

# PATHFINDER

## ADVENTURE PATH



### HELL'S REBELS

## DANCE OF THE DAMNED

by Richard Pett

# KINTARGO



Night Road

TANESSEN ESTATE

JARVIS ESTATE

DELRONGE ESTATE

VASHNARSTILL ESTATE

AULAMAXA ESTATE

JHALTERO ESTATE

AULORIAN ESTATE

SARINI ESTATE

Silver Road

Yolubilis River

Yolubilis River

KINTARGO OPERA HOUSE

LUCKY BONES

ARGO ISLE

Ravounel Road



# PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH

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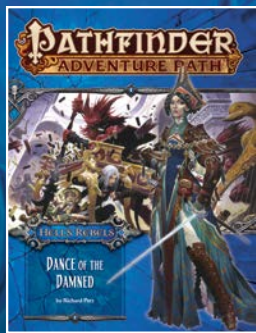
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## ON THE COVER



Cover artist Wayne Reynolds shows off someone who has been missing in action from the start of Hell's Rebels—Kintargo's previous lord-mayor, Jilia Bainilus. Hopefully, the heroes can find and rescue her from her terrible vampiric fate in this adventure!



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## REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at [paizo.com/prd](http://paizo.com/prd).

*Advanced Class Guide*  
*Advanced Player's Guide*  
*Bestiary 2*  
*Bestiary 3*

ACG  
APG  
B2  
B3

*The Inner Sea World Guide*  
*Ultimate Combat*  
*Ultimate Equipment*  
*Ultimate Magic*

ISWG  
UC  
UE  
UM



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## POLITICAL INTRIGUE ADVENTURES

**P**athfinder adventures typically follow a standard pattern: the heroes explore a location, encounter adversaries in combat, and gain treasures by defeating those foes. Now and then, however, we at Paizo like to mix things up and present adventures that focus on things other than the classic dungeon crawl. In “The Sixfold Trial,” we focused a significant part of the volume on the production and performance of a notorious and sinister play. Large portions of *Kingmaker* were concerned with wilderness exploration and the expansion of a new kingdom. The first adventure of *Skull & Shackles* was about the day-to-day life aboard a pirate ship. All situations wherein the expected tropes of “killing monsters and taking their stuff” are either turned on their head or ignored entirely.

All of the *Hell's Rebels* adventures have sections where the classic dungeon crawl format is set aside, but none more so than in “Dance of the Damned.” In this adventure,

the player characters attempt to secure political alliances by eating at a decadent banquet, seek the support of a wide range of noble families, and attend a masquerade ball where their skill at dancing and political machinations may prove as valuable as their abilities with swords and spells. While the adventure certainly does have opportunities for more traditional play elements (notably with a short underwater excursion into an aboleth's lair or a more lengthy assault on a mountainside castle), for much of “Dance of the Damned,” the players will be earning their rewards and experience points via methods other than killing enemies.

As a result, you'll want to keep an eye on those experience point totals. If your play style is simply to have your players level up their characters at specific moments during the story, you can ignore this issue in large part, but if you adhere more closely to the classic method of handing out experience points, make sure

not to shortchange your players and their characters if and when they manage to advance the storyline or solve problems via diplomacy, subterfuge, or other nonviolent methods. This adventure presents numerous story awards that should provide plenty of experience points for the PCs, but don't be afraid to adjust these noncombat awards as you see fit to ensure the PCs remain on schedule for the challenges that await them at adventure's end.

One interesting side effect that rises from an adventure that eschews classic combat encounters is the simple fact that there are fewer opportunities for the PCs to gain treasure as rewards. "Dance of the Damned" presents far fewer spoils and decked-out NPCs to loot than most adventures. Consequently, the stashes of treasure included in this volume tend to be quite a bit larger and more concentrated. While this does mean that thorough PCs will come out of the adventure with well above the expected treasure for their level, if they miss one or two of the troves, they'll be quite a way behind the wealth curve. Therefore, you should pay close attention to how much wealth and gear your player characters accumulate. As always, it's more important that the PCs' wealth is at a level you are most comfortable with given your style of GMing, but if you can tell that the players are going to miss some of the valuables, feel free to move those treasures into a stash they'll uncover later. At the very least, they can be rewarded with valuables of your own design at adventure's end by their allies for accomplishing the adventure's goals. How and where they earn their gear, after all, isn't as important as the fact that they receive these resources—they'll need everything they can scrounge together if they're going to be able to defend Kintargo in the next adventure!

## THE ONGOING RECLAMATION

The Glorious Reclamation continues its march through the rest of Cheliox as this adventure progresses, despite suffering a few setbacks here and there (the most notable of which is losing of control of Kantaria, where Thrune agents recently won a decisive victory over the Iomedaeans). Larger cities, such as Senara, are falling to the Glorious Reclamation, forcing House Thrune to mobilize their armies to defend the Chelish heartland and southern coast, which incidentally leaves less and less direct support for Barzillai Thrune and his rule over Kintargo. The inquisitor is increasingly on his own in ruling the Silver City, which—unfortunately for Kintargans—means that his methods of control will be growing more and more oppressive.

Of course, if you worry that these rumors might distract your players from this Adventure Path, feel free to downplay or omit their presence in your game entirely. Further details on the progress of the Glorious Reclamation can be found in the next Adventure Path, *Hell's Vengeance*.

## NOTORIETY CHECKS

During this adventure, you'll need to periodically roll Notoriety checks to determine whether the Silver Ravens' renown and infamy are high enough for certain events to take place. If you're using the Rebellion rules from the *Hell's Rebels Player's Guide*, the Silver Ravens' Notoriety score will have been established already and will continue to fluctuate as the game progresses. If you're not using these rules, assume that the rebellion has a static Notoriety score of 50. When you're called upon to make a Notoriety check, roll d%. If you roll equal to or less than the Silver Ravens' current Notoriety score, then they or their agents are recognized.

## THE FINAL UNMASKING

The climax of this adventure takes place at the end of a masquerade ball, when the PCs are set upon by a large number of foes inside of a sprawling opera house. Run as a typical encounter, this final fight could well be a CR 15 encounter, and one that could easily wipe out a 9th-level party. The adventure provides advice on how to run this complex battle—not every foe should focus his attention on the PCs, for example, and the PCs themselves should have several NPC allies to support them.

The battle takes place amid a crowd of hundreds, some of whom should be NPCs the PCs have met and befriended. You can use this as a sort of safety net when you run the encounter—if one or more of the PCs seem to be getting in over their heads, you can have a friendly NPC turn martyr, taking a fatal hit so that the PC can live for another round. Doing so will not only preserve player participation, but will also give the players all the more reason to hate Barzillai Thrune and be eager to end his rule in the next adventure. Alternatively, a friendly NPC might have found a good hiding place and allow a PC to come share the shelter for a few rounds—long enough for the PC to cast a few healing spells, perhaps. The friendly NPC might even have a few healing potions or scrolls to share with the PC if you wish. Finally, keep in mind that the enemies in this last fight don't necessarily want to kill the PCs—they simply want to ruin their reputations. Given the choice between slaughtering a handful of innocent revelers and striking a death blow against a PC, try to have a foe opt for slaughtering more NPCs. This helps establish the enemy's despicable nature while simultaneously preserving the PCs long enough, perhaps, to make it through the night!

  
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# DANCE OF THE DAMNED

## PART 1: THE SILVER COUNCIL

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The heroes meet with their allies to discuss Kintargo's future.

## PART 2: DEAD IN THE DEEP

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A trip to aid the aquatic elves of the Dismal Nitch ends in an underwater confrontation against a group of unquiet dead and its master.

## PART 3: THE VYRE ACCORD

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Securing the support of the city of Vyre will go a long way, but elements in the city's underworld have their own reasons to hate the heroes.

## PART 4: BREAKING THE MENADOR GAP

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If the Menador Gap can be closed, Cheliax's major land route to the northwest will be cut off, giving Kintargo the time it needs to rebel.

## PART 5: THE RUBY MASQUERADE

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Amid growing unrest, Barzillai Thrune holds a gala to appease and reward his supporters, but the event is in fact a deadly trap!

### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Dance of the Damned" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

7

The PCs begin this adventure at 7th level.

8

The PCs should be 8th level before attempting to close the Menador Gap.

9

The PCs should be 9th level before attending the Ruby Masquerade.

The PCs should be 10th level by the adventure's end.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Lord-Mayor Barzillai Thrune has seized control of Kintargo, but rule of the city is not his final goal. After studying the *Book of the Damned* and seeking the advice of the archdevil Mephistopheles himself, Barzillai has discovered a method of infusing himself into the very land of Cheliox, cheating death and achieving immortality as a spirit of the land—a genius loci. During the previous adventure, “Turn of the Torrent,” Barzillai sought out a corruption of the River of Souls known as a *soul anchor*, located deep under Kintargo. There, Barzillai enacted the ritual to anchor his soul to the region, removing his own heart while bathing in the energies of the *soul anchor*, and thus began the lifelong process of becoming a genius loci. This ritual did not kill the inquisitor—it merely bound his body and soul to the region. Leaving his heart in the *soul anchor*, Barzillai returned to Kintargo to recover from the ritual and to regain his strength. His plan now is to live out the rest of his life in Kintargo, for the longer he lives on, the more swiftly his soul will become a genius loci upon his death. The inquisitor knows that if he were to die before his time, he would be forced to endure decades of torment in Hell before having a chance to return and achieve his ultimate goal, and as such, he hopes to secure Kintargo as a safe place wherein he can live out the rest of his life.

As “Dance of the Damned” begins, Barzillai is in an awkward position. The lord-mayor knows the Silver Ravens exist and oppose Thrune’s control of Kintargo. Likewise, he knows the PCs are rising stars who are idolized and well loved. It doesn’t take long for Barzillai to deduce the truth—that the PCs are indeed the leaders of the Silver Ravens—but the last thing he wants to do is martyr them. Yet he can’t leave them to continue their course of action without risking loss of control of Kintargo. At this point, being forced to abandon the city would be disastrous for his plans to attune his soul to the region.

And so the devious inquisitor engineers a cunning trap: luring the PCs into his clutches and painting them as bloodthirsty criminals who had to be put down. The lord-mayor and his allies organize a grand event—the Ruby Masquerade—to be held in the legendary Kintargo Opera House. Invitations will be sent to many of Kintargo’s nobles, artisans, and celebrities, but also to a fair number of working-class crafters and laborers. Barzillai intends to present the ball as a “peace offering” to the city, hoping to show its citizens that he values them as much as did their previous lord-mayor, Jilia Bainilus.

In truth, this entire event is a sham, and the roles of Barzillai and his agents at the ball will instead be played by devils and killers. Barzillai plans to turn the event into a slaughter, and then frame the PCs as the perpetrators—the murderers of Kintargo’s most beloved aristocrats and artists. Through such defamation, Barzillai hopes to neutralize the Silver Ravens and the PCs in one blow, leaving their reputations as dead as their bodies.

## PART 1: THE SILVER COUNCIL

By the start of this adventure, the PCs should have secured numerous allies among Kintargo’s movers and shakers, including the Hellknight Order of the Torrent, the Bellflower Network, the cult of Milani, and even dissident members of the Chelish navy. Yet as the Silver Ravens’ list of allies grows, their own fame as heroes of the city has grown as well. At the end of the previous adventure, Lord-Mayor Barzillai Thrune may have been forced to publicly thank the PCs, though he rewarded them with a number of gifts that he can secretly use to spy on the PCs via spells like *locate object*.

During “Dance of the Damned,” Barzillai’s interest in the PCs and the Silver Ravens only intensifies. His agents begin searching for their headquarters and begin pressing for confrontations with the PCs, but for now, these are not intended to be serious attempts to undermine the rebels or even defeat them. Barzillai doesn’t want martyrs on his hands to further encourage the rebellion’s growth—should his trap with the Ruby Masquerade fail, he saves his plans for a full-out attack on the Silver Ravens for the next stage of his scheme. These plans are covered in full in the next adventure, “A Song of Silver.”

## THE KINTARGO RUMOR MILL

The PCs will have numerous opportunities to learn and overhear rumors about current events in Kintargo. They might overhear a rumor during play while relaxing at their favorite tavern. They could learn a rumor via a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information after 1d4 hours of investigation, or by taking the Gather Information rebellion action. You can randomly determine one of the rumors in the table on page 7; information in parentheses after each indicates if the rumor is a general one or if it links to a specific encounter in this adventure. If you roll up an encounter-based rumor the PCs have already resolved, you should adjust the rumor to account for that fact—having the PCs hear a growing number of rumors about how they solved a problem is a great way to give them in-game feedback about the rebellion’s growing success.

## TAX HIKE

Early in this adventure, preferably before the first Silver Council takes place (see page 6), Thrune announces a second tax hike to all Bleakbridge traffic. After the last increase to 5 sp per crossing, starting with this adventure the tax for crossing the bridge increases to 2 gp (or 10 gp for a day-long pass)—an announcement that shouldn’t inconvenience the PCs, but crosses the line for many of Kintargo’s citizens. Those who own boats begin smuggling travelers between north and south Kintargo. At first they charge only a few coppers, but increasingly ferry travelers for free as a way to fight back against the government.

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## LUCKY BONES' DEFENSE

This adventure assumes the PCs have claimed the Lucky Bones as the new hideout for the Silver Ravens. Eventually, the PCs will need to defend their headquarters from attack in "A Song of Silver," but no such attack is scheduled to occur during this adventure. The players don't know this, though, and your group may seek to add traps, guardians, or other wards and defenses to the Lucky Bones in anticipation of such an assault. Knowing what portions of the Lucky Bones the PCs have fortified early will be of help in the next adventure.

Rules for creating traps and paying for such creations appear on page 423 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, and the number and power of any traps the PCs wish to add to the Lucky Bones is limited only by their resources and time. If the PCs want to devote a portion of the Silver Ravens themselves to the defense of the Lucky Bones, a single Special Action taken during the rebellion's Activity phase is all that's required to ensure that the hideout is properly watched over. Placement of additional guardians, including charmed monsters, constructs, trained animals or magical beasts, or hired mercenaries, is also left to the PCs' discretion. At your discretion, placement of certain guardians might impart penalties to the rebellion's Loyalty score (as bound devils or enslaved undead tend to unsettle good-aligned rebels).

## MAXIMUM REBELLION RANK

As this adventure begins, the Silver Ravens' maximum rebellion rank should be 15. During this adventure, as soon as the PCs accomplish two of the three regional quests (as detailed in Parts 2 through 4), their group's maximum rebellion rank increases to 20, the absolute maximum. Alternatively, once this adventure is over, their maximum rebellion rank increases to 20, regardless of how many regional quests they have successfully completed.

## THE SILVER COUNCIL

As this adventure begins, the PCs should be made aware that now that they have firmly established the Silver Ravens and secured a hideout, the addition of a brief weekly meeting with key allies and leaders among the Silver Ravens is well advised. If the PCs don't come up with this idea first, have one of their allies, such as Hetamon Haace, mention that he was approached by Lady Mialari Docur of Docur's School for Girls. Lady Docur wants to talk to the leaders of the Silver Ravens about a possible alliance with her organization, and the PCs' ally suggests the founding of a "Silver Council" to meet weekly as a venue for the PCs and their allies to discuss future tactics and concerns.

Who attends the Silver Council and where it is located is left to the PCs, but if they ask for advice, most allies suggest not holding the meetings at the Lucky Bones and

instead changing the venue every week to different allied taverns, the homes of allied NPCs, or the like, so as to prevent Throne agents from learning about the meeting.

The first Silver Council meeting is particularly important for this adventure, in that it offers an opportunity for you to focus the PCs' goals. The topics of this first meeting are laid out below. Whether future Silver Council meetings happen in this adventure is left to the players. If they do, it's best to have these meetings take place just before or just after you run a week's rebellion activities and events.

### TOPIC 1: LADY DOCUR'S PROPOSAL

Hetamon Haace has been approached by one of his long-standing allies, Lady **Mialari Docur** (CN female elf rogue 3/sorcerer 4/arcane trickster 2). This elven woman has long run Lady Docur's School for Girls in Villegre, and is today the closest thing that Kintargo currently has to an actual mistress of a thieves' guild.

Lady Docur is curious to find out if the Silver Ravens have any plans beyond rebellion. She's heard rumors that the Silver Ravens have an interest in the Gray Spiders, Kintargo's previous thieves' guild of significance, and worries the rebellion might end up becoming her competition. Beyond this concern, she wants desperately to get rid of Barzillai. His presence in Kintargo is no good for her school and is an affront to her sensibilities.

When she speaks during the Silver Council to the PCs, she does so respectfully and gracefully, speaking with tact and making sure that the PCs get the impression she'd be a better ally than enemy. In hopes of sweetening the deal, she brings gifts for the PCs to show them her good intentions—a *scroll of heal* and a *scroll of raise dead*—items she's kept in a personal stash for emergencies, but that she now feels would serve Kintargo better in the hands of the city's saviors. Unless the PCs are overly crass, boorish, or unwelcoming, an alliance with the elf and her followers, the Lacunafex, is more or less automatic; see page 57 for details on what she can offer the Silver Ravens as an ally.

Note that if the PCs haven't started to curry favor with Kintargo's nobles, Lady Docur is an excellent NPC to use to push them in that direction. She can point out that one of the most important factors in her own work as the leader of a "society of gifted individuals who would, without her guidance, be outcasts at best" is that she's maintained excellent relations with the city's elite. Securing alliances with a majority of Kintargo's noble families is just good sense.

For now, strive to present Lady Docur as something of a friendly enigma. Beyond the boon she and the Lacunafex grant as allies, she has little else to add directly to this adventure. Full statistics for her, as well as information on how she can help directly oppose Barzillai Throne when the time comes, will appear in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #100: A Song of Silver*.



## KINTARGO RUMORS

### d10 Rumor

- 1 "The increased taxes on Bleakbridge are just the start. I hear Thrune's planning on taxing entertainment, food, and even the streets themselves soon!" (*General and unfounded rumor due to growing unrest.*)
- 2 "Heard that Thrune's going to throw a costume ball for the city at the opera house, and that invitations will be going out across all walks of life. If that's true... maybe Barzillai isn't all bad?" (*General rumor indicating that Barzillai may be trying to soften his public image.*)
- 3 "Sounds like Thrune's considering ending the curfew—maybe he'll even return taxes back to normal after the Ruby Masquerade. Wish I could attend and hear for myself!" (*False rumor circulated by Barzillai to lure PCs to the opera house.*)
- 4 "The opera house has secret chambers within that hold treasures hidden away from the time of the civil war—treasures no one's seen in decades!" (*Rumor circulated by Barzillai to lure PCs to the opera house—one that he's unaware is actually true.*)
- 5 "My cousin's friend finally outdid herself with the crazy stories—she says she saw a blue dragon with some sort of pentagram carved into its chest appear out of nowhere on the roof of the opera house late last night, before it took off into the night sky!" (*Rumor intended to foreshadow Rivozair's appearance in "A Song of Silver."*)
- 6 "Her shop burnt down during the Night of Ashes, but I don't believe Shensen died—she must be working for the Silver Ravens!" (*Foreshadows discovery of Shensen as a statue in the opera house.*)
- 7 "Heard from a merchant ship that sailed too close to the Dismal Nitch that there were strange fires burning on the shore. Place is haunted, for sure. Who in their right mind would live there?" (*Foreshadows Part 2 of this adventure.*)
- 8 "Vyre's been strangely quiet about all of this political unrest, carrying on like nothing new's happening. Must be nice to be so sheltered away from it all." (*Foreshadows Part 3 of this adventure.*)
- 9 "Menador Gap's all but closed to traffic, with one of the lord-mayor's distant relations overseeing the closure. Only Thrune loyalists are being allowed through the pass!" (*Foreshadows Part 4 of this adventure.*)
- 10 "The Aulorians seem to be shifting support from Kintargan tradition to Thrune. Feels more and more like our so-called nobles are turning into the lord-mayor's pets!" (*Encourages PCs to seek the support of Kintargo's nobles.*)

## TOPIC 2: REGIONAL SUPPORT

Back in the first adventure, "In Hell's Bright Shadow," Laria Longroad gave the PCs some advice on the five steps of revolution. So far, the PCs have rallied and recruited followers and secured a stronghold, and as the Silver Council's second topic gets under way, Laria points out that the time has come to gather regional support. It would be foolish to launch a full-scale attack on Barzillai and his minions when he could reach out to Cheliox itself for support, or even to his own support here in the city. By taking steps to counter or minimize the ways Cheliox can lend support to Thrune, the PCs bolster their chances for a successful revolution when the time to strike comes.

Laria and the other NPCs of the Silver Council have narrowed the opportunities for regional support to three targets. The order in which the PCs attempt these three missions is up to them (although the order in which they're presented in this adventure represents their increasing difficulty).

**Acisazi (see Part 2):** Following the rescue of several elves from the town of Acisazi, the PCs have the opportunity to secure an alliance with the aquatic elves of that remote village—an alliance that would be a significant asset in defending Kintargo from naval responses from Cheliox.

**Vyre (see Part 3):** While technically a part of Cheliox, the city of Vyre has long been treated more as a free city by the

government, which values the fact that Vyre is a place where officials can go to unwind. Maintaining good relations with Vyre is important to the Chelish government, and thus securing Vyre's support for Kintargo's independence would be a significant boon to the Silver Ravens.

**Menador Gap (see Part 4):** While the Menador Mountains aren't impassably rugged, there's only one navigable pass through the mountains as far as troop movements and trade with the rest of Cheliox are concerned: the Menador Gap. If this pass were to close, Cheliox would be unable to send additional ground troops directly to Kintargo, and would have to move around the mountains through Nidal or up through Pezzack—both significant detours through areas fraught with their own political troubles.

## TOPIC 3: SCUTTLEBUTT

The rest of the meeting should be devoted to advice and sharing rumors. You can use future Silver Council meetings to supply the PCs with new rumors—roll on the rumor table above each time the PCs have a meeting to determine what their allies bring to their attention. During this first meeting though, three specific points of interest are brought up.

**Curious Investigator:** One of the PCs' allies should mention having noticed a woman asking around about the PCs and the Silver Ravens. As this NPC

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describes the woman, others in the group pipe in with similar observations; this curious woman has been asking questions all over town. This is an independent investigator hired by Thrune named Tayacet Tiora. The PCs may have noticed her or even confronted her in the previous adventure—in this case, they should recognize the descriptions. Tayacet has become increasingly frustrated with her job working for Thrune, and increasingly impressed with the PCs, particularly if they caught and defeated Varl Wex in the previous adventure. See Part 5 for more details on Tayacet.

**Lord-Mayor Jilia Bainilus:** Lictor Octavio has long suspected that Kintargo's previous lord-mayor never left the city and that she'd been captured and imprisoned—and perhaps even executed—by Barzillai Thrune. He reaffirms his convictions during this meeting, even though he's received no new information about his theory. If the PCs follow up on this rumor, those they speak to repeat the story that Jilia fled Kintargo for distant Arcadia at the outset of all the unrest rising throughout Cheliox associated with the Glorious Reclamation. With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, a PC confirms that most of Kintargo's citizens don't believe this hearsay.

In fact, Jilia's fate is worse than Lictor Octavio imagines: she's been transformed into a vampire thrall of Alucedá Zhol, Kintargo's high priest of Zon-Kuthon, and has spent the duration of this Adventure Path imprisoned under the opera house. The PCs should have a chance to discover her fate, destroy her, and then restore her to life if things go according to plan; see Part 5 for more information.

**The Ruby Masquerade:** Finally, rumors are spreading that Lord-Mayor Barzillai Thrune is planning on throwing a masquerade ball in the near future as a way to curry favor with Kintargo's nobles and artists. Such an event might give the PCs an excellent opportunity to get close to Thrune and his allies. The Silver Ravens will keep their ears to the ground to try to learn more about this upcoming event and will even work to get the PCs invited. This event, the Ruby Masquerade, is the climax of this adventure; see Part 5 for more information.

## ALLIANCES WITH ARISTOCRATS

Kintargo is home to numerous wealthy families, but there are nine official noble houses with interests in the city. Of these nine, one was all but eradicated by Thrune on the Night of Ashes—Rexus Victocora is the last of his line in the city.

The task of securing alliances with the other families of Kintargo is one the PCs should work at throughout the course of this adventure, but the amount of time you wish to set aside for roleplaying between the PCs and these nobles is left to you. The number of noble families the PCs recruit will play a key role in the next adventure to determine the Silver Ravens' initial strength when the battle for Kintargo begins.

Each of the eight noble families is presented below in an abbreviated format.

**Leader:** Each leader is listed with a few vital statistics such as race, class, and level, along with three different personality quirks to inspire roleplaying interactions should they come up.

**Interests:** This section lists the family's interests and concerns. A PC whose background, skills, or abilities align closely with these interests gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all skill checks made to learn about a family's political allegiance or to broker alliances.

**Political Allegiance:** Each family's political allegiance is listed with a DC; this is the DC of a Diplomacy check to gather information or a Knowledge (nobility) check to learn where that family's allegiance lies. A family with a political allegiance to Kintargo can be convinced to ally with the Silver Ravens if the family's alliance requirements are met. There are no penalties for failing to secure this alliance, and multiple attempts to secure an alliance with such a family are possible. A family with a political allegiance to Thrune will never agree to an alliance with the Silver Ravens, and any attempt by a PC to broker an alliance with them increases the rebellion's Notoriety score by 2d6. A family with a political allegiance of Kintargo/Thrune is one whose current politics are in flux—they can be convinced to ally with the Silver Ravens if the alliance requirements are met, but if an alliance attempt is failed, they automatically become Thrune supporters and increase the Silver Ravens' Notoriety score by 2d6.

**Alliance Requirements:** This section details the skill check DC (and possible additional requirements) needed to secure an alliance with the noble family if the PCs seek to personally pursue one. An option for having representatives of the Silver Ravens take a Special action during the rebellion's Activity phase is offered as well. Either method is equally viable for securing a long-term alliance. If one of the PCs is a member of a noble family, the Silver Ravens gain a +10 circumstance bonus on all checks made to secure the alliance with that family (if the PC is in good standing with his family) or a -10 penalty (if he is not). No alliance requirements are listed for families firmly loyal to Thrune.

**Alliance Benefit:** This indicates what benefit the Silver Ravens gain for securing an alliance with the family in question. No alliance benefits are listed for families firmly loyal to Thrune.

### AULAMAXA

**Leader** Archbaroness Eldonna Aulamaxa (N female human aristocrat 3/fighter 5); flirtatious, gossipy, dotes on her beloved (and aggressive) poodle Harcule

**Interests** hunting, opera, public opinion

**Political Allegiance** Kintargo (DC 15)

**Alliance Requirements** Impress the archbaroness with your skill at hunting (Survival DC 30) or singing (Perform

[sing] DC 30), or use the Spread Disinformation rebellion action to reduce the Silver Ravens' Notoriety score by 6 or more with a single check.

**Alliance Benefit** The Silver Ravens can now take the Recruit Supporters rebellion action up to twice per Activity phase.

### AULORIAN

**Leader** Count Auxis Aulorian (LE male human aristocrat 7); egotistical, florid, short-tempered

**Interests** magic, salt, silver

**Political Allegiance** Kintargo/Throne (DC 20)

**Alliance Requirements** In order to secure an alliance with Auxis, the PCs must help him locate his missing son, Marquel. Of course, Marquel remains in hiding on board the *Scourge of Belial* with his lover, Captain Sargaeta. The PCs need not return Marquel to his father to secure an alliance—they need only to inform Auxis of where Marquel is, and he'll take care of the rest with hired mercenaries. Captain Sargaeta ends up imprisoned in Kintargo Keep as a result, and Marquel may well commit suicide not long thereafter. In any event, betraying Sargaeta in this manner removes him as an ally to the Silver Ravens. Alternatively, a PC can buy Auxis's loyalty with a bribe (preferably in magic items) of no less than 20,000 gp—a PC can pick up on this possibility with a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check while speaking to the man.

**Alliance Benefit** Auxis was privy to a fair amount of information about the government, and if the PCs manage to secure an alliance with the Aulorians, Auxis shares this information with the PCs. This information allows the rebellion to take a Reduce Danger action each week as a bonus action, even if the rebellion doesn't normally have a team capable of taking such an action.

### DELRONGE

**Leader** Archbaroness Melodia Delronge (LE female human aristocrat 2/bard 8); confident, cosmopolitan, patriotic

**Interests** horse breeding, hunting, mercantilism

**Political Allegiance** Throne (DC 15)

### JARVIS

**Leader** Baroness Belcara Jarvis (CG female human aristocrat 3/fighter 6); friendly, unusually passionate about architecture, secretly worships Cayden Cailean

**Interests** architecture, carpentry, city planning, stonemasonry

**Political Allegiance** Kintargo (DC 15)

**Alliance Requirements** Impress the baroness with your skill at building (Craft or Profession [related to the Baroness's interests] DC 30) or your sophistication and social grace (Diplomacy DC 30), or use the Reduce Danger action with the rebellion to reduce Kintargo's Danger rating by 10 or more for a week. If she knows that at least one of the PCs is a devout worshiper of Cayden Cailean, the PCs gain a +5 bonus on these checks.

**Alliance Benefit** The baroness makes her vast collection of maps of Kintargo available to the rebels; these maps include many forgotten or obscure routes through the city. The rebellion gains a +2 bonus on Security checks.

### JHALTERO

**Leader** Baron Canton Jhaltero (CN male human aristocrat 7); ferociously protective of family, shrewd judge of character, soft-spoken

**Interests** information, silver, stone quarries

**Political Allegiance** Kintargo (DC 20)

**Alliance Requirements** Impress the baron with your wealth of knowledge (Knowledge [any] DC 30) or your skill in reading social cues and motivations (Sense Motive DC 30), or help him smuggle a cousin out of the city (doing so is a special use of the Rescue Character action that requires a successful DC 20 Security check).

**Alliance Benefit** The baron allows the Silver Ravens to utilize his information network. The rebellion gains a +2 bonus on Secrecy checks.

### SARINI

**Leader** Countess Urora Sarini (LE female human aristocrat 4/bard 5); constantly vying for Throne attention, enjoys cruel humor, obsequious

**Interests** diabolism, entertainment, Theater of the Real

**Political Allegiance** Throne (DC 10)

### TANESSEN

**Leader** Count Geoff Tanessen (LN male human aristocrat 2/wizard 6); humorless, student of military history, taciturn

**Interests** armor and weapon crafting, city defense, military

**Political Allegiance** Throne (DC 15)

### VASHNARSTILL

**Leader** Baron Sendi Vashnarstill (CN male human aristocrat 5/rogue 2); greedy, sleazy, worldly

**Interests** Arcadian trade, fishing, shipbuilding

**Political Allegiance** Kintargo (DC 10)

**Alliance Requirements** Impress the baron with your verbal acrobatics and innuendo (Bluff DC 30) or your skill with languages (Linguistics DC 30), or use the Earn Gold rebellion action to earn more than 50 gp with a single roll.

**Alliance Benefit** The Vashnarstills help fund the placement of minor and intermediate caches. They can finance the placement of up to three minor caches and one intermediate cache per month, at no cost to the Silver Ravens (though a Secure Cache rebellion action is still necessary to establish each cache).

**Development:** If the PCs manage to secure the allegiances of at least four of the noble families, there's a huge surge in support for the rebellion. At the start of the rebellion's next Upkeep phase, automatically increase the

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## THE DISMAL NITCH



## A. ACISAZI



## B. THE DROWNED EYE



## WITHIN THE DROWNED EYE



rebellion's supporters by 600 or by enough to boost the Silver Ravens to the next rank, whichever total is higher.

**Story Award:** Each time the PCs manage to secure an alliance with a noble family, award them 3,200 XP.

## PART 2: DEAD IN THE DEEP

In the previous adventure, the PCs likely rescued a group of aquatic elf scouts from the village of Acisazi, which is located in a remote and oft-ignored coastal region to the west known as the Dismal Nitch. The leader of these scouts is a woman named Aava. She explains that her village has been ravaged by a strange illness, and her group came to Kintargo seeking the aid of one of their strongest allies in the city—opera singer and Thrune antagonist Shensen. Unfortunately, they haven't been able to contact her (indeed, she's been missing since the Night of Ashes, and as the PCs will learn in Part 5 of this adventure, has spent her time since petrified as a statue in the Kintargo Opera House). Their time as prisoners of the skum have made the elves desperate, and they explain that if the PCs return with them to Acisazi and aid them in their plight, surely the elves will ally with Kintargo!

## THE SITUATION IN ACISAZI

Aava reveals to the PCs that several weeks ago (adjust this time frame as appropriate to your game so it places this event at a point during the first week of your Hell's

Rebel's campaign), a strange sickness swept over her village. The malady originally caused listlessness and aches, but as it continued and the elves became more seriously ill, the village elders found the cause—the ancient wards around the Drowned Eye, an underwater haunted pit 4 miles west of Acisazi, had failed.

Aava can explain that the Drowned Eye has long been regarded by the elves as a cursed place. Acisazi's founders placed protective wards around the pit to contain its unnatural curse, and for generations, the citizens of the village avoided the area. In fact, Aava notes wryly, the notorious site's reputation has helped protect the village from intruders by scaring them away.

Now, though, the Drowned Eye has become a doom on the village—one the current populace cannot combat. Aava's group was one of two sent out to appeal to neighbors for aid; the other headed west to a distant aquatic elf settlement to ask for help, but no word has been received from them. As far as Aava knows, her group is Acisazi's last chance, and with Shensen nowhere to be found, the PCs are her final hope.

Aava suspects that a creature recently moved into the Drowned Eye, and that this creature destroyed the wards and seized control of the undead that dwell within. Two waves of draugr have raided Acisazi recently, taking with them a dozen or so victims each time. During the second raid, one of the draugr issued an ultimatum to the

villagers—Acisazi would offer up a fresh dozen subjects whenever the lord of the Eye, a creature the undead identified as “Menotheguro,” demanded it. If the elves complied, monthly sacrifices would suffice, but if they refused, Menotheguro promised a swift destruction of the village.

Today, between the sickness spreading through the village and the looming threat of more raids, the elves and half-elves of Acisazi are in desperate need of rescue—a rescue that Aava hopes the PCs can provide. She knows little about Menotheguro, beyond the fact that the skum who captured her served the creature as well. If the PCs haven’t already come to the conclusion that Menotheguro is an aboleth, Aava can certainly voice her fear, noting that if it is indeed an aboleth, it’s likely some sort of necromancer or possesses some other way to control undead—a fact that the elf finds sobering, to say the least.

### TRAVELING TO THE DISMAL NITCH

Mists seem to constantly hug the broken coast of the Dismal Nitch, and the bay itself is blocked by a treacherous line of jagged reefs. The shoreline consists of rugged cliffs, leaving very few areas for safe harbor and little access to the interior from the shore. The region is plagued by stories of ghost ships, sea serpents, and flesh-eating merfolk. As a result, the Dismal Nitch is traditionally avoided by coastal runners and trade ships. All this is by design of the aquatic elves, who have long used their magic and trickery to give the Dismal Nitch its fearsome features so as to keep a length of land safe and secure for one of their rare shoreline villages, Acisazi. This is a place for the aquatic elves to stage missions ashore, craft necessities that cannot be easily fabricated underwater, and shelter air-breathing allies and half-elven children.

With a successful DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) check, a PC knows that no ships ply the waters of the Dismal Nitch, and that if the PCs are to make the journey there by boat, they’ll need to hire a captain specifically for the journey. While the cost for this 85-mile journey is only 20 gp per person (the cost being over double the normal 1 sp/mile cost of ship’s passage due to the region’s poor reputation), unless the PC arranging it succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check to ensure secrecy, Barzillai’s agents take note of the trip and the Silver Ravens’ Notoriety score increases by 1d6. If the PCs make use of one of the favors owed them by Captain Sargaeta, he’ll bring them to and from the Dismal Nitch for free, and uses his tact and connections to avoid any Notoriety gain. In either case, sailing from Kintargo to Acisazi takes just under 2 days.

Overland, it’s only a 60-mile journey, yet much of this is through increasingly rugged, increasingly unsettled, and trackless hill country. Feel free to make use of the encounter tables on page 83 to liven up the journey.

While sneaking out of Kintargo to make an overland journey avoids any risk of Notoriety gain, it’ll take the PCs longer to make this journey by foot or even on horseback. (At a base speed of 30 feet, it’s a 5-day journey, while on horseback at a speed of 50 feet it’s a 3-day journey.)

As the PCs approach the Dismal Nitch, their aquatic elf escorts advise that they anchor their ship at a sheltered cove a short distance north of Acisazi, and then make their way south by land to avoid both the treacherous reefs and the minions of Menotheguro. No captain, even Captain Sargaeta, is willing to brave the notorious reefs, but if the PCs own their own ship and wish to risk navigation, feel free to make it as harrowing as possible for them. This adventure assumes the final approach to Acisazi is by land.

### A. ACISAZI

The elven village of Acisazi is an unusual place that straddles two cultures and two terrains. While its populace is primarily half-elves of aquatic elf descent, some full-blooded aquatic elves dwell there as well, and thus part of the village is located underwater. The citizens of the village have always been insular and strange. They maintain some ties to other aquatic elf settlements further out to sea in Nisroch Bay and the Arcadian Ocean beyond, but they are by and large self-sufficient, their primary purpose being the providing of a place for half-elves and their families to dwell.

Menotheguro’s arrival in the Drowned Eye now threatens Acisazi’s survival. The depths of the Drowned Eye have long been haunted, but until recently, wards placed by long-dead Acisazi elders have kept this vile influence contained. When Menotheguro claimed the Drowned Eye, it destroyed those wards and took control of the resident undead. Since then, the malevolence that infuses the site has been expanding, and as this influence grows, the elves of the village grow sickly and listless. Menotheguro has attacked the village with its undead minions twice to date, the assaults ending as quickly as they began with the abduction of a dozen or so elves each time. The village sent two groups of scouts out for aid—one to Kintargo, and another deeper into the sea to the nearest aquatic elf settlement of Mirivenn, a few hundred miles to the west. Alas, unbeknownst to the Acisazi villagers, this second group never made it out of the Dismal Nitch, having been captured and slaughtered by the aboleth.

Today, the elves and half-elves of Acisazi are depressed, gaunt, and haunted by an almost palpable sense of doom. The influence coming from the ancient magic found within the Drowned Eye (once an aboleth site of power that Menotheguro is attempting to restore) is ancient and mysterious, and not all that well understood by the elves. They know the Drowned Eye is source of the malaise, but also know that they lack the resources

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### THE SICKNESS

As long as the ancient magic in the Drowned Eye persists and the wards containing the magic remain inactive, all aquatic elves and aquatic half-elves within a 10-mile radius of the Drowned Eye suffer the effects of a debilitating malaise. This nameless illness causes such characters to become sickened as long as they remain in this area of effect—the onset of this sickness can be delayed by a successful DC 15 Fortitude save every 12 hours, but once this save is failed, the sickness remains in effect. So far, this effect has not resulted in any deaths, but in time, the sickness will grow in strength, eventually killing all elves and animating them as Menotheguro's undead slaves. This is a disease effect. It can be cured via magic, but such cures do not prevent the victim from falling prey to the sickness anew if they remain in the area for 12 hours. See encounter **B4** for information on how to contain or remove this effect for good.

to deal with it—any of their number that travel to the Drowned Eye vanish at best, or join the undead ranks of the enemy at worst.

#### ACISAZI

CN village

**Corruption** -1; **Crime** -3; **Economy** -1; **Law** +2; **Lore** +0;  
**Society** -3

**Qualities** Deep Traditions, Insular

**Danger** +0

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** autocracy

**Population** 146 (112 aquatic half-elves, 34 aquatic elves)

#### Notable NPCs

**Speaker Athannah Quhurill** (CN venerable female aquatic half-elf druid 5)

**Warden Nerrenn Aeelamna** (CN aquatic elf ranger 7)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 500gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500gp;

**Spellcasting** 3rd

**Minor Items** +1 *merciful trident*, *ring of swimming*, 8 *potions of water breathing*; **Medium Items** *belt of physical might* +2 (Dex and Con); **Major Items** —

#### SETTLEMENT QUALITY

**Deep Traditions** Acisazi is bolstered by its strong traditions, but its citizens have difficulty interacting with visitors. (*Crime* -2; *Law* +2; *Society* -2)

#### ACISAZI GAZETTEER

Half above and half below the water, Acisazi is a place of beautiful decay; seaweed and anemones cling to surfaces below the water, while above the surface weathering has worn smooth the driftwood walls of its quaint

buildings. The bulk of Acisazi's structures are one-story buildings with two to three rooms—most are the homes of solitary half-elves who value their privacy as much as the convenience of neighbors who don't ostracize their heritage. Additional homes and buildings sit atop creaking boardwalks and piers—these structures house families, where aquatic elves and half-elves dwell together with easier direct access to the sea. Below the waterline dwell the rest of the village's aquatic elves, living in submerged caves in reefs or isles. Fog is nearly always present in the village at dawn and dusk, and layers of moss and lichen serve the structures in place of paint.

Acisazi's locals dress oddly, wearing clothing made from seaweed, shells, strips of leather, and material scavenged from the flotsam left by the tide. The people aren't particularly rich, but they have little need for material wealth. The primary religion in Acisazi is worship of Gozreh, and the elves and half-elves live mostly in harmony with the wild, subsisting on fish, sea birds, and seaweed grown on the numerous submerged farms in the Acisazi harbor.

The following specific areas in and around Acisazi warrant additional information.

**A1. The Hidden Climb:** The cliffs surrounding Acisazi are sheer drops of 100 feet, and scaling them requires a successful DC 20 Climb check. However, a hidden set of ladderlike niches have been cut into the cliff wall. From below, a PC needs only a successful DC 10 Perception check to notice the route, but from above, the DC of this Perception check increases to 15. If the PCs are accompanied by Aava, she points out these recesses to the PCs. Navigating the cliffs via this route is much easier (Climb DC 5).

**A2. Warden's Perch:** This ledge of rock looks out over the village of Acisazi. A small, stout building in the center is the post of Acisazi's warden, Nerrenn Aeelamna, but an investigation of the building reveals the curious fact that the building hasn't been visited in what seems like days, as if the warden had been spending most of his time elsewhere.

**A3. Food Storehouse:** The village uses this building to store food for lean times. Fish and shellfish are smoked in one of the numerous side rooms, while the central room is used to store preserved food. Even a casual glance into the storehouse should confirm that Acisazi's food stores are running low—the elves have been unwilling to risk traveling out to sea of late.

**A4. Speaker's Bones:** Located near the center of the village, this unique structure has been built over the bones of a long-dead blue whale that beached itself here decades ago. The whale's skeleton creates the building's frame, which is draped with sheets of weatherproofed leather, thatched with seaweed, and shored up by stacked stones and driftwood. The Speaker's Bones serves Acisazi as a town hall, and is the traditional home of the village's leader.

**A5. Seaweed Farms:** The bulk of Acisazi's vegetable diet comes from these submerged seaweed farms, although recently the farms have been left to grow untended.

### EVENT 1: ARRIVAL IN ACISAZI (CR 6)

How the PCs approach Acisazi is up to them. If Aava is with the group, she suggests approaching via the hidden climb (area A1), as this route avoids exposure to perils by sea. When the PCs approach Acisazi for the first time, read or paraphrase the following.

A dreary, sodden skeleton of a village clings to the shoreline here, nestled in the embrace of fog-slicked cliffs to all sides save the west, where the gray waters of the sea surge. With buildings of driftwood and wicker connected by rope bridges and soggy wooden boardwalks, the town does not present a welcoming embrace. Even the sea birds that festoon the roofs of the small village seem tired and listless.

Once the PCs enter town, a large group of half-elves gathers to stare nervously at them before one of them makes his way through the crowd to present himself.

This notable aquatic elf is Nerrenn Aeelamna, the village warden. Once the commander of a group of scouts (the officer to whom Aava and the others once reported, in fact), Nerrenn is the last of the village's defenders of note. With the village speaker taken ill, Nerrenn has taken on the role of interim leader, and he does not suffer visitors to Acisazi well, even if they're escorted by one of his own.

Further complicating the situation is the fact that for several weeks now Nerrenn has been dominated by the aboleth Menotheguro. None in the village have realized this—they've been blindly accepting Nerrenn's reports of perils in the waters and surrounding lands, when in fact these are ploys enacted at Menotheguro's command. However, as Nerrenn speaks to the PCs, a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Sense Motive check notes the strange cadence of his mannerisms, suggesting that the elf has been dominated.

