

PATHFINDER SOCIETY PLAYTEST SCENARIO #3, TIER 5



PATHFINDER
PLAYTEST

ARCLORD'S ENVY



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PROVIDING PLAYTEST FEEDBACK

Arclord's Envy is designed to test the newest edition of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, from combat encounters to exploration to the overall gameplay experience. The goals are to create a fundamental understanding of the game and to test if the revisions to the rules still allow for the same types of storytelling and adventure roleplaying that everyone has come to expect from Pathfinder. You can build your own 5th-level characters for this adventure, or you can download a selection of pregenerated characters available at paizo.com.

Contribute your feedback through the survey at paizo.com/pathfinderplaytest. In addition, be sure to check out other playtest adventures, including three additional Pathfinder Society Playtest scenarios as well as the seven-part adventure *Doomsday Dawn*.

SCENARIO TAGS

Scenario tags provide additional information about an adventure's contents. This adventure has no scenario tags.

HOW TO PLAY

Pathfinder Society Playtest Scenario #3: Arclord's Envy is a Pathfinder Society Playtest scenario for 5th-level characters. You can find more information about running these quests, pregenerated characters, and feedback surveys on this page.



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ARCLORD'S ENVY

By Lyz Liddell

Ever since the archmage Nex vanished during an attack on Quantum 4 millennia ago, his disciples have maintained power within and squabbled for control over his arcane nation. The most famous of these followers are the Arclords of Nex, who claim to be descended from Nex's household servants. Using rare primary sources purportedly traced to Nex himself, the Arclords claim legitimacy as they purportedly carry out Nex's vision and unfinished business. After millennia of infighting, exile, and jockeying for influence—all in the shadow of Nex's true powerbrokers, the Council of Three and Nine—the Arclords are equal parts political force and arcane society. Even so, they become bolder each time a new Nexian tome surfaces that promises more of the archmage's wisdom that they can read and then hide from curious eyes.

One such text recently surfaced in the hands of the Arclord Kefanes Ahmakt, an individual with numerous enemies, including Arclord Ngasi Bakolo and Arclord Prakhavu Khibenid. Only days after news of the text came to light, Kefanes Ahmakt came to an untimely end, and Nexian authorities suspect one of his rivals murdered him in an attempt to steal the text. A member of the Nine has approached the Pathfinder Society's Nexus House to serve as arbiters with a threefold charge: to investigate the implied treachery, to guard the text, and to help determine to whom the text should be bequeathed.

SUMMARY

Venture-Captain Sebnet Sanserkoht tasks the PCs with investigating the murder of Arclord Kefanes Ahmakt. Their investigation takes them to the Arclord's workshop, where the flesh golem that killed the wizard remains active—and not entirely subdued! Their findings might lead them to a Quantum vendor of arcane raw materials and components who met with the deceased wizard shortly before the attack. Finally, the intrepid PCs track down one of the city's infamous Quantum golems in an attempt to retrieve the slain Arclord's corpse from the

WHERE ON GOLARION

Arclord's Envy takes place in Quantum, the metropolitan capital and societal center of the nation Nex. A diverse city in thought, trade, influence, and composition, Quantum hosts vaunted arcane universities, bustling markets, millennia-old architectural marvels, and the long-empty home of the legendary archmage who founded the nation that bears his name. Two massive iron golems, one crimson and one of a greenish hue, maintain the same wordless patrol around the city's perimeter that they have conducted since Nex's time.



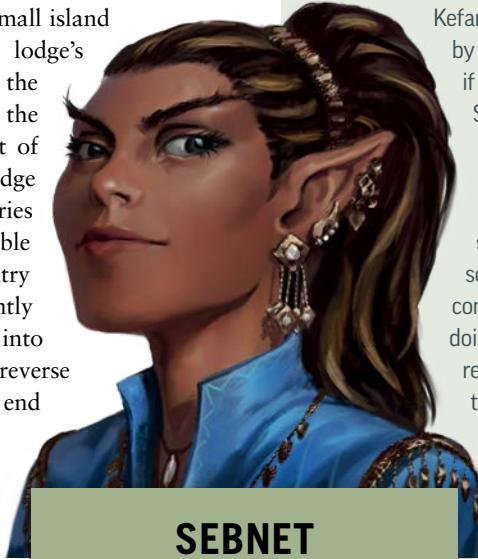
bottom of the golem's foot. On their way back to report their findings, the PCs are ambushed by a trio of bruisers hired by the wizard responsible for the attack, whose identity the PCs can learn if they manage to capture and interrogate the team's leader.

Reconvening with Venture-Captain Sebnet, the PCs learn that the copy of the *Collected Directives* within the Pathfinder Society's care is in fact a fake! But there's a chance to track down the culprit and retrieve the tome at a high-profile soiree that the Arclords are sure to attend. The PCs join the festivities and, if they haven't already, learn conclusively who's responsible for the Arclord's murder. They can then confront the guilty wizard in the venue's luxurious garden and reclaim the real *Collected Directives* in the process.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs begin in Nexus House, an old and extravagant Pathfinder Lodge in the Nexian capital city of Quantum, at the request of the gnome Venture-Captain Sebnet Sanserkoht.

Nexus House was the first Pathfinder lodge founded following the Grand Lodge in Absalom, constructed by an early Pathfinder and his new wife using funds “secured” from the treasury of a small island nation in the Obari Ocean. The lodge’s founders strove to appeal to the powers in Quantum by embracing the arcane and occult, and as a result of their financing and ambition, the lodge features numerous strange luxuries not seen elsewhere. Most noticeable as the PCs enter is the grand entry hall, easily 30 feet wide with elegantly carved archways leading farther into the lodge. A waterfall flows in reverse from the floor to the ceiling at the end of the hall, framing a marble statue of a bookish middle-aged Taldan man tenderly holding the hand of a smirking Vudrani woman with a long, thick braid of hair.



**SEBNET
SANSERKOHT**

In the center of the arcane opulence that is the Nexus House stands a diminutive figure, her bronze-hued skin and dark hair all the more striking given her sky-blue tunic and green leggings, the bright streaks of gold through her hair, and a prodigious collection of bangles along each forearm. She throws up her arms in welcome with a metallic jangle. “Pathfinders! Welcome to Nexus House! I’m Sebnet, one of the Vash-Vatom—Sebnet Sanserkoht, I mean, introductions and all.”

Without waiting for a response, she gestures and leads the way through one of the stone archways into a wide hallway before turning around and proceeding right back through the same archway into a comfortable sitting room, speaking all the while. “Thank you for helping—of course you’re here to help, right? Of course you are, you wouldn’t be here if you weren’t. Do you know who the Arclords of Nex are? One of them helps us access all kinds of delightful artifacts and relics, or at least we did, until he turned up stomped flat on the bottom of one of the Quantum golems’ feet the other day. Can you imagine? The poor fellow is still there. We might have to go get him, see, because he’s been murdered, and we’ve been commissioned to handle the preliminary investigation. We don’t know who’s responsible, but we know that the Arclord—his name is Kefanes Ahmakt—

just got his shiny hands on a new book. Well a really old book, actually, it’s one written by Nex himself, and so it’s both quite valuable and also something that a lot of other people might want. Especially other Arclords. So the Nexian guard brought it here for safekeeping.” She points at an ancient, tattered folio in a glass case on a table to one side of the room.

“So! The obvious places to start looking are Kefanes’s workshop, which is being watched by the Nexian guard, but they’ll let you in if you tell them you’re working for the Society. And then you’ll probably want to examine Kefanes himself, so you’ll have to find the golem who’s giving him a ride around the city and perform some kind of extraction. Oh, that sounds like so much fun! I wish I could come with you! Anyway, while you’re doing that, and anything else that seems reasonable based on what you find out there, I’ll be here going through that old book to see if I can find something to tell us who might have wanted it so much. Come back here once you’ve checked things out, and we’ll have dinner and compare notes. All right? Did I forget anything? Do you have any questions?”

No doubt the PCs have questions for Sebnet. Likely questions and the venture-captain’s answers are below.

What is a Vash-Vatom? “It’s an old title for the venture-captains of Nexus House, I think one of the founders borrowed the phrase from something Nex wrote so we’d sound more official in the city, and I’m not even sure ‘venture-captain’ was a title yet then. There are three of us, but Uoyaius is meeting with the council today, and Kargus is a little shy around new agents.”

What are the Quantum golems?/Where can we find them? “There are two Quantum golems, and they’re huge! You can’t miss them. They’ve been walking around the city since Nex told them to, and since he hasn’t told them otherwise, they’re still walking. You’ll see them if you go wander around, or you can just ask someone and they’ll point you in the right direction.”

