

PATHFINDER SOCIETY

YEAR OF THE DEMON



CAIRN OF SHADOWS

BY DENNIS BAKER



CAIRN OF SHADOWS

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #5-23

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CAIRN OF SHADOWS

BY DENNIS BAKER



Nearly 10,000 years ago, during the nearly forgotten time scholars call the Age of Darkness, nomadic tribes wandered the land now known as Nidal. These proud people revered and relied on their steeds, and so the other peoples of the time knew them as “horselords.”

In this distant age, these people suffered greatly. After the near-apocalypse of Earthfall, dust and ash choked out the sun, plants withered and died, and herd beasts starved. In desperation the horselord tribes called out to the darkness—for food, for protection, for salvation. The darkness heard their cries, and sensed their desperation, and the Midnight Lord, Zon-Kuthon, answered.

Fearful and despairing, the horselords struck a bargain with the god, promising him their loyalty and service if the dark god preserved their lives. The cost was high, and the tribes of ancient Nidal endured terrible suffering, but under Zon-Kuthon’s baleful gaze they survived.

Yet not all the horselords agreed to this dark pact and under a sunless sky the followers of the old ways warred against the adherents of Zon-Kuthon. Without the Midnight Lord’s protection, though, these rebels had few victories and found fewer allies. Gradually, they were hunted down, captured, or slaughtered. Those dissenters that could be taken alive were not immediately executed, for that mercy was alien to the new Kuthite religion. In their lightless redoubts the new priests of Zon-Kuthon forced horselord chieftains to watch as their steeds were slaughtered, their sacred lands desecrated, and their people tortured until they accepted the Kuthite cause. Only after being forced to witness these fates were the last horselord leaders taken to Barrowmoor.

Even before Earthfall Barrowmoor existed, a rocky land filled with the burial mounds of the horselords’ most honored dead. This ancient people considered it a sacred place, a somber site where the spirits of nature and great ancestors were praised atop the hillocks where their honored dead were interred. After the followers of the old ways were scattered, the worshipers of Zon-Kuthon turned parts of Barrowmoor to their own demented purpose. Powerful spellcasters used the dark crypts of

WHERE ON GOLARION?

Cairn of Shadows takes place in Nidal, a dark and twisted land north of Chelixa and west of Molthune. The nation is run by the mysterious Umbral Court, a collection of cruel, squabbling aristocratic families. Nidal is the one nation on Golarion that openly welcomes the worship of Zon-Kuthon, as a result of a pact made with the Midnight Lord thousands of years ago. In the course of this adventure the PCs spend time in the largely joyless port city of Nisroch and the hills of Barrowmoor in the country’s far north. For more information regarding Nidal, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, available in bookstores and game stores everywhere, and online at paizo.com.



Barrowmoor to anchor gateways to prisons of eternal darkness, extraplanar torture-realms where the foes of Zon-Kuthon might receive his torments forever. These shadow prisons were independent demiplanes, shards of the Shadow Plane meant to serve as cells for prized captives and assure their living torment for centuries. Unholy minor artifacts, medallions called *shadow obelisks*, controlled the gateways from Barrowmoor to the prison demiplanes and allowed their possessors to control aspects of each demiplane.

Dreadful outsiders—often the terrifying masters of torment known as kyttons—were conjured and bound

to each demiplane so they might serve as guardians and skilled tormentors. These guardians were as much prisoners as their wards, though, their magical bindings granting them the unique misery of eternal imprisonment. For centuries, the priests of Zon-Kuthon supplied their kyton jailers with fresh flesh in the form of new captives. Over the ages, though, the clergy's attentions wandered and the shadow prisons in the backwater lands of Barrowmoor were neglected.

Among the shadow prisons of Barrowmoor lies the Cairn of Shadows, a dark realm ruled by the kyton prison master Kazartak. Originally the primary prisoner of this demiplane was the horselord chieftain Telendrak, a name virtually lost to history—but remembered by a small number of the secretive Desnan cult of Nidalese freedom fighters known as the Whispering Song. Unlike most prison masters, after the exact site of the Cairn of Shadows was lost to mortals, Kazartak was clever enough to allow some of his prisoners to escape every few centuries, spreading rumors of prison's location. Thus Kazartak's prison rarely wanted for new guests with whom he could share the excruciating majesty of Zon-Kuthon.

As the ages passed, Kazartak's first and favored captive, the horselord Telendrak, expired. Unwilling to be without someone fulfilling the role of the proud horselord chieftain, the kyton sculpted the flesh and minds of other captives to take Telendrak's place. Thus, through the ages, Kazartak has created and recreated his prized prisoner, assuring the Cairn of Shadows is never without some approximation of its first guest. Since the Age of Darkness scores of "Telendraks" have been tortured and killed, each replaced by another prisoner who was forced to learn as much as possible about the original horselord chieftain.

In recent years, the Onyx Alliance, a coalition of fetchlings, grasping natives of the Plane of Shadow, and their agents on the Material Plane, learned the location of the Cairn of Shadows, as well as details of the *shadow obelisk* that controls that realm. The Alliance has sent a team of humans and fetchlings to recover the *shadow obelisk*, hoping to use the relic to help establish a foothold in Northern Nidal and rebuild its strength following a devastating incident with the Pathfinder Society several years ago. The expedition's leader is a human agent named Lord Maravan, a sadistic spellcaster who has already reached Barrowmoor and begun excavating the entrance to the Cairn of Shadows.

Upon discovering the buried entrance into the shadowy demiplane, Lord Maravan parleyed with Kazartak, accepting some unspeakable pact with the kyton warden to gain custody of the *shadow obelisk* and take over as keeper of the Cairn of Shadows. Kazartak slipped into the shadows and has not been seen since. Now Lord Maravan

seeks to master the *shadow obelisk*, meditating on the foul visions it reveals to him, a depraved puzzle of the mind he's determined to unlock. Once he has, he intends to return to his superiors as the new master of the Cairn of Shadows.

