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SECOND DARKNESS

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Second Darkness Player's Guide

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HELLO GOODBYE

Welcome, gentle reader! As you've undoubtedly noticed, this product is not like the player's guides we published for *Rise of the Runelords* and *Curse of the Crimson Throne*. With this, the Second Darkness Pathfinder Companion, we not only launch a new Adventure Path, but we also launch a whole new product line: *Pathfinder Companion*.

Each bi-monthly *Pathfinder Companion* focuses on a particular topic tied to Golarion or the Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting and comes out on the months opposite Pathfinder Modules. A *Pathfinder Companion* is made up of three sections: an examination of the main topic in roughly 10 pages, a close look at some location important to the topic at hand (in the case of companions that focus on a location, this will be a city or other specific place within the covered area), and five short treatments offering new rules elements for use with the topic: a prominent NPC and four based on classic character archetypes. Every third *Pathfinder Companion*

acts as the player's guide to the Adventure Path launching that same month. Even if you don't play in that particular Adventure Path, though, you are sure to find something useful—just as with every companion.

The *Pathfinder Companion* comes out of multiple requests from among our readers to provide more player-friendly information. With the Adventure Path products and modules, we definitely had the GMs in our audience covered. Our Pathfinder Chronicles line does a good job of presenting information for both GMs and players, but in most of those products there are sections that could spoil certain plotlines for players. Not so with the *Pathfinder Companion*. Nothing in here or future companions should spoil any surprises for players, making these products 100% safe for GMs to share with their groups. That isn't to say there's nothing in here for GMs, though. On the contrary: since everything available to players is also available to game masters, every *Pathfinder Companion* presents 32 pages of information you as the GM can use to make your campaigns even more immersive.

BE GUIDED, YE PLAYERS

For this particular *Pathfinder Companion*, the topic at hand is the Second Darkness Adventure Path. In this companion, we introduce a structured and expansive traits section. We first introduced traits in the *Curse of the Crimson Throne Player's Guide*, but with this player's guide we set out more defined rules and a much greater variety. Originally conceived by James Jacobs, I had the opportunity to work from his excellent ideas to build the framework of the traits system for the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* (which also releases this month!). When the system got cut from that book for space concerns, we decided to add it to this player's guide. We hope you like the new traits system, because you're likely to see a lot of it. It's our intent to add new traits to the system in every *Pathfinder Companion*, expanding your options every 2 months.

Because the Second Darkness Adventure Path begins in the hive of scholars and villainy known as Riddleport, this companion's location piece examines that unique City of Cyphers on Varisia's northwestern coast. Following the Riddleport section comes five discussions full of useful mechanics from Amber Scott, including a Second Darkness-themed prestige class, spells for Riddleport's cyphermages, a look at worshipers of Cayden Cailean, and magic items useful in exploring underground realms. Then, closing out the section, comes the NPC Lavender Lil, a locally infamous worker of the oldest profession intimately tied into the waning Vancaskerkin fortunes. Hopefully all this will prepare your characters for what's coming up in Second Darkness.

FARE THEE WELL, MY FRIENDS

In 4-1/2 years of working at Paizo, I have only taken the opportunity to directly address you, our gentle readers (best in the world!), twice. Once in the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* hardcover and once here. By a strange series of coincidences and not-so-coincidences, both of these forewords come out in the same month and both of them represent the end of my stint at Paizo Publishing.

I started in November, 2003, as an assistant editor on the beloved (and missed) *Dragon* magazine. Wesley Schneider and I started at the same time, and together we shepherded *Dragon* for 44 issues, from spy-filled #316 through to the nostalgiatastic #359. With the end of *Dragon* and *Dungeon's* print incarnations and the rise of *Pathfinder*, Wes and I stopped working on the same team. He went on to work on the *Pathfinder* Adventure Paths and I became editor of... well... everything. For a while, everything Paizo put out went past my eyes, making me quite knowledgeable about Golarion and *Pathfinder* Chronicles Campaign Setting continuity. For that reason, as well as my organizational skills, I

was blessed with the lead position on the campaign setting's hardcover and with launching this whole new line of products. As of writing this, I've assigned the next two companions to some excellent writers. *Pathfinder Companion: Elves*, coming out in a couple months, is being written by industry veteran Jeff Quick and frequent *Dragon* contributor (and RPG Superstar Top 16 finisher) Hal Maclean. The third companion, set in wondrous Osirion, comes from the fertile imaginations of designer Todd Stewart and RPG Superstar Top 4 finisher Jason Nelson.

My favorite part of this job is working with the writers, some of whom have been in this industry since the heady days of 1st edition in the late 70s. It has also been my great pleasure to help novices become recognized names in the industry, aiding in the careers of several reliable and talented writers.

When I announced my resignation I feared Paizo might not be able to find a replacement with the varied yet narrow skill set I have developed in the past 4-1/2 years, that James, Wes, Jason, and Sutter would have to train a proofreader to become an editor. Despair not, my friends, for Paizo once again worked its magic to not only replace me, but to find an upgrade! My replacement on the *Pathfinder* Chronicles and *Pathfinder Companion* lines is himself a master of gaming lore and an all-around nice guy. I speak here of Sean K Reynolds, who, as it turns out, helped me land my first freelance gig in the d20 industry that ultimately landed me my job at Paizo. So while this is the last (and first!) foreword I will be writing for you, I promise you're going to like what you'll see from these products in the future.

Lest you fear this is the last you'll hear from me, take heart: I plan to continue writing for Paizo as a freelancer for as long as they want to give me projects to work on. Now I just need to get Sean to assign me a *Companion* once in a while.

Thanks for many great years!



Mike McArtor
Editor
Pathfinder Companion



Second Darkness: Player's Guide

A foul omen looms in the sky over the scoundrel city of Riddleport, an ominous shadow that defies the light. Is it a curse laid millennia ago by forgotten mages? Does it forewarn against the return of some terrible foe? Or does it portend a terrible new era, a second Age of Darkness?

Welcome to the Second Darkness Adventure Path! This campaign will take your character from the pirate's haven of Riddleport to lands unknown, far across—and deep below—the continent of Avistan. What follows is everything you'll need to make a character specially suited to the challenges and trials that await, and new rules to give you the edge you'll need to combat the dark. Also within lies a description of Riddleport, the City of Cyphers, meant to familiarize you with the campaign's starting city and quite possibly your character's new home. Everything you need to survive the coming dangers lies before you, so read closely, choose wisely, and prepare for the darkness.

RACES

Humans dominate the majority of the cities along Varisia's coast, and Riddleport proves no different. Yet, in this den of outcasts and brigands, races rarely seen among the civilized lands of the south—such as half-elves, half-orcs, and tieflings—gather in significantly greater numbers. Dwarf or elf, halfling or human, the residents of Riddleport holds few qualms over whom or what they're willing to exploit.

Humans

As the dominant race in Riddleport, humans can be found occupying almost every occupation in the City of Cyphers, including most of the positions of power and influence. Although Chelaxians and settled Varisians make up the majority of Riddleport's population,

representatives of nearly every ethnicity in Avistan and Garund find their way to the pirate port. Kellishite and Garundi traders sail their sharp-sailed vessels beneath the arch of the Cyphergate, bringing with them the exotic garb, art, and weapons of their people. Proud Ulfen warriors from the Land of the Linnorm Kings regularly make grudging stops in Riddleport, trading the wares of their homeland and the spoils of raids in the city's markets. Traders, pirates, and privateers of Chelish and Taldan descent compete on the open seas, eager to steal the greatest riches back to the ports of their homeland.

Many of Varisia's natives also find their way to Riddleport. Among them, wandering Varisians delight in the city's wild spirit and exotic sites, making the city a favored spot even over Magnimar and Korvosa to the south. The criminal Sczarni—families and gangs of Varisian thieves—particularly relish Riddleport's anything-goes, lawless atmosphere, and take every opportunity to bilk foreign travelers of their gold. Even the occasional Shoanti makes his way to the City of Cyphers. While the sea-faring barbarians of the Shadde-Quah occupy the cliffs and sea vales of the nearby Calphiaks, they have few dealings with Riddleport's unruly populace, seeing them—rightly so—as untrustworthy and dishonorable. Occasionally, members of the Shriikirri-Quah journey to the outskirts of the city to trade their famously well-bred horses, but rarely travel within the city walls. Those Shoanti seen within the city are typically outcasts and dishonored warriors, seeking a new life in their shame and often becoming laborers, brawlers, or pit fighters.

Aside from controlling many of Riddleport's criminal enterprises, humans make up the majority of the city's scholars and clergy. The increasingly influential Order of Cyphers and the academics of the Windward District are filled with both native-born and well-traveled intellectuals seeking to unravel the mysteries of Varisia's ancient past. The city's several temples also support primarily human clergy and congregations—although locally several tieflings extol Calistria's tenets, and Cayden Cailean's following is particularly diverse.

Dwarves

Many of the dwarves of Janderhoff find Riddleport a lawless place unfit for proper business and devoid of interest in true craftsmanship—and they're not wrong. The promise of profit often overshadows such scruples, though. Funded wholly by a faceless consortium of investors from Janderhoff, Riddleport's Gas Forges employ a sizable number of dwarves, either as miners in the deadly underground carbauxine mines or as smiths in the complex forges above. Aside from those dwarves committed or crazed enough to sacrifice years of their lives working among the poisonous forges, opportunistic

dwarves sometimes migrate to the city. These usually adventurous dwarves often hope to make names and fortunes for themselves by bringing a degree of much lacked skilled labor to the city, or simply to turn a profit selling dwarven goods to travelers from afar. Those with no interest or skill in mining or trading find Riddleport's air of constant change, danger, and wild opportunity a liberating change from stifling dwarven traditions.

Elves

With little interest in so uncouth and dangerous a community, especially one so nearby the splendor of the Mierani Forest, elves rarely deign to walk the streets of Riddleport. While on rare occasions a lone Mierani hunter or desperate elven traveler might find himself forced to take shelter among the city's vagrants and thieves, such visits prove rare. Mierani criminals, outcasts forced to flee their wooded homeland, and those afflicted with dangerous wanderlust, appear slightly more frequently. Similarly, individuals from far-off lands are just as likely to make their way to Riddleport as those of the nearby forests. Thus, although still uncommon, wild elves from the Mwangi Expanse and even the aloof elves of Kyonin are not unknown.

Gnomes

Some daring gnomes eke out a dangerous life for themselves in Riddleport. Freedom-loving folk, typically possessing no notion of humanity's concepts of morality, many make profitable livings working as alchemists and druggists for any one of the city's criminal factions. With their love of change and new experiences, gnomes delight in wandering the docks and markets of Riddleport, as foreign ships bring an endless pageant of exotic sights, sounds, and smells to their very doors. Some also make filthy livings plying the muck of the Velashu River, unknowing but always eager to discover what—or whom—they might turn up amid the slime.

Halflings

Wily gamblers, skilled sailors, and deft thieves, halflings find great opportunity in Riddleport's pervasive criminal underworld. As in Korvosa to the south, many halflings take work upon the sea, their size and nimbleness making them especially well suited to life on sailing vessels. Yet, for all the short-folks' skill, thieves of other races typically look down upon their diminutive peers, and slurs regarding "scrawny slips" are bandied about frequently. Many halflings take such prejudices as motivation to excel, and they avenge themselves by outdoing their oversized competition. A few more enlightened or greedy crime bosses care little for the size of those in their employ, especially when it comes to getting a job done.

Half-Elves

Many of Varisia's half-elves naturally migrate to Riddleport, finding few who care about their parentage among the city's jaded populace. Quick thinkers, deft talkers, and able workers, half-elves find great opportunity among the city's sailors, gamblers, merchants, and criminals. Yet, aside from more provincial occupations, Riddleport offers half-elves a chance at respectability such as they rarely find in other lands, whether as business managers, ship captains, or, particularly, among the city's gendarmes. Their keen wits and free spirits also attract many to the Order of Cyphers and the worship of the unruly deities Calistria and Cayden Cailean.

Half-Orcs

Although unlikely to find acceptance even in a city of outcasts and scoundrels, half-orcs embracing their human parentage find Riddleport the most tolerant of Varisia's cities. The greed and ambition that drives so many ventures in the pirate port blinds many employers to the specifics of one's race, and the natural brawn and ferocity of half-orcs make them coveted bodyguards, bouncers, and brawlers. Aside from those who make their livings as professional knee-breakers or combatants in Zincher's Arena, some half-orcs enjoy an almost human life, taking on everyday jobs often denied them in other lands, or shipping out to sea as either pirates or legitimate traders. Enjoying the goddess's fickleness and savagery, more than one half-orc also dons the hemp vest of Besmara, goddess of pirates, strife, and sea monsters.

Tieflings

Enigmatic and fearful, a small number of tieflings make their home in Riddleport. Although few of the fiend-blooded race can hope to disguise their heritage even among the port's exotic

crowds, the city's chaotic and underhanded nature appeals to many. Taking to criminal ventures with ease, tieflings participate in a wide variety of illicit plots from thieving to merely lending their intimidating presences to unlawful proceedings. Like other half-bloods, many tieflings come to Riddleport seeking freedom from societies that scorn and fear them. Others come to the city trying to escape their own fiendish heritages, hoping to blaze new paths in the service of foreign deities, among the crew of a far-ranging ship, or as masters of their own destinies.

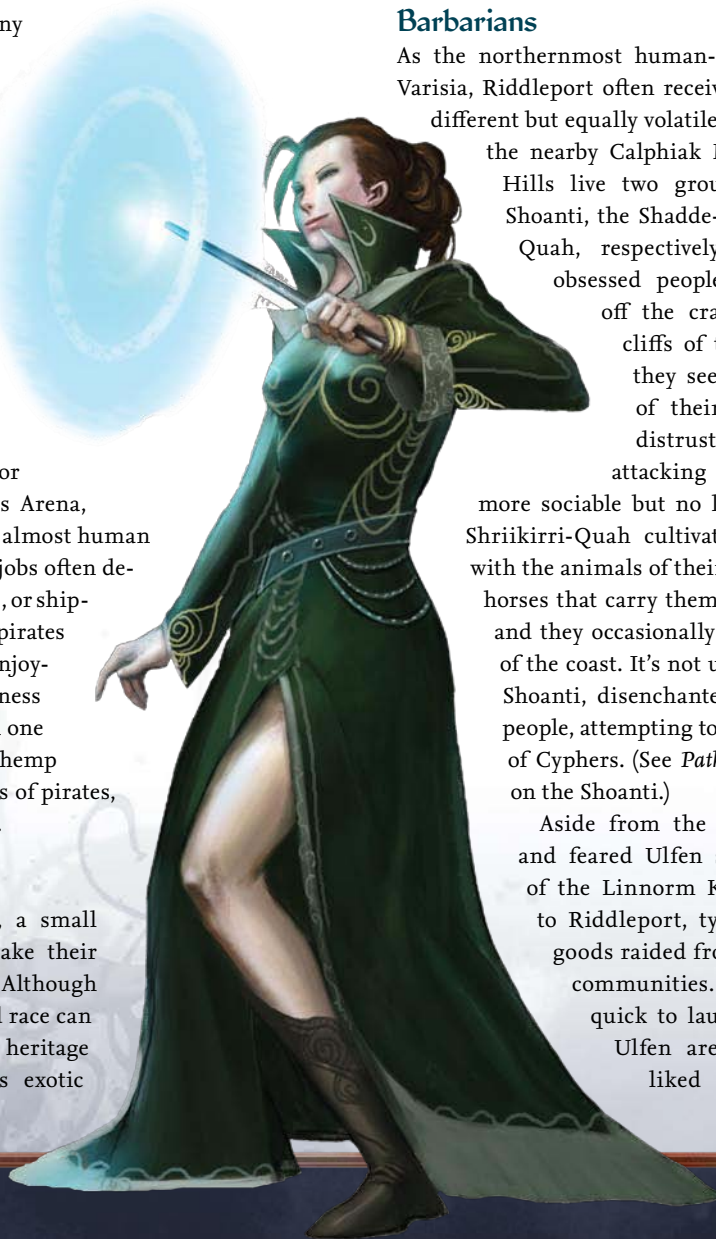
CLASSES

As travelers from all walks of life flock to Riddleport, those of numerous professions and with countless skills flourish in the City of Cyphers. While Varisia's more civilized south shuns those of more exotic or eccentric vocations, Riddleport's residents covet and cultivate any skills that might help turn a profit.

