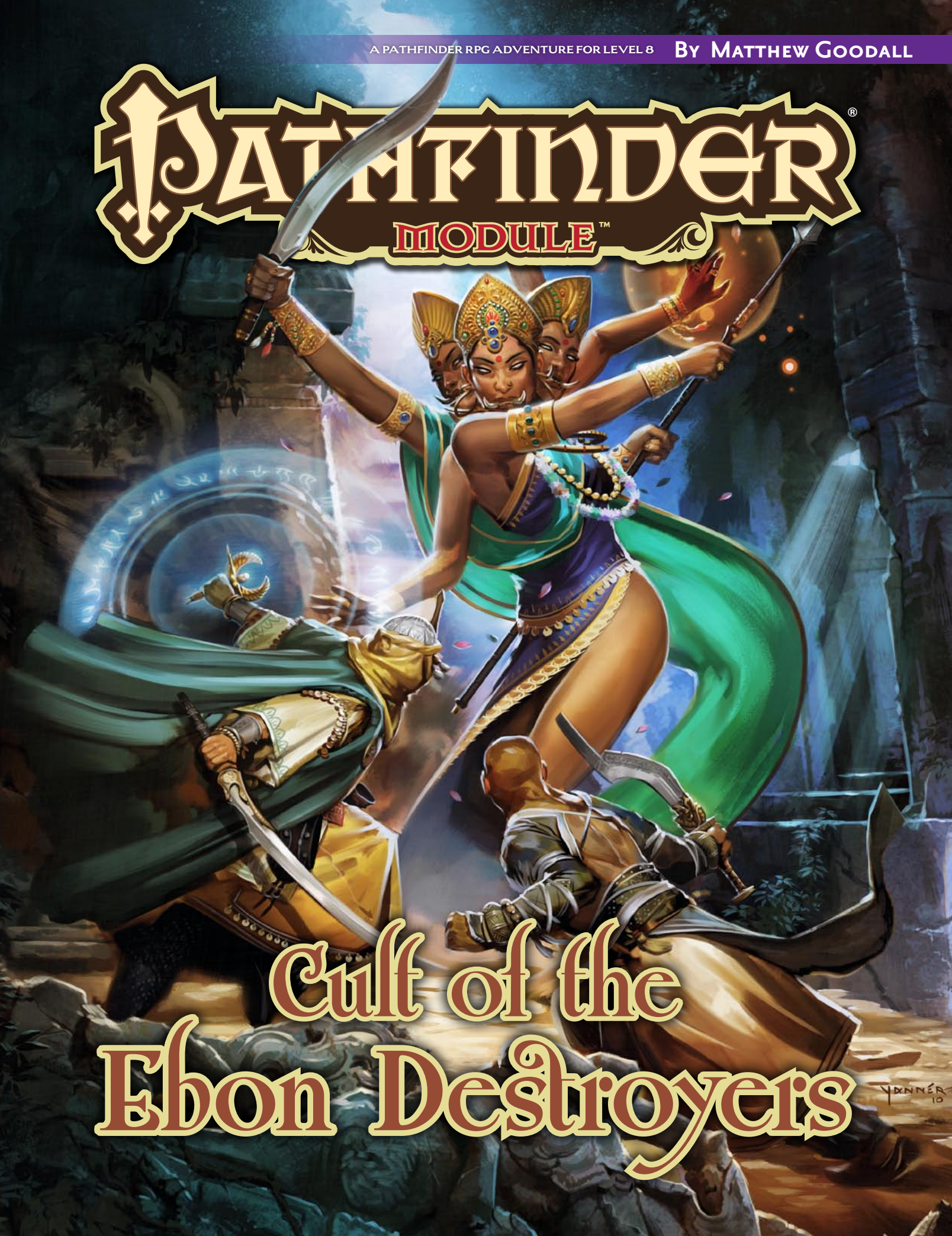


A PATHFINDER RPG ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 8

By MATTHEW GOODALL

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## MODULE<sup>™</sup>



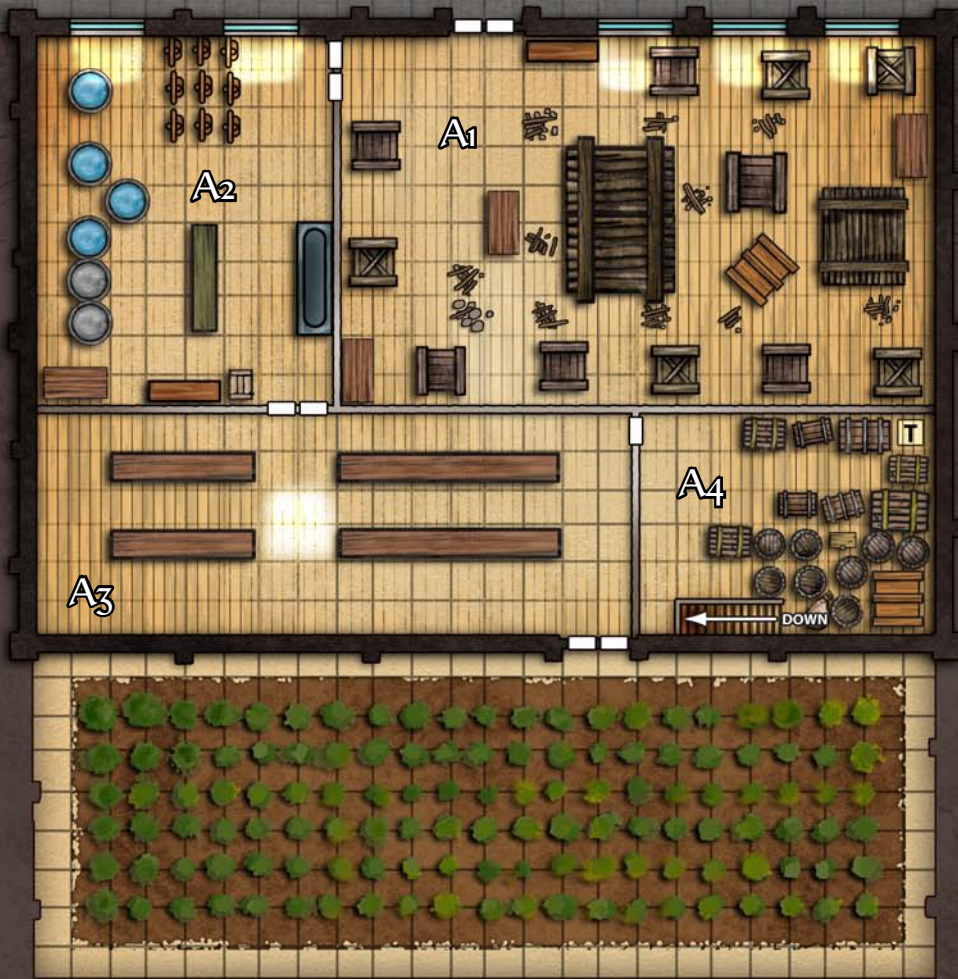
# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

YANNER 10



# Silk Mill

Lower Level



1 square = 5 feet



# Silk Mill

Upper Level



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

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*Cult of the Ebon Destroyers* is a Pathfinder Module designed for four 8th-level characters and uses the medium XP advancement track. This module is designed for play in the Pathfinder campaign setting, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. This module is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the 3.5 edition of the world's oldest fantasy roleplaying game. The OGL can be found on page 32 of this product.

This product makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, and *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. These rules can be found online as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at [paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd).

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# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

The Isle of Jalmeray, a former outpost of the faraway kingdoms of Vudra, has long been an isolated pocket of Vudrani culture in the Inner Sea. Of the hundreds of gods worshiped in the island nation, the dark deity Dhalavei is among the most sinister, her cultists hiding among structures of power and established organizations and rotting them from within. Known as the Ebon Destroyers, Dhalavei's cult is growing in the Kingdom of the Impossible, and seeks to gain control of the Jalmeri government through fear, subterfuge, and murder. The thakur of Jalmeray has outlawed the cult, and in turn been threatened with assassination. Now is the time to bring down the Ebon Destroyers. But who among the Jalmeri can be trusted against a cult known for infiltrating even the most secure organizations?



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the distant kingdom of Vudra, the Ebon Destroyers have a long history, with their organized cabals infiltrating, robbing, and ritually murdering the innocent. These horrendous cultists are devoted to Dhalavei, the evil Vudrani goddess of silent, internal rot. When the cultists kill in her name, they burn fill their victims' mouths and throats with acid to symbolize corruption from within.

The cultists often join caravans, sometimes in several small groups to allay suspicion, waiting until they befriend the travelers and gain their trust. In the dark of night, at prearranged places, they strike using sacrificial blades or their bare hands to stealthily and systematically murder their victims. The Ebon Destroyers dispose of the bodies, making entire caravans disappear without a trace.

Recently the cult came to Jalmeray, where it has slowly grown in power, expanding its influence and bringing in members from the east. Now the cult's local leaders feel sufficiently well placed to attempt to seize covert control of the island.

Two weeks ago, a favorite cousin of Thakur Kharswan, Jalmeray's ruler, disappeared suddenly. With the help of divination magic, his corpse was found bearing the cult's ritual sacrificial markings. Incensed at the attack on his family, Kharswan called on the Maurya-Rahm (his legion of advisors and administrators), and demanded that they outlaw the cult and prohibit the worship of Dhalavei. The advisors warned that the killing was a calculated measure to observe the thakur's response, and that such a drastic reaction might be unwise. Kharswan would not relent, however, and the ban on worship of Dhalavei came down. That very night the thakur received a death threat from the forbidden cult.

Worried for their leader's safety, the thakur's advisors have employed every means they could muster to find and destroy the Cult of the Ebon Destroyers. Lord Raheem Pansidar, one of the most loyal and influential members of the Maurya-Rahm, recognizes how pervasively insidious this cult is, and seeks independent aid to assist in the search.

## The Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

The cult of the Ebon Destroyers is a highly secretive organization, well organized in structure, but destructive in nature. Its aim is to obtain power by undermining or taking over established organizations, cities, and even entire nations from within. The cult works through infiltration and subversion, as well as overt measures such as intimidation and fear. Members receive rewards of wealth, status, and the blessings of their evil goddess.

The cult is divided into semi-independent cells or sects, each led by three masters. Each master represents

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

*Cult of the Ebon Destroyers* takes place in the island nation of Jalmeray, dubbed the Kingdom of the Impossible for its countless monasteries where ascetics perform unbelievable feats of mind, body, and spirit, and the nation's Vudrani populace worships hundreds of foreign gods.

If you're interested in reading more about the isle of Jalmeray, be sure to pick up a copy of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, available at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com) and book and hobby stores everywhere.



one of Dhalavei's three aspects: deception, destruction, and secrecy. Individual sects have limited information about one another, and only the leaders of the Niswan sect know the approximate location of the hidden temple to the south.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In Niswan, Jalmeray's capital city, the PCs are recruited to locate and eliminate the Ebon Destroyers. The PCs use their employer's contacts and their own resources to investigate the cult and discover clues leading to its hideout. The cultists attempt to thwart the PCs' investigation, using methods that include heightened threats and even kidnapping.

The clues lead the PCs to a battle with a shapeshifting rakshasa cult member who reveals the location of the cultists' hideout—a silk mill in the low-caste area of Niswan. Here, the PCs fight cultist rogues and the cult's local leader, an evil garuda. The PCs discover clues leading to the cult's secret temple headquarters near a small village in the rugged hills of southern Jalmeray. They also learn that there are three cult leaders, all masters of Vudrani martial arts.

As the PCs travel south through the thick jungle, a weretiger disguised as a holy man stalks them overland. The PCs reach the village. Despite appearing cheerful, the villagers are under the sway of the cult and try to murder the PCs in their sleep. The PCs may discover a well-

## DO YOU SPEAK VUDRANI?

Many of the NPCs in this adventure and most citizens of Jalmeray don't speak Taldane, only Vudrani. Use this fact to add flavor and create the atmosphere of an exotic location. Characters of the PCs' level should be able to circumvent any language barrier easily. *Comprehend languages and tongues* spells, or a *helm of comprehend languages and read magic*, are magical answers. However, an easy mundane solution is to hire a translator. Employing a street urchin as a translator costs as little as 3 sp per day. The PCs might also pick up a few common phrases, such as "Zubhaa vizarat," a common Vudrani greeting meaning, "All the gods' blessings to you." For more information on Jalmeray and Vudrani culture, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*.

disguised trail leading from the village into the hills. In a valley, they come across a mass grave of the cult's victims, haunted by a vetala, a ghost that can animate and possess corpses. Continuing, they find the cult's headquarters set halfway up a mountain cliff face. The PCs must storm this temple and face the three cult leaders in the depths of the diabolic shrine to defeat the cult.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure begins in Niswan, the capital of the island nation of Jalmeray, during the celebration of Yolarati, the traditional Vudrani Festival of Colors. What brings the PCs to Niswan, and from whence they come, is up to you, but the adventure assumes they are visitors, not natives. Martialy oriented PCs may travel to Niswan seeking admission to one of the famous Houses of Perfection, while historians or arcanists may journey to the city in search of scrolls of unusual lore in the markets of the Commerce District. The festival itself is a perfectly good reason for PCs looking for a break from adventuring to travel the isle.

Whatever brings them to Niswan, allow the PCs to enjoy the week-long festival. They observe many locals wearing robes that were once white, but are now smeared with a myriad of colored dye. The normally reserved Vudrani citizens rub multi-hued powders on each other's faces and yell exuberant, joyful blessings. Elaborate illusions of rainbow patterns, flowing auroras, and sparkling bursts fill the sky or liven otherwise blank walls. Laughing children splash each other with dyed water. The air is a heady cloud of fragrant flavors, and sounds of music and celebration are all around. Mouth-watering delights are generously available, as well as large mugs of thandi, a local drink, to wash them down.

Foreign PCs likely lack a heroic reputation among the local population. Consider providing opportunities during the festival for PCs to shine in their individual

areas of expertise, gaining a following for acts of wonder and heroism even among the festivals' many attractions.

On the last day of the festival, one of the thakur's servants approaches the PCs on behalf of a prominent member of the Maurya-Rahm. **Lord Raheem Pandisar** (NG male human aristocrat 7; Bluff +13, Diplomacy +18) has heard of their exploits and requests an audience. Raheem seeks their help because the PCs are outsiders with no possible connection to the cult.

## PART 1: INVESTIGATION IN NISWAN

As the servant guides the PCs to their audience with Lord Raheem, read or paraphrase the following:

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Towering palatial chambers supported by elaborately carved pillars surround an ornamental stream that flows through the palace. Halls of polished marble lead to a languidly luxurious sitting room. The thakur himself sits at the far end of the room, his bejeweled turban sparkling in the light shining through the windows. He paints a canvas while watching his baby son in a crib nearby.

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Raheem, a tall, tanned man with a neatly trimmed goatee, introduces himself and offers the PCs comfortable seating around a low table. Although the PCs are in the thakur's presence, he doesn't acknowledge them; the PCs' audience is with Raheem, not Kharswan. Raheem is a pleasant host and offers opulent refreshments. He compliments his guests on their achievements before recounting the events from the assassination of the thakur's cousin up to the threat to the thakur's life, as described in the Adventure Background section. Raheem reveals his suspicions of informants in the palace, as current investigations into the Ebon Destroyers have uncovered surprisingly little. He hopes that, as outsiders to Jalmeray, the PCs may have advantages in finding the cult that the locals wouldn't.

Raheem asks whether the PCs would consider giving their assistance and invites them to name their price, cheerfully bargaining with them until they reach a reasonable consensus (roughly 2,000 gp per PC). If the PCs insist on a larger reward, make opposed Diplomacy checks and increase the reward by 100 gp per PC for every point by which the PCs beat Raheem. If PCs are uninterested in monetary rewards, Raheem offers to use his considerable political and social influence to help the PCs in other ways.

