

PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH[™]



STRANGE AEONS

IN SEARCH OF SANITY

by F. Wesley Schneider



Briarstone Asylum was built around the foundations of an abandoned fort, as evidenced by its thick stone walls. I could almost feel them embrace me as I entered the building, as if to welcome me home. In a way, Briarstone knew more about my mind than I did.

ASYLUM

Forgive me if these entries seem jumbled. I find it harder and harder to keep my thoughts straight. Let me begin thusly: My name is Jerius Wynnak, I am a Pathfinder, and I believe that I am haunted. Not by any ghost or phantom, but by an idea of a place I have seen only in my nightmares. And so, seeking a way to ease my troubled mind, I traveled to Thrushmoor in Ustalar, a place with a history of unusual happenings. Under the guise of undertaking an important Society mission, I began to comb through nearby Briarstone Asylum's records in hopes of finding at least one reference to someone with a similar affliction.

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ON THE COVER



Artist Michal Ivan brings a terrible nightmare to life with this twisted illustration of the Tatterman, the horror stalking the unfortunate patients of Briarstone Asylum 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.

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|----------------------------------|------|--------------------------|----|
| <i>Advanced Player's Guide</i> | APG | <i>Occult Adventures</i> | OA |
| <i>Inner Sea Gods</i> | ISG | <i>Ultimate Combat</i> | UC |
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IÄ! IÄ! PATHFINDER FHTAGN!

Faithful readers of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* will know that elements of H. P. Lovecraft's writings are no stranger to Golarion. Concepts directly influenced by his writings have appeared from the start, with denizens from Leng being involved with the machinations of Runelord Karzoug back in *Rise of the Runelords*, while themes of cosmic horror, madness, and terror lurking in the proverbial backyard have never been far from any adventure Paizo has published.

In taking inspiration from Lovecraft, we've merely been continuing a decades-long tradition that Lovecraft himself embraced. He regularly encouraged his writing peers like Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Bloch, and others to use his mythos creations in their weird tales, just as he often borrowed from them or paid homage to writers he admired (the words "Hastur" and "Carcosa," for example, were coined by Ambrose Bierce and expanded upon by Robert Chambers decades before Lovecraft first used those names). In so doing, Lovecraft fostered a wholly new mythology, one that came into being in the pages of the pulps of the early 20th century

and established an entire genre of horror apart from the classics like vampires, werewolves, and ghosts. And by encouraging this spirit of sharing between authors, writers gave the impression that what would in time come to be known as the "Cthulhu Mythos" was bigger than any one story—that it drew upon something more than just fanciful plots and characters created for a single short tale. If you read about some monster named Cthulhu in one story, then ran across the same name months or even years later in a different story by a different author, it might not be long before you start wondering whether there's more to this Cthulhu fellow than the story itself suggests.

Today, the category of Lovecraftian horror extends far beyond Lovecraft's initial pulp tales. New authors are expanding on the seeds planted by Lovecraft, and in genres far beyond its roots. Movies, comic books, video games, and music all contain numerous examples of his influence. As do, of course, roleplaying games.

Which brings us to the newest *Pathfinder Adventure Path*, which this volume launches: *Strange Aeons*.

The name of the Adventure Path comes from what is perhaps Lovecraft's most memorable quote—a haunting couplet that first appeared near the start of his short story "The Nameless City," where the phrase is cited as being from another of his most famous inventions, the blasphemous book called the *Necronomicon*. The full quote is as follows:

*"That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die."*

"The Nameless City" was first published in 1921 in an issue of the amateur press journal *The Wolverine*. Taking a quote from a story published in 1921 as the title of this Adventure Path feels right—beyond the fact that it's just hands-down an interesting name. After all, if you do the math that we've established, the implied year that *Strange Aeons* begins in (4716 AR) does in fact correspond to the year of 1921 here on Earth... but that's surely just coincidence, right?

THE PATHFINDER MYTHOS

In *Strange Aeons*, we're embracing numerous themes of Lovecraftian horror to present an entire campaign that pits Golarion's latest batch of heroes against maddening menaces from beyond time and space. For the next six volumes of *Pathfinder Adventure Path*, you'll find adventures focusing on locations like insane asylums, creepy old houses, the Dreamlands, musty libraries, forgotten desert cities, and even the alien city of Carcosa itself, where some folks might be surprised to find some unexpectedly familiar landmarks! Yet at the same time, *Strange Aeons* remains fundamentally a Pathfinder game. Your characters will continue to gain power as they rise in level, and the expectation is that they will survive and persevere against seemingly insurmountable horrors. There may be casualties along the way, but in the end, *Strange Aeons* is not meant to give ruthless GMs a blank check to kill off the party in every other encounter. As with all Adventure Paths, the story presented in *Strange Aeons* unfolds best when there is a continuing thread of characters from start to end. They may emerge with scars (both mental and physical) when all is said and done, but overall, the encounters in this campaign aren't designed to be unsurmountable. Well, most of them. We do make the PCs fight a Great Old One as early as the third adventure, but that's sort of an exception. Sort of.

But beyond this, there's another interesting challenge we had to navigate in presenting a Lovecraftian Adventure Path. The primary antagonist of this campaign is Hastur, a character who was first created by Ambrose Bierce in his short story "Haïta the Shepherd" in 1893. The strange journey Hastur makes from a god of shepherds to a Great Old One is more than I can recount here, but suffice to say, not everything that every

author has said about Hastur, Carcosa, and the various other mythos elements are appropriate for Golarion. Likewise, there are new additions to the mythos—the Great Old One Xhamen-Dor is one I created in an unpublished short story back in high school and then pulled into Golarion a few years back in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #46: Wake of the Watcher*.

So while mythos scholars will surely find plenty familiar in *Strange Aeons*, there will also be some fresh interpretations of old ideas that take the mythos of Carcosa, the King in Yellow, and other mythos elements in brand new directions. I hope you enjoy the ways we've adapted the mythos to the world of Golarion!

SPECIAL THANKS

Of course, none of what you're about to read and then inflict upon your unsuspecting players would have happened if not for the work of Chaosium and their classic roleplaying game, *Call of Cthulhu*. Not only were the fine folks at Chaosium more than eager to let us play with a lot of their creations and additions to the mythos (in many cases, the incarnations of monsters like the byakhee or the dark young of Shub-Niggurath exist in popular culture today thanks to the *Call of Cthulhu* RPG, and Kevin A. Ross's design of the yellow sign has become one of the genre's most recognizable icons), but had the *Call of Cthulhu* RPG never been published in the first place back in the early 1980s, I'd say that chances are better than good that the Lovecraft renaissance begun in that decade might not have happened at all.

As it turns out, this year is a big one for Chaosium. After being out of print for many years, the *Call of Cthulhu* RPG is finally coming back with its brand new 7th edition. So if you're itching to jump back in and confront the terrors of the mythos in a milieu closer to the stories for which Lovecraft is the most famous, you really should take advantage of this chance and give *Call of Cthulhu* a try! I've been playing with the new rules myself and I can happily report that they're as efficient as ever at frightening players and destroying their characters.

Here's a word of advice. If you're running a *Call of Cthulhu* game where the players are your coworkers, keep in mind that arbitrarily killing off your boss's character with a serpentfolk armed with a moon gun is an excellent way to instill fear into the other players.

And really, isn't moon-gunning your boss what *Call of Cthulhu* is all about?

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PART 1: PRISON OF THE MIND

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The heroes face a shared nightmare of a relentless supernatural killer stalking them through a surreal cityscape. Upon awaking, they find reality isn't much better, and must seek out allies if they're going to have any hope of escaping the half-ruined halls of Briarstone Asylum.

PART 2: THE DEAD DON'T DREAM

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Exploring Briarstone Asylum's halls, the heroes face creatures escaped from nightmare realms and the vestiges of traumatized patients. Through research and spectral encounters, they find clues to what led to the sanitarium's ruin.

PART 3: NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE

44

A cult devoted to one man's terrifying dreams has taken control of the asylum's ruined halls. The heroes must find the source of the supernatural fog and sever its connection to the Dimension of Dreams before they can have any hope of defeating a cult leader possessed by his own nightmares.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"In Search of Sanity" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 1** The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2** The PCs should reach 2nd level soon after defeating Doctor Oathsday.
- 3** The PCs should reach 3rd level prior to entering the cultists camp in the northeastern halls.

The PCs should be 4th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

It is said none survived the Thrushmoor Vanishing. Almost 700 years ago, all the residents of Thrushmoor, a simple Ustalavic village on the coast of Avalon Bay, disappeared. None can say what one day caused every living thing in town to simply vanish. In the centuries since, those who resettled the land have seen much and learned to be suspicious. An evil haunts the tales and memory of Thrushmoor, and the people know it as the Briarstone Witch.

But in 4596 AR, Count Haserton Lowls I, the newly lorded count of Ustlav's Versex County, sought to put an end to such foolishness. In a bid to erase the history of fear and witchcraft plaguing his county, Count Lowls invited the church of Pharamasma to perform an elaborate, showy exorcism upon Briarstone Isle—the setting of so many tales of strange disappearances. While the Pharamsmians found no evidence of undead or hauntings, Lowls vociferously declared the island cleansed of evil. Soon after, with the aid of Rozenport's Sincomakti School of Sciences, he funded the construction of Briarstone Asylum on the foundations of an old, half-built fort. With that, Lowls claimed a victory for enlightenment and declared the time of fear and superstition in Thrushmoor was closed for good.

Yet, while such might have been the case for Haserton I, ancient evils act subtly, and over time, their methods give rise to new nightmares.

For over a hundred years, Briarstone Asylum operated as a refuge for those affected by mental illness. Even as the sanitarium drifted from the influence of the Sincomakti School, it remained a sanctuary and place of true medical research. In 4687 AR, a resident doctor, Eliege Losandro, began treating a former Sincomakti School student, Ulver Zandalus. Zandalus had been a promising protegee of Doctor Henri Meirtmane, but after returning from a venture with the doctor in Qadira, Zandalus began suffering terrifying nightmares. While abroad, Meirtmane had encountered a cult sworn to the King in Yellow and robbed them of a tome called *The Chain of Nights*, an ancient Keleshite text devoted to both science and arcana related to dreams. Zandalus was held captive by the cult for a time before Meirtmane freed him, and together they escaped. Upon returning to Rozenport, Zandalus's memories of the events turned into terrible dreams, visions infected by the symbols and chanting of the King in Yellow. Within his dreams—a realm bordering on the King's demesne, the nightmare city of Carcosa—Zandalus was consumed.

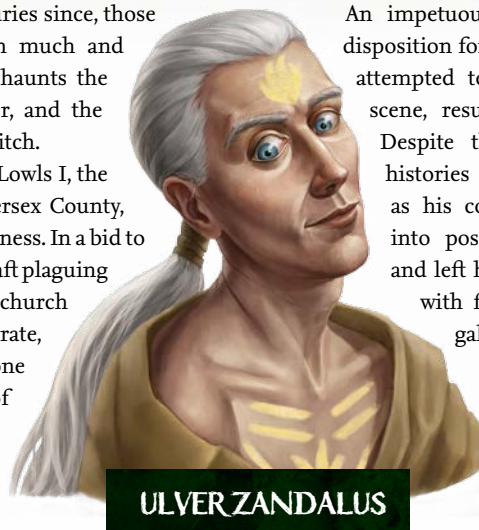
For decades, Zandalus lived under the supervision of Losandro and the doctors of Briarstone. He gained

some renown during that time as the mute patient who drew startling visions of his nightmares, with powerful impressions of spiraling skies and vast, dead cities. Some of his art was even displayed in local galleries, whereupon Count Haserton Lowls IV took notice.

An impetuous pseudo-academic without the disposition for true scholarship, Lowls doggedly attempted to enter the Rozenport academic scene, resulting in public embarrassment. Despite this, Lowls's interest in hidden histories and lurid tales of horror, as well as his considerable wealth, brought him into possession of several occult tomes and left him with some passing familiarity with forbidden topics. Upon visiting a gallery event featuring Zandalus's dream art—among the works of other patients—Lowls recognized shapes and scenes common to descriptions of the Dreamlands, Carcosa, and, most shockingly, the *Star Stelae* of his home, Thrushmoor.

In the following months, Count Lowls immersed himself in study of the Dreamlands and began paying visits to Zandalus at Briarstone Asylum. In his observations of the mute's artistry, Lowls became increasingly convinced that Zandalus explored the Dreamlands each night. Over time, he became certain that he might even follow Zandalus into the Dreamlands and learn what connection the *Star Stelae* held to realms beyond. The results were a success, revealing that the city infecting Zandalus's mind was not only fabled Carcosa, but also the manifestation of the forgotten city of Neruzavin. With a new focus for his obsession, Lowls set forth to make the discovery he'd always lusted after. But Lowls didn't simply abandon Zandalus. By way of a reward, he left Doctor Losandro, now administrator of Briarstone Asylum, with two gifts. The first was a copy of *The Chain of Nights* and directions on a rite that might excise the nightmares from Zandalus's mind—a method that sounded like a cure for the man's torment, but that also assured none could follow in Lowls's path. The second were several of his former agents, minions whose minds he had sacrificed. Losandro enthusiastically accepted both the tome and the amnesiacs.

It didn't take Losandro long to attempt the ritual Lowls directed her to in *The Chain of Nights*. She had expected the nightmares released by the rite to be something small and inanimate, like the excising of a brittle mental bezoar. The results were almost immediate: Zandalus spoke to Losandro for the first time in their long doctor-patient relationship. Encouraged by the breakthrough, Losandro eagerly prepared for more discussion with Zandalus, but didn't seek to rush matters.



ULVER ZANDALUS

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That night, though, Zandalus's nightmares spread. Although the afflicted artist slept soundly for the first time in decades, something had indeed been released from Zandalus's dreams. Another child of the Dreamlands, one that had latched onto Zandalus years ago, slipped through the dreamscapes of Briarstone's patients. The Tatterman now hunted unrestrained. A native of the Dreamlands and an ancient servant of the King in Yellow, the Tatterman sought to peel away his victims' living facades, revealing the beasts inside each dreamer. He stalked the asylum's patients in nightmares. Those he killed before they awoke suffered terrifying transformations: any who restrained their desires were transformed into ghouls; any who sought to be something else became doppelgangers; others underwent even stranger changes. The plague of dreams and unpredictable emergence of monsters threw the asylum's staff into a panic. In the midst of these events, Zandalus—encouraged by the Tatterman—turned the rites from *The Chain of Nights* back on Doctor Losandro, creating an unstable portal from which manifestations of her psyche escaped. While the staff was distracted, he gathered a flock of impressionable and dangerous patients, anointing them the Apostles in Orpiment. What should have been a typical evening's routine turned into a violent uprising, led by a Tatterman-influenced Zandalus.

Briarstone Asylum fell quickly. If the creatures lurking in the sanitarium's hidden places weren't enough, the bhole that slumbers beneath the island shuddered in its dreams, causing a tremor that collapsed much of the asylum's upper levels, killing dozens and damaging the ground floor. Many of the survivors attempted to flee, but found the isle ringed by an unnatural yellow mist. This fog, a manner of ether seeping from the Dreamlands' hinterlands, has been unleashed by Zandalus's tampering with dreams and the power contained within *The Chain of Nights*. A veil of nightmares, the fog has made Briarstone Isle a cage from which none might escape.

The adventure begins in a dream, wherein the PCs—Lowls's amnesiac agents marooned at Briarstone—encounter the Tatterman. However, their dream-slaughter doesn't reveal the monsters they are. As they are blank slates, their brush with the Tatterman grants them a new start and hope for sanity.

ASYLUM FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, all of the rooms in Briarstone Asylum have stone walls covered in cracked and chipping white paint. Ceilings are approximately 10 feet high. The doors are typically of good wooden construction (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18). Most locks can be bypassed with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check.

Several structures within the asylum are in poor repair as a result of recent tremors, though none of the rooms threaten to collapse.

The PCs can dig through any of the rubble piles if they wish to do so, but it should be a laborious process that attracts the attention of random encounters (see page 415 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for details on clearing collapses). In

some cases, clearing a collapse will allow the PCs to access dangers for which they might not be prepared. If this is the

case, a helpful NPC or threatening noises from beyond might deter such work.



HASERTON LOWLS IV

THE NIGHTMARE MIASMA

Noxious yellow fog envelops all of Briarstone Isle, and only the half-ruined asylum provides any shelter from its invasive tendrils. The fog serves two purposes in the adventure's course: an ever-present reminder of the otherworldly corruption leaking into the world, and as a method of trapping the PCs in the building. The best cages, however, are those that don't appear to be cages. Accordingly, you should help the PCs come to the conclusion that leaving the asylum is not in their best interests. Here are three suggested methods to assist with this. Start with the first and most subtle, and escalate to more dangerous and heavy-handed methods as required.

Terrible Vagaries: Allow each of the PCs to attempt a DC 10 Perception check before entering the mist. Those who succeed (and perhaps even those who don't) see the shadows of awful, unnatural figures moving through the mist—gangly hunchbacked giants, lurching tumor-heaps, spiders scuttling upon forests of legs, and other nightmares of your design. Horrifying noises, some that echo weirdly, others loud enough to be uncomfortable, accompany the shapes. These are all reflections of terrors from the Dreamlands and no matter how nimbly PCs pursue, they will never encounter the creatures—though hopefully, their size and obvious power is enough to deter such investigation.

Shrouded Denizens: Should the PCs insist on venturing into the fog, allow them to encounter a few of the least of the horrible things there. These are small

horrors that have oozed through from the Dreamlands and might include ratlings, zoogs or maddened ghouls lost in the fog (see Briarstone Asylum Encounters on page 81 for some examples). These encounters should test the PCs and drain them of resources, but avoid making them lethal.

Prisoners of the Mist: The most absolute way to steer the PCs out of the fog is to warp reality beneath their feet. The laws of nature and physics in the Dreamlands are not the same as they are on Golarion. Therefore, if the PCs wander in a straight line into the mist, they might emerge mere steps from where they entered. This might take only a moment, or it could be considerably longer. Feel free to twist physics in whatever unsettling ways you please to coax the PCs back into the asylum.

In addition to these methods, characters like Winter Klaczka and Wren Elbourne can assure the PCs that they've tried everything to escape with no success. Remember that being in the mist also exposes the PCs to the Endless Storm effects on page 81. Do your best to avoid killing the PCs with random monsters and deadly environmental effects. If things grow too dangerous, have the door to area C1 appear through the mist. Ultimately, the PCs should come to understand that reality is not reliable here and destroying Ulver Zandalus's cult offers the only hope of escape.

PART 1: PRISON OF THE MIND

The adventure begins with the PCs being hunted. To them, they're lost in a city they faintly recognize. Their pulses pound as—ragged and underprepared—they flee a tenacious citrine fog and the relentless threat they inexplicably know lurks within.

In reality, the PCs are asleep and are in little physical danger. They're participating in a shared dream, but they shouldn't immediately be aware of that. Even though the dream's surreal nature likely gives them cause to suspect something is amiss, you shouldn't confirm or deny their suspicions. Remain cryptic and ask for their next actions. Strive to keep the following scene fast paced and hectic, so the players feel like they're running ahead just as blindly as their characters (see the In Media Res sidebar on page 8 for details).

PREYED UPON IN DREAMS

Read or paraphrase the following to set the stage for the PCs' hopeless flight. The PCs don't know where they are or remember how they got there.

All around is a wall of sickly yellow fog, tumbling through the alley's canyon of crumbling, gray brick walls like some jaundiced flash flood. Ahead, the unfamiliar alley splits, curving to the left and right. Behind, from the silent swell of mist, emanates the sound of footsteps—slow, but somehow keeping pace with the careening, hungry wave.

Immediately have the PCs roll for initiative. In that order, give each player one action, allowing them only a moment to decide what to do. Which direction the PCs go doesn't matter. Whether the PCs stay together or separate doesn't matter. The intention here is to have the PCs scramble, while giving them as little information as possible. Once all the PCs have performed their actions, read or paraphrase the following, only delaying if a PC takes one of the actions noted below.

The alley walls sag, battered brick slumping over the path, nearly blotting out the bruised twilight sky. Again the grimy cobblestone path splits. This time one route curves uphill, while the other recklessly descends. Behind, the yellow fog and the relentless sound of pursuit grow closer.

Again, quickly ask the PCs what they want to do in initiative order. Once they've all answered, read or paraphrase the following.

The mist parts, now mere steps behind. A mask of gray rags emerges, strips of something fleshier than fabric worming and constricting across a body that's almost humanlike—but too lean, and far too flexible. Gauzy gray ribbons reach out like tendrils, each grasping for less doubtful flesh to claim.

Once the Tatterman emerges, combat immediately begins. Prior to his appearance there are only two actions the PCs can perform that can or should slow the chase.

To Battle! If a PC doesn't buy into the scene's whole "you're really scared" angle, that's fine. If a PC chooses to stand her ground or charge into mist before the threat reveals itself, that's fine too. But don't ruin the Tatterman's reveal on account of one hasty PC. If a PC wants to have an even more unfair fight with the Tatterman by engaging him inside the fog, so be it. Such a character's likely speedy murder by an invisible foe can serve to heighten the tension for the other players, and drive home the threat's ominousness. Any PC who enters the fog before the Tatterman emerges is attacked by the Tatterman. The Tatterman is invisible while inside the fog and can make as many attacks as he pleases—typically, as many attacks as it takes to kill the PC in 1 round. Attacking a PC doesn't slow his appearance or the pacing of the read-aloud text, though you might want to describe the grisly sounds and blood spray that momentarily emanate from the fog. A PC killed in the fog is treated as described in the Development section below.

Use an Item: A PC who chooses to use an item provokes a startling discovery among all the characters. Tell each PC to roll 1d4. The result is how many of the items the character has listed on her character sheet that she actually has. Have every character mark or otherwise note that number of items. These are the only items the character currently has with her. This includes weapons,

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"In Search of Sanity" begins with a scene designed to be hectic and to make both the players and characters uneasy. Many players will likely go along with the fast-paced narrative, but some might flounder and seek details to cling to. To keep the players from dissecting their circumstances and pursuing more information—which you either don't have or need to purposefully obscure—try to keep the action moving quickly. Not only will this help keep the tension high, but the chase-like circumstances give you a reason to not answer all the players' questions. If on his turn, a player asks for more details, focus on getting him to respond with an action. Don't hesitate to reply to inquisitive players with answers like "you're not sure," "you're too focused on what's coming to think of anything else," or similar non-answers—but keep it fast. If you have to, feel free to rush players along by saying, "Tell me what you're doing now." You don't want to deny players their part in the game, but you need to establish that this is no time for dawdling. If players still have trouble with the scene's hectic nature, don't hesitate to step out of the narrative for a moment and reassure them to just go with it, to trust you, and that it's all part of the game.

Beyond rushing the characters, if you want to further increase the anxiety of the scene, try standing up rather than sitting at the table, describing events at a slightly louder or faster pace, or by turning up tense background music.

armor, magic items, objects required for class abilities (like holy symbols and spellbooks)—everything. If a player asks, tell him not to bother erasing the other items (but also don't suggest their return is imminent). Within this dream, these are the only items the PC has access to. If a player is concerned that this puts her character at an unfair disadvantage, you might want to agree with her and encourage her to adapt to the circumstances, which she obviously doesn't have all the details on yet.

Creature: The Tatterman lurks within the fog. This dream-haunting malevolence cannot be bargained with or deterred. It wants nothing more than to terrorize and destroy the PCs. To that end, it attacks each PC in turn, focusing on slaying individuals as efficiently (yet brutally) as possible.

GMs are encouraged to run this encounter without miniatures or a play mat to heighten the nebulous, dreamlike nature of the scene. Be flexible. Even if players describe themselves running in opposite directions, you should consider all of them to always be within one move action of the Tatterman and one another. If one PC wants to flank with another, let her. Unless a PC attempts an action that makes her purposefully vulnerable,

the Tatterman neither takes nor provokes attacks of opportunity. Continue to try to keep the pace fast, and avoid lingering too much on strategy or nuance. For the PCs, this should be a hectic experience. It should also be over quickly, as they're destined to lose.

Try to make the first death come swiftly to reveal the portentous nature of dying in this nightmare world (see Development below). Though it isn't important for this dreamtime encounter, the Tatterman's statistics can be found on page 56.

Development: As the Tatterman kills the PCs, their shared nightmare begins to break and a forceful influence slips in from beyond. Four words compose a message screamed at the edge of the PCs' consciousness. As PCs die, their blood and bodies become vessels for this message. As each PC gruesomely expires, describe a vicious blow from the Tatterman and a spray of gore. Following a death, any surviving PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check notices her ally's blood spatters across a nearby wall, sticking in a pattern that looks like the word "me." A round later, the fallen PC's mouth lolls open and a voice no one recognizes echoes forth, as if from down a long hall. The word "me" resonates and repeats from deep within.

Follow each death with a similar scene, adding the words "up" and "save" to the wall and the syllables resounding from the corpse's mouth.

Ultimately, the scrambled message will be "Wake up! Save me!" But the final word won't be revealed until only one PC remains—don't disclose the word "wake" until then, as it so forcefully suggests the encounter's dreamlike nature.

If your party has fewer than four players to sacrifice on this message's behalf, double up on words as needed. If you have more than enough players, feel free to have dead PCs repeat words to draw the message out, their deaths adding intensity and volume to the message, but not additional words. If one of the PCs already died in the fog, their blood appears on the wall and another distant voice echoes soon after the next PC's death. Ultimately, the PCs' dooms don't need to happen in close proximity for the message to be revealed.

Finally, when only one PC survives, have her attempt a DC 20 Will save. If she succeeds, she hears another voice inside her own mind. All it says is "wake," and the PC is suddenly convinced that the scene playing out around her isn't real. If she fails, her nose begins bleeding and she immediately notices a new word, "wake," appear on the wall.

Once the entirety of the message is revealed, the encounter doesn't end. The dream only ends once the Tatterman has killed all the PCs or when a living PC figures out or reads the message on the wall. Even if the PCs somehow guess the message, the scene ends when there's only one survivor. Once the sole remaining PC

dies or manages to wake up, all of the PCs wake in area A1a.

Story Award: At the conclusion of their encounter with the Tatterman, regardless of whether a character survived or died, award each PC 400 XP.

A. THE FURNACE ROOMS

A series of tunnels runs beneath Briarstone Asylum. These passages once allowed the staff to pass between courtyards and the grounds beyond unseen, and without dragging dirty supplies through the asylum. Since Ulver Zandalus took control, though, these tunnels have been ruined. They have since become the playground of sadistic doppelgangers, who gruesomely confirm and reconfirm the frailty of humanoid flesh.

A1A. THE CELLS (CR 3)

Once the nightmare has ended, the PCs regain consciousness in a grimy cell in a dungeon they don't recognize. Each of the three cells in the room has space enough to comfortably fit two Medium humanoids. You can scatter PCs between cells as you please, or cram PCs together if the number of players warrants it.

The PCs retain full memory of their dream, but no negative side effects short of a bloody nose (if called for in the previous scene). To their likely unease, they have none of their equipment with them (see *Treasure* on page 10), even if they had items in the dream.

As they groggily wake, read or paraphrase the following.

"Wake up, damn it!" the man on the table screams, his panic cutting through the claustrophobic near dark.

Bars separate the PCs from the stranger, a struggling human with split lips and skin covered in a mapwork of fresh red lines. Heavy ropes lash the man to a splintery worktable.

Another figure, unsettlingly thin and wearing a blood-smearred doctor's coat, circles the table casually—stopping every so often to scrutinize one of the man's wounds or select a different object from a sideboard of shiny blades. Currently, she spins one blade of a broken pair of pruning shears, which glints in the dull light of the lamp suspended overhead. With careless cruelty, the doctor draws the blade across the bound man's bare thigh, releasing a tortured wail.

None of the PCs recognize the man screaming on the table, a former orderly named Campre Linweigh. As they further gain their bearings, each PC realizes that he also doesn't recognize anyone in the room, including the other PCs. Even if characters have interwoven backgrounds or intimate connections, they have no memory of those experiences or relationships.

The smaller table next to the one upon which Campre is bound displays an array of sharp instruments, none

designed for use on living flesh: a gardening trowel, forks, several long pieces of broken glass or metal, and the other blade of the tormentor's shears. Most of these can be employed as improvised weapons capable of dealing 1d2 points of damage. Additionally, heavily loaded sacks lie near the door.

Regardless of the disturbing circumstances and their unmoored mental states, the PCs still likely seek to escape, if for no other reason than to avoid sharing the fate of the man on the table. Unfortunately, the bars through which they glimpse their fellow prisoners form a sturdy barrier, each with a swinging section held closed by a heavy lock. The lock requires a successful DC 25 Disable Device check to pick, but none of the PCs have the necessary tools upon first waking. Those who look for the key might be rewarded, though (see *Creatures* below).

Creatures: The man bound to the table is Campre Linweigh, a particularly stubborn orderly. He has been abused by his captors and currently has 1 hit point. He can call out to the PCs, but can do little else to help them. While he can withstand a few slaps and superficial cuts from his torturer, any real damage will render him unconscious.

The "doctor" is the major threat here. This doppelganger used to be Ilesi Scaen, one of the first inmates to be transformed by the Tatterman (see page 56). She's been left here to indulge her obsession with blood and further convince herself that her new form is superior to human flesh in every conceivable way.

Scaen doesn't expect the PCs to wake up for hours. While minor noises and soft conversing won't attract her attention, any PC who shouts or addresses figures outside a cell immediately alerts her. Upon noticing the PCs, the doctor wheels on them and demands, "Pipe down. You'll have your turn soon enough." She then goes about her business, agonizing over where to make her next incision on her patient.

Anyone who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices a ring of keys dangling from a hook at Scaen's waist. In her pacing, though, she keeps well out of reach of the PCs. Fortunately, an opportunity to snatch them may soon present itself.

If the PCs persist in trying to communicate with Scaen or Campre, or otherwise make nuisances of themselves, the doppelganger quickly loses patience. She wheels after a few moments, screaming, "Quiet!" and at the same time transforming her face to look like the offending PC. The first time this happens, it merely gives the PCs a hint of the doctor's supernatural nature. If the PCs persist in their noisemaking, Scaen again turns to threaten them. This time, though, it leaves her vulnerable.

When Scaen's back is turned, Campre struggles in his blood-slicked bindings and manages to get a leg free. Desperately, he kicks the doppelganger in the small of her back, throwing her up against one of the PCs' cells—

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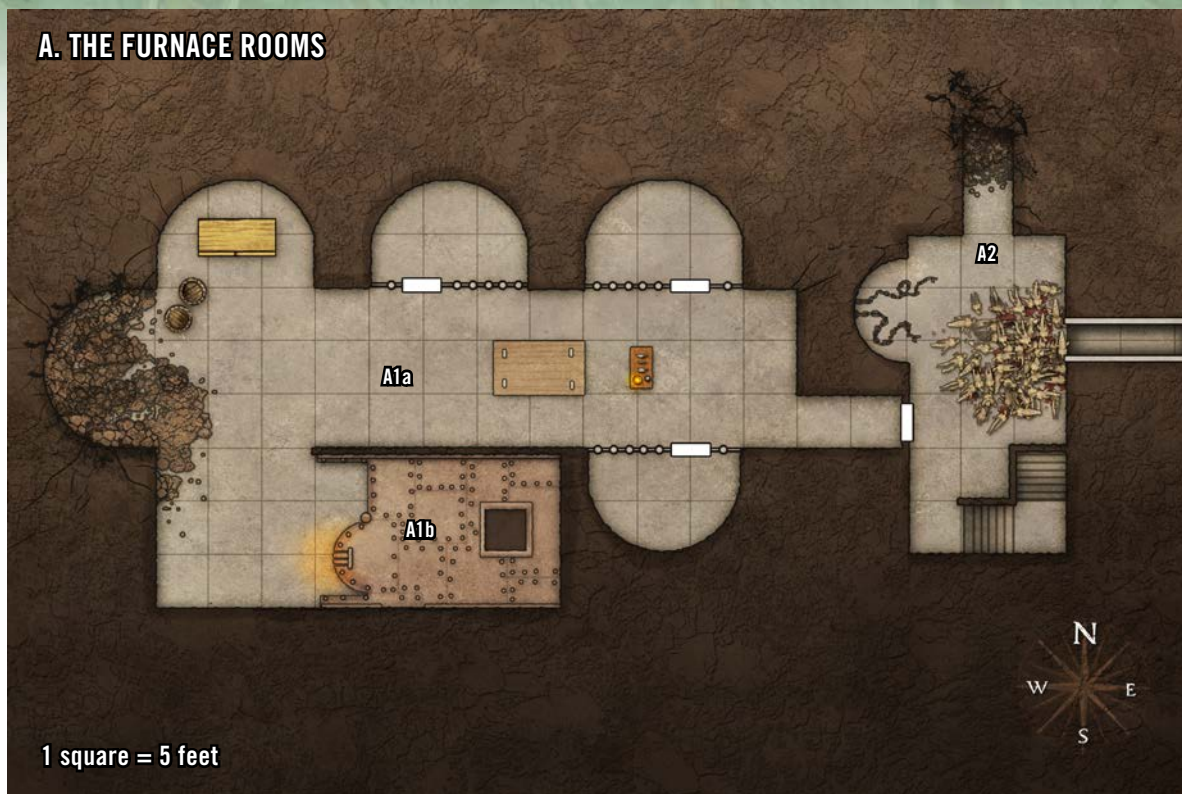
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A. THE FURNACE ROOMS



likely that of the character she was just scolding. Any PC in that cell can attempt a DC 14 Dexterity or Sleight of Hand check to grab the key off Scaen, or can attempt to grapple or otherwise restrain her. If Scaen is grappled, picking the key off her belt is a simple matter for any PC in the same cell as the grappler.

If the PCs fail to get the key off Scaen, the doppelganger spins on Campre only to be greeted with a harder kick to the face. This knocks her to the ground and sends the key sliding into one of the PCs' cells (likely a different cell from the one she was kicked into the first time). In the chaos, she does not notice losing the key. She also spends the next 1d4 rounds distracted from the PCs as she violently murders Campre. Her laughing and cursing distracts her so much that she reverts to her natural doppelganger shape. Unless the PCs make a show of bursting out of their cells during this time, Scaen is utterly focused on her bloody work. She won't even notice if a PC takes a tool from her workbench. Only after this period ends, or if she's attacked, does she turn her attention to the PCs.

"DOCTOR" ILESI SCAEN

XP 800

Female doppelganger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 89)

hp 26

TACTICS

During Combat Scaen wasn't expecting to fight the PCs and certainly isn't interested in being outnumbered in a fight. If the PCs get loose and fight back, she attempts to

escape to area **A2** and out of the basement via the chute there.

Treasure: Any of the PCs' valuable possessions—such as obvious magic items, potions, holy symbols, spellbooks, or the like—are in the sacks near the door. Scaen had planned to take these her when she was done amusing herself.

A1B. THE FURNACE

A cold, iron furnace hunkers in the corner of the basement, its four-foot-square door gaping half open. Nearby sprawls a heap of gory clothes and other dubiously flammable trash.

This sizable furnace once heated the boilers and other needful spots in the asylum above. Since order broke down in the asylum, the doppelgangers have been pitching their victims into this cellar. Scaen was tasked with disposing of the bodies in the crematorium. After finding the tunnel leading to area **C2o** destroyed, though, she's made do with the furnace here. Yet, upon discovering that a few of the bodies pitched her way weren't quite dead, she's become completely distracted with her amateur surgeries.

The furnace now lies cold. A character who looks inside can attempt Perception check. Any PC who succeeds a DC 12 check notices several scorched humanoid bones amid the ashes, easily from a half-dozen bodies. Any PC

who succeeds at a DC 16 check also notes that the vents leading up and out of the furnace are particularly wide, so much so that a Small creature could easily fit inside, while a Medium creature could fit by squeezing. Regular seams and offshoots within the duct make it scalable with a successful DC 5 Climb check. Those who try to navigate the 20-foot-high duct face no danger other than the challenge of the climb. While smaller branches extend throughout the asylum, the traversable part of the duct leads directly to area **B9**.

Development: It's possible for PCs proving especially eager to escape to crawl up the furnace duct without ever entering area **A2**. This isn't a problem, unless a PC has a familiar or similar animal companion restrained in that room. If such is the case and the PCs seem likely to leave without their ally, have them hear barking, scratching, whimpering, or other appropriate noises from the other room, hopefully encouraging investigation. If this doesn't compel them, feel free to have the character's missing animal companions show up later, perhaps restrained in a safe room or having already joined the survivors in area **B5**.

Treasure: The PCs' weapons, armor, and mundane equipment are discarded amid the garbage pile near the furnace. A successful DC 16 Perception check also reveals a masterwork viol buried among the soiled clothes and garbage of past victims. The bow is missing, but the instrument is, remarkably, undamaged. If a PC purposefully examines the interior or destroys the instrument, he finds a strip of parchment inside. The rolled strip bears the name "Auseil."

A2. CELLAR

A broad chute extends diagonally through one of this cellar's half-crumbled stone walls. Beneath it lies heaped more than a dozen mutilated humanoid bodies. Nearby, a flight of rickety, wooden steps climbs toward the high ceiling—an escape none of the room's current occupants seem capable of employing. The smell of rot and decay in the room is nearly overwhelming, and the buzz of flies hangs in the air.

The bodies piled here are all victims of the doppelgangers, both orderlies and patients alike. All are dead, some having been so for days. The doppelgangers disposed of many of their victims by throwing them down the chute in area **B1**, which empties here. However, since Scaen grew distracted with those living victims she found, the bodies she was meant to dispose of have piled up. These bodies here been picked clean of valuables, though any PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check notices that many of them are wearing the same thing: a plain, white uniform that buttons in the front. It is

very similar to the doctor's outfit worn by Scaen—a Briarstone orderly's smock.

The steps here seem like the most obvious exit from the cellar, but a fallen wall above has blocked the way out. Anyone who climbs to the stair's landing or higher can clearly see the heaps of rubble choking the passage above. Despite their unsteady appearance, the stairs are sturdy enough to climb.

The tunnel that was once here might have also allowed the PCs to escape. It used to connect with area **C20**, but the tremors that affected the island destroyed the passage, and also undermined several portions of the asylum's foundations elsewhere. As such, the heaps of rock here offer no hope of escape.

This makes the chute the only surviving exit from the room. Despite the fact that the chute's lowest point is 8 feet off the floor, the bodies heaped beneath make convenient—if morbid—stairs. Climbing the heap of bodies is simple enough (and does not require a skill check), but a climber must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw or contract filth fever (see page 557 of the *Core Rulebook*). A character wearing gloves or other protective covering doesn't need to attempt this saving throw.

Once reaching the chute itself, the passage is 15 feet long but the rough walls make it easy enough to scale, requiring only a successful DC 5 Climb check. A metal door at the top of the chute is closed, but can be pushed open easily, leading to the service room in area **B1**.

Creatures: Any animal companion, familiar, or similar ally of the PCs is chained up here, awaiting its turn on Scaen's table. (If the PCs happen to have any humanoid companions, they would be in the cells with the PCs.) Although the PCs don't remember their companions, their allies instinctually identify them and bark, purr, or otherwise express their excitement. If a PC acts ambivalently toward his ally, reveal that he has some faint flicker of familiarity with the creature, though nothing as concrete as a memory. The creatures' chains are simple bolt-and-pin collars and can be removed easily enough. Once the PCs' companions are free, they behave as normal. If none of the PCs have an animal companion, familiar, or mount, this room is empty of any creatures.

Characters who attempt to pump their allies for information—perhaps using *Speak with Animals* or similar magic—find them unable to provide useful information, having little understanding of where they've been or where they are now. They seem to be affected by the same strange affliction as the PCs.

Treasure: Spending 10 minutes searching the stack of bodies turns up 15 gp worth of stray coins and cheap jewelry, mostly on the bodies of dead orderlies. Additionally, any equipment the PCs didn't recover in area **A1** should be stored under the stairs here.

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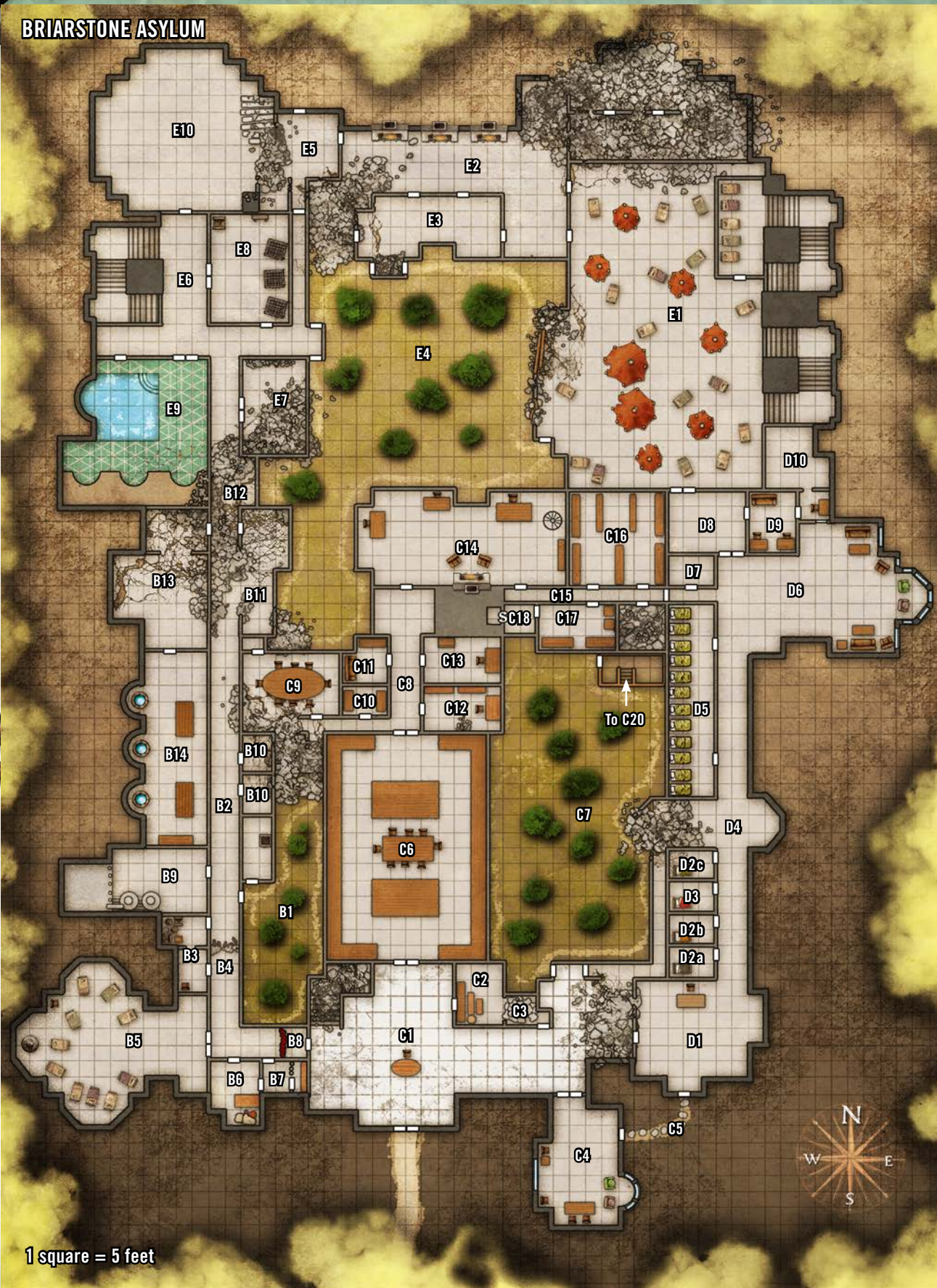
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BRIARSTONE ASYLUM



B. REFUGE OF DREAMERS

The PCs emerge onto a strange sort of battlefield. These halls once housed the service and housekeeping parts of Briarstone's operation. Just off the asylum's entry hall, a small, multidominational chapel offered its services to the families of patients. Once chaos erupted in the asylum halls, several desperate souls fled to this corner of the hospice, seeking the protection of the gods after the protections of mortals failed them. But they weren't alone.

