PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #1-22

**TIER 1-4** 

# Vear of the Open Road



By Calder CaDavid



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### How to Play

Pathfinder Society Scenario #1-22: Doom of Cassomir is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st- through 4th-level characters (Tier 1–4; Subtiers 1–2 and 3–4). As a scenario, this adventure is designed to take about 4 hours to play. It is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Pathfinder Society campaign, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at **PathfinderSociety.club**.

### **GM Resources**

Doom of Cassomir makes use of the Pathfinder Core Rulebook, Pathfinder Bestiary, and Pathfinder Lost Omens: Gods & Magic, as well as Pathfinder Flip Mat: Haunted House, Pathfinder Flip Mat: Red Light District, Pathfinder Flip Mat: Tavern Multipack, and Pathfinder Flip Tiles: Dungeon Starter Set. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Reference Document at **paizo.com/prd**, and creature stat blocks from the Bestiary are reprinted at the back of the adventure for the GM's convenience.

### **Scenario Tags**

Scenario tags provide additional information about an adventure's contents. For more information on scenario tags, see the *Pathfinder Society Guide to Play* at <u>http://www.organizedplayfoundation.org/paizo/guides/</u>. This adventure has no scenario tags.



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### **GM SYNOPSIS**

This adventure includes a mix of investigation, social interaction, and combat activities, as the PCs must track down the leader of a Groetus cult in the city of Cassomir to stop the spread of a grim influence that threatens the lives of Cassomir's most vulnerable residents. Several of the combat encounters can be bypassed through investigation or roleplay.

### **ADVENTURE BACKGROUND**

Blackwood Swamp surrounds the Taldan port of Cassomir on all landward sides. It is a murky, rotting, brackish marshland of tangled trees, dense overgrowth, quicksand, menacing hydras, marauding humanoids, and other monsters.

Some years after Cassomir's founding, it expanded out into the Admiral's Fen district by reclaiming the land from the Blackwood Swamp, draining a portion of it into the brackish moat that surrounds the city. Streets, buildings and sewers were constructed, but the new district quickly began to lose ground to the ever-expanding swamp. The streets long ago sunk, many buildings crashed in muddy ruins, and the air was filled with the perpetual reek of wet mud, rotting vegetations and murky pools of water. Efforts to keep the district as dry as possible have proven to be a losing battle. Today, Admiral's Fen is home to lower-class crafters, dock workers, and criminals. This grim setting has given rise to a small but growing group of followers of Groetus, god of the end times. Groetus worshippers typically adhere to an interpretation of what Groetus' role in the End Times will be. The disillusioned nihilists of Admiral's Fen call themselves Groetus's Chosen. They believe in a doom known as the Portal of Incarnation, which portends that Groetus will gather up all the souls of heroes and villains to purify them and make them the gods of a new world to come.

A wicked hag who has lurked in the Blackwood Swamp for many generations recently discovered this burgeoning cult and begun to twist it to her advantage. Slipping into town disguised as a beautiful prophet, the green hag Ahksiva has convinced some of the more influential and charismatic Groetus worshippers that she is a herald of Groetus and the End Times, and that by following her teachings she can assure the downtrodden residents of Admiral's Fen that they will be among the chosen gods for the new world that Groetus will usher in. Ahksiva's reasons for doing so are actually quite simple: she delights in human suffering and hates that Cassomir intrudes upon her swamp, so any misery she can bring to the city and its residents is time well spent.

### WHERE ON GOLARION?

Doom of Cassomir takes place entirely in and nearby the Taldan port city of Cassomir. More information on Taldor can be found in *Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide*, page 128-129, as well as *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Taldor, the First Empire*.



### **ADVENTURE SUMMARY**

The PCs are called to the Taldan city of Cassomir by Venture-Captain Hestia Themis. She hopes to find Pathfinder agents who are capable of solving a burgeoning crisis in a muddy district of the city known as Admiral's Fen. Hestia tasks the PCs with scouring the neighborhood for information involving violent attacks.

The PCs are given the opportunities to look into several different promising leads. They use various exploration activities to search the area. Cultists burned down a popular tailor shop, leaving clues to their actions among the ashes. A shipwright was attacked by a cult member who was hoping to earn their place as Groetus's Chosen. A fanatical preacher was instructed by the cult's founder, a deceptive secret hag masquerading as a holy woman, Ahksiva.

During their investigations, the PCs might gain the attention of a corrupt public official secretly working for Groetus's Chosen. With the help of fellow cultists, the bureaucrat ambushes the PCs. After the cultists have been defeated, the PCs discover a flyer pointing toward a cultist meeting later that evening.

To prepare for the secret meeting, the PCs can stake out the abandoned building where it will take place, asking about the cult's leadership, the ex-Arodenite Reast Mycer, and the cult's mysterious prophet, Ahksiva. They may discover Ahksiva's *swine scopes*, sinister implements

that Ahksiva placed throughout the city to gaze upon the unfolding violence, and use them to observe the building to get a sense of the cult's numbers. The PCs might wish to attend the meeting themselves, infiltrating past the guards to listen to Reast Mycer firsthand, but stealthier PCs may want to climb up to the rooftops and spy on the meeting without risking their necks.

Reast Mycer arrives to the secret meeting and conducts a sermon, extolling the virtues of Groetus and his great plan. Mycer than greets the PCs. The PCs might trick him into revealing the location of the cult's prophet, or they might spur him to violence if he sees through their ruse.

After Reast has either been defeated or fooled, the PCs have gained enough information to point them toward the cult's true leader, who resides in Blackwood Swamp. The prophet Ahksiva dwells within an abandoned house, a place she has come to call Toad Manor. Inside Toad Manor, Ahksiva passes the time either dreaming of new ways to bring destruction upon Admiral's Fen or, if she's aware of the incoming PCs, preparing herself for battle. She either attempts to convert one of the PCs to her newest disciple or kill them all outright.

Once Ahksiva has been defeated, the cult of Groetus's Chosen falls apart. Without the hag's influence, the rate of violent attacks and wanton vandalism decrease in the neighborhood.

### **GETTING STARTED**

**Venture-Captain Hestia Themis** (LN female human aristocrat) put out a call to Pathfinder agents to solve the recent troubles threatening Cassomir's resurgence. The PCs meet Hestia at the modest Pathfinder lodge in Cassomir, but as soon as the PCs arrive, she instructs them to follow her into the streets. Her speaking voice is commanding and fills the space around her. She keeps her dark black hair pinned back and wears fashionably functional clothing.

Hestia guides the PCs through the bustling streets of her hometown, the Taldan port city of Cassomir. She makes several stops during the tour, taking her time to explain niche local history, and proudly boasts over the city's current economic upswing. She showcases the efficient ship production line, with each new building and busy construction site. Hestia happily introduces the PCs to the sights Cassomir until the group reaches the southeast district, a muddy slum known as Admiral's Fen. She sighs deeply before speaking to the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following.

Welcome to Admiral's Fen. I know it doesn't seem like much, but not too long ago this was the best part of the city. I spent my childhood running up and down these streets, but it has been years since the streets of Admiral's Fen were clear of mud. Some bad years and poor city planning strangled the life out of this place. Each year, more and more of the neighborhood sinks into Blackwood Swamp. Even my childhood home has been swallowed up by the hungry bog.

But something here is amiss, more dangerous than the common petty crime and vandalism. The rest of the city is enjoying a remarkable turnaround, but mysteriously, Admiral's Fen is growing only more dangerous. Recently, a wave of violent attacks and murders have plagued the neighborhood, far more than could be considered normal. I have my suspicions, but no definite proof.

The citizens of Admiral's Fen deserve better. If these attacks can be stopped, perhaps the district can finally make a real comeback. It also wouldn't hurt to strengthen the relationship between the Pathfinder Society and the new Taldan regime by quelling the derelict district's woes. I want you to find out who or what is behind these attacks and put a stop to them. I've arranged for your lodgings at The Sinking Ship, one of the few remaining inns still operating in Admiral's Fen. Blend in, get to know the people, and ask around. Someone knows something, we just have to find them.

After Hestia has finished speaking, the PCs have some time to ask her some questions. Some likely questions and Hestia's answer to them are as follows.

How do we know these crimes are connected? "We don't know that they are, not for sure, anyway. The attacks are limited to Admiral's Fen and the outskirts of the neighboring districts. The strangest thing is, there doesn't seem to be any connection among the victims: old or young, rich or poor, Taldan or guest. Anyone could be next."

What are your suspicions? "Several years ago, I subdued a dangerous cult devoted to Groetus, God of the End Times, with the aid of capable Pathfinder agents. I thought the cult had been destroyed, but now I'm not so sure."