On reaching an agreement, Raheem asks that the PCs report only to him to ensure the cult can't sabotage the investigation. He provides an official writ of authority affirming that the PCs are working for him, as well as letters of introduction to several people knowledgeable about the cult: Prince Kanvar, a great student of Vudrani history; Lord Mahindra, an infamous rumormonger;



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Pravezak, the thakur's spiritual counselor; and Varunasi, a high-caste merchant well acquainted with current regional politics.

Raheem provides the PCs with additional information if they ask, but doesn't offer it unless prompted.

**May we see the thakur's cousin's body?** "He has already been cremated and interred. Court clerics were able to use magic to speak with the corpse, however, and discovered that he saw nothing of his killers and remembered little except a searing pain in the back."

**May we see the letter threatening the thakur's life?** "The ultimatum note burst into flame upon being read, badly burning the servant who read it to His Excellency. Nothing remains of it."

## Initial Inquiries

The PCs likely begin their investigation by speaking with the contacts Raheem provided them. They may speak with the experts in any order, and needn't meet with all of them should their investigation lead them to the cult's trail with fewer clues.

**Prince Kanvar, student of history:** Prince Kanvar is a noble of the scholar caste who lives near the Grand Chronicler's Circle, in an ancient crumbling mansion filled with scrolls. He's a chubby, dark-skinned man wearing an inordinately large turban. Kanvar can answer the PCs' questions regarding the history of the Ebon Destroyers. An intellectual, Prince Kanvar speaks Common (albeit with a strong accent). If asked about the cult, he says:

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"The Ebon Destroyers have existed since ancient times and are far more prevalent in Vudra than elsewhere on Golarion. Unless the cult wants to leave a message, its victims' bodies are rarely found. There have been many attempts to eradicate the cult, but the cultists inevitably go into hiding, sometimes for years at a time, and no effort has ever been truly successful at eliminating them. At several points in Vudrani history, they have taken over entire kingdoms, ruling through fear and forcing the populace to worship their foul goddess. The cult often recruits from the lower castes, as their goddess's aspect of destruction appeals to those who are dissatisfied with their role in society and wish revenge against those of higher status. However, Jalmeray's caste structure is not as formal as Vudra's, with far fewer low-caste people, meaning that the cult may work differently here."

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The PCs may also learn the information above with a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check.

**Lord Mahindra, rumormonger:** Mahindra is an elderly man with a graying beard and fatherly demeanor. He acts as a matchmaker and information broker in the Heights. If presented with Lord Raheem's letter of introduction, Mahindra thinks for a moment, stroking his beard, then tells the PCs about two incidents he believes may be related to their investigation.

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"A headless body was recently found in the Commerce District, a particularly gruesome affair unlike even the most violent of Niswan's crimes. I've also heard rumors of informants in the palace guard, though who they sell information to is something even I can't glean from local chatter. Raheem is a good friend, and you seem like honest folk; I promise to try to find out more. I can also find you dedicated spouses if you're in the market, heh?"

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PCs who don't meet Mahindra may learn the same information with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check or a DC 20 Diplomacy check made to gather information. If PCs wish to investigate the body, Mahindra provides them directions to the scene of the crime (see page 6).

**Pravezak, spiritual advisor:** Pravezak resides in the thakur's palace, providing spiritual guidance to Kharswan and his family. He's thin, with wild, frizzy hair, and dresses in simple orange robes. He only speaks Vudrani, but can relate all the information listed in the Dhalavei sidebar.

If PCs do not meet with Pravezak, they may uncover the same information regarding Dhalavei with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check.

**Varunasi, authority on politics:** The PCs can find Varunasi, a high-caste merchant, at her clothing shop in the Commerce District at most times of the day. She's a mature woman of conservative but stylish dress, and gladly chats over tea and a meal once she reads Raheem's letter. She explains briefly how the Jalmeri government functions.

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"The thakur is a figurehead with little real power. The true influence rests with the temple mystics, the monastic masters, and the nobles of the highest castes who make up the Maurya-Rahm. Yet even as a figurehead, when the thakur cried out against his cousin's murder, the Maurya-Rahm and those with influence agreed that attacking the thakur equates to attacking Jalmeray itself. The common people are scared for the thakur, and killing him would greatly destabilize the nation despite the true administration of Jalmeray falling to the Maurya-Rahm."

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LORD RAHEEM  
PANDISAR



## DHALAVEI

The Unsuspected Rot  
Goddess of internal decay

Alignment: LE

Domains: Destruction, Evil,  
Knowledge, Law, Trickery

Favored Weapon: Temple sword

Stories describe Dhalavei as a shapely, three-headed woman with ebon-black skin and unbound blue-black hair. Each of her two arms branches at the elbow into six forearms, in which she holds a temple sword, a noose, a black glass orb, and a sealed scroll. One hand shows a symmetric symbol on the palm, while her last hand is outstretched in a mystic gesture.

As all colors vanish in shadow and darkness, so do all forms and things vanish in Dhalavei's shadow. Her faithful claim that she holds the hidden comprehension of the unmaking of all things, and that she awaits the time when her cult is perfectly positioned to unleash her final destruction. She relishes well-planned espionage that leads to the devastation of enemies, the sowing of discord that breaks families, and secret political corruption that topples empires.

Frequently outlawed, Dhalavei's cultists work in clandestine groups and sacrifice their enemies and other intelligent beings to their dark goddess. The new moon is a propitious time for sacrifices to Dhalavei, as her cult claims that she then actively strips the light from the night sky. Eclipses are especially sacred events to Dhalavei's faithful.

A DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) check provides the PCs with this information if they don't meet Varunasi.

**City Guard:** Niswan has a small but efficient city guard who are more used to dealing with theft, fraud, and mercantile squabbles than a highly organized cult of murderers. The guards cooperate if they know the PCs are working for Lord Raheem. The guard is currently investigating a case that could be the work of the Ebon Destroyers—the body of an incense maker was found yesterday, her head missing.

### Following the Leads

Depending on which of Raheem's contacts the PCs meet with and which leads they investigate, they may encounter the following in any order.



**Headless Body:** Vitusa was an outspoken, unmarried woman of the merchant caste who openly agreed with the thakur's banning of Dhalavei worship. She owned and operated a small but successful incense shop in the Commerce District, and it was here that her body was found.

PCs investigating the crime scene are greeted by Nabeeka, one of Vitusa's employees, who only speaks Vudrani.

Once the PCs establish communications, she invites them in. Vitusa's death has deeply saddened Nabeeka, who describes her employer as a kind and generous mistress. Nabeeka notes Vitusa's forthright and negative opinion of Dhalavei. She told customers that banning the worship of Dhalavei was the best thing the thakur ever did. The

other employees, Mastami and Jamun, live nearby but know no more than Nabeeka.

The shop itself shows signs of a struggle: jars of ingredients lie smashed on the floor and a large quantity of blood remains uncleaned and splattered about. The city guard investigated and had the body removed and ritually cremated. Aside from evidence of a struggle, the murderer—the rakshasa known as Lankesh (see page 7)—left no evidence implicating himself.

With a DC 25 Perception check, PCs searching the shop find a distinctive copper earring under a cabinet, covered by spilt incense and blood. Nabeeka can confirm it belonged to Vitusa. The PCs can cast *locate object*, or ask Raheem to hire someone to cast the spell, to find the other earring. The divination leads them to an abandoned cesspit under a derelict warehouse in the Surakport Quarter where Lankesh sometimes dumps his victims. The PCs find Vitusa's head wearing the other earring, its soft tissues burned out by acid.

Characters examining the muddy cesspit floor who succeed at a DC 20 Survival check note clawed footprints. Beating the DC by 5 or more allows the PC to note that the thing was walking backward or had backward-facing feet. There are pieces of other partially eaten humanoid remains here, but not enough to identify them.

A PC who searches the cesspit (DC 20 Perception check) finds a damaged falchion discarded in the muck. Lankesh is often overeager to feast on a victim, and frequently strikes too hard with the falchion, cutting through flesh and bone and smashing the blade against the ground.

A DC 20 Appraise check or at least one rank in Craft (weapons) recognizes that the blade was made in either



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

Jalmeray or Vudra. Under the handle of the hilt is the mark of the smith who forged it. The PCs may gather information in the markets to find the smith, Lohakar. He keeps records and still has the bill of sale. He remembers selling the blade to Lankesh, a high-caste merchant, who also brought it back for sharpening.

**The Palace:** If the PCs wish to investigate the palace, Raheem directs them to see **Captain Harita** (LN female human fighter 5), requesting that she fully cooperate with the PCs. Harita is a tall, wiry woman; she summarily informs the PCs that her officers are impeccable, but a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that she hesitates slightly as she says this. If the PCs change Harita's attitude from Indifferent to Friendly (DC 16 Diplomacy or Intimidate check), she admits that one of the guard officers named Viraj is known to be lazy, commonly late to his duties and often disheveled. She's sure he isn't a traitor or revealing confidential information, but feels something's amiss.

Gathering information among the palace guards reveals that Viraj's arranged marriage fell through around a year ago, and he has been heartbroken ever since.

Each guard has a locker of gear at the palace. Viraj's box is locked (Disable Device DC 20), but Captain Harita has a master key. A meticulous search (DC 30 Perception check) of Viraj's box reveals minute traces of agada leaves, an addictive drug that is highly illegal in Jalmeray. The plant is a relative of cabbie-weed, with soporific and hallucinatory effects. Searching Viraj's small apartment in the Commerce District (Perception DC 20), the PCs discover a concealed hookah and traces of the drug along with a scribbled note listing an address. The address is a disused teahouse in the Harbor District.

Viraj only speaks Vudrani, but Harita can translate. If confronted, Viraj denies that he uses drugs. He lies and says the agada came from a pouch he confiscated from a servant. Terrified for his job, Viraj has an initial attitude of Hostile. A successful DC 15 Intimidate check or DC 25 Diplomacy check causes him to confess. Harita assists in the interrogation, automatically aiding another on the PCs' check. Viraj confesses his agada addiction, but denies selling information. A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals this as true, but that he's holding something back.

If prompted, Viraj tells how he has been buying and smoking agada in a deserted teahouse. Sometimes while he lay hallucinating under the stupefying influence of the drug, he heard a soft voice in the darkness asking him questions about the palace. He's sure he said nothing, but the voice seemed to reach inside his head. He never saw who sold him the drug, as the person was always unseen or invisible.

If the PCs search the Harbor District teahouse, they find it empty. A DC 20 Survival check reveals tracks in

the back room left by a large serpentine creature. PCs who search city records or succeed at a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check discover that a man named Lankesh owns the teahouse.

## Lankesh's House (CR 10)

The investigation should lead PCs to a merchant known as Lankesh, who lives in a modest house in the Commerce District. A simple DC 10 Diplomacy (gather information) or Knowledge (local) check in the neighborhood reveals that he lives here alone, and sticks mostly to himself.

**Creatures:** Lankesh is a young, bat-headed rakshasa and an exile from the distant east. On the run from his clan, Lankesh joined the Ebon Destroyers in Vudra, happy to travel to faraway Jalmeray. He's an indifferent worshiper of Dhalavei, seeing her as a means to an end, though he does hold ambitions of one day taking over the cult. Lankesh is young, arrogant, and overconfident, especially with non-Vudrani, believing that the people of the Inner Sea have no idea that rakshasas exist. His day-to-day disguise is that of a well-built Vudrani male with a beaklike nose, thick eyebrows, and a shaven head.

Lankesh spends a lot of time here, preferring that those seeking to trade come to him. If the PCs encounter him here, he grudgingly invites them in and conducts any conversation in his main living room. He uses *detect thoughts* on the PCs during the conversation to determine what they know. Lankesh pretends that he's a busy merchant with no time for questions unrelated to trade, and unless the PCs know too much about the cult, he feigns annoyance and soon asks them to leave.

### LANKESH

CR 10

XP 6,400

Male rakshasa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 231)

hp 115

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Lankesh casts *mage armor* on himself every day, renewing it as needed. If he anticipates imminent combat, he also casts *shield*.

**During Combat** Unless he's already engaged in melee, Lankesh opens with a *lightning bolt*, then uses his weapons.

**Morale** Overestimating his abilities, Lankesh fights until it's too late to retreat, and then, seeing no alternative, fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Gear** +1 *kukri*, bill of sale for 20 square yards of undyed silk from the Apananda Silk Mill, ring of keys to his house and the silk mill, 100 gp

**Development:** Lankesh keeps nothing incriminating at his house. There are neatly filed papers in his study detailing his mercantile dealings. Examining these shows



that Lankesh makes most of his money from sales of consignments of silk from the Apananda Silk Mill in Niswan's Low-Caste District, which he owns. Lankesh keeps no coin here, preferring promissory notes.

## Retaliation

The cult has informers in various parts of the city and quickly learns that the thakur has hired the PCs. The cult doesn't actively watch the PCs, but uses its sources to keep tabs on them. The PCs are an unknown element, and rather than attempting face-to-face confrontation, the cult takes an escalating series of measures against them. Use these events in order, roughly one event per day, in between the PCs' other investigations. If the PCs investigate the cult's activities quickly, some or all of the retaliation may be avoided. Each encounter below provides an additional clue for the PCs, so these may also be used to nudge them in the right direction if they appear stumped or otherwise on the wrong track.

**A Warning:** Early in the investigation, an errand-girl named Shari approaches the PCs in the street and hands them a note. The note reads (in Common), "The promise of death awaits you if you choose to keep interfering!" If asked, Shari was paid a silver piece by a balding, middle-aged man with a mustache dressed in merchants'

robes and told to give the note to a group matching the PCs' description. Shari only speaks Vudrani and hopes for a small tip for delivering the message. If the PCs can communicate with her, she describes the man, although she smiles winsomely and holds out her hand as she does so. The "merchant" who wrote the note was the rakshasa Lankesh, using his change shape ability to disguise himself. A PC who closely examines the note and makes a DC 20 Linguistics check discerns from the abnormal and flamboyant style of the handwriting that its writer has unusually long hands with very flexible digits.

**An Arrow:** When the PCs return to their quarters or any other identifiable location of frequent use, the Ebon Destroyers send a message in the form of a speeding arrow. The sniper, the garuda Utkroza, is 180 feet away, hiding on the roof of a 3-story building. He casts *true strike* the round before attacking, giving him a total attack bonus of +35, including the -2 range penalty. He doesn't use Deadly Aim or the shock enchantment of his bow (calculating that the less the PCs know about his tactics, the better). Utkroza drops behind the cover of the roofline immediately after attacking and uses *Stealth* to hide (see *Sniping* on page 106 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). He then flees, flying quickly down to an alley on the far side of the building and casting *disguise self* to blend in with people on the street.

There's a small note tied to the arrow with a bright silken thread that reads (in Common), "This is your final warning!" The handwriting isn't the same as on the first note; it's in Utkroza's scratchy scrawl. The fletching of the arrow is distinctive—a DC 20 Appraise check notices that the feathers aren't those normally used to make arrows; a DC 29 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies them as garuda feathers.

The silk of the note is also distinctive. The PCs can find the silk's source by canvassing the merchants of Niswan. There are four silk mills and more than a



LANKESH



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

dozen home-based silk weavers in the Low-Caste District alone; the PCs may need more information to find the correct one.

**Dead End:** The PCs find the burned-out corpse of the rumormonger Mahindra on their lodging's front steps. Heal checks on the body uncover interesting details. It's fairly obvious that Mahindra died elsewhere, as there's very little blood here (DC 10). While he has heavy bruising around the neck, a very accurate strike to the heart from a short stabbing blade was the cause of death (DC 15). His mouth was burned by acid after death (DC 20). The body's state of rigor mortis shows that he died around 12 hours ago, and the deathblow's angle and position shows that he was stabbed either from the side or behind (DC 25).

Citizens on the street are likely to see the body and call the city guard. The guard arrives and questions any witnesses (including the PCs); they inspect the scene, and have the corpse removed.

