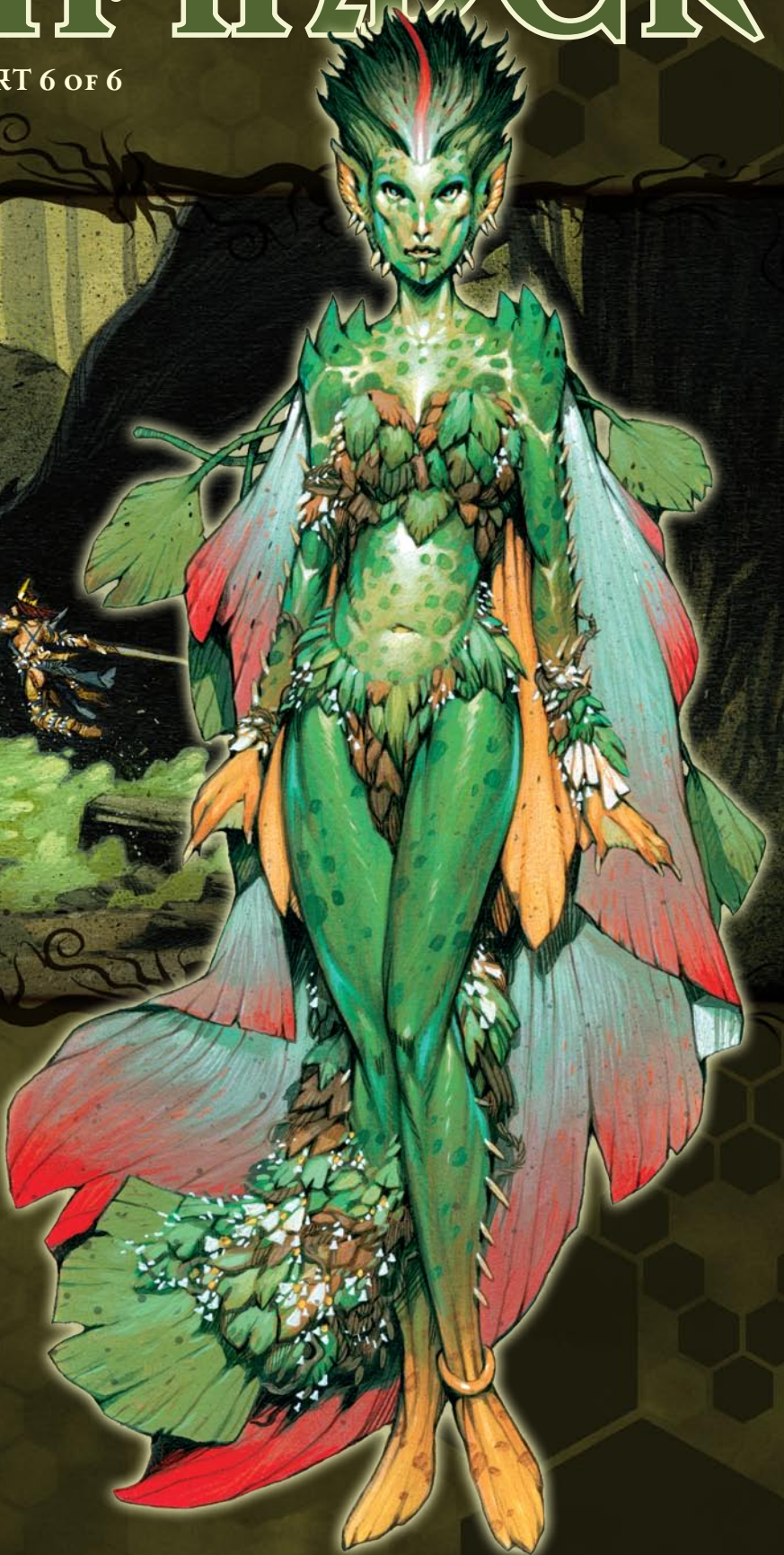


PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH PART 6 OF 6



Kingmaker

SOUND OF A THOUSAND SCREAMS

by Richard Pett



CHASING LIGHTNING

Source: A traveling druid.

Task: Vezakus Windthorn, a traveling druid who has come to the region to observe the strange bleeming manifestations of the First World, seeks bark samples of lightning-scarred treants. These monsters, the druid believes, are more common in the First World, and he would like to study how lightning causes the treant to transform into a strange new form of life.

Completion: Secure a lightning treant bark sample.

Reward: A wand of barkskin (CL 12th, 20 charges).



BOTTLED ESSENCE

Source: A strange tiefling wizard.

Task: Anamar Lellewen wants to know why some fiends, when they perish in strange corners of the multiverse, become devourers. He is willing to pay handsomely for a vial of depleted essence (essentially blood) from a powerful devourer that perished in the First World.

Completion: Find a devourer in the First World, kill it, and bottle a sample of essence.

Reward: A scarab of protection with 9 charges.



STOP THE ETTINS!

Source: Reports from the field.

Task: Reports from a nearby fort claim that a dozen ettins led by a helmed satyr have been causing problems. While their leader is intimidating, it's the twelve ettins who have been doing the most physical damage. Stop them before they cause any more devastation!

Completion: Defeat all twelve of the ettins.

Reward: The defeat of the murderous ettins raises the kingdom's spirits, resulting in Stability and Loyalty increasing by +2 each.



A "LITTLE" LINNORM

Source: A curious scholar.

Task: Not all linnorms are equally huge. Rarely, one of these dragons doesn't grow to full size.

Tarlen Zheed, a noted scholar of all things draconic, would like to see proof. If one could find a linnorm runt, Tarlen promises a significant reward for the delivery of samples of its blood, flesh, teeth, and eyes.

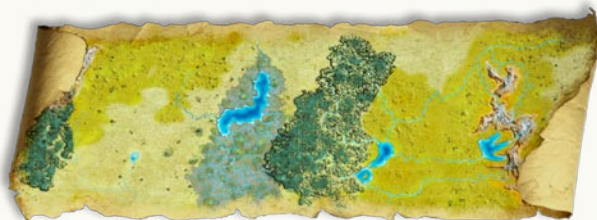
Completion: Slay a linnorm runt and collect the parts.

Reward: 4,000 gp.



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ADVENTURE PATH PART 6 of 6



Kingmaker

SOUND OF A THOUSAND SCREAMS





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Editors • Judy Bauer, Christopher Carey, Rob McCreary, and James L. Sutter
Editorial Assistance • Jason Bulmahn, Erik Mona, Sean K Reynolds, and Vic Wertz
Editorial Intern • Patrick Renie
Production Specialist • Crystal Frasier
Publisher • Erik Mona

Cover Artist
Vincent Dutrait

Cartographer
Rob Lazzaretti

Contributing Artists
Eric Belisle, Andrew Hou, Jon Hodgson, Peter Lazarski, Damien Mammoliti,
Sara Otterstätter, Florian Stitz, Francisco Rico Torres, and Tyler Wapole

Contributing Authors
Gareth Hanrahan, Richard Pett, Patrick Renie, F. Wesley Schneider,
James L. Sutter, and Jay Thompson

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Bonus Content!

Wes disapproves when I use the foreword as a sneaky way to put in additional adventure content. Well, not only is that precisely what I'm doing now, but I'm gonna do it again next month!

You see, sometimes when I'm developing an adventure, an idea comes to me that suddenly explodes into a rush of words and ends up being a key part of the adventure. This time around, the creation of *Zuddiger's Picnic* did just that. In the adventure, the PCs might seek out a copy of this relatively rare picture book after learning that it might have some clues pertaining to the realm of Thousandbreaths. Unfortunately for the adventure's word count, the description of the contents of *Zuddiger's Picnic* ended up being well over 1,000 words—as you can see here, that's about a page. I couldn't really justify cutting a page of actual load-bearing content from Rich Pett's adventure, but neither could I bear losing the *Picnic*...

And so, here it is! I hope it does the mad brilliance that Richard Pett brought us with "Sound of a Thousand Screams" proud!

ZUDDIGER'S PICNIC

If the PCs seek out a copy of this rare book, they'll be rewarded with an important guide to Thousandbreaths. *Zuddiger's Picnic* is a short picture book, written and published in Pitax 42 years ago. With a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check, the PCs can learn more about its mysterious author and history.

The author and artist of this book was a talented painter named Karn Zuddiger. His inspiration for this book was not imagination but the result of an actual horrific and frenzied accidental journey through Thousandbreaths. This adventure and his miraculous escape did not leave him unscathed—mad with inspiration, he spent the next 3 years of his life crafting the woodcut illustrations and story for *Zuddiger's Picnic*, hoping to drive out the images in his head with art.

Only a month after the book's publication, however, Zuddiger succumbed to the madness inflicted by his trip through Thousandbreaths—creating the book had not expunged his visions, only inflamed them. He went on a

killing spree, murdering a new victim every week and using the remains to restage scenes from his illustrations for the citizenry of Pitax to find the next morning. He was caught soon enough and swiftly executed, and the majority of his books were burned by shocked and scandalized parents.

Since then, *Zuddiger's Picnic* has become a highly sought-after collectible. The PCs can locate a copy by making a DC 35 Diplomacy check to gather information—a copy of the rare text is worth 1,500 gp. The contents of *Zuddiger's Picnic* are summarized below. Lines in italics indicate lines of the story that appear on the left-hand pages, while the words that follow the story's line describe the facing woodcut illustration.

Page 1: This page is blank save for a tiny woodcut illustration of a young man and a crow sharing a picnic lunch and a single line of text that reads, “*All of what follows is true.*”

Pages 2–3: *I was having a picnic that first day of spring when a pesky crow flew down and stole my spoon.* Zuddiger jumps up and down and waves a sword in anger while a crow flies away into the woods, a spoon clutched in its beak. The jar of raspberry preserves Zuddiger had been about to spoon onto a biscuit lies neglected on the ground. In the background, a scary castle with knife-like towers protrudes above the treetops.

Pages 4–5: *The nasty bird flew into the trees and then through a gate, but I followed with haste.* Zuddiger runs down a forest path that passes through an immense iron gate flanked by iron statues of beautiful women.

Pages 6–7: *He flew over a swirling lake, and the black swans honked at him in anger.* Zuddiger races along the edge of a lake, the center of which is a whirlpool and on which float several black swans.

Pages 8–9: *I chased him through a garden and tried not to disturb the locals.* Zuddiger races through a garden of strange fungus and a carpet of tiny, misshapen, vegetable-like humanoids that crawl and run from him; the crow perches atop a mushroom and watches.

Pages 10–11: *Unfortunately, some of the locals were already disturbed.* Zuddiger climbs into a leaf-shaped boat on a river while an angry flying owl intercepts the crow's flight, forcing the smaller bird to veer away downriver. In the background, two immense stone hands at the top of a cliff seem to pour a waterfall into the river below.

Pages 12–13: *It got very cold and my boat froze, so I had to chase the crow through the graveyard on foot.* Zuddiger chases the crow through a snowy graveyard, the gravestones of which are three times as tall as they should be. His boat is frozen in a lake in the background, and the shadowy form of a four-armed giant seems to rise up beyond a large crypt to watch the chase.

Pages 14–15: *But the crow had an older brother.* Zuddiger cowers in a large forest clearing at the center of which is a large stone spire. The crow hovers near the top and points

down at Zuddiger with a wingtip while the “older brother,” an immense crow perched atop the spire, peers down with angry eyes.

Pages 16–17: *I was beginning to worry that I would not be able to finish my picnic after all.* The bigger crow clutches Zuddiger in its talons and flies over a swamp filled with scary worms that rise up to bite at Zuddiger's feet; the smaller crow flaps along behind the bigger bird, spoon still clutched in its beak.

Pages 18–19: *Fortunately, I landed on something soft.* The giant bird and the crow fly off into the sky laughing as Zuddiger, recently dropped, lands on the belly of a particularly hideous troll. In the background rises an iron cage shaped like a beehive, from which dozens of smiling but disembodied faces shine down.

Pages 20–21: *And also fortunately, I'm faster and craftier than a silly old troll.* Zuddiger sneaks down a forest path; the angry troll is far behind. The troll carries a large ranseur and is climbing around on a crooked house as if he's looking for Zuddiger among the house's dozens of mismatched roofs.

Pages 22–23: *But I still didn't have my spoon.* Zuddiger wanders forlornly through a forest glade filled with statues; in the background, a tall tower rises from a round hilltop.

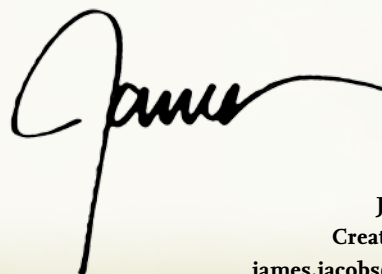
Pages 24–25: *As it turned out, neither did that nasty crow!* An elated Zuddiger finds the crow caught by a beautiful woman—she holds the spoon in one hand and a scared crow in the other. In the background, a strange house looms on an island.

Pages 26–27: *So I traded my sword for a spoon and a bird.* The now smiling woman gives a grinning Zuddiger the spoon and the crow and accepts his sword as a gift.

Pages 28–29: *And made it back home in time for dinner.* Zuddiger, spoon in one hand and the tied-up crow tucked under an arm, walks down another forest path, at the end of which can be seen his picnic basket, blanket, and raspberry preserves sitting patiently in a clearing.

Pages 30–31: *It was the best picnic ever.* Zuddiger sits down to a picnic meal of raspberry preserves while a delicious-looking crow roasts over an open fire.

Page 32: The last page of the book presents a full-color, hand-painted map of Thousandbreaths—you can present this map (reproduced on page 25) to the PCs as a handout if you wish.



James Jacobs
Creative Director
james.jacobs@paizo.com



Sound of a Thousand Screams

Do not fear these uncertain times, my friends. This is not a new age of lost omens, but a new age of hope and freedom! We have seen the results of prophecy too many times before, and those who believe the future is preordained are but fated to set their own fates in stone. For yea, those who would look to tomorrow are destined to create that tomorrow, and those who would cast their stones to seek enlightenment from the spirits of the future do not know that they only slave their will to destiny. Only those who wake to each new day with eyes shrouded to their fate are truly free to forge their own destinies. And now, in this new age of hope, we shall all forge our own fates!

—Hadkathos Vanshivilae,
two weeks before his execution for heresy

Advancement Track

“Sound of a Thousand Screams” assumes four player characters using the medium advancement track for XP. Characters should be well into 15th level when they begin this adventure—if they’re still a bit shy from 15th level, consider giving them a few more years of kingdom expansion and exploration before you begin this adventure. By the time the PCs are ready to enter the First World, they should be 16th level, and they should reach 17th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The words on the preceding page were first spoken by Hadkathos Vanshavilae, a priest of Pharasma, in his sermon to a frightened mass in Ustalav’s city of Caliphass after the onset of the Age of Lost Omens. Hadkathos taught that only by leaving the future unforeseen and prophecy unspoken can mortals truly shape their destinies, for only when the future is unknown can hope and free will survive. Alas, his church was not ready for his wisdom, and he was burned at the stake only 2 weeks later for heresy. Yet his words held a core of wisdom that the nymph queen Nyriisa could well have learned from—that to look into the future and to see one’s fate is a sure way to meet it. Nyriisa has long known that heroes would come to her home and defeat her with a sword forged from her own fractured spirit, and though she has hoped that this vision—this prophecy—was but a nightmare, it was not until the Age of Lost Omens brought an end to the tyranny of prophecy that she began to feel hope that her future was not writ in stone.

Yet she is taking no chances. In order to fully render this vision of her own death impossible, she hopes to reclaim the sword *Briar*, to mend her own shattered mind and spirit, and to remove from existence the very weapon so long ago foretold to herald her death. Yet in taking these steps to destroy *Briar*, she may have empowered the very heroes that could be her undoing.

Nyriisa has not always been a power in the First World, but when she fell in love with one of the realm’s Eldest, Count Ranalc, she forever changed her place in this reality. Touched by Count Ranalc, Nyriisa grew in power rapidly, yet this power also corrupted her, as power is wont to do. She began to think of herself as the newest of the Eldest, and worse, proclaimed this power to any who would listen, beginning to build her own empire in the First World—a realm she named Thousandbreaths. The other Eldest did not react well to Nyriisa’s bold claims, and sent one of their monstrous champions, the Tane known as the Jabberwock, to slay her. Nyriisa escaped the monster, but in so doing fell into the clutches of the Eldest. Their judgment was swift—they tore from her mind and spirit her capacity to love, coalesced these powerful and deadly emotions into physical reality in the shape of a magical sword called *Briar*, and then cast the sword into the Material Plane where the nature of reality would hide *Briar* forever beyond Nyriisa’s sight. Their punishment extended to their fellow Eldest

as well, whom they suspected had used Nyriisa all along as an experiment. Count Ranalc was sent into exile in the Shadow Plane, eventually to meet his own humiliating fate (see page 67).

The matter settled, the Eldest quickly moved on with their own inscrutable agendas. Yet while they seemed to forget about what they’d done to Nyriisa, the nymph herself did not. As the ages wore on, she grew more and more obsessed with her loss of love—or perhaps it was the loss of love that caused her to grow more violent and obsessed. In her early attempts to discover the location of *Briar*, she received the visions and prophecies that would come to haunt her so—that *Briar* would be returned to her, but only as an instrument of her own death, wielded in the hands of a mortal hero. Regardless, Nyriisa began the long task of shaping Thousandbreaths and wearing down the boundaries between it and the Material Plane, so that someday the boundary between realities would crack and the region known as the Stolen Lands would bloom with life as it and Thousandbreaths merged. The War of the River Kings was but one of the steps toward this goal—by weakening the kingdoms that occupy the land she wishes to claim, she weakens the opposition to her goal. Now that both kingdoms are reeling in the aftermath of their war, Nyriisa prepares to draw the Stolen Lands into her realm and bottle it, an act that will leave a wasteland on the Material Plane and give her the perfect gift or bribe to repair the damage her reputation suffered with the Eldest. That her acts will destroy a significant region on Golarion is irrelevant to the loveless nymph—for in her obsession, she fails to see that these acts may be the very thing that drives the enemies from her vision to slay her.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure begins after the War of the River Kings has ended—the PCs, be they the war’s victors or losers, are faced with the task of rebuilding their kingdom or perhaps helping to rebuild Pitax. Yet soon after the war is over, a new peril strikes the region as strange monsters and violent bursts of rapid vegetation growth and bizarre weather plagues the Stolen Lands. At the same time, the PCs learn that one of the treasures discovered in Pitax’s House is a nascent *vorpal sword*, a weapon of immense power, and as the strange weather and blooms of life and monstrous incursions increase, so does this sword’s intelligence and power.

The PCs soon learn that their kingdom faces an invasion, but this time not from the physical world. Some fell force from the legendary First World is attempting to expand into this world, and when the PCs begin to fight back against these verdant blooms, they discover that it's possible to step from this world into the First World realm of Thousandbreaths. There, the PCs face powerful new threats unlike anything they've seen before, and learn that the dangers facing their kingdom are even greater than they feared, for the fey ruler of Thousandbreaths is about to absorb the Stolen Lands into a bauble for her own purposes, an act that would scour clean the region and leave behind nothing but a wasteland.

If the PCs hope to save their new kingdom from this threat, they must combat the nymph queen Nyrissa both by stopping the various blooms in their kingdom and by traveling into Thousandbreaths itself to confront the dangerously insane nymph.

QUESTS

Eight quests appear on the inside covers of this book, additional opportunities for the PCs to earn some rewards and XP by accomplishing great deeds. Unlike previous installments in the Kingmaker Adventure Path, no additional quests beyond these eight await discovery—in “Sound of a Thousand Screams,” the PCs have but one primary goal: the defeat of the nymph queen Nyrissa.

Each of the Thousandbreaths Quests presented in this book is worth 102,400 XP when completed—this amount is in addition to any experience points the PCs might earn while attempting to complete the quest.

PART ONE: A MONTH OF DESTRUCTION

Although “Sound of a Thousand Screams” assumes that the events begin soon after those of “War of the River Kings” ends, you can, of course, alter the start of this adventure as you see fit. Certainly, if the PCs’ kingdom hasn’t yet grown to span all four regions of the Stolen Lands, you’ll want to run a few more years of kingdom growth until the PCs’ kingdom covers a wide enough area that when Nyrissa starts her assault, the PCs will be compelled to oppose her.

The intrusion of the First World into the Stolen Lands can be thought of rather like a levee breaking. At first, the appalling weight of the First World strains at this levee like the weight of a mighty river straining to flood the surrounding kingdom. Early bloom events occur at a trickle as the First World seeps slowly into the lands of humanity. These trickles quickly become full-fledged breaches as the blooms pour forth into the region, and

as these breaches grow, the strength of the monsters and strange weather increases as well, eventually culminating in the arrival of a deadly predator from the First World—a lesser jabberwock spawned from the blood of the most legendary Tane of them all.

DENIZENS OF THE FIRST WORLD

In this adventure, many of the monsters the PCs face are more powerful than their Material Plane versions. Statistics for these creatures have been generated by simply advancing existing monstrous stat blocks through the addition of several Hit Dice, and in some cases increasing size. All of these monsters possess at least one additional physical power as well, be it an extra set of arms or a long prehensile tongue or wings capable of flight. No monstrous template, simple or complex, is provided to allow GMs to create new First World monsters, because no two such monsters should be exactly the same. It’s better to simply advance these monsters by 10–20 HD and give them a new ability of your choosing if you’re looking to build new First World opponents; the rules for advancing monsters and creating new monsters in the Appendices of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* provide a wealth of advice on the subject.

BRIAR

At the end of the previous adventure, the PCs likely recovered a powerful magic sword from a hidden chamber below Irovetti’s Palace—a +4 *bastard sword* named *Briar*. This sword was formed ages ago by the Eldest after they tore from Nyrissa’s mind and spirit her capability to love—they transformed this emotional energy into a sword and cast it into the Material Plane, making the sword effectively invisible and undetectable to Nyrissa. She’s had agents scouring the River Kingdoms for the sword for ages, but servants of the Eldest have done their best to counter her efforts, resulting in a stalemate that persisted until recently, when Irovetti’s agents found the sword. The ex-king of Pitax kept the discovery secret, hoping to save the revelation of its discovery for a point in the future when he desperately needed Nyrissa’s aid—unfortunately for him, he waited just a bit too long to send word to her, and he paid for this mistake with the loss of his kingdom.

If the PCs haven’t discovered *Briar*, you should give them a chance to do so by letting them further explore Irovetti’s Palace. Alternatively, the sword could be recovered by the Horned Hunt (see page 13), and these hunters could be on their way back to deliver the sword to Nyrissa when the PCs encounter them.

As a +4 *bastard sword*, *Briar* is already rather powerful. Yet the weapon has much more potential than this—as the First World begins to intrude into the Stolen Lands, and as the PCs slay creatures from that dimension with the sword,

Briar slowly but surely regains its true powers. At its height an intelligent *vorpal sword*, *Briar* is also a deadly weapon against its source—the nymph queen Nyrissa. Since *Briar* is a key part of this adventure, you should consider changing it from a bastard sword into some other weapon if no one in your campaign uses swords—the point is to give the PCs a weapon they can use, not to punish them for deciding to build characters who focus on other types of weapons. Note that *Briar* is a *vorpal* weapon, so it should be a slashing weapon if possible—if this isn't possible, you can allow it to function identically to a *vorpal* weapon but with a change in flavor. A *Briar* that inflicts piercing damage might be called a *brainstriking weapon*, while a *Briar* that inflicts bludgeoning damage might be called a *skullsmashing weapon*—in both cases, it instantly slays a creature it strikes with a confirmed critical after a natural 20 in the same way a *vorpal* weapon does, but with slightly different gory effects.

The process of awakening *Briar* requires that the weapon be present when First World blooms are defeated or when powerful creatures from the First World are slain—*Briar* need not be the weapon that defeats a bloom or slays a monster, but it should be in the immediate area (within 100 feet). Defeating a bloom or slaying a CR 15 or greater monster from the First World (this includes all creatures closely associated with a bloom, unless otherwise indicated in the text) gives *Briar* a sharpness point. As it accumulates these points, it gains additional powers, as detailed below.

Regardless of its sharpness points, *Briar* is considered to be a major artifact for the purposes of *detect magic*, and all effects created by it function at CL 20th. *Briar's* abilities can be discerned via divination magic such as *legend lore* or simply by speaking with the nereid Evindra (see below). A DC 35 Spellcraft check identifies the powers of the sword, including the fact that it has the potential to gain more powers, although the methods by which it gains Sharpness Points is something the PCs will need to learn from more powerful divinations, discussions with Evindra, or simple experimentation.

Empathy: When *Briar* gains 4 Sharpness Points, it becomes intelligent. It becomes chaotic neutral, can communicate via empathy, and has Int 10, Wis 10, and Cha 16. Its senses extend to 30 feet, and it can cast *barkskin* on its wielder 3/day.

Speech: When *Briar* gains 8 Sharpness Points, it can communicate via speech and can speak Aklo, Common, and Sylvan. Its senses extend to 60 feet and it gains darkvision. It can now cast *blight* 3/day as a swift action upon a creature it strikes in combat.

Telepathy: When *Briar* gains 14 Sharpness Points, It can communicate via telepathy. Its senses extend to 120 feet. It gains a special purpose to defeat denizens of the First

Kingdom in the Background

“Sound of a Thousand Screams” occurs after the bulk of the kingdom-building aspect of Kingmaker has passed—certainly, the PCs can continue building and expanding their kingdom, but those elements are not directly supported by this final adventure. As a result, if you aren't using the kingdom-building rules, you can run this adventure more or less unchanged. Simply assume that their nation of Narland now covers the majority of all four Stolen Land regions, and that Pitax itself has been annexed by the kingdom (although Narland allows Pitax to more or less carry on with its own self government).

Briar's Awakening

Sharpness

Points	Power Gained
0	+4 <i>bastard sword</i>
1–3	+4 <i>cold iron bastard sword</i>
4–7	+4 <i>intelligent (empathy) cold iron bastard sword</i>
8–13	+4 <i>intelligent (speech) cold iron bastard sword</i>
14–19	+4 <i>intelligent (telepathy) cold iron bastard sword</i>
20 or more	+5 <i>intelligent (telepathy) cold iron vorpal bastard sword</i>

World—when wielded against such creatures, it gains the *vorpal* weapon quality. In addition, it can cast *true resurrection* on its wielder once per month.

Vorpal: When fully awakened at 20 Sharpness Points, *Briar* functions as a *vorpal sword* against all targets. It is unlikely that *Briar* will reach this stage of full awakening until Nyrissa's death, so only if you continue the campaign beyond this last adventure will the PCs have a full *vorpal weapon* at their disposal.

EVINDRA

In the previous adventure, the PCs may have rescued a beautiful fey creature from a prison under a haunted abbey. This is the nereid Evindra—her stats are not reprinted here, but if she remains allied with the PCs and they've finished the quest to recover her missing shawl, you can use her to help the PCs however you wish. She remains quite grateful to the PCs for rescuing her and returning her property, and at the very least she can serve as an excellent source of information about the dangers the PCs will soon face.

Even before the first blooms manifest, Evindra can warn the PCs that a powerful creature from the First World named Nyrissa is likely to come after them now that they've recovered the sword *Briar*. Evindra can explain how, many long years ago, she was charged with watching over *Briar*, and how she eventually lost the weapon. She blames

herself for allowing the weapon to fall into Irovetti's hands, and even though this didn't result in the sword's return to Nyrissa, the close call shames and distresses Evindra for some time. As a result, she wants to stay close by the sword at all times and help the PCs protect it from being reclaimed by Nyrissa.

Evindra can tell the PCs much about both *Briar* and Nyrissa, even though she knows relatively little about the whole.

Briar: Evindra was ordered to watch over the sword *Briar* long ago—she can't remember how long ago, but knows it was before humans first came to the Stolen Lands. Nor can she say much about who set her to the task of watching over the sword—she's certain the shadowy fey worked for those who serve the Eldest of the First World, though, and thus she knew better than to disobey. Those who ordered her to guard *Briar* told her the sword was valuable to an "upstart" named Nyrissa—that this Nyrissa desired the blade greatly, and that the Eldest did not want her to have it. Evindra can confirm to the PCs that *Briar* is a +4 *bastard sword* now, but that its powers would likely start to reawaken once it is exposed to the raw energies of the First World or is used to slay denizens of that realm. While Evindra doesn't know all of *Briar's* potential powers, she does know that, fully awakened, the sword is both intelligent and a *vorpal sword*, among other things. She can also tell the PCs what she knows of the secret history of Whiterose Hill (see pages 28–29 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #35: "War of the River Kings"), although this information has little bearing on the current adventure.

Nyrissa: Evindra knows the legend of how Nyrissa fell in love with one of the Eldest, how the nymph's resulting rise in power led her to proclaim herself one of the rulers of the First World, and how the Eldest reacted by sending the Jabberwock to slay her and exiling her lover from the First World to the Shadow Plane. She knows Nyrissa survived, and suspects she harbors a grudge against the Eldest. She also knows that the nymph queen rules a realm called Thousandbreaths, and that it lies close to the Material Plane in the similarly named Thousand Voices, or Forest of Breath. She knows too that Nyrissa has long had an interest in the Stolen Lands, and that many of the region's fey know of her and fear her—there are even rumors that the nymph queen walks the Stolen Lands now and then, visiting cruelties on those who

annoy her and strange rewards upon those who please her. These rumors make Evindra suspect that there may be some physical connection between the Stolen Lands and the First World—and logic would dictate that a likely place for such a connection to exist would be the depths of the forest of Thousand Voices.

THE BLOOMS BEGIN

Part One of "Sound of a Thousand Screams" is different than most of the Kingmaker Adventure Path—the events of this part occur on a set schedule. In previous adventures, the PCs could afford to take months or even years off during the course of the adventure, especially during periods where the only thing going on was region exploration. If there are still parts of the Stolen Lands the PCs have yet to (and wish to) explore, you should consider delaying this adventure until that itch for exploration is at least scratched, because once Nyrissa's blooms begin to manifest, they come fast and furious. This is by design—the PCs should not have a lot of time to rebuild resources and recover between blooms, since the assault on their kingdom is meant to be a furious one.

The events in this chapter take place over the course of a single month, with only a few days passing between each new manifestation of a bloom. This means that no kingdom management or development can occur once the blooms begin, since a kingdom phase lasts a month.

Of course, assuming the PCs defeat all of the blooms and survive this month of destruction alive and with their kingdom intact, the adventure and campaign can immediately return to a more laconic pace if you desire. After the month of destruction, if the PCs have not yet fully explored Thousandbreaths or defeated Nyrissa, they'll be rewarded for enduring that month by being able to tackle Parts Two and Three of this adventure at a pace of their own choosing—although if they take too long, you should feel free to have Nyrissa start a second or even a third round of blooms.

All of the events detailed in this chapter start with a date listed as "Day 1," "Day 14," "Day 27," and so on. This allows you to pick the start day to be any day you wish—it's convenient if you set Day 1 to be the same as the first day of the month, but not required.

Any firsthand examination of a bloom combined with a DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check is enough to confirm that the incident is caused by a planar breach between the Material Plane and the First World, although the



breach is not large or stable enough to allow creatures from the Material Plane to actually enter the First World. Learning the same information secondhand increases the DC to 35.

Fortunately, as blooms manifest, the PCs can defeat them. The method of defeating each bloom is different for each one. Once a bloom is defeated, the PCs can harvest special trophies (see sidebar) that allow them to enter and navigate Thousandbreaths with increasing ease (note that they'll need at least three such trophies before they can even enter the realm of Thousandbreaths). Of course, defeating blooms and harvesting trophies won't prevent Nyrrissa from eventually stealing the PCs' kingdom, but the more blooms the PCs defeat, the longer it'll take the nymph to achieve this goal.

When a bloom manifests, it does so in a hex located somewhere in the Stolen Lands. Each bloom is assigned a type of hex that it can appear in—the exact hex in which the bloom appears is left to you to determine. You can either randomly determine where a bloom occurs or simply select an area. Once a bloom manifests, it changes the nature of reality in some unique manner within the reach of that hex. Worse, that hex is immediately removed from the PCs' kingdom. This not only reduces the kingdom's size by 1, but also increases Unrest by 1 (or by 4 if the hex contained a city). Any improvements in that hex are lost, including all city-based improvements and modifiers and all special hex features such as resources. If the bloom in the lost hex is defeated, the hex can be reclaimed during the kingdom's Improvement Phase (this counts against the limit on total number of hexes the kingdom can claim in a phase as normal) for a cost of 5 BP (this is greater than the normal cost for reclaiming a hex since the changes and damage done by a bloom require more work to fix).

Once a bloom appears, it spreads at a rate of 1 hex per day. Determine the hex into which the bloom spreads randomly (it can only spread into an adjacent, unbloomed hex). The original hex always remains the core hex in which the mechanism for defeating the bloom remains. When a bloom is defeated, all of the hexes it has spread to revert to normal (but must be reclaimed individually).

Although a newly formed bloom is obvious to those in the hex in which it appears, it sometimes takes time for word to spread. As long as the PCs are active in their kingdoms, though, it should never take more than a few days for news of a bloom to reach their ears. Blooms that manifest in areas that aren't part of their kingdoms, though, can go on for some time before anyone notices. If a bloom manifests in such an area, make a secret Loyalty check for the PCs' kingdom against the kingdom's Control DC. If the check is a success, the PCs hear rumors of the bloom a few days after it manifests, but if the check fails, no one reports the bloom for a month and it spreads. If this

Bloom Trophies

When the PCs successfully defeat a bloom, the strange energies and First World power are released in a dramatic way. The energy that suffuses the area rises up from the surrounding terrain in a vortex of green light and a high-pitched keening not unlike the sound of a mortally wounded rabbit or deer. This energy is eerie and disturbing, but ultimately harmless. The majority of the energy returns to the First World, spiraling down through a number of identical objects left behind by the bloom and infusing those objects with power. These objects become bloom trophies. A dead body that becomes a bloom trophy does not decay for many weeks, as if affected by a *gentle repose* spell for 100 days. All bloom trophies radiate strong conjuration and transmutation magic, but with the exception of any magic properties the item may have possessed before it became a bloom trophy, these objects possess no apparent abilities of their own.

A DC 30 Spellcraft check made while examining a bloom trophy under the effects of *detect magic* (as if identifying a magic item) is enough to discern that while the bloom itself has vanished, this object remains as a sort of link or anchor between the Material Plane and the First World. Such an object would likely function as an activation key or component for a portal to the First World, and could perhaps have additional strange properties if brought into certain regions of the First World.

A trophy's link to the First World fades 100 days after it is created, and it returns to being a normal object of its kind.

spread enters a hex controlled by the PCs' kingdom, they learn about the bloom automatically; otherwise you'll need to make additional secret Loyalty checks until they do.

At your discretion, the PCs can learn about blooms much more quickly if they take special measures to patrol and observe the Stolen Lands, including recruiting local monsters, casting spells like *commune with nature*, or physically patrolling their kingdom for at least 2 weeks per month.

Bloom Traits: While the exact nature of a bloom varies, depending on the source of the bloom in Thousandbreaths, all blooms have similar traits, as detailed below.

- Movement through a bloom hex is difficult because of the rampant and uncontrolled plant growth—treat bloom hexes as dense forest for the purposes of overland movement, or difficult terrain for tactical movement. Note that two of the blooms (the Whirling Lake and Nights of Dread) do not have physical effects of increased vegetation.
- Wandering monster encounters are twice as likely to happen in a bloom hex. Encounters in a bloom hex are

always resolved by rolling on the First World Random Encounter chart located on page 79 of this book, not the standard tables for the hex's base terrain.

- Although life is fecund in a bloom, it is also much more dangerous—Survival checks in a bloom hex suffer a –10 penalty.

DAY 1: THE WHIRLING LAKE (CR 15; FIRST BLOOM)

The first bloom is not a bloom of vegetation but a bloom of churning water that spreads disease among those who drink it. Unlike the land-based blooms, which manifest as sudden tangles of overgrowth, this bloom manifests as a slowly churning whirlpool of black water in one of the Stolen Lands' lakes.

Location: This bloom can appear in any of the lakes in the Stolen Lands. Its effects can spread only through water—it cannot spread into hexes that don't contain water connected to the source bloom via a lake or river.

Link: Lake of Midnight Swans (area B).

Bloom: The whirlpool that appears in the lake is 500 feet across and reaches all the way down to the bottom of the lake, where the vortex is only 50 feet across, leaving a circular area of the lakebed exposed to the air. The water in the vortex doesn't "drain" anywhere, but it does continue to churn nonstop. It's a DC 30 Swim check to avoid being caught up by the vortex's current up to its edge—failure results in a creature falling into the vortex and suffering 4d6 points of nonlethal damage for 2d6 rounds before the vortex hurls them out into the surrounding waters.

Eerie, silent black swans seem to congregate in the waters surrounding the whirlpool; as they're drawn into the vortex, they fly up into the air and settle down back in the water some distance away only to slowly drift back into the whirlpool over time. The swans are ill-tempered, but otherwise normal. Attempts to communicate with them via *Speak with Animals* or similar magic reveals that they fear the whirlpool because it's loud and scary—they don't have memories of their life in the similar lake in Thousandbreaths (area B). The swans are immune to the disease brought by the churning waters.

Anyone who drinks the water in this hex or any hex that the bloom has spread to is exposed to blinding sickness (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557).

The heart of this bloom consists of the four elder water elementals that swim and froth in the region surrounding the vortex. The elementals ignore the swans and any animals of that size or smaller, but quickly move to attack other creatures that approach the vortex, splitting off of the whirlpool in their own vortex shapes and assuming their natural forms to attack as soon as they take any damage. In their natural forms, these water elementals look like immense swans of dark water.

If all four elder water elementals are slain or banished from the Material Plane, the central vortex immediately collapses in on itself as the bloom vanishes. The resulting geyser of water calms quickly, and all of the black swans die and bob to the surface.

ELDER WATER ELEMENTALS (4)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 152 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 127)

Trophy: Black swan carcass.

DAY 8: THE SHRIEKING CHILDREN (CR 15; SECOND BLOOM)

This bloom manifests either in the Narlmarches or Thousand Voices. The sudden growth in this bloom consists of a foul tangle of enormous mushrooms, molds, and thick fibrous roots and vines that quickly start to choke out existing plant life. Along with this fungal bloom come swarms of tiny humanoid plantlike monsters—mandragoras.

Location: This bloom can occur in any hex that contains forest.

Link: The Fruiting Orchard (area E).

Bloom: Thousands of mandragoras infest this bloom—each of these misshapen plants looks vaguely humanoid, with tiny eyes, leaves for hair, and sharp wooden teeth. Normally a mandragora is the size of a human child, but these are much smaller—the typical mandragora here is only 4 inches high, but there are enough of them to form into swarms.

It's possible that this bloom can go unnoticed if it appears in a forested area the PCs haven't yet fully explored or claimed. In this case, you should have nearby farms and towns start to become plagued by small numbers of these Fine-sized pests, doing things like biting the ankles of livestock or children, chasing pets, or climbing up onto sleeping citizens to drink blood from exposed necks or arms.

