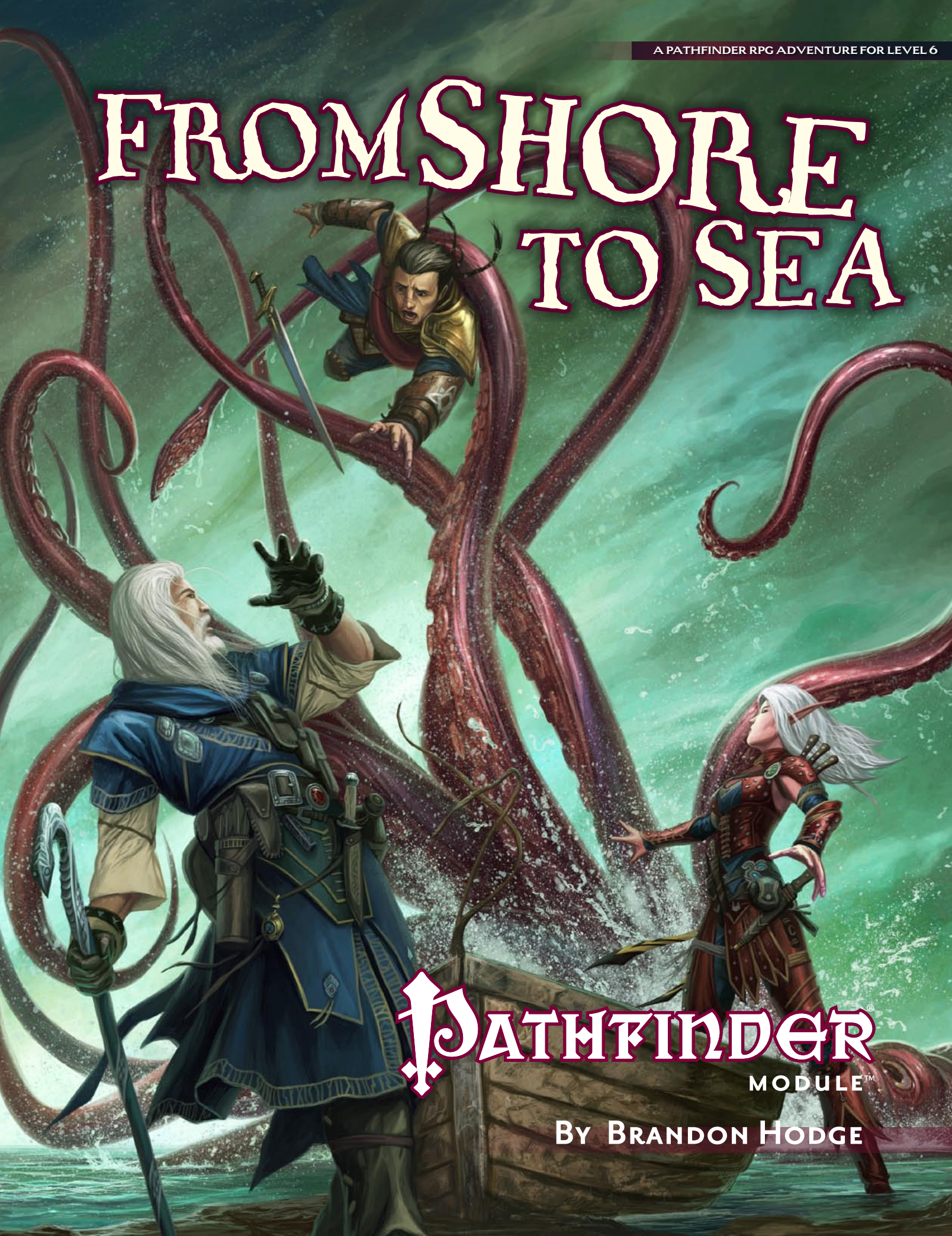


# FROM SHORE TO SEA



**PATHFINDER**  
MODULE™

By BRANDON HODGE

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# The Ruined Island of Nal-Kashel



## Key

- B1. Wedding Rock Cou
- B2. Archives
- B3. Growing Ruin
- B4. Quicksilver Graveyard
- B5. Aquarium
- B6. Excavation
- B7. Observatory
- B8. Armillary Tower
- B9. Natatorium

# FROM SHORE TO SEA

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*From Shore to Sea* is a Pathfinder Module designed for four 6th-level characters and uses the medium XP advancement track. This module is designed for play in the Pathfinder Chronicles 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 31 of this product.

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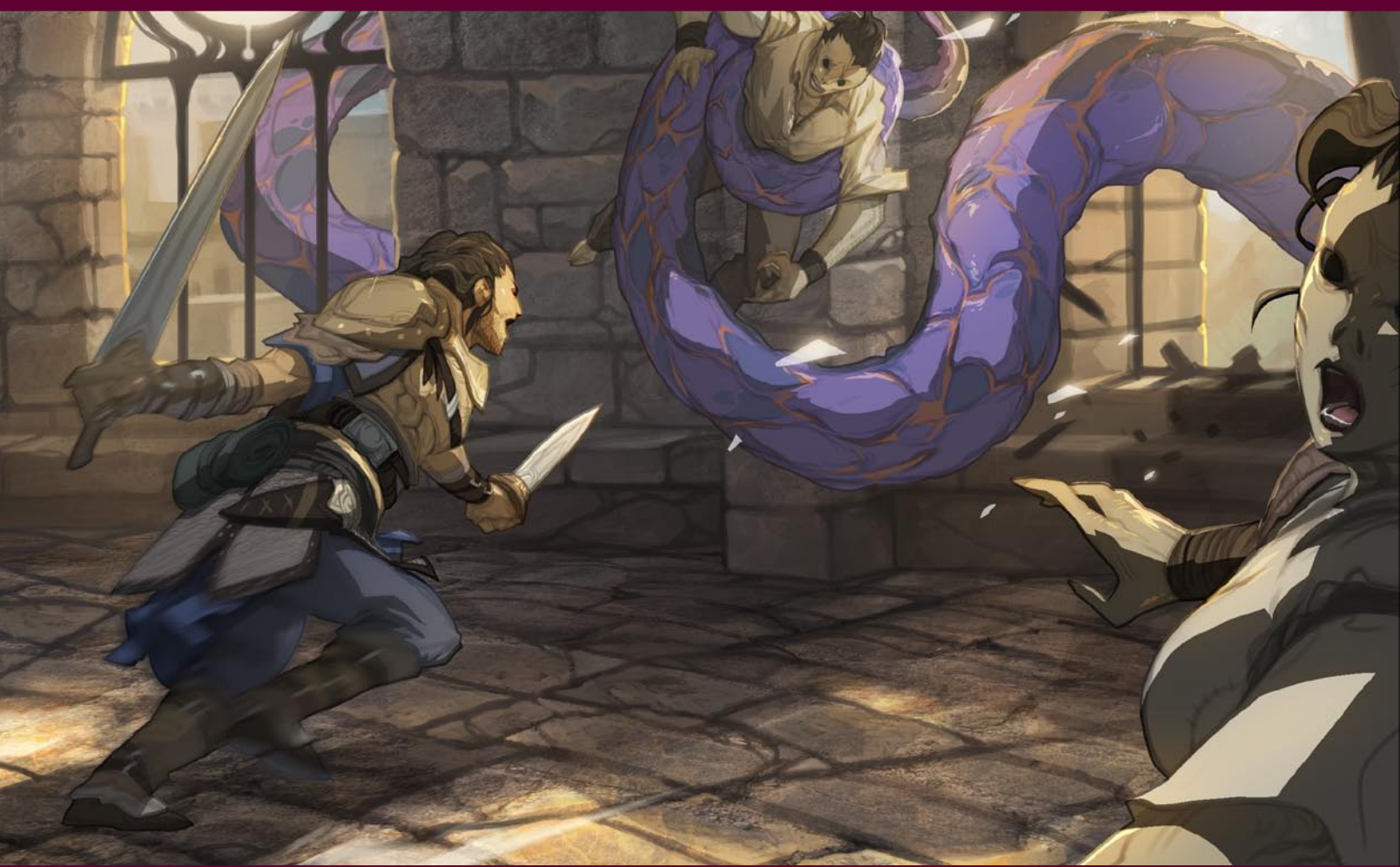
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# FROM SHORE TO SEA

ACCORDING TO THE FEW REMAINING ACCOUNTS, THE AZLANTI OUTPOST OF NAL-KASHEL WAS A SHINING TESTAMENT TO THE GLORIES AND REVELATIONS OF THE OLD EMPIRE. A CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGINEERING, THE CITY SERVED AS AN ANCIENT OBSERVATORY AND CENTER OF LEARNING, AND A NECESSARY PILGRIMAGE SITE FOR THE EDUCATED ELITE OF OLD AZLANT. BUT EVEN THEN, DARK RUMORS HINTED AT FORBIDDEN ASTROLOGICAL MANIPULATIONS OF ALIEN REALMS, AND WHISPERS CLAIMED A TERRIBLE FORCE GUIDED THE MINDS OF NAL-KASHEL'S SCHOLARS.

EARTHFALL BROUGHT LOW THE GLORIOUS EMPIRE, AND NAL-KASHEL SANK BELOW THE WAVES, ITS HALLS HOME NOW TO SHARKS AND EELS. ONLY THE HIGHEST SPIRES AND DESERTED STREETS OF THE ELEVATED TEMPLE DISTRICT REMAIN ABOVE THE SEA, WHILE BROKEN TOWER TOPS FLOAT THROUGH THE SKY ABOVE IN SLOW, ELLIPTICAL ORBITS ABOUT THE ISLAND, A FORLORN TESTAMENT TO THE CITY'S FORMER GLORY.

# FROM SHORE TO SEA

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Along the isolated coast of western Cheliox's Hellmouth Gulf live the people of Blackcove, descendants of Azlanti survivors of Earthfall who still remember their ancestors' fallen empire. The simple fishermen conceal an ancient aquatic gift of their heritage—villagers consider it a blessing to develop gill slits and webbed digits as they mature, eventually taking to the sea to guide great schools of fish into the waiting nets of their kin.

Periodically, these gillmen heed some call from the depths and disappear, a fact of life accepted by the citizens of Blackcove. The terrible secret unknown even to many villagers, however, is that while the gillman traits come from the villagers' Azlanti heritage, their true beginnings lie in an ages-old pact of foul interbreeding between their ancestors and a race of abhorrent, aquatic fish-men. These ancient creatures, once called *ulat-kini* but more commonly known as *skum*, still live offshore in a secluded colony. So the people of Blackcove live as they always have, concealing their nature from outsiders and fearing the dark creatures their legends tell them will someday return from the sea to reclaim the gifts given.

On the nearby ruined island of Nal-Kashel lies the wedding rock, the crumbling remains of an Azlanti altar. Here, young newlyweds from Blackcove traditionally come to consummate their marriage vows, only to fall victim to an ancient deception. The rock's hypnotic aura clouds the eyes and minds of the young lovers, and brides are led away by strange shapes that are not as they appear. Thus, the seed of the *ulat-kini* is perpetuated among the fishermen of the village, and most never learn that the gifts their children carry come from anything other than their Azlanti blood.

Recently, a gillman sorcerer named Gerlach discovered the truth—that villagers like him are doomed to eventually change into the true form of their disgusting heritage. Seeking to reverse his seemingly inevitable transformation, Gerlach worked to find an alchemical solution. Plagued by conflicting, dark thoughts and increasing symptoms of his *ulat-kini* heritage, he desperately searched the mysterious island for a cure for his people.

Among the island's ruins, the sorcerer discovered the dried-out husk of the hibernating aboleth *Mohl'omog*, the lost lord of Nal-Kashel, trapped beneath the island by his peers since Earthfall. Gerlach slowly nursed the conniving aboleth back to health in exchange for the promise of a cure for the villagers' impending metamorphosis. But under *Mohl'omog*'s influence, Gerlach eventually transformed into a *skum* and abandoned the cure for his people he'd discovered, instead working to restore the island's observatory to amplify the aboleth's mental abilities. Like the ringing of some great undersea bell,

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

*From Shore to Sea* begins near the village of Blackcove, located on the shores of the Hellmouth Gulf in the nation of Cheliox.



the aboleth issued a mental summons to the offshore *ulat-kini*, who willingly came to serve their old master.

The aboleth also dominated the gillmen of Blackcove and awakened the corruption hidden within them. Most of the village's gillmen have now transformed into *skum*, and many of the previously ungifted villagers have developed gillman traits as well. With their dark desires released and their attentions warped toward freeing the aboleth, the enthralled *skum* have taken to raiding the village and enslaving more of their kin, forcing them to help excavate the aboleth from the ruins of its former residence.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs rescue a fisherman caught in the claws of a strange sea creature and then investigate his wild claims of horrific monstrosities descending on the nearby village of Blackcove. Exploring the seemingly lifeless town, the party finds evidence of recent attacks from the sea. A few nervous survivors tell the PCs about regular kidnappings, and the party learns about an offshore island where the raiders live.

After a high-tide attack on the village lighthouse by a tentacled horror, the PCs journey across the Hellmouth Gulf to the dangerous island ruins of Nal-Kashel. Exploring what remains of this once-proud ancient Azlanti center of learning, the PCs discover an enormous excavation to free *Mohl'omog*, but before they can rescue the enslaved villagers and stop them from releasing the imprisoned aboleth back into the sea, the PCs must reactivate an Azlanti orrery to break the aboleth's mental domination.

Meanwhile, the island's reality-warping technology has physically altered the PCs. They learn of the unnatural heritage of the scions of Blackcove and their sorcerous leader Gerlach, and to put things right, the PCs must delve beneath the island's ruins in search of the alchemical cure Gerlach completed before his own transformation. Traversing the murky depths of the



ancient pool-temple, the PCs face deadly traps, strange guardians, and villagers transformed into skum loyal to the aboleth, until they finally confront the skum sorcerer and the ancient aboleth lord of Nal-Kashel before it succeeds in its bid for freedom.

## PART ONE: THE SHORES OF HELLMOUTH GULF

Ships and sailors avoid Hellmouth Gulf for good reason. Sharp rocks jut from the waves all along its inhospitable coastline, like the gaping maw of some foul beast. A rough road runs the length of the coast, providing a safer choice for those averse to traveling across the sea.

The Hellmouth Gulf's coast is a treacherous stretch of craggy cliffs, torn from the side of the continent by the cataclysmic tremors of Earthfall, 10,000 years ago. A coastal road follows the rugged coastline atop these cliffs; some stretches are hundreds of feet tall, and only occasionally do breaks in the cliff wall expose entrances to small coves and inlets. Dark sand and jagged rocks cover the coast's small, spare beaches, and the incoming tide carries with it a sulfurous grime. It is along such a stretch of coastline that the adventure begins.

### IN WATERS NEITHER DEEP NOR SHALLOW (CR 6)

A low fog hangs along the shore, refusing to release its grip in the pervasive gloom of an overcast morning. The surf crashes against nearby cliffs, and the cold wind carries a spray of fine mist. But then a cry of distress rings out over the briny current! Shouts of pain echo as a fisherman in an old rowboat wields a single broken oar against an enormous crab. The man struggles to reach the rocks and the safety of a small inlet nearby.