Barbarians

As the northernmost human-dominated settlement in Varisia, Riddleport often receives visits from two wildly different but equally volatile barbarian people. Within the nearby Calphiak Mountains and Curchain Hills live two groups of the land's native Shoanti, the Shadde-Quah and the Shriikirri-Quah, respectively. Aloof, proud, honor-obsessed people, the Shadde-Quah live off the crashing waves and jagged cliffs of the Varisian coast, where they see themselves as defenders of their homeland's seas. They distrust non-Shoanti outsiders, attacking most on sight. The more sociable but no less proud Shoanti of the Shriikirri-Quah cultivate a spiritual connection with the animals of their homeland, especially the horses that carry them in their nomadic travels, and they occasionally trade with the foreigners of the coast. It's not uncommon to see tattooed Shoanti, disenchanted with the ways of their people, attempting to start new lives in the City of Cyphers. (See *Pathfinder* #10 for full details on the Shoanti.)

Aside from the Varisian natives, skilled and feared Ulfen seafarers from the Land of the Linnorm Kings sometimes venture to Riddleport, typically to sell and trade goods raided from any number of coastal communities. Quick to anger, but also quick to laugh, brag, and drink, the Ulfen are better understood and liked in Riddleport than the



local Shoanti, despite their not-infrequent attacks on Riddleport ships.

As merchants and travelers from all over Avistan and Garund venture to the City of Cyphers, strange beliefs and barbarian cultures from across these lands trickle into port. Thus, it's not uncommon to see wanderers from the northern Garundi deserts, savage Kellids from Numeria, and even stoic tribesmen from the Mwangi Expanse passing through or seeking work.

Bards

Along with ravenous appetites for gold and alcohol, Riddleport has an insatiable need for entertainers. With the city's numerous bars, inns, gaming halls, brothels, restaurants, clubs, and other venues, the talents of skilled performers are constantly in demand. Wandering songsmiths, local instrumentalists, exotic dancers, traveling poets, long-winded scops, and entertainers from a hundred different cities and courts throughout the world demand high coin for their coveted services. Riddleport crowds are fickle, though, and one day's star is the next day's hack; though, conversely, yesterday's courtesan has a fair chance at being tomorrow's starlet. Thus, competition among entertainers proves fierce in the City of Cyphers, with performers knowing that, in many venues, a poor show might cost them much more than just their jobs, Riddleport audiences being notoriously physical in their disapproval. Unsurprisingly, especially through the Wharf District, rowdy pub patrons demand bawdy tunes and clever sea shanties in endless supply, an art form adopted by several foul-mouthed artistes.

Clerics

Faith is fickle in Riddleport, a city that places its reverence in luck, trickery, debauchery, and the sea. Most of the city's residents find it wiser to place their faith in their own cunning and hard work than in capricious deities, but one also can't enter a local gambling den without hearing praises raised to Desna's, Cayden Cailean's, or Calistria's name.

Despite the inconsistency of their flocks, Cayden Cailean and Calistria both have well-attended temples in the City of Cyphers—a fact that likely has less to do with faith and more with the former being a boisterous tavern and the latter a brothel. These two temples, the Publican's House and House of the Silken Veil, respectively, both support priests and reach out to the communities at large. The church of the goddess Besmara, a lesser deity revered by pirates and seafarers, also keeps a small local temple where sailors and privateers make blood offerings in exchange for placid seas and rich hauls.

Aside from these well-rooted faiths, several priests of the goddess Desna and Gozreh tend to small congregations

throughout the city, praying for fortune and fair weather in their followers' dealings on land and at sea. Especially along the docks, the faithful of dozens of other deities wander the city, some simply bringing their gods with them as they travel, others seeking to proselytize in a new land. As the resident faiths tend to be accepting or uncaring regarding other beliefs, Riddleport proves quite open to foreign dogmas—so long as they don't interfere with business.

Druids

With the city's reliance on the sea, druids are more welcomed in Riddleport than most other urban centers. Although the city as a whole cares little for its environment—as evidenced by the disgusting state of the Velashu River, Riddleport harbor, and the marshy Boneyard—the city does all it can to placate the wrath of surly nature worshipers with coins and token offerings to Gozreh and other natural faiths. Despite their distaste for the city, druids often come to the coasts near Riddleport to commune with the waves and the creatures of the ocean. Many predict that it's only a matter of time before the fury of nature consumes the exploitive city, but some druids take a less damning approach to their dealings with the city. As such, several druids take up residence near the city's docks, hoping to minimize the city's impact on the nearby bay, while others even join the crews of ships, offering their unique abilities over the elements for the chance to experience the open ocean.

Aside from those druids interested in the waves and forests farther inland, some hermetic druids make their homes deep within the Calphiaks. Among the rocks and beasts of the mountains, these hard-souled nature worshipers find a rugged kind of spirituality. Yet, some of these pious explorers seek to connect not with boulders and mountain summits, but with the very depths of the earth, delving into the endless tunnels that thread their way through the heart of the Calphiaks and, as some say, far beyond.

Fighters

Riddleport's need for those with strong arms and sharp weapons never declines, even as the city slowly slides toward legitimacy. Although mercenaries and raiders can always find work on any number of pirate ships, caravans, and trading vessels, most of the city's martial-minded residents take jobs protecting the stakes of the city's numerous crime bosses. Whether as bouncers, toughs, hit men, or racketeers, experienced and well-feared fighters never lack for work among the gangs of the city's extensive underworld. Particularly bloodthirsty or brutal fighters can also find work brawling and splitting skulls exclusively among the city's several outlets for blood sport, primarily at Zincher's Arena, where crowds pay for gory displays on a nightly basis.

Yet, for all the grim and nefarious work opportunities the city offers, those warriors who prefer not to be tied directly to any of Riddleport's several obviously criminal enterprises have options as well. Numerous skilled fighters find an air of questionable legitimacy among the mercenaries that serve as the city's gendarmes. Although not a wholly noble organization, many these keepers of Riddleport's few laws and relative peace do actually strive to aid the people of the city.

Monks

While hardly a spot to find enlightenment and spiritual wholeness, Riddleport is a place where both martial abilities and deception are valued commodities. As such, the skills of those who are most deadly when unarmed and whose appearances disguise their prowess are held in high esteem. Although few who hone their physical skills seek worldly comforts, those who do can find great respect and endless work serving the city's various crime bosses. The crowds at Zincher's Arena also delight in rare displays of martial arts and, therefore, such practitioners command high prices for such exhibitions. In some underground arenas and fighting clubs, inelegant brawlers and hulking boxers learn techniques similar to those of foreign monks, cultivating bare-fisted styles less artful but no less devastating.

Aside from the rare well-trained Shoanti brawler or wandering ascetic, few Riddleport locals adopt the path of the monk. Rather, most such martial-masters travel to the city from afar, either passing through as they seek new experiences to test their skills or in search of rivals to hone their abilities. Thus, it's not unheard of to find representatives of the whirling masters of Thuvia, the stone-footed acrobats of Qadira, or the silent lamas of the east exploring Riddleport's docks.

Paladins

Although none of Riddleport's prominent faiths support paladins among their ranks, one occasionally encounters such valorous warriors amid the city's bustling crowds. Some holy warriors take it as a divine challenge to bring the word of their deity to the irreverent, especially those clustered in cities of sin like Riddleport. Occasional wandering paladins of Iomedae and Abadar come to the city in the hopes of wresting a few souls from darkness and combating the wickedness rampant in the city, but most end up departing in frustration. More than one such holy warrior has disappeared in Riddleport, as crusades against the city's potent crime lords rarely last long or end well. Paladins of Erastil and Sarenrae tend to have slightly more success in the city, taking lighter approaches and ingraining themselves among the people by providing education and healing to the frontier city. Also, paladins of other faiths sometimes

pass through the City of Cyphers, hoping to cleanse the city by ridding the still dangerous countryside of savages and monstrous threats. In doing so, most hope to pave the way for more decent folk to come to the region and change the city over time.

Rangers

As one of the northernmost true cities encountered before entering the savage Land of the Linnorm Kings and wildernesses beyond, Riddleport is a true frontier town. As such, numerous skilled hunters, trackers, and explorers make their home in and around the city, ever ready for the next expedition. In the nearby wilds, hunters patrol the mountains in search of exotic beasts that prey upon farms along the Velashu River, such as wolves, firepelt cougars, harpies, and even the occasional roc or hill giant.

Within the city, some rangers take sail aboard local ships, and more than one shark hunter or killer of sea monsters—such as aberrant reefclaws or magical beasts like devilfish—keep live-in trophy halls near the city's wharves. Those with swift mounts make fine livings as couriers within the city and between Riddleport and its holdings in Roderic's Cove. Alternatively, hunters of men find endless outlets for their talents as hit men for the city's endless criminal dealings.

Recently, several local rangers have taken to exploring the vast cave systems beneath the Calphiak Mountains. Those who survive such dangerous expeditions sometimes return with strange fungi and evidence of bizarre, pale-skinned beasts.

Rogues

In a city of scoundrels, the quick-witted flourish. Rogues of every variety and specialty find ample use for their skills serving the city's various crime bosses, from pickpockets and second-story men to con artists and smugglers. Nearly every racket has its possibilities and place in Riddleport, and it's not uncommon to find the most skilled scoundrels involved in multiple schemes at the same time. Those rogues adverse to theft and deadly dealings often make their ways as gamblers, merchants, prostitutes, private investigators, and even among the city's gendarme.

Aside from those crooks in the direct employ of Riddleport's crime bosses, several other fledging gangs and lone thieves seek to make names for themselves in the City of Cyphers. Groups of Sczarni occasionally blow into the city, running con games and quick rackets before heading back on the road. And while crime bosses control many of the criminal enterprises within the city, most hold little sway outside the port's walls. Thus, wandering brigands and roadside thieves come from all across Varisia to pawn their pilfered wares.

Sorcerers

Many magic-users feel a special connection to the massive, ancient monuments that mark the Varisian landscape, with few feeling such lures more fundamentally than sorcerers. In a land that seems to be suffused with magical wonders, such spellcasters often seek to learn more of the mysteries of their own blood and improve upon their innate talents. Many sorcerers join the ranks of the Order of Cyphers, some even claiming evidence of ancestries relating them to the land's lost civilizations. Others use their magical skills for more direct monetary gain, aiding criminals, performing their own magic-aided cons, or participating in the occasional spell duel at Zincher's Arena.

Wizards

Obsessed with the secrets of its infamous monuments, wizards have flocked to Varisia for decades, hoping to discover ancient magics and arcane secrets amid the enigmatic monoliths. At the vanguard of research exploring these gigantic artifacts, the Order of Cyphers—a group of scholars with a shared obsession—makes its home in Riddleport. Growing in influence by the year, these cyphermages study Varisian monuments—particularly Riddleport's enigmatic Cyphergate—in exhaustive detail. Although the Order exists to share discoveries and research, many cyphermages prove dangerously competitive, keeping their findings from one another and even sabotaging the inquiries of their peers.

Cyphermages are not alone in Riddleport, though. The skills of talented magic users go far in both trade and criminal enterprises. Some wizards make tidy profits selling simple scrolls and potions, especially of spells that prove particularly useful at sea. Others join the ranks of the city's underworld elite, their divinations and illusions aiding rival crime bosses in spying and misleading one another. Several of the city's better-funded gambling dens also keep house wizards on staff, using their magic to watch for cheaters. Aboard the ships of pirates and privateers, ship wizards are also highly respected and paid, their skills proving invaluable in crippling the vessels of enemies and defending against any number of sea-spawn threats.

CHARACTER TRAITS

Playing an Adventure Path is a different experience than playing in a one-shot adventure. An Adventure Path presents a long, ongoing campaign, but unlike a custom-created campaign built by a specific GM for a group of players whose tastes and proclivities in character creation are known quantities, we don't know what kinds of choices your players prefer when building their characters. As a result, one of the driving philosophies of crafting an Adventure Path is to include sections for all 11 of the core classes, so that no one feels "left out" by the game.

But what about the less tangible elements of game play? If you're rolling up a new character for a homebrew campaign, you can (hopefully) trust your GM to tailor the campaign to include your character and his history and personality. For an Adventure Path, though, how is a player to know what choices and what backgrounds might dovetail into the predetermined story arc of the campaign he's about to spend several months playing, without spoiling key components of the adventure's plotline?

That's the question that the Adventure Path Player's Guides have attempted to address. In all of the Player's Guides, including this one, we attempt to provide not only a gazetteer of the region in which the campaign begins, but also a spoiler-free discussion on what choices might be best to make when creating a dwarf, an elf, a sorcerer, a ranger, and so on. Yet there's another tool that's been evolving over the past year as well: the Character Trait.

The first incarnation of this new element to your character appeared in the *Rise of the Runelords Player's Guide*, disguised as six new feats that your new character could take (we recommended that GMs allow players to pick one of these six as a bonus feat). These new feats were more than just additional tricks and powers, though; they were crafted to infuse newly created characters with built-in links to the then brand-new realm of Varisia.

In the *Curse of the Crimson Throne Player's Guide*, we abandoned the bonus feat model and instead came up with several traits from which new players could pick and choose. Each trait granted one of two relatively minor bonuses, but the majority of each trait consisted of flavor and background information intended to prime your new character for the start of the campaign.

And that brings us here, to the *Second Darkness Player's Guide* and the finally solidified Character Trait mechanic.

Character Trait Design Philosophy

At its core, a Character Trait is approximately equal in power to half a feat—in fact, at one point, we considered calling them "Half Feats" but abandoned that idea when we realized it implied a point-based system that didn't really exist (there's no such thing, for example, as a "Double Feat"). Yet a Character Trait isn't just another kind of power you can add on to your character—it's a way to quantify (and encourage) building a character background that fits into the world of Golarion. Think of Character Traits as "story seeds" for your background; after you pick your two traits, you'll have a point of inspiration from which to build your character's personality and history. Alternatively, if you've already got a background in your head or written down for your character, you can view picking his traits as a way to quantify that background, just as picking race and class and ability scores quantifies his strengths and weaknesses.

One more thing: Character Traits are for PCs. If you want an NPC to have traits, that NPC will need to “buy” them with the Additional Traits feat. Player characters are special; they’re the stars of the game, after all, and if they have an advantage over the NPCs of the world in this way, that kind of makes sense. The pregenerated characters presented in *Pathfinder* and the modules will not have bonus traits selected for them—we’re leaving those choices to you if you wish to use one of them as a PC.

Many traits grant a new type of bonus: a “trait” bonus. Trait bonuses do not stack—they’re intended to give you a slight edge over the non-PCs of the world, not a secret backdoor way to focus all your traits on one type of bonus to gain an unseemly advantage over the rules. It’s certainly possible, for example, that somewhere down the line, a “Courageous” trait might be on the list of Dwarf Racial Traits, but just because this trait’s on the Dwarf Racial Traits list and the Basic Combat Traits list doesn’t mean you’re any more brave if you choose both than if you choose only one.

Gaining Traits

When you create your character for Second Darkness, ask your GM how many traits you can select. In most cases, a new PC should gain two traits, effectively gaining a bonus feat at character creation. Some GMs may wish to limit this somewhat, depending upon their style of play; you may only be able to pick one trait, or your GM might allow three or more. Even if your GM doesn’t allow bonus traits, you should still be able to pick up some with the Additional Traits feat (see the sidebar on page 12).

For Second Darkness, there are two categories of traits to choose from. One of your Traits must be a Campaign trait chosen from the list starting on page 14—this trait ties your character into the Second Darkness storyline and gives you a built-in reason to begin the first adventure, “Shadow in the Sky.” Your other trait should be chosen from one of the four types of Basic Traits: Combat, Faith, Magic, or Social. Note that each of these four categories roughly equates to the four modes of adventuring, but aren’t tied to specific classes. It’s perfectly possible to have a religious rogue, for example, or a magic-obsessed fighter.