The bloom itself consists of a sudden infestation of fungus and mold, among which the carpets of mandragoras swarm and caper and shriek. The mandragora swarms sleep at night, but during the day anyone who enters the bloom can't help but notice the countless tiny cries, not unlike miniature babies, that sound throughout the fungal bloom.

While there are tens of thousands of mandragoras in this bloom, the PCs need only defeat two swarms before the entire flood of tiny mandragoras shrieks and dies. Both swarms must be slain within 1 minute of each other, though—otherwise the PCs must locate and confront another pair of swarms after a day has passed to have another opportunity to defeat this bloom.

MANDRAGORA SWARM

CR 13

XP 25,600

Pathfinder Adventure Path #17 84, Advanced Bestiary 45

CE Fine plant (swarm)

Init +13; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 28, flat-footed 18 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 size)

hp 220 (21d8+126); fast healing 10

Fort +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** plant traits, weapon damage, **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to darkness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee swarm +23 (5d6 plus blood drain, distraction, and poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 25), shriek

TACTICS

During Combat A mandragora swarm begins battle by shrieking. It then swarms over as many foes as it can, chewing and draining blood and leaving confused victims in its wake.

Morale A mandragora swarm fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 29, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness

Skills Perception +14, Stealth +45 (+53 in heavy plant growth)

Languages Abyssal, Common

SQ hive mind, vines

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) Whenever a mandragora swarm damages a foe with its swarm damage, it also drains blood, dealing 1d6 points of Strength damage. A mandragora that drains blood from a target with 0 Strength instead deals 2d4 points of Constitution damage.

Hive Mind (Ex) The mandragora swarm has one central mind, but retains its immunity to mind-affecting effects due to its plant traits.

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; *save* Fort DC 27; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* confused for 1 round; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Shriek (Su) Once per day as a standard action, a mandragora swarm can give voice to an unsettling shriek that sounds not unlike

the cry of a thousand tiny babies. Any creature within 30 feet of a shrieking mandragora swarm must make a DC 25 Will save or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vulnerable to Darkness (Ex) A mandragora swarm in an area of darkness loses its fast healing and becomes slowed, as per the spell.

Trophy: One of the little dead mandragoras.

DAY 9: THE HORNED HUNTERS (CR 17)

Nyrissa knows that *Briar* can slay her, and as this adventure progresses, she becomes aware of rumors that the PCs have discovered the sword. This element, seemingly fitting so perfectly into the ancient visions she received of her own death, begins to increasingly distress Nyrissa, and on day 9 of this adventure, she sends a group known as the Horned Hunt—the protectors and wardens of the realm of Thousandbreaths—into the Material Plane to find the PCs and secure the sword.

Creatures: The Horned Hunt consists of a large group of particularly muscular and violent ettins led by a deadly satyr ranger known only as the Horned Hunter. They first appear in the Stolen Lands deep in Thousand Voices, at the site of the Castle of Knives—the point at which the boundaries between Thousandbreaths and the Stolen Lands are the most fragile. They immediately set out into the Stolen Lands, seeking the PCs and leaving devastation in their passing. The Horned Hunt knows quite a bit about



Mandragora

the PCs, and assuming the PCs have displayed a tendency to be protective of their people, the Horned Hunter knows that the best way to lure the PCs into a conflict is to begin wreaking havoc. If the PCs seem not to care about their people, the Horned Hunter either travels to the next bloom site to ambush the PCs when they come to defeat it, or they could just as well attempt to infiltrate the PCs' homes at a point where they're alone to try to take them down one at a time. In the end, the way in which you use the Horned Hunter is up to you.

THE HORNED HUNTER

CR 16

XP 76,800

Male satyr ranger 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 241)

CN Medium fey

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +26

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+5 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural)

hp 206 (20 HD; 8d6+12d10+112)

Fort +14, **Ref** +20, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities evasion; **DR** 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 horns +23 (1d6+9)

Ranged +3 seeking composite longbow +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d8+19/19-20/x3) or Rapid Shot +21/+21/+16/+11/+6 (1d8+19/19-20/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (human +6, elf +4, gnome +2), pipes, quarry

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

At will—*charm person* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 15),

suggestion (DC 17)

1/day—*fear* (DC 18), *summon nature's ally III*

Spells Known (CL 9th;

concentration +13)

3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *greater magic fang*

2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*, *protection from energy*

1st—*charm animal* (DC 14), *entangle* (DC 14), *pass without trace*

TACTICS

Before Combat The Horned Hunter casts *greater magic fang* on his horns every day. Before entering battle, he casts *barkskin* and *cat's grace* on himself.

During Combat The Horned Hunter always uses *Deadly Aim* in battle, and prefers to use *Rapid Shot* as often as he can. On the first round of combat, he grants his favored enemy bonus to his ettins via his hunter's bond. Although his natural inclination is to fire upon humans before any other target, if it's obvious who's carrying *Briar*, he and his ettins focus their attacks on that target. The Horned Hunter's not really interested in slaying the entire party as much as he is in capturing *Briar*. If the person carrying *Briar* is defeated, the Horned Hunter claims the sword as soon as he can, teleporting to the Castle of Knives after claiming the sword (or the body of the PC he suspects carries it), and then stepping through the portal that

has opened at the castle and into Thousandbreaths, at which point he makes his way to the House at the Edge of Time to present the sword to his mistress. See Part Three for details on what happens if Nyryssa reclaims *Briar*.

Morale The Horned Hunter fights to the death in his pursuit of *Briar*, but once he has the sword, he flees as detailed above.



The Horned Hunter

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 23, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 38

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Critical (composite longbow), Improved Initiative, Improved Precise Shot, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (composite longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +29 (+33 jump), Escape Artist +29, Knowledge (nature) +23, Perception +26, Stealth +29, Survival +26

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ camouflage, favored terrain (forest +4, plains +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +6, wild empathy +16, woodland stride

Gear +3 leather armor, +3 seeking composite longbow with 20 arrows, greater bracers of archery, helm of teleportation

ADVANCED ETTINS (12)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 130, 294)

DAY 12: NIGHTS OF DREAD

The most insidious of the blooms does not manifest in a physical sense, but in the dreams of those it touches upon.

Location: This bloom can appear in any hex that contains a settlement of any size—it's best if this bloom manifests in the PCs' capital city.

Link: The Nightmare Spire (area D).

Bloom: This bloom manifests without anyone's notice—it has no immediate effect on the physical world until nightfall. At that point, many who sleep in the hex suffer horrific nightmares of being chased through the woods, being savaged by wild animals, and especially of being pursued by an immense night-black bird whose wings blot out the stars. In some cases, these dreams have a greater effect than merely unsettling sleep—for some, they become living nightmares.

A living nightmare manifests as a spontaneously cast spell that functions at CL 20th, focused on the sleeping victim of the effect. On this first night, only one victim succumbs to the effect, but as this bloom spreads, one additional victim succumbs each night—this bloom does not spread to additional hexes as much as it spreads to new victims in the same city. Any spell can manifest as a living nightmare, but you should make an attempt to have spells with particularly gruesome effects appear. One night, a person might be targeted by a *creeping doom* spell. Another, someone might wake from a dream about being strangled by an octopus to find himself caught in the area of a *black tentacles* spell. *Summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells are an excellent way to have the monstrous antagonist of a nightmare manifest in reality to attack the dreamer and perhaps seek out the dreamer's family, friends, and

neighbors. You can use the table on page 16 to randomly generate a spell effect for each living nightmare if you wish. Living nightmares are mind-affecting fear effects.

If the bloom manifests in an area where one of the PCs is sleeping, you should have one of these living nightmares target a random PC. Otherwise, PCs likely first hear of this bloom's effects as news of a terrible, grisly fate that strikes a local farmer, shopkeeper, or other innocent citizen.

Regardless of the nature of the living nightmare a given victim endures, the living nightmares share a feature in common with the standard nightmares suffered by everyone in the bloom—the presence of an immense black bird that watches over the nightmare from the dark night skies above. This monstrous shape never takes part in the nightmares, but the dreamers always wake with the conviction that the bird is what brought them these nightmares.

This shape is a creature called the Nightmare Rook, an immense avian that dwells in Thousandbreaths and is directing the horrific nightmares from beyond. The Nightmare Rook can be identified with a DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check as a mythical creature said to dwell in the First World—if this check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, the character also remembers that the Nightmare Rook was a character in a strange picture book published long ago in Pitax by a mad artist—see the beginning of Part Two for more details on this book. In the tales and the picture book, a hero manages to drive off the Nightmare Rook by ignoring the nightmares in his dreams and confronting the Rook itself, threatening to attack it. The Rook is startled by this unexpected aggression and flies away, and the nightmare ends.

Herein lies the key to defeating this bloom—when a character suffers a living nightmare, he must ignore the nightmare itself and confront the watching, ever-present Nightmare Rook. Whenever you describe a PC's nightmare but before he wakes to endure the resulting spell effect, describe the nature of his nightmare and the fact that a giant black bird is looming over the horizon, watching. Give the PC a chance to react to his nightmare. If he does anything other than ignore the nightmare and confront the black bird in any way, describe the nightmare doing something horrific to his dreaming self, then have him awaken and endure the effects of the living nightmare as appropriate.

If, on the other hand, the character confronts the Nightmare Rook, he may make one of the following rolls—an attack roll (using his best weapon attack), a caster level check, or an Intimidate check. The DC for all three of these checks is 30. If the check fails, the PC doesn't impress the Nightmare Rook—it laughs a raucous cawing laugh, and the PC wakes and must endure the effects of his living nightmare. With a successful check, the PC startles the

Living Nightmares

d% Roll	Spell Effect	Living Nightmare Description
1–8	<i>black tentacles</i> (CMB +25)	You're attacked by a kraken while drowning at sea.
9–14	<i>call lightning storm</i> (DC 17)	You're caught in a violent storm with no cover.
15–17	<i>create greater undead</i>	You're lost in a graveyard and chased by a devourer.
18–24	<i>creeping doom</i> (DC 20)	You're sinking in quicksand while bugs eat you alive.
25–36	<i>dominate person</i> (DC 16)	Your friends are possessed—kill them with an axe.
37–39	<i>earthquake</i> (DC 22)	You're trapped in your home during an earthquake.
40–46	<i>feeblemind</i> (DC 17)	You become a newborn baby or a senile old wreck.
47–49	<i>fire storm</i> (DC 22)	You're a helpless forest creature caught up in a forest fire.
50–51	<i>imprisonment</i> (DC 23)	You're buried alive by friends who think you're dead.
52–57	<i>insanity</i> (DC 20)	Hideous alien monstrosities devour your mind.
58–60	<i>storm of vengeance</i> (DC 23)	The gods open the heavens and smite the world.
61–63	<i>summon monster IX</i>	You're attacked by a glabrezu.
64–69	<i>summon monster VI</i>	You're assaulted by a succubus.
70–74	<i>summon monster VII</i>	You're attacked by a bebilith.
75–78	<i>summon monster VIII</i>	You're attacked by a barbed devil.
79–81	<i>summon nature's ally IX</i>	You're attacked by 1d3 purple worms.
82–87	<i>summon nature's ally VI</i>	You're attacked by a dire tiger.
88–91	<i>summon nature's ally VII</i>	You're attacked by a tyrannosaurus.
92–96	<i>summon nature's ally VIII</i>	You're attacked by 1d4+1 giant scorpions.
97–100	<i>whirlwind</i> (DC 22)	You have a broken leg but must outrun a tornado.

Nightmare Rook and drives it off, and he awakens with a scream but does not suffer a living nightmare. Clutched in the PC's hand is a large black feather—a token of his triumph over the Nightmare Rook. As soon as someone drives off the Nightmare Rook, this bloom is defeated.

Trophy: A black raven feather pulled out of a nightmare.

Story Award: Award the PCs 51,200 XP if they defeat this bloom.

DAY 16. THE FROZEN BLOOM (CR 15)

An incursion of frost giants occurs on Day 16—thugs invading from a frozen graveyard ruled by a deadly four-armed warlord.

Location: This bloom can appear in any mountain hex.

Link: The Frozen Boneyard.

Bloom: Snow begins falling over this hex, regardless of any weather conditions in the skies above. The vegetation that blooms and grows here consists of tangles of alpine shrubbery, twisted pine trees, and sheets of thick, slippery lichen. The temperature in this area drops to extreme cold (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 442), and any water in the region freezes over.

The four-armed frost giant Kargstaad commands these giants, although he does not leave the Frozen Boneyard. When the bloom between the Stolen Lands and the Frozen Boneyard opens, he sends six hearty giants through to protect the site. These giants are natives of the First World, with skin as clear as ice and eyes that glow with

blue light—they heal wounds at an astounding rate and are stronger and more dangerous than normal frost giants. Yet once the giants arrive in the Stolen Lands, the urge to savage and crush the delightfully fragile creatures they find there proves too much to resist. They begin to explore the Stolen Lands, leaving the bloom behind to defend itself. The wandering band of giants can be encountered anywhere you wish, but most likely the PCs will first hear of them after they attack a small outlying village or start crushing merchant caravans. The giants meet no real opposition as they travel and raid, and they quickly come to see this world's denizens as trivial challenges. Only with the first giant's death do the remaining giants realize that there are dangers on the Material Plane, like the PCs, that are capable of meeting the challenge they provide. At this point, the giants adopt a more defensive pose and make a fighting retreat back toward the Frozen Bloom.

The Frozen Bloom itself has a singular link to Thousandbreaths—at the center of the hex it manifests in rises a towering, 30-foot-tall gravestone made of ice on which are inscribed tens of thousands of names. The language of these names appears to be in the reader's native tongue, and anyone who thinks to look up their own names or the names of friends or family invariably finds them on the gravestone with eerie speed. This effect is a powerful *programmed image* (DC 19 Will save to disbelieve if interacted with)—it is nothing more than a threat, but could well unsettle the PCs. To destroy this bloom,

this massive ice gravestone must itself be destroyed. The gravestone is 10 feet wide and as hard as stone, but it need only be toppled over to be destroyed, so inflicting enough damage to its base can do the job (hardness 8, hp 1,800, Break DC 65). The ice is immune to acid damage, but takes double damage from fire and sonic damage. Cold damage actually repairs the gravestone for a number of hit points equal to the damage the cold would normally have inflicted; the freezing temperatures in the bloom effectively grant the stone fast healing 5. If destroyed, the icy gravestone topples and shatters into millions of razor-sharp shards, each the size of a dagger. These shards remain cold and do not melt (unless put in direct contact with flame, in which case they melt normally) for 100 days.

KARGSTAAD'S GIANTS (6) **CR 10**
XP 6,400 each

Advanced frost giants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 149)
 hp 161 each; fast healing 10

Trophy: Icy gravestone shard.

DAY 17: THE KNURLY BRIARS (CR 15)

This bloom links the Stolen Lands to one of the more disturbing locations in Thousandbreaths—the not-quite-abandoned Knurly House.

Location: Any hill or plains hex.

Link: The Knurly House (area H).

Bloom: When this bloom manifests, it does so as a sudden mound of creeping briars and brambles. The runners and roots of these large plants grow unnervingly quickly, the sound of the vines digging through the ground making a rasping grind. These hideous, fast-growing brambles extend from the unkempt yard of the Knurly House, the home of a bitter and wretched hag known as the Knurly Witch.

The brambles and briars grow to a height of 15 feet, and create heavy undergrowth (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 426), making it difficult for any creature to move around in the thorny brush. In addition, the sharp thorns are, in a strange way, mobile and angry—whenever a creature not native to the First World makes an aggressive action (such as casting a spell or making an attack) the thorns slash and grasp in response. Effectively, the briars are capable of making an attack of opportunity against any target that stands in the undergrowth, but no more than once per round per target. A thorn lash has a +15 melee attack roll and inflicts 1d8+4 points of damage on a hit. A 5-foot-square section of thorns can be destroyed by the application of at least 40 points of damage from any area effect attack or slashing damage, although destroyed brambles regrow back to undergrowth levels (at which point they can make attacks of opportunity again) in 1 minute.

While the Knurly Witch doesn't emerge from her house and travel into the Stolen Lands, her presence can be felt throughout these briars in the form of half-heard cackles, muttering, and brief glimpses of a strange but towering humanoid shape moving just out of sight through the brambles. These shapes are the "gardeners" of the Knurly Briars, immense and hideously malformed giants known as athachs.

An athach stands about 20 feet in height. Burly and muscular, with no neck to speak of, an athach's human-like shape is marred by its sabre-like poisonous fangs and the gangly third arm that grows out of one of its armpits. This third arm is tipped with a sharp talon incapable of wielding a weapon or fine manual manipulation, but quick and sharp, striking almost with a mind of its own.

As the Knurly Witch's gardeners, these athachs carry sickles and large bags of strangely pulsating seeds. They move through the brambles slowly, pruning back dead brambles and harvesting the eerie red seeds that periodically grow on the vines, only to replant the seeds in the ground. It is this act of pruning and seeding that keeps this bloom growing, and if all three athachs are slain, the bloom reacts by causing the brambles and vines to shriek and whip about in a frenzy. All creatures in the brambles at this time take 8d6 points of slashing damage from the thorns (DC 15 Reflex halves the damage). One round later, three foul-smelling pods of plant matter erupt from the ground at the locations where the athachs were slain—these pods take 1 minute to grow to full size, after which point three healthy new athachs emerge and return to work. In order to truly defeat the bloom, the three pods (hardness 5; hp 50; Break DC 25) must be destroyed. At this point, the brambles shriek again, but instead of slashing at those caught within them, they melt away into green light and smoke, leaving behind scattered lengths of knotted vines and brambles.

ATHACHS (3) **CR 12**

XP 19,200 each

CE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 9, flat-footed 22 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 161 each (14d8+98)

Fort +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Resist cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee sickle +19/+14 (2d6+11), claw +17 (1d10+5), bite +17 (2d6+5 plus poison)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attack third claw

TACTICS

During Combat The athachs prefer to move about as they fight, using Lunge to reach foes that they can't reach and attacking with Vital Strike sickle blows and their third claws even if they move.

Morale The athachs fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 32, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +10; CMB +23; CMD 34

Feats Cleave, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +16, Fly +0, Perception +11, Stealth +0

Languages Giant

Other Gear leather armor, sickle

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 24; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 Str; cure 2 consecutive saves.



Athach

Third Claw (Ex) An athach's third claw attacks with a mind of its own—the athach can attack with its third claw as a swift action if it wishes.

Trophy: A 2-foot-long section of tangled, knotted bramble vine.

DAY 22. RISE OF THE MIRE WORMS (CR 16)

A worm-infested bloom of algae, moss, and drooping swamp trees erupts into a remote part of the Hooktongue Slough.

Location: Any swamp hex.

Link: The Mire (area G).

Bloom: The source of this bloom is a hideous swampland in Thousandbreaths known as the Mire, a trackless, soggy realm ruled by a squirming, noxious wizard called the Wriggling Man. This dangerous foe does not enter the Material Plane with this bloom, but he does send a number of little red worms cast off from his writhing body into the Stolen Lands. Upon arriving in the swamp, these worms rapidly grow to immense sizes and make their way out into the surrounding swampland, consuming any living creature they come across. These three worms travel as a single group at a rate that matches the bloom's expansion—the worms can always be encountered in the latest hex to be claimed by this bloom.

These mire worms are hideous, red, segmented creatures with hook-shaped jaws that extend from their rubbery maws when they bite. Each worm is also armed with a jagged, poisonous stinger-tipped tongue. Statistically, they function identically to advanced purple worms, save that their sting attack is at the tip of their tongue instead the tip of their tail.

This bloom is relatively easy to defeat—simply killing the three worms does the trick. When the bloom is defeated, the bodies of the worms steam and writhe and shrink back down to their original size—about the length of a man's finger. Although dead, these red worms continue to sporadically twitch in a most unsettling manner.

MIRE WORMS (3)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Advanced purple worm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 230, 294)

hp 232 each

Trophy: A twitching red worm.

DAY 25: THE MISBEGOTTEN TROLL (CR 16)

A bloom manifests on the site of a large structure or ruin, filling the surrounding lands with tangles of vegetation and introducing a dangerous new menace to the Stolen Lands.

Location: Any hex with a structure, lair, or ruin.

Link: The Baleful Lantern (area I).

Bloom: While the majority of the blooms manifest in the Stolen Lands without bringing along the powerful denizens that rule the various glades in Thousandbreaths from whence the blooms originate, this one does. Sprouting in an immense cagelike fortress called the Baleful Lantern, this bloom of tangled trees and spiny berry bushes manifests in the Stolen Lands along with the Lantern's denizen—a hateful and cruel monster known only as the Misbegotten Troll.

When this bloom manifests, it does so in a hex that contains a structure, lair, or ruin. The tangle of vegetation that radiates out from it grows swiftly, as with all other blooms, but the core of the bloom is linked to the Misbegotten Troll, who hitched a ride into this world in hopes of finding himself a new bride—the Misbegotten Troll is somewhat rough on his paramours.

The location of where this bloom manifests is left to you, but it should be at a site the PCs have already explored but haven't developed into a settlement or (if possible) haven't even claimed as part of their kingdom—it's best if this is a site that is supported by a map from a previous adventure, so that when the PCs come to this bloom, they'll be on familiar ground yet facing a new enemy. Some excellent choices for sites for this bloom to manifest include the Ruined Keep or the Troll Lair in the Greenbelt, Vordakai's Tomb in the Nomen Heights, Whiterose Abbey in the Glenebon Uplands, or the boggard village of M'Botuu in the Slough. You can certainly repopulate these areas with monsters of your choosing if the PCs haven't been back to the site, but keep in mind that any who would come into conflict with the area's new master are likely dead. If your PCs are particularly low on XP, this bloom site gives you a perfect chance to drop in a new dungeon filled with monsters and traps for the PCs to face (and to gain much-needed experience defeating).

It's likely that the PCs will first hear about this bloom and its cruel master after rumors of raids on outlying areas of the kingdom appear. The Misbegotten Troll is seeking a new and beautiful bride, and after countless years preying upon fey, he's looking for some variety—a human or half-orc bride in particular. Whether the PCs come to confront the troll after he's first started to raid or after he's abducted one or more possible candidates is left to you to decide. If you want to inject a particular sense of urgency, the troll's victim could well be an NPC important to the PCs.

As the PCs approach the Misbegotten Troll's new home, it should be obvious that someone has moved into the ruin. Smoke from unseen cook fires pours from the entrance or vents, and numerous territorial markers made of fresh bones, slaughtered locals, or other grisly trophies decorate the approach to the site.

The methods that the Misbegotten Troll uses to defend his new lair from attackers depend greatly on the layout and nature of his new home, and thus no details are given here apart from the villain's stat block and notes on his basic combat tactics. The troll is a loner, but he does keep several particularly large and ill-tempered, black-pelted smilodons handy to serve as guardian beasts. The Misbegotten Troll keeps six of these enormous beasts, two as guards near the entrance to his lair and the other four at his side at all times for additional protection.

THE MISBEGOTTEN TROLL

CR 16

XP 76,800

Male troll fighter 11

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+12 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 268 (17 HD; 6d8+11d10+181); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +21, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7; +3 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *vicious ranseur* +26/+21/+16 (2d6+17/19-20/x3 plus 2d6), bite +20 (1d8+8) or

bite +25 (1d8+12), 2 claws +25 (1d6+14/19-20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with ranseur)

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+7)

TACTICS

During Combat The Misbegotten Troll enjoys the wounds his ranseur causes his enemies almost as much as those it causes to his own body, and howls in delight with each successful hit. He also takes great delight in breaking the weapons of other foes, and often makes sunder attacks against those who wield particularly large weapons. If he faces a foe that seems capable of staying inside the reach of his ranseur, he casts the weapon aside with a frustrated roar and uses both claws in battle.

Morale The Misbegotten Troll fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 16, **Con** 28, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 37

Feats Critical Focus, Improved Critical (ranseur), Improved Critical (claws), Improved Sunder, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Staggering Critical, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (ranseur, bite, claws), Weapon Specialization (ranseur, bite, claws)

Skills Perception +17

Languages Giant

SQ armor training 3

Gear +3 full plate, +2 *vicious ranseur*, necklace of lovelies

BLACK SMILODONS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Advanced dire tiger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 265, 294)

hp 133 each

Trophy: A broken cage from the *necklace of lovelies* (see the sidebar on page 21).

DAY 26. WAR OF THE HIGH FOLLY (CR 11 MASS COMBAT)

The final bloom opens near the PCs' capital city, unleashing a horde of First World soldiers upon the kingdom in a penultimate clash with the denizens of Thousandbreaths.

Location: Any hex adjacent to the PCs' capital city.

Link: The High Folly (area J).

Bloom: The final bloom emerges dangerously close to home, at the heart of the PCs' kingdom and within sight of their capital city. When this bloom manifests, it does so with a sudden and explosive growth of twisted trees, thorny vines, and evil-looking fungi. Protruding from the center of this bloom is a ghostly image of an impossibly

tall alabaster tower atop a hill that looks too round to be natural. This is a projection of a structure called the High Folly in Thousandbreaths—the lair of the black dragon Ilthuliak, one of Nyrissa's most dangerous denizens and the final guardian of the approach to her home. A ghostly image of the black wyrm flying in circles around the tower should give the PCs cause to worry, but at this time Ilthuliak has no way to physically strike at the PCs and does not factor into the battle.

When this bloom manifests, the clamor coming from the tangle of vegetation makes it sound as if an entire army of First World monstrosities hides within—this is not far from the truth. An army of murderous beasts, crazed satyrs, giant worms, slaving deformed wyverns, lumbering giants, and blood-drinking plants lurks in this bloom, and these creatures do not wait long before they march from the bloom upon the PCs' capital city.

This is a mass combat encounter that utilizes the rules for such presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #35. If you don't have access to that book, you can simply ignore this event, or run it strictly as a narrative encounter in which Nyrissa's gibbering army surges against the city's walls but is defeated through a heroic defense of the city. If you're using the kingdom-building rules, you can simply have the PCs make a Stability check against their kingdom's Control DC to determine if they win the battle—if they fail, the monstrous army overruns the city and destroys 1d6 blocks of buildings. The PCs should keep attempting Stability checks until they succeed or until the city is totally destroyed.

If, on the other hand, you have access to the mass combat rules, you can run the battle with the PCs defending their capital city with any armies they happen to have stationed there. If the PCs have no armies stationed in their capital city, they can call upon the city guard to defend the place—in this event, you can use the stats for a regular army as presented on page 59 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #35.

The enemy army is unusual in that it consists of a horde of varied creatures—this is a mob of monsters and debased fey creatures, with no true commander. A mob can never have any special abilities from its members' races, nor can it know tactics or use resources—it's simply an disorganized but no less dangerous army.



Misbegotten Troll

A mob always fails morale checks when it needs to make them, as it has no leader to rally behind. It always adopts the standard strategy track. The mob strikes against the PCs' city, but the distance it has to cover gives the PCs 3 rounds of ranged combat if their defending armies have ranged capability.

If the army is destroyed, the bloom itself is destroyed. The ghostly image of the High Folly fades, as does the projection of the black dragon Ilthuliak, and the tangles crumble into dust. Yet the ground at the point where the High Folly once stood is scoured clean of vegetation, leaving behind a perfectly round patch of barren sand a hundred feet in diameter. If the army survives, the bloom grows as normal, and its mob continues to strike against the PCs' kingdom. Unlike other blooms, this one does not expand in random directions; it always expands towards the closest city.

FIRST WORLD MOB	CR 10
XP 9,600	
CN Gargantuan army of monsters	
COMBAT	
hp 45; DV 20; OM +10	
Weakness mob	
LOGISTICS	
Speed 2; Consumption 5; Morale always fails	

Trophy: A handful of sand taken from the scar left by the High Folly's passing.

DAY 28. BEWARE THE JABBERWOCK (CR 20)

If the PCs don't force the House at the Edge of Time to manifest on the Material Plane in the forest of Thousand Voices by the 28th day (see page 35), then Nyrissa sends her deadliest minion into the Stolen Lands to finish the PCs off—a lesser jabberwock that Nyrissa grew from blood left over from her ancient battle with the true Jabberwock so long ago. The procedure by which she created and raised this lesser jabberwock is a closely guarded secret known only to a few denizens of the First World, for the resulting monster, while not as deadly as a true jabberwock, is a devastating monster nevertheless.

On the day of this final event, a strange thing happens in the skies above—although there's not a cloud in the sky, roars of thunder echo across the Stolen Lands. The thunder comes in regular intervals every 10 minutes or so; by noon, however, the thunder begins coming more quickly, almost like the approaching footsteps of an immense creature. Use this ominous event to let the PCs know that something is coming.

Exactly 1 hour after noon, the loudest peal of thunder strikes yet, and with a flash of unsettling green light

NECKLACE OF LOVELIES

Aura abjuration (evil); **CL** 17th

Slot neck; **Price** 36,000gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This repugnant and cruel magic item consists of a chain of cold iron on which dangle six tiny, cold iron cages, each of which contains a living but miniaturized pixie. While the pixies are free to shriek and yell and cry, the item prevents them from taking any action that would directly free them from their cage and suppresses all of their supernatural and spell-like abilities.

As a swift action, the wearer of a *necklace of lovelies* can redirect hit point damage inflicted on him from any single attack or effect that damages him onto one of the pixies on the necklace—doing so automatically kills the poor pixie in a tiny explosion of blood. Once all of the necklace's pixies are dead or released, the necklace becomes nonmagical.

The magic of a *necklace of lovelies* can also be released by breaking open one of the tiny pixie cages (hardness 10; hp 10; Break DC 20). If the cage contains a living pixie, the grateful fey quickly escapes and returns to normal size—in so doing, the wash of energy allows the pixie to bestow luck upon the creature who broke that particular cage if the pixie so chooses (most pixies are grateful enough to a rescuer to automatically grant this boon). An instant after the luck is bestowed, the grateful pixie vanishes (presumably back to the area in which he or she was first imprisoned in the necklace during its creation). The luck granted by this effect can be used at any point once during the next 7 days as a swift action whenever a d20 is rolled—it allows the lucky soul to roll 2d20 and pick which result he wishes to accept.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *imprisonment*, *shield other*, 6 willing or helpless pixies; **Cost** 18,000 gp

above the PCs, the boundaries between this world and the First are sundered and a true monster steps through. Of course, if the PCs use powerful magic to hide their location, Nyrissa might not be able to locate them by scrying and will need to wait for another opportunity to send her monster after them.

A lesser jabberwock is, despite its name, a deadly foe. This hideous reptilian beast stands nearly 30 feet high, with a long, scaly neck, a vaguely draconic body, and a long whiplike tail. Its arms and legs are thin but incredibly strong, ending in sharp talons. Immense draconic wings flap on its back, and its ovoid head is a nightmare of bulging eyes, sharp teeth, and long, thin antennae or whiskers.

This monster, Nyrissa's most deadly pet, has orders to destroy the PCs—Nyrissa figures that their deaths

should render her visions of her own demise moot just as surely as her retrieval of *Briar*. If she's already retrieved the weapon, she won't send the lesser jabberwock to attack the PCs—in this case, feel free to have the PCs encounter the monster in Thousandbreaths or in the House at the Edge of Time/Castle of Knives as you wish.

As this battle begins, if the PCs have the weapon *Briar*, the sword immediately glows with a vibrant green light. For this battle, the sword awakens to its full capacity, as if it had gained 20 sharpness points. The sword returns to its proper level of awakening once the lesser jabberwock is defeated.

If this battle takes place in a city, the lesser jabberwock's thrashing and destructive nature can destroy buildings. Every 1d4 rounds, the PCs' kingdom must make a Stability check against its Control DC; if the check is failed, one nearby building is destroyed.

LESSER JABBERWOCK CR 20

XP 307,200

CE Huge dragon (air, fire)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +35

Aura frightful presence (120 ft., DC 28)

DEFENSE

AC 38, touch 12, flat-footed 34 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +26 natural, –2 size)

hp 387 (25d12+225); fast healing 10

Fort +23, **Ref** +17, **Will** +21

DR 15/vorpal; **Immune** fire, magic paralysis and sleep; **Resist** acid 20, electricity 20, sonic 20

Weaknesses fear of vorpal weaponry, vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +36 (3d6+13/19–20), 2 claws +36 (2d6+13/19–20 plus grab), 2 wings +31 (1d8+6), tail +31 (2d6+6)

Ranged 2 eye rays +26 touch (15d6/19–20 plus burn)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks burble, burn (6d6, DC 31), whiffing

TACTICS

During Combat The lesser jabberwock races into the midst of the PCs on the first round of combat to make a vital strike with its bite. On the second round, it burbles to confuse the PCs that surround it. On following rounds, it makes full attacks—preferably against the PC wielding *Briar*. If the monster is reduced to fewer than 200 hit points, it takes to the air and circles, firing one eye ray per round with Vital Strike while it heals back up to at least 300 hit points before landing and entering melee again. If denied this level of mobility, the monster simply focuses its full attacks on single targets, hoping to take the PCs down one at a time. At your discretion, if the monster defeats the wielder of *Briar*, it could scoop up the weapon and take to the air. The gate through

which Nyrrisa sent the creature into the Material Plane is closed, so it must return to the First World via the portal at the Castle of Knives—it flies toward that site with all due haste, eager to return the hated weapon to its mistress.

Morale The lesser jabberwock fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 37, **Dex** 16, **Con** 29, **Int** 8, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 54

Feats Awesome Blow, Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite, claws, eye rays), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +23, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +35, Sense Motive +35

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Gnome, Sylvan

SQ whiffing

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burble (Su) A lesser jabberwock can burble once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action. This blast of strange noises and shouted nonsense in the various languages known to the jabberwock (and invariably some languages it doesn't know) affects all creatures within a 60-foot-radius spread—these creatures must make a DC 28 Will save or become confused for 1d4 rounds. Alternatively, the lesser jabberwock can focus its burble attack to create a 60-foot-line of sonic energy that inflicts 20d6 points of sonic damage (DC 28 Reflex save for half). The confusion effect is mind-affecting; both are sonic effects. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Damage Reduction (Ex) A lesser jabberwock's damage reduction can be bypassed only by weapons with the *vorpal* weapon enhancement.

Eye Rays (Su) The lesser jabberwock can project beams of fire from its eyes as a ranged touch attack as a standard action. It projects two beams, and can target different creatures with these beams if it wishes as long as both targets are within 30 feet of each other. A creature that takes damage from an eye beam suffers burn.

Fear of Vorpal Weaponry (Ex) A lesser jabberwock knows that a *vorpal weapon* can kill it swiftly. As soon as it takes damage from a *vorpal weapon*, a lesser jabberwock becomes shaken. If it is hit by a critical threat from a *vorpal weapon*, whether or not the critical hit is confirmed, the jabberwock is staggered for the following round.

Whiffing (Ex) A lesser jabberwock's wings and violent motions create a significant amount of wind whenever it makes a full attack action. These winds surround the monster to a radius of 30 feet, and are treated as severe winds—ranged attacks suffer a –4 penalty to hit a lesser jabberwock when it is whiffing, and Medium creatures must make a DC 10 Strength check to approach the creature. Small or smaller creatures in this area that fail a DC 15 Strength check are blown away. See page 439 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for further details on the effects of severe winds.

AFTERMATH

After the jabberwock's attack, one of two things occurs, depending on how many blooms are still active.

If at least one bloom is active, Nyrrisa can attempt to take the Stolen Lands out of the Material Plane and into her specially prepared receptacle in the First World. Her chance of success is equal to 10% per functioning bloom. If she's successful, consult *Concluding the Adventure* for the ramifications of this disastrous development. If she fails, all of the blooms collapse and she must wait 1d12 months before attempting the theft again by causing new blooms.

If no blooms are active, the PCs have thwarted her plans for now. She must wait 2d12 months before attempting the theft by causing new blooms to appear. This should give the PCs plenty of time to take the fight to the nymph's own realm of Thousandbreaths.

PART TWO: A THOUSAND BREATHS

The dense woodlands in the shadow of the Branthlend Mountains have been known as Thousand Voices (or the Forest of Breath) for as long as the rivers in these regions have been ruled by kings. Yet these kings did not name the woodland—it earned this name long before humanity came to this region, for the woodlands grow in a region where the boundaries between this world and the First are thin. On the far side of reality lies the forest realm of Thousandbreaths, a deadly, beautiful, and hideous tangle ruled by the nymph Nyrrisa. The influence of Thousandbreaths infected the dreams and idle thoughts of the first to settle Thousand Voices long ago, and that influence is felt today in the similar names given to the woodland.

Thousandbreaths Lore

Knowledge

Check	Lore
DC 20	The realm of Thousandbreaths is a forested part of the First World said to have some sort of connection to the Stolen Lands in the woods of Thousand Voices.
DC 25	Most of what is commonly known about Thousandbreaths today comes from a highly collectible picture book called <i>Zuddiger's Picnic</i> . This book, published more than 4 decades ago in Pitax, was quite a sensation when it was first released, but the disturbing nature of the pictures coupled with the artist's murderous killing spree only a month after the book's publication resulted in many copies of the book being destroyed. If the PCs wish to seek out a copy of this book, its contents are described in this volume's Foreword on pages 4–5.
DC 30	The ruler of Thousandbreaths is a mysterious nymph named Nyrrisa, known in some tales as the Queen of Forgotten Time or the Count's Last Mistress. Her realm consists of several glades connected by rivers and paths—each of these glades is ruled by one of Nyrrisa's favored minions. Nyrrisa herself dwells in a strange house called the House at the Edge of Time.
DC 35	The glades in Thousandbreaths not only provide a path to Nyrrisa's home, but actually function as the foundation of the realm. Without these glades, Nyrrisa's hold over the realm would weaken.
DC 38	At this level, and for every 3 additional points, you can divulge to the PCs one more bit of specific information about a randomly determined glade in Thousandbreaths as you see fit.

As this adventure begins, the PCs should quickly realize that their kingdom is under attack by something beyond the mortal realm. The manifestation of the blooms, the incursions of strange monsters, and even the appearance of the strange trophies after a bloom is defeated all point to the First World as the source of the dangers.

RESEARCHING THOUSANDBREATHS

There are many events in Part One of this adventure that should convince the PCs that some force from the First World has taken an interest in the Stolen Lands—speaking with the nereid Evindra or interrogating captured prisoners from blooms will confirm this. The article that begins on page 64 of this book provides baseline information about the First World, but the PCs should soon realize that their destination, if they wish to confront their enemy, is a specific part of the First World called Thousandbreaths.

A DC 20 Knowledge (history or planes) is enough to know that the legendary land of Thousandbreaths is said to lie somewhere “within” or “behind” the forest of Thousand Voices. Indeed, the strange denizens and rumors of eerie monsters of that woodland are likely explained by bleed-over from the First World. The nereid Evindra can also confirm that Thousandbreaths lies in conjunction with this woodland.

Further attempts to research Thousandbreaths can be accomplished by a Knowledge (nature or planes) check. Evindra herself has never been to Thousandbreaths, but she has Knowledge (nature) +17 and could be a source of information for the PCs. Consulting a well-stocked library can, of course, aid either check (ranging from +2 to +8 at your discretion). Spells like *vision* and *commune* can also reveal information about Thousandbreaths as you see fit.