The PCs may go to Mahindra's home to investigate his death. His wife Shoa, who only speaks Vudrani, says that Mahindra was last seen the previous evening, heading to the Low-Caste District to follow leads on merchants. If the PCs are respectful to Shoa, she lets them examine Mahindra's study. A note there says, "Must check the seller of saffron and cardamom shipment that arrived last spring." A DC 20 Diplomacy check made to gather information allows the PCs to discover that a man named Lankesh sold the spices. The spices were from a caravan that never arrived, and Mahindra matched the dates and quantities with the missing caravan.

**Conflagration (CR 7):** The PCs return to their quarters to find a folded note slipped under the door. The note is a trap: moving or touching it triggers a fiery explosion. If the PCs avoid triggering the trap or disarm it, they may find, with a successful DC 25 Perception check, two 6d6 spheres from a *necklace of fireballs* concealed inside the note. The note itself is blank. If the PCs left anything particularly valuable in their quarters, it was stolen and the cultists have already sold or destroyed anything they took to avoid divination. Questioning the neighbors for witnesses allows the PCs to obtain descriptions of several factory workers who earlier delivered a crate to the PCs' quarters. Tracking down the workers requires a DC 40 Diplomacy check to gather information in a city the size of Niswan. If the PCs succeed in doing so, the search leads them to the Apananda Silk Mill.

## FIERY NOTE TRAP

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 29; Disable Device DC 29

### EFFECTS

Trigger touch (*alarm*); Reset none

Effect spell effect (*fire trap*, 1d4+7 fire damage, DC 16 Reflex)

## MAGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

There are a variety of spells the PCs can use to help them investigate.

**Commune:** This spell allows the PCs to narrow down their search with yes/no questions. Give the players hints, but don't let them use this spell as a crutch.

**Discern Location:** This high-level solution allows the PCs to pinpoint the location of a known creature or object.

**Divination:** Use the following as the result of a *divination* concerning the cult:

*Those of darkest deceit spin their designs aimed at the island's beloved heart.*

*Three of bestial aspect twist their schemes for their fierce dark mother.*

*Find the third one who possesses the weave;*

*Find his possession, and follow the thread to its source.*

*From the distant heights, the chosen Three meditate on her glory.*

*Bring illumination, stifle the power, and call on valor to swiftly end the darkness.*

**Locate Creature:** Utkroza (area A6) is the only garuda in Niswan, so the PCs could use this spell to locate him, though the spell's caster needs to have seen Utkroza or to have observed a garuda from within 30 feet. Locating Sapini (area A3) is also possible, but she isn't the only naga in Niswan. Others include an elderly guardian naga serving in the temple of Gruhastha the Keeper. She is, however, the only naga residing in the Low-Caste District.

**Locate Object:** The cultists are aware of this spell and are careful to sell or destroy any stolen items, though Vitusa's earring is an oversight the PCs can exploit.

**Scrying:** Scrying might allow the PCs to see the current surroundings of one of the cultists, but it is unlikely to help locate their headquarters. If the target detects the scrying attempt, the cult counters by having *nondetection* spells cast each day thereafter.

**Speak with Dead:** The cultists always cut out the tongues of their victims, but the PCs can still use this spell to interrogate dead cultists.

**Vision:** While the casting time of *legend lore* is too long to be effective, *vision* is a high-level alternative. As the PCs have incomplete information about the cultists, provide vague, cryptic statements similar to *divination* above to hint where the PCs need to look.

Once the PCs find out that the cultists have kidnapped Raheem in retaliation, they have several options: *locate creature* can find him, and *scrying* or *sending* can let the PCs see or communicate with him. Raheem knows that he's in the basement of a silk mill, but not which one.

For more advice on running a mystery in a magical setting, see pages 246–247 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.



save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 5-ft. radius). Triggering the trap sets off two fireball beads: spell effect (*fireball*, 6d6 fire damage each, DC 14 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. radius).

**Dismissal:** While the PCs are out searching for clues, a young messenger finds them and summons them to Lord Raheem's presence. If the PCs follow the messenger, they arrive at Raheem's townhouse in the Raja Heights area. Raheem greets them at the door, pays the messenger, and brusquely shows them into his parlor. Frowning, Raheem tersely explains that their services are no longer required, stating abruptly that the cult's ringleaders are now in custody. They are low-ranking officers in the thakur's personal guard and have all confessed. He tosses a bag of coins (containing 500 gp) on the table and bids them good day, leaning back dismissively and waiting for them to take the money and go.

Certain things about "Raheem" might bother the heroes: the sudden change in his demeanor, his failure to bargain over the payment, or the unnatural angle of his fingers as he tosses the bag on the table. The cult has kidnapped the real Raheem and Lankesh, the bat-headed rakshasa (see page 7), is impersonating him. The PCs can make opposed Perception checks against Lankesh's Disguise check, and Sense Motive checks against Lankesh's Bluff check. It's best to have the PCs pre-roll these checks to avoid arousing the players' suspicions by rolling dice in the middle of a conversation. Lankesh also uses his *detect thoughts* ability on the PCs during the conversation to determine what they have already found out about the cult. If they see through Raheem's lies and disguise or attempt to cast divination spells, he reveals his true form and attacks.

After defeating Lankesh, the PCs discover that the real Raheem is missing and his servants are dead, their bodies thrown in the pantry. If Lankesh's charade is successful, the PCs only hear of Raheem's disappearance days later, greatly decreasing their chances of finding the cult in time to save Raheem and the thakur.

## The Apananda Silk Mill

The PCs' investigations should lead them to the Apananda Silk Mill in the Low-Caste District. It is a 20-foot-high brick building with a sloping terra-cotta roof. If they manage to discover the mill without encountering Lankesh, feel free to have him return as the PCs assault or reconnoiter the hideout.

The three local leaders of the Ebon Destroyers in Niswan are Lankesh the rakshasa, Sarpini the dark naga, and Utkroza the garuda. Utkroza is the primary leader, and the other two serve as his subordinates. Utkroza is a dictatorial leader, as any other approach leads to the other two undermining his authority. With two lieutenants

who can both read thoughts, Utkroza never removes his *ring of mind shielding*. Lankesh is the junior member of the three. He's the most recent arrival in Jalmeray, and the others don't entirely trust his devotion to Dhalavei or his youthful exuberance. While Sarpini's and Utkroza's races are traditional enemies and both loudly state their dislike for each other, they have developed a grudging mutual respect. At the moment, the cultists are concentrating on moving against the thakur, and don't seek to recruit, make sacrifices, or expand their operations.

## A1. Main Work Floor (CR 8)

Huge looms cover most of the floor in this area. On each loom, hundreds or thousands of yards-long warp threads wind through intricate wooden frames, and spools of silken thread hang down from tall wooden stands that rise up toward the rafters of the high-ceilinged roof, ready to be loaded onto shuttles. There are windows high on the western wall, and the crowded floor space between the looms is a mess of clutter.

Here workers weave silk thread into cloth. Benches, assorted tools, equipment, and cloth fragments limit mobility and should be treated as difficult terrain. The main doors to the outside remain barred at all times.

**Hazards:** The loom nearest the doorway is rigged as a trap and is raised and tied up against the wall. If someone cuts the rope holding up the loom, it falls, dealing 1d6 damage to anyone in the 4 squares beneath it. Creatures of Medium size or smaller must make a DC 15 Reflex save or become trapped under the broken loom, knocking them prone and entangling them in the device's many cords, threads, and beams. Escaping from this mess requires a DC 20 Escape Artist check.

**Creatures:** There are four mill workers here, all cultists with orders not to let any strangers into the mill. Attempts by the PCs to bluff or bribe their way inside meet with coarse refusal. The mill workers spend most of their spare time here too, as it's cheaper for them to sleep here than to pay for accommodation in the city. If unaware of intruders, the workers are weaving or sleeping.

**MILL WORKERS (4)**

**CR 4**

**XP 1,200 each**

Human rogue 5

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +9

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 18, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 46 each (5d8+20)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

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

**OFFENSE**



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk punching dagger +7 (1d4+1/x3), mwk punching dagger +7 (1d4/x3) or

mwk punching dagger +9 (1d4+1/x3)

**Ranged** mwk composite shortbow +8 (1d6+1/x3 plus poison [dhat-gunchi paste; DC 14; 1/rd. for 4 rds.; 1 Con and 1d2 Wis, 1 save])

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6

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## TACTICS

**Before Combat** If alerted to intruders, the cultists hide among the looms and drink their *potions of invisibility*. They each coat an arrowhead with poison and ready their bows.

**During Combat** The mill workers use the area's disordered state to their advantage, using Nimble Moves to move easily through the difficult terrain in the chamber. They work in teams of two, using the confined space to flank and sneak attack opponents.

**Morale** The mill workers fight until reduced below 12 hit points, then retreat through area **A2** to **A3**.

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## STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Dodge, Nimble Moves, Toughness, Two-Weapon

Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (punching dagger)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +7, Climb +9, Craft (cloth) +5, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +14, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +12

**Languages** Vudrani

**SQ** rogue talents (finesse rogue, weapon training), trapfinding +2, uncanny dodge

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, dhat-gunchi paste (3 doses); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork punching daggers (2), masterwork composite shortbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, masterwork thieves' tools, 25 gp

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## A2. Spinning and Dyeing Room

Large dye vats and reels of drying silk fill this area. At the north end of the room, a large trough sits on a long charcoal bed. The place reeks with an acrid chemical odor.

Here workers boil cocoons (making it easy to unravel their silken filaments), spin multiple filaments into reels of silk thread, and dye the silk bright colors. During the day, a fire burns under the trough, boiling the water within. It's possible to tip the trough over with a DC 15 Strength check as a full-round action, dealing 4d6 points of fire damage to anyone in the three squares directly to the south of the trough and 1d6 points to anyone in the line of five squares to the south of those. A DC 10 Reflex save halves this damage. Tipping over the trough also makes that area slippery, increasing all Acrobatics DCs by +2. If Sarpini or

the mill workers retreat through this room, they may tip the trough over on pursuers. The two easternmost vats are empty, and are big enough to hide in; the cultist rogues may do this if they retreat here. The other vats are full of dye; an adjacent character can push over a vat as a standard action, with a DC 13 Strength check. Anyone on the vat's opposite side must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 2d6 damage. Either way, bright dye splashes anyone in the same square as the upended vat.

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## A3. Worm Room (CR 9)

Wooden shelves stacked with trays of cocoons and cases of silkworms feeding on mulberry leaves fill this room. A skylight in the middle of the ceiling fills the room with dim ambient light.

The workers cultivate silkworms here, and the worms and their silken cocoons occupy nearly every surface in the place. The locked back door to the outside requires the correct key or a DC 30 Disable Device check to open. Utkroza, Sarpini, and Lankesh all have keys to the door. A simple latch holds the skylight closed.

**Creatures:** The dark naga Sarpini meets with two acolytes from the Order of Unfathomable Darkness here, organizing the details of how the order of Dhalavei-worshiping monks should proceed regarding the thakur. Sarpini explains the current situation in Niswan to the acolytes, so they can relay it to the order's masters.

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### DARKNESS ACOLYTES (2)

CR 3

**XP 800 each**

Human monk 4

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +9

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### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +2 Wis)

**hp** 33 (4d8+12)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantment

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

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### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike +8 (1d8+4) or

flurry of blows +7/+7 (1d8+4)

**Special Attacks** stunning fist (4/day, DC 14, fatigued)

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### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The acolytes drink their *potions of mage armor* when they become aware of intruders (adjustments already included in their statistics).

**During Combat** The acolytes use Stunning Fist every round, and spend a *ki* point to gain an extra attack when flurrying. They attempt to stay between Sarpini and the PCs,



allowing her to cast spells unhindered.

**Morale** The acolytes attack as long as Sarpini still fights. If she falls, the acolytes flee the silk mill.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 22 (24 vs. grapple)

**Feats** Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

**Skills** Acrobatics +8 (+12 jump), Climb +11, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +8

**Languages** Vudrani

**SQ** fast movement, *ki* pool (4 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft., still mind

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of mage armor*; **Other Gear** ritual dagger

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Permanent Spells** The acolytes benefit from the effects of permanent *resistance* spells.

#### SARPINI

CR 8

XP 4,800

Dark naga (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 211)

hp 85

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If she has time, Sarpini casts *invisibility*, *shield*, and *cat's grace* when she realizes the silk mill is under attack.

**During Combat** Sarpini attacks with *lightning bolt*, *scorching ray* and *magic missile*. She casts *displacement* and uses her sting if an enemy gets too close.

**Morale** Sarpini casts *invisibility* and retreats to **A2** if brought below 20 hit points.

**Development:** PCs who sneak up and listen may overhear some of Sarpini's conversation with the acolytes, although they're speaking in Vudrani. With a successful Perception check, PCs can overhear Sarpini's raspy, sibilant voice telling the acolytes, "Return quickly to Leckumgee and tell the masters what I have told you. We must act together against Kharswan." Even if the listening PC doesn't speak Vudrani, the words "Leckumgee" and "Kharswan" are recognizable as proper names. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check identifies Leckumgee as a small village south of Niswan.

## A4. Storage Room

Bolts of silk cloth and spools of silken thread fill much of this storeroom. A set of steps with wooden railings in the southeast corner leads down below ground level.

This is the lair of Sarpini the dark naga. She likes the opulence of silk and has a concealed sleeping burrow

in the northeast corner among the bolts of cloth, easily located with a DC 5 Perception check. A DC 15 Perception check allows PCs to notice a trap door in the northwest corner of the ceiling, leading up to the attic. The trap door is wedged shut from the other side and has a heavy barrel placed on it. It takes a DC 24 Strength check to force the trap door open from this side.

**Treasure:** While the mill is a front to cover the cult's more nefarious plans, it makes a tidy profit. Much of the silk it produces is stored here. In total, the bolts and sheets of silk cloth, including those used to make Sarpini's luxurious bedding, are worth a total of 2,250 gp. Sarpini stores her keys to the mill here, as well as her personal treasure: a golden tiara set with blood rubies worth 1,400 gp and several sets of jeweled earrings worth 450 gp.

## A5. Affie (CR 10)

This room is set in the cramped, slanted space between the roof and the rafters of the room below. A large, nestlike structure made from silk cloth and pieces of wood occupies the center of the room. Other furnishings include a desk and trunk against the inner wall and a barrel in the corner.

A trap door in the northwest corner of the floor leads down to **A4**, but Utkroza has wedged it shut and placed a barrel of rocks on it to prevent anyone from opening it. He simply flies up to the rafters of an adjacent room to enter.

**Creatures:** This is the dwelling place of the garuda Utkroza, leader of the Cult of the Ebon Destroyers in Niswan. He's a renegade from his aerie, an outcast from the east. In Vudrani society, Utkroza was the antithesis of a normal garuda. Even as a hatchling, it was said that he "came from a bad egg." He felt that all the earth-bound humanoids should serve and worship garudas, and that the relaxed, benevolent attitude of his brethren was the reason that garudas didn't rule entire kingdoms. After murdering a hunting expedition of human nobles that had dared to pursue an animal he had marked as prey, his life swiftly spiraled downward. Outlawed, he fled to a large city and fell in with lowlifes and criminals; there he discovered Dhalavei and became an Ebon Destroyer cultist. He relishes the opportunity to expand the cult's influence in Jalmeray and carve out a place that he alone rules. Aware that his race is extremely rare in the Inner Sea region, Utkroza rarely ventures outside unless absolutely necessary. He prefers to spend most of his time plotting up in the attic. This lets him look down on his underlings, and the attic's lack of windows reduces his longing to fly. On darker nights, he takes to the sky to feel the air rush beneath his wings.

Aware of the PCs' recent investigation into the cult's activities, Utkroza has employed a small contingent of



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cultists to act as his honor guard. Currently three such mill workers hide among the rafters with their master.