But we don’t intend on stopping there! With each new *Pathfinder Companion*, you can look forward to us introducing additional traits. These new traits will fall into one of three categories: Racial, Regional, and Religion. If you’re creating a Second Darkness character after additional *Pathfinder Companions* have become available, you can certainly choose to pick a Racial, Regional, or Religion Trait as your second trait, but your initial trait should always be one selected from the Second Darkness Campaign Traits list.

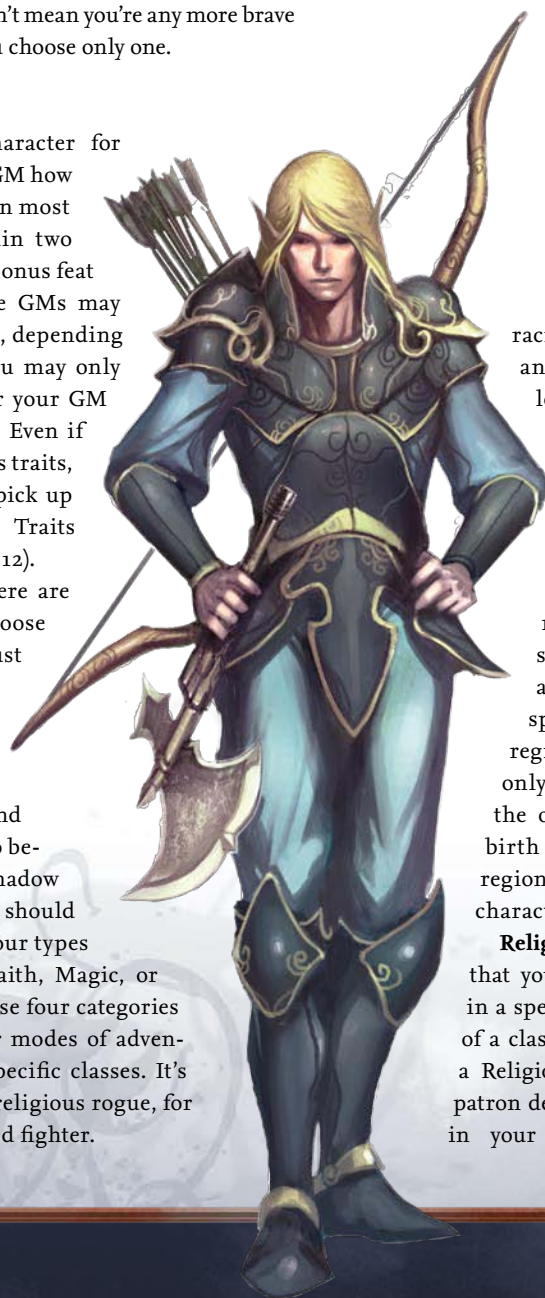
Types of Traits

There are five types of Character Traits to choose from, although at the time of this book’s printing, only two (Basic and Campaign) are available; these traits are described on pages 11–15. The other three categories of traits are listed below—expect to see traits from these categories in future *Pathfinder Companions*!

Racial Traits: Racial Traits are keyed to specific races or ethnicities. In order to select a Racial Trait, your character must be of the trait’s race or ethnicity. If your race or ethnicity changes at some later point (as could be possible due to the result of polymorph magic or a *reincarnation* spell), the benefits gained by your racial trait persist—only if your mind and memories change as well do you lose the benefits of a Racial Trait. Of course, in such an event, you’re also likely to lose skills, feats, and a whole lot more!

Regional Traits: Regional Traits are keyed to specific regions, be they large (such as a nation or geographic region) or small (such as a city or a specific mountain). In order to select a Regional Trait, your PC must have spent at least a year living in that region. Note that at first level, you can only select one Regional Trait (typically the one tied to your character’s place of birth or homeland), despite the number of regions you might wish to write into your character’s background.

Religion Traits: Religion Traits indicate that your character has an established faith in a specific deity; you need not be a member of a class that can wield divine magic to pick a Religion Trait, but you do have to have a patron deity and have some amount of religion in your background to justify this trait.



Unlike the other four categories of traits, Religion Traits can go away if you abandon your religion, as detailed below under Restrictions.

Restrictions on Trait Selection

There are a few rules governing trait selections. To begin with, your GM controls how many bonus traits a PC begins with; the default assumption is two traits. When selecting traits, you may not select more than one from the same list of traits. Certain types of traits may have additional requirements, as detailed in the section above.

Remember also that traits are intended to model events that were formative in your character's development, either before he became an adventurer, or (in the case of additional traits gained via the Additional Traits feat) events that happened while adventuring. Even if you become a hermit and abandon society, you'll still retain your legacy of growing up an aristocrat if you took a Social Trait. The one exception to this is Religion Traits—since these traits require continued faith in a specific deity, you can indeed lose the benefits of these traits if you switch religions. In this case, consult your GM for your options. He may simply rule that you lose that trait, or he might allow you to pick a new Religion Trait tied to your new deity. Another option is that if you abandon a religion, you lose the associated Religion Traits until you gain an experience level, at which point you may replace lost Religion Traits with Basic Faith Traits.

BASIC TRAITS

These traits are broken down into four categories. Combat Traits focus on martial and physical aspects of your character's background. Faith Traits focus on his religious and philosophical leanings. Magic Traits focus on any magical events or training he may have had in his past. And Social Traits is both a catch-all category and one that indicates what social class or upbringing your PC had.

Combat Traits

These traits are associated with combat, battle, and physical prowess; they give characters minor bonuses in battle and represent conflicts and physical struggles in the character's backstory.

- 1 **Anatomist:** You have studied the workings of anatomy, either as a student at university or as an apprentice mortician or necromancer. You know where to aim your blows to strike vital organs and you gain a +1 trait bonus on all rolls made to confirm critical hits.
- 2 **Armor Expert:** You have worn armor as long as you can remember, either as part of your training to become a knight's squire or simply because you were seeking to emulate a hero. Your childhood armor wasn't the real

thing as far as protection, but it did encumber you as much as real armor would have, and you've grown used to moving in such suits with relative grace. When you wear armor of any sort, reduce that suit's armor check penalty by 1, to a minimum check penalty of 0.

- 3 **Bullied:** You were bullied often as a child, and you are now constantly ready to defend yourself with your fists when an enemy comes near. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity attack rolls made with unarmed strikes. Note that this trait does not grant the ability to make attacks of opportunity with your unarmed strikes—you'll need to take a level of monk, the Improved Unarmed Strike feat, or some other similar power to gain the use of this Character Trait. However, that doesn't prevent you from selecting this trait. You'll simply not be able to make use of it until a later point if you do.
- 4 **Courageous:** Your childhood was brutal, yet you persevered primarily through force of will and the hope that no matter how hard things might get, as long as you kept a level head you'd make it through. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against fear effects.
- 5 **Deft Dodger:** Growing up in a rough neighborhood or a dangerous environment has honed your senses. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Reflex saves.
- 6 **Dirty Fighter:** You wouldn't have lived to make it out of childhood without the aid of a sibling, friend, or companion on whom you could always count to distract your enemies long enough to do a little bit more damage than normal. That companion may be another PC or an NPC (who may even be recently departed from your side). When you hit a foe you are flanking, you deal an additional 1 point of damage (this damage is added to your base damage, and is multiplied on a critical hit). This additional damage is a trait bonus.
- 7 **Fencer:** You trained long hours as a youth with blades, either taking lessons in the genteel art of fencing from tutors paid for by your parents or by being taken under the wing of a disenfranchised fencer who may have turned to a life of crime. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity made with daggers, swords, and similar bladed weapons.
- 8 **Killer:** You made your first kill at a very young age and found the task of war or murder to your liking. You either take particular pride in a well-placed blow, or vile pleasure in such a strike as you twist the blade to maximize the pain. You deal additional damage equal to your weapon's critical hit modifier when you score a successful critical hit with a weapon; this additional damage is added to the final total, and is not multiplied by the critical hit multiple itself. This extra damage is a trait bonus.
- 9 **Reactionary:** You were bullied often as a child, but never quite developed an offensive response. Instead, you became adept at anticipating sudden attacks and

NEW FEAT: ADDITIONAL TRAITS

You have more traits than normal.

Benefit: You gain two Character Traits of your choice. These traits must be chosen from different lists, and cannot be chosen from lists from which you have already selected a Character Trait. You must meet any additional qualifications for the Character Traits you choose—this feat cannot enable you to select a Dwarf Character Trait if you are an elf, for example.

reacting to danger quickly. You gain a +2 trait bonus to Initiative checks.

- 10 **Resilient:** Growing up in a violent neighborhood or in the unforgiving wilds often forced you to subsist on food and water from doubtful sources. You've built up your mettle as a result, and gain a +1 trait bonus on Fortitude saves.

Faith Traits

These traits rely upon conviction of spirit, perception, and religion, but are not directly tied to the worship of a specific deity. You do not need a patron deity to gain a Faith Trait, as these traits can represent conviction in one's self or philosophy just as easily as they can represent dedication to a deity.

- 1 **Birthmark:** You were born with a strange birthmark that looks very similar to the holy symbol of the god you chose to worship later in life. This birthmark can serve you as a divine focus for casting spells, and, as a physical manifestation of your faith, increases your devotion to your god—you gain a +2 trait bonus on all saving throws against charm and compulsion effects as a result.
- 2 **Caretaker:** As the child of an herbalist or an assistant in a temple infirmary, you often had to assist in tending to the sick and wounded. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Heal checks, and Heal is always a class skill for you.
- 3 **Child of the Temple:** You have long served at a temple in a city, and not only did you pick up on many of the nobility's customs, you spent much time in the temple libraries studying your faith. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (nobility and royalty) and Knowledge (religion) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.
- 4 **Devotee of the Green:** Your faith in the natural world or one of the gods of nature makes it easy for you to pick up on related concepts. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography) and Knowledge (nature) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.
- 5 **Ease of Faith:** Your mentor, the person who invested your faith in you from an early age, took steps to ensure that you understood that what powers your divine magic is no different than that which powers the magic of other

religions. This philosophy makes it easier for you to interact with others who may not share your views. You gain a +1 bonus on Diplomacy checks, and Diplomacy is always a class skill for you.

- 6 **History of Heresy:** You were raised with heretical views that have made it not only difficult for you to accept most religious beliefs, but you also have had to live with the fact that you or those you love were often treated as pariahs. As a result, you have turned your back on religious teachings, and as long as you do not possess any levels in a class that grants divine spellcasting power, you gain a +1 trait bonus on all saving throws made against divine spells.
- 7 **Indomitable Faith:** You were born in a region where your faith was not popular, yet you never abandoned it. Your constant struggle to maintain your own faith has bolstered your drive; you gain a +1 trait bonus on Will saves as a result.
- 8 **Sacred Conduit:** Your birth was particularly painful and difficult for your mother, who needed potent divine magic to ensure you survived; your mother may or may not have survived. In any event, the magic infused you from an early age, and you now channel divine energy with greater ease than most. Whenever you channel divine energy to turn or rebuke undead, you gain a +2 trait bonus on the Turn/Rebuke Undead check.
- 9 **Sacred Touch:** You were exposed to a potent source of positive energy as a child, perhaps by being born under the right cosmic sign, or maybe because one of your parents was a gifted healer. As a standard action, you may automatically stabilize a dying creature merely by touching it.
- 10 **Scholar of the Great Beyond:** Your great interests as a child did not lie with current events or the mundane—you have always felt out of place, as if you were born in the wrong era. You take to philosophical discussions of the Great Beyond and of historical events with ease. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (the planes) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

Magic Traits

These traits are associated with magic, and focus on spellcasting and manipulating magic. You need not be a spellcaster to take a Magic Trait (although several of these traits aren't as useful to non-spellcasters). Magic Traits can represent a character's early exposure to magical effects or childhood studies of magic.

- 1 **Classically Schooled:** Your apprenticeship or early education was particularly focused on the direct application of magic. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Spellcraft checks, and Spellcraft is always a class skill for you.
- 2 **Dangerously Curious:** You have always been intrigued by magic, possibly because you were the child of a magician or priest. You often snuck into your parent's laboratory or

- shrine to tinker with spell components and magic devices, and often caused quite a bit of damage and headaches for your parent as a result. You gain a +1 bonus on Use Magic Device checks, and Use Magic Device is always a class skill for you.
- 3 **Focused Mind:** Your childhood was either dominated by lessons of some sort (be they musical or academic) or by a horrible home life that encouraged your ability to block out distractions to focus on the immediate task at hand. You gain a +1 bonus on Concentration checks, and Concentration is always a class skill for you.
 - 4 **Gifted Adept:** Your interest in magic was inspired by witnessing a spell being cast in a particularly dramatic method, perhaps even one that affected you physically or spiritually. This early exposure to magic has made it easier for you to work similar magic on your own. Pick one spell when you choose this trait—from this point on, whenever you cast that spell, its effects manifest at +1 caster level.
 - 5 **Hedge Magician:** You apprenticed for a time to a craftsman who often built magic items, and he taught you many handy shortcuts and cost-saving techniques. Whenever you craft a magic item, you reduce the cost of gp and XP required to make the item by 5%.
 - 6 **Magical Knack:** You were raised, either wholly or in part, by a magical creature, either after it found you abandoned in the woods or because your parents often left you in the care of a magical minion. This constant exposure to magic has made its mysteries easy for you to understand, even when you turn your mind to other devotions and tasks. Pick a class when you gain this trait—your caster level in that class gains a +2 trait bonus as long as this bonus doesn't increase your caster level higher than your current Hit Dice.
 - 7 **Magical Lineage:** One of your parents was a gifted spellcaster who not only used metamagic often, but developed many magical items and perhaps even a new spell or two—and you have inherited a fragment of this greatness. Pick one spell when you choose this trait. When you apply metamagic feats to this spell, treat its actual level as 1 lower for determining the spell's final adjusted level.
 - 8 **Magical Talent:** Either from inborn talent, whimsy of the gods, or obsessive study of strange tomes, you have mastered the use of a cantrip. Choose a 0-level spell. You may cast that spell once per day as a spell-like ability. This spell-like ability is cast at your highest caster level gained; if you have no caster level, it functions at CL 1st. The spell-like ability's Save DC is Charisma-based.
 - 9 **Mathematical Prodigy:** Mathematics has always come easily for you, and you have always been able to “see the math” in the physical and magical world. You gain a +1 bonus on Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (architecture and engineering) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.
 - 10 **Skeptic:** Growing up, you were always around magical effects to the extent that you realized that much of it was smoke and mirrors. You gain a +2 trait bonus on all saving throws against illusions.