**Adler Vanderholt** (N male human commoner 6) fled Blackcove after creatures wrested his new bride from his arms at the wedding rock. Although not a Blackcove native, Adler has a personal interest in the fate of the village and is desperate to find help and put an end to the terror. He fled in his boat this morning, hugging the coast and hoping daylight would stave off attacks from the creatures raiding the village. He has made it this far only to become tired and disoriented, and to then be set upon by voracious giant crabs. Adler has 21 hit points and is currently exhausted.

From the road, the PCs can vaguely discern Adler's rowboat some 60 feet away through the morning fog, which is now beginning to lift. Adjacent to their position along the road is a 30-foot-wide stretch of sandy beach that breaks up into a 20-foot-wide zone of hazardous rocks

bashed by the pounding surf (treat it as dense rubble). Adler struggles against the waves 10 feet from the termination of this rocky outcropping in water 10 feet deep.

When he spots the PCs, Adler calls for help and uses a move action to throw a rope toward shore in the hope that the PCs can drag his boat to safety. Characters must make three consecutive DC 13 Strength checks (each a standard action) to beach the boat and allow Adler to flee, and up to two PCs can make such attempts per round. Assume Adler loses 4 hit points per round from the crab attacking him until he reaches the shore, giving the PCs 6 rounds to come to his aid. If he falls, assume he stabilizes at –3 hit points and plunges overboard, the rough surf warding off the crabs until the PCs can recover his unconscious body when it washes ashore.

**Creatures:** Four giant crabs clamber through the surf to attack when the PCs approach.

#### GIANT CRABS (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 50)

### THE APPEAL

The fisherman pulls at his wet, ruined clothes as he wipes seawater from his many lacerations and licks his cracked, sunburnt lips. "Can you help Blackcove? Something has riled up the creatures of the deep—unnatural, shambling things! They come out of the waves and take people in the night! Just like they stole my wife!"

Adler is not a Blackcove native and is attempting to return to his home village up the coast to recruit help. He recently eloped with his young wife, Sara. When she insisted they follow tradition and row to the wedding rock, several skum arrived and snatched her from Adler. His recollection is extremely distorted due to the rock's hypnotic power, but he is convinced the creatures were conjured by some "sea witch" on the island—actually a confusion of rumors regarding the sorcerer Gerlach. He pleads for aid to protect the remaining villagers from similar attacks and bemoans the fate of his bride, who, unknown to Adler, has actually survived (see Cloaks of Silence on page 15).

Adler unwraps a wet cloth and offers the PCs a golden comb in the shape of a manta ray in exchange for an agreement to aid the surviving villagers, saying, "The villagers gave me this—and promise more if only you'll help! Sara was just a pretty fisherman's daughter—she didn't deserve this!" If this emotional plea does not persuade the PCs, Adler resorts to further bribery: "If gold is what you are after, there is this and more—lots more. Those Blackcove folk pull gold from the sea!" A DC

20 Appraise check reveals the comb is worth 200 gp, while a DC 25 Appraise check reveals it is Azlanti in origin and may command 400 gp from a collector.

Adler provides directions to Blackcove, explaining that it is “hard to find from this road—the locals don’t like strangers.” The village lies about 5 hours south of this location, and if they leave now, the PCs should arrive by late afternoon. Adler fearfully refuses to guide the PCs to Blackcove himself, and after speaking to the PCs, he abandons them to return to his own village on foot.

## BLACKCOVE

Hidden from the coastal road by overhanging cliffs, the battered homes and hovels of this ramshackle fishing village cling precariously to the coastline, tightly nestled among the rocky crags. The tall, worn, stone tower of a lighthouse perches on a natural jetty that intrudes rudely into the surf, breaking the waves at awkward angles. Old boats tug gently against several rough wooden piers as hard rain pelts the coastline.

The village of Blackcove is small and isolated, nestled among the cliffs and crags of the Hellmouth Gulf and protected, for the most part, from both outside intrusion and government interference. Due to its position far below the road, many travelers pass by without noticing the sheltered village below.

The village has not completely escaped official notice, however. The sunken spires off the coast are as dangerous as any hidden reef, and the Chelish government erected a lighthouse in 4303 AR to ward off ships. Later, in response to a mandate from the church of Asmodeus in 4653 AR, inquisitors and missionaries scoured Cheliox to convert temples displeasing to the diabolical faith and to convince local populations to pay tithes to the Prince of Darkness. Blackcove was no exception, and locals have long resented the rededication to Asmodeus of the coral-built shrine that stands on the cliffs above the village. When fish stopped appearing in their nets after the consecration of the shrine, however, the villagers took steps to improve their catches (see area **A4**).

When the PCs arrive in Blackcove, the village proper is almost totally abandoned. Many villagers are out in their boats, while the rest huddle together in the lighthouse (area **A2**), praying to the gods they feel have forsaken them.

## EXPLORING BLACKCOVE

Curious adventurers will no doubt want to investigate the village seeking survivors and clues. A typical cottage in Blackcove consists of a three-room structure on raised stone foundations with weathered wooden walls and a thatched roof. All show generations of constant wear

and repair. Most are appointed as well as any common farmhouse with washbasins, well-crafted tables, racks of dried fish, and tools of various trades, but all are abandoned—many recently, but others years ago. The dark sand of the cove invades some of the newly abandoned cottages; their doors hang loose and rap out sharp cadences while crabs pick at abandoned meals inside. Nets hang half-knotted and boats thump hollowly against the docks. Other houses have been totally neglected for years if not decades, and some even have washed out to sea, leaving only their foundations.

A storm is brewing, and a light rain begins to fall as the PCs begin their explorations, gradually increasing as night approaches. In addition, high winds blow off the cove. The wind is strong up to a height of 20 feet, increasing to severe above that height. See pages 439–440 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for more information on wind effects.

While there are no events keyed to specific cottages, it is important to build up the flavor of the abandoned village while providing disheartening clues as the PCs approach the shore. The following encounters should reinforce the creepiness of the village and the PCs’ sense of unease about their exploration while also exposing some of the village’s secrets.

## VILLAGE ENCOUNTERS

The GM should pick a few of the following encounters and present them to PCs as they explore the village. The washed-out path provides the easiest route through the village, and the various hooks below should distract any who rush directly toward the shore or the lighthouse. To build a sense of unease and give the players a sense that hidden events are transpiring all around them, call for random Perception checks often, so the players always suspect they have either just missed something, or something is about to happen.

**Abandoned Alchemist’s:** The stone foundation cracks loudly as the house shifts, leaning askew. Inside, an alchemical lab composed of alembics, stills, and glass tubes lets off a foul odor. A large urn contains the body of a half-formed homunculus that is part man and part fish. If disturbed, it briefly gasps for air, meets the gaze of the adventurers, and dies. A DC 15 Perception check discovers two *scrolls of comprehend languages*. This cottage was Gerlach’s home and workshop.

**Clawed Cottages:** The croaking of a wounded pelican disturbs the quiet. Investigations reveal several toppled cottages in a row, perhaps damaged by recent storms, which show no evidence of attempts at repair. A DC 20 Perception check discovers that embedded in several beams are what appear to be large claws with ragged, fishy flesh hanging from them—like the rotting claws of



a large cat. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check identifies these as the tentacle hooks of giant squid.

**Distant Boats:** The villagers believe that during the day they are largely safe from the predations of Mohl'omog's minions at sea, provided they hug the coast and stay in shallow water, and many have taken refuge in their boats. The boats can be spotted offshore with a DC 20 Perception check, but their crews do not respond to any hails from shore.

**Shrine to the Sea:** A loud clatter comes from within a nearby cottage, hinting at life inside. The door must be forced open with a DC 15 Strength check to due to a buildup of sand inside. Within, several crabs have knocked over a bowl. The cottage also contains a small altar draped in seaweed and adorned with cowrie shells and urchin spines. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the altar as a shrine to the deities of the sea. Other cottages have similar shrines.

**Tracks in the Sand:** Several furrows are visible in the sand of the beach, disappearing into the crashing surf. A DC 15 Survival check finds fresh seaweed and clawed footprints in the sand, as if something came up out of the water and dragged villagers back into the sea.

**Vanishing Villager:** The PCs glimpse what could be a loitering villager on the distant, decaying docks. A

moment later, the figure disappears into the waves. If the PCs investigate the spot (see area A1), they discover the remains of a raw, scaly meal on the docks near the sighting, as well as many taut ropes, still tethered to sunken boats below. The village's constable, Nicolaius Gavendi, may approach the party at this point (see Meeting the Locals).

## MEETING THE LOCALS

After the PCs have explored a bit, the GM should feel free to make the first introductions to the wary townsfolk as characters approach any of the following structures. These NPCs should not provide the characters with too much information, but rather should serve as lead-ins to the lighthouse assembly later that evening. The villagers and their leaders are mostly Neutral in alignment. While they may not lie, neither will they share the entire truth. A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the villagers are frightened, extremely prejudiced against outsiders, and unlikely to reveal all they know, but are generally well-meaning, hard-working, and family-oriented people.

Three community leaders remain in the village, all of whom make excellent encounters as the PCs explore the ruined cottages of Blackcove. Each of them tries to direct the players toward the lighthouse and the assembly that will take place after sunset.



# FROM SHORE TO SEA

**Gervus Barhandin**, lighthouse keeper (N male human expert 3): A strangely hunched man with a lopsided gait, Gervus carries the distinctive look of the villagers of Blackcove: his skin is pallid and waxy, his dark, thin hair recedes into a sharp widow's peak, and his brow furrows deeply, showing only the faintest wisps of eyebrows. The man might have been uniquely handsome once, with a wide, toothy grin and large eyes, but the harsh environment has taken its toll. Gervus is likeable and well read, with a penchant for using big words inappropriately: "Aye, these waters are 'infatuated' with sharks, the 'apprehensible' beasts. And the sharp rocks can be 'lecherous.'" The lighthouse keeper is more forthcoming than Nicolaius (see below) and is grateful for any "insistence" the PCs can provide. Like the constable, he isn't very forthcoming, but he admits there have been attacks by strange, "licentious" beasts from the "debts" of the sea and that all who remain in the village fear for their lives and have "congealed" themselves in the lighthouse.

**Lira Saruven**, village pastor (N female human druid 4): This petite young woman is plain, homely, and reserved, displaying the distinct heritage of her people, and she is prone to bestowing deep, discerning gazes before her eyes suddenly wander away nervously. She is grateful for the party's aid but reveals little other than cryptic, prophetic statements like "The sea nurtures, but it is a jealous mother not to be refused when the debt comes due" and "My people know the dangers of tides and storms but have never found reason to stay ashore." If questioned about her faith, she pulls a tarnished holy symbol of Asmodeus from beneath her blouse. A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals her coy deception—following the custom of the caretakers of Blackcove's souls, Lira is not devoted to a single god, given that the villagers' beliefs are as fickle as the tides.

**Nicolaius Gavendi**, constable (LN male human ranger 4): An aging, ugly man with distorted features and a keen shipman's axe tucked in his belt, he is the town's constable. If approached, he whistles with arched brows, acting ingenuous and familiar with the party, as if this is just another day at sea. "Bah! Poor catch again! Something stirs the deeps, and the fish flee in fear! We haven't had catches this poor in years!" He is wary of disclosing the village's plight and loath to divulge their troubles, blaming the situation on desertions caused by the poor catches. If pressed, or if the information gained from Adler is revealed, Nicolaius snorts and invites

the characters to the lighthouse assembly. He reveals nothing else, neither confirming nor denying what the PCs believe.

## A1. THE RUINED WHARF

Haphazardly balanced upon rickety wooden stilts, long docks stretch out from the village and protrude into the waves. One dock ends at a dilapidated shack and seems ready to fall into the sea.

This pier and the abandoned tavern at its far end are almost ready to collapse. Tied to the pilings are several ropes, pulled tightly into the water by the weight of sunken boats below. Walking on the rotted dock is dangerous, and any characters moving faster than 5 feet per round must make a DC 12 Reflex save or fall through the planks for 1d6+2 points of damage. If the characters traverse the wharf to the tavern and search the battered structure, they find 1d4 bottles of preserved brandy that

predate the ascension of the House of Thrune, worth 20 gp each. Lingering PCs are approached by several returning fishermen, led by Nicolaius.

## A2. THE LIGHTHOUSE

This imposing structure rests on a jagged stretch of rock that juts out several hundred feet from shore. The crashing waves have worn away most of its paint, yet the lighthouse gleams a dirty bone white against the dark cliffs of the cove. Large windows punctuate the cardinal directions on the second floor, and the top story glows with a bright red light of obviously arcane origin.

Built to ward ships away from the dangers of the sunken spires in these shallow waters, sailors call this lighthouse the Red Eye of Asmodeus. The three dozen frightened citizens who remain in Blackcove have fled here for their own safety, venturing out only to collect mussels, pay homage at the shrine, and scavenge for supplies.

The lower story of the lighthouse is 50 feet in diameter and damp with collected pools of seawater. A rusted staircase rises 15 feet to the floor above. Here, blankets, cots, and makeshift beds take up the entirety of the 40-foot-diameter floor, where the villagers have taken refuge for almost 4 days, following the last attack. The stairway continues another 15 feet to the top of the lighthouse, where a 5-foot-wide walkway encircles the magically blazing light enclosure.



GERVUS

The rocky way to the lighthouse is hazardous by foot, and anyone moving at faster than quarter speed must make three consecutive DC 15 Acrobatics checks to safely traverse the slippery, abrasive rocks. Failure by 4 or more results in 2d4 points of damage from the sharp rocks followed by a plunge into the sea. For this reason, Gervus keeps a rowboat handy, and he can usually be found near the lighthouse, ferrying villagers or searching in the sand for something he will not identify.

### A3. BARTOCK'S KEELBOAT

A grounded keelboat lies buried in the sand. Large piles of washed-up junk, nets, glass floats, and other debris litter the beach here.



If the PCs approach the boat, they see a gaunt, sunburned, and bearded man of peculiar bearing. This is the beachcomber **Bartock** (CN male human expert 4), whom the locals have always given a wide berth. Bartock clammers from the vessel with a wild-eyed, fitful ranting, picking sand fleas from his ragged clothes and praising the arrival of the village's saviors. As he chews his nails nervously, he curses some unidentified instigator, ranting, "He tried to take the water's gift from our veins!" and "He nursed that old, dead god like a newborn babe!" Ironically, his "insane ravings" are perhaps the closest to the truth the PCs are going to get during their stay in the village.

Bartock briefly snaps back to reality only to barter maniacally, and if the PCs need any supplies that could be reasonably found along a beach, chances are good that he has something similar.

### A4. VILLAGE SHRINE

High on a rocky outcropping overlooking Blackcove rests a small church built of stained coral. Carved steps wind precariously up the cliff to the temple. Little more than a windowless room with a simple altar and pews, the shrine contains strange murals depicting bizarre sea life and coral statues peering forth from carved alcoves. Perhaps they once portrayed Asmodeus, but all are now draped in seaweed and nets and festooned with fish bones, starfish, shells, and other offerings in obvious tribute to marine deities that demand their own loyalty.

Originally a shrine to Aroden and the gods of the sea, the church was reconsecrated to Asmodeus after the ascent of the House of the Throne, but the villagers have continued their traditional worship here. Before the recent attacks, the citizens concealed their true worship from outsiders, clearing the shrine of the accumulated artifacts and detritus of the sea when rare, curious visitors or agents of the Asmodean church appeared.

