to alert the entire fort.

### DIRE BATS (7)

hp 30 each (MM 62)

CR 2

### K6. Drexinis's Tower

The doors to this tower (including the trap door from the roof) are *arcane locked* (CL 13th).

This tower contains a well-appointed personal chamber. The walls are covered over with rich, red velvet curtains. A lavish poster bed is swathed with similar bedsheets. Near the stairway is a carved table of mahogany on which stands a washing bowl of gold-trimmed ivory.

This is the personal abode of Drexinis. Although he maintains chambers at Allevrah's base in the Throne of Abraxas, Drexinis considers this tower his actual home for now, and this is where he stores his more sensitive secrets—along with some of the luxury items he has managed to hide from his Azrinae priestess.

Due to the sensitivity of the area (and Drexinis's temper), the drow and drider guards have standing orders never to enter the tower, even if the Bloodforge is under attack. Should they witness anyone entering, however, they immediately alert Drexinis in area K7.

**Treasure:** The curtains and sheets are of excellent make and the finest silk, worth 500 gp as a matched set. The bowl is worth 150 gp. Drexinis's prized items, however, are a set of alchemical tools hidden under his bed that provide a +2 competence bonus to Craft (alchemy) and Craft (poison) checks and a set of silver-and-green ceremonial vestments taken from Allevrah's bedchambers. The tools are worth 250 gp, while the vestments are worth 3,000 gp. The vestments are interesting in that they are sized for a female elven priestess of Nethys—Drexinis knows little about religion and took these because Allevrah never wore them and he figured they wouldn't be missed; he enjoys the smell of the robes as they remind him of his domineering lover. These robes could give the PCs an advantage in the final battle against Allevrah (see page 40 for details).

## K7. The Bloodforge (EL 15)

This tower is nearly seventy feet across. Three large cages stand to the south, shackles hanging from their inside bars. Along the north wall rests a tight grouping of tables, covered with vials, bottles, and powders, their surfaces all seemingly stained with blood. The room is lit by the nauseating purple glow of a ten-foot-wide circular glyph that hovers against the southeastern wall.

The Bloodforge itself is not a forge at all but the alchemical laboratory where Drexinis performs his experiments on the black blood to create new poisons, transmutative potions, and other alchemical wonders. The cages are used to hold stock for his experiments—typically chardas or drow who need to be punished. The cages are currently empty.

**Creatures:** Drexinis has just completed one of his experiments—another failed attempt to infuse

a creature with the black-blooded template. The result of this failure, a slowly melting but still barely alive drider, screams in the middle of the room where it has collapsed. The thing will be nothing more than a pool of rancid black sludge in less than a minute. Drexinis is accompanied by a lumbering hezrou demon on loan to him from Allevrah. Drexinis has just given the demon permission to feed on the dying, melting drider, and if the PCs enter here without raising the alarm, they are greeted with this unnerving and nauseating sight.

### DREXINIS

CR 14

Male drow sorcerer 13

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12

(+2 deflection, +3 Dex)

**hp** 58 (13d4+26)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7 (+9 vs. spells and spell-like abilities)

**Immune** sleep; **SR** 24

**Weakness** light blindness

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +6 (1d4)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *detect magic*, *faerie fire*, *feather fall*, *levitate*

**Spells Known** (CL 13th, ranged touch +8)

6th (5/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 24), *globe of invulnerability*

5th (7/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *dominate person* (DC 22), *mage's faithful hound*

4th (7/day)—*dimension door*, *minor creation*, *shout* (DC 22)

3rd (8/day)—*confusion* (DC 20), *hold person* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 21), *slow* (DC 20), *vampiric touch*

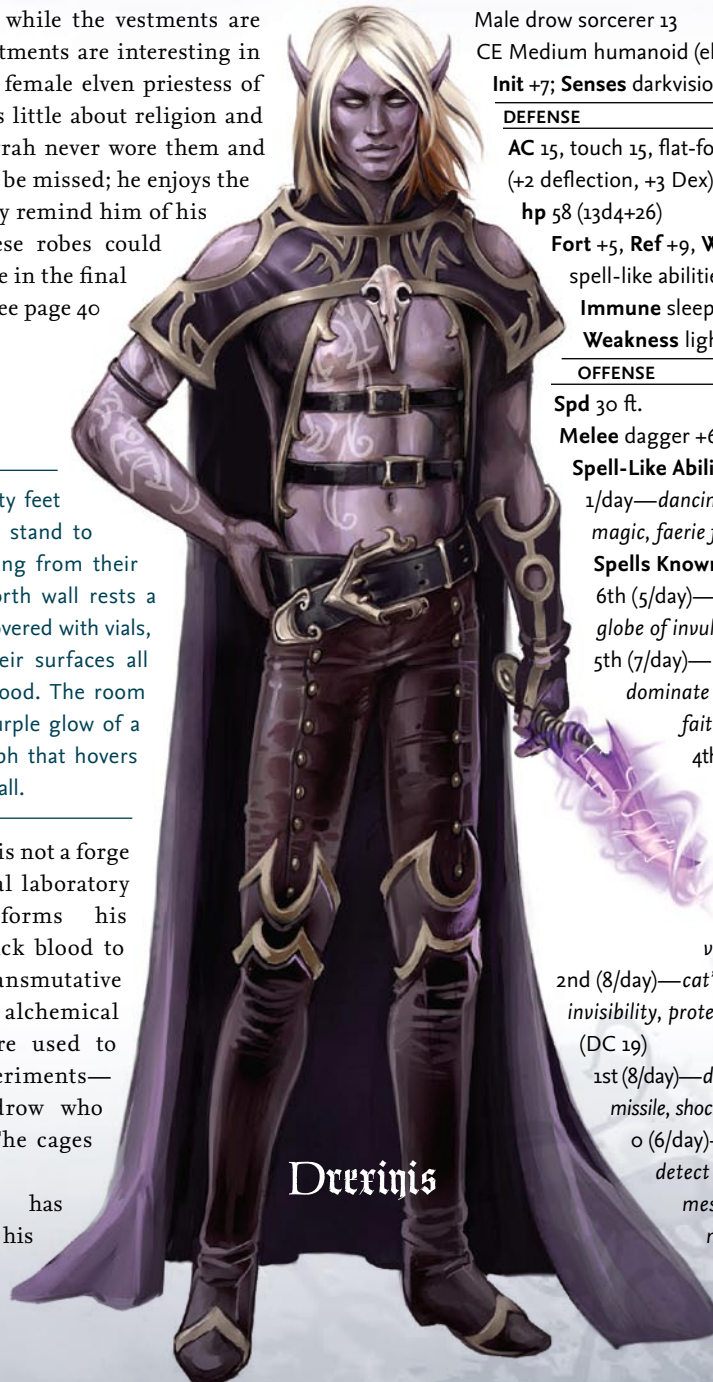
2nd (8/day)—*cat's grace*, *eagle's splendor*, *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *scare* (DC 19)

1st (8/day)—*disguise self*, *floating disk*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *unseen servant*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *flare*, *mage hand*, *message*, *open/close*, *read magic*, *prestidigitation*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat**



Drexinis

Drexinis prepares for combat by casting *invisibility*, then *cat's grace* to increase his defenses (AC 17, touch 17, Reflex +9) and *eagle's splendor* to increase his spell DCs by +2. If he still has time before combat, he casts *globe of invulnerability* and *protection from arrows*.

**During Combat** Drexinis uses *hold person* and *confusion* to disable non-spellcasters, and targets casters with *chain lightning* or uses *lightning bolt* in conjunction with his metamagic dagger.

**Morale** Drexinis is too pretty to die. If reduced below 20 hp or if the PCs manage to eliminate the driders and draw him down to his last spells, the drow mage unleashes his spell of last resort: *transformation*. Rather than employing the benefits of the spell to combat the PCs, Drexinis attempts to flee the area, bursting through the door and leaping over the courtyard wall. He is convinced that he has already failed Allevrah, and would rather assist in the final battle than be slain here. If Drexinis manages to flee, be sure to include him as part of the final encounters in the Throne of Abraxas.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 15, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +6

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Dark Adept, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation), Silent Spell, Still Spell

**Skills** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +12, Concentration +15, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Perform (dance) +15, Perform (oratory) +15, Search +4, Spellcraft +9

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Sakvroth (drow sign language), Undercommon

**SQ** summon familiar (Kashess the tiny viper)

**Combat Gear** *lesser empowered metamagic dagger* (as rod);

**Other Gear** *belt of health* +4 (as *amulet of health*), *glove of storing*, *ring of protection* +2, *robe of charisma* +4, 175 gp.

#### HEZROU

hp 138 (MM 44)

#### CR 11

**Treasure:** The majority of the bottles on the tables contain incomplete alchemical mixtures, but there are several completed potions strewn about, along with several doses of poison and a few vials of purified black blood. None of the vials are labeled (although those containing black blood are relatively obvious for what they are). In all, there are 6 vials of black blood, 2 *potions of mage armor*, 3 *potions of false life*, a *potion of fly*, a *potion of haste*, 5 vials of drow poison, 3 vials of purple worm poison, and 1 vial of oil of tagit.

#### GLYPH OF DEFENSE

*The magical symbol emits a field of foreboding, as if warning that none will be permitted to pass, no matter the righteousness of their cause.*

**Ward** Drow, driders and evil extraplanar beings within 100 feet of the *glyph of defense* receive resistance to acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, and sonic 10, and DR 5/—.

**Incantation** "I am the armor and the shield of my mistress, and I fear you not."

**hp** 600

**AC** 30; **Saves** +12

**Resistance** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10; **SR** 25; **DR** 15/bludgeoning

**Weakness** none

**Spell Keys** Any spell that creates a fear effect deactivates the ward for 1 round if cast within 10 feet of the glyph. If cast directly on it, the glyph suffers 50 points of damage in addition to losing its aura and all energy resistance for 1 round.

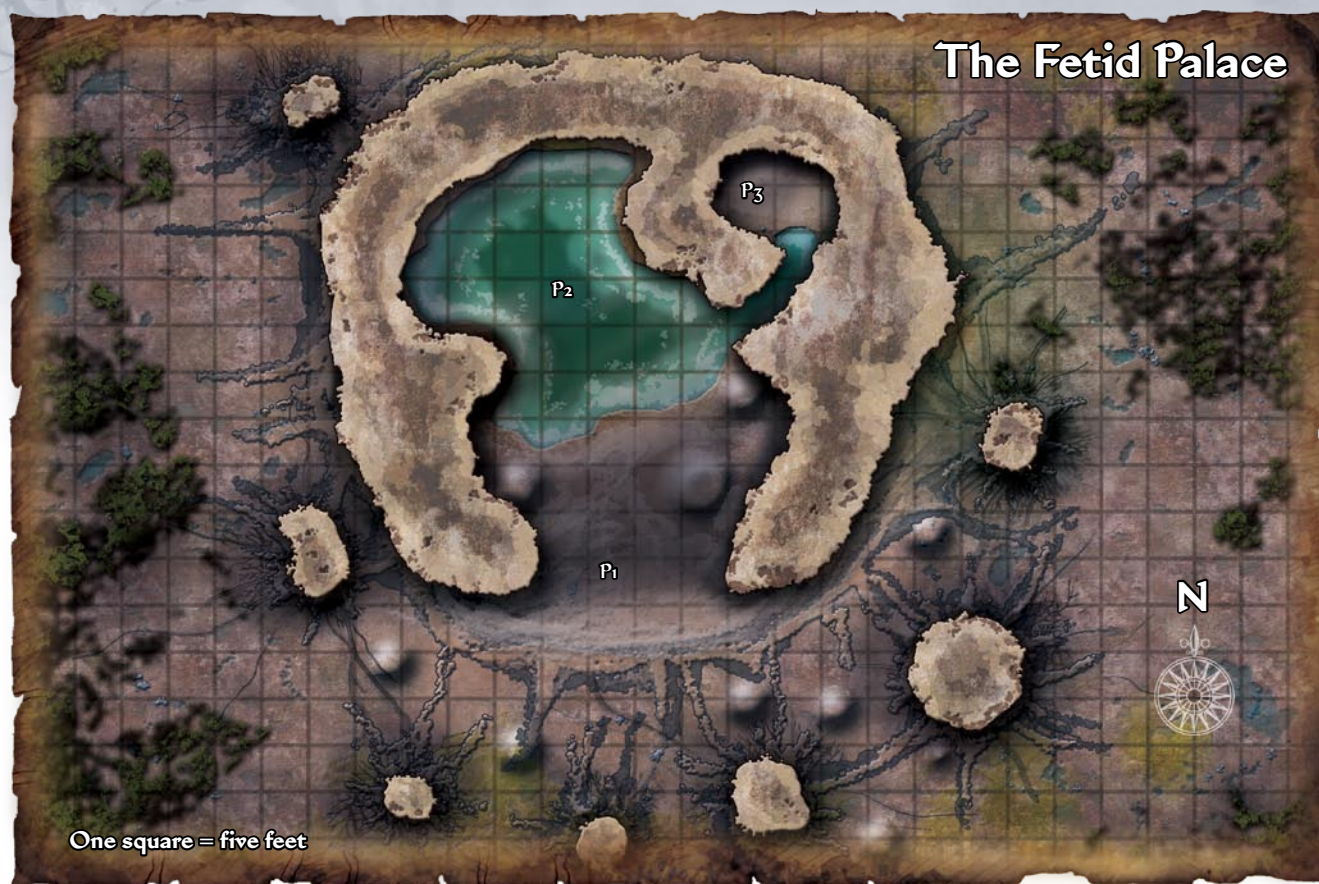
**True Key** A character that touches the glyph can feel the protective field emanating off the magical symbol. After deciphering the glyph, a character can make a DC 25 Sense Motive check to learn what is necessary to disable it: the glyph must be convinced that the person touching it doesn't find the glyph's mistress to be a threat. As a full round action, a character touching or adjacent to the glyph may attempt a DC 30 Intimidate check to so convince the glyph. This deactivates the aura as if a spell key had been cast. Three consecutive successful Intimidate checks made to calm the glyph deactivate it permanently, requiring a new ritual from Allevrah to restore its power. These checks must be made in consecutive rounds by the same character.

**Deactivation** Deactivating the *glyph of defense* by means of its true key grants the character who deactivated the glyph immunity to electricity and a +4 insight bonus to AC for 24 hours. Deactivating the glyph in any other way causes a wash of energy to flow outward in a 60-foot-radius burst. All creatures in this area must make a DC 16 Will save or suffer a potent curse that infuses them with ill luck against attack. This curse imparts a –6 penalty to the cursed victim's AC, and is permanent until it is lifted. As the glyph is deactivated, a bolt of lightning arcs toward the Weeping Cliffs.

## PART SEVEN: THE FETID PALACE

In the western reaches of the Land of Black Blood grows a hideous and unnerving mass of fungus—the Hanging Jungle, a realm where ropes of thick, foul-smelling fungus hang from floor to ceiling. Mushrooms grow on the cavern's floor and roof alike, many of them the size of trees. An eerie world exists between the caps of these mirrored mushroom forests, where down and up look the same.

The Hanging Forest is ruled by one of the Land of Black Blood's most dangerous denizens—a being known as the Moldering Emperor. This creature is a massive, winged abomination that has dwelt here for countless ages, emerging only rarely to hunt and claiming the entire Hanging Forest as its domain, brooking no intelligent neighbors. Once a hulking, worm-like creature with a



maw of writing tentacles known as a neothelid, the Moldering Emperor was one of the first creatures to undergo the hideous transformation into a black blooded creature—and unlike those that followed, the Moldering Emperor’s body is forever. It does not fear the dissolution that affects all other victims of the black blood curse—but only as long as it remains in the Land of Black Blood: it can never return to its kind in distant Denebrum far to the west.

The Moldering Emperor enjoys its solitude, and seeks to consume any creature foolish enough to enter its palace. Its current lair is a cavern carved in the side of a slowly dying mushroom, the tallest in the Hanging Forest at a height of nearly 250 feet, known as the Fetid Palace. Impressed by Allevrah’s tales of the new world that would exist once she brings her strike down on Kyonin, it granted the drow’s request to use part of its home—a hollow portion of the husk that the Emperor doesn’t use—as the site of one of her *focus glyphs*. Although the drow’s machinations passingly amuse the great beast, it is no friend of the dark elves and they cannot call upon it for aid.

Note that the effects of the *glyph of vigilance* cause those who come within 60 feet of area **P3** (which includes any creatures inside of the Fetid Palace) to grow heightened

senses. One can see every distinct spore floating in the air, smell the hideous mélange of aromas and pick out which scent is which with ease, and can even hear the soft hissing of sweat dripping from pores.

### P1. Entrance

Rising out of the muck is a great, massive mushroom, its gradually sloping stalk rising hundreds of feet into the air—so far that light does not reach its tip from the cavern floor. A platform of fungal matter forms a sort of landing out of the swamp-like terrain, leading to a wide, tall gap in the side of the mushroom’s stalk fifty feet off the ground.

The great, centuries-old mushroom that houses the Fetid Palace has a number of smaller fungi growing off it like parasites on the flank of a massive beast. The entrance through which the players must pass to enter the palace is no exception; it contains a number of small spore pouches that look like dangling grapes or dangling blisters, each hidden beneath the surface. With sufficient weight, the pouches pop and the spores within become airborne.

The first character to walk across the floor of this area triggers a burst of these spores, creating a 20-foot-radius



spread. The spores take root in the lungs and around the mouth and nose of any creature, affecting all within as if by *dust of sneezing and choking* (works as a poison 2d6 Constitution damage/1d6 Constitution damage; Fortitude DC 15 to resist) without the stunning normally associated with the cursed dust. The spore cloud persists for 1 minute, after which time it fades away; once the spore cloud is triggered, it takes a day for the entrance to rebuild its supply of deadly spores.

## P2. The Emperor's Lair (EL 16)

This roughly circular cavern fills a great deal of the interior of the mushroom's stalk, with thick, fibrous ribs running up along the walls to support what looms above. Numerous species of fungus coat the walls, and the air is thick with a haze of spores. The floor is slick with mold and drops away to the north into a nearly gelatinous pool of foul-looking water.

The pool in this chamber is a mere 2 feet deep at its deepest point, but the water itself is quite foul and carries a particularly virulent strain of blinding sickness—anyone who drinks from the water or even allows the stuff to get into wounds (this includes anyone who wades in the stuff while at less than 50% full hit points) must make a DC 24 Fortitude save to avoid contracting the sickness (DMG 292). Close examination of the chamber's walls with a DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the chamber appears to have been grown as much as constructed in a clever way that allows a large chamber without impacting the mushroom's stability above.

The thick cloud of spores in the room have a random effect on those who breathe the air in this room. A breathing creature can resist the spores by making a DC 20 Fortitude save, otherwise he must roll 1d4 to determine how the foul spores affect him. A new save must be made each round a creature continues to breathe the tainted air. Immunity to disease grants immunity to these spores, and a *remove disease* or similar effect removes the spores effects (although such efforts grant no protection to the next round's effects).

### d4 Spore Effect

- 1 Hallucinations (the victim sees threats that are not there and reacts in a random manner, as if *confused* for the round)
- 2 Nausea (the victim is nauseated for 1 round)
- 3 Sickened (the victim is sickened for 1 round)
- 4 Choking (the spores take root in the victim's lungs and burrow into the flesh, causing 1d4 points of Constitution damage)

**Creature:** The Moldering Emperor spends much of its time here simply sleeping and dreaming—there's a

60% chance it is doing so when the PCs arrive. As long as the PCs are exceptionally stealthy they can move through the chamber uncontested, but note that even if the Emperor is sleeping, it still gains a +10 bonus to its Listen check from the presence of the *glyph of vigilance* (offsetting the -10 penalty to Listen checks for sleeping). If the Moldering Emperor is not present, it certainly returns to its lair from a recent hunting trip at about the point when the PCs are finishing up with the glyph in area P3. Note that even if the PCs hide in area P3, the Emperor's tentacles can still reach every corner of that room if the creature moves up adjacent to the entrance to the area from this room.

If it sees that intruders have invaded its home, the Moldering Emperor issues a tremendous gurgling roar and attacks, pursuing foes as long as it is able. The beast looks like an immense worm, but is covered with a thick dripping layer of black ooze. Several pairs of horrid wings rise out of its back and its mouth unfolds like a rapidly blooming flower to reveal four long serrated tentacles.

#### MOLDERING EMPEROR

CR 16

Black-blooded neothelid

hp 362 (see page 83)

### P3. Glyph of Vigilance

Humid, cramped, and uncomfortable, this small chamber is still drier than the main cavern of the putrid place. Hovering against the calcified northern wall is a softly glowing sigil, a blue-white light tracing its lines like the strangely organized gyrations of a swarm of fireflies.

The air in this room is filled with the same dangerous spores as in area P2, although here they are more concentrated and it's a DC 25 Fortitude save to resist their effects.

This room is dominated by the presence of the *glyph of vigilance*, and otherwise contains no objects or direct threats. Allevrah depends on this glyph to alert her when other *focus glyphs* are being assaulted, and has hidden it as far away from sight as possible to keep prying eyes or angry creatures from disturbing it.

#### GLYPH OF VIGILANCE

*This glyph seems open and airy. It takes in all, and there is a sense of skittish alarm to the sigil, like a great bell waiting to be rung.*

**Ward** The *glyph of vigilance* heightens the senses of all creatures within a 60-foot spread, granting a +10 competence bonus on all Listen, Search, and Spot checks in addition to granting the effects of *true seeing* and scent. If the glyph is harmed in any way, its mental shriek of alarm alerts all creatures in this area to the glyph's danger, waking those who may be sleeping or otherwise distracted.

**Incantation** "Blessed is he who alerts his master to wrongdoing, that punishment may be swift and severe."

hp 1,000

AC 25; Saves +8

**Immune acid**; **Resistances** cold 20, electricity 20, fire 20; **DR** 15/slashing

**Weakness** vulnerability to slashing damage (the glyph suffers an additional 2d6 points of damage whenever it takes slashing damage)

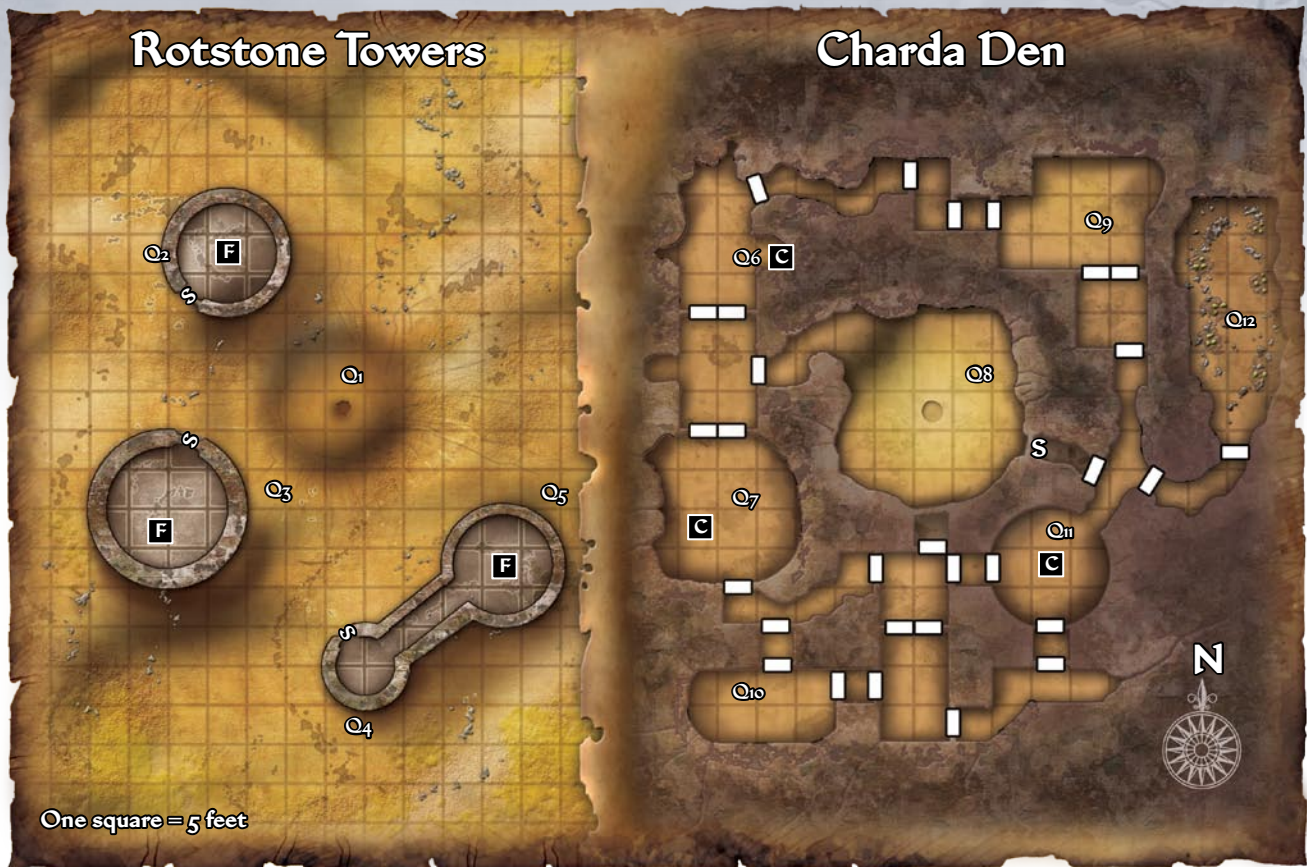
**Spell Keys** A *silence* spell or any spell that causes a sleep effect deactivates the ward for 1 round if cast within 10 feet of the glyph. If cast directly on the glyph, it suffers 50 points of damage in addition to losing its ward, acid immunity, and energy resistances for 1 round.

**True Key** A character that touches the glyph is filled with the feeling of panic and a desire to report this panic to others. A successful DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals the means for disabling the glyph: it wishes to be convinced that no danger is present. As a full round action, a character touching or adjacent to the glyph may attempt a DC 30 Bluff check to soothe the glyph's worries. This deactivates the aura as if a spell key had been cast. Three consecutive successful Bluff checks from the same person deactivates it permanently. These checks must be made in consecutive rounds.

**Deactivation** Deactivating the *glyph of vigilance* by means of its true key causes the character who used the true key to gain a +20 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks for 24 hours, and the ability to use *silence* and *greater invisibly* once during that 24 hours as spell-like abilities (CL 16th). If the glyph is deactivated any other way, it explodes into a cacophonous blast of energy in a 60-foot burst. All creatures in this area must make a DC 16 Will save or be driven permanently insane (as per the spell). As the glyph is deactivated, a swarm of bat-like bursts of energy arc off toward the Rotstone Hollows.

## PART EIGHT: ROTSTONE HOLLOW

Deep in the mud flats of the Rotstone Hollows stands a trio of structures rising out of the sucking ooze. Long ago, a lake of black blood filled this area of the cavern, and the site of these towers once marked a small island on which a group of particularly religious chardas dwelt. When unknowable forces and tides within the Caltherium shifted and changed, this lake drained away and transformed into a sea of mud, and the buildings that once comprised Rotstone Towers sank below. Today, only a few towers protrude from the mud, but below, the buildings still exist in the crumbling bedrock of the ancient island, creating a muddy, damp dungeon well suited to the isolated chardas that still dwell within. It is here that Allevrah chose to hide away the *glyph of watching*, charging her favorite slave,



a troglodyte named Orrn, with the task of guarding the glyph with his life.

The small tribe of chardas that dwell here call themselves the Unblinking Scales. The lair is accessible through the ruined towers, but the entrances from the mud fields are carefully hidden by slime, muck, and carefully packed dried-out mud. The chardas live beneath the towers themselves, dwelling in the ruined structures of the ancient city, traveling through tunnels burrowed through the muck.

Allevarez chose this site for the location of the *glyph of watching* because of its remoteness from the rest of the Land of Black Blood, the tenacity of its defenders, and the relative invisibility of their settlement. Orrn is the only loyalist to Allevarez here (unless she's sent additional forces in response to rising threats, of course), and he stands watch in the charda hatchery, effectively holding the tribe's young hostage in exchange for vigorous defense of the Azrinae symbol. The chardas call Allevarez the "Blood Witch," and believe that she and her drow minions rose from the black blood itself to lay claim to the land.

If at any point the players neutralize or slay Orrn and his demon allies, any chardas still remaining give up the fight and beg the PCs to leave them in peace—yet if they feel that their hatchery is still in danger (or if the combat in area

Q12 has already destroyed their eggs), the chardas fight to the bitter end. They are entirely unaware of Allevarez's plans to bring a meteor down on Kyonin and reshape the world, but would be unswayed by the news (not in part due to their belief that there is no world beyond the edges of the Land of Black Blood). The future of their tribe is all that matters to the amphibious folk, and the sooner the troglodyte and his assistants finish their task and leave, the happier the chardas will be.

## Q1. Rotstone Towers (EL 13)

The monotony of the vast plain of reeking mud finally gives way to three ruined, leaning towers rising out of the muck. The mud and slime spattered about the towers seem almost to be reaching up out of the surrounding mudflats as if trying to drag them further down. A funnel-shaped depression in the mud sits in the middle of the ruins—something at the depression's bottom glints like polished silver.

The mud of the Rotstone Hollows is thick and treated as difficult terrain, although *water walk* does allow a character to move with ease across the surface. The entrances to each of the towers are well hidden by caked mud, and require a DC 25 Search check to locate.



**Creature:** The funnel-shaped depression in the middle of the towers is in fact the lair of a dangerous predator that lives in a symbiotic relationship with the chardas—it provides the approach to their towers with a defense, and they keep it well fed with a portion of whatever they catch on hunting trips. This creature is an immense ant lion-like creature known to scholars as a muck lion. Native normally to the Elemental Plane of Earth, this muck lion has long dwelt in the Land of Black Blood.

The funnel is its trap. Any creature that approaches within 5 feet of the funnel's edge causes the mud to slip away and slide toward the center, forcing the creature to make a DC 20 Balance check or slip and slide into the pit's depths as well. The gleaming bit of silver is in fact the tips of the muck lion's enormous mandibles—razor-sharp metallic graspers it uses to snatch and chew prey. The muck lion itself looks like an immense pale grub with an ant-like head from which these huge mandibles protrude. Its flesh is runny and quivers like white mud, constantly sliding and oozing with the consistency of thick sludge. Those the muck lion catches are dragged down into its lair in area **Q8**.

### MUCK LION

CR 13

Advanced elite muck creature ant lion (*Tome of Horrors Rev.* 18; *Advanced Bestiary* 183)

N Huge elemental (augmented vermin, earth, extraplanar, water)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

**Aura** info

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 10, flat-footed 21

(+2 Dex, +13 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 348 (24d8+240)

**Fort** +24, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

**Immune** mind-affecting effects

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#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.

**Melee** bite +27 (3d8+16)

**Ranged** mudball +18 (2d6+11 nonlethal plus slippery mud)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** exude muck, improved grab, smother

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#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The muck lion attacks the first creature to fall into its pit or the first creature to damage it, and doesn't switch targets until the current target is dead or out of sight.

**Morale** The muck lion retreats into its lair if it drops below 150 hit points. If confronted in its lair, it fights to the death.

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 32, **Dex** 14, **Con** 30, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +18; **Grp** +37

**Skills** Climb +19, Escape Artist +12, Hide –6 (–2 in mud), Swim +19  
**SQ** earth and water mastery

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Earth and Water Mastery (Ex)** A muck lion gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if its foe is touching ground or water while the muck creature is touching ground or water. A muck creature takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls against airborne targets.

**Exude Muck (Su)** At will as a full-round action, a muck lion may exude a puddle of slippery muck in a 20-foot spread. This muck remains in the affected area until washed away. Any creature other than a muck lion that attempts to move in this area must make a DC 15 Balance check when it does or fall prone.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** If the muck lion hits a foe with its bite, it may make a grapple check as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity in order to establish a hold. If establishes a hold, it may automatically affect the opponent with its smother attack.

**Mudball (Su)** A muck lion may spit a mudball as a thrown weapon with a range increment of 20 feet. In addition to taking nonlethal damage, a creature hit by a mudball is covered in mud and takes a –3 penalty on all attack rolls, Reflex saves, and both Strength- and Dexterity-based checks (though it does gain a +3 circumstance bonus on saves against fire effects). The mud lasts for 1 minute or until washed off by at least 10 gallons of water.

**Smother (Ex)** With a successful grapple check, a muck lion fills its victim's mouth and nose with noxious muck. The target must immediately hold its breath and cannot speak. Furthermore, it must make a DC 32 Fortitude save each round or be nauseated—the nausea lasts until 1d4 rounds after it can once again breathe. Clearing the muck is a move-equivalent action (this can be done even while grappled) requiring a DC 15 Constitution check.

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## Q2. North Tower

The floor of this small, cramped room is caked with dust, and dried mud crusts over the floor and lower walls.

The trapdoor in the floor is buried under a layer of mud and can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check. The chardas haven't used this entrance to the lower level in years. It leads down to area **Q6**.

