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TEARS AT BITTER MANOR

A PATHFINDER RPG ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 5 BY STEVEN HELT

GROUND FLOOR



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

SECOND FLOOR



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

THIRD FLOOR



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

BASEMENT



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

L. TRISTEZA HOUSE

PATHFINDER MODULE™

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ON THE COVER



Kieran Yanner shows us exactly why you should always bring a gauntlet to a fistfight—especially when your opponents are undead!



TEARS AT BITTER MANOR

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REFERENCE

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

<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Horsemen of the Apocalypse</i> ,	BOTD3
<i>Bestiary</i>	B1	<i>Book of the Damned, Vol. 3</i>	
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM



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TEARS AT BITTER MANOR

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Tears at Bitter Manor is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 5** The PCs begin the adventure at 5th level.
- 6** The PCs should reach 6th level as they begin Chapter 2. They will likely need to face some of the optional encounters in Hope's Hollow.
- 7** The PCs should be 7th level by the time they reach the front door of Tristeza House.
- 8** The PCs should be 8th level before facing Anobaith.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

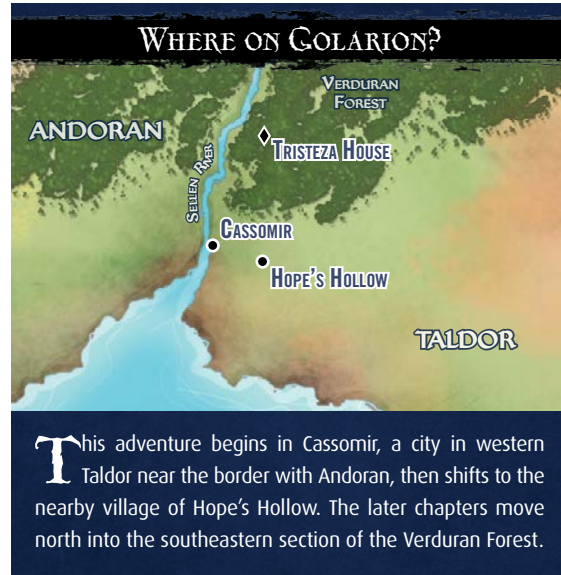
In *Tears at Bitter Manor*, a retired cadre of lifelong adventurers called the Golden Watch meets every year to embark on the group's latest "last quest." As they prepare for their annual reunion in Cassomir, one of them disappears amid signs of foul play. The remaining members ask the PCs to locate and retrieve their alchemist friend before their celebration becomes a wake. The alchemist has, in fact, betrayed the rest of the Watch, and intends to trap them so a cruel daemon can feed off their suffering. His price? Eternal youth. The PCs travel through bleak stretches of the Verduran Forest to an old manor house where the alchemist carries out his experiments and the fiend chronicles the people she brings to ruin.

TEARS AT BITTER MANOR QUESTS

Tears at Bitter Manor can be a deadly adventure, so the PCs need quests to push them above their normal advancement. Details for these quests appear in the adventure's text, and are summarized below. You can pass out quest cards from *Pathfinder Cards: Tears at Bitter Manor Campaign Cards* to players as they learn of quests, so they can keep track of their accomplishments.

Quests marked with an asterisk (*) are optional bonus quests not tied directly to the adventure's story.

1. **Finding Flinn:** *Acquired:* Adventure's start. *Quest:* Investigate the disappearance of Taergan Flinn. *Reward:* 400 XP.
2. **Visiting Dern Fosimuth:** *Acquired:* Adventure's start. *Quest:* Verify Dern Fosimuth's condition at Mother's Care Home for Invalids. *Reward:* 400 XP.
3. **Child of the Wildwood*:** *Acquired:* Brother Zaganos. *Quest:* Find the missing Wildwood Order druid and rescue him if he's in danger. *Reward:* 800 XP, and the druid will cure each PC of poison and disease once.
4. **Finding Strange Beasts*:** *Acquired:* Brother Zaganos. *Quest:* Provide the druids of the Wildwood Order with trophies or descriptions of up to three new creatures encountered in Chapter 2: the deadfall dweller, delgeth, and tizheruk. *Reward:* 400 XP per creature, and Zaganos convinces Governor Bozbeyli to offer the PCs Tristeza House.
5. **A Slain Father's Peace*:** *Acquired:* Cassomiri Constabulary. *Quest:* Destroy the haunt at area D. *Reward:* 800 XP and 100 gp, and the constabulary is patient with the PCs' investigation.
6. **Harpy Help*:** *Acquired:* Merchant Board. *Quest:* Slay the harpies and return the lost cargo found in their lair. *Reward:* 1,200 XP, plus 200 gp in nonmagical jewelry per PC and a *bag of holding* (type IV).
7. **Arboreal Arachnids:** *Acquired:* Blackrock Headquarters. *Quest:* Destroy the giant black widow and her fiendish ettercap keeper. *Reward:* 1,200 XP and the Blackrock Adventuring Company gives the PCs 250 gp.
8. **Purging the Cannibals:** *Acquired:* Blackrock Headquarters. *Quest:* Eliminate the cannibals and their camps. *Reward:* 600 XP and 150 gp per camp.
9. **No One Else:** *Acquired:* Mother's Care Home. *Quest:* Destroy the monsters before they murder another patient. *Reward:* 2,400 XP, plus 200 gp each.
10. **Investigating Mother's Care:** *Acquired:* Dern Fosimuth. *Quest:* Expose the truth of Mother's Care Home. *Reward:* 1,200 XP, plus two vials of *silversheen*, two *ioun torches*, and a *scroll of cure moderate wounds*.
11. **Good for the Soul:** *Acquired:* Dern Fosimuth. *Quest:* Whether by skill or spell, draw a confession out of Taergan Flinn. *Reward:* 2,400 XP.
12. **With this Ring*:** *Acquired:* Area I10. *Quest:* Acquire the ring from Gill's scorned fiancée. *Reward:* 1,200 XP and the 200 gp ring.



13. **Settling the Sibling Rivalry*:** *Acquired:* Hope's Hollow (see page 52). *Quest:* Convince the siblings to settle their differences in court. *Reward:* 800 XP.
14. **Finding the Path:** *Acquired:* End of Chapter 1. *Quest:* Discover clues that point to Crandel and Tulles's recent presence. *Reward:* 400 XP each time.
15. **House of Death:** *Acquired:* End of Chapter 1. *Quest:* Enter Tristeza House. *Reward:* 1,200 XP per PC.
16. **Rescuing the Elder Heroes:** *Acquired:* End of Chapter 1. *Quest:* Rescue Crandel and Tulles from the trap they're walking into. *Reward:* 2,400 XP.
17. **The Lost Rangers*:** *Acquired:* End of Chapter 1. *Quest:* Find the missing Cassomiri rangers. *Reward:* 1,200 XP and Bozbeyli shows the PCs Cassomir's hospitality.
18. **Fiendish Trophies:** *Acquired:* End of Chapter 1. *Quest:* Destroy the fiend wearing a *quicksand cloak*. Kill other fiends for further rewards. *Reward:* 1,600 XP and 1,000 gp, plus 300 gp for each other daemonic trophy.
19. **The Record of Iniquity:** *Acquired:* End of Chapter 1. *Quest:* Return Anobaith's Tapestry of Betrayals to Cassomir. *Reward:* 1,600 XP, plus a +2 bonus on each PC's next save to resist magical compulsion.
20. **We Were Soldiers*:** *Acquired:* Chapter 2 rumors. *Quest:* Destroy the abandoned ones. *Reward:* 800 XP.
21. **Rest in Peace*:** *Acquired:* Chapter 2 rumors. *Quest:* Transport the remains of the fresh zombies to Cassomir for interment. *Reward:* 3,200 XP.
22. **The Fallen Priests*:** *Acquired:* Chapter 2 rumors. *Quest:* Destroy the huecuvas and consecrate their resting place. *Reward:* 1,200 XP.
23. **The Fatal Feast*:** *Acquired:* Tristeza House sidebar on page 23. *Quest:* Destroy the haunt and put Tristeza's previous owners to rest. *Reward:* 1,600 XP.
24. **The End of Anobaith:** *Acquired:* The mothman in area L13. *Quest:* Destroy the erodaemon forever. *Reward:* 1,600 XP on acceptance, and 1,600 XP on completion.



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CHAPTER 1

THE GOLDEN WATCH

For Taergan Flinn, nothing is more frustrating than growing old. In his prime, the half-elf was a brilliant alchemist and fearless adventurer, part of a band of traveling companions who amassed considerable wealth and experience together. When the time came for some of them to settle down, Flinn resisted. He proposed that the five friends keep their personal and professional relationship alive by meeting once per year for a challenging excursion. The group became known as the Golden Watch.

Over time, even this revival failed to sate the middle-aged alchemist's wanderlust. Moreover, with his ennui came other irritants—Flinn's body started to complain of the long decades of rugged life and long nights in the laboratory. He began to experience the rigors of aging his human friends had endured for years, for the first time

facing a foe he felt helpless against. In the year between each reunion with the Golden Watch, he searched for the secret of magically restored youth, enlisting apprentices from Cassomir to assist in researching and documenting his discoveries. Finding little success from his own efforts, and unwilling to forever rely on purchasing solutions from expensive vendors, he brooded on what measures he could take to slow the aging process.

Enter the fiend Anobaith, an erodaemon—a creature devoted to severing the bonds between friends or families. For centuries, the erodaemon has delivered broken souls to Abaddon by arranging for elaborate and humiliating betrayals to crush the will of her ill-fated marks. Active in the northern reaches of Taldor since the days of the First Army of Exploration, Anobaith searches constantly



for new venues and victims. Having acquired a mansion in the woods north of Flinn's hometown, she approached the aging alchemist with a macabre offer: she would give him the secret of restoring his own youth in exchange for him betraying his former adventuring companions and allowing her to slowly kill them. At first, Flinn scoffed at the idea, insisting the restoration of his youth was certainly not worth the price of sacrificing his friends, but Anobaith patiently plied her unholy gifts, seducing the alchemist with her wilting kiss and reminding him of the passions of youth. When the oldest human in the Golden Watch, the wizard Rhoma Bissel, died peacefully—and in Flinn's eyes, feebly—her death shook his resolve. He could no longer deny the ache in his bones and the pang for his lost youth. Looking past the friends and family he knew at the wizard's wake, Flinn saw the daemon waiting for him. He finally accepted her offer.

For nearly a year, Flinn has plotted the events that unfold in *Tears at Bitter Manor*. Knowing his friends would risk their lives to save him, he stages his own disappearance, with the ultimate goal of luring his former companions to Anobaith's lair at Tristeza House. In exchange for long life and vitality, he will give his daemon benefactor the shattered faith of his lifelong friends, allowing them to die at her hands—broken-hearted, despairing, and alone, as a result of his treachery.

Even as the PCs discover the presence of Anobaith's daemon influence, uncovering one story of death by heartbreak after another on Cassomir's busy streets, Flinn and his two apprentices work nonstop in Tristeza House's basement, desperate to solve the formula Flinn needs to regain his youth. While Flinn has no intention of saving his friends from Anobaith, he longs to be free of her and fears that she'll renege on her offer to keep him young. By the end of the first chapter of *Tears at Bitter Manor*, while the PCs are investigating Mother's Care Home for Invalids, Flinn uses a *scroll of sending* to lure his friends to the trapped and guarded manor house. Amid the other requests made by bereaved locals, the party must chase the elderly couple deep into the woods and brave a house of evil and horror to save them from Flinn's betrayal.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs could get involved in the events of *Tears at Bitter Manor* through one of several possible approaches. The Golden Watch could hire them as simple mercenaries, or the Pathfinder Society could ask the PCs to safeguard the respected old-timers. In their prime, the members of the Golden Watch might have saved one of the PCs, and one might now ask for a favor in return. The PCs could be friends, relatives, or associates of the Golden Watch, or owe them a significant favor. With some adaptation, the PCs could actually *be* members (or former members) of the Golden Watch, desperate to save their missing friend right up to (and even during) the final confrontation.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR THIS ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, you'll need at least the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*. Rules for several encounters use monster descriptions from *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*. Rules for these monsters can be found in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/prd. The adventure features the daemons of Abaddon, so *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Book of the Damned, Vol. 3* will be particularly helpful. You can run this adventure without *Book of the Damned, Vol. 3*, as this module contains the full statistics for those monsters, but the full flavor and abilities of those monsters (namely the erodaemon and venedaemon) are detailed in that book. More about the city of Cassomir can be found in *Pathfinder Chronicles: Cities of Golarion*.

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW ENEMIES

The adventure begins in the Taldan city of Cassomir, at an expensive inn called The Sword Point, located near the northwest corner of the Old Cassomir district. Two members of the Golden Watch are staying here until their annual reunion ends in a week's time. These human veterans are Verus "Igneous" Crandel, known in his day for smiting foes with his *flaming warhammer*, and his wife Branda Tuller, who chose her own wedding rings by stealing them from the mausoleum of a corrupt Galtan noble and then promptly proposed to her now-husband Igneous after their adventure concluded. The two grow concerned that their friend Taergan Flinn has yet to appear. They ask the PCs to visit Flinn's townhouse to check on him, and also to visit a fourth member of the group, Dern Fosimuth, who has been committed to an invalid home since last year. The two strongly suspect that someone means harm to the remaining members of the Golden Watch and doubt their ability to solve the mystery themselves.

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs.

An invitation brings summons to The Sword Point, a pricey inn in the Old Cassomir district. Waiting there are two older humans: a caramel-skinned man with strong hands and a pale, thin woman with neatly piled platinum hair. After a long, assessing stare, the elderly woman speaks.

"We are grateful that you came. This is my husband and long-time comrade, Verus Crandel—we called him "Igneous" in our day—and I am Branda Tuller. The two of us were once adventurers like you, and we, along with a few of our friends, have had more than our share of excitement in our youth."

She looks to her companion, who sits up to take a sip of ale, wiping his gray mustache with an embroidered cloth. He says in a weathered voice, "Each year about this time, the remaining four of us gather together in this city to remember

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our fallen friend, Rhoma Bissel, and to lend our experience to a cause worth fighting for. We can still face bullies and brigands and such, but my hammer gets heavier every time I lift it. I've meant for each of our last three ventures to be the end, but Branda and I still travel here every year to meet up with Dern Fosimuth and Taergan Flinn and to share a few stories with younger travelers like yourselves."

He pauses for a long second before he continues. Worry hangs heavy in the air as he clears his throat.

"Our two friends have not made their appearance yet this year. We've learned that one, Dern Fosimuth, is laid up in a place called Mother's Care Home for Invalids, in nearby Hope's Hollow. The other one is more curious—Taergan Flinn is a half-elf, so he's a bit more active and nimble than the rest of us. And he never really took to retirement, so this gathering started as his idea. It worries us that he hasn't shown, especially as we've made our share of enemies over the years. We think it's best we stay here, should Taergan arrive, but ask that you would check his home for us just in case—and bring word back of Dern, as well."

Branda Tulles takes over from there. "We've talked about mentoring a few younger pioneers, maybe even handing down a few secrets we never quite explored. We'd be willing to lend you our company and more if you'd be good enough to check on our two friends. If they need help, we'd rather someone younger and up to a challenge discover them. Once we know they're safe, we'll look in on them ourselves."

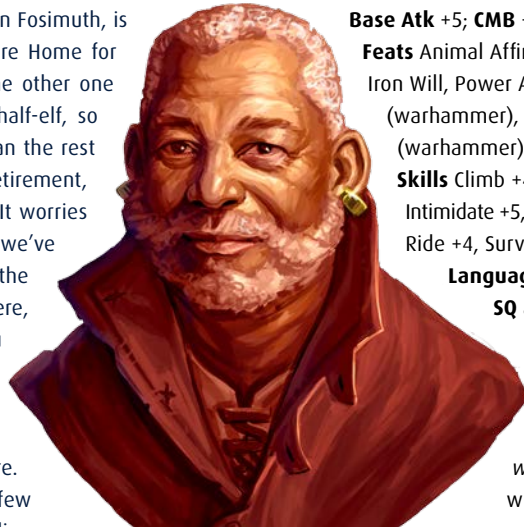
The retired adventurers promise to reward each PC, upon safe delivery of Flinn, with coin and treasures from their personal stores. The veterans also offer their services as mentors or contacts for as long as they are able.

The pair offers a description of Flinn's townhouse in northern Threegates (area A). They also give brief directions to Hope's Hollow, an hour's ride along the eastern road through the Blackwood Swamp. As the party leaves, there's a forlorn look in the couple's eyes—seeing younger adventurers head off reminds them of their youth.

Quests: As a result of their conversation with Crandel and Tulles, the PCs gain the Finding Flinn and Visiting Dern Fosimuth quests.

VERUS "IGNEOUS" CRANDEL **CR 4**
XP 1,200
 Male old human fighter 5
 LN Medium humanoid (human)
Init -1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE
AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, -1 Dex, +1 shield)



VERUS "IGNEOUS" CRANDEL

hp 42 (5d10+10)
Fort +7, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5 (+1 vs. fear)
Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 flaming warhammer +9 (1d8+5/×3 plus 1d6 fire)
Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19-20)
Special Attacks weapon training (hammers +1)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 9, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 15
Feats Animal Affinity, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialization (warhammer)
Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Ride +4, Survival +6
Languages Common
SQ armor training 1
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** mwk breastplate, light steel shield, +1 flaming warhammer, light crossbow with 10 bolts

BRANDA TULLES **CR 4**
XP 1,200

Female old human rogue 5
 CG Medium humanoid (human)
Init +6; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE
AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge); +1 dodge vs. traps
hp 26 (5d8)
Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4
Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +6 (1d6-2/18-20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +6 (1d6/×3)
Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14
Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse
Skills Acrobatics +10, Appraise +6, Bluff +11, Climb +2, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +10, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +11
Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven
SQ rogue talents (combat trick, finesse rogue), trapfinding +2



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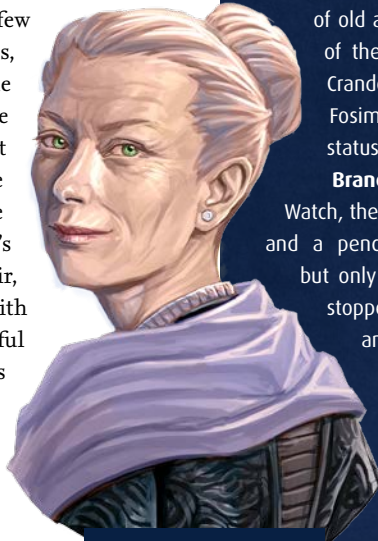
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Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds (2), acid; Other Gear* +1 studded leather, mwk rapier, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, sunrod (2), 10 gp

CASSOMIR LOCATIONS

The people of Cassomir have an odd tolerance for violent crime and strange disappearances. The town sits over a catacomb that leads deep into the tunnels of the Darklands, and sometimes suffers abductions by derros and other invasive events. A few districts have their local haunted sites, though none is more infamous than the ruins of Quickfall Abbey. Because the Cassomirites are hardy and somewhat inured to such troubles, they're quite responsive to adventurers who inquire about rumors and recent events. There's always news to gossip about in Cassomir, and charismatic PCs who interact with the right people might gain useful information—as well as several offers of employment.

The people and places described here are keyed to the map of Cassomir on page 8.



BRANDA TULLES

A. FLINN'S TOWNHOUSE

Located on the northeast side of Cassomir, Taergan Flinn's townhouse appears worthy of a lifelong adventurer. Large, clear windows overlook manicured bushes, presenting a posh face to the front drive. A small building holding servants' quarters sits on the north side of the property.

The townhouse's second floor is constructed of wood, and has many windows. The building's southern wing appears to house a laboratory of some kind. The house is as quiet as the neighborhood surrounding it.

When Crandel and Tulles ask the PCs to inquire about Flinn's status, they are unaware he has already staged his own kidnapping and left to set up his alchemical workshop at Tristeza House (area L) in the Verduran Forest. His townhouse provides subtle clues as to the nature of his gambit, including two victims of a failed experiment and vile daemons left to dispatch trespassers.

A1. Foyer

The townhouse's front door is closed but unlocked. Any knocking by the PCs goes unanswered, but anyone who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check hears a faint, rhythmic bumping sound coming from upstairs.

The foyer is visible from the front windows. The expensive furniture and painted wooden doors of this room are undisturbed.

MEMBERS OF THE GOLDEN WATCH

Some adventuring parties rotate through members, but not the Golden Watch. They started out as five close friends who sought lives of adventure. They're now far past their prime—with the exception of Taergan Flinn, who aged more slowly because of his half-elven blood. They meet up for annual adventures (on a small scale), and have done so since they all settled down and gave up the adventuring life. Rhoma Bissel, their wizard, died of old age a few months ago, but four members of the Golden Watch remain: Verus "Igneous" Crandel, Branda Tulles, Taergan Flinn, and Dern Fosimuth. The members and their current statuses are described below.

Branda Tulles: The public face of the Golden Watch, the Branda has always had a way with words and a penchant for snagging precious treasures—but only if they belong to evil people. After she stopped adventuring, she invested her gold well and has been free to do what she pleases ever since. She rents a posh penthouse in Absalom, and has made waves among higher social circles. As Igneous is far less social, the couple takes frequent trips back to Andoran.

Dern Fosimuth: After a serious accident (engineered by Taergan Flinn), the party's human cleric hasn't been able to walk, so Taergan committed to him a care home in Hope's Hollow. Once known as a trustworthy and pious ally—one with a powerful intelligent scimitar named *Clarity*—he's now a shadow of his former self, and is kept in a drugged state at the home.

Rhoma Bissel: The human wizard Rhoma, the oldest member of the Golden Watch, was the first of the group to die. She had settled into a comfortable life and died peacefully, surrounded by her family, inside the extensive library that was her most cherished place.

Taergan Flinn: This half-elf alchemist appears to be missing at the start of the adventure, but has actually staged his own kidnapping to betray his friends. He searches for a way to gain eternal youth, and fell in with the erodaemon Anobaith, swayed by her promises to help him secure it.

Verus "Igneous" Crandel: Brawny and strong-willed, Verus is reliable as a rock. He owns a small ranch in southern Andoran that he bought with treasure he gained adventuring. Igneous is married to Branda Tulles, and the two split their time between the ranch and Absalom.

A2. Dining and Game Room

This room features a large oval dining table, a full-sized billiards table, and three comfortable, padded chairs. A rack of expensive billiards sticks is attached to the east wall.





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A3. Kitchen

The aroma of cooked lamb hangs in the air, but otherwise the kitchen is unremarkable. A door in the east wall leads to a small patio with a fire pit, where food can also be prepared outside in warm weather. A short walkway to the north leads to the servants' quarters at A4.

A4. Servants' Quarters (CR 4)

Inside this small house two simple wooden doors close off small rooms. A small table and two rocking chairs fill the main room. Seated in the chairs are two emaciated, motionless figures. They appear to have been dead for several days.

Creatures: Flinn employs two servants who act as cooks, hosts, and cleaning crew—a brother and sister named Jorn and Milsa Meet. Unfortunately for these two, Flinn included them in an early and unsuccessful experiment on preventing aging. They instead aged rapidly, until Flinn preserved them with *unguent of timelessness* and reanimated them as juju zombies. Since then, they have made excellent servants, working tirelessly and losing none of their previous domestic skills. The two zombies have had no chores the last few days since Flinn left for Tristeza House; Flinn instead ordered them to sit motionlessly unless someone attacks them, moves to the bedroom doors, or leaves the quarters to go back into the townhouse. If the PCs make any significant noise while on the second floor, the Meets climb the outside of the house and enter through one of the second-story windows.

JORN AND MILSA MEET CR 2

XP 600 each

Human juju zombie expert 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 291)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 22 each (3d8+9)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/magic and slashing; **Immune** cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee slam +4 (1d6+3)

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Fleet, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Climb +16, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +9, Profession (cook) +7, Profession (steward) +7, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +7; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

Languages Common

Treasure: Each small bedroom contains a coffer with a few simple changes of clothes, one jar of *unguent of timelessness*, and 1 month's wages (a stamped silver bar worth 10 gp).

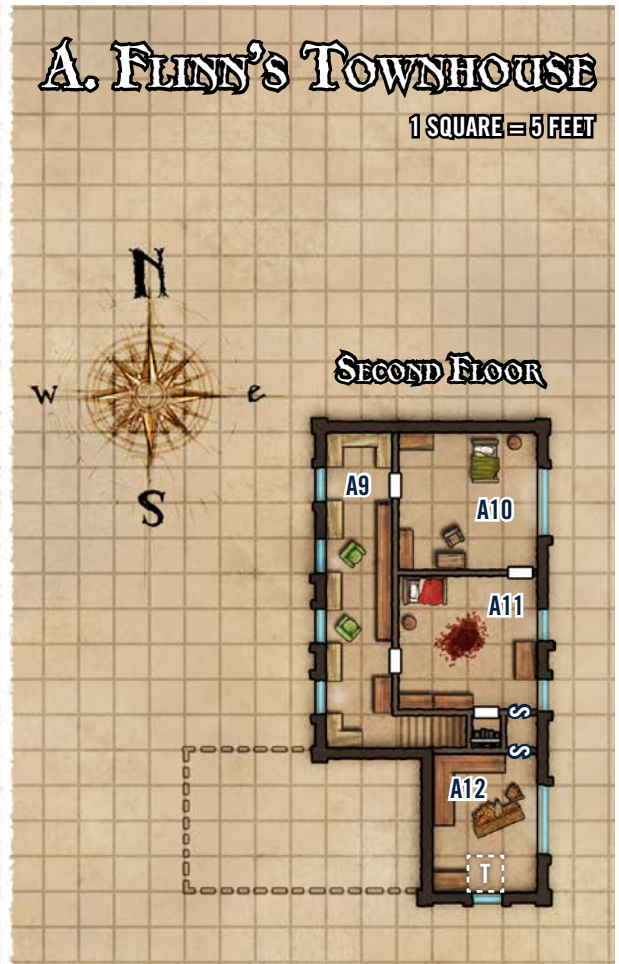
Story Award: Should the PCs report the death of the wait staff, reward them with an additional 250 XP. The characters also earn the understanding of the constabulary should they become involved in the other encounters around town.

A5. Sun Room

This room has a large bay window facing east, and is ideal for eating breakfast or reading in the sun during cold weather. A thin wooden panel wall separates this room from the museum (area A6). The wall folds into a nook in the west wall. A door leads to a patio outside, where a small table sits, decorated with several rare, colorful flowers.



MILSA MEET



A. FLINN'S TOWNHOUSE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

GROUND FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

A6. Museum (CR 5)

A tasteful menagerie of Flinn's travels and victories packs this large room. Paintings and memorabilia fill the perimeter, and a large glass display case with a prominent lock on its front lies in the room's center. Inside the case rest several rolled maps, a pair of worn leather journals, and a shining iron chalice. A fine painting of Flinn and his four adventuring friends hangs on the eastern wall, behind which a wooden staircase rises to the second floor.

Flinn has cataloged his adventures over the years in this small museum devoted to his travels. Alchemical discoveries, letters from other adventurers, a few paintings, and several archaeological artifacts adorn the room. A narrow staircase leads to the second floor. Featured prominently on the outside of the staircase is a painting of all five members of the Golden Watch (including the deceased wizard Rhoma Bissel), each holding a small fragment of a large golden watch. It's clear from the painting that Flinn appears much younger than the rest of his friends.

Traps: An alchemical trap protects the large display case. No harm comes from touching the glass or wood

outside the display, but opening the case without the correct key unleashes a pressurized batch of liquid blade mixed with a dose of blue whinnis poison.

LIQUID BLADE TRAP CR 5

XP 1,600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect Atk +15 melee (1d6+5/19-20 plus blue whinnis poison)

Treasure: Among old journals and obscure artifacts worth 200 gp, the glass case holds a *chalice of communal dweomer* (see page 54).

A7. Privy

The arrangement of carefully shaped bushes behind the townhouse offers privacy for those who use the narrow wooden outhouses found in either alcove.

A8. Alchemist's Laboratory (CR 4)

Bright windows line the exterior of this large laboratory, illuminating row after row of shelves stocked with chemical



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reagents, minerals and metals, and creature parts. A wooden attic door remains closed in the ceiling in the southeast corner; its dangling pull-string is perfectly still. A low partition separates a small office in the eastern third of the lab, and two stone tables take up space in the western part of the room. It's clear that multiple alchemists perform work here.

The office houses a number of records on ongoing experiments, but Flinn left no notes about his past few years' attempts to fight off the natural effects of aging.