Social Traits

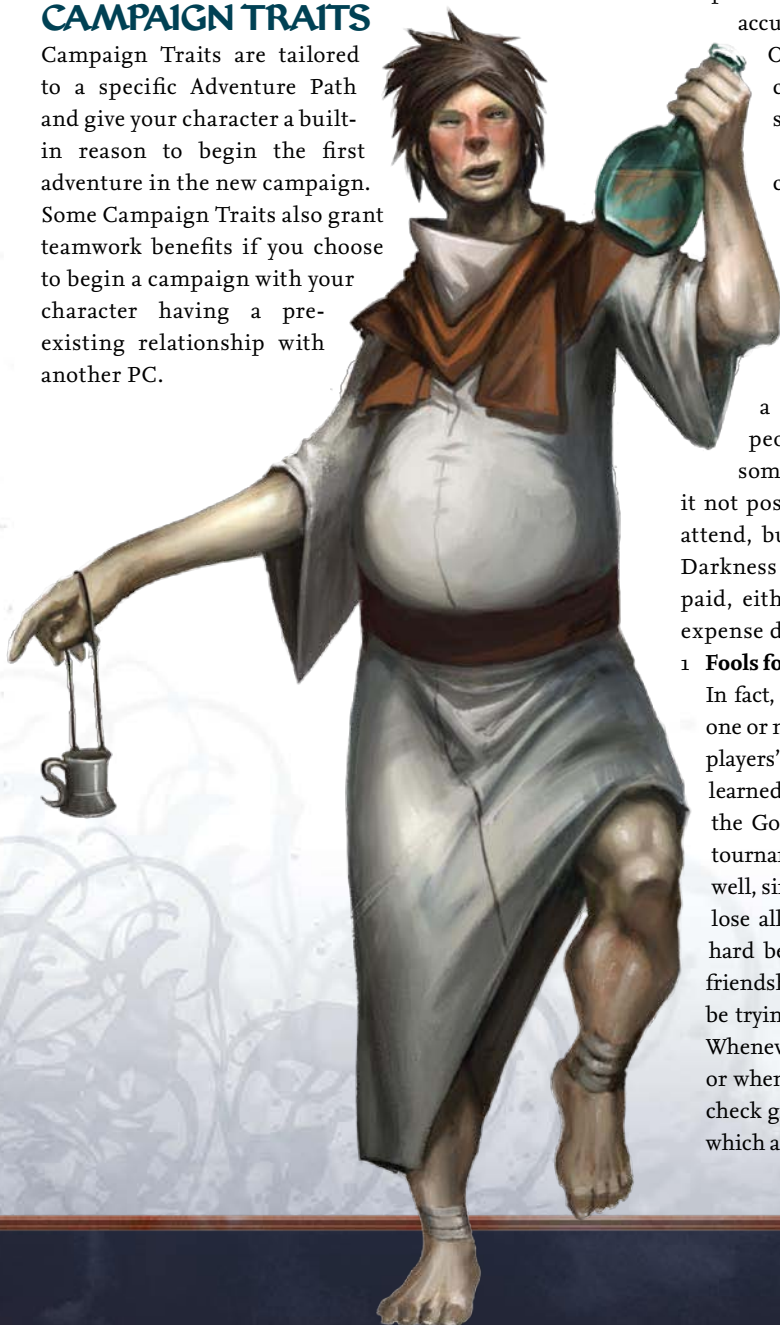
Social Traits are a sort of catch-all category—these traits reflect the social upbringing of your character, your background with high society or lack thereof, and your history with parents, siblings, friends, competitors, and enemies.

- 1 **Adopted:** You were adopted and raised by someone not of your actual race, and raised in a society not your own. As a result, you picked up a Racial Trait from your adoptive parents and society, and may immediately select a Racial Trait from your adoptive parents' race.
- 2 **Bully:** You grew up in an environment where the meek were ignored and you often had to resort to threats or violence to be heard. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Intimidate checks, and Intimidate is always a class skill for you.
- 3 **Canter:** You grew up among thieves and scoundrels, and their unusual speech patterns and turns of phrase don't phase you in the slightest today as a result. Anyone who attempts to use Bluff to deliver a secret message to you gains a +5 bonus on his Bluff check. When you attempt to intercept a secret message using Sense Motive, you gain a +5 trait bonus on the attempt.
- 4 **Charming:** Blessed with good looks, you've come to depend on the fact that others find you attractive. You gain a +1 trait bonus when you use Bluff or Diplomacy on a character that is (or could be) sexually attracted to you, and a +1 trait bonus to the save DC of any language-dependent spell you cast on such characters or creatures.
- 5 **Child of the Streets:** You grew up on the streets of a large city, and as a result you have developed a knack of knowing where to go and who to talk to when you're looking for some information. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Gather Information checks, and Gather Information is always a class skill for you.
- 6 **Fast-Talker:** You had a knack at getting yourself into trouble as a child, and as a result developed a silver tongue at an early age. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff checks, and Bluff is always a class skill for you.
- 7 **Natural-Born Leader:** You've always found yourself in positions where others look up to you as a leader, and you can distinctly remember an event from your early childhood where you led several other children to accomplish a goal that each of you individually could not. All cohorts, followers, or summoned creatures under your leadership gain a +1 morale bonus on Will saves to avoid mind-affecting effects. If you ever take the Leadership feat, you gain a +1 trait bonus to your Leadership score.

- 8 **Poverty-Stricken:** Your childhood was tough, and your parents had to make every copper piece count. Hunger was your constant companion, and you often had to live off the land or sleep in the wild. You gain a +1 bonus to Survival checks, and Survival is always a class skill for you.
- 9 **Rich Parents:** You were born into a rich family, perhaps even the nobility, and even though you turned to a life of adventure anyway, you enjoyed a one-time benefit to your initial finances and your starting cash increases to 900 gp.
- 10 **Suspicious:** You discovered at an early age that someone you trusted, perhaps an older sibling or a parent, had lied to you, and often, about something you had taken for granted, leaving you quick to question the claims of others. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Sense Motive checks, and Sense Motive is always a class skill for you.

SECOND DARKNESS CAMPAIGN TRAITS

Campaign Traits are tailored to a specific Adventure Path and give your character a built-in reason to begin the first adventure in the new campaign. Some Campaign Traits also grant teamwork benefits if you choose to begin a campaign with your character having a pre-existing relationship with another PC.



You'll notice right away that Campaign Traits assume a lot more about your character's back story than Basic Traits do, and that those assumptions are mostly about very recent events in your history rather than formative childhood events. You have a certain amount of leeway in adjusting or changing a Campaign Trait's expected back story once you've selected which Trait is right for you, but make sure to get your GM's approval before you run with a modified back story.

All of the following traits revolve around one of two current events in the city of Riddleport. The first is the manifestation of the Blot, a strange and ominous shadow in the sky that looks like nothing so much as a cloud of darkness. The Blot captured the interest of Riddleport's citizens when it first manifested, but that was months ago—now, after the strange cloud hasn't done anything particularly dramatic for so long, most folk have grown accustomed to it. Most—but not all; some, such as the Order of Cyphers, remain concerned by the strange cloud, and worry that it may be the harbinger of something worse.

The other event is a gambling tournament called "Cheat the Devil and Take His Gold." Held at the recently reopened Gold Goblin Gambling Hall, talk of the tourney has spread throughout the town of Riddleport and has even reached some taverns in cities as far as Magnimar or even Korvosa. Excitement for the tournament has been building for a month, and now that the day is finally here, people from all over are flocking to take part. The somewhat restrictive entrance fee ironically makes it not possible for many of Riddleport's own citizens to attend, but in the case of each PC who takes a Second Darkness Campaign Trait, that 1 gp entrance fee has been paid, either by an interested party or by yourself (this expense does not come from your starting cash).

- 1 **Fools for Friends:** You don't think of yourself as a gambler. In fact, you rather detest the whole thing. Unfortunately, one or more of your friends (pick one or more of the other players' characters) doesn't think so, and you've recently learned that friend—or friends—have decided to go to the Gold Goblin's "Cheat the Devil and Take his Gold" tournament. Which pretty much means you have to go as well, since if no one's there to watch out for them, they'll lose all their money and respect. Again. Sometimes it's hard being the responsible one. Your devotion to your friendships (even when said friends seem, at times, to be trying to test that devotion) is a point of pride to you. Whenever you take the Aid Another action to help an ally, or whenever an ally aids you in this manner, a successful check grants an additional +1 trait bonus to the check for which aid was being rendered. Additionally, as long as one

- of your friends is within 30 feet, you gain a +1 trait bonus on all saving throws against charm and compulsion effects.
- 2 **Into Enemy Territory:** The shadow in the sky is visible from all around Riddleport, not just in town. It's certainly come to the attention of several druids, rangers, and other rural folk who dwell in the nearby mountains, forests, and swamps—among them, yourself. You've consulted with several seers and Harrowers, and may even have performed some simple auguries yourself, and all the signs point the same way—something or someone in Riddleport is connected to the blot, and it means bad news for the region. You've avoided the sleazy, dirty town for most of your life, traveling there only when absolutely necessary, and although you don't relish the prospect of going there now, you see little other choice (especially if one of your superiors is ordering you to go investigate). Fortunately, an eccentric friend of yours (pick another PC) is in town, and you've heard this friend will be taking part in some gambling thing at a place called the Gold Goblin. Your friend's always had better luck interacting with the cityfolk, so you've decided to accompany your friend to this gambling tournament and plan on letting him find a safe place for you to stay while you're in town. Your long life of self-sustenance has toughened you and made you more resistant to hardship, in any event—pick one of the three categories of saving throw. You gain a +1 trait bonus on all saving throws of that type.
 - 3 **Looking for Work:** Although out of work, you aren't particularly keen on the prospect of gambling away your last remaining coins simply for a chance at riches. That said, if the Gold Goblin's fortunes reverse after this big gambling tournament, you're relatively certain its owner, Saul Vancaskerkin, will be needing to hire on some new staff members. You've secured payment for the tournament, and intend on attending mostly to check the place out, to decide if it's a place you'd want to work at (as a bouncer, bartender, croupier, server, entertainer, spotter, or cook), and hopefully get a chance to catch Saul's eye and make an impression. You've long worked at honing your skills, and are quite accomplished and certain that you have something to offer. Pick one of the following skills: Bluff, Craft (any), Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perform (any), Profession (gambler), or Spot. You gain a +1 trait bonus in that skill, and that skill is always considered a class skill for you.
 - 4 **Optimistic Gambler:** You've always seemed to have trouble keeping money. Worse, you always seem to have debts looming over your head. When you heard about the "Cheat the Devil and Take His Gold" gambling tournament, you felt in your gut that your luck was about to change. You've always been optimistic, in fact, and even though right now is one of those rare times where you don't owe anyone any money (you just paid off a recent loan from local moneylender Lymas Smeed), you know that'll change soon enough. Better to start amassing money now when you're at one of those rare windfall times! You've set aside a gold coin for the entrance fee, and look forward to making it big—you can feel it in your bones! This time's gonna be the big one! Your boundless optimism, even in the face of crushing situations, has always bolstered your spirit. Effects that grant you morale bonuses persist 1d4 rounds longer than they normally would as a result.
 - 5 **Researching the Blot:** You may or may not be seeking membership into Riddleport's most prestigious magical guild, the Order of Cyphers, but you certainly have heard their call for aid in determining the nature of the strange shadow in the sky above Riddleport. You arrived in town several days ago and had some issues with security and safety at several inns before you finally settled on the Gold Goblin; you've been staying there as a guest for several days now, and the owner, Saul Vancaskerkin, seems like a nice guy. He's even given you a pass to attend the gambling tournament he's about to throw—you're not sure how into gambling you'll be, but perhaps there'll be some visitors from out of town you can talk to about the strange shadow in the sky. At the very least, you're hoping someone at the tourney will be into magic—there's not really enough folk in this town who seem all that interested in magic, you've found. Your interest in magic dates back quite far, and as a result, you've developed a knack for identifying common magical items at a glance. You can use Spellcraft to identify magic items in the same way you can use Spellcraft to identify a potion. The DC to identify a magic item is equal to 20 + the item's caster level.
 - 6 **Scouting for Fiends:** You belong to an organization (most likely a religion) that has definite views on the menace posed by the lower planes. The willfulness with which the city of Korvosa (they even allow a temple of Asmodeus to operate in broad daylight!) tolerates infernal influences is, to you and your organization, the greatest symbol of what's wrong with civilization today. And now, in Riddleport, there's news that a gambling tournament is using devils and Hell as an idle decoration. It's likely that this is just an example of poor taste, but there's a chance that something sinister may be lurking beneath the goings-on at the Gold Goblin. You have been contacted by your organization (or may have decided on your own) to travel to Riddleport (if you don't already live there) and attend this tournament under the guise of a patron. Keep an eye on things there, even after the tournament is over; if you can, get a job working for the owner. Demons and devils can be subtle, and it could take weeks or even months to find proof of their involvement. Your near-obsessive hatred of all things fiendish grants you a +1 trait bonus on all attack rolls made against foes you know to be evil outsiders.



Welcome to Riddleport

The third largest city in all Varisia, Riddleport is also the most notorious. Once a secret pirate haven, Riddleport has grown over the last three centuries into a port city in its own right. At first it served as a den of piracy, but over time the city has expanded into a true settlement, the frontier's frontier, the northernmost outpost on the lonely strip known as the Lost Coast. Yet while Riddleport has grown into a proper city, it remains true to its roots—you can get rich quick in Riddleport if you've got skill and a bit of luck. Yet, for every Riddleport success story, there are a dozen nameless bodies buried in potters' fields or tossed to the hungry denizens of the sea.

What follows is an overview of Riddleport, the starting city of the Second Darkness Adventure Path. Everything here in is open to players and would be known by characters who live or who have spent any considerable amount of time in Varisia's City of Cyphers.

RIDDLEPORT

Large City nonstandard (titular overlord with multiple crimelords);
AL CN

GP Limit 40,000 gp; **Assets** 26,600,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 13,300

Type mixed (77% human, 7% dwarf, 5% half-elf, 4% half-orc, 3% tiefling, 2% halfling, 1% gnome, 1% other)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Gaston Cromarcky, NE male human fighter 7/expert 5 (Overlord of Riddleport)

Riddleport at a Glance

Most of Riddleport's buildings are composed of wood—logs or planks—with multiple floors and steep, high-peaked roofs of wooden shingles. They are built in close quarters, and in some cases their wooden upper

floors sag and lean together from the constantly sodden conditions. Stone fireplaces ward off the bitter winter cold and the chill that lingers in the fog-laden streets for much of the year, save for in high summer. During this two-month period, warmer air currents from the south bring a muggy, oppressive heat along with great black mosquitoes that breed in the nearby marshes. Many burn peat treated with incense in their hearths during these months to ward off the vermin with their thick smoke.

The major streets of Riddleport are cobbled, often becoming rain-slick cataracts during the wet seasons. Cobbles are often missing or crushed by the incessant traffic, leaving gaping holes and ruts in even the most well-tended thoroughfares. Side streets tend to be relegated to muddy tracks that are swift to turn into stinking morasses of sucking mud and filth. Riddleport doesn't have much of a sewage system, and relies mainly on gutters along street edges to carry refuse to the river and harbor. One feature unique to the major streets are the frequent oil lamps mounted on iron poles that provide beacons of light in the benighted mists. These are set in sturdy hurricane lamps and burn thick, rancid-smelling oil from barrel-shaped reservoirs at the lamppost base—a byproduct and innovation of the Gas Works. These wavering lights give off illumination equal to a torch in even the foulest weather but are not well-tended; just over a third of them are out on any given night, in need of repairs or refueling.

Life in Riddleport

The titular head of the Riddleport government is the self-appointed Overlord of Riddleport, a position traditionally held for life. Riddleport's current overlord is a former pirate captain named Gaston Cromarcky. Since the city's founding, Riddleport has been ruled by a series of pirate lords, buccaneers, and other unsavory sailors in a bloody cycle of betrayal and violent coups. Overlord Cromarcky has maintained his rule over Riddleport for three decades by entrenching himself in a wholly new manner. Rather than rely on the loyalty of pirate crews and fellow captains, Overlord Cromarcky opened the coffers of his deceased predecessor and hired mercenaries and enforcers from land-bound groups with no connection to piracy. Calling this new breed of enforcers the Riddleport Gendarmes (“gentlemen-at-arms”), he created a military force loyal to his coin.

Under Cromarcky's rule, life in Riddleport has become more stable than ever before. Open street-warfare between rival gangs is a rarity now, and the gendarmes have made it safe enough for brave or desperate merchants from Magnimar to bring in trade. By Overlord Cromarcky's decree, any ship that flies the flag of Riddleport at full mast is under his protection

RIDDLEPORT RUMORS

In a city where everyone watches for new opportunities to turn a profit, no news remains a secret for long. Here are but a few of the rumors currently making the rounds in Riddleport.

The Shadow in the Sky: A strange, persistent, dark cloud recently appeared in the sky above the City of Cyphers. Some people say it was caused by the Order of Cyphers meddling with the Cyphergate, while others believe it's a storm being cooked up by Gozreh or some overly moral deity to wipe Riddleport off the map. It's the big news in town and everybody seems to have their own explanation.

Carnivore Carnage: Several Shadde-Quah wavecutters recently washed up on the rocks near the Riddleport Light, their hulls covered in dozens of gashes from teeth and claws. Sailors fear some new predator in the Varisian Gulf or an unseasonable migration of local bunyips.