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## Q3. West Tower

The floor of this chamber is caked with dried mud. Dust floats through the air, concealing most of the contents behind a film of dirt and muck.

The largest of the towers rises 20 feet out of the mud of the Rotstone Hollows, but stands empty. The floor is a slanted, muddy wreck (Balance DC 12 to stay upright), and the recent moisture on the floor has partially uncovered

the trapdoor leading down into the charda lair (area Q7), making it noticeable with a DC 15 Search check.

## Q4. Eastern Tower Entrance

A narrow corridor leads into a larger chamber to the northeast from this small room. Smear tracks run through the muck, as though something was dragged through here recently.

This tower is the entrance most commonly used by charda hunting parties. Their recent passage is obvious (no Spot or Survival check is necessary), making it clear that there is some sort of entryway within.

## Q5. Upper Guard Post (EL 9)

The floor of this stuffy chamber is slathered with mud and the passage of countless, strangely shaped feet. A stone trap door sits in the floor in the room's center.

The trapdoor here leads down to area Q11.

**Creatures:** As this entrance is the only one in regular use, two chardas stand guard here, ready to attack anyone they don't recognize as drow. If the PCs are disguised as drow and they convince the chardas they're supposed to be here, the creatures stand down and let them pass.

**CHARDAS (2)**  
hp 94 each (see page 84)

**CR 7**

## Q6. Lower Guard Post (EL 11)

The walls of this stone chamber area are pitted and filled with holes from which bits of slime slowly trickle, seemingly frozen in mid-drip. Stone double-doors dominate the southern wall, and the eastern wall is split between a makeshift door in a mud-carved corridor and an alcove with a fungus-vine ladder hanging from the ceiling above.

**Creatures:** Four chardas stand guard here, two at either end of the area. The chardas are fiercely protective of their territory, especially now that their hatchery is in danger. The guards attack on sight, and provide no quarter to the players. They appear resigned to defeat if presented with overwhelming force, but don't bother to pursue the PCs out of this area or raise the alarm—despite Allevrah's troglodyte servant, they recognize the PCs as potential liberators and hope that the PCs can free them from their scaly oppressor Orrn. They will not, however, act to aid the players in any way, fearing reprisal should they fail to defeat the troglodyte.

**CHARDAS (4)**  
hp 94 each (see page 84)

**EL 7**

## Q7. Western Barracks

This partially collapsed chamber seems to be a nesting chamber of some sort, judging by the ten cramped pallets of mud and leathery fragments and slop that sit on the floor. A trapdoor sits in the ceiling fifteen feet above, but there seems to be no easy way to reach it.

These are the sleeping quarters for the charda guards that are currently on duty in areas Q5 and Q6, as well as four more that are out on an extended hunting trip. The charda nests are made of shavings of fungal meat and mud, and each has a few oddly shaped stones scattered near one corner—a ceremonial charda offering for protection of one's sleeping place. Other than the bedrolls and the stones, there are no objects or furniture in the area.

**Treasure:** One of the oddly shaped stones is in fact an uncut sapphire worth 2,500 gp once all the mud is cleaned off of it—noticing that the sapphire is more than just a muddy rock takes a DC 20 Search or Appraise check (automatic if all the stones are cleaned).

## Q8. Muck Lion Lair (EL 13)

This large cave is filled with foul-smelling vapors. The stone walls drip and ooze with mud, covering the entire floor with a thick layer of nasty-smelling sludge. A single passageway leads up out of the mud to the northwest, and a partially dried clot of mud seems to plug a large hole in the ceiling.

**Creature:** This cave is the lair of the dangerous muck lion. It is a violent, instinctive beast, and—since it lacks any sort of intellect—fights the PCs to the death (although it's too big and stupid to pursue them out of this area). The mud plug above is how the creature seals its trap in area Q1 above; if the PCs come upon this room without alerting the creature or triggering its funnel trap above, they find the immense grub-like body coiled in the center of the room, its head jammed up against the hole above. Once it moves, the torrent of mud that sluices down into this room as it moves away from the hole causes a thick sloppy tide. Any creature in the room at this time must make a DC 20 Balance check to avoid being knocked prone. Thereafter, the ground here is considered difficult terrain until the muck lion gathers up the mud and pushes it back up through the hole above and resets its trap (or plugs it up).

**MUCK LION**  
hp 348 (see page 31)

**CR 13**

**Treasure:** The muck lion generally feeds on unintelligent creatures or bodies provided it by the

chardas, yet a few of its victims have been adventurers or wandering derros. Most of their gear has long since been broken or gathered by the chardas, but a few pieces of treasure remain here, discoverable with a DC 25 Search check. One such treasure is a +2 *dancing short sword*, property of a drow guard that stumbled into the den long ago. Another is a crystal *wand of stoneskin* (32 charges) that didn't quite provide enough protection to a wandering derro savant.

### Q9. Northern Barracks

Nests of mud and strips of strange cloth or leather rest on the ground of this wide, square room, a trio of strangely shaped stones placed in one corner of each. Dust lies heavy over everything in this room—it doesn't appear to have been used in some time.

These were the sleeping quarters for nearly a dozen other chardas—all of whom were slaughtered by Allevrah and her forces when the drow first arrived in the area. The chardas have abandoned this room, consolidating their remaining number in area Q7, and although they think this room is haunted, it is merely empty.

### Q10. Klirikit's Chamber

Strange candlelight lights a room decorated with crude clay jars and exotic gourds. A few large, flat stones hold sticks, bones, and small rocks, and a pile of brown, cloth-like mats rests folded in a corner.

**Creature:** This room is home to the current leader of the Unblinking Scales, Klirikit. She serves as their leader and spiritual authority. A powerful adept, she normally uses her spells to provide fresh water, heal wounds, and punish disobedience among the tribe. When Allevrah arrived and informed Klirikit that the Unblinking Scales would be hosting one of the glyphs, the shaman thought to fight back. The result was the loss of about half their tribe—none of Allevrah's forces perished. In the face of such strength, Klirikit had no choice; she gave over her home to the invaders and has remained sequestered here in a haze of shame and depression ever since.

When they enter, the shaman assumes the PCs are further minions of Allevrah, and in a thick, slobbery voice she gathers the last remnants of her courage and demands, in Aquan, to know what new sacrifice the Unblinking Scales must offer up to the Blood Witch. If the PCs attack, her cries and the sound of her magic should bring all of the remaining chardas in the complex running to support her—the defense of their leader being one of the few things left that can galvanize them to swift action.

Yet if the PCs can establish a line of communication with Klirikit, they can claim to be minions of the Blood Witch Allevrah (in which case Klirikit escorts them to Orrn in area Q12 if asked). But if the PCs make plain the fact that they oppose Allevrah, Klirikit swiftly grows excited. If the PCs can defeat Orrn without harming their eggs, she promises them whatever aid she and the chardas can supply. While the chardas have very little in the way of wealth they do have large numbers and the Unblinking Scales are generally well regarded by the other charda tribes. With Klirikit's allegiance and aid, she could organize a large group of chardas to strike at the Throne of Abraxas and provide an excellent distraction for the PCs when they make their final move against Allevrah—a plan Klirikit quickly suggests once she realizes exactly what the PCs hope to accomplish here.

If the PCs forge an alliance with the Unblinking Scales, Klirikit is more than eager to use her magic to help them, healing their wounds and even helping prepare them for the fight against Orrn (although she won't risk herself or her chardas in a fight against the troglodyte, who terrifies all of them). She'll even offer them two boons: her prized *scroll of heal* and a charda guide to help them on their way to the next destination. This eliminates the chance of any random encounters between Rotstone Towers and the next area the players decide to approach, with the exception of drow or demons. As long as the PCs travel with a charda guide, simply treat results of non-drow and non-demon on the wandering monster chart as "no encounter."

#### KLIRIKIT

CR 8

Female charda black tongue

hp 94 (see page 84)

### Q11. Guard Post

This round chamber holds no furniture, only a pair of stone doors and a hanging, rope-like ladder that descends from the ceiling. To the north of the room, a tunnel stretches outward into darkness.

The trapdoor above leads to area Q5—if the PCs make it down into these caverns without confronting the chardas above, and if they subsequently raise the alarm, those two guards relocate from above down to this room.

### Q12. Hatchery (EL 14)

The high ceiling of this long chamber glows with the light of a large sigil floating against the north wall. Mud surfaces give way to hard, slate-like stone to the north, while to the south the floor is thick with a several clusters of skull-sized eggs nestled into the muck.

This chamber, the charda hatchery, is where Allevrah decided to place the *glyph of watching*. The chardas have been forced to abandon the hatchery, and are allowed to enter here only once every several hours to tend to the eggs. It is this situation that forced them to become the unruly allies of the true guardians of the glyph, one of Allevrah's favored slaves (a cruel troglodyte cutthroat named Orrn), and a pair of babau demons who have been commanded to both provide aid to Orrn and to make sure he doesn't betray Allevrah—if he does, the babaus are ready to teleport back to Allevrah to report.

Orrn himself is half insane, a sick-minded murderer shunned and loathed even by his own kind. He is much happier when there are frequent creatures to murder and torment, and this duty of what he derisively calls "egg watching" is both humiliating and boring, and his murderous nature is kept in check only by the great fear he has of Allevrah learning about a betrayal. This fear vanishes once the two babaus are killed, at which point Orrn's tactics switch from "kill the PCs" to "fight through the PCs and escape into the wilds of the Land of Black Blood and eventually find a way back to the surface to be rid of the drow forever." Despite his hatred of the drow, he is not a good candidate for ally, since he'd be more likely to try to murder "friends" in their sleep than anything else.

The *glyph of watching* is thus unique in that none of its guardians are truly devoted to its defense. The babau demons are bound by a fell oath to protect the glyph, but will desert the area using *greater teleport* if Orrn is defeated or the glyph is destroyed. Likewise, destroying the *glyph of watching* causes the troglodyte to panic and try to flee, even if both babaus are still alive.

Orrn is not pleased with his enslavement to the Azrinae in this task. If captured alive and questioned, he explains that he was told that if he were to disobey Allevrah's orders and abandon his charge of holding the chardas hostage, he would not only be killed instantly by the spells of the glyph, but his very soul would be bound up in its magic, to be tortured by the babau that assisted him. He gladly offers any one of his potions to the PCs as reward for his freedom, but refuses to assist them in the final assault on the Throne of Abraxas. If he's not allowed to flee soon after being captured, he'll eventually find a way to exercise his lust for murder on a sleeping PC.

**ORRN**  
Male troglodyte rogue 12

**CR 13**

CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)  
**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 20, flat-footed 20  
(+3 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +6 natural)

**hp** 93 (2d8+12d6+42)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +4

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +15 (1d4+3) and

Bite +12 (1d4+2)

**Ranged** javelin +14 (1d6+2)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +6d6, stench

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Orrn prefers to stalk his prey and either attack from surprise or when the target is already in combat, gaining a sneak attack.

**During Combat** Orrn prefers not to fight when outnumbered and would rather kill a weak creature and retreat with it than stand and fight.

**Morale** Orrn is a survivor and flees when he drops below 30 hit points. If flight is not possible and his enemies offer mercy (in Draconic), he is willing to surrender if he believes them.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +12

**Feats** Multiattack<sup>B</sup>, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw), Weapon Focus (javelin)

**Skills** Bluff +4, Climb +12, Escape Artist +13, Hide +24\*, Jump +10, Move Silently +13, Search +8, Sense Motive +5, Swim +12

**Languages** Draconic

**SQ** trapfinding

**Combat Gear** none; **Other Gear** *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *bracers of armor* +3, *cloak of elvenkind*, *ring of protection* +1

**BABAUS (2)**

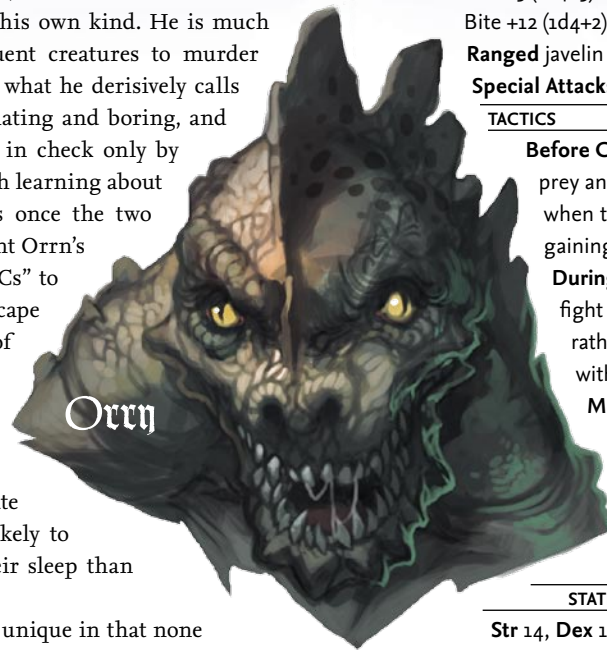
**CR 6**

**hp** 66 each (MM 40)

#### GLYPH OF WATCHING

*Carved into the stone is a great symbol like a stylized, unblinking eye. No matter where you shift to avoid its gaze, the etching is ever-watching, like a tireless sentinel.*

**Ward** Creatures attuned to the glyph (any Azrinae drow, the troglodyte Orrn, and any evil outsiders) gain blindsight 60 feet when within 60 feet of the glyph and gain a +8 bonus



on Initiative checks.

**Incantation** “Abraxas sees all, hears all, knows all. Such is his power.”

**hp** 400

**AC** 32; **Saves** +12

**Immune** cold, fire; **Resistance** acid 10, electricity 10, sonic 10; DR 15/bludgeoning

**Weakness** subject to extra damage from sneak attacks and critical hits

**Spell Keys** A *blindness* spell deactivates the aura for 1 round if cast within 10 feet of the glyph. If cast directly on the glyph, it suffers 50 points of damage in addition to losing its aura for 1 round.

**True Key** Any character within 30 feet of the glyph feels an invasive presence similar to a guard putting a forbidding hand on one’s shoulder. A character that successfully deciphers the glyph’s runes realizes that the key to defeating it is to change its glyphs with deft manipulation to effectively “blind” it. A character can blind the glyph with a DC 30 Disable Device or Use Magic Device check, deactivating the ward as if a spell key had been cast. Three consecutive successful checks made by the same character deactivates the glyph permanently.

**Deactivation** A character that deactivates the *glyph of watching* with the true key gains the benefit of *true seeing* for 24 hours. Deactivating the glyph in any other way causes it to explode into a dazzling flash of light in a 60-foot burst. All creatures in this area must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be permanently blinded. As the glyph is deactivated, a spiraling beam of color lances toward Bloodforge.

## PART NINE: THE THRONE OF ABRAXAS

The seat of Allevrah’s power in the Land of Black Blood is a small island on the southern section of the Caltherium. Known to her and her minions as the Throne of Abraxas, this is an inhospitable isle of sharp, mountain-like stalagmites protruding from an upthrust wedge of rock. It is here that the PCs finally face Allevrah and her minions, and hopefully destroy the *master glyph* before she brings her meteor crashing down on Kyonin. Allevrah has stationed the majority of the Azrinae soldiers she’s brought with her in several stone bunkers at the southern point of the island, while she and her favored minions (mostly drow priests of Abraxas and demons) dwell in a stone temple built into the heart of the isle—a structure known as the Blood Basilica. When she first arrived, Allevrah was a bit shocked that an ancient but empty temple of Abraxas was waiting for her, but she quickly realized that what she was doing had been in her master’s plans far longer than hers, and that this was one more sign to her that the Second Darkness is the right choice.

Most of the Throne of Abraxas is impassible—the giant spires of stone too steep and razor-sharp for any sort of

crossing. An easier approach to the Blood Basilica is via a narrow path that runs from the southern shore of the island up to the center. Of course, magical means such as flight, teleportation, and the like are the easiest approaches of all if the PCs have such resources.

### J1. Azrinae Bunker (EL 18)

A squat stone building stands here, a structure that seems to have been magically raised up from the surrounding stone. The top of the building is open, a twenty-foot-wide bay lined with perches for enormous bats. A single doorway faces east and a pathway leads up into the interior of the stalagmite forest that covers the island beyond.

**Creatures:** This building was created by Allevrah to house her soldiers—she trusts the smaller number of more powerful demons and priests in the Blood Basilica to handle her defense, and doesn’t trust most of the rank-and-file drow soldiers to treat the place with the respect it deserves. Most of the drow stationed at this bunker spend their time patrolling the Land of Black Blood, either on foot or on dire bat back, so that at any one time, only two dozen soldiers, a dozen driders, and a dozen dire bats are resting here. The capacities of the bunker are obviously much more—Allevrah has well over a hundred drow with her in the Land of Black Blood, but these drow are spread throughout the region (or, if the PCs have started raising alarms, stationed at the *focus glyphs*).

If these drow notice the PCs, they rise up to attack. A battle against this many foes can quickly turn sour for the PCs, and can be difficult to run; so as long as the PCs take precautions to use stealth as they pass through this area, it’s certainly okay to let them make it by unseen—there’ll still be plenty of battles waiting for them, after all. But if the PCs need a little more experience, or if they’re actually itching for a big fight, a battle against the drow stationed here can serve as an exciting penultimate climax to the final infiltration of the Blood Basilica—especially if the PCs have secured the aid of the chardas in mounting an attack here from the Caltherium. In this case, you can simply describe how the drow and driders clash with the chardas in a grand battle, then throw a smaller, more manageable group of driders and drow at the PCs to fight. In this scenario, you should use the PCs own success against their foes to determine if the battle goes for or against the remaining drow. In any event, apart from the drow’s gear, there is nothing of value kept here.

**DROW SOLDIERS (24)**  
**hp** 57 each (see page 13)

**CR 8**

**DRIDERS (12)**  
hp 45 each (MM 89)

**CR 7**

**DIRE BATS (12)**  
hp 30 each (MM 62)

**CR 2**

## J2. Black Blood Causeway

A large lake of glossy black water fills a crater-shaped valley at the island's heart. A thirty-foot-wide bridge of stone rises over the water, supported every forty feet by stone pilings carved with images of snakes.

The remnant of a time when the Caltherium covered most of this island, the Lake of Blood is still fed by underground channels, and its waters have the same effect as those in the rest of the cavern. The land bridge is just over 2 miles long, but the edges slope downward sharply so that anyone walking within 5 feet of the edge must make a DC 12 Balance check to avoid a 20-foot fall into the black blood below. The bridge itself, like the Blood Basilica, was created ages ago by minions of Abraxas, who even then was preparing the area for his drow worshipers once they eventually discovered the secrets of the *earthfall glyphs*.

There are no set encounters for this area, although you can feel free to throw a random encounter at the PCs while they traverse the bridge. To heighten tension, force a few Spot or Listen checks as the players proceed; this will also make the Spot check in area **R1** less transparent.

## The Blood Basilica

Although this temple to Abraxas was created hundreds of years ago, it remained empty until recently when Allevrah claimed the temple as her own. She found the place well suited, as if it had been built just for her—and in a way, it had been. Even deep inside the temple, in a small personal shrine, she was greeted by one of Abraxas's own minions, a marilith named Alistraxia who greeted Allevrah like a long lost sister and congratulated her on reaching the end of her long journey. All that remained was the creation of the five *focus glyphs* and the *master glyph*, and then a long series of daily rituals to keep the glyphs active in guiding the falling star to its exact target.

Allevrah waits for the inevitable confrontation with the PCs in area **R7**, hoping on one hand that her minions defeat them before they reach her, and hoping on the other that they do not so she can have the honor of defeating them herself.

The interior of the Blood Basilica is softly lit, as if by candlelight, by countless softly glowing runes inscribed along the polished stone walls. Each of these is a different prayer to Abraxas, written in Abyssal and praising a method

in which magic can be used in forbidden, vile methods. These runes are written with special inks that incorporate powdered caphorite crystal, a material relatively common in the Darklands that provides shadowy illumination but suppresses brighter light, although the runes themselves enhance the intrinsic qualities of the crystals. Any attempt to cast a spell with the light descriptor in the Blood Basilica requires a DC 25 caster level check or the effects of the spell are diluted enough to be inconsequential. Ceiling height in the Blood Basilica averages at a lofty 30 feet unless otherwise noted. Doors are made of stone but cannot be locked.

Allevrah has further protected the Blood Basilica with numerous greater *glyphs of warding*. All of these glyphs are blast glyphs that inflict electrical damage (so that the damage done won't hurt any demons caught in the area), and are set to trigger if anything other than a worshiper or minion of Abraxas passes over them. A *glyph of warding* is present at every location on the map of the Blood Basilica that bears a number key on it, with the exception of **R1**, **R1A**, **R5**, and **R6**. In addition, every door bears a *glyph of warding* as well, set to trigger as soon as a non-worshiper of Abraxas passes through the doorway (double doors only bear one glyph). In all, there are 32 *glyphs of warding* in the Blood Basilica. These glyphs have all been treated with *magic aura* spells to make them not radiate magic—they can still be detected with a Search check by a character with trapfinding, though.

### GREATER GLYPH OF WARDING

**CR 6**

Type spell; Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

#### EFFECTS

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*greater glyph of warding* [blast]; 16th level cleric, 8d8 electricity, DC 24 Reflex half); multiple targets (all targets within 5 feet)

## R1. The Coils of Abraxas (EL 14)

The bridge ends at a level landing, flat and even but for the slopes where ripples in the black blood below lap at the stone. A great stone gate, nearly twenty feet wide and at least as tall, is carved out of the giant cliff. Each door bears a hideous symbol of a demonic face surrounded by a coil of snakes and with two snake tails descending from the mouth. The entire cliffside itself continues this serpentine motif, with hundreds, perhaps thousands of stone-carved snakes winding out like entwined sunbursts from the door as far as the eye can see.

**Creatures:** The entrance to the Blood Basilica is far from unguarded—Allevrah has posted several demons here as guardians. Four vrock's perch on particularly wide, carved serpent coils within 15 feet of the door's entrance, while a single glabrezu stands directly before



the doors. The demons make no attempt to hide, but stand relatively motionless—they do not move to attack any who approach unless they are attacked first or until someone attempts to open the door (and likely triggering a *greater glyph of warding*). The demons immediately alert the drow priestesses in area **R3** telepathically when they note anyone approaching, however, and the glabrezu is the recipient of a *status* spell so that Allevrah knows immediately if he is harmed. The glabrezu regards anyone who approaches with a mixture of amusement and disdain; the vrocks simply cackle and jeer, hurling insults in Abyssal. None of them are interested in talk.

#### VROCKS (4)

CR 9

hp 115 each (MM 48)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vrocks have mirror images going at all times, and cast *heroism* on themselves on the first round of combat before swooping down to attack the PCs in melee, starting with stunning screeches. They don't attempt to summon additional vrocks until one of their number falls. Using *telekinesis* to push non-flying PCs into the black blood is a particularly favorite tactic.

**Morale** The vrocks fight to the death.

#### GLABREZU

CR 11

hp 174 (MM 43)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The glabrezu has a *mirror image* going at all times, and on the first round of combat attempts to throw the PCs into disarray with *reverse gravity*. He follows up with *dispel magic* if the PCs seem to have a lot of spell effects going, then starts throwing *unholy blights* and *chaos hammers* while the vrocks keep the PCs busy. He waits to use his *power word stun* against a PC who appears to be wounded, or is particularly vexing and adept at hurting him. If reduced to less than 100 hit points, he *teleports* to a point several hundred feet away, replenishes his *mirror image*, then teleports back to the battle and tries to summon 1d2 vrocks to aid him.

**Morale** The glabrezu fights to the death.

#### R1A. Hidden Entrance

This underwater tunnel has all the unpleasantness of the black blood that fills it combined with the cramped, lightless comfort of an underwater passage. It's not visible from the surface, but someone in the water nearby can notice it with a DC 20 Spot check. The tunnel leads into area **R5**.

## R2. Processional (EL 16)

This long, straight hallway is empty except for the friezes of a strange part-snake, part-bird demon carved into the stone walls on either side. Tangled coils of softly glowing runes wind along the walls in dense patterns between these carvings, filling the hall with shadowy light. Two matched sets of doors stand closed on either side of the corridor, with a set of double doors at each end of the hallway.

The grand processional of the temple is a long, sparse corridor, with carvings to remind visitors that they are in the presence of the demon lord Abraxas.

**Creatures:** If the priestesses in area **R3** have been alerted to the presence of intruders, they stand ready to spring an ambush as soon as the majority of the PCs are in the middle of the hall, springing out from the four doors to attack them.

### DROW PRIESTESSES (8)

CR 10

Female drow cleric of Abraxas 9

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; **Listen** +7, **Spot** +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17

(+7 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 49 (9d8+9);

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +11 (+13 vs. spells and spell-like abilities)

**Immune** sleep; **SR** 20

**Weakness** light blindness

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** *short sword* +2 +9 (1d6+2)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

**Spells Prepared** (CL 9th)

5th—*chaos hammer*<sup>DC</sup>, *mass cure light wounds*

4th—*chaos hammer*<sup>DC</sup>, *cure critical wounds*, *poison*

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*<sup>D</sup>, *invisibility purge*, *meld into stone*

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*, *hold person* (2), *shatter*<sup>D</sup>, *silence*

1st—*command*, *cure light wounds*, *entropic shield*, *protection from law*<sup>DC</sup>, *shield of faith*, *summon monster* 1<sup>C</sup>

0—*cure minor wounds*

**D** domain spell; **C** chaotic spell; **Domains** Chaos (+1 caster level for chaotic spells), Magic (use spell completion and spell trigger items as a wizard 4)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The priestesses cast *entropic shield* and *shield of faith* on themselves if they have time before combat starts.

**During Combat** The priestesses use *silence* against enemy spellcasters, *death knell* on dying enemies, *invisibility purge*

against invisible foes, their wands against grouped foes, and *chaos hammer* against anyone who appears lawful. If several are present they tend to take turns casting *mass cure light wounds*.

**Morale** The priestesses are willing to die in the name of Abraxas, but not needlessly, and they flee if the odds are greatly against them or they suffer heavy losses.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +6

**Feats** *Combat Casting*, *Improved Initiative*, *Lightning Reflexes*, *Weapon Finesse*

**Skills** *Bluff* +2, *Concentration* +11, *Diplomacy* +2, *Heal* +5, *Knowledge (arcana)* +7, *Knowledge (religion)* +7, *Knowledge (the planes)* +7, *Search* +4, *Sense Motive* +5, *Spellcraft* +5

**Languages** *Abyssal*, *Common*, *Elven*, *Sakvroth* (drow sign language), *Undercommon*

**Combat Gear** *short sword* +2, *elemental gem* (any type), *potion of invisibility*, *wand of fireball* or *wand of lightning bolt* (5th level, 5 charges); **Other Gear** *chain mail* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, 100 gp

## R3. Barracks (EL 12 each)

Three metal-framed beds dressed in sumptuous black bedsheets sit in this room astride low personal shrines carved to resemble writhing snakes. A single table with three chairs sits in the center of the room, a small stone coffer sitting at its center. Softly glowing runes, thousands of them in all, decorate the walls.

These four rooms are identical—bedchambers used by Allevrah's priestesses. At any one time, only two priestesses are in each room, while the remaining four are with Allevrah in area **R7**. If the priestesses are alerted by the telepathic warning from the demons in area **R1**, they're ready to ambush the PCs in area **R2**; otherwise they are here in prayer, eating, talking in low voices, or resting in the beds. If surprised here, they call out for aid from their kin, who arrive in different waves as soon as possible.

### DROW PRIESTESSES (2 PER ROOM)

CR 10

hp 49 each (see above)

**Treasure:** The bed sheets are of rich, black spidersilk, worth 300 gp per set. The stone coffer on the table is unlocked and contains a *wand of cure moderate wounds* and a *wand of magic aura*; each wand has 1d10+10 charges left.

## R4. Nave (EL 15)

Four towering rooster-headed, snake-legged statues of stone dominate this large antechamber, massive sculptures that seem carved out of the pillars that hold up the cavernous ceiling.



Glowing runes wind around the statues, along the walls, and in strange shifting coils across the polished stone floor and domed ceiling above. A pair of double doors to the west bear more symbols, dominant among them the demon head with snake tails trailing from the mouth. To the east, the chamber opens up into a large cavern.

**Creature:** One of Allevrah's most dangerous guardians is posted here, a gift sent her from Abraxas. This is a xacarba—an enormous snake-like demon said to be one of the children of the Master of the Final Incantation. This monster is the final guardian before the Grand Temple itself; as it lunges forth to attack, it sends a swift telepathic warning to Allevrah to the west, and she and her minions quickly prepare for the coming battle.

#### ABRAXAS DEMON

CR 15

hp 195 (see page 86)

### R5. Black Beach (EL 3)

This long, narrow cavern is mostly filled by a lake of black, oily water. A fan-like landing of silty stone barely rises out of it below an opening in the west wall that overlooks the lake from a height of twenty feet. A tiny hut sits at the northernmost corner of the beach, a small fire burning fitfully outside it.

This beach is the home of Lodra, the blind, insane derro servant of the aboleth Ndtkia. As with much of her kind, Lodra is insane—once one of the nearly feral derro that dwell in the ruined city of Orgeshta, she voluntarily gave herself over to an aboleth that slobbered up from the Caltherium one day, and has served as its mouthpiece to air-breathers for nearly 2 decades, communicating Ndtkia's wishes, appetites, and advice. When Allevrah arrived in the region, she found this derro and her aboleth master waiting for them both here, influenced by whispers sent by Abraxas and ready to serve as advisors to the drow in these last hours.

Lodra shuffles swiftly out of her tiny hut as soon as she notices visitors approaching. Her initial attitude is hostile, but she doesn't immediately attack. She is initially uninterested in any sort of violence, but will assault the characters viciously should they in any way insult her master. Yet Lodra is also eager to brag and crow about her role in things, and about her exemplary service to Ndtkia—if the PCs can make her at least friendly with magic, a DC 35 Diplomacy check, or a successful Intimidate check, she can be an unexpected font of information.

Yet even then, Lodra is unwilling to help the players unless she can be convinced that they serve—or at the very least are not hostile toward—Ndtkia. Before she'll answer any questions, she demands to see what offering they have brought Ndtkia. Completely insane, she accepts anything the PCs offer as an acceptable gift, and uses her telepathic link to the aboleth to alert it that visitors have arrived with the gift. The aboleth is deep in its own alien ruminations and takes a few minutes to respond, during which Lodra answers any questions the PCs may have. She doesn't know much about Allevrah, other than to call her “the one the Whispers told us to wait for.”

The players might ask about the magic of the glyphs, but Lodra knows very little; the aboleth has done much to twist her mind, and most of the messages she delivers are either wiped from her mind soon after or so shrouded in obscure language and foul practices that she banishes them from her memory. Most questions will be met with insane laughter. Still, Lodra's lunatic mind sometimes answers logically, and you can use her to inform the PCs about any last-minute loose ends that need wrapping up.

Eventually, the aboleth realizes that it has visitors, and it swims up from its den in R6 to see what gifts have been brought it—the aboleth's sudden emergence from the black waters drives Lodra into a shrieking fit of glee, and she points to the PCs and proclaims that they are her gift to the master. Combat is sure to follow.

If the PCs have already defeated Allevrah and destroyed the *master glyph*, Ndtkia has returned to the Caltherium with its derro slave.

#### LODRA

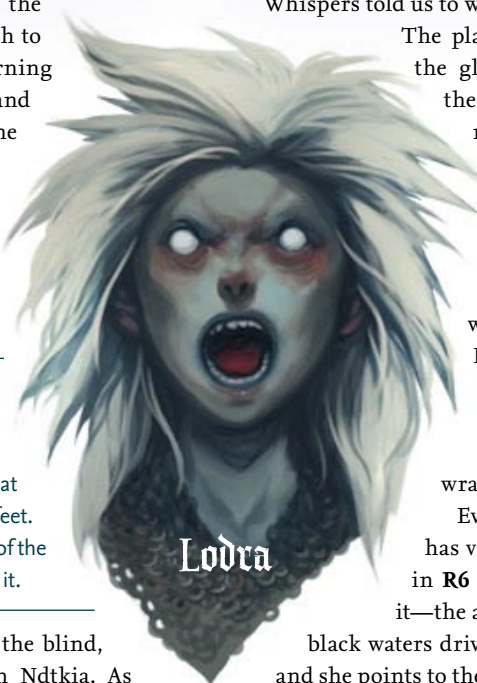
Female derro  
hp 16 (MM 49)

CR 3

### R6. Ndtkia's Lair (EL 13)

The Black Blood swirls in mixture with water here, like murderous hands plunged into a clean spring.

This chamber is entirely underwater, the watery home of the aboleth Ndtkia. Feared and loathed even by its brethren within the Caltherium for its unpredictable moods and powerful magic, Ndtkia found itself in the unusual position of receiving a divine vision several months back. Normally violently atheistic, considering



## A SHRED OF SHAME

Although Allevrah has fallen too far for redemption, a tiny sliver of shame at betraying her race and, more importantly, her previous religion still exists somewhere deep inside her. Being confronted by elven PCs or clerics of Nethys aren't enough to trigger this shame, but if the PCs confront Allevrah with her old vestments (from area **K6**) or the shattered statuette of Nethys from Thorn's End (from *Pathfinder* #17) and castigate her for her actions, she freezes in shock. The other drow and demons, unsure of what's going on, pause as well. If this act occurs during combat, all of the creatures here essentially lose their actions as they either reel from the confrontation (in Allevrah's case) or watch with bated breath to see what effect the unexpected confrontation with their mistress's past has upon her. These creatures are not flat-footed—they simply don't take actions on their turn until Allevrah's next action.