Through their dreams, many of the asylum's patients and staff were infected by the otherworldly taint of the Dreamlands. Those with peculiar urges and vulnerable psyches allowed the alien energies to gradually transform them, twisting them into monsters. Several became doppelgangers and ghouls, and were eventually chased from the northeastern halls where the Apostles in Orpiment cling to a semblance of their humanity. When the bhole beneath the asylum partially awoke, its thrashing toppled much of the second floor, causing significant collapses in the halls below. Tons of rubble now separate these halls from the rest of the asylum, creating a sanctuary for the desperate survivors entrenched here, but also sealing them in with monstrous creatures that indulge in a perverted mockery of medical practice.

The asylum's most lucid survivors now struggle to survive here. They're a frayed, skittish bunch whose supplies and time are running short. Fortunately, a forgotten blessing over the chapel largely shields them from the siege of nightmares that has overwhelmed the rest of the asylum's inhabitants.

B1. WESTERN COURTYARD

Trampled flowerbeds lie smeared and squashed across this muddy courtyard. On all sides, stark gray walls climb toward a narrow gap of sunless sky.

Three courtyards, built to be peaceful greens, form cavities within Briarstone's walls. This one saw the least amount of maintenance, and has deteriorated even further since the tremor.

Since the asylum's upheaval, this courtyard has been largely cut off. The unbound dream effects affecting Briarstone Isle become evident in open places like this, manifesting as an endless, erratic thunderstorm—see the details on the Endless Storm on page 81. As long as Ulver Zandalus lives, it rains heavily here and in all of Briarstone's exterior areas. Be sure to note the unusually warm rain and strange thunder before the PCs leave the area.

This courtyard is now used by the doppelgangers inhabiting much of the asylum's western halls as a place to dispose of unwanted bodies, keeping them out of reach

so not to tempt the ghouls that lurk nearby. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check notices scabby stains amid the mud puddles, faintly leading from the door to the west to the service room containing the chute that leads to area **A2**.

A shedlike structure to the southeast lies largely collapsed; it once connected to the top of the stairs in area **A2**. Fallen walls to the north also obstruct a path to areas **C8** and **C9**. As such, the passage to area **B2** serves as the courtyard's only exit.

B2. SOUTHWEST HALL

Broken lanterns and several battered doors line this cold, rubble-strewn hall. To the south, a pair of swinging doors lies shattered upon a 4-foot-high heap of wrecked furniture clogging a broad doorway.

This hall runs much of the length of the asylum's western side. As with most of the asylum, it is dark, though light is visible beyond the barricade to the south. Those who enter the hall from area **B1** without somehow veiling their passage are visible to the guards in area **B4**. See the description of that area on page 14 for their reaction to strangers.

B3. CHAPEL GATEHOUSE (CR 3)

The northern door to this area is locked. As a common asylum door, it can be unlocked with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check, but this one has a break DC of only 12. It's plain to see something has tried to beat its way through this door in the past, but succeeded only in weakening it.

These two small rooms were once clearly separated, but now a broad gap in the brick wall links them. Dusty buckets, brooms, and racks of cleaning supplies lie in the rear of one space, while the other features a small desk and chairs shoved out of the way.

The northern room of this area was once used to store supplies and cleaning equipment useful to the upkeep of the boiler in area **B9**, though the majority of the useful or dangerous tools and chemicals once stored here have been absconded with since the asylum uprising. The southern room served as the rarely used office of the asylum groundskeepers—little more than a staging ground for projects and paperwork.

Regardless of the rooms' past functions, the gap between them has led the survivors occupying this corner of the asylum to use it as a kind of gatehouse, a controlled passage around the barricade that protects them in the hall beyond.

While the door between here and area **B2** is locked, the door connecting to area **B4** is not.

Creatures: Two chapel guards are posted in the former office, ready to assist their allies in the hall outside.

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CHAPEL GUARDS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Human warrior 3

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 22 each (3d10+6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +3 (1d6)

Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 9,

Wis 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Point-Blank

Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Perception +5, Sense Motive +4,

Survival +1

Languages Common

Gear padded armor, club, light crossbow with 20 bolts

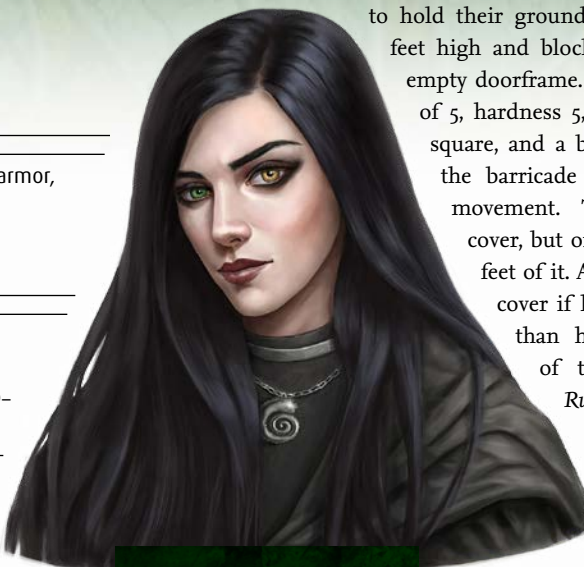
Treasure: A PC who searches through the cluttered supplies of the north room, and succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check, finds one of the following each time until all are discovered: two empty sacks, a box containing three tindertwigs, three flasks of oil, a hooded lantern, and a crowbar. Additionally, any PC that wants to investigate the desk must spend 1 minute working to make its drawers accessible. Once done, the desk contains a vial of ink, three splintery pens, and stacks of mundane work orders, most directed to a Mr. Finchley (the asylum's former head groundskeeper) from Miss Deliadde (the asylum's head nurse). The name Briarstone Asylum is repeated dozens of time on forms and inexpertly printed stationery.

Story Award: If the PCs don't attack the guards and convince them to stand down, award them 600 XP.

B4. CHAPEL BARRICADE (CR 5)

A 3-foot-high barricade of broken furniture and fallen masonry fills a wide, empty doorframe, blocking off the northern portion of this broad hall. Lanterns flicker upon the walls, casting shadows upon several closed doors and beyond the ramshackle barricade.

This hall and all the rooms attached to it compose the territory held by some of the asylum uprising's survivors. As the main entrance and exit to the space lies at the northernmost end of the hall, the survivors have erected



WINTER KLAZCKA

a ramshackle barricade as a battlefront from which to hold their ground. The barricade stands 3 feet high and blocks a 5-foot section of an empty doorframe. The barricade has an AC of 5, hardness 5, 40 hit points per 5-foot square, and a break DC of 20. Crossing the barricade counts as 2 squares of movement. The barricade provides cover, but only to creatures within 30 feet of it. An attacker can ignore the cover if he's closer to the obstacle than his target. (See page 195 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for more details on low obstacles and cover.)

A considerable amount of junk is piled up along the walls next to the barricade, and any damage to the fortification can easily be repaired with 10 minutes of work.

A different barrier rises at the eastern end of the hall. A set of four bed sheets have been clumsily switched together, creating a curtain that obscures all of area B8. Any PC within 5 feet of the drape who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check hears faint weeping beyond.

Creatures: Four guards are always on alert here, three positioned at the barricade. The fourth is typically Denman Winopares, a guard who makes sure no one—especially not the children—get too curious about what's in area B8. The chapel guards are slightly fitter and better equipped than most of the survivors.

When the PCs first approach the survivors' territory, they are not met as friends. As the party likely emerges from area B1 into area B2, well within sight of the barricade, there's a high chance the guards here notice them. If the PCs are spotted, a guard yells out a warning both to the strangers and his allies, such as "Whoa, there! We got more here!" The guards train crossbows on the PCs and order them to stay back. After a tense round or two, the guards' "captain," Vaustin York, arrives. York demands the PCs draw no closer and leave. He doesn't want to shoot strangers, but he also knows they might be doppelgangers. If the PCs draw closer, he gives them a sterner warning. If they try to cross the barricade or force open the door to area B3, he and the other guards open fire.

York can be reasoned with, though. If the PCs try to explain themselves, or simply seem confused enough, York asks how he can know they're not shapeshifters. If challenged about his unusual question, he explains the whole place is overrun by lunatics and monsters that can look like anyone. Although he won't elaborate on the asylum's current status, he's a reasonable—if fantastically stressed—fellow. If the PCs prove well reasoned or

desperate enough, he tells them to prove they're not shapeshifters. When asked how, he thinks a moment, then comes up with: "Bring back a few dead doppelgangers, then maybe we'll rethink whose side you're on." If asked to elaborate, he explains that the doppelgangers lurk in the big wash rooms just to the north. Through the entire conversation, York seems suspicious to the point of paranoia. He's seen a lot of death and unexplainable things in the last few days, so his trust doesn't come easy—even in the face of logical answers and wounded strangers. As such, he resists even the most reasonable requests and peppers his comments with remarks like, "As if you didn't know."

"CAPTAIN" VAUSTIN YORK **CR 1**

XP 400

Male human fighter 2

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 21 (2d10+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee light mace +4 (1d6+2)

Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Perception +2, Sense Motive +3, Survival +5

Languages Common

Gear leather armor, light crossbow with 20 bolts, light mace

CHAPEL GUARDS (4) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

hp 22 each (see page 14)

Development: Vaustin York ratchets down his suspicion of the PCs if they return with multiple dead doppelgangers. Even if the PCs managed to kill Ilesi Scaen in area **A1** and drag her corpse back here, one body is not good enough to convince York—"I know we've hit a few of you. Who's to say we weren't the ones who killed that one?" If pressed, he has no problem spelling out that it'll take at least three doppelganger corpses to convince him the PCs are whom they say they are. Once the PCs drag three shapeshifter corpses to the barricade, York orders the northern door to area **B3** opened. Once admitted, he demands the PCs give up their weapons and come with him. He comes across as stern enough, but it's ultimately a rather half-hearted demand. If the PCs resist for more than a round or 2, he finally relents. After this, he personally escorts the party to the survivors' leader, Winter Klaczka, in area **B5**.

B5. CHAPEL

Improvised pallets are clustered beneath sculpted divinities, and cooking fires burn beneath cracked windows in this chapel. Panes of violet and blue stained glass form spiraling patterns between prisonlike bars, while dozens of candles flicker from modest alcove shrines.

When all hell broke loose at Briarstone, many of the asylum's staff and more lucid patients headed for the doors. Many of those who found their escape blocked panicked and met terrible ends. A few, though, sought protection from the gods, and a small, desperate congregation assembled here at the asylum's multid denominational chapel. As things grew worse, more forlorn survivors gathered as far away as they could get from the monsters and lunatics overrunning the asylum's northeastern halls. In their hearts they knew they were waiting for their own awful fates. However, through the determination of a resolute few, that end has not yet come.

The Briarstone chapel is consecrated to Pharasma, as suggested by a prominent statue of the goddess standing before the sanctuary's westernmost wall and depicted on the spiral stained glass windows. However, there are smaller, candlelit shrines to other deities, including Abadar, Desna, Erastil, Gozreh, Iomedae, Irori, Sarenrae, Shelyn, and even a modest donation box beneath the symbols of Asmodeus and Zon-Kuthon. Several lesser deities—including almost any deity a PC might worship—also have ledges with symbols and candles here. Each serves as a place where the distressed can come and pray for guidance or mercy for their afflicted loved ones.

The chapel's role as a place of reflection and consolation has largely been pushed aside for more pragmatic uses. A PC might have the idea to escape the asylum by breaking the stained glass window here, but careful inspection reveals that the windows are all barred. In addition, breaking the windows would only let the mist outside to seep in, and the survivors here would stop any efforts made to break the window. For more details on the community that's been established here, see pages 22–25.

More than the chapel's location makes it an effective redoubt. While most of the shrines are little more than stone and candle wax, two have special properties. One is the altar of Pharasma, which radiates a *hallow* effect that encompasses the entire chapel. The altar is made of more than a ton of black-and-white granite and can't be moved or destroyed without a significant expenditure of time and effort. If it is, though, the *hallow* effect ends. The other, even more vital feature of the sanctuary is the shrine to Desna, which blankets the entire chapel with a zone of peaceful slumber. Anyone who rests in this area has pleasant dreams and wakes up feeling refreshed. The nightmares that infect sleeping minds elsewhere in the asylum don't reach here. As a result, those who rest in this

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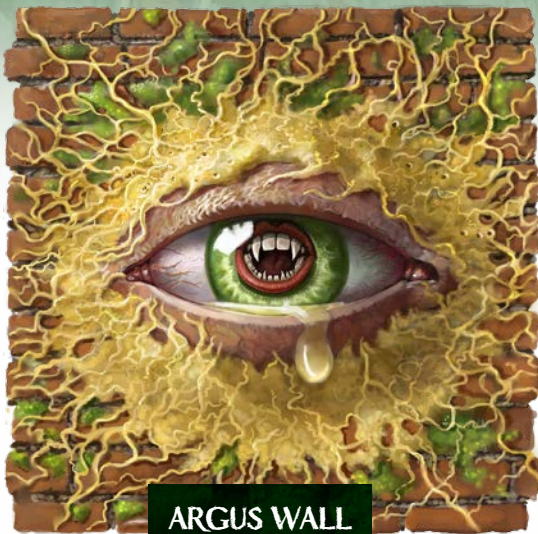
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place don't experience the effects detailed in Dreaming in Briarstone on page 25 (for that night), and recover 1 additional hit point from natural healing. Additionally, the effects of the spell *nightmare* are suppressed as long as one rests within the chapel. The shrine of Desna is fragile, its focus being a delicate, 2-foot-tall porcelain statue of the butterfly-winged goddess, posed in a dance amid silks and stars. If left in its alcove along the northernmost wall, the statue is in no danger. If removed from the room, the shrine's effects end (though the effects resume if the statue is returned to its alcove). The statue has hardness 4 and 5 hit points. As a standard action, a character can deliberately topple the statue from its alcove, dealing 1d6 points of damage to the statue. If reduced to 0 hit points, the statue is destroyed, and its effects irreparably end.

Creatures: At any given time, up to 22 survivors might be in this room, though a few are usually on guard duty in area B4 or secluded in area B6. The following statistics might be used for any survivor not detailed elsewhere. Winter Klaczka watches over all of them.

SURVIVOR

CR 1/2

XP 200

Human commoner 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 11 (2d6+4)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +1 (1d6)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Alertness, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Skill Focus (Survival)

Skills Perception +1, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +3, Survival +4

Languages Common

Gear club

WINTER KLACZKA

XP 600

hp 20 (see page 60)

Treasure: Throughout the chapel is a variety of useful but not particularly valuable equipment—candles, lanterns, oil, rations, and so on. If the PCs are helping the survivors and are in generally good standing with them, they can request 10 gp worth of rations and adventuring gear from the group, so long as the GM feels it makes sense for the group to have the requested items (they likely have sacks and torches; they probably don't have miner's picks and portable rams).

Additionally, there are two donation boxes in the chapel, one in the alcove north of the door, and the other to the south. The one to the north is marked with the symbol of Pharasma, while the southern one sits beneath the symbols of several evil deities. Each has hardness 5 and 1 hit point, and is secured by a simple lock that requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check to open. Inside the northern lockbox is 8 gp, while the southern lockbox contains 112 sp, 14 gp, and a gold band worth 10 gp with the engraving "G. R. + M. D."

Development: When the PCs first arrive in the chapel they are likely escorted to meet with the survivors' leader, Winter Klaczka, or she otherwise makes herself known. She's wary of the PCs and has no compunction about making that clear, but deals with her unease and the new arrivals with the pragmatism of someone harboring greater concerns. If the PCs have already proven themselves to York, Winter accepts that they're probably not doppelgangers and offers them the sanctuary of the chapel, its meager resources, and her own strapped healing abilities. However, if they want more, they're going to have to work for it. See Negotiating with Winter on page 22 for details on how this conversation might go and what she can tell the PCs.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully negotiate with Winter, help out and befriend the survivors, award them 800 XP.

B6. CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE

A nest of cushions and linens squeezes between this room's rear wall and a battered desk covered in folded paper animals. A sculpted emblem of a spiraling comet overlooks the otherwise ransacked room.

This room once served as the office of Avros Setrakian, Briarstone's chaplain. After the survivors holed up in this area, they ransacked the room for fuel, turning bookshelves into firewood and stuffy ecclesiastical treatises into kindling. The desk proved too awkward to break up swiftly, but its time may soon come.

Creatures: With noise and disturbing outbursts common in the chapel, Winter asked the soft-spoken nurse Tolman Leolies to take two of the young survivors here to keep them calm and safe. Tolman has done so admirably, distracting Brenton Lieklan and Maeve Kostenbau with paper folding crafts (Maeve likes making animals, while Brenton works on perfecting an orchid-like shape). Through his own dozing and by watching the children, Tolman knows that they're all suffering from bad dreams, but that these dreams seem lessened inside the chapel. Therefore, for their sanity and safety, Tolman takes the kids into the chapel to sleep every night. If asked about nightmares, or if the PCs gain his confidence, he shares his observations about the chapel's nightmare suppression effect. He doesn't know what causes it, though. Tolman has the statistics of a normal survivor. The children have the same statistics, but with the young simple template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295).

B7. CHAPLAIN'S SHRINE AND RECORDS

Candles array themselves before a violet wall hanging embroidered with the shape of a spiraling comet. A wall of bars divides the room, locking away a row of filing cabinets.

This room once served as Chaplain Setrakian's personal shrine, where he would prepare for the day and seek inspiration for the patients' mandatory church services by following a strict regimen of self-flagellation. A wall of iron bars locks away ecclesiastical records for many of the patients. The cramped space can be accessed via a squat door of swinging bars. The barred door's lock can be circumvented with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check. Those who manage to access the records find hundreds of files documenting past patients and a subset of Briarstone's current population.

Treasure: A cabinet here holds three deep purple cleric's vestments (suited for a priest of Pharasma), a clean leather lash, and a box containing two *scrolls of cure light wounds* and one *scroll of sanctuary*, as well as a *wand of lesser restoration* (7 charges).

B8. WEEPING WALL (CR 3)

The hall ends just beyond the dingy curtain, but the wall here suffers some sort of otherworldly parasitism. A mass of stringy, yellow fungus stretches across the stone blocks. At its heart bulges and blinks a watery eye the size of a wagon wheel.

Throughout Briarstone Asylum, the Dreamlands have forced their insane reality upon the Material Plane. In places, those nightmarish influences have been warped by Ulver Zandalus, either by insane whim or terrible intention. The eyelike organ growing here is an example of something between the two. Zandalus knows of the survivors in the chapel and has sealed the door to trap them, both out of cruelty and in expectation of vague future uses. The survivors know none of this. The growth emerged here 2 days ago and has spread slowly. York had the sheet put in place to hide the horrible sight from the children and other excitable survivors.

Haunt: Although it manifests as a physical effect, the gigantic eye is a haunt that has affected the door with a grotesque variation of *warp wood*, sealing it shut. If the haunt is destroyed, the door is also destroyed, and the PCs can pass through the doorframe.

If the PCs begin attacking the eye, Vaustin York races to this area and demands they stop, as its screaming is upsetting the already tense survivors. He firmly encourages them to find another way to circumvent the wall, though he won't go as far as physically restraining the characters. If the PCs haven't wiped out the doppelgangers in areas **B11–B14**, he's quite adamant about this. If the PCs have dealt with the doppelgangers, he relents if the characters put up a confrontation.

ARGUS WALL CR 3

600 XP

CE item-bound persistent haunt (haunted door)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 10 (to hear faint sobs up to 10 feet away)

hp 13; **Trigger** constant (always in effect); **Reset** 1 day

Weakness affected by physical damage

Effect A gigantic eye gazes from the center of a funguslike wall that's as tough as wood. The wall (including the eye) has hardness 10, 40 hit points, and a break DC of 23. The surface heals 2 hit points every round. If any part of the wall is attacked, the eye's pupil sprouts fangs and immediately attempts to attack any creature within 5 feet (+2 attack, 1d8 damage). It can make one attack per round. After attacking, the eye-mouth screams, "Who am I become?" in three overlapping, drowned-sounding voices, then cries a 1-pint tear of ammonia.

Destruction The eye and fungus quietly wither away if it views its own reflection.

B9. BOILER ROOM (CR 2)

Mighty iron boilers crowd here, their pipes piercing the walls and ceiling. Shadows and rust fill the narrow gaps between the cold tanks.

Once the furnace in area **A1** below heated the water here, which was then used in the nearby laundry, shower

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rooms, and elsewhere in the asylum. Since the furnace has only been sporadically tended since the asylum erupted into chaos, the tanks in this room have cooled. Hypothetically, if the furnace was relit and tended for 5 or more hours, the boilers here would function again, providing hot water to areas **B14** and **E9** (see those areas for more details).

The duct from area **A1b** opens into a tight but traversable space inside one of the boilers. A heavy iron door is partially opened already, allowing those who climb from below to enter the room.

Any character who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check notices a faint glow emanating from beneath a boiler toward the rear of the room—light cast by one of the creatures lurking here.

Creatures: A group of rodents fled here after tremors destroyed their previous nest. Not all of these creatures are Briarstone natives, though, or even natives to this world. Huddled among the temperamental dire rats is a zoog, a sentient native of the Dreamlands that's simply looking for shelter. The zoog's spell sight ability casts a cone of light that's mostly blocked by the pipes beneath a boiler. Anyone who moves to investigate the light catches a glimpse of glowing eyes and writhing face tendrils before the zoog and its dire rat companions attack.

DIRE RATS (2) **CR 1/3**
XP 135 each
hp 4 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

ZOOG **CR 1**
XP 400
hp 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 288)

Treasure: A character who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check finds two unused sunrods that have rolled beneath a boiler, about 4 feet from the nearest edge. A Small or smaller creature can climb under to collect them, but larger creatures will have to devise some method to recover them.

B10. STORAGE (CR 1)

Two storage rooms lie off the southwest hall. These rooms once held spare linens and cleaning supplies crammed onto wall-mounted racks. The tremors that shook the asylum ruined several of the racks here, and soon after survivors looted almost everything of value. What remains are two rooms that reek of chlorine and are heaped with fallen shelves and broken containers. Any character who spends 5 minutes sifting through the debris and who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check reveals the treasure noted below, but might also disturb the new residents.

Creatures: The tremors created a deep crack in the northern storage room, admitting two giant centipedes that now lurk amid the wreckage. PCs who search in the

northern storage room startle these two vermin, which attack after the PCs' surprise round.

GIANT CENTIPEDES (2) **CR 1/2**
XP 200 each
hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 43)

Treasure: Those who spend time searching the southern storage room discover a lantern, a hammer, and three winter blankets. In the northern room, they turn up 10 feet of chain, a set of manacles, two winter blankets, and a tarnished old silver necklace worth 5 gp.

B11. STAFF OFFICE (CR 3)

The walls between the hall and this office have largely collapsed, exposing debris-cluttered desks, toppled lockers, and several bodies that almost look human.

The asylum's support staff once organized from this office, addressing tasks and storing personal items. Most of the furniture and supplies used by the modest operation, now in ruins, have been destroyed. In addition, the bodies of several humans lie amid the debris, both Briarstone employees caught in the wreckage and survivors who fell to the halls' monstrous new denizens. Three doppelganger bodies are also tangled amid the ruins, most riddled with crossbow bolts fired by survivors to the south. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check notices that lengths of flesh have been deliberately stripped from the corpses, human and doppelganger alike—evidence of Doctor Latchke's experiments.

Creature: The survivors in the chapel rightly fear the doppelgangers, but more than they need to. They don't realize the collapse in area **B12** stranded only a handful of doppelgangers in close proximity to their bastion, several of which their guards dealt with in recent skirmishes. Now only two doppelgangers remain, Doctor Latchke and Doctor Oathsdays. Currently, Doctor Latchke—the more subservient of the pair—is here, conducting a comparative analysis on the degradation of human flesh versus doppelganger skin. If Doctor Latchke is aware of the PCs' approach and has time to prepare, he falls amid the human bodies in his experiment and transforms into a grandmotherly old nurse with a gruesomely broken leg. He keeps up the facade until he has an opportune moment to attack a PC, he can escape toward area **B14**, or his disguise is compromised. He refuses to go to the chapel, expecting the paranoid guards to unmask him.

If come upon unawares, Doctor Latchke is stripping skins from the human and doppelganger corpses and laying them alongside one another in long strips. This morbid organization marks the extent of his "science."

DOCTOR LATCHKE**CR 3****XP 800**Male doppelganger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 89)**hp 26**

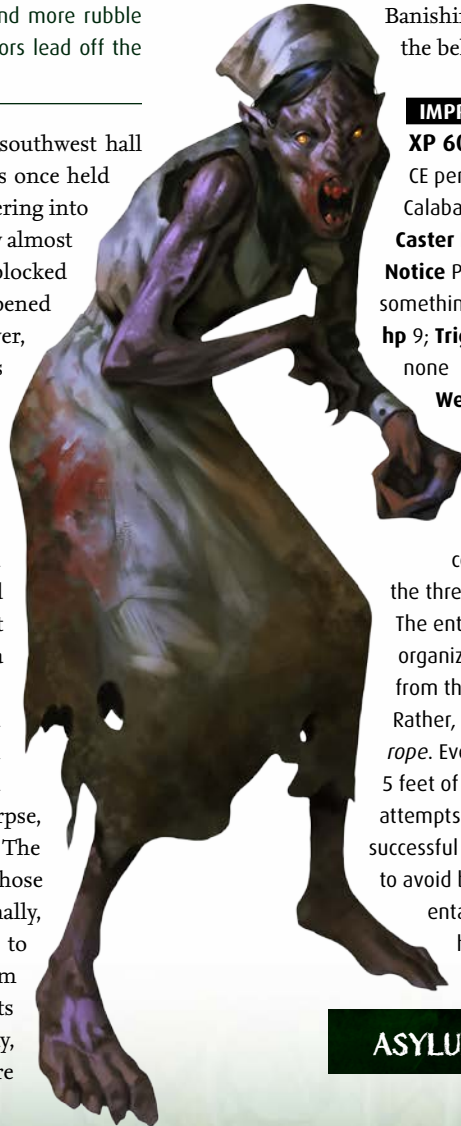
Treasure: Those who spend 10 minutes clearing away the rubble find desks containing paper and basic writing implements, all functional, but used enough to be valueless. Any character who also succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check discovers a wooden holy symbol of Pharasma, a small steel mirror, and a pair of gaudy red leather boots with cat skin lining (worth 20 gp). If a character's Perception result exceeds 20, she also finds a masterwork silver dagger in a locker full of what looks like grass-stained hunter's clothes.

B12. RUINED HALL (CR 3)

Most of this area has collapsed into a heap of dense gray rubble. The occasional clattering pebble makes it sound as though the mound is not entirely settled, and more rubble could collapse at any moment. Surviving doors lead off the hall to the west and east.

The space at the northern end of the southwest hall was once a sort of guard station. Orderlies once held posts there to prevent patients from wandering into the asylum's service areas. The place is now almost completely buried. Though partially blocked by debris, the western door can be opened with only a minor bit of effort. However, the passage that would lead to area **E6** is entirely obstructed by rubble.

Creatures: The corpse of the orderly Dalami Calabar lies here, half buried from the waist down by rubble. The invasive powers of the Dreamlands and the Tatterman's influence have seeped into her body, animating it as an undead creature, but not in a particularly efficient way. Dalami's body now functions as a beheaded and two crawling hands. None of the rest of the body is animated, and none of the undead pieces have control of the whole. As a result, the three undead parts are trapped on the facedown corpse, ineffectually scrambling for freedom. The undead body parts can attack only those within 5 feet of Dalami's corpse. Additionally, the immobile remains they're shackled to prevent them from moving and deny them their Dexterity bonus to AC. The body parts are largely harmless to those who keep away, but that might change if any of them are harmed (see *Haunt* below).

**ASYLUM GHOUL****BEHEADED****CR 1/3****XP 135****hp 4** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 17)**CRAWLING HANDS (2)****CR 1/2****XP 200 each****hp 9 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 59)

Haunt: The powers of the Dreamlands manifests throughout Briarstone as strange occurrences and otherworldly influences. One such tendril of otherworldly power was responsible for Dalami's incomplete animation. That force still lingers here, roiling within the corpse. If Dalami's corpse or any of the three animate undead attached to it are damaged, the body's fourth animate part—its entrails—thrash violently to life, tearing the corpse apart, releasing the three previously listed undead to function as normal, and attempting to ensnare any who approach. The powers acting on Dalami's body can be noticed and prevented as per a normal haunt.

Banishing the haunt has no effect on the beheaded or crawling hands.

IMPRISONED VISCERA**CR 2****XP 600**

CE persistent haunt (Dalami Calabar's corpse)

Caster Level 2nd**Notice** Perception DC 16 (to notice something writhing inside the corpse)**hp 9; Trigger** damage to corpse; **Reset** none**Weakness** susceptible to physical damage

Effect When this haunt is triggered, the corpse's animated innards rip the corpse's flesh apart, releasing the three undead body parts attached. The entrails are disgusting, but aren't organized enough to move away from the corpse or deal damage. Rather, they function as per *animate rope*. Every round someone is within 5 feet of the corpse, the viscera attempts to entangle that creature. A successful DC 14 Reflex save is required to avoid becoming entangled, and the entangled creature can free himself from the entangling

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organs with a successful DC 14 Escape Artist check. The organs have an AC of 10 and 2 hit points, and require a successful DC 18 Strength check to burst.

Destruction The haunt ends 1 minute after the viscera erupts from the body, but remains active until that time has passed or the entrails have been destroyed.

Treasure: Searching Dalami's body yields a freshwater pearl necklace worth 200 gp.

B13. LINEN AND DRYING (CR 3)

Sturdy racks and toppled tables suggest this space once served as a sizable laundry. Much of the northern end of the room is filled with rubble.

The heart of the asylum's housecleaning operation has ceased to beat, but its chambers haven't gone to waste.

Creatures: A wall of pipelike crossbeams fills the western alcove of this room. Three figures are manacled to the rack here, from south to north: a human wearing stained yellow sheets as robes and bearing a flame-shaped chalk mark upon his forehead, the corpse of a partially eaten patient, and a ghoul. The prisoners cannot move from the four westernmost spaces of the alcove, but they can slide north and south. The prisoners were all captured and chained here by the doppelgangers and now wait to take part in Doctor Oathsdays's experiments (see area B14).

The human is Juglan Rivercane, a patient who began suffering from aphasia after nearly drowning. He used to uncontrollably repeat the first word of sentences he was trying to say. Since the breakdown at the asylum, he has fallen in with the Apostles in Orpiment, and has become able to exclaim three things: "praise," "words fail," and "Zandalus sees!" Juglan has the statistics of a common cult member but has only half the normal amount of hit points. He desperately seeks to be freed, knowing that the hanging corpse will only protect him from his ghoul fellow prisoner for so long. If freed, Juglan will try to return to area B5, likely provoking a standoff with the guards in area B4.

The corpse dangling here was once another asylum patient. This unfortunate fell victim to the hungers of her undead fellow prisoner. Her left arm has been completely stripped of flesh.

The final prisoner is a ghoul who calls himself Argade. He used to be a patient, but was transformed in the same manner as the other ghouls in Briarstone. When the nearby hall collapsed, he was separated from his fellows and fell victim to Doctor Oathsdays. He's somewhat frightened, but distracts himself by devouring one of his fellow prisoners. The process is slow as his hands are restrained, but he'll be able to complete his gruesome task in the next 48 hours, after which he'll move on to Juglan. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Bluff, Diplomacy,

or Intimidate check can distract Argade for 1 minute, long enough to ask a question or two. The ghoul is half-feral and can tell the PCs that he used to be a patient, and that he and some others were captured by shapeshifters after the asylum started falling apart. He can't say why he's now a ghoul and doesn't seem particularly concerned. If freed, he attacks the PCs.

JUGLAN RIVERCANE

CR 1

XP 400

Apostle in Orpiment (see page 36)

hp 16 (currently 8)

GHOUL

CR 1

XP 400

hp 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

Treasure: If the prisoners are freed, the PCs can collect the three sets of manacles. Additionally, if a PC searches the half-eaten body, she finds a strange treasure in a dirty handkerchief inside one of its pockets. Slipped through from the Dreamlands, the item is nothing more than a disembodied, coin-sized eye with an X-shaped pupil. The eye has hardness 0 and 1 hit point, and if left on a flat surface, it slowly rolls in a random direction. A membrane within the eye blinks every few moments and the pupil moves to make eye contact with whoever's holding it. The eye has no apparent function, but a buyer of curiosities might pay up to 250 gp for it.

B14. LAUNDRY ROOM (CR 4)

Several wide tables and gigantic washbasins fill a laundry equipped to service hundreds. The place looks as though it were repurposed as a failed surgery, though, with at least one table heaped with remains while corpses lie discarded in corners. A stained sheet hangs between two of the basins, dividing the room roughly in half. A lantern shines on the far side.

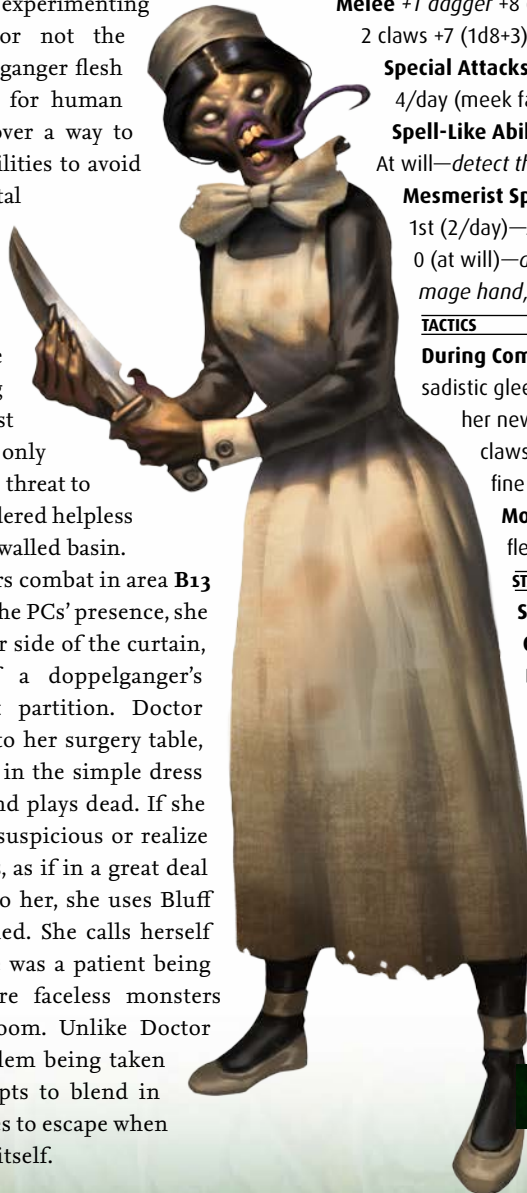
Briarstone's patients once assisted the staff in the endless task of doing laundry for all the asylum's residents. Three 6-foot-tall, 10-foot-diameter washtubs stand in alcoves along the west walls, two short folding ladders leaning near each. The tables here have been cleared of their mundane work and used as surfaces for operating and dissection. The remains of several humans and doppelgangers lie spread across these tables, butchered beyond simple scientific inquiry.

There are several bodies here, five belonging to human former patients and two doppelgangers reverted into their natural forms after being killed by crossbow bolts. Most sprawl in the corner east of the door.

Three pull chains hang from the ceiling along the south wall. Once these controlled the flow of water from the boiler room to the washtubs. If no special steps are taken, the chains don't work. If the furnace in area **A1b** is lit and tended as described in area **B9**, the boilers function again. If the boilers are working, pulling a chain causes boiling water to start or stop flowing into an associated tub. The tubs take about 20 minutes to fill with water. Any creature that comes into contact with boiling water takes 1 point of fire damage per round. If a washtub is overfilled, the water overflows into drains in the floor (the room cannot be flooded).

Creatures: The leader of the area's remaining doppelgangers has created a small surgery for herself here. Being the only one of the doppelgangers to have formerly been a doctor and thus have any surgical skill, she's investigating her new state and the abilities and dangers it presents. Having encountered the ghouls already, she's currently experimenting to determine whether or not the ghouls' hunger for doppelganger flesh is equal to their craving for human meat. She hopes to discover a way to use her transformative abilities to avoid the undead gluttons. Vital to her experiments is a crippled ghoul (formerly Chaplain Setrakian before he succumbed to the Tatterman) that is being held in the southernmost washbasin. The ghoul has only 1 hit point and presents no threat to the PCs unless they're rendered helpless and thrown into the high-walled basin.

If Doctor Oathsday hears combat in area **B13** or is otherwise alerted to the PCs' presence, she casts *silent image* on the far side of the curtain, creating an illusion of a doppelganger's silhouette on the sheet partition. Doctor Oathsday then climbs onto her surgery table, transforms into a human in the simple dress of a Briarstone patient, and plays dead. If she thinks the PCs might be suspicious or realize she's not dead, she groans, as if in a great deal of pain. If the PCs tend to her, she uses Bluff checks to fake being healed. She calls herself Iza Weeds and claims she was a patient being treated for anxiety before faceless monsters dragged her from her room. Unlike Doctor Latchke, she has no problem being taken to the chapel. She attempts to blend in with the survivors and tries to escape when the opportunity presents itself.



If the PCs manage to sneak up on Doctor Oathsday, she's standing on a folding ladder, carefully feeding chunks of doppelganger flesh into the southernmost basin and noting the ghoul's reactions.

DOCTOR OATHSDAY **CR 4**

XP 1,200

Female doppelganger mesmerist 1 (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 89, *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 38)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 37 (5 HD; 1d8+4d10+11)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

Immune charm, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 dagger +8 (1d4+4/19-20) or

2 claws +7 (1d8+3)

Special Attacks hypnotic stare (-2), mesmerist tricks 4/day (meek facade), painful stare (+1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +21)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 15)

Mesmerist Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (2/day)—*silent image* (DC 14), *vanish*^{APG} (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13),

mage hand, *unwitting ally*^{APG} (DC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat Doctor Oathsday fights with sadistic glee. She slashes at her opponents with her newly acquired dagger instead of her claws to draw out the fight and because the fine cuts delight her.

Morale The doppelganger attempts to flee if reduced to 10 or fewer hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Feint

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +14, Heal +4, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Bluff (+20 while using change shape), +4 Disguise (+20 while using change shape)

Languages Aklo, Common

SQ change shape (*alter self*),

DOCTOR OATHSDAY

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consummate liar +1, mimicry, perfect copy

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 dagger, 48 gp

GHOUL

CR 1

XP 200

hp 13, currently 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

SPECIAL

The ghoul is too weak and wounded to climb out of the washtub. Due to its condition, it is worth only half the usual amount of experience.

Treasure: Besides her gear, Doctor Oathsday also has a key to the manacles restraining the prisoners in area **B13**. It sits next to the lantern to the far south of the room. A set of reasonably well-kept surgeon's tools (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 79) rests on the table nearby. Additionally, the table holds a *handy haversack* containing a pouch with 3 pp, a *pearl of power* (1st level), and a *phylactery of faithfulness*, all formerly owned by the chaplain. A 6-foot-tall standing mirror also leans against the wall (it weighs about 8 pounds, but is relatively easy to move), and six 10-foot poles sit propped in the washtubs, two in each.

NEGOTIATING WITH WINTER

The PCs likely have many questions for the survivors and their leader, Winter Klaczka, has the answers to some of them. Winter's willingness to help is tempered by the daunting challenge of keeping her community together. Therefore, she forces two deals upon the capable-looking PCs. First, if the PCs have not already proved themselves by helping York and rooting out the doppelgangers in the areas **B11–B14**, she insists on that and won't engage the PCs further until the threat is dealt with. Once the doppelgangers are handled, she's willing to talk if the PCs help her for a few hours. If the PCs refuse or insist that they're in too much of a hurry for chores, she has no problem not speaking to them until they relent or prove useful to the community in another way. If they agree, she converses with the PCs over dinner (or the next most logical meal).

As a community, the survivors have managed to pilfer enough food, linen, scrap wood, and other supplies to establish a modest refugee camp, but the situation isn't tenable. Food is already dwindling, the water they collect through the broken windows isn't reliably potable, and the privy situation grows worse daily. All told, the community has about 7 days of healthy living left, barring deadly outside interference. After these 7 days, Winter begs the PCs to find more resources, directing them toward the asylum kitchens for food. While the needs of the survivors are genuine, the only real way to keep them safe is to help them escape. Use Winter's worry about the

survivors' dwindling supplies as a way to hasten the PCs' investigations, but don't let attending to them become a major thrust of the adventure.

It's up to the PCs to determine how they'll help the refugees. There are three concerns that need attention, along with the endless work of breaking up furniture for the fires. Each chore takes roughly 1 hour to perform, though if a PC has a spell or other special ability that immediately solves the problem (in a legitimately helpful fashion), the heroes can move on to another. For every chore the PCs complete, Winter's attitude improves one step (starting at unfriendly and progressing toward helpful; Diplomacy checks alone won't change her attitude more than 1 step). Some of the activities might also influence the PCs' standing among all the survivors. Keep track of this good favor as a general gauge of how well liked the PCs are by the entire community, but these results don't have any concrete effects beyond flavoring future interactions. The activities also serve to introduce the PCs to several other noteworthy members of the community. Once the PCs are ready to help, have Winter direct them toward specific chores or briefly list what obviously needs to be done and let the PCs choose their tasks.

Attend Wounded: Two survivors, Airwynn Savoia and Bates Yopchick, are suffering from wounds Winter hasn't been able to fully heal yet. They are both currently resting on pallets near the altar. Airwynn suffered a broken arm and several broken ribs when she was almost crushed by a falling wall. Bates was set upon by dangerous patients whipped into an animalistic fury by Ulver Zandalus. He was barely rescued by another survivor, Mura, but suffered vicious bites all over his body. The boy is still scared and hurting. Airwynn currently has 1 hit point, and Bates has 2 hit points. A PC can use the Heal skill to provide long term care and the patients will heal 5 hit points overnight (this includes the additional hit point healed from sleeping in the chapel). If a PC is able to magically heal the wounded outright, the chore takes only minutes. In either case, the PC gains the good favor of Airwynn, Bates, and (likely unknown to them) Mura.