The Devil and His Gold: The washed-up crime boss Saul Vancaskerkin recently renovated the Gold Goblin Gambling Hall and has a massive gaming tournament planned called “Cheat the Devil and Take His Gold.” While this might just be a publicity stunt, some say the swindler sold his soul to some fiend and is using the tournament as a way to raise the money to buy it back.

Lost Below: Milon Chath, a cleric of Desna, left to explore several caverns in the nearby Calphiak Mountains more than a week ago and has yet to return. Several Varisians fear the priest has become lost in the labyrinthine caves said to riddle the endless depths below the mountains.

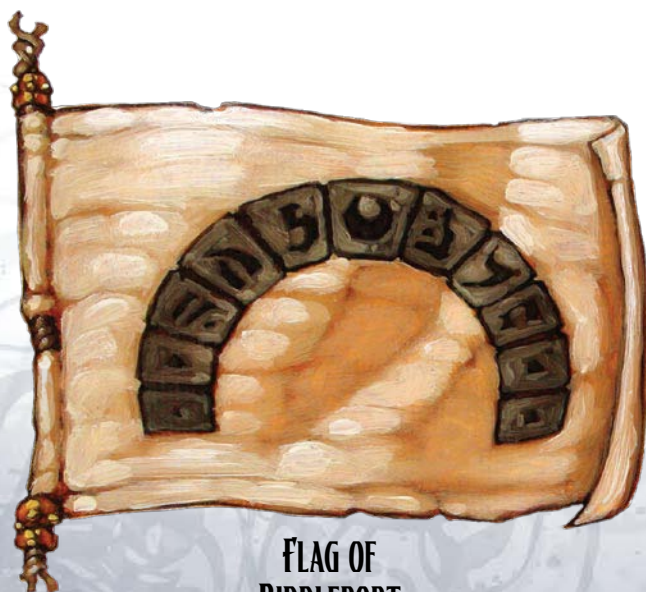
Siren Song: A band of smugglers recently tried to set up a base at Devil's Elbow, an island just south of Riddleport's harbor, but they've gone missing. Most blame Virashi, the famed siren of the haunted island, for the disappearance.

and is not to be raided by any pirate who wishes to call Riddleport home. That Cromarcky charges scandalously high prices for this protection of visiting ships ensures that there's always enough ships plying the Lost Coast or the southern waters for Riddleport's traditional pirates to prey upon to keep them happy. The stability and semi-regular influx of imported goods has begun to spoil the citizens of Riddleport, but these days may be numbered. Rumors abound that Cromarcky's coffers may finally be running low (despite his protection racket), and the rise in power of Cromarcky's most vocal public enemy, Elias Tammerhawk, has many of Riddleport's citizens expecting a shift in leadership soon, an eventuality that many Riddleport traditionalists would greet with relief.

Despite the unheard-of political stability that the city of Riddleport currently enjoys, only a longtime Riddleport native would ever think of the city as truly civilized. The overlord rules with a light touch and with the consent

of several powerful individuals who likewise shape the direction of Riddleport's future. These individuals are the various crime bosses who hold sway in the city. Pirates may have founded the city, but many more bandits and scoundrels soon saw the value of having a place to call home, the wilds of Varisia hardly being a safe place to camp. The crimelords each have their own particular specialties and focus, and they play the role that noble families do in most other cities: they are the movers and shakers, the leaders whom the average citizen idolizes and fears. When an overlord dies, the new overlord invariably rises from the ranks of the city's crimelords.

Yet not everyone who comes to live in Riddleport is attracted there by the promise of loose law and criminal sanctuary. In increasing numbers, all manner of sages, scholars, and wizardly types have been flocking to the city, drawn by the presence of the Order of Cyphers. This scholastic organization is dedicated to deciphering the mysteries of ancient Thassilon's monuments—in particular, the vexing Cyphergate, whose function and meaning have eluded illumination for so long. The locals find the influx of philosophers and scholars aggravating, and find their soft-spoken ways and general attitude to be infuriating, but the Order of Cyphers does not interfere with the day-to-day skullduggery of Riddleport's citizens. Furthermore, Overlord Cromarcky has openly welcomed the order to Riddleport, likely because the addition of many skilled wizards can only increase the city's defensive options. That the leader of the Order of Cyphers went on to be Cromarcky's most outspoken public foil no doubt vexes the aging pirate lord, and many of the city's citizens have taken to betting among themselves on how many more weeks will pass before Cromarcky and Tammerhawk come to blows.



FLAG OF
RIDDLEPORT

City Districts

Riddleport is divided into a total of nine separate districts (although two of them, Lubbertown and the Boneyard, technically lie outside of the overlord's jurisdiction):

Free-Coin District: Overlord Cromarcky's three grand gamehalls are located in this part of the city along the northwestern shore of the Velahsu River.

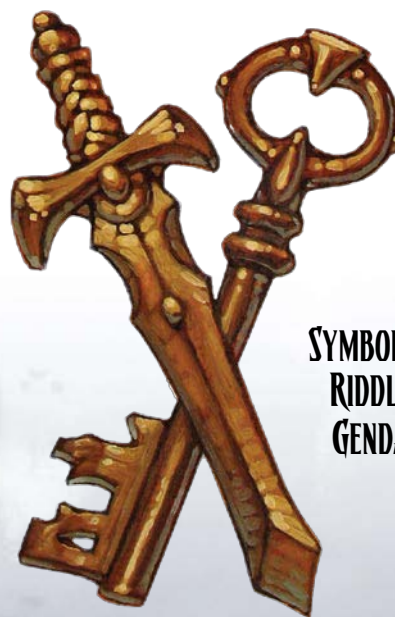
Leeward District: The city's largest district, Leeward is built into the protecting curve of the city's eastern ridge, where it is sheltered from the worst of the winter winds. The majority of the city's population resides in the tall tenements of this district, and most buildings have a shop at street level where standard goods and services can be obtained.

Lubbertown: Known derisively as Lubbertown for the fact that most of its inhabitants arrive at the city by land rather than by sea, this district is not patrolled by the gendarmes and has developed its own social order, informal system of laws, and distribution of goods and employment.

River District: This section of town runs along the banks of the Velashu River and consists primarily of shops and mills. Riddleport's atrophied trade items are crafted in this district. The waste produced by the district's tanners and fishmongers and the fact that many of the city's sewage gutters converge here have earned the place the unofficial name of "Reek District."

Rotgut District: The slums of Riddleport are a truly depressing and dangerous place to be. Easily the poorest section in the city proper, Rotgut also hosts the highest crime rate and the most brothels and alehouses per capita. It lies along the city's eastern side against the ridge.

The Boneyard: This deceptively named place actually serves as the city's dump and ship's graveyard. Its name is derived from the many old hulks and collections of ships'



SYMBOL OF THE
RIDDLEPORT
GENDARMES

ribs that protrude from the swampy ground. The whole area is a partially flooded salt marsh that is generally 2 or 3 feet deep, although some hidden patches of quicksand are much deeper. Monstrous cockroaches, swamp barracuda, and (it is whispered) wererats infest this area.

The Devil's Fork: This small military district is nestled near the north end of the city on an island in the Velashu River. It serves above as barracks for Riddleport's 250 gendarmes, and below as a prison for the city's malcontents.

Wharf District: This rough-and-tumble district lies hard on the edge of the very docks of the city and is where much of the city's day-to-day action of commerce and thievery occurs. Nearest the docks are a series of warehouses and cheap grog houses where merchant and pirate crews alike mingle in a haze of rum-soaked blood and debauchery.

Windward District: Built on the slopes of the city's western ridgeline, this is Riddleport's affluent district; the buildings here are generally quite tall and its streets winding and steep. The majority of the city's scholars and sages dwell in this windy district.

Important Sites

Several of the more important locations in Riddleport are described below.

City Mortuary: This large, nondenominational chapel is maintained by the churches of Cayden Cailean, Calistria, and Besmara, and is used for funeral services and burial rites. It features its own attached mausoleums for those who can afford interment there rather than in the common graves of the Burying Ground.

Cypher Lodge: This lodge is the headquarters of the vaunted Order of Cyphers, a society of skilled wizards and sages who have dedicated themselves to unraveling the secrets of ancient Thassilon—in particular, the purpose of the Cyphergate. The lodge is open to all cypherimages for a monthly room-and-board fee of 1 gp, a fee that grants access to its extensive libraries as well as a host of learned scholars on the subject. To non-cypherimages, a day's room and board (and access to the libraries) is a much heftier 20 gp. Nevertheless, its guest rooms are almost always full.

Cyphergate: The enigmatic Cyphergate looms large over Riddleport's harbor, a constant reminder of the transience of life and even civilization, since no record has ever been found of who may have raised this architectural wonder. The arch rises 350 feet above the water at high tide, secured by the rocky crags on either side of the harbor mouth—its diameter is exactly 700 feet. It is of an unidentifiable stone of nearly supernatural hardness that resists almost all efforts at defacing or marking, and as with most Thassilonian monuments, it has weathered

DEITIES OF RIDDLEPORT

Although not a particularly pious lot, the people of Riddleport know better than to trust in luck alone. Thus, a number of unruly congregations flourish in the City of Cyphers, the largest being dedicated to deities sympathetic to sailors, gamblers, criminals, and free spirits of all walks.

Besmara: Although primarily worshiped among the Shackles far to the south, the Pirate Queen is the goddess of pirates, strife, and sea serpents. Thus, her faith suits the scallywags and seafarers of Riddleport well. Her temple, derisively known as the Fish Bowl, makes regular blood sacrifices to assure safe and profitable voyages.

Calistria: The fickle goddess of trickery, lust, and revenge maintains a particularly healthy following in Riddleport. Her temple, the House of the Silken Veil, encourages her flock's vendettas and oversees the city's "hospitality" industry. Several thugs and assassins are known for quoting Calistria's collection of holy poems, *Blood for Wine*, before setting about their grim work.

Cayden Cailean: From the raucous Publican's House, the clergy of Cayden Cailean, god of alcohol, bravery, and freedom, welcome nearly all comers and hearten those who seek to live lives free of laws and restrictions. The church of the Drunken Hero is known for helping newcomers find homes within the city and encouraging legitimate trade—especially the import of exotic wines and brews.

Desna: The most blessed and cursed deity in Riddleport, the butterfly-winged goddess of travelers, luck, and the stars watches over gamblers, navigators on ships, and those seeking fortune and new beginnings. Although her faith does not support an actual temple within the City of Cyphers, nearly every gambling den in the city bears a statue in her image and several wandering priests—particularly of Varisian descent—do her work.

Gozreh: Although no temple in Riddleport bears the symbol of the Wind and the Waves, few sailors don't in some way pay respects to the god of nature. Many docks bear small shrines so departing seafarers can offer last-minute sacrifices, and wandering clerics and druids of Gozreh sell blessings and prayers for their god's distraction.

the passage of years amazingly well. Most scholars believe that the runes on the arch have no meaning, and are decorative. Magical attempts to decipher the runes have supported this theory, yet the Order of Cyphers believes that this simply points to the runes' mystic nature, that even magic cannot decipher their meaning or the Cyphergate's true purpose. Cracking this code has become the primary goal of the Order, yet they are no closer to solving it today than they were when their order was founded.

Gas Forges: This immense building, said to be built over a large deposit of rare natural gas, is owned and staffed by dwarves. The forges within are the only ones in all Varisia that burn hot enough to smelt and forge certain rare metals like adamantine.

Gold Goblin Gambling Hall: Once a high profile venue and shining diamond of the bustling Wharf District, this run-down gambling hall has been recently rebuilt and is the site for the upcoming “Cheat the Devil and Take His Gold” gambling tournament.

House of the Silken Veil: This octagonal pyramid is the city’s temple of Calistria in addition to being a high-class brothel. Temple prostitutes work the streets and squares of Leeward and send criers and samples down to Wharf District to bring in the “pigeons.”

Maskyr’s Island: Named for Cabriem Maskyr, the pirate captain who became the first overlord of Riddleport, this islet in the center of the Velashu River holds the current overlord’s citadel and estate as well as many of the city’s various administration buildings. Several docks provide access to the island, but all are heavily guarded by gendarmes. Overlord Cromarcky does not accept visitors lightly.

Publican House: A sign bearing the symbol of a dented ale mug hangs above the door, and written discreetly beneath it in gold letters are the words “Publican House.” This raucous place is actually a temple to Cayden Cailean, god of adventurers and drink, and is a favorite among the ships’ crews and travelers that visit Riddleport for its fair prices and wide selection. Cypherimages are not welcome here.

People of Riddleport

Over ten thousand souls call Riddleport their home, but very few of them actually have any real positions of power. Some of the city’s more notorious folk are detailed below.

Anton Mescher: Overlord Cromarcky’s right-hand man, Anton oversees the city’s fortress-prison and leads the gendarmes.

Arnando Rolf: Arnando is the high priest of the local temple of Cayden Cailean, a bear of a man who is rarely seen without a notched sword swinging at his hip.

Avery Slyeg: The owner of a pricey inn called the River Runner, Avery Slyeg’s true interests lie in smuggling and other black-market operations; it’s said he has agents in two dozen cities throughout the Inner Sea region.

Boss Croat: Known for keeping entirely half-orc minions, Boss Croat has his hand in much of Riddleport’s drug trade and other contraband.

Clegg Zincher: One of Riddleport’s more notorious crimelords, Clegg runs the quite profitable Zincher’s Arena, a place where anyone can pay to see desperate men fight monsters (or, more commonly, each other).

Elias Tammerhawk: Elias is the leader of the Order of Cyphers, an accomplished wizard who has been elected as speaker of the order for two consecutive eight-year terms. Many whisper that Elias has his eye set on the position of overlord, and Riddleport’s other crimelords worry about the nature of the changes to their beloved city should this event occur.

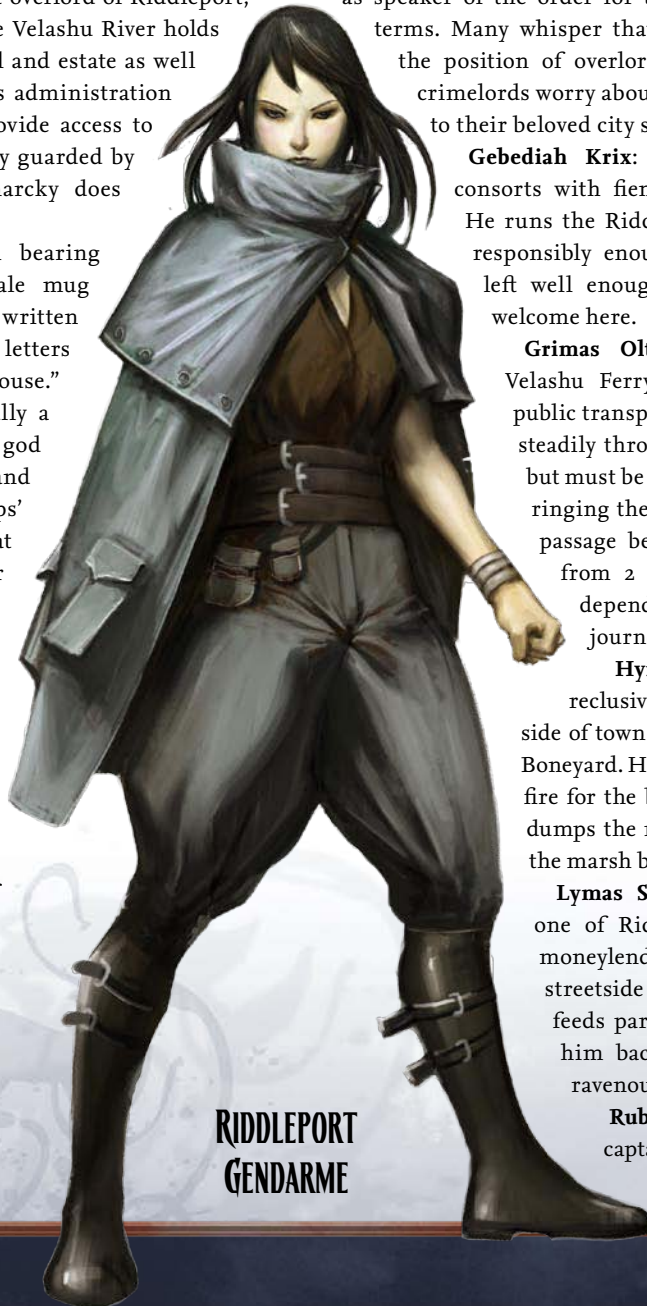
Gebediah Krix: Gebediah, rumor holds, consorts with fiends from the Outer Rifts. He runs the Riddleport Light, and does so responsibly enough that the overlord has left well enough alone. Visitors are not welcome here.