What was Admiral's Fen like in the past? "It was beautiful, the height of Taldan sophistication. Architects from as far as Oppara fought for the privilege to design marvelous modern buildings. But when the economy slowed, it became harder to stop the swamp—eventually the roads were swallowed up and most buildings without proper foundations collapsed. Even the most remarkable structures lean as they slowly sink into the muck."

### Religion (Recall Knowledge)

Based on the result of a DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs might know more information relevant to this adventure concerning the religious traditions of the region.

- **Critical Success** Nature's Cataclysm, a cult devoted to Groetus, once threatened Cassomir. The cult was responsible for several kidnappings and murders. The PCs also learn the information for the success condition.
- **Success** Many of Cassomir's residents continue to worship Aroden, decades after the god's disappearance. They hope their continued prayers will reach the absent god.

Failure The PCs learn no information.

**Critical Failure** The people of Admiral's Fen believe Gozreh punishes the unfaithful by expanding the mud.

### Society (Recall Knowledge)

Based on the result of a DC 15 Society check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs might know more information relevant to this adventure concerning Cassomir and Admiral's Fen.

- **Critical Success** It isn't only the gangs in Admiral's Fen that make the area so dangerous. Monsters from Blackwood Swamp occasionally cross the city's sodden border in search of easy prey. The PCs also learn the information for the success condition.
- **Success** The influx of new residents into Cassomir has created a tension among the established residents. The most downtrodden receive no financial benefit from the Taldor's revitalization.

Failure The PCs learn no information.

**Critical Failure** The greatest export of Admiral's Fen is an artisanal drink made using the unique fungi in the swamp.

After the PCs have finished their conversation with Hestia, she once again turns and begins walking at a brisk pace through the thick mud before reaching an intersection. She points to a large establishment with a prominent lean, the front of the inn built to resemble a ship's bow. She tells the PCs their lodgings and meals are paid for through the next three days, and that she expects them to report back to her after they've discovered a lead.

### **Boons and Hero Points**

Give the PCs a few moments to slot their boons for the adventure and remind each PC that they have 1 Hero Point available for use during the adventure.

### **ADMIRAL'S FEN**

Admiral's Fen is in dire shape. To create the district, whole swaths of Blackwood Swamp were drained and cleared, and new buildings and roads were immediately constructed in the booming metropolis. But when the money slowed, the efforts to keep the swamp at bay were neglected. Buildings without strong foundations collapsed years ago. The streets have completely sunken into the mire, and everyone who could afford to leave the neighborhood has already done so.

### The Sinking Ship

Hestia's choice of inn, the Sinking Ship, was once a mustsee attraction in Cassomir. Originally constructed as an homage to Cassomir's shipbuilding tradition by an eccentric architect from Wispil, the building has traded hands several times. The once-grand interior is now thoroughly marred by years of muddy boots and lack of care. The rooms are sparse, but the drinks are strong, and the owner serves hot fish stew to guests every night. The inn is one of the few remaining establishments in the neighborhood where residents can congregate.

It is just after noon when the PCs enter The Sinking Ship, and a crowd has gathered for the lunch rush. **Tamara Reed** (N female human innkeeper), the proprietor of the establishment, darts among the residents, taking orders and commanding her staff. She notices the PCs when they enter, telling them to sit wherever they would like. The furniture was once high quality, but is now streaked with dried mud and shabbily mended where broken. After the PCs have been waiting for about ten minutes, Tamara gets to their table and lists the specials for the day.

There are two options on the menu at the Sinking Ship. The most popular entrée is the fish stew; for a single copper piece, diners receive a thin tomato-based dish filled with the cheapest fish Tamara could procure from the market. The special today is the cavedano al forno, a flaky baked fish served on a bed of noodles for 1 silver. PCs who purchase the special gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression on Tamara or Cooking Lore checks made to interact with her. Tamara is a hardworking Taldan woman who grew up in Admiral's Fen. She loves the city and worries about the recent troubles plaguing her home. She greets the PCs, taking a special interest in why anyone from out of town would choose to spend time in Admiral's Fen.

PCs can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) or DC 13 Cooking Lore check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) to uncover more information about the recent attacks from Tamara.

- **Critical Success** Tamara trusts the PCs enough to refer them to **Nogliss Maro** (LN male human shipwright), a survivor of a seemingly random stabbing. Three days ago, Tamara found Nogliss collapsed in the mud, bleeding profusely. She was able to get him to a healer in time to save his life. Nogliss has been on bed rest since the attack. She also tells them the information for the success condition. The PCs are automatically aware of all three locations for the subsequent investigation.
- **Success** Tamara believes the PCs are here to help the district. She directs them to the King's Closet, a recently burned clothing shop, noting how rare fires are in such a damp place. She also mentions that a street preacher, Dalimus,

has been unnerving people with his predictions of doom. The PCs are automatically aware of the King's Closet and Falling Moon areas for the subsequent investigation.

**Failure** Tamara isn't sure what to make of the newcomers, but if they want to look into violent criminals, that's their business. She does mention that a preacher has been ranting on the street about the end times, though. The PCs are automatically aware of the Falling Moon area for the subsequent investigation.

### **Combing through the Muck**

The PCs have the day to look for answers in the Admiral's Fen, but the truth is hard to come by. People don't want to risk becoming the target of the next attack and are unwilling to talk about the increasing violence, fearing it could draw attention. There are three main locations that are relevant to this investigation. The PCs likely already discovered one or more of these locations from Tamara, but unless they critically succeeded at their check to speak to Tamara, they may need to ask around town to learn of more locations. The first time the PCs exhaust their leads, allow each PC to attempt a DC 17 Society check to Gather Information (DC 20 in Subtier 3–4). Use the highest PC's result to determine the outcome.

**Critical Success** The party learns of two locations they did not yet know.

Success The party learns of a location they did not yet know. At each location, the PCs can attempt a check to learn more information, as listed in each location's section. The PCs earn 1 Investigation Point for each successful check and 2 Investigation Points for each critical success and lose 1 Investigation point for each critical failure. When the PCs reach 6 Investigation Points (8 Investigation Points for a group of 5 PCs, or 9 Investigation Points for a group of 6 PCs), they piece together enough information to identify a member of the Groetus cult and acquire a flyer for the cult's meeting at Guiding Light temple later than night, pointing them toward their next location. The PCs do not need to continue exploring the three locations once they have done so. If the PCs fail in their investigation, they draw the ire of the cult, who ambushes them near the end of the day (see page 7).

**Rewards:** If the PCs succeed at their investigation, they earn 3 Treasure Bundles.

Hero Points: If you have not awarded a Hero Point yet, award one to a player here if they successfully complete the investigation. This should go to a player who engaged in interesting roleplay during the investigation, or who rolled a critical success on one of their investigation skill checks. If none of the players match any of these conditions, award a Hero Point to a single player of your choice.

### THE KING'S CLOSET

This apparel vendor was built by the gnome tailor Kinaunen right before recession hit the neighborhood. The King's Closet managed to stay in business for years by pivoting its brand and catering to the new residents of the district. The building had a strong foundation and stood perfectly upright due to the gnome man's keen artisanship, as Kinaunen prided himself on selling fashionable clothes at modest prices.

All that are left now are ashes and blackened boards. Reast Mycer, accompanied by two members of the Groetus's Chosen, applied a flammable tar to the building's entryway before lighting the buildings ablaze. Reast and his accomplices then helped themselves to some of the vendor's best wares before fleeing into the night. By the time Kinaunen woke from the smoke and heat, it was too late to escape. The Groetans' greed makes their crime easier to trace; in the process of grabbing clothing, Reast accidentally dropped his silver religious symbol. Allow each PC to attempt a single DC 15 Perception check (DC 18 in Subtier 3-4) or a DC 13 Architecture Lore check (DC 16 in Subtier 3-4) to search the building's sooty remains. Once all PCs have rolled the check or chosen not to, they receive a result below based upon their highest roll. PCs who do not roll automatically fail the check.

- **Critical Success** After the PCs clear heavy charred beams from the doorway, they uncover a ghastly sight. The arsonist drew a specialized religious symbol—Aroden's eye gripped in Groetus's jaws—with tar before setting it ablaze, charring the unholy image into the building's stone foundation.
- **Success** Before the cultists set fire to The King's Closet, they helped themselves to some of its wares. The PCs sift through burned clothes and uncover a silver religious symbol of Groetus among the ashes. The religious symbol is unusual, as it depicts Groetus gripping the eye of Aroden in his teeth.
- **Failure** The PCs uncover the dropped silver religious symbol in the ashes, but a member of the cult spots them snooping around the boutique's ruins and runs off to report back to Reast. All of the PCs' opponents in encounter B receive a +1 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls.