Calm and Medicate: Loic Ulsohnen, an asylum patient, has frequent auditory hallucinations of his sister calling for him. His twin sister died when they were eight; Loic is now 27. His hallucinations are usually managed with tinctures, which the community currently has in good supply. It's just a matter of convincing a currently quite agitated Loic to calm down and take his medicine. Loic has typical survivor statistics (see page 16) and is currently being hedged into a corner by Naysa Walika, a former asylum nurse. It's taking all of her attention to keep Loic from running off into the hall, where he might be hurt. Naysa can fill in a PC on the situation, but refuses to let the PCs manhandle her patient (growing furious if they treat Loic aggressively). Any PC who succeeds at a Bluff,

Diplomacy, or Intimidate check can convince Loic to calm down (though Naysa only tolerates so much bullying). Over the course of the next hour, calm conversation and continued attention relaxes him and persuades him to take his medication. Those who help Loic without violence gain Loic's and Naysa's good favor.

Prepare Firewood: Splintered furniture and fallen support beams lay heaped in one corner of the chapel. A crowbar and a handaxe are all the survivors have to break the scrap wood apart, though. If a PC succeeds at a DC 14 Strength check and spends an hour working at the heap, he produces enough scrap wood to keep the fires burning for the night. Additionally, if a PC succeeds at a DC 14 Survival check or employs a two-handed slashing weapon to break up the scrap, she produces an excess of firewood. This impresses Denman Winopares, the guard who usually stands watch outside area B8 and who works here when not resting or on watch.

Prepare Food: There are several small fires set up about the chapel with cooking implements, collected water, and basic foodstuffs. Some of the survivors are trying to prepare meals, but their methods are amateurish and wasteful. A PC can attempt a DC 15 Profession (cook) or Survival check to help prepare a meal. Success sees all the survivors fed. If the PC succeeds by 5 points or more, the meal is the best the survivors have had all week, making the PC something of a local celebrity and improving all of the survivors' attitudes toward that PC by 1 step. If the skill check results in a roll of 5 or less, the PC gives some of the survivors food poisoning (which doesn't become apparent until the following day), decreasing all of the survivors' attitudes toward that PC by 1 step.

WHAT WINTER KNOWS

Eventually Winter interrupts the PCs' chores with bowls of watery onion broth and dried venison—made with supplies saved from a now-collapsed storeroom. In a drafty corner around a small fire, she's happy to share what she knows with helpful PCs. Below are topics Winter is most readily able to discuss. Read or paraphrase these responses as the PCs bring them up. Winter knows nothing about the PCs' identities (they'll have the potential to learn this in area C18) or about the truth behind the Tatterman or the Apostles in Orpiment. The PCs might not think to ask all of these questions in their first conversation with Winter, but as long as they remain on good terms with the survivors, she's willing to talk more later. As Winter speaks with the PCs, the strange weather outside the asylum occasionally interrupts the conversation (see page 81).

Where are we? "Briarstone Asylum. It's a hospice stuck on a rock sitting in the Danver River—a convenient place to forget inconvenient people."

It's some sort of prison? "Not as such. It's a sanitarium. The doctors here endeavored to treat and learn more

RUNNING DREAMS

Dreams and dreaming are a significant part of "In Search of Sanity." It's possible, though, that the PCs quickly learn about the asylum's dangerous nightmares and go out of their way to avoid them. That's fine, but it might mean you need to take advantage of a broader range of the opportunities to provide the PCs with dreams. If such is the case, anytime a PC wakes up from a magical sleep effect or is roused from unconsciousness, let her know she has had a dream. Time in the dream doesn't need to comport with that in the world, so a lengthy dream might happen in an instant.

The dreams the PCs might experience are both portentous and vague. If the players are allowed to pose all of their questions to the GM, a dream might seem like any other encounter. Therefore, you should consider taking a dreaming PC aside and run the vision as a brief, one-on-one encounter. Afterward, the PC becomes the vector for providing the rest of the group with information about the dream—or not. When other PCs or the dreamer have questions, the GM can shrug, making ambiguity part of the dream and leaving interpretation up to the group.

As for timing, don't feel like information about a dream needs to be provided in the instant the dream occurs; the very nature of dreams mean that they sometimes take time to recall. A brief, solo encounter between the GM and the player have their can occur whenever works best for the game, whether before a session, after, during an intermission, or even online. In this way, the game doesn't need to stop just so the GM can have an aside with one player.

about diseases of the mind. Briarstone wasn't a renowned institution, but it was far from the torture pits common folk often make asylums out to be."

Who are you?/Why are you here? "I'm Winter Klaczka, a sister of Maiden's Choir Cathedral in Caliphaz. My associates and I were helping a Royal Accuser investigate strangeness in Thrushmoor."

What strangeness? "Haserton Lowls, the count of Versex, appears to have abandoned his duties as one of the nation's rulers. Accuser Omari had reason to believe that Lowls had regular business here at Briarstone. She sent me along with other associates to investigate the asylum while she went on to Thrushmoor."

Why did the accuser involve you? "The Royal Accusers have a long, complicated relationship with the royal cathedral, but generally, when they call, we assist as we can. In this particular instance, I believe my experience as a healer was judged useful."

Who are we?/Why are we here? "I'm sorry, I don't know. You wouldn't be the first ones to lose a piece of themselves

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here. If you were patients, there must be some record of why you were committed.”

Why don't you leave? “It's as if the outside world has turned against us. I don't know if it's just Briarstone Isle, or if it's the whole world, but the hospice is surrounded by some repulsive vapor. Worse, the weather beyond is like nothing I've ever seen—thunder like laughter, rain like blood. And that's to say nothing of the shapes that scamper and flap within, vague forms that know when we sleep. Things are terrible here, but at least here we can see doom coming.”

Who is in charge of the asylum? “Doctor Eliege Losandro. I met her only once and she seemed like a capable administrator... but then the revolt happened.”

What revolt? “I'm not entirely sure, but a patient led an uprising. It wasn't like any riot I've ever heard of, though. It was more like a religious movement. Most of the northern halls are now held by robed patients who call themselves Apostles in Orpiment. Those we've encountered are fanatically devoted to a patient named Ulver Zandalus.”

Who is Ulver Zandalus? “I've never laid eyes on him, but some of the other survivors worked here before the uprising. They say Zandalus was a quiet man who suffered from horrible nightmares—a poet and artist whose art was disturbing, but who always seemed peaceful enough himself. All of that apparently changed, though.”

Why are there doppelgangers/monsters in the asylum? “I don't know. Wherever they came from, they emerged soon after the revolt. What's strange is that some of the patients and asylum staff say that, in the nights before the uprising, they had nightmares of exactly the sorts of things that stalk the halls now.”

What do you know about nightmares in the asylum? “Not much, but some of the other survivors say that sick fog outside is from their dreams, and that they keep expecting it to part and reveal a gloomy city vacant of inhabitants or a man dressed in rags. Some have fallen asleep outside the chapel have also woken screaming. I don't know what it all means, but here in the chapel, the goddess tends our dreams.”

What's growing on the wall to the east of the chapel (area B8)? “I... I don't know. We've left it alone and it hasn't bothered us. Don't tell the others about it, though. I don't want to upset the children or any of our more delicate souls. Things are bad enough without that.”

By succeeding at a DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check, a PC knows that Briarstone Asylum is in Versex County in Ustalav. A successful DC 18 Knowledge (local) check means a PC knows a bit about Ustalav's Royal Accusers, that they are secretive agents of the Ustalavic crown warranted to enforce laws and exact justice without regard for the nation's baroque hierarchy of titles and rank. They have a reputation for

harsh justice, acting on matters of national importance, and quietly ending noble dynasties. PCs who don't succeed at this check merely know them as royal investigators.

If asked about the quakes or what's caused so many walls to fall down, Winter doesn't know. None of the survivors know anything about the creature sleeping beneath the asylum (see area C2o).

Once the PCs have asked Winter all of their questions, or she can't answer any more, she makes her own plea.

“I'm sorry I can't tell you more about what's going on, but I know we can't stay here. We need a way out. All things considered, you seem able enough. If you can find some way for us to escape, some route that doesn't lead straight into that terrible fog, I'll see that the Royal Accusers reward you well. Please, you have to help us.”

If the PCs try to bargain with Winter, they find she can't offer much in the way of value. If forced, she can only raise 28 gp worth of coins and cheap jewelry from the survivors, and she won't like doing it. She is happy to offer food and shelter, though. If the PCs need more encouragement, Winter asks the PCs to think of their own survival as well. Once the party accepts, she points them where to head.

“Good. Thank you. I think I know where to start looking... but I don't think you'll like it. That thing growing at the end of the hall... well, there was a door there once. If you dispose of what's there now, the asylum's entry hall is just beyond. Lady be with you.”

Once Winter suggests that the PCs dispose of the haunt in area B8, York and the other chapel guards admit them and don't interfere with their tactics. The asylum's main entrance, area C1, is not the easy escape Winter imagines, though. If the PCs return to Winter after finding the path beyond blocked, she offers them further direction.

“That's disappointing, but not a complete surprise. There must be some way to get out of here, though. Maybe Doctor Losandro's still alive out there and knows what's caused all of this. Her office is at the very heart of the asylum. That's a good place to start. She might even be able to tell you who you are. If the worst has befallen her, though, perhaps there are other survivors out there. If you find any, bring them back here and we'll shelter them as best we can. Goddess watch over you.”

Beyond this, Winter will do her best to aid the PCs without straining the survivors' resources. She can offer food, shelter, and some healing, but little more. She will not agree to explore with the PCs or send any of

her people into combat with them, as they're too vital keeping the sanctuary safe and not up to the task. As long as the PCs don't do anything to jeopardize the survivors' safety, Winter and her people likely remain on cordial terms with the characters.

CHAPEL SURVIVORS

At the adventure's start, 22 survivors huddle together for protection in the Briarstone Chapel. In addition to Winter and York, the PCs have a chance to meet several survivors as they interact with the community. While none become major figures in the adventure, it may be helpful to have additional details about these characters, both to build ties between the PCs and the refugee community and to be sources of peripheral encounters. You might expand these characters along the outlined trajectories to build sympathy for the survivors and increase the PCs' investment in saving these innocents. Unless otherwise noted, all of the chapel's inhabitants have either the chapel guard or survivor statistics (see pages 14 and 16).

Airwynn Savoia (CG female human Kellid survivor) is member of the asylum support staff who suffered several broken bones during the quakes. If healed, she knows much about the asylum grounds, and can tell the PCs how to make the furnace and boilers work.

Baisily Harbour (LN female human Varisian survivor) is a patient who's quick to smile and frequently sleepwalks into the hall. She might be replaced mid-adventure by a doppelganger who seeks to destroy the chapel's Desnan shrine.

Bates Yopchick (LN male human Varisian survivor) is a wounded child who suffers from regular seizures. His condition grows worse without medication. He doesn't know his relation to Mura.

Brenton Lieklan (N male human Varisian survivor) is a frightened youngster who got separated from his brother during the uprising. He clings to a shadow lantern, the only memento of his departed parents (see area D3).

DaNae Foulkes (LG female human Varisian chapel guard) is a patient in her fifties who's recovering after a stress-induced nervous breakdown. She is largely recovered—if anything, recent events have steeled her. DaNae is pragmatic and mistrustful of strangers.

Denman Winopress (CN male human Varisian survivor) is a poorly performing member of the asylum's kitchen staff. He's twitchy but good with a knife. York infrequently assigns him barricade duty.

Loic Ulsohnen (N male human Varisian survivor) is a middle-aged patient suffering from unsettling auditory hallucinations of his dead sister's voice. He's a fantastic storyteller and loves the sound of rain.

Maevie Kostenbau (CN female human Kellid survivor) is a traumatized youngster who's repressed much of

what she's recently seen. She desperately wants to go outside and play, and throws temper tantrums if she's not adequately distracted.

Mura Yopchick (N female human Varisian chapel guard) is a mute, distrustful patient who's resided at the asylum for more than 12 years. She has become intensely protective of Bates. Mura doesn't know her relationship to the boy, but the PCs might discover this by investigating asylum records. (Mura and Bates are half-siblings, but they only met once years ago. Their mutual father was the person who committed both of them to Briarstone Asylum.)

Naysa Walika (NG female human Varisian chapel guard) is a veteran nurse with a calming voice and full-figured beauty. She has more than a decade of experience assisting the mentally ill, has natural singing talent, and is intensely curious about halflings.

Tolman Leolies (LG male human Garundi chapel guard) is a bookishly handsome young nurse and amateur artist. He is asexual and frequently prays to Shelyn. Tolman has recently sworn himself to protecting the children among the survivors and willingly lays down his life in their defense.

Vaustin York (LG male human Varisian chapel guard) is a former orderly with 1 year of military experience. His family—minor nobles from Rozenport—procured him a position at Briarstone to keep him close to home. "Captain" York proves especially protective of Winter, his friend Tolman, and the groups' children.

DREAMING IN BRIARSTONE

Over the course of the adventure, the PCs are likely to be afflicted by further strange dreams and nightmares. These are guaranteed to occur when the PCs sleep outside of the protected area within the chapel (area B5), but don't need to happen only when characters purposefully intend to sleep. Those put to sleep by spells or who are simply knocked unconscious might also experience strange dreams.

Should a PC purposefully sleep in order to rest outside area B5, he must attempt a DC 12 Will saving throw. Regardless of success or failure, he experiences a dream. If he fails, he wakes up haggard and unrested and, as a result, regains no hit points from natural healing. Additionally, he takes a cumulative -1 penalty on this Will save in the future (just the Will save attempted when sleeping in Briarstone—no others). Any character who fails this saving throw by 10 or more suffers a more terrifying effect, taking 1d4 points of damage and waking with visible claw and bite marks on his skin.

As for what the dreams entail, the GM should feel free to concoct her own unsettling visions, but the following dreams have special connections to the Adventure Path's plot. These visions don't need to be

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roleplayed as encounters and can be detailed as brief visions (see the Running Dreams sidebar on page 23 for more suggestions on handling these interludes).

The Observer: The dream begins as a scene in now-familiar deserted alleys, with the PC wandering an endless, alien city pursued by mists. Soon, a wall collapses, revealing a disproportionately small room. Inside, an ancient Keleshite woman sits on a stool at a simple table. She looks up at the dreamer and offers a simple piece of advice, cryptically directing the PC toward a useful piece of plot-related information or presaging the next adventure. While her messages might refer to events in this adventure—like “The past sleeps in the doctor’s tome”—her farther-reaching messages might include “Briarstone’s mistress draws closer,” “Your past was the sacrifice,” or “Beware the yellow walkers.” The dream ends immediately after.

The Tatterman Returns: The PC finds himself back in the same endless, alien city as in his original nightmare flight from the Tatterman. The scene plays out much as that dream did, but when the mists pull back to reveal the gaunt monster, it seems surprised to see the character. It cocks its head and floats forward. The dream ends just as the monster is reaching out to caress that character’s face.

Zandalus Dreams: The character wanders in an endless cloud of yellow vapor. Other shapes form and vanish in the mist, fleeting, unsettling things that refuse to be focused upon. After what seems like a lifetime, an exhausted-looking man with a ponytail of straight, white hair stumbles through the fog. He’s insane with desperation. He tries to pass the PC by, but if stopped or restrained he gapes and shouts, “We’re all lost here! We’ll never escape!” before rushing away. His ranting, “What have I done? What have I done?” follows him as the dream ends. The PC experiencing the dream doesn’t likely know that this unreachable soul is Ulver Zandalus, whose mind is trapped in the dreams suffusing Briarstone.

PART 2: THE DEAD DON'T DREAM

Having learned about the situation at Briarstone Asylum and gained a safe haven, the PCs venture into the sanitarium’s central halls. This region is divided into two branches, the central chambers devoted to the hospice’s administration, and the eastern rooms where new or temporary patients were assessed and treated. In the time since the uprising, though, these corridors have become a wilderness of sorts, where uncanny creatures from Briarstone’s past and realms beyond hold sway. The PCs aren’t the only ones exploring this region, though. The Apostles in Orpiment have largely cemented their hold on the northern half of the asylum and seek to control the rest.

As the PCs explore the region, they’ll learn more about Briarstone’s history (and how it has erupted into

chaos), the Apostles in Orpiment, and the nightmare gripping the entire asylum.

C. ADMINISTRATION

The majority of the rooms at the heart of Briarstone Asylum served to admit new patients and support the sanitarium’s doctors in providing their wards with the best possible care. The southernmost rooms provided entry and meeting spaces, where patients and their families consulted with the asylum’s doctors. Farther north, the library, offices, and records rooms supported scientific psychological work. At least, they did until Administrator Losandro stepped away from psychology and into the realm of the occult. Now, some of Briarstone Isle’s oldest inhabitants have returned and, aided by the strange powers of the Dreamlands, seek to reclaim what was once theirs.

C1. ADMISSION (CR 3)

White tile, spiderwebbed with cracks, lines the walls of this cathedral-like hall. A prominent, oval desk faces staunch double doors, while hard benches and portraits of somber doctors line the walls. Regal stairs ascend toward a second floor, but rubble has crushed the upper flights, blocking passage. Lofty windows, gridded by bars, reveal yellow mist seething just beyond.

Designed to inspire a sense of reliability and prominence, the entry hall of Briarstone Asylum was once one of the prides of the institution. Now, its marble floor is broken, the path to the observation halls above has crumbled, and its admitting nurses have fled.

A number of paths lead from the entry, including several doors, the stairs, and a broad hall stretching east toward the temporary treatment wards, though an impassible wall of rubble blocks this last exit. The doors all open easily, with the exception of the front doors (see below). Unlike most of the asylum’s rooms, the ceiling here is 20 feet high.

The stairs can be climbed up to the landing, approximately 10 feet off the ground, but another wall of rubble blocks the flight of steps leading higher. There is nothing beyond this wall, as much of the asylum’s second floor has collapsed.

Anyone who attempts to open the strong wooden front doors finds that they resist the effort, being swollen in their frame. A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Strength check can yank them open, but doing so perhaps doesn’t offer the desired escape. As soon as the doors open (even a crack), a bilious fog spills into the room, vaporous tendrils clinging to the chamber’s fringes. These yellow wisps are harmless and disintegrate 1 round after the front doors are closed, but still obscure vision beyond 5 feet (*Core Rulebook* 439). Each round the doors remain open, the fog

fills a 10-foot cube, eventually encompassing the entire area and leaking into other areas if doors to those areas are open.

Characters near the door or actively peering through can attempt a DC 12 Perception check. Those who succeed glimpse vague, bulbous masses moving deeper in the mist and hear what sounds like the faint churning of a distant but gigantic stomach. If the doors remain open for a second round, the shapes grow closer and the noise louder. On the third round, a horror sloughs into the space just beyond the door.

Creature: More than denizens of the Dreamlands prowl the mists surrounding Briarstone. Through the mists also creep monstrous, half-formed amalgams of otherworldly protoflesh and the corporeal nightmares of those trapped inside the asylum. While these semi-living beings manifest and disincorporate in the mist at random, several haunt the area in front of the hospice's front doors. Only one slowly attempts to push its way into the entry hall. It doesn't struggle if the door is slammed on it, but it lingers nearby for several minutes. If not deterred, it enters the room or attacks any creature standing in its way. Once it pulls itself from the fog, it's easy to see that this hungry flesh is more than just a shapeless mass, though. Its piles of pocked tissue heap upon one another, forming a facelike semblance that the PCs might later recognize as Ulver Zandalus. For now, though, it's a waxy, half-melted visage intent on adding to its sprawling bulk. Upon being defeated, the grotesque ooze deflates.

HUNGRY FLESH

CR 3

XP 800

hp 47 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 152)

Development: The PCs cannot be allowed to leave Briarstone by the front door. If a single hungry flesh isn't enough to deter them from wandering into the mist, have another one or two hungry fleshies close in through the fog; you can even imply with the sounds of growing gurgling that more are coming. Do not create an encounter that the PCs can't handle, but if need be, have another hungry flesh attack. After the second attack, an otherworldly presence slams the front doors shut. They can be opened again, but hopefully the PCs get the hint. If they don't, refer to the fog properties described in the Nightmare Miasma section on pages 6–7 to help corral stubborn parties.

G2. CONSULTATION ROOM

The door to this room from area C1 is barricaded from the inside. Those who attempt to beat it down find it has an AC of 5, hardness 5, 25 hit points, and a break DC of 20.

A long desk, several chairs, a sideboard, and numerous once-stately landscape paintings barricade the door of this somber conference room. A toppled wall opposite the barrier undermines the room's defenses, a point driven home by the masked bodies littering the ground.

It wasn't customary for strangers to arrive at Briarstone's doors with hysterical family members to place under the care of the asylum's physicians. Rather, committing a loved one or charge was often the result of a lengthy series of interviews between family, asylum doctors, and the patient in question. If it was decided that the patient could be treated (or, at least, learned from), the discussion evolved to encompass the possibility of residence. But asylum staff made it clear that Briarstone acted as neither a charity nor a prison, and abandonment of patients was an open concern. Many of those discussions took place in this room.

When staff and patients alike rushed for the main entrance in an attempt to escape, they found themselves trapped by the yellow mist billowing across the grounds. While some like Winter Klaczka sought refuge elsewhere, others thought it made the most sense to remain near the front doors, so they'd know when help arrived. However, the Apostles in Orpiment expected exactly that.

A handful of frantic staffers and patients huddled in this room when the Aggra "Bag Lady" Loomis, one of the asylum's few criminally deranged patients (see area F1), took up leadership of a band of Apostles. The survivors barricaded themselves in this room, throwing furniture against the door, but there was little they could do when the wall between here and area C3 collapsed. The resulting slaughter was absolute, but relatively brief.

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HUNGRY FLESH

Six bodies lie in this room, battered by a variety of blunt implements. Following the Bag Lady's modus operandi, all of the corpses have had their faces wrapped in sheets, shirts, or grain bags and cinched tight around the neck. It should be clear to PCs who search the bodies that the corpses consist of Briarstone staff and patients alike, and that not all the residents succumbed to the taint of the Dreamlands or Zandalus's murderous evangelism.

Treasure: PCs who investigate the bodies find a former orderly wearing a suit of padded armor and wielding a sap. Additionally, A character who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check finds two thunderstones and a golden ring worth 150 gp.

C3. FRONT STORAGE

This room is partially collapsed, destroying most of the buckets, mops, and feather dusters that were stored here. A portion of the western wall has fallen away, opening into area C2.

C4. VISITOR'S ROOM (CR 1)

As though it had been plucked from the halls of some warm, country estate, this room is filled with inviting furnishings, a hearth ready for a fire, artwork populated by picnicking families, and a mansion-shaped cage with colorful taxidermic birds inside. Large windows might have once looked out over colorful flowerbeds, but now show only yellow mist. A battered corpse is impaled on the antlers of a stuffed elk head hung above the hearth.

Briarstone's staff knew the stigma associated with medical institutions, with stories of the cruelties propagated at Ashcliff Asylum in the hills outside Hyannis remaining common even decades after that sanitarium's terrible end. To combat such misperceptions, Briarstone's staff created a welcoming, homey space where family and visitors could meet with patients. Whenever possible, nurses led patients through the garden path in area C5, so visitors had the impression of their loved ones returning home.

The visitor's room has remained largely as before, but with one addition. Two cultists wearing stained yellow robes and tattered yellow veils are dead in this room. One lies beaten to death on the ground, and the other remains tangled with the stuffed animal's antlers. These two Apostles in Orpiment ran afoul of the haunt that still watches over this room.

A PC who looks out the windows to the east and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check sees that the mist is thin enough to reveal a garden path (area C5) leading from the door to another part of the asylum (beyond the collapse in area C1).

Haunt: The pleasant memories that once pervaded this room have soured with the infusion of Dreamlands

energies. They've infested the birdcage here as a possessive guardian haunt.

TAXIDERMIC WINGS

CR 1

XP 800

CE persistent haunt (interior of area C4)

Caster Level 1st

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear faint chirps)

hp 6; **Trigger** proximity (touching anything in area C4);

Reset 1 day

Weakness slow, susceptible to physical damage

Effect Any creature that touches an object or bit of furniture in area C4 causes the taxidermic birds in the room's birdcage to chirp pleasantly. Creatures in the room can roll initiative to react to the haunt before it manifests its dangerous effects at initiative rank 0. At that time, the birds' song transforms into a shrill, mechanical-sounding klaxon and the haunt targets one creature (likely whoever touched something in the room), forcing it to attempt a DC 12 Will save. If the creature fails, it levitates 10 feet into the air, as per *levitate*. On each following round, the haunt can target another creature with its levitation effect. It can also drop a creature from the ceiling, dealing 1d6 points of damage.

Destruction The haunt is ended if the birds in the cage are destroyed. The birds have an AC of 10 and 4 hit points, but the delicate cage grants them hardness 2.

Treasure: Outfitted to explore areas beyond their gathering place in area E1, each of the cultists has a masterwork silver dagger, an *amulet of natural armor +1*, and two *potions of cure light wounds*.

C5. GARDEN PATH (CR 2)

The mist is thin in this area. As long as the PCs stick to the garden path, they are not affected as described in the Nightmare Miasma section on pages 6–7.

Rustic flagstones create a path through a bed of wilted flowers and shrubs, the foliage shriveled as if drowned by the surrounding sea of dense yellow fog. Though the unnatural mist muffles every motion, a sound like the flapping of giant wings splits through the fog bank, causing it to swirl as if seeking escape.

The sound and motion of the mist here is unnerving, but nothing more than a weird effect of the mists and the nightmare realm they connect to. If the PCs later take this as foreshadowing of the nightgaunt that circles the skies above Briarstone, so much the better.

On the opposite end of the garden path stands a door leading into area D1. The door is locked, but can be opened with one of the keys from area C14 or a successful DC 20 Disable Device check.



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Creatures: On the round after the PCs step onto the path, have them attempt Perception checks. Those whose results exceed DC 16 hear digging in the earth around them and see disturbances in the mulch. On the next round, pale, headless things like wormy bats with too many limbs burrow forth and begin flopping and snuffling impotently. On the following round, they burst into the air as one.

PALLID WRIGGLER SWARM

CR 2

XP 600

hp 13 (see page 86)

C6. LIBRARY (CR 5)

Sagging shelves, held together by dust and an extensive system of rolling ladders, ring this library of husky, dull-looking tomes. At the room's center broods a heavily worn table surrounded by uncomfortable chairs. A chandelier of iron vines dangles above. The scents of leather and old paper pervade the high-ceilinged space, but so does a distinct bestial musk.

Briarstone's library boasts an impressive collection of texts covering advanced psychological theories and

treatments, common medical practices, and matters of regional record. Many are copies of texts held at Rozenport's Sincomakti School of Sciences; some have even been pilfered from that collection and bear the university's stamp within their covers. Regardless of the tomes' pedigree, almost any matter relating to medicine, psychology, and Briarstone or Versex history can be researched here (see Research in Briarstone on page 42 for details) once the PCs have the time.

Beyond the texts, four rolling ladders span the 8-foot-tall bookshelves here—one for each of the four contiguous sets of shelves. The ladders are attached to the shelf frames and roll easily along steel tracks. A character can move a ladder with a touch and, if she moves in a path adjacent to a shelf, can pull a ladder along with her as a free action. The ladders can be pushed 15 feet as a standard action; a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Strength check can push a ladder up to 30 feet. The ladders follow their tracks around corners, but slam to a halt if they reach the end of a track. The ladders each have hardness 10 and 40 hit points. Characters who climb the ladders to the top have room to stand, as the ceiling is 14 feet high.

With a successful DC 10 Perception check, a PC notes that several of the lower shelves have had their contents scattered across the floor. Those who investigate see that

the books and the backs of the nearby shelves have been gnawed through. Looking into the low, darkened shelves reveals narrow tunnels (only passable by Tiny creatures) bored through the wood and stone beneath. A character who succeeds at an additional DC 16 Perception check also notices that one of these tunnels is particularly well used and breaks through the north wall, connecting with area C12. The passage is suited to Tiny creatures, but a Small creature could squeeze through the 5-foot-long gap.

Creatures: Three ratlings have invaded this room searching for magical texts. They've all crawled to the tops of the library's bookshelves and are creating sticky nests from the collection's oldest and most delicious tomes. Upon noticing the PCs, they shriek and chitter to one another in Aklo, summon allies, and do their best to drive back the PCs. Except for the following differences, these ratlings have the regular statistics.

RATLINGS (3) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 226*)

Ranged book +1 (1d2-2)

Feats Dodge, Throw Anything

TACTICS

Before Combat The ratlings have climbed to the top of the library's bookshelves and armed themselves with a supply of heavy tomes they can throw as improvised weapons.

During Combat Determined to keep the high ground, the ratlings use their summon swarm ability to impede invaders. They try to attack foes climbing the ladders to reach them, but if a PC climbs to the top of a bookshelf, they use *dimension door* and *invisibility* to flee to other shelves.

Morale Once two of the ratlings have been defeated, the third surrenders.

Development: If one of the ratlings is spared, it offers to aid the PCs in return for her life. The ratling calls herself Genny Two-Tail, a moniker lauding her handsome pair of wormy tails. She can tell the PCs that the ratlings live in warrens deep in the rocks below Briarstone Isle, but those tunnels are far too small for big folk to traverse and the recent tremors have collapsed many of the tunnels, leaving her and her kin separated from their den. Genny knows nothing else about the current situation at the asylum.

C7. EAST COURTYARD

High asylum walls hedge in this spacious courtyard garden. Only thin breaths of sickly fog seep in from overhead, though beyond it's just as thick as ever. Misty wisps slip between leafless trees and simple benches, giving the impression of silent beasts prowling through the garden.

Briarstone's gardeners once spent countless hours creating an oasis of peace and quiet beauty at the very heart of the asylum. On any given day, patients and staff alike would enjoy meditative strolls and take meals amid the sweet shrubs and mimosa trees. Now, the plants are dead, choked and warped by mist.

Fortunately, the asylum's walls prevent the mist that covers the grounds beyond from fully invading this space. The PCs can see up to 20 feet before the fog obscures their sight. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check hears strange noises: the flapping of wings, low growls, and rustling steps, all tricks of the mist and sounds carried from its eerie home realm. Any PC who succeeds at this Perception check by 10 or more realizes the sounds have no immediate source, and rather seem to drift from a distance. Regardless, the GM should regularly describe these noises in an effort to unnerve the PCs.

Despite the mist being lighter here, the alien weather infiltrates the area just fine. See page 81 to determine what weather effects reign over the area whenever the PCs enter this courtyard.

At the northeastern corner of the courtyard, a sturdy wooden shed leans against a courtyard wall. The door is unlocked. Inside, stairs descend to area C20, the morgue. Or at least, they did once.

Creature: One of the deadlier creatures to slip through the veil separating Briarstone Isle and the Dreamlands is this nightgaunt. It's taken up residence upon the asylum's heights, sightlessly scanning the fog for prey. The disappearance of the mist in this area means nothing to the creature except that it has coaxed victims out into the open. As soon as the PCs enter this area, the nightgaunt spots them and swoops in to grab the frailest-looking character.

NIGHTGAUNT CR 4

1,200 XP

hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 203*)

C8. CENTRAL HALLWAY

This L-shaped hall runs from a collapsed space in the west to a small waiting area outside the asylum administrator's office. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check notices mucuslike smears on the tile floor. With a subsequent success on a DC 10 Survival check, a PC determines that the antiseptic-smelling smears form a trail that runs between the doors of areas C9, C10, and C13. Next to the door to area C14 is a nameplate that reads "Administrator Eliege Losandro."

C9. CONFERENCE ROOM (CR 3)

A once-handsome wood conference table now sits marred by the partially toppled southwest walls. Between heaps of collapsed stone, a closet door still stands.

The asylum's doctors and senior staff regularly met here to discuss the treatment of patients and the business of sanitarium operations. The tremors hit this conference room hard, resulting in the partial collapse of one of its walls. While the asylum's human inhabitants have avoided the structurally unsound room, two miserable souls have taken up residence here.

The door in the room's northwestern corner opens into a closet, the contents of which have been strewn across the room to make space for its new occupants. The closet features a plain shelf, roughly 6 feet high. Characters following the slime trail from area C8 find that it crosses the room and ends in the closet.

Creatures: Two pickled punks awoke from among Doctor Chawaar's personal collection of cerebral oddities. Both examples of fetuses with extreme hydrocephalus, the sagacious-looking corpses proved exceedingly helpful in the doctor's work. Yet several days ago, both awoke within their fluid-filled jars, granted unnatural life by the invasive tendrils of the Dreamlands. Confusion and vague anger led the pair to escape their jars, but in a bizarre show of sympathy and kinship, the corpses couldn't bring themselves to leave Chawaar's other displays behind. As such, they have relocated the doctor's entire collection of floating, aberrant brains, spinal columns, and dissections into the closet of this room. There, they've created a sort of nest from lab coats and the remains of Doctor Chawaar himself.

The pickled punks now guard their strange family. While one nests amid its kin, the other has taken up a spot on the closet shelf, along with a heavy, preservative-filled mason jar containing a hornlike tumor that once rooted in a patient's brain. The punks have disowned the tumor from their family and placed it on the high shelf. If the pickled punks hear the PCs enter the area, the one on the shelf readies an action to shove the display jar onto whoever opens the door. Treat this as an attack with an improvised weapon, incurring a -4 penalty on the attack roll. If the jar hits, it explodes, dealing 1d4 points of damage and forcing the target to attempt a save as if it were exposed to one of the pickled punks' irritant ability. Once their trap has been sprung, the undead slosh forward to attack.

PICKLED PUNKS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 11 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 214)

Treasure: Those who search the body of Doctor Chawaar get a hint of his intention in coming here. There are six flasks of alchemist fire on his body. Additionally, PCs can find eight lab coats about the room. These coats grant a character a +2 bonus on Disguise checks to impersonate a Briarstone doctor, but are otherwise worthless.

C10. JUNIOR DOCTORS' OFFICE

Two desks are crammed into this crowded office. More space has been dedicated to filing cabinets, bookshelves, and stacks of loose research than room for occupants.

Despite the cramped nature of this office, there is enough room for two junior doctors to work closely here. This is evidenced by the two bodies slumped over the desks. A PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check notes that the young doctors here were slain by blows to the back of the head. A PC whose check exceeds this DC by 10 realizes that's only partially accurate: the doctor's legs have been savaged, as if by something small but vicious. The blows to the head seem to have been made by small claws, digging into the base of the skulls—the results of the pickled punks in area C9 trying to “liberate” more members of their family from their prisons of bone.

Treasure: Most of the documents and files here are related to mundane asylum duties and unremarkable psychological evaluations. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check finds a thick yew wand etched with the symbol of Sarenrae hidden in the back of the eastern desk (a *wand of bless* with 18 charges). A piece of twine is wrapped around it, connecting to a note that reads, “Mr. Lantz, this is a place of science, not faith. Please keep your religion at home.”

C11. RUINED LOUNGE

The ceiling of this room has collapsed, crushing a table and well-worn couch.

This lounge once served as a private place for Briarstone's doctors to step away from their research and relax for a bit. The collapsed ceiling has destroyed most of the furnishings, as well as the doctor who occupied the room. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices a pale hand extending from the rubble.

Treasure: If the PCs spend 10 minutes working to extract the body from the rubble, they find an individual crushed beyond recognition. However, those who search her pockets find a capped syringe with an alchemist-created potion of *cure moderate wounds* inside. Any PC who identifies the potion also knows that it functions only if injected, a process that requires a standard action.

C12. RUINED OFFICE (CR 5)

This room's sagging ceiling rests largely upon a pair of sturdy bookshelves. A desk and set of chairs skirt the edge of a sizable fissure in the floor.

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This office belonged to one of Briarstone's resident doctors, but the most violent tremors largely destroyed it. These quakes created a sizable crack that split the asylum's foundation and connected the ratling warrens below with the structure above. The cracks are large enough for a Small creature to squeeze through in some places, but grow narrower and run for winding miles beneath the asylum. A casual investigation reveals droppings and various unsavory smears, but nothing else. If characters doggedly persist on invading the warrens, they don't get far before a small tremor causes part of the passage to collapse, but allowing the PCs' and their allies to narrowly escape.

Creatures: Ratch Mamby, leader of the ratlings of Briarstone Isle, came up to the asylum after the first tremor, but he and his party got trapped on the surface. He remains here at the location where he and the other ratlings initially emerged while he waits for the others to find an alternative route back down. If non-ratlings move through the gap leading to area C6, he orders his dire rat guards to attack, supporting them with spells from the rear.



RATCH MAMBY

DIRE RATS (2) **CR 1/3**

XP 135 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

RATCH MAMBY **CR 4**

XP 1,200

Male ratling sorcerer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 226)

CE Tiny magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect magic, low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 41 (6 HD; 3d6+3d10+15)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d3-2 plus bleed)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (1), long limbs (5 ft.), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9)

Constant—*detect magic, read magic, speak with animals* (rodents only), *spider climb, tongues*

3/day—*cause fear* (DC 14), *dimension door, invisibility* (self only)

1/day—*summon swarm* (rat swarm only)

1/week—*commune* (only when serving as a familiar; 6 questions)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

6/day—*acidic ray* (1d6+1 acid)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

1st (6/day)—*enlarge person* (DC 14), *mage armor, magic missile, shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*disrupt undead, flare* (DC 13), *mage hand, mending, touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Bloodline aberrant

TACTICS

Before Combat Ratch cast *mage armor* before coming up to the surface from the safety of his warren, and its effects are still in place.

During Combat Ratch orders the dire rats to attack, supporting them with spells and flanking with them.

Morale If Ratch Mamby feels the fight turning against him, he either tries to parley or dives for the fissure at the room's center and disappears within to hide in safety.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 12 (16 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Mobility

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +8, Climb +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +8, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +8,

Stealth +15, Swim +6

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Dark Folk; *Speak with Animals* (rodents only), *Tongues*

SQ bloodline arcana (+50% duration on polymorphs), scroll use

Combat Gear *brooch of shielding*; **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance +1*

Development: If reduced to fewer than half his hit points, Ratch Mamby yields, squealing in a high-pitched voice, "I'll tell you all his secrets! Whatever you want!" If that gets the PCs' attention, Ratch Mamby offers to answer any questions. The ratling knows much about the Tatterman and his history (see page 57). However, Ratch is ignorant of the asylum's residents or the uprising, but would rather use his Bluff skill to lie to the PCs than appear useless. He explains things in circles, never willing to sound like there's something he doesn't know.

C13. DOCTOR CHAWAAR'S OFFICE

This would look like a typical physician's office if it weren't for the preponderance of grotesque anatomical sketches, most depicting traumas and deformities of the head and brain. A sturdy display case stands open and completely empty.

Although Doctor Chawaar had a reputation for morbidity, the Vudran doctor's fascination with cerebral growths and deformity was far more than a fascination with the grotesque. Combining his skill as a surgeon with his knowledge of psychological symptoms, the doctor sought and successfully linked and treated many types of physical causes of psychological ailments.

Characters following the slime trail from area C8 find that it begins at the display case. If the PCs didn't follow the trail to this room, any one of them can attempt a DC 14 Perception check to notice the spilt preservative fluids pooling here and leading out into the hall.

Treasure: The desk and bookshelves here are in fine repair, but contain little of value. Any character who spends 5 minutes looking through the desk drawers finds that the notes within belong to a Doctor Arosh Chawaar, who pursued new treatments for hydrocephalus. Many of these notes bear marginalia from the doctor's sister, Doctor Anya Chawaar of Katheer. The sum of Arosh's research is compiled in a worn, rust-colored notebook in his desk drawer. Any character who examines the book and succeeds at a DC 16 Heal check identifies that it's valuable, though its worth is hard to determine. Though the legitimacy of the notes would take months to verify, most medical institutions or scholars of medicine (as one might find in any significantly sized city) might pay up to 800 gp for the journal. If the notes are returned to Doctor Anya Chawaar, she'll pay four times that amount.

C14. ADMINISTRATOR LOSANDRO'S OFFICE (CR 4)

Yellow fog soundlessly roils against the cathedral-like windows of this opulent, two-story office. The ground floor features overstuffed furnishings, elegant side tables, and an altarlike desk of dark marble. A delicate spiral staircase and balcony of dark iron rises to a lofty library overhead. Both floors' fixtures frame the lake of blood spread across the room's center.

The office of Briarstone's administrator, Eliege Losandro, combines the features of a psychologist's office and a queen's lounge. While dedicated to her work, Losandro still made herself and her favorite aides comfortable with Count Lowls's excessive donations. Rich appointments in soothingly dark shades once left office visitors with an impression of Losandro's even-temperedness and good taste. Now, the place bears the gruesome evidence of its owner's reckless experiments with reality-warping magic.

The pool of blood here belongs to Losandro herself. Her office's appointments have fared better than she has. While the furnishings and books in the administrator's personal library are impressive, there's nothing especially remarkable here. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check notices a set of six small but powerful images sketched with coal upon torn parchment and set in fine frames. They depict eerie vistas of an endless, empty city under a sky of whirling mist. In the corner of each, a delicate copperplate records a year from 4708 to 4715 and the name Ulver Zandalus. Characters who study the images find that they feel familiar, finding them quite similar to the city from the shared nightmare they experienced at the adventure's beginning.

The marble desk here features several drawers filled with mundane writing supplies and extensive but uninteresting documents. One of these drawers is locked, requiring a successful DC 20 Disable Device check to open. The key to the lock is on the ring in Administrator Losandro's pocket, but recovering it means entering the mysterious fog bank surrounding her. Those who manage to open the drawer uncover Losandro's journal, a concise record of her daily duties and observations. Those who spend 10 minutes perusing the journal find it to be largely mundane—filled with notes from staff meetings and interviews with the families of would-be patients—but in entries written during the last year, the names Haserton Lowls and Count Lowls appear with increasing regularity. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check recognizes that both names refer to Count Haserton Pragmus Lowls IV, ruler of the County of Versex in Ustalav. The final entries prove to be of particular interest; provide the PCs with Handout #1 (on page 35). There is nothing else in the journal referring to Lowls's associates or *The Chain of Nights*.

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Creature: At the room's center, Eliege Losandro kneels in a pool of her own blood, her back straight, her mouth gaping at the ceiling. From her soundlessly screaming mouth an unsteady torrent of colored mist spurts like a fountain of gritty sludge. Losandro now suffers as the botched result of Ulver Zandalus's first attempt to repeat the rite from *The Chain of Nights* that she performed upon him. The doctor has become a malfunctioning oneirogen, a gate between the Material Plane and the Dreamlands. Rather than releasing one's dreams into the real world as the ritual in *The Chain of Nights* intends, Zandalus's failed attempt of the rite locks individuals within their own minds. The catatonic victims then endlessly belch mist and protomatter from the borders of the Dreamlands into the Material Plane, weakening the boundaries between the two realms. The operation of Zandalus' oneirogens

elsewhere in the asylum (such as areas E11 and F2) is what has cloaked Briarstone in fog and released Dreamlands natives into its halls. Zandalus's prototype, Losandro, doesn't work so well, though.