## UTKROZA

CR 9

XP 6,400

LE garuda (see page 29)

hp 115

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Utkroza casts *protection from arrows* and *mage armor* at the start of each day. When he becomes aware of a disturbance in the mill, he casts *cat's grace* and *shield* and then moves to the disturbance, staying up in the rafters above the mill's rooms.

**During Combat** He casts *haste* on himself and any allies and shoots arrows from the rafters. If enemies engage him, he retreats to either room **A1** or **A3**. He casts *haste* on his remaining allies there, then flies outside through a window or skylight to the mulberry gardens. Once outside, he fights the PCs from around 180 feet in the air, shooting down volleys of arrows. He casts *displacement* if wounded by return fire or if the PCs engage him in melee.

**Morale** Unwilling to abandon his headquarters to lesser creatures, Utkroza fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Gear** +1 shock composite longbow (+3 Str) with 40 arrows, ring of mind shielding, gold jewelry worth 750 gp, keys to the silk mill

## HONOR GUARDS (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Human rogue 5 (use the mill worker stats on page 11)

hp 46 each

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The honor guards hide among the rafters, watching for any threats against their master and awaiting his command.

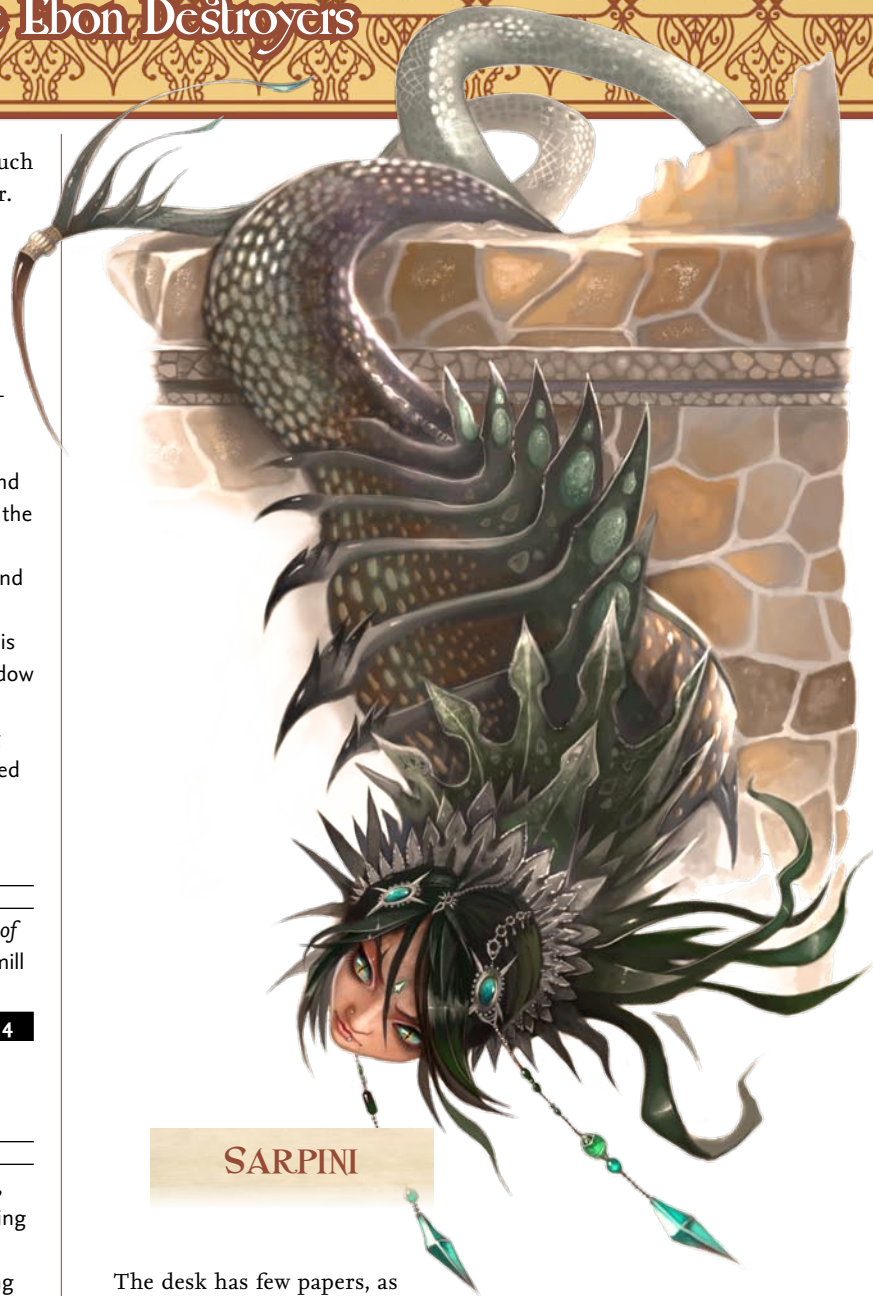
**During Combat** The honor guards move constantly, weaving through the rafters, firing their bows at anyone threatening Utkroza. They place themselves between the garuda and his attackers whenever possible to draw fire away from him.

**Morale** Fully dedicated to the cult and Utkroza, the honor guards fight to the death.

**Treasure:** In the nest are twenty masterwork arrows, masterwork artisans' tools for fletching arrows, and raw materials for over a dozen more arrows. Utkroza's claws have thoroughly shredded the silk used to make the nest, so it's worth very little.

The desk's only drawer contains quills, paper, sheets of silk, and eight intricately spiraling glass ink vials with golden lids, each holding a different color of ink. The set is worth a total of 200 gp.

The trunk contains 760 gp in mixed coinage and trade goods worth 450 gp in total.



SARPINI

The desk has few papers, as although Utkroza likes to plan on paper, he's also meticulous about burning documents after use. There's a shallow bowl full of ashes, with a candle and tinderbox nearby for this purpose. The unburned papers (written in Vudrani) consist of:

- A list of new regulations: no more sacrifices without permission; report those who openly express support for the new law banning "our most holy dark mother"; pass on any information, no matter how minor, about the thakur's palace. A footnote here reads, "Extract all we can from Raheem."
- Information about the PCs, including descriptions, which possessions detect as magical, where they're staying, and other details about them.
- A scribbled note (see handout on next page) giving an important clue to the location of the cult's headquarters in Jalmeray. A DC 30 Knowledge (geography) check



## Player Handout

*Given that our brethren from the Order of Unfathomable Darkness are groundling creatures that will never know the glory of the sky, I estimate that it will take them roughly*

*20-25 miles/day*                      *35-40 miles from village through hilly jungle*  
*3-6 miles in jungle = avg 14*                      *+12-18 +7-12 miles is 2 days travel at least*  
*3-6 miles of hills = miles/day*                      *plus 3 miles/hour is 10 hours*  
*(for 30 miles = 1 day, 2 hours) = 4 days*

*4 days to travel north to Niswan. Sarjini, slithering abomination that she is, shall send word to the Masters of the Order, requesting that they come immediately to Niswan, so that together we shall RESOLVE the situation!*

reveals that the village referred to in the note must be Leckumgee in southern Jalmeray.

## A6. Basement

Beams and floorboards form the low roof of this dank basement. There are crates and boxes piled against the walls and a desk and several sturdy chairs in the middle of the earthen floor.

The crates and boxes hold broken pieces of weaving equipment as well as parts and tools for maintaining and repairing the mill's looms.

**Development:** If the cult has kidnapped Raheem, the PCs find him here, blindfolded, gagged, and tied to a chair.

## PART 2: THE JOURNEY SOUTH

The PCs should now know the rough location of the temple headquarters, somewhere near the village of Leckumgee. Raheem requests that the PCs travel there and strike back at the cult, hoping the PCs can find the cultists' headquarters without alerting them. If too many people know of the PCs' mission, the cult may find out and vanish, only to reappear later and take vengeance against the thakur. He recommends that the PCs try to eliminate the cult in a single attack, so that the cultists have no chance to regroup. Raheem provides elephants, provisions, and a guide named **Bala** (N male human expert 3; Handle Animal +10, Survival +7) to help the PCs journey south. Bala is a short, bearded man with an easy smile and relaxed manner. He gladly defers to the PCs, as long as he's free to tend his beloved elephants. The PCs leave Niswan and travel along the dusty road south through the surrounding farmlands.

Elephants move at a speed of 40 feet, allowing those riding them to travel around 32 miles in a day on the flat

open terrain north of the Segang Jungle. The PCs can cross the wide River Sald for a silver piece each, using the services of a team of ferrymen who cheerfully sing as they row their barge across the river. Each elephant costs 5 sp to bring across, but Lord Raheem gave Bala enough money to cover such expenses.

The small fishing village of Mudaliar on the south side of the Sald provides an uneventful place to stay the night. The land south of the river is less populated and once the PCs reach the edges of the jungle, they are the only people in sight. The thickly forested and hilly jungle normally slows travel to half normal, but the character leading the group can make a DC 20 Survival check once per day to find game trails or natural paths to increase the party's overland movement to three-quarters normal.

## The Tiger's Shrine (CR 8)

The jungle opens into a clearing, where thick foliage parts to display the sky above and a cool breeze renders the air less humid than among the dense trees. A rough wooden shrine holding a wide variety of clay statuettes depicting Vudrani deities stands to one side of the clearing.

Sitrakha, a hermit and holy man, tends the shrine. He's dirty, with a scraggly beard and worn and grimy clothing. He greets the PCs in deeply accented Common and asks if they want to pray at his "most holy enshrined house of worship." The shrine itself has many Vudrani gods, including Irori and Dhalavei, all of whom have equal placing and are well tended. He asks if the PCs are in need of his wisdom, and is quite happy to answer questions, explaining that few pilgrims come to his shrine.

If the PCs ask about other travelers, Sitrakha tells them about several groups of half a dozen strangers who avoid his shrine and travel to or from the south. They wear



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hoods even in the humidity of the jungle and don't look like villagers. They have become more common over the last month. If asked about the gods in the shrine, Sitrakha knows the name and a brief description of each but little more. This may raise the PCs' suspicions, although Sitrakha makes up details if he thinks his audience won't know better, or pretends to be eccentric and absentminded. He plays up how long he has been alone in the jungle, calling himself "a poor servant of the gods, like those who tended this holy place before me, with only the holy communion of the great ones themselves for company."

He offers the PCs his blessings, and if the PCs appear interested in Dhalavei or the cultists, offers cryptic advice such as "Lanterns can shine on the darkest of nights, but only if the sacred oil is anointed upon them," and "The land will be shadowed by the blade of the black goddess, unless there are those who can sweep aside the blinding veil."

Sitrakha asks for food or a few coins in exchange for his blessings and the spiritual peace of the shrine. He also offers to paint the center of each PC's forehead with a resin that he claims can open a mystical third eye. This resin smells foul and is difficult to wash off, allowing a creature with the scent ability to detect a creature marked with it at five times the normal range, note its direction as a free action, pinpoint it when it's within 25 feet, and track it by scent with a +5 bonus on its Survival checks. The effect decreases by one range increment per day (four times normal range after 1 day, three times range after 2 days, and so on) until the creature is again at normal scent levels.

In truth, Sitrakha is an evil, flesh-eating weretiger. He plans to hunt the PCs after night falls, and the resin's smell makes it easy to track them down in the dark of night. The cult pays Sitrakha in living meals to ensure safe passage through his territory. Sitrakha knows the cultists are part of the Ebon Destroyer cult, that they worship Dhalavei, and that they have headquarters south of here. Sitrakha has little loyalty to the cult, and if captured, reveals what he knows about them if it helps him. If the PCs see through his deceptions and attack him here, he transforms into his hybrid form and flees, using his woodland stride ability to move through the thick jungle to escape.

In any event, Sitrakha tracks the PCs and tries to ambush them that evening once they make camp or as they travel in the darkness. Unless the PCs take extraordinary measures, Sitrakha's jungle skills and knowledge of the area make it difficult for the PCs to avoid him, especially if they have the resin on their foreheads. See page 304 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* for details on tracking prey with scent.

## SITRAKHA (HYBRID FORM)

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male natural weretiger ranger 7/rogue 1 (*Bestiary* 2 183)

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

As the PCs journey south, spice up their travels with additional encounters, although these don't have to be hostile. Perhaps the PCs come across a huge snake distending its jaws to swallow the remains of a wild boar, or pass an army of ants constructing a nest in an immense dead tree. Roll for encounters once per day with a 20% chance of an encounter occurring. Roll on the table below to determine the encounter's nature.

| d10  | Encounter                     | Average |                            |
|------|-------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
|      |                               | CR      | Source                     |
| 1–2  | 1 monkey swarm                | 2       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 212      |
| 3–4  | 1 advanced emperor cobra      | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 252, 292 |
| 5–6  | 1d2 massive chameleon lizards | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 194        |
| 7–8  | Landslide                     | 7       | <i>Core Rulebook</i> 429   |
| 9–10 | Dire crocodile                | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 51         |

**Landslide:** A malicious earth mephit uses its *soften earth and stone* ability to cause an avalanche of rocks and soil, and the PCs are caught in the direct path of the bury zone. The mephit flees after setting off the landslide.

**Advanced emperor cobra:** This is a venomous snake with the advanced simple template.

**Dire crocodile:** Locals call this reptilian behemoth "Mukara," believing it to be a manifestation of the divine mount of the goddess of rivers.

**Massive chameleon lizards:** Known as "kralasa" to the Vudrani. Treat these as giant frilled lizards with the grab and constrict special attacks, but without the intimidating charge special ability. They also have a +16 Stealth bonus.

**Monkey swarm:** A large troop of monkeys chatters and screeches loudly in the branches of several fruit-bearing trees, perhaps hurling rotten fruit and other unsavory things at the PCs.

Init +6; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +6

Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 95 (8 HD; 7d10+1d8+47)

Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +4

DR 10/silver

### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d6+5 plus curse of lycanthropy), 2 claws +12 (2d6+5)

Special Attacks combat style (natural weapon\*), favored enemy (humans +4, animals +2), sneak attack +1d6

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*cat's grace* (already cast)



1st—*entangle* (DC 13), *longstrider* (already cast)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Sitrakha casts *cat's grace* and *longstrider* before sneaking up and ambushing the PCs (these spells are included in his statistics).

**During Combat** Sitrakha starts by casting *entangle* to catch as many of the PCs as possible, then charges anyone unaffected by the spell, targeting humans. He uses Power Attack against lightly armored foes and Step Up to stay with an opponent.

**Morale** If reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, Sitrakha flees through the dense jungle, using his speed and woodland stride ability to outrun any pursuers. He heals himself with his wand and returns to finish off the PCs. If driven off a second time, Sitrakha licks his wounds and avoids further contact with the PCs.

**Base Statistics** Without the benefit of any spells, Sitrakha's stats are as follows: **Init** +4, **AC** 20, touch 16; **Ref** +11; **Speed** 30 ft.; **Dex** 18; **CMD** 28; –2 to all Dex-based skill checks.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Dodge, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Power Attack, Step Up, Toughness, Rending Claws\*, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Acrobatics +21 (+29 jump), Bluff +10, Climb +16, Linguistics +4, Perception +13 (+15 in jungles), Stealth +26 (+28 in jungles), Survival +13 (+15 in jungles); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics (+8 jump), +2 Perception (+4 in jungles), +4 Stealth (+6 in jungles), +2 Survival (in jungles)

**Languages** Common, Sylvan, Vudrani

**SQ** change shape (human, hybrid, and tiger; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (tigers and great cats), track +3, wild empathy +6, woodland stride, trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of fly*, *wand of cure light wounds* (15 charges); **Other Gear** leather armor, masterwork kukri (2), masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of elvenkind*, *ring of protection* +1

\* See *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

## The Village of Leekumgee (CR 8)

The steep, heavily vegetated hillside opens out onto a small village, each of its roughly twenty huts raised on tall stilts. Goats, pigs, and other animals stand tethered or in pens.

