

PATHFINDER[®] MODULE[™]

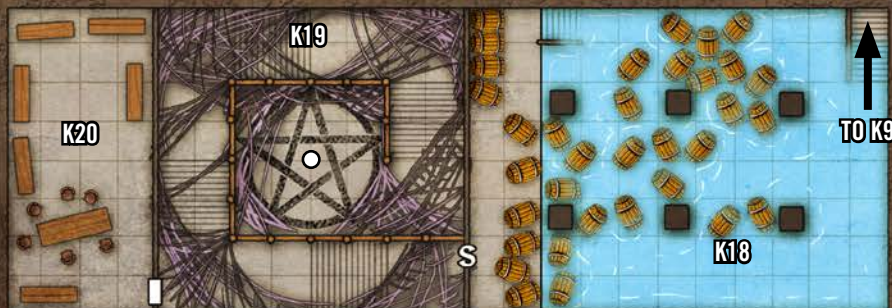


GALLOWES OF MADNESS

THREE PATHFINDER RPG ADVENTURES FOR LEVEL 1 OR 2

K. The Sarini Estate

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



PATHFINDER MODULE

Development Lead • Amanda Hamon Kunz
Authors • Benjamin Bruck, Mikko Kallio, and Mike Kimmel
Cover Artist • Setiawan Lie
Interior Artists • Kez Laczin, Kiri Østergaard Leonard, Ian Perks, Rian Trost, and Vicky Yarova
Cartographer • Robert Lazzaretti

Editor-in-Chief • F. Wesley Schneider
Creative Director • James Jacobs
Executive Editor • James L. Sutter
Senior Developer • Rob McCreary
Pathfinder Society Lead Developer • John Compton
Developers • Adam Daigle, Crystal Frasier, Amanda Hamon Kunz, Mark Moreland, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Linda Zayas-Palmer
Managing Editor • Judy Bauer
Senior Editor • Christopher Carey
Editors • Jason Keeley and Josh Vogt
Lead Designer • Jason Bulmahn
Designers • Logan Bonner, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter

Managing Art Director • Sarah E. Robinson
Art Director • Sonja Morris
Senior Graphic Designers • Emily Crowell and Adam Vick

Publisher • Erik Mona
Paizo CEO • Lisa Stevens
Chief Operations Officer • Jeffrey Alvarez
Director of Sales • Pierce Watters
Sales Associate • Cosmo Eisele
Marketing Director • Jenny Bendel
Vice President of Finance • Christopher Self
Staff Accountant • Ashley Kaprielian
Data Entry Clerk • B. Scott Keim
Chief Technical Officer • Vic Wertz
Software Development Manager • Cort Odekirk
Senior Software Developer • Gary Teter
Project Manager • Jessica Price
Organized Play Coordinator • Tonya Woldridge
Adventure Card Game Designer • Tanis O'Connor

Community Team • Liz Courts and Chris Lambertz
Customer Service Team • Sharaya Copas, Katina Davis, Sara Marie Teter, and Diego Valdez
Warehouse Team • Laura Wilkes Carey, Will Chase, Mika Hawkins, Heather Payne, Jeff Strand, and Kevin Underwood
Website Team • Christopher Anthony, William Ellis, Lissa Guillet, Don Hayes, Julie Iaccarino, and Erik Keith

ON THE COVER



A swarm of fiendish spiders pours over Alain while Seoni casts a devastating spell in this dynamic cover by Setiawan Lie.



GALLOWS OF MADNESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 2 |
| A Foul Breed | 4 |
| A rash of missing apprentices plagues the Isgeri town of Saringallow, and there are rumors of enormous vermin lurking in the alleys. It's up to the heroes to uncover the sinister plot at work—and to stop the terrible Abyssal corruption at its heart before the entire settlement is overrun. | |
| What Lurks in the Woods | 22 |
| Filthy, goo-covered goblins are menacing the good farmers outside of Saringallow's walls, and the authorities worry that the wicked creatures may pose a dire threat. The heroes must track these corrupted goblins to their fortress and contend with their mad Lamashtan leader if they hope to stop Saringallow's day of reckoning. | |
| The Festering Blot | 36 |
| Still suffering under the weight of diabolic sacrifices many decades ago, the people of Saringallow have learned that records detailing the fates of those who disappeared exist in the infamous, abandoned Sarini Estate. While braving the estate's depths, the heroes learn that a demon has been secretly lairing there, and must stop him from making Saringallow his personal Abyssal playground! | |
| Appendix 1: NPCs | 52 |
| Meet the NPCs who can help tie this volume's adventures together. | |
| Appendix 2: Bestiary | 58 |
| The five creatures featured here appear throughout the adventures. | |

REFERENCE

This book is designed with beginner friendliness in mind and therefore primarily uses rules elements from the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*. Other referenced rules sources are either reprinted in full or summarized with full references to the books in which they are found. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/prd.



Paizo Inc.
7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

paizo.com

This product is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game or the 3.5 edition of the world's oldest fantasy roleplaying game.

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, deities, etc.), dialogue, plots, storylines, locations, characters, artwork, and trade dress. (Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content or are in the public domain are not included in this declaration.)

Open Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity (see above), the game mechanics of this Paizo game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Gaming License version 1.0a Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

Pathfinder Module: Gallows of Madness © 2016, Paizo Inc. All Rights Reserved. Paizo, Paizo Inc., the Paizo golem logo, Pathfinder, the Pathfinder logo, and Pathfinder Society are registered trademarks of Paizo Inc.; Pathfinder Accessories, Pathfinder Adventure Card Game, Pathfinder Adventure Path, Pathfinder Campaign Setting, Pathfinder Cards, Pathfinder Flip-Mat, Pathfinder Map Pack, Pathfinder Module, Pathfinder Pawns, Pathfinder Player Companion, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, and Pathfinder Tales are trademarks of Paizo Inc.

Printed in China.



GALLOWES OF MADNESS

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Gallows of Madness includes three adventures, all designed for four characters using the medium XP track. For groups that intend to play two or more of these adventures, use the following guidelines. All three adventures include scaling information for 2nd-level groups.

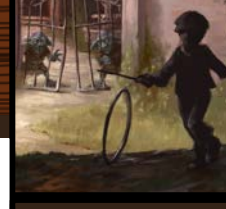
1 The PCs begin the first adventure at 1st level.

2 During the second adventure, the PCs should reach 2nd level.

By the end of the third adventure, the PCs should reach 3rd level.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The three standalone adventures in *Gallows of Madness* can be narratively linked if a GM wishes. In Mike Kimmel's "A Foul Breed," the heroes find themselves investigating the troubling disappearances of several apprentices from the Isçeri town of Sarinçallow, as well as rumors of large vermin scuttling throughout the streets. In Benjamin Bruck's "What Lurks in the Woods," the heroes comb the Isçeri wilderness for strange goblins that pose a much larger threat to Sarinçallow than anyone thinks. In Mikko Kallio's "The Festering Blot," the mayor of Sarinçallow recruits the heroes to brave the eerie, long-abandoned Sarini Estate and track down records that might finally bring the town peace. Enhancing and further tying together all three adventures is the material in this volume's appendices, which offers details on three key allies as well as an assortment of new creatures.



WELCOME TO SARINGALLOW

Pathfinder Module: Gallows of Madness immerses the PCs in the rich and brutal history of Isgar while weaving a new and decidedly unexpected thread into this region's tapestry: the threat of Abyssal corruption. This module's adventures are perfect for both characters who hail from Isgar and concerned outsiders or mercenaries alike. In either case, strength of heart and skill are crucial to making it through these challenges alive.

The organization and storytelling approach of this volume are unique in that *Gallows of Madness* presents three adventures that can be played separately or together in any order. GMs who need a quick pick-up adventure can run one and know that their players will complete a satisfying story. Alternatively, GMs who wish to bring a group of PCs from 1st to 2nd level can do so by running any two of these adventures; each also includes scaling information for parties of 2nd-level characters. For a more traditional experience, GMs can prepare all three adventures, paying special attention to the Creating a Narrative Arc section.

To enhance these adventures' flexibility, the end of each includes a Tying the Adventures Together section to help GMs provide natural transitions between the stories. This volume's appendices also include details on NPCs who can act as bridges between each of the adventures.

Creating a Narrative Arc

GMs who want to run all three adventures with as deep of a story as possible should run the adventures in the order they appear. Such GMs should keep the following timeline in mind, with the demon Wormgnash (see page 56) as the overarching villain.

- About 3 months ago, Saringallow's curmudgeonly gravedigger, Armas Sapiro, died of natural causes. Sapiro was an exceedingly wicked man who stole relentlessly from the dead. Sapiro's soul found its way to the Abyss, where it eventually transformed into a vermlek demon (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2* 54).
- Several weeks ago, after becoming the de facto leader of a pit full of his own kind, the transformed gravedigger—now named Wormgnash—found a tiny rift between the Abyss and Material Plane. He traveled through it and was transported to near his old hometown. The portal closed, however, and he became stuck on this plane.
- Seeking a place where he could research how to reopen the rift and bring his vermlek allies to Saringallow, Wormgnash slunk to an isolated warehouse. When the warehouse's owner, Marcuccio Bravoni, stumbled upon the demon, Wormgnash killed the man and donned his corpse as a disguise. During that brutal process, Wormgnash inadvertently created some demon's bile, a vermin-attracting substance that can infuse creatures with fiendish energy (for more information, see page 18).

WHERE ON GOLARION?



All of the adventures in *Pathfinder Module: Gallows of Madness* take place in and around the Isgeri town of Saringallow. "A Foul Breed" takes place in the settlement proper. "What Lurks in the Woods" takes the PCs through the wilderness that surrounds Saringallow. "The Festering Blot" sends the PCs into the depths of the old Sarini Estate, located a few hours by foot from Saringallow.

- Abandoning the warehouse district, Wormgnash stopped by the his old stomping grounds, accidentally leaving a smudge of demon's bile on a gravestone. Later, the apprentice apothecary Gellion Vazarro studied and became infected by the vile substance. More details appear in "A Foul Breed."
- Just outside of Saringallow proper, Wormgnash came across some goblins whose war cries indicated an affiliation with Lamashtu. Curious, Wormgnash followed the goblins to their bugbear leader and gifted the creatures with some demon's bile. More details appear in "What Lurks in the Woods."
- Wormgnash then moved on to the old Sarini Estate. On the way, he encountered a band of fey, which he tainted and conscripted as guardians. He then ensconced himself in the estate's basement and continued his research, coming ever closer to achieving his destructive goals. More details appear in "The Festering Blot."

A Focus on Beginner Friendliness

In addition to its narrative versatility and resulting abundance of 1st-level material, this module's adventures were designed with ease of play and accessibility to beginning players and GMs in mind. To that end, nearly all of the adventures' content is drawn from the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*. When the text references material from other sources, such material is reprinted in full (an example is the vermlek statistics on page 56). In some cases, to reflect the adventures' stories, creature statistics require the application of the fiendish simple template. Follow the instructions found on page 294 of the *Bestiary*, giving the monster the appropriate senses, energy resistances, spell resistance, and special attack as indicated.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1:
A FOUL BREED

CHAPTER 2:
WHAT LURKS IN
THE WOODS

CHAPTER 3:
THE FESTERING BLOT

APPENDIX 1:
NPCS

APPENDIX 2:
BESTIARY



CHAPTER 1

A FOUL BREED

Like a virulent disease, Abyssal corruption on the Material Plane can spread quickly from both infected individuals and places. Left unchecked, such plagues can eventually threaten everything virtuous around them. Such is the case in the settlement of Saringallow in Isgar. Less than a month ago, the town's deceased wicked gravedigger—who returned in the form of a vermlek (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2 54*)—wandered into an unfortunate merchant's warehouse, killed the man when he stumbled upon the demon, and inhabited his body. The peculiar sludge the vermlek created during this disgusting process, combined with the latent Abyssal energies that clung to it, produced an evil substance called demon's bile, which attracts vermin and has the

ability to taint those who wallow in it, as well as sickening those who ingest it (see the Demon's Bile section on page 17). The vermlek eventually abandoned the town proper, but it left behind swaths of demon's bile in the warehouse and, to a lesser extent, in the town's graveyard.

Unluckily, the latter served as a secret meeting ground for two mischievous apprentices: Gellion Vazarro, who works for the town's apothecary, and Nolaria Wintren, a priestess-in-training at the temple of Erastil, as well as some of their friends and fellow apprentices. One recent evening, when Nolaria's duties forced her to cancel a meeting with Gellion, the young man strolled through the graveyard alone and happened upon the strange substance. More than a little intrigued, the highly inquisitive and impulsive apprentice took a sample of the



bile home for further study. However, when he dipped a finger into the stuff and tasted it, its vileness coursed through his veins, warped his brain, and brought him under the influence of the Abyss itself.

For a time, he perpetuated his mad ravings and vile experimentations in his home, where the fiendish vermin and the wicked creature the apprentice managed to create still torments his parents. Then, under the influence of the cacophony of screeching and buzzing he heard in his head, Gellion wandered to the warehouse, where he discovered that the bile there had grown into a breeding ground for fiendish vermin. In his madness, the apprentice believed that it was his mission to help the bile to expand and consume Saringallow and everyone in it. Worse, Gellion incorrectly believed that the breeding ground at the warehouse required human flesh and blood as fuel for its expansion, so he began kidnapping his friends and fellow apprentices for that very purpose. One by one, Gellion lured his friends to the warehouse or drugged them and dragged them there himself.

As these strange events swirled around her, Nolaria deduced that something was amiss. When her research revealed that demonic influence might be at play, she confronted Gellion, but by this time the young man's mind was fully corrupted. No longer in control of his actions, he nearly killed his closest friend. Now, Nolaria lies with the others, barely clinging to life in the abandoned warehouse at the center of it all. Meanwhile, the bile-infested areas continue to grow, attracting vermin and warping them into a serious threat to the town.

So far, the people of Saringallow don't recognize that there's a major problem, for no one is aware of the situation at Gellion's house or the warehouse, and the vermin, while strange-looking indeed, seem few and far between. There is some chatter about the missing apprentices, but not much time has passed, and most everyone has assumed that the apprentices are simply skipping work to engage in harmless tomfoolery or otherwise just shirking their duties. Mayor Sandra Trinelli, however, suspects that these ominous vermin sightings and the disappearances of a half-dozen apprentices might be connected, and that they might be harbingers of something terrible—even worse than the fate House Sarini's diabolical dabbling visited upon the town's youth 100 years ago. As the town's primary administrator, Trinelli hasn't the time to delve into the problems, and even if she did, the townspeople would notice her doing so, which could cause a panic she hopes to avoid. Therefore, Trinelli has quietly put out a call for heroes to investigate the vermin and bring the apprentices home. However, the situation is far direr than it appears to the mayor, and unless the brave adventurers act quickly, Nolaria and her friends surely face a grisly death—and the rest of Saringallow's populace may soon follow!

SARINGALLOW

SARINGALLOW

LN large town

Corruption +0; **Crime** -4; **Economy** +1; **Law** +3; **Lore** +1; **Society** +2

Qualities long memory, strategic location, superstitious

Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 2,110 (1,800 humans, 200 half-elves, 60 gnomes, 50 other)

NOTABLE NPCs

Apothecary Majara Pricknettle (LG female gnome alchemist 4; *Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

Father Ildris Ruvarra (LG male human cleric of Erastil 5)

Mayor Sandra Trinelli (LN female human aristocrat 6)

Tavern-Keeper Alcie Kruptin (LN female human expert 2/fighter 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 10,000 gp;

Spellcasting 3rd

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Long Memory The people of Saringallow have a deep-seated hatred for members of House Sarini. Any such individual who makes his presence known in town is attacked with nonlethal and improvised weapons within 1d4 hours. Sarinis who survive this attack are warned and unceremoniously dumped outside the town's walls; those who return are subsequently hanged. Similarly, residents look upon other nobles with suspicion, and known nobles visiting town must pay 200% of the normal price for goods and services and may face mockery, insult, or even violence. (Full details about settlement rules are on pages 202-209 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.)

For those who are interested in running this as an adventure connected to one or more others in this volume, see the Creating a Narrative Arc section on page 3 as well as the Tying Together the Adventures section on page 21.

PART 1: SECRETS IN SARINGALLOW

The first part of the adventure focuses on the PCs' efforts to locate the missing apprentices. Along the way, they also encounter some of the fiendish vermin that plague the town as a result of the demon's bile. The PCs must piece together the information they learn from these events to determine where the missing apprentices might be—and what might have caused their disappearances.

INTRODUCTION

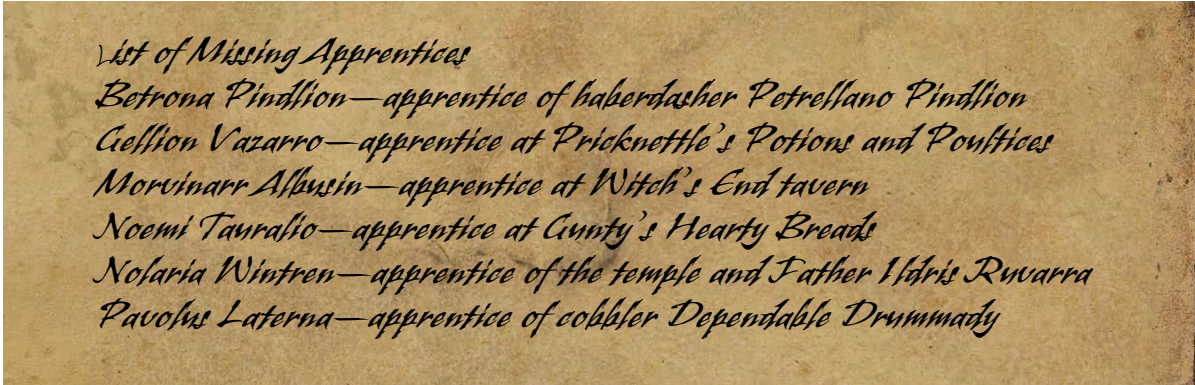
CHAPTER 1:
A FOUL BREED

CHAPTER 2:
WHAT LURKS IN
THE WOODS

CHAPTER 3:
THE FESTERING BLOT

APPENDIX 1:
NPCS

APPENDIX 2:
BESTIARY



HANDOUT #1

Getting Started

Once the PCs answer her discreet call for help, Mayor Sandra Trinelli meets with them in her office on the ground floor of Saringallow's town hall. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure started.

The plush red carpet and oak furniture upholstered with velvet lend this room an air of comfort, but it's also clearly a place of official business, with several layers of administrative papers, staff memos, maps, and charts covering the wide surface of the solid desk in the center. From her tall-backed chair behind her desk, Mayor Sandra Trinelli looks up, shaking herself out of a deep concentration. A subtle look of relief flashes across her face as she motions to the oversized chairs in front of her.

"Normally, I'd exchange more pleasantries with my guests, but I fear there is no time," she says. "The business that brought you here is quite urgent—it may actually be a matter of life and death.

"Let me explain. You may have heard that several young apprentices from various establishments in Saringallow have disappeared in the last couple of weeks. Every one of them has failed to show up to work, and nobody seems to know where they've gone.

"That's not all. Rumors are spreading about sightings of enormous insects roaming about town. So far, the townspeople have chalked up such rumors to overactive imaginations, but I fear they might be real, and that they might have something to do with the missing apprentices. I have no proof that the situations are connected, but if folks get that notion into their heads, things are bound to spiral out of control."

She shifts nervously, as if avoiding an uncomfortable implication, before continuing.

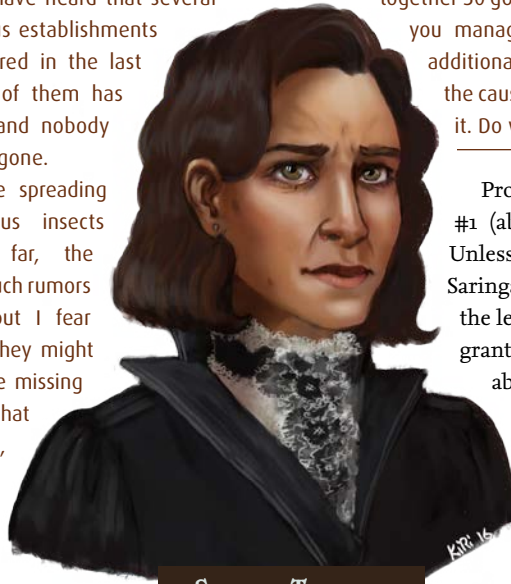
"Please, I implore you to look into this matter quietly and thoroughly—find out where our apprentices have gone

and discover the cause of our vermin problem. Don't jump to conclusions until you have investigated every possible angle; we need to be absolutely sure that we know who or what is responsible before we take any necessary law-enforcement actions.

"I suggest you start by interviewing the masters of every missing apprentice on this list I've compiled. I suspect that, collectively, they might shed some light on the youngsters' whereabouts. That could in turn illuminate our vermin problem, but until we have more information, I caution you against suggesting to anyone that the two situations are connected. Beyond that, though, you have my full cooperation in this matter. If anyone gives you guff about your line of questioning, show them this letter."

The mayor pushes a scrap of paper with several names scribbled on it across her desk, as well as a rolled-up, ribbon-bound letter written on thick parchment.

"As far as an incentive," the mayor says, "I've pooled together 50 gold pieces as a reward for each apprentice you manage to find and rescue, as well as an additional 100 gold pieces if you can determine the cause of our vermin problem—and eliminate it. Do we have a deal?"



SANDRA TRINELLI

Provide the PCs with a copy of Handout #1 (above) and Handout #2 (on page 7). Unless otherwise noted in the Exploring Saringallow entries on pages 9–12, showing the letter to any of the apprentices' masters grants a +3 bonus on any skill checks or ability checks made while interacting with them (unless otherwise noted). Additionally, the mayor's letter also garners the PCs a 10% discount at Saringallow's Sundries, the town's cooperative general store, for any nonmagical items or weapons they may need during their mission.

Before they begin, the PCs may have some questions for the mayor. She answers them as best she can.



Why can't you handle this investigation yourself? "I would, but you can see how busy I am." Mayor Trinelli gestures to the mess of documents around her. "And if I were to step away, my absence would soon become obvious. On top of that, I'd have to involve a least a small contingent of the guard—they're a talkative lot who would no doubt reveal the nature of my inquiries. You see how my hands are tied. I need help, preferably outside help. You seem like the perfect candidates."

You seem worried about what might happen if rumormongering gets out of control. Why? Trinelli pauses as if unsure whether to continue, before taking a resolute swig from the large mug of tea on her desk. "As you likely know, the people of Saringallow are a superstitious lot, and with good reason—our community has been through its share of hardships, particularly when it comes to our vulnerable youth. If folks begin to assume that foul play is behind the apprentices' disappearances, they might decide to mete out justice against an innocent person. Or if they come to believe the two situations are related, they may begin to suspect a diabolic or otherwise foul influence, and there would be panic in the streets. Under no circumstances can I allow that to happen."

Why are the townsfolk so superstitious? Trinelli sighs and gazes out the picture window beside her desk. "It's a painful history," she admits, "but more than a hundred years ago, our town was little more than rural holdings belonging to Cheliox's House Sarini. At some point, the Sarinis began dabbling in diabolism. It made everyone uncomfortable by all accounts, but no one said anything until it was too late."

She pauses, and when she continues her voice is filled with palpable anger. "Those horrible nobles exsanguinated several innocent youths in service to their dark patrons, like they were nothing but toys. The townspeople rose up, and in their rage, they hanged every Sarini they could get their hands on. They changed the town's name to Sarini Gallows as a warning, though it eventually became Saringallow. Since then we've never knowingly suffered a Sarini's presence in our town."

The mayor takes a deep breath, calming the passion that welled inside her while recounting the tale. "However," she continues, "We paid a price back then even beyond the lives of those young people. During the hangings, the townspeople began turning on each other, accusing folks of diabolism at every turn. The real villains lost their lives, but so did many innocent people, and I can't allow that to happen again. If I do, I'll very likely have blood on my hands."

Does this letter from you require the townsfolk to speak to us? "No, it's certainly not a legally compelling document. It's merely a politely worded request to treat you as my proxies, and to answer any of your reasonable questions as thoroughly as possible. If anyone asks you about the details of your assignment, tell them that you're looking into a matter of personal significance to me, and that you can give no further details. If anyone has any problems with it, they can take it up with me, their duly elected mayor—I'll handle it from there. I will warn you, however, that this expression of my favor may get you further with some of our merchants than with others."

My Fellow Esteemed Citizens,

The bearers of this letter have embarked on a matter of official Saringallow business on my behalf. As such, it is my deepest hope that you will treat them judiciously and conscientiously, and that you will trust that any questions they ask are in the interest of furthering this urgent errand. Please answer their inquiries completely and to the best of your knowledge, as you would answer questions from me personally. Should you be aware of another citizen who may have the information they desire, I implore you to disclose those details, as well as anything else that might be of use. Should you aid my proxies in completing their task, rest assured that you will earn my profound gratitude, as well as any small favor from my office.

*Your Humble Mayor,
Sandra Trinelli*

GATHERING INFORMATION

Before they specifically visit any of the locations listed in the Exploring Saringallow section, the PCs may wish to spend 1d4 hours gathering information from the townsfolk about the town's apprentices. Based on the results of the Diplomacy check, the PCs might learn the following information about this topic. Note that while the townsfolk might share the following general gossip with the PCs, the PCs can learn the location of Gellion's home only the ways described in the Concluding the Investigation section on page 14.

Each PC gathers all of the information whose DC is less than or equal to the result of the check. Showing the mayor's letter to the townsfolk grants one PC a +3 bonus on this check.

15+: Two old folks playing dice near Merchant's Square ruminate about the town's younger generation, including the apprentices. "Youngsters today are so amiable and carefree with everyone. They aren't cautious, like we were back in our day. If any of them have done anything other than run off of their own accord, it's probably because they were too trusting of the wrong person."

20+: A group of peddlers scurrying through the streets knows many of the apprentices, if only in passing. "They seem like they're all friends. In fact, it's almost like they run in a pack. One or two of them probably convinced the others to all skip work at once, the lazy kids."

25+: A crowd of trade workers is closely acquainted with Majara Pricknettle, the town's apothecary, from whom they often purchase home remedies and other supplies. "Most of the shop owners see their apprentices like workers-in-training. Majara, though, she's different. She tries to hide it, but that apprentice boy of hers is more like a son to the gnome. I don't think I've ever heard her raise her voice to him."

Do you have any idea what might have happened to the apprentices? "No, I truly don't. From what I gather, their masters mostly think they've just momentarily run off. The longer they're missing, however, the more worried the townsfolk will become. I do hope you find them safe and sound soon."

Saringallow's History

A minor house at the time, House Sarini of Cheliox founded the town of Sarini's Hollow in Isgar as a garden estate for its more influential members several decades before the rise of House Thrune. The town grew steadily as the nobles brought in peasants to serve its many needs, from farming to ranching to housework. As the Sarinis began to dabble in witchcraft and diabolism more, the peasants also served

as a steady and clandestine supply of victims. Once the townspeople caught on, they executed all the Sarinis they could catch and drove out the other nobles.

Shortly after the uprising against House Sarini, the town's leaders began constructing a wall that soon extended beyond the town, even enclosing some of the farmland that supported its populace. Their intention was to allow the townsfolk to live and farm in peace, and to keep the dangers of the outside world at bay. Indeed, Saringallow's wall protected the town from most of the Goblinblood Wars' dangers—the disorganized goblins simply flowed around it in search of easier targets. To this day, only the poorest farmers and most marginal citizens live near the walls. The rest of Saringallow's residents refuse to build too close, and the guards breathe heavy sighs of relief when they finish their patrols of the ramparts.

Despite its suspicious populace and high walls, trade in Saringallow has flourished thanks to its proximity to Conerica River. While noble visitors are carefully watched and merchants must subject their wares to thorough inspections, the town thrives on the varied commerce that passes through its borders.

Life in Saringallow

The people of Saringallow are generally hardworking and independent, but can be cold and unwelcoming to outsiders. They tolerate travelers and merchants only as long as is necessary to conclude business. Those who decide to settle permanently in Saringallow typically must spend months or even years cozying up to their new neighbors before they are truly treated as fully recognized members of the community.

Within Saringallow, small groups of families and businesses have formed close-knit ties that have lasted for generations. To some older residents, frequently consorting with people from other neighborhoods or walks of life—even fellow citizens—is considered unlucky or even unnecessarily risky, so strong is the townspeople's fear of the unknown. A common saying reflects the townspeople's distrust of anyone trying to get to know them: "True friends aren't too friendly."

Most citizens of Saringallow are deeply suspicious of magic, especially witchcraft and evil divine magic, though some admit that certain kinds of arcane magic have their merits. In general, though, they see the practice of magic as an invitation to outside forces that cannot be controlled. Practitioners of arcane magic are generally tolerated, if distrusted, but anyone with any ties to witchcraft or evil divine magic is unwelcome within the town's walls. On the other hand, the townspeople view alchemy as a practical trade, and they see divine spellcasters of good-aligned deities as holy protectors. Therefore, the town has a few bustling alchemy shops, and Saringallow's temple to Erastil supports a burgeoning congregation.



Saringallow's top administrator is its elected mayor. Sandra Trinelli currently fills this position, though unless she can resolve the town's recent troubles, the townsfolk might wish to elect a new leader before long. The people of Saringallow quickly lose faith in leaders who fail to keep the world's evils at bay.

Exploring Saringallow

Below are details on the most important and relevant locations in Saringallow. An appropriately-labeled map of the town appears on the poster map that accompanies this volume. Unlabeled buildings represent private homes, businesses, warehouses, minor trade offices, small farms, and various other structures in the settlement. Many of Saringallow's buildings are built from stone or brick, especially the older ones, which were constructed before the Goblinblood Wars. These include the temple, the town hall, and many of the shops. Newer buildings are primarily constructed of wood.

Each entrance via the roads into Saringallow boasts heavily defended guard towers and sturdy gates, which also feature interior wicket gates. In times of peace, the gates are left open, but the mayor reserves the right to close them whenever an outside threat faces the town.

Certain locations in Saringallow are particularly significant to this adventure. The town hall is where the PCs begin the adventure. In the rest of Part 1, the apothecary's shop, temple of Erastil, baker's shop, cobbler's shop, haberdashery, and tavern are particularly relevant. Armed with the clues the PCs gain there, they are likely to visit the graveyard and orchard. Here, the PCs can investigate the missing apprentices. During Part 2 and Part 3, the PCs visit Gellion's house and the abandoned warehouse. The gazetteer below includes the information and leads that the PCs can discover at each of these locations, as well as the story awards for the different parts of their investigation.

1. Nobles' Folly: The road known as Nobles' Folly winds through the woods to the decrepit ruins of the Sarini Estate. It sees little use, as it leads nowhere that any reasonable citizen of Saringallow would wish to travel, so weeds and moss choke its ancient cobblestones. On foggy nights, children sometimes dare one another to walk the twisted road. Some particularly brave ones even go all the way to the eerie old estate, but more than one has undertaken such a journey and never returned.

Thus, incredible superstition surrounds the road, which is the subject of many traditional ghost stories told in Saringallow.

2. Old Gallows: Both of Saringallow's town squares—the old Merchant's Square to the south and the Traveler's Square to the north—were the site of dozens of hangings following the uprising against House Sarini.

