

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



Agents of Edgewatch

—Adventure Path—

DEVIL AT THE DREAMING PALACE

By James L. Sutter



AZLANTI KEEP

WISE QUARTER

PETAL DISTRICT

IVY DISTRICT

ASCENDANT COURT

WESTGATE

FOREIGN QUARTER

THE COINS

EASTGATE

THE DOCKS

THE PUDDLES

PRECIPICE QUARTER

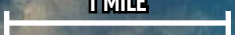
FORT TEMPEST

STARWATCH KEEP



ABSALOM

1 MILE



PATHFINDER

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Agents of Edgewatch

Adventure Path

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by Luis Loza, Andrew Mullen, Samantha Phelan, and James L. Sutter

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CONTENT WARNING

While *Devil at the Dreaming Palace* contains typical Pathfinder action and adventure, it also presents scenarios—particularly in Chapter 4—that fall into the realm of horror. This includes depictions of serial killers, torture, nonconsensual voyeurism, and violence against children. Before you begin, understand that player consent (including that of the Game Master) is vital to a safe and fun play experience for everyone. You should talk with your players before beginning the adventure and modify descriptions or scenarios as appropriate.



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CHAPTER 1: THE MEAN STREETS OF ABSALOM 4

The Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path begins! The heroes, as new recruits of the recently formed city guard division called Edgewatch, must patrol Absalom's Precipice Quarter and resolve crimes at the once-in-a-lifetime Radiant Festival. No sooner have they walked their first beat, however, than a disaster at a traveling menagerie requires the officers' to stop escaped beasts from wreaking total mayhem.

CHAPTER 2: MISSING PERSONS 20

The agents' next mission is to investigate a rash of mysterious disappearances, starting with laborers who were constructing the Dragonfly Pagoda exhibit. When the heroes find that the construction site has been taken over by rebellious kobolds who are holding the workers hostage, they must infiltrate the half-completed shrine and de-escalate the perilous situation.

CHAPTER 3: INTO THE UNDERCITY 30

The agents' investigation into missing persons takes them undercover and underground. After navigating a perilous path through Absalom's subterranean Undercity, the guards reach a planar-themed speakeasy and question its shady patrons.

CHAPTER 4: THE MURDER HOTEL 44

Having traced the missing persons to the same hotel, the Edgewatch agents must battle their way through an array of sadistic traps and torments in order to finally bring a serial killer and his associates to justice.

A FESTIVE BACKDROP

The Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path takes place in Absalom during the city's grand centennial celebration, the Radiant Festival, which spans the entire summer season. The six volumes of this campaign assume that the player characters are fledgling city guards at the outset of the festival and the city's only hope by summer's end. However, you need not keep precise track of the in-game calendar. Dates for significant events (such as the Radiant Parade in the second volume or the Floating Gala at the Lucky Nimbus in the third volume) are purposefully omitted to give you and your players ample flexibility for the amount of time that passes between challenges, chapters, and adventures, including downtime and time for recuperation.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Devil at the Dreaming Palace" is designed for four characters.

- 1 The Edgewatch agents begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2 The agents should reach 2nd level after resolving the hostage situation at the Dragonfly Pagoda.
- 3 The agents should reach 3rd level before they start investigating the Dreaming Palace.
- 4 The agents should reach 4th level before they delve into the Dreaming Palace's basement.

The agents should be halfway to 5th level by the adventure's conclusion.



CHAPTER 1: THE MEAN STREETS OF ABSALOM

Absalom, the City at the Center of the World, has always drawn travelers from distant lands. Yet this year is different, for it is the year of the Radiant Festival, a celebration of epic proportions held every hundred years to commemorate the failed Radiant Siege of Absalom in 1619 AR. Delegations from across the world congregate at Absalom's fairgrounds to exhibit their nations' marvels of magic and masonry. A panoply of performers, merchants, and inventors flood into the city to astound tourists with their art and ingenuity. This year's grand exhibits include incredible gyroscopic towers from Vudra, a Minkaian kami temple called the Dragonfly Pagoda, a moving castle built by Keleshite engineers, and a terrifyingly massive excavation machine called Graveraker. While the failed siege by the Whispering Tyrant a year ago set the festival behind schedule and threatened to undo all the hard work of the Festivals Committee, Tar-Baphon's defeat has given Absalomians all the more reason to

celebrate, and the fair is poised to open to great fanfare even with many of the exhibits only half-completed. Already the city groans under the pressure of thousands of tourists, with locals simultaneously thrilled at the flow of trade and despairing at the overcrowding.

To alleviate the latter, Absalom's leaders adopted an ambitious plan. The prominent Absalomian architect Blune Bandersworth, with the support of Grand Councilmember and City Planner Olansa Terimor, propositioned the Grand Council and bid for a contract to magically transform the Precipice Quarter—a district all but destroyed in an earthquake 22 years ago—into the heart of the 4720 AR Radiant Festival. The enthusiasm of Acting Primarch Wynsal Starborn, who since taking his station has wanted to resurrect the Precipice Quarter, sealed the deal for the site of this century's grand fair.

The Radiant Festival has already brought gold and tourists to the city like never before, but with



such opportunity comes danger. Unable to completely clear the Precipice Quarter of monstrous threats before the opening-day festivities, festival officials have simply cordoned off some parts of the district. Meanwhile, lawbreakers of all sorts see potential gain in the chaos: petty thieves pick the pockets of wealthy travelers and fairgoers, while the machinations of the city's most powerful gangs and criminal families finally reach a boiling point amid the celebration and spill over into all-out street warfare.

To help keep the peace, Absalom's leaders have established a new division of guards to patrol the Precipice Quarter during the fair and thereafter—the Edgewatch. As fresh recruits to the unit, the player characters must keep the Radiant Festival's crowds from getting out of hand, apprehend criminals, and maintain the peace. (See the free *Agents of Edgewatch Player's Guide* on paizo.com for backgrounds tying the character to this setting.) Unbeknownst to the heroes, some of the most dangerous villains in the city have decided to use the festival as cover for a coup stretching to the highest halls of power. In future adventures, the characters will discover evidence of this wide-reaching criminal plot and save the entire city from sinister forces. But first, they'll need to gain their bearings as city guards, and in the process, ultimately stop a deranged serial killer from preying on the festival attendees.

For more details on the Radiant Festival, see the article starting on page 64. For a complete outline of the Agents of Edgewatch campaign, see page 75.

EDGEWATCH

The Edgewatch is a crucial part of Absalom's plan for hosting the Radiant Festival in the still-perilous Precipice Quarter, but as with every aspect of the fair, the city has had to cut corners in order to fund the festival committee's overly ambitious plans. In order to fill out the Edgewatch's ranks, the Grand Council has adopted an unusual solution: for the duration of the festival, Edgewatch guards will operate as the police version of privateers.

Each guard theoretically receives a modest stipend, but in practice only the top brass see any real compensation; the rank-and-file watch members' wages are automatically garnished by the city to pay for food, training, uniforms, and lodging in the station's barracks (regardless of whether the officers actually choose to stay there). The guards' only actual means of earning liquid cash is by requisitioning possessions and money from any criminals they catch breaking major laws—no trial required. All findings are to be meticulously catalogued so as to prevent abuse of power, and any confiscated goods with identifiable owners must be returned. Absalom's Grand Council insists that once the festival is over it will revise the budget and convert the Edgewatch to a normal pay structure. In the meantime, the public tolerates the guards' summary justice, preferring it to the anarchy of an under-policed city.

The Edgewatch operates from a newly constructed precinct headquarters near the center of the Precipice Quarter under the command of an infamous veteran of justice, Lieutenant Grospek Lavarsus. The station is a cramped and crowded affair, with a desk-packed main workroom and a few private offices and interrogation cells. Most of the younger guards live in an attached barracks, while guards with their own lodgings and families sleep elsewhere. A small cafeteria and a heavily guarded armory and evidence locker round out the installation.

Agents can purchase gear from the Edgewatch's quartermaster, including all the common adventuring gear, weapons, and armor from the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* and the new items in the Adventure Toolbox (see page 77).

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The heroes gain their footing as new members of the Precipice Quarter's Edgewatch. Their assignments include de-escalating a run-of-the-mill bar brawl, completing a street beat during which they'll encounter a variety of troublemakers taking advantage of the Radiant Festival, and capturing or subduing the escaped animals at a menagerie exhibit.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The following list includes all significant pieces of permanent and consumable treasure found in this chapter, excepting currency and mundane equipment.

- almiraj horn (+1 dagger)
- lesser antidote
- lesser antiplague
- lesser tanglefoot bag
- minor healing potions (5)
- owlbear claw
- salve of antiparalysis
- scroll of charm
- scroll of speak with animals
- silver shortsword
- wand of command

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FACES OF EDGEWATCH

In addition to Lieutenant Lavarsus, the following NPCs are cornerstone personalities within Edgewatch Headquarters, which you can include in your game at your discretion.

Detective Desdelen “Skinny” Bolera (NG female half-elf investigator 6): Skinny is the Edgewatch’s best detective, and she doesn’t hesitate to say so herself. Having grown up on the streets of the Docks, she has a deep understanding of how crime works in the city and can teach rookies the basics of detective work if they win her approval. With her rakish charm, trademark hat, and penchant for intradepartmental flings, Skinny is notorious around the district for breaking hearts, and she just might set her sights on one or more of the agents if they’re (un)lucky.

Sergeant Moldun Ollo (LG male dwarf senior officer 8): The beloved Sergeant Ollo has been a city guard in various Absalom precincts for longer than a human lifetime. Unflappable and placid to the point of occasionally falling asleep mid-conversation, Ollo nevertheless keeps Edgewatch Headquarters organized by turning Lieutenant Lavarsus’s tirades into concrete orders. He gripes constantly about the chaos of the festival, with the constant refrain that he’s getting too old for this business.

Corporal Kerr Batiste (NE female human officer 8): While outwardly a meticulous officer who answers every order with a crisp salute, Corporal Batiste is in fact deeply corrupt. She uses her position in the Edgewatch to facilitate minor scams, shake down law-abiding citizens, and act as an informant for several local gangs. As the heroes establish themselves as capable agents, Batiste may quietly take an interest in them, either as potential confederates or in order to sell information about them to the very criminal organizations they’re investigating.

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins when the heroes—newly inducted into the Edgewatch, outfitted with their uniforms and gear, and all assigned to the same patrol unit—are summoned into Lieutenant Grospek Lavarsus’s office for their first briefing. As they walk toward the office, the new recruits no doubt notice some of the unit’s established members giving them sympathetic looks.

Lieutenant Lavarsus is a large human man with curly, graying blond hair. He has a broad belly, a gilded nightstick slung in his belt, and an unlit cigar clamped in his teeth. (For more about Lavarsus’s personality and background, see page 86.) As the heroes enter and stand at attention, read or paraphrase the following.

The lieutenant rises from behind his desk, glaring out from beneath brooding brows as he silently studies his new agents.

After a long moment, he shakes his head, muttering “unbelievable.” as he pulls his well-chewed cigar from his mouth and gestures disdainfully. “This year’s Radiant Festival is the most ambitious peacetime undertaking the city’s seen. The Edgewatch is responsible for the safety of thousands. I told the council I needed the best of the best. And instead they send me you—a bunch of rookies so green you’ve practically got gills. Did you pin those badges on yourself, or did Sergeant Ollo have to do it for you?” He sighs and sits.

“Abadar only knows what sin I committed to deserve you. But we work with what we’re given. You do what you’re told, learn from the veterans, and maybe you’ll come out of this proper guards. But if I catch you shirking work or tarnishing the reputation of this precinct, I’ll bounce you out of here so hard you’ll land in Absalom Harbor. Clear?” He doesn’t wait for an answer, instead snatching up a scrap of paper from his desk and holding it out. “Here’s your first assignment. A bunch of dung-heeled wannabe adventurers are smashing up the Topsy Tengu. Clean it up—book ‘em or fine ‘em, just don’t kill anyone.” He shuffles through some more papers on his desk before looking up pointedly. “Well? You want me to hold your hand on the way there? Get going. Dismissed.”

NOISE COMPLAINT

The Topsy Tengu is a new mid-tier tavern in the Precipice Quarter built to cater to foreign officials and dignitaries during the daylight hours and opening its doors to more common visitors in the evening. Its owner, an Absalomian named **Belberry Breckenridge** (N female halfling innkeeper 2), had hoped to liven things up by allowing in adventuring groups to entertain the clientele with tales of derring-do, but this particular business idea hasn’t worked out quite as she expected.

At the moment, a group of neophyte dungeon delvers are celebrating their first successful foray into the monster-infested siege castles surrounding Absalom. Unfortunately for Belberry, the adventurers’ celebration consists primarily of getting royally drunk, smashing furniture in ever-growing retellings of their exploits, and picking fights with other patrons. The drunkards refer to themselves as either the Splendid Spelunkers or the Burning Banshees—they’ve agreed on alliteration but are still arguing over the exact name.

A. THE TIPSY TENGU

MODERATE 1

When the Edgewatch agents arrive at the tavern, the Splendid Spelunkers/Burning Banshees are arguing loudly with Belberry inside the main hall.

The interior of the Topsy Tengu is a raucous mess of tipped-over chairs and spilled drinks. A motley group of drunken adventurers is the clear cause of the chaos, including a dwarven bruiser wearing a horned helmet, a sloppy elf in



robes, an armored human worshipper of Cayden Cailean, and a leather-clad halfling.

"Ah, there you are!" A well-dressed man with an ornate cane and bold blue eyes leaps to his feet from where he was seated next to the door. "The city's finest, come to deliver us from churls and belligerents!" He lowers his voice conspiratorially and adds, "Honestly, I'd never allow their sort into my hotel, but poor Belberry thought they'd add flavor, and they certainly have." He sticks out his hand to shake. "Hendrid Pratchett, proprietor of the Dreaming Palace. This is my associate, Ralso." He nods to a hard-looking half-orc woman. "We thought we'd come down and enjoy a quiet night of dinner and drinks before the opening-day festivities tomorrow. So much for rest and relaxation, though, eh?" A cup suddenly smashes the man in the face as one of the adventurers howls with laughter. He clutches his bleeding nose and steps aside. "Right then. I'll let you be about it."



Hendrid Pratchett

Pratchett is the ultimate villain of this adventure—you can find his statistics and backstory on page 88—yet he's an extremely smooth talker and the Edgewatch agents have no reason yet to suspect him of anything. This brief meeting is intended purely as foreshadowing. If any agents find Pratchett's enthusiasm off-putting, succeeding at a DC 18 Perception check to Sense Motive allows them to realize that something seems unctuous and false about the man, but likely nothing more than a merchant cozying up to the law for potential personal gain. Should the Edgewatch agents decide to visit the Dreaming Palace before Chapter 4 of the adventure, they're politely but firmly stopped at the front desk and turned away by an apologetic Ralso. For now, however, Pratchett and Ralso quickly duck out of the tavern to address Pratchett's broken nose, and the agents' main focus should really be on handling the rowdy adventurers.

Tavern Features: The Topsy Tengu is a standard tavern, including a common room, bar, kitchen, stable, and upstairs area with bedrooms. A map of the common room—which the adventurers are currently making a mess—appears on page 8, but the specific layout is unimportant, and you may wish to save time by using a pre-drawn map such as *Pathfinder Flip-Mat Classics: Tavern* or *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Bigger Tavern*.

Creatures: The adventurers all have their own reasons for causing a ruckus. Bolar of Stonemoor, the dwarven barbarian, feels ashamed for not personally getting a kill

in the dungeon and is high on stimulants and looking for a fight to prove his prowess. Miriel Grayleaf, the group's wizard, has gotten blind drunk trying to drown her sorrows over the death of her familiar, Runkles the Raven. Skebs, the halfling rogue, just got caught trying to sloppily pick another patron's pocket, and Antaro Boldblade—a human cleric of Cayden Cailean—is getting plastered on general principle.

The four start out actively hostile to the Edgewatch agents, loudly asking what sort of bartender calls the guards on celebrating heroes and accusing the guards of "hiding behind a badge because you can't hack it in a fair fight." Talking them into leaving the bar isn't easy—a non-violent resolution requires the agents to succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidation check against each adventurer (representing the guards' efforts to comfort Miriel, soothe Bolar's ego, and so forth). The agents can retry failed checks, but a critical failure causes the targeted adventurer to take a swing at the agent addressing them, at which point the whole group rushes into combat.

As long as the Edgewatch guards make nonlethal attacks, the adventurers do the same—they're not evil, just drunk and belligerent. If the guards switch to lethal attacks, however, the adventurers do as well (though they likely regret it later). If any of them is knocked unconscious or appears in danger of permanent injury, the others immediately put their hands up, grumbling that the fight was "just a bit of alehouse fun, that's all."

MIRIEL GRAYLEAF

CREATURE -1

CG MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Female elf wizard

Perception +2; low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven

Skills Arcana +5, Library Lore +5, Occultism +5

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** -1, **Int** +3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

Items crossbow with 10 bolts, dagger

AC 13; **Fort** +1, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

HP 5

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +2 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4 piercing

Ranged ♦ crossbow +5 (range 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 15, attack +7; **1st** *grease*; **Cantrips (1st)** *mage hand*, *tanglefoot*

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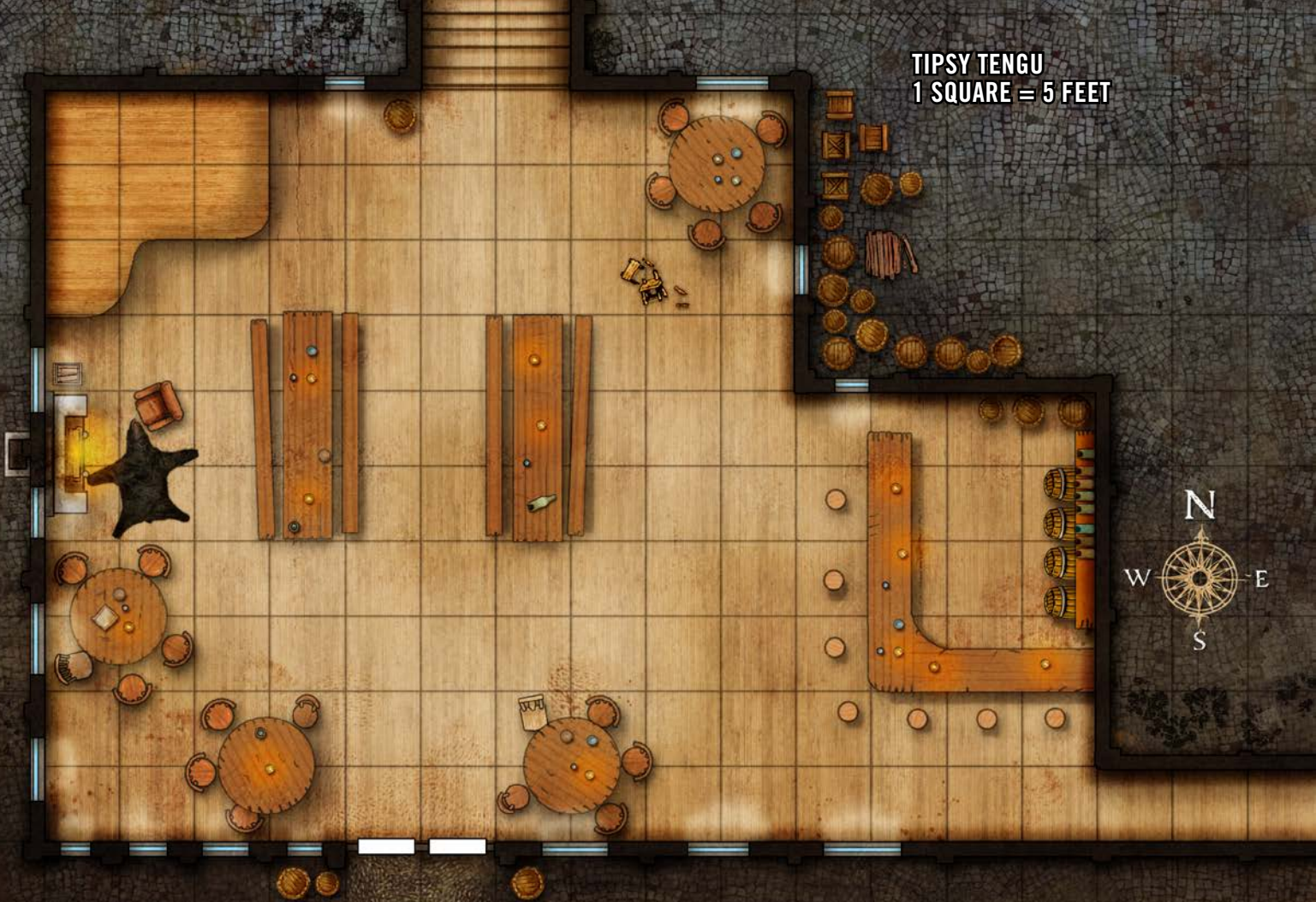
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TIPSY TENGU
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



BOLAR OF STONEMOOR

CREATURE -1

CN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Male dwarf barbarian

Perception +3; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Intimidation +2

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2

Items battle axe, studded leather armor

AC 14; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

HP 13

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ battle axe +6 (sweep), **Damage** 1d8+4 slashing

Rage ♦ (concentrate, emotion, mental) **Requirements** Bolar isn't fatigued or raging; **Effect** Bolar gains 3 temporary Hit Points that last until the rage ends. While raging, he deals 2 additional damage with melee attacks and takes a -1 penalty to AC. The rage lasts for 1 minute, until there are no enemies Bolar can perceive, or until Bolar falls unconscious. Once the rage ends, Bolar can't Rage again for 1 minute.

ANTARO BOLDBLADE

CREATURE -1

CG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human cleric of Cayden Cailean

Perception +4

Languages Common, Dwarven

Skills Athletics +4, Diplomacy +6, Religion +4

Str +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

Items rapier, wooden shield, splint mail

AC 15 (17 with Shield Raised); **Fort** +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

HP 9

Speed 15 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +5 (deadly 1d8, disarm, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

Divine Prepared Spells DC 16; **1st** *heal*; **Cantrips (1st)** *light*, *stabilize*

SKEBS

CREATURE -1

CN SMALL HALFLING HUMANOID

Agender halfling rogue

Perception +4

Languages Common, Halfling

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +2, Stealth +5, Thievery +5

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Items daggers (4), studded leather armor

Distracting Shadows Skebs can use creatures that are at least one size larger than themselves as cover for the Hide and Sneak actions.

AC 15; **Fort** +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

HP 7

Speed 25 feet



Melee ♦ dagger +8 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +8 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4 piercing

Sneak Attack (precision) Skebs deals 1d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Treasure: The Edgewatch agents are within their rights to level a fine against the adventurers—the amount is up to them, but for this kind of misdemeanor guard convention frowns on confiscating more than what a person has on them in terms of currency and gear. After paying their tab, the adventurers have 17 gp in assorted coins, plus their weapons and armor.

XP Award: If the agents resolve the encounter without resorting to violence, award each character the typical XP for completing the encounter (80 XP for a 1st-level party), plus a 30 XP story award.

Drinks on the House: Once the adventurers have been dealt with, Belberry thanks the agents and urges them to stay or return for drinks—free of charge—anytime. If they do, they have the opportunity to chat with several figures from the fair and hear about the various exhibits and events coming up, such as the Radiant Parade and the Blood City Games at the Irorium. (See the Radiant Festival article on page 64 for more information.)

Satisfied with the agents' handling of the noise complaint, Lieutenant Lavarsus cuts them loose for the night, ordering them to report to the duty board the next morning.

GUARDS! GUARDS!

After the agents have rested for the night, read or paraphrase the following to set the scene the next morning at the Edgewatch duty board, where Sergeant Ollo details active investigations and assigns patrol routes and shifts.

Though the fair has been gathering steam for months, with many exhibitors setting up early, this is the Radiant Festival's first official day, and the streets outside Edgewatch Headquarters teem with people. Inside the precinct, Sergeant Ollo stands before the Edgewatch duty board—an oversized map of the Precipice Quarter tacked to a large plank of wood facing the headquarters' main floor.

Ollo gives the agents a roaming route that takes them all across the district, the better to familiarize

themselves with the various neighborhoods and beats. Despite the early hour, there are already two known issues conveniently positioned at opposite ends of the circuit: a heated confrontation between two rival shop owners (see Goblin Fight below) and “some sort of domestic dispute” in a wizard's workshop (The Wizard's Apprentice on page 11). The agents can choose to start with either end of the route, walking through the district either clockwise or counterclockwise and dealing with the other encounters (The Risen Dead on page 11 and Mugging at the Walking Castle on page 10) in either order.



Belberry Breckenridge

Since these encounters occur on typical city streets easy to draw at the table, no maps are provided. To expedite gameplay even more, consider using a pre-drawn map set such as *Pathfinder*

Flip-Tiles: Urban Starter Set.

Once all four encounters are complete, the guards have completed their beat and wind up back at the station—at which point they're immediately dispatched to handle a new emergency (Panic at the Zoo on page 13).

GOBLIN FIGHT

LOW 1

Smoke and profanities rise up from a cluster of food stalls near a small park overlooking Absalom Harbor. The commotion centers on two particularly decrepit booths positioned across from each other, each little more than piles of haphazardly nailed boards, their peripheries scorched and smoldering. Suddenly a clay pot flies across the intervening space, smashing against one of the scorched stalls and splattering flaming oil across several others.

Creatures: The owners of two food stands, Everything Fried and Pelmo's Pickle Hut, have been brawling over the right to sell their dubious delicacies here, with each convinced there's only enough demand for one goblin-owned snack shack in this particular park. (The fact that there are a dozen other food vendors right next to them doesn't seem to matter, as they believe—correctly—that goblin cuisine and those of other ancestries don't have much overlap in clientele.) The conflict has escalated into a literal fire as the two chefs assault each other's establishments with jars of flaming cooking oil. Truth be told, both goblins are rather enjoying the firefight, but neighboring vendors called the guard to preclude the possibility of their own stalls getting caught in the crossfire.

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The rival stall owners, Grunka and Pelmo, are hopping mad, and after bad experiences with guards in the past, each automatically assumes that anything less than full and immediate support from the heroes means the authorities have sided with their opponent. They start the encounter hostile toward everyone and continue to go after each other, fighting the Edgewatch agents as well if they attempt to intervene physically. Talking them down requires any combination of two successful relevant skill checks, DC 15 for Intimidation or DC 16 for Diplomacy. Otherwise, the guards will need to subdue the shopkeepers or physically restrain them; either goblin surrenders if reduced to half their Hit Points.

GRUNKA AND PELMO (2) **CREATURE -1**

Female and male goblin warriors (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 180)

Initiative Perception +2

Items club, lesser alchemist's fires (2)

Melee club +8 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6 bludgeoning

Ranged lesser alchemist's fire +8, **Damage** 1d8 fire plus 1 persistent fire and 1 fire splash

Hazard: The goblins aren't the biggest threat in this situation. As implied by the stall's name, Everything Fried specializes in frying anything that fits in Grunka's oversized deep fryers.

(She even sells fried pickles—the initial source of Pelmo's rage.) Toward that end, her booth is packed with barrels of highly flammable cooking oil... and the place is currently on fire. Neighboring shopkeepers are quick to point out that the barrels could explode at any moment. The agents need to smother the fire quickly but carefully—water just spreads the oil around and succeeding at a DC 15 Perception check is enough for a character to realize that jostling the burning barrels too hard could cause them to rupture and explode.

EXPLOSIVE BARRELS

HAZARD 2

ENVIRONMENTAL FIRE

Stealth DC 15

Description Wooden barrels marked with an oil-drop symbol catch fire and explode.

Disable Survival DC 20 to smother the flames without rupturing the barrels

AC 15; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +3

Hardness 1; **HP** 5; **Immunities** object immunities, precision damage

Explode **Trigger** 4 rounds pass after the agents' arrival without anyone smothering them; **Effect** The barrels explode, dealing 3d6+8 fire damage to everything within a 20-foot radius (basic DC 20 Reflex save).

Treasure: Grunka and Pelmo each have 15 gp in their respective cashboxes. If the guards decide to fine the goblins for their antics, they can claim that money, or the goblins may offer it as a bribe to keep the Edgewatch from shutting down their stalls.

XP Award: If the agents resolve the dispute between Grunka and Pelmo peacefully, award each character 50 XP instead of the usual 40 XP they would have earned from the combat encounter.

MUGGING AT THE WALKING CASTLE

LOW 1

As the Edgewatch agents pass by one of the fair's most impressive exhibits, the Walking Castle of Kelesh, they witness a robbery in broad daylight. Read or paraphrase the following.

A crowd of fairgoers stands watching in awe as, just beyond a line of guard ropes, a stone castle—complete with battlements and domed towers—marches along a wide, elliptical stone track. Dozens of thick mechanical legs support its bulk, and nobles in fine dresses and coats wave from atop its walls.

Suddenly, a commotion erupts from the crowd. A woman races out holding a dagger and a belt pouch. Behind her, a red-faced man points and yells, "Thief! Stop her!"



Grunka and Pelmo



Creature: As a pickpocket and stick-up artist, Larigold Rell has so far greatly enjoyed the crowds of wide-eyed tourists arriving for the Radiant Festival. The easy pickings have made her sloppy, though, and she didn't see the city guards coming—as a result, she's running right toward them. The agents can move to cut off her escape by succeeding at a DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check. If all the characters fail, they can attempt additional checks on subsequent rounds, adding 2 to the DC each time to represent Rell's lead.

A single successful check is enough to block Rell, at which point she attacks, trying to drive back the agents with sheer ferocity or creating more imminent chaos as a distraction (such as by grabbing a lit torch and throwing it in a pile of hay, startling a mounted horse to endanger its rider, and so forth). If at any point during combat she has no opponents within 20 feet of her, Rell makes a break for it, prompting new Acrobatics or Athletics checks, as described above. If reduced to 5 HP or fewer, she surrenders.

LARIGOLD RELL CREATURE 2

Female human bandit (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 208)

Perception +6

Treasure: In addition to the shouting man's belt pouch containing 5 gp—which the Edgewatch are obligated to return—Rell also has 22 gp worth of stolen coins in several different pouches and purses. Since there's no way to know who the gold belongs to, the agents can requisition the money with a clean conscience, along with Rell's own weapons and armor.

THE RISEN DEAD MODERATE 1

Screams erupt from an excavation project on a nearby street. Workers flee, scattering their shovels and pickaxes as four skeletons in rusted armor clamber up from a hole in the pavement.

Creatures: Since an earthquake nearly destroyed the district decades ago, the Precipice Quarter has been haunted by the spirits of those who died in the catastrophe. While the city has made an effort to clear out the monsters in advance of the Radiant Festival, incidents are still disturbingly common. In this case, street workers accidentally disturbed four undead soldiers—members of the guard unit that previously protected this precinct—trapped within a collapsed chamber, and the corpses are now intent on mindless slaughter. Their weapons and armor are too rusted to be worth anything, but they are still plenty dangerous.

SKELETON GUARDS (4) CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 298

Initiative Perception +2

THE WIZARD'S APPRENTICE TRIVIAL 1

High-pitched shouts and the sound of breaking glass emerge from a narrow wooden building painted with mystic runes. A woman in a floppy, wide-brimmed hat stands outside the door, arms crossed and tapping her foot impatiently. She looks up to the sky in exasperation and snaps, "Finally! It took you long enough."

A young apprentice wizard named Eunice and his master Kemeleles came to the city two weeks ago for the Radiant Festival. Upon arrival, the two split up to run errands, but Kemeleles never returned to their appointed meeting spot. Having spent years hearing Kemeleles tell stories about the villainy of his sworn rival, an Absalom-based evoker named **Marin Porphyry** (LN female human evoker 3), the increasingly desperate Eunice became convinced that Marin must have somehow sensed their arrival and kidnapped or murdered his teacher. He asked around for directions to Marin's workshop, broke in, and has barricaded himself inside, threatening to smash up the place if she doesn't release Kemeleles. (In fact, Kemeleles went looking for lodging and ended up a victim of Hendrid Pratchett at the Dreaming Palace—see Chapter 4—though the Edgewatch agents have no way to determine this yet.)

Marin, for her part, barely remembers Kemeleles from their time together at the Arcanamirium. She's far more powerful than Eunice, but would prefer to let the agents handle matters, noting, "This sort of thing *is* your job, isn't it? Besides, roasting my own workshop to remove a housebreaker rather defeats the point."

Eunice has locked the door and wedged a chair under the handle—breaking down the door requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check. The windows, unlocked, are another entry option, though breaking in creates a mess of glass shards on the workshop floor.

Creature: Eunice is a teenage Taldan boy whose voice is still cracking from puberty. He knows he doesn't have any evidence against Marin, but he insists that he "knows in his heart" that the wizard is responsible, and that in addition to "hitting the villain where it hurts," his taking the workshop hostage is an effort to uncover evidence. So far, that search has mainly consisted of him pulling all books off their shelves and smashing several delicate experimental devices.

Eunice doesn't initially trust the city guards to take him seriously. While the Edgewatch agents can simply talk him down by succeeding at a DC 18 Diplomacy or

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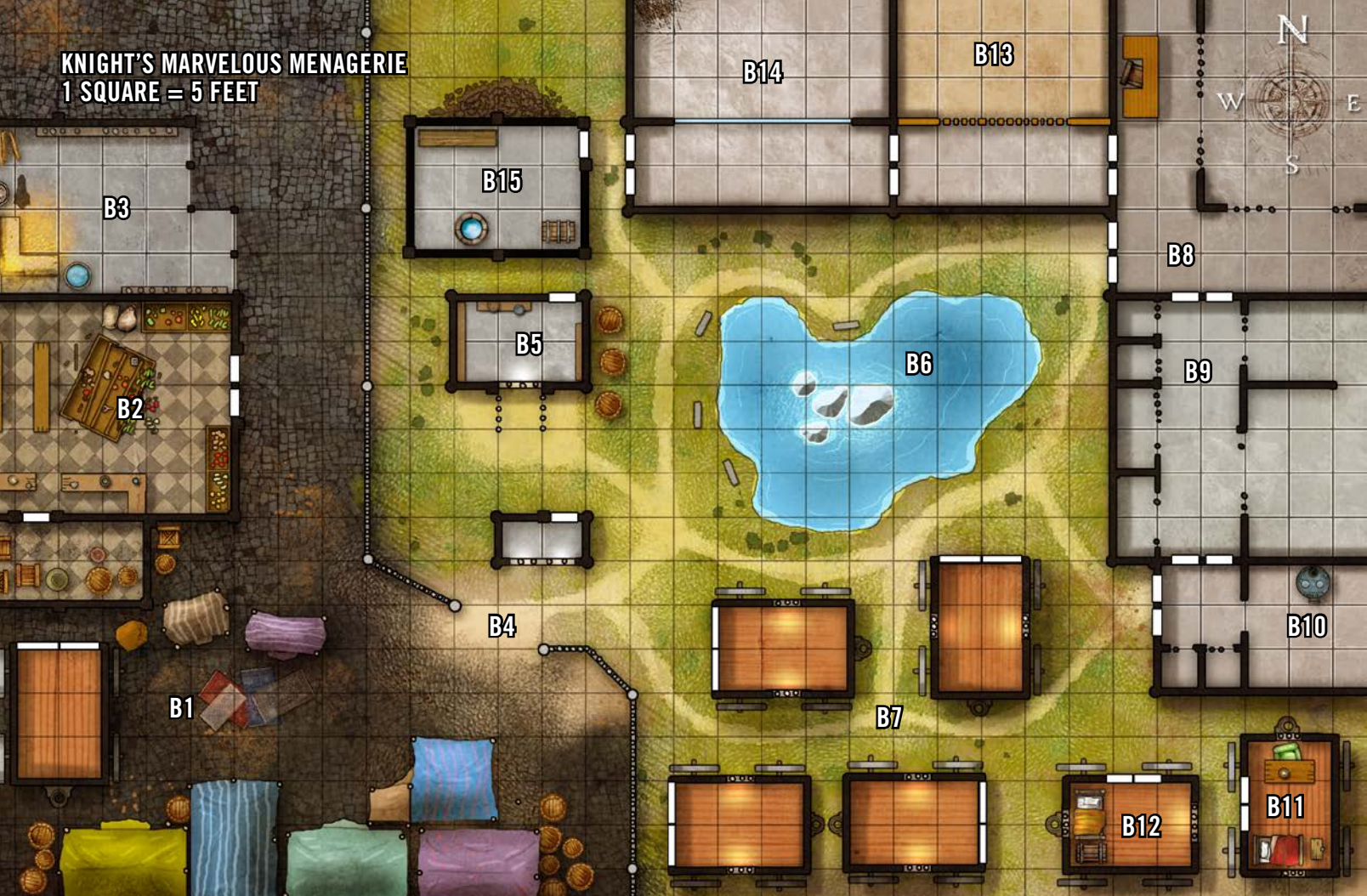
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KNIGHT'S MARVELOUS MENAGERIE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Intimidation check (DC 15 if the agents break down the door first), this is a good opportunity to roleplay the encounter. In this case, one of the surest ways the agents can earn the boy's trust is by proving their knowledge of the arcane arts. A show of magic from one of the party's arcane spellcasters does the trick, as does proof of association with any of Absalom's institutions of magic or higher learning, such as the Arcanamirium or Forae Logos. (If one of the agents has the Learned Guard Savant background from the *Agents of Edgewatch Player's Guide*, they can curry favor with Eunice by mentioning their association with the Learned Guard.) Eunice is concerned first and foremost about the safety of his master; if the agents promise (whether or not they intend to follow through) that they'll file a missing person report and look into the wizard's disappearance, Eunice ultimately gives up on his siege and apologizes to Marin for wrecking her workshop.

If the Edgewatch agents attempt to oust him by force, Eunice fights back with *magic missile* and *telekinetic projectile* from behind a makeshift barricade of desks and tables that grants him cover. If dropped to 5 Hit Points or fewer, he surrenders, sobbing and insisting he didn't want to actually hurt anybody, he was just

trying to save his master. Regardless, Marin has little interest in pressing charges—she just wants the boy out of her shop.

EUNICE

CREATURE 0

CG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human apprentice wizard

Perception +7

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Arcana +7, Farming Lore +5, Occultism +6

Str +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1

Items dagger, spellbook

AC 15; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

HP 20

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ dagger +8 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S),

Damage 1d4 piercing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 16, attack +9; **1st** *magic missile*; **Cantrips (1st)** *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *telekinetic projectile*

XP Award: If the Edgewatch agents resolve this encounter without resorting to violence, award each character a 40 XP story award instead of the usual encounter experience.



PANIC AT THE ZOO

In addition to permanent exhibits like the Graveraker and the Gyroscopic Towers, the Radiant Festival has attracted hundreds of smaller-scale entertainers who rent space by the hour to perform their traveling shows or set up temporary installations for the duration of the festival. One such temporary attraction is Knight's Marvelous Menagerie, a small zoo in which patrons can gawk at rare creatures both magical and mundane.

When the agents return to Edgewatch Headquarters after completing their beat, they're met at the door by an uncharacteristically animated Sergeant Ollo. He's just received word that some of Knight's creatures have managed to escape and are terrorizing not just the zoo's visitors, but surrounding businesses. It's up to the agents of Edgewatch to put things right as quickly as possible and then report back.

The map on page 12 shows the menagerie and the nearby affected businesses. The agents can tackle the encounters in any order they wish, but Ollo insists that at least those creatures causing havoc outside the menagerie's fence must be handled, and preferably immediately—if the Edgewatch agents decide to rest partway through the mission, a lot of people could get hurt.

Zoo Features: Since the menagerie was open for business when the animals escaped, all ordinary doors are unlocked, though any uncompromised cages are locked with poor locks (each lock requires two successful DC 15 Thievery checks to pick). Ceilings inside the buildings and wagons are 10 feet high. The walls of the cage-wagons are iron bars, and unless otherwise noted, all other structures are made of reinforced wood.

Escaped Animals: The zoo creatures themselves are acting unusually aggressive, with a starting attitude of hostile. This is the result of a rage-inducing serum called blackfinger blight. An agent of Jonis Flakfatter, one of the city's high priests of Norgorber (and an important antagonist later in this campaign), tested his latest formulation by introducing the contagion into the animals' water supply. An agent who succeeds at a DC 15 Nature check realizes that this sudden hostility seems abnormal, as does the black froth around some of the creatures' mouths, yet the Edgewatch agents aren't intended to discover much about the contagion itself at this time. Rather, this is foreshadowing for the



Eunice

much larger role blackfinger blight will play later on in the Adventure Path, (see the campaign summary on page 76).