Rather than spilling exclusively the stuff of the Dreamlands into the world, Losandro releases vestiges of her own thoughts and dreams, as well as manifestations of strong psychic presences from elsewhere. The physical expression of this is the rainbow of mists that spill from her mouth. Although Losandro is still technically alive, she does not behave like a living creature. Rather, she functions as a magical fountain of sorts. Any creature that comes within 5 feet of Losandro enters the fog swirling around her body and must attempt a DC 12 Will saving throw. Each creature who fails immediately falls asleep and randomly experiences one of the dreams detailed on page 26. A character can be awakened from this sleep as normal, but experiences the entirety of the dream (even if that means the whole dream transpired in an instant or is not immediately known to them; see *Running Dreams* on page 23).

ELIEGE LOSANDRO

CR 2

XP 600

Oneirogen (see page 88)

hp 25 (currently 5)

Treasure: Those who investigate Administrator Losandro's office find a number of interesting and modestly valuable curios, the most valuable being a brain-shaped sculpted wooden box, bookends depicting twin screaming and crying figures, and a brass sculpture of an Osirian pyramid. Each of the three items is worth 50 gold pieces. Zandalus's paintings can also be collected and might fetch up to 100 gp for the set.

A PC who spends 15 minutes perusing the crowded shelves here can attempt a DC 14 Knowledge (local) check to recognize a number of mundane but remarkable texts: *On the Treatment of Ambitions, Disappointments, and Regrets* by Doctor Beurigmand Trice, *On Violent Sands* by Doctor Henri Meirtmane, and a signed copy of Ailson Kindler's *Galdyce's Guest: Feast of the Nosferatu*. Each book weighs 2 pounds and is worth 100 gp.

Additionally, anyone who searches Administrator Losandro's body finds a ring bearing a number of keys. Most are to forgotten closets and unimportant cabinets, but among them are keys to this room's doors, the desk in this room, the door to area C18, and the door from area C5 to area D1.

Lastly, in addition to Losandro's journal, the locked desk drawer also contains a magnifying glass, two vials of alchemist's kindness^{APG}, a vial of smelling salts, two vials of soothe syrup^{APG}, 4 doses of antitoxin, 2 doses of opium, a scroll of fox's cunning, two scrolls of remove paralysis,

ELIEGE LOSANDRO



Oathday: Another unexpected call from Count Lowls. These have become so common and Lowls's focus is so singular that they no longer leave me apprehensive. He requested to see me after his visit with Zandalus, though. He claims to have a theoretical solution for the poor man's condition. I don't know what the count and my prized patient have been discussing—and Lowls again refused to share—but I doubt that lordly amateur psychologist has truly hit upon anything of worth. Regardless, I'd be a fool not to humor my liege.

Starday: Lowls's "solution" was not at all what I expected. I have no clue where he turned it up, but on his most recent visit he brought along a copy of Valhadis's *The Chain of Nights*, a near-legendary collection of psycho-arcane studies and treatments focused on dreaming. While I abhor arcane tampering, if there's a permanent solution to Zandalus's nightmares, it could be here. Lowls allowed me to study the text for the duration of his visit, but staunchly refused to leave it in my possession.

Moonday: Lowls has made me an offer: his copy of *The Chain of Nights*. All I must do in return is accept a handful of new patients—former associates of his that have suffered some unprecedented manner of group amnesia. I might accept this as charity on the count's behalf, but he insists that I keep no record of their committal. The terms make me suspicious, but I can learn more of these curious strangers once they're in my care. If it means the possibility of a cure for Zandalus and others, I welcome the bargain.

Toilday: *The Chain of Nights* is a marvel. It will take years of study to unravel all its possibilities, but already I've discovered a process by which chronic dreams might be drawn forth and disposed of like so much psychic gristle. Tomorrow our experiment begins.

HANDOUT #1

a candle of spirit protection^{OA}, a small tin filled with incense of open thoughts^{OA}, a greater talisman of beneficial winds^{OA} on a thin silver chain, and a braided leather cord holding a lesser talisman of healing power^{OA} and a lesser talisman of warrior's courage^{OA}.

C15. RECORDS HALL

This hall is dark and empty except for the smashed remains of lanterns on the ground. Six doors branch from here. All are unlocked except for the door to area D6. Its key is missing, but it can be opened with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check. However, if the haunt in D6 hasn't been dealt with, doing so unleashes the torrent of blood it holds back. If more than 5 points of damage are dealt to the door (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 18), the door shatters, releasing the flood behind it as though it had been opened. A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check

notices beads of blood between some of the door's boards. Any creature in the hall when the door opens must attempt a DC 16 Reflex save. A creature that succeeds is knocked back 10 feet as the wave of gore slams into it. A creature who fails falls prone, takes 2d6 points of damage, and is knocked back 20 feet. If the wave knocks a creature into the wall at the west end of the hall, that creature takes 1d6 additional points of damage.

C16. PERSONAL EFFECTS STORAGE (CR 3)

Racks cluttered with boxes and sprawling collections of haphazard junk fill this dusty storage room.

This room holds the personal effects of hundreds of Briarstone patients, present and past. Most are held in trust, awaiting the day when their owners will once again

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Patient Record: Ulver Zandalus

Male, varisian descent, approximate age 47

Home suspected to be Rozenport, Versex County

Committed: 2 Sarenith 4685

Circumstances: Transferred from Pharasmin lamentations in Rozenport

Attending Doctor: Æliege Losandro

Zandalus exhibits complete withdrawal from society and an inability to care for himself in any but the most basic modes. The symptoms of his passive antisociality chronically present as mutism and blankness. Frequent night terrors result in brief but dramatic nocturnal outbursts—shouting, shaking, fear responses. Zandalus grasps the difference between sleep and wakefulness and typically recovers from nightmares quickly.

Treatment: Therapy, antipsychotic regimen, observation

Development: 2/4687—Zandalus proves to be a gifted and prolific artist. He has enthusiastically taken to using a charcoal drawing set to create dramatic but fanciful works of art, typically of surreal architecture and skylscapes. Art calms him in the wake of nightmare. He will be afforded basic supplies to continue such art therapy.

Development: 11/4762—A shift has occurred in Zandalus's art. He has repeatedly almost perfectly illustrated one of the ancient standing stones situated at the northwestern corner of the asylum grounds. As the isle's shores are off-limits to patients, I do not believe he has ever seen the subject of his work. The significance or coincidence of this brooks further study.

Development: 3/4715—Count Haserton Lowls has taken an interest in Zandalus: first his art and now the artist. Lowls has become a repeat visitor, spending hours with my patient, but refuses to explain his interest.

HANDOUT #2

be fit enough to reclaim them and leave. Befitting the likelihood of such hopeful prospects, most of the items are covered in a thick layer of dust.

The storage room has been partially ransacked, with some of the shelves knocked over and their contents scattered across the floor.

Creatures: Since his experience with *The Chain of Nights* left him alert and focused for the first time in decades, Ulver Zandalus sought to have all evidence of his years of embarrassing treatment destroyed. He sent three of his Apostles in Orpiment to the asylum's records and storage rooms to wipe out whatever they find of his or mentioning him. Two of the cultists still linger here, having forgotten or willfully abandoned their mission. While one scours the room for dubious "valuables," the other has become fixated on tutoring a class of mismatched dolls. The two

remember something of their orders upon noticing the PCs and move to attack.

APOSTLES IN ORPIMENT (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Human rogue 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 16 each (2d8+4)

Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee crowbar +3 (1d6+2) or

sap +4 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +5, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8, Survival +3

Languages Common

SQ rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Gear padded armor, club, sap

Treasure: While most of the valuable items have been looted from this room, some useful tidbits remain. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check finds two vials of *silversheen* and an *oil of align weapon*.

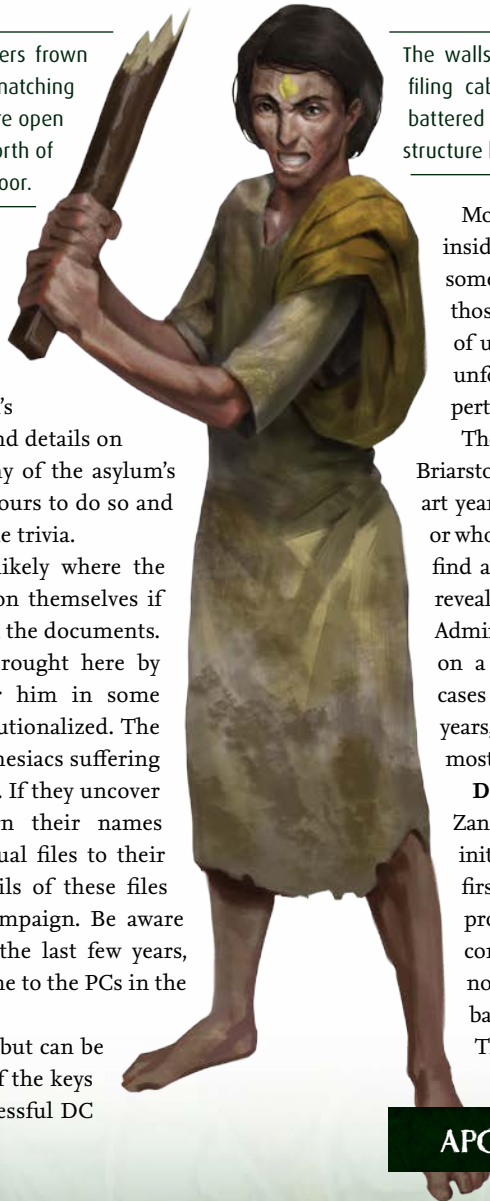
C17. RECORDS ROOM (CR 1)

The handles of dozens of drawers from the faces of numerous matching cabinets. Many of the drawers are open and their contents—volumes' worth of stray parchments—blanket the floor.

The personal histories and treatment records of Briarstone's patients are stored here. The room's recent ransacking has destroyed much of the room's order. While the PCs could find details on the background of almost any of the asylum's patients here, it would take hours to do so and result only in largely mundane trivia.

This mass of records is likely where the PCs find some information on themselves if they bother to search through the documents. They can learn they were brought here by Lows and they worked for him in some capacity prior to being institutionalized. The records mention they are amnesiacs suffering from a manner of fugue state. If they uncover this information, they learn their names and can match their individual files to their descriptions. Tailor the details of these files to the characters in your campaign. Be aware they still lack memories of the last few years, and more revelations will come to the PCs in the near future.

The door to C18 is locked, but can be opened either by using one of the keys from area C14 or with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check.



Creature: Another Apostle in Orpiment works here. After trying and failing to beat down the door to C18, she has since been obsessively rooting through the files here, searching for any mention of Zandalus. The unlikeliness of the cult leader's name arising in other patients' files has not deterred her search. She refuses to be interrupted and attacks any creature she sees that's not wearing yellow robes.

APOSTLE IN ORPIMENT CR 1

XP 400

hp 16 (see page 36)

Story Award: If the PCs find the patient records and discover their names and their connection to Lows, award them 800 XP.

C18. SPECIAL RECORDS

The walls of this crowded room are covered by filing cabinets, except for one space where a battered old painting of a somber, towering structure hangs.

More cabinets fill this room, the records inside being of a more disturbing and sometimes supernatural nature than those held in area C17. While hundreds of unexplained events and brutal dramas unfold in these pages, most are not pertinent to the PCs' goals.

The dreary painting here once hung in Briarstone's entry, but was replaced by other art years ago. A PC who moves the painting or who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check find a small brass latch that opens a panel revealing a hollow within the wall. Inside are Administrator Losandro's extensive records on a variety of interesting psychological cases she's observed and treated over the years, with the case of Ulver Zandalus being most extensive.

Development: The records on Ulver Zandalus stretch back decades, to his initial committal as one of Losandro's first patients. Handout #2 on page 36 provides a general overview of Zandalus's condition and Losandro's overarching notes. Mundane details of Zandalus's background can also be learned here.

The general takeaways should be that

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the Zandalus the PCs have likely heard about is much changed from the silent artist detailed in these accounts, and that Count Lowls has an interest in the man.

Treasure: In addition to Losandro's notes, the asylum administrator stashed several particularly valuable or dangerous items in the secret alcove here. A tiny lockbox can be opened with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check, or with the same key that opens Losandro's desk. Inside are 40 gp, six pearls worth 15 gp each, and a calling card for the services of the Thrushmoor offices of the Sleepless Detective Agency that prominently bears an accusatory eye. Additionally, there is a sword in a crimson scabbard. The pommel is sculpted in the shape of a cardinal and an etched gold band bears the name Red Destiny. The weapon is a +2 *short sword*.

Story Award: If the PCs discover Losandro's records on Ulver Zandalus, award them 800 XP.

C19. RECORDS STORAGE

This room once held the records of past patients, but those files have been buried or destroyed by tremors. The door to the room opens just far enough to allow the PCs to squeeze inside.

C20. MORGUE (CR 17)

This area lies beneath area C7. It is not depicted on the map, as it is beyond the scope of the adventure. The shed in area C7 contains a few gardening tools and a wooden staircase that descends into darkness. The brittle wooden stairs descend 20 feet along a stone wall, but then stop. The wall itself continues down another 15 feet, but then it falls away, along with any evidence of a worked floor. Even the sides of the subterranean chamber give way, leaving the lowest steps and mortared bricks hanging exposed in a vast, airy expanse.

The space beyond is open darkness, the void of an immense cavern hidden beneath Briarstone Isle. The exact measurements of the space are purposefully vague, as the PCs should not be able to easily reach the floor or other extremities of the place. Should they somehow manage to reach the space below—at least 200 feet down—they find a floor composed of leathery, fleshlike segments beneath a blanket of rubble and ancient stone. The cavern has no other exits besides the stairway.

Creature: Resting at the bottom of the cavern is a *hohle* (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 18) locked in temporal stasis by a rite conducted by Sarkorian druids and their allies ages ago. This creature, an ancient servant of Shub Niggurath, the Lord of the Woods, is what attracted a woman named Ariadnah to Briarstone Isle in the first place, so many centuries ago. Soon after, she became known as the Briarstone Witch.

Because of the magic affecting the vast creature (and its own exceptional defenses), the PCs should not be able to harm it, or really interact with it much at all. If

they linger, they experience the thing slightly shift in its centuries-long slumber, a slow ripple of worm-flesh that results in a tremor that shakes the cavern and the asylum above. This is a result of the Dreamlands invading even the unknowable fantasies of this creature. The disruption is what's caused so much damage to the asylum above and, over the course of weeks, could cause the whole structure to collapse (a character who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge [engineering] check realizes this). Any characters who experience the *hohle's* shaking should have the realization that it's moving as though it's having a bad dream. Other than these insights, there's nothing else to be gained here at this time. The advice of any NPC accompanying the PCs and your subtle urging should encourage the PCs to not dally trying to disturb this eons-old chthonian.

D. THE EAST WARD

Most who came to Briarstone weren't expected to stay indefinitely. While the now-ruined upper halls hold rooms for the asylum's long-term residents, those who came with well-documented complaints or physical maladies were put up in the East Ward. Here, doctors and nurses oversaw cases expected to last a matter of days or weeks—or in some cases, those who couldn't be housed among the larger patient population.

After the asylum uprising, the Apostles in Orpiment struck this ward first. Most of the residents fled the rampaging cultists, but those who couldn't still linger here, changed by terror and the influence of the Dreamlands.

D1. ADMITTING (CR 3)

Pale paint peels like scabs from the walls of this spacious chamber. A bent desk guards a broad hall stretching away to the north, while curtained frames shroud the room's eastern quarter. The place smells intensely of rubbing alcohol.

Nurses once took the histories of new patients and gave them preliminary examinations here. Now, the place is largely empty.

Curtain frames that stand 7 feet tall and 5 feet wide divide a portion of the room. These adjustable, utilitarian walls are made of nearly transparent fabric and can be opened or destroyed with little effort. On a stool burns a lit hooded lantern, abandoned here days ago by a panicked cultist. The lantern should have burned out long ago, but some aspect of the Dreamlands has frozen the flame, leaving it lit, but static. The light glows through the curtains, making it an obvious beacon for any who enter the room. Those observing the lantern notice that the faint lantern light doesn't flicker as it should, being cold and weirdly paralyzed. If anyone touches the lantern, the tiny flame unfreezes and promptly snuffs out.

Although the door in the western wall still stands, it cannot open all the way as it abuts the collapsed portion of area C1. It opens just far enough for a Medium creature to squeeze into a nearly 5-foot-by-5-foot space, which is usually empty.

Creature: Slopping from a pile of dirty gauze, two grotesque oozes of diseased matter immediately crawl toward any signs of life that enter the room.

BOILBORNS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 15 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 22)

D2. PATIENT ROOMS

A bed and a low table are perhaps all that are required for a patient to quietly convalesce here, but the accommodations hardly look comfortable.

These three rooms are largely identical; only the tableaux within set them apart. In addition to what's described above, the three rooms have the following details.

D2a: A portion of the tiled ceiling has given way, allowing heavy bricks to fall across the bed and floor. Fortunately, no one seemed to be in the room when the collapse occurred.

D2b: Three figures lie dead in this room. Two wearing yellow robes lie slumped on the floor, having suffered repeated vicious blows to the face. A third—an old man easily in his eighties and wearing a light cloth dressing gown—has fallen back across the bed. He is dead, but has a satisfied smirk on his face and still grips a sturdy leather boot with blood on its heel. The boot's partner lies on the floor nearby.

D2c: Human-shaped carnage covers the bed, remains of a patient trapped here and set upon by hunting ghouls. The window is broken.

Treasure: The only semi-obvious treasure in these rooms is the old man's boots. Anyone who succeeds at a DC 12 Appraise or Knowledge (local) check can see that they are well worn, but come from Angier's—a famed shop that holds the royal warrant for leatherworking. If cleaned, these boots could still fetch up to 200 gp from a buyer.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check in **D2c**, she finds a gold signet ring with the holly-and-hawk emblem of the Millair family of Redleaf Lake (worth 50 gp). The symbol can be identified with a successful DC 14 Knowledge (local) check.

D3. THE LIEKLAN ROOM

A shapeless mess of sheets and pillows piles atop two plain beds. Bold chalk letters high on the opposite wall proclaim this to be "Brenton and Debis's Room."

Brenton and Debis Lieklan, brothers who witnessed their parents being slaughtered by bandits near Hyannis, shared this room. Local authorities brought the obviously traumatized siblings to Briarstone while they attempted to track down relatives. That was 7 months ago.

While equally scarred by the tragedy, Brenton's and Debis's recoveries have not been so similar. Brenton has become bookish and, while quiet, is recovering normally in his doctors' estimation. Debis, however, has become withdrawn and suffers regular night terrors wherein he repeatedly witnesses his parents' murder. These terrible dreams were lessened, though, if Debis awoke and found his shadow lantern—a favorite gift from his parents—still lit. Despite their sad story and the hard times ahead of them, the Lieklan boys had become favorites of the nurses in the East Ward.

The Lieklans' tragedy compounded after the asylum uprising. Brenton and Debis were separated, with Brenton winding up among the survivors in the asylum chapel. Debis was not so fortunate, though. The sad near-end to his story lingers in area **D8**.

Treasure: Although there is nothing of value in this sparse room, a PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check finds a pair of carved wooden knights in the tangle of sheets at the foot of the southern bed.

Development: If the PCs bring the toy knights to Brenton in area **B6**, he can be convinced to willingly part with his brother's shadow lantern.

D4. EAST WARD HALLWAY (CR 1)

Two hallways meet here beneath a lofty ceiling. High windows, alive with the nauseating fog beyond, give the space an airy feel. A portion of the western hallway has collapsed, blocking it with tons of rubble.

The hallway leading to the garden is partially collapsed. Normally, it would take the PCs days of effort to clear away the rubble. Fortunately, as evidenced by the claw-scarred debris, something has already been at it. If the PCs spend a total of 4 hours digging, the wall here can be broken down, opening a path to area **C7**.

Creature: A ghoul from the asylum's northwestern halls has become trapped here by the haunt in area **D6**. After savaging a trapped patient or two, it attempted to return home and found its way blocked. It now struggles to claw through the rubble, ignoring the dead flesh torn from its hands with every scuffle and scrape. Unless the PCs make considerable noise as they approach, the ghoul doesn't notice them while absorbed in its work.

GHOUL CR 1

XP 400

hp 13 (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 146)

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D5. COMMUNAL WARD (CR 1)

Chipped white paint peels from the battered frames of a row of identical beds. Dingy white curtains separate each bed, but offer only the illusion of privacy.

Patients spending the briefest time at Briarstone or who needed constant observation were kept in this long room. All of the beds have padded manacles and leather restraints affixed to them. Currently, one bed remains in use.

Creature: Like many of Briarstone's patients, Jeprin Mears has been suffering from terrible dreams. This is made all the worse due to his narcolepsy. Yet, despite the relentless assault of terrible dreams, Jeprin has somehow managed to evade the Tatterman—until now.

When the PCs enter the room, Jeprin is in the throes of a nightmare. As the PCs approach, he screams, "No! Not again!", "Keep away!", "I don't want anything from you!", "Get away from me, bastard!", and the like in an increasingly panicked voice. Those who reach his bed at the far north of the room see that he's restrained. He can be freed, but doing so takes a full-round action to remove each of the five restraints—left and right arms, left and right legs, and waist. Nothing the PCs can do wakes Jeprin.

Moments after the PCs enter the room, Jeprin shrieks and ceases thrashing. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices a wisp of yellow vapor escape along with his final breath. It's obvious to anyone who examines Jeprin that he is dead. One minute later, though, he convulses again. The Tatterman has tried to uproot Jeprin's secret yearnings but failed. As a result, the man has been turned into a ghoul.

After his transformation, Jeprin tries to attack the PCs. His restraints, if still in place, hold him helpless and he's not strong enough to immediately break them, though he could gnaw through them given a few hours. If given some sort of meat (even the dead flesh of another ghoul), Jeprin will converse with the PCs, but he's crude, confused, endlessly hungry, and knows nothing of the current state of the asylum. He can, however, recount his dream, saying that he's had it dozens of times. The PCs recognize the nightmare as the same one they experienced at the beginning of the adventure. If asked what was different this time, he guesses that "the bastard finally got me."

JEPRIN MEARS CR 1

XP 400

Ghoul (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13

Treasure: Most of the useful supplies have already been stripped from this room, but a straightjacket^{OA} and a hoodwink cowl^{OA} sit in the corner of the room.

D6. DAYROOM (CR 3)

Worn old chairs and small tables set with the scattered pieces of simple games lay scattered throughout this room. A serving hatch in the north wall opens into a darkened space beyond. Vast glass windows dominate the eastern walls, beyond which a jaundiced kaleidoscope swirls hypnotically. A coppersy smell permeates the room, and to the west stands a wall of red.

The dayroom once served as a peaceful place for patients to convalesce and quietly socialize. In the chaos of the asylum's upheaval, all who could fled. Some, though, were left behind.

Sitting in a wheelchair before the bay windows to the east is the body of a patient named Mrs. Freeling. From beneath the chair runs an endless stream of blood. The room's haunt creates this excessive amount of gore, and also causes gravity to affect it strangely, making it pool vertically in the 15-foot-long hallway leading to the door to area **C15**. Neither the door to **C15** or **D7** can be employed while the haunt remains.

Creatures can pass between this room and **D10** as a move action, crawling through the windowlike serving hatch.

Haunt: Mrs. Freeling was a kindly old woman, but required a delicate daily cocktail of medication to fight back the effects of age and dementia. She hardly noticed the patient uprising, but knew something was wrong when the nurses never brought her evening tinctures. Lack of treatment and confused fear caused Mrs. Freeling to pass away the night after the chaos at Briarstone unfolded.

When the PCs enter the area, she's as she was left, a rotund old woman in a faded housecoat sitting in her wheelchair and facing the eastern windows. A gaping wound covers her chest, gore pooling and streaming away from her.

Mrs. Freeling never quite understood what her medications were for, but once overheard one nurse tell another that if she didn't receive them her heart might explode. The thought always terrified the old woman. The haunt here is a manifestation of Mrs. Freeling's terror, a river of gore pouring from a gruesome wound in her chest. Even if her body is destroyed, the haunt here restores her every 24 hours until she receives her medication.

HEMORRHAGIC ROAD CR 3

XP 800

CE persistent haunt (5-foot-wide, 75-foot-long path)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 10 (to see the running trail of blood)

hp 13; **Trigger** constant (always in effect); **Reset** 1 day

Effect A path of blood streams from Mrs. Freeling's corpse to the far western portion of area **D6**. The blood follows

the most direct and straightest route. Any living creature that enters a square affected by the blood flow is targeted as per *hydraulic push*, as a wave of gore rises from the blood flow and tries to sweep the creature toward the pool at its end. The haunt receives a +10 bonus on its bull rush attempt, which, along with its caster level and ability score modifiers, grants it a total bonus of +14. Any creature that is pushed into the 3 squares of pooled blood in front of the door to area **C15** is submerged in blood and must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw or contract filth fever. The vertical pool of blood is opaque, but can be passed through as difficult terrain. Creatures moving through the blood must hold their breath as if they were swimming.

Destruction The haunt ends if someone administers medicine to Mrs. Freeling's corpse, whether actual chemicals (like those in area **D10**) or a healing potion. Healing magic alone does not suffice.

D7. STORAGE CLOSET

Racks of cleaning supplies and bins of stained laundry stew here, filling the close space with a unique, acrid reek.

Most of the cleaning supplies, stained sheets, and soiled bedclothes are in decent condition. This is largely due to the presence of Denetta Hobes, an orderly who resisted the cultists as they tried to invade the eastern ward. Her one-woman defense bought many of the patients time to escape before she was critically wounded. Even bearing numerous stab wounds, Hobes made a fighting retreat to this storage closet, where the cultists wisely left well enough alone. Hobes expired quietly, not knowing the good she had done. Her body remains here.

Treasure: Hobes's work defending Briarstone can continue. Her equipment, salvaged from across the ward, remains here: a suit of studded leather armor, a *cloak of resistance +1*, a *potion of bull's strength*, and a *potion of protection from evil*.

D8. DEBIS'S NIGHTMARE (CR 4)

This room is supernaturally dark. If the PCs can somehow see through or dispel the *deeper darkness* effect (see below), read or paraphrase the following.

As if an explosion tore this room apart, furniture, racks of blunt weapons, padded restraints, and glass lamps lay shattered to pieces and scattered to the corners. The walls are bare and the room's center lies perfectly open.

This room used to serve as one of the asylum's few guard posts, a place where strapping orderlies ensured that the dozens of patients who regularly dined and socialized in the hospice's gallery didn't wander from their appointed areas. As the largest of these posts, suits

of padded armor, leather-wrapped batons, and restraints were stored here, but all the gear in the hospice couldn't have prepared the staff for the violent, semiorganized revolt led by Ulver Zandalus. The guard post was quickly overrun and the peaceful wards to the south were flooded with Zandalus's fledgling cultists and their strange allies. Chaos ensued and innocent blood flowed freely.

Separated from his brother, Debis Lieklan was among those killed. Even death, however, has not released the youngster from the visions that haunt him (see area **D3**). Rather, his terror now spills into the world of the living, where it traps his soul, but also confines the Apostles in Orpiment. As a side effect of his trauma and the influence of the Dreamlands, this room is under the effects of a *deeper darkness* effect.

Creature: Debis Lieklan met a violent end at the hands of patients transformed into ghouls. While his body is no more, the tatters of his bedclothes and the scraps of his extensive charcoal drawings have formed a frail, new body. Though death should have ended his torment, Debis's nightmares still plague him. The attic whisperer refuses to leave the room and perceives all who enter as murderous strangers. He uses his aura of sobs ability to hamper foes and lashes out as best he can. Even as Debis attacks, the PCs can clearly hear his sobs, which often include pleas like "Brenton?! Wake up, Brenton!" and "Brenton, the lamp went out!" These are references to Debis's brother Brenton, one of the survivors in area **B6** who holds the key to putting Debis to rest: the boy's shadow lantern.

If the PCs retrieve the shadow lantern from Brenton in exchange for retrieving his wooden knights and bring the lantern into the room, the attic whisperer immediately bursts into relieved sobs. The departing spirit of Debis Lieklan manifests as a disembodied, luminous hand that touches the lantern then vanishes as the attic whisperer collapses and is destroyed. This also dispels the *deeper darkness* effect.

DEBIS LIEKLAN

CR 4

XP 1,200

Attic whisperer (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 34)

hp 45

D9. STAFF OFFICE

A couch and small desks covered in paint flakes and thick dust fill this communal office. Nurses not actively attending to patients used to work and take brief breaks here. Remnants of the mundane work performed here remain amid the chaos of looting performed by the Apostles in Orpiment.

Treasure: A character who searches the desks and succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check finds a book wrapped in butcher's paper that bears the handwritten word "confiscated." Inside is a Taldan quarto titled *Her*

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Majesty's Honorable Nightcap by Charent. The quarto is currently worth 10 gp due to its licentious contents.

D10. NURSE STATION (CR 3)

A low desk sits behind a window that passes into a room beyond. Behind it an empty doorframe opens into a ransacked storage room, its floor covered in broken glass and opalescent stains.

This post allowed Briarstone staff to chaperone patients in the dayroom while preparing medication from the attached pharmacy supply room. Creatures can pass between this room and D6 by crawling through the serving hatch here.

Creatures: When chaos erupted, the asylum's once-strict procedures swiftly crumbled. The most reckless patients and those urged on by Zandalus invaded areas once deemed off-limits, looting and destroying as they pleased. After the initial madness, cagier members of the Apostles in Orpiment swept the halls with more deliberate objectives.

The cultists here had sought out the asylum's pharmacy, intent on indulging in the opium they knew staff stored there, but they got cornered when the haunt activated in area D6 and the attic whisperer manifested in area D8.

These three cultists are twitchy and panicked, and they've recently begun to experiment with some of the drugs they've acquired. Due to the stress of constant fear and side effects of the psychotropic substances they found, the cultists attack anything that enters the room.

APOSTLES IN ORPIMENT (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (see page 36)

Treasure: The medicine cabinets in the northern portion of this room have been thoroughly ransacked. They once stored bandages, dried herbs, mundane tinctures, and chemical medications useful in treating a spectrum of ailments. A character who spends 5 minutes searching can attempt a Perception check to discover any surviving medicine. Anyone whose result exceeds DC 14 discovers enough stray gear to effectively fashion a healer's kit, while a result of DC 18 or higher reveals two *potions of cure light wounds*. The healing potions or the remaining drugs the cultists scavenged can be used to destroy the haunt in area D6.

Development: Though mentally askew, the cultists can share some information if they are not killed. They can't tell the PCs much about what has happened in the past few days, but can say that many of the surviving patients have been forced to join a cult called the Apostles in Orpiment, led by one of the asylum's longest-term residents, Ulver Zandalus. They know many of the survivors now scrape for shelter in the northern halls, but are disorganized and just as scared as they are.

RESEARCH IN BRIARSTONE

The asylum's library (area C6) has the potential to be a fantastic boon to PCs seeking to learn more about the hospice, its history, and its practices. The PCs can spend days researching lore within the library, potentially revealing forgotten details about the asylum, what transpired upon these grounds, and hints of what curse currently lies upon the place. Research in the library can be conducted using the research rules presented on pages 148–153 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue*. Remember that attempting a Research check requires 8 hours of uninterrupted research, and while the secrets revealed are likely worth the expenditure of time, it's entirely possible that research in such an environment leaves the PCs vulnerable to dangers either in the form of random encounters (see page 81) or, if they choose to sleep away from the chapel, nightmares.

Due to the range of topics PCs might want to research here, multiple categories are listed among the research results (following the information's kp). If the PCs actively seek information about a specific topic, their research turns up information related to that category as they reduce the library's kp as normal (PCs can research



DEBIS LIEKLAN

multiple topics in a single day). However, if the PCs don't actively search for a topic or know about a category yet, their research doesn't reveal anything about it. This prevents the PCs from learning significant details about topics they've had no reason to research yet. If PCs reduce the library's **kp** past the threshold of a category they aren't searching for, they can later spend another research period searching for information. The information reveals itself at the end of the research period so long as the PCs make a successful Research check. This might reveal multiple pieces of information at once. As the library holds information on hundreds of subjects, its knowledge points are higher than other libraries of the same challenge rating.

BRIARSTONE LIBRARY

CR 4

XP 1,200

Complexity 15

Languages Common

Research Check Knowledge (local), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion); **Knowledge Bonus** +2

kp 35

RESEARCH THRESHOLDS

kp 30 (Briarstone Asylum) Located on Briarstone Isle, Briarstone Asylum was founded in 4585 with the support of Count Haserton Lowls I and Rozenport's Sincomakti School of Sciences. The asylum devotes itself to the treatment of patients with mental diseases and those in need of psychological care. Its staff also pursues humane, nonmagical treatments of such disorders. With the exception of restraints, most physical and surgical treatment methods were phased out at Briarstone over a century ago.

kp 25 (Briarstone Isle) Briarstone was originally intended to be a fort, positioned to protect Thrushmoor and trade along the Danver River from pirates sailing Lake Encarthan. The fort's construction began in 4315 and was plagued by accidents, culminating in the death of its overseer, Captain Anoch Atherton. Construction on the fort was halted and rumors spread that Briarstone Isle was haunted. To expunge the taint of urban legends, Count Haserton Lowls I convinced the church of Pharama to perform a successful, island-wide exorcism in 4584.

kp 20 (Briarstone Isle) Captain Anoch Atherton didn't die in a construction accident. The overseer of Fort Briar's construction disappeared, only to be discovered a week later, his entrails strewn across the site. After Atherton's death, work halted on the fort's construction, but locals still reported seeing lights in the deserted, half-constructed structure. Rumors attributed the tragedy to the Briarstone Witch and claimed that she'd curse or kill any who trespassed upon her home.

kp 15 (Briarstone Witch) Folklore attributes many disappearances and spates of bad luck in the Thrushmoor region to the Briarstone Witch, an elusive crone said to

AMONG THE APOSTLES

Approximately 40 Apostles reside in the slums at any given time. Even those who were once peaceful patients and asylum staff are now traumatized into obeying Zandalus and his enforcers; there is little hope of talking someone here into turning against the cult.

The PCs should be wary about mentioning how they got here or bringing up the survivors in the hospice chapel. Although most of the Apostles here will turn murderous only if following orders, they're all eager to curry favor with Zandalus. Those who learn that there's a path open to the chapel (and that there are supplies and recruits there) race up the stairs to area **F** to tell Zandalus. If this occurs, the cult leader soon organizes a raiding party to attack the chapel—an event that is beyond the scope of this adventure. Those who overhear the PCs should make their excited interest clear, giving the characters either the opportunity to take back what they said, claim they misspoke, or otherwise deter the would-be informant. The exception to this is Doctor Elbourne, who warns the PCs not to talk about the other survivors if they wish to keep them safe.

inhabit Briarstone Isle. The first reports of the Briarstone Witch date to the early 4000s, soon after the founding of Thrushmoor by a congregation of psychopomp-worshipping homesteaders. These tales attribute many good works to the witch and present her as a figure who helped the settlers survive their hard early years. Some tales refer to the witch's servant, called the Tatterman.

kp 10 (Briarstone Witch) The Briarstone Witch was not a legend. She was a Kellid interested in lesser-known cults and occult knowledge. As she shared her esoteric knowledge with Thrushmoor's settlers, she joined them, and as she exhibited her power, she eventually came to lead them. However, in 4050, the report of a Pharasmin inquisitor accused the people of Thrushmoor of engaging in "perverted rites in mockery of Pharama and her servants' names."

kp 5 (Briarstone Witch) Encouraged by the Briarstone Witch, the people of Thrushmoor split from both the church and the national government. When emissaries of the state marched to retake control of the town, they found the entire population had disappeared. Although a few gruesome stains marked buildings across the empty town, no other evidence of the people was ever found. The unsettling event became known as the Thrushmoor Vanishing and hundreds of years passed before Thrushmoor was resettled.

kp 0 The partial journal of the daughter of one of Thrushmoor's homesteaders holds an account of life in the town. She refers to the Briarstone Witch as Mother

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Ariadnah and notes her sitting in council with other town leaders: Father Gierde, Father Weavewood, and Mother Zandalus. The precocious youth directly asks about the Tatterman. While her parents fearfully hush her, Ariadnah tells her not to be afraid, saying that “The Tatterman is only a dream, and a dream can’t hurt a good girl like you.”

CONCLUDING PART 2

By the end of Part 2, the PCs should have encountered their first oneirogen (area **C14**), learned something of Ulver Zandalus (area **C18**), and gotten a hint that nightmares are causing horrible transformations (area **D5**). Optimally, all of this should occur before passing into area **E1**. The haunt in area **D8** encourages the PCs to revisit the survivors in the chapel. If the PCs do and haven’t explored all of the administration halls yet, have Winter or another NPC ask about their progress and encourage them to do so. Ultimately, don’t prevent the PCs from passing on to area **E1** if they insist. If they do, have Doctor Elbourne encourage them to find out what happened to Administrator Losandro before he asks them to go into the northwestern halls.

PART 3: NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE

The PCs finally reach Briarstone’s northern halls, the seat of the uprising that cast the asylum into chaos. There they find the mob that comprises Zandalus’s dream cult, the Apostles in Orpiment. Far from everyone in the congregation is a deadly lunatic, and many seek nothing more than escape from Briarstone. Some even have ideas on how to do exactly that.

E. NORTHERN HALLS

The northernmost halls of Briarstone once held the asylum’s kitchens in addition to several spaces for patients to congregate, dine, work, and participate in communal therapies. These areas have borne the brunt of the chaos at the asylum, not just in terms of collapsed architecture, but as many of the surviving patients now struggle to survive here as victims and forced members of the Apostles in Orpiment.

E1. THE LARGE HALL (CR 4+)

This gigantic space might have once been a cafeteria or assembly hall. Now, it’s the village of a savage tribe. Wildly burning braziers stand amid yellow tents and scrap structures. Portions of the western and northern walls have collapsed, but ramshackle barricades have risen to surround them. To the east, two sets of wide stairs climb to the floor above. Around the stairs nearly a dozen bodies hang crucified upon the walls, dried crimson streaks below them, sacks cinched around their heads. Tendrils of yellow mist creep throughout the entire space, wisps endlessly lapping and fondling the bizarre encampment.

Once the majority of Briarstone’s residents came here for afternoon and evening meals—simple breakfasts being taken in their rooms above. The space was also used for large announcements. With the collapse of much of the second floor, though, most of the surviving patients congregated here. Many were hurt, and all were terrified, which made them easy targets for Ulver Zandalus and his cult. Within hours of the collapse, the ranks of the Apostles in Orpiment swelled. Patients and surviving staff who’d normally never think of joining Zandalus’s insane assembly had no choice but to yield to his notoriously violent allies, like Aggra “Bag Lady” Loomis. When it became clear that things in the fog prevented escape and that the ghouls in the western halls threatened them all, most of the survivors donned the Apostles’ yellow robes. Those who didn’t now hang along the eastern walls.

There are three subparts to this large space: the barricades, the hospital, and the slums.

The barricades here are similar to the one in area **B4**, except here Apostles in Orpiment squint against the mist, hoping not to be on duty when the ghouls raid again. At any given time there are four Apostles on guard here. The barricades have an AC of 5, hardness 5, 20 hit points per 5-foot square, and a break DC of 20. Those who wish to break any of the structures or scrap walls in the entire area can treat them as having the same statistics.

The “hospital” is a large tented area where Doctor Elbourne treats almost a dozen men and women harmed by the collapsed second floor or violence from Zandalus’s thugs. The tent backs up against the partially collapsed northern stairs that once led to the women’s ward. The dead-end stairs have allowed Doctor Elbourne to create a private place for himself, and even Zandalus’s most fervent followers see the wisdom in not harming their lone healer. So long as Elbourne’s secret isn’t revealed, he and those in his care remain relatively undisturbed. If the PCs need to rest, Elbourne offers this place. Remember, though, that the PCs are not protected from bad dreams here as they would be in area **B5**.

The ramshackle slums fill the rest of the large room. Mostly constructed of broken furniture, scavenged sheets, and torn mattresses, numerous tiny hovels provide shelter to small, wary gangs of Apostles. Fighting in the slums is forbidden, a rule enforced by four Apostles in Orpiment who wander the area as guards. If things get out of hand, these guards run to fetch Zandalus’s bodyguards in area **F1**.

Additionally, the broken walls allow mist and strange dampness to seep into the room. While the fog isn’t as bad as on the asylum grounds or in the courtyards, it still limits vision to 40 feet (roughly half the room at any given time).

Creatures: Upon seeing the PCs, a small crowd forms, brandishing mismatched and improvised weapons.

They keep their distance, though. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check notes that, while all of the strangers wear some bit of yellow, they don't all look like battle-hardened brutes or glassy-eyed cultists.

Before things can escalate, a man in the coat of a Briarstone doctor emerges and demands the cultists stand down. He loudly declares, "Good! More come to gaze beyond, to serve the orpiment! Welcome, friends!" He approaches with open arms and empty hands. As soon as he's close enough, he desperately whispers, "Nod and follow me if you want to live." If the PCs do as they're told, they're led to the "hospital" in the northeastern corner of the room. If they don't, the man begs them to, promising he'll explain where it's safe. If the PCs continue to resist, the crowd begins to lose interest and drifts away rather than watch the hushed conversation. If the PCs go along with the man, see Talking with Doctor Elbourne below.

Development: If the PCs cause an obvious disruption, four armed Apostles in Orpiment (see page 36) move to engage the PCs. More will come in groups of four unless the PCs make amends for whatever offense they committed or retreat from the area. The guards won't pursue the PCs out of the area or into the hospital. After 10 minutes, the guards abandon the PCs and go back about their business. Only if the PCs begin actively sowing chaos will a larger group—including those from area F1—retaliate en masse.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully avoid conflict with the cultists and put their trust in Doctor Elbourne, award them 800 XP.

TALKING TO DOCTOR ELBOURNE

Once out of sight of the crowd, the stranger introduces himself as Doctor **Wren Elbourne** (CG male human bard 3; use the statistics for the local celebrity on page 27 of *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* if necessary). He became trapped here when Ulver Zandalus provoked a riot and tremors caused portions of the asylum to collapse soon after. He secured Zandalus's tolerance—if not his trust—by treating the wounded in his corner hospital. Currently he works as he has for days, doing his best to make the wounded comfortable and trying to lie low until there's somewhere he can escape to. With the PCs' arrival, he sees a chance to disrupt Zandalus's cult. He eagerly works toward this, either by assisting the PCs in whatever reasonable plans they've already devised, or by directing them to otherwise disrupt the cult's work. At the outset, he welcomes any questions the PCs might have.

Who are you? "I'm Doctor Wren Elbourne. I study and treat diseases of the mind. I only started working at

Briarstone a week ago, and was excited for the job... that's hard to believe now."

Who is Ulver Zandalus? "He's this lot's leader and the one responsible for all this. I hear he used to be just a quiet artist who had bad dreams. I don't know how else to explain it, but something let his dreams loose. He convinced a bunch of patients that he's some sort of prophet and that he can lead them to the land of dreams. That was enough to start a riot. Soon after, those strange mists rose outside and an earthquake caused much of the asylum to fall apart. We've been trapped here ever since."