Only a few villagers speak Common, and then only haltingly, but in spite of the possible language problems, the smiling villagers use gestures and pantomime to make the PCs feel welcome. The residents happily greet the PCs and offer them a large meal, feed for their mounts, and a place to rest. If the PCs arrive in the afternoon, the villagers hospitably press the PCs to stay overnight.

The leader of the village is a middle-aged woman named Shreya who is politely insistent that the PCs enjoy the village's hospitality. Provided the PCs agree to spend the night in the village, Shreya asks each of the PCs what caste they belong to. She's somewhat shocked if the PCs say they don't know or that they have no caste. In this case, she asks further questions, such as what profession the PC follows and what their parents do. She insists that PCs of different castes can't sleep in the same hut, and unless two PCs firmly insist that they're married, she requires that PCs of different genders sleep in different huts as well. She makes several huts available so that the PCs have fitting accommodation. Shreya is shocked if the PCs insist on staying together and exclaims that things like this aren't right. The huts are 10 to 15 feet off the ground, and if the PCs ask, the villagers explain that the stilts keep out snakes and other vermin and prevent flooding during torrential rains.

There's a sinister motivation behind Shreya's seeming prudishness. The villagers are under the sway of the cult, and by splitting the PCs, she hopes to more easily eliminate them in their sleep. More than half the villagers are evil, and most are worshipers of one or more aspects of the Unexpected Rot. As Leekumgee receives few visitors, especially of the PCs' stature, the villagers assume that, in spite of whatever reason PCs gave for traveling to their village, they are here to hunt the Ebon Destroyers.

Any extra kindness by a PC, such as curing a villager of disease or donating coins to local children, results in one of the few good-aligned villagers furtively warning that PC—probably using pantomime—not to sleep and to leave the village. Suspicious PCs can make Sense Motive checks (DC 20) to get a feeling that something's wrong in the village.

During the evening meal of spicy goat curry with rice, the villagers offer the PCs a sweet, strongly alcoholic fruit drink called penj. The villagers keep the PCs' cups full in an attempt to get them drunk. If the PCs set a watch during the night, several of the villagers keep that PC company. When they are ready to strike, one of the cultists approaches the watch and motions that there's a disturbance, or that he saw something at the other end of the village. If this lures the watching PC away from the other PCs, another cultist leaps from around a corner, while the PC's villager "friends" try to quietly pin and subdue that PC. Groups of cultists simultaneously climb up to the other PCs' sleeping quarters and try to murder the visitors in their sleep. If the PCs refuse the villagers' hospitality, the villagers follow them and ambush their campsite that evening.

**Creatures:** A number of the stronger villagers have received training from the monks of the temple and have some skill at covert attacks. One of the attacking cultists is Shreya herself.



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

## VILLAGER CULTISTS (12)

CR 1

### XP 400 each

Human commoner 2/warrior 1  
LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 14 each (2d6+1d10+2)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk club +4 (1d6+2) or  
unarmed strike +4 (1d3+2)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The cultists rush the PCs and attempt to grapple and pin them, using aid another actions against stronger opponents. They joyfully perform a coup de grace on helpless or sleeping opponents.

**Morale** These cultists are fanatical and long for a glorious death serving their goddess.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4 (+6 grapple); **CMD** 15 (17 vs. grapple)

**Feats** Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike

**Skills** Bluff +3, Stealth +4

**Languages** Vudrani

**Gear** masterwork club

**Development:** Interrogating any surviving attackers reveals that they're fervent worshipers of Dhalavei and would die before betraying the cult. Using magic to aid the questioning or talking with non-cultist villagers, initially treated as Hostile because of their fears of retaliation from the rest of the village, uncovers the following information:

- The Ebon Destroyer monks live in the steep, mountainous hills to the east, less than a day's travel from the village.
- None of the villagers know where the temple is, but they all know the location of the forbidden path leading there.
- Bands of monks come and go through the village, sometimes with prisoners.
- Groups of around six monks come down about once a month to collect supplies. The last collection of supplies was a week and a half ago.
- There are three masters of the Ebon Destroyers at the temple, though none of the villagers have met them or know what they look like.

Locating the forbidden path to the temple without aid from a helpful villager requires a DC 25 Survival check. The cultists who use this path carefully cover any signs of their passage for the first half-mile from the village, after which the DC to find the path drops to 15.

As the PCs head into the hills, the path becomes narrower and more twisted, and overland movement slows to half normal. Bala offers to stay here with the elephants, partly because the elephants have to squeeze through rocky gaps in the terrain, slowing down the party, but mostly because he's afraid of the cult.

## Mass Grave (CR 9)

As the narrow path descends into a steep valley, the sickly smell of carrion overwhelms the stagnant air. A hauntingly dense ground mist floats over the thick undergrowth. In the dim light, through shadows cast by the high peaks surrounding the ravine and copious tree cover, the grisly form of a mass grave comes into view.

Many bodies are piled among the trees here. Some are partially buried in the clay soil, but most have simply been dumped here to rot. There are victims of all ages, races, and genders, though most seem to be middle-aged human men. They have one thing in common: their throats and jaws eaten away by acid. A few are recent, but judging by the festering decomposition of most of the bodies and the putrefying stench of decay, the majority of the corpses have been here for at least weeks if not months. There are just over 100 corpses in this mass grave, all victims of the cult.

**Creatures:** An eerie spirit known as a vetala haunts the grave site. A vetala is a variety of ghost known to arise if a murder victim doesn't receive the proper funerary rites performed over its remains. It sees all living creatures as conspiring with those responsible for its murder and considers any who trespass on its grave dire enemies. Evil and spitefully angry, it inhabits a host corpse, waiting until the PCs move among the corpses before commanding its zombie minions to rise up and attack.

## VETALA

CR 8

Human variant ghost expert 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)  
CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 84 (8d8+48)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** corrupting touch +7 (8d6, Fort DC 19 half)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

1/day—*animate dead*



## TACTICS

**Before Combat** The vetala has animated 16 zombies as guards.

**During Combat** The vetala inhabits a corpse to protect itself, possessing a new zombie if the PCs destroy its current host. It attacks using its withering gaze while keeping zombies between it and attackers. If the PCs destroy more than eight zombies, the vetala animates eight more. If the PCs destroy all the zombies, the vetala continues attacking with its corrupting touch.

**Morale** The vetala fights until destroyed.

## STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

**Skills** Fly +9, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +9

**SQ** corpse possession

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Corpse Possession (Su)** This functions as the malevolence ghost ability, except a vetala can only possess a corpse or zombie of the vetala's size or smaller. A mindless zombie receives no saving throw against this ability. The possessed body functions as a zombie, except that it doesn't have the staggered special quality. When the host body takes damage, the vetala also takes half damage. While possessing a body, the vetala takes damage as if it were still incorporeal: it's immune to nonmagical attacks, and damage that is neither a force effect nor from an incorporeal creature is halved again (one-quarter damage). The vetala cannot use its corrupting touch while possessing a body. The host body is under the effect of a *gentle repose* spell while the vetala possesses it.

## HUMAN ZOMBIES (16)

CR 1/2

hp 12 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

**Development:** To put the vetala to rest permanently, the PCs need to find its original body, which they can find buried under a pile of corpses after 1 hour of searching the mass grave. If the PCs saw the vetala's incorporeal form while it was not inhabiting a corpse, they may recognize its original body with a DC 25 Perception check. The vetala's original body hasn't decayed nearly as much as the ones around it. The vetala often inhabits its original body, but doesn't want it disturbed or damaged. If the PCs search the body, they discover a circular wooden holy symbol of an open palm (identifiable as representing Irori with a DC 10 Knowledge [religion] check) around its neck. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check allows a PC to recall that a specific Iroan prayer should put the spirit to rest.

**Story Award:** If the PCs permanently destroy the vetala, award them experience as if they had defeated a

CR 5 creature in addition to the experience gained for defeating it in combat.

## PART 3: THE TEMPLE OF DHALAVEI

The secret temple complex dedicated to Dhalavei serves as the headquarters of an order of monks known as the Order of Unfathomable Darkness. These Dhalavei-worshipping monks are the leaders of the Ebon Destroyers in Jalmeray. The order is an obscure, secretive discipline of Vudrani martial arts. Their fighting style utilizes stealth, deception, and misdirection to neutralize and overcome opponents. Three masters share control of this sect of the Ebon Destroyers: Deepti, a shadowdancer monk, represents the goddess's aspect of deception; Ikrimah, an ascetic wizard monk, represents the aspect of secrets; and Zaaflira, a warlike oracle monk, represents the aspect of destruction. Zaaflira is the de facto leader of the sect, but the three masters make all important decisions collectively.

The cultists have kept the shrine a secret for so long that their standing orders no longer present a well-coordinated defense. Each master prepares for intruders in his or her own area and hopes to be the one to dispatch any interlopers to show superiority over the other two, only retreating if the PCs gain the upper hand.

If the PCs attack the temple and then retreat to rest, the cult acts in response. If it is only a minor intrusion, Deepti leads a group of four acolytes to find and attack the PCs' campsite. If the PCs inflict considerable damage by defeating at least one master or more than half the acolytes, the remaining masters abandon the temple. They order any remaining acolytes to defend the temple to the death and then depart, going into hiding to rebuild the cult at a later date. The PCs may interrupt the remaining cultists as they attempt to sacrifice prisoners to gain Dhalavei's blessing before the PCs' next onslaught.

## Cliff Face

The hidden path leads to a steeply sloping cliff face on the western side of one of the tall mountains. The cliff face is 900 feet high, with the entrance to the shrine just over halfway up. Climbing the uneven cliff face requires a DC 15 Climb check, and there are several natural outcroppings along the way if the PCs want to rest. While the entrance itself isn't visible from the bottom of the cliff, the ledge is the only place on the cliff that could contain a tunnel entrance. Unless otherwise noted, all corridors in the shrine are 10 feet high.

## B1. Entranc (CR 7)

A barren ledge set into the jagged stone of the cliff face provides a magnificent view out across the rocky foothills. At



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the rear of the cavity, two basalt pillars guard the entrance to a dark, narrow opening that leads inward into the depths of the mountain. The pillars and the lintel of the entrance both have twisted runes carved into them.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check or DC 20 Linguistics check identifies the runes as Vudrani symbols describing annihilation, darkness, and the unknown, as well as verses from Dhalavei's holy texts.

**Traps:** Among the runes on each side of the entranceway are two magical traps, a *glyph of warding* and a *symbol of pain*, both set to trigger if any creatures pass through or touches the archway or pillars. All of the monks know the password for the *glyph of warding* and have the *symbol of pain* attuned to them.

## GLYPH OF WARDING TRAP

CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

### EFFECTS

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 5d8 sonic damage,

DC 18 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 5-ft. radius)

## SYMBOL OF PAIN TRAP

CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

### EFFECTS

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*symbol of pain*, -4 on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 hour, DC 21 Fortitude save negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 60-ft. radius)

**Development:** If the PCs set off the *glyph of warding*, the noise of the blast alerts the acolytes at area B2, who rush to inform the complex.

## B2. Revealing Shrine (CR 5)

Bright orange flames illuminate a sharp turn in the passage. The flames issue from the upraised claws of a carved, two-headed gargoyle statue that squats in the corner. Each head stares down a different passage.



The statue is inanimate and the flames are *continual flame* spells. There's a continuous *invisibility purge* effect (CL 5) on the statue with a 25-foot radius. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (history) check reveals that the two-headed statue depicts a mythical Vudrani creature called a sharaberunda, which has both feline and avian features; Vudrani deities occasionally manifest as this bizarre creature.

**Creatures:** Two acolytes maintain a watch in the darkened north end of the corridor at all times. If alerted to the PCs' presence, they move stealthily away to warn the rest of the temple.

#### DARKNESS ACOLYTES (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Human monk 4

hp 33 each (see page 11)

### B3. Entrance Hall (CR 9)

The southern end of the hall has a thick black curtain across it. When approached from the south, slight gaps around the edges of the curtain show a faint radiance, revealing that there's light on the other side.

A pale, magical light, radiating from the air itself, shines throughout this pillared hall. A balustraded walkway surrounds the upper floor of the two-story area. Passages lead from either side on both the upper and lower levels, as well as from entranceways at each end of the hall.

**Creatures:** When not otherwise occupied, darkness acolytes spend their time here or in the nearby refectory. There are a total of eight acolytes near or in the entrance hall (not including the two on watch in area B2), with at least two acolytes guarding the hall itself. If alerted, the acolytes hide behind pillars or in passageways until the PCs enter and reach the first set of pillars, then ambush them, leaping down from the upper story and using slow fall if necessary to mob the PCs.

#### DARKNESS ACOLYTES (8)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Human monk 4

hp 33 (see page 11)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The acolytes drink their *potions of mage armor* when they become aware of intruders (included in their statistics).

**During Combat** The acolytes use *Stunning Fist* every round, and spend a *ki* point to gain an extra attack when flurrying. They try to gang up on and grapple spellcasters.

**Morale** When over half their number falls, the acolytes flee to the fighting arena (B11).

### B4. Refectory

The refectory contains mundane goods and equipment to maintain the complex, including cooking tools and cleaning gear. A 6-inch-wide crack above the cooking fire serves as a chimney, leading up to the outside, 550 feet farther up the mountain.

### B5. Larder

This room stores food and other basic supplies. Dried meat, grains, spices, and large quantities of rice are stored here, as well as firewood and fresh water. There are enough supplies to feed a dozen people for about 2 months.

### B6. Acolyte Quarters

These austere rooms each contain a sleeping mat and a small trunk. The trunks contain spare clothes and personal belongings. The acolytes don't store any treasure here, but each trunk holds a *chit* listing the amount of wealth the owner has amassed from his victims and stored in the treasury.

### B7. Main Shrine (CR 9)

This shadowy chamber has a large, square shrine recessed into the wall opposite the entrance. From the center of the shrine, a dark, multi-armed stone idol seems to watch over the room. Deep-etched abstract designs fill the walls and ceiling. Offerings of dried flowers sit around the shrine, and the cloying scent of bitter incense hangs in the air.

The shrine alcove is 15 feet high and the main area is 20 feet high.

**Creatures:** A representation of Dhalavei, an olive-skinned beatific one named Sulukta, is a guardian for this unholy shrine to the Unexpected Rot. Sulukta is bound to the area and won't leave it, even to pursue intruders. She ensures that the faithful attend services, that there are appropriate offerings, and that regular sacrifices to Dhalavei are made. When no worshipers are present in the shrine, Sulukta spends much of her time in contemplation in the shrine alcove. Because of her oath of obligation to Dhalavei, Sulukta cannot use her ability to summon other beatific ones.

#### BEATIFIC ONE

CR 9

XP 6,400

(*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #9 82)

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

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +21

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, **touch** 20, **flat-footed** 18 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 monk, +6 natural)

**hp** 93 (11d10+33)



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**Fort** +6, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14; +2 vs. enchantment

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion, **DR** 10/good; **Immune** curses, disease, poison; **Resist** acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 20

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** mwk spear +18/+13/+8 (1d8+9/x3), mwk kukri +18 (1d4+3/18–20), mwk temple sword +18 (1d8+3) or unarmed strike +18/+13/+8 (1d10+6) or flurry of blows +16/+16/+11/+11/+6 (1d10+6)

**Special Attacks** continuous barrage, flurry of blows, stunning fist (11/day, DC 22, fatigued, sickened)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +10)

At will—*disguise self*, *feather fall*, *see invisibility*, *ventriloquism*  
3/day—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *blur*, *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16), *levitate*, *magic weapon*

1/day—*dimension door*, *hold person* (DC 17), *summon* (level 3, 1 beatific one, 40%)

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Sulukta casts *blur* on herself and *magic weapon* on her weapons when she becomes aware of interlopers (not included in her statistics).