The poison's current formulation has a short half-life. If knocked unconscious or restrained, creatures affected by the virus recover in a day or two. None of the escaped creatures are currently capable of spreading the blight.

B1. MARKETPLACE MODERATE 1

Tents, wagons, and carpets displaying goods for sale define a small marketplace just outside the zoo's fence. Panicked merchants shout from behind wagon doors or tightly closed tent flaps. On one of the carpets, a life-sized statue of a merchant wraps its arms around an array of fine vases, as if trying to protect them from something. Several other small rugs and pillows have been piled haphazardly in the market's center, around which stalks a strange creature resembling a bat-winged chicken screeching challenges.

Creature: The "bat-winged chicken" is Beaktooth, a cockatrice escaped from captivity. Having already petrified the only merchant to fight back against her, Beaktooth now prowls the market in a daze and distractedly looks for more nesting material to improve her new lair in the market square. As soon as anyone enters the marketplace, she crows a challenge and charges, fighting in a frenzy until incapacitated.

BEAKTOOTH CREATURE 3

Female cockatrice (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 66)

Initiative Perception +8

B2. GREENGROCER MODERATE 1

The inside of this greengrocer's shop is a mess of smashed fruit and spilled vegetables, with overturned bins and shelves scattered across the floor. A counter runs across the south end of the shop, guarding a narrow door to a back room. On the north side of the space, a huge shaggy beast with a cruelly hooked beak tears apart a display of gold wine-melons.

Emmaline Greengold (N female elf merchant 1), the shop's owner, peers out through a crack in the storeroom door. If she sees the Edgewatch agents enter, she pokes her head out and yells for help, demanding that they get her out of there and save her produce (with seemingly equal passion for both issues).

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Creature: Hoots the Owlbear was Archibald Knight's first acquisition for the menagerie, and advanced age and years of traveling—including the recent lengthy sea voyage to reach Absalom—have taken their toll on the beast. The owlbear is thrilled to have found such a trove of treats in the greengrocer's store and is eager to defend it. If any creatures pass through the grocer's doors, Hoots attacks using her Screeching Advance, proceeding to fight until incapacitated.

HOOTS

CREATURE 3

Female weak owlbear (*Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 259*)
Initiative Perception +13

B3. SMITHY

SEVERE 1

Shouting and the sounds of clanging and breaking emerge from the open-air entrance of a blacksmith shop bearing a sign reading "Parva's Ironworks." Inside, a large man wearing a turban and leather blacksmith's apron flails with a broom at a five-foot-long lobsterlike monster, shouting, "Out! Out, you feather-faced bastard!"

Within this blacksmith's shop **Parva Maock** (LG male human blacksmith 2) spends most of his days working at an anvil and forge. The rest of the shop is covered in half-stocked wooden shelves and racks. At the moment, most of the shop is in shambles, the shelves toppled and coated in the rust-colored dust that used to be Parva's wares.

Creature: The current chaos—both here and at the zoo in general—is the work of Rusty the Rust Monster, the star of Knight's Marvelous Menagerie. Having been infected by blackfinger blight (see area **B15**), Rusty overpowered his caretaker and broke free from his specialized enclosure, rampaging through other exhibits and rusting away cage bars and locks with his antennae before finally being drawn to the scent of metal from Parva's smithy. Rusty is currently glutting himself on Parva's wares, only occasionally bothering to snap at the smith beating ineffectually on its carapace. If the Edgewatch agents attempt to interfere, the rust monster immediately turns on them and attacks, ferociously targeting whichever character wears the most metal or is doing the most damage to him. Enraged by the blackfinger blight, Rusty fights until incapacitated.

RUSTY

CREATURE 4

Male elite rust monster (*Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 283*)
Initiative Perception +10

Treasure: Parva is overwhelmed by the destruction to his inventory, but still deeply grateful to the Edgewatch agents for handling the situation. He offers to make or give the agents any metal weapons or armor they might desire for free, up to a maximum cumulative value of 50 gp. He also offers to customize each piece of gear, working heraldry or artwork significant to the characters into the designs—any special orders of this sort can be picked up the next day.

B4. MAIN GATE

A ten-foot-high wooden fence surrounds the menagerie proper, enticing passersby with colorful murals of fantastic beasts. The gates of the main entrance stand open beneath an arch featuring a cartoon of a rust monster wearing a top hat, flanked by the words "Knight's Marvelous Menagerie—Home of Rusty the Rust





Monster!" An abandoned ticket kiosk stands just inside, behind which sprawls the zoo's manicured lawn and meandering dirt paths. To the northeast, a windowless wooden building with two distinct wings defines the far sides of the menagerie's grounds, while a variety of wagons fill the south end and a few smaller structures stand to the north.

Inside the ticket kiosk, the dirt floor is coated with a scattering of colorful paper tickets bearing Rusty's image, suggesting that whoever was staffing the booth left in a hurry. A steel cashbox lies empty, its lock clearly having been forced open—evidence that not even rampaging monsters can stop Absalom's thieves from capitalizing on an opportunity to profit.

B5. CONCESSIONS

LOW 1

A red-and-white-striped canvas roof covers the menagerie's open-air food stand. Colorful signs above the counter list fancifully named treats such as "Arcadian gold-corn" and "owlbear chow."

Creatures: A pair of escaped hyenas are currently gorging themselves here. Though they've hidden behind the counter, characters anywhere in the zoo's open-air grounds can notice the animals' loud snuffling and gulping if they stop to listen. If any creature approaches within 5 feet of the concession stand, the hyenas lurch upright and attack, intent on defending their food.

WEAK HYENAS (2)

CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 211

Initiative Perception +6

B6. PENGUIN POOL

LOW 1

A large decorative pool lined on the north and west sides by benches serves as the centerpiece of the menagerie's open-air exhibits. Rocks painted white to resemble icebergs stud the artificial pond, and oversized wooden cutouts depicting smiling penguins wearing top hats have been placed around the pool's edges. The only actual penguin in the exhibit stands at the peak of the largest painted rock, squawking frantically. The surface of the water is murky with blood and feathers.

Intended as a place for visitors to sit and eat lunch, this exhibit is surrounded by "educational" plaques that cite astonishing facts about penguins, of which the only accurate one is that this colony was captured in the Crown of the World and brought south.

Creature: The carnage floating on the surface of the pool is the work of Big Berta, the star of the reptile exhibit. Upon escaping, the viper immediately feasted on the zoo's penguin colony, and she currently lies in wait at the bottom of the pool, rising every 10 minutes to take a breath. She makes no move against characters in areas **B4** or **B5**, but as soon as the heroes pass within 10 feet of the north or south end of her pool, she erupts from the water and attacks, attempting to catch them by surprise. The murkiness of the water grants Big Berta greater cover and thus a +4 circumstance bonus to her Stealth check to Sneak, and she counts as coiled for her initial attack. If reduced to 5 HP or fewer, Berta sinks to the bottom of the 10-foot-deep pool to hide and recover.

BIG BERTA

CREATURE 2

Giant viper (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 303)

Initiative Perception +7

B7. CAGE CARTS

Various creatures fill these rolling cages, many of them howling and agitated behind the bars of their enclosures. A statue of a monkey leans out of one cage, stone arm extended between the bars.

These carts contain the zoo's less fantastical creatures, gathered from all across the Inner Sea region. Current residents include raccoons, toucans, a giant porcupine, meerkats, an archaeopteryx, and a "carbuncle" that characters who succeed at a DC 15 Nature check or observe it closely can tell is an iguana with a fake gem glued to its forehead. The statue is a monkey who reached through the bars for the escaped cockatrice and got turned to stone.

The caretakers hadn't gotten around to bringing water to these exhibits yet, and thus the animals inside haven't been infected by the blackfinger blight (see area **B15**)—they're simply agitated by the recent commotion and are hungry thanks to their missed mealtime.

B8. OWLBEAR EXHIBIT

Three sets of wooden double doors open into this wide chamber. To the northeast is a large steel-barred enclosure, its floor covered in dirty straw and its north and east walls painted with a crude mural of an evergreen forest. On the vacant cage's west side, the bars appear to have been rusted through and then bent, leaving a wide opening. Along the room's west wall, next to the northernmost set of doors, is a sturdy wooden desk and chair.

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This was the former home of Hoots the Owlbear. The escaped rust monster devoured part of Hoots's cage before getting distracted, and the owlbear was able to pry the opening wide enough to escape.

Treasure: The desk usually seats an attendant tasked with making sure patrons remove any metal items before passing through the doors to area **B13**. Guests could leave their items at the desk and receive a claim check, and the zoo did a brisk business in surreptitiously removing small amounts of coin from purses before returning them. A number of items were abandoned when patrons fled the menagerie, including various coin purses containing a total of 15 gp, a low-grade silver shortsword, a shiny orc knuckle dagger, and 25 gp worth of rings and necklaces.

B9. SOUTH HALL

LOW 1

This wide hall runs between wooden double doors to the north and south. To the east, two large barred enclosures stand empty, the bottom several feet of the iron cages dissolved in a long swath. The northernmost enclosure is strewn with what appear to be statues of rats, while the southern enclosure is covered in straw and pungent dung. To the west, the wall is studded with smaller glass display cases, several of which have been shattered, set a few feet off the floor for easy viewing.

The petrified rats mark the cage that formerly held Beaktooth the Cockatrice, while the other large enclosure held the menageries's hyenas. Both were accidentally released when the zoo's rust monster rampaged through the area and devoured parts of their cages. Two of the glass cases along the west wall have been smashed, releasing their occupants, while others remain intact. Those still secure include a variety of centipedes, spiders, scorpions, and other rare bugs, as well as a strange tentacle-nosed simian creature called a zoog.

Creatures: While the cockatrice and hyenas have escaped, some of the menagerie's smaller residents are still here, and the effects of blackfinger blight have made them eager for a fight. One such critter is an almiraj, a rare predator that resembles

an oversized magical rabbit with a spiraling unicorn horn emerging from its forehead. The other creature of note is a flash beetle, which lights up the area with its glow as it buzzes around the hall.

The almiraj currently waits next to this room's southern doors, knowing prey lies just beyond, and as soon as any creature enters the hall from any side both it and the beetle attack. Infected with blackfinger blight, the creatures know only rage and fight until incapacitated.

ALMIRAJ

CREATURE 1

UNCOMMON N SMALL BEAST

Perception +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Sylvan (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Occultism +7, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

AC 16; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +5; -2 status penalty vs. occult spells

HP 20

Magic Susceptibility An almiraj takes a -2 status penalty to saving throws against occult spells. Any beneficial occult spells with a duration of 1 round or longer cast on the almiraj last twice as long.

Speed 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee horn +9 (finesse, magical),

Damage 1d6+2 piercing

Magic Horn Any living creature slain by the almiraj's horn Strike immediately becomes petrified with no saving throw, in addition to dying. A severed almiraj horn retains a wisp of its former magic; in combat, the horn can be wielded as a +1 dagger or, if affixed to a shaft, a +1 spear.

FLASH BEETLE

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 41

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: If the characters slay the almiraj, they can harvest the creature's horn.



Almiraj

B10. REPTILE ROOM

This room's occupants have haphazardly barricaded both sets of doors from the inside. Forcibly gaining entrance requires a successful DC 14 Athletics check to smash a door open, though the Edgwatch agents can also negotiate with the terrified people on the other side to convince them that it's safe to come out.



This small room is stiflingly warm thanks to a large stove in the northeast corner. Double doors leading out to the north and west have been barricaded with heavy pieces of wood stripped from a climbing structure shaped like a jungle tree. To the east, the bars of a large cage with back walls painted to resemble a jungle scene have been rusted through. To the south, several small glass cases contain snakes that hiss and lunge ineffectually at the glass.

The cage to the east formerly held the giant viper named Big Berta, who is currently lurking in the penguin pool (area **B6**). When animals began escaping and attacking people, two apprentice zookeepers sought refuge in Berta's empty cage, bringing with them a half-dozen zoo patrons. All are terrified and unwilling to leave the safety of the reptile exhibit until convinced that all the loose animals have been dealt with. The staff members—**Raisa** and **Telomand** (NG male and female human zookeepers 1)—can answer any basic questions the Edgewatch have about the menagerie or its staff; any time after the agents have talked to the zookeepers, they treat any Nature checks to identify the zoo animals' abilities or weaknesses as one degree of success higher than they actually are. If the agents are wounded, the staff members suggest that there might be healing potions in the vet's wagon (area **B12**).

The Missing Zoo Owner: Regardless of what else the Edgewatch guards might ask, the zookeepers soon begin babbling about how none of this would have happened if Mr. Knight were still here. It was an open secret among the staff that the zoo's owner, Archibald Knight, was carrying on an illicit affair with the zoo's veterinarian, Minera Frum. Nobody cared much, but the pair slipped off for a tryst a week ago and disappeared, leaving the remaining staff ill-equipped to keep things running. While the staff are concerned about the pair's disappearance—they've never been gone for more than an evening before—they're also furious at being abandoned and are desperate to make the Edgewatch understand that the blame for the current disaster belongs entirely to their absentee bosses.

In fact, Archibald and Minera were both victims of the Dreaming Palace, having checked in for a brief liaison and fallen prey to the hotel's murderous owner. Since they didn't let anyone know where they were going, however, tracing them to the hotel is impossible until the agents investigate the Palace in Chapter 4.

Nils's Plight: One of the patrons here, a human man named Nils, begs the Edgewatch to locate his son Jerov, who became separated from him amid the chaos.

The child is currently in area **B14**—if the heroes manage to rescue him and reunite the pair, Nils thanks them profusely and presses his belt pouch with 17 gp into their hands, insisting they accept the reward.

B11. MANAGER'S OFFICE

The wooden door to this wagon is locked (DC 15 Thievery check to pick), and only Archibald Knight has the key. The wagon also has two reinforced windows, which a character can Force Open with a successful DC 15 Athletics check.

The inside of this wagon is a cluttered office, its walls and furniture covered in old bills, annotated maps of nations around the Inner Sea region, and books featuring illustrations of various strange creatures. A narrow foldout bed stands against one wall, while a large wooden desk fills the rest of the space.

The various papers here represent the mundane business matters of running the menagerie, while the books scattered about are (mostly accurate) guides to different animals and magical beasts. The maps are covered with Archibald's notations showing the menagerie's past and future venues. Characters who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check notice a thin layer of dust covering everything and dates on half-finished documents which, together, indicate that no one has been in this room for a week.

Treasure: The bottom drawer of the desk houses the menagerie's treasury. Business has been brisk leading up to the fair, and the leather satchel currently contains 55 gp in copper and silver. Also in the drawer are an *owlbear claw* talisman, a blowgun with three *sleep darts* (treat as *sleep arrows*), and a lesser tanglefoot bag. Underneath all of it is an unsent letter to Archibald's wife, Larwen Knight, telling her the marriage is over.

B12. VETERINARIAN'S WAGON

An unusually large set of double doors leads to this wooden wagon. Inside, a low, oversized metal operating table takes up most of the center of the windowless space. Cabinets, assorted surgical implements, and a few high bookshelves with slim leather-bound volumes line three of the walls. A fold-down bunk occupies the west wall over a large trunk. The whole place is spotlessly clean and reeks of strong spirits.

This is the home and operating theater of the meticulous Minera Frum, a middle-aged human woman from Cheliox and the menagerie's resident

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veterinarian. From this wagon, Frum maintained the health of the zoo's creatures and—to a lesser degree—its workers. She adored her bestial charges; the only thing she cared about more than the animals was her not-so-secret affair with Archibald Knight. A diary hidden under the clothes in the trunk records their liaisons in scandalous, clinical detail.

Treasure: The various cupboards are full of items useful in the care and treating of creatures both magical and mundane. These include five *minor healing potions*, a *wand of command*, a dose of *salve of antiparalysis*, a vial of lesser antidote and another of lesser antiplague, a *scroll of charm*, and a *scroll of speak with animals*.

The books on the shelves include both Minera's own notes on the zoo's animal entertainers, plus treatises on the anatomy and treatment of various unusual creatures. Spending a few minutes reading through the materials here allows the agents to easily identify the abilities and weaknesses of the zoo's animals without the need to roll a check to Recall Knowledge.

B13. RUST MONSTER EXHIBIT

A ten-foot-wide hallway runs between doors to the east and west. To the north, a lattice of thick darkwood and a heavy wooden door separates the hallway from a tiled enclosure beyond, though the door hangs open. A wooden painting of Rusty the Rust Monster hangs on the wall to the south, and a plaque beneath it informs patrons of the exhibit's rules. Dried blood cakes the ground in front of the door and trails away to the west.

This area used to hold the zoo's star attraction: a captive rust monster named Rusty. The pen's door was carefully constructed to have no accessible metal, and the spaces between the wooden slabs in the lattice were wide enough for audiences to get a good view of Rusty, but too small for the beast to squeeze through or bite anyone (unless someone were foolish enough to stick their hands through). The beast's antennae could reach through, however, and patrons could pay 5 cp to buy an iron piton and hold it near the cage, letting the hungry aberration turn it to dust in their hand. The rules plaque describes all this, along with other straightforward edicts—no taunting Rusty, all metals must be left outside in the owlbear exhibit (area B8), no spitting, and so forth.

Normally docile thanks to a steady diet of pitons and scrap ore, Rusty was the first of the menagerie creatures to drink the infected water and succumb to

blackfinger blight. When the head zookeeper, Remy, came by to feed the rust monster and get it to perform simple tricks for the patrons, Rusty surprised him with a sudden and savage attack, escaping through the open door and rusting its way through other exhibits. The injured Remy is currently hiding in the supply shed (area B15).

B14. ANKHRV EXHIBIT

MODERATE 1

The doors on the western end of this hall are latched so as to be exit-only, with "No Entrance" painted on their outer face.

Low, red-glazed lanterns cast this room in crimson and shadow. To the north, a large pane of thick crystal walls off an enclosure of glazed tile, with a door of the same translucent material. Inside the exhibit, the walls, which are painted to resemble subterranean tunnels filled with giant arthropods, have been scarred in long streaks, as if dissolved by acid. Actual half-dissolved humanoid corpses cover the floor of the observation area, while inside the enclosure, a small human child sits weeping with his back to the closed door.

Creatures: Unlike most of the creatures in the Knight's Marvelous Menagerie, the ankhavr has no official name, referred to by its keepers only as "that bastard." The crystal and tiles of its enclosure have been alchemically treated to resist its acid, but unfortunately the locking mechanism on the outside of the door was ordinary iron. When the rust monster rampaged through, the door opened and the ankhavr escaped, massacring several people. The only person still alive in the area is a 7-year-old boy named Jerov, who was able to slip into the enclosure and shut the door, jamming the still-functional crystal half of the locking mechanism with bones from the ankhavr's previous meals.

The ankhavr lurks in the main hallway, splitting its time between devouring the corpses of patrons and futilely spitting acid at the crystal between it and Jerov. It attacks any creature that enters the room, fighting until slain.

THAT BASTARD

CREATURE 3

Male ankhavr (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 22)

Initiative Perception +7

XP Award: Jerov explains that he came to the menagerie with his father, Nils, but doesn't know where he is and fears he's been killed. If the Edgewatch agents return Jerov to his father in area B10, award each character a 30 XP story award.



B15. SUPPLY SHED

This large wooden shed has no windows, only a door on the eastern side and a large, pungent mound of animal dung piled near the north wall. Inside, the building is packed with shovels, pitchforks, buckets, and other tools, plus bags and crates of animal feed and an open-topped cistern full of water.

This is where the staff keeps all the ordinary tools and supplies necessary for the menagerie's functioning. At the moment, it's occupied by a single injured gnomish man holding a pitchfork. This is **Remy** (NG male gnome zookeeper 2), the menagerie's most senior employee after Archibald Knight himself.

Of everyone in the menagerie, Remy has the best understanding of how things went to hell. He had refilled the water for all the creatures in the zoo's main building and was starting to make the rounds with their dinner when Rusty uncharacteristically attacked him and broke free, inadvertently releasing several other creatures as he fed on the bars of their enclosures. Remy did his best to usher patrons to safety and then fled here to await reinforcements from the city guard.

Though significantly wounded by the rust monster's mandibles, Remy is even more hurt emotionally; he loved Rusty the Rust Monster like his own child, to the point of having the creature's cartoon image tattooed on his shoulder. He tearfully insists that an attack like this just isn't like Rusty, and that something must have happened. He also loudly blames the disaster on the zoo's owner and veterinarian—"If they hadn't run off for a blanket rodeo and never come back, we wouldn't be stretched so thin right now, and maybe none of this would have happened!"

Unbeknownst to him, Remy is standing right next to the true cause of the incident: the cistern holding the animals' water supply. The agents may deduce through Remy's story that only the animals he had recently given water are acting unusually aggressive. Unfortunately, learning anything beyond this is essentially impossible, as the poisoner who snuck in to dose the water was a professional who didn't leave any evidence behind. The particular version of blackfinger blight that was being tested was highly unstable and has already partially broken down—drinking it now only gives agents a splitting headache and a feeling of intense irritability, though it also



Remy

makes it amply obvious that the water was the source of the animals' fury. If the agents take samples back to the station, Lieutenant Lavarsus agrees to have their alchemists in the lab look into it, but by the time they finally learn anything, the agents will have already run across the blight again in a future adventure. Regardless, if the agents begin to pursue this threat too far, Lavarsus makes it clear that their top priority should be the missing persons (Chapter 2).

If the Edgewatch agents managed to recapture Rusty, Remy is overjoyed, and helps calm the creature and get it back in its enclosure. If they killed Rusty, Remy weeps all the harder.

Treasure: This room is filled with assorted common tools—shovels, pitchforks, and so forth—of little value, but tucked in one corner are two heavy crossbows with 10 bolts each,

for those unfortunate times when an animal needs to be put down.

WRAPPING UP

Once the menagerie's creatures have been subdued or safely contained, the Edgewatch's work here is done. In gratitude for their help—and in a thinly veiled effort to keep the city from permanently shutting down the menagerie—the employees insist on rewarding the agents with all the various funds and items found in this section's Treasure list. (As Remy points out, "As long as the show stays open, we'll earn it back. And besides, this is all Knight's property—and I don't see him here objecting, do you?")

As the Edgewatch agents head back to the station to report, they notice an additional oddity: the giant machine called Graveraker, which had dominated the skyline not far from the menagerie as recently as an hour ago, seems to be missing. Should the agents investigate, they quickly encounter a commotion near the machine's now-empty exhibit, as well as senior agents of the Edgewatch who've been assigned to the mystery and who tell the rookies to mind their own business and report to Sergeant Ollo.

Back at the station, Ollo takes down the officers' report and commends them for their work at the menagerie. He then cuts them loose for the evening to rest up, with orders to be back at the crack of dawn the next morning for a meeting with the lieutenant.

XP Award: For successfully handling their first beat and stopping the escaped animals at the menagerie, award each agent an 80 XP story award.

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CHAPTER 2: MISSING PERSONS

When the agents report for duty at Edgwatch Headquarters the next morning, Sergeant Ollo ushers them immediately into Lavarus's office, where the lieutenant leans against his desk with arms crossed, sizing them up. After a moment he grunts and holds up a report. To start the second chapter of this adventure, read or paraphrase the following.

"Well," the lieutenant grunts, "Ollo's report says you didn't screw up the menagerie call too badly. But don't let it go to your heads—we've got bigger problems than a couple of escaped pets. While you were busy playing 'catch the cockatrice,' somebody stole one of the exhibits—some device called Graveraker. Broad daylight, thousands of pounds of magical excavator, and it's just gone—right under our noses." He shakes his head in disgust. "I've got my best people—no, not you—pulling double shifts until we figure out who took it and how in the hells they pulled it off. But until then, someone

else is going to have to shovel all of this." He waves the report in his hand at the stacks of similar papers on his desk.

"It says here," he continues, "you reported some missing persons—a wandering wizard and some randy zookeepers. Well, half the reports on my desk are about the same thing. Now, I can't have my top detectives chasing down every runt who didn't hold mommy's hand at the fair. So instead I'm putting you on it. Track down these strays and see if there's more here than just a bunch of drunks and runaways. And for Abadar's sake, don't mess it up, or I'll have you investigating the latrines in the holding cells till they shine like the First Vault. Clear?"

Lavarus doesn't have much information on the missing persons—there doesn't seem to be an obvious link between the more than 20 different cases, other than the fact that all went missing in the last month, and all were visitors to the city rather than residents.



The agents should start with the Dragonfly Pagoda. A whole crew of the workers there—five specialist stonemasons from Minkai—went missing at the same time two nights ago, and in addition to them being the most egregious of the disappearances, the pagoda’s architects have enough influence to get Lavarsus’s superiors breathing down his neck and giving him heartburn. The lieutenant orders the agents to start their investigation there and question the remaining workers to see if they can learn anything.

THE DRAGONFLY PAGODA

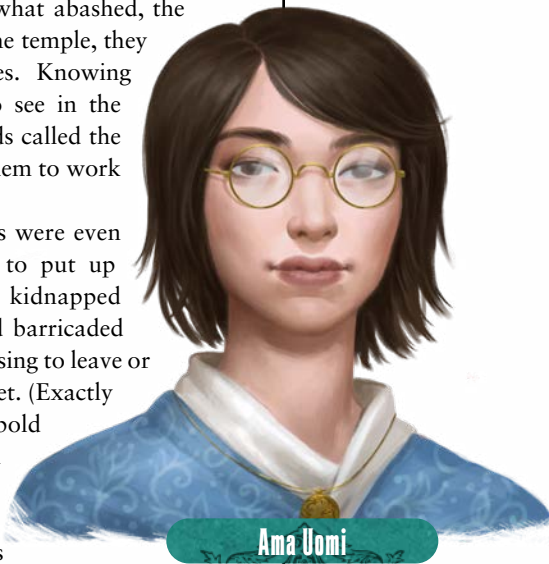
Situated near the heart of the Precipice Quarter, the Dragonfly Pagoda is sure to be one of the highlights of the Radiant Festival—if its builders can ever get it finished.

Sent from Minkai to introduce the common people of the Inner Sea region to the majestic culture of the Empire of Dawn, the delegation in charge of constructing the temple includes some of the finest architects to ever serve the Jade Throne, yet the project has seen innumerable construction delays. At the time of the fair’s opening, only the first floor of the theoretically seven-story tower has been completed. Crews have been working around the clock under grueling conditions, and more than one fight has broken out between local laborers and their Minkaian counterparts.

When the Edgewatch agents approach the pagoda, they find the site in more chaos than ever. No one appears to be working—instead, a crowd of laborers and dignitaries shout at each other a stone’s throw from the temple’s front doors. Characters who approach quickly find themselves speaking to **Ama Uomi** (LN female human architect 3), the delegation’s chief architect and head of construction. Somewhat abashed, the architect reveals that in their rush to complete the temple, they made some... “unconventional” hiring choices. Knowing kobolds’ talent for construction and ability to see in the dark, the forepersons recruited a gang of kobolds called the Stonescales from Absalom’s Undercity, putting them to work with several Minkaians on the night shift.

Unfortunately for the project, the Stonescales were even less willing than their day-shift counterparts to put up with overworking and mistreatment. They’ve kidnapped the non-kobold members of the night shift and barricaded themselves inside the half-completed temple, refusing to leave or release their prisoners until their demands are met. (Exactly what their demands are is unclear, as each kobold shouting them out the doors adds their own spin to the negotiations, including increasingly unreasonable demands ranging from ownership of the pagoda after the fair to a seat for kobolds on Absalom’s Grand Council.)

While it seems unlikely that the kobolds are responsible for the original worker disappearances—the kobolds didn’t hijack the pagoda until just last night—Ama makes it clear that the people the Edgewatch needs to interview about the missing masons are among the kobolds’ hostages. (And even if they weren’t, this is clearly a higher priority for the city guard.) In order to continue their investigation, the agents first have to infiltrate the temple and rescue the imprisoned workers. Should they seek backup or authorization from the station, Sergeant Ollo informs them that the Edgewatch is stretched too thin for reinforcements, and the agents will have to handle things themselves.



Ama Uomi

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The Edgewatch agents’ next assignment—to investigate a series of missing person reports—takes them to one of the festival’s incomplete exhibits, the Dragonfly Pagoda. There, they must resolve a workers’ rights dispute between the exhibit’s architects and hired kobold laborers. After handling a delicate hostage situation, the agents learn that they’ll need to delve into the Undercity if they hope to track down the missing persons.

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The following list includes all significant pieces of permanent and consumable treasure found in this chapter, excepting currency and mundane equipment.

- +1 *greatpick*
- *minor healing potions* (4)
- *scroll of shape wood*

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DRAGONFLY PAGODA (GROUND FLOOR)

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

C1

C2

C3

C8

C9

C4

C5

C10

C11

UP

DRAGONFLY PAGODA (SECOND FLOOR)

C12

DOWN



Ama can provide a useful blueprint of the structure (though she notes that the kobolds have likely set up any number of traps not accounted for on the map above). While she recognizes that the safety of her workers should come first, Ama asks the Edgewatch agents to avoid smashing up the place if possible, and she also warns them of the building's extremely flammable nature. "You Absalomians are accustomed to brick and mortar, so I'll offer this advice: fire and Minkaian architecture don't exactly mix." To further incentivize the guards to be careful with the construction, Ama tells them they can requisition any loose valuables they find in the pagoda, including the discretionary cash located in the desk drawer in the pagoda's administration room. ("We'll probably have to start the remaining construction from scratch anyway," she laments.)

Pagoda Features: A chaotic maze of lumber and tools surrounds the completed bottom floor of the temple, which is elevated about 10 feet from the earth via a grid of wooden support beams and thick pillars, giving the impression, from a distance, of a massive dragonfly hovering above the ground. The temple's primary entrance is at the tip of the building's "tail" (the mutinying kobolds destroyed the stairway to the building's rear exit). Colorful, massive dragonfly wings

made from glass and paper rise gracefully upward on tall support pillars and serve as beautiful ceilings for the building's annex rooms.

The majority of the temple is made from specially reinforced wooden beams. Exterior walls are made of strong wooden lattices that provide the support and allow light in from outside. Climbing the foundation and beams is fairly straightforward (DC 10 to Climb). Interior walls, as well as the pagoda's sliding doors and windows, are made of much thinner lattices combined with paper, and any of these paper partitions can be cut with a sharp object or simply burst through (treat as difficult terrain). As Ama has warned, fire and paper are a dangerous combination; any fire that touches the pagoda's paper walls spreads at a rate of 10 feet per round and can quickly engulf the entire building if not extinguished.

An open-air walkway around the eastern section of the building (areas C11) and the atrium (area C3) are the most obvious entrances other than the front doors, but Stonescale lookouts stationed in both areas make infiltration here just as perilous.

The sliding doors inside the structure have no locks, and ceilings are 15 feet high unless otherwise noted. All rooms except for the open-air areas (C3, C10, and C11)



are completely dark at night and only dimly lit during the day—the kobolds don't need light to see and have thus destroyed all the lanterns in the pagoda to give them a tactical advantage in case of a fight.

C1. FRONT STAIRS

Beautifully carved marble steps lead up ten feet to a simple arbor made of dark wood, which marks the temple's entrance. Two red wooden posts rise up on either side of the base of the stairs and connect by an elaborate crosspiece to create the impression of a gateway.

While the work crews report that there were kobolds just inside the arbor earlier, shouting and driving everyone back with thrown rocks and brandished crossbows, the area's been quiet since the agents arrived.

C2. FOUNTAIN PAVILION

TRIVIAL 2

This air in this pavilion is significantly warmer, the heat radiating pleasantly up from the tile floor. Large semicircular basins protrude from the thick wooden walls to the north and south, their warm water constantly draining away and replenished by burbling, dragon-headed fountains mounted on the walls above them. To the east and west, lattice balustrades of fine darkwood demarcate the edges of the pavilion, with a walkway continuing the structure to the east.

Characters who succeed at a DC 15 Society or Religion check recall that in Minkai, it's customary to wash one's hands and face before entering a temple. If they succeed at a DC 15 Engineering Lore or similar check, they surmise that both the water and the radiant floor heating are powered by a boiler system hidden beneath the floor.

Creature: A single Stonescale scout named Doopa has been tasked with guarding the front door, which she does from the opposite side of this pavilion. This is Doopa's first big solo assignment from Battle Leader Rekarek, and she's taking her task seriously. Her inexperience means she is also quite naive, though, and she takes a -2 status penalty to her Perception DC against Deception checks to Lie and to her Will DC against Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression. She is particularly receptive to the Edgewatch agents if they say they are negotiators sent on behalf of Ama, in which case Doopa asks the agents to wait here while she goes to fetch Rekarek (who brings her cadre of guards, as well as Cheel and Josk from area C3, and attacks the Edgewatch agents, claiming they are imposters regardless of any evidence to the contrary). In the case of a fight, all the Stonescale gang members

THE MISSING

The Edgewatch's list of missing persons is long, yet a shocking number of them met the same fate—running afoul of the sinister traps at a hotel called the Dreaming Palace, run by the sadistic murderer Hendrid Pratchett. The agents will likely have put together enough clues to realize the disappearances are the result of a serial killer by the time they get to Chapter 4 of this adventure, but for the moment the assignment should feel largely mundane.

Presented below is an incomplete selection of names from the missing persons list and basic details compiled by the Edgewatch. Though this list should initially be presented to the characters as a random sampling to provide flavor and highlight some of the names they already know, in fact these are the victims the agents are most likely to find evidence of when investigating the hotel in Chapter 4. These are far from Pratchett's only victims, however, and only once the heroes find his ledger of atrocities in area E36 will they be able to declare the case closed on more than a dozen names. (What happened to those names unaccounted for is beyond the scope of this adventure.)

Anastatia Corvis: A human Irriseni merchant who came to Absalom to sell ice wine.

Archibald Knight and Minera Frum: A halfling menagerie owner and his human veterinarian employee.

Dragonfly Masons: Minkaian stonemasons working on the Dragonfly Pagoda—humans named Roji Aozo, Asao Iruya, Nakura To, Shuno Danoma, and Takeko Lon.

Elama Mohaso: A dwarven scholar from Rahadom who came to the city to study at the Forae Logos.

Kemeneles: A human wizard originally from Taldor who trained at the Arcanamirium decades ago.

Lyrma Swampwalker: A gnome ranger from Vidrian who came to Absalom to see the fair.

The Sachta Family: A family of Jalmeri tourists consisting of mother and father Vindi and Sudhar and their 8-year-old twins Bashar and Nita.

know of and avoid the trap here, attacking with ranged attacks from the other side of the pavilion and fleeing through the eastern portal if defeat seems imminent.

DOOPA

CREATURE 1

Female kobold scout (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 213)

Initiative Perception +8

Hazard: The kobolds have made a deadly addition to the pavilion's plumbing. Pressure plates beneath the floor tiles in the marked squares on the Map disable safeguards on the boilers—when someone steps on them, the plumbing suddenly sprays boiling water in a line, burning anyone caught between the two fountains.

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BOILING FOUNTAINS

HAZARD 2

MECHANICAL TRAP


Stealth DC 18 (trained) to spot the pressure plates

Description Four pressure plates beneath the floorboards activate dragon-headed fountains on either side of the room, which spray boiling water across the area between them.

Disable DC 21 Thievery (trained) to disable each pressure plate, DC 16 to jam each fountain, or DC 18 to deflect a fountain's spray

AC 15; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +5

Fountain Hardness 8; **Fountain HP** 30 (BT 15); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Scalding Spray  (fire, water) **Trigger** Weight is placed on one of the squares marked with "T" on the map, triggering a pressure plate; **Effect** The fountains spray boiling water across their own squares and the 10-foot-by-20-foot area between them (marked with dotted lines), dealing 4d6+4 fire damage to any creatures in the area (DC 22 basic Reflex save).

Reset Once a pressure plate has been activated, it must be reset manually.

C3. ATRIUM

LOW 2

A wide stone path leads from the western wooden archway into this roofless, open-air atrium. Ten-foot-tall wooden lattices with strategic gaps provide viewing windows all around the area while preventing visitors from falling off the raised structure. Rising up from the elegant landscaping on either side of the path, six squat stone-and-iron lanterns nearly the size of humans stand like sentinels, their bases surrounded by exotic flowers. At the eastern end of the atrium, wide marble steps ascend ten feet to two large wood-and-bronze doors.

The Edgewatch agents can enter the temple here by Climbing the beams beneath the pagoda and then the lattices (DC 15). The lanterns here are made of stone except for the fire boxes, which consist of four iron grates; the eastern side of each fire box swings open on a hinge and shuts with a simple latch.

Creatures: Two Stonescale scouts named Cheel and Josk currently hide inside the empty fire boxes of the easternmost two stone lanterns, which provide the kobolds with both concealment and cover. As soon as a character enters the area, the kobolds fire their crossbows, attempting to catch the heroes flat-footed and deal their sneak attack damage. They continue to shoot from their fortified positions inside the lanterns until their positions are compromised or one of them is slain, at which point they make a run for the adjacent antechamber (area C4). If Cheel or Josk

hear the characters trying to climb the lattice, they leave their fire boxes and drop their flasks of acid on the agents through the narrow gaps in the lattice (the gaps act like arrow slits, granting cover to creatures on either side as long as they aren't within 5 feet of the gaps).

CHEEL AND JOSK (2)

CREATURE 1

Female and male kobold scouts (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 213)

Initiative Perception +8 or Stealth +7

Items lesser acid flasks (2)

C4. ANTECHAMBER

LOW 2

Four of the walls of this octagonal chamber are lined with low stone benches. Beneath each bench is a honeycomb of small, built-in cubbies. On the walls, colorful tile mosaics portray a tranquil stream winding through a deep forest, with tiny, half-hidden humanoid creatures peeking furtively out from between branches, behind trunks, or underneath rocks. A large, ornate brass seal depicting a winding dragon is embedded in the center of the room's wooden floor. Soft, flutelike music emanates around the room, along with a gentle breeze. Bronze double doors to the west and east are the room's exits.

This antechamber is intended to be a place where visitors can leave their shoes in a cubby before entering the temple proper. Succeeding at a DC 15 Perception check allows a character to notice that the music and breeze in the room are being piped in through small circular openings hidden within the mosaic.

Hazard: As with area C2, the kobolds have turned the temple's sacred machinery into a trap. Expecting that anyone who made it through the fountain room is likely to be on their guard, they this time installed the pressure sensors on the subfloor supports. If at any point more than two creatures of size Small or larger are standing on the brass seal in this room, the trap activates, using the air pumps and pipes emanating the musical breeze to fire barrages of darts.

DART BARRAGE

HAZARD 3

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +11 (trained) or DC 23 (trained) to notice scratches around the musical pipes and a slight give to the seal

Description Four dart-loaded pipes hidden in the diagonal walls are connected to a pressure plate under the brass seal in the room's center.

Disable Thievery DC 22 (trained) to disable the pressure plate, or four Thievery DC 18 (trained) checks to plug the dart launchers

AC 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +7



Hardness 10; **HP** 60 (BT 30) to destroy the seal and disable the trap; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Dart Volley **Trigger** More than two Small or larger creatures step on the brass seal. **Effect** The trap makes up to four dart Strikes against creatures standing on the seal, then rolls initiative.

Routine (4 actions) The trap loses 1 action for each disabled launcher. On each of the trap's actions, it fires one dart at a creature in the center of the room.

Ranged dart +12, **Damage** 3d6 piercing, no multiple attack penalty

Reset The trap runs out of darts after 4 rounds of firing and must be reset manually by dismantling the walls to reload the launchers. If at any point there are no longer more than two creatures placing weight on the floor, the trap ceases firing but remains armed, ready to resume firing its remaining darts once triggered again.

C5. MAKESHIFT MAZE

The twenty-foot-tall ceiling and half-finished mosaics of pastoral scenery on the visible walls here give the impression of a grand hall, but the floorboards have been systematically torn up to create a veritable maze of dangerous catwalks. The pagoda's zigzagging support beams and the bare earth twenty feet below are visible through the ripped-up floorboards. Exits include numerous sliding doors on either side of the hall, a set of bronze double doors to the west, and an ascending staircase to the east that ends at a wide pair of sliding doors.