SUMMARY

The Pathfinder Society has discovered the Onyx Alliance is searching for a specific burial mound in Nidal's haunted hills known as Barrowmoor. This tomb, called the Cairn of Shadows, supposedly contains a minor artifact known as the shadow obelisk, which the Alliance hopes to use in their plots to strike back against both the Pathfinder Society and their allies, the Blakros family. The PCs are asked to make their way to Nisroch, Nidal's largest city, to contact an agent of the Whispered Song, a secret group of Desnans who fight against the nation's Zon-Kuthon worshiping rulers. The contact, Golbrier Frosh, is waiting for them at the Broken Cup, a small run-down inn and pub located near the docks of Nisroch. However, a bounty hunter has captured Frosh, and the PCs must rescue him before he can assist them in finding the Cairn of Shadows.

Once rescued, Golbrier explains the Whispered Song has lost many agents searching for the Cairn of Shadows, and fear that whatever lies within it will strengthen the Umbral Court of Nidal, even if it is the Onyx Alliance that claims the prize. Golbrier guides the PCs across Nidal to the location of the Onyx Alliance's excavation into the barrow they believe to be the Cairn of Shadows. When they enter the barrow, the PCs discover it is actually a gateway to a small pocket dimension with traits similar to the Shadow Plane. For the PCs to capture the *shadow obelisk* and stop the Onyx Alliance, they will have to make their way through the prison dimension, fight the extraplanar guards of the cairn, and overcome the leader of the Onyx Alliance expedition, Lord Maravan, who struggles to master the *shadow obelisk* for himself.

The Cairn of Shadows has two levels, the lower Shadow Throne, and the upper Warden's Lab. Searching the lower level reveals few hints about where the Onyx Alliance expedition has gone, exposes a river of shadow essence, and brings the PCs in contact with an ancient torture victim who has been forced to assume the identity of Telendrak, the long-dead original prisoner of the dark demiplane.

When the PCs arrive, Maravan is still exploring the torture hall in the upper level. As soon as Maravan hears PCs combating the zealots at the top of the chain climb, he uses the power of the *shadow obelisk* and *shadow walk* to return to the lower level, and uses the river of shadow essence to complete a ritual that will bind the *shadow obelisk* to him forever. After defeating him, the PCs have little time to escape the masterless demiplane before it collapses.

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins in the city of Korvosa in southeastern Varisia, a land just north of Nidal. There, the PCs meet Venture-Captain Sir Canayven Heidmarch in a run-down shop in Thief Camp, an informal district just outside the city itself. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure started.

“The Blakroses are among the oldest and most influential families in Absalom,” Venture-Captain Canayven Heidmarch begins, wasting no time. “We’ve built a good relationship with them, but in doing so we’ve inherited a few of their enemies, namely a shadowy group of power-mongers who call themselves the Onyx Alliance. The Blakroses recently contacted the Society with intelligence about the Onyx Alliance’s movements, and it seems they’re set on breaking into a particularly ancient barrow mound in northern Nidal. Normally, we wouldn’t worry too much about amateur tomb robbers in such a dangerous area, but apparently they’re prepared to recover a potent relic from inside. They’ve some plot to use whatever this ancient talisman is against that Blakros family—and probably against us as well.

“It’s rare that we get a promising lead in Nidal, and the prospect of earning more good will with the Blakroses is even better. The barrows are thought to contain graves dating all the way back to the Age of Darkness, and the Society has very little information about the mysterious ‘horselord’ ancestors of the modern Nidalese people.

“Luckily we have contacts within the Whispered Song, a group of Desna worshipers who work against the local government in Nidal. Agents of the Whispered Song have been tracking the Onyx Alliance, and believe these grave robbers are close to discovering the entrance of a tomb they call the Cairn of Shadows. If we move quickly, we should be able to get you into Nidal and in touch with the Whispered Song in time to catch up with the Onyx Alliance and prevent them from acquiring this relic. And if you can learn something about the ancient tribal people of Nidal in the process, so much the better.”

Canayven leans in, his expression becoming even more serious. “Nidal is a perilous destination and one where we’re not welcome. I don’t mind some subtle heroics, but I’d refrain from any particularly overt displays of gallantry if you want to come back alive. If you attract too much attention in Nidal, there’s no chance we’ll be able to help if you’re captured, or worse.

“I know a member of the Whispered Song who frequents the Broken Cup, a rather morose tavern in Nisroch. He should know how to lead you to where in the Onyx Alliance is searching for the Cairn of Shadows. He’s also prepared to help you avoid tangling with the local authorities. I can get you on a ship there in an hour, after which I leave you to meet with him with all haste. From there, I’m trusting your resourcefulness. Explore, report, cooperate, and secure whatever treasure the Onyx Alliance is after. The risk is significant, but so is the danger if the Onyx Alliance acquires what they’re looking for.”

GM RESOURCES

This adventure makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player’s Guide* (APG), the *Pathfinder GameMastery Guide*, the *Pathfinder NPC Codex*, the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*. The rules for these books can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/prd.

At this point the GM should take a moment to answer any brief questions the PCs may have. The following are questions the PCs are likely to ask and Sir Canayven’s responses.

Why does the Onyx Alliance wish to harm the Blakros family, or the Pathfinder Society? “The Blakros family used to have an alliance with the Onyx Alliance, which was terminated under circumstances not favorable to the Alliance. The Pathfinder Society assisted the Blakros family in that matter, earning the Onyx Alliance’s enmity.”

What do we do if we attract attention in Nisroch? “I’d recommend running and hiding. Get out of the city quickly. You don’t want to call what passes for law in the place down on your heads.”