Where is Zandalus? "He and his closest followers keep to what remains of the halls upstairs. No one is allowed up there, though. Zandalus's thugs stand guard, but worse, that weird mist collects up

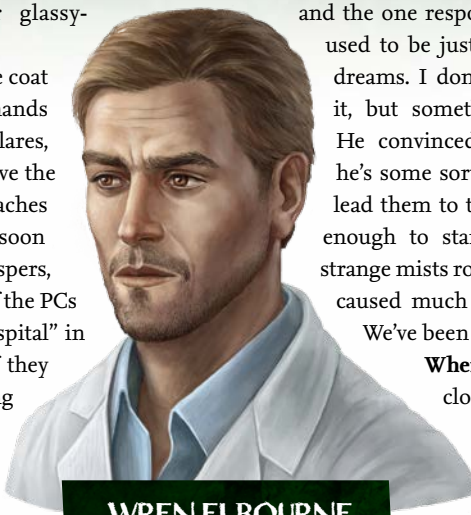
there like a snake in a hole. Who knows what they do in that fog? But we all hear the chanting and screaming... even though we try not to."

Who is the Tatterman? "A lot of people are having the same dream of a gaunt thing in yellow rags hunting them. They say if he kills you in your dreams, he reveals what you really are. Sometimes that's a corpse, sometimes it's something worse. Regardless, everyone is terrified of sleeping, fearing the nightmares. Worse, they say that the Tatterman works for Zandalus. It's all the more reason not to defy him, lest he send his dream assassin after you."

Who are the people wearing yellow? "Zandalus calls them the Apostles in Orpiment. They're his followers. Some have bought into Zandalus's creed that dreams are prophecies and that Zandalus's visions foretell the coming of a great change, but most are just scared, former patients who need treatment."

Who are the people with bagged heads? "Victims of Aggra Loomis. She's one of the asylum's only truly dangerous patients. She killed nine men in Rozenport over forty years ago. They called them the Bag Lady murders, since she always wrapped up her victim's faces. Apparently she passed between prisons and hospitals, but finally ended up here. She's got to be nearly 70 now, but she's still strong as a devil!"

What is the fog outside? "Zandalus found some way to breach the border between dreaming and wakefulness. The fog is a result; it's like spillover from whatever dream realm he's tapped into. But the fog isn't the problem, it's the things that came along with it. Weird things, like from nightmares. The worst seem content to keep to the fog, but I've seen strange forms slip into the asylum—figures I can't rightly describe."



WREN ELBOURNE

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Why are people having nightmares? “If all that’s happened here wasn’t reason enough? I can’t be sure, but everyone’s suffering from the same bad dreams, me included: mostly visions of bleak skies and empty cities. Some say they’re the dreams Zandalus used to have, that now that they’re free of his head they’re infecting everyone else. Some say the Tatterman brought them, and he’s haunting all of our nightmares. Others think they’re visions of what’s beyond the fog. But who can truly say?”

Elbourne doesn’t know much more than this, beyond being able to answer a few basic questions about the survivors and their defenses against the ghouls that sometimes raid from the west. He also tries to avoid answering personal questions. He claims he arrived at Briarstone only a week ago, which is true. What isn’t is his claim that he’s a doctor.

Wren Elbourne was sent here by family in Ardeal, secondarily for treatment of his “self-abuse and refusal to wed,” but primarily because of the embarrassments his defiant bachelorhood threatened to bring upon his family. While Briarstone doesn’t usually accept patients for dubious reasons, the Elbournes’ donations were enough for the sanitarium to accept Wren for a several-month-long retreat. Since stripping the coat off a dead doctor during the uprising, Wren has been lying to make himself seem more useful, employing his bardic magic to heal the wounded and his +11 Bluff skill to maintain the facade. While his lies don’t likely jeopardize the PCs, they might be discovered if the PCs review the asylum records in area C17. Revealing proof of Wren’s lies panics him and he begs the PCs not to reveal him to the cultists. He believes doing so would be near to a death sentence—and he’s right.

Regardless of Elbourne’s lies, he sincerely wants to help the PCs, or at least wants their help in disrupting the Apostles in Orpiment. He even has a plan, but it’s dangerous. Once he’s answered the PCs’ questions, he makes his proposal.

“You seem like you might be strong enough to take out some of Zandalus’s guards, but there’s an army of them. Even if you beat them all, Zandalus himself is still locked away in that maze of fog upstairs. So, it seems to me, the only way to get out of here is to get rid of that mist—and I have a hint of how.

“Zandalus calls his most devoted acolytes his oneirogens. Most stay locked away with him upstairs, but at least one watches over the northwestern tower. I don’t know what he does up there, but I think he’s alone. If you got to him, you could probably wring some of Zandalus’s secrets out of him, maybe even learn how to get rid of this awful mist. Once it’s gone, what you do about Zandalus is up to you.”

Elbourne doesn’t have any more details on the oneirogens. He doesn’t know what they really are. Even if the PCs describe their encounter with Losandro in

C14, he doesn’t know that she was one of them. He can provide the PCs with details on how to get to the tower, but holds back one detail: that the tower is ghouled territory. If the PCs specifically bring up the ghouls, Elbourne will talk about them and, if pressed, simply say he thought he had mentioned the creatures. In any case, he assures the PCs that he’s confident they can deal with the disorganized undead and points them on a direct path through area E2.

If the PCs require further incentive to aid Elbourne, he explains they’re aiding themselves as well, unless they want to become Apostles under Zandalus’s rule. Should the PCs still press, he offers them the few magical healing supplies he’s scraped together: a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of remove disease*, and a *wand of cure light wounds* (48 charges). He offers them the potions upfront, but the wand only once they return.

E2. KITCHEN (CR 4)

A row of fireplaces stand among heaps of barrel-sized pots and cooking implements in this ruin of a kitchen. Numerous doors lead to the south, east, and west, while multiple corners of the L-shaped room have collapsed. A line of large rocks deliberately cordons off the westernmost door.

The asylum’s kitchens have suffered heavy damage, both from the quakes and from being a primary target for looting. Since the collapse of the storage and pantry hall, which once stretched from the northeastern corner of the room, the chamber has been largely left alone. The dangerous haunt situated in the westernmost fireplace means the Apostles in Orpiment have converted the preparations room in area E3 to serve their cooking needs.

Haunt: An obvious haunt rattles a cauldron over the kitchen’s cold westernmost fireplace. Although its lid clatters as if some boiling brew were within, the large pot is empty. Through trial and error, survivors have roughly marked the border of the haunt with large rocks taken from the nearby rubble piles.

The haunt is all that remains of the asylum’s betrayed head cook, Calabren Runnelstaub, who was murdered in his office by Zandalus’s followers, then buried in the room’s destruction. Calabren’s spirit seeped forth to occupy this fireplace. The haunt now represents the generous man’s resentment at being betrayed by the same people he always strove to keep well fed and comfortable.

TREACHEROUS FEAST

CR 4

1,200 XP

CE haunt (10-foot square before western fireplace)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 10 (to hear a pot clattering in the

western fireplace)

hp 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect As soon as any creature comes within the affected area, the cauldron overturns and a vaporous, spectral image of a lean man's sobbing face pours forth, filling the area and then dissolving. If any creature in the area has eaten within the past 12 hours, it must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or immediately be infected with filth fever. Additionally, all nonmagical food in the area of effect is reduced to rotten worminess.

Destruction Either Calabren Runnelstaub's body must be exhumed and buried properly or all patients need to leave Briarstone.

E3. PREPARATION ROOM (CR 5)

Sizable cracks split the surface of the south wall, allowing the smoke of several small cooking fires to escape. Several doors exit the room, but two at the south end of the room have been blocked by a waist-high heap of debris.

Due to the haunt in area E2, the asylum's survivors have moved most of their cooking and food preparation here. The small fires allow the few cooks to boil potato after potato from the massive heap of sacks in the northeastern corner. The survivors ran out of other perishable food, and their once-sizable store of potatoes is rapidly dwindling.

The debris piled to the south is more than incidental. This is a barricade created to prevent ghouls from slipping through from the courtyard beyond and attacking. This barricade has the same statistics as those in area E1. It would have to be destroyed for anyone to pass through the inward-swinging doors to area E4.

Creatures: Four Apostles in Orpiment are in this room at any given time, two cooks and two guards. The cultists leave the PCs alone so long as they don't disrupt the cooking or damage the southern barricade.

One of the cooks is Ivory Garidine, an assistant chef who became trapped here during the riots. She's survived by offering the rioters who first charged into this room a bowl of cookie dough, and then promising to make more. She's since run out of the ingredients for desserts and now does what she can with her very limited supplies—largely water, potatoes, salt, dill, lard, and bacon grease. She's very concerned about what running out of dill means for her longevity, but puts on a strong face.

While the PCs are in the room there is a 25% chance that two ghouls from area E4 test the doors here. They beat against them viciously, terrifying the guards and cooks. Although the ghouls give up after a few rounds, they might damage the doors, highlighting the danger those inside face.

APOSTLES IN ORPIMENT (4)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (see page 36)

E4. NORTH COURTYARD (CR 4 AND 5)

Dense, sour mist fills this spacious courtyard. Eddies in the fog create phantom shapes among the shadows of bent trees and wilted foliage.

The most picturesque of Briarstone's three courtyards, this grassy space used to be a calming refuge. Cobblestone paths once ran the perimeter of the space, leaving the interior to a few colorful mimosa trees and sweet shrubs. All of the plants are dead now, poisoned by the mist and strange weather effects. Roll on the Briarstone's Supernatural Weather table on page 81 to see what supernatural weather currently afflicts the courtyard. This, as well as the fog (detailed on pages 6–7), makes it challenging to pass through the area—to say nothing of the creatures lurking here.

Creatures: The courtyard has become a neutral zone between the portion of the asylum held by the Apostles in Orpiment and that held by ghouls. Three ghouls lurk in the mist near the blocked entrances to area E3, watching for victims who wander away from the group and concocting schemes to break through the barricade.

Additionally, the nightgaunt detailed in area C7 regularly flies over this place. If the PCs have not yet encountered the nightgaunt, consider having it drop a victim as they cross this courtyard.

GHOULS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

Haunt: Although he had made significant strides during his stay at Briarstone, Brin Cerznalo struggled with his anorexia for years. One place he found respite from his dread of weight gain was in sleep, where he frequently dreamed of serene forests and storybook creatures, silver-voiced dryads and proud unicorns featuring prominently. When Brin refused to join the Apostles in Orpiment, though, several violent cultists chased him into this courtyard's southwestern recess and ended his life.

Yet, something survived Brin's death. A creature from his dreams, a majestic unicorn given life by the remnants of his spirit and the power of the Dreamlands, now haunts the courtyard. Any creature who ventures more than 10 feet off the paths circling the area might glimpse or hear the galloping creature. The unicorn teleports frequently and seeks to confuse any who explore the area, galloping in and out of sight through the fog. All of area E4 is treated as its domain. It is, for the most

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part, harmless and effectively mindless, being a neutral manifestation rather than a true unicorn. This changes, however, if the PCs enter the dead end where Brin Cerznalo's body still lies. The unicorn appears and attacks any creature that comes within 30 feet of Brin's corpse (see Treasure).

DEADLY DREAM

CR 5

XP 1,200

CE persistent haunt (beyond the path in area E4)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 16 (to hear the sound of hoof clops through the mist)

hp 22; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Weakness If the unicorn is physically defeated, the haunt ends; the haunt is tricked by *hide from undead*.

Effect If creatures stray from the paths in area E4, this haunt conjures a neutral unicorn (*Bestiary* 269) to confuse and unsettle strangers. The unicorn attacks only if creatures approach the body of Brin Cerznalo. The haunt can be damaged anywhere in the area. If the haunt is neutralized, the unicorn vanishes.

Destruction The body of Brin Cerznalo must be buried.

Treasure: Left amid the rubble in the southwestern corner of the courtyard is the body of Brin Cerznalo, a young man whose attractiveness was only marred by his painful thinness. He wears the loose uniform of a Briarstone patient. Those who investigate his body and succeed at a DC 12 Perception check notice a simple silver band with a design of grassy fields. Unknown to its former owner, this is a *ring of sustenance*, the magical properties of which contributed to Brin's anorexia.

E5. NORTH ORDERLY STATION

This room once served as a station where orderlies could watch over the patients in the Tower Room, and assure that none left the building or interfered with the kitchen staff. It is partially collapsed now and nothing of interest remains.

The door in the north wall of this room is open to the outside grounds, and as such the room is filled with sickly yellow mist. See area C1 and pages 6–7 for suggestions on what to do if the PCs attempt to escape into the fog. If the PCs deal with the oneirogen in area E11 before coming here, the fog is vastly thinned.

Creatures: As the barrier between the Dimension of Dreams and the Material Plane wore thin, a voonith slipped into Briarstone. Unsettled by its new surroundings and fearful of the ghouls that prowl this area, the voonith immediately attacks any creatures that enter this room.

VOONITH

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 283)

E6. NORTHWEST CORRIDOR

Paint chips the color of eggshells cover the floor of these halls. Many of the walls are cracked and sag, causing numerous doors to lean awkwardly in their broken frames.

These halls used to connect the patients' rooms above with several large therapy rooms and showers. Now, rubble chokes the wide stairs leading to the second floor and several of the walls have fallen to ruin.

Of greatest interest, and potential danger, is the wall that separates this hall from area E7. The wall is not collapsed, but it's riddled with cracks. Klades, the leader of the ghouls, has posted three of his servants in area E7, where they wait to ambush any who come down the hall. See that area for details of their ambush.

Any character who comes within 15 feet of this wall and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check notices that it looks unstable. Those who openly come closer, though, risk becoming victims of the ghouls' ambush.

Additionally, a wall just outside area E9 to the west has collapsed, revealing the controls for the showers, an intricate series of pipes, valves, and chains. If the furnaces in area A1b are active, the pipes here are hot to the touch. Any character who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (engineering) check can figure out how to activate the showers in E9 and cause them to expel scalding water. If thus activated, the showers operate for a half hour, during which time any creature in area E9 takes 1d2 points of fire damage from the blistering hot water.

Development: If the showers are activated, the creatures in area E9 rush into this area to escape.

E7. WORK ROOM (CR 4 AND CR 3)

Several workbenches lie crushed beneath the rubble of this room's collapsed ceiling.

Once dedicated to work therapy, this room provided patients a place to feel useful, working at small crafts and performing minor woodworking repairs. Most of the equipment that once filled the room has been pilfered or destroyed and the rubble of the floor above now fills much of the room. The space might have entirely collapsed if it weren't for a few particularly sturdy supports.

Creatures: Three ghouls skulk in this room, following Klades's orders to keep watch on the hall beyond. All three peer through the cracks in the northern wall, prepared to spring the trap (see below) once anyone comes within range. The ghouls work in unison, and so gain a +2 bonus on the Strength check they attempt to topple the wall. Once the wall has collapsed, they rush into the hall to attack.

GHOULS (3) CR 1**XP 400 each**hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146*)

Trap: The northern wall of this room is dangerously unstable. As a full-round action, a character standing adjacent to the wall can peer through cracks into the room beyond. Any character that pushes on the wall can attempt a DC 14 Strength check. On a success, an entire 15-foot length of wall topples away from the character. The trap affects any creatures within 10 feet of the wall in the direction that it topples.

COLLAPSING WALL CR 3**XP 800****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** —**EFFECTS****Trigger** touch; **Reset** no reset

Effect 3d6 bludgeoning damage plus targets knocked prone; Reflex DC 16 half; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-by-15-foot area adjacent to the wall)

E8. GROUP THERAPY (CR 5)

The reek of sweat and rot mingles here. Multiple tables and chairs have been shattered and rebuilt into cages along the east wall, while a crate and an upended bed fitted with harnesses stand against the north.

This place of group discussion and sharing has become the ghouls' pantry. Crates and furniture now act as makeshift cages holding morsels. The bed here was dragged from the rubble and features restraints like those from area D5.

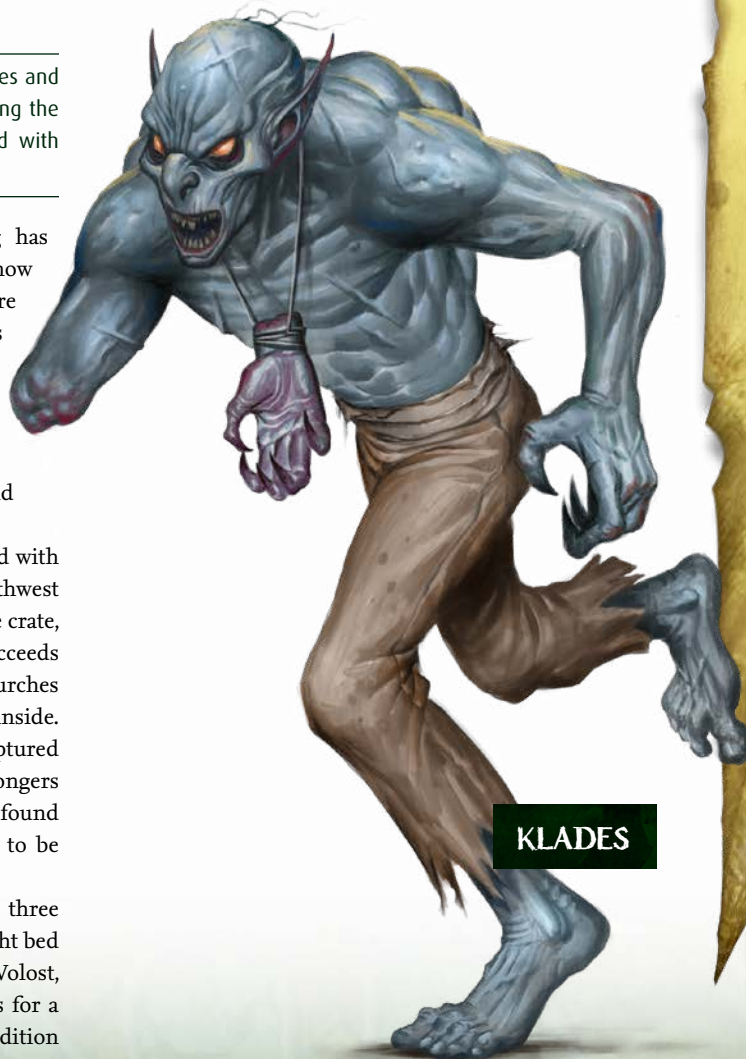
There are three sizable crates serving as cages, each holding a former prisoner dead from neglect or their keepers' "snacking." The crate next to the bed is a crude trap, one the ghouls have used to hold a particularly unusual and dangerous captive.

Creatures: Three ghouls linger here, preoccupied with prodding and peering into a sizable crate in the northwest corner. One of the ghouls is squatting on top of the crate, using its weight to hold it down. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check notices the crate lurches occasionally, suggesting something is trapped inside. This is absolutely the case, as the ghouls have captured an *esipil*, an animalistic variety of *sahkil*—fear mongers native to the Ethereal Plane. This particular horror found its way into Briarstone via the Dreamlands, only to be captured by these ghouls.

When the group notices the PCs, two of the three ghouls rush to attack. The third moves to the upright bed leaning against the wall. Chained to the bed is Ilki Volost, a patient with severe depression (use the statistics for a survivor with 2 hit points; see page 16), but his condition

has been a secondary concern since his capture by the ghouls. He's been restrained here for days and is the only one of the ghouls' captives to have survived. One round after combat begins, this third ghoul screeches at the PCs to leave, threatening to bite out Ilki's throat if they don't. If the PCs don't immediately leave, the ghoul bites off one of Ilki's fingers (dealing 1 point of damage) to prove that it means business. If the PCs leave, the ghouls remain wary for 1 hour before returning to various macabre diversions. If the PCs don't, the ghouls have no compunction about killing their captive and then fight to the death.

As for the *esipil*, it remains under the crate unless its nature is revealed or the crate is damaged. Without a significant weight on top of the crate, the *esipil* can escape. It can see through the crate's narrow slats, though, and bides its time—especially once the PCs and ghouls begin fighting. If after 3 rounds the ghouls seem like they're winning, it emerges and attacks any nearby creatures, ghoul and PC alike. If it seems like the PCs are winning, it remains in its crate and uses its change shape ability to transform into a frightened, quizzical-looking

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mutt of a dog. If released, it tries to ingratiate itself with one of its saviors, yipping and licking affectionately. If the PCs are openly suspicious, it runs off at the first chance (maybe to appear ominously later, or infiltrating one of the two communities of survivors). If a PC seems disposed to keep the creature, it tags along and remains out of combat. It lingers until a PC is vulnerable, at which time it reveals its true form and savages its victim.

If Ilki survives, he warns the PCs that the thing in the crate is not what it seems. He prioritizes this information even over his pleas to be set free.

ESIPIL CR 2

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5 213*)

GHOULS (3) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146*)

Treasure: Two of the bodies in the cages are patients with nothing on them. The third cage holds an orderly who carries a broken padded club, a *+1 heavy wooden shield*, three vials of antitoxin, and a silver necklace etched with the holy symbol of Shelyn (worth 50 gp).

E9. SHOWERS (CR 4)

Cracked, river-green tiles cover the walls and floors of this communal shower in wavering patterns. Dry metal spouts jut from several walls, overlooking grates in the tile floor. A sizable portion of the floor drops into a shallow pool, filled with something other than water: a vile stew of corpses and blood. The smell of rot and copper fills the air in this room. Three alcoves, providing minimal privacy, run along the south wall. In the center, a simple chair has been transformed into a gruesome throne covered with draped viscera and gnawed bones.

The showers have become the feast hall of those transformed into ghouls by the Tatterman. The bath here now holds the half-devoured bodies of almost two dozen men and women—some cultists, others mere innocent captives. Their remains choke the tub's drains, causing more than an inch of gore to accumulate between the carcasses. Any creature that enters the tub must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or contract filth fever. Those who fall prone in the tub take a -2 penalty on this save.

The grisly "throne" in this room is the chosen seat of the ghouls' leader, Klades (see Creatures below). The showerheads in this room can be made to function using the controls in area E6.

Creatures: Briarstone's ghouls are led by Klades, a formerly aggressive and self-destructive patient with an

unsettlingly high pain tolerance. When the Tatterman slew Klades in his dreams, the brutish man didn't rise as a ghoul, but rather as a more powerful ghast. During the revolt, Klades rounded up other patients who had transformed into ghouls and attempted to overrun the asylum and devour all who hadn't received their gift. The Apostles in Orpiment organized far faster than the ghouls, though, and despite the strength and resilience of the undead, the cult halted their rampage. Ever since, Klades and his ghouls have lurked here. Although they occasionally probe the cultists' defenses—especially at night when most of them sleep—they know time is on their side. So they wait for their living rivals to grow weak, entertaining one another with stories of the carnage to come.

Klades whiles away the hours here with two of his minions. He bears many scars from the past days' battles. The worst is a severed left arm, which he lost to a zealous ghoul who tried to usurp his position. He wears his severed hand around his neck.

GHOULS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146*)

KLADES CR 2

XP 600

Ghast (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146, 294*)

hp 17

SQ missing arm

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Missing Arm Klades has only one arm. As a result, he gets only one claw attack.

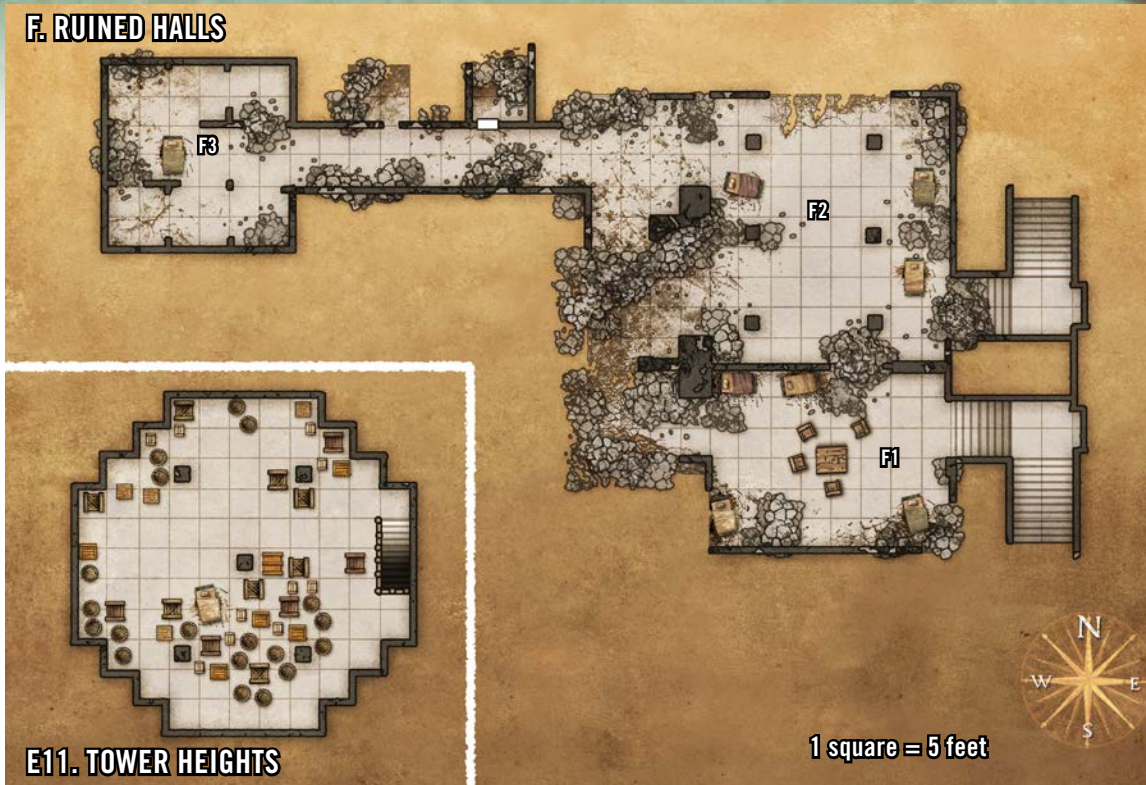
E10. TOWER ROOM (CR 4)

A row of wicker rocking chairs faces this room's tall windows, staring into the mist licking the outside of the glass. A heap of broken planks lies in one corner, the wreckage of a wooden stairwell that still partially clings to the wall above.

Patients once spent hours here under the supervision of nurses and orderlies, reading, conversing, or gazing out into the kitchen gardens. A narrow wooden stairway once climbed to a platform 15 feet overhead, and then on to the tower heights. The lower portion has collapsed, though, leaving a rickety (but stable) flight of stairs hanging overhead. PCs can climb the wall to these stairs; a variety of studs and holes left in the walls makes this possible with a successful DC 10 Climb check.

Creatures: Three ghouls dressed in tattered patient gowns circle the room, their noses and tongues raised high. They've caught the barest scent of the oneirogen

F. RUINED HALLS



E11. TOWER HEIGHTS

1 square = 5 feet

in area **E11** above, but haven't pinpointed the source yet. Upon seeing the PCs, they attack.

GHOULS (3) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

E11. TOWER HEIGHTS (CR 2)

Broken windows look out across a sea of churning saffron fog. Inside, dusty crates of every size crowd the room.

The asylum staff stores obsolete medical equipment here. The tower itself exists as an example of an outdated treatment method—some quack theory involving higher, more rarefied air. Although the airy room is no longer used for the treatment of patients, Zandalus marked it as a perfect place to instate one of his oneirogens, and thus ensure the Dreamlands' influence would sprawl to the farthest reaches of Briarstone Isle.

Creature: The patient here used to be Lesean Wymon. He was always taken with Zandalus's art, with its lonely vistas and the sense of yearning it imparted. When the mute artist emerged from his years of antisociality, Wymon was among the first to seek out Zandalus and listen to his strange creed. Zandalus promised him freedom from his condition and an escape to his most idealized dreams. In the midst of the asylum riot,

Lesean submitted to the rites from *The Chain of Nights*, becoming one of the first fog-spouting oneirogens. Soon after, Zandalus had a group of his followers led Wymon here so his mind might cause dreams to flood from the tower heights. The oneirogen has remained here ever since.

ONEIROGEN **CR 2**

XP 600

hp 22 (see page 88)

Development: Upon disrupting the oneirogen's meditations, the mists spewing from it begin to slow. By the time the PCs defeat it, the mist outside the windows looks lighter. While the surrounding region is still awash in the deadly fog, much of the immediate area appears to clear, hinting to the PCs that destroying other oneirogens could potentially eliminate the threat of the mysterious fog.

Any characters who wish to linger and investigate the oneirogen's body can learn more by succeeding at a DC 16 Heal or Knowledge (planes) check. A PC who succeeds at the Heal check can tell that most of the corpse's organs have been ripped away, consumed by some force that seems to be gone now. A PC who succeeds at the Knowledge (planes) knows that the corpse was exposed to extraplanar energies, and that the fog emanating from the body came from another realm, as if the individual somehow had a small portal inside him.

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These halls once served as the threshold to the wards where Briarstone's long-term patients convalesced. The original shape of the halls are now nearly indistinguishable, as the sanitarium's second floor didn't survive the tremors nearly as well as the first. Zandalus's followers have repurposed the least damaged rooms into halls for the cult leader, his bodyguards, and his oneirogens. Shattered windows allow the oneirogens' dreams to spill across the asylum grounds as vile mist, but a measure of it still collects here, filling areas **F2** and **F3**.

F1. GUARD ROOM (CR 5)

A wide flight of stairs rises to a chamber that has almost entirely collapsed upon itself. Shattered pieces of wall and ceiling timbers, knotted like broken fingers, slump precariously. Despite the chamber's near ruin, a number of tables, chairs, and bedrolls lie about the room. A hall choked with fog lies through a gap in the wall to the north.

Zandalus's guards have turned this hollow amid the second floor's ruins into a flophouse. A square table at the room's center is scattered with the remains of past meals and melted taper candles. Four battered mattresses serve as sleeping pallets in the room's corners, most heaped with a mess of tangled sheets that look luxurious compared to the camp below.

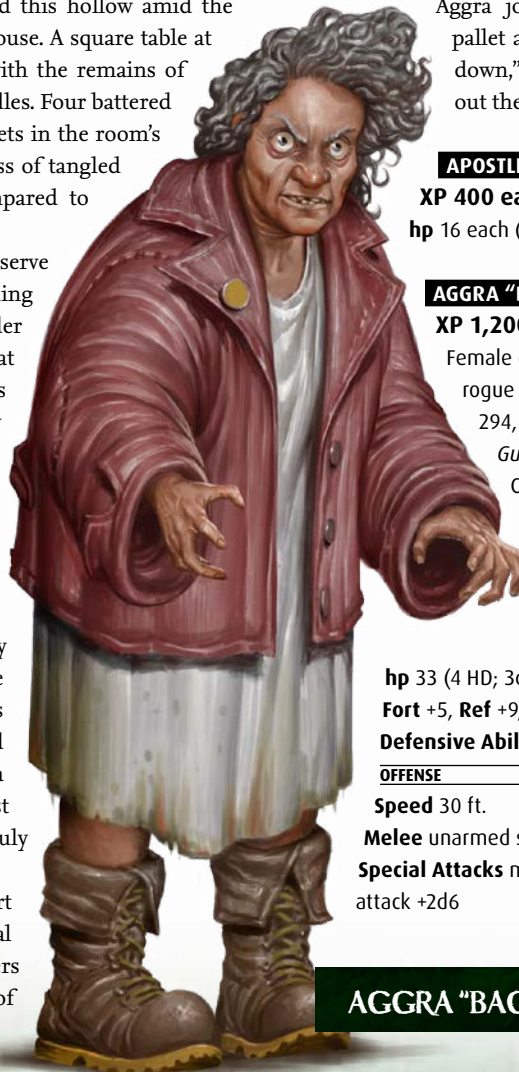
Creatures: The cultists here serve as Zandalus's bodyguards, holding position to protect their leader from the strange creatures that now prowl the asylum and his own often erratic followers. They also enjoy the prestige that comes with being among the cult's elite, such as dining first and having a dedicated sleeping space. However, some elements dampen the experience. First, the chanting and unearthly noises that regularly issue from the western chambers prove unsettling. Second and worse is the presence of Aggra Loomis, one of the asylum's most dangerous and among the few truly criminal patients.

Aggra terrorized Rozenport in the 4670s, killing several unfortunates living in the sewers near the Sincomakti School of Sciences. Reports of the murders referred to

Aggra as the "Bag Lady" in the days before her capture, not as a comment on her social status—she was, in fact, a student at the university at the time—but due to her habit of smothering and choking her victims by wrapping grain bags around their heads. No one ever determined what incited Aggra's murders, but psychopathic tendencies were diagnosed as a contributing factor. As such, rather than being sentenced to death, Aggra became a ward and subject of study at institutes and asylums across Versex.

Now nearly 70 years old, Aggra remains limber and shockingly strong for a person her age. She's become a devout follower of Zandalus and has eagerly readopted her old practices of bagging and strangling to deal with those she deems unfaithful. Aggra is cantankerous, highly critical, and hard of hearing, a combination that makes her a terror among the other apostles. All know the stories of the acolyte she strangled for speaking blasphemy, when all he had asked was whether she was ready for dinner.

Upon noticing the PCs, the apostles here stand up from the table at the room's center and demand they leave. If the PCs refuse to back down, they attack. A round later, Aggra joins the fray, rising from her pallet and shrieking at first to "keep it down," but swiftly switching to "drive out the nonbelievers!"



APOSTLES IN ORPIMENT (3) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (see page 36)

AGGRA "BAG LADY" LOOMIS CR 4

XP 1,200

Female old advanced human brawler 1/rogue 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 23)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 33 (4 HD; 3d8+1d10+11)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +7 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks martial flexibility 4/day, sneak attack +2d6

AGGRA "BAG LADY" LOOMIS

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+8 grapple); **CMD** 21 (23 vs. grapple)

Feats Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Strangler^{UC}, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +10, Climb +8, Diplomacy +10, Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +8, Sense Motive +11, Stealth +11, Survival +8

Languages Common, Skald, Varisian

SQ brawler's cunning, martial training, rogue talent (weapon training), trapfinding +1

Gear *bracers of armor* +2

Treasure: Those who investigate the table find that the cultists had been using a Harrow deck to play some nameless gambling game. The battered deck is itself worth 100 gp. A PC who riffles through and succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices that the card The Foreign Trader depicts a veiled figure in yellow bearing an armful of misshapen rubies. This card, like all the others, is nonmagical, but it carries some obscure significance familiar only to the enigmatic race known as denizens of Leng. Any denizen of Leng will offer five Leng rubies in exchange for the card (see page 39 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Treasures*). Additionally, searching the pallets about the room turns up a bag that contains 200 gp worth of various coins and jewelry, 12 bite-sized pieces of jerky, and a pearl tooth worth 18 gp.

F2. HALL OF ONEIROGENS (CR 6)

Cracked pillars bent at broken angles support a sagging ceiling. While most of the walls look ready to fall apart, the northern wall has done so, creating a massive gap open to the strange weather beyond. Opposite it, the wall in the best repair is laden with parchment pages covered in stark lines of coal and chalk. A hall stretches to the west.

This dilapidated hall bears the broken supports and toppled brickwork of multiple rooms, former patients' cells, and nurse stations. At present, it has more in common with an opium den, as the smoky breaths of weak figures fill the air. Dusty pallets slouch against walls and rock piles.

The wall of pages displays the work of cult leader Ulver Zandalus. These pictures mostly depict scenes of chalky mist filled with impossible, ominous shapes. They serve as the seat of a haunt that affects much of the room.

Creatures: The oneirogens here spout mist that topples through the open segment of wall in an endless cascade. They ignore the PCs unless they are interfered with or if the characters attempt to move into area **F3**. Once any one of them is accosted, they all rise to attack.

ONEIROGENS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (see page 88)

Haunt: The display of Ulver Zandalus's works here threatens to draw in the minds of all who get too close.

HYPNOTIC DREAMS

CR 3

XP 600

CE haunt (15 feet from the south wall of **F2**)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 18 (to see the sketches flutter in an unfelt wind)

hp 6; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect Any creature that comes within 15 feet of the wall of sketches here must succeed at a DC 13 Will save or be fascinated by the swirling effects.

Destruction The haunt ends once Ulver Zandalus is killed.

Treasure: Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices that many of the coal- and chalk-marked pages decorating this room have text on the backsides. If a PC spends 1 hour collecting all the pages in this room and then an additional 10 hours (minus the character's Wisdom modifier) placing them in the proper order, the resulting book is a *book of extended summoning* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 283) keyed to chaotic alignment.

F3. ZANDALUS'S DEN (CR 5 AND 6)

Comprising multiple toppled cells, this chamber looks as though it could collapse at any moment. Thousands of parchment scraps cover the walls, as if in a pitiful attempt to plaster the countless cracks. The flickering of dozens of candles illuminates the artwork's subject matter: innumerable forlorn, surreal landscapes stretching into bleak infinities. The multitude of visions transforms the room into a threshold of nightmares.

Although this ruin of several former patient rooms looks precarious, it is currently in no danger of collapsing. At its center lies four stained mattresses and numerous pillows, heaped together to form the pallet-throne of the leader of the Apostles in Orpiment, Ulver Zandalus.

Those who examine the artwork see numerous repeated images: swirling skies, empty cities, towering monoliths, and threatening figures cloaked by mist. Those who succeed at a DC 16 Perception check notice that a number of the monoliths and the cities seem to be the same, as if they're depictions of a single object or place, not just fanciful impressions. Although the PCs currently have no way of knowing this, many of these sketches depict the *Star Stelae* in Thrushmoor and the city of Neruzavin, and elicit a spark of memory despite the PCs' fugue state.

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Creature: A gaunt man with a ponytail of long and exceptionally straight white hair sits cross-legged upon the pallet like a Keleshite mystic. He wears multiple patients' gowns that have been shredded and stitched to create a layered robe. His arms and much of his chest are exposed, revealing lines of charcoal and yellow chalk that streak his flesh, the most prominent of which appears to be a yellow flame on his forehead.

Upon spotting the PCs, Zandalus's eyes go wide and his mouth falls open. A voice like a tempest wind hissing over broken glass sheers from his split, motionless lips—as though something other than Zandalus himself speaks from inside his body. "You're supposed to be dead. I already killed you. Why aren't you dead?!" With that, Zandalus yanks upward, as if a puppet on invisible strings.

Zandalus cannot be reasoned with and fights until slain. That ritual gave the Tatterman, the entity that had infested Zandalus's dreams, control of not just his sleeping body, but also his waking form. Ever since, the Tatterman has manipulated those around him to create a cult devoted to his master, the King in Yellow, and seeks to draw all of Briarstone Island into the Dreamlands as a mass sacrifice.

ULVER ZANDALUS CR 4
XP 1,200
hp 39 (see page 58)

Slaying what remains of Ulver Zandalus does not destroy the Tatterman. In fact, Zandalus's frayed consciousness was all that kept the Tatterman contained. With the last tethers of Zandalus's mind severed, the Tatterman is no longer chained to the Dreamlands. As Zandalus falls, his wounds and orifices begin spewing clouds of thick, yellow smoke; 1d4 rounds later, a familiar figure—the shadowy, gaunt murderer from their communal dream—steps forth from the mist. The sickly fog clings to him and many of his tatters flutter freely and dissolve into mist. The Tatterman attacks immediately, intent on completing the job he couldn't in dreams.

THE TATTERMAN CR 6
XP 2,400
hp 56 (see page 56)

Treasure: The hundreds of sketches here are unsettling, but if collected, could fetch a significant price. Zandalus's name is known in the most avant-garde of Versex's artistic circles. PCs who attempt to sell the artwork in the county can find buyers willing to pay up to 1,200 gp for the collection. No one outside of Versex county is especially interested in the pieces, though, and the best offer PCs can expect is closer to 100 gp.

A PC who searches Zandalus's mattresses and succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check finds eight pouches each containing 50 gold coins, a *wand of command* (38 charges), an *elixir of truth*, a *scroll of summon monster III*, and a book titled *The Chain of Nights*. Among the book's numerous elaborate medical sketches of the brain, depictions of pressure points and chakras, meditative mantras, and methods of achieving lucid dreaming are spells and arcane rituals devoted to breaching the boundaries of dreams. This book is worth 1,100 gp to the right collector.

THE CHAIN OF NIGHTS

Written in the late 1200s by the Keleshite doctor and seer Valhadis, *The Chain of Nights* explores the brain as an organ, as the lens of perception, and as the throne of something more.

The Chain of Nights is first and foremost a text on the anatomy and workings of the brain, and the first several hundred pages concern themselves with diagnosing, analyzing, and treating—via therapy, drugs, and basic surgeries—numerous physiological and psychological afflictions. Only in the final third does the tome turn toward more esoteric topics, such as the source of nightmares, accounts of the Dimension of Dreams, and descriptions of the creatures that live there.

Any reader who spends 1 hour consulting *The Chain of Nights* can immediately after use the hypnotism occult skill unlock (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 195) once per day even if that character isn't capable of casting psychic spells or doesn't possess the Psychic Sensitivity feat. Also, after 1 hour of consulting the tome, the reader gains a +2 bonus on a single Knowledge (planes) check related to the Dimension of Dreams. Additionally, the tome contains the spells *dream*, *dream council*^{OA}, *dream scan*^{OA}, *dream travel*^{OA}, and *nightmare*. Most notoriously, it contains an elaborate—and some say flawed—ritual for releasing one's dreams. While the rite functions, the side effects of failure can create dangerous beings known as oneirogens (see page 88).

RELEASE NIGHTMARE
School conjuration (creation); **Level** 6
Casting Time 60 minutes
Components V, S, M, F (a candle flame flickering in a darkened room), SC (up to 12)
Skill Checks Heal DC 28, 4 successes; Knowledge (planes) DC 28, 2 successes
Range touch
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Will save; **SR** yes
Backlash The primary caster is targeted by the spell *nightmare* every day for the next 1d6 days. The effect has the same DC as this ritual.
Failure The target takes 2d10 points of damage. If this kills the target, the target becomes an oneirogen rather than dying.



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EFFECT

This ritual creates a small rift between the Dimension of Dreams and the target's mind. If the target suffers from natural, reoccurring nightmares, the ritual conjures them into a viscous, physical substance that boils forth from the target's mouth and nose, then congeals into an inert, coal-like lump of dead dreamstuff. After this, the target has no natural nightmares for a year and never has those specific nightmares again. This ritual dispels the effect of the *nightmare* spell and makes the target immune to that spell for 1 week.

If the target is the victim of an outsider that can cast *nightmare* as a supernatural or spell-like ability, this ritual attempts to conjure that outsider. The target must have been affected by the outsider's *nightmare* ability within the last 3 days. In this case, upon the ritual's completion, the outsider must succeed at a Will saving throw or be summoned into a space adjacent to the target. If the target has been affected by multiple outsiders' *nightmare* ability, the outsider with the lowest Hit Dice is conjured. The outsider is in no way controlled by the target or the ritual's casters, and likely either attacks those who conjured it or attempts to flee. Outsiders having an ability similar to *nightmare*—such as a night hag with its dream haunting ability—might also be conjured by this effect.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

While the defeat of the oneirogens in area F2 causes much of the mist covering the grounds to begin dissipating, the fog's grip on Briarstone doesn't loosen

until Zandalus's defeat. Once it's clear that the mist is gone, though, the Apostles in Orpiment almost immediately fall apart. Many of the former patients race onto the grounds, reveling in the return of a familiar sky and dawning sun. Some attempt to flee the island, but most have no place to go. Fortunately, Winter and her survivors, as well as Elbourne, quickly rise to lead the refugees and provide critical medical attention.