This was meant to be the center of the temple, a bright gathering space from which visitors could access all the various sections of the pagoda's ground floor. The Stonescales, however, have carved a hazardous walkway out of this grand hall.

Falling Down: The kobolds have all memorized the remaining floorboards' weak spots (each marked with an "X" on the map) and take care to avoid stepping on them. A creature that enters one of the indicated spaces causes the floorboards there to give way and must succeed at a DC 16 Reflex save to Grab an Edge or fall through the beams and onto the ground below (a 20-foot fall). Creatures might also fall through the gaps in the floor via other means, such as by failing a check to jump across or being pushed over the edge by another creature.

C6. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

LOW 2

To the southwest of this broad room, a small screened-off area connects to a finely lacquered counter, which

separates the wall and attached bookcases from the room proper. The bodies of three humans lie on the floor. Their clothes are stained rust red, but their faces are pale and shriveled.

This room is the temple's administrative office, but it also functions as a souvenir shop where visitors can purchase talismans. Thus far, the construction crew's forepersons have been using the room to handle all their on-site paperwork around receiving materials, organizing payroll, and so forth. When the Stonescale rebellion began, the supervisors of the night shift managed to retreat here and lock the doors. Unfortunately for them, the height of the pagoda made escaping out the windows perilous at best. They opted to stay put while formulating a plan, but the workers were soon assailed by a swarm of blood-devouring predators who flew into the window, attracted by the blood spilled by the insurrection.

Creatures: Four of the flying predatory pests called bloodseekers buzzed through the windows and drained the workers dry hours ago. They are currently resting motionless among the scraps of tattered paintings, but once the agents enter the room, the bloodseekers race to attack their fresh prey.

BLOODSEEKERS (4)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 42

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: Though the crew bosses know better than to keep the organization's treasury so close to all their workers, they do keep a certain amount of petty cash on hand for basic expenses. A drawer in the counter with a simple lock (three DC 20 Thievery checks to pick) holds 45 gp—the key to the drawer is in the pocket of one of the corpses. Also behind the counter, on a shelf, is a bottle of rare Minkaian sake worth 10 gp. The corpses have nothing valuable on them other than a splendid bejeweled brooch in the shape of a dragonfly, worth 10 gp. A character who inspects the brooch finds an engraving in Minkaian on the gold backing that reads "To Ibetsuo. May our good fortune never wane. Ama."

XP Award: Returning the brooch to Ama earns the architect's eternal gratitude, since Ibetsuo, one of the slain laborers, was one of Ama's best friends. Grant each agent a 10 XP story award if they return the brooch. (This good deed may seem a small act now, but it will come into play much later in the campaign, during *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #162: *Ruins of the Radiant Siege*, when Ama helps the Edgewatch agents prevent the Precipice Quarter from being destroyed.)

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C7. HALL OF FACES

LOW 2

Along the walls of this room stand dozens of terra-cotta sculptures of strange creatures ranging from tiny to nearly ten feet tall. One of the statues has been destroyed, and there is a badly marred human corpse near its base. Exits include a hallway to the west and a sliding door to the north.

This hall is intended to educate visitors about the various kinds of kami, spirits who are revered in Minkai. Each of the sculptures in this room represents a different type of common kami, from the short and faceless kodama tree spirits to a scaled-down depiction of a massive jinushigami land spirit.

The corpse here is another one of the pagoda's laborers. He died after fleeing into this room from the bloodseekers in area C6 where he unfortunately triggered one of the Stonescales' trapped statues.

Hazard: The Stonescales have taken advantage of the hollow sculptures to rig two clever traps, one of which (west of the northern door) has already gone off. The remaining trapped statue—that of a toshigami, an antlered old woman with a body of bark and blossoms—is in the northeastern corner of the room and packed full of crude explosives. A hidden trigger wire runs along the foot of the sliding door next to it. Anyone who opens the door without first disabling the trap causes the statue to explode, spraying the area with shrapnel. (Cheel and Josk from area C3 both know how to disarm and reset the trap, but the other Stonescales are oblivious to it.)

If the statue explodes, it likely sets fire to the adjoining paper screen. Player characters who succeed at a DC 13 Survival check can extinguish a 5-foot-wide area of screen (a creature who uses water to douse the flames treats their check as one degree of success better).

EXPLODING STATUE

HAZARD 2

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 18 (trained)

Description A hollow statue filled with explosives is connected to a trip wire running along the adjacent door.

Disable DC 21 Thievery (trained) to safely cut the wire

AC 21; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +12

Hardness 5; **HP** 30 (BT 15); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Explosion **Trigger** A creature opens the northern door without first disabling the trip wire; **Effect** The statue explodes, spraying shrapnel to the west in a 5-foot cone and dealing 1d10+7 piercing and 1d10 fire damage to all creatures in the affected area (DC 18 basic Reflex save).

C8. HALL OF MESSAGES

The western half of this rectangular room features a small network of wooden gutters, extending a foot from the walls and gradually sloping from the south to the north end of the room. The bottoms of the shelves are covered with a layer of sand. Narrow pipes along the walls connect the northernmost shelf edge to the ceiling and the southern edge into the floor. Exits include a hallway to the east and a sliding door to the south.

Four corpses lie sprawled on the floor, their bodies studded with arrows.

A character who succeeds at a DC 16 Religion check recognizes the angled sand tables that line the wall as a method for visitors to write prayers and messages to the temple's kami. Anyone who wants to inscribe a message to the spirits can do so by drawing it in the sand with a stylus or finger. When it rains, pipes carry water from the pagoda's gutters onto the sand tables, wiping the sand smooth before flowing out through the pipes at the south end. The temple's monks believe that the flowing water carries the erased messages to the kami as it races to rejoin the rivers and bays of the natural world.

The four corpses—two humans, a dwarf, and a gnome—were all workers who resisted the kobold uprising. Agents who succeed at a DC 14 Survival or Medicine check can tell that they were killed elsewhere and dumped here after the fact.

C9. HALL OF WISDOM

LOW 2

In the northern corner of this room, before a bank of sliding paper windows, a wide stairway leads to a raised dais bearing a smaller version of the red gate-arch that marked the temple's front doors. Three bronze bells of varying sizes hang from the arch's crossbar. A few small cushions lie scattered across the chamber's floor, and the whole room is crisscrossed with strands of white, sticky webbing. Exits include a hallway to the west and a sliding door to the south.

This room is intended as a place for visitors to hear lessons from resident monks and meditate on the divine, especially aspects of Tian philosophies including karma-focused Sangpotshi and kami-centered Tamashigo.

Hazard: Kreski (see Creatures on page 27) has set a snare made of spider webs on the steps leading up to the dais.

HAMPERING SNARE

SNARE 1

Pathfinder Core Rulebook 590



Creatures: When the Stonescales revolted, they rallied some of their remaining gang members in the Undercity as reinforcements, including a giant hunting spider and its handler. The spider currently lurks on the ceiling, ready to drop down on prey. It tied a strand of webbing to both the southern sliding door and across the western hallway to serve as alarms. Thus, it can use its Spring Upon Prey ability against any creature who walks into the room, attempting to catch the victim flat-footed. The spider's handler, a kobold named Kreski, crouches behind one of the pillars on the dais and whiles away the time cleaning her weapons.

KRESKI **CREATURE 1**
Female kobold scout (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 213)
Initiative Perception +8

MARGLE **CREATURE 1**
Hunting spider (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 306)
Initiative Stealth +7

C10. HALL OF OFFERINGS **SEVERE 2**

At present, this broad room seems to serve as a staging area for construction materials and tools. Flanking the sliding doors to the west are a pair of white stone statues of foxes—one with its mouth open, the other with its mouth shut. To the east lies a precarious mound of loose lumber, rolls of white paper, and countless hand tools such as saws and hammers. The room's exits are three identical paper sliding doors: one to the west and two to the east.

The eventual purpose of this room is to be a place where visitors can leave offerings for the kami, represented by the fox statues, which the resident monks would collect each evening. The pile of materials by the eastern wall is difficult terrain.

Creatures: Four elite Stonescale warriors—Epset, Kipper, Steggy, and Tiktal—defend this room under the command of the Stonescales' champion fighter, Battle Leader Rekarek. The warriors hold this room at all costs while shouting about how the Stonescales won't tolerate abuse any longer. Unfortunately, despite the laborers' slogans and theoretical desire to bargain, Rekarek sees this situation as an opportunity to advance her legend as a warrior and has no real interest in negotiating. She has a starting attitude of hostile and orders her minions to attack anyone who enters the room.

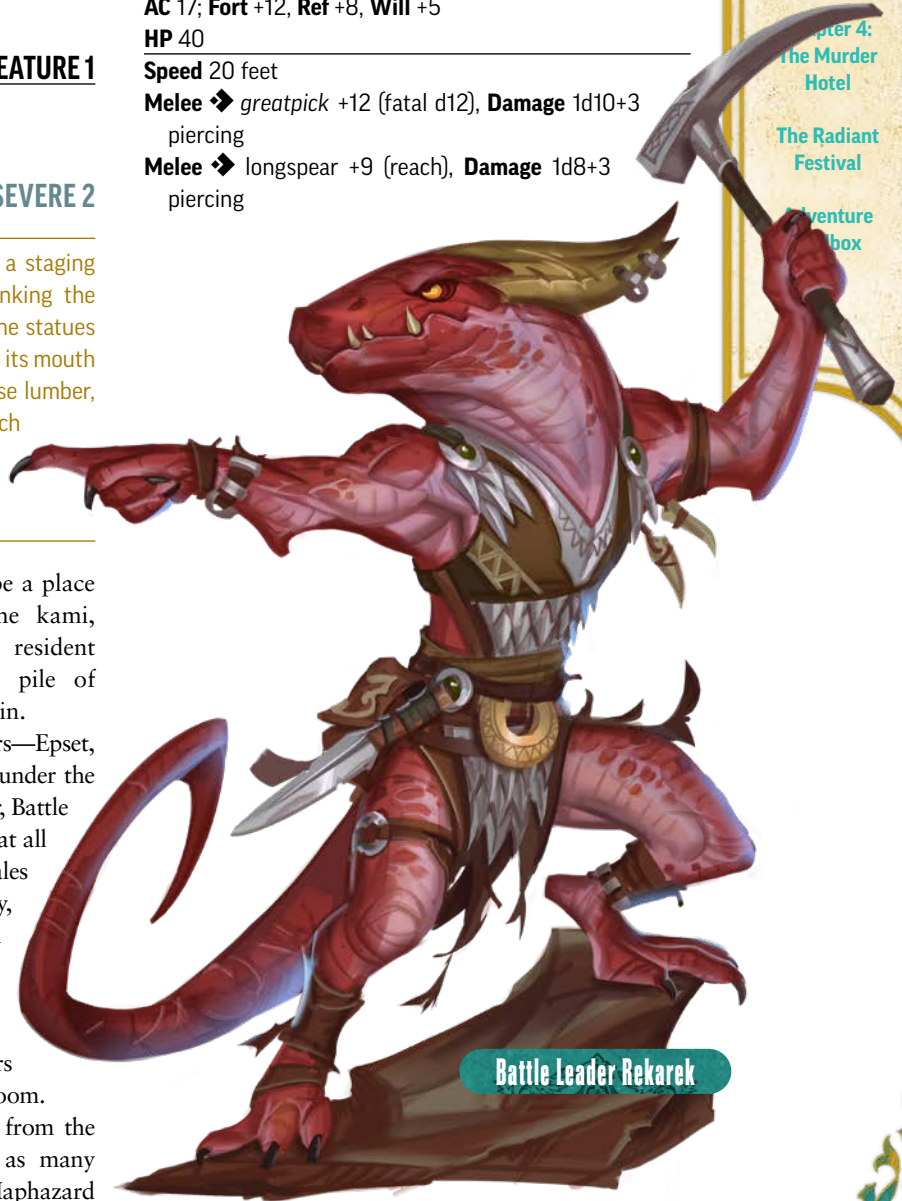
In combat, Rekarek does her best to lead from the front, positioning herself in the middle of as many opponents as possible in order to use her Haphazard

Hack ability. If she's slain, one of the remaining kobolds takes up her *greatpick* in an attempt to succeed her as leader. If the two kobolds in area C11 hear the fight, they rush in to join the fray. If only two kobold warriors remain conscious at any point, they hurriedly surrender.

BATTLE LEADER REKAREK **CREATURE 2**

UNIQUE **LE** **SMALL** **HUMANOID** **KOBOLD**

Female kobold commander
Perception +10; darkvision
Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +7, Stealth +6
Str +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1
Items +1 *greatpick*, *lesser healing potions* (4), longspear, scale mail, sling with 20 bullets
AC 17; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5
HP 40
Speed 20 feet
Melee **◆** *greatpick* +12 (fatal d12), **Damage** 1d10+3 piercing
Melee **◆** longspear +9 (reach), **Damage** 1d8+3 piercing



Battle Leader Rekarek

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Ranged ◆ sling +10 (propulsive, range increment 50 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+1 bludgeoning

Haphazard Hack ◆◆ **Requirements** Rekarek is adjacent to two or more enemies; **Effect** Rekarek makes three melee weapon Strikes, two of which must be against different enemies. These attacks count toward her multiple attack penalty, but only after all three Strikes have been made. After taking this activity, Rekarek is flat-footed until the beginning of her next turn.

ELITE KOBOLD WARRIORS (4) **CREATURE 0**

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 212

Initiative Perception +5

Treasure: The kobolds are smart enough not to hold prisoners and weapons in the same place, and so they stashed most of the hostages' gear and valuables in the pile of rubbish here, including a light hammer, a hatchet, a maul, and a warhammer. Rekarek's greatpick and long spear are her own, brought from the Undercity. Also present in the pile is a crinkled *scroll of shape wood*.

C11. VERANDA **TRIVIAL 2**

This wide, open-air walkway wraps around the outside of the pagoda. Only two levels of the veranda are currently complete. The bottom walkway has a 15-foot-tall ceiling that marks the floor of the second story, which can be accessed via a wooden spiral staircase to the north. Wooden staircases to the northeast and southeast would have connected to the ground below, but the Stonescales destroyed the stairs during their coup. The first floor of the veranda's perimeter is fenced with a 3-foot-tall wooden lattice balustrade that looks out and over the fairgrounds below, but no balustrade has yet been constructed on the second story, making for a perilous falling hazard.

Creatures: Two Stonescale lookouts, one per level, guard the veranda from intruders who would climb up the sides of the pagoda. Okel watches the first level and Wex the second; the two pass the time by shouting riddles to each other.

If the lookouts hear the clamor of battle in area **C10**, they rush to join the fight, arriving one per round over the course of two rounds.

OKEL AND WEX (2) **CREATURE -1**

Female kobold warriors (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 212)

Initiative Perception +3

C12. KAMI SHRINE

At the western end of this large, unfinished room, a statue resembling the upper half of an armored warrior seems to

float above a stone pillar carved with dozens of tiny creatures. Three mirrors positioned around the statue are angled so as to create an endless line of reflected stone warriors stretching into infinity. At the shrine's feet, six humanoid workers lie bound and gagged, their eyes wide with fear.

Though the finished pagoda tower will hold many attractions, this is the temple's heart. The figure depicted by the statue is a zuishin, or shrine kami—a supernatural warrior who protects sacred places. The architects hope that this shrine and the prayers of petitioners will eventually attract an actual zuishin guardian, whose presence overseeing the sanctuary might help draw more timid kami to a land so in need of their influence.

The Stonescale warriors holding this room have erected a squat makeshift barricade using spare lumber; the barricade grants greater cover to Small creatures and cover to Medium creatures.

Creatures: All of the workers taken hostage by the Stonescales can be found here, guarded by several kobold warriors and their leader, Dragon Mage Skerix.

The most well-spoken and educated of her clan, Skerix was responsible for making the initial construction deal with Ama, as well as for organizing this uprising when she realized her people were being underpaid compared to other workers. Of all the Stonescales, Skerix is the only one who truly understands the goal of taking hostages, and that the temple is a bargaining chip rather than something they plan to hold long-term. She styles the takeover of the temple as a labor uprising, and her people as a newly established Kobold Trade Union, shouting slogans and leading her warriors in protest chants that—since she's the only one who speaks Common—they don't actually understand. (Her favorite is one she made up herself, that goes, "Merk mep, mep merk—equal pay or we won't work!")

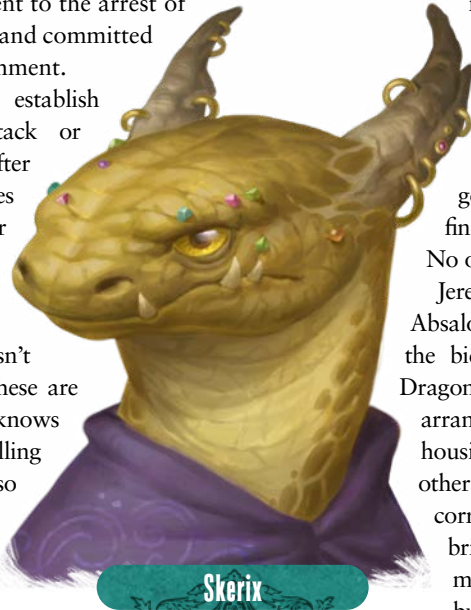
If the Edgewatch agents make it this far, the Stonescales here know they must be a formidable force and don't immediately rush to attack. Skerix is open to negotiations, though she and one of her warriors hold knives to the throats of two hostages throughout the terse discourse. She agrees to release the prisoners in exchange for back pay equivalent to what the Minkaian laborers received, as well as a guarantee of no further reprisals for the deaths of the workers (which, she claims, were actually the work of Rekarek only, whom she was unable to sufficiently rein in). If told of this deal, Ama and the architects reluctantly agree to pay, and the matter is resolved without further conflict. Depending on the deal the Edgewatch agents make, the kobolds might even agree to keep working on the temple.

If the characters left Battle Leader Rekarek alive, the guards are obligated to arrest the murderer and



put her through Absalom's justice system (which ultimately finds her guilty and sentences her to death). The other kobolds seem ambivalent to the arrest of their brutal ally, who they understand committed egregious crimes worthy of punishment.

If the agents don't attempt to establish communication, or if they attack or otherwise betray the kobolds after opening negotiations, the Stonescales rush to attack, and Skerix and her right-hand warrior slit the throats of two of the six hostages, killing them. Skerix threatens to kill more hostages if the Edgewatch doesn't parley with the Stonescales, but these are mostly empty threats, since she knows she has nothing to gain by killing hostages if she and her cadre are also slain or arrested. The Stonescale warriors fight to the death, but if all of her honor guard is killed or if Skerix is reduced to 10 HP or less, she surrenders and orders any remaining allies to do the same.



Skerix

SKERIX **CREATURE 2**

Female kobold dragon mage (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 213)
Initiative Perception +5

KOBOLD WARRIORS (3) **CREATURE -1**

Pathfinder Bestiary 212
Initiative Perception +3

Treasure: If the Edgewatch agents successfully rescue the hostages—either through negotiation or by wiping out the kobold threat—Ama and the other architects are extremely grateful. They're also aware that their illegal treatment of their contracted laborers led to this problem in the first place, and thus eagerly reward the agents with a 100 gp "donation" in an attempt to remain on their good side and avoid any punishment from the law.

XP Award: If the Edgewatch agents resolve this encounter peacefully with no Stonescales or hostages harmed, award each character 120 XP as a story award instead of combat XP. If they resolved the encounter with combat, award each character only the typical experience for the encounter (85 XP for 2nd-level characters).

INTERVIEWING THE LABORERS

Once the Edgewatch rescue the hostages, they can finally ask questions about the five specialist stonemasons and sculptors who went missing days ago. Unfortunately, the remaining laborers know

fairly little about their missing comrades. The five all came over from Minkai together and didn't associate much with the common laborers.

On the night the specialists went missing, however, several people heard them complaining about the shabbiness of their assigned quarters and how they were going to talk to Jeremin Hoff about finding them better accommodations. No one has seen them since.

Jeremin Hoff is a powerful Absalomian labor broker who won the bid to provide local labor to the Dragonfly Pagoda project as well as to arrange building materials, temporary housing for the foreign workers, and other necessities. He's notoriously corrupt—skimming building funds, bribing inspectors, and sourcing materials from sketchy vendors—but since that flexibility around

the law also helps his projects get done on time and on budget, he never hurts for reputable clients. In addition, he was the person who initially introduced the pagoda architects to the Stonescales as a way of potentially expediting construction. Ama can explain all of this and agrees with the other architects that Hoff might know what happened to the missing crew, and she urges the Edgewatch agents to pursue the lead.

Questioning Hoff is tricky, however. He takes his time responding to meeting requests, and time is of the essence for the agents. As far as Hoff is concerned, he's done his part for the pagoda; given his reputation, he doesn't want to talk to the city guard. He lives in and operates his business from an elite social club called the House of the Planes, an exclusive underworld (and literally underground) speakeasy carved out of the Undercity ruins beneath Eastgate.

If Skerix is questioned about any of this, she's happy to provide her perspective. She doesn't know anything about the missing stonemasons, but she suspects that Hoff and his associates might (as far as she's concerned, the shady businesspeople know everything going on in the upper city). Skerix also knows something even more important: the House of the Planes has a secret back door that Hoff used to bring her in for the initial meeting. She suggests to the Edgewatch agents that they sneak into the club to observe or question him incognito, and she draws them a map to the secret entrance. (If the agents killed Skerix, one of the other kobolds can provide this information.) Given that the club is in the Undercity, getting to the back door will require a bit of dungeon delving.

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CHAPTER 3: INTO THE UNDERCITY

If the Edgewatch guards return to the station after rescuing the hostages, Sergeant Ollo listens eagerly to their story, especially the information gained by questioning the hostages and kobolds. He agrees that speaking to Hoff at the House of the Planes is the best move, reasoning that even if the labor boss doesn't know anything, one of his associates must.

Unfortunately, there's not enough probable cause to go kicking in the door or demanding meetings with such influential figures—the Edgewatch isn't all-powerful, and rattling the wrong cages could cause the precinct a world of problems. Instead, Ollo recommends the agents rest until the evening, then go undercover as the sort of high-profile lowlifes to which the speakeasy caters, using the kobolds' secret back door to slip in, mingle, and covertly investigate. Toward this end, Ollo introduces the agents to the Wardrobe, the precinct's impressive collection of clothes and costumes kept for

precisely this purpose. All manner of disguises, from chic cocktail dresses to garish jester outfits, hang from over a dozen racks that line the walls of the vast walk-in closet. From what Ollo has heard, the agents can probably wear their weapons and armor in the House of the Planes without raising too many eyebrows, but the Edgewatch uniforms will have to go, and with a surprisingly shrewd eye for fashion, he advises them to dress to impress—the flashier the better. (Feel free to roleplay this “dress up” exchange as long as your players are interested. The agents will have numerous opportunities to return to the Wardrobe throughout the Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path, so they should become familiar with it.)

Once the characters have rested and are ready to continue the adventure, proceed to the next section, in which the agents use the map from Skerix to infiltrate the House of the Planes through an old smuggler's route.



ENTERING THE UNDERCITY

Absalom's famed Undercity is a warren of tunnels, from naturally occurring caverns to monster-excavated burrows and a palimpsest of old buildings and basements buried by centuries of new construction. The House of the Planes has taken advantage of the unregulated tunnels to construct an elite hangout for some of the city's extralegal entrepreneurs. Located in Absalom's quiet Eastgate district, the place's heavily guarded main entrance is in the basement of a dive bar called Mulligan's, not far from the Blue Tower. To reach the back door, however, the Edgewatch agents must start in a small neighborhood graveyard, a cemetery dubbed Raptor's Rest for the stylized headstones of several Eagle Garrison members buried here.

Raptor's Rest is a nondescript plot of land crammed between buildings in one of the less affluent sections of Eastgate, its graves packed so close together that there's barely room for grass between them. The doors to the large mausoleum in the cemetery's center are unlocked; inside, the Edgewatch agents find a nondescript sarcophagus with a hidden staircase leading down—the secret Undercity entryway mentioned by the Stonescales. Close examination of the sarcophagus's lid reveals scratches in the stone around the lid's edge, and characters who succeed at a DC 15 Survival check recognize them as coming from humanoid claws (these are from the ghouls in area **D3**). The 5-foot-wide staircase descends for several stories, periodically shallowing out into a narrow corridor running south, before ending in area **D1** at the entrance to the mapped cavern system.

THE BACK DOOR

Though the House of the Planes's builders initially cleared a serviceable path through the Undercity between their back door and the safety of Raptor's Rest, the route is rarely used. The various safeguards failed over the years and allowed the Undercity's perils to creep back in. Other criminal elements use the graveyard entrance for their own ends, and visitors creep into the tunnels from the Darklands further below.

General Features: The cavern system is unlit, and its ceilings are 8 feet high unless otherwise noted. The thinner walls separating the cavern rooms from one another are made of ruinous building materials and debris—remnants of old Absalomian buildings and streets—that can be broken through with considerable time and labor. Little of the debris is of interest, though characters on the lookout might find rusty pieces of rebar or bits of rubble that could make for suitable improvised weapons in a pinch.

D1. LANDING

The masonry of the staircase ends at the entrance to a cavern carved out of countless layers of rubble and ancient city buildings. To the west, the subterranean passage splits into two tunnels.

A character who succeeds at a DC 10 Survival check notices that the dust on the floor has been disturbed. If the result of the check surpasses

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

Following the lead they got from the Dragonfly Pagoda's remaining workers, the Edgewatch agents infiltrate an underground speakeasy in Absalom's Undercity via a forgotten smugglers' tunnel. Once inside, the agents undergo a series of planar-themed trials to impress the club's criminal clientele and gather enough clues to identify Hendrid Pratchett, Ralso, and the Dreaming Palace as common threads connecting the Edgewatch's missing persons cases.

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The following list includes all significant pieces of permanent and consumable treasure found in this chapter, excepting currency and mundane equipment. Treasure marked with an asterisk can be found in this volume's Adventure Toolbox.

- +1 mace
- +1 weapon potency rune
- alchemist's fires, lesser (9)
- bag of holding type I
- black smear poison (3 doses)
- bracers of missile deflection
- everburning torch
- full plate
- grolna* (10 doses)

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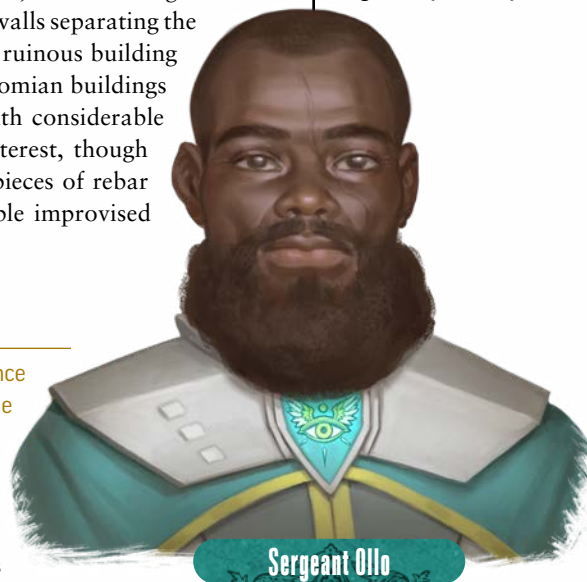
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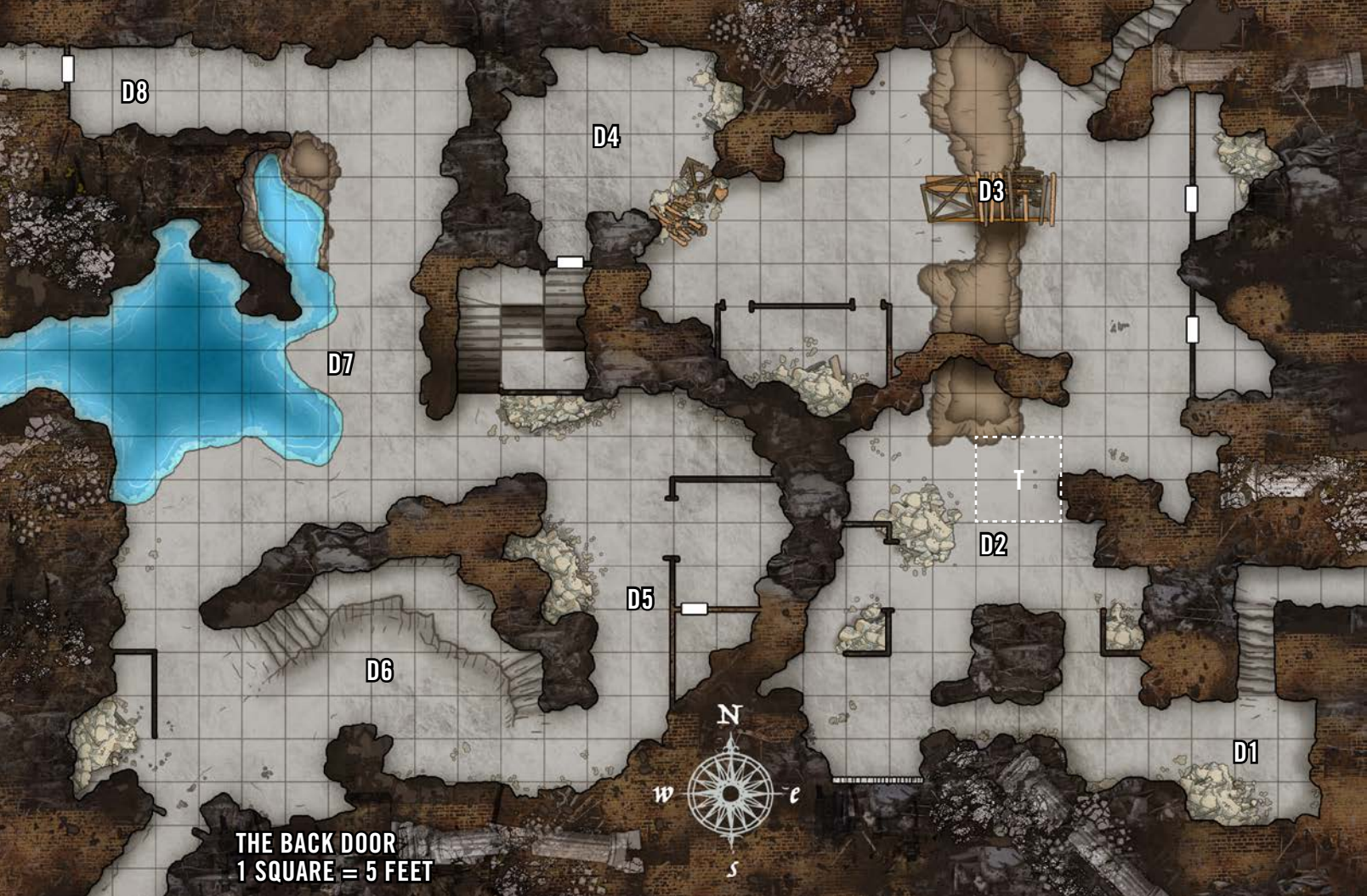
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Sergeant Ollo



THE BACK DOOR
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

the DC by 5 or more, the character sees several sets of tracks, including kobolds (Stonescales returning from the pagoda to their warren, toward the Darklands, or to rest), strangely mangled humanoid feet (the ghouls from **D3**), and some sort of large rodents (the ratfolk in area **D5**). A critical success allows the character to recognize the exact types of creatures involved and the fact that they all passed this way in the last few hours.

D2. CUBE CAVERN

LOW 2

The floor of this broad cavern appears strangely clean and polished. Even the debris of the crumbling building façade to the west is devoid of dust and dirt. To the south, a narrow tunnel has been thoroughly walled off with white bricks. To the north, a crevasse yawns in the floor and stretches under the northern wall. Just east of the pit lies a small heap of gleaming armor and weapons in the middle of a tunnel that leads northeast.

The crevasse to the north is 30 feet deep and runs under the wall into area **D3**, allowing an alternative route between the two chambers. The pit's slope is gradual and jagged enough to climb with relative ease (DC 12), but still steep enough to pose danger if pushed into.

Creature: The pile of gear is the remnant of a gelatinous cube's meal, as well as the only easily visible portion of the creature (its location is marked with dotted lines and a "T" on the map above). Having slunk through the Undercity sucking up organic matter from sewers and sunken graveyards, the cube was lured here by recent activity in these tunnels. Since it failed to attract the ratfolk in **D4** on their initial passage through the room, it currently blocks the passage to area **D3**, using its transparency and the valuables visible inside its body to lure in victims of their own accord. It initially remains still, requiring an active Search and a successful DC 23 Perception check to notice it, but if it gets the impression that its ruse has failed, it lurches forward to engulf the nearest prey.

GELATINOUS CUBE

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 254
Initiative Perception +5

Treasure: Inside the gelatinous cube is a set of full plate armor, a tower shield, and a +1 mace, each emblazoned with a large holy symbol of Asmodeus. Tucked in the rubble to the west is an old but salvageable torch.



D3. BRIDGE AND BARRICADE

MODERATE 2

A long crevasse cuts through the center of this sprawling cavern, spanned by a crude stone bridge. At the western end of the chamber, an even cruder barricade made from wooden crates blocks an exit. To the north, a narrow tunnel burrows into the wall several feet off the ground, the earth and stone scattered around its maw suggesting recent excavation. The ruined remains of a sunken building, its crumbling doors still somehow attached to their hinges, stand east of here, and in the southwestern corner is a similar architectural relic of old Absalom.



Kekker and Gref

The crevasse in the center of the room is 30 feet deep and runs underneath the wall into area **D2**. The ratfolk in area **D4** are responsible for the barricade to the west. Ghouls dug the tunnel to the north—their claustrophobic passage is only 2 feet high, and it squirms through dirt, stone, and several now-empty graves in Raptor's Rest before terminating in a collapsed dead-end.

The ratfolk in area **D4** have barricaded themselves into that room to guard against the ghouls. Breaking through the barrier requires either a successful DC 15 Athletics check or 3 rounds of work to disassemble it. The barricade provides greater cover to creatures on either side.

Creatures: Drawn by vibrations from the passing ratfolk thieves, three allied ghouls burrowed through the eastern wall from the graveyard above, forcing the thieves to barricade themselves in the chamber to the west. The ghouls managed to spot the gelatinous cube in area **D2** and thus avoid using that passage. They're currently clawing at the wooden barricade, but if they notice any creatures enter the room, they howl and, starving for fresh flesh, turn to attack. The ghouls' names are Eggard, Guston, and Blinny.

EGGARD, GUSTON, AND BLINNY (3) CREATURE 1

Male and Female ghouls (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 169)

Initiative Perception +7

Barricade Negotiations: If the thieves on the other side of the barricade hear the ghouls being routed, they attempt to learn as much as they can about their unexpected company by initiating a discussion with the Edgewatch agents before either group disassembles the barricade.

D4. RATFOLK REFUGE

The northern and eastern walls of this chamber appear to be excavated from the interior corner of a sunken, crumbling building, some of which has caved in along the eastern wall. To the southwest, a boulder from the cave-in blocks a heavy iron door.

Removing the boulder from in front of the door requires a successful DC 16 Athletics check. Characters who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check notice that the door itself is far older than the House

of the Planes is purported to be—a relic from some bygone era.

Creatures: The House of the Planes staff and their associates aren't the only people who know about this corner of the Undercity. Two small-time ratfolk thugs named Kekker and Gref, who call themselves the Whisker Brothers, recently began using this passage to meet with their caligni drug suppliers from the deep caverns beneath the city. Unfortunately, the meetings have attracted the attention of various subterranean horrors. During their most recent meeting in area **D6**, the dealers and thieves were attacked by a flock of vargouilles swooping in from the nearby Darklands passage. Both factions fled, but the panicked ratfolk were faster and slammed the door to **D4** behind them, consigning their business contacts to their grim fate. All the commotion drew in a group of ghouls who then attacked from the other side, trapping the smugglers in this chamber and forcing them to use their trade goods as a barricade.

The Whisker Brothers start out hostile and are unwilling to help the Edgewatch agents fight the ghouls, instead using the gaps in the barrier to attack anyone who tries to force their way through. If the agents defeat the ghouls, however, the brothers become unfriendly instead. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidation check shifts their attitude to indifferent, at which point they let the guards through the barricade and explain what happened (without mentioning the drugs). Once they've loaded their trade goods back onto their cart, the thieves make a run for the exit in area **D1**. If the agents try to stop the thieves from leaving or confiscate their goods, the Whisker Brothers fight back until reduced to half their Hit Points, at which point they abandon their treasure and flee.

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KEKKER AND GREF (2)

CREATURE 2

UNIQUE LE SMALL HUMANOID RATFOLK

Male ratfolk smugglers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 277)

Perception +9; darkvision

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +6, Stealth +8, Thievery +8

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Items crossbow with 10 bolts, katar, leather armor, snake oil (2), tindertwig

AC 17; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4

HP 40

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ fangs +8 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Melee ✦ katar +10 (agile, deadly d6, finesse, monk), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Ranged ✦ crossbow +10 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Cheek Pouches See *Pathfinder Bestiary* 277.

Katar Specialist The smugglers have trained extensively with the katar blade. Any katar they wield gains the finesse trait.

Quick Stow ✦ See *Pathfinder Bestiary* 277.

Swarming See *Pathfinder Bestiary* 277.

Treasure: The smugglers' goods, which they were to use as payment for the calignis' drug shipment, consists mostly of ordinary surface goods that fetch a higher price in the dark caverns below, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. ("These lemons is yellow gold in the deeps!" insists one of the smugglers. "A right delicacy!") Among the goods that have more value to the Edgewatch agents are a padded case with nine bottles of lesser alchemist's fire and a rune of +1 *weapon potency*.

XP Award: If the agents successfully question Kekker and Gref and arrest the smugglers, award each character a 30 XP story award.

D5. CREEPERS' LAST STAND

MODERATE 2

A narrow staircase winds up the northern end of this cavern to an iron door. A massive pile of debris takes up the southwestern corner of the area, while passages lead to the west and south.

Creatures: The two surviving Darklands drug dealers lurk at the bottom of the staircase here, splitting their attention between watching for the vargouilles in area D6 and preparing to ambush the traitorous ratfolk thieves if they come out the door to the north. All they really want to do is go home, escaping into the formerly walled-off tunnel that they broke through to access these chambers, but they're terrified of the vargouilles that they're positive still

lurk silently between them and salvation. Given the danger, they'd rather fight their way up to the surface and find a different route home from there.

The calignis are furious at being left to die and assume the Edgewatch agents must be in league with the ratfolk—why else would anyone be down here? Adding to their already healthy suspicion of surface-dwellers, any character who tries to stop the violence by explaining the situation must succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check to have any effect; otherwise, the calignis sneak up on the agents and brutally attack them. (Or, if they remain hidden from the Edgewatch agents, the calignis might try to sneak past the agents and flee to the surface.) The calignis believe their lives depend on this fight, but if one of them dies and the other is reduced to half their Hit Points, the survivor decides to take their chances and flees for the tunnel in area D6.

TIANO AND MORVIGGUS (2)

CREATURE 2

Female and male caligni creepers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Initiative Stealth +10

Items black smear poison (3 doses), 3 daggers

Treasure: In addition to the poison for their blades, the creepers also have their delivery—10 doses of a decadent new drug called grolna (page 81). Each dose is worth 3 gp, and one of the calignis carries the shipment in a *bag of holding type I*.

D6. KISSING CAVE

MODERATE 2

The ceiling in this part of the cavern soars up almost twenty feet. Tunnels exit to the north and east. To the southwest, near the ruins of a sunken building, a third passage was clearly once walled shut with white bricks, but the bricks have been removed from the middle to create a narrow pathway. A small bundle of dark rags lies in the center of the floor near the mangled corpse of what looks like a fiendish severed head with bat wings.

The Whisker Brothers and the Darklands drug dealers from areas D4 and D5 met here to initiate their ill-fated handoff only to be attacked by vargouilles fluttering silently up from the Darklands below. The vargouilles managed to take down one of the fleeing calignis—losing one of their own in the process—but accidentally killed him before they could transform him into another vargouille, so his corpse combusted into light and left only a small pile of wrappings and weapons.