Who are the Arclords of Nex? Sebnet gives an annoyed gesture, jangling her bracelets. “They’re sort of a wizard’s society for the most part. Really good wizards, and a few sorcerers, I suppose, but they have really big heads. I mean egos, not their actual heads. They like to claim every connection they can to Nex, and they think they know what he’d want for the nation, so they try to tell everyone what to do.”

Who is Nex? “Nex was the archmage who founded this nation. Really incredible guy, immortal, big into conjuration and interdimensional portals and demiplanes, kind of a world power in his time. Waged war with Geb, the lich on the other side of the Mana Wastes, until he disappeared about 4,000 years ago.” She shrugs. “No one’s seen him since.”

Can you tell us more about Kefanes? “Kefanes wasn’t necessarily... nice,” Sebnnet admits. “He wasn’t a popular guy. Shabti, gold skin and all, came down from Osirion. Good at what he did, and smart, and made good deals, like the deal he made with us to study one another’s findings. But, to be square, he made a lot of enemies, too, some of them other Arclords. Spent most of his time in a little workshop over in the north side of town.” Sebnnet provides the PCs with an address.

What is a shabti? “Not everybody’s confident about how the afterlife will play out, so the really rich ones sometimes build golden humanoids called shabti to serve out any karmic punishment for them. Some of those shabti break free and live normal lives, at least until they’re dead—case in point, Kefanes.”

What’s the book? Sebnnet laughs. “It’s called the *Collected Directives*, a collection of angry letters from Nex to the overseer of one of his golem factories, demanding to know why they weren’t running on schedule and ordering the production of this, that, and the other. Hardly worth a fight, right?”

Why can’t you come with us? “You know the Mana Wastes? South of here, where magic’s all bungled up? When I was an agent doing some fieldwork there, I got hit by a wave of raw magic mixed up with some negative energy right as I was trying to drink a healing potion. That entangled positive and negative energy right through me, and now the things that heal most folks—living or undead—just hurt me more. Makes it pretty dangerous to go out getting into fights, you see?” A hint of disappointment flashes over Sebnnet’s face before she grins again. “But then I became a venture-captain here, and that hardly ever gets boring, so it’s all right, see?”

Who are the people in the statue in the hallway? Sebnnet gives a knowing nod and a smile. “Those are the founders of Nexus House, Adolphus and Princess Ganjay.”

How did we get into this room? “Through the door,” Sebnnet says in a matter-of-fact tone. “Why go all the way down a hallway to get somewhere when there’s a perfectly good doorway right here?”

Once the PCs seem to be done asking their questions, she gestures with a clash of bangles and shoos them on their way, ensuring they have the address of Kefanes’s workshop and reminding them to be back in time for dinner, as Nexus House has a wonderful dining room table with a permanent conjuration effect to produce

WHODUNNIT?

The villain of *Arclord’s Envy* can be either of the two rival Arclords: Ngasi Bakolo or Prakhavu Khibenid. As the GM, you can decide which of the wizards is the villain up front, or through the course of the adventure as the PCs’ investigations turn up more evidence toward one wizard or the other. For a more satisfying investigation story, you might let the PCs’ suspicions guide your decision as to the identity of the murderous wizard, or nudge them in that direction if you’ve already determined your villain—though choosing the other wizard would be fine in the spirit of a narrative twist or one wizard framing the other. Ultimately the decision of which Arclord committed the crime is up to you and the story you’d like to tell.

If you do decide that one wizard framed the other, it is important to include several opportunities for the PCs to uncover the ruse. In general, discerning this planted evidence should be possible by exceeding the success DC of a skill check by 5 or more, and with a critical success, a PC should not only see through the ruse but also find some evidence implicating the real villain. Overall, keep in mind that a mystery with fabricated evidence is harder to solve than a more straightforward one, so consider avoiding this twist for newer groups.

a lovely dinner right at sunset each night. The PCs can pursue the leads in any order.

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION) OR SOCIETY (RECALL KNOWLEDGE)


A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Diplomacy check to Gather Information or a Society check to Recall Information might know more about the Arclords of Nex. A critical success provides additional information, and a critical failure provides only the following false information. Remember that these skill uses should be rolled secretly.

Critical Failure: The Arclords are powerful wizards capable of seeing through others’ eyes, controlling their actions from afar, and reading minds. They rarely animate undead, instead binding their enemies’ souls to the ubiquitous golems that serve as guardians and laborers in Quantum. Sometimes those souls try to escape, driving the golem berserk, during which time it’s possible to question the trapped spirit.

Success: The Arclords of Nex are a loose political association of spellcasters who trace their origins to the household servants of the archmage Nex. They seek out and hoard any scrap of knowledge of and writings by the archmage, seeking to carry out his intentions since his disappearance. The master of the Arclords of Nex is Agrellus Kisk, who has held a position of substantial power in Nex’s Council of Three and Nine for over a

of the bookshelves lie strewn throughout the room, and streaks of dried blood mark the site of a deadly encounter. In the center of the room, a badly damaged flesh golem bound with sturdy silk rope twitches, groans, and strains against its bonds.

When the flesh golem barged into the workshop (urged onward by its Arclord master), it triggered a pair of traps at the workshop's entrance: a fireball trap that had little effect on the magic-resistant golem, followed by a burst of adamantine-edged shrapnel. A PC can recognize the scorch marks as those caused by a *fireball* spell by succeeding at a DC 18 check to Identify Magic. Recognizing the nature and intended function of the metal fragments is more difficult, requiring a PC to succeed at a DC 21 Arcana or Occultism check to identify them as adamantine-edged shrapnel from an explosive trap, though a PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to this check if they have examined the flesh golem (see Creatures below) and noticed the shrapnel wounds. The damaged equipment and bloodstains are simply evidence of a brutal conflict that took place in this space.

 Only 1d4 rounds after the PCs enter the workshop, the golem finally succeeds at snapping the cords confining it, lurches to its feet, and attacks the nearest creature. As it has already gone berserk, it has little in the way of tactics and simply attacks the nearest creature until destroyed.

While the guards standing watch outside don't participate in the combat, neither do they stand idle. The first round the golem frees itself, Eiab pulls a whistle from his pocket and starts blasting a sharp pattern of whistles, herding bystanders away from the building. Zanhanel pulls a small packet from a pouch, bends it, and starts shaking it vigorously. On the next round, she rubs the packet onto her longsword, leaving a silvery residue, and then passes the weapon to the nearest PC before moving to assist her partner in keeping bystanders safe. The packet is a specially formulated Quantum adamantine weapon blanch, and the treated weapon deals adamantine damage for the next hour.

DAMAGED FLESH GOLEM

CREATURE 7

Construct
Golem
Large
Mindless

Perception +12, darkvision
Skills +5; Athletics +15
Str +5, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5
AC 22, **TAC** 19; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

HP 123; **Immunities** asleep, bleed, disease, death effects, electricity, enervated, enfeebled, healing, magic (see below), mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralysis, poison, stun;
Resistances physical 5 (except adamantine)

Berserk A severely damaged flesh golem has a chance of going berserk, and this golem has already reached that state. A

SCALING ENCOUNTER A

To accommodate a group of more than four PCs, make the following adjustments.

5 PCs: The flesh golem has full Hit Points (143) for a creature of its kind.

6 PCs: The flesh golem has not been weakened; remove the weak adjustment (increase AC, attack bonuses, damage with Strikes, DCs, saving throws, and skill modifiers by 2; increase its HP to 143; increase the damage on its berserk slam to 1d6 additional damage on a hit).

berserk golem wildly attacks the nearest living creature, or the nearest object if no creatures are nearby.

Immunity to Magic The golem is immune to spells and magical abilities other than its own, though certain spells bypass this immunity.

- *Healed by Electricity* Any electricity magic that targets the golem makes it lose the slowed condition and gain HP equal to half the electricity damage the spell would have dealt. If the golem starts its turn in the area of electricity magic, it regains 2d4 HP.
- *Harmed by Fire* Any fire magic that targets the golem causes it to take 6d8 damage instead of the usual effect. If the golem starts its turn in the area of fire magic, it takes 3d4 damage.
- *Slowed by Cold* Any cold magic that targets the golem causes it to be slow 1 for 2d6 rounds instead of the usual effect. If the golem starts its turn in the area of cold magic, it's slow 1 for that round.
- *Vulnerable to Flesh to Stone* A flesh to stone spell affects the golem normally.


Speed 25 feet

◆ **Melee** fist +16 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+3 bludgeoning

◆ **Berserk Slam**


Requirement The golem is berserk.

Effect The golem makes a fist Strike with a -1 circumstance penalty to the attack roll. If it hits, it deals 1d4 extra damage and knocks the target prone.