Trap: The attic door pulls down, dropping a folding stair. Flinn uses the door to travel between floors while observing his apprentices. When staging his disappearance, Flinn trapped the door with dozens of burst jars (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 106). If the string attached to the attic door is pulled, the door opens easily under the jars' weight, dropping them down onto the floor below.

BURST JAR TRAP **CR 4**
XP 1,200
Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20
EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none
Effect One dozen burst jars fall and shatter (24 sonic damage and 1 round later the target is permanently deafened, Reflex DC 20 half and reduce the duration of deafness to 1d4 rounds); multiple targets (all targets within 5 feet take 12 points of sonic damage, Reflex DC 20 half)

Treasure: The lab contains every material component a practicing alchemist needs to mix extracts of 3rd level or lower, as well as two *potions of lesser age resistance* and 85 cp. The lab counts as a full alchemist's lab (*Ultimate Equipment* 76), and provides the equivalent of four alchemy crafting kits (*Ultimate Equipment* 76). The lab also contains notes sufficient for an alchemist to learn any extract in Flinn's statistics (see page 45).

A9. Library

The stairs open to a bookshelf-lined hallway punctuated by tall windows. Books on advanced mathematics, magical theory, history, anthropology, and alchemy fill the shelves, along with several volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*—including volumes 6 and 36. Two closed bedroom doors rest along the wall opposite the windows.

A10. Guest Room

Taergan Flinn has not had an overnight guest in some time, a fact evidenced by this tidy, dusty room.

A11. Master Bedroom

Flinn's private room has been turned over roughly. Signs of a struggle include a broken window in the south side of

the eastern wall, a displaced mattress, a broken chair, and a spatter of dried blood on the floor. On the south wall, a tall mirror appears to hang just off kilter. The same muffled thumping is louder here than elsewhere in the house.

The dried blood is indeed Flinn's. As part of his ruse, he scattered a vial in the middle of the floor several days ago. He hopes his former companions will come looking for him and make the discovery, driving them to follow him into the Verduran Forest. The large mirror is actually a secret door leading to Flinn's upstairs study. Characters inspecting the mirror notice immediately that it is ajar.

Treasure: Flinn took most of his vital supplies with him, but left behind a few useful alchemical products. The desk against the east wall has a locked drawer (Disable Device DC 20) holding 3 doses of itching powder, two liquid blades, and two draughts of *elixir of last will*.

A12. Flinn's Study (CR 5)

This large study has clearly been ransacked. Papers and inkwells have been thrown around the room. A large wooden cabinet lies on its back, its closed doors facing the ceiling. A window in the east wall has been broken out.

The west wall is a large tinted window overlooking a well-appointed alchemy lab. Something makes a loud thump from inside the fallen cabinet.

If the trap in area A8 wasn't triggered, several clay pots appear carefully piled on the study's floor.

Creatures: Three cacodaemons occasionally ricochet within the fallen cabinet, which Flinn locked them inside. They become still and invisible if anyone disturbs the cabinet, and fly out immediately once the doors are opened. The troublesome daemons then begin an attack pattern: flying in circles, charging in to bite, and then leaving again through a door or upstairs window, only to enter from another opening. The cacodaemons make frequent use of *invisibility* during the combat. If the opportunity arises, they attempt to bull rush an apparently weaker creature through a window or into the pile of clay pots (which leads to the PC falling to the laboratory below amid dozens of small explosions). Falling into the alchemist's lab below along with the burst jars counts as having set off the trap described in area A8, except that the character takes a -2 penalty on her saving throw.

CACODAEMONS (3) **CR 2**
XP 600 each
hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 64)

The presence of the cacodaemons might provide a clue about Flinn's alliance with a more powerful daemon, but the creatures make no conversation or threats. They cackle



and curse, continuously harassing the PCs until one is killed, at which point the other cacodaemons become invisible and flee into Cassomir to stalk its citizens instead.

Development: The clay burst jars are left to trap the door against those entering from the lab (area A8). There's no danger in moving them manually. Flinn created the signs of struggle here to provide evidence to substantiate his disappearance for when his allies receive the ransom letter (see The Sword Point, Again on page 19). He also left the cacodaemons to make his "captors" seem like a sizable threat.

Story Award: For exploring the second level of Flinn's townhouse, award the PCs an additional 400 XP.

B. BROTHER ZAGANOS

Most of the houses near the east gate are fairly well appointed. Several of them in the southeast portion of Abbey Green, however, have a simpler, earthy appearance. The residents here cure their own meat and grow their own produce, living in a way remarkably different from the spoiled lifestyles of those living in the heart of the city.

One of these houses belongs to **Brother Zaganos** (N male human druid 7), an initiate of the Wildwood Lodge. He represents the interests of the natural world to the authorities in Cassomir, who in turn need a supply of the Verduran Forest's famed blackwood.

Zaganos generally keeps to himself and his immediate neighbors, whom he tries to influence toward his beliefs. Of late, reports of unusual monsters in the Verduran Forest and a change in the natural balance of flora and fauna have worried him. If asked about the forest, he acknowledges that the wood has always been dangerous, with great beasts and capricious fey creatures, but says he believes it's even more so now. Zaganos further explains that communication between him and some of his brethren has been inconsistent in recent weeks. If the PCs reveal their interest in going into the forest, Zaganos asks that if they witness an abundance of dangerous beasts or members of his order in peril, they take care of the problem; in turn, he promises to use his political connections to reward them. He tells them to be on the lookout for a few strange beasts—such as a creature that appears to be made of dead trees, a charred elk, and a water serpent—that have been reported but not killed or captured, and asks that if the PCs slay any of these creatures, they bring back trophies.

Quests: The PCs gain the Child of the Wildwood and Finding Strange Beasts quests after speaking with Brother Zaganos.

C. CONSTABULARY

Nestled in Old Cassomir, the constabulary is a gray, weathered building that's among the oldest in the city.

Though the neighborhoods near the citadel are quiet, Cassomir maintains a large force to police its less savory regions and make quick examples of troublemakers.

The Chief Constable is **Roani Cheliff** (LN human female fighter 6), a polite woman who understands the city's politics and enforces the law with unbridled favoritism toward the wealthy and highborn. Lowborn criminals receive quick, severe punishment for their crimes, while Cheliff ensures that those criminals with influence are merely placed under house arrest and given everything they need.

Of late, Cheliff has had to work harder to maintain peace in Cassomir. Numerous high-profile complaints require her immediate attention, and the rabble are as miserable and undisciplined as ever. She's grateful for any help the PCs can offer, so if they report Flinn's disappearance, she asks them to investigate and offers them a reward for reporting their findings to her. She offers to increase the reward if the PCs can resolve the issue quickly and quietly.

Chief Constable Cheliff is also aware of a few mysteries in Cassomir the PCs might be able to help explain. If the PCs are arrested because of the haunt at area D, Cheliff confides that Swift Prison holds nearly a half-dozen folks arrested for the same crime in the same location. For months, she's been looking for a solution to the problem.

"The first assault occurred in that square nearly six months ago. Since then, it happens every few weeks. Someone claims they saw an argument that riled up bitter emotions. Then they attacked whoever they were with. Different folks, but always in that square."

If the PCs ask about the scene replayed by the haunt, Cheliff informs them the original criminal, who stabbed his father to death, still sits at Swift Prison (area G) until the authorities can sort through what's happening in their town. Cheliff has the original knife from the attack locked up in the constabulary.

Quest: The PCs gain the A Slay Father's Peace quest, which involves destroying the haunt.

D. SELFISH SON (CR 5)

Anobaith's games have begun to influence the normally stalwart people of Cassomir. If the PCs return to the Old Cassomir district to report their findings to Chief Constable Cheliff, they encounter a haunt. Six months ago, Riger Mann stabbed his father to death after demanding an early inheritance. This crime was so infused with emotion that the scene replays itself nightly at this exact location, infusing that emotion into those who pass by.

SELFISH SON	CR 5
XP 1,600	
NE haunt (20-ft.-by-20-ft. intersection)	



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NEW MONSTERS**Caster Level** 2nd**Notice** Perception DC 21 (to hear jingling coins and footsteps increasing in volume)**hp** 4; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day**Effect** When this haunt is triggered, an older man and a younger man appear. The younger one snatches a bag of coins from his elder and turns his back. As he does so, the older man pursues him, shouting, "Son, if you hate me so much, why don't you just kill me already!" The image of the young man turns on his father, knife in hand, and stabs him. As the scene fades, the older man screams, at which point the triggering PC is targeted by a *murderous command* (Will DC 11 negates).**Destruction** The body of Tolger Mann is buried at the cemetery outside Tristeza House, his former home (see Chapter 3). Burying the dagger used to kill Tolger at his gravesite (area **K2**) permanently destroys the haunt.**Development:** Old Cassomir is well guarded by the constabulary, which is quartered nearby, so a public attack warrants the constables' intervention. Riger, the murderous son, had demanded his share of his father's estate so he could elope with a recent lover—the daemon Anobaith in disguise—and murdered his father when Tolger refused him. Riger now sits alone in a cell in Swift Prison, waiting (in vain) for his lover to visit him. Chief Constable Cheliff keeps the dagger used to commit the crime under lock and key at the Constabulary (area **C**).**Story Award:** If the PCs permanently destroy the haunt, award them 800 XP, and Chief Constable Cheliff rewards them with 100 gp. In addition, Cheliff acknowledges the unusual events the PCs are involved in, and she promises to be patient with developments as long as the PCs don't make trouble for the city.

E. MERCHANT BOARD

A flat wooden board sits on stilts in the square adjoining the Abbey Green, Old Cassomir, and Threegates regions of town. Nailed to the board are several broadsheets—announcements of laborers seeking work, rewards for lost pets or missing children, and sketches of wanted criminals.

A guild member named **Verith Telan** (N female human expert 5) stands watch over the merchant board, answering questions or redirecting complaints to the correct vendors. Verith, a jeweler by trade, is a font of information about current events in the city. As a member of the Taldan Merchants' Guild, she knows much about the city's culture and commerce. A PC who strikes up a conversation with Verith during a Diplomacy check to gather information gains a +2 bonus on the check. This includes attempts to learn specifically about the Verduran Forest or Tristeza House, as the PCs transition to Chapter 2 of the adventure.

If the PCs analyze the board, one item of specific interest to Verith and several other merchants stands out: a flight of harpies has been attacking merchant ships coming to or from the Sellen River. The flying monsters have thus far evaded capture, despite inflicting thousands of gold pieces in losses on the merchants of Cassomir. Verith pulls down one of the broadsheets and offers to personally reward the PCs with a unique piece of jewelry that's "worthy of enchantment or could become an heirloom" if they slay the harpies and recover the stolen cargo. If the PCs agree, Verith loans them a *bag of holding* (type IV) to hold the recovered goods. She expects the bag to be returned to her, but the extra capacity can help the PCs deliver bodies or trophies as proof they've completed other assignments.

In truth, Verith's storefront is a prop for a smuggling operation. Verith has lost a significant investment in the missing mithral and gems taken by the harpies at area **J4**.

Quest: If they decide to take care of the harpies, the PCs gain the Harpy Help quest.

F. BLACKROCK COMPANY

This is one of the headquarters for Cassomir's Blackrock Company. The group is well known for delving the depths below Cassomir, but informed PCs might wish to inquire about the group's activities outside the city, particularly when the PCs learn about Tristeza House and the Verduran Forest.

The current liaison for Blackrock at this storefront is **Tiller Merseine** (LN human male ranger 4). Asked about recent events affecting the town, he explains that business under the city proceeds as usual, but the company has received an increasing number of requests to look for missing persons or investigate strange events in the Verduran Forest. Some of these requests are made by angry business associates, and others by anxious family members. Explorers have returned from ranging the forest with reports of unusual beasts invading camps or killing companions. Overwhelmed, Merseine offers a stipend if the PCs are able to provide any leads on cases he can pursue later.

Development: If the PCs accept Merseine's offer, he rummages through a few scraps of parchment, looking for things connected to the town or to the Verduran Forest. He asks the PCs whether they'd like to look into a nest of giant spiders led by a winged spider-creature or dispatch a tribe of forest cannibals—however, he'd prefer them to take care of both. Though he's tight-lipped about the details, Merseine is referring to legitimate complaints by Cassomir's residents who have spoken with survivors returning from the forest to the north. The PCs might earn additional rewards if they encounter the calibans at area **J5** or the giant spider lair at area **J7**.

Quests: The PCs can take on the Arboreal Arachnids quest, the Purging the Cannibals quest, or both.



G. SWIFT PRISON

Swift Prison is a large complex containing a heavily gated jailhouse surrounded by less secure apartments. Wealthy convicts live under house arrest, and common criminals suffer more severe punishment behind thick walls and in heavy chains.

The PCs might come to Swift Prison looking for Riger Mann, who murdered his father after being denied an early portion of his inheritance. His story closely resembles several who have experienced temptation and betrayal in Cassomir lately.

“I fell in love with a beautiful woman, but she was betrothed to another. She said unless I could repay the dowry given by her suitor, we could never be together. I asked my father for the money, but he said it would deplete my inheritance. Then I got really angry. He said, ‘Why don’t you just kill me then!’ I don’t know what came over me. All I could think about was freeing my love. She was perfect to me—everything I ever dreamed about, and almost more perfect than I could bear.

“But I see now I was wrong. I let my love for her triumph over the love I held for my father. His grave lies at an old estate in the woods called Tristeza House. I know I’ll never see his grave, but I wish I could make amends. The knife I killed him with was a family heirloom. Perhaps if you buried it with him, I could be certain it would never claim another life.”

If the PCs ask the name of the woman who entranced him, Riger struggles to remember, but draws a blank. He confesses that he can’t remember ever asking for it—as if he didn’t need to. He only remembers her beautiful face and manner of speaking, exactly as he’d always dreamed his perfect girl would be.

The blade Riger used to kill his father is stored with his other personal effects at the Constabulary (area C). Riger knows that someone paid for the burial while his father’s assets were held after the arrest. He doesn’t know who the benefactor was or what motivation caused him or her to pay for the burial. He just assumes it was one of his father’s friends among the wealthy of Cassomir.

HOPE’S HOLLOW

The east road out of Cassomir leads to a quiet agricultural town known as Hope’s Hollow (described in more detail beginning on page 50). Having agreed to verify the condition of Dern Fosimuth, the PCs must travel an hour outside town to a facility called Mother’s Care Home for Invalids (area I). Unfortunately, they find the hospice is as broken and dark as the rest of poor Hope’s Hollow.

The name on the sign outside this town has been vandalized with red paint to read, “Hope Is Hollow.” The town has suffered significant losses in population and productivity, as the trust its citizens once placed in one another has completely dissolved. Anobaith maintains

only a residual presence in the town, tasking her corruptors to push the town further over the brink. Four of her minions—two dark slayers and a pair of childlike *vulnudaemons*—reside at Mother’s Care Home.

Hope’s Hollow is a tough place for outsiders to visit. Storefronts are closed, duels break out in the street, and very few trust even their former lovers or clergy, much less inquisitive outsiders. Multiple encounters revolve around betrayal and loss, as the influence of Anobaith spreads and the desperate people of Hope’s Hollow add to her list of unholy trophies and soulless servitors.

The nursing home features sad stories of people wasting away alone, including a gradual decrease in visiting hours until no one could see their loved ones. As the PCs interview Dern Fosimuth, he tells them that Flinn has betrayed his allies, and gives them a small cache of gifts with which to exact his revenge.

H. Sorrow from Beyond (CR 7)

A dark-skinned young woman approaches, never breaking her stride or stare. As she nears, she appears to step through a lamppost as if it weren’t there. Her face is tear-stained and intensely sorrowful.

Creature: Some unfortunates suffer such heartbreak that their will to live drains away and their physical bodies fail regardless of health. Such is the case of the Qadiran merchant Sahba Khalitu. Sahba began new business relationships not long after she and her husband moved to Hope’s Hollow from Omash. Later, she broke a contract with suppliers from her hometown, leaving behind considerable debt. When her creditors murdered her husband, she was consumed by guilt. She ceased to work or do anything at all, allowing herself to die of starvation—and some would say heartbreak. Her spirit remains in a state of unrest, driven to feed from the living. Sahba attacks the PC with the highest Charisma score, and fights until destroyed.

EPHEMERAL ECHO

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 84 (see page 61)

I. MOTHER’S CARE HOME FOR INVALIDS

The sign outside of this stark hospice reads, “Mother’s Care Home for Invalids.” Once, Mother’s Care Home was well regarded for its healing and comfort, but the hospice’s new owner cares little for the well-being of his patients. Taergan Flinn purchased the business four months prior to the upcoming Golden Watch reunion. He engineered a crippling injury for his cleric friend, Dern Fosimuth, and then committed him to spend the rest of his days being “treated” by a dwindling staff of inattentive doctors and nurses at the home.



Today, Mother's Care serves only to break the spirits of its remaining patients. Few visitors are allowed, patients are kept in a medicated fog, and letters never seem to reach the lonely residents.

In Mother's Care Home, the PCs encounter the broken priest, who is willing to tell them of Flinn's plan. They could also encounter callous staff and withering patients. Two encounters within are considerably dangerous, as servants of Anobaith seek to silence the party and stop them from assisting Flinn's former friends.

Quest: When the PCs realize the dark slayers and vulnudaemons inhabit Mother's Care Home, they gain the No One Else quest.

11. The Watching Daughter

Outside the facility, a lone figure watches from across the street. Though the figure attempts to be stealthy, the PCs deduce with a successful DC 10 Perception check that the stalker is a middle-aged woman, and her attention is focused on the same facility the PCs must enter to check on Dern.

The woman's name is Mura Boles; she's been staying at an inn nearby while awaiting permission to speak to the staff about the ill treatment her father received here—so far, no one has been forthcoming. Desperate for sympathy, she relays her fears to the PCs if they approach, unprompted if they don't ask her.

"We brought my father here because the new owner promised good care. After he took over, everything was clean and bright, and Father seemed happy. Then the staff stopped allowing visitors. Instead of proper food, they served gruel and water. Father was old, but he wasn't sickly. Yet he passed on quickly after we brought him here."

She looks up with bitter tears welling in her eyes. "If you have loved ones here, get them out now! Don't let them suffer and die in there!"

12. Entry and Social Hall

The brief hallway beyond the front door of the care home is bleak and gloomy. A large meeting area with several tables is completely devoid of patients and family members. Two offices near the door feature small windows—the only light within the building appears to be from the exterior windows.

The doors to either office are unlocked, but the "staff" in the main office (area I3) make no move to approach the PCs unless the PCs begin to wander into the halls beyond.

Most of the rooms at Mother's Care are empty patient rooms, with stripped beds and bare, rickety tables. Rooms of note are described below.

13. Main Office (CR 6)

The main office is furnished with two disorganized desks and shelves covered in flat papers, quills, and inkwells. Two middle-aged administrators, a man and a woman, look at one another as if they're surprised to receive visitors.

The man stands and looks down his nose through a pair of spectacles, saying nothing.

The staff here consists of three human nurses, who remain at the home in order to keep up appearances, and two dark slayers posing as administrative staff. There are no longer any doctors at the facility, and the administrators fired the cook and cleaning staff. The slayers use magic and their mundane disguise kits to appear as if they belong there. Flinn has contracted them to stay here until the remaining members of the Golden Watch die at his hand. The human nurses passively work through their days and pay little attention to what's happening around them. Beyond observing that the center seems to have lowered its standards for care, they can tell the PCs little.

Creatures: Flinn's slayers occupy the offices of Mother's Care so they can maintain the ruse of being administrators until Flinn fulfills his bargain with Anobaith. When visitors or potential customers approach the facility, the dark slayers use their *wands of alter self* to assume Medium size and a human appearance, and then frighten or entertain newcomers as they see fit. They are aware that Flinn owns the facility, and also that Dern Fosimuth is constantly drugged to keep him from interfering with Flinn's plans. When they interact with visitors, they're awkward and impatient. Once they determine the PCs pose a threat, they claim they must check on other patients, whereupon they use their *death knell* ability to gain power and then ambush the PCs. The dark slayers fight to the death.

DARK SLAYERS (2)

CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 75*); statistics modified by *alter self*

Size Medium

Melee mwk kukri +8 (1d4/18-20)

Str 11

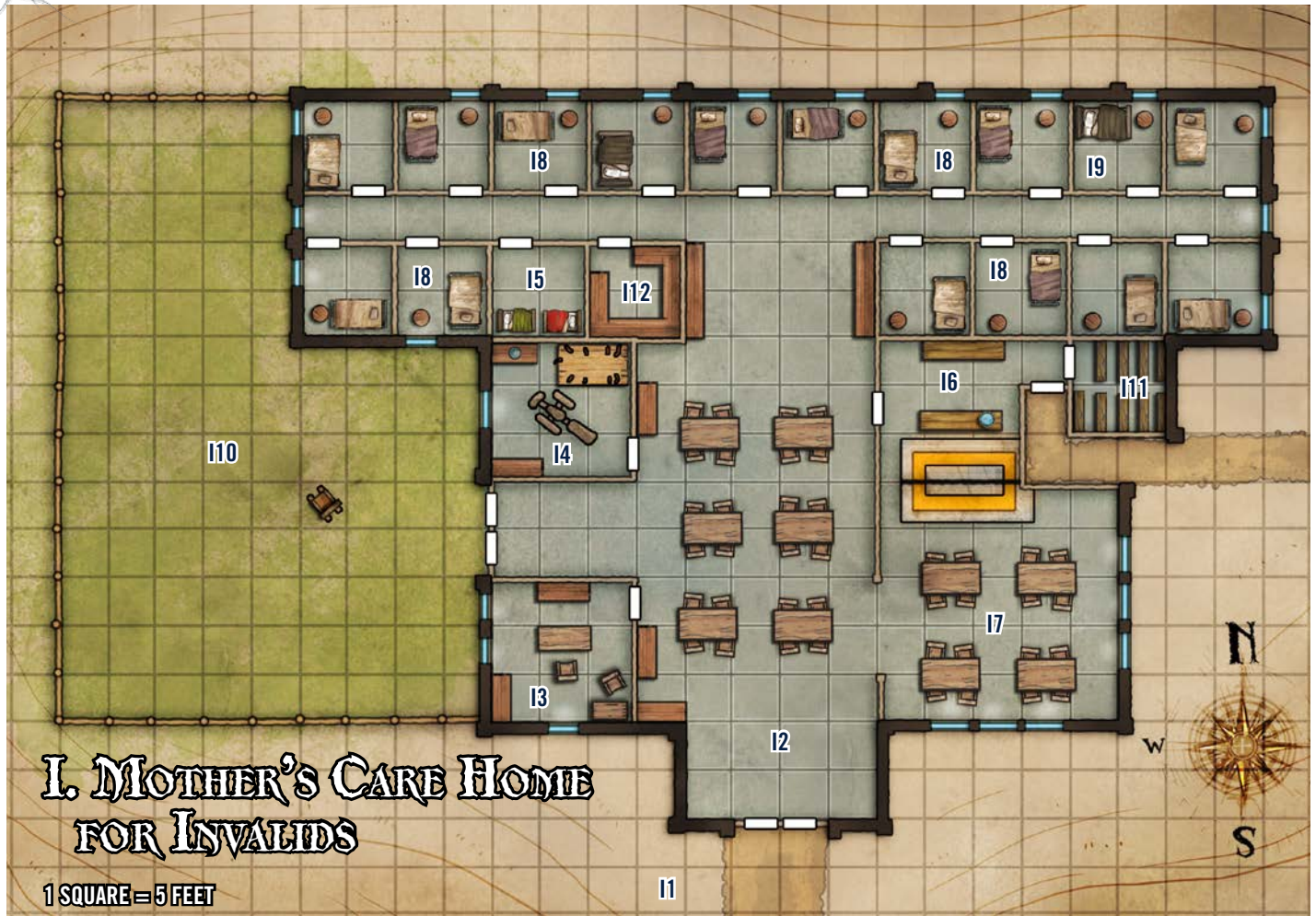
CMB +3, CMD 17

Skills Disguise +12

Treasure: Each dark slayer has a disguise kit, a *wand of alter self* with 12 charges, and 75 gp.

14. Nursing Station

This small office holds a bed and chair for patient examination and treatment that can't be performed in a patient's room. The wall holds enough sconces to



I. MOTHER'S CARE HOME FOR INVALIDS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

provide bright light, though none are currently lit. A few locked cabinets (Disable Device DC 20) contain samples of most alchemical remedies appropriate for medical care. The statistics for many of these items can be found in *Ultimate Equipment*.

First Cabinet: Basic medical supplies (such as bandages, cotton balls, and syringes), 4 doses of alchemist's kindness (*Ultimate Equipment* 183), and 2 doses of wismuth salix (*Ultimate Equipment* 101).

Second Cabinet: Three doses of meditation tea, 1 dose of padzahr (*Ultimate Equipment* 100), 12 doses of indigo dreams poison (*Ultimate Equipment* 111), two *potions of cure light wounds*, and one *potion of lesser restoration*.

Third Cabinet: One dose of antiplague, 1 dose of antitoxin, 1 dose of twitch tonic, and 8 doses of smelling salts.

15. Double Trouble (CR 6)

This room has two small beds positioned end to end against a windowless wall. Macabre but simplistic artwork is drawn on the wall in colored chalk. It seems clear this room is used to treat a pair of children. The wet, red stains on the sheets make that an uncomfortable assumption.

Most patient rooms in Mother's Care are either unoccupied or have a single patient. Based on the PCs' actions, either this room holds two childlike forms hiding under the covers, or the bloodstained beds are vacant.

Creatures: The room is currently home to two *vulnudaemons*, who remain here to terrorize the few patients who have not been moved by their families to another facility. The daemons use several cruel tricks to wring more bitterness out of their lonely prey. Their favorite games are to dispel their *invisibility* while standing across a room or hallway, whispering accusations about why a patient's family abandoned them, and using *minor image* to create illusory visitors. More than one patient's mind has fractured under the daemons' malevolent influence.

If the PCs have upset the routine created by Flinn's dark slayers, the *vulnudaemons* wait under the sheets for the party to find them. They then ambush the PCs as soon as they are adjacent to the beds. If the party hasn't made significant trouble, the daemons continue with their normal routine: roaming the halls, pretending to be children, torturing patients by opening their bleeding neck-maws, and so on. The only exception to



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this approach is that the vulnudaemons attack the PCs immediately if the PCs dispatch the dark slayers.

Once they enter a battle, the daemons fight until they're destroyed.

VULNUDAEMONS (2) **CR 4**

XP 1,200 each

hp 39 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 63)

16. Kitchen (CR 2)

The kitchen at Mother's Care exudes the foul odor of mildew and insect dung. A dirty pot containing old gruel sits on the counter opposite a cold hearth that hasn't been used for cooking in a long time.

Creatures: A PC who investigates the old food notes two significant details. The first is that the gruel was left out at least a week ago, with no sign of a more recent meal having been prepared. The second is the swarm of roaches that comes streaming out of the food and toward the characters.

COCKROACH SWARM **CR 2**

XP 600

hp 26 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 58)

Development: The kitchen is covered in grime and clearly illustrates the sad state of affairs at Mother's Care Home. If the nurses are asked about the quality of food or cleanliness of the place, they shrug and claim they're only responsible for medicating the patients; they aren't cooks or servants. They recommend that the PCs direct their concerns to the office staff (the disguised dark slayers). If the characters ask the office staff about the conditions, the staff excuses themselves so they can prepare an attack on the PCs.

17. Dining Room

The dining room rarely sees use these days, since the remaining patients are shut into their own rooms most of the time. The hearth on the north wall extends into the kitchen as well, though a black iron partition prevents anyone from looking into the kitchen from the dining room, and vice versa.

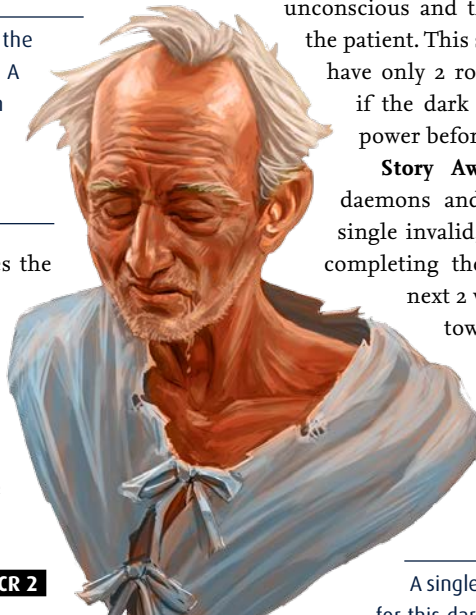
18. Invalid Patient

Each of these rooms houses a single elderly patient. Though the patients are of different ethnicities and genders, they all have similar stories. They are lonely

and hungry, their medication brings them in and out of consciousness, and they have nightmares of horrid children whose necks open into hellish maws.