The half-bricked passage leads deeper into the Undercity and eventually the Darklands. This tunnel



isn't part of the Stonescales' map to the back door, and its perils are beyond the scope of this adventure.

Creatures: The two remaining vargouilles from the attack on the ghouls in area **D3** lurk in the shadows between stalactites (granting them concealment), ready to ambush anyone who enters the room. They don't like fighting in narrow quarters, and thus are reluctant to attack the calignis where they're holed up near the stairs in **D5**, preferring to wait and ambush them when they make their inevitable dash for the passage leading home. If any creatures enter the room, the vargouilles wait until the prey is maximally exposed, then drop from the ceiling and fight relentlessly in their desire to create new vargouilles.

VARGOUILLES (2)

CREATURE 2

NE SMALL BEAST FIEND

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Infernal

Skills Acrobatics +8, Stealth +8

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

AC 18; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

HP 30

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +10 (finesse), **Damage** 1d8+3 piercing plus vargouille venom

Kiss ♦ The vargouille kisses an adjacent creature that's asleep, paralyzed, or unconscious, exposing it to the vargouille transformation disease.

Shriek ♦♦ (auditory, concentrate, visual) The vargouille shrieks, its scream so terrible that all non-vargouilles within 60 feet must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3 rounds. The effect ends early for a creature if the vargouille moves out of sight, moves farther than 60 feet from the creature, or attacks the creature with its fangs. After attempting its save, a creature is immune to that particular vargouille's Shriek for 24 hours.

Vargouille Transformation (disease) Exposing the victim to sunlight or any light spell of 3rd level or higher pauses the progression of the disease until the victim is no longer in light. **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no effect (1d6 hours); **Stage 2** victim's hair falls out (1d6 hours); **Stage 3** victim's ears grow into leathery wings, tentacles sprout on the chin and scalp, and the teeth become long, pointed fangs (1 day); **Stage 4** victim's mind regresses to a vicious and unintelligent shell of its former self (1d6 hours); **Stage 5** victim's head breaks free of the body (which dies) and becomes a new vargouille

Vargouille Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Stage 1** Damage the victim has taken from

vargouille fangs can't be healed magically. Once all vargouille fang damage has been healed nonmagically, the poison ends.

Treasure: The dead drug dealer's gear—three daggers, each coated with black smear poison—can be found among the rags on the ground.

D7. THE POND AND THE PIT

LOW 2

A shallow pond fills the western half of this chamber, its placid surface revealing glowing cave fish that swim slowly through the water. At the pond's northeastern edge, water flows into a stream that runs north before cascading down into a yawning pit in the floor, from which a faint glow emerges.

The pond is 10 feet deep and filled with the rainwater that seeps through narrow passages in the rock above. The pit is 40 feet deep, ending in another pool of water 10 feet deep that drains through the rubble into the soil below.

Creatures: A slimy, tough-skinned, wormlike monster from the Darklands known as a grick lives on a ledge partway down the pit, resting from a recent feast upon the pond's abundant cave fish. If it becomes aware of the Edgewatch agents, the grick initially bides its time, hiding and hoping to ambush the first character to look over the edge into the pit. If none do, the grick ignores the party and remains motionless here unless attacked, content with its steady supply of cave fish.

GRICK

CREATURE 3

N MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +12; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +10, Stealth +10 (+14 in rocky terrain), Survival +8

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

AC 19; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

HP 40; **Resistances** physical 3 (double resistance vs. non-magical)

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +12, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Melee ♦ tentacle +11 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

Unbalancing Blow Any creature a grick critically hits is flat-footed against its attacks until the end of the grick's next turn.

Vermicular Movement When a grick takes a Stride action to move half its Speed or less, that movement doesn't trigger reactions.

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Additionally, if the vargouilles in **D6** haven't been encountered yet and can hear any creatures in this room, they flutter into the chamber and attack.

Treasure: Bouncers from the House of the Planes have on occasion used the pit to dispose of the corpses of unruly guests. At the moment, the bloated, half-eaten corpse of a wizard wearing rotting but functional *bracers of missile deflection* floats at the bottom, illuminated by an *everburning torch* that one of the guards accidentally dropped and which continues to light the pit from the bottom of the pool.

D8. BACK DOOR

The tunnel here ends in a door of iron-banded wood set in a frame of white brick, not quite thick enough to completely muffle the sounds of festivities of bacchanalian magnitude.

This door opens into a rarely used storeroom in the back of



Grick

the House of the Planes. Since its existence is a secret, and since Hoff believes that these caverns remain safely walled off from the rest of the Undercity, there was no need for extensive security—the lock is of poor quality (requiring two successful DC 15 Thievery checks to pick), and Breaking Open the door requires an agent to succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check. (Fortunately for the Edgwatch agents, the raging party within the speakeasy more than covers the sound of a door being kicked in.)

HOUSE OF THE PLANES

Among criminal circles, the House of the Planes is one of the trendiest new watering holes in Absalom. Jeremin Hoff's subterranean speakeasy is half kink club, half carnival fun house, with each room on the main floor themed around a different plane of the Outer Sphere. Attendees are invited to wander between the rooms as they please, or they can be "judged" in the central Boneyard chamber by a staff member dressed as Pharamasma, the goddess of death, and sent to a particular area. The judgment takes the form of a light, humorous roasting inspired by whatever clues the Pharamasma impersonator can glean from a guest's appearance.

Despite what the agents might think given their ease of entrance, security in the House of the Planes is formidable. Plenty of bouncers masked like angels, demons, and other extraplanar beings lounge in the doorways between chambers, all strong enough that anyone who starts trouble will end up overpowered and dumped in an alley somewhere without the need to play out combat. Similarly, since the bar caters to the underworld elite, the guests themselves are likely more than a match for the Edgwatch agents at this stage.

While the characters can access all the public rooms of the main floor and are free to leave out the front door when they're done, the entrance to Hoff's private chambers is so well guarded as to be beyond the scope of this adventure. In short, the characters' best option is to follow through on the plan to mingle with guests and gather information through conversation. (As a result, and given that all of the public rooms are connected to each other and the entrance through the central Boneyard chamber, there's no need for a map of the house at this point, though you can find one when the characters return here in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #161: Belly of the Black Whale*.)



Fortunately, the agents can learn everything they need through conversation. Regardless of when the agents arrive, the club has enough guests—including underworld elites, their retinues of bodyguards and hangers-on, and enough thrill-seeking aristocrats and arm candy to keep things interesting—that a few unfamiliar faces won't draw undo attention, especially if the characters took Ollo's advice and dressed to kill.

Navigating the House: Each of the rooms detailed on the following pages contains information on the important underworld figure in that room (the Patron entries), as well as what information they might know or believe to be true related to the Edgewatch's case (the Clue and potential False Leads entries). The characters' tactics determine how each social encounter plays out, but you should strive to make these conversations fun roleplaying opportunities. In each encounter, the characters need to attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check to butter up, impress, or otherwise loosen the tongues of the criminal in question; on a success, the characters receive both the Clue and the False Lead. These checks can get easier as characters narrow in on the truth—asking a direct question about the Dreaming Palace, Ralso, or Pratchett gains the agents a +4 circumstance bonus to the Diplomacy check to learn what the patron knows about the subject. While it's usually obvious from observing body language which patron is the most important or high standing in each room, characters who want to do research in advance can learn basic info about each room's patron from other, less important guests with a successful DC 12 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. While each patron has their own False Lead entry, these theories are quickly dismissed and ridiculed by other patrons if the characters mention them, helping the heroes separate the chaff from the actual clues.

Aiding in all of these checks is a challenge for each room: a themed activity that characters can undergo in order to earn both respect from the other guests and a circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks in that room. (If the characters have already failed the Diplomacy check to talk to a patron, succeeding at the challenge allows them to try again.) Unless otherwise specified, this circumstance bonus is +4. Each character can attempt the challenge and the check, though they should generally do so one at a time.

Since the agents are relatively new to the city guard, they're unlikely to be recognized or raise suspicions. As long as the agents don't deliberately blow their cover, assume that no one sees through

it (or that, if some do, they dismiss the agents as no real threat and remain quiet for their own reasons). At the same time, the club's clientele has little love for city guards, and if any characters are brash enough to announce their identities, they're politely but firmly escorted to the door, and will have to gain the necessary information through other routes—in this case, you may wish to adapt the patrons' descriptions and clues into encounters with the Edgewatch's network of informants elsewhere in the city.

The characters' first stop in the House of the Planes is the Boneyard, the neutral plane where the souls of mortals are "judged," but after that they're welcome to visit any rooms they like, in any order. If they seek out Jeremin Hoff right away, the agents can find him with relative ease in the Hell room.

Story Award: While you should play out the social encounters for as long as everyone at the table is having fun, it's not necessary to run every encounter. Successfully gathering information from a handful of different patrons and a bit of cross-referencing should be enough to notice Hendrid Pratchett, Ralso, and the Dreaming Palace as common threads throughout the missing persons cases. Once the Edgewatch agents are finished, they can simply walk out the front door. While they do not receive XP for individual social interactions or completing room challenges, if the party members successfully investigate enough to lead them to the Dreaming Palace, award each character an 80 XP story award. If they're completely stumped, they can overhear one of the patrons putting the clues together, in which case they can move the adventure forward but gain no experience.

BONEYARD

The walls of this room have been painted with an endless field of gravestones under a black sky. Open archways along the walls lead to numerous other rooms. A tall, black-robed woman with long white hair and ash-colored makeup perches on a spiral-marked headstone in the room's center next to an oversized stone sarcophagus filled with dirt.

As soon as the characters enter the room, the white-haired host—obviously dressed as Pharasma—swans over to meet them. She's a bombastic, campy performer with a decidedly irreverent take on the goddess of life and death, winking at the characters and loudly asking: "All right now, honey babies, are you ready for some *judgment*?"

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This encounter is intended to let you explain in character how the social encounters within the House of the Planes will work. “Pharasma” is an excellent cold reader and can tell right away that the characters are there to talk to some big shots—she lets them know that in each room (including this one) is a powerful figure holding court, and that the best way to impress these patrons is to show off their talents and bravery by completing the challenge in their room. (She illustrates this by

pointing out the Boneyard’s patron, who is eagerly watching someone lose their nerve partway through the burial challenge.)

At the end of the conversation, Pharasma winks again and asks the characters if they want to stay here and “have a seat on my spire” or if they want to get judged. If the agents choose the latter, she picks some obvious aspect of their outfits or demeanor and uses it to judge them, pitching her voice for all to

hear. (For instance, for a fighter or barbarian, she might look at their biceps and say, “Oh bones, look at these! You must be one of Kurgess’s flock—off to Nirvana with you!” If a character is wearing a particularly dashing or scandalous outfit, she feigns swooning with desire and declares, “Lust is my favorite sin—but it’s still a sin, you naughty thing! Take your wicked ways to the Abyss with all the other succubi and incubi!” (See *Pathfinder Lost Omens: Gods & Magic* for more details on the Pathfinder campaign setting’s afterlife and the Outer Sphere.)

Whether or not they’ve been judged, once the characters have finished their interaction with Pharasma, they’re welcome to do as they wish, including disregarding her judgment or staying here and completing the room’s challenge.

Room Challenge: Be briefly buried alive in the sarcophagus full of dirt. While this isn’t particularly dangerous—the layer of dirt is thin and easy to escape from if the character starts to suffocate—completing it with aplomb requires succeeding at both a Fortitude and a Will save (DC 14) to hold one’s breath and avoid panicking.

Patron: **Leila Scandrabar** (NE female halfling smuggler 7) is a prominent Absalomian fence, facilitating the safe sale of stolen goods thanks to a network of traders who carry particularly identifiable items to distant ports before selling them. She’s fairly open about her business, trusting in her clever techniques for hiding and altering goods to protect her from guard interference, and she immediately pegs the characters as the type of folks who might have hot merchandise they need to off-load.

Clue: Business has been booming for Leila with the chaos of the fair, though a lot of her bounty is the low-value, empty-your-pockets sort of personal



Pharasma Impersonator



effects typical of tourists. In particular, she's been getting a steady stream of such detritus from a thief named Ralso, which struck her as strange since pickpocketing and mugging seem beneath the thief's abilities. The most recent batch of stolen items contained a bunch of Minkaian goods, including a couple of mason's tools—the personal effects of the missing Dragonfly Pagoda crew. Leila doesn't know where Ralso lives or works, but she thinks Cass Hamish, who is in the Nirvana Room, might.

False Lead: Being in the business of making things disappear herself, Leila posits that the missing persons might simply be folks cutting ties with their old lives and starting over. Absalom is the perfect place to lose yourself in the crowd, and if the agents mention any of the specific disappearances, Leila points out that things like a wizard abandoning an annoying apprentice, a businessman running off with his employee lover, or a bunch of foreign travelers who decided to disappear in Absalom are a lot more believable than some grand conspiracy.

ABADDON

This nearly empty room is notably colder than the others. Guests sit on the bare stone floor or chunks of rubble. The walls are painted with scenes of a vast wasteland and erupting volcanoes, and a spherical light fixture on one wall only barely illuminates the room thanks to a dark circle of metal that eclipses it. A horse-skull mask obscures the bartender's face as she sits cross-legged on the floor surrounded by her bottles and a single conspicuous half-full chalice.

Room Challenge: Drink from the Plague Chalice. Guests are encouraged to pour the dregs of their drinks into the bartender's large silver cup, along with any other choice liquids the bartender might care to add. Any customer who can chug the chalice's disgusting contents without flinching or spewing earns a cheer from the assembled guests, plus free drinks from the bartender for the rest of the night. This feat requires a successful DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid the concoction immediately coming back up, as well as a successful DC 14 Will save to do so with a straight face.

Patron: Lomo Dibashi (CN male elf drunkard 2) used to be a highly successful burglar before a traumatic experience turned him into a paranoid, shaky drunk. Due to his longtime friendship with Hoff and the recentness of his transformation, Lomo is still welcome in the House of the Planes, where he regularly drinks the Plague Chalice to cover his bar tab.

Clue: One of Lomo's last jobs was an attempt to rob a new hotel in the Precipice Quarter called the Dreaming Palace. Almost as soon as he broke into one of the bedrooms, however, two statues in the room came to life and attacked him, and he barely escaped. He doesn't know what's going on with the hotel—he assumes his close call was the result of excellent magical security rather than some nefarious plot—but he's steered clear of the place ever since.

False Lead: A month ago, Lomo was abducted by terrifying, gray-skinned beings called deros. They paralyzed him while he was sleeping, took him down to their lair in the Undercity where they conducted strange experiments on him, then returned him to his bed. No one quite believes his story—especially given that he's been drunk every day since—but if the Edgewatch agents bring up the missing persons, he's convinced that the deros must be behind it somehow.

ABYSS

The walls of this room are painted with capering demons of all varieties. There's no bar here, only a collection of glass cases that stand like pillars throughout the room. Inside each case is a bottle surrounded by a different form of unpleasantness—worms, scorpions, blood, and worse.

Room Challenge: Fetch a bottle of high-end Galtan brandy and offer it to Molly. All of the liquor in this room is self-serve, but with a twist: drinkers must reach into the tops of the glass cases with their bare hands and fish the bottles out of the grotesqueries surrounding them, which include everything from bull's blood and manure to worms and biting insects. The best drink in the house—brandy from a Woodsedge distillery that burned to the ground in a riot 16 years ago—rests inside a case of aggressive Thuvian boreworms. Anyone reaching in to retrieve it must succeed at either a DC 16 Fortitude or Reflex save to avoid taking 1d6 poison damage as the worms gnaw their way into bare flesh. (The worms are easily squeezed out, but the damage remains.) On a successful save, the character gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks against Molly; if unsuccessful, they still gain a +2 circumstance bonus for the attempt.

Patron: Molly Crimson (CG female gnome madam 1) runs a coalition of sex workers spanning several neighborhoods, including the Precipice Quarter. She's instantly recognizable by her short red hair, matched by long opera gloves and a low-cut dress of the same color. The gloves aren't merely for style—she has a deep-seated phobia of contagion and has turned this obsession with hygiene into a major selling point

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for both her clients and her staff. (Her paradoxical presence in this room is a form of self-imposed exposure therapy.)

Clue: Molly doesn't know anything about Pratchett or the Dreaming Palace, but some of her employees are missing as well, and she'd like to know where they are. Instead of earning a clue, characters who curry Molly's favor convince her to use her considerable influence to aid in their investigation, granting them a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks against any of the other patrons in the House of the Planes.

False Lead: Given her paranoia about disease, Molly wonders if the disappearances are the result of some illness that's being covered up by the Grand Council for fear of disrupting the Radiant Festival.

AXIS

All the tables in this room are perfectly square and situated in a neat grid. Copper wire runs in geometric patterns across the walls, linking together tiny glass bulbs that blink and glow. A chalkboard on one wall holds a riddle written in large, perfect block letters.

Room Challenge: Solve the day's logic puzzle. Today, it's a classic riddle called the Plane Shift Problem: "You need to transport an inevitable, a protean, and a mortal to Pharsma's Spire, but your magic plane-shifting ring will let you take only one passenger at a time. If at any point you leave the inevitable and protean together unchaperoned, they'll kill each other, but if you leave the protean and the mortal together, the protean will corrupt them. How do you get all three to the Spire safely?"

The answer is to transport the protean first, then come back and take the inevitable, but bring the protean back with you and leave it in the original location while you transport the mortal, then come back and bring the protean in the last trip. The agents can succeed by either reasoning out the answer themselves or by succeeding at a DC 15 Intelligence check. (You can, of course, devise a riddle of your own, if your group is particularly puzzle savvy.)

Patron: Wilifred Stoneburrow (LE female dwarf con artist 10) is the head of Stoneburrow and Associates, a prominent real estate development firm, and also a member of the Argent Syndicate, a gang of powerful white-collar criminals. In Wilifred's case, that means making a killing off of shady real estate deals in the newly reclaimed Precipice Quarter primarily through forged documents proving that associates of hers have historical claims to certain ruined buildings. Wilifred has an extremely high

opinion of her own intelligence and is reserved around anyone she sees as her intellectual inferior (which is most people). She loves logic puzzles, however, and thus anyone who solves the room's challenge gains an advantage in talking to her.

Clue: Wilifred sold the property for the Dreaming Palace to Pratchett. As part of the transaction, she saw some of his early architectural drawings, which struck her as eccentric and remarkably inefficient, with lots of extraneous chambers and nothing properly standardized. If not asked directly about Pratchett, she might bring him up as an example of some of the rubes paying top dollar for property in order to launch ill-advised businesses catering to festivalgoers.

False Lead: Wilifred despises the poorer economic classes, seeing their poverty as the result of intellectual inferiority or sheer laziness. As such, she's positive the disappearances are the result of "base predators within the rabble"—especially carnies and other traveling entertainers, who outright terrify her.

ELYSIUM

Murals of impossibly high mountains and endless forests cover the walls here, while marble sculptures of winged snake-women curl around pillars in the corners. On one side of the room, a live griffon is chained to an artificial nest, glaring at patrons and snapping at tossed scraps, while waitstaff dressed as Calistrian clergy maintain a careful distance.

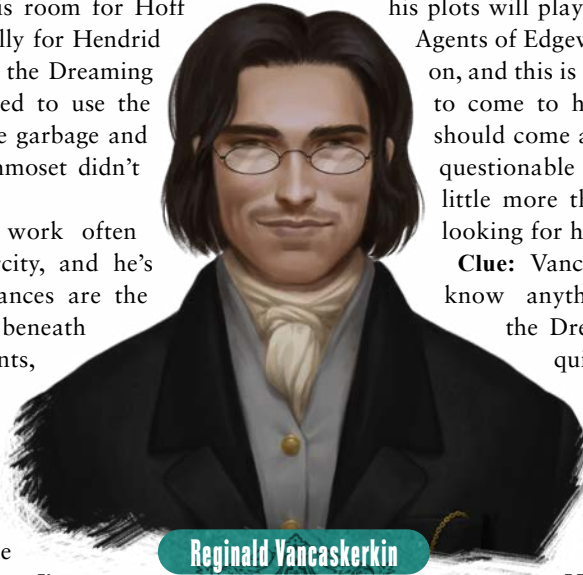
Room Challenge: Approach the griffon and place your head inside the beast's mouth. The griffon is only half-trained—wise enough to know that beheading a humanoid could cause problems, but also chronically furious at its captivity. Agents who succeed at a DC 16 Nature check—or any use of magical or class-based animal friendship or communication abilities, such as a druid's wild empathy or a *Speak with Animals* spell—can keep the griffon from biting down long enough to complete the challenge. If the character fails, they take 2d8+4 piercing damage.

Patron: Ahmoset Nez (N male dwarf merchant-explorer 7), a dwarf with the dark skin and the shorn cheeks of the Osirian Pahmet culture, works as a "procurement specialist" who acquires whatever his clients need, no matter an item's rarity, legal status, or current ownership. While less a housebreaker than a trader and adventurer, Ahmoset's prices mean no one hires him for the easy jobs, and his exotic patchwork of armor from across the world is proof of both his worldliness and his success, though not necessarily of his discretion.



Clue: Ahmoset has done a number of interesting jobs that he's happy to reminisce about, such as acquiring the griffon in this room for Hoff or procuring a live ochre jelly for Hendrid Pratchett, the proprietor of the Dreaming Palace, who said he planned to use the creature as part of a unique garbage and sewage disposal system. Ahmoset didn't ask any further questions.

False Lead: Ahmoset's work often takes him into the Undercity, and he's pretty sure any disappearances are the work of monsters from beneath the Isle of Kortos, vagrants, or even undead stirred up by the festival and the resurrection of the Precipice Quarter. "Bad business to reclaim a lost district, my friends," he notes about the latter. "Where I'm from, when the desert claims a city—you leave it to its ghosts."



Reginald Vancaskerkin

Though that particular aspect of his character doesn't show up in this encounter, Vancaskerkin and his plots will play a much bigger role in the Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path later on, and this is a chance for the characters to come to his attention. For now, he should come across as oily, nosy, and of questionable moral fiber, but otherwise little more than an aristocratic gossip looking for his next sensational story.

Clue: Vancaskerkin doesn't actually know anything about Pratchett or the Dreaming Palace. Instead, he quickly turns any conversation with the characters into an interview of his own, answering questions with questions and pumping the guards for information about the missing persons. His tabloid would be very interested in the story, and he immediately comes to the conclusion that the disappearances must be the work of a serial killer, running with that angle despite any evidence to the contrary, as it's "clearly the most compelling story." (The fact that it's true is only partially a coincidence—while he doesn't know anything about Pratchett, he *does* know of the existence of a Skinsaw cult in the city, so it's not entirely a wild guess. His skill at deception is so far beyond the Edgewatch agents' at this point, however, that there's no way for them to see through his facade.)

False Lead: While the newspaperman remains positive that it's a serial killer, he concedes that it could *possibly* be a murder cult, like worshippers of Norgorber's Skinsaw Man aspect.

HEAVEN

The walls of this well-lit room are painted with blue skies and bright, fluffy clouds, except for the wall behind the bar, which portrays an enormous mountain. Waitstaff drift between the tables wearing revealing white robes and fake feathered wings. A one-foot-high round stone pedestal stands in one corner.

Room Challenge: Publicly confess a sin or crime while standing atop the Pillar of Truth—a pedestal enchanted with a *zone of truth* spell. An agent who succeeds at a 16 Diplomacy or Performance check wins over the crowd and earns the bonus, though the onlookers are particularly impressed by honestly regretted or damning transgressions and may be satisfied with a lower check result if the story is particularly juicy. Upon confession, the "Celestial Judge"—the bartender—acknowledges the confession and offers the confessor "penance" (a particularly strong house cocktail).

Patron: **Reginald Vancaskerkin** (NE male human entrepreneur 18) owns and operates *Eyes on Absalom*, a tabloid regarded as filth by the city's more discerning critics and enjoyed by nearly everyone else. A consummate gossip and rumormonger—hence his presence in this particular room—he's also secretly a staunch worshipper of Norgorber and a member of the Twilight Four.

HELL

Red lanterns drench this room in bloody light, illuminating walls painted with fiery pits and rocky crags. All of the tables here are inset into waist-high pits in the floor, and the bartender stands in their own bottle-lined pit in the center, sporting either a tiefling's brow-horns or a set of remarkable fakes. Elaborate torture devices stand at the ready all around the room.

Room Challenge: Consent to be tortured with "butterfly boots." As the owner of the House of the Planes, Hoff enjoys showing off new and unusual torture devices, especially if he's operating them himself on willing subjects. Imported from Tian

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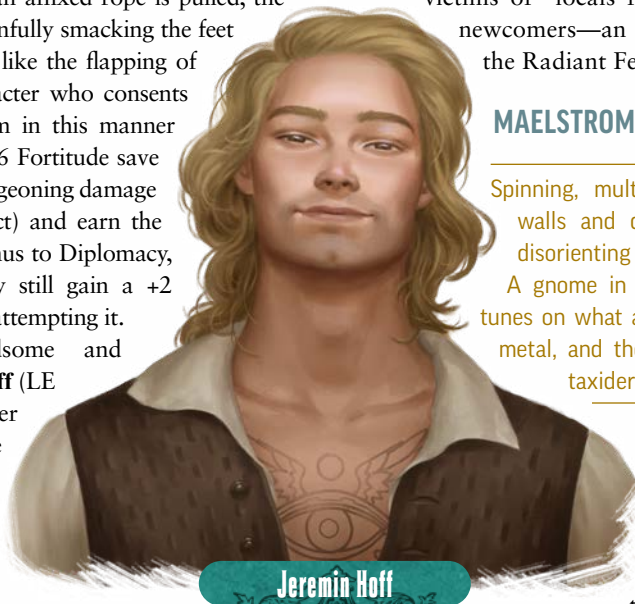
Xia, the butterfly boots method involves lying down and putting one's bare feet inside an apparatus of wooden boards. When an affixed rope is pulled, the boards rapidly close, painfully smacking the feet and ankles in a motion like the flapping of butterfly wings. A character who consents to let Hoff torture them in this manner must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save to avoid taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage (this is a nonlethal effect) and earn the full +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy, though if they fail they still gain a +2 circumstance bonus for attempting it.

Patron: The handsome and charismatic **Jeremin Hoff** (LE male human power broker 13) is a powerful figure among Absalom's working classes who acts as one of the primary brokers of day labor for projects around the city. Large and imposing, with a gaudy amount of jewelry and shirt hanging open to reveal a large chest tattoo of the Eye of Aroden, Hoff started his career as a dockworker before turning his connections into a half-legal empire. He's a staunch nativist, and while he's not above working with foreigners when it's to his financial gain, he believes Absalom-born locals should come first in all things. (Any characters who were born in Absalom automatically gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks against Hoff, while those from elsewhere take a -2 penalty.) Hoff prides himself on his intelligence and eloquence, though when he gets angry he quickly resorts to the sort of dockworker epithets that would make a sailor blush.

Clue: The Dragonfly Pagoda's missing building crew did indeed come to see Hoff, complaining about the quarters he'd set up. Fearing that their complaints might reach the ears of the pagoda's architects and harm his reputation, he decided to appease them and agreed to pay for better lodging. He says that the last he'd heard, the workers had gone to stay at a hotel called the Dreaming Palace. That's all he knows—as he's quick to point out, he's a businessman, not a nanny. "If the work crew ran off, well, that's what the architects get for bringing their own foreign workers along, since my own people would never abandon a job half-finished."

False Lead: Due to his Absalom-first politics, Hoff is both extremely proud of the festival's achievements and suspicious of all the foreigners it's bringing in, especially those looking to profit off the fair themselves. Since, as

far as the Edgewatch agents know, only foreigners have gone missing, Hoff assumes they were the victims of "locals fed up with the hordes of newcomers—an inevitable consequence of the Radiant Festival."



MAELSTROM

Spinning, multicolored lanterns paint the walls and denizens of this room in a disorienting riot of kaleidoscopic shapes. A gnome in the corner plays discordant tunes on what appears to be a pile of scrap metal, and the bartender wears an entire taxidermy swan as a hat.

Room Challenge: Take a puff from the Muzullah siblings' hookah, which is filled with a new and experimental compound they're testing for use as a potential street drug. Characters who inhale the smoke must attempt a DC 16 Fortitude save. If they succeed, they experience only a mild, pleasant sparkle effect across their vision, which imposes no penalties. If they fail, they are stupefied 2 as they're overwhelmed by hallucinations (primarily a visual artifact in which colors appear to melt into each other and an unshakable sense that all items of footwear are actually small animals devouring the legs of their wearers). This effect lasts until the next time the character gets 8 hours of sleep. Regardless of the success of the saving throw, attempting it grants the characters a +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy to influence the Muzullahs.

Patron: Qadiran siblings **Sharim and Halan Muzullah** (CN male human alchemists 4) love to experiment, and they use their alchemical expertise to add novel effects to existing drugs or engineer entirely new forms of "chemical creativity" for their successful drug-dealing business. Both are fond of sampling their own wares, making them even more eccentric than they might be otherwise, with their conversations taking abrupt twists as random ideas and stimuli capture their attention.

Clue: There's always plenty of call for drugs in Absalom, and the influx of adventurous tourists has only increased demand. As a result, the Muzullahs have several new clients placing wholesale orders, including a man named Hendrid Pratchett, who has been aggressively buying soporifics and hallucinogens. The brothers assume he must be setting up his hotel as a new drug den. (In fact, he's been using them in his various traps and tortures.)



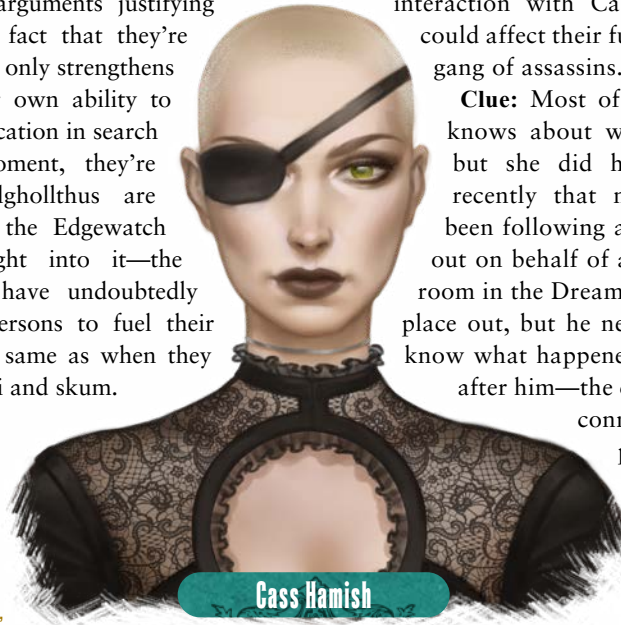
False Lead: The siblings are consummate conspiracy theorists, using their considerable intellects to construct elaborate arguments justifying outlandish claims. (The fact that they're occasionally proven right only strengthens their confidence in their own ability to "pierce the veils of obfuscation in search of truth.") At the moment, they're convinced that the algholthus are behind everything, and the Edgewatch agents' story feeds right into it—the ichthyoid masterminds have undoubtedly abducted the missing persons to fuel their genetic experiments, the same as when they created races like azarketi and skum.

NIRVANA

The walls of this room are painted with rolling hills, pastoral forests, and floating temples. The tables, bar, and seats in the room are mostly carved to look like tree stumps and other natural phenomena, save for a raised stone dais in the center which has a squared-off surface inset with lit torches.

Room Challenge: Demonstrate mastery of your physical and mental self by wrestling the burly bartender in a round of Phoenix Wrestling. To add spice to the game, wrestlers compete atop the dais, where the burning torches deal 2d6 fire damage to anyone who's pinned to the ground. The twist, of course, is that the grinning bartender is a tiefling with fire resistance. The participating agent attempts a grappling contest with the bartender (Athletics +7, Fortitude +10), with the agent going first. If the agent successfully Grapples the bartender, they pin him to the floor and win the challenge. If the bartender successfully Grapples them, they take the fire damage but can attempt a DC 16 Will save to maintain their composure as they burn—if they succeed, they still receive the +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks.

Patron: Cass Hamish (N female human assassin 16) is a member of the Garrote Sisterhood, a local gang of female assassins recognizable by their stylized garrote necklaces. Easygoing and friendly—especially if you buy her a drink—Cass maintains that holding grudges is poison to the soul... which is why you should hire her to realize your vengeance for you, so that you may move on. (The Garrote



Sisterhood make an appearance in the fifth volume of this Adventure Path. Note how the characters' interaction with Cass goes here, because it could affect their future interactions with the gang of assassins.)

Clue: Most of the disappearances Cass knows about were ones she engineered, but she did have a weird experience recently that might be relevant. She'd been following a mark, ready to take him out on behalf of a client, when he rented a room in the Dreaming Palace. She staked the place out, but he never emerged. She doesn't know what happened, and she couldn't go in after him—the concierge, Ralso, has gang connections that make the place off-limits. The mark never turned up again, and the failure landed Cass in hot water with the sisterhood's leader, a woman named Alzuna who sometimes frequents the House of the Planes. Cass's relaxed exterior masks her nervous anticipation of whatever punishment her boss might have in store for her.

False Lead: Cass is obsessed with the Red Mantis—the prototypical matriarchal assassin gang—and sees the mark of their sawtooth blades in everything. If people are disappearing mysteriously, she's sure it must be the Mantis at work, and she is excited and terrified in equal measure by the prospect.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

With all their clues from the House of the Planes, the Edgewatch agents should have plenty of cause to investigate the Dreaming Palace. They'll likely want to take some time first to rest, sell off loot, and resupply. If they report back to the station, Sergeant Ollo is impressed with their work and agrees that the Dreaming Palace and its proprietors seem like the common thread. If the agents ask to pull station records, the meager documentation available reveals that Ralso is a convicted thief, though she served her time and has no outstanding warrants, while Pratchett has no record at all. Without further information, Ollo thinks the best thing to do is get in there, take a look around, and question Ralso and Pratchett (though he gives the characters the chance to come to this conclusion themselves and only nudges them if they seem headed off on a tangent).

Once the agents have recuperated and are ready to continue their adventure, proceed to Chapter 4.

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CHAPTER 4: THE MURDER HOTEL

The agents' investigation has brought them to the most likely suspects behind the missing persons: a mysterious man named Hendrid Pratchett, his ex-con accomplice Ralso, and their labyrinthine hotel fortress—the so-called Dreaming Palace. To finalize their case against the proprietors and bring the culprits to justice, the heroes will need to investigate the haunted hotel firsthand, a process that quickly proves fraught as they encounter its numerous deadly traps and monstrous inhabitants.

QUESTIONING PRATCHETT

If the agents' first instinct is to question Pratchett, they find him quite amenable to meeting. He suggests they talk in a comfortable setting such as the Tippy Tengu during a quiet lunch hour. Pratchett is a masterful smooth talker and liar who comes across as completely cooperative with the agents' investigation, and he seems genuinely concerned about the missing persons.

He answers questions with verifiable half-truths (“I do recall negotiating lodging with your friend Mr. Hoff, but I’m afraid his clients simply never showed”) or diversionary, noncommittal responses (“The name rings a bell, but I can’t say for sure. I’ll ask Mrs. Honeywall next time I see her. She never forgets a face, you know, the dear lady”). Pratchett even brings the doctored guest log from the hotel to show the agents that all his guests can easily be accounted for (the books list none of the missing persons, though careful scrutiny of the materials suggests numerable erasures, all of which Pratchett chalks up to clumsy bookkeeping on the part of his partner Ralso).

It should become apparent to the players that their best course of action is to check out the hotel for themselves—something Pratchett welcomes, and he offers to provide a guided tour himself. Of course, if such a tour plays out, Pratchett uses every monster, trap, and weapon at his disposal to quickly and quietly eliminate the agents.



THE DREAMING PALACE

The Dreaming Palace is a recent construction in the Precipice Quarter, situated at the junction of quiet Osprey Lane and the busier Sabaton Road, completed only a few months ago in preparation for the Radiant Festival. Its mastermind, the charming serial killer Hendrid Pratchett (page 88), bought the property shortly after the resurrected district was opened to the public as an opportunity to realize his dream: a murder hotel where victims would literally arrive on his doorstep and pay him for the privilege of dying. Between his natural charm, the local street smarts of his associate Ralso (page 90), and a policy of targeting only visitors to Absalom, Pratchett's dream has become reality, with dozens of victims meeting their end in the hotel's nefarious traps.

The hotel itself is a bizarre, rambling affair built atop and inside the ruins of an old foundry. Though little of the original structure remains aside from a few thick stone walls, incorporating these remnants into the hotel gave Pratchett an easy excuse for the eccentric layout. Combined with the hiring and firing of several different work crews during construction, this allowed Pratchett to build a mazelike edifice full of secret passages and hidden spaces for his dark delights, including turning the entire foundation of the foundry into a secret basement accessible only via his office.

From the outside, the hotel appears nice enough, if a little strange. Several of the street-level walls are the original thick gray stone from the foundry, with windows irregularly placed and half-concealed by elegantly draping ivy. The second floor is more conventional half-timbering with whitewashed panels and leaded windows, several brick chimneys, and a small, round tower poking up from the northeastern side.

If the agents ask around, they find that neighbors in the area quite like Pratchett, who's always chatty and friendly. Ralso has more of a mixed reputation—especially among those who know her criminal past—but is still generally well-tolerated since she runs Pratchett's errands and always pays their tabs. If the agents stake out the hotel, neither suspect emerges for a long time, though after three days Ralso eventually leaves for groceries.

Hotel Features: Unless otherwise noted, the Palace's interior walls are made of specially reinforced wood (*Core Rulebook* 515) and have been thoroughly soundproofed—Ralso and Pratchett actually advertise this element of privacy as a selling point, even if its true purpose is to keep the guests from hearing the screams of their neighbors falling prey to the hotel's various traps. Ceilings are 10 feet high on the main and upper floors and 15 feet high in the basement, and all the rooms and corridors are kept dimly illuminated by hanging lanterns.

Except where noted, all doors to private guest rooms are lockable (each requiring a successful DC 16 Thievery check to pick), though Ralso and Pratchett have master keys to every room in the building, and only occupied rooms are locked. Pratchett and Ralso both have the ability to disarm the hotel's various traps, and they sometimes let guests get comfortable for several days before quietly rearming their room's trap and watching the unsuspecting guests meet their grisly fate. At the moment, however, all traps are fully armed.

The hotel's windows are its most magical elements—while some are completely ordinary, the windows of any room with traps or other incriminating elements are enchanted with an *illusory scene* spell to display an ordinary, empty hotel room when viewed from the exterior. The DC to disbelieve the illusions is 26, but each scene is on a 1-minute loop; careful observation over the course of several minutes reduces the Perception DC to 16, as characters can notice subtle repetitions such as a curtain waving or a housefly landing in the same place.

CHAPTER 4 SYNOPSIS

The agents explore the tortuous halls of the Dreaming Palace, a dastardly hotel full of traps and terrors. Should they survive its perils, the Palace proves to be a treasure trove of evidence against its murderous proprietor and his ex-convict partner.

CHAPTER 4 TREASURE

The following list includes all significant pieces of permanent and consumable treasure found in this chapter. Treasure marked with an asterisk can be found in this volume's Adventure Toolbox.

- *corpseward pendants** (2)
- expanded healer's tools
- infiltrator thieves' tools
- knockout dram* (2 doses)
- lesser antidotes (2)
- *lesser healing potions* (4)
- *oil of mending*
- *oil of potency*
- *Reaper's Lancet**
- *reusable recording rod**
- *ring of discretion**
- *scroll of bind undead*
- *scroll of gentle repose*

HORROR AHEAD

The final chapter of this adventure is set in a hotel of horrors owned by a serial killer, inspired in part by the real-life "murder castle" of notorious Chicago-based killer H. H. Holmes. Unlike kobolds or owlbears, the following monsters and situations might hit a lot closer to home, with disturbing themes such as torture, voyeurism, and violence to children. Before diving into the action, talk with your players about their preferences regarding such issues, and respect their boundaries. Depending on your players' preferences, you might want to alter or wholly remove certain elements, such as the peepholes in area **E11**, the reference to cannibalism in **E15**, the tortured prisoners in **E21**, the attic whisperer or dead crows in **E25**, the pickled punks in **E31**, and the binimir in **E37**.