If the PCs haven't already drawn the links between themselves and the amnesiacs described in Administrator Losandro's notes, Winter engages them in a discussion of where they'll head next. She draws attention to any mention in the notes of mysterious patients or, if the PCs didn't find Losandro's notes, she produces them herself and suggests that the amnesiacs and the PCs are one and the same. In any case, now that the PCs have escaped Briarstone, they can follow the clues of their missing memories to Thrushmoor, home of the obsessive Count Haserton Lowls.

Free of the asylum, the PCs and other survivors can follow the road in front of the asylum to a dock on the southern end of the island. A boat remains tied to the pier, though it's too small for everyone to board at the same time. One of the other survivors, likely York, offers to go along on the first trip to Thrushmoor, and then row the boat back to Briarstone Isle to ferry the remaining survivors off the island in as many trips as are needed.

THE TATTERMAN

A living nightmare, the Tatterman has long haunted Briarstone Isle. In Ulver Zandalus, this servant of terror found not just a new victim to torment, but a gate to a hunting ground beyond dreams.

THE TATTERMAN **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Unique nightmare doppelganger sorcerer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 204, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 89)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +12

Aura fear (60 ft., DC 17), frightful presence (30 ft., DC 17)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 56 (7 HD; 3d6+4d10+24); regeneration 5 (good spells and weapons, silver)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10; +4 vs. illusion effects

Defensive Abilities illusion resistance, *protection from good*; **DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** charm, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 10 ft. (perfect)

Melee +1 *war razor* +9 (1d4+4/19-20) or 2 claws +3 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks night terrors (DC 17)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +23)

Constant—*protection from good*

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17)

3/day—*dream*, *nightmare* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*shadow walk* (DC 20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +8)

8/day—*lullaby*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +8)

1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 16), *hypnotism* (DC 16), *sleep* (DC 16), *vanish*^{APG} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

Bloodline dreamspun^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Lucid Dreamer^{OA}

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +13, Fly +12,

Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +8, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +10;

Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff (+20 while using change shape), +4 Disguise (+20 while using change shape), +4 Intimidate, +4 Stealth

Languages Aklo, Common, Hallit

SQ change shape (*alter self*), feign death (DC 17), mimicry, perfect copy

Gear +1 *war razor*^{SWG}, *ring of protection* +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Anchored to Consciousness (Su) The Tatterman is directly tied to Ulver Zandalus and his consciousness. For the most part, the Tatterman is locked away in the Dimension of Dreams, and can influence only Zandalus's thoughts. The Tatterman can't manifest on the Material Plane while Zandalus is conscious, but when the cult leader sleeps, the Tatterman can haunt the halls of Briarstone Asylum. If Zandalus is killed, the Tatterman can freely walk the waking world.

Nightmare Transformation (Su) Any humanoid slain by the Tatterman's *nightmare* spell-like ability returns to life 1 hour later as a vile creature. If the creature's Charisma score is equal to or higher than its Constitution score, it transforms into a doppelganger. If its Charisma score is lower than its Constitution score, it transforms into a ghoul. A humanoid who becomes a doppelganger or ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it had in life. The creature is not under the control of the Tatterman, but its alignment changes to evil and it behaves like a normal doppelganger or ghoul in all respects.

The ancient Sarkorians, with their breadth of worship and host of demi-deities, learned from bitter experience that reverence would not spare them from some entities' pitiless natures. In the wake of violence and insanity, the King in Yellow came to number among those beings too taboo to worship. But staunchly traditionalist Sarkorians sought to pay heed to all of the gods of their ancestors,

and so one of Hastur's servants, a cruel and sadistic being known as the Tatterman, became an intermediary.

Through centuries of gods and spirits falling in and out of religious vogue, as well as the destruction of Sarkoris itself, the Tatterman was nearly forgotten. As time went on, a wandering Kellid witch named Ariadnah, known as the Briarstone Witch, learned of the Tatterman, who piqued her interest. She knew that the Tatterman was a servant of the King in Yellow, a Great Old One who was associated with one of her own foul gods—Shub-Niggurath. Seeking to use him as a tool, Ariadnah roused the dream hunter. After she raised a Sarkorian godstone in his honor, the Tatterman walked and killed at Ariadnah's side as a loyal servant. Together, they caused the quiet slaughter remembered as the Thrushmoor Vanishing.

In the years since Ariadnah's disappearance, the Tatterman drifted back to his stalking ground in the Dimension of Dreams, but his attention has remained on Briarstone. In the past centuries, he's been able to exert little influence over the mortal plane, limited to preying upon the nightmares of those who dream on Briarstone Isle. But in recent years, he found a mind marked by his lord, as Ulver Zandalus's dreams became a beacon for servants of the King in Yellow. Through the magic of *The Chain of Nights*, the unexpected happened, and this beacon became a gate. Now, the Tatterman lurks at the threshold of the Dimension of Dreams, and through Zandalus's flesh and nightmares he's turned Briarstone Asylum into his personal killing ground.

Numerous other inhabitants of Briarstone Asylum, in addition to Ulver Zandalus, know of the Tatterman. The surviving patients and staff are aware of the unsettling nightmares and general sense of dread that haunt the asylum. Many among the surviving staff (see Chapel Survivors on page 25) believe that the Tatterman is just a ghost story that has carried on and spread through the patients like an illness, but some have seen or felt the Tatterman themselves. The former kitchen hand Denman Winoparess claims that he has seen the Tatterman—not just in nightmares, but for real. He's been told by other members of the asylum staff to watch his tongue and not talk about the Tatterman, so if the PCs directly ask him when others are around he poorly plays dumb, though observant PCs might notice his eyes flash with fear or sweat bead on his brow. If you choose, any of the chapel survivors might have a tale to tell of the Tatterman, but none of them know any lasting history.

The Briarstone inhabitant who knows the most about the Tatterman is the ratling Ratch Mamby. He can relate

parts of the Tatterman's history—information he picked up from eavesdropping on conversations and reading through books and notes in the asylum's library. He calls the Tatterman by other names, such as the Shredman, the Every-All, and the Final Dream. He can tell the PCs that the Tatterman has been on Briarstone Isle for a long, long time, that he was once a servant of the Briarstone Witch, and that the Tatterman is a servant of the Great Old One Hastur—this final piece of information is delivered in a hushed whisper after glancing over his tiny shoulders. Ratch can tell the PCs that once the Tatterman has turned his malevolent eye upon a victim, he hounds her to her death. The ratling claims that many of the patients who passed away in their sleep were victims of the Tatterman.



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ULVER ZANDALUS

For Ulver Zandalus, art, obsession, and nightmare have long been one and the same. Yet, now that the walls of reality have been breached, his delusions and dreams terrorize the halls of Briarstone Asylum.

ULVER ZANDALUS

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human expert 3/psychic 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 60)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 39 (6 HD; 3d6+3d8+15)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *light mace* +5 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks dark half (3 rounds/day, 1 bleed), phrenic amplifications (defensive prognostication, overpowering mind), phrenic pool (3 points)

Psychic Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

1/day—*detect thoughts* (DC 10)

Psychic Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

1st (6/day)—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *mind thrust* ^{10A} (DC 14), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *lullaby* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *resistance*, *telekinetic projectile* ^{0A}

Psychic Discipline abomination

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Diplomacy +8, Heal +7, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +8, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +10

Languages Aklo, Common, Kelish, Osiriani, Varisian, Vudrani
SQ detect thoughts

Combat Gear *oil of magic weapon*, *potion of bear's endurance*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *light mace*

The Apostles in Orpiment call Ulver Zandalus their leader, and most see him as the architect of the Briarstone uprising. None realize that Zandalus is just as much a victim as everyone else trapped in the asylum, a man whose nightmares have been freed to torment the rest of the waking world.

BEFORE BRIARSTONE

A bright, sensitive student at Rozenport's Sincomakti School of Sciences, Ulver Zandalus applied himself to learning the mysteries of the world. He was a talented writer, researcher, and artist, and bent his fascination and talent toward studying the ancient empires of Osirion, Kelesh, and Ninshabur. Despite his relative inexperience, his enthusiasm and faithful, detailed renderings of those civilizations' most sacred places won him a spot on an expedition led by the famed scholar Doctor Henri Meirtmane. Along with Meirtmane and several veteran researchers, Zandalus journeyed to Katheer, capital of Qadira. But the Zandalus who left Rozenport never returned.

During the expedition—one aimed at exploring freshly unearthed ruins outside of Katheer—Doctor Meirtmane discovered the location of a copy of a fantastically rare tome called *The Chain of Nights*. Because he was seen publicly helping the doctor, Zandalus was targeted and captured by the book's owners, a drug cult sworn to a mysterious entity they called the King in Yellow. Although held for only 3 days, Zandalus was exposed to both potent hallucinogens and intense psychological torture. The cultists dragged him along with them on their dream travels, and what he witnessed infected his mind and shut down his ability to speak. Even after his rescue, yellow-tinged visions haunted Zandalus, and empty cities and crumbling skies plagued his nightmares.

Upon returning to Rozenport, Zandalus received considerable counseling, but he never recovered his speech. Unable to study, he abandoned his classes

and, for a time, joined the beggars and unfortunates inhabiting the local Pharasmin lamentation, a type of religious hospice. When Meirtmane learned of this, he saw to Zandalus's placement in a true asylum, entirely at the expense of the Sincomakti School. For several years Zandalus passed between institutes before finally arriving at Briarstone Asylum.

AT BRIARSTONE

In 4687 AR, Ulver Zandalus became a patient at Briarstone. Mute and generally harmless, Zandalus was a calm but largely unresponsive patient. Even under the care of one of the asylum's head doctors, Eliege Losandro—who would eventually become the institution's administrator—he showed no improvement, endlessly suffering dramatic night terrors. While Losandro's addition of art therapy to Zandalus's schedule helped to calm and distract him during the day, he turned skittish every evening, and whenever exhaustion forced him to slip into sleep, he woke screaming unintelligibly.

Although Zandalus's art was nothing like a cure to his affliction, he produced thousands of remarkable coal and chalk illustrations over the years, nearly all depicting the harsh cityscapes and tortured faces common to his dreams. His art even gained some limited notoriety, and was exhibited in Rozenport where it happened to catch the eye of the local count, Haserton Lowls.

For his own obsessive reasons, Lowls began visiting Zandalus at Briarstone. In private conference with the man, Lowls vacillated between watching him work and relentlessly interrogating him about his dreams, the city that appeared therein, and a realm he called the Dreamlands. While Zandalus never answered a single question, Lowls read much in the tormented man's eyes. From Zandalus's art and his one-sided interviews, Lowls became convinced of some secret connection between the *Star Stelae* of Thrushmoor and the lost city of Neruzavin—a secret trapped in Zandalus's dreams, whether he knew it or not. Convinced of his own theories, Lowls set one last experiment in motion. He presented to Administrator Losandro a cure for Zandalus's condition. Claiming it was the only way to finally excise her long-suffering patient's nightmares, Lowls gave her his own copy of *The Chain of Nights*.

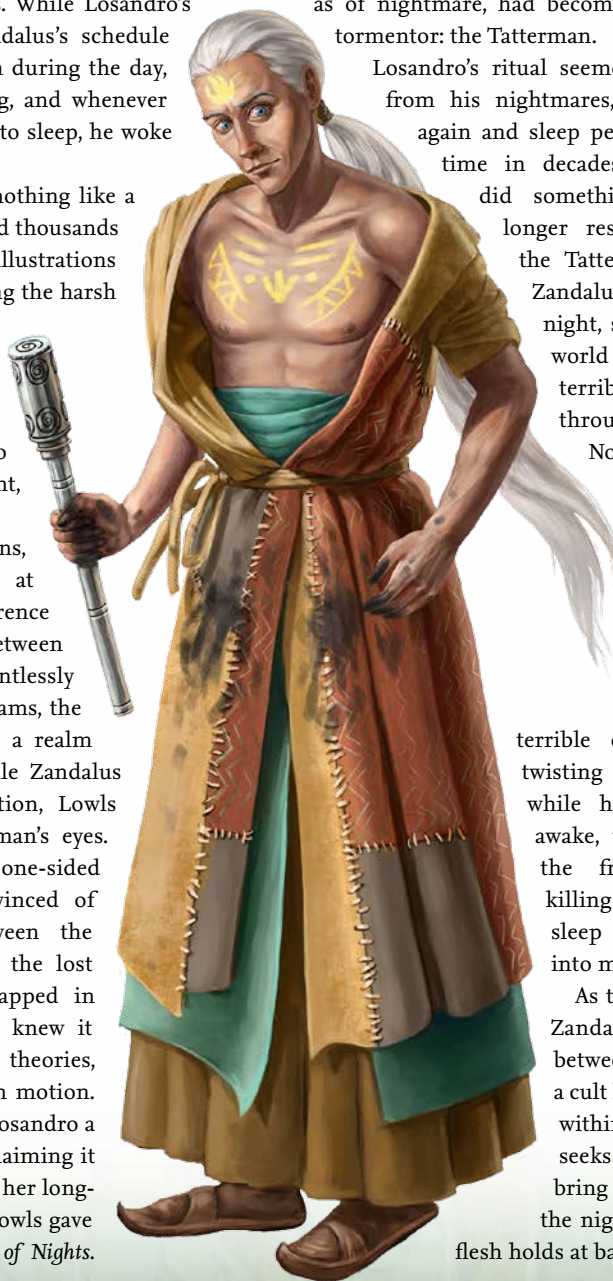
With that, he departed, curious to learn what might transpire, though knowing that the results would be quite dramatic and dangerous.

In the following days, Losandro discovered and performed the release nightmare occult ritual, which she hoped would liberate Zandalus from his nightly torments. Yet she'd always assumed that Zandalus's dreams were natural, the scars of trauma. Rather, Zandalus's brush with the Dimension of Dreams had made him the victim of a terrible sort of virus, one that had grown strong over the years. As Zandalus dreamed, his mind sang out to the denizens of the unwaking realm, drawing curious and ever more terrible things to follow his nocturnal journeys. Since coming to Briarstone, one in particular, a being as much of legend as of nightmare, had become Zandalus's nightly tormentor: the Tatterman.

Losandro's ritual seemed to free Zandalus from his nightmares, enabling to speak again and sleep peacefully for the first time in decades. However, it also did something far worse. No longer restrained to dreams, the Tatterman took hold of Zandalus's mind and, by night, slipped into the real world to sow fear and cause terrible transformations throughout Briarstone.

Now Zandalus struggles to keep hold of his own mind and body, knowing that every time he falls asleep, the Tatterman speaks and acts through him, building a terrible cult to the mind-twisting faith of Hastur. Yet, while he manages to stay awake, the monster haunts the fringes of dreams, killing victims in their sleep and turning them into monstrous servants.

As the adventure begins, Zandalus lies stretched between terrors, master of a cult he fears and prisoner within his own body. He seeks an end, but can't bring himself to unleash the nightmare that only his flesh holds at bay.



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WINTER KLACZKA

Trapped at Briarstone Asylum, the Pharasmin priestess Winter Klaczka has become the leader of a fragile band of survivors. She knows that it will take more than prayer if any of them are to escape the terror.

WINTER KLACZKA
CR 2
XP 600

Female changeling cleric of Pharasma 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 29)

N Medium humanoid (changeling)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +2 (1d4-1/19-20) or
2 claws +1 (1d4-1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 13, 2d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6)
6/day—gentle rest, rebuke death (1d4+1)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6)
2nd—*calm emotions* (DC 15), *gentle repose*^o (DC 15),
lesser restoration

1st—*bless*, *deathwatch*^o, *protection from evil*,
sanctuary (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*create water*, *guidance*, *purify food and
drink*, *stabilize*

D domain spell; **Domains** Healing, Repose

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Combat Casting, Extra Channel

Skills Bluff +2 (+4 vs. creatures sexually attracted to her),
Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +5, Sense Motive +8;

Racial Modifiers +2 Bluff vs. creatures sexually
attracted to her

Languages Common, Varisian

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other**

Gear chain shirt, mwk dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1

When Mother Thestia, high priestess of Maiden's Choir Cathedral in Caliphaz, personally called for Winter, the

young priestess knew her life was about to change. Well after midnight, before the great statue of Pharasma in the cathedral's sanctuary, the High Mother introduced Winter to a severe woman who identified herself only as Omari. This stranger, Mother Thestia explained, was one of the nation's Royal Accusers, secretive agents who were sworn to Ustalav's crown and operated outside the country's baroque hierarchy of titles and privilege. Omari came requesting the service of one of the cathedral's sisters on an undertaking that would lead them to Thrushmoor in the neighboring county of Versex. The High Mother didn't deign to reveal the terms of the church's bargain with the Royal Accusers. Rather, she explained only that Winter would aid Accuser Omari until the errand's completion. Dutifully, Winter promised to serve to the best of her ability and faithfully represent the church, fully aware that, when it came to twists of fate, Pharasma's blessings and curses often appeared much the same.

The journey to Versex proved quiet enough. There were no interruptions, and all members of the investigation rode along in silence for much of the trip. Upon arriving, Accuser Omari left to keep some private appointment, a short task from which she returned with errands for each of her aides. Omari handed Winter a badge deputizing her with the authority of the Royal Accusers, and sent her along with a small contingent to nearby Briarstone Asylum to inquire after a handful of recently committed patients previously in the service of Haserton Lowls, count of Thrushmoor.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Following the insanity that gripped Briarstone, Winter became a prisoner within. She had met only briefly with Administrator Losandro and had learned little of the asylum's workings or those she'd been sent to inquire after, though she was promised a chance to interview the patients. Even during her brief visit, she inferred something of the strangeness unraveling at the

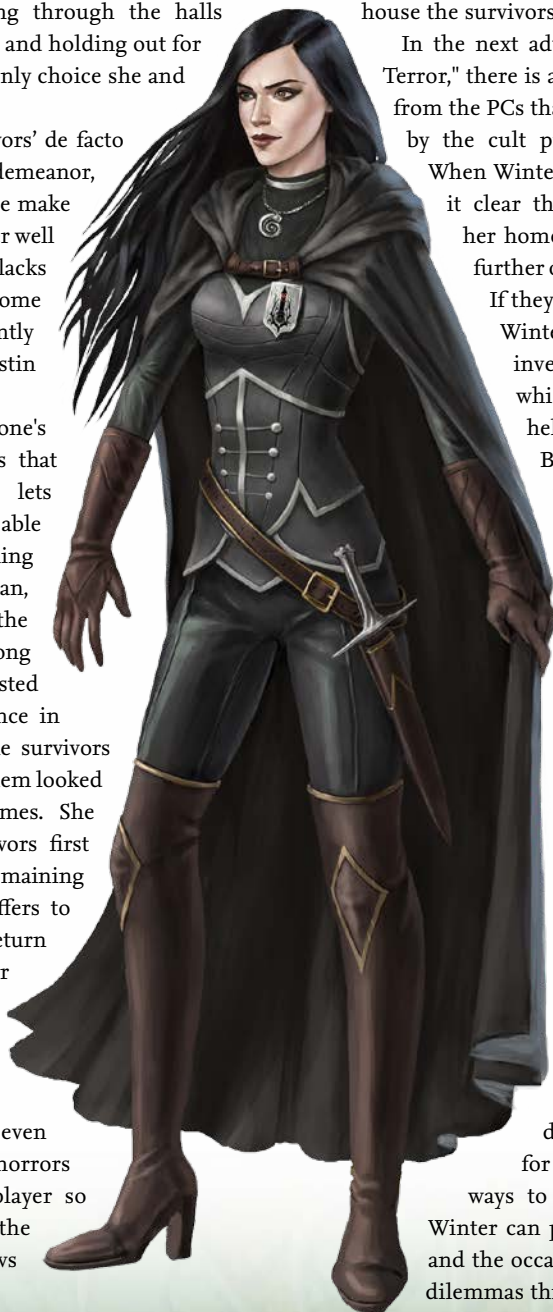
sanitarium and had been granted leave to explore the grounds. It was during this investigation that the first of the quakes struck and the patient uprising began. In the chaos that followed, Winter and her compatriots found themselves attacked by ghouls, which overwhelmed those who had traveled with her. Desperate to escape, Winter made her way to the asylum's entry, but found that she wasn't the first to be trapped by the unnatural mist surrounding the grounds. At her suggestion, a handful of survivors made for the nearby chapel to hide—and pray.

Winter's desperate plan saved the lives of several of the asylum's patients and staff, who still linger in the chapel. The priestess never expected the asylum's chapel to become her new home, but with no options for escape and terrors crawling through the halls beyond, fortifying the holy place and holding out for as long as possible seemed the only choice she and the others had for survival.

Winter has become the survivors' de facto leader. Her common sense, calm demeanor, and honest desire to see everyone make it out of the asylum alive make her well suited to this role, even if she lacks any tested survival skills. She's come to trust all of the survivors currently struggling along with her, Vaustin York foremost among them.

When the PCs arrive at Briarstone's chapel, she's initially suspicious that they are doppelgangers, but lets herself hope that they might be able to find a way off the isle. She's willing to assist the PCs however she can, so long as it doesn't disrupt the fragile calm she maintains among her charges—she is most interested in keeping all of them safe. Once in Thrushmoor, Winter ensures the survivors are safe, and seeks ways to have them looked after or returned to their homes. She offers her healing to the survivors first and to the PCs second; any remaining healing she can perform she offers to the people of Thrushmoor in return for donations in order to help her get the survivors to safe and comfortable places.

If you wish, Winter can become an important character in future adventures. Winter can even replace a PC who falls to the horrors of Briarstone Asylum, if the player so wishes. In this case, provide the player with this entry so he knows more about Winter's backstory.



After the PCs find a way to get rid of the mist surrounding the asylum and escape the island, Winter helps them as they ferry the other survivors to Thrushmoor. Once she's in Thrushmoor, Winter's first action is to visit the Sleepless Building, as it was designated as a rendezvous site by Accuser Omari. In this instance, Winter's motivations help bring the PCs to meet with Cesadia Wrentz, head of the secretive agency. However, if other survivors are injured or are in need of a safe place to recuperate, Winter might visit New Chapel, Thrushmoor's church dedicated to Pharasma, to seek aid from a fellow member of the faith. Once she finds out that New Chapel's priestess is missing, she commandeers the building in order to house the survivors.

In the next adventure, "The Thrushmoor Terror," there is a chance for Winter to learn from the PCs that Accuser Omari was killed by the cult preying upon Thrushmoor.

When Winter discovers that, she makes it clear that she wants to return to her home church in Caliphast to get further orders from Mother Thestia. If they want, the PCs can plead for Winter to help them during their investigation of Thrushmoor, which she agrees to since they helped save everyone from Briarstone, but once their work is done, Winter plans to return home.

If you want to keep Winter associated with the party for longer, you could have Winter send word back to her church that she is tracking down those responsible for killing Omari and continuing the investigation of Lowls that was cut short by the chaos at the asylum and in Thrushmoor.

If the PCs successfully convince Winter to come along with them, she could serve as a skilled companion. Even if she doesn't travel with the PCs for long, they can arrange for ways to contact one another, and Winter can provide important research and the occasional insight into the PCs' dilemmas throughout the campaign.

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THE ELDER MYTHOS

Nor is it to be thought that man is either the oldest or the last of earth's masters, or that the common bulk of life and substance walks alone. The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them, They walk serene and primal, undimensioned and to us unseen... unseen and foul in lonely places where the Words have been spoken and the Rites howled through at their Seasons. The wind gibbers with Their voices, and the earth mutters with Their consciousness. They bend the forest and crush the city, yet may not forest or city behold the hand that smites."

—H. P. Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror"

The gods of Golarion are diverse and varied, and while some are newcomers to the ranks of the divine, others date back millennia. Some of those worshiped when the first architects of Azlant were drawing up plans for their nascent empire are still venerated today. But even in those early days, there were older gods whose existence dwarfed even those who helped shape the course of written history. These are the unimaginably ancient and inconceivably potent Great Old Ones, who in turn serve and worship the even greater Outer Gods. Scholars call these entities by many names, but on Golarion, their faiths and the entities themselves are known as the Elder Mythos.

The Great Old Ones and Outer Gods do not reside within the outer planes of the Great Beyond. Some visit or dwell in regions or dimensions adjacent to those distant planes, but the vast majority of those who make up the Elder Mythos dwell on the Material Plane. Yet they are anything but mortal. Death holds no claim over the Great Old Ones, who merely dream when defeated, waiting for another opportunity to work their wills once again when they inevitably waken. And the Outer Gods themselves have always been there. As far back as one dares to peer, evidence of their influence can be found. Some scholars propose that the Outer Gods predate

DOMAINS AND SUBDOMAINS

The Scalykind and Void domains can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*. The Dark Tapestry, Dragon, Entropy, Fear, Isolation, Revelry, Stars, Venom, and Whimsy subdomains can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*. The other subdomains and complete rules for subdomains can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

even the oldest of the gods, that they existed before time, and that they recall the birth of Pharasma, and thus the birth of life and death. Worshipers of the Lady of Graves regard these theories as blasphemy, yet the wisest among her clergy know better than to delve too deeply into such matters, for the truth may not be something even the staunchest of Pharasmin minds could bear to accept.

These pages detail the Elder Mythos gods who are most often worshiped on Golarion. Cultists devoted to the Elder Mythos are often quite insane. As such, it is the cultists who most often threaten mortal affairs, not the gods themselves. And in the end, even the most faithful will succumb during those strange aeons when the stars are right and the Elder Mythos rules again.

DEITIES OF THE ELDER MYTHOS

| Deity | AL | Areas of Concern | Domains | Favored Weapon |
|----------------|----|--|--|-----------------|
| Abthoth | CN | Disease, fecundity, oozes | Chaos, Darkness, Earth, Madness, Strength | Whip |
| Atlach-Nacha | NE | Construction, futility, spiders | Artifice, Evil, Madness, Void | Net |
| Azathoth | CN | Entropy, madness, mindless destruction | Chaos, Destruction, Madness, Sun, Void | Warhammer |
| Bokrug | CN | Revenge, storms, water | Chaos, Destruction, Water, Weather | Ranseur |
| Chaugnar Faugn | CE | Blood, patience, remote hill country | Chaos, Death, Evil, War | Light pick |
| Cthulhu | CE | Cataclysms, dreams, the stars | Chaos, Evil, Madness, Void | Dagger |
| Ghatanothoa | NE | Disasters, lost islands, sacrifice | Destruction, Evil, Madness, Water | Morningstar |
| Hastur | CE | Decadence, disorder, nihilism | Chaos, Evil, Rune, Void | Rapier |
| Ithaqua | CE | Cannibalism, cold, wind | Air, Chaos, Evil, Weather | Handaxe |
| Mhar | CN | Caverns, mountains, volcanoes | Chaos, Destruction, Earth, Fire | Heavy pick |
| Mordiggian | CE | Darkness, ghouls, voices of the dead | Chaos, Darkness, Death, Evil | Scimitar |
| Nhimbaloth | CE | Despair, ghosts, swamps | Chaos, Death, Evil, Plant, Void | Flail |
| Nyarlahotep | CE | Conspiracies, dangerous secrets, forbidden magic | Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic, plus one more | Varies |
| Orgesh | CE | Alchemy, hunger, subterranean waterways | Chaos, Earth, Evil, Water | Spear |
| Rhan-Tegoth | CE | Hibernation, immortality, ruin | Chaos, Evil, Repose, Void | Sickle |
| Shub-Niggurath | CE | Fertility, forests, monsters | Animal, Chaos, Evil, Plant, Void | Dagger |
| Tsathoggua | CE | Magic, outcasts, the underworld | Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic | Short sword |
| Xhamen-Dor | NE | Decay, parasites, transformation | Death, Evil, Plant, Trickery | Spear |
| Yig | CN | Cycles, procreation, serpents | Chaos, Community, Protection, Scalykind | Punching dagger |
| Yog-Sothoth | CN | Gates, space, time | Darkness, Chaos, Knowledge, Travel, Void | Dagger |

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ABHOTH



SOURCE OF UNCLEANNESS

CN Outer God of disease, fecundity, and oozes

Domains Chaos, Darkness, Earth, Madness, Strength

Subdomains Caves, Ferocity, Insanity, Night, Nightmare, Resolve

Favored Weapon whip

Symbol tentacle coiled around a disembodied eye

Original Source Clark Ashton Smith, "The Seven Geases"

In the deepest reaches of every world lie vast caverns that, in most cases, have been long forgotten or simply never discovered by that world's inhabitants in the first place. On Golarion, these deep pathways and hidden realms are known as the Darklands, but similar extensive networks exist on countless other worlds. It is in these forgotten midnight grottoes that Abthoth, the Source of Uncleanness, the Primal Clay of Life's First Lurch, seeps and clots and spews forth its aberrant spawn.

Abthoth has an otherworldly wisdom and a staggering intellect, yet it does not devote its mind to matters that mortals could comprehend. It's not so much trapped as it is cradled in a cavern lair connected to many worlds. The creatures it constantly spawns that manage to escape its ravenous gluttony and eternal hunger stagger upward through the nighted ways, growing stronger and larger the longer they survive. The greatest find paths through ancient portals in those caves to other worlds, where they may spawn entire societies and races of their own. Abthoth's cultists maintain that all life in the universe was spawned by the Unclean God, and that in our flesh and bones lie traces of its divine excretions.

Abthoth appears as a vast lake of seething, surging, protoplasmic ooze in which eyes and mouths and limbs and organs constantly form and are consumed. Those creations that drip from its bulk gain sentience of their own, and through them Abthoth can see and explore and infect any world they touch.



ATLACH-NACHA



THE VOID WEAVER

NE Great Old One of construction, futility, and spiders

Domains Artifice, Evil, Madness, Void

Subdomains Construct, Isolation, Nightmare, Toil

Favored Weapon net

Symbol spider perched at the center of a web

Original Source Clark Ashton Smith, "The Seven Geases"

The Spider God Atlach-Nacha is of an indeterminate gender—in some tales, he is portrayed as male, but in others she is female. In truth, constructs as prosaic as gender are but afterthoughts to Atlach-Nacha. Dwelling in a vast underground cavern large enough to swallow entire nations, Atlach-Nacha weaves an impossibly complex web to span the gulf. Texts claim that on the day its vast bridge finally connects all sides of this complex canyon, a new age of madness will be unleashed, while others purport that Atlach-Nacha's web-bridges are to be used by the Outer God Abthoth to surge out of its deep cavern rather than sending forth only its spawn.

Those who venerate Atlach-Nacha see the divine in the spider's form. Many of its worshipers are arachnid creatures, such as driders, ettercaps, and jorogumos. These latter beings have been known to take the name of Atlach-Nacha themselves when they invade human societies, although their goal in appropriating the god's name is unclear.

Atlach-Nacha appears as a huge black-and-red spider with a body the size of an elephant and long, spindly legs. Its face is vaguely humanoid, with hair-rimmed eyes, but in certain obscure sources it has also been depicted as having multiple arms and a woman's head and torso. Many of the spiders of Leng venerate it as their mother, and doubtless the tunnels below Leng eventually connect to Atlach-Nacha's web-strewn canyon lair.

AZATHOTH



THE DAEMON SULTAN

CN Outer God of entropy, madness, and mindless destruction

Domains Chaos, Destruction, Madness, Sun, Void

Subdomains Catastrophe, Dark Tapestry, Entropy, Insanity, Nightmare, Stars

Favored Weapon warhammer

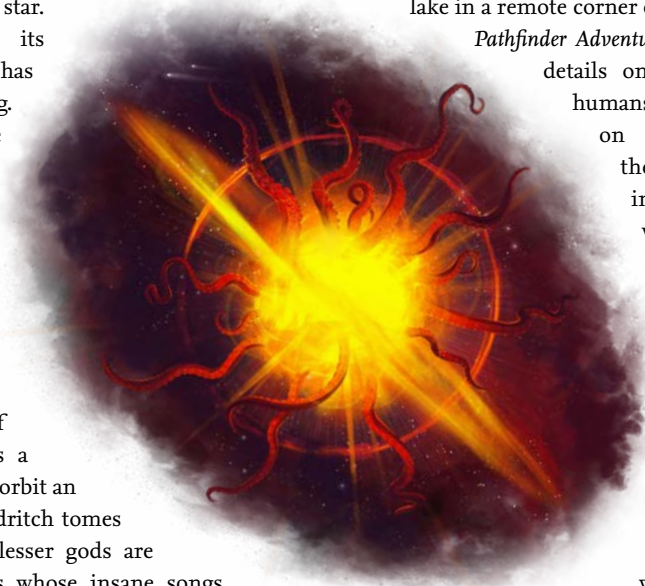
Symbol eight-pointed star

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft, "Azathoth"

The so-called "blind idiot god" is a primal mass of mindless devastation and destruction the size of a star. Azathoth is unaware of its worshipers, and indeed has little interest in anything. Some scholars theorize that Azathoth isn't even self-aware, likening the outer god to a cosmic firestorm on the grandest scale, an entity incapable of directing action or reacting to stimuli.

Azathoth is attended by an unknown number of other gods that orbit it as a solar system's planets might orbit an angry star. Referred to in eldritch tomes as Azathoth's Court, these lesser gods are themselves powerful beings whose insane songs and eerie piping provide a constant accompaniment to Azathoth's chaotic babblings and thunderous explosions. Many worshipers of Azathoth liken the entities of Azathoth's court to the true manifestation of their god's conscious will. Although lesser than Azathoth, these gods are themselves quite powerful, and the greatest of them is none other than Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos.

Said to lie at the center of the universe, Azathoth is believed by some to be the source of all existence, the primal truth that created the Material Plane. Cultists of the Primal Chaos often seek to harness their blind god's power for their own destructive ends, yet such attempts are fraught with peril, for the tiniest ripple caused by Azathoth's thrashings can lay waste to entire planets. The Shory are said to have developed ways to harness this power, but it seems just as likely that tampering with such forces may have played a key role in that empire's mysterious fall so long ago. Azathoth is referenced as the "Daemon Sultan" in some ancient texts, but this appellation does not imply any connection to the fiends known as daemons, for Azathoth has as little interest in matters of the Great Beyond as it does anything else.



BOKRUG



THE WATER LIZARD

CN Great Old One of revenge, storms, and water

Domains Chaos, Destruction, Water, Weather

Subdomains Catastrophe, Oceans, Rage, Storms

Favored Weapon ranseur

Symbol green lizard with a long, coiling tail

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft, "The Doom That Came to Sarnath"

The original worshipers of Bokrug were a hideous aquatic race who dwelled upon the shores of an ancient lake in a remote corner of the Dreamlands (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #111 for more details on these creatures). As humans rose to prominence on the Material Plane, they inevitably came into violent conflict with these creatures. Humans prevailed, but a thousand years later, the spirits of the slain worshipers of Bokrug rose to exact a terrible revenge. Today, in remote regions of the Dimension of Dreams, Bokrug is worshiped out of fear as much as devotion. When those who encounter

Bokrug's cult while traveling this dimension waken, they often carry in their minds the seeds of faith. In this manner, Bokrug's cult has spread to the waking world.

Compared to other deities of the Elder Mythos, Bokrug seems relatively content to bask in the adoration of his worshipers and the powerful storms that often visit the distant dreaming lands he dwells within. The Great Old One does not often seek to destroy others, by design or by accident. Only when his anger and thirst for vengeance are aroused does Bokrug go on the hunt.

Bokrug appears as an immense aquatic lizard with spines and sickly green scales. His exceptionally long tail ends in three terrible spines, and his breath is said to be a poisonous green mist. His cult is typically found in rural regions, where worship of the Water Lizard seems to do wonders in the bringing of fine weather and prosperity—as long as blood sacrifices to Bokrug continue. Although he does not demand the sacrifice of sentient creatures, many of his cults have nonetheless taken to sacrificing prisoners or criminals.

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CHAUGNAR FAUGN



THE HORROR FROM THE HILLS

CE Great Old One of blood, patience, and remote hill country

Domains Chaos, Death, Evil, War

Subdomains Blood, Entropy, Murder, Tactics

Favored Weapon light pick

Symbol elephantine visage with a bloody trunk

Original Source Frank Belknap Long, "The Horror from the Hills"

The entity known as Chaugnar Faugn is ancient beyond imagining, a creature capable of existing in more dimensions than most could even guess at and surviving over epochs of time that birth and destroy worlds. For thousands of millennia, Chaugnar Faugn has dwelled, dormant and immobile, in a shallow cave lost within the depths of a desolate stretch of rugged hill country. This is how the Great Old One gained his appellation as the Horror from the Hills, and most of his more ardent worshipers are those who dwell in such backcountry. Yet he has no particular affinity to the slopes and vales that hide him; they are merely where he has waited for the past unknown eons.

Chaugnar Faugn's faithful adopt the Great Old One's patience. They are violent and eager for blood, yet they wait generations before acting on plans for vengeance or raids. Many times, the cultists' enemies have believed them to have been exterminated after a brutal conflict, but each and every time, this was a misconception. The worshipers of the Horror from the Hills were merely content to wait for a proper chance at revenge. In those rare occasions when Chaugnar Faugn does wake, though, worship does nothing to deter his hunger; he feeds on zealots and unbelievers with equal disdain.

Chaugnar Faugn is vaguely humanoid in form, yet his head is that of a distorted, nightmarish elephant with vast veined ears, enormous curved tusks, and a trunk that ends in a large disk through which he drains the blood of those who draw too near.



CTHULHU



THE DREAMER IN THE DEEP

CE Great Old One of cataclysms, dreams, and the stars

Domains Chaos, Evil, Madness, Void

Subdomains Dark Tapestry, Insanity, Nightmare, Stars

Favored Weapon dagger

Symbol complex rune surrounding an open eye

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu"

Although Cthulhu is imprisoned in the sunken corpse city of R'lyeh under a vast ocean on a distant world far from Golarion, his mind is vast and terrible, capable of reaching out to touch dreaming minds across the universe. His cult is spread in this manner, as those sensitive to his dreams of madness (typically half-insane artists, poets, and visionaries) waken with memories not wholly their own. Upon waking, these afflicted artists and dreamers may not even consciously recall their dreams or realize that their actions have been influenced. Cthulhu's spawn—tremendous entities similar in shape and purpose to their great master—also spread his terrible worship, but deadly as they are, they possess but a shadow of Cthulhu's power.

Cthulhu's cults are secretive, based in remote swamplands, dense forests, and sprawling sewers under the world's greatest cities. They know that one day the stars shall align and their master's city will rise again above the waves on that distant, doomed planet, at which point it is merely a matter of time before they are rewarded with the arrival of their terrible deity upon Golarion as he wipes entire worlds clean in preparation for the return of all of the Outer Gods.

Cthulhu is a massive creature, roughly humanoid in shape but hideously inhuman in many regards, with an octopoid face, immense wings, and foul protoplasmic flesh that writhes in ways no flesh should. While imprisoned, his mad thoughts can touch only a dreaming few, but once awake, his alien mind will spread like a virus of insanity through all thinking souls.

GHATANOTHOA



THE ETERNAL SOURCE

NE Great Old One of disasters, lost islands, and sacrifice

Domains Destruction, Evil, Madness, Water

Subdomains Catastrophe, Insanity, Nightmare, Oceans

Favored Weapon morningstar

Symbol waves parting around a rising jagged stone

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft and Hazel Heald, "Out of the Aeons"

Some have likened Ghatanothoa to Cthulhu, and certainly there are superficial similarities shared by the two Great Old Ones. Both entities are trapped in immense structures atop sunken islands. Both came to the same distant world in ancient times from the dark places between the stars. And when they wake, their actions cause great storms or disasters, as if the world itself recoiled from their actions.

These similarities may be more than superficial, for evidence exists that Ghatanothoa may be one of Cthulhu's spawn. The worshipers of the Eternal Source deny such claims, and fight against the cult of Cthulhu when they encounter it. Cthulhu's cult, on the other hand, treats the worshipers of Ghatanothoa as insignificant and no more worthy of notice than any other gathering of mortal madness.

The Eternal Source's insane worshipers are said to be able to raise islands on distant worlds from unknown oceans that serve as portals between the Eternal Source and new vistas to conquer.

Ghatanothoa's form is said to be particularly horrific, and no two accounts are the same; all they agree on is that the merest glance is enough to transform the foolish viewer instantly into a desiccated, living mummy capable of observing the world and feeling the endless passage of time, but incapable of moving or otherwise interacting with the world. This form of immortality is said to be among the most horrific fates a mortal mind could endure.



HASTUR



THE KING IN YELLOW

CE Great Old One of decadence, disorder, and nihilism

Domains Chaos, Evil, Rune, Void

Subdomains Dark Tapestry, Language, Stars, Wards

Favored Weapon rapier

Symbol the Yellow Sign

Original Source Ambrose Bierce, "Haïta the Shepherd"

As with many of the Great Old Ones, Hastur is imprisoned on a distant world. Yet unlike most of the imprisoned Great Old Ones, Hastur can manifest an avatar on other worlds as long as the light from the strange star in the sky of his prison world shines upon the targeted portion of the second world. He requires the assistance of powerful magic in order to manifest this avatar, known as the King in Yellow, but such magic need not be consciously wrought.

His cultists are masters of subtle magics that can trick unsuspecting victims into opening the way for the King in Yellow. Hastur's symbol, the Yellow Sign, is often

used in conjunction with such magic, and often those who find the Yellow

Sign become doomed to host

the King in Yellow in

their own minds, slowly

transforming into his

agents. Some of

his followers

regard him

as a patron

of shepherds,

believing that

the bulk of

humanity are but

sheep to be gathered

for an unknown future use.

None know what Hastur looks

like, for he has been imprisoned far

longer than mortal life has existed.

Those he takes as avatars when

manifesting as the King

in Yellow appear as

entities clad in what

seem to be frayed

and tattered yellow

robes. Only upon

closer inspection are

the "robes" revealed to be

the creatures' flesh, and

what lies hidden under

the darkened hoods is

horror incarnate.

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ITHAQUA

THE WIND-WALKER

CE Great Old One of cannibalism, cold, and the wind

Domains Air, Chaos, Evil, Weather

Subdomains Cloud, Ice, Storms, Wind

Favored Weapon handaxe

Symbol antlered wooden humanoid effigy

Original Source August Derleth, "The Thing That Walked on the Wind"



MHAR

THE WORLD THUNDER

CE Great Old One of caverns, mountains, and volcanoes

Domains Chaos, Destruction, Earth, Fire

Subdomains Ash, Catastrophe, Caves, Smoke

Favored Weapon heavy pick

Symbol shattered triangular rune

Original Source Greg A. Vaughan, "The Spires of Xin-Shalast"



The frozen lands at all the worlds' northern poles are the domains of Ithaqua, the Wind-Walker. He is capable of striding the gulfs between planets on icy winds to visit any world that might catch his interest, yet his explorations and influence over the worlds he treads upon seem to be curiously limited in scope to those regions above each world's arctic circle. He can, for short periods of time, venture south, but never for long, and his touch is unknown in the southern reaches of these worlds.

Yet in his realm, he is greatly feared, for cannibalism and the monstrous creatures known as wendigos are rampant in the times before and after his visits. Ithaqua often takes a personal interest in certain souls, be they worshipers or unbelievers. He takes these folk into the skies and may even bring them to other worlds, yet his purpose in these abductions is unclear, for those who walk with Ithaqua always meet the same fate—a devastating fall from a great height resulting in either death in some frozen wilderness or transformation into a wendigo and the loss of all memories of a previous life.