Who is your contact in the Whispered Song? “His name is Golbrier Frosh. A skittish sort of man, but given that he works for Desna in the joy-hating nation of Nidal, his bravery cannot be questioned.”

Once the PCs have taken the opportunity to speak with Sir Canayven, they’re free to head on to the ship the venture-captain mentioned, a reliable vessel bound for Nisroch.

Faction Notes: Members of the Cheliox faction receive a note from Paracountess Zarta Dralneen before boarding the ship leaving Korvosa. Provide these players with **Player Handout #1**.

Knowledge (history)

PCs curious about the ages Barrowmoor and the Cairn of Shadows date back to might recollect something from their studies of ancient history.

15+ Before Earthfall Nidal was inhabited by tribal peoples often referred to as horselords. After Earthfall ushered in the Age of Darkness, many of these tribes made a bargain with Zon-Kuthon. They offered to loyally serve and worship the Midnight Lord, in return for his protection. Those chieftains who opposed this bargain were brutally suppressed, paving the way for thousands of years of Kuthite control over that land.

20+ The horselord tribes buried their dead in Barrowmoor, a rocky region in the north of Nidal. Local tradition forbids exploring the cairns of the Barrowmoor, but tomb robbers sometimes discover vast riches in ancient burial mounds—as well as traps and

ancient curses. Locals claim the exact number of cairns within the Barrowmoor changes, making it impossible to properly explore or map.

Knowledge (local or nobility)

Through their travels with the Pathfinder Society, the PCs may have gained some knowledge of the Blakros family and its enemies. The following Pathfinder Society scenarios have strongly featured the Blakros family: *Pathfinder Society Scenario #5: Mists of Mwangi*, *Pathfinder Society Scenario #35: Voice in the Void*, *Pathfinder Society Scenario #2-11: The Penumbra Accords*, *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-07: Echoes of the Overwatched*, *Pathfinder Society Scenario 4-09: The Blakros Matrimony*, or *Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-09: The Hellknight's Feast*, and *Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-14: Day of the Demon*. If a PC has earned a Chronicle sheet from any of these adventures, he gains a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus for each Chronicle sheet on a Knowledge (local or nobility) check made to gain the following information below. Characters with one of these Chronicle sheets can attempt this check untrained.

10+ The Blakros family is a powerful matriarchy that made its fortune smuggling goods and secrets between Qadira and Taldor since the early 41st century AR, and by using its daughters' marriages to form powerful alliances.

15+ Until a few years ago, the dark secret to the Blakros family's success was a tenuous alliance with denizens of the Shadow Plane, specifically an organization called the Onyx Alliance, who received the service of the first Blakros daughter born into each generation. This practice ended in 4710, when the Pathfinder Society interceded, destroying the contract that enforced this terrible tradition before the twin daughters of this generation were taken away.

The Onyx Alliance retaliated during the Grand Convocation of the Pathfinder Society in 4712, but the Pathfinders were able to defeat the fetchling-led invasion. Ever since, the Onyx Alliance has licked its wounds, rebuilt its holdings, and sought a new advantage.

20+ The Blakros family has maintained spies in the Onyx Alliance in the interest of self-defense. These spies recently reported that the organization is on the verge of uncovering a powerful magic item in Barrowmoor, a huge stretch of burial mounds in northeastern Nidal. Concerned that the Onyx Alliance may turn this minor artifact on the Blakros family and its allies Hamaria, the matriarch of the family, has shared the discovery with the Pathfinder Society. Society leadership has agreed to send a team of Pathfinders to intercept the Alliance agents, hoping both to keep the discovery out of Onyx

Alliance hands as well as to document the mysterious Barrowmoor cairns.

A. ESCAPE (CR 8 OR CR 11)

The PCs' voyage to Nisroch proves fortuitously uneventful, and the ship docks in the evening at the Portside district after the captain pays a considerable harbor fee. The city is a dreary place constructed of wood and slate, and one of the region's common downpours makes it feel even more oppressive. The PCs can easily find their way to the Broken Cup, a tavern in the Southbank district that caters to common folk.

Use *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Seedy Tavern* or *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Urban Tavern* to represent the Broken Cup.

There is nothing bright or cheerful about the Broken Cup. The walls are worn gray and the furniture drab brown. There are few lights, the brightest sitting by the stairs that presumably lead to rooms upstairs. There is no singing, no laughter, and no real sign that the tavern even welcomes new customers. Those who linger here mostly mind their food and themselves, going out of their ways not to make eye contact.

Though joyless, the Broken Cup is a mostly safe establishment—so long as they PCs don't give the proprietor or patrons any reason to summon the guard. Loudly inquiring about the Whispered Song or worshipers of Desna is enough to draw suspicious glances. If this continues for more than a moment or two, someone slips out to inform the city guard, a ruthless group of monks known as the Silent Enforcers. A confrontation with these grim monks would run contrary to the PCs goals, and the party should receive forewarning enough of the guards' arrival to make an escape.

Creatures: **Golbrier Frosh** (CG male human bard 5) is in the Broken Cup, but he's there as a captive, not as a patron. He spends much of his time quietly spreading hope and the Desnan faith, and recently the Umbral Court placed a bounty on his head. A bounty hunter named Alya Renatus tracked him to the Broken Cup, subdued him, and tied him up. Hoping to collect her bounty quickly, she has arranged to hand him over to a low-ranking member of the Umbral Court in the morning. She currently has him locked in her room upstairs.

Alya is quite pleased with her catch and is vocal in her self-congratulations. In fact, she's one of the only jovial sorts currently in the Broken Cup. PCs who succeed at a DC 12 Perception check notice Alya at the bar, celebrating with herself and those nearby strangers who reluctantly listen. Should the PCs join them or just venture closer, they have no difficulty determining that she has captured Golbrier and plans to turn him over in the morning—

though she cagey and sober enough not to reveal where she's stashed her captive.