Nerrenn's initial greeting to the PC is terse. He demands the outlanders turn back at once and leave the village, making it clear they are not welcome here. If Aava or other aquatic elves accompany the PCs, Nerrenn allows the aquatic elves back into the village but stands firm on denying the PCs entry—he may even comment that the returning aquatic elves will need to undergo interrogations to confirm they have not been "corrupted" by their contact with air-breathers.

Allow the PCs to interact with Nerrenn, roleplaying out their attempts to convince him they're here to help. With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check in public, the PCs can maneuver him into a position where he has no choice but to admit the PCs to the village, but only to meet with Acisazi's speaker. In this event, Nerrenn slips off into the sea while the PCs talk to the speaker. He swims out

to the Drowned Eye to report to his master, and can be encountered again later. Alternatively, with a successful DC 19 Intimidate check, a PC flusters Nerrenn enough that he steps aside and lets the group enter Acisazi unescorted, then slips off to join the aboleth soon thereafter.

If the Diplomacy or Intimidate checks fail, or if the PCs simply try to force their way into the village, Nerrenn shrieks in rage and attacks them, accusing them of being harbingers of the sickness plaguing the village.

Nerrenn's animal companion is a jigsaw shark named Sesskeress who spends its time swimming the waters of the harbor. If Nerrenn retreats to the Drowned Eye, he brings the shark with him.

### NERRENN AEELAMNA CR 6

#### XP 2,400

Male aquatic elf ranger (shapeshifter) 7 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Races* 242, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 126)

CN Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf, shapechanger)

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 71 (7d10+28)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantment

**Immune** sleep

**Weakness** sickened

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +9 (1d4+7)

**Special Attacks** combat style (natural weapon), favored enemy (monstrous humanoids +4, humans +2)

**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 4th; concentration +4)

2nd—*bear's endurance*

1st—*charm animal* (DC 13), *longstrider*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Before confronting the PCs, Nerrenn casts *bear's endurance* and *longstrider* on himself, and then uses his shifter's blessing to activate his form of the dragon.

**During Combat** If the PCs have any animal companions, Nerrenn uses *charm animal* on the first round of battle to prevent one such companion from attacking him. He attacks with his claws, focusing attacks on humans if possible, and uses Power Attack at all times (these bonuses and penalties are included in his melee attacks above).

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Nerrenn flees by racing to the ocean and swimming out to join his master's side in the Drowned Eye. If confronted there, Nerrenn fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Aspect of the Beast<sup>APG</sup>, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

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**Skills** Climb +10, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Perception +12, Stealth +9, Swim +18

**Languages** Common, Elven

**SQ** amphibious, elven magic, hunter's bond (shark animal companion named Sesskeress), shifter's blessing (form of the dragon), track +3, wild empathy +5, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, vest of the deep (see page 16), scrimshaw-handled fish-gutting knife worth 200 gp, belt made of skum skin set with walrus-tusk eyes and clasped with a copper buckle worth 125 gp

### SESSKERESS CR —

Shark animal companion

N Medium animal (aquatic)

**Init** +6; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 natural)

**hp** 34 (4d8+16)



NERRENN AEELAMNA

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** swim 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +7 (1d6+6)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Sesskeress remains in the Acisazi harbor and can't aid his master in a fight on land, but accompanies the ranger out to the Drowned Eye and fights loyally at his side thereafter.

**Morale** Sesskeress fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor

**Skills** Perception +7, Swim +16

**Development:** The *dominate monster* effect on Nerrenn is potent (CL 16th), but it can be dispelled, and effects like *protection from evil* can suppress it. Nerrenn, of course, fights to resist such attempts, but as soon as one is successful, he returns to his actual personality—a stoic, taciturn individual laced with a new sense of shame and humility at having been turned into an enemy's pawn. If freed from Menotheguro's influence, Nerrenn can confirm to the PCs that the source of the problems facing Acisazi is an aboleth necromancer. He can sketch out areas **B1–B4** for the PCs, as well as inform them of what sorts of creatures lie in wait there. He is wary of returning to face the aboleth, but if you feel the PCs could use the additional aid, Nerrenn agrees to accompany them if his *dominate* effect is dispelled. If the effect is merely temporarily suppressed, Nerrenn begs the PCs to bind him tightly before the suppression ends, hoping the PCs can kill the aboleth before he can get free.

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to avoid a fight with Nerrenn and gain access to the village, award them 3,200 XP. If they manage to remove the *dominate monster* effect from the elf and rescue him from the aboleth's control, award them XP as if they'd defeated him in combat in addition to the above story reward.

## EVENT 2: MEETING WITH THE SPEAKER

Once the PCs handle Nerrenn, either through words or combat, they'll find the people of Acisazi to be wary and nervous, even if Aava or another aquatic elf accompanies them. Any citizen the PCs approach points them toward the large structure in the center of the village, a building constructed over the framework of a blue whale's bones.

The village's traditional leader, an elderly half-elf woman named Athannah Quhurill, occupies this structure. Already frail before the sickness descended on Acisazi, Athannah is now completely infirm. The sickly druid is attended by four half-elves (all 1st-level commoners) who refuse to leave her side but do not participate in discussions.



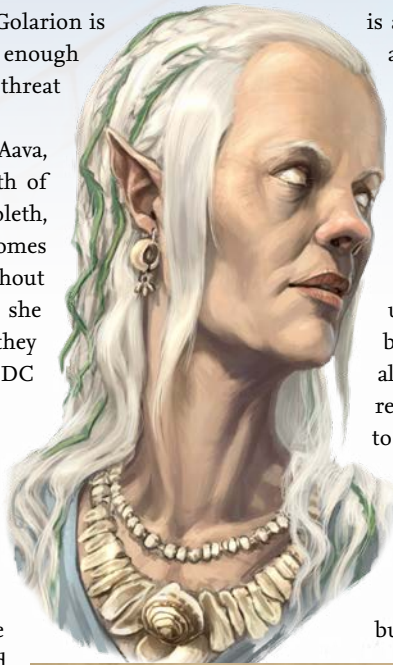
Despite her age and infirmity, Athannah remains clear of voice and sound of mind. Her long white hair is tied back with strips of dried bladder wrack and she sits in a chair of driftwood, wrapped in furs. She knows that her remaining time on Golarion is limited, and wants only to live long enough to see someone vanquish this latest threat facing her home.

If the PCs are accompanied by Aava, or if the PCs have exposed the truth of Nerrenn's subjugation to the aboleth, Athannah openly and thankfully welcomes the PCs. If the PCs come to her without any prior evidence of friendship, she remains suspicious of the PCs until they soothe her fears through a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check.

Regardless, Athannah asks the PCs to prove themselves by saving Acisazi. With the villages' warriors mostly missing and a cursed sickness blanketing the area, she has few recourses. She knows that the source of the trouble comes from the Drowned Eye, and can give the PCs directions to the site. While Athannah is worried that a failed attack on the new master of the Drowned Eye might bring deadly repercussions on Acisazi, at this point she's willing to risk such an event in light of the dire circumstances.

Athannah is a 5th-level druid, and while she is in no shape to accompany the PCs, she can provide free spellcasting services if the PCs agree and promise to aid her. Healing and the ability to breathe underwater are among the most useful services she can provide, but if the PCs are accompanied by Aava and she learns of how the PCs rescued the scouts from the skum below the Lucky Bones, the druid offers the PCs the minor items of Acisazi's treasures as a reward, both as thanks for rescuing their kin and as a way to help bolster them in their attack on the Drowned Eye. The treasures of Acisazi are listed above in the town's stat block—if the PCs don't earn her trust, she'll still sell the items to them at normal price.

As for what the PCs may face in the Drowned Eye, Athannah is unsure. She knows of the contingent of draugr, of course, and she fears that the creature that has seized control of the undead is some sort of powerful necromancer. She confirms that an aboleth makes sense, but doesn't offer this as a theory on her own. If the PCs do suggest this possibility, she strongly recommends they utilize *protection from evil* at the very least to avoid being controlled by the monster's domination attacks.



**ATHANNAH QUHURILL**

## B. THE DROWNED EYE

The Drowned Eye is located about 4 miles west of Acisazi, amid the treacherous reefs that complicate entry into the Dismal Nitch from the sea. The Drowned Eye is a deep pit in the ocean floor that drops away into inky darkness. The upper extent of the pit and the surrounding sea floor are a mere 30 feet underwater, but the floor of the pit drops away to a depth of over 250 feet. Viewed from above, the waters above the pit are dark and ominous, and on a day of calm seas, present the illusion of a dark eye looking up out of the depths. The region has long been a particularly notorious one in an already infamous stretch of ship-breaking reefs, and numerous fools have sailed to their doom in attempts to navigate the waters around the eye. Each ship that went down in the region only increased the supposed aggregation of wealth to be found by the one lucky or brave enough to explore the pit's depths, but after a while, attempts to secure the treasures were abandoned entirely.

The Drowned Eye has a legacy that stretches back far before these more recent treasure-hunting tales, though, for during the Age of Legend, it served as an aboleth outpost. Here, the veiled masters and their aboleth minions kept tabs on the tribal societies of humanity on the mainland, and worked to fashion faceless stalkers and other aberrant horrors to visit upon these air-breathing curiosities. The aboleths abandoned this outpost in the years before Earthfall. But as with so many aboleth outposts, the strange magical effects they left behind eventually took on a life of their own, even after thousands of years saw the crumbling and erosion of the complex itself into little more than a pit in the sea. Today, the Drowned Eye's latent energies have mingled in unanticipated ways with the souls of the sailors who drowned in foolhardy attempts to explore its secrets.

The Drowned Eye was already haunted by undead when Menotheguro arrived several months ago. The aboleth was amused by the fragile wards previous generations of aquatic elves had erected around the pit's perimeter, and destroying them and seizing control of the draugr who haunted the area's upper reaches was a simple task. Adjusting the fell magic of the Drowned Eye to target the elves of Acisazi was trivial as well, but the aboleth's true goal is anything but. Menotheguro hopes to harness the latent energies of the site, augment them via procedures applied to living victims harvested from Acisazi, and raise up a deadly aquatic undead known as a sea bonze (*Pathfinder*

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**VEST OF THE DEEP**

Favored by aquatic races who find themselves moving between varying depths in the sea or undertaking visits out of the ocean's depths entirely onto dry land, the *vest of the deep* is an invaluable tool to the surface-dwelling creature who seeks to explore the ocean depths. These vests are common gifts from aquatic elves to surface-dwelling allies who seek environmental protection when visiting a particularly deep-water settlement. A *vest of the deep* is typically crafted from the hides of fish and treated to remain supple in and out of water; often, the vests are adorned with complex patterns or other elements to enhance the fashion and sense of style.

**VEST OF THE DEEP****PRICE**  
2,000 GP**SLOT** chest**CL** 7th**WEIGHT** 1 lb.**AURA** moderate abjuration

A *vest of the deep* creates a constant shell of magical energy that protects the wearer from extreme environmental pressure, such as that inflicted by water at a depth of over 100 feet. It does not provide any protection from constriction or other forms of direct crushing damage, nor does it grant water breathing.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS****COST** 1,000 GPCraft Wondrous Item, *life bubble***B1. WRECK OF THE MISTRUNNER (CR 7)**

A wide trench scars the seabed here. Sprawled along its northern slope is a wrecked sailing ship, while the pit below is thick with seaweed.

The seabed surrounding the Drowned Eye is 30 feet underwater. Several sunken ships festoon the region, but their holds have long since been scavenged by brave souls who managed to survive the sinister lure of the Drowned Eye itself. One wreck, though, lies perilously close to the Eye. This sailing ship was once a Magnimarian merchant vessel called the *Mistrunner*, and it went down here decades ago after being driven off course by a squall. The *Mistrunner* lies on its side, a rotten tangle of debris, amid a seaweed-filled gully that extends from the eastern side of the Drowned Eye; here, the seabed dips to a depth of 45 feet.

**Creatures:** The last remnants of the *Mistrunner's* crew rose as draugr not long after their ship sank here, and they've since been recruited by Menotheguro as undead minions via *command undead*. As that spell allows Menotheguro to control only a limited number of undead, it sent most of the draugr out into the Dismal Nitch to patrol the region, then left them to roam the sea floor freely (these are the draugr the PCs might encounter, at your discretion, on the way to the Drowned Eye). These five draugr here are no longer under Menotheguro's direct control, but they consider the aboleth necromancer an ally and swiftly attack any intruders they spy encroaching on the master's realm. None of these draugr are armed with weapons—they attack with a single slam.

**DRAUGR (5)****CR 2****XP 600 each****hp** 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 110*)

**Treasure:** A search of the *Mistrunner's* hold reveals that much of its cargo—fine silks and clothing—has been destroyed by its long immersion. With a successful DC 20 Perception check, a PC turns up the ship's strongbox, which contains 400 gp, a spyglass, and a rotten leather pouch containing 10 pearls worth 100 gp each. Among the rotted clothing is a fine-looking midnight-blue *+1 keen bladed scarf*<sup>15WG</sup> that has survived its immersion.

**B2. THE DROWNED EYE (CR 7)**

The sea floor drops away into a vertiginous black pit here. The water above the shaft seems colder and darker than

*RPG Bestiary 3 239*). Menotheguro is still quite far from realizing this plan, but it has no fears of its eventual success until the PCs challenge it.

If the PCs used a favor from Captain Sargaeta to bring them to the region, at your discretion they may be able to convince the captain to sail them closer to the notorious site, although doing so certainly costs the PCs another favor. Swimming out to the location is an option if the PCs have the physical strength to cross that distance, but none of the residents of Acisazi want to approach the site.

The Drowned Eye exudes an additional dangerous magical aura as well—anyone who crosses over the actual pit must succeed at a DC 15 Will save to avoid a sudden overwhelming compulsion to dive into the water and swim down into the depths below. It is this sinister compulsion that lured so many sailors to their drowning deaths, although PCs who prepare ahead of time with *water breathing* spells should fare better against this compulsion's effects.

that around it, while the smooth-sided walls drop straight down into the depths, almost as if something had melted through the earth long ago. A ring of shattered coral growth surrounds the rim of the chasm.

The Drowned Eye is a vertical shaft, descending a full 250 feet before reaching area **B3** below. After a depth of 150 feet, the smooth walls grow increasingly rough, and are caked with jagged coral and writhing colonies of strange, protoplasmic sea life. Although eerie, these colonies are harmless to the living.

A dead body cast into the Drowned Eye animates as a draugr (if it was a humanoid body) or a zombie (if anything else) after being left in the pit for 24 hours.

With a successful DC 15 Perception check, a PC making a close inspection of the ring of coral surrounding the pit finds arcane symbols carved into the shattered remains. Further, a faint, lingering aura of abjuration magic still clings to the coral. A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check while examining this aura reveals that this ward once contained the necromantic energy within the pit, but now that the coral ward has been destroyed, it would take months to regrow and repair. If the PCs seek a swifter solution to the sickness, it must lie below.

**Creature:** In the inky dark below 100 feet, a spawn of the Drowned Eye's unnatural aura patrols. This is an undead great white shark—the creature is unharmed by pressure damage (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 445), and immediately attacks anyone who swims into the depths. Menotheguro maintains a *command undead* spell on the shark at all times, allowing the aboleth to come and go without being attacked (and allowing safe passage for those it escorts past the shark).

#### ZOMBIE SHARK CR 7

##### XP 3,200

Great white shark zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 241, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

NE Huge undead (aquatic)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 9, flat-footed 21 (+1 Dex, +13 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 65 (9d8+9)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

**DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** swim 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +12 (2d8+8)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

##### TACTICS

**During Combat** The zombie shark attacks the closest foe each round, and pursues for up to 1 mile from the Drowned Eye before returning here to patrol.

**Morale** The zombie shark fights until destroyed.

##### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Toughness

**Skills** Swim +16

**SQ** staggered

## B3. THE SOCKET (CR 7)

An insane tangle of broken ships, a dozen at the least, lies in a jumbled heap near the bottom of the trench. The sodden wreckage is so thick that it's impossible to tell the true depth of the pit beneath the clogged mass of sunken vessels. A narrow alcove to the east overlooks the heap of wreckage.

The topmost wrecked ship is at a depth of 250 feet, but the pit itself extends another 30 feet below this. There's no easy way to navigate the sunken wrecks. Fortunately, there's nothing of any interest in or below the wreckage, unless you wish to expand this area into a larger submerged ruin of your own design—in this case, feel free to provide a narrow passageway through the wreckage into new areas below. A slithering layer of clear protoplasmic sludge clings to every surface here, but apart from being unpleasant to the touch, this eerie manifestation of ancient aboleth magic is harmless.

The eastern wall of the alcove is in fact the entrance to a tunnel leading to area **B4** that has been masked by an *illusory wall* placed by Menotheguro. The aboleth can see through this wall.

**Creatures:** Not so harmless are the undead guardians of the socket. The one-time captain of the *Mistrunner* dwells here, along with four of her crew—these five draugr rise up to attack the PCs as soon as they notice intruders. As with the draugr in area **B1**, none of these undead are armed; they fight with slam attacks alone.

#### DRAUGR CAPTAIN CR 3

##### XP 800

Advanced draugr (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 110)

**hp** 25

#### DRAUGR (4) CR 2

##### XP 600 each

**hp** 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 110)

**Development:** If it notices the PCs in combat (this is all but guaranteed if the PCs bring light into the depths), Menotheguro observes the fight from the tunnel leading to area **B4**. Once the fight is over, the aboleth casts *veil* to appear as a ghostly, aquatic elf woman, then uses *project image* to appear on the ledge overlooking area **B3**. In this guise, Menotheguro claims to be the spirit of an aquatic elven druid named Menotha who tried to purge the Drowned Eye of its evil necromantic aura,

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but was slain by the undead who dwelt here. In order to put “Menotha” to rest, the aboleth claims the PCs must bring a living aquatic elven druid to this location to perform a short ritual of cleansing. Menotheguro would rather not engage in a fight against the unknown PCs, and instead hopes to convince them to leave and return with Athannah from Acisazi. If they prove suspicious or hesitant, it uses *dominate monster* to try to force a few PCs to comply; if the PCs attack outright, the aboleth uses its spells through the projected image, fighting as detailed in area **B4**. Should the PCs bring Athannah here, the aboleth dominates the druid to cement its control over the village, and then attacks the PCs.

#### B4. MENOHEGURO'S DOMAIN (CR 8)

The walls of this underwater cave are etched with thousands of strange, twisted runes, creating a tangled, multilayered mess of writing. The runes glow and pulse with soft green light, giving a sickly atmosphere to the chamber. Over two dozen decaying elven bodies float here and there in the murky water, adding to the cave's already grim ambience.

The runes covering the walls radiate a strong aura of necromancy, but deciphering their meaning and function requires 1d4 hours of work and a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or Linguistics check by someone who can speak Aklo. The runes focus foul energies into the Drowned Eye by siphoning motes of negative energy from the Negative Energy Plane, so as to infuse those who die within with unlife. Furthermore, someone has recently been adding to the runes to enhance and focus them—the work is far from complete, but with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check, the reader correctly interprets the creator is attempting to channel the negative energy into the creation of a powerful oceanic undead creature known as a sea bonze.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check finds that one rune in particular seems to be at the center of the pattern of pulsing light—a character who has successfully studied the runes gains a +10 bonus on this check. This rune, located on the spur of rock protruding from the east wall, is the anchoring rune, and if it is removed, the necromantic aura infusing the Drowned Eye fades. *Dispel magic* (against CL 15th) or *erase* can remove the rune, as can a character capable of disarming magic traps who succeeds at a DC 30 Disable Device check. Physical damage can destroy the rune as well (hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 32). Any attempt to remove the rune that doesn't succeed causes a backlash of magic to strike the person who failed, dealing 3d6 points of negative energy damage to him.

**Creature:** Menotheguro has spent the past several weeks within this chamber, meticulously crafting and adjusting the runes on the walls in its attempt to create a sea bonze. The aboleth has slaughtered numerous living creatures to fuel the process—this is the source of the dead bodies adrift in the chamber. Rather than allow the necromantic energies to animate these slain victims as draugr, the aboleth siphons that energy into its work. At your discretion, some of the aquatic elves in here may still live, but they are effectively docile, held prisoner via *dominate monster*.

If Nerrenn fled to Menotheguro's side, the PCs encounter him and his animal companion here, where he fights to the death to protect his aboleth master.

#### MENOHEGURO

CR 8

XP 4,800

Aboleth necromancer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 8)

LE Huge aberration (aquatic)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18**Aura** mucus cloud (5 ft., DC 19)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +11 natural, -2 size)**hp** 112 (11 HD; 8d8+3d6+66)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

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**OFFENSE**

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**Speed** 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

**Melee** 4 tentacles +13 (1d6+7 plus slime)

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

**Aboleth Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +19)

At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *illusory wall* (DC 17), *mirage arcana* (DC 18), *persistent image* (DC 18), *programmed image* (DC 19), *project image* (DC 19), *veil* (DC 19)

3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 22)

**Necromancer Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

7/day—*grave touch* (1 round)

**Necromancer Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*command undead* (DC 16), *false life*, *invisibility*

1st—*chill touch* (DC 15), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

**Opposition Schools** conjuration, transmutation

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**TACTICS**

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**Before Combat** Menotheguro casts *false life* on itself before entering combat.

**During Combat** The aboleth would prefer to capture PCs alive, since it can then kill them at its leisure and use the interaction of their souls with the Drowned Eye's necromantic energies to further fuel its work. If it manages to dominate a foe, it prefers to command the foe to simply lay down arms rather than risk her escaping control by forcing her to attack her allies.

**Morale** Menotheguro isn't interested in risking its life for its project. If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, it casts *invisibility* and attempts to flee. The monster swims as quickly as it can out to sea to seek depths where it is more comfortable, and if the PCs allow it to escape, it does not return to antagonize Acisazi.

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**STATISTICS**

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**Str** 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 30 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

**Skills** Bluff +14, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +18, Spellcraft +18, Swim +29

**Languages** Aboleth, Aklo, Azlanti, Common, Elven, Infernal

**SQ** arcane bond (*ring of protection* +1), power over undead

**Gear** *pale blue rhomboid ioun stone*, *ring of protection* +1 (worn on the tip of a tentacle), spellbook (strips of preserved seaweed inscribed with runes containing all prepared spells)

**Treasure:** In addition to its magical gear, the aboleth has scavenged all of the items of value from the wreckage in area **B3**; it keeps the loot in a heap in the northern portion of the cave. These valuables include

a +2 *mithral chain shirt*, a +1 *mighty cleaving greatsword*, a rusting longsword with a golden jeweled hilt depicting prancing swans mounting lustful mermaids worth 400 gp, a waterproof golden hip flask set with an opal stopper worth 750 gp and containing *elixir of truth*, and a silver pillbox inset with a miniature depiction of a woman with two heads (one human, one gargoyle-like) worth 300 gp.

## THE ACISAZI ALLIANCE

The PCs need only remove the anchor rune in the depths to immediately negate the sickness afflicting the elves of Acisazi—once this is done, the elves and PCs alike immediately note the loss of the oppressive pall. It's unlikely that the PCs will be able to achieve this without defeating or driving off the aboleth, but otherwise Menotheguro's defeat is largely incidental to this goal.

With this significant favor done, the elves of Acisazi readily agree to support the Silver Ravens. While they aren't themselves a significant defensive force, they have contacts with other aquatic elf settlements deeper in the Arcadian Ocean. In addition to this allegiance (the full benefits of which will become apparent in "A Song of Silver" and the adventures to follow), the elves offer the PCs their greatest treasure, a *belt of physical might* +2 (Dex and Con), as a reward.

**Story Award:** If the PCs destroy the anchoring rune in the Drowned Eye and then forge an alliance with the elves of Acisazi, grant them 6,400 XP.

## PART 3: THE VYRE ACCORD

The city of Vyre is interested primarily in its own well-being, but it shouldn't take a lot of work to convince at least a few of its leaders that the welfare of Kintargo is also important. After all, with Vyre's poor accommodations for harboring ships, most of that city's imports of food and other supplies depend on being able to use Kintargo as a sort of proxy port; otherwise, many trade vessels would simply pass the city of Vyre by on their way north or south in pursuit of safer harbors. The primary hurdle to gaining support for Kintargo isn't necessarily convincing Vyre's leaders, though—the real trick is finding a leader to convince. Vyre is governed by a hidden council of five self-styled queens and kings who keep their identities secret, and not all of them are friendly. Before the PCs can approach one of these masked leaders with a request for an alliance with the Silver Ravens, they need to determine not only whom to approach, but also whom not to approach.

Captain Sargaeta has visited the city for personal reasons several times. If no PC is able to succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (nobility) check, Sargaeta can inform them that Vyre is led by five so-called queens and kings. Currently, these consist of the Queen of Whispers

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(representing Vyre's intelligence and protecting its secrets), the Queen of Blades (leader of the city's militia), the King of Keys (charged with maintaining city defenses), the Queen of Blood (responsible for the representation of Vyre's citizens), and the Queen of Delights (representing Vyre's economy and the interests of the city's many visitors). This last is the one Sargaeta suggests the PCs approach, given her role as Vyre's primary diplomat. Sargaeta (or any PC with who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge [local] check) further reveals the five promises by which all visitors to Vyre must abide (see page 68). If the PCs don't learn about these beforehand, they'll see the promises carved in stone once they arrive in the city, for such carvings are common in Vyre. Sargaeta agrees to transport the PCs to Vyre if they wish to cash in one of the favors he owes them. It is 70 miles to Vyre from Kintargo, and thus Sargaeta's ship, the *Scourge of Belial*, can make the trip in a day and a half. Sargaeta suggests leaving in the morning, so the PCs arrive in the late afternoon on the second day.

Vyre itself is presented in more detail starting on page 64.

### MOLLY MAYAPPLE

This adventure assumes the PCs recovered the Mayapple deeds from the Lucky Bones in the previous adventure. These deeds are proof of ownership of several warehouses and lots in Vyre's waterfront district (the Vice) by a woman named Molly Mayapple. The Gray Spiders initially planned on using these deeds to blackmail Molly, forcing her to finance several Gray Spider endeavors in return for the deeds themselves, but the Order of the Torrent destroyed the Gray Spiders before they could enact this plan. The deeds remained lost under the Lucky Bones for 40 years, during which poor Miss Mayapple fell on particularly hard times—without proof of ownership, she was forced to live on the streets for a decade before she managed to regain her standing and start rebuilding her reputation. Today, Molly Mayapple owns one of Vyre's most financially successful hostels in the Vice, an establishment called the Seven Apples. While she's rebuilt her fortune, the delivery of these long-missing deeds is both an emotional and a financial boon. With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check, a PC knows that Molly Mayapple runs the Seven Apples (Captain Sargaeta can also provide this information). Should the PCs visit Molly's establishment and hand over the deeds, they'll earn a valuable ally and a point of contact who can arrange a meeting with the Queen of Delights.

See page 62 for more details on Molly and how the PCs can earn her assistance.

**Story Award:** For securing Molly Mayapple's aid and returning the deeds to her, award the PCs 4,800 XP.

### SPENDING TIME IN VYRE

The amount of time the PCs have before attending the queen's banquet is left to you to determine—no events or scripted encounters occur in Vyre during this time, and if your group is running short on experience points, this would be an excellent time to introduce a short adventure of your own design to help them catch up. Vyre also presents an excellent opportunity for shopping, gambling, and roleplaying; consult the Vyre Gazetteer on page 67 for inspiration and information if the PCs wish to explore the city.

Complicating matters for the PCs, is a hidden enemy already awaiting them in Vyre—and Molly Mayapple isn't the only elderly wererat in their future. Once a guildmistress of the Gray Spiders, Hei-Fen escaped the Order of the Torrent's purge of her guild, then fled to Vyre and was taken in by the Skinsaw Cult. Over the 40 years that followed, she has murdered marks in two dozen different cities throughout Avistan at the behest of the church. Over half of these killings were ordered by the current King of Keys, Delaraius Solzakarr. Hei-Fen has recently been rewarded for her devotion with semi-retirement and the opportunity to live out her remaining days in relative comfort in Vyre, but she has already grown bored. She keeps agents (whom she refers to as her "ears") active in many cities, including Kintargo, and when she learns of a group called the Silver Ravens moving into the Lucky Bones, she becomes intrigued.

Hei-Fen learns of the PCs' association with the Silver Ravens at some point in this adventure, and her sense of outrage at having her old home turned to such use grows as Hell's Rebels proceeds. Initially eager to simply secure any of her belongings she was forced to leave behind, Hei-Fen's obsession with the PCs in particular grows as she begins to associate them with the Order of the Torrent. Unable to avenge herself on the already abolished order, Hei-Fen begins to see the PCs and their Silver Ravens as a surrogate target for her vengeance. Eventually, in "A Song of Silver," she arrives in Kintargo with her own agents to join forces with Barzillai Thrune against the PCs—but for now, she bides her time. She will be in attendance at Cobweb Manor for the Queen of Delights' banquet, and takes advantage of this opportunity to size up the PCs.

### THE QUEEN'S BANQUET

Manticce Kaleekii, in addition to being in charge of Vyre's busy and infamous Opal Market, is the city's primary diplomat—the Queen of Delights. Her home is an ancient and decrepit-looking estate on the fringe of the Opal Market, a building known as Cobweb Manor for the unusual number of dusty-gray, fist-sized (but relatively harmless) spiders that scurry among its eaves and across its foundation stones. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (nobility) check uncovers a rumor

that Manticce is a witch with an uncanny knack for whispering to spiders; religious-minded PCs may fear this suggests a connection to Norgorber, but the queen's fascination with spiders is merely a coincidence. In fact, Manticce is an avowed atheist, and any suggestion that she worships Norgorber in any of his guises is guaranteed to put one on her bad side.

The queen's banquet is scheduled to begin at precisely sundown, but the manor doors open an hour early for visitors to arrive. Molly suggests the PCs wait until the last moment before arriving—not quite late, but certainly not early enough to appear too eager, as the Queen of Delights has little patience for beggars. If the PCs are to gain the queen's favor, they must be on their best behavior during the banquet. Molly warns the PCs that they should be respectful of the queen and her guests, even in the (quite likely) eventuality that some of those guests might not deserve respect. Further, Molly warns, stay away from the topic of religion during dinner! As a last-minute word of advice, she also mentions the PCs that the queen's husband shall "be in attendance," but that they are not to speak of him. Only if pressed for more detail does Molly remember that having a dead man at a banquet table is unusual and warns the PCs ahead of time of this grisly affectation of the queen—for the Queen's husband has been dead for a decade, and his bones, while they sit at the table, are more for decor than conversation.

Molly suggests the PCs prepare by securing fine clothing for the meal. A new outfit worth a minimum of 100 gp is enough to do the job—more expensive purchases are fine as well, but offer no additional advantage. Wearing older fashions (any outfit not purchased within the past week in Vyre) or any outfit worth less than 100 gp—or worse, wearing obvious armor—would be considered a faux pas at best, and an outright insult at worst. Acquiring a small gift for the queen is also a good idea—anything more expensive than 500 gp is generally viewed as bribery and looked down upon, but anything less expensive than 10 gp is thought of as cheap. Gifts can be anything, but Molly points out that the queen is particularly fond of spiders, onyx jewelry, and fine mead. Characters who spend some time gathering information can attempt to learn more of the queen's tastes. With a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information, a PC learns of one of the following less commonly known preferences of the queen (for every 5 by which the check result exceeds the DC, the PC learns of one additional gift possibility): salacious works of art, lacy gloves, fancy potion vials, flowers with black petals, Ustalavic novels, or exquisite banquet utensils. Allow each PC to decide how much he or she wants to spend on a gift (if any), and let them come up with the gift's description—Vyre is a big enough city that there are plenty of choices, after all!

## BANQUET POINTS

The meal in which the PCs are about to indulge acts as a backdrop to the more pressing matter of convincing the Queen of Delights to commit Vyre to an alliance with the rebels of Kintargo. As with all social events, character interaction should be at the fore, with the roll of the dice augmenting roleplaying as needed.

As the banquet progresses, the PCs will have several opportunities to earn Banquet Points. In order to impress the Queen of Delights and secure an alliance, the PCs must accrue a minimum of 20 Banquet Points. Note that it is possible to lose points as well. If at any point the PCs' Banquet Point total reaches 0, the banquet is paused and the Queen of Delights, with an icy glare and cold voice, asks the PCs to "Please leave my table before I am forced to take measures." (Should the PCs show up dressed poorly or otherwise commit several early faux pas, the queen could ask them to leave even before the banquet starts!) If the PCs don't immediately leave (and thus lose any chance to secure their alliance), Manticce and her golems attack while her guests flee Cobweb Manor. In case of this unfortunate development, the queen's statistics are presented on page 26.

**Dress:** For each PC who is dressed appropriately (in a minimum of 100 gp worth of the latest fashions), the party earns 2 Banquet Points. For each PC who is dressed in obvious armor or carrying a shield, the party loses 1 Banquet Point. While armor is frowned upon, weapons are not.

**Ovation:** For each PC who doesn't participate in the standing ovation when Manticce enters the banquet hall, the party loses 1 Banquet Point.

**Course Etiquette:** Each of the courses requires specific and proper etiquette to consume. At the start of each course, ask each PC if they want to immediately begin or if they want to wait and watch other guests to learn the proper etiquette through observation. A character who starts at once must succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (geography or local) or Profession (cook) check to know the proper way to eat the meal—for each PC who succeeds at this check, the party earns 1 Banquet Point, but each failure results in a faux pas that costs the group 1 Banquet Point. Once the proper way of eating a course is known (either as a result of a PC making her check, or as a result of a PC waiting to see others eat first) further checks are required to actually consume the course; these checks are detailed within each course below.

**Conversation Opportunities:** As the banquet progresses, each PC has additional opportunities to earn Banquet Points by engaging in table-side conversation. During each course, the Queen of Delights prompts the table with a topic of discussion. As a general rule, one other guest becomes unsettled by each topic and embarrasses himself. The PCs can remain quiet if they wish, or they can take part in the conversation. Judge their

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words and manner; then, after a short discussion, have each PC who spoke attempt a DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check, as best fits the tone of her words. On a successful check, the character earns the party 1 Banquet Point by being particularly witty, suave, or impressive in the way she comports herself. If a PC fails this check by 5 or more, she bungles it and the party loses 1 Banquet Point. Silent PCs neither earn nor lose the party points. Any character who mentions the name of a deity or otherwise brings up the topic of religion during the meal takes a –5 penalty on her skill check, as the Queen of Delights has little patience for such topics.

**Tracking Banquet Points:** Keep track not only of the total Banquet Points earned by the group, but also of the number of points each individual PC contributes to this total. At the end of the meal, the PC who contributed the most points has a chance of attracting the special attention of the Queen of Delights; see After-Dinner Distractions on page 26 for more information.

#### ARRIVING AT COBWEB MANOR

When the PCs arrive at Cobweb Manor, a lumbering, 7-foot-tall figure with pale skin and terrible scars attends the door. This “man” is dressed in a fine suit, but does not speak—he merely nods upon seeing invitations and steps aside to allow entry. This is a flesh

golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 160), and anyone who attempts to enter without an invitation draws attacks from the lumbering doorman.

Cobweb Manor is quite clean and well decorated within, albeit with spider and spiderweb motifs. The ceilings, draped with sheets of cobwebs, hold numerous chandeliers lit with *continual flame* spells, while the wood-paneled walls are decorated with many erotic paintings of subjects quite varied and scandalous in nature. Little is left to the imagination in these works of art, though in several, the same dark-haired, crimson-eyed, horned beauty seems to be placed in a position of prominence. When the PCs finally meet her, they’ll recognize this woman as the Queen of Delights herself.

No map of Cobweb Manor is provided, for the PCs should not be getting into a fight here, and will only really be spending time in the manor’s vast banquet hall.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

The banquet takes place in a large hall, the focus of which is a sprawling table capable of seating two dozen guests. The head of the table is reserved for a setting for the queen herself, while the last setting at the far end of the table contains only a slumped and dusty skeleton clad in fine clothing at least a decade out of date. These are the dusty remains of Manticce’s husband. None



speak of the bones or even cast them much of a glance, even when his place is set and food placed before him. Although they remain motionless during the banquet unless Manticce is attacked, three additional flesh golems stand in the corners of the room.

The PCs are all seated together, along with Molly, in a row of chairs near the foot of the table—this means one PC gets to sit next to the bones of long-dead Anteen Kaleekii. Molly does not join in the small talk, preferring to watch her new friends and stepping in only to smooth over any of their faux pas. Molly does so during the feast the first time that a PC does something that would cost the party Banquet Points, and her intervention immediately negates the loss of the points, but after that she can no longer effectively intercede.

The sidebar on page 24 lists all nine of the other guests, along with a few brief notes to help you roleplay them as needed. Of special note is Hei-Fen, who wasn't originally intending to attend the banquet but changed her mind when she heard the PCs would be in attendance—she is here purely to size up the PCs. The PCs may have seen an image of Hei-Fen in the Lucky Bones, but the woman's appearance has changed drastically over the past 40 years; she's not only older (with gray hair now worn in a much longer and more elegant style), but now has a large mole on her chin. Each PC can attempt a single DC 25 Sense Motive check at the start of the banquet. By the end of the second course, any who succeeded at the check note that Hei-Fen seems to have been watching them, but if she is confronted with this at the table, she merely comments that one of the PCs looks strangely like a particularly charming family servant who died of a spider bite during her childhood many years ago—only the PC isn't *quite* as charming, she adds with a slight sneer. Unless the PC who confronts her manages to keep this interaction subtle through a successful DC 20 Bluff check, Manticce notices and disapproves (reduce the PCs' Banquet Points by 1).

Hei-Fen avoids using her name in the banquet and remains quiet herself. If a PC presses her for her name, she merely introduces herself as "Tsutsia," a fictitious name that everyone else at the table knows is a lie. Even though none of the other guests understand Hei-Fen's reason for lying, she's a Vyre native, so they assume she has a good reason for the lie and begrudge the PCs for forcing her to make it (reduce the PCs' Banquet Points by 1). A PC who speaks T'ien recognizes the word "tsutsia"



HEI-FEN

as a particularly rude term often used to berate those who speak out of turn. In any event, Hei-Fen avoids direct confrontations; more information on her plans, including her full statistics (she's a 12th-level cleric of Norgorber), will be given in the next adventure, "A Song of Silver."

There shouldn't be much time for the PCs to interact with these other guests before the host, Queen of Delights Manticce Kaleekii, enters the room to a standing ovation. For each PC who doesn't rise and clap, the party loses 1 Banquet Point. Manticce is a beautiful tiefling woman clad in a long, flowing gown with black spiderweb lace and elegant gloves. Her dark hair is held back in a net of cobwebs, revealing her pointed ears, little red horns, and the spiderweb tattoos on both sides of her neck. Her eyes are an unnatural crimson, and she moves with an unnerving grace—all manifestations of her tiefling heritage. As she arrives, she greets the banquet attendees with a smile and a short speech.

"Greetings, new friends and old, to my home. I see some familiar faces here, and some delightfully unfamiliar ones as well. It is always a pleasure to serve new tongues the delectable offerings of House Kaleekii, and I trust you shall remember the meal to come for the rest of your lives. Tonight's banquet is brought to us by master chef Annatolintis Tasetas, all the way from Katapesh, and consists of four expertly prepared courses. I expect the conversation to be lively and thought-provoking, and as always, I shall accept your gifts during the serving of dessert. Without further ado, let us begin!"

### FIRST COURSE: QUICKSOUP

All four courses are presented by a small army of servants all clad in diaphanous white robes and wearing wraps of gauzy veils over their faces to hide their identities. The servants can see through the gauze, but the features of their faces are hidden per the Queen of Delights's preference that "help should be faceless and voiceless."

This first course consists of quicksoup—a strange and unusual delicacy first pioneered in the Iobarian city of Orlov. Each guest is given a tureen of heady, boiling-hot soup sitting atop a nest of five short candles, a smaller bowl in which swim five live minnows, and a set of utensils that include a two-tined fork, a sharp, slender knife, and a spoonlike sieve. The proper way to eat this meal is to scoop a fish out of the bowl, drop it into the boiling soup, spear it with the fork, and then cut the flesh of the freshly poached minnow away with the knife. Once the fish have

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## NINE OTHER GUESTS

The other nine guests of the Queen of Delights are as follows. The concept listed at the end of each entry is each guest's nominees for "worst sin" when the queen asks during the third course.

**Anca Verezzian:** Female Varisian human; orphaned ex-circus acrobat; chief of security at the Final Throw; eager and curious. *Worst sin:* neglecting your children.

**Asmerru Krupt:** Male Chelish human; visiting aristocrat from Hinji; interests in halfling slave trade; shameless gossip. *Worst sin:* disobedience to a superior.

**Elitu Rosewinter:** Female halfling; wanted for murder in Augustana; out-of-work assassin; sadistic and prone to using grisly metaphor in idle conversation. *Worst sin:* resurrection.

**Hei-Fen, a.k.a. "Tsutsia":** Elderly female Tian human with a mole on her chin; ex-guildmistress of the Gray Spiders; retired diplomat; quiet and observant. *Worst sin:* invading another's home.

**Kekza Zenk:** Female gnome; ex-adventurer; dancer at the Nine-Tails pub; incorrigibly flirtatious. *Worst sin:* chastity.

**Morvira Crispin:** Female Chelish human; madam; owns the Night Tea Room, a local brothel; enjoys giving people embarrassing or salacious nicknames. *Worst sin:* abuse of trust.

**Sefuri Dendru:** Male Garundi human; businessman; owns the Coughing Carbuncle, a local tavern; heavy and proud of it. *Worst sin:* wasting food.

**Strephian:** Male half-elf; businessman; owns the Blue Monkey game hall; heavy drinker who never seems to get drunk. *Worst sin:* wasting booze.

**Xoshak Zabrinni:** Elderly male Keleshite human; businessman; owns local curio shop Zabrinni's Discoveries; refers to self in third person. *Worst sin:* fraud.

been consumed, the candles are extinguished, and the soup is allowed to cool, the regular spoon is used to sip the broth and eat the vegetables in the soup.

**Course Etiquette:** In order to properly eat quicksoup, the minnows must be transported and filleted properly with a successful DC 12 Sleight of Hand or Dexterity check. On a success, one fish is properly eaten; every 4 by which the result exceeds the DC allows for an additional fish to be consumed without incident (eating all five requires a result of 28 or higher). Failure indicates a fish is dropped during transport to the boiling soup, a cut is too deep and taints the soup with fish entrails, and so on. A PC who manages to properly eat at least two minnows earns the party 1 Banquet Point, while a PC who eats all five minnows earns the party 2 Banquet Points. A character who refuses to eat any fish at all costs the party

1 Banquet Point. A character who blatantly eats the meal in the wrong way (at your discretion) costs the party an additional 2 Banquet Points.

**Conversation Opportunities:** The Queen of Delights comments on how Cheliox seems to be having trouble with keeping itself together, and notes wryly that if a ragtag group of rebels (she's speaking initially about the Glorious Reclamation, but the PCs may well think she's speaking of them) can cause this much mayhem, can one honestly consider House Thrune to have ever been in control of Cheliox in the first place? Of the dinner guests, Asmerru Krupt becomes the most worked up by this question, ferociously defending Cheliox and sputtering so much that he completely bungles his meal.

**Story Award:** If at least one PC successfully eats all five minnows, award the PCs 6,400 XP. If no PC achieves this success but at least half the PCs successfully eat at least one minnow, award the PCs 3,200 XP instead.

## SECOND COURSE: GALTAN SQUASH

The second course arrives in large clay pots, the tops of which have been covered by blood-red cloths, along with plates containing tiny loaves of bread. Within each pot is what looks like an obscenely bloated, fleshy head. This is in fact a "Galtan squash"—a squash carved and braised in order to look like a boiled, bald, severed human head. The meal comes with a large sharpened spoon and a small sauceboat containing a spicy red sauce. Galtan squash is a relatively new sort of meal invented by scornful Chelish chefs; the proper way to eat the squash is to drench it in spicy sauce and then use the razor-sharp spoon to scoop through the rind and spoon out the juicy, stringy flesh inside. The little loaf of bread is not to be eaten until the end of the course; ingredients in the bread help to mitigate the spice.

**Course Etiquette:** There's no special trick to eating Galtan squash, other than simply enduring the significantly spicy sauce. Each character must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save to endure the sauce without making a fool of herself or eating the bread early. A PC who fails her save by 5 or more finds her mouth and throat somewhat swollen by the sauce, resulting in a -4 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks for the remainder of the banquet. The spiciness of the sauce is a poison effect. For each PC who endures the spice with a successful Fortitude save, the party earns 1 Banquet Point. For each PC who fails the save by 5 or more (or who eats her loaf of bread before finishing the squash), the party loses 1 Banquet Point.