### **NOGLISS MARO**

**Nogliss Maro** (LN male human shipwright) is a broadshouldered man with pale skin and thin black hair flattened down with pomade and a luxuriant mustache. He came to Cassomir recently, hearing tales of the plentiful opportunities for shipwrights. The carpenter swiftly found work at one of Cassomir's dry docks, but he spent all of his funds on the journey to Taldor. He planned on staying in Admiral's Fen for a brief period until he saved enough gold to afford a house in one of the better parts of town.

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Nogliss was walking home from a long day of work when he was attacked by cultists. He was caught by surprise and would have died if he was not immediately discovered by Tamara. He now rests in his bed, anxiously waiting to recover enough to return to work.

Allow each PC to attempt a single DC 15 Diplomacy check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) when attempting to interview Nogliss about his attack. Once all PCs have rolled the check or chosen not to, they receive a result below based upon their highest roll. PCs who do not roll automatically fail the check.

- **Critical Success** There was only a single attacker, but she wasn't alone. Three more people fled with her after she attacked him. They didn't take his money either, he had his week's pay jangling in his pocket. The attack happened near where The King's Closet had burned down.
- Success Nogliss remembers during the attack, the assailant called out "I will join you soon, Aroden!"
- **Failure** Nogliss thinks the attack was from one of Wrath's Ruffians, an unrelated criminal group in the city. The gang tried to get him to join shortly after he moved to the neighborhood, but he flatly turned them down.

#### FALLING MOON

**Dalimus** (CE male human preacher) is an angry, bitter man. After years of gambling and rotten luck, he had nothing and blamed the world for his misfortunes. When Ahksiva spoke to him and told him of Groetus's grand ambition, he converted that day. Ahksiva saw Dalimus was too wild to be any real use, and so she instructed him to spread the message of doom throughout the neighborhood. None shall rest until all have heard of the inevitable end.

A small crowd has circled around Dalimus. While some laugh, many citizens stop and watch, entranced by Dalimus' frantic performance. The preacher screams out his words, praising Groetus and his prophet Ahksiva. As he speaks, he takes large melons from his cart and slowly impales them upon long spikes. PCs that succeed on a DC 15 Religion or Groetus Lore check know the melons symbolize the moment Groetus's lunar form pierces itself atop Pharasma's spire, beginning the end of days.

When the PCs approach Dalimus's performance, the street preacher makes a grand show of them, derisively commenting on their clean clothes and lack of respect for Aroden and Groetus. Dalimus is not part of the organized cult, but he is privy to much of its inner workings. Allow each PC to attempt a single DC 15 Religion or Deception check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) to reason with the grim convert. Once all PCs have rolled the check or chosen not to, they receive a result below based upon their highest roll. PCs who do not roll automatically fail the check.

- **Critical Success** Dalimus exclaims he is chosen by Groetus, as heralded by Ahksiva herself. The prophet descended upon the town several months ago to give hope to the hopeless. She appears only to those who will listen and is impossible to reach-but Reast Mycer, a member of the church of Aroden, often acts in her stead.
- **Success** Dalimus assures the party, "Groetus's end awaits us all, but only after it come to pass can this world be reborn into something more perfect. Those who help bring about this new world will be rewarded by the God of the End Times in the next one to come."
- Failure Dalimus grows angry at the PCs' lack of respect for Groetus and refuses to aid them.

### A. Failing the Investigation (Low or Moderate)

If the PCs are unable to reach the required number of Investigation Points by the end of the day in their search of Admiral's Fen, their clumsy investigation draws the attention of the cult of Groetus. The cult has been able to act with impunity until now and is quick to take down any threat they perceive. As the PCs return to the Sinking Ship after a day of investigations, they are stopped by a customs official, **Ptiro Valner** (CE human male bureaucrat). Ptiro is secretly a member of Groetus's Chosen, who abuses his position to "mishandle" paperwork, keep tabs on individuals about town, and threaten those who act against the cult with punitive fees.

Ptiro has planned an ambush for the nosy interlopers and begins it by yelling at them to halt. Ptiro claims they failed to properly register themselves when arriving in town and that they owe him substantial penalties, occupying them with lengthy citations and statutes. This is just a distraction, however—as he draws their attention, one or more disgruntled dockworkers, also members of the cult, move to attack.

#### **SUBTIER 1-2**

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PTIRO VALNER	CREATURE 3

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**Reward:** Ptiro Valner carries a flyer in his pocket detailing out the specifics for the next meeting of Groetus's Chosen. Give **Handout 1** to the players (page 26). The rally is scheduled for later in the evening, at Guiding Light. The cultists carry small coin purses that contain 2 Treasure Bundle's worth of gold—note that this is less than the PCs would have turned up in the course of a successful investigation.

Hero Points: If you have not awarded a Hero Point yet, award one to a player now. This should go to the player that either got a critical success during the exploration activities, dealt the finishing blow to Ptiro Valner, or performed any other significant heroic deed. If none of the players match any of these conditions, award a Hero Point to a single player of your choice.

### **THE DOOMSPEAKERS**

After the PCs have discovered the cult's plans to meet, they might wish to report to Venture-Captain Hestia Themis. The venture-captain hurriedly ushers them into her home when they approach and offers them tea while discussing what they have learned. If the PCs mention Ahksiva, Hestia recalls the name. She believed the woman was another Aroden-believing street preacher. If the PCs mention Groetus to Hestia, her posture immediately shifts as she becomes wary and exacting. She tells the PCs that a Groetus cult can't be allowed to fester in Cassomir's wounds. She tells the PCs to collect as much information about the cult and informs them that apprehending Ahksiva or her known associate, Reast Mycer, could potentially dissolve the entire movement.

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### Staking out the Temple

The PCs can use what time remains to prepare for the meeting of Groetus's Chosen. The meeting is to be held at Guiding Light, one of two temples to Aroden built in Cassomir at its height. The temple's location is well known, and the PCs can easily reach it. Since Aroden's death and Cassomir's economic slump, Guiding Light was sold off, becoming a tavern for a time before it was ultimately shuttered, so that the remaining priests could focus their efforts on maintaining a single structure. The building stands taller than those around it. The outer walls are made of a polished white granite and trimmed with gold. It is now a filthy ruin, a skeleton of its former grandeur.

As the PCs arrive at the temple, they can attempt to learn about Groetus's Chosen and investigate the structure.

### **THE APOCRYPHAL PRIEST**

Reast Mycer, son of a prominent Aroden cleric, was raised in the decaying church. Throughout his life, Reast was plagued by religious doubt, but stayed with the church of Aroden despite his growing reservations. He enjoyed a position of some authority within Cassomir's remaining Aroden temple but often thought of leaving.

Several months ago, the prophet Ahksiva barged into the functioning Aroden temple and declared to all the remaining clergy they had failed to understand Aroden's vision for a new world. The priests swiftly tossed the woman out onto the street, but Reast followed, captivated by the prophet's message and beauty. In Reast, Ahksiva saw the perfect pawn to further her plan of destruction and suffering. She converted him to the worship of Groetus, explaining Aroden had joined with the foul moon so that they could usher in a new world.

For the first time in his life, Reast feels important. The burgeoning size of the congregation has given him all the assurance he needs that he is on the right path.

Allow characters to attempt a DC 15 Society or Deception check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) to surreptitiously ask passers-by for more information on Reast Mycer or Ahksiva.

- **Critical Success** When the prophet Ahksiva walks through Admiral's Fen, no mud or dirt stains her robes. She is often described as walking out of Blackwood Swamp and into Admiral's Fen. The PCs also learn the information for the success condition.
- Success Reast Mycer was formerly a cleric of Aroden. Even in the clergy's shrunken numbers, he never stood out. He abandoned the faith after Ahksiva challenged its leaders to religious debate. Reast is now devoted to Groetus and manages the day-to-day problems of the growing faith.

- Failure Reast Mycer is known for giving loud, captivating public speeches.
- **Critical Failure** Reast Mycer owns and operates an overpriced mud-removal service.

#### **BLESSINGS FROM A GRIM MOON**

Ahksiva knows it is only a matter of time before there is a serious attempt to stop her violently growing faith. To embolden her flock, she tasked Reast with beseeching the God of the End Times for his blessing over their new temple. Reast obliged and a foul divine magic now lays over the building.

The PCs might choose to scan the area around Guiding Light using *detect magic* or similar means. Doing so reveals a cloying, suffocating magical aura over Guiding Light. PCs can attempt a DC 15 Religion or Occultism check to Identify Magic (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4); they can also attempt this check using Arcana or Nature, but the DC is increased by 2.