On her next action, Allevrah shrieks in Elven, "I shall not go back! That life is dead to me! And so are all of you!" and then casts *fire storm* in a blind rage. So incensed is she at realizing that she still has a tiny sliver of shame, she doesn't bother differentiating between PCs and allies; she *fire storms* everyone she can. The result is pure chaos. The other drow in the room panic and try to flee, convinced that their mistress is about to kill them all, while the vrock shriek in rage and swoop down to attack Allevrah (and any PCs who happen to be in the way). Allevrah focuses her attentions thereafter solely on the character who confronted her with her shame, and does not bother to flee to regroup as detailed in her morale section if damaged—she no longer cares about protecting the glyph, and fights to the death. In this condition, blinded by rage, Allevrah suffers a  $-4$  penalty on all attack rolls and skill checks, and suffers a 30% spell failure chance. If the PCs flee and she has a few hours to cool down, these penalties vanish but her increased hatred of the PCs does not.

the gods to be self-delusional entities barely worth the trouble to think about, these visions from Abraxas intrigued the aboleth and stoked its ego. In the visions, Abraxas showed Ndtkia a drow priestess come to the Land of Black Blood, and that she wielded ancient aboleth glyphs and would bring about a Second Darkness. The visions attempted to compel Ndtkia to take up residence here in the Blood Basilica—the aboleth agreed, but not out of any sense of faith. It was intrigued by the concept of a Second Darkness, and its ego was pleased at the concept of being regarded as an expert on the ancient art of glyph magic.

Yet the aboleth has started to wonder if it hasn't been tricked—when Allevrah arrived, she already knew much about glyph magic, and the aboleth was surprised to find

that it was actually learning something from her in their discussions on how to fine tune the *earthfall glyphs*. It's spent the last few months in growing torment, torn between its desire to continue its periodic discussions with Allevrah in order to learn more from her insights and its desire to destroy her for having the audacity of what she is attempting to do.

The arrival of the PCs gives it the opportunity to strike against her. When it realizes the PCs are in the area, it attempts to enslave them—once enslaved, Ndtkia sends them up to area **R7** to destroy Allevrah, secure her notes on the *earthfall glyphs*, then return here and describe them to it. Once the PCs have done this for the aboleth, it plans on killing the ones it doesn't have a use for (any PC that casts divine spells) and bringing the rest back to the depths of the Caltherium as food or slaves.

### NDTKIA

Aboleth mage (MM 9)

hp 177

CR 13

## R7. Grand Temple of Abraxas (EL 20)

This wide, spacious hall is lit by constantly writhing runes dancing along the walls of the room, bathing the contents with shifting purple lights. A much larger rune, circular and fifteen feet across, floats a foot above the floor in an alcove to the west at the far end of a wide upraised pulpit. A circular flight of steps leads down from the front of the pulpit to a lower area. Pillars carved to resemble coiling snakes support the cathedral ceiling a hundred feet above, and in alcoves along the walls stand immense stone statues of a snake-legged, bird-faced demon.

The final confrontation against Allevrah might take the PCs more than one try—this is the climactic encounter of the campaign (although not necessarily the final encounter), and there are a lot of foes for the PCs to face here. As a result, the PCs should be, at minimum, 15th level before they attempt this battle (16th level would be even better)—the dungeon is set up to give the PCs that amount of time, since it assumes they arrive while Allevrah is leading an earthfall ritual and thus can't easily order her minions in area **R7** to aid battles in nearby areas. In any event, consider pausing before this last encounter to award experience points to the PCs if they're close to leveling up; this gives them a clue that what's about to come is going to be major, and gives them a fun last boost of power at the campaign's end.

If the PCs attempt this battle and are forced to retreat, Allevrah can swiftly replace soldiers that fell in battle, but she is limited to the total number of priests in area **R3** and can't quickly replace slain vrock at all. Of course, if the PCs allowed other characters (like Denrelwe or Drexinis) to escape, they may face even more enemies here than are

currently listed. In any event, have fun, and as long as the PCs don't fail their assault on the Grand Temple badly enough to reach Doomsday, they can keep trying until one side is dead!

This is the location of Allevrah's *master glyph* and her sanctum, where she is waiting for the players to confront her. When the PCs first arrive in this room, they find a strange and eerie ritual in full swing. Standing in a semicircle in the lower portion of the chamber at the edge of the steps are nine of Allevrah's most devout soldiers, while four of her priestesses stand atop the pulpit. All 13 drow face the *master glyph*, and are deeply focused on it and chanting a complex hymn to aid in its call to the falling star far above. Five vrockts perch on the statues of Abraxas or cling to the pillars throughout the room, occasionally lending their raucous calls to the chanting.

Allevrah herself stands just to the edge of the *master glyph*, facing it as well, a statuesque beauty dressed in shimmering chainmail, wielding a demonic shield in one hand and a writhing scaly whip in the other. Her right ear, clipped off halfway down its length in a decisive battle against an enemy she's long forgotten in her previous life as an elf, is the only feature one who knew her in her former life could use to identify her. She reacts to the PCs arrival (possibly one punctuated by the triggering of the *glyph of warding* on the doors to the south) with the smile of one finally reunited with an old, almost forgotten lover. She has no speech to give the PCs. She simply directs the attention of her 18 minions, drow and demon alike, to them with an almost casual wave of the hand, and the battle is on.

The *master glyph* itself is the players' goal, and the drow and demons do their best to defend it. If one of the drow or driders is standing on the glyph itself and is between 20 and 0 hit points, that creature can choose to immolate itself in a purplish ball of unholy light that lashes all creatures within 10 feet of the glyph for 9d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 16 half); half of this damage is divine in origin, and is not reduced by resistances or immunities to fire.

If the players manage the unlikely feat of disabling the *master glyph* before defeating Allevrah, she freezes in horror. An instant later, her flesh is immolated from within by demonic green fire as Abraxas destroys her—her ashes and gear drop to the floor a moment later. In this

event, the demons in the temple (with the exception of the marilith in area **R11**) shriek as they are called back to the Abyss, and any surviving drow panic and attempt to flee the Blood Basilica rather than face the PCs.

See page 45 for details on the *master glyph* and how it can be deactivated. If the players manage to kill Allevrah before destroying the glyph, they have 12 hours to disable its magic (through the true key or raw damage) before the end comes. See the Charting Failure sidebar (page 17) for the results of the fallen star in this case.



### ALLEVRAH AZRINAE CR 19

Female drow cleric of Abraxas 12/  
demonic disciple 5  
CE Medium humanoid (elf)  
**Init** +4; **Senses** *arcane sight*,  
darkvision 120 ft., *see invisibility*;  
Listen +10, Spot +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 40, touch 20, flat-footed 36  
(+9 armor, +5 deflection, +4 Dex,  
+1 insight, +5 natural, +6 shield)  
**hp** 148 (17d8+68)  
**Fort** +17, **Ref** +10, **Will** +21;  
+2 against enchantment,  
+10 against spells, +5 against  
magical writing

**Immune** death effects, fear, poison, sleep; **SR** 28

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** *Lash of Abraxas* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+7/19–20 plus 1 Con)

**Special Attacks** heretical revelation, rebuke undead 9/day (+8, 2d6+18), *summon demonic ally*

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 17th)

1/day—*augury*, *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *dancing lights*,  
*darkness*, *detect magic*, *discern lies*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*,  
*feather fall*, *identify*, *illusory script*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 19)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 16th)

8th—*quicken freedom of movement*, *fire storm* (DC 26),  
*greater spell immunity*, *protection from spells*<sup>o</sup>  
7th—*quicken cure serious wounds* (2), *destruction* (DC 25),  
*repulsion* (DC 25), *spell turning*<sup>o</sup>  
6th—*antimagic field*<sup>o</sup>, *blade barrier* (DC 24), *greater dispel  
magic*, *heal*, *heroes' feast*  
5th—*dispel good*, *quicken divine favor*, *greater command*  
(DC 23), *flame strike* (DC 23), *slay living* (DC 23), *true seeing*<sup>o</sup>  
4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds* (3), *greater magic weapon*,  
*imbue with spell ability*<sup>o</sup>, *sending*  
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *cure  
serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*<sup>o</sup>, *invisibility purge*, *magic  
vestment* (2)  
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell* (DC 20), *detect*

## LASH OF ABRAXAS

**Aura** strong conjuration and evocation; **CL** 17th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 130,000 gp; **Weight** 4 lb.

### STATISTICS

**Alignment** CE; **Ego** 23

**Senses** 120 ft. darkvision, blindsense, and hearing

**Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

**Communication** speech, telepathy; *read magic*

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

**Skills** Knowledge (the planes) +14

**Lesser Powers** *faerie fire* 3/day, *cure moderate wounds* on wielder 3/day

**Greater Power** *haste* owner 3/day

**Special Purpose** defend interests of Abraxas (*poison* heightened to 4th level)

### DESCRIPTION

After the *earthfall glyphs*, Allevrah's greatest triumph is the creation of the *Lash of Abraxas*. Granted intelligence by infusing the soul of Simovara, the previous matron of House Azrinae, the *Lash of Abraxas* is a +1 *wounding elf bane whip* that deals a base of 1d8 points of slashing damage on a hit—further, it is not limited to the number of creatures it can harm, unlike a normal whip. Allevrah usually further enhances the *Lash of Abraxas* with a greater magic weapon spell. The *Lash of Abraxas* is semi-animated, and grants her a +8 bonus on trip and disarm checks. Attacking with the *Lash of Abraxas* does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

The *Lash* has a special purpose—when defending the interests of Abraxas, it can cast *poison* (DC 18) upon any creature it strikes.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cure moderate wounds*, *faerie fire*, *haste*, *keen edge*, *poison*, *summon monster 1*; **Cost** 65,000 gp, 5,200 XP

*thoughts*<sup>D</sup> (DC 20), *hold person* (DC 20), *resist energy*, *silence*, *status*

1st—*command* (DC 19), *cure light wounds* (4), *magic aura*<sup>D</sup>, *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary* (DC 19)

0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (3), *guidance* (2)

**D** domain spell; **Domains** Knowledge, Magic

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Allevrah starts each day by casting *greater magic weapon*, *magic vestment* on her armor and shield, and *heroes' feast* (she generally shares the feast with all of her priestesses). She also casts *status* on the glabrezu in area **R1** and on the demon in area **R4**. If she expects

intruders (such as if her *status* spell indicates a demon is under attack), she casts *protection from spells*, *spell turning*, *freedom of movement*, *air walk*, and *greater spell immunity* (picking four spells she's heard the PCs favor, or *destruction*, *flesh to stone*, *harm*, and *blade barrier* if she doesn't have that information).

**During Combat** Allevrah prefers to let her drow and demons engage the PCs in melee so she can hang back and use her ranged spells against them. If she's immune to *blade barrier*, she'll place one to hit as many PCs as she can and then step back and forth through it herself as needed to keep foes from getting to her. If forced into melee, she casts quickened *divine favor* on the first round of combat, then uses quickened *cure* spells as necessary in the rounds to follow. As she fights, remember that the *Lash of Abraxas* takes its actions independent of Allevrah's. If it senses invisible characters, it *faerie fires* them. It hastes Allevrah on the first round of combat, then waits to use *cure moderate wounds* on her whenever she drops below 100 hit points.

**Morale** Although Allevrah does her best to defend the *master glyph*, she knows that her death would result in the glyph becoming vulnerable. If reduced to 40 hit points or less she flees to area **R11** by using her boots to teleport. Allevrah is aware of the protections that the glyph possesses, having laid them there herself, so does not immediately rush back to the battle. She uses as much of her available healing as is necessary to restore her health (after trying, and failing, to recruit the aid of the marilith in the fight). If she can, she puts a spell into her *ring of counterspells* to counter a particularly troublesome spell the PCs have been using against her. In the end, when she returns to area **R7** to take up the fight again (likely catching the PCs in the middle of attempting to destroy the *master glyph*), she fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 26, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +12; **Grp** +15 (+23 with *Lash of Abraxas*)

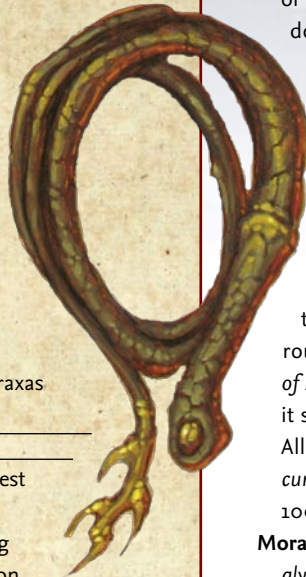
**Feats** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dark Adept, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Umbral Scion

**Skills** Concentration +25, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Spellcraft +20

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Undercommon; abyssal tongue, *tongues*

**SQ** *contingency*, *damnation*, *dark mark*, *spontaneous casting* (inflict spells)

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin* +5 (2), *scroll of heal*, *scroll of mind blank*, *scroll of restoration* (2), *scroll of stonkskin* (2), *wand of cure serious wounds* (34 charges), *wand of enervation* (44 charges), *wand of magic aura* (12 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *moderate fortification elven chain*, +1 *heavy fortification heavy shield*, *Lash*



of Abraxas, belt of giant strength +6, boots of teleportation, bracers of health +6 (as amulet of health +6), cloak of charisma +6, gloves of Dexterity +4, helm of telepathy, dusty rose ioun stone, pale green prism ioun stone, periapt of wisdom +6, ring of counterspells (contains greater dispel magic), ring of protection +5, 5,000 gp in jewelry, true seeing ointment (3 doses worth 250 gp each), 1,000 gp diamond, four 500 gp diamonds, silver unholy symbol for destruction spell (worth 500 gp)

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Abyssal Tongue (Ex)** Allevrah can speak in a way that is only understood by those foresworn to Abraxas.
- Contingency** Allevrah used a *contingency* scroll (CL 18th)—when she's reduced to less than 40 hit points or is harmed by an effect that *heal* can cure, a *heal* spell activates on her.
- Damnation (Ex)** Upon dying, Allevrah's soul is claimed by Abraxas and cannot be returned to life by any means without Abraxas's consent.
- Dark Mark (Ex)** Allevrah can innately recognize those who are dedicated to Abraxas.
- Exceptional Stats (Ex)** Allevrah Azrinae was destined from birth to achieve greatness. Her ability scores were generated using 32 points, rather than the standard 25-point elite array. Additionally, her gear was determined as if she were a PC rather than an NPC to account for her great resources as the matron of a drow house. These advantages increase her total CR by 1.
- Heretical Revelation (Su)** Three times a day, Allevrah may whisper a terrible secret to an adjacent target as a standard action. The target makes a DC 17 Will save to resist, otherwise she can affect him with *charm monster* (duration of 2 hours), *confusion* (duration of 2 rounds), or *nausea* (duration of 2 rounds).
- Permanent Spells** Allevrah has used several *permanency* scrolls (all CL 16th) to make the following spell effects permanent: *arcane sight*, *read magic*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*.
- Summon Demonic Ally (Sp)** Once per day, Allevrah can cast *summon monster V*, but only to summon chaotic evil extraplanar creatures—she prefers to summon 1d3 fiendish Huge vipers with this ability.

**DROW PRIESTESSES (4)**  
hp 49 each (see page 38)

CR 10

**DROW SOLDIERS (9)**  
hp 57 each (see page 13)

CR 8

**VROCKS (5)**  
hp 115 each (MM 48)

CR 9

## R8. War Room

This spacious room has a number of chairs arranged around a massive rectangular table covered with maps, diagrams, huge

### DEMONIC ERRATA

As the first of her dark faith, Faidaeva Vonnarc has the dubious honor of shedding further light on certain overlooked details of the demonic initiate prestige class (appearing in “Drow of Golarion” in *Pathfinder* #15). What follows are two clarifications of that class's abilities.

**Demonic Boons:** To clarify, as spell-like abilities, the DC of saves against effects created by a demonic initiate's demonic boon ability are Charisma-based.

**Summon Demonic Ally:** A term sacrificed upon the altar of d20 terminology, the word “demon” in this ability has a broader context than merely the 12 fiends listed in the MM. For the purposes of this ability, “demon” refers to any chaotic evil extraplanar creature.

tomes, and moldering parchments containing strange sigils. Doorways offer exits in each direction, while a single dim lantern hangs from the ceiling.

The secret door to area **R10** can be found with a DC 25 Search check.

This room is where Allevrah completed her plans to place the *earthfall glyphs* and call down the meteor on Kyonin. The documents on the table contain all of the information necessary to replicate this devastating magic, although the one doing so must spend years studying the tomes first. The procedure is expensive and time-consuming, but quite effective.

Allow the players to decide what they will do with the plans. They might decide to destroy them, to turn them over to the elves of Kyonin (who keep them as a weapon of last resort or mutual destruction), surrender them to a religious authority, or keep them for future use. Ramifications for what they do with this information are explored in *Concluding the Adventure*.

The plans themselves are, of course, utterly priceless to someone who wants to bring down the sky.

## R9. Drexinis's Chamber

Dark and cold, this room has little furniture other than a red, gilded divan in the middle of the room and a raised platform of marble in the corner. Several sackcloth blankets are draped over the marble, and a simple clay pitcher and bowl rest on the floor beside it.

This is normally Drexinis's chamber when he visits Allevrah. Unlike his chambers in the Bloodforge, this room is more spartan and rough. Drexinis's bed itself is a slab of marble—rich yet uncomfortable, the veins of minerals that run through its polished stone seem selected because of their resemblance to blood.

If Drexinis survived his encounter with the PCs at the Bloodforge, he retreats to this area. He might be encountered here or (if Allevrah retreats to her chambers to heal) in the Great Temple. Drexinis has no desire to fight the PCs again, and if they have already succeeded in defeating Allevrah and destroying the *master glyph*, he departs through the secret exit in area **R10** before they can confront him.

**Treasure:** Drexinis has hidden six *potions of cure moderate wounds* and three potions of lesser restoration amid his blankets, for use after Allevrah becomes too eager with her attentions on him. The potions can be found with a DC 15 Search check.

## Alistraxia



## R10. Escape Tunnel

This room is small, narrow, and otherwise quite uninteresting. The secret door to Allevrah's quarters in area **R12** only opens from that room, and is inaccessible from this area without a DC 28 Strength check to break it down.

## R11. Personal Shrine

Two statues of the snake-legged, bird-headed demon stand in alcoves here, astride a large altar of what appears to be bloodstained gold.

The altar is in fact made of marble but glamered with illusion to make it appear to be made of gold. This room is a small, personal shrine to Abraxas, one that Allevrah uses for her own meditations as needed.

**Creature:** When Allevrah first arrived at the Blood Basilica, she was greeted here by an unexpected advisor—a marilith demon named Alistraxia. Sent directly here by Abraxas to greet Allevrah, Alistraxia remains in this chamber and has offered advice, encouragement, and thinly veiled insults to Allevrah over the past several months. Alistraxia is here as much to observe Allevrah's actions as anything else, but also serves as an emissary between Abraxas and the temple he built for Allevrah.

Alistraxia is a powerful creature indeed—as a 12th level rogue, her skill with weapons and treachery is far greater even than most mariliths can master. She's certainly more than a match for the PCs, but she is not here to challenge them—only to deliver a message. Alistraxia is well aware that the plot to bring destruction down on Kyonin was not something that grew entirely out of Allevrah's heart but in fact from a seed planted by Abraxas. It took time for that seed to bear fruit, and Allevrah committed several despicable acts to reach her current state—Alistraxia wants to impart this knowledge upon the PCs so that they will know that the whispers of her master Abraxas are mighty indeed.

In truth Abraxas wanted only for the ancient aboleth magic not to be forgotten—it matters not to him if Allevrah accomplishes her goal or not. The simple act of attempting the audacious feat was enough to rekindle the destructive secrets back into the world, and Alistraxia notes with a smirk that the wizard Hialin of the Winter Council could have filled this role as well. In any event, now that the knowledge has returned to the world, she wonders who might next take up this destructive mantle.

The marilith happily tells the PCs all of this. In addition, she offers them a great reward if they would promise to hide the documents in area **R10** somewhere in a large library in a surface city for someone new to someday find. If the PCs agree, she'll promise them each

a medium magic item of their choice (the marilith is good for her word, and the promised item is waiting for the PCs at their homes when they return to the surface world, providing they hold up their end of the bargain). Of course, accepting this deal is a chaotic evil act, and should have repercussions on alignment.

If the PCs turn down the marilith, or if they destroy the documents, she smiles again, noting slyly that “There are always more copies to be found—you humans are remarkably adept at preserving your mistakes,” before she vanishes back to the Abyss to report to Abraxas of Allevrah’s failure. Likewise, if the PCs are foolish enough to attack, the marilith simply shakes her head and vanishes—only now they have made a dangerous enemy indeed.

## R12. Allevrah’s Quarters

This room is dark and unwelcoming, yet offers a cold sort of comfort with its twisted iron and silver furnishings reflecting whatever light happens to glint off their polished surfaces.

These are Allevrah’s personal quarters. The bed is an exact match for the one in Drexinis’s tower in the Bloodforge, down to the red velvet bedsheets. Her lover and servant, Drexinis, is not allowed into this room, and the sheets from his former abode are for Allevrah’s comfort, not his own.

## R13. Treasury

This rectangular room is stacked with precious goods, cast-off treasure, and enough items of potent magic to make the air itself hum with power.

This room contains a significant portion of House Azrinae’s treasury, transferred here by Allevrah to help finance the great expense of creating the *earthfall glyphs*, as bribes and payments, and simply to satisfy her greed. Even though much of the treasure here has long since been used for potent spell components, payments for the numerous *planar ally* and *greater planar ally* spells Allevrah’s been casting, and to pay for the construction of the glyphs, what remains is significant.

**Treasure:** This room is the party’s reward for surviving to the end of the Second Darkness Adventure Path—if you intend on continuing the campaign, you can use the treasure here to prepare the PCs for whatever you have planned next. In any event, the treasure here consists of coins, gems, jewelry, and trade bars of gold and platinum worth a combined total of 50,000 gp, a dozen sets of gear for additional drow soldiers and drow priests; two dozen *potions of cure moderate wounds*; a dozen *potions of lesser restoration*; 200 doses of drow poison contained in

several crystal bottles; a *rod of splendor*; a *staff of life* (16 charges); a set of *dimensional shackles*; a *lyre of building*; an *orb of storms*; a *deck of illusions*; and a small stack of 12 *scrolls of binding* and 5 *scrolls of contingency*. Feel free to include or adjust this treasure as you wish, but the end result should easily be the largest windfall of riches the PCs have ever seen.

## The Master Glyph

The last of the *earthfall glyphs* that the players have to disable is the *master glyph* in area R7. This is the glyph that actually calls the falling star down upon Golarion, so even if the players destroy some or all the *focus glyphs*, disaster is not totally averted (see “What if Allevrah Wins?” at the end of the adventure for the implications of the meteor’s impact). Like the *focus glyphs*, the *master glyph* can be destroyed by a number of means; unlike the others, the *master glyph* is entirely immune to all damage while Allevrah lives, unless the players manage to negate its aura.

### MASTER GLYPH

*Strange light seeps out of the shimmering glyph, tendrils lashing out to grasp at anyone nearby.*

**Ward** While within 60 feet of the glyph, Allevrah is protected by a *death ward* effect.

**Incantation** “And now, death comes to this fragile world. Let the deafened hear the thunder! Let the blind witness the final light! Let fear strike through the soul and rage boil blood from flesh. Thus, ever, is the end of all things—the final lasting peace.”

**hp** 1,000; fast healing 20

**AC** 30; **Saves** +15

**Immune** damage, disjunction (including destruction from a *rod of cancellation* or *mage’s disjunction* spell)

**Weakness** Each time one of the drow soldiers or priestesses or one of the vlocks in area R7 is slain, the *master glyph’s* maximum hit point total is reduced by 40; this hit point reduction bypasses the glyph’s normal immunity to damage. The glyph must make a DC 25 Fortitude save each time its hit point total is reduced; if it fails the save, its ward, immunities, and fast healing are suppressed for 1 round. If Allevrah is slain, the glyph loses its fast healing, ward, and immunities forever.

**Spell Keys** none

**True Key** To initiate the true key, a PC who has seen at least one of the *focus glyphs* must observe the *master glyph* for 1 round and must make a DC 20 Search check to realize that the *master glyph* contains within it copies of all five *focus glyphs*. A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check at this point is enough to reveal that these five *focus glyphs* must be undone to destroy the *master glyph*. The clue to the order in which these glyphs must be removed lies in the pattern of incantations—fury, defense, watching, vigilance, and renewal. If the correct pattern of glyph disruption falters, all five glyphs reappear

and the process must be started over from the beginning.

**Renewal** A DC 30 Heal check, *enervation*, or *energy drain*.

**Vigilance** A DC 30 Bluff check, *silence*, or any spell that causes a sleep effect.

**Watching** A DC 30 Disable Device or Use Magic Device check or any spell that causes *blindness*.

**Defense** A DC 30 Intimidate check or any spell that creates a fear effect.

**Fury** A DC 30 Diplomacy check, *calm emotions*, or any spell of the charm subschool.

**Deactivation** Once all five glyphs within the *master glyph* are deactivated, the *master glyph* itself flashes rapidly. A growing whine fills the air, and an instant later a wash of magical energy pulses outward in a 60-foot burst. All creatures in this area become infused with the magical power, and immediately gain a +2 insight bonus on an ability score of their choice. If the glyph was deactivated in any way other than using the true key, the blast of magic also inflicts 10d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 16 half) on all creatures in this area as well.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the destruction of the *master glyph* and the defeat of Allevrah Azrinae, the PCs have averted a terrible doom upon Golarion. The falling star that had been captured by the *earthfall glyphs* is released, and the influence of the powerful magic that shielded it from the planet's atmosphere fades. Soon after the PCs' triumph (try to time this event so that the PCs can witness it—perhaps after they've returned to Kyonin to report their success to the queen, or even after they've returned to Riddleport to check up on the Gold Goblin), a brilliant meteor streaks through the sky above Avistan. The event catches the eye of millions as the falling star bursts harmlessly into a plume of fire and smoke, disintegrating high above. Very few ever learn how close the world came to a second Age of Darkness, and most record the astonishing astronomical event as little more than an unexpected diversion. The next day, the falling star is on many lips and the subject of countless barroom tales, but by the end of the week it is well on its way to being forgotten.

Yet some few know better. The PCs, for one, know of what could have been, and so do the leaders of Kyonin. If the PCs don't return to Kyonin on their own, they'll receive a summons from the queen the day after the falling star bursts harmlessly in the sky above. Once they return, Queen Telandia welcomes the PCs back to the surface and proclaims them "Heroes of Kyonin." Word spreads throughout the elven nation swiftly, and by the end of the week the PCs are recognized throughout and greeted with smiles and kind words. To go along with the public recognition, Queen Telandia opens the vaults of the Emerald Library to the PCs, allowing them to each choose a magical tome or manual from the stacks as their reward

that, once read, will grant the PC a +3 inherent bonus to an ability score of their choice.

Queen Telandia also offers any of the PCs who are interested a role in the elven government as royal advisors. With the loss of the Winter Council, the queen wishes to replace the services they provided with people she can trust. And with the PCs' recent services, she can think of no one better suited to take on the role. A PC that accepts the position is granted his own building in the vicinity of the Queen's Palace and a monthly stipend of 1,000 gp, provided the PC devotes a minimum of 8 hours a month to his advisory duties.

## What if Allevrah Wins?

If the PCs fail to prevent Allevrah from finishing the ritual by advancing the Doomsday Score to 20, the Second Darkness comes to pass. If the PCs haven't destroyed any of the *focus glyphs* when this occurs, the falling star strikes true and destroys Kyonin... and many of the neighboring nations. The darkness created by the explosion as ash is hurled into the sky blots out the sun for months, triggering a terrible death of plant life and animal life across Golarion. Kyonin is transformed into a massive crater, the base of which runs molten for some time, incidentally filling the Land of Black Blood with lava and killing everything within (Allevrah is sure to vacate the realm before this event so she can enjoy things from her seat of power back in Zirnakaynin). The event isn't huge enough to truly end the world, or even enough to approach the level of devastation caused 10,000 years ago, but it's enough to change the face of the world.

If the PCs destroyed one or two *focus glyphs*, the falling star breaks up as it nears the surface of Golarion. Much damage is done to regions bordering Kyonin, and the loss of life is appalling, but beyond this area the world itself escapes the brunt of the devastation.

If the PCs destroyed three or four *focus glyphs*, the falling star breaks up into mostly harmless fragments. The largest portion plunges into Lake Encarthan, causing a tsunami to flood the coastal regions, but otherwise the world escapes relatively unscathed.

If the PCs destroyed all five *focus glyphs* but fail to defeat Allevrah in the final battle, the meteor bursts in the sky above Kyonin, transforming night into day and showering the nation with hundreds of tiny meteorites. Many forest fires result, but in the grand scheme of what could have been... this could almost count as a victory.

## Continuing the Campaign

Although the Second Darkness has been averted, loose ends and new challenges can present themselves to the PCs in the days, weeks, and months after the brilliant spectacle of the falling star that could have ended the world burst in the heavens above. Listed below are several campaign seeds and



adventure hooks that could serve as the basis for any number of new adventures for your PCs to tackle in the future.

**Dawn of a New Council:** Even if the Winter Council is no more, they leave behind numerous powerful elven noble allies. A new Winter Council, formed of bitter and vengeful elven traditionalists eager to see Kyonin close its borders to non-elves could rise from the old Council's ashes, even if the PCs manage to befriend the actual surviving councilors and convince them that the concept of the secret council has long outlived its usefulness. Members of the new Winter Council need not be high level, but they should be fantastically rich, and they doubtless view the PCs as rabblerothers at best and assassins at worst—in this case, a new conspiracy could arise in the shadows of Kyonin's government. Ignorant of the role the PCs played in preventing the Second Darkness, these conspirators see the PCs only as a threat to traditional elven values and the complex machinations of their revenge could haunt the PCs for years—for the elves are very, very patient.

**Zirnakaynin Goes to War:** Eventually, the truth of the PCs' hidden invasion of Zirnakaynin spreads, likely as Alicavniss makes strides in her research into how the PCs managed the disguise. After a group of drow capture the elven necromancer Giseil and pry from him the secrets of his *recorporeal incarnation* spell, the drow have a powerful new weapon. Whereas before, the drow of Zirnakaynin were more or less content to rule below, Allevrah's influence on House Azrinae has awakened in many a longing for the surface world again or enhanced the inherent hatred of elves. With the ability to transform themselves as humans, elves, and other surface dwellers, the drow of Zirnakaynin could learn much of the surface—certainly enough that a full-scale invasion from the Darklands can't be far behind.

**The Dark Revelation:** The PCs have learned one of the elven race's greatest secrets—the Dark Fate. The elves have long hidden the fact that a rare few elves spontaneously transform into drow—most elves would find the concept ludicrous. Yet with Allevrah, the PCs have compelling evidence to prove the Dark Fate exists. Queen Telandia would prefer the PCs help her keep this a secret—but she could be convinced that keeping secrets is what nearly brought about the end of it all, in which case she nervously agrees that it is time to publicly admit the Dark Fate. Such a bold political move could well rip through Kyonin like a knife, and might perhaps even result in riots or a civil war. The queen will need all the help she can get to manage this tense political situation, but an even greater and more sinister ramification to such a development exists. Eventually, the drow learn of it, and it certainly won't take them long to hit upon the idea of researching a method by which the Dark Fate could be induced. What would happen to the elves of the world if a talented drow spellcaster developed a plague that carried on the wind this sinister transformation, and how could such a plague be stopped before the elves of Golarion succumbed?





# The Land of Black Blood

The vast vaults of the Darklands are worlds unto themselves, places warped by magic and lost to the knowledge of the surface kingdoms. Among the greatest of these is the Land of Black Blood, a massive cavern and the heart of a lost underground civilization. Its walls gleam and ooze with black slime, a strange fluid that seems to exist in endless supply, dripping into the Darklands in a slow but steady flow.

The vault of the Land of Black Blood is a large and thriving region, though its corruption and peculiarities make it difficult for any major race of the Darklands to establish a permanent presence. The stories of the place never quite express the sheer strangeness of a cavern that seems to have pulsing foul blood, chittering servants, and a quasi-life of its own. While all regions of the Darklands have their dangers, the Land of Black Blood is best avoided by those who seek to retain their health and sanity.

## THE BLACK BLOOD

The most obvious and striking feature of the Land of Black Blood is that which gives it a name: the chilling black fluid that seeps from more than a dozen sites throughout the cavern, dripping and oozing in fetid streams. This vile liquid seems to embody the distilled corruption of the earth, flowing in a fluid manifestation of death and dark energies that pools in this underground world as it seeps toward some deeper, unfathomable destination. Coalescing in a lake of decay called the Caltherium, the black blood hides depths unplumbed by mortals, as all attempts to chart it even by magic have failed. If any alive know what lurks within those frigid depths none dare speak of it.