Grimas Oltedler: Grimas runs the Velashu Ferry, the only safe mode of public transport over the river. He works steadily through the evening and night but must be summoned from his bed by ringing the ferry bell if one is seeking passage before midday. Prices range from 2 to 6 copper per traveller, depending on the length of the journey up or downriver.

Hiram Crooge: Hiram is a reclusive man who dwells just outside of town on a ledge overlooking the Boneyard. He maintains a constant bonfire for the burning of some trash and dumps the rest over the cliff edge into the marsh below.

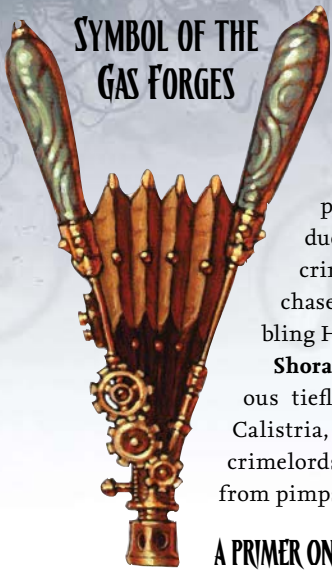
Lymas Smeed: This surly man is one of Riddleport’s more notorious moneylenders. Lymas Smeed (if the streetside chatter is to be believed) feeds parts of those who fail to pay him back on time to his always-ravenous pet baboon.

Ruben Carfay: A retired sea captain, Ruben is the leader of



RIDDLEPORT
GENDARME

SYMBOL OF THE GAS FORGES



an open-air temple dedicated to the Pirate Queen Besmara.

Saul Vancaskerkin: Just recently, Saul recovered his footing in Riddleport after several years of destitution due to some sort of run-in with the other crimelords of the city. He's recently purchased and rebuilt the Gold Goblin Gambling Hall.

Shorafa Pamodae: An alluring but dangerous tiefling high priestess of the temple of Calistria, Shorafa is also one of the city's minor crimelords and rules the hospitality industry, from pimps to liquor sales.

A PRIMER ON RIDDLEPORT SLANG

Many of Riddleport's citizens have their own slang and jargon that they use in mixed company to hold conversations in front of others while not revealing what they're actually talking about. Of course, in a city of thieves, the Thieves' Cant loses much of its use, and over the years, the Cant has devolved into a wide collection of regional slang words that most folk pepper liberally (and without thinking) into everyday speech. Listed below are several of the more common bits of Riddleport Slang.

- Abbess:** A priestess or whore of Calistria
- Bridge Monkey:** Someone from Magnimar
- Capp:** A trusted lieutenant or henchman
- Cattle:** A group of Varisians
- Cow:** A Varisian
- Church Work:** Any lengthy job that is slow to finish or is otherwise drudgery
- Dog Biter:** A large rat, small child, or halfling
- Earth Bath:** An unmarked grave
- Easy Lad:** A male prostitute
- Fancyboy/Fancygirl:** A cyphermage (sometimes an elf)
- Gendarme:** A city guard
- Grog-Blossom:** A facial pimple, or an unsavory person
- Hushman:** A hired killer, generally one kept on semi-permanent retainer
- Kiss:** To stab someone—"Kissed the snickersnak" is a phrase used to mean "Got murdered"
- Laced Mutton:** A prostitute (gender neutral)
- Leaky:** Someone who can't keep a secret ("Don't tell him about the heist—he's leaky!")
- Lumber:** A passenger on a ship (typically an unwanted or unwelcome passenger)
- Pigeon:** A person targeted by a criminal to be the victim of a crime, or a person that visits a prostitute
- Pigmeat:** A dead body, or someone who is about to become dead
- Pump-Sucker:** A dwarf (particularly one who works at the Gas Forges)

POISONS OF THE CITY OF CYPHERS

As might be expected in a city founded by pirates and ruled by criminals, Riddleport's poison trade is brisk and hearty. It's possible to find bargain prices on viper venom and arsenic on most city street corners, but as often as not, the wares of streetside poison merchants is diluted and hardly worth the money saved. Those who seek poison would do much better to visit one of the city's many skilled and well-supplied alchemists.

In addition to all of the standard poisons listed in the DMG, the following local poisons are quite popular among many of Riddleport's criminals.

RIDDLEPORT TEA

A mixture of dream spider venom and crushed flayleaf berries, this deep violet liquid carries with it a potent bitter flavor. Yet when mixed with spiderberry tea, the poison's unpleasant taste and aroma becomes negligible. The poison does not inflict lasting damage, but those who drink it are immediately beset upon by powerful hallucinations that drive them into a frothing, unpredictable frenzy of violence and babbling. This period is swiftly followed by deep fatigue. Since Riddleport tea does no lasting damage, some among the church of Cayden Cailean have even taken to taking the stuff voluntarily. The church frowns upon this use, though, since those who expose themselves to this poison are almost as likely to fly into a murderous rage as they are to experience anything approaching a legitimate vision from the gods.

Riddleport Tea: Ingested DC 15; **Initial Damage** *confusion* (as per the spell of the same name); **Secondary Damage** fatigue; **Price** 500 gp.

INDIGO DREAMS

Favored by prostitutes who supplement their earnings by the dangerous practice of robbing their customers, a dose of indigo dreams incapacitates a person by inducing a pleasant lassitude and mental fog. A dose of indigo dreams turns its victim's eyes purple for the duration of its effect.

Indigo Dreams: Ingested DC 13; **Initial Damage** 1d6 Wisdom; **Secondary Damage** 2d6 Wisdom; **Price** 150 gp.

- Quickwife:** A female prostitute
- Rathole:** The mouth (especially a mouth that belongs to someone who is saying unwelcome things)
- Rotgut:** Liquor (particularly foul-tasting liquor)
- Sideshow:** A tiefling
- Snickersnak:** A small knife that can be easily hidden on a person's body
- Soaker:** A priest of Cayden Cailean
- Soggy Plum:** A drunk
- Whisker:** A wererat

PRESTIGE CLASS: LIBERATOR

Liberators fight to free the wrongfully imprisoned—be they slaves, political prisoners, or princesses locked in towers. They rely on physical strength—but also quick wits—to overcome oppressors. Since charging blindly into battle could result in a prisoner's death, liberators plan their rescues carefully.

Liberators despise slavers above all others, particularly races well known for these practices, such as the gnolls. While some liberators operate solely in cities, most dwell in or near territories held by known slaver organizations or groups. Liberators typically strike under the cover of darkness, and they usually seek to smuggle slaves to safety without alerting any guards. As a result, liberators develop many abilities related to navigating darkness and stealth.

In large cities, the law typically views the actions of liberators as dangerous, since they often show no respect for traditional investigative procedures. These feelings of distrust and disdain are shared by most liberators, who tend to see the law as a lumbering, ineffective giant. Liberators



often operate in the shadows of society as a result, lest they become prisoners themselves. Rarely, city officials view liberators as expensive but effective mercenaries who bring results the average guardsman cannot. Liberators often find work in such cities, and in return gain cautious but respectful accolades for their deeds.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a liberator, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonlawful.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Escape Artist 6 ranks, Open Lock 6 ranks.

Feats: Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Stealthy.

CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the liberator.

To the Rescue (Su): The sight of a liberator staging a daring rescue proves inspirational to his allies. As a standard action, the liberator can shout an encouraging phrase or raise a rallying cry to bring hope to those awaiting rescue. All allies within 30 feet of the liberator gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls, a +4 morale bonus on Escape Artist checks, and a +4 morale bonus on saving throws made against fear effects. These bonuses persist for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the liberator's Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round).

Poison Resistance (Ex): Slavers often make liberal use of poison and drugs to keep their captives lethargic and under control. A liberator purposefully exposes himself to a variety of venoms in order to build up a resistance to such toxins, should he ever fall victim to those he opposes. He gains a +2 bonus on saving throws made against poisons. This bonus increases to +4 at 7th level.

Lockbreaker (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a liberator receives a competence bonus equal to half his class level on all Open Lock checks. He also gains this bonus on all Escape Artist checks made to escape bindings, shackles, and other restraints.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd level, the liberator gains a bonus feat. He must qualify for the feat, and it must be from the following list: Blind-Fight, Iron Will, or Skill Focus (any class skill).

Silent Sunder (Ex): At 3rd level, a liberator learns methods of applying force and striking objects in such a way as to minimize noise. He can choose to make no more noise than people talking when making a sunder attack action or attempting to break an object with a Strength check.

Slaver's Ruin (Ex): The sight of imprisonment and slavery can drive a liberator into a righteous frenzy. A liberator of at least 5th level can designate one creature engaged in such acts as the target of his wrath. The

LIBERATOR

HIT DIE: D10

Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Poison resistance +2, to the rescue
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Lockbreaker +1
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus feat, silent sunder
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Lockbreaker +2
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Slaver's ruin
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Greater sunder, lockbreaker +3
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Poison resistance +4, steely resolve
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Darkvision, lockbreaker +4
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Quick pick
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Freedom of movement, lockbreaker +5

Skills (2 + Int bonus per level) Climb, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (local), Open Lock, Search, Sense Motive, Survival, Use Rope.

designated foe is considered flat-footed against the liberator's next attack. Opponents who cannot be caught flat-footed (such as through improved uncanny dodge) are immune to this effect.

Greater Sunder (Ex): Beginning at 6th level, a liberator ignores half of an object's hardness when making a sunder attack or attacking an object. He also gains a +2 morale bonus on his opposed attack roll when making a sunder attempt (but not when defending against a sunder attempt).

Steely Resolve (Ex): A liberator fears magical domination more than anything else, for the enslavement of the mind is difficult to detect and remove. At 7th level, whenever a liberator is targeted by a charm or compulsion effect and fails his saving throw, he may attempt his saving throw again 1 round later at the same DC to resist the effect. He gets only this one extra chance to throw off any one effect.

Darkvision (Su): At 8th level, a liberator has spent so much time sneaking through the dark to free the victims of unjust imprisonment that he develops darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If the liberator already possesses darkvision, the range of his darkvision increases by 60 feet.

Quick Pick (Ex): There's not always time to properly pick a lock, and sometimes liberators have to improvise. At 9th level, a liberator has perfected the art of lockpicking to such an extent that he may attempt an Open Locks check as a move action instead of a full-round action without any additional penalties.

Freedom of Movement (Su) At 10th level, the liberator's focus against slavery and restriction to mobility develops into a potent resistance to restraint. He is now treated as if under the effects of a *freedom of movement* spell at all times. This ability cannot be dispelled. Once per day, he can also use *freedom of movement* as a spell-like ability (caster level equals his class level) to share this benefit with others.

LIBERATORS IN RIDDLEPORT

Riddleport, a city known for its lawlessness and intrigue, experiences more than its fair share of abductions. Crime cartels often snatch innocents to hold hostage for ransom. Some crime lords abduct the families of city officials to force certain actions, such as the release of their own imprisoned men, the passing of a particular law, or a cessation of patrols in a specific area. Criminals themselves sometimes fall prey to abduction plots staged by other gangs, as retaliation or an intimidation tactic. Vigilantes, however well intentioned, sometimes find themselves locked up and awaiting rescue. Even unsuspecting travelers occasionally run afoul of corrupt guards and end up wrongfully imprisoned.

As a result, liberators never experience a dearth of work in Riddleport. Some prefer to work through official channels, sanctioned by the city to retrieve political prisoners and assist the gendarmes in rescuing kidnapping victims. Others freelance, determining who deserves rescue based on their personal philosophies. Crime cartels rarely employ liberators, but large organizations whose members frequently wind up in jail sometimes retain a liberator for emergency rescues.

A well-known liberator by the name of Peveny Vall operated for many years in Riddleport. Rumor held that Peveny broke into various crimelords' dwellings for daring rescue missions no fewer than 20 times over the course of 2 years a decade ago. Her daring actions eventually united the crimelords the way little else could, and shortly after her 20th daring mission, her body turned up in a gutter near the river. The gendarmes confiscated her body as evidence, and some believe to this day that it wasn't Peveny's body at all, but the corpse of some unknown slaver that Peveny used to cover her escape.

DIVINE TRAPPINGS: CAYDEN CAILEAN

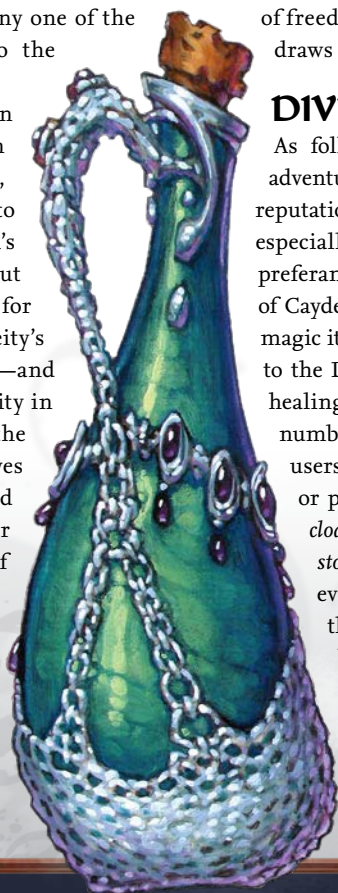
The straight-talking, freedom-loving clergy of Cayden Cailean attracts many followers to the faith, especially adventurers who often feel a strong draw toward the god's views on bravery and daring and regular pints of ale. Presented here are several suggestions, common abilities, and religion-specific magic items often employed by those who follow the occasionally reckless path of the ascended god of bravery, freedom, and alcohol.

PIOUS ADVENTURERS

Even though an adventurer might not be a cleric and never set foot in one of Cayden Cailean's temple-taverns, many still raise silent prayers to his name before venturing into danger. Aside from priests of his faith, those of varying classes and professions worship Cayden Cailean. Many fighters and other martially skilled characters favor the god's dash-in, slay-the-monster, win-the-treasure approach to adventuring. Among spellcasters, especially sorcerers, the god's on-the-fly resourcefulness is often emulated. More skillful sorts also favor the Drunken Hero's noble roguishness and swashbuckling flair, seeking to follow in his footsteps to fame, glory, and legendary rewards.

Aside from various classes' general outlooks on the god, players who seek to create characters in the service of the Drunken Hero might consider any one of the following character paths common to the god's faithful.

The Cult of Cayden: Although not an actual cult or acknowledged faction within the Drunken Hero's church, many adventurous worshipers seek to model their lives after Cayden Cailean's experience as a mortal. It turned out pretty good for him, so why not for them, the thinking follows. As the deity's life as a mortal is well documented—and embellished—many see a certain nobility in selling their swords or other skills in the pursuit of noble causes. This path proves particularly popular in Absalom and among those from the City at the Center of the World, as the god lived many of his mortal years there. The question of how their deity would have acted in their position lingers at the forefront of these often multi-classed fighter/clerics' minds, and they're ever eager to visit the same sites or perform similar tasks as their deity.



Divine Drunk: Although members of Cayden Cailean's faith are often stereotyped as brawling drunkards, the majority prove quite level-headed. Not all are in that majority, though. Some take to drink with a religious zeal, claiming that their deity guides their stumbles and their loose words. Frequently, such drinkers receive alcohol-induced visions—or at least divinely suggested misconceptions. Such inebriated clerics believe their god communicates with the worthy, the brave, the beautiful, the lucky, those whom he judges capable of completing a particular task, or sometimes just random people via such alcoholic hazes. Occasionally, even the most resilient clerics claim a single drink got them drunk, the result of which was a hallucination which started them on the path of an important quest.