- **Critical Success** The PCs recognize two set of lingering magical auras leading away from the building and out of town. One of the auras is from the same divine caster who placed Groetus's blessing over Guiding Light. The second aura is remarkably different, occult with a monstrous energy. The PCs also learn the information for the success condition.
- **Success** The enchantment effect over the sinking temple is directly tied to Groetus. Creatures within the structure are weakened unless they have a devotion to Groetus.
- **Failure** The magic aura over the temple indicates the people inside are all mind-controlled by a powerful being from another plane.

### **STAKE OUT GUIDING LIGHT**

The old Guiding Light temple is in a mostly abandoned corner of Admiral's Fen, near Blackwood Swamp. The area is thick with mud, the roads were swallowed up long ago by the invading swamp. The poorest and most destitute Cassomiri citizens squat in these teetering buildings. Two guards are always standing at the front door of the building, though they make a small attempt to appear inconspicuous.

Most members of Groetus's Chosen have yet to fully commit to the cult's practices, engaging in mere vandalism rather than more severe acts and continuing to live in their own homes. A much smaller number have completely converted to Ahksiva's teachings and have taken up residence in Guiding Light.

The PCs can keep an eye on the building and watch as members of the cult come and go throughout the day. Allow characters to attempt a DC 15 Perception or Society check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) to notice peculiarities surrounding Guiding Light.

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- **Critical Success** The PCs notice that some members of the cult greet each other by cupping their hands together and bowing. This is gesture is specific to Groetus's Chosen and is used by members to recognize one another. The PCs also learn the information for the success condition.
- **Success** Several people come in and out of Guiding Light throughout the day. Most leave and return hours later carrying weapons or food. The PCs can surmise somewhere between four to seven people have taken to living within the temple.
- **Failure** The PCs notice the guards standing out front, but the guards similarly notice the PCs. Though they don't immediately move to violence, they do increase the guard presence as a precautionary measure. Add an additional member of Groetus's Chosen to the encounter in area **B**.

### Joining the Flock

The PCs can choose to either attempt to infiltrate the gathering or observe from the safety of some nearby ruins, but either way, they have to pass by Ahksiva's magical precautions. The hag thrives on creating strife and destruction and delights in the tales her flock relays to her about their evil deeds, but mere secondhand tales no longer satisfy her. So that she may witness the violence herself, she's developed *swine scopes*—magical sensors created by performing an evil ritual over eyeballs pulled from still-living animals, such as cows or pigs—and had Reast place them around Guiding Light. With a thought, the hag can perceive directly through a sensor, watching her malicious plans come to fruition from the cracks and corners of the town.

When the characters attempt to survey the area around Guiding Light, each PC can attempt a DC 15 Perception or Occultism check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4).

- **Critical Success** The PCs find several *swine scopes* in the area around Guiding Light and can use them to draw Ahksiva's attention elsewhere, such as by throwing a rock or interfering with the eyes' magic. This means that not only does Ahksiva remain unaware of the PCs hanging around the area, but the enemies in encounter **B** take a -2 circumstance penalty to their initiative roll due to the distractions.
- **Success** The PCs notice an eyeball tucked away into the corner of a building, the eye gazing fixedly upon the entrance to Guiding Light. A thin, spidery strip of muscle holds the eyeball to the ceiling. If the eye is removed, it quickly deflates and shrivels, and Ahksiva never notices the PCs through her magic.
- Failure The PC walks directly in front of a *swine scope*. Ahksiva takes notice of that adventurer and magically informs Reast of their appearance. Should the PCs successfully infiltrate Guiding Light, Reast immediately recognizes them after he has finished his sermon and initiates combat.

### **CHOOSING GROETUS**

Over a dozen cult members and more than a few potential recruits begin to amass upon Guiding Light just before sundown. Some members travel alone but most travel in small groups. Devoted cultists will invite several new people interested in hearing Ahksiva's message at once. The cultists present their flyer to the guard and are then let inside. The attendants congregate in the central chamber as they wait for Reast Mycer to appear.

Groetus's looming presence blankets the building and weighs on nonbelievers. All creatures entering Guiding Light must succeed on a DC 16 Will save (DC 19 in Subtier 3–4) or take a –1 status penalty to attack rolls while within the premises. Creatures that worship Groetus can offer a prayer to their god, which prevents them from having to attempt a check and replaces the effect with a +1 status bonus to attack rolls instead.

The PCs can attempt to blend in with the cultists and attend the sermon to get a closer look. Allow these PCs to attempt DC 16 Deception or Religion checks. If upon entering, the PCs repeat the hand gesture they witnessed between two cultists while staking out Guiding Light, add a +2 circumstance bonus to their Deception or Religion check.

- **Critical Success** Several cultists and recruits approach the PCs to make idle conversation. The cultists want to know about the PCs' history with Groetus and if they've had the pleasure of meeting Ahksiva. Most of the cultists are regular people looking for answers but the most devout are brutes looking for an opportunity to direct their anger. This insight into the cultists grants the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to their Deception or Religion checks when speaking with Reast Mycer after his sermon.
- **Success** The PCs are able to blend in among the cultists. The cultists seem wary of the strange newcomers and keep their distance.
- **Failure** The PCs fail to get past the guard at the entrance. News that there may be an investigation into their group has already raised alarms in the temple. The guard looks them over and tells them to leave before the entire congregation forces them.

#### **Spying from on High**

At the urging of Reast, members of Groetus's Chosen have toppled several nearby buildings, surrendering more of the neighborhood to the Blackwood Swamp. Due to the proximity of the dangerous swamp and the squalid conditions, this corner of Admiral's Fen suited the cult perfectly. Crimes were rarely reported and people assumed the toppled buildings be the result of district's continued erosion.

Built to impress, Guiding Light is the largest structure in the area. The surrounding houses and abandoned shops now tilt toward the structure, as if they were sinking toward it. The remaining buildings now provide numerous vantage points where one could peek into Guiding Light's broken and dirty windows. So long as they are not seen, the PCs will be able to witness the whole sermon from outside.

Allow characters to attempt a DC 15 Stealth or Athletics check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) to climb up to an advantageous hiding spot.

- **Critical Success** The PCs find a well-hidden vantage point. From there they recognize several buildings in the immediate area have all recently collapsed. The patterning and amount of destroyed buildings is too great to be coincidental. When Ahksiva informs Reast of the hidden PCs later, it takes Reast and his followers two rounds to discover the PCs' hiding spots, unless the PCs reveal themselves first.
- Success The PCs find a hidden spot from which they can peek out and observe the happenings of Guiding Light's grand hall. From the ground, they are completely unobserved. When Ahksiva informs Reast of the hidden PCs later, it takes Reast and his followers one round to discover the PCs hiding spots unless the PCs reveal themselves first.
- Failure The PCs climb to a semi-hidden spot on sagging roof. The PCs can observe the happenings inside the grand hall but are easily spotted by enemies scanning the roof for intruders—when Ahksiva informs Reast of the hidden PCs later, the cultists begin combat knowing the PCs' locations.

#### B. Sermon at the End of the World Moderate

Reast Mycer arrives several minutes after sundown, a gray hood covers his wavy brown hair. He is a handsome man of 35 years, with a commanding presence. He wears long blue and gray robes and carries a pleasant expression upon his face. Around his neck he wears a silver religious symbol of his own design, the grim skull of Groetus gripping the Eye of Aroden between its teeth. This symbol is identical to the one the PCs likely found in the King's Closet.

When Reast enters the grand hall, all parishioners cease their chatter. Several of the more dedicated members of the cult breakout into full applause when they spot the cleric. Reast has become accustomed to the adoration and religious fervor. He enjoys spreading Ahksiva's message and dreams of spreading their vision across Taldor and all of Golarion.

Reast hushes the crowd and takes his place behind dirty altar. He speaks with compassion and empathy, but his words are violent.

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"Good people of Admiral's Fen, it is an honor to be among you tonight! I grew up in this neighborhood, raised in this very temple by clerics who clung to the hope that Aroden would return and save us all from this nightmare. But as Ahksiva has taught me and will teach you all, Aroden is not coming back.

The clerics? They will not tell you this. The rulers? They don't want you to know. They would all rather you live and die in ignorance and fear rather than learn the truth. The truth is that this world is ending. There's not much time left.

But rejoice, for Aroden has not truly died, he has joined with Groetus! Aroden saw our world's end, but in his wisdom, he understood the only way out was through. Groetus is not the end, but the beginning! After the apocalypse, Groetus will create a new world. A perfect paradise where the mistakes made in this world can be amended. Those who assisted in creating Groetus's new world will be elevated to the position of gods and will rule alongside Aroden over paradise.

This future is within our grasp, but we can't idly wait for it to happen! Every day, Blackwood Swamp drowns Admiral's Fen so that the swamp may be whole again. We must be as the swamp and drown out the world so that something new may grow in its place. When we are made gods, none can judge us."