The PCs might get Alya to reveal where she is keeping Golbrier with a successful Bluff check. Rather than having Alya make an opposed check, assume she takes 10 on Sense Motive—resulting in a DC 18 in Subtier 5–6, and a DC 21 in Subtier 8–9. Alternatively they might subtly search the tavern without Alya noticing. Assuming she takes 10 on her Perception checks, searching for Golbrier without her noticing requires a successful DC 16 Stealth check in Subtier 5–6, and a successful DC 26 Stealth check in Subtier 8–9. Those who head upstairs can attempt a DC 15 Perception check to hear Golbrier's muffled cries from the upstairs room.

Once they have found Golbrier, to free him the PCs must bypass the door of his room. Without appropriate magic this requires a successful Disable Device check to pick the lock of his door (DC 25 for an average lock in Subtier 5–6, DC 30 for a good lock in Subtier 8–9), a successful Sleight of Hand check to steal the key from Alya (DC 16 in Subtier 5–6, DC 26 in Subtier 8–9), or they can just smash it down (it's a good door with hardness 5, hp 15, and a break DC of 18 in Subtier 5–6, a strong door with hardness 5, hp 20, and a break DC of 23 in Subtier 8–9). Of course if the PCs don't have some way to muffling the sound of breaking down a door (such as the *silence* spell), doing so immediately attracts attention.

If the PCs try some alternate plan to find and release Golbrier, use the DCs of the methods outlined above as benchmarks for any other required skill checks. In general one failed skill check raises suspicion—Alya starts watching the PCs carefully, other patrons begin looking nervous, the innkeeper mentions possibly calling the Silent Enforcers. Two failed skill checks means Alya demands the PCs justify their odd actions and someone does call for the Silent Enforcers (who take 10 minutes to arrive). However once Alya is on to them it is difficult for the PCs to calm the situation. A successful Bluff check with a –10 penalty might to convince Alya to believe a far-fetched lie might, or enchantment magic might work for the purpose.

Alya typically doesn't engage in combat unless the PCs attack her or she catches them with Golbrier. If combat does begin, the bar patrons panic and start vigorously calling for the guards. At this point, it should be clear to the PCs that they'll have to act fast, subdue Alya, and escape quickly in order to avoid having the entire city of Nisroch chasing them.

Subtier 5–6 (CR 6)

ALYA RENATUS

CR 6

Watch Captain (*Pathfinder GameMastery Guide* 261)

hp 57

Subtier 8–9 (CR 6)

ALYA RENATUS

CR 11

Bounty Hunter (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 135)

hp 94

Development: If the PCs successfully rescue Golbrier and explain they are from the Pathfinder Society, he aids them in slipping out of the city through the nearby Leper's Gate. He's inclined to trust them, since he would have been handed over to the Umbral Court without their intervention. He was waiting for members of the Pathfinder Society to show up when he was apprehended by the bounty hunter, so he's much more grateful than suspicious.

Golbrier's most recent information from the Whispered Song is about the leader of the Onyx Alliance expedition, a man named Lord Maravan. Golbrier's sources say Maravan is a spellcaster of some power, having trained in the Arcanamirium in Absalom, but also an accomplished duelist who studied under a Tian Xia weaponmaster. Whispered Song spies have heard him claim he was planning on recovering a minor artifact known as an "obsidian obelisk." Maravan seems to know the location of an ancient barrow known as the Cairn of Shadows, which lies within the Barrowmoor. They believed it was the burial mound of a horselord chieftain named Telendrak, an ancient foe of the Midnight Lord who the Desnans hold in high esteem.

Golbrier is happy to have allies willing to explore the site, though he is not interested in entering the barrow personally. ("I'm a lover... and a singer... and a bit of a dancer, but not a fighter.")

Since the Whispered Song is aware that Pathfinders were due to arrive and seek out the Onyx Alliance expedition, Golbrier has already arranged a route to get the PCs to Barrowmoor. With his assistance, they are able to travel quickly, borrowing mounts from Desnan sympathizers and dodging Nidalese enforcers as they head toward the Cairn of Shadows.

If the PCs fail to rescue Golbrier another agent of the Whispered Song, **Merichel Thay** (CG female human bard 3) finds them in or near the tavern and directs them out of Nisroch. She can also explain that agents of the Onyx Alliance have been spotted heading into Barrowmoor, and she can assist the PCs in catching up to them, but she lacks the detailed background Golbrier could have provided.

Treasure: If rescued, Golbrier Frosh rewards the PCs with two *cloaks of elvenkind* in Subtier 5–6, or a *vest of escape* and *boots of springing and striding* in Subtier 8–9.

Faction Notes: Golbrier Frosh is an excellent contact within the Whispered Song. Through missives sent to Andoran faction PCs earlier in the season, faction leader Major Colson Maldris has expressed an interest

CAIRN OF SHADOWS

Dampened Light: Within the prison plane, all sources of light—both magical and mundane—have their ranges halved.

Enhanced Magic: Spells with the shadow descriptor or of the shadow subschool are enhanced in the prison plane, functioning as if their caster levels were 2 higher than normal, and specific spells become even more powerful. *Shadow conjuration* and *shadow evocation* are 30% as powerful as the conjurations and evocations they mimic (as opposed to 20%). *Greater shadow conjuration* and *greater shadow evocation* are 70% as powerful (not 60%), and *shades* is 90% as powerful (not 80%). Despite the dark nature of the prison plane, spells that produce, use, or manipulate darkness are unaffected by the plane.

Impeded Magic: Spells with the light descriptor or that use or generate light or fire are impeded within the prison plane, requiring a concentration check (DC 20 + the level of the spell) in order to function normally. If the check fails, the spell does not function but is still lost as a prepared spell or spell slot.