Development: The invalids are more or less awake when the PCs enter Mother's Care, but have difficulty conversing in their medicated state. If one of the vulnudaemons or dark slayers attempts to murder a patient, that patient lets out a hoarse scream the PCs can hear. The tactic delays the assailant for 1 round, after which the creature proceeds to knock the patient unconscious and then use its *death knell* ability on the patient. This sequence of events means the PCs have only 2 rounds to save one of the invalids if the dark stalkers decide to increase their power before attacking the PCs.

Story Award: If the party defeats the daemons and dark slayers without losing a single invalid, award them 2,400 bonus XP for completing the No One Else quest. Over the next 2 weeks, several families from other towns come to Mother's Care Home for Invalids to retrieve their loved ones; the families offer each PC 200 gp in total for uncovering the truth there.



DERN FOSIMUTH

19. Dern Fosimuth

A single candle provides the only illumination for this dark room, which has a pungent, sweet odor different from the rest of Mother's Care Home. A human man in the grip of a fitful sleep lies on a bed within.

Dern Fosimuth (NG male old human cleric of Sarenrae 5) traveled with the Golden Watch as a veteran priest until his health declined more than a year ago. Flinn considered him an easier target than Crandel or Tuller for Anobaith's game; after engineering Dern's accident, Flinn committed him to the care of a quality hospice, then purchased the center quietly to avoid suspicion. Dern has been exposed to constant cruelty ever since then—he's been neglected, bled, drugged, and even had his injured legs amputated. Though the staff brightens things up for visitors occasionally to deflect concern, no one visits Dern, and few precautions are taken to disguise the severity of his abuse.

Dern remains on a regimen of chemicals derived from indigo dreams poison (*Ultimate Equipment* 111), which impairs his ability to think and communicate clearly. Any PC can recognize the aroma of indigo dreams, or the symptoms of the poison, with a successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check or DC 25 Heal check. He can neither speak nor write as long as the poison affects him, but medical or magical treatment that removes the poison

from his system or otherwise raises his Wisdom score by 4 or frees him to offer a grave warning to the party.

The cleric sputters a few seconds, working his dry mouth and choking out a rasping cough. "There's no time," he says in a hoarse whisper. "Taergan Flinn keeps me here. He plans to murder Crandel and Tulles. Don't let them go to the woods. Fiends and nightmares lurk there."

The elderly priest struggles visibly, as if forcing memories to the surface of his mind. His eyes widen momentarily. "A house in the Hollow. My strong box. My old treasures, and my piece of the watch. Take them to Tulles. She will know you speak for me."

He breathes heavily for a few seconds, then continues, struggling against his weakened body. "Find Flinn. Make him confess. And tell the town about this place so these families can save their own."

Dern Fosimuth closes his eyes, exhausted by the effort. His breathing slows but appears even.


Treasure: After Dern confides in the PCs, he gives them the location of his strongbox in Hope's Hollow. Armed with Dern's gifts and the knowledge that Taergan Flinn intends foul play, the next step is to warn the remaining members of the Golden Watch not to trust him.

The safe house in Hope's Hollow is a simple affair, a modest shack intended to keep Dern's equipment and wealth nearby if he needs it. A locked coffer (Disable Device DC 25) hidden under a small bed contains a *wand of lesser restoration* (17 charges); a scroll of *blessing of fervor* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 205); a scroll of *consecrate*; and Dern's longtime companion, the intelligent scimitar *Clarity*. Finally, Dern's fragment of the *weirding watch* (see page 55) is mounted on a copper bracelet. Anyone wearing the bracelet when it's activated (by its wearer or any watchbearer within 30 feet) benefits normally from the watch's activation.

Clarity doesn't reveal her nature to anyone without a good alignment, but functions normally in the hands of a good creature regardless of his faith. The sword expects to be returned to Dern after Crandel and Tulles are saved.

Quests: From Dern, the PCs gain the Investigating Mother's Care quest (related to the goings-on at Mother's Care Home) and the Good for the Soul quest (to be claimed when they encounter Taergan Flinn).

Story Award: For finding Dern and verifying his condition, award the PCs an additional 400 XP. Also, if the PCs immediately tell the authorities about the conditions at Mother's Care Home and the monstrous staff of its new owner, the townspeople offer their meager resources to thank the party and support their effort to bring Flinn to justice. They offer the PCs two vials of *silversheen*, two *ioun torches* (*Ultimate Equipment* 305), and a *scroll of cure moderate wounds*.

CLARITY		PRICE 21,015 GP	
SLOT none	CL 7th	WEIGHT 4 lbs.	
AURA moderate evocation [good]			
ALIGNMENT neutral good		SENSES 30 ft.	
INTELLIGENCE 10	WISDOM 12	CHARISMA 14	EGO 7
LANGUAGE empathy			
			

Clarity is a +1 *holy scimitar* crafted to vanquish the evil creatures of the night. Though she can't speak, her empathic communications clearly indicate a protective mindset. *Clarity* enjoys giving warm, encouraging energy to her wielder as long as that wielder opposes evil and gives his best effort. To preserve her wielder's valor in fights, she can cast *remove fear* up to three times per day, affecting only her wielder.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 10,665 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>holy smite</i> , <i>remove fear</i>	

110. Grounds

A frail man sits outside in a wooden rocking chair. He faces northeast as if looking at a place far away. He rocks slowly, muttering quietly to himself.

The outdoor grounds of Mother's Care Home for Invalids once provided a lush lawn and warm sunshine for the facility's residents. Today, the ground is hard and dry, and the grass is mostly dead. During the day, one patient sits in a wooden rocking chair facing northeast, muttering to himself constantly—the staff leave him out here so the noise doesn't disturb them.

If offered any attention at all from the PCs, the old man doesn't so much speak to them directly as simply mutter louder.

"I never should have listened. My fiancée was as beautiful as sunset over the sea. I had everything I wanted, until that other woman convinced me to leave my love. I tried so hard to resist, but how can you escape the one you've dreamed of all your life? I told Bethany before the wedding that I had met the girl I'd always dreamed of. We argued. I told Bethany to leave, and to throw her ring into the river. She stole my carriage and fled north. I never saw her again. I never saw the other woman again, either. I drank my sorrows away till my health failed. Been here almost forty years now. Forty lonely years."

If the PCs ask for more information, the old man only repeats his story to himself, which he does every hour or so until either he begins to sob or one of the human orderlies finally comes to wheel him inside for the night.



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Development: Gill's story is connected to the haunt at area J3. Resolving the haunt brings uneasy peace to Gill in his last days, which also earns the PCs a story award and a ring worth 200 gp. If the party notes that both Gill's other woman and Riger Mann's young lover were exactly what both men dreamed of, they may spot Anobai's calling card; if they also succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check, they identify that this could be the work of an erodaemon.

Quest: The PCs can encounter the haunt left behind by Gill's misdeeds. This is part of the With this Ring quest.

111. Pantry

The pantry is almost bare, and as filthy as the kitchen, but the only vermin here are dead.

112. Storage

Like everything else, the storage room suffers from neglect. Precious few medical and custodial supplies remain. There are no vials of medicine as there were in the nursing station, only ratty bandages, moth-eaten sets of spare clothes for the patients, and basic disinfectants.

Some old records gather dust on the floor under a shelf. They're files on former patients, all listing dates of death within the last several month. The newer records contrast greatly with those kept during the previous ownership. The new ones are incomplete and hastily written, but clearly show the patients weren't treated as well.

THE SWORD POINT, AGAIN

Once the PCs finish with Hope's Hollow, they return to Cassomir to deliver their dire findings. When the PCs attempt to deliver their news to Igneous and Branda, the owner of The Sword Point tells them the pair left in a considerable hurry. He confides that they purchased horses and left fully equipped, but paid for their rooms for the remaining 3 days.

The departing adventurers instructed the innkeeper to allow the PCs admittance to the couple's rooms. The remaining two members of the Golden Watch left a hastily scrawled note (see the Player Handout on this page).

Treasure: Crandel and Tulles left a few supplies behind on the table with the note: 10 +1 *evil-outsider-bane* arrows, a *scroll of dimensional anchor* (divine, CL 7th), and three *potions of cure serious wounds*. The equipment left behind is an important clue that the two are not aware of the true threat awaiting them.

Quests: The PCs gain the following quests that pertain to finding and rescuing Crandel and Tulles: Finding the Path, House of Death, and Rescuing the Elder Heroes.

CASSOMIR'S CALL

As the party exits The Sword Point a second time, some of Cassomir's residents have come looking for them, hoping for news about loved ones. Included in the bunch waiting outside is Governor Bozbeyli. After years spent noting the

We received word that Taergan is being held against his will in the Verduran Forest north of here. We have set out to find him at a place called Tristeza House. Please bring whatever you need and join us as soon as you can. Bring word of Dern's safety with you.

—Branda Tulles

PLAYER HANDOUT

slow descent of his city—and hearing tales about the even worse depredations visited on nearby Hope's Hollow—he's grateful that adventurers have come along.

He had originally planned to employ the adventurers in secret, but seeing a possibility to garner some positive reactions from his constituents, he improvises a speech about the PCs and the dangers they face.

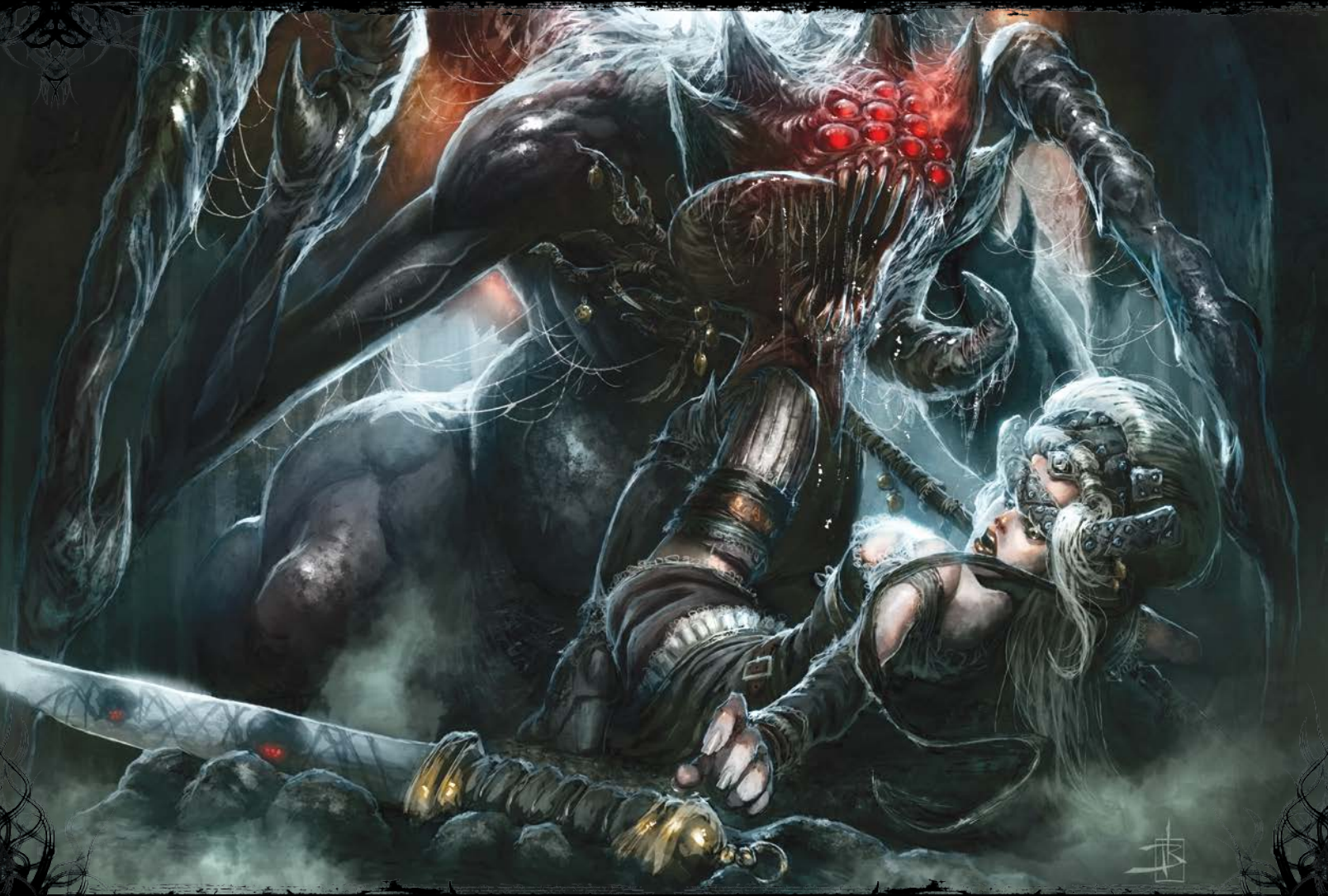
"People have been talking about what you're doing here in the city—slaying ghosts and rescuing people. We need more folks like you. In fact, we have a few of Cassomir's finest missing in the woods up north. When you're finished with the work you're doing now, I'd like you to go after a band of rangers we sent north to scout the forest. The druids are concerned for them, which worries us. And of course, good people going missing isn't something we can let stand. If you can bring me news of our missing rangers, I can promise to make your stay here in the city a memorable one.

"There's more, too. People talk of demons and dark cults, saying it's been going under our noses for a while. Petra Damaken, an expert tracker, says she got attacked by a fiend not long ago; it left her near dead and took her quicksand cloak. If you find that fiend before you're through, I'll reward you a thousand gold pieces to bring me proof. Now there might be more I don't know about, but I'll give you another three hundred gold for every one you slay, as long as you bring back proper evidence of those too.

"These plots have thrown lives into disarray. If you can get any sort of record of who's been affected, let us know so we can sort through it and learn who needs justice and who needs mercy. We'll make it known that the people of Cassomir are not to be toyed with. Let them play their games in Isarn!"

The Governor's speech draws a larger crowd, and the people of Cassomir cheer the PCs on as they make their preparations to travel to the Verduran Forest in search of Cassomir's daughters and sons, not the least of which are the two remaining members of the Golden Watch. If the PCs haven't visited the locations yet, Bozbeyli points them toward the authorities at areas B, C, E, and F, as well as the supernatural occurrence at area D.

Quests: To pursue the tasks Governor Bozbeyli has set out, the PCs gain the The Lost Rangers, Fiendish Trophies, and The Record of Iniquity quests.



CHAPTER 2

NORTH BY NORTHEAST

It's clear to the PCs that their benefactors are in imminent danger. Crandel and Tuller have ventured off to find their missing friend, unaware that his disappearance is a hoax and the site of his would-be rescue is a trap. By now, the PCs know not only that Taergan Flinn is behind the escapade, but also that the half-elf alchemist has betrayed his friends in exchange for an ancient fiend's dark promises. Anobaith herself has agents and schemes throughout the area, both to defend of her plots and property and in an effort to spread further heartache and misery among the beleaguered folk of towns like Cassomir and Hope's Hollow.

Armed with knowledge of Flinn's plot and the instruments left behind by the members of the Golden Watch, the adventurers' next course of action is quite

clear. They must brave the dangerous Verduran Forest to find Tristeza House. Once there, it will take everything they have to rescue the elderly heroes and free all of western Taldor of the daemonic threat named Anobaith.

The erodaemon maintains an old manor property in the woods north of Cassomir, where the southern Sellen River divides the wild Verduran Forest. Tristeza House, whose gardens and crypts serve as both outer defense and trophy case for the erodaemon, was abandoned after its last occupants poisoned one another in an attempt to dissolve a mutually unfaithful marriage. The estate was thenceforth nicknamed Bitter Manor by those inhabitants of Cassomir who know of it.

Signs along the way, including a few locals' attested sightings of Crandel and Tuller, confirm the PCs are

following the correct route. As the PCs work their way toward the manor, they must contend with a haunted wood full of undead and bizarre magical beasts and the menacing gardens of the larger estate.

RUMORS OF THE WOODS

Whether in Cassomir or Hope's Hollow, the Taldan locals have plenty to say about the deep wood north of their homes. For generations, the Verduran Forest has provided them wood and game in rich supply. In recent decades, however, the locals have witnessed a steady decline in wildlife, as well as a steady increase in dangerous mishaps.

The PCs can attempt Knowledge checks for the categories below to learn more about what they might face when adventuring in the forest. Knowledge of the following facts and rumors make the PCs aware of potential quests (see *Tears at Bitter Manor* Quests on page 3). Alternately, they can obtain this information through successful Diplomacy checks made to gather information. If the PCs miss out on any of these quests, give them additional chances to learn this information when they encounter people with more information later in the adventure, such as the missing druids and rangers or Jalhemah the berbalang.

Knowledge (history): With a successful DC 15 check (Diplomacy DC 20), a PC recalls that Taldor honors the Treaty of the Wildwood, a pact made with a cabal of druids to protect the forest from excessive logging and hunting, so the wood is wilder than most travelers expect.

With a successful DC 20 check (Diplomacy DC 25), a PC also knows the Verduran was actively explored by Taldor's First Army of Exploration more than 4,500 years ago. Many soldiers were lost to exposure, and still others deserted. It's said that the souls of those who died alone in the forest are covetous of the living. They appear from time to time to abduct travelers, who are never seen again. *Quest:* By finding out this information, the PCs gain the *We Were Soldiers* quest.

Knowledge (local): With a successful DC 10 check (Diplomacy DC 10), a PC knows the old wood is as haunted and tragic as Cassomir itself. Scores of loggers, merchants, river pirates, poachers, rangers, bandits, and explorers have disappeared there in the last few years alone.

Knowledge (nature): With a successful DC 10 check (Diplomacy DC 20), a PC recalls that in the last year or so, an increasing number of people have gone missing in the Verduran. Some are young explorers or recent travelers who don't know the history of the wood. However, a large number of them were also seasoned guides, loggers, and traders. Families all over are still waiting for their loved ones to return. *Quest:* By finding out this information, the PCs gain the *Rest in Peace* quest.

With a successful DC 13 check (Diplomacy DC 22), a PC hears the frequency of forest fires throughout the Verduran Forest is on the rise. The burns appear to be

small and controlled, but occur too often to be accidents or natural events.

Knowledge (religion): With a successful DC 15 check (Diplomacy DC 20), a PC knows the forest is rumored to be home to fiends, strange cultists, and the hungry dead. Though there are no concrete details regarding these cults or undead, rumors abound of malevolent priests who betrayed their faith in life and of charming old men who turn into giant bats and chase their prey through the night. *Quest:* By finding out this information, the PCs gain the *The Fallen Priests* quest.

J. THE VERDURAN FOREST


The Verduran Forest is an ancient wood that spans the borders of Taldor and Andoran. The branching Sellen River splits the vast wood into rough thirds. The nearest section, north and east of Cassomir, is dense and old forest. Despite centuries of travel on the Sellen, the Verduran remains home to many unexplored ruins and dangerous predators. Through the years, the forest has been home to a rich assortment of natural wildlife, as well as more dangerous things like giant vermin and carnivorous plants.

The encounters below are keyed to the regional map of the Verduran Forest north and east of Cassomir. Local rangers and explorers can give a basic crash course on how to navigate the forest, but most of it is unmapped and uninhabitable by humans. The old roads are rarely used, offering little guarantee of safety.


Maps still show the location of an abandoned village, which was once inhabited by loggers, a short journey into the forest. Two old roads lead out of it; one goes north into the thick forest, and the other heads west to the river. Merchants sailing upriver once traveled to the village via the western road, but after the village's abandonment, they paused near the road only as a mooring site where they could conveniently camp. Lately, however, harpy attacks have kept them from stopping on this stretch of the river. Since the most experienced trackers have gone missing and the area isn't mapped, there's little information to be gained about the geography north of the old village.

In the woods, bright sunlight breaks through the canopy, casting warm rays here and there onto the forest floor. A light breeze fills the air with the rustling of trees, punctuated by the calls of birds and insects. But as the PCs travel deeper into the forest, things change. The flora stops moving in the wind and seems to droop hopelessly. Fauna becomes scarce. The animals and vermin the PCs can hear in the distance seem wound up, even aggressive.

Though most of the Verduran Forest's terrain is fairly easy to navigate, the areas deeper in the forest count as difficult terrain, and include some steep hills, especially near the gorge. Running across the uneven slopes at full speed requires a successful DC 7 Acrobatics check. The precipitous sides of the gorge drop 20 feet, and climbing



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up them requires a successful DC 15 Climb check. The bottom of the gulch holds 5 feet of standing water.

J1. The Nameless Village

These crumbling old hovels were once a frontier logging village. Now only a few visitors stop here, mostly rangers who use it as a base camp before trekking into the uncharted parts of the Verduran Forest. If the PCs search the town, they find a few clues about landmarks they might reach deeper in the forest. Most of the old wooden signs have been weathered into uselessness, but a few still have visible location names carved into them. Two signs pointing toward the north road say “Bridge over Twisting Gorge” and “Serene Pool.” Another sign pointing to the west road reads “Three Cliffs Road.”

Treasure: The PCs find a campsite made by the captured rangers Delia and Themian. It’s clear that the occupants left in a panicked hurry, as they left behind a backpack, 10 trail rations, a masterwork bow with a broken string, and a quiver containing seven masterwork arrows and four +1 *magical-beast-bane* arrows.

J2. Something’s Out There (CR 5)

Anobaith considers the entirety of the Verduran Forest northeast of Cassomir to be her domain. Her first line of defense is a pair of cruel lacridaemons. These fiends serve to weaken and confuse any who traverse the forest, and they take delight in forcing lone explorers deep into the woods to be killed by exposure or the unnatural creatures Anobaith’s presence attracts.

Creatures: The two lacridaemons haunt the woods and attempt to disrupt the PCs’ sense of direction. Each day, they appear at a different area J2 and summon additional lacridaemons for brief patrols, using their teleport ability to cover a wide area. Once they track down the PCs, they combine their weeping aura and spell-like abilities to confound their quarry from a distance, and cast *hold person* or *overwhelming grief* on any who venture off or stand watch alone.

LACRIDAEMONS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Book of the Damned, Vol. 3* 48)

Ranged +1 *composite shortbow* +8 (1d6+3/×3)

Development: The PCs may have learned in Cassomir or Hope’s Hollow that a number of loggers and hunters have disappeared in the Verduran Forest lately. Both lacridaemons are camped nearby, and have stashed jewelry and equipment that will help identify their recent victims at their camp. PCs who track the daemons to their camp (or coerce the daemons into leading the way) discover two human rangers, Delia and Themian (the only survivors of the group mentioned at the end of Chapter 1).

TRISTEZA HOUSE

Though everyone knows of the Verduran and its monsters, haunts, and autonomous druidic orders, few have heard of Tristeza House. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check learn the approximate location of the old manor house; with a successful Knowledge (local) check at the DCs listed, they discover its reputation as well. Riger Mann in Swift Prison (see page 14) can also provide hints.

DC 15: There are a few old manor houses in the woods, where wealthy pioneers enjoyed their privacy while keeping close to Cassomir and the river. Tristeza House is one of the oldest such estates.

DC 18: Old houses in the woods are often said to be haunted, overrun with demons, or occupied by brigands, but it’s an established fact that the last occupants of Tristeza House murdered one another decades ago. Rumor had it they were both unfaithful and looking for a way to escape their loveless union, a circumstance that gave the estate its nickname: Bitter Manor. Now no one wants the place, no matter how big the land or house is. *Quest:* By finding out this information, the PCs gain the The Fatal Feast quest.

DC 20: An anonymous benefactor has stepped in several times in the recent past to pay for burials of Cassomir’s citizens. This usually happens in cases where tragedy has caused a split between victims and their families (who would normally pay for the services). The corpses were picked up and taken north, ostensibly so they could be taken to a place where burial is less expensive than in Cassomir.

Treasure: Each lacridaemon carries a +1 *composite shortbow* (+2 Str) and two *potions of cure moderate wounds*. In their shared camp (see below), they have stored away a pair of *rat-tread boots* (see page 55) along with a considerable amount of nonmagical equipment (worth 100 gp in total).

Story Award: If the PCs provide some healing to Delia and Themian and also give them the nonmagical gear and trinkets on the lacridaemons’ bodies, the rangers get back to Cassomir safely and return the other effects to their owners’ families. This brings peace and closure to many in the city; award the party 1,200 XP. Moreover, Governor Bozbeyle puts the PCs on his tab for an evening of revelry.

J3. The Jilted Bride-To-Be (CR 6)

A young woman wearing a stylish gown approaches the cliff. Between tearful sobs, she whimpers, “Throw the ring into the river, shall I?” After a second’s hesitation, she assumes a defiant expression and steps to the edge. She leans over the cliff and closes her eyes, then slips off, crashing into the cliff face several times before her broken form splashes into the water below.

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SUSURRANT SISTER



The cliff is a 30-foot drop into the river, which is 20 feet deep at this location. A fall from this height would normally deal only 1d3 points of nonlethal damage, but avoiding the protruding rocks of the cliffs and the shore requires making a deliberate dive (Acrobatics or Swim DC 15). A character who fails the check or doesn't deliberately jump takes 2d6 points of falling damage bounces off the cliff, and takes no damage for the second, shorter fall into the water. Moving up or down the cliff face requires a successful DC 15 Climb check. The bodies of several victims lie at the bottom of the Sellen River below these cliffs. The original suicide victim (now a skeleton in a tattered dress) still wears a ring worth 200 gp.

Haunt: Anobaith's meddling has resulted in dozens of suicides, many of them unknown to the larger world, and counted merely as more disappearances into the forest. Here, on the cliffs overlooking the Sellen River, the party witnesses one such tragic scene in the form of a haunt showing the death of Gill's (area **I10**) jilted bride-to-be. When any character observes the water from the cliff's edge, the scene plays for everyone present.

JILTED BRIDE-TO-BE **CR 6**
XP 2,400
CE haunt (10 ft.-by-60-ft. length of cliff edge)
Caster Level 6th
Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear wind and soft footfalls)

hp 12; **Trigger** proximity;
Reset 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, a young woman appears in a beautiful wedding gown. She walks toward the cliff as she cries and mocks herself. When her image jumps over the ledge, each PC in the haunt's area is targeted by a *telekinesis* spell (a combat maneuver check to bull rush with a +8 CMB), attempting to push the PC over the edge as well.

Destruction If a PC wears the ring and leaps into the river, the haunt is permanently destroyed as long as the jumper survives the fall.

Hint: With a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check, a PC determines that repeating the fiancée's leap could destroy the haunt by making the spirit feel it isn't alone.

Story Award: Resolving the haunt by re-enacting the bride's leap takes considerable courage. Award the PCs 1,200 XP and the ring as treasure.

J4. Susurrant Sisters (CR 7)

A slight curve in the Sellen River turns north and proceeds for miles. The short river bank leads to a steep cliff topped by dense forest. Cheerful birdsong gives way to a chorus of female voices, singing in a pensive rhythm.

Creatures: The voices belong to a small flight of harpies known locally as the Susurrant Sisters. They harass merchants and travelers in the forest or along the river, murdering their victims for food and then fighting over the remaining spoils. When they see the PCs, one breaks into her captivating song and flies over the water, trying to compel her adversaries to walk off the cliff face onto the rocks below. (This cliff follows the same rules as the one in area **J3**.) The remaining harpies do the same in subsequent rounds, based on the number of opponents who succumb to the effect. If multiple subjects are captivated by one harpy, the other two use flyby tactics to defend her from ranged attacks.

HARPIES (3) **CR 4**
XP 1,200 each
hp 38 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 172)

Treasure: This flight of harpies attacks smaller trade boats and any humanoids who venture near their cliff home. The personal effects of several merchants, pirates, and trackers can be found among a disturbing litter of bones piled on the stony bank below the cliff. Among these items are a +2 *light steel shield*, a *wand of water breathing* (10 charges), and 212 gp.

Story Awards: Below the harpies' perch are several crates, including assorted glass jars, costume jewelry, iron bars, and more. A successful DC 15 Appraise check reveals that the iron bars have a mixture of mithral in them and that the costume jewelry includes authentic rare gems worth 10,000 gp in total. If the PCs slay the harpies and return the looted goods to the merchants of Cassomir, give them an additional 1,200 XP. In addition, Verith Telan (from area E) is so pleased that the threat is ended that she keeps her promise to give the PCs some unique jewelry (worth up to 200 gp per PC), and lets them keep the *bag of holding* (type IV) as a reward.