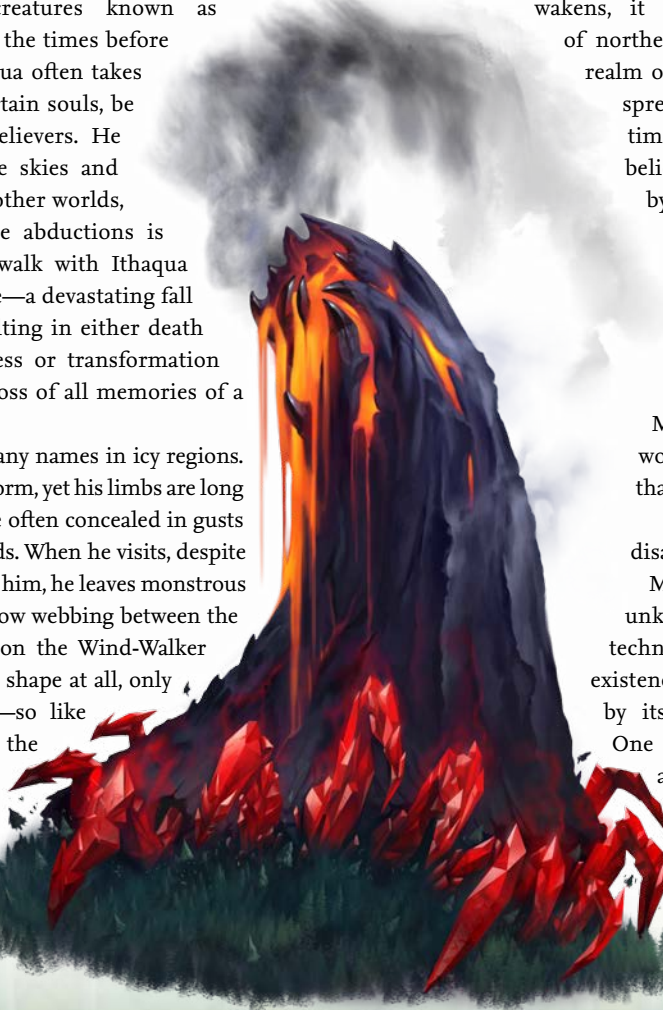
Ithaqua is known by many names in icy regions. He appears humanoid in form, yet his limbs are long and gaunt, and his feet are often concealed in gusts and blasts of blizzard winds. When he visits, despite these winds that surround him, he leaves monstrous tracks in the snow that show webbing between the toes. Those who gaze upon the Wind-Walker often don't remember his shape at all, only the two points of light—so like strange sparkling stars in the night sky—that are in fact his eyes.

Note that while Ithaqua does not grant the domain of Water, his clerics can take the subdomain of Ice.

The ancient entity known as Mhar first attempted to enter Golarion eons ago, using the planet's crust as a womb. The attempt to manifest failed for unknown reasons; perhaps the alignment of the planets was not right, or perhaps other entities acted to still the birth before it came to term. Yet Mhar's cult believes not that their god failed to be born, but rather that its gestation is merely one measured in eons. The cult further believes that the time for Mhar's birth draws near, and that when the Great Old One—said to dwell deep under the tallest mountain in the Inner Sea region, a peak in the Kodar

Mountains known as Mhar Massif—finally awakens, it will transform much of northern Avistan into a new realm of fire and ash that will spread across world. The time of this birth, the cult believes, can be predicted by a sudden increase in the number of violent, fatal earthquakes and sudden instances of volcanism throughout the world, and some of Mhar's more powerful worshipers seek to hasten that birth by triggering their own tectonic disasters in key places.

Mhar's true shape is unknown, for the deity technically has yet to enter existence. In images created by its cult, the Great Old One is generally depicted as a volcano-shaped leviathan, its caldera surrounded by huge fangs of molten lava and its slopes bearing forests of terrifying, razor-sharp crystal limbs.



MORDIGGIAN



THE CHARNEL GOD

CE Great Old One of darkness, ghouls, and the voices of the dead

Domains Chaos, Darkness, Death, Evil

Subdomains Entropy¹⁵⁶, Loss, Night, Undead

Favored Weapon scimitar

Symbol bloody fangs surrounded by darkness

Original Source Clark Ashton Smith, "The Charnel God"

In ancient times, Mordiggian was the god of ghouls, yet as these undead spread throughout the countless worlds, many of them lost their way and fell into decadence. These ghouls have forgotten the Charnel God, and only pockets of those from Leng who have not degenerated maintain the ancient rites today.

Mordiggian's primary worshipers in the modern era are humans who venerate him as a death god, yet to the untrained eye, these men and women are little more than ghouls themselves. Using vile rituals and surgical practices, they transform their limbs and visages into ghoulish countenances. In cities where such grotesqueries would cause incident, his worshipers wear heavy cloaks and silver masks to hide their shapes. Mordiggian's temples are grand mausoleum-cathedrals placed in positions of prominence in their cities. Cities that host such temples have no graveyards of their own, for the priests of Mordiggian collect the bodies of the dead and place them, free of charge, into their sacred vaults for "disposal." As such, undead and corpse-borne disease are rare contagions in cities under Mordiggian's care, yet sometimes his priests are too eager in gathering the "dead," and have been known to take away those in comas or deathlike trances from which they could have recovered.

Mordiggian is a living cloud of darkness, capable of congealing and coalescing all or portions of his form within the inky depths to serve his needs, whether he's manifesting a long, grasping limb to pluck a ripened morsel from a coffin-platter, or visiting his wrath upon those who dare to tread upon halls where only the dead may walk. The Charnel God's favored form is that of an immense worm with a set of grasping tentacles arrayed around a central maw; this fanged maw appears often in the god's symbology.

NHIMBALOTH



THE EMPTY DEATH

CE Outer Goddess of despair, ghosts, and swamps

Domains Chaos, Death, Evil, Plant, Void

Subdomains Dark Tapestry¹⁵⁶, Decay, Entropy¹⁵⁶, Fear¹⁵⁶, Isolation¹⁵⁶, Undead

Favored Weapon flail

Symbol dripping skull with jaw stuffed with wet moss

Original Source James Jacobs, "The Elder Mythos"

When mortals die, their souls slip from the flesh and enter the River of Souls, where they are eventually carried to Pharasma's Boneyard to be judged. Yet this river, as with any river, is not wholly without peril. Predators hunt the metaphysical banks and depths of the River of Souls, eager to pluck out and devour drifting souls before they can be sent on to their final rewards. Mysterious Nhimbaloth feeds upon those predators, and revels in the digestion of souls already being digested in the gullets of those who would deem themselves the hunters of the dead.

Nhimbaloth's presence is most often felt in tangled swamps, desolate shorelines, or remote stretches of river. Her cultists hold that will-o'-wisp are her eyes and believe that the fear one endures when one knows death is near is her breath. While those who die know grief and pain, their souls can one day go on to be something greater. But those touched by Nhimbaloth know only the agony of death. They do not go on. They simply end.

The Empty Death is shapeless, yet evidence of her presence can be seen in the tortured, faceless undead that often haunt places she has brushed against. Wildlife grows more antagonistic in these areas, and plants grow strangely hateful to the eye and eager to tear the flesh. Strange markings on riverbanks or island shores—clusters of seven perfectly spaced divots of crumbling dry earth—are thought to be her fingerprints. Where Nhimbaloth has hunted, the world itself recoils.

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NYARLATHOTEP



THE CRAWLING CHAOS

CE Outer God of conspiracies, dangerous secrets, and forbidden magic

Domains Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic, plus one more (fifth domain varies; Darkness for the Haunter of the Dark, Trickery for the Black Pharaoh)

Subdomains Arcane, Divine, Memory, Thought, plus two more associated with the fifth domain

Favored Weapon varies by form (dagger for the Haunter of the Dark, quarterstaff for the Black Pharaoh)

Symbol varies (circle with wing-shaped arms for the Haunter of the Dark, inverted ankh for the Black Pharaoh)

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft, "Nyarlathotep"

Said to have a thousand different forms, Nyarlathotep is unusual among the Outer Gods in that he seems to enjoy toying with and causing discord among mortal races, rather than leaving this to his cultists. Scholars of the Dark Tapestry believe that Nyarlathotep himself is the prime mover in preparing countless worlds for the devastating return of the Great Old Ones, nudging events along in subtle ways to encourage various apocalyptic ends. Some believe that it was Nyarlathotep's advice that moved Taldor to launch the Armies of Exploration that ultimately presaged that nation's fall from glory, and that led the dwarves of Dongun Hold to invent the first firearm. Certainly his influence can be seen in the troubled history of Osirion, a culture he seems particularly interested in.

Nyarlathotep's forms are each associated with their own distinct cults. The best-known of the god's manifestations are the Haunter of the Dark (a batlike entity with a tri-lobed burning eye) and the Black Pharaoh (a humanoid form that has links to Ancient Osirion as well as to many modern witch cults).



ORGESH



THE FACELESS GOD

CE Great Old One of alchemy, hunger, and subterranean waterways

Domains Chaos, Earth, Evil, Water

Subdomains Caves, Ice, Metal, Oceans

Favored Weapon spear

Symbol open maw surrounding a rune

Original Source Wolfgang Baur, "The Land of Black Blood"

In the Land of Black Blood deep below central Avistan, strange lakes of frozen fluid bubble and roil. Similar in appearance and consistency to crude oil, this black blood is freezing cold to the touch, yet bolsters and invigorates undead flesh. It was within these un-waters that the race known as the charda were spawned, and first among their kind was the Faceless God, Orgesh.

Orgesh no longer dwells in the Land of Black Blood, having abandoned its children to that realm. Although they still worship it, generations of neglect have had a positive effect on the charda—they retain their unpredictable ways, yet are no longer driven by cruelty and vengeful hunger. Those who remember but do not

venerate Orgesh believe the Faceless God abandoned its children for others found far to the west in the deepest, darkest trenches of the Sightless Sea. Orgesh has

no organized cult, and its followers see each other as the greatest threat.

Some believe that by consuming the flesh and bones of a fellow devotee of the

Faceless God, one can take in that devotee's faith, and that when but one worshiper remains,

Orgesh will return to use this final fanatic to unleash a new race upon the vaults of Orv—a race that may not stop its expansion until all has been consumed.

None alive has looked upon Orgesh, yet statues of it remain strangely impervious to erosion, and thus provide evidence of its visage, or lack thereof. These statues depict Orgesh as a vaguely humanoid figure with a hugely distended belly, clawed and doglike legs, and an open mouth filled with shark's teeth, but with no other facial features whatsoever.

RHAN-TEGOTH

HERALD OF THE END TIMES

CE Great Old One of hibernation, immortality, and ruin

Domains Chaos, Evil, Repose, Void

Subdomains Ancestors, Dark Tapestry¹⁵⁶, Entropy¹⁵⁶, Stars¹⁵⁶

Favored Weapon sickle

Symbol three black stars

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft and Hazel Heald, "The Horror in the Museum"



Strange and silent Rhan-Tegoth bears some similarities to Chaugnar Faugn in that much of its existence seems to have been spent in waiting. Texts mention a time when Rhan-Tegoth was active and alive and ruled an empire to the north on an unknown world far beyond Golarion, yet when its worshipers abandoned it, Rhan-Tegoth transformed into an immobile statue of an unknown material. Yet immobility should not in this case be taken for inactivity, as those who spend time in proximity to this strange statue find themselves compelled to undertake increasingly violent sacrifices before the slumbering Great Old One—mere proximity is apparently enough to enable the ancient entity's mind to reach out and influence lesser intellects than its own.

While records of Rhan-Tegoth's waking periods and its activities during those times are rare and unreliable, rumors persist of certain chants capable of temporarily stirring the god from its eternal hibernation and restoring life and mobility to its petrified form. What purpose such chants could serve, one can only guess, for the Great Old One invariably devours those with the temerity to rouse it. The ancient texts do agree that when Rhan-Tegoth does finally waken of its own accord, the End Times themselves shall be upon all worlds. Yet it is unclear whether the apocalypse wakens the Herald of the End Times, or whether the god's awakening triggers the end of all. Legends state that if Rhan-Tegoth could be eradicated, this shared apocalypse could be forever avoided, yet a method of destroying something that fundamentally embodies immortality has baffled even the gods.

Many statues of Rhan-Tegoth exist, and it can be difficult, if not impossible, to discern which of these is the actual slumbering god. These statues depict a creature with a globular torso; six long, sinuous limbs tipped in crablike pincers; and a head with three fishy eyes and a long proboscis.



SHUB-NIGGURATH

BLACK GOAT OF THE WOODS

CE Outer Goddess of fertility, forests, and monsters

Domains Animal, Chaos, Evil, Plant, Void

Subdomains Dark Tapestry, Decay, Feather, Fur, Growth, Stars

Favored Weapon dagger

Symbol three goat heads attached at the neck with horns pointed outward to form a circular shape

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft and Adolphe de Castro, "The Last Test"



Whereas Nyarlathotep is said to have a thousand forms, the monstrous fertility deity Shub-Niggurath is said to have spawned a thousand young. Her cult is particularly strong in rural areas where vegetation is thick, such as forests, jungles, and swamps, and many of the creatures associated with her dwell in these verdant realms. Of all the cults of the Dark Tapestry, Shub-Niggurath's seems to be the most widespread throughout the Inner Sea region, particularly in areas surrounding Lake Encarthan. Many of the Great Old Ones and even other Outer Gods are believed to have mated with Shub-Niggurath, with the resulting spawn being among the most powerful of her children.

Shub-Niggurath appears as a roiling cloud of flesh and mist that constantly forms and absorbs hooves, mouths, eyes, tentacles, and other portions of anatomy. She often gives birth to monstrous young, spawning beasts or depositing eggs with hideous fecundity upon the lands she blights.

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TSATHOGGUA



FATHER OF NIGHT

CE Great Old One of magic, outcasts, and the underworld

Domains Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic

Subdomains Arcane, Divine, Thought, Whimsy¹⁵⁶

Favored Weapon short sword

Symbol crouching eyeless toad

Original Source Clark Ashton Smith, "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros"

Tsathoggua dwells in the same network of vast caverns wherein can be found other divinities of the Elder Mythos, such as Abhoth, Atlach-Nacha, and Orgesh. Some maintain the specific underground realm ruled by Tsathoggua is a blue-lit realm called K'n-Yan, while others say the denizens of K'n-Yan rose up against Tsathoggua and drove him from that realm to a deeper lair where even light dreads to go—a dark tangle of caverns called N'kai.

Tsathoggua has a strange, almost whimsical nature; while evil and unpredictable, at times he can appear almost benevolent in his dealings with mortals. Yet such dealings are never long-lived, and more often than not end in tragedy for those who would treat with the Great Old One.

Tsathoggua appears as a semi-humanoid creature whose features mix those of a toad, a bat, and a sloth, with sleepy-looking eyes and a toothy grin.



XHAMEN-DOR



THE INMOST BLOT

NE Great Old One of decay, parasites, and transformation

Domains Death, Evil, Plant, Trickery

Subdomains Decay, Deception, Murder, Undead

Favored Weapon spear

Symbol sphere of tendrils with two long descending tails

Original Source James Jacobs, "Cults of the Dark Tapestry"

The sentient infestation known as Xhamen-Dor, first cultivated in the sewers of the alien city of Carcosa, infected and transformed countless worlds before some ancient catastrophe or miscalculation nearly destroyed it. Reduced to a single blot of fungoid sentience trapped within a comet, the Great Old One eventually came to Golarion during Earthfall, accidentally plucked from the sky just as the *Starstone* was in the aboleths' assault upon the doomed nation of Azlant. Where Xhamen-Dor's comet came to rest is unknown, but its cult agrees that the fallen star that bears the Great Old One's core lies in the depths of a large but remote lake somewhere in the world.

Since that date, Xhamen-Dor has slowly begun waking, growing and sending filaments of its fungoid body throughout the world to rise up here and there to infest and spread.

Those infected by the Inmost Blot first become sickly, then begin to simultaneously decay and transform, eventually becoming undead monsters animated by a combination of necromantic energy and the alien fungal masses that writhe in their cores. Cultists of Xhamen-Dor often take these parasitic creatures into themselves under the belief that they will live on as part of the creatures that emerge from their bodies, but just as often use unsuspecting sacrifices to serve as hosts.

Foul Xhamen-Dor is said to have once resembled a tangled mass of fungoid tendrils growing from the shattered bones of some ancient reptilian life-form, though what nightmarish shape the slowly growing blight has taken on today is unknown.

YIG

FATHER OF SERPENTS

CN Great Old One of cycles, procreation, and serpents

Domains Chaos, Community, Protection, Scalykind

Subdomains Defense, Dragon, Revelry^{SG}, Venom

Favored Weapon punching dagger

Symbol coiled serpent with a crescent mark on its head

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft and Zealia Bishop, "The Curse of Yig"



Of all the Great Old Ones—indeed, of all the gods of the Elder Mythos—the Father of Serpents is without a doubt the most benign. Yet those who would be so foolish as to expect kindness from Yig would do well to think again, for Yig does not suffer fools and is as likely to devour those who beseech him for aid as he is to provide aid. Even Yig's most devout worshipers realize the god may simply wish to feed at times, and on these occasions, no amount of devotion can protect the supplicant from death.

Yig is worshiped primarily by nomadic societies and those who live with a close connection to the land; veneration of him is all but unknown in urban regions. He protects communities that honor him in the right ways, particularly if they follow the complex rituals required of his worship through the seasons. His favor can result in bountiful harvests, good hunts, and strong and healthy babies—at times immaculate conceptions are attributed to Yig, particularly if the resulting children bear crescent-shaped birthmarks upon their brows. Conversely, when a society has displeased or failed Yig, its children are born with crippling or monstrous deformities that leave mothers dead and fathers insane. Yig speaks through the actions of serpents, yet he is rarely worshiped by serpentfolk.

Indeed, the Father of Serpents has long been at war with the god Ydersius, although since the decapitation of Ydersius, Yig has turned his attentions elsewhere.

Yig appears as a scaled, humanoid creature with a serpent's head and lashing tail, or as an immense rattlesnake with a crescent-shaped mark upon the brow.



YOG-SOTHOTH

THE KEY AND THE GATE

CN Outer God of gates, space, and time

Domains Darkness, Chaos, Knowledge, Travel, Void

Subdomains Dark Tapestry, Exploration, Memory, Night, Stars, Thought

Favored Weapon dagger

Symbol black spiral

Original Source H. P. Lovecraft, "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward"



According to some, the Dark Tapestry is not so much a location as a thing that connects all places and possibilities. These texts go on to suggest that this it is conscious—that it is aware. Yog-Sothoth is normally said to dwell within the Dark Tapestry, but some ancient legends say he is the Dark Tapestry. Certainly he has great power over time and space, and can exist at multiple times in multiple realities. Distance has no meaning to him, yet he seems unable to properly exist in the reality shared by most mortal life. He can only partially intrude upon this dimension, taking on the shape of a slithering mass of iridescent spheres or glowing motes of light when he does. Or perhaps

Yog-Sothoth can exist in this world but has no reason to do so, and what mortals see and tremble before is but his shadow.

Yog-Sothoth's cultists believe he is slowly preparing the many worlds of the universe for a new age presaged by the waking of the Great Old Ones, during which time the inhabitants of these worlds will be wiped out to make way for the true masters. Cults often call upon Yog-Sothoth to bless unborn children, turning them into monstrous hybrids that help to prepare the unsuspecting world for the time when the stars themselves shall be right for the Great Old Ones to rule once again.

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THE DOLLMAKER

Discovered this account attached to a forgotten patient's file in Briarstone's records. Very sad, but it brings me no closer to understanding my dreams. -JW

Holding a candle, I stood in the attic surrounded by the ghosts of my childhood and thought about my mother. Her laugh. How she would bake almond cakes on rainy days. The look of disappointment when I told her I wanted to join the Sleepless Agency. Her joy tinged with sadness those few times I returned home to Caliphias. These memories were all I had left of her.

Footsteps trod behind me. "Look at all this junk."

I turned around. Cormin had unbuttoned his mourning jacket and loosened his cravat. He held a toy crossbow in one hand and pawed through a small trunk with the other.

"As much of this stuff was yours as mine," I said.

He snorted. "Hand-me-downs, Vee. Mother and Father would have dressed me in your old frocks if it had occurred to them." He pulled a wooden bolt with a padded tip from the container. "So what should we do with all this mess?" He waved the tiny bolt in a gesture that encompassed the entire attic.

"I don't know. I can't really think about it right now."

Cormin loaded the miniature crossbow with a faint click. "We have to sooner or later. Neither of us can really afford to keep the house. Unless the Agency has started paying you in platinum."

"Business isn't *that* good. Can we talk about this in the morning? I just came up here to see if... actually, I'm not exactly sure why I came up here."

"Memories?" He pointed the crossbow at a dressing dummy and pulled the trigger. The bolt slid out of the weapon and clattered to the ground at his feet. He tossed the crossbow back into the trunk. "Junk," he muttered with bemused disgust.

Another set of footsteps sounded on the stairs. These were lighter, more timid. Irinette's shiny brown curls

bobbed into view first, followed by her large, hazel eyes. Her gaze took in the clutter of the attic like she'd just walked into the world's biggest confectionery.

"Daddy," she said distractedly, "Mommy is looking for you."

Cormin ruffled her hair. "Thanks, angel-face." He turned to me. "Don't let her inhale too much dust, okay?"

"Don't worry."

He went downstairs. Irinette had already found her way to the back of the room and was calling out. "Auntie Vee! What's this?"

I peered around a grimy wardrobe to see my niece holding a porcelain doll.

It was clothed in a frilly white dress that was starting to turn yellow, and a hairline fracture ran down the left side of its face. Its hair, not dissimilar from Irinette's, was tied with golden ribbons.

My breath caught in my throat and my head swam for a moment. "Ruxandra," I whispered.

"Is that her name?"

I brought myself back to the present and gently took the doll from Irinette. "That's right. This

was mine when I was your age. I haven't thought about her in a very long time."

"Why is she up here?"

"I... I don't remember." I turned the doll over in my hands. "I just outgrew her, I guess."

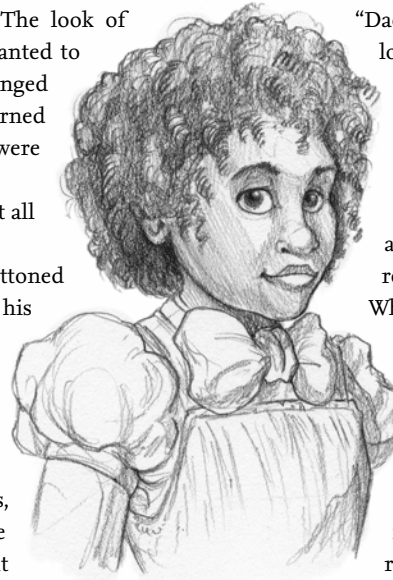
"Then can I have her?" she asked with a directness only children can muster.

"I don't know, dear. Her clothes are terribly out of style and she's got a crack."

"Oh, but she's still so beautiful!" A plaintive tone entered Irinette's voice.

I sighed. "Fine. But, look! She's missing a shoe. See if you can find it."

She began rummaging through the chest that presumably had held Ruxandra until recently. Something felt off, though. A heavy padlock was attached to the



Like any child, my niece Irinette just wanted a new toy. I couldn't deny her anything when she looked at me with her wide eyes. If only I had been stronger...

container, though it hung open. “Iri? Was this box closed when you found it?”

She shrugged, focused on her task.

“Who could have opened this lock?” I asked, mostly to myself.

“Found it!” Irinette proudly held up a tiny slipper. I took it and put it on the doll, noticing the maker’s mark—“MG”—on the heel. I then handed Ruxandra to my niece, who squealed in delight and bolted for the stairs.

I looked around the attic once more, blew out the candle, and followed.

Later that night, while I watched Irinette play with that relic from a nearly forgotten period of my history, I decided I would buy my niece a doll of her own, something newer. Then we could toss the older doll into the fire. Hopefully, that would quell the disquiet I felt whenever I looked at it.

Cormin agreed. “Are you sure that doll was even yours and not, say, mother’s or grandmother’s? I don’t remember ever seeing you play with it.”

“It must have been when you were very young. We were inseparable for a time, I’m sure of it. But now, it just looks... wrong.”

“Well, don’t empty your coin purse, okay? I don’t want to spoil her.”

“But that’s what Auntie Vee is for!” I playfully slugged his shoulder.

The next morning, I headed out for Barragaro Road, the city’s premiere merchant district. Despite the light drizzle, the street looked as busy as ever, with almost every conceivable form of merchandise available for sale from the many stalls and shops. A handful of buskers played music or juggled in attempts to earn a few coins from the busy shoppers. Many of them presented more of an annoyance than entertainment. Mud splattered my trousers’ cuffs as I stepped past a wagon hauling apples and up to a covered counter to purchase a hot mincemeat bun.

“Very tasty,” I complimented the halfling baker as I wiped a bit of warm icing from my chin. She nodded in thanks. “Maybe you can help me. I’m looking to buy a doll for my niece. Do you know of any good toy shops around this way?”

“If you want a lovely doll, then you want Mateas Griggu’s shop, just a few blocks that way.” She pointed up the street. “Been making and selling dolls here for as long as I can remember. But I don’t think it’s been open for a couple of days now.” She rubbed her chin. “Sorry, I suppose that’s not much help.”

The initials “MG” floated to the surface of my mind. An interesting coincidence—something my years working for the Sleepless Agency taught me to never ignore.

“It’s just what I need. Thank you.” I left her an extra silver piece.

A faded shingle depicting a smiling doll marked Griggu’s storefront, but as the halfling said, it was closed. Marionettes and cloth figurines peered out from the building’s lone ground-floor window; the inside was dark. A few of Griggu’s neighbors confirmed that they hadn’t seen the dollmaker in several days. They claimed he had been acting quite strange the last few weeks—refusing to sell his wares, shouting angrily at random passers-by, and carrying large, strange tomes in and out of his shop.

A street musician, who up until this point had been inexpertly plucking away on an out-of-tune lute, approached me. “I can direct you to Griggu’s home. If you make it worth my while.”

“What makes you thinking I’m looking for Griggu?” I looked over this young man who had obviously been shadowing me all morning. He wore a brightly colored tunic with frayed sleeves and a number of unidentifiable stains. A thin cloak barely kept him dry, even in this light rain. The aforementioned instrument looked older than him. He had the furtive eyes of a pickpocket or other small-time criminal.

“If you just wanted to buy a doll, you would have found another store long ago.”

“So you’ve been eavesdropping too, eh?” I spun a gold coin across my knuckles. “What’s your name?”

“Draozen,” he said.

“Well Draozen, it so happens that I am looking to buy a doll, just from this particular dollmaker. But it seems he’s gone missing and that has piqued my interest. How do you know where he lives?” I tossed him the coin.

He caught the gold piece expertly and stashed it in his clothes. “He has a workshop in his home and sometimes he’d pay me a few bits to carry stuff back and forth to the shop. Helped me eat when my music wasn’t very profitable.” He strummed the lute and I had to stop myself from flinching.

I handed him a few more coins. “Go ahead and have a nice lunch on me then.”

Griggu’s address was in the southwest area of the city, just across the harbor. The buildings in this neighborhood, though among some of the newest, still reflected the style of architecture popular throughout the city proper. By afternoon, I arrived at what I hoped was Griggu’s house, a three-story edifice situated at the top of a small rise. Its nearest neighbor was several dozen yards away, so it enjoyed a small yard that clearly hadn’t been tended to in weeks. The house must have been an expensive purchase when new, but the neglected grounds, along with the cracking paint and crooked shutters, left the building looking like something thrown into a gutter to rot.

As I stood on the street debating whether this endeavor was a good use of my time, I couldn’t shake the feeling of being watched from the house’s many windows.

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If anything terrible awaited me inside, it likely already knew I was there. So I strode up the stone walkway, climbed the moldering porch stairs, and knocked on the front door.

I waited a few moments, and after getting no response, I knocked again, harder. There might have been some faint stirring within, but no one came to the door. I tried to turn the knob, but found it locked. It would have been a simple matter to pick the lock, but I couldn't risk doing so in full view of the street. I took advantage of the nearby overgrowth to circle the house, looking for a conveniently placed window or other means of ingress.

I was rewarded with a small door in the foundation, its lock simple enough to give with a hard shove. Inside, I found what I first thought was a children's mortuary or a gruesome serial killer's lair. Tiny severed limbs hung arrayed on one wall, sorted by size. Strands of hair lay stretched out on display. An innocent face peered out from a large vise. A halfling-sized form dangled from a hook in the ceiling. But when my eyes finally adjusted to the minimal light coming in through the door, I realized I looked at Griggu's basement workshop.

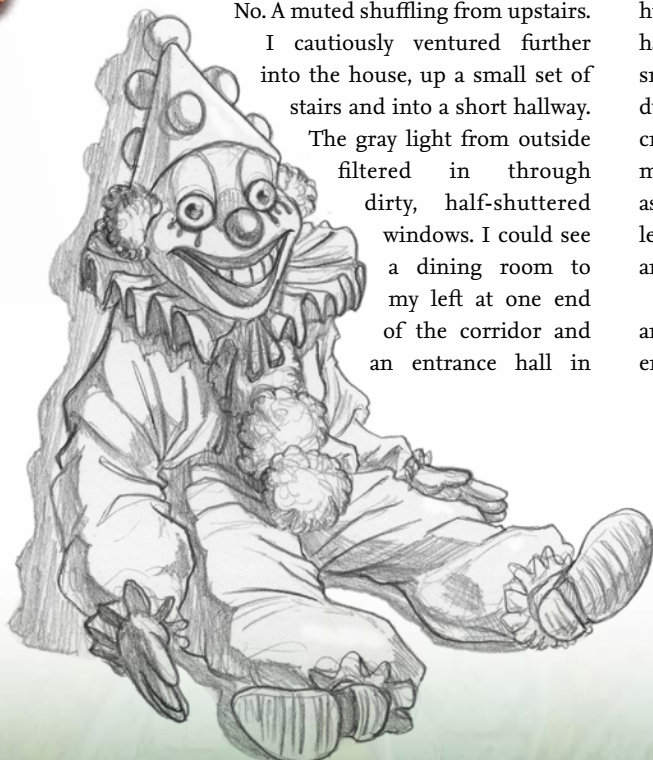
The room contained the equipment to craft all manner of dolls and puppets. Stacks of wood and bolts of cloth sat in one corner, while another held a small iron kiln for firing clay into porcelain. A handful of molds were stacked under a workbench. The smells of paints and varnishes drifted through the air. Many of the tools showed signs of recent use.

"Griggu?" I called out. "Mateas Griggu? Are you here?"
Silence.

No. A muted shuffling from upstairs.

I cautiously ventured further into the house, up a small set of stairs and into a short hallway.

The gray light from outside filtered in through dirty, half-shuttered windows. I could see a dining room to my left at one end of the corridor and an entrance hall in



the opposite direction. A completed doll sat on a nearby decorative table next to a vase of wilted flowers. It wore a white suit with three black pom-poms running down the front, a wide ruff, and a white conical hat. Its porcelain face was painted bone white with dabs of black under its eyes. Under the doll's eerie rictus, its blank stare seemed to bore right through me.

More muffled movement came from somewhere above me. Someone was definitely in the house.

I spotted the first few steps of another staircase in the entrance hall, so I turned in that direction. More dolls, at least two dozen, were arranged around the room, some on tables and shelves, some sitting on the floor. Made of everything from wood to cloth to porcelain, the dolls were in various states of disrepair. And I felt them all looking at me. The hairs on the back of my neck stood on end.

A brief skittering came from the passageway behind me. I whipped around. The clown doll no longer sat on its table. It was nowhere to be seen. My stomach lurched.

A moan of pain floated down from upstairs. Even though my intuition told me to flee this decrepit house, I would never forgive myself if I abandoned someone injured. I crept up the stairs, ready to spring into a run at a moment's notice. A longer hallway ran the length of the second floor, also lined with dolls. My mouth went dry.

Another grunt led me to a second set of stairs leading up. I climbed them and entered a small attic space. Unlike the rest of the house, this area was devoid of furniture and, more importantly, dolls. A lantern burned in the corner of the room, providing ample illumination to see the hundreds of scratches—runes or letters of no alphabet I had ever seen—lining the floor and walls, except for one small patch near a ceiling beam, under which an elderly dwarf lay prostrate. He was a few feet from a dagger, its crescent-shaped blade reflecting the light in a way that made it hard to look at. I stood momentarily befuddled as he pulled himself inches closer to the weapon. His legs were clearly freshly injured, with one ankle bruised and beginning to swell.

He sensed my presence and seemed to crumple like an empty waterskin. "Damn," he wheezed. "Wasn't fast enough. Fine, take what you came here for, you blasted—"

Though clearly the work of a master, this doll was unsettling to look at. Fashioned to look like a character from a Chelish opera, the clown seemed ready to jump up and begin capering. I could almost even hear the faint sound of its laughter.

He looked up and the words died in his mouth. “You’re not...”

“Mateas Griggu?” I asked. He nodded. “No, I doubt I’m the person you’re expecting. But maybe I’m a person who can help you.” I retrieved a small flask from my cloak. “Lucky for you, I always keep a potion on me for emergencies.” I stepped closer and handed him the container. “My name is Vasilika Badescof, by the way.”

Griggu’s clothes looked and smelled like he hadn’t changed them in over a week. His hair and beard were unkempt, and he had large black circles under his eyes—eyes that shone with a hint of madness. Despite all that, he had the presence of mind not to drink an unknown liquid given to him by a stranger. “Why are you here? How did you get into my house?”

“Truth be told, Master Griggu, I started the day looking to buy a doll for my niece. I think I owned one of your creations when I was younger. I discovered that your shop hadn’t been open for a few days and, well, curiosity got the better of me. Your workshop door was fairly easy to get open.”

“Oh no. No no no...”

“I’m sorry, Master Griggu. I’m happy to replace your lock. Now please, drink the—”

“No, I don’t give a tinker’s cuss about the lock. The knife! Where’s the knife?”

I turned to look behind me. The strange dagger was missing. I heard the faintest of footsteps on the stairs. Griggu was visibly upset.

“Must get that knife back. I haven’t finished carving!” He pushed himself up to a sitting position, crying out in pain as he moved his ankle.

“You aren’t going anywhere until you take that healing draught.”

He looked at his hand as if surprised to see the flask he held. “Fine, fine.” He quickly drained the container, and the worst of his injuries faded moments later. “The dolls must have taken it.” He stood and moved toward the stairs, but I stepped to block him.

“Wait a minute, Master Griggu. You need to tell me what’s going on here.”

“No time! The Haunter of the Dark is coming for me, for the last shred of my soul!” He pushed past me, belying his sickly appearance. “But I discovered a way to stop him, yes.” He started down the steps, and I trailed him. “I must etch the runes. Then I can kill myself, deny him his prize, and undo all the evil I have brought into the world.”

Any questions I had for the dwarf flew from my mind when I saw what awaited us downstairs. Dolls crowded the second-floor hallway that I’d just walked through. Dozens of tiny figures stood there, all facing us. They didn’t move, but a faint susurrus floated up from them; something about these whispers stirred my memory. I could swear that I had heard them before.



Mateas Griggu was obviously unhinged. His eyes darted about and he was constantly looking over his shoulder, as if he expected to be set upon at any moment. I soon discovered his paranoia was fully justified.

Griggu froze and emitted a keening from the back of his throat. I wished that I’d brought one of my weapons with me, though I couldn’t be sure even an enchanted blade would be of any use against these unholy mannequins. A blur of movement caught my attention.

“There!” I pointed toward the back of the horde. The tip of Griggu’s knife wobbled above the heads of the throng toward the stairs to the first floor, followed by a familiar pointy hat. The dwarf grunted and moved to intercept. I held him back. “What about...” I gestured at the mass of dolls.

“Each contains a tiny sliver of my soul. They dare not hurt me. Only He can do that.” Griggu pulled away from me and started tromping through the crowd. He seemed not to care where he stepped, but somehow he managed not to knock over a single doll. I carefully followed in his wake, certain if I disturbed any of the off-putting toys, they would rise up en masse and drag me to the floor. I balked at imagining what would follow. The whispers increased in volume, becoming shouts in my head. My brain felt like it was on fire.

Griggu reached the bottom of the steps and flung himself across the entrance hall. With an unintelligible cry of triumph, he tackled the clown doll, knocking off its headpiece. It squirmed in his grasp, swinging the occult dagger around wildly in both hands, but not making contact. As I caught up with the dwarf, two more dolls came marching out of the first-floor hallway. Now that I

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could see them fully, the dolls' movements were all wrong, as if they were being controlled by some alien puppeteer. Their arms and legs jerked awkwardly, yet they easily closed the distance. One was dressed as a prince, while the other was devoid of clothing. They wielded nasty-looking tools from Griggu's workshop.

I looked frantically around the room for a weapon. I grabbed a heavy brass candelabrum, spilling its tapers to the floor. I held the improvised weapon at the ready, eyeing the first doll that approached me—the prince. It lunged clumsily, and I brought the candelabrum down on its head as I stepped to one side. The porcelain cracked and something glimmered from underneath.

"Griggu!" I shouted. "Why are these things glowing on the inside?" I dodged another attack.

He grunted, "Soul focus," as he continued to wrestle with the clown doll.

The naked doll stuck my leg with a rusty awl. Blood welled up on my breeches, but the pain helped sharpen my fuzzy thoughts into a powerful hunch. I raised my candelabrum once more, and aimed the strongest blow I could muster at the luminosity behind the prince's face. A loud crack reverberated throughout the room, followed by a brief flash of light. The ersatz prince lay motionless.

I looked up to see dozens more dolls watching from the staircase. Why weren't they swarming? Surely, they had the numbers to overwhelm us. Something in their demeanor told me they treated this like a game, but as soon as it was no longer fun, they would bring me to a quick end.

The naked doll took advantage of my momentary distraction to nick my leg once again. Grimacing, I swung and connected with the doll's chest. But it was an ungainly attack, and my momentum sent me staggering to one side. I regained my balance and felt a sharp sting in my foot. The clown doll had stabbed me with Griggu's dagger. The hilt fractured in the doll's hands, as the noises in my head rose to a shriek for a brief, agonizing second. All of the fight drained out of Griggu like water from a leaky bucket. The clown doll moved to stand next to its comrades, and its naked companion scampered after.

I choked down the bile rising in my throat, and the candelabrum fell from my fingers. "What happened?"

The dollmaker met my gaze, tears streaming down his face. "The knife tasted blood before it was properly

prepared." He grabbed what was left of the blade and threw it across the room. "I am doomed."

"It's been my experience that you're only doomed if you give up. Things might look bleak now..." I scanned the watching congregation of dolls, standing as implacable as a row of trees at the forest's edge. An idea blossomed. "But there's still something we can do." I pulled Griggu to his feet and threw my arm over his shoulders. Using him as a crutch, I limped us both toward the workshop stairs.

I was certain that if I turned my back on the dolls, they would pounce on us as soon as they could, but I tamped down that fear and concentrated on getting us downstairs, not looking back. I could hear them shuffling behind us, moving quietly but inexorably closer. Once in the basement, I let go of the dwarf,

who slumped against one of his workbenches. I started gathering materials from around the room, hoping the dolls wouldn't divine my intentions before it was too late.

I wrapped scraps of cloth around a couple of wooden slats. I pointed at the oven. "You must have a way to light this. A flint or some tindertwigs?"

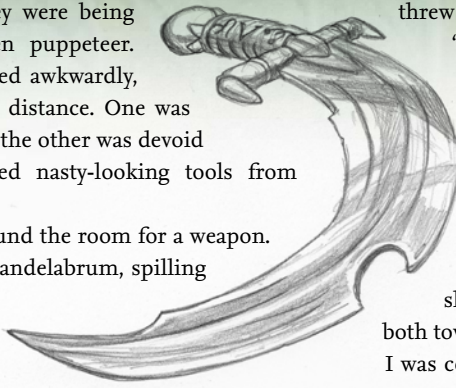
Griggu sighed. "I'm sorry."

My heart skipped a beat. "You can't be serious."

"I am so sorry. You said you had one of my dolls when you were younger? What that must have done to you... to all of the children like you." He wasn't talking about tindertwigs.

"What do you mean?"

"I had a family, once. A loving wife and a beautiful daughter." His breath hitched. "It happened so quickly. One minute we were just walking down the street, the next... I should have died as well! How could that cart have left me completely unharmed? It shouldn't have been possible! No priest could offer me solace, no sage give me an explanation." Griggu picked up an empty mold and slowly turned it over in his hands. "I stopped making dolls for a time. I stopped doing much of anything. I must have caught His notice there, in the depths of my despair. The Haunter of the Dark. The Crawling Chaos. I know those names now, but I was ignorant those many decades ago. He gave me a way to dull my anguish. All I had to do was funnel it into my dolls." His voice raised in pitch. "You have to understand that I was completely ignorant of the consequences! I promise you I never would have done it if I knew!" He slammed the mold back down on the bench. "For over thirty years, I have been spreading His



Griggu's knife was like no weapon I had ever seen. The blade appeared to squirm when glimpsed out the corner of my eye. No doubt it possessed some vile magic. But where did the dollmaker acquire it?



The fire did nothing to burn away the terrible memories of what I had seen inside that house, and the black smoke reflected the color of my mood as I hurried back into the city. But hopefully the blaze would prevent further madness from infecting the innocent.

corruption through the innocent little boys and girls of Caliphas! And probably beyond!”

Then it happened. The whispers in my head, the pain in my foot, and Griggu’s sad story combined in some kind of alchemy to unearth a memory I had buried so long ago.

“Vasilika, what have you done?”

My mother’s terrified shriek. My father’s stunned silence. The cleaver that I had pilfered from the kitchen, now bloody. My hands, covered in gore. The stray cat I had captured, its eyes gouged out, its entrails spilled onto the table, its skin pulled from the muscle. My doll at my side, her porcelain face discolored with tiny spots of crimson.

My wistful explanation. “Ruxandra said I should.”

“I told you that thing was off-putting. It’s probably cursed or haunted!” My mother wailed.

“Now dear, don’t be superstitious. It’s just a doll,” my father replied.

“I don’t care. Get it out of here! Lock it in the attic! What if she had done this to the baby?”

I came back to the present, face flushed and hands clammy. “The doll... my doll...” Griggu nodded sadly.

A realization dawned on me. “Gods! I gave that doll to my niece!”

Griggu looked horrified. “Then you must go while there is still time!” He gestured toward the door.

The sound of porcelain on wood startled me. The clown doll, smiling its frozen smile, sat on the highest step and methodically tapped a foot against the riser. I grabbed a container of varnish and splashed its contents on the cloth and wood I had collected. “Not yet.” I spotted a single tindertwig that had fallen behind the oven. “Not with those things running around.”

Griggu took hold of my arm. “No guarantee that a fire will burn down the whole house. Unless someone stays behind to make sure of it.” He picked up a plank and fashioned a makeshift torch. He dipped it into another canister of varnish. “My soul and mind are forfeit. But perhaps I can make amends.”