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DREAMING PALACE (FLOOR 1)
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

E1. LOBBY

Large arched windows illuminate the elegantly polished floor and warm wooden furniture of the hotel's reception area. Directly across from the stout main doors, double doors of bronze lattice are carved to resemble interwoven vines and offer tantalizing glimpses of a large chamber beyond. A few comfortable chairs surround a fireplace to the west, while to the east a long, tall counter encircles a small wooden door.

The half-orc thief Ralso occupies the lobby during the day as the hotel's receptionist and concierge. If the agents arrive late at night, she might have already retired to her quarters, in which case the hotel's doors and windows are locked and barred, though a bell pull just outside the front doors rings bells in both her quarters and Pratchett's office and brings the half-orc running to assist any patrons.

As Pratchett's partner in crime, Ralso is naturally nervous about city guards visiting the hotel. If the Edgewatch agents come in uniform or otherwise raise her suspicions, she regretfully informs them that the hotel is all booked up for the duration of the Radiant Festival. If they ask about Pratchett, she informs them that the hotel's owner is away on business. (In fact, he's in the basement amusing himself with his latest victims.) Any reference to her criminal past leads her to icily insist that she's paid her dues and reformed.

If the Edgewatch agents insist on looking around the hotel, Ralso agrees to give them a tour. In this case, she takes them to some of the hotel's "safe" areas—the Primarch Suite (E4), which they're currently keeping

empty as a showpiece to prospective guests; the lounge (E10); the dining room (E15); and the bunkroom (E13). Along the way, they likely encounter Mrs. Honeywall around area E5. Beyond these areas, however, Ralso insists that she can't show the agents any more of the hotel without violating guests' privacy.

If the agents refuse to take no for an answer, Ralso reluctantly agrees to show them the rest of the rooms. She leads them to the Brass Room (area E16) and sees them into it before quietly excusing herself. While the trap in that room does its work, Ralso alerts Pratchett, then flees to her room (area E24) and prepares to make a last stand if the agents escape. She hopes that the hotel's tricks and traps will do them in and she can merely collect what's left, but if she believes the agents have left the premises (such as to recuperate), she eventually makes a run for it, though her attachment to the spirit of her sister (area E25) ultimately brings her scurrying back to the Dreaming Palace.

If all of her subterfuge fails and the agents seem like too much for her to handle, Ralso simply makes a run for it, flings a handful of caltrops behind her to slow them down, and retreats to her room.

E2. CHECK ROOM

The door to this room is locked (two successful DC 18 Thievery checks to pick).

This small coatroom is lined with shelves and cluttered with baggage, piles of linen, a wooden rack holding a small collection of liquor and wine bottles, and more miscellany.



This room is used to safeguard checked bags for guests and to store various items related to running the hotel.

Treasure: The hotel's liquor collection is worth 30 gp.

Secret: A thorough search of the walls reveals a peephole into area **E16** drilled into the northern wall, hidden behind a bag of linens. Beneath it, two small magical runes control the summoning traps in **E16** and **E17**—the agents can disarm either or both by succeeding at a DC 20 Thievery or Arcana check.

Evidence: While Ralso and Pratchett are usually careful to keep anything incriminating out of here, Ralso did overlook a bag that had been checked by one of the Minkaian stonemasons, and characters who search the luggage can notice a Minkaian character embroidered on one of the bags. (Anyone who speaks Tien or Minkaian can confirm that the symbol is the name Takeko, matching one of the missing workers.)



Ralso

E3. GRAND HALL

A sweeping, bifurcated staircase rises up from the northern end of this open space, splitting and curving to either side as it reaches the second floor. A huge portrait of a handsome half-elf man looms over the staircase. At the base of the stairs, the handrails end in marble pillars topped with statues, one of a crying angel and one of a laughing devil. Tiled corridors stretch off to the east and west, while bronze lattice doors lead south to the lobby.

The portrait is of a grinning Hendrid Pratchett. If anyone asks Ralso about the statues, she notes that it's an artist's statement on the sins of mortals and their need for redemption—the inn's owner is a very spiritual man.

Escape Contingency: If her cover is blown or Ralso has trapped the agents in a different room, the thief locks the double doors here (DC 19 Thievery to pick) to block any additional intruders and slow down the agents' escape before fleeing to her room.

E4. PRIMARCH SUITE

This spacious room has its own bathroom and large, curtained windows overlooking both a small decorative garden to the west and the quiet street to the south. A huge feather bed, a couch, a coffee table, and several chairs furnish the room,

and large paintings of city landmarks such as the Starstone Cathedral and Azlanti Keep hang on the walls.

Ralso and Pratchett declare this the best room in the house—and charge accordingly—but they keep it mostly free of customers so that they can show it off or offer it for free when they need to curry favor with important people. They're careful to make sure none of their illicit activities ever touch this room. If the agents insist on staying in the hotel and the jig isn't up yet, this is the room they're rented, free of charge (or 10 gp per night, if the agents refuse to take what they may consider to be a bribe).

E5. LOW ROOM

The ceiling in this well-appointed bedroom is only five feet high and covered in elaborate wooden molding carved to resemble leaves and branches. All of the furniture is half the usual size for humans, and low windows with pink curtains look out onto a small garden bed. Paintings of fruit bowls and assorted domestic scenes hang on the walls.

This is another of the "safe" rooms that Pratchett keeps for show, designed to appeal specifically to halflings, gnomes, and other shorter guests. The current resident is **Mrs. Honeywall** (LG female halfling seamstress -1), a kind-hearted widow from rural Taldor who wanted to see the wonders of Absalom and the Radiant Festival before she's too old to travel. She's been staying at the hotel happily for weeks now and knows nothing about the proprietor's unsavory activities. Quite the opposite, actually—she's developed a crush on the smooth-talking Pratchett and is quick to say so, uttering things like, "Mr. Pratchett is quite the stallion, isn't he? I'd like to take him for a ride!" Both Ralso and Pratchett recognize the value of having an obviously innocent advocate, and they've kept Mrs. Honeywall around for just that purpose.

Secret: The low ceiling in this room isn't only for the comfort of smaller guests. Pratchett installed a hidden crawl space directly above the room that is accessible via a ladder in the secret chamber of room **E6a**. From there, he can lie prone and observe guests through peepholes hidden in the molding. Locating the peepholes from this side requires a successful DC 18 Perception check.

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E6. BATHROOMS

This small, elegant chamber contains a privy seat, a basin in a waist-high pedestal, and a tub for bathing, each made of white porcelain and bearing a gleaming metal handle.

One of the Dreaming Palace's major selling points is its luxurious indoor plumbing system, with hand-pumped water drawn up through metal pipes and privy waste carried away the same way—exactly the sort of novelty people come to the Radiant Festival to experience.

Secret: While some of the hotel's bathrooms are exactly what they appear, others hide sinister secrets.

The southern wall of area **E6a** has a hidden door, unlocked by pushing in a loose tile on the wall next to the bathtub (requiring an active search or a successful DC 18 Perception check to notice). The 5-foot-by-10-foot room beyond contains both a peephole into room **E7** and access to the crawl space over **E5** via a short ladder.

In area **E6b**, a peephole hidden behind a painting of a ship looks into room **E14**.



Mrs. Honeywall

MIMIC **CREATURE 4**

Pathfinder Bestiary 236

Initiative Deception 28 (automatic result)

Treasure: The mimic likes to use real treasure as a lure. Its current cache, harvested from its most recent victim, consists of 7 gp and a gold necklace worth 10 gp inscribed with Rahadoum's First Law of Mortality: "Let no mortal be beholden to a god."

E7. SHACKLES ROOM

LOW 3

The windows along the walls of this bedroom are stylized to look like portholes. A large painting of a pirate ship hangs on one wall with portholes that show a tropical ocean scene. A large painting of a pirate ship hangs on one wall, and the wooden bed frame has been carved to resemble thick ropes and elaborate knots. A classic wooden pirate chest, straight out of a storybook, sits at the foot of the bed.

Anyone who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check notices a thin gold necklace chain hanging partway out of the closed chest.

Creature: Through his association with Ahmoset Nez, Pratchett acquired a live mimic and placed it in this room to prey on unsuspecting guests. While the creature isn't exactly an accomplice, the two have worked out a mutually satisfactory arrangement: Pratchett brings victims to this room and helps keep the area free of anything that might tip them off, and in exchange the mimic agrees not to attack him or Ralso. Having heard stories about the creatures since childhood, Pratchett even managed to convince the mimic to take on one of its classic fairy-tale forms—that of a pirate's treasure chest—and decorated the room accordingly.

E8. IRRISENI ROOM

Glass icicles drape from the ceiling of this whitewashed, wood-paneled room. A large wooden wardrobe stands against the north wall, while a huge framed painting of an elegant, snow-covered castle hangs on the eastern wall over a bed heaped with furs.

Hazard: A hidden trapdoor in the middle of the floor (indicated on the map with a T) drops victims down into the rendering chamber (area **E33**) in Pratchett's secret basement lair.

HIDDEN CHUTE

HAZARD 3

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 23 (trained)

Description A trapdoor in the floor conceals a stone chute.

Disable DC 20 Thievery (trained) to remove the trapdoor or lock it in position using a catch hidden inside the room's doorframe

AC 12; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +6

Trapdoor Hardness 5; **Trapdoor HP** 30 (BT 15); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage



Pitfall ↻ **Trigger** A creature walks onto the trapdoor; **Effect** The triggering creature falls 30 feet down the shaft to area **E33**, taking 15 bludgeoning damage and landing prone in the ochre jelly's pit. The creature can Grab an Edge to avoid falling. The DC to Climb the walls or Grab an Edge is 22.

E9. GALTAN ROOM

MODERATE 3

A huge wooden bed stands against the eastern wall of this room. In place of an ordinary headboard, the bed sports a guillotine's scaffold complete with raised blade, though the scaffold's track indicates that even if the blade somehow fell it would land safely behind a wooden guard separating the guillotine from guests' pillows. A tattered and stained flag of red, white, and blue hangs on the southern wall.

If a character succeeds at a DC 10 Society check, they recognize the flag as belonging to the nation of Galt.

Hazard: While the guillotine poses little threat on its own, the magic enchanting it is far from benign.

FLYING GUILLOTINE

HAZARD 5

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +10 (trained) or DC 23 (expert) to spot the glyph

Description An invisible magical glyph on the guillotine's blade detects living creatures in the room, which causes the guillotine to fly off its hinges and attack.

Disable DC 20 Thievery (trained) to erase the glyph (which requires a successful unarmed attack roll if the blade is already active) or *dispel magic* (3rd level; counteract DC 20) to counteract it. The trap has a secret bypass known only to Ralso and Pratchett: as long as the guillotine can see a creature in the room touching thumb and pinky together with an empty hand, it remains dormant.

AC 23; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +17

Blade Hardness 13, **Blade HP** 52 (BT 26); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Flying Blade ↻ (abjuration, arcane, attack) **Trigger** A living creature enters the room; **Effect** One round after a creature enters the room, the door to the room slams shut and locks (two DC 20 Thievery checks to pick), and the guillotine blade detaches from its housing and begins flying around the room as the trap rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The blade Flies up to 20 feet and Strikes any creatures whose squares it passes through. It cannot target the same creature more than once per round. The blade cannot be grappled and doesn't take a multiple attack penalty.

Speed fly 20 feet

Melee guillotine blade +15, **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing

Reset After 1 minute, the trap deactivates, though the door remains locked. The trap rearms itself each day at dawn.

E10. LOUNGE

A large stone fireplace takes up the northeastern corner of this comfortable reading room. Bookshelves line the walls, and overstuffed armchairs dot the floor in small knots to facilitate conversation. In the southwestern corner is a small bar with racks of glassware.

The thick stone of the northern and western walls are part of the building's original foundation and thus look much older than the rest of the hotel. Pratchett and Ralso know better than to store their booze where guests can serve themselves and haven't stocked the bar.

Secret: Anyone actively searching the room who succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check notices that the back of the fireplace houses a 6-inch-wide shaft leading downward in addition to the larger chimney stretching up—a hint of the smelter in area **E34**.

E11. HONEYMOON SUITE

Colorful silks hang from the ceiling of this large bedroom over an oversized canopy bed, a low divan, and an abundance of scattered cushions. Curtains conceal windows to the north, and double doors of angled wooden slats can be closed to partition off a private bathroom to the south or opened to leave the facilities exposed to the rest of the room. A massive moth-eaten tapestry on the eastern wall depicts a satyr and a nymph about to do something scandalous on the sandy shore of a desert oasis.

Advertised as being modeled on a “Qadiran pleasure palace”—something neither Pratchett nor Ralso has ever seen—this room serves as the hotel's honeymoon suite. It currently hosts **Jessamine and Rabnal Prougthy** (N female and male human potters 0), a pair of young newlyweds from Augustana. Though they came to Absalom to see the festival, they're so infatuated with each other that they've barely left their room, which they leave locked, and regardless of when the Edgewatch agents knock or enter, the pair is invariably half-dressed and red-faced. The lovers haven't noticed anything amiss at the hotel, and they spend half of any conversation staring longingly at each other, constantly touching and using pet names like “sweet bun” and “apple blossom.”

Secret: Not all the holes in the tapestry are from moths. While the tapestry is nailed firmly to the wall on all sides, characters who succeed at a DC 18 Perception check notice that several of the myriad small tears are actually peepholes—both Pratchett and Ralso are fond of watching guests' antics in this room from the secret compartment in the kitchen (area **E12**).

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E12. KITCHEN

This clean kitchen contains a large wood-burning stove and brick oven that vent out the side of the building, as well as a gleaming metal hand pump and basin inset into one of the many counters. The western wall holds a recessed pantry with shelves full of dried and preserved goods. Innumerable pots and pans hang from hooks in the ceiling, and a large stone larder takes up the room's southwestern corner. A wooden door exits to the south.

Pratchett's ingenious freshwater plumbing system extends to this kitchen as well. There's enough food here to feed a fully booked hotel for a week.

Secret: Agents who succeed at a DC 18 Perception check notice a conspicuous gap between the wall and the pantry's shelves. Pulling on a stone jar labeled "beef tonsils" triggers a latch and causes half the pantry to swing open, allowing access to a small chamber with peepholes looking into the Honeymoon Suite (area **E11**). As the hotel's cook, Ralso is militant about not allowing any guests in the kitchen—mainly so that they can't catch her coming and going from the secret room, where she's been spending a lot of time since the Proughtys arrived.

E13. BUNKROOM

Several bunk beds have been set up around the perimeter of this windowless stone room. At the foot of each bed are two lockable wooden cabinets.

While Pratchett prefers for the Dreaming Palace to exude an air of luxury, he's not above taking copper from the cheaper class of clients, especially if they're the servants or companions of someone staying in a more expensive room. Anyone who books a hostel-style bed here also gets a key to one of the cabinets to lock away their possessions (one DC 15 Thievery check to pick; Ralso and Pratchett have master keys).

The patrons of this room change by the night, so the Edgewatch agents might encounter any variety of commoners here at your discretion. Though a few of the individuals on the Edgewatch's list of missing persons stayed here initially before being offered a "free upgrade" to a trapped room, Pratchett and Ralso were careful to remove any evidence of their victims from the lockers.

E14. FAMILY ROOM

This room is packed tight with a full-sized bed, a smaller children's bed, a crib, and a dresser with a stuffed fabric goblin sitting atop it. The candy-striped walls are lined with pictures of clowns and happy-looking animals.

This room is reserved specifically for families traveling with young children. At the moment, the room is inhabited by the **Kerenhelm family** (LG female and male dwarf miners –1 to 1) from the Five Kings Mountains: father Shamus, mother Rella, and young children Beryl and Malachi.

E15. DINING ROOM

This magnificent dining hall boasts huge glass windows along its curved wall that looks out at the cobblestone street, as well as a wagon-wheel chandelier attached to the ceiling. Two long wooden tables with benches fill the western space, while a large round table surrounded by chairs occupies the circular part of the room.

Lodging at the Dreaming Palace includes surprisingly tasty dinners—occasionally including meat harvested from the hotel's victims, at Pratchett's urging—cooked by Ralso. Pratchett enjoys mingling with guests each night as a chance to practice his charm and establish his alibis.

E16. BRASS ROOM

MODERATE 5

This windowless stone bedroom is decorated entirely in brass and iron, with a massive brass four-poster bed in the center of the eastern wall, a wrought-iron clothes rack, and two iron chairs at a metal table in a small alcove to the west. The walls are painted with red and yellow flames and hung with shadowbox-style artwork formed of overlapping thin steel plates, all depicting a fiery city of onion domes and minarets.

This room is decorated to evoke the flavor of the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Secret: Characters who succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to Seek notice that one of the many tiny windows cut out of the towers in the metal landscape actually extends into the wall—a peephole from area **E2** that's blocked on the other side by something.

Hazard: Pratchett commissioned the magical trap in this room from an unscrupulous wizard, then decided to theme the room's decor around it as an ironic twist.

SUMMONING RUNE

HAZARD 5

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +12 (trained)

Description An invisible cloud of magical sensors detects living creatures in the room and summons fire elementals to slay the creatures.

Disable DC 22 Acrobatics (trained) to approach without triggering the trap, followed by DC 22 Thievery (trained) to erase the rune or *dispel magic* (3rd level; counteract DC 20) to counteract the rune



Summon Elementals ☞ (arcane, conjuration, summon)

Trigger A living creature enters the room; **Effect** Two rounds after a creature enters the room, the room's door slams shut and locks (two DC 20 Thievery checks to pick), and two cinder rat fire elementals (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 148) emerge from the floor. The elementals roll initiative and remain for 3d6 rounds, after which the spell ends and the creatures disappear. The elementals also disappear if someone disables the trap before the duration expires. The summoned elementals can use 3 actions each round and can use reactions, unlike most summoned creatures.

Reset The trap resets each day at dawn.

E17. CHELISH ROOM

MODERATE 3

Red stone inlays form a pentagram encircled by runes on the floor in the center of this room. To the west stands a wrought-iron four-poster bed with an iron sculpture of a grinning imp atop each of its upright pillars. Opposite the bed is a wardrobe depicting agonized humans skewered on pitchforks. The walls are painted black and draped in long, regal streamers of crimson cloth.

Hazard: Like area E16, this room contains a magical summoning trap triggered by any character touching the floor outside of the summoning circle. The devil summoned by the trap, named Qamuzar, struck a bargain with Pratchett to murder anyone it finds in this room.

SUMMONING RUNE

HAZARD 5

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +11 (trained)

Description A summoning circle inlaid into the room's floor detects living creatures and summons a violent devil.

Disable DC 18 Perception to notice the trap's magic and avoid stepping on the floor outside the circle, followed by DC 21 Thievery (trained) to break the circle or *dispel magic* (3rd level; counteract DC 23) to counteract the rune

Summon Devil ☞ (arcane, conjuration, summon) **Trigger** A living creature steps on any part of the floor not enclosed by the summoning circle; **Effect** One round after a creature touches the triggering area, the door to the room slams shut and locks (two DC 20 Thievery checks to pick) and a barbazu devil (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 88) appears in the summoning circle. The devil rolls initiative and remains for 3d6 rounds, after which the spell ends and the devil disappears. The devil also disappears if someone disables the trap before the duration expires. The summoned devil can use 3 actions each round and can use reactions, unlike most summoned creatures.

Reset The trap resets each day at dawn.

Treasure: Careful examination of the imp statues atop the bedposts reveals that while three have eyes of red glass, one has an eye of clear glass. This is actually the viewing lens of a *reusable recording rod* (page 80); the rod slides easily out of its hiding spot inside the hollow statue. Pratchett set it to trigger upon screams or other loud noises, then placed it here to record victims' last moments. If the characters triggered the trap in this room, the rod's memory currently contains a recording of their fight with the fiend.

E18. HALLWAYS

The twisting, dimly lit hallways on the hotel's second floor are laid out even more eccentrically than those of the first floor, often rising or falling by a few steps for no apparent reason and with doors scattered seemingly at random. Only a few windows look out over the surrounding streets and buildings, and a few in the eastern wing look incongruously out onto the blank wall of a neighboring building just a few feet to the north.

E19. UNFINISHED ROOM

This room appears to still be under construction, its walls unfinished and heaps of tools and sawdust scattered across the floor. A fanciful bed frame in the room's center resembles a dragon-headed longboat made out of iron, while above a tattered tarp blocks light from pouring through an open skylight in the ceiling.

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Cinder Rat



DREAMING PALACE (FLOOR 2)
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Pratchett is in the process of building a new bedroom themed around the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, complete with an immolating bed trap inspired by their storied viking funerals. He hasn't yet figured out how he wants to handle venting the smoke from the trap, hence the hole in the ceiling, and characters who succeed at a DC 16 Perception check can discover the gas pipes emerging from the floor and woven through the metal bed frame.

If anyone ascends through the skylight, they find the inn's roof to be steeply peaked but otherwise mundane. Climbing down the sides of the building is challenging (Climb DC 23) but might allow access to other areas of the hotel via the scattered windows.

E20. MWANGI ROOM

TRIVIAL 3

Magical lights blaze as bright as the noonday sun on this room's blue-painted ceiling. The tile floor is painted with leaves and branches, giving the impression of a room suspended in a jungle canopy. Plants drape down from alcoves along the tiled walls, fed by numerous trickling fountains that cascade down from high on the walls before disappearing into discrete grates in the floor. A large hammock hangs in the chamber's northeastern corner, and various storage bags and boxes dangle from the ceiling on vine-like ropes.

Hazard: Pratchett is particularly proud of the complexity of the trap in this room, as it involves both his innovative plumbing system and an advanced system of pressure plates in the center of the floor. As long as the trap senses only a single creature, it doesn't activate. Once two creatures step on the plates, however, the sensor triggers a 6-second sand timer—allowing more people to enter the seemingly safe room—before the trap activates in full.

CANOPY DROP

HAZARD 4

MECHANICAL TRAP


Stealth DC 25 (expert)

Description A trapdoor, connected to floor sensors, opens in the section of floor marked on the map, while the surrounding floor suddenly tilts to a 45-degree angle and the fountains in the wall begin spraying at high pressure, making the tile slippery and pushing creatures toward the open chute.

Disable DC 23 Thievery (expert) to jam the mechanisms and keep the trapdoor from opening, or to locate the bypass switch hidden under a stair riser just outside the room

AC 20; Fort +13, Ref +8

Trapdoor Hardness 10; **Trapdoor HP** 40 (BT 20); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Flush  **Trigger** Two or more creatures stand on the trapped spaces; **Effect** One round after the trap is triggered, all creatures in the room fall 40 feet down the shaft to area E36, taking 20 bludgeoning damage from the fall plus 2d6 piercing damage as they land in the spiked pit. The creatures can Grab an Edge to snag the hammock or one of the hanging storage containers to avoid falling. The DC to Climb the walls or Grab an Edge is 20.

Creature: Hiding in one of the hanging baskets is another of Pratchett's nefarious traps: a snoozing giant viper that wakes at the sound of intruders and lunges out of its container to surprise its victim. If the canopy drop trap is tripped while the viper is out of the basket, it automatically falls into the pit below.

GIANT VIPER

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 303

Initiative Perception +7 or Stealth +8



E21. PRISONERS

LOW 3

The door to this room is locked from either side (A successful DC 20 Thievery to pick).

This tiled room is bare save for two sets of manacles hanging from opposite walls to the east and west, a nozzle like a showerhead on the southern wall, and a drain in the center of the floor. Red and brown stains streak the floor tiles, and the whole place reeks of filth.

Creatures: Pratchett has been keeping two prisoners in this room—a human wizard named Kemeneles and a gnome ranger named Lyrma Swampwalker, both travelers who booked rooms in the hotel and fell prey to Pratchett’s machinations. For the last two weeks, Pratchett has kept them chained to opposite walls, experimenting with a variety of physical and psychological tortures designed to break their psyches. The nozzle in the wall attaches to a gas tank in E30—Pratchett uses this to pump in knockout gas to pacify the prisoners, or hallucinogens to put them into suggestible states.

A few hours ago, however, Pratchett made a mistake. After placing Lyrma’s trident between the prisoners and informing them that he’d let one of them go free if they killed the other, he left them there to stare at the weapon and mull over the prospect. Yet this time, he misjudged how much poison he needed to keep Kemeneles too sedated to cast spells. Emerging slightly from his mental haze, the wizard was able to use a combination of *acid splash* and *mage hand* to break free from his manacles, then did the same for Lyrma. When the Edgwatch arrive, the two are lying in wait, Kemeneles pretending to still be manacled while Lyrma hides in the northern alcove with the trident, ready to stab the first person through the door.

Unfortunately for the agents, Pratchett’s mind-breaking experiment was all too successful. Both Kemeneles and Lyrma are full of desperate rage, and Pratchett has already toyed with them several times by disguising himself and Ralso as rescuers, only to reveal the truth once their hopes are raised. This time, the prisoners aren’t taking any chances, and they attack the characters mercilessly with magic and metal while screaming about how they won’t be tricked again.

Convincing the prisoners that the Edgwatch agents really are there to rescue them requires a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check, at which point the prisoners break down into rasping sobs and relay their stories. Otherwise, Kemeneles and Lyrma attack for just long enough to get the Edgwatch agents out of their way, then attempt to flee. The terrified pair know little about Pratchett, Ralso, or the inn’s layout (in their haste they might even bumble

into another trapped room), and under no circumstances do they agree to help the agents confront the villains.

KEMENELES

CREATURE 2

NG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

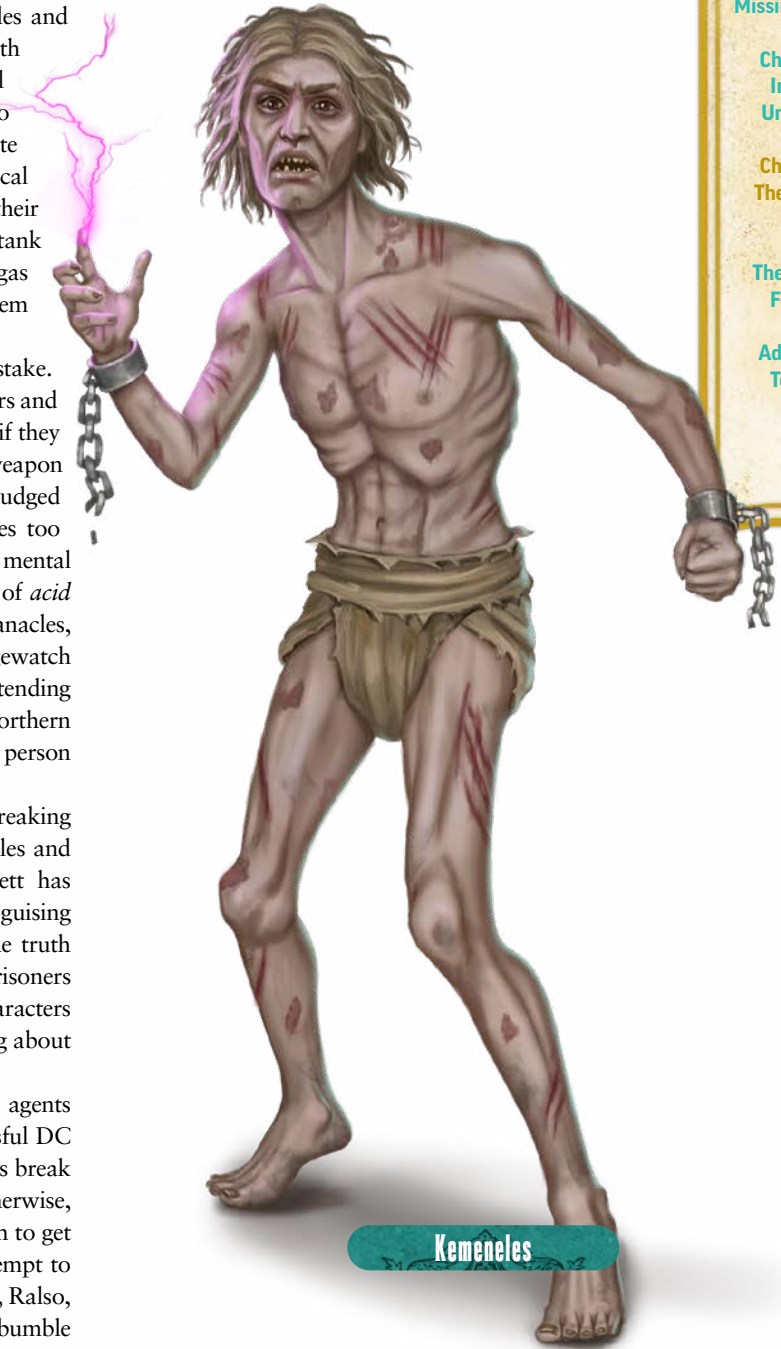
Male human wizard

Perception +9

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven, Draconic, Dwarven

Skills Arcana +8, Crafting +8, Occultism +8

Str +0, Dex +4, Con -2, Int +4, Wis +3, Cha +1



Kemeneles

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AC 15 (14 without *mage armor*); **Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11
HP 30 (currently 20)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ fist +6 (agile, finesse, nonlethal, unarmed),
Damage 1d4 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 18, attack +12; **1st** *burning hands*, *mage armor* (already cast), *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*; **Cantrips (1st)** *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

Wizard School Spells DC 18, 1 Focus Point; **1st** *force bolt* (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 407)

Eschew Materials See page 209 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.

LYRMA SWAMPWALKER

CREATURE 2

CG SMALL GNOME HUMANOID

Female gnome hunter

Perception +11; low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnomish, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +9, Medicine +9, Nature +7, Stealth +8, Survival +9

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items trident

AC 14; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

HP 38 (currently 30)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ trident +11 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

XP Award: Regardless of whether they resolve the encounter with force or persuasion, if the Edgwatch agents rescue Kemelees and Lyrma from the Dreaming Palace, award each agent a 30 XP story award.

E22. NIDALESE ROOM

This room is decorated in black and gray, including gray drapes on a wrought-iron canopy bed. Smoked-glass windows and a single gas lamp cast the room in twilight, and in addition to a large iron wardrobe, the room features a torturer's rack, manacles, and torture implements hanging from the wall. A sculpture of a flayed, eviscerated man is inset into the eastern wall, as if the wall were a thin membrane and the man were being pushed through from the other side.

Pratchett theoretically built this room so that worshippers of Zon-Kuthon would have a place that felt like home. Indeed, on the two occasions in which such guests have sought lodging, he's allowed them to stay here unmolested (at least by him) while he spied on them from area E23. When other guests book this room, he's enjoyed putting them at ease by explaining that the room's sinister decor is just

a bit of spooky fun, only to later watch them die slowly under the ministrations of the hotel's resident torture expert, Nobbindale.

Nobbindale the redcap (currently in area E23) keeps a constant eye on this room through a peephole hidden in the sculpture's tangle of intestines. If the Edgwatch agents enter, he bides his time until it seems like the best opportunity for an ambush, then swings open the secret door between the rooms and attacks.

Secret: A character can notice the room's peephole and the squat hidden door—the top edge of which forms part of the sculpted man's stomach wound—with a successful DC 18 Perception check.

Treasure: The room comes stocked with both a spiked chain and a whip.

E23. NOBBINDALE'S QUARTERS

MODERATE 3

This dank room reeks of blood, likely thanks to several congealing, fly-covered buckets of the stuff around the chamber's perimeter. Thick, stained carpets cover most of the floor several layers deep, and a similarly bloodstained pallet lies in one corner. Embedded in an alcove in the western wall is a three-foot-tall stone door with a peephole.

Pratchett piled this room high with carpets so that guests wouldn't hear its resident stomping around in his iron boots.

Creature: During his travels, Pratchett met a redcap named Nobbindale and found he shared certain passions with the sinister fey. Working together was originally out of the question since Pratchett relies on his ability to blend with the populace, but after building the hotel, Pratchett sent word to the redcap. Nobbindale now lives in this room and is content to stay here and entertain Pratchett with his creative sadism in exchange for new victims delivered to his doorstep. Nobbindale is used to ambushing his victims in E22, but if encountered here he happily fights until incapacitated.

NOBBINDALE

CREATURE 5

Male redcap (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 278)

Initiative Stealth +13

Treasure: Nobbindale has little need for money, and part of his deal with Pratchett is that any possessions from his victims are turned over to the house. That said, he's managed to squirrel away two useful trophies—a vial each of *oil of mending* and *oil of potency*—along with a child's stuffed wyvern and a collection of several adult humanoid pinkies, all hidden beneath his filthy mattress.

E24. RALSO'S QUARTERS

SEVERE 3

This mostly round tower bedroom has prominent windows, an unmade bed, and an oversized wooden armoire with its swinging doors cracked open. An ordinary, full-sized door leads out to the south, but to the west is a half-sized door with no knob, only a lock with a large brass key protruding from it.

This is Ralso's bedroom. Whenever she's not working or with Pratchett, she's in this room journaling obsessively or playing with her disturbing dolls.

Creatures: Ralso is a deeply disturbed woman, thanks in large part to the grim death of her sister (see page 90 for Ralso's full backstory). One of the many unhealthy ways Pratchett has attempted to bind Ralso to him was by commissioning two soulbound dolls resembling her departed sister but powered by the souls of hotel victims. Unable to quite take the step of calling them by her sister's name, Ralso instead refers to the dolls by nicknames she once used for her sibling—"Little Bit" and "Pretty Girl." Though turned evil and malicious by the trauma of the soul-harvesting procedure, the dolls have come to bond with Ralso and think of themselves as her younger sisters.

Depending on their tactics, the Edgewatch agents might fight Ralso in other areas of the hotel, yet if she believes battle is imminent or that the hotel's cover has been blown, the thief retreats to this room to make a last stand. This isn't a conscious, strategic decision—she fully intends to grab her journal and flee, but once she gets here she finds she can't bring herself to ascend to the attic and confront the undead abomination that was once her sister (area E25), but neither can she leave her behind. In that situation, the agents find her here standing in front of the small door and loudly arguing with herself, repeating "Just open the door! Just *open* the door!" as her soulbound doll attendants look on. If the characters instead sneak into the hotel without Ralso's knowledge, they find her here quietly journaling on her bed while her dolls play-wrestle one another. If Ralso isn't here at all, the dolls are hiding in the armoire, stealthily peering out from the crack in the doors.

As soon as any characters enter this room, its residents attack. The soulbound dolls have been commanded to defend Ralso and the door to the attic at all costs, and thus fight until destroyed. Knowing the Edgewatch agents will never allow the spirit of her sister to continue on, and unwilling to go back to prison, Ralso also fights until incapacitated.

RALSO

Page 90

Initiative Perception +14

CREATURE 4

LITTLE BIT AND PRETTY GIRL (2)

CREATURE 2

Soulbound dolls (NE and CE; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 304)

Initiative Perception +8

Treasure: Ralso has relatively few possessions of her own, but at Pratchett's urging, she acquired a set of infiltrator thieves' tools for setting up the hotel's various tricks and traps. In addition to her listed gear, she also has a set of keys to every area of the hotel.

Ralso's Journal: Among the other items in the armoire is a slender journal. Pratchett initially suggested Ralso keep a diary so that he could use its confessions to blackmail her if she ever turned against him, but it quickly became apparent that her loyalty was absolute and the journaling helped to ease her troubled mind. In addition to detailing the duo's many murders (including descriptions matching many of the missing persons on the Edgewatch's list), the journal also reveals Ralso's entire backstory, as explained on page 90.



Little Bit and Pretty Girl

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R,
Got a job if you're interested. Big money in plain sight, strike while the streets are soaked with tourists. We need a jimmy. You in?



Perhaps most interesting to the Edgewatch agents, however, is a recent journal entry detailing how a gang of thieves called the Copper Palm contacted Ralso and tried to recruit her for a bank robbery they're planning to coincide with the Radiant Parade. This is an important clue that will guide the heroes' actions in the next adventure (see Concluding the Adventure on page 63). Anyone who scans the journal immediately notices the entry because Ralso also slipped the original missive the Copper Hand sent her (give the players the handout above). While the thieves' note is cryptic at best, Ralso has handily decoded its meaning as best she could in her journal: "I've told them I'm out of the game, but still the Copper Hand comes calling. Using the Radiant Parade as a cover for a bank job is clever, but no way am I getting involved with that lot again."

XP Award: For finding Ralso's journal of damning confessions and the clue about the upcoming bank robbery, award each agent an 80 XP story award.

E25. ROOKERY

LOW 3

Narrow wooden stairs lead up to this cramped, slope-ceilinged attic. Small, empty wire cages line the walls, several containing the desiccated corpses of crows. The only light comes from a row of six-inch holes cut in the eastern wall above a matching row of small wooden perches.

Pratchett initially intended to use this attic space for the maintenance of trained birds that could carry messages for him and his hotel guests, but he hasn't gotten around to actually implementing it—a plan further complicated by the fact that Ralso couldn't bring herself to tend to the room containing her sister's possessions. The would-be courier birds subsequently starved.

Low Ceiling: The ceiling here is only 6 feet tall at its tallest and slopes to 4 feet tall where it meets the walls. Any Medium or larger creature in a square adjacent

to a wall must hunch over uncomfortably, becoming clumsy 1 for as long as they remain in such a square.

Creature: Cora, Ralso's younger sister, died of neglect while Ralso was in prison, but her spirit didn't completely pass on. Instead, vestiges of it clung to the toys and clothes that Ralso has stashed up here, combining with negative energies released by the hotel's murders to birth a monster known as an attic whisperer.

The creature—which took the skull of one of the dead corvids as its own—now lurks in the shadows of one of the empty, unlocked cages and launches a surprise attack as soon as the Edgewatch agents enter the room. As it fights to the death, it whispers in the voice of a little girl, addresses the characters by Ralso's name, and eerily implores them: "Why did you abandon me? Did I do something wrong, sister? What did I do to make you leave?"

ATTIC WHISPERER

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 28

Initiative Perception +10 or Stealth +13

E26. STORAGE

This large storage closet is packed with cleaning supplies and construction tools.

Evidence: Tucked in the corner of the closet, hidden beneath some wooden boards and brooms, is a mop and bucket crusted with blood.

Treasure: A wooden box on the back shelf contains a set of expanded healer's tools.

E27. OSIRIAN SUITE

MODERATE 3

The walls of this furnished suite appear to be cut from enormous stone blocks and engraved with hieroglyphs. Two large windows on the southern wall overlook the lower

DREAMING PALACE (ATTIC)
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





roof and street outside. In the western corner of the room is an oversized bed, the frame carved to resemble a stone sarcophagus but containing an ordinary mattress. A huge stone lid is suspended above it from the ceiling by chains. Against the eastern wall is a fireplace with a fine stone mantle flanked on either side by two life-sized humanoid statues, one jackal-headed, the other with a falcon's visage. The northern section of the room sports an oversized stone bathtub with gleaming pump handles.

Any interaction with the “stone” walls and furniture reveals that they’re actually sculpted plaster over normal reinforced wood. Anyone who can read Osiriani recognizes that the hieroglyphs are gibberish—an artist’s idea of what such writing might look like rather than actual language. The tub has hand pumps for hot and cold water, and while the sarcophagus-styled bed might look like an obvious trap, the lid is in fact firmly secured to the ceiling.

Creatures: The real dangers of the room are the statues, which wait until a creature ventures near before springing to life and attacking. The statues can also respond to an additional, more subtle signal—by placing thumb and pinky together with an empty hand while in view of the statues, then flicking their remaining fingers, Pratchett and Ralso can command the statues to hold off on animating for 1 hour per flick. This allows the hotel managers to show off the room and let guests settle in, then have the statues attack when least expected.

ANIMATED STATUES (2)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 21

Initiative Perception +9

E28. CLOUD ROOM

MODERATE 3

The floor of this room is covered in soft white carpet. A fluffy white duvet tops a bed against the southern wall like whipped cream on a pie, and the walls and ceiling are painted sky blue with murals of clouds and a long bramble stretching from the floor up to a flying castle. A large bank of built-in drawers and cabinets lines the western wall, including an elaborate silver-framed mirror that hangs in the southwestern corner.