**Conversation Opportunities:** The queen notes that rebellions are often bloody and asks how rebels can justify the pain and death they cause by opposing what is often a rightful ruler. This question is pointedly aimed at the PCs as the queen grows intrigued by the new guests. Elitu Rosewinter gets distracted by the mention of pain

and death and starts arguing with Anca Verezzian about how sometimes pain and death are necessary for growth. The two NPCs end up nearly coming to blows before a snarky comment by the queen (“Seems we’ve got our own rebellion growing at this very table!”) defuses their growing anger.

**Story Award:** If at least half the PCs succeed at their Fortitude saves, award the PCs 6,400 XP. If fewer than half but at least one PC succeeds at the Fortitude save, award the PCs 3,200 XP. However, if even one PC eats her loaf of bread before the meal is finished, no XP is earned for this course.

### THIRD COURSE: THE UNSEEN FEAST

The help trot out a large tray balanced on the back of a shaved ram, heaped with what appear to be pies with golden flaky crusts. The queen claps her hands in delight, exclaiming, “Ah, the meat course!” These pies are filled with a most unusual and curious meat—the braised flesh of an invisible stalker. When cooked delicately, this meat remains invisible for a short time, and has a texture not unlike that of cotton candy. The meat itself is relatively flavorless, but the thick, mostly clear sauce it’s cooked in is quite savory. The proper way to eat an unseen feast is to finish it within 5 minutes of the pie being opened, for after this point, the meat has had enough time to react with the air and becomes visible as a fluffy, wispy mass. When this happens, any bits of meat left uneaten take on a bitter taste, and traditionally, once the meat becomes visible, it is considered gauche to eat it.

**Course Etiquette:** Eating an unseen feast requires keen observation. Each PC must succeed at a DC 25 Perception check in order to eat all the meat before it becomes visible. A PC who can see invisibility can eat all the meat automatically—but casting a spell like *see invisibility* is considered a faux pas, and any PC who does so forfeits any possible Banquet Points earned during this course. If at least one PC finishes his meal before the meat becomes visible, the party earns 1 Banquet Point. If all PCs finish their meals in time, the party earns 3 Banquet Points. For each character who refuses to even try the meal, the party loses 1 Banquet Point.

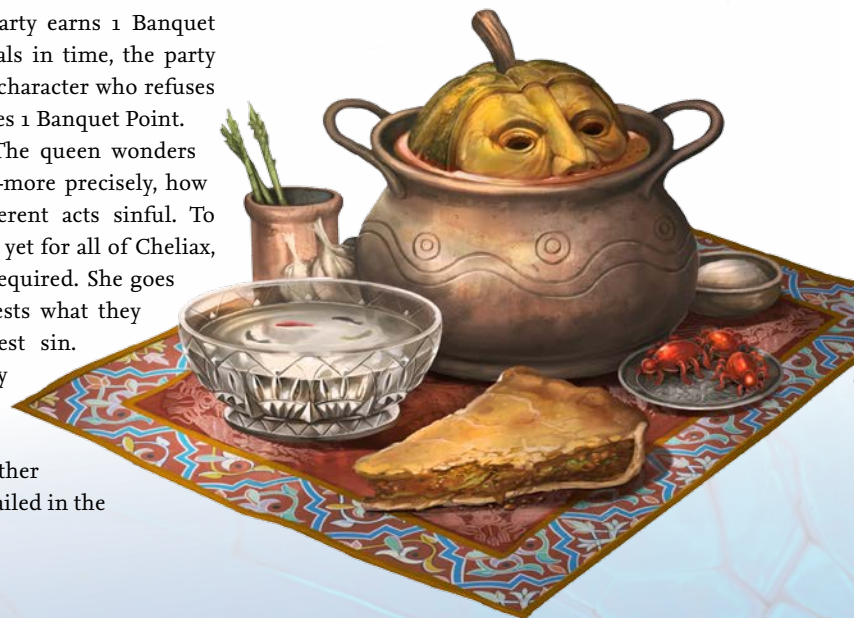
**Conversation Opportunities:** The queen wonders aloud at the strangeness of sin—more precisely, how different societies consider different acts sinful. To her, the worship of a god is a sin, yet for all of Cheliax, worship of Asmodeus is all but required. She goes around the table, asking the guests what they each consider to be the greatest sin. She leaves the PCs for last—they must answer with the skill check (Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate) of their choice. The other NPCs’ chosen “worst sins” are detailed in the sidebar on page 24.

**Story Award:** If at least half the PCs succeed at eating their meals before the meat becomes visible, award the PCs 6,400 XP. If fewer than half but at least one PC successfully consumes the meal, award the PCs 3,200 XP.

### FINAL COURSE: SWEETFATS WITH HONEY SAUCE

The final course is the dessert course. At each setting, the help place a small plate covered by a silver lid, a strange device that looks like a little corkscrew, and a curious fist-sized object in the shape of a dodecahedron (the same shape as a 12-sided die). The help lift the lids of all plates simultaneously, and a tumble of fat, candied spiders, each with a belly the size of a grape, come tumbling out over the edges of the plate! These candied spiders are a Darklands delicacy called sweetfats—crunchy and served cold, they are slightly sweet if eaten dry but much more delicious drenched with honey sauce. Alas, the honey sauce itself is trapped within the dodecahedron, and opening the container is tricky.

**Course Etiquette:** Eating the sweetfats is done by screwing the corkscrew through the spider’s head, dipping it in the honey sauce, and then eating just the crunchy belly—the legs and head are discarded. The tricky part is opening the honey container. With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check, a character recognizes the container is modeled on a notorious magical item called a Chelish Crux. Opening the magical version requires tracing runes along its 12 faces, with failure causing a blast of energy that harms the user. Fortunately, these containers are nonmagical reproductions, but they’re still difficult to open—a successful DC 20 Disable Device or Intelligence check is required to open a sauce container. A character who fails by 5 or more spills the contents of the pot across the tabletop and must eat his sweetfats without the sauce. For each character who manages to open his own sauce pot,



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the party earns 1 Banquet Point. For each character who spills his honey sauce, the party loses 1 Banquet Point.

**Conversation Opportunities:** During this final course, the queen accepts any gifts her guests have brought. The other guests bring her relatively boring gifts that she dutifully accepts. When she gets to the PCs, they can attempt the standard Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks when giving her their gifts to earn additional Banquet Points, but the nature of the gifts themselves can earn more. Only gifts that are worth more than 10 gp but no more than 500 gp are appropriate—if the PCs give the queen an inappropriate gift or no gift at all, the party loses 1 Banquet Point. Giving a plain gift (not something associated with something the queen likes) earns the party no points. If the PCs give an appropriate gift of onyx jewelry, fine mead, or an item that incorporates themes of spiders, the party earns 1 Banquet Point. If the PCs give an appropriate gift of salacious artwork, fancy potion vials, flowers with black petals, Ustalavic novels, or exquisite banquet utensils, the party earns 3 Banquet Points. A second gift that is similar to a previously given gift from another PC earns the party no Banquet Points.

**Story Award:** If at least half the PCs manage to open their own sauce pots and none are spilled, award the PCs 6,400 XP. If fewer than half but at least one PC opens his own sauce pot, award the PCs 3,200 XP.

### AFTER-DINNER DISTRACTIONS

As the banquet concludes, the NPCs thank the queen for her banquet and prepare to leave. It's at this point that Molly urges the PCs to ask the Queen of Delights for the Silver Ravens' support. The queen has suspected the PCs were here for such a reason, and graciously acknowledges their request swiftly, shushing them if they get too formal or complex in making the request, saying, "My darlings, your performance at my table has already made my decision. No need for theatrics." Whether or not she accepts the proposal for an alliance depends on the total number of Banquet Points the PCs have earned.

**19 or Fewer Banquet Points:** The queen shrugs and smiles slightly, noting, "If the leaders of the Silver Ravens can't even comport themselves at a simple meal,

what chance do they have opposing House Throne? I wish you luck, my birds, but Vyre will not risk Thrune's ire for you." If the PCs press for reconsideration, Manticce swiftly grows impatient, and she and her golems attack if the PCs don't quickly leave.

**20 or More Banquet Points:** The queen smiles radiantly and promises her support: "Of course Vyre will support your bid for freedom—this little banquet is nothing compared to the complex political machine at work. When the time comes to throw off Thrune's shackles, Vyre will be there to aid you!" She has little more to say to the PCs, and bids them farewell. If characters linger too long, she recants her decision and the alliance is off!

**Special Attention:** The Queen of Delights is particularly impressed with one of the PCs—whoever earned the most Banquet Points. In the unlikely case of a tie, she favors the PC with the higher Charisma (if this is still a tie, she favors all tied PCs equally). Before the PCs leave, she holds

up a delicate finger and invites the favored PC or PCs to remain behind for "private conversation." With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, the character reads between the lines and recognizes that the queen is more interested in physical companionship than she is in chatting with that

PC, regardless of race or gender. If a PC accepts her invitation and the party has accumulated at least 10 Banquet Points, Manticce changes her mind and agrees to the alliance offer after all (if she hasn't already agreed to it). If a PC accepts her invitation and the party has accumulated at least 30 Banquet Points, she offers a personal alliance with the Silver Ravens as well—see the end of the

adventure for how this can help the

rebellion. The nature of events that take up the remainder of the night between the Queen of Delights and the chosen PC or PCs is left to you to determine. Regardless of any other activities, Manticce warns the favored PC about Hei-

Fen, pointing out that the old woman (who she knows to be a wererat and a fanatic of Norgorber) seemed unusually interested in the PCs.

### MANTICCE KALEEKII

CR 18

XP 153,600

Female devil-spawn tiefling aristocrat 2/  
witch 17 (*Pathfinder Player Companion:  
Blood of Fiends* 21, *Pathfinder RPG  
Bestiary* 264, *Pathfinder RPG  
Advanced Player's  
Guide* 65)

### MANTICCE KALEEKII

CN Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

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**DEFENSE**

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**AC** 25, touch 17, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

**hp** 160 (19 HD; 2d8+17d6+89)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +16

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

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**OFFENSE**

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**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *mithral dagger* +11/+6 (1d4+2/19–20)

**Special Attacks** hexes (agony, charm, disguise, evil eye, major healing, retribution, tongues, vision, ward)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 19th; concentration +21)

1/day—*pyrotechnics* (DC 14)

**Witch Spells Prepared** (CL 17th; concentration +22)

9th—*dominate monster* (DC 24)

8th—*demand* (DC 23), *mass charm monster* (DC 23)

7th—*harm* (DC 22), *heal*, quickened *lightning bolt* (DC 18)

6th—quickened *false life*, *flesh to stone* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*, *stone to flesh*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), quickened *cure light wounds* (2), *dominate person* (DC 20), *teleport*

4th—*charm monster* (DC 19), *dimension door* (2), *scrying* (DC 19), *vermin shape II*<sup>UM</sup>

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *major image* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 18), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*alter self*, *blindness/deafness* (2, DC 17), *mirror image*, *web* (DC 17)

1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *cure light wounds* (3), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *reduce person* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *light*, *message*

**Patron** trickery

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**TACTICS**

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**During Combat** Manticce casts quickened *false life* and *mirror image* on the first round of combat, then a quickened *lightning bolt* and *mass charm monster* on the second. She favors *dominate monster* and *dominate person* after that, hoping to make allies out of enemies. If she dominates the whole party, she sends them back to Kintargo to continue their lives but periodically steps in to maintain her domination; how this plays out over the long term is left to you, but Manticce is no friend of Thrune, so it may be that being dominated by the witch has no real effect on the campaign.

**Morale** If reduced below 80 hit points, Manticce teleports to safety elsewhere in her home. The PCs soon thereafter find themselves relentlessly attacked by various dominated minions and allies, along with repeated *demand* spells, until they can track down Manticce and either defeat her or apologize; how they might accomplish this may well lead to a series of adventures of your own design.

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**STATISTICS**

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**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 36

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +16, Diplomacy +26, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Perception +23, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +27, Use Magic Device +24

**Languages** Azlanti, Common, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Infernal, Varisian

**SQ** witch's familiar (scarlet spider named Gozzlemer)

**Combat Gear** *wand of charm monster* (20 charges), *wand of cure serious wounds* (44 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 10th, 31 charges); **Other Gear** +2 *mithral dagger*, *amulet of natural armor* +4, *corset of dire witchcraft*<sup>UE</sup>, *headband of mental superiority* +2, *ring of protection* +4, numerous other valuables spread around Cobweb Manor

**Story Award:** If the PCs secure an alliance with Vyre through the Queen of Delights, grant them 12,800 XP.

## PART 4: BREAKING THE MENADOR GAP

Securing alliances with powerful neighbors like Vyre or the aquatic elves will certainly help Kintargo oppose Thrune retaliation from the sea, but what about by land? There are, essentially, three workable routes from mainland Cheliox into the northwestern archduchy of Ravounel, as the rugged Menador Mountains serve as a significant barrier to trade and the movement of armies. The longer route requires traveling through Nidal, and while the two nations remain allies for now, Nidal grows increasingly nervous about protecting its own borders as the Glorious Reclamation gains momentum. Significant Chelish troop movements through Nidal are unlikely to be welcome, and Thrune certainly doesn't want to aggravate their closest ally in these treacherous times. A secondary coastal route along the Hellmouth Gulf exists, but rebel activity in classically insurgent cities like Pezzack, combined with the dangers posed by the strix of Devil's Perch, makes this route unworkable for now as well. This leaves one mountain route of significance connecting the bulk of Cheliox to Ravounel: the Menador Gap.

### C. MENADOR KEEP

For much of its length, the Menador Gap is quite wide, yet at one point, the rugged mountains close in and constrict the pass, transforming it into a section of narrow, winding roads that cling precariously to the mountainsides. Carved by dwarven engineers during the Age of Darkness, these roads were initially meant to increase trade through the mountains. At the point at which these mountain roads grew the most narrow, the dwarves erected a small but highly defensible gatehouse, known today as Menador

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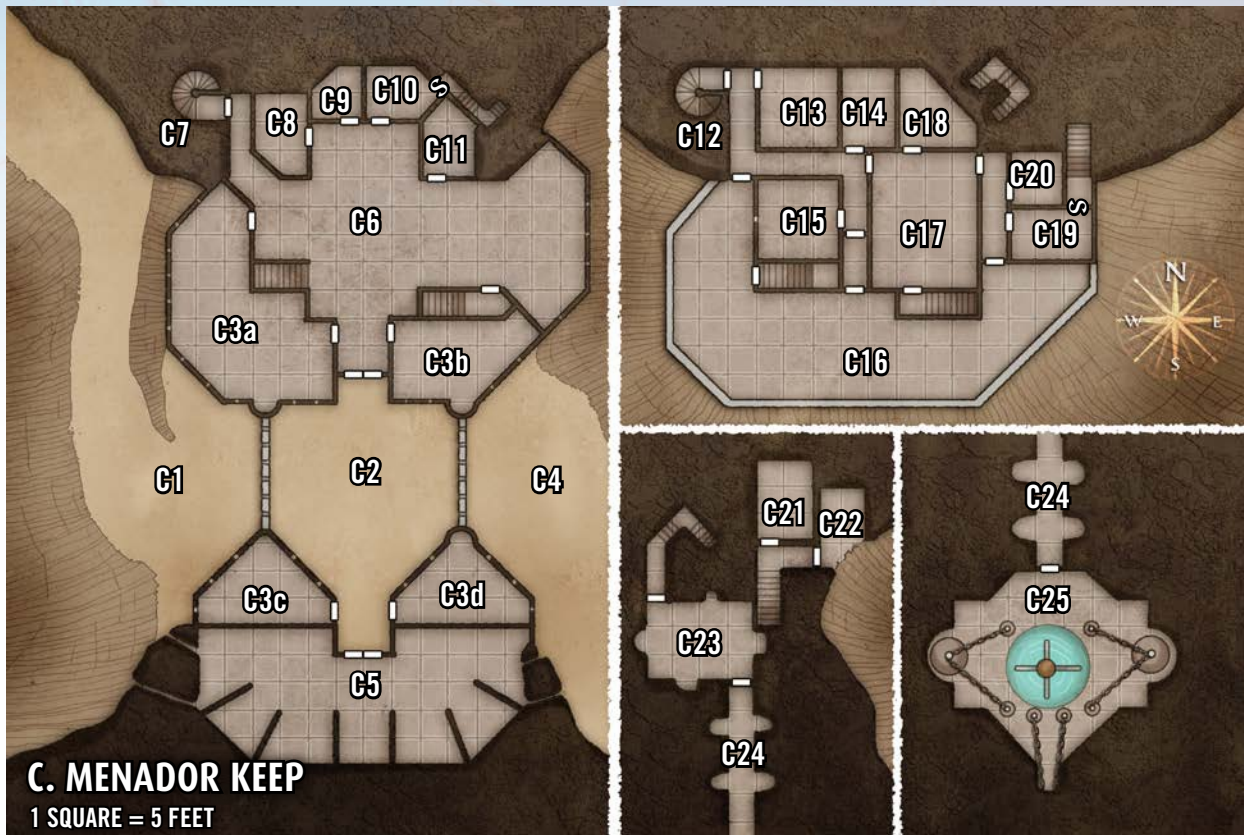
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Keep. The roads and the keep itself, all of sound dwarven engineering, remain quite usable to this day, but the dwarves knew they needed a plan for a worst-case scenario. Therefore, they built into the keep a failsafe—an engine of self-destruction called the Anvil of Unmaking, with which they could destroy the keep and close the pass. After all, the ancient dwarves reasoned, it was surely possible to rebuild what they'd already built once, so being able to destroy a structure to deny its use by enemies in the meantime just made good sense.

The dwarves ultimately abandoned the region before they were ever put in a situation where they had to contemplate using the device—it remains fully functional in a hidden chamber above the keep, which is itself built into an arch of stone that hangs above the pass. If the device is triggered, not only would the keep be destroyed in a massive landslide, but the gap would be erased in a cascade of rock and stone, closing the path to land-bound traffic for years—perhaps even decades—before the damage could be repaired. The original Silver Ravens learned of this failsafe in the last days of the Chelish Civil War, but by then they were in no position to take advantage of it. They did make notes of their discovery, though, and Rexus (or possibly a PC, if one succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge [history] check or has specifically studied the documents recovered in the first adventure) is quick to inform the PCs of this information when the topic of securing the Menador Gap comes up.

The old Silver Ravens documents also proposed using an *earthquake* spell to collapse the keep, which is now held by House Thrune, if its failsafe couldn't be triggered, but access to such magic is unlikely to be available to the PCs. Certainly, no *scrolls of earthquake* or allied NPCs capable of casting that spell exist in Kintargo. Eager PCs may be able to secure such a scroll in Vyre, at your discretion, yet their allies tell them that simply destroying the castle from afar with such a spell might not work—the attempt may merely damage the pass, and if the PCs aren't able to completely block it on their first try, Thrune will surely send reinforcements to make future attempts impossible. In addition, prisoners, valuable intelligence, or magical treasure might be lost if the keep were destroyed before it was fully explored.

It's a 220-mile trek from Kintargo to Menador Keep, but this part of the adventure is focused entirely on the keep itself. Numerous small towns and villages dot the route south, but none are of significant size, and their citizens are quiet and meek, worried about their futures as whispers of rebellion and martial law in Kintargo persist. If you like, you could roll a Notoriety check as the PCs approach each town; if the result is lower than or equal to the Silver Ravens' current Notoriety score, the PCs are recognized in one of these towns and given safe places to hide by grateful citizens eager to be free of Thrune. Alternatively, such a check result could well indicate that the PCs encounter a hostile group of Hellknights or Thrune loyalists heading north to join up with Barzillai.

If you wish, you can have the PCs stay at a sizable roadside way house called the Oakrib Inn at the western mouth of the Menador Gap. This inn is destined to host an important political meeting between the PCs and Throne diplomats in the last adventure, “Breaking the Bones of Hell,” but the inn and its owner, **Olradi Ormovor** (LN male human aristocrat 2/expert 4), have no role to play in this adventure.

### MENADOR KEEP FEATURES

Before the PCs approach Menador Keep, they may wish to do some research on the fortress to prepare. Unfortunately, because of Throne’s efficiency in seizing and redacting sensitive documents, no maps of the keep are available in any holdings of Kintargo or Vyre. Travel through the pass is strictly regulated during these days of unrest. Menador Keep charges significant taxes for those seeking to use the pass, and keeps track of the nature of travelers’ business at the pass. Merchants and loyal agents of Throne or the church of Asmodeus are generally allowed to pass, but most other travelers are turned away. Located as far as it is from Kintargo, the rebellion actions of Covert Action, Sabotage, or Secure Cache cannot be taken against the site, although Gather Information works to learn the above intelligence.

Menador Keep is located at the narrowest and highest point in the pass, at an elevation of 3,400 feet (well below the tree line). The surrounding mountainous terrain is trackless and steep; climbing or flight is required if the PCs wish to approach via a direction other than the Ravounel Road. The walls of the keep are hewn stone, and PCs must succeed at DC 25 Climb checks to scale them. Doors within the keep are fashioned of stone (hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 28), but are so cunningly weighted and engineered that they glide open with barely a sound. All can be sealed tight from within a room with an internal metal bar, but none bear actual locks.

If the PCs retreat from an attempt to explore and destroy the keep before they defeat Lucian Throne, he sends his erinyes minion Elulae to report to his superiors in Egorian. Traveling via teleportation, she returns within an hour of the PCs’ first retreat to report that no further reinforcements are coming at this time, and that Lucian is expected to hold the keep. This infuriates Lucian, but also compels him to do his best to capture the PCs and thus prove to his superiors his worth.

### MENADOR SOLDIERS

Statistics for the rank-and-file soldiers who stand guard in the keep are presented here, as they can be found throughout the fortification and their exact positioning changes depending on the nature of the alarm. If the alarm is raised, all of the soldiers

mobilize quickly to aid each other in defending the pass. Specific details on how the soldiers, the monsters, and the captain himself react to a raised alarm are presented in each encounter area’s Development section, as appropriate.

#### MENADOR SOLDIER CR 2

**XP 600**

Human fighter 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 30 (3d10+9)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2 (+1 vs. fear)

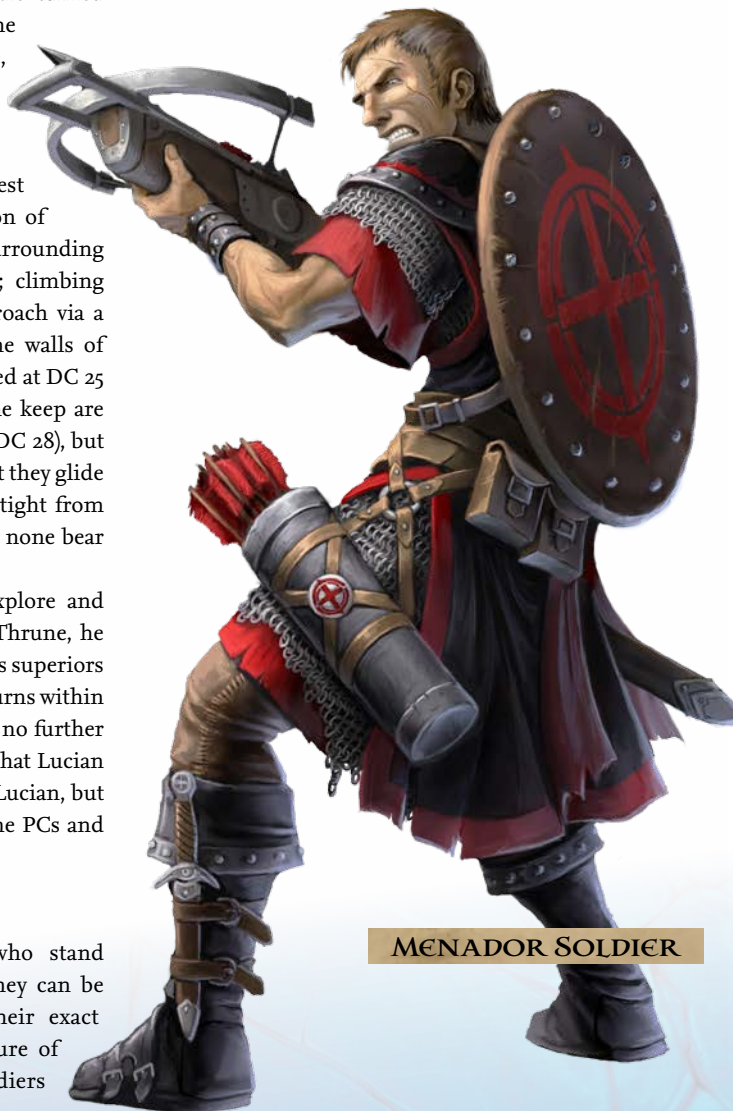
**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk halberd +5 (1d10+1/×3)

**Ranged** mwk heavy crossbow +3 (1d10+2/19–20)



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**TACTICS**

**During Combat** On the first round of combat, a soldier fires at a foe using a *screaming bolt*; these shrieking attacks also double as alarms for the keep. Menador soldiers prefer to break into equal-sized groups, with half of their number engaging foes in melee while the others hold back and provide support via their crossbows. They always use Deadly Aim with crossbow attacks, and their ranged attacks reflect this tactic in the above statistics.

**Morale** Menador soldiers are loyal to House Thrune, and fight to the death until their leader, Captain Lucian, is obviously defeated. At this point, any remaining Menador soldiers make a fighting retreat to the east in an attempt to flee back to the Chelish heartlands.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy ballista), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow)

**Skills** Intimidate +5, Perception +4, Sense Motive +4

**Languages** Common

**SQ** armor training 1

**Gear** mwk chainmail, mwk halberd, mwk heavy crossbow with 10 bolts and 3 *screaming bolts*, 40 gp

**C1. WESTERN APPROACH**

Menador Keep sits in the shadow of an arch of stone that hangs over the pass itself, forming a short, natural tunnel through the mountainside. The road narrows to just over ten feet in width as it approaches the keep, ending at a large iron gate that blocks entrance into the keep's courtyard. South of this courtyard stands a one-story stone stable, while the keep to the north is two stories tall, with half of its upper floor built directly into the arch above. Numerous arrowslits decorate the bleak stone walls looking out over the pass.

The iron gate to area **C2** is kept closed and locked—the guards open it only for approved travelers (the winches to open the gates are found in areas **C3a** and **C3b**). As long as the gate is closed and locked, it is difficult to force open (hardness 10, hp 180, break DC 32, Disable Device DC 30). The western cliff is a precipitous drop from the pass's edge, falling 150 feet down into a still-steep valley below—a character must succeed at a DC 20 Climb check to scale these walls.

**Development:** The western approach is watched over by the guards in areas **C3a**, **C3c**, and **C16**. A guard in area **C16** hails travelers, informing them that passage through the gap is currently restricted. Unless the PCs can convince this guard they are agents of Thrune, representatives of the Church of Asmodeus, or merchants with legitimate

business on the behalf of one of those two, the PCs are told to turn back. A successful Bluff check is required to get the guards to open the gates; on a failed check, or if the PCs refuse to retreat, the guards immediately attack, firing on the PCs with *screaming bolts*. They do not engage foes in melee here.

**C2. COURTYARD**

The keep's courtyard is stark, bare stone. Gates to the east and west control passage through the keep, while stone double doors to the north and south allow entrance into the keep and the stable, respectively.

**Development:** If the PCs successfully talk their way into the courtyard, they are met here by the soldiers from areas **C3a**, who give them a cursory examination. If any PC fails a Disguise check at this point, the guards notice something off and demand the PCs surrender to them at once. Should the PCs do so, their armor, weapons, and gear are confiscated, and they are held in area **C8** until Captain Lucian can interrogate them. The best case scenario here if the PCs don't escape on their own is that they're turned back to the west without any of their belongings.

If combat breaks out here, the guards from areas **C3a** and **C3c** emerge to attack in melee, while guards from areas **C3b**, **C3d**, and the roof in area **C16** provide crossbow support. Captain Lucian responds to the fight quickly, but first moves to area **C22** to mount his wyvern. He joins a fight here 1d4+4 rounds after it begins. If more than half the keep's defenders are slain, he immediately calls upon the devils in areas **C15** and **C21** to join the battle—they teleport in at the start of the following round.

**C3. GUARDROOMS (CR 8)**

A winch mechanism in area **C3a** controls and locks the gates to area **C1**, while a similar mechanism in area **C3b** does the same for the gates to area **C4**.

**Creatures:** Although each of these rooms is slightly different in shape, they all contain the same defenders—a posting of eight Menador soldiers at all hours of the day. The soldiers serve grueling 12-hour shifts, leaving the remaining 12 hours for rest; meals are brought to the guards three times during their shifts by the cook who toils in the kitchen above (area **C13**).

**MENADOR SOLDIERS (8)****CR 2****XP 600 each****hp 30 each (see page 29)****C4. EASTERN APPROACH**

This area is similar to area **C1**, and in the unlikely event that the PCs approach from this direction, the keep's defenders react in the same manner.



## C5. STABLES

The air inside this large room smells musty. A total of seven stalls line the southern wall, each containing a hitching post and heaps of straw.

The stables are usually used to house the steeds of visiting officers or other persons of note. No horses are kept here now.

## C6. COMMON ROOM (CR 5)

Narrow windows on the east side of this long, chilly hall look out over the Menador Gap. The black-and-red Asmodean tapestries that hang on the walls ripple gently in the draft.

The eastern and western staircases head up to areas C17 and C16, respectively.

**Creatures:** The keep's inhabitants use this room to relax, socialize, and gather for announcements or meetings. Their grueling schedules minimize the amount of time guards have to use this room, though. The first time the PCs visit the keep, three off-duty soldiers sit around one of the tables playing a half-hearted game of cards. If they hear the sound of battle elsewhere in the keep, they abandon their game and head upstairs to area C17 to alert the sleeping guards. It takes them several minutes to help the other guards don their armor, after which point all eight soldiers start to patrol the keep as a group, looking for the intruders.

**MENADOR SOLDIERS (3)** CR 2  
**XP 600 each**  
**hp 30 each** (see page 29)

## C7. LOWER STAIRWELL

This spiral staircase leads up to area C12.

## C8. PRISON

The door to this room locks and bars from the outside of the room rather than the inside, making it a perfect chamber for use as a prison.

**Creatures:** Currently, the room contains three frightened and malnourished halfling slaves, sent up from the Chelish heartlands for Lucian to eventually feed to the slithering trackers in area C11. All three halflings have 1 hit point and have accepted their fate, but if they realize the PCs may be here to rescue them, they tearfully thank their saviors. Named Perren, Crandy, and Nausp, all three are 1st-level commoners and thus relatively helpless in combat. If the PCs ask them to follow, they'll cower behind the heroes when fights break out, or may even panic and flee into the keep to find hiding places.

**Story Award:** For each halfling prisoner who survives and is brought to safety, award the PCs 3,200 XP.

## C9. STORAGE

Numerous shelves holding small boxes, crates, and barrels fill this cramped storeroom.

**Treasure:** Most of the contents of this room consist of preserved foodstuffs, barrels of drinking water, and other miscellaneous, relatively worthless supplies. A search of the area automatically finds what valuables are there to be found after a few minutes of work: 10 vials of alchemist's fire, 12 tanglefoot bags, a barrel of caltrops, and a box of 40 tindertwigs.

## C10. ARMORY

Several suits of chainmail armor lie in a neatly organized stack on the floor, while nearby weapon racks hold halberds and crossbows. A large chest sits near the north wall.

The cleverly disguised secret door in the northeast wall leads to area C23; it can be discovered by a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check. Lucian and the erinyes Elulae technically have a chance of noticing the door, but they have had little reason to spend much time in this room. So far, the door has been noticed by only one of the keep's current occupants—the janni Zorumar (see area C13)—and he has had no reason to share this information with his master.

**Treasure:** The spare armor and weapons held here for the soldiers includes four suits of masterwork chainmail, five masterwork halberds, and three masterwork heavy crossbows. A dozen ballista bolts lean against the wall in front of the secret door. The chest contains 200 crossbow bolts and, wrapped in a black velvet cloth, seven *screaming bolts*.

## C11. SLITHERING COURT (CR 7)

This chamber is bare and empty—even the dust seems to be missing. The walls, the floor, and even the ceiling are polished smooth.

**Creatures:** Lucian Thrune doesn't depend only on his human soldiers and a few devils to keep the security of Menador Keep: two slithering trackers dwell in this room. Thrune makes sure to keep them well fed on the blood of slaves he regularly imports (the slithering trackers particularly enjoy halfling blood), and in return, the eerie protoplasmic beings periodically slither through the halls of the keep on the lookout for intruders. Whether the PCs encounter them on patrol or find them here is left to you to decide. Lucian may attempt to lead the PCs here if they seem to be winning a fight against his soldiers out in the courtyard.

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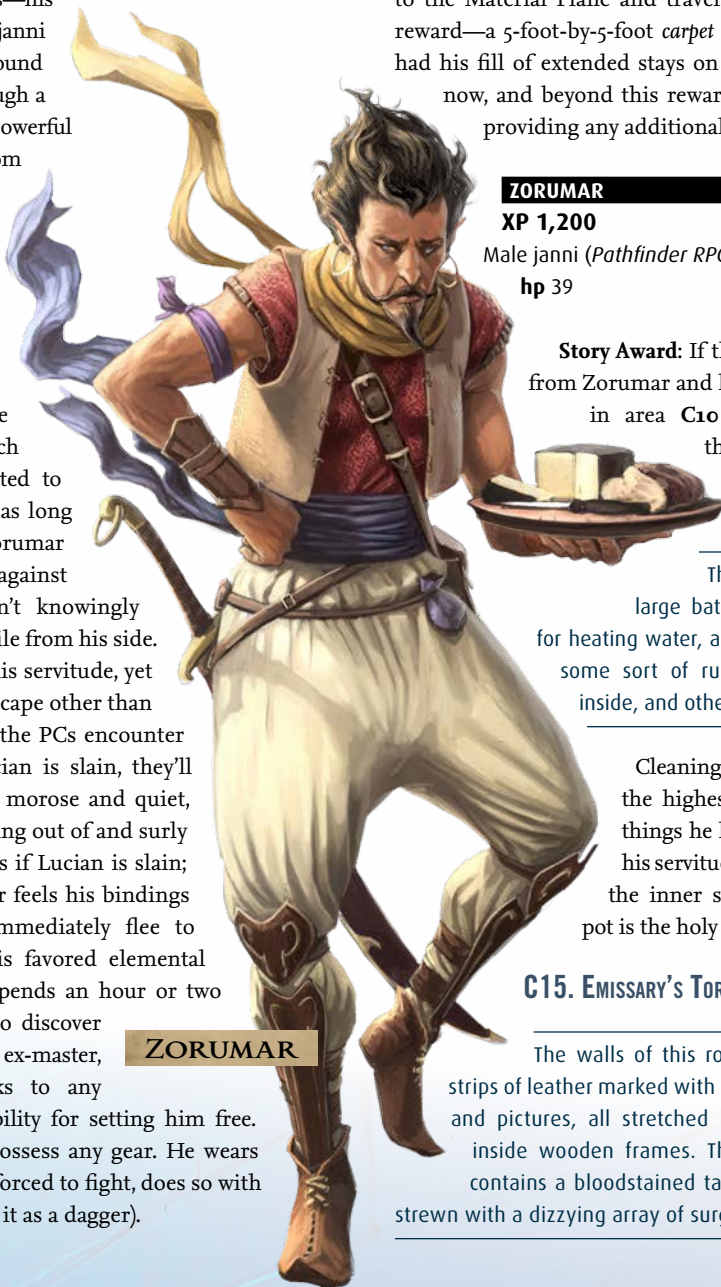
**ADVANCED SLITHERING TRACKERS (2)****CR 5****XP 1,600 each****hp** 50 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 250)**C12. UPPER STAIRWELL**

This set of spiral stairs leads down to area C7.

**C13. KITCHEN (CR 4)**

This kitchen has a small table for preparing food, a basin for holding water, and several bins containing utensils and plates. Curiously, there are no food supplies or even a stove in evidence.

**Creature:** Times being lean, Lucian's full staff of help have been recalled to his family holdings in the heartland. Only one servant remains—his personal valet, a janni named Zorumar. Bound to serve Lucian through a ritual enacted by a powerful family friend from Katapesh, Zorumar is under strict orders to not use his spell-like abilities, with the exception of *create food and water* (which he uses to prepare meals for the keep's occupants each day). He's not expected to fight for Lucian, but as long as Lucian lives, Zorumar can take no actions against his master and can't knowingly travel more than a mile from his side. The janni chafes at his servitude, yet sees no real way to escape other than to outlive Lucian. If the PCs encounter Zorumar before Lucian is slain, they'll find the janni to be morose and quiet, difficult to get anything out of and surly to boot. This changes if Lucian is slain; in this case, Zorumar feels his bindings fade, but doesn't immediately flee to the Plane of Air (his favored elemental plane). Instead, he spends an hour or two searching the keep to discover what happened to his ex-master, and to offer thanks to any who claim responsibility for setting him free. Zorumar does not possess any gear. He wears simple robes, and if forced to fight, does so with a kitchen knife (treat it as a dagger).

**ZORUMAR**

If he finds the PCs, Zorumar is gracious and polite in thanking them for setting him free. He knows much about the keep, and can provide the PCs with a map of the structure and advise them on the presence of potential enemies. He noticed the secret door in area C10 many months ago while cleaning the armory, but took delight in withholding that secret from his master. He eagerly tells the PCs of the door, but regretfully says he can't tell them what awaits beyond.

Zorumar is eager to leave the Material Plane, but before he does so, he promises to return in a few days with a reward for the PCs if they but tell him where the reward is to be delivered. Assuming the PCs share this information with the janni, Zorumar is as good as his word. After he spends a few days recovering from his servitude amid old friends on the Plane of Air, he returns to the Material Plane and travels to Kintargo with his reward—a 5-foot-by-5-foot *carpet of flying*. The janni has had his fill of extended stays on the Material Plane for now, and beyond this reward, has little interest in providing any additional services to the PCs.

**ZORUMAR****CR 4****XP 1,200**Male janni (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 141*)**hp** 39

**Story Award:** If the PCs secure a reward from Zorumar and learn of the secret door in area C10 through him, award them 6,400 XP.

**C14. BATH**

This room contains a large bathing tub, a small stove for heating water, an iron chamber pot with some sort of rune emblazoned on the inside, and other amenities for comfort.

Cleaning this room is perhaps the highest on Zorumar's list of things he loathes doing as part of his servitude. The rune carved into the inner surface of the chamber pot is the holy symbol of Iomedae.

**C15. EMISSARY'S TORTURE GALLERY (CR 9)**

The walls of this room are decorated with strips of leather marked with curious designs, images, and pictures, all stretched by taut cords of sinew inside wooden frames. The middle of the room contains a bloodstained table, the top of which is strewn with a dizzying array of surgical implements.

**Creature:** The erinyes Elulae has been assigned to Lucian as a messenger and a scout—she serves at the behest of the church of Asmodeus, and as long as Lucian keeps her supplied with victims to torture and flay, she doesn't lament her situation too terribly. She much prefers tattooed victims, and harvests their skin for the art on her walls. If any of the PCs wear prominent tattoos, she favors them in battle and does her best to capture them alive without doing too much damage to their lovely hides in the process. If the PCs attack and retreat, Elulae is Lucian's primary mode of messages to his superiors. Once Lucian receives orders to handle the PCs himself, he may send Elulae out to infiltrate their camp or otherwise attack as they approach the keep the next time.

Elulae herself looks almost like an albino angel—slim and androgynous, with pale skin, snow-white wings, pink eyes, and a serene expression on her face even in battle. For such an admirer of tattoos, she bears none of her own.

**ELULAE** CR 9

**XP 6,400**

Advanced erinyes devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 75)

**hp 112**

**Treasure:** The decorations on the walls are various tattoos harvested from dozens of different victims flayed by Elulae over the years, well preserved and each bearing the donor's name. Of the tattoos, five are particularly interesting, as they were harvested from a Varisian wizard and contained five of his favorite spells. These scraps of flesh became infused with the man's pain and horror as he died on Elulae's table, transforming these five tattoos into scrolls containing the following spells: *break enchantment*, *displacement*, *major image*, *mirror image*, and *seeming*.

### C16. BATTLEMENTS (CR 7)

This open rooftop is surrounded by a low crenellation that provides cover to ranged attackers against foes on the ground below in areas **C1**, **C2**, and **C4**. A pair of heavy ballistae (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 161) are kept here along with a half-dozen bolts each; the ballistae look out over area **C1** and **C4** respectively, and are mounted on ingenious turrets that allow them to fire down into those areas, or to rotate and fire down into area **C2**.

**Creatures:** Six soldiers stand guard here at all times; during the night, they carry bullseye lanterns. Their reaction to visitors is detailed in area **C1**; if a fight breaks out, they split into teams of three to crew the ballistae. The turrets the ballistae are mounted on count as targeting platforms, and as such the soldiers take no penalties when firing the ballistae. They do not use Deadly Aim when firing a ballista.

**MENADOR SOLDIERS (6)** CR 2

**XP 600 each**

**hp 30 each** (see page 29)

**Ranged** heavy ballista +6 (4d8/19–20)

### C17. GUARD QUARTERS (CR 7)

A set of six none-too-comfortable-looking double bunks fill this room. Numerous footlockers sit at the base of each bunk—nearly two dozen in all.

**Creatures:** There isn't enough bedding here for the entire staff of the keep to sleep at once, but since more than half of the soldiers are on duty at any one time, this has never been a problem. The first time the PCs visit, five soldiers are sleeping here—they'll need time to throw on their armor if the alarm is raised.

**MENADOR SOLDIERS (5)** CR 2

**XP 600 each**

**hp 30 each** (see page 29)

**Treasure:** The footlockers contain changes of clothing and personal items owned by the soldiers. At first glance, there is nothing of value here, but with a successful DC 30 Perception check while searching the footlockers, a PC turns up a *ring of protection +3* one soldier swiped from a murdered traveler and then hid in the lining of a footlocker. Needless to say, the soldier thinks the ring is merely a gold bauble, and is ignorant of its true power.

### C18. WAR ROOM

A circular table with several chairs sits in this room. Sprawled atop the table are numerous maps of Cheliox, along with several scrolls weighed down by a bejeweled dagger.

**Treasure:** The dagger's scabbard is set with red garnets in pentagram patterns and is worth 2,000 gp, while the dagger itself is a *+1 merciful dagger*—a family heirloom owned by Lucian, but not something he really considers useful enough to carry on his person.

The documents on the table, though, may be more valuable. The bulk of the scrolls and maps strewn across its surface are reports from the Chelish heartland, showing the advances and losses Thrune has made against the Glorious Reclamation. A study of the notes makes it apparent that Thrune has its hands full handling the more widespread uprising, and that while they know rebellion is growing in Kintargo, they simply don't have the resources at this time to bolster Barzillai's work there. Several letters impress upon Lucian Thrune that if he can't hold Menador Keep, the government will send more soldiers to replace him and oust any troublemakers who

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claim the keep—it seems obvious that the destruction of the keep and pass aren't things that House Thrune has even considered as a possibility. In addition, the number of documents here that contain recent battle tactics and techniques can be of great use to the Silver Ravens—if the PCs secure these notes and return them to Kintargo, the Silver Ravens gain an advantage over Thrune's forces when the battle for Kintargo occurs. The next adventure, "A Song of Silver," contains information on how these notes can help.

**Development:** If the PCs make it this far into the keep without raising the alarm, they'll likely find Captain Lucian Thrune here, poring over the notes in frustration.

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 4,800 XP for securing the war notes from this room.



LUCIAN THRUNE

### C19. LUCIAN'S CHAMBERS (CR 9)

This bedroom is neat and well organized. The bed has a firm mattress that looks like it hasn't been slept in for a few days. A trunk sits at the foot of the bed.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers the secret door in the north wall; the stairs beyond lead up to areas C21 and C22.

**Creature:** This austere chamber belongs to the keep's commander, Captain Lucian Thrune. The man doesn't sleep here often, as stress and worry about letting undesirables through the pass keep him active for much of the day. He catches sleep when he can, just enough to avoid fatigue. There's a 20% chance that if the PCs infiltrate the keep at night they'll catch the captain asleep here for a few hours.

Lucian Thrune is normally a haughty peacock of a man, eager to promote his own government standing and more at home jockeying for political power than running a military outpost. He begrudgingly accepted the post of personally commanding the guards stationed at Menador Keep when the Glorious Reclamation rose up, hoping that doing so would bolster his reputation by gaining some "wartime experience." The rebellion has dragged on, though, and Lucian increasingly worries that he's missing out on opportunities back home for significant grandstanding, yet the loss of face he would endure for abandoning his duties here has so far outweighed the benefits of returning home. For now, the man remains loyal to his task, even if it makes his personality more and more unpleasant for those serving under him each day.