 Though the PCs likely won't have time to investigate it thoroughly before it attacks them (see Creatures above), the flesh golem carries several clues on its body. First, its behavior suggests (and the guards can confirm) that it has gone berserk; a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Information knows that this a known occurrence with golems that have been significantly damaged. The golem's body shows signs of several types of damage: a series of tiny wounds, some studded with adamantine fragments (an indicator of one of Kefanes's traps; noticing this damage grants a +2 circumstance bonus to identify the function of the adamantine shrapnel near the door). Scorch marks

indicate it was targeted by several types of fire magic (both the fireball trap at the door and Kefanes's attempts to defend himself).

Most interesting, however, are the third series of wounds, which a PC can interpret by succeeding at a DC 21 Medicine or Survival check. Some of these have been partially healed. Though the characters might initially think the healing is due to some kind of necromancy effect, a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check to Recall Knowledge realizes that flesh golems are healed by electricity; the guards outside relay this information in the PCs speak to them. The specific type of wound depends on the guilty Arclord. If Ngasi is the murderer, the golem bears wounds from some kind of slashing weapon (by succeeding at a DC 18 Nature check, a PC guesses they were inflicted by a particularly vicious claw or talon, like that of a bird but comparable to a human in size) before being healed; if Prakhavu is responsible for the death, the golem bears peculiar bludgeoning wounds where fragments of sand and stone have been forced under the skin, which a PC can identify as typical of an earth creature such as a mephit or an earth elemental—both commonly summoned creatures—with a successful DC 18 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Knowledge. In either case, though the PCs might not be able to piece the elements together yet, the Arclord responsible for Kefanes's murder attacked the golem until it went berserk (using their own polymorphed form or a summoned minion) and then cast a few electricity spells on it to heal it before unleashing it on the workshop.

 A PC who searches the room notices an unopened parcel on the far corner of the worktable, surprisingly intact despite the general state of the workshop. The package is sealed and marked with the insignia and name of the merchant who sold it: Ladhliia. Inside, the PCs find raw crafting materials worth 80 sp; a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana or Crafting check can determine that the materials are suitable for construction of a trap or other defensive mechanism.

SOLE-SEARCHING

If the PCs direct their investigation toward retrieving the Arclord's corpse from the Quantum golem, they first should collect some information about these famous constructs. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Information about the Quantum golems knows the following information: the golems are two massive constructs, one crimson and one a greenish hue, patrolling Quantum's perimeter on opposite sides of the city from one another, which they have done since when Nex was alive. A PC who spends the time to Gather Information and succeeds at a DC 18 Diplomacy check learns the same information. With a

result of 21 or higher, the PC also knows (or finds) that the golems deviate from their patrol only if attacked or obstructed, and even then only until they eliminate or circumvent the obstacle, whichever is most direct. Even if the PCs fail both of these checks, they can find the guardians whether or not they know anything about them, since the golems are such an iconic feature of Quantum. It takes only a cursory scouting expedition to find the murdered Arclord's body, wedged in an unfortunate gap in the bottom of the crimson golem's left foot.

A Quantum golem is a Gargantuan creature with a 20-foot space and reach, and each of its feet is roughly the size of a Large creature. The golem has a Speed of 20 feet and typically Strides twice each turn, the movement of each foot constituting 1 Stride action—therefore, the corpse-bearing foot moves 40 feet forward once each round. To spend any action toward freeing the trapped corpse, a PC must also move 40 feet each round (though doing so without being noticed might prove difficult; see below). Alternatively, once adjacent to the foot, a PC can attempt a DC 18 Athletics check to Climb the golem's foot; if successful, the PC can “ride” the foot as it moves each round by succeeding at a DC 18 Acrobatics check to Maintain Balance. On a failure, the PC falls from the foot as it moves and must catch up again; on a critical failure, the PC is also knocked prone.


A PC adjacent to or on top of the golem's foot can attempt to remove the trampled corpse. Freeing the body requires the PCs to succeed at a total of three DC 19 skill checks in any combination of Athletics checks to Disarm the foot of its corpse or Thievery checks to Steal an Object or Disable a Device (or other skill uses the PCs suggest that seem reasonable). A critical failure on this check means the corpse becomes more securely jammed in place, increasing the total number of successes required to extract it by one. This likely means the characters attempt checks over multiple rounds, regularly moving to keep up with the golem.

Regardless of the party's tactics, each PC within 10 feet of the golem's foot must avoid attracting the golem's attention by attempting a DC 14 Stealth check as an action (representing the PCs timing their actions and routes to stay out of sight) each round to stay out of the golem's line of sight. (Fortunately, the golem doesn't spend much time looking at its own feet.) On a failed Stealth check, the character is perceived as interfering with the golem's route through the city, so the golem swats the character away with a nonlethal warning Strike with its massive hand (melee +28, 3d10+10 damage). Alternatively, a character can attempt a DC 19 Bluff or Intimidate check to attract the golem's attention; if a character succeeds at this task, the golem doesn't pay any attention to its feet and the characters near it do not need to attempt Stealth checks

that round. After the third failed Stealth check (among all PCs), or if any PC attacks the golem, the golem halts in its patrol and brings its bastard sword to bear against the PCs. As the golem is a level 20 creature, the PCs cannot possibly win a fight with it. They should already have a sense of this from the creature's warning swats, but if combat breaks out, bystanders begin shouting for the PCs to run before they're obliterated. Once a full round passes in which no PC is within 50 feet of the golem, it returns to its patrol, effectively resetting the encounter (but unfortunately also mashing the corpse back into the gap in its foot, thus also resetting the number of successes needed to free the shabti's body). If the PCs fail so many checks that the golem tries to pursue them in this way three separate times, the shabti's body dislodges on its own but is so mangled that the DCs of all checks to find clues (see below) are 4 higher.

Once the Arclord's corpse is freed from the golem's foot, a PC can attempt a DC 18 Medicine check to assess its condition. Aside from being largely pulverized from its underfoot journey around town (though astonishingly still intact, thanks to the tough construction inherent to a shabti), the body bears bludgeoning wounds from the flesh golem as well as another distinct type of damage. If the PCs have already hit a lead on the guilty party, these wounds support that evidence: claw marks matching those found on the flesh golem if Ngasi was the culprit, or stone-embedded bludgeoning damage from a conjured minion if Prakhavu was the murderer. If the PCs don't have any leads yet, this should be an opportunity for them to get one on the guilty party. Alternatively, if this is the PCs' first route of investigation, the corpse might have both types of wounds, some dealt by the Arclord and some by the Arclord's minion.

Any PC who searches the corpse for belongings finds a scrap of a vaguely threatening letter in which the writer offers to buy the recently uncovered text; the author mentions they will be at an upcoming event hosted by the Merchant's League and would be willing to make the trade there. While the letter is somewhat damaged and the signature is missing, the PCs can still garner information from it. By succeeding at a DC 22 Society check, a PC can pick up on subtle hints in the phrasing that suggest the author's native language was either Polyglot (if Ngasi is the murderer) or Vudrani (if Prakhavu is the murderer). In addition, the merchant Ladhlia might recognize the handwriting (see Out of the Blue on page 10).

 With additional investigation (a successful DC 21 Perception check to Seek valuables, a successful DC 18 Arcana check to find magical items, or the use of *detect magic*), the PCs can find a surviving *ring of counterspells* with a *fireball* spell (3rd level) stored within. Kefanes correctly suspected his enemies might attempt to bring

him harm and prepared himself to fend off a common spell. Alas, an attack in the form of a berserk golem was not one he had anticipated.

OUT OF THE BLUE

Asking around town to learn more about a merchant named Ladhlia (Diplomacy DC 15 to Gather Information) leads the PCs to her shop, a freestanding, single-story structure not far from Kefanes's workshop.

The shop's interior is cool and shaded, a welcome change from the bold sunlight on the streets. Though the building seemed large enough from the outside, the space within seems small, perhaps due to a mazelike tangle of shelves filling all but a narrow walkway through the center. Each shelf bears a trove of trinkets, tomes, bottles, and boxes and a boggling array of bits and bobs. Customers quietly browse the shelves. Only a few steps into the shop, a high glass-lined countertop offers a break from the tall shelves everywhere else. An astonishingly large woman with sky-blue skin sits behind the counter, holding a magnifying eyepiece over one eye while examining a dark, gleaming gemstone the size of a human's palm. A moment later, she looks up and then stands, towering in a surprisingly nonthreatening manner. "Well, well," she booms. "I don't recognize you, so you must be new customers. My name is Ladhlia. How can I help you?"