J5. Caliban Camps (CR 7)

Vagrant hunters occupy this small camp. They appear very similar to one another, with thick, webbed fingers, wide mouths, and horns that protrude from their foreheads. They stand near a simple fire surrounded by a ring of stones. A charred humanoid form roasts on a spit above the fire.

Three different camps, each almost exactly the same as the others, lie near Tristeza House. Each one consists of crude tents surrounding a large fire pit.

Creatures: The camps' inhabitants are calibans that Flinn experimented upon and mutated in his failed attempts to control aging. When Flinn first obsessed over magical paths to immortality, he considered several options. He wanted something more permanent than the expensive *sun orchid elixir*, and still without the eternal commitment of undeath. He read about ways to transfer consciousness from one body to another, and decided to use a group of lonely calibans he'd found in the Verduran Forest as the subjects of his experiments. His attempts to transfer consciousness completely failed. Thinking the problem was that the creatures were too dissimilar from himself, he tried altering their biology to better match his own. All he managed to do was create a few dozen monstrous caricatures of himself, all selfish and paranoid. Angry and ashamed of what he'd made, Flinn banished them back to the forest outside Tristeza, figuring they could at least serve his cause by guarding the forest near Tristeza House.

The calibans are not intrinsically evil, but they are dimwitted and violent. They lived as hunters before Anobaith filled the Verduran with daemons and dangerous predators. With available game dwindling, the calibans have resorted to preying on human hunters from Taldor and refugees from Galt.

Flinn's clones have separated into a few bizarre tribes that claim territory around Tristeza. Though they share a deformed look and a primitive version of Flinn's thinking and personality, they aren't completely identical. The different camps of calibans divide themselves based on minor variations. These camps compete for game,

occasionally capturing and eating one another. Despite their rivalry, they unite against any outside force. If the PCs attack one camp, at least one caliban uses its unsettling scream ability to warn others, which also warns the forlarren druid in area K4.

CALIBANS (6)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (see page 57)

Development: Encounters with the calibans can occur at any of three locations on the Verduran Forest map. Once the party visits one of these locations, the calibans in the other camps prepare for potential threats—by hiding in the woods to ambush the party or staggering their numbers, with ranged attackers firing short bows from cover in the center of the camp. Once threatened, the confused and paranoid creatures fight until killed.

If the PCs capture one or more calibans and question them later, the deformed creatures respond if their captors succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy or DC 13 Intimidate check, conveying the following.

"If you seek the Master, we will not help you to harm him. We will not harm the one who made us. He is angry with us, for we failed to make him younger. But he lets us live here, and we keep him safe. He lives in the fiend's house a few miles away."

If pressed about Crandel and Tuller, the calibans admit they know of an elderly couple who passed near their village several hours before. Crandel and Tuller skirted the caliban camps, staying far enough away not to be easy prey but didn't escape the clones' notice. Any surviving calibans can relate that the couple looked tired, but traveled as though in a great hurry in the direction of their masters' house.

The calibans gladly promise to avoid the PCs if the PCs beat them in combat. They point out the direction of Tristeza House from their camp, but know very little of the daemon's defenses or Flinn's intentions.

Story Award: Learning that Crandel and Tuller reached this part of the forest alive earns the party 400 XP. Flinn's experiments had a side effect of making the calibans especially aggressive; they threaten any innocents they encounter, killing and eating those who fight back. Destroying calibans and providing proof to the Blackrock Company in Cassomir is worth an additional 600 XP and 150 gp per camp.

J6. Brush with Death (CR 5)

This pocket of the forest holds large piles of broken limbs and leaning trunks, as if a few older trees had collapsed together, perhaps felled by disease or a lightning strike.

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Creature: Most of the apparent deadfall is actually a disguised predator called a deadfall dweller. The beast waits until prey is within range of its spittle ability and fires an acidic glob to weaken its meal. The beast then lurches forward and attacks.

DEADFALL DWELLER **CR 5**
XP 1,600
hp 57 (see page 58)

Story Award: The discovery of this unusual predator might help reduce the risk of traveling through the Verduran Forest for future traders, trackers, and adventurers. Award the party 400 XP for taking a trophy or noting a description of the magical beast.



YERRIL

J7. Black Widow Lair (CR 7)

A dense stand of trees grows here, the spaces between them obscured by thick webs and piled branches. The interior of the stand is dark, almost like a cave. The entrance is large enough for a horse to pass through.

Giant spiders are fairly common in temperate forests, but Anobaith delights specifically in the black widow, which mates with other spiders and then kills them to feed herself and her young. The erodaemon tasks a half-fiend ettercap named Yerril with nurturing her favorite spider until she returns to Abaddon. Yerril's workshop is a forest lair defended by traps and a sticky web perimeter.

Creatures: The ettercap cultivates spiders and breeds them to giant sizes. Currently she has two adult male giant spiders she intends to mate with her immense black widow. Yerril spends most of her time in a darkened corner; there she feeds, prays to Lamashtu, and bides her time while her pets spin webbing that she uses to repair the traps she builds here and in the graveyard at area K1.

YERRIL **CR 4**
XP 1,200
 Female half-fiend ettercap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 129, 171)
 NE Medium outsider (augmented aberration, native)
Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE
AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +3 natural)
hp 38 (4d8+20)
Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7
DR 5/magic; **Immune** poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 15

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
Melee bite +7 (1d6+4 plus poison), 2 claws +7 (1d4+4)
Special Attacks poison, smite good 2/day (+0 attack and AC, +4 damage), traps, web (+7 ranged, DC 17, hp 4)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)
 3/day—*darkness*
 1/day—*desecrate*

STATISTICS
Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 21, **Int** 10,
Wis 17, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative
Skills Climb +19, Craft (trapmaking) +12,

Fly +8, Perception +10, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers**
+8 Craft (trapmaking)

Languages Common
SQ spider empathy +8

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 10 rounds; effect 1d2 Dex; cure 2 consecutive saves.

GIANT BLACK WIDOW SPIDER CR 3

XP 800
hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 256)

GIANT SPIDERS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each
hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

Traps: Two types of traps—collapsing wall traps and pit traps—protect the spider lair. Yerril uses layers of webs to prop up a false surface. Any creature larger than Tiny sinks into the earth, becoming trapped by the pit and several feet of sticky webs.

COLLAPSING WALL TRAPS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each
Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual
Effect collapsing branches, webs, and other debris (2d6 damage and entangled); Reflex DC 15 halves damage and negates the tangled condition; multiple targets (all targets within 5 feet of the web wall)

WEBBED PIT TRAPS (3) CR 1

XP 400 each
Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual
Effect 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage and grappled, break or Escape Artist DC 17); Reflex DC 20 negates; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

Development: Yerril primarily tends the spiders, but she also watches the forest for intruders and reports any unusual findings to Rigzarreth, the forlarren groundskeeper at area **K1**. If the spiders are slain and Yerril gets away, the half-fiend warns the druid of the incursion and joins her in patrolling the grounds outside Tristeza House.

Story Award: Award the PCs 1,200 XP for destroying all four creatures here. If Yerril is wounded and driven off, the PCs receive full XP, but they don't gain more XP if they kill her later. Also, the Blackrock Adventuring Company gives the PCs an additional 250 gp if they deliver the carcass of either the half-fiend ettercap or the black widow.

J8. Gallows Grove (CR 7)

Though old trees tower all around, one stands out from the rest. A series of hanging branches droop low enough that their leaves dangle about four feet above the forest floor; a few even drag along the ground. On the far side of the tree, a lone figure hangs by its neck.

Creature: A forest fertilized by bloody soil and rotting flesh makes a perfect home for a wicked hangman tree. As indicated on the adventure map, two such monsters roam the Verduran here (albeit separately), killing wildlife when there are no calibans or other unusual creatures to feed on.

HANGMAN TREE CR 7

XP 3,200
hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 152)

Development: If the party travels through a second hangman tree encounter area, assume the hangman tree there has already released its hallucinatory spores.

J9. Hounds of Horror (CR 7)

The eerie baying of hounds rings from all sides, but no sound of footfalls or snapping branches accompanies the hunters' cries.

Creatures: Anobaith is fond of pets that evoke fear and exhibit cruelty. In the interior of the Verduran Forest near Bitter Manor, a small pack of yeth hounds roams the dense forest freely, hunting every living creature they detect. Using their bay and flight abilities, they herd the party through the forest and attempt to drive the PCs into the gulch.

The hounds are primarily active at night, but the forest's thick canopy dampens most of the sunlight here, so it often seems night to them. The hounds fear their daemon master, so they harry any creature that passes within a mile of the gulch. The areas the yeth hounds patrol are among the deepest stretches of the forest, counting as difficult terrain and requiring anyone running across the slopes at full speed to attempt a DC 7 Acrobatics check. The hounds give chase to anyone who flees because of their baying.

YETH HOUNDS (4) CR 3

XP 800 each
hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 286)

J10. Tizheruk (CR 5)

A shallow creek of fast-running, clear water gently gurgles as it flows southwest.

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Not every threat in the woods near Bitter Manor has a connection to the daemonic influence here. Tizheruks are among the older natural hazards found in the Sellen River and its tributaries.

Creature: The two areas marked **J10** designate the areas of water in which each of these stealthy beasts live. The tizheruks eat the flesh of any creatures that come within reach—living, undead, or daemon—and they aggressively attack any creatures standing in or near the water.

Tizheruks prefer to lie low and ambush prey from shallow waters, but they're no less dangerous when deeper. As indicated on the adventure map, a tizheruk also lies in wait at the far end of the gulch from this location. If the yeth hounds chase any creature into the water, the tizheruk comes to investigate and then attacks.

TIZHERUK **CR 5**
XP 1,600
hp 30 (see page 63)

Story Award: Describing the stealthy tizheruk to authorities in Cassomir prevents future attacks on unwary travelers. As with the deadfall dweller (area **J6**), award the party 400 XP for taking a trophy or noting a description of the magical beast.

J11. Delgeth (CR 6)

An impressive elk darts through the forest, lighting small fires along the way with its flaming hooves.

Delgeths are the exception to the trend of wildlife becoming difficult to find among the woods near Bitter Manor. Strong and deadly, the delgeths have little to fear from human hunters, and defend themselves from more monstrous predators with their ability to create fire to cover their retreat. As such, delgeths might have gone unnoticed before, but become harder to ignore as they mate and produce young capable of setting the forest aflame.

Creature: The bull delgeth found at either **J11** area on the encounter map prefers to be left alone. If the PCs give chase, it becomes aggressive and attacks. It tries to isolate one character with walls of flame and then charges the character, horns-first.

DELGETH **CR 6**
XP 2,400
hp 30 (see page 59)

Development: Normally, the Verduran Forest is not considered a dry environment, but the delgeth produces magical fire, which can set combustible objects aflame. If the PCs fail to slay the delgeth, it causes a small forest fire (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 426). This fire

spreads at a speed of 10 feet per round for 5 rounds before burning out.

Story Award: Describing the flaming delgeth to authorities in Cassomir helps the locals understand the creature's nature and its place in the local ecology. As with the deadfall dweller (area **J6**) and the tizheruk (area **J10**), award the party 400 XP for taking a trophy or noting a description of the magical beast.

J12. Jalhemah (CR 6)

A wooden platform hangs fifteen feet off the ground, lashed to the branches of several trees. No ropes or ladders lead up to the platform, and the smell of rotting meat and spoiled blood hangs in the air.

Creature: The undead monster Jalhemah hunts this portion of the wood; it has already eradicated the predators near its lair and consumed most of the local game. Jalhemah lives in a tree lair at the location indicated on the map, but frequently flies among and over the trees, looking for new prey to consume.

If the party finds Jalhemah's tree lair before the creature finds them, the *berbalang's* body is slumped against the central trunk of the lair. The *berbalang* returns to its body and attacks if anyone disturbs its physical form. If the *berbalang* discovers the party first, it uses *alter self* to assume the form of an old hermit and entertains them until it thinks it can charm a humanoid creature into staying behind.

The *berbalang* has no particular loyalty to Anobaith, but does know of her manor house and that her associates travel to and from Cassomir. If asked about what it's seen (while in its hermit form), it even offers hope that Crandel and Tullies might be alive.

"I keep to myself and bother no one that I don't need to. I will say there's that old mansion in the woods, where monsters roam night and day. If you're looking to go there, or following that elderly pair, you'd best turn back. If you're determined to go anyway, one of you should come up to my loft so I can get you a map. There are nasty beasts out here, and you don't want to deal with more than you have to."

JALHEMAH **CR 6**
XP 2,400
Berbalang (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 40)
hp 68

J13. Broken Brothers (CR 7)

For a second, it appears there are three soldiers walking in the woods. They wear battered soldiers' uniforms and sheathed short swords. They disappear just as quickly.

Ages ago, the Taldan Empire sent thousands of soldiers out to pacify the Verduran Forest, every reach of the Sellen River, and what is now the River Kingdoms beyond. Many of the soldiers died lost and alone, prey to the elements, savage wild monsters, and the ravages of war. Some of these lost troops returned to the world as undead spirits. They remain perpetually lost, feeding on the life of those they can similarly consign to isolation. Over time, rumors of the existence of these sorrowful soldiers turned to sober confirmations of their existence. Today, Taldans know these risen threats as abandoned ones.

Creatures: Though abandoned ones are normally solitary, this trio became lost together during the time of the First Army of Exploration over 4,000 years ago. They seek out living creatures to isolate and murder. Once they settle on a target, one of the abandoned ones attempts to single out the victim with its consign to oblivion ability. If the ability succeeds, they attack their quarry with short swords until the victim is dead. If the abandoned ones aren't hurt significantly, they attempt their gambit on a second victim.

ABANDONED ONES (3)**CR 4****XP 1,200 each****hp 37 each (see page 56)**

Development: If outclassed in combat, the abandoned ones beg for parley. They still crave revenge for their abandonment, but prefer their continued existence over damnation. If forced to surrender, they are quick to explain how they died and why they suffer still.

"We were lied to. Ages ago, a woman came to us while we kept watch over our fellow soldiers. She had a fiend's horns and burned black fingers, and her tail was like a giant serpent. She promised we'd survive if we just abandoned our comrades and retreated into the woods. She was so frightening, we knew she'd take our souls if we stood our ground. We left our comrades behind, asleep and defenseless. We know they all died, but we never heard even one of them scream.

"We ran when she didn't come back. We tried to find someone to help avenge our comrades, but we were lost. She chased us, and then there were sounds like children crying, and we were so hungry. And now you, with your warm heartbeats and flowing blood. We couldn't stand it. But we'll leave you be if you'll let us go. We don't want to die... again."

If the abandoned ones are beaten but not destroyed, they don't attack the PCs again.

Story Award: If the PCs destroy (not just defeat) the abandoned ones, award them an additional 800 XP.

APPROACHING TRISTEZA HOUSE

When the PCs reach area K on the Verduran Forest map, they've found Tristeza House—the so-called Bitter Manor where Flinn and Anobaith have captured Igneous Crandel and Branda Tuller. The estate occupies a sizable clearing, and the PCs see the manor house looming up ahead long before they come within sight of any of its inhabitants, so they can safely stop and rest near the edge of the woods if they need to do so before tackling the final stage of their mission. They can approach the manor from several different sides, but they almost certainly need to pass through the extensive grounds surrounding the house first. The grounds and the manor house are both described in detail in the following chapter.

**JALHEMAH**

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CHAPTER 3

THE HOUSE WITHOUT HOPE

The PCs have survived a number of deadly encounters up to this point, including a trapped townhouse, a daemon-infested invalid home, and an assassination attempt. They have met good people across western Taldor who are depending on them to bring back news of lost loved ones. They have braved the horrors of a forest haunted by strange magical beasts and evil experiments gone wrong. Their adventure has been filled with danger and sobering stories of loss.

Despite all this, Bitter Manor proper is where the real threat lies. Daemons, constructs, religious zealots, and, of course, Anobaith await the PCs as they continue their vigilant quest to save Crandel and Tuller.

The party should arrive at Bitter Manor with a sense of urgency. The remaining members of the Golden

Watch could be only a room away and in desperate need of rescue. Moreover, they could be in the duplicitous company of Taergan Flinn, caught off guard by the monstrous truth of his plans to kill them. If the PCs are to thwart his betrayal, they must navigate the old house and find Crandel and Tuller before Anobaith declares the time is right for the alchemist to complete his vile plot to regain his youthful vigor.

Two main areas constitute Bitter Manor: the grounds around it and the manor's interior. The grounds include the graveyard, grove, and outlying buildings. Tristeza House itself is a three-story mansion with a basement—this cellar is where Taergan Flinn conducts his experiments and his daemonic benefactor Anobaith keeps her sanctum.



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K. TRISTEZA GROUNDS

A five-foot-tall stone wall surrounds the grounds of Bitter Manor. A grove of staggered trees outlines the path leading to an iron gate. Beyond the gate, a sodden dirt path leads up a small hill to the mansion's front porch. Even from a distance, the house clearly shows signs of neglect. Boarded-up patches; broken windows of dirty glass; and faded, peeling paint make Tristeza House's reputation as a haunted manor seem reasonable.

A graveyard, complete with a family mausoleum, is visible inside the stone wall. Between the graveyard and the house lies an overgrown garden of wilted flowers.

Before they can enter Tristeza House to save Igneous and Branda, the PCs must fight through the outer defenses of Anobaith's lair. The following four encounters take place outside Tristeza House before the party enters their mission's final chapter.

K1. Forlarren Grove (CR 8)

A narrow grove of trees, decorated sparsely by flowers, bushes, and statues, abuts the stone wall surrounding the property. The grove might have been impressive once, but now looks unkempt and sickly.

The entrance to the Tristeza House estate lies past a once-lovely grove of sycamore trees, which are now overgrown and riddled with disease and damage from insects. The grove has its share of dangers, as the druids of the Wildwood Order recently discovered.

Upset at the incursion of unnatural creatures into their lands, three druids approached the unkempt grove at Bitter Manor. Surprised by the leechroots and evil forlarren druid, they succumbed easily to blood loss and Rigzarreth's magical abilities. Two of the druids died in the attack, but one remains, unconscious from thirst and lashed to the branches of one of the grove's trees. Rigzarreth delights in the druid's suffering, but can't bring herself to kill him so soon after having wept for his friends. She plans eventually to cut him loose and leave him for the leechroots.

Creatures: The forlarren named Rigzarreth keeps up the grove. The poor creature lives in perpetual misery, her nymph mother having died in childbirth, and her father an uncaring fiendish associate of Anobaith's. The erodaemon feeds richly from the forlarren's constant internal struggle. Rigzarreth desperately wants to connect with the natural world around her, but the fauna of the Verduran Forest shuns her. Anobaith finds the druid's constant cycle of heartbreak and frustration sweet, and the daemon keeps Rigzarreth near the house so she can watch the forlarren tear animals apart with her claws and then weep over their bloody bodies.

Rigzarreth spends most of her time near a statue of a lithe nymph in a beckoning pose (marked "R" on the Forlarren Grove map on page 32). The statue represents her mother and was crafted by an admirer ages ago.

The history of blood and horror at Tristeza House provides ideal conditions for the spontaneous creation of undead creatures. Though most spirits near Bitter Manor are haunts or intelligent incorporeal undead, the roots of Rigzarreth's blood-soaked grove have animated, and feed on the blood that drains into the earth from her kills. The leechroots sit idly below the ground at the two locations indicated by the letter "S" on the Forlarren Grove map. If the PCs gain the leechroots'

attention, the soft ground beings to lurch as if something is burrowing under it and the acrid smell of copper and rotting wood fills the air.

Because of her fractured nature, Rigzarreth is slow to resort to violence. However, once battle begins, she loses herself to it, fully embracing the ensuing carnage.

The leechroots know only hunger. Rigzarreth is aware of them, so she leaves behind anything she kills in the grove so the mindless terrors won't attack her. The leechroots remain 10 feet underground, and only move when their tremorsense detects a creature on the surface. Once any creature bleeds within range of their tremorsense, the leechroots immediately charge, burrowing in a straight line to sate themselves on the blood source.



RIGZARRETH



RIGZARRETH **CR 7**

XP 600

Female forlarren druid 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 125)

ME Medium fey

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 68 (9 HD; 4d6+5d8+32)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

DR 5/cold iron

Weaknesses remorse

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks wild shape 1/day

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

3/day—*summon swarm*

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +9)

3rd—*beast shape I⁰* (animals only), *call lightning* (DC 11), *spike growth* (DC 11)

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *hold animal⁰* (DC 10)

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *magic fang⁰*, *obscuring mist*, *speak with animals*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *guidance*, *know direction*, *light D* domain spell; **Domain** Animal (Fur subdomain^{AP6})

TACTICS

Before Combat If she's aware that the party is coming soon and has time to prepare, Rigzarreth casts *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, and *cat's grace* on herself. (These aren't included in her statistics.) If the party draws near, she casts *call lightning*, *spike growth*, and *magic fang*.

During Combat If Rigzarreth doesn't have enough time to prepare, she casts *barkskin* and *call lightning* in the first 2 rounds of combat while avoiding the PCs. She draws the PCs to the leechroots in order to elicit their aid in combat.

Morale Rigzarreth places very little value on her life, and defends her grove to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 4, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Knowledge (nature) +3, Perception +17, Stealth +10, Survival +10

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

SQ nature bond (Animal domain), nature sense, predator's grace (7/day), trackless step, wild empathy +3, woodland stride



LEECHROOTS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 32 (see page 62)

Treasure: The druid refuses to stay and fight inside an artificial structure, but out of gratitude, he offers what remains of his equipment: two *potions of barkskin* and a pouch of *grave salt* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 301).

Development: If saved, the grateful druid announces he will depart immediately to make the order aware of the threat. He won't venture into the house, but promises to relay the dangers as he understands them.

Before he departs, he also asks if the PCs happen to be looking for an elderly couple. He relays that while he was passing in and out of consciousness, such a couple passed through the grove in a considerable hurry. He was pleased to see them sneak past the forlorn druid in her own grove, but was bothered to see that the old man seemed injured. He remembers no other details.

Story Award: Saving the druid not only relieves Zaganos's concern for his order's safety, but strengthens the cabal and allows them to more quickly repair the damage done to the Verduran Forest. Award the PCs an additional 800 XP. In addition, the druids offer to cure each PC of disease or poison one time over the course of the next year.

If the PCs assist the order by both rescuing the druid and chronicling the strange beasts of the woods (completing the Child of the Wildwood quest and chronicling at least one monster for the Finding Strange Beasts quest), Zaganos convinces Governor Bozbeyli to offer the house to the PCs tax free. The Wildwood Order also expresses friendship and commits to aid the PCs in future endeavors.

The druid's testimony regarding the recent arrival of the Golden Watch also earns the PCs 400 XP.

K2. Grave Gardens (CR 8)

Once a sloped lawn on the south side of the manor house, the grounds here are now marked by gravesites rising amid the weeds. Several of them are marked by gray or white stones.

Each grave appears fairly fresh, and has a relatively new stone marker. As Anobaith's victims die of heartbreak, she converts their souls to soul gems for later use, or to keep as trophies. She transforms the bodies into zombies, forcing the dead to guard their own graves—monuments to the ruin she brought to their lives. Each marker bears an inscription announcing Anobaith's triumph in breaking the spirit of her mortal victim. When a new soul is beaten, Rigzarreth uses *stone shape* to create a headstone that includes a memorial. The remarks on some of the gravestones offer a clear testimony as to the erodaemon's monstrous nature. Each stone bears a name and city of residence, a death date, and the particular episode of heartbreak that finally took the life from the deceased.

For example, one such tombstone reads: "Mareus Graffe of Hope's Hollow, 4676–4713. Hanged himself after the mother he loved so married a second husband in Absalom. Praised be Laivatiniel."

A successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check allows a PC to recall that Laivatiniel is an obscure demigod from the gloomy realm of Abaddon. His name is barely recorded, except in the histories of dark cults devoted to incestuous rituals and unhealthy parental obsessions.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check notices that two of the graves here are partially dug out and have new headstones, marked for Igneous Crandel and Branda Tullis. The stones each bear an inscription noting the current year as the date of death and a proclamation that the deceased died alone, trying to save a lost friend.

With a successful DC 15 Perception check, a PC notes a headstone bearing Tolger Mann's name (PCs automatically succeed if specifically looking for his grave). The PCs can complete the A Slain Father's Peace quest by burying Riger Mann's dagger in Tolger's grave. He arrived recently enough that Anobaith hasn't yet turned him into a zombie, so if he's reburied, he can rest here in peace.

If the half-fiend ettercap Yerril (from area J7) encountered the PCs and escaped to the manor grounds, she lingers here, using her *desecrate* ability to empower the zombies and her web special attack to keep anyone who walks among the graves in position so the zombies can attack.

Traps: Each location marked "P" on the map is a pit trap identical to the webbed pit traps in area J7. The ettercap Yerril maintains these traps. The zombies gravitate toward living creatures stuck in the webs.

Creatures: Each grave marked "Z" on the encounter map holds a fresh zombie. The undead are ordered to wait in the shallow graves until an intruder enters the area. If a creature besides Yerril or the huecuvas (from area K3) walks adjacent to or falls into one of the graves, the zombies immediately attack.

HUMAN ZOMBIES (6)

CR 1

XP 400 each

NE Medium undead (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

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

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)

hp 22 each (4d8+4)

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +6 (1d6+4)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

Feats Toughness^b

SQ staggered

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Development: If the swinging hook trap from area L12 throws its target out the window, that creature falls 30 feet, landing in the square marked “X.” The subject must then succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save or fall into the pit trap. The target takes a –2 penalty on the saving throw if forced onto the pit in this manner.

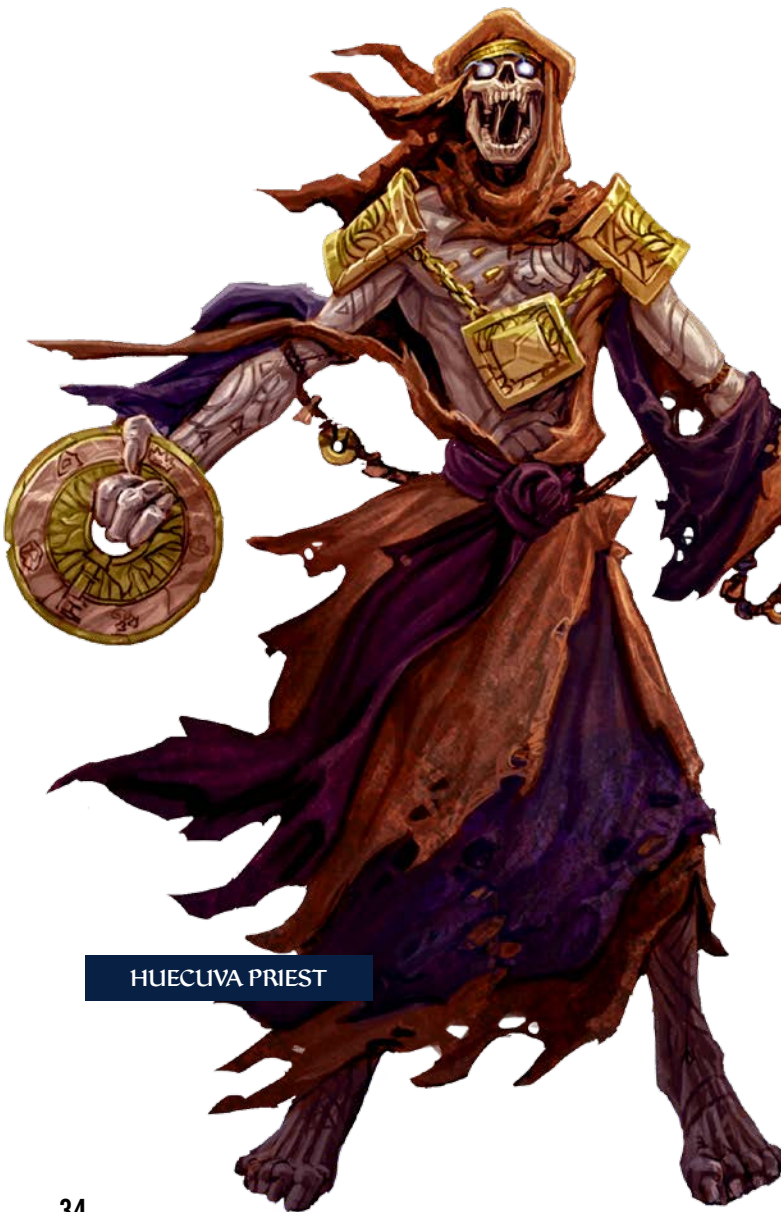
Story Award: Since the zombies are recently deceased, transporting their remains to Cassomir for identification brings peace to their families. Award the party 3,200 XP if they return the bodies to the zombies’ grieving families.