ENTERING THOUSANDBREATHS

The First World is a difficult place to reach, and mortal magic can be untrustworthy in providing a means of travel there. *Plane shift* does not normally allow travel to the First World, although it functions fine when used to travel to other planes from the First World. *Gate* is the only mortal magic capable of providing a guaranteed link to the First World, and even then the points at which a *gate* opens into the First World are subject to the whims of the rulers of whatever lands the gate leads to—a gate opened to Thousandbreaths always opens to the Byway (area A).

Yet a fixed portal does exist that links Thousandbreaths and the First World—it is via this portal that many of Nyrissa's agents, like the Horned Hunt, come and go during this adventure. While the PCs may have discovered the Castle of Knives in Thousand Voices already, it's not until the blooms begin that it functions as a portal to the First World. The PCs can learn this information from Evindra or perhaps even make the logical connection by studying the illustration on page 3 of *Zuddiger's Picnic*. Alternatively, they can learn of this portal via divination magic or by interrogating captured or charmed monsters from blooms.

The Castle of Knives is little more than a crumbled ruin today, hidden away deep in Thousand Voices near the central Branthlend Mountains—its exact location is given on the map in “War of the River Kings.” Once the blooms begin, though, a remarkable transformation takes place—the castle seems to appear as it did long ago, a strange structure of sharp towers and confusing architecture of dozens of colors that seem strangely too vibrant for the surroundings. The entire castle is surrounded by a wrought iron fence that contains a single gate flanked by statues of beautiful women (in fact, each is an image of Nyrissa). The majority of this effect is a *mirage arcana* (CL 20th) that lasts until the PCs disrupt Nyrissa's realm, but the iron gate is in fact a two-way gate to area A of Thousandbreaths. This gate does not normally permit non-natives of Thousandbreaths to pass, but the presence of at least three different trophies gathered from blooms is enough to trick the portal and allow those who carry enough trophies to pass in and out. A DC 35 Use Magic Device also allows a character to trick the portal into allowing any creature to pass through it for a minute per successful check.

Note that while Thousandbreaths is Part Two of this adventure, the PCs need not wait until Part One resolves to begin exploring this realm. Indeed, if they can force Thousandbreaths to collapse and merge wholly with the Material Plane (see page 35), they can prevent the manifestation of blooms to come and even, perhaps, the eventual attack of Nyrissa's lesser jabberwock—at the very least, they can delay this dangerous encounter until they're higher level.

AN UNSTILL LAND

Thousandbreaths lies within the eerie realm of the First World, and as such conforms to the rules and descriptions presented in the article beginning on page 64. Yet as this realm is under the direct control of Nyrissa, certain other realities exist as well. The following paragraphs summarize the major features of this unstill land.

Eternal Twilight: It is always twilight in Thousandbreaths, a sunset realm alive with cries of fear and fury. No matter what time the PCs enter and how long they stay there, time doesn't seem to advance (although in fact time is unaffected and passes normally—the time of day is merely fixed in place).

Glades: A number of large clearings exist in Thousandbreaths—these are known as glades, and each contains a unique encounter area detailed below. Each glade is also linked to one of the blooms that manifests in the Stolen Lands—a character carrying a trophy from one of those blooms receives a +2 luck bonus on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, skill checks, saving throws, CMB checks, and ability checks (such as concentration or caster level checks) while in that glade.

Sleeping: Any non-natives of the First World who sleep in Thousandbreaths are subjected to living nightmares if the Nightmare Rook (see area D) still lives.

Sounds: These are the voices: the thousand voices of Thousandbreaths, the source of the region's name. In truth, there are far more than a mere thousand breaths in Thousandbreaths, as the disembodied voices are from those taken and remade by the queen, cries of helplessness in a pitiless and unending twilight. Beyond the screams there are other sounds: weeping, singing of children's rhymes, shouts of anger, feral cries, and howls—PCs who listen too closely might even hear familiar voices that could well sound like villains or friends who have died or gone missing over the course of the Kingmaker Adventure Path.

The Woods: Travel through the wood is difficult beyond the paths and rivers (see the next section). Off the path, the woods are the equivalent of a *wall of thorns* that cannot be dispelled. Moving through these woods is difficult and painful. Fortunately, there is nothing of any real import hidden in the deeper parts of these woods.

PATHS AND RIVERS

Simple travel through Thousandbreaths is possible via a network of paths, yet even walking on these paths and moving down these rivers is nerve-wracking. Eyes blink from the screaming dark of the forest, lights are dim and seem to have trouble illuminating beyond the paths, and stranger lights dance and twitch in the sky above, almost as if the few stars could not decide on their paths through the darkening sky.



Two types of passages exist within the realm of Thousandbreaths—paths and rivers. Travel along a path is possible in both directions, but travel along a river always leads downstream—even if a person attempts to follow a river upstream by flying above it or swimming against the current, the next destination he reaches is always the ones he would have reached by moving downstream. The rivers always flow away from area K toward area B.

Any character who tries to fly above the wood's tree line discovers an unsettling truth about the reality of this realm—there seems to be no world above the canopy. No matter how high she flies, the tops of the trees extend to what seems to be 200 feet above her. Only the Nightmare Rook (see area D) can actually travel above the treetops of Thousandbreaths.

Regardless of the speed or method used to navigate a path or river, it always takes 1d4 hours to reach the next glade. Check for wandering monsters once each time the PCs use a path or river to travel to another glade. Every time the PCs move onto a pathway, there's a 50% chance the pathway is perilous in some way—roll on the Pathway Perils table to determine in what way.

A. ENTERING THOUSANDBREATHS

This area is where the gate in Thousand Voices at the Castle of Knives leads to—an archway called the Byway, formed by a pair of beautiful women carved from iron. The statues make an arch with their raised hands, while in their other hands they hold high a sword that bears a striking resemblance to *Briar*. Indeed, the first time *Briar* is brought through this gate, it gains a Sharpness Point—as this occurs, both it and the two blades held by the statues momentarily glow with green light. Nyrrisa notices this effect and thus knows when *Briar* enters Thousandbreaths, but she does not react. If the sword is in the hands of her agents, they'll bring it to her soon enough, and if it is in the hands of her enemies, she does not want to confront them and instead hopes that the various perils of Thousandbreaths finish them off before they reach her.

B. WATCHERS ON THE WHIRLING SHORE (CR 15)

The forest clears, and a broad lake of dark water fills the majority of the resulting glen, leaving a fifteen-foot-wide path around the lake's edge. Dozens of black swans glide along the lake's surface, apparently unimpressed by the immense but strangely silent whirlpool that churns at the lake's center. Along the forest edge, many of the trees seem to be dying or dead, their twisted branches drooping and their trunks scarred with disease and burns.

The swans are simply swans, and while the lake's vortex is powerful (functioning in a similar way to the vortex that appears on Day 5 of Part One), it doesn't present a threat to those who wade along the shores. The lake itself is roughly circular in shape and about 200 feet across.

Creatures: The true threat in this area comes from the treants that guard the lake's shores. Although these lightning-scarred guardians might look to the casual observer like dead trees, they are very much alive and quickly move to attack anyone that passes nearby. There are four treants in all—one stands guard next to each exit from the lake glade.

ADVANCED LIGHTNING TREANTS (4) CR 11

XP 12,800

Tome of Horrors III 119

NE Huge plant

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dex, +15 natural, -2 size)

hp 162 (12d8+108); fast healing 10

Fort +17, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities electric healing; **DR** 10/slashing; **Immune** electricity, fire, plant traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +21 (2d8+14)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks double damage against objects

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +14)

Constant—*greater magic fang* (self only)

At will—*faerie fire*

3/day—*call lightning storm* (DC 17), *lightning bolt* (DC 15),
protection from energy

1/day—*chain lightning* (DC 18)

TACTICS

During Combat If a lightning treant can't reach the PCs, it uses its spell-like abilities to attack from afar, making sure to catch other treants in the area of effect if it can to provide healing.

Morale The lightning treants fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 13, **Con** 28, **Int** 15, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 33

Feats Cleave, Greater Sunder, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

Skills Knowledge (nature) +14, Perception +20, Stealth +8 (+24 in forests), Survival +17

Languages Aklo

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Double Damage Against Objects (Ex) A lightning treant that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Pathway Perils

d%

Roll	Result
01–25	This is a grassy trail, the edges of which are littered with statues of curious creatures that are at once human and animal. The trees here have an unsettlingly fleshy look about them, with parts of people woven or grafted into them, some of which speak nonsense to the PCs as they pass. At one point during the journey, all of the PCs must make DC 15 Will saves to avoid becoming confused by these voices for 1d6 rounds.
26–50	This path is narrow, only 10 feet wide, with thorny branches hanging low over it. Medium or larger characters take a –2 penalty on attack rolls and Dexterity-based checks due to the low branches.
51–75	The edges of this path grow thick with strange flowers that seem to writhe and move on their own. Each flower has a tangle of tentacle-like vines hanging down from its stem. These plants are dangerous, and exude nightmare vapor (<i>Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook</i> 560) for 1d8 rounds once the PCs are halfway down the path to their destination—if the PCs encounter a wandering monster on this path, the plants wait until a battle begins to gas the region.
76–100	This 10-foot-wide path seems to be a barely used animal track, although countless bloated animal carcasses lie strewn amid the undergrowth along both sides of the path. Characters who travel this path are exposed to bubonic plague (<i>Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook</i> 557).

Electric Healing (Ex) Electricity damage heals a lightning treant 1 point of damage for every 3 points it would otherwise deal. If the amount would cause the lightning treant to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points—these temporary hit points last for 2 hours.

Development: If this glade's linked bloom has not been defeated, four elder water elementals lurk within the waters of this lake—these elementals work with the lightning treants to defend the glade.

C. THE FROZEN BONEYARD (CR 17)

Snow falls steadily in this forest glade, which appears to be an ominously oversized graveyard. Dozens of ten-foot-tall headstones rise from the snow, with what must be drift-buried paths winding through the graveyard where no stones loom. An old tower leans precariously against the supportive branches of several trees at one end of the glade, while an immense marble vault looms at the other, at the edge of a frozen lake.

The temperature in this glade is rather frigid, functioning as extreme cold (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 442). Nyrrisa rarely comes to this grove anymore; she has little interest in this frigid corner of Thousandbreaths and leaves its care to Kargstaad, a foul-tempered and four-armed frost giant who lives in the mostly empty vault at the edge of the boneyard's frozen lake. This glade, despite the appearance of a frozen cemetery, is not an actual cemetery—Nyrrisa simply found the appearance of a frozen graveyard soothing when she was in her darker moods not long after she survived the aftermath of her affair with one of the Eldest.

The leaning tower is little more than a spiral stair built into a 200-foot-tall circular stone shell. The tower is in dreadful repair, but is in no danger of collapsing. The stairs end at a dizzying vantage point in the open rooftop that allows a view over the tops of the tree line (although anyone who attempts to fly from this tower finds the tree line suddenly extends above as normal for Thousandbreaths).

Creature: The four-armed frost giant barbarian Kargstaad and his six giant followers dwell here, eternally provided for by the glade when it comes to hunting for food or water. Collected as trophies ages ago by Nyrrisa, these giants know little but their lives in this glade. When this glade's bloom opens, Kargstaad sends his giants through to protect the bloom, but his giants, starved for entertainment, quickly abandon it.

Once the bloom closes, Kargstaad knows his giants have failed him, and the arrival of the PCs gives him an opportunity to smooth over this failure if he can only capture them for his mistress.

KARGSTAAD

CR 17

XP 102,400

Male frost giant barbarian 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 149)

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+7 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural, –2 rage, –1 size)

hp 343 (22 HD; 14d8+8d12+228)

Fort +25, **Ref** +12, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities rock catching; improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2, DR 1/—; **Immune** cold

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk cold iron handaxe +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+23/19–20/x3), 3 mwk cold iron handaxes +25 (1d8+11/19–20/x3)

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

Special Attacks rage (26 rounds/day), rage powers (guarded stance [+2 + Con bonus], quick reflexes, swift foot +5 feet)

TACTICS

During Combat Kargstaad rages at the start of any fight and uses Power Attack while in melee. If he can't engage foes in melee, he uproots tombstones and hurls them as thrown rocks.

Morale Kargstaad fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 13, **Con** 30, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +32; **CMD** 44

Feats Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (handaxe), Improved Iron Will, Iron Will,

Multiweapon Fighting, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (handaxe)

Skills Climb +34, Intimidate +22, Perception +26

Languages Giant

SQ fast movement

Gear +3 *hide armor*, masterwork cold iron handaxes (4), *amulet of natural armor* +3, *ring of protection* +2

Development: If this glade's linked bloom has not yet been defeated, Kargstaad's six frost giant minions are encountered here as well.

D. THE NIGHTMARE SPIRE (CR 16)

A 1-mile-wide clearing in the endless forest opens under the twilight sky to make way for a field of jagged hills and thorny plains. A single stone spire rises like a needle nearly a mile into the sky—and perched atop it is what appears to be an immense but motionless crow.

Creature: The enormous crow is one of the most notorious of Thousandbreaths' denizens: the Nightmare Rook. This monstrous guardian of the skies above Thousandbreaths can visit the dreaming minds of outlanders who are foolish enough to sleep in Nyrisa's realm, inflicting horrific living nightmares upon them. Yet it also serves as an expedient way to travel for many of the region's creatures, for the Nightmare Rook is one of two creatures (the other being Nyrisa herself) that can fly above the trees of this realm.

The Nightmare Rook only agrees to carry passengers from the Material Plane at Nyrisa's direct request or perhaps as a result of magical control (note that carrying such passengers is fundamentally against the rook's nature, and it may gain additional saving throws to resist such magical commands). The Nightmare Rook has excellent vision, and unless the PCs take pains to be stealthy as they enter this glade, the immense bird sees them and turns to face them as they approach. If they move more than a hundred feet into the clearing, it shrieks, spreads its wings, and swoops to attack.

Although the monstrous Nightmare Rook has the nightmare creature template from the *Advanced Bestiary*, its powers function somewhat differently, as detailed below.

NIGHTMARE ROOK

CR 16

XP 76,800

Male awakened advanced nightmare roc (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 236, *Advanced Bestiary* 187)

CE Colossal magical beast (augmented animal, evil)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +28

Aura fear aura (60 ft., DC 26)



Kargstaad

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 24 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +22 natural, -8 size)

hp 252 (24d8+144); regeneration 5 (silver or good)

Fort +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities feign death; **DR** 5/silver or good;

Immune illusions

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 talons +23 (3d6+13/19-20), bite +23 (3d8+13/19-20)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks living nightmares

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +24)

Constant—*protection from good*

TACTICS

During Combat The Nightmare Rook uses Flyby Attack and Vital Strike bite attacks to devastating effect, relying on its fear aura and frightful presence to scatter its foes. If this tactic works, it uses Snatch to grab a PC and then flies off with its foe. If the Nightmare Rook makes it over the tree line, it is effectively out of reach of other players and free to travel to any other glade it wishes to drop its stolen PC—the bird has a particular fondness for dropping prey into the Mire (area G) or the Fruiting Orchard (area E). It can't drop a PC into the deep woods, as the nature of Thousandbreaths prevents such a stranding, and if a PC manages to wrestle out of the Rook's clutches while hanging over the vast green forest below, she falls a distance of well over 200 feet to land at the edge of the glade from which she most recently left. If the Rook isn't able to separate the PCs, it lands and makes full attacks until reduced to 100 hit points or less, at which point it flies back up to its spire to heal and glare malevolently at the PCs.

Morale If confronted at the top of its perch (a circular area 90 feet in diameter), the Nightmare Rook fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +39; **CMD** 55

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (talons, bite), Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Armor (3), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Snatch, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +32, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (planes) +27, Perception +28, Stealth +22

Languages Aklo, Sylvan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear Aura (Su) Creatures affected by the Nightmare Rook's fear aura become shaken the first time they fail their save and cower in fear each round they fail a save thereafter. Once a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this effect, it is immune to the effect for 24 hours.

Living Nightmares (Su) The Nightmare Rook has the ability to inflict living nightmares on any non-native of the First

World who sleeps in Thousandbreaths, at the rate of one nightmare per person per night. A living nightmare functions as detailed on page 15—this ability cannot be used in combat.

Development: If the PCs have not defeated the Nights of Dread bloom, the Nightmare Rook gains the benefits of *haste* and *displacement*—these effects can only be removed by defeating the Nights of Dread bloom.

E. THE FRUITING ORCHARD (CR 15)

A thirty-foot-high brick wall encircles a large clearing in the woods—within, the riot of growth continues, but as a tangle of mushrooms and fungus rather than actual leafy plants. Bulbs of brightly colored fruits the size of a man's head hang from or grow on the trunks of many of the mushrooms—many of these bulbs twitch and pulse as if something within were attempting to escape.

Creatures: This noxious orchard is where Nyryssa allows the “children of Thousandbreaths” to dwell—hundreds of thousands of tiny little mandragoras. The bulbous “fruits” on the mushrooms are in fact growing mandragoras nearing “birth.” A solid blow to such a hanging fruit causes it to burst and shriek like a newborn baby as it disgorges its malformed contents onto the thick, moldy soil below.

While this garden is infested with mandragoras, just as the bloom of the Shrieking Children was infested, these mandragoras do not attack intruders as a swarm. Instead, they swarm up into a mound, quickly building their mass up and spreading their malleable bodies apart and together to form a single 35-foot-tall mandragora—an impressive trick they do quickly as soon as the PCs kill any single mandragora, living or unborn.

IMMENSE MANDRAGORA

CR 15

XP 51,200

CE Gargantuan plant

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +9 natural, -4 size)

hp 232 (16d8+160); fast healing 10

Fort +20, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

Immune plant traits; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to darkness

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 vine whips +25 (2d8+17/19-20 plus poison), bite +25 (2d8+17)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (30 ft. with vine whips)

Special Attacks shriek

TACTICS

During Combat The mandragoras require the entire first round of combat to collect into their Gargantuan form.

During this round, the immense mandragora cannot make attacks. Once it is fully formed, it uses Power Attack with every strike, and Awesome Blow against characters that are able to make large numbers of melee attacks trying to force the characters to take move actions to get back in range, thus minimizing the damage they do.

Morale The immense mandragora fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 45, **Dex** 17, **Con** 30, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +33; **CMD** 46

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (vine whips), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +25, Fly +0, Perception +12, Stealth +0 (+8 in heavy plant growth)

Languages Aklo, Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Vine whip—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 28; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* confused for 1 round; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Shriek (Su) Once per day, as a standard action, an immense mandragora can give voice to an unsettling shriek that sounds not unlike the cry of gargantuan baby. All creatures within 30 feet of a shrieking immense mandragora must make a DC 25 Reflex save or take 15d6 points of sonic damage and a DC 25 Will save or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. A successful Reflex save halves the sonic damage, while a successful Will save negates the nausea. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vulnerable to Darkness (Ex) An immense mandragora in an area of darkness loses its fast healing and becomes slowed, as per the spell.

Development: If the PCs have not yet defeated the bloom of the Shrieking Children, they face two immense mandragoras here rather than one.

F. THE SHUNNED FALLS (CR 16)

A waterfall cascades between two immense stone hands carved from the peak of a stony cliff, tumbling into a large pool in this two-hundred-foot diameter forest glade. The pool is crystal clear, its shores thick with reeds and water-flowers of dazzling hue. A number of great trees hang over this pool as though trying to protect it from something above. Several large leaves the size of small boats float near the pool's shore.

The Shunned Falls is unique among the glades of Thousandbreaths in that it does not generate a bloom in the

Stolen Lands—this is the one place in Thousandbreaths that has fallen from Nyriassa's direct control, for it is here that evidence of her shame and guilt persists. This glade is maintained by the Eldest as a constant reminder to Nyriassa that no matter how powerful she thinks she can become, the Eldest are more powerful still. As a result Nyriassa hates this glade with a passion and rarely, if ever, visits here. Once the glade's current denizens (see *Creatures*, below) leave, it can be a safe place for beleaguered PCs to camp—Nyriassa and her minions do not intrude upon this region.

The large leaves that float on the water can serve as impromptu rafts for characters who wish to float downstream on the river.

Creatures: A mated pair of what serve in the First World as predators dwell in this glade—flying owlbears. While intelligent enough to understand Sylvan, the winged owlbears are little more than wild beasts as far as denizens of the First World are concerned, and exist here simply because the glade is otherwise uncontrolled.

WINGED OWLBEARS (2)

CR 14

XP 38,400

CN Gargantuan magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;

Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +17 natural, -4 size)

hp 248 each (16d10+160)

Fort +20, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +26 (2d6+14/19-20 plus grab), bite +26 (2d6+14)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The two winged owlbears rise up as one to attack anyone who intrudes on their territory. They have little interest in creatures on the ground unless a flying or climbing creature retreats to it.

Morale The winged owlbears fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 18, **Con** 31, **Int** 6, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 49 (53 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Natural Armor (3), Vital Strike

Skills Fly +9, Perception +14

Languages Sylvan (cannot speak)

G. THE MIRE (CR 16)

The trail ends at a great space in the forest that opens up into a foul-smelling marsh perhaps a mile or so across. A few trees stand defiantly in the fen, but they are sick things that grow from

algae-choked water. Tiny red dots squirm in the water—closer inspection reveals them to be countless tiny, twitching worms.

The mire's waters average 10 feet deep, but numerous crisscrossing troughs drop down to depths of 30 feet throughout the swamp. Likewise, a maze of ridges that come within inches of the water surface (but average 1 foot below it) wind throughout the mire—a character can move through the mire along these ridges as long as she moves at half speed. If she moves faster, she must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping into a deeper trough.

Creatures: This bog is normally the den of one of Nyrissa's most valued advisors—the Wriggling Man. She's asked this monstrous wizard to join her in her Home while she prepares to absorb the Stolen Lands, for his advice and magical aid are invaluable. Yet the Wriggling Man has not left his swamp unguarded—three immense mire worms swim through the waters of the marsh, and they quickly surge forth to attack anyone who enters the glade.

MIRE WORMS (3) CR 13
XP 25,600 each
 Advanced purple worm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 230, 294)
 hp 232 each

Development: If the PCs have not yet defeated the Rise of the Mire Worms bloom, they face three additional mire worms in this encounter.

H. THE KNURLY HOUSE (CR 16)

The forest opens into a narrow clearing surrounded by bent, extremely broad trees. At the center of the clearing rises a strange sight—what appears to be two dozen different houses tangled together in a semi-organized mess, forming a conglomerate building where right angles seem unwelcome. The smoke rising from a few of the house's chimneys indicates that the strange structure is not abandoned. A tangled yard filled with bristly vines and thorns surrounds the cottage.

This building is the Knurly House, all that remains of Nyrissa's first attempt to craft herself a House from the raw potential of the First World. She learned much from this initial attempt, and the House at the Edge of Time is a much more stable and well-organized affair.

The thorns that surround the Knurly House are identical to those that manifest in the Knurly Briars bloom (see page 17).

Creature: Nyrissa gave this house to one of her few true friends (who is also one of only two nonindigenous creatures allowed to dwell

in Thousandbreaths as if they were true natives of the First World). This creature is a powerful hag cleric of the goddess Gyronna—a twisted crone who has abandoned and forgotten her true name in favor of being known as the Knurly Witch. She is an annis, a towering hag with skin, teeth, and fingernails as hard as iron.

Not many clerics dwell in the First World, and although Nyrissa shares the contempt many of this world have for the gods, she also recognizes the value of having a cleric nearby. When the Knurly Witch first stumbled into Thousandbreaths 220 years ago, Nyrissa offered the annis a choice—die and feed the tarn linnorm, or live as Nyrissa's servant. The annis made the choice easily enough, and does not regret it, for she has been treated well by Nyrissa.



Winged Ovlbear

The Knurly Witch doesn't live alone in this house unless her athach gardeners have already been dispatched to (and possibly slain on) the Material Plane. She spends the majority of her time sleeping, cooking, repairing her home, or sitting on her front stoop and watching the weeds in her yard grow. It's this latter pastime that she's engaged in when the PCs arrive.

Although the Knurly Witch is as evil as they come, she doesn't immediately attack. She's been warned of the PCs by Nyrrissa, and she's curious. She invites the PCs up to share "tea" with her (a foul concoction of crow's blood and powdered maggots that, if imbibed, nauseates for 2d6 rounds unless a DC 18 Fortitude save is made) as soon as she spots them—if the PCs agree to the invitation, the Knurly Witch adopts a strangely forthcoming and honest tactic. She simply starts asking the PCs what they're doing here in Thousandbreaths and tries to discern their powers, their goals, and their weaknesses through blunt questioning. If she thinks that it'll make the PCs more cooperative, she proposes a free trade of information—for every question they answer of hers, she'll answer one of theirs about Nyrrissa. Of course, the Knurly Witch lies with each answer, trying to feed the PCs completely false information about the nymph queen in hopes that even if they believe one of her lies, their

tactics will be compromised in a later confrontation. Eventually, either the Knurly Witch or the PCs are likely to grow tired of this game (likely at a point when the Witch still has at least a minute's duration left on her *bead of karma*—see her Tactics below), at which point the witch simply starts casting a *summon monster VII* spell to begin combat with 1d3 huge earth elementals.

THE KNURLY WITCH

CR 16

XP 76,800

Female annis cleric of Gyronna 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bonus Bestiary* 11)

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 249 (20 HD; 7d10+13d8+153)

Fort +16, Ref +11, Will +20

DR 2/bludgeoning; SR 17

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +23 (1d6+7/19-20 plus grab), bite +22 (1d6+7)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks aura of madness (DC 21, 13 rounds/day), channel negative energy 4/day (DC 17, 7d6), destructive smite (+6, 8/day), destructive aura (+6, 13 rounds/day), rend (2d6+10)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +18) 8/day—vision of madness

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +18)

7th—*insanity*^D (DC 22), *summon monster VII*

6th—*harm*^D (DC 21), *heal*, *word of recall*

5th—*flame strike* (DC 20), *greater command* (DC 20), *shout*^D (DC 20), *summon monster V*, *wall of stone*

4th—*air walk*, *confusion*^D (DC 19), *cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *sending*, *spell immunity*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *contagion* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*, *rage*^D

2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (3), *hold person* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon*, *touch of idiocy*^D

1st—*command* (DC 16), *cure light wounds* (4), *lesser confusion*^D (DC 16), *shield of faith*

o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *mending*, *read magic*

D Domain spell; Domains Destruction, Madness

TACTICS

Before Combat The Knurly Witch activates her *bead of karma*, then casts *shield of faith* and *air walk* as soon as she sees the PCs approach her home.

During Combat The Knurly Witch casts *summon monster* spells for the first 2 rounds of combat to liven up the battlefield, moving into the air above her home via *air walk* if she can before she begins casting. She uses



The Knurly Witch

her ranged spells as much as possible, but if melee becomes unavoidable, she casts *divine power*, activates her destructive aura, and attacks with tooth and claw (and periodic touch spells).

Morale If reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, the Knurly Witch casts *word of recall*. As an “adopted” native of the First World, she can use this spell to retreat to her sanctuary—area **K16** in the House at the Edge of Time. There, she seeks out Nyrissa to report her failure to defend the Knurly House and prepares as mentioned in area **K16** to confront the PCs one last time.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 14, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 37

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lunge, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (claws)

Skills Intimidate +16, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +28, Spellcraft +13

Languages Common, Giant

Gear +3 *leather armor*, *scarab of protection* (9 charges), *strand of prayer beads* (standard)

Development: If the PCs have not yet defeated the Knurly Briar bloom, they face the Knurly Witch’s three attach gardeners as well as the crone herself.

I. THE BALEFUL LANTERN (CR 14)

This small clearing is lit by ghastly yellow-green light that flickers like torchlight. The sources of the light are dozens of female human heads that hang by their hair from spikes on the outer edge of a towering beehive-shaped structure in the center of the clearing—these heads function as horrific lanterns, with the light emerging from empty eyesockets and gaping mouths. Worse, the eyes and lips of several of these grisly lanterns seem to be twitching and writhing as if in pain.

This horrific building is the home of one of Thousandbreaths’ most hateful denizens: the Misbegotten Troll. The dozens of severed heads that decorate his strange home are the remains of his previous “wives,” unfortunate victims harvested from across Golarion over the past several hundred years. The twitching and wriggling is little more than an eerie side effect of the minor necromantic enhancement that makes the heads function as lanterns—the souls of these unfortunate victims have long since moved on to the Boneyard.

Creatures: The Misbegotten Troll left another six of his black smilodons behind here to guard his home while he was out—if the PCs come to this area after defeating the troll on the Material Plane, these advanced dire tigers are frenzied and eager for anything, and they attack on sight.

BLACK SMILODONS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Advanced dire tiger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 265, 294)

hp 133 each

Development: If the Misbegotten Troll escaped death on the Material Plane, he can be found here, brooding over his failures and eager for a rematch against the PCs. Likewise, if the PCs come upon this area before the Misbegotten Troll’s bloom manifests in the Stolen Lands, they’ll encounter him and his extra black smilodons here.

J. THE HIGH FOLLY (CR 17)

This huge clearing consists of a grassy field in which stand thousands of stone statues. Each statue depicts a different strange denizen of the First World, from mire worm to treant to linnorm to nymph and more, and each is encrusted with moss and grime. At the center of the clearing rises a low but strangely round hill, atop which rises a three-hundred-foot-high tower of white stone with a peak consisting of three conical rooftops. An immense archway gapes at the base of the tower, wide and tall enough for a pair of elephants to walk through side by side.

This glade contains the High Folly, a sort of “gatehouse” that watches over the only path that leads to Nyrissa’s home. The field of statues that surrounds the central tower is an entire army of petrified First World monstrosities—a stone army that Nyrissa has been collecting with the aid of her medusa ally Phomandala for many years. When the War of the High Folly begins, the final bloom restores this army to flesh, and they are unleashed upon the PCs’ capital city. Here on the First World, though, they are harmless.

The High Folly itself rises in the center of the clearing, a hollow tower within which a single curving stairway rises to an observation platform under three open roofs—the structure and purpose of the tower is similar to the leaning tower in area C, but a character who looks out from this tower’s observation platform can see all of Thousandbreaths laid out below—almost exactly how the map at the end of *Zuddiger’s Picnic* shows. Nyrissa often uses the High Folly to oversee her Kingdom or simply to contemplate.

Creature: The High Folly has served as the lair of one of Nyrissa’s more powerful Material Plane allies for some time now. This ally is the notorious black wyrm Ilthuliak, a dragon who, in her youth, often scoured and raided the River Kingdoms of Pitax and Mivon as well as Numeria and Brevoy. She murdered and ate all would-be dragonslayers who hunted her, and eventually attracted Nyrissa’s attention. The nymph wooed Ilthuliak to relocate her lair to Thousandbreaths with promises of power, treasure,

and glory—and so far, Nyrisa has made good on those promises. Ilthuliak hopes that if she can help Nyrisa rebuild her reputation with the Eldest, she'll be rewarded with a small fraction of the strange favor and power the First World manifests in the world's linnorms.

As such, it is in Ilthuliak's best interest to keep the PCs from reaching the House at the Edge of Time. She remains vigilant at all times, a light sleeper and a keen observer. As soon as she notices intruders in this glade, she immediately swoops down to attack.

ILTHULIAK

CR 17

XP 102,400

Female wyrm black dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 92)

CE Huge dragon (water)

Init -1; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., dragon senses; Perception +32

Aura frightful presence (330 ft., DC 31)



Ilthuliak

DEFENSE

AC 48, touch 7, flat-footed 48 (+4 armor, -1 Dex, +33 natural armor, +4 shield, -2 size)

hp 324 (24d12+168)

Fort +21, **Ref** +13, **Will** +21

Defensive Abilities evasion; **DR** 20/magic; **Immune** acid, magic paralysis and sleep, dragon traits; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +34 (2d8+18), 2 claws +34 (2d6+12), 2 wings +32 (1d8+6), tail slap +32 (2d6+18)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks acid pool, acidic bite, breath weapon (100-ft. line of acid, 22d6 damage, DC 31), crush (2d8+18, DC 31)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 24th; concentration +28)

At will—*darkness* (110-foot radius), *insect plague*, *plant growth* 1/day—corrupt water

Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +17)

6th (4)—*acid fog*, *flesh to stone* (DC 20)

5th (6)—*teleport*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of force*

4th (7)—*dimension door*, *eneration*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *mass reduce person* (DC 18)

3rd (7)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *haste*, *suggestion* (DC 17)

2nd (7)—*acid arrow*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*

1st (7)—*charm person* (DC 15), *grease* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *shield*

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 14), *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ilthuliak casts *mage armor*, *shield*, and *invisibility* (in that order) on herself before she initiates combat. As a result, the dragon's AC increases to an impressive 48—this may be far too high for your PCs to handle, so if you are worried that the battle won't be fair, feel free to replace *mage armor* or *shield* with other 1st-level spells like *magic missile* and *obscuring mist*.

During Combat The dragon opens combat with her breath weapon, following up with a few rounds flying overhead and casting spells like *acid fog*, *mass reduce person*, and *flesh to stone* at PCs on the ground below. When her breath weapon recharges, she casts *haste*, then on the next round swoops down to land amid the PCs and uses her breath weapon again—on the following several rounds, she loses herself in the glory

of melee battle, periodically taking to the sky to cast a few more spells.

Morale Ilthuliak fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 8, **Con** 25, **Int** 18, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +24; **CMB** +38; **CMD** 47 (51 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Eschew Materials, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +31, Fly +22, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (history) +31, Knowledge (planes) +31, Perception +32, Sense Motive +32, Stealth +18, Swim +39

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Skald, Sylvan

SQ speak with reptiles, swamp stride, water breathing

Gear ring of evasion

Treasure: Ilthuliak's treasure, already considerable before Nyrrisa gave her more to help seal their alliance, lies atop the High Folly in an impressive mound at the center of the observation platform. This hoard consists of 570,400 cp, 48,200 sp, 11,950 gp, 1,240 pp, and several dozen gemstones and minor trinkets worth a total of 24,000 gp. In addition, her lair contains several potent magic items: a suit of +4 *elven chainmail*, a +2 *wild buckler*, a *sylvan scimitar*, a +3 *returning icy starknife*, a *rod of the python*, a *staff of defense*, a *cloak of the bat*, *bracers of armor* +7, a *gem of seeing*, and a *mantle of faith*.

Development: If the war of the High Folly has taken place, the thousands of statues are shattered and crumbled.

UPROOTING THOUSANDBREATHS

Nyrrisa, despite her power, does not actually have within herself the ability to shape and maintain the realm of Thousandbreaths. She can create glades and their contents, but in order for them to maintain their shape, each glade must be "tethered" to a powerful entity so full of life that its presence acts as an anchor—without these entities, the 10 glades of Thousandbreaths would drift apart like so many leaves floating on the surface of a wind-tossed sea.

Whether they realize it or not, by defeating these anchors, the PCs are weakening Thousandbreaths' place in the First World. Each time they defeat all of the guardians of a glade, there's a cumulative chance that the defeat is enough to cause Thousandbreaths to calve off of the First World and tumble cataclysmically into the Material Plane in a reversal of the act that Nyrrisa so desperately wants to perform to the Stolen Lands.

Note that the denizens of area F already count as a defeated glade, as they are not under the direct command of Nyrrisa.

When Thousandbreaths is uprooted, it manifests entirely within the forest of Thousand Voices in the Stolen Lands, its glades replacing 10 different areas in the forest, with

Guardians of the Glades

The various guardians who must be defeated in the glades and the increase to the chance of uprooting Thousandbreaths with each successive defeat are summarized below.

Area	Guardian	Uproot
		Chance Increase
B	4 advanced lightning treants	+5%
C	Kargstaad	+20%
D	Nightmare Rook	+10%
E	Immense mandragora	+5%
F	None (automatic for PCs)	+10%
G	3 mire worms	+5%
H	The Knurly Witch	+15%
I	6 black smilodons	+5%
J	Ilthuliak	+25%

the House at the Edge of Time merging with the Castle of Knives. When the uprooting occurs, the sound of a thousand screams tears through the air, a horrific noise as the realm expels its thousand breaths at once in a traumatic death. The denizens of the glades are traumatized by this event, and all surviving guardians (with the exception of those who were inside of the House at the Edge of Time when the transfer occurred and the two non-natives—the Knurly Witch and Ilthuliak) become staggered as long as they remain on the Material Plane. Creatures permanently staggered in this manner are reduced in CR by 2.

All of the otherworldly elements of Thousandbreaths vanish when it uproots—this can have a number of effects if you wish, but for the most part the general natures of the encounters in the glades should be relatively unchanged.

Given time, Thousandbreaths rebuilds and repairs itself and can return to the First World, but this process takes several years—and if Nyrrisa is slain, it will never occur. If the PCs can uproot Thousandbreaths from the First World, they'll gain a major advantage over their enemy.

Story Award: If the PCs uproot Thousandbreaths, award them 102,400 XP.

PART THREE: HOUSE AT THE EDGE OF TIME

At Thousandbreaths' heart lies a House; yet this is no earthly citadel, no mortal edifice. The House is a creation of a powerful entity of the First World, and its architecture is a part of the world itself. Known as the House at the Edge of Time for its timeless quality (it alone has existed unchanged for Thousandbreaths' long existence, whereas the glades themselves periodically shift and change as Nyrrisa's needs and interests change), this House sits at

the center of an isle in a large lake atop a mesa. On one side, it overlooks the panorama of Thousandbreaths itself, while the other side looks out over time and space—an endless gulf of stars and blackness. There are pathways from the House at the Edge of Time to the rest of the First World, but for the purposes of this adventure, they do not currently exist—Nyrissa has willed them out of reality.

While in Thousandbreaths, the lake surrounding the House is effectively bottomless—just as one can fly upward and never rise above the tree level, one can swim down into the lake without ever reaching the bottom—but fortunately the surface is never more than a few hundred feet away should a swimmer elect to return. The lake spills over the edge of its mesa in two places, to the left and right, to form the twin nameless rivers that frame Thousandbreaths and eventually meet again at the Whirling Lake, where the waters drain away to nowhere. If Thousandbreaths is uprooted, the waterfalls soon vanish as the lake drains to a point where the water no longer pours over the edges—this results in a surface height change of only 20 feet. Additionally, the lake gains a bed once it appears on the Material Plane, although at 150 feet, it is still quite deep.

The House can be reached via a long stone causeway that connects its island to the mesa's edge. A gatehouse flanked by towers guards the entrance beyond this bridge, while in the courtyard beyond, tall dark trees rise and rustle in the constant soft breeze. Hundreds of windows stare out of the House itself, and stone angels hang from every gable. The outline of the House is as beautiful as it is dangerous, with knife-like crenellations, spear-topped towers, and eaves and shingles made of blades. Some parts of the House seem new and others old, but the structure as a whole is ancient and unchanging—even those sections of the House in ruins have always been that way.