Reast leads the congregation in prayer to Groetus, sprinkling in praises to Aroden and Ahksiva throughout. Reast is particularly interested in meeting the new people in hopes of drawing them further into his new religion.

If the PCs have infiltrated the cult, Reast moves to speak with them after his speech. He asks them what has drawn them to their meeting. Characters must attempt a DC 16 Deception or Religion check when speaking with Reast (DC 19 in Subtier 3–4).

- **Critical Success** Reast is very impressed with the PCs and their devotion to Groetus. They may be the very people he needs to take the movement outside of Cassomir. He gives them instructions on how to find Ahksiva's cabin in the swamp and instructs them to go to her that she may judge their worthiness herself.
- **Success** Reast spends time listening to the PCs and gives them advice, though his solutions always call for violence or death. He sends the PCs to meet Ahksiva so that she may judge their worthiness, but he sends one of the Chosen with them as a guide, increasing the difficulty of the final encounter.
- **Failure** Reast realizes the PCs are frauds. He and his devoted followers attack while the remaining congregants flee the temple.

If the PCs have not infiltrated the sermon, Ahksiva spots them in their hidden positions using a *swine scope* once the sermon is complete. She magically informs Reast of the unwelcome guests and their locations.



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After the sermon, Reast turns to his congregation and exclaims "Prophet Ahksiva has spoken to me, seems like we have some unwelcome guests listening in! Groetus guide us." He and one or more of his most devoted followers rush outside to attack the PCs. If the PCs failed an attempt to stake out Guiding Light, add one of Groetus's Chosen to this encounter.

### **SUBTIER 1-2**

GROETUS'S CHOSEN	<b>CREATURE -1</b>
Page 18, art on page 23	
REAST MYCER	CREATURE 2
Page 18	
SUBTIER 3-4	
GROETUS'S CHOSEN	<b>CREATURE 1</b>
Page 21, art on page 23	
REAST MYCER	<b>CREATURE 4</b>

Page 21

**Reward:** Reast carries a book of prayers dedicated to Groetus in his pocket. In the margins of the book, Reast has written love poems dedicated to Ahksiva. One of the poems is about his excitement about traveling through Blackwood Swamp to reach her manor. While the poem is saccharine, it describes the path to her location in enough detail for the PCs to find their way there. For defeating Reast, including by tricking him into revealing Ahkshiva without combat, the PCs earn 3 Treasure Bundles.

Hero Points: If you have not awarded a Hero Point since the PCs completed their investigation, award one to a player now. This should go to the player that either got a critical success during the exploration activities, dealt the finishing blow to Reast Mycer, or performed any other significant heroic deed. If none of the players match any of these conditions, award a Hero Point to a single player of your choice. Avoid giving Hero Points repeatedly to the same player.

### **BLACKWOOD SWAMP**

Whether the PCs defeated or deceived Reast Mycer, they have obtained information pointing to Ahksiva's home in Blackwood Swamp. If the players failed to gather the various clues they might want to return to Venture-Captain Hestia Themis once more. The news of the cult shocks the venture-captain. She tells the PCs Ahksiva must be dealt with immediately, her teachings put all citizens of Admiral's Fen at risk. Should the PCs require more prodding to head into Blackwood Swamp, Hestia informs them of particulars she has gathered. Few people throughout the neighborhood have seen or spoken to the prophet Ahksiva, but she's described as remarkably beautiful, apple-cheeked with long wavy hair. After spreading her message, she disappears among the gnarled trees of Blackwood Swamp. The so-called holy woman must be living there!

### **Swamp Crawl**

If Reast never told the PCs exactly where to find Toad Manor, they need to search the swamp. Blackwood Swamp sprawls for hundreds of miles before eventually merging back into the Verduran Forest to the North. There are few true paths through the swamp, and even at its driest, the ground is spongy.

Players must either navigate their way through the swamp or use their intuition to guide them to Ahksiva's lair. There are several actions available for PCs to pick from during exploration mode; the GM should help the players choose an activity, asking the PCs how they would like to assist in searching for Ahksiva's home and then suggest an activity that most closely fits that answer. PCs attempting to overcome this challenge will find the following activities especially useful.

**Detect Magic:** This activity requires the PC to be able to cast *detect magic* and assumes they do so at regular intervals. If the PCs had previously found the magical auras leading off from Guiding Light, they rediscover those auras, leading them directly to Toad Manor.

**Investigate:** This activity allows characters to actively investigate their surroundings as they plod through the swamp. The players use secret Recall Knowledge checks to find clues. If a PC uses this activity during exploration, they can attempt a DC 15 Swamp Lore check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) or DC 17 Arcana or Occultism check (DC 20 in Subtier 3–4) to Recall Knowledge to notice the hanging effigies and poisonous plants that grow more frequent the closer the PCs venture toward Toad Manor.

**Sense Direction:** A PC can attempt a DC 14 Survival check to Sense Direction (DC 16 in Subtier 3–4) and find humanoid tracks leading deep into the swamp.

As long a single PC passed the check to navigate the swamp, the PCs discover Toad Manor not long after entering the swamp and the adventure continues as described. If none of the PCs succeed on an activity that draws them toward Toad Manor, the group wanders the muddy swamp for several hours before finally finding Ahksiva's lair. This allows Ahksiva to become fully aware of the PCs and the threat they represent, and she calls an additional slurk inside to defend her, increasing the difficulty of the encounter in area C.

### C. Toad Manor

A sinking manor looms over the surrounding trees. The building's walls sag and bend, small animals have clearly penetrated its upper reaches. The swamp itself appears to be strangling the waterlogged structure.

Years ago, Mavel Autumna was one of the most prominent nobles in Cassomir. He owned several successful fisheries and his contracts with the navy kept a steady flow of gold into his coffers. He used his vast sums of gold to build a magnificent family manor in the swamp, away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Mavel knew the steep upkeep required to maintain such an estate but felt confident the good times would last forever.

For years Mavel enjoyed his expensive home out in the swamp, but things changed when a young woman appeared outside his home. The hag Ahksiva pleaded with the noble, claiming she'd gotten lost while foraging for mushrooms. The noble let Ahksiva into his home and he quickly became become infatuated with her. Soon after, clerks and servants began disappearing and Mavel Autumna himself suffered an illness from which he never recovered. Any remaining visitors or staff Ahksiva fed to her pet slurks.

Ahksiva now fully controls the estate and has renamed it Toad Manor after her slurks. From Toad Manor, she has been able to come and go from Admiral's Fen without much notice. She wants nothing more than to destroy Admiral's Fen and eventually, all of Cassomir. To Ahksiva, Blackwood Swamp is hers, and in draining the swamp to make room for Admiral's Fen, the Taldans stole from her.

To enact her revenge, she sought a weakness in Cassomir and found the depressed state of its people. She used their love for Aroden against them and directed their faith to Groetus. Ahksiva has no particular interest in the God of the End Times, she intends only to use Groetus's iconography to further her own goals. Ahksiva's greatest desire is to see the people of Admiral's Fen suffer. She'll tear down the whole neighborhood if she isn't stopped.

### **C1. THE FRONT PORCH**

### TRIVIAL

The doors into the building were broken off long ago. The two sets of stairs ascend from muck to a covered porch. Thick globs of green slime cover the stairs and adjacent areas.

The PCs approach the front of Toad Manor from the East. This area was once a display of wealth and luxury, but the grime of the swamp has wiped away any former grandeur. Ahksiva has placed a magical trap outside her front steps to deter any intruders.

### CREEPING SLIME

#### CONJURATION MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 17 (trained)

- **Description** The thick green slime has been imbued with foul hag magic, making it cling to and grow over living creatures that touch it.
- **Disable** Thievery DC 17 (trained) to carefully push the slime away without causing it to grow, DC 17 Crafting (one action) to neutralize it with alchemical reagents, or *dispel magic* (2nd level; counteract DC 15 [DC 18 in Subtier 3-4]) to counteract the magic animating it. Casting a 1st-level or higher spell with the water trait washes away the slime.

### C2. THE GRAND HALL

#### SEVERE

HAZARD1

Only a few decades old, the wide hall already leans substantially. The corners are crocked and covered in thick patches of dark mold. Several globs of slime coat the floor and mildew spreads over the walls. The room reeks of fouled water.

Several muddy nests lined with bones and plants line the sides of the hall. In places where the slime has managed to dry, it's grown crusted and flaky. A putrid, and sickly sweet stench fills the air. Strung up around the room are dozens of hideous effigies created from sticks and what appears to be sinew. The waterlogged floorboards squeak and squeal when stepped on.

Hung near on the wall near the door, a large silver religious symbol of Groetus grins over the room.