K3. Mausoleums (CR 7)

A small graveyard with a prominent set of mausoleums at its center surrounds the manor. Smaller gravestones litter the ground. The graveyard continues all the way to the house.

Before meeting Tristeza’s current master, Sejil and Ethra served as priests of Shelyn, goddess of beauty and art. During their service, they grew to love one another more than their patron, thanks to Anobaith’s meddling. The crafty erodaemon took considerable delight when the two sought to make a canvas of one another, disdaining their natural beauty in exchange for an increasing number of piercings, tattoos, and self-inflicted scars. When other priests complained, the Sejil and Ethra defied their peers and their goddess, and eventually converted to serving Zaigasnar, the daemonic harbinger of destructive vanity. Their ornamentations became careless over time, until they contracted infections from the frequent cutting and tattooing. When they died, their perverse deity raised them as huecuvas and gave them to Anobaith as a gift.

Creatures: As huecuvas, Sejil and Ethra barely acknowledge one another. They take turns casting *desecrate* on the mausoleum area, keeping themselves and the zombies at area K2 charged with negative energy. They are united in their hatred of the living—of priests in particular. Once they discover the PCs, they cast spells to empower their javelins or to fill the graveyard with *obscuring mist*. They use the cover of mist to channel negative energy, healing one another or harming the PCs. Sejil carries an *icon of aspects*, which lets her use the destruction domain’s smite ability if pressed in melee. The benefits of the *desecrate* spell are included in their statistics below.



HUECLIVA PRIEST

SEJIL AND ETHRA (2) **CR 5**
XP 1,600 each

Huecuva cleric of Zaigasnar 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 150)
 CE Medium undead
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8
Aura faithlessness (30 ft., DC)

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 53 each (6d8+27)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

DR 5/magic or silver; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d4+3 plus disease)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 16, 2d6)

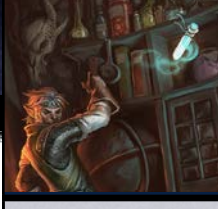
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6)
 6/day—touch of evil (1 round)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

2nd—*align weapon* (evil only)⁰, *desecrate*, *resist energy*
 1st—*bane* (DC 13), *doom* (DC 13), *obscuring mist*,
*protection from good*⁰

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Liberation



STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +8, Survival +9

Languages Common

SQ false humanity, liberation (3 rounds/day)

Gear *bracers of armor +1*

Treasure: Sejil carries an *icon of aspects* (see page 54) devoted to Zaigasnar, harbinger of destructive vanity. It can still be used by those who have domains of other deities.

Development: Should Yerril, the half-fiend ettercap from area **J7**, escape the PCs, she is here tending to the graveyard and looking for more spiders to groom. If Yerril is here, assume the zombie graves at area **K2** are affected by *desecrate*. In addition, the central mausoleum where the huecuvas stay contains a permanent shrine to Zaigasnar, doubling the effects of the pair's *desecrate* spells.

PCs who succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identify Zaigasnar as an evil patron of destructive vanity.

Story Award: Destroying the huecuvas and removing the spell effect on the shrine earns the PCs an additional 1,200 XP.

K4. Carriage House

The Tristeza carriage house is shut by a great wooden sliding door. The door is stuck from misuse (Strength DC 10), but opens easily enough once started.

This old wheelhouse has four sturdy walls, but contains no carriage. Tufts of wild grass grow in the ruts carved by decades of use in older times.

Development: If the PCs enter the carriage house without being detected by the occupants of Bitter Manor, they might have some opportunity to rest and prepare. No creatures near the building have scent or other perceptive special abilities, nor does any creature come to investigate the wheelhouse unless the PCs attract attention.

If the PCs flee a combat, this place might offer some shelter, but nothing prevents their adversaries from besieging the unused garage or gathering backup.

L. TRISTEZA HOUSE

All of the ground floor windows of this old, three-story manor house are boarded up with scraps of aged, painted wood. Shards of filthy glass still protrude wickedly from the window frames. The brown and white paint is dirty and cracked throughout. Weeds surround the exterior of the house, which sits on a pocked foundation of large stone. Overhead, windows curve out from the southwest corner above one of the two ground-level entrances. A sagging wooden porch frames each of the two front doors.

PREPARING FOR ANOBAITH

Once the party enters Tristeza House, it's difficult for them to rest or replenish resources, and the fights keep getting tougher. Anobaith's plan is to wear out her foes until they have nothing left but hope. Her goal is to take everything from them, and then watch for the moment when their hope gives way to despair.

Because the adventure increases in danger, give the PCs any experience points they're due and have them level up mid-session as they enter the house and just before they face Anobaith. They'll need every bit of help they can get!

The exterior of Tristeza House is frightening enough, but the interior is truly intimidating. The ground floor rooms are reinforced with wood and iron sheets to forge a death trap of unusual rooms, filled with traps and monsters that please Anobaith or remain tied to the house's violent history. The encounter maps for Tristeza House are found on inside front cover. Each creature encountered within the house knows of all the others. Unless noted otherwise, no creature in the encounters listed below attacks or pursues the other residents. They're tasked only with eradicating intruders.

Though the residents of Tristeza House are on perpetual alert, they aren't initially aware that rescuers may be arriving to free the prisoners in the basement. Anobaith keeps several destructive games brewing, and every few months some brave soul trespasses onto the estate looking to avenge a lost love or claim some reward the daemon has no intention of fulfilling. If the PCs have avoided detection while traversing the forest and the grounds, they could approach the house unnoticed. Beyond that, to catch anyone in the building unaware, they need to enter the house without making the sounds of combat or letting the shadow mastiff in the entry hall (area **L2**) alert the other residents.

To find Crandel and Tulles, and ultimately confront Flinn and his daemonic benefactor, the PCs must find their way to the basement. Anobaith designed the interior of the house to draw the PCs to the roof, where determined survivors can brave the perilous chimney in order to reach the erodaemon's underground lair. Inside, Crandel and Tulles remain captive, ready to be sacrificed on Flinn's blade the moment Anobaith witnesses that the couple has lost all hope.

Ground Floor

The first floor is the most fortified of the three aboveground stories, and it's difficult for anyone outside to see inside through the boarded-up windows. The house's reinforced interior forces intruders to experience the threats within at a significant disadvantage. The lower level's windows are covered with 2-inch-thick boards of

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hardwood (hardness 5, 20 hit points), so no one can see into the house from the outside, or vice versa. The inside walls of the ground floor are fortified with wood and iron planks, making the interior resistant to burning and allowing Dulvan, the wererat from area L3, to move between the walls undetected while he chooses a target to assassinate.

If the PCs attempt to go in through one of the less reinforced upper stories, scaling the house's exterior requires a successful DC 15 Climb check.

L1. Front Porch (CR 4)

The two front entrances are connected by a large covered porch. The wooden floor is old and dry, and creaks and cracks under significant weight. Like the rest of the ground-floor windows, the centuries-old window sills are walled over from the inside with thick planks of wood.

When the manor was in more conventional use, this was the main entrance. The covered porch was surely once grand, but today it exhibits serious neglect—cobwebs, dried wasp's nests, and broken windows boarded up from the inside add to the spooky atmosphere. The wooden floor buckles here and there, but is otherwise stable, until someone opens the locked front door (Disable Device DC 20).

Trap: The door is connected to a clever mechanism that includes a rolling beam under the porch. Opening the door removes the support from under the squares marked "T" on the encounter map. The porch cracks and drops away instantly when the door is opened even an inch. Anyone in the affected squares must succeed at a Reflex save or fall into the dank crawl space at area L15, landing amid several propped-up shards of broken glass—remnants of the ground-floor windows.

GLASS SHARD PIT TRAP CR 4

XP 1,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d8+3 damage each); Reflex DC 20 negates; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. rectangle)

L2. Foyer (CR 6)

This entrance is locked (Disable Device DC 20). Any contact with the door alerts Blacktongue the shadow mastiff, which responds with menacing growls.

The door shudders under a powerful impact. On the other side, something barks loudly, like a vicious canine, and growls with violent intent.

Once the PCs have dealt with the shadow mastiff and porch traps, they can catch a more detailed glimpse of the entryway.

Even after decades of neglect, this sitting room seems luxurious—out of place amid the horrors of the surrounding territory. A few small couches and tables once served the needs of the manor's visitors, but most are threadbare and splintered. Grand stairs sweeps along the north wall and rises to the second floor. Sheets of iron and wood have been nailed to strengthen the exterior wall, further disrupting the room's high-society feel.

Creature: The shadow mastiff Blacktongue holds a faithful dog's loyalty to Anobaith, though she uses him to guard this entrance and almost never engages him. Blacktongue attacks intruders with an intimidating show of barking and clawing at the door, but soon after retreats to the rear of the old entry hall to ready a charge against the first person to enter the house. With almost no light inside the mansion, it normally benefits from concealment from assailants, allowing him to harry a party of intruders by himself.

BLACKTONGUE CR 6

XP 2,400

Advanced shadow mastiff (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 241, 290)

hp 63

Development: Blacktongue's howl might panic the PCs and send them fleeing from the estate. Unless a fleeing character's player indicates otherwise, assume the character runs directly away from the house, into the Forlarren Grove (area K1). The mastiff readies an action to charge any creature that opens one of the doors to the room, which is particularly inconvenient if any PCs fell into the pit trap under the porch.

Blacktongue hates mortal creatures and attacks until destroyed, but doesn't leave the safety or darkness of the house. If Blacktongue is left alone, but knows that someone fell into the crawl space at area L15, he uses the wooden flip door marked "D" on the encounter map.

Story Award: When the PCs enter the house at either door (here or area L3), award each PC an extra 1,200 XP.

L3. Ballroom Entrance (CR 7)

The front entrance to Tristeza House is a good quality door (break DC 18), secured by an average lock (Disable Device DC 25). Once the PCs gain entrance, they see the remodeled house for what it really is.

The house's interior paints a very different picture from the broken windows and walls outside. What was once a cloakroom is now a boarded fortress. Planks of wood reinforce the pocked walls, though the old wood and its soiled paper covering are



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perforated with a few small holes here and there. The wooden door in the north wall is similarly reinforced, though it looks as if it might still slide. On the west wall, metal hooks once meant to hold a visitor's outerwear have been filed down to threatening barbs. The rest of the room was likely once the opening to a lush ballroom, though it's difficult to make out any details other than the warped hardwood floor and the heavy chandeliers above.

Creature: Stalking the PCs from the moment they enter the manor is Dulvan, a minion of Anobaith's who became a wererat several years ago. Since that time, he vacillates between wanting to kill the erodaemon and serving her by killing those who would endanger her. Anobaith wouldn't have it any other way.

When the PCs begin to explore the manse, Dulvan observes them from inside the walls, in the secret passages shown on the encounter map. He quietly follows them through tight corridors wrapped around the ground floor's major rooms—which he has access to via the secret doors marked on the encounter map—stalking the PCs as they move from room to room. Several places in the walls are pierced with tiny murder holes, where he can watch, take aim, and noiselessly fire his crossbow (thanks to his *whispering gloves*). He hopes to kill at least one PC without revealing his location to them.

Languages Abyssal, Common

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat), lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats), poison use, rogue talents (bleeding attack +4, finesse rogue), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear black adder venom (3); **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, +1 short sword, mwk light crossbow, *whispering gloves* (see page 55)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) *Filth Fever*: Bite—injury; save Fort DC 13; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Development: Dulvan does his best to avoid detection and study one of the PCs until he can perform a death attack. Generally, he remains inside the walls, taking rat form to avoid discovery if need be. Left alone, he follows until the PCs encounter one of the other denizens of the house, and then he attacks the PC farthest from the action. Whether he kills a PC or inflicts one with a poisonous, bleeding wound, Dulvan attempts to retreat back into another room, preparing to defend himself with cover

DULVAN (HYBRID FORM) CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human natural wererat rogue 5/assassin 2 (augmented humanoid) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 197)

LE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +2 natural) **hp** 68 (7d8+33)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4; +1 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1; **DR** 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +9 (1d6+2/19–20), bite +3 (1d6+1 plus curse of lycanthropy and disease)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +10 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 13), sneak attack +4d6

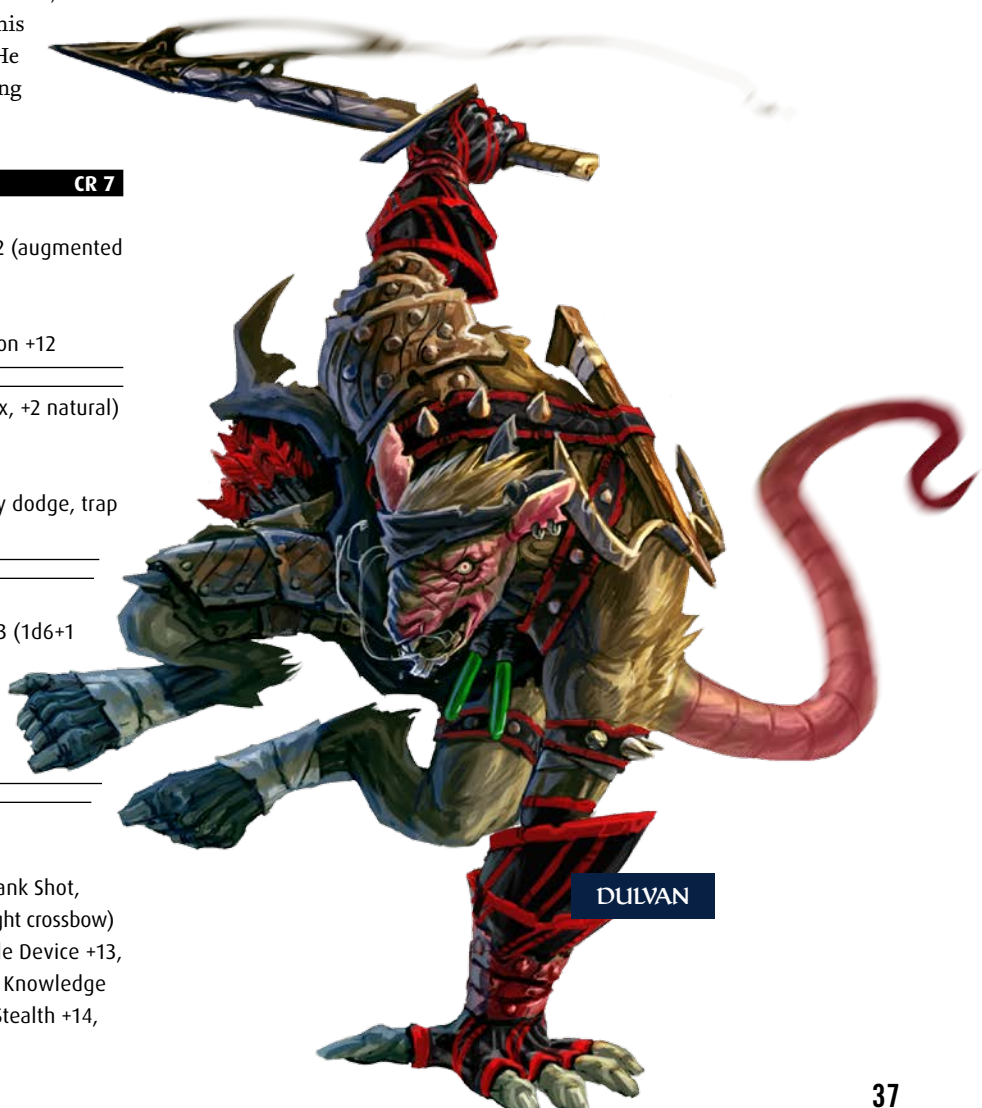
STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19

Feats Deadly Aim, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (light crossbow)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +8, Climb +11, Disable Device +13, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +14, Swim +5





or allowing a PC to bleed out while he chooses his next target. If encountered in open melee, Dulvan revels in the destruction he causes and fights until killed.

Dulvan placed openings in the wall at strategic locations to aid him in ambushing intruders. Not pictured on the map, additional holes open into area **L2** above the table and in the middle of the stairs. The holes shown in the north wall of area **L4** are lower and between the chairs. Dulvan is aware of the threats in the second floor, but hasn't been allowed onto the third floor or into the basement.

Story Award: When the PCs enter the house at either door (here or area **L2**), award each PC an extra 1,200 XP.

L4. Ballroom (CR 5)

This is an expansive room with high, paneled walls and a hardwood floor. Dead plants wilt in moldered pots in the corners, and moth-eaten cloth chairs dot the north and south walls. Overhead, two dusty, lead-crystal chandeliers hang from the ceiling.

The old ballroom is a large, clear area, but it's not without its threats: three invisible cacodaemons hide here. With a successful DC 25 Perception check, observant PCs notice that two of the chandeliers are swaying subtly.

Creatures: The three invisible cacodaemons, servants of the venedaemon Shaysera from area **L8**, frequently perch on the chandeliers above. Once the PCs enter the room, the cacodaemons fly to the room's corners and use their *lesser confusion* spell-like ability to befuddle the party. Once they exhaust this ability or it proves fruitless, they fight by charging while invisible, focusing on weaker melee combatants, while Dulvan uses the distraction to fire his light crossbow at tougher fighters.

CACODAEMONS (3) **CR 2**
XP 600 each
hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 64*)

Development: By the time the party explores this room, Dulvan should be studying a PC in preparation for a death attack. If he has made this attack and the cacodaemons are working to harass the PCs, the wererat then uses his Deadly Aim feat to attack the chandeliers in an attempt to bring them down on confused and occupied PCs. A chandelier's chain has AC 9, hardness 5, and 5 hit points. Being hit by a falling chandelier deals 2d6 points of damage and causes any Medium or smaller creature to be entangled until it leaves the affected square. A successful DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage and negates the entanglement.

L5. Dining Room (CR 6)

A long wooden table with rich curves and thick, stylized legs stands in the center of this old dining room. Expensive chairs

surround the table, but clearly have not seen use in some time. A thick layer of dust covers the table, making two round depressions in the dust seem out of place. Near the head of the table, a dark stain colors the dirty floor. A silver placard sitting in the middle of the table reads, "Here Adrius and Lestenna of the Tristeza line met their ends. Let words of infidelity ever remain unspoken. Let resentment seethe and death be the reward."

Haunt: When seeking information on Tristeza House, the PCs may have learned that the estate's previous owners, an unfaithful married couple, poisoned one another some decades ago (see the sidebar on page 23). The full truth is that Anobaith was the object of both affairs that drove the couple's desire to escape their marriage. The couple's passing allowed Anobaith to take Bitter Manor as her own. Every day since the death of the last members of the Tristeza family, the first living creatures to enter the formal dining room witness this ironic scene.

The PCs hear the sound of a knife scraping against a plate comes out of nowhere, followed by the appearance of the spirits of an attractive young Taldan couple. Adorned in evening wear and expensive jewelry, the pair go through the motions of a civilized dinner without a word. Even as she pours his wine and he slices her roast, their gestures are cold and routine.

Suddenly, the young male spirit gestures to his wine glass, struggling to speak. The female spirit grasps at her throat and fixes him with a shocked glare. Moments later, their forms both slump to the table in apparent death.

LAST SUPPER **CR 6**
XP 2,400

NE haunt (all living creatures within 5 feet of the table, a 15-ft.-by-20-ft. area)

Caster Level 6th

Notice Perception DC 25 (to hear the sound of silverware clinking on plates)

hp 12; Trigger proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, a married couple endures a cold, wordless dinner. In the end, both partners poison one another and die at the table. All creatures in the room are targeted by a *poison* spell (DC 16).

Destruction A mortal creature must honestly confess an act of infidelity (marital, romantic, or spiritual) in the room.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check realizes this method could destroy the haunt.

Development: The living creatures inhabiting Tristeza House know about the house's history, and all but the daemons avoid this room. They gain access to the kitchen via secret doors.

Story Award: As witnesses to the couple's mutual murder, the PCs can confirm rumors of the owners poisoning one another. Award them 1,600 XP if they both witness the crime and destroy the haunt.



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L6. Kitchen and Abattoir

Perhaps this kitchen was once used to prepare opulent dinners for memorable events, but now the tables are all but bare. Scraps of meat and cheese give proof that a meal was eaten here recently, but otherwise the kitchen seems unused. One of the long tables still smells like it was used for butchering, and the multicolored stains darkening its chipped surface make that even clearer.

A successful DC 10 Perception check reveals tracks in the dust, indicating the kitchen is still use. Analyzing these tracks (Survival DC 12) reveals the tracks of a large rat (Dulvan), soft bootprints (Dulvan), and heavy bootprints (Luersa from area L7).

Two smaller rooms are adjacent to the kitchen area. The one to the north is a mostly empty pantry, where a few hunks of bread, cheese, and jerky are stored for the house's mortal residents. The room to the south is an old cook's quarters, where Dulvan now stays when he isn't watching for intruders; it contains a small cot, a trunk for clothes and mundane supplies, and a rickety wooden table bearing a whetstone and a pile of fine metal shards.

Treasure: Dulvan's trunk holds two *potions of cure light wounds* and a vial of wyvern poison.

Second Floor

With the lower floor containing most of the common rooms for entertaining, the second floor holds private areas that only the residents and their closest guests used. This floor is not as fortified against intrusion as the lower floor—although many of its windows are boarded up, not all are, and the walls have not received reinforcement.

L7. Harbinger Shrine (CR 6)

This bleak room is filled with broken iconography, smashed holy symbols, and tomes with violent or suggestive artwork on their covers. Standing by a desk along the west wall, an armored woman brandishes a longsword with a cruel, serrated edge. Her skin is weathered, and her face scarred and scowling.

"You are not permitted here. Present your champion. If I kill her, you are bound by your honor to leave. If she kills me, this place is yours to do with as you see fit."

Creature: Luersa is a former paladin who forsook her faith in Iomedae after being passed over for promotion in her religious order. Impatient and eager for notice, she started a brawl with one of her peers. As the fight continued, she found herself less willing to show

restraint and more willing to teach her critics a lesson about how unwise it was to oppose her. Anobaith revealed herself to Luersa in the infirmary afterward, praising the paladin for being self-assured enough to almost murder her rival. The erodaemon whisked her away to Tristeza House, where Luersa now guards the second floor. She spends her days studying the documented (or confabulated) failures of her former church in order to engineer its public humiliation.

LUERSA **CR 6**

XP 2,400

Female human antipaladin 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 118)

CE Medium humanoid (human)



LUERSA

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +2
Aura cowardice (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +1 natural, +2 shield)
hp 57 (7d10+14)
Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9
Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +8/+3 (1d8+4/19–20), mwk heavy spiked shield +6 (1d6+1 plus bull rush) or +1 *longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+4/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +10 (1d4+3/19–20)
Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 17, 4d6), smite good 3/day (+4 attack and AC, +7 damage)
Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)
 At will—*detect good*
Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +8)
 2nd—*eagle's splendor*
 1st—*bane* (DC 15), *protection from law*

TACTICS

Before Combat When she becomes aware the PCs are drawing near, Luersa casts *eagle's splendor* on herself and uses fiendish boon to make her longsword magical.
During Combat If anyone accepts the antipaladin's challenge, she requests the melee take place on the landing near the stairs. Using the Shield Slam feat in combination with her cruelty ability, Luersa attempts to drive the combat down the stairs, where Dulvan can join in, or near the library at area L8. More than anything else, Luersa despises the church of Iomedae. If a PC openly wears the sword and starburst, Luersa specifically challenges him, activating her smite good ability as she calls him out.

If the PCs refuse her challenge and fight her as a group, she tries to get assistance from Dulvan or retreats into area L10 to get the embalming bear to attack the PCs. She doesn't stay and fight on her own.

Base Statistics Without *eagle's splendor* and fiendish boon, Luersa's statistics are **Fort** +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5; **Melee** mwk longsword +8/+3 (1d8+3/19–20), mwk heavy spiked shield +6 (1d6+1 plus bull rush) or mwk longsword +12/+7 (1d8+3/19–20); **Cha** 14; **Skills** Diplomacy +3.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22
Feats Improved Shield Bash, Power Attack, Shield Slam, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +2, Sense Motive +5
Languages Common
SQ aura, code of conduct, cruelties (shaken, staggered), fiendish boon (weapon +1, 1/day), touch of corruption (3d6, 7/day)
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *half-plate*, mwk heavy spiked steel shield, mwk

longsword, mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, silver unholy symbol

Development: Shaysera, a venedaemon sorcerer, investigates any disturbance outside the library (area L8), using spells to attack the PCs while Luersa handles her charge. If Dulvan is still alive when the PCs encounter Luersa, he takes the opportunity to attack from within the walls or from the bottom of the stairs. Similarly, if Luersa hears the sound of combat from her room, she goes to investigate, standing guard over the stair to make her challenge.

If Luersa wins the fight against a PC she challenged, she drinks her *potion of cure moderate wounds* to ready herself for combat while parleying with the PCs. She cares little for honor and attacks once her wounds are healed.

L8. Library (CR 8)

The decrepit library's walls are lined with leaning wooden shelves. Both tomes fill the straining shelves and sit in tall piles on the floor. A few desks and a long table are also piled with books, scrolls, broadsheets, and almanacs that lie atop one another, obviously part of an ongoing research project.

Public decrees, marriage announcements, notes of succession, and more provide ample opportunities for Anobaith to cultivate unhealthy emotions and bring her hysterical subjects to ruin. She and her minions steal or coerce records from Cassomir, Isarn, Oppara, the River Kingdoms, and even as far away as Thronestep. They bring records and contracts back to Tristeza so Anobaith can plot the course that will take their prey to heartbreak.

Creature: Anobaith tasked the venedaemon Shaysera with completing research, and Shaysera works constantly to find new marks for its master's games of betrayal. Unable to teleport to safety, Shaysera opts to use Bluff and Intimidate against the party, promising to burn the house down around the PCs (and their captive friends) unless they leave it be. If the PCs leave Shaysera alone, it follows them outside the room and attacks with spells when they are engaged elsewhere.

SHAYSERA

CR 8

XP 4,800

Venedaemon sorcerer 3 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Book of the Damned, Vol. 3* 60)
 NE Medium outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural)
hp 100 (9 HD; 6d10+3d6+57)
Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12
DR 5/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 16



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OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee 2 tentacles +7 (1d6)

Ranged ray +11 ranged touch

Special Attacks arcane soul-crush

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

Constant—*arcane sight*

3/day—*dimension door, dispel magic, slow*

1/day—*summon* (level 3, 1 cacodaemon 75%)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +16)

10/day—*grave touch* (1 rounds)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +16)

4th (5/day)—*animate dead, black tentacles, enervation*

3rd (8/day)—*blink, hold person* (DC 20), *slow* (DC 20), *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*arcane lock, false life, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray*

1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 18), *chill touch* (DC 18), *mage armor, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*acid splash, arcane mark, bleed* (DC 17), *mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation* (DC 17), *ray of frost, read magic*

Bloodline undead

TACTICS

Before Combat Shaysera casts *mage armor* on itself.