Preservation: There is no need for food, drink, or sleep within the Cairn of Shadows, and creatures age at only half their normal rate. It is thus possible to keep prisoners for prolonged periods—many human prisoners currently in the prison have been here for more than a century—but eventually every prisoner dies. After death, their bodies continue to act with some semblance of life for another century or two, but they are incapable of anything other than moaning and writhing. Any such body taken out of the Cairn of Shadows immediately becomes an inanimate corpse.

Locked Plane: As the prison plane is meant to hold souls indefinitely, planar travel within or away from it is restricted. Creatures may only enter or leave the plane via the barrow entrance connected to the Material Plane. This effects all conjuration (calling) and conjuration (teleportation) spells, as well as *etherealness*, *ethereal jaunt*, and similar spells that allow planar travel. It does not affect other forms of conjuration magic, including conjuration (summoning) spells (which only summons creatures temporarily, allowing them to arrive and depart from the demiplane normally).

LEVEL ONE: THE SHADOW THRONE

The lower level of the Cairn of Shadows holds most of the demiplane's traps and defensive measures, as well as Kazartak's victims when they are not being tortured.

B1. HALL OF CHAINS

A large hall stretches to some great height, its ceiling too high to see. Chains of every size and length hang from above, filling

the space with delicate clinks and slow scraping sounds as they gently sway in some unfelt breeze. The depth and height of the chamber are difficult to assess as the chains obscure vision beyond a few feet, but through the forest of chains comes the sound of strangely slow running water.

This is the entry hall to the Cairn of Shadows. The thick curtains of chains hang from the ceiling 50 feet above, obscuring vision and obstructing attacks. Creatures more than 10 feet apart gain concealment (20% miss chance) from one another, while creatures more than 30 feet apart have total concealment (50% miss chance) from each other in this room.

The hall is separated from area **B2** by a stream of shadowy ichor and a small arched bridge. The stream is diffuse shadow essence, a poisonous planar material congealed from the misery and terror caused by the tortures conducted within the Cairn of Shadows. The material is not deep—no more than 2 to 3 feet—but any contact with it exposes a creature to the effect of shadow essence poison as if they had been injured by it (see area **B3** for the effects of shadow essence). The chains do not interfere with anyone crossing the bridge when the PCs first arrive (though this changes in the Final Confrontation encounter).

Kazartak made sure to give those who recently intruded on his domain a terrifying first impression. Several of the fetchlings and humans serving Lord Maravan were killed here by the prison's guardians. Their bodies now lay buried under oozing piles of chains, though they've been stripped of anything of value.

Hazard: Moving through this room requires brushing against the chains, leaving streaks of rust, oil, and blood on clothes and armor. So long as PCs move deeper into the room the chains slip past and movement is unimpaired, but if they attempt to move toward the exit (the western door) the chains weakly animate, hindering movement in that direction. Consider any PC moving to the west as passing through difficult terrain. Additionally, flying creatures must make a DC 30 Fly check each round to avoid becoming entangled in the chains. Entangled flyers are stuck in place and cannot move until they succeed at a DC 20 Escape Artist check or Strength check as a standard action. The chains do not impair any kytons, chain slaves, or the bearer of the *obsidian obelisk* (see The Finale).

B2. THE HORSELORD CHIEFTAIN

At the end of this macabre hall, a desiccated humanoid husk stands propped up by chains. Dozens of hooks of all sizes dig into its flesh, suspending the frail looking corpse a few inches above a throne of rusted iron like some corpse marionette. Its head hangs limp against its chest.

SHADOW ESSENCE POISON

Type poison (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

Initial Effect 1 Str drain; **Secondary Effect** 1d2 Str damage;

Cure 1 save

While chains hang throughout this entire area, those directly above the horselord stretch much higher. Rather than stop at the vaulted hall ceiling 50 feet up, these stretch another 150 feet up a shaft into area C1. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals this from the floor, assuming the PCs can even see the ceiling in the dark confines of the Cairn of Shadows. If a PC attempts to climb the chains, see area C1.

Creature: The victim hanging over the throne is a shell of a man, but is still technically alive. As soon as the PCs approach, a dry coughing breath escapes him, sending ripples of motion up and down the chains that suspend him. Ancient, empty eyes lift to see who disturbs his rest, though he can barely to lift his head and can only speak in a rattling whisper. He has long forgotten his original name or background, having been forced to take the role of the original inhabitant of the throne, Telendrak.

The current Telendrak is used to being questioned, as Kazartak would often quiz him about things learned from the previous Telendrak. However, decades of torture have left the reigning Telendrak's mind weak. He begins firmly claiming to be the horselord Telendrak, the last chieftain to defy Zon-Kuthon, and a prisoner for more than 9,000 years. Under ongoing questioning, though, he begins to crack and speak of previous Telendraks and obeying the command to become Telendrak. If pressed on these incongruities, he refuses to answer while shooting fearful glances at the ceiling. Sadly, the man no longer remembers anything about his own real name or past, and assumes any effort to get him to remember such things is a trick by Kazartak that can only lead to more torture.

At this point the GM should allow the PCs some time to speak to Telendrak, and decide what to do with him.

What do you know about the horselords? "The horselords tribes ruled the Atteran Plains, their warriors riding mighty chiardmars and driving foes before them with spear and lance. The tribes were fierce and independent, worshipping spirits of nature and our ancestors. So it was in my day."

How long have you been here? "Always, we've always been here. The horselord Telendrak came to the Cairn of Shadows in the time of darkness, and before true darkness descended on the land called Nidal. That's what the last Telendrak said."

Aren't you Telendrak? "Of course I am. I AM TELENDRAK!" (He looks up to the chains hanging

above him.) "I said I am Telendrak. It doesn't need to come. I obeyed."

Who doesn't need to come? "The Master of Chains. The Lord Above. Giver of the Gift of Anguish. Our only god, now. He made me Telendrak, when the last Telendrak was so foolish as to die."