One more curious feature of the House—it casts a sort of “shadow” into the Material Plane. Deep in the woodland of Thousand Voices lies a mysterious ruin that has long been known as the Castle of Knives. In appearance, this ruin resembles the House at the Edge of Time, but after some unknown calamity has brought it down and left only a few crumbling walls and ruined towers of knives in its place.

APPROACHING THE HOUSE (CR 18)

Regardless of whether the house exists on the First World or has been uprooted, the approach to the house is well protected. A single tarn linnorm named Tarlaxian dwells in the lake, and it keeps a watchful eye on those who fly above its waters or cross the bridge. Note that if Thousandbreaths has been uprooted, Tarlaxian becomes staggered and easier (but by no means safe) to fight—in this case, his CR drops to 16.

TARLAXIAN

CR 18

XP 153,600

Male variant tarn linnorm “runt” (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 192)

CE Gargantuan dragon (aquatic)

Init +12; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent, true seeing; **Perception** +36

DEFENSE

AC 35, touch 14, flat-footed 27 (+8 Dex, +21 natural, –4 size)

hp 279 (18d12+162); regeneration 15 (cold iron)

Fort +20, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities freedom of movement; **DR** 15/cold iron;

Immune acid, curse effects, flanking, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects; **SR** 29

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 80 ft.

Melee 2 bites +26 (2d8+12/19–20 plus poison), 2 claws +26 (1d8+12), tail +21 (2d6+6 plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (DC 28), constrict (tail, 2d6+18), death curse (DC 26)

TACTICS

During Combat Although small for a tarn linnorm, Tarlaxian is still rather enormous—if he notices anyone approaching the House, he bursts from the still waters of the lake to roar a challenge and then attacks.

Morale Tarlaxian fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 26, **Con** 28, **Int** 7, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 27

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +34 (+38 grapple); **CMD** 52 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bites), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +23, Perception +36, Stealth +17, Swim +41

Languages Aklo, Draconic, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, flight

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Su) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 28; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* 4d6 acid damage and 1d6 Con drain; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

HOUSE FEATURES

The House exists in the past and the future, the maybe and the never. One room may be clean and bright, with liveried servants and gaiety, while others are collapsing and decayed. Some have been damaged by the arrival of the PCs who slew the Queen yesterday and will do so tomorrow in this land of the impossible. Yet as strange as these warpings in time may be, stranger still is the fact that they remain constant, as if a storm of fractured time tore through the structure, only to be frozen forever in the middle of a chaos of a hundred different eras. This is how the House was when Nyrissa created it so long ago, and how it will remain—until the uprooting of Thousandbreaths.



Doors, Walls, and Windows: The outer walls are covered in ironwood vines that have grown over the windows, effectively barring them. While these vines make climbing the walls easy (DC 10 Climb check), they make breaking in through windows very difficult (the ironwood has hardness 10, 90 hit points, and Break DC 28). Anyone climbing the outer walls also quickly attracts the attention of the creatures that dwell atop the ivy tower (area M2), or the denizen of the courtyard (area K2). The doors are good; they are carved with faces and open with a touch (a free action) unless otherwise indicated. The stairs are steep and narrow (functioning as difficult terrain).

Phantoms: The House is full of phantoms of yesterday and tomorrow. They can be glimpsed in mirrors, the scent of their perfume lingers at times in the air, and the meals they have yet to eat lie steaming on the table. The PCs may even be able to see or hear these phantoms, if only briefly. These phantoms can variously be of people and creatures they do not recognize, but now and then the phantoms draw from the PCs' own minds, pasts, and futures—these phantoms

might remind the PCs of allies, old enemies thought dead, or even younger or older versions of themselves. In some cases, these temporal phantoms can actually interact with the present—the text of the encounter provides details as to where these effects can occur.

Static Time: Features in the house can be altered (walls destroyed, doors bashed down, windows broken, furniture burnt, and denizens slain), but every 24 hours the contents of the house “reset” as long as Nyrissa still lives. This can make exploring the site frustrating and exhausting—the PCs have only a single day to navigate the place without repeating their trials unless they opt to rest and recover while inside the house. Unfortunately for the PCs, the fact that they are from the Material Plane means that while the House's denizens are restored to full health every 24 hours, they are not—personal resources consumed by them remain consumed, and treasure looted from areas within the house vanish back to their original sites. Beneficial effects granted by any items or magical effects from treasure or objects in the House vanish upon this



24-hour mark, but unfortunately, afflictions, damage, and other negative effects remain.

K1. GATEHOUSE (CR 16)

A shining gatehouse bars entry into the courtyard of the large building with a lowered portcullis. In the walls above, arrowslits leer down while a solid smooth wall some forty feet high extends away from the gatehouse in both directions to connect to two more towers.

The gate is an iron portcullis (hardness 10, 60 hp, Lift DC 25, Break DC 28) that can be raised or lowered from the upper floor of the gatehouse (area K1b). Although there are several guards posted here and along the wall, the denizen of the courtyard (area K2) comes to defend the area if it notices anyone breaking into area K1a.

Creatures: Undead are rare in the First World, for this realm is infused with life. At worst, undead take constant damage from what is essentially a continuous influx of positive energy, but here in the House at the Edge of Time the overabundance of life is muted.

Nyrissa's favored house guards and servants are thankful for this, as they are ghosts. Once members of an ancient

elven community that formerly dwelled in the Stolen Lands, these elves were abducted by Nyrissa and executed in a foul ritual that, with the aid of the Fable, caused their bodies to die but transformed their souls into undead minions enslaved to the nymph's every whim. These ghosts rejuvenate as long as Nyrissa lives—her death is the only thing that can set them free.

As ghosts, these guards are eternally vigilant—they need not take breaks to eat, sleep, or entertain themselves. At any one time, four stand guard in area K1b, two atop each of the towers (areas K1c and K1d), and two atop each of the walls to either side of the gatehouse, amounting to 12 ghostly guards in all.

GHOSTLY GUARDS (12) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Male elf ghost rogue 10

CE Medium undead (augmented, elf, incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +5 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 115 (10d8+70)

Fort +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, incorporeal rejuvenation, trap sense +3; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee +1 *ghost touch rapier* +12/+7 (1d6+3/18–20), corrupting touch +5 (1d6 [Fort DC 20 halves])

Special Attacks frightful moan (DC 20), sneak attack +5d6 plus 5 bleed, telekinesis (DC 20)

TACTICS

During Combat When these ghosts spot intruders, they use their frightful moan more as an alarm than an attack, then proceed to use telekinesis to attempt to disarm the intruders or hurl them against the walls of the House. After a few rounds, the ghosts swoop down to engage the PCs in melee—note that with their solid equipment, these ghosts cannot easily pass through walls.

Morale The ghostly guards fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+20 jump), Bluff +18, Disable Device +16, Fly +11, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (local) +15, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +24, Sense Motive +14, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +24

SQ rogue talents (bleeding attack +4, combat trick, improved evasion, surprise attack, weapon training), trapfinding +5

Gear +2 *ghost touch leather armor*, +1 *ghost touch rapier*

K2. THE GREAT COURTYARD (CR 20 OR 16)

This large courtyard is a two-tiered region covered with thick grass. Paths wind to and from various doors, and a single, wide flight of stairs allows easy access to the courtyard's second tier, where several towering oak trees loom over the main body of the house.

A subtle but strange warping of reality exists in this courtyard—while the main body of the house is all on the same level as the upper tier, the entrance to area **K14** lies on the same level as the lower tier despite the fact that one can walk from area **K14** to **K2** via the house without seeming to change elevation. If the House is uprooted to the Material Plane, this warped bit of reality cannot exist, and area **K14** is violently thrust up on a pinnacle of rock, causing the short hallway that connects **K14** to **K1d** to crumble into rubble.

The branches of the tallest tree in the courtyard (the one south of area **K12**) are one of the four entrances to the Fable—they lead to area **M7b**.

Creature: The guardian of the Great Courtyard is a huge and dangerous creature—but its nature depends on whether the PCs have already slain the lesser jabberwock at the end of Part One. If the events of Day 28 have yet to occur, then the lesser jabberwock still lurks here amid the trees of the courtyard's upper tier. If, on the other hand, the lesser jabberwock has already been slain, Nyrissa has replaced it with a less dangerous but equally enormous zomok. In either case, the monstrous guardian won't pursue foes into the house itself, but it will chase intruders for several minutes if they attempt to flee the region.



Ghostly Guard

The House Uprooted

If the PCs uproot Thousandbreaths, the House at the Edge of Time is torn out of the First World and merges with the ruins of the Castle of Knives—the two locations become one. In addition to now functioning according to the realities of the Material Plane, rather than being subject to the traits of the First World, this merging causes a number of changes to the House's defenses and features, as summarized below (additional changes are noted in the encounter text as appropriate).

Nyrissa: The nymph will not leave the Fable as long as the House at the Edge of Time is trapped in the Material Plane and she suspects the PCs are nearby.

Phantoms: The phantoms and their effects are suppressed entirely.

Static Time: This effect vanishes entirely, and damage or changes to the House and its denizens no longer reset after 24 hours, regardless of whether Nyrissa lives or dies.

Teleport Trap: This effect vanishes entirely.

LESSER JABBERWOCK

CR 20

XP 307,200

hp 387 (see page 22)

ZOMOK

CR 16

XP 76,800

hp 297 (see page 88)

K3. STABLES

A set of six narrow stalls line the far wall of this stable.

Soon after the PCs enter, the unsettling sight of a dead horse hanging its head miserably over a stable door confronts them. Despite appearances, this is no undead horse. Rather, these six stalls each maintain a *phantom steed* (CL 20th)—a steed can be “keyed” to a rider by simply opening the door to a stall and beckoning the undead-looking horse out. A *phantom steed* created in this manner persists for 20 hours before unceremoniously vanishing, and after another 4 hours a replacement appears in its stall here.

K4. LOWER HALL (CR 18)

The polished marble floor of this otherwise empty chamber depicts a carving of the sun being devoured by a great dragon. The walls are painted to resemble a twilight forest with strange, dark shapes hiding in the trees as if peering out into this room.

Creatures: The carving on the floor is harmless, but the strange, dark shapes that seem to lurk amid the trees on

the walls are not. These are shadowy fey assassins known as ankous, guardians bound here by Nyrissa, eager to attack intruders and feel hot blood run over their dark talons. What Nyrissa doesn't realize is that these ankous are in fact also spies working for the Eldest of the First World—if she manages to capture the Stolen Lands or reclaim *Briar*, the ankous abandon this area and return to their true masters elsewhere to report. Otherwise, they'll slip out of hiding among the shadows on the walls to attack as soon as anyone notices that they're not merely decorations, or as soon as someone attempts to leave the room.

ANKOUS (4)

CR 14

XP 38,400 each

hp 133 each (see page 80)

K5. DINING ROOM

This dusty dining room seems to have remained unused for decades. A huge wooden table fills the chamber, eight fine chairs drawn up to its sides. What appears to be a faintly glowing phantom meal is laid out on the table, and periodically bits of food or drink rise up and vanish as if being consumed by invisible diners. A statue of a beautiful woman stands in one corner of the room.

The feasting hall has not been used in centuries. The phantasmal food itself is an echo of the ancient past—the last time Nyrissa had a dinner party. The diners are not present, but the dinner moves and floats as if they are. A PC that sits at the table can partake of the feast—doing so forces him to make a DC 20 Fortitude saving throw. If the save is a success, he gains the effects of a *heroes' feast* (CL 20th) after a single round of eating, but if the save is a failure, he instead gains 1d6 negative levels as the phantom food drains his soul of life.

Treasure: The statue is a faithful rendition of the nymph Nyrissa, but is otherwise unremarkable save for the *poisonous cloak* draped over her shoulders and naked form.

K6. DANCING BEAR (CR 10)

This room is dominated by a domed cage, its verdigris-encrusted surface caked with muck. A black bear stands lifelessly within the cage. A rubble-choked hall extends from one side of the room.

The rubble filled hall that leads to area **K17** is treated as difficult terrain.

Creatures: Moments after the PCs enter the chamber, the bear in the cage lumbers onto its hind legs and begins a slow but strangely graceful dance, made all the more grotesque by the fact that the bear is obviously dead. One of Nyrissa's many amusements, the bear is not in fact undead but rather

a stuffed animal that has been turned into an animated object. The bear doesn't attack, even if the characters attack it, but Nyrrisa has rigged the bear to punish anyone who destroys it—1 round after the bear's "death," it explodes into a blast of fire, filling the room and inflicting 20d6 points of fire damage to everyone within the room (DC 20 Reflex for half damage).

EXPLOSION BEAR

CR 10

XP 9,600

Variant animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)
hp 36

K7. OBSERVATORY

An arched opening looks out from the far side of this room, providing the large brass telescope in the middle of the room an excellent field of view.

The spyglass was formerly used by the Queen to look at the stars and moon and planetary bodies on the far side of Thousandbreaths, but she hasn't used the telescope in some time. From the outside, the "window" that looks out of this room simply doesn't exist as long as the House exists in the First World, but once the place is uprooted, the window functions like a normal opening (and provides an easy, unguarded entrance into the structure)—of course, on the Material Plane, the window looks out at the trees of Thousand Voices rather than a wondrous vista of space.

Treasure: The telescope is heavy (800 pounds) but quite valuable—it's worth 3,500 gp.

K8. DOOMED STOREROOM

While on the First World, this is an empty room. Once the House uproots, though, a nearby tree shifts and crashes against this room, knocking a hole in the wall and creating a new entrance into the building.

K9. THE SWILL FEAST

This room was obviously some sort of dining room. A great oaken table is pushed up against the wall, while several rickety chairs line the opposite wall. The rotting remnants of a vast feast lie upon the table—silver tureens spill fungal rot, a tarnished silver salver lies ruptured on its side, and old bones cover a number of plates.

Treasure: This room is unremarkable, but if the silver service is cleaned, it's worth 1,300 gp.

K10. POISONED WELL

A covered well is this chamber's only feature.

This well is 100 feet deep while on the First World, and the waters, while cool and crystal clear looking, are in fact tainted with disease—anyone who drinks from the well is exposed to blinding sickness (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557). Once the House is uprooted, the well is only 20 feet deep and contains no water at all.

K11. TELEPORTER ENTRANCE

This small chamber is clearly set aside for meditation. The themes herein are all of the natural world; a sumptuous stained glass window dominates the far wall, while green candlesticks carved to look like writhing trees light the room. A large round dais of stone sits in one corner of the room.

While on the First World, the stone dais can function as a teleporter that bypasses the building's teleport trap, although while Nyrrisa lives, the teleporter only functions for those who have her express permission. This teleporter leads to other realms in the First World, and if the PCs defeat Nyrrisa while the House at the Edge of Time remains on the First World, they can use this teleporter as a means to continue exploring the First World. The teleporter does not function while the House is uprooted.

Treasure: The six intricately carved jade candlesticks are worth 500 gp each.

K12. STAIRWELL

These stairs lead up to area L5.

K13. SALON OF CONFUSING SOUNDS

This salon is sumptuously decorated with vivid frescoes depicting primeval forests filled with incredible blooms and women of breathtaking beauty. The sounds of some sort of celebration may be heard in this room as if from a great distance.

With a DC 25 Perception check, the faint sounds of celebration—dancing, singing, and the playing of unearthly music—can be discerned. Further details cannot be heard save that the noises come from the floor above. These sounds are simply phantoms from the past, but if a PC listens for more than a minute, unless he makes a DC 18 Will save, the whispers turn sinister and disorienting, causing the character to become confused for 1d4 rounds.

K14. HALL OF WEeping DEMONS

This room is lined with strange, decaying plants. An empty pool sits in its center, and the walls are decorated with hundreds of small statues of sobbing demons.

This room serves as a guest entrance to the House—it hasn't been used in years.

Treasure: A DC 25 Perception check notes that one of the hundreds of sobbing demons in fact appears to be laughing. Removing this demon from the shelf causes the plants in the room to bloom into life and the empty pool to fill with water as the weeping demon statues cry streams of real tears that run down to collect in the center of the room. The pool takes 1 minute to fill completely, at which point anyone who steps into it receives the benefits of a *heal* spell (CL 20th). Each use causes the pool to shrink in size—there's enough water in the pool for three *heal* spells. The room “recharges” after 24 hours during the House's reversion, but if the House has been uprooted, this pool can only form once before the room's magic is expended.

K15. SERVANTS' WING (CR 16)

This wing of the House serves as workrooms for the servants—a group of a dozen ghostly guards. The rooms themselves are relatively unremarkable, but if the PCs enter this wing, they'll quickly attract the anger of the ghostly elves.

Area **K15i** contains a trap door that opens at a touch (like the other doors in the complex) to reveal a ladder leading down to area **K16**.

Creatures: The first group of ghostly guards the PCs encounter use their frightful howl to alert the others, who come running as quickly as possible. Remember, these ghosts wear armor and carry weapons, so they can't pass through walls, but the doors all open at a touch as a free action, so the ghosts should be able to gang up on intruders relatively quickly. If the Knurly Witch has retreated to area **K16**, she hears these howls and clambers up the ladder to join the fight. She makes good use of her ability to channel negative energy to keep the ghosts healed.

The function of each room (and the number of ghosts that start in each) are as follows.

K15a: Room used for quick naps and relaxation.

K15b: Ruined room (difficult terrain) once used as a food prep room.

K15c: Parlor used to relax and discuss the day's duties (2 ghosts).

K15d: Anteroom used to prepare flower garlands and prep meals (2 ghosts).

K15e: Kitchen used to cook and prepare food (2 ghosts).

K15f: Well room (identical to area **K10**).

K15g: Servants' dining room (3 ghosts).

K15h: Pantry used to store food and drink (2 ghosts).

K15i: Room used to grow delicate herbs and other spices (1 ghost).

GHOSTLY GUARDS (12)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 115 each (see page 38)

K16. CELLAR (CR 16)

This earthen-floored cellar contains all manner of mundane supplies, such as firewood, food, tools, lumber for repairs, and a surprising number of gourds drying on twine hanging from the rafters.

The cellar is split into three rooms, with the farthest from the ladder having been converted into a bedroom. This chamber is the home-away-from-home for the Knurly Witch when she visits the House—she chose this room out of all those offered her by Nyriisa because she likes the ambience. If the Knurly Witch fled a previous encounter from the PCs, she can be found here nursing her wounds and her pride. If confronted here, she fights to the death.

THE KNURLY WITCH

CR 16

XP 76,800

hp 249 (see page 32)

K17. THRONE ROOM (CR 18)

This richly decorated, cathedral-like chamber appears to be almost new. Turquoise tiles adorn the walls, with a false gallery hanging some ten feet above the tiled floor. An ornate wooden bridge crosses the chamber thirty feet above the floor, connecting doors on the building's second floor—the vaulted ceiling rises another ten feet above that. Incredible paintings cover this ceiling, depicting animals in sylvan scenes. The first scene shows a wolf in a forest with a child's severed hand clenched in its jaws. The second depicts a great viper approaching a crib, while the third shows a huge bear stalking a mother and child. An archway decorated with a scene of a dragon eating a mounted knight at one end of the room opens to a great iron spiral staircase leading upward, while at the other end of the hall sits a regal throne made of marble shot through with green veins. Two statues of beautiful women wielding upraised swords stand behind the throne, while a long purple carpet runs the length of the room. Numerous chairs and benches line the walls.

Nyriisa has not used this room in ages—her followers know what to do and there is little need for the nymph to address them. The stairs lead up to area **L1**. The walls can be climbed with a DC 20 Climb check.

The throne is one of the four entrances to the Fable—it leads to area **M7c**.

Creature: Unless the PCs have means to defeat detection from Nyriisa's use of the Fable (area **M7**), this room's denizen is waiting for them—one of Nyriisa's more hideous minions and her personal advisor, a worm that walks known as the Wriggling Man.

The Wriggling Man does not recall his life before his death, save that he was a powerful human wizard who had

come to the First World for a now-forgotten mission. That he failed in this mission seems obvious, for it was after his failure and death that his mind and spirit infested the worms that fed upon his rotting remains, and he was reborn. The Wriggling Man now exists as a hideous creature known as a worm that walks, a swarm of worms that maintains the general shape of its previous body and that retains all of its previous life's power—and then some. The worm that walks template can be found online in the 3.5 SRD, but this incarnation has been updated to work with the Pathfinder RPG and adjusted to function as a non-epic (but still powerful) monster.

The Wriggling Man soon found work as Nyrissa's advisor in all things arcane—while Nyrissa herself is a talented arcanist, her gifts are inborn, not the result of study, and she often needs help with her more complex plans. The theft of the Stolen Lands is one of many such projects the Wriggling Man has helped the nymph with over the ages. Currently, his only task is to await the PCs, ambush them, and kill them.

THE WRIGGLING MAN CR 18

XP 153,600

Male worm that walks transmuter 17
NE Medium vermin (augmented human)

Init +10; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 22, flat-footed 27 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 insight, +2 natural, +4 shield)

hp 144 (17d6+85); fast healing 18

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13 (+21 vs. mind-affecting)

Defensive Abilities worm that walks traits; **DR** 15/—; **Immune** disease, paralysis, poison, and sleep effects; **Resist** cold 30, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

Melee swarm slam +14 (5d6 plus grab)

Special Attacks disincorporate, engulf

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +23)

At will—change shape

(*beast shape III/elemental body II*, 17 rounds/day)

9/day—telekinetic fist +14 touch (1d4+8)

Transmuter Spells Prepared (CL 17th; concentration +23)

9th—*summon monster IX*, *time stop*

8th—*quicken greater invisibility*, *mind blank*, *polymorph any object* (DC 26)

7th—*quicken fireball* (DC 19), *mass hold person* (DC 23), *mage's sword*, *reverse gravity*

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 22), *disintegrate* (DC 24), *flesh to stone* (DC 24), *mage's lucubration*, *quicken resist energy*, *quicken scorching ray*

5th—*feeblemind* (2; DC 21), *overland flight*, *quicken shield*, *telekinesis* (DC 23), *telepathic bond*

4th—*black tentacles*, *confusion* (DC 20), *dimension door*, *mass reduce person* (DC 22), *mnemonic enhancer*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20)

3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *fireball* (DC 19), *protection from*

energy, slow (DC 21), *stinking cloud* (DC 19)
2nd—*invisibility*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 20), *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (3), *web* (DC 18)
1st—*grease* (DC 17), *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *magic missile* (3), *reduce person* (DC 19)
0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*
Opposition Schools Divination, Necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat The Wriggling Man casts *mind blank* every day, and activates his *ring of invisibility* as soon as the PCs enter the House at the Edge of Time. He casts *overland flight* and *resist energy (cold)* once updates from Nyrissa convince him the PCs will soon be entering this room.

During Combat As soon as the PCs enter the room, the Wriggling Man, who stands near the throne but is invisible, casts *time stop*. He has at least 2 rounds to cast spells while time is stopped—he first casts *quicken shield* and then *summon monster IX* to summon an astral deva. The next round, he



The Wriggling Man

casts *telepathic bond* on the deva so he can communicate with it silently and quickened *fire shield* (*chill shield*) on himself. If he has enough time during *time stop*, he'll also cast quickened *resist energy* (*acid*) and *protection from energy* (*sonic*) on the third round, *mage's sword* on the fourth round, and *reverse gravity* on an area where he can affect the most walking PCs. When his *time stop* ends, he telepathically commands the summoned astral deva to imperiously demand that the PCs leave this place, claiming that they tread upon the works of one under the protection of Heaven itself. This is, of course, a lie—the Wriggling Man doesn't expect the PCs to fall for it, but the tactic does amuse him and it could work, especially if the PCs don't ask to make Sense Motive checks to see through the angel's forced lie. If the PCs persist, the Wriggling Man telepathically orders the angel to attack the PCs, starting with a *blade barrier* and following up with melee attacks with its hammer. The Wriggling Man keeps in motion, flying around the room invisibly as a move action after each time he casts an attack spell on the PCs each round so that it's difficult to track his position. The Wriggling Man tries to avoid melee combat if possible, but if his magic manages to incapacitate a character, he won't be able to resist approaching to engulf the poor PC.

Morale If the Wriggling Man's contingency activates, he uses *dimension door* to retreat to area M6. He waits until he's recovered, then casts *dimension door* to return to this room to start the attack anew—this time he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 22, **Con** 16, **Int** 22, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +8 (+16 grapple); **CMD** 31

Feats Arcane Armor Training, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus, Improved Initiative, Light Armor Proficiency, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (transmutation), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +16, Fly +26, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (local) +26, Knowledge (nobility) +26, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +26, Stealth +31

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon

SQ arcane bond (staff), *contingency*, physical enhancement (Dex +4), tenacious

Combat Gear *staff of transmutation*; **Other Gear** +4 fire resistant leather armor, amulet of natural armor +2, headband of mental prowess +2 (Int [fly], Wis), ring of invisibility, ring of protection +2, portable hole (contains a small library, a reading desk, and all of his spellbooks—these books contain all of the wizard spells in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* save for Divination and Necromancy spells)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency If the Wriggling Man's hit points drop below 30, a *dimension door* activates.

Discorporate (Su) The Wriggling Man can collapse his body into a shapeless swarm of worms as a free action. He drops all held, worn, and carried items, and his Strength score changes to 1. He functions as a true swarm while discorporated, and has a reach of 0 feet (his space remains unchanged). While discorporated, he loses all of his defensive abilities but gains all of the standard swarm traits. He also loses his slam attack and all special abilities and special attacks, but can make a swarm attack that inflicts 5d6 points of damage. He can reform into his true form as a full-round action, as long as he has at least 1 hit point—doing so provokes an attack of opportunity.

Engulf (Ex) If the Wriggling Man successfully grapples a foe, he can engulf that foe as soon as the attempt to grapple succeeds. He then sends a large number of the worms that comprise his body to swarm over the grappled creature. He can only engulf one target per round. These worms inflict 5d6 points of damage per round. The damage caused by an engulf attack is treated as swarm damage for the purposes of what creatures it can affect. Any creature damaged by this engulf attack is also subjected to distraction, and must make a DC 21 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Grab (Ex) The Wriggling Man can use his grab attack on targets that are no more than one size category larger than himself.

Tenacious (Ex) The Wriggling Man gains a +8 racial bonus on CMB checks made to grapple a foe, rather than the normal +4 racial bonus granted to most creatures with the grab special attack. In addition, he gains a +4 racial bonus to his CMD.

Worm That Walks Traits The Wriggling Man has no discernable anatomy, and is not subject to critical hits or flanking. He can be damaged normally by weapons (such as blows scattering worms or temporarily disrupting a portion of its body), but damage is mitigated normally by fast healing and damage reduction. Reducing him to 0 hit points forces him to discorporate—at 0 hit points he is staggered, and at negative hit points he is dying. He is immune to any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*), with the exception of such spells and effects generated by himself, which treat him as a single creature if he so chooses. Mind-affecting effects that target single creatures also function normally against him since his individual components share one hivemind in common. He takes half again as much damage (+50%) from spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and many evocation spells. The Wriggling Man is susceptible to high winds—treat him as a Fine creature for the purposes of determining the effects of wind.

SUMMONED ASTRAL DEVA

CR 14

XP —

hp 172 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 10)

K18. DRESSING CHAMBER

Clearly a dressing chamber, this room has several wardrobes and long mirrors.

Treasure: Long-neglected clothes for visiting guests fill the wardrobes. There are 20 noble outfits and a similar number of courtiers' outfits. A DC 30 Perception check finds in the pocket of one of the noble outfits a beautiful signet ring made of platinum worth 1,500 gp.

K19. RUINED WASHROOM (CR 16)

The walls of this high-ceilinged room have fractured, and the elements have rushed in. This was clearly once some sort of washroom with stone walls and numerous tubs, but now the place is in a shambles.

Creatures: This room was destroyed even as Nyrissa created it—the elementals that ruined the place still dwell here, boiling around the room in a rage. The Wriggling Man loathes this chamber, as the elementals have more than once torn him apart in a most embarrassing manner. The elementals attack any intruders on sight, fighting to the death. Although the elementals are Huge, the room's 40-foot-high ceiling allows them some additional room while flying (but does limit their simultaneous access to foes on the ground and forces them to make swooping flyby attacks each round).

ENRAGED AIR ELEMENTALS (4)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

Advanced elder air elementals

hp 184 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 121, 294)

K20. THE DRIPPING CLOCK (CR 3)

A large and convoluted water clock, constructed of darkwood, twisted crystal, and bronze tubes and built to look like a tree, drips quietly away in this dust-layered chamber. The walls of the room are given over to books—hundreds of them.

Creature: The clock continues to tick away the seconds, never losing time as it is inhabited and constantly tended and adjusted by a water mephit named Pludock. While the mephit would never dare to neglect his duty for fear of punishment, he's a chatty creature and can be a useful source of information for the PCs. His initial attitude is indifferent. If made helpful, he happily talks with the

PCs. He knows the secret of the healing pool in area K14 and the danger of damaging the dancing bear in area K6—he might be able to inform the PCs of other minor traps or beneficial areas as well. If asked about Nyrissa, he grows silent after saying, "I'd better not say." If forced into talking, he admits that she's likely hiding out in the Fable—a chamber high above that allows her not only to manipulate things in the house but to watch over every room. When he says this, he clamps his hands over his mouth, his eyes bulge as he looks around at the corners of the room... and a moment later, he bursts into an explosion of water—slain by an unhappy Nyrissa via the Fable.

Pludock has no desire for combat, but if assaulted, he breathes acid and casts *stinking cloud* to keep attackers at bay. After this, he flees shrieking through the House's halls.

PLUDOCK

CR 3

XP 800

Water mephit

hp 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 203)

L1. GREAT HALL (CR 17)

Here is a huge and ornate chamber fallen into terrible decay. The ceiling of this huge chamber is vaulted, with supports carved to resemble serpentine dragons holding great beams aloft. Seven statues of a beautiful woman holding a sword or posing in a seductive way stand against the walls, along with several chairs and tables, while two long tables with benches sit in the middle of the room astride a large marble statue of a snakelike dragon.

This room serves as a grand banquet hall for when Nyrissa has enough guests to warrant such an occasion. The secret door to the servant's wing can be found with a DC 30 Perception check. It hasn't been opened in ages, and is somewhat stuck—a DC 24 Strength check is enough to dislodge it and force it open.

Creatures: A pair of Nyrissa's pets, lithe and quick wyverns with long, barbed tongues capable of lashing out and pulling prey into their jaws, sleep and play in this chamber. Their attitude quickly shifts to one of aggression if they sense intruders—they attack on sight.

BARBTONGUED WYVERNS (2)

CR 15

XP 51,200 each

Advanced variant wyvern (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 282, 294)

NE Huge dragon

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

Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +16 natural, -2 size)

hp 250 (20d12+120)



Fort +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13

Immune paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee sting +26 (2d6+8 plus poison), bite +26 (4d6+8/19–20), 2 wings +21 (2d6+4), tongue +21 (1d4+4 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.; 30 ft. with tongue

Special Attacks pull (tongue, 30 ft.), rake (2 talons +26, 1d8+8)

TACTICS

During Combat If they can, the barbtongued wyverns start combat by swooping in to attack the PCs before the party can fully deploy into this room, limiting melee combat options while still being able to take advantage of their reach to strike at foes farther up the stairs or down a hall.

Morale The barbtongued wyverns fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 22, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 43

Feats Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Vital Strike, Improved Natural Attack (sting), Improved Natural Attack (wing), Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +17, Perception +28, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +17

Languages Draconic

L2. STAIRWELL

These stairs lead up to area M3.

L3. GUEST ROOMS

This wing of the House contains four large guest rooms. None of these chambers have been used in a long time, but each seems brand new and ready to receive guests. If the House is on the First World, temporal ripples and phantoms sometimes flit around the place, echoes of long-departed guests.

L4. STAIRWELL

This flight of spiral stairs leads up to area M1.

L5. STAIRWELL

These stairs lead down to area K12.

L6. SERVANTS' WING

This wing of the house once served as private chambers for servants, but since Nyrrisa created her ghostly guardians, these rooms have gone unused. Areas L6a and L6b are both bedrooms. L6c is a storeroom, while L6d is a privy. L6e is a lounge stocked with a large number of old (but relatively mundane and worthless) books, while L6f is an open room for exercise and gatherings.

L7. THRONE ROOM BRIDGE

This walkway crosses over the throne room (area **K17**) below. The door to area **L8** is one of the few that is kept locked. It is made of ironwood (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28); its lock can be picked with a DC 35 Disable Device check.

Development: If the Wriggling Man has not yet been encountered, he'll react to intruders on this bridge as detailed in area **K17**.

L8. NYRISSA'S CHAMBERS (CR 16)

This wing of the House contains NyriSSa's private chambers for relaxing, although since the beginning of this adventure, she's spent the majority of her time in the Fable, where her personal bedchamber is. All of the rooms in this wing are opulent and extravagant; the function of each room is summarized below, but the area's guardians are mobile and quickly react to intrusions, so combat here is likely to spill through multiple chambers.

L8a. This large room is a private ballroom, the walls of which are hung with floral tapestries.

L8b. This washroom contains a porcelain tub that fills with hot, scented water on command.

L8c. This room is a study—a search of the room reveals several sheets bearing flowery script and illustrations of plant and fey creatures.

L8d. This room is, in theory, NyriSSa's bedroom, but in fact the bed is one of the four entrances to the Fable—it leads to the nymph's true bedroom (area **M7d**).

L8e. This drawing room is a relaxing venue in which to paint and pursue other artistic endeavors.

L8f. This large closet contains the majority of NyriSSa's impressive collection of dresses and clothing.

L8g. This is a combination reading room and lounge.

Creatures: Although NyriSSa's true valuables are kept in the Fable or other rooms of this tower, enough objects of value (either sentimental or otherwise) remain here that she never leaves her suite of rooms unprotected. The safekeeping of these objects, the cleaning and tending of these rooms, and, when she is present, assisting NyriSSa are the duties of eight defaced nymphs.

NyriSSa once counted these nymphs her sisters and friends. Their beauty rivaled her own, but when NyriSSa suffered at the hands of the Eldest, these six did as well, and NyriSSa had the Nightmare Rook pluck out their eyes. These six defaced nymphs can still see and utilize their gaze attacks, but their beauty has been forever marred. They know that NyriSSa is responsible for their unending pain, but cannot bring themselves to hate her for it—instead spending their days in constant pain and servitude here. When they notice intruders, they silently move to attack, tears of blood running freely down their cheeks.

You can place the defaced nymphs as you wish throughout the rooms of this wing.



Barbtongue Wyvern

DEFACED NYMPHS (8)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

Female broken soul advanced nymph (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 217, 294, *Advanced Bestiary* 34)

CN Medium fey

Init +5; Senses low-light vision; Perception +15

Aura baleful gaze (DC 20), blinding beauty (30 ft., DC 20)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 25, flat-footed 23 (+9 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 108 each (8d6+80)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

DR 10/cold iron, 5/—; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, sonic 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 10 ft.

Melee torturous touch +9 touch (2d6 plus 1d6 Dexterity plus convulsions)

Special Attacks agonized wail, baleful gaze, torturous touch, stunning glance (DC 20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +14)
1/day—*dimension door*

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +13)
4th—*air walk*, *flame strike* (DC 18)

- 3rd—*call lightning* (DC 17), *poison* (DC 17), *spike growth*
 2nd—*barkskin*, *flame blade*, *resist energy*, *tree shape*
 1st—*charm animal* (DC 15), *endure elements*, *entangle* (DC 15),
obscuring mist, *produce flame*
 o—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *stabilize*

TACTICS

Before Combat If a defaced nymph has the opportunity before battle, she casts *air walk* and *barkskin*.

During Combat A defaced nymph uses her baleful gaze on the first round of combat, then activates her blinding beauty, saving her stunning glance to use against non-humanoid foes or creatures that manage to engage her in melee.

She prefers to hang back and cast spells on foes, using her agonized wail if she's surrounded.

Morale A defaced nymph fights to the death, as if eager for release from her painful existence.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 21, **Con** 28, **Int** 20, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Casting, Diehard^B, Dodge, Endurance^B, Mobility, Toughness^B, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+28 jump), Bluff +17, Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +15, Perform (string) +17, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +16, Swim +22

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Common, Draconic, Giant, Sylvan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Agonized Wail (Su) As a standard action, a defaced nymph can emit an agonized wail that affects all creatures within 120 feet—this wail causes those who experience it to become shaken (Will DC 20 negates) as long as they remain within 120 feet of the defaced nymph. A successful save renders a creature immune to that defaced nymph's agonized wail for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Baleful Gaze (Su) Any creature within 60 feet of a defaced nymph must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Strength, Constitution, and Charisma drain. Whatever the result of the saving throw, the creature cannot be affected by the same defaced nymph's baleful gaze again for 1 minute. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Torturous Touch (Su) A defaced

nymph can make a touch attack to cause hideous, painful wounds to rip open in the target's body. This touch causes 2d6 points of slashing damage and 1d6 points of Dexterity damage, and causes the touched creature to fall prone in a fit of convulsions (during which the creature is helpless) for 1d4 rounds. A DC 20 Fortitude save negates the Dexterity damage and the convulsive fit. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: A search of area **L8a** reveals a dozen cloth patches on a shelf that depict various musical instruments. These patches are actually masterwork instruments under the effects of a permanent *shrink item* spell (CL 20th; a DC 30 Use Magic Device check or a *dispel magic* spell allows an item to be restored to its true shape and size)—one of the instruments is actually a horn of blasting.

The 43 dresses in area **L8f** are each worth 200 gp—one of them is actually an elegant (and scandalously cut) dress that duplicates the abilities of a *robe of stars*.

M1. ATTIC (CR 15)

The bare wooden floor of this attic space is covered with thick layers of dust. Cobwebs hang in curtainlike sheets, and the slumped figures of what seem to be three demonic skeletons lie against the walls. A ladder leads up to a trap door in the ceiling in one corner, but the door seems clogged with vines and roots.

The stairs lead down to area **L4**. The trap door leads up to **M2**, but is overgrown above by vines and roots—it's a DC 26 Strength check to push the door open from below. This entire chamber is protected by a permanent *dimensional lock* effect (CL 20th).

Creatures: This room has long been abandoned. The skeletal remains are of a group of demons that Nyriessa used to aid in building her home and then grew tired of. She bound them into this room and, over time, they succumbed to each other's anger. Shielded from the multiverse and, more to the point, the life-infused reality of the First World, these doomed demons came back as



Defaced Nymph

advanced devourers. They've managed to devour the essence of several curious and unwary visitors over the centuries, and each has 12 Essence Points available.

ADVANCED DEVOURERS (3) CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 161 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 82, 294)

M2. IVY TOWER (CR 16)

This tower looks out over the house grounds, leaning at a vertiginous angle over the courtyard below. The entire area has been covered over with a tangle of vegetation, much like a nest.

It's a DC 35 Perception check to note the vine- and root-covered trap door that leads down to M1 below.

Creature: This tower is the den of Nyrissa's zomok, a draconic plant that serves as both a decoration and a guardian. Note that if the PCs have slain the lesser jabberwock in Part One, the zomok relocates down to area K2, in which case this area is empty.