The impossibly arrogant Thrune relies upon the reputation of his family to terrify those he commands. Tall and handsome, Lucian enjoys insulting his subordinates and predicting violent fates for them. His entire pre-combat discourse revolves around this arrogant tirade. He cares nothing for the soldiers here, other than for their use in helping him defend the pass from troublemakers. If combat begins, he quickly retreats through the secret door to mount his wyvern and take the fight outdoors if he can.

#### LUCIAN THRUNE

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human aristocrat 3/cavalier 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 32)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; Senses Perception +14

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+9 armor, -1 Dex)

hp 103 (10 HD; 3d8+7d10+47)

Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +6

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**OFFENSE**

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**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 flaming greatsword +13/+8 (2d6+5/17–20 plus 1d6 fire)

**Special Attacks** banner +2, cavalier's charge, challenge 3/day (+7 damage, +2 AC), tactician 2/day (Distracting Charge<sup>ACG</sup>, 6 rounds)

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**TACTICS**

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**During Combat** Lucian prefers to fight astride his wyvern, and uses Ride-By Attack while using Vital Strike with his greatsword. He's conservative with Power Attack, and tends to use that feat only when he can somewhat offset the penalty on his attack rolls with a charge, flanking, or the like. He uses his tactician ability to grant Distracting Charge to allies, particularly to his wyvern when Lucian uses Ride-By Attack. He prefers to challenge obvious worshipers of faiths opposed to Asmodeus, but if given no other option challenges non-human foes, particularly halflings—Lucian bristles at the mere thought of halflings not being enslaved. When mounted, Lucian must guide his mount with his knees since he uses a two-handed weapon, but unless there are extenuating circumstances, he can't fail this DC 5 Ride check or the DC 10 Ride check to fight with a combat-trained mount.

**Morale** Lucian's fear of failure outweighs his sense of self-preservation, but he won't hesitate to break off combat to retreat and recover if outclassed. If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, he retreats to area **C21** to use the healing magic kept there, abandoning his soldiers and even his wyvern if he feels that doing so will help him reach that room. He then commands the devil that guards area **C21** to accompany him back to battle. At this point, he fights to the death. If cornered with no option to flee, he prefers to leap from a cliff's edge, hoping to fall to his death rather than allow the PCs to take him alive.

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**STATISTICS**

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**Str** 16, **Dex** 8, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Duck and Cover<sup>ACG</sup>, Improved Critical (greatsword), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Skill Focus (Ride), Toughness, Vital Strike

**Skills** Diplomacy +15, Handle Animal +15, Intimidate +15, Perception +14, Ride +13

**Languages** Common

**SQ** expert trainer +3, lion's call, mount (wyvern named Zailosorn), order of the lion

**Gear** mwk full plate, +1 flaming greatsword, iron and silver bracelet set with small opals depicting devils being eaten by bloated dolls (worth 700 gp), long dark cloak set with black peacock feathers (worth 100 gp), soft leather scissor case containing scissors depicting a lewdly posed gnome (worth 75 gp), small vanity mirror painted with angels (worth 50 gp), silver-rimmed reading spectacles in an iron case (worth 50 gp), iron key for the trunk in area **C21**

**Treasure:** The trunk contains eight fine noble's outfits worth 200 gp each, a crate of eight bottles of magnificent brandy (worth 100 gp per bottle), a bottle of scent in the shape of a naked woman (worth 300 gp), a superb cup made of silver and gold with platinum studding (worth 750 gp), and a carved wooden wyvern on a tin stand inscribed "To Luci, with love." This last is a relatively valueless object, a gift from Lucian's aunt that represents one of his few memories of childhood happiness. If the PCs somehow get hold of this carved toy, threatening its destruction is the one thing that could possibly convince Lucian to abandon Menador Keep and allow its destruction. Whether or not the PCs learn about this is left to you, but if the PCs prepare for the attack on Menador with divination magic, consider giving them a clue about this tactic as a reward.

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## C20. GUEST ROOM

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This bedroom is well made, clean, and organized, yet does not extend much effort toward the goal of comfort.

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This room is used by visiting dignitaries, but is currently unused.

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## C21. TREASURY (CR 7 AND 8)

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A large iron trunk sits against the north wall of this otherwise empty room.

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**Creature:** This room, Menador Keep's treasury, is guarded by a devil on extended loan to House Thrune from the church of Asmodeus. The devil is an advanced host devil named Azmagort, and he rankles a bit at the role of "trunk guardian," yet is bound by his promise to serve Lucian as needed. Azmagort looks forward to the end of the year when his term of service ends and he can return to Hell, but until then, he loyally follows Lucian's orders. His current orders are to slaughter anyone other than Lucian who enters this room.

**AZMAGORT****CR 7****XP 3,200**Advanced host devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 288, 53)**hp 73**

**Trap:** The iron trunk is not only locked (Lucian Thrune carries its key), but trapped. Anyone who attempts to open the chest or damage it without the proper key causes a razor-sharp scimitar blade slathered in wyvern poison to scythe out at foot level from the bottom of the chest.

**FOOTSLASHER BLADE****CR 8****XP 4,800****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

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**EFFECTS****Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual**Effect** Atk +15 melee (1d6+4/18–20 plus wyvern poison)

**Treasure:** The chest contains several pouches of gold consisting of 980 gp in all (the keep's payroll). Additionally, the chest contains a stash of six *potions of cure moderate wounds* and six *potions of cure serious wounds*, along with a few other unusual treasures Lucian has gathered from unfortunate troublemakers he's captured over the past several months. These include a Small +1 *human-bane bastard sword*, six +3 *frost arrows*, a lacy white dress worth 200 gp, an ivory fan with a painted silk picture of *The Six Trials of Larazod* worth 200 gp, a leather-bound glass flask with attached silver fox-head stirrup cup worth 200 gp (the flask contains a *potion of haste*), and a solid-gold pillbox carved with a leering harpy face worth 400 gp containing three doses of *dust of appearance*.

**C22. WYVERN PEN (CR 7)**

A heap of straw, bones, and shredded cloth has been tucked into the northern portion of this room, while to the southeast, the walls open up to the outside, looking out over the Menador Gap beyond. No railing or other protection prevents an accidental stumble out of the room.

It's a 180-foot drop down to the rocky valley below if someone falls off the edge here, though a character can scale the cliff face with a successful DC 20 Climb check.

**Creature:** Although Lucian Thrune is a cavalier who originally trained on horseback, he prefers the wyvern Zailosorn as his favored mount. He trained the wyvern from a hatchling, and while Zailosorn is a foul-tempered beast that swiftly attacks anyone else who comes near, he dotes upon Lucian and chirps in delight whenever the man gives him any attention whatsoever.

**ZAILOSORN CR 7****XP 3,200**Advanced wyvern (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 282)**hp** 87**C23. FORGOTTEN GUARDIANS (CR 8)**

A thick layer of dust covers the floor of this room. Stone doors stand in opposite corners, while four curving alcoves, each fitted with a squat statue of a dwarf armed with a warhammer, stand guard silently.

The secret door in area C10 leads to a long-forgotten stairwell that winds up inside the cliff face and eventually into this room. Although located directly above the barracks below, none of the current occupants of

Menador Keep know about this chamber—it and areas C24–C25 have been forgotten since the keep's original dwarven occupants abandoned the structure several thousand years ago.

**Creatures:** Wary adventurers may suspect the four statues of Torag in this room to be guardians—and they're half right. Of the four statues, the two in the north and south alcoves are in fact potent graven guardians carved in Torag's image. Although the sentinels of Torag have remained motionless for thousands of years, they swiftly animate and challenge any intruders in this room.

**SENTINEL OF TORAG CR 6****XP 2,400**Advanced graven guardian (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 290, 140)

N Medium construct

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +3

**DEFENSE****AC** 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 Dex, +12 natural)**hp** 53 (6d10+20); fast healing 2**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 16**Weaknesses** faith bound**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** +1 *keen warhammer* +12/+7 (1d8+6/19–20/×3), slam +6 (1d6+2)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +2)1/day—*haste* (self only)**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The sentinels give intruders a round to retreat back down the stairs, but if anyone attacks or attempts to push by to get to the door to area C24, the constructs attack. They don't pursue foes north, but do pursue foes south into area C24 and beyond.

**Morale** The sentinels fight until destroyed.**STATISTICS****Str** 20, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 5**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25**Skills** Acrobatics +4 (+8 to jump)**SQ** magic weapon, guardian domains (Earth, Protection)**Gear** warhammer**C24. THE BELLOWS OF TORAG (CR 9)**

Dust covers the floor and cobwebs hang from the ceiling of this vaulted, fifty-foot-long hallway. Curved alcoves flank the hallway, four to a side. Each alcove contains a long-dry basin held aloft by a stone dwarf. Runes are carved above the door to the south, while the door itself bears the carved face of a scowling dwarven man.

The southern door is sealed via a complex set of bars, and while it can be disabled or destroyed to gain access to

the room beyond (hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30), any attempt to open the door triggers the ancient magical trap that wards it to this day. The runes above the door are written in Dwarven and say, “Beyond is the Anvil of Unmaking, yet woe to those who give not prayer to the Father of Creation before undoing what his children hath wrought.”

**Trap:** Any prayer uttered to Torag by either a devout worshiper of that deity or someone who offers the prayer with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check causes the magical trap on this door to deactivate and the door to swing open, provided the supplicant is within 5 feet of the door. Any attempt to force the door open triggers the trap—the stone face on the door animates and releases a thunderous shout that affects all creatures in area **C25**.

### BELLOWS OF TORAG CR 9

**XP 4,800**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** prayer (see above)

**Effect** sonic blast (4d6 sonic damage, Reflex DC 18 half) plus *fear* (Will DC 18 or panicked for 1d4 rounds); multiple targets (all creatures in area **C24**)

## C25. ANVIL OF UNMAKING (CR 9)

Thick layers of dust cover the floor of this room and the looming contraption of stone and iron it contains. Looking something akin to a massive, squat bell of stone bound in iron bands, the device is connected to pillars of iron to the west, east, and south via taut metal chains. Four iron beams radiate from the top of the central bell, almost like the wheel of an ancient winch.

This device is the Anvil of Unmaking—the mechanical device the dwarves built long ago to facilitate the destruction of their fortress in the event of an unstoppable enemy. The device still works; see The Quaking End of Menador Keep below for details on how it can be activated.

**Creatures:** Two legion archons have stood watch over the Anvil of Unmaking since its creation so long ago. These archons appear as stocky dwarves armed with +1 *flaming burst warhammers* that they wield with two hands. They have Improved Critical (warhammer) and Weapon Focus (warhammer) instead of feats to augment the use of greatswords. They otherwise conform to the standard legion archon statistics. Endlessly patient, the archons react to intruders depending on the method of trespass. If the PCs bypass the bellows of Torag with prayer, the archons step forward to stand before them and demand to know their reasons for approaching the Anvil of Unmaking. If the PCs force their way into the room, the archons take the time to cast *aid*, *align weapon*, *mirror*

*image*, and *versatile weapon* on themselves, then demand that the intruders leave at once, but don't immediately attack. They are willing to listen to the PCs, and may still grant them access to the anvil despite their lack of proper protocol in opening the door. Only if the party contains a character with a detectable evil aura do the archons attack without provocation.

The archons are bound here to ensure that the Anvil of Unmaking is activated only for proper cause, and until they are satisfied, they do not allow anyone to activate the device. The archons have remained here, isolated from the world, for ages—they have no concept of Cheliax as a result. Allow the party one opportunity to convince the archons of their righteousness, either via an attempt at trickery (using *Bluff*), honesty (using *Diplomacy*), or bullying (using *Intimidate*). Regardless of the skill used, a PC must succeed at a DC 30 check to convince the archons to let the PCs enter. Only one PC can attempt this check, but other PCs can add their own words to use aid another. Furthermore, for each dwarf in the party or each character who is obviously a worshiper of Torag, the character attempting the check gains a cumulative +5 bonus.

Each method may be tried once per day. Repeating a skill check more than once in 24 hours to try to convince the archons aggravates them enough to cause them to attack. Otherwise, if they believe there are good-aligned foes among the PCs, they repeatedly advise retreat and promise not to pursue.

### LEGION ARCHONS (2) CR 7

**XP 3,200 each**

**hp** 76 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 19)

**Melee** +1 *flaming burst warhammer* +13/+8 (1d8+5/19-20/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

**Story Award:** If the PCs secure access to the Anvil of Unmaking without slaying the archons, award them XP as if they had defeated the creatures in combat.

## THE QUAKING END OF MENADOR KEEP

The final goal at Menador Keep for the PCs should be its destruction, but wise PCs take the time to fully explore the area and ensure its prisoners are safely evacuated and its treasures and secrets are secured.

**Anvil of Unmaking:** This is the surest and safest way to destroy the pass. The Anvil of Unmaking is a mechanical device in remarkable working condition, complex in engineering but simple to comprehend. A PC must succeed at a DC 12 Knowledge (engineering) check to understand that rotating the wheel atop its character bell one full rotation causes complex internal mechanisms to release. The chains connected to the three support pillars then snap taut, shattering all three pillars. This in turn sets up a cascading failure throughout the structure that,

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once it begins, can be halted only by powerful magic like *wish* or *miracle*. As internal supports snap and shatter in the slow-moving chain reaction, the entire keep shakes, shudders, and rumbles. It takes a full 10 minutes for Menador Keep to collapse, which in theory gives any survivors within plenty of time to flee to safety.

**Earthquake:** An *earthquake* spell can destroy the keep as well, but ensuring total destruction is difficult. To destroy the keep, the *earthquake* must be cast such that its epicenter is at a key structural point. Determining such a point requires a successful DC 30 Knowledge (engineering) check; there are multiple locations to choose from, all of which are visible from outside the keep. An *earthquake* is a much cruder method of destruction, and once cast, its results are swift—its effects play out immediately, without the 10-minute grace period granted by the Anvil of Unmaking. On a failed Knowledge (engineering) check, the keep collapses only partially, and the pass remains open enough that another attempt must be made. However, in this case, the damage to the keep is heavy enough to render the Anvil of Unmaking useless for future attempts. Each *earthquake* cast grants a cumulative +5 bonus on the Knowledge (engineering) check to place the epicenter properly.

**The Keep Collapses:** Once the keep collapses, all creatures located within the structure take 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 15 half) and are pinned beneath the rubble. Once pinned, a creature takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute; a character who falls unconscious must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until either freed or dead.

**Development:** Regardless of any steps the PCs took to disguise their actions in this part of the adventure, the destruction of the keep increases the Silver Ravens' Notoriety score by 2d6+20. If the PCs were forced to retreat or otherwise allowed Lucian to send messages to Cheliox about the attempted attack, the Silver Ravens' Notoriety score instead increases by 4d6+40.

**Story Award:** For closing the Menador Gap, award the PCs 12,800 XP.

## PART 5: THE RUBY MASQUERADE

Barzillai Thrune does not remain quiet once Menador is closed, and he now realizes the Silver Ravens are a significant threat that must be eliminated. At this point, he moves forward with his cunning plan to defame the PCs and destroy support for the rebellion by fabricating an atrocity and framing the Silver Ravens as its perpetrators.

Barzillai's plan involves the aid of a specialized diabolic ally—a bone devil inquisitor named Cizmekris. With the aid of a *polymorph any object* spell and the bone devil's skill at disguise, Cizmekris assumes Barzillai's

form while the real Barzillai retreats to the temple of Asmodeus to wait things out. The plan centers around a very public masquerade ball called the Ruby Masquerade, which Barzillai hopes will lure the PCs into attending. At the ball's unmasking ceremony, Barzillai's agents intend to slaughter those in attendance, then plant evidence (including magically sculpting corpses to look like dead Silver Ravens) to make it appear as though the PCs and the Silver Ravens slaughtered these innocent bystanders in a misguided attempt to strike against the government.

Barzillai makes sure to invite many nobles whom he knows don't support Thrune, along with several prominent local business owners and people of note, but also invites several staunch supporters, including members of nobility who are quite visible in their support of the government. To Barzillai, the death of these supporters is an acceptable loss in the pursuit of defaming the Silver Ravens—he reasons that he can always sway more nobles.

### INVITATIONS TO THE RUBY MASQUERADE

Since Barzillai suspects that if he personally invites the PCs to the ball, their suspicions will be aroused, he instead ensures that securing invitations via other methods is possible. His greatest hope is that the PCs attend without any gear or preparation for an ambush, but doesn't expect they'll fall for the trap so completely. His method preys upon the PCs' curiosity and ego—he ensures that all of Kintargo knows about the upcoming event and that invitations have gone out to not only the city's aristocrats and prominent business owners, but also to several of the common folk.

As a result, securing invitations should be a simple matter for the PCs. Allow them to come up with their own methods for doing so, but whatever they decide to do should be successful. Feel free to ask for Bluff, Diplomacy, Sleight of Hand, or other skill checks if you wish; then, regardless of the results, allow the PCs to claim their invitations.

Of course, the PCs might also learn that the ball is a trap; indeed, there are some built-in ways that they can learn this for fact (see *Tayacet Makes Contact* on page 39 for one such method). To a certain extent, it is best if the PCs do expect a trap, or at the very least suspect treachery—if the PCs show up to the ball without any gear and without making preparations, they may well find themselves in over their heads.

### TAYACET MAKES CONTACT

Tayacet Tiora was first introduced in the previous adventure as a mercenary investigator hired by Barzillai Thrune. She has increasingly grown to resent her latest employer. She is something of a wild card in this adventure—the role she plays depends on how the PCs have acted up to this point. She could be a valuable



contact and informant, or she could be a dangerous foil. While this adventure assumes she is something of an ally, disillusioned with working for Barzillai and impressed by the PCs' actions (particularly with how they handled Varl Wex in the previous adventure, if they defeated the serial killer), if your players have been having an easy time of things, you could add Tayacet to Thrune's list of allies in this final act of the adventure.

The trigger that should make Tayacet approach the PCs to offer her aid, if she has not done so already, should be the destruction of the Menador Gap. She approaches the PCs quietly in a public area, preferably in one of the taverns or coffee houses they frequent, and informs them that she's learned quite a bit about who they are, but that she has no intention of turning this information over to Thrune unless the PCs give her a reason to do so. Instead, she warns them that they should not attend the gala—she suspects Thrune has set the event up as some sort of trap for the PCs. Of course, if the PCs persist, Tayacet nods gravely and pledges her aid. She attends the gala on her own, wearing an imperial dragon mask, and if the PCs haven't yet secured invitations for themselves, Tayacet makes an excellent source for them. Should the PCs get in over their heads once the ball is underway, she can come to their aid. Tayacet is eager to hold off on revealing her change in allegiance, since once she acts on the PCs' behalf, she'll no longer have access to Thrune's trust. If the PCs can avoid calling on her aid during this adventure, she may well be able to serve a greater role in the next adventure, but if things get out of control in the opera house, Tayacet's intervention might be the difference between life and death.

**TAYACET TIORA** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

Female human investigator 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 30)

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +17

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +3 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 63 (8d8+24)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7; +6 vs. poison

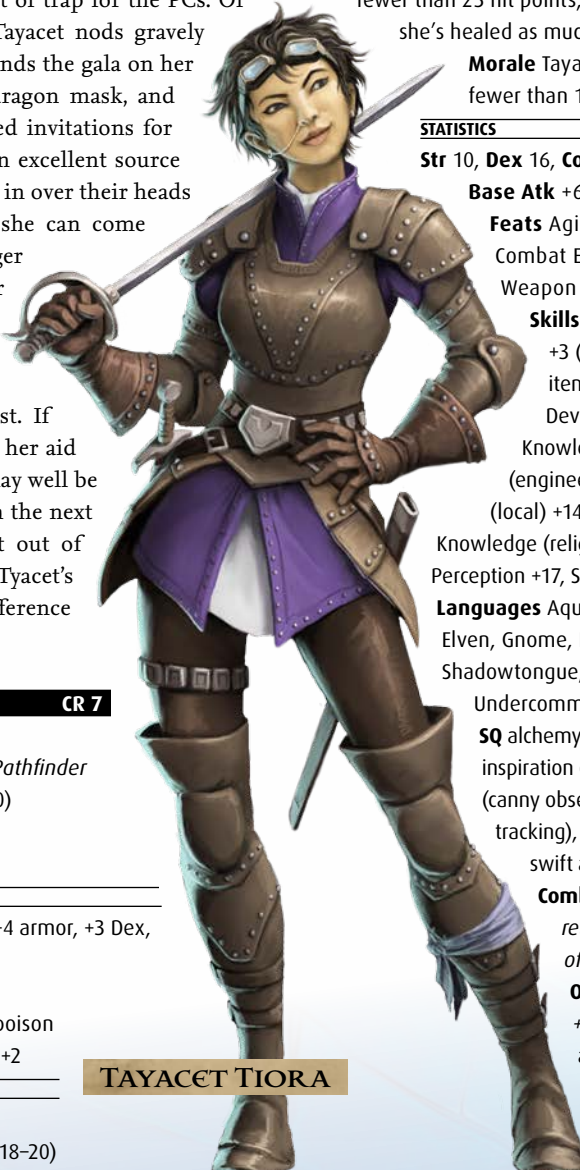
**Defensive Abilities** trap sense +2

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 rapier +10/+5 (1d6+1/18–20)

**TAYACET TIORA**



**Special Attacks** studied combat (+4, 3 rounds), studied strike +3d6

**Investigator Extracts Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +11)

3rd—*cure serious wounds, fly, seek thoughts*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 16)

2nd—*barkskin, cure moderate wounds, invisibility, perceive cues*<sup>APG</sup>, see *invisibility*

1st—*comprehend languages, cure light wounds* (2), *expeditious retreat, shield*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Tayacet drinks extracts of *barkskin* and *shield* before any fight.

**During Combat** Tayacet prefers to avoid combat if possible, but if forced to fight, she uses her extracts to maintain superior mobility over her foes. She prefers to take her time in striking blows, and would rather spend a few rounds in hiding setting up a studied strike on an enemy rather than recklessly attacking each round. She seeks a defensive place to hide and heal whenever reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, returning to battle as soon as she's healed as much damage as she can.

**Morale** Tayacet flees combat if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +10, Craft (alchemy)

+3 (+11 to create alchemical items), Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +18, Intimidate +10,

Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge

(local) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +10,

Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +14,

Perception +17, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +10

**Languages** Aquan, Common, Dwarven,

Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Infernal, Minkaian, Shadowtongue, Strix, Tengu, Tien,

Undercommon, Varisian

**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +8),

inspiration (7/day), investigator talents

(canny observer, extend potion, perceptive tracking), keen recollection, poison lore,

swift alchemy, trapfinding +4

**Combat Gear** *potion of expeditious*

*retreat, potion of haste, potion of spider climb*, blue whinnis (4);

**Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 rapier, *eyes of the eagle*,

alchemy crafting kit, belt pouch, flint and steel, ink, inkpen,

mwk manacles, poisoning

sheath<sup>UE</sup>, thieves' tools, 55 gp

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### OPERA HOUSE INTRIGUES

If the PCs have recruited a team of saboteurs or spies, they can have the rebellion take Covert or Sabotage actions against the Kintargo Opera House, as detailed in the *Hell's Rebels Player's Guide*. The results of such actions, if successful, are as follows.

**Covert Action:** With a successful DC 15 Secrecy check, a team of spies can provide a map of the opera house that includes everything except for the existence of the secret tunnels (areas **G18–G26**) and the subbasement (areas **H1–H3**). A result of 25 or more on this check reveals areas **G18–G24** and the fact that Barzillai has hidden stashes of healing supplies in the board room (area **E8**), archives (area **F6**), and vault (area **G12**). A result of at least 30 on this Secrecy check allows PCs to learn that Barzillai constructed additional chambers below the basement, likely accessible via the underworld (area **G1**). Finally, a result of 35 or more on the Secrecy check reveals the presence of areas **G25–G26**.

**Sabotage:** With a successful DC 20 Secrecy check, saboteurs can place one of their own in the opera house as an undercover contact to aid the PCs. This undercover contact poses as one of the opera house's security guards. See the Masquerade Guardians section on page 42 for how this agent can assist the PCs once the ball gets underway. With a result of 25 or more on this Secrecy check, a team of saboteurs can also provide the PCs with a copy of a skeleton key that opens most of the doors in the opera house.

### AN EARLY START

"Dance of the Damned" assumes that the PCs wait until the masquerade ball starts to pay a visit to the opera house. But what happens if they try to go there earlier?

In theory, the real Barzillai spends his time in the opera house, having taken it as his home away from home. *Hell's Rebels* assumes, though, that the actual confrontation with the lord-mayor occurs in "A Song Of Silver." If your players can't wait for the ball and instead wish to explore the opera house earlier, you can use the details in this part to run such an exploration. You'll want to have the dottari soldiers patrol more aggressively, and the devils and Nox herself should be encountered at your whim in other rooms as needed.

Eventually, though, the alarm will be raised, and teleporting devils quickly alert Barzillai, who should not be present in the opera house at this time. In this event, Barzillai sends Cizmekris, disguised as himself, to the opera house and hopes to defeat the PCs in a more classic battle. Once this occurs, whether the PCs defeat Cizmekris or are forced to retreat, this adventure ends

and "A Song of Silver" begins, as detailed in Concluding the Adventure—however, without the opportunity to secure more goodwill among Kintargo's movers and shakers (like they do during the masquerade ball itself), the PCs may find themselves at a disadvantage as the battle for Kintargo begins.

### PREPARING FOR THE BALL

The public reason for the ball is simple—Barzillai hopes to use it as a sort of peace offering to Kintargo, and hopes the citizens of Kintargo interpret the event as evidence that he values them as much as their previous lord-mayor did. As the adventure progresses, word of mouth indicates the plan is going well, and as excitement builds for the Ruby Masquerade, the PCs should hear about it on the lips of citizens to whom they speak. It seems like everyone knows someone who's been invited, and that an excellent representation of the city should be in attendance—the fact that Thrune's apparently gone out of his way to ensure those of all classes get to participate in the event seems to be doing wonders for his reputation.

The timing of the masquerade is left to you to decide. Since the PCs should be 9th level before starting this climactic part of "Dance of the Damned," try to avoid nailing down a date for the event unless you're comfortable setting up a timer for the PCs to work against. Once the Menador Gap is closed, the masquerade could occur at any time. The event itself begins at curfew (9:00 P.M.) and is scheduled to progress until midnight.

The primary focus of the Ruby Masquerade is the ball itself—the entire stage of the opera house has reportedly been converted into a large ballroom floor on which guests can dance. Additionally, fine beverages and food will be served throughout the event, and once the night is underway, Barzillai has promised to make a personal appearance and reveal a "kinder, gentler plan for Kintargo" that he assures will better fit the city's traditions. Rumors that he intends to lift the taxes on Bleakbridge and to end the curfew spread like wildfire in the days leading up to the masquerade.

There are but two requirements for those who secure invitations to the Ruby Masquerade—everyone must incorporate the color red into their outfits in some manner, and everyone must wear a mask. As is tradition in Kintargan masked balls, at the stroke of midnight, masks are removed and the identities of those you've spent the evening with are revealed. Stories of new business partnerships, the end of old rivalries, and of course exciting new romances born of such unmaskings are well loved by the locals.

Allies such as Laria Longroad, Lictor Octavius, or others may attend as well, of course. Certainly having these NPCs along will increase the PCs' resources, but they'll also need each and every ally they can get for

“A Song of Silver,” and should any of their allies perish during this adventure, the events of the next will prove more difficult. That said, the challenge facing the PCs at the Ruby Masquerade is significant—potentially even deadly—and bringing at least a few NPC allies with them to help fight against the trap is a wise (and perhaps necessary) move. If you allow NPC allies to attend, do not reduce XP awards granted to PCs—the use of allies to aid their efforts in this regard is no different than the PCs using their own class skills or magic items. Note that Hetamon Haace, the tiefling leader of the Rose of Kintargo, should not attend—during the Ruby Masquerade, he is abducted by his vengeful mother, Natsiel, and held prisoner at the start of the next adventure. If the PCs wish to invite Hetamon, inform them that he’s nowhere to be found once the Masquerade begins; see “A Song of Silver” for details on his fate and how he might be rescued.

**Masks:** A mask can be as simple as a sack with eyeholes cut into it or as extravagant as a work of art or potent magic item, but the value of the mask does impact certain checks the PCs attempt during the masquerade. A mask worth less than 10 gp imparts a –4 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks during the ball, while a mask worth more than 1,000 gp imparts a +4 circumstance bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks during this time. Allow each player to decide what his or her mask depicts.

**Outfits:** As with masks, the value of the outfit worn can affect events at the masquerade. There are three categories of outfits to choose from: typical (any outfit worth 100 gp or less), exceptional (any outfit worth more than 100 gp), and inappropriate (work clothes, filthy clothes, nonmagical armor, or any outfit that neglects to incorporate the color red in some way). A suit of armor that has had at least 100 gp in adornments, or any suit of magical light or medium armor, counts as exceptional. Heavy armor is always considered inappropriate, as are tower shields (though any smaller shield is fine). At your discretion, exceptions can exist. Have each player decide on what her character is wearing and use the guidelines above to categorize the character’s outfit as typical, exceptional, or inappropriate—these rulings will come into play during the ball itself (see Masque Points below for more details).

## MASQUE POINTS

The PCs’ success during this event is tracked by Masque Points. Explain to the players that their Masque Point total is a representation of how the public perceives their “performance” at the ball, with higher points indicating more support from the attendees. The total number of Masque Points the PCs have at this adventure’s end not only determines an additional XP award, but also helps set the stage for events at the start

of the next adventure—so make sure you retain a record of their total Masque Points accumulated!

As the masquerade begins, the party starts with 10 Masque Points. Reduce this starting total by 2 points for each PC who arrives in an inappropriate outfit, and increase the total by 2 points for each PC who arrives in an exceptional outfit, to a minimum of 4 Masque Points and a maximum of 16. Allies of the PCs who attend affect the starting total in the same way. As the evening progresses, the PCs’ Masque Points will fluctuate, but if at any point their total reaches 0, Cizmekris proceeds with the unmasking ceremony immediately.

## OPERA HOUSE FEATURES

During the ball, some portions of the opera house are freely accessible by all guests, while others are off-limits; off-limits areas above ground level are indicated in yellow on the map. Areas **G** and **H** are also off-limits. If the PCs are caught in an off-limits area, fast talking or trickery might be enough, at your discretion, to allow them to avoid conflict, but swiftly resolving combat (in 3 rounds or less) can generally prevent an alarm from being raised.

**Ceilings:** On the first floor, the ceiling height is high and vaulted, reaching 20 feet, save for in the central portion where the ceiling height rises all the way up to the third floor. On the second, third, and underground floors, the ceilings are 10 feet high.

**Doors:** The doors in the opera house are made of exceptionally stout and sturdy black oak (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23, Disable Device DC 30) and decorated with elegant carvings of dancers and musicians. Each door can be locked; skeleton keys exist that unlock all doors in the opera house, but only two people carry them in this adventure—Cizmekris and Nox. It’s possible that the rebellion could fashion a new skeleton key for the PCs (see the Opera House Intrigues sidebar).

**Illumination:** In areas open to the public, the rooms are well lit by numerous chandeliers aglow with *continual flame* spells. Areas that are off-limits are unlit, although guards carry everburning torches—all rooms where guards are posted are lit thusly.

**Secret Doors:** The secret doors in the opera house (Perception DC 30) hide either access to the hidden stairwells near the stage or access to the secret Silver Raven tunnels below the structure. Barzillai has discovered all of these secret doors, save the one leading to area **G25**.

**Stairs:** Stairwells are the primary means of access between floors in the opera house. Connections between flights of stairs are indicated on the map by number—a stairwell labeled “S1” on the first floor connects to the stairs bearing a “S1” label on the second floor.

**Trap Doors:** A number of trap doors connect the stage (areas **D5** and **D6**) to the underworld (area **G1**). These trap doors can be locked into an open or closed configuration from below—once a trap door is locked, a PC can open

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it only with a successful DC 30 Disable Device check. An unlocked trap door can be opened as a swift action with a kick or a push to the right spot. A character on stage who doesn't take care to avoid these trigger spots and moves over a closed but unlocked trap door has a 50% chance of accidentally triggering it, falling into area **G1** and taking 1d6 points of falling damage (Reflex DC 15 negates). Hanging rope ladders allow safer transport to and from the trap doors between floors, and all of the trap doors feature lifts powered by block and tackle that can be used to raise and lower actors or props from the underworld to the stage above. One additional trap door in the northeast corner of the underworld exists—a secret, recently constructed trap door that a character can spot with a successful DC 30 Perception check. This trap door leads down to area **H1**, and is a new addition to the building.

**Walls:** The opera house's exterior walls have numerous handholds in the shape of protruding stonework, gargoyles, gutters, and other adornments, requiring only a successful DC 15 Climb check to scale the walls from the outside. Inside, the stone walls are paneled with fine black oak. What handholds exist here are tenuous at best (hooks to hang art, molding, wainscoting, and the like). A PC must succeed at a DC 30 Climb check to scale these walls.

**Windows:** Many tall, narrow windows decorate the exterior walls, each filled with panes of glass (hardness 1, hp 1, break DC 10). Most of these windows cannot be opened—only those on the third floor in area **F1** that look out over Aria Park can be opened. These windows are currently closed and locked from the inside (Disable Device DC 30); they can be unlocked from within by the skeleton key, but not from outside. The DC of a Perception check to hear a window breaking is -10. An attempt to break a window quietly instead has a DC equal to the result of a PC's Stealth check at a -10 penalty.

## MASQUERADE GUARDIANS

While Barzillai Thrune has relocated several of his more powerful minions (along with himself) to the temple of Asmodeus, he leaves behind in the opera house a wide range of servitors that he feels can more than handle the PCs once his trap is sprung. These guardians are mobile, and where and when they might be encountered can vary, so their statistics and tactics are presented here.

**Dottari Guards:** In all, there are 22 dottari guards on duty in the opera house during the ball. Of these, 12 are held in reserve in areas **D10** and **D12**. The remaining 10 are spread out in areas **D1**, **D3**, and **E1**, where they serve as waiters, announcers, guides, and other helpful staff. These dottari guards have the same statistics as the Menador soldiers the PCs encountered in Part 4, save that they're armed with masterwork longswords instead of masterwork halberds. They also wear red tabards over their armor, as well as masks bearing the images of smiling faces to help visitors recognize them as staff.

### DOTTARI GUARDS (22)

**CR 2**
**XP 600 each**

Human fighter 3 (Menador soldier, see page 29)

**hp** 30 each

**Melee** mwk longsword +5 (1d8+1/19–20)

**Undercover Silver Raven Saboteur:** If the PCs manage to have one of their saboteurs infiltrate the opera house as an undercover agent (see the Opera House Intrigues sidebar on page 40), that agent replaces one of the 22 dottari guards. In this case, the agent makes contact with one of the PCs soon after the ball begins to inform the PC not only of the exact number and locations of the Dottari guards, but also of the devils in areas **D13**, **F3**, **F4**, and **G3**, and the quick-release switch for the cockatrices in area **D8**. The agent can disable this switch if the PCs wish, making it impossible for the cockatrices to be released later in the evening. The undercover agent stands ready, in any event, to join the PCs in a fight at their command (the saboteur is a 7th-level human rogue; use the statistics for the freelance thief on page 147 of the *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex*).

**Nox:** If your players managed the unlikely task of killing Nox in the first adventure, her devilbound soul can't be resurrected, and she does not appear in this adventure. In this case, the PCs have one fewer foe to worry about in the coming fight, and Cizmekris does not have a personal guardian.

If Nox escaped death, she likely returned to report her failure to Barzillai at the end of the first adventure. Barzillai was not pleased, and subjected his bodyguard to a grueling and torturous regime of excruciations, transforming the devilbound woman into a broken soul. Today, Nox is even more horrifying than ever—her armor has been wired to her body and her broken limbs have been forced to heal in grotesque ways. A metal plate has been bolted to her lower jaw, covering her mouth entirely to prevent her from speaking or even eating (she now relies on a *ring of sustenance* to survive). In addition, a metal headdress with plates that press down around her eyes prevents her from being able to see. The excruciations have destroyed her personality, and she exists now only as a broken soul, ordered to remain at her master's side (or in this case, at the side of the devil Cizmekris). Nox knows she doesn't guard the real Barzillai, and hopes that she can either serve well enough in this plan to regain a slight amount of respect from Thrune, or to find final death at the PCs' hands. She is never found far from Cizmekris's side, wherever the devil may be. Note that she is not able to utilize her agonized wail because of the plate covering her mouth—Barzillai found the sound of her wail too annoying to allow her to retain access to this special attack. The metal headdress likewise blocks her baleful gaze ability, although Cizmekris can rip this away from her face to restore this power as a standard action.

**NOX****CR 9****XP 6,400**

Female bearded-devil-bound broken soul human fighter (polearm master) 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 56, 24; *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 106)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** blinders, darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +10

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 26, touch 10, flat-footed 26 (+8 armor, +8 natural)

**hp** 99 (7d10+56); regeneration 5 (good spells, good weapons)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4; +4 vs. poison

**DR** 5/—; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 30, sonic 5

**Weaknesses** contract bound

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 15 ft.

**Melee** +1 *vicious glaive* +16/+11 (1d10+13/x3 plus 2d6) or torturous touch +13 touch (2d6 plus 1d6 Dexterity damage and convulsions)

**Ranged** throwing axe +7 (1d6+6)

**Special Attacks** baleful gaze (DC 11), pole fighting, steadfast pike

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration –5)

3/day—*dimension door*, *rage*

1/day—*summon* (level 2, 1 *lemure* 100%)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Nox uses her glaive's reach to fight the PCs while they engage in melee with others. She prefers to fight with this weapon, but switches to her torturous touch if forced into close quarters. If Cizmekris removes her blinders, Nox swiftly moves away from her "master" to keep him out of reach of her gaze if possible—though she doesn't bother to keep any *dottari* guards sheltered from the gaze. She doesn't bother summoning a *lemure* in this battle. She avoids using *rage* so she can retain the option of using *dimension door* if needed to pursue the PCs.

**Morale** Nox fights to the death.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 22, **Dex** 10, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Stand Still, Step Up, Toughness, Weapon Focus (glaive), Weapon Specialization (glaive)

**Skills** Climb +6, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (planes) +1, Perception +10, Sense Motive +9

**Languages** Common

**SQ** torturous touch

**Gear** +2 *chainmail*, +1 *vicious glaive*, throwing axes (4), *belt of giant strength* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of sustenance*, blinders, skeleton key

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Blinders (Ex)** As long as Nox wears her blinders, she loses access to her baleful gaze—the tiny holes in the blinders

limit her vision to no farther than 10 feet; she remains no farther than 10 feet from Cizmekris at all times as a result. As a standard action, an adjacent creature can yank a chain hanging from the back of the blinders, causing the device to painfully rip away. This deals 2d4 points of damage to Nox, but restores her sight and baleful gaze ability.

**Devils:** The most dangerous devil the PCs face in the opera house is the bone devil inquisitor Cizmekris, who plays the role of Barzillai during the masquerade. In addition, five bearded devils, an erinyes, and a regular bone devil are posted throughout the opera house, ready to join any fights once they break out, but until Cizmekris gives the order to attack, the devils stay in hiding. To assist in the deception, all seven of these devils wear *hats of disguise* to appear as azatas when the trap is sprung, to give the impression that they are chaotic good outsiders called in by the Silver Ravens to kill Kintargan citizens. The bone devil

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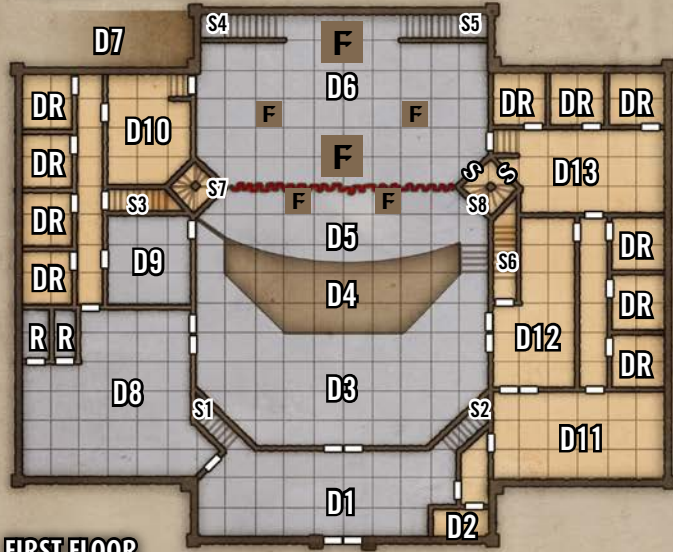
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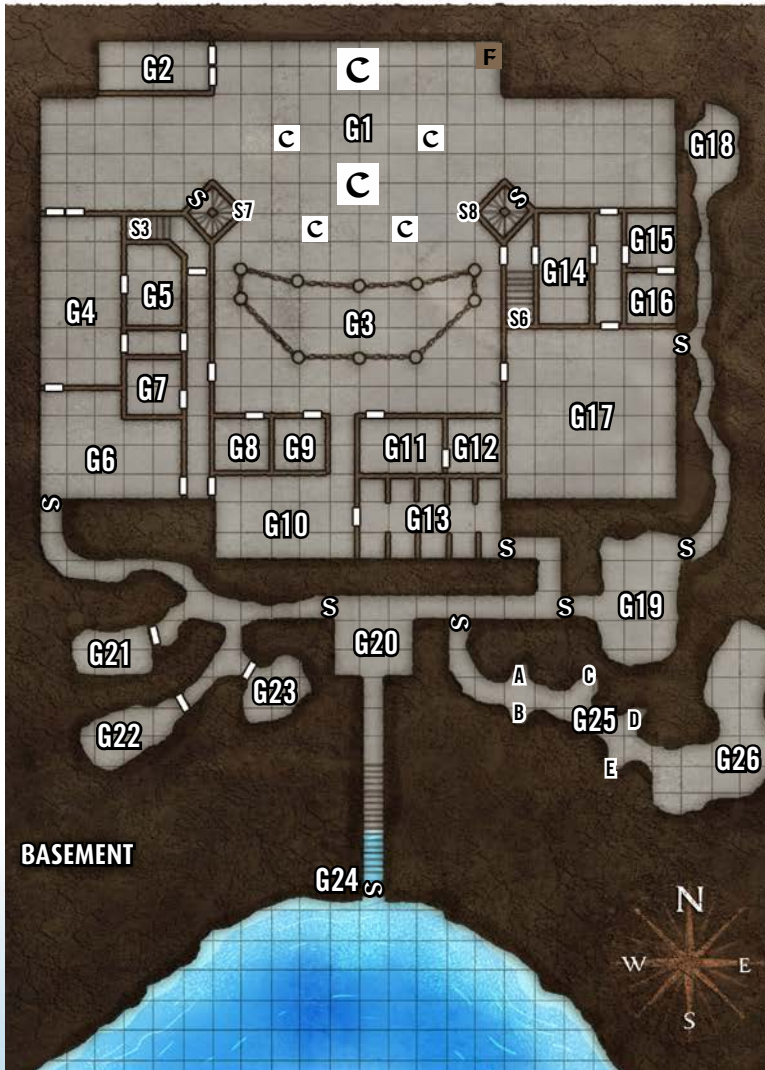
D.-H. KINTARGO OPERA HOUSE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

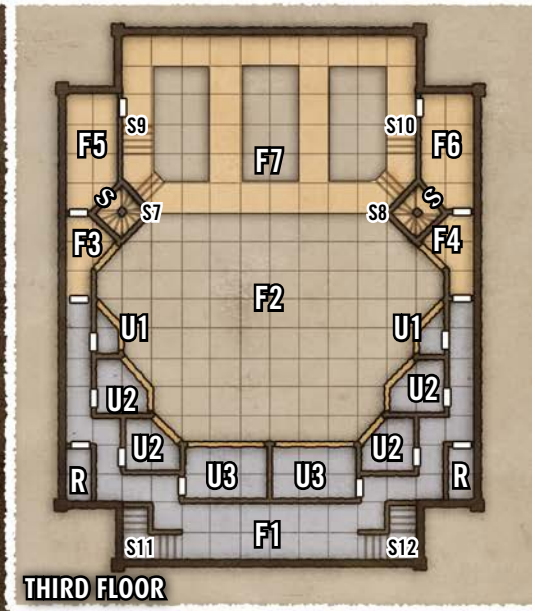


FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR



BASEMENT



THIRD FLOOR



SUBBASEMENT

uses its *hat of disguise* to appear as a lillend azata, while the erinyes and bearded devils appear as bralani azatas.