Ahksiva has let her foul slurks freely in and out of this room for years, there is hardly any surface not covered in a layer of dried slime.

If Ahksiva knows the PCs' intent before they arrive, she has prepared for a fight. She casts *invisibility* over her pet slurk, who is well trained and will attack only when she gives the command. Ahksiva delicately reads from an apocryphal book of Groetus's lore, scouring the tome for more creative ways to inspire her cultists to violence. She gives a crooked smile to the PCs as they enter, welcoming them to Toad Manor with a sardonic tone to her voice.



"Oh no, looks like you found me. Yes, it is I, the great prophet Ahksiva. Well done. I'd been expecting someone like you for a while now." She reaches for a chalice and takes a large gulp of black, syrupy wine. She pushes a small spider back into her mouth as it attempts to escape. "What have you done for the people of Admiral's Fen? I've given them hope, a belief they can hold onto. Would you take that away from those poor people? I see a better future than that. A future where Admiral's Fen is a memory, Cassomir is a ruin, and Taldor is plunged into chaos. The people here want to worship Groetus, let them! The God of the End Times has some excellent ideas about pain and destruction."

If the PCs want to attempt tricking Ahksiva into believing they are interested in hearing about Groetus, allow them to attempt a DC 18 Deception check (DC 21 in Subtier 3–4). Characters who succeed can convince Ahksiva they are honest in their intentions to become members of Groetus's Chosen; they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to initiative rolls in the upcoming encounter.

Ahksiva is looking to expand her following and while she does need more people she can trust, the group of PCs is too many people for her to properly indoctrinate at once. She asks to speak to a single character alone upstairs, preferably picking a character who seems to lack wisdom. She hopes to make this character into another one of her street preacher pawns. She trusts her slurk to devour the rest of the party.

**Slippery Floors:** Slime covers several parts of this room, rendering it difficult terrain. Creatures can attempt to Stride at their full speed by attempting a DC 15 Acrobatics check (DC 18 in Subtier 3–4) before attempting to move. Creatures that fail this check immediately fall prone rather than Stride.

**GM** Note: There is a strong chance the PCs spent time interacting with Ahksiva before engaging her in combat. In this instance, it is appropriate to allow the PCs to use the skills they had used to interact with the hag to determine their initiative rolls. For example, a character who conversed with Ahksiva on topics of faith can use a Religion check to determine their initiative roll or a character who attempted to bully Ahksiva into compliance can use Intimidation.

### **SUBTIER 1-2**

AHKSIVA

Page 19, art on page 24

### <u>LITTLE ZURA</u>

Page 19, art on page 25

### **SUBTIER 3-4**

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**CREATURE 5** 

**CREATURE 3** 

Page 22, art on page 24

#### LITTLE ZURA

Page 22, art on page 25

**Reward:** After she and her slurk have been defeated, the PCs can recover Ahksiva's silver religious symbol of Groetus from the wall. The religious symbol is well polished and heavy. In addition, several bags stuffed with magical reagents and gifts offered to the prophet can be found with a short survey of the area. These items are worth 4 Treasure Bundles.

### CONCLUSION

After the PCs have dealt with the threat posed by Ahksiva, their return journey through the swamp is uneventful. By the time the PCs return to the city, Venture-Captain Hestia Themis has captured and imprisoned Reast Mycer if the PCs had not already defeated him. Guiding Light has been thoroughly raided.

Without the guidance and rallying figure of Ahksiva, the cult known as Groetus's Chosen quickly dissolves. The neighborhood of Admiral's Fen sees a dramatic decrease in violent crime and vandalism over the next several months. Attempts at draining the neighborhood begin in earnest again. The people of Cassomir no longer fear walking the streets.

Venture-Captain Hestia is ecstatic with the Pathfinders' work. She promises to do all she can to keep hope alive in Admiral's Fen and ensure that monsters who would prey on the downtrodden can't find their way into the city. So long as people have hope and faith, they won't turn to anger and false prophets.

#### Primary Objectives

The PCs succeed at the primary objective so long they defeat Ahksiva and rid Admiral's Fen of her destructive cult. PCs who succeed each earn 2 Fame and 2 Reputation for any faction associated with their currently slotted faction boon.

### Secondary Objectives

The PCs fulfill their secondary objective if they remained unknown to Reast Mycer until after his sermon. If they were, they each earn 2 Fame and 2 Reputation for any faction associated with the currently slotted faction boon.

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**CREATURE 3** 

**CREATURE 1** 

### APPENDIX I: SUBTIER 1-2 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario. These encounters are written for four 1st-level PCs. If your group has a different composition or size, refer to the Challenge Points section of GM References (page 28) for instructions on how to use the scaling sidebars to adjust the encounters for your group.

If a creature is marked "(0)," don't include it in the encounter unless otherwise specified (likely from the scaling sidebars).

### Encounter A: Failing the Investigation (Subtier 1-2)

Ptiro has planned an ambush for the nosy interlopers and begins it by yelling at them to halt. Ptiro claims they failed to properly register themselves when arriving in town and that they owe him substantial penalties. This is just a distraction, however—as he draws their attention, one or more disgruntled dockworkers, also members of the cult, move to attack. As the cultists worship the god of endings, they fight until knocked out or incapacitated.

The area has several crates that dockworkers can use their Heft Crate ability on. These are marked on the map with "C".

### DOCKHAND CULTIST

#### **CREATURE 0**

Melee If ist +7 (agile, nonlethal), Damage 1d4+3 bludgeoning

- Ranged ◆ bottle +5 (agile, thrown 20 feet), Damage 1d6+3 bludgeoning
- Heft Crate ◆◆ (manipulate) Requirements The dockhand is adjacent to a crate; Effect The dockhand picks up a crate and heaves it up to 15 feet. Upon landing, the crate breaks open in a 5-foot burst. Each creature within the area takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 13 basic Reflex save), and the area becomes difficult terrain until cleared.
- Swig ↔ (manipulate) The dockhand Interacts to either draw a bottle of alcohol or pick up a nearby unattended bottle of alcohol and drink the whole thing. For 1 minute, the dockhand gains a +2 item bonus to melee damage rolls and saving throws against fear, but they become clumsy 1.

### SCALING ENCOUNTER A

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**12+ Challenge Points:** For every 4 Challenge Points beyond 8, add one dockworker to the encounter.

### **PTIRO VALNER**

#### **CREATURE 1**

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

**Perception** +7 (+8 to find concealed objects)

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +7, Groetus Lore +5, Intimidation +5 Str +4, Dex +2, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha -1

Items crossbow (10 bolts), club, dagger, sap, scale mail, signal

whistle AC 18; Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5

**HP** 20

Attack of Opportunity **P** 

Speed 25 feet

**Melee A** club +9, **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Melee 💠 sap +9 (agile, nonlethal), Damage 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Ranged ◆ crossbow +7 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), Damage 1d8 piercing

Ranged ◆ club +7 (thrown 10 feet), Damage 1d6+4 bludgeoning

### Encounter B: Sermon at the End of the World (Subtier 1–2)

The location on the map where Reast and Groetus's Chosen confront the PCs depends upon which strategy the PCs use to approach the temple and how successfully they carry out their plans. If the PCs were observing from outside, they begin in the location marked "Hiding Spot" (which is elevated 10 feet from the ground) and the enemies begin in the location marked "Gathering Spot"; if the PCs had entered Guiding Light, both they and the enemies begin in the location marked "Gathering Spot." Whatever the location of the battle, Reast prefers to begin combat with magic. If the PCs trigger his swear vengeance reaction, he uses a weapon attack on his next turn to benefit from *true strike*.

#### GROETUS'S CHOSEN

#### **CREATURE -1**

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Perception +2

Languages Common

**Skills** Deception +1, Intimidation +1, Groetus Lore +6, Occultism +1, Society +2, Stealth +4

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

Items dagger, cultist garb (functions as leather armor)

AC 15; Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2 (or +0 vs. higher-ranking members of the cult)

**HP** 20

#### Speed 25 feet

Melee Adagger +6 (agile, versatile S), Damage 1d4+2 piercing

Ranged ◆ dagger +5 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), Damage 1d4+2 piercing

Fanatical Frenzy ◆ Requirements The cultist has taken damage and is neither fatigued nor already in a frenzy; Effect The cultist flies into a frenzy that lasts 1 minute. While frenzied, the cultist gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and a +2 status bonus to damage rolls, and they take a -2 status penalty to AC. The cultist can't voluntarily stop their frenzy. After their frenzy, the cultist is fatigued.

### SCALING ENCOUNTER B

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**10+ Challenge Points:** For every 2 Challenge Points beyond 8, add one of Groetus's Chosen to the encounter.