Freezing to the touch and innately repulsive to most forms of life, black blood has the consistency of honey or

*The cloud of bats continued for minutes that seemed like hours, but we kept moving, trying to stay ahead of the demonic shrieks. The bats gave us some cover, time to find a hiding place. The vrockes were close, but they were toying with us, giving us time to run. Where would we go, after all?*

*Tellar found the caverns behind a faceless statue, a narrow tunnel wet with black water but enclosed and easier to defend. Something within had died and left the stench of a thousand hells. The demons mocked us from outside the caves, but seemed reluctant to enter. The tunnel water pulsed and quaked. The waters trickled over runes barely more than a scratch in the walls. Charda runes.*

*What, tell me, makes a demon hesitate in fear? In the Land of Black Blood, even the mighty learn caution.*

—Scrap 138 of the Journal of Bhorvhar Flintheim

sap, but bears the color of oil over tar or liquefied organs. It holds a slight odor of spoiled eggs, but its own viciousness seems to trap that greater reek one might expect from such foulness. As it flows from the stone it moves slowly, oozing like freezing magma, grasping, freezing, and dragging along that which lies in its path. As it settles into pools, the blood quivers with unexpected vibrations, twitching in occasional spasms as if something hidden within were trying to burst free but lacks the strength.

Sages of the underworld hold varied theories on the black blood's true nature. Some claim the noxious fluid to be the runoff of countless surface-world graves and mausoleums, the putrescence of the dead and rotting attracted to special channels within the earth and flowing toward a single point, one that will eventually fill and gradually flood the world in a tide of death. Others claim the stuff to be the blood of Golarion itself, the internally wept tears of a world overrun by despoiling parasites. Still others claim it to be a manifestation of foul emotions, drawn from throughout the world by some magic or device hidden beneath the Caltherium that has long outlived its creators. Regardless of its actual nature, the black blood is undoubtedly foul and its connection to the negative energies and dark magics of the world is undeniable. Groups throughout the Darklands and beyond covet the ooze and dare daunting journeys to claim its chilling resource. For long centuries bold necromancers, mad urdefen, the lich drow of Shraen, the ghouls of Nemret-Noktoria, and others have sought to dominate the perverse resource, but ever have the dangers of the vault forced them to merely claim what they can carry before fleeing the myriad horrors of the Land of Black Blood.

## CREATURES OF THE LAND

The Land of Black Blood has always been fought over for its gates and magical powers, and aboleth, drow, cloakers, derro, and others have controlled it for various spans of past aeons. In addition, outsiders and monstrosities have boiled up from the depths to make their mark, attracted perhaps to the arcane energies that the vault somehow both draws to itself and shapes into various forms.

### PROPERTIES OF BLACK BLOOD

Corruption made manifest, few sane minds could conceive of a use for black blood, yet its properties to cruel spellcasters make it one of the most coveted reagents known to necromancers. The noxious fluid repulses and freezes all natural life, though certain creatures possess an uncanny immunity. With the exception of aberrations and undead, any creature who comes into contact with black blood takes 1d6 points of cold damage—10d6 if fully immersed.

The fluid's most fascinating and coveted property, however, is its latent necromantic power. When removed from the Caltherium or other source, a pint of black blood can be used as unholy water. In addition, spellcasters who consume a pint or more of black blood cast all necromantic spells at +1 caster level for the next 10 minutes, but take 3d6 points of damage and 1 point of Constitution damage. In either case, the blood must be used within an hour of being drawn from its source, as after this time it loses all mystical properties. The spell *gentle repose* can preserve a container of up to 1 gallon of black blood away from its source for increased lengths of time.

**The Moldering Emperor:** An aberrant neothelid of unusual size and strength lives within the Hanging Forest and occasionally ventures into the depths of the Caltherium, seeming to feed upon the black blood itself (see page 82 for more details). Massive and murderous, this ruinous creature is the deadliest predator in the Land of Black Blood, commanding the respect and fear of all the vault's inhabitants. Some propose that creatures similar to the Moldering Emperor live within the depths of the Caltherium and that killing one near the surface merely brings another up to claim the former's range and habitations as their own.

**Chardas:** The only indigenous race of the Land of Black Blood, the merciless and fanatical chardas embody the perverse nature and deadliness of their eerie homeland. Chardas are half-amphibian savages that thrive on the black blood, swimming in it, eating the foul frogs and fish that live in it, and worshiping at the altar of their bizarre deity, Orgesh. They are cowards, though, and prefer to

# The Land of Black Blood



drag creatures into the black blood and drown them. They rarely stand and fight, except in defense of their foul altars and places of sacrifice. The only work they do is that required to find sacrifices, prepare sacrifices, and make sacrifices. Their religion obsesses them, and they live in perpetual fear of their mysterious god's wrath. See page 82 for more details on this degenerate race.

## THE LAND AT A GLANCE

Any place as filled with foulness as the Land of Black Blood draws evil to it as a corpse draws maggots. Demons, drow, and the followers of vile gods have all made their mark on the vault, as well as creatures long forgotten and entirely inhuman.

**The Black Mire:** This section of low marsh ground is much prized by chardas, ether frogs, and other aquatic life. The area is overgrown with mushroom blooms, swamp cabbages, and strange plants of a sulfurous yellow that extend fern-like fronds from the water and seem to feed on nothing but water and mud. The mire reeks and few creatures find them hospitable, especially as the Moldering Emperor often hunts here.

**The Bloodforge:** Recently built atop a small island in one of the dozens of black blood rivers that drain into the Caltherium, the Bloodforge was created by the Azrinae drow. It is detailed in full in "Descent into Midnight."

**The Caltherium:** This central pool of the black blood covers almost a square mile of territory, and waves and even fogs sometimes rise from its chill waters. Its inhabitants include blind cave fish, crayfish, ether frogs, and larger creatures such as chardas and the Moldering Emperor (see page 83). The depth of the Caltherium has never been definitively established, but it drops off sharply near the shore. Most guess it must be at least 200 feet deep, and it certainly has connections to other, deeper realms where the aboleth live. The places where the black blood flows into the Caltherium are plain; the waters are blacker there, and no fish frequent the area. The outflow must be underwater.

**The Cliff Dwellings:** The cliff dwellings are sets of square-walled houses a full 80 feet above the cavern floor, inset from the cliff face in areas of soft stone that go back as much as 60 or 70 feet from the vault itself. The spaces are easily reached by flight or magic but are otherwise quite difficult to assault. They are frequently used by caravans and hunters passing through the region, though they lack an easy supply of pure water.

Most of the cliff dwellings are warded by arcane runes against outsiders and against scrying, fused into the stone by the house's builders. These shelters are inhabited by feral vampire clans, goblins, svirfneblin, and others. Assaults on them are common, and many of the cliff dwellings have substantial piles of bones at the

### WITHIN THE VAULT

The adjacent map notes the locations of sites detailed herein and in this month's adventure, "Descent into Midnight."

- A Northeastern Entrance
- B Southeastern Entrance
- C Southwestern Passage
- D The Northern Fortress
- E The Grove of Statues
- F The Demonspire
- G The Cube of Writhing Glyphs
- H The Weeping Cliffs
- I The Crystal Plaza
- J The Throne of Abraxas
- K Bloodforge
- L Venderlash
- M Orgeshta
- N The Faceless Idol
- O The Cliff Dwellings
- P The Fetid Palace
- Q Rotstone Towers

foot of the cliff below them: the impromptu graveyards of former owners.

**The Crystal Plaza:** A region of oily black sand along the eastern shore of the Caltherium is the preferred beaching ground for aboleths who deal with the chardas and other inhabitants of the Land of Black Blood. Near the landing stand spire-ruins like great grave markers avoided by all the vault's inhabitants, a supposedly haunted place known as the Crystal Plaza. See page 19 for more details.

**The Cube of Writhing Glyphs:** Legends claim that a blind necromancer among the chardas carved this cube with the 10,000 faintly glowing glyphs that still mark it today, and that these symbols either relate the history of the chardas, or they reveal the secret of the black blood's creation and control. Anyone who attempts to read the glyphs—whether they are actually capable of understanding the runes or not—must make an immediate DC 22 Will save or lose 1d4 points of Wisdom. Those who use a *comprehend languages* spell or make a successful DC 30 Decipher Script check can then decipher some small portion of the runes. None who have succeeded have made anything intelligible from the writings, but from that point on they gain an increased benefit from drinking black blood (allowing them to cast necromantic spells at +2 caster level for a time).

**The Demonspire:** While the various arms of the larger vault can extend for miles, one landmark in particular is noteworthy because of its position. The Demonspire is a huge finger of stone extending up from a crater or gorge. The top platform is a favorite site for meetings because all approaches can be seen so clearly. The spire may

have served as an observation tower or watchpost for the inhabitants of Orgeshta; now it is the preferred perch of the vrock that frequently visit the vault.

**The Faceless Idol of the Hungering God:** Not far from Orgeshta is an enormous idol, almost large enough to rival some of the works of the Thassilonian Empire. Carved out of the cavern wall, this figure has a hugely distended belly, clawed dog-like legs, and an open mouth filled with shark-like teeth. However, it has no nose, eyes, or ears, and so is usually called the Faceless God. Many of the creatures who live in the vault consider it their patron and protector—particularly chardas—and venerate it when they pass. Thus, before the statue lies a large stone altar shaped like a bowl and filled with festering meat, rotting fungus, and similar material. Chardas gather here every 12 days for a ceremony and sacrifice, but they insist on being left alone during these rituals. Intruders are warned off with gurgling shouts, and then attacked if they dare approach. The charda high priest is said to be enormous, the size of an ogre, with chitin plates as thick as a man's wrist.

Those who come within 100 feet of the statue without leaving an edible offering are considered deeply unfortunate and ill-omened. Such individuals are said to be suffering the Bite of Orgesh, which manifests as the effects of a *bestow curse* spell and last for the next 24 hours. Leaving an edible offering, however, evades the curse. Creatures willing to offer up a sentient humanoid sacrifice gain a much greater return from the idol. By making a sacrifice and spilling its blood on the altar, those who participate in the sacrifice gain the effects of a *prayer* and *deathwatch* spell for 24 hours. Such a sacrifice is an evil act.

**The Glyph Walls:** Many sections of pale stone in the land of black blood are smoothed, vertical surfaces used to inscribe historical or arcane information in a dozen languages and from twice as many magical traditions. The authors were often apparently inhuman, carving aboleth slaver-glyphs, charda chatter-scrawl, fungoid ravings, and countless other runes. Others are at least warm-blooded: thin drow etchings, blunt derro runes, and the sooty marks of dark stalkers. Regardless, they leave their comments for all to read: simple warnings, long-winded prayers, arcane invocations, and even some truly pompous declarations of eternal dominion by the rulers of the vault.

Those who make a DC 25 Decipher Script check with the benefit of a *comprehend languages* spell can reveal a portion of the writings on any given section of wall, revealing them as incredibly complex arcane notations written in varied tongues. As the notations stretch for miles throughout the caverns and have been altered or destroyed in areas, revealing what all the writing means would take centuries if it's even possible at all. The drow have recently added their own potent arcane glyphs to the Land of Black Blood, layering yet one more foul invocation on the region.

**The Grove of Statues:** At first it seems that a basilisk or medusa might lived in this section of the vault for a time as hundreds of stone humanoids stand about, all made of the same grayish, gritty granite and all carved in great detail from helmet to boots. On closer inspection, though, this is clearly not the work of magical petrification, or at least not the usual variety. Every single creature in the grove is faceless as old Orgesh, without eyes, nose, or mouth. Why this is so is unclear, but it appears to be the work of an insane artist with an extraordinary amount of time on his hands. At the grove's heart stands the Shrine of Bound Earth, an exotic and sacred place guarded by beings of living stone. See page 9 for more details.

**The Hanging Forest:** Here, an immense forest of mushrooms and fungi hold sway over the terrain, rising like trees in a surface forest. Yet this is no mere forest of fungal giants, for above, the growth is duplicated in the form of hanging mushrooms and immense sheets and vines of fungus. Favored roosting sites for bats and cloaklers, when these plants die they crash to the floor of the cavern, often bringing down a cloud of guano and spores and crushing creatures below. The largest of the mushrooms here is known as the Fetid Palace, a site widely speculated to be the lair of the Moldering Emperor. Further details on this location can be found on page 26.

**The Northern Fortress:** This narrow passage is completely dominated by four towers (two at the entrance to the passage, two at the end) and must once have been a center of martial activity. Little remains except for ancient weapons platforms, defensive walls, pits, and chambers with excellent lines of fire onto the passage below. The deeper sections of the fortress include hundreds of chambers that must have served as armories, barracks, messes, storage areas, and dungeons for long forgotten prisoners. It is unknown what threat this complex served to defend against. It is now haunted only by chokers, fungi, and occasional wandering bands of drow or derro.

**Orgeshta:** While several small settlements fill the long arms of the Land of Black Blood, only one can be called a proper city. This is the City of Piled Stones, which is called Orgeshta after the ancient idol whose people raised it. Some believe the first settlers were a type of deeply corrupted and cannibalistic dwarves; certainly the quality of the stonework is not in dispute, as it has withstood sieges, war, and dark magic for many centuries, perhaps millennia.

The city is really a series of circular towers, many of them still in good condition. They are shaped roughly like beehives, with a single entrance and tiny parapet at the top, and a small postern gate (often missing) at the bottom. Bats, rats, and cloaklers sometimes haunt these lairs, but no humanoid race presently calls this home.

Which is not to say that no one visits or that it is abandoned. Chardas often come here, some keeping stockpiles of food



in flooded tower cellars, while others leave offerings at the numerous ancient icons of Orgesh, whom they worship. The temple itself is a simple affair of gray stone and primitive murals daubed in blood and clay, little more than a half-fallen ruin. Likewise, caravans of drow explorers and blood harvesters stop here, using the buildings as stables for their pack animals and as a safe place to shelter. The graffiti in the city's core is written in a dozen languages.

**The Rotstone Hollows:** This section of the vault is a vast plain of stinking mud, a soggy lakebed that once was filled with the black blood. Immense fanged grubs called muck lions haunt these reaches, eager to feed on unwary charda pilgrims that often explore the mudflats. In several locations, the remains of buildings protrude from the mud, marking sites where charda buildings once stood. Some of these, such as Rotstone Towers (see page 23), are still inhabited by chardas, but others have been abandoned to more sinister creatures. One particularly large ruin has become the home to one or more scanderigs, a sort of tunnel devil who has eaten his way through a number of foes who have dared to seek shelter here (see *Pathfinder* #4).

**The Throne of Abraxas:** This mysterious island near the southeastern shore of the Caltherium is a favored roosting place for demons. The Throne of Abraxas is presented in detail on page 35.

**Venderlash:** This is the only steadily inhabited section of the vault, where outcasts—mostly duergar, mongrelmen, and dark folk—raise bats for meat and glove-leather, and where a small community of derro work alchemical wonders with rare minerals and arcane reagents.

Venderlash is dull because little of the black blood flows in this section of the vault. It has no fogs, no ancient glyphs, and demon attacks are rare. Despite this, few merchants like the place. It has little money, and seems to barely hang on. For the most part, its inhabitants are happy to keep fed and avoid enslavement to more powerful forces. If questioned, the residents claim that the rest of the vault is deadly and that only large, well-guarded expeditions and caravans can hope to survive the trek. They can provide directions to the largest landmarks—Orgeshta, the Hanging Forest, and the Caltherium—but they really know nothing of the dangers involved or the creatures that live deeper in the vault.



## Demon Lords of Golacion

The demon lords of the Abyss are legion. Hell has eight rulers, each tasked with specific goals set by the ninth, mighty Asmodeus himself. The ruling daemons of Abaddon number but four (with the shadowy possibility of a mysterious fifth that dwells in the shadows beyond the Four Horsemen themselves). But in the myriad realms of the Abyss, the demon lords are legion.

Yet despite their vast numbers, they do not rise up to conquer all of creation for a very simple reason—the greatest enemy of the demonic host is itself.

From mighty Lamashtu's epochal battles against her legendary enemy Pazuzu on down to the petty squabbles of pitiful dretches over squatting rights in the most dismal corners of the Abyss, demons seem born to bicker and fight among themselves. The natural order of things in the Abyss follows the old paradigm of "might makes right." The stronger demons lord over the weaker, forcing their

lessers to serve them just as they themselves serve their own mistresses and masters. Eventually, the most successful and powerful demons, regardless of their race or type, reach a point where the Abyss itself takes note of their power. Generally, this occurs after the demon has established a realm, held it for several centuries, and spilled endless waves of blood holding his domain. At this time, the powerful demon undergoes that most hideous and legendary of apotheosis—he becomes a nascent demon lord.

Although this transformation is certainly physical, for the Abyss reshapes the demon into a new form more appropriate to his temperament, the nature of his realm, and the whims of the Abyss itself, it is also a powerful spiritual change. Once nothing more than a singular demon, the nascent demon lord can feel the devotion and fear of the faithful. He can grant divine magic in answer to prayers offered in his name. Yet even now, such a demon is not a true lord—he can still be slain permanently by



*There are more evils in this world than those which you and your barbaric kin have imagined. Across the gulfs of the outermost sphere lies the Abyss, and there, where demons cavort and play, evil is refined. And among them are Lords so potent they may even challenge the gods themselves—nay, they are gods themselves. So do not think to compare me to a Demon Lord, for I have seen their evils. I have called them to my bidding, and should you vex me further I shall do so again. And then you will see that the evils you ascribe to me are nothing compared to the idle fancies of a Queen perhaps too patient with her slaves.*

—Queen Elvannia of Irrisen to King Kruthgan on the eve of his execution in Whitethorne

his enemies, and he lacks the ability to control his Abyssal realm. Only when a nascent demon lord expands his realm to encompass an entire Abyssal rift (the Abyssal equivalent to a planet or world in the Material Plane), does the apotheosis complete its course—only then does the demon become one of the new Lords of the Abyss.

Countless nascent demon lords rise and fall in the Abyss, yet relatively few have the stuff to hold an Abyssal rift and thus complete their ascension. In some cases, a demon lord might deliberately invest some of his power in a favored minion and artificially trigger an ascension from demon to nascent lord. The most well-known ascension of this type on Golarion is that of Treerazer, who was ascended to power by his master Cyth-V'sug. Yet as seen in this example, such ascensions are fraught with peril—when Treerazer betrayed his master and attempted to seize control of Cyth-V'sug's Abyssal rift, he was banished to the Material Plane, an act that “froze” his apotheosis and left Treerazer caught in a half-life between power and oblivion.

Yet despite the relative rarity of successful demonic ascensions, there exist on the Abyss dozens, perhaps hundreds of demon lords. While all of them have interests in the Material Plane, only a few dozen have specific interests on the world of Golarion. This article presents the 29 most widespread and reviled demon lords, those whose cults have long darkened the Inner Sea region, and in some cases, have shaped the world for the worse.

## READING THE ENTRIES

Each of the following 29 demon lords is presented in identical format to group like information together. Actual combat statistics for the demon lords are not presented here, but you can use a demon's listed CR as a guideline if you wish to create stats (or adapt them from another rulebook) for use in your Pathfinder campaign. As a general rule, demon lords range from CR 26 to CR 32. Only Lamashtu has no CR listed—as a true deity, she is beyond the capability for mortals to directly challenge. Nascent demon lords (none of whom are detailed in this article) generally have CR scores of 20 to 25.

Each demon lord entry is split into two sections. The first section presents information about the demon lord

himself, starting with his name, his title and Challenge Rating, his gender, and the two areas of concern with which he's most commonly associated. The name of each demon lord's Abyssal realm is listed next, followed by a description of his unholy symbol. Finally, the section lists the domains the demon lord grants his clerics, and his favored weapon.

The second section provides a short description of the demon lord, as well as some information about his goals on Golarion, where his worship is most widespread, and similar tidbits of information intended to guide GMs seeking to create cults or adventures based on the demon lord.

### **ABRAXAS, MASTER OF THE FINAL INCANTATION** CR 32

CE male demon lord of magic and forbidden lore

**Realm** Pleroma (Deceptive Realm of False Paradise)

**Unholy Symbol** Demonic face encircled by a snake with two snake tails descending from mouth

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic

**Favored Weapon** Whip

Abraxas is a hideous creature, with the head of a deformed and fanged bird and two writhing vipers in place of legs. His torso is humanoid, and he wields a whip and shield. Abraxas knows countless destructive secrets and eldritch magical formulas, particularly those that cause great devastation and pain. When the aboleths called down doom upon Azlant, Abraxas was there to watch, and he made sure to catch and preserve the methods by which the terrible event was orchestrated so that others could duplicate the effort at some time in the future. His greatest weapon is the dreaded “Final Incantation,” a single potent word that can unmake magic.

Although Abraxas's following is quite strong among the drow of Golarion, his cult is certainly not limited to the Darklands. On Golarion's surface, one can expect to find small cults of Abraxas in most large cities. He is also venerated by sadistic wizards, sorcerers, and scholars who seek forbidden knowledge. His cult is particularly strong in Nex's capital city of Quantium, where it maintains a notorious library called Scrivenbough, a fortified stone structure with countless rare books in its holdings, and cultists who tattoo the greatest secrets on hidden parts of their bodies.

## ALDINACH, SHE OF THE SIX VENOMS

CR 27

CE female demon lord of sand and scorpions

**Realm** Sea of Whispering Sands (Vast Desert of Ruined Cities)

**Unholy Symbol** Gold scorpion with sand dripping from its claws

**Domains** Animal (effects that target animals can also target scorpions), Chaos, Evil, Sun

**Favored Weapon** kukri

Aldinach appears as a golden scorpion the size of a house. Her claws have razor-sharp crystalline edges, and her face is hideously human. On her back swarm countless scorpions, and she can send them out to do her bidding with but a thought. Her favored demonic minions are the scorpion-like gharros demons (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 113). Aldinach's cults are strongest in desert regions, particularly in Osirion's wastelands, where many believe that the monstrous "double scorpions" known as sandwalkers (*Kobold Quarterly* #7) that plague certain caravan routes are her children. Temples devoted to Aldinach tend to be converted churches in ruined cities—in inhabited cities, her cults tend to gravitate to underground lairs.

Aldinach is one of Lamashtu's daughters, although since Lamashtu's ascension to divinity, the two have not associated overmuch. The same cannot be said of her relationship with her sister Areshkagal, with whom Aldinach is locked in what seems an eternal war. Ever since Aldinach stole the Sea of Whispering Sands from Areshkagal, forcing her into exile in the Blood Clefts, Aldinach has been forced to defend her realm constantly from her sister's increasingly desperate attempts to reclaim her lost territory.

## ANDIRIFKHU, THE RAZOR PRINCESS

CR 28

CE female demon lord of traps and knives

**Realm** The Vault of Ten Thousand Deaths (Huge Trap-Filled Dungeon of Iron and Stone)

**Unholy Symbol** Skull pierced by six thin blades

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Luck, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** kukri

Known also as the Mistress of the Thousand Cuts, Andirifkhu is the patron of the marilith demon, the torturer, and the sadistic inventor. Her cultists are fond of building trap-ridden dungeons and sending sacrifices through to die on any one of a dozen or more spikes or swinging blades or spear tips within—sacrifices who manage to escape are generally hobbled or crippled and then put through the gantlet again and again until they eventually succumb. Andirifkhu appears as a towering, beautiful woman with green scaled skin and long crimson hair. Her eyes are snake eyes, and she has six arms that each wield a different blade—although her favorite are kukris. Her worship is strong among the drow and certain noble families in Galt and Northern Taldor.

## ANGAZHAN, THE RAVENER KING

CR 28

CE male demon lord of apes and jungles

**Realm** Ahvoth-Kor (Tropical Jungle Realm of Ape Demons)

**Unholy Symbol** Demonic ape face

**Domains** Animal, Chaos, Evil, Plant

**Favored Weapon** spear

Angazhan appears as a towering blood-red ape with six long, thin fingers, tusk-like teeth, and relatively small bloodshot eyes. His worship is strongest in the Mwangi Expanse, where his chattering brood, the simian charauka (known elsewhere as ape men) hold court in jungle-choked ruins and feast on the flesh of human cattle. Angazhan is also served by the nalfeshnee demons, and although most nalfeshnees are too proud and self-absorbed to admit that Angazhan is their lord, he is nonetheless served in his jungle realm of Ahvoth-Kor by hundreds, if not thousands of them.

## ARESHKAGAL, THE FACELESS SPHINX

CR 26

CE female demon lord of portals and riddles

**Realm** The Blood Clefts (Blood-Drenched Badlands)

**Unholy Symbol** A faceless woman's head decorated with a bloody pharaoh's headdress

**Domains** Air, Chaos, Evil, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** sickle

Areshkagal's realm, a barren region of blood-red stony hills and dry gulches, abuts the Abyssal realm of the Sea of Whispering Sands, and she often sends her armies into the desert to torment those of her half-sister Aldinach. Areshkagal once dwelt in the Sea of Whispering Sands, but was forced to retreat to these barren hills when her younger but more powerful half-sister defeated her. Areshkagal appears as a faceless six-legged female sphinx with midnight blue fur and pale flesh. Her wings are draconic, and her tail is a hissing viper—it is from this viper's mouth that she whispers her unfair riddles to those she captures. Whispers hold that her actual face is too hideous for even the Abyss to bear, but that for brief moments she can reveal it to strike viewers insane or dead.

## BAPHOMET, LORD OF THE MINOTAURS

CR 31

CE male demon lord of labyrinths and beasts

**Realm** The Ivory Labyrinth (Endless Maze of Minotaurs)

**Unholy Symbol** A brass minotaur's head with ruby eyes

**Domains** Animal, Chaos, Evil, Strength

**Favored Weapon** glaive

Although he is traditionally the god of the minotaur race, Baphomet's cult is on the rise among humanity. His human worshipers hold sermons in his name in secret, and they hand down his teachings along family lines across generations, forming secretive societies that tend to have much political power in many of Golarion's larger cities. They remain secretive about their allegiance

to Baphomet, though, patiently awaiting a time when he might call upon them to rise up against their enemies and return the world to the dominion of the beast. These secret societies use complex signs, hand gestures, passwords, and sigils to identify themselves to each other and pass messages—in those communications, they use their “true names” and refer to themselves as the Templars of the Ivory Labyrinth.

Baphomet himself was ascended to the status of demon lord from the soul of the first and greatest minotaur, a beast created by Lamashtu to serve as a leader for her latest creations. He remains to this day one of Lamashtu’s favored consorts. Baphomet appears as a muscular humanoid with a bull’s head; he is only rarely depicted without his cruel glaive of red adamantine in hand. He is also served by the glabrezu demons, who often act as advisors to his Templars and even seed new cults in cities not yet tainted by his word.

**CYTH-V’SUG, PRINCE OF THE BLASTED HEATH** CR 31

CE male demon lord of fungus and parasites

**Realm** Jeharlu (Vast Underground Fungus Realm)

**Unholy Symbol** Mold-caked severed tentacle coiled in a spiral

**Domains** Chaos, Earth, Evil, Plant

**Favored Weapon** scimitar

Cyth-V’sug’s realm is both a place and a being—an immense parasitic fungus called the Jeharlu capable of extending tendrils into other planes, corrupting them, and then drawing them in to the Abyss to expand itself. Cyth-V’sug dwells at the heart of this fungus realm, an immense monstrosity that appears as a tangled mass of fungal tubers, tentacles, and grasping claws topped by a heaving draconic body with puffball eyes and jagged teeth. Cyth-V’sug has little interest in building cults on Golarion, but instead hungers for the world itself and wants to consume it all. The majority of the demonic minions he sends there are infested with deadly parasites that spread his fungal taint throughout the world. One of his greatest minions, the nascent demon lord Treerazer, recently established a domain on the Material Plane after a failed coup against Cyth-V’sug, yet curiously, the Prince of the Blasted Heath has done little to strike against his wayward minion since.

**DAGON, THE SHADOW IN THE SEA** CR 32

CE male demon lord of the sea and sea monsters

**Realm** Ishiar (Monster-Infested Abyssal Ocean)

**Unholy Symbol** Gold disk inscribed with sinister runes around an open octopus eye

**Domains** Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Water

**Favored Weapon** trident

Said to be the largest of the demon lords, Dagon dwells in the Abyssal Sea of Ishiar in a sunken city called Ugothanok. Not quite fish nor octopus nor eel, Dagon is fond of

**QLIPPOTH LORDS**

Before the rise of mortal life, before the first devil set foot in Hell, before even the gods themselves turned their attention to the world, life existed on the Abyss. This was a time before the concept of good or evil existed, and the creatures that dwelt in the Abyss were not demons—they were what came before. These ancient forbearers exist still in the most remote corners of the Abyss, and are known as the qliploth.

The first demons rose from deliberate tampering with the qliploth at the hands of a long-forgotten daemon lord. By mixing evil mortal souls with qliploth, a new race of fiend was born—the mixture of pure evil with raw chaos resulted in the first demon. The procedure started a chain reaction in the Abyss—and as more mortal souls filled the plane, more demons rose. It took an uncounted eon, but eventually demonkind became the dominant race on the Abyss, and the qliploth were forced to the corners of the Outer Rifts. The mix of mortal evil with Abyssal chaos did more than create the demonic. The Abyss itself reacted well with the most powerful demons, and those who were able to seize control became the first demon lords.

Yet not all of the demon lords began as demons. There were those among the qliploth who grew jealous of this newfound power, and they sought the same. They took into their being the evil of mortal souls and in so doing transformed themselves from qliploth to demon lord. Thus, while there are no true “qliploth lords” on the Abyss, there are certainly demon lords who began existence not as demons, but as something far older. These demons are generally apparent for their inhuman forms—among the various demon lords presented here, only Cyth-V’sug, Dagon, Jubilex, Mazmezz, and Zevgavizeb all began life eons ago as qliploth, yet are now more properly categorized as “demon lords.”

sending his spawn into the oceans of the Material Plane to spread his influence, often physically by breeding with creatures of the deeps or among isolated coastal-dwelling societies. The octopoid gutaki of the deep ocean trenches raise sunken temples in his name, and some of the more debased tribes of sahuagin venerate him as well. Marsh giants (*Pathfinder* #5) are traditionally among his most fervent worshipers on land, yet in certain remote locations (particularly along the western coastlines of Avistan and Garund), his cult is growing among humanity. A village that turns to the worship of Dagon often does so secretly, maintaining a facade of worshipping another deity like Gozreh or Erastil when in fact their town’s devotions are for the Shadow in the Sea. In the most remote locations these cults mix with sahuagin, gutaki, boggards, and other hideous aquatic creatures, so that the deformed hybrid children of such blasphemous unions are sure signs of Dagon worship. In these regions, such deformities are regarded almost as badges of honor.



## DESKARI, LORD OF THE LOCUST HOST

CR 30

CE male demon lord of locusts and infestation

**Realm** The Rasping Rifts (Vermin-Infested Maze of Chasms)

**Unholy Symbol** Crossed locust wings dripping with blood

**Domains** Chaos, Destruction, Evil, War

**Favored Weapon** scythe

Thought to be the greatest son of Pazuzu, many scholars believe Deskari to be the Usher of the Apocalypse. He and his cult have long plagued the northern nation of Sarkoris, where his cultists were eventually driven into the Lake of Mists and Veils by Aroden. Yet upon Aroden's death, Deskari's influence on Golarion ripened and burst in a dramatic way, transforming Sarkoris into the demon-haunted Worldwound. The blighted land is barely held in check today through the diligence of crusaders from Mendev and the south, but fears that the Worldwound could eventually spread to engulf all of Avistan remain. Elsewhere, cults of Deskari remain a problem in Mendev, northeastern Numeria, and Brevoy, yet it is in the Worldwound itself that his presence can most strongly be felt. His realm in the Abyss, a horrific maze of chasms known as the Rasping Rifts, is an analogy to the growing rift of the Worldwound. Deskari appears as an insectoid creature, vaguely humanoid above the waist and locust-like below, with wings made of swarming insects and a terrible scythe known as the *Riftcarver* clutched in his hands. His favored minions are the venomous locust demons (*Book of Fiends* 57).

## FLAUROS, THE BURNING MAW

CR 29

CE male demon lord of fire and salamanders

**Realm** The Bloodpyre Fields (Searing Inferno of Volcanoes and Molten Seas)

**Unholy Symbol** Fanged mouth drooling lava

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Fire, War

**Favored Weapon** spear

Flauros appears as an immense serpentine monster with red-hot lava for skin. In places, his flesh cools to the sheen of volcanic glass, only to crack open and melt anew as his liquid interior boils up to the surface. He wields a jagged obsidian spear in his muscular arms, and his head is a demonic abomination that is mostly fanged mouth, from which thick rivulets of magma, clouds of smoke, and tongues of fire emerge.