The shrine serves many oceanic deities, as villagers pray to Gozreh to keep winds favorable and catches plentiful and placate Besmara to keep marauding horrors at bay. All of the gods of Golarion's seas, whether adored or placated, are represented in some fashion, including, disturbingly, the demon lord Dagon (identified with a DC 15 Knowledge [planes] check). A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that the murals also depict a form of ancestor worship wherein the dead rise again from the waves to perpetuate the cycle of life.

If the PCs approach the shrine, four villagers led by the young druid Lira meet them halfway through their ascent. Lira respectfully denies the PCs permission to visit the church, citing the coming storm while escorting

them back down the stairs. Lira quietly ushers her nervous congregants toward the lighthouse and listens to the party thoughtfully, nodding frequently, before suggesting they join the rest of the congregation at the lighthouse.

## THE ASSEMBLY

As darkness descends on Blackcove, previously unseen villagers scurry from wrecked cottages toward the lighthouse, some slowly picking their way over the slippery rocks and rising tide, while Gervus ferries others to the structure. For the purposes of this adventure, assume high tide occurs at 6 A.M. and 6 P.M., with low tide coming at noon and midnight. Use the assembly to introduce any community leaders the PCs have not yet met.

The dark clouds of the storm bring a premature evening, and as the sun sets over the rising western waters, nervous glances usher the last of the villagers into the safety of the lighthouse, and all ascend the rusty iron stairs to the haven above.

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Tightly packed into the cramped quarters of the lighthouse are all of the villagers who remain in Blackcove. Numbering less than forty, the bedraggled assembly exudes anxiety and dismay. Their kinship is obvious, and most display the same waxy and weathered skin, thinning hair that recedes sharply to either side of a pronounced widow's peak, and disarmingly dark purple eyes. Phlegmatic coughs echo throughout the damp, crowded room and it seems as if the community members' constitutions have grown weak because of degeneration following too many years of isolation.

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The villagers once numbered over 200 but have now been reduced to a pathetic assortment of grieving spouses, orphaned children, and shocked elders. When the PCs arrive, a hush falls over the room; the only sounds are a wet, labored breathing, the increasingly hard rain, and the pounding surf below. With a nervous laugh, Gervus breaks the silence: "Well, it looks like Adler found help, and here's hoping they'll be our salvation. I suppose we should tell them about our troubles."

The PCs now have a chance to learn as much as they can about the villagers' plight. Have the PCs make a Diplomacy check to talk to the villagers; up to two other characters can assist. The villagers start the assembly with an unfriendly attitude. A Diplomacy check of 20 shifts them to indifferent, with improving shifts in attitude for every 5 by which the check exceeds 20. Failing the check by 5 or more decreases the villagers' attitude to hostile. The attitude of the villagers determines what information the PCs gain, as shown below (the PCs learn all of the information from lower results as well).

**Hostile:** The offending PCs are threatened with drowning or being tossed over a cliff for their meddling.

The villagers claim simple lives, and traditions such as the wedding rock should not be judged by ignorant outsiders. The only information the PCs get is that the attacks on the village seem to come from the nearby island of Nal-Kashel. No one discourages the PCs from exploring the island, nor will anyone help. The villagers mutter that the PCs can find better company in the storm and should flee in fear like Adler.

**Unfriendly:** The attacks on the village began shortly after a villager named Gerlach started exploring the island of Nal-Kashel. He never said what he witnessed, but all agree he should not have trespassed. Dangerous creatures lurk in the ancient ruins there, and old secrets are better left alone. Gerlach visited the island frequently, and the villagers don't want the PCs "stirring things up" like he did. Some fear Gerlach has died, and others curse his name for upsetting whatever dwells on the island.

**Indifferent:** No one has seen Gerlach since the attacks started weeks ago, when he disappeared from his cottage. Villagers report he blamed the wedding rock on Nal-Kashel for a "sickness," but they explain that going to the rock is simply an old tradition for newlyweds. Children conceived on this honeymoon night are blessed by the sea, but they must eventually return to the waves to repay the gift.

**Friendly:** Gerlach is a gillman, born with the sea's gifts, and is a talented sorcerer and alchemist, concocting brews to aid his fellow fishermen (his old lab still stands—see Village Encounters on page 5). His discoveries on Nal-Kashel drove him mad, and he claimed to be "setting things right with his people." The villagers claim the island ruins are an old Azlanti city full of dark magic. They offer 1,000 gp worth of strange golden jewelry said to come from the island if the PCs stop the attacks.

**Helpful:** The island of Nal-Kashel was once an Azlanti outpost, and the villagers claim to be descended from the island's original inhabitants, blessed with pure Azlanti heritage. Many villagers are gillmen like Gerlach and live below the waves, but they were the first to disappear when the attacks began, fleeing into deeper waters. Several claim to have seen relatives watching from the sea during the recent attacks and fear Gerlach is manipulating his people. Desperate for the attacks to end, the villagers quickly gather a pile of hidden wealth, offering the PCs 2,000 gp for their aid.

## THE LIGHTHOUSE ATTACK (CR 7)

No matter how much information the PCs collect from the villagers, events are occurring below them even now. Utilizing the island's Azlanti observatory, the aboleth Mohl'omog has raised the tides to dangerous levels. The water rises 3 feet per round in the lower chamber, and

unless any PCs are keeping watch in the lower level, it touches the 9-foot mark before the villagers notice.

Rain pounds the lighthouse as lightning flashes, illuminating the murmuring villagers. A shocked cry rings out, and the assembly gazes nervously toward the stairwell leading down. There, seawater creeps steadily upward, approaching the stain that marks the highest tides and flooding the entire lower story.

**Creature:** Mohl'omog has sent an abomination from the abyssal depths of the sea to pluck the last survivors from the lighthouse. This giant horror remains submerged beneath the sea but sends its tentacles into the lighthouse to grab the villagers and attack the PCs.

The following event should be run as a descriptive, cinematic encounter (rather than as a normal combat on the battlemat). Each round, the tentacles attacking the lighthouse take certain actions, and the PCs can take their own actions to influence the outcome of the battle.

**Round 1:** One of the villagers notices the rising water and cries out. Ask for initiative rolls to give some urgency to the

proceedings, although there is no other visible threat at this time. The villagers panic, creating a crowd (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 436–437) that collectively acts on initiative count 0. Without an overt threat, the crowd's fears seem irrational, although a DC 15 Diplomacy check or a DC 20 Intimidate check can temporarily end the crowd environment until the attack begins. Build up tension by describing the cresting waves outside or showing Bartock clinging to the rotten mast of his keelboat, screaming as a giant tentacle reaches up from the waves and drags him under.

**Round 2:** The water rises to 12 feet and the crowd environment continues unless halted by the PCs. The tentacled horror attacks the lighthouse itself on initiative count 15, causing the structure to sway and shake violently. Anyone inside must make a DC 15 Reflex save or fall prone.

**Round 3:** The water rises to 15 feet, reaching the landing of the stairwell of the second level, and stops. The tentacled horror attacks—one of its giant tentacles bursts out of the stairwell and two more invade through the east and west windows. The crowd environment erupts anew, providing cover for the PCs and partial cover for the tentacles. Spellcasters attempting to cast spells in the crowd must succeed on a concentration check (DC 15 + the spell's level) or lose the spell. With nowhere to go, the uncontrolled crowd makes a trip attack against each PC on the crowd's initiative count. Directing the crowd at this point requires a DC 25 Diplomacy check or a DC 30 Intimidate check every round.

Each of the tentacles acts on its own initiative count (20, 15, and 10, respectively), attempting to grab as many villagers as possible to drag them to the abomination's aboleth master. The tentacles can reach any point in the lighthouse or on the balcony surrounding the upper level.

Assign each of the PCs a number between 5 and 20. Each round, roll 1d20 for each tentacle to determine its target. A roll of 1 to 4 means a tentacle attacks a villager but misses. Rolling one of the PCs' numbers means a tentacle attacks that PC, grabbing and constricting. Any other number means a villager has been automatically grappled.

See the Tentacle Attack! sidebar for the tentacles' statistics. Grappled PCs can attempt to escape or break a grapple as normal. PCs attempting to liberate villagers use their own CMB with a +2 bonus from the struggling victim against the tentacle's CMD. The tentacles can be attacked or sundered with a slashing weapon. A tentacle that takes 10 or more points of damage in a single round is severed, releasing its target. A tentacle that takes less damage constricts its victim on its next action. A villager is automatically killed if the tentacle grappling him constricts. The tentacled horror is here to capture villagers for enslavement and does not constrict grappled villagers unless the tentacle grappling them is attacked.



# FROM SHORE TO SEA

**Round 4 and following rounds:** The tentacles continue their attacks. Any villager grappled the previous round is automatically pulled out of the tower and is lost. When a tentacle leaves with a villager or is destroyed, a fresh tentacle replaces the previous one on its initiative count on the following round and immediately attacks.

**Development:** Keep track of how many villagers are taken or killed, as well as how many are rescued and how many tentacles are severed. Once the tentacled horror has taken 10 villagers or has had 10 of its tentacles severed, the abomination retreats with its victims. Any grappled PCs suffer one final constrict attack and are then released.

In the aftermath of the attack, the storm abruptly ceases and the water retreats as quickly as it came, leaving the villagers stunned and no doubt fewer in number. If the PCs were unable to improve the villagers' attitude before the attack, they may try again once the assault is over. For every villager killed or taken by the tentacles, reduce the result of the Diplomacy check by 2. For each villager rescued from a grappling tentacle, increase the result by 2. This change in the villagers' attitude may grant the PCs additional information as the grateful villagers suddenly become forthcoming with their new saviors.

## TROUBLED WATERS (CR 6)

If the PCs agree to undertake the journey to Nal-Kashel, the fisherman Estian offers his ferrying services. Estian is secretly a gillman but has not yet displayed the more advanced traits of the ulat-kini. The broad-shouldered man is unafraid of fishing and traveling the waves, but he is unaware that his daily proximity to the island has opened him to the aboleth's influence. Estian's large rowboat carries up to five passengers, and he expects the PCs to be ready before dawn breaks. The journey over seas is choppy and lasts about 2 hours before the island comes into clear view.

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The island materializes ahead as imposing cliffs lift weed-choked ruins far above the frothing sea. Miraculously, the broken tops of several towers orbit the island in slow, lazy ellipses, some plunging into the ocean before emerging aloft again. A huge blanket of floating jellyfish lurk just below the gray waters as Estian croaks a rough sea shanty under his breath. He sniffs the salty air and nods toward the jellyfish bloom, his wide mouth breaking into a toothy grin. "That's a bad place to be right now, surely, I'd say!"

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**Creature:** As the party approaches the island, the aboleth Mohl'omog ensnares Estian's mind, triggering a change that transforms the fisherman into a skum. Call for a DC 20 Sense Motive check as Estian abruptly stops singing and rowing. Successful PCs sense Estian's

## TENTACLE ATTACK!

The tentacled horror is a Colossal aberration and represents a much greater threat than a 6th-level party can handle. But its individual tentacles can be attacked, grappled, or pinned. Inflicting 10 points of damage on a tentacle severs it, releasing anyone grappled by the tentacle. A severed tentacle is replaced the following round with a new tentacle with full hit points.

For the purposes of this encounter, the giant tentacles are considered a single CR 7 creature and use the following statistics.

### GIANT TENTACLES CR 7

XP 3,200

Senses tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +13

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#### DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15 (can't be caught flat-footed; includes cover bonus)

hp 10 each

Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +8

Defensive Abilities cannot be flanked; Immune cold, mind-affecting effects, sleep, and visual effects

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#### OFFENSE

Melee tentacle +10 (1d6+5 plus grab)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 30 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+4)

CMB +10 (+14 grapple); CMD 20 (can't be tripped)

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Tenacious Grapple (Ex)** As parts of a larger creature, the tentacles do not gain the grappled condition when they grapple foes.

nervous agitation and may act during the following surprise round.

On the surprise round, Estian undergoes a rapid and horrifying transformation from a normal-looking human into a croaking fish-man. He croaks something in an unintelligible garble and attempts to rock the boat and pitch the PCs overboard into the jellyfish bloom.

### ESTIAN CR 2

XP 600

N male skum (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 253)

hp 20

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#### TACTICS

**During Combat** His mind ensnared, Estian attempts to throw the PCs overboard on the surprise round (see Hazard on page 12). On the first full round of combat, Estian does not attack but rather continues to thrash against the boat as a standard action to pitch the PCs overboard.

**Morale** After his second attempt, Estian dives overboard, vanishing into the depths.

## CROSSING THE GULF

Several means exist for the PCs to travel to Nal-Kashel besides the one presented here. The island waits 2 miles off the coast, and the journey there can be as easy or as difficult as the GM wishes. If PCs attempt to cross using *beast shape*, *water breathing*, or *water walk* spells, consider making it quite a challenge, as foul things exist offshore, lurking in the sunken spires beneath the murky waves. The druid Lira can also offer means to cross to the island. A group of coastal nixie sisters owes her favors, and she can call upon the nixies to cast *water breathing* on the PCs and provide them guidance to the wedding rock cove, after casting *hide from animals* on the party. If PCs take a boat without Estian, use the same encounter, with unseen, undersea skum tipping the boat instead. Orcas, sharks, and giant moray eels can also provide appropriate challenges for parties making the journey on their own.

**Hazard:** Everyone aboard the boat when Estian rocks it must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or fall overboard into the jellyfish bloom. Those who made the earlier Sense Motive check receive a +2 circumstance bonus on their saving throws. PCs may take standard actions to brace themselves against the assault, granting a +3 bonus on their saves to avoid falling overboard, while standing up in the wet, slippery boat gives a –2 penalty on the save.

The jellyfish bloom covers the water in a 30-foot radius around the boat. These poisonous invertebrates float along the upper waves in dangerous swarms of thousands. Anyone inside a 5-foot-square bloom of jellyfish is subject to the paralytic poison of their stinging tentacles.

*Jellyfish poison:* contact; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1 Str; cure 2 saves.

**Development:** Unfortunately for any armored PCs falling into the sea, the water here is rough, and DC 15 Swim checks are required to stay afloat. A DC 12 Climb check is needed to climb back into the boat. Luckily, the island is now very close, and with a little effort the PCs can row to the nearby beach without further attack.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** Regardless of the outcome of this encounter, once the PCs reach the island, award them for the entire encounter as if they had defeated a CR 6 creature.

## PART TWO: THE RUINED ISLAND OF NAL-KASHEL

The ruins of the ancient Azlanti city of Nal-Kashel lie atop cliffs that rise 100 feet out of the surf. Two sunken beaches provide the only easy access to the island's interior, one lying to the east and the other to the west,

just above the level of the waves. Characters coming from Blackcove approach the island from the east, making Wedding Rock Cove (area **B1**) their most likely landing spot.

The island climbs steadily toward the center, broken into three tiers separated by 40-foot-high cliffs. The entire island radiates strong and overwhelming auras of transmutation and enchantment magics, particularly near the observatory (area **B7**).

## THE ORBITAL CURRENT

Nal-Kashel's enduring magical energies produce strong gravitational forces above the island. The broken tower tops seen floating over the island are caught in this orbital current, and any flight more than 60 feet above the ground is treated as flying in a windstorm (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 439). Medium-sized creatures flying above 60 feet find themselves checked and must succeed on a DC 20 Fly check to move against this orbital current. Failure means they are caught in the island's orbital current, moving 1d6x10 feet in a single, random direction each round until they can break free with a successful DC 20 Fly check.