ZOMOK CR 16

XP 76,800

hp 297 (see page 88)

M3. THE RUINED HALLS (CR 16)

This series of rooms, once Nyrissa's private sanctuary, suffered greatly from the nymph's frustrations and wrath after she survived the Eldest's attempt to have her killed by the Jabberwock—she never bothered restoring these rooms and converted the suite of rooms at area L8 to serve as her new private quarters, leaving this area in shambles. Today, these rooms are a tangle of rubble, stones, and thick, creeping vines and plants that have grown riotously to a height of 1 foot throughout the entire area, making this area difficult terrain. In addition, a large number of damaged or destroyed statues of all manner of creature lie strewn about the place—these were left by this area's dangerous guardian.

Creature: When Nyrissa first began experimenting with the Jabberwock's blood in her attempts to create a lesser version of the creature, one of her first experiments involved infusing creatures with the ichor. All but one of these experiments died, but that one, a medusa ally named Phomandala, transformed into a scaly but quite healthy monster. Phomandala has lived in these ruined halls ever since, serving as a guardian for the upper floors of the House. Over the years, the infusion of jabberwock blood and her life on the First World have granted her sorcerous powers as well, and the medusa is well on her way to becoming a powerful sorcerer in her own right.

PHOMANDALA CR 16

XP 76,800

Female saurian medusa sorcerer 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 201, *Advanced Bestiary* 213)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, all-around vision; **Perception** +26

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 19, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +4 shield)

hp 238 (20 HD; 8d10+12d6+152)

Fort +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17

DR 10/adamantine

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 3 bites +20 (1d8+7 plus poison), 2 claws +20 (1d4+7)

Special Attacks laughing touch 8/day, leaping pounce, petrifying gaze (DC 21), poison (DC 20)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +17)

6th (3/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 21)

5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *nightmare* (DC 20), *tree stride*

4th (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *dimension door*, *poison* (DC 19), *stoneskin*

3rd (7/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 18), *displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *major image*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *hIDEOUS laughter* (DC 17), *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *disguise self* (DC 16), *entangle* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

Bloodline Fey

TACTICS

Before Combat Phomandala casts *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *mage armor*, *stoneskin*, *spectral hand*, and *shield* before combat begins if she has the time.

During Combat On the first round of combat, Phomandala uses *spectral hand* to make attacks with *bestow curse*, *poison*, and *vampiric touch* while attempting to stay at range—her woodland stride ability should make it easy for her to remain more mobile than the PCs in these tangled rooms, allowing her to make hit-and-run attacks.

Morale Phomandala fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 37

Feats Ability Focus (petrifying gaze), Arcane Strike, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Quicken Spell, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claws)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+29 jumping), Perception +26, Spellcraft +23, Survival +11

Languages Common

SQ *bloodline arcana*, *fleeting glance* 12 rounds/day, *woodland stride*

Gear *amulet of natural armor +3*, *ring of protection +3*, 1,500 gp in diamond dust

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Leaping Pounce (Ex) When Phomandala charges a foe and jumps at least the last 10 feet of it, she may make a full attack.

M4. NYRISSA'S LIBRARY

This well-lit chamber is something between a laboratory and a library, with numerous large tomes sitting on sagging shelves along the walls and several tables covered with notes and strange schematics.

The majority of the notes on the tables are poetry written by Nyrissa, but if the PCs still have some unanswered questions about what Nyrissa is up to or why she's out to take the Stolen Lands, you can have them discover some fragmentary notes here to help clear up any lingering last-minute questions the PCs may have. The PCs can also learn about the Fable by studying these notes—with a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or planes) check, a character can decipher these notes to not only learn what the Fable is capable of and how it works, but also the locations of the four portals that open into the Fable and the method of opening the portals (as well as, perhaps, the even more important method of leaving the Fable once one is inside it). See area M7 for these details. Note that if the PCs aren't stealthy about investigating these notes, Nyrissa notices from her vantage point in the Fable and alerts her surviving minions to make all haste to this area and stop the PCs from learning too much from her carelessly forgotten notes.

Treasure: This library contains a large number of books about the First World, the Stolen Lands, and magic theory. A Knowledge (arcana, history, local, nature, or planes) check made while using the library to research a topic tied to one of these three subjects gains a +6 circumstance bonus on the check. The collection weighs several hundred pounds in all, but as a set is worth 5,000 gp.

A forgotten and unread *manual of gainful exercise +3* sits on a shelf in one corner of the room.

M5. THE ABANDONED TREASURY

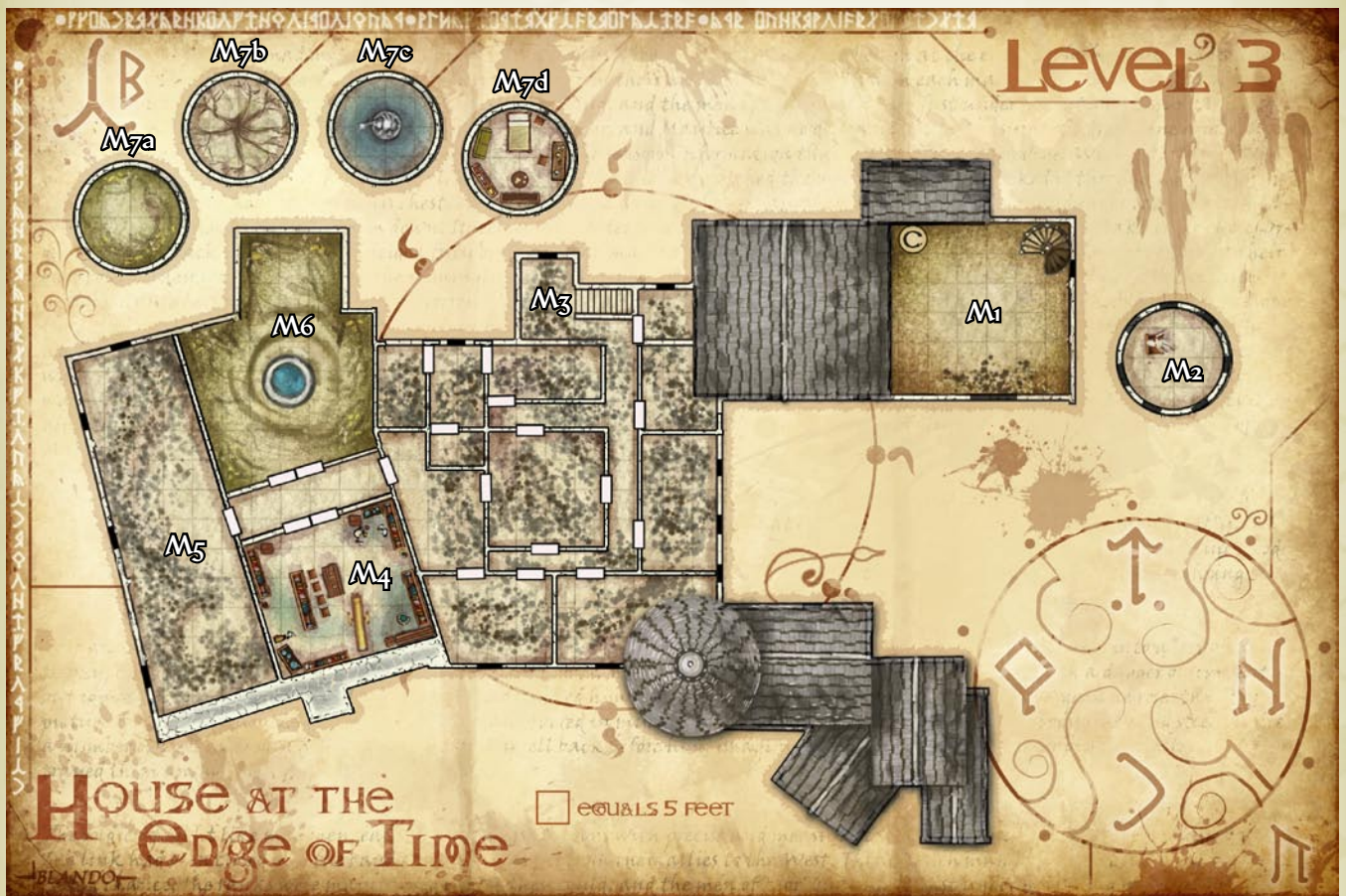
This room is falling into ruin; plaster hangs from the ceiling, furniture lies buried in fallen leaves, the walls sag, and dust covers everything. Numerous empty and toppled treasure chests strewn about the place hint that it may have once been a grand treasury.

Although it appears close to collapse, the room is structurally sound. This is indeed Nyrissa's treasury, but the majority of the magical items and treasures kept here were taken long ago by the Eldest as a sort of fee after Nyrissa survived the Jabberwock's attack. The nymph never bothered restocking the place, instead opting to keep her greatest treasures close at hand.

Treasure: The agents of the Eldest didn't take everything—a 10-minute search of this area reveals bits and pieces of treasure that still remain. This search reveals a miniature castle of jade wrapped in the coils of a silver serpent (an old table centerpiece designed to hold flowers) worth 1,200 gp, a pig-shaped casket containing 999 pp with each coin set comfortably in its own



Phomandala



velvet slot, a gold decanter bound in gold with a ruby stopper worth a total of 2,000 gp, a +2 *adamantine construct bane rapier*, a gold and ivory scroll tube worth 750 gp that contains a *scroll of form of the dragon II*, and a slightly dented *helm of brilliance* that has only one *prismatic spray* and two *fireball* gems left.

M6. NYRISSA'S GARDEN (CR 14)

The vines and leaves of an overgrown garden fill this high chamber. The walls are difficult to make out through the riotous green growth, but at the room's center sits a rippling pool of water.

The pool of water is one of the four entrances to the Fable—it leads to area M7a.

Creature: The majority of the overgrowth in this room actually consists of three ravenous giant flytraps of immense size; they can't move around much in here, but their bites allow at least two to reach any point in the room.

ADVANCED GIANT FLYTRAPS (3) **CR 11**
XP 12,800
 hp 175 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 134, 294)

M7. THE FABLE (CR 20)

For all of the impressive features possessed by the House at the Edge of Time, none can match NyriSSa's greatest creation—an extradimensional tower known as the Fable. This region exists as part of the House, but not wholly in the same place or time. The Fable consists of four similarly sized but overlapping circular rooms, each 20 feet in diameter and 20 feet high, but each quite different in contents.

In order to open a portal into the Fable, a character must physically contact the portal trigger and focus his mind on opening the portal by concentrating on a specific image. All four portal triggers radiate strong conjuration magic—a *legend lore* or *vision* spell can identify their use and the thought image that activates them, as can a DC 35 Spellcraft check made with the aid of detect magic. Alternatively, a DC 30 Use Magic Device check can blindly activate a portal. Once activated, the portal immediately transports the activating creature and up to five other creatures who are touching him to the linked area inside the Fable—if there's not enough room for all of these creatures to appear in that particular Fable chamber, the excess travelers are either left behind at the portal (75% of the time) or sent at random to one of the other three Fable chambers (25% of the time).

Fable Portals

Portal Trigger	Activating Thought	Portal Destination
Tallest tree in area K2	Flying as a crow through an endless forest	Area M7b
Throne in area K17	Holding court before a crowd of thousands	Area M7c
Bed in area L8d	Caressing or embracing a lover	Area M7d
Pool in area M6	Lying on one's back on the grass in the sun	Area M7a

The contents of each of the four chambers within the Fable are detailed below. These chambers function quite differently if the House is on the First World than if it's been uprooted, as indicated. In cases where a room's appearance is actually a permanent image, the image functions at CL 20th—a DC 20 Will save is enough to see through the illusion if it is interacted with.

M7a. This chamber appears to be a boundless open field under the noontime sun on a bright summer day. When the House is on the First World, the field goes on forever in every direction, but on the Material Plane the field and sky are permanent images.

M7b. This chamber appears to be a single, immensely tall tree that extends forever in either direction inside a silo of impenetrable green leaves. The tree's branches can be moved onto with a DC 10 Acrobatics check or its trunk climbed with a DC 15 Climb check; a creature that falls drops for 1d20 × 10 feet before crashing into a wide-enough branch to end its fall. On the Material Plane, this chamber is instead only 20 feet across and 20 feet tall—the tree's extension above and below is a permanent image. To those who believe the image, creatures that stand upon the floor seem to be walking on air.

M7c. This chamber is a plain circular room with stone walls, floor, and ceiling, lit by several *dancing lights* floating near the ceiling. A statue of Nyrrissa stands in the center of the room, one arm held out as if in greeting. It is in this room that the Fable's power is concentrated, and where Nyrrissa spends much of her time—in this room, she can observe every single room in her House simultaneously as if via *clairvoyance/clairaudience*. She can also use the Fable to immediately destroy any of her allies (but not intruders) in the house by simply snuffing out their lives and causing their bodies to burst. Nyrrissa only uses this ability to destroy an ally who has become controlled by or seems to be allying with the PCs—an event likely to occur only with the unfortunate mephit in area **K20**, but if the PCs manage to dominate or charm an important ally, Nyrrissa opts for its destruction as well. Likewise, if the PCs are about to learn something important, the nymph may well send her closest allies to intercept the PCs.

M7d. This chamber is Nyrrissa's private bedchamber—it's lit by several everburning torches.

Exiting the Fable: Once the PCs enter the Fable, they can exit it simply by touching any solid surface within the room

and making a mental picture of the room from which they originally entered the Fable. *Plane shift* and other planar travel also functions to leave one of these rooms—but otherwise each of these extradimensional spaces is treated as its own demiplane and is very difficult to escape from. Exiting the Fable in this manner is a move-equivalent action. If the PCs don't already know the method of exiting the Fable, a spell like *legend lore* or a DC 30 Spellcraft check made while examining the chamber with detect magic reveals the method of exit. Alternatively, a DC 30 Use Magic Device check can trigger the exit. A creature that exits the Fable can bring with it as many willing creatures as it is in physical contact with.

Creature: Nyrrissa spends most of her time in area **M7c** so she can use the Fable to track visitors and intruders in her House, and she does so as soon as the PCs arrive. If the PCs still possess *Briar*, she is in no hurry to confront them and remains here, but if she's reclaimed *Briar* and placed the sword in her personal chambers, she watches the PCs' progress through her lair with amusement and, perhaps, a growing sense of worry.

Nyrrissa, it must be remembered, is not only a capricious and inscrutable creature of the First World—but even by those doubtful standards she is fully insane, and her tryst with one of the Eldest, her near death and effective exile punishment, and her long years spent festering and brooding in Thousandbreaths have done little for her peace of mind. She sees the PCs as a manifestation of this betrayal, and her visions have convinced her that the PCs mean her no good. Her attitude toward friendly approaches (even the surrendering of *Briar*) is at best one of unyielding suspicion and paranoia—especially if the PCs have uprooted Thousandbreaths. She takes the sword, listens to speeches and smiles knowingly to the PCs' requests, and then unleashes her fury.

Nyrrissa is a woman of unearthly beauty and grace, yet she is obviously far from human. Her body bears numerous thorns and ridges, as if aspects of the natural world were trying to form out of her flesh.

Although Nyrrissa is an exceptionally powerful foe, there are two key methods by which the PCs can make their confrontation with her a little easier.

Uprooting the House: If the PCs confront Nyrrissa on the First World, she functions at full capacity. If, on the other hand, the PCs manage to uproot Thousandbreaths,

Nyrissa becomes horrifically distracted by the pain and despair being forced wholly into the Material Plane inflicts on her. On the first round of combat on the Material Plane, Nyrissa acts as if confused. Every 1d4 rounds, she automatically becomes confused again. In addition, she is constantly shaken and fatigued while on the Material Plane, and must make a DC 35 Concentration check in order to cast any of her spells.

Briar: The sword *Briar* is particularly effective against Nyrissa, and when the sword is first brought within 30 feet of her, it automatically gains enough Sharpness Points to fully awaken (and stays awakened after this first encounter). Furthermore, the wielder of *Briar* gains SR 30 against Nyrissa's magic, and each time *Briar* strikes Nyrissa, she must make a DC 40 Fortitude save to avoid being staggered for 1 round—multiple hits in a single round do not increase this duration.



Nyrissa

NYRISSA CR 20

XP 307,200

Female nymph sorcerer 6/mystic theurge 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 217)

CE Medium fey

Init +14; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +39

Aura blinding beauty (DC 29)

DEFENSE

AC 51, touch 34, flat-footed 40 (+8 armor, +13 deflection, +10 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +4 shield)

hp 378 (24 HD; 8d6+6d6+10d6+294)

Fort +32, **Ref** +35, **Will** +41

Defensive Abilities evasion, protection from decapitation; DR 10/cold iron; SR 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee *flame blade* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+8)

Special Attacks laughing touch 16/day, stunning glance (DC 29)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +20)
1/day—*dimension door*

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 18th; concentration +31)

9th—quicken *cure critical wounds*, quicken *death ward*

8th—quicken *cure serious wounds*, *finger of death* (DC 29), *reverse gravity*

7th—quicken *cure moderate wounds*, *fire storm* (DC 28), *heal* (2), *summon nature's ally VII*

6th—*antilife shell*, *greater dispel magic* (2), *summon nature's ally VI*, *wall of stone* (2)

5th—*cure critical wounds* (4), quicken *cure light wounds*, *wall of thorns*

4th—*cure serious wounds* (4), *flame strike* (DC 25), *rusting grasp*

3rd—*cure moderate wounds* (5), *poison* (DC 24), *speak with plants*

2nd—*barkskin*, *flame blade*, *gust of wind*, *lesser restoration* (4)

1st—*cure light wounds* (5), *produce flame*, *speak with animals*

0—*create water*, *guidance*, *light*, *stabilize*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 17th; concentration +30)

8th (5/day)—*maze*

7th (7/day)—*greater teleport*, *prismatic spray* (DC 30)

6th (8/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 29), *geas/quest* (DC 29), *greater dispel magic*

5th (9/day)—*dismissal* (DC 28), *dominate person* (DC 28), *sending*, *telekinesis* (DC 28)

4th (9/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 27), *charm monster* (DC 27), *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*

3rd (9/day)—*displacement*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 26), *suggestion* (DC 26)

2nd (9/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 25), *glitterdust* (DC 25), *hideous laughter* (DC 25), *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

1st (10/day)—*charm person* (DC 24), *disguise self* (DC 24), *entangle* (DC 24), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 24), *shield*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 23), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Bloodline Fey

TACTICS

Before Combat If she can, Nyrissa casts *death ward*, *shield*, *barkskin*, *spectral hand*, and *flame blade* before combat begins.

During Combat Nyrissa is a complex character with a huge number of choices in battle. She also has the advantage of being able to watch everything the PCs do in her home via the Fable. As a result, you should take the time to tailor Nyrissa's tactics to match the PCs' tactics as closely as possible. She begins most battles by casting *antilife shell* to prevent the PCs from approaching her if she can (although in the small confines of the Fable, she'll likely need to move up against a wall to make sure that the spell's emanation excludes the PCs when she casts it). She uses quickened spells to great effect, healing herself of damage or using them to cast spells like *haste*, *displacement*, or *greater invisibility* to bolster her defenses. If one of the PCs wields *Briar*, she focuses all of her attention on that PC, doing everything she can to defend herself from that PC and either defeat him or separate him from *Briar*. As an artifact, *Briar* is immune to *dispel magic* and damage, but that doesn't mean she can't use *telekinesis* to try to disarm it, *dismissal* on its wielder (only if the fight takes

place on the First World), or (her favorite tactic) *maze* to keep that foe out of the battle (remember, though, that *Briar* grants SR 30 against her spells).

Morale If Nyrissa is reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, she exits the Fable, then casts *dimension door* to reenter a different Fable portal long enough to use her magic to heal herself before she returns to area **M7c** to confront the PCs again. In the end, Nyrissa's madness and pride push her to the edge—she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 30, **Con** 32, **Int** 22, **Wis** 32, **Cha** 36

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 48

Feats Ability Focus (blinding beauty, stunning glance), Agile Maneuvers, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +38, Bluff +41, Climb +10, Diplomacy +41, Fly +43, Knowledge (nature) +34, Knowledge (planes) +31, Perception +39, Sense Motive +23, Stealth +38, Swim +30

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Hallit, Skald, Sylvan

SQ bloodline arcana, contingency, inherent bonuses, inspiration, unearthly grace, wild empathy +21, woodland stride

Combat Gear *rod of maximize metamagic*; **Other Gear** *belt of physical perfection* +6, *bracers of armor* +8, *headband of mental superiority* +6 (Acrobatics, Fly, Swim), *ioun stones* (orange prism, pale green prism), *ring of evasion*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *scarab of protection* (fully charged), *wings of flying*, fancy anklet worth 10,000 gp, 500 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency If Nyrissa is brought below 0 hit points, a *cure critical wounds* spell heals her of 4d8+16 points of damage.

Inherent Bonuses Nyrissa has used a *manual of gainful exercise* +4 and a *tome of understanding* +5 to increase her Constitution and her Wisdom.

Protection from Decapitation Nyrissa has used a *wish* from a ring to gain a special defense against beheading—the first time she is beheaded by any effect (including a vorpal weapon), the wound immediately heals after it is dealt, effectively inflicts no damage, and does not decapitate her. A second decapitation effect inflicted before she can secure another *wish* to replenish this defense can kill her normally.

Treasure: If Nyrissa has reclaimed the sword *Briar*, the weapon lies on the bed as if casually tossed there in an afterthought. In addition, her bedroom (area **M7d**) contains a large number of trophies and prizes she's picked up or had her minions collect over the years—all of which have been collected from the Stolen Lands and help to focus the Fable upon this region. If these trophies are taken out of the Fable, Nyrissa cannot bottle the Stolen Lands until they are regained. These trophies consist of things such

as a unicorn's horn, a silver dragon's claw, a tooth from Armag's skull, and so on. In addition, you should add other objects that the PCs at one time possessed but have since lost or sold. The more unique and recognizable these items are (like the *Stag's helm*, *Ovinrbaane*, or the *oculus of Abaddon*—even if they thought some of these items forever destroyed), the more disturbing it will be for the PCs to find the items here.

The crystalline bottle she hopes to use to contain the Stolen Lands sits on the bookshelf—this item radiates overwhelming transmutation magic, but is little more than a focus for the act of absorbing the land—the bottle itself is worth 8,000 for its otherworldly workmanship, but does not possess any intrinsic magical powers.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Nyrissa's defeat, the greatest current threat to the PCs kingdom and, indeed, all of the Stolen Lands, is removed. When the nymph dies (likely to an unfortunate beheading from a sword forged of her own capacity to love), a strange and violent transformation ripples through the First World. If Thousandbreaths still exists there, it is immediately uprooted and cast into the Material Plane. The House at the Edge of Time immediately crumbles and suffers thousands of years of erosion at once as if inflicted by constricting vegetation, rainfall, lightning strikes, and subsidence—effectively transforming into the ruins known today as the Castle of Knives. If they make a DC 20 Will save, characters inside the House or the Fable when this occurs gently float to the ground at the center of the ruins as it all comes down around them—otherwise the chaos of the devastation stuns them for 1d4 rounds and inflicts 1d4 negative levels.

During this reversion and devastation, Nyrissa's body rises up on a pyre of black lightning. As it does, a terrible gale rips through all of Thousandbreaths. The Queen's body acts as the center of this whirlpool and soon vanishes in a black pall of madness. Within a minute, the unraveling is over. The House finishes its collapse and the surviving denizens of the building and Thousandbreaths flee into the strange new world they find themselves in.

WHAT IF NYRISSA WINS?

If the PCs are unable to defeat Nyrissa before she's able to capture the Stolen Lands, you'll have on your hands the seeds for an exciting new campaign. Perhaps the PCs are caught along with the rest of their kingdom as the realm is pulled into the special bottle Nyrissa has prepared for the region—in this case, the PCs can continue to rule their kingdom but cannot leave it. They may even be content to rule this kingdom in a bottle, but the knowledge that they



are nothing more than a bauble on a shelf may soon drive them to seek a way to escape.

Alternatively, the PCs could be left behind when their kingdom is whisked away. When this occurs, the region known as the Stolen Lands is immediately transformed into a lifeless desert—the rivers that once flowed through the region are quickly absorbed by the thirsty sands, while the event causes much panic in neighboring kingdoms—particularly Brevoy and Pitax, whose borders now lie uncomfortably close to a wasteland.

The method by which the Stolen Lands can be restored is left to you, but it likely requires a journey into the First World—perhaps even the attention of the region's Eldest. Certainly the PCs will need to face their nemesis Nyrrissa once again—only this time, with her bribery to the Eldest successful, she'll be even more powerful than before.

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

Yet for all of these dire possibilities, this adventure assumes that such an end does not come to the Stolen

Lands, and that the PCs manage to defeat Nyrrissa and save their kingdom. In this case, the end of the blooms herald a time of much rejoicing for the PCs—not only is any damage to their kingdom's Economy, Loyalty, and Stability scores caused by blooms restored, but in addition, all three scores are increased by +4. For the first time, the Stolen Lands may have a chance for peace. Now that the area's unruly bandits, dangerous wildlife, ancient cyclopean liches, violent barbarian tribes, jealous River Kings, and mad nymph queens have all been dealt with, the PCs can finally enjoy the fruits of their rule.

Or can they? On the following pages, the "Beyond Kingmaker" article explores several possible ways you can continue your Kingmaker campaign into even higher levels of experience. Of course, before you move on with a war against Brevoy or the possible return of Choral the Conqueror, you should give the PCs a chance to rest and recover.

They have, after all, earned it!



Beyond Kingmaker

To the villainous warlord occupying southern Rostland, thief of the Stolen Lands:

The crown and citizens of Brevoiy demand you cede all holdings along the Rostlandic border, abdicate your unlawful throne, and surrender yourself and all agents of your illegal government. Refusal will be considered nothing less than an act of rebellion against the Ruby Fortress and a declaration of war against the people of Brevoiy. The forces bearing this command await your immediate reply and stand ready to escort you and your accomplices to New Stetven to face true justice.

In the name of Aoleski Surtova, Regent of the Dragonscale Throne, Blood of the Conqueror, overlord and rightful king of all Brevoiy

Although this volume marks the official conclusion of the Kingmaker Adventure Path, “Sound of a Thousand Screams” doesn’t need to be the end of your campaign. Countless plots and lurking dangers still exist within the Stolen Lands and beyond its borders, all ready to confront its rulers. The following pages present a variety of options GMs might choose to employ to continue their campaigns beyond 17th level. Whether the PCs continue to rule their kingdom and perhaps indulge in imperial aspirations, or leave their lands in the hands of allies to seek adventure elsewhere, the fate of the Stolen Lands now lies entirely in the hands of the GM and that realm’s rulers.

ENDLESS ADVENTURES

What course the Kingmaker Adventure Path might set the PCs and their lands upon can vary wildly depending on the interests of the characters, the tastes of the GM, and the stories they’ve chosen to explore. While books like *Guide to the River Kingdoms* and past articles included in the Adventure Path provide GMs with a wealth of options to expand their exploits, noted here are several plots that might naturally grow from seeds planted in the past six adventures. While developing each still requires a significant amount of creativity and refinement, the tools on the following pages should aid in crafting new tales. Ultimately, this is an opportunity for the GM to let the PCs take the wheel and guide their fates where they please, in effect finally becoming masters of their lands.

Fury of the First World: With the defeat of Nyriisa and her attempt to draw the Stolen Lands into the First World, the frontier realm returns to a state of near tranquility. But such is not the fate of the First World. Soon after the PCs return to their capital, one of the rulers of the First World, Magdh the Eldest, appears before them, demanding recompense for the destiny and future deeds of Nyriisa that their intervention has altered. Only by seeking the forgiveness of the First World’s rulers can the PCs save their nation from the vengeance of that insane other dimension. See pages 57–59 for more details.

Into the East: Beyond the Tors of Levenies sprawls the mysterious, rugged land of Iobaria, a realm that has known both savagery and empire. In the eerie ruin of Hask-Ultharan, the “Cairn of Many Torments,” something ancient stirs to a perverse new life, awakened by the magic of the *oculus of Abbadon* at the hands of the cyclops lich Vordakai. Now, the giants of that accursed monument delve into the darkest ruins of Iobaria, breathing new life into the cinders of a monstrous empire. Does the cyclops empire stir anew? Or has a more fiendish menace arisen in the heart of Fangard? See the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting World Guide: The Inner Sea*, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #33*, and *Lords of Chaos: Book of the Damned, Vol. 2* for more details.

Iron Storm: While few held any love for Castruccio Irovetti, his name and ties to the barbarian realm of Numeria did much to hold the merciless raiders of that realm at bay. With the fall of Pitax and the relative inexperience of the Stolen Land’s rulers, warlords along the Nimerian border eye new lands in the River Kingdoms and covet the PCs’ throne. Among these barbarians, two warmongers rise to lead barbaric legions against the Stolen Lands: Coclavlis the Iron Wizard, heir to the secrets of Numeria’s ageless mystical lore, and the mercenary lord Angdrathus, whose ties to the Technic League of Starfall have granted him an army and weapons like no other. See the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting World Guide: The Inner Sea* for more details on Numeria.

The Outlaw Council: With the solidification of their realm, the PCs receive word from Raston Selline of Mivon inviting the ruler of the Stolen Lands and her retinue to an upcoming meeting of the River Kingdoms Outlaw Council. But do the lawless lords of that wild country actual seek to invite a new despot into their midst, or is this meeting of merciless rulers merely a stage for assassination and warlike aspirations? And might the masterminds of such schemes be the PCs themselves? See the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting World Guide: The Inner Sea* and *Guide to the River Kingdoms* for more details.

The Rostland Revolution: King Surtova has watched with dread as his nation’s southern frontier has turned from a lawless land to the realm of a new princeling. Yet with the fall of Pitax, it seems the PCs’ kingdom threatens to become an empire in its own right. Refusing to let Brevic lands slip through his grasp and to appear weak in the face of rebellious Rostlanders, he sends one of the nation’s Talon Armies to the border and demands the PCs’ surrender. Can the PCs defend their nation from their own fatherland? And will their act of defiance stoke the flames of a full-scale revolution in Brevoy? See pages 61–63 for more details.

Return of the Conqueror: When a great wyrm red dragon of incredible size and power sweeps across the waters of the Lake of Mists and Veils, all of Brevoy trembles. Yet, when it declares itself Choral the Conqueror, legendary unifier and rightful lord of all Brevoy, scheming nobles divert its imperial eyes toward the Stolen Lands, a realm long claimed by the nation but now held by new rulers: the PCs. See pages 59–61 for more details.

FURY OF THE FIRST WORLD

After a period of peace and entrenchment within their nation, the PCs find a mysterious creature upon their throne, a being of swirling mists, alien stars, and silent doom. This creature, the Eldest Magdh, one of the unpredictable and godlike rulers of the First World, comes before the PCs to exact a price for their actions. While the

nymph Nyriisa distinguished herself as troublemaker among the lords of the First World, she was nevertheless one of their sisters. Yet more than that, life, death, and fate flow differently in the realm of the fey. In the First World, a creature might die and live again a thousand, thousand times, and find itself little changed. The strands of destiny stretch continuously for the denizens of that strange land, knotting and twisting but never ending. The death of Nyriisa upon the Material Plane or by the blade of the sword *Briar*, however, served not just to end her life, but cut her existence off from her home realm, annihilating her absolutely.

Thus, Magdh comes seeking something other than vengeance. She seeks an apology, and a personal one at that, not just for herself, but for those Eldest with the deepest interests in Golarion. To satisfy Magdh, her kin, and the fey realm's tangled web of predestiny, the three-faced emissary demands that the PCs seek out the domain of the Green Mother in the First World, apologize for their trespass, pay her any service she might require to ease her mourning (and untangle her fate from Nyriisa's broken fortunes), and then move on to pay the same respects to the next Eldest. Thus, only by touring the whimsically deadly First World and courting its stormy lords can the PCs repay the questionable debt perceived by these godlike beings.

Should the PCs balk at such an elaborate apology, Magdh elusively hints that the connection between their land and the First World did not end with Nyriisa. After a few weeks, when First World blooms and minor gates to the fey realm begin reopening and threatening the PCs' kingdom, even the most unapologetic sovereigns might rethink undertaking Magdh's personalized act of contrition.

Actually entering the First World might be the PCs' initial challenge, should they lack the magic to hop from one plane to the next. Determining whether they can enter through newly opened blooms or need to find another gate could take some research and travel—especially if they seek an entrance that reliably allows them to return to the Material Plane. Regardless of how they reach the First World or where they enter, Magdh waits for them, and serves as an elusive guide—disappearing and reappearing as she will, often couching her directions or warnings in riddles or doublespeak.

Following is a list of the Eldest with domains or interests with the closest ties to Golarion. While a campaign venturing into the unpredictable and often dangerous First World might lead the PCs into the realms of several of these deific beings (or any of the other lands described in the tour of the First World presented later in this volume), ventures into this realm don't need to include every Eldest and every destination. The GM should lead

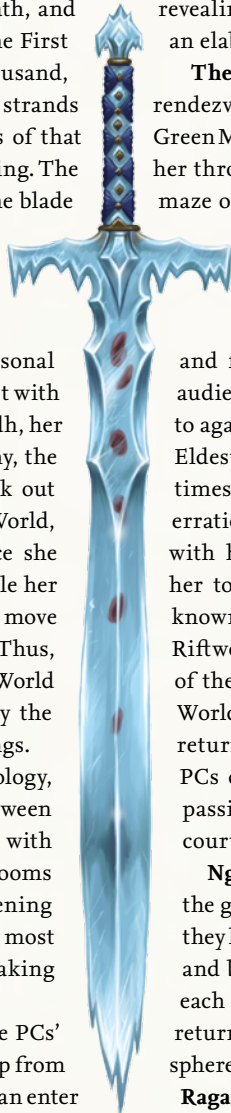
the PCs to as many strange realms and saddle them with as many strange deeds as proves enjoyable, perhaps even revealing that there might be more to Magdh's wish for an elaborate apology than mere extraplanar courtesy.

The Green Mother: The vine-veiled salons and secret rendezvous of the Hanging Bower form the court of the Green Mother, sensual mistress of the Silkwood. Reaching her throne room-boudoir requires the PCs to navigate a maze of decadences, inviting company, fey temptations, and pseudonatural wonders. While little rises to confront visitors—aside from the occasional surly arachnid—the dangers of becoming entranced and trapped within a web of ecstasies and fairy illusions are real. When the PCs gain an audience with the Green Mother, she is grief-stricken to again hear of dear Nyriisa's death—even though the Eldest had only encountered the nymph a handful of times. She first insists that the only way to assuage her erratic mourning is to leave the comeliest of the PCs with her for all time. Resistant PCs might convince her to accept another favor, though. The Witch-Tree known as the Sard currently stalks the canopy of the Riftwood. Sneaking into the presence of the Tane, one of the impossibly massive monster-titans of the First World, stealing one of its soul-shearing leaves, and returning it to the Eldest also satisfies her. Should the PCs do this for the Green Mother, she thanks them passionately, and begrudgingly points them to the court of Ng the Hooded.

Ng the Hooded: The Eldest himself greets the PCs at the gate of the Palace of Seasons. Already knowing why they have come, he offers them four empty glass spheres, and bids them return to Golarion and capture within each sphere one of their world's seasons. Upon their return to the First World, he greets them, takes back the spheres, and points them to the sea of Ragadah.

Ragadah the Water Lord: Three great challenges confound those who would treat with the Father of Dragons. First, no seaside entreaty summons the Eldest to the PCs, requiring them to venture into his underwater realm. Second, his sunken metropolis, Karaphas the Drowned, is a maze of uncanny undersea ruins infested by curious and ill-tempered ocean creatures, sea serpents, linnorms, and worse. Third, the Water Lord's temper makes approaching him and interrupting his wandering reverie a dangerous proposition, one that only a remarkable gift or particularly flattering—but not too flattering—entreaty might assuage. Ragadah cares not about Nyriisa's death and dismisses the PCs to bother Imbrex.

Imbrex the Twins: Though also caring little about the death of Nyriisa the nymph, the massive, statue-like Eldest that is Imbrex chooses not to show its favor or disfavor with the PCs. Their challenge thus becomes finding a way



to commune with Imbrex and learn what the dual-lord requires. While the residents of Anophaeus might be of some help or might even offer to “interpret” the Eldest’s will—potentially for their own ends—likely only by entering a realm of dreams might the PCs learn the Twins’ desires. Upon awaking, the telepathically blared name “Shyka” leads the PCs on.

Shyka the Many: Within the lofty House of Eternity, the multitude that is Shyka the Many makes its home. Wandering the time-maze of this ever-changing citadel likely leads the PCs to encounter numerous strange creatures, from beings lurking past, beyond, or before time, to figures lost to history, and even to past or future incarnations of themselves. Approaching Shyka’s throne, the distracted and seemingly panicked Eldest asks for a desperate boon: a single year. Fortunately, the PCs have already acquired a year for Ng. Thus, Shyka begs the PCs to make haste to steal into the Palace of Seasons, reclaim their gift to Ng, and bear it to him instead. The dangers and traps Ng has prepared to defend his seasons prove as numerous and strange as they are deadly, but should be achievable. With their infiltration complete, the PCs return to Shyka and find the Eldest changed into another, far calmer persona. This new Shyka thanks them, but has no need for the gift. She hands the orbs containing Golarion’s seasons directly to Ng, who waits at hand to receive them. The Eldest then asks the PCs to pay a visit to the Lost Prince.

The Lost Prince: Upon reaching the Crumbling Tower, the PCs find it in the throes of a violent anti-magic storm, one that seems to take a particular interest in the PCs themselves. Scaling the tower thus becomes a challenge of acrobatics and cunning as the structure rises and collapses around them. Gaining the highest chamber actually means pursuing the constantly moving door to the throne room, as rivers of crumbling architecture threaten to dash it to the ground while the frantically building army of servitors fights to keep it aloft. As the storm disperses and the PCs gain access to the audience hall, they find it a claustrophobic, drafty attic room with a single, sad-looking stool. On it lies a worn doll missing a button eye, with a note pinned over its mouth: “Thank You, but No Thank You. See M. ~P.”

Magdh: The PCs find Magdh amid the vision-pools of her home in the Evergrove. There, she has a final task for the PCs: restore the nymph Nyrrissa to life. Apparently the whimsical Eldest known as the Lantern King somehow managed to snatch up Nyrrissa’s fading life energy and spirit it back to the First World. Yet, rather than allowing it to restore the nymph in her homeland, he’s bottled it in a weird parody of the sword *Briar* and set it at the heart of the restored House at the Edge of Time. Now the Lantern King entertains himself playing gentleman caller to his bottle-belle, all in an even stranger vision of Thousandbreaths, reshaped to his whimsically demented pleasure. Thus,

the PCs must revisit Nyrrissa’s realm, an even more wildly crazed reflection of the First World expanse detailed in this volume, and release the nymph’s soul from its prison, either by talking the Lantern King out of his current fancy or in complete defiance of the Eldest’s will. Freeing Nyrrissa’s essence allows the nymph to be reborn elsewhere on the First World, but likely as a whole creature again. And should the PCs have concerns about restoring their old enemy, Magdh can assure them that they’ll all be long dead before the nymph ever remembers enough of her past lives to contemplate revenge. Whisking the PCs back to their kingdom and assuring them that the fates of the First World and their realm are now restored to the proper balance, Magdh leaves the PCs with one final request: Meddle in the affairs of the fey no more!