**During Combat** Sulukta holds her opponents in disdain. She trips and disarms foes, then batters them with unarmed strikes. She enjoys disarming foes and using their own weapons against them.

**Morale** Sworn to protect the shrine, Sulukta fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +17 (+19 disarm, grapple, trip); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. disarm, grapple, trip)

**Feats** Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Snatch Arrows, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

**Skills** Acrobatics +21 (+33 jump), Appraise +17, Climb +20, Escape Artist +21, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +21, Perform (dance) +15, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +21

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Infernal, Vudrani; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** fast movement, monk qualities, still mind

**Gear** masterwork kukri, masterwork spear, masterwork temple sword

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Continuous Barrage (Ex)** If a beatific one hits with the last attack of its flurry of blows, it may make an additional attack at a –2 penalty. If this attack hits, the beatific one may continue to make additional attacks, with a cumulative –2 penalty for each subsequent attack (–4 for the second attack, –6 for the third, and so on). If any attack misses, the barrage ends.

**Flurry of Blows (Ex)** A beatific one can make a flurry of blows as per the monk ability. It may use this ability whenever it has at least two of its six hands free or is equipped with a special monk weapon.

**Monk Qualities** A beatific one emulates many of the strengths of the monk character class. On top of its racial abilities, a beatific one receives the AC bonus, bonus feats, speed bonus, unarmed damage, and weapon proficiencies of a monk whose level is equal to its Hit Dice, along with the flurry of blows, improved evasion, and still mind abilities. All these benefits are included in the statistics above.

**Treasure:** There are numerous offerings of food, incense, perfumes, fine feminine garments, poetry scrolls, and jewelry in the rear of the shrine worth a total of 400 gp. The first person to touch these offerings without saying a prayer to Dhalavei must make a DC 19 Will save or become shaken for the next 24 hours. Sufferers of this curse feel the idol's awareness focus upon them, filling them with nameless dread. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. Additionally, anyone who touches or otherwise defiles the statue of Dhalavei also triggers this curse.

## B8. Web of Secrets (EL 11)

The walls of this long, sinuous passage are rounded and smooth, and a DC 26 Knowledge (arcana) check allows the PCs to recognize that the tunnel was created using *disintegrate* spells. The layout of the web's passages forms an arcane symbol from above. If PCs are mapping the compound, they may look at the web once they have completely traversed it and attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check to interpret it as an arcane symbol representing the mysterious unknown.

**Creatures:** The Web of Secrets is the domain of Ikrimah, the Master of Mysteries. Ikrimah worships Dhalavei's aspect of secretive knowledge and seeks to discover and unlock the hidden principles of reality. Ikrimah creates magic items for the cult, but is an enigmatic loner, only briefly leaving his web once a week to communicate with the other masters.

There are three permanent silent *alarm* spells set throughout the labyrinth that mentally alert Ikrimah to intruders. Many other surfaces in the web have *magic mouth* or *arcane mark* cast on them, to mislead those using *detect magic* spells. The labyrinth serves as a means to delay the arrival of intruders, giving Ikrimah time to cast his collection of enhancement spells. Ikrimah is a reclusive individual; the other monks never disturb him except in extreme emergencies. If an *alarm* spell triggers, Ikrimah knows that enemies are close and prepares for battle as described below.

If the third *alarm* triggers before he has finished preparing, Ikrimah casts *lesser globe of invulnerability* and *resilient sphere* and continues casting his enhancement spells. When prepared, Ikrimah dismisses the globe and



sphere and fights, or if the PCs haven't arrived yet, he hunts them down in the web.

## IKRIMAH

CR 11

**XP 12,800**

Male human monk 1/transmuter 11

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +21

### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 19, flat-footed 28 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +4 shield, +4 Wis)

**hp** 121 (12 HD; 1d8+11d6+74)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +17

**Defensive Abilities** *displacement* (50% miss chance), *mirror image* (5 images); **DR** 10/adamantine (110 points), 10/magic vs. ranged weapons (100 points); **Immune** fire (*protection from energy*, 120 points); **Resist** electricity 30 (*resist energy*)

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft., fly 70 ft. (average)

**Melee** unarmed strike +21/+21/+16/+11 (1d6+6) or flurry of blows +19/+19/+19/+16/+11 (1d6+6)

**Special Attacks** stunning fist (3/day, DC 20)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +17)

At will—change shape (*beast shape II/elemental body I*, 11 rounds/day)

9/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+5 bludgeoning)

**Transmuter Spells Prepared** (CL 11th; concentration +17)

6th—*disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*, *transformation\**

5th—*overland flight\**, *telekinesis*, *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th—*dimension door*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *mnemonic enhancer*, *resilient sphere*, *stoneskin\**

3rd—*displacement\**, *greater magic weapon\**, *haste\**, *heroism\**, *protection from energy\**

2nd—*alter self\**, *blur\**, *false life\**, *mirror image\**, *owl's wisdom\**, *protection from arrows\**, *resist energy\**

1st—*chill touch* (DC 17), *expeditious retreat\**, *mage armor\**, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good\**, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield\**

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*

\* Already cast.

**Opposition Schools** Divination, Enchantment

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ikrimah casts *false life*, *greater magic weapon* (unarmed strike), *mage armor*, *overland flight*, and *protection from arrows* on himself at the start of each day. When an *alarm* spell triggers, Ikrimah casts spells on himself in this order: *protection from energy* (fire), *resist energy* (electricity), *heroism*, *stoneskin*, *blur*, *alter self*, *mirror image*, *owl's wisdom*, *expeditious retreat*, *protection from good*, *shield*, *displacement*, *haste*, and *transformation*. (All are included in his statistics.)

**During Combat** Ikrimah uses smokesticks to cloud the

area as he engages the PCs, using his *Blind-Fight* feat to gain a tactical edge. He stays in the air to prevent the PCs from surrounding him and attacks enemy spellcasters first.

**Morale** Ikrimah's *contingency* spell triggers if he drops below 30 hit points, turning him invisible. However, Ikrimah can't cast spells while under the effects of a *transformation* spell, so he might need to lurk invisibly until it expires before casting *dimension door* to retreat to the fighting arena (**B12**).

**Base Statistics** Without any spells affecting him, Ikrimah has the following statistics: **Init** +4; **AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14; **hp** 82; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +13; **Melee** unarmed strike +8 (1d6+3), stunning fist (3/day, DC 18); **Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Wis** 14; **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 22, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 35

**Feats** *Blind-Fight*, *Brew Potion*, *Combat Casting*, *Craft Magic Arms and Armor*, *Craft Wondrous Item*, *Defensive Combat Training*, *Deflect Arrows*, *Improved Initiative*, *Improved Unarmed Strike*, *Power Attack*, *Scribe Scroll*, *Stunning Fist*, *Toughness*

**Skills** *Acrobatics* +19 (+31 jump), *Escape Artist* +19, *Fly* +24, *Knowledge (arcana)* +23, *Knowledge (engineering)* +18, *Knowledge (history)* +18, *Perception* +21, *Spellcraft* +23, *Stealth* +19.

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Kelish, Osiriani, Tien, Vudrani

**SQ** *arcane bond (ring of protection +2)*, *contingency*, *physical enhancement* +3

**Combat Gear** *potion of bear's endurance*, *potions of bull's strength* (2), *potions of cat's grace* (2), *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *scroll of greater dispel magic*, *scroll of teleport*, *wand of scorching ray* (15 charges), 4 smokesticks;

**Other Gear** *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2 (*Escape Artist*), *ring of counterspells (dispel magic)*, *ring of protection* +2 (bonded item, nonfunctional for anyone but Ikrimah), *contingency statue* (worth 1,500 gp), *diamond dust* worth 750 gp (for *stoneskin* spells), *spell component pouch*, *spellbook* (contains all prepared spells plus: o—all; 1st—*alarm*, *disguise self*; 2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *continual flame*, *darkvision*, *eagle's splendor*, *fox's cunning*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *magic mouth*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *spider climb*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball*, *gaseous form*, 5th—*permanency*, *symbol of pain*; 6th—*greater dispel magic*, *permanent image*)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Contingency** If Ikrimah drops to 30 hit points or fewer, an *invisibility* spell activates on him.

**Permanent Spells** Ikrimah benefits from the effects of permanent *darkvision* and *see invisibility* spells.



## B9. Center of the Web

This tetrahedral chamber possesses a single entrance at one of the three base corners. Red light bathes the area, causing the polished walls to gleam. Around the room's edges, squat benches and low shelves fill the cramped space between the floor and the steeply sloping walls. The room's center is clear and has a spiraling circular design etched into the floor.

Although the spiraling design in the floor radiates faint abjuration magic, it is merely ornamental. The tetrahedron's upper point is 47 feet above the floor.

**Creatures:** If Ikrimah is here and has cast *resilient sphere*, he hovers in its center cross-legged, weaving his arms in esoteric patterns as his glowing eyes bore into the PCs with deadly intent.

**Treasure:** The benches and tables hold alchemical equipment, strange arcane paraphernalia, and rare spell components worth 450 gp. There are also three *potions of mage armor*, five smokesticks, four tanglefoot bags, and two everburning torches.

## B10. Grand Training Hall (CR 11)

A soft, reed floor fills this large, high-ceilinged stone hall; a gaping pit centered around a series of small platforms drops into darkness in the room's middle. Target boards line the walls, and training dummies are spread around the room.

*Continual flame* spells illuminate the hall's edges, leaving the middle of the central area in shadow. The walls are smooth stone (DC 30 Climb checks to scale) and rise to the ceiling 70 feet above the hall's floor. A variety of weapons rest embedded in training dummies or set against the walls. Most are ranged weapons that the monks use for training purposes; none are masterwork or magical.

The monks practice acrobatic maneuvers atop the series of pillars in the middle of the pit, the tops of which are level with the room's floor. The walls of the 40-foot pit are made of the same smooth stone as the rest of the training hall, with a single rope ladder in the northeast corner. In the center of the pit's floor, an even deeper hole descends another 60 feet. Twenty feet down this narrow hole, a net stretches to catch anyone falling down it. Level with the net, a hidden trapdoor leads to a crawlspace, which in turn gives access to the fighting arena in area B11.

**Creatures:** Deepti is the master in charge of the training area, and she confronts the PCs here. She wears dark gray wrappings and a scarf tied over her hair. A dark gem glints on her forehead, and she bears numerous sharp metal rings at her belt and around her wrists. If she hears the sound of the

PCs approaching, she jumps to the top of a pillar near the pit's center and uses her *hide in plain sight* ability within the dim light, readying a chakram for when the PCs enter the room.

She fights from the pillar tops in the central pit, making spring attacks against foes near the edge, jumping from a pillar, attacking, and leaping away. It requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check to stand atop a pillar (DC 20 if moving at more than half speed). Deepti keeps away from simple melee combat with the PCs, using stealth and ranged weapons to weaken and confuse her foes.



IKRIMAH

If Deepti fears defeat, she fakes a fall into the deep hole in the center of the area, using her slow fall ability to avoid death. The hidden net breaks her fall, and she sneaks away using the secret trapdoor (DC 25 Perception check to find), removing the net to mislead her foes. The small passage snakes toward the fighting arena (area B11) and is only 3 feet wide by 3 feet tall. A dummy of a robbed body lies at the narrow hole's bottom.

## DEEPTI

CR 11

**XP 12,800**

Female human fighter 5/monk 6/shadowdancer 1

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +16

### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 19, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +6

Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +1 Wis)

**hp** 118 (5d10+7d8+54)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8; +2 vs. enchantment, +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, evasion; **Immune** disease

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike +16/+11 (1d8+3) or

flurry of blows +16/+16/+11/+6 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** +1 *flaming bracelet chakram* +18/+13 (1d2+6 plus 1d6 fire) or

flurry of +1 *flaming bracelet chakram* +18/+18/+13/+8 (1d2+6 plus 1d6 fire)

**Special Attacks** stunning fist (7/day, DC 17, fatigued)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Deepti drinks a *potion of mage armor* when she becomes aware of intruders. When she hears the PCs nearby, she drinks her *potion of bear's endurance*. (Already included in her statistics.)

**During Combat** Deepti stays at range and either pelts the PCs with chakrams or uses Spring Attack and then leaps away, luring the PCs into chasing her onto the narrow pillars above the pit. She takes advantage of any shadows in the room, using her *slippers of spider climbing* to move along the wall of the pit, in and out of shadows cast by the columns, should PCs illuminate the room beyond its initial levels.

**Morale** If reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, Deepti fakes a fall into the deep pit in the training hall's center. Using her slow fall ability and a conveniently placed net, she makes her escape via the hidden tunnel to the fighting arena (B11).

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 22, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Deadly Aim, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Far Shot, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bracelet chakram),

Weapon Specialization (bracelet chakram)

**Skills** Acrobatics +21 (+35 jump), Climb +25, Perception +16, Perform (dance) +6, Stealth +21

**Languages** Vudrani

**SQ** armor training 1, fast movement, hide in plain sight, high jump, *ki* pool (4 points, magic), maneuver training, purity of body, slow fall 30 ft., still mind, weapon training (monk +1)

**Combat Gear** *potion of bear's endurance*, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potions of mage armor* (2), tanglefoot bags (3); **Other Gear** +1 *flaming bracelet chakrams* (40), masterwork cold iron bracelet chakrams (20), *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *slippers of spider climbing*, *third eye of midnight* (the gem of inky blackness on Deepti's brow, functions as *goggles of night*)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Permanent Spells** Deepti benefits from the effects of a permanent *resistance* spell.

**Bracelet Chakrams** These are flat metal rings with a highly sharpened outer edge, small enough to wear or carry on the forearm. They have the same statistics as shuriken.

**Treasure:** The training weapons in the Grand Training Hall are worth a total of 500 gp, but are cumbersome and weigh 50 pounds.

## B11. Fighting' Arcna (CR 10)

Cold white light pours down from the ceiling, illuminating a raised platform in the center of the area. The room is two stories high, with a series of balconies running around the upper level, overlooking the platform. Two narrow walkways cross above the center of the platform on the second story. Stone pillars positioned around the lower level support the balcony and walkways. To each side at the rear of the chamber, steep steps ascend to the upper level.

Unlike the Grand Training Hall in area B10, the fighting arena hosts ritual tournaments and formal duels instead of mere practice. The monks sometimes give prisoners an unlikely chance to avoid sacrifice by winning a challenge of hand-to-hand combat.

**Creatures:** The cult's spiritual guide, Zaafera, the Master of Black Destruction, resides here. Zaafera worships Dhalavei's aspect of destruction and ordered annihilation of all things. A statuesque woman with a charcoal dot on her forehead, she wears a fitted black sari and veil, set off by an intricately jeweled nose ring.

Zaafera and any other surviving monks and masters make a stand against invaders here. If she has time, Zaafera heals those wounded in previous battles. If any acolytes retreat here, Zaafera has them scout



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

the passage and report the PCs' approach, hopefully granting her enough time to prepare for their arrival. If she's unaware of intruders in the temple, Zaafera is here alone, meditating in prayer or practicing intricate combat drills on the central platform.

Zaafera waits on the upper level opposite the entrance doorway and attempts to parley with the PCs. She steps forward on the balcony, stares down at the PCs, and demands to know what they want. Any other surviving cultists silently move to stand beside her. If the PCs are willing to talk, she removes her veil, revealing her striking looks, and negotiates.

She describes how the glorious cult of the Ebon Destroyers has existed since the Age of Darkness, the pervasive power that the cult possesses throughout Vudra, and how all attempts to eliminate it have failed. She devotedly explains the glorious nature of Dhalavei as the dark mother who slays those who would harm her protected chosen, and offers the PCs valued places as cult members.

Assuming the PCs decline, she proposes to resolve the situation with a duel between herself and one of the PCs. Zaafera carefully negotiates the duel's conditions and the penalties for defeat, as she intends to honor its terms. However, this doesn't bind the other masters to Zaafera's agreement.