### REAST MYCER

#### **CREATURE 2**

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +10

Languages Common

**Skills** Diplomacy +8, Performance +8 (+10 to give sermons), Religion +7, Survival +7

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

**Items** flail, manifesto (functions as religious text), pouch of rocks, robes

**AC** 17; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11 **HP** 24

**Swear Vengeance** Trigger A creature that Reast can see damages a follower of Groetus other than Reast; Effect Reast gains the effect of a 1st-level *true strike* spell. If Reast makes an attack roll against anyone other than the triggering creature, the *true strike* ends with no effect. Reast can use this reaction once per day.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ flail +9 (disarm, sweep, trip), Damage 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Melee I fist +9 (agile, nonlethal), Damage 1d4+3 bludgeoning

Ranged ◆ rock +7 (thrown 10 feet), Damage 1d4+3 bludgeoning

**Divine Spontaneous Spells** DC 18, attack +10; **1st** (4 slots) bane, harm, ray of enfeeblement, sanctuary; **Cantrips (1st)** daze, detect magic, guidance, know direction, light, prestidigitation, read aura

### Encounter C2: The Grand Hall (Subtier 1-2)

Ahksiva appears in the form of a human woman. If she expects the PCs, she casts *invisibility* on Little Zura and any other slurks added by this encounter's scaling before the PCs arrive. She also has Little Zura place belly grease at strategic places on the floor to inhibit the PCs' mobility.

In combat, she primarily attacks in melee with her claws. Filled with rage that the PCs have dared to interfere with her schemes, she fights to the death. Little Zura attempts to harry the PCs with slime squirt and belly grease, but once Ahshiva has taken 15 or more points of damage, he switches to flanking with Ahksiva and attacking with his tusks.

As the PCs by now have likely surmised that Ahksiva is an enemy, her Betraying Touch ability likely does not work on them.

### **AHKSIVA**

#### CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HAG HUMANOIC

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Jotun; tongues

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Arcana +10, Diplomacy +9, Nature +7, Occultism +7, Stealth +8

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

**Coven** Ahksiva adds entangle, outcast's curse, and wall of thorns to her coven's spells.

**AC** 19; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10, +1 status to all saves vs. magic **HP** 55; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

**Sound Imitation** A green hag who succeeds at a Deception check to Lie can mimic the sounds of any animal found near her lair. She has a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

Speed 25 feet, swim 25 feet

- Melee ◆ claw +12 (agile, magical), Damage 1d10+4 slashing plus enfeebling humors
- Occult Innate Spells DC 19, attack +13; 2nd invisibility (at will), tree shape (at will); Cantrips (2nd) acid splash, dancing lights, ghost sound, message; Constant (5th) tongues; (2nd) water breathing; (1st) pass without trace
- **Betraying Touch** ◆ Ahksiva touches a creature that doesn't realize she is an enemy. The betrayed creature is affected by her enfeebling humors and takes a -4 circumstance penalty to their saving throw against that effect.
- **Change Shape** ◆ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) Ahksiva can take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid woman. This doesn't change her Speed or her attack and damage bonuses with her Strikes, but might change the damage type her Strikes deal (typically to bludgeoning).
- **Enfeebling Humors** (necromancy, occult) A creature damaged by a hag's claw must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or be enfeebled 1 for 1 day. On a critical failure, or if it gets hit again and fails its save a second time, it's enfeebled 2 for 1 day.

### **SCALING ENCOUNTER C2**

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**11+ Challenge Points:** For every 3 Challenge Points beyond 8, add another slurk to the encounter, using the statistics for Little Zura. These additional slurks prefer making tusk attacks to using their other abilities.

Exhale Miasma ↔ (necromancy, occult) Ahksiva exhales a miasma of green vapors. Each living creature in a 15-foot cone is affected by her enfeebling humors (attempting a save as normal). She can't use Exhale Miasma again for 1d4 rounds.

### LITTLE ZURA

**CREATURE 1** 

#### UNIQUE N MEDIUM ANIMAL

Perception +5; darkvision

Languages Draconic (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +5 (+7 to Escape), Athletics +7, Stealth +4

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

**AC** 15; **Fort** +9 (+11 vs. Grapple or Shove), **Ref** +5, **Will** +3 **HP** 24

**Speed** 30 feet, climb 30 feet

Melee  $\clubsuit$  tusks +9 (deadly 1d10), Damage 1d6+2 piercing

Ranged ◆ slime squirt +7 (range increment 30 feet), Effect entangling slime

- **Belly Grease** The slurk extrudes a slippery grease from its ventral glands to coat the floor under it and in a 5-foot emanation, turning the affected area into uneven ground for 10 minutes, after which it dries to a putrid crust. The DC to Balance across the slime is 17.
- **Entangling Slime** A creature struck by a slurk's slime squirt becomes clumsy 1 and takes a -5-foot penalty to Speed for 1 hour or until the slime is removed. The slime can be removed with a total of three Interact actions by the entangled creature or creatures adjacent to the creature. These actions don't need to be consecutive or made by the same creature.

### APPENDIX 2: SUBTIER 3-4 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario. These encounters are written for four 3rd-level PCs. If your group has a different composition or size, refer to the Challenge Points section of GM References (page 28) for instructions on how to use the scaling sidebars to adjust the encounters for your group.

If a creature is marked "(0)," don't include it in the encounter unless otherwise specified (likely from the scaling sidebars).

### Encounter A: Failing the Investigation (Subtier 3-4)

Ptiro has planned an ambush for the nosy interlopers and begins it by yelling at them to halt. Ptiro claims they failed to properly register themselves when arriving in town and that they owe him substantial penalties. This is just a distraction, however—as he draws their attention, one or more disgruntled dockworkers, also members of the cult, move to attack. As the cultists worship the god of endings, they fight until knocked out or incapacitated.

The area has several crates that dockworkers can use their Heft Crate ability on. These are marked on the map with "C".

### DOCKHAND CULTISTS (2)

### **CREATURE 0**

CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +3

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +3, Athletics +5, Groetus Lore +4, Intimidation +3

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

Items empty bottle (3), leather armor, whiskey (1 bottle) AC 14; Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3

HP 20

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ fist +7 (agile, nonlethal), Damage 1d4+3 bludgeoning
 Ranged ◆ bottle +5 (agile, thrown 20 feet), Damage 1d6+3 bludgeoning

- Heft Crate ◆◆ (manipulate) Requirements The dockhand is adjacent to a crate; Effect The dockhand picks up a crate and heaves it up to 15 feet. Upon landing, the crate breaks open in a 5-foot burst. Each creature within the area takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 13 basic Reflex save), and the area becomes difficult terrain until cleared.
- Swig ↔ (manipulate) The dockhand Interacts to either draw a bottle of alcohol or pick up a nearby unattended bottle of alcohol and drink the whole thing. For 1 minute, the dockhand gains a +2 item bonus to melee damage rolls and saving throws against fear, but they become clumsy 1.

### SCALING ENCOUNTER A

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**19+ Challenge Points:** For every 3 Challenge Points beyond 16, add one dockhand cultist to the encounter.

### **PTIRO VALNER**

#### **CREATURE 3**

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

**Perception** +9 (+10 to find concealed objects)

Languages Common

**Skills** Athletics +11, Diplomacy +5, Groetus Lore +5, Intimidation +7

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

**Items** club, crossbow (20 bolts), keyring, simple manacles, signal whistle, studded leather armor

AC 20; Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +7

**HP** 45

Attack of Opportunity [reaction]

Speed 25 feet

- Melee 🔶 club +11, Damage 1d6+8 bludgeoning
- Ranged ◆ crossbow +10 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), Damage 1d8+4 piercing
- Melee ◆ club +10 (thrown 10 feet), Damage 1d6+6 bludgeoning
- Efficient Capture (attack, manipulate) Requirements Ptiro has manacles in hand and is adjacent to a creature; Effect Ptiro attempts to bind the creature's wrists or ankles with the manacles. If Ptiro succeeds at an attack roll with a +9 modifier against the target's AC, he apply the manacles.
- Intimidating Strike (emotion, fear, fighter, mental) Ptiro makes a melee Strike. If it hits and deals damage, the target is frightened 1, or frightened 2 on a critical hit.
- **Subdue Prisoners** Ptiro doesn't take the normal penalty for making a nonlethal attack when attacking with his club.

### Encounter B: Sermon at the End of the World (Subtier 3-4)

The location on the map where Reast and Groetus's Chosen confront the PCs depends upon which strategy the PCs use to approach the temple and how successfully they carry out their plans. If the PCs were observing from outside, they begin in the location marked "Hiding Spot" (which is elevated 10 feet from the ground) and the enemies begin in the location marked "Gathering Spot"; if the PCs had entered Guiding Light, both they and the enemies begin in the location marked "Gathering Spot." Whatever the location of the battle, Reast prefers to begin combat with magic. If the PCs trigger his Swear Vengeance reaction, he often uses a weapon attack on his next turn to benefit from *true strike*.