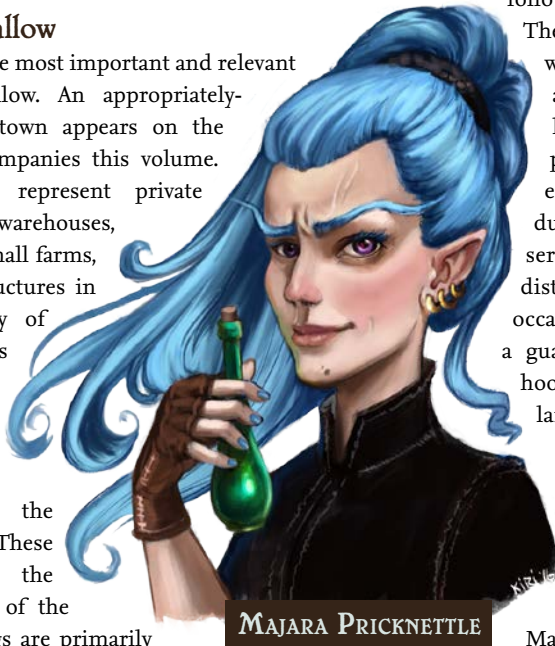
The original gallows still stand, kept in working shape as a matter of tradition and occasional necessity, though they have seen less use as the decades have passed. A single guard stands watch at each site at all times during the day, a duty that is partly symbolic, but also serves to keep guards at easy hailing distance for much of the city. On the rare occasions when an executioner is needed, a guard dons a solemn (and disguising) hood and takes up the traditional axe and lantern to dispatch the condemned.

3. Gellion's House: Gellion, the apothecary's apprentice, lives in a two-story house with his parents near the center of town. Their home is unremarkable and nearly impossible to find without directions from Majara herself. The demon's bile has taken hold there thanks to Gellion's misguided

experiments. See area C in Part 2 for more information about the current situation at Gellion's house.

4. Abandoned Warehouse: This warehouse belongs to Marcuccio Bravoni, who, unknown to anyone in town, died a month ago when he happened upon the vermlek that had wandered inside. The vermlek left behind some demon's bile before it abandoned the town proper, and now Gellion is obsessed with trying to expand the bile's vile influence. As a result, he has kidnapped several of his close friends and fellow apprentices and holds them here so he can feed them to the bile. Since the warehouse's location is out of the way, and its owner is ostensibly out of town (as far as the townspeople know), no one has entered the building to discover the awful truth. But it's only a matter of time before the dangers lurking within make themselves known; see area D in Part 3 for more information about the current situation at the abandoned warehouse.

5. Pricknettle's Potions and Poultices: The town's foremost apothecary, Majara Pricknettle, hails from the Iseri gnome settlement of Umok. Tragedy struck her family during the Goblinblood Wars, and she fled Umok to distance herself from those painful memories. Saringallow, with its high walls and townsfolk who keep their distance, in addition to its small but established gnome population, suited her needs quite well. She settled there permanently, vowing never to return home.



MAJARA PRICKNETTLE

After several years, as the townsfolk finally warmed toward her, Majara decided to take on Gellion as her apprentice, seeing the benefit of passing her skills on to other locals. What started as a strictly businesslike master-apprentice relationship turned friendly as Gellion charmed the gnome with his inquisitiveness and quirky gregariousness. This friendship blossomed as time passed, and now Majara is as fond and protective of Gellion as a she would be toward her own child, though she does not often let it show to the young man, let alone to others.

When the PCs first approach her shop, Majara is relatively curt but friendly, and extols the virtues of the alchemical wares she has for sale, answering any questions the PCs might have about that topic. However, she tries to change the subject if the PCs bring up Gellion, and she professes disinterest about any other missing apprentices the PCs might mention.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 18 Diplomacy check, however, she reveals that she has not seen Gellion in several days, and that she suspects that Nolaria Wintren, the apprentice at the temple of Erastil, might have something to do with his disappearance. Majara views the priest's apprentice as a meddler who puts dangerous ideas into Gellion's head. If the PCs fail the Diplomacy check, Majara snappishly states that Gellion is late to work again today and refuses to discuss the topic any further. A successful DC 15 Sense Motive check, though, reveals some worry and false bluster behind these words.

If the PCs ask where Gellion's home is, Majara refuses to tell them, even if the PCs brandish the mayor's letter. "If you want to get any information like that from me, you're going to have to give me several good reasons why you really need it," she says. In reality, Majara is wary toward outsiders, but she also wishes to protect Gellion however she can. Before she will reveal the home's location (random townsfolk also won't reveal it to the PCs, even if one of more PCs are Saringallow natives), the PCs must bring proof of the town's dire situation to her. See the Concluding the Investigation section on page 13 for more information about how to do this.

6. Temple of Erastil: The peasants brought in by House Sarini built this temple to Erastil in the early days of the settlement, and it is now one of the largest and oldest structures in town. The space is dedicated to the needs of the people, rather than the needs of the temple's staff: the infirmary and housing areas for the poor dwarf the priests' modest chambers. Many people pass through on a daily basis, seeking blessings and prayers before traveling or interacting with outsiders. The current head priest is Ildris Ruvarra. Though he has lived in Saringallow for only a decade or so, he is well respected for his selflessness as a healer. Ruvarra's adopted daughter, Nolaria Wintren, is also his apprentice, and has gone missing.

His duties have prevented him from searching for her himself, so he is appreciative if the PCs offer to help. If a PC succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy check, he is willing to share what he knows of Nolaria's background as an orphan of the Goblinblood Wars and her tendency to bend rules and get into trouble (for more information about Nolaria, see page 54). He insists that he does not believe she would knowingly endanger her friends, but admits that she often overestimates her abilities. If a PC succeeds at the Diplomacy check by 5 or more, Ruvarra reveals that his apprentice was last seen at the old graveyard (area B) with her loyal pet raven (which is actually her familiar). Alternatively, if a PC uses magical healing or attempts a Heal check on the pair of injured residents currently in the temple's infirmary, Ruvarra offers all of the information above freely.

Story Award: For learning about Nolaria Wintren's last known location, award the PCs 200 XP.

7. Gunty's Hearty Breads: The five apprentices at the largest bakery in Saringallow are afraid of nothing more than their stern master, **Gunty Keronna** (LN male human expert 2/warrior 2). A veteran of the Goblinblood Wars, his severe leg injury only soured his already surly disposition. After the war, rather than begging for his livelihood like so many of his former comrades-in-arms, he devoted himself to making "the heartiest damn breads this side o' the river." One of Keronna's apprentices, Noemi, has been absent since her abduction 2 days ago by Gellion, though Gunty believes she's simply sulking after receiving a particularly vicious upbraiding for burning a pan of rolls.

Although he has few words for the PCs at first—he's a busy man—Keronna respects helpful displays of strength and enjoys reminiscing about successful battles from the wars. If a PC succeeds at a DC 12 Strength check to help a pair of bakers move a cart with broken wheels, or a DC 18 Knowledge (history) check to discuss a past battle, Keronna discusses Noemi more at length. Unlike with other merchants, showing the mayor's letter to Keronna does not provide any bonuses, as he is less than impressed with her tenure as mayor.

Upon a successful check, the baker grouses about the time Noemi spends with her "no-good friends," and reveals that he believes Noemi and the other apprentices are planning some sort of trick in retaliation for his strict rules. On recent nights, the baker has been hearing buzzing noises and seeing strange flickering lights, "like torches flying through the sky," near the town's central orchard. Whatever the apprentices are planning, Keronna is convinced that the orchard (area A) is their staging ground. He's tried to investigate, but all he's found so far is a bunch of trampled fruit.

Story Award: For learning about the disturbances coming from the orchard, award the PCs 200 XP.

8. Dependable Drummady's: Saringallow's most successful cobbler, "Dependable" **Drummady Laterna**



(NG female human expert 4), has a reputation for making the sturdiest footwear in town at reasonable prices, and is willing to repair any shoe purchased from her store at a steep discount. Her business truly took off 3 years ago when she split with her husband Petrello, who tried to exercise control over the business even though he is a far inferior crafter than Drummady.

Petrello and Drummady also bumped heads over their children, Pavolus and Betrona. Pavolus is Drummady's apprentice, and Betrona is Petrello's apprentice. Their father is terribly strict with them, while their mother is far more permissive. The largest point of contention between the parents is Petrello's disapproval of Pavolus's interest in Gellion, who the haberdasher believes is a distraction and not nearly good enough for his son.

When the PCs approach the cobbler's shop, they find Drummady in a state of grim resolve. She refuses to allow her business to falter because her children are missing. She is practical and avoids engaging in chitchat with the PCs; however, PCs who succeed at a DC 18 Perception or Sense Motive check realize that her critical muttering is directed toward her family worries, and any further questioning prompts her to reveal the situation described above.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy check, Drummady also shares that Gellion was certainly the most charismatic of the missing apprentices, and usually acted as the group's de facto leader. She also reveals that Pavolus recently made Gellion a pair of bright yellow boots as a gift—a fact that she emphasizes to display her son's kindness, and to criticize her ex-husband's disapproval of him.

Story Award: For learning that Gellion was the apparent leader of the apprentices, award the PCs 200 XP.

9. Petrello's Haberdashery: The haberdashery owned by **Petrello Pindlion** (LN male human expert 2) is nowhere near the most prominent or successful in the town, but it is the only one with a missing apprentice. Petrello started this business to support himself and his daughter Betrona when he and Drummady separated (see above). He was a terrible cobbler, and he is no better as a haberdasher; the people of Saringallow cruelly comment that his hats look more like shoes than his shoes ever did.

The place is a mess, and he is disinclined to speak with visitors; his starting attitude is unfriendly, and all he'll say to the PCs is, "It's that apothecary boy's fault. He's a bad influence, that one!"

If a PC succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy check, however, he is more willing to talk. Petrello shares that he suspects Gellion and Nolaria of getting the other apprentices into some sort of trouble. Despite strictly forbidding it, he suspects that Betrona met with her friends anyway—perhaps in the town's orchard or graveyard—and that if she had only listened to her father, none of this would have happened.

Story Award: For learning about Petrello's suspicions, award the PCs 200 XP.

Morvinarr,
I know you're worried,
but please keep this
matter between us
for now. Meet me at
the usual place at
midnight and I'll take
you to the others.

HANDOUT #3

10. Witch's End Tavern: A sign depicting a dark-haired figure burning at the stake hangs over the door of this building. Alcie Kruptin is the imposing proprietor of the Witch's End Tavern. Well over 6 feet tall, she makes a point of learning the name and occupation of every visitor to her establishment, and holds great distrust for adventurers and spellcasters; the only reason the tavern is so popular with travelers is because its food is phenomenal.

The tavern-keeper is in a particularly foul mood lately because of the disappearance of Morvinarr, who is her best cook-in-training and also acts as another bouncer when needed. Kruptin has little to say outside of taking the PCs' order and lobbing backhanded barbs at PCs who aren't locals. However, the PCs can earn Kruptin's respect by showing intimate knowledge of the town and its history (Knowledge [local] or [history] DC 20), or by showing bluster that might lend itself to keeping the peace in her tavern (Intimidate or Bluff DC 18).

Upon a successful check, Kruptin reveals that Morvinarr, as the biggest and strongest of his friends, saw himself as their protector. Where they went, he went, always making sure to keep them out of harm's way. Most often it was Nolaria who led them on wild adventures outside of town; they would often return to the tavern to boast about their exploits. Recently, however, they seem to have been avoiding the Witch's End, and Morvinarr has been taking more time off. She suspects that they were getting into something she would not approve of—which more than likely has something to do with magic.

Further, Kruptin reveals that when Morvinarr disappeared, she searched his room and discovered a missive (see Handout #3 above). The note isn't signed, so she doesn't know that it was from Gellion, who targeted his strongest friend last.

Story Award: For learning about the note Kruptin found, award the PCs 200 XP.

11. Saringallow's Sundries: This general store is a cooperative venture owned by several influential townspeople and operated by the mayor's office. A rotating staff of clerks, inventory managers, and guards crowd

the place during daylight hours. They keep extremely accurate records of every item bought and sold. Though it is a general store, a variety of simple weapons are available for sale in addition to items to fight and ward off evil creatures, including silver and cold iron weapons. The PCs might choose to shop or investigate here, especially given the discount the mayor's letter affords them. If they ask about the apprentices and show the mayor's letter, they learn that Nolaria Wintren recently requested the "largest cold iron weapon available," and that the store sold her a cold iron morningstar.

12. Conerica Docks: The Conerica River, which flows from the Five Kings Mountains past Saringallow and through Cheliax, brings steady trade through the town. The mayor employs a large number of inspectors who work during the day to ensure that no illicit goods or unwelcome visitors are brought into the town.

13. Conerica Paths: The roads leading to and from Saringallow are part of a network colloquially known as the Conerica Paths, which mostly follow the Conerica River but also lead to other places on the outskirts of town and beyond. Not directly part of the famed Conerica Straits, these roads are still wide and well traveled, but a variety of dangers lurk in the nearby woods and hills. Goblins, bandits, ghouls, and worse terrors are not uncommon, and Isger's army, decimated by the recent Goblinblood Wars, has trouble keeping them safe. Saringallow's town guard can provide a modicum of protection near its walls, but beyond that, most merchants and other travelers are on their own.

14. Saringallow Orchard: The sprawling apple orchard near the center of Saringallow has seen better days. The family that previously tended the trees left to fight in the Goblinblood Wars and never returned. In the 15 years since, the responsibility of caring for the trees and harvesting the apples has rotated between citizens who lack a livelihood of their own. Thanks to the lack of consistent oversight, no one has noticed the cluster of fiendish fire beetles that have taken up residence in one of the trees. See area A for more information about what the PCs encounter when they visit the orchard.

15. The Gallows' Graveyard: The members of the Sarini family were not the only ones who died when the people of Sarini's Hollow rose up. Following the revolt, much of the frightened populace accused their rivals and neighbors of consorting with evil. The witch-hunt lasted several years and resulted in several dozen hangings. The town's small graveyard is crowded with bodies, all given proper burials at the insistence of the clergy of Erastil. Today, the nearby walls mostly prevent ghouls and other scavengers from desecrating the graves, but a patrol of priests and town guards still visits at least once a month to clear the deserted place of any dangers. The graveyard is Nolaria and Gellion's favored meeting place; they sometimes brought their friends there to discuss their free-spirited schemes. Unfortunately, the demon's bile has begun to take root

here. See area B on page 13 for more information about what the PCs encounter when they visit the graveyard. (For those playing multiple adventures in this module, see page 3 for details about how the town's late former gravedigger set these heinous events into motion.)

16. Town Hall: This complex dominates the center of Saringallow. Several large buildings overlook the rest of the town and serve as its administrative headquarters. The town hall's upper floor contains the mayor's residence, and its lower floor contains a meeting hall and stuffy records room. A crowded garrison, well-stocked armory, and tidy stables surround a large military-style training ground. At any time during the day, the areas outside each building and in each large public area have 2d4 guards (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 267) milling about.

A. SARINGALLOW ORCHARD (CR 1)

Rows of neglected apple trees sway in the wind, and the occasional rotting, worm-eaten fruit falls with a wet thud to the ground below. The earth is heavily trampled near the southern end of the orchard, and an overturned barrel of apples lies broken on its side, exuding a sickly sweet scent.

The orchard's location near the center of town make it an excellent meeting place for clandestine meetings, as far as Saringallow's apprentices were concerned. Once the demon's bile corrupted his mind, Gellion lured his friends here, drugged them to make them pliable, and led them off to the warehouse. When he confronted the last of his friends, Morvinarr, the burly tavern keeper's apprentice, resisted, and the two fought. Gellion won, but only barely, making quite a mess in the process. The signs of their struggle are still visible in the orchard. With a successful DC 15 Survival check, the PCs learn that two humanoid creatures fought here several days ago, and the victor half-carried the loser—a very large person—away to the south. The trail ends at the edge of the orchard. With a successful DC 18 Perception check, the PCs notice thin strands of a purplish-black substance clinging to a nearby tree. A patch of bark beneath the strands has begun to decay, and all of the tree's fruit has fallen to the ground.

GMs may wish to use *Pathfinder Map Pack: Farmstead* when the PCs venture into the orchard.

Creatures: Gellion has traveled between the orchard and the warehouse a great deal, and he left traces of demon's bile on one of the trees when he was waiting for his latest victim. The bile attracted vermin and has grown (as described in the *Demon's Bile* section on page 17), and has turned several bugs into fiendish fire beetles. These creatures have taken up residence in the trees, and at night they fly forth to prey on rats, stray dogs, and the like. So far they have not killed any of the town's residents, but the beetles still pose a threat to the town's unsuspecting populace.



If the PCs arrive during the day, the beetles fly down to attack in 2d4 rounds, or when they are provoked. At night, the beetles attack in 1 round. These fiendish beetles resemble normal fire beetles, but their spots shed light like torches instead of their usual greenish-yellow glow.

FIENDISH FIRE BEETLES (3) **CR 1/3**

XP 135 each

hp 4 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 33)

Hazard: Because just a small amount of demon's bile is present here, it is not yet in the process of growing as described in the Demon's Bile section on page 17, though the PCs may wish to destroy it now or later in the adventure. The demon's bile is present on the tree described above; any damage from a cold iron or good-aligned weapon or any positive energy destroys it.

Treasure: The PCs discover a masterwork sap discarded on the ground nearby. Morvinarr dropped this weapon in his struggle with Gellion.

Development: If the PCs are trying to convince Majara Pricknettle to divulge the location of Gellion's home, they may wish to take a sample of the demon's bile they find in the orchard. See *Concluding the Investigation* for more information.

B. THE GALLOWS' GRAVEYARD (CR 3)

Hundreds of small grave markers stand between a few large mausoleums in this graveyard. Crows leer from the gravestones, scattering when other creatures draw near, only to resettle some distance away.

Gellion, Nolaria, and the other apprentices used the graveyard as a secret meeting place until recent events led to Gellion's corruption. Gellion and Nolaria in particular often met behind an unmarked mausoleum, out of sight of the temple of Erastil, where no one would discover that they were sharing arcane lore and information they'd learned about other harmless but taboo eldritch topics. When Gellion captured Nolaria, her raven familiar, Blackfeather, managed to avoid attracting his notice. Through their empathic link, Blackfeather knows that Nolaria is in danger and afraid, but he doesn't know where she is. He is waiting for her to return to the graveyard and cawing madly at the gigantic ants scuttling about.

The PCs can follow recent tracks to the apprentices' meeting site with a successful DC 15 Survival check, or they can discover it after 3d10 minutes of searching. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, they also might notice that all of the birds in the graveyard—except a single large, noisy raven—are avoiding this particular mausoleum. The PCs can recognize Blackfeather as a spellcaster's familiar with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (arcana) check.

GMs may wish to use *Pathfinder Map Pack: Crypts* or *Pathfinder Flip Mat: Necropolis* once the PCs enter the town's graveyard.

Creatures: Like in the orchard, Gellion has left traces of demon's bile at the meeting site in the graveyard; the vermlek also left some bile here on its way out of town. Some mundane ants became exposed and have grown to many times their normal size and taken on fiendish traits. These creatures scurry aimlessly about the graveyard, waiting for prey. They attack anyone who moves to the far side of the mausoleum, where Gellion and Nolaria's meetings took place. (Note that the ants are the worker variety of giant ant, as described in the text on page 16 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, and do not have a poison sting or a grab special attack.)

FIENDISH GIANT WORKER ANTS (2) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

hp 18 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 16)

Hazard: Because just a small amount of demon's bile is here, it is not yet in the process of growing as described in the Demon's Bile section on page 17, though the PCs may wish to destroy it now or later in the adventure. The demon's bile coats three gravestones, and any damage from a cold iron or good-aligned weapon or any positive energy destroys it.

Treasure: After Gellion and Nolaria fought, the crazed apprentice threw the priestess's cold iron morningstar across the graveyard. It landed against one of the three gravestones covered with demon's bile, and the PCs can easily see that the foul material has grown around the weapon. Nolaria also dropped a *wand of bless weapon* (which has 10 charges left) at the meeting site, along with a pouch containing an *elixir of hiding* and an *elixir of vision*.

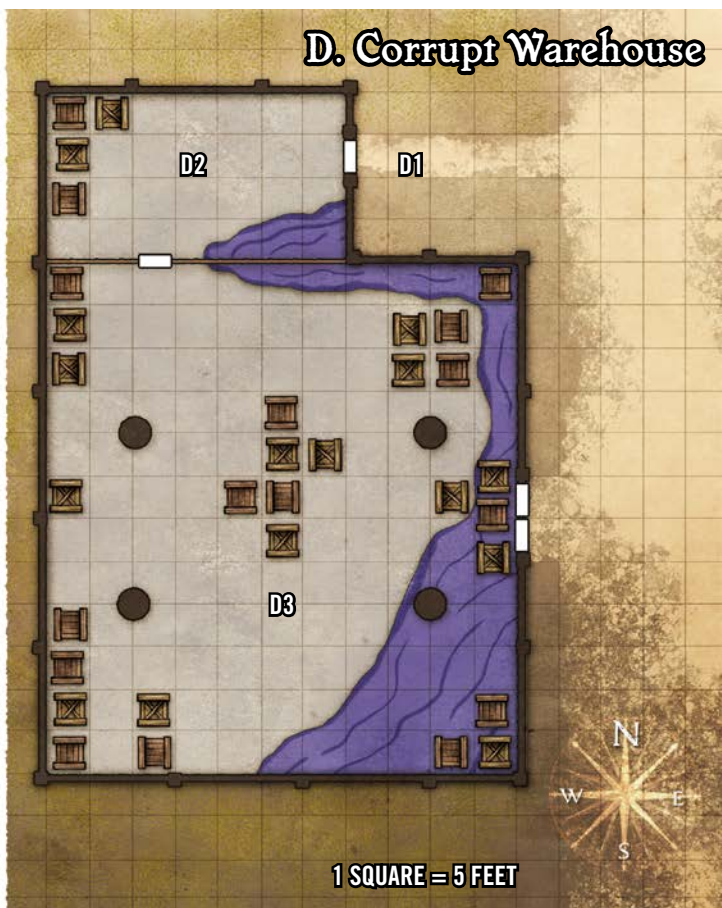
Development: If the PCs defeat the fiendish ants, Blackfeather swoops down to land on a nearby gravestone and begins cawing wildly. He cannot speak outright, of course, but he can mimic some aspects of human speech, and any PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Linguistics check or a DC 12 Intelligence check can tell that his squawks approximate the words, "Yellow-Foot! Get Yellow-Foot!" He repeats this frantically until the PCs leave the area.

This is a reference to Gellion, who recently received a pair of bright yellow boots from Pavolus Pindlion. The stubborn raven refuses to leave the graveyard, where he last saw Nolaria, and is of little use in his current state.

If the PCs are trying to convince Majara Pricknettle to divulge the location of Gellion's home, they may wish to take a sample of the demon's bile they find in the orchard. See *Concluding the Investigation* for more information.

Concluding the Investigation

Once the PCs have spoken to each of the apprentices' masters and investigated the orchard and graveyard,



they will likely want more information from Majara Pricknettle about Gellion's whereabouts. The PCs need at least three of the following three pieces of evidence to convince Pricknettle to direct them to Gellion's home: a sample or description of the demon's bile from one or more locations he frequents; the name "Yellow-Foot" from Nolaria's familiar and knowledge of his new yellow boots; testimony from one or more of the masters that Gellion was the leader of the missing apprentices; or the letter that Gellion wrote to Morvinarr, which Pricknettle can see is in Gellion's handwriting. If they choose to take their findings to Sandra Trinelli instead, as long as they have at least two pieces of evidence, the mayor considers everything and summons Pricknettle to the town hall to speak with the PCs. After hearing the evidence, Pricknettle gives the PCs directions to Gellion's family's house, but pleads that they give him a chance to explain his side of things when they find him.

Story Award: If the PCs learn the location of Gellion's home from Majara Pricknettle or the mayor, award them 200 XP.

PART 2: THE ABYSSAL APPRENTICE

After a thorough investigation of the missing apprentices in Part 1, the PCs should realize that there is a connection between the demon's bile and the

strange vermin plaguing the town, and may suspect the missing apprentice Gellion Vazarro is at the center of things. In the second part of the adventure, the PCs investigate Gellion's home. Though they do not discover him here, they can find horrific evidence of his Abyssal experiments and clues leading them to his current location in Marcuccio Bravoni's warehouse.

C. GELLION'S HOUSE

Gellion Vazarro lives in this two-story house with his parents, Altius and Beldonna Vazarro. The two are landowners and also factors, conducting business on behalf of many of the area's farmers to get their goods to market. When their son Gellion showed interest in alchemy, they encouraged him, believing that such training plus the good business sense they had instilled in him would lead him to become a respected and influential member of society. When he grew more distant in recent weeks, they assumed he was simply absorbed in his studies. They never imagined that he had been corrupted by demonic influence.

Shortly after his exposure to the bile, Gellion began hearing strange buzzing and screeching sounds that, as he slipped deeper into madness, began to sound like instructions. Before he followed this monstrous siren call to the abandoned warehouse, he first enacted its hideous



demands in his own home. One night, while he was experiencing a particularly fevered waking nightmare, the vile instructions took him hypnotically through the steps of an ersatz Abyssal ritual.

It visited considerable stress and fatigue on his mortal form, but Gellion somehow managed to create a foul creature from his own tainted flesh and blood—a hunchbacked, wingless creature not unlike a homunculus (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 176). When he awoke, Gellion attempted to command the creature, but the wicked thing was filled with fiendish hatred even for its would-be master, and lashed out at him. The two fought, but neither could quite bear to slay the other, bound as they were by blood. Gellion soon abandoned the creature to follow the buzzing noises in his head to the abandoned warehouse. In his absence, the creature plotted thousands of ways to torment its master. It broke and battered everything in Gellion's bedroom, releasing a small sample of demon's bile and eventually spawning the fiendish spiders that now lurk in the room. When Altius and Beldonna heard the racket, they decided at last to intervene in their son's strange activities. They stood no chance against the horrors they discovered within, and are now being held prisoner, each barely clinging to life, in area C5.

Unless otherwise noted, each room in Gellion's house is dimly lit by sunlight during the day, and dark at night.

C1. Gellion's Front Door (CR 1)

The Vazarro home is a simple, well-kept, two-story structure of bricks, wood, and plain shingles. Smoke billows from a brick chimney, and minimal light escapes from the windows, from which partially closed, thick-slatted shutters hang. The front door bears a tarnished brass knocker.

Allow the PCs to attempt Perception checks when they come within 15 feet of Gellion's home. PCs whose check results are 15 or higher notice a dark, greasy-looking stain oozing from between the slats of the shutters on the ground floor windows. PCs whose check results are 20 or higher also notice that the door's knocker is lightly smeared with a dark, dried substance. With a successful DC 15 Heal check, a PC identifies this substance as blood that is likely only a few days old.

The windows are locked from the inside (Disable Device DC 20). The glass breaks easily (hardness 1, hp 1), but the PCs should note that causing property damage directly violates the mayor's request that they keep their investigation discreet. The front door is a strong wooden door (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23) and has a simple lock (Disable Device DC 20).

Trap: The door also has a trap that Garlmak, the wicked creature that Gellion's mad experimentations brought to life, set for the apprentice in anticipation of his return home. The trap is a spring-loaded vial of searing blood,

magically heated from the Abyssal energies inside the house, that sprays on anyone who opens the door.

SCORCHING BLOOD SPRAY

CR 1

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect line of searing blood (1d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 18 avoids); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft. line directly north of the door)

C2. Living Room (CR 3)

Scratches and dark stains cover nearly every surface in this spacious living room. To the east, paintings and other once-fine objects give fuel to a fire roaring in the hearth. Bent, broken, and bloody cutlery juts at odd angles from the table in the center of the room. Books lie scattered in heaps next to broken shelves, and shards of shattered dishes spill forth from their cabinets. An open door to the west looks into the filthy kitchen, and stairs to the southwest lead up to the next floor. Tiny bloody footprints cover the stairs, heading in both directions.

The chaos and destruction in this room are the work of Garlmak, the wicked creature Gellion created in his madness. The objects in the fireplace including paintings, Gellion's old toys, bed linens, and basically anything else that reminds the creature of Gellion. The fire sheds normal light throughout the room at all times of day.

Creature: Garlmak is a spiteful creature. The hapless apprentice created this homunculus-like being without truly knowing what he was doing, and badly botched the process. The creature lacks the wings and poisonous stinger that true homunculi possess, but it is stronger and its teeth are larger. Plus, it has gathered several small paring knives from the kitchen (area C3) and can hurl them from the hiding places it's made throughout the room. Garlmak has rigged the living room with traps to help it take out Gellion and his allies (see the Traps section below).

Garlmak feels only hatred for its creator and sees its sole purpose as making Gellion's life as miserable as possible. In truth, Garlmak inherited Gellion's own self-loathing and shame. It assumes that anyone who enters the home is a friend of Gellion and attacks other creatures on sight, hoping that their deaths will cause Gellion suffering. A character who succeeds at a DC 11 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes Garlmak's similarities to a homunculus, and can learn its special powers or vulnerabilities as normal.

GARLMAK

CR 1

XP 400

Variant homunculus (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 176)

CE Tiny construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 11 (2d10)

Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +6 (1d2+1/19–20) or bite +5 (1d4+1)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d2+1/19–20)

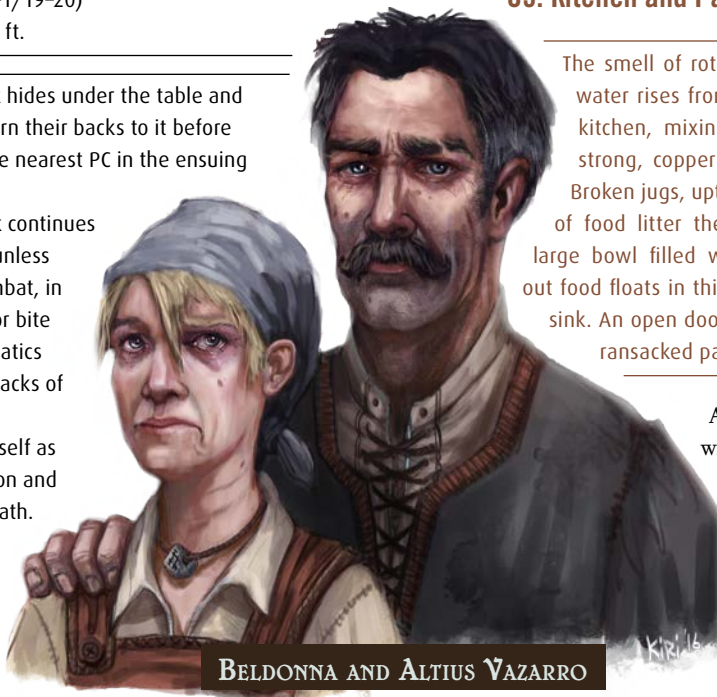
Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

TACTICS

Before Combat Garlmak hides under the table and waits for the PCs to turn their backs to it before hurling a dagger at the nearest PC in the ensuing surprise round.

During Combat Garlmak continues to attack from range unless forced into melee combat, in which it tries to stab or bite the PCs and use Acrobatics to avoid provoking attacks of opportunity.

Morale Garlmak hates itself as much as it hates Gellion and gladly fights to the death. It pursues fleeing PCs throughout the house, but doesn't leave the house to follow the PCs.