Zaafera believes a duel should come down to the strengths of the combatants, and wants the following. Both duelists must fight on the dueling platform and neither may voluntarily leave it. Neither duelist is to receive aid or outside interference during the duel. The duelists cannot have others cast spells or other magic on them before combat. She's even prepared to duel without any enhancement spells at all, provided her opponent is as well. If the duelists agree to limited or no magic, she uses *detect magic* on her opponent before the duel, and if Ikrimah is here, she quietly orders him to position himself in the center of the walkways above the platform and cast *globe of invulnerability* when the duel starts. This suppresses spells of 4th-level or lower in the center of the platform, preventing most magical aid during a no-magic duel.

Zaafera obeys the exact wording of the agreement during the duel and orders any other monks not to interfere. She isn't above pushing the agreement to its limits, however, and if she can gain an advantage without violating the terms of the duel, she does so. For example, if the rules call for both duelists to be on the platform before the duel can begin, she happily uses *air*



DEEPTI

*walk* to charge her opponent as soon as he climbs onto the platform, before he's had a chance to ready himself for combat.

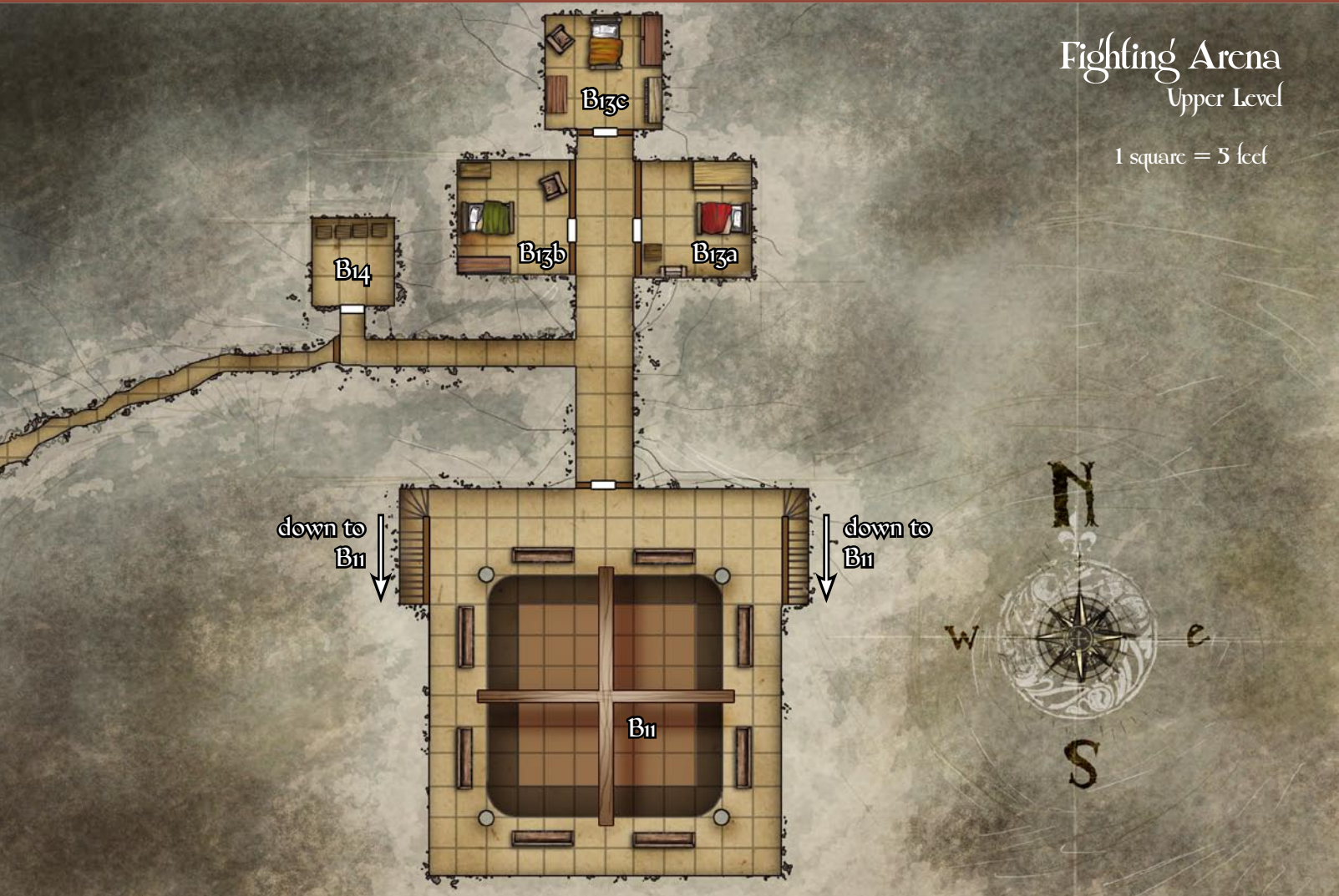
If the PCs break the rules of the duel, Zaafera calls on any other monks to fight, and if Ikrimah is here, he casts a *wall of force* between the two duelists and the other PCs to give Zaafera a chance to slay the cheat.

If the PCs refuse to duel or attack straightaway, Zaafera fights, marshaling her remaining allies to improve the odds. If she has any acolytes with her, she orders them to stay close so that she can fight without giving the PCs a chance to flank her. If Ikrimah is here, he casts *telekinesis* and performs combat maneuvers on opposing warriors or uses his *wand of scorching ray*. In melee, he combines *chill touch* with flurries of unarmed strikes. If Deepti is here, she throws chakrams or uses Spring Attack, employing her slippers to move up a wall or pillar. If needed, Zaafera casts *deeper darkness* to aid the other masters.



## Fighting Arena Upper Level

1 square = 5 feet



### ZAAFIRA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human monk 2/oracle 9 (*Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +18

#### DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 19, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +4 Wis)

hp 106 (11 HD; 11d8+53)

Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +14

Defensive Abilities evasion

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *temple sword*\* +16/+11 (1d8+11/17–20) or  
flurry of blows with +2 *temple sword* +15/+15/+10 (1d8+8/17–20)

**Special Attacks** flurry of blows, stunning fist (4/day, DC 19)

**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 9th; concentration +11)

4th (4/day; 2 cast)—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 16), *freedom of movement*, *wall of fire*

3rd (6/day; 4 cast)—*cure serious wounds*, *deeper darkness*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 15), *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against good*, *magic vestment*

2nd (7/day; 1 cast)—*aid*, *align weapon*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *fog cloud*, *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 14), *owl's wisdom*

1st (7/day)—*bles*, *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *endure elements*, *enlarge person*, *inflict light wounds* (DC 13), *protection from good*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *guidance*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

#### Mystery Battle

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** At the start of each day, Zaaifira casts extended *magic vestment* on her robes. When she hears of intruders in the temple, she drinks her *potion of mage armor* and casts *air walk*, *freedom of movement*, and *magic circle against good*. If warned that the PCs are approaching,



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers

Zaafira casts extended *shield of faith*, extended *bull's strength*, extended *owl's wisdom*, and extended *bear's endurance* on herself, in that order. (All are included in her statistics). Right before combat, Zaafira casts extended *divine favor*, *aid*, and *enlarge person* on herself in that order (not included in her statistics).

**During Combat** Zaafira uses her surprising charge ability to gain an unexpected flurry attack or to make a full attack and then move back to escape retaliation. Each round, she makes a Stunning Fist attack through her sword and attempts to trip opponents.

**Morale** If fairly defeated in a duel, Zaafira complies with its terms—including surrendering herself. Otherwise, she fights to the death to defend the temple.

**Base Statistics** Without the benefit of any spells except *magic vestment*, Zaafira has the following statistics: **AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; **Melee** +2 temple sword +14/+19 (1d8+8/19–20); **Str** 18, **Con** 12, **Wis** 14; **CMB** +11 (+16 trip); **CMD** 25 (27 vs. trip); **Perception** +16.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +13 (+18 trip); **CMD** 32 (34 vs. trip)

**Feats** Asura Stun, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Extend Spell, Extra Revelation\*, Improved Critical (temple sword), Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lunge, Power Attack, Step Up, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Focus (temple sword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +18, Spellcraft +13

**Languages** Common, Vudrani

**SQ** oracle's curse (haunted), revelations (maneuver mastery, surprising charge, weapon mastery)

**Combat Gear** *potions of mage armor* (2), *wand of cure light wounds* (40 charges); **Other Gear** +2 temple sword, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, jeweled nose ring worth 250 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Feats** Zaafira's Asura Stun feat allows her to use Stunning Fist when attacking with special monk weapons, as well as when making unarmed strikes. (See Cornugon Stun on page 26 of *Cheliax, Empire of Devils*.)

**Permanent Spells** Zaafira benefits from the effects of a permanent *resistance* spell.

\* See *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

## B12. Prisoners' Cell

A smooth shaft drops 20 feet before opening out into a filthy, 20-foot-tall oubliette. The cultists store prisoners here until an auspicious time for sacrifice arrives. The latch and bolt that hold the grating closed are out of reach for normal humanoids from below the grating. The rope in the corner is 60 feet long and the cultists use it to lower or pull out prisoners.

There are three prisoners in the cell. Two are caravan guards named **Samar** and **Haljit** (both LG male human warriors 2) from northern Jalmeray. If freed, they follow the PCs' orders and try to keep out of danger. The cultists kept the pair in a drugged stupor while bringing them here, and they know nothing about the temple beyond the oubliette.

The third prisoner is an acolyte of peace named **Jalissa** (NG female aasimar adept 6). Jalissa has sworn a sacred vow of nonviolence, preventing her from harming any creature. The monks that ambushed Jalissa's pilgrim companions were surprised at her lack of resistance and recognized that she would make a special sacrifice to Dhalavei.

## ZAAFIRA





## PADMA BLOSSOM

**Aura** faint abjuration and enchantment;

CL 3rd

**Slot** none; **Weight** —; **Price** 8,000 gp

### DESCRIPTION

This perfect lotus flower formed from pink jade offers purity of mind and spiritual calm. While grasped, the blossom grants its holder a +3 competence bonus on concentration checks and suppresses the following on its holder: morale bonuses, fear effects, and the confused, dazed, or stunned conditions. Twice per day, the bearer can cast *calm emotions*.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *calm emotions*, *remove fear*, **Cost** 4,000 gp



**Treasure:** Jalissa rewards her saviors with a magical *padma blossom*, on which she was able to cast *magic aura* and which she concealed before her capture.

## B13. Masters' Quarters

All three masters' quarters are furnished similarly, with sumptuous, finely crafted teak furniture and bedding of fine silk.

**Zaafira's Quarters (B13a):** The room has a dressing table with a large mirror, and there are many dresses and saris in neat rows in two large wooden wardrobes.

**Deepti's Quarters (B13b):** A noticeable lack of lamps or other lighting and a well-used target board on one wall hints at the owner of this room.

**Ikrimah's Quarters (B13c):** A thin layer of dust covers everything here. An empty bookshelf sitting in the corner is the only personal feature of the room. Ikrimah never sleeps here, preferring to use a sleeping mat in the Web of Secrets.

**Treasure:** The 10 finest outfits of clothing in Zaafira's quarters are worth 550 gp in total. In a drawer in Deepti's quarters, there's a purse containing onyx and jet gemstones (with a total value of 450 gp). Just inside the door to Ikrimah's room on a side table is the key to the treasury.

## B14. Treasury

The locked door to this room has reinforced iron bindings (hardness 8, hp 40, Break DC 25). The key to the treasury is in Ikrimah's quarters, or a DC 35 Disable Device check can pick the lock. The secret door nearby is well hidden (DC 35 Perception check to find) and the narrow passage beyond leads to the secret tunnel in the Training Hall.

**Treasure:** An open lacquered case contains 12 *potions of cure light wounds* and 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*. A closed iron strongbox with the key in the lock has leather bags heaped inside, each holding 100 coins. In total, the bags contain 4,800 gp and 1,200 sp; a smaller pouch contains 63 gp and 45 sp. More than half the coins are Vudrani in origin and depict strange deities, geography, and monuments on their intricately minted faces. An ornately carved mahogany box holds an *eversmoking bottle*, two pots of *marvelous pigments*, and a *rod of metal and mineral detection*. There's also a velvet pouch containing 850 gp worth of mixed gemstones.

The last chest contains papers—detailed accounts of the cult's finances and activities in Jalmeray. There are plans for well-coordinated raids on caravans and shipping, an inventory of sacrifices, and records of contacts in Jalmeray and other countries in the Inner Sea region that supply information or fence goods for the cult. Taking these papers to the thakur proves invaluable in stamping out any remaining traces of the cult in Jalmeray. The papers also hint at cult activity in other countries. While there's nothing that could incriminate specific individuals, these hints could easily lead to other adventures.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the threat from the Ebon Destroyers eliminated, Thakur Kharswan rewards the PCs profusely. Wealth, fantastic objects, and exceptional pets are all available; even offers of a spouse from the thakur's household are possible. Kharswan treats the PCs as honored guests at the palace, and each day showers them with gifts. Each PC receives treasures worth a total of approximately 3,000 gp, tailored to suit the PC, over a period of 2 weeks. The blessing of Raheem and other Maurya-Rahm can secure a candidate's entry into Jalmeray's greatest monasteries. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Vudrani people are great storytellers, and whispered rumors of the PCs' heroic deeds spread throughout Vudrani communities around the Inner Sea, presenting many opportunities and possibilities for adventure in the future.

While the cult's power is broken in Jalmeray, it still exists in many parts of the world, and Dhalavei's faithful in hidden sects elsewhere around the Inner Sea may seek vengeance against the PCs.

If the PCs were completely successful in eradicating the Ebon Destroyers, other governments might ask the PCs to help remove the malignant influence of similar evil cults from their region. The PCs might even gain the opportunity to travel and see the Impossible Kingdoms of Vudra firsthand!



## APPENDIX 1: NEW MONSTER

### Garuda

This winged creature has clawed hands and bird's talons. Large, glinting eyes and a serrated beak dominate its avian face. Its feathers display shadings of rusty red and deep green. Its torso is a golden tan, and it wears loose robes accented by fine jewelry.