**CIZMEKRIS** **CR 10**

**XP 9,600**  
**hp** 123 (see page 58)

**BONE DEVIL** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400**  
**hp** 105 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 74)

**ERINYES** **CR 8**

**XP 4,800**  
**hp** 94 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 75)

**BEARDED DEVILS (5)** **CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**  
**hp** 57 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 73)

**Jilia Bainilus:** Since she's supposed to be away in Arcadia, Jilia Bainilus remains in her coffin in area **H2** throughout the evening, even after the trap is sprung. She joins the fight only if called upon by Cizmekris; see page 58 for the conditions under which the devil summons Jilia.

**JILIA BAINILUS** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400**  
**hp** 121 (see page 60)

**OPTIONAL COMPLICATION: SKINSAW CULTISTS**

In the next adventure, Hei-Fen makes her move against the PCs, arriving in force in Kintargo with several Skinsaw cultists, but if you wish (and if, perhaps, the PCs made a particular impression on her during the banquet at Cobweb Manor), she sends a small group of Skinsaw cultists to Kintargo early. You can add this complication if you believe that the PCs could use some more XP, or if you feel like they're up for the additional challenge, but if the PCs are struggling, consider omitting this option and saving the Skinsaw cult for the next adventure.

If you do opt for this addition, six Skinsaw cultists infiltrate the basement of the Opera House under Hei-Fen's orders. These cultists arrive early in Kintargo, donning nonmagical animal masks to blend in to the masquerade. They infiltrate the Opera House via the secret tunnel that leads to Aria Park (area **G24**).

Once the masquerade begins, these six cultists mingle with the crowd, watching and waiting to identify the PCs. These cultists know who they're looking for, and keep an eye on the PCs, waiting for a chance to be alone before striking in an attempt to murder them—they do not attack in public areas, and seek at all times to avoid involving agents of Thrune.

Of course, at your option, feel free to have the cultists spot and identify the PCs while they're exploring off-limits

areas of the Opera House, allowing you to use an attack by the cultists to spice up the exploration as you desire.

**SKINSAW CULTISTS (6)** **CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**  
Human cleric of Norgorber 3/rogue 3  
NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +11

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)  
**hp** 51 (6d8+21)

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

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *war razor* +8 (1d4+3/19–20)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 3/day (DC 11, 2d6), sneak attack +2d6

**Cleric Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +5)  
5/day—bleeding touch (1 round), copycat (3 rounds)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +5)  
2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 14),  
*invisibility*<sup>o</sup>

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*<sup>o</sup>, *divine favor*  
0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*  
**D** Domain spell; **Domains** Death, Trickery

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The cultists organize into pairs, so that they outnumber PCs two to one if possible—if they choose to attack the whole party while they are skulking in the off-limits part of the Opera House, all six take part in the fight. If a cultist surprises a PC, he casts *hold person* to try to end the fight before it begins. The cultists cast *divine favor* on the first round of combat, then move to flank foes. A cultist reduced to 20 or fewer hit points casts *invisibility*, then flees to heal as best as she can with her spells before returning to the combat try to finish the fight. These cultists try not to kill the PCs, but rather render them unconscious—hoping to save as many as possible for a ritual sacrifice (likely to take place in area **G20**) at 1:00 A.M. Captured PCs are held prisoner in area **G21** until that time comes.

**Morale** A Skinsaw cultist fights to the death.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (war razor), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Disguise +9, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +11, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +12

**Language** Common

**SQ** rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

**Gear** mwk studded leather, mwk buckler, +1 *war razor*<sup>ISWG</sup>

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## EXPLORING THE OPERA HOUSE

This final part of “Dance of the Damned” is intended to play out over the course of a single night. The PCs should be aware of this, as should their players—resource management, planning, involving allies, and resupplying via caches are key to success here. Once Cizmekris springs the trap, his plan is to slaughter the guests and then pin the blame on the PCs. In order to prevent this, the PCs must save as many guests as possible so that there are more witnesses to attest to the truth.

While there are numerous locations within the Kintargo Opera House, most of them aren't vital to this adventure—the PCs may stumble into them during a battle, or might use them to hide. The various rooms in the opera house are given brief descriptions in the following pages, but fights and confrontations within should be dynamic rather than confined to the specific rooms in which they begin.

**DR. Dressing Rooms:** These 20-foot-square rooms were used by performers to prepare. None of them contain anything of interest or value today, but could serve as places to hide or conceal bodies, since the guards generally don't check these rooms very well on their patrols.

**R. Restroom:** A dottari guard checks a restroom once every 15 minutes to clean as needed.

**U. Upper-Class Seating:** Areas **U1** seat two, **U2** seat four, and **U3** seat eight. These areas are public but relatively unused, making them excellent places for clandestine meetings.

**D1. Foyer:** This is the primary entrance to the Kintargo Opera House, and is where arrivals are received. A pair of dottari guards are stationed here, serving as greeters.

**D2. Box Office:** Tickets for upcoming events are purchased here—a sliding window allows walk-ups from the street to interact with a clerk here without setting foot in the opera house. No one is stationed here during the ball, and the ticket window is locked tight. Treat it as an ordinary window that lacks a pane of glass, though its small size requires a Medium character to succeed at a DC 30 Escape Artist check to enter (Small characters can move through the window as if it were difficult terrain but without needing to attempt a skill check).

**D3. Low Seating:** This area once contained seating for patrons, but Barzillai had the seating removed to make room for mingling and refreshments. A total of four dottari guards mill about this room, serving as attendants and resupplying food and drink as needed, but they leap into action when the trap is sprung.

**D4. Orchestra Pit:** This open area is surrounded by a low railing; it drops 10 feet into the orchestra (area **G3**) below. Music wells up from the pit until the trap is sprung—see area **G3** for more details on the orchestra itself.

**D5. Stage:** The stage is clear of decor. The crimson curtains are pulled back, combining this area with the

backstage to form the main dance floor for the ball. The stage is 5 feet higher than area **D3**.

**D6. Backstage:** With the curtains raised, this area merges seamlessly with the stage to create a large ballroom venue. All of the trap doors (see Opera House Features) are locked shut until the trap is sprung, at which point one of the guards in the underworld (area **G1**) unlocks them. Thrune's agents know where the trap doors are and avoid them, but try to lure PCs into stumbling onto them if a fight breaks out here.

**D7. Loading Ramp:** This external ramp leads down to provide direct access to the areas under the stage—it is marked as area **G2** on the basement map. There is no direct access to the loading ramp from the first floor.

**D8. Assembly Room:** During performances, parties would often assemble here to spend time gossiping before the show began. During the ball, this room serves as an adjunct area for guests to mingle and eat. Barzillai's three pet cockatrices are on display here in hanging birdcages as indicated on the map—these cages are suspended 7 feet off the ground to keep the creatures from accidentally lashing out at guests. A hidden switch (Perception DC 25) just to the south of the double doors to area **D3** can be flipped as a move action to open all three cages, and can be disabled with a successful DC 30 Disable Device check.

**ADVANCED COCKATRICES (3)****CR 4****XP 1,200 each****hp 37 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 294, 48*)

**D9. Founder's Museum:** The Kintargo Opera House was founded nearly 800 years ago in 3901 AR by Lady Jerryl Nahune. This room was originally devoted to her as the building's patron, but today her statue has been replaced by a statue of Barzillai Thrune, and the art on the walls no longer depicts famous performances and performers, but instead depicts Barzillai in various scenes of glory. Notably, perhaps, none of the art here depicts Queen Abrogail II.

**D10. Scene Room:** This room was used to prep for scene changes during performances. Today, it is used as one of two staging areas for guards. Six dottari guards wait patiently here to join the attack when Cizmekris gives the order.

**D11. Storage:** This room was used as a general storage area for the opera house. Today, this room is where the seating uprooted from areas **D3** and **E1** has been stored in large, tottering stacks.

**D12. Security:** The opera house's security station serves in much the same fashion today as it did during performances. Six dottari guards wait here to join the attack when the order is given.

**D13. Green Room:** Originally used by actors and singers to relax during performances when they weren't



onstage, this room has been converted into Barzillai's personal lounge. Three bearded devils wait here, eager to join the fight when it begins. When not out mingling, Cizmekris can be found here as well, attended by these bearded devils.

**E1. Balcony:** As in area D3 below, the seating in this area has been torn out to provide a mingling floor. The nobles in attendance gravitate to this area. A pair of dottari guards stand near each stairwell leading down to area D3—these four guards assist as they can but spring into action when the trap is sprung.

**E2. Overlook:** This open space looks out over the stage, orchestra pit, and lower seating below. There is a 15-foot drop to the stage, a 20-foot drop to the lower seating, and a 30-foot drop to the orchestra.

**E3. Guest Salon:** Opera patrons who purchased first-class tickets were allowed to partake of refreshments here in the guest salon. While there are no such distinctions among the guests during the ball, the nobles tend to congregate in this room and look down upon common folk attempting to mingle here. Regardless, the food served here is no different than elsewhere tonight.

**E4. Prince's Parlor:** A small sitting room that once housed artwork depicting the most popular current performers, this space provided first-class guests a place to step out during a performance to discuss private matters or otherwise take a break from the entertainment. It has now been redecorated as a private shrine to Asmodeus. All guests are expected to stop by here to leave an offering to the Prince of Darkness, and as the evening progresses, the locked iron offering box (hardness 10, hp 25, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30) on the shrine fills with gold at a rate of 2d6 gp per 30 minutes until the unmasking ceremony. The lockbox can be opened via one of the opera house skeleton keys.

**E5. Patron Room:** This private lounge was set aside for use as a private room for honored patrons who donated large amounts to the establishment. Barzillai has converted it into a private dining area. While not off-limits, this room is not visited by other guests.

**E6. Client Meeting Room:** Technically off-limits, this room was used to meet with important guests, and contains little of immediate interest. The guards don't often check this room, making it a secure place to hide or conceal bodies.

**E7. Art Gallery:** Paintings inspired by famous operas once decorated the walls here, but Barzillai has replaced them with images of hellscape, vicious torments, and other gruesome pieces of work. Those guests who can stomach the grisly artwork enjoy lording their tolerance of the violent imagery over the more squeamish guests.

**E8. Board Room:** This room features several large tables and chairs. The opera house management would

meet here with employees and troupes to plan future shows. Barzillai uses it today in a similar manner to meet and plan with his underlings, although he's always careful to gather up his notes afterward. While there is no incriminating evidence here, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check notices a hidden stash in the north wall that contains eight *potions of cure moderate wounds*, two *potions of lesser restoration*, and five doses of *restorative ointment*.

**F1. Park Overlook:** Barzillai looked out over the crowd from this balcony at the start of the Hell's Rebels Adventure Path. The shutters on the large windows here are locked tight (though they can be opened with the opera house skeleton key), but do not bear panes of glass. The overlook is 30 feet above the plaza.

**F2. Overlook:** This open space looks out over the stage and lower levels below. There is a 10-foot drop to the balcony, a 25-foot drop to the stage, a 30-foot drop to the low seating, and 40-foot drop all the way to the orchestra.

**F3. West Security:** A single erinyes stands guard in this room, awaiting the order to attack when the trap is sprung.

**F4. East Security:** A pair of bearded devils wait patiently in this room for the order to attack when the trap is sprung.

**F5. Storage:** This room is used to store tools and rope for maintenance of the rigging loft.

**F6. Archives:** This room stored mundane archives, such as the business ledgers for the opera house. Barzillai has tagged many of these archives for investigation, but hasn't yet gone forward in studying the files. There's little of interest to the PCs here, with the exception of a stash of supplies that can be discovered with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The supplies include four *potions of cure moderate wounds*, four doses of *restorative ointment*, two *potions of invisibility*, and a *scroll of restoration*.

**F7. Rigging Loft:** These wooden catwalks are 25 feet above the stage.

**G1. Underworld:** Normally a scene of bustling activity, the underworld is an extensive open area where the behind-the-scenes workers toil to make performances on the stage above magical and memorable. Barzillai uses this area to train specialized followers, but the space is currently patrolled by several of Barzillai's pets: a pack of six hell hounds that pace the area relentlessly. While these monsters do not join a fight on the floors above, they immediately attack anyone in this area not wearing Asmodeus's colors, and their howls and blasts of fire have a cumulative 20% chance per round of being noticed over the din of the orchestra by those above.

#### HELL HOUNDS (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 173)

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## REPRISAL

*Reprisal* is a beautiful and startlingly well-balanced mithral-bladed rapier. The weapon has been in the Bainilus family for generations, and was originally gifted to Lady Jallah Bainilus in 4098 AR by Cayden Cailean himself for her aid in defending his faith from cultists of the now-slain demon lord Aolar. Originally, *Reprisal* bore greater enhancements against evil outsiders, but with Aolar's death at Desna's hands in 4155 AR, *Reprisal*'s magic has faded. Still, when the blade strikes deep into the flesh of such a foe, it momentarily wakens once again.

## REPRISAL

MINOR  
ARTIFACT

SLOT weapon	CL 15th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
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**AURA** strong transmutation

*Reprisal* is an unusually well-balanced and responsive +2 rapier. *Reprisal*'s wielder can apply her Dexterity modifier to damage rolls with the weapon in place of her Strength modifier—this bonus is not increased if *Reprisal* is wielded two-handed, but is halved if the rapier is wielded in an off-hand. If *Reprisal* confirms a critical hit against an evil outsider, the rapier gains the *evil-outsider-bane* special ability and is treated as silver, cold iron, and good for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction for the next minute. Subsequent critical hits extend this duration by 1 minute per blow. As long as this effect persists, *Reprisal*'s wielder gains a +2 sacred bonus on all saving throws against attacks from evil outsiders. These effects end prematurely if *Reprisal* is sheathed, disarmed, or is otherwise no longer wielded.

## DESTRUCTION

If *Reprisal* is used to knowingly and deliberately murder a true worshiper of Cayden Cailean, the rapier may thereafter be destroyed normally, as if it were not an artifact.

**G2. Loading Ramp:** This is the same area as D7 above. The doors are locked and barred.

**G3. Orchestra:** This area is open to the stage and low seating above. It's a 10-foot distance up to the upper floor. Normally, this area is where the orchestra plays, but tonight, the "orchestra" is a *major image* cast by a bone devil named Axala. The sound and visuals of the human performers, all wearing faceless masks, is quite good, yet a far cry from a masterpiece of a performance. Most of the attendees don't realize the orchestra is an illusion.

Dispelling this illusion can hasten the timetable of Barzillai's trap—see The Ruby Massacre on page 55. Axala must concentrate to maintain the illusion, and does so from a vantage point at the doorway to area G11 so he can perform the dual duty of guarding access to the vault. If he notices intruders, he doesn't intervene unless attacked, but does inform Cizmekris telepathically of the intruders (this costs the PCs 10 Masque Points).

**G4. Repair Workshop:** This large workshop contains supplies and tools used to build and repair set dressing and the like.

**G5. Storage:** Raw materials for set building are kept in this storage area.

**G6. Servants' Quarters:** Numerous bunks line the walls here. Once used by opera house employees, the area is now occupied by the house guards maintained by Barzillai. During the ball, this room is empty.

**G7. Client Files:** This storeroom was used to store information on the various wealthy clients and patrons of the opera house. Barzillai has gone through these files and destroyed many of them, so they are now tantalizingly bland and incomplete. There is nothing of interest to be found here today.

**G8. Costume Storage:** Costumes for performances are kept here. A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check uncovers a *robe of blending* tucked into a flat case and missed by Barzillai's troops.

**G9. Materials Storage:** Supplies such as makeup, props, and other materials are kept here.

**G10. Prop Workshop:** This room was used as a workshop for creating props for performances; the chamber is now unused.

**G11. Accountant's Office:** The opera house's accountant kept his office here, but the room is now empty save for a desk and chair. The iron door to area G12 is particularly well reinforced (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30), and is also warded with a *glyph of warding* placed by Barzillai himself.

## GLYPH OF WARDING

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

## EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

**Effect** spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast glyph, CL 15th]; 5d8 sonic damage; Reflex DC 20 half); multiple targets (all targets within a 5-ft. radius)

**G12. Vault:** Once used to store the opera house's funds and expensive props, Barzillai has put this vault to use for the storage of some of the more interesting trophies and treasures he and his minions have gathered. A search of this vault reveals three different stashes of wealth.

The first stash is a cache of healing supplies in an unlocked wooden coffer on a shelf. This coffer contains four *potions of cure serious wounds*, five doses of *restorative ointment*, a *scroll of heal*, a *scroll of raise dead*, and a *wand of cure critical wounds* with 15 charges.

The second is a large collection of documents, relics, and treasures stolen from the artifact recovery room of the Many-Steps Monastery under Hocum's Fantasmagorium. The bulk of these items are rare but nonmagical texts or works of art from pre-Throne Chelias, worth a total of 4,000 gp but weighing a total of 500 pounds. Also found here is a blank *blessed book* and a *periapt of proof against poison* bearing the holy symbol of Irori, as well as a *book of infinite spells*. This last item has only five pages remaining and is currently turned to *dimension door*; the next four pages contain (in the following page order) *rusting grasp*, *stoneskin*, *breath of life*, and finally *contingency*. If a PC claims this book as his own, ownership shifts to him from its current owner—the devilbound blue dragon Rivozair. Upon this transfer, Rivozair immediately loses access to the *dimension door* spell and knows that the book has been stolen. Fortunately for the PCs, the dragon is in no position to try to get the book back, but may well seek out the book's new owner in the next adventure.

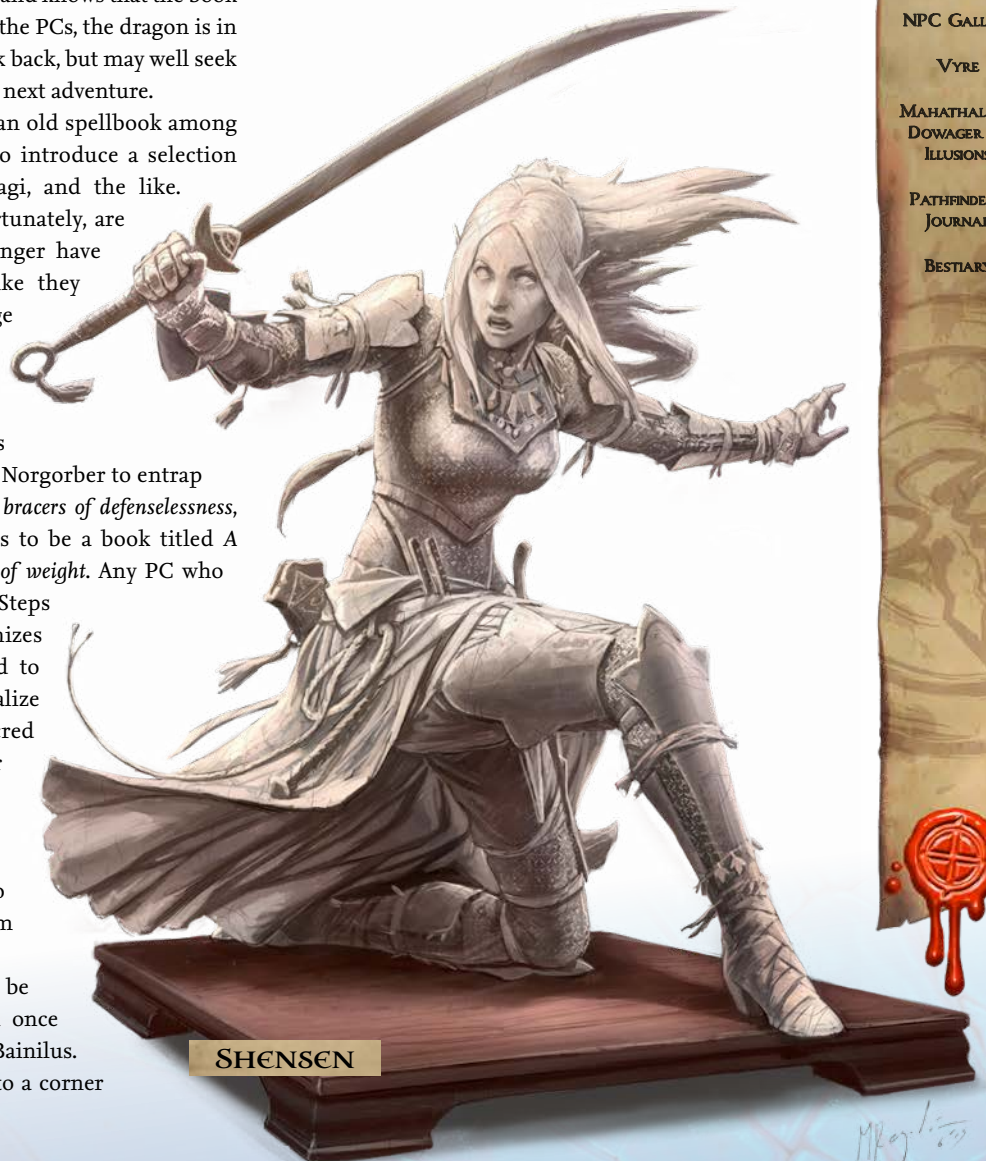
If you wish, you can include an old spellbook among these treasures as well, so as to introduce a selection of new spells for wizards, magi, and the like. Mixed in with the items, unfortunately, are a few cursed items that no longer have warnings attached to them like they did when they were in storage in the Many-Steps Monastery. These include an *amulet of inescapable location* bearing the symbol of Abadar (this item was originally created by the cult of Norgorber to entrap worshipers of Abadar), a set of *bracers of defenselessness*, a *vacuous grimoire* that purports to be a book titled *A History of Kintargo*, and a *stone of weight*. Any PC who spent time in the Many-Steps Monastery automatically recognizes some of the labels still affixed to these treasures and should realize they were looted from the Sacred Order of Archivists—whether or not they recall that these items were listed as cursed is up to the players (although a kindly GM might give PCs who were present a DC 15 Wisdom check to recall this key clue).

The final bit of treasure to be found in this significant stash once belonged to Lord-Mayor Jilia Bainilus. Kept in a burlap sack tossed into a corner

is her high-pointed *cap of the free thinker*<sup>UE</sup>, her *ring of protection +3*, and her priceless family heirloom, the rapier *Reprisal* (see the sidebar on page 48). If she's rescued, Jilia asks only for her rapier back and lets the PCs keep the other two items as rewards. She may even, under the right circumstances, allow them the use of *Reprisal* (see Jilia's entry in Appendix: Allies on page 56). A PC can recognize the hat and rapier as having belonged to the city's previous lord-mayor with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local or nobility) check.

**G13. Library:** Numerous bookshelves line the walls of this library; collected here is a staggering number of plays, operas, sheet music, and other material worth 10,000 gp in all. As a patron of the arts, Barzillai has resisted the urge to have the works here destroyed, but he has flagged many of them with dabs of red paint to indicate the ones he wants to keep for himself before offering the less valuable ones up to the government as an offering.

**G14. Performers' Meeting Room:** This room was used by various performers to meet and plan, and also for casting.



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Barzillai has converted it into a personal dining hall and kitchen, but has dismissed the staff he uses for now since he plans to turn the opera house into a killing floor.

**G15. Director's Office:** This well-appointed room was used by Barzillai as a personal lounge, but he has relocated anything of value here to his quarters in the temple of Asmodeus on the off chance that his plan to frame the PCs goes awry.

**G16. Director's Apartment:** Barzillai chose this chamber as his personal quarters, but has recently moved all of his valuables to the temple of Asmodeus. Still, enough remains to indicate that the lord-mayor dwelt there until recently. The one object of value is an incredibly lifelike statue mounted on a wooden platform in the southwest corner of the room. The statue depicts a half-elven woman on her knees, raising a scimitar in a gesture of horrified defense. With a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, the PCs recognize this as an exact representation of the famous Kintargan opera singer Shensen, while with a successful DC 26 Knowledge (arcana) check, a character confirms this is no mere statue—it is, in fact, Shensen herself, petrified by Barzillai's cockatrices. This adventure assumes the PCs aren't able to rescue Shensen during the ball, but they may find resources or have methods for reversing the petrification. In this case, you can use the statistics presented in "A Song of Silver"—she has her gear, but has only 10 hp and has exhausted most of her spells and bardic performance rounds for the day. Feel free to adjust her resources as you wish. If the PCs are having a particularly tough time of things, she can be a powerful ally to gain. In any event, Shensen's primary role in the Adventure Path begins with the next adventure.

**G17. Conservatory:** This room was originally the opera house's conservatory. The musical instruments that were once kept here have been unceremoniously pushed against the room's southern wall to make room for a staggering array of torture devices. The musical instruments are quite fine, and worth 6,500 gp in all (though many are rather bulky to transport). Characters who look through this room find evidence that the room has been well used, both as a venue for creating new methods of torture and an arena of pain. It was in this room that Barzillai transformed his bodyguard Nox into a broken soul (see *Masquerade Guardians* on page 42).

**G18. Northern Guard Post:** This secret room once served the Silver Ravens as a guard post, but it goes unused today. Barzillai, Nox, Cizmekris, and a few others know about this room and the other secret tunnels once used by the Silver Ravens, but none of the other occupants of the opera house have been informed of these chambers.

**G19. Despoiled Shrine:** Barzillai has defaced and despoiled this shrine, which was once devoted to the patrons of the Silver Ravens—Cayden Cailean, Desna, Milani, Sarenrae, and Shelyn—but he hasn't yet bothered

to dedicate it to Asmodeus. Cleaning and restoring the shrine takes 1 day of work, at the end of which a worshiper of one of those five deities can restore the pantheistic altar with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check. Alternatively, a *hallow* spell cast on the shrine reactivates it immediately. Once the shrine is reactivated, any character who was involved in the physical duty of cleaning it gains a +1 sacred bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saves, and skill checks. This effect cannot be dispelled, and ends once "A Song of Silver" concludes. For worshipers of one of the five mentioned deities, one of these bonuses (on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, or skill checks) increases to +2.

**G20. Southern Guard Post:** Although Barzillai found no real use for these old tunnels, he avoided the urge to fill them in so as to maintain an escape route should his minions need it. With the aid of the church, he arranged for a guardian to watch over this room—a Nessian hell hound. The hound is constrained to the tunnels (areas G18–G23) and pursues intruders relentlessly within them, but can't join fights above due to the nature of its binding.

#### NESSIAN HELL HOUND

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 126 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 173)

**G21. Hidden Archive:** This room was once used to store archives kept by the Silver Ravens, but Barzillai has moved these documents to Kintargo Keep (see "A Song of Silver" for more details).

**G22. Safe Room:** This room once served as a safe room for allies of the Silver Ravens who needed to hide. Today, the bunks that line the walls of this cave are empty.

**G23. Research Room:** This once served the Silver Ravens as a war room and a place to perform research. Barzillai relocated the treasures once kept here to Kintargo Keep.

**G24. Submerged Exit:** This underwater exit opens into the waters of the Aria Park pond.

**G25. Founder's Crypt:** The secret door to this tunnel is particularly well hidden (Perception DC 40). So far, this area and area G26 have gone undiscovered by Barzillai Thrune (although, given more time, he may well stumble across the door). If the PCs learn about this secret area from their spies via a Covert action (see the *Opera House Intrigues* sidebar on page 40) they gain a +10 circumstance bonus on Perception checks to find the door. Otherwise, once they rescue and restore Shensen, she can inform them of this area's existence, allowing the PCs to return here at a later date during "A Song of Silver."

This area and area G26 are under the effects of a permanent *mage's private sanctum* (CL 15th).

The niches in the walls here each contain sarcophagi bearing the names and likenesses of one of the five

leaders of the Silver Ravens, as listed below. With the exception of **G25e** (Jackdaw's crypt), each of these contains the mortal remains of the Silver Raven in question, but no gear—the Silver Ravens generally willed their gear to friends, family, or allies. Each sarcophagus bears an inscription written in Common. All four souls of the Silver Ravens buried here have been judged, and as such, none can be resurrected today. The bodies and inscriptions themselves were placed and carved by the last few supporters of the Silver Ravens, who themselves disbanded not long after Brakisi's failed abduction brought shame on the group.

**G25a. Amyreid's Crypt:** This sarcophagus depicts a female half-elf cleric of Milani and the inscription "Amyreid of Milani, perished 4640 AR in defense of Kintargo on a Hellknight's blade—may she serve forever at the Everbloom's side."

**G25b. Ba's Crypt:** This sarcophagus depicts a male halfling dressed in wizardly robes and the inscription, "Ba Brackenthorn, slaughtered by Brakisi in 4644 AR while attempting to protect the Silver Ravens' legacy."

**G25c. Kyda's Crypt:** This sarcophagus depicts a female human dressed in leather armor while engaged in the act of singing and the inscription, "Lady Kyda, perished 4640 AR under Thrune's fire while giving her final breath to sustain the Song of Silver."

**G25d. Brakisi's Crypt:** This sarcophagus depicts a faceless male human with several arrows protruding from his body and the inscription, "After bringing disgrace to the Silver Ravens, Lord Brakisi perished 4644 AR at the hands of Lictor Naulvaneti—may he find forgiveness in the Great Beyond, for he found none in Kintargo."

**G25e. Jackdaw's Crypt:** This sarcophagus depicts a female elf clutching a starknife to her chest and the inscription, "Jackdaw, taken from us by unknown assailants in the time of greatest need—may her memory live on, and may she yet live to reclaim her treasures found within." Inside this sarcophagus lies no body, but rather some gear: a +2 *shadow mithral shirt*, a +1 *returning starknife*, a *hat of disguise*, a *belt of incredible dexterity +2*, and a pair of *boots of elvenkind*.

**G26. Silver Vault:** This chamber once held the resources of the Silver Ravens, but Brakisi squandered much of the holdings here in his numerous failed (and increasingly self-centered) attempts to oppose Thrune in the years following the Silver Ravens' defeat and the end of the Chelish Civil War. While it should be obvious to the PCs that much more wealth was once kept here, with numerous empty armor racks, weapon racks, dust-filled chests, and sparse bookshelves, what remains is by no means meager. A total of 700 pp, 8,000 gp, 25,000 sp, and 120,000 cp can be scraped together from various chests and coffers, along with an additional 11,500 gp in gems and jewelry. In addition, some powerful magic awaits rediscovery here, including a walnut-and-silver

scroll case worth 200 gp (containing a *scroll of greater restoration*, a *scroll of resurrection*, a *scroll of stone to flesh*, a *scroll of vision*, and a *scroll of word of recall*), a *staff of healing* (7 charges), a *ring of wizardry* [type II], a *manual of gainful exercise +1*, a *lantern of revealing*, a *horn of blasting*, a *ring of evasion*, and a +2 *transformative<sup>UE</sup> axiomatic longsword*. Yet perhaps the most important find here are the documents detailing much of the Silver Ravens' tactics in defending Kintargo—these documents are presented in greater detail in "A Song of Silver," but primary among them is a copy of sheet music for the "Song of Silver" itself. Rules for this potent performance and how it can help turn the tide against Thrune are found in the next adventure.

**H1. Subbasement:** This subbasement was carved out of the bedrock via magic at Barzillai's order to create a place to keep Jilia hidden away and to provide a chamber to house one of his more dangerous minions: the devilbound dragon Rivozair. The trap door in this room leads up to area G1.

**H2. Jilia's Coffin:** A single coffin sits on a low wooden platform in the center of this cavern. The coffin itself is the resting place of Kintargo's previous lord-mayor, Jilia Bainilus. See her NPC entry on page 60 for more details. If the PCs make it to this room before the unmasking ceremony, they find Jilia slumbering in her coffin here; if they have the right tools, can dispatch her with ease. If Cizmekris is forced to bring Jilia into play and she is defeated, she retreats here to recover. Defeating Jilia earns the PCs the full amount of XP, even if they stake her without a fight. If they later resurrect her and recruit her to the Silver Ravens, they'll earn additional XP as detailed in Appendix: Allies on page 56.

**JILIA BAINILUS** CR 9  
**XP 6,400**  
**hp 121** (see page 60)

**H3. Abandoned Dragon Lair:** Until recently, this chamber was the lair of the devilbound blue dragon Rivozair, whose enslavement is one of Barzillai's greatest triumphs. The inquisitor has kept Rivozair hidden from the public as a secret weapon of sorts, and intends to unleash the dragon should his current plans to defame the Silver Ravens fail. Rivozair and his treasure are no longer to be found here, but a character observing the telltale signs (a reptilian stink, lightning scars on the walls, and claw marks on the floor) can, with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check, confirm that until recently this room was a blue dragon's lair. Barring this, if the PCs rescue Jilia and restore her to life, she confirms seeing the blue dragon within the room, and that it came and went using teleportation of some sort (actually the *dimension door* spell granted by the *book of infinite spells*), but she doesn't know where it is now. Of course, all of Kintargo will soon hear Rivozair's roar as

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“A Song of Silver” gets underway—for now, though, the dragon hides out in the temple of Asmodeus.

### THE RUBY MASQUERADE

In all, 300 Kintargans (other than the PCs and their hand-selected allies) attend the Ruby Masquerade. These guests range from nobles to laborers (some of whom had to scrape together the funds to secure fancy masks and outfits), and the masks do quite well to hide from immediate view what station each holds in day-to-day life. This adventure does not provide a full list of the guests, but you should take the time to build a list of key attendees tailored specifically to your players. For each PC, select two NPCs of note from Kintargo: a friend and a rival. Select these from the NPCs with whom the PCs have had minor but memorable encounters over

the course of the Adventure Path—as the evening commences, there will be opportunities for each PC to encounter her friend or rival. It might be helpful to pick out masks for each friend and rival so the players can keep track of them even if they don’t correctly guess the actual identity of the NPC.

During the event, the areas marked “public” on the map of the opera house are busy with guests. The majority of guests mingle in areas **D3**, **D8**, **E1**, **E3**, and **E7**, or dance in areas **D5** and **D6**. Small groups make their way up to areas **F1** or even the upper-class balconies for private, quiet discussions. In the more well-attended areas, moving through the crowds counts as difficult terrain.

### MASQUERADE EVENTS

When the PCs first arrive at the opera house, they are greeted by dottari guards wearing fine chainmail, red tabards, and dramatic, smiling porcelain masks. No names are written down or announced as the guards take invitations; they inform newcomers that refreshments may be found in the low seating and the assembly room, and that dancing on stage shall continue throughout the event. The guards also inform guests that they may pay any offerings they wish to the host in the Prince’s Parlor (area **E4**), and that two events are scheduled for the evening. Barzillai himself shall lead the attendees in the Dance of the Damned at 10:00 P.M., and during the unmasking ceremony at midnight the lord-mayor plans on addressing the attendees with some news regarding Kintargo’s future. Apart from these events, guests are encouraged to mingle as they wish.

The Ruby Masquerade begins at 9:00 P.M., just before the evening’s curfew. (In theory, invitations double as street passes for attendees after they leave the ball later in the evening, but in fact, Barzillai doesn’t expect anyone to survive the coming massacre.) The evening is split into six half-hour scenes. During each scene, each PC can take one of several actions, as detailed below—you should supply the players with a list of their available options to help them decide how they wish their characters to spend their time during each scene. In order to take an action, the PC must spend the listed amount of Masque Points from the party’s total. This expenditure of points represents the party wearing out their welcome over time, but also increasing focus brought on them by their enemies.

When you resolve the events for each scene, do so in the following order each turn.

**Distract (1 Masque Point):** The PC attempts to create a distraction to focus attention away from other PCs. In order to do so, the PC must make a public spectacle of himself via a successful DC 15 Acrobatics, Intimidate, or Perform (any) check. If the distraction works, all other



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PCs gain a +5 bonus on Bluff and Stealth checks for the rest of this scene. With a result of 30 or more, the PC makes such a spectacle that he earns the party 1d4 Masque Points (or 1d4+2 points for a Perform check). If the PC fails the check, the spectacle fails as well, and the party loses 1d4 Masque Points.

**Mingle (0 Masque Points):** The PC spends the scene chatting with other attendees. The PC can mingle in one of two ways—via charm (using Diplomacy) or via wit (using Bluff). Allow the PC to attempt a skill check. On a result of 15 or more, the PC hears a rumor (see page 7) and earns the party 1 Masque Point. On a result of 20 or more, the PC also identifies either his personal friend or rival (equal chances) among the crowd. Once a friend or rival is identified, a PC can take future Mingle actions to chat with the friend or rival—if he does so with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check (for friends) or Bluff check (for rivals), he earns the party 2 Masque Points. Keep track of how many friends and rivals the PCs connect with during the course of the night, for each such connection made will boost the Silver Ravens' number of supporters (see Concluding the Adventure on page 56).

**Eat (1 Masque Point):** The PC samples the food and drink made available to all attendees. The refreshments are potent—sweet, alcoholic, and heavy—and it's easy to overindulge. While eating, a PC can also take the Mingle action for free, but must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save to avoid overindulging. This save DC increases by 2 for each previous scene that PC spent eating. Failure indicates the PC becomes tipsy, suffers indigestion, or is otherwise inconvenienced; treat that PC as sickened for the next 1d3 scenes. A PC who fails this saving throw while already sickened becomes nauseated very publicly; the party loses 1d6 Masque Points and this PC can take no actions at all during the next scene as he recovers.

**Dance (2 Masque Points):** The PC and a partner spend the scene dancing on stage. The partner chosen may be anyone, including a random person, but the results of a dance are enhanced if a PC spends the time with his friend or rival NPC. The PC must attempt a Perform (dance) check to determine how well he performs. With a result of at least 15, he earns the party 3 Masque Points. With a result of 25 or more, he earns the party 6 Masque Points. If the PC danced with a friend or rival NPC, a result of 15 or more earns the party an additional 3 Masque Points. The party loses no Masque Points for a result of 14 or below.

**Explore (Variable Cost):** If a PC wishes to explore an area that's off-limits, he must spend 2 Masque Points per area explored. Up to three adjacent areas can be explored per scene—for these purposes, each labeled room counts as a single area. For example, in one scene, a PC can explore areas **D2**, **D11**, and the **DR** chamber just north of area **D11**, or he could explore

areas **D12**, **G14**, and **G17**. At the end of exploration, the PC can decide to stay in the last room explored and then take the Explore action again the next scene (this costs an additional 2 Masque Points, but allows the PC to start from the current room to determine adjacent rooms in the next scene), or he can return to the public area (regardless of how many previous explorations he took). If the PC enters an occupied area, he can attempt a DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check to try to explain himself—on a success, the PC convinces the occupants of the area allow him to return immediately to a public area, but if he fails, the occupants attack. Note that certain denizens (such as the hell hounds in area **G1**) can't be reasoned with in this way. Alternatively, with a successful Stealth check, a PC can pass through an occupied room without being contested. If a fight breaks out, the PCs typically have 3 rounds to finish the battle before an alarm is raised; at your discretion, a fight can go longer without raising an alarm (such as a fight against the Nessian hell hound in area **G20**, or if the PCs manage to block all exits from a room). If the alarm is raised, Cizmekris is forced to jump the gun as detailed under Combat and Confrontation below. When handling exploration in this way, try not to spend too much time with the minutiae of each room, and keep in mind as well that PCs won't have enough time to perform thorough searches or catalogue all items in an area.

**Other Actions (Variable Cost):** Your PCs may wish to attempt other actions as well, such as pickpocketing attendees, stealing away with an NPC for a romantic interlude in a secluded area, sneaking outside to send a message to an ally via a *silver raven figurine of wondrous power*, and so on. Use the actions listed above as guidelines for how many Masque Points such events cost and how to resolve them. A pickpocketing attempt could function as a Mingle action but require a Sleight of Hand check, for example, while a tryst could function as a Dance action but with a Stealth check to remain hidden.

**Combat and Confrontation (Special):** If a PC initiates combat in a public place, the crowd panics and Cizmekris is forced to proceed with his trap before he is ready—see The Unmasking below. Likewise, at your discretion, PCs publicly calling out or challenging “Barzillai” can force this event to occur as well. If a PC's action forces the trap early in this manner, the party loses 2d6+10 Masque Points.

## THE DANCE OF THE DAMNED

At 10:00 P.M., the orchestra goes silent and Cizmekris (as Barzillai) takes center stage to welcome the guests to the Ruby Masquerade. He keeps his speech short, thanking the citizens of Kintargo for their patience in these trying times, and promising those in attendance

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that the worst is behind them and that, starting tomorrow, Kintargo will return to its former glory. His announcement of his plans to lift the curfew are met with a rousing cheer. He then asks for dancers to step onto the stage to take part in a classic Chelish competition: the Dance of the Damned.

Allow each PC to decide if she wishes to take part in this event; for each PC who refuses to take part, the party loses 2 Masque Points. Participation in this event also counts as a PC's action for this half-hour scene of the evening.

The Dance of the Damned is a traditional Chelish dance that serves as a metaphor of the lost souls being tormented in Hell. As a Dance of the Damned proceeds, several moderators, traditionally dressed as devils wielding small pitchforks, patrol the floor and observe the skill of the dancers. The style of dance is left to each participant, as long as the performance is executed well. Every few minutes, the music changes to a new song and the moderators tap those dancers who performed poorly with the tines of their pitchforks to "damn" them—when a dancer is damned, he must leave the dance floor at once. The dance continues for multiple songs until only one or no dancers remain. If no dancers remain, the Prince of Darkness is said to have feasted well, and all of those who participated in the dance will be cursed with bad luck for the next year. If one participant makes it to the end, though, this curse is avoided for all who took part, and the winner is cheered and praised as a savior. No actual curse of ill fortune descends upon the PCs if no one wins, but if a PC wins, she earns the party Masque Points and experience points.

Each PC who takes part in the Dance of the Damned must succeed at a series of increasingly difficult Perform (dance) checks in order to avoid being damned by one of the moderators (three of the guards from area **D12** wearing devil masks) and thus dismissed from the competition. For the first song, a PC need only succeed at a DC 5 Perform (dance) check to escape being damned, but with each song, the DC increases by 5. The dancing involved is particularly strenuous, and after each skill check, the dancers must attempt a DC 8 Fortitude save; the DC of this save increases by 1 after each song beyond the first. On a failed save, the dancer is fatigued for the remainder of the evening, and becomes exhausted if she fails one of these Fortitude saves while fatigued. Being fatigued does not penalize subsequent Charisma-based Perform (dance) checks, of course, but certainly could penalize the PCs' other efforts, such as the night's inevitable combat. Becoming exhausted causes the dancer to collapse and be damned.

When you run this dance, it's easiest to simply have all participating PCs attempt their own Perform (dance) checks (and subsequent Fortitude saves); any PC who fails is disqualified, but a PC who succeeds at the Perform

(dance) check moves on to the next song. In order to win, a PC must make it through a minimum of four songs and succeed at the fifth Perform (dance) check (DC 25). If the PC makes it through all five songs, the dance ends and he has become the last dancer standing and wins the Dance of the Damned, to the great adoration of the crowd. (If two or more PCs are successful, choose the PC with the higher result as the winner.) A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception or Sense Motive check at this point detects that "Barzillai" is unhappy to see a PC win the dance, but nonetheless the impostor lord-mayor steps out to crown the surviving PC as the night's savior. He awards that PC with the crown of the damned (a gold-and-ruby tiara worth 3,500 gp), but more importantly, he keeps his attention on that PC for the remainder of the evening. All actions that PC takes for the remainder of the Ruby Masquerade cost double the normal amount of Masque Points.

**Development:** If no PC succeeds at five successive checks, then no one wins, and the tenor of the Ruby Masquerade becomes a bit muted as participants worry about their future ill luck. The PCs lose 1d6 Masque Points, and they take a -2 penalty on all further Charisma-based skill checks during the remainder of the Ruby Masquerade up until (but not during) the unmasking ceremony.

**Story Award:** If all PCs take part in the Dance of the Damned, award the party 4 Masque Points and 9,600 XP. If a PC emerges as the victor of the dance, instead award the party 10 Masque Points and 19,200 XP.

## THE UNMASKING

As midnight nears and the time for the unmasking ceremony draws nigh, dottari guards begin herding participants into the central auditorium. Soon, every participant at the Ruby Masquerade has gathered in areas **D3** and **E1** as they prepare to remove their masks. Allow any PCs who were exploring the chance to return to one of these two areas—those who don't may find themselves cut off from support and in poor positioning to defend the crowd when Barzillai springs his trap. In any event, each PC not present when the unmasking begins costs the party 5 Masque Points.

Once the revelers have gathered, the false Barzillai takes center stage. Nox stands at his side, hunched over and silent, and Barzillai addresses the crowd with the following speech.

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"And thus we come to the conclusion of tonight's festivities. I would like to thank each and every one of you for making the Ruby Masquerade a night to truly remember."