As a demon of fire and lava, Flauros is favored by the salamander race, who—unlike many other elemental races—turn to his worship rather than one of the Elemental Lords. The Mistress of Fire, a jealous and vindictive elemental named Ymeri, has long waged war for the salamanders, yet on this front Flauros has traditionally been the victor. Flauros is also worshiped by the drow, particularly those who dwell in volcanic regions or pride themselves in the craft of forging weaponry in lava forges.

## GOGUNTA, SONG OF THE SWAMP

CR 26

CE female demon lord of boggards and swamps

**Realm** Mephizim (Immense Saltmarsh Island)

**Unholy Symbol** Fetish of frog-like humanoid made of twigs

**Domains** Chaos, Death, Evil, Water

**Favored Weapon** whip

The goddess of the frog-like race of boggards (*Pathfinder* #2), Gogunta began her life as one of that race's priest-queens, a mighty mobogo (*Pathfinder* #12). Her route to ascension as a demon lord is believed by the boggards to have been the result of a life spent slaughtering just the right creatures and feeding on just the right parts of their bodies. Scholars of the demonic believe it more likely that she was a hezrou in the service of Dagon who was ascended to the role of demon lord by her master—certainly she favors the hezrous as guardians and lovers, and often sends them to guard or even lead boggard tribes on the Material Plane (particularly tribes in Varisia's Mushfens or in the Sodden Lands to the south).

Gogunta is unusual among the demon lords in that her realm is not wholly her own—the stinking saltmarsh of Mephizim is a vast region, yet it is contained wholly within the realm of Dagon's Ishiar. Dagon seems content to let Gogunta rule her tiny realm above his own, in any event, ignoring her blasphemous cavortings above. Gogunta's cult often mingles freely with that of Dagon on the Material Plane, her boggards and Dagon's cultists mixing in blasphemous ways that nature never intended.

## HAAGENTI, THE WHISPERS WITHIN

CR 31

CE male demon lord of alchemy and transformation

**Realm** Cerebulim, the Hermetic Horizon (Alchemical Clockwork Realm of Laboratories)

**Unholy Symbol** The philosopher's stone

**Domains** Chaos, Creation, Evil, Strength

**Favored Weapon** battleaxe

Of the demon lords, there is a perception that Haagenti is among the least destructive and most reasonable. Of course, this is in fact little more than smoke and mirrors, for Haagenti is as cruel and sadistic as demon lords get—that his alchemical creations and wondrous inventions are so useful is simply his method of subtly influencing the development of society. The greatest secret he has revealed to mortal life is the method of transmuting lead into gold using a philosopher's stone, but others exist as well, such as the destructive retrievers or the secrets of drow fleshwarping. Haagenti's cultists tend to be alchemists and magicians, both among the surface races and the drow. Haagenti has a myriad of forms, and can change his appearance at will—he typically appears as a member of the same race of those he is interacting with. Rumor holds that his true form is that of a demonic winged bull, but none can offer proof of this claim.

**JEZELDA, MISTRESS OF THE HUNGRY MOON**

CR 27

CE female demon lord of the moon and werewolves

**Realm** The Moonbog (Misty Moonlit Moor of Frightened Human Victims)

**Unholy Symbol** Full moon rising above a desolate moor

**Domains** Animal, Chaos, Evil, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** scimitar

In certain rural areas of the world, particularly in the region around Darkmoon Vale and the darkened woodlands of Lozeri in northern Ustalav, the barrier between man and wolf grows thin on nights of the full moon. Many religious texts point to the werewolf Jezelda as the first to spread lycanthropy among the mortals of the world, but strangely, neither she nor her faithful support that claim; instead they remain strangely silent upon her history, as if they shared with her a secret that the world is not yet meant to know.

As the patron of werewolves, Jezelda is a shapechanger. She can appear as a beautiful dark-haired Varisian woman, a feral and slaving wolf with huge fangs and yellow eyes, or her favored form—that of an emaciated amalgamation of these two embodiments. She despises non-werewolf lycanthropes, and charges her worshipers with seeking out such creatures as heretics worthy only for sacrifice.

**JUBILEX, THE FACELESS LORD**

CR 30

CE male demon lord of poison and ooze

**Realm** The Undersump (Slime-choked Immense Sewer/Cavern Network)

**Unholy Symbol** A melting red eye

**Domains** Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Water

**Favored Weapon** heavy mace

Of the demon lords listed here, Jubilex is perhaps the one least concerned with maintaining a cult. His favored minions, the omoxes (*Pathfinder* #16), do more to spread his cults than he does—in fact, it's debatable whether Jubilex even realizes he has worshipers. Only among the drow is his faith particularly popular and pervasive. Certainly, those who worship him tend not to think of him as an entity to be venerated as much as a source of power. Yet despite the Faceless Lord's passing disinterest in his faithful, he certainly knows of the Material Plane and enjoys absorbing the bodies of unwilling mortals into his protoplasmic bulk. Jubilex appears as a shapeless green mass of ooze shot through with dark ribbons of tar and hundreds of glaring red eyes the size of a man's head.

**KABRIRI, HE WHO GNAWS**

CR 29

CE male demon lord of graves and ghouls

**Realm** Everglut (Immense Haunted Necropolis)

**Unholy Symbol** Maggot-filled bowl made from a human skull

**Domains** Chaos, Death, Evil, Knowledge

**Favored Weapon** flail

It is said that when the first man to feed upon the flesh of his brother died, he was reborn in the Abyss in a vast necropolis that the plane created in his honor. Kabriri's teachings are popular among the ghouls of the world, particularly those that dwell in the Darklands city of Nemret-Noktoria deep under Osirion. Kabriri appears as a tall human with pointed ears, sharp teeth, a long tongue, and pale gray flesh. His eyes are beady and



Deshari

red, his hands talons, and his feet hooves. His favored weapon is a two-headed flail made of iron and bone, the twin heads of which are skulls wrapped in strips of spiked iron.

## KOSTCHTCHIE, THE DEATHLESS FROST CR 28

CE male demon lord of giants and cold

**Realm** Skyscar (Frozen Realm of Ice Mountans)

**Unholy Symbol** Ice-caked rune-carved warhammer

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Strength, War

**Favored Weapon** warhammer

Kostchtchie was born of an Ulfen man and grew up a murderer after his father forced him to kill his mother

and sisters. Kostchtchie went one better and murdered his father as well. Later in life, he tried to force Baba Yaga to grant him immortality—the witch agreed, but twisted his form and turned him into a hideous giant. Kostchtchie fled to the Abyss to nurture his hatred and hide his shame, eventually finding a new purpose as a patron of frost giants who turned away from their god Thremyr in search of a more active and warlike deity. Kostchtchie's current goal is the destruction of Irrisen, and it is in the neighboring Realm of the Mammoth Lords that his worship is most common.

Kostchtchie appears as an immense, deformed frost giant with twisted legs, tiny white eyes, and a thick matted beard into which are woven dozens of skulls—trophies of mortal kings and priests of rival faiths he has slain. He is never seen without his warhammer, an adamantine maul of such prodigious size that even the strongest frost giant would have trouble wielding it properly, yet in Kostchtchie's grizzled hands it appears almost weightless.

## LAMASHTU, THE DEMON QUEEN CR — (DEITY)

CE female demon lord of madness and monsters

**Realm** Kurnugia (Monster-Infested World Ruled by Gnolls)

**Unholy Symbol** Three-eyed jackal head

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** falchion

Of all the demons described here, only one has ascended beyond even the vast power afforded to a lord of the Abyss—Lamashtu. After murdering a god and stealing from him the power over the wild beasts of the world, Lamashtu found herself a true goddess. Her realm of Kurnugia is the largest of the demon lord realms of the Abyss, a vast region populated by gnolls, flinds, warped ones (*Book of Fiends* 79), and countless monsters she has birthed over the ages. Lamashtu is generally accepted to be the first demon lord—certainly she is the most powerful.

Lamashtu is detailed further in *Pathfinder* #5 and *Pathfinder Chronicles: Gods and Magic*.

## MAZMEZZ, THE CREEPING QUEEN CR 27

CE female demon lord of vermin and bindings

**Realm** Khavak-Vog (Immense Vermin Infested Hive)

**Unholy Symbol** Skull at center of a spiderweb

**Domains** Animal (affects vermin), Chaos, Destruction, Evil

**Favored Weapon** net

Mazmezz appears as a hideous tangle of insectoid legs, far too many for any worldly insect to command. Some of these legs end in claws, others in pincers, and others in spinnerets. At the center, a sickening clot of wriggling hair boils around a roughly spherical body—the only concession toward a “front” being an immense spider-like mouth filled with thrashing pedipalps and fangs. Mazmezz is worshiped primarily by the drow, driders, and

## Nocticula



ettercaps. Her favored children are the bebiliths, and the core of her maze-like lair is guarded by several of these demons grown to great size.

**MESTAMA, THE MOTHER OF WITCHES** CR 30

CE female demon lord of hags and deception

**Realm** The Barren Wood (Sinister Temperate Forest Haunted by Witches)

**Unholy Symbol** Human eye balanced atop three sharp stones

**Domains** Charm, Chaos, Evil, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** punching dagger

Patron of hags, witches, and vengeful widows, Mestama takes great delight in murdering young women on the night before their wedding day so she can take their form and wed their husbands-to-be, only to return to her true form (that of a fanged crone with sunken black eyes, talons, raven wings, and a donkey's tail) at the height of the wedding's consummation that evening, at which point she castrates the husband and vanishes. Those who survive often receive visits decades later from twisted hideous half fiends—their sons or daughters, sent by Mestama to finish off the job and murder their fathers.

Mestama's cult is a hateful one, composed entirely of eunuchs or women who live for the spread of cruelty through deception. Those of her cults led by hags or actual witches often seize control of entire villages, and their victims are those unfortunate enough to come upon the settlement and choose to spend the night.

**NOCTICULA, OUR LADY IN SHADOW** CR 32

CE female demon lord of darkness and lust

**Realm** The Midnight Isles (Debased Island Realm in Eternal Night)

**Unholy Symbol** Seven-pointed crown wrapped with thorny vines

**Domains** Chaos, Charm, Darkness, Evil

**Favored Weapon** hand crossbow

The first succubus is a beautiful but deadly creature. Lady Nocticula is fond of wearing her dark hair in complex styles. Her eyes are devoid of pupils, her fingers are tipped with talons, and her feet end in stony hooves. Bat-like wings covered with glowing runes and three stingered tails complete her demonic appearance. Yet she is also a master of transformation, and often appears to unsuspecting folk as a particularly beautiful woman or handsome man simply to lure them into her graces before slaughtering them. Even demon lords aren't safe from her deadly seductions—the number of demon lords she's seduced and assassinated is formidable—among her greatest triumphs being Vyriavaxus, the Demon Lord of Shadows. From him she won the grudging loyalty of the shadow demons. The other demon lords treat her with a mixture of obsession and fear, with only one of them, Socothbenoth (her brother and sometimes lover) maintaining a relatively friendly relationship.

Nocticula is one of the most popular demons among the drow, and she is also worshiped in places of decadence like Katapesh, Nex, Geb, and certain River Kingdoms. Recently, Lamashtu's cult has taken notice of her rising power and has increased hostility with her worshipers, causing some to believe that Nocticula may be close to being the second demon lord to ascend to godhood, and that Lamashtu may even be threatened by this possibility of competition.

**ORCUS, PRINCE OF UNDEATH** CR 32

CE male demon lord of undead and necromancy

**Realm** Thanatos (Haunted World of Undead-Ruled Ruins)

**Unholy Symbol** A goat's head with red eyes and four horns

**Domains** Chaos, Death, Evil, Magic

**Favored Weapon** heavy mace

Although Orcus doesn't have a strong following on Golarion (his worship is mostly constrained to the nation of Geb and certain backwater regions in Nidal), he has far more dealings with other worlds than most of Golarion's demon lords. His cultists maintain that the Prince of Undeath is merely waiting for the time to be right, for matters in other worlds to resolve themselves before turning his gaze upon this world as his next prize—and that when he does, his faithful shall be rightly rewarded for preparing the way. Of course, fierce competition against the cult of Zura and the church of Urgathoa for worshipers is likely a more realistic reason why Orcus's cult on Golarion isn't more widespread. Orcus appears as an immense, fat humanoid with a ram's head, bat-like wings, cloven feet, and a long, stingered tail—his legendary weapon, the *Wand of Orcus*, is never far from his taloned hand.

**PAZUZU, KING OF THE WIND DEMONS** CR 32

CE male demon lord of winged creatures and the sky

**Realm** Shibaxet (Immense Cliff Overlooking Abandoned City)

**Unholy Symbol** Image of Pazuzu with right hand upraised

**Domains** Air, Chaos, Evil, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** longsword

Pazuzu appears as a wiry human with eagle's legs and talons, a demonic avian head, two pairs of bird wings, a scorpion tail, and a writhing snake in place of his genitals. Pazuzu is an aggressive demon fond of possessing mortals and using them to work his evils upon the world—it is said that Pazuzu can hear his name when an innocent speaks it unknowingly, and that this may be all that is needed to invite possession by the demon. He is the patron of all evil things that fly, particularly vlocks, harpies, and kuchrima lamias (*Pathfinder* #6). His breath is a cloud of locusts, and it is said that at the dawn of civilization his first breath of air upon the Material Plane spawned the demon Deskari.



Pazuzu is among the oldest of the demon lords, one of the first to rise to power in the Abyss long ago alongside Lamashtu, Abraxas, and Dagon.

## SHAX, THE BLOOD MARQUIS

CR 30

CE male demon lord of lies and murder

**Realm** Charnelhome (Immense House of Countless Sinister Rooms)

**Unholy Symbol** Curved white feather sitting in a pool of blood

**Domains** Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** dagger

Cruel and sadistic, Shax revels in the act of torture and murder, especially if the victim retains hope for survival up to the very instant of death. He is particularly fond of eating the eyes of his living victims, but not until he is sure they have seen the filthy tools and bloodstained devices he intends to use upon their bodies.

Shax appears as a human man with a dove's head, bird-like legs, and an immense collection of knives and other bloodstained weaponry. His cultists are typically lone murderers or sadists, often killers who lead double lives as upstanding citizens of society and who kill in secret. Shax is the creator of the babau race, and those he creates by skinning living victims and then infusing them with Abyssal energies are the most powerful of their kind.

## SIFKESH, THE SACRED WHORE

CR 27

CE female demon lord of heresy and suicide

**Realm** Vantian, the City of Open Windows (Haunted City of Debased Churches)

**Unholy Symbol** Bloody feminine hands crossed at slashed wrists

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Madness, Trickery

**Favored Weapon** war razor

Sifkesh is unusual among the demons of the Abyss in that her motives are much more diabolical than most of her kin. She seeks not to destroy the body but to twist the mind away from purity, to seduce men and women of faith into betraying their religions in blasphemous ways that cause lingering damage to their faith's reputation in society. Her greatest pleasure is to be with a fallen priest when he or she realizes what has been done and then seeks suicide as the answer, for then Sifkesh can snatch away the heretic's soul and consume it.

Sifkesh herself appears as a thin human woman with alabaster skin, snow-white bird's wings, and stringy black hair that drips blood. Her lips and eyes are stitched shut with rusty wire, and her body is cut into sections at the wrists, ankles, hips, wings, shoulders, and neck, with each portion floating independent and not quite moving perfectly in sync with the rest. Many believe Sifkesh was originally a powerful erinyes devil who succumbed to the Abyss and became one of Hell's first heretics. In many ways, Sifkesh is symbolic of the similar roles shared by the three major fiend races—she corrupts like a devil, feeds

like a daemon, but is in fact a demon, a conundrum that has long vexed those seeking to impose order upon the nature of the demonic.

## SOCOTHBENOTH, THE SILKEN SIN

CR 31

CE male demon lord of perversion and taboos

**Realm** The Cathedral Thelemic (Shangri-La-like City Hidden in a Sylvan Woodland)

**Unholy Symbol** Eyeless snake coiled around a bejeweled staff

**Domains** Chaos, Charm, Evil, Travel

**Favored Weapon** quarterstaff

If Nocticula is the demonic embodiment of seduction and lust, then her brother and lover Socothbenoth is the embodiment of the methods by which such hungers are satiated. Paragon to deviants of all types, Socothbenoth views all of creation as his personal arena of pleasure. His tastes, and those of his faithful, tend to run to the violent and destructive. He is fond of changing his form on a whim to aid in whatever pleasures he currently seeks, but his true form is that of a lithe, handsome man with black eyes, long brown hair, large pointed ears, and numerous body piercings of metal and bone. His cult is strong among the drow, but also in the Ustalavic county of Versex, where his cult is quite large and maintains a steadily growing secret society of deviants among the nobility of the city of Karcau.

## URXEHL, TROLLFATHER

CR 26

CE male demon lord of trolls and storms

**Realm** Verakivhan (Burning Forest under Constant Storm)

**Unholy Symbol** Stormcloud pierced by lightning

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Fire, Weather

**Favored Weapon** greatclub

Although he is considered to be the patron of the troll race, the demon lord Urxehl in fact despises the twisted giants that share his form with a great and tremendous loathing. His realm is a constantly burning forest lashed by powerful storms with rain that fuels the flames below rather than douse them. It is only in the face of such tremendous natural disaster that Urxehl is truly pleased, and often he sends visions of such disasters to mortals in hopes they might find a way to create them. Yet his strongest worshipers remain his trolls, the most religious of which believe that Father Urxehl gifted them with regeneration so that they could survive his terrible rages and depredations. Urxehl's cultists are particularly active in the River Kingdoms where trolls are most common. He appears as a towering horned troll, nearly 20 feet high and with a long, spiked tongue. He can command storms with ease, and can direct the flow and power of forest fires with but a thought. His troll priests are granted some power over fire, primarily as a way for them to maintain control of those they lead through fear.



**XOVERON, THE HORNED PRINCE**

**CR 29**

CE male demon lord of gargoyles and ruins

Realm Ghahazi (Immense Ruin atop Monster-Filled Catacombs)

**Unholy Symbol** Five-horned gray gargoyle skull missing a jaw

**Domains** Chaos, Evil, Earth, Strength

**Favored Weapon** ranseur

Some believe that the Horned Prince can look out of the stone eyes of any gargoyle perched atop a ruined building to watch the world below, and that from these vantage points he selects those he wishes to torment. Whether or not this is true, the monstrous gargoyles of the world certainly venerate horned Xoveron as their lord. Sacrifices to the demon require bodies to be cast from high windows or to be impaled atop spires under the open sky—always in ruined locations, for inhabited cities are anathema to the Horned Prince. His goal is nothing less than the emptying of the cities of the world so that he may reign over the resulting desolation. Xoveron is the patron not only of gargoyles, but also of the dreaded nabasus (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 120), and he often sends them into the Material Plane to spread his cruelties. Xoveron appears as a four-armed, two-headed gargoyle.

**ZEVGAVIZEB, GOD OF THE TROGLODYTES**

**CR 28**

CE male demon lord of troglodytes and caverns

Realm Gluttondark (Monster-Haunted, Dank and Filthy Caverns)

**Unholy Symbol** Twisted tentacle terminating in an oversized talon

**Domains** Animal, Chaos, Evil, Strength

**Favored Weapon** spiked gauntlet

Bestial Zevgavizeb rules the horror-filled Abyssal caverns of Gluttondark, feeding on anything he encounters there and basking in the adoration of his troglodyte minions. He has very little interest in events beyond his empire, and of the demon lords described here presents the least peril to Golarion as a result. His troglodytes, on the other hand, commit countless atrocities in his name, for they believe that only by regularly sacrificing other creatures to his hunger can they prevent him from emerging into their own cavern lairs to feed on them. Zevgavizeb is a hideous beast the size of a dragon, part reptile, part tentacled worm, and part bat.

**ZURA, THE VAMPIRE QUEEN**

**CR 29**

CE female demon lord of cannibalism and vampires

Realm Nesh (Mountainous Woodland Gothic Realm)

**Unholy Symbol** Crimson fanged skull rune

**Domains** Chaos, Death, Evil, Madness

**Favored Weapon** rapier

Gothic and beautiful, Zura is believed to have risen from the corpse of an Azlanti Queen who succumbed to a lust for eternal life and the flesh of her own kind. Scholars point to Zura's acts as the start of Azlant's

fall into decadence and perhaps even one of the catalysts for the Age of Darkness to follow. Even today, thousands of years later, tales of her hideous banquets and baths of blood persist as legends. Zura often assumes the form of a voluptuous maiden, but in her true form she is an emaciated woman with bat-like wings instead of arms, blood-red eyes and hair, immense fangs, and taloned feet. Her worshipers are vampires, and her cults are strong in places where their kind are common, such as Ustalav, Cheliax, and the underground cities of the drow.

**Abraras**





## Infestation

Within the Land of the Black Blood, the ghostly luminescence of the Hanging Forest holds many secrets amid its gnarled branches. Among the upper reaches of the forest hides the Livid Sanctum, a decrepit shrine dedicated to Camazotz, an ancient and obscure god of bats. Abandoned long ago, it contains goods pilfered from ruins throughout the land and magical items crafted by forgotten hands. Now ticks, spiders, roaches, and other vermin infest the lofty sanctuary. Among these creeping inhabitants recently came the drider Xizho, who subdued the insectoid denizens of the Sanctum, claiming it and its deadly lord as his own. Now the mad drider terrorizes the residents of the forest and beyond, spilling blood in the name of Camazotz and reigniting a fear not felt in the Land of Black Blood for centuries.

“Infestation” is an adventure for four 14th-level characters. In addition to working as a stand-alone adventure, this Set Piece can supplement this month’s Adventure Path installment, “Descent into Midnight,” or any campaign headed deep underground or into dense forested depths.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

GMs might have their PCs journey to the Livid Sanctum and discover its grotesque infestation in a variety of ways. Adventure hooks marked with an asterisk might prove especially useful to GMs running “Descent into Midnight.”

**The Only Cure:** The meat of the gigantic morgoria root is said to have incredible curative properties. These rare, gigantic, dangling vines were said to have once flourished in the depths of the Hanging Forest in the Land of Black Blood. Seeking to devise a poison that can overcome even the most potent antitoxins, the derro Goverfetch of Venderlash offers to pay the PCs 17,000 gp if they seek out one of these massive roots and bring back clippings from its core. As fate would have it, the last morgoria root holds the Livid Sanctum.

**\*A Secret of Blood:** The PCs encounter Vandryl Moiavis traveling alone through the Land of Black Blood. If they confront her, she offers to tell them of a great magical treasure in exchange for her life. Vandryl serves as an

emissary to the drow sorcerer Drexinis, who recently learned of the ancient *Xiboqav Tome* and, believing it might hold secrets useful to his research into black blood, has sent her to locate it. Vandryl knows the general location of the Livid Sanctum—and the layout of the Bloodforge—but little more of use.

**Thief's Exodus:** The chardas of the Rotstone Hollows have heard the rumblings of their god Orgesh and grow fearful. An ancient power reawakens in the Hanging Forest to the east, a rival god of darkness, and bats, and winged death. The chardas entreat the PCs to investigate and destroy this reawakening foe for their strange god, and in return offer them the Eye of Orgesh, a giant black pearl worth 20,000 gp.

**\*Wild Goose Chase:** If the PCs fall for the drow's deception in the Shrine of Bound Earth, they are sent to the Livid Sanctum, thus giving the dark elves additional time to build their resources. See page 11 of "Descent into Midnight" for more details on this red herring.

## THE LIVID SANCTUM

Ages ago, the noxious ooze of the Caltherium mingled with blood spilt by the knives of the bat god's faithful, and these minions of Camazotz drank deep. The savage worshipers of the Hungry Dark plagued the Land of Black Blood, claiming the entire vault as the realm of their foul deity. But their rule of the vast cavern did not go uncontested, and a ruinous war began between the bat worshipers and the agents of the demon lord Abraxas, who had designs of his own on the Land of Black Blood. In the end, Camazotz's followers were purged from the Land of Black Blood and the icons of the bat god thrown down. All except one, as deep within the Hanging Forest hid the Livid Sanctum, a shrine grown, not built, crafted from the massive, intertwining pale roots of the eerie jungles. There, among the colonies of ghostly bats, the vault's final worshipers of Camazotz pleaded and begged for salvation, but the Hungry Dark does not suffer the weak and soon his fanatics became meals for his swarms of children.

For centuries, the Livid Sanctum was home only to bats, vermin, and the beasts of the Hanging Forest, a place of stories and fearful rumors among the lore of the shadowed land. Then, scant months ago, came the drider Xizho. Having come to the Land of Black Blood with the Azrinae drow, the drider managed to escape his bondage and flee into the forest. Coming upon the abandoned Sanctum and there reading the perverse rites of Camazotz, he recognized similarities between the dark god's rituals and those of his people's demonic patrons, and came to believe that by the bat god's will he was preserved and guided here. He now sees himself as the first of a new order of Camazotz's faithful and seeks to restart the bloody rites that were once performed here.

As the PCs near the Livid Sanctum, read or paraphrase the following:

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Amid the dangling vegetation of this dripping, alien forest lolls a massive, pale white vine, its bulbous, twisting form hanging from the ceiling like a bloodless tongue. From shadowed cavities along its gnarled length swarm colonies of hundreds of pale white bats, while thick webbing stretches in ghostly sheets between it and smaller growths nearby. From its bottommost tip dangles what looks like a crude wooden hunter's blind, though no way to reach the lofty platform presents itself.

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Numerous chambers comprise the Livid Sanctum, each carved from or supported by a massive, pale white root suspended from the cavernous ceiling of the Land of Black Blood. While many of the rooms are interconnected, some can only be reached by scaling the guano-slick exterior of the structure—which requires a DC 25 Climb check—or through arcane means. Such a climb is made all the more difficult as swarms of pale bats hunt the countless insects infesting the ancient shrine. Those who climb upon the structure have a 20% chance of being attacked by a bat swarm every round (see area 1). Reaching the sanctuary might also prove difficult. Although flying or other magical movement is the easiest way, those without access to such abilities might need to scale the long, thin roots that dangle perpendicular to the structure. Making one's way up these twisted vines to area 1 requires a DC 20 Climb check. Once there, a rope on the watch platform might be cast down to those below.

Within the shrine, the majority of the rooms have 10-foot-high ceilings and walls of tangled vines, each almost a foot thick with hardness 5 and 100 hit points. A tar-like black coating cakes much of the shrine, preventing it from burning easily. In addition to its natural features, the original creators of the Livid Sanctum layered a *forbiddance* spell over its entirety, which prevents extraplanar intrusions and damages non-believers. Any creature not of chaotic evil alignment that attempts to enter the Sanctum must say Camazotz's name or be damaged by the spell, DC 20 Will save for half.

### 1. Watch Platform (EL 5)

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Situated over a hundred feet above the cavern floor, this wooden platform provides a dizzying view of the surrounding reaches of the eerie forest. Connected to the base of the great white root, the exposed platform bears evidence of the innumerable bats above. A patch for phosphorescent fungus covers part of the strange wood floor, shedding pale light like a dying torch. A soiled woolen blanket and stained rope lie in a pile here, and metal rings stud the massive vine, rising in a line toward a sickly branch overhead.

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The platform still serves its original purpose; to watch out for enemies approaching the sanctuary. Fallen into disrepair, the platform cannot support more than 500 pounds before collapsing to the forest floor 130 feet below. The rings here aid anyone who attempts to scale the root up to area 2, requiring only a DC 15 Climb check to make the ascent. While the blanket and fungus here are of little use, the rope stretches 150 feet and can easily be thrown down to any characters still on the ground.

**Creatures:** Pale bats occasionally flutter through this area and may brush against a character, but for the most part they are more interested in the insects higher above. Should the PCs make a great deal of noise, though, they attract the ire of several swarms of bats. While not terribly dangerous they can make climbing significantly more dangerous.

**BAT SWARM (3)**  
hp 13 (MM 237)

**CR 2**

## 2. Catch Pool (EL 13)

Beads of condensation drip down over the gleaming white bark of the vines here, coalescing in a wide pool cupped between two twisting branches. Moss and charcoal-gray toadstools grow at the sides of the water.

Little more than a twist in the shape of the massive root, this bough serves as a convenient natural stopping point on the climb up the sanctuary's exterior, its bend serving to collect water that drips from above. Any character who makes a DC 15 Spot check notices a few rusted metal rings and holes in the vine twisting up toward area 3, but most have fallen away or been overgrown by the vegetation, making them useless to climbers.

**Creatures:** The cloaker Chovokan has adopted this bough as his favored hunting place, both for the abundance of fat insects and for the curious larger creatures that come to investigate the Sanctum. When the party approaches he is hiding in a crevice amid the knotted vines 15 feet above the pool. Preferring to let gravity do his dirty work, Chovokan delights in causing land-bound explorers to fall from the tangled heights. Unless the PCs are obviously flying, he waits until they continue on their ascents before moving to attack.

**CHOVOKAN**  
Male cloaker rogue 8 (MM 36)

**CR 13**

CE Large aberration

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +23, Spot +23

**DEFENSE**

AC 30, touch 19, flat-footed 23

(+3 armor, +4 deflection, +6 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)  
**hp** 111 (14 HD; 6d8+8d6+56)  
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8  
**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 10 ft.; fly 50 ft. (average)  
**Melee** tail slap +17 melee (1d6+7) and  
 bite +12 melee (1d4+3)  
**Special Attacks** moan, engulf, sneak attack +4d6

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Chovokan spends most of his time at rest in a narrow crevice above the pool here. When he notes potential prey, he typically watches to assess his prey's speed. When faced with flying creatures, he waits for them to become distracted and drink from the pool before attacking. Against those forced to climb, he watches until they are concentrating on their ascents before flying forth to attack.

**During Combat** Chovokan prefers to attack climbing opponents, making use of his nausea moan to knock climbers from their perches. Should any foes continue to cling to the vines even after he moans, he makes fly-by sneak attacks against them in ongoing attempts to make them fall.

**Morale** If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points by land-bound creatures, or 50 or fewer hit points by flying foes, Chovokan flies away into the forest as fast as he can.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 24, **Dex** 23, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17  
**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +21  
**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility  
**Skills** Bluff +12, Escape Artist +13, Hide +22, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +23, Move Silently +27, Search +13, Spot +23  
**Languages** Undercommon  
**SQ** shadow shift, trapfinding  
**Gear** *wing clasps of armor* +3 (as *bracers of armor*), *ring of protection* +2

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Moan (Ex)** Chovokan's moan attacks require a DC 20 Will save to resist.  
**Shadow Shift (Su)** The silent image effect of Chovokan's shadow shift ability requires a DC 20 Will save to resist.

### 3. Spider Nest (EL 5)

A thick layer of cottony spider silk coats every surface of this silent chamber. Beneath opaque webbing lie the shrouded forms of desiccated corpses and grotesque orbs the size of kegs. These web-wrapped globes quiver and twitch spasmodically. Two circular exits, each roughly ten feet in diameter, lead from of the chamber.

Careful not to disturb the Widowfangs—a trio of Huge spiders lairing in area 4—Xizho turned this former storeroom into a larder for the beast, hoping to keep it appeased with an occasional charda or an overly curious

## CAMAZOTZ

Master of Black Wings and Lord of Stolen Blood, the bat god Camazotz flies among the winged predators of the underworld, reminding the living why they fear the night and leading his brood to feast upon the weak. Appearing as a gigantic and terrifying man-like bat, Camazotz garbs himself with the sacrifices of his worshipers and the blood of his victims. He delights in tricking foolish mortals—whether they be foes or dutiful servants—from the safety of their homes and into the maws of predators. He cares little for his followers but enjoys their sacrifices, protecting them only so they might continue to offer him skulls, blood, bodies, sweet drink, and other offerings. Those who turn from his faith or otherwise wrong the bloodthirsty god face his ire and might find themselves haunted by bats for the rest of their lives.

Camazotz rules a tripartite realm, spanning the cavernous ceiling over the Abyssal pit of Argahoz, the vast Arcadian Darklands wilderness known as the Land of the Eleven Deaths, and his palace, the House of the Bat, in the distant realm of death, Xibalba.

Following their deity's example, the cult of Camazotz seeks to spread fear and undermine the comforts of civilization. They revel in the night and revere nocturnal predators, especially bats in all of their gigantic varieties, though jaguars, vultures, spiders, and wolves are also venerated. Ceremonies to the bat god always involve blood sacrifices—preferably drawn by the fangs of living beasts—that are offered or directly fed to fearful statues or icons of Camazotz.

Camazotz's domains are Animal, Chaos, Darkness, Evil, and Trickery. His favored weapon is the javelin.

vault traveler. Buried under the webbing lie several barrels and crates, filled with rotted clothing, firewood, and dried rations. As for the corpses, there are four chardas and a dark elf here, all stripped of anything valuable.

**Creatures:** Six of the Widowfangs' egg sacs are the only creatures here. Still gestating, they pose no threat as long as they're left undisturbed. Prodding, puncturing, or otherwise opening the sacs releases swarms of earsplitter spiders—a species of shrieking spiders unique to the depths of Orv. The shrieking of these young alerts the Widowfangs to intruders, causing the massive spiders to come to investigate from area 4 after 1d4 rounds.