Ladhlia is a mercane, a humanoid-shaped outsider standing about 9 feet tall with blue skin, numerous eyes, and a broad body. She operates this small shop to provide magic crafters in Quantum the tools and raw materials required for their projects, as well as components for common spells and a few finished wares. Even when providing information or pleasant conversation, she slips into upselling some tool, trinket, or reagent that she has on hand—perhaps introducing the PCs to some of the new gear appearing in the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*—extolling its many benefits or the ways it could help that PC. Even in doing so, though, she doesn't push products to the point of annoying anyone, and she backs off this strategy if it seems to be upsetting potential customers.

Ladhlia begins this encounter with an attitude of indifference. A PC can improve her attitude through use of Diplomacy to Make an Impression (Ladhlia's Will DC is 21), but any attempts to Coerce or Demoralize her shift her attitude toward unfriendly. So long as her attitude is indifferent or better, she is happy to sell the PCs her wares, including packets of the Quantum adamantine weapon blanch described below and just about any other common (or even some uncommon) items the PCs might want.

If asked, she is also willing to speak about the deceased Arclord. She's heard of the murder—common enough

SCALING ENCOUNTER B


To accommodate a group of more than four PCs, add one minor fire elemental for each additional PC beyond four.

among rivals, she bemoans, but Kefanes was a regular customer and she’s disappointed to have lost him. A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Diplomacy check persuades her to share that Arclord Kefanes Ahmakt had visited her shop only a few days before, acquiring the materials to construct a series of new defensive wards to protect a valuable item that he was worried would be stolen. Ladhlia can recall two names that Kefanes mentioned as individuals he knew were aware of and interested in his most recent acquisition: the Arclords Ngasi Bakolo and Prakhavu Khibenid.

Ladhlia knows a bit about each of these two wizards (also customers of hers), which she shares if she remains friendly or helpful. Ngasi, she explains, is a Mwangi woman who specializes in transmutation magic and has some kind of investment in the infamous fleshforges of Ecanus, where a significant portion of Nex’s golem production takes place—when the facilities are operating properly. Prakhavu, according to Ladhlia, is almost a complete opposite: a Vudrani conjurer from Oenopion, Nex’s other major city, who came to Quantum to pursue his single-minded research of the archwizard Nex.


Ladhlia does not know anything about the item Kefanes was trying to protect, but if the PCs think to share what they know about the *Collected Directives*, the mercane gives a knowing nod. She relates that she could see either of the named Arclords having an interest in the text: Ngasi due to her efforts in the fleshforges, about which the *Collected Directives* were written, and Prakhavu due to his conviction that every word Nex wrote held hidden messages about the archwizard’s vision for his nation. PCs who have already recovered Kefanes’s corpse may have the fragment of the letter offering to purchase the tome. If they think to show the letter to Ladhlia and her attitude toward the PCs is at least friendly, she admits that she recognizes the handwriting. You can use this as additional evidence to indicate whichever suspect the PCs have more evidence for or to implicate either suspect if the PCs need a clue in the right direction.

The other “customers” in the store are in fact the mercane’s suite of bodyguards, prepared to defend their employer against would-be thieves or attacks. They pretend to ignore the conversation, and they brush off any attempts by the PCs to converse.

 If the PCs are particularly persuasive (either shifting Ladhlia’s attitude to helpful or otherwise demonstrating well-meaning intentions, such as by returning the unused components found in Kefanes’s


workshop), the mercane gives them a Quantum adamantine weapon blanch. While she normally sells these items to the Quantum city guard, she explains, she is happy to support the PCs’ efforts in preventing her customers from murdering one another. “Can’t trust golems,” she quips, “and it’s only right to have an ‘off switch’ when the worst comes to pass.” She cheerfully sells the PCs additional blanches at their normal Price.

A Quantum adamantine weapon blanch is a consumable alchemical item of light bulk that requires two hands to use. Activating the packet requires 2 Operate Activation actions (no cost) to snap an internal reagent and shake the packet to mix the contents, after which the packet must be smeared across a single melee or thrown weapon or 10 pieces of ammunition within 1 minute. For the next hour, any physical damage the weapon deals is adamantine; this temporarily replaces any damage type from the weapon’s actual special materials (such as cold iron). One packet has a Price of 15 gp.

 The PCs may be tempted to pursue Ngasi, Prakhavu, or both once they have these names. The investigation can lead the PCs to these wizards’ residences while they’re in Quantum, but the number of guards and other obstacles are far too considerable for the PCs to overcome. If asked, Sebnnet recommends seeking out more clues before making accusations.

B. UNSUBTLE WARNING HIGH 7

As there are no further leads for investigation, the PCs likely make their way back to Nexus House to report back to Sebnnet—but their efforts have not gone unnoticed!

 An ifrit mercenary—a human descended from a fire outsider—and her minor fire elemental minions ambush the PCs as they make their way through town. The crew was hired by the Arclord responsible for the murder as a warning to the PCs for having stuck their noses where they don’t belong. The ifrit, a woman named Keeamah, sends her elementals to engage the PCs in melee and hangs back, harrying them from a distance. While the elementals fight until destroyed, Keeamah tries to flee if reduced below 25 Hit Points.

Use the PC death and dying rules (see pages 294–295 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*) for Keeamah because the PCs likely want to question her afterward.

2 MINOR FIRE ELEMENTALS CREATURE 3

Elemental Fire Medium	<p>Perception +8, darkvision</p> <p>Languages Ignan</p> <p>Skills +3; Acrobatics +9</p> <hr/> <p>Str +2, Dex +3, Con +1, Int -3, Wis +0, Cha +0</p> <p>AC 18, TAC 18; Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +5</p> <p>HP 47, explosion; Immunities asleep, critical hits, fire, paralysis, poison, precision, stun; Weaknesses cold 5, water 5</p>
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B. UNSUBTLE WARNING



PCs
START
HERE

K

F2

F1

F3

F4

F : MINOR FIRE ELEMENTAL

K : KEEAMAH

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PATHFINDER FLIP-MAT: BIGGER VILLAGE

IDENTIFYING THE CULPRIT

In an investigation with many clues, it can be a little difficult to identify the culprit with certainty. This adventure's likely to be more satisfying for the players if they feel their earlier findings played an important role, rather than relying on the upcoming soiree. If the PCs have reliably uncovered clues identifying one wizard over the other, Sebnet can help them review their findings, either supporting their hypotheses or coaxing them toward observations they may have missed. If the PCs have uncovered only a few clues—or obtained conflicting information—Sebnet can help them review what they have and confirm that the PCs need more information. Overall, the venture-captain should act as a GM mouthpiece to help steer any analysis and keep the adventure moving.

Explosion (fire) When the elemental dies, it explodes, dealing 2d6 fire damage to all creatures in a 5-foot aura (DC 16 Reflex save half, double damage on a critical failure, no damage on a critical success).

Speed 40 feet

◆ **Melee** tendril +9, **Damage** 1d8+4 fire plus 1d4 persistent fire

Water Weakness When this creature is doused with water, either through a spell or some other effect (such as pouring a bucket of water over it) it takes damage equal to its water weakness value. If it starts its turn within water, it also takes that amount of damage.

KEEAMAH

CREATURE 5

Humanoid
Ifrit
Medium

Perception +12 (+14 to Seek hunted target), darkvision

Languages Common, Ignan, Kelish

Skills +6; Acrobatics +13, Stealth +13, Survival +11

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

Items +1 crossbow with 20 bolts, expert scale mail, lesser elixirs of life (2), short sword

AC 20, **TAC** 18; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

HP 75; **Resistances** fire 5

Speed 25 feet

◆ **Melee** shortsword +11 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

◆ **Ranged** +1 crossbow +13, **Damage** 2d8+4 piercing

Ifrit Innate Spells DC 19; 3rd *burning hands*

◆ ◆ **Favored Aim** (concentrate, ranger) Keeamah attempts a ranged weapon Strike against her hunted target. She ignores concealment and screened, and she reduces the target's bonus to AC from cover by 2. If the target isn't benefiting from any of those, she gains a +2 bonus to her attack roll.

◆ **Hunt Target** (ranger)

Requirement Keeamah can see or hear the target.

Effect Keeamah designates a single creature within 100 feet as her target. As long as all her attacks in a round are against her target, the multiple attack penalty on the second attack is -4 (-3 with an agile weapon) instead of

-5, and -8 (-6 with an agile weapon) instead of -10 on the third and any further attacks in the round. She ignores the penalty for making ranged attacks against the target within her second range increment.

◆ **Running Reload** (ranger) Keeamah Strides, Steps, or Sneaks, and then she Interacts to reload.