BELDONNA AND ALTIUS VAZARRO

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10,

Wis 11, **Cha** 7

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

Feats Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Craft (traps) +1, Stealth +11

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ unbound

Gear daggers (6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Unbound (Su) Unlike a traditional homunculus, Garlmak is not physically or telepathically bound to Gellion. If Garlmak is destroyed, Gellion takes no damage, and if Gellion dies, Garlmak doesn't lose its Intelligence score, feats, or skill ranks, or suffer any negative effects.

Traps: As Garlmak rampaged through the Vazarros' home, it built itself a lair of sorts in the living room, complete with projectile traps he's fashioned from forks and other sharp implements he's found. One trap is built into the center of the shelf along the room's southeast wall, and triggers when the PCs touch it. The other triggers when the PCs touch the door to area C3.

Garlmak can take a standard action to reset the traps whenever he likes.

FORK TRAPS (2)

CR 1

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

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual (standard action for Garlmak only)

Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d8+1/×3)

C3. Kitchen and Pantry

The smell of rotting food and stagnant water rises from the filth in this small kitchen, mixing sickeningly with the strong, coppery scent of fresh blood. Broken jugs, upturned trays, and scraps of food litter the room. In the sink, a large bowl filled with chewed and spat-out food floats in thick, bloody water in the sink. An open door to the south reveals a ransacked pantry.

Any creature that comes within 5 feet of the sink must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw or be sickened for 1 minute due to the disgusting smell.

Any creature that approaches the sink must make this saving throw only once; PCs that approach the sink multiple times do not again risk being sickened.

C4. Storeroom and Washroom

The shelves in this storeroom have been ripped off the wall and lie in a heap on the floor, along with their now-wrecked former contents—bloody linens, a broken broom, and other ruined household supplies. Past the storeroom is a tidy washroom that appears oddly untouched by the surrounding messy chaos.

Garlmak left the washroom clean hoping that Gellion would step inside. Anyone entering triggers a cruel prank the homunculus hopes will humiliate and anger the apprentice. Entering the washroom causes the mirror to fall off the wall, revealing a nasty, scrawled message written in blood in a childlike hand: "You know nothing! You ruined everything! Your friends hate you! I HATE YOU!" Any character who recognized Garlmak as a homunculus realizes that this message likely represents the creator's own deep-seated feelings toward his- or herself.



C5. Gellion's Room (CR 1)

This small room contains a simple bed, desk, and chair. Thick webs cover the west end of the room, where the bed sits—and two humanoid forms appear trapped within. Sticky, purplish-black strands cling to the desk and chair on the east side of the room, except in one spot where the strange filaments have left a clear space around a small piece of metal.

Gellion spent a great deal of time in his room after his initial exposure to the demon's bile, driven to madness by its influence and trying to figure out how it works. During Garlmak's tantrum following the apprentice's departure, samples of bile splattered across his desk.

Creature: A spider became exposed to the bile after Garlmak ransacked the room, and it grew large enough to overpower and entrap Altius and Beldonna when the two came to investigate Gellion's room. The spider poisoned the parents, who are still alive and unconscious in the webs.

FIENDISH GIANT SPIDER

CR 1

XP 400

hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 258)

Hazard: A 5-foot-by-10-foot square of demon's bile is located in the corner of the room. If left unchecked, it will continue to attract vermin and eventually begin growing in earnest, as described in the Demon's Bile section on page 17. If the PCs have not already determined the nature of the demon's bile, allow them to attempt Knowledge (nature or planes) checks (DC 12) to do so now. If none of the PCs are trained in Knowledge (nature or planes), Father Ildris Ruvarra is familiar with these details and can relate them to PCs who describe the demon's bile to him.

Treasure: A cold iron arrowhead sits in the center of the space free of demon's bile. Once part of a collection from Gellion's youth that includes a steel arrowhead, a stone arrowhead, and an obsidian arrowhead, the apprentice repurposed the assortment when he began to study alchemy. He regularly tested various chemicals' reactions to the arrowheads' material; he learned much when in this way when he began experimenting on the demon's bile. Some scribbled notes can be found on the desk underneath the vile corruption read, "Adverse reaction to cold iron. What about magic? Fire? Cold? Further trials are required."

A small chest next to the desk contains six flasks of acid, two flasks of alchemist's fire, two tanglefoot bags, a *potion of remove disease*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, and three *potions of cure light wounds*.

Development: Gellion's parents are both suffering from numerous spider bites—their hit points and Strength scores are currently 0. The PCs will need to heal Altius and Beldonna if they wish to speak with them. If the PCs elect not to use the items found in this room, Ildris Ruvarra

at the church of Erastil is willing to care for the parents for free (providing *lesser restoration* and *cure light wounds* spells as needed), should the PCs ask for his help. When conscious again, Altius and Beldonna can reveal that their son has been acting quite oddly lately, consumed by some sort of strange alchemical experiments. They recently heard him ranting about a warehouse, and they saw him heading in the direction of their acquaintance Marcuccio Bravoni's warehouse with one of his friends, Morvinarr. The tavern-keeper's apprentice appeared quite drunk, which Altius and Beldonna found unusual. When they went to confront Gellion after a terrible racket in his room, they discovered the spiders within, along with a "horrible little blood-stained man." Gellion's parents can give clear directions to the abandoned warehouse that Gellion referred to in his mad ravings.

C6. Master Bedroom

This large bedroom is full of upturned furniture and decorations knocked from the shelves and walls. Every painting has been smashed from its frame and torn to pieces. Sitting on the otherwise-undisturbed master bed is a single journal.

The journal belongs to Gellion's mother. Its contents are quite mundane—simply a record of the family's life from day to day—but every page has the message "Our son is an awful disappointment" written over it in blood, in the same childlike handwriting as that in area C4. This was Garlmak's doing as well. If the PCs spend 1d10 minutes looking over the journal, they discover in the most recent entries that Beldonna was concerned about her son's well-being; he was spending too much time on his experiments, was not eating well, and seemed distant from his friends and parents.

Demon's Bile

The demon's bile created by the vermlék's activities in Marcuccio Bravoni's warehouse is a unique Abyssal substance that can act as an ingested disease as well as a special environmental hazard, depending on the circumstance. The following details describe the demon's bile hazard and disease, respectively.

Demon's bile is biological in nature, and if left in an open area unchecked, even a small amount of it can begin growing until, in 1d4 months, the substance takes up a 10-foot-by-10-foot area of filth. Demon's bile that covers an area of that size or larger then begins growing in earnest, expanding at a rate of about 5 feet per day. Demon's bile attracts vermin, and those that wallow in it (as well as some other creatures exposed to it) often grow in size, gain the fiendish template, or both. Additionally, demon's bile that covers a 10-foot-by-10-foot area or greater has a 50% chance to spew forth fiendish vermin every 1d4 days. Any good-aligned damage, damage from cold iron

weapons, or positive energy damage applied to any 5-foot square of bile destroys it. A successful DC 12 Knowledge (nature or planes) check reveals the nature of demon's bile and its details, including its potential for growth and the ways to destroy it. Ildris Rugarra, the priest of Erastil, is also familiar with demon's bile and its details.

Additionally, anyone who ingests demon's bile is exposed to the following disease.

DEMON'S BILE

Type disease, ingested; **Save** Fortitude DC 18

Onset 1d4 days; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect 1 Wisdom damage, gain 1 Strength, shift one alignment step toward chaotic evil, see below; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

Special In addition to suffering the effects above, creatures under the effects of the demon's bile disease hear a constant buzzing in their heads that, along with their shifting alignment, prompts them to undertake tasks that most would consider madness. This madness manifests in different ways for each creature, but it often involves delusions.

In Gellion's case, the madness caused by demon's bile has convinced him that the demon's bile is glorious and that it needs human blood to continue its growth. GMs are encouraged to be creative when applying this disease's effects to PCs and NPCs. In all cases, the demon's bile should come across as the will of the Abyss made manifest.

The Mayor's Request

Mayor Sandra Trinelli approaches the PCs once the Vazarros have recovered. She asks what they have discovered so far, and encourages them to seek healing themselves at the temple of Erastil—if needed, she gives them a 50 gp stipend to offer as a donation for this purpose. When she learns that the PCs' next stop is an abandoned warehouse near the Conerica Docks, she promises to have her guards clear the streets nearby on some innocuous pretext so that no innocents are harmed in any conflict that occurs.

PART 3: THE SPAWNING GROUND

In the final part of the adventure, the PCs confront Gellion at the abandoned warehouse where he is hiding. Under the influence of demon's bile, Gellion has trapped five of his friends here, hoping that they can serve as fuel for the demon's bile and help it to spread across Saringallow. The PCs need to find a way to defeat Gellion and the fiendish substance at the center of this situation and rescue the apprentices from the demon's bile.

FIENDISH AMBUSH (CR 2)

True to the mayor's word, the streets surrounding the warehouse district are clear. An eerie quiet has settled

over the neighborhood. The abandoned warehouse lies several blocks away.

On their way to the warehouse, 1d4 minutes into the journey, the PCs face an attack by a quasit demon called Kzzrekz. The vile creature followed the vermlek to Saringallow, discovered the demon's bile that it produced, and has since been watching the unfolding events with amusement. Now that the PCs have set out to stop Gellion and the demon's bile, Kzzrekz believes that this is its opportunity to curry favor with the stronger servants of the Abyss. Kzzrekz plans to destroy the PCs, find its way back to its home plane, and take credit for the Abyssal corruption descending upon Saringallow. Kzzrekz knows from checking in at Gellion's home that the PCs are close to discovering the mad apprentice's operations at the warehouse, so it takes this opportunity to attack.

GMs may wish to use *Pathfinder Flip-Mat Classics: Town Square* or *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Warehouse* for this encounter.

KZZREKZ

CR 2

XP 600

Quasit demon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 66)

hp 16

TACTICS

Before Combat Kzzrekz follows the PCs with *invisibility* and uses *detect good* and *detect magic* to determine their disposition and magical strength before attacking.

During Combat The quasit uses its *cause fear* spell-like ability on the party on the first round, then focuses its attacks on foes who successfully saved against the effect. It prefers to attack good-aligned enemies and spellcasters first.

Morale If reduced to 8 or fewer hit points, Kzzrekz turns invisible and flies off until its fast healing can cure it, then renews its attacks. Kzzrekz fights to the death.

D. CORRUPT WAREHOUSE

Marcuccio Bravoni's warehouse once stored all manner of mundane supplies and trade goods, but now, unknown to the people of Saringallow, it houses an Abyssal breeding ground. The building's merchant owner is long dead and his body is now host to a vermlek demon, which has fled the town proper (see "The Festering Blot" on page 36), but the demon's bile has grown and the apothecary's apprentice has taken up the demon's mantle as its warden. Mistakenly convinced in his madness that the bile consumes humans, Gellion lured or dragged his friends here one by one, and has kept them bound and gagged ever since while he researches the best way to feed them to the corruption. Of course, the kidnapped apprentices are slowly dying as the foul vermin in the warehouse multiply or grow stronger and begin to eye them for their meals. Soon, Gellion hopes, the bile will consume Saringallow and create another Abyssal haven on Golarion. Use the map on page 14 for these encounters.



D1. Warehouse Entrance (CR 1)

The rusty front doors of this large, dingy warehouse are slightly ajar, as if someone forgot to close them entirely. Sprawled across the door and the southern side of the building are thick, disgusting, purplish-black strands that pulse with malevolence.

These warehouse doors are unlocked. As an experiment, Gellion smeared some demon's bile onto the front doors here. Any PCs who have identified the properties of demon's bile easily recognize the corruption on the doors as the same substance that was in Gellion's room.

The strong wooden doors to the south (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23) are locked (Disable Device DC 25). Should the PCs get these doors open, they must still squeeze between the boxes shoved up against the doors to enter the warehouse proper, and are exposed to demon's bile in the process.

Creature: When the PCs come within 10 feet of these doors, the demon's bile spews forth a fiendish spider swarm. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check notice that the corruption is writhing and can act in a surprise round against the vermin.

FIENDISH SPIDER SWARM CR 1 XP 400

hp 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 258)

D2. Spreading Corruption (CR 2)

Basic warehouse supplies, such as ropes, hammers, crowbars, and cargo nets, hang from the northern wall of this room. Several crates stand against the western wall. Doors stand against the east and south walls. A pulsating mass of purplish-black sludge lies along the floor near the southern wall between the two doors, and long filaments anchor the substance to the walls and ceiling. A large, strange egg sac lies at the center of the slime, with tiny legs visibly scabbling beneath its surface. Three other nearby egg sacs have already burst.

This unlit room has served as Gellion's observatory. Under barely controlled conditions, he has covered some insect eggs in demon's bile to watch the results and wallow in his growing madness.

Creatures: Three giant centipedes, transformed into fiendish creatures by the bile, guard this room. They attack anyone other than Gellion who passes through. In 2d4 rounds, the egg in the center of the bile hatches into another fiendish giant centipede, which immediately attacks. Hatching is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The egg has 1 hit point; the PCs can deal any amount of damage to the egg to destroy it before it hatches.

FIENDISH GIANT CENTIPEDES (3) CR 1/2 XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 43)

Hazard: The corruption in the southeastern portion of this room is demon's bile. If the PCs don't destroy it, it spews forth two fiendish giant centipedes in 1d4 minutes. For more information, see the Demon's Bile section on page 17.

Development: The sound of combat in this room alerts Gellion (in area D3) to the presence of intruders, and he prepares for combat as described in the tactics section of his stat block.

D3. Spawning Grounds (CR 3)

Torches in each corner of this large room shed dim flickering light between high columns of barrels and crates. Four large pillars support the ceiling. Purplish-black slime covers the eastern wall and much of the room's southeast corner, stretching between the walls, pillars, and crates with long filaments. Countless shapes, varying greatly in size, crowd the sludge. Several of these shapes, pinned to the walls and crates or lying on the floor, appear human-sized.

The demon's bile that resulted from the vermlék's possession of Marcuccio Bravoni's remains originated here. When Gellion discovered and ingested some of the bile, the apothecary's apprentice sensed the presence of these spawning grounds and came to the warehouse. Driven mad by the bile, he became convinced that it was his duty to nurture it with the still-living bodies of human victims. He lured or dragged five of his friends here: Betrona, Morvinarr, Noemi, Nolaria, and Pavolus. Gellion is wrong about the bile—it doesn't need to feed on humans—but the five apprentices here are nonetheless slowly dying of bites from the giant hook fly. If he isn't stopped, when Gellion realizes the bile isn't eating them, he feeds his friends to the vermin instead.

Creatures: Gellion stays here all the time now, feeding off the few edible (but now mostly rancid) goods in the warehouse. He experiments constantly with the substance, exposing all manner of creatures and things to it in order to discern its strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and other properties. The demon's bile has driven him entirely mad and changed his alignment to chaotic evil. He constantly mutters about "bringing the worm demons home" and aiding their rise to power. Though he doesn't even consciously know what his words really mean, these mutterings become passionate shouts during battle. The effects of the demon's bile disease are included in Gellion's stat block.

The bile's latest spawn, a fiendish giant hook fly, buzzes aimlessly about the room, content for now to feed off the helpless apprentices. It has recently drained

4 points of Constitution total from the apprentices—it need only drain 2 additional points of Constitution with its blood drain ability to spawn a nonfiendish hook fly swarm using its spawn brood ability (see page 60 for more details). It attempts to do this immediately if enemies enter the room. The apprentices are trapped in the southeast corner of the room. They can be pulled free from the bile with successful DC 20 Strength checks, and they automatically break free if the bile in their space is destroyed. They are all unconscious, most of them have serious injuries, and it's likely clear to the PCs that they are in terrible shape indeed.

GELLION VAZARRO **CR 1**

XP 400

Male human expert 3

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk heavy mace +6 (1d8+3)

Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)

TACTICS

Before Combat If he hears the PCs approaching, Gellion takes cover behind the stacked boxes or near one of the pillars, trying to find a good angle from which to throw his tanglefoot bag or alchemist's fire at them.

During Combat Gellion shoots his crossbow at the PCs while the giant hook fly attacks them. After the hook fly is defeated, he wades into melee with his heavy mace. At all times, he focuses his attacks on anyone attempting to destroy the bile.

Morale The mad apprentice fights until slain or knocked unconscious, but does not pursue foes from this room or attempt to flee, thinking that he must stay near the breeding ground to protect it from harm.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 8, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness

Skills Craft (alchemy) +5, Diplomacy +7, Heal +2, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (nature) +2, Perception +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), acid (2), alchemist's fire (3), smokestick, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone; **Other Gear** chain shirt, mwk heavy mace, light crossbow with 25 bolts, antitoxin, 1 gp

FIENDISH GIANT HOOK FLY **CR 2**

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, see page 60)

Hazard: The corruption along the eastern portion of this room is demon's bile. If the PCs don't destroy it, it spews forth a fiendish giant hook fly in 1d4 minutes. For more information, see *Demon's Bile* on page 17.

Treasure: In addition to Gellion's possessions, the room contains 550 gp worth of valuable alchemical ingredients that Gellion stole from Majara Pricknettle. She gladly buys these back from the PCs at their full value. The warehouse's former goods are all ruined and have no value.

Development: If Gellion survives the encounter, his behavior in the future depends on whether the PCs are able to cure him of the demon bile disease. Otherwise, he is an insane wreck, babbling constantly about the "demon worms" and his own insatiable hunger. He refuses to eat, insisting that "only mother can feed me!" Gellion means Lamashtu, though he does not realize it. He does not recognize his friends or parents. If the PCs do manage to cure him of the disease (such as by using the *potion of remove disease* found in area C5 or taking him to the temple of Erastil where Ildris Ruvarra can aid him with Heal checks), he returns to his old self over the course of a few days, though he is utterly ashamed of his actions and falls into deep remorse if anyone died in the battle. Gellion remembers a desperate urge to ingest the bile, but after that, his only recollection is of disturbing dreams and an obsession with "bringing the demon worms home."

The kidnapped apprentices can be brought back to consciousness with any amount of magical healing. If the PCs do this, they express dismay that their friend would cause them such harm, and upon seeing him they insist that he is not nearly himself. One of the weakened apprentices suggests that the PCs take them to the temple of Erastil, where Ildris Ruvarra can best care for their various wounds.

Story Award: Award the PCs 200 XP for destroying all of the demon's bile in this room. If still conscious, Gellion falls into a state of cowering helplessness as soon as the bile is destroyed, rocking and whimpering on the floor.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If they do not return to Saringallow's town hall, Mayor Sandra Trinelli approaches the PCs shortly after they successfully handle the threats in the corrupted warehouse. She requests an update to the situation, and once the PCs explain what happened, she delivers their promised reward (50 gp per rescued apprentice, and 100 gp for dealing with the town's vermin problem) and communicates the town's gratitude. She is also visibly relieved herself, as the situation and potential danger to Saringallow and its people have weighed on her mind heavily in recent days.

If the PCs destroyed the demon's bile at Gellion's house and in the warehouse, the threat is indeed abated.



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: A FOUL BREED
- CHAPTER 2: WHAT LURKS IN THE WOODS
- CHAPTER 3: THE FESTERING BLOT
- APPENDIX 1: NPCS
- APPENDIX 2: BESTIARY

If not, the PCs may want to return to those sites to destroy the bile, or the mayor might offer to send the town's guards to do this cleaning up on their own. The mayor listens carefully to any information the PCs can provide about the demon's bile and its properties and outfits the guards accordingly.

The PCs have the opportunity to influence Gellion's fate if he survives the encounter. The mayor explains that the people of Saringallow are likely to demand the boy undergo a harsh sentence if left to their own judgments; however, she welcomes the PCs to speak on Gellion's behalf if they are interested. Alternatively, the PCs can describe the exact nature of the demon's bile's influence over Gellion. A fair and compassionate woman, the mayor then offers to advocate on Gellion's behalf herself in the days ahead.

Assuming the apprentices of the following businesses survive, the grateful youths and their masters make these respective offers to the PCs: free room and board at Witch's End tavern for a week; a 10% discount at Pricknettle's Potions and Poultices; warm bread from Gunt's Hearty Breads for a month; a free pair of boots, shoes, or other footwear from Dependable Drummady; free clothing repairs from Petrello Pindlion; and up to two free healing and restorative spells of 1st- or 2nd-level per day from the temple of Erastil whenever the PCs need them. The masters of any apprentices who perished thank the PCs for trying their best, but do not offer any such rewards.

TYING THE ADVENTURES TOGETHER

If the PCs are playing two or more of these adventures, Nolaria Wintren informs them that her visiting cousin, Nixa Volsetti, was also a victim of Gellion's abductions. For some reason, Nixa was bound and left outside of town near the woods, where goblins have been known to lurk, and hasn't been seen since. Nolaria heard Gellion rambling about his plans to do this, and watched him drag Nixa in that direction, but Gellion himself has no memory of these events. However, he tells the PCs to ask the mayor for information about some recent nearby goblin sightings, which have been rumored throughout town recently. This provides a hook for "What Lurks in the Woods." Gellion's ravings about "worm demons" are a reference to the foes that the PCs encounter in "The Festering Blot," and PCs who are playing that adventure can piece together the vermlek's trail when receive starting information from Sandra Trinelli about the Sarini Estate.

SCALING THIS ADVENTURE

To accommodate a group of 2nd-level PCs, GMs running this adventure should make the following changes to each of the encounters listed below.

Encounter A: Add 2 additional fiendish fire beetles. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter B: Use ordinary fiendish giant ants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 16, 294) instead of fiendish giant worker ants. This makes the encounter CR 4.

Encounter C2: Apply the advanced creature simple template (*Bestiary* 294) to Garlmak. This makes the encounter CR 4.

Encounter C5: Apply the advanced creature simple template (*Bestiary* 294) to the fiendish giant spider. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Fiendish Ambush: Apply the advanced creature simple template (*Bestiary* 294) to Kzzrekz. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter D1: Add a giant spider (*Bestiary* 258) to the encounter. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter D2: Add two more fiendish giant centipedes. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter D3: Add one hook fly swarm (see page 60) to the encounter with Gellion and the fiendish giant hook fly. This makes the encounter CR 4.



GELLION VAZARRO



CHAPTER 2

WHAT LURKS IN THE WOODS

Fifteen years ago, under the command of their vicious hobgoblin leaders, the goblinoids of Isgar's Chitterwood poured from their hovels and terrorized the nation's rural areas in all-out attacks. The goblinoid threat overwhelmed many of Isgar's settlements, which struggled to fortify themselves with only limited military help. Tremendous losses occurred on both sides during this tumultuous time. Eventually, an unlikely alliance of Isgar's army, Chelish Hellknights, a contingent of Druma's Mercenary League, and a regiment of Andoran's Eagle Knights put down the goblinoids, but the aftermath of the Goblinblood Wars has reverberated throughout Isgar ever since. Perhaps even worse, many goblinoids still want to see the conflicts between their kind and humans reignited.

Mezodarath, a bugbear whose mother fought in several Goblinblood conflicts, belongs in that category. After Mezodarath's mother retreated into the peaks west of Saringallow, she raised her son on a steady diet of bitterness against humans and wishes for glorious redemption for all goblinkind. Throughout Mezodarath's early life, the bugbears moved from underground lair to underground lair, avoiding the human patrols that periodically swept through the area. Mezodarath grew more deranged daily, eventually obsessing over the obeisance his mother paid to a being she called the Mother of Monsters, the supposed agent of the goblinoids' second rising. Mezodarath didn't know at the time, but he indirectly came to serve Lamashtu, and the Demon Queen's influence soon began to manifest as harsh, maddening whispers in his ears.



Eventually, Mezodarath became convinced that he would lead the goblinoids' next glorious uprising, destroying of all humans in his path. He left his mother and emerged on the surface, moving east toward Saringallow. Along the way, he conquered a disparate band of goblins—the scattered descendants of a few Goblinblood Wars survivors who quickly came to see the powerful young bugbear as a savior. Mezodarath marched the goblins further east, where he fortuitously discovered the remains of a destroyed fort. There, the goblinoids trained and recruited other wandering goblins for their eventual attack on the unsuspecting residents of Saringallow.

Just a few weeks before Mezodarath planned to attack, though, a strange creature approached the goblin scouts that skulked outside of Saringallow. Although he looked like a lurching and bloated human, the creature managed to stay the goblins' blades and, his interest piqued by the Lamashtan-like war cries on their lips, convinced the goblins to introduce him to Mezodarath. The creature—in reality a vermlek (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2* 54) inhabiting the body of a murdered Saringallow merchant—immediately recognized the bugbear as an adherent of the Mother of Monsters. Eagerly optimistic about this unexpected alliance, he taught the bugbear more about the deity's ways. Convincing the goblinoids that he was bestowing a great blessing upon them, he mixed some of the demon's bile from his filthy body with the mud found in the filthy fort. The vermlek then bade Mezodarath and his goblin followers to bathe in the disgusting pool. This eventually turned the bugbear and most of the goblins fiendish, making them more disgusting than ever. (For more information about demon's bile, see page 17.) The demon instructed the goblins not to eat any of the sludge under any circumstance, however, as the disease carried by the bile would ravage the entire camp in short order. Mezodarath related the vermlek's words to his burgeoning army, threatening to severely punish anyone who disobeyed.

Before the vermlek left the goblins' fort for a better lair, he coached them on their upcoming assault on Saringallow. He described the town and the surrounding area to the goblins, and told them to keep an eye on the residents' comings and goings. The demon instructed the goblinoids to attack when the townsfolk seem the weakest, cause as many casualties as possible, and force-feed demon's bile to anyone they don't outright kill. Of course, goblins are a capricious and not entirely competent lot, and the scouting missions they've undertaken have not gone unnoticed.

For those playing multiple adventures in this volume, Mezodarath's ambitions play right into the vermlek's larger scheme to decimate Saringallow. For more information, see the Creating a Narrative Arc section on page 3 as well as the Tying the Adventures Together section on page 35.

PART 1: THE GOBLIN THREAT

The first part of the adventure involves the PCs stumbling upon the fiendish goblins sent out on raids from Mezodarath's fort lair; this brings them face to face with the dire nature of the building threat to Saringallow.

Getting Started

If the PCs have completed one or both of the other adventures in this volume, Mayor Sandra Trinelli reaches out to them directly to request a meeting at their earliest convenience. Otherwise, she makes it known throughout the region that she is recruiting adventurers and willing to pay good money. If the PCs plan to spend any time in Saringallow prior to the adventure, or if GMs wish to describe the town and its history in more detail, see the Saringallow's History, Life in Saringallow, and Exploring Saringallow sections on pages 8–12.

Once the PCs arrive at Saringallow's town hall, they are ushered into the mayor's office on the ground floor. Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure.

Golden beams of light stream into this comfortable-but-official room's picture window, illuminating a cluttered wooden desk and an empty chair pushed haphazardly to the side. Between the window and the desk strides Mayor Sandra Trinelli, who, brow furrowed, has clearly worn a pacer's path into the plush red carpet. Noticing her visitors, she sighs in determined resignation and steps behind her desk, leaning over it gravely.

"I'm glad you've arrived," she says, a measure of relief creeping into her strained voice. "Our town is dealing with its share of troubles right now, and this unknown menace beyond our walls has me the most worried."

She takes a deep breath as if composing herself, and sits carefully in her chair, assuming a self-assured posture that seems to come to her much more naturally.

"Specifically, we may have a goblin problem," the mayor continues. "I've recently received reports of goblins lurking in the woods outside of town. There have been no attacks yet—only minor damage to fences and some stolen sheep, I'm told—but we can't afford to let our guard down. Given how we suffered during the Goblinblood Wars, we can't assume that these scattered sightings are meaningless when they might very well mean that a major warband is about to descend on our heads.

"Even worse, it seems that these goblins are covered in some unholy manner of filth—even more so than normal! If word about that gets out, well, folks might start to panic. We are a superstitious lot here in Saringallow, as I'm sure you know.

"In short, we need to move quickly and deal with these goblins before they become a larger threat. Sending members of the town guard out into the woods, though, could leave us open to attack. I'm sure you see my dilemma.

"This is where I'd like you to intercede, my friends. Find out where the goblins are coming from and who—if anyone—is



leading them, then take out the threat. I can offer you a bounty of 5 gold pieces for each goblin you kill, 10 gold pieces for each goblin dog, and an additional bonus of 100 gold pieces if you bring me proof that you've destroyed their camp or otherwise dealt with whatever additional threat they pose.

"Most of the sightings have originated from the area northwest of town, particularly near the homesteaders out by Clover Stream. That's probably a good place to start your investigation. Aside from that, I'm afraid I don't have much else to tell you. Unless you have any specific questions?"

Before they begin, the PCs may have some questions for the mayor. She answers them as best she can, as outlined below. If the PCs ask why Saringallow's townsfolk are superstitious, or if Mayor Trinelli is worried about rumormongering, see the answers given on page 7.

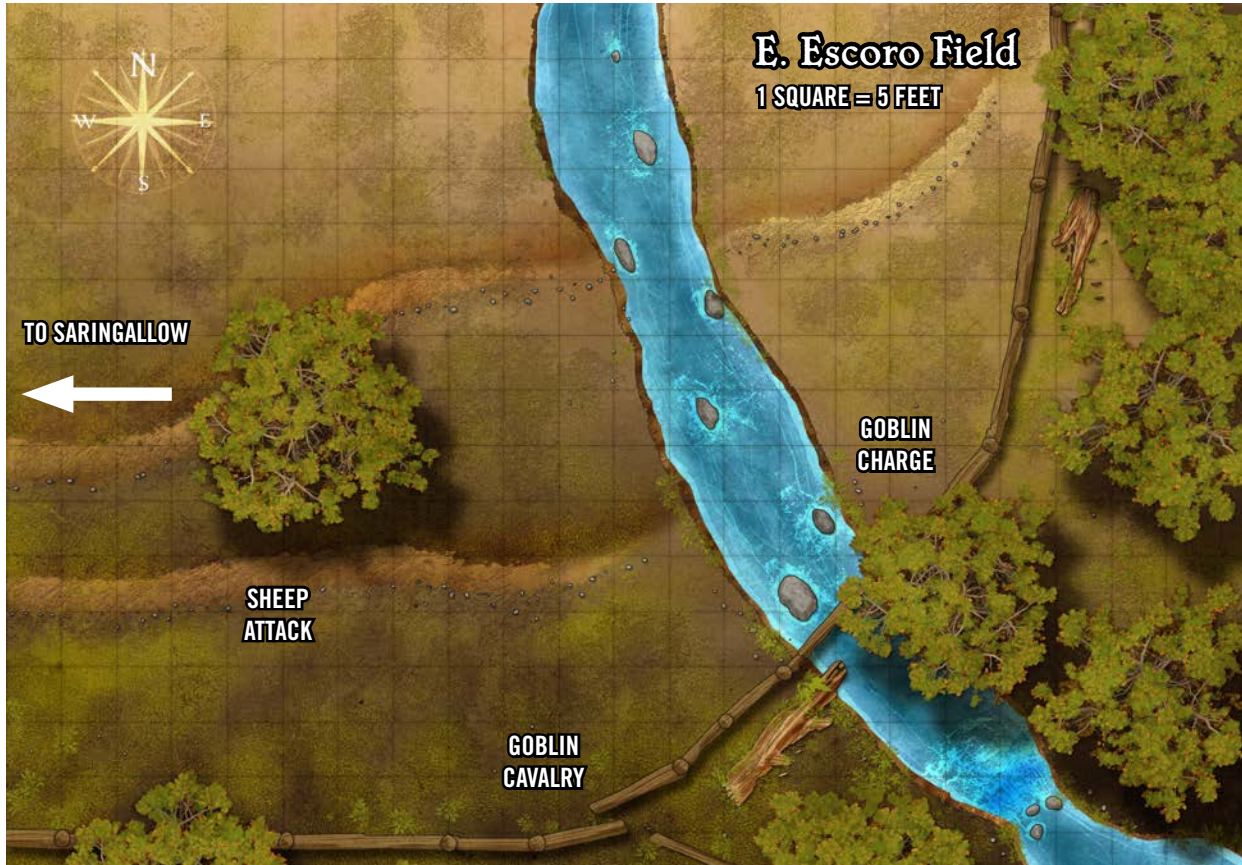
What can you tell us about goblins? "Goblins are vicious little monsters that live in the woods, caves, or anywhere they've sunk their claws into, really. Alone, they aren't so threatening—but groups of them are dangerous, and hordes of them are terrifying. The abhorrent beasts seem to feed off each other's chaos, so things quickly get out of hand when they're involved. In general, though, goblins hate dogs and fear horses, but they love fire. I also hear that they're very superstitious about reading—they believe that it steals words out of your head, or some such nonsense."