Liberator: Those who oppose oppression, seek an end to slavery of all kinds, and wish to make the world a better place for good, simple people, feel particular kinship with Cayden Cailean. Many heroes dedicate their lives to uplifting the downtrodden, an occupation that often is as depressing as it is dangerous. Faith in the god of freedom helps bring a sense of nobility to such dark tasks and eases the heart afterward, though. Adventurers who were slaves themselves, who worked to free imprisoned loved ones in the past, or who escaped oppressive societies often worship Cayden Cailean openly. Many heroes embarking on rescue missions bring a bottle or cask of brandy with them to offer to the newly rescued as tribute to the god of freedom. Cayden Cailean's straightforward doctrine draws all manner of followers to his cause.

DIVINE MAGIC ITEMS

As followers of a deity who was once a renowned adventure seeker, Cayden Cailean's clergy has a reputation for coveting and creating magical items, especially when such magic can be combined with their preference for unique and delicious libations. Temples of Cayden Cailean often create and stock several useful magic items meant to aid worshipers and those friendly to the Drunken Hero's church. Aside from the typical healing magics, such collections usually contain a number of simple magical items that enhance their users' appearance, increase their resilience or luck, or prove especially versatile. As such, *bags of tricks*, *cloaks of resilience* and *cloaks of Charisma*, *gloves of storing*, *necklaces of adaptation*, *eyes of charming*, and even the rare *luckblade* sometimes appear among the reliquaries of the god's temples and wielded by the most pious, deserving, or downright lucky of his faith.

In addition, worshipers of Cayden Cailean have created a number of magical items unique to their faith.

HERO'S BREW**Aura** faint enchantment; **CL** 5th**Slot** none; **Price** 1,400 gp; **Weight** —**DESCRIPTION**

Cayden Cailean's faithful keep the secret of this sweet, spiced liquor with magical properties closely guarded, but they freely offer the libation for sale. This strong beverage often comes in iridescent blue-green wine bottles, sometimes held in elegant slings made of gold or silver chains.

A dose of *hero's brew* mimics the effect of a *potion of heroism*, granting you a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks for 1 hour. Additionally, the potent brew renders you moderately tipsy and impairs your judgment somewhat, imposing a –2 Wisdom penalty for its duration—a religious state for many of the god's worshipers.

A cleric of Cayden Cailean who has Charm or Strength as a chosen domain may use the domain power of either domain one additional time per day while under the effects of *hero's brew*. This does not count against your domain power's uses per day limit, and it immediately ends the effects of the *hero's brew*. You can only use *hero's brew* to gain one additional use of a domain power per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Brew Potion, *heroism*, must have access to the Charm or Strength domain; **Cost** 750 gp, 56 XP

LUTHIER'S RAPIER**Aura** strong transmutation; **CL** 11th**Slot** none; **Price** 5,020 gp; **Weight** 2 lb.**DESCRIPTION**

Many stories feature Luthier, Knight of the Vineyard, champion of good and Cayden Cailean's trusted ally. These legends often mention Luthier's elegant rapier, and while the original *Luthier's rapier* undoubtedly remains with its owner, copies surface from time to time—usually when a faithful follower of Cayden Cailean requires assistance.

Rose-hued steel forms the length of the blade, and gold flowers seem to blossom in the filigreed basket-hilt. A large ruby glimmers at the hilt's center. *Luthier's rapier* is a +1 *holy rapier*. Once per day, you can activate the power of the ruby embedded in the rapier's hilt to gain a +4 sacred bonus to Charisma and a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. These bonuses last for 10 minutes.

Also, once, you can command the gem to shatter in an explosion of red light. Every creature except you within 30 feet must make a DC 20 Will save or be dazed for 3 rounds. Once you shatter the gem in this fashion, the rapier becomes just a normal +1 *rapier*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms & Armor, *bless weapon*, *eagle's splendor*, creator must be chaotic good; **Cost** 2,510 gp, 200 XP

CAYDEN CAILEAN'S FOLLOWERS IN RIDDLEPORT

In a city as rife with evil and villainy as Riddleport, it's no surprise that Cayden Cailean's clergy works actively in the shadows. Sprees of kidnappings often overtake the city, and small groups of Cayden Cailean's faithful—sometimes including official clerics, sometimes not—meet in dark corners of taverns or in secluded wine cellars to discuss the crimes and consider action.

In public, the rabble of Riddleport treats clerics of Cayden Cailean with respect. Most criminals leave the clerics alone, and some even treat a cleric's known allies with some deference. Truly hardened criminals might not treat a cleric of Cayden Cailean any differently than his other victims, however, and many show no special favor to a cleric's allies.

While criminals often show respect to Cayden Cailean's faithful on the street, few carry that devotion behind closed doors. A cleric of Cayden Cailean caught infiltrating a thieves' guild or confronting a slaver undoubtedly faces violent retribution. Bodies of Cayden Cailean's faithful sometimes appear on the doorsteps of taverns in Riddleport. Although murderers might not balk at killing clerics, many consider it bad luck to irreverently dispose of the corpses.

RING OF EMANCIPATION**Aura** faint transmutation and moderate evocation; **CL** 7th**Slot** ring; **Price** 2,100 gp; **Weight** —**DESCRIPTION**

This single thick iron band makes for a rather ugly ring. Rust pits the surface of the ring in places and the item seems on the brink of falling apart. Occasionally, these rings bear a tiny chain link or dented tankard symbol.

While wearing a *ring of emancipation*, you gain a +2 competence bonus on all Open Lock and Escape Artist checks, in addition to all attack rolls made to sunder. Also, the ring has three charges, which can be expended at any time to cast *shatter* as a spell-like ability with a caster level equal to your character level. Each time a charge is expended, the ring becomes more rusted and marred. Upon the third charge being expended, the ring is destroyed.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *cat's grace*, *shatter*; **Cost** 1,050 gp, 84 XP



SPELLS OF THE CYPHERMAGES

Rarely seen far from the City of Cyphers, Riddleport's mysterious and misunderstood cyphermages dedicate their careers to unlocking the ancient secrets of Varisia's famed monuments. The trappings of ancient cultures fascinate these mages, from obscure runes and abandoned languages to the spells and relics of cultures long forgotten. From their headquarters in Riddleport, members of the Order of Cyphers venture wherever they must to unravel the secrets over which they obsess, traveling from the feet of gargantuan monoliths to the ruins of ancient dungeons, from the lecture halls of their organization to libraries half a world away.

Because cyphermages immerse themselves in the lore and nuance of the ancients, they highly value precision and complexity, going so far as to develop spells dedicated to uncovering new information and protecting the discoveries they've uncovered.

Although the four spells presented here originally evolved in the libraries and lecture halls of Riddleport's Order of Cyphers and are primarily used by cyphermages, their use has spread to many of the

uninitiated throughout Golarion. Some particularly opportunistic cyphermages even go so far as to use the secrets of their order's magic as bargaining chips when dealing with other spellcasters who might hold the keys to unraveling ancient mysteries. Also, as many cyphermages never return from their explorations, it's not uncommon for adventurers in Varisia to stumble upon a lost cyphermage's body along with his scrolls and spellbooks. Deciphering a cyphermage's secrets from the works he carried with him might be another matter entirely, though.

CODESPEAK

School transmutation; **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M

EFFECT

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target you plus one willing creature per two levels, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw no; **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

Upon casting this spell, all recipients gain the ability to speak a new language. This language sounds like random, babbling syllables to anyone not under the influence of the spell, but the targets understand each other perfectly.

Anyone using *codespeak* can read and write in this new language as well. Once the spell expires, however, any coded writing suddenly appears as gibberish. If the same individuals become the targets of a *codespeak* spell again, cast by the same caster, they can once again read any coded writings.

Comprehend languages does not enable a caster to understand the language of another's *codespeak* spell, but it does reveal that the targets are speaking a magical language. *Tongues* translates *codespeak* normally.

Material Component A complex rune inscribed on a slip of paper that is then placed under your tongue.

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

School transmutation; **Level**

sorcerer/wizard 2

CASTING

Casting Time 1 round

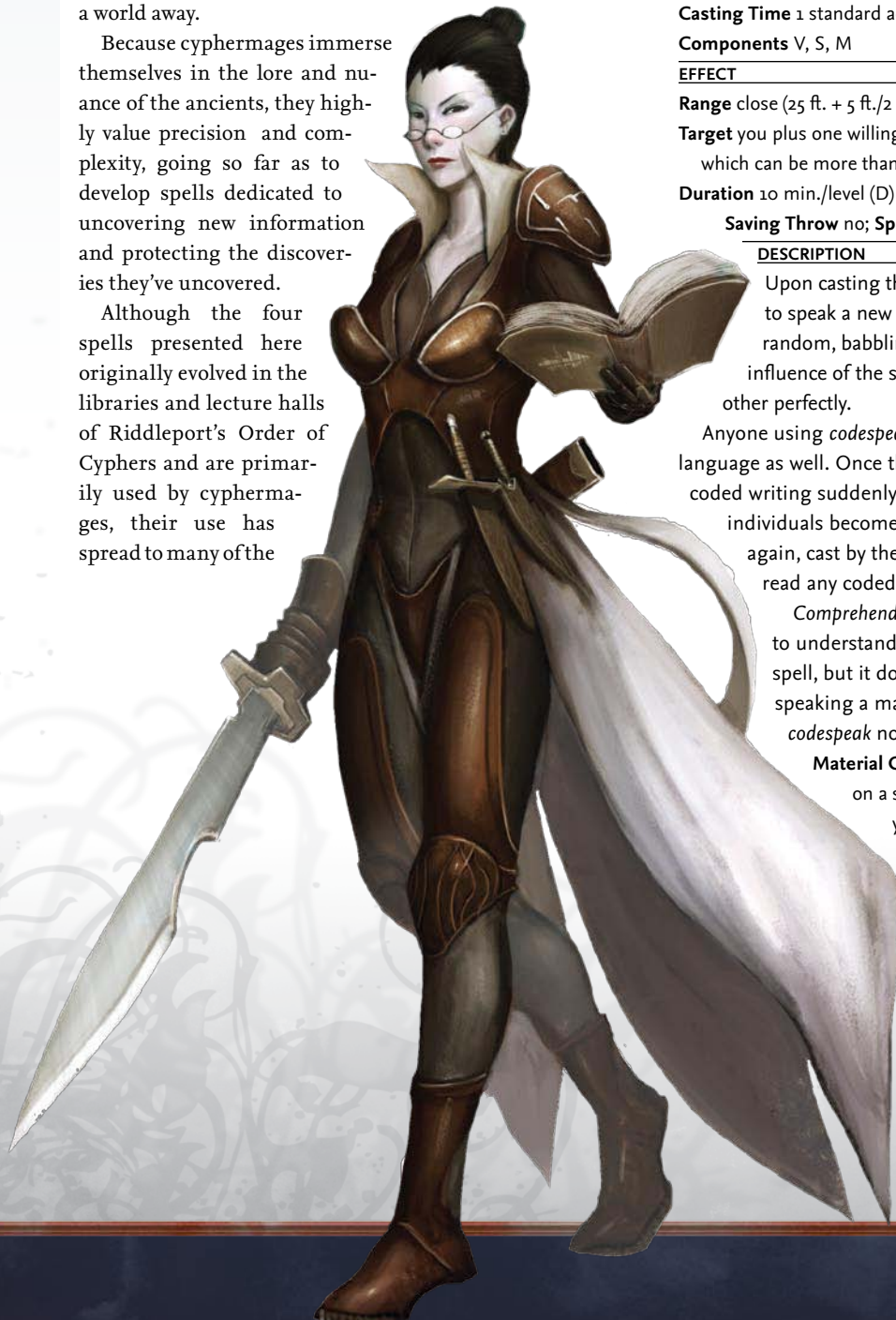
Components V, S, M (a drop of ink)

EFFECT

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 day/level



DESCRIPTION

This subtle but useful spell allows the caster to safeguard important knowledge—even from himself. While casting this spell, you recite one piece of knowledge you possess (up to a maximum of 50 words). Upon completion of the spell's casting, you transfer the knowledge from your mind to your skin in the form of an intricate, runic tattoo placed anywhere you choose on your body. The knowledge disappears utterly from your mind, and you might not realize you forgot something. The magic of the spell patches over gaps in your memory with recollections from the past. Until the spell's duration ends, the knowledge is lost to you.

Many cyphermages commission nonmagical tattoos to disguise the effects of this spell. A *detect magic* spell or a Decipher Script check (DC 15 + your Int modifier) reveals an enchanted tattoo but not its contents. The effects of *hidden knowledge* can be dispelled normally, in which case the knowledge is completely lost.

IMPEDE SPEECH

School necromancy; **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 3

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 10 min./level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

DESCRIPTION

This minor curse interferes with the target's ability to speak. On a failed save, the target has difficulty stringing words together. Only with great concentration can he communicate intelligibly. Speaking in combat becomes a move-equivalent action rather than a free action. If the target attempts to cast a spell with a verbal component, he has a 50% chance of making an error and losing the spell. Even if he can successfully cast a spell, doing so takes 1 round if the spell's normal casting time is less than 1 round. If the spell's casting time is usually 1 round or longer, its casting time doubles (up until the end of *impede speech*). *Impede speech* cannot be dispelled, but *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish* can end it prematurely.

PATTERN RECOGNITION

School transmutation; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 1

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range personal

Target you

Duration 10 min./level

WHAT IS A CYPHERMAGE?

Students of the lingering lore of Varisia's ancient past, cyphermages seek to understand the magic inherent in the land's ancient monuments and reveal the mysteries carved into centuries-old stone. These students of the past vary in arcane skill and interest, with bards, sorcerers, wizards, and clerics of Irori and Nethys making up the majority of their ranks, though even ingenious non-spellcasting scholars are welcomed to join. Intrigued by all things Varisian, these researchers often adopt the mysterious tattoos some of the land's native wanderers possess, seeking to find greater understanding of and intimacy with the mysteries they explore (see the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting* for more details on Varisian Tattoos). Aside from imitating the traditions of Varisia's natives, cyphermages have learned much in their investigations and widely share many of their most inspired discoveries. The Order of Cyphers keeps its greatest secrets for its most esteemed members, however.

CYPHER SCRIPT

Through researching endless ancient arcane script, you have discovered a more efficient method to record spells.

Prerequisite: Int 12, Decipher Script 4 ranks.

Benefit: Any spell you scribe in your spellbook costs half as much and takes up only half the room it normally would. In addition, it only takes you 12 hours to add a new spell to your spellbook.

CYPHER MAGIC

Your intimacy with runes and the mysteries of ancient arcana has taught you secrets to draw greater power from a variety of arcane writings.

Prerequisite: Int 14, Scribe Scroll.

Benefit: You cast spells from scrolls at +1 caster level higher than the level of the scroll's creator. This benefit extends to scrolls that you have created.

In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on caster level checks made to activate a scroll with a higher caster level than your own.

DESCRIPTION

Pattern recognition allows you to notice unusual breaks in the patterns of stones in a wall, boards in a floor, cracks in glass, trees in a forest, or similar interruptions. You gain an insight bonus equal to one-half your caster level (minimum +1, maximum +10) on Search checks.

You gain the same bonus on Survival checks made to follow tracks. *Pattern recognition* does not grant you the Track feat, a rogue's trapfinding ability, or the ability to disable traps. You can use it in conjunction with those abilities if you possess them, though.

A SPELUNKER'S TREASURY

Be it the tangled network of smuggler's tunnels below the streets or the innumerable cave systems in the nearby mountains, Riddleport adventurers are no strangers to the fine art of cave exploration. In their case, superior exploration equipment proves quite handy. The combination of poor visibility, treacherous footing, extreme temperatures, and enclosed spaces can turn a challenging situation into a deadly one. For explorers bereft of strong combat abilities or spells on which to fall back, any kind of edge can mean the difference between life and death. The following magic items can provide the needed edge to adventurers traveling underground, particularly those who rely on their skills to survive.