During Combat Shaysera begins combat with *blink* and *slow*, followed by *black tentacles* and *enervation*.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials[®], Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Magical Aptitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (ray)

Skills Bluff +19, Disguise +13, Fly +12, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +13, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +18

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ bloodline arcana (corporeal undead affected by humanoid-affecting spells)

Gear *quicksand cloak* (see page 55), 2 *soul gems* (4 HD and 2 HD)

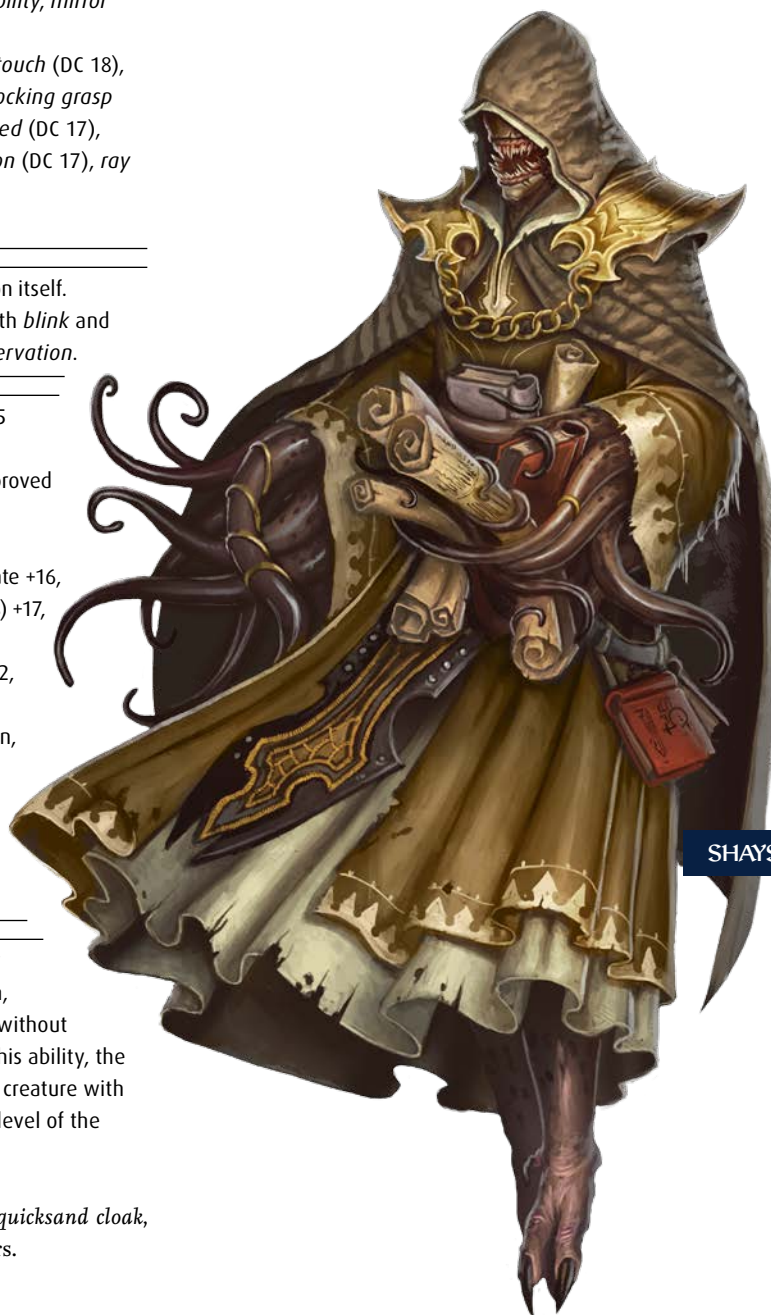
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Soul-Crush (Su) A venedaemon may consume a held soul gem as a swift action, allowing it to cast any of its spells known without using a spell slot. For the daemon to use this ability, the consumed gem must contain the soul of a creature with Hit Dice equal to or greater than the spell level of the desired spell.

Treasure: Shaysera wears the bizarre *quicksand cloak*, which partially protects it from grapplers.

Development: Shaysera values the library's contents, so it disingenuously makes any offer to prevent combat from occurring if the PCs seem ready to parley. Shaysera cares nothing for honor, but the punishment it would endure for letting Anobaith's decrees and histories be damaged would be everlasting. If the PCs seem unwilling to cooperate at all, Shaysera uses its *dimension door* ability and attacks the PCs from across the landing.

Story Award: If the PCs kill Shaysera and take a trophy from the daemon (most likely its head or its three fiendish tongues), award them 1,600 XP. If they return the trophy to Governor Bozbeyli in Cassomir, he rewards them with 1,000 gp.



SHAYSERA

L9. Master Bedroom (CR 8)

This master bedroom rivals any luxury suite. A four-poster bed stands against the west wall, and windows lean out over the porch below. Two tables are set against the wall next to the bed, and a wardrobe sits next to the door in the east wall. An inset in the south wing of the room holds an old iron tub nearly ten feet in length and a handsome wooden washbasin. Despite this room's romantic appearance, dust and grime coat it from floor to window to wardrobe. The translucent figure of an angry woman materializes and shouts as she glides through the air.

Creature: The Taldan woman Caitrin Deveaux sits forever in waiting. As an Opparan youth, she was captivated by the sophistication and eloquence of Zavin Dall from Isarn. After several nights of romance, Caitrin was complete enthralled. Desperate to please Zavin, she agreed to leave the country with him, beguiling Tristeza House. After consummating her love for him again in this bedroom, Dall confessed he was taken with her physical charms, but whisked her away for the affair only to avoid discovery by his wife and business associates. Even this was not the full truth, for when he left her there crying on the four-poster bed, heartbroken, he returned to Isarn to complete his bargain with a certain erodaemon, who promised him a turn at leadership on the Revolutionary Council. One day, Anobaith intends to claim his soul, which is now permanently locked in Madame Margaery, the guillotine that severed his disgraced head.

Caitrin was no match for the repeated battering by Anobaith's magical abilities. The erodaemon teased her with visions of Dall's return, and rewarded her renewed hope with *crushing despair* and *modify memory*. Within days, Caitrin Deveaux stopped eating; 2 weeks later, her body joined her soul in a quiet passing.

Since those days, Caitrin's soul stares out the master bedroom window, watching for her lover's return. She's doomed never to raise her eyes in hope, and the appearance of any creature still blessed with a reason to live provokes her to blind rage. She screams in anguish when any PC enters the room, shouting at him about his betrayal and pounding him in rage. The *amulet of grasping souls* (see page 54) she wears around her neck allows her to manipulate objects and interact with the environment.

CAITRIN DEVEAUX CR 8

XP 4,800

Advanced ephemeral echo (see page 61)

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 105 (10d8+60)

Fort +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

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

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +10 touch (1d6 cold plus 1d4 Charisma) or

2 slams +14 (1d6+6) (while corporeal)

Special Attacks bewitching gaze

STATISTICS

Str — (22 while corporeal), **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7 (+13 while corporeal); **CMD** 27 (33 while incorporeal)

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (slams)

Skills Fly +22, Intimidate +15, Perception +13, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common

SQ corporeal form, stolen power

Gear *amulet of grasping souls*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bewitching Gaze (Su) 1 point of Charisma drain, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 21 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: If Caitrin's physical form is defeated, her *amulet of grasping souls* drops to the ground. She retrieves the amulet if it is still there when she reforms the next night. Changes in Caitrin based on whether she's incorporeal or using the amulet to be incorporeal are figured into the statistics above.

Development: Caitrin's misery is confined to the master bedroom and second-floor landing. If the PCs flee beyond this area, she returns to her bedroom. Remembering that Dall might change his mind and come back to her, she cries until she becomes incorporeal again.

If a PC observes this room from the outside of the house, Caitrin appears briefly after several seconds, paws at the window sadly, and then vanishes. If the PC is climbing and adjacent to the window when she appears, he must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save to hang on to the house. Otherwise, he flinches and falls 20 feet.

L10. Display Room (CR 7)

Antiques and other oddities fill this strange display room. A wide tapestry of green-and-gold silk, its design resembling a family tree of events and dates, covers one of the boarded walls. Small glass cases hold various curiosities, among them a rune-encrusted skull, an obsidian pyramid inlaid with gold filigree, and a bronze medallion. A testament to the bizarre range of keepsakes here is the very large stuffed grizzly bear corpse in the southwest corner. The preserved bear clearly hails from somewhere far away, as it flaunts a stylized suit of armor along its spine from skull to tail.



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Creature: Guarding the ostentatious tapestry is the armored bear carcass—an early precursor to the alchemical golem guarding area **L17**. The bear remains perfectly still until one of the PCs touches anything in the room, at which point, the bear attacks until destroyed.

EMBALMING BEAR CR 7

XP 3,200
hp 52 (see page 60)

Development: Hanging on the wall is a tapestry recording every game of betrayal Anobaith has arranged in her days outside the city of Cassomir. A brief study of the names and dates shows that the erodaemon has engineered the ruin of hundreds over the last several generations, going as far back as the time of Taldor's First Army of Exploration. Her activity increased every few centuries until the last generation, and her games ended dozens of lives.

Story Award: If the PCs take the tapestry as proof of Anobaith's activity, award them 1,600 XP. In addition, seeing the tapestry is a reminder of the destructive power of daemonic lies. Each character in the party receives a +2 circumstance bonus on her next saving throw against a magical compulsion effect.

Third Floor

The third-floor stairs open into a loft of sorts. The north wall ends in a broken window. Outside, the old wooden roof is scattered with broken shards. The window prominently frames a cold brick chimney.

The much smaller third floor consists of only a few small rooms. Many of the windows are broken out, allowing easy access to the roof and to the secret passage through the chimney into the basement.

L11. Chimney (CR 4)

The chimney is the only direct route through the house into the basement. Climbing down the chimney requires a successful DC 5 Climb check, and it accommodates only Medium or smaller creatures. The chimney opens to the basement hearth at area **L16** (Flinn's laboratory).

Trap: Inside the chimney, at the second story, a climbing PC encounters a mechanical trap intended to kill one creature and jam the chimney. For creatures Anobaith allows to access the basement, there is a hidden switch (Perception DC 25)—a loose brick that slides into the chimney wall with an audible click. Once disabled, the trap is neutralized until someone pushes the adjacent brick to reset it. If triggered, the trap fires a barbed spearhead through the subject and then rains bricks down to cover the body and block access from anyone who might help. Once it's discovered the trap has been

triggered, Anobaith teleports to Dulvan to order him to deliver the body to Sejlil and Ethra, the huecuvas priests in area **K3**, and rebuild the trap.

FIREPLACE POKER TRAP CR 4

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic reset
Effect Atk +15 melee (1d6+6/×3 plus 2 bleed damage/round) and small bricks pile atop the subject, pinning her inside the chimney and walling her off.

Development: The chimney leads directly to Flinn's laboratory at area **L16**. The party can climb the chimney quietly and avoid the trap on the second floor, but once PCs start emerging from the basement hearth, it's difficult to escape the notice of Flinn and his apprentices.

L12. Swinging from the Attic (CR 7)

A wall runs north to south across a good portion of this room, dividing it into two areas. The ceiling is high, secured by sturdy beams strung with dusty cobwebs. Broken glass windows let in pale light from the clouded sky outside.

The walls here aren't reinforced by the same kind of iron-and-wood sheets as those downstairs.

Trap: An unusual trap attempts to remove one of the PCs from the building altogether. When a creature steps into one of the squares marked "X," a sharp steel hook swings through the affected squares and attacks the target, seeking to drive its victim out the south window.

HOOK-AND-CARRY TRAP CR 7

XP 3,200
Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual
Effect Atk +16 melee (2d4+5/×3 plus bull rush the target toward south window with a combat maneuver bonus of +16. A subject pushed out the window falls 30 feet.)

Development: A PC pushed out the third-floor window falls 30 feet to the graveyard at area **K2**, taking 3d6 points of damage upon landing. The character encounters the zombies, Yerril, or any surviving huecuva priests, if those creatures weren't already defeated earlier in the adventure.

L13. Guest Room (CR 6)

In this sparsely furnished guest room, a small bed and a simple table sit neglected on the wooden floorboards. Across from the entrance, an eerie blue-white glow emanates from beyond the window. The room is unnaturally cold.

Through the window, a large city comes into view—a future, damned version of Absalom, perhaps. Ash and snow fall from a dark, starless sky. The buildings are little more than abandoned husks. Looters drag stolen cargo through the alleys, and gangs of humans attack each other in the streets. The sounds of wailing, arguing, and suffering fill the air.

Creature: A mysterious mothman waits in this room. As the PCs enter the room, he begins to show the party his vision for the future if Anobaith survives and gains more power on Golarion. He begins by penetrating the PCs' thoughts with his hissing, alien voice, saying, "You should not have come here. Better for them to die." The mothman's intention has been to observe Anobaith, and to take action only if she grows enough in power to become more ambitious. Knowing that true calamity awaits the world if Anobaith leaves a rural area like the woods north of Cassomir, the mothman plans to find heroes capable of stopping her in this eventuality. He hopes, though, that she will remain here or be destroyed before the situation gets that dire. Thus, the appearance of the PCs, with its uncertain outcome, perturbs him—if they allow her to get away, his vision of a horrific future filled with loss, betrayal, and war may come true. On the other hand, they could stop Anobaith now, before she becomes truly dangerous. He shares this vision with the PCs using *major image*.

The mothman has no desire to engage the PCs in combat. If one or more of them fails to see the illusion, he converses with them telepathically in cryptic terms until the rest of the party witnesses his awful vision. He then leaps out the window and flies away.

If a creature attacks the mothman, he uses his *phantasmal killer* spell-like ability and then attempts to flee. He uses *flight*, *greater invisibility*, and *mislead* to get away.

MOTHMAN CR 6
XP 2,400
hp 76 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 194)

Treasure: If the PCs swear to destroy the erodaemon (see Development, below), the mothman gives them a one-time boon in the form of a *good hope* spell. This spell activates automatically once the PCs join Anobaith in combat, and affects those who join against the daemon. This is a use of the mothman's *agent of fate* ability.

Quest and Story Award: The mothman entreats the PCs to make the destruction of Anobaith their top priority. Though they can still rescue the Golden Watch and cleanse Tristeza House, if they vow to defeat the erodaemon, they gain The End of Anobaith quest; immediately award them 1,600 XP. If the PCs go against this path, and it becomes clear they aren't going to face Anobaith, fate revokes this boon; they lose the XP granted by the mothman.

L14. Nursery (CR 7)

The windows of the nursery remain mostly intact, but are filthy from years of neglect. Three small daybeds lie empty. Several old toys, including a porcelain doll and a collection of wooden animals, rest unused in the corners of the room. Tiny tracks crisscross the dust on the floor. They seem almost like the tracks of a cat, but the oily fingerprints on the windows are unmistakably those of young children.

The depths of daemonic evil are illustrated in the spirits inhabiting this room. In order to drink from the misery she causes, Anobaith sometimes kidnaps children and relishes in the immediacy of their fear and broken trust. Several years ago, the neglected triplets imprisoned in this room grew so lonely that their passing created unquiet spirits called attic whisperers.

When the PCs enter the nursery, dust swirls in the room in chaotic eddies. An unseen wind drives the dust and debris on the floor into vaguely childlike forms. Within seconds, three small creatures shuffle forward, a terrible mixture of broken stuffed animals, dried cat bones, and old clothes. One of them wears a filthy rag over its round head, one has the face of a large bat skull, and the last wears the head of that broken porcelain doll. The creatures approach the PCs, surrounded by a dreadful chorus of disembodied, childlike whispers, uttering things such as, "Where have you been, Mother?," "Play with us," and "I'm hungry."

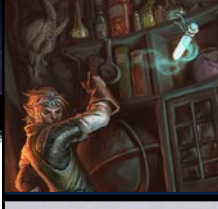
Creatures: The spirits here are the manifestation of the deceased children's loneliness and desperation. Any living creature that comes into the nursery causes the triplets to approach. The attic whisperers seek attention from the PCs until the PCs are within reach, and then attack savagely.

ATTIC WHISPERERS (3) CR 4
XP 1,200 each
hp 34 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 34)

Development: The attic whisperers pursue the party as far as the third-floor landing; if the PCs retreat further, they roam around the nursery and nearby rooms.

Basement

The climax of the adventure occurs in the basement, where Crandel and Tulles remain bound and under watch. Anobaith's terms require that the elderly couple despair to the point of asking for death. In fact, if they attempt to escape on their own, the erodaemon's minions are under strict orders to retrieve the couple without killing them. While working out her deal with Flinn, Anobaith provides a laboratory so that the alchemist can continue his research into the secrets of extended youth.



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L15. Crawl Space

The dirt floor here is moist and red, with small pieces of bone protruding from the soft earth. Many dirty glass shards protrude from the ground, planted there by a cruel trapsmith. The walls of this deep crawl space are earth on the south and west sides; the walls to the north and east are part of the solid stone foundation. The only light comes from the holes in the weathered wooden porch above.

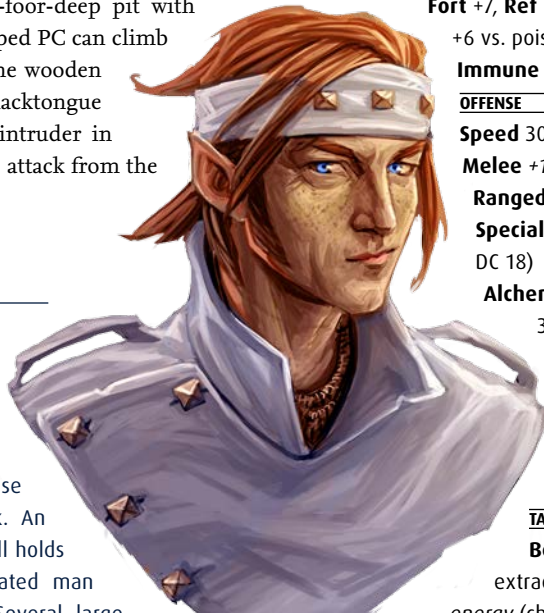
The crawl space is a 10-foot-deep pit with two means of escape. A trapped PC can climb out (Climb DC 15) or find the wooden trap door from area L1. If Blacktongue from L2 knows there's an intruder in the crawl space, he comes to attack from the safety of the darkness.

L16. Laboratory (CR 8)

The chimney empties into a busy alchemist's lab. Colored bottles and vials of varying shapes and sizes litter the tables here, along with workbooks, inkwells, grease pencils, and pieces of chalk. An iron cage along the north wall holds a lone occupant, an emaciated man dead from advanced age. Several large jars hold the remains of what look like rapidly aged children immersed in amber fluid. A dozen smells compete to be the most foul.

Creatures: Taergan Flinn and his apprentices are indentured prisoners here. Anobaith forbids them to leave the premises while they conduct their research—until Flinn's former allies finally despair enough to beg for their end. She supplies raw materials for the alchemists' research, and provides them a little food, but otherwise treats them little better than prisoners. Flinn would prefer an equal partnership, but as long as his goal of discovering the secret of eternal youth is met, he accepts this temporary discomfort. He's not concerned about the imprisoned members of the Golden Watch in area L17.

Between the sounds of combat coming from other rooms, the snarling of the shadow mastiff, and the chimney trap, assume Flinn and his apprentices drink their extracts and are prepared for combat. If the PCs are particularly noisy or slow when they descend the chimney, the apprentices greet the first PC to enter the room with flaming bombs. None of the alchemists bomb the chimney if the fireplace poker trap (area L11) is sprung, for fear of collapsing it.



TAERGAN FLINN

TAERGAN FLINN CR 7

XP 3,200

Male middle-aged half-elf alchemist 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 63 (8d8+24)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantments, +6 vs. poison

Immune sleep; **Resist** fire 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *dagger* +11/+6 (1d4+1/19-20)

Ranged bomb +11/+6 (4d6+4 fire)

Special Attacks bomb 12/day (4d6+4 fire, DC 18)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 8th)

3rd—*gaseous form, haste, heroism*

2nd—*barkskin, cat's grace, cure*

moderate wounds (2), resist energy

1st—*cure light wounds (2), expeditious retreat, true strike (2)*

TACTICS

Before Combat Flinn drinks his extracts of *barkskin, cat's grace*, and *resist energy* (choosing fire).

Base Statistics Without *barkskin, cat's grace*, and *resist energy*, Flinn's statistics are

Init +2; **AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; **Ref** +8; **Resist** none; **Melee** +1 *dagger* +9/+4 (1d4+1/19-20); **Ranged** bomb +9/+4 (4d6+4 fire); **Dex** 14; **CMD** 19; **Skills** Disable Device +8, Sleight of Hand +8.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

Feats Brew Potion, Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]), Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +4, Craft (alchemy) +18, Disable Device +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (engineering, history, planes) +8, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +15, Use Magic Device +7; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal
SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +8, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 80 minutes), discoveries (fast bombs, frost bomb, precise bombs [4 squares], sticky poison [4 strikes]), elf blood, poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

Other Gear +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *dagger*, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, Large scorpion venom (2)

APPRENTICE ALCHEMISTS (2) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Human alchemist 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

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

hp 41 each (5d8+15)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2; +4 vs. poison

Resist fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar +4 (1d8)

Ranged bomb +8 (3d6+3 fire)

Special Attacks bomb 8/day (3d6+3 fire, DC 15)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 5th)

2nd—*cat's grace*, *fire breath*^{APG} (DC 15), *resist energy*

1st—*bomber's eye*^{APG}, *cure light wounds* (2), *shield*, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat The apprentice alchemists drink their extracts of *cat's grace* and *resist energy* (choosing fire).

Base Statistics Without *cat's grace* and *resist energy*, the apprentice alchemists' statistics are **Init** +6; **AC** 16; **Ref** +6;

Ranged bomb +6 (3d6+3 fire); **Dex** 14; **CMD** 16; **Skills** Disable Device +10.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Brew Potion, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]), Throw Anything

Skills Appraise +11, Craft (alchemy) +14, Disable Device +12, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +9, Spellcraft +11

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +5, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 50 minutes), discoveries (acid bomb, feral mutagen), poison use, swift alchemy

Combat Gear *wand of cure light wounds* (25 charges);

Other Gear mwk studded leather, mwk morningstar, *assisting gloves*^{UE}

Treasure: Flinn's lab holds several finished potions, including two *potions of barkskin*, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, one *potion of cure critical wounds*, one *potion of detonate* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 215), and one *potion of thorn body* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 248). In addition, one sample of *lesser age resistance* extract remains here (though as an extract, the PCs can't actually use it, only examine it).

Development: The golem stays put unless Flinn spends a full-round action to unlock the door to area L17 and orders the construct to attack. Though combat in this room might attract Anobaith's notice, she's unlikely to use her defensive abilities to aid Flinn. She instead

teleports into the laboratory once during the combat to observe. If the combat is going well for the alchemists, she immediately returns to her den to prepare. If the PCs clearly have the upper hand, she uses her summon spell-like ability in an attempt to bring ceustodaemons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 65) to help Flinn and his apprentices. The alchemical golem follows only Flinn's direct orders, so unless the half-elf can get away to ask it for help, it stays in area L17 and guards the remaining members of the Golden Watch.

PCs who investigate the elderly corpse in the cell or any of the young specimens in jars might deduce (Craft [alchemy] or Heal DC 20) that the old man was a caliban from the Verduran Forest, and that the young bodies are all failed clones of Flinn. All were part of Flinn's experiments meant to find a way to control the aging process.

Story Award: Flinn doesn't confess his plot unless faced with his friends and asked, or unless one of the PCs succeeds at a DC 18 Intimidate check. Flinn's confession makes him guilty of his arrangement with Anobaith—he can't simply claim the daemon corrupted him. If the PCs gain the confession from Flinn, award them an additional 2,400 XP.

L17. Prison (CR 9)

Igneous Crandel and Branda Tules are both unconscious in separate iron-barred cells. Two doors in the east wall are the only exits to this room. An eight-foot-tall creation of glass bottles and sheepskin hoses built into a wood-and-iron frame stands upright, guarding the room. One arm is packed with glass bottles filled with different-colored liquids, and is built to fire those bottles at intruders.

Creature: Anobaith furnished Flinn with a mighty alchemical golem that he then customized to suit his preferences. Flinn and his apprentices perform maintenance for the machine, and the golem watches tirelessly over the prisoners in the basement.

The golem's instructions are to leave the alchemists and daemons alone, but it tolerates the presence of no creatures outside the metal cages. It immediately attacks when the PCs enter. Though the golem has no control over the alchemical effects it produces with its bombs or slam attacks, it refuses to target the prisoners or the interior of one of the cells with its bombs.

ALCHEMICAL GOLEM CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 96 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 135)

VERUS "IGNEOUS" CRANDEL CR 1/2

Injured male old human fighter 5

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-1 Dex)



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hp 9/32 (5d10+5)

Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +3 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Melee unarmed strike +6 (1d3+1)

STATISTICS

Base Atk +5; CMB +4; CMD 13

BRANDA TULLES

CR 1/2

Injured female old human rogue 5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge); +1 dodge vs. traps

hp 4/12 (5d8-10)

Fort -1, Ref +4, Will +1

OFFENSE

Melee unarmed strike +3 (1d3-2/18-20)

STATISTICS

Base Atk +3; CMB -1; CMD 12

Development: The keys for Tulates and Crandel's cells hang from the golem. Freeing them without the keys requires a successful DC 25 Disable Device check.

Crandel and Tulates are mobile once revived and sufficiently healed of their nonlethal damage. The remaining members of the Golden Watch are battered and low on resources. However, they're determined to avenge the damage done to their coterie, bring justice to Flinn and his apprentices, or end the threat that their captor poses once and for all. If the PCs accept their help, the two have the following statistics unless further healed or equipped. Note that both of them currently have two negative levels and 20 points of nonlethal damage in addition to their current hit point damage. Their full statistics can be found on page 6; the stat blocks below include only their most important combat statistics. Neither of them wears any gear beyond basic clothing. The rest of their equipment lies in Anobaith's cabinet in area L18.

Story Award: If the PCs rescue Crandel and Tulates, they gain 2,400 XP.

L18. Anobaith's Den (CR 11+)

This dark den is the stuff of nightmares. Foul-smelling incense wafts skull-shaped puffs of smoke into the air. The room's floor is marked with sinister sigils. A pile of furs and flayed skin acts as a makeshift bed for the room's lone occupant, who sits demurely with her legs folded under a sheer, white gown marked with unsettling stains. The fiend resembles a classically beautiful woman in form, but her hands and feet are withered

and charred, ending in black, skeletal claws. Elegant white scars cover her blue skin, and her grotesquely beautiful face is framed with blackened ram horns. A red eye glares above her brow. A menacing snake slithers out from behind her gown—a hungry, fanged tail.

Since first formed on the bleak plane of Abaddon, the erodaemon Anobaith has crushed the will and hopes of humans on Golarion for several thousand years. Though she returns to Abaddon to offer worship to the Four Horsemen and her harbinger masters for centuries at a time, she considers Avistan the center of her life's work.

Creature: The commotion outside lead Anobaith to investigate the threat. After this, she returns to her abode and prepares for her defense. Anobaith doesn't bother to prevent the rescue of the elderly couple—their deaths mean nothing to her if they still dare to hope. Instead, she focuses on eradicating those who have disrupted her operation, and uses *greater teleport* to escape if reduced below 20 hit points.

If given time to prepare, Anobaith lights her evil *candle of invocation* and activates



ALCHEMICAL GOLEM

her *gorget of living whispers* (see page 54), instilling the living whisper with the command “Drop your weapons and flee!” The snakelike form created by the gorget waits by the door and readies an action to bite any creature revealed when the door opens. If the PCs catch Anobaith off guard, she’s alone and hasn’t burned her *candle of invocation*. When a PC attempts to open the door, Anobaith summons ceustodaemons (provided she didn’t for Flinn in area L16). The daemons start out in the summoning circles.

ANOBAITH **CR 11**
XP 12,800

Female erodaemon (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Book of the Damned, Vol. 3* 46)
 NE Medium outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*, *detect thoughts*; Perception +22



ANOBAITH

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural)
hp 147 (14d10+70)
Fort +11, **Ref** +16, **Will** +14
DR 10/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee bite +21 (1d6+4 plus 1d4 Charisma drain), 2 claws +21 (1d6+4)
Special Attacks object of desire, wilting kiss
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)
 Constant—*detect good*, *detect thoughts*, *tongues*
 At will—*death knell*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *unnatural lust*^{UM}
 3/day—*desecrate*, quickened *crushing despair* (DC 20), *enervation*, *suggestion*
 1/day—*modify memory*, summon (level 4, 1d3 ceustodaemons 35%), *utter contempt*^{UM} (DC 20)

TACTICS

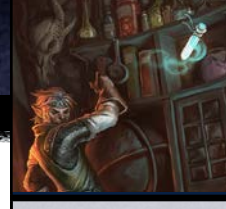
Base Statistics Without the bonuses from her neutral evil *candle of invocation*, Anobaith’s statistics are **Fort** +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12; **Melee** bite +19 (1d6+4 plus 1d4 Charisma drain), 2 claws +19 (1d6+4); **CMB** +19; **Skills** Bluff +33, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +24, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (local) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Sleight of Hand +22, Stealth +22.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** 21, **Int** 19, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22
Base Atk +14; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 34
Feats Agile Maneuvers, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*crushing despair*), Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +35, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +26, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Sleight of Hand +24, Stealth +24
Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.; *tongues*
Gear *gorget of living whispers*, *soul gems* (4)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Object of Desire (Su) While using its *detect thoughts* ability, an erodaemon can see into the mind of a humanoid and identify the person the target most desires, whether it be a lost loved one or an object of lust. As a full-round action, the erodaemon can change into the form of this desired person as long as the target is a Small, Medium, or Large humanoid. The erodaemon gains a +20 bonus on its Disguise and Bluff checks to impersonate that person and avoid being detected as a fraud, but spells like *true seeing* negate this effect as normal. This effect ends if the erodaemon attacks any creature. Actions that could reveal the erodaemon as a fraud (such as performing an action



that the imitated person would obviously not do, like cast a spell or speak Infernal) require the erodaemon to attempt an immediate Bluff check to continue the impersonation, with the erodaemon losing some or all of its bonus depending on the severity of the breach (at the GM's discretion).