How many goblins have been spotted near town recently? "At most, folks have seen two or three at a time, but in a few cases they were also riding goblin dogs. I don't know if that was the same two or three each time, or if there's a larger group nearby."

What's a goblin dog? "Oh, they're terrible, the hideous, rat-faced things. Goblins seem to love them and often use them as mounts. Don't let that fool you, though. Goblin dogs are just as dangerous, if not more so, than their wicked little masters."

Is there a local goblin tribe? "Goodness, no—we'd never suffer a goblin tribe to live within a stone's throw of town. Isgar in general is crawling with the little beasts, though, and these latest sightings might herald a band that's recently come together to threaten us. However, the last of the proper tribes in the hills were wiped out decades ago."

What can you tell us about the Goblinblood Wars? "Almost twenty years ago, hobgoblins—bigger, stronger, more intelligent goblins—surged out of Chitterwood leading armies of goblinoids. They attacked the rest of Isgar and overran much of the country before we could muster much of a defense. They even started spreading into Andoran, Cheliah, and Druma. The war lasted four years, but with help from our neighboring nations, we managed to drive the goblins back into Chitterwood. The effort set half the forest on fire, but we wiped them out."



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: A FOUL BREED
- CHAPTER 2: WHAT LURKS IN THE WOODS
- CHAPTER 3: THE FESTERING BLOT
- APPENDIX 1: NPCS
- APPENDIX 2: BESTIARY

Can you get help from Wolfpoint, or from the army?
 “The army is far too busy chasing bandits away from the merchant caravans on the Conerica Straits to aid us. They were the ones who suggested hiring adventurers when I requested support. As far as help from the other cities, well, they’ve long made it clear on our own in that regard.”

Goblin Weaponry

Goblins use unique weapons, which they construct out of garbage, scrap metal, and other pieces of refuse. The table below presents statistics for the weapons some of the goblins use in this adventure.

E. ESCORO FIELD

The journey through Saringallow’s outskirts is largely a pleasant one. The homesteads nearest to the city belong to farmers, who point the PCs farther down the road if they inquire about recent goblin sightings. Eventually, the dirt

roads give way to smaller, worn-down trails. Pastures thick with green grass and dotted with sheep and other livestock replace the rows of wheat and vegetables. Soon, the PCs can faintly make out the sound of running water nearby.

Each of the three events that follows takes place in the Escoros’ field (shown in the map above and on the poster map). In between each event, the PCs should have 2 rounds to heal their wounds and tend to any other concerns before the next wave of enemies enters the field. This is particularly important after the PCs face the goblin cavalry.

Event 1: Sheep Attack (CR 1)

A young shepherd bolts across one of the nearby fields, clearly terrified by something behind him. He shouts and gestures frantically toward whatever he’s fleeing. “I saw them!” he screams. “Goblins! They’re in the woods! They took our sheep! You have to do something!”

TABLE: GOBLIN WEAPONS

| Martial Weapons | Price | Dmg (S) | Dmg (M) | Critical | Range | Weight | Type | Special |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|----------|-------|---------|--------|-------------|
| <i>Light Melee Weapon</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Dogslicer | 8 gp | 1d4 | 1d6 | 19–20/x2 | — | 1 lb. | S | Fragile* |
| <i>Two-Handed Melee Weapon</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Horsechopper | 10 gp | 1d8 | 1d10 | x3 | — | 12 lbs. | P or S | Reach, trip |

*A fragile weapon gains the broken condition if the wielder rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll with the weapon. If a fragile weapon is already broken, rolling a natural 1 destroys it instead.

UNDERSIZED MOUNT

The goblin riders have the following feat. Its text appears on page 159 of *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* but is reprinted below for the GM's convenience.

Undersized Mount (Combat)

You've learned techniques that allow you to ride beasts of smaller sizes than normal.

Prerequisite: Ride 1 rank.

Benefit: You can ride creatures of your size category, although encumbrance or other factors might limit how you can use this ability.

Normal: Typically a mount suited for you is at least one size category larger than you.

Creatures: Unknown to the young man, the goblins have been stealing sheep from various fields throughout most of the morning and using them to craft "clever disguises." Three of these sheepskin-covered goblins now approach the party, hoping to ambush them and prevent word of their antics from spreading to Saringallow—or back to Mezodarath, as this pillaging isn't part of their orders.

One round after the shepherd, Carlo Escoro, approaches the PCs, the disguised goblins enter the field. Each PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check realizes that the sheep have an unnatural gait or spots flashes of steel beneath the sheepskins as the goblins draw their weapons.

The PCs enter from the northwest end of the field. Although Clover Stream is normally little more than a trickle in most places, it's engorged from recent rains, and PCs who wish to cross the stream and attack from range must succeed at a DC 10 Swim check to do so.

FIENDISH GOBLINS (3) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 156)

Development: The shepherd Carlo Escoro flees toward his home as soon as combat breaks out.

Event 2: Goblin Cavalry (CR 3)

As the dust settles from the goblin attack, the sound of deranged, off-key singing filters onto the field.

Any PCs who speak Goblin can understand the song.

"Chase them! Chase them! Low and high!

Cut their eyes out, make them cry!

Cut them! Chop them! Slice them up!

Feed them to our goblin pups!"

Creatures: Drawn by the sounds of the previous combat, two goblins scramble into the field through a break in the fence (as shown on the map), riding comically undersized goblin dogs. These goblin dogs are immature pups that strain to carry the weight of their riders. However, their riders are trained to ride undersized mounts and are quite adept at doing so—and believe themselves to be very fearsome—making the pair as deadly as they are ridiculous.

GOBLIN RIDERS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Fiendish goblin rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 10 (1d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +0

Resist cold 5, fire 5; SR 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk heavy mace +3 (1d6+1)

Ranged shortbow +5 (1d4/×3)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day, sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat The goblin riders shoot with their shortbows while their goblin dog mounts move toward the PCs. Once they've closed to melee, the goblin riders dismount and attack with their maces.

Morale The goblins fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 14

Feats Undersized Mount

Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +4, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Ride +12, Stealth +16, Swim +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Goblin

SQ trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, alchemist's fire (2), tanglefoot bag, thunderstone; **Other Gear** leather armor, mwk heavy mace, shortbow with 20 arrows, a handful of chipped rings with the gems missing (worth 17 gp in total)

YOUNG GOBLIN DOGS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 7 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 157)

SPECIAL

Speed The goblin dogs' speed is 35 feet while they serve as mounts and 50 feet without goblins on their backs.

Tricks As combat-trained mounts, the goblin dogs know the following tricks: attack, come, defend, down, guard, and heel.



Event 3: Goblin Charge (CR 2)

Suddenly, the sound of a trumpet rings out over the field, becoming louder as its player approaches.

Creatures: Enraged at the PCs' interference in her cunning plan to plunder the countryside, the goblin leader Izgarp musters the last of her allies to attack the PCs. They approach the field from the east as indicated on the map.

IZGARP CR 1/2

XP 200

Female fiendish goblin barbarian 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, -2 rage, +1 size)

hp 17 (1d12+5)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

Resist cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. **Melee** horsechopper +5 (1d8+4/×3)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day, rage (6 rounds/day)

TACTICS

During Combat If the stream separates the PCs from Izgarp, she throws a javelin at one of them, then attempts the DC 10 Swim check to cross it. When she emerges from the water, she charges at the strongest-looking PC. Otherwise, she attacks anyone on the same side of the stream as her.

Morale Izgarp fights to the death.

Base Statistics When not raging, Izgarp's statistics are

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; **hp** 15; **Fort** +4, **Will** +0;

Melee horsechopper +3 (1d8+1/×3); **Ranged** javelin +3;

Str 13, **Con** 14; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14; **Skills** Swim +1.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

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

Feats Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +2, Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Ride +3, Stealth +7, Swim +3; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Goblin

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), acid (3), alchemist's fire (3), smokestick, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** scale mail, horsechopper, javelins (5), bent and tarnished coins and loose strings of pearls (worth 70 gp in total)

FIENDISH GOBLINS (3) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 156)

Development: Once the PCs defeat Izgarp, the immediate threat of the goblins to this particular area has passed. The PCs have time to heal and recover any items of value from the dead goblins. However, if they linger too long or decide to head back to Saringallow, they should hear screams and goblin-song coming from the direction of the nearby Escoro homestead, urging them onward.

F. HOMESTEAD SIEGE (CR 1)

The Escoro homestead is a small, one-story wooden house located in the southwest corner of a large fenced-in pasture. Thirty feet south of the house, separated by a wooden fence, is a large wooden barn. The barn's door faces east and is shut and barred when the PCs arrive. If combat occurs at this location, GMs should consider using the farmhouse and barn maps from *Pathfinder Map Pack: Farmstead*.

Creatures: A single goblin rider and its mount pursued the fleeing shepherd to his home, and they are now circling the house looking either for a way in or to goad the occupants into coming out. The Escoro family's horse (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 177), Burnella, is currently in the barn, and is audibly agitated by the presence of the creatures nearby. The goblin and its mount are distracted with tormenting the family trapped inside the house, and do not notice the PCs approach unless they make their presence known. The PCs can act in a surprise round if they choose to attack the goblin and its mount.

Alternatively, the PCs can attempt to unlatch the barn door and release the horse Burnella. This goblin is already disheartened, as it suspects that its group's attack so far has failed, and the sudden presence of an enraged horse causes it to panic and flee with its mount back into the forest.

Opening the barn door requires a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. To do so without attracting the goblin's attention, a PC must succeed at a Stealth check opposed by both the goblin's and goblin dog's Perception checks.

A PC with a horse mount or horse animal companion can instead try to use her own animal to terrify the goblins by attempting a DC 15 Intimidate check to produce the same effect as releasing Burnella. If the PCs don't already know that goblins are terrified of horses, a successful DC 5 Knowledge (local) check reveals this.

GOBLIN RIDER CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 10 (see page 26)

YOUNG GOBLIN DOG CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 157)

Development: Once the goblin and its mount flee or are defeated, Garreni Escoro, Carlo's father, opens the door and falls to his knees weeping tears of joy. He thanks the PCs for their timely intervention and offers them whatever aid or reward he can provide. The family has little money, but if the PCs are visibly injured or push for a reward, Garreni gives the PCs three *potions of cure light wounds* he has collected over the years in case his sheep or family members were ever seriously wounded.

Aftermath

With the initial assault repelled, any remaining goblins in the area flee back into the woods. Fortunately for the other homesteads in the area, the goblins focused their attack on the Escoros and the PCs, and left the neighboring homesteads and their occupants relatively unmolested. The PCs may wish to rest and recover after their long battle in the shepherd's field, and the Escoro family is more than happy to put them up for the night, as well as aid them in any limited way they can.

PART 2: IN SEARCH OF HIGHFORT

The next task the PCs must accomplish is locating the goblins' camp. The goblins live in a ramshackle structure that once served as a hobgoblin fort during the Goblinblood Wars, but is little more than a ruin now. The goblins have taken to calling this structure Highfort, and it is nestled at the foot of a peak known colloquially as Mount Witt, about 4 days' travel by foot northwest of Saringallow. There are a few different ways the PCs can learn more about where the goblins come from and how to reach Highfort, as described in the following sections.

Questioning the Shepherds

The PCs may wish to question the Escoros or the other shepherds about the goblin sightings. Garreni Escoro and his wife Ophania have little information. They have seen shadows skulking around the edge of their property at night, but until today, they hadn't seen any goblins in the flesh.

The Escoros' son, Carlo, has more to share. If asked, he gives the following account.

"Four days ago, I was chasing a lamb that strayed past the fence. Out of nowhere, I saw two ugly, green little things out in the clearing. They were talking some nasty, jabbering language I didn't understand. One of them, the one wrinkled like a raisin, was all scarred up. The other had a big blade for chopping tied to the end of a pole. They were arguing back

and forth, and then they walked off in different directions. Once I was sure they'd gone, I ran home and told my ma and pa."

The two goblins Carlo saw were Leeza and Izgarp. The shepherd can identify Izgarp (or her body) as the goblin with the big blade if allowed to examine the captured (or dead) goblin, but none of the other goblins in the attack match his description of Leeza. Although Carlo believes he got away from the pair of monsters undetected, Leeza caught sight of the young man fleeing, and returned to Highfort to plan the goblins' defenses.

Carlo can take the PCs to both the location he first saw these goblins and to the place where he saw the goblins right before the most recent attack. If the PCs then succeed at a DC 10 Survival check at either location, they pick up the goblins' trail toward Highfort.

Interrogating a Prisoner

Alternatively, if the PCs captured or subdued one of the goblins that participated in the attack, they can learn about

Highfort by interrogating their prisoner. To do this, at least one PC must speak Goblin, or else have some magical means of communicating effectively with the prisoner.

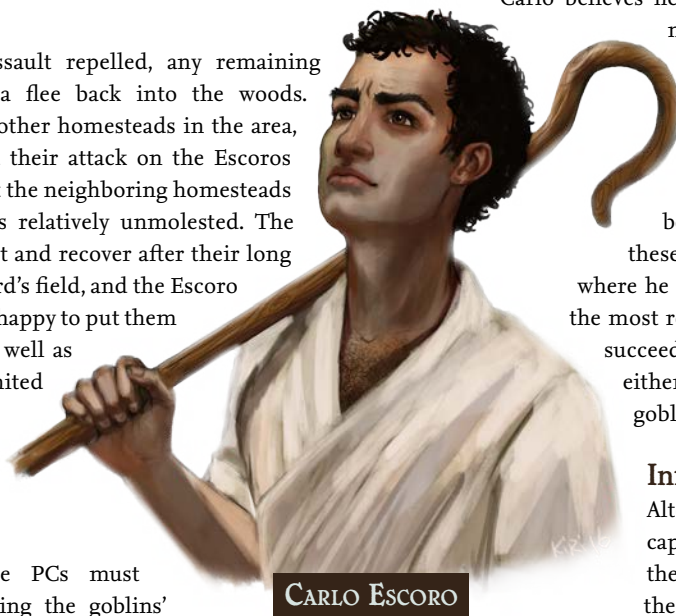
Bluff and intimidation are the best tactics to take to interrogate a goblin prisoner. A successful DC 12 Bluff or Intimidate check fools or scares the superstitious and cowardly goblin into giving up the location of its lair. From this information, the PCs can easily discover the trail left by the goblins and begin following it as described below in area G. The PCs may also wish to question a goblin prisoner about the condition and strength of the force at Highfort. The following are answers to questions the PCs might ask.

How many goblins are there? "Lots! More than fingers and toes."

Who is your leader? "Scary big-chief. He kill old chief and make us roll in mud and come here. He big and strong and have lots of sharp teeths and sometimes he eats us when we do bad."

What defenses does the camp have? "Highfort has big walls, up high, can't climb! Leeza also make big mean traps. They hurt real bad when they go off. Almost always, whoever set off trap gets dead."

Why are you covered in goo? "Scary big-chief say goo is nice gift from Wormgnash that make us very strong.





He make us swim in muddy goo stuff, soak it up. Now we be special goblins!”

G. THE JOURNEY TO MOUNT WITT

The area between Saringallow and Mount Witt is forested, but not densely so, and is considered an area of light undergrowth (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 426). It takes 4 days for characters with a 30-foot base speed to reach the edge of the mountain.

If the PCs are tracking the goblins back to their camp using Survival, they must succeed at a DC 12 Survival check twice each day to stay on the goblins’ trail. Failing a check means that the party loses the trail and becomes lost in the woods for 1 hour, after which they can retry the failed check.

Woodland Encounters

The PCs must face the following encounters on their way to Mount Witt. GMs should feel free to run these encounters in any order that they wish, and should consider using *Pathfinder Flip-Mat Classics: Forest* or *Pathfinder Flip-Map Classics: Woodlands* if combat occurs in any of these encounters.

G1. Abandoned Drake Den

A small stream passes along the base of a thirty-foot-tall black stone scarp. Strange, horse-sized cavities pock the face of the cliff, their edges smooth and warped as though etched or melted into the stone rather than carved. The air is thick with the stench of decay and rot, beneath which there is a faint tinge of an acrid, chemical odor. Despite the smell, things here are eerily peaceful.

The goblin tracks lead to an abandoned drake den, where the goblins camped on their way to Saringallow. The drakes who lived here attacked one too many merchant caravans to the south, so soldiers camped in Wolfpoint drove them out of the region long ago.

The odor present at the site comes from the combination of the goblins’ leftover stench and a pile of purplish goo in one of the lower cavities. This is where the goblins slept overnight, and they left behind a smudge of demon’s bile. If the PCs haven’t yet attempted Knowledge (nature or planes) checks to determine the properties of the demon’s bile (DC 12), they can do so now (see page 17 for details).

The goblins also spent some time decorating the walls of this cavity with chalk drawings. If the PCs investigate these drawings, they can make out crude renditions of a large, lopsided bugbear (Mezodarath), a goblin covered in terrible scars (Leeza), and the shrine to Lamashtu where the pool of demon’s bile is located (area H10). A character can identify the crude figure of Mezodarath as that of a bugbear with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check.

DEMON’S BILE

The sludge found in the abandoned drake den is demon’s bile, and GMs are encouraged to point out the sludge’s purplish appearance and allow the PCs to attempt DC 12 Knowledge (nature or planes) checks, as described in the Demon’s Bile section on page 17, to learn more about the substance. The PCs will likely want to destroy the demon’s bile found here and in Highfort, and if they are playing multiple adventures in this volume, doing so is doubly important to the overall narrative.

Treasure: A cold iron dagger lays very close to the puddle of demon’s bile, forming a conspicuous indentation where the goo has grown around, but not touched, the weapon.

The drakes kept their valuable possessions in the topmost cavity in the cliff. The cavity is 20 feet up the side of the cliff, and recessed into the stone such that the ceiling juts out farther than the floor of the cavity, making it difficult to simply drop into the cavity from above. From below, a PC can spot the hint of something shiny resting on the edge of the cavity by succeeding at a DC 15 Perception check. A character must either succeed at DC 15 Climb checks to scale the side of the cliff, or succeed at a DC 15 Acrobatics check to swing from the top of the cliff down into the cavity. Inside the cavity are two *potions of lesser restoration* kept inside a rusty metal canister with the symbol of the Isgeri army on it, a masterwork light steel shield, and 73 gp.

G2. Goblinblood Battlefield (CR 2)

A steep-sided ravine runs east to west here, opening at the far western end into a wide grassy depression. The scene would be idyllic if it weren’t for the scattered rusting weapons and pieces of armor, a few of which still contain moldering bones, strewn about the area. Pungent moss and a few patches of mushrooms dot the field; this place looks like it is the final resting place for many unfortunate souls.

Fifteen years ago, at the tail end of the Goblinblood Wars, this was the site of a minor battle between human soldiers and a band of hobgoblin raiders. The victorious hobgoblins left the bodies and equipment of their human opponents to rot and rust in the wilderness.

Creature: The presence of so much death and decay here makes it the perfect environment for yellow musk creepers. One of these hideous plants recently took root.

YELLOW MUSK CREEPER

CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 285)

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1:
A FOUL BREED

CHAPTER 2:
WHAT LURKS IN
THE WOODS

CHAPTER 3:
THE FESTERING BLOT

APPENDIX 1:
NPCS

APPENDIX 2:
BESTIARY

G3. The Katroome's Kingdom (CR 1)

The light is dim in this part of the forest, as the interlocking branches of the trees form a thick, shadowy canopy.

Creature: A solitary katroome (see page 62) named Asiclassus lurks in the branches up above. As the PCs approach, he lowers himself on a thread of silk and demands to know the names of those who dare trespass in his kingdom. Asiclassus primarily seeks to converse with the passing PCs. He is proud, however, and does not suffer insults to himself or his forest domain. If the PCs fail to show proper deference, he refuses to let them pass. If the PCs then don't leave immediately, the katroome attacks.

Asiclassus initially has an attitude of indifferent toward the PCs, but with a successful DC 16 Diplomacy check the PCs can improve his attitude toward them. If they can adjust his attitude to friendly or better, he is willing to answer questions about the area or the goblins. If they offer the katroome trail rations or other civilized food, they gain a +5 bonus on one Diplomacy check attempted while interacting with him. (The PCs can gain this bonus on any one Diplomacy check of their choice, as long as they attempt it after giving the katroome the food.)

Asiclassus can confirm that the PCs are headed in the right direction to find the goblin camp, or give them specific directions to reach the camp, such that they no longer need to attempt Survival checks to follow the goblins' trail. The katroome also observed the goblins when they migrated into these woods, and he can describe both Mezodarath and Leeza. Additionally, he noted goblins carrying a human in the direction of the goblins camp (for more information about Nixa Volsetti, see page 52).

ASICLASSUS CR 1

XP 400

Katroome (see page 62)

hp 11

TACTICS

Morale The katroome uses his *invisibility* spell-like ability and flees if reduced to 4 or fewer hit points.

G4. Raven Attack (CR 1)

The rotting corpse of a goblin occupies the center of this small glade. Its eyes and face are missing, as if they were chewed or pecked off by wild animals, and its corpse is covered in purplish, festering goo that seems to be liquefying the body.

This goblin was a scout sent to watch the approach from Saringallow and warn Highfort of any potential hostile forces. Fortunately for the PCs, it fell from its perch in a nearby tree, broke its legs, and died. The sludge on the

goblin's corpse is demon's bile, the Abyssal substance that turned these goblins fiendish. For more information about demon's bile, including how the PCs can identify its properties, see the Demon's Bile section on page 17.

Creatures: Unfortunately for the PCs, a flock of ravens has been feeding on the goblin's corpse over the past several hours. Consuming the demon's bile that corrupted the goblin's flesh has infected the ravens with Abyssal energies, transforming them into fiendish creatures. Overtaken by bloodlust, they attack the PCs on sight.

FIENDISH RAVENS (6) CR 1/6

XP 65 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 133)

Treasure: The PCs can find a composite longbow (+1 Str) and a Small suit of masterwork studded leather armor on the goblin's body.

G5. Cruel Garden (CR 2)

Crumbling stone walls mark the site of what was once a small cottage, but is now merely a ruin. The remains of a garden, now in disarray, surround the dilapidated and collapsed cottage.

Creature: Long ago, this was once the home of a druid who cultivated magical plants. Though few signs of the druid's garden remain, a descendant of its occupants still haunts these ruins. A breathless orchid hides among the weeds next to the ruins of the house, waiting to ambush any creature who draws near.

BREATHLESS ORCHID CR 2

XP 600

hp 19 (see page 58)

Treasure: A PC who searches the ruins of the cottage and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check locates a small metal box hidden in the foundation. This box contains a single *bird feather token*.

PART 3: STORMING HIGHFORT

Highfort is situated on a stone shelf on the eastern side of Mount Witt. Once the site of a minor hobgoblin fortification during the Goblinblood Wars, it now remains mostly derelict. However, Mezodarath and his goblins have done their best to rebuild the fort, even turning one of the buildings into a shrine to Lamashtu.

Story Award: When the PCs reach Highfort, award them 400 XP.

H. HIGHFORT

The following encounters take place when the PCs approach Highfort, which is shown on the map on page 32.



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: A FOUL BREED
- CHAPTER 2: WHAT LURKS IN THE WOODS
- CHAPTER 3: THE FESTERING BLOT
- APPENDIX 1: NPCs
- APPENDIX 2: BESTIARY

H1. Ambush (CR 1)

Soft light filters through the branches of the forest, which is still and silent. A rough platform formed of interlocking hexagonal stone columns rises thirty feet above the forest floor, abutting the foot of the mountain. A rickety wooden staircase attached to the side of the cliff leads to the top of the platform, which is covered by a ramshackle collection of boxy wooden buildings surrounded by a patchwork steel fence.

The camp has been on high alert for the past few days, after Leeza spotted Carlo the shepherd spying on her meeting with Izgarp. The goblins nervously await the approach of “longshanks”—humanoid—enemies, though all refuse to show their anxiousness to one another.

Creatures: Three goblin scouts wait in trees at the foot of the cliff. Unless the PCs take care not to be spotted, the goblins notice them and ready an ambush. The PCs must all succeed at Perception checks opposed by the goblins’ Stealth checks to avoid being caught in a surprise round. The goblins begin combat 15 feet off the ground. Though their position in the trees gives them an advantage in catching the PCs by surprise, the goblins are not very adept at balancing on branches. A goblin takes no penalties as long as it remains in one place, but if it moves, it must succeed at a DC 7 Acrobatics check or it falls off the branch. Additionally, a goblin who takes damage, either while standing still or moving, must succeed at a DC 17 Acrobatics check or fall off the branch. A goblin who falls takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage and ends up prone on the ground.

PCs are also able to force the goblins to attempt Acrobatics checks by shaking the trees in which they perch. A successful DC 8 Strength check is required to jostle a tree enough to potentially cause a goblin to lose its footing. For every 5 points by which the result of the PC’s Strength check exceeds 8, the goblin in that tree takes a cumulative –2 penalty on its Acrobatics check due to the vigorous shaking.

FIENDISH GOBLINS (3) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 294, 156*)

TACTICS

Morale The goblins fight until one goblin dies. Then, goblins brought to 3 hit points or fewer attempt to hide from the PCs in the trees. If they remain unseen, they flee into the woods once the PCs are out of sight.

H2. The Climb (CR 2)

Lashed-together wooden poles form a makeshift staircase crudely bolted and fixed to the side of the stone shelf. The stairs lead upward to a platform that sits thirty feet above the ground.

The stone shelf upon which the fort sits is a purely natural feature, despite its odd appearance. It is deceptively difficult to climb; doing so requires successful DC 20 Climb checks. If a PC fails such a check by more than 5, he not only falls, but also causes part of the stone face to fracture and fall away. The resulting rockslide deals an additional 1d6 points of damage to the falling character and causes a terrifically loud crash, alerting the goblins above to the PCs’ presence (if the battle with the goblins in area **H1** has not already done so). The PCs can identify the risk of climbing the cliff face by succeeding at a DC 12 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check.

The stairs look rickety, but are actually reasonably stable, and can easily support the weight of several Medium or smaller creatures.

Trap: The stairs are also the location of Leeza’s most recent ingenious trap. Leeza was terribly frostbitten by brown mold as a youth, and keeps samples of this fungus to cultivate for use in her traps.

When a PC steps on the marked square, the boards that make up the stairs shift, pulling a hidden rope taut and causing jars of brown mold (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook 416*) that are concealed in the building above to launch into the air. The jars are secured to the building by ropes, causing them to swing back down and smash on the wall above the trap’s trigger, covering that square in dangerous brown mold. A PC who succeeds at her Reflex saving throw to avoid the brown mold ends up far enough away from the affected area to avoid taking the nonlethal cold damage. However, PCs who later move within 5 feet of the mold (whose area may expand; see the Development section below) take damage from it as normal.

BROWN MOLD TRAP CR 2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 18; **Disable Device** DC 18

EFFECTS

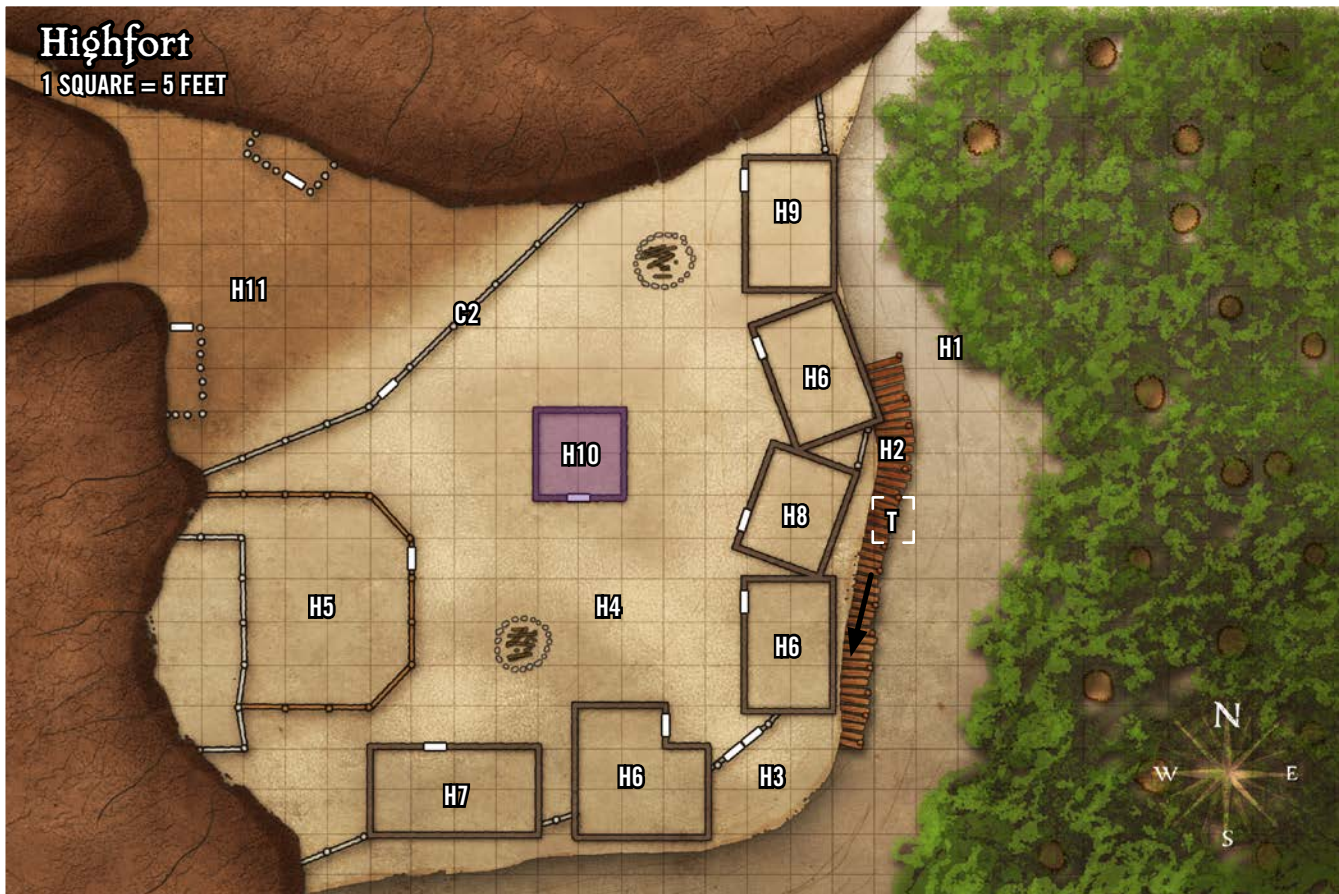
Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect broken jars of brown mold (3d6 points of nonlethal cold damage, Reflex DC 16 avoids, 5-ft.-by-15-ft. area)

Development: If the trap goes off, Leeza climbs to the roof of area **H8** 1 round later and begins throwing flasks of alchemist’s fire at the newly released patch of brown mold on the crude staircase. Each alchemist’s fire that hits Leeza’s target doubles the area of the mold. Leeza flees if attacked.