## THE WARPING

Long ago, Mohl'omog's Azlanti servitors performed secret experiments to create ideal vessels to host alien abominations from the Dark Tapestry, and the consequences of this tampering echo throughout the ages. The lingering energies from these experiments warp any humanoid creatures who stay too long on the island, not only hastening the evolution of the original hosts' descendants (the gillmen of Blackcove), but also corrupting PCs wandering the polluted ruins. Play up the changes that the PCs are undergoing at dramatic moments, allowing the corrupting influence of the island to build not only in the bodies of the PCs, but also in the minds of the players.

After an hour on the island, each PC automatically develops a minor taint, chosen randomly from the list below. The warping energies have their greatest effects on the blood, head, limbs, lungs, organs, or skin. Minor taints are cosmetic only, with no game effects.

As the PCs venture farther into the interior of the island, the warping energies grow stronger. An hour after entering the island's second "tier" past the first ring of cliffs (including areas **B2** and **B3**), each PC must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or develop a moderate taint affecting the same part of the body as her minor taint. A character who makes the initial save must make a new save every hour until she develops a moderate taint. Moderate taints grant the character a small ability or bonus, but they create greater cosmetic changes.

## FROM SHORE TO SEA



An hour after entering the island's third "tier" (including areas B4 through B9 and all of area C), all of the PCs must make DC 17 Fortitude saves. A character with a moderate taint develops a severe taint. A character with a minor taint develops a moderate taint instead, but she must then continue making new saves every hour until she eventually acquires a severe taint. Severe taints impose an even greater cosmetic change and have associated penalties as well.

The warping only affects humanoid creatures, and it only affects one area of each creature's body (blood, head, limbs, lungs, organs, or skin). The effects are cumulative, so a creature with a moderate taint also experiences the effects of a minor taint. A DC 20 Heal check or spells such as *detect magic* reveal a unique magical taint, but spells such as *remove curse*, *remove disease*, or *dispel magic* have no effect on the affliction and provide no protection against the constant barrage of magical energies. Cure or restoration spells likewise have no effect on the taint or its effects. Only *heal*, *greater restoration*, or *miracle* spells can remove the taint

and heal its effects, as can the *elixir of true form* found in area C11.

The effects of the various levels of taint caused by the warping are outlined below.

### MINOR TAINT

**Blood:** Eyes constantly weep thick, black blood

**Head:** Eyes bulge, nose flattens, and lips crack

**Limbs:** Webbing grows between fingers and toes, joints become knobby and painful

**Lungs:** Develops phlegmy, wracking cough

**Organs:** Occasional nausea and vomiting

**Skin:** Skin becomes clammy and moist, with oily sweat

### MODERATE TAINT

**Blood:** Eyes turn a shiny black color (gain darkvision 10 feet)

**Head:** Hair falls out, eyes move subtly toward the sides of the head (+2 on Perception checks)

**Limbs:** Limbs elongate, bones warp and thicken (+1 natural armor bonus)

## NAL-KASHEL RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Dangerous creatures roam Nal-Kashel's ruins, and the PCs risk encountering them as they explore the island. There is a 20% chance per hour of a random encounter while exploring the ruins, or a 5% chance per hour while resting.

d%	Encounter	Average CR	Source
1–5	1 assassin vine	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 22
6–10	1 basidiron	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 28
11–15	1d6 bat swarms	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 30
16–25	1d6 giant crabs	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 50
26–30	2d4 darkmantles	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 55
31–35	1 gibbering moulder	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 153
36–40	1d3 crab swarms	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 50
41–45	1d3 gray oozes	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 166
46–50	1 shambling mound	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 246
51–55	3d8 vegepygmies	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 273
56–60	1 black pudding	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 35
61–65	2d4 chokers	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 45
66–70	1 chuul	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 46
71–75	1d3 cloaklers	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 47
76–85	2d4 skum	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 253
86–95	1d3 will-o'-wisps	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 277
96–100	1 giant flytrap	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 134

**Lungs:** Uncontrollable coughs wrack the body with painful spasms (character can hold her breath for twice as long as normal)

**Organs:** Organs shift around beneath skin (cure spells heal +1 hit point per die)

**Skin:** Skin develops coating of slimy mucus (+2 on Escape Artist checks and CMD to resist grapples)

### SEVERE TAINT

**Blood:** Blood thickens and turns black, blood vessels constrict (–2 penalty to Constitution, normal vision range is halved)

**Head:** Mouth widens, tongue lengthens, croaking voice (–2 penalty to Charisma, 15% spell failure chance for spells with vocal components)

**Limbs:** Back hunches, limbs twist, hands and feet become fully webbed (–2 penalty to Dexterity, speed reduced by 5 feet, but gain +4 bonus on Swim checks)

**Lungs:** Vestigial gill slits appear on sides of neck, breathing becomes wet and labored (character is fatigued, but can breathe water for a number of rounds equal to character's Constitution bonus)

**Organs:** Organs pulse and shift under stress (–2 penalty to Constitution, character is nauseated for the first round of all combats)

**Skin:** Skin must be kept wet, or it cracks painfully (–2 penalty to Charisma; character must submerge herself in water at least once per day; if skin dries out, character is staggered until immersed in water)

## THE WATCHERS OF NAL-KASHEL

**Creatures:** The ancient Azlanti selectively bred will-o'-wisps, trapping their most prized specimens within fragile globes and placing them along avenues as streetlamps. The immortal creatures have witnessed much—the fall of their masters, the city's slow decay, and now the return of people to the island. Although numerous will-o'-wisps remain trapped within these lamps, many more run rampant on the island in gangs called “strings,” feasting on death and fear.

Set the tone of these creatures early. There is a 60% chance after any combat that 1d12 strange lights blink on all around the characters. The will-o'-wisps attack only if provoked—at most, they make a single defensive shock attack before fleeing invisibly. They are content to silently float near the PCs, feasting on the deaths of creatures the characters encounter.

**WILL-O'-WISPS (1D12)**

**CR 6**

**XP 2,400 each**

**hp 40 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 277)

**Development:** Because the will-o'-wisps witnessed the outpost's rise and fall, they are incredible fonts of knowledge about the island, but if the PCs try to communicate with the will-o'-wisps, they find negotiation with the strange creatures a frustrating affair. The will-o'-wisps' initial attitude is unfriendly and they consider the island to be an important secret, adding +10 to the DC of any Diplomacy checks made to communicate with them. Should the PCs successfully make contact with them, they may learn information about the following locations. The will-o'-wisps can provide direction to any sites mentioned.

**The Growing Ruin (area B3):** The will-o'-wisps know of a skum astrologer who wore “the old amulet of Aulus,” a former master of the orrery. Gerlach has been searching desperately for the skum and has abandoned the observatory in his absence, but only the will-o'-wisps know the astrologer was consumed by a “beast in the ever-growing tower,” a clue to a key component to control the observatory.

**The Observatory (area B7):** The will-o'-wisps know of the power of the observatory and are aware that it is the key to the domination of the villagers at the excavation site. The will-o'-wisps reveal that ulat-kini astrologers repaired the observatory and used its power to make the rebellious villagers docile and raise the waves against



Blackcove. Shutting the observatory down could end this control and turn the villagers against their captors. The will-o'-wisps have no knowledge of the aboleth.

**The Quicksilver Graveyard (area B4):** The will-o'-wisps can also confirm that the skum have spent a lot of time in the Quicksilver Graveyard, where their “former masters now rest.”

## ISLAND EVENTS

As the PCs explore the island’s ruins, certain events also take place. While there is no set timeline for these encounters, most of these events happen after the PCs have explored a certain location or after meeting some of the island’s inhabitants. The best time to stage each of these events is outlined in the following descriptions.

## CLOAKS OF SILENCE (CR 8)

This event should take place after the PCs have investigated the excavation site (area B6).

A woman breaks from the overgrown ruins ahead, shrieking as three dark shapes bear down on her. The creatures look like flying mats of tangled seaweed, but with toothy maws. The woman abruptly stops, cut off in mid-scream, as the closest creature moans horribly, then drops down and completely engulfs her.

**Sara Vanderholt** (N female commoner 4), Adler Vanderholt’s wife, was kidnapped by skum when she and her new husband visited the wedding rock (see area B1). She later escaped her captors, eluding pursuit for the past several days, but now her luck has run out. Sara has 18 hit points.

**Creatures:** Three cloaklers, grudging servants of Mohl’omog, have finally tracked Sara down and now seek to silence her and prevent the characters from meddling in their master’s affairs. One of the cloaklers uses its stupor moan to paralyze Sara and engulf her while the other two fly forward to attack the PCs. The cloakler engulfing Sara deals 6 points of damage per round to Sara, giving the PCs 5 rounds to rescue Sara before she is killed (at –12 hit points). The cloaklers are 60 feet from the party.

**CLOAKERS (3) CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**

**hp 51 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 47*)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** As one cloakler engulfs Sara, the other two move within range of the PCs and moan, directing their fear effects

toward the party to ward them away from their prey. The cloaklers fly just out of melee reach and use their unnerve and nausea moans against any characters unaffected by their fear moans. Afterward, one cloakler attempts to engulf any PC affected by a moan, while the other continues to moan to distract the PCs.

**Morale** If the PCs inflict 20 or more points of damage on the cloakler grappling Sara, it releases its hold on the woman and attacks the PCs. The cloaklers’ main goal is Sara’s silence, and they retreat once she is dead (–12 hit points). Otherwise, they fight to the death.

**Treasure:** A DC 15 Perception check discovers two interesting magic items concealed in the fleshy folds of the cloaklers. One wears a *ring of swimming*. Another has a marine-themed plaque made of a strange bronze alloy, an Azlanti *amulet of natural armor +1*. When grasped, the plaque breaks apart into sigils that clamber up the user’s body and embed themselves along his upper torso, taking the user’s neck slot. The amulet can be removed at will.

**Development:** If the PCs rescue Sara (or use *speak with dead* if they were unable to save her), she reveals the terrible truth about the wedding rock (area B1): the village’s wedding tradition is a setup “so those foul creatures can breed in the bellies of our women.” She also says that the gillman sorcerer Gerlach tried to reverse “the change” of her people and came to the island seeking secrets to make his alchemy a success. She warns the PCs that “he is now more fish than man,” so she is doubtful of his true motivations, but if the PCs hope to reverse their own warping and save her people, finding Gerlach is the key.

Sara tells the PCs that the captured villagers tried to fight against their captors but are now hopelessly dominated, a change she claims came about after a transformed Gerlach “started experimenting in the big domed building above the excavation” (the observatory, area B7). In addition, she tells the party that several of her kin were led away by skum and never returned, and she later saw the same creatures speaking with “a strange silver man” at the pools, a clue to the location of the Quicksilver Graveyard (area B4) and its use. She also tells the PCs that she has seen skum moving to and from the aquarium (area B5). Sara has no knowledge of the aboleth Mohl’omog or its plans for her people.

If asked of her plans, Sara reveals the newly developed gill slits on her neck and insists on taking her chances with the sea, hoping to warn her family and the rest of the village and to find her husband. She cannot be convinced otherwise and leaves soon afterward.



SARA



**Ad Hoc Experience:** If the PCs rescue Sara from the cloakers, award them 2,400 XP.

## WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING (CR 7)

This encounter should take place some time after the PCs have encountered Sara Vanderholt (see Cloaks of Silence on page 16), when the thought of more escaped villagers might lure them into a false sense of security. As the PCs explore the city, a DC 10 Perception check reveals a bedraggled male villager loitering in the courtyard of a nearby ruin. He appears wounded but waves desperately at the PCs and limps slowly toward them. He seems somewhat confused and disoriented, begging the PCs for help in slurred, stilted speech.

**Creature:** By this point, Mohl'omog has decided to take action against the PCs. Using its *veil* ability, the aboleth has changed the appearance of a favorite chuul and sent it to hunt down and kill the PCs. Allow the PCs who make DC 19 Will saves to see through the *veil* before the chuul attacks with surprise.

### CHUUL

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 85 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 46)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The chuul waits until its prey gets within reach to spring its attack, attempting to grab the closest opponent.

**During Combat** The chuul tries to grab a single victim and transfer him to its paralytic tentacles. Once a victim is secure, it attacks other opponents with its claw attacks.

**Morale** The creature gives no thought to self-preservation and fights until destroyed.

**Development:** A DC 17 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check reveals that the powerful illusion displayed by this chuul is abnormal, and that this sort of hunting tactic is unheard of. Smart PCs may speculate (correctly) that a more powerful force was directing its actions.

## B1. WEDDING ROCK COVE

Imposing cliffs rise above the frothy sea, collapsing at a rocky beach of dark sand. Graceful spires and golden domes pierce the island's thick foliage high above, and the remains of a ruined road of white slate crumble down the cliffs onto the beach. Overhead, a half dozen broken towers float in slow elliptical orbits around the island. A large rock covered in graffiti juts from the sand in the middle of the beach.

The large rock in the center of the beach is the "wedding rock," where generations of Blackcove newlyweds have come to consummate their marriages and unwittingly perpetuate an ancient deceit. Humans approaching the rock from the sea (such as those coming from Blackcove)

are fascinated by the rock and lulled into a sleep filled with vivid but unsettling dreams. The skum of the surrounding sea have taken advantage of the villagers' tradition for centuries, using the hypnotic power of the rock to deceive young brides into mating with them. Often these skum are the brides' own ancestors, under the guise of darkness and glamor magic. Afterward, the skum enact a ritual subjecting the couples to a *modify memory* spell to create euphoric recollections of the events, thus concealing and perpetuating the breeding cycle of the ulat-kini.

PCs can discern a disturbing hum emanating from the rock with a DC 15 Perception check. Anyone approaching within 60 feet of the rock must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened, as disturbing visions and unsettling memories that never were appear in the mind and vanish just as quickly. A character who remains within 60 feet of the rock for more than 30 minutes must make a DC 17 Will save or fall into a magical sleep as if affected by a *deep slumber* spell. Creatures brought out of the area recover from these effects in 1 round, and the rock has caster level 12 for purposes of *dispel magic*. A DC 20 Knowledge (history) check identifies the large rock as but a small, exposed fragment of an enormous Azlanti altar to some unknown deity. The rock radiates a strong aura of enchantment.

The cliffs that surround the cove are sheer, reaching heights averaging 100 feet and requiring a DC 25 Climb check to scale. The sharp rocks at the bottom inflict double normal falling damage, and climbers who fall also risk drowning in the churning sea. The jumbled remains of the ancient road, however, provide enough handholds to require only a DC 15 Climb check to navigate, and the slope here reduces falling damage to a maximum of 2d6 points of damage.

**Development:** When the PCs leave the beach and journey into the city itself, read or paraphrase the following.

The streets of the city wrap around the ruined structures of the island in sweeping curves like the shell of some enormous mollusk. Massive slabs of a white, chitinous material grow layer upon layer in a once-contiguous piece, long ago broken into jagged formations. Along the streets, urchin-like spines stab ten feet upward, some with illuminated, glass globes drifting slowly in silent orbit around their points. Densely overgrown, vine-choked buildings alternate between fantastic domed structures and symmetrical, orderly city blocks, following the arcs of the queerly curving streets.