**SPIDER SWARMS (6)**  
**hp** 9 (MM 239)

**CR 1**

### 4. Lair of the Widowfangs (EL 5)

Rent cocoons lie in uneven piles near the single entrance to this high-domed chamber. Gummy strands of dense silk form the rough walls with skeletal remains and dried chitin making up

the bulk of their thickness. A musty odor, the smell of rotting wood and worse, fills the chamber, tinged with the acrid bite of sulfur.

Much like area 3, this was once a storeroom, but now it is the domain of some of the Sanctum's most aggressive residents, five man-sized arachnids known as earsplitter spiders for their high-pitched shrieks, but known locally as the Widowfangs.

**Creatures:** These monstrously fecund earsplitter spiders are the primary source of the spider infestation in the area. These spiders constantly spin new egg sacs to replace those that hatch, their brood invading the sanctuary and in turn attracting swarms of bats to the hanging shrine.

## WIDOWFANGS (5)

CR 1

Medium monstrous spiders (MM 288)

hp 11 each

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Widowfangs are minor threats to high-level PCs, but the true danger they present is their ability to alert the entire Livid Sanctum. When they see intruders, the spiders unleash tremendous shrieks, immediately alerting the other denizens of the complex and causing all of the egg sacs in area 3 to hatch into spider swarms.

**Morale** The Widowfangs fight until killed.

**Treasure:** This particular storeroom held some of the Sanctum's more valuable items, which now lie buried beneath cocoons and webbing. Any creature that spends 10 minutes clearing the webs reveals a number of useful items. Those who use fire to scour the webs destroy the scrolls as well. Amid the old shelves and bones are a *scroll of heal*, a *scroll of symbol of fear*, a *scroll of summon monster VII*, a black opal pendant on a gold chain (1,100 gp), and a pouch containing 115 gp.

## 5. Refuse Tunnel

Cruel foot-long barbs project from the walls of this long, narrow tunnel. Bits of unidentified flesh, clothing, and excrement cling to the walls and numerous fat, black spiders crawl over the surfaces.

Connecting to the Sanctum's cesspit, this tunnel served as a convenient way to rid the shrine of garbage by emptying directly onto the cavern floor far below. The Sanctum's builders also wanted to make ingress through this area a last resort and thoroughly trapped the passage with numerous rusty spikes. A Small or smaller creature can easily navigate through the barbs and spurs of the refuse tunnel, but Medium creatures must squeeze to even gain entry and even then take 1d4 points of slashing damage for every 5 feet of movement up the 20-foot passage. Those injured by the spikes here expose themselves to red ache (Injury, Fort DC 15). Creatures larger than Medium size cannot enter the refuse tunnels.

## 6. Cesspit (EL 11)

The smooth curve of the structure's viney trunk dominates the center of this room, pierced by rusty iron ladder rungs which ascend to a metal trapdoor in the ceiling. Numerous holes and the ends of thick tubes dot the ceiling, and fungus-infested heaps of trash and offal pile under their openings, giving the entire room the scent and appearance of an open sewer. The surface of the floor seems to shift and move as waves of insect life crawl over the refuse.

Long ago, the inhabitants of the Sanctum relied upon vermin, molds, and fungi to dissolve their garbage into compost and little has changed in the ages since. Locked in place by metal bars located in area 7, the 2-inch-thick iron plate blocks any passage up. The trapdoor has hardness 10, 60 hp, and can be broken with a DC 28 Strength check.

Each of the four large piles of refuse in this room hides patches of yellow mold. Any character who makes a DC 25 Spot check notices the mold. Those who tread through the room's debris-covered squares cause mold spores to disperse into the air. See page 76 of the DMG for details.



## 7. Apse

Formed of twisting branches and layers of webbing and pulped wood, this hall serves as the main entrance into this strange, living structure. Tattered, ghostly drapes and grim decorations adorn the ceiling and walls of the chamber. Facing the main opening to the south hangs a bloodied stone disk, etched deep with a leering winged humanoid bat dressed in a girdle of skulls. Next to the stone carving, rungs embedded into the structure's trunk stretch upward from a rusted and barred metal plate in the floor to a similar metal trapdoor overhead.

This small entry serves as the main entrance into the Livid Sanctum, as well as a focal point of travel within, with a ladder leading to the upper level (area 11), a barred grate descending to area 6 below, and the hall itself stretching to the dining hall in area 9 and the shrine in area 8. The bars blocking the way to area 6 can be removed with a DC 15 Strength check.

Looking about the chamber, any character who makes a DC 28 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the bat image carved on the stone disk here as the symbol of Camazotz. To the east lies a long piece of furniture that once served as the main dining table for the Sanctum's residents. Other piles of mold and rotted wood north of the table might have once formed a kitchen, but age and decay have reduced the furniture and supplies to worthless, mold-covered wreckage.

## 8. Kiva (EL 6)

Layers of brimstone-reeking guano coat the stylized carved bats and defaced figures on the walls. Mounds of humanoid, animal, and other rune-covered skulls flank the stone statue of a terrifying bat demon situated at the far wall of this chamber. Bloodstains mar the carved mouth and claws of the fiendish creature, and several partially melted candles lie at its feet. A tattered curtain hangs here, swaying in the faint breeze, separating this chamber from another to the east.

Serving as the shrine's center of worship to the demon lord Camazotz, this alcove holds an 8-foot-tall statue of the bat god himself. Xizho makes regular sacrifices to the image, accounting for the still fresh bloodstains painting the stone.

Piled around the statue lie numerous rune-covered skulls, each etched with a litany of prayers to Camazotz, all written in Undercommon. Those who make a DC 15 Search check discover that several of the skulls hold gemstones. Camazotz visits his wrath upon those who attempt to remove these stones or the skulls that contain them from his sight—and in so doing activates the trap centered on the statue here. Those who add new skulls to the pile,

however, gain the foul god's blessing and are affected as if by the spell *deathwatch* for the next hour.

**Trap:** Anyone who takes a gemstone or skull from the pile here triggers a magical trap. Victims must save or find their vision filled with images of terrifying bats and their ears filled with the sound of screeching and beating wings.

### CAMAZOTZ'S SIGHT

CR 6

Type spell; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch (taking a skull or stone); Reset automatic (1 round)

Effect spell (*blindness* and *deafness*; CL 18th, DC 20)

**Treasure:** Twelve of the skulls here hold bits of topaz worth 400 gp apiece.

## 9. Acolytes' Room (EL 10)

Scattered collections of blankets, crates, barrels, and bedrolls lie in piles throughout this narrow, curving chamber. Moldy remains of clothing spill out of broken chests and torn sacks, and guano coats everything in the room. Four of the hammocks lining the walls are filled with thick knots of spider webbing, the dense strands cloaking piles of cracked yellow bones.

Sharing a communal sleeping chamber, the devotees of the Sanctum once slept and studied here. Centuries ago, facing death at the hands of their Abraxas-worshiping enemies, the final four members of Camazotz's clergy poisoned themselves and laid down to die. Their corpses are now little more than boney piles, picked clean by scavengers long ago, and now serve as homes for legions of tiny spiders. But though they are dead, these final members of Camazotz's cult are not departed.

**Creatures:** Refusing to let their sanctuary fall to heretical hands even after their deaths, the spirits of the Livid Sanctum's final guardians lingered on. Now bound within the walls of their onetime home, these four spectres protect the shrine from invaders. They ignore Xizho, as he has become a dutiful worshiper of the bat god. All others, though, they view as heretics and defilers, and so do all they can to kill or drive off their foes.

### SPECTRES (3)

CR 7

hp 45 (MM 232)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The spectres wait within the trunk of the structure, mindful of foes who enter the chamber that holds their bodies. If those who enter don't bear the symbol of Camazotz, the undead move through the walls to encircle their opponents, then attack.

**During Combat** Seeking only the destruction of their enemies,

the spectres each concentrate on their own foe, attempting to energy drain opponents before aiding their brethren.

**Morale** Fanatical even in death, the spectres fight until destroyed.

**Treasure:** Little of value remains from the days the Sanctum was occupied, but those who make a DC 24 Search check discover a web-covered crate holding two *caster's shields*, both scribed with the spell *creeping doom*.

## 10. Library

Horseshoe-shaped and cramped with bookshelves and scroll racks, this wide chamber contains several desks and stools. A layer of tiny mushrooms carpets the floor, while iron sconces overgrown with phosphorescent purple-spotted fungi illuminate the room in a lavender hue.

Once filled to the brim with scrolls, religious epics, and unholy rituals, the current library pales in comparison to its past glory. Although the majority of the parchment texts have rotted away, several shelves contain stone tablets etched with depictions of the Land of Black Blood, ancient theories on the nature of the black blood, and sizable glyphs seemingly burnt into the stone. Anyone who spends an hour reading through these tablets and who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check comes to understand the basic nature of black blood as detailed on page 49. In addition, those searching for information on the vault or the black blood find a great resource here and can collect 5 pounds of tablets that should satisfy their employer.

**Treasure:** Those who make a DC 25 Search check discover a tablet that functions as a *scroll of fly*.

## 11. High Priest's Chamber (EL 15)

Appointed with brocaded curtains and fine-woven tapestries, this chamber mutely states the former glory of the strange shrine. An elaborate mosaic inlaid with miniscule squares of colored glass hangs in front of a warped window, the runic inscriptions on the mosaic smeared with dark ink, dulling its conspicuous polish. Hunched in front of the window rests a carved stone lectern, made to resemble a leering bat peering at a bejeweled silver-and-ivory-bound leather tome. Handprints and dried rivulets of ancient blood mar the bone-white pages of the book. Ivory candelabras flank the lectern, their flickering blue candlelight illuminating the pages and surrounding area. To one side of the room, a lumpy pile of bedding covers a collapsed bed frame, while a cracked stone tub reeks from the slimy water contained in it.

This room once served as the personal chamber of Camazotz's most powerful and merciless priest. Now, though, the drider Xizho has adopted it as his own.

While age and the room's new occupant have destroyed much of the finery that once adorned this chamber, the mosaic before the window here maintains the *forbiddance* spell that protects the Sanctum. The stained glass mosaic has hardness 1 and 2 hit points. Destroying it dispels the *forbiddance* effect, though the spell can also be negated with spells like *dispel magic*.

**Creature:** When Xizho came to the Land of Black Blood he was but one of dozens of driders in the service of House Azrinae. Sent with three others of his kind into the Hanging Forest, the driders were set upon by chardas. Only Xizho escaped, fleeing into the canopy above. Surprised and delighted by his newfound freedom, the drider decided not to return to people. He soon happened upon the Livid Sanctum and, under the sight of the statue of Camazotz, bested the giant spiders that had taken up residence in the main sanctuary. Seeing his victory as a blessing from the strange new god he found there, Xizho has taken up the mantle and greatest treasures of the shrine's former priests. Now, the drider seeks to bring word and fear of Camazotz back to the inhabitants of the Land of Black Blood.

Xizho sees all visitors to the Livid Sanctum as intruders, even if they profess to worship Camazotz. Terribly paranoid of being discovered and recaptured by his former masters, he has no intention of letting any creature who sees him escape alive.

### XIZHO

CR 15

Male drider cleric of Camazotz 8

CE Large aberration

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +16, Spot +16

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 13, flat-footed 20

(+3 armor, +4 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 133 (14d8+70)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +22

**SR** 17

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., climb 15 ft.

**Melee** +2 *keen returning spear* +14/+9 (2d6+6/19-20/x3) and bite +7 (1d4+1 plus poison; DC 18)

**Ranged** +2 *keen returning spear* +15 (2d6+6/19-20/x3)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** rebuke undead 6/day (+5, 2d6+11)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 16)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 14th, +13 ranged touch)

7th—*blasphemy*<sup>0</sup>, quickened *blindness/deafness* (DC 19),

quickened *cure serious wounds*, *destruction* (DC 22)

6th—*blade barrier* (DC 22), quickened *cure moderate wounds*,



heal, harm, prying eyes<sup>D</sup>

5th—*dispel good*<sup>D</sup>, *flame strike* (DC 22), quickened *divine favor*, quickened *shield of faith*, *slay living* (DC 22)

4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds* (2), *death ward*, *freedom of movement*, *unholy blight*<sup>D</sup>

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds* (2), *magic circle against good*<sup>D</sup>, *magic vestment*, *searing light*, *wind wall*

2nd—*blindness*<sup>D</sup> (DC 19), *cure moderate wounds* (3), *death knell* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*command* (DC 18), *cure light wounds* (5), *obscuring mist*<sup>D</sup>, *sanctuary* (DC 18)

0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*

**D** domain spell; **Domains** darkness, evil

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#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Xizho casts *magic vestment* on his cloak every day. If he's alerted to the PCs' presence, he climbs to hide among the vines at chamber's ceiling in an attempt to use surprise to his advantage. If not, he's here meditating—usually while clutching two live, struggling, shrieking bats.

**During Combat** Xizho tries to keep out of reach of foes as much as possible, using his highest level spells and spear to weaken the most heavily armored opponents he faces.

**Morale** Believing himself to be the chosen of Camazotz, the drider doesn't believe mere mortals can destroy him and fights to the death.

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +17

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Quicken Spell, Spring Attack

**Skills** Climb +11, Concentration +22, Hide +4, Knowledge (religion) +9, Listen +16, Move Silently +8, Spellcraft +9, Spot +16

**Languages** Elven, Common, Undercommon

**SQ** spontaneous casting (infect spells)

**Gear** +2 *keen returning spear*, *cloak of resistance* +4, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *periapt of Wisdom* +2

**Treasure:** Upon the lectern here lies the *Xiboqav Tome*, a cursed book that holds much knowledge pertaining to the Land of Black Blood and the depths of the Darklands at large. The tome sheds a constant mobile *unhallow* effect. In addition, anyone who spends 5 minutes referencing the tome as part of any Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), or Knowledge (local) check regarding the Land of Black Blood or specifically the Darklands layer of Orv gains +2 bonus on the check. The *Xiboqav Tome* is worth 60,500 gp.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Upon defeating Xizho, the PCs gain control of a relatively defensible redoubt within the Land of Black Blood, as well as all the time they wish to study

what lingering lore they find within the sanctuary. After spending a few hours purging the taint of Camazotz from the shrine, the Livid Sanctum could prove to be a useful base for the characters' continuing campaign within the vault—a place to rest and recuperate between forays against the drow and the region's other deadlier residents. The amount of lore regarding the depths of the Darklands that the PCs might discover here also proves highly valuable to scholars of the world above, with the tablets from area 10 fetching up to 20,000 gp, while some scholars might pay as much as half again the price for the *Xiboqav Tome*. Regardless of what the PCs do with the Livid Sanctum, though, Camazotz is a patient and vengeful god and does not take kindly to even the least of his sanctuaries being despoiled. After their adventures here, the party might find themselves harassed by bats and all manner of nocturnal predators when they least expect it.

## Camazotz





# END OF THE ROAD

## 01 Abadius, 4708 AR

My hands clutched at salt-crusted wood, the railing rough and pitted from the ocean's continual spray, as below me the boat rocked in place with the rise and fall of each rolling swell. Above, gulls wheeled and clashed over herring and bits of trash, their massed numbers darkening the sky but still nothing compared to the harbor below them.

Absalom. City at the Center of the World. Even from just outside the great jaws of its port, the waterfront was numbing in its immensity. Docks stretched for miles, all of them bustling with ships of a thousand makes—traders and frigates, warships and junks, fishermen's skiffs and oceanic craft from lands whose names I might never learn. Though still too far away to see movement, I knew that every one of them seethed with life, longshoremen loading cargo and sailors jumping ship for a drink or a throw at the nearest bawdy house. They would find too many to count, ranging from ramshackle flophouses to the finest inns and brothels money could buy, lining the boardwalks and piers a dozen deep. Rich or poor, there's always someone in Absalom willing to take your money.

The docks, however, were only the beginning. Rising up from the waterfront, sometimes at such a radical pitch that the streets bore handrails of thick hemp ship's line,

Absalom spread out like an anthill, roofs packed so close as to be a solid mass, a pointillist painting broken only by the thin lines of grand thoroughfares and the occasional green splash of parkland. Even with its overwhelming bulk, the sense of weight that struck newcomers speechless, I knew that the city proper was still hidden behind the horizon, its patchwork quilt stretching for miles in any direction. To think that man is capable of such a vast construction is alternately inspiring or terrifying, depending on your disposition.

Behind me, the captain of the *Crescent* finished haggling with the harbor pilot and paid over a handful of coins. The pilot, a sailor of middling years whose pressed uniform bore Absalom's seal, yelled something over the side before taking the wheel, and off to port I saw the small dory containing several similarly garbed men cast off and pull quickly away, sails catching the wind expertly and sending them skipping across the waves toward the next waiting vessel. As soon as they were free, the captain shouted orders, and the great ship began to move forward with the harbor pilot at its helm.

The greatest city in the Inner Sea, Absalom is a prize that many have sought to claim. To control its ports would be to control trade for the western world, and to tax each resident a copper would make a man wealthy beyond his

wildest dreams. Since the dead god Aroden first raised the Isle of Kortos from the seafloor, streaming kelp and brine, the conquerors have come with blooded blades and silvered tongues, and all have been rebuffed. Their siege castles line the Cairnlands outside Absalom's walls, and the graves of countless soldiers produce vengeful ghosts and fertile farmland in turn.

Indeed, as they have fallen, these would-be tyrants have only strengthened Absalom's defenses. Beneath the pilot's steady hand, the *Crescent* tacked and glided past the steel-capped masts of sunken ships, their spars ready to gut enemy vessels and add them to the collection. To be a harbor pilot of Absalom requires years of diligent study, memorizing the location of each hulking wreck without the aid of charts, and is one of the most lucrative careers to which a sailor can aspire.

I leaned back and closed my eyes, listening to the roar of the city build, the familiar hum of people working, loving, and dying, humanity breathing as a single living beast. Welcoming me.

To be a Pathfinder is to never truly feel at home. Yet this is where my path began, and where my current chapter ends.

Absalom. The city stretched forth its arms and gathered me in.

Forgoing the gangplank, I vaulted over the rail as soon as the ship pulled into port, landing lightly on the worn wood of the pier and wavering slightly at the sudden stability. Though my gut told me I was already too late, I hadn't come this far just to give up the chase within sight of my goal.

From the docks I cut through the throngs of travelers and workmen and set out northwest toward the Foreign Quarter, disdaining the main thoroughfares with their close-packed carts and stalls in favor of less-populated alleys and half-remembered shortcuts. Despite new construction and misremembered turns, I still made faster progress than I would have trying to fight my way through those clotted avenues that make up Absalom's primary arteries. At last, one of my alleys broke out onto a wide cobblestone plaza, the thick press of shops clearing away and allowing in a swath of blue, cloudless southern sky. And below it, the shining walls of the Grand Lodge, eternal seat of the Pathfinder Society.

Beneath a stone arch prominently displaying the Glyph of the Open Road, twin gates stood open and guarded by armored young men with halberds—probably initiate Pathfinders. Though most of the traffic through the plaza continued past the massive complex without slowing, a steady trickle of men and women entered and exited through the gates. Hitching up my bag, I moved forward through the press and joined them.

"Greetings," the guardsman said when it was my turn. "Name?"

"Eando Kline, Pathfinder."

"The Grand Lodge welcomes you, brother." The guard stuck out his arm politely, and we clasped wrists. "May you find what you seek, and your stories be told." Taking a bit of ribbon, he bound my sword to my sheath.

"Thank you," I said, but he was already turning to the next man in line. Self-consciously tugging at the hilt of my sword, I moved on into the picturesque gardens and walkways of the compound.

The bit of ribbon would snap with ease, of course, but that wasn't the point. It had been a long time since I'd had any of my weapons peace-bonded. I wasn't sure I liked it.

Inside the walls, the Grand Lodge rolled out before me in all its elegance. Dead ahead rose the five-towered palace of Skyreach, a spired fortress of white stone high enough to be visible from miles away. Beyond it, six smaller fortresses of varying architectural styles studded the manicured groves and pristine squares, connected via white-paved paths big enough for a cart. To the east and west sat numerous conventional buildings of wood and brick: dormitories for visiting Pathfinders, workshops, smithies, and all the other necessities that kept the lodge running. And of course, farthest from the gate and sheltered by the towering walls, the doorless lump of the Repository squatted, its walls housing the sixty-six tongueless and enchanted criminals who transcribe chosen reports to create each volume of the *Chronicles*.

Like most of those entering, I proceeded directly to the front gates of Skyreach, passing up its marble steps and into the vast hallways. Strange that after all this time it should still feel so familiar. Doors and stairways to either side led off to sections that I had never been invited to see. In truth, I doubted if there were any outside of the Decemvirate who had been in every room of the Grand Lodge. Exploration, as initiates young and old had whipped into them early on in their training, was something best left for *outside* the lodge.

Yet those places I've been I remember well, and soon I turned a corner and entered the carpeted expanse of the Den, one of the many combination lounges and libraries where Pathfinders meet to drink, study, and mingle with their compatriots. As a young man I had spent hours here, attaching myself to grizzled adventurers for as long as they would continue talking, soaking up every fact and half-truth from their journeys. Just as I remembered, the room was half-full of Pathfinders relaxing in knots of quiet conversation centered on tables and couches. Yet I had eyes for only one.

"Belzig."

My voice was over-loud, and several heads turned toward me. I ignored them and stalked across the room toward where the oily-haired fop stood drinking wine with a number of companions. He smiled and gestured with his glass, his cohorts making way for me.

"Ah, Eando!" he cried, full of genuine good humor. "I wondered how far behind me you were. Apparently only a few hours. Delightful!"

I said nothing, only tightened my grip on my sword. Belzig glanced down at it pointedly and smiled wider.

"Tough journey, eh? I can't say I'm surprised—I had a devil of a time myself. I was just telling my friends here about my near-conversion in Razmiran." He waved to indicate the others, two men and a woman.

"Garud, Eryk, Chlora—allow me to introduce you to Eando Kline. He and I go back a long way, and ran into each other several times during the course of my most recent discovery—but then, you'll read all about that once it's published." The group murmured polite greetings.

"Your discovery?" With all my strength I managed to unwrap my fingers from my sword.

"But of course! I'm happy to say that my latest gamble has paid off handsomely—I've been invited to present it to the Decemvirate itself shortly. Needless to say, I'm honored." He tipped his glass toward me. "And you? I know your last effort met with poor results, but didn't you have another in mind? Something about being a scribe for the orc lord in Urgir?"

It was time for me to leave—had been, since the moment I entered. Ignoring the curious stares of our audience, I turned and left without saying a word.

The next few hours passed in a blur, and darkness found me sitting alone on a bed in a private room in the East Dormitory, fiddling with a dagger and unable to make myself light a candle or put pen to paper. Somehow, recording my every thought didn't seem quite so important just then. Finally, long after the rest of the building had quieted down, I judged it dark enough and repacked everything except my dagger. That I slipped into my belt, then threw open the window. Outside, night had muffled the city's bustle. Thankful that this side of the dormitory was away from the lantern-lit walkways, I slipped out the window and found a grip on the overhanging eaves.

The information I needed had been laughably easy to obtain—just wait for a change of staff, then pretend to have drunkenly forgotten which room I was in. All that was left now was the silent shimmy along the side of the building, pressing myself tight against the weathered brick. Booted toes sought purchase in the mortared spaces and found it, barely. Fingers locked into claws drew me sideways across the face of the building, trying not to acknowledge the ground three stories below, until I came to the darkened window I wanted. To my surprise, it was cracked open. Crouched on the sill, I slowly lifted the sash, then pulled myself inside.

The room was completely dark, lit only by the window behind me. On the far side, against the wall, the modest bed held a familiar shape, its breathing slow and deep. I stood motionless, listening, until I was sure that he was asleep. Then I moved quickly forward and drew my dagger.

I wish I could say that my hand wavered, that I found myself choking on the idea of murdering a man in cold blood while he slept. But I can't. The dagger rose.

"I wouldn't do that."

I jumped. Eyes still closed, Belzig smirked.

"Really, Eando, did you think I'd make it that easy? Just kill me and all your problems will go away?" His eyes opened and he sat up, shoving my knife away.

"At this moment, my notes are in vaults belonging to the Decemvirate, along with a letter stating that if anything happens to me, it is undoubtedly the work of Eando Kline, a failed Pathfinder driven mad by jealousy." He pulled open his shirt to reveal a hairy chest.

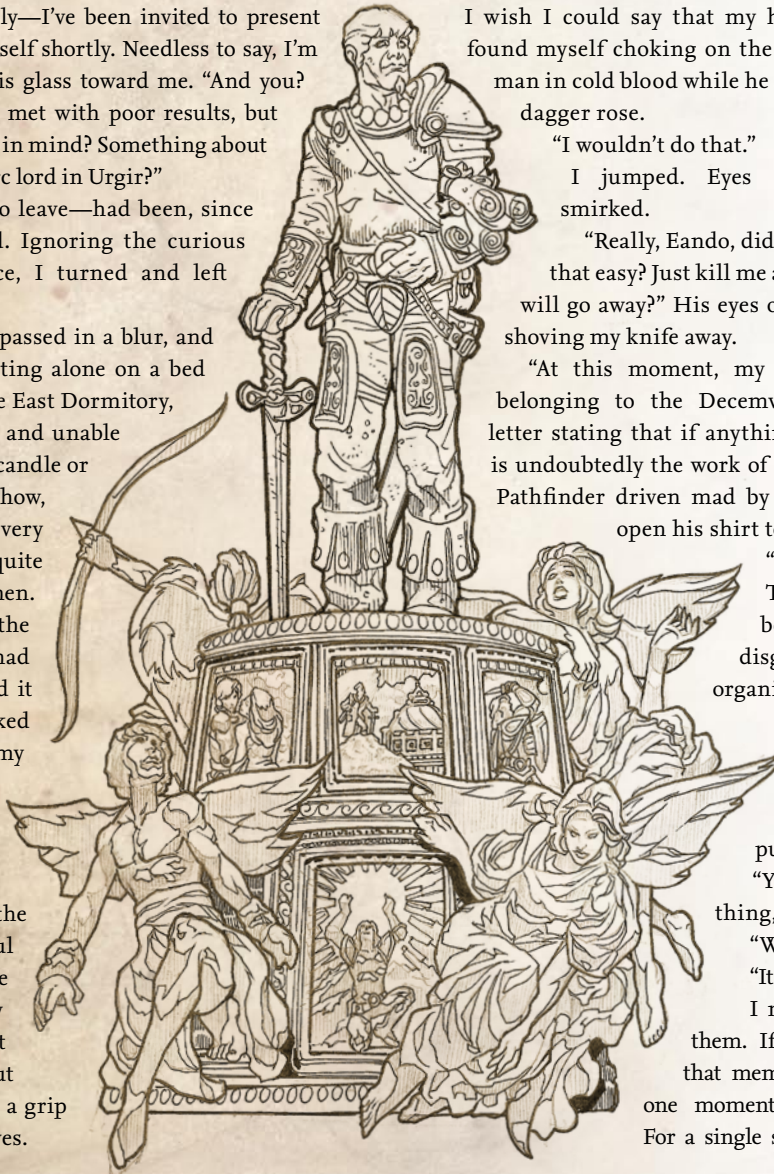
"So go for it, Eando. Take your shot. You'll be a wanted man, disgraced to the only organization that cares about you, and the knowledge you so desperately want to cover up will get published anyway."

"You're forgetting one thing," I said.

"What?"

"It would feel *really* good."

I met his eyes and held them. If I take any pride in that memory, it's that, for just one moment, his smile faltered. For a single second, he feared he'd



Durvin Gest, the most famous Pathfinder.

misjudged me, and that now he was alone and unarmed in a room with a lunatic.

Then his composure returned. "Get out of my room, Kline."

I left through the front door.

Dawn came, and I watched it rise from the high stone pediment of a statue. I was more than a little hung over. Flat on my back, I peered up from between the legs of Durvin Gest, greatest of the Pathfinders. Only the servants were up and about at this hour, preparing meals and maintaining the dew-lined hedges and trees. Several passed by and regarded me with quiet disgust. I agreed with them. Above me, Durvin met the new day with the quiet, self-satisfied confidence I'd worn so frequently myself. I put my arm over my eyes to protect them from the burgeoning light and let the cool stone leach the heat from my body.

"Well, isn't this a fine portrait of a Pathfinder?"

The woman staring up at me from the foot of the pedestal was roughly my age, with straight black hair and no-nonsense traveling clothes draped over a body built for speed. The delicate nose was slightly raised, giving her a pugnacious look. Her arms were crossed.

"Shevala."

"Gods, it is you." My venture-captain practically spit. "What the hell happened?"

My addled brain struggled to answer, but nothing I could come up with seemed sufficient, and instead I lay there on my stomach, peering over the edge at her.

She sighed. "Come on, then," she said, climbing up on one of the stone angels ringing the statue's base and getting a grip on my shirt. "Let's get you out of here." She heaved, and I was barely able to get my feet below me before I hit the ground.

Some time later we sat in a dingy bistro, thick stew and over-salted bread stealing the wine's fog from my brain.

"So," she said when I had finished scraping the bowl with my crusts. "Talk."

I talked. With Belzig's information already in the Decemvirate's hands, secrecy didn't matter anymore, and in any case I had been alone too long. I poured out my story in every miserable detail, from the moment she'd dispatched me to retrieve Dakar's ioun stone in Kaer Maga to my frantic race with Belzig across Avistan. I told her of the serpent city, my fears of what would happen once its location were released. Of my aborted attempts at murder to keep it hidden. Most of all I told her of the people I'd left to die, friend and foe alike—all in the name of the Pathfinders.

"Sounds like you did what you had to," she said noncommittally.

"But for what? To become famous? To get my godsdamned journal published?" My hands shook.

"Here I've come up with the greatest discovery of the age, and I wish I'd never left Magnimar. I've done things—become things—I never wanted, all to find out what waited at the end of the road. And this is it." I gestured at the empty bowl.

"There's still time to submit your journal to the Decemvirate. It'll be your word against Belzig's, and your version undoubtedly holds up better."

"That's not the point anymore." I gestured wildly. "I don't want any of it published. And that's just it: I've spent the better part of my life devoted to the idea that information—all of it—should be free. That by unveiling the hidden, we're bettering the world. And now I know that we're not." I ran a hand through my greasy hair and clenched, tugging hard on it.

"And if I don't believe that anymore, then—who am I?"

Shevala reached over and pulled my hand from my hair, a surprisingly intimate gesture.

"Look, Kline," she said, voice soft. "Even Durvin Gest didn't give up all his secrets to the Society. Only fools like Belzig think that's all there is. I trained you better than that."

She stood up abruptly and threw down a few coins for my meal, suddenly all business again. "So clean up, quit feeling sorry for yourself, and get ready."

"Ready for what?" I asked, but she had disappeared out the door.

That afternoon I received my summons from the Decemvirate.

The Hall of Inquiry was every bit as intimidating as it sounded. For the first time in my life, one of the quiet servitors in Skyreach led me past the Den, past the Great Hall used for rare assemblies and lectures, and up the many staircases of one of the great towers. Most of the corridors were deserted, and those few Pathfinders or servants we passed moved quickly and confidently past doors which varied wildly, from elaborate portals covered in glyphs to iron-banded slabs more appropriate for a bank vault—or a prison. At last we passed through an ornate archway and into the hall itself, an imposing chamber taking up most of the tower's crown.

Belzig was already there, standing casually with hands folded behind his back. He inclined his head in a mocking salute. Before him rose a high stone dais that took up half the chamber, its shape a horseshoe opening toward us. No banners or tapestries adorned the walls—other than the dais itself, there was no furniture in the room whatsoever. Just the bare stone floors, the high-arched ceiling with its scrollwork buttresses, and tall windows that flared with light.

The servant directed me to the middle of the room, a spot roughly even with Belzig, then stepped back to join



another beside the entrance. As he moved, I caught the flash of a blade up one voluminous sleeve. The Decemvirate took no chances.

"Nice of you to attend my ceremony," Belzig said.

My reply was short and anatomically improbable.

Before things could go any further, the deep tolling of a bell close by sent both of the servants snapping to attention. At the far end of the room, a door opened and ten figures moved through in a solemn line, taking up positions behind the dais, whose purpose I now understood. From a platform behind the long podium they loomed over us, staring down like gods prepared to pass judgment.

And they were impressive. Male and female, young and old, their identities were obscured completely by the elaborate masks they wore, each as unique as the many architectural styles of the Grand Lodge. One man wore a domino mask of pure black studded with glowing crystal tears, others more intricate affairs that terminated in the horns of stags or rams. One bore a strange whorled black mesh that wrapped his entire head like a tangle of briars, and another had no eyeholes at all. Of the women, one's face was screened by magically flowing water, and another bore spreading branches like a winter snag. In the center, a figure whose gender I couldn't determine was dressed entirely in white, its face obscured by a featureless veil. Some wore the practical clothing of warriors or travelers, others robes and dresses to shame the courts of Taldor. All watched us with level, impassive stares.

"The Decemvirate recognizes Arnois Belzig and Eando Kline, Pathfinders." It was the woman masked by the branching spikes. "We have already reviewed Belzig's writings, and have found his discovery of the serpent city more than worthy of publication in the *Chronicles*. Yet it has come to our attention that you, Kline, were also involved in the discovery, and have different information."