Have you seen any others come through here? "Others came. They went to see the Lord Above. We could hear the screams, as the Lord gave them the gift of anguish. And there was such blood, cool drops that rained down upon us..."

What do you know about a talisman kept here? "The shadow obelisk! The Master of Chains wears it, and through it he controls this place. It binds us here, controls the shadows, and keeps this place whole. I have seen such terrible rituals performed in the shadows, with and without the obelisk. Such dark secrets I have seen."

The PCs can cut Telendrak down or kill him. If released from his chains, Telendrak obediently follows any simple direction he is given. The chains can be removed with a successful DC 25 Disable Device check, a DC 30 break check, or by damaging the hardness 5, 20 hp chain. Even if released, though, he is too fearful to take any action on his own, and too weak to climb or fight.

Subtier 5–6 and Subtier 8–9

TELENDRAK **CR 1/2**

Pig Farmer (*Pathfinder NPC Codex 256*)

hp 9

SQ In matters regarding the horselords of Nidal, Telendrak is treated as having a Knowledge (history) bonus of +10.

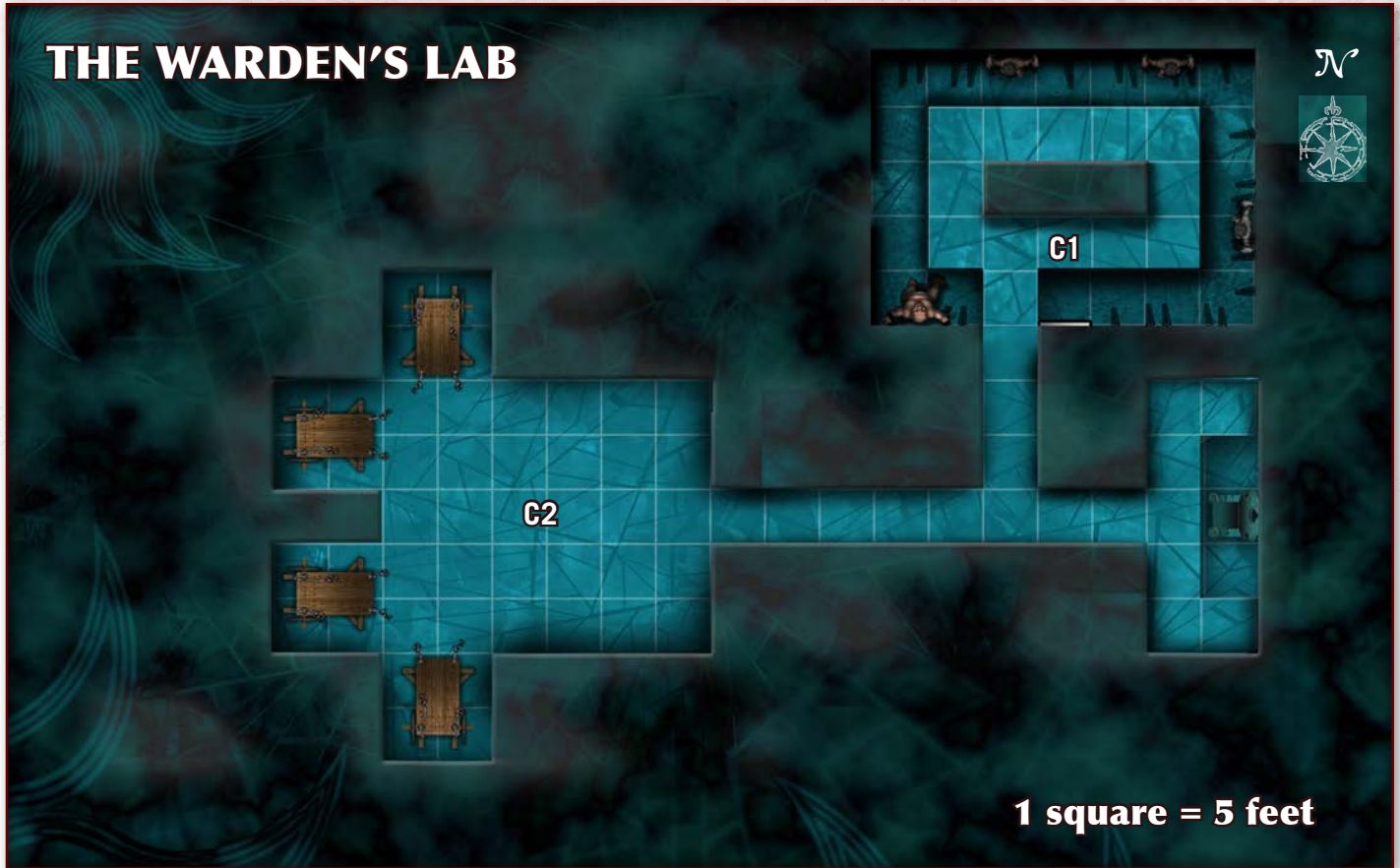
Faction Notes: Telendrak is an excellent source of information about rituals holy to Zon-Kuthon, having been the subject of such dark rites for untold years. Cheliox faction PCs who have been contacted by Zarta Dralneen through the handout earlier in this adventure might consider this the type of information they were told to watch for. Telendrak could teach their faction leader much if Cheliox faction PCs get him safely out of the Cairn of Shadows.

B3. THE DARKENED PIT (CR 4 OR 7)

Unlike the areas near it, this wide hall has no chains within. Rough, uneven stairs run from landing to landing. There is the scent of old blood, and disturbing stains mark the walls. A single black wooden door sits at the end of the run of stairs.

Many years ago, the entrance to the barrow wasn't buried and intruders were more common. To contend with

THE WARDEN'S LAB



visitors, Kazartak built this trap to capture them until he was ready to deal with them. As the number of incursions dropped off, he ceased even checking this room.