The city's streets have broken into many levels throughout the city, creating rising barriers that separate the island into tiers. Roll 1d4x10 to determine the height difference between street levels when PCs approach the breaks shown on the map. A DC 20 Climb check is required to scale these sheer natural edifices.

The floating globes along the streets contain bound will-o'-wisp used as streetlights. Though the globes are fragile (hardness 1, hp 2) and most are shattered, some have survived intact. Their occupants now roam freely and attempt to lure trespassers into dangerous portions of the ruined city.

## B2. ARCHIVES (CR 6)

The grand crystal dome atop this structure has collapsed into massive shards that jut from the earth at odd angles, forming an unusually beautiful courtyard within this huge structure. A cracked, tessellated floor and worn stone alcoves highlight an ancient archive. Thin, engraved copper plates float gently in the air, bundled in groups like open books, their tarnished pages no doubt filled with all manner of esoterica.

This ancient Azlanti library allows the party to gather important information and learn more of the history of Nal-Kashel.

**Creatures:** For generations, a small colony of rust monsters has subsisted on the bounty of this metallic storehouse of knowledge. Feasts of metals beyond the bland copper found here immediately attract their attention.

**RUST MONSTERS (3)** CR 3  
XP 800 each  
hp 27 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 238)

**Development:** A successful DC 20 Perception check turns up a text from the archives that has survived amid the floating, rusty crumbs of knowledge forever lost. Entitled *Idionestra's Histories*, these early chronicles of Nal-Kashel detail its founding as a small, isolated observatory and its growth as a center of learning. Many of the plates are missing, but referencing the volume identifies most of the island's buildings and provides a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) checks relating to Nal-Kashel.

Other books include *The Seventh Column*, about a secret society who were executed by drowning after a failed coup of Nal-Kashel's colleges, and *Sigil & Glyph*, woefully incomplete editorial broadsheets claiming the existence of secret experiments transforming humans into aquatic hosts for alien entities from the Dark Tapestry, under the control of something known as the "unwelcome guest."

GMs can create similar tomes to aid parties who need more information, such as a volume on the operation of the orrery in the observatory (area B7) that provides a bonus on the Spellcraft check there, clues to the nature

### ARMILLARY AMULET

Aura faint divination; CL 5th

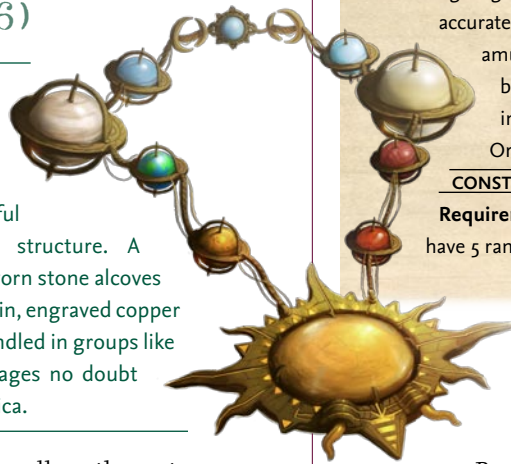
Slot neck; Price 2,500 gp; Weight —

#### DESCRIPTION

This thin chain of silvery-gray metal holds a series of interlocking rings that slowly turn within themselves in an accurate replication of the celestial sphere. The amulet grants its wearer a +5 competence bonus on Spellcraft checks. It also grants immunity to the dangerous effects of the Orrery of Nal-Kashel (see area B7).

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 5 ranks in the Spellcraft skill; **Cost** 1,250 gp



of the Quicksilver Graveyard (area B4), or further hints about the ancient machinations of the Azlanti.

**Treasure:** An additional DC 20 Perception check reveals a copper plate engraved with arcane formulas: an Azlanti *minor crown of blasting*. When touched, the plate separates into stamped metal glyphs that closely orbit the head of the user. The item takes up the user's head slot and reforms into the copper plate when removed.

## B3. THE GROWING RUIN (CR 6)

Piles of white shale litter the ground before a twisting, broken spire near a high cliff. Large white flakes constantly slough off the top and sides of the tower and plummet to the ground and sea below, as if the spire was still growing like some out-of-control mollusk. A gaping hole provides entry to the lower floor.

**Hazard:** This magical tower sheds large flakes of a thin, constantly growing, shell-like material—a malfunctioning example of Azlanti organic architecture. These shards of falling shale slice dangerously through the air. Creatures within 60 feet of the tower must make a DC 12 Reflex save each round or be cut by falling debris for 2d4 points of damage. This is a CR 3 hazard.

**Creature:** A giant frilled lizard lairs within this 30-foot-diameter tower. This beast consumed an important skum astrologer who possessed an item integral to the working of the observatory (area B7). Unless the characters take extra precautions to sneak toward the tower, the lizard charges as soon as a PC approaches within 60 feet of the tower's entrance.

**GIANT FRILLED LIZARD** CR 5  
XP 1,600  
hp 59 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 194)

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** The lizard hides in the darkness of the tower's interior, surprising the party with its intimidating charge ability when anyone approaches within 60 feet.

**During Combat** After its initial charge, the lizard attacks with its tail and bite, taking 5-foot steps each round back toward the tower.

**Morale** The lizard fights until dead.

**Treasure:** A DC 20 Perception check discovers a *horn of fog* inside the tower, buried under flakes fallen from the shell-like walls. In addition, the skum astrologer's *armillary amulet* (see sidebar) lies in the lizard's belly. Recovering the item takes 1d10 rounds and may further subject the party to falling debris, depending on the location of the lizard's body.

## B4. QUICKSILVER GRAVEYARD (CR 7)

A low wall encircles seven radiating pools containing silvery liquid. Thousands of dark motes gently float in each reservoir. Crumbling markers of an etched coppery metal lie half buried among the ruins. The stench of rot spoils the tranquil scene, and gulls pick at a neatly arranged pile of discarded bodies nearby.

The greatest philosophers of the learned colony of Nal-Kashel are buried in this Azlanti graveyard. Deceased luminaries were delivered to the pools, where their essences were absorbed by the magic of the reservoirs and their memories and likenesses were maintained. Students could summon the simulacrum of deceased lecturers to witness their most important and famous lessons.

The pools constantly require living souls for power, however, and the reservoirs' ability to summon simulacrum is failing. Mohl'omog's servitors summoned the silvery simulacrum of its creators to learn the secret of how to operate the observatory's orrery (area B7), sacrificing 20 weak villagers to the pools in the process. The corpses of these villagers are respectfully arranged with their hands serenely folded over their chests. Traces of silvery ooze can be seen on their clothing, and a DC 15 Heal check reveals they died by bludgeoning.

Near the corpses stands a coppery plaque with tiny inscriptions written in the lost language of Ancient Azlanti. Three inscriptions have been burnished clean. A *comprehend languages* spell or DC 20 Linguistics check reveals them as proper names with grandiose titles. The three cleaned inscriptions are:

**Aulus**, Observant Councilor Most High, his speech on solar calculation, Lesson 3 of 6.

**Ossoryol**, Master of Lenses & Optics, the Master's final lecture on celestial alignment, Part the All.

**Erinthander**, Grand Provost of Spheres & Glyphs, his platform on the implications of solar sigils & wards, Lesson 2 of 3.

A nearby stone-mounted plaque, which has also been cleaned, includes instructions for the summoning ritual. When a living person reaches into the waters with bare flesh and calls forth a specific person by name and title, the pool forms a mercurial likeness of the individual for the length of the requested lecture.

The recent sacrifices gave Mohl'omog's servants enough power to learn how to set the orrery in its current position, but the residual power in the pools allows for the calling of only one more simulacrum. The lectures are esoteric and academic, but listening to the simulacrum's lessons can help PCs learn how to operate the orrery themselves. Aulus's speech and Ossoryol's lecture each provide a cumulative +2 bonus on the Spellcraft check to operate the orrery. Erinthander's lecture reveals the location of the missing orrery lenses in the uppermost spire of the Armillary Tower (area B8), adjacent to the observatory, in an otherwise long, boring lecture on the proper enhancement of solar runes.

**Creature:** When the first lecture ends, regardless of which simulacrum is chosen, the mercurial summoned mass slops out of the reservoir and attacks with a foul semblance of life. This quicksilver simulacrum is identical in all ways to a black pudding, although it's as reflective as mercury. This encounter occurs only once; future simulacrum are reabsorbed back into the pool.

**QUICKSILVER SIMULACRUM**

**CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

Black pudding (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 35*)

**hp 105**

**Development:** If the PCs fail to summon the proper simulacrum, they must find a power source to re-energize the pools. A DC 20 Spellcraft check reveals that anyone of Azlanti stock (including skum) killed in the last 24 hours will suffice; its essence is absorbed with contact with the reservoir. Bodies could be pilfered from the excavation site or from random encounters with guards. The villagers' bodies here have already been drained and are useless for this purpose.

## B5. AQUARIUM (CR 8)

A sheet of muddy water flowing up from the floor forms the door to this domed, shell-like structure. The liquid moves in a continuous loop, flowing from a large central pool across the floor and up the walls in a thin sheet, then falling from the domed crystal ceiling in a cylinder of water. A large bubble of

# FROM SHORE TO SEA

murky water floats in the air above the pool. Detailed mosaics of fantastic sea creatures and undersea motifs adorn the coral-colored walls.

The skum have recently repaired this 60-foot-diameter aquarium to keep their catches fresh and in a convenient location. The central pool is 30 feet in diameter, and the floating bubble is 20 feet in diameter.

**Creatures:** Hidden in the murky, floating bubble is a very hungry giant octopus. As the PCs explore the room, allow DC 15 Perception checks to notice the pool turn jet black as the octopus fills the sphere with its ink cloud. All succeeding on the check are unsurprised when the pool suddenly sprouts tentacles as the octopus attacks. The ink cloud grants the octopus total concealment within the bubble.

**GIANT OCTOPUS** CR 8  
XP 4,800  
hp 90 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 219)

**Treasure:** The corpse of a decaying skum lies toward the rear of the building. The dead skum wears a *cloak of the manta ray* and holds a corroded copper scroll case containing two *scrolls of freedom of movement*. An *elixir of swimming* is tucked in the cloak's interior pocket.

## B6. THE EXCAVATION (CR VARIES)

An entire section of the island has plunged to sea level here, forming a sunken cove far below the streets of the city above. Among the toppled towers punctuating this beach, a rough canal cuts from the shore deep into the interior of the island, disappearing into a dark cave mouth in the cliff wall. Seawater in the trench rises and falls with the tide. Dozens of exhausted villagers excavate the canal with crude shovels and large clamshells scavenged from the nearby beach.

The cliffs drop 180 feet to the beach below. PCs approaching the excavation from the top of the cliffs can detect a steep, roughly carved staircase descending to the shore along the southern cliff with a DC 15 Perception check. The trench leads into a cave in the cliff face, 50 feet deep and 30 feet wide, eerily lit by two will-o'-wisp globes. The canal extends for the length of the cave and terminates at a partially uncovered wall of strange, sculpted coral. A DC 15 Perception check reveals the sounds of metal scraping on stone from the other side of

the wall. A DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) identifies the coral wall as a deeply set foundation.

**Creatures:** Enslaved by Mohl'omog's orrery-amplified mental domination, 60 villagers work to dig a channel to free the aboleth from its subterranean prison. Two dozen more villagers work inside the cave excavation.

Skum guards concealed in the nearby ruins and the waters of the trench keep a watchful eye on the villagers, only revealing themselves if the PCs interfere with the excavation too much (see below).

Most of the villagers are gillmen, aquatic descendants of the ancient Azlanti (see page 19 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*). In addition, they all suffer taint from the island's warping (see pages 12–14). Under Mohl'omog's mental control, the villagers completely ignore the PCs. If physically interrupted, villagers turn and study the PCs with dead-eyed gazes as Mohl'omog taps the villagers' sensory input for information on the intruders. A DC 15 Sense Motive check or *detect magic* spell reveals an enchantment effect. *Remove curse*, *protection from evil*, *dispel magic*, or similar effects (against caster level 16th) temporarily break this domination, but due to the amplification of the orrery, such spells have a duration of only 1 round per caster level.

Slaves temporarily freed from the aboleth's domination gain the confused condition, but when acting normally during this episode recall hearing “an overwhelming call from the sea” and meeting “the one we knew would someday come.” They do not reveal the true nature of the aboleth or its location.

If the PCs interfere with the villagers (for example, by attempting to free them), Mohl'omog orders two slaves per round to attack the PCs with clubs and shovels to drive the party away. If the PCs begin wantonly slaying the innocent workforce, Mohl'omog mentally alerts his skum guards, who attack the PCs in patrols of 2d4 skum each that arrive every 5 rounds until the PCs are killed or driven away.

**ENSLAVED VILLAGERS (84)** CR 1/2  
XP —  
Male or female gillman commoners 2  
N Medium humanoid (aquatic)  
Init +0; Senses Perception +0

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**DEFENSE**  
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10  
hp 9 each (2d6+2)  
Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0



ENSLAVED VILLAGER

**Weaknesses** water dependent

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**OFFENSE**

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

**Melee** improvised club +2 (1d6+1)

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**STATISTICS**

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

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Improvised Weapon Mastery

**Skills** Profession (fisherman) +5, Swim +14

**Languages** Common

**SQ** amphibious

**Gear** blunt digging tool (as club)

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**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Water Dependent (Ex)** A gillman's body requires constant submersion in fresh or salt water. Any gillman who spends more than a full day without fully submerging himself in water risks internal organ failure, painful cracking of the skin, and death within 4d6 hours.

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**SKUM (2D4 PER PATROL)**

**CR 2**

**XP 600 each**

**hp** 20 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 253)

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## B7. THE OBSERVATORY (CR 9)

A cracked crystalline dome surrounded by overgrown, walled courtyards rests here in ruined splendor, precariously supported by intricately curved columns. Smashed doors of coral open into the pervasive gloom within. Inside, the crystal dome reveals a remarkably clear night sky. Dozens of glowing metallic globes, spheres, glyphs, and crystal lenses circle in swirling orbits around the room, some held together in corroded metal mounts. Periodically, a lens pauses, briefly concentrating the light of some distant star upon one of the glowing glyphs circling the perimeter of the massive orrery.

This ancient observatory houses an astronomical artifact that was the jewel of Nal-Kashel, a device for making prophecies, controlling the weather, and discovering new arcana. The crystal dome magically filters the light of day from the interior of the structure, revealing the stars normally concealed by the sun's light. The metal spheres and crystal orbs of this orrery orbit freely through the air, some serving as intricate mounts for lenses that focus concentrated starlight on a series of perimeter-orbiting glyphs. The observatory is 200 feet in diameter, and the dome is 60 feet high in the center.

Its lenses cracked, its glyphs faded, and its spheres out of synchronization, the once finely calibrated machine now works only erratically. Gerlach used the orrery to power some of the remaining glyphs; he then activated

them to control the tides, flood Blackcove, and amplify the influence of Mohl'omog's mental powers. Currently, only one amplification glyph is active, and the PCs must deactivate it if they wish to break the aboleth's mental domination of the enslaved villagers.

**Trap:** Investigating the observatory can be difficult, as the PCs must navigate the orrery's hazardous orbiting components. The entire building is treated as a deadly trap with variable effects. For every 10 minutes a character spends inside the observatory, there is a 10% cumulative chance of setting off a random effect, alternately rolled as 60% per hour spent examining the device. During combat, this chance increases to 25% per round due to the distraction of battle.