"You may state your version of the events."

I did so, starting with my assignment in Magnimar and holding nothing back. As with Shevala, the simple act of revealing the information caused a weight that I hadn't known I was carrying to lift from my shoulders, my body growing lighter and straighter as I confessed every act, noble or otherwise, before this blank-faced council.

When finally I finished, Belzig twitching impatiently at my side, I was flying. For better or worse, I had fulfilled my mission.

There was a long pause as the Decemvirate digested my story, then the man whose mask resembled a horned ram's skull spoke.

"Your account is impressive, Kline. Yet it is imperative that we confer further before any decisions are made." He turned toward his companions and waved one hand negligently.

All sound in the room vanished. Not even my own breathing registered, my bones refusing to conduct vibrations. Next to me, Belzig's stricken expression showed that he hadn't been spared. Before us, the council conversed freely, their lips moving in no language that I recognized.

It made sense—why bother to sequester themselves before issuing their verdict, when they could simply deafen their audience? I was impressed by the casual display of power, if not necessarily their regard for their fellow Pathfinders.

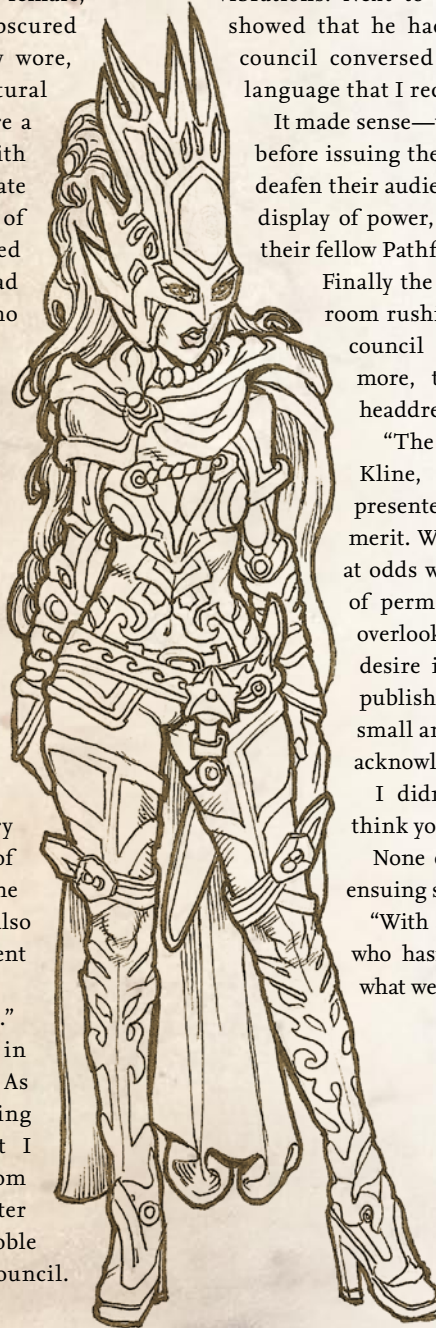
Finally the spell lifted, the tiny sounds of the room rushing back in a thunderclap, and the council sat stoically observing us. Once more, the woman with the branching headdress addressed us.

"The council has heard your words, Kline, and read those that Belzig has presented, and found them to be of equal merit. While we find your constant conflict at odds with the Pathfinders' code, the lack of permanent harm has convinced us to overlook your behavior. As such, if you desire it, both of your findings shall be published concurrently." Belzig's smile was small and forced, but he bowed his head in acknowledgment.

I didn't. "While I'm honored, lords, I think you've missed the point."

None of the Decemvirate shifted, yet the ensuing silence spoke volumes. I pressed on.

"With all due respect, I'm not sure anyone who hasn't been in the city can appreciate what we've uncovered here. These beings are



*I wonder if even the Decemvirate's members know each other's identities?*

incredibly powerful. I know—I've felt one of them inside my brain, felt the ease with which it controlled me completely. Only by sheerest luck was I able to break out of its power, and that was just one of them."

"Your graces, they *want* us to come down there. They've been waiting for thousands of years for us to mature to the point where we're strong enough to be decent *servants*. If word gets out about the city, we won't be able to stop the treasure-hunters, or even our own scholars, from flocking to it. And once this genie is released, we won't be able to bottle it again.

"Let this discovery pass us by. Record it and relegate it to the darkest part of the Vaults, some unused corner of the Repository. Just don't let it leave this lodge."

I paused. "Please."

Again, the silence following my words was almost as complete as the spell.

"You are bold, Kline," said the man with the ram horns. "A fine quality in a Pathfinder. Yet you presume overmuch."

"Yes," echoed the one in the crying mask, his razor-edged voice high and light. "Perhaps you were overcome by the serpent man, but surely even you don't believe yourself the most capable of our agents? Besides, those who come after will have your information to work with. They will go prepared, and I daresay will find more success than you did."

"But—"

"That will be all, Kline." The voice of the branch-masked woman was coated in ice. "You may publish your findings or not, as you wish, but it is not the place of a Pathfinder to advise the Decemvirate."

Deep inside me, something broke loose.

"Fair enough," I said, and reached into my pocket. Behind me I could hear the guards suddenly shift, too late to stop me as I grabbed and thrust, lobbing underhand.

Before me, my wayfinder clinked and slid to a stop on the stone floor.

"Guess that doesn't apply to me anymore."

I turned and walked toward the door.

"Eando."

The woman's voice. I stopped.

"The Decemvirate understands your disappointment, and will grant you time to rethink your rash decision. But you bear something that is not yours."

The guards moved to block the doorway, hands concealed beneath their sleeves. I faced the council.

"The ioun stone, Eando. You acquired it on official Society business, and that makes it Society property. It will be useful in guiding future scholars back to the city. Besides which, it's an important artifact—far too important for one man, Pathfinder or not." She held out a hand.

"Come, Eando. You can still do this honorably."

I stared at that open hand, weathered and worn, and wondered at the swords or bows it had once held—perhaps still held. Who were these men and women, to walk among us so secretly powerful? How did they develop such arrogant confidence, the hubris to direct the lives of thousands?

If I were in their position, would I be any different?

Slowly, I walked forward and stooped to retrieve my wayfinder, the magic compass still as bright as the day I received it. Once again I dug into my pocket, and this time withdrew a brilliant emerald stone, socketing it into place. The needle continued to point due north—back up the Sellen the way we had come.

I looked down at it, then back at the Decemvirate woman. She smiled encouragingly.

I flipped the wayfinder sidearm over the dais, hitting her in the bodice, and she scrambled to catch it.

"You forget yourself, Kline!" she hissed, but I was already walking away.

"Maybe," I replied. "Or maybe I'm starting to remember."

This is my last entry. As such, I feel the need to get the details right.

The sun slanting through my window is soft and yellow, bathing me with heat and picking individual motes of dust out of the air. This pen has seen better days, broken and mended. Outside, the noise of the city is a blanket, enfolding and humbling me, reminding me that despite all my problems I am one of many—a tiny speck flung screaming through space and time. It is a comforting thought. Next to my journal, the ioun stone floats gently in the air.

By the time the Decemvirate realizes that the stone in my wayfinder is a fake, one of the unspent gems plucked from the snake man's crypt, I'll be days ahead, maybe weeks. I don't expect them to give up, especially not when they still have Belzig's notes, but that'll give me plenty of time to get north and purchase the supplies I need. Nothing out of the ordinary for a simple prospector—just torches, rope, and those alchemical concoctions the miners use for blasting. Lots of them.

If Belzig remembers which tunnels he came through to escape the city, then it's up to me to make sure those tunnels aren't there anymore.

Ever since I was a child, I've believed that the greatest thing a man can do is seek knowledge. But now that I'm here, I think perhaps gaining knowledge is not nearly so important as what is done with it. I'm leaving this journal to you, Shevala, because I think you of all people might understand. Maybe years from now you'll decide it makes a good yarn and distribute it yourself. Maybe you'll shelve it and never touch it again. It doesn't matter so much to me. But if you ever do publish these, please sign me just:

Eando Kline,  
Adventurer

## EANDO KLINE

Little is known about the early life of Eando Kline. While his light skin and native tongue mark him as a child of Avistan, possibly Taldan or Andoran, even companions of long standing rarely get more than a few words out of him on the subject of his origins. Occasional references to a wayward youth, however, combined with a certain practiced affinity for petty theft and lock picking plus charitable tendencies toward orphans, suggest that Eando may have spent his formative years as a street urchin himself. Certainly no one has ever heard him mention a family.

As far as he's concerned, Kline's story begins at the age of 15, when he arrived penniless and travel-stained at the gate of Absalom's Grand Lodge, demanding politely but firmly to be inducted into the Pathfinder Society. Impressed by both the boy's spirit and the great distances which he had obviously traversed to be there, the Society quickly acceded to his wishes and accepted him as an initiate.

Eando's years being trained within the Grand Lodge were tumultuous at best. While none of his instructors could deny the fervor or skill with which he attacked his studies, his drive for knowledge and flagrant disregard for authority frequently landed him in hot water. Even as an adolescent, Eando had a tendency to view rules and laws as guidelines rather than absolutes, and his shameless explorations of the lodge's many off-limits areas and the cheerful, roguish manner in which he accepted his frequent punishments proved a constant source of exasperation for his superiors. Finally, after several years (and as many near-expulsions), Eando was raised to the status of a full Pathfinder and assigned to the jurisdiction of Shevala Iorae, a recently promoted venture-captain whose own legendary stubbornness and talent were hoped to be a match for the ambitious newcomer.

The pairing worked, and over the next decade Shevala became something of a mentor and confidant for the naturally independent Kline, sending him on expeditions all across the Inner Sea region. These missions met with moderate success, despite (or sometimes as a result of) Kline's tendency to leave a swath of accidental carnage in his wake.

In 4707 AR, after a particularly close call in Lastwall left Eando a wanted man in several townships—a simple misunderstanding, Eando insisted, involving questionable property rights and a milkmaid's virtue—Shevala assigned him to the newly established Pathfinder lodge in Magnimar, the first such base of operations on the Varisian frontier. Unsure if he was being punished or not, Eando went eagerly to this relatively unexplored region rife with ancient ruins and monuments from lost cultures. It was here that a simple attempt to recover a mysterious *ioun stone* brought him to the greatest discovery of his career—and the one that would eventually estrange

him from the Society. While the nature of this revelation has not yet been confirmed officially, rumors hold that its implications were terrible enough that Eando went against both his training and his nature in order to plead with the Decemvirate not to release his findings. It's said that, when they refused to safeguard the knowledge, he threw down his *wayfinder* and resigned from the Society, immediately disappearing from the city of Absalom and taking the strange *ioun stone* with him. If Shevala or anyone else knows where to find him, they have remained quiet thus far, but the venture-captain has hinted repeatedly that she agrees with Eando's decision, and that she suspects the Society—and the Decemvirate—hasn't seen the last of him.

Eando embodies the spirit of the lone Pathfinder, constantly placing himself in exotic and dangerous situations in pursuit of the thrill of discovery. While personable and persuasive—and perhaps not as self-reliant as he likes to think—Eando is at heart a loner, with few real friends and no true home but the pack on his back. Part of this is undoubtedly due to his nature: a rough-and-tumble firebrand who has no problem overlooking society's conventions if they don't mesh with his own needs or sense of honor. Yet what demons might lurk behind the cocky demeanor and drive him to so often sacrifice both his own happiness and that of others in favor of obscure knowledge and adventure is a mystery even Eando has yet to solve.

### Appearance

Eando is a reasonably attractive man in his late twenties, though most of his appeal comes from his aura of mystery and ever-present smirk rather than any especially handsome features. He stands almost 6 feet tall and is of average build, though his lack of bulk belies lithe and rosy muscles which make him both faster and stronger than his opponents expect. A veteran of numerous brawls and close calls, Eando's limbs bear copious scars from old injuries, and an especially noticeable gash running down the outside of his left eye adds to his charm more than it detracts.

Eando generally dresses in practical traveling clothes, along with a few bits of leather armor which still allow him to move freely. His skin is naturally light but constantly tanned a rich brown from traveling, and his hair and short beard is dark brown bordering on black. His cocky charm and casual air, combined with a talent for oratory and perhaps subconscious bardic abilities, tend to make people want to like him—often despite their better judgment.

### Development

Eando can be used in a number of ways, depending on what stage of his career he's at when PCs encounter him. As a



working Pathfinder, he's a convenient source of adventure hooks or obscure knowledge, perhaps recruiting the PCs to help him with a mission, accompanying them on an adventure for his own secret ends, or even working against them to claim an artifact of historical significance for the Society before the PCs can reach it.

After his resignation from the Pathfinder Society, Eando is still useful as a plot device. He might try to convince the PCs to assist him in defying the Society or subverting a given member, or even seek to enlist them in a splintered version of the Society that refuses to recognize the Decemvirate. Perhaps the PCs are tasked with hunting him down and stopping him at any cost before he can rebury the great secret which inspired him to cut ties with the Pathfinders. For PCs familiar with his story, they might simply encounter him posing as a run-of-the-mill NPC, only piecing together his true identity after he has disappeared once again.

**EANDO KLINE** CR 8

Male human rogue 3/sorcerer 1/bard 4  
CG Medium humanoid

**Init** +2; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15  
(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

**hp** 37 (8 HD; 7d6+1d4+8)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1

**OFFENSE**

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *short sword* +8  
(1d6+1/19-20) or  
unarmed strike +7 (1d3+1  
nonlethal)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +8 (1d4+1/19-20)

**Special Attacks** bardic music 4/day  
(countersong, *fascinate*, inspire  
competence, inspire courage +1), sneak  
attack +2d6

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 4th)

2nd (1/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 15), *shatter*  
(DC 15)

1st (3/day)—*cure light wounds*, *feather  
fall*, *grease* (DC 14)

0 (3/day)—*flare* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *light*,  
*mending*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 1st, +7  
ranged touch)

1st (4/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *sleep*  
(DC 14)

o (5/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *ghost sound* (DC 13),  
*read magic*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Not normally a religious man, Eando has recently taken to whispering quick prayers to Desna before fights. Treat these as bardic music inspiring competence or courage in himself using Perform (oratory). On those rare occasions when he sees a fight coming in advance, he generally hides and prepares to ambush his foe with a sneak attack.

**During Combat** Eando doesn't fight unless he has to, preferring to sneak, run, or talk his way out of any conflicts, but if cornered, he prefers to take the first swing—often literally. Rather than waste time drawing a sword, he generally chooses to go for a disabling kick to the knee or a quick and surprising blow to the face or throat, hoping to drop a foe with a well-placed nonlethal sneak attack and end things early.

Though he's a competent spellcaster, a lifetime of hard knocks has taught Eando to rely first and foremost on his physical reflexes, and he tends to save his spells for emergencies.

**Morale** Eando is no fool, and attempts to escape combat if reduced below 10 hit points, provided his allies are able to do the same. Haunted by the death of the adventurer Sascha Antif-Arah, one of his few true friends, Eando fights to the last to defend those he truly cares about.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 13,  
**Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +6

**Feats** Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse

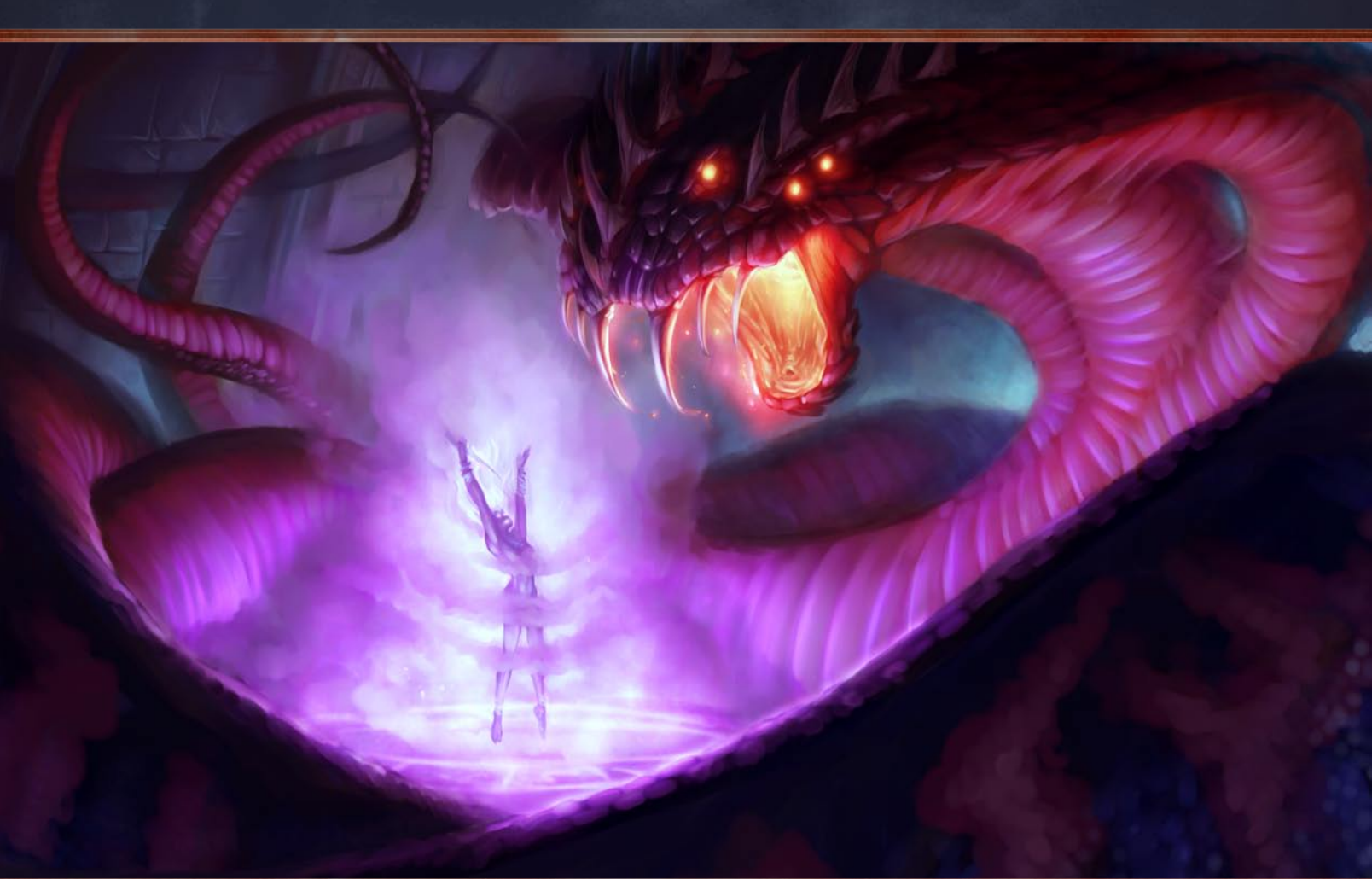
**Skills** Bluff +9, Climb +7, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +9 Gather Information +11, Hide +8, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Perform (oratory) +11, Ride +7, Sleight of Hand +10, Survival +2

**Languages** Common, Shoanti, Orc, Varisian

**SQ** bardic knowledge +7, summon familiar (currently none), trapfinding

**Gear** +2 *leather armor*, +1 *short sword*, *masterwork dagger*, *ring of protection* +1, *mysterious ioun stone*, *backpack*, numerous belt pouches, *journal*, *writing supplies*





# Bestiary

The Land of Black Blood comes to terrible life with this month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary. From this savage world within the world climbs a host of new terrors, some native to the inky depths, while others invade from worlds beyond. Savages from the deepest reaches of the Darklands, demons from the bowels of the Abyss, and beings of living stone haunt the bizarre depths of this deadly vault, and none of them are welcoming to visitors.

## WANDERING MONSTERS

Even though the Land of Black Blood already teems with all manner of terrible and deadly life, the coming of the drow has managed to make the vast cavern even more deadly. Monstrosities once content to laze amid the vault's chilling ooze now break the surface, eager to aid or feast upon the land's newest visitors. Savages used to being masters of the land take to the warpath in defense of their deadly home. And in the darkness demonic eyes look on in anticipation, feeling the eddies of foul magic and unspeakable destruction

gathering around them. The adjacent table details just a few of the beasts that might be encountered in the Land of Black Blood. GMs who wish to expand upon this table or add their own entries are encouraged to do so, as in a place as strange and savage as this nation-sized cavern, nearly any bizarre beast or unnatural terror might make its lair.

The following descriptions explain various encounters the PCs might face in the Land of Black Blood in greater detail.

**Drow Patrol:** With their plots nearing completion, the drow of House Azrinae vigilantly patrol the Land of Black Blood, watchful for any who might impede their plans. A typical patrol of drow consists of four drow soldiers and a drow priestess—an EL 13 encounter (see page 13 and 38 for stats). Additionally, soaring low over the deadly landscape, five drow soldiers on the backs of dire bats travel far and fast in their search for intruders, making for an EL 14 encounter. In the rarest cases, groups of six drow priestesses occasionally travel the lands as deadly diplomatic envoys, hoping to convince—or subdue—the vault's natives into serving the drow cause. A group of six drow priestesses are an EL 15 encounter.

*His face like fire, we know him as lord. His words like knives, they flense us from the cages of our forms. His wisdom like venom, we cannot be ourselves again. In his eyes we see the life and death of all things. In his hands the truth behind the veil of worlds. In his scales shimmers the flow of magic, which struggles as a beast too great to be tamed. By his shield we abandon our assumptions and the laws of those who are peers no more. By his scourge we lord ourselves masters of breath and knights of the invisible. By his crown we swear our lives, our souls, and our great works. Until the Final Incantation comes. Abraxas. Abraxa. Abrax. Abra. Abr. Ab. A.*

—Chant to Abraxas, Master of the Final Incantation

**The Moldering Emperor:** One of the greatest menaces to inhabit the Land of Black Blood, this horrifying black-blooded neothelid preys on beasts that near the oozing mires through which it writhes. More details on the Moldering Emperor can be found in the black-blooded template and on page 28.

**Muck Lion:** A terrible breed of gigantic, unnatural ant lion native to the vault, muck lions lie patiently amid the slime and decayed earth in several places throughout the region. See page 31 for more details on muck lions.

## SHAITAN AND THE FIVE JINN

Tales of jinn pervade Arabian mythology. Varyingly portrayed as spirits, monsters, devils, or other superhuman beings throughout millennia of tales and religious traditions, jinn—a name possibly derived from the Latin *genii* and later corrupted into genie—are creatures born of the elements, particularly wind and fire. Tales typically depict jinn as prideful and eager to trick or harm humans, though some prove more benevolent and possess great wisdom or piety.

In some of the oldest Arabic tales jinn are divided into five groups: the Efrit, the Marid, the Jann, the Jinn, and the Shaitan. Of these, the shaitan are little known to Western storytelling. Mythologically, shaitan vary in depiction, from their earliest roles as a species of jinn similar to others of their kind in ability and demeanor, to a more religious portrayal as evil spirits created from hellfire. From this latter representation shaitan (or shaytan) serve as the etymological root of the modern name Satan, likely accounting for their demonization in games and literature.

As d20 gaming accentuates the elemental heritages of genies, the majority of these beings appear in the MM—efreet (fire), djinn (air), jann (all elements)—and the *Tome of Horrors III*—marids (water)—with only an elemental embodiment of earth being neglected. Thus, both drawing upon and taking liberties with the folkloric traditions of the shaitan, the Pathfinder Chronicles campaign setting employs these jinn as its cosmology's earth genies. Those who would prefer to use another title should have little problem finding fictionalized names for earth genies online or in other d20 sources. Expect much more about all the genie races in upcoming volumes of *Pathfinder* with the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE LAND OF BLACK BLOOD

1d20	Encounter	Avg. EL	Source
1–3	1 minor xorn	3	MM 260
4–6	1d8 ghouls	4	MM 119
7–10	1d8 bat swarms	5	MM 237
11–12	1 phase spider	5	MM 207
13–14	1d4 urdefen	5	<i>Into the Darklands</i>
15–18	1d6 derro	6	MM 49
19–21	1d6 phantom fungi	6	MM 207
22	1 aboleth	7	MM 8
23–25	1d8 mobats	7	TOHR 31*
26–28	1d6 vampire spawn	7	MM 253
29–31	1d6 cloaklers	8	MM 36
32–35	2d6 morlocks	8	<i>Into the Darklands</i>
36–38	1d8 phycomids	8	TOHR 293*
39–42	2d8 skums	8	MM 228
43–47	1d8 abyssal dire frog	9	TOHR 206*
48–49	1d4 black dracolisks	9	TOHR 161*
50–54	2d6 fiendish cockroach swarms	9	<i>Pathfinder</i> #13
55–56	1d4 lurkers above	9	TOHR 258*
57–60	1d6 chadras	10	<i>Pathfinder</i> #18
61–63	1d8 average xorn	10	MM 260
64–65	2d4 wraiths	10	MM 257
66–68	1d8 driders	11	MM 89
69–71	1d4 vrock	11	MM 48
72–73	1 hezrou	11	MM 44
74	1 omox	12	<i>Pathfinder</i> #16
75–77	1 purple worm	12	MM 211
78–80	1d4 Colossal spiders	13	MM 288
81–84	1 muck lion	13	see text
85–86	1d4 stone golems	13	MM 137
87–90	Drow patrol	14	see text
91–92	1d4 ropers	14	MM 215
93–94	1 vemerak	14	<i>Into the Darklands</i>
95	1 Abraxas demon	15	<i>Pathfinder</i> #18
96–97	The Moldering Emperor	16	see text
98	1 aboleth mage	17	MM 8
99	1 marilith	17	MM 44
100	1 nightcrawler	18	MM 195

\* From the *Tome of Horrors Revised*.



## BLACK-BLOODED

*Viscous black ooze covers every inch of this writhing mass of flailing tendrils and vestigial appendages. Whatever it might have once been lies hidden beneath spatters of noxious, tar-like filth, which sprays across everything nearby it as the thing lashes and leaks madly. A wave of cold rushes before the disgusting abomination as it comes, an icy, fetid breath like that from a chill sepulcher.*

None can claim to fully understand all of the properties of the black blood that courses through the depths of the Darklands. Freezing regardless of temperature and fundamentally charged with deadly negative energies, the viscous ooze empowers the magic of the dead while it fouls and destroys nearly every living thing it touches.

Yet not everything is destroyed by the profane substance's corruptive touch. Some rare beings refuse to be drained of life, and for their tenacity the black blood disfigures them as if by some cruel whim.

Black-blooded creatures are monstrosities warped by exposure to the vile fluids that pervade the Land of Black Blood. Sometimes born of creatures living on the shores of the Caltherium or those subjected to the necromantic fluids as part of cruel experiments, such beings prove exceedingly rare. Those that do exist, however, are crazed and physically warped abominations, living manifestations of the destructive black blood, their paths tainted by endless secretions of the freezing pollution and the ruined lifeless forms of all they encounter. Fortunately, most mutated by the black blood don't live for long, as no mortal form can suffer the negatively charged. But, in the depths of the Darklands—to the fright of the inhabitants of those already deadly realms—there are known to be some terrifying exceptions.

### Creating a Black-Blooded Creature

“Black-blooded” is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, plant, or vermin (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A black-blooded creature uses all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to aberration and it gains the aquatic subtype. Do not recalculate Hit Dice, base attack bonus, or saves. Size is unchanged.

**Speed:** A black-blooded creature gains a swim speed equal to its base movement speed. If it can already swim, use the higher of the two swim speeds.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor increases by +2 (this stacks with any natural armor bonus the base creature has).

**Damage:** A black-blooded creature retains all of the attacks and damage of the base creature, but deals an additional 1d6 points of cold damage on all attacks.

**Special Attacks:** A black-blooded creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attack.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 30-foot cone of black blood, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 6d6 cold. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 black-blooded creature's racial HD + black-blooded creature's Con modifier) reduces damage by half.

**Special Qualities:** A black-blooded creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus darkvision out to 120 feet, low-light vision, and the amphibious quality. A black-blooded creature has immunity to ability drain, cold, energy drain, and poison.

**Blood Rain (Su):** Black-blooded creatures constantly leak and spray bursts of freezing black blood. Any creature within 15 feet of a black-blooded creature takes an amount of cold damage equal to the black-blooded creature's Constitution modifier.

**Tainted Life (Ex):** The black blood is antithetical to all life and consumes all but the heartiest hosts. Any creature with the black-blooded template must make a DC 15 Fortitude save every day or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Dex +2, Con +4, Int -4, Cha +2.

**Skills:** A black-blooded creature has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered.

**Environment:** The Land of Black Blood.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as base creature +1.

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil.

**Level Adjustment:** Same as base creature +3.

## Sample Black-Blooded Creature

Lurking amid the depths of the Caltherium at the heart of the Land of Black Blood writhes one of the vault's deadliest hunters, the fearsome Moldering Emperor. Once, perhaps, this monstrosity was an ancient neothelid, but centuries of exposure or experimentation with the black blood has perverted the beast into a terrible new form. Burdened with mutations, out-of-control tendrils, and wing-like fins, this hunter of the depths claims every black-blood-soaked region of the vast cavern as its personal domain, and it doesn't take kindly to trespassers.

### THE MOLDERING EMPEROR

CR 16

Black-blooded neothelid (aquatic)

CE Gargantuan aberration

**Init** +3; **Senses** blindsight 100 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 5, flat-footed 31

(-1 Dex, +26 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 362 (25d8+250)

**Fort** +18, **Ref** +7, **Will** +16

**DR** 5/—; **Immune** ability drain, cold, energy drain, poison; **SR** 25

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Melee** 4 tentacle rakes +25 (3d6+11 plus 1d6 cold/19-20)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

**Special Attacks** breath weapon, improved grab, swallow whole

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *charm monster* (DC 19), *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *telekinesis* (DC 20), *teleport*, *trace teleport*, *poison* (DC 19)  
3/day—*mind thrust* (DC 23), *psychic crush*, quickened *suggestion* (DC 18)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 32, **Dex** 9, **Con** 31, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +18; **Grp** +41

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (tentacle rake), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle rake), Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (suggestion)

**Skills** Climb +39, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Listen +30, Spellcraft +29, Spot +30, Swim +19

**Languages** Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** amphibious, blood rain, tainted life

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blood Rain (Su)** Any creature within 15 feet of the Moldering Emperor takes 8 points of cold damage.

**Breath Weapon (Su)** The Moldering Emperor has two breath attacks. One is a 50-foot cone of acid, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 14d10 acid, Reflex half DC 32. The other is a 30-foot cone of black blood, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 6d6 cold. Reflex DC 32.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, the Moldering Emperor must hit a creature with two tentacles. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the foe.

**Mind Thrust (Sp)** The Moldering Emperor delivers a massive blast of mental energy at any one target within 60 feet, inflicting 15d10 points of damage. A successful DC 24 Will save negates the effect. This is a mind-affecting effect.

**Psychic Crush (Sp)** The Moldering Emperor attempts to crush the mind of a single creature within 60 feet. The target must make a DC 24 Will save with a +4 bonus or collapse, becoming unconscious and dying at -1 hit points. If the target succeeds on the save, it takes 6d6 points of damage.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** The Moldering Emperor can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a smaller size than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+15 points of crushing damage plus 2d6 points of acid damage per round from stomach secretions. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the stomach (AC 22). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; any additional swallowed opponents must cut their own way out. The Moldering Emperor's interior can hold 1 Huge, 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

**Trace Teleport (Sp)** This ability affects a spread with a 60-foot radius. The Moldering Emperor learns the mental coordinates of the teleport destination of all creatures that teleported in the area over the previous minute, gaining an awareness of the location equivalent to "seen casually." This power does not grant any environmental information about the conditions of the destination.

**Skills** The Moldering Emperor has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered.



## CHARDA

Short and densely built, this armored humanoid bounds forward with surprising speed. Thick scaly plates clack together as it moves, while four muscular arms gash their claws in menacing anticipation. From its reptilian face gaze two slitted emerald eyes, while a maw full of sharp teeth dribbles a thick, black drool.

### CHARDA

Often CN Small monstrous humanoid (aquatic)  
**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20  
 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +9 natural)  
**hp** 94 (9d8+54 HD)  
**Fort** +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7  
**Immune** immune to black blood, poison

**CR** 7

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

**Melee** 4 claws +14 (1d4+4) and bite +9 (1d4+2 and black bile)  
**Ranged** black bile +10 (1d4 plus 1d6 cold)  
**Special Abilities** black bile, bodyslam

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Chardas enter combat by bull rushing opponents whenever possible, attempting to make use of their body slam ability.

**In Combat** Knowing the revulsion and harm most races suffer from coming in contact with black blood, chardas regularly attempt to force opponents into bodies of the freezing fluid. If no pools of black blood are available, they make ready use of their black bile ability.

**Morale** Religious fanatics, chardas believe their deaths feed their foul god Orgesh and see great honor in dying in battle.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 13, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8  
**Base Atk** +9; **Grp** +9  
**Feats** Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack  
**Skills** Hide +11 (+15 in water), Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +12  
**Languages** Drow, Dwarven, Undercommon  
**SQ** amphibious, blood born

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** The Land of Black Blood  
**Organization** solitary, pair, or hunting party (4–8)  
**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** cleric  
**Level Adjustment** +6

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Black Bile (Ex)** All chardas retain a store of black blood in muscular organs attached to their mouths. Three times a day, they can use the blood to perform the following actions.