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As Barzillai speaks, allow the PCs to attempt a DC 25 Perception or Sense Motive check. If any PC is successful, alert them that they notice additional dottari guards gathering along the edges of the room, closing



and locking doors, and taking up tense positioning. Allow them the opportunity to react as they wish as the speech continues.

“We have reached a turning point, all of us in Kintargo, and from this night onward, the city will look to what occurred this evening as a rallying point. A point where the city’s true villains were revealed, and its true heroes were forced to save the day. A point where the so-called Silver Ravens showed their true colors—the colors of blood, of betrayal, and of death! Thank you, loyal sacrifices of Kintargo, for offering yourselves as the martyrs this city so desperately needs!”

With these words, Barzillai’s troops attack as detailed under The Ruby Massacre below. The PCs are, of course, free to act while he is still speaking, but until Barzillai finishes his speech with the order to attack, any act of aggression by the PCs counts as a combat action and costs the party 2d6+10 Masque Points. Of course, the PCs may feel that the surprise round they gain by taking this sudden action is worth the cost in Masque Points!

### THE RUBY MASSACRE (CR 15)

The events of this night are destined to be recorded in Kintargan history books as the Ruby Massacre, but whether Barzillai Thrune or the Silver Ravens are blamed depends on the outcome of the fight. Note that while this encounter is technically a CR 15 encounter, the PCs should have had several opportunities to prepare for the fight, either by taking out some of their opponents, setting traps, or recruiting and bringing allies. Furthermore, not all of the participants focus their wrath on the PCs at once—many of the guards and devils have been tasked with keeping the crowd contained and slaughtering innocents, delaying direct action against the PCs (though expediting the massacre of the Kintargan citizenry).

**Cizmekris:** Cizmekris remains in human form for the fight. Specific details on his tactics appear on page 58.

**Nox:** Nox spends the battle at Cizmekris’s side, defending him from attackers but not seeking out foes herself. See page 43 for her tactics.

**Bone Devil:** The bone devil that was maintaining the illusory orchestra teleports into area E1 amid the crowd, still disguised as a lillend azata, and uses its fear aura to increase panic. Until it is directly confronted by a PC, the bone devil slaughters 1d6 citizens each round on its turn. If it sees citizens fleeing through an open door, it puts a *wall of ice* in front of the exit to block it off unless the devil is distracted by PCs.

**Erinyes:** The erinyes leaps from the window in area F3 and flies in circles above, maintaining her appearance as a bralani azata. On the first round of combat, she attempts to summon 2 bearded devils (these follow the

same tactics as the other bearded devils, but lack the azata disguises). On subsequent rounds, she strikes the crowd below with *unholy blights*, killing 2d4 people each round. Only if she’s directly engaged by a PC does she shift tactics to focus on the PCs, but once she does so, she uses her longbow against the PCs and does not return her attention to the crowd.

**Bearded Devils:** The five bearded devils disguised as bralani azatas have orders to directly engage the PCs—they focus on them from the start of the battle, hoping to distract them long enough for Cizmekris to prepare his defensive spells and to allow the other devils a chance to murder more citizens.

**Dottari Guards:** The dottari guards break into 11 teams of two. Pairs take up positions before each door leading out of areas D3 and E1. Another pair takes up positions at each flight of stairs leading down to area D1 from area E1. One pair takes up position at the stairs leading up to the stage from area D3. The final pair descends the stairs from area E1 to area D1, moves to area D8, and releases the cockatrices. This route takes 3 rounds in all; if the cockatrice cages have been disabled, the dottari abandon the cockatrices and return to aid the guards elsewhere.

**Cockatrices:** On round 4, the doors between areas D8 and D3 open, and the remaining crowd surges into area D8—only to be attacked by the cockatrices. Unless the PCs move in to engage the cockatrices, this results in an additional 1d6 fallen citizens during the cockatrices’ turn each round.

**Hell Hounds:** The hell hounds in area G1 do not take part in the fighting above, but quickly move to attack anyone who enters the underworld (most likely those who fall through a trap door or tumble into the orchestra pit).

### THE CROWD’S FATE

As the battle progresses, the crowd panics. When the Ruby Massacre begins, 300 citizens are packed into areas D3 and E1. As the battle progresses, this total will be reduced each round by numbers who perish or flee until it reaches 0. Keep track of the number of those who flee and who fall separately, as these numbers are important at the adventure’s end.

At the end of each round, roll 2d6 to determine how many people fall that round (this is in addition to those slain by devils or cockatrices). If the doors out of these areas are unlocked (as may be the case if the PCs don’t wait for the end of Cizmekris’s speech), or once the PCs open the doors (either by key, lock picking, or outright destruction) some of the crowd can also escape each round. Roll 1d6 per viable exit and add this total to the number of citizens fled. At your discretion, if the PCs take significant actions to rescue citizens, you can increase this number as you see fit.

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If the PCs defeat Cizmekris, the remaining dottari guards panic and attempt to flee while Nox and any remaining devils focus their attacks on the PCs—at this point, no further citizens fall, but they can still flee.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

"Dance of the Damned" comes to a close as soon as the PCs defeat the trap laid by Barzillai and Cizmekris. At this point, they essentially have the remainder of the evening to finish exploring the opera house (and perhaps fight a few straggling enemies, defeat Jilia, or recover treasures). If the PCs wish to come back and explore the opera house later during "A Song of Silver," they may do so, but once they leave the building tonight, this adventure ends and the next one begins.

Nevertheless, there are a few loose ends you can tie up before moving on to the next adventure.

**Preserving Kintargan Heritage:** Some of the documents, works of art, and other items of note the PCs might have a chance to recover from the opera house are valuable and could be sold, but keeping control of these civic treasures might be more important in the long term, as detailed in the next adventure.

**Rescuing Shensen:** This adventure assumes the PCs do not restore Shensen to flesh during the Ruby Masquerade, but that she is restored at the start of the next adventure. If the PCs manage to restore the famous local bard early, see the next adventure for her statistics and details on how she can help the Silver Ravens. (If you don't have this book handy yet, feel free to assume she's overwhelmed by her time spent petrified until the next adventure begins, or alternatively, use her statistics as presented on page 57 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: NPC Guide*.) Restoring Shensen to flesh grants a story award of 12,800 XP.

**Rescuing Jilia:** Discovering Jilia's fate provides some grim closure on a lingering mystery. If the PCs destroy the vampire, they can then resurrect the former lord-mayor (using the *scroll of resurrection* found in area G26, or perhaps using their own resources). If the PCs rescue Jilia in this way, she becomes an ally—see Appendix: Allies below for more information.

**Recovering the Song of Silver:** Recovering the "Song of Silver" from area G26 is an important goal—if the PCs don't find this sheet music on their first visit, Shensen can lead them to the Silver Vault early on in the next adventure to recover the treasures hidden therein along with the "Song of Silver." Once the PCs recover the song, award them 19,200 XP.

**Upwelling of Support:** Friendly or rival NPCs who made contact with a PC during the masquerade can be assumed to have survived the massacre, and they go on to spread the good word of the Silver Ravens—even if they began as rivals. For each friend or rival the PCs

successfully contacted during the masquerade, increase the Silver Ravens' supporters by 100.

**Final Rewards:** The PCs have two metrics by which you can judge their success: remaining Masque Points and the total number of people who survived the massacre. At the adventure's end, reduce the number of fallen attendees by an amount equal to the PCs' final Masque Point total, and add this number to the number of attendees who fled to safety. Reduce Kintargo's total population by the number of attendees who perished. If all 300 citizens fall, award the PCs no additional XP; if all 300 survive (unlikely, but possible if the PCs end the evening with a large number of Masque points) award them 25,600 XP. Otherwise, if more attendees fled than perished, award the PCs 19,200 XP. If more attendees perished than fled (but there were still survivors), instead award the PCs 6,400 XP.

**What if the PCs Lose?:** The Ruby Massacre is a complex and harrowing trap, and it may turn out that the PCs are defeated by Cizmekris. In this event, all is not lost. Assume that instead of killing the PCs, Cizmekris captures them all alive. He uses his *wand of sculpt corpse*<sup>APG</sup> to transform citizens into the bodies of the PCs to make it appear they perished during the fight, then imprisons the PCs themselves in Kintargo Keep. The next adventure, "A Song of Silver," includes information on handling captured PCs.

**Preparing for War:** However events play out in this adventure, there should be relatively little downtime between the end of "Dance of the Damned" and the start of the next adventure, "A Song of Silver." Barzillai Thrune does not rest idle when he realizes that his plot to trap and frame the PCs with the deaths of hundreds of Kintargans has failed, and swiftly enacts a number of atrocities and assaults on the city in an attempt to finally take Kintargo by force. The PCs should certainly have time to rest and recover from their ordeal in the Kintargo Opera House, but long-term projects like crafting magic items or further bolstering the Silver Ravens themselves will need to likely be put on hold until the situation in the Silver City can be resolved.

## APPENDIX: ALLIES

The PCs have the opportunity to recruit the following allies during "Dance of the Damned." Each unique NPC recruited earns the PCs 3,200 XP. At your discretion, you can use these unique allies as inspiration for creating allies of your own design, perhaps from NPCs the PCs have grown attached to through the course of the campaign so far.

**Jilia Bainilus:** If the PCs manage to restore Jilia to life after defeating her vampire incarnation, she joins the Silver Ravens but maintains a low profile. Her knowledge of House Thrune and Asmodean plans, combined with the rebels' delight at the return of their



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former lord-mayor, grants the rebellion a +2 bonus on Security and Loyalty checks. She also loans the PCs her rapier, *Reprisal*, if they wish, asking only for its return to her family once the work of defending Kintargo from Barzillai Thrune is done. Jilia Bainilus can serve as an officer for the Silver Ravens. Note that the remainder of the Hell's Rebels Adventure Path assumes that the PCs restore Jilia to life and allow her to continue in her role as the lord-mayor of Kintargo once Barzillai Thrune is dealt with. If Jilia remains a vampire, or if the PCs destroy her but don't bother resurrecting her, you will need to put another allied NPC, or perhaps even a PC, in the role of Kintargo's leader. Shensen, Octavio Sabinus, or even Rexus Victocora would make good substitutes for Jilia, as might any of the city's nobles who aren't currently allied with Thrune.

**Mialari Docur:** Mialari is a multitalented woman, and when she joins the Silver Ravens, the PCs can pick one area in which they would like her to aid them: Loyalty, Secrecy, or Security. As long as Mialari is an ally, she grants a +1 bonus on checks of the selected type. The PCs can reassign this +1 bonus to a different type of check once per rebellion Upkeep phase. In addition, Mialari Docur can serve as an officer for the Silver Ravens.

**Queen of Delights Manticce Kaleekii:** The Queen of Delights personally allies with the Silver Ravens

only if she is particularly taken with one of the PCs. As long as she remains an ally, the rebellion never loses supporters for having a treasury shortage. In addition, while she remains an ally, the Silver Ravens may take a bonus Earn Gold action during the Activity phase, provided the queen's favored PC leads the team taking this bonus action.

**Rose of Kintargo:** If the PCs allied with Hetamon Haace in the previous adventure, they replenish their stock of supplies as this adventure begins and can place up to 4 minor caches, 3 intermediate caches, and 1 major cache—see page 61 of “Turn of the Torrent” for details on these caches.

**Tayacet Tiora:** Tayacet prefers to keep her cover as an independent investigator serving under Barzillai Thrune, and as long as she's allowed to maintain this cover, she can continue to slip the PCs intelligence about Thrune's plans. In addition to Tayacet being able to warn them that the Ruby Masquerade is an elaborate trap, her support over the days and weeks to come grants the Silver Ravens a +2 bonus on Secrecy and Security checks. Once her cover is blown, she seeks asylum among the Silver Ravens and does her best to help with morale, at which point the Silver Ravens lose the bonus on Secrecy and Security checks and instead gain a +2 bonus on Loyalty checks.



# CIZMEKRIS

Conjured from the depths of Hell itself, this inquisitor of the Prince of Darkness specializes in the infiltration of society—who he is today might not be who he is tomorrow. His skill at masquerading as a mortal makes him the perfect agent for Barzillai's trap.

**CIZMEKRIS (DISGUISED AS BARZILLAI) CR 10**
**XP 9,600**

Male polymorphed bone devil inquisitor of Asmodeus 3  
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 74, Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 38*)

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +13; **Senses** Perception +24

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**DEFENSE**

**AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 12 (+2 deflection, +5 Dex)

**hp** 123 (13 HD; 10d10+3d8+55)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10

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**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** +1 *flaming heavy mace* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+8 plus 1d6 fire)

**Special Attacks** judgment 1/day

**Bone Devil Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +18)

Constant—fly

At will—*dimensional anchor*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 19), *wall of ice* (DC 19)

3/day—quickened *invisibility* (self only)

1/day—summon (level 4, 1 bone devil 35%)

**Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

At will—detect alignment

7/day—copycat (3 rounds)

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

1st (4/day)—*burst bonds*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *brand*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*

**Domain** Trickery

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**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Cizmekris attempts to summon a bone devil. If he has the chance, he casts *divine favor* and *shield of faith*.

**During Combat** Cizmekris starts combat by casting *invisibility* on himself in the first round, then uses a *major image* to make himself appear elsewhere in the area, hoping to draw off enemy resources, wasting them on the illusion. Once battle begins in earnest, he moves into melee with his mace, fighting with allies so he can use his Outflank feat to gain a +4 flanking bonus on his attacks. He always uses Power Attack when flanking a foe. (Since his allies

don't actually have Outflank, the feat allows his allies to take attacks of opportunity when Cizmekris confirms a critical hit, but he can't take attacks of opportunity in response to his allies' critical hits.) Cizmekris relies on *walls of ice* to block off attackers that use ranged weapons or ranged spells against him so he can focus exclusively on fighting up close. Cizmekris has no method to exit his polymorphed condition himself in this adventure, but if the PCs manage to dispel the effect (the *polymorph any object* functions at caster level 15th), they face the bone devil in his true form.

**Morale** If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, Cizmekris uses a quickened *invisibility* to vanish, then retreats into the Kintargo Opera House to heal: the board room (area **E8**), the archives (area **F6**), and the vault (area **G12**) all contain healing supplies, and Cizmekris makes for the closest one. Once he's healed, he searches for surviving allies, preferring to seek out Jilia in her coffin (area **H2**) in the subbasement, and then returns with Jilia at his side to launch a new attack. Cizmekris has been ordered to remain in the opera house until the PCs are dead, and so the best he can do in a hopeless battle is to hide in the building; if the bone devil can simply outwait the PCs or force them to retreat, his orders allow him to teleport back to the temple of Asmodeus to report to Corinstian Grivenner. Should this occur, you'll need to incorporate the bone devil into the next adventure yourself, as Hell's Rebels assumes he is defeated in "Dance of the Damned."

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**STATISTICS**

**Str** 21, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Outflank<sup>APG</sup>, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*invisibility*)

**Skills** Bluff +26, Disguise +26, Fly +31, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +24, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +21, Use Magic Device +19

**Languages** Azlanti, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal **SQ** monster lore +4, solo tactics, stern gaze +1, track +1

**Gear** +1 *flaming heavy mace*, *ring of counterspells* (*dispel magic*), *wand of sculpt corpse*<sup>APG</sup> (19 charges), skeleton key

### CIZMEKRIS (IN HIS TRUE FORM)

Male bone devil inquisitor of Asmodeus 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 74, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 38)

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +24

**Aura** fear aura (5 ft., DC 21, 1d6 rounds)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 136 (13 HD; 10d10+3d8+68)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

**DR** 10/good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 20

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** +1 *flaming heavy mace* +18/+13/+8 (1d8+9 plus 1d6 fire), bite +17 (1d8+5), claw +17 (1d6+5), sting +17 (3d4+5 plus poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** judgment 1/day

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 35

**Skills** Bluff +26, Disguise +26, Fly +28, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +24, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +16, Use Magic Device +19

**Languages** Azlanti, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**True Form Abilities** In his true bone devil form, Cizmekris retains the same spell-like abilities, inquisitor spells known, feats, special qualities, and gear as in his disguised form.

When Barzillai schemed to lure the PCs into attending his masquerade ball, he asked High Priest Corinstian Grivenner for aid in procuring a double. Cizmekris was the first devil the priest considered for the task. One of the many unique indentured devils pressed into service time and time again by the Chelish Church of Asmodeus, the bone devil inquisitor had often served that branch of the diabolic faith as an interrogator, spy, and assassin.

Corinstian used a *scroll of greater planar ally* to conjure Cizmekris, then tasked the devil with teleporting to Egorian to secure a *scroll of polymorph any object* from the Throne holdings there. The devil returned shortly after, and with the aid of Barzillai's Varisian agent Zella Zidlii, used the scroll to transform into a human of

approximately Barzillai's size. Cizmekris then further augmented the deception with his own skill at disguises, becoming a duplicate of Kintargo's lord-mayor.

Of those attending the ball, none have reason to suspect "Barzillai Thrune" is anything other than he claims. For his part, Cizmekris rankles somewhat at having to perform a mission as delightfully devious as this in the restrictive guise of a human body (his true form is much more devastating in battle, after all), but long-standing contracts and arrangements leave the bone devil little room to back out. He plays his role as Barzillai to the hilt, and even in death the *polymorph any object* effect persists. Canny PCs will take note of the fact that his corpse radiates transmutation magic, or that once the physical disguise is removed, the resulting corpse is manifestly not that of Barzillai Thrune. In any event, the truth comes out in the next adventure, when the real lord-mayor is forced to take drastic action.



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# JILIA BAINILUS

Her frame emaciated with hunger and her eyes sunken into her skull, this fanged, sallow-skinned caricature of a noblewoman exudes equal amounts of danger and despair. She is no longer the woman she once was—she is now a bloodthirsty monster.

## JILIA BAINILUS

**CR 9**

### XP 6,400

Female human vampire aristocrat 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 121 (9d8+81); fast healing 5

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +9 (1d4+3 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 21), energy drain (2 levels, DC 21)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Jilia Bainilus is under the control of Alucedá Zhol, the high priest of Zon-Kuthon in Kintargo. As the former lord-mayor's vampiric mistress, Alucedá has forbidden Jilia from certain actions. While she must follow Barzillai Thruné's orders, not even he can countermand Alucedá's directive never to create spawn of her own—Alucedá wants to deny Jilia any measure of power over anything below her. This extends to her dominate ability as well. Anyone Jilia successfully dominates can be used to attack others who immediately threaten her, but if there are no other threats, she's been ordered to send those she's dominated to the Shadowsquare to offer themselves to Alucedá and be placed under her control. Statistics for Alucedá are not presented until the next adventure: any PC who manages to follow these commands may well need to be removed from play until he or she can be rescued by surviving allies. Otherwise, Jilia's first action in combat is to call on several swarms of rats to join the battle. After that, she simply attacks with her slam attacks; once battle is joined, she doesn't bother making dominate attempts.

**Morale** If reduced to 0 hit points or fewer, Jilia retreats to her coffin in area H2.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +8 (+10 disarm); **CMD** 22 (24 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +27, Diplomacy +24, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Linguistics +15, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Stealth +10

**Languages** Aquan, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Strix, Varisian

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

**Gear** +1 *glamered chain shirt*, *headband of alluring charisma* +2

For many years, Jilia Bainilus has done her best to straddle two roles: a loyal Chelaxian in service to a nation she loves, and the leader of a city that shares her frustration at the government currently in control of that nation. The people of Kintargo generally supported her rule, even if they sometimes grew frustrated with her stance on House Thruné and tendency to buckle under during the rare times the government became more directly involved in the city's affairs. These incidents repeatedly broke Jilia's heart—she knew the Thrunés could simply have her replaced at any time, and she also knew any replacement would likely not have the city's best interests at heart. And so she did her best to appease House Thruné while simultaneously working to shelter her citizens from the awful truth.

Of course, after Barzillai Thruné seized control of the city, Kintargo's citizens finally realized just how good things had been under Jilia's leadership. Many of them have still bought the official government line that she abandoned Kintargo for distant Arcadia. Some, such as Lictor Octavio of the Order of the Torrent, believe otherwise, and as the Silver Ravens' influence grows, rumors that Jilia remains alive but imprisoned somewhere in Kintargo grow as well.

The truth is, as with so many things concerning Barzillai Thrune, far more awful. Jilia was the first true victim of Barzillai's plot. She never fled the city—she was abducted by Aluceda Zhol, the high priest of Zon-Kuthon, and transformed into a vampiric thrall. Entirely bound in servitude to Zhol, Jilia has spent the bulk of Hell's Rebels in the cold dampness of a brand-new subbasement carved into the foundations of the Kintargo Opera House. Barzillai pays her visits with increasing frequency, mostly to torment her with mocking (and false) reports of how the city adores his rule, and how much more prosperous Kintargo has become under his rule. Jilia aches for the true bliss and oblivion of death now, but has no free will of her own. She must follow Aluceda's commands, and through those, the will of Barzillai Thrune himself. See Cizmerkris's tactics on page 58 for how the vampire Jilia might be used against the PCs.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

If the PCs manage to destroy Jilia, they can restore her to life via *raise dead* or other powerful magic. In this case, Jilia is grateful and seethes with a need to avenge herself on Thrune, Aluceda, and all of Kintargo's oppressors. She joins the Silver Ravens as an ally, but prefers to remain in hiding for now. In any event, once rescued from undeath and restored to life, Jilia Bainilus cannot go back to being what she calls a "slave of the child queen." Her new goal, the freedom of Kintargo and all of Ravounel, should mesh well with that of the PCs, and she should become a powerful and influential ally in the adventures to come. The remainder of Hell's Rebels assumes Jilia has been restored to life by the PCs—see "A Song of Silver" and the following adventures for more details.

In case Jilia is restored to life, her stats are as listed below, along with her attack values with her rapier *Reprisal*, if the PCs return the weapon to her possession (see page 48 for details on *Reprisal*).

### JILIA BAINILUS CR 7

**XP 3,200**

Female human aristocrat 9  
CG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex)

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

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** *Reprisal* +10/+5 (1d6+4) or  
unarmed strike +7 (1d3–1 nonlethal)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Without a weapon, Jilia prefers to flee rather than fight. If she has allies, she takes an aid another action each round to grant a bonus to an ally's AC. If she gains a weapon (she hopes for her heirloom, *Reprisal* [see page 48], but otherwise prefers weapons she can use with Weapon Finesse), she fights with a bravery that rivals that of most soldiers, particularly when she fights at the side of allies or against a hated enemy, such as House Thrune.

**Morale** With a renewed and obsessive hatred of House Thrune, Jilia fights to the death when facing agents of Barzillai or the church of Asmodeus, yet harbors a deep fear of the undead and of vampires in particular. She flees any combat against an obvious vampire unless the PCs can bolster her courage (how they can do so is left for you to determine—but a successful DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check should do the trick).

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5 (+7 disarm); **CMD** 16 (18 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy),

Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +14,

Diplomacy +22,

Intimidate +16,

Knowledge (history) +11,

Knowledge (local) +11,

Knowledge (nobility) +11,

Linguistics +14, Perception +11,

Sense Motive +14

**Languages** Aquan, Celestial,

Common, Draconic,

Dwarven, Elven,

Gnome, Halfling,

Infernal, Shadowtongue,

Strix, Varisian

**Gear** +1 glamerd chain shirt,  
headband of alluring charisma +2



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# MOLLY MAYAPPLE

This elderly halfling woman seems frail and weak, yet the glitter in her eyes reveals the force of her will and suggests at hidden, secret reserves of strength within. She carries herself—and her hand crossbow—with confidence that leaves little doubt as to her skill.

**MOLLY MAYAPPLE (HALFLING FORM)**
**CR 8**
**XP 4,800**

Female old halfling natural wererat rogue 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 197)

CN Small humanoid (halfling, shapechanger)

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +15

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**DEFENSE**


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**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

**hp** 47 (8d8+8)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5; +2 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

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**OFFENSE**


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**Speed** 15 ft.

**Melee** mwk rapier +10/+5 (1d4–4/18–20)

**Ranged** +1 *hand crossbow* +11/+6 (1d3+1/19–20 plus poison)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +4d6 plus 4 bleed

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**TACTICS**


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**Before Combat** Molly is unlikely to engage in combat in this adventure, but she still keeps 10 of her hand crossbow bolts prepared with oil of taggit.

**During Combat** Molly has little interest in fighting or revealing her wererat nature yet, and as such she is unlikely to shift forms. If faced with a fight that she can't avoid, however, she assumes her hybrid form—in this shape, her physical body is bolstered by her feral nature.

**Morale** If Molly's confronted with violence, she either attempts to flee or begs for mercy, trusting in her appearance as a frail old woman if she thinks that will stay her enemy's hand. If she escapes, she plots revenge.

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**STATISTICS**


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**Str** 3, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Dodge, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (hand crossbow)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +14, Climb +6, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +12, Disguise +14, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +5,

Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +9, Perception +15, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +14

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Halfling, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Undercommon, Varisian

**SQ** change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats), rogue talents (bleeding attack +4, combat trick, finesse rogue, weapon training), trapfinding +4

**Gear** +1 *studded leather*, +1 *hand crossbow* with 10 bolts poisoned with oil of taggit, mwk rapier, *ring of protection* +1, small gold locket (contains a miniature painting of a smiling halfling child) engraved with the words "To my beloved niece, fortune in your travels —MG" worth 250 gp, gold bee brooch with central diamond worth 1,000 gp, gold serpentine necklace with blue enamel head and set with a matching grinning devil locket worth 700 gp, gold ring set with black obsidian ravens worth 250 gp, gold earrings designed to resemble rampant owlbears worth 250 gp each.

Thrice married and thrice widowed, extremely well traveled and somewhat world-weary, Molly Mayapple certainly has her share of reasons to be a cynic, yet somehow she retains a hopeful and positive outlook on life. At 81 years of age, Molly has been and seen so many things over the past decades that she sometimes feels like she lives in someone else's home in a distant place. Yet through it all, she manages to keep a firm grip on her wry sense of humor.

Born in the free city of Vyre to wererat parents she never really knew, Molly made a name for herself in her young adult years as an adventurer. When she rescued the twin daughters of Vyre's King of Delights from a gang of thugs who had holed up in the abandoned temple of Calistria in Heretic's Row, she was rewarded with a handful of deeds to several prime buildings in the Vise. Unfortunately, those valuable deeds were soon stolen, along with all of her wealth, in a home invasion orchestrated by Kintargo's Gray Spiders, the criminal gang that had helped orchestrate the abduction Molly had thwarted. But before they could ransom back Molly's deeds, the Gray Spiders were unexpectedly crushed by the Order of the Torrent.



This was little solace to poor Molly, of course, for her wealth and property remained out of her reach. For the next several decades, she faced recurring and frustrating bouts of bad luck, beginning with the death of her previous patron and his replacement by a halfling-hating racist as the new King of Desires. It was during these lowest decades of her life that Molly endured three unfortunate marriages, all of which ended badly—the first when her husband discovered her wererat condition and tried to kill her for a bounty (she murdered him instead and went into hiding), and the second when her husband turned out to be a member of the Scarlet Sign (she murdered him when she discovered his upcoming role in a Scarlet Sign plot). She has fond memories of only her third husband, a fellow wererat named Vazzereen, with whom she lived and loved in the sewers below Vyre for just over 12 years before he and his family were slaughtered by a band of Thrune agents seeking revenge against the wererat clan for a slight levied against them decades earlier.

Molly spent another few decades in a deep depression, living on the street until she had an epiphany: life was not eternal, and unless she did something about it, she would die miserable. She has spent the last 10 or so years of her life striving to overcome the hardships of her past, and today she runs the Seven Apples, one of Vyre's hostels, and manages a large network of guides who specialize in helping visiting adventurers find fun and intrigue in the city.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

The PCs should have found Molly's stolen deeds in "Turn of the Torrent." Molly is friendly and welcoming to the PCs even before she finds out they have something for her—she has a keen eye and can spot adventurers with ease.

If the deeds are returned, though, Molly tears up and quietly excuses herself, leaving the PCs attended by a few of her agents (two human wererats named Happy Grunn and Letticia Moll) for a few minutes while she collects herself in the back room. She returns a few moments later, back in control of her emotions, and thanks the PCs from the bottom of her heart. She also rewards them for their kindness not only by extending to them accommodations at the Seven Apples gratis for as long and as often as they wish to visit Vyre, but also by handing over a significant portion of her savings in thanks: a *handy haversack*



she kept hidden under the floorboards of her bedroom. The *handy haversack* contains 800 pp; should the PCs balk at this reward, she makes a dismissive sound and points out that with the returned deeds, she'll be able to make that much back in a season.

If Molly learns the PCs represent the Silver Ravens (if the result of her Notoriety check is less than or equal to the Silver Ravens' Notoriety score, she knows this automatically; otherwise, the PCs must to admit their need to her before she connects the dots), she grows even friendlier. She has heard of what's been going on in Kintargo and the rest of Cheliox, and understands that Vyre should secure an ally against House Thrune, just to be safe. Kintargo is an excellent option, but as long as Barzillai remains in power there, Vyre's primary point of contact on the mainland remains in flux.

Molly tells the PCs that she happens to be on relatively good terms with the current Queen of Delights, muttering about that being a nice change after the last few were "such disappointments." Molly tells the PCs that the Queen of Delights holds monthly banquets where those she favors are allowed to share a meal, air grievances, and jockey for her favor. The next banquet is only a few days away, and it's no big deal for her to arrange for the PCs to accompany her as her guests. There's no better way to approach a leader of Vyre about setting up an alliance, Molly points out, especially since the city's other four leaders are "not the type of folks you'll want to make friends with, by and large."

If the PCs don't possess the deeds, you'll need to engineer another way for them to secure these invitations. A simple solution would be to change things up so that Molly Mayapple is the distant cousin of a halfling ally like Laria Longroad, and on that ally's recommendation, the PCs can make contact with Molly to secure her aid.

Beyond serving as a guide and ally in Vyre, Molly is destined to cross paths with the PCs again, quite soon, when she learns that her hated rival Hei-Fen has traveled to Kintargo to seek revenge against the PCs for taking over the Lucky Bones. Molly travels to Kintargo soon after and pledges her aid to the Silver Ravens more directly. Rules for how she can serve as an ally, including full statistics for her in her wererat hybrid form, appear in the next adventure, "A Song of Silver."

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A stroll along the streets of Vyre is one long assault on the senses, as punters and pushers, pimps and perverts shove and scrutinize, promise and threaten, doing their best to entice and cajole passersby into sampling their wares. 'Follow,' they say as they beckon to doors or nearby alleyways. 'Within, all your dreams will be fulfilled. Whatever your wish, whatever your desire, you will not be the first to indulge, not here. What happens beyond closed doors shall stay beyond closed doors in Vyre.' Signs and placards leave nothing to the imagination, whether they be brothels or drug parlors or menageries or markets... and frankly, in the so-called City of Masks, it can be hard to tell which is which!"

—Pathfinder Koriah Azmeren recounting her first and only trip to Vyre

Long before the nation of Cheliox was established in 3007 AR, the city of Vyre was born. Founded in 1673 AR by settlers from Corentyn who sought to escape the overly strict laws laid down in distant Taldor, Vyre was, from the start, a city for those who wanted a place to indulge in the exotic, the dangerous, and the forbidden. In the centuries since, Vyre has thrived. The so-called City of Masks prides itself on being a place where names aren't required, no questions are asked, and no appetites judged. With the rise of Cheliox, Vyre entered a marriage of convenience with the nation, its tacit obedience always masking an aloof independence. The rulers of Vyre are canny in their dealings with Cheliox, and the city has effectively remained a free port. The draw of a place where the rich and powerful can retire to without worrying about repercussions has ensured Vyre's continued stability and remains one of the key factors of its success. After the Chelish Civil War, Queen Abrogail I saw the wisdom in having a place where her supporters could travel to relax, even if she personally never visited Vyre's attractions, and so the relationship between the City of Masks and the nation of Cheliox continued largely unchanged into the Age of Lost Omens.

### VYRE, THE CITY OF MASKS

CN large city

**Corruption** +0; **Crime** +4; **Economy** +4; **Law** -1; **Lore** +1; **Society** +6

**Qualities** holy site, no questions asked, notorious, prosperous, tourist attraction

**Danger** +20

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** council

**Population** 17,300 (13,200 humans, 1,350 halflings, 720 tieflings, 510 half-elves, 470 half-orcs, 340 gnomes, 320 elves, 180 dwarves, 210 other)

#### Notable NPCs

- King of Keys Delaraius Solzakarr** (NE male human rogue 3/cleric of Norgorber 17)
- Queen of Blades Mera Bantikere** (CN female halfling swashbuckler<sup>ACG</sup> 16)
- Queen of Blood Pirreta** (CN female lunar naga<sup>B3</sup> sorcerer 13)
- Queen of Delights Manticce Kaleekii** (CN female tiefling aristocrat 2/witch<sup>APG</sup> 17)
- Queen of Whispers Simandu** (NE female jorogumo<sup>B3</sup> rogue 10)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 14,400 gp; **Purchase Limit** 100,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 9th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

#### Currently Guaranteed Available

**Armor and Weapons** +1 banded mail, +3 composite longbow (*Str* +3), +3 greater shadow chain shirt, +2 shadow breastplate

**Potions and Scrolls** *oil of arcane mark, oil of bless weapon, potion of bull's strength, scroll of darkness, scroll of desecrate, scroll of halt undead, scroll of inflict light wounds, scroll of lightning bolt, scroll of protection from spells, scroll of wall of ice*

**Rods, Rings, and Wands** *lesser rod of extend metamagic, ring of wizardry III, rod of enlarge metamagic, rod of flame extinguishing, wand of cure serious wounds (50 charges)*

**Wondrous Items** *efficient quiver, handy haversack, necklace of fireballs type III, pearl of power (6th level), periapt of wound closure*

#### SETTLEMENT QUALITIES

**No Questions Asked** Vyre's citizens mind their own business and respect a visitor's privacy. (*Lore* -1, *Society* +1)

## VYRE AT A GLANCE

Squatting at the edge of the sea, looming over a harbor too shallow for larger ships, the City of Masks exists primarily to entertain. Here truly nothing is regarded as sin, and for the right price, anything is possible and even excusable. Yet Vyre is no anarchy—even this depraved city has laws that are enforced by a wide range of well-paid and specialized peacekeepers.

Vyre entertains, and does so outrageously. Its gambling halls, drug dens, brothels, and bloodsport arenas are an aperitif to even darker games and entertainments. Private excruciations, blasphemous orgies, and obscene, gluttonous feasts take place nightly behind closed doors, and one never has to dig too deeply to secure invitations. However, those who immerse themselves in Vyre's underground amusements do so at their own risk, for once one attends such engagements, the penalties for exposing the identities of other guests or spreading the word beyond Vyre Island are grim indeed.

The city sprawls between two rising hills, its shallow harbor protected by a rocky isle that is home to the city's government buildings and defensive quarter. On a smaller rocky islet sheltered by the harbor looms Dunrock Prison, one of the most notorious jails in Avistan. The city is a tangle of wood and stone that opens here and there into sprawling markets. A haze of smoke lies over the city, and in a strange twist to most urban centers, the streets tend toward quiet during the day, when most of the citizens sleep off the previous night's debauchery, and come to noisy and riotous life at night. The experiences of Vyre don't stop with sight and sound. The streets are a complex melange of smells as well—mixtures of the brine and fish of the harbor mix with exotic spices and foods and perfumes adorning a mix of cultures drawn from across the Inner Sea. Locals claim that one can even navigate Vyre blindfolded and with earplugs, following scent alone as one's only guide—although woe to those who willfully abandon their awareness in a place like the City of Masks!

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## VYRE, THE CITY OF MASKS

### VYRE FACTIONS

Many different factions call Vyre home, but those summarized below represent the City of Masks' most powerful groups and organizations.

**Church of Norgorber:** Few outside of Norgorber's church realize the special significance Vyre holds for their god, for the mortal Norgorber was born in this very city. Norgorber's interest has resulted in Vyre being among the strongest, if best-concealed centers of his worship.

**Dunrock Turnkeys:** The guards and wardens of Dunrock Prison are highly trained and universally known to be sadists and bullies. The fact that the prison's jurisdiction doesn't physically extend beyond its walls does little to blunt the respectful fear a Dunrock turnkey wearing his striking black-and-gray uniform solicits when he walks the streets of Vyre.

**Hellknight Armigers:** While no official Hellknight order keeps a citadel on Vyre Island, hopeful armigers from all orders come to the City of Masks to round out their experiences before submitting to a specific order for membership. Often clad in full plate that closely resembles Hellknight armor despite not officially belonging to any order, these expectants patrol Vyre's streets for no pay, striving to uphold the city's promises and keep Dunrock Prison well stocked with prisoners, unaware of the awful fate that awaits the majority of Dunrock's "guests."

**Masks of Vyre:** The rulers of Vyre keep their identities secret, but each one, in theory, upholds one of the Five Promises of the city (see the sidebar on page 68). In turn, each of the self-styled kings and queens are served by a hand-selected group of guards, known collectively as the Masks of Vyre. Currently, the Masks of Whispers and the Masks of Keys are under the direct influence of the Church of Norgorber, and thus share resources and information, while the other three Masks of Vyre tend to focus on their own charters. The Masks of Delights police mercantile matters, transactions, and all forms of entertainment in Vyre. The Masks of Whispers control the flow of information and announcements in the city as well as protect the reputations of powerful citizens. The Masks of Blades serve as the city's militia, while the Masks of Keys seek to maintain the walls and locks that make up the city's defenses. Finally, the Masks of Blood see to the representation of Vyre citizens in legal matters and defense against foreigners.

### GOVERNMENT AND LAW

The city of Vyre is a place of organized chaos, but while so many of its movers and shakers accept this, the city itself is quite strictly regulated. Of course, these dictates often go unnoticed and unseen by most visitors. Unlike many cities, when one visits Vyre, there are no tariffs or taxes at the gates and no registers to inscribe names. Vyre prides itself on anonymity and on the protection of the

same for its visitors. Yet none who visit Vyre can miss the prominently placed Five Promises (see the sidebar on page 68), graven in stone at the bases of numerous statues of masked heroes and villains from the city's cosmopolitan past.

The city is ruled by a council of five, all of whom keep their true identities secret. They are referred to as the "kings and queens" of Vyre, yet their positions are hardly hereditary. Power in Vyre goes to those who can seize and keep it, and the secret nature of its rulers can mean that power can shift from one king or queen to the next with few noticing the change.

The greatest factor in maintaining the veneer of civility in Vyre, though, are not its leaders, but rather the constant presence of Dunrock Prison. This formidable island houses many of the Inner Sea's most dangerous criminals, and the thought of being imprisoned here is more than enough to keep the bulk of Vyre's citizens in line with the city's few but immutable laws.

## VYRE GAZETTEER

The following section presents information on key locations found throughout Vyre, although many more sites of interest exist in the city. These brief overviews are merely representative examples of the unique locales that await discovery in the City of Masks.

### KEELWRACK

Separated from the greater part of the city by the shallow waters of Keelwrack Harbor, two islands make up the district of Keelwrack. The larger of the two is Keelwrack Island, on which reside Vyre's palaces and government buildings, yet it is the smaller isle, Dunrock (so named for the sadist who first claimed it as his home so many centuries ago) that commands so much of Vyre's respect, for it is the location of one of Avistan's most notorious prisons.

The waters of Keelwrack Harbor are quite shallow, forcing waterborne traffic to rely on barges, rowboats, and other similar watercraft. This natural feature protects against invasions by Taldor and other southern nations, and though it hasn't helped much against raiders from the Linnorm Kingdoms, the numerous siege weapons mounted on the city walls do.

**1. Vyre Palace:** This great citadel is by far the largest structure on all of Vyre Island. The spired building is made of many-colored basalt and granite, and its central dome is a true wonder of architecture. The Kings and Queens of Vyre hold court here, but themselves dwell in one of the many manors spread throughout Keelwrack Island.

**2. Dunrock Prison:** This stark, gothic edifice squats atop a steep-walled spire of stone thrust up from the harbor, its land approaches limited to two stairways built into steep sea walls. The prison can house nearly 300 inmates in the cells carved into the rocky isle under the upper structure's administrative floors, yet overpopulation has never been

a problem. Dunrock is secretly ruled by the Skinsaw Cult, whose practice of selecting prisoners for sacrifice prevents overcrowding. Most of the prison's turnkeys are humans or half-orcs, though at least a few are disguised jorogumos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 156) loyal to Father Skinsaw. The prison (and thus the Skinsaw Cult) is run by Warden Delaraius Solzakarr, the King of Keys. Several of the deepest levels below Dunrock extend below the harbor. Rumors among the prisoners that the turnkeys long ago lost control of these deep levels to underground horrors, who in turn "recruit" some of the prisoners who go missing, may not be entirely fanciful. The Queen of Whispers, Simandu, maintains some control over these deepest chambers, yet even she doesn't have a full accounting of what dwells deep within.

**3. The Lantern:** Glowering out to sea, this fortresslike lighthouse sheds a strange mauve light that can be seen by ships a score of miles away. The Lantern is run by Harbormaster **Morgramb Hudd** (NC male human ranger 9), who also operates a smuggling business with the help of a few cohorts.

### THE VISE

Vyre's bustling waterfront district, known as the Vise, is so called for the belief that this area is where Vyre seizes new visitors and never lets them go. Consisting of the subdistricts of Southmarket and Old Vyre, the Vise contains the bulk of the city's infrastructural support. As the place where travelers to Vyre first set foot in the city, the Vise also has a large number of inns and taverns. Numerous hostels, which serve as both taverns and inns, can be found in the Vise. The more eminent establishments feature small roving staffs of guides who also serve as self-styled "Reputation Watchers," doing their best to ensure their guests retain their anonymity.

**4. The Dancing Cat:** The Dancing Cat is denoted by a gaudy sign depicting a cat leaping on a bed of hot coals. This hostel is one of the oldest in Vyre, and its prestige for protecting reputation is unparalleled. It is also under the watch of the Cult of Norgorber; its owner, **Inaminah Clov** (NE female half-elf rogue 5/cleric of Norgorber 7), leads the local branch of the church under Norgorber's incarnation as the Reaper of Reputation. Many know the truth of Inaminah's faith and that of her staff, but they mistakenly suspect the Dancing Cat to be Norgorber's primary public church in the city when, in fact, it is but a minor shrine.

**5. The Heavenly House:** This hostel keeps contracts with dozens of brothels in Vyre and can arrange for discreet visits from whichever bawdy house a patron chooses. Its owner and manager, Pirreta, also secretly serves Vyre as the Queen of Blood. She leaves most of the day-to-day management of the place to the self-effacing so-called "Slip King," **Golath Thamus** (N male halfling sorcerer 8).

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### VYRE'S FIVE PROMISES

Vyre's laws are simple, yet prominent, and represented throughout the city in stone carvings below statues of ancient heroes and villains. All visitors to Vyre are expected to uphold these five promises, as are her citizens—those who break these regulations and cannot offer defense invariably end up in Dunrock Prison.

**I Shall Honor All Coin:** Transactions are always binding and refunds are not guaranteed. Do not burgle or steal. Price itself is always negotiable.

**I Shall Speak Many Names:** Names spoken in Vyre are to be accepted as truth. Do not publicly spread visitors' true identities if they want them hidden.

**I May Wound Yet Shall Not Kill:** Let your enemies live, that they might have a chance at revenge. If you cannot abide such threats, make no enemies at all.

**I Know None Are Below Me:** Even the lowliest beggar may well be a high priest of Norgorber. In Vyre, all forms of prejudice are frowned upon, and the racist, the misogynist, the classist, and the like must tread with care.

**I Shall Let Closed Doors Remain Closed:** Breakings of these promises that occur in private are considered to have never been broken at all, lacking a burden of proof, but revealing closed-door secrets without sufficient evidence is answered with imprisonment.

**6. Munkchuff's Quay:** This cluster of houses built atop a tangled boardwalk exhibits a countless array of freaks, outre objects, and glimpses of madness meant to intrigue and delight the connoisseur of the outlandish. Its owner, **Algernon Munkchuff** (N male dwarf bard 7), is a collector of all that is strange and—ideally—disturbing, and visitors who can add to his collection of curiosities can earn discounts on their stay.

**7. The Seven Apples:** The Seven Apples is owned and operated by the elderly Molly Mayapple (see page 62 for her full statistics), who has worked to make her hostel appeal to adventurers who come to Vyre for rest and relaxation. Molly retains a wide ranging network of guides and advisors who provide affordable aid to her guests, both in the form of helping them get around the city, but also in keeping them informed of possible adventures to find in the city itself.