Crossbow Ace (ranger) When she uses Hunt Target or an Interact action to reload her crossbow, if Keeamah's next Strike with that crossbow before the end of her next turn is against her hunted target, she adds 1 to her damage roll and increases the damage dice to d10s.



If the PCs manage to subdue Keeamah, they might think to interrogate their captive. By succeeding at an Intimidate check to Coerce her, a PC can convince the ifrit to admit who hired her. Alternatively, a PC who attempts a Diplomacy check to Make an Impression and manages to shift her attitude to friendly or helpful (her starting attitude is unfriendly) can then Request the same information. If the PCs are successful, Keeamah provides the name of her employer (though she attempts to use the information as a bargaining chip to secure her own release). Her employer, of course, is the guilty Arclord, and you can use this information to confirm the evidence or suspicions the PCs already have.

INTERMISSION

When the Pathfinders return to Nexus House, a grim-faced Sebnet greets them. "Welcome back, Pathfinders. I hope your investigations were more fruitful than mine. What have you found?"

She's inclined to let the PCs share their findings before relating her own, nodding with approval at the clues they've uncovered and with conflicting expressions of fascination and disgust at their description of the murdered Arclord's body. When they finish, or if they ask her about her own efforts first, she relates her own discovery with a scowl aimed over one shoulder at a hefty tome. "It seems the text recovered from Kefanes's workshop and placed into our care isn't the original. What we have is a fake, and I'd wager whoever was responsible for the murder now has the book that got Kefanes killed."

If the PCs haven't yet learned about the two Arclords who Kefanes was most worried about, Sebnet has formed her own suspicions based on her evaluation of the text. She can relate the same information as Ladhliia about Ngasi and Prakhavu, though she does not recognize the handwriting on the letter. This may be enough for the PCs to piece together their clues and identify the culprit, if they haven't already. Whether or not the PCs have successfully identified the guilty wizard, Sebnet has a plan.

"Tomorrow evening, there's a soiree of sorts hosted by the head of the Merchant's League. It's the kind of event where everyone who is or wants to be someone makes an appearance, and that includes most of the Arclords. Of course, since the Pathfinder Society maintains good relations with most factions in the city, it was relatively easy to secure invitations for you."

Sebnet intends for the PCs to attend the event and, if they haven't yet identified the guilty wizard, continue their investigation and confront the Arclord in the neutral ground of the event space. If the PCs are confident they have identified the Arclord responsible for the murder, then Sebnet encourages them to take advantage of the opportunity to catch the culprit without having to deal with the defenses a wizard would have on their home turf. "Ideally you'd incapacitate the Arclord so we can hand them over to the authorities," she suggests, and then shrugs. "But keeping yourselves safe is more important. I'll work to bring the site's authorities so they can get what they need once you've neutralized any threats."

If the PCs seem reticent to start a fight at an event, Sebnet reassures them with a nonchalant wave of one hand. "Duels and dogfights happen all the time at events like this. No one will be surprised. Just don't cause too much damage to the host's property, and you'll be fine."

Sebnet provides the PCs lodging at Nexus House, and they have most of the following day to make any preparations they feel are necessary for the evening's event. The rules for resting appear on page 332 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

C. MERCHANT'S LEAGUE SOIREE

Sebnet distributes a set of gilded vellum invitations to the party and gives them directions to the site, promising that she'll arrive in roughly 2 hours with the authorities. With invitations in hand, the PCs arrive and are quickly admitted by a pair of extravagantly uniformed doorkeepers and ushered into the gala.

The ballroom is filled with a dull roar of conversation, laughter, and music as the gathering is in full swing. The space boasts marble floors gleaming with a perfect shine, lavish woven carpets, and silk draperies over latticed windows allowing the light evening breeze in; glass globes holding colored flames dangle from the ceiling overhead. Guests hail from nearly every part of Golarion, flaunting everything from Varisian dancing scarves to colorful Garundi garb, Keleshite headscarves to Vudrani wraps to Tian silks. A distinctive construct engages in conversation with two robed women, a cleric of Nethys wears a half-black and half-white garment reflecting his holy symbol, and a tall lithe figure near one

OTHER GUESTS

There are many guests attending the soiree, and the following provide a few NPCs the PCs might meet while gathering intelligence.

Greora (Dwarf): As a high-ranking priest of Nethys, the white-and-black-clad Greora condones most uses of magic (including in Kefanes Ahmakt's death). However, she believes even the strongest spellcaster must be ready to suffer the consequences of arcane expression, and she can be convinced to share information about Kefanes's killer with anyone who seems close to figuring it out already.

Master Phade (Invisible Stalker): This unfailingly polite invisible elemental wears a full-body suit of leather armor when making public appearances. Master Phade takes a restrained interest in combat-oriented PCs and news of recent violence, lending some credence to the rumor that the elemental is Quantum's Master of Assassins.

Olorthu (Oread): Sporting an asymmetrically stylish array of head crystals that simulate hair and golden travertine skin, Olorthu is a supernaturally earth-blooded humanoid known as an oread. He's proudly made his fortune in diamonds, particularly given a rising demand in diamonds to fuel *raise dead* spellcasting in the last decade.

wall wears a unique full-body suit of leather armor. A small army of house golems moves through the crowd serving hors d'oeuvres and a range of beverages, while a small orchestra at the far end of the hall performs selections from the latest Kintargan operas.

Most of the partygoers are sociable and have a good impression of the Pathfinders as an organization, and thus they are willing to engage with the PCs on good terms. If the PCs have already identified the guilty party, they can Request information from a partygoer about that wizard by name. By succeeding at a DC 16 Diplomacy check, the PC learns that the Arclord was last seen moving to the venue's posh garden, just off the hallway to the north of the ballroom. If the party follows these directions without delay, they deny their target the advantage of preparation: proceed to encounter C1 below (or directly to encounter C2, omitting the optional encounter C1, if time is short).

If the PCs don't know who's guilty yet (or if they do but delay their approach; see Special on page 14), they can work the crowd using a variety of skills to learn more. A PC can try to slip in to a conversing group unnoticed with a Stealth check and eavesdrop, or they can use Deception to Impersonate a neutral partygoer and linger nearby to overhear information. PCs can encourage people to talk using Diplomacy to Make an Impression and Request to hear recent rumors, or using Intimidation to subtly bully people into sharing what they know.

SCALING ENCOUNTER C1

To accommodate a group of more than four PCs, add one damaged animated statue (using the weak adjustment) for each additional PC beyond four. The weak adjustment decreases the AC, attack bonuses, damage with Strikes, DCs, saving throws, and skill modifiers by 2 each. The adjustment also reduces the statue's HP to 25.

Socialite PCs can use Society to integrate themselves into the crowd and join conversations throughout the event. Demonstrations of magical ability and knowledge (via successful checks using Arcana, Occultism, Nature, Religion, or a relevant Lore skill) get the attendees to respect the PCs and share their knowledge. The DC for any of these checks is 20, though particularly creative or effective tactics suggested by the PCs might earn a mild circumstance bonus or penalty (anything from -2 to +2). A PC can instead Aid another PC, either through use of a similar skill or through tactics to improve the crowd's mood (such as using Performance, or perhaps Acrobatics or Athletics in a showy display).


Run this scene in phases, giving each PC one opportunity to pursue information per phase. The number of phases the PCs spend gathering information affects how much time the culprit has to prepare.

For each success the PCs achieve, they learn a piece of information in the order presented below; on a critical success, the PCs learn two pieces of information.

- A new Nexian tome has spurred a bout of infighting among the Arclords. While Kefanes Ahmakt has already been slain, it seems the fighting hasn't ended.
- Arclord Ngasi Bakolo and Arclord Prakhavu Khibenid have both mentioned interest in the Collected Directives text since news of it surfaced.
- Arclord Ngasi, a Mwangi woman known for her powerful transmutations, is heavily involved in the operation of the fleshforges in Ecanus. She's always seeking ways to more effectively run the facility, and especially for ways to stabilize the ancient technology.
- Arclord Prakhavu Khibenid is a devoted Vudrani student of Nexian lore, known to claim as an ancestor Nex's own contemporary and ally Khiben-Sald. Prakhavu seems convinced that nothing Nex wrote was solely mundane. Instead, Prakhavu believes that everything the archmage left behind has some deeper meaning relating to his vision and plans for the nation, and the Arclord obsessively researches every text he can find in pursuit of his research. A true follower of Nex, Prakhavu specializes in conjuration magic.
- The PCs learn that the guilty Arclord (whom you should specify by name) has been quietly bragging during the party about having obtained the Collected Directives.

- The Arclord responsible for murdering Kefanes slipped down a side hall toward the garden just a few minutes ago, along with an assistant or apprentice.