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**THE ORRERY OF NAL-KASHEL**

**CR 7**

**Type** magic and mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 30\*

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**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (entire area); **Reset** automatic (immediately)

**Effect** (varies; roll 1d6)

- Electricity Arc** (2d6 electricity damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft. line)
- Wild Orbiting Globe** Atk +10 ranged (2d4+2)
- Astral Shunt** spell effect (target subject to *blur* for 2d4 rounds, DC 15 Will negates)
- Armillary Sphere Cluster** Atk +10 ranged (4d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)
- Spatial Ambiguity** spell effect (target subject to *blink* for 1d6 rounds, DC 15 Will negates)
- Stray Starlight** (target subject to *greater invisibility*, *silence*, and *confusion* for 2d4 rounds, DC 23 Will negates)

\* Successful Disable Device checks pause the device for 2d10 minutes, stopping all effects until movement resumes. Any user wearing an armillary amulet is immune to any of the above effects.

**Creatures:** The unnatural energies of the observatory have recently attracted a mated pair of phase spiders, who are interested in making the PCs their next meal. The spiders' unique dual-plane nature makes them immune to the orrery's astral shunt, spatial ambiguity, and stray starlight effects.

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**PHASE SPIDERS (2)**

**CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**

**hp** 51 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 226)

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**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** The phase spiders lurk in the Ethereal Plane, attempting to surprise the party with their ethereal ambush ability. They materialize adjacent to spellcasters, make bite attacks, and then use *ethereal jaunt* to shift away before opponents can retaliate.

**During Combat** The phase spiders continue this gambit each round, moving intelligently to keep foes within reach, so as not to sacrifice the move actions they need for *ethereal jaunt*.

**Morale** The phase spiders retreat to the Ethereal Plane if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points.

**Development:** Figuring out the complicated arcane technology to shut down the orrery's amplification glyph requires a DC 40 Spellcraft check. Only one check can be made each day, after 1d4+1 hours of study spent dodging the orrery's many dangerous effects, but any character with at least 4 ranks in Spellcraft can use the aid another action to provide a +2 bonus. Due to the distractions of the dangerous orrery components, characters cannot take 10 or take 20 on this check.

Fortunately, crafty PCs have several means at their disposal to discover the inner workings of the daunting device. Instructional steles inscribed in the Azlanti tongue hover in stationary positions around the room, and a DC 18 Perception check finds one that has received recent attention. A *comprehend languages* spell or a DC 30 Linguistics check deciphers the lens-manipulation instructions on the stele, providing a +5 bonus on the Spellcraft check. Studying the orrery for at least 10 rounds with an *identify* spell grants an additional +10 bonus on the check as well. Each daily attempt at operating the device adds a cumulative +2 bonus as PCs become familiar with the mechanism.

The instructional stele also carries a warning to students to wear their "armillary amulets." The PCs may learn the whereabouts of such an amulet (in area B3) from the will-o'-wisps (see *The Watchers of Nal-Kashel* on page 14). A character wearing the *armillary amulet* gains a +5 competence bonus on the Spellcraft check as well as immunity to the orrery's dangerous effects. In addition, listening to the speeches of the deceased lecturers in the Quicksilver Graveyard (area B4) can provide further bonuses.

To prevent the party from destroying the mechanism, make it clear during their initial investigations that tampering with the device is extremely dangerous. If the PCs try to operate other aspects of the orrery, show the harmful effects of tampering with sudden examples of *control weather*, *call lightning*, or *earthquake* spells. Such effects can warn overzealous PCs of the dire consequences of using brute force against ancient and unstable artifacts.

Once the PCs succeed on the Spellcraft check to discover the means to the orrery's operation, they discover an inconsistency that immediately halts their effort—a great crystal lens needed to properly shut down the glyph lies shattered on the floor of the observatory, sabotaged by Gerlach to prevent just the kind of tampering the PCs are attempting.

Another instructional stele (found with a DC 18 Perception check) contains a caveat for broken lenses, instructing students to "consult your professor so that a replacement might be retrieved." Although the professors have been dead for some 10,000 years, their counsel is still available in the Quicksilver Graveyard (area B4), a piece of information that can be provided by either Sara Vanderholt (see *Cloaks of Silence* on page 15) or the will-o'-wisps (see *The Watchers of Nal-Kashel* on page 15). The lecture of Erinthander reveals the location of replacements for the missing lens, secured in the broken, orbiting spire of the Armillary Tower (area B8). See *Replacing the Lens* on page 22 for details on activating the orrery once the PCs retrieve the missing lens.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** If the PCs survive the dangers of the orrery and make the Spellcraft check to discover its workings without damaging or destroying it, award them 3,200 XP.

## B8. ARMILLARY TOWER & ORBITING SPIRE (CR 4)

By listening to Erinthander's lecture in the Quicksilver Graveyard (area B4), the PCs can learn the location of the missing lenses in the armillary spire adjacent to the observatory. The missing lens is a potential bottleneck in the adventure, as it is required to activate the orrery and free the villagers. If the PCs are having trouble finding the lens, you can use the results of divination spells to guide them in the right direction or perhaps have them encounter a patrol of skum sent by Gerlach to locate replacement lenses, complete with a map to the Armillary Tower.

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Nothing remains of the Armillary Tower but crumbling, broken walls; its upper levels were long ago destroyed. However, a dark shadow passes overhead as the tumbling top of the ruined steeple floats in its perpetual orbit above the island, narrowly missing the tower's ruined foundations.

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The information gathered by the PCs reveals that the lenses are stored in the upper spire, but only shattered walls remain rooted to the ground. The tower's top room still exists, however, long broken off but held in an elliptical orbit around the island. To access the room and gain the lenses stored within, the PCs must enter the floating spire.

The spire orbits the island every 10 minutes, and only the lower of two levels is accessible from the outside. Inside the tower's base, an old stone staircase climbs 70 feet to the upper broken edges of the tower. To reach the orbiting spire, PCs may use magical means, such as *fly* or *dimension door*, or more mundane means, such as using



grappling hooks or jumping into an opening in the spire as it passes by the tower ruins. If the PCs choose to fly to the spire, see *The Orbital Current* on page 12, as the tower orbits at a height of 80 feet.

At its closest point, the orbiting spire passes within 10 feet of the crumbling upper stair of the tower, but there is no room for a running start on the stairs, thereby doubling the DC of any Acrobatics checks to clear the distance. Each person beyond the first attempting the jump as the tower passes adds +2 to the DC of this check due to the crowded, narrow ledge. After a successful leap, a PC must make a DC 15 Climb check to clamber inside the nearest opening. Failure results in a fall from 80 feet up, and the orbit of the spire carries any falling PCs 2d6x10 feet per round away from their starting position.

Traversing the tumbling spire without the luxury of flight requires a DC 10 Climb check each round to move at quarter speed, or DC 15 to move at half speed. Any failure of 5 or more results in the PC getting knocked about within the spire and suffering 2d6 points of damage.

The replacement lenses hover serenely in the uppermost room of the tower and are cushioned from the erratic movements of the spire by a stationary levitation effect. Several lenses are shattered, their shards still hanging in place. Only three intact lenses remain.

**Trap:** If a PC who is not wearing an *armillary amulet* touches any of the lenses, he triggers a trap. A PC wearing the *armillary amulet* can easily and safely retrieve a lens without setting off the trap.

**ELECTRICITY ARC TRAP**

**CR 4**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** electricity arc (4d6 electricity damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft. line)

**Development:** Without the *armillary amulet*, disarming the trap takes 2d4 rounds. In addition, a DC 15 Strength check is required to remove the lenses from the levitation field. The bronze-mounted lenses weigh 50 pounds each, which may encumber some characters as they return to the observatory.

**Treasure:** Searching the tumbling, orbiting spire with a DC 20 Perception check turns up a selection of ancient Azlanti art objects worth a total of 2,500 gp.

## REPLACING THE LENS

Once the PCs have recovered the orrery's missing lens, an additional DC 30 Spellcraft check must be made to place it properly, an action that takes 2d4 rounds. This check is

subject to the same modifiers as the initial investigations of the device (see area **B7**), but the PCs may retry the check as often as needed.

Replacing the lens increases the PCs' chances of drawing a random orrery effect to 25% per round. Any PC holding the lens and hit by the orrery's wild orbiting globe, astral shunt, or armillary sphere cluster effects must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid dropping the lens and thus shattering it and requiring another replacement from the orbiting spire.

If the check is successful, the lens is pulled suddenly into orbit, where it hovers in place and collects starlight in an increasingly tight-focused beam. A single, glowing glyph rises to meet the beam, pulses briefly, then descends slowly to rest, now dark. At the excavation site, the villagers begin slowly shaking off the effects of the aboleth's enhanced domination (see *Freeing the Villagers* below).

**Ad Hoc Experience:** For successfully replacing the lens and deactivating the glyph, award the PCs 2,400 XP.

## B9. THE NATATORIUM

This location and the hidden chambers beneath it are detailed in Part Three.

### FREEING THE VILLAGERS (CR 8)

By the time the PCs arrive at the excavation site after deactivating the domination-enhancing glyph, an unusual standoff has occurred between the villagers and eight skum guards. The villagers are no longer dominated, but they now face a harsh reality—their grotesque captors are their ancestors who underwent the change from gillmen to skum. The villagers are shocked at this realization and the implications of their ancient traditions and are unsure what to do.

As the PCs approach, the skum croak appeals to their relatives: "Kindred, free the Master and you can return to peaceful lives!" and "Now is the time to repay the sea's debts!" A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the villagers are no longer charmed, but they are scared and confused—and seem to be considering the skum's offer. A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals the skum guards seem sincere and disturbingly kind in their requests (indeed, the skum have no wish to kill the citizens of Blackcove).

If the PCs approach peacefully, the skum guards bare their arms but do not attack, croaking only that "Outsiders have no place here" and "You owe the sea nothing, and the Master below even less." The villagers inform the PCs of their newfound revelation, pointing out skum with shaking fingers and quavering statements like "He is my grandfather" or "These creatures are our kin." For their part, the skum are nervous and agitated at the PCs'



presence and continue with their threats toward them while trying to persuade the villagers to keep digging. A crowd control struggle erupts.

The PCs must make DC 14 Diplomacy or DC 12 Intimidate checks, opposed by the skum, to determine who persuades the crowd. Due to the skum's relationship with the villagers, the PCs have a -5 circumstance penalty on their checks, while the skum receive a special +5 racial bonus (for a total modifier of +8) on their Intimidate checks to persuade their kin to return to work, coercing their kin with threats of the "sea's debts" and "catches that will never come." Whichever side gets the higher result on these checks convinces the villagers to perform as desired. If neither the skum nor the PCs reach the required DCs, the villagers ignore both sides until further arguments are made. For flavor and tension, award success on the best two out of three checks as escalating arguments are made.

**Creatures:** If the PCs win the diplomatic effort, the villagers obey the party and shy away from the skum. As the villagers retreat, the aggressive, evil nature of the skum guards takes over, and they attack the PCs. If the skum win the diplomatic effort, the villagers move into the cave to resume work, and the confident skum attack the PCs for their intrusion.

**SKUM (8)** CR 2  
**XP 600 each**  
 hp 20 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 253)

**Development:** If the PCs defeat the skum, they may make one last Diplomacy or Intimidate check to convince the startled villagers of the evil nature of the skum and the dire consequences of the excavation. If convinced, the villagers heed the PCs and cease their work. If the check fails, they do not stop working, convinced that they are saving themselves and their people by setting free "the one we knew would someday come." If the PCs provoke or attack the villagers, up to 20 villagers attack the PCs (see area B6 for the villagers' stats). In this case, the PCs should receive no experience for their shameful deeds, and paladins and good-aligned clerics should suffer immediate consequences.

Once the PCs halt the excavation, the villagers can provide a wealth of information. They reveal that Gerlach leads the skum and works "in a secret place, deep beneath the island" to create some magical elixir. They also reveal that the sorcerer discovered the desiccated husk of an old Azlanti god, a creature called Mohl'omog, although their recollections of meeting this ancient being are hazy at best. Many recollect where they were taken when they were first brought to the island—down the steep steps of the natatorium (area B9).

To remove the burden of the rescued villagers from the party, have Sara Vanderholt and the druid Lira Saruven arrive from the surf to lead the villagers safely back to Blackcove. Lira notes the PCs' corrupted physical condition from the island's warping effect, which should be quite advanced at this stage. "We have repaid our debts to the sea," she says, "and now the God of Deep Waters owes you a debt in return." If needed, she requests that the PCs venture beneath the natatorium to defeat Gerlach and Mohl'omog once and for all.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** If the PCs successfully free the villagers and learn of the hidden chambers below the natatorium, award them an additional 4,000 XP.

## PART THREE: THE NATATORIUM OF MOHL'OMOG

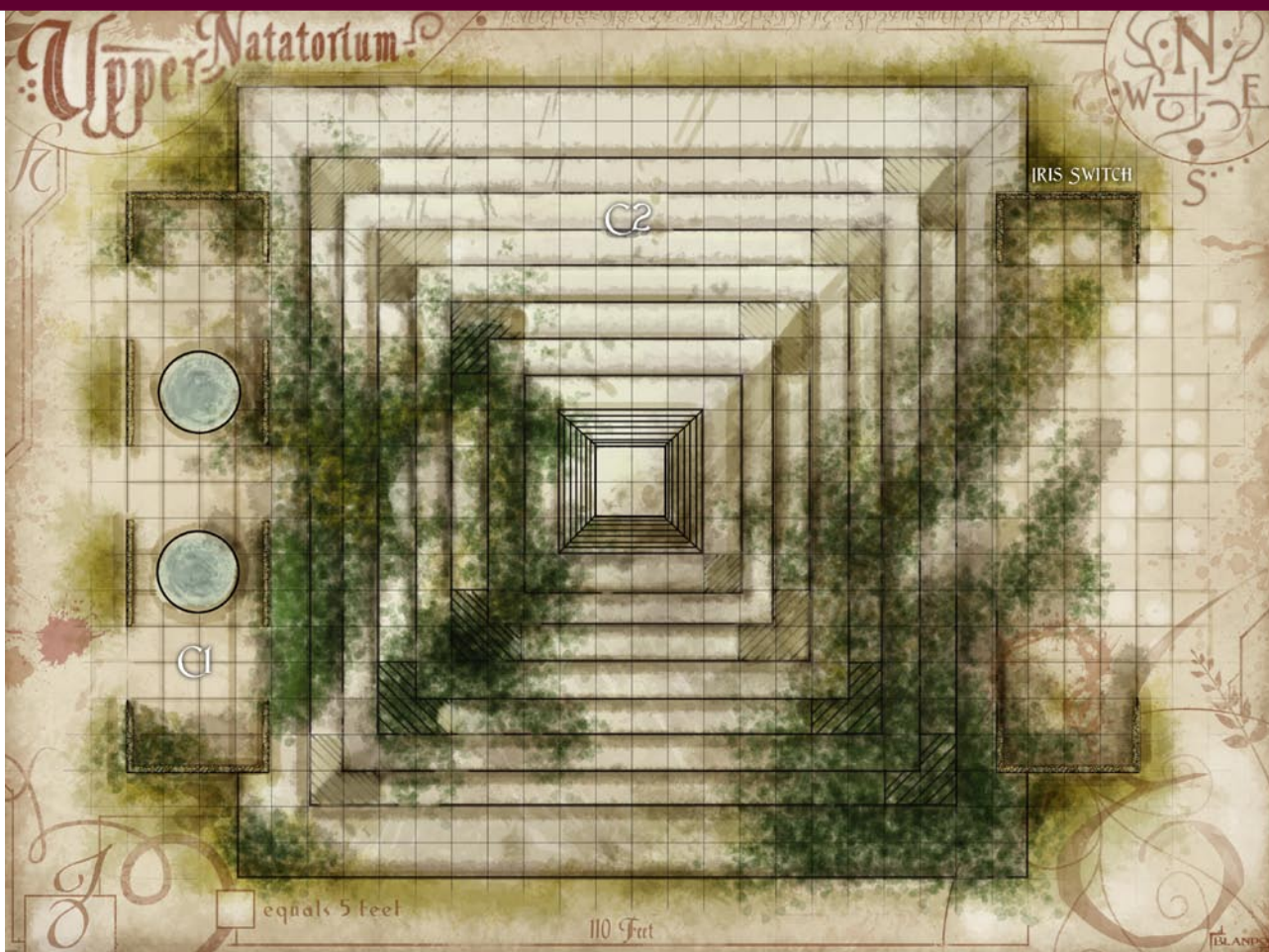
The hidden chambers below the natatorium (area B9) conceal the trapped aboleth Mohl'omog and Gerlach, the ulat-kini sorcerer who nursed Mohl'omog back to health in exchange for the promise of a cure for Blackcove's gillmen. Gerlach perfected the promised cure before succumbing to his skum nature and the aboleth's mental domination. Once they venture within, the PCs must prevent the release of the dangerous tyrant and discover the cure to their own physical warping and corruption.