RETURN OF THE CONQUEROR

Soon after the PCs return from Thousandbreaths, word reaches them of a most unprecedented marvel in Brevoy: Choral the Conqueror, historic but lost unifier of Brevoy, has returned. Yet, in an unthinkable outrage, rather than being a man of flesh and blood, the more than 2-centuries-old king is a draconic titan! Sweeping down upon New Stetven and proclaiming his right to the Dragonscale Throne, the great red dragon obviously differs from the historians’ tales of the father of Brevoy. Yet, tales of the Conqueror’s draconic allies and the wyrm’s more than encyclopedic knowledge of the lost lord’s life and secrets make his claim all the more possible—to say nothing of the fact that none in New Stetven dare denounce the fortress-sized monster. In a cunning gambit to rid the capital of the beast and buy the country time to muster its armies to drive back the dragon, King Surtova guilefully asks the dragon Choral to submit to a test. Just as the legendary Choral forged Brevoy from disparate lands, Surtova posits that, should the dragon be able to reunite the Stolen Lands with the rest of the nation, such a feat would go far to prove the wyrm’s identity. Thus, the dragon readies itself for a campaign of conquest, sharpening its claws to sink into the Stolen Lands and the PCs themselves.

CHORAL THE CONQUEROR

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

Advanced great wyrm red dragon

CE Colossal dragon (fire)

Init +4; Senses dragon sense, smoke vision; Perception +29

Aura fire, frightful presence (360 ft., DC 32)

DEFENSE

AC 43, touch 2, flat-footed 43 (+41 natural, –8 size)

hp 507 (29d12+319)

Fort +27, **Ref** +16, **Will** +26

DR 20/magic; **Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 36

Weakness vulnerability to cold



OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy)
Melee bite +47 (4d8+27/19–20), 2 claws +47 (4d6+18), 2 wings +45 (2d8+9), tail slap +45 (4d6+27)
Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 25 ft. (30 ft. with bite)
Special Attacks breath weapon (70-ft. cone, DC 35, 24d10 fire), crush, incinerate, manipulate flames, melt stone, tail sweep
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 29th, concentration +37)
 At will—*detect magic*, *discern location*, *find the path*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 21), *wall of fire*
Spells Known (CL 19th, concentration +27)
 9th (4/day)—*shapechange*, *time stop*
 8th (7/day)—*iron body*, *polar ray*, *polymorph any object* (DC 26)
 7th (7/day)—*greater teleport*, *limited wish*, *spell turning*
 6th (7/day)—*antimagic field*, *contingency*, *greater dispel magic*
 5th (7/day)—*polymorph*, *telekinesis* (DC 23), *teleport*, *wall of force*
 4th (8/day)—*fear* (DC 22), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*
 3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*, *tongues*
 2nd (8/day)—*alter self*, *detect thoughts*, *misdirection*, *resist*

energy, see invisibility

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 19), *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*
 0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 47, **Dex** 10, **Con** 33, **Int** 26, **Wis** 27, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +29; **CMB** +55; **CMD** 55 (59 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Stunning Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Appraise +29, Bluff +29, Diplomacy +29, Fly +29, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history), +29 Knowledge (local) +29, Knowledge (nobility) +29, Perception +29, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +29, Stealth +29, Survival +29

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Hallit, Ignan, Orc, Skald

THE CONQUEROR'S HOARD

The dragon claiming to be Choral the Conqueror is a crafty foe, and should he face his end, he likely does so on his own ground, where his lair lies hidden—somewhere in Brevoy, north of the Lake of Mists and Veils, or elsewhere. Those who survive an epic battle against the terror receive an equally epic reward. The hoard of Choral the Conqueror is valued at approximately 630,000 gp and consists of the following.

- 1,950,008 cp
- 160,000 sp
- 22,000 gp
- 1,100 pp
- Dozens of types and shapes of both raw and cut gemstones, meticulously organized by type and size in numerous chests and coffers (worth 19,300 gp in total), along with two masterpieces: a silver hourglass filled with small but flawless white pearls (worth 5,000 gp) and a ruby cut with unnerving precision into the shape of a human heart (worth 6,696 gp).
- A stunning variety of jewelry, from simple rings, brooches, and pendants to elaborate jeweled armbands, precious torcs, and filigree masks, fill several delicate displays and padded cases (worth 23,000 gp altogether). Eclipsing the assortment's other splendors, a collection of six crowns—each a masterpiece from a different era and culture—sit upon six yellowed skulls, glimmering as grim but striking trophies (worth approximately 4,000 gp apiece). One of these crowns is firmly nailed to its skull mount.
- 30 masterwork weapons, mostly overly long and sturdy lances of Brevic make dating back to the time of the country's unification, worth 9,300 gp in total.

- 12 masterwork suits of armor, several still bearing the distinct odor of charred meat, worth 10,800 in total.
- A centuries-old copy of the *Record of Truan Iolavai*, written in Common and bound in thick green scales, which bears thorough amendments and marginalia in the Cyclops language, a language that seems to backdate the already ancient book by untold ages. Several rough, hand drawn maps of Iobaria, the Windswept Wastes, and western Kaladay fill the end papers, also bearing annotations and corrections. The most noteworthy alteration pushes the northwestern arm of the Castrovain Sea several dozen miles south and marks what looks like a maze of trees and a man-shaped tower about 150 miles south of modern Mirnbay. This unique, ancient document is worth 15,000 gp.
- A black marble statue of a 7-foot-tall warrior dressed in the airy robes of an ancient Jiskan noble. While most of the sculpture's body bears a flesh-like appearance, purposefully carved cracks reveal gear work designs beneath—though its body is entirely stone. As an oddity and stunning piece of ancient art, the statue is worth 22,000 gp. However, those who dispel the magic affecting the statue (DC 32 dispel check) reveal it to be a powerful kolyarut inevitable called Lirjox (see the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary II*), possessing several levels of fighter or inquisitor. Lirjox has been trapped for several thousand years, yet after a brief period of confusion, seeks to fulfill his ancient mission to wipe out an ancient family of foul magic-users. Unfortunately, Lirjox does not see a distinction between his ancient mandate to exterminate a handful of wizards and the hundreds of innocents who can trace their ancestry through the generations to these long-dead villains.
- A masterwork mandolin, carved from lacewood and etched with images of intertwined snakes and graceful angels, with a neck sculpted like the serpentine body of a lillend azata. As an instrument, the mandolin is worth 4,000 gp. Those who make a DC 18 Perception check notice that the body of the instrument hides a folded piece of handwritten sheet music, its song a simple but very catchy melody, sure to be popular if played in public. Aside from notes, the paper bears the initials "S.P."
- A green acorn the size of a human's head. A DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check reveals it to be a treant's seed. Returning the seed to a treant, goodly fey creature, druid, or other agent of nature is sure to win thanks. Alternatively, planting and tending the seed for 5 years sees it grow into a young treant. The acorn is worth 6,000 gp to some eclectic gardeners and wizards.
- The incredible armored ball gown of Aidiusphine, Choral the Conqueror's infamously brutal lieutenant and rumored lover. Shinning studs, mithral chains, and filigree "embroidery" replace the silks and lace that

would commonly compose such an elaborate outfit. The gown is effectively *+4 mithral full-plate of etherealness*, worth 75,800 gp. If need be, the armor's dress can be removed, making the armor usable as half plate rather than full plate, but retaining all of its magical properties.

- Three sizeable pieces of adamantine ore. These slabs of skymetal are worth a total of 15,000 gp, and could easily be used by a skilled craftsman to forge new weapons or armor—using the value of the ore to forgo the additional cost of creating an adamantine item.
- Two collections of spellbooks, one set bound in pale leather and bearing the emblem of an elaborate cartouche circling crossed swords, and the other made of sheets of thick papyrus covered by panels of lacquered wood. These tomes might bear any spells the GM wishes to introduce into the campaign.
- A *+3 speed falchion*
- An *amulet of mighty fists +2*
- A *bronze griffon figurine of wondrous power*
- 2 *carpets of flying* (5 ft. by 10 ft.)
- 3 *elixirs of love*
- *Iron bands of binding*
- A *ring of x-ray vision*
- A *rod of security*
- A set of *horseshoes of speed*
- A *tome of leadership and influence +2*

THE ROSTLAND REVOLUTION

The ascension of King Noleski Surtova to the Dragonscale Throne has not been popular among the proud people of Rostland. Throughout the frosty Rostland Plains fester memories of generations-old slights and injustices committed by arrogant Issians in the days before Choral the Conqueror united the nation. In the Free City of Restov, firebrands whisper of the days when no Rostlander would bend his knee to a northerner lord and their lands were theirs to do with as they pleased. Even in the council halls of Lord Mayor Sellemius echoes such dissent, urging the city's ruler to reclaim a measure of the land's former glory. Yet rather than turn his eyes to the strength of the capital and crown guard at New Stetven, Sellemius sets his sights south, on the Stolen Lands, testing his people's willingness to let action match their words.

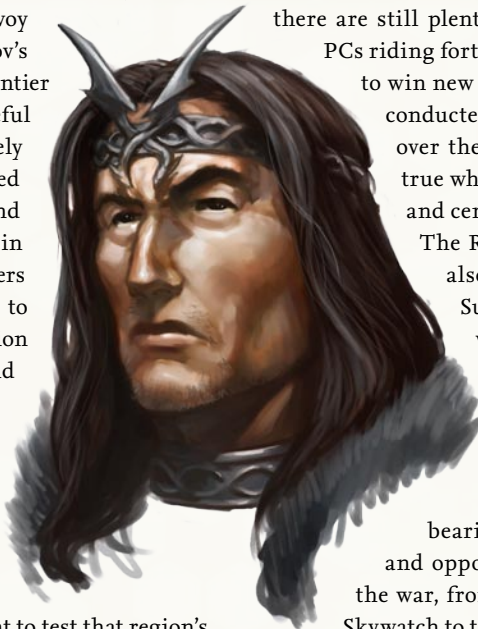
In the months since Restov sponsored bands to enter and reclaim the Stolen Lands, ostensibly for the Brevic crown, but in truth for the honor of Rostland, much has changed. Where once ran a wilderness of lurking beasts and elusive bandits now sprawls a new kingdom, beholden to its former masters only in the most tenuous of terms. Restov's trick to galvanize the pride of its people and expand its holdings as a prelude to challenging New Stetven has failed in a remarkably unforeseen way, yet one that might still play into the Rostlanders' needs.

In the capital, however, the growing power in the Stolen Lands symbolizes both an insult to the Dragonscale Throne and a potential threat to Brevoy as a whole. Seeing only that Restov's attempt to reclaim the southern frontier has facilitated the rise of a resourceful warlord, King Surtova acts to decisively quash this fledgling kingdom. Backed by the Company of the Red Claw and the Crown Knights of Issia, armies in service to the throne, two messengers leave New Stetven. One travels to Restov, bearing tidings of suspicion and royal disapproval, and a command to sever all ties with agents in the River Kingdoms—with the scarlet lances of hundreds of Issia's finest horsemen reinforcing the decree. The other messenger, accompanied by the mercenary hill folk of the Red Claw, delves into the Stolen Lands with a simple ultimatum meant to test that region's ruler: surrender, or face open war.

The threat of war again looms over the Stolen Lands, and now the PCs must decide whether they want to relinquish their hard-won country or lead their people to war.

THE BREVIC CAMPAIGN

Should the PCs decide to wage war against Brevoy, they need not be alone. To the north, only steel lances hold Restov's rebellious dreams at bay, and while Lord Mayor Sellemius balks at leading his people to war, he eagerly backs any righteous banner marching toward New Stetven. Numerous other forces might also be turned toward Brevoy's heartland, from ambitious lords of the River Kingdoms and Numeria eager to claim noble titles, to peoples like the Nomen Centaurs, inflamed by the chance to lay their arrogant neighbors low. By the same token, though, Brevoy is far from undefended. Multiple armies guard the capital, notably the various regiments of the Crown Knights of Issia and the home guard of the Stetven Shield. Should war come to Brevoy, King Surtova proves both wily and merciless. He acts swiftly to move the Dragonscale Throne to his family's ancestral fortress, the White Manor in Port Ice, deep amid friendlier Issian lands. Any who would seek to depose Surtova must then fight their way through all of Brevoy, facing not only armies loyal to the crown, but also mercenaries bought by royal gold and the private forces of nobles desperately clinging their lands. This is not to say that diplomacy, cunning, and gold might not win allies for either side, and just as Surtova might purchase aid from Numeria, so too might the PCs win the support of noble forces.



Although much of a campaign dealing with the conquest of Brevoy doubtlessly takes place on the field of battle, there are still plenty of adventures that might see the PCs riding forth without their armies. Any attempt to win new allies to the PCs' cause is likely best conducted without legions of soldiers waiting over the hill—though that might not hold true when dealing with Numerian warlords and certain regents of the River Kingdoms. The Ruby Fortress in New Stetven might also hold secrets to be used against Surtova, whether those secrets be weapons of Choral the Conqueror or shocking revelations about the disappearance of the members of House Rogarvia. Other famed and notorious sites might also await Brevoy's invaders, each bearing its own mysteries, challenges, and opportunities for altering the course of the war, from the weird magical observatory of Skywatch to the haunted, dragon-scarred lands of the Valley of Fire. In any case, few adventurers put down their swords and staves just because they've become generals or kings, and leading an army doesn't need to mean one's dungeon delving days are past.

What follow are several new armies that, along with those presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #35, can help GMs run dozens of new conflicts upon new battlefields, in Brevoy and beyond. GMs are also encouraged to use the rules presented in that volume to create any additional armies their campaigns might require.

ALLIED ARMIES

RESTOV REBELS CR 8

Gargantuan army of humans (warrior 4)

COMBAT

hp 44; DV 18; OM +8

Special Ability crusader

LOGISTICS

Speed 2; Consumption 3

Prerequisite Must have liberated the city of Restov

ALDORI ELITE CR 9

Large army of humans (fighter 8)

COMBAT

hp 49; DV 19; OM +10

Tactics Dirty Fighters; **Resources** Improved Weapons

Special Ability crusader

LOGISTICS

Speed 2; Consumption 3

Prerequisite Must have liberated the city of Restov

NUMERIAN MARAUDERS CR 9

Huge army of humans (barbarian 6)

COMBAT

hp 59; DV 19; OM +9

Tactics Relentless Brutality

Special Ability mercenary

LOGISTICS

Speed 2; Consumption 4

Prerequisite Allied with a Numerian warlord

RIVER KINGDOM RENEGADES CR 4

Medium army of humans (ranger 5)

COMBAT

hp 22; DV 14; OM +4

Tactics False Retreat; **Resources** ranged weapons

Special Ability mercenary

LOGISTICS

Speed 2; Consumption 2

Prerequisite Allied with another River Kingdom

LEGIONS OF BREVOY

THE ASSASSIN ARMY CR 7

Medium army of humans (rogue 8)

COMBAT

hp 31; DV 17; OM +7

Special Ability poison

LOGISTICS

Speed 3; Consumption 3

COMPANY OF THE BLACK CLAW CR 6

Huge army of humans (warrior 4)

COMBAT

hp 33; DV 16; OM +6

Tactics Taunt

LOGISTICS

Speed 2; Consumption 3

CROWN KNIGHTS OF ISSIA CR 8

Huge army of humans (cavalier 5)

COMBAT

hp 44; DV 20; OM +10

Resources mounts

LOGISTICS

Speed 3; Consumption 4

NOBLE HOUSE PRIVATE ARMY CR 6

Large army of humans (fighter 5)

COMBAT

hp 33; DV 18; OM +8

Resources mounts

LOGISTICS

Speed 3; Consumption 3

New Resources and Special Abilities

In addition to those strategies presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #35, these new armies make use of several new tactics.

Special Ability: Crusader: Whether a legion of holy warriors or a band of freedom fighters, this army is particularly dedicated to its cause. Its consumption is reduced by -1 (to a minimum of 0).

Special Ability: Mercenary: This army fights for the highest bidder. Its weekly consumption points can be paid in either Build Points or gold. It costs 1,000 × the army's CR to pay for 1 Build Point. A mercenary army can be overpaid in gold to increase its morale. For every additional Build Point (or its worth in gold) paid in addition to its normal consumption, the army gains +1 Morale for that week (to a maximum Morale bonus equal to half the army's CR).

Resource: Ships (10 BP per 100 soldiers): This army is capable of moving over water through a single body of water (and connected bodies that a ship could reasonable reach) at a rate equal to their normal speed +1. The army receives +4 DV and -4 OM if on the water and battling an army on land. Having ranged weapons negates the penalty to OM.

Prerequisite Allied with a Brevic noble house

PORT ICE PRIVATEERS CR 13

Gargantuan army of humans (fighter 8)

COMBAT

hp 71; DV 23; OM +13

Tactics Dirty Fighters; **Resources** ships

LOGISTICS

Speed 3; Consumption 6

SKYWATCH SPELLGUARD CR 8

Large army of humans (wizard 6)

COMBAT

hp 28; DV 21; OM +11

Tactics

Special Abilities spellcasting

LOGISTICS

Speed 3; Consumption 6

Prerequisite Control Skywatch

THE STETVEN SHIELD CR 12

Colossal army of humans (fighter 5)

COMBAT

hp 66; DV 22; OM +13

Resources improved armor

LOGISTICS

Speed 1; Consumption 6



The First World

If the multiverse is the gods' finest work of art, as their priests so often claim, then the First World is their rough sketch. Crumpled and tossed away in a time before time, this world has no place in the conventional cosmology of the planes. Instead, the First World exists behind the Material Plane, as a palimpsest in which one reality is laid over the top of the other, effectively erasing the original from the multiverse. It is the birthplace of gnomes and the fey, and within its wild and ever-shifting borders roam strange entities, both the eerily familiar precursors of mundane animals and beings alien beyond measure. It is a realm of life and nature run rampant, both beautiful and terrible, and the same could be said of its disconcerting residents.

In a more concrete sense, the First World is a chaotic realm that incorporates elements of both the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane, as it is coterminous with both and represents a blueprint left over from a time before those two realms split in earnest. Cosmologists sometimes explain the current location and relationship of the three planes as being like white light split apart by a prism: once all three planes occupied the same space, yet over the ages the Negative Energy Plane has pulled the various realms out of phase, with the Shadow Plane pulled faster than the First World, which in turn is more susceptible than the Material Plane. The result is that while all three are still coterminous, the First World has more in common with both the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane than the latter two do with each other, and possesses many qualities that mortals normally associate with the Shadow Plane.

GEOGRAPHY

In all aspects, the First World is both primal and primordial, appearing as a bigger and brighter version of the Material Plane. While other infinite planes still bear plenty of familiar, constant locations, the First World is a universe of possibilities, and the path you take between landmarks today might be twisted or gone tomorrow. In many ways, the First World is similar to the chaos of the Maelstrom, yet while the Cerulean Void is the chaos of entropy and destruction, the First World is the chaos of birth and fertility. Rather than lacking natural laws, it is a jumble of conflicting and half-considered rulings, as well as the endless drive of nature to exploit such flaws.

The First World is infinite, and given over to wilderness in all of its forms: impossibly vast forests and mountain ranges that mirror our own, yet with infinitely more variation. These places are constantly blooming and evolving, and the creatures that run within them are prototypes of every creature in existence, in varying stages of completion. Natural phenomena themselves take strange forms, and what seems like rain may upon closer inspection turn out to be only an artist's impression of rain, dumping oceans of water without getting anything wet.

STABILITY AND SHAPING

Natural laws rarely last long in the First World, and have a disturbing tendency to vary from region to region, as if someone were slowly tweaking the world's design—which in many cases is the literal truth. For while constants are hard to come by in the land of the fey, willpower counts for everything, and many of the more powerful residents and artifacts—such as the mysterious rulers known as the Eldest—have the ability to bend and mold the world around them at will. While far from static, the landscapes within these regions can be manipulated only by their masters, making them welcome islands of stability for extraplanar

travelers. This process of bending the First World around oneself is known as “shaping,” and while only the Eldest are capable of doing it on a grand scale, many residents of the First World engage in it to some extent. Even visitors to the realm might unintentionally find themselves subtly manipulating the landscape and natural laws.

A second form of stability comes in the form of randomly occurring singularities. Sailing through the First World like comets, these invisible forces create swaths of stability anywhere from a few feet to hundreds of miles wide, meandering trails in which the natural laws are locked in place. Though rarely dangerous to locals, these singularities spawn thousands of explanations. Are they the souls of dead or transcendent gods? Are they a cancer on the First World itself, one that will eventually render it as systematic and bland as the Material Plane? Whatever the truth may be, the trails seem to have a set length, lasting anywhere from hours to centuries before slowly rolling up behind themselves without a trace—though some residents fear they're steadily growing longer.

The form of stability in the First World most commonly encountered by travelers from the Material Plane is the breach scar. These regions occur around open portals and rifts to the Material Plane that allow some of its stability to seep into the First World. While these scars give adventurers a locked position to map out and return to, locals rarely take kindly to such uninvited intrusion, and most First World creatures stumbling across a breach scar do their best to repair the damage, taking out their ire on the parties responsible.

TRAVEL

Moving between the First World and the Material Plane is more difficult than traveling between planes, as the First World exists behind reality rather than within it. Passing between the conventional cosmology and the First World at will requires magic at least as powerful as *gate*, but more often travelers seek out portals known as breaches. These tears in reality occur at weak points between the First World and the Material Plane, places where the fabric of the universe has worn thin to reveal the world behind it. Such breaks sometimes occur naturally, but are often the result of powerful magic straining reality past its breaking point. Here beings from both sides can move between worlds with impunity. Breaches are frequently identifiable by energy from each world leaking through into the other—in the First World, the area around such a rift crystallizes into the stable breach scars, while on the Material Plane, the area near a breach suddenly blooms with strange life as the fertility of the First World makes a mad rush into new territory. In both cases, a breach tends to attract immediate attention from locals, eager to either destroy it or harness the portal and energy leakage for their own purposes.

On Time

Like all laws and constants, time has less of a foothold in the First World. It progresses faster in some areas and slower in others, sometimes according to the whim of powerful individuals. Creatures may exist right next to each other but in different timestreams, potentially making them invisible to each other (for to a creature as slow as a starfish, does a hummingbird even exist?). While such variances seem strange to outsiders, most First World natives think nothing of the occasional chronological incompatibility, and the most powerful individual in a group or area tends to enforce its own time scheme upon the others. Fortunately for visitors from the Material Plane, their own sense of time—hard-coded into them by their mortality—tends to keep them rooted in their own timestream while in the First World. Unfortunately, this means that it generally roots those around them as well, which isn't always appreciated.

Travel within the First World is much easier, and like the Shadow Plane, its strange relationship with distance is one of its most attractive features to visitors from the Material Plane. According to theorists, part of the reason the landscape of the First World is so mutable is that the fabric of the plane itself is constantly undulating, bunching and unbunching like a page being crumpled and smoothed. To those within the First World, this undulation manifests as distances never being fixed; two locations that are leagues apart one moment can be neighbors in the next as the plane scrunches itself into a new arrangement. For those like the Eldest who have sufficient willpower, it's even possible to temporarily direct the folding of the plane's fabric and step straight from one location to another.

Unlike the Shadow Plane, however, the First World is not a direct reflection of the Material Plane, and hence is not bound to the same dimensions. The First World exists behind the entirety of the Material Plane, not just Golarion, and doesn't follow the same model of scattered worlds in interstellar space. Thus, an enterprising scholar attempting to reach one of the other planets in the night sky might simply enter the First World and begin walking, knowing that the mutability of distance and time might eventually allow him to exit through a breach onto another world. Certainly, some of the stranger beings in the First World (and even the Material Plane) may have emigrated from the stars in the same manner. What residents of Golarion refer to as the First World is merely that patch of the fey realm resting directly behind their own, and distant worlds harbor similarly distant (and alien) regions of the First World.

MAGIC AND RELIGION

The First World was the rough draft for the Material Plane. And like most rough drafts, it was abandoned by the artists

once the final work was complete. For most gods, the First World holds little entertainment compared to the Material Plane, and such prejudice is reinforced by the First World's lack of those items that most hold deities' interest: souls.

Creatures of the First World have no souls, and thus have little to offer the gods. Accordingly, most First World residents have little time for religion, and those few who still agitate for the gods' return find their prayers falling upon deaf ears. On the plus side, however, the gods' negligence makes the First World a perfect place to hide from their sight, should one incur divine wrath.

Faith within the First World is a curiosity, and most residents of a worshipful bent tend to place their faith in one of the Eldest. Those faithful who pass into the First World from the Material Plane often report a terrifying feeling of disconnection from their patrons, and divine magic functions even more strangely within the fey realm than its arcane counterpart. Spells contacting deities or summoning outsider allies have a high probability of failing or acting in unforeseen ways, and spells intended to summon animals tend to summon their strange First World versions instead. Of course, the fact that clerics can still cast spells within the First World at all leads many Material Plane practitioners to smugly assert that the gods haven't actually abandoned the First World. Yet the fey are just as quick to point out that the clerics' spell effects may be the result of the will and conviction behind their faith, with the casters shaping the world around them through traditional First World means.

RESIDENTS

The First World is known throughout the Material Plane as the ancestral home of the fey and the place from which gnomes emigrated long ago, yet it is home to more than just dryads and pixies. Its varied environments boast ecosystems a hundred times more complex than those of the Material Plane. Nearly every creature that has ever existed on the Material Plane still has a prototype within the First World, many with strange traits that never made it into the final design. In the First World, wolves might have tentacles, birds reptilian tails, or badgers giraffe-like necks to steal honey from the hives of intelligent bees. Given the plane's vastness, the variations are literally endless, and some posit that summoners tap into this to create their idols.

Within this world, the fey are dominant, existing in harmony with the landscape much as their Material Plane counterparts do. Yet to equate two dryads from different planes is a mistake, for while their forms may be similar, their mindsets are distinct for several reasons, the most significant being the immortality of First World natives.

Simply put, creatures of the First World do not die—at least, not without powerful magic. Cut off from the cycle of souls, a mortally wounded native reforms from the stuff of the First World after a variable amount of time. As a result,

a First World native's concept of death is sketchy at best, leading to customs and a capricious sense of humor that can be unintentionally murderous to outsiders. Similarly, the mutability of their home in all respects makes them inherently fickle and untrustworthy, with priorities that rarely align with those of mortal creatures. They are fundamentally disconnected from all the things that give mortal life balance and significance, and this disconnect makes them a dangerous unknown in most matters.

Oddly enough, one thing that doesn't change much in the First World is language. With few exceptions, all speech-capable beings within the First World communicate in the same unnamed universal language, a tongue that may be the foundation of both Sylvan and Aklo, and that speakers of either can generally understand.

In addition to conventional fey, several other prominent Material Plane races have their origins on the First World. Gnomes live here in abundance, though immortal and even stranger than their Material Plane kin. Linnorms also roam the forests and mountains, claiming to be the ancestors of all modern dragons (who supposedly descend from linnorms that emigrated long ago). And hundreds of others, from lesser jabberwocks to treants and vegepygmies, make their way in the wilderness of the First World.

Most creatures from the First World, however, never venture to the Material Plane—for if a First World creature dies on a different plane, it ceases to exist. Faced with such a risk, it's a wonder that any of the fey remained on the Material Plane long enough to become part of it.

THE ELDEST

While no one truly rules the First World, there are those entities so powerful as to command respect and obedience from other residents, and even from the land itself. These all-powerful personalities go by many names—the feylords, the shapers—yet to most they are simply the Eldest. Parents, dictators, and forces of nature all in one, the Eldest have little interest in the fairy circles and fey courts of either the First World or the Material Plane, and even the hangers-on that make up their personal courts matter no more to them than oxpecker birds matter to a hippopotamus. For the most part, the Eldest are content to commune with each other and pursue their own cryptic plots and curiosities. Yet when their ancient eyes focus on outsiders, dreams can be granted, and whole worlds can feel their touch.

Manifestations of their masters' will, the demesnes of the Eldest are the stablest landmarks in the First World, yet tend to follow their masters around unless specifically anchored. While Eldest presumably exist throughout the infinite reaches of the First World, the term is usually used on Golarion to refer specifically to the eight (formerly nine) known entities who live close enough to make their presence felt. The members of this strange cohort are listed below.

Count Ranalc: The third volume of Hobard's *Catalogue of Impossible Beings* describes a regal fey lord named Ranalc among the Eldest. A primal being of darkness and the chaos of creation, Ranalc was exiled from the First World millennia ago by his fellows, carving out a forlorn barony in the depths of the Shadow Plane, from which his sworn agents manipulated events on the Material Plane. Records of Ranalc's interference date back to the earliest days of the Age of Anguish, but by the third century of the Age of Enthronement his name had disappeared from most new texts. Ranalc's disappearance (some say murder) dates almost exactly to the siege of Absalom by the archwizard Nex, a longtime foe of the fey lord, and Hobard himself suggests that the shadowy creatures Nex used to raid the city may have some connection to the missing Eldest.

The Green Mother: This tall, beautiful woman resembles a cross between a nymph, an elf, and a dryad, and has shocking green hair. Her flawless skin constantly shifts to resemble natural features—sometimes her hands are gnarled tree roots, other times the flesh of her stomach and legs smoothes into liquid, enveloping any who dare touch it. This is the Green Mother, and within her forest bower she is the most seductive and manipulative creature in the First World. Attended by a legion of admirers and would-be lovers, she weaves her delicate webs of intrigue with the grace and subtlety of a peerless courtesan, though when enraged she is a terrible sight to behold, distorting her shape horribly in order to swallow offenders whole. For ages, her greatest desire has been to bring the Lost Prince under her spell, but to date the Melancholy Lord has rebuffed all her advances.

Imbrex the Twins: Whether the entity known as the Twins is truly a pair of siblings or simply one creature split into two bodies is a question that may never be answered. Hundreds of feet tall, the vaguely reptilian humanoids that refer to themselves collectively as Imbrex stand silent and unmoving, their androgynous faces never flickering with a hint of expression. Yet those devotees who live at their feet have no question as to their lords' will, for the telepathic word of the Twins reaches everyone within 20 miles, and the terrible power of the living statues stands guard over the settlement that has sprung up around their feet. Legends whisper that one day the Twins will shake off their torpor and begin walking, heralding the end of the First World and the retiring of the Material Plane, but so far Imbrex itself has refused to confirm or deny this possibility.

The Lost Prince: Often referred to as the Melancholy Lord, the gaunt, dark-haired individual known as the Lost Prince is a morose and dour individual, generally rejecting the company of other Eldest in favor of brooding in his domain, the Crumbling Tower. While his servants expound with fervor on his good works, the truth is that the Lost Prince attempts to remain neutral in most matters, which makes him all the more important when other Eldest seek

The Origin of Gnomes

No one has ever conclusively nailed down why the gnomes first immigrated to the Material Plane from the First World, yet one theory holds particular weight. According to it, gnomes traveled to the Material Plane because they were intrigued by the cycle of souls, and wanted to see what it was like to transform through death the way mortals do. In twos and threes, they passed through the barrier between worlds, yet discovered upon doing so that only beings born on the Material Plane can bond with a soul from the Positive Energy Plane. Nevertheless, some stayed and procreated, and their children were the first Material Plane gnomes, endowed with souls and able to progress through Pharamasma's Boneyard. This mortality came with a price, however, for though the new gnomes could age, die, and pass on, their bodies still cried out for the constant flux of the First World, and began to break down without it.

Thus was born the Bleaching, a sort of allergic reaction to the structure and stasis of the Material Plane. Even today, this lack of malleability and stimulus physically drains the vitality from gnomes, and only through the search for constant novelty can they maintain their resistance against the murderous dullness of the Material Plane. This weakness often leads First World gnomes to look on their mortal kin with pity, disgust, and—of course—curiosity.

to arbitrate disputes. Strangely, while all of the Eldest's origins have been lost to time, rumors persist that the Lost Prince is the only one not originally from the First World, having emigrated from some alternate reality. Why he left, and when and how he might return, may well be the subject he ponders as he sits alone on his blackened throne.

The Lantern King: If the First World can be said to have a trickster god—no easy feat in a world where capricious, reality-bending mischief is standard practice for many natives—then the title belongs to the Lantern King. Generally appearing as a foot-wide ball of floating light, the Lantern King has been pointed to by some as the progenitor of all will-o'-wisps, but such allegations meet with derisive laughter from the King himself. Forgoing an established realm of his own, the Lantern King roams as he wills through the fields and forests of the First World, and those lives he touches are rarely the same afterward. For though the Lantern King's sense of humor is vast, it can easily turn dark or incomprehensible.

Magdh: Capable of seeing farthest into other realms and down the long lines of probability and fate, Magdh is the prophetess and seer of the Eldest. Though her form can change, even splitting into three parts when necessary, the woman known sometimes as the Three most commonly appears as a robed and well-proportioned human female

with three faces set equidistantly around her head. Though not independent entities, the three faces each appear to represent a different part of her personality, and in conversation may cut each other off suddenly, as her head swivels to present another face to her audience without adjusting the rest of her body. Those seeking her wisdom and second sight are welcomed according to strange and mysterious guidelines, her required tributes ranging from a child's shoe to the heart of a star. The knowledge Magdh gleans from her forest pools is often opaque, yet many supplicants believe that the Three sees far more in her divinations than she lets on, and already knows how every story will end—even her own.

Ng the Hooded: If Ng the Hooded has a face, no one has ever viewed it. Always garbed in long, flowing silver robes that keep the space below the cowl in total darkness, Ng is a detached and dispassionate entity, with a patience and logic that could drive the axiomites mad. Often lairing at the Palace of Seasons—which he maintains is not his home, merely a site he's maintaining for some unnamed other—he can also be found wandering paths throughout the First World or standing completely motionless while studying someone with unseen eyes. Some whisper that the delicate gloves that are his only visible body part hide whirring clockwork, others that he's the mouthpiece of a distant god or the First World itself. Whatever the truth, Ng meets questions regarding his nature with silence, leaving the asker looking at his trail in the dust—a trail that shows only the swishing of robes, with no sign of footprints.

Ragadahn the Water Lord: Despite their serpentine shape, most linnorms live on land—and Ragadahn the Water Lord may be the reason. Also known as the Serpent King, the World Serpent, and (somewhat heretically) the Father of Dragons, Ragadahn claims to be the progenitor from whom all linnorms are spawned. Certainly he's old enough, and it's true that few of his First World "children" dare enter the sea for fear of arousing his ire, as Ragadahn claims all oceans and lakes as his own, having ceded the land and its shallow tarns to his brood. Those few creatures other than the Eldest who dare seek his counsel find him wise and knowledgeable, if somewhat quick to wrath, and are advised to call his name from a peninsula or seaside cliff rather than approaching his aquatic lair directly.

Shyka the Many: Time is fickle in the First World, and Shyka knows this better than any. Over the eons, many men and women have borne this title—and continue to. For in all of his incarnations, Shyka the Many is a master of time, and sees no reason to restrict himself to any particular age. Long ago, the original Shyka—whichever one that may be—made a deal with all those who would eventually bear his title, sharing his reign not chronologically but in fits and flickers, that each might experience representative samples of eternity. As such, though there's never more than

one present at once, there's no telling which incarnation of Shyka may have claim to an existing moment. Sometimes he's a young black-skinned man, other times a pale elven woman, or any of dozens of other forms. His personality varies accordingly, but though each Shyka is his own entity, all have spent enough time living each other's lives to have amassed the same amazing stores of knowledge, and when Shyka speaks, he speaks for all of him, past and future.

LOCATIONS

While the distances between them vary, numerous locations in the First World remain stable in their composition, held by the will of a powerful being, ancient magic, or other unknowable means. Below are the few notable sites most familiar to travelers from Golarion.

Anophaeus, the First City: Often calling themselves the Children of the Twins, the citizens who make their homes within the telepathic cocoon of Imbrex's cyclopean thoughts exult in the powers of their lord, building their modest towers and streets right over the feet and legs of their god-rulers. Imbrex doesn't show any objection to this practice, or any concern at all for the ants that live and die in its shadow, save for the strange and pleasantly addictive dreams that it chooses to share with Anophaeus's residents, as well as the occasional booming, telepathic command that brings all intelligent beings within range to their knees.

The Crumbling Tower: Usually found far from the domains of the other Eldest, this jet-black tower is the domain of the Lost Prince. As befits its master's mood, the tall, gothic spire pours forth a steady stream of detritus from its crumbling battlements, sometimes losing room-sized chunks of masonry, yet never quite managing to fall. This constant destruction is ameliorated to some extent by the efforts of the Lost Prince's menagerie of minions, who show their fervent love and loyalty by keeping up the place as best they can. Of course, the magical nature of the tower itself causes the structure to discreetly regenerate at the same rate that it crumbles, making the servants' efforts purely symbolic, but the residents of the Crumbling Tower have long since made peace with their strange home.

The Evergrove: A pastoral forest hundreds of miles wide, the Evergrove is a fairy tale made life. Here fey of all sorts cavort between enormous trees, hedge-mazes of topiary animals, and the deep loam tunnels of the Blind Land, home to the fungus fey and entrance to vast networks of subterranean caverns.

Godsarm: While it's common knowledge that the living gods have long since abandoned the First World, the same can't be said for dead ones, and the corpses of

long-forgotten deities still dot the face of the First World, infusing the terrain around them with their magic and even traces of consciousness. The quaint gnome village of Godsarm is a prime example. Nestled in the valley between the immense corpse's arm and torso, the gnomes believe their unidentified patron to have been a god of creativity who continues to grant strokes of genius to his residents even in death. Though many of the gnomes live in modest cottages ascending the slopes of stony flesh, others bore deep into the chest cavity, creating grand halls and circumspectly searching for the legendary heartstone.

The Hanging Bower: Located deep within the Silkwood, the Hanging Bower is precisely what its name implies: a sensual palace of boudoirs and feast halls, all hanging from the forest canopy on ropes of silk woven by the forest's monstrous spiders. Even the floors of these floating chambers are made of silk stretched taut enough to support the weight of dozens of courtesans, and in this diaphanous strength lies a metaphor for the Green Mother herself. Within the curtained and lantern-lit twilight of her forest



The Tane

The most feared residents of the First World, the Tane are living engines of destruction created by the Eldest during a time of internal strife now long forgotten. Horrors beyond mortal conception, these beings are now held as guard dogs by the lords of the First World, ready to be unleashed upon the Material Plane should its petty mortals infringe too far upon their realm. Known only as fairy tales to most mortals, the Tane are described in the book *The Serpents Tane* as: "goliaths of war and madness dreamt and stitched into being by the Eldest... terrible to behold, they descend upon those kingdoms that offend their masters, ravaging the land with firestorms and crushing cities underfoot." Though no one beyond the Eldest knows just how many of the Tane still breathe within their hidden barracks, the book mentions several Tane by name, including the Dreaming Hill of the Dark (also known as Thrasfyr, a mountainous mass of hooks, barbs, and iron); the witch-tree Sard, Storm of Insanities; and the infamous Jabberwock.

home, the Mother calls the dance as she sees fit, and any of the revelers and lovers foolish enough to question her purred desires are likely to end up consumed by her attendants.