H3. Front Gate

A piecemeal steel and iron fence runs between two wooden buildings. A seven-foot-tall wooden gate constructed from fragments of tower shields blocks a crudely cut hole in the fence, while wooden stairs lead down the side of the rock face.



This gate is fastened from the inside with a stout wooden beam (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23). The PCs may instead wish to climb the fence, which requires a successful DC 15 Climb check.

H4. Yard (CR 3)

This small practice yard is surrounded by a crudely made metal fence and several small wooden buildings. Mud and morass cover the ground, and the sickly sweet stench of decay hangs heavy in the air. A rusting metal gate blocks the entrance to a cave to the northwest, while a second gate leads to the southeast. In the center of the yard, a stubby rectangular building sits upon a roughly hewn stone foundation. A crude depiction of a three-eyed face decorates its door.

This yard serves as the goblin's communal eating area and practice ground. All the buildings that connect to the yard have strong wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23), but none of these doors are locked. The buildings can be scaled with successful DC 10 Climb checks.

The metal gate to area H11 is locked; opening it requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check. The gate has hardness 10, 30 hit points, and a break DC of 25.

Creatures: Leeza has organized a group of goblins to attack the PCs in this location. If the scouts in area H1

raised the alarm, or if the PCs triggered the trap or a rock fall in area H2, the goblins have time to hide before combat and attempt to ambush the PCs. Otherwise, they are simply standing around the yard picking their noses and waiting for orders from Leeza.

FIENDISH GOBLINS (3) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 156)

LEEZA CR 1

XP 400

Female goblin rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 14 (2d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d4+1/19-20)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS



Before Combat If Leeza has warning that the PCs are headed into the yard, she drinks her *potion of invisibility* before ordering her goblins to attack.

During Combat Leeza prefers melee combat, flanking PCs with her minions so she can make bleeding sneak attacks.

Morale Leeza fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +4, Craft (traps) +5, Disable Device +8, Handle Animal +3, Perception +6, Ride +11, Stealth +15, Swim +4; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Goblin

SQ rogue talents (bleeding attack +1), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*, alchemist's fire (2); **Other**

Gear chain shirt, mwk short sword, shortbow with 10 arrows

Development: Once the PCs defeat Leeza and the other goblins, they begin to hear deranged shouting coming from the direction of area **H11**. This is the voice of Mezodarath, who blames the arrival of the PCs not on the failed attack against the farmers of Saringallow, but on the schemes of his prisoner, Nixa Volsetti. The bugbear begins to berate the captive fighter, screaming that she will not stop his eventual conquest of Isgar and the slaughter of her kind.

H5. Goblin-Dog Kennel (CR 1)

The interior of this squat, wooden kennel is filled with hay and stinking excrement. A door leads to the east.

Creature: This kennel is where the goblins keep their goblin dogs. The goblins took most of the mounts with them on their latest foray, but they left their most prized hound here—the female goblin dog who is the mother of most of the brood.

MOTHER HOUND CR 1

XP 400

Fiendish goblin dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 157)

hp 9

H6. Goblin Bunkhouse

These foul-smelling buildings are filled with filthy piles of rags and straw.

H7. Mezodarath's Quarters

This wooden shack is built more soundly than the others. It contains a large bed stained purplish-black with sludge, and a short wooden table piled high with maps and papers.

Mezodarath uses this building as his personal quarters and planning room. The papers on the table

include maps of Isgar, particularly of the areas around Saringallow, all of which are annotated with invasion plans. The remaining papers on the table constitute a journal of Mezodarath's increasingly disjointed thoughts. By reading them, the PCs can learn about Mezodarath's history (see page 22).

H8. Leeza's Workshop

Crudely fashioned tools hang from hooks along the eastern wall. Drawings of questionable skill cover the remaining walls, depicting humans being crushed, dismembered, or otherwise mutilated by elaborate and impractical traps.

Leeza uses this room to craft her devious devices. The PCs can find diagrams of the trap located in area **H2**, and a variety of other death traps, many of which incorporate brown mold. A PC who copies these designs down gains a +2 circumstance bonus on her next Craft (traps) check.

Treasure: The tools on the wall make up a set of masterwork artisan's tools for Craft (traps) checks.

H9. Storehouse

This room is where the goblins keep their filthy supplies.

Treasure: PCs who search this room and succeed at a DC 15 Perception check can locate a silver-and-pearl earring worth 50 gp in one of the sacks.

H10. Shrine to Lamashtu

The floor of this small building is recessed into the ground about a foot and filled with viscous purplish ooze. A crudely carved image of a three-eyed face decorates the far wall.

Mezodarath and the goblins hastily crafted this shrine to Lamashtu while Wormgnash stayed with them. Simultaneously, they mixed demon's bile with mud to create the sludgy pool that fills the room's floor.

If the PCs haven't already attempted Knowledge (nature or planes) checks to learn about demon's bile, they should have an opportunity to do so now (more information is in the Demon's Bile section on page 17). Because the goblins in this room have soaked up much of the bile's Abyssal energies, the pool isn't propagating fiendish vermin for now, though that could change in the coming days and weeks if the PCs don't destroy it soon.

Treasure: Each of the carving's three eyes is set with a faceted peridot; the gems are worth 50 gp each.

H11. Cave of Prisoners (CR 4)

The walls and ceiling here are covered with innumerable crude paintings, all depicting goblinoid figures engaged in all manner of violent acts. Two large metal cages occupy the north and west walls. The door to one of these cages lies torn from its hinges on the floor.

Creatures: Just before the PCs reached this room, Mezodarath wrenched the door from the cage in which Nixa Volsetti was being kept. Enraged and convinced that she had something to do with the PCs' intrusion, he attempted to strangle her to death. However, Nixa made a lucky break from the bugbear's grasp, and upon seeing civilized humans for the first time in many days, she now urges them to help her defeat the bugbear and his goblin guards before the villains can slay everyone.

At the vermlek's suggestion, Mezodarath had plans to first extract from Nixa as much tactical information about Saringallow as possible. Then, he planned to feed Nixa demon's bile, wait for it to corrupt her fully, and then release her near town. The bugbear hoped she would be able to slip safely into the town, where she could infect other humans and recruit them to the cause right before, or even as, the goblins mounted their attack. Nixa does not fully understand how the demon's bile could prompt her to do this, but she understands the gist of Mezodarath's plan, and is looking for any way to stop the evil creature. She immediately sees the PCs as allies and fights bravely to help them defeat the bugbear.

MEZODARATH **CR 3**
XP 800

Fiendish bugbear cleric of Lamashtu 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 38)

CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +3 natural)

hp 26 (4 HD; 3d8+1d8+9)

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Resist cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk falchion +7 (2d4+6/18–20)

Ranged javelin +2 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day, channel negative energy 4/day (DC 11, 1d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +3)
5/day—*strength surge* (+1), *vision of madness* (+/–1)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)
1st—*bane* (DC 13), *doom* (DC 13), *enlarge person*⁰ (DC 13)
0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *guidance*, *stabilize*

D domain spell; **Domains** Madness, Strength

TACTICS

Before Combat Mezodarath uses his *strength surge* spell-like ability on his nearest goblin ally.

During Combat Mezodarath channels negative energy once before casting *bane*. He casts *doom* on a creature affected by his first spell before wading into melee, and then uses his vision of madness domain power, if possible. He smites any PCs who are obviously good, such as paladins.

Morale Mezodarath is convinced that he will herald a new

age of greatness for goblinoids in Isger. He fights to the death to defend this vision.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 11, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

Feats Selective Channeling, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Intimidate +7, Perception +10, Sense Motive +7,

Stealth +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Intimidate, +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ stalker

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

studded leather, javelin, mwk falchion, three fused rubies worth a total of 79 gp, wooden unholy symbol of Lamashtu

FIENDISH GOBLINS (3) **CR 1/3**

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 156)

NIXA VOLSETTI **CR 1**

XP 400

hp 22 (see page 52)

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the bugbear cleric Mezodarath is defeated, the goblin threat to the wilderness surrounding Saringallow is ended. Any goblins still present in the camp flee once it becomes clear that their big, scary chief is dead; they want no part of any punishment that might await them should the PCs get their hands on them. Therefore, the PCs are free to explore and loot the remaining locations in Highfort without difficulty.

If Nixa Volsetti survives the battle with the bugbear, she expresses her profound gratitude, explaining that she was able to seize the opportunity to break free thanks to the PCs' timely intervention and Mezodarath's subsequent distraction. If the PCs inquire as to her presence in the goblin cave, she explains that she was abducted along with her cousin from Saringallow and taken to a strange place that she cannot completely identify, but about which she could provide general details. She was later given to the goblins, who brought her to Highfort and hoped to learn about the town's defenses before enacting some sort of heinous plan to turn her against the townsfolk. The goblins and Mezodarath have kept her locked up in the cave ever since, waiting for her to break.

Upon returning to Saringallow, the PCs can collect any bounties they're owed by providing proof of the goblins' death, describing the scene at Highfort, and generally explaining the situation to Mayor Sandra Trinelli (or having Nixa do so on their behalf). If the PCs have left any demon's bile in wilderness, the mayor decides to send guards to destroy it now that the goblin menace is contained. If the PCs have yet to determine the details of the demon's bile, they can learn them from Ildris Ruvarra at the temple of Erastil.



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1:
A FOUL BREED
- CHAPTER 2:
WHAT LURKS IN
THE WOODS
- CHAPTER 3:
THE FESTERING BLOT
- APPENDIX 1:
NPCS
- APPENDIX 2:
BESTIARY

TYING THE ADVENTURES TOGETHER

If the PCs have completed the adventure “A Foul Breed,” they learn that Nixa Volsetti is the missing cousin of Nolaria Wintren, the apprentice to the priest of Erastil in Saringallow. When Nixa and the PCs return to town, Nolaria is overjoyed to be reunited with her beloved cousin and thanks the PCs profusely. She emphasizes that, were it not for the PCs, Nolaria and Nixa would likely not have survived these terrible turn of events. For more information about Nixa and Nolaria, including their family history and their potential roles in each of this volume’s adventures, see pages 52–55.

If the PCs have not completed “A Foul Breed,” Nixa may inform them about the missing apprentices. While not wishing to impose upon them again so soon after they saved her life, she prevails upon them to help find her cousin. She is terribly worried about what might be happening to Nolaria and those who were being held captive along with them, and she promises to help the PCs in whatever way she can. This ties into “A Foul Breed” (see page 4).

If the PCs ask, Nixa unfortunately cannot relate any significant details about her abductor, other than that the abductor seemed to know the others who were also being held prisoner with the cousins. However, Nixa offers to help the PCs in any other way that she can; for more details about how this might play out, see page 53.

Nixa can also inform the PCs that during her captivity, she overheard the bugbear jabbering on about something named Wormgnash, and that Mezodarath often mentioned that name in connection with the old Sarini Estate. The bugbear seemed to be either praying to this Wormgnash or beseeching its favor, leading her to theorize that a potentially serious danger might now lurk in or near the estate. This ties in to the adventure “The Festering Blot” (see page 36). For more information about how Nixa can lend her aid to the PCs during that adventure, see page 53. For more information about how Wormgnash can be tied to an overall narrative arc that links all three adventures in this volume, see the Creating a Narrative Arc section on page 3.

SCALING THIS ADVENTURE

To accommodate a group of 2nd-level PCs, GMs running this adventure should make the following changes to each of the encounters listed below.

Event 1: Add two additional fiendish goblins to this part of the battle in the Escoro Field. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Event 2: Add a third goblin rider and a young goblin dog as its mount to the fight in the Escoro Field. This makes the encounter CR 4.

Event 3: Add a young goblin dog without a rider to the fight. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter F: Add two fiendish goblins and allow them to attempt Perception checks if the PCs try to stealthily open the barn door. This door makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter G2: Add the advanced creature simple template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294) to the yellow musk creeper. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter G3: Add the advanced creature simple template (*Bestiary* 294) to Asiclassus. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter G4: The PCs should face a fiendish wolverine (*Bestiary* 279, 294) instead of fiendish ravens. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter H1: Add two additional fiendish goblins to the ambush. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter H4: The mother hound from area H5 break its chain and joins the combat in this area. This makes the encounter CR 4. In this case, the PCs encounter no creatures in area H5.

Encounter H11: Add a goblin rider (see page 26) and young goblin dog (*Bestiary* 295, 157). This makes the encounter CR 5.



MEZODARATH



CHAPTER 3

THE FESTERING BLOT

In 4425 AR, a branch of Cheliah's House Sarini founded a village called Sarini's Hollow along the Conerica River in central Isgar. The Sarinis brought in peasants to work for them and farm the land, and over time, the encampment grew into a full-fledged settlement. However, despite its relative independence, the town was still tied inextricably to House Sarini and all its goings-on.

Around 4590 AR, the leader of the Isgeri branch of House Sarini, Baron Lucius Sarini, arranged for his son to be married to Sadira Dioso, scion of the Remesiana branch of an influential Chelish family. The marriage was intended to cement an alliance between the families, increasing the power of both noble houses. At the time, the baron's son, Marcus Sarini, served as a military officer

in the Chelish colony of Sargava. He did not relish the thought of an arranged marriage, and he used every excuse to extend his stay. However, his father's sudden death finally prompted his return.

Marcus brought home a young boy named Luca, presenting him as a fallen friend's orphaned son. In truth, Luca was Marcus's illegitimate son, whose Mwangi mother had died in childbirth. Shortly after his return, Marcus accepted the title of baron, and he wedded Sadira despite their mutual dislike of one another.

With every passing year, the baroness became increasingly convinced that Luca was Marcus's son. The thought gnawed at her, particularly because they had no children of their own. After careful planning, she tricked the boy into eating a deadly dose of poisonous



| |
|--|
| INTRODUCTION |
| CHAPTER 1: A FOUL BREED |
| CHAPTER 2: WHAT LURKS IN THE WOODS |
| CHAPTER 3: THE FESTERING BLOT |
| APPENDIX 1: NPCS |
| APPENDIX 2: BESTIARY |

berries from the baron's garden. The grieving baron wanted to hire someone to raise the boy from the dead, but that would have prompted far too many questions. Feeling powerless, the baron plummeted into despair and madness. He fell into diabolism out of a misguided hope that it would help him bring his son back. For her part, though she disapproved of his goal, Sadira saw diabolism as her key to power, too.

To protect their secrets, Marcius built a wall around the estate and constructed a sacrificial pit in the basement. He hired builders from outside Isgar to prevent rumors, and these workers also became the Sarinis' first victims. The Sarinis later discovered that youthful blood worked the best for their rituals, and wayward children and the estate's maids and other junior servants started disappearing. Although the Sarinis took care to get rid of the bodies and other evidence, their diabolism became an open secret among the villagers. On a fateful winter day in 4604 AR, while the baron and baroness were conducting business in town, an angry mob attacked them and other members of House Sarini, and hanged them without a trial. The town then descended into chaos as residents turned on each other, accusing their neighbors of colluding with the hated nobles. Eventually, the crisis waned, but the town paid a high price in blood that it still remembers today. A grim reminder of the past, the town's name became Sarini Gallows, which over time became Saringallow.

The Sarini Estate lay abandoned for over a century, but recently, a demon named Wormgnash—a vermlek (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2* 54) born of the town's late, wicked gravedigger—decided to settle there, drawn by the place's isolation and latent sense of suffering.

Along the way to the estate, Wormgnash came across a band of mites and drochtacs (see page 59) that lived in nearby shallow caves. Seeing the weak-willed creatures' potential as allies, Wormgnash convinced them that he could give them great power—enough to overthrow the puny humans of Saringallow—if they followed him. Naturally, the mites eagerly acquiesced, and once at the estate, Wormgnash transformed them with demon's bile (for more information about that substance, see the Demon's Bile section on page 17). Now, the fiendish fey and their vermin allies guard the demon's lair until he can enact his final plan: the utter destruction of Saringallow—for while wallowing in his lair and the disgusting demon's bile that resulted from the merchant's corpse he currently wears, Wormgnash discovered a way to bring his demonic brethren to the Material Plane.

Coincidentally, though she knows nothing about the vermlek or other creatures lairing there or the plans already in motion, Saringallow's mayor Sandra Trinelli recently discovered that the Sarinis kept records about their long-ago victims. Hoping to finally grant the victimized families some closure—as well as temper the

anti-noble attitudes that are decidedly bad for the town's business—she has put out a call for outside help to find the documents hidden somewhere at the estate.

Before Wormgnash settled in the Sarini Estate, he set into motion more threats that could jeopardize Saringallow from within as well as from the nearby woods. For those interested in running this as an adventure connected to one or more others in this volume, or for more information about connecting these stories, see the Creating a Narrative Arc section on page 3 as well as the Tying the Adventures Together section on page 51.

PART 1: LEGACY OF BLOOD

In the first part of this adventure, the PCs must learn about the Sarinis and the events that led to the town's revolt, venture to the infamous Sarini Estate itself, and investigate what might lie behind its ominous walls.

Getting Started

The adventure begins with the PCs meeting Saringallow's mayor, Sandra Trinelli, at the town hall. (For more information about the town hall's location, see the Saringallow map or the information in the Town Hall section on page 12.) The PCs could answer the mayor's call for aid for any number of reasons. They might be distant relatives of the Sarinis' victims or other invested locals, or simply adventurers looking to earn some coin.

If the PCs have played through the previous adventures in this module, they may also have heard about the Sarini Estate from Nixa Volsetti (see page 35). Similarly, if the PCs investigate whether there is any truth behind the apothecary's apprentice's mad ravings about “worm demons” (see page 20 of “A Foul Breed”), they are likely to hear stories about House Sarini, perhaps prompting them to undertake this adventure.

Read the following to get the adventure underway.

Although it's covered in a layer of files and paperwork that indicate its official nature, this office is also eminently comfortable, with its plush carpet, velvet-lined oaken furniture, and ornate serving carts bearing colorful fruit and fine drinks. The soothing smell of sage and apple blossoms floats on a warm breeze wafting through the large, open picture window.

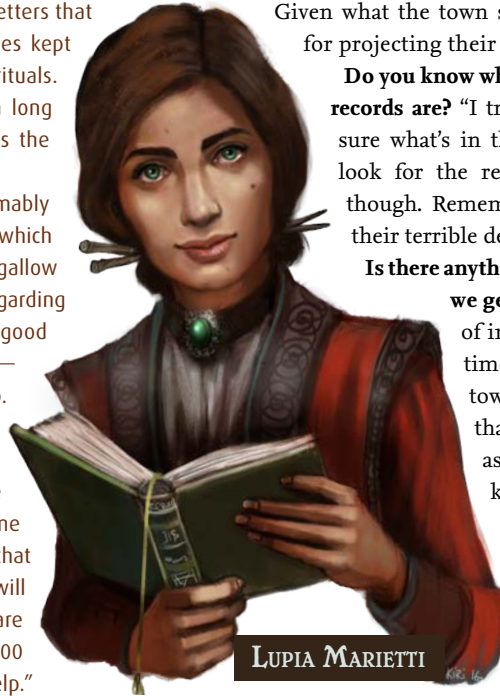
At the center of the room, behind a solid and polished wooden desk, sits Mayor Sandra Trinelli, her long fingers folded together in thought. Her face is solemn as she surveys her visitors. “Thank you for your quick attention to my request,” she begins, motioning to the oversized chairs in front of her. “As you can imagine, it involves a delicate task that promises results of great significance to our beleaguered population. Let me explain.

“The history of this town, I'm afraid, is written in blood. More than a century ago, the family that founded Saringallow committed heinous crimes against the hard-working folks

who toiled on their behalf. When all was said and done, these nobles—the Sarinis—kidnapped and murdered many local children. They were hanged for their crimes, but the bodies of the youths were never found, and our families still suffer those tragic memories today. After all of these years, they’ve never had closure, and our town has never been the same.

“However, not long ago, while I was searching the town archives, I discovered a few old letters that seem to indicate that these evil nobles kept records of their victims and diabolical rituals. Finding these documents would go a long way toward healing the deep wounds the Sarinis inflicted on our poor people.

“Unfortunately, the evidence is presumably stored in the Sarinis old, walled estate, which is located some distance from Saringallow proper. Around here, superstitions regarding the Sarini family still run deep, and the good men and women of our town watch—bless their hearts—are reluctant to help. There’s no proof, however, that any of the rumors about the Sarini Estate are real, so I’d like to hire you help me solve this matter. Please, if you will, bring me any records of these terrible crimes that exist. Once you do, I believe our town will finally begin to heal. I trust that you are capable, and I hope that a reward of 100 gp will be enough to persuade you to help.”



LUPIA MARIETTI

If the PCs try to negotiate a higher reward, the mayor tells them that they can keep everything they find while searching the Sarini Estate. Given the Sarinis’ wealth, she says, this could add up to a tidy sum. Furthermore, if a PC succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy check, Trinelli agrees to pay 50% of the reward up front.

Before they begin, the PCs may have some questions for the mayor. She answers them as best she can, as outlined below.

What can you tell us about the Sarini Estate? “The estate is a large place, with two main stories and a basement, or so the old stories go, but we don’t have a map of the place in our archives. Given what horrors happened there, the townsfolk have always given the place a wide berth—no one here is greedy enough to covet the murder-tainted valuables that hated family might have owned. Some things are more important than gold, you know. The Sarinis and everything tied to them are a blot on our existence.

“The estate is located about 10 miles from town, down a road almost no one travels except for foolhardy youths trying to prove themselves. Given its isolation, I would not be surprised if there weren’t a few dangers in or around the place. You’d do well to arm yourselves sufficiently before heading out.”

What are these rumors you mentioned about the Sarini Estate? “This tragedy has had several generations to generate rumors, but they’re all nonsense, as far as I’m concerned. Some say the estate is haunted by the spirits of those murdered there; others say the estate has collapsed under its own weight, and still others believe diabolic powers still lurk within and plot against us.

Given what the town suffered, can you blame them for projecting their fears into that hated place?”

Do you know where in the estate these diabolical records are? “I truly do not. No one knows for sure what’s in the estate anymore. I wouldn’t look for the records in any obvious places, though. Remember, the Sarinis tried to hide their terrible deeds right up until the end.”

Is there anything else we should know before we get started? “We have quite a bit of information available about the time period in question in the town hall’s archives. I suggest that you start there. Find my assistant, Lupia Marietti. She’s a kind woman and will help you with whatever you need.”

Town Hall Archives

In the town hall’s archives, the PCs can find information about the history of Saringallow, the Sarinis, the

Sarini Estate, and the missing persons reported during the Sarinis’ dabbling in diabolism. The archives consist of thousands of documents, but thankfully, they are all meticulously labeled and indexed, and **Lupia Marietti** (LN female human expert 2), the mayor’s assistant, can help the PCs find the right documents.

If the PCs return to the archives during the adventure and ask for information about the demon’s bile they encounter, Lupia has no documents related to the Abyssal substance, nor has she ever even heard of such a material. However, she points the PCs toward **Ildris Rugarra** (LG male human cleric of Erastil 5), the head of the town’s temple. If the PCs describe demon’s bile to him, Rugarra can reveal the full details of about it (see page 17).

Searching the Library

Lupia tells the PCs that all they need to do is give her a keyword and she’ll fetch any documents related to the topic. The PCs can retry any of the skill checks below later if they find additional clues or items related to the topic.

Hangings: No official records of the Sarini hangings exist in the library. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (local) or Profession (barrister) check knows that Chelish laws would have required a considerable



amount of paperwork if trials had been held. There are, however, allusions to the town abruptly coming under control of the mayor, rather than nobles.

Luca Sarini: A death certificate says the following: “Adolescent ward of half-Mwangi descent. Died of an accidental poisoning at the Sarini Estate in 4599 AR.” Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Linguistics check realizes that the handwriting of the word “accidental” shows hesitation, as if writer didn’t believe that the poisoning was accidental.

Marcus Sarini: A deployment letter dated 4585 AR indicates that Marcus Sarini volunteered to serve in the Chelish army and trained to lead a special engineering unit. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Craft (traps), Disable Device, or Profession (soldier) check deduces that his training involved building traps and sabotage, among other things.

A letter from a servant dated after Marcus’s return also indicates that the rising baron brought a young ward by the name of Luca back to his family’s estate in Saringallow. A successful DC 10 Linguistics check reveals that the word “ward” is written messily, with no further accompanying explanation, as if the writer were uncomfortable lingering on the topic for long.

Missing Persons: Between the years 4600–4604 AR, many missing persons were reported. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices that the average age of the missing persons was 12–20, and many of them were female.

Reports written by a watch captain of the time indicate that the bodies of a few missing people were found. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (arcana, planes, or religion) check notices details in the reports that suggest the persons were killed in witch or diabolist rituals. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Heal check can deduce that in all cases, from the death descriptions listed, the cause of death was complete exsanguination as opposed to simple blood loss.

Sadira Sarini: Documents indicate that the baroness was originally from Remesiana in Chelias. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Knowledge (nobility) check is able to deduce that Sadira was a member of House Dioso, an influential Chelish family.

Saringallow: The first records about settlers moving into this area date back to 4425 AR. However, all the documents from that time refer to the community as “Sarini’s Hollow.” Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (local or history), Linguistics, or Perception check notices that somewhere between 4600 AR and 4610 AR, the town’s name seems to have changed to Sarini Gallows, and gradually, that name was corrupted into Saringallow. Mayor Trinelli can recount more details about the town’s history, if asked (see page 7).

Sarini Estate: An invoice for construction materials reveals that the construction of the main estate building

RUMORS

The PCs can discover clues about House Sarini and the Sarini Estate by talking to local townsfolk. The mayor advises, however, that the PCs take everything they hear with a grain of salt.

Any PC who spends 1d4 hours gathering information and succeeds at a DC 10 Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check finds a person willing to share one of the rumors listed below. For every 5 by which the check exceeds DC 10, the PC hears one additional rumor from the table. If the PCs have played through other adventures in this module, each NPC they have befriended can also share one rumor. Whether the rumor is true, false, or partially true is listed after its details; the PCs have no way of knowing this information.

RUMORS IN SARINGALLOW

| d8 | Rumor |
|----|--|
| 1 | “The Sarini Estate is haunted! Hungry ghouls and ghosts lurk in the shadows!” (<i>False.</i>) |
| 2 | “Some folks say they’ve seen little blue people near the estate!” (<i>True.</i>) |
| 3 | “They say there’s a funny smell coming from the estate, and it’s the smell of rotting corpses.” (<i>False.</i>) |
| 4 | “Those evil Sarinis were hanged—they were hanged high! Ever think where the ‘gallow’ in Saringallow comes from?” (<i>True.</i>) |
| 5 | A well-known nursery rhyme starts as follows: “All Sarinis, red or blue, slit your throat or we’ll hang you too!” |
| 6 | “The Sarinis worshiped demons and devils, and they held unspeakable revels at their estate back in the day!” (<i>Partially true; the Sarinis did practice diabolism, but not as entertainment at parties.</i>) |
| 7 | “The Sarinis kidnapped children and drank their blood.” (<i>Partially true; they exsanguinated youths to fuel their rituals.</i>) |
| 8 | “Goblins have taken over the abandoned Sarini Estate! The town watch ought to do something about it!” (<i>Partially true; the estate is home to fiendish fey and vermin.</i>) |

began in 4426 AR, and a later bill indicates that a wall was built around the grounds in 4600 AR. If a PC succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (engineering) or Profession (architect) check, she notices that the amount of construction materials ordered was too large for the wall’s size. Any PC succeeding at a DC 14 Linguistics or Perception check notices that the text has been tampered with to obscure some details.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1:
A FOUL BREED

CHAPTER 2:
WHAT LURKS IN
THE WOODS

CHAPTER 3:
THE FESTERING BLOT

APPENDIX 1:
NPCS

APPENDIX 2:
BESTIARY

DEMON'S BILE

The sludge found on the estate's gate is demon's bile, and GMs are encouraged to point out the sludge's eerie purplish appearance and allow the PCs to attempt Knowledge (nature or planes) checks, as described in the Demon's Bile section on page 17, to learn more about the substance. The PCs likely want to destroy the demon's bile found here and elsewhere in the estate, and if they are playing multiple adventures in this volume, doing so is doubly important to the overall narrative. If the PCs fail to identify the bile's details, consider having Ildris Ruvarra share them the next time they're in Saringallow.

Another individual document indicates that the last legal owners of the Sarini Estate were the Baron Marcius Sarini and Baroness Sadira Sarini, who acquired joint ownership of the property in 4593 AR.

Sarinis' Diabolism: There are no documents that even mention the word diabolism or any other outward indicators of the subject; however, Lupia is a skilled archivist and has dug up some letters from Marcius Sarini to an unnamed priest of Asmodeus in Egorian. The letters contain vague and cryptic language, but they do mention the existence of gifts for a nebulous patron, and that these gifts were carefully recorded somewhere in a secure location on the estate known only to Marcius and Sadira knew. A successful DC 14 Knowledge (arcana, planes, or religion) check reveals that this is a reference to diabolic sacrifices and the records the mayor seeks.

Story Award: For each of the eight topics whose skill checks the PCs succeed at, award the party 100 XP (to a maximum of 800 XP total).

J. NOBLES' FOLLY (CR 1)

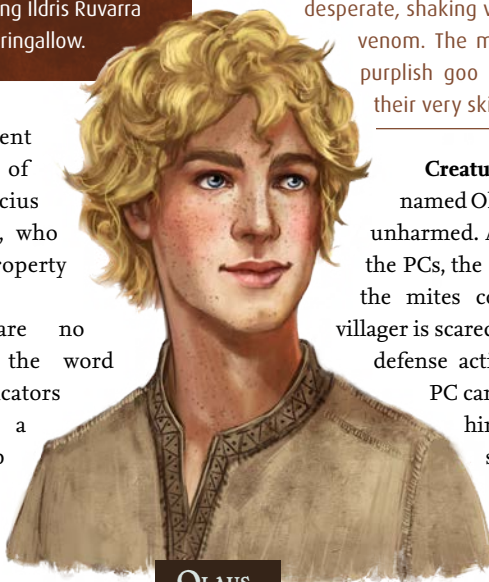
The Sarini Estate is located 10 miles northeast from Saringallow proper. It is along a road that is part of the trails known colloquially as the Conerica Paths; however, the specific path that leads to the Sarini Estate is known as Nobles' Folly. The haughty Sarinins built the estate in a commanding position on a wooded hill looking out over the surrounding landscape, and for decades, it has remained virtually untouched.