Hazard: This room contains a simple yet sinister trap. Hidden vents can pump in any number of different gases to poison the occupants. Pratchett is particularly fond of watching his victims from his own bed (area E30) via a peephole hidden behind the one-way mirror. From there, he can pick his poisons; sometimes he waits for a guest to fall asleep and then quietly asphyxiates them by filling the room with an unbreathable gas, while other times he pumps in obvious poison while

they’re still awake to enjoy their panicked struggles. The trap is currently automated and armed with the latter, which enters the room through four hidden vents: one in the floor spraying up through the carpeting, one in a gap where the cabinetry meets the wall, one in the metal whorls and loops of the mirror’s frame, and one in the wall hidden by the bed frame.

GAS TRAP

HAZARD 5

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +14 (trained) to smell the poison gas or hear it hissing
Description A spring slams and locks the room’s door before four hidden gas vents begin pumping poison gas into the chamber.

Disable Four DC 20 Thievery checks to block the gas vents, or a DC 26 Thievery check to unlock the door and escape

Door Hardness 13, **Door HP** 52 (BT 26); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Toxic Gas **Trigger** A creature opens one of the drawers;
Effect The door to the room slams shut and locks and the trap rolls initiative. (The trap can also be triggered manually or disarmed from area E30.)

Routine **◆** Each round on its initiative count, the trap pumps more toxic gas into the room. Any breathing creature in the room takes 4d6 poison damage (a successful DC 22 Fortitude save halves the damage taken). If a creature acts before the trap on the first round, it has the option of holding its breath to postpone taking damage from the trap—holding one’s breath after the trap’s first action has no effect, since the air in the creature’s lungs is already tainted. Locating and blocking one of the hidden gas vents reduces the poison damage by 1d6—if all four are blocked, the trap is disabled, though the door remains locked. Otherwise, the trap functions for 1 minute before all the gas is expended and characters in the room cease taking damage, after which the trap ventilates the room for 1 additional minute.

Reset The trap must be manually rearmed by unblocking the vents or replacing the poison gas tank in area E30.

E29. FIVE KINGS ROOM

This darkened bedroom has been decorated to resemble a natural cavern, with gray stone walls made of plaster and a simple stone ledge supporting the mattress. A single unlit gas lamp protrudes from the wall over a built-in stone chest of drawers in an alcove to the east, and gem-colored pieces of glass sparkle from a carving of a mountain wearing a crown on the northern wall.

Hazard: The squares marked on the map (page 52) indicate a hidden trapdoor in the room’s floor next to the stone chest. If a creature steps on them, the door

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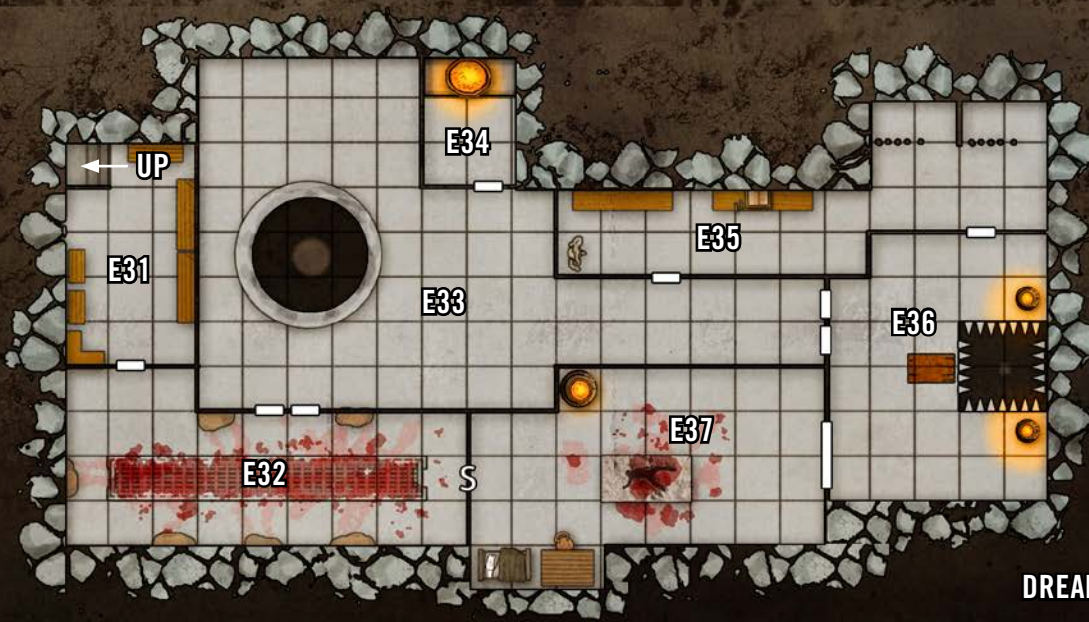
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DREAMING PALACE (BASEMENT)
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

opens and drops them down a chute to the rendering chamber (area E33). Opening the trapdoor also triggers hydraulics hidden under the floor and causes a 10-foot-wide section of the eastern wall to suddenly lurch westward and shove anyone within 10 feet of the northern wall into the chute.

PLUNGER CHUTE HAZARD 3

MECHANICAL TRAP


Stealth DC 22 (expert)

Description A trapdoor in the floor conceals a hidden chute, and a moving section of wall shoves victims into it.

Disable DC 23 Thievery (expert) to jam the trapdoor shut or activate a hidden bypass switch by twisting a fitting on the gas lamp

AC 22; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +8

Trapdoor Hardness 10; **Trapdoor HP** 40 (BT 20); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Pitfall and Plunger  **Trigger** A creature walks onto the trapdoor; **Effect** Anyone within 10 feet of the room's northern wall falls 40 feet down the shaft to area E33, taking 20 bludgeoning damage and landing prone in the ochre jelly's pit. The victims can Grab an Edge to avoid falling. The DC to Grab an Edge is 20; the DC to Climb the walls is 22.

E30. PRATCHETT'S OFFICE

The door to this room is locked (two successful DC 19 Thievery checks to pick).

A large window in the western wall of this office reveals pitched roofs sloping away down the hill and glimpses of the sea beyond. Across from the window is a large wooden desk with a leather top. A closet door juts into the room from the northwest, creating a smaller sleeping alcove to the northeast filled almost entirely by an oversized bed.

Paintings of picturesque sylvan villages decorate the eastern walls.

This is Pratchett's office and personal living quarters. As such, the room hides several secrets, but the largest is the "closet"—beyond its door lies a narrow, secret staircase that zigzags back and forth as it passes down through the first floor and into the hotel's secret basement. This represents the only non-trap access to the heart of Pratchett's sinister lair, and it's locked with a DC 19 lock.

Evidence: The desk is unlocked and full of the usual paperwork related to running an upscale hotel. Pratchett keeps any truly incriminating documents down in his basement sanctum, and the logbooks in this desk have been carefully doctored to remove any record of the missing guests. Noticing the replaced pages requires a successful DC 20 Perception check, while agents who succeed at a DC 13 Accounting Lore check can tell that the accounts don't line up, suggesting that Pratchett is either an incredibly sloppy businessman or the inn is a front funded by some other means.

Secret: The room also contains two peepholes. One looks into E29 and is hidden behind a painting. The other, looking into room E28, is positioned behind a small shaving mirror, at a perfect height to be visible to someone lying in the bed. Both of these are easily discovered via any dedicated searching.

A secret panel is harder to detect, with its edges concealed by decorative paneling on the walls—characters who succeed at a DC 18 Perception check can find both the panel and the method of unlocking it (pushing up on a lamp fixture). Inside the panel are two pressurized gas tanks the size of bread loaves with valves that control the trap in area E28—one valve (currently open) can be opened to arm the trap with poison gas, while the other (currently closed) floods the



room with inert but suffocating natural gas. If both are closed, the trap in **E28** is disarmed. There's also an open slot and valve where an additional gas canister can be inserted—this runs to the nozzle in **E21**.

The gas tanks behind the panel have already had their seals punctured, and thus their contents cannot be safely harvested without specialized tools—characters who succeed at a DC 16 Engineering Lore check can realize that attempting to do so is likely to flood this room with poison.

Treasure: The central drawer of the desk holds a *corpseward pendant* (page 80) for Ralso to use whenever she needs to reach Pratchett in the basement, as well as 10 gp in loose change.

E31. BOTTLE ROOM

MODERATE 4

Long racks of freestanding wooden shelving, all covered with glass bottles and jars of varying sizes, line the eastern and western walls of this rectangular stone room. Inside the jars float embalmed monstrosities ranging from preserved humanoid body parts and whole fetuses to more bizarre curios. Other than the wooden staircase to the northwest, the only exit is a wooden door to the south.

Given his fascination with death, Pratchett has established a large collection of preserved biological specimens—some purchased, and others that he personally harvested from victims and embalmed.

Creatures: Not all of the creatures preserved here are as lifeless as they appear. Inspired by occult writings, Pratchett collected six fetuses over the years from victims who happened to be pregnant and exposed the fetuses to necromantic energies, turning them into undead creatures known as pickled punks. He uses *corpseward pendants* (page 80) to keep the monsters from attacking either him or Ralso, and as such is able to use the vicious creatures as guardians. When the Edgewatch agents arrive, the punks watch without moving (Stealth DC 17) and wait for the agents to lower their defenses or come near the punks' positions (three on the western shelf, three on the eastern shelf). When the time seems right, they knock the lids from their jars, drag their sloshing glass homes forward with grotesquely distending arms, and attack the agents by unhinging their jaws to bite them.

PICKLED PUNKS (6)

CREATURE 1

NE TINY UNDEAD

Perception +8; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5, Stealth +7

Languages Common

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3

AC 16; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

HP 20; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 2

Combustible The first time each round that a pickled punk takes fire damage, its fumes combust, dealing 5 fire damage to all other creatures within the area of its Suffocating Fumes aura.

Suffocating Fumes (aura, inhaled, poison) 5 feet. A creature that enters or begins its turn within the aura must attempt a DC 14 Fortitude save, or DC 17 if the pickled punk is attached to the creature. On a failed save, the creature is sickened 1, and on a critical failure, it's also enfeebled 1 for 1 minute.

Speed 20 feet

Melee fist +9 (agile, finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+1 bludgeoning plus attach

Melee jaws +7, **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing plus 2 poison and attach

Attach When a pickled punk hits a target larger than itself, it uses bizarre excretions to adhere to that creature. This is similar to Grabbing the creature, but the pickled punk is not flat-footed, and it moves with that creature rather than holding it in place. Each turn while attached, the pickled punk automatically deals the damage from its jaws Strike to the creature to which it's attached. It also wriggles about, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to AC as long as it's not also grabbed or restrained.



Pickled Punk

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E32. TROPHY CHAMBER

MODERATE 4

Six flayed humanoid skins hang like tapestries along the stone walls of this long hallway, some edges tacked out taut to display their gruesome features, others hanging in long tatters. Some appear old and leathery, while others are fresh enough to still stink in the cold room, the blood having dripped down the stone in dried brown smears into the long metal-grated drain in the floor. The exits are through a door in the northwestern corner and a set of double doors on the northern wall to the east.

While Pratchett disposes of most of the corpses he creates without too much sentiment—he thinks of himself as a practical man, and it's the murder itself he enjoys, not the mementos—he occasionally likes to take the skins of those who die in particularly

memorable ways as trophies to remind himself of the good times, or to wear in public beneath his suit when he's feeling particularly deviant.

Creatures: The rampant negative energy surging through the hotel has brought four of these skins—easily identifiable as the former rookie adventurers who smashed up Pratchett's nose at the Topsy Tengu in Chapter 1—to hideous life as undead creatures called shredskins. Though they're prevented from attacking Pratchett and Ralso by the pair's *corpseward pendants*, they peel themselves from the wall and flutter toward any other living creatures who enter the room. Their mouths gape wide in silent screams as they seek to enshroud victims and grant themselves bodies once more.

SHREDSKINS (4)

CREATURE 2

NE TINY UNDEAD

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +8, Deception +8, Stealth +8

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

AC 18; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8

HP 30; **Immunities** critical hits (except slashing), death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, precision, poison, unconscious

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ✦ claws +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing plus Grab

Melee ✦ jaws +11, **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

Constrict ✦ 1d4+4 bludgeoning, DC 16

Compression When a shredskin successfully Squeezes, it moves through the tight space at full speed. Narrow confines are not difficult terrain for a shredskin.

Control Body ✦ **Requirements** The shredskin is adjacent to a Medium or Small humanoid-shaped corpse; **Effect** The shredskin wraps itself around the corpse and takes control of the host body. While controlling a host, the shredskin uses the host's Speed but its own attacks, and it loses its Grab and Enshroud abilities. Attacks that target the shredskin while it controls a body deal half of the damage to the shredskin and half of the damage to the host body. Attacks that target an area deal damage to both the shredskin and host body normally. The shredskin can release the host body as a free action at the start of its turn. If the host is destroyed, the shredskin automatically releases the body and is flat-footed for 1 round. A Medium corpse typically has 15 Hit Points, while a Small corpse typically has 10 Hit Points. Creatures can notice that a corpse is controlled by a shredskin by succeeding a Perception check against the shredskin's Deception DC.

Enshroud ✦ **Requirements** The shredskin is grabbing a creature; **Effect** The shredskin attempts to pin the creature

Shredskin



and wrap itself around the creature like a shirt. The shreddskin rolls an Athletics check against the creature's Fortitude DC. On a success, the creature becomes restrained and the shreddskin can take control of the creature as if using Control Body. At the start of its turn, the shreddskin can automatically Constrict the enshrouded creature as a free action. An enshrouded creature can attempt a DC 16 Escape check to break free (DC 18 if the shreddskin critically succeeded its Athletics check to Enshroud).

Evidence: The freshest skin in here—thankfully unanimated—has elaborate dragon sleeve tattoos in a distinctive Minkaian design that someone could identify as belonging to Shuno Danoma, one of the Dragonfly Pagoda builders.

Secret: The one-way secret door on the eastern wall can be detected with a successful DC 20 Perception check, but the switch to activate it is in area E37, so it cannot be used from this side.

E33. RENDERING CHAMBER MODERATE 4

A large, circular well fifteen feet wide dominates the western section of this large stone chamber. Directly above the well, a matching circular hole in the ceiling extends up into darkness, its sides mirror-smooth. Doors exit the room to the south and northwest, and a corridor leading east bears two more. A metal basket with a ten-foot-long handle is propped up in the room's northwestern corner.

Careful examination of the chamber reveals that it is abnormally clean, with freshly polished floors and no trace of dust. Both the sides of the well and the shaft above it are difficult to Climb (DC 22)—the shaft splits and leads to the trapdoors in areas E8 and E29. The well in the room's center is 10 feet deep, and its bottom appears to be awash in a thick yellow-brown liquid that is actually an ochre jelly (DC 16 Nature or DC 14 Ooze Lore to identify it as such).

Creature: Pratchett acquired a powerful ochre jelly from the adventurer Ahmoset Nez and installed it here early in the hotel's construction, theoretically as part of its elaborate plumbing system. Bound via a rare ritual to hurt neither Pratchett nor Ralso, the jelly lurks in this room waiting for victims to fall down the feeding chute and into its lair, where it quickly dissolves their flesh. Any creature that falls down the chute and into the well is immediately set upon by the jelly, and begins combat prone and flat-footed due to the surprise. Pratchett or Ralso uses the metal basket in the room's corner to fish out undigested remains and any valuable items, putting any bones Pratchett doesn't want to keep into the smelter (area E34).

ELITE OCHRE JELLY CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 255

Initiative Perception +9

E34. SMELTER

A heavy, industrial-looking forge with a basin for melting metal takes up most of this small stone room. The equipment looks old and half-ruined, with a severely cracked chimney extending up along the back wall.

This smelter is one of the few pieces of industrial equipment Pratchett salvaged from this building's former life as a foundry. He uses the half-functional forge to melt down or incinerate evidence inedible to the ooze in E33 and too incriminating for Ralso to fence. The resulting smoke is piped up through the same chimney as the fireplace in the hotel's lounge and the Osirian Suite.

Evidence: The smelter's basin contains a few items from victims that Pratchett hasn't gotten around to melting down yet, including a locket inscribed with the words "To Anastatia, my love" and a large signet ring bearing the image of Rusty the Rust Monster from Knight's Marvelous Menagerie. (Though they're worth a total of 5 gp, the fact that the agents can identify their rightful owners—and thus are obligated to return them to their next of kin—means they don't count as treasure, and should instead be turned over to Ollo and the Edgewatch evidence locker for processing.)

E35. NECROMANTIC LABORATORY MODERATE 4

Both doors to this room are locked (DC 18 Thievery to pick).

A long wooden workbench along the north wall in the western portion of this room is crowded with books, scrolls, small bottles, and the skull of some ursine predator and is watched over by a humanoid skeleton on a wire stand. To the east, two open iron-barred cages collectively contain three slumped and decaying humanoid corpses.

This room was intended to be Pratchett's primary necromantic workshop, with the cages to the east containing victims captured alive for his magical creations and studies. Unfortunately for him, one of his recent undead experiments went awry and reanimated the three prisoners as wights that he couldn't control. Pratchett is unsure of how exactly he wants to handle the situation—whether the wights need to be destroyed entirely, or if he can control them without getting eviscerated first—so for the time being, he's settled for locking the room and trapping them inside.

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Creatures: The three wights wait in their respective cages, holding perfectly still and attempting to appear like ordinary corpses (Deception +11 due to their uncanny resemblance to actual corpses). If a creature approaches within 10 feet, if they believe their ruse has been uncovered, or if it appears that a creature is about to leave the room, the wights leap up and attack in hopes of catching their opponents flat-footed. With no memory of their original identities, the wights know only hunger and the desire to create more of themselves, and fight until slain. Their corpses are too decayed to be identified as any of the Edgewatch's missing persons.

WIGHTS (3)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 332

Initiative Deception +11 or Stealth +6

Treasure: The bottles on the counter are ordinary spell components worth a total of 1 gp. The tomes are treatises on necromantic lore and collectively comprise Pratchett's spellbook—since he has no desire to carry it with him and let on that he knows magic, he's had no incentive to distill the knowledge down into one volume. The writings include the spells Pratchett has prepared, plus the ritual *create undead* (wights only), but at your discretion could contain additional necromantic spells for characters to learn—altogether, they're worth 25 gp.

In addition to Pratchett's study materials, the workbench also holds two scrolls that he's purchased from Absalom's black market—one of *gentle repose* and one of *bind undead*.

The room also contains two items belonging to the prisoner Kemeneles (area E21): a spellbook and a glass orb (his bonded item). Since the spellbook is clearly labeled with its owner's name, the Edgewatch agents are obligated to return it and the orb to either him or his apprentice.

Special: An active search of Pratchett's notes reveals a series of musings on the psychic bond between twins, and ideas about how to retain that bond after death. Sketches and half-finished formulae indicate that he designed some sort of necromantic experiment involving twin children—foreshadowing the binumir in area E37.

E36. SKINSAW SHRINE

A square-sided pit yawns in the stone floor on the eastern side of this room, its bottom a nest of long metal spikes. On the wall above and behind the pit hangs a large, black metal sculpture of a mask with one starburst eye. Directly above the pit, the ceiling opens into a dark shaft leading upward. A red rug is positioned along the pit's western rim, and a wooden lectern in the room's southeastern corner holds a large book.

This is Pratchett's shrine to the dread god of thievery, secrets, and assassination, Norgorber—particularly his murderous Father Skinsaw aspect—and as guards of Absalom, the agents can easily recognize the mask as the Ascended's holy symbol. Both the sides of the pit and the shaft above it are difficult to Climb (DC 22); the shaft leads to the trapdoor in area E20. The pit is 10 feet deep, and its spikes are crusted with gore. The prayer rug next to the pit is for Pratchett, who periodically meditates here in front of the holy symbol while half-alive impaled offerings scream out their dying breaths in the pit below.

Evidence: The book on the lectern is a detailed ledger of Pratchett's murders that stretches back to his parents—Pratchett sees its creation as an act of devotion to both Father Skinsaw and his secret-based Reaper of Reputation aspect. Many of the missing persons on the Edgewatch's list can be found in the recent listings here, identified either by name or description. The book itself is a relatively new project, and the blood it's written in comes from whichever victims are convenient when the mood strikes him. While it describes Pratchett's involvement with (and eventual self-important departure from) a local Skinsaw cult, as described in his backstory on page 88, it doesn't provide any identifying details about cult members or the locations of their meetings.

E37. PRATCHETT'S DUNGEON

SEVERE 4

A large metal dissection table with attached catchment basins stands in the center of this room, with a half-flayed human corpse splayed out atop it. A large desk in an alcove to the southwest is piled high with bottles, alembics, and other glassware half-full of variously colored liquids and powders. Next to it stands an incongruous child-sized bed, its comforter pink and embroidered with happy-looking frogs. Next to the northern wall, a stove with a small mound of coals burning inside keeps a large cauldron warm.

This is Pratchett's private retreat, and the only section of the hotel that Ralso isn't allowed into. He uses the room primarily to torture and dissect victims—boiling and combining their hides to add leather to his armored coats—as well as to distill and concoct poisons. Of late, however, he's been working on an ambitious new necromantic project.

Creatures: Having grown jealous of Ralso's relationship with her soulbound dolls—or at least his conception of the relationship—Pratchett decided to build himself his own childlike companions by murdering a pair of twins and raising them as rare undead creatures called binumir. Pratchett quickly



disposed of the children's parents, and the brother and sister—Bashar and Nita—have had all memories of their original parents locked away, though if the characters mention Vindi or Sudhar by name, the ghosts begin keening as the magical wards holding back their grief strain against the depth of the buried emotion.

When the agents first arrive at the Dreaming Palace, Hendrid Pratchett is likely down here flaying his latest victim while narrating the process to the binumir in this room, whom he's magically compelled to see him as a sort of father figure. He's informed Ralso that he's not to be disturbed and is content to let his accomplice handle any problems on her own, but if he hears the sounds of combat elsewhere in the basement or believes the jig is up, he drenches the floors and walls of the basement with copious amounts of oil, hunkers down in this chamber with his ghostly minions, casts *true strike*, and waits to ambush the agents. (See page 88 for more on Pratchett's combat tactics.) Knowing that either he or the Edgewatch agents will likely die in this room, he happily confesses his murders, boasting that he "can explain neither my desires nor my skills, save for the reaper's mark upon my heart."

The binumir, for their part, use their Agonizing Wail ability before launching into an all-out assault with their ghostly hand Strikes. Compelled by their magical bond with their "new father," the undead creatures fight until destroyed.

HENDRID PRATCHETT CREATURE 5

Page 88

Initiative Perception +17

BINUMIR CREATURE 3

Page 82

Initiative Perception +10

Pratchett's Escape: If he believes the fight is lost, Pratchett sabotages his hotel and flees via the secret door on the western wall. He first tosses a sealed pint of oil into the lit stove in this room (it explodes 1 round later), then flings bottles of oil and alchemist's fire behind him as he ascends the wooden staircase to his office. He knocks over lit oil lanterns in the hallways, unafraid to burn down his entire hotel if it means evading capture. You can simulate his flight either using the standard rules for Encounter Mode or by using another subsystem, such as the chases subsystem in the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*. Ideally the heroes manage to catch up to and arrest Pratchett and prevent the entire building

from burning down, but the volatility of the situation makes accounting for every possible outcome impossible. Regardless, the most important result for the agents is to find Ralso's journal in **E24**, which is the vital clue that leads them to the next adventure, so at worst it's perfectly acceptable for a local fire brigade to miraculously save the building (and thereafter deliver the journal to the agents) just in the nick of time.

Treasure: The desk in the corner contains supplies for crafting poisons for Pratchett's sword cane. At the moment, the desk contains two doses of knockout dram (page 81) and two vials of lesser antidote. A locked bottom drawer (DC 20 Thievery, two successes to pick—Pratchett has the key) contains the hotel's treasury of 70 gp. While Pratchett himself has access to far more stolen funds, he's deposited them at assorted banks and under various names around the city and left no records that anyone else can follow.

Evidence: The corpse on the table is that of Roji Aozo, one of the missing Dragonfly Pagoda stonemasons, identifiable by the discarded clothes and identification papers in the corner of the room.

XP Award: For solving the case of the missing persons and bringing Ralso and Pratchett to justice, award each character an 80 XP story award.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With both Pratchett and Ralso defeated and their crimes uncovered, the Edgewatch agents have solved the missing persons cases and prevented further murders. While Sergeant Ollo and some of the other more established Edgewatch guards clap the characters on the backs and marvel at their cracking such a major case so soon after joining, Lavarsus remains brusque, acknowledging their success but glossing over the agents' heroism. (If the characters seem too proud of themselves, he's quick to cut them down with comments like "So you solved a case—that's your job, remember? Do you give a medal to every baker who doesn't burn the bread?")

Nevertheless, even Lavarsus agrees that the agents have proven themselves to be a valuable asset to the station. What's more, either the agents or the cleanup crew Lavarsus sends in to catalogue and clear out the Dreaming Palace found an important clue in Ralso's diary (or from interrogating Ralso herself): an indication of a bank robbery planned to coincide with the Radiant Parade. With no other officers to spare, Lavarsus puts the agents in charge of the bank investigation, leading them to dive headfirst into a den of thieves in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #158: Sixty Feet Under*.

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Fabulous structures, amazing works of art, and streets teeming with throngs of people may be the norm in Absalom, but at no time are such sights more pronounced than during the legendary Radiant Festival. Known by many names—such as the World’s Exhibition, the Inner Sea Fair, and the Centennial Celebration—this once-per-century occasion sees the population of the City at the Center of the World explode with new arrivals. Its already-numerous attractions multiply tenfold during 3 months of jubilee, merriment, and the cross-pollination of cultures from all over Golarion.

The Agents of Edgework Adventure Path takes place in Absalom during the Radiant Festival. While player characters will interact with numerous aspects of the festival throughout the adventure, inspired Game Masters might wish to expand upon the unique atmosphere of the celebration with additional quests or plot hooks; alternatively, you as Game Master might borrow the details herein to produce a new festival of epic proportions for your own urban campaign setting.

Throughout the following pages you will find a brief history of the festival, a gazette of the festival’s fairgrounds and most notable attractions, a map of the fairgrounds in Absalom’s Precipice Quarter during the latest Radiant Festival, and adventure hooks to use within the Agents of Edgework campaign or to inspire entirely new adventures altogether.

HISTORY OF THE RADIANT FESTIVAL

Officially, the Radiant Festival marks the anniversary of the battle in which Absalom’s defenders successfully warded off the attack of Kharnas the Angel-Binder’s Radiant Siege in 1619 AR. Over the millennia, however, the significance of the siege has been lost, and the festival has instead become a celebration of Absalom as a whole—as well as a chance to show off contributions to the realms of art, magic, and science.

The entire 4,000-year legacy of the Radiant Festival is best told in D.W. Geraline’s lengthy *Narrative of the History of the Radiant Festival*, from which the following excerpts have been drawn.

Anniversary of the Radiant Siege (1620 AR): The first Radiant Festival was held in 1620 AR to commemorate Absalom’s successful defense against Kharnas the Angel-Binder’s Radiant Siege the year before. The city, then still relatively young in terms of Golarion’s empires, came together to honor the brave defenders who lost their lives to protect Absalom and to vanquish Kharnas. The defeat of the so-called Angel-Binder came at an additional price, however: the loss of a powerful life-giving artifact called the *Radiant Spark*, which Kharnas stole from Absalom and used in his failed attack. The *Radiant Spark*—a lightning bolt-tipped staff with the power to resurrect the dead en masse—was lost in the aftermath of the siege. In observance of this lost relic, and to evoke its themes of rebirth and new life, the memorial was named the Radiant Festival.

The Second Radiant Festival (1720 AR): The first festival drew no visitors to the city and occupied just a few streets in the Ascendant Court, but the joyous atmosphere and spirit of cooperation would come to define the occasion forever after. In 1720 AR, 101 years after Absalom repelled Kharnas, Grand Councilmember Yamarta Elisensia put forth a decree that established the Radiant Festival as a centennial event. Elisensia—an unpopular politician who had been appointed to the High Council just a year before under suspicious circumstances, and whom history has largely forgotten save for this one proclamation—used the festival as a means of winning over the public and portraying herself as a leader who inspired the people and fostered community. While her reasons for instating the festival were hardly benevolent and the support she rallied to organize it was paltry, much of what transpired during that second Radiant Festival

1. Aspis Pier
2. Beldrin's Tower
3. Coral Beach
4. Esker's Camp
5. The Fattened Goat
6. Hall of Nations
7. Heroes' Fountain
8. Living Lake
9. Mystic Gardens
10. Silver Lawn
11. Snowdew Pond
12. Stockyard
13. War Dome



RADIANT FESTIVAL FAIRGROUNDS

3,500 FEET

has become an integral part of the fair, including a large exhibition hall she had constructed, a well-attended parade that marched through the entire city, and the official invitation of other nations' leaders to Absalom for the occasion.

The Grand Exposition in Oppara (2820 AR): Not every Radiant Festival has actually been held in Absalom, a fact that patriotic Absalomians prefer to ignore. In the waning years of the third millennium after Aroden raised the *Starstone*, the leaders of Absalom largely consisted of nobles from two major factions: the Blue Lords (primarily from Taldor) and the Cult of the Hawk (with members mainly from Osirion and Qadira). In a hasty decision that would prove to be one of their least popular, the Blue Lords, which then held a majority on the Grand Council, ordered the 2820 AR Radiant Festival be held in the Taldan capital city of Oppara. While Oppara is a geographically close neighbor of Absalom and the festival's planners gave every certified Absalomian a free boat ticket to sail to the event, the citizens as a whole vehemently opposed the decision and made their opinion clear. The festival was a resounding failure, with the lowest attendance record of any Radiant Festival throughout history, and even Opparans were embarrassed by their

government's half-hearted showing. In Absalom, riots rocked the poorer quarters, and while the city's leaders responded to the outcry with an iron fist, subsequent rulers never again made the mistake of trying to move the Radiant Festival from its home city. The debacle remains one of the enduring stains on the Blue Lords' legacy.

The Remembrance of Fire (4520 AR): The last century of the Age of Enthronement was marked by both calamity and exuberance. With new empires rising and falling faster than ever, the 30th Radiant Festival promised to be the grandest one yet, and it lived up to expectations. The festival brought more money than ever to the city's coffers, largely thanks to sponsorships from private interest groups, including a jewelry shop's worth of gemstones from the recently formed Aspis Consortium, a hoard of gold from the fledgling nation of Brevoiy, and a donation of priceless relics from the Cult of the Dawnflower in Taldor—all of which earned these groups considerable accommodations in the exhibition hall and throughout the city as a whole. Attendance and enthusiasm were at an all-time high (to say nothing of expenses, which had also ballooned to incredible proportions), and the Festivals Committee capped



the celebration with a sunset fireworks show the world would never forget. 30 beautiful maritime vessels, ranging from schooners to galleons, sailed into Absalom Harbor just short of the Flotsam Graveyard, then their captains took rowboats back to shore. As the sun dipped beneath the horizon, onshore operators triggered spells that scuttled each ship in a spectacular succession of blinding explosions both alchemical and magical, each bigger than the last, culminating in the sinking of a Chelaxian warship loaded with 1,000 tons of alchemist's fire. While a few critics (perhaps justly) complained of the waste and excess of the event, the light show has become the hallmark of the fair.

Cancellation of the 4620 AR Radiant Festival: The 47th century will forever be marked as a time of great sorrow and tribulation in history books, and Absalom was often at the center of this era's misfortunes. With the death of Aroden, the City at the Center of the World lost not only its founder and patron deity, but also a core piece of its identity. The decision to delay what would have been the 31st Radiant Festival was not made lightly. Many Absalomians protested the primarch's decision to put off the celebration, but the city's rulers had enough on their plates without hosting the centennial fair. The delay dragged on, and before long, the willpower and enthusiasm necessary to host the Radiant Festival had evaporated completely.

NOTABLE PREVIOUS EXHIBITS

Countless inventions and pieces of artwork have been made for the Radiant Festival over the millennia, enduring lengthy legacies since their first showing. The Greatboat of Guntar, for instance, still floats in the bay at Kalsgard, dwarfing the many other ships that hail from that linnorm kingdom. East of there, the Ice Gardens of Neverith still entrance visitors to Whitethrone, hundreds of years after the ninth queen of Irrisen, Tashanna, commissioned the maze of sparkling sculptures to be featured at the Radiant Festival's Grand Lawn. The illusory Pools of Desire, scorned by aristocrats at the 3820 AR Radiant Festival for "pandering to the most base desires of the unenlightened public," were drained after the end of that year's fair but reinstalled in Nantambu the next year after thousands of Nantambu's citizens signed a strongly worded petition. Perhaps best-known among the festival's historic creations, however, is Absalom's own Blue Tower, which still stands on the outskirts of the Eastgate District and remains a popular picnicking spot for the district's idle wealthy—as well as a site of much mystery and danger.

THE 4720 AR RADIANT FESTIVAL

It has been 200 years since the last Radiant Festival, and the upheaval of the last two centuries—with the death of Aroden and the nearly successful siege of the Whispering Tyrant—might have cemented the fair's status as a piece of history if not for the influence of several key Absalomian power-brokers. Most notably, the acting primarch, Wynsal Starborn, stepped into the limelight in place of the still-missing true primarch, Lord Gyr of Gixx, to announce the revival of the celebration and form a committee to



Jeremia Plumendod

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ABSALOM DURING THE FESTIVAL

The City at the Center of the World is an overwhelming place to visit on an average weekday, to say nothing of the energy during its once-in-a-lifetime festival. While most of the Radiant Festival's activities and attractions are contained within the Precipice Quarter, the entire city is abuzz from so much anticipation and so many tourists.

Aside from the fairgrounds, the most noticeable changes to Absalom can be seen in the city's inns and taverns, which have all hiked rates and still have almost no vacancies whatsoever for the duration of the fair.

The crush of foot traffic during the Radiant Festival can't be understated, and the sheer pressure of so much tourism—which has doubled Absalom's population for the duration—creates myriad problems for locals. Lower-class commoners feel the strain the most, since Absalom's basic utilities, including clean water and garbage disposal, become less and less reliable as the festival continues. Absalom's district managers hire additional temporary guards for their watch factions, but qualified hires are so rare that planners must weigh the cost of chronic understaffing against potential corruption, frequently choosing the former. Jails overflow throughout the summer, and this year they are especially crammed with the numerous delinquents that had heretofore squatted in the ruins of the Precipice Quarter.

While the disenfranchised and vulnerable might see few benefits from their hometown's centennial celebration, most Absalomians would say that the city truly comes alive during the Radiant Festival, and to see Absalom at its fullest and most jubilant is a truly special occasion indeed.

ensure its success. The Festivals Committee consists of nine high-minded thinkers, planners, and industrialists with proven track records of throwing similarly massive undertakings, including Ganfen of House Kethlin, master of blades of the Irorium; three members of the Grand Council, including the unscrupulous but inarguably expert City Planner Olansa Terimor; Jeremia Plumendod, an unrivaled arborist and savvy businesswoman; and Blune Bandersworth, one of the city's most prolific architects.

A DISTRICT REBORN

The preparation of the Precipice Quarter for the Radiant Festival meant more than tearing down a few old buildings and resodding the lawn—under the guidance of Chief Architect Blune Bandersworth and Managing Landscaper Jeremia Plumendod, teams of wreckers and salvagers razed entire neighborhoods of derelict buildings, dozens of druidic engineers leveled

hundreds of acres of scrub brush, and a platoon of paladins and priests destroyed and consecrated swaths of haunted land. Countless magic items were created (and a few artifacts destroyed) in the effort to make the formerly abandoned Precipice Quarter a suitable fairground for the largest Radiant Festival in the history of Absalom. City planners routed fresh water from springs beneath the Kortos Mounts to fill massive reservoirs, and primal spellcasters sculpted the earth to raise sturdy islands and magnificent rock sculptures from the artificial lakes' bottoms.

From the moment work began, it took workers more than three years to flatten the rolling hills and transform the span of land between Whisper Street and Absalom's eastern curtain wall. While visitors might consider this a remarkably short time for such an extravagant makeover, the truth is that the preparation of the festival grounds took far longer (and far more funding) than any of the chief planners expected, delaying the schedule so much that it jeopardized the entire festival. It wasn't until Abadius of 4720 AR—six months before the fair's scheduled opening—that stakeholders could even start hauling in the building materials needed to construct their exhibits.

But the Radiant Festival has a tendency to bring out the best in people—or, if not their best, then certainly their tenacity. With an impossible deadline and doubtless more unexpected setbacks awaiting them, the laborers plunged forward and achieved something remarkable. As the remaining months turned to weeks, and the weeks to days, the former wasteland called the Precipice Quarter transformed into a glimmering plaza. Mounds of debris became hillocks covered in emerald lawns, fetid cesspits became crystalline swan ponds, and cobblestone-lined ditches became brown-brick walkways. With the exception of a few attractions—most notably the Dragonfly Pagoda, which was heavily promoted in the city's newspapers leading up to the Radiant Festival—nearly every exhibit hall, administrative building, and spectacle was completed in time for the fair's opening day.

Of course, in the rush to get the work done, the Festivals Committee had to make certain compromises and cut corners wherever possible. The original blueprints showed the fairgrounds extending all the way to Absalom's eastern curtain wall, but workers didn't make it past Jasper Avenue, and instead cordoned off the undead-infested eastern ruins of the Precipice Quarter to the best of their ability. Unbeknownst to even the Festivals Committee, labor captains skimmed on foundational work under some of the less-funded exhibits, leaving dangerous gaps and sinkholes under many of the buildings. Wherever possible,



landscapers simply leveled and covered up rubble that wasn't salvageable, raising the average height of the district's ground level by more than 10 feet and resulting in an entire ruined subterranean level just beneath the surface of the fairground. To the Festivals Committee—and the city's leaders—these risks were well worth the trade-off of opening the fair on time in order to showcase the glory of Absalom.

NOTABLE GUESTS

The recently crowned Empress of Minkai, Ameiko Amatatsu, is just one of the many foreign dignitaries to come from distant lands to Absalom for the Radiant Festival. Her goals for the visit are severalfold: in addition to simply wanting to take in the sights and sounds of the gathering (as Empress Ameiko still entertains a streak of carefree hedonism), she intends to use the festival as an opportunity to bolster trade and establish connections with other nations.

Leaders from all over Golarion—including Queen Anastasia of Whitethrone, Thakur Kharswan of Jalmeray, Grand Princess Eutropia of Taldor, and dozens of others—are attending the Radiant Festival with similar goals in mind. With so many famous (and infamous) visitors come all the tribulations of hosting high-risk individuals. Members of acknowledged royal families reside in either confidential state-sponsored manors throughout the city or in the private manors of powerful Absalomian noble houses, such as honorable House Candren or the wealthy House Ormuz, depending on each visitor's individual predilections. More than a few famous visitors—including Empress Ameiko—take an altogether different approach, hiding in plain sight by boarding in one of the commonplace inns built specifically for the festival. Often in disguise and usually attended by an entourage of skilled bodyguards, these devil-may-care nobles mingle with the unwashed masses (an entirely new and novel experience for many such elites). Of course, such dalliances carry no shortage of risks, and several leaders within the newly formed Edgewatch wring their hands in dread, worrying that it's only a matter of time before some high-profile kidnapping or murder case rocks the city.

THIS YEAR'S EXHIBITS AND EVENTS

An entire library of volumes would be insufficient to discuss all the splendors of even just one Radiant Festival (indeed, historians pen extensive catalogs and map folios for years following each fair). The following are just some of this century's most interesting and unique attractions, many of which correspond to locations noted on the map of the fairgrounds (page 66).

Aspis Pier: When the infamous Aspis Consortium won the contract to construct the Radiant Festival's largest overwater exhibition, no one knew what to expect from the exploitative company of mercenaries. But the Aspis Pier—as the elevated boardwalk boldly proclaims across numerous signs along its length—has defied any and all expectations. The massive structure stretches more than 3,000 feet into Absalom Bay and is supported by hundreds of pillars. As impressive as it is from a bird's eye, though, Aspis Pier's true grandeur can only be seen at street level, for the pier is not one boardwalk, but two—one stacked upon the other—separated by 100 vertical feet of crisscrossing wooden beams. Spiral staircases connect the upper and lower boardwalks at various points along the pier's span. Numerous food vendors, private exhibits, and smaller attractions line both boardwalks, with the lower pier in particular providing countless nighttime entertainment venues (risqué or otherwise) for the festival's nocturnally inclined visitors. While the Aspis Consortium soaks in the public's acclaim, a few special interest groups question how such a marvel could be produced in so short a time, with some even claiming that the water below the pier is filled with the corpses of the laborers who worked to death to build it.