### PAUPER'S PALACE

The quietest and largest of Vyre's districts is known as Pauper's Palace. This is the city's residential district, a safe place where the locals can retreat, relax, and prepare to once again entertain the hordes of eager visitors on the following night. Though the application process for becoming a citizen of Vyre

is long and arduous, the city does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, religious belief, government affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, or any other social division. The subdistricts of Pauper's Palace range from the southeastern slums known as the Whispers to the middle-class neighborhoods of Nettles, Graystone, and Duskwalk, finally reaching the old-money neighborhoods of Westwatch and Sunshade to the northwest. At the core of these neighborhoods lies the River District, the most diversely populated subdistrict of Pauper's Palace.

**8. The Blissful Abattoir:** There are no graves in Vyre. When a visitor perishes, the body is returned to the person's home. If the deceased has no home to return to or is a local, agents of this somber building come into play. The orange-cloaked Collectors of the Abattoir wear distinctive beaked masks that resemble the attire of plague doctors, and while they claim to serve psychopomp ushers (and beyond them, Pharama herself), they are actually agents of Norgorber in his aspect as the Gray Master. Their true specialty is not in the theft of valuables but in the theft of bodies. In theory, the dead of Vyre are cremated, but in practice, animal remains are often substituted for the corpses, which are in fact smuggled into Dunrock Prison or abroad for animation as undead minions. The Collectors are led by **Quentin Crabb** (NE male human cleric of Norgorber 13), who, as has his predecessors before him, has done an excellent job hiding the truth of the Collectors from the public and periodic inquisitive investigators from the church of Pharama.

**9. Graveolent Gardens:** This park sits on the edge of the Pauper's Palace, and was originally meant to be a gift from the city's nobility to the underclasses. Unfortunately, no nobles agreed to pay for its upkeep, and now the gardens are a functional shantytown gripped by ancient trees, fancy ornate ironwork, and glowering statues. Here, the homeless vie among themselves for survival, but few ever manage to escape once they fall into the gardens' net of poverty.

**10. Darakole Sanitarium:** Experimentation with tainted drugs, the crushing humiliation of a devastating gambling loss, and exposure to dark magic or forbidden rites have claimed the minds of many visitors to Vyre. While some victims are sent to Dunrock Prison, those whose friends are influential or rich enough can pay to instead have them confined in Darakole Sanitarium. Whether regarding a person who is admitted to Darakole as being "fortunate" is fair or not depends on the situation, for the sanitarium itself is but another front for the worship of Norgorber. **Anja Creeve** (NE female human alchemist<sup>APG</sup> 9) runs Darakole Sanitarium, and she and her orderlies worship their patron as Blackfingers and use many of their hapless charges to experiment with strange new drugs and poisons.

## BUSS

When one thinks of Vyre, most often one pictures the district of Bliss and its neighborhoods of Sanctuary, the Cradle, and Nightcrown. Here is where the city's storied fighting pits, gambling dens, drug emporiums, brothels, dance halls, and other venues of outlandish and extraordinary entertainment can be found. Exact offerings change seemingly monthly, as shops and establishments go out of business, only to be replaced by new options for distraction and deviance.

**11. The Final Throw:** Part circus, part casino, the Final Throw is owned by Mera Bantikere, although her work as the city's Queen of Blades has kept her from being able to be a part of the show as much as she would prefer.

**12. Heretic's Row:** This temple-lined street was originally intended to be the center of religion in Vyre, but time and the growing influence of Norgorber has shifted its purpose to one bordering on blasphemy. Today, the old temples of faiths that have long since abandoned the city are used almost as trophies. When a gambling hall, brothel, drug den, or other house of ill repute makes a name for itself, its owners can claim one of these abandoned houses of worship as their own as a show of their success—maintaining their presence within the walls as long as they can afford the steep rent to Vyre's rulers. Few establishments last long within the walls of a fallen church before they are forced to abandon their prestigious domain and start anew in a less expensive (and less desirable) location elsewhere in Bliss. The names and purposes of these temples shift constantly as a result, with over half being abandoned and empty at any one time. In theory, the city keeps undesirables out of the empty temples, but in practice, strange cults and outlaw gangs take up residence within those that remain abandoned for too long. The hiring of adventurers to periodically clean out dangerous squatters from a church in Heretic's Row is a time-honored tradition in Vyre. However, one building, an old cathedral of Abadar, has never been claimed, for it is the



DELARAIUS SOLZAKARR

headquarters of one of Vyre's most insidious cults, the Scarlet Sign. Created centuries ago by the demon **Vissagho** (CE male vrolikai<sup>B2</sup> rogue 2), the Scarlet Sign is a sinister secret society attended by nobles from throughout Chelixa who wish to keep themselves viable in Vyre's politics. With funds flowing in from across the nation, the leaders of Vyre have never rented out this cathedral, knowing that doing so would invite the violent dissatisfaction of the cult's murderous founder. What strange plots and desires compelled Vissagho to found the Scarlet Sign in the first place are known only to him.

**13. Opal Market:** The great market of Vyre sprawls in the city's heart, quiet and slumbering by day, yet waking at night into a riot of color. Outlandish bargains can be claimed in the Opal Market, and fortunes made for those lucky enough to attract the right attention at the right time. Exotic companions, dinosaur tamers, caterwauling stilt-walkers, flaming sword swallows, con artists, shady alchemists, brilliant inventors, peddlers of untested experimental drugs, and purveyors of strange magic are common sights here. The market is overseen by Manticce Kaleekii, who augments her interests by serving, in secret, as Vyre's Queen of Delights. She dwells in sprawling Cobweb Manor, which squats on a hill looking out over the Opal Market.

## SEWERS

The sewers of Vyre are as ancient as the city, but despite their age they are well maintained by various guilds and agencies, yet not entirely for the purpose of sanitation. As one might guess in a city all but ruled by the church of Norgorber, the sewers of the City of Masks are a sprawling network of secret tunnels, vaults, guilds, and lairs of all manner of criminal activity. Significant portions of the catacombs and sluiceways are left to monsters such as otyughs, kobolds, troglodytes, faceless stalkers, and even more powerful creatures such as nagas or seugathi keep isolated lairs within. The thieves and other criminals give the monsters a wide berth, and in return enjoy the additional security such dangerous neighbors afford. The sewers of Vyre are thus ripe with opportunities for adventure, but also for death as well. Explorers are advised to travel with care!

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## MAHATHALLAH

### DOWAGER OF ILLUSIONS

**M**ahathallah knows she will die—she has seen it. In the courts of the Boneyard, she judged countless souls. Generations, whole worlds, and entire millennia of spirits passed through her court en route to their afterlives. Mortals called her the Maiden of Mists, whose gaze pierced any veil and whose whisper parted any fog. She never sought praise, but she came to be worshiped nonetheless as one of the mysterious leaders of her kind: a psychopomp usher. Though her mistress, Pharasma, the Lady of Graves, never said as much, she was pleased. Mahathallah, however, could never entirely accept the prayers raised in her name. Her faithful claimed she knew every beginning, every act, and every end, but that wasn't true. Mahathallah knew every mortal's demise, and in her wisdom predicted the dooms of far greater beings—but to her own end she was utterly blind.



**I**gnorance of one's own death is often a blessing to mortals, but the conclusion of her own existence tormented Mahathallah. That one failure of her perfect sight eventually consumed her vision, blinding her to all else. Over time, she became so preoccupied that she could no longer serve the souls seeking her judgment. Realizing this, she went to the Lady of Graves.

Mahathallah beseeched Pharasma to reveal why the goddess had impaired her sight, why she was able to see every end except the one most important to her. The goddess paused in her balancing of life and death for only a moment, just long enough to remind her servant that only those who travel the River of Souls may learn their final fate.

Mahathallah left the Boneyard. She traveled to the mortal realm, waited for a portentous moment, and used her nearly perfect vision to find the last being to die in that instant. She then followed that spirit's path along the River of Souls.

The length of the River of Souls differs for every creature, but for Mahathallah the path was particularly winding. By the time her route returned to the Boneyard, all her shrines were rubble. She stood once more before the goddess at the center of the multiverse. Without a word, Pharasma pulled back the illusions of time and revealed Mahathallah's final moment. The Maiden of Mists had never understood the fear mortals associated with death, and so had no concept of the terror she would face upon witnessing her own immortality's end.

And Mahathallah fled.

None can say all the places Mahathallah wandered. The eldest sahkils of the Ethereal Plane recount her passing with furious awe and proud scars. Tales on mortal worlds tell of the crone who spoiled destiny, unraveling the planetary fates. But ultimately Mahathallah's flight drove her to one of existence's deepest pits: Hell itself.

Only Mahathallah knows what Asmodeus promised, but the Prince of Darkness calmed her as no other could. Ancient now as only a deity can be, Mahathallah turns her vision to the service of Hell, a maiden no longer, but the Dowager of Illusions.

## PERSONIFICATION AND REALM

The Dowager of Illusions numbers among the nobility of Hell as the most elusive of the four demigoddesses known as the Whore Queens. Her appearance endlessly changes from that of a youthful, though cadaverous, angel wearing a dusk-hued burial gown to a rotting crone

trailed by tatters and shattered wings. This cycle of decay and regeneration passes erratically, sometimes taking as much as a day or as little as a moment. Although typically cold and dispassionate, Mahathallah's emotions seem to affect her appearance, youth being the mask of her anger and age that of her nihilistic wisdom. Ever changing, Mahathallah is impossible to accurately depict. Artists often represent her as a vaguely feminine figure cloaked in somber mists, or by her symbol alone—a glaring eye surrounded by an assortment of occult sigils.

Mahathallah shows her favor to mortals through lucid dreams, euphoric visions, fires hissing like soft laughter, and the disappearance of signs of age (whether minor or dramatic, but always temporary). Her disapproval comes in the form of wicks that refuse to catch flame, patches of wrinkled skin, suddenly ineffective drugs, and—most dramatically—blindness.

The Dowager of Illusions is lawful evil and her areas of concern include death, fate, and vanity. Her favored weapon is a net—a metaphor for obsession and ensnaring magic. Her domains are Death, Evil, Law, and Trickery. Her priests are primarily clerics, mesmerists, oracles, and witches.

Mahathallah's divine realm is known as Voiporl, a dank, cavernous land where rents in the distant ceiling reveal the dizzying spin of alien constellations. Occupying caverns connecting Phlegethon and Stygia (the fourth and fifth layers of Hell), Voiporl is a realm of violet sand dotted by ancient temples with onion-shaped domes, cavernous pillars, and oasis gardens as big as jungles. Souls escaped from Phlegethon's mines and workshops often flee into this dim desert, where they are typically picked off by gigantic serpents or dragonflies, if not the desert witches, medusas, and undead who seek wisdom in those depths.

## DOGMA AND WORSHIPERS

Mahathallah's primary care is her followers' ability to spread the core tenet of her faith: that mortal existence is limited and meaningless. Through whispers and drug-induced visions, she pulls back the veils of lies that obscure the profound facts of existence. Each stage of her teachings reveals the pure meaninglessness of life, and she claims to mislead only to reveal deeper truths. Yet Mahathallah is no anarchist. Lessons gravid with metaphor teach her followers that they hold the special ability to see through falsehoods and to craft their own—to find the grain of truth that pins every falsehood



All you see is illusion.  
All you know is fiction.  
All you are is lies.  
—*The Mysteries of Salaur*

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to reality. Those who recognize a lie can dispel it, make it true, or turn it to their service. Thus, her teachings strive to make her followers false arbiters of reality, convincing them that they are unto the gods themselves. Mahathallah's lessons foment arrogance and vanity, elevating her followers above the world's blind throngs and encouraging them to distrust common wisdom and instead put their faith in the insight she grants. The teachings also impart a callousness toward those outside the faith, as the goddess's followers spread the power of illusion, serve as guides to and interpreters of hallucinations and dreams, and capitalize on the ignorance and gullibility of the masses.

Ceremonies held in Mahathallah's honor are rare and short, often revolving around haruspicy conducted at the solstices or equinoxes and the sacrifice of portentous beasts (blind birds, albino reptiles, or multi-headed goats). More elaborate displays are reserved for impressing useful rubes. For the most part, Mahathallah's worship revolves around study, arcane and alchemical experimentation, and the seeking of visions—alone or in small groups—preceded and followed by prayers to the demigoddess.

Many of Mahathallah's philosophies call to outcasts. She offers the wisdom to see what others can't, visions confirming one's superiority over the common multitudes, and the power to turn the mysteries of life and death against one's foes. Mahathallah has no care for who follows her or how mortals comfort themselves. Her clergy is dominated by women, especially in areas where there are strict gender roles or tension between genders, but the goddess has no special regard for her female followers, and men who feel powerless flock to her faith as well. Members of third, flexible, and nonbinary genders are also common in Mahathallah's faith.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Worshippers of Mahathallah don't build temples. Their scattered congregations collect around the dwellings and teachings of a single elder. The homes of such women are often ancient, sulfurous caves marked by ominous rock formations—though mossy huts and dark yurts aren't uncommon. The interiors are cluttered with ritual tools for spiritual communion and the conflicting reeks of toxic herbs and natural gases abound. Although minor rituals and private fortune-tellings might transpire in such places, the most devout followers believe the goddess's temple lies within their own minds—and only the worthy are granted the key.

In this case, the key Mahathallah's followers speak of is a spiritual state of being, but also a closely guarded drug called adyton (see the sidebar on page 75). Only Mahathallah's most devoted worshipers know the process of its creation, but the result is a fine, magical violet powder. By dusting their eyes, users immediately fall into a trancelike state while their consciousness

enters an immersive mindscape (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 234). This mindscape, known as the Adyton, is a vast, labyrinthine temple that floats in a balmy, sunless expanse. Here, Mahathallah's worshipers from across the planes trade mysteries and raise praises to the demigoddess. Various scholarly devils (particularly bone and cabal devils), undead, and sahkils make pilgrimages to the Adyton, sharing and bartering secrets. The mindscape is nearly infinite—every shadowy arcade and veiled shrine seems to connect to still other curving corridors. Those visiting the Adyton never feel hungry or thirsty and time passes more rapidly. The Adyton is a permanent mindscape controlled by Mahathallah herself, and changes at her whim.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

In Mahathallah's faith, the demigoddess's servants are sworn only to their deity and themselves. They consider uniting congregations, identifying and rooting out heresy, spreading dogma, raising monuments, and repeating rote ceremonies to be frivolities that waste time in the already fleeting moment of mortal existence. For a true servant of Mahathallah, life is entirely about earning a place alongside the demigoddess and her grandest disciples in death, where they together can share the secrets of reality—and perhaps change its course. They are a tight-lipped lot, saying little and allowing outsiders to assume much. Many live in squalor, indulging in hallucinations and psychic journeys, and often gaining reputations as inscrutable seers. Most hate the blind squabbling and meaningless pursuits of so-called civilizations. Rather than seeking to ruin nations and cities, those followers of Mahathallah who endure the presence of common folk trade on what they have learned, cultivating favors among the powerful and turning addicts into their slaves. None willingly share all of their secrets, except with their daughters and those they adopt as such.

Mahathallah embraces most worshipers, provided they prove their devotion to her, to exploring the secrets of the planes, and to keeping the secrets of her cult. This attracts many selfish magic-users, especially those who seek to trade on secrets and half-truths as routes to power. Many reclusive, neutral seers also drift into Mahathallah's fold, avoiding the darker mysteries and more wicked members of her flock. Bitter souls also join the faith, vainly believing Mahathallah speaks truth to them even as she reveals all else to be a lie.

Most of Mahathallah's priests sleep during the day—avoiding the hottest hours or recovering from late-night rites. In the evening, they tend their gardens, collect plants best harvested under the dying sun, and prepare their homes for visitors. Soon after dusk, many accept supplicants, perform fortune-tellings for money, or otherwise instruct those who look to them for counsel. They perform their magic at midnight or otherwise

seek communion with the demigoddess, be it through meditation, drugs, or the pursuit of other altered states. The worthiest of Mahathallah's followers live almost a second life in the Adyton, studying or teaching amid those from distant lands or worlds.

## HOLIDAYS

Mahathallah's holidays are largely tied into rare cosmic conjunctions and abnormalities. Her faith celebrates leap day, the extra day at the end of Calistril that only occurs every 8 years. They call this rare occasion Fateless Day, marking it as a time when fate loosens its bonds, promises don't stand, and the River of Souls ceases to flow. Mahathallah's worshipers claim that a "back door" to death opens on this day, and that the dead who know what to look for can slip past Pharamasma without being judged. Many sacrifices to Mahathallah and suicides among her followers take place on this day. The next Fateless Day occurs in 4720 AR.

## APHORISMS

Mahathallah's believers trade in veiled wisdom and subjective truths. The maxims common among her followers share similar qualities.

**We Are as You See Us:** Many of Mahathallah's followers appear ragged and weather-beaten, with clothing to match. To most, they look like hermits or outcasts, and are frequently dismissed as such. However, the learned and their fellow devotees recognize mystical reagents they carry, their wrinkles of experience, and the stains of oracular drugs on their eyes. So the faithful summarize this duality in this saying, and offer it to outsiders as a bit of wisdom that most mistake for a greeting.

## HOLY TEXT

Mahathallah has no universal holy text, but her followers share a great deal of wisdom in the libraries of the Adyton, passing along discoveries and researching lost secrets. Many of Mahathallah's followers keep records of their studies in journals widely referred to as "mysteries."

**The Mysteries of Salaur:** Widely copied and traded among Mahathallah's Qadiran followers, this encyclopedic tome focuses on the cultivation of hallucinogenic plants, particularly bloody methods of haruspicy, interpretations of dreams, and predictions of cosmic alignments. Any character who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) check realizes that several of the purported facts are entirely fictional. A successful DC 25 Wisdom check, however, reveals numerous metaphor-coded prayers and rites to Mahathallah hidden among the fictions, including the process of preparing adyton. Salaur herself, a Keleshite mystic born in 1500 AR, is said to have found a way to preserve her body in a state of near death so her mind can eternally explore the halls of the Adyton.

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## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

As one of the Whore Queens—or Angels of Vengeance or Queens of Light as these infernal demigoddesses are often known by their worshipers—Mahathallah has close ties to Ardad Lili, Doloras, and Eiseth. Of those in the group, however, she and Doloras compete to be most aloof. Much like Mahathallah, Doloras values wisdom over petty mortal distractions. The two have a dispassionate and distant, but mutually beneficial, relationship of trading secrets—typically exchanging Mahathallah's mysteries of nature and the cosmos for Doloras's innovations of science and suffering. Action- and emotion-driven Eiseth typically has little tolerance for Mahathallah's patience and slow revenges. All four distrust the others and regard them as competitors, though they often ally with one another against other

prominent devils, albeit reluctantly. Mahathallah often counsels Doloras, the group's de facto leader, lending her memories of ancient lore and deadly prophecies alongside Ardad Lili's appeals for romance and revenge. In all of these cases, the followers of Mahathallah consider those who worship the other Whore Queens as allies in faith, and deal with them fairly—so long as these other servants respect their insight.

Among the other rulers of Hell, Mahathallah owes much to Asmodeus. Whatever the Prince of Lies promised the fallen psychopomp to bring her into Hell's fold, her loyalty remains strong even after millennia of horrors. Some in Hell claim that the Dowager of Illusions would have met her fate long ago if not for Asmodeus's protection. Mahathallah also has close ties to Barbatos and Geryon, who share her interest in the darkest secrets of the multiverse. She and Barbatos have a strange sort of relationship, as they share prophecies and predictions of the future with one another. While she grounds her predictions in ageless planar insights and potent divinations, Mahathallah has yet to divine the source of the Bearded Lord's foresight.

Mahathallah also has ties among sahkils (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5212), forged during an eon of living among them. Her relationships vary; the sahkil tormentor Eil the Cancer Note admits to owing her countless favors, while Beiltod Goremouth holds an ancient grudge against her. A mysterious figure among sahkils, Agra the Ridwife, also grudgingly acknowledges Mahathallah as her mother.

The churches of Desna and the empyreal lords Andoletta and Immonhiel go out of their way to stymie Mahathallah's worshipers, viewing her faithful as hoarders of truth and corruptors of nature's secrets. As with most things, Pharasma appears to not care about for Mahathallah's rebellion, and neither she nor her church hold any special concern for the demigoddess's followers.

## NEW SPELL

Clerics of Mahathallah can prepare *ghost sound* and *prestidigitation* as orisons, *disguise self* as a 1st-level spell, *minor image* as a 2nd-level spell, and *major image* as a 3rd-level spell. Her priests have access to the following spell.

### CREATE DRUG

**School** conjuration (creation); **Level** cleric 4, druid 3

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S

**Range** 0 ft.

**Effect** 1 dose of a drug/3 levels

**Duration** 1 minute

**Saving Throw** none (see below); **Spell Resistance** no

The caster conjures into being one of the following drugs: aether, flayleaf, opium, pesh, scour, shiver, or zerk. The drug must be used within 1 minute of being conjured or

it dissolves into worthless dust—though the effects of the drug may last far longer. Drugs created by this spell cannot be sold, but they can be given to other creatures. A creature taking the drug typically must be either willing or helpless, though some drugs might be inhaled, applied to injuries, or slipped into food if the caster acts swiftly—see each drug’s description. The DC to resist a drug created by this spell is based on the creator’s caster level, not the DC listed in the common versions of the drug. For more information, see *Drugs and Addiction* on page 236 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

As a special use of this spell, a worshiper of Mahathallah can create the drug adyton (see sidebar). A Mahathallah worshiper can create only adyton once per week, regardless of her level or how many times she casts this spell. The spell otherwise functions—and creates as many doses—as normal.

## OBEDIENCE

The following describes the ritual a worshiper of Mahathallah must perform to take full advantage of the Deific Obedience feat, as well as the boons for the evangelist, exalted, and sentinel prestige classes found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*.

### OBEDIENCE (MAHATHALLAH)

Spend an hour in deep meditation, reflecting on the nature of the cosmos and your exceptional place above all others in the multiversal scheme—preferably while under the effects of a perception-altering drug. The DC of all illusion spells you cast increases by +2 and you gain a +2 profane bonus on saving throws to resist mind-affecting effects.

#### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Voice from the Mist (Sp)** *ventriloquism* 3/day, *hypnotic pattern* 2/day, or *major image* 1/day
- 2: Persistent Illusions (Su)** Whenever you cast an illusion spell with a duration of concentration (plus any number of rounds), add half your level to the duration.
- 3: Indirect Dose (Su)** You can apply drugs of the injury type to a weapon as if they were poison. Additionally, you can’t accidentally expose yourself to a poison or a drug when applying it to a weapon—though you are still exposed if you roll a 1 when attacking with a poisoned weapon.

#### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Mists of the Mind (Sp)** *silent image* 3/day, *invisibility* 2/day, or *create drug* (see above) 1/day
- 2: Breathe in the Cosmos (Su)** Upon ingesting a drug—including those conjured by the *create drug* spell—you heal an amount of damage determined by the severity of that drug’s base addictiveness: 1d6 for minor, 2d6 for moderated, 3d6 for major. Additionally, when taking the drug adyton, you automatically succeed at the Will save.
- 3: Breathe Out Death (Su)** You know the secrets of controlling the flow of blood and toxins in your body. You gain a +4 saving throw against poison and can no longer become addicted to drugs. Additionally,

## CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Mahathallah’s priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

### Summon Monster III

Forlarren (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 125)

### Summon Monster V

Achaierai (*Bestiary* 2 7)

### Summon Monster VIII

Cabal devil (Uniila; *Pathfinder Adventure Path #28: The Infernal Syndrome* 86)

## NEW DRUG: ADYTON

The drug adyton is central to Mahathallah’s worship and the spreading of her mysteries. It can only be purchased from worshipers of Mahathallah, and typically, only by servants of the goddess.

<b>ADYTON</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 2,000 GP
<b>TYPE</b> contact	<b>ADDICTION</b> major	<b>FORTITUDE</b> DC 20

**Effects** variable; affected creatures that succeed at an additional DC 20 Will saving throw have their consciousnesses transported into the mindscape called the Adyton, where they can linger for as long as they like and return as a full-round action whenever they so please. Those that fail this secondary saving throw sleep fitfully for 2d4 hours and wake remembering snippets of surreal dreams.

**Damage** 1d4 Str damage

you gain a +4 bonus on rolls to become stable when reduced to negative hit points. Finally, your life span is supernaturally lengthened, with each aging step (middle age, old, venerable) being postponed by a number of years equal to double your Wisdom score.

#### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Dervish in the Mist (Sp)** *disguise self* 3/day, *blur* 2/day, or *displacement* 1/day
- 2: Inescapable Fate (Su)** When you wear armor not made of metal, its maximum Dexterity bonus increases by 2. This applies to armors normally made out of metal, but crafted from different materials like bone or obsidian (see *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*). Additionally, the DC for entangled creatures to escape a net you wield increases by 1 for every 4 Hit Dice you possess.
- 3: Cut to the Truth (Su)** Whenever you attack a target and have to roll a percent mischance as a result of effects such as concealment, *blur*, or similar effects, reduce that percent miss chance by 10%. Additionally, when taking the drug adyton, you automatically succeed at the Will save.

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# TO STEAL FROM THIEVES

## Pathfinder's Journal: Monsters Among Us 3 of 6

The sun rose over Corentyn's walls, cresting like a great, burning eye, and set the city ablaze. In its bright shadow, we walked with our heads held high. The city's cobblestone streets sparkled like gems beneath our feet, and people parted before us.

I followed behind Drayven, attempting to mimic his imposing gait. Though no taller than I and built just as slight, he was a wolf among sheep. The people seemed to sense it and moved instinctively from our path. I did not yet know if I, too, was a wolf, or if I was the shepherd.

This early in the morning, the marketplace was aflutter with merchants setting up their stalls and assistants hauling wares. Several men worked to erect a platform for the daily slave auction, while the traders corralled their merchandise into pens better suited for pigs. I spared them only a glance, but caught the gaze of a girl no older than ten. Her eyes were not pleading or frightened, as I'd expected, but vacant. She looked through me into an unknown and unknowable future.

I shivered despite the warmth of the sun beating against my back.

Drayven's hand closed over my arm, and I realized I'd stopped to stare.

"We're not here to browse, Lady Maharai," he said.

I nodded and turned to face him. His long hair shimmered around him like black glass. Though it was becoming easier to look at him, I found myself focusing on the scar bisecting his face rather than his winter-blue eyes.

"Come," he said, slipping his arm through mine as if he were a gentleman and I some noble lady. "Your merchant should be here, yes?"

"Her name is Sanha."

"And what does she trade in?" he asked.

In the hours since we'd escaped the Thin Wisps, I had told Drayven little about my purpose in Corentyn. I had bought a room in an inn, where I was able to rest and wash the blood from my hands and clothes. While I slept and prayed for Nethys to guide me, Drayven stood guard outside my door. I felt his presence as keenly as if he'd been hovering over my bed, watching me as I slumbered. And though he had yet to reveal why he was helping me, I liked to think my pleas were heard and my god had sent him to aid me in saving my son.

This thought helped to keep my nightmares at bay.

"She sells nautical charts," I said. "Maps and the like."

"This way then." His expression gave away nothing, and he led me through the throng.

The rows of stalls seemed to appear around us, a maze of goods from across the Inner Sea. Sacks of grain and barrels overflowing with fish, freshly baked bread and sweet rolls shining with sugary glaze. Bolts of colorful silk teetered in stacks atop one merchant's table, while another hawked genuine Taldan wigs. We passed stalls stuffed with herbs that stung my eyes and one with an elderly man who sat on the ground, a bag of bones dumped in front of him.

"Tell your fortune," he said to every passerby. When Drayven and I neared him, he scooped up his bones and looked away.



Drayven ignored it all. He marched with a single-mindedness that comforted me. It was something we shared, something about him I could understand.

Finally, we stopped at a stall where a tapestry of the star-studded sky hung in the backdrop. Rolled parchments protruded from crates labeled in Varisian script with the names of nations. I could smell the iron and tannin of the ink, the heady blend of vellum and wood-pulp paper.

A woman stood protectively behind a table, haggling with a young man over the map of Nex sprawled out between them. She looked my age, with fine lines around her amber eyes and short-cropped hair that was turning from blond to silvery white. Tattoos decorated her olive skin from wrist to neck and disappeared under a simple, belted dress.

The woman saw us from the corner of her eye and frowned. Her negotiations with the man ended rather quickly, with her getting the better end of the deal from what I could gather. As the man left her stall, she turned to us with forced politeness.

"How may I help you today?" she asked.

I replied in her native tongue. Varisian was better suited to trade and, I hoped, Drayven might not speak it.

"Are you Sanha?" I asked.

Her brow furrowed, but she nodded. "I am."

"I am the healer, Maharai. My apprentice has exchanged letters with you."

She glanced at Drayven and crossed her arms as though chilled. "And where is she?"

I hesitated, and her troubled expression deepened. Following my instructions, Liset had arranged this transaction with subtlety. My name had not been mentioned to avoid attracting the attention of my husband and the Thin Wisps. Now, those precautions seemed to be causing me more harm than good.

"Do you have the map?" I asked.

"I think I'll wait for your apprentice, if it's all the same," she said.

Drayven stirred by my side, his body tense and coiled like a snake. He released my arm and stepped toward Sanha.

"It's not," he said in perfect Varisian. He withdrew the rolled parchment from under his breastplate. The wax seal of House Thrune seeming darker, bloodier, in the daylight. "We'll take the lady's map and be about our business."

Sanha sighed. Her shoulders slumped as though defeated, and a sheen of sweat broke out across her brow.

"Of course, sir," she said, moving toward the back of the stall.

She was clever, I will afford her that, for when I turned to whisper thanks to Drayven for handling the situation without bloodshed, Sanha lifted the starry tapestry and ran.

My escort, however, was not so easily fooled. Already Drayven was chasing after her. Fearing he might kill her



*LISET ARRANGED FOR SANHA TO HAND OVER THE MAP I NEEDED.*

*I DON'T KNOW WHAT LISET OFFERED HER FOR IT, BUT SANHA SEEMED NERVOUS FROM THE START.*

as quickly as he had the last person who interfered with us, I followed as best I could.

For years I have wandered this world in search of a suppressed fragment of the *Poleiheira* that could cure my son. I have walked over mountains, ventured into caverns and catacombs from which I thought I might never escape, and once, before Liset joined me on my mission, I hid for three days in the hollow of a tree trunk while goblins overran the forest around me. I am not, by nature, an athletic person, but my feet are calloused, and my legs still sturdy despite the steady ache of my bones. Though I was familiar with the limits of flesh and muscle and had witnessed much in my travels, I had seen few who could match Drayven's speed.

Sanha, however, was a challenge.

I caught the bob of her blond head weaving through the crowd. Drayven gained on her, bowling over shoppers who were too unobservant or slow to scuttle from his path. He cut through the crowd like a blade, while Sanha slipped as smoothly as water between their busy bodies. By the time I fought my way through, I saw only the shadow of Drayven disappearing into an alley.

The next thing I knew, a screeching noise echoed from the alley. I turned in time to see Drayven struggling as a swarm of bats swirled around him. They screamed and chirped and beat their wings against him. Their piercing cries ricocheted against the stone walls, filling the alley with a cacophony of screeches.

I gaped at Drayven, unsure how I might help him. He appeared unharmed, but Sanha was a different story. She lay on her stomach farther down the way, crawling as a

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smear of blood trailed behind her. The hilt of a dagger stuck from her back, and by its location, I imagined it had nicked her spine.

"Don't let her die," he shouted, making my decision for me.

I hurried past him. Sanha clawed at the cobblestones, every motion wiggling the dagger deeper into her back.

"Stop," I said. "You're bleeding out."

She muttered something I could not discern amid the noise. Then she stilled, folding her arms below her head like a pillow. She trembled, and I thought she might be going into shock, but I realized she was laughing.

I glanced behind us as the bats faded from existence. Drayven glowered. He held a dagger in each hand, his knuckles white as he marched toward us.

"You have no idea, do you?" Sanha whispered.

Ignoring her, I gently touched her leg. "Do you feel that?"

"You should run," she said.

I frowned at her and inspected the wound. Only the handle of the dagger was visible, the crossguards curving into wicked spikes. I placed my left hand on her shoulder, and carefully wrapped my right around the grip.

"Try not to move," I said and pulled the blade from her flesh.

Sanha whimpered. As quickly as I could, I cast a healing spell. My palm warmed with magic, and her skin began to close. It seemed to struggle, the edges of the wound reaching for each other but failing to take hold. Though the bleeding slowed, dark blood seeped down her back.

I whispered the spell again, thinking it had not been enough. Magic flowed through me, but the gash remained. Though I smelled no bile, there was a scent on the edge of my senses, rotten and sweet enough to be

cloying. I longed to slip my birdlike mask over my head, to at least shield my nose from this memory.

"What have you done?" I looked up as Drayven loomed over us. He seemed larger than before, the shadows gathering around him.

"The map," he said. "Give it to me."

Sanha laughed without humor and closed her eyes. She looked as though she might fall asleep, there in the dirty alley, her blood pooling around her and my hand pressed uselessly on her soft skin.

"I would rather die than help House Thrune," she said.

"You will not die," I said and narrowed my eyes at Drayven. "Tell her."

He crouched, his lithe body belying his strength. But I felt it, an old, chilling power buried inside of him.

"She is right," he said. "It will be much worse than death."

He snatched the dagger from my hand, Sanha's blood still dripping from the tip of the blade. With disturbing tenderness, he traced the edge down her bare arm. A line of pink appeared in its path, and the cloying stench worsened.

"You will weaken," he continued. "Your strength will wane until your bones break under the weight of your own flesh. Your ribs will pierce your lungs, and you will struggle for the slightest breath. Don't worry though, Lady Maharai is a gifted healer. She will keep you alive as long as it takes."

He met my eyes, and I shuddered.

I believe there are moments in life where the gods present us with choices that will forever alter our futures. Not all of these times will we choose wisely. These moments are what beget our regrets. Some memories, we can easily forget from one minute to the next, shuffled to the darkest recesses of our minds. But others will haunt us when we are alone, in the quiet stillness of night, when no one can protect us from ourselves.

This was one moment I would forever grieve.

"Please, Sanha," I said. "My son is dying. This map will save him. I beg you."

"We are all dying," she said. "Not even House Thrune can escape its end."

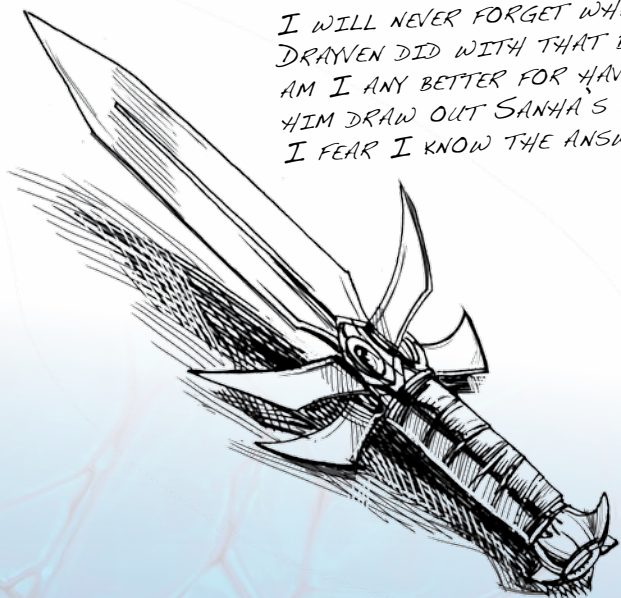
Her skin grew cold under my touch, her muscles slackening as Drayven had promised. I felt her shiver and watched as her wound reopened, blossoming like a flower.

"So be it," Drayven said.

I will not go into the details of the moments that followed, for they are among my worst. I healed her again, and again, until my own body ached and my heart emptied.

Sanha remained silent, save for her screams. When a member of Corentyn's guard came to see about the commotion, Drayven merely showed him the royal seal, and the soldier retreated to the mouth of the alley to keep us from being interrupted.

*I WILL NEVER FORGET WHAT  
DRAYVEN DID WITH THAT BLADE. BUT  
AM I ANY BETTER FOR HAVING LET  
HIM DRAW OUT SANHA'S AGONY?  
I FEAR I KNOW THE ANSWER.*





In the end, she confessed the map was folded in her boot. But by then, I wasn't sure if I cared. I struggled to summon Khem's face in my mind's eye. What would he think of me? Could he hate me more than he already did? I contented myself with the fact that he need never know what it took to cure him, only that he was cured.

"Leave her," Drayven said as he tucked the map into his own boot. Streaks of Sanha's blood stood out in stark contrast against his pale face.

"You agreed she would not die." I stared down at my own hands. My breathing was ragged, the constant use of magic causing my shoulders to sag.

"I did?" He smiled at me.

"You never lie," I reminded him of his earlier words to Razizo.

His smile widened, and he inclined his head. "As you say. Be about it then, great healer."

I sighed in relief and straightened my spine. The words of power slipped over my tongue, soothing my battered conscience. The sickly sweet scent of poison evaporated from the air, and my next spell closed all of Sanha's cuts in a cleansing rush. She sobbed softly into her arms, and I said nothing to her as I stood.

Some wounds were too deep for my magic to mend.

"What does it say?" Drayven peered over my shoulder at the map unfurled on the table in front of me. I was thankful he could not read the ancient Jistka characters.

"The Anferita Wood?" he asked, pointing to the large patch of woods bordered on either side by coastlines that would be familiar to anyone from the Corentyn region of Cheliax.

I nodded.

"We leave at dawn, then," he said.

"After we rescue Liset," I reminded him.

He smiled at me, an expression I was growing to recognize as amusement at something I'd said or done. It made him more menacing, the scar across his face pulling at his eyes. He appeared more a monster and less a man. I wondered what I looked like to him, if my bloodstained robes would ever resemble that of a healer's again. I was, I realized, no better than the caretaker, whose life I'd taken what now seemed so long ago.

"Yes, your apprentice. How could I forget?" He turned abruptly toward the door.

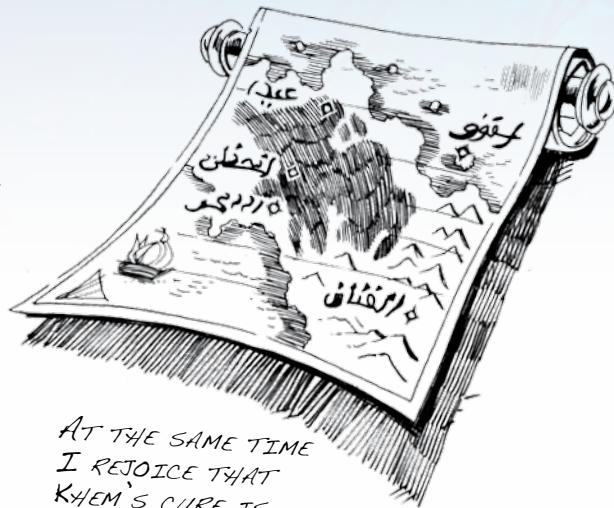
My room at the inn was lit by the sunset pouring in from a singular window. It caught his coal-black hair, creating an orange glow like the dying embers of a fire. His image seemed to waver slightly, and I rubbed my eyes.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"You're tired. I'll return with your apprentice in the morning."

I gathered my map and stood. If Drayven went to the Thin Wisps alone, I worried what he might do. How

*WHEN I THINK OF THE MEANS DRAYVEN EMPLOYED TO GET THE MAP, I SHUDDER DEEP IN MY SOUL.*



*AT THE SAME TIME I REJOICE THAT KHEM'S CURE IS NOW SO NEAR.*

many lives would he casually take to rescue Liset? Would my husband end up among the dead?

"I will accompany you," I said.

He turned to me, that smile stretching his lips. "Will you?"

"No one needs to die tonight."

"Will you stop me, Lady Maharai?" He closed the distance between us in two strides.

I could smell the lingering sweetness of his poisons clogging my senses. My stomach tightened, and I swallowed the urge to retch.

"If it means your quest is over, if your son will die, will you stop me from doing what is necessary?" he asked.

I closed my eyes, not wanting to see his face, knowing he was right. My son's life was all that mattered now.

"There it is again," he said and lowered his voice to a whisper. "Determination."

"Why are you helping me?"

He tilted his head as though confused at my question. "Isn't it obvious? I was sent to aid you. More to the point, I believe in you."

My breath left me in a rush. Something inside of me loosened, and I felt tears prick at my eyes. My god, the All-Seeing Nethys, had sent this man—mad though he may be—because my purpose was divine. The prayers I'd said each morning had been answered.

Hope renewed me.

With a new lightness to my step, we set out to rescue Liset.

I had thought Drayven might know of a hidden entrance, that we would sneak into the thieves' lair and

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*THIS THIN  
WISPS WOMAN  
SEEMED TO  
KNOW MY  
HUSBAND WELL.*

*PERHAPS SHE FILLED A ROLE IN HIS  
LIFE THAT I NEVER COULD. IF SO,  
SHE HAS MY GRATITUDE.*

scurry away with my apprentice under the cloak of night. So when he led me to the door of their guildhouse and knocked, my surprise must have shown all too plainly.

Drayven merely grinned. "All doors are open to House Thruene."

A lean halfling woman answered, and he presented her with his official parchment.

"You have unlawfully detained a chosen one of Nethys," he said.

The woman scowled. "What does House Thruene care of the matter?"

With the back of his freehand, Drayven slapped her. The ruby ring on his finger sliced her cheekbone, and she glared up at him as blood dripped to her chin. On instinct I reached to heal her, but he grabbed my hand.

"Yours is not to question," he said. "Take us to the prisoner."

She nodded and led us into the guildhouse.

We passed dozens of Thin Wisps—a mix of halflings and humans—playing cards or eating their evening meals. Some looked up, and others half-rose, but Drayven had only to wave his parchment. The thieves grumbled or cursed under their breaths. One fellow crossed himself with the five-pointed star of Asmodeus, but no one interfered.

A stairwell brought us into the cells below the guild, if they could be called such. My escape with Drayven happened so quickly, I did not notice that the dungeon I'd thought I had been in was little more than bedrooms that latched from the outside. There were only a handful,

and I imagined that thieves were not much for taking prisoners. Liset and I had been special.

"Open it," Drayven said as we stopped outside one such door.

Frowning, the woman slid aside the bolt and held the door open for us.

"Get her," Drayven told me. "I'll wait here."

Liset was standing at the foot of a the straw pallet. A tray of food lay half-eaten at her feet, a book in one hand as though she'd been reading. Her left eye was swollen, the skin around it tinted blue, but otherwise, she was unharmed.

"Maharai," she said when she saw me.

I rushed into her arms, hugging her tight enough to bruise. Until that moment, I had not realized how deeply I missed her, how much I needed her. She had been my apprentice for only a handful of years, but she was more than that. She was my friend, my daughter if not by blood, then by divine purpose.

"What happened?" I asked, drawing back and tracing her blackened eye with my fingertips. The spell came naturally, the skin softening until it was rich and dark and lovely once more.

"My first escape attempt," she said and chuckled. "Thank you."

"Come, we are leaving." I took her hand and led her to the door.

She hesitated when she saw Drayven, his skin still streaked with the merchant's blood.

"My things," she said.

Drayven motioned to halfling. "Get them."

The woman nodded and left us.

"This is our rescuer," I said, introducing Drayven.

He bowed as though we stood in a hall of nobles rather than a den of thieves.

"At your service, lady," he said.

To Liset I whispered, "He was *sent*."

She looked at me askance, but I knew she understood. The messengers of our god came in many forms, not all of them beautiful to behold. I realized, then, that Drayven bore a likeness to our god, for he was both beautiful and scarred and altogether powerful in his own right.

Before Liset could respond, the woman returned carrying my apprentice's rapier and traveling bag. Behind her followed a contingent of Thin Wisps, my husband at the lead.

"Where are you going?" Razizo asked. His gaze strayed to Drayven for an instant before settling on me. His contempt seemed to have weight, pressing against me until I struggled for breath.

Drayven clenched the hilt of a dagger at his belt, but I rested my hand on his elbow to stay him.

"To save our son," I said. "As you should be doing."

Razizo blinked as if I'd struck him a blow. "What happened to you?"

I stepped toward them and grabbed Liset's belongings from the woman's hands. Handing them to my apprentice I said, "I do what must be done. For Khem. For my god."

My husband choked back a laugh. "This has always been about you, Maharai."

The woman who had escorted us turned to Razizo. "You've dragged us into your personal affairs. Kantha will not be pleased."

Kantha Elvignon, the leader of the Thin Wisps, was notorious in Corentyn, and I wondered what this might mean for my husband. Kantha was not known for her forgiveness. Would he, too, be another corpse in my wake?

"Asmodeus take Kantha," Razizo spat.

The thieves at his back paled, and I caught Drayven's mischievous grin from the corner of my eye. Tension filled the air. The woman stepped closer to my husband, her hand falling to the sword at her side.

"You want me to tell her that, too?" she asked.