It takes roughly 3 hours for the PCs to reach the estate by foot, and two-thirds of the way there, they face the following encounter. They witness a pair of small blue humanoids covered in greasy, purplish growths attacking

a local farmer. The creatures—fey beings called mites—are trying to kill the young man so they can take the body to the Sarini Estate for Wormgnash's vermlek brethren to eventually inhabit, but the PCs likely won't yet know the extent of this plot. This encounter takes place either in the evening or at dusk, so the mites take no penalties from their light sensitivity.

Some sixty feet ahead on the road, a villager is lying curled on the ground, his hands shielding his face from two ugly, blue-skinned creatures with oversized, wrinkly heads. A centipede as big as a large man hisses menacingly at the desperate, shaking villager, its mandibles oozing with venom. The monsters are covered in a greasy, purplish goo that seems to be growing from their very skin.

Creatures: The villager, a young man named Olaus, is lying prone but otherwise unharmed. As soon as the monsters notice the PCs, the centipede attacks them, though the mites continue attacking Olaus. The villager is scared witless and takes only the total defense action each round. However, any PC can attempt to issue commands to him as a standard action. If a PC succeeds at a DC 10 Diplomacy or Intimidate check while issuing a command, Olaus thereafter follows that PC's commands until the end of the combat.



OLAUS

FIENDISH GIANT CENTIPEDE CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 43)

FIENDISH MITES (2) CR 1/4

XP 100 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 207)

OLAUS CR 1/3

XP 135

Male human commoner 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

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

hp 9 (1d6+6)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +0 (1d3)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10



Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 11

Feats Endurance, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (local) +3, Perception +3

Languages Common

Development: If he survives the encounter, Olaus tells the PCs that he was looking for a stray calf when the strange creatures attacked him. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Sense Motive check notices he is lying, though. Because the PCs saved him, his attitude toward them is friendly, and so with a successful DC 10 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, a PC can drag the truth out of him: he tried to steal something from the Sarini Estate to prove to his friends he is not a coward. The monsters attacked him right outside the estate's gates and chased him to this spot on Nobles' Folly.

Story Award: If Olaus survives the encounter, award the PCs 100 XP.

PART 2: THE ABANDONED ESTATE

In the adventure's second part, the PCs must venture into the abandoned Sarini Estate in search of the documents that can give the townspeople closure. They also discover a harrowing, and heretofore unknown, threat to the settlement's very existence.

K. SARINI ESTATE

For more than a century, the Sarini Estate stood empty except for wandering animals and monsters. The Sarinis' reputation kept most looters away, and the few brigands who ignored the superstitious rumors fell prey to traps and other dangers lurking around the estate, adding to the eerie place's infamy. Recently, though, it has become the lair of Wormgnash and his fiendish fey and vermin allies, though no one in town is aware of this fact.

A map of the estate is located on this volume's inside front cover. The following are general features of the areas in and around the estate (areas **K2–K20**).

Chairs: Any squares that contain chairs should be treated as difficult terrain.

Doors: Unless otherwise specified, all doors are unlocked and have AC 3, hardness 5, and 20 hp.

Lighting: During the day, areas inside the estate and the estate's outbuildings have normal light because of the abundance of doors and windows. Areas **K18**, **K19**, and **K20** are areas of darkness, and the PCs will likely need lighting sources to properly see.

Stairs: All stairs throughout the estate are steep and are considered difficult terrain by any ascending or descending creatures.

Tables: With a successful DC 12 Acrobatics check, a creature can hop onto a table as part of a move action. If the creature fails this check by 5 or more, its movement ends and it falls prone.

Walls and Ceilings: The smooth walls of the estate building have a Climb DC of 20, and the rough stone walls of the outbuildings and the walls around the estate have a Climb DC of 15. The ceiling is 15 feet high on the estate's ground floor and second floor, while in the stable, family tomb, and basement the ceiling is 10 feet high.

Windows: All windows are easy to break (AC 4, hardness 1, hp 1). Small windows are barred (hardness 10, hp 15, break DC 20) and so narrow that Medium creatures must succeed at a DC 20 Escape Artist check to squeeze through.

K1. Estate Grounds (CR 2)

After a hike up the hill, the PCs arrive at the Sarini Estate.

The rusted, badly bent iron gate to this walled estate is dirty and hangs ajar, creaking gently in the breeze. The lawn is overgrown, and a thick tangle of vines has crept up the walls of the opulent estate building. An abandoned stable occupies the southwest corner of the grounds, and to the east, more buildings lie partly hidden behind bushes and crooked trees.



FIENDISH GIANT CENTIPEDE

A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that the smudge on the gate is not merely dirt or rust, but a purplish, gooey substance. This is demon's bile, and it has rubbed off one of the fiendish mites that guard the estate. For more information about demon's bile, including how it can eventually propagate fiendish vermin and how the PCs can determine its properties, see the Demon's Bile section on page 17.

Creatures: A drochtac (see page 59) and two fiendish mites are guarding the estate grounds. Normally, the mites reserve their aboveground activities for the darkness, but these mites are so committed to Wormgnash that they stay here even in the middle of the day. If the PCs face this encounter during hours of bright daylight, the mites are dazzled because of their light sensitivity weakness.

The drochtac is hiding in the small bush left of the gate, and the mites are hiding in the larger bush on the right. Unless the PCs notice them, they wait until all the PCs are within the estate walls. The drochtac attacks the PC who enters last, while the mites try to keep the other PCs busy. During this fight, Wormgnash telepathically checks in on one of the mites and learns that the PCs are infiltrating the estate.

DROCHTAC **CR 1**

XP 400

hp 13 (see page 59)

FIENDISH MITES (2) **CR 1/4**

XP 100 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 207)

K2. Stable (CR 1)

Bones litter the bare stone floor of this stable. The reek of decay hangs heavy in the air.

The Sarinis once owned several thoroughbreds, but the horses are, of course, long dead. The fiendish mites serving Wormgnash have shed demon's bile here, and this in turn has attracted some centipedes, made them fiendish, and prompted them to build nests among the stable's refuse.

In the corners of the last two stalls, purplish, nearly pulsating goo covers the walls and floor. This is demon's bile. The PCs should receive an opportunity to use Knowledge (nature or planes) to identify it and its properties (DC 12; see the Demon's Bile section on page 17 for more details). If the PCs do not destroy the demon's bile here within 1 day, it spews forth another fiendish giant centipede.

Creatures: Two giant fiendish centipedes have recently laid eggs in the two rearmost stable stalls. As soon as they notice any intruders, they start making a chittering sound.

However, despite the fact that they are corrupted with Abyssal energies, the centipedes here just want to protect their eggs. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Knowledge (nature) check or a DC 18 Sense Motive check realizes that the creatures do not want to fight; they are just trying to scare the PCs away. They attack the PCs only if the PCs come within 15 feet of the eggs.

FIENDISH GIANT CENTIPEDES (2) **CR 1/2**

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 43)

Story Award: If the PCs resolve the encounter without resorting to violence, they earn XP as though they had defeated the creatures in combat.

K3. Family Tomb (CR 1)

Hidden amid a copse of gnarled trees sits a large mausoleum of polished granite. Statues of weeping angels of green-tinted bronze flank the closed entrance. A tarnished silver doorplate on the black steel door reads, "Sarini."

The only way to enter the family tomb is through the front door. Opening the old, rusted door requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check to pick the lock or brute force to break down the door (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18). Those who try to pick the lock or break down the door may trigger a trap; see the Trap section on page 43 for more details.

Inside the mausoleum, two stone coffins stand on a dais, and several more coffins lie on shelves built into the walls. The coffins on the dais were made for the baron and baroness, but their bodies were never laid to rest, and the coffins remain empty.

One of the other coffins contains the bones of an adolescent boy. The corpse is still clutching an old journal, whose dedication reads "to Luca." Moisture has rendered the journal nearly illegible, and each of the book's three parts requires 1d6 hours to read, or 1d6 × 10 minutes if a PC succeeds at a DC 13 Linguistics check. The journal recounts the adventures of Marcius Sarini in Sargava as a young officer. The book narrates interactions with Sargavans and bloody skirmishes with monsters. During his time abroad, Marcius befriended many locals and learned much about the traps and poisonous plants they used for hunting. He also met a brilliant woman named Eshebe, who had a son not quite a year after she and Marcius became acquainted. The final part of the book discusses hunting trips, including a successful mantichore hunt and a plan to kill a chimera, but the ending of the story is missing.

The skeleton holding the book belonged to Marcius's son Luca. Luca inherited his father's prominent chin, a feature that remains obvious even in his skeletal form.



(PCs who have seen the portraits in area **K5** and succeed at a DC 15 Perception check make this connection.)

Trap: The angel statues that flank the tomb's entrance are actually cleverly disguised traps that Marcius Sarini devised after he laid his son to rest. When someone tries to open the door, the statues' wings unfurl, slicing anyone standing in that square.

RAZOR WING TRAP **CR 1**

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect **Atk** +10 melee (1d4+1/19-20)

Treasure: Luca's coffin also contains a palm-sized golden disk with a winged eye carved onto it. The disk is worth 100 gp. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (history or religion) knows that the disk is a holy symbol of Aroden. Before Marcius's fall to diabolism, he revered the now-dead god.

K4. Poison Garden (CR 1)

This wild garden is flush with colors and full of scents both sharp and sweet. A gazebo topped with a weather vane sits in the northeast corner of the garden.

Baron Marcius Sarini cultivated many different kinds of poisonous plants in his garden, including hemlock, poison oak, belladonna, and even stranger growths, many of which are not native to Isgar. A successful DC 16 Knowledge (geography or nature) check reveals that some of the plants have been imported from other countries, some of which are as distant as Sargava. The plants in the garden have since long lost their original potency, but it is still a dangerous place for those who are not careful. See the Hazard section below for more details.

Creature: A bloated frog is lying in ambush amid the bushes. It has become immune to the various poisons in the garden, and it is smart enough to use the poisonous bushes to its advantage when attacking the PCs.

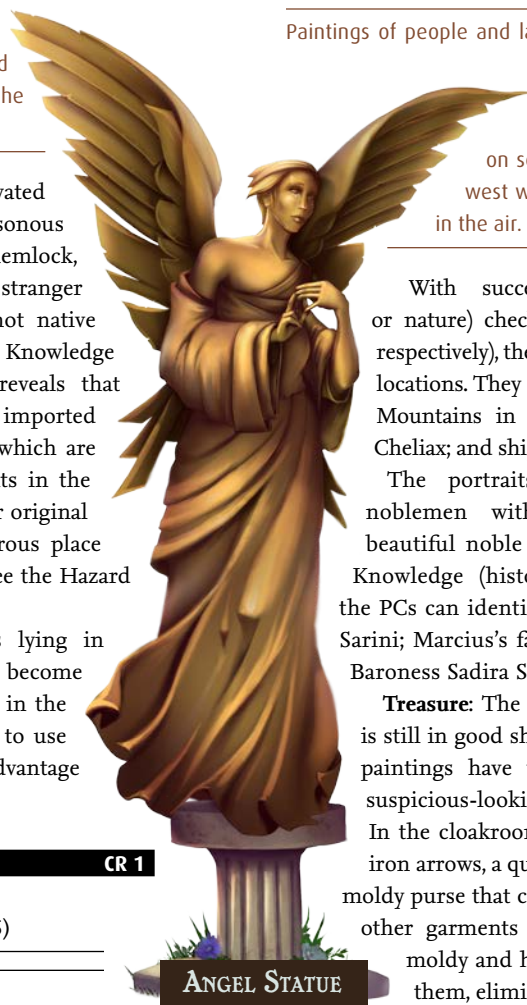
GIANT FROG **CR 1**

XP 400

hp 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 135)

DEFENSE

Immune poison



Hazard: Squares filled with bushes are considered difficult terrain and provide concealment (20% miss chance). Furthermore, the bushes are dangerous to touch. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in any such square must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude saving throw against poison or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. If the creature is already sickened, the duration is extended by an additional 1d4 rounds.

Treasure: Many of the poisonous plants found in the garden can be used as ingredients for antidotes or medicines. If a PC succeeds at a DC 10 Craft (alchemy), Heal, Knowledge (nature), or Survival check, she finds enough plants to sell for 50 gp. For each 5 points by which the check result exceeds the DC, increase the total worth of the plants found by 25 gp (to a maximum of 125 gp).

On the gazebo's roof is the spare key to the baron's study (area **K16**). The key cannot be seen from this area, but it (and the glint it gives off during daylight hours) is visible from the window of the bedroom on the second floor (area **K17**).

K5. Entrance Hall and Cloakroom

Paintings of people and landscapes adorn the walls of this once-grand entrance hall. A few small vases, most of them cracked or broken altogether, sit on semi-circular tables set against the west wall. A faint smell of mildew hangs in the air.

With successful Knowledge (geography or nature) checks (DC 10, DC 15, and DC 20, respectively), the PCs can identify the landscapes' locations. They depict a sunset over the Aspodell Mountains in Isgar; a garden in Remesiana, Chelias; and shipyards in Eleder, Sargava.

The portraits depict two proud-looking noblemen with prominent chins and a beautiful noble lady. With a successful DC 10 Knowledge (history, local, or nobility) check, the PCs can identify the nobles as Baron Marcius Sarini; Marcius's father, Baron Lucius Sarini; and Baroness Sadira Sarini.

Treasure: The painting that depicts shipyards is still in good shape and worth 60 gp. The other paintings have varying water stains, tears, or suspicious-looking smudges and are valueless. In the cloakroom, there is a quiver with 5 cold iron arrows, a quiver with 5 cold iron bolts, and a moldy purse that contains 26 gp. There are various other garments in the cloakroom, but all are moldy and have a dank smell wafting about them, eliminating any value they once had.

K6. Ballroom (CR 2)

The floor, walls, pillars, and fireplaces of this majestic ballroom are all made of polished marble. On the north side of the room, a grand staircase with divided flights leads up to a balcony overlooking the ballroom floor. An angel of black marble is standing menacingly on a platform behind the middle landing of the staircase.

Long ago, the Sarinis hosted magnificent ballroom parties and dinner parties in this room. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Knowledge (planes) check realizes that the statue actually depicts an erinyes devil. Further, any PC who studies the statue and succeeds at a DC 12 Craft (stonemasonry), a Knowledge (engineering) check, or a DC 20 Perception check notices seams around its base that suggest this statue replaced an earlier one.

A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals smears of purplish goo on both of this room's support columns. This is demon's bile; for more information about demon's bile, including how it can eventually propagate more fiendish vermin and how the PCs can determine its properties, see the Demon's Bile section on page 17.

Creatures: A mite ranger called Ticklick guards this area and, as effectively as a mite can, marshals the other

mites who serve Wormgnash. Smarter than most mites, Ticklick remains hidden and observes the PCs for a while, trying to ambush them when they are vulnerable. Ticklick knows the building very well, and if necessary, he moves around the ground floor of the building (areas **K5–K11**) as well as the upper part of the ballroom. Ticklick has a fiendish giant centipede mount; however, if he has warning that the PCs are headed his way, he may leave his mount out in the open and ambush the PCs while they are distracted.

FIENDISH GIANT CENTIPEDE CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 43)

TICKLICK CR 1

XP 400

Fiendish mite ranger 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 207)

LE Small fey

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

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

hp 26 (3 HD; 1d6+2d10+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

DR 2/cold iron; **Resist** cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 6

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee dagger +4 (1d3+1/19–20)

Ranged shortbow +5 (1d4/×3)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day, combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +2), hatred

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st, concentration +2)

At will—*prestidigitation*

1/day—*doom* (DC 10)

TACTICS

During Combat Ticklick uses Rapid Shot as often as he can.

If he is mounted, Ticklick's centipede mount moves before the attack to give him a clear line of fire, and it moves again after the attack to avoid retaliation.

Morale If brought to 7 hit points or fewer, Ticklick drinks a *potion of cure light wounds*. If Ticklick is unable to heal or his centipede dies, the mite flees at top speed and likely ambushes the PCs from elsewhere in the estate.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

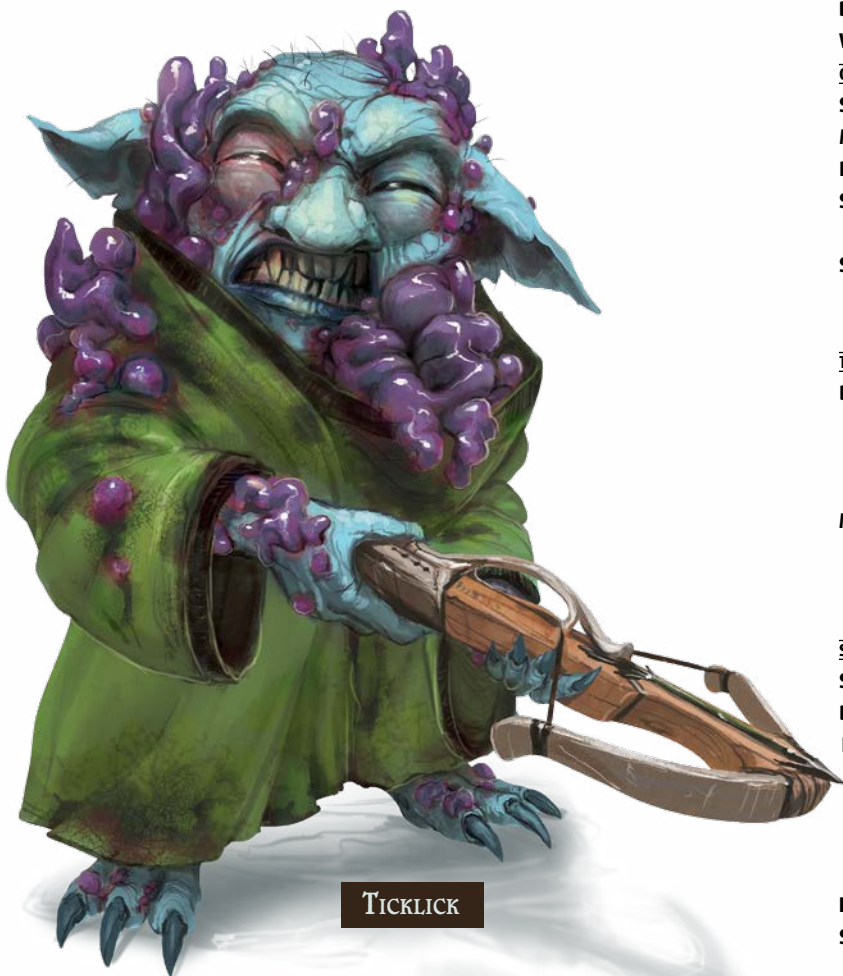
Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +5, Climb +15, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (planes) +3, Perception +7, Ride +8, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +16, Survival +7; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Sleight of Hand, +4 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Common, Undercommon

SQ track +1, vermin empathy +4, wild empathy +1



TICKLICK



Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** dagger, shortbow, with 20 arrows, 57 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hatred (Ex) Mites receive a +1 bonus on attack rolls against humanoid creatures of the dwarf or gnome subtype due to special training against these hated foes.

Vermin Empathy (Ex) This ability functions as a druid's wild empathy, save that a mite can use this ability only on vermin. A mite gains a +4 racial bonus on this check. Vermin are normally mindless, but this empathic communication imparts to them a modicum of implanted intelligence, allowing mites to train Medium vermin and use them as mounts. Vermin empathy treats swarms as if they were one creature with a single mind—a mite can thus use this ability to influence and direct the actions of swarms with relative ease.

Development: The secret passage marked here leads to the southeast corner of area **K18**, but is obscured under a rug, and so is very difficult to find (Perception DC 25). Those who locate the secret passage here also have difficulty opening it without any additional information (Disable Device DC 22).

However, if the PCs find the music box and sheet music in the nursery (area **K12**), they can attempt a DC 10 Perform (keyboard instruments) or Knowledge (nobility) check to play the tune on the harpsichord. If they're successful, this automatically reveals and opens the passage to **K18**.

Area **K18** can also be accessed by the stairs in area **K9**.

K7. Library (CR 1)

The long bookshelves in these dusty alcoves are filled with books. The smell of mildewed paper hangs in the air.

This library contains a fine collection of books, maps, and other old documents, but mildew has ruined most.

Trap: Opening the book titled *The Nine Secrets* (see below) triggers a poison needle trap.

POISON NEEDLE TRAP

CR 1/2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 16; **Disable Device** DC 16

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect Atk +7 melee (1 plus blue whinnis poison)

Treasure: Hidden in a box made of hollowed-out books (Perception DC 20) is a stash that contains the following scrolls: *alarm*, *charm animal*, *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *jump*, *mount*, *obscuring mist*, and *shield of faith*. The caster level of each scroll is 1st.

Furthermore, the PCs can try to find rare and valuable books that have not been ruined by mildew. This takes

1d6 × 10 minutes and requires one or more successful DC 15 Perception checks. With each successful check, the PCs find one of the following books.

Using any of the books to gain a bonus on a check takes 10 minutes of studying, and the bonus lasts for 1 hour. The user can attempt any of the listed checks untrained. Each book can be sold for 50 gp.

From Rivers to Mountains: This old collection of maps and travel literature grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (geography) checks pertaining to Isgar and Survival checks to avoid getting lost or survive in the wilderness while in Isgar.

History of Isgar: Though outdated, this tome grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (history or nobility) checks pertaining to Isgar.

The Nine Secrets: This book looks like a collection of weird poetry, but any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Linguistics or Sense Motive check can decipher secret messages hidden on its pages. Once deciphered, the book grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (planes or religion) checks related to devils, diabolism, Hell, or Asmodeus.

K8. Drawing Room

Once-fine furniture, now ripped and faded from neglect, adorns this chamber. Two large mirrors have been set on the north wall here, but cracks and dark stains mar their silvery surface, and many pieces are missing. A lute rests against the back of a stained red velvet sofa.

After dinner, the Sarinis and their guests would withdraw to this room and play cards, play and listen to music, or engage in other fashionable diversions.

Curious and slightly intimidated by the sudden appearance of unwelcome visitors, Wormgnash contacts one of the PCs telepathically (select randomly) as the heroes enter this room. The vermlek's words echo in the recipient's mind in a harsh, burping voice. He asks the PC the following questions: "Who are you, trespasser?", "Who sent you here?", and "What are you looking for?"

If the PC starts asking questions, Wormgnash claims the following three things: he lived in the house long ago, he wishes to find out whether the PCs are skilled enough to help him, and he wants to remember who he was and will be thankful if the PCs can find any clues. These answers are, however, just a ruse to make the PC reveal information about themselves. Each of the three statements allows the PC to attempt a DC 18 Sense Motive check to realize they're lies.

If the PC calls out Wormgnash's lies, he retorts "Fool! You've already told me all I need to know!" and communicates with them telepathically no more. However, if the PC plays along, she can attempt to fool him into revealing information about himself

by succeeding at a DC 18 Bluff check. A success means Wormgnash blurts out something that either confirms or denies the PC's statement. If the PC fails the check by 5 or more, Wormgnash says "How dare you doubt me?" and ends the conversation.

Treasure: The lute is a masterwork instrument, but it has the broken condition.

K9. Kitchen

Two large tables flank an oven built into the west wall of this kitchen. Jars of different sizes sit on the two tables in uneven rows. A narrow set of stairs leads down to a dark, musty basement.

Once a well-stocked kitchen, this room now contains only dirty jars, shelves, and barrels. The stairs in the northeast corner of the room descend to the cellar (area **K18**) 15 feet below.

Treasure: If the PCs spend 5 minutes rummaging through the miscellaneous junk in the kitchen, they find a well-sealed keg of salt that weighs 5 pounds and is worth 25 gp. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Craft (alchemy) check reveals that a PC can use a pound of salt (worth 5 gp) as a splash weapon against the giant leech in the basement (area **K18**) as if the salt were a flask of acid.

K10. Breakfast Room and Pantry

The Sarinis usually enjoyed their breakfast in this room. There is now nothing of value here.

K11. Dining Room

A few pieces of silver tableware lie strewn about on a 30-foot-long oak table, and more valuables are displayed in a large antique vitrine. The heads of three beasts—a dragon, lion, and goat—have been mounted above a fireplace on the north wall.

In the early hours of the evening, the Sarinis often dined in candlelight around the small round table, or around the long table if they had guests.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check knows that legendary beasts known as chimeras have three heads matching those mounted on the wall. In truth, the heads never belonged to a chimera; any PC who studies the heads closely and succeeds at a DC 18 Knowledge (arcana or nature) check notices that the dragon head's scale pattern matches that of a dragon rather than a chimera, and that the goat and lion heads belonged to ordinary animals. Marcius Sarini and a handful of soldiers from his unit once tried to hunt a chimera, but his companions were killed and Marcius was severely injured. Marcius didn't get the prized trophy,

so he purchased the heads and never told anyone the truth about the failed hunt.

Treasure: On the table and in the vitrine, the PCs can find silver tableware worth 125 gp.

K12. Nursery

The creaking sound of a rocking cradle echoes in the room. Dolls, wooden figurines, and clockwork toys lie abandoned on a table.

The Sarinis intended to use this room as a nursery, but they were hanged before that plan came to fruition.

Creature: The nukkefeen Anilda from the servant's quarters (area **K13**) stole a fiendish centipede egg from the stable (area **K2**), wrapped it in a blanket, and put it in the cradle, calling it her baby. The egg hatched and the young centipede is now squirming to escape from under the blanket, causing the cradle to rock. The creature is too young to be dangerous to the PCs.

Treasure: On the table, there is a silver music box worth 35 gp. The cheerful melody the music box plays opens a secret passage if played in the ballroom (area **K6**), and the sheet music for the melody is carefully folded and placed within the box. On the back of the sheet music are the scrawled words: "play to access the secrets below." This was a note from Marcius, who kept it as a reminder to himself and his wife of how to access the basement without needing to use the stairs, which were in the staff's full sight.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Knowledge (history or local) or Perform (any) check, any PC from Remesiana, knows that the melody is from a popular sea chantey still sung in Remesiana today.

K13. Servants' Room (CR 1)

This dormitory-style bedroom looks tidier than other rooms in the building. A hunched figure wearing a maid's uniform is sitting on a small bed in the northwest corner of the room.

Many servants died at the hands of the baroness in this room and the adjacent bathroom (area **K14**).

Creature: A nukkefeen (see page 63) named Anilda lives in this room. A few months ago, while lurking near a norn lair in the First World corresponding to the Saringallow area on the Material Plane, she stumbled through a shifting breach and could not find her way back. The emptiness and tragic energy surrounding the estate drew her here. She now serves Wormgnash somewhat grudgingly and only because he is the strongest creature here. Anilda is obsessed with the deaths of the maids who once served Sadira Sarini and has even dressed up as a maid. For the present, she is content to play house at the estate, where there are a lot of rooms to clean and a lot of things to fix.



Anilda is curious about the PCs and tries to talk to them, asking the following questions in a somewhat random order. While talking, she nervously keeps snipping at the air with her scissors. If the PCs ask about Wormgnash before she has asked all her questions, Anilda tells the PCs she doesn't trust them yet. She is initially indifferent, but the PCs' responses can affect her attitude.

"I don't know you. Why are you here?" If the PCs tell her the truth, her attitude worsens by one step unless the PCs succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check to convince her that they are good people. If the PCs tell Anilda they serve the same creature as she, they must succeed at a DC 15 Bluff check or her attitude worsens by one step. Mentioning Wormgnash's name or that he is wormlike gives the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus on the check.

"Have you seen my baby? Is she safe?" If the PCs have harmed the centipede in the nursery (area K12), and cannot come up with a convincing lie (Bluff DC 15) or reason with Anilda (Diplomacy DC 21), her attitude worsens by one step.

"My scissors are dull. Do you have anything sharper?" If the PCs give her any sharp household item, her attitude improves by one step. However, if the item is an actual weapon, she shakes her head and says, "Nuh-uh, I don't like weapons."

"Your eyes are pretty. Could I borrow them briefly?" If a PC agrees and willingly fails the save against Anilda's steal eyesight ability, her attitude improves by one step.

"What do you know about the humans who once lived here? Do you know any stories?" The PCs can tell a fascinating story about the Sarinis with a successful DC 12 Knowledge (history or nobility) check or make one up with a successful DC 15 Bluff or Perform (oratory) check. The PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus for each topic they have successfully researched at the town hall archives (see page 38). If they succeed at the check, Anilda's attitude improves by one step. If the PCs used Bluff or Perform (oratory) and fail the check, her attitude worsens by one step.

Further, if the PCs threaten Anilda with violence and succeed at a DC 20 Intimidate check, her attitude improves by one step for the duration of the encounter, but after the PCs leave, she is treated as unfriendly for the purpose of determining her actions, and she tells Wormgnash about the PCs to (see below).

ANILDA **CR 1**

XP 400

Nukkefeen (see page 63)

hp 14

Development: Once Anilda has asked all her questions, her attitude determines her actions after the encounter.

Helpful: Anilda becomes convinced that she is a fool to serve Wormgnash. She describes the rooms and any

dangers she is aware of, and gives the PCs a physical description of Wormgnash. She doesn't know anything about the basement or locked areas, however.

Friendly: As above, but Anilda doesn't answer questions about Wormgnash.

Indifferent: Anilda neither helps nor hinders the PCs.

Unfriendly: Anilda allows the PCs to leave, but when Wormgnash next telepathically contacts her, she slips away to the bathroom (area K14) to tell him about the PCs. She attacks the PCs later using stealth to surprise them.

Hostile: Anilda attacks the PCs in a murderous rage.

Story Award: If the PCs can resolve the encounter without violence, they receive experience points as though they had defeated the nukkefeen in combat. If Anilda reveals useful information, the PCs gain an additional 200 XP.

K14. Bathroom

Dozens of once-fashionable outfits hang in three large closets set against the north wall. Two red folding screens covered in dark stains partially hide a lavish bathtub of gilded porcelain.

The Sarinis used this chamber for bathing and as a dressing room.

Treasure: Most of the clothes in the closets are smelly and moth-eaten. However, Marcius Sarini treated the closet in the middle with an alchemical substance that has kept pests away, and consequently, the contents of the closet—a *cloak of resistance +1* and four noble's outfits worth 75 gp each—are still in pristine condition. Also, behind the clothes are Marcius's small personal weapon stash, consisting of a cold iron morningstar and a cold iron dagger, both wrapped in luxurious cloth and tied with a red silken sash.

K15. Master Bedroom (CR 2)

A large, red four-poster bed sits in the northeast corner of this grand bedroom. Many pieces of dusty jewelry lie on a round table beside a fireplace on the west wall. A large glass double door leads to a balcony with a view over hills and valleys to the south.

This was the baron and baroness's bedroom. The door to the study (area K16) is locked (Disable Device DC 25). The baron's spare key (see area K4, though it's visible only from area K17) also opens the door here, but unless the lock is opened with a specific sequence of key turns, all the traps in the study immediately become armed. To identify this aspect of the lock (ensuring that the PCs don't face the traps in area K16), a PC must succeed at a DC 18 Disable Device check while using the key.

Creature: A snake-shaped silver necklace on the round table is actually an iron cobra. Upon casual inspection, the motionless creature looks like a mundane object,

ANTIQUARIAN'S MONOCLE

This magical eyepiece is often used by those without spellcasting training to peruse mystical writings.