Once they have determined the identity of the wizard responsible for the murder and learn that their target has slipped out to the garden, the PCs can go confront the Arclord. Proceed to encounter C1 (or directly to encounter C2 if you are running short on time).

 If the PCs know the guilty party but spend some time working the crowd anyway, using the same tactics described above, they can gain special benefits. In this case, once they have learned at least five of the facts above, they also garner the attention of the innocent suspect, who intercepts them with a quiet offer of support. The Arclord expresses their appreciation that the Pathfinders have taken the time to thoroughly investigate the matter and ensure that the rival Arclord isn't able to get away. The innocent Arclord gifts the party a powerful scroll to aid in their efforts. The exact scroll depends on the identity of the assisting Arclord. If Ngasi is the murderer, Prakhavu nervously provides a *scroll of summon monster* (3rd level). If Prakhavu is responsible, Ngasi gleefully hands over a *scroll of hypnotic pattern*, pointing out that a conjurer who can't concentrate loses his summoned allies.

If the PCs spent at least two phases securing more information, the wizard in area C2 has time to prepare for the conflict. Likewise, if the PCs critically fail a skill check at the soiree, the wizard has enough warning to prepare.

If the PCs pursue the incorrect suspect, they find that wizard chatting with a handful of mephits. If confronted with accusations of having killed Kefanes Ahmakt, the wizard laughs at the prospect, inspiring bystanders to join in the ridicule. The suspect explains that while they would have happily taken the *Collected Directives* through legal means, killing Kefanes was never a consideration. If confronted with false evidence, the wizard adeptly points out ways in which that evidence could be (and likely was) really created. Bystanders share some of the key facts above that the PCs could have discovered through discussion, allowing the PCs to pursue the true culprit. However, their earlier accusation gives the guilty wizard the maximum time to prepare for the imminent encounter in area C2 and adds one additional Arclord's apprentice to the encounter.

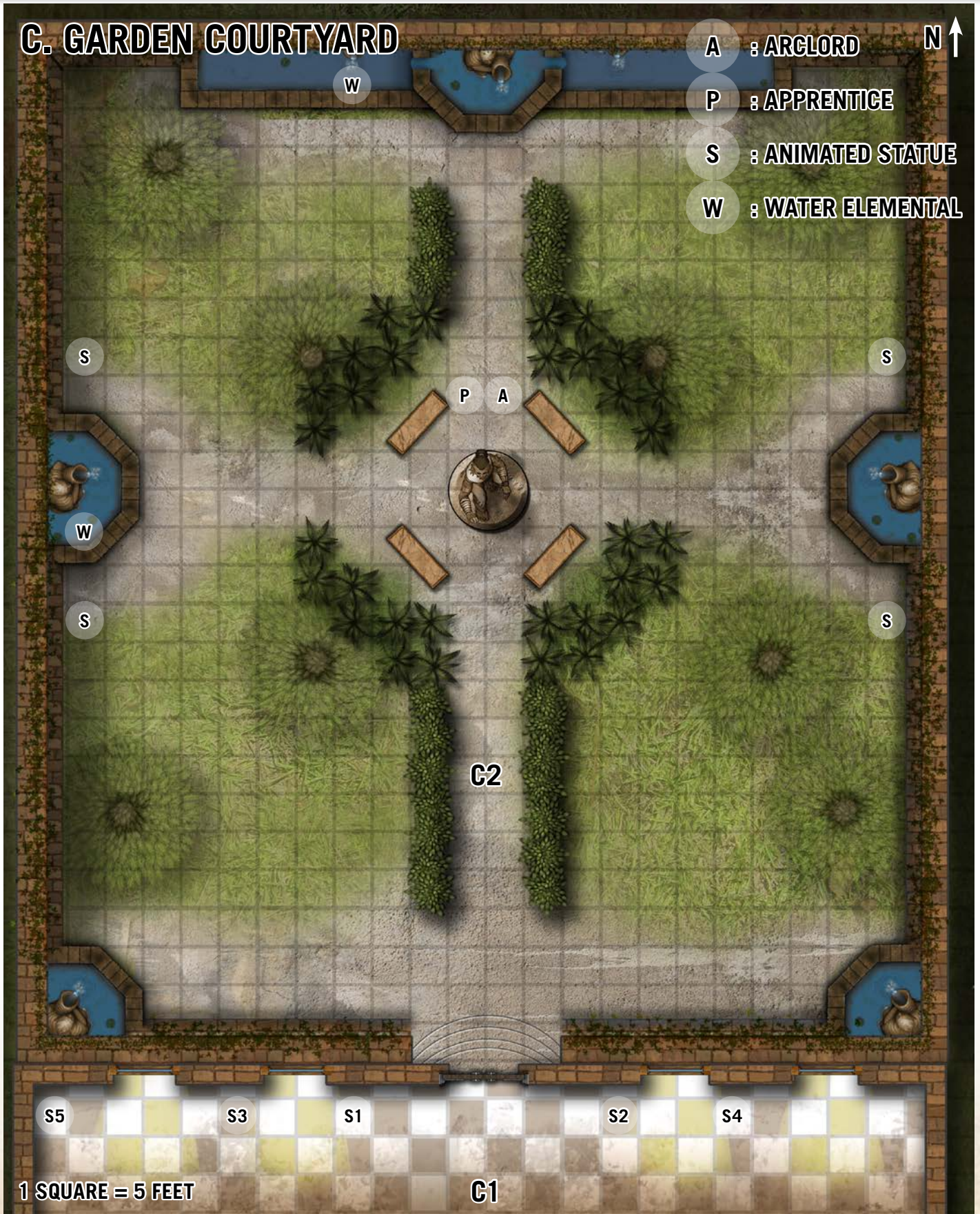
C1. A BRUSH WITH HISTORY

Low 5

The polished marble floor of this fifteen-foot-wide hallway shines almost like a mirror. Artful mosaics of Garundi landmarks line the southern wall, while marble statues of soldiers wearing distinctive splint mail stand proudly in alcoves along the northern wall. The faint scent of clematis and sound of trickling water drifts

C. GARDEN COURTYARD

- A : ARCLORD
- P : APPRENTICE
- S : ANIMATED STATUE
- W : WATER ELEMENTAL



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

C1

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER


The encounter in area **C1** is optional. If less than 75 minutes remain to complete the scenario, the statues are no more than historically interesting artwork.

SCALING ENCOUNTER C2

To accommodate a group of more than four PCs, add two animated statues (see encounter **C1**) for each additional PC beyond four, as the Arclord has arranged for additional guardians.

in through carved stone latticework and a wide, open archway set in the center of the northern wall.

The PCs can enter this hallway from either end, as both connect to the main soiree hall. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Society check identifies the armor and weaponry of the statues as types used by the Tekritanin League, an ancient civilization that once controlled much of northern Garund.

 The guilty Arclord paused along his path to the garden (area C2) to enact some basic defenses, animating the statues along the northern wall. As soon as the PCs approach within 15 feet of the doorway to the garden, the statues step forth from their alcoves and attack. They fight until destroyed, pursuing foes into the garden if necessary, but they do not pursue anyone venturing back into the main hall (through the doorways on the southern edge of the map).

3 ANIMATED STATUES

CREATURE 3

Construct
Earth
Medium
Mindless

Perception +3, darkvision
Languages –
Skills +2, Athletics +8
Str +3, **Dex** –2, **Con** +5, **Int** –5, **Wis** –5, **Cha** –5

AC 20 or 16 when broken, **TAC** 13 or 12 when broken; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

HP 40; **Hardness** 7; **Immunities** asleep, bleed, disease, death effects, enervated, enfeebled, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralysis, poison, stun

Construct Armor Like other objects, an animated statue has Hardness. This Hardness reduces any damage it takes by an amount of damage equal to the Hardness. The construct armor takes damage equal to the attack's damage, and might become dented or broken. The construct's AC and TAC might be

lower when its broken. The construct armor can't be entirely destroyed since it's part of the creature's construction.

Speed 20 feet

 **Melee** stone fist +8, **Damage** 1d8+6 bludgeoning plus grab

C2. SHOWDOWN IN THE GARDEN EXTREME 5


Faint magical light from elaborate wrought-iron sconces along the walls casts this pristine garden in a gentle light. Water splashes playfully down from a channel atop the sandstone walls into elegant fountains, and the garden's entire northern wall shimmers as water cascades smoothly over its surface into a wide basin. Fragrant flowering vines climb the sandstone walls, while immaculately manicured hedges line the main walkways of crushed marble. A ten-foot-tall statue of the archmage Nex stands proudly in the center of the garden, flanked by marble benches and encircled by a different type of flowering vine. Tall palms and pruned olive trees stand in symmetrical pairs throughout the space.