Trap: When PCs touch the false door (which includes basically any action other than checking it for traps) the entire 30-foot-long corridor in front of the door tilts, dropping anyone in that section into area **B3a** and its spiked chain nets.

Subtier 5–6 (CR 4)

SPIKED CHAIN PIT TRAP CR 4

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

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect 30-ft.-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); pit of spiked nets (Atk +10 melee, 1d4+1 spikes per target for 1d4+3 damage each); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10 ft. wide, 30 ft. long area)

Subtier 8–9 (CR 7)

POISONED SPIKED CHAIN PIT TRAP CR 7

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 23; **Disable Device** DC 23

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect 30-ft.-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); pit of spiked nets (Atk +10 melee, 1d4+1 spikes per target for 1d4+3 damage each plus shadow essence poison); DC 23 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10 ft. wide, 30 ft. long area)

Treasure: A search reveals numerous coins and bits of cut gems in the spiked pits, the more durable remains of previous adventurers. There are 8 small ruby songbirds (worth 500 gp each) and 165 pp in Subtier 5–6, and 8 small ruby songbirds (worth 500 gp each) and 465 pp in Subtier 8–9.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to find the songbirds or they bypass the trap entirely, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 5–6: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 941 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 1,191 gp.

Subtier 8–9: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 1,441 gp.

B4. DISPOSAL

Blood, rusted chains, and corpses cover the floor of this room. It smells of rot and cold blood and the air is heavy with moisture

SCALING ENCOUNTER C1

If there are fewer than 5 characters in the party, reduce the number of shae by 2 at Subtier 5–6, and reduce the number of shae by 1 at Subtier 8–9.

seeping from rent body parts. Two opposing walls have doors in them, the only apparent egresses.

When a tool of torture, or victim of it, no longer serves its purpose in the Cairn of Shadows, it is disposed of here. The congealed misery of this place seeps into the wall and floors, eventually forming the stream of shadow essence in area **B1**. Four fetchling bodies, recently shredded, can be found here. Like the recent corpses in area **B1** these are dead members of Lord Maravan's expedition—a stark testimony of the price the Onyx Alliance expedition paid upon entering the demiplane. They've already been stripped of valuables by the guardians in area **C1**.

B5. COLD STORAGE

This large chamber is more than twenty feet wide and thirty long. Two walls have black wooden doors set in them, each tall enough to allow an ogre to pass through. Spiked chains fill the chamber, stretching upward endlessly. Dozens of corpses hang from the chains, cruel looking hooks dig deeply into flesh, suspending the bodies several feet from the ground. Some of them appear to be the subjects of extensive unnecessary surgeries with chains, hooks, or spikes replacing limbs. The faint rasping of labored breathing fills the room.

The ceiling here is between 200 and 250 feet high, meaning these chains hang from a much greater height than elsewhere on this level. It takes a successful DC 30 Perception check to notice this from the floor, assuming the PCs can even see in the dark confines of the Cairn of Shadows. If a PC attempts to climb the chains, see area **C1**. The bodies are hung from chains so they can be pulled up to areas **C1** and **C2** above, where they can be tortured or modified by the guards and wardens of this prison. Kazartak has grown bored of these victims though and most haven't been touched in decades.

Creatures: The bodies hanging from hooks in this room all seem alive, but most are actually dead, only retaining the semblance of life due to the nature of the demiplane. Only two of the bodies here are truly alive, and they are both in training to be the next horselord chieftain when the current Telendrak dies. They can both answer questions much as the current horselord does. They are weak and starved, weighing no more than 100 pounds each, and are too frail to move at any pace more

than a slow shuffle should they be removed from their chains. These prisoners can be liberated in the same way as Telendrak in area **B2**. If stats become necessary, use those of Telendrak in area **B2**.

Faction Notes: Andoran faction PCs might wish to rescue the survivors, who are the only prisons able to speak or move at all. If the PCs close the prison before freeing these victims, the prisoners will die.

LEVEL TWO: THE WARDEN'S LAB

Accessible only via the chains from the lower level, the warden's lab is where Kazartak and his guards experiment with different forms of torture, avant-garde surgery, and nameless other depravities.

C1a. Anchorite Guards (CR 8 or CR 11)

Near the top of the chains a massive platform juts from the wall, filling the center of the chain-filled shaft. The platform has a walkway along its outer edge and a hole in the center, both allowing chains to stretch up past it to the ceiling fifty feet above.

It is possible to climb up the chains from area **B2** or **B5** to this level, though likely not without danger (see Hazards). The floor of the Warden's Lab is 200 feet above the floor of the Shadow Throne. Extraplanar anchorites stand guard here, having been convinced by Lord Maravan that he will release them from this prison once he controls it with the *shadow obelisk*. They watch over areas **C1a** and **C2a**, but will congregate at either location to defend it during an attack.

Creatures: Over the centuries numerous outsiders have come to the Cairn of Shadows to serve as unholy anchorites, religious students learning the fine arts of torture and breaking mortal spirits at the instruction of the kyton who dwelled here. Most such anchorites eventually succumbed to the opportunity to receive the gift of pain themselves, and spend the rest of eternity hanging on the chains in area **B5**. A few were eventually released from their isolated training in the Cairn of Shadows, to ensure word of Kazartak's masterful torture techniques reached new ears.

The anchorites keep guard over the two areas where chains lead up from the Shadow Throne (in areas **B2** and **B5**). If the anchorites notice PCs coming up the chains, they attack immediately. The anchorites are aware of Lord Maravan's deal with Kazartak, and thus don't attack him, but until he successfully proves he is as masterful a torturer as the previous warden, they make no effort to assist him.