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| ANTIQUARIAN'S MONOCLE | | PRICE 1,350 GP |
| SLOT eyes | CL 3rd | WEIGHT — |
| AURA faint divination | | |

This lens, mounted in a round silver frame, fits snugly in the eye orbit of any Medium or Small user. Three times per day on command, the monocle allows the user to read magical inscriptions (including scrolls) as if affected by *read magic*.

Once per day, by speaking a second command word, the user can activate a 1st-level spell from a scroll even if she doesn't have the spell on her class list or meet the other requirements. Activating a scroll with the monocle is a full-round action (or the spell's casting time, whichever is longer).

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 675 GP |
| Craft Wondrous Item, <i>read magic</i> | |



but if a PC studies the objects on the table more closely before touching them, she can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check to notice that it is actually a construct creature. A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals that the necklace is not truly a piece of fancy jewelry. The iron cobra attacks only if the PCs touch any of the objects on the table or act in a generally threatening manner. The cobra's reservoir still contains 2 doses of black adder venom.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| IRON COBRA | CR 2 |
| XP 600 | |
| hp 15 (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 182) | |

Treasure: The iron cobra is inlaid with silver patterns, and its remains can be sold for 100 gp. Other than the cobra, there is a signet ring worth 25 gp and an assortment of jewelry worth 125 gp on the table. However, the signet ring is a Sarini heirloom and has the family's symbol on it prominently. No one in Saringallow is willing to purchase it nor even take it for free, and showing it to any merchant decreases the merchant's attitude toward the PCs by one step.

K16. Baron's Study (CR 3)

The furniture in this irregularly shaped room are cluttered with scientific equipment, and the glassy eyes of taxidermy animal heads stare down from the walls. At the north end

of the room, the stuffed body of a large, winged beast is mounted on a low platform.

Baron Marcius Sarini often retired to his study in the evenings to work on traps and other mechanical devices, and to experiment with poisons, potions, and alchemical substances.

Traps: Incredibly secretive about his work, Marcius Sarini built deadly traps to protect this room. One, a scythe trap, is embedded in the northern column and lashes out at nearby creatures. There is also an area trapped with floor spikes near the door.

FLOOR SPIKES **CR 1**

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 16; **Disable Device** DC 16

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect floor spikes (1 piercing damage plus caltrop wound [*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 155])

SPRING SCYTHE TRAP **CR 1**

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 16; **Disable Device** DC 16

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect Atk +6 melee (2d4+1/×4)

Treasure: In a cupboard, the PCs find an old map of the manor and surrounding grounds. It indicates that there is a secret door in the southwest corner of the cellar (area **K18**). A musical note has been drawn onto the area depicting the ballroom (area **K6**). This is a reference to the music box's melody, which opens the secret door there. The PCs also find a chain shirt and a masterwork cold iron longsword.

On the table next to the column, the PCs can find five *potions of cure light wounds*, two *potions of endure elements*, a *potion of enlarge person*, and a *potion of reduce person*. On the table next to the fireplace, the PCs can find an *antiquarian's monocle* (see the sidebar on this page), four vials of alchemist's fire, and two sunrods. The rest of the equipment in the room makes up a fully functional alchemist's lab.

K17. Small Bedroom

The large windows of this bedroom offer a magnificent view of the hills to the northeast.

The Sarinis used this room as a guest room. There is nothing of value in this room, but from this unique vantage point, the PCs can see a metallic glint on the roof of the gazebo in the garden (area **K4**). This is the spare key to the baron's study (area **K16**).



A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals letters scratched into the floor near the bed. If the PCs look under the bed, they see the words “help me” carved into the hardwood planks in a dark substance—a plea from a long-dead servant trying to hide from her murderous employers.

PART 3: CHILDREN OF THE ABYSS

In the adventure’s final act, the PCs descend into the Sarinis ritual chambers in the manor’s cellar and come face-to-face with the terrible creature that seeks to build an Abyssal army to overrun Saringallow. Plus, the very foundation of the estate begins crumbling around the heroes, threatening to bury them where they stand!

K18. Flooded Cellar (CR 2)

Steep stone stairs descend into a vaulted cellar flooded with turbid water, in which dozens of wooden barrels idly float.

The Sarinis used this spacious cellar to store wine, cheese, and other goods. Lack of maintenance and heavy rains have caused the cellar to become flooded.

The secret door to area **C19** can be found with a successful DC 15 Perception check.

Creature: Wormgnash’s pet giant leech is lounging near the stairs in the northwest corner of the flooded area. The demon’s bile in the basement spawned the hideous monstrosity, and Wormgnash has taken quite a shine to it. As soon as the PCs descend into the water, the leech starts moving underwater, and the PCs can attempt Perception checks to notice its presence. The murky water gives it a +8 bonus on Stealth checks just as though it were in a swamp; see Hazards for other affects of the deep water. The leech attacks only after the first PC has moved past the middle columns in the room. It prefers attacking the last PC in the group, or a PC separated from the rest of the party.

FIENDISH GIANT LEECH **CR 2**

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 187)

Hazards: There is nearly 4 feet of water in the flooded area, which counts as a deep bog (see page 427 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). Because the giant leech remains underwater, creatures attacking it take the usual penalties for fighting underwater (*Core Rulebook* 433). Pulling oneself up onto the elevated platform at the far end of the room requires a successful DC 10 Climb check.

The heavy barrels in the water block movement, but it is possible to dive under them with a successful DC 10 Swim check. Getting onto a barrel requires a move action and a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check. Any PC who starts her turn on a barrel or jumps onto a barrel must

also succeed at a DC 15 Acrobatics check or fall into the water. While balancing on a barrel, a PC is safe from the giant leech’s attacks. Lastly, as a move action, a PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Strength check can move a barrel 5 feet. For every 5 points the check result exceed the DC, the PC can move the barrel an additional 5 feet.

Treasure: A barrel of high-quality wine worth 150 gp has survived the intervening decades.

K19. Bile Pit (CR 2)

A web of thick, pulsating goo covers the walls and part of the floor of this room. Dozens of misshapen, puffy heads and arms stick out from throbbing sacs attached to the vile substance, their mouths wailing and moaning, and their twitching claws reaching out blindly. Spiraling stairs lead down to a central two-foot-deep recess decorated with diabolical symbols.

Before they were hanged, the Sarinis sacrificed many innocent lives in unspeakable diabolical rituals in this room. When Wormgnash arrived here, he co-opted the diabolic space to create more fiendish creatures. Here, the demon’s bile that sloughed off his body has grown into an enormous web that now covers the Sarinis’ old diabolic altar, which is situated in the middle of a five-pointed star at the bottom of a recess. Wormgnash has embedded the rest of the mites (whose gear is fully intact) in this web, and the bile’s Abyssal energies is turning them fiendish. If the PCs haven’t already determined the properties of demon’s bile, allow them the opportunity to do so (see the Demon’s Bile section on page 17 for more details).

Creatures: The web is full of mites being transformed into fiendish creatures. Six mites, embedded in random places in the web, are nearly ready to emerge to do Wormgnash’s bidding. At any time, Wormgnash can telepathically instruct these six to break free and attack. The PCs must succeed at a DC 18 Perception check to notice the mites breaking free (DC 22 for PCs without a light source); otherwise, the freed monsters can act in a surprise round.

The web also keeps the door in the southwest corner of the room shut (Strength DC 26 to open). Wormgnash, however, can will the demon’s bile to allow him to come and go as he pleases.

FIENDISH MITES (6) **CR 1/4**

XP 100 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 207)

Development: As soon as the six mites are killed, Wormgnash and one summoned slimy dretch (see Wormgnash’s stat block on page 56) enter the room and attack the PCs. See area **K20** for details.

K20. Records Room (CR 3)

The Sarinis stored records about their victims, rituals, experiments, and other secrets in this room.

Creature: Wormgnash, a vermlek demon, lives in this room. Wearing a dead merchant's body, he is almost indistinguishable from a living human (Perception DC 24 to see through the disguise, or DC 28 for PCs who don't have a light source). When Wormgnash first encounters the PCs in person, he gives the following speech on his first combat turn.

"So, the heroes have arrived. Try not to make a mess when you die—I have great plans for your remains."

Later, when Wormgnash reveals his true form (see the Morale section of his tactics), read the following aloud.

Despite his grievous injuries, the mustached man is still grinning. "You think that is enough to stop me? You have to—" He stops mid-sentence as his obese form shudders. With a ripping sound, his flesh peels off, revealing a fatheaded man-sized worm, which utters in a gurgling voice, "Try harder."

WORMGNASH

CR 3

XP 800

hp 30 (see page 56)

TACTICS

Before Combat Wormgnash summons a slimy dretch (see his full stat block on page 56) and uses his *jump* spell-like ability on himself.

During Combat Wormgnash uses *mass inflict light wounds* whenever there are three targets within 30 feet. Because negative energy heals him, Wormgnash includes himself in the spell's effects if he is injured. Before entering melee, Wormgnash tries to lure the PCs into a choke point where only one PC can attack him. Both in human form and his true form, he uses Combat Expertise and Improved Feint while in melee.

Morale If he's reduced to 15 hit points or fewer and he has no daily uses of *mass inflict light wounds* left, Wormgnash uses his abandon flesh ability. He fights to the death.

Development: On the table, the PCs find drawings and diagrams of some sort of portal, showing a vermlek stepping through what looks very much like the sacrificial pit in the adjacent room. Wormgnash's notes—written in Abyssal—suggest that he believed he was very close to a breakthrough that would have ripped a tiny interdimensional hole here that would have allowed several of his vermlek brethren to join him on the Material Plane. The PCs also find a rough map of Saringallow with arrows and drawings of mites scribbled on it. It indicates that the fiendish fey were

soon to attack the town in order to obtain bodies for the vermleeks to inhabit.

There are six cabinets in the room, each full of documents. The shelves are neatly labeled, and the PCs easily find the missing records in the cabinet in the northeast corner of the room.

As soon as the PCs have finished looting the room, the walls begin to shudder and the Collapse encounter begins.

Story Award: If the PCs determine the true Abyssal threat to Saringallow, award them 600 XP.

COLLAPSE (CR 2)

Once the PCs have defeated Wormgnash and gathered the records they need for the mayor, the building's age and the latent Abyssal energies from the demon's bile cause the house to begin to collapse. Portions of the ceiling begin to crumble, and small tremors ripple throughout the basement.

The encounter consists of five obstacles the PCs must overcome, as detailed in the paragraphs below. To overcome an obstacle, each PC must first choose one of two strategies, each of which requires a successful saving throw, ability check, or skill check. Any PC who has chosen the same check type as another PC can voluntarily take a –2 penalty on her check to give a +2 bonus on the other PC's check. Multiple PCs can help the same character. When everyone is ready, all of the players roll simultaneously.

Regardless of the check results, each PC proceeds to the next obstacle, but any PCs who failed the check take 1d3 points of damage each. In between navigating the obstacles, it is possible to quickly quaff a potion, cast a single spell, or use an ability that takes no more than a full-round action to function. A PC can drag an ally who falls unconscious through these obstacles, but that PC takes a –4 penalty on checks and saving throws while doing so. This penalty is only –2 if two PCs drag a single unconscious ally.

After the fifth obstacle, the PCs reach the garden outside the building and are no longer in danger.

1. Falling Cabinets: A powerful tremor shakes the basement, causing cabinets to topple. To dodge them, a PC must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save. To prop them up, a PC must succeed at a DC 12 Strength check.

2. Grasping Hands: The dying and panicking mites trapped in the demon's bile web blindly grab at anything they can. To tumble past them, a PC must succeed at a DC 10 Acrobatics check. To wriggle away from them, a PC must succeed at a DC 12 Escape Artist check.

3. Rolling Barrels: Rolling barrels make movement in the flooded cellar difficult. To dive under them, a PC must succeed at a DC 12 Constitution check. To slip to the side, a PC must succeed at a DC 12 Swim check.

4. Crumbling Stairs: The precarious stairs leading out of the basement are falling apart. To scramble up them,



a PC must succeed at a DC 13 Climb check. To tread carefully, a PC must succeed at a DC 14 Perception check.

5. Panic in the Kitchen: A stream of frenzied rats blocks the way out. To herd them away, a PC must succeed at a DC 10 Knowledge (nature) or Handle Animal check. To tough out the situation and wade through the rats, a PC must succeed at a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw.

Story Award: When the PCs escape from the crumbling estate, award them 200 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Back in Saringallow, Mayor Trinelli congratulates the PCs for their bravery and resourcefulness and pays them 100 gp for the records, as agreed. When the mayor issues a report about the PCs' findings, people start lining up in front of the town hall, curious to know what happened to their kin so long ago. To underscore the meaningfulness of the PCs' actions, the mayor encourages the PCs to meet with the grateful people whose families are mentioned in the records. Many tearful townspeople also seek out the PCs to meet and thank them, and though it will take a long time for the damage to fully heal, a grim chapter in Saringallow's history is nearer to coming to a close.

Although the PCs' have thwarted Wormgnash's plan, many dangers still lurk near the Sarini Estate. If the PCs did not destroy the demon's bile, the mayor decides to send guards to do the job now that the main menace at the estate is contained. The mayor may request that the PCs brief the guards about how to destroy the demon's bile, at the GM's discretion.

TYING THE ADVENTURES TOGETHER

If the same PCs are also playing one or both of the other adventures in this module, they find documents on Wormgnash's human-looking remains indicating that it was once the body of Marcuccio Bravoni, a merchant who owned the abandoned warehouse that features prominently in "A Foul Breed." Bravoni stumbled upon Wormgnash while the demon was squatting in the warehouse; Wormgnash promptly killed the unfortunate man and inhabited his body. The merchant's notes also mention that he saw a strange goblin scouting the town at night. This provides a story hook for "What Lurks in the Woods."

SCALING THIS ADVENTURE

To accommodate a group of 2nd-level PCs, GMs running this adventure should make the following changes to each of the encounters listed below.

Encounter J: Add a second giant centipede. Neither centipede attacks Olaus. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter K1: Add 2 fiendish mites. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter K2: Add a third fiendish giant centipede. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter K4: Add a poison frog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 135) to the encounter in the garden. This frog is also immune to the garden's poisonous herbs. This makes the encounter CR 2.

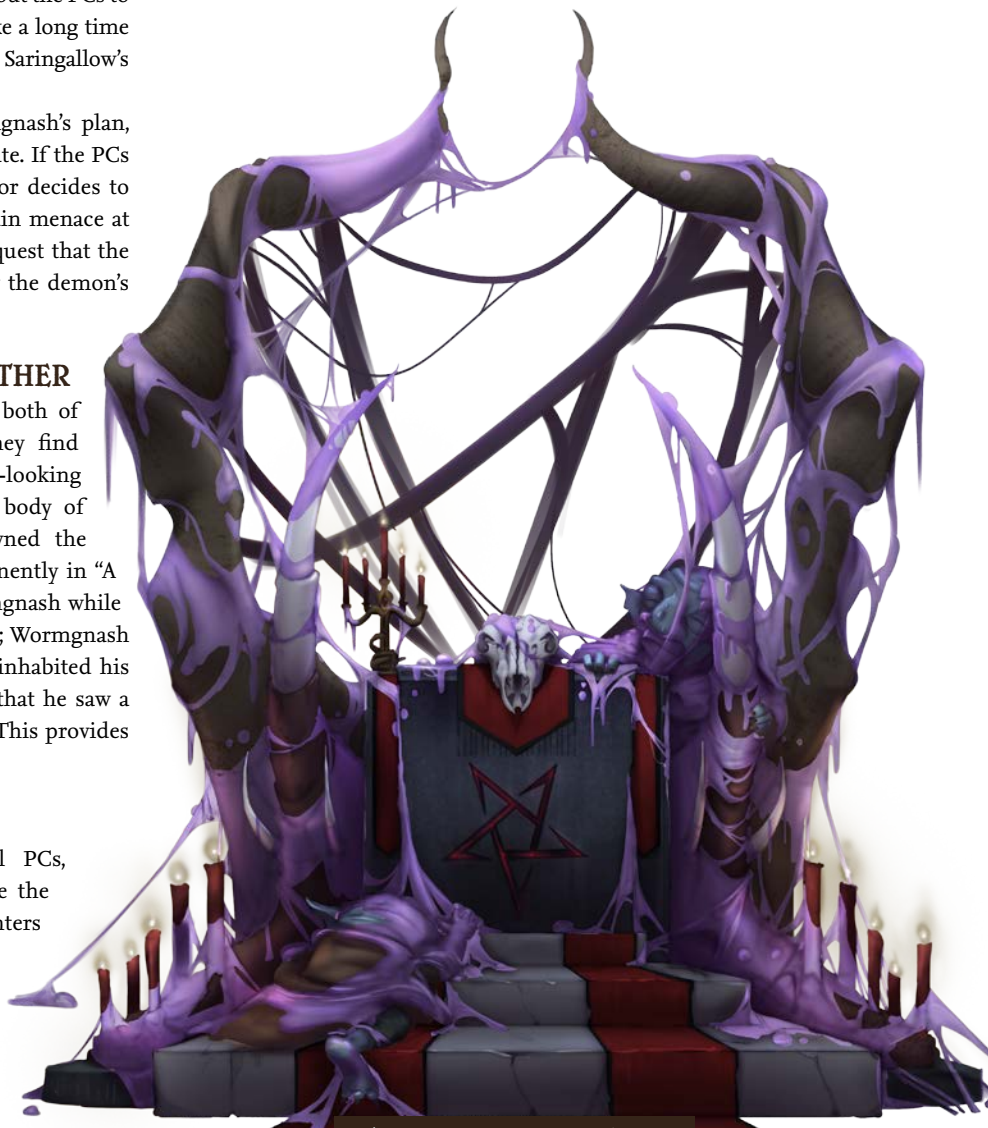
Encounter K6: Add 1 fiendish giant centipede. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter K13: Give Anilda the advanced creature simple template (*Bestiary* 294). All skill check DCs related to her increase by 2. This makes the encounter CR 2.

Encounter K18: Give the giant leech the advanced creature simple template (*Bestiary* 294). This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter K19: Add two fiendish mites. This makes the encounter CR 3.

Encounter 20: Wormgnash manages to summon three slimy dretches (see page 56) instead of merely one. This makes the encounter CR 4.



CORRUPTED DIABOLIC ALTAR

APPENDIX 1: NPCs

NIXA VOLSETTI

Stalwart and protective, Nixa Volsetti knows her way around a sword and shield. She spent her early years as a farmer, but has since taken up her parents' mantle as a defender of the countryside against the ever-present goblin menace.

NIXA VOLSETTI

CR 1

XP 400

Female human fighter 2

LG Medium humanoid (human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 18 (2d10+7)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +4 (1d8+3/19–20), light shield +3 (1d3+3)

TACTICS

During Combat Nixa focuses her attacks on particularly dangerous or aggressive enemies, hoping they will target her rather than her allies. She drinks her *potions of cure light wounds* as needed.

Morale Nixa does not retreat unless her allies are out of danger or otherwise beyond her aid.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Shield Bash, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Climb +2, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +1, Survival +5

Languages Common, Goblin

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), acid (2);

Other Gear breastplate, light steel shield, mwk longsword, everburning torch, 26 gp

Nixa grew up on one of the many farms that dot the countryside near Saringallow. As a very young child, she loved to wander the wilderness surrounding her parents' farm, exploring the fields and streams and battling imaginary monsters. Nixa's blissful childhood ended, though, when the real monsters arrived.

Armies of goblinoids surged out of the Chitterwood in southern Isgar, sparking the 4-year-long conflict that would come to be known as the Goblinblood Wars. Nixa's family was fortunate—they had just enough warning to gather their most important belongings and flee before the tide of goblins crashed down on their homestead and put the farm to the torch. During the war, Nixa's father cared for the girl in a refugee camp within Saringallow's walls, while her mother donned heirloom armor to fight the goblin threat head-on. Nixa's mother, Norra, saw heavy fighting, but luckily escaped serious injury, and after the war, the family returned to their land and determinedly rebuilt their home brick by brick.

While Nixa and her parents escaped disaster during the horrific hobgoblin advance, other members of her family were not so lucky. Nixa's distant aunt and uncle were both slain by goblins, leaving Nixa's cousin, Nolaria Wintren, orphaned. Overwhelmed with the herculean task of rebuilding their own lives, Nixa's parents were





glad that a young priest named Ildris Ruvorra adopted Nolaria as his own daughter. They lovingly kept up a correspondence with Nolaria, and, when her adoptive father's priestly duties required him to travel extensively, they took her in for a period of several years. Strong and capable, Nixa taught her smaller, younger cousin how to defend herself. In return, the inquisitive Nolaria taught Nixa how to read from the library of books she brought from the temple to the farm. By the time Nolaria returned to Saringallow to once more live with Ildris full-time, the two cousins were as sisters.

For all of her life, Nixa has been enamored by stories of her mother's courage during the Goblinblood Wars, and though she lives in a rural area, she has trained with Norra's weapons and armor as much as her parents allowed. Now, as a young woman, she is no longer content with leading a simple farmer's life. Although her parents welcome the calm after so many years of harrowing turmoil, Nixa recently enlisted in Isgar's army, determined to serve her country and bring as much honor to it as her mother did. Nixa is certain that the goblinoid hordes will one day return to ravage her beloved country's peaceful farms and settlements. She hopes to keep vigil against such an attack and fight it valiantly when it comes.

Nixa has only a few months left until she receives her deployment assignment from the army, so she has traveled to Saringallow for a long visit with Nolaria—it could be the last time the cousins can see each other for a while, after all. They had planned for much reminiscing and merriment. However, what was to be a bittersweet and treasured time has gone terribly wrong, as both cousins have been captured by a corrupted apothecary's apprentice. Nixa still isn't quite sure how the apprentice got the drop on her, but she feels deep shame at her inability to defend herself and her cousin. The apprentice initially took Nixa to the same warehouse as her cousin, though Nixa has no idea where they were. He ultimately moved Nixa, leaving the fighter tied up near the woods where she was eventually taken prisoner by local goblins for reasons that baffle the embattled young woman.

Regardless, the goblins have taken Nixa back through the woods to their camp, careful to keep her tightly bound. Since then, they've kept her locked in a steel cage, and the bugbear Mezodarath interrogates Nixa daily, demanding for her to tell him all about Saringallow's defenses and how best to attack the city. So far, Nixa has resisted the bugbear's questioning; however, even a soul as brave as Nixa can resist such a tormentor for only so long. Unless the PCs rescue the fighter, she may very well break down and relinquish the information Mezodarath so desperately seeks. All Nixa needs is a little help to break free from her captors and bring justice to those who have wronged her and who continue to threaten her beloved cousin.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The PCs are likely to encounter Nixa for the first time in Highfort, during the last part of "What Lurks in the Woods." In fact, she likely fights alongside the PCs against the fiendish bugbear, Mezodarath, whose goblins dragged her from Saringallow to their corrupted camp. If Nixa survives the fight with Mezodarath and the PCs have not yet embarked upon "A Foul Breed," she tells them that her cousin is being held somewhere in a large building along with several other Saringallow apprentices. Nixa is frantic about this situation, as she believes that Nolaria is in mortal danger, and she feels responsible for not preventing it. If the PCs encounter her before playing through "The Festering Blot," Nixa tells them about the disturbing ramblings in which Mezodarath addressed a creature he never referred to by name, but indicated that its lair was in or near the old Sarini Estate. Nixa worries that this creature might be another corrupted bugbear, or perhaps a monster even more heinous, that could threaten her cousin and the whole of Saringallow.

Further, Nixa offers to help the PCs on their subsequent adventures in Saringallow. If they accept, she can contribute in the other adventures in the following ways.

A Foul Breed: As a brief captive of Gellion, Nixa can share details about the number of apprentices who were with her, including her beloved cousin, and the general wet, dark area where they were being kept. She can also share that her original captor was likely a young man, but she does not know any more specific details because of her unfamiliarity with Gellion and the others. She is unaware of exactly where the apprentices are, because Gellion rendered her unconscious before taking her to the warehouse, and so Nixa's presence does not allow the PCs to skip any major portion of the adventure. However, because a few townsfolk recognize her as Nolaria's cousin, she can provide a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks when the PCs are attempting to gather information (see the sidebar on page 8). At the GM's discretion, Nixa might provide the PCs with combat help during Part 1 of the adventure, but she subsequently returns to the temple of Erastil to check on Nolaria's father, though the PCs can return to her for information at any point.

The Festering Blot: Nixa knows little about what might be lurking in the Sarini Estate, but thanks to her cousin, she spent ample time in her youth around books, and can provide a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history or local) and Perception checks the PCs attempt while searching the town hall archives' library (see page 38). Additionally, Nixa has heard a few scraps of information about the estate, and so can share one of the rumors from the Rumors in Saringallow table on page 39. If Nolaria doesn't accompany the PCs as they travel down Nobles' Folly, the path to the Sarini Estate, Nixa will do so, although she returns to Saringallow after the PCs encounter Olaus (see page 40).

NOLARIA WINTREN

Bold and inquisitive, Nolaria Wintren studies under Saringallow's head priest of Erastil and is a friend to many of the settlement's apprentices. She often seeks knowledge and goes on excursions with her compatriots that many in Saringallow would disapprove of or consider dangerous.

NOLARIA WINTREN **CR 1**

XP 400

Female human adept 3
NG Medium humanoid (human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (+2 armor, -1 Dex)

hp 13 (3d6+3)

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee morningstar +0 (1d8-1)

Ranged mwk longbow +1 (1d8/×3)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds*, *detect evil*

0—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nolaria casts *detect evil* if she cannot immediately identify the nature of her foe.

During Combat Nolaria uses her *scroll of protection from evil* if she knows that her foe is evil. She knows that she lacks the physical prowess and skill to stand up to opponents in battle, so she keeps her foes at bay with her longbow as long as possible. If she has allies in the fight, she casts *bless* as soon as she can.

Morale Nolaria flees to try and find help if she is injured. Once she is safe, she casts *cure light wounds* when she is out of harm's way, or if she is reduced to 5 or fewer hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 9, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 9

Feats Magical Aptitude, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longbow), Scribe Scroll

Skills Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +7, Survival +6, Use Magic Device +5

Languages Common

SQ summon familiar (raven)

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *scroll of bless*, *scroll of protection from evil*, alchemist's fire, holy water (2), thunderstone; **Other Gear** leather armor, morningstar, mwk longbow with 20 arrows, everburning torch, wooden holy symbol of Erastil, 26 gp

Nolaria Wintren has few memories of her early childhood, and the ones she does have are so unpleasant

she wishes she could forget them. Nolaria's parents were both officers in Isgar's army during the Goblinblood Wars. As the war wound down and the goblin forces fled one by one back into Chitterwood, a desperate hobgoblin captain called Gristlebriar led a surprise attack against the village where Nolaria's parents were stationed. Neither of them survived the battle. Gristlebriar razed the village to the ground, but a few people escaped, including Ildris Ruvorra, a young priest of Erastil and a friend to Nolaria's parents. When he searched the burned buildings for survivors, he found little Nolaria Wintren in the ruined temple of Erastil, hiding under the bell tower's giant cracked bell. It was clear to the priest that she would grow up to serve the church, and that it was his responsibility to adopt the girl and raise her as his own daughter. After the war, he relocated to Saringallow, where he eventually became the head priest.

For a few years after the war, Ildris Ruvorra's duties as a priest of Erastil required him to travel a great deal. When he was away from town, Ruvorra left Nolaria in the care of her distant relatives, the Volsetti family, who lived on a farmstead a few days from Saringallow proper. During this time, Nolaria grew close with her cousin, Nixa Volsetti, a brave fighter who became like a protective older sister to the wide-eyed girl. Nixa taught her how to shoot a bow, and in turn, Nolaria taught the fighter how to read. As the cousins grew older, their relationship stayed strong, and Nixa still visits Nolaria for weeks at a time in her temple home.

Over the years, Nolaria grew to disagree with Ildris Ruvorra about her purpose. Though she fulfills her duties at Erastil's temple and is grateful to Ruvorra for his generosity, she does not see herself as a servant of Erastil destined to serve the populace from inside the town's walls. She would much rather go out into the world to do Erastil's bidding, and she prays to the god daily to reveal a path more true to her heart. So far, Erastil has not seen fit to answer these pleas, though in the last year Nolaria learned to channel her faith into her very first spells. This satisfied her thirst for adventure for a short while, until Ruvorra resumed nagging her about her great destiny as a town priest, like him. Nolaria pretended to acquiesce, but she secretly rebelled. Nolaria is faithful to Erastil, but she is no friend to strict rules and stuffy traditions.

While the temple's faithful often mutter disapprovingly behind their backs, Ildris Ruvorra insists that Nolaria is a true devotee of Erastil, and none of the others dare to contradict the head priest. Nolaria tries to ignore their criticisms, preferring to spend time with her friends and plan adventures rather than worrying about others' perception of her.

Nolaria's closest friend is Gellion Vazarro, the apprentice to the gnome apothecary Majara Pricknettle. She and Gellion share a desire for knowledge and



adventure, though Gellion is more engrossed in the intricacies of arcane magic, whereas Nolaria has proven more interested in exploration. So far, her adventures have been relatively conservative, as she has maintained a healthy fear of some of the unexplored areas outside of Saringallow, including the infamous and abandoned Sarini Estate. Her feelings about the eerie place are complicated. Part of her desperately wants to brave its abandoned halls, while another, more practical part is reluctant because of the wild tales that villagers tell about the place.

Together, Nolaria and Gellion are the de facto leaders of a group of friends that includes several other apprentices from around the town. They spend a great deal of time together and boast loudly about adventures future and past. Most of them see Nolaria's grand ideas as a game, not realizing that she is earnest about venturing to new and even dangerous places. Nolaria and Gellion often meet without the others to study arcana together, and Nolaria recently asked Gellion to share his knowledge of alchemy with her. Before their lessons truly got off the ground, however, Gellion was corrupted by demon's bile, which led him to abduct Nolaria and several of their friends (see "A Foul Breed" for more details).

Nolaria is known for wearing her brown hair in an untidy bun that she neatens only for official holidays and ceremonies. Her clothing is comfortable and practical—strong boots, a simple tunic, leather armor, and a fur cloak with a wooden holy symbol of Erastil for a clasp. She carries her longbow—a relic of the Goblinblood Wars—at all times, and her raven familiar, Blackfeather, is never far from her shoulder.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The PCs are likely to encounter Nolaria for the first time as a captive of Gellion in the last part of "A Foul Breed." If the PCs rescue her before embarking upon "What Lurks in the Woods," she informs them that her cousin, a fighter named Nixa (see page 52), was also kept captive in the merchant's warehouse, but Gellion took her out of the town before the PCs arrived. If the PCs rescue Nolaria before "The Festering Blot," she can describe some of Gellion's disturbing ramblings about a worm-demon in the old Sarini Estate.

Further, Nolaria offers to help the PCs on their subsequent adventures in Saringallow. If they accept, she can contribute as follows in the respective adventures.

What Lurks in the Woods: Because she's seen the fiendish vermin in Saringallow up close and is thoroughly acquainted with information about goblins, Nolaria can tell the PCs that the filthy goblins Mayor Sandra Trinelli describes are very likely fiendish creatures. She can share up to five pieces of useful information about the fiendish goblins encountered in this adventure (as

if she had succeeded at a 40 Knowledge [local] check). Additionally, she can give the PCs a good map of the outlying areas around Saringallow, which provides a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to find Highfort during Part 2.