Wilting Kiss (Su) An erodaemon can draw a mortal into a state of obsession with its kiss. An unwilling victim must be grappled before the erodaemon can use this ability. A creature affected by this kiss must succeed at a DC 23 Will save or become obsessed with the erodaemon, an obsession the erodaemon feeds on. Each round the target is more than 30 feet away from the erodaemon, it must attempt an additional DC 23 Will save. Failing the save means that the sheer pain of the erodaemon's absence deals 1 point of Charisma drain to the subject that round. Succeeding at the Will save two consecutive times ends the effects of this ability. Spells such as *dispel magic* and *break enchantment* end this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: Anobaith attempts to force the surrender of the PCs by using her *gorget of living whispers*, which remains after her passing. The *candle of invocation*, assuming the PCs have opportunity to use or sell it, will be consumed after burning for 1 hour more. Crandel's and Tuller's equipment (see page 6) are stowed in the cabinet on the east wall. She also wears 2,300 gp in jewelry decorated with four smoky gray soul gems (*Bestiary* 2 64) that contain the souls of Tolger Mann and three of the Cassomir citizens who were turned into zombies.

Development: The PCs are somewhat protected from facing further opposition because the upper floor minions have difficulty reaching the basement (though Shaysera can bring them down using *dimension door*). If it becomes clear to Dulvan, Luersa, or Shaysera that Anobaith is destroyed, they flee the estate and disband utterly. Attempts to bring them to justice begin with finding them in whatever corners of Avistan they settle.

Story Award: If the PCs keep their promise to the mothman in area L13, and rid Taldor of Anobaith's insidious presence, award them 1,600 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If Anobaith defeats the party and escapes, she takes her foul craft to a populated area that's rich in political potential or a center of trade and travel—most likely Absalom. Within weeks, she settles into her familiar role as despoiler of abundant lives. In months, she has arranged an estate, no longer needed by its former owners, and her tributes to Abaddon resume apace.

Because of Anobaith's ability to teleport, the party can succeed only by physically destroying her body. In this case, a great burden is lifted from the region. Oppara still has its decadence, and Cassomir still has ghosts and

OWNING TRISTEZA HOUSE

If *Tears at Bitter Manor* is part of an ongoing campaign, Tristeza House provides a significant resource for any adventuring company. To assess a value for the manor and its resources, use the following rules from the downtime system that appears in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign*. Repairing walls, providing furniture, cleaning up the grounds, and (most importantly) moving the graveyard far away takes about 1 month and costs 4,695 gold pieces. This accounts for repairing existing structures, such as extant traps or the constructed secret spaces on the ground floor. The traps have a total value of 9,750 gp. If the PCs choose not to repair them, repair costs are reduced to 2,695 gp, and the refurbished manor has no traps and is worth 16,750 gp (365 Goods, 332 Labor).

Because of its reputation as Bitter Manor and its remote location, Tristeza House is difficult to sell. If the PCs wish to sell it, the task is more difficult and time consuming, and has a lesser reward. It takes 3d6 weeks to find a buyer, and the offer is only 20–30% of the manor's full value (minus the cost of repairs if the PCs haven't renovated the building and moved the graveyard).

TRISTEZA HOUSE

Create 595 Goods, 34 Influence, 590 Labor, 18 Magic (26,510 gp)

Rooms 6 Alchemy Labs, 1 Ballroom, 1 Bath, 10 Bedrooms, 4 Book Repositories, 1 Burial Ground, 5 Cells, 1 Ceremonial Room, 1 Common Room, 2 Courtyards, 1 Crypt, 2 Defensive Walls (stone), 6 Kitchens, 1 Nursery, 1 Office, 2 Secret Rooms (passages), 3 Sitting Rooms, 4 Statues, 1 Storage, 2 Trophy Rooms, 3 Traps

strange disappearances, but the miasma over the forest and nearby towns dissipates over time.

The PCs are quickly hailed as heroes when the tale of their daemon slaying is told. They might have committed to resolving a number of quests, such as delivering remains to Cassomir or identifying the unusual magical beasts of the wood. If physical rewards were promised for these actions, the PCs are offered the rewards now that the threat has been vanquished.

The city of Cassomir declares Tristeza House devoid of ownership, and offers the PCs right of first refusal on the condition they help manage the monsters and other hazards of the Verduran.

Crandel and Tuller provide a safe place for Dern Fosimuth to live out his days in peace, and foreswear taking up arms again. They gift their own *weirding watches*, as well as Flinn's and the one belonging to the party's deceased wizard, to the party and bid them great care in their future career.

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APPENDIX 1: HOPE'S HOLLOW

The desolate town of Hope's Hollow lies near the larger city of Cassomir in western Taldor. Hope's Hollow might be most aptly described as a ghost town that still has people living in it. Outside the small, agrarian town, weeds grow on abandoned farms and poorly tended cattle wander at will. In town, businesses have failed and lifelong citizens flee the area each day to start their miserable lives over somewhere else. Rumors blossom into accusations and sins produce bitter rationalizations, bleeding the town dry of goodwill and making every day a continuation of the town's death throes. The citizenry's slow flight from the town has been going on for years. The final holdouts are either folk who have already lost everything, or those who still retain some will to fight for whatever they have left. Even among those who have not completely given up yet, trust and geniality are hard to come by. Residents look at one another with wary eyes, if at all. Strangers can expect a cold, quiet reception at best.

Most of the townsfolk don't know what forces have brought their town to ruin, but they have no shortage of suspicions. Shifting blame from one scapegoat to the next merely serves to hide and protect the corrupting influences that guide the town's continued downfall. It took effort to start the town spiraling toward darkness, but now that its decline has persisted for so long, its populace will take it to ruin with little help from sinister, outside influences.

HOPE'S HOLLOW

CN small town

Corruption +1; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** +2;

Society -1

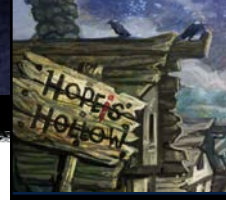
Qualities insular, rumormongering citizens

Danger +0; **Disadvantages** impoverished

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 611 (594 humans, 11 half-elves, 6 other)



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NEW MONSTERS**Notable NPCs****Gilda Marsh** (LN female human cleric of Pharasma 4)**Lerral Armonde** (N male human expert 6)**Sabine LeFleur** (NG female half-elf aristocrat 5)**Thurden Leeze** (NE male human bard 5)**Xemne Pardette** (N female human expert 4)**MARKETPLACE****Base Value** 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th
Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** 1d3; **Major Items** —**ABANDON HOPE**

Some communities on Golarion suffer so greatly under the weight of bleakness and malevolence that they despair of any salvation. Whether sacked by daemonic influences, broken by unforeseen catastrophe, or stuck in a seemingly permanent cycle of counterrevolution, some places simply lose the will to change. When a human settlement sees the public destruction of its heroes, the exploitation of its wards, and the decadence of those who remain, it ends up like Hope's Hollow.

The sad state of Hope's Hollow stems from daemonic meddling. The erodaemon Anobaith (see page 48) claims the northwest region of Taldor as her own, traveling from one town to another to tempt innocent mortals into games of seduction, betrayal, and vice. Anobaith always has multiple games going at one time, so she enjoys the dynamics of smaller communities, where one ploy affects the outcome of another. The daemon's goal is to dupe the poor people of Taldor into consigning their souls in exchange for the objects of their desire, then let the carnage unfold as broken vows and broken hearts bring a once-peaceful community to ruin. Anobaith's work in the Hollow began almost 2 years ago, and today she rarely visits the town. The damage she has wrought on its poor people is so complete that now it seems they'll continue to decline on their own, allowing the daemon to drink in the essence of crushed hopes with little additional effort on her part.

NOTABLE FIGURES

With the drastically reduced population in the town, only two types of people remain: the most noble and tenacious, and the most base and vindictive. The few good seeds still living here might be the only hope for bringing the town back from darkness, but they need help and some sign that things could get better before they can do much. The following figures illustrate the pervasive sadness and despondency of a town torn apart by the unmitigated victory of corrupting influences.

Gilda Marsh: An awkward side effect of the murder and deceit that have besieged Hope's Hollow is the prosperity of those who profit from chaos and violence. As undertaker and priest, Gilda Marsh has more work than she can handle. In addition to her more expected duties, Marsh is frequently sought after by superstitious and vindictive

folk who seek to pay for divine protection, or for curses against those they blame for the sad conditions in their town. This development saddens Marsh, but she feels the call to observe the slow demise of Hope's Hollow as she would any dying soul.

Lerral Armonde: Lerral is the mayor of this beleaguered town. The last person to hold the office was caught with the wife of a man he jailed under suspicious circumstances, and was hanged at night by an unknown group of citizens. Armonde knows the task before him is daunting. Having conducted business in Galt in his younger days, he can't help but think that recent events have too much in common with the constant slaughter of that nation's leaders. Lerral wants to help his town locate whatever corrupting influence has a hold on it, but he makes his own self-preservation his first priority.

Sabine LeFleur: Few people retain the impulse to defend and protect the people of the Hollow, and those who do never last long. Sabine LeFleur's husband and her only son were murdered by a pair of grieving parents who insisted an angel had come to announce their child had been reincarnated in the form of Sabine's own. Sabine never knew whether the pair was delusional or had received some ill omen from a sick provocateur. Regardless, the realization that she was alone in a dwindling town of folk trapped in similarly dreadful situations triggered a strong response in her—a refusal to give up her peers to the Hollow's descent into darkness without a fight. Sabine now practices swordplay and archery, and guards several families left in the town to make certain no outsiders, monsters, or dissemblers attempt to wreck whatever peace Hope's Hollow has left.

Thurden Leeze: The former town crier and street entertainer found himself the direct beneficiary of the community's early dysfunction. Trading in news, gossip, and rumors, Leeze began to receive offers from both sides of almost every conflict. Brokering both truth and power, the bard gathered a considerable amount of financial and political influence. The value of his word has waned as duplicity has run rampant in the town, but the impact of his coin is as strong as ever. As the rumors and accusations he was privy to grew more complicated and less likely, he wondered what had changed to bring trouble to his peers, and now correctly suspects otherworldly influence in the downfall of his once stable town. He foolishly believes he will manipulate the monster behind all this when it plots against him, just as he credits himself with manipulating everyone else.

Xemne Pardette: A longtime prostitute, Xemne used to serve primarily visiting travelers, but switched to more local clientele on the advice of a visiting priestess of Calistria. Though this holy woman didn't stay to observe Xemne's obedience, the advice intrigued Xemne. As the Hollow began to shun outsiders and lonely or angry men and women sought Xemne's professional company, she

realized the priestess knew—or even engineered—the events that now contribute to her hometown’s demise. Xemne used her occupation to become a confidant for several emotionally lost customers, and has recast herself as the brothel’s madam and the town’s metaphysical healer. Her ultimate goal is to amass a lifetime of wealth and seek out the priestess who advised her a few years ago, either to learn from her mentorship or to end her misdeeds if she was actually behind the town’s fall.

HOPE’S HOLLOW ENCOUNTERS

These potential encounters reflect the paranoia and sadness that permeate the town. They’re all indicative of the frequent squabbles, persecution, and supernatural dangers that plague the streets of Hope’s Hollow.

Dueling Siblings (CR 5)

This encounter is typical of the interactions PCs have in a place like Hope’s Hollow. In this case, a pair of siblings comes to blows over a shared love, not knowing they’re the pawns of a daemon in disguise.

An argument fills a town square ahead, with two young people shouting over one another. Both have their hands on the pommels of their rapiers, and look ready to draw steel at any moment.

The two people are Regine and Cris Rolst, a sister and brother who have recently learned that they share a romantic connection to the same woman. The matter is further complicated because Regine, the older of the two, has already proposed to the woman in question. The siblings are involved in one last attempt to place blame for the incident before settling the matter with a duel to the death.

Unfortunately for both siblings, the object of their desire is an erodaemon intent on fomenting the conflict in order to break the young lovers’ hearts. Unless the PCs interrupt the proceedings, one sibling will lose both life and love, and the other will live with the knowledge that the killing was for nothing—the daemon won’t appear to the victor after her plan comes to fruition.

Quest: When they find out the siblings are going to fight to the death, the PCs gain the Settling the Sibling Rivalry quest.

REGINE AND CRIS ROLST	CR 4
XP 1,200 each	
Human rogue 3/warrior 2	
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +4; Senses Perception +9	
DEFENSE	
AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 shield)	
hp 27 each (5 HD; 3d8+2d10+3)	
Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +2	

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +10 (1d6+3/18–20) or dagger +8 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +9 (1d6/×3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Alertness, Dazzling Display, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Bluff +9, Climb +9, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +9, Ride +7, Sense Motive +9, Survival +4

Languages Common

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Gear mwk chain shirt, mwk buckler, +1 rapier, dagger, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, 382 gp

Development: The PCs can forestall the duel by joining in the argument. Both siblings are willing to die for their new love, but neither really wants to kill a sibling if there’s another way. If the PCs succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check with each sibling, both relent and agree to another conversation about the matter before resorting to violence. However, if both checks fail by 5 or more, the siblings’ emotions run hot and they reject the meddling of the PCs. Both attack the party before returning to the business at hand.

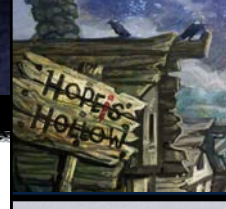
Further discussions between the siblings alone won’t be entirely successful, and even if convinced not to fight, they seek a mediator to settle the issue. A PC can serve as mediator (which takes some convincing of the Rolst siblings), or the siblings will submit to have the matter settled by a court—preferably one in Cassomir rather than in the contentious atmosphere of their hometown.

Story Award: In a place as unstable as Hope’s Hollow, a peaceful resolution to any problem is a step forward. If the PCs convince the siblings to resolve the matter in court or with another arbiter, award them 800 XP for preventing another fatal tragedy, plus another 2,400 XP—the same amount they would have gained for defeating the siblings in battle.

The Former Mayor (CR 6)

A loud screech pierces the air. The sound is monstrous, and clearly emanates from a skeletal humanoid shape moving toward the townsfolk with outstretched claws.

Several months ago, the populace of Hope’s Hollow descended on their mayor with shouts of foul play and corruption. The accusations were true—Filus Berot had seduced a local farmer’s wife, then had the farmer



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imprisoned on a host of false charges. When Berot confessed the affair to his prisoner, the farmer gave up any expectation of justice and let the mayor beat him to death. When guilt festered in the wife, she explained her husband's innocence, causing an angry mob of townsfolk to invade Berot's home, drag him from his bed, and hang him without trial.

Creature: A few weeks ago, Berot rose from his grave as a revenant, consumed with the desire to murder everyone who participated in the lynching. He strolls through town or into the local ranches to strangle his murderers every few nights until he at last kills his former lover. When he appears, read the text below.

FILUS BEROT **CR 6**

XP 2,400

Male revenant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 235)

hp 76

A Hanging (CR 7)

Hope's Hollow has little patience for outsiders. Their own neighbors aren't worthy of trust, so they see strangers as little more than an opportunity for graft or to gain assistance in proving their lover, employer, or former best friend is guilty of betrayal, theft, and violence. When those who remain in the town have had their fill of torturing and hating one another, they unite by turning on the few hapless souls who stumble into their ongoing tragedy.

Outside the tavern or another establishment they visit, the PCs are greeted by a mob of a dozen grim-faced locals. One steps forward, bolstered by the support of the small crowd behind him, and speaks.

"We've got enough problems without your kind sweeping through to make more. We don't know what you're up to, but we know it isn't good. You can leave right now, before there's trouble."

The townsfolk assembled here agree that their attentions are better focused on the PCs than one another for a change. They intend to march the PCs out peaceably, or to hang them if they refuse. The primary spokesman for the group is **Franz Dorthin** (CN male human commoner 6), who sees outside influence as the primary contributor to the collapse of his hometown.

If the PCs refuse to leave the town immediately, the members of the mob start talking among themselves, muttering that it's time for a public hanging. At this point, six members of the mob have an attitude of hostile (Franz Dorthin and the five ruffians that use the stat block below), so continuing dialogue with them requires a successful DC 24 Diplomacy check, and the other six have an attitude of unfriendly, requiring a successful DC 19 Diplomacy check. Anyone whose attitude improves to indifferent or better deserts the mob, losing interest

in executing the newcomers. When half of them are gone, the mob disperses. If a PC fails a Diplomacy check by 5 or more, battle breaks out immediately. The less combative members of the crowd run off—including Franz—and the ruffians stay to fight. If any PCs are captured, the ruffians drag them off to hang them within the following 2 hours.

Intimidating the crowd into dispersing requires only a successful DC 14 check, but later three of the ruffians (instead of all five) track the PCs down and attempt to hang them anyway.

HOPE'S HOLLOW RUFFIANS (5) **CR 2**

XP 600 each

Human warrior 4

CN Medium humanoid (human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 26 each (4d10+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk greataxe +9 (1d12+4/x3)

Ranged mwk longbow +6 (1d8/x3)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Diehard, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (greataxe)

Skills Intimidate +9, Perception +4

Languages Common

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

mwk banded mail, mwk greataxe, mwk longbow with 20 arrows, 254 gp

Story Award: If the PCs get the crowd to disperse, they gain 3,000 XP as though they had defeated the ruffians in combat. They don't get any additional XP if they later fight the ruffians.

INTERACTING WITH RESIDENTS

The people of Hope's Hollow are generally insular and suspicious, but love spreading rumors about each other—even to newcomers. With the exception of some of the NPCs detailed above, no one in town begins an encounter with outsiders with an attitude better than indifferent. Most are unfriendly, and a sizable minority are hostile no matter whom they speak to. With a successful Diplomacy check, a PC might find helpful information from a civilian convinced to talk. If the PC is simply trying to find out rumors and gossip, treat the DC of interacting with any NPC as 5 lower. While some rumors—such as the idea that Sabine secretly wants to murder all the men in town—are false, others should help lead PCs to investigate key NPCs or locations.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

In addition to the winning adventure from the 2013 RPG Superstar contest, this book also showcases some of the best items entered by contestants. The items below are a mix of RPG Superstar submissions and items new to the adventure.

AMULET OF GRASPING SOULS		PRICE
		21,000 GP
SLOT neck	CL 13th	WEIGHT —
AURA strong transmutation		



This amulet can be worn by both corporeal and incorporeal creatures. If worn by a corporeal creature, it confers the *ghost touch* special ability on her natural attacks and weapons she wields (even thrown weapons and projectiles).

Once per day as a swift action, the wearer can make the next spell she casts affect incorporeal creatures as though she were using the Ectoplasmic Spell^{APG} metamagic feat but without increasing the spell level.

When an incorporeal creature wears the amulet, it can interact with its surroundings. Any item in its possession becomes incorporeal, allowing the incorporeal creature to take items and phase through objects with them. An incorporeal creature without a Strength score uses its Charisma score to determine how much it can carry.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Wondrous Item, Ectoplasmic Spell, <i>plane shift</i>	10,500 GP

CHALICE OF COMMUNAL DWEOMER		PRICE
		3,750 GP
SLOT none	CL 7th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA moderate transmutation		



Once per day, a creature can pour a potion with a duration longer than instantaneous into the chalice, then drink it as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The bearer and up to two willing allies within 30 feet gain the benefits as though they had consumed

the potion; however, the duration is divided evenly between all recipients (including the bearer), rounded down to the nearest round.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>alchemical allocation</i> ^{APG} , <i>amplify elixir</i> ^{APG}	1,875 GP

ELIXIR OF LAST WILL		PRICE
		150 GP
SLOT none	CL 1st	WEIGHT —
AURA faint necromancy		

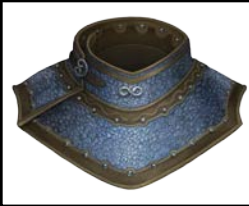


If a character drinks this gray liquid, the next time (within 24 hours) he falls below 0 hit points, he exhales a sliver of his consciousness—whether he is alive or dead. If a character drinks multiple elixirs in a 24-hour period, only one is effective.

As an immediate action, the sliver can guide the action of one ally within 30 feet of the drinker's body. This guidance gives a +2 luck bonus on that ally's next attack roll, to the ally's AC against the next attack made against her, or on the ally's next skill check. The drinker decides the type of bonus and the ally. The bonus must be used within 1 round.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>guidance</i>	75 GP

GORGET OF LIVING WHISPERS		PRICE
		15,000 GP
SLOT neck	CL 9th	WEIGHT —
AURA moderate conjuration and enchantment		



Once per day as a standard action, the wearer of this collar can speak a suggested course of action. Her words coalesce into a living whisper—a sinuous creature with blue runes lining its

back—that appears in a square adjacent to her. The living whisper uses the statistics of a fiendish venomous snake (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 255, 294), but has an Intelligence score of 3 and can communicate telepathically with the gorget's wearer. Instead of being poisoned, any creature bitten by the living whisper must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or be affected by a *suggestion* spell (CL 9th). This *suggestion* is determined when the living whisper is summoned and affects all creatures bitten by it. Creatures that can read Aklo can read the runes on the living whisper and know what *suggestion* is carried by its bite. A living whisper lasts for 1 minute or until slain.

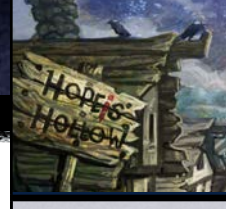
CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>suggestion</i> , <i>summon monster II</i>	7,500 GP

ICON OF ASPECTS		PRICE
		5,500 GP
SLOT none	CL 7th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA moderate evocation		



When a cleric with an *icon of aspects* prepares spells, she may replace the granted powers of one of her domains with those of a different domain she doesn't have but that is associated with her deity. This lasts until the

next time she prepares spells. The cleric must meet the level requirements for both abilities. For example, a 6th-level cleric with the Good domain who swaps for the Healing domain can't use *healer's blessing* even though she meets



the level requirement, because the holy lance power of the Good domain requires her to be 8th level. The icon affects only granted powers, not domain spells, bonus feats, or other benefits. The icon can affect only one person at a time.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,750 GP
----------------------------------	----------------------

Craft Wondrous Item, *imbue with spell ability*, creator must be a divine spellcaster

QUICKSAND CLOAK		PRICE
		15,000 GP
SLOT shoulders	CL 5th	WEIGHT 4 lbs.
AURA faint transmutation		



The exterior of the cloak is an extradimensional space filled with water and sand. Each time a creature of the wearer's size or smaller attempts to grapple the wearer, it must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or fail at the attempt and be engulfed by quicksand (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 427). Every round

it's trapped in the extradimensional space, the trapped creature must make a Swim check (DC 15) to climb out, landing prone adjacent to the wearer. Crawling out doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity from the wearer, but does provoke from others. A creature that fails its Swim check by 5 or more submerges and begins to drown. A creature that succeeds at the initial save grapples the wearer normally, and doesn't need to save again unless the wearer escapes and the creature tries to grapple the wearer again.

A *quicksand cloak* left on the ground behaves as a patch of quicksand filling one 5-foot square, and swimming out works the same. Others may use aid another to help a creature trapped in the cloak, as though the creature were grappled.

A *quicksand cloak* of any size can contain only one creature at a time; a creature attempting to grapple the wearer while the cloak already contains a body is not affected by the cloak.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,500 GP
----------------------------------	----------------------

Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*, *shifting sand*^{APG}

RAT-TREAD BOOTS		PRICE
		8,500 GP
SLOT feet	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA faint conjuration		



On command, these rat-fur boots summon a rat swarm underneath the wearer that moves with her and acts as a living carpet. As a move action, the wearer can travel on the backs of the rats as they swim,

moving up to 15 feet across the surface of calm waters. If surface conditions become worse than calm, the rats disperse and the wearer falls. On land, the swarm allows the wearer to ignore difficult terrain's effects on her movement for up to 15 feet of movement per round. The swarm can be used for

up to 10 minutes per day. This duration doesn't need to be continuous, but must be used in 1-minute increments.

If the wearer falls unconscious while *rat-tread boots* are active, on the wearer's next turn the swarm tries to move her away from the nearest foe, moving 5 feet before dispersing. This movement doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity. If such movement is impossible, the swarm disperses.

The swarm is a normal rat swarm, except its area doesn't exceed that of the wearer and it can't move out of the wearer's space. The swarm disperses when the effect's duration ends or when the swarm is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer. *Rat-tread boots* grant the wearer immunity from the attacks of rat swarms, including their special attacks.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,250 GP
----------------------------------	----------------------

Craft Wondrous Item, *charm animal*, *summon swarm*

WEIRDING WATCH		PRICE
		22,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT —
AURA faint transmutation		



This gold-plated watch is divided into five pieces. The *weirding watch* keeps flawless time without ever needing to be wound or repaired. In addition, the bearer of any piece of the watch can activate it to exercise

power over time for herself and her allies. Once a watch piece is activated, the bearer gains the benefits of *haste* and *lesser age resistance*^{UM} for 3 rounds. Anyone bearing a piece from the same *weirding watch* within 30 feet receives the same effect. Each piece of the watch can be activated once per day. The price of a *weirding watch* includes all five pieces. Pieces are rarely sold separately.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 11,000 GP
----------------------------------	-----------------------

Craft Wondrous Item, *haste*, *lesser age resistance*^{UM}

WHISPERING GLOVES		PRICE
		15,400 GP
SLOT hands	CL 5th	WEIGHT —
AURA faint illusion and transmutation		



These gloves constantly project a very short-range *silence* spell, so that anything touched or held by the wearer's hands makes no sound. Thus picking a locked door wouldn't make a clicking noise audible to those on the

other side, and holding a hand over a victim's mouth would silence his scream. The *silence* extends only a few inches, so knocking on a door produces no sound but hammering it down still does.

If the wearer presses a finger to her lips and speaks, no sound comes out, but the words are audible to anyone she chooses in her line of sight (as the *message* spell).

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,700 GP
----------------------------------	----------------------

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *message*, *silence*

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APPENDIX 3: NEW MONSTERS

As with the magic items in this book, several of these monsters first appeared as submissions in the 2013 RPG Superstar contest. In this case, they are from the third round, when the field had been whittled down to just 16 contestants.

ABANDONED ONE

This corpse of a soldier is twisted and ghoulish, its old-fashioned clothes are caked in mud, and its expression lost and forlorn.