I struck the tindertwig against the sole of my boot and lit Griggu’s torch. Throwing the flame on the varnish-soaked pile, I made my way to the basement door. I heard the dwarf screaming in defiance as he went back upstairs, but I didn’t look back.

I could smell the smoke of Griggu’s sacrifice as I hurried back home, hoping I wouldn’t be too late. For Irinette and for the rest of the children of Caliphas.

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The wind continues to howl. Only a thin wall of canvas separates us from the blizzard. Despite this, Hron has somehow managed to fall asleep, damn his Kellid blood.

I've been trying to tell myself that the cold is keeping me awake, but I know deep down it is guilt and fear. Guilt that I brought Hron to this icy purgatory on false pretenses—I promised him grand treasures, telling him nothing of the strange compulsion tugging at me from the north. And fear of what my shaking hands might do once they put down this pen.

For that terrible hunger is once again upon me...

—Fragment of a bloodstained journal found in the Stormspear Mountains

Along with a Great Old One, weird swarms, a psychic gremlin, and innocents trapped between planes, the Strange Aeons Adventure Path bestiary kicks off with details regarding the unnatural weather lashing Briarstone Asylum.

ENDLESS STORM

The borders between Briarstone Isle and the Dreamlands have frayed, and the mists covering the island have brought with them the Dreamlands' unnatural weather. While the baffling nature of the mists (see page 6) makes the asylum's grounds largely impassable, some outdoor areas are still accessible but suffer the effects of unnatural weather. Whenever the PCs enter an outdoor area—such as areas **B1**, **C5**, **C7**, and **E4**—roll a d6 on the chart below to determine what strange weather is active there.

The weather effects begin by being merely unusual, but if the same result is rolled multiple times, the GM should consider making that phenomenon more unsettling. To aid in this, each effect has a Recurrence section, suggesting ways you might alter the result. These recurrences are purely flavorful, but should reinforce the eeriness afflicting Briarstone Asylum.

Unless otherwise noted, weather effects last as long as the PCs are in an area, plus an additional 10 minutes. Roll again if the PCs reenter an outdoor area after this time.

BRIARSTONE'S SUPERNATURAL WEATHER

d6 Result

- Scalding Rain:** In addition to the effects of normal rain (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 438), the precipitation is unnaturally hot and changes temperature every round. Every round a character is exposed to the weather, he must succeed at a DC 8 Reflex save or take 1 point of fire damage. Characters with head-to-toe covering gain a +2 bonus on this save. *Recurrence:* On successive occurrences, the rain might be bile, mud, oil, paint, some manner of sickeningly sweet batter, or chunks of eyeballs.
- Angry Thunder:** It is raining, as normal, but after 1d10 rounds, an explosive peal of thunder shatters the quiet. Each creature outside must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be deafened for 1d4 rounds. The thunder continues, occurring once every 1 minute + 1d4 rounds (or more often at the GM's discretion). *Recurrence:* Randomly choose one PC. Instead of thunder, the storm screams that PC's name. The following peals sound like godlike laughter. Alternatively, the thunder might sound like a gigantic roar, a bird's screech, a wet burble, a metallic klaxon, or a densely populated city toppling off a cliff.
- Unpredictable Winds:** Powerful winds sweep through the area, dramatically changing direction every round—rushing across the land, blowing down from above, or blasting without source from below. Roll 1d4 every round, with the results corresponding to the effects on page 439 of the *Core Rulebook* (1: moderate wind, 2: strong wind, 3: severe wind, 4: windstorm). *Recurrence:* The wind carries with it the smell of sewage, animal musk, or sweet candy. Alternatively (or additionally), it blows with it harmless but alien debris, like arm-length feathers, hair, daddy longlegs, squirming leaves, scabs, giant pollen spores, or scraps of Ulver Zandalus's artwork.
- Grasping Fog:** Every minute, the fog attempts a trip combat maneuver check against a random PC. The fog has a CMB of +8. Additionally, it aids creatures that perform combat maneuvers, the PCs and their enemies alike, granting a +2 bonus on all combat maneuver checks attempted in the area. The fog cannot be attacked or resisted, but if the fog is cleared—such as by an effect like *gust of wind*—it and the bonuses it provides cease until the fog returns. *Recurrence:* The trip attempt coincides with a very localized earthquake, but the ground feels like it has turned into a mass of skittering beetles, and the mist forms into the shape of an indistinct crowd.
- Unpredictable Storm:** Roll again for another result. This new weather effect stays in effect for 1 minute, then abruptly ends. The weather remains clear for 1d4 rounds after this. Then reroll for a new weather effect.
- Calm Weather:** No special effects, though shapes hidden just beyond the ever-present fog roil ominously. If the PCs spend 10 or more minutes outside, roll again for a new weather effect.

BRIARSTONE ASYLUM ENCOUNTERS

| d% | Result | Avg. CR | Source |
|--------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 1-5 | 1 giant centipede | 1/2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 43 |
| 6-12 | 1 human zombie | 1/2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 288 |
| 13-17 | 1 survivor | 1/2 | See page 16 |
| 18-22 | 1 etaiinen | 1 | <i>Bestiary</i> 5 111 |
| 23-27 | 1 ghoul | 1 | <i>Bestiary</i> 146 |
| 28-32 | 1 spider swarm | 1 | <i>Bestiary</i> 258 |
| 33-37 | 1 poltergeist | 2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 211 |
| 38-42 | 1 rat swarm | 2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 232 |
| 43-49 | 1 rattling | 2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 4 226 |
| 50-54 | 1 soulsliver | 2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 4 250 |
| 55-61 | 1 Small animated object | 2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 14 |
| 62-66 | 1 zoog | 2 | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 288 |
| 67-71 | 1d3 Apostles in Orpiment | 3 | See page 36 |
| 72-76 | 1 doppelganger | 3 | <i>Bestiary</i> 89 |
| 77-81 | 1 spring-heeled jack | 3 | <i>Bestiary</i> 4 253 |
| 82-88 | 1 vampiric mist | 3 | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 277 |
| 89-95 | 1 faceless stalker | 4 | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 122 |
| 96-100 | Collapsing ceiling* | 5 | <i>Core Rulebook</i> 420 |

* Functions as falling block trap.

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GREAT OLD ONE, ITHAQUA

This looming humanoid shape has long, gangly limbs, glowing red eyes, and a gaping mouth full of fangs.

ITHAQUA

CR 28



XP 4,915,200

CE Gargantuan monstrous humanoid (air, chaotic, cold, evil, Great Old One)

Init +24; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, snow vision, *true seeing*; Perception +45

Aura unspeakable presence (300 ft., DC 36)

DEFENSE

AC 46, touch 27, flat-footed 35 (+10 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 insight, +19 natural, -4 size)

hp 688 (32d10+512); fast healing 25

Fort +26, **Ref** +30, **Will** +28

Defensive Abilities immortality, insanity (DC 36); **DR** 15/epic and lawful; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, aging, cold, death effects, disease, energy drain, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, petrification, storms; **Resist** electricity 30, sonic 30; **SR** 39

Weaknesses arctic bound, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., *air walk*

Melee 2 slams +46 (4d6+18/19-20 plus grab)

Ranged 4 wind blasts +38 (8d6/19-20 plus hurl)

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

Special Attacks arctic dreams, create wendigo, howl, mythic power (10/day, surge +1d12)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 28th; concentration +38)

Constant—*air walk*, *true seeing*

At will—*control weather*^m (as druid), *control winds*, *dimension door*^m, *dream*^m, *gust of wind*^m (DC 22), *ice storm*^m, *nightmare*^m (DC 25), *whispering wind*, *wind walk* (DC 36; see page 83)

3/day—*demand* (DC 28), quickened *feblemind* (DC 25), quickened *gust of wind*^m (DC 22), *summon* (level 9, 2d4 wendigos 100%)

1/day—*interplanetary teleport* (arctic regions only), *storm of vengeance*^m (DC 29), *whirlwind*^m (DC 28)

STATISTICS

Str 46, **Dex** 31, **Con** 42, **Int** 29, **Wis** 31, **Cha** 30

Base Atk +32; **CMB** +54 (+58 bull rush); **CMD** 95 (97 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Blinding Critical, Critical Focus, Dodge, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Critical (wind blast), Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*feblemind*, *gust of wind*), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +42, Knowledge (arcana, geography, history, nature, planes, religion) +41, Perception +45, Sense Motive +42, Spellcraft +41, Stealth +33, Survival +45, Use Magic Device +42

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Giant; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ otherworldly insight, wind walk

ECOLOGY

Environment any cold

Organization solitary (unique)

Treasure triple

Original Source August Derleth, "The Thing that Walked on the Wind"

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arctic Bound (Ex) When Ithaqua is south of a planet's arctic circle or on a planet without a magnetic north, he is staggered.

Arctic Dreams (Su) Any creature that has ever looked into Ithaqua's eyes or has committed cannibalism can be targeted by the Great Old One's arctic dreams regardless of distance, even across planar boundaries. If such a victim fails its save against Ithaqua's *nightmare* spell-like ability, the damage it takes from the ability is cold damage. Upon awakening, the victim is affected by a *geas/quest* to travel north beyond the arctic circle and, once there, await Ithaqua's arrival in a remote location. Whether or not the Great Old One comes to call is left to the GM to decide, but if Ithaqua does not visit within 1 month, the effects of the arctic dreams end.

Create Wendigo (Su) By using *wind walk* with a creature or by affecting it with his unspeakable presence, Ithaqua afflicts the creature with an enhanced version of wendigo psychosis.

Wendigo Psychosis: Curse—unspeakable presence or wind walk; *save* Will DC 36; *onset* immediate; frequency 1/hour; *effect* 1d6 Wis drain (minimum Wis 1). When a victim's Wisdom reaches 1, it seeks an individual of its race to kill and devour. After completing this act, the victim takes off at a run, and in 1d4 rounds sprints up into the sky at such a speed that its feet burn away into jagged stumps. The victim transforms into a wendigo (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 281) over the next 1d4 minutes. Once the transformation is complete, the victim is effectively dead, replaced by a wendigo. *Miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish* can restore such a victim to life, yet doing so does not harm the new wendigo. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Great Old One Traits Rules for Great Old One traits like immortality, insanity, his mythic abilities, and otherworldly insight, and the base rules for unspeakable presence can be found on page 306 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4*.

Howl (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a swift action, Ithaqua can emit a forlorn howl that can be heard up to 10 miles away. Any who hear the howl must make succeed at a DC 36 Will save to avoid becoming shaken for 24 hours. Creatures within 360 feet of Ithaqua become panicked for 1d4+4 rounds, and those within 60 feet cower in fear for 1d4 rounds. Although this is a mind-affecting fear effect, immunity to fear does not offer full protection; a creature normally immune to fear must still succeed at a Will saving throw if within 60 feet to avoid becoming

shaken for 1 hour (immunity to fear functions normally against Ithaqua's howl at greater distances). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immortality (Ex) If Ithaqua is slain, his body explodes in a burst of frozen wind that deals 20d6 points of cold damage to all creatures within a 60-foot spread (Reflex DC 42 half; the save DC is Constitution-based). Ithaqua reforms with full hit points 1 year later in another world's arctic region, but cannot return to the world on which he was slain via *interplanetary teleport* for another 10 years (or until outside agents allow for his travel to this world).

Immune to Storms (Ex) Ithaqua is immune to the effects of any storm or storm-like condition unless he chooses otherwise. This includes being affected by high winds and by spells like *ice storm* and *storm of vengeance*.

Snow Vision (Ex) Ithaqua can see perfectly well in snowy conditions, and does not take penalties on Perception checks when in snowy or blizzard conditions.

Unspeakable Presence (Su) Failing a DC 36 Will saving throw against Ithaqua's unspeakable presence has two effects. First, it exposes the victim to Ithaqua's create wendigo ability (see page 82). In addition, the creature gains vulnerability to cold and loses any resistance or immunity to cold it had; this condition persists for 24 hours. A creature that lacks any immunity or resistance to cold also becomes chilled by the Great Old One's presence, taking a -4 penalty on ranged attacks, initiative checks, Reflex saving throws, and Dexterity-based skill checks, as well as a -4 penalty to Armor Class. These penalties last for 24 hours.

Wind Walk (Sp) If Ithaqua pins a grappled foe, he can attempt to use *wind walk* with the grappled foe by using his spell-like ability—he automatically succeeds at all concentration checks made to use *wind walk* in this case. If the victim fails to resist the spell, Ithaqua hurtles into the sky with it. Each round, a victim can attempt a new DC 36 Will saving throw to turn solid again, but at this point it falls if it cannot fly. A creature affected by Ithaqua's wind walk in this way might begin transformation into a wendigo (see Create Wendigo on page 82), and eventually Ithaqua strands the victim in some rural area, often miles or even worlds away from where it began. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Also known as the Wind-Walker, Ithaqua has visited countless worlds during his travels throughout the universe. Whether he is able to visit only worlds with arctic circles and magnetic poles, or whether those worlds have such conditions because the Great Old One visited them in their earliest days is unclear.

Ithaqua appears as a 50-foot-tall primitive humanoid with glowing red eyes and unnaturally long arms, yet his feet are always cloaked in blasts of thick snow-laden and freezing winds.

ITHAQUA'S CULT

Ithaqua is worshiped in arctic regions, primarily by cannibal tribes, giants, and wendigos. Those who fear starvation or the loss of morality might offer sacrifices to him out of fear—such sacrifices are traditionally performed by leaving a body draped in the highest possible boughs of a pine tree. Worship of the Wind-Walker below the arctic circle is rare, but not unheard of.

Additional details on Ithaqua, his cult, his domains and his favored weapon appear on page 68 of this book.



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GREMLIN, DREXIN

This pale, spindly creature has a vaguely humanoid shape, but with arms unnaturally long for its torso. Strands of long white hair sprout from its bulbous head, and its eyes are pools of liquid darkness.

GREMLIN, DREXIN

CR 2



XP 600

CE Small fey

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

Aura mental static (DC 13)

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 16 (3d6+6)

Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

DR 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +1 (1d4-1), 2 claws +1 (1d3-1)

Psychic Magic (CL 6th; concentration +8)

5 PE—*babble*^{OA} (2 PE, DC 14), *id insinuation* ^{IOA} (2 PE, DC 14), *mental block*^{OA} (1 PE, DC 13), *mind thrust* ^{IOA} (1 PE, DC 13), *telekinetic projectile*^{OA} (1 PE)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +1; **CMB** -1; **CMD** 13

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +8, Climb +3, Craft (traps) +12,

Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +9,

Knowledge (arcana) +4, Perception +12; **Racial Modifiers**

+4 Craft (traps), +4 Intimidate, +4 Perception

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

SQ trap savant

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground or urban

Organization solitary, pair, or mob (3-6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Trap Savant (Ex) A drexin can craft magical traps as if it had the Craft Wondrous Item feat.

This gremlin's head and pointed ears are overlarge compared to the rest of its anatomy. Thin, often matted hair tops a drexin's scalp. Its light-starved, wizened flesh stretches taut across its bones, and its claws brush the ground as it walks. An average drexin stands 3 feet tall and weighs 25 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Many gremlins believe that drexins were once nuglubs or jinkins who strayed too far underground. It's thought that after wandering into the twisted lands of Orv, these poor creatures stumbled upon a cabal of neothelids and were taken prisoner. Years in the massive worms'

captivity both warped the gremlins' appearances and enhanced their minds. These lost gremlins became the drexins. The altered creatures emerged from the depths with new psychic abilities and an understanding of the neothelids' aberrant tongue. Perhaps the drexins escaped through sheer luck; perhaps their ascension to the upper levels of the Darklands is part of the machinations of the alien monstrosities in the deep heart of the world. Of course, the entire story is mere conjecture, and drexins quite possibly developed their psychic talents independent of neothelid influence.

As their enlarged craniums suggest, drexin gremlins are particularly intelligent and have psychic talents that they gleefully employ to befuddle and maim the minds of others. While other gremlins revel in breaking objects, drexins enjoy tinkering with and disrupting thoughts, breaking the wills and minds of their targets rather than dismantling them physically.

Drexins delight in sneaking up on spellcasters or artisans and using abilities such as *babble*, *id insinuation* *I*, and *mental block* to disrupt the process of spellcasting or magic item creation. If the victim senses the drexin's presence, the drexin typically casts *mind thrust* *I* or telekinetically flings an available object at the creature before fleeing. Drexins are physically weak and abhor physical combat unless they have a powerful ally to hide behind. This cowardice usually confines drexins to the sidelines of a fight.

Like all gremlins, drexins are skilled trapsmiths. A drexin can imbue its traps with its own psychic spells. These masterpieces far surpass the mechanical devices made by other types of gremlins. Drexins are fond of creating and setting snares outside places of study, magic shops, and mages' homes. If a target springs the trap, the drexin emerges to torment its victim while she lies incapacitated, just outside the reach of aid. Drexins especially like to target other psychic creatures in this way, particularly those that are too powerful to confront directly. While drexins crave additional psychic power, most are incapable of more than a few spells. These wretched creatures therefore envy those who master the occult.

From time to time, a drexin appears to a spellcaster or psychic and offers its services, usually proposing to increase the security of that person's home or workshop by building a number of traps in exchange for certain knowledge. Anyone foolish enough to accept the drexin's terms enjoys the benefits of a loyal trap crafter for a time. All too soon, however, the drexin gains the knowledge it seeks or grows bored with the arrangement. The unfortunate master returns to his home or study only to fall into the traps that once kept his secrets safe. The drexin then either kills or disables its former employer before stealing anything valuable and retreating to the sewers.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Among gremlinkind, drexins are feared for their mastery of mental magic. Different varieties of gremlins grudgingly cooperate with drexins to terrorize other creatures, but regard the psychic gremlins with intense distrust. Jinkins, pugwampis, and vexgits are even known to put aside their aversion to cold iron and construct “mind shields”—simple helms or plates of cold iron that are fastened around the head with straps to prevent drexins’ psychic intrusions. These items do nothing to stop drexins’ intrusions, but popular gremlin opinion keeps them in use. The fact that drexins speak Aklo as well as Undercommon further contributes to their otherness in gremlin society.

In the Darklands, some lesser creatures believe drexins are capable of mental possession. The average drexin cannot truly dominate the mind or spirit, but individuals encourage this rumor, desiring the fearsome reputation it brings. Some drexins, however, grow more powerful than their kindred and gain class levels in kineticist or psychic. These drexins are particularly influential in gremlin society, and often command their own mobs of drexins or even other gremlins, who serve them out of fear and necessity rather than respect. Advanced drexins occasionally infiltrate humanoid society, enticing curious minds to explore mysteries best left undisturbed. Behind many academics who delve too deeply into maddening ancient secrets and spellcasters who open cursed magical tomes is an ambitious drexin joyfully luring others into psychic peril.

Drexins prefer to dwell in the subterranean world, usually making their homes in caves and underground ruins. These gremlins commonly reside in the Darklands, and can be found among the slaves of the drow and serpentfolk of Sekamina. Drexins also form their own loosely organized societies in Nar-Voth, alongside jinkins, nuglubs, and vexgits. Still, the buzzing energy of thousands of minds in close proximity draws drexins to surface cities, where they often infest abandoned buildings and sewers.

Though drexins usually betray their allies, occasionally creatures forge successful partnerships with these fey. Frauds claiming a connection to the spirit world or the minds of others sometimes use a hidden drexin’s abilities to con patrons out of their hard-earned coin. A drexin might enter such a deal spurred by the promise of shared knowledge or gifts of materials to augment trap crafting. Ultimately, to avoid falling victim to a drexin’s backstabbing, a drexin’s partner must be just as conniving and cruel as the gremlin itself. Such a worthy creature might inspire a feeling akin to friendship in the drexin. If the partner ever double-crosses the drexin, however, the arrangement ends.

Drexins do not hold grudges; rather, they cultivate and nurture them over time, never forgetting the face or name of a betrayer. A drexin is a patient creature and may wait years to exact its revenge.

Drexins are proud gremlins and do not typically worship deities or acknowledge any force greater than themselves. Contrary to their nature, however, some drexins pay homage to a being reverently named “The Taker.” This entity urges drexins to increase their own mental abilities by stealing the power of others, usually through a gruesome ritual in which the gremlin ingests portions of the brain of a murdered spellcaster or psychic. Drexins who follow The Taker typically dispatch their victims via traps, poison, or strangulation while those unfortunate souls sleep. While The Taker is not a deity and cannot grant spells to clerics, drexin oracles and shamans serve as the being’s prophets and emissaries among drexin populations. Whether The Taker is an aspect of another deity, a powerful but mortal being with nefarious plans, or the creation of the gremlins’ wild imaginations remains unknown.



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INDESCRIBABLE SWARMS

When delving into the stranger parts of the world, things are not always as they first appear. This section details several horrific swarms.

PALLID WRIGGLER SWARM

These writhing, many-winged worms have no heads other than pairs of large nostrils that make a constant, droning snorting.

PALLID WRIGGLER SWARM CR 2   

XP 600

NE Diminutive aberration (swarm)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., scent; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 size)

hp 13 (3d8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee swarm (1d6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 15, **Con** 11, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +2; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Fly +12, Perception +11

SQ indescribable swarm (DC 13), snort

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary or cloud (2–6)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Indescribable Swarm (Ex) The horror of discovering a swarm that seems normal at first holds a bloodcurdling secret can drive sane folk mad. The first time an intelligent creature encounters a given variety of swarm with this ability, it must succeed at a Will saving throw against the swarm's distraction ability save DC or become shaken for 1 hour or until the swarm is defeated, whichever comes first.

Snort (Ex) The swarm's strange noises increase the DC of its distraction ability by 2. Additionally, if the swarm spends a full-round action sniffing and searching for targets, the range of its blindsense increases to 60 feet until the end of its next round.

From the deepest regions of the Darklands come the strange creatures commonly called pallid wrigglers. Originally bats mutated by mad derros to enhance their natural abilities, the wrigglers have slowly evolved to their current form. A wriggler's wormlike body is supported between anywhere from two and six wings, four to eight legs, and possibly a collection of tails. Each creature

lacks a head, and instead has merely a pair of grotesque nostrils, which create the trademark sound that both aids it in hunting and overwhelms its prey's senses.

These creatures aren't terribly dangerous individually, but meet any disturbances in their territory with swift and often deadly investigation. The creatures immediately swarm any intruders, trying to learn their scent from as close as possible. They seem driven more by curiosity than animosity, but the resultant battering and probing can occasionally prove fatal. Pallid wrigglers are herbivores, feeding on the fungus that is ubiquitous in their cavernous lairs, so creatures slain by their attentions often rot away unless eaten by another scavenger.

PATCHWORK INSECT SWARM

This collection of insects is composed of a variety of centipedes, beetles, and other bugs, each of which bears humanoid arms, legs, eyes, or even faces.

PATCHWORK INSECT SWARM CR 1/2   

XP 200

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

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

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (–1 Dex, +4 size)

hp 9 (2d8)

Fort +3, **Ref** –1, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities sickening crunch, swarm traits; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee swarm (1d6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 11)

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 9, **Con** 11, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +1; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

SQ indescribable swarm (DC 11)

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, cluster (2–8), or epidemic (9–20)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Indescribable Swarm (Ex) See above.

Sickening Crunch (Ex) Any attack made against a patchwork insect swarm creates a sickening sound as the insects' humanoid limbs snap with astonishing volume. Every creature within 20 feet of the swarm that can hear this sound must succeed at a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw or become sickened for 1 round.

These grotesque creatures appear in a variety of forms, usually taking the general shape of an insect or other vermin, but with hideous and disconcerting limbs. Most

common are humanoid arms and legs in place of the usual limbs, but some of these disgusting creatures have human eyes, ears, or entire heads or faces. Elven ears or dwarven beards appear occasionally, though they are not nearly as common as human traits. There are even tales of goblin-headed beetles roving the Chitterwood of southern Iger in vast packs, singing insane songs as they devour their prey.

Scholars who have had an opportunity to study these creatures up close speculate that they are actually created by some strange form of fungus or parasite that grows a humanlike skin over the existing chitin of the vermin involved. The incredible coincidence of the resemblance to human forms makes the influence of occult magic a strong possibility, but there is no record of the history of these monstrous creatures that might reveal the truth.

SWIMMING EYE SWARM

At the heart of each of these tiny blobs of slime and tentacles is a single, eerily human eye.

SWIMMING EYE SWARM CR 4 
XP 1,200

NE Tiny aberration (aquatic, swarm)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 size)

hp 45 (7d8+14)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, ruptured membranes, swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed swim 40 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +5; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Swim), Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +12, Swim +14

SQ indescribable swarm (DC 15)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or warm water

Organization solitary or bloom (2–8)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Indescribable Swarm (Ex)

See above.

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; *save*

Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex; *cure* 1 save.

Ruptured Membranes (Ex) As a defense mechanism, some members of a swimming eye swarm sacrifice themselves by rupturing their outer membranes when unexpected creatures enter the swarm's space, splattering the target with gruesome vitreous fluid. Any creature entering a space occupied by a swimming eye swarm must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex saving throw or be affected by the swarm's poison ability. A creature that fails its saving throw against poison administered in this way is nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The darkest depths of the sea are home to some of the strangest creatures imaginable. At first glance, these creatures appear to be little more than small jellyfish. However, at the heart of each gelatinous mass is a disturbingly human-looking eyeball floating as if suspended in the creature's bodily fluids.

Like many of their common jellyfish cousins, the creatures in a swimming eye swarm are incredibly poisonous. Their uncanny eyeballs act as poison sacs as well as a sensory organ. These eyes are remarkably fragile, often bursting after even the gentlest jostling. However, a swarm's eyeballs grow back quickly, often in less than a week.



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ONEIROGEN

This vague, humanoid figure seems to be the source of a bank of unnaturally colored fog.

ONEIROGEN

CR 2



XP 600

CN Medium outsider (native)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

Aura obscuring fog (10 ft.), veil of mists (5 ft., DC 12)

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 25 (3d10+9)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Immune mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses planar split

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +5 (1d4+2)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude

Skills Acrobatics +8, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +8

Languages Common (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary or gang (2-6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Obscuring Fog (Sp) An oneirogen is constantly surrounded by strangely colored fog that moves with it. Treat this as *obscuring mist* that fills the area within 10 feet of an oneirogen. A creature 5 feet away in the mist has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target). An oneirogen cannot suppress this effect, and its vision is impeded the same as that of any other creature. If the fog is blown or burned away, it reforms in 1d4 rounds.

Planar Split (Ex) An oneirogen is trapped between two planes, effectively harboring an active portal within its failing body. Having connections to multiple planes at once, an oneirogen is always affected by spells like *dismissal* and *banishment*, which force it to the plane to which its portal connects. Additionally, effects like *dimensional anchor* cut off an oneirogen's connection to another plane. Such effects suppress the oneirogen's obscuring fog and veil of mists abilities and make the oneirogen staggered.

Veil of Mists (Su) Within the obscuring fog that cloaks an oneirogen lie denser eddies of planar potentiality. This fog is charged with extraplanar energies that manifest in a variety of ways depending on the plane to which

the oneirogen is linked. While an oneirogen is immune to the effects of these vapors, any creature that enters the mists within 5 feet of the oneirogen is affected (see below). These fumes don't impede vision any more than the oneirogen's obscuring fog ability already does. They can also be blown or burnt away (and recover) in the same manner.

Many oneirogens are linked to the Dimension of Dreams—they spew a sour, yellow fog. Creatures that enter this fog must succeed at a DC 12 Will save or fall asleep. Additionally, they do not receive natural healing from resting for the next 24 hours. The creature can attempt another Will save every round to wake up and can be woken up as if it had been affected by the spell *sleep*. Creatures that succeed at the save to resist this effect are immune to that oneirogen's veil of mists for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Oneirogens were once normal mortals who suffered a rare but terrible curse. Within them lies a sliver-sized tear between planes, a crack hardly larger than a pinprick that destroys everything they once were in an endless deluge of planar power. Created by magical mistakes and otherworldly conjunctions, oneirogens wander in a haze as living husks whose grip on any reality has been erased. What little remains of their minds is bent on self-preservation, even as they are locked at the center of storms of strange powers endlessly streaming from their mouths and nostrils. The death of their personalities might be a mercy, but what lingers on are primal beings, slaves of uncontrolled planar might.

While the portal trapped within an oneirogen might connect to any plane of existence, it most commonly provides a path to the Dimension of Dreams. As mortal minds already drift toward that realm, breaches between the waking and unconscious worlds might occur when potent magics attempt to tamper with the boundaries of dream. The notorious tome, *The Chain of Nights*, is just one grimoire known to plumb the depths of thought and nightmare. Those who attempt to use such magic without full mastery, though, risk transforming themselves or those they would aid into drifters trapped between planes.

Some rare, unsettling reports tell of groups of oneirogens collecting in a single place, flooding the surrounding area with planar energies. The effects of such energies on the world surrounding them are unpredictable and usually deadly to native inhabitants.

Oneirogens might arise from any humanoid race, but always appear as mysterious figures cloaked in a strange haze or fog. These creatures rarely live for long, as their bodies swiftly wither from exposure to planar energies, and most lack enough sense of self to bother with eating or other basic needs. Only if protected and tended will an oneirogen live for more than a week.

VARIANT ONEIROGENS

Although most oneirogens are living conduits to the Dimension of Dreams, an oneirogen might be linked to almost any plane of existence. While the creatures' statistics are the same regardless of the plane to which they're bound, the effects of the raw planar energy infusing its veil of mists changes. Presented here are variant veils of mists tied to other planes to which an oneirogen might be bound.

Abaddon: The oneirogen's portal opens into the Plaguemere, the unholy realm of Apollyon. Creatures that enter the veil of mists must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be staggered by the noxious smell for 1 round and contract red ache (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557).

Abyss: The oneirogen's portal opens into a vicious Abyssal wilderness of gnashing fangs and nameless, shrieking things. A creature that enters the veil of mists must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be shaken for 1 round and take a -2 penalty on Will saves for the next 24 hours. The penalty on Will saves ends prematurely if the creature benefits from any effect that grants a morale bonus.

Elemental Planes: The oneirogen's portal opens into an expanse of one of the Elemental Planes. Creatures that enter the veil of mists take 1d6 points of energy damage. The type of damage varies depending on the relevant Elemental Plane: acid damage for the Elemental Plane of Earth, cold damage for the Elemental Plane of Water, electricity damage for the Elemental Plane of Air, and fire damage for the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Elysium: The oneirogen's portal opens to euphoric haze somewhere in Elysium. Creatures that enter the veil of mists must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be confused for 1 round. Additionally, the character feels unusually excited or amorous for the rest of the day (no statistical effect).

Energy Planes: The oneirogen's portal opens to the overwhelming reaches of either the Positive or Negative Energy Plane. Creatures that enter the veil of mists take 1d6 points of damage of the appropriate type. They take an additional 1d6 points of damage 1 round later, even if they've left the veil of mists, due to the intense energy coursing through their bodies. If the creature is killed by unrestrained positive energy, its body is reduced to a fine ash, making resurrection more challenging. If the creature is killed by unrestrained negative energy, the corpse reanimates as a zombie in 1d4 rounds.

Hell: The oneirogen's portal opens into a terrible inferno somewhere deep in Hell. Creatures that enter the veil of mists take 2d4 points of damage. Half of

this damage is fire damage and half is untyped damage resulting from infernal energy.

Shadow Plane: An oneirogen's portal opens to a realm of vaporous darkness within the Shadow Plane. Any creature that comes within 5 feet of the oneirogen is blinded for as long as it remains adjacent to the oneirogen. The oneirogen isn't affected by this effect.

Wild Portal: In the rarest cases, one side of an oneirogen's portal is locked within its body, but the other wildly lashes through the planes of existence, connecting to a different reality every round. In the case of such creatures, roll 1d12 at the beginning of the oneirogen's turn. Its veil of mists ability randomly corresponds to the Dimension of Dreams, the four elemental planes, the two energy planes, Abaddon, the Abyss, Elysium, Hell, and the Shadow Plane.



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THE STARS ARE RIGHT

SPOILER ALERT! On these pages you'll find the background and outline for the Strange Aeons Adventure Path. If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! These pages spoil the plot for the upcoming adventures.

During the Age of Serpents, a storm of Hastur-worshipping flying polyps came to Golarion in search of a world to infest with the Great Old One Xhamen-Dor. They claimed two sites as staging areas for this infestation, and raised triads of *Star Stelae* to link these locations to the alien city of Carcosa and offer them to the parasite city as supplication to their master Hastur, the King in Yellow. However, at the first site, the flying polyps were confronted and defeated by a powerful group of serpentfolk in a pyrrhic battle that saw the destruction of both forces, leaving only the *Star Stelae* as lasting evidence of the conflict. Upon this site, Thrushmoor was founded millennia later.

The flying polyps were more successful at the second site in Casmaron, and built one of their eerie cities around the *Star Stelae* erected there. When Earthfall ended the Age of Legend, a single castaway comet containing the last surviving blot of matter of the fungoid Xhamen-Dor—a monstrosity spawned from the mad dreams of Carcosa—plunged into the heart of the city, drawn by the still-active *Star Stelae*.

For eons, the nameless city remained largely abandoned, the haunt of monsters and worse. Primitive nomadic societies in ancient Casmaron avoided it, knowing that what dwelt within its ruins was no friend of life and sanity. The lands around the ruins, known as the Parchlands, were likewise taboo. Only the mad or truly desperate dared approach this region.

For thousands of years, Xhamen-Dor and its infectious dreams lay dormant and forgotten in this lost city, which was eventually named Neruzavin by explorers from Ninshabur. But even that name was lost for millennia with Ninshabur's destruction, until fragments of the city's legend were finally unearthed by Count Haserton Lowls IV of Versex in Ustalav. Count Lowls began obsessively searching for this enigmatic city, hoping an expedition there would outdo all of his rival's accomplishments and repair his own damaged reputation. In his research, Lowls learned of a man named

Ulver Zandalus who was plagued by dreams of a lost city featuring the same stelae that stand in Thrushmoor, in the count's own lands. Fascinated by a possible link between Thrushmoor and this lost city, Lowls spent his entire family fortune buying up every book he could find on the topic. In so doing, he unwittingly fell further under the influence of the King in Yellow.

By day he researched his books, but at night Lowls learned more and more from his dreaming explorations, drawing ever closer to the truth. Eventually he made contact with an enigmatic figure known as the Mad Poet, who required Lowls to sacrifice several allies in order to receive the knowledge he sought. Lowls offered the dreaming minds of several ne'er-do-wells in his employ, which drove them mad with a potent form of amnesia and stupefaction. Satisfied, the Mad Poet told him that the city he sought was called Neruzavin, and that he would find its location in a book called the *Necronomicon*, held in a vault in Katheer.

Upon waking, Lowls handed his amnesiac thugs over to Briarstone Asylum, gathered his most important tomes and resources, and traveled south. Lowls thinks that when he finds Neruzavin he will uncover a wealth of ancient secrets and forgotten lore that will cement his legacy as a scholar. In truth, though, his fate is to become the incubator for a Great Old One's resurrection. Unless his one-time victims can recover, track him down, and stop him, he will complete the flying polyps' original goal of bridging the gap between this world and Carcosa. Not only will Thrushmoor fall to the parasite city's hunger, but Golarion itself could become the latest banquet for a ravenous Great Old One returned from death!

IN SEARCH OF SANITY

By F. Wesley Schneider

Pathfinder Adventure Path #109, Levels 1–3

The PCs awake in a cell beneath Briarstone Asylum with no memory of how they got there or who they are. After a dangerous fight against the monstrous creatures

roaming the asylum's halls, the PCs discover other survivors who have taken refuge in Briarstone's chapel. This group struggles to survive this waking nightmare, but can provide a safe retreat while the PCs find a way out. Aside from the monsters, the greatest danger is posed by a cult that has sprung up around a patient named Ulver Zandalus, a man who has accidentally turned his nightmares into the horrible reality that suffuses Briarstone Asylum.

THE THRUSHMOOR TERROR

By Tito Leati

Pathfinder Adventure Path #110, Levels 4–6

A cult of Hastur has infiltrated the town of Thrushmoor and begun kidnapping and sacrificing the populace. The PCs arrive to discover the town gripped by terror as even their leadership has gone missing. Count Haserton Lowls IV, the man responsible for committing the PCs to the asylum, skipped town just as this recent unpleasantness unfolded. The PCs must investigate what preys on the people of Thrushmoor, while exploring a town that remembers them even if they don't recall their own past. The PCs need to find who is kidnapping the townsfolk, investigate the missing count, and invade Count Lowls' estate if they hope to survive long enough to figure out what happened to their memories.

DREAMS OF THE YELLOW KING

By Ron Lundeen

Pathfinder Adventure Path #111, Levels 7–9

By studying the books left behind in Count Lowls's estate, the PCs discover that Lowls had researched Neruzavin in dreams via a ritual that sent his slumbering mind into the Dreamlands. On the count's trail, the PCs travel to Cassomir and do their own dream research during the long journey. As they encounter dangers on the water by day, they explore the Dreamlands by night. In their first excursion, the PCs arrive in an abandoned caravanserai where they meet a splinter of Count Lowls's psyche who calls himself the Yellow King. From him they find out that they must appease the Mad Poet if they wish to learn what Lowls was after. Once the PCs collect appropriate gifts during a number of horrifying dream quests, they return to the caravanserai to discover that the Yellow King has been locked away in a prison on the Dreamlands' moon. The PCs need to free the Yellow King if they wish to meet the Mad Poet and recover their lost memories.

THE WHISPER OUT OF TIME

By Richard Pett

Pathfinder Adventure Path #112, Levels 10–12

With their memories restored, the PCs recall their checkered pasts working for Lowls, but they also begin getting mysterious mental transmissions from someone (or something) trying to warn them of Hastur's

growing influence. They reach Cassomir to find the lab of Lowls's ally Miacknian Mun infested with derros and the alchemist's constructed guardians running amok. The PCs learn that Lowls and Mun have already moved on to Katheer. On their heels, the PCs visit an enigmatic library called the Mysterium. Upon arrival, the PCs discover that Lowls had visited recently and somehow set off the library's defenses. Thinking that Lowls might remain trapped within, the head of the Mysterium pleads for the PCs to make sure that the *Necronomicon* is still intact. Yet Lowls continues to evade the PCs, having stolen the vile tome and fled to Okeno to meet with an associate before heading into the Parchlands. The PCs have to maneuver the mean streets of Okeno to locate the gnoll slaver Biting Lash and infiltrate her fortress. There, the PCs encounter a yithian mind-swapped with an elderly slave—the source of the mysterious communications—who can help the PCs find Neruzavin.

WHAT GROWS WITHIN

By John Compton

Pathfinder Adventure Path #113, Levels 13–14

Once again, Lowls is a step ahead of the PCs, having claimed the *Necronomicon* and traveled to the Parchlands in southwestern Casmaron. The PCs brave the arid wasteland to reach the forsaken city of Neruzavin, where the last vestige of the Great Old One Xhamen-Dor sleeps and infects the world with its sinister dreams. Although Neruzavin's streets appear abandoned, the city crawls with accursed life, including those who have survived one apocalypse—and would herald another. The PCs must track Lowls's party, recover the *Necronomicon*, find and reactivate the city's *Star Stelae*, and perform a powerful ritual in order to follow Lowls to Carcosa, where he might unwittingly deliver Golarion to the King in Yellow. However, as the PCs race to stop Count Lowls, they must take care that they do not awaken Xhamen-Dor or the flying polyyps sealed beneath the city.

BLACK STARS BECKON

By Jim Groves

Pathfinder Adventure Path #114, Levels 15–16

The PCs follow Lowls to Carcosa to sever the links between it and Golarion. To start, the PCs must navigate the frozen ruins of an elder thing city while stalked by its mind-shattering horrors. The heroes then travel to a twisted version of Paris, where they must assail the black "Tower of Eiffel" to further untether Carcosa from Golarion. Finally, in a skewed reflection of Thrushmoor, the Briarstone Witch opposes the PCs as she readies to escape Carcosa while the real Thrushmoor is devoured. Time is not only running out—it's unraveling! An unspeakable nightmare stirs in the depths of Lake Hali, and if the PCs fail, Thrushmoor and Golarion are doomed to greet the King in Yellow.

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NEXT MONTH

THE THRUSHMOOR TERROR

By Tito Leati

After escaping from the waking nightmare of Briarstone Asylum, the former captives venture to the dismal town of Thrushmoor to unravel the enigma of their lost memories. Upon arrival, the adventurers discover that the town's leadership has either fled or gone missing, and a rash of kidnappings and rumors of the Briarstone Witch spread terror through the people of Thrushmoor. As the adventurers investigate, they uncover a cult that plans to use the town's ancient monuments to increase its power. Will the adventurers discover the secret behind their affliction and solve Thrushmoor's mysteries, or will they fall victim to ruthless fanatics?

THRUSHMOOR GAZETTEER

By Tito Leati

Explore life in the dreary Ustalavic town of Thrushmoor, county seat of Versex. Learn more about the mysteries of the sleepy town, its prominent citizens, and why the townsfolk harbor such suspicions.

HASTUR

By James Jacobs

Delve into the unspeakable lore of Hastur, the King in Yellow. Find out more about the cults that worship the Great Old One of decadence, disorder, and nihilism.

AND MORE!

Horror on the plains of Molthune in the Pathfinder's Journal by Christopher Row! Plus, a host of loathsome monsters in the Strange Aeons Adventure Path bestiary.

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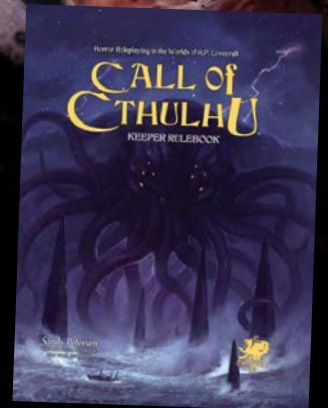
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I thank the gods
that I've never seen
one of these beasts
during waking hours.

THE WINGED TERRORS

I cannot say for sure when the nightmares began, but they all start in the most innocuous way. I find myself drifting serenely through the night with no obvious means of propulsion. I am calm. Happy, almost, for a brief time. And then the creatures arrive on silent, ebon wings. One swoops close to grab me with its elongated fingers and brushes against me sickeningly with its long tail. Though its face is but a smooth expanse under its curled horns, I can sense its delight at my mind-numbing fear. But that is only the beginning. My research so far has given a name to these monsters: "nightgaunts." I shudder even to write the word.



WAKING NIGHTMARES

The Strange Aeons Adventure Path begins with “In Search of Sanity,” a mind-shattering foray into horror where the heroes awaken within the walls of the eerie Briarstone Asylum, their minds wracked and memories missing. Working together to recover their missing time, they soon learn that their amnesia is but a symptom of a much greater cosmic menace. As they struggle to retain their sanity, the heroes must ally with other asylum residents and fight against the monstrosities that have taken over the building and plunged it into nightmare. Can the adventurers defeat the terror that stalks the halls and free themselves from their prison of madness?

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path launches the Strange Aeons Adventure Path and includes:

- “In Search of Sanity,” a Pathfinder adventure for 1st-level characters, by F. Wesley Schneider.
- A double-sized article that peers into the dangerous realm of the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods who make up the Elder Mythos, by James Jacobs.
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