The Festering Blot: Nolaria has not yet explored the Sarini Estate, but has heard many reliable rumors about the place. Although she has no knowledge of the creatures that infest the estate now, she can describe the complex's rough layout, including the main house's three stories, the stable, the mausoleum, the gazebo, and the general courtyard area. She takes care to warn the PCs that there may be fiendish creatures there. If Nixa doesn't accompany the PCs as they travel down Nobles' Folly, the path to the Sarini Estate, Nolaria offers to do so instead, although she returns to Saringallow after the PCs encounter Olaus (see page 40).



WORMGNASH

Born from the soul of Saringallow's evil gravedigger, this demon schemes to use the strange Abyssal substance that he inadvertently created to corrupt the settlement's people, empower his recruited allies, and open the way for a demonic army to gloriously destroy the area in Lamashtu's name.

WORMGNASH **CR 3**

XP 800

Male variant vermlek (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2 54*)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init -1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, -1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 30 (4d10+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities abandon flesh, flesh armor, negative energy affinity; **DR** 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft. (when not inhabiting a corpse)

Melee mwk rapier +7 (1d6+2/18-20), bite +1 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks inhabit body

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

3/day—*mass inflict light wounds* (DC 16), *jump*

1/day—*gentle repose*, *summon* (level 2, 1d4 slimy dretches 50%; see special abilities)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 9, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +8, Disguise +8 (+16 when inhabiting a corpse), Escape Artist +6 (+14 when not inhabiting a corpse), Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Disguise when inhabiting a corpse, +8 Escape Artist when not inhabiting a corpse

Languages Abyssal, Common, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear mwk rapier

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Abandon Flesh (Su) As a swift action, Wormgnash can abandon an inhabited body, crawling hideously out of his host and leaving behind an empty sack of skin and bits of gristle. In so doing, he absorbs much of the body's flesh to heal himself, regaining 2d6+3 hit points. Wormgnash cannot later reclaim this body with his inhabit body ability.

Flesh Armor (Su) When Wormgnash wears a humanoid body (see Inhabit Body below), he treats the dead flesh and muscle as armor and gains a +3 armor bonus to his AC. This bonus is already included in Wormgnash's statistics above; when not inhabiting a corpse, his statistics are **AC** 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (-1 Dex, +3 natural).

Inhabit Body (Su) Wormgnash can crawl into the body of any dead Medium humanoid, consuming and replacing the bulk of the humanoid's skeleton and internal organs as he does so. This process takes 1d4 rounds to complete, during which Wormgnash is considered flat-footed. Once the process is complete, Wormgnash appears for all practical purposes to be a living but bloated version of the previous humanoid. He gains a +8 racial bonus on Disguise checks to appear as a

normal humanoid while wearing a dead body in this manner, but does not gain any of the abilities the dead creature had in life, including natural attacks, unusual movement types, or bonuses to natural armor. He loses his own burrow speed while inhabiting a body, but gains the ability to wield weapons or wear armor shaped for humanoids (although note that the armor bonus granted by wearing armor does not stack with the bonus granted by the vermlek's flesh armor ability).

Negative Energy Affinity (Ex)

Wormgnash is healed by negative energy and harmed by positive energy, exactly as if he were an undead creature.

Summon Slimy Dretch (Sp)

The dretches (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 60*) that Wormgnash summons are covered in demon's bile, and their abilities are also altered. Instead of their usual spell-like abilities,

these dretches can cast *grease* twice per day as a spell-like ability.





The soul from which the vermlek demon known as Wormgnash was born once belonged to Armas Sapiro, a gravedigger from Saringallow. Armas was a thoroughly unpleasant man who never had any kind words for his fellow townsfolk. Yet his foulness obscured the true wickedness of his ways; in the lonely corners of Saringallow's graveyard, Armas stole from unburied corpses and even dug up ancient bodies and looted their remains. Nothing was sacred to Armas, who pilfered gold teeth, wedding bands, and anything else of value or interest to him. The gravedigger took perverse pleasure in knowing that he stole from folk who could never accuse him of the misdeeds.

Several months ago, Armas died alone in his cottage next to the Saringallow cemetery. His soul ended up in the Abyss, where it writhed and twisted until, eventually, it transformed into a vermlek. The former gravedigger found himself wallowing in his new, wormlike form at the bottom of an Abyssal pit, where several others of his kind also suffered. Unlike the others, however, the vengeful demon—who is erroneously convinced that one of the hated townsfolk of Saringallow poisoned him—assessed the situation with a cold, calculating cunning. He became the leader of his band of wretched demons, and promised to find a way for them to escape their pit and wreak havoc on the weak without the interference of other, more powerful demons that might ruin their fun. The other vermleks dubbed their newborn leader Wormgnash, in admiration of the way his wormlike head thrashed during his plotting. Wormgnash embraced his new name, thinking it imbued him with a certain level of fearsomeness appropriate to his new demonic form.

Soon, Wormgnash's fumbling searches in his pit turned up a tiny rift between the Abyss and the Material Plane. The demon wandered through it; to his delight, the rift led him to the banks of the Conerica River, right next to the docks of his hated hometown. The demon salivated at the thought of his vermlek allies following him through the portal, murdering the townsfolk, and inhabiting their bodies in a grotesque parody of human life, all to the glory of Lamashtu, the Demon Queen. Wormgnash planned to return to the Abyss and lead his allies in such an attack, but when he tried to slither back through the rift, he found that it had closed. Now stuck on the Material Plane without allies, Wormgnash decided to take stock of his situation, find a place where he could lair, and research how he could reopen the rift and bring his allies with him.

First, Wormgnash slithered from the docks to the town's warehouse district, looking for a secluded place to plan his next move. He slipped into a promisingly quiet warehouse, but while he lurked within, its unfortunate owner, the merchant Marcuccio Bravoni, returned. The demon immediately killed and inhabited

the man's flesh, thinking it a brilliant disguise. To his delight, when he took over the merchant's body, the Abyssal filth that covered Wormgnash's body mixed with his unique brand of hatred and shed a disgusting substance called demon's bile, which has the curious property of attracting and corrupting all manner of vermin (for more information about demon's bile, see page 18). Wormgnash spent some time in the murdered merchant's warehouse, studying the bile and trying to formulate a better plan, but it soon became clear that the area was not as isolated as he hoped. Wormgnash returned to his old stomping grounds, Saringallow's graveyard, but even that did not meet his needs, as there was too great a risk of mourners (and shirking apprentices) stumbling upon him there. Under cover of night, Wormgnash slunk out of town, thinking to hole up in the old Sarini Estate—the one place upon which he knew the townsfolk would never dare intrude.

On his way to the estate, Wormgnash encountered a pair of goblins. The demon at first planned to cut the goblins down, but the war cries on the wicked little creatures' lips piqued his curiosity. These supplications to Lamashtu marked the creatures, or perhaps simply their leader, as servants of the Demon Queen. The crafty vermlek befriended the goblins, followed them back to their fortress lair, and met with the bugbear Lamashtan who commanded them.

Beyond pleased with what he found, Wormgnash gifted the goblinoids with demon's bile, mixed it with the mud and morass he found in the fort, and created a slurry in which he instructed the creatures to bathe. This turned the goblins fiendish. After securing promises of alliance from the bugbear, Wormgnash coached the evil creatures on their upcoming raid; it would be advantageous, he explained, if they could somehow abduct a townsman, find out information about the settlement's defenses, and then infect that unfortunate individual with demon's bile and turn the person loose while the goblins attacked Saringallow in earnest. Wormgnash hoped that this would ensure that chaos would rip the town apart from the inside, just as the goblins were attacking it from without. The result would be many dead bodies for Wormgnash's allies to inhabit once they traveled through the re-opened Abyssal rift. Wormgnash then left the goblinoids to finalize and carry out their plans.

As he continued toward the Sarini Estate, Wormgnash stumbled across some local fey, including a mite tribe that he co-opted into guarding his lair while he put his plot into motion. Now, the demon is just a single step away from bringing his evil hopes to fruition. Wormgnash is confident that between his goblin allies and the imminent re-opening of the Abyssal rift, he and his fellow vermlek will soon terrorize Saringallow, all for the greater glory of the Mother of Monsters.

APPENDIX 2: BESTIARY

BREATHLESS ORCHID

This colorful plant has long, thin leaves and three prominent, bright pink pistils that reach elegantly toward the sky.

BREATHLESS ORCHID

CR 2



XP 600

N Medium plant

Init +3; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Immune plant traits

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee slam +5 (1d4 plus attach)

Special Attacks extract air

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2 (+10 grapple when attached); **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

Feats Weapon Finesse^B

SQ camouflage

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary or patch (2–5)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When a breathless orchid hits with a slam attack, its sinewy leaves latch onto the target. An attached breathless orchid is effectively grappling its prey. The orchid loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 10, but holds on with great tenacity—it has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached breathless orchid can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself; if its prey succeeds at a grapple combat maneuver check or Escape Artist check against it, the orchid is removed.

Camouflage (Ex) Since a breathless orchid looks like a normal flowering plant when at rest, an onlooker must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to notice it before it attacks. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plant.

Extract Air (Su) A breathless orchid that begins its turn attached to a living creature that breathes gains fast healing 2 as it feeds off the air in its victim's blood and lungs. This rapidly impacts the creature's ability to breathe. At the end of the orchid's turn, if it is attached, its victim must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude saving throw or be staggered for 3 rounds while it gasps for breath (although this does not interfere with the creature's ability to speak). Following these rounds, if the orchid is still attached, the creature must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude throw or fall unconscious. At the end of the following round, if the orchid is still attached, the creature drops to –1 hit point and is dying. At the end of the following round, the creature dies if the orchid is still attached.

Breathless orchids are beautiful but predatory plants that feed off the oxygen present in the blood and lungs of breathing creatures. Sometimes, breathless orchids live atop other plants, slowly leeching the oxygen they produce. However, these plants prefer to accost air-breathing creatures, as they find such beings' oxygen much more enriching, and thus the orchids absorb air from them far more quickly. These plants' brilliant colors serve to lure unsuspecting creatures within striking distance, and also indicate how well the plants have recently fed. Breathless orchids that boast the brightest and most beautiful colors have surely gorged themselves recently on the dying gasps of several creatures.





DROCHTAC

An inordinate number of sinewy limbs, each terminating in clawed feet, protrude from the sides of this slithering creature. Its face is disturbingly demonic.

DROCHTAC

CR 1



XP 400

CE Medium fey

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

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

hp 13 (3d6+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

DR 2/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d6+1 plus paralysis), 2 claws +2 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 12), surprise reach

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Step Up

Skills Climb +15, Escape Artist +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7, Survival +4

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ compression, revolting taste

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary, pair, or nest (3–8)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Revolting Taste (Ex) Any creature that deals damage to a drochtac with a bite attack must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw or be nauseated for 1 round and sickened for 1d4 rounds. A creature that succeeds at the saving throw is sickened for only 1 round. This is a poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Surprise Reach (Ex) As part of a full attack, a drochtac can extend the reach of all its natural attacks by 5 feet. This grants the drochtac a +2 bonus on its attack rolls, but imposes a –2 penalty on its AC until the start of its next turn.

Drochtacs are evil fey that, given their mottled skin and many limbs, are almost verminlike in appearance. These creatures move in an undulating motion, with each pair of a drochtac's feet taking turns dragging its body along the ground. Although a drochtac looks emaciated, the muscles between its ribs are powerful and allow the creature to quickly stretch its body like a spring. This enables the creature to attack targets far beyond

its apparent reach, often to the shock and terror of its enemies. Unfortunately for drochtacs' prey, these vicious fey can survive in a wide variety of climates.

The flesh of a drochtac contains vomit-inducing chemicals that, when ingested, cause nausea in most living creatures. For this reason, these fey creatures have few natural enemies. Rather, drochtacs are patient ambush predators that prefer to catch creatures close to their own size. Drochtacs prefer to make meals out of intelligent creatures, as they find this prey requires them to employ more advanced hunting and stalking skills than when they're hunting animals or other low-intelligence creatures.

Also, despite their violent natures, drochtacs are curious creatures that enjoy talking to their victims before killing them. Sometimes, although rarely, drochtacs keep their prey alive for weeks if the victims can keep them entertained with stories (and the fey creatures can find something else to eat). When very hungry, however, they often do not even bother to kill their paralyzed victims before they start eating them.

Drochtacs often stalk small parties of travelers or lost wanderers, waiting for just the right time to strike; in this way, they ensure that their hunting skills stay sharp. Their metabolisms are slow; and after gorging on a creature of suitable size, a drochtac can go for weeks without eating. When they're not hunting, drochtacs lair in secluded ravines, inside the hollows of large trees, or in caves or other places abandoned by larger predators. Drochtacs also use such places to bear and rear their offspring, turning once peaceful spots into terrifying dens of many-legged young.



HOOK FLY, GIANT

This enormous, horrifically bloated fly has a proboscis shaped like a serrated hook. Its many-faceted eyes smolder like hot coals.

HOOK FLY, GIANT CR 2 

XP 600

N Small vermin

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

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee bite +3 (1d4 plus attach)

Special Attacks death throes, spawn brood

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1 (+9 grapple when attached); **CMD** 12 (20 vs. trip)

Skills Fly +3

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or cloud (3–6)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When a giant hook fly hits with a bite attack, it latches onto the target, anchoring the target in place. An attached hook fly is effectively grappling its prey. The hook fly loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 13 (touch 11), but holds on with great tenacity and inserts its proboscis into the grappled target's flesh. A giant hook fly has a +8 racial bonus on combat maneuver checks to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached hook fly can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself; if its prey manages to succeed at a grapple combat maneuver check or Escape Artist check against it, the hook fly is removed.

Death Throes (Ex) If a giant hook fly dies after draining blood with its spawn brood ability but before disgorging a hook fly swarm, its swollen abdomen bursts, sending dead hook flies in every direction. Their tiny hooks deal 2d4 points of slashing damage to all creatures within 10 feet. A successful DC 13 Reflex save halves the damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spawn Brood (Ex) A giant hook fly drains blood at the end of its turn if it is attached to a foe, dealing 1d2 points of Constitution damage. When a giant hook fly drains blood, its abdomen becomes bloated as it spawns an enormous brood of young. It gestates these flies in its abdomen until it has dealt 6 points of Constitution damage with this ability. The following round, the giant hook fly detaches from its victim, and as a standard action that provokes

attacks of opportunity, its abdomen ruptures and disgorges a hook fly swarm. The swarm appears adjacent to the giant hook fly and immediately attacks any nearby foes (it ignores the giant hook fly that spawned it). When its abdomen ruptures, the giant hook fly takes 3d6 points of slashing damage. Blood stored in a giant hook fly's abdomen is absorbed after 24 hours and cannot be used to spawn a brood.

HOOK FLY SWARM

The tiny, buzzing insects that make up this cloud have distinctive bloated bodies and sharp, if miniscule, proboscises.

HOOK FLY SWARM CR 1 

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

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

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 size)

hp 11 (2d8+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

OFFENSE

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

Melee swarm (1d6 plus bleed and distraction)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (1), distraction (DC 12)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +1; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Fly +7

SQ gestate

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or cloud (3–6)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bleed (Ex) A hook fly swarm is made up of a terrible mass of juvenile giant hook flies that have undeveloped, though still terribly sharp, proboscises. Any creature that takes swarm damage from a hook fly swarm also takes 1 point of bleed damage at the beginning of its turn. This bleed damage does not stack with itself or other bleed effects. Bleeding can be stopped by a successful DC 15 Heal check or through the application of any spell that cures hit point damage.

Gestate (Ex) Hook fly swarms are made up of underdeveloped giant hook flies, which stay in swarm form for 1 week. Afterward, the swarm finds a secluded place and builds around itself a cocoon-like pod, which it stays in for 1d4 days. This pod is roughly 5 feet by 5 feet in size, and has AC 11 and 11 hit points. After this gestation period, 1d6 giant hook flies burst from the cocoon as a standard action, fully formed and with all of a giant hook fly's abilities.



Giant hook flies are terrifying, overgrown insects that thrive on their victims' fresh blood. In particular, giant hook flies are known for their rampant breeding and fast gestation period. Their reproduction is tied to the blood they drain from victims; the more blood they drink, the quicker they can expel their young—which are threats on their own.

Giant hook flies and their parasitic broods can be found anywhere, from a nest in an abandoned barn to the depths of a neglected basement to untold stretches of wilderness. Naturally, they are attracted to blood, so any place where blood is spilled can become a hook fly breeding ground. Butchers and livestock farmers, in particular, must stay vigilant against these dangerous pests, as even the sighting of a single juvenile hook fly might herald a terrible infestation just weeks or even days away. Blood cultists, too, sometimes find that giant hook flies and their spawn are unwelcome visitors to their lairs. On more than one occasion, giant hook flies and their swarms have unwittingly driven evil creatures from their hiding places, surreptitiously aiding a populace shocked that the cultists have been operating in their midst the entire time. Left unchecked, giant hook flies can overrun small farms or other rural places where individuals capable of ending these infestations might be scarce.

That said, giant hook flies are not particularly compelled to stay together, even if they were members of the same brood. In the absence of a strong blood scent to follow, a swarm of juvenile hook flies moves randomly until it finds a secluded area in which to build its cocoon. Once the adults hatch, each of the unintelligent vermin drifts aimlessly, seeking the scent of blood. However, once rooted, giant hook fly populations can prove maddeningly difficult to fully eliminate. Rumor has it that swarms can be dispersed only with gouts of flame; otherwise enough juvenile hook flies survive for the swarm to reform—and surviving swarms inevitably build cocoons that yield fully formed and dangerous new giant hook flies. A common rural saying goes, "If you haven't killed hook flies with fire, you haven't really killed them at all."

The process of spawning a hook fly swarm typically kills the swarm's parent. Those that survive normally live up to another 6 months, but the damage to their abdomens leaves them unable to spawn again. However, tales tell of particularly enormous and resilient giant hook flies that live much longer life spans and take minimal damage from

spawning their broods—meaning they can spawn again. Worse, these creatures are said to expel two brood swarms at a time.

GIANT HOOK FLY MATRIARCHS

GMs who wish to use more resilient giant hook flies (often called giant hook fly matriarchs) should make the following adjustments.


A giant hook fly matriarch is CR 3. It has a natural armor bonus of +3 (AC 15, flat-footed 14), 4 Hit Dice (26 hp), a +4 attack bonus to its bite attack, a base attack bonus of +3, a CMB of +2 (+10 grapple), and a CMD of 13 (21 vs. trip). Its spawn brood extraordinary ability deals only 1d6 points of slashing damage to it when its abdomen ruptures, and the ability expels two hook fly swarms at a time.

Giant hook fly matriarchs are typically found alone or with other non-matriarch hook flies in places where spilled blood is enormously abundant, such as on or near recent battlefields, at sites of mass tragedy, or the like. Although they tolerate other giant hook flies, particularly their own spawn, giant hook fly matriarchs are often quite territorial, and matriarchs in close proximity often squabble or even fight the death. However, in places where blood is so abundant that the matriarchs don't need to fight for resources, giant hook fly matriarchs sometimes coexist peacefully, regularly giving birth to enormous broods. The prospect of such a hook fly population explosion is terrifying to most sentient creatures, as it would ensure that no living creature could survive nearby for long.



KATROOME

This large, plump caterpillar is brilliantly colored and has a strangely self-important bearing.

| | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| KATROOME | CR 1 |  |
| XP 400 | | |
| CN Small magical beast | | |
| Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5 | | |
| DEFENSE | | |
| AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 size) | | |
| hp 11 (2d10) | | |
| Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2 | | |
| OFFENSE | | |
| Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft. | | |
| Melee slam +1 (1d3-2) | | |
| Special Attacks web (+5 ranged, DC 11, 2 hp) | | |
| Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +6) | | |
| 3/day— <i>command</i> (DC 12), <i>detect magic</i> | | |
| 1/day— <i>invisibility</i> , <i>suggestion</i> (DC 14) | | |



STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +2; **CMB** -1; **CMD** 11 (can't be tripped)

Feats Iron Will

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +2, Climb +10, Knowledge

(arcana) +3, Perception +5, Sense Motive +6,

Spellcraft +4, Stealth +10 (+14 in forested environments);

Racial Modifiers +4 Sense Motive, +4 Stealth in forested environments

Languages Common, Goblin, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Brilliantly beautiful but nearly as elusive as the breeze, the caterpillar-like katroome is a little creature with an enormous ego. Katroomes are rare and mostly live deep within forests or similar uninhabited areas. Most travelers confuse them with fey creatures, given their magical abilities, capriciousness, and haughty demeanors. In reality, they are magical beasts that almost never reveal themselves to others unless they wish.

Katroomes tend to view themselves as monarchs of their surroundings. They don't believe themselves superior to all others in their demesnes; they simply think that it's their birthright to protect their homelands and natural surroundings. In turn, they expect to be treated with the respect such a position deserves. To those unfamiliar with a katroome's ways, the creature might come across as overbearing or imperious. Even to those who might compliment its beauty, a katroome might condescendingly issue a correction: "I'm not beautiful," one might say, "I am *regal*."

Travelers typically encounter katroomes because the creatures are curious about any visitors in their realm. If the travelers seem innocuous and prove that they understand a katroome's internalized hierarchy of the area, the katroome might aid them with information. If the travelers are wicked or have disrespected the katroome or its home, the creature might stalk them, using its compulsion abilities and its natural webbing to play malicious pranks on the party.

In addition to katroomes' self-assigned roles as protectors and emissaries of the forest, they are also rather avaricious, although they'll never admit it. Katroomes love savory culinary items that might appeal to a typical human. They are also enamored of magic, particularly wondrous items. A katroome might descend from its verdant perch to approach a traveler on the pretense of asking her intentions, when in reality, the katroome is merely curious about the shiny brooch on her cloak.

A 5th-level spellcaster can gain a katroome as a familiar if she has the Improved Familiar feat, although the katroome usually believes that the caster is the true familiar.



NUKKEFEEN

This eerie creature resembles a human with oddly segmented limbs, waxen skin, and doll-like eyes.

NUKKEFEEN

CR 1



N Medium fey

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 14 (4d6)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

DR 2/cold iron

Weaknesses blind

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +5 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged dagger +5 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks improvised weaponry, sneak attack +1d6, steal eyesight

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

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

Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Bluff +5, Disable Device +6, Disguise +5, Perception +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or family (3–4)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blind (Ex) A nukkefeen sees and senses exclusively through its blindsight ability, which is based on sound and movement—beyond 60 feet, the nukkefeen is considered blind. A deafened nukkefeen is effectively blinded as well. It is invulnerable to all sight-based effects and attacks, including gaze attacks.

Improvised Weaponry (Ex) A nukkefeen can use kitchen knives, scissors, shears, straight razors, and other sharp household objects of similar size as though they were daggers. A nukkefeen does not take any penalties for using such objects as improvised weapons.

Sneak Attack (Ex) Against a creature denied a Dexterity bonus to its AC, a nukkefeen's attacks deal extra damage. This ability functions like the rogue's class feature of the same name.

Steal Eyesight (Su) Once per day as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a nukkefeen can steal the eyesight of any humanoid or animal that can see within 30 feet.

The target must succeed at a DC 14 Will saving throw or become blinded for 1d4 hours. During this time, the nukkefeen loses all the benefits and drawbacks of blindness and blindsight, and it gains the target creature's low-light vision and darkvision abilities, if any. If the nukkefeen dies while using the eyesight of a creature, the affected creature immediately regains its eyesight. If the affected creature dies before the duration ends, the duration of the nukkefeen's stolen eyesight is instead extended to 24 hours. This is a curse effect. The save DC is Wisdom-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Many scholars posit that nukkefeens originated as experiments of a powerful First World creature or creatures, and perhaps were intended to serve as assistants or researchers. Some have even tied these creatures to norms' workshop-like lairs, positing that they may have originally acted as servants of those prescient beings. Nukkefeens' eyes are glazed and unnatural, and though they are quite limber, their knocked knees make their gait seem uneven and stiff. Most nukkefeens resemble human men or women, though many appear androgynous.

Nukkefeens have a peculiar sense of morality. For example, most of them loathe weapons and violence, but think that harming unpleasant people or animals with scissors or similar objects is a way to "fix" them. They are not inherently malicious, though they are obsessed with old, abandoned buildings where great tragedies have occurred. They are likely to settle in abandoned homes, which they take care of in their own peculiar way.



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1:
A FOUL BREED

CHAPTER 2:
WHAT LURKS IN
THE WOODS

CHAPTER 3:
THE FESTERING BLOT

APPENDIX 1:
NPCS

APPENDIX 2:
BESTIARY

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts, creatures, characters, stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying

or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content You Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors: Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Iron Cobra from the Tome of Horrors Complete © 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author: Scott Greene, based on original material by Philip Masters.

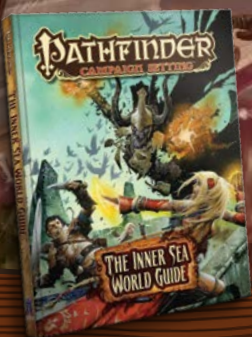
Mite from the Tome of Horrors Complete © 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author: Scott Greene, based on original material by Ian Livingstone and Mark Barnes.

Yellow Musk Creeper from the Tome of Horrors Complete © 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author: Scott Greene, based on original material by Albie Fiore.

Pathfinder Module: Gallows of Madness © 2016, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Benjamin Bruck, Mikko Kallio, and Mike Kimmel.

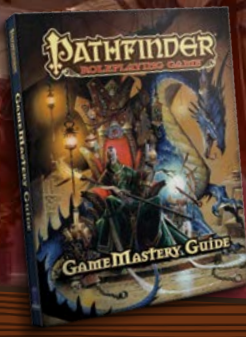
BRING YOUR GAME TO LIFE!

PATHFINDER MODULE



THE INNER SEA WORLD GUIDE

Discover the world of Golarion, the official campaign setting of the Pathfinder RPG, including the complex history and politics of Isger.



GAME MASTERY GUIDE

Learn invaluable tips for all Game Masters, from the nuts and bolts of running a session to the greater challenge of crafting storylines.



STRATEGY GUIDE

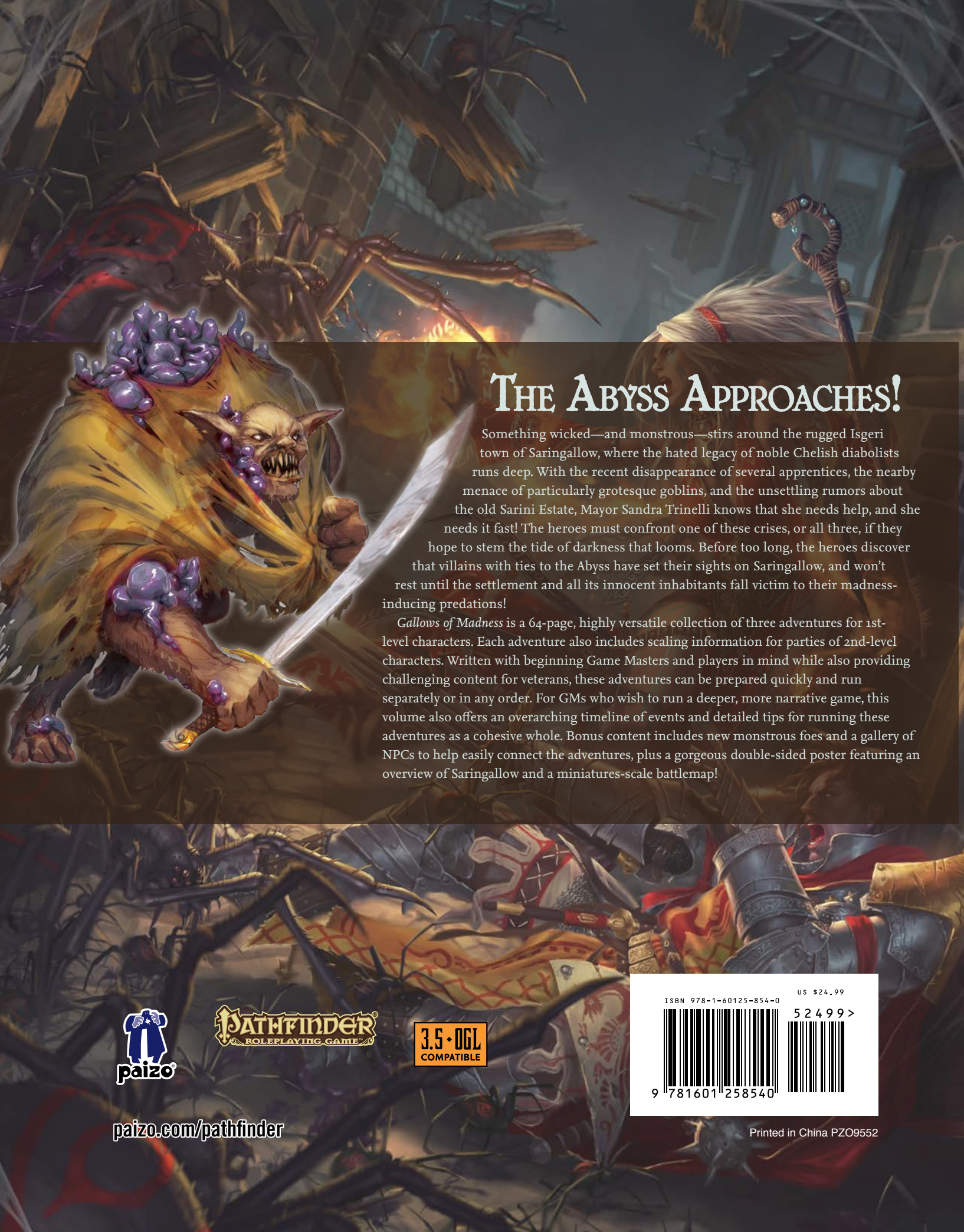
When you're looking for the perfect way to customize your character, this tome is a superb advisor for beginners and veterans alike.



BESTIARY BOX

Your battles can roar into being with this collection of pawns, each with a full-color image of a monster from the Pathfinder Bestiary.





THE ABYSS APPROACHES!

Something wicked—and monstrous—stirs around the rugged Isergi town of Saringallow, where the hated legacy of noble Chelish diabolists runs deep. With the recent disappearance of several apprentices, the nearby menace of particularly grotesque goblins, and the unsettling rumors about the old Sarini Estate, Mayor Sandra Trinelli knows that she needs help, and she needs it fast! The heroes must confront one of these crises, or all three, if they hope to stem the tide of darkness that looms. Before too long, the heroes discover that villains with ties to the Abyss have set their sights on Saringallow, and won't rest until the settlement and all its innocent inhabitants fall victim to their madness-inducing predations!

Gallows of Madness is a 64-page, highly versatile collection of three adventures for 1st-level characters. Each adventure also includes scaling information for parties of 2nd-level characters. Written with beginning Game Masters and players in mind while also providing challenging content for veterans, these adventures can be prepared quickly and run separately or in any order. For GMs who wish to run a deeper, more narrative game, this volume also offers an overarching timeline of events and detailed tips for running these adventures as a cohesive whole. Bonus content includes new monstrous foes and a gallery of NPCs to help easily connect the adventures, plus a gorgeous double-sided poster featuring an overview of Saringallow and a miniatures-scale battlemat!



ISBN 978-1-60125-854-0

US \$24.99



9 781601 258540

5 2 4 9 9 >

paizo.com/pathfinder

Printed in China PZO9552