Before I could intervene, Razizo shoved her. The woman's back hit the wall, and the air left her lungs in a whoosh. She drew her sword and held it at the ready. The other Thin Wisps drew as well, and I could picture the battle before it started. My husband was a skilled swordsman, almost as practiced as Liset. But there were too many, and none would match Drayven for power and speed. If a fight broke out, Razizo would die. I imagined him bleeding out before me and wondered if I had enough magic left to save him, to save any of them. To save myself.

I stepped forward, my hands gesturing in a sign of supplication, my lips forming the words. I touched the symbol of Nethys embroidered on my robes, a mask with one side light, the other dark, and prayed.

Their shoulders slumped first; their blades followed. Only Drayven seemed unaffected. He bounced on the balls of his feet, eager for a fight.

It was Liset who came to my aid, as I should have anticipated.

"Come with us," she said to Razizo.

He glanced at her, his brow furrowed.

"Come with us," she repeated. "For your son."

I noted her voice seemed to linger at that last, as if there was more she wished to say. My husband studied her for a long moment, reading something in her face I could not see.

"You should go," the Thin Wisps woman said, her blade now pointed at his feet. "You won't be welcome here any longer."

He sighed. Something inside of him seemed to break, some final bit of hope that had gotten him through all those years without me. How many nights had he rocked our son to sleep when he was little? Did he pray I would return with a cure, or that I would return at all? He had joined the Thin Wisps out of necessity, this I knew, to feed a sick son and pay the temples for his care. Eventually, he had risen within their ranks and must have gained a sense of family that I had never given him.

Now, I had taken that from him, too.

Razizo sheathed his sword. He took a final look at his once-kin, and then stared at me.

"For you," he said.

Perhaps he expected the words to touch me, to cause me to wrap my arms around him and rekindle something we had buried long ago. Or maybe he believed they would prompt me to thank him for every sacrifice he had made in my absence.

But I felt only a sense of relief that no more blood would be spilled on my account.

"I want nothing from you," I told him, and I watched the last remnants of the man I'd once loved fade from his eyes.

Liset frowned at me and reached out for my husband as I should have. He took her hand limply, and I realized I had well and truly killed him, as surely as a blade in his back.

"Oh, this is grand," Drayven said at my side. The parchment protruded from under his breastplate, the seal of House Thrune winking at me. Then he slipped his arm through mine once more, this savior sent by my god, and led us from the thieves toward our destiny.

## THE POLEIHEIRA

*LONG HAVE I SEARCHED FOR THE CURE TO KHEM'S CURSE. I HAVE BECOME CONVINCED IT LIES IN A FRAGMENT OF THE POLEIHEIRA, THAT FAMED SERIES OF TEXTS OF THE ANCIENT JISTKA PENNED BY ARUSTUN DURING HIS LEGENDARY TRAVELS. THOUGH THE POLEIHEIRA WAS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE JISTKA IMPERIUM, A FEW SCHOLARS OF ESOTERIC LORE HAVE LONG SUSPECTED THE EXISTENCE OF A NUMBER OF REPPRESSED FOLIOS OF ARUSTUN'S WRITINGS. THESE ARE SAID TO CONTAIN ACCOUNTS OF POWERFUL AND DANGEROUS AZLANTI MAGIC UNCOVERED IN THE CAVE OF TIANDRA. WOULD THAT I HAD NEVER RUN ACROSS ONE OF THESE TEXTS IN MY YOUTH AND TRIGGERED THE CURSE THAT WITHERED MY SON. BUT NOW THE FRAGMENT THAT HOLDS THE CURE TO THAT CURSE LIES NEAR AT HAND. I CAN FEEL IT.*

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BESTIARY



## BESTIARY

**W**e heard that this town can be rough, but I didn't really expect to get attacked in broad daylight. I figured it'd be safe enough to take the alleyways as short cuts to avoid the crowded streets, but I was wrong. We came across a handful of shabby-looking characters slumped against a wall in a huddle. They smelled terrible and there were even roaches crawling on them. One of them stuck out its hand as we passed—looking for alms, I figured. However, as soon as Kieltra passed by, the vagrant snatched at her cloak and a strange clawed arm burst from the central mass of the stained robes. They suddenly leapt to their feet and unfurled their rags, and swarms of cockroaches flew from the folds."

—Bodo Tirebassi, adventurer

This volume of the Hell's Rebels Adventure Path takes adventurers outside Kintargo's walls, seeking help for their rebellion. This bestiary presents raccoon-headed agathions, bone-drinking monstrosities, predatory vagrants, and strange new proteans.

## OUTSIDE THE CITY OF SILVER

The random encounter tables presented here feature dangers the PCs can encounter while exploring the hinterlands outside of Kintargo. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 30% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend exploring the countryside, but they should have no more than two random encounters per day.

Since this adventure spans a range of levels, some random encounters might be too simple or too difficult for the PCs, depending on where they are in the course of the adventure. If the result rolled is outside the Challenge Rating range appropriate for the PCs, roll again on the table or choose a different encounter.

**Drake Parents (CR 7):** Perched atop a rocky cliff overlooking the coast, a small pocket in the rocks has been the temporary nesting site for a pair of mist drakes (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 79*). The nest is difficult to see at first—a successful DC 20 Perception check is needed to notice it. Both the mother and father look after a trio of eggs in a nest of shredded tree limbs, leaves, and grass. Protective of their yet-to-hatch brood, the pair attacks any creatures venturing too near that look like they might disturb the nest.

**Lost Giant (CR 7):** Hungry and lost, Thelda the hill giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 150*) has been wandering the Ravonell Coast for weeks. She was once part of a tribe of hill giants who were answering the call to join growing army of giants far away in the Mindspin Mountains, but her group was attacked by a bronze dragon and all but wiped out. She watched the dragon soar off to the west, and tracked it to Conqueror's Bay where she followed the coastline south in search for its lair to avenge her tribemates. She might be convinced to not attack the PCs if they offer her food or provide information about the dragon that killed her companions.

**Surprise Party (CR 8):** Every evening at sundown, a fevered round of singing and dancing fills the air. A few travelers have gathered around a crackling fire and are drinking from jugs of wine and spirits while snacking on a spread of food. However, the ringleader of this impromptu party isn't benign. The host is a maenad (*Bestiary 4 191*) who goes by the name Shulu, and if she notices the PCs passing by, she tries to lure them to the fire with promises of strong drink and entertaining songs. The maenad waits until the PCs are thoroughly intoxicated and have been lulled into complacency before she presents her true desire—ripping them limb from limb and bathing in their blood.

### RAVOLINEL COAST ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-6	1d4 crab swarms	6	<i>Bestiary 50</i>
7-11	1d8 sahuagin	6	<i>Bestiary 239</i>
12-18	1d6 weresharks	6	<i>Bestiary 4 190</i>
19-24	1d4 cecaelias	7	<i>Bestiary 3 49</i>
25-32	Drake Parents	7	See below
33-36	1d4 globsters	7	<i>Bestiary 3 131</i>
37-39	1d4 killer seahorses	7	<i>Bestiary 4 234</i>
40-43	1 oceanid	7	<i>Bestiary 4 208</i>
44-49	1 shark-eating crab	7	<i>Bestiary 3 60</i>
50-51	1 giant octopus	8	<i>Bestiary 219</i>
52-55	1d4 jellyfish swarms	8	<i>Bestiary 2 170</i>
56-61	1d4 saltwater merrows	8	<i>Bestiary 2 189</i>
62-65	1d4 sea drakes	8	<i>Bestiary 2 109</i>
66-68	1 stymphalidies	8	<i>Bestiary 3 257</i>
69-73	1 coral golem	9	<i>Bestiary 4 131</i>
74-79	1 dire shark	9	<i>Bestiary 247</i>
80-82	1 dragon turtle	9	<i>Bestiary 112</i>
83-84	1 giant snapping turtle	9	<i>Bestiary 2 273</i>
85-88	1 giant squid	9	<i>Bestiary 259</i>
89-94	1 sargassum fiend	9	<i>Bestiary 3 235</i>
95-100	1 nereid	10	<i>Bestiary 2 198</i>

### RAVOLINEL HINTERLANDS ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-7	1d4 bearded devils	7	<i>Bestiary 73</i>
8-12	1 bulette	7	<i>Bestiary 39</i>
13-15	1 dracolisk	7	<i>Bestiary 170</i>
16-19	1d4 flame drakes	7	<i>Bestiary 2 106</i>
20-25	1 huge earth elemental	7	<i>Bestiary 122</i>
26-30	1d4 leucrottas	7	<i>Bestiary 2 178</i>
31-34	Lost Giant	7	See below
35-39	1 spire drake	7	<i>Bestiary 4 81</i>
40-45	1d4 wraiths	7	<i>Bestiary 281</i>
46-50	1 erinyes	8	<i>Bestiary 75</i>
51-54	1 gorgon	8	<i>Bestiary 165</i>
55-59	1d12 ogres	8	<i>Bestiary 220</i>
60-63	1d6 ogre spiders	8	<i>Bestiary 3 254</i>
64-66	1d4 redcaps	8	<i>Bestiary 2 233</i>
67-71	Surprise Party	8	See below
72-78	1d4 will-o'-wisps	8	<i>Bestiary 277</i>
79-84	1d4 wyverns	8	<i>Bestiary 282</i>
85-88	1 aurumvorax	9	<i>Bestiary 2 35</i>
89-92	1 tick swarm	9	<i>Bestiary 2 265</i>
93-96	1 yrthak	9	<i>Bestiary 2 290</i>
97-100	1 peluda	10	<i>Bestiary 4 212</i>

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BESTIARY

## AGATHION, PROCYAL

Wide of chest and waist, this finely dressed man has a gray-muzzled raccoon's head and beady, darting eyes.

## PROCYAL

CR 8



XP 4,800

NG Medium outsider (agathion, extraplanar, good)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

## DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)

**hp** 95 (10d10+40)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6; +4 vs. poison

**Immune** electricity, petrification; **Resist** cold 10, sonic 10

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *short sword* +12/+7 (1d6+2/19–20) or  
2 claws +11 (1d4+1)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +13)

Constant—*Speak with animals*

At will—*calm emotions* (DC 15), *magic aura* (DC 14),  
*suggestion* (DC 16)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *dimension door* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *heroism*,  
*invisibility*, *shadow conjuration* (DC 17)

1/day—*blood biography*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 16), *dominate person* (DC 18),  
*spiritual ally*<sup>APG</sup>

## STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +11 (+15 dirty trick<sup>APG</sup>); **CMD** 23 (25 vs. dirty trick<sup>APG</sup>)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Greater Dirty Trick<sup>APG</sup>,  
Improved Dirty Trick<sup>APG</sup>, Spell Penetration

**Skills** Bluff +20, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +20, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +16, Perform (act) +16, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +15

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Halfling; *Speak with animals*, truespeech

**SQ** fabricated forgery, imitator

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban (Nirvana)

**Organization** solitary or party (3–4)

**Treasure** standard (+1 *short sword*, other treasure)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Fabricated Forgery (Su)** Procyal agathions are able to flawlessly forge signatures and legal documents even if they have never seen them before. They can use Bluff in place of Linguistics when forging the signature of or a document written by the creature whose form they are currently assuming.

**Imitator (Su)** Procyal agathions can use the change shape special quality as per the *alter self* spell, but they can assume only the forms of any specific individual they have met at least once. They are unable to assume any other form beyond their natural shape.

Procyals are mischievous agathions who take great pride and pleasure in acting just outside the boundaries of imperfect, mortal societies. Unlike many agathions, who are born from the souls of those who seek enlightenment through self-understanding, procyals are born from those who understand the balance of society and the individual.

Procyals view society and the individuals therein as entities in a symbiotic relationship. They believe that individuals can be truly happy or free only within a society when they have access to luxury, commerce, and choice, and that society basically exists as a structure centered on the freedom of the individuals within. It is critically important to procyals that all individuals realize that society isn't something greater than themselves, but that they are intrinsically part of it and vice versa. Procyals commonly say that "you are not *in* the city, you are a *part of* the city"—and this serves as a reminder to those they visit that every member of the community is important.

Procyals present a far more active force than most agathions, as they understand that neither societies nor people are static; rather, they believe that both are constantly growing and changing, and so must be willing to change to attain perfection. They move about the various planes constantly, humbling the prideful, praising the meek, striking down unfair laws, and building the structures that keep society in order. They happily see their work as never truly being complete, since healthy societies are constantly growing and changing. It is the goal of all procyals for this change to always be positive.

Procyals are exceptional shape changers, able to effortlessly take the form of humanoid creatures they have met during their travels. This change is rarely more than cosmetic, however, for procyals are not interested in impersonating the person's normal behavior. Instead, they do things geared toward the creature's ultimate good—or at least the ultimate good of that creature's community. When all is well, procyals sometimes take on particular individuals' appearances just to play good-natured pranks on them—though never harmful ones. Some favorites include shadowing that person through town to befuddle onlookers, making public appearances in multiple places at the same time, or asking "themselves" for directions, only to watch the mimicked creature's face twist in confusion.

Despite their ability to take on specific forms, procyals are unable to assume a humanoid form of their own invention. Instead, they choose from the forms available to them as appropriate for a given task. They may, for example, portray old crones to relay important messages or powerful mercenaries to deliver threats.

Procyals typically stand between 5 and 6 feet tall and weigh 180 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Most procyal agathions have short, reddish fur, and gray muzzles that suggest old age. Rarely, a procyal has black or white fur; such creatures are treated with great respect by their fellows. Like raccoons, procyals have sharp teeth and small claws that could potentially serve as weapons, but they prefer to fight with manufactured blades when possible, viewing unarmed combat as distasteful even if it is sometimes necessary.

They do not need to eat or drink, but they greatly enjoy such activities and always endeavor to ensure that food and drink are in abundant supply. Likewise, they enjoy dressing in the trappings of high society, wearing elaborate outfits and carrying only the finest tools. After all, they believe the availability of such luxuries is an indication society is working as it should—provided, of course, that these indulgences don't come at someone else's expense.

Although procyals resemble raccoons, they take great offense to the suggestion that they might resort to rooting through the trash to satisfy their hunger or might engage in other undignified pastimes. Though they may wear fancy clothes, procyals make a point not to try to flaunt their wealth, and earnestly attempt to ensure that others are able to satisfy their own needs. Procyals are more than willing to go without or donate their time and energy in order to ensure that others have enough.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Procyals are one of the only types of agathions that build entire cities in Nirvana, and they take great pains to ensure that their home settlements are suitably beautiful. Instead of imposing laws, they establish order through hundreds of maxims that discuss every aspect of daily life, from what clothing to wear to how to speak with strangers. Procyals don't follow every axiom at all times; instead, they use these proverbs as behavioral guides, and they expect visitors to do likewise. They record these maxims in large, bound tomes kept in the hearts of their cities, available for all to read.

Procyals are gregarious creatures who are always eager to meet new people while on their travels, whether they are in Nirvana or on the Material Plane. They prefer to travel frequently from one community to another, experiencing

each one fully and guiding it as needed before once again setting out toward the next settlements along their paths. Once they have experienced a community, they never forget about it or its needs, and they often return when they know their services will likely be needed. However, procyals rarely spend significant time in one place.

The exception is when procyals cross paths with obvious evil, whereupon they stop, often for years at a time, to establish and carry out complex and long-term plans to undermine it. They don't see evil as a force to be met head on and fought, but instead as something that needs to be weakened over time, so that good can naturally rise up in its place.

This is especially true when it comes to governing bodies, as procyals see some administrations as fundamentally better than others: democratic groups and wise councils are among their favorite forms of government, while dictatorships, monarchies, and military states must ultimately be replaced. In cases of particularly tyrannical rulers, they even go so far as to actively encourage or provide assistance to bands of revolutionaries or heroes who might usher in a fundamentally better government.

Procyals are hesitant to meet even a weaker foe in direct combat if they can avoid it.

Instead, they prefer to trick enemies into attacking another stronger opponent, especially if that will weaken both antagonists at the same time. When they must fight, they fight dirty, and they take any advantage they can. Procyals typically focus on damaging their opponents' faces as they fight; if they are forced into unarmed combat, they gouge eyes and tear off ears whenever they can.

On the Material Plane, procyals are rarely wholly trusted. Since procyals love to chasten the powerful and to play pranks on the high-and-mighty, few talented creatures are willing to enter into long-term alliances with them. Individuals in the lower classes are frequent exceptions. They tend to welcome procyals with open arms. For here among the poor and downtrodden, where society exists in its most imperfect state, nearly every action that a procyal takes has a positive and lasting effect.



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BESTIARY



## MORGODEA

Amid this hissing cloud of glistening cockroaches is a disheveled vagrant with wasplike stingers extending from its palms.

## MORGODEA

CR 4



XP 1,200

CE Medium fey

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

**Aura** cockroach cloud (5 ft.)

## DEFENSE

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

**hp** 33 (6d6+12)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

**Immune** mind-affecting effects

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** claw +8 (1d6 plus grab), 2 stings +7 (1d4 plus morgod jelly)

**Special Attacks** morgod jelly, sickening impulse (60ft, DC 15)

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 21, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3 (+7 to grapple); **CMD** 18

**Feats** Multiattack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (stings)

**Skills** Bluff +11, Disguise +15, Knowledge (local) +8,

Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +12; **Racial**

**Modifiers** +4 Disguise

**Languages** Aklo, Common

**SQ** cockroach empathy +8

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban

**Organization** solitary, pair, or infestation (3–6)

**Treasure** double

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Cockroach Cloud (Su)** As a swift action, a morgodea can open its layered hide and expel a brood of cockroaches into all adjacent squares. This cloud moves with the morgodea. Creatures other than morgodeas and cockroaches within the cloud at the beginning of their turns take 1d6 points of damage. Any creature damaged by the cockroach cloud must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be exposed to a dose of morgod jelly. Area-effect attacks that deal 10 or more points of damage to the morgodea destroy its cockroach cloud for 3 rounds, after which a new brood matures and the morgodea can unleash its cloud again. When a morgodea dies, its brood disperses.

**Cockroach Empathy (Ex)** This ability functions as a druid's wild empathy ability, save that it works only on cockroaches. A morgodea gains a racial bonus on this check equal to its Hit Dice (+6 for most morgodeas). Vermin are normally mindless, but this empathic communication imparts a modicum of implanted intelligence in them, allowing the morgodea to train cockroaches and giant cockroaches and use them as guardians (although it does not grant them skills or feats). Cockroaches and giant cockroaches never attack a morgodea unless magically compelled to do so.

**Morgod Jelly (Ex)** Morgodeas produce a pale, clear jelly from their bodies that acts as a powerful and addictive hallucinogenic (see the sidebar on page 87). Creatures unwillingly exposed to morgod jelly can resist its effects with a successful DC 15 Fortitude save. The save DC for a morgodea's jelly is Charisma-based.

**Sickening Impulse (Su)** A morgodea can stir the morgod jelly in an addict's system. As a standard action, it can place an impulse into the mind of a single creature suffering from morgod jelly addiction within 60 feet. This functions as per the *command* spell, but the morgodea and its target do not need to hear or understand one another. Alternatively, the morgodea can inspire visions of insects crawling under the target's skin, sickening the target for 1d6 rounds. A successful DC 15 Will save negates either effect. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.





Morgodeas are sinister syntheses of fey and vermin who lurk in the filthy underworlds of cities. Compelled to corrupt and debase, these disgusting creatures deal in a pleasure that can plunge their victims into the depths of addiction and madness. Morgodeas appear as human or elven vagrants covered in dirty rags. These “rags” are actually layered flaps of hide the morgodea can open to reveal a brood of cockroaches crawling amid its waxy, yellow flesh. Large pores in its body constantly weep a pale, thick jelly that sustains its nest of vermin and inspires euphoric visions in humanoid.

In combat, a morgodea’s cockroach brood erupts into a flesh-eating cloud to defend their master. The fey itself can extend a hidden chitinous pincer from its abdomen, and needlelike stings from the palm of each hand. It uses its massive claw to restrain victims while it injects them with its addictive venom again and again. A victim caught in this way is overwhelmed by the morgodea’s druglike poison, and the prey’s consequent hallucinations render its attacker indistinguishable in the teeming mass of hissing, gel-smearing insects, even as the morgodea holds it in place. A morgodea stands 5 to 6 feet tall and weighs around 200 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Morgodeas originated in the First World, where they once cleaned the filth and refuse from the Eldests’ glittering cities. Some ancestral crime corrupted their entire bloodline, and saw their people banished to the Material Plane, where their bodies twisted and warped to mirror their foul, covetous hearts. They can eat any sort of rotting organic matter, but prefer the flesh of humanoid creatures rendered comatose by their addictive jelly. These awful monsters keep such victims alive as long as possible, carefully consuming only those parts of their victims’ bodies that will not necessarily kill the prey. The addict’s brain is the foremost delicacy, and saved for a final feast.

Morgodeas reproduce by inserting a single egg into a comatose addict. Within days, the egg develops into a larva, which burrows its way into the brain and consumes it, and then begins to merge with the brainless body. Throughout this time, the parent keeps its young hidden away in a foul place, while the body emits a pheromone to attract cockroaches from the surrounding area to inhabit the corpse—laying eggs and multiplying by the hundreds—while feeding from the jelly produced by the growing larva. After 4 weeks, the body reawakens as an adult morgodea, already host to a large swarm of the insects and covered in porous, waxy flesh that weeps its own supply of morgod jelly.

Despite this transmutation, the victim’s face remains recognizable, resulting in mistaken sightings of missing people. Occasionally, individuals searching for down-and-out friends and family members instead find themselves the monsters’ latest victims.

## MORGOD JELLY

Morgod jelly causes vivid hallucinations and a sense of euphoria, and proves remarkably addictive to most humanoids. Morgodeas not only coat their stingers in this jelly, but also collect it in vials or wax-covered paper to sell to victims once they become addicted. For further details on drugs and addiction, see page 236 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

### MORGOD JELLY

**Type** ingested or injury; **Addiction** special (see below), Fortitude DC 15

**Price** 10 gp

**Effects** 1 hour; +1d2 Cha and all creatures are considered to have concealment against the user

**Damage** 1d2 Cha and 1d2 Wis

### MORGOD ADDICTION

**Type** disease, variable; **Save** Will DC 15

**Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

**Effect** –2 penalty to Wis and Cha, target cannot naturally heal ability damage caused by morgod jelly; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Morgodeas are strongly attracted to sprawling urban areas, where they nestle against the dark underbelly of civilization. Such settlements must be large enough to provide a level of anonymity to their inhabitants. Morgodeas’ secret infestation of cities is like a foul disease creeping through the bloodstream to infect the vital organs of society. An infestation begins with a lone morgodea claiming a lair—often an abandoned building or sewer—and clearing the surrounding area of other predators before it begins selling the dubious pleasures of its jelly to the desperate and demented. Soon thereafter, the monster’s growing number of thralls secure its place in the underworld and bring it rotting meats and fruits, strong alcohols, and sugary sweets in payment. Eventually, those overwhelmed by addiction slip into a nightmare-filled coma before becoming a meal or a newborn morgodea.

A morgodea’s nest slowly grows alongside its influence and stock of customers. A full infestation of morgodeas rarely contains more than five or six of the creatures, and even then, only the largest of cities and metropolises that can sustain such numbers without rapid detection of the nest. Morgodeas in excess of this number leave the nest to seek out new settlements to infest, or else are devoured by their own families long before they gestate from their larval states.

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BESTIARY

## PROTEAN, PELAGASTR

This glittering serpent's body ends in a tangled, looping length of tail. Its scales glow softly in ever-changing patterns.

### PELAGASTR

CR 8



XP 4,800

CN Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, incorporeal, protean, shapechanger)

**Init** +10; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., detect law; Perception +16

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 20, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +6 Dex)

**hp** 85 (10d10+30); fast healing 5

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous anatomy, freedom of movement, incorporeal **DR** 5/lawful; **Immune** acid, polymorph; **Resist** electricity 10, sonic 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +16 (1d4), tail slap +12 (1d6 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d6), overshadowing ego, spirit coils, warpwave

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +14)

Constant—*comprehend languages*, *detect law*

At will—*dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *mage hand*

3/day—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *pilfering hand*<sup>UC</sup>

1/day—*chaos hammer* (DC 18)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 23, **Con** 17, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 30 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Focus (tail slap)

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +23, Diplomacy +17, Fly +22, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +16, Perform (sing) +17, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +19, Swim +16

**Languages** Common, Protean; *comprehend languages*

**SQ** blending scales, change shape (*polymorph*)

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Maelstrom)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or convocation (4–6)

**Treasure** none

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blending Scales (Ex)** A pelagastr has bioluminescent scales that either reflect its emotions or blend into its environment. So long as it remains motionless, a pelagastr gains a +20 racial bonus on Stealth checks. It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

**Overshadowing Ego (Su)** Once per round, the pelagastr can merge its body with that of a corporeal creature. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (the caster level equals the protean's number of Hit Dice), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the pelagastr must be adjacent to the target. The target

can resist the attack with a successful DC 19 Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same pelagastr's overshadowing ego for 24 hours.

**Spirit Coils (Su)** A pelagastr can dip its long tail into reality, allowing it to attack corporeal creatures using its tail slap, grab, and constrict abilities. It can suppress or resume this ability as a swift action, and suppressing it causes the pelagastr to immediately release any corporeal creature it is grappling. A pelagastr's tail can lift or manipulate a maximum of 5 pounds of solid matter.

**Warpwave (Su)** A creature that takes damage from a pelagastr's constrict attack must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or be affected by a warpwave (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 213). To determine the effects of a pelagastr's warpwave, roll a d12 and consult the warpwave effect table to see what effect its entropic energies have. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Pelagastrs, also known as asomatous wyrms, are the most ephemeral of the proteans, woven from gossamer strands of chaos that blow from the deepest heart of the Maelstrom. Just as other proteans delight in bringing change to the grotesque stagnancy of the physical world, pelagastrs dedicate themselves to inviting chaos and freedom into the dull, stale lives of its inhabitants. Devoid of physical form, they exist out of phase with reality, drifting along on the same unseen currents of potential the rest of their kind swim through in place of water. Unrestrained by the limits of a physical body, they spy on private spaces and secrets, and hop from host to host to savor the strangeness of the physical world using as many senses as possible. They are able to bind themselves to corporeal beings like possessing ghosts; they wear others' flesh simply to delight in new experiences, and they see their own carefree attitudes and disregard for the future as wondrous gifts shared with lesser beings, rather than as gross invasions of privacy that may ruin relationships or lives.

Though they lack tangible bodies, pelagastrs are among the most strikingly beautiful of the Maelstrom's children. Impossibly long and covered in bioluminescent scales, a pelagastr's body perpetually changes colors as it slithers in a hypnotic, iridescent dance. Its long tail allows it to stir up eddies of potential to harm its foes, and can carry treasures from the physical world that its incorporeal form is otherwise unable to move.

#### ECOLOGY

The life cycle of pelagastrs differs in many ways from that of other proteans. Pelagastrs don't develop directly from mortal souls, nor are they lesser proteans transformed into members of a new caste. Pelagastrs instead emerge fully formed from the depths of the Maelstrom—much like voidworms—devoid of youth or age. Asomatous wyrms are created in the plane's

infinite depths by some natural process, spawned by the sheer potential that bubbles up in the intangible sea in which all proteans swim. Some claim they are intentionally created by one of the protean lords or keketar cabals as a unique protean caste dedicated to exploring and understanding the experiences of stable reality. Pelagastrs certainly enjoy interacting with the solid world more than many proteans, though because of their incorporeal natures, they are confused and fascinated by even the most mundane experiences; a pelagastr views its host's pleasure and pain with equal delight and curiosity.

As distinct as they are from the other proteans, pelagastrs generally lack the capacity to evolve into any other caste. Yet the meandering, paradoxical stories of imenteshes tell of choruses of incorporeal keketars in service to the protean lord Il'surrish the Wanderer—itsself a creature without defined physical form. Whether or not the whispering wyrms' tales are true, the only certainty is that within the Maelstrom any rule preventing such a transition can and will be broken.

### HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Pelagastrs exist as a side branch of proteans, distinct in many ways from the more familiar castes. Rarely interacting with or congregating under the banner of the keketar cabals, they more often cavort where the Maelstrom borders the other planes of the Outer Sphere and—whenever possible—in the planes of the Inner Sphere. Scholars speculate the Maelstrom's gentle currents of chaos disperse these frail proteans far and wide, just as real winds scatter the delicate seeds of a dandelion.

Pelagastrs obsess over the Material Plane, where they delight in running amok with little to no regard for the consequences of their actions. In the process of migrating from the Maelstrom to the Material Plane, they typically make themselves profoundly unwelcome among the geniekin of the Elemental Planes, with the lawful efreet in particular barring or even hunting pelagastrs within their borders. Although such trespassers are frequently killed or banished as punishment for their gleeful activity, more pelagastrs follow in their wake to begin new revels there.

Pelagastrs occasionally find like-minded and willing hosts with which to temporarily merge. Such relationships blur the lines of typical possession, as protean and host mingle their memories, desires, and bodily control, resulting in a careful if unpredictable dance. Mortals who harbor a pelagastr (willingly or not) forever carry a subtly chaotic stain on their souls, which may manifest as protean bloodlines in their children or grandchildren.

Though they're relatively easy to summon, pelagastrs prove extremely difficult to control even after bargains are struck. Riddled with curiosity, they raise whatever havoc their masters fail to forbid, ignoring orders beyond their original agreement, rearranging the belongings of the one who called on their services in a bizarrely artistic fashion, and joyriding in any available bodies. If unprepared, one who summons a pelagastr may awaken one morning in a strange bed, only to discover that days or weeks have passed, and his planar "servant" has used his body to accomplish the task for which he had bargained. The social and legal ramifications of a pelagastr's time in its presumed master's skin gives the proteans a reputation for often being more trouble than they're worth. Regardless, the prospect of binding a powerful, intangible spy still tempts the foolish, headstrong, and overconfident.



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**TENOME**

This wrinkled, pale humanoid has a hairless, eyeless head, quivering nostril slits, and an unsettlingly wide mouth lined with rows of sharp fangs. Its eyes glare freakishly from the palms of its clawed hands.

**TENOME**

CR 4



XP 1,200

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

**DEFENSE**AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)  
hp 39 (6d10+6)

Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +7

Weaknesses obscuring grapple

**OFFENSE**

Speed 30 ft.; burst of speed

Melee bite +8 (1d6+2), 2 claws +8 (1d4+2 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** bone drink, terrifying gaze**STATISTICS**

Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12

Base Atk +6; CMB +8 (+12 grapple); CMD 21

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Intimidate +10, Perception +9, Stealth +11, Survival +9

Languages Common

**ECOLOGY**

Environment any urban

Organization solitary, pair, or scourge (3–5)

Treasure standard

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

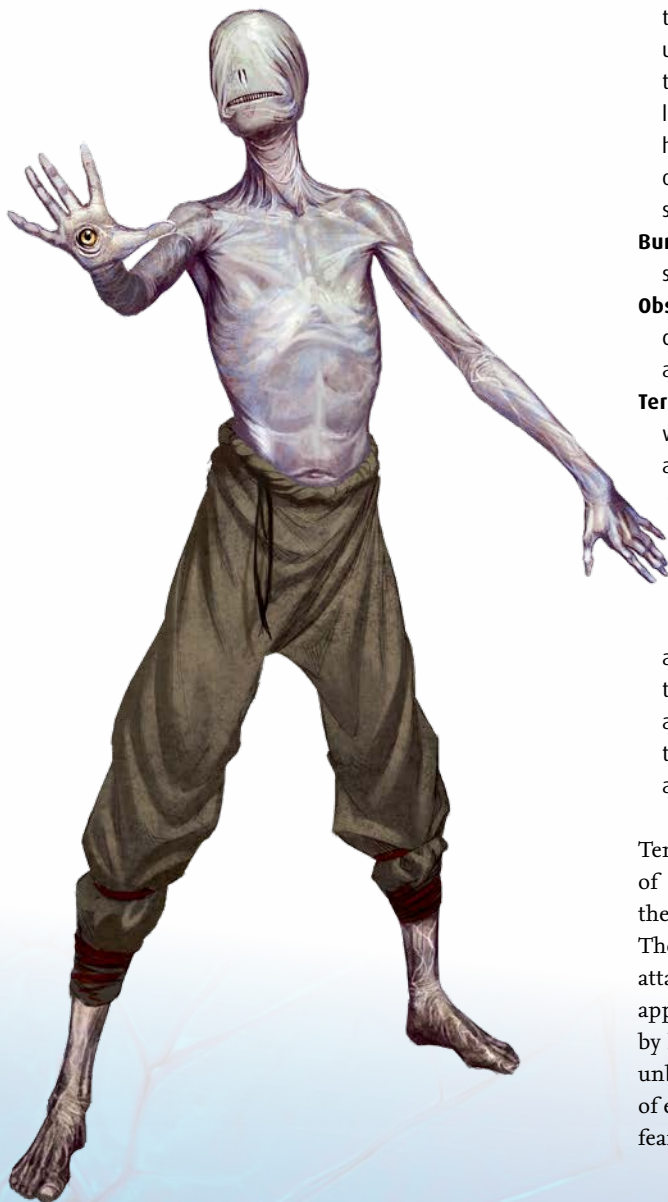
**Bone Drink (Su)** If a tenome establishes or maintains a pin, it attaches its mouth to the victim and uses a sonic attack that liquefies the victim's bones, allowing the monster to drink them through flesh and skin. This deals 1d3 points of Constitution damage to the victim. A creature damaged in this way must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw or be fatigued by the pain, or exhausted if already fatigued, or rendered unconscious for 1 minute if already exhausted. A tenome recovers 5 hit points each round it drinks liquefied bone (it cannot heal more than its maximum hit points). A creature reduced to a Constitution score of 0 in this way dies, its skeleton liquefied. This is a sonic effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Burst of Speed (Ex)** A tenome can move twice its base speed once every 1d4 rounds.

**Obscuring Grapple (Ex)** While a tenome is grappling a creature, all other opponents gain total concealment against the tenome.

**Terrifying Gaze (Su)** A tenome can gaze at one opponent within 30 feet by presenting one of its eyes (a standard action) or both of its eyes (a full-round action). An opponent that fails a DC 14 Will saving throw is frightened if it is the target of a single eye's gaze, or paralyzed if it is the target of both eyes' gazes. These conditions last for 1d3 rounds. A tenome can use its gaze attack only actively; opponents do not need to attempt saving throws at the beginning of their turns if they meet the tenome's gaze. Once a creature succeeds at its save against this ability, it is immune to that tenome's terrifying gaze for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tenomes are hideous predators that stalk the fringes of civilization, ambushing travelers and invading the rural homes of families to feast on their bones. They typically try to get close to their victims before attacking, hiding the monstrous elements of their appearance with hooded cloaks or voluminous robes, or by lying in wait along darkened trails. By revealing the unblinking stares of their angry eyes, one in the palm of each clawed hand, tenomes can paralyze a victim with fear or cause enemies to flee. Once they advance, they



pin their victims and initiate the terrible vibrations that allow them to drink creatures' bones. Because of the location of their eyes, however, tenomes that are grappling are practically blind against other opponents. They avoid attacking groups that heavily outnumber them, preferring to patiently track and strike when they can take victims one at a time.

A typical tenome stands between 5 and 6 feet tall and weighs around 150 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

While tenomes can sustain themselves on meat, including carrion, their constant hunger for living creatures' bones drives them to frequently hunt at the edges of settlements, where they prey on docile livestock and the people who care for them. The liquefied skeleton of a large farm animal or its farmer can sustain a tenome for weeks at a time. When living victims are scarce, tenomes make do with skeletal remains, digging up graves if necessary. Careful to avoid notice, tenomes prey upon the same site repeatedly only if they are extremely hungry.

Folktales in the Minkai Empire suggest that tenomes originated as a supernatural punishment for a community that did not adequately care for its elderly and disabled. Specifically, long ago, an old, blind widower lived alone for years, without comfort or help from other families in his village. From time to time, he became confused and wandered through the streets and farmlands at night. Instead of showing compassion, the farmers cursed the old man for worrying their livestock and openly wished he would die soon and relieve them of their burden.

One night, a group of local youths heard the alarmed bleats of sheep and found the man in a nearby field. Bored and lacking empathy, they assaulted him, pushing him from attacker to attacker and raining fists and kicks upon him from all directions. The old man begged them to stop, but the thugs only laughed, ripped his clothes away, and tripped him whenever he tried to escape. Beaten and bloody, bewildered and frustrated, the old man began trembling and shaking as an inhuman rage grew within him. With screams that caused his assailants to step back in horror, the blind old man tore out his own eyes and crushed them with his own hands, damning them for their uselessness. Overcome with revulsion, the youths quickly gathered rocks from a farm wall and stoned the man to death, smashing his bones to splinters before hiding the body. The next morning, when they returned to the scene of their crime, the body was gone and so too, they assumed, was their problem. But when the boneless bodies of the youths and their families began to turn up during the following days, the villagers learned that their problem had only just begun.

## TENOMES IN MYTHOLOGY

The tenome is a yokai, a supernatural creature of Japanese myth, which was first illustrated in Toriyama Sekien's 1776 book *Gazu Hyakki Yako (The Illustrated Night Parade of One Hundred Demons)*. It originates in a folktale in which a dying blind man, attacked and robbed by thugs, laments his lack of sight with his dying breath and is reborn as a monster with eyes on the palms of its hands. Other legends relate the story of a young man who falls prey to the monster's hunger for bone when it sniffs out his hiding place in a temple. While it bears only a superficial resemblance to the yokai of Japanese myth, the Pale Man in the film *Pan's Labyrinth*, directed by Guillermo del Toro, is perhaps one of the most striking visualizations of the monster to date.

Thus, the tale claims, was the first tenome created. The resulting devastation was, scholars believe, the source of all tenomes that came after, for legend holds that if the monster plucks the eyes from a humanoid victim and places them in the victim's hands, the corpse may transform into a new tenome on the next nightfall.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Tenomes lair where the edges of society and wilderness meet, typically in the caves and burrows of wild animals they have slain, and whose skins and furs they wear in colder climes.

Tenomes are nocturnal creatures, and they travel miles from their lairs under cover of night to terrorize rural communities. They typically rotate their hunting grounds and try to cover their tracks when farmers take action to defend their lands or when they organize in order to locate the tenomes' lairs. Fearing discovery, tenomes tend to keep to themselves. They associate only with others of their kind, and even then, gather only in small groups that rarely exceed four or five. In these bands, one serves as the leader, assigning roles to the others, such as lookout, scout, and defender.

If too many communities in an area become well defended and sources of food become difficult to access, tenomes migrate to a better habitat, usually finding a lair near the next cluster of towns down the road. They can also bury themselves in the earth and enter a state of hibernation, shutting down their bodily functions for months at a time, showing only the barest flicker of life. Knowing the superstitions that people hold about disturbing the dead, tenomes commonly use actual graves for this purpose. Indeed, sightings of ravenous tenomes, roused from their slumbers and clawing their way out of the ground, have contributed to the erroneous belief that these creatures are undead.

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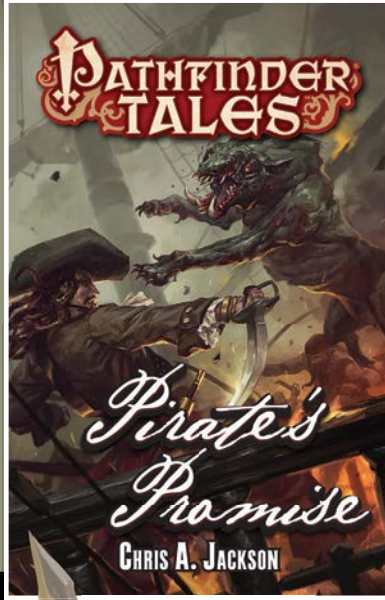
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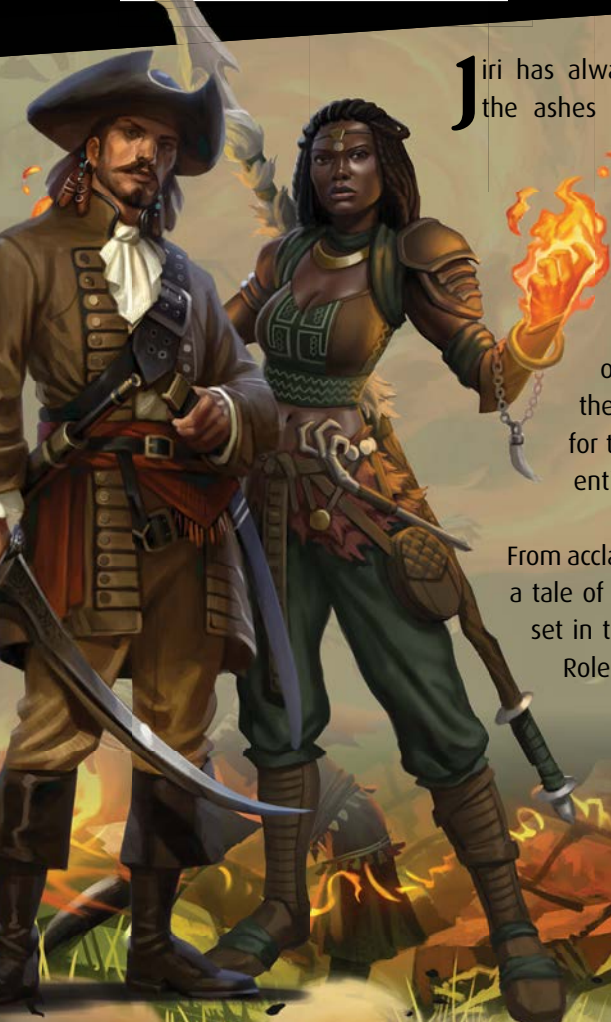
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## BELCARA JARVIS

Baroness of Argo (CG female human aristocrat 3/fighter 6)

Belcara Jarvis spent much of her youth as an adventurer, but when her parents passed on, she reluctantly retired to take on the role of family matriarch. Over the past several years, though, she's found that the life of urban comfort and politics appeals to her almost as much as the more palpable risks of raiding goblin lairs and fighting trolls. The Barony of Argo consists of the entirety of Argo Isle, upon which southern Kintargo is located, and the Jarvis family has done more than any other over the years to ensure the stability of Kintargo itself. The district of Jarvis End is named for the family, and many of the city's prominent buildings (including Castle Kintargo) were designed by Jarvis architects.

## CANTON JHALTERO

Baron of Whiterock (CN male human aristocrat 7)

The town of Whiterock is the first major settlement on the Yolubilis south of Kintargo—a settlement that made its mark (and earned its name) via the productive quarries of pale granite and marble located in the hills and dales west of the river. The Jhalteros have held a controlling interest in these quarries for generations, yet have traditionally dwelled in Kintargo and left the day-to-day management of their southern interests in the hands of loyal allies. Canton himself misses the comforts of life in a smaller town, but understands that maintaining a presence in Kintargo is important, and views this sacrifice as a necessary step to protect Jhaltero interests.



## ELDONNA AULAMAXA

Archbaroness of Cypress Point (N female human aristocrat 3/fighter 5)

The small town of Cypress Point is located to the northeast of Kintargo, a relatively run-down and depopulated settlement whose primary claim to fame—fishing—has been on the decline of late. The Aulamaxas have never been particularly proud of Cypress Point, and Eldonna is no exception—in fact, she's never visited the town, and sees no need. Petitions to shift the Aulamaxa barony from Cypress Point to Kintargo have never been approved by the throne, yet the family persists. In the meantime, Eldonna spends her time practicing stage combat and enjoying the delights of Kintargo's entertainments. Although she fancies herself a celebrated performer, her singing is well known in Kintargo to be atrocious at best.

## SENDI VASHNARSTILL

Baron of Anchor's End (CN male human aristocrat 5/rogue 2)

The baron of Anchor's End is unique in Kintargo, for his barony is a colony located on the distant shores of Arcadia. For many generations, the Vashnarstills have been the controlling family of Anchor's End, but not long before the recent unrest, House Thrune canceled its contracts as importers of goods from that distant port. This has thrown the Vashnarstills into a mild panic—for now, they have retained their family's noble title, but many worry that it's only a matter of time before House Thrune finds a way to take that away as well. The family's current leader, Sendi, isn't helping matters by avoiding the problem with his own carousing and increasingly expensive trips and parties.





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This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path continues the Hell's Rebels Adventure Path and includes:

- "Dance of the Damned," a Pathfinder adventure for 7th-level characters, by Richard Pett.
- A gazetteer of Vyre, the City of Masks, by Richard Pett.
- A look into the faith and worshipers of Mahathallah, by F. Wesley Schneider.
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