Hollow Hall: This gargantuan tree stump has been hollowed out and now hosts one of the biggest parties in the First World. Walkways corkscrew up the sides of the stump's caldera, offering balconies with views of the festivities below. Tunnels into the root network provide even more rooms, but the central floor of the hollow is the primary attraction, for here satyrs and their admirers dance and feast in a never-ending orgy of music and wine.

The House of Eternity: High in the mountains rises the lonely fortress of Shyka the Many. A conglomeration of impossibly narrow spires, Shyka's mountain castle is accessible only from the air or via a narrow, winding staircase. Like Shyka himself, the House of Eternity has a set position in space, but none in time, and its architecture shifts constantly to reflect its various incarnations.

Karaphas the Drowned: All the seas of the First World may belong to Ragadahn, but Karaphas is his capital. A sunken city of soaring bridges and domes, Karaphas predates even Ragadahn himself, its original, non-humanoid inhabitants long since departed. The city gleams like a jewel in its dark ocean trench, lit by globes of eerie light. Though the ocean has reclaimed much of sleeping Karaphas, and its chambers are filled with scuttling crab-things larger than men, Ragadahn permits no visitors to enter its buildings, and those who know the linnorm best whisper that he still searches for something within the flooded chambers.

The Palace of Seasons: In the middle of a trackless desert, this onion-domed structure rises like a mirage out of the

sand, with no path leading to its golden gate. Here Ng the Hooded watches over the carefully bottled labels and samples of all those seasons that never saw implementation on the Material Plane, such as the Season of Growth and Death, the Season of Mist, the Season of Dreams and Ancestors, and the Season of Carnivorous Light.

Palenhyr, City of Faith: Palenhyr is a bazaar of tents, shanties, and most of all churches. Shrines big and small, some magnificent and others built out of trash, all clog the nexus of the First World's few faithful. Dozens of cults of gods both real and imagined mix and war in the narrow alleys of the city, seeking expansion of their marginalized cults. Of late, several of the more powerful sects have secretly begun work on the Apostolic Engine, a magical item designed to draw a deity back into the First World and bind it there, forcing it to embrace the fey faithful.

The Quickening: If the First World represents change, than the Quickening is its defining location. Creatures that pass within its rippling boundary find themselves in nature's crucible, evolving in unexpected directions at a furious rate. Limbs and tails sprout and wither, heads enlarge and split, and feet grow roots. Even when protected by strong magic, most visitors can only manage a few hours without changing permanently beyond all recognition. Young fey sometimes dare each other beyond the barrier, sporting the unpredictable modifications like badges of honor, but wiser heads give the region a wide berth, lest they become the plantlike mounds or fell beasts seen wandering through the landscape, seemingly worshiping the mysterious pillar barely visible at the region's center.

The Riddled Sphere: Just as powerful individuals can warp the landscape of the First World, so can powerful artifacts. The dungeon complex called the Riddled Sphere is rumored to have formed around an artifact known as the *Archetype* like a pearl around a grain of sand. A mile in diameter, this sphere of black stone sits lightly on the ground, barely bending the grass beneath it, its surface broken by dozens of doors, archways, and fissures. Within the sphere, a three-dimensional network of rooms and passageways honeycombs the rock, constantly shifting and guarding the item at its center. Exactly what the *Archetype* is remains anyone's guess—some say it's a small-scale model of the Material Plane, through which the bearer can bend or shape that realm, others that it's a key to Abadar's First Vault. Regardless, countless treasure-hunters have ventured into the sphere, returning in frustration or disappearing altogether when the door through which they entered closes. In the meantime, the Riddled Sphere continues to wander slowly on its own errands.

Riftwood: Also known as The Bottomless Grove, The Forest Well, or simply The Deep Woods, this forest appears strangely uniform from beyond its borders, with all treetops coming to roughly the same level. As



travelers move farther into the woods from any side, they find the ground sloping downward, and the trees getting steadily thicker and taller. Before long the slope becomes exponential, and all creatures making their homes in the deep Riftwood do so in the canopy, brachiating, gliding, or creating villages of ropes and bridges. Those explorers who dare seek ground in the forest's heart are forced to descend carefully down trunks hundreds of feet thick, some of which bear ancient carved steps.

Ulas, the Mountain That Walks: Though many mountains shift positions with the warping of the First World, Great Ulas takes an active role. Massing as much as any Material Plane volcano, the bulk of Great Ulas lifts itself just inches off the ground on an uncountable number of tiny, writhing green tentacles, propelling itself across the landscape with the speed of a walking man and crushing all in its path. Worshiped by primitive tribes of brownies, redcaps, and warrior nymphs that reside on its slopes, Ulas might be counted as one of the Tane save for the fact that its wanderings don't appear malicious, and its

residents see it as both a parent to be obeyed and a child to be comforted. Those who've cut through the rocks and trees that cover Ulas report that its flesh bleeds gray, and the mountain itself keens with despair—at least until its “children” descend on the attackers.

Witchmarket: The Witchmarket is a roving caravan of merchants and hucksters that migrates between breaches and portals to the Material Plane, setting up shop nearby in hopes of peddling its wares to foreigners. While much of the business is legitimate, the currency of the First World is strange, and a warrior seeking magic arms might pay a year of his life, a kiss, a drop of blood, all his childhood memories—or just the shiny buttons off of his coat. The wares offered are equally varied, and range from love potions and magic beans to an entire shop of items pulled from the buyer's memory (such as perfect replicas of childhood toys or lost magic items). The Witchmarket is run by Aggys, the Crone in the Cart, an impossibly old woman with the ability to look into the future and provide customers with what they need most—at dangerously steep prices.



Prodigal Sons: 6 of 6 Running for Cover

I must admit, I'd hoped our military camp of weedy old men, emaciated bondsmen, and general riffraff would have held up better in a skirmish. Instead, they'd scattered as soon as the first Tymon spear thudded into our camp. As well, I'd hoped Tymon's soldiers might have greeted our little expeditionary force with more courtesy. Instead, they came with shackles.

"What would you say, brave soldier of Tymon," I asked the brutes bearing the pole from which we hung like trussed deer, "to loosening these ropes, so that we might tell you of our offer?"

From where I wobbled upside down, I could pick out the distant line of Daggermark's army to one side of me, and smell the stench of Tymon's gladiator forces to the other.

"A *fabulous* offer!" I clarified.

The soldiers carrying the pole said nothing. Then, all at once, my nose was buried in a bootprint in the black mud around us. I pried myself up and saw that one of the soldiers had cut my bonds after all. He'd even deigned to cut the bonds of Phargas.

The dirty swarm of gladiators and soldiers around us parted. Two beat drums, and stepped aside to reveal Makoa, the gladiator who had officiated over our chariot race in Tymon, now with a heavy, expensive sword at his hip.

"Tell me," Makoa said, conversationally, "you sons of vermin, why I shouldn't have you both flayed alive, bathed in salt and acid, and fed to razorcrows in the arena?"

I like a man who gets to the point. I opened my mouth, but before I could explain, Phargas butted in.

"Generous and clever commander of the Tymon host," Phargas said, falling to one knee, "you have honored us by sparing our lives thus far, and we truly apologize that our—carelessness—has led to this misunderstanding with your most undignified neighbor of Daggermark. *May the blood of the great bull burn in your veins.*"

There went Phargas, laying it on again. Makoa, I was surprised to see, paused to frown at my companion.

"What did you say?"

"*May the blood of the great bull burn in your veins. May all false friends flee the sheen of your blade, and the Lord in Iron harden your will.*"

Makoa leaned close—not the freshest-smelling of sword-swingers, him.

“Slave,” he asked, “why did you not mention that you and your companion were adepts of Gorum?”

“Commander,” Phargas said, inclining his head once more, “my companion and I only wished for a moment wherein your warrior’s heart might recognize the fact.”

Gorum—of course. The god of battle and slaughter was no doubt a favorite among these lowborn warriors.

Makoa gave a bass-drum rumble I realized was a laugh. “So. The rumors of magic that traveled with you from the Sellen pleasure craft have some truth.”

Phargas nodded. “We came like any other indentured servants to Lord Ungin’s city. Yet could we have eluded your soldiers as long as we did, Commander, without the favor of he who watches over all warfare? And, without his favor, could we have the confidence to unveil this proposal?”

I wasn’t sure I liked where this was headed. A famous name and a swift double-cross might be the best way out of any tight spot, but I’d have preferred to take the lead.

I chanced a look around. The ugly Tymon force that pursued us and the slaves we’d freed had swelled in number. Several hundred soldiers surrounded our little camp of recaptured servants. Some of Makoa’s gladiators looked at us as if any spot of dirt would do for a pit to polish us off. Others sharpened tridents, spears, and broadswords; smithed their armor; or just watched the opposite horizon. Where their eyes pointed, the single black line of Daggermark’s own army waited, its signal fires sending even columns of smoke up to a murky sky.

“My terrifying and noble commander,” Phargas went on, “though we came as captives and departed in secret, my companion and I may yet signal great blessings for you—and for Champion Ungin’s kingdom.”

“Blessings?” Makoa raised an eyebrow.

“Clearly, my lord, aged and corrupt Daggermark sees hostile intentions in your massed force.”

“This we can sort out later. But you stung my lord with your betrayal.” Makoa gave a knife-wound smile. “I came to convince you to return and make amends properly.”

“But my lord,” Phargas continued, undeterred, “their army watches you as you watch theirs. If Gorum wills the bull’s blood to burn in your veins, what better moment than right now to finish what unnumbered others have sought in vain—the conquest of Daggermark!”

A wire-thin old human pushed forward to Makoa’s side. “The conquest of *Daggermark*?” He snorted. “You, slave, have lost your wits, or are playing us for fools!” He turned to Makoa. “Commander, surely you see the foolishness of such an attack. Daggermark’s militia has held this land for generations. The pranks of these slaves, charging the border as if the outriders of an invasion, have brought us to the brink of war. You see Daggermark’s legions massed

on the horizon. And we are to make this absurd aggression a reality without the Champion’s orders?”

Makoa tapped a long fingernail on his sword hilt. “You speak prudently, Caziar.”

Caziar cringed. “You never mean that as a compliment.”

Makoa laughed again.

I glanced at Phargas. For a man who’d just sent us all to our suicides, his face was downright serene.

“What was that about you being a priest of Gorum? Last I checked, you were a priest of Desna! Or was it Calistria?”

Adding insult to injury, you see, hadn’t seemed quite enough. Commander Makoa had been so persuaded by Phargas’s speech that this time, he and I really were to lead the way: to scout a path through the abandoned peat farms and fens separating Tymon’s force from Daggermark’s army. If Makoa had any doubts about Phargas’s sincerity, our deaths in battle would settle the question.

“If you can think of a better way to save our skins,” Phargas said, “I’m all ears.”

We crept our way slowly under the shadow of a recently emptied farmhouse toward Daggermark’s line. Makoa had given us until dusk to determine how many soldiers the opposition had fielded, then report back. At sunset, he’d attack, then send word to Tymon of the new territory it held and press on toward the city of Daggermark itself.

I peered from behind an abandoned peat farmer’s cart. In the distance I saw lines of footmen and bowmen, and, winding among them, the strong, sharp-edged outlines of the women—never accuse a Daggermark swordswoman of being less than a man in battle.

“For all we know,” I said, “we’ve already been spotted.”

“If we had, we’d no longer be breathing.”

“Phargas, old friend,” I said, “wasn’t it the great Pathfinder Durvin Gest himself who said that no hero ever died by a wound to his retreating boot heel?”

“If he did, it wasn’t in the *Chronicles*.”

“What would you know about the *Chronicles*?”

Instead of answering, Phargas tugged me behind the cart. “Foot soldier,” he hissed. “Don’t move.”

I ventured a look around the edge of the cart; a silhouette, some score of yards away, was making straight for us. “Too late. He’s seen us.”

I reached for my knife. In that instant, the cart burst into flame and toppled over on its side.

“What in the Kingdoms...?”

“Never be without a small incendiary.”

Just like him to keep secrets from me. “Where did you get alchemist’s fire?”

Instead of answering, Phargas dug frantically into his pack and came up with a dark bundle, which he slipped his chin into.

“What are you doing?”

He tossed another bundle to me. "Put it on." He stood and shook the fabric out over himself, revealing one of the habits we'd worn back at the convent.

"Get dressed," he whispered, "*—Olive.*"

I could hear the clink of the soldier's chainmail as he ran toward us. Seeing little alternative, I forced my head through my bundle. Phargas stepped from behind the burning cart.

"Fellow soldier!"

How could he make his voice so high and so low at once? I scurried into sight as well, and the soldier froze. He squinted at us. "And who might you two ladies be?"

Phargas set his feet apart. "Mistress Francis of the Reckless Fireballs, servant of Our Lady of the Fiercely Virginal Order of Blessed Exoneration, and warrior—today—of Daggermark."

The soldier's face glowed red from the burning cart, and he pointed. "What happened to that thing?"

I looked over at the shattered boards and smoking wood, and tried my squeakiest, fiercest voice. "Does our target practice disturb you?"

"Well, I—"

"Soldier," Phargas said. "Among our sisterhood's holiest vows is that of the chastisement of the Hated Sex." He reached to his side to clasp a splinter of wood that would do for a wand. "We nuns emerge to serve Our Mistress of General Slaughter alongside your gender only in times of great need, and Daggermark sent a messenger astride an immense avian mere hours ago, to plead just such a need in the face of Tymon's unjust advance."

The soldier looked ill at ease. Phargas pointed at me: "This is my companion, Mistress Olive of the Clumsy Castration. Perhaps you're in need of her services?"

That did it. "Sisters," he said hastily, unconsciously lowering his spear to guard his nethers, "allow me to lead you to my commanding officer—Lady Ommarra of the Broadsword. It was she, no doubt, who sent the call for your services."

Lady Ommarra of the Broadsword, eh? "Not bad," I whispered to Phargas, as the soldier turned and trotted—perhaps fled would be a better word—toward the front line ahead of us.

Lady Ommarra turned out to be a tall, dark-haired, armor-plated beauty carrying a brass horn and a sword that justified her name. She was also happy to see two more troops. "Mistresses Francis and Olive, you say?"

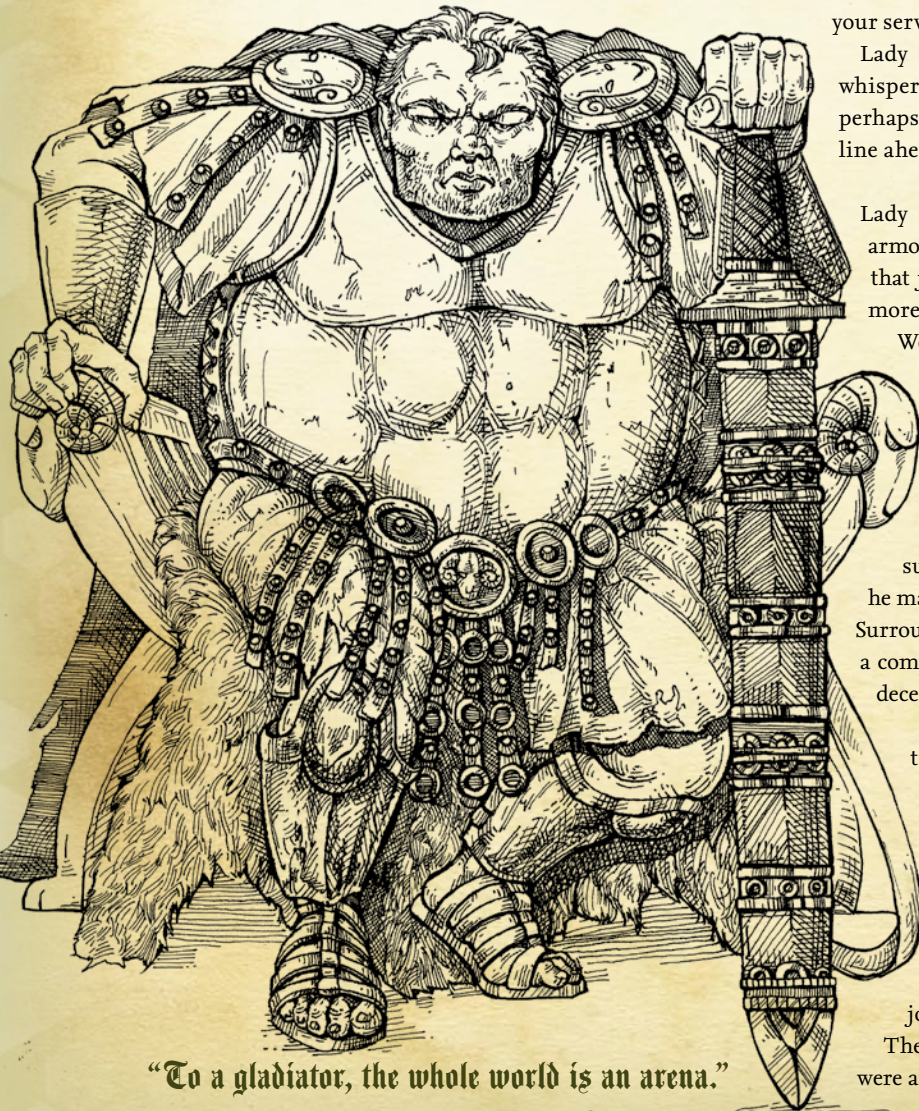
Well, it wasn't me who sent for you, but I'm glad the Order spared both a long- and a short-range fighter. Fireballs and...?"

"Castrations."

"Superb." Her eyes sparkled. "I never would have thought Ungin stupid enough to challenge Daggermark, but Tymon's field commander is summoning the last of his forces, and it looks like he may have finally decided to try Daggermark's mettle." Surrounded by several hundred militia swordsmen and a company on horseback, I thought their mettle seemed decent enough.

"What's more," she continued, "rumor has it that two who've gravely offended our poisoners' guild are serving as his counselors. In any case, I'm glad you sisters aren't too proud to fight alongside men. And you,"—she patted my arm—"might just get to practice your specialty by sunrise." A soldier hailed her, and taking her leave of me and Phargas—whom she looked over once more with that same sparkle in her eye—she jogged away over the darkening plain.

The next half-hour passed in a blur. As soon as we were alone, I politely reminded Phargas that our goal was



"To a gladiator, the whole world is an arena."

escape, not fighting for either kingdom. No sooner had my words come out, however, than we heard the horns of Daggermark commanders gathering troops and the hum of arrows taking flight. The bulk of the force double-timed forward. Tymon had fired the first shot; we were suddenly surrounded by hoarse shouts. “They’re attacking from the southeast,” Phargas called, pocketing a silver amulet I’d never seen him produce before. “Come north, and we’ll skirt the lines.”

“What was that amulet?” I asked as we slunk along.

He glanced sideways at me. “Something any Pathfinder could tell me about.”

I was about to ask him what he meant by *that* little comment when a dozen Daggermark soldiers barreled up behind us. One soldier crashed into me, pulling me down in a tangle of arms and legs.

I stood up with battle fully pitched a dozen yards from me, ducked an arrow, and turned to face the little wretch who’d collided with me. All of a sudden, I realized I was looking in the eyes of the soldier who’d first found us.

I cleared my throat and tried out my high voice. “Well, if it isn’t our old friend. Back to take us up on our offer?”

Instead of stepping back, the soldier narrowed his eyes and gave a nasty chuckle.

That didn’t sound good. I held up my knife. “We’re here to practice our blessed gift on our mutual enemies.”

“Well, I happen to know—*Mistress*—that Our Lady has nothing to do with this fight.”

I stepped backward, toward the skirmish.

“That’s right,” he continued. “I asked my commanders. No one from Daggermark sent word for any warrior nuns.” He lifted his halberd again. “You’re a spy for Tymon, and it’s going to be my pleasure to run you through.”

“A spy for Tymon?” Where was Phargas? I tried a hearty-yet-feminine laugh. One of the horses in the battle gave a short, screeching neigh as it went down. The two sounds were remarkably similar. “Absurd!”

“Then where’s your friend?” the soldier said. I heard a familiar bellow and glanced back; in the half-dark, I saw two horsemen locked in combat with a gladiator in full armor, heavy sword chopping deep into the flesh of man and horse. Commander Makoa. He was framed on either side by two more opponents, unlikely soldiers dressed in plain black and armed with thin staves, who seemed unable to do more than fend off his vicious blows.

The soldier inched toward me; I inched away. Screams and the splintering of wood were very close behind me now. Well, this was it.

“I’m no spy, soldier,” I proclaimed, pulling back my hood. “Ollix Kaddar’s the name—scion of Kadria, Pathfinder extraordinaire, and adoptee of your army.” Introducing myself, no matter the circumstance, gave me a touch of pride. “Now kindly let me pass and rejoin your struggle.”

I felt a shock through my feet and saw, at the corner of my eye, a Daggermark rider fall dead along with his horse.

I started to turn; the soldier looked up, and his eyes widened; an arrow struck him in the chest.

A voice thundered behind me. “Again? The wretch dares to betray Tymon *again*?” The voice broke off in a bellow of rage and all around me was a bristle of spears. I saw suddenly I was alone—no warrior of Daggermark still stood within eyesight.

Makoa broke through the line of his troops, swinging an immense broadsword, bloodshot eyes fixed on me. The Tymon lieutenant, Caziar, pushed along behind him.

Perhaps it hadn’t been the choicest moment to remove my cowl.

“Prepare to die, traitor!” Makoa called, and I found myself without a comeback. The big man sneered as he paced around me, sword point level with my chest. His other hand reached to his belt and drew out a short crescent blade. “The tide is turning on Daggermark. Tonight we take this land, and tomorrow we march on Daggermark itself. Lord Ungin’s flag will fly on its battlements, and I will hold it in his name. But I think I’ll start the celebration early by skinning you here and now.”

A cry went up from Makoa’s troops. Through the shine of armor and the flash of swords, I saw that Ommarra had leapt into their company, blade swinging. Another noise sounded beside me—Phargas. He shrugged off his cowl and stepped between Makoa and me.

“You won’t harm him.”

Above the noise and clash of blades, I heard Ommarra say, “Olive? *Francis*?”

Caziar, spiked mace raised, laughed involuntarily. “By Gorum’s eyes—it’s a woman soldier and our lying priest!”

Phargas lifted his walking stick. A flame lit the tip. “You *will not* harm the young one.”

Makoa pointed his broadsword at Phargas. His breath came in pants, but a hint of a smile played across his features. “Well—this is a little more sporting.”

Phargas murmured a few words under his breath, then said louder in a dreamy, hypothetical tone, “And what is sport for you, Lord Makoa?”

“Sport for you is an arena of slaughter!” The words jumped out of my mouth before I could catch them. “You call yourself a warrior, but your only taste of blood comes from watching undeserving creatures die in your pit.” As if pulled by a string, my knife leapt upward in my grip. I had never felt such a thing before—like the words were flying from my lips. “The weak and foolish are brought from across the River Kingdoms, but are never enough to slake your mad thirst. You organize death, but dare not deal it. And you call yourself a warrior!” My chest felt like it was on fire. “A warrior? A wart-riddled orc raider begot you on some peddler’s mother in a reeking *ditch*!”

Makoa's face darkened steadily. He lifted a hand to hold back his soldiers.

"You may have your pleasure on that Daggermark girl and the false priest," he said to Caziar. "This one's mine."

"Come on then, coward!" The voice sprung unbidden from my mouth, but it was my own, as were the arms that spread wide in challenge.

A vein throbbed in Makoa's pitted forehead. He hefted his blade, and I felt myself step into what I could muster of a defensive pose. He opened his mouth—and suddenly, a look that was almost thoughtful stole across his face.

He lifted one hand to his side, and looked around in surprise. Then his fingers stiffened, and he toppled over into the dirt like a sack of rags. Startled, Caziar twisted to look—and kept on twisting, falling beside him.

The soldiers howled. Ommarra used their moment of distraction to run two of them through, and the gladiators of Tymon—unused to the chaos of proper warfare—scattered. Ommarra lifted the horn around her throat and blew three clear notes. I started toward her, only to be pulled down into a crouch by Phargas.

"Desna's sake, Ollix, look around! *This is poisoners' work.*"

My mind leapt back to Makoa and Caziar fighting in the press of bodies. Two humans in plain black, with hoods low over their eyes, had fought near them, only for a moment; I'd taken them for some sort of priesthood.

"You mean—"

"These darts are called Midnight's Toll." He pointed to the gap between groin and breastplate in fallen Caziar's armor. A tiny flash of light there, no brighter than a strand of fey's hair, caught my eye. "Makoa and Caziar had been dead half a minute. They just hadn't felt it yet." He lifted a hand to display the slenderest of needles, tipped in ornamental blue.

"You mean—"

"And you'd taken off your hood! These poisoners know our faces. If they'd glimpsed you out of our disguise, you'd have gotten a dart as well."

"You mean—"

"Listen!" The noise of battle had changed. The clash and collision had given way to bayings, trampling feet, and screams. One theme in particular caught my attention.

"Every Tymon commander?" I asked, incredulous.

"The Poisoners' Guild doesn't lie down on the job." He reached for his walking stick and made to crawl forward, but suddenly I realized that I'd had enough.

"Now wait a second, Phargas," I said, and to my surprise there was steel into my voice. "How do you know so much about poison? And what witchery did you use back there? Those weren't my words that challenged Makoa. I think you owe me some answers."

Phargas stared at me for a long moment, considering. Then he took a deep breath and let it out.

"Very well, boy," he said, and crouched down beside me in the shadow of the dead horse. The ground thundered as cavalry rode past us, chasing the retreating Tymons.

"Ollix," he began, "I've never been truthful with you about my mission, though on occasion I thought you might figure it out yourself. It's been months since your father sent you away. Since then we've traveled together, you believing I was your bodyguard."

"I prefer 'sidekick,'" I responded, "but yes."

"We found a wayfinder and a cloak pin with the Glyph of the Open Road early in our journey, and you had the nerve to start calling yourself a Pathfinder. But as a servant of the Decemvirate—"

"The what?"

Phargas rolled his eyes. "Forget it," he said. "The thing that you need to understand, Ollix, is that you've indeed been working for the Pathfinder Society. But not intentionally." He gestured. "I'm the Pathfinder, Ollix. I was sent out months ago on a mission to chart the ever-changing borders between the lesser River Kingdoms. One of my first stops was Kadria." He pursed his lips. "Lord Kaddar approached me with an offer the first night I was in town."

"But you called yourself a priest!" I cried. Phargas smiled, and his expression of casual, paternal disdain would have been at home in any noble court.

"Country boy, I've been a Pathfinder for eight years. I speak ten languages and have mastered the magic of speech and song. Believe me, I can appear as I need to appear."

Country boy? "If my father," I continued, "was sending me out with a top-notch sidekick, he should have told me."

A cloud passed over Phargas's face. "My charge from your father wasn't to guard you, Ollix."

"What?"

"Think about it: your old man instructed you to make a name for yourself *or die trying*. Given your track record, which do you think he expected to happen? And if it didn't, well—no harm in purchasing a little insurance."

It took me a moment to make sense of his words. He put up his hand.

"Believe me," he said, "I've been tempted. At the Swaddled Otter? That mess with Jedda's captain of the guard, or the ridiculous wagers on the river barge? All moments I smiled to imagine leaving you to your fate—and earning the second half of my reward."

What he proposed was inconceivable. "Phargas, my father would never have sent me to die."

"Oh really?" he asked, and this time his tone was almost gentle. "And why would that be? Because of his great love for you? Tell me—which is worth more to a petty warlord: A son who's a constant embarrassment? Or a son whose tragic murder in a nearby kingdom might just be the impetus for one last war of expansion?"

That sounded uncomfortably like my father's thinking. "But—with Mako," I asked. "You just saved my life."

"That's right, I did. Because I'm fed up with doing other people's chores." He yanked off his habit, revealing his mud-stained cloak and breeches. He stood, heedless of a troop of cavalry who pounded past us led by Ommarra. Gingerly, I rose to my feet as well.

"I can't believe it." The battlefield was growing deserted. Up ahead, Tymon's troops were fleeing west toward their distant city, Daggermark's militia hot on their heels.

"If I'd died under Mako's sword, you'd have had your fee, plus Ommarra's eye. I saw how she looked at Francis."

Phargas laughed—a full, rich sound. "Watching a buffoon die is no compensation for serving another one." He gestured at Daggermark's lines. "Besides, I suspect Ommarra will lose interest now that she knows you and I aren't mistresses after all. And I've always preferred the company of gentlemen, anyway."

"Well, who doesn't? But I meant that she might take you as a lover."

Phargas sighed. "Never mind. Anyway, this dung-showered detour of ours will make a fine addition to my report, but if I'm ever to write it," he snatched up his pack and dusted it perfunctorily, "I must be on my way. Your Glyph of the Open Road, please." He put out his palm.

It took a moment to process the request, then I dug in my pocket for the dented iron pin and dropped it into his hand. With the wayfinder in the leucrotta's possession, my time as a Pathfinder was officially over.

"Thanks," he said, and began to turn away. Then he stopped and studied me for a moment.

"You know, Ollix, for all I've said, your road isn't set." He tossed up the pin and caught it. "If you ever want to earn one of these," he said, "you know where to find us." Then he turned on his heels and was quickly lost to view.

Ommarra found me sometime later, still standing next to the dead horse. "Where's he gone, Olive?"

"It's Ollix. He was Phargas. And I'm apparently not qualified to follow where he's going."

Her smile was wry. "It seems we've repulsed Tymon's little assault—their leadership has been found lying down on the job. That wasn't a bad trick, slaying the two commanders at once. Whether you're with the Poisoners' Guild or working freelance, your skills are impressive."

"Phargas was full of good ideas," I said generously.

"Pity, he made a stunning mistress. And you? Do you care to return with us to the city you fought for?"

It occurred to me that some guildsmen in black might not be pleased to see me. "No, thanks. I have

an appointment of my own to keep, back home. Family business."

"Family business?"

My head spun with a thousand plans, none of them gentle. Perhaps it was time to show my father exactly what I'd learned on the road.

"Family's like any band of outlaws, my lady—we have to see to our own."

And with that, I began the long walk back to Kadria. Behind me, Ommarra blew her horn twice more. Then the soldiers returned, and the notes were lost in the cutthroat clamor of the crowd.

"How could anyone pass up a woman like that?"





Bestiary

Spotty regional records say the natural harbor of Vaidencoast once teemed not only with emerald-flecked trout, but also with sharp rocks that made it dangerous for vessels putting into port unawares. To guard visiting ships, the town raised a stout lighthouse to warn of the dangerous harbor. It's said the towering light had not shone a week before rousing the ire of a terrible dragon, which scoured the town with waves and green ruin. Yet where Vaidencoast once stood now spreads only rubble and a monstrously thick bramble patch spilling from the ruined beacon tower. Locals say a dragon pulled this tower down, but from what I've seen, I'd say it was something far, far worse.

—From *The Record of Truan Tolavai*

Creature Type

- Aberration
- Animal
- Construct
- Dragon
- Fey
- Humanoid
- Magical Beast
- Monstrous Humanoid
- Ooze
- Outsider
- Plant
- Undead
- Vermin

Climate

- Cold
- Extrplanar
- Temperate
- Tropical

Environment

- Desert
- Forest/Jungle
- Hill
- Mountain
- Plain
- Ruins
- Swamp
- Sky
- Underground
- Urban
- Water

The denizens of the First World invade in this month's entry into the Bestiary. From prowling predators and alien natives of that weird world to dragon-like terrors and servants of the mysterious Eldest, these dwellers beyond the edge of the reality creep forth, ready to invade the Stolen Lands or any other unsuspecting campaign.

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

Alien in the extreme, the First World constantly shifts and warps, as do many of the creatures native to that realm. GMs planning to add random encounters to their PCs' adventures in the First World can, of course, make use of any of the thematically appropriate monsters listed on the table here. The strange powers and twisting nature of the plane also mean that few beings have direct or obvious analogs among the creatures of the Material Plane. Thus, while every adventurer might know what a chimera looks like on his home world, in the First World such creatures have the potential to look and act radically different, as well as to exhibit unexpected powers. The First World gives GMs the opportunity to wildly alter the descriptions of even the most mundane creatures, making their First World counterparts feel exotic and unknown. While the statistics behind the GM screen might be for a standard chimera, a description of a winged beast with three huge

crocodile heads and a legion of centipede legs hardly evokes images of such a legendary monster. As the First World offers limitless potential for creation and change, GMs should feel free to let their imaginations run wild with each creature description.

Such freedom need not be limited to cosmetic details, though. There are dozens of minor changes that a GM could make to a creature on the fly to render an encounter weirdly memorable without the need for a great deal of pre-planning. While the simple templates in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* allow for a range of quick adjustments, the First World opens the door for a variety of other unexpected adjustments and mutations. A GM might change the energy type of a creature's breath weapon, swap out one spell-like ability for another of the same level, or replace a natural attack with another that does the same amount of damage, to give a few examples. Such ad-libbed changes should be minor and in general should not change underlying statistics—GMs should avoid making the creature an unbalanced challenge—but when teamed with an unusual description, they can make a party think they're facing an entirely alien menace. Several such encounters, together with the ones already in this month's adventure and those noted here, might go far toward making the First World feel like a place of inscrutable creatures and unpredictable danger.

First World Random Encounters

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1d8 unicorns	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 269
6–9	2d8 nixies	7	<i>Bonus Bestiary</i> 15
10–14	1d6 grodairs	8	see page 84
15–19	2d4 dryads	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 116
20–23	1d4 dweomercats	9	see page 82
24–29	2d6 satyrs	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 241
30–35	2d12 faerie dragons	9	<i>Bonus Bestiary</i> 9
36–41	1d8 skrik nettles	10	see page 86
42–47	3d6 pixies	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 228
48–53	1d8 nymphs	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 217
54–56	1d6 giant slugs	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 254
57–62	1 athach	12	see page 17
63–67	2d6 treants	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 266
68–70	1 mandragora swarm	13	see page 13
71–75	1 winged owlbear	14	see page 30
76–80	1d8 giant flytraps	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 134
81–84	1d3 athachs	15	see page 17
85–87	2d8 frost giants	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 149
88–91	2d8 nuckelavees	15	<i>Pathfinder</i> #34
92–94	1d4 crag linnorms	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 190
95–97	1d6 ankous	17	see page 80
98–99	1d4 zomoks	18	see page 88
100	1 lesser jabberwock	20	see page 22

*See paizo.com for the *Pathfinder RPG Bonus Bestiary*.

ANKOU

Cloaked by wings of darkness, this horrific, skeletal alien appears to be burning from within, a flaming glow shining through its emaciated chest. Among this gaunt being's most prominent features are shimmering black wings, sharp talons, and yellow eyes that radiate a lambent malice.

ANKOU

CR 14



XP 38,400

LE Large fey (extraplanar)

Init +13; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft.; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 19, flat-footed 21 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 133 (14d6+84)

Fort +10, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13

DR 10/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed fly 90 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +14 (1d6+8), tail +9 (1d8+4 plus bleed), 2 wings +9 (1d8+4 plus bleed)

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

Special Attacks bleed (2d6), cold iron killer, shadow doubles, sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +22)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 20), *silence* (self only)

3/day—*dimensional anchor*, *greater teleport*, *true seeing*

1/day—*circle of death* (DC 23), *discern location*, *prismatic spray* (DC 24)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 28, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 36

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Stance, Wind Stance

Skills Bluff +24, Escape Artist +26, Fly +32, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (nature) +20, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +22 (+30 in dim light or darker); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in areas of dim light or darker.

Languages Common, Sylvan (cannot speak); telepathy 100 feet

ECOLOGY

Environment any (First World)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cold Iron Killer (Su) All of an ankou's natural weapons are treated as cold iron for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Shadow Doubles (Su) Once per day, as a free action, an ankou can conjure up to four shadowy duplicates of itself, which appear anywhere within 60 feet of the ankou and last for a number of rounds equal to the ankou's Charisma modifier

(typically 7 rounds). These shadow doubles are identical to the original ankou in all respects, except that they have hit points equal to 20% of the true ankou's hit points when conjured (26 hit points if conjured by an ankou with full hit points). The shadow doubles have all of the true ankou's melee attacks and abilities, except that they cannot use the ankou's spell-like abilities with the exception of *deeper darkness*, and cannot create more shadow doubles. Any creature that interacts with a shadow double can make a Will save to disbelieve the duplicate (DC 10 + 1/2 the ankou's Hit Dice + the ankou's Charisma modifier, typically DC 24). Against a creature that recognizes a shadow double for what it is, the shadow double functions as a *shadow conjuration* (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 340). Shadow doubles take double damage from any spell with the light descriptor. If the true ankou is slain, is rendered unconscious, or is ever more than 120 feet away from a shadow double, the duplicates instantly vanish.

Death is a passing inconvenience to the folk of the First World. If a fey is slain in its home realm, it reforms sometime later from the mutable stuff of reality. To them, violence and mayhem are somewhere between a sport and a mode of criticism. If a fey lord chops the head off one of his knights, it might be little more than a dramatic rebuke.

Therefore, the creatures known as ankous should not be considered simple killers. Their duty is not merely to kill—it is to terrify and torture, to wring every iota of suffering out of their target in a pageant of cruelty before the final act, the bloody murder itself. Ankous are the servants of powerful fey nobles who rule with cold-iron fists, and whose subjects live in terror of a visit from the dark ones. They cannot permanently kill those of the First World, but they can make victims long for oblivion.

Physically, ankous are a fearful sight—that is, when they permit themselves to be seen, instead of blinding their foes with darkness. The ankous themselves never speak—the only words they can utter are those whispered telepathically into the victim's ear an instant before death, and those words are spoken in the voice of the one who sent the killer.

A typical ankou measures approximately 10 feet tall, and about 8 feet across its ebon wings. Exceedingly light, the dark fey seem to be made of little more than shadows and gossamer, weighing less than 100 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Servants of the Eldest, ankous exist to mete out the displeasure of their masters. The wounds caused by its wings and tail are especially agonizing, and victims have described little shards of crystalline moonlight cutting their way through muscle and bone underneath the skin. The blood-drenched skin of the victim of an ankou occasionally seems to shimmer or sparkle as if from residual moonlight in the corpse. Regardless of whether or not such dreadful

whimsy is true, the wounds dealt by an ankou's tail and wings prove particularly vicious, leaving some victims to slowly bleed out from what appears to be nothing more than a mere scratch.

The fey's most horrific power, though, is its ability to conjure lesser shadows of itself. The assassin can create duplicates to aid in its attack. A single ankou can block all the exits from a chamber, ripping a victim to shreds with a flurry of slashes from the same claw. These conjured fey are born of shadow and wrath, and are of one mind with the ankou that created them. These lesser copies vanish when the true ankou is killed or is otherwise unable to maintain its focus. Only powerful Eldest can block an ankou's generation of duplicates.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Ankous have no true culture of their own. When not hunting a foe, an ankou slumbers in a cocoon of darkness amid the most shadowy reaches of the First World. They are rarely called to service by their fey masters, as the mere threat of an ankou is often enough to terrify even the most fearless enemy. When loosed upon an especially hated foe, one of these assassins might be told to kill the victim many times over—murdering its target, waiting for its connection to the First World to reform it, and then killing it again.