NGASI

This lavish garden was designed to allow multiple individuals to enjoy the space while providing a modicum of privacy

between the various areas. The statue of Nex provides cover to those on the opposite side. The hedges are greater difficult terrain (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 312), and both they and the trees can be used with the Take Cover action. Scaling the 10-foot-high sandstone walls requires a creature to succeed at a DC 13 Athletics check to Climb. The magical illumination (a level 4 spell effect) keeps the entire garden illuminated with dim light.

 The wizard responsible for the death of Kefanes Ahmakt stands along the path north of the statue of Nex, accompanied by an apprentice. The Arclord knows that the Pathfinders have caught on to the trail, and so the wizard acts swiftly, looking to overwhelm the PCs swiftly before the fight can get out of hand. The apprentice supports his master with his evocation spells. Having already bested one rival and claimed the prize, the Arclord is supremely confident and fights until unconscious or slain. The apprentice, on the other hand, breaks from his master and attempts to flee if reduced below 15 HP or once the Arclord is defeated.

Two water elementals make their home in the fountains here. One is presently splashing in the larger of the western

fountains, while the other relaxes under the currents in the northern basin; upon entering the area, a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Perception check can notice the creatures from the unnatural patterns in the water. The elementals pay no heed to what takes place in the garden unless they are harmed (as might happen with reckless use of area spells). An injured elemental joins the fray, attacking whichever creature harmed it most recently.

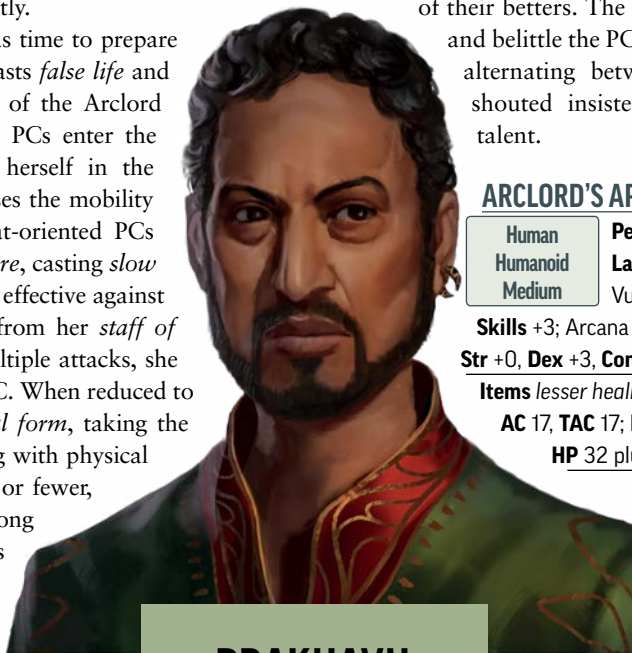
Ngasi's Tactics: If Ngasi has time to prepare before the PCs' arrival, she casts *false life* and *longstrider*. She has her Eye of the Arclord ability active as soon as the PCs enter the garden and casts *haste* on herself in the first round of combat. She uses the mobility granted to pelt more combat-oriented PCs with *fireball* and *flaming sphere*, casting *slow* on anyone who proves overly effective against her and casting *acid arrow* from her *staff of evocation*. If she is hit by multiple attacks, she casts *shield* to improve her AC. When reduced to below 75 HP, she casts *aerial form*, taking the shape of an eagle and fighting with physical attacks. If reduced to 25 HP or fewer, she reverts to human form along one of the garden's walls and uses a *healing potion* before targeting the PCs with her remaining spells. If in humanoid form and targeted with *magic missile*, she attempts to counterspell the attack.

If pressed to explain her actions, Ngasi informs the PCs that a collection of documents about the fleshforges clearly belongs in the hands of someone involved in the facility's operation so they could be used to return the manufacturing to what Nex originally intended. A character might point out that this doesn't justify murder, but Ngasi calmly counters with the fact that quite a few people perish each time the fleshforges fail, and the documents she's sought might be able to prevent that loss of life.

Prakhavu's Tactics: If Prakhavu has time to prepare before the PCs' arrival, he casts *false life* and his 4th-level *summon monster*, summoning an animated statue to fight for him. He has his Eye of the Arclord active as soon as the PCs enter the garden. On the first round of combat, he casts *web* to immobilize foes, followed by *stinking cloud* and then *fireball* centered on any trapped foes. He casts *telekinetic maneuver* to Disarm the most dangerous combatant of their weapon, and then targets foes with spells from his *rod of evocation*. If targeted with *magic missile*, he attempts to counterspell the attack. When his animated statue is defeated or dismissed, he

casts 3rd-level *summon creature* to summon a mephit to harry his foes. He consumes a *healing potion* when reduced below 50 HP.

If pressed to explain his actions, Prakhavu argues that he came by the text through entirely just means, and states that the PCs clearly don't understand the Arclords' internal politics and shouldn't be meddling in the affairs of their betters. The Arclord continues to berate and belittle the PCs throughout the encounter, alternating between muttered insults and shouted insistence of his own skill and talent.



PRAKHAVU

ARCLORD'S APPRENTICE CREATURE 3Human
Humanoid
Medium**Perception** +5
Languages Common, Kelish, Vudrani**Skills** +3; **Arcana** +9, **Nex Lore** +7, **Society** +7
Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1**Items** *lesser healing potion*, *scroll of web*, sickle
AC 17, **TAC** 17; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6**HP** 32 plus 10 temporary**Speed** 25 feet◆ **Melee** sickle +7 (agile, trip), Damage 2d4 slashing**Arcane Prepared Spells** DC 17, attack +8; **2nd** *flaming sphere*, *false life* (already cast), *invisibility*; **1st** *burning hands*, *grease*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*;**Cantrips** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *light*, *mage**hand*, *ray of frost***Wizard Powers** 4 Spell Points, DC 17; **2nd** *force bolt* (1 Spell Point)**ARCLORD OF NEX****CREATURE 7**Human
Humanoid
Medium**Perception** +10
Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani, Vudrani
Skills +7; +15 **Arcana**, +15 **Crafting**, +15 **Nex Lore**, +15 **Society****Str** +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +6, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2**Items** *bag of holding* (type I; contains spellbook, material component pouch, *Collected Directives*), *lesser staff of evocation*, *moderate healing potions* (2)**AC** 23, **TAC** 23; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14**HP** 115◆ **Counterspell** (abjuration, arcane)**Trigger** A creature casts a spell the Arclord has prepared.**Effect** The Arclord expends a prepared spell to counter the triggering creature's casting of that same spell. The Arclord loses their spell slot as if they had cast the triggering spell and then attempts to dispel the triggering spell.**Speed** 25 feet

◆ **Melee** staff +11 (two-hand d8), Damage 2d4+2 bludgeoning
(Ngasi Only) Transmutation Prepared Spells DC 21, attack +15; **4th** *aerial form, fire shield, wall of fire*; **3rd** *fireball, haste, magic missile, slow*; **2nd** *false life, flaming sphere, shocking grasp, shrink*; **1st** *burning hands, longstrider, magic missile, mage armor* (already cast); **Cantrips** *detect magic, electric arc, light, mage hand, shield*

(Ngasi Only) Transmutation Wizard Powers 6 Spell Points, DC 21; 2nd *physical boost* (1 Spell Point)

(Prakhavu Only) Conjunction Prepared Spells DC 21, attack +15; **4th** *acid arrow, confusion, summon monster*; **3rd** *fireball, magic missile, stinking cloud, summon monster*; **2nd** *acid arrow, false life, telekinetic maneuver, web*; **1st** *grease, gust of wind, magic missile, mage armor* (already cast); **Cantrips** *acid splash, detect magic, electric arc, mage hand, shield*

(Prakhavu Only) Conjunction Wizard Powers 6 Spell Points, DC 21; 2nd *augment summoning* (1 Spell Point)

Steady Spellcasting The Arclord's spells are disrupted by reactions only if they take 14 or more damage.

◆ **Widen Spell** (metamagic)

Trigger The Arclord begins casting a spell that has an area of a burst, cone, or line, and that does not have a duration. The spell must have a maximum of 2 spellcasting actions.

Effect The Arclord adds a Somatic Casting action to the casting of the triggering spell and increases the area of that spell, adding 5 feet to the radius of a burst that normally has a radius of at least 10 feet, 5 feet to the length of a cone or line that is normally 15 feet long or smaller, or 10 feet to the length of a larger cone or line.