ABANDONED ONE

CR 4



XP 1,200

CE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d8+3)

Special Attacks curse of oblivion, forgotten friend

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th;

concentration +8)

3/day—*alter self*, selective invisibility, zone of silence

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13,

Cha 17

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon

Focus (claw)

Skills Bluff +8, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9,

Stealth +10

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest or swamp

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Curse of Oblivion (Su) Three times

per day as a standard action, an abandoned one can cause one creature within 60 feet to disappear (Will DC 15 negates). Living creatures treat the victim as invisible and can't hear its voice. This is a curse effect and lasts for 12 hours or until the abandoned one is destroyed, whichever comes first. Only creatures that are within 100 feet of the target

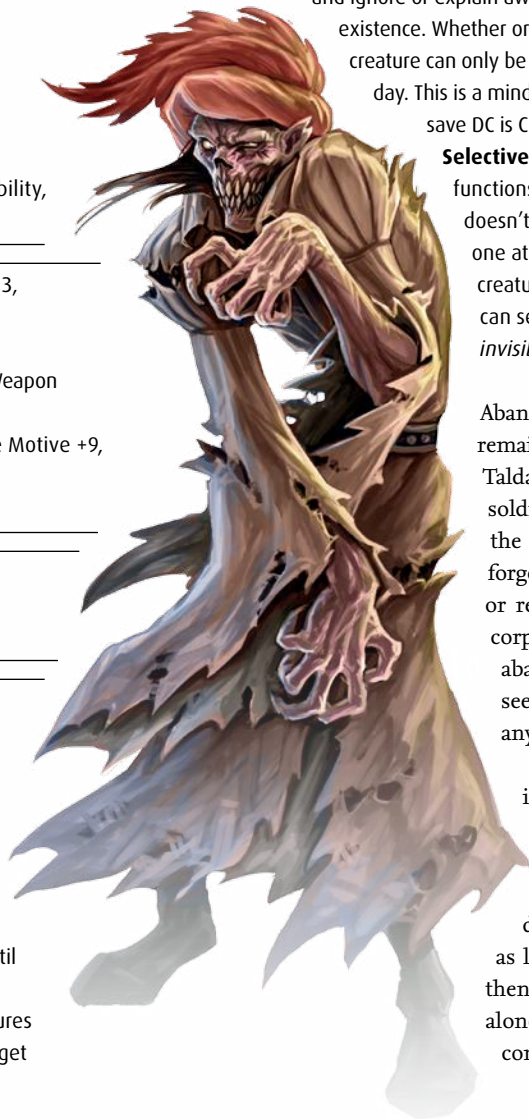
when the abandoned one uses this ability are unable to see and hear the target, and they remain unable to do so even if they go outside of this range. The target remains invisible for the entire duration, even if it attacks or takes other actions that would normally cause an invisible creature to become visible. It can speak and cast spells as normal, but only the abandoned one can hear its vocalizations. The target remains tangible, and can be detected by scent, touch, or the sound of its movement. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Forgotten Friend (Su) When an abandoned one successfully uses its curse of oblivion, any creature within 100 feet of the cursed creature that has prior knowledge of it must succeed at a DC 15 Will saving throw or lose all memory of the target's existence for the duration of that ability's effect, and ignore or explain away all evidence of the target's existence. Whether or not it succeeds at the save, a creature can only be affected by this ability once per day. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Selective Invisibility (Sp) This ability functions as *invisibility* (CL 5th), but doesn't end when the abandoned one attacks a creature. Instead, any creature the abandoned one attacks can see through the abandoned one's *invisibility* for 1 hour.

Abandoned ones are the vengeful remains of lost soldiers from the Taldan Armies of Exploration—soldiers who were left behind in the wild places of the world and forgotten as their armies moved on or retreated. Tethered to their own corpses by the fury of their perceived abandonment, abandoned ones seek to share their torment with any mortals they encounter.

An abandoned one resembles its living self, but its features are drawn and its skin leathery. Abandoned ones approach travelers in the darkness, magically disguised as lost soldiers or obliging guides, then attempt to draw victims off alone and kill them before their companions remember them.



CALIBAN

This scaly, pale-furred monstrosity has bulging muscles, a short muzzle, and two small horns that erupt over its sloping brow.

CALIBAN

CR 2

**XP 600**

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +6**DEFENSE****AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)**hp** 22 (4d10)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., swim 20 ft.**Melee** handaxe +5 (1d6+1/x3), claw +0 (1d4) or 2 claws +5 (1d4+1)**Special Attacks** share deformity, unsettling scream**STATISTICS****Str** 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17**Feats** Athletic, Nimble Moves**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Climb +10, Intimidate +5, Perception +6, Survival +4, Swim +11**Languages** Common**ECOLOGY****Environment** temperate and warm forests and marshes**Organization** solitary or brotherhood (2–6)**Treasure** standard (handaxe, other treasure)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Share Deformity (Su) Once per day as a standard action, a caliban can make a melee touch attack against a humanoid creature. If it hits, the opponent must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or have its form warped horribly. An affected creature takes 4 points of ability damage to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution (caliban's choice). Until this ability damage is healed, the caliban gains a +4 bonus to that same ability score. This ability damage heals automatically after 24 hours. A creature can't be affected by more than one instance of this ability at a time. This is a curse effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Unsettling Scream (Ex) As a standard action, a caliban can wail horribly. All non-caliban creatures within 60 feet that can hear must succeed at a DC 12 Will save or be deafened for 1 round and shaken for 1 minute. A creature affected by this ability is immune to the unsettling scream of the same caliban for 24 hours, regardless of whether its save is successful. This is a sonic fear effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

While an individual hag who has coupled with a human can only hope to birth a changeling (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 29), hag covens prove far more versatile in spawning monstrous progeny. The hags in such covens occasionally use their combined witchcraft to supernaturally create abominable male children—brutish monsters born of foul sanies and unholy ablutions that are stewed for days and then allowed to ferment into living creatures. These monsters go by many names among the hags who “birth” them, but among civilized races they are known by just one word: caliban.

Calibans are free-willed but invariably inherit much of the vileness of their monstrous parents. Unlike changelings, calibans are usually raised among hags rather than in human settlements, since most societies would find a caliban's form too repulsive for any purpose other than obliteration. Thus calibans learn from an early age to trust only their mothers and to revile anyone else. Those calibans who for whatever reason find themselves apart from their hag mothers are the most likely to shed their evil ways and forge a path of their own, but such individuals are few and far between.

Just as changelings are always female, calibans are always male, and since they are the result of hags' foul magics it is impossible for them to reproduce. The average caliban is 7 feet tall and weighs about 260 pounds.



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DEADFALL DWELLER

This creature resembles a fallen tree trunk that walks upon dozens of tiny, barbed branches and shambles like a spider.

DEADFALL DWELLER

CR 5



XP 1,600

N Large magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 57 (6d10+24)

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

Immune acid

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+5 plus poison), 2 limbs +5 (1d4+2)

Ranged spittle +6 (1d6 acid plus entrap)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks entrap (DC 16, 1d4 rounds, hardness 3, hp 6), implant, spittle

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 5, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Climb +17, Perception +7, Stealth +2 (+10 in forests or swamps); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in forests or swamps

Languages Sylvan (can't speak)

SQ freeze

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests and swamps

Organization solitary, brood (2-5), or ruin (6-12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Implant (Ex) A deadfall dweller can inject 1d3 larvae into a helpless creature as a full-round action. Excretions from these larvae have a paralyzing effect, leaving the host helpless until the larvae mature into young deadfall dwellers that erupt from the host's body, killing it.

Each day, an impregnated host must attempt a DC 16

Fortitude save. If the host succeeds at the saving throw, it is no longer helpless, but is still impregnated. If it fails, it takes 1 point of Constitution drain and remains helpless for another day. All of the larvae in an impregnated creature can be destroyed with a *remove disease* spell. Alternatively, a creature can take 10 minutes to attempt a DC 20 Heal check to remove a single larva. This check can be attempted multiple times, but each attempt deals 1d6 points of damage to the host. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dexterity damage; *cure* 1 save.

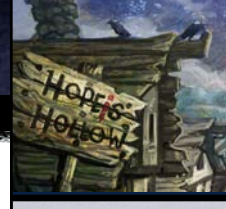
Spittle (Ex) As a swift action, a deadfall dweller can emit a stream of corrosive spittle at one target within 30 feet. On a successful attack, the target takes 1d6 points of acid damage, and must save to avoid being entrapped by the solidifying mucus.

Deadfall dwellers are dangerous ambush predators most commonly encountered in the old forests and forgotten marshes of eastern Avistan. They make their homes among fallen stands of trees, where they take advantage of a unique form of camouflage. Hungry deadfall dwellers fold their many sticklike legs under themselves, collapsing against large tree trunks or simply lying on the ground. When a warm-blooded creature happens by, a deadfall dweller straightens its legs to pursue, and bellows out a spray of acidic mucus that paralyzes the victim in its tracks. The beast then advances to attack with its poisonous bite and sharp, scraping appendages.

Deadfall dwellers reproduce by immobilizing prey with repeated applications of acidic spray, then implanting a clutch of eggs within the paralyzed host. The larval dwellers keep their host immobilized while they absorb moisture from its body. After the dwellers grow in size, they emerge from the husk of their host, whose flesh by that point resembles the shriveled bark of a dead tree.

Most deadfall dwellers have a mottled green-brown carapace, the better to fit into their typical surroundings. A few have been reported in colder climates, with white-gray exoskeletons and freezing spittle. An average deadfall dweller stretches 11 feet long, stands 6 feet tall, and weighs 600 pounds.





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DELGETH

The impressive rack of antlers on this adult elk appears scorched and charred, as do the beast's legs near its blackened hooves.

DELGETH

CR 6



XP 2,400

N Medium magical beast

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 68 (8d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Immune fire

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee gore +12 (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire), 2 hooves +10 (1d4+2 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks fight with fire, flight of flames

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Run, Skill

Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +11, Stealth +9

Languages Sylvan (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary, pair, or family (3-5)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fight with Fire (Su) A delgeth can strike at the ground with its flaming hooves as a swift action, causing blazing sparks to appear in a square of the delgeth's choosing within 30 feet. A creature in that square must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or catch fire (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flight of Flames (Su) A delgeth can use its smoldering hooves to ignite the ground and brush when it runs or withdraws, creating a blazing trail of fire behind it. The fire fills every square the delgeth moves through during its run or withdraw action. When the fire appears and on each of the delgeth's turns, the flames deal 2d6 points of fire damage to each creature in one of the squares of fire and 2d4 points of fire damage to each creature within 5 feet of such a square but not inside one. The flames gutter out after 3 rounds, but can be extinguished before then by any means that would extinguish normal nonmagical fires of their size. The flames can ignite flammable debris, but in normal forest conditions they rarely spread.

The delgeth is a unique breed of ungulate native to magical forests and places where the line between the natural and the supernatural is blurred. Delgeths' soaring core body temperature manifests in the elklike creatures' flaming hooves and smoldering extremities, both of which the beasts use to defend themselves and mark their territory during mating season. Delgeths are unpredictable creatures, and are equally as likely to run from predators as they are to stand their ground and face off against aggressors. Either way, a delgeth is sure to leave a fiery reminder of its passing, the beast's flaming hooves blazing a telltale trail through the brush.

Tribal cultures and scholars of the supernatural alike hold the majestic delgeth in awe. Though it has an innate connection to flame, the delgeth lives in balance with the natural world, allowing natural fires to purge the forest of excess deadwood.

A typical delgeth stands 4 feet tall at the shoulder and weighs 200 pounds.



EMBALMING BEAR

This decaying taxidermic bear is held together with thick stitches, metal armor plates, and a pungent chemical fluid.

EMBALMING BEAR

CR 7



XP 3,200

N Large construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20 (-1 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 74 (8d10+30)

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

Defensive Abilities hardness 5; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d8+6 plus grab and poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+6)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. trip)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) *Potent embalming fluid:* Claw—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dex and 1d2 Con; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Though embalming bears could easily be mistaken for beasts brought back from the dead, these strange constructs are actually taxidermic bear corpses that have been modified so they can walk once again. Embalming bears employed as guardians are designed to deliver dangerous doses of embalming fluid with strikes from their powerful claws. Few of these creatures exist, and those that do are found where alchemy is widely practiced or where mummification of pets and guardians is a part of funereal tradition. Embalming bears are often created to guard over precious treasures, but some serve less significant functions, and are merely trophies

preserved by taxidermists and animated to decorate macabre halls or guard remote locations.

An embalming bear is different from other animated objects in that the process of its creation includes a step that turns the chemicals that preserve the taxidermic animal into a weapon. This especially powerful embalming fluid is a deadly poison when injected into the injuries of living enemies. The main purpose of the liquid, though, is to provide the bear with a semifluid mobility normally not afforded to animated objects.

Many embalming bears (such as the one described here) have armor plates bolted onto their bodies, typically disguised as pieces of ceremonial armor to make the creature look as if it had been used in battle. Though this is often just an affectation, some embalming bears actually are honored creatures that died in battle and were then turned into eternal servants. A typical embalming bear is 7 feet tall and weighs 300 pounds.

Construction

The bear carcass, taxidermy process, and armor for an embalming bear cost 900 gp in raw materials alone. In addition, the construct must be injected with 1,200 gp worth of special embalming fluid.

EMBALMING BEAR

CL 8th; **Price** 18,500 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *minor creation*, creator must be caster level 8th; **Skill** Craft (taxidermy) DC 18; **Cost** 10,300 gp





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EPHEMERAL ECHO

This ghostly image of a sad-eyed young woman hovers suspended in the air. Her face never loses its mournful expression.

EPHEMERAL ECHO

CR 7



XP 3,200

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 84 (8d8+48)

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (while corporeal), fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +9 (1d6 cold plus 1d4 Charisma damage) or
2 slams +13 (1d6+6) (while corporeal)

Special Attacks bewitching gaze

STATISTICS

Str — (22 while corporeal), **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9 (+12 while corporeal); **CMD** 26 (32 while corporeal)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Fly +20, Intimidate +14, Perception +12, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +21; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common

SQ corporeal form, stolen power

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure NPC gear

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bewitching Gaze (Su) 1 point of Charisma drain, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 20 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Corporeal Form (Su) Whenever an ephemeral echo deals Charisma damage to a creature, it absorbs a portion of its victim's anguish and becomes more real. It loses the incorporeal subtype and gains a Strength score equal to its Charisma score. Its deflection bonus to AC becomes a natural armor bonus, and its incorporeal touch attack is replaced with two slam attacks. The ephemeral echo loses its fly speed and gains a land speed of 30 feet. These changes last for 1d4 rounds or until the ephemeral echo takes any Charisma damage, whichever comes first. The third time in a day an ephemeral echo deals Charisma damage, its corporeal form lasts for 24 hours or until it takes Charisma damage, whichever comes first.

Rejuvenation (Su) Each ephemeral echo is tied to a unique fetter—some event, location, or object that reminds it of the sadness of its former life. Resolving this fetter (by consecrating the location or destroying the item, for example) destroys the ephemeral echo permanently. If the

echo is physically injured or killed but its fetter remains unresolved, the echo rejuvenates fully in 1d10 days.

Stolen Power (Su) Whenever an ephemeral echo deals Charisma damage or drain, it gains a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks until the end of its next turn. The echo also gains 5 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour.

Miserable remnants of souls who died in despair, ephemeral echoes are restless spirits who felt powerless or heartbroken at the moment of their death. They roam the Material Plane, lingering near a fetter they recognize as meaningful to them in life or death. Ephemeral echoes gain power and become corporeal as they sap the strength of personality from their victims, until their incorporeal menace becomes a dangerously tangible threat.

Ephemeral echoes exhibit a combination of jealousy and hatred for the living, whom they see as unfairly blessed with the continuation of their lives and potential. They generally attack those who demonstrate a particularly vibrant personality. Upon borrowing their victims' will to take material shape, ephemeral echoes savagely attack the living in a flurry of brutal blows and violent sobs.



LEECHROOT

This tangle of rotten, lifeless roots resembles a mess of bodily organs, its visceral tendrils grasping for sustenance.

LEECHROOT **CR 4**

XP 1,200

NE Large undead

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 32 (5d8+10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities bloodthirst, channel resistance +2;

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

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., burrow 5 ft.

Melee 2 roots +7 (1d6+5 plus bleed and grab)

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

Special Attacks bleed (2), bloody sap, drag under

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 18 (can't be tripped)

Skills Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +16 Stealth

SQ earth barrier

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bloodthirst (Su) A leechroot can absorb blood directly from its victims' cuts. The leechroot gains fast healing equal to the number of creatures with the bleed condition it is grappling (if any).

Bloody Sap (Su) The viscous resin that exudes from a leechroot's tentacles is infused with negative energy, preventing both natural and magical healing. The DC of any Heal check to stop the bleeding caused by a leechroot's attacks is increased by 2. Casting a cure spell on a creature bleeding because of a leechroot's attacks requires a successful caster level check (DC 15 + the spell's level) or the spell has no effect on the bleeding creature.

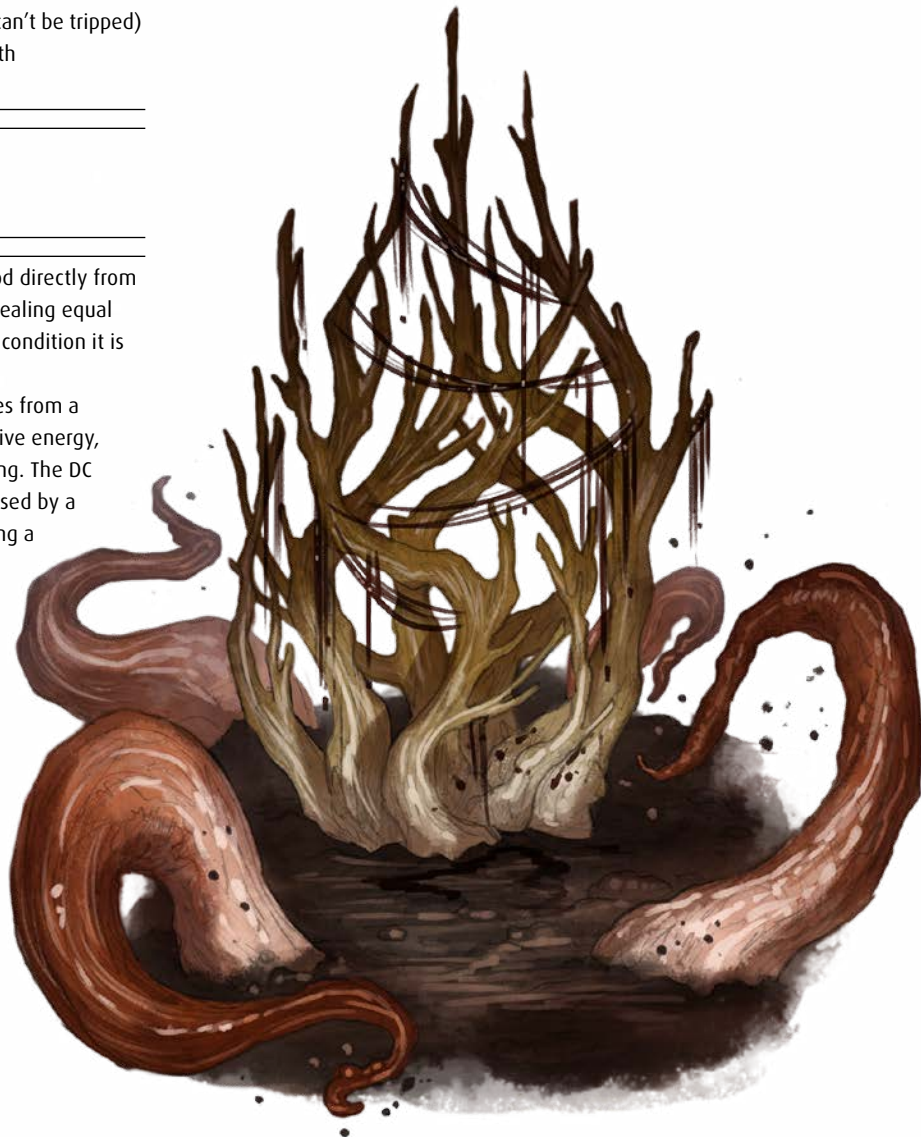
Drag Under (Ex) As part of an action to maintain a grapple, a leechroot can move the grappled creature up to 5 feet (within the leechroot's reach) and bury it partway into the ground. The buried creature is pinned and can't receive help to break free from the grapple. A buried opponent that escapes the grapple remains pinned unless it spends a move action to dig itself free and it succeeds at a DC 10 Strength check.

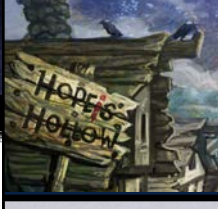
Earth Barrier (Ex) A leechroot burrowing 5 feet below the surface is partially visible, can make attacks using its normal reach, and gains concealment and partial cover. It can be uprooted with a successful drag maneuver. It can burrow back under the earth as a move action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

The brutal Goblinblood Wars created the first leechroot, which emerged from the remains of plants drowned in the blood-drenched soils of Chitterwood. A chaotic intertwining of rotten roots, this monstrosity quickly spread its curse by soaking other dead plants in its sap. Moving underground, leechroots dispersed to forests all over Avistan, reaching as far as the Shudderwood in Ustalav.

A leechroot is driven solely by its thirst for blood. It hides below the earth while waiting for prey and snatches victims with its razor-sharp tentacles, feeding directly from their wounds. The absorbed blood mutates into a thick red sap that runs through the leechroot's body.

An adult leechroot averages 12 feet across (not including its root appendages) and weighs 700 pounds.





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TIZHERUK

This serpentine beast has transparent, scaly skin that reveals the creature's murky red-and-brown organs through its flesh.

TIZHERUK

CR 5



XP 1,600

N Large magical beast (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 52 (5d10+25)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee bite +12 (2d6+10 plus grab) or tongue +12 (grab and pull)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with tongue)

Special Attacks pull (tongue, 15 ft.), swallow whole (1d6 acid damage, AC 14, 8 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 17, **Con** 21, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26 (can't be tripped)

Feats Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +6 (+14 in water), Swim +19;

Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth in water

SQ compression, see-through skin

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate rivers and marshes

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Compression (Ex) A tizheruk can use its compression ability to remain in waterways as shallow as 8 inches deep. While compressing itself against the floor of a body of water, a tizheruk gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks.

See-Through Skin (Ex) Because so much of a tizheruk's body is transparent, a creature swallowed whole by it has line of sight to creatures outside the creature, and creatures outside the tizheruk can see anyone inside.

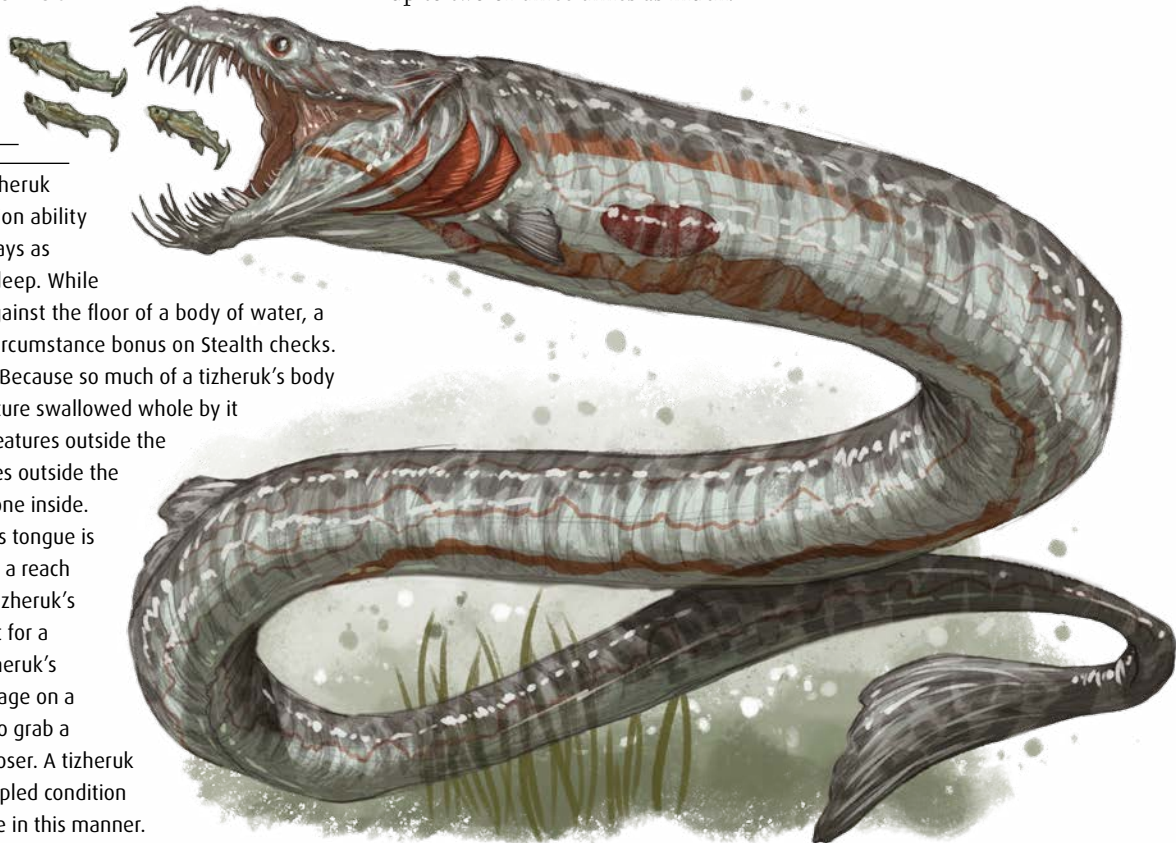
Tongue (Ex) A tizheruk's tongue is a primary attack with a reach equal to double the tizheruk's normal reach (20 feet for a Large tizheruk). A tizheruk's tongue deals no damage on a hit, but can be used to grab a creature and pull it closer. A tizheruk doesn't gain the grappled condition while using its tongue in this manner.

The vicious tizheruk is a foul freshwater predator that wreaks havoc in the lakes and rivers it inhabits. To make matters worse, tizheruks also frequently travel far inland via smaller streams where animals and humanoids might think themselves safer. When a tizheruk swims upstream in such waters, it naturally compresses its muscles and organs, enabling it to remain in water less than a foot deep. It explodes to its full size as soon as it attacks, swallowing smaller prey or dragging larger creatures into the water before swimming away with its meal.

Though tizheruks mostly subsist on aquatic prey, they supplement their diets with creatures on the shore, particularly sizeable mammals such as deer or wild boar. To capture such creatures, a tizheruk extends its tightly coiled, whiplike tongue to snare one of the prey's legs, then retracts the appendage to pull the creature to its mouth.

A tizheruk's skin is nearly transparent, granting it a sort of natural camouflage beneath the water because its rust-colored organs and tissue can easily be mistaken for the floor of a creek or stream. After gorging itself on fish or on land animals that wander near the shore, the tizheruk compresses itself on the bottom of a lake or river while it slowly digests its prey.

An adult tizheruk is 8 feet long and weighs 180 pounds, though a tizheruk that has just fed may weigh up to two or three times as much.



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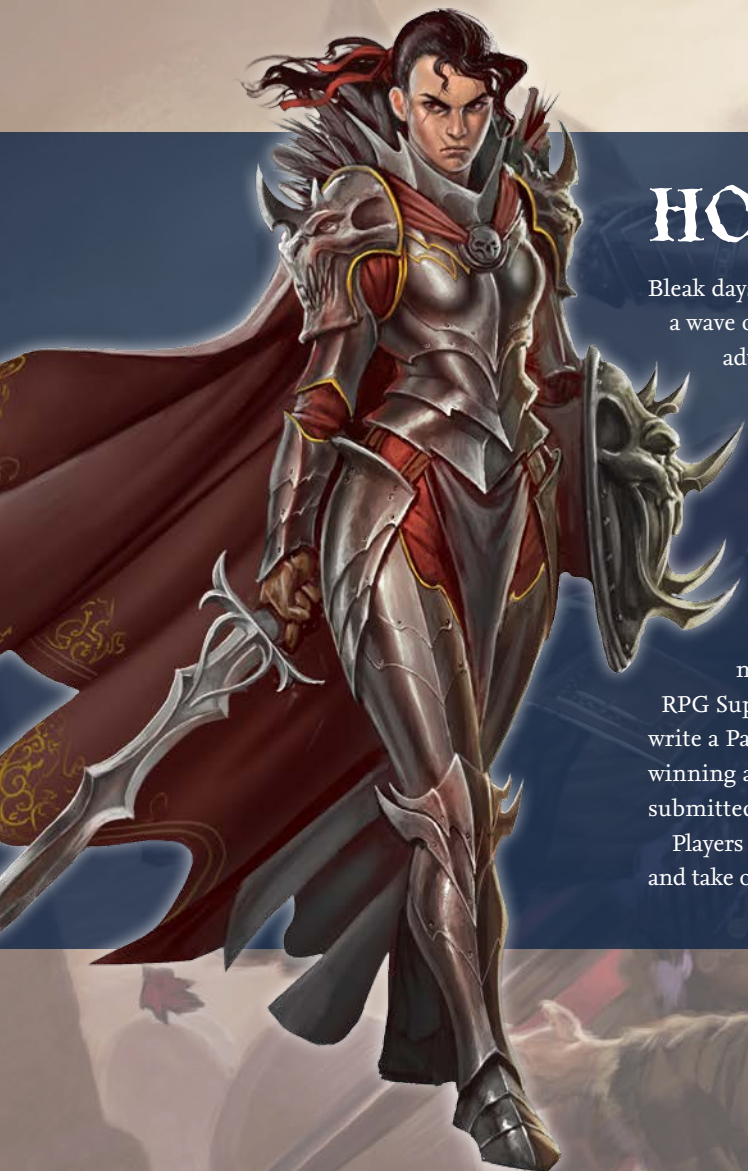
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