Amid the courts of the Eldest, ankous typically lurk as present but needless threats—like weapons hung in a royal hall. While the Eldest themselves prove more than capable of dispatching those who displease them, the flocks of ebony-winged fey nonetheless prove disturbing. What most non-fey typically have difficulty understanding is the lack of malice inherent in assassinations meted out by ankous. On the First World, such acts shock and annoy, but they don't equate to the ultimate punishment that death presents to mortals of the Material Plane. Thus, these grim tormenters of the First World take on new aspects of terror when encountered by non-natives of that realm.

In the unlikely event that an ankou's master is permanently killed, the murderous fey wanders as it will. Moody and quick to take offense—whether from the pestering of other inquisitive fey or from trespassers into lands it deems its own—a free ankou proves even more murderous than one employed as an assassin, though far less concerned with repeated murders. Typically they prefer to be left in silent solitude, brooding amid ancient ruins, crumbling castles of forgotten fey lords, or other morbid demesnes. They take particular umbrage at those who bring light or, even worse, song into their dour realms, often resorting to brief tortures before slaying such interlopers. Unfortunately for ankous,

daredevil fey pranksters who discover their lairs often make a grim game of invading and taunting these murderous beings, eventually forcing the assassins to relocate to even more unreachable depths of the First World.

Numerous ankous once served the Eldest known as Count Ranalc, whose disappearance has long been a matter of debate, wonder, and lurking fear among his immortal brethren and other strange lords of the First World. Devoted to his service and in the fulfillment of some unknowable past order, the ankous of his court have sought their master, slaying many they believe have had some hand in his disappearance or knowledge of his whereabouts. In the past decades, these murderous fey have come to investigate Golarion, believing that world bears some mark of their lost lord's passage. Whether or not this is true, and whether Golarion now serves as a hiding place for the lost Eldest or merely a step on a greater path, none the ankous have encountered can say—though that hasn't prevent the deadly fey

from ending those who arouse their suspicions.



DWEOMERCAT

Its coat shining vividly, this majestic tiger looks exotic and otherworldly. It gazes with piercing yellow eyes and stands calmly, as though fearless.

DWEOMERCAT CUB

CR 2



XP 600

CN Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 16 (3d10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

DR 5/magic; **SR** 14

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d2–1), bite +7 (1d3–1)

Special Attacks dweomer leap, pounce, rake (2 claws +6, 1d2–1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

Constant—*detect magic*

1/week—*dimension door* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13 (17 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +3, Knowledge (arcana) +0, Perception +5,

Stealth +4; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb

Languages Common, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary or ambush (1–3 dweomercats and 2–12 dweomercat cubs)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dweomer Leap (Su) When a dweomercat is targeted by a spell or within the area of effect of a spell, it can, as a swift action, choose to teleport to a square adjacent to the spell's caster, effectively appearing mid-leap and aimed toward the caster. This ability takes effect regardless of whether or not the spell overcomes the dweomercat's spell resistance. If it chooses, the dweomercat can immediately make a full attack against the spell's caster as though pouncing. Using this ability does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If there is no safe space adjacent to the caster—or if the dweomercat chooses—the dweomercat can forgo using this ability.

DWEOMERCAT

CR 7



XP 3,200

CN Medium magical beast

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +6

DR 5/magic; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +16 (1d4+2), bite +16 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks dweomer leap, pounce, rake (2 claws +11, 1d4+2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*lesser globe of invulnerability*, *dispel magic*

3/day—*dimension door* (self only), *antimagic field*

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 23, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Perception +16,

Stealth +19; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ spell link

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest (First World)

Organization solitary, hunt (2–3), ambush (1–3 dweomercats and 2–12 dweomercat cubs)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spell Link (Su) When a dweomercat is targeted by a spell or within the area of effect of a spell, it can, as a swift action, forgo its dweomer leap ability to gain an effect related to the school of the spell targeting it. This effect activates before the dweomercat is affected by the spell targeting it and regardless of whether or not the spell overcomes its spell resistance. Each power lasts for 1 minute per level of the spell targeting the dweomercat, until the dweomercat uses this ability again, or until the dweomercat chooses to dismiss the effect as a free action, whichever duration is shortest. This ability does not prevent the spell affecting the dweomercat from taking effect; it only provides an additional benefit.

Abjuration: Gains acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic resistance equal to 2 per spell level.

Conjuration: Gains a deflection bonus to AC equal to +1 for every 5 levels of the spell.

Divination: Gains the effects of *detect chaos, evil, good, or law*.

Enchantment: Grants the effects of the spell *heroism*.

Evocation: Inflicts an amount of damage equal to the spell's level upon the spell's caster.

Illusion: Grants the effects of *invisibility*. This effect ends as per the spell.

Necromancy: Gains the effects of *false life*, as if cast by the opposing spell's caster.

Transmutation: Gains an enhancement bonus on its natural weapons equal to +1 for every 5 levels of the spell.

Powerful and regal, dweomercats stalk the First World, preying upon lesser creatures, but more voraciously hunting new and ever stranger sources of magic. Beings as much composed of sculpted arcane eddies as of flesh and blood, these capricious felines flourish along the intangible ley lines of their home realm, drinking in its weird powers as a plant thrives on light. Yet even more potent than their thirst for magic and the euphoria they draw from being in proximity to the reshaping of reality is dweomercats' racial curiosity, which leads them endlessly across the First World—and often beyond.

The average adult dweomercat is about 4 feet tall and 7 feet long, weighing over 250 pounds, while their cubs are approximately 1 foot tall and weigh no more than 15 pounds.

ECOLOGY

A newly born dweomercat cub is connected to its homeland by only a thin tether of fey magic, and can only tap into its true potential during the instant a spell is cast upon it. The burst of magical energy brought forth by a freshly cast spell momentarily intensifies the bond between the First World and the dweomercat. This link manifests itself clumsily as a sort of sudden teleportation that heaves the fey cat through space and time toward the source of the spell, fueled by the magnetic reaction between the dweomercat and the magic's origin.

A dweomercat grows not by the passage of time, but through direct exposure to fey magic. Thus, a dweomercat cub on the Material Plane is stunted developmentally. Though it ages and gains experience and practical wisdom anywhere, only by spending several lifetimes on the First World can the cub reach adulthood. Once it has reached this stage, however, a fully grown dweomercat may freely travel between its native land and the Material Plane without adverse effects.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

In the First World, dweomercats travel in packs while hunting. Beyond this predatory advantage, however, they have little use for organized society, as the ever-shifting nature of their homeland impedes it anyway.

Dweomercats that are born on or come to be stranded on the Material Plane are often forced to live on their own. Cut off from the direct magical eddies of the First World, dweomercat cubs prove unable to grow into adults. While they might become slightly stronger and more learned, they never reach the size and prowess of those

constantly subjected to the magic of their homeland. Were a dweomercat cub to return to the First World, it would eventually grow into a normal dweomercat, but only over the course of numerous humanoid lifespans.

Those dweomercats marooned on the Material Plane seek out areas of great age, changeability, and magical potency—lands most like the First World. Sometimes this means not a specific place, but rather a period spent journeying with a mortal spellcaster. While an adult dweomercat would scoff at the idea of following a humanoid's orders, adolescents see the benefit of journeying alongside an intelligent creature native to the alien world. Should a dweomercat cub find a magic-user reckless or whimsical enough to keep its attention, it might join the caster as a familiar, gaining a measure of constant magical exposure from the intangible connection inherent in such a mystical relationship.

DWEOMERCAT CUBS AS FAMILIARS

Attracted to flashy displays of magic and the strange powers inherent in a bond between a magic-user and her familiar, a dweomercat cub that's wandered from the First World might find its taste for magic and adventure satisfied in the service of a particularly whimsical or ostentatious arcane spellcaster. A spellcaster with the Improved Familiar feat can acquire a chaotic neutral dweomercat cub at 7th level or higher. Should the spellcaster settle into a life of research and predictability for a span of months, the dweomercat cub familiar might take to wandering off and, eventually, might not return—deliberately severing the master-familiar bond and freeing the spellcaster to summon a new familiar.



GRODAIR

A monstrous fish of earthy hues wriggles clumsily, its scales glistening with droplets of moisture. It moves by dragging itself along on its fins. Several tentacles sprout from its belly, which looks like a bulbous sac of liquid. Every few moments, it excretes water from these tentacles, then flounders through the shallow pools it creates.

GRODAIR

CR 5



XP 1,600

CN Medium magical beast (aquatic, extraplanar)

Init +3; Senses Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (–1 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d8+4), tail slap +6 (1d6+2 plus trip)

Ranged water blast +6 (1d8 plus push)

Special Attacks death flood, push (water blast, 5 feet)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

1/day—control water

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15

Base Atk +7; CMB +11; CMD 20 (24 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Point-Blank Shot

Skills Knowledge (nature) +8, Survival +8, Swim +22

Languages Aquan, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, muddy field

ECOLOGY

Environment any aquatic or coastal (First World)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Death Flood (Su) There is a 90% chance that when a grodair is killed, the extradimensional sac of water within it explodes. All creatures within 15 feet of the fish are blasted by highly pressurized water inflicting 5d6 damage (Reflex DC 17 for half damage). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Muddy Field (Su) As a standard action, a grodair can gush standing water into the area surrounding it. Upon doing so, the land within 15 feet of the grodair is treated as a shallow bog (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 427). This water remains as long as the grodair is within 15 feet and wishes to maintain the water. The bog instantly disperses as soon as the grodair is killed or moves out of the area.

In the constantly shifting landscape of the First World, fresh water can be a sparse commodity. Adding to this confusion is the grodair, a bloated aquatic creature that

possesses the unique power to carry its own massive stores of water with it.

The bulbous sac on the grodair's spine is an extradimensional space that can contain a whole lake or river. Grodairs can suck up water in one place and expel it in another. The creatures use this power to travel the First World—though they are amphibious and can easily survive outside of water indefinitely, they much prefer the water and thus soak the lands through which they travel. By carrying their own lakes with them, grodairs are never far from home.

Typical grodairs can rise up on their tentacle legs to a height of nearly 6 feet, though they rarely do so. Most measure about 7 feet long and weigh about 400 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Grodairs are solitary nomads, wandering across the First World seemingly at random. They meander through glens—suddenly submerged by their eerie control over water—and recently drowned vales, poking curiously at the remains. Grodairs are intelligent, but extremely absentminded and careless. They have memories little better than actual fish, and for the most part have difficulty remembering things they were told 5 minutes ago—though some facts seem to crystallize within their memories, allowing them to recall events of the distant past with perfect clarity.

Grodairs are picky eaters, nibbling on the choicest of flotsam. A grodair that raises waters to drown a faerie queen's castle might then swim in and nibble on a few pieces of cake and frosted grapes; one that has just drowned an orchard might grab a few apples before moving on. They have a similar approach to treasure. Having no need for magical items or artifacts and lacking any conception of their actual purpose, an absentminded grodair often consumes any shiny baubles it comes across, mistaking the loot for brightly colored food.

The magical organ holding whole lakes worth of water within a grodair has befuddled many sages. It appears to be an extradimensional space accessed through the grodair's mouth. The grodair can either belch forth highly pressurized blasts of water or gradually drool out enough water to swamp its surroundings. The sac often contains more than water, as the aqueous creature's vacuum sucks up dirt, leaves, algae, and even small fish—fueling curiosity as to the waters' origins.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Grodairs are solitary creatures, meeting others of their kind only rarely. When their paths—or rather, their streams—cross, a pair of grodairs may mate and produce a dozen or so small fry. After the eggs hatch, they are the responsibility of the male grodair to raise and teach

for 3 years (assuming, of course, he remembers his responsibility). Once the small grodairs reach the age of 3, they are fired out of their sire's tentacles on a high-pressure jet of water in the direction of the nearest large lake or ocean.

Grodairs are driven to explore, but they cannot say why—if there ever was a reason for their constant watery peregrinations, they forgot it long ago. One bizarre theory is that grodairs were an early attempt by the gods to fix the broken nature of the First World by regulating the flow of the water across the ever-changing landscape. If this theory is true, then there should be other creatures out there that have similar powers to move mountains or reshape the world. Another tale claims that grodairs are the servants of a buried god who was imprisoned under the ocean when the other deities abandoned the First World, and that they search for his drowned tomb to free him, while a third theory insists that the extradimensional space in the sac requires constant renewal, and that most of a grodair's brain is taken up with casting and recasting the same spell over and over. Sensible sages, though, just point to the grodairs as another example of the ill-considered and haphazard nature of reality in the First World.

The forgetful grodairs rarely mean to cause deliberate harm, but are often so distracted they forget that other creatures cannot breathe underwater. A grodair might drown a village, then swim into the ruins wondering why everyone is taking a nap. When their errors are pointed out to them, grodairs become immensely apologetic, offering to do whatever they can to make amends. "Would you like a nice ornamental pond," they ask, "or perhaps a waterwheel?" In any event, the creatures soon lose interest and swim off in search of something more interesting that they cannot name.

In the past, some vengeful souls have tried hunting grodairs, but when cornered they are surprisingly doughty foes, using blasts of high-pressure water to send enemies flying and soaking the ground around them to make it harder for enemies to attack them in melee. If a foe is knocked prone, a grodair may train its water spray on him, keeping him pinned underwater until he drowns or until the fish forgets he is there. Grodairs also have a surprisingly powerful tail swipe and viciously sharp teeth. When the creatures are slain, their water sacs rupture, letting all of its contents loose in a tremendous flood. Overeager attackers can release a deluge on their own heads; experienced hunters stalk grodairs with small canoes in tow, waiting until the creatures' sacs are nearly empty before attacking. Alternatively, many predators simply attack from above.




TREASURE

Most grodairs explode in a blast of murky water and oversized fish guts when slain. Some, however, do not. Only grodairs that meet death with their fragile internal extraplanar space intact don't erupt in this fashion. While these fish creatures' delicate organs often erupt as the result of even the gentlest killing, some anomalous organs remain viable after its body's death—approximately one in 10. These satchel-sized sacs continue to function for a period of 2d6 hours as a *decanter of endless water*, but one that can only produce a "stream" or "fountain" effect. This organ can only be extracted by making a DC 22 Heal or Profession (fisherman) check. Failing this check by 5 or more causes the organ to burst as per the grodair's death flood ability. A grodair's magical innards have no gp value, their size and sliminess outweighing any temporary remarkability.



SKRIK NETTLE

A delicate-looking creature floats silently in midair. Resembling a large jellyfish, it has a fringe of bird's feathers around its quivering central mass and long tentacles trailing from its center, with each tentacle ending in a snapping beak. It sings to itself as it flies, each beak making a different note in an eerie harmony.

SKRIK NETTLE	CR 6	  
XP 2,400		
N Large magical beast (extraplanar)		
Init +7; Senses blindsight 30 ft.; Perception +12		
DEFENSE		
AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)		
hp 68 (8d10+24)		
Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +3		
OFFENSE		
Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)		
Melee 3 bites +11 (1d6+4 plus poison)		
Space 10 ft.; Reach 15 ft.		
Special Attacks poison		
STATISTICS		
Str 18, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8		
Base Atk +8; CMB +13; CMD 26 (30 vs. trip)		
Feats Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes		
Skills Fly +9, Perception +12, Stealth +0		
SQ spill poison		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any tropical (First World)		
Organization solitary or shoal (6–24)		
Treasure none		

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Su) *Levitation poison:* Bite or contact—injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 5 rounds; *effect* 1 Dexterity damage + *levitate* (victim rises 10 feet as per the spell per failed save); *cure* 2 consecutive saves. Skrik nettle poison can be cured by either *remove poison* or *dispel magic*, as if it were caster level 8th. The effect's CL equals the skrik nettle's Hit Dice. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spill Poison (Su) Anytime a skrik nettle is damaged by a slashing or piercing melee weapon, it splashes its poison on the opponent who damaged it. That opponent must save or be affected by the skrik nettle's poison. Weapons with reach allow their wielders to avoid this effect.

Shoals of skrik nettles float through the skies of the First World. They sail like boats, driven before the wind and using their feathers to tack and turn. They sing as they fly, jabbering and chirping to each other in complex harmonies. The average skrik nettle shoal consists of three dozen or more of the majestic creatures, but these flocks are often split up during the roaring storms so common to the First World. Lone skrik nettles may be

encountered in smaller numbers, confused and trying to find their way back to their kin.

Skrik nettles range in size from a few inches across (for a newly spawned hatchling) to the size of gigantic, scintillating clouds. Most, however, are no more than 8 or 9 feet across.

ECOLOGY

Skrik nettles are primarily scavengers, although they will attack suitable prey when hungry. Their method of attack is curious. The sharp beaks of a skrik nettle drip with a magical poison that is injected when the creature bites a foe. The victim of the poison feels slightly nauseous and light-headed at first—and then begins to float off the ground.

As long as the poison pumps through the veins of the skrik nettle's victim, the victim keeps floating up into the sky. The victim has no control over this magical levitation—unless she has some other method of controlling her flight, such as wings or magic, or she can grab a convenient tree branch, she will keep ascending until the poison wears off and gravity takes hold once more. The skrik nettles usually float up alongside their prey, keeping it floating by injecting more poison as soon as it starts to drop. Especially dangerous or hard-shelled prey might be poisoned, allowed to rise, and then dropped repeatedly from a height until dead.

The poison's effects seem to be rooted in magic, rather than venom, and dispelling the ailment has proven to be just as effective as bleeding a victim. Before aiding a victim, however, one must take caution to tie said creature down securely, as there are few deaths more ironic than being cured of a skrik nettle's poison only to instantly plunge to earth from a great height. Oddly, in addition to traditional remedies, killing a skrik nettle also instantly cancels the effects of its poison.

Once every year, skrik nettles return to their shoal's spawning grounds to reproduce. The jellyfish-like creatures form hard, rugged eggs inside their bodies, then float gently down to the spawning ground—usually a jungle clearing or warm swamp—and dig nests with their tentacles. Skrik nettles are hermaphrodites, so each one lays its eggs and then fertilizes those of its neighbor (this cross-breeding strengthens future generations of skrik nettles). The average skrik nettle lays three or four eggs, whose size ranges from that of a clenched fist to that of a giant's skull.

These eggs incubate in the warm earth for several days, during which time the skrik nettles patrol above the spawning ground, attacking anyone who might disturb the eggs. When ready to hatch, the eggs explode out of the ground and shoot into the sky, bursting into a swarm of newborn skrik nettles. Unwary travelers who slip past the

patrolling skrik nettles can trigger a premature hatching if they walk over the spawning ground; such travelers may be pummeled by flying, rock-hard egg shards, or even carried into the sky by a particularly large hatchling.

Hatchling skrik nettles are ravenously hungry when born. To provide for the needs of their young, skrik nettle shoals assemble caches of poisoned meat and float them over the spawning ground. A wary explorer can spot a spawning ground from afar if she notices rotting corpses hanging overhead. Skrik nettle eggs can often be sold to the fey. Some train young skrik nettles as songbirds, teaching all six beaks to sing in harmony. Others wrap skrik nettle eggs in cloth filled with golden dust or brightly colored pollen; when an egg prepared in such a manner flies into the sky and explodes upon hatching, the cloth's contents scatter across the sky like a beautiful firework. Such entertainments are popular at parties—though the ensuing swarm of carnivorous jellyfish swooping down on the guests is considered less enchanting.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Skrik nettles dwell amid the clouds, descending only to feed and procreate. They use their songs to keep the shoal together, flying toward the chirping music of their kin. Bards are often able to lure skrik nettles down to them with their enchanting melodies, but once within range, the poisonous creatures usually trade this performance for a live meal.

Skrik nettles are not especially intelligent predators—thus, they eat the bounty of the land, or, if particularly lucky, snatch a dead or weak creature from the ground. While skittish, they retaliate when attacked, regarding the assault as a chance to feed. Settlements in regions where skrik nettle migrations are common usually keep a few sacrificial animals handy to lure the skrik nettles away during a hunt. The one exception is where the skrik nettle's spawning grounds are involved—during the time before a hatching, the skrik nettle shoal patrols the area around the spawning grounds and viciously attacks any trespassers. Skrik nettles are also a hazard to flyers. They lurk in low-hanging clouds, letting their tendrils trail down out of the mist. An unwary bird or flying creature can be stung, grabbed, and whisked off to be eaten in a matter of seconds. When scavenging, they fly at a low level above the landscape, letting their tendrils play over the ground as they search for carrion.

Skrik nettles themselves have few natural predators. They are reputed to taste so light and airy that eating one is like trying to eat a soap

bubble, albeit a soap bubble with a half-dozen stinging beaks. Skrik nettles perceive the world by sensing air currents and shifting vibrations through their sensitive tentacles; during storms or strong winds, they secure themselves in the forks of large trees and wait out the harsh weather.

Some fey hunt the skrik nettle shoals in little flying boats for sport, bringing them down with weighted nets or leaden harpoons. A few fey even try riding skrik nettles, “docking” them to make them harmless by clamping their beaks shut and then hanging a saddle from the tentacles, but the creatures are too weak to make good steeds. It is also the fashion in some regions for noble faerie-maidens to be accompanied by a small flock of “docked” skrik nettles, each one bearing a fan, mirror, or basket of fruit in its tentacles. Others capture skrik nettles and train them to speak—the skrik nettles are not intelligent, but they can be taught to imitate the speech of the First World, much like parrots can learn to imitate human tongues. A trained skrik nettle can even hold conversations with itself, with each of its half-dozen tentacles imitating a different voice.



ZOMOK

Resembling an enormous lizard composed entirely of organic plant matter, this beast shakes loose soil from its earthy wings and exhales dirt particles with every breath.

ZOMOK

CR 16



XP 76,800

N Gargantuan plant (extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +27

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 6, flat-footed 33 (+27 natural, -4 size)

hp 297 (18d8+216)

Fort +23, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Immune sonic, plant traits

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 claws +21 (2d6+12), bite +21 (2d8+12), 2 wings +16 (2d6+6), tail slap +16 (2d8+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with tail)

Special Attacks entombing breath (60-ft. cone, 18d6 bludgeoning plus entangled, Reflex DC 31), swallow whole (6d6 bludgeoning damage, AC 23, 29 hp), trample (2d8+18, DC 31)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +19)

Constant—*pass without trace*

At will—*command plants* (DC 22), *plant growth*, *quench* (DC 21)

3/day—*entangle* (DC 19), *liveoak*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of thorns*

1/day—*shambler*

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 11, **Con** 34, **Int** 16, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +29; **CMD** 39 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Snatch

Skills Fly +8, Knowledge (nature) +21, Perception +27, Stealth +9, Survival +24

Languages Common, Sylvan, Terran

SQ tree step

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest (First World)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Entombing Breath (Su) A zomok can use its breath weapon once every 1d4+1 rounds, blasting forth a 60-foot cone of flying dirt, bark, stones, and moss. This rain of earth and pulped vegetation deals 18d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex save DC 31 for half). Those creatures that fail their Reflex saves and are also in contact with the ground

are entangled by the debris, which quickly takes root. The creature is entangled for 1d6 rounds or until it breaks free of the clinging vegetation with a DC 31 Strength or Escape Artist check. The check and save DCs are Constitution-based.

Creatures slain by a zomok's breath weapon instantly decompose, and their bodies are utterly destroyed. This makes resurrecting such creatures difficult, but not impossible, requiring a *true resurrection* or greater spell, or a *resurrection* or similar spell cast directly on the spot where the creature died. Dirt or similar debris from the spot do not count as remains for the purpose of *resurrection*.

Tree Step (Su) As a standard action, a zomok in a forest area may teleport up to 120 feet by moving the essence of its being to another forested area. The zomok is cured of 60 points of damage when it does this. It may use its tree stride power every 1d6+1 rounds but no more than three times per day. If the zomok has swallowed a foe, the foe is left behind when the creature teleports.

The First World's seasons are as random as any other aspect of that strange realm, with summers lasting for years or winters passing in an afternoon. Many of the forests of that world, some of them surprisingly similar to those on Golarion, have difficulty coping with the unpredictable climate. These forests often survive only because they're inhabited by zomoks: plant-dragons that prowl the woodlands, defending them from the often destructive forces of that realm, and healing and regrowing vegetation as needed. Through the ages, some of these creatures have even traveled from the First World to inhabit the wilds of other realities, protecting the nature of such lands from disasters and axe blades just as tenaciously as they would in their homeland.

No two zomoks look alike, and rarely does one creature look the same for long; parts of their bodies are constantly growing, dying off, and regenerating from nearby plants in an endless cycle. Most rise to a height of 18 feet and stretch at least 35 feet long, with wingspans of more than 80 feet and weights of 30 tons.

ECOLOGY

A zomok is more than just a single creature, being closer to a collective spirit of the woodlands. One might step into one stand of trees and reform a new body elsewhere in the forest, the same creature but with a different body. The shape of a zomok is different each time it arises. On one occasion, it might pick a sturdy larch as its right foreleg and turn a weeping willow into its head; on another, it could have a body of oak and make its teeth from brambles and nettles. The overall shape is always draconic, but its components change, even from moment to moment. In truth, it is more a dragon-shaped wave moving through the forest—the trees bend momentarily

into the dragon's body and limbs, but the wave passes on, leaving them intact in its wake.

Zomoks do not need to eat and have no real digestive system. Any creatures they happen to devour whole are often found hanging in bloody gobbets from the topmost branches of random trees, though the hungry plants of the realm often consume the remains before they are ever found.

In combat, zomoks prefer to keep moving, using their tree stride ability to ensure that no one stand of trees takes the brunt of the injuries. To protect their habitat, zomoks breathe a raging torrent of thorns, twigs, chunks of bark, and clouds of moss that envelops those in its path, encasing them in a thick shroud of organic matter. Those slain by the breath weapon are instantly decomposed into rich loam; even those who survive often find mold growing on their skin or small plants sprouting from their hair or ears, with each tendril trying to root the creature into the earth.

Zomoks can also control the terrain, turning the land into a swamp or conjuring defensive walls. When need be, they can quench flames at will—a useful talent for a creature so vulnerable to fire. When facing powerful foes, zomoks create mighty walls of briar and moves through the wood to divide its enemies and attack them individually. Zomoks can also call up formidable guardians of mold and vines using magic, and it is rare for them to be without such defending monsters. Some zomoks even consume their shambling minions, holding them in their bodies so any creatures the dragon-plants swallow are assaulted inside of them as well as out.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Though zomoks do not inhabit every forest in the First World, they are far from uncommon, and they offer the benefit of protecting nature and its denizens wherever they may go.

The finicky zomok's temperament varies with the season. In spring, they are often playful and mercurial, playing pranks on intruders or changing forest paths to confuse travelers. In summer, zomoks find their strength and majesty and become kings of the woodland, attending courts with dryads, satyrs, and stranger folk of the green. In autumn, zomoks become weird mystics, spouting prophecies and cryptic mutterings about the fate of the forest.

Only the most foolish would dare approach a zomok in winter, when starvation and the chill of the frost make them vicious and cruel. A zomok wearing its winter coat of rime-covered branches and gray moss can be placated with suitable sacrifices, such as broken axe-heads or nubile virgins with green thumbs.

Zomoks have a slightly bemused attitude toward other creatures dwelling in their woods, considering them pets at best and pesky parasites at worst. In any event, the mobile nature of a zomok's woodland territory means that there are few long-term residents within the dragon's demesne,

although some zomoks have forged extended alliances with dryads, bringing the dryads' trees along each time they move. Like most woodland fey, they despise those who harm trees—woe betide any who set axe or fire to wood in the presence of a zomok. Despite this, threatening the forest is often the best way to deal with such a monster. Actually killing a zomok is difficult because of its ability to heal itself through tree striding, so a better tactic is to blast the surrounding woods with fireballs or blights until the plant-dragon agrees to negotiate.

Unlike true dragons, zomoks have little interest in treasure, but a few coins or other items may sometimes be found lodged in the branches and roots of the creatures' innards.





Amiri

FEMALE HUMAN

DEITY Gorum
HOMELAND Mammoth Lords

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Barbarian 15
ALIGNMENT Chaotic Neutral
INITIATIVE +3
SPEED 40 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 21
DEXTERITY 16
CONSTITUTION 16
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 12
CHARISMA 8

DEFENSE

HP 163
AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +3 natural)
Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +11
Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +5; DR 3/—

SKILLS

Acrobatics +20, Climb +22, Intimidate +17, Perception +19, Survival +19

FEATS

Critical Focus, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Extra Rage, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Power Attack, Strike Back, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

OFFENSE

Melee +4 *Large icy burst bastard sword* +23/+18/+13 (2d8+11 plus 1d6 cold/17–20)
Ranged +2 *anarchic composite longbow* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+5/x3)
Base Atk +15; CMB +20 (+22 bull rush); CMD 36 (38 vs. bull rush)
Special Abilities damage reduction 3/–, fast movement, greater rage 41 rds/day, indomitable will, rage powers (clear mind, knockback, mighty swing, powerful blow +4, renewed vigor, scent, strength surge)

Combat Gear *potions of blink* (2), *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *potions of displacement* (2), *potions of haste* (2); **Gear** +4 *moderate fortification chain shirt*, +4 *Large icy burst bastard sword*, +2 *anarchic composite longbow* (+5 Str) with 20 arrows, javelins (2), spiked gauntlet, throwing axe, *amulet of nat. armor* +3, *belt of physical perfection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +5, *handy haversack*, *ring of prot.* +3, 849 gp

Amiri never quite fit into the expected gender roles of her tribe, and when the tribe attempted to send her on a suicide mission, she returned with an enormous trophy—a frost giant's sword. She has since abandoned her people, and has come to value her oversized sword (even though she can only truly wield it properly when her blood rage takes her). She never speaks of the circumstances that forced her to flee her homeland. Some things are better left unsaid.



Harsk

MALE DWARF

DEITY Torag
HOMELAND Druma

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Ranger 15
ALIGNMENT Lawful Neutral
INITIATIVE +6
SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 14
DEXTERITY 23
CONSTITUTION 16
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 14
CHARISMA 6

DEFENSE

HP 132
AC 30, touch 19, flat-footed 24 (+9 armor, +3 deflection, +6 Dex, +2 natural)
Fort +12, Ref +15, Will +9; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Defensive Abilities evasion

SKILLS

Handle Animal +1, Heal +20, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Perception +20, Stealth +24, Survival +20

FEATS

Deadly Aim, Diehard, Endurance, Far Shot, Improved Critical (heavy crossbow), Improved Precise Shot, Iron Will, Pinpoint Targeting, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (heavy crossbow), Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow)

OFFENSE

Melee +3 *greataxe* +20/+15/+10 (1d12+6/x3)
Ranged +4 *flaming burst heavy crossbow* +26/+19/+16 (1d10+4 plus 1d6 fire/17–20)
Base Atk +15; CMB +17; CMD 33 (37 vs. bull rush and trip)
Special Abilities camouflage, favored enemy (humanoid [giant] +6, fey +4, humanoid [human] +2, humanoid [monstrous humanoid] +4), favored terrain (mountains +6, forest +2, cold +2), hunter's bond (companions), quarry, swift tracker, track +5, wild empathy +8, woodland stride
Spells Prepared (CL 12th, concentration +14)
4th—*tree stride*
3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *neutralize poison*
2nd—*p. from energy*, *spike growth*, *wind wall*
1st—*delay poison*, *entangle* (DC 13), *resist energy* (2)

Combat Gear *potions of meld into stone* (2), *antitoxin* (2), *smokesticks* (2), *tanglefoot bags* (2), *thunderstones* (2); **Other Gear** +3 *mithral breastplate of invulnerability*, +3 *greataxe*, +4 *flaming burst heavy crossbow* with 30 bolts and +1 *brilliant energy bolts* (15), *masterwork silver dagger*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of incredible dexterity* +6, *cape of the mountebank*, *handy haversack*, *pearl of power* (1st level), *ring of protection* +3, rations (4), signal whistle, teapot, *winged boots*, 520 gp

Harsk is, in many ways, not your standard dwarf. Much of his anger stems from the slaughter of his brother's warband, slain to a man by giants. He prefers strong tea over alcohol (to keep his senses sharp), the wildlands of the surface world (where giants can be found), and the crossbow over the axe (which allows him to start fights faster).



Lini

FEMALE GNOME

DEITY Green Faith
HOMELAND Linnorm Kings

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Druid 15
ALIGNMENT Neutral
INITIATIVE +5
SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 6
DEXTERITY 12
CONSTITUTION 16
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 24
CHARISMA 15

DEFENSE

HP 116
AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +4 deflection, +1 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)
Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +16; +2 vs. illusion; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects
Senses low-light vision
Immune poison

SKILLS

Handle Animal +20, Heal +20, Knowledge (nature) +18, Perception +27, Ride +14, Spellcraft +13

FEATS

Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Natural Spell, Spell Focus (conjunction), Trample

OFFENSE

Melee +3 sickle +13/+8/+3 (1d4+1)
Ranged +2 sling +15 (1d3)
Base Atk +11; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23
Special Abilities a thousand faces, gnome spell-like abilities, nature bond (small cat named Droogami), nature sense, timeless body, trackless step, wild empathy +17, wild shape 6/day, woodland stride
Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +22)
8th—*earthquake*
7th—*fire storm* (DC 24), *wind walk*
6th—*move earth*, *mass bull's strength*, *w. of stone*
5th—*cure critical wounds*, *stoneskin*, *w. of thorns* (2)
4th—*air walk*, *d. magic*, *flame strike* (2, DC 21)
3rd—*neutralize poison* (2), *remove disease* (2)
2nd—*bull's strength*, *barkskin*, *flaming sphere* (DC 18), *resist energy*, *spider climb*
1st—*cure lt. wounds* (3), *entangle* (2; DC 17)
0—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *stabilize*

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *scrolls of call lightning storm* (2), *wand of contagion* (CL 7th, 18 charges), *wand of cure critical wounds* (20 charges); **Other Gear** +4 wild leather armor, +3 sickle, +2 sling with 20 bullets, *druid's vestment*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +6, *portable hole*, *ring of protection* +4, *wings of flying*, belt pouch, collection of de-barked sticks, mistletoe, spell component pouch, sunrods (2), 480 gp

Lini has always possessed a certain affinity with creatures of the woodlands. Since her departure from her home, Lini has collected dozens of sticks—one from each wood she visits. To Lini, these sticks are a roadmap of her experiences, each holding a wealth of memories for the gnome druid.



Sajan

MALE HUMAN

DEITY Irori
HOMELAND Vudra

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Monk 15
ALIGNMENT Lawful Neutral
INITIATIVE +3
SPEED 80 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 17
DEXTERITY 16
CONSTITUTION 14
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 12
CHARISMA 8

DEFENSE

HP 116
AC 28, touch 21, flat-footed 24 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 monk, +1 Wis)
Fort +16, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15; +2 vs. enchantment
Defensive Abilities improved evasion;
Immune disease, poison; **SR** 25

SKILLS

Acrobatics +21 (+56 jump), Climb +21, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +21

FEATS

Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (temple sword), Gorgon's Fist, Greater Grapple, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Stance, Medusa's Wrath, Mobility, Scorpion Style, Snatch Arrow, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Wind Stance

OFFENSE

Melee unarmed strike +16/+11/+6 (2d6+5 plus 1d6 electricity) or
flurry of blows +18/+18/+13/+13/+8/+8 (2d6+5 plus 1d6 electricity) or
+4 temple sword +18/+13/+8 (1d8+8/19–20)
Base Atk +11; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 35 (39 vs. grapple)
Special Abilities abundant step, diamond body, diamond soul, fast movement, high jump, *ki pool* (8 points, lawful, magic), maneuver training, quivering palm, slow fall 70 ft., stunning fist (15/day, DC 18, fatigued, sickened, staggered), wholeness of body

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *potions of fly*; **Gear** +4 temple sword, *bracers of armor* +7, *cloak of resistance* +5, *monk's robe*, *scabbard of keen edges*, *ring of protection* +3, +2 *shocking burst amulet of mighty fists*, wooden holy symbol, belt pouch, 932 gp

Sajan Gadadvara and his twin sister Sajni were separated when the lord they served was shamed and forced to cede half his army to the victor—among them Sajan's sister. Sajni was taken away from Vudra by her new master, and Sajan abandoned his own responsibilities to follow. He spent years trying in vain to find her, but has not yet given up. He cares not for his home country and continues to seek out any clue that might point him toward his sister.



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A HEROIC CHALLENGE

Source: Aurex Thewsen, abrasive "hero."

Task: Hailing from Pitax, Aurex Thewsen often brags about his dragon-slaying skills. He challenges the leaders of the Stelen Lands to prove their worth by slaying a dragon themselves, in order to prove why they should remain leaders in the River Kingdoms.

Completion: Seek out an infamous true dragon and defeat it in combat. The legendary black wyrm Ithuliak would suffice, if one could find her lair.

Reward: The PCs' fame for becoming dragonslayers increases the kingdom's Economy by +4.



THE PIXIE'S SISTERS

Source: Limm Ticklewing, worried pixie.

Task: Limm Ticklewing is worried for her six "sisters."

A month ago, they were all captured by a "nasty wizard made out of worms." He and a scary witch put Limm's six sisters into a magic cage and gave that cage to a mean troll. Limm escaped, and desperately wants her sisters to be saved.

Completion: Rescue as many of Limm's sisters as you can.

Reward: For each rescued sister, Limm promises a gem worth 5,000 gp.



THE HOUTEN LEGACY

Source: Belinda Houten, proper noblewoman.

Task: Belinda Houten is looking for a legacy; she wants a theater and several monuments built and dedicated to her family name. She happens to possess a book that a strange fortune-teller told her the leaders of the Stelen Lands would some day need, but she won't part with it until she has her buildings.

Completion: Build a theater and four monuments in Belinda's honor (all must be in different cities).

Reward: A mint-condition copy of Zuddiger's Picnic worth 5,000 gp.



A FLYING OWLBEAR

Source: Loris Shadwest, eager taxidermist.

Task: Loris wants to stuff a winged owlbear. While lesser taxidermists might just stick a giant bird's wings onto a normal owlbear, Loris wants his masterpiece to be "real." He's promised a powerful magical item to the first person to deliver to him a real winged owlbear carcass. **IN GOOD CONDITION!**

Completion: Kill a winged owlbear and deliver it to Loris.

Reward: The magic item Loris promises is in fact a crystal ball that's been in his family for years.



A World Gone Mad

With the dangers of the Stolen Lands brought to heel, the PCs rule as lords of that realm. But from an unassuming corner of their kingdom, a centuries-old plot takes shape, turning the land itself into a deadly enemy that threatens to bring their entire nation to ruin. As the boundary between the Stolen Lands and an insane other world begins to break down, it's up to the PCs to save their people from nature gone mad and the emissaries of a reality beyond imagining. But can they retain their kingdom—and their sanity—against the fury of the First World?

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