CAVER'S HAMMOCK

Aura faint illusion and transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 1,200 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

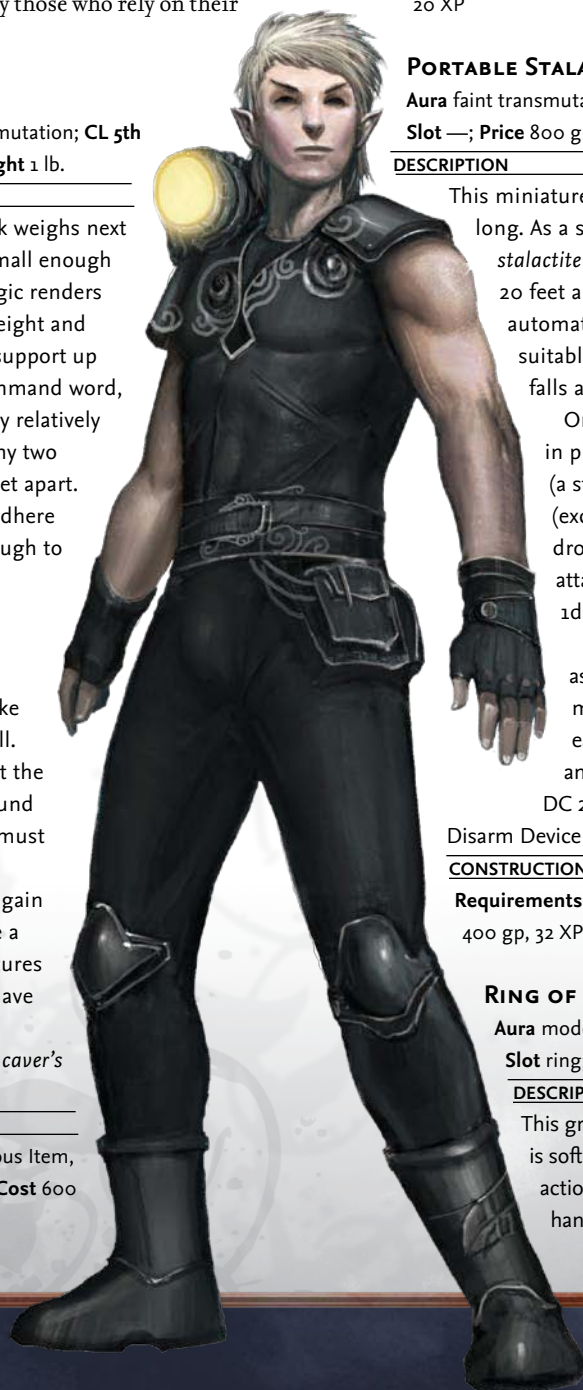
DESCRIPTION

This soft, billowy hammock weighs next to nothing and folds up small enough to fit into a pocket. Its magic renders the hammock both lightweight and incredibly strong, able to support up to 500 pounds. With a command word, the hammock affixes to any relatively flat, overhead surface or any two sturdy surfaces up to 10 feet apart. The hammock refuses to adhere to surfaces not strong enough to support the hammock at full capacity.

Once affixed, a *caver's hammock* takes on a dark gray, pebbly appearance like that of a typical cavern wall. Anyone attempting to spot the hammock in an underground or naturally rocky setting must make a DC 30 Spot check. Creatures with darkvision gain no special bonus to notice a *caver's hammock*, but creatures with blindsense or scent have no additional difficulty in noticing an occupant of a *caver's hammock*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *silent image*, *spider climb*; **Cost** 600 gp, 48 XP



MUSHROOM VEST

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot chest; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** 3 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This spongy, mottled brown vest is several inches thick and composed of woven strips of preserved fungus. The vest feels soft to the touch and springs back into shape no matter how badly compressed. Its magic keeps the vest fresh and whole despite constant wear and abuse.

A *mushroom vest* protects you from impact trauma. When wearing the vest, you treat any fall as if it were 20 feet less when calculating damage.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *feather fall*; **Cost** 250 gp, 20 XP

PORTABLE STALACTITE

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd

Slot —; **Price** 800 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This miniature stone stalactite measures 4 to 5 inches long. As a standard action, you can toss a *portable stalactite* up to any solid surface no more than 20 feet above, whereupon the *portable stalactite* automatically affixes to the ceiling. If no suitable ceiling exists, the *portable stalactite* falls at your feet.

Once affixed, the *portable stalactite* remains in place until you call it back to your hand (a standard action) or until a living creature (except you) walks under it, at which point it drops from the ceiling and makes a +10 attack roll against the target. If it hits, it deals 1d6+1 points of damage.

You can affix as many *portable stalactites* as you like to an area's ceiling, but you must leave at least 5 feet of space between each. A *portable stalactite* can be detected and disarmed as if it were a trap—it's a

DC 20 Search check to discover, and a DC 15

Disarm Device check to safely detach one.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic stone*; **Cost** 400 gp, 32 XP

RING OF THE STONE SIBLING

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 9th

Slot ring; **Price** 7,400 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This gray ring looks like stone, but the material is soft and flexible. Once per day, as a standard action, you can touch a stone wall with your hand to create a stone duplicate of yourself.

Immediately upon activating the *ring of the stone sibling*, your double steps out of the wall. It appears to be a stone statue carved in an exact likeness of you. The stone double stands 10 feet away from you and mimics your movements, as if reflected in a mirror. As a move-equivalent action, you can mentally command the stone sibling to move to a new location, but it must remain within 30 feet of you at all times.

The stone sibling has hardness 8 and 50 hit points. It can take no actions other than to aid you, which it does every round on your turn. The stone sibling makes a +5 aid another check each round, either to aid your attack rolls or your Armor Class, as you command. It continues to render the same aid indefinitely until you command it otherwise (which requires a move action).

The stone sibling lasts for 10 minutes, until it is destroyed, or until you dismiss it (a standard action), whichever comes first.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *mirror image*, *stone shape*; **Cost** 3,700 gp, 296 XP

SALT LAMP

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 350 gp; **Weight** 2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A *salt lamp* appears as nothing more than a fist-sized chunk of pink, white, or green quartz-like rock. In reality, the “rock” is compressed salt mined from areas infused with strange magical radiations. When you speak the command word, the *salt lamp* lights up with a glow equivalent to a torch. The *salt lamp* becomes warm, though never uncomfortably hot, to the touch. The *salt lamp* glows for 1d4+1 hours before its light fades out and it becomes ordinary salt.

At any time while the *salt lamp* glows, you can hurl it at the floor, causing it to explode into a cloud of glimmering salt crystals that form a 10-foot radius cloud. The cloud continues to shed light as a torch, as well as visibly outlining invisible objects within the cloud. Shining salt particles cover anyone within the area and adhere and glow for the remainder of the lamp’s duration. The salt particles cannot be removed by normal means, but they can be dispelled. Any creature within the cloud, or covered with the salt particles, takes a –40 penalty on Hide checks.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *glitterdust*, *light*; **Cost** 175 gp, 14 XP

SPOREBLADE

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 13th

Slot weapon; **Price** 27,815 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Bulbous fungal growths sprout from this short sword’s blade, particularly around the hilt. The fungal growths constantly swell, wither, and sprout again in a continuous cycle. The

growths appear bright blue, green, yellow, and purple. The weapon’s blade is a dull gray that does not reflect light.

The *sporeblade* is a +2 *keen short sword*. On a successful critical hit, the *sporeblade* deals its normal critical damage and also creates a puff of mottled spores. The victim of the critical hit must make a DC 20 Fortitude save. On a failed save, the victim takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage and becomes fatigued for 1 hour as the spores take root in his flesh and grow with unsettling speed into thick, fibrous tendrils. The special critical hit ability of the *sporeblade* functions no more than once per round.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *contagion*; **Cost** 14,065 gp, 1,100 XP

SPELUNKER’S MAIL

Aura faint conjuration and moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th

Slot armor; **Price** 10,000 gp; **Weight** 10 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Spelunker’s mail allows a creature to more easily navigate narrow underground tunnels by granting the wearer the option of reducing his size when a passageway grows too narrow.

Spelunker’s mail is a +1 *slick chain shirt* and has a dark, lustrous sheen to its blue-black links. Ten times per day, by speaking a command word, you can activate the armor’s power to reduce your size. Your size category decreases by one step and you gain the relevant bonuses and penalties of your new size. Your abilities and speed remain unchanged, and all equipment you wear or carry reduces appropriately in size. This transformation lasts for up to a minute, and you can dismiss its effects as a free action.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms & Armor, *grease*, *reduce person*; **Cost** 4,875 gp, 390 XP

TRACKLESS BOOTS

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 9th

Slot feet; **Price** 3,500 gp; **Weight** 2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Leaving marks of your passage can alert predators that a newcomer has entered their territory. *Trackless boots* help prevent you from making too much noise as you creep along, and they also mask traces of your passage through underground caverns to prevent your enemies from finding you. These boots are particularly valued by smugglers who work in patrolled areas.

Trackless boots are soft, well-worn leather boots with thin soles. The softness of the boots’ soles add a +4 competence bonus on Move Silently checks. In addition, the boots conceal your passage much like the *pass without trace* spell—you leave no trail underground and cannot be tracked.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *pass without trace*; **Cost** 1,750 gp, 140 XP

LAVENDER LIL

Like many of the city's tieflings, Lil grew up an orphan in Riddleport. She earned her coin by telling stories on street corners, where her fantastical tales garnered just enough copper for a bite to eat. Although a gifted storyteller, Lil's exotic good looks drew more attention than her tales, and soon a local pimp forced her into his flock.

As she matured, Lil's sultry purple eyes and her love for flowers earned her the nickname "Lavender." Her talent for storytelling matured alongside her looks, and rumors circulated that her grandfather was Varisian and her grandmother was a devil-woman. While Lil had no strenuous objections to working as a prostitute, she missed the freedom of life on the streets. Her dreams never grew grand enough to imagine life as a noble lady, a brave adventurer, or even a wife or mother. All Lil wanted was the freedom to claim her own life and to manage it, for ill or good.

After 2 years working as a prostitute, Lil realized she was changing in ways she'd never



anticipated. She woke with energy seeming to crackle in her mind. The stories she told the other prostitutes carried more weight than usual—sometimes enough to influence thought and behavior. Lil hid these developments, practicing in secret until she better understood her power. When she felt she'd mastered her new abilities, she used them to distract her pimp and escape from his employ.

A brief war ensued between Lil and her old master, who sought to recapture and punish her as an example to the other workers. Yet Lil had planned her escape well, though, and after several unsuccessful assaults, her former pimp finally found himself in the water with a particularly foul-tempered bunyip. After watching the vile man be eaten by the creature, Lil was her own mistress once again.

For the next few years, Lil continued to work as an independent prostitute. Several other women of her occupation used her as an inspiration and broke free of their own shackles. Some tried to follow her, only to find themselves gently but firmly rebuffed. Lil had no desire to lead or to follow. She wished only to be left alone to conduct her business. Her independence, her beauty, and her talent left her with no dearth of clients, and the level-headed way in which she conducted business left her living in comfort with a tidy sum hidden away for emergencies.

At the beginning of her independent career, Lil purchased several love potions to ensure a core of faithful clients. She soon abandoned that strategy, though, when she found ensorcelled lovers too difficult and time consuming to manage. She did, however, forge a lasting relationship with Falk Zincher, the alchemist who provided the potions. Lil used an array of poisons and potions to ensure her security, and Falk acted as a supplier and confidante.

Recently, one of Lil's new clients, a mercenary named Orik Vancaskerkin, fell under the charming tiefling's influence and grew madly infatuated with her. Desperate to break through Lil's businesslike reserve and into her heart, Orik sought out an alchemist to brew him a love potion. As luck had it, he found his way to Falk Zincher.

Falk quickly intuited the target of Orik's affections from the man's lovesick ramblings, and he substituted some cheap ale laced with lavender for a true love potion. Orik returned to Lil's boudoir and slipped the "potion" into her drink. Lil noticed the scent of lavender in her cup and Orik's hungry stare, and deduced that Falk was somehow involved; the alchemist often scented her purchases with lavender as a subtle tribute to their friendship. She acted the part of an infatuated paramour with Orik long enough to satisfy him, then promised to meet him the next night and sent him on his way. After a brief consultation with Falk, Lil decided to play her lovestruck role long enough to make it worth her while, and to punish Orik for trying such a trick.

For a week, Lil carried on her false romance with Orik, and through subtle questions and bardic trickery, she learned the location of Orik's savings. While Lil entertained Orik in her bedroom, Falk broke into Orik's lodgings and robbed him blind. When Orik returned home and discovered the theft, he let out a yell loud enough to wake the entire building. He rushed back to Lil's but found her door locked and bearing a note from Lil ordering him to leave her alone.

Unable to retaliate against Lil (despite her role in the treachery, he couldn't bring himself to hurt her), Orik instead turned his rage on Falk. He confronted the alchemist, words came to blows, and before he realized what had happened, Falk lay dead on the floor of his own shop. Orik panicked, knowing that Falk was the brother of a powerful local crimelord, Clegg Zincher, and he fled Riddleport without even taking the time to reclaim his money.

When news of Falk's murder reached Clegg's ears, the elder Zincher flew into a rage. He turned all his resources to tracking down those responsible for the crime, and when he hit a dead end with Orik, he turned his anger against Orik's father, Saul Vancaskerkin, and against the woman he felt was responsible for the whole situation—Lil.

After barely surviving an attack from a group of Clegg's thugs, Lil realized how desperate her situation was and did something she'd hoped she'd never have to do: she turned to another for protection. However, she sought asylum not under a pimp, but within the walls of Riddleport's church of Calistria. High priestess Shorafa Pamodae took pity on Lil (perhaps as a result of their shared heritage), and for the past year she has protected Lil from Zincher's retaliation. In that year, Lil has become a rather devout follower of Calistria, yet she has begun to chafe at having to disguise herself before going out and hopes to some day soon settle her ongoing conflict with Clegg Zincher.

APPEARANCE

Lil's glimmering purple eyes are famous in Riddleport. Although some find her exotic appearance frightening, Lil possesses grace and personal magnetism uncommon in those of fiendish ancestry. Her coal-black hair contrasts sharply with her pale skin, and her heavy curls overshadow her delicate features. Two small horns curve from her temples. Lil favors the flower for which she is named, and she usually wears a sprig of lavender somewhere on her person.

DEVELOPMENT

Lil makes all her decisions with survival and independence foremost in her mind. She frequently casts *detect thoughts* on her clients, but never uses the information for blackmail. If word got out that she used such tactics, she'd find herself out of business. Instead, she hoards the information and

brings it out only to protect herself. Some who threaten Lil find their own secrets threatened in return, and cut all ties with the prostitute rather than risk exposure.

LAVENDER LIL

CR 7

Female tiefling bard 6

CN Medium outsider (native)

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

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14

(+3 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 35 (6d6+12)

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee masterwork bladed scarf +7 (1d6–1/19–20) or

masterwork dagger +7 (1d4–1/19–20 plus poison)

Spells Known (CL 6th, +6 ranged touch)

2nd (3/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 14), *invisibility*, *sound burst* (DC 14)

1st (4/day)—*animate rope*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 13), *identify*

o (3/day)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 12), *lullaby* (DC 12), *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*darkness*

Special Attacks bardic music 6/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire courage +1, inspire competence, *suggestion*)

TACTICS

Before Combat Lil is by no means a seasoned fighter, and she prefers to exit combats as quickly as possible. When in her boudoir, she keeps a bladed scarf draped nearby in case of an emergency. On the street, she carries a poisoned dagger. She keeps a long scarf on her person and in her chamber so she can utilize her *animate rope* spell.

During Combat Lil relies heavily on poison in combat, knowing that her skill rarely matches that of her enemies. She tries first to flee, second to fight, and last to bargain, either with money or her charms.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bladed scarf), Still Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +11, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +13, Hide +4, Knowledge (local) +11, Perform (oratory) +11, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +13

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +8

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of delay poison*; **Other Gear** +1 *glamered leather armor*, masterwork bladed scarf, masterwork dagger, *ring of protection* +1, vial of small centipede poison (2), vial of Riddleport tea, vial of indigo dreams (2)



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Crystal River

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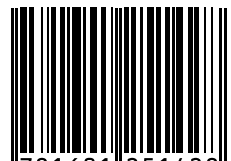
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