### GROETUS'S CHOSEN

#### **CREATURE 1**

CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +4

Languages Common

**Skills** Deception +3, Intimidation +3, Groetus Lore +8, Occultism +3, Society +4, Stealth +6

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

Items dagger, cultist garb (functions as leather armor)

AC 17; Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +4 (or +2 vs. higher-ranking members of the cult)

HP 20

#### Speed 25 feet

Melee 💠 dagger +7 (agile, versatile S), Damage 1d4+4 piercing

Ranged ◆ dagger +6 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), Damage 1d4+4 piercing

Fanatical Frenzy ◆ Requirements The cultist has taken damage and is neither fatigued nor already in a frenzy; Effect The cultist flies into a frenzy that lasts 1 minute. While frenzied, the cultist gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and a +2 status bonus to damage rolls, and they take a -2 status penalty to AC. The cultist can't voluntarily stop their frenzy. After their frenzy, the cultist is fatigued.

### SCALING ENCOUNTER B

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**20+ Challenge Points:** For every 4 Challenge Points beyond 16, add one of Groetus's Chosen to the encounter.

### **REAST MYCER**

### **CREATURE 4**

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +9

Languages Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Deception +10, Intimidation +10, Religion +10, Society +7

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

- **Items** composite shortbow (20 arrows), flail, half plate, steel shield (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10)
- AC 22 (24 with shield raised); Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +11 HP 58

#### Shield Block ${f Q}$

Swear Vengeance → Trigger A creature Reast can see damages a follower of Groetus other than the zealot; Effect Reast gains the effect of a 1st-level *true strike* spell. If Reast makes an attack roll against anyone other than the triggering creature, the *true strike* ends with no effect.

Speed 20 feet

- Melee ◆ flail +12 (disarm, sweep, trip), Damage 1d6+6 bludgeoning
- Ranged ◆ composite shortbow +9 (deadly 1d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), Damage 1d6+2 piercing
- **Divine Prepared Spells** DC 19, attack +11; **2nd** harm (×3), restoration, see invisibility, shield other; **1st** detect alignment, magic weapon, spirit link; **Cantrips (2nd)** detect magic, divine lance, forbidding ward, read aura, sigil
- **Channel Smite** (divine, necromancy) Reast expends a prepared *harm* spell and makes a melee Strike. Instead of the normal effect of the spell, its negative damage is added to the Strike's damage.

### Encounter C2: The Grand Hall (Subtier 3-4)

Ahksiva appears in the form of a human woman. If she expects the PCs, she casts *invisibility* on Little Zura and any other slurks added by this encounter's scaling before the PCs arrive. She also has Little Zura place belly grease at strategic places on the floor to inhibit the PCs' mobility.

In combat, she primarily attacks in melee with her claws. Filled with rage that the PCs have dared to interfere with her schemes, she fights to the death. Little Zura attempts to harry the PCs with slime squirt and belly grease, but once Ahshiva has taken 15 or more points of damage, he switches to flanking with Ahksiva and attacking with his tusks.

As the PCs by now have likely surmised that Ahksiva is an enemy, her Betraying Touch ability likely does not work on them.

#### **AHKSIVA**

**CREATURE 5** 

#### UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HAG HUMANOID

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Jotun; tongues

Skills Acrobatics +11, Arcana +13, Diplomacy +12, Nature +10, Occultism +10, Stealth +11

Str +5, Dex +4, Con +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +5

- **Coven** Ahksiva adds *entangle*, *outcast's curse*, and *wall of thorns* to her coven's spells.
- AC 22; Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +13, +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 90; Weaknesses cold iron 5

Sound Imitation A green hag who succeeds at a Deception check to Lie can mimic the sounds of any animal found near her lair. She has a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

Speed 25 feet, swim 25 feet

- Melee claw +15 (agile, magical), Damage 1d10+7 slashing plus enfeebling humors
- Occult Innate Spells DC 21, attack +15; 2nd invisibility (at will), tree shape (at will); Cantrips (3rd) acid splash, dancing lights, ghost sound, message; Constant (5th) tongues; (2nd) water breathing; (1st) pass without trace
- **Betraying Touch** ◆ Ahksiva touches a creature that doesn't realize she is an enemy. The betrayed creature is affected by her enfeebling humors and takes a -4 circumstance penalty to their saving throw against that effect.
- **Change Shape** ◆ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) Ahksiva can take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid woman. This doesn't change her Speed or her attack and damage bonuses with her Strikes, but might change the damage type her Strikes deal (typically to bludgeoning).

### **SCALING ENCOUNTER C2**

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**22+ Challenge Points:** For every 6 Challenge Points beyond 16, add another slurk to the encounter, using the statistics for Little Zura. These additional slurks prefer making tusk attacks to using their other abilities.

- **Enfeebling Humors** (necromancy, occult) A creature damaged by a hag's claw must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or be enfeebled 1 for 1 day. On a critical failure, or if it gets hit again and fails its save a second time, it's enfeebled 2 for 1 day.
- Exhale Miasma ↔ (necromancy, occult) Ahksiva exhales a miasma of green vapors. Each living creature in a 15-foot cone is affected by her enfeebling humors (attempting a save as normal). She can't use Exhale Miasma again for 1d4 rounds.

### LITTLE ZURA

#### UNIQUE N MEDIUM ANIMAL

Perception +7; darkvision

Languages Draconic (can't speak any language)

**Skills** Acrobatics +8 (+10 to Escape), Athletics +10, Stealth +7 **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0

**CREATURE 3** 

AC 18; Fort +11 (+13 vs. Grapple or Shove), Ref +7, Will +5 HP 52

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet

Melee  $\clubsuit$  tusks +12 (deadly 1d10), Damage 1d8+6 piercing

- Ranged ◆ slime squirt +10 (range increment 30 feet), Effect entangling slime
- **Belly Grease** The slurk extrudes a slippery grease from its ventral glands to coat the floor under it and in a 5-foot emanation, turning the affected area into uneven ground for 10 minutes, after which it dries to a putrid crust. The DC to Balance across the slime is 20.
- **Entangling Slime** A creature struck by a slurk's slime squirt becomes clumsy 1 and takes a -5-foot penalty to Speed for 1 hour or until the slime is removed. The slime can be removed with a total of three Interact actions by the entangled creature or creatures adjacent to the creature. These actions don't need to be consecutive or made by the same creature.

### **APPENDIX 3: ART & HANDOUT**



GROETUS'S CHOSEN

Pathfinder Society Scenario







Pathfinder Society Scenario

### HANDOUT #1: CULT PAMPHLET

Are you alone? Do you feel left behind? Cassomir seems to be changing faster than ever. What can you do when your nation has forgotten you? In the end, all of us will find new beginnings Next sundown, present this pamphlet at Guiding Light Come hear the glorious message of Prophet Ahksiva

### **GM REFERENCES**

### TREASURE TABLE

Level	Treasure Bundle
1	1.4 gp
2	2.2 gp
3	3.8 gp
4	6.4 gp

### **Chronicle Sheet**

If the PCs defeat Ahksiva, all PCs earn the Doom Averted boon.

### **TREASURE BUNDLES:**

Note that the PCs cannot earn Treasure Bundles in both Combing Through the Muck and Area A.

□□□ Combing Through the Muck, page 6: 3 Treasure Bundles

□□ Area A, page 7: 2 Treasure Bundles

□□□Area **B**, page 11: 3 Treasure Bundles

□□□□ Area C, page 14: 4 Treasure Bundles

### **CHALLENGE POINTS PER PC**

Level	Challenge Points
1	2
2	3
3	4
4	6

### **CHALLENGE POINTS AND SUBTIER**

CP Total	Subtier
8-14	1-2
16-18 (5+ players)	1-2
16-18 (4 players)	3-4
19+	3-4

### **Challenge Points**

Challenge Points are a system for scaling the difficulty of encounters appropriately for groups of mixed size and level. Total up the number of Challenge Points your group has, using the Challenge Points per PC table above.

Then use the Challenge Points and Subtier table to determine which Subtier is appropriate for your PCs. Subtier 1–2 encounters appear in Appendix 1, and Subtier 3–4 encounters appear in Appendix 2.

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### **Event Reporting Form**

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Event Code:

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Bonus Faction Goal Achieved:	□ Yes	🗆 No	□ N/A	Scenario-based II	nfamy earned?	□ Yes □ No	□ N/A	
						action:		
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Character Chronicle #

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				Faction	Reputation
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				Faction	Reputation
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