Beldrin's Tower: The most famous monument in the whole Precipice Quarter, Beldrin's Tower, was originally a three-spire magic academy built atop Beldrin's Bluff, overlooking the sea to the south. The earthquake of 4698 AR sheared off two of Beldrin's spires and left much of the final spire in ruins. Now, just in time for the festival's opening ceremonies, the mysterious wizard's tower has been refurbished into a museum showcasing relics and memorabilia from notable periods in Absalom's past. In the building's foyer, a larger-than-life statue of Aroden raises a massive golden orb from the center of a fountain that flows with prismatic water. As visitors traverse the tower's levels, they can witness illusory scenes including the construction and demolition of Absalom's various curtain walls over the millennia, the ascension of other divinities like Iomedae and Norgorber, and a miniature rendition of Kharnas's Radiant Siege.

The exterior of the tower is no less magnificent—an acres-long shallow basin stretches before the tower's entrance, with onyx footpaths and granite benches inviting visitors to spend the morning playing in the water or pass an afternoon relaxing in the tower's shadow. Massive exhibit halls on either side of the basin host auctions, galas, and other private events day and night. While the tower's reopening was promoted as one of the highlights of the entire fair, authorities only completed work on less than half of the tower,

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the remainder of which remains blocked by locked doors, sealed off with hastily erected false walls, or even masked by powerful illusion magic. So far, the exhibit has been a major success, but it is too early in the festival to say whether or not Beldrin's Tower will remain a popular (and safe) tourist attraction.

Coral Beach: Absalom's sweltering summer weather makes water activities an attractive option for fairgoers trying to beat the heat. To this end, a



Esker of Ormuz

Taldan construction company called Oppara Quartz and Stone sponsored the creation of the Precipice Quarter's first tourist-aimed beachfront, and the response has been nothing short of ecstatic. The sponsors brought in thousands of tons of sand to craft the artificial beach, which spans over a quarter mile of the waterfront. Large circular bungalows constructed every few dozen feet offer beachgoers a reprieve from the sun, but the beach's true wonder—an entire underwater castle made of stony, varicolored coral—can be accessed only by strong swimmers or fairgoers willing to pay a premium to the boaters who ferry passengers between the castle and the beachfront.

Despite the public's interest in this incredible "Coral Castle" (as it is unofficially known), the leaders of Oppara Quartz and Stone have been uncharacteristically tight-lipped about the means by which they constructed the structure and how they continually pump it full of fresh air. In fact, the construction company had nothing to do with the castle—it simply suddenly appeared beneath the bay's waves in the days leading up to the festival. Though the builders are happy to take credit for it now, they fear that whoever actually manifested the increasingly popular tourist hotspot may not have the public's best interests at heart.

Esker's Camp: Aspis Pier's distance from the rest of the fairgrounds makes it one of the least policed parts of the festival, and hundreds of squatters and displaced Precipice Quarter residents have already set up camps around the hills to the east. Aspis representatives have made multiple requests to the Edgwatch to "take care of the vagrant problem," but there is no easy solution to the rampant homelessness caused by the Radiant Festival. In response to repeated incidents of harassment and even abuse at the hands of Aspis agents, the displaced have united under a single banner and rallied for reasonable accommodations and basic rights. The surprising coordination is thanks largely to the leadership of a doughty half-elf who wears a brilliant white cape and calls herself Esker of Ormuz. The noble house has made no comment on her repeated claims, but an intercepted letter from House Ormuz to the Aspis Consortium leaked to the press has raised considerable questions about Esker's origins—as well as her true intentions behind rallying the derelicts to a common cause.

The Fattened Goat: In the run-up to the Radiant Festival, hundreds of business owners applied for permits to build their restaurants, taverns, and inns among the fairgrounds in the Precipice Quarter. The Fattened Goat—easily identifiable by the cartoonish drawing of an engorged goat on its sign—is but one of



the 80 or so proprietorships approved and constructed in time for the festival. Its proximity to the quarter's main thoroughfare, Radiant Street, has made it one of the most successful taverns in the quarter, even despite the relative plainness of its living quarters and its taproom's uninspired menu (which consists mainly of goat-based dishes). But beneath its unassuming facade, the Fattened Goat harbors a secret: hidden behind a trick wall in the establishment's cellar, those who know the password and have made contact with the infamous but enigmatic bookie Shylva Clancutter can make or lose fortunes alongside dozens of other gamblers. Here, in the so-called Goat's Underbelly, patrons can smoke imported cigars, drink expensive brandies, and make bets with one another or against the house on just about anything related to the Radiant Festival. The Fattened Goat's portly owner, Lundy Bursman, takes a cut from Clancutter's profits in exchange for hosting the illicit gambling ring, and the two alternate between mutual full-hearted trust and a burning desire to slip a knife into the other's back. Presently, Bursman and Clancutter aren't speaking to one another, and patrons of the Goat's Underbelly have started to make enormous bets on when and how the gambling den will be shut down.

Hall of Nations: Near the center of the Precipice Quarter, on a small bluff overlooking Living Lake, stands a monumental building that is one of the largest to ever be constructed by human hands. The brainchild of the avuncular diplomat Perrov Bristaria, esteemed international affairs advisor to Lord Gyr of Gixx, is known as the Hall of Nations, and it's here that visitors to the Radiant Festival encounter the most important inventions and developments from every civilized nation on Golarion. Each nation employs dozens of boisterous barkers, charismatic speakers, and theatrical exhibitors to draw in crowds and show off advancements in alchemy, technology, art, magic, and other pursuits. In this grand hall, representatives from rival nations might be neighbors, setting aside bloody feuds to instead compete in the realms of ingenuity and entertainment. Archmage Sabbion Retrokav from Nex and Lady Izabelle Elliosa of House Madinani are two such rivals, both showcasing increasingly dramatic new evocation and conjuration spells that might threaten the integrity of the building if either chooses to ignore Absalom's strict ban on certain spells (which has been relaxed somewhat for the fair). Thankfully for the public and the building's stakeholders, the Hall of Nations is the Edgewatch's most heavily patrolled exhibition area, and guards in their trademark gold-and-teal uniforms can be seen from every angle of the gallery.

Heroes' Fountain: Absalom has no shortage of local legends, but the marvelous Andoren exhibit called the Heroes' Fountain is so grand that even a native Absalomian could be forgiven for momentarily forgetting all about their hometown heroes. Marble, granite, and quartz columns encircle the fountain's main feature—a 250-foot-wide scene composed of dozens of Andoren folk heroes locked in a frantic fight against faceless monsters, amorphous fiends, and cloaked humanoid villains. The fountain's cerulean waters issue forth from spouts strategically placed throughout the scene, such as where heroes' swords would draw blood or from the mouths of roaring dragons. The detail of the enormous statue—which is, impossibly, carved from a single block of snow-white travertine—is so arresting that the Festivals Committee has hired civilian traffic coordinators to ensure that gawking pedestrians don't halt directly in front of a moving cart. At night, the Heroes' Fountain is illuminated by a thousand *everburning torches* placed around its base, but despite the lights and constant throngs that surround it, the fountain has become the site of several crimes of note, including the mugging of Lord Pittel of House Nimz by hog-masked thieves and a concerning amount of mysteriously spilled blood on the northeast corner of the statue (authorities are still investigating, but rumormongers loudly claim the blood is a sure sign of a gargoyle).

Living Lake: It took the city's most powerful druids, geomancers, and water-shapers two months to carve out the central area of the decrepit Precipice Quarter—and several months more for work crews to complete a pipeline from springs in the Kortos Mounts to fill the excavation site—but the final effect can't be understated: Living Lake is one of the grandest human-made marvels in all of Absalom. Countless varieties of freshwater fish populate the artificial lake, in the center of which rises a fertile island covered in dozens of varieties of red, orange, and pink ornamental trees and bushes. Pleasantly shaded walking trails meander across the nameless island, and lovers young and old make frequent use of the ample foliage for afternoon trysts, no doubt inspired by the springtime spirit that seems to suffuse the small forest. At the northwestern end of Living Lake is another, smaller island from which an array of fireworks are launched in well-attended shows every night. The shows' chief operator, a Varisian gnome named Beckabee, is a capable alchemist and excellent orchestrator, but the long nights have been catching up with her; it seems only a matter of time until one of the sleep-deprived pyrotechnician's increasingly frequent mishaps becomes a full-fledged disaster.

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Mystic Gardens: At the southern edge of the large triangular island in the center of Living Lake are the sprawling Mystic Gardens, where thousands of landscapers and orchard owners have convened to create a massive park unlike any other in the world. Arboreals and other nature spirits tend the grounds at night, straightening shrubbery and picking up garbage, while during the day visitors peruse exotic flower varieties like sparkle-lily and Nidalese dour daisy, sample fresh fruits from every corner of the Mwangi Expanse, and get lost in the topiaries and ever-shifting hedges of Canterwall's Maze of Terrors. The latter attraction has in fact resulted in a few actual missing persons reports, though the operators swear that the Ustalavic labyrinth's name and array of frightening props and costumed actors are all just a part of the show and present no actual danger to anyone. Regardless, higher-ups in the Edgwatch are keeping close tabs on the Maze of Terrors' proprietor, Dieralik Jhovanki, and they believe his frequent midnight rendezvous to the Ivy District might be a clue to the disappearances.

Radiant Parade: While the Radiant Festival's opening ceremony is perhaps the best-attended march of the fair, the Radiant Parade is no doubt the celebration's most highly anticipated spectator event. Varisian fireworks, Kelish smoke-shows, and massive colorful floats from all around the world are just a few of the highlights of the parade, which travels through each of Absalom's districts except the Puddles. Orchestrating the parade is a complex affair, and it seems that each time at least one float catches fire or a costermonger forgets to move her food stall out of the way of the parade route. This time, the parade will pass by each of Absalom's banking institutions, which have all revamped their facades in order to show off their wealth and hopefully attract new patrons. Members of the Starwatch oversee the security of the parade, and the guards are on high alert this year after catching wind of a number of potential saboteurs.

Silver Lawn: International exhibits too large, complex, or dangerous to fit in the Hall of Nations instead reside on the Silver Lawn. Minkai's Dragonfly Pagoda, the Gyroscopic Towers of Kelesh, and the building-sized Arcadian excavation machine called Graveraker are just a few of the enormous attractions that dot the broad scrape of flattened land, named for the way its Iobarian bluegrass looks nearly metallic during sunset. Vast stretches of unused grass make for perfect picnicking spots or viewpoints to watch the sunset, but pickpockets and thieves of convenience are so commonplace here that idlers are warned to keep a close eye on their purses and baskets.

Snowdew Pond: Most fisherfolk can only dream of a body of water like Snowdew Pond: crystal-clear, with a surface as flat as newly cut glass, and continually stocked with fish ranging from mundane to magical. It is here that the weekly Fishing Contest of Gobru is held (the event's host jokingly named the contest in honor of a would-be god of fish who failed the Test of the *Starstone* some years ago), and anglers from far and wide use their homemade bait to try and land the most lauded catch of all—a unique ruby-colored, whiskered fish called, incongruously, Crimson Duck. Snowdew Pond is not completely artificial—in the decade before it was revamped for the festival, it served as a small watering hole for the vagrants and orphans who lived in the ruins around it. Despite the water's clarity and the serenity all around Snowdew Pond, several fairgoers have complained of a foul stench emanating from the spot, and one terrified visitor has even claimed to have seen a ghastly arm reach out from the middle of the pond, curl its clawed fingers



Beckabee



Missive from the Festival
Dearest Mel,

Where to begin? I won't bore you with the details of my arrival (magnificent) nor my first night's lodging (subpar). Allow me to skip straight to the details of the fair, this glorious Radiant Festival, so that you might experience its spectacles as I did.

Upon first stepping through the admission turnstiles, one is immediately beset by the grandeur of the fair's spectacular grounds, dedicated to the founder of Ashalom and god of humanity—grounds which took twenty thousand workers nearly four years and an entire treasury of gold to devise. I must admit that before entering I asked myself if anything was so worthwhile to justify such an expenditure of labor and money, but upon witnessing the fairgrounds for myself, I know now that I may as well have asked whether it was worthwhile for Arden to raise the Starstone from the sea. The awe-inspiring view I had upon entrance—from the immaculate turquoise stretch of Silver Lawn to the mirrorlike waters of Snowdew Pond—were all the evidence I needed to know that there is no worthier cause than the celebration of the greatest city the world has ever known.

Did you know that there is an entire island of martial artists and acrobats just off the coast of Garund? Or that dragons dwell among the humans on the other side of Golarion, where rice is eaten instead of bread, and the forests are saturated with the spirits of the dead? For the longest time Casromir was all I knew, but just twenty-four hours on the Starstone Isle has opened my eyes to the smallness of our little corner of Talador.

I must admit that a certain degree of anxiety has overcome me, which is why I have retired to my modest hotel room to write you this letter. The crowds do not disturb me, and it is not the overwhelming exoticism of the sights that pervade every corner of the festival that so stir my fears—no, my anxiousness is a result only of the feeling that no matter how many days I spend here, I will not see all that the Radiant Festival has to offer. The fair lasts the whole summer, and my voyage back departs in one month's time, but after just one day's wanderings it is obvious to me that nothing short of the stoppage of time would permit me to witness all the festival—to say nothing of Ashalom—has to offer.

I miss you dearly, my daffodil, and wish you could see even just a fraction of the things I have seen so far. Give my love to the children and wish your mother well for me.

*Yours always,
Bartheleme*

into a loose fist, and then sink back into the depths as quickly as it had come. So far, inspections have resulted in few clues as to the origin of the transitory stench or the eerie hand, though officials did discover that the legendary Crimson Duck is little more than an ordinary catfish painted with waterproof pigments (Sergeant Ollo is still debating what to do with this information; his nephew, Dullen, is an avid fisher who competes in the contest each week, and the sergeant isn't sure he wants to break the boy's heart).

Stockyard: The Stockyard is by far the biggest area of the Radiant Festival, designated for displaying livestock, steeds, and impressive fauna from all around Golarion. The pungent barns, stalls, and stables are a veritable wonderland for anyone interested in seeing firsthand the prismatic fleece of Druman alpacas, drinking fresh milk from Jalmeray blue cattle, or learning skills related to animal husbandry or the rearing of incredible beasts. Rumors abound of especially rare beasts and possibly even monsters held in fortified backrooms of the Stockyard or imprisoned in wagons nearby. At a festival where dangerous creatures like cockatrices and rust monsters are only moderately unusual attractions, it is difficult to imagine what kinds of dangerous creatures would need to be sequestered in secret holding pens, but if the rumors are true, then the Stockyard might be a powder-keg that needs only the right spark to go off.

War Dome: The Inner Sea is a tumultuous place, and the past century has been no exception. From the rise

of hobgoblin-ruled Oprak in Avistan to the Vidrian revolution in Garund, the path to peace on Golarion is all too often stained with blood. The War Dome is this year's Radiant Festival's answer to the mayhem of late. Inside the stolid stone building, whose most notable feature is an impressive hemispherical roof made entirely from sheets of treated mithral, visitors can honor fallen warriors and living veterans around the world thanks to unique enchantment magic. The spell, which suffuses the entire interior of the structure, draws memories of loved ones from attendees and projects images of these individuals onto the flat black panels of the building's dome. Every visitor sees different images based on their thoughts and feelings, though it is possible to share visions by holding hands with whoever is conjuring the strongest image at the time. Some patrons have sworn they could stand right beside embodiments of their heroic grandparents in full regalia, while others have witnessed terribly realistic renditions of the horror of the battlefield. Few visitors leave the War Dome unchanged, and the sight of so many grief-stricken or even openly weeping attendees leaving the building has resulted only in ever-increasing attendance numbers. The exhibit's creator and manager, a retired Molthuni mage-general named Romolu Setten, solemnly acknowledges every person who enters or leaves the dome. Though many uncouth exhibitgoers have asked, the sober veteran refuses to share any details of his own War Dome visions nor any hints about his rumored secret missions for Molthune.

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ADVICE FOR GAME MASTERS

Agents of Edgewatch is the first Adventure Path in which the player characters are outfitted members of a major city's official guard. While any Game Master with a passing knowledge of Pathfinder can run Agents of Edgewatch without modifying the game's default rules, it's worth considering the following concepts as you prepare for the campaign.

NONLETHAL WEAPONS

As members of the city watch, player characters in Agents of Edgewatch must keep in mind the laws of the city—including limits on the use of lethal force. Because using lethal weapons is the default assumption of Pathfinder's combat system (which imposes penalties on nonlethal attacks made with lethal weapons), you might consider making a house rule for this campaign that unless otherwise stated, attacks by the player characters are always nonlethal and don't take the usual penalty when they use nonlethal weapons. And of course, player characters should receive full XP awards for any potential combat encounter they resolve peacefully, even if they don't end up fighting anyone.

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Throughout this campaign, it should be abundantly clear to your players that in their role as Absalom watch guards, their primary motivation is to keep the peace and maintain the law. Part of this commitment means adhering to the city's most obvious laws (only kill in self-defense, don't steal from innocents, etc.) and refusing to abuse their authority.

That said, some leeway should be given to players who want to lightly play against the grain—a player should feel free to roleplay a "loose cannon" who doesn't always play by the rules, for example—but you as the Game Master should work with such players to ensure minor breaches of protocol don't boil over into outright corruption. The campaign assumes that

BOOK 'EM

What happens to those arrested in Absalom? The short answer is that it's up to you. Since the focus of this Adventure Path is fast-paced action rather than legal paperwork, the outcomes of any arrests the player characters make are purposefully left vague. In general, it's safe to assume that apprehended criminals undergo a process similar to that of many modern real-world countries: suspects are detained, if appropriate, in holding cells at Edgewatch Headquarters until the guards can write a case file; are let out on bail; and must show up to their appointed court date at the local district magistrate's office for proper sentencing.

the player characters have good intentions; if everyone in your group enthusiastically agrees that they want to play as a squad of crooked cops, prepare to make significant modifications to numerous aspects of the Adventure Path, the full details of which would be far beyond the scope of this text.

KEY TO THE CITY

Part of the appeal of this Adventure Path is playing within the setting of Absalom, the City at the Center of the World. With such a large playground to explore, it would be impossible to pack every district, secret, and character into a single Adventure Path, and your players will likely want to go a bit off the rails and explore areas of the city not covered in these adventure volumes. Thankfully, Absalom is detailed extensively in the forthcoming *Absalom, City of Lost Omens* hardcover, available soon.

As usual, the goal of Pathfinder is to have fun, so as long as you and your players are having a good time, there's absolutely no reason you can't put aside the Adventure Path's main plot points for a while in order to indulge in some big-city shenanigans. With a bit of imagination, it's completely possible to occasionally indulge in side quests and subplots while routinely returning to the main story of the Adventure Path.



CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

The following summaries of the Adventure Path volumes are intended to help Game Masters prepare their Agents of Edgewatch campaign.

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By James L. Sutter

Pathfinder Adventure Path #157, Levels 1–4

The player characters perform their first investigations as fresh recruits of the Edgewatch, a newly formed faction of the Absalom guard created to police the now-restored Precipice Quarter at the outset of Absalom's Radiant Festival. At the fair, they witness strange happenings (including a giant excavator that goes missing in the blink of an eye) and are tasked with investigating several reports of missing fairgoers. The investigation leads the Edgewatch agents to a serial killer who bases his killings out of his labyrinthine hotel-dungeon. Within the hotel, they also discover clues that point to the presence of other evildoers capitalizing on the confusion of the Radiant Festival—a thieves' guild called the Copper Hand and a cult of murderers who worship Norgorber in his aspect as the Skinsaw Man.

SIXTY FEET UNDER

By Michael Sayre

Pathfinder Adventure Path #158, Levels 5–8

The Edgewatch agents investigate an impending bank robbery in the Coins district and intercept would-be robbers belonging to the Copper Hand thieves' guild. In the Vudratown neighborhood in the Foreign Quarter, the agents must infiltrate the Copper Hand's hideout to put a stop to the guilds' machinations. It turns out that the guild has been funding a burgeoning Skinsaw cult located in a remote corner of Absalom's Catacombs. When the agents delve into the Catacombs and arrest the cult's nefarious leader, "the Skinner," they learn that she is also a member of an even more dangerous Norgorberite cabal: a mysterious group called the Twilight Four.

ALL OR NOTHING

By Jason Keeley

Pathfinder Adventure Path #159, Levels 9–11

After learning about the Skinner's connection to a powerful quartet of Norgorber worshippers calling themselves the Twilight Four, the agents broker a peace between a pair of rival gangs in the Docks district in order to learn the whereabouts of the Four's so-called doomsday weapon. They then perform a daring heist at the Lucky Nimbus casino to obtain the weapon—but it's already been stolen! They must track the thief to the Irorium, where a saboteur loyal to Jonis Flakfatter, an infamous priest of Blackfingers (and secretly one of the

Twilight Four), plans to detonate the bomb, which is loaded with a virulent disease called blackfinger blight.

ASSAULT ON HUNTING LODGE SEVEN

By Ron Lundeen

Pathfinder Adventure Path #160, Levels 12–14

Having stopped the Irorium bombing, the Edgewatch agents receive a much-deserved promotion and a transfer to the interjurisdictional Starwatch—just in time to apprehend Flakfatter, their second confirmed member of the Twilight Four. After fighting their way through his sanctum and arresting him, the heroes must hold their suspect in an abandoned (and haunted) hunting lodge until the cavalry arrives, all the while being beset by Flakfatter's loyal servants as well as other mysterious assassins. Afterward, a mysterious contact calls in with a tip, sending the agents to a decrepit amusement park called Harrowland where they discover the stolen giant excavator and are witness to the framing of Acting Primarch Wynsal Starborn.

BELLY OF THE BLACK WHALE

By Cole Kronewitter

Pathfinder Adventure Path #161, Levels 15–17

With their ally Wynsal Starborn behind bars and themselves implicated in his crimes, the heroes must play into the Twilight Four's hands for now. To gain the trust of an Undercity crime lord named Miogimo, the Starwatch agents frame themselves for crimes they didn't commit and hand in their badges. Now working for Miogimo, the disgraced agents perform tasks in exchange for a map to the Black Whale, the floating prison where Starborn is being held. With this new intelligence, the heroes orchestrate a prison break to spring Starborn. Finally, they must clear their names before confronting their betrayer, the third member of the Twilight Four and notorious tabloid publisher Reginald Vancaskerkin.

RUINS OF THE RADIANT SIEGE

By Amber Stewart

Pathfinder Adventure Path #162, Levels 18–20

While Starborn was behind bars, the final member of the Twilight Four, Grand Councilmember Olansa Terimor, claimed the position of acting primarch for herself, in the process fulfilling a pact with Norgorber to become the god's new divine herald. To overthrow and defeat Olansa, the heroes must go beneath Fort Tempest to obtain an artifact called the *Radiant Spark* while also preventing the stolen excavator from utterly destroying the Precipice Quarter. Finally, artifact in hand, the heroes ascend Beldrin's Tower, which Olansa has turned into a shadowy domain, and defeat the usurper in order to hand the primarchy back to Wynsal Starborn.



EDGEWATCH AGENTS TOOLBOX

A city guard's work is very different from an adventurer or soldier's. Their opponents are often the very same citizens they're charged to protect. As a result, many guards forego the usual blades in favor of nonlethal weapons, and rather than hone their capacity to deal damage, they specialize in intimidation, enchantment, and other means of deescalating confrontations. Before an officer can apprehend criminals, they must be able to identify them, and in a city as cosmopolitan as Absalom, law enforcement has pioneered many new techniques and devices for helping agents track down suspects and ascertain guilt.

The following pages present a variety of new rules options available to the player characters in their role as Edgewatch guards, as well as items they'll discover over the course of this adventure. New guards should consider outfitting themselves with classic police officer tools like the signal whistle, sap, magnifying glass, or manacles from the Equipment chapter of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*. As they gain wealth, the agents might also invest in useful magic items such as *sleep arrows* (*Core Rulebook* 560), *truth potions* (*Core Rulebook* 564), and *candles of truth* (*Core Rulebook* 570).

GUARD GEAR

Absalom's guard precincts employ a number of items designed to help officers track down lawbreakers.

FINGERPRINTING KIT ITEM 3

UNCOMMON

Price 30 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** L

Rarely found outside of major metropolises, fingerprinting kits are a state-of-the-art, non-magical means of linking suspects to the scene of a crime.

The kit consists of two parts. The first, a delicate brush and a jar of extremely fine dust, is used to reveal fingerprints left behind by most humanoid creatures. The dust sticks to the natural oils left behind on smooth surfaces. When you use the kit to determine whether or not creatures left behind a fingerprint at a crime scene, the GM rolls a secret Thievery check against the Thievery DC of every creature capable of leaving prints that has interacted with the scene. On a success, you locate a clear print from that creature and carefully transfer it to a special sheet of sticky paper. (Note that fingerprints can last for days, and prints collected in this manner often include those of victims, witnesses, and unrelated passersby.) At the GM's discretion, the print-leaving creature might get a bonus to its Thievery DC for taking special precautions. In other cases, finding a print might be impossible (such as if the creature was wearing gloves or if the location has been significantly compromised).

The second part of the kit is a small sheaf of paper and a pad soaked in ink. By forcing a humanoid creature with fingerprints to roll a finger across the pad and then press it to the paper, you can obtain an image of the unique whorls in that creature's fingerprints. These can then be compared to any prints found at a crime scene. Successfully determining whether or not two prints match requires a DC 15 Perception check—the GM should roll this check secretly as well, since a failed check may result in false information.

HANDCUFFS ITEM 3+

UNCOMMON

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Developed in Absalom and rarely used except by police forces in major cities due to their significant cost, handcuffs possess a ratcheting lock system in each cuff that allows them to be quickly cinched down on a captive's limbs, even if they're actively resisting.

To apply handcuffs, you must first grab or restrain your opponent, then attempt an Athletics check against the opponent's Fortitude DC. On a success, you lock one of the cuffs around your opponent's wrist. You can lock the other cuff to yourself or a stationary object within reach as an Interact action; to lock it to another creature (either the same opponent you just cuffed or a separate creature altogether), you must first grab or restrain that creature, as before, and then make an Athletics check against its Fortitude DC. The DC to make the Athletics check against your own wrist is 5, or 10 for an unattended object.

If you bind a creature to itself, it takes the same penalties as those imposed by manacles (*Core Rulebook* 290). If you bind a creature to another creature (including yourself), the two creatures are locked together and must remain in adjacent spaces, and both creatures gain the clumsy 1 condition as long as they are handcuffed. If you lock a creature to an immobile object, such as a bar or tree, the creature is immobilized. (For creatures with an unusual physiology such as more or fewer limbs, the GM determines what effects handcuffs have, if any.)

Handcuffs are unlocked via a key and are easier to slip out of than ordinary manacles. The chain between handcuffs can be Broken Open with a single Athletics check.

Type average handcuffs; **Level** 3; **Price** 30 gp

Escaping requires two successful DC 27 Thievery checks, and the Athletics DC to Break Open the chain between handcuffs is 30.

Type good handcuffs; **Level** 9; **Price** 350 gp

Escaping requires three successful DC 30 Thievery checks, and the Athletics DC to Break Open the chain between handcuffs is 35.

Type superior handcuffs; **Level** 17; **Price** 6,000 gp

Escaping requires four successful DC 40 Thievery checks, and the Athletics DC to Break Open the chain between handcuffs is 45.

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NONLETHAL LOADOUT

The Edgewatch offers a variety of items and training to help agents pacify lawbreakers.

Nonlethal Gear

The following gear is in common usage among guards.

BLINDPEPPER BOMB ITEM 5

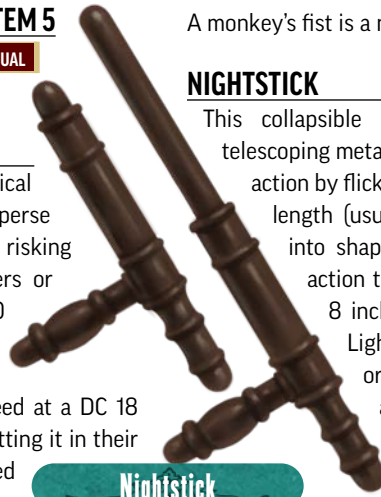
UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL BOMB CONSUMABLE VISUAL

Price 40 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ⚡ Strike

Though expensive, these single-use alchemical bombs are often used by police forces to disperse unruly crowds and quell riots without risking permanent physical injury to either officers or civilians. The bomb can be thrown up to 30 feet, causing it to explode, spraying the aerosolized pepper dust in a 15-foot-radius burst. All creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 18 Reflex save to avoid inhaling the dust or getting it in their eyes. On a failed save, the creature is blinded for 1 round and then dazzled for 1 round. On a critical failure, the creature is blinded for 1 round, sickened 1, and dazzled until it removes the sickened condition.



Nightstick

MONKEY'S FIST ITEM 0

Also called a "slungshot," the monkey's fist is a short length of rope ending in a thick knot wrapped around a metal weight. You can tie the loose end of a monkey's fist to your wrist; if you are disarmed, the weapon remains secured to your wrist rather than falling to the ground, though you must use an Interact action to grip it before using it again. A monkey's fist is a martial melee weapon.

NIGHTSTICK ITEM 0

This collapsible baton consists of several nested, telescoping metal shafts that can be extended as a free action by flicking the wrist. Once extended to its full length (usually around 2 feet), the baton locks into shape until the wielder uses an Interact action to collapse it—a collapsed nightstick is 8 inches long, making it easily concealed. Lighter and more maneuverable than an ordinary club or truncheon, nightsticks are designed to subdue foes without causing permanent injury. A nightstick is an uncommon simple melee weapon.

Pacifying Weapon Property

The following weapon property rune is popular among city guards, as it can potentially deescalate deadly combat encounters into nonlethal brawls.

BLINDPEPPER TUBE ITEM 1

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE VISUAL

Price 3 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This single-use pacification device consists of finely ground hot pepper loaded into a sealed, blowgun-style tube with a one-way valve and a range of 5 feet. To use it, the wielder must tear open the tube's seal as an Interact action, then spend another action to blow the hot pepper into an adjacent creature's face. These actions don't have to be taken in the same round. The target must attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid inhaling the pepper or getting it in their eyes. On a failed save, the creature is blinded for 1 round and then dazzled for 1 round. On a critical failure, the creature is blinded for 1 round, sickened 1, and dazzled until it removes the sickened condition.

PACIFYING RUNE 5

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL

Price 150 gp

Usage etched onto a weapon

This rune turns weapons into instruments of peacemaking. **Activate** ⚡ command (mental); **Trigger** You damage a creature with a *pacifying* weapon; **Effect** The damaged creature must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be pacified. A pacified creature takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls on any attacks that aren't nonlethal for 1 minute, and the creature also experiences a clear psychic warning that they should stop dealing lethal damage.

Uncommon Simple									
Melee Weapons	Price	Damage	Range	Reload	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits	
Nightstick	1 gp	1d4 B	—	—	L	1	Club	Agile, finesse, nonlethal, parry	
Martial Weapons	Price	Damage	Range	Reload	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits	
Monkey's fist	1sp	1d6 B	—	—	—	1	Flail	Finesse, monk, nonlethal	
Exquisite sword cane (level 4)	90 gp	1d6 P	—	—	1	1	Sword	Agile, concealable, finesse, parry, twin (sheath)	
Exquisite sword cane sheath	—	1d4 B	—	—	L	1	Club	Agile, finesse, parry, twin (sword)	



EDGEWATCH DETECTIVE ARCHETYPE

You're a specially trained detective for the Edgwatch guard precinct in Absalom.

EDGEWATCH DETECTIVE DEDICATION FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Intelligence 14 or Wisdom 14

You become trained in Society or Thievery; if you are already trained in both of these skills, you instead become trained in a skill of your choice. You can use Perception instead of Survival to Track, and you gain the Experienced Tracker skill feat (*Core Rulebook* 261).

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the this archetype.

SENSE ALIGNMENT ◆◆◆ FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE SECRET

Prerequisites Edgwatch Detective Dedication

You read the body language of an intelligent creature within 30 feet and pick up on subtle cues to detect its general propensity for good or evil and law or chaos. The GM rolls a secret Perception check, comparing the result against the target's Deception DC.

Critical Success You ascertain the target's alignment.

Success You ascertain the target's alignment, but only along one axis (your choice of either the good-evil axis or the lawful-chaotic axis).

Failure You do not learn the target's alignment.

Critical Failure You incorrectly ascertain the target's alignment, misidentifying their alignment along either one axis or both (GM's choice).

ARCANE SENSITIVITY FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Edgwatch Detective Dedication

You can sense the presence of the supernatural, even if you don't have any magical ability yourself. You can spend a single action (this action has the concentrate trait) to determine if any magical auras are present in the area. This has the effects of a 1st-level *detect magic* spell but isn't magical. By straining, you can also discover the source of the magic and its school (with the effect of a 4th-level *detect magic* spell), but doing so prevents you from using this ability again until you've rested for 8 hours.

BOLERA'S INTERROGATION ◆◆◆ FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Edgwatch Detective Dedication

Frequency three times per day

You focus your attention on a single creature within 30 feet. That creature must attempt a Will save against your

Perception DC. On a failure, the creature finds itself unable to speak any deliberate and intentional lies and takes a -2 penalty to Deception checks. On a critical failure, the penalty to Deception checks is -4. This effect lasts for 10 minutes as long as you are within 30 feet of the target and the target is aware that you are using the ability against it. If you begin a new interrogation, this effect ends for any previous target. After your interrogation ends, the target is immune to this ability for 24 hours.



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GOING UNDERCOVER

The following items are popular with officers working undercover or attempting to blend in with the populace while on a stakeout. Of course, many criminals find these items useful for the same reasons.

RECORDING ROD


ITEM 3+

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE DIVINATION MAGICAL SCRYING

Usage varies; **Bulk** 1

This smooth metal bar is short enough to fit in one hand. It has several inset gemstone buttons on one end and a small lens on the other.

Popular with law enforcement and blackmailers alike, *recording rods* allow users to capture and replay incriminating scenes and are often concealed and triggered covertly to avoid raising the subject's suspicion.

Activate  Interact; **Effect** When activated, the rod records anything it sees and hears for 1 minute. Its lens acts as both eye and ear with precise vision and imprecise hearing. This recorded sequence can then be played back as many times as desired, the sights and sounds communicated telepathically to the rod's holder. The rod's recording sequence can be triggered manually by a person holding it, or it can be programmed to begin recording automatically in response to a specified stimulus, such as nearby movement or a specific trigger word spoken in its vicinity.

For basic *recording rods*, once activated, the rod records for 1 minute, after which it loses its recording ability but can replay that same scene over and over. Rarer and more expensive reusable versions of the *recording rod* operate similarly, but the recording function can be enabled a second time by permanently erasing the memory currently stored on the rod. A *reusable recording rod* lacks the consumable trait.

Type basic; **Level** 3; **Price** 20 gp

Type reusable; **Level** 5; **Price** 60 gp

RING OF DISCRETION

ITEM 1

UNCOMMON ILLUSION INVESTED MAGICAL VISUAL

Price 15 gp

Usage worn ring; **Bulk** –

This ring magically conceals any armor and sheathed weapons you're wearing by either turning them invisible or creating the illusion of ordinary clothes. The ring doesn't change your appearance beyond concealing weapons and armor. As soon as you wield a weapon, the weapon becomes obvious to onlookers and is no longer affected by the ring until you sheathe the weapon for at

least 1 minute. A creature can disbelieve this illusion by Seeking or any time it hits you with an attack.

CRIMINAL CONTRABAND

The following alchemical and magic items are put to nefarious purposes by criminals and are likely to raise eyebrows when encountered by law enforcement anywhere. Some of these items appear throughout the course of the adventure; others may be included at the GM's discretion.

One of the following magic items, *Reaper's Lancer*, is an exquisite sword cane—a sword sheathed inside a hollow cane, which itself can be used as a clubbing weapon with or without the sword sheathed inside. The stats for the exquisite sword cane and its sheath appear in the table on page 78. The concealable weapon trait and the standard sword cane (which lacks the parry trait and whose sheath can't be used as a weapon) can be found on page 248 in the *Advanced Player's Guide*. For convenience, the concealable weapon trait is reprinted below.

Concealable: This weapon is designed to be inconspicuous or easily concealed. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks and DCs to conceal a weapon with this trait.

AURIFYING SALTS

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE

Price 12 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate  Interact

You can apply this pale eggshell powder to one outfit, one object of up to Medium size, or up to 10 smaller objects in the same space, such as jewelry, to make them appear gilded for 1 hour. If used as part of Making an Impression on an audience swayed by expensive clothing, it makes most clothing or jewelry seem to be worth 10 times as much as they really are. Only someone who closely inspects an affected item notices it's not real gold. If you apply the salts to an object made of metal, the metal softens like gold, reducing its Hardness by 4 (to a minimum of Hardness 10) for 1 hour.

CORPSEWARD PENDANT

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON ABJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 150 gp

Usage worn amulet; **Bulk** –

This small pendant is usually shaped like a humanoid skull or small animal skull.



Recording Rod



Ring of Discretion



Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** You become undetectable to undead creatures for 10 minutes. Undead can't see, hear, or smell you, nor detect you with sensory capabilities such as scent or tremorsense. A creature can attempt a single DC 18 Will saving throw to ignore this effect.

If an undead has reason to believe that undetected opponents are present, it can still attempt to Seek or Strike you. If you attempt to use a positive spell to damage undead, use Command Undead, touch or damage an undead creature, or attack any creature while warded in this manner, the pendant's effects immediately end. An undead creature who observes you in this manner or one who succeeds at the Will save is immune to the *corpseward pendant* for 24 hours.



GROLNA ITEM 1

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE DRUG INGESTED POISON

Price 3 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

This caligni-made, murky-green drug supercharges a creature's olfactory senses at the expense of dulling their mind. Popular throughout the Darklands for its ability to transform normally dull scents and flavors into intense, euphoric experiences, grolna can also be a great aid to trackers who want to follow scent trails, turning ordinary humanoids into effective bloodhounds.

Taking an additional dose of grolna while affected by the effects of stage 1 of a previous dose resets the duration of stage 1 and postpones the onset of stage 2 effects.

Saving Throw DC 13 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 8 hours; **Stage 1** gain scent (imprecise) 30 feet, gain a +3 item bonus to Survival checks to follow tracks, and become stupefied 1 (1 hour); **Stage 2** stupefied 2 (6 hours)

KNOCKOUT DRAM ITEM 7

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INGESTED POISON

Price 70 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

This soporific chemical comes in liquid form and is virtually undetectable by taste or scent. It's most commonly slipped into a victim's drink to quickly induce a deep unconsciousness.

Saving Throw DC 23 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 10 hours; **Stage 1** fall unconscious and can't attempt Perception checks to wake up (1 minute); **Stage 2** sleep normally (1d4 hours)

LOOTER'S LETHARGY ITEM 2

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE CONTACT POISON

Price 6 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

Traps may keep many a thief at bay, but the poison known as looter's lethargy ensures that no thieves are strong enough to walk off with pilfered treasures. Commonly smeared on locks, chests, and even valuable items themselves, the poison slowly saps the strength of those who touch it. Nearby guardians can then simply follow the resulting trail of discarded valuables to find the weakened trespasser.

Saving Throw DC 19 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 1 hour; **Stage 1** reduce Bulk limit by 3 (1 minute); **Stage 2** flat-footed, reduce Bulk limit by 4 (10 minutes); **Stage 3** flat-footed, reduce Bulk limit by 5 (10 minutes)

REAPER'S LANCET ITEM 5

UNIQUE MAGICAL NECROMANCY POISON

Price 200 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

Hendrid Pratchett himself designed this custom skull-topped *+1 striking exquisite sword cane* and had it gilded in high-quality gold. Its first victim was the very smith whom Pratchett commissioned to craft the weapon, so the means of its construction are a secret known only to Pratchett. The magic of the *Reaper's Lancet* applies to both the blade and the sheath, making them each effectively a *+1 striking weapon*, but only if both are wielded by the same creature—if the two components are shared between creatures, only the blade retains the rune's magic.