**GARUDA** CR 9

XP 6,400

CG Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 115 (11d10+55)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

**DR** 10/evil or magic; **SR** 21

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +16 (1d6+3), 2 claws +16 (1d4+3), 2 talons +16 (1d4+3), 2 wings +11 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** +1 shock composite longbow +17/+12/+7 (1d8+4/x3 plus 1d6 electricity)

**Special Attacks** hatred, swooping pounce, talon or wing

**Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *haste*

2nd (7/day)—*cat's grace*, *protection from arrows*, see *invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *true strike*

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *message*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 21, **Con** 20, **Int** 15,

**Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Manyshot, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Fly +23, Intimidate +21, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +19, Survival +16; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Intimidate, +4 Perception, +4 Sense Motive

**Languages** Common, Garuda, Vudrani

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** tropical hills and mountains

**Organization** solitary, pair, or aerie (3–6)

**Treasure** double (+1 shock composite longbow [+3 Str])

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

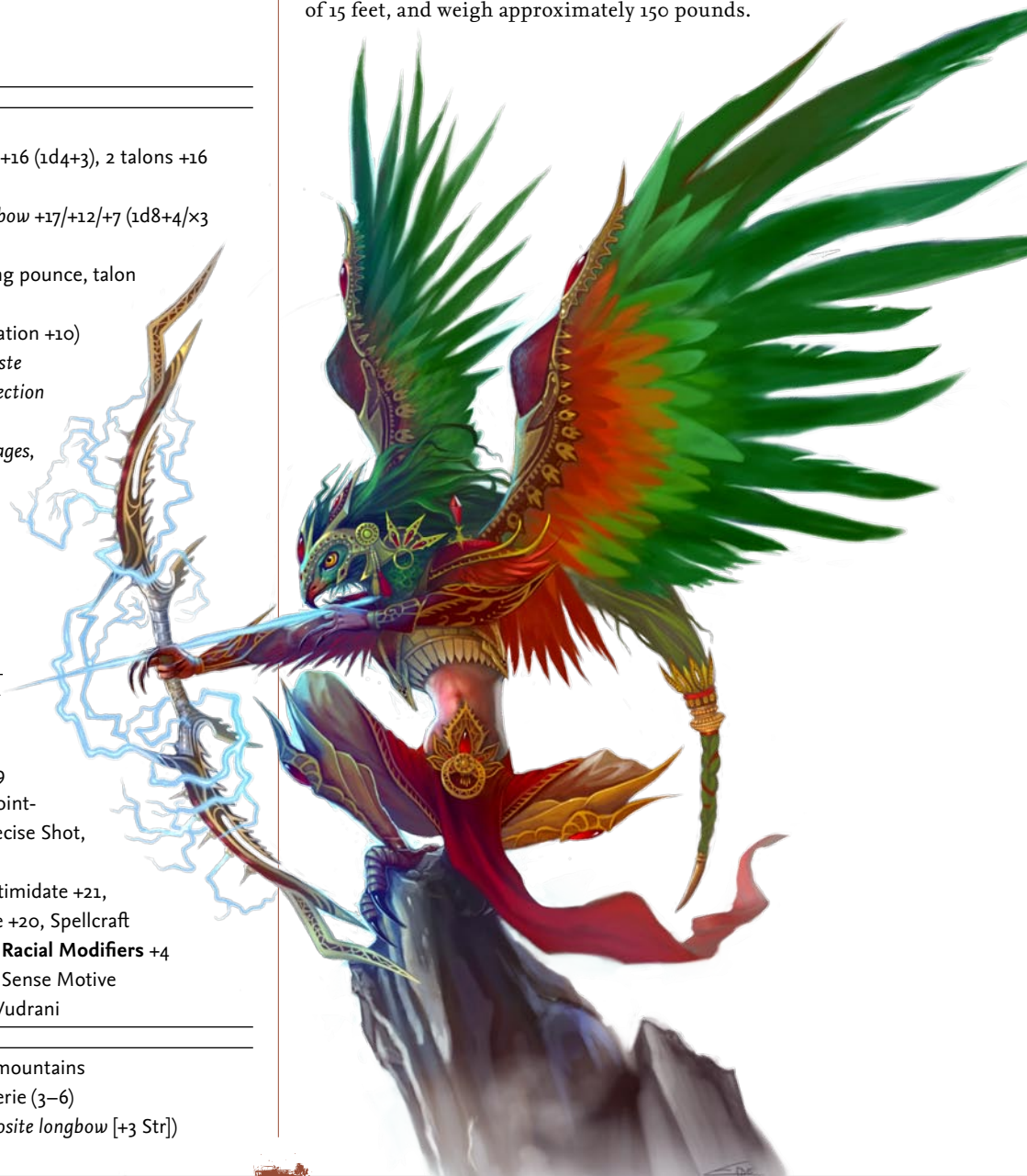
**Hatred (Ex)** Garudas receive a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against nagas and other serpentine aberrations.

**Swooping Pounce (Ex)** When a garuda makes a diving aerial charge, it can make a full attack with its natural weapons.

**Talon or Wing (Ex)** A garuda cannot use its wing attacks while flying, and cannot use its talon attacks while using its legs to stand.

Garudas are noble, birdlike creatures inhabiting rugged hills. While they remain detached from humanoid society, they are impetuous and gallant, often serving as protectors of nearby communities.

Most garudas stand around 6 feet tall with a wingspan of 15 feet, and weigh approximately 150 pounds.





## APPENDIX 2: NISWAN

Dazzling gem of the kingdom of Jalmeray, Niswan exemplifies why those of the Inner Sea consider Jalmeray to be the Kingdom of the Impossible. Built around a small harbor of considerable natural beauty on the west coast of Jalmeray, the city is breathtaking when beheld from the Obari Ocean beyond the harbor's mouth. Vibrantly colorful, with silk banners flying from seemingly every rooftop, the city's twisting red-stone roads wind their way past many-tiered edifices, rising to a massive, intricately detailed palace of marble and gold that rests atop the highest prominence.

### NISWAN

N Large City

**Corruption** +2; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +4; **Law** +1; **Lore** +4; **Society** +5

**Qualities** Academic, Insular, Prosperous, Rumormongering  
Citizens, Tourist Attraction

**Danger** +10

### POPULACE

**Government** council

**Population** 10,300 (9,850 humans, 130 dwarves, 100 gnomes, 90 elves, 80 halflings, 50 other)

### Notable NPCs

**Grand Master of Untwisting Iron Rajni Ayasa** (LN female human monk 11)

**Keeper of the Temple Mannan Villauta** (LG male human cleric of Irori 11)

**Favored member of the Maurya-Rahm Lord Raheem Pansidar** (NG male human aristocrat 7)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 8th

**Minor Items** 4d4 (*amulet of mighty fists* [shock], *decanter of endless water*, *elemental gem*, *flute of charming* [as *harp of charming*], *gloves of arrow snaring*, *helm of comprehend languages and read magic*, *incense of meditation*, *rope of climbing*, *sandals of levitation* [as *boots of levitation*]);

**Medium Items** 3d4 (+3 *kukri*, *figurine of wondrous power* [marble elephant], *gem of brightness*, *lesser strand of prayer beads*, *monk's robe*, *rod of the python*, *staff of swarming insects*); **Major Items** 2d4 (*amulet of proof against detection and location*, *gem of seeing*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +6, *robe of stars*, *scarab of protection*)

## The Palace and the Heights

The thakur's palace is a sublime masterpiece boasting elemental servants and jade fountains that circulate fine wine. The upper slopes around the palace are home to a lavish landscape of sumptuous residences for high-caste families and influential members of the Maurya-Rahm. Many warriors reside in the Heights as well, either serving as guards for the wealthy inhabitants of

the district or employed as elite soldiers at the thakur's grand palace.

Clinging to the steep seaside cliffs below the Heights are the tiny huts of cliffside fishers. These hardworking, low-caste folk endure damp, confining conditions, proudly dragging their small boats up and down the treacherous slopes each morning and night.

## Religion and Scholarship

The city's quiet majesty is most evident in the gold-inlaid temples and domed shrines of the High-Holy District, where priests, mystics, and prophets worship Vudran gods unknown elsewhere in the Inner Sea region. The Rahthanam Shrine is the largest temple here, built for the veneration of hundreds of deities in the many small prayer sanctums inside.

Niswan has an academic history that intertwines with spiritual devotion. Copies of religious texts have always been in high demand, and Niswan's Grand Chronicler's Circle grew from the Vudrani citizens' need for written guidance in the complexities of their faith and the proper conduct required to attain enlightenment. The streets surrounding Niswan's largest library house scribes, translation services, manuscript storage, and shops selling finished scrolls and books.

Adjoining both the Grand Chronicler's Circle and the High-Holy District is the Maurya-Rahm Ward, where the thakur's many advisors and administrators live and work. On the western road out of Niswan are the Houses of Perfection, testing grounds for Jalmeray's three greatest monastic orders. Candidates undergo extraordinary trials here to obtain admittance to these prestigious schools; those who fail but still display great ability may be accepted into lesser schools scattered throughout Jalmeray.

## Business and Economy

The Commerce District is a bustling jumble of haggling merchants and intriguing goods, as well as lodging and entertainment for those here to trade. Niswan's Harbor District is home to much of the city's populace and industry; craftsmen and artisans here use traditional techniques mastered centuries ago by their ancestors. Much of Katapesh's spice trade passes through Niswan, and precious cargo from Vudra and Tian Xia is bartered here before being sold onward to ports throughout the Inner Sea.

Behind the market and the Harbor District are terraced gardens on the sloping hillside. These gardens supply much of Niswan's primarily vegetarian population with fresh produce. Surakpor is the warehouse quarter, used to securely store bulky trade goods before sale or shipment elsewhere. The Low-



# Cult of the Ebon Destroyers



Caste District is a crowded hodgepodge of crooked streets, home to farmers and those who perform jobs deemed too impure for other castes.

## City Features

Four springs around the city flow through carved channels and provide ample water for bathing and ritual cleansing, irrigation, and drinking. Ritually immersing oneself in the sacred waters from the High-Holy District's spring is a tradition that most citizens of Niswan observe annually.

Although occupied by the Arclords of Nex during the Vudrani absence from the isle, no sign of Nexian influence remains in Niswan. The only symbols of that distant time are the colossal Statues of Concordance, two enormous stone figures seated on massive thrones depicting Maharajah Khiben-Sald and the Archmage Nex.

## Life in Niswan

Hospitality in Niswan is paramount. In Vudrani culture, it is the custom that a guest be offered food and refreshment; to do otherwise would not only be insulting to the guest, but also deeply shameful to the host. Visitors should be aware that refusing a host's cooking is deeply offensive to all involved.

Native Niswani are typically friendly to visitors, though they are often reserved and formal with foreigners, at least until they come to know them. The Vudrani natives are proud of their culture and generally slow to adopt new ways, preferring tradition to innovation. The Harbor and Commerce Districts, which have many guest houses and hostels for traders, are the best places for visitors to find accommodation.

Niswani food is typically spicy and often involves sumptuous sauces, marinades, and exotic vegetables.



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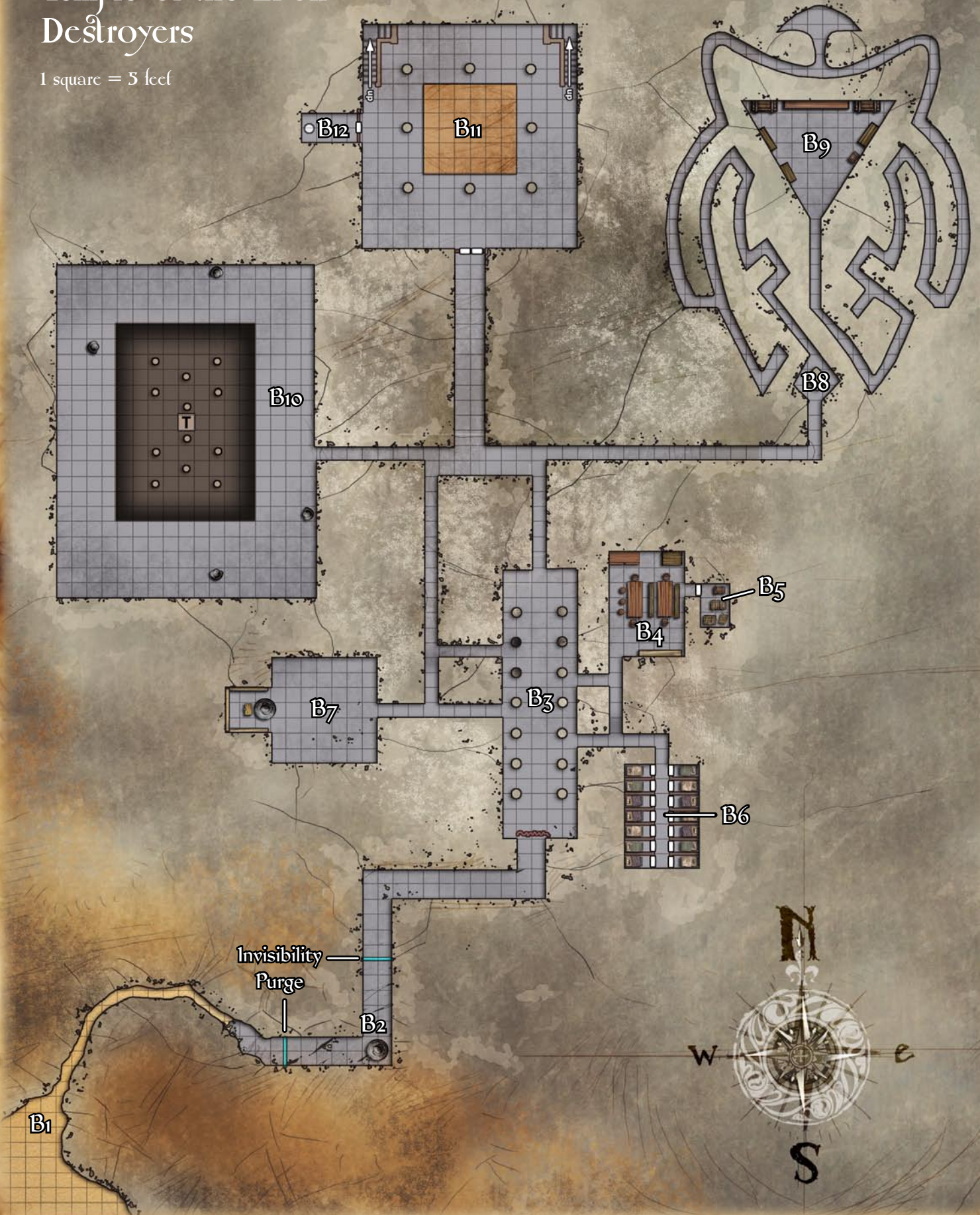
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# Temple of the Ebon Destroyers

1 square = 5 feet





# MURDER-CULT TERROR!

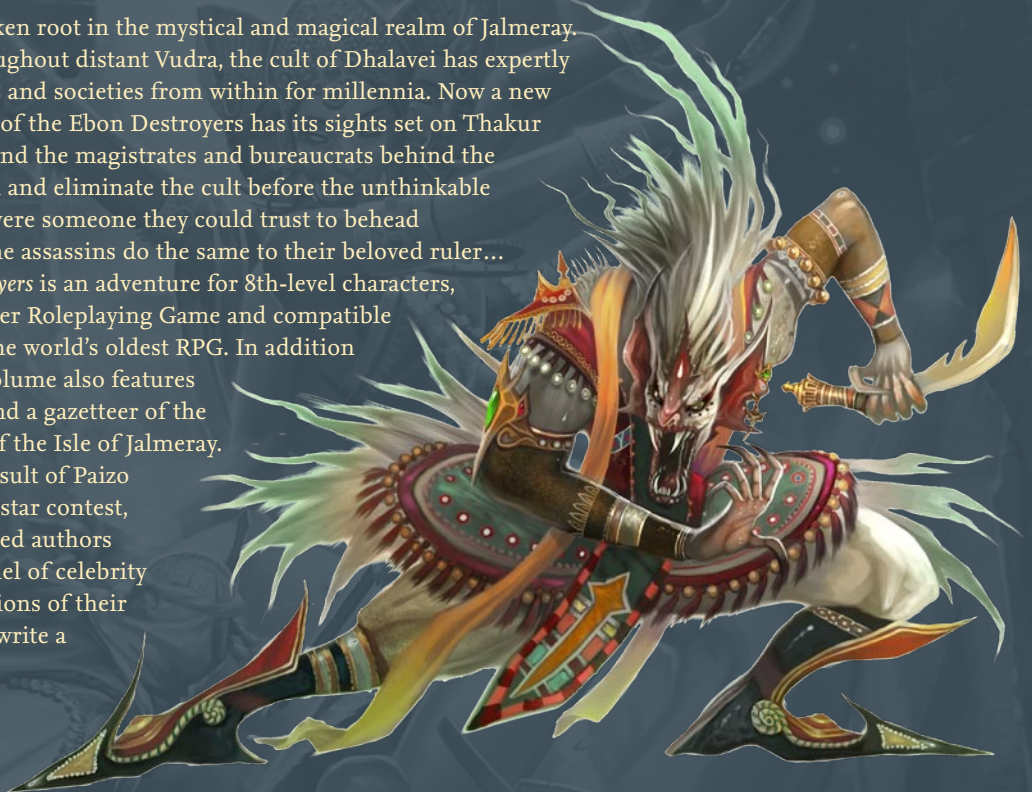
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