### B9. THE NATATORIUM

Tall, cracked walls surround this structure. They are punctuated by two grand arched entryways, only one of which still stands. Massive, verdigris-coated mounts for huge lenses hover lazily over the complex, their glass long ago shattered, while ruined aqueducts lead away from the structure in sweeping curves, disappearing into the island's foliage.

This grand, stepped natatorium was the center of leisure in old Nal-Kashel. Here students and lecturers alike bathed daily, spending hours socializing in the hot waters of the natatorium, which were heated with huge, focused lenses. Deep channels beneath the island connected the natatorium to the sea, and the tidal level and temperature were artificially controlled through magic and engineering. Only a few Azlanti nobles knew of the influence of the aboleth on this social center, and for years the creature ensnared the minds of the most talented academics, swaying their interests toward dark studies.

As the natatorium is a central location in the city and the focus of the villagers' excavations, hasty PCs may rush to explore it prematurely. If PCs investigate the natatorium before they have stopped the aboleth's domination, remove the skum guards from area C1 and describe the natatorium as lifeless and abandoned. PCs choosing to investigate the site prematurely should have a hard time finding the



iris portal leading to the lower natatorium. Note that the aboleth has taken measures to conceal the entrance to its lair as well (see area C2). Do not map the area or read descriptions at this point; only provide simple descriptions of the complex. Downplaying attention to the area may convince players that the structure is not important.

### C1. GUARD ROOM (CR 8)

Graceful, crumbling archways open into a large bathing room. Two pools stand in the center of the room, full of stagnant water.

**Creatures:** Once the PCs have halted Mohl'omog's mental domination of the villagers, the aboleth recalls many of his skum guards here to the natatorium. In this case, four skum hide underwater in each of the filthy bathing pools (Stealth +10), and they attempt to ambush the PCs as they enter this ancient spa.

**SKUM (8)**

**CR 2**

**XP 600 each**

hp 20 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 253)

**Treasure:** A DC 15 Perception check reveals a suit of +1 *banded mail* left behind in one of the pools, forged in the likeness of a prehistoric armor-plated fish. In addition, a DC 20 Perception check discovers a cache of six *potions of levitate* hidden in the rubble along the southern wall. Gerlach placed the potions here for the skum to use to navigate the shaft down to the lower natatorium (see area C2).

### C2. THE SPIRAL WELL (CR 6)

A marvel of engineering, the interior of the complex is a deep, stepped well plunging to a dry basin below. Each level consists of a narrow walkway with steep stairs in the corners that lead to the level below, creating a spiraling descent to the bottom of the pit. Half of the structure is ruined, with debris littering large portions of the walkways.

The stepped, spiraling well is 90 feet deep. Each stepped level is 5 feet wide and drops 10 feet to the next level below. The narrow, concentric ledges are slippery, adding +2 to the DC of Acrobatics checks made in the area. In addition, the ruined areas are steeply sloped with loose rubble and are considered rough terrain, adding +5 to the DC of Acrobatics

# FROM SHORE TO SEA



checks made in those areas. The steep stairs between levels are considered severely sloped (+5 Acrobatics DC).

A permanent *illusory wall* covers the bottom basin of the well, which appears as a simple, flat slate surface with small puddles of murky water. Tossed rocks do not reveal the illusion, as it lies just above the closed iris portal, but a PC who searches the basin and directly interacts with the illusion can make a DC 17 Will save to disbelieve the illusion.

**Trap:** The *illusory wall* conceals a complicated, iris-like aperture, the entrance to the lower natatorium and the lair of Mohl'omog. The switch to control the opening is hidden in the collapsed guard room to the east and can be found with a DC 20 Perception check. Otherwise, the portal requires a DC 25 Disable Device check to open. Once the portal is open, it snaps shut once per round if PCs attempt to cross the threshold.

## SPRING-LOADED IRIS PORTAL CR 6

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic (immediately)

**Effect** Atk +20 melee (2d6+6/x4)

**Development:** The portal opens onto a 10-foot-square vertical shaft that drops 90 feet to the flooded entryway (area C3) of the lower natatorium. The skum use *potions of levitate* provided by Gerlach (stored in area C1) to traverse the shaft. A PC without flight or levitation may attempt to climb down the slippery walls with a DC 25 Climb check.

## BELOW THE NATATORIUM

The domed chambers and corridors below the natatorium are of a decidedly different manufacture than the upper pool area, with its pedestrian symmetry. The rooms and passageways seem grown from a greasy, organic substance that looks like the dark carapace of a deep-sea crustacean. The corridors are all completely circular tunnels with diameters of 15 feet, while the rooms all have domed ceilings 15 feet high at their perimeter and 20 feet high at their apex.

The water level in flooded rooms is chest deep for Medium-sized characters (Small characters must swim), but in flooded corridors it's only knee deep (waist deep for Small characters). The slippery surfaces increase the DC of all Acrobatics checks by +2 in all areas.



### C3. FLOODED ENTRYWAY (CR 7)

A large, spherical chamber lies at the bottom of the shaft, its strangely twisted, ribbed walls seemingly grown from the organic shell of some deep-sea creature. Curving, bone-like structures support the high domed ceiling, and stagnant seawater floods the chamber to chest level. To the northeast, a large portion of this organic growth has collapsed, revealing dark bedrock. Of the three spherical passages sprouting from this room, two show similar signs of collapse.

The water is murky and chest deep for Medium-sized characters, but Small creatures must swim. Characters are subject to the combat modifiers for fighting in water (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 433) but are considered to have firm footing. The west and southeast passages are blocked from collapse.

**Creatures:** Three electric eels and a giant moray eel lurk beneath the surface of the water, and they attack as soon as the first PC enters the water. The moray eel prefers to attack targets stunned by the electric eels.

#### ELECTRIC EELS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 17 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 119)

#### GIANT MORAY EEL

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 52 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 119)

### C4. COLLAPSED PASSAGE (CR 6)

More bony growths support this circular passageway. The concave floor is slippery and uneven, and the water level drops to knee height. The tunnel diverges ahead, although one passageway has completely collapsed. The rocks reflect light with an oily sheen.

**Creatures:** The alchemical run-off from Gerlach's experiments beyond the collapsed corridor has coalesced into two gray oozes lurking below the murky water. They are difficult to spot due to their transparency and the cover of water, so they require a DC 30 Perception check to be noticed. They wait for prey to walk over

# FROM SHORE TO SEA

them, inflicting automatic damage and attempting grab attacks against the PCs.

## GRAY OOZES (2) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 50 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 166)

**Development:** The corridor rises above water level shortly beyond area C4. A DC 15 Survival check reveals several pairs of damp footprints emerging from the water and moving to and from the room ahead (area C5).

## C5. DEAD AND DYING (CR 6)

This half-collapsed room is strewn with the remnants of recent slaughter. Several villagers lie on the floor here, wounded and dying, entangled in nets and impaled by broken tridents—their cries of pain echo throughout the room. The metallic tinge of blood hangs heavy in the air of the chamber.

This scene is a *programmed image* created by Mohl'omog to drain the party's resources and is triggered by the passage of anyone other than a gillman or skum at the diverging corridors of the collapsed passage (area C4). Within the room are eight illusory wounded villagers. Three are disabled and plead for aid, while another five lie unconscious and dying. The three disabled villagers point to the more grievously injured and beg that they be helped first. Curative magics seem to heal the illusory villagers and even seem to restore the dying to consciousness. The illusory villagers thank the PCs for aid while continuing to beg for "a little more" healing. Any PC interacting with the illusion receives a single DC 19 Will save to see the illusion for what it is.

**Trap:** The weakened northeastern wall is rigged to collapse if any of the marked squares are entered.

## COLLAPSING WALL TRAP CR 6

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset none

Effect Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in room)

## C6. FLOODED CHAMBER (CR 7)

A dank pool of seawater has seeped into this domed chamber and flooded most of the room. In the chamber's dark recesses, seaweed floats in the dark water in tangled mats.

**Creatures:** The "seaweed" is in fact two cloakers. Any PC who makes a DC 26 Perception check recognizes the cloakers for what they really are and can act on the surprise round.

## CLOAKERS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 51 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 47)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The cloakers emerge from the water with 5-foot steps and begin moaning, directing their unnerve effects toward the party.

**During Combat** The cloakers fly just out of melee reach. One uses its unnerve or fear moan, while the other attempts a stupor moan. If successful, the latter cloaker attempts to bull rush the held opponent into the water to drown it.

**Morale** The cloakers fight until slain.

**Treasure:** A DC 15 Perception check while searching the flooded portion of the room reveals a fossilized skeleton of a human grasping a mineral-encrusted +1 *aberration bane spear*. The spear's head contains a motif of seven entwined columns, the symbol of an Azlanti secret society that attempted to assassinate Mohl'omog in antiquity (see area B2 for details).

## C7. CHUUL AMBUSH (CR 9)

This domed room smells horrible, and a pool of polluted water floods the eastern end of the chamber.

**Creatures:** Hearing the moans of the cloakers in C6, two chuuls have set up an ambush at the entrance to this room. One chuul draws the attention of the party in the corridor past the room, while the second hides just inside the room, trying to surprise the PCs as they pass its hiding spot.

## CHUULS (2) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 46)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The chuul inside the room hides (Stealth +9), hoping to charge the party when they attack the chuul in the corridor outside.

**During Combat** Each chuul attempts to grab a single victim and transfer him to its paralytic tentacles. Once each has secured a victim, it attacks other opponents with its claws.

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

**Treasure:** A DC 15 Perception check discovers a fist-sized gem glowing beneath the murky water, a *fire elemental gem* once used to summon fire elementals to heat the waters below the natatorium.

## C8. DECAYING CHAMBER

The organic structures of this room are badly decayed, exposing the island's dark bedrock beneath.



## MOHL'OMOG

PCs passing the entrance of this room or the corridor beyond set off a mental *alarm* cast by Gerlach, who immediately begins preparing himself for combat.

**Treasure:** A DC 15 Perception check discovers a small urn in the room containing 4 uses of *salve of slipperiness*.

### RETURNING THE LOST MASTER TO THE SEA

When the PCs pass the Decaying Chamber, they enter the lair of Gerlach and Mohl'omog. This series of encounters is exceptionally challenging, with the potential to turn into a CR 11 encounter, and GMs should familiarize themselves with all of the locations and creatures present. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs enter the corridor leading to areas C9 through C11.

A steady glow of light and the rhythmic sound of sharp metal on stone come from the corridor ahead.

#### C9. THE PRISON OF MOHL'OMOG (CR 7)

An *illusory wall* conceals the entrance to this chamber (DC 17 Will save to disbelieve if the area is actively searched). With the sounds of the excavation up ahead, the PCs will probably not detect the *illusory wall*. If this is the case, proceed to The Final Excavation.

The organic walls of this chamber appear diseased, peeling away from the bedrock walls in large flakes. The desiccated

carcass of some huge, aberrant sea creature lies atop a large bier-like growth rising in the center of the room. Dried husks composed of what looks like discarded, wrinkled skin lie scattered about the floor, which is coated in a thin veneer of slime.

The slime on the floor increases the DC of all Acrobatics checks made in the room by +5.

**Creature:** The aboleth Mohl'omog lies atop the bier in this chamber, waiting for its skum servants to complete the final excavation in area C10 so it can gain its freedom at last. If the PCs discover the *illusory wall* and enter the chamber, the aboleth immediately attacks.

#### MOHL'OMOG

CR 7

XP 3,200

Aboleth (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 8)

hp 84

**Gear** *clear spindle ioun stone*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** In the shallow water of the partially flooded lower natatorium, Mohl'omog cannot take advantage of its swim speed. It uses *dominate monster* on strong melee opponents and commands them to attack its foes, while using *hypnotic pattern* to fascinate other enemies. If forced to defend itself, Mohl'omog attacks with its tentacles.

**Morale** Concerned only with freedom, Mohl'omog flees to the final excavation (area C10), hoping to breach the wall and return to the sea. If cornered at the excavation, the aboleth attempts to parlay with its attackers, offering knowledge and treasure in exchange for its freedom. Otherwise, it fights to the death.

**Development:** If the PCs find and attack Mohl'omog before reaching the final excavation (area C10), the aboleth mentally alerts Gerlach in area C11, who arrives 4 rounds later to attack the PCs from the corridor.

**Treasure:** Mohl'omog's bier is surrounded by the piled offerings of its skum slaves, gathered and scavenged from the island's ruins and beneath the sea. The treasure consists of 1,436 gp in assorted old coins, 1,500 gp worth of ancient Azlanti jewelry, and a *pearl of power* (3rd level).

#### C10. THE FINAL EXCAVATION (CR 7)

A floating will-o'-wisp globe illuminates this chamber, which contains rubble and debris from an excavation against the face of the northeast wall. Water streams into the room from cracks in the wall as the surf pounds against the other side.

The water in this room is about 3 feet deep. Each square is considered difficult terrain for the purposes

of movement, and Acrobatics and Stealth checks in the room have their DCs increased by +5.

**Creatures:** Five skum labor next to the northeast wall, digging frantically through an old foundation wall that seems to grow new layers as they dig, trying to break through the final wall between the aboleth and freedom. They attack the invading PCs on sight.

## SKUM (5) CR 2

**XP 600 each**

**hp** 20 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 253)

**Development:** Gerlach joins the battle in 4 rounds, after preparing himself with spells in his lab (see area C11 for his stats and tactics). Once the PCs seem to have the upper hand (such as when all the skum are defeated, or when Gerlach is reduced to 20 hit points), the desperate Mohl'omog bursts from its chamber and uses *project image* in the excavation area to dominate any PCs, using them to replace its slain skum servants and dig through the wall (see area C9 for Mohl'omog's stats and tactics).