Eye of the Arclord (divination) Once per day, an Arclord of Nex can spend an action (this action has the concentrate trait) to open an incandescent third eye on their forehead. This eye remains open for 1 minute, during which time the Arclord gains darkvision, the effects of *detect magic* (at the highest level of spell the Arclord can prepare), and a +5 conditional bonus on Perception checks to notice invisible creatures. In addition, while the eye is open, the Arclord can reduce the number of additional casting actions required when adding a metamagic feat he knows to a divination spell by 1.

2 MINOR WATER ELEMENTALS

CREATURE 3

Aquatic
Elemental
Medium
Water

Perception +8, darkvision

Languages Aquan

Skills +3; Athletics +9, Stealth +7

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

Vortex (aura, water) 20 feet. Water in the aura and in the same body of water as the elemental is difficult terrain for swimming creatures without the water trait.

Waterbound When not touching water, a water elemental is slowed 1 and can't take reactions.

AC 18, **TAC** 18; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

HP 45; **Immunities** asleep, critical hits, paralysis, poison, precision, stun; **Resistances** fire 5

◆ **Vortex Pull** (water)

Trigger A creature in the elemental's vortex uses a move action.

Effect The elemental makes a current of water that causes the triggering creature to attempt a DC 17 Athletics check to Swim. If the triggering creature fails, it's pulled 10 feet toward the elemental instead of moving the way it had intended. The triggering move action is lost.

Speed 15 feet, swim 60 feet

◆ **Melee** wave +9, **Damage** 1d12+4 bludgeoning plus push 5 feet

◆ **Drench** (abjuration, arcane) The elemental puts out all fires within 5 feet. It extinguishes every nonmagical fire automatically, and attempts to dispel any magical fire (as 2nd-level *dispel magic*, spell roll +7).



The flowering vines sprawling across the ground in the center of the garden are a rare plant with surprising defensive capabilities. In addition to the hazardous effects, the spaces they occupy are difficult terrain. A character can Leap over affected squares to avoid the vines, though a failed check means the character falls into the patch and is affected by the hazard. The brambles affect any creature that passes through any of their squares, whether as part of an action or through forced movement, such as being Shoved.

Knowing that others might come for the tome, the Arclord who stole the *Collected Directives* took precautions to protect the prize. The *bag of holding* in which the text is stored has been warded with a simple but effective electric rune trap.

ELECTRIC RUNE

HAZARD 3

Magic
Trap

Stealth DC 19 (trained) or detect magic

Description An invisible rune imprinted on the *bag of holding* releases a powerful electric discharge.

Disable Thievery DC 19 (expert) to scratch out the rune without allowing electricity to flow, or spell DC 17 (2nd level) to dispel the rune

◆ **Electrocution** (arcane, electricity, evocation)

Trigger A creature attempts to open the *bag of holding* directly or with a tool.

Effect The triggering creature takes 3d12 electricity damage. On a successful DC 16 Reflex save, a creature takes half damage (or reduces it to none on a critical success).

SOPORIFIC BRAMBLE

HAZARD 3

Environmental

Stealth DC 14 (trained)

Description Thorny vines infect creatures with a soporific substance.

Disable Survival DC 19 (expert) to point out the thorns' poison and make the trap no longer hidden (Perception DC 0)

◆ **Prick** (poison)

Trigger A creature enters a square with brambles.

Effect The triggering creature takes 1d4 piercing damage and is exposed to soporific vine sap.

Soporific Vine Sap (poison) Fortitude DC 16; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds. **Stage 1** stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** stupefied 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** asleep (1 round).

CONCLUSION

Once the clamor of battle dies down, six Quantum guards spill into the garden, Venture-Captain Sebnet tentatively following them. If the Arclord survived the encounter, the guards arrest the murderer (and the apprentice, if he survived the encounter and the PCs don't intercede).

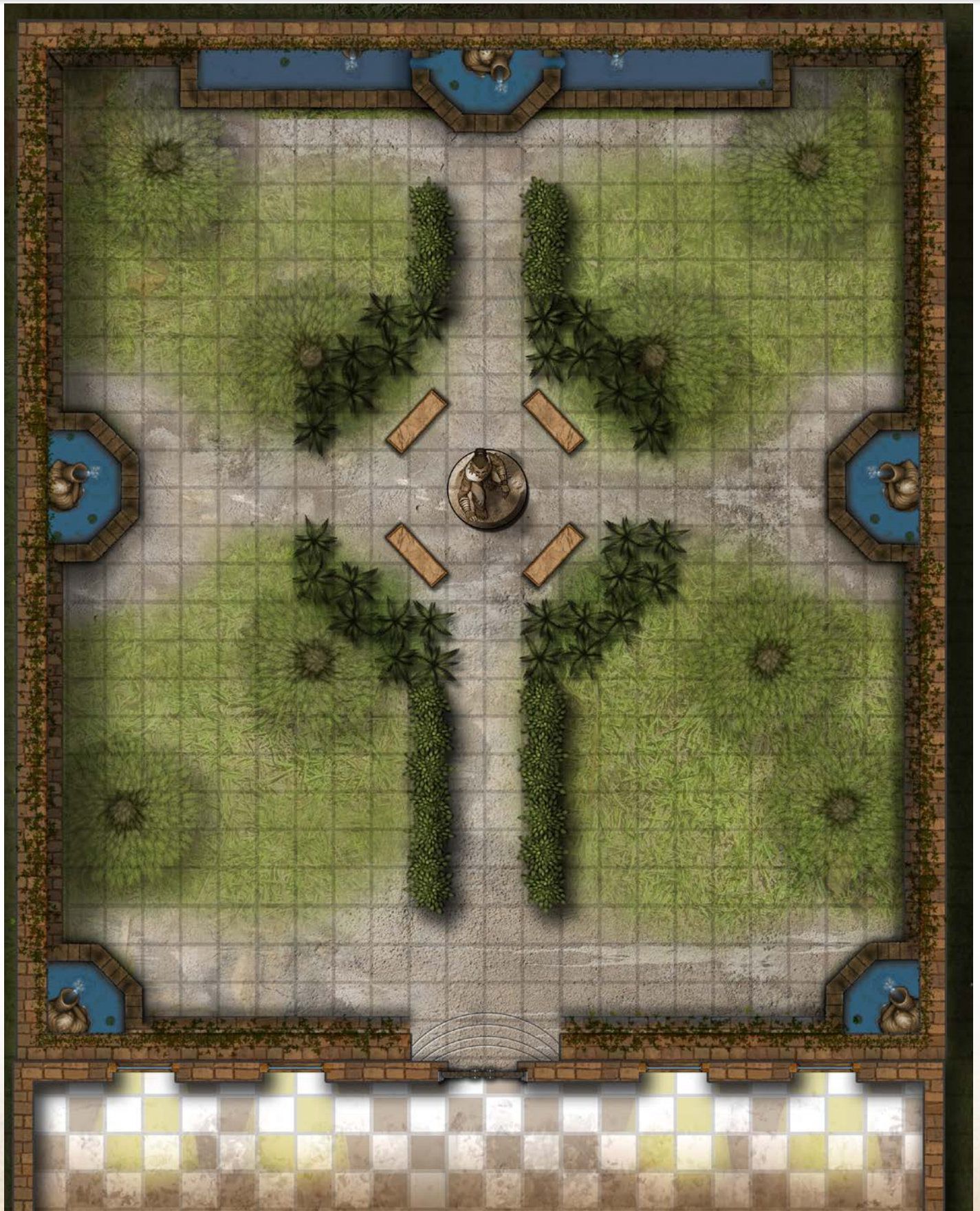
In the unlikely event that the PCs were overwhelmed by the Arclord, the weakened wizard falls quickly to the combined forces of the guards gathered just outside the soiree venue. Sebnet hurries into the garden shortly thereafter to perform Medicine checks and administer lesser elixirs of life where necessary to help the PCs recoup.

As the guards take over handling of the Arclord (or the Arclord's body), the venture-captain thanks the PCs

enthusiastically and commends them for their outstanding performance in tracking down the perpetrator. She then asks what they think should be done with the *Collected Directives*, as she doesn't have a stake in the tome beyond hoping it doesn't spark further violence. The PCs are free to suggest whatever they like, though some likely suggestions include bequeathing the tome to the innocent Arclord or claiming the text on behalf of the Pathfinder Society. Ultimately, unless the PCs recommend something truly outrageous, Sebnet finds their suggestion reasonable and agrees to carry it out. She then thanks them again for their efforts and promises to send a report on their performance (for better or worse!) to the Grand Lodge in Absalom. She then encourages them to rejoin the party and enjoy themselves, now that their business is concluded.

REPORTING NOTES

Please remember to complete the survey on paizo.com to make your feedback count in the Pathfinder Playtest, and encourage your players to do the same. Thank you!



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