Reaper's Lancet has a hidden reservoir inside the skull that automatically applies a new dose of poison to the blade after the previous dose was expended with a successful Strike. The reservoir must be filled manually (a process requiring 1 minute) and is large enough to hold only 3 doses at a time. Any sort of injury-delivered poison can be placed in it, though all doses must be of the same poison. The Price of the poison is not reflected in this weapon's listed Price.

Activate ↻ Interact; **Trigger** You damage a creature with *Reaper's Lancet*; **Effect** You poison the creature you hit with the poison currently in the reservoir.

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BINUMIR

Whenever two individuals who share a strong emotional bond perish together, they might rise as a combined spirit known as a binumir. The two individuals' souls partially merge into a singular entity, though each one feels a constant longing for the other. This curse causes a binumir great distress and envy, leading the creature to lash out and attack others. Only the destruction of the binumir will liberate the two spirits and finally give them peace.

Binumirs commonly appear in places where people die sharing their last moments together, such as in settlements hit by natural disasters.

The two spirits of a binumir are distinct. Each half retains the visage of the respective individual that died to later form part of the creature. The spirits typically appear holding hands, but they constantly search for each other. They cry and weep for their lost loved one, unable to recognize the other's presence right beside them.

GREATER BINUMIRS

In some cases, several creatures that perish together form a more powerful binumir. These binumirs are generally Large or Huge and have thematic abilities based on the group. For example, a binumir arising from an order of slain monks might have ki abilities or ghostly strikes.



BINUMIR

CREATURE 3

LE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Society +10

Str -4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

AC 19; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

HP 25, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 2 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Delay Condition The binumir's dual spirit takes longer to be affected by detrimental effects. When the binumir is the target of an effect that imparts the confused, controlled, fascinated, frightened, sickened, slowed, or stunned condition, the condition is automatically suppressed until the end of the binumir's next turn.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee \blacklozenge ghostly hand +12 (agile, finesse, magical),

Damage 1d8+4 negative

Agonizing Wail $\blacklozenge\blacklozenge$ (auditory, concentrate) The binumir unleashes a distressing cry that fills others with wrenching sadness. Creatures within 30 feet must attempt a DC 17 Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and is temporarily immune to Agonizing Wail for 1 minute.

Success The target can't use reactions for 1 round.

Failure The target is slowed 1 and can't use reactions for 1 minute as it sobs uncontrollably. It can attempt a new Will save to end the effect at the end of each of its turns.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target can't make saves to end the effect.

Dual Assault $\blacklozenge\blacklozenge\blacklozenge$ The binumir makes four Strikes; no more than two can be against the same target. These attacks count toward the binumir's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after all the attacks have been made.



COBBLESWARM

Cobble mites look like stones or rocks with small mouths that resemble the inside of geodes. Tiny, unassuming, and typically harmless, they reside in mountains and cavernous regions, subsisting on scraps of food and gravel. When dozens of cobble mites congregate, they use their collective might to overwhelm and consume small creatures, much like a school of hungry piranhas attacking and devouring unfortunate animals.

Cobbleswarms, also known as stone flocks or rock hives, typically live simple existences. However, some cobble mites end up pulled from their native mountainsides or caverns. Humanoids tend to see cobble mites as endearing little creatures and sometimes take one as a pet. Because cobbleswarms have consistent, smooth shapes, they're sometimes inadvertently collected for use in road building and other construction. Other times, cobble mites simply get lost after wandering far from their home territory. Lone cobble mites have an uncanny knack for finding each other, especially when forming a cobbleswarm.

Most cobbleswarms living in urban environments hide among cobbled city streets. They consume the rocks caught the rocks caught in the grooves of boots and food dropped by pedestrians. Cobble mites are tough creatures that can endure being trodden upon uninjured. Some streets bear several cobble mites that even locals don't suspect, as the creatures stay well-fed enough to refrain from moving much or causing trouble. Loud explosions frighten cobble mites, and many cobbleswarms lash out during firework displays, mostly due to fear.



COBBLE MITE PETS

Characters looking to keep a cobble mite as a pet can usually buy one in a large city for 1 gp. Cobble mites are content as pets if they're pampered and well-fed. Searching for one in the wild takes careful hunting and risks finding cobble mites laired together in a cobbleswarm. A character with a familiar can choose a cobble mite, which must have the burrower familiar ability.

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COBBLESWARM

CREATURE 2

N **LARGE** **ABERRATION** **EARTH** **SWARM**

Perception +9; tremorsense (precise) 40 feet

Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +13

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Clutching Cobbles The cobbleswarm's space is difficult terrain.

Precise Tremorsense The cobbleswarm's tremorsense is a precise sense out to 40 feet and an imprecise sense out to 80 feet. The cobbleswarm can't sense anything beyond the range of its tremorsense.

AC 17; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

HP 20; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind;

Weaknesses area damage 3, splash damage 3;

Resistances piercing 6, slashing 6

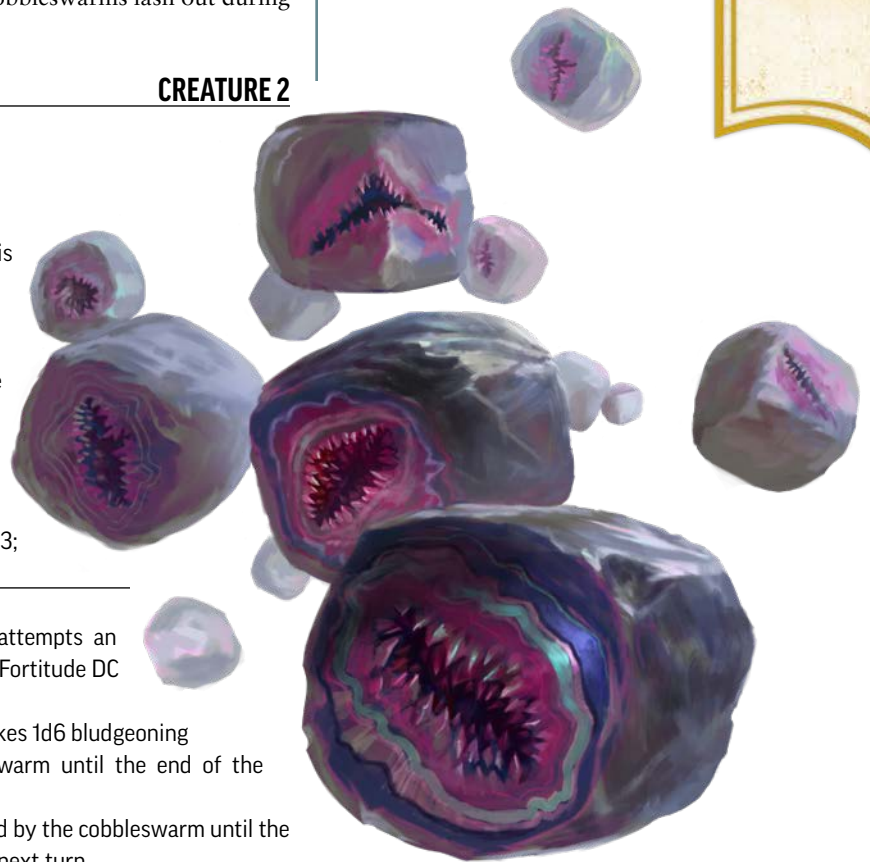
Speed 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

Grasping Bites **◆◆** (attack) The cobbleswarm attempts an Athletics check and compares the result to the Fortitude DC of all creatures in its space.

Critical Success The creature falls prone and takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage, and is restrained by the cobbleswarm until the end of the cobbleswarm's next turn.

Success The creature falls prone, and is grabbed by the cobbleswarm until the creature until the end of the cobbleswarm's next turn.

Pummeling Assault **◆** Each enemy in the cobbleswarm's space takes 2d4 bludgeoning damage (DC 17 basic Reflex save).





SIEGE SHARD

UNIQUE SIEGE SHARDS

Especially charged events, such as the clash of two bitter rivals or the destruction of a neighborhood, can create a stronger psychic presence resulting in a more powerful siege shard with potent innate psychic abilities. This shard's surfaces still display images of conflict, but it might take significant research to determine such a shard's origins.

Sieges provoke lingering feelings of confinement and desperation. These emotions can coalesce as a psychic presence that animates broken battlements as quasi-intelligent constructs dubbed siege shards. The shard's surface depicts the conflicts that created it, which hold the key to dispersing its psychic presence. A successful DC 18 check to Recall Knowledge is sufficient to identify the conflict that engendered the construct. A creature aware of a shard's generative conflict can attempt the following activity.

PROVE PEACE

CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE

Requirements You know the conflict that created a specific siege shard, and the siege shard is immobilized.

You touch the siege shard, establish a mental connection, and relay facts of the conflict's resolution. Attempt a check to Recall Knowledge about the conflict that created the shard, using the siege shard's Will DC. If you succeed, you prove the conflict's end, and the siege shard reverts to ordinary stone. On a critical failure, images of the past conflict overwhelm you, and you are confused until the end of your next turn.

SIEGE SHARD

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON N TINY CONSTRUCT

Perception +9; darkvision

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +10

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -4

AC 19 (15 when broken); **Fort** +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

HP 37; **Hardness** 5; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious

Exorcism Mental damage ignores a siege shard's hardness. Additionally, proving the siege shard's generative conflict is over with the Prove Peace activity reverts the creature to ordinary stone.

Surreptitious Siege While a siege shard is embedded within a structure while using *meld into stone*, the structure and all objects within it take twice as long to repair.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee slam +11, **Damage** 1d8+4 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 20, attack +12; **3rd** *meld into stone* (at will); **2nd** *telekinetic maneuver*;

Cantrips (2nd) *mage hand*, *telekinetic projectile*

Overwhelming Anguish (emotion, enchantment, mental, occult) **Frequency** once per minute;

Effect The siege shard emits a disorienting psychic blast. All creatures within a 15 feet take

4d6 mental damage (DC 20 basic Will save).

Rejuvenation (abjuration, occult) When a siege shard is destroyed within 100 feet of a structure, it reforms after 2d4 days within the nearest structure, fully healed. A siege shard within a structure can be permanently destroyed by the Prove Peace activity.





ZRUKBAT

Zrukbat resembles long-limbed bats with gangly wings, which make them clumsy fliers. Instead, these reclusive fey prefer to crawl along surfaces using the hooked talons on the tips of their wings and feet. Their somewhat humanoid faces feature bulging black eyes, dark fur, and pointed fangs, shocking—if not terrifying—those who get a glimpse of them scuttling along a roof or peeping out from under an eave. Sensitive creatures, zrukbat quickly learn that their appearance triggers negative reactions, yet they prefer to live in urban settlements, observing busy streets and houses from inconspicuous locations.

Zrukbat hide in plain sight using their shapeshifting abilities to mimic a broad repertoire of objects. Despite their intelligence, they fundamentally don't understand others' reasoning and often make foolish mistakes in their disguises. For example, one might shapeshift into a lit lantern in an otherwise abandoned house, misjudge the pattern of roof ornaments and become an out-of-place spire, or disguise itself as smoke in an unlit chimney.

Due to their fearsome appearance and predisposition to conceal themselves, zrukbat are associated with ghosts and other supernatural phenomena. This affiliation isn't wholly earned; as long as zrukbat feel they've gone unnoticed, they remain generally peaceful. When their obsessive secrecy fails, they devolve into extremely volatile, dangerous creatures. Once spotted, zrukbat fly into a rage if anyone utters even a casual suspicion regarding their presence. In areas known to harbor zrukbat, superstition forbids speaking aloud of curious phenomena, lest they take offense and attack.

ZRUKBAT

CREATURE 2

CN SMALL FEY

Perception +7; darkvision

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +9, Deception +5, Stealth +10

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1

AC 18; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

HP 30; **Immunities** sleep; **Weakness** cold iron 5

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ✦ claw +11, **Damage** 1d8+3 slashing

Melee ✦ fangs +11, **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

DubiousShifting ✦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation)

The zrukbat assumes the shape of any Small object or ornamentation, although the zrukbat's mimicked objects usually have unrealistic or suspicious quirks. This doesn't change the zrukbat's size but can alter their coloration and visual appearance. They have an automatic result of 23 on Deception checks and DCs to pass as the mimicked object.

Go for the Eyes ✦✦ The zrukbat flies up to its Speed and makes a claw Strike at the end of its move. If the claw attack hits, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw or be blinded for 1 round (or blinded for 1 minute on a critical failure). If the Strike was a critical hit, the target's save result is one degree of success worse.



ZRUKBAT DISGUISES

Zrukbat are intelligent but lack intuition. They can mimic many items and constantly look for new forms, but their disguises always have an element of peculiarity. Zrukbat's disguises might include a blacked-out window, a mismatched light fixture, an off-center picture, or unreachable decor. Zrukbat in a colony might all select the same item to mimic, resulting in obvious clusters of similar items.

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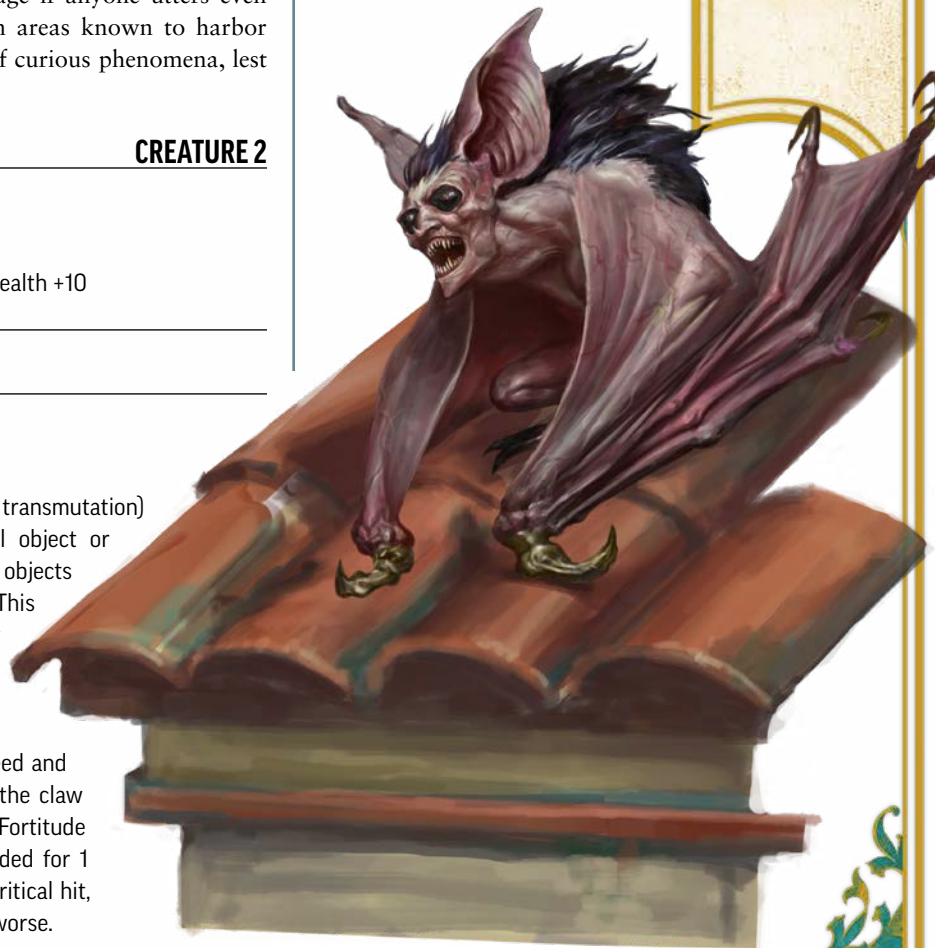
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GROSPEK LAVARSUS

Lieutenant Grospek Lavarsus is sometimes called “the Dragon of Edgwatch Station,” and for good reason. Rare is the occasion when the lieutenant isn’t roaring orders or metaphorically roasting a subordinate for some failure of duty. Given sole command of the newly established Edgwatch as a reward for decades of exemplary service in the Post Guard—and, some guards whisper, because no other division wanted to deal with him—Lavarsus is determined to keep the Radiant Festival safe and turn the struggling Edgwatch into the most respected guard precinct in Absalom.

From an early age, Lavarsus’s devout Abadaran parents instilled in him a firmly held belief in the value of order, so when he began at St. Ariphe’s School of Trade, he quickly earned a reputation among his classmates as a snitch and suck-up. His rigid morals and uptight personality made Lavarsus a target of frequent bullying. Determined to have the last laugh, he transformed his bitterness into action. He befriended influential teachers and learned how to manipulate any and all channels of authority available to him; by the end of his primary education, he had personally seen to it that every one of his childhood tormentors was unsparingly castigated.

As a young man, Lavarsus parlayed his knowledge of law and justice into one of the few professions bound to win his parents’ approval: that of a city guard. Constant training turned a soft boy into a barrel-chested man. Accolades for bravery and efficiency piled up, resulting in promotion after promotion. Yet no matter how much respect Lavarsus earned from his fellow guards or the general populace, it never felt like enough. Inside, he was still the angry child, convinced he’d never be good enough and furious over the injustice.

Even today, as the head of the Edgwatch, Lavarsus remains notoriously short-tempered. Though he would never go so far as to abuse his staff physically (unless they’re foolish enough to start something), the lieutenant has perfected the art of cutting down subordinates with angry tirades, derisive remarks, and menial punishments.

As a result, most of his guards live in perpetual fear of drawing his ire, though a few—most notably Skinny Bolera and Sergeant Ollo—have managed to win enough of his respect to shrug off his outbursts or actively defy him.

Lavarsus likes to think of himself as a stern father figure. Echoing his own parents, he insists that he’s hard on his troops because he wants to help them realize their true potential. Yet while it’s true that Lavarsus loves Absalom and has a near-religious level of pride in his city and profession, he’s also become the bully he despised. A lifetime of secret shame, self-doubt, and resentment have taught him to enjoy berating others as a way of venting his constant rage. Fortunately for him, he’s obedient enough to authority and good enough at the other parts of his job that his superiors are willing to give him free rein to run his department as he likes—the tyrant of his own little fiefdom.

Now in his forties and a bit past his physical prime, Lavarsus remains a towering figure, a broad-shouldered Taldan man with brown hair streaked with gray and a bushy mustache. While he rarely takes to the streets himself anymore, he still insists on wearing a battered silver breastplate over his uniform. He can often be found with an unlit cigar in his mouth, leading many guards to note “if he’s not chewing on that, he’s chewing on you.”

Though he might seem to be nothing but a tower of bile and ambition, Lavarsus has a secret soft spot: Sergeant Ollo. Despite their age difference, his admiration for the dwarf has long since quietly turned into romantic longing. Lavarsus would never violate office protocol by acknowledging it, especially given their difference in rank, but in his heart he’s quietly waiting for the dwarf to retire so he can reveal his feelings. So far, no one—including Ollo himself—has picked up on the crush, and that’s exactly how Lavarsus wants it to stay. Canny players may notice that the lieutenant points to the dwarf as a model guard perhaps more often than the sergeant’s actions actually warrant.



CAMPAIGN ROLE

In this campaign, Lieutenant Lavarsus serves as both the player characters' quest provider and foil—a classic “mean boss” figure that even otherwise-unconnected characters can unite against. He starts out the campaign treating the player characters like any other fresh recruits—which is to say, poorly—but as the campaign goes on and they succeed at their jobs, his feelings will grow more complicated. While he appreciates good work and the acclaim their activities bring to the station, he'll also come to subconsciously resent their success, seeing it as a challenge to his own achievements. As a result, he'll continue to find flaws and belittle the Edgewatch agents while throwing them at ever-larger assignments, using his keen powers of perception to ferret out the agents' personal weak points and hammer on them with unflattering nicknames and observations. This adversarial relationship should never boil over into outright sabotage of the heroes activities, however. The lieutenant is an officer of the law first, and the success of the Edgewatch is always his first priority. His tirades are intended as amusing social encounters for the players, which should make it even more satisfying when the characters get promoted and outrank him at the beginning of the fourth adventure.

In combat, Lavarsus prefers to lead from the front, attempting to intimidate opponents into surrendering with his stentorian voice and sheer physical presence. If that doesn't work, he wades in with his magical truncheon *Lawkeeper*, preferring to go toe-to-toe with the most dangerous adversary first. If it seems like he'll need the extra striking power on a raid, he might requisition a maul from the Edgewatch armory, but even then he strives to subdue lawbreakers with nonlethal attacks and manacle them for processing back at the station.

GROSPEK LAVARSUS CREATURE 7

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human city guard commander

Perception +17

Languages Common, Kelish

Skills Absalom Lore +15, Acrobatics +12, Athletics +17, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +18, Legal Lore +15, Society +15

Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

Items breastplate, hand crossbow with 10 bolts, good handcuffs (page 77), *lesser healing potion*, *Lawkeeper* (+1 striking pacifying club; page 78)

AC 24; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

HP 140

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *Lawkeeper* +19 (nonlethal, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+13 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ hand crossbow +16 (range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Furious Pacifier Lavarsus adds double his Strength modifier to any nonlethal melee Strikes he makes with a bludgeoning weapon.

Nonlethal Training Lavarsus has trained to take down suspects without killing them. He can choose to make nonlethal attacks with any bludgeoning weapon without taking the usual penalty to his attack roll.



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HENDRID PRATCHETT

Hendrid Pratchett is the most recent alias of a man who has gone by many names over the course of his short and sinister career. Born Harial Lemorad, Pratchett is the only child of an elven father and a human mother in the Kyonin settlement of Erages. His mixed heritage raised few eyebrows in a community populated primarily by half-elves, and his parents were nothing if not doting to their son. Pratchett, however, had a streak of profound cruelty that soon blossomed into sadistic torments perpetrated on other children or neighbors' livestock. The need to avoid trouble honed his ability to lie and charm, and the young Pratchett soon grew into a model gentleman, his courtly manners and winning smile hiding his increasingly gruesome desires.

As soon as Pratchett reached the age of majority, he left home, loudly proclaiming his desire to seek his fortune in the wild frontiers of distant Varisia. In fact, Pratchett went no farther than the edge of town, where he laid low for a week. Once his alibi had been firmly established, he crept back to his old home and looted the family's coffers. Catching his parents asleep in their beds, he slowly tortured them both to death, finding in their murder a satisfaction beyond anything he'd ever felt. He burned down the house and set off once more, this time in earnest.

In the years since, Pratchett has traveled far and wide across the Inner Sea region, leaving a trail of mysterious disappearances in his wake. Along the way, he's also managed to teach himself a variety of arts to further his endeavors, from the aristocratic art of sword cane dueling to a modest understanding of necromantic magic. The latter comes in handy in his schemes; though he may not personally have the skill to carry out all of his macabre fantasies, he understands enough of the theory to purchase the appropriate scrolls or hire more adept casters. Each time he arrived in a new city, he used his charm and adaptability to ingratiate himself in the community,

establishing himself in some public-facing service job—such as barber, grocer, or scribe—that gave him the opportunity to make connections and scout for potential victims. In the past, he's been careful to take only a few lives in each location, moving on before authorities could begin to suspect him. Yet eventually he wearied of his constant wandering and set his sights on Absalom: a city so large and bustling that he could at last put down roots, taking as many victims as he wanted without anyone being the wiser.

Upon arrival in the City at the Center of the World, however, he found that his schemes weren't quite as clever as he'd thought. Someone had noticed his predations—but not the authorities. Instead, Pratchett found himself recruited by a gang of Norgorberite cultists run by the powerful underworld figure Wrent Dicaspiron, also known as the Skinner. Initially overjoyed to have fallen in with like-minded individuals, Pratchett took zealously to the worship of the Skinsaw Man, aiding the group in their ritualistic killings. Yet before long, Pratchett grew bored. His enormous ego chafed at the idea of working for others, and he found the cultists' methods too restrictive and unimaginative, their leaders too concerned with discretion to attempt the bold schemes capable of satisfying his ever-increasing appetites. He left the cult, reinventing himself once more, but remained in the city, for the coming of the Radiant Festival had prompted a new dream: a murderous hotel of his own design, funded by his family fortune and the wealth of his victims. There, Pratchett could prey exclusively on travelers, taking an endless stream of new victims without fear of the local authorities noticing.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Hendrid Pratchett is the ultimate villain of this adventure, as he is responsible for almost all of the Edgewart's missing person reports.

Physically, Pratchett is a handsome if slightly delicate dandy, with an eccentric fashion sense that nevertheless wins him copious admirers from all social classes. He's fond of bowler hats and bright, frock-coated suits lined with inconspicuous leather armor sections—when possible, he likes to prepare the leather plates himself from the hides of his victims. When the PCs first meet him at the Arcadian, he's wearing a suit of blue and gold, but by the last encounter he's switched to an outfit of white and crimson. He's also never without his trademark cane, and while he self-effacingly jokes that he needs the skull-topped accessory to “scare off ruffians attracted by my fragile frame,” the affectation is, in fact, an elegant and deadly sword cane of his own design.

Though he isn't averse to using magic directly in combat—particularly *ray of enfeeblement*—Pratchett knows he's still a relative amateur in the necromantic arts (and he prefers to get his hands dirty anyway). If given the opportunity, he casts *true strike* before combat begins, ensuring that his poisoned blade has the best chance of doing its work. He attempts to poison as many different opponents as possible and let the venom do his work for him, but once he's out of poison, he prefers to focus on a single opponent to take them down. While Pratchett attempts to flee if reduced to 10 Hit Points or fewer, he has no interest in surrender—he knows any magistrate or jury would immediately put him to death for his crimes, and he would rather die on his own terms with a blade in hand.

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 22, attack +14; **1st** *ray of enfeeblement*, *true strike* (×2); **Cantrips (1st)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shield*

Wizard School Spells DC 22, 1 Focus Point; **1st** *call of the grave* (Core Rulebook 406)

Sword Cane Duelist Each round, Pratchett can Strike once with each component of a sword cane without incurring the usual multiple attack penalty. Subsequent attacks incur the multiple attack penalty as usual.



HENDRID PRATCHETT

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Male half-elf serial killer

Perception +17; low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal

Skills Acrobatics +14, Arcana +12, Deception +15, Diplomacy +15, Medicine +14, Occultism +12, Religion +13, Society +14, Stealth +14

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +5

Items armored coat (as leather armor), *corpseward pendant* (page 80), *lesser healing potions* (3), hunting spider venom (3 doses, in *Reaper's Lancet*), *Reaper's Lancet* (page 81; bonded item)

AC 24; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

HP 100

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *Reaper's Lancet blade* +17 (deadly 1d8, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+7 piercing plus hunting spider venom (Core Rulebook 552)

Melee ♦ *Reaper's Lancet sheath* +17 (agile, finesse, shove), **Damage** 2d4+7 bludgeoning

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RALSO

A child of the Puddles, Ralso grew up hard, orphaned at a young age and forced to take care of her sister Cora, who was barely out of infancy. Being poor orphans would have been difficult enough, but whatever charity their equally hardscrabble neighbors might have mustered for the girls was usually outweighed by the poor reputation of their feckless dead parents. With few other options, Ralso embraced a life of crime, deciding to take what she needed from a corrupt city that would so casually discard her and her family. Though necessity turned her hard and merciless—she could slit a dozen throats a day without losing sleep—Ralso never lost her affection for her little sister, whom she put up in a tenement and paid a local couple to feed and shelter while she went out to do her dirty work.

For several years, Ralso was a minor celebrity among the thieves and footpads of the city's poorer districts, inspiring fear and admiration in equal quantities. Her burgeoning career was cut short when she was caught red-handed by the Lotus Guard while burgling a haberdasher in the Petal District. Sentenced to five years in the Brine, Absalom's notorious flooded prison, Ralso grimly refused to die, becoming a model prisoner and using an assortment of corrupt guards and gang contacts to ensure that money kept flowing to the couple caring for her sister.

When at last she was released, however, Ralso discovered an unbearable truth: The couple she'd been paying to care for her sister had developed a drug habit funded by the money Ralso had sent them and had soon ignored Cora completely. Locked in her bedroom, the child had starved to death less than a year after Ralso began her prison sentence.

The tragedy broke Ralso. In a rage, she killed the traitorous couple, then gathered up her sister's meager belongings and fled into the city. Though her reputation with local gangs remained ironclad due to her toughness and refusal to rat out associates, she no longer had any interest in being part of such a group. The only family

she'd ever cared about was gone, and she drifted through the streets of Absalom like a ghost.

This morose half-life lasted until the day Ralso attempted to mug a well-dressed and strangely charming traveler named Hendrid Pratchett. He caught her in the act, but rather than report her (or kill her in some dank alleyway, which he considered), Pratchett took pity on the woman, and something about his manner broke through her shell of grief. Soon, Ralso found herself spilling out her entire life story, and to her surprise, instead of recoiling at her sordid past, Pratchett offered her a job—he'd come to Absalom to do something grand, and he'd need an associate with her particular skills. Ralso accepted, and under Pratchett's gentle encouragement, she began to reopen her connections with the various fences and gangs throughout the city, reestablishing herself as a retired but valued member of the criminal underworld. For the first time in years, she didn't feel alone. When at last Pratchett revealed his murderous nature and his sinister plans for the Dreaming Palace, it barely fazed Ralso. After all, lesser people took innocent lives all the time through negligence and malice—what were a few more, compared to the love of a true friend?

Though Ralso's personal tragedies have left her with deep psychological scars, she doesn't actually share Pratchett's love of murder, and feels no particular desire to witness or participate in the killing. Instead, she uses her knowledge and connections to engineer the hotel's traps for her friend and to help clean up the remains after his kills. For Ralso, working at the hotel is primarily about keeping Pratchett happy and basking in his praise and familial affection. Yet in the months since the hotel opened, she's also discovered a previously unknown passion for voyeurism, and she spends as much time as safely possible hiding in the hotel's secret observation chambers to spy on guests' private moments. Though she hasn't talked about it with Pratchett, Ralso writes in her diary that the appeal lies in both the thrill of observing what people keep hidden and the chance to dissociate



from her own sordid life—the chance, in other words, to fantasize about being an ordinary person.

Ralso remains haunted by the death of her sister, both figuratively and literally. Her twisted desire to relive some element of happier times has led Ralso to embrace two soulbound dolls as familial stand-ins. Pratchett commissioned the dolls for her, both powered by the souls of other people but crudely modeled on what details of Cora Pratchett could learn. Ralso also stores Cora's personal effects in the attic of her tower in the Dreaming Palace, and as the killings in the hotel have increased, the surges of negative energy have blended with the echoes of Cora's spirit, giving life to an undead remnant called an attic whisperer. Unlike the dolls, this grotesque amalgamation of the dead girl's clothes and toys contains a fragment of Cora's soul, and this realization terrifies Ralso even as it fills her heart with hope. Ralso leaves the monster locked in the attic, unwilling to confront it, and falls asleep each night listening anxiously to its familiar whispers drifting down through the ceiling.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The player characters likely engage Ralso in combat at one point or another during Chapter 4 of this adventure, since she is unwilling to turn over her dearest friend Pratchett without a fight. Never eager to attract attention from the city guard, yet equally unwilling to travel unarmed, she uses a *ring of discretion* (contraband that would easily land her another five years in prison if discovered) to conceal her various armaments. In combat, Ralso is ferocious and desperate, throwing herself into the fray with seeming disregard for her own life and focusing her attacks on one opponent at a time.

Double Stab ✦ **Requirements** Ralso is wielding two piercing weapons; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Ralso makes two Strikes against a single creature within reach, one Strike per weapon. These attacks count toward Ralso's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks.

Sneak Attack Ralso deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

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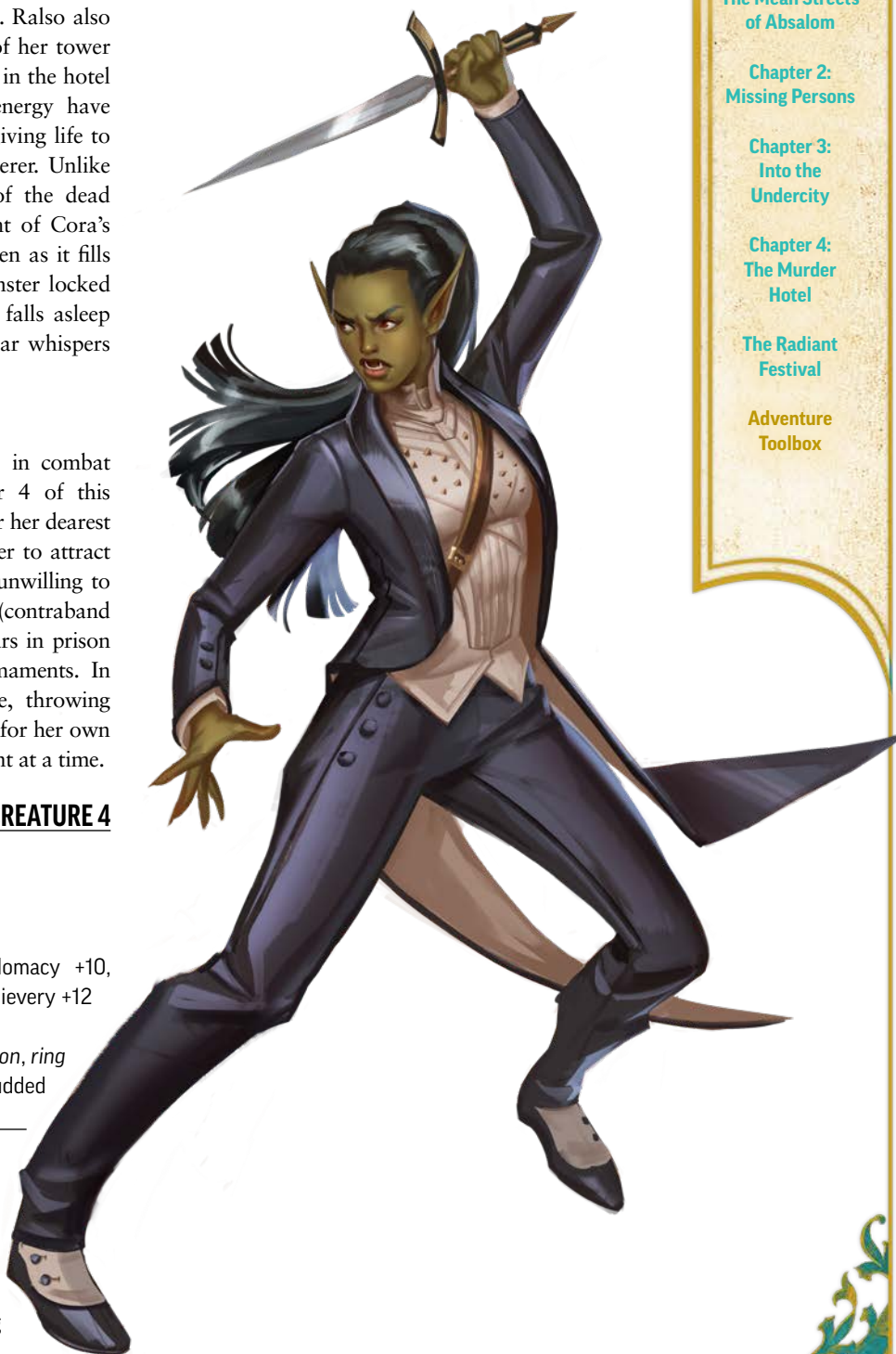
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RALSO

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID ORC

Female half-orc thief

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +12, Deception +12, Diplomacy +10, Intimidation +12, Society +7, Stealth +12, Thievery +12

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

Items caltrops, daggers (2), *lesser healing potion*, *ring of discretion* (page 80), shortswords (2), studded leather armor

AC 22; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

HP 55

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ shortsword +14 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing

Ranged ✦ dagger +14 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing



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by Michael Sayre

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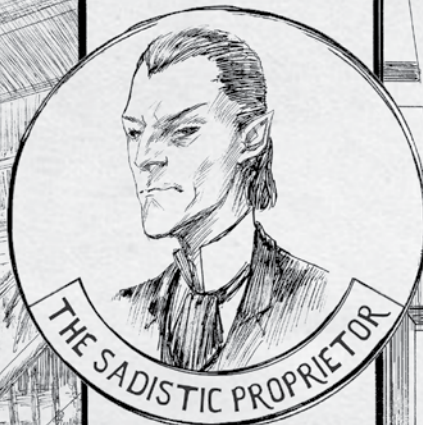
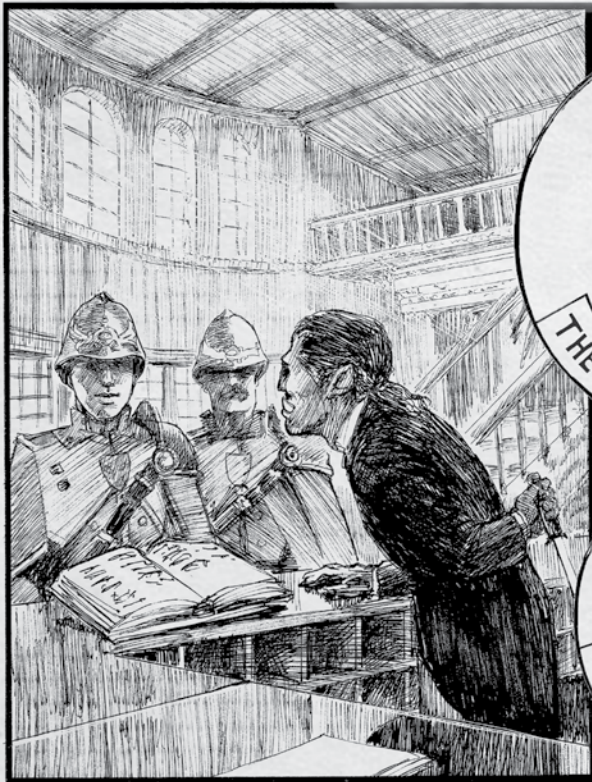
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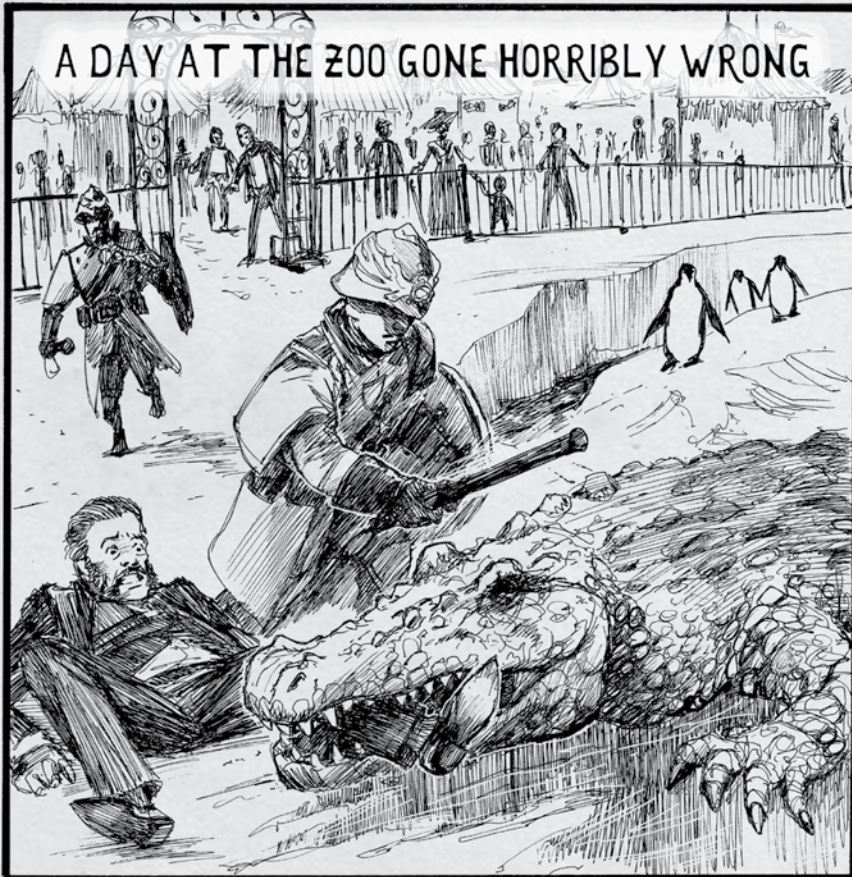
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