The skum's excavations have weakened the northeast wall (hardness 8, hp 90, Break DC 35). Attacks or spells could finish the work, as could PCs dominated by Mohl'omog. Should this happen, the flow of water through the breach acts as a geyser from a decanter of endless water (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 509) for 3 rounds. The water level climbs to 5 feet high in 10 rounds, requiring DC 15 Swim checks; underwater combat rules now apply in the room (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 432). In addition, the water is now deep enough for Mohl'omog to take advantage of its swim speed, and the aboleth makes its bid for freedom through the breach at the earliest opportunity.

## C11. GERLACH'S LABORATORY (CR 9)

This chamber is partially flooded, its dry western section reserved for an alchemical lab cobbled together from salvaged Azlanti equipment. The lab appears to have not seen use in weeks, as dried chemicals and reagents have gummed up its condensers, extractors, and crucibles. Thin copper sheets hover above the makeshift lab, engraved with esoteric formulae.

**Creature:** If Gerlach has somehow not been alerted by combats in areas C9 or C11, he is found here in his lab. When he first arrived on Nal-Kashel, Gerlach labored to find a way to stop "the change" of his kin into foul ulat-kini after generations of abominable interbreeding with the creatures from the sea. Unfortunately for the sorcerer, he succumbed to that curse before he could save himself, and the treacherous Mohl'omog ensnared Gerlach into orchestrating its bid for freedom. If found in this room, Gerlach immediately attacks.

## GERLACH CR 9

**XP 6,400**

Male skum sorcerer 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 253)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4 (+8 underwater)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 97 (10 HD; 2d10+8d6+58)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

**Resist** cold 10

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *trident* +11/+6 (1d8+5), claw +10 (1d4+4), bite +10 (1d6+4) or touch +10 (by spell)

**Ranged** +1 *trident* +9 (1d8+5) or ray +8 ranged touch (by spell)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with melee touch attack)

**Special Attacks** long limbs

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +11)  
5/day—acidic ray (1d6+4 acid)

**Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th (3/day)—*contagion* (DC 17)

3rd (5/day)—*lightning bolt* (DC 16), *tongues*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*bear's endurance*, *ghoul touch* (DC 15), *levitate*, *see invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *chill touch* (DC 14), *enlarge person*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

**Bloodline** aberrant

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Warned by his *alarm* spell (cast every day), Gerlach casts *see invisibility* followed by *mage armor*. As the interlopers draw near, Gerlach casts *shield* and *bear's endurance* and then drinks his *potion of eagle's splendor*.

**During Combat** Gerlach casts *lightning bolts* or *rays of enfeeblement* from his wand and then rushes into melee. He uses his long limbs to strike from behind his skum guards, using touch spells. He saves at least one 3rd-level spell slot to cast *vampiric touch* to regain hit points when needed.

**Morale** Driven to near madness by his transformation and Mohl'omog's domination, Gerlach fights to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without his spells, Gerlach has the following stats: **AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; **hp** 77; **Fort** +5; **Con** 14, **Cha** 15; **Skills** Use Magic Device +10. His spell save DCs also drop by 1, and his concentration modifier is reduced to +10.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Skill Focus

(Craft [alchemy]), Toughness

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +14, Perception +4 (+8 underwater), Spellcraft +11, Stealth +6 (+10 underwater), Swim +16, Use Magic Device +11

**Languages** Common

**SQ** amphibious, bloodline arcana

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of eagle's splendor*, *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (10 charges); **Other Gear** +1 trident, *cloak of resistance +1*, *headband of alluring charisma +2*, 307 gp

**Development:** The lab holds the solution to removing the physical taints the PCs have acquired on Nal-Kashel. *Detect magic* reveals the magical nature of the lab's unbottled results, while a DC 24 Spellcraft check discovers that six *elixirs of true form* (see Treasure) can be salvaged. A DC 25 Spellcraft check is required to infuse the remaining ingredients into the elixirs and complete their creation.

**Treasure:** A *wand of remove curse* with 6 charges remaining lies on the floor nearby. The copper sheets hovering above the lab contain formulae outlining the

creation of *elixir of true form*, usable by any character with the Craft Wondrous Item feat.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** If the PCs defeat both Mohl'omog and Gerlach, award them 6,400 XP.

### ELIXIR OF TRUE FORM

**Aura** moderate abjuration; **CL** 8th

**Slot** none; **Price** 1,600 gp; **Weight** —

#### DESCRIPTION

This elixir removes all curses and transmutation effects from the imbiber, including the unnatural mutations resulting from the arcane warping of the island of Nal-Kashel or gained through an ancestor's unspeakable interbreeding with ulat-kini. The elixir stops gillmen from transforming into skum but cannot reverse the transformation if a gillman has already become a skum. Only doses of the elixir manufactured on the island of Nal-Kashel can remove the warping effects of the island's influence.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *remove curse*; **Cost** 800 gp

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of Gerlach and Mohl'omog, the PCs have removed the threat to the village of Blackcove and may return to the mainland. By using the *elixir of true form*, the PCs can also cure themselves of the taint brought on by the warping effects of the island. Upon arriving in Blackcove, the PCs are met by Gervus, Lira, Nicolaius, and the rescued villagers, who give them their promised reward.

What eventually happens to the villagers is left up to the GM to decide. Perhaps the townsfolk decide to accept their true natures and embrace the sea like their ancestors before them. PCs returning to Blackcove later might find the village abandoned and lifeless, its inhabitants vanished beneath the waves. Finding what became of them might become the goal of another adventure.

If the aboleth Mohl'omog somehow escaped, it seeks revenge on its brethren who imprisoned it so long ago, although the implications of these actions may take centuries and may never be known by mortals. In search of servants to assist it in this task, the aboleth may return to Blackcove yet again, and the village might once more have need of heroes to protect it from dangers beneath the waves. If Mohl'omog's escape was thwarted, the PCs should leave proud knowing they have prevented this foul force from being unleashed on the world, and they can emerge, finally, from the sea to the shore, to walk again that dry coastal road toward new adventures.



**GERLACH**



# FROM SHORE TO SEA

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## VALEROS

MALE HUMAN FIGHTER 6

ALIGN NG INIT +7 SPEED 30 ft.

### ABILITIES

18	STR
16	DEX
12	CON
13	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 49

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18  
(+1 when two-weapon fighting)

Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1  
(+2 vs. fear)

**OFFENSE**  
Melee +1 longsword +13/+8 (1d8+8/19–20)  
Dual Wielding +1 longsword +11/+6  
(1d8+8/19–20), +1 short sword +10  
(1d6+5/19–20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +10/+5  
(1d8+3/x3)

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 24

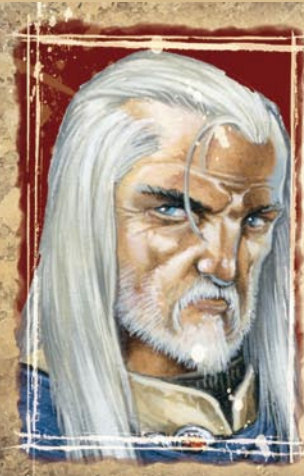
**SPECIAL QUALITIES**  
armor training 1, bravery +2, weapon  
training (heavy blades +1)

**SKILLS**  
Climb +11  
Intimidate +9  
Perception +5  
Swim +11

**FEATS**  
Combat Expertise, Double Slice,  
Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon  
Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting,  
Weapon Focus (longsword),  
Weapon Focus (short sword),  
Weapon Specialization (longsword)



**Combat Gear** elixir of fire breath, elixir of swimming, potion of bear's endurance, potions of cure moderate wounds (2), potion of cure serious wounds; **Other Gear** +1 breastplate, +1 longsword, +1 short sword, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, belt of giant strength +2, ring of protection +1, backpack, lucky tankard, rations (6), silk rope, 310 gp



## EZREN

MALE HUMAN WIZARD 6

ALIGN NG INIT +3 SPEED 30 ft.

### ABILITIES

11	STR
9	DEX
12	CON
20	INT
15	WIS
9	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 29

AC 12  
touch 10, flat-footed 12

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +8

**FAMILIAR**  
Sneak (weasel)

**SPELLS (CL 6TH)**  
Spells Prepared (concentration +11)  
3rd—fly, lightning bolt (DC 18), water breathing  
2nd—acid arrow, invisibility, scorching ray, web  
(DC 17)

1st—grease, mage armor, magic missile, shield,  
shocking grasp  
0 (at will)—acid splash, daze, detect magic, light  
(DC 17)

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**  
Hand of the Apprentice: 8/day, +8 attack bonus

**FEATS**  
Alertness, Combat Casting, Empower Spell,  
Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Scribe  
Scroll, Spell Penetration

**OFFENSE**  
Melee cane +3 (1d6)  
Ranged mwk light crossbow +3  
(1d8/19–20)  
Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 13

**SKILLS**  
Appraise +14  
Fly +8  
Knowledge (arcana) +14  
Knowledge (geography) +14  
Knowledge (history) +14  
Knowledge (local) +14  
Perception +10  
Spellcraft +14  
Swim +0



**Combat Gear** elixir of swimming, potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of scorching ray, wand of magic missile (CL 5th, 50 charges), alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** cane (as club), dagger, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, bracers of armor +2, cloak of resistance +1, headband of vast intelligence +2, ring of protection +1, backpack, rations (6), scroll case, spell component pouch, spellbook, 161 gp



## MERISIEL

FEMALE ELF ROGUE 6

ALIGN CN INIT +9 SPEED 30 ft.

### ABILITIES

12	STR
20	DEX
12	CON
10	INT
13	WIS
10	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 42

AC 21  
touch 16, flat-footed 15

Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +3  
(+2 vs. enchantment)

**Defensive Abilities** evasion,  
trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

**OFFENSE**  
Melee +1 rapier +10 (1d6+2/18–20)  
Ranged dagger +9 (1d4+1/19–20)

Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 21

**Special Attacks:** sneak attack +3d6

**SPECIAL QUALITIES**  
immune to sleep, low-light vision, rogue  
talents (combat trick, finesse rogue,  
surprise attack), trapfinding +3

**SKILLS**  
Acrobatics +19  
Bluff +9  
Climb +10  
Disable Device +16  
Intimidate +8  
Perception +12  
Sleight of Hand +14  
Stealth +19  
Swim +5

**FEATS**  
Dodge, Improved Initiative,  
Mobility, Nimble Moves,  
Weapon Finesse



**Combat Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds, potions of invisibility (2), acid, alchemist's fire (2), thunderstone; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 rapier, daggers (12), amulet of natural armor +1, belt of incredible dexterity +2, boots of elvenkind, cloak of elvenkind, backpack, grappling hook, hooded lantern, masterwork thieves' tools, oil (5), polished jade worth 50 gp, rations (6), silk rope, 328 gp



## KYRA

FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC OF SARENRAE 6

ALIGN NG INIT -1 SPEED 20 ft.

### ABILITIES

13	STR
8	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
18	WIS
12	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 42

AC 21  
touch 10, flat-footed 21

Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +12

**SPELLS (CL 6TH)**  
Spells Prepared (concentration +10)  
3rd—dispel magic, prayer, searing light<sup>6</sup>, water walk  
2nd—bull's strength, cure moderate wounds<sup>2</sup>, hold  
person (DC 16), lesser restoration, spiritual weapon  
1st—command (DC 15), divine favor, endure  
elements<sup>5</sup>, sanctuary (DC 15), shield of faith  
0 (at will)—detect magic, guidance, stabilize, virtue  
D Domain spell; **Domains** Healing, Sun

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**  
channel positive energy 4/day (DC 14, 3d6 [+6  
vs. undead, bypass channel resistance], healer's  
blessing, rebuke death 7/day (1d4+3),  
spontaneous cure

**OFFENSE**  
Melee +1 scimitar +7 (1d6+2/18–20)  
Ranged mwk light crossbow +4  
(1d8/19–20)  
Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 15

**SKILLS**  
Diplomacy +10  
Heal +13  
Knowledge (religion) +9  
Perception +10  
Swim +6

**FEATS**  
Combat Casting, Iron Will, Selective  
Channeling, Weapon Focus (scimitar)



**Combat Gear** scroll of water breathing, wand of cure moderate wounds (15 charges); **Other Gear** +2 chainmail, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 scimitar, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, ring of swimming, backpack, gold holy symbol (with continual flame) worth 300 gp, rations (6), 350 gp

# The Observatory



Armillary Tower  
Bottom

Orbiting Spire  
Lower Level

Orbiting Spire  
Upper Level



80 feet

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# THEY COME FROM BENEATH THE SEA!

## Pathfinder Module FROM SHORE TO SEA

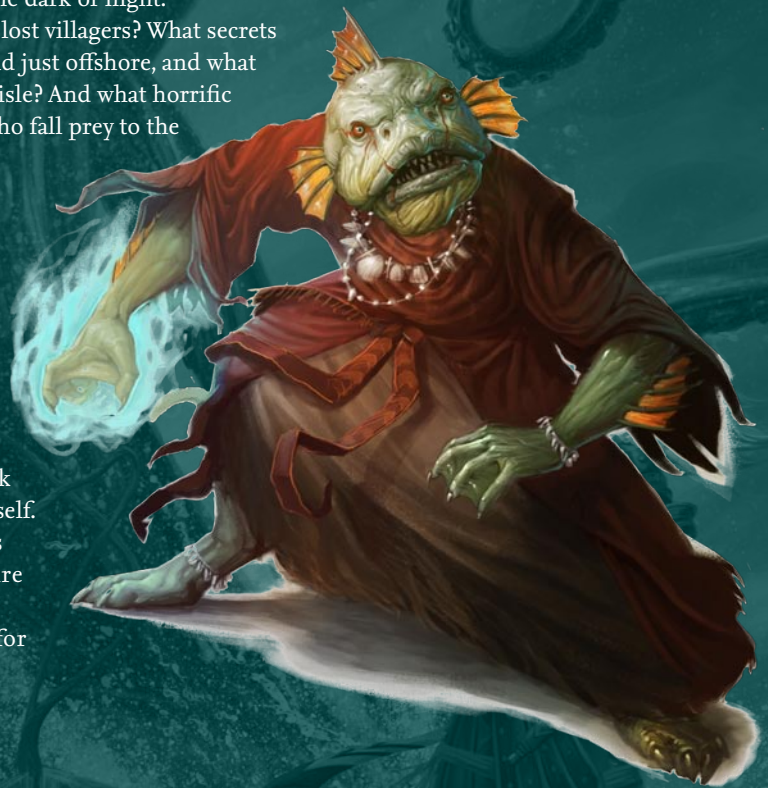
The deep waters of the Hellmouth Gulf have long concealed ancient mysteries, both wondrous and terrible. But these secrets have been submerged for too long, and the remote coastal village of Blackcove has accidentally awoken a slumbering horror from a bygone age. Strange creatures now venture from beneath the waves to steal townsfolk away in the dark of night.

Can the PCs discover the fate of Blackcove's lost villagers? What secrets still lie hidden on the mysterious, ruined island just offshore, and what now lurks in the flooded temples beneath the isle? And what horrific fate lies in store for those unfortunate souls who fall prey to the island's eldritch influence?

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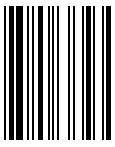
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