**Blood Bite:** When a charda successfully hits an opponent with its bite attack it can choose to expel some of its stored black blood as well, dealing an additional 1d6 points of cold damage.

**Bile Blast:** A charda can spit a concentrated stream of black blood. This ranged attack has a range of 80 feet with no range increment. Those struck by the attack take 1d4 points of damage plus 1d6 points of cold damage.

**Bile Spray:** Chardas can also unleash a 15-foot cone of black blood. A charda must choose how many charges of black blood it wishes to utilize in this attack. For each charge of black blood it expends, the damage of this attack increases by 1d6 points of cold damage to a maximum of 3d6 (reflex DC 20 halves). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Once a charda's store of black blood is exhausted it cannot use its black bile abilities again until the next day and it has drunk from a pool of black blood. If no black blood is available, a charda does not regain its use of these abilities.

**Blood Born (Ex)** The chardas are children of the black blood. In addition to being completely immune to the effects of the noxious fluid, they find it invigorating. A charda gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are at least partially immersed in black blood. Creatures who have taken damage from a charda's black bile are not counted as immersed in black blood.

**Body Slam (Ex)** Small and dense, chardas excel at rushing into opponents and bowling them over. A charda that succeeds at a bull rush attack may choose to knock opponents prone rather than pushing them back.

**Skills** A charda has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Deep below the earth, in lightless rivers and blackened pools, chardas lurk and feed on those foolish enough to cross their paths. They worship strange gods, swim silently through darkness, and offer mercy to no one. They are hideous things, a race seemingly built for an alien war, with plates upon plates of armor, too many limbs, and a maw filled with deadly teeth.

All charda grow to the same height, almost exactly 4 feet tall, although their weights increase steadily throughout their lives as their plates constantly grow, causing most to weigh approximately 120 pounds—though rare elders might weigh as much as 200 pounds.

## Ecology

Chardas are small but wide, with gills protected by the armor of their backs. Their skin and armor colorings vary, with most being green with black armor, though many color varieties exist. One of the strangest aspects of their seemingly unnatural physiology is their immunity to black blood—the freezing, necromatically charged liquid that pervades their subterranean homes. Not only do the charda exhibit a specific immunity to the strange chill shed by this fluid, they prove uniquely disposed to utilize black blood in their natural defenses, possessing powerful mouth sacs capable of expelling the lethal ooze directly into bites or over long distances. How these deadly hunters avoid harm from taking the freezing black blood inside of them remains a mystery, seemingly even to the chardas themselves.

Reptilian in nature, female chardas lay clutches of 3 to 5 soft eggs, which they guard diligently for the 8 months before they hatch.

## Habitat & Society

Chardas inhabit the Land of Black Blood, a vast vault found in the Darklands region of Orv deep below the surface

nation of Kyonin. There they roam the cavern's marshy lands, never venturing more than a few miles away from the shores of the Caltherium and rivers of black blood that give their homeland its name.

Charda society is largely a mystery. Their communal homes are small half domes constructed upon swampy banks, creating tiny flooded communities. Both males and females take part in hunting parties, and leadership seems to be determined by merit or age rather than gender. Religion dominates much of charda life as ancient traditions lead them to covet strange gods, many of which are unknown outside the Darklands. Greatest—or at least most revered—among these inscrutable deities is the endlessly hungry Orgesh. Tribes of chardas provide frequent tributes to this ravenous deity, offering living sacrifices seemingly more out of fear and placation than actual veneration. The sincerity of the savages' devotion usually means little to those they capture and offer up to their greedy god, though. Part of their faith relates to the black blood, which they believe to be the blood of Orgesh's mother, spilled when the merciless god gnawed his way forth into the world.

Although chardas are quite intelligent, they hold the search for food as a particularly desperate act. When hunting, even in a group, any single charda covets and swiftly devours his first several catches rather than sharing them with the group. Even mothers think nothing of starving their children when food is scarce—though the race only resorts to cannibalism in the most desperate times. Only once an individual's desires are satisfied are the needs of the group considered. Although born of reasonable concerns regularly faced in their exceedingly deadly environment, the covetousness of individual chardas goes far to explain their limited societal growth and why few other races care to have dealings with the deadly savages. Only the aboleth seem to have some fondness for the chardas, though whether those aquatic masterminds value them for their deadly hunting ability, had some hand in their creation, or hold some greater plan for the race remains unclear.

## Charda Blacktongues

Those few chardas who survive to old age—50 or more years for the race—often develop strange abilities due to their years of exposure to black blood, a blessing the savages claim comes from Orgesh himself. These charda blacktongues, so named for the black stain of their mouths and faces, possess a Wisdom of 15 or more and spell-like abilities, which they use as 10th-level clerics. Once per day they can use *acid arrow*, *control water*, *deeper darkness*, *obscuring mist*, and *transmute rock to mud*. The save DC is Wisdom-based. One in ten charda is a cleric, usually of 2nd to 5th level.



## GENIE, SHAITAN

This broad-shouldered being, its muscles seemingly carved from the very living rock, has glossy skin of deep umber and eyes that glitter like agates, its bald head and neatly trimmed beard of jet black gleaming like oiled marble. It moves with deliberate economy and smooth precision.

### SHAITAN

Always LN Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +14,

Spot +14

### DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19

(+1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

### CR 7

hp 58 (9d8+18)

Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8

Immune electricity

### OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +12 (2d6+12)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks metamorph, *plane shift*, stone curse

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*meld into stone*, *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *veil* (self only)

3/day—quicken *glitterdust* (DC 14), *stoneskin*, *wall of stone*

1/day—*stone tell*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Shaitans will always use *stoneskin*

before entering battle. If they have a chance to pick their battlegrounds, they prepare with *soften earth* or *transmute rock to mud*. They are fond of using *meld into stone* to lie in wait to ambush foes as well.

**During Combat** Shaitans use *wall of stone* to partition the battlefield or trap enemies, using *stonewalk* to bypass their own walls and move in to attack trapped foes. They also use *transmute mud to rock* to trap enemies mired in mud that they have previously created. Shaitans use *glitterdust* to reveal invisible creatures that they detect with their tremorsense.

**Morale** Shaitans fight with a single-minded fury when pursuing a goal, but they are not particularly brave and use their *stonewalk* ability to flee any combat in which they drop below 20 hit points, unless they're bound by magic to fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

Str 26, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15

Base Atk +9; Grp +21

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*glitterdust*)

Skills Appraise +14 (+19 against gems, metal, and stone), Bluff +14, Concentration +14, Craft (gemcutting) +19, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +19, Listen +14, Profession (miner) +19, Search +14 (+19 in stonework), Sense Motive +14, Spot +14

Languages Celestial, Common, Ignan, Terran

SQ earth mastery, stone glide

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** Elemental Plane of Earth

**Organization** Solitary, company (2–4), or band (6–15)

**Treasure** standard coins; double goods (gems and metals only); standard items

**Advancement** 10–14 HD (Large), 15–27 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment** —

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Earth Mastery (Ex)** Shaitans gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and opposed Strength-based checks (such as grapple and bull rush) when both they and their opponent are standing on any stone or earthen surface.



**Metalmorph (Su)** As a standard action, a shaitan may touch any single metal object of no more than 10 pounds and transform it into any other metal, including adamantine, mithril, cold iron, silver, or gold. Transformed metal remains transformed as long as the shaitan remains in contact with the metal, and for 1 day after the shaitan releases the object. A shaitan may use this ability to warp and deform any one metal object within 20 feet. This functions like *warp wood*, but affects only metal objects that fail a DC 16 Fortitude save (attended objects use their wielder's saves). Armor or shields lose half their bonus to AC (enhancement bonuses are unaffected), and weapons are rendered useless save as improvised clubs. The transformation lasts 1 minute, after which the affected metal reverts to its normal state. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Plane Shift (Sp)** Like all genies, shaitans can enter any of the elemental planes, the Astral Plane, or the Material Plane via *plane shift*, taking up to 8 additional creatures (caster level 13th).

**Stone Curse (Su)** If a shaitan wins a bull rush check by 5 or more and pushes its target into a stone, metal, or crystal barrier, the target must make a DC 22 Reflex save or be forced into the barrier as if the target had cast *meld into stone* to merge with the object. The victim cannot exit the stone voluntarily unless he takes a full-round action to make a successful DC 22 Fortitude save. Other creatures can use physical damage to the stone or magic spells to expel the trapped individual in the same way one can force someone out of *meld into stone*. The save DCs are Strength-based.

**Stone Glide (Su)** Shaitans can move through stone, dirt, crystal, or metal as easily as a fish swims through water, using their burrow speed. This burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole or any other sign of passage. A *move earth* cast on an area containing a burrowing shaitan flings it back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save. This ability does not grant the Shaitan the ability to ignore damage from weapons made of stone, metal, or crystal, nor does it grant any protection against earth-based magic.

**Skills** Shaitans gain a +5 racial bonus on Craft (gemcutting), Knowledge (architecture and engineering), and Profession (miner) checks. They gain a +5 racial bonus on Appraise and Search checks made against stone or gem subjects.

Shaitans are genies from the Elemental Plane of Earth. With flesh of rare metals, glittering gems, or polished stone, they are the strongest physically of the four genie races. A shaitan stands about 11 feet tall and weighs 5,000 pounds. When they move, the muted sound of stone grating on stone follows.

### Habitat & Society

Shaitans live in elaborate mazes, delves, mines, and palaces carved into the walls, floors, and ceilings of great cysts and caverns on the Elemental Plane of Earth, but sometimes can be found ruling empires of slaves deep in

the Darklands of Golarion. They are master craftsmen and possess a love of working with metal and stone, though they often hire (or sometimes enslave) elementals and xorn to labor on their behalf. Shaitans love to barter for power and wealth, sometimes entering into contracts with others in exchange for riches, honor, or prestige. They are canny in conversation and are clever bargainers, always seeking a way to twist a contract to their own benefit.

Although the vast majority of shaitans are lawful neutral, they are not known to be kind. Boastful and proud, shaitans love to display their finery (often using *veil* to appear finer still, with illusory adornments accenting the actual), even when they take on the appearance of ordinary humans, dwarves, and the like. Even in servitude, their egos are immense, and they must be constantly stroked and showered with praise or they will begin to sulk, doing only the bare minimum to meet their obligations.

### The Opaline Vault

The shaitan race hails from a vast palace on the Elemental plane of Earth called the Opaline Vault. There they are ruled by Sultana A'shadi'eayah bint Khalid, who oversees the vast mercantilism and mining operations of the Vault with a mind-boggling efficiency. She is served by an array of guilds for each of the great crafts, each guild house ruled by a pasha and their lieutenants. Individual shaitans are allowed to negotiate their own contracts, but anyone seeking the services of more than one shaitan must first gain the approval of the pasha of the guild, or rarely the sultana and his court, for any truly massive undertaking.

The shaitans of the Opaline Vault are at a constant war with the efreet of the City of Brass, for it is the shaitan's claim that the Elemental Plane of Fire is constantly working to melt away their precious stony realm and transform it into the most hated of earthen manifestations—treacherous magma, which causes earth to run like water. Yet beyond the Opaline Vault, shaitans seem to get along relatively well with efreet, since both races share an ordered pragmatism and love of tradition that often pits them at odds with the more chaotic traditions of the djinn and marids of air and water.

### Shaitan Pashas

A rare few (1% of the total population) shaitans are pashas. A shaitan pasha is an advanced, elite shaitan of no less than 18 Hit Dice. Their spell-like abilities function at CL 18th. Shaitan pashas can use *earthquake* 1/day as a spell-like ability, and can grant up to 3 *wishes* per day (non-genies only) but are often loath to do so—and when they do, are fond of honoring the *wish* strictly as worded and not as intended by the wisher. A sample Shaitan pasha statblock appears on page 15 of this volume of *Pathfinder*.



## XACARBA

Its scaly shape surrounded by a susurrus of serpentine syllables, the terrible head of a gigantic snake-like terror slowly rises. Bristling with spines, the thing's body looks like three massive snakes twisted in an unbreakable embrace, splitting only at the tail, which lashes like a trio of flensing whips. Along the thing's length runs a pattern of writhing runes, shapes that waver and reform with each terrible undulation. Three pairs of eyes, each burning with terrible intellect, crown its hooded visage, while below gapes a maw crowded with venom-dripping fangs the length of longsword.

### XACARBA

CE Gargantuan outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)  
**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +26, Spot +26  
**Aura** aura of voices 30 ft.

### CR 15

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 11, flat-footed 25  
 (+5 Dex, +19 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 195 (17d8+119)

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

**DR** 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 23

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +22 (2d8+9 plus tri-venom) and  
 3 tail lashes +17 (2d6+4)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (2d6+9), improved grab, summon demons, tri-venom

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 18th)

At will—*arcane sight*, *charm monster* (DC 21), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *disguise self*, *enthrall* (DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *hypnotism* (DC 18), *invisibility* (DC 19), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 20), *true seeing*  
 3/day—*mass suggestion* (DC 23), *scrying* (DC 21), *symbol of pain* (DC 22), *touch of idiocy* (DC 19), *vision*

#### TACTICS

**In Combat** Delighting in dispelling their foes' magic, xacarbas make frequent use of their vile disjunction poison, weakening opponents and removing their ability to escape before afflicting them with other poisons and constricting them.

**Morale** Xacarbas are proud but not foolish. Upon being reduced to fewer than half of their total hit points, they attempt to teleport away or, if magically prevented from doing so, begin bargaining for an end to hostilities.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 21, **Con** 25, **Int** 26, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 25

**Base Atk** +17; **Grp** +38

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Lightning Reflexes, Spring Attack

**Skills** Balance +17, Bluff +27, Decipher Script +28, Diplomacy +31, Disguise +17, Gather Information +27, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana, plus 2 others) +28, Listen +26, Move Silently +25, Search +28, +Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +30, Spot +26, Tumble +25

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** serpentine mask

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** The Abyss

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** standard coins; double goods; double items

**Advancement** 18–26 (Gargantuan); 27–32 (Colossal)

**Level Adjustment** —

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aura of Voices (Su)** A xacarba has three voices that constantly murmur to, taunt, and distract anything that comes near. This aura negates *silence* and similar effects. In addition, the voices speak twisted incantations to spellcasters. Any creature that

attempts to cast a spell within the aura of voices must make a DC 24 Concentration check. If a magic-user fails to cast his spell as normal, the xacarba chooses another viable target for the spell—another creature within reach for a touch spell, another location for an area-affected spell, and so on. Neither the caster nor the xacarba can cause the spell to not function after a failed Concentration check. The skill DC is Wisdom-based.

**Constrict (Ex)** A xacarba deals automatic tail lash damage with a successful grapple check.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, a xacarba must hit with one of its tail lash attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. A xacarba can grapple up to three creatures at once, but makes one fewer tail lash attack per round for each creature it grapples.

**Serpentine Mask (Su)** A xacarba can transform itself into any humanoid shape of its size or smaller, as per the spell *shapechange*. In whatever form it takes, though, it retains an obvious serpentine trait, such as slitted eyes, fangs, or a scaled skin, which negates the +10 bonus to Disguise checks provided by the spell (thus its Disguise check remains as noted above). A xacarba may change its form as a free action once per round, as per the spell.

**Summon Demon (Sp)** Once per day a xacarba can attempt to summon 2d4 babaus, 1d6 succubi, or 2 hezrous with a 50% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

**Tri-Venom (Su)** A xacarba's bite can afflict an opponent with one of three separate poisons. Upon damaging a creature, the demon chooses one of the following venoms to inflict upon its foe. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

*Abraxas's Blood:* Injury, Fortitude DC 25, initial damage 1d4 Dex and 1d4 Wis, secondary damage causes *confusion* for 10 minutes and requires a DC 25 Will save to resist. Spells that neutralize poison cure this *confusion* effect.

*Demonic Bile:* Injury, Fortitude DC 25, initial and secondary damage 1d8 Str plus 2d8 points of damage to good-aligned beings.

*Vile Disjunction:* Injury, Fortitude DC 25, the creature is affected by a targeted *greater dispel magic* effect as if cast by an 18th-level caster. This effect reoccurs as secondary damage 1 minute later.

*Neutralize poison* and similar spells have no effect upon this poison.

**Skills** A xacarba has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

The xacarbas work the will of Abraxas, demon lord of magic and forbidden lore. It is said that the first xacarba was created by the Master of the Final Incarnation by plucking off one of his own scales and speaking a corruption of his name with each one of his mouths 11 times. Since then, these rare demons have both guarded the secrets of their master and infiltrated the mortal plane to spread word of his mysteries. Where they trod they encourage works of great and wondrous magic regardless of morality, urge wizardly apprentices to outdo their arcane masters, and tempt sorcerers to invoke

## ABRACADABRA

Beyond mere nonsense and the flourishes of stage magicians, the quintessential magic word, *abracadabra*, bears a history and meaning stretching back centuries. Although none can say for how long fearful mortals have muttered this cryptic incantation, it was first recorded in Latin in the second century A.D. as part of an invocation to conjure benevolent spirits to ward off diseases. In this tradition, the word was recited while bearing a piece of parchment or wearing a medallion scribed with the word repeated 11 times, abridging the last letter in each repetition until the word form an inverted pyramid.

Some trace *abracadabra's* origins to the spirit Abraxas—also known as Abrasax or Abracax. History and various cultures have held this mystical figure in varying regards, some presenting him as a deity, others as a demon, and still others as a dualistic embodiment of good and evil. Amulets bearing Abraxas's rooster-head and snake-legged form were once popular talismans now known as Abraxas stones, often gems or medal engraved with the spirit's name or related protective incantations.

While historians and occultists argue various other potential etymologies, some of the most compelling possibilities link the word to corruptions of phrases in ancient languages, such as *avra kehdabra* in Aramaic meaning "I will create as I speak," the Hebrew *ab ben ruach acadosch* meaning "father-son-holy spirit," or the Chaldean *abbada ke dabra* that translates as "perish like the word."

their powers until the magic unleashes their supposed true potential. Xacarbas are bringers of knowledge and whisperers of secrets, but also the embodiments of all things that man was not meant to know.

A typical xacarba looks like a massive fiendish serpent with three tails, three sets of fiery eyes, and three pairs of fangs. Most measure approximately 40 feet in length and weigh upward of 16 tons.

## Habitat & Society

Well documented by the heretical writings of thaumaturges and Abraxas's devotees, xacarbas frequently seek out promising students of magic, eager to aid in their instruction. Although their disguises are always flawed, the snake-like fiends regularly masquerade as masked wizards, cloaked scholars, and veiled wisemen, performing elaborate deceptions in order to assemble small cults of adherents or even a single student. Peppering ridiculous claims with true arcane secrets, xacarbas drive their followers to test the limits of their abilities, encouraging their vanity and feelings of superiority. In the end, most xacarbas' victims self-destruct, either going on arcane rampages or falling victim to their own miscast magic, typically ignorant of their master's true nature or his manipulations.

## SAJAN



**MALE HUMAN MONK 14**

**ALIGN LN INIT +6 SPEED 70 ft.**

**DEITY:** Irori

**HOMELAND:** Vudra

### ABILITIES

14	STR
23	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
14	WIS
8	CHA

### DEFENSE

**HP 108**  
**AC 32**  
touch 25, flat-footed 26  
**Fort +12, Ref +15,**  
**Will +11** (+2 against  
enchantment)

**Special Defenses**  
improved evasion, slow  
fall 70 ft., still mind;  
**Immune** nonmagical  
disease, poison; **SR 24**

### OFFENSE

**Melee** unarmed strike +18/+13  
(2d8+4/19–20) or  
greater flurry of blows  
+18/+18/+18/+13 (2d8+3/19–20) or  
+1 temple sword +13 (1d8+3/19–20)  
**Base Atk +10; Grp +12**

**Special Attacks** abundant step 1/  
day, *ki strike* (lawful and magic),  
stunning fist 15/day (DC 16),  
wholeness of body (28 hp/day)

### SKILLS

Climb	+19
Escape Artist	+23
Jump	+37
Sense Motive	+19
Tumble	+25

### FEATS

Deflect Arrows, Dodge,  
Exotic Weapon Proficiency  
(temple sword), Improved  
Critical (unarmed strike),  
Improved Trip, Mobility,  
Spring Attack, Stunning  
Fist, Weapon Finesse



**Gear** +1 temple sword, amulet of mighty fists +2, bracers of armor +5, dusty rose ioun stone (+1 insight bonus to AC), incandescent blue ioun stone (+2 Wisdom), pink rhomboid ioun stone (+2 Constitution), gloves of Dexterity +6, ring of protection +3, ring of force shield, monk's belt, winged boots, wooden holy symbol, belt pouch

Sajan Gadadvara and his twin sister Sajni were separated when the lord they served was shamed and forced to cede half his army to the victor—among them Sajan's sister. Sajni was taken away from Vudra by her new master, and Sajan abandoned his own responsibilities to follow. He spent years trying in vain to find her, but has not yet given up. Sajan knows he cannot return to Vudra, for the padapranja there would execute him as a deserter. He cares not for his home country, however, and continues to seek out any clue that might point him toward his sister.

## LINI



**FEMALE GNOME DRUID 14**

**ALIGN N INIT +1 SPEED 20 ft.**

**DEITY:** Green Faith

**HOMELAND:** Land of the Linnorm Kings

### ABILITIES

6	STR
12	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
24	WIS
13	CHA

### DEFENSE

**HP 108**  
**AC 21**  
touch 15, flat-footed 20 (+4  
bonus against giants)  
**Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +18**  
(+2 against illusions)

**Special Qualities**  
immune to poison,  
low-light vision, nature  
sense, woodland stride, a  
thousand faces, gnome  
spell-like abilities

### OFFENSE

**Melee** mwk sickle +9/+2 (1d4–2)  
**Ranged** +1 sling +12/+7 (1d3–2)  
**Base Atk +9; Grp +3**  
**Special Attacks** wild shape 5/day  
**Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; +11 ranged)  
7th—*fire storm* (DC 24), *heal*, *sunbeam*  
6th—*fire seeds* (DC 24), *greater dispel*  
*magic* (2), *wall of stone*  
5th—*animal growth*, *death ward*,  
*trans. rock to mud*, *wall of thorns*  
4th—*air walk*, *dispel magic* (2), *flame*  
*strike* (DC 19), *freedom of mumm.*  
3rd—*call lightning* (DC 20), *neutralize*  
*poison* (DC 20), *poison* (2, DC 20),  
*remove disease*, *quench* (DC 20)  
2nd—*barkskin* (3), *cat's grace*, *lesser*  
*restoration* (2), *resist energy*  
1st—*cure light wnds.* (2), *entangle* (DC  
18), *longstrider*, *produce flame* (3)  
0—*cure minor wnds.* (4), *light*, *mending*

### SKILLS

Concentration	+20
Craft (alchemy)	+2
Handle Animal	+18
Knowledge (nature)	+19
Listen	+7
Ride	+18
Survival	+7
Wild Empathy	+15

### FEATS

Augment Summoning,  
Mounted Combat, Natural  
Spell, Ride-By Attack, Spell  
Focus (conjuration)

### ANIMAL COMPANION

Droogami (snow leopard;  
MM 274)



**Combat Gear** rod of lesser quicken metamagic, wand of flame blade (50 charges), wand of cure moderate wounds (50 charges); **Other Gear** +4 wild leather armor, masterwork sickle, +1 sling with 10 bullets, cloak of resistance +2, ring of protection +3, periapt of Wisdom +6, belt pouch, mistletoe, spell component pouch, rations (2 days), collection of special de-barked sticks, 5 gp

Lini always seemed to possess a certain affinity with various creatures of the woodlands near where she grew up—particularly with larger predators like bears and snow leopards. In the years since her departure from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Lini has collected more than a dozen sticks—one from each forest or wood she visits.

## SELTYIEL

MALE HALF-ELF

FIGHTER 7/EVOKER 5/ELDRITCH KNIGHT 8

ALIGN LE INIT +5 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Asmodeus

HOMELAND: Cheliox

### ABILITIES

12	STR
20	DEX
16	CON
21	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 92

AC 24

touch 18, flat-footed 19

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5; +2 against enchantment; immune to sleep effects

**Special Qualities**  
low-light vision

**Prohibited Schools**  
enchantment, necromancy

### OFFENSE

**Melee** +2 flaming b. spell st. longsword

+15/+10/+5 (1d8+3/19–20 + 1d6 fire)

**Ranged** +1 flaming comp. longbow

+17/+12/+7 (1d8+2/×3 + 1d6 fire)

**Base Atk** +11; **Grp** +12

**Spells Prepared** (CL 12th, +16

ranged touch, 10% spell failure)

6th—*chain lightning* (3, DC 23)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *still ice*

*storm*, *teleport*, *wall of force* (2)

4th—*dimension door*, *fire shield*, *still*

*lightning bolt* (2, DC 20), *stoneskin*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (2, DC

20), *fly*, *still scorching ray* (2)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *glitterdust* (DC

14), *still magic missile* (3), *mirror image*

1st—*enlarge person*, *burning hands*

(DC 18), *magic missile* (4), *shield*

0—*flare* (DC 14), *light*, *mage hand*,

*ray of frost*, *prestidigitation*

### SKILLS

Concentration	+17
Craft (alchemy)	+20
Diplomacy	+2
Gather Information	+2
Intimidate	+4
Knowledge (arcana)	+20
Listen	+0
Search	+3
Spellcraft	+20
Spot	+0

### FEATS

Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Still Spell, Weapon Focus (longsword)

### FAMILIAR

Dargenti (bat)

**Combat Gear** *potion of barksin* +4; **Other Gear** +4 leather armor, +2 flaming burst spell storing longsword (contains vampiric touch), +1 flaming composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows and a human slaying arrow, *amulet of health* +2, *gloves of Dexterity* +4, *headband of intellect* +6, *ring of protection* +3, *absinthe* worth 50 gp, gold holy symbol worth 75 gp, diamond dust (500 gp), spellbook, 8 gp

Born from a dead mother, Seltiel grew up surrounded by shame. Before he came of age, his stepfather attempted to murder him, but Seltiel killed him and fled. His brief reunion with his true father (a notorious bandit) ended with the half-elf being betrayed and imprisoned.

## AMIRI

FEMALE HUMAN BARBARIAN 14

ALIGN CN INIT +2 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Gorum

HOMELAND: Realm of the Mammoth Lords

### ABILITIES

24	STR
15	DEX
20	CON
10	INT
12	WIS
8	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 166

AC 22

touch 14, flat-footed 20

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

**Special Defenses**  
trap sense +4, improved uncanny dodge, indomitable will; DR 3/—

### OFFENSE

**Melee** Large +3 frost bastard sword

+23/+18/+13 (2d8+13/17–20 plus

1d6 cold)

**Ranged** +1 frost comp. longbow

+17/+12/+7 (1d8+8/×3 plus 1d6 cold)

**Base Atk** +14; **Grp** +21

**Special Attacks** greater rage 4/day

**Special Qualities** fast movement,

illiteracy

### BARBARIAN RAGE

HP 208; AC 20, touch 12, flat f. 18

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

**Melee** Large +3 frost bastard

sword +26/+21/+16 (2d8+18/17–20

plus 1d6 cold)

**Str** 30, **Con** 26

### RAGING POWER ATTACK

**Melee** Large +3 frost bastard sword

+12/+7/+2 (2d8+46/17–20 +1d6 cold)

### SKILLS

Climb	+22
Intimidate	+16
Jump	+22
Listen	+18
Spot	+3
Survival	+18

### FEATS

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

**Combat Gear** *potion of barksin* +3 (2), *potion of fly*; **Gear** +5 hide armor, Large +3 frost bastard sword, +1 frost composite longbow (+7 Str), javelins (2), throwing axe, *amulet of health* +6, *belt of giant strength* +6, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +2, 20 gp

Amiri never quite fit in with the expected gender roles of her tribe, and when the tribe attempted to send her on a suicide mission, she returned with an enormous trophy—a frost giant's sword. She has since abandoned her people, and has come to value her oversized sword (even though she can only truly wield it properly when her blood rage takes her). She never speaks of the circumstances that forced her to flee her homeland. Some things are better left unsaid.



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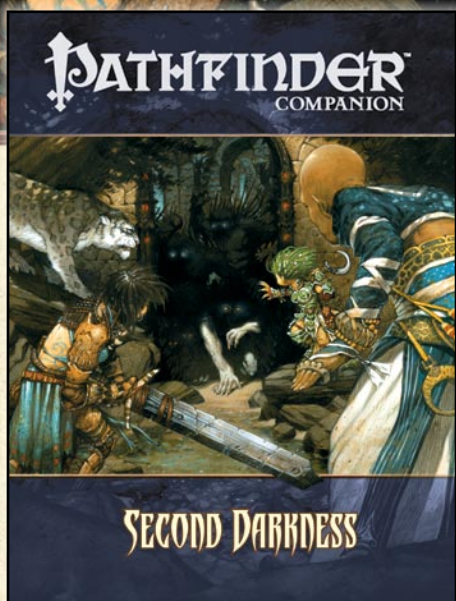
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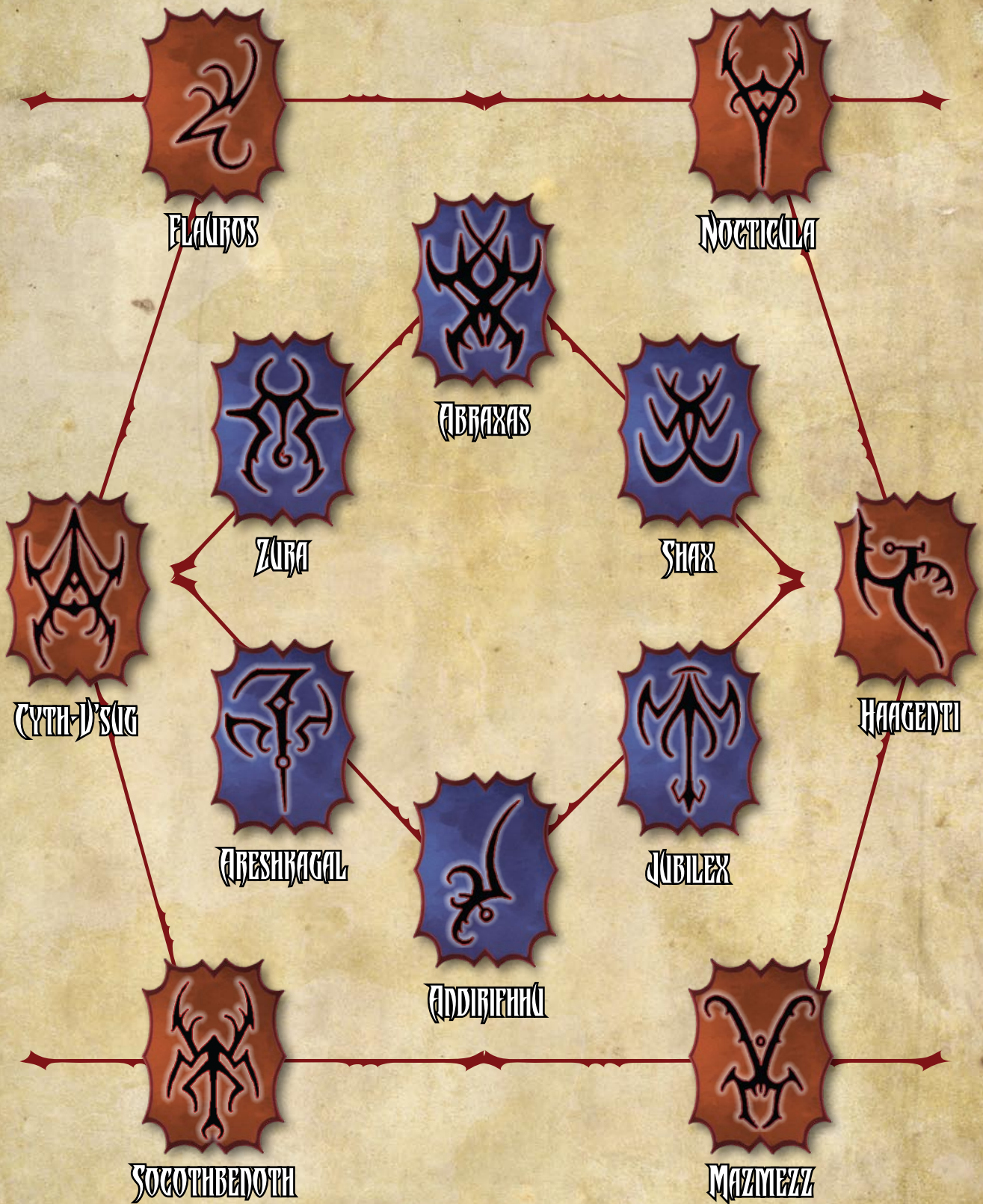
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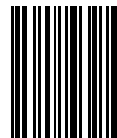
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