Subtier 5–6 (CR 7)

SHAE (3)

CR 4

hp 38 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 242*)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk falchion +8 (2d4+4/18–20 plus 1d6 cold) or touch +7 (1d6 cold)**Ranged** composite longbow +10 (1d8+3/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat The shae use their *lesser shadow evocation* (generally to emulate *magic missile* and *scorching ray*) and longbow attacks on foes climbing the chains, then switch to their swords when foes get within melee range. If a foe is too heavily armored to hit with falchions, the shae switch to use their cold touch attacks.

Morale The shae are religious fanatics. They fight the PCs to the death.

Subtier 8–9 (CR 10)

SHAE (3)

CR 4

hp 38 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 276*)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk falchion +8 (2d4+4/18–20 plus 1d6 cold) or touch +7 (1d6 cold)**Ranged** composite longbow +10 (1d8+3/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat The shae use their *lesser shadow evocation* (generally to emulate *magic missile* and *scorching ray*) and longbow attacks on foes climbing the chains, then switch to their swords when foes get within melee range. If a foe is too heavily armored to hit with falchions, the shae switch to use their cold touch attacks.

Morale The shae are religious fanatics. They fight the PCs to the death.

NIGHT HAG

CR 9

hp 92 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 215*)

TACTICS

During Combat The night hag uses her *magic missile* and *ray of enfeeblement* spell-like abilities on foes climbing the chains, then switches to claw and bite attacks when foes close within melee range. If flanked or targeted by a foe she cannot reach, she uses *invisibility* and attempts to reposition herself.

Morale The night hag believe herself trapped in the Cairn of Shadows until Lord Maravan releases her, and so fights to the death.

Hazards: Creatures adjacent to the pit in this room cover (+4 AC, +2 to Reflex saves) against those below.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER

The Kyton's Flesh Lab is an optional encounter. If there are fewer than 90 minutes remaining, skip this encounter. The tables are not traps, and the PCs hear the chanting of Lord Maravan from the Final Confrontation as soon as they enter the room.

Climbing the chains isn't particularly difficult, but it is dangerous—climbing creatures do not normally get their Dexterity bonus to AC, cannot use shields, and must make a Climb check to avoid falling anytime they take damage. A successful DC 10 Climb check allows PCs to ascend the ropes. However many of the chains have blades, hooks, and spikes jutting from them at odd angles, and the chains sway of their own accord. As a result, any PC that fails a Climb check takes damage (1d6 in Subtier 5–6, 1d10 in Subtier 8–9). If a PC fails a Climb check by 5 or more he falls. A DC 20 Climb check allows the PC to catch himself, taking the same damage as failing a Climb check. If the PC fails to catch himself, he falls 1d6 × 10 feet. If the PC doesn't hit the ground he is caught on a hooked chain, taking double the damage of failing a Climb check.

Making Stealth checks while climbing chains is difficult, but not impossible. The chains offer concealment for creatures more than 40 feet apart. Stealth checks attempted on the chains take a –5 penalty from the noise made while. As such, the anchorites on guard will notice PCs once they are within 40 feet unless some other steps are taken to create cover or a distraction.

Treasure: The anchorites keep mementos of those they have particularly enjoyed torturing to death. These items are stashed in ornate bags kept with the anchorites, treated as valued trophies. There is a *robe of bones*, a *ring of sustenance*, and a *heavyload belt* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*) in Subtier 5–6. There is a *belt of giant strength +2*, *ring of sustenance*, *robe of bones*, and *robe of climbing* in Subtier 8–9.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat the shaes (and night hag, if present) reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 5–6: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 704 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 912 gp.

Subtier 8–9: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 1,120 gp.

C2. The Kyton's Flesh Lab (CR 7 or 10)

This large chamber—roughly thirty feet by thirty-five feet—is accessed by a long tunnel at one end. It has four wide alcoves containing tables that appear to have been used for cruel experiments and torture. Each is surrounded by a variety of surgical implements, while straps, hooks, and chains on the

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

surfaces have clearly been used to restrain subjects during procedures. A pale, gray body lays on one of the tables, its skin flayed from its body.

This was where formal torture occurred within the Cairn of Shadows, though the anchorites and kyton were not above torturing victims anywhere. Lord Maravan cut a deal with Kazartak here before the PCs arrived, and tortured his last fetchling guard to death to prove he was truly worthy of claiming the *shadow obelisk*. Unless the PCs have reached this point with utter stealth, he has departed, but has not gone far (see the Final Confrontation).

Traps: The chains attached to the tables are animated by the centuries of torture they have inflicted on thousands of living creatures. As soon as a PC comes within 10 feet of a table, the chains attempt to drag the PC onto the slab. If the PC wrestles free, the chains stop struggling, though they become active again if a new creature approaches. The tables are fairly sturdy (hardness 5, 50 hp, break DC 23).

Subtier 5–6 (CR 7)

TORTURE TABLE CHAIN TRAP CR 7

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 3 rounds; **Reset** automatic

Effect Grab (CMB +15), 4d6 crush damage per round and grapple condition with successfully CMB check.

Subtier 8–9 (CR 10)

TORTURE TABLE CHAIN TRAP CR 10

Type magic; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 5 rounds; **Reset** automatic

Effect Grab (CMB +20), 8d6 crush damage per round and grapple condition with successfully CMB check.

Development: Once the PCs deal with the chain traps, they begin to hear eerie chanting from area **B1**, the beginning of Event 1.

EVENT 1: FINAL CONFRONTATION

Having dealt with the other horrors of the Cairn of Shadows, it's time for the PCs to face the demiplane's new master—though he may not be where they expect.

Creatures: Lord Maravan has spent his life in an obsessed quest for greater personal power. He spent years in Absalom training with anyone and everyone

who had secrets they would teach him. This included time in the Arcanamirimum learning arcane magic, and years as the student of a swordmaster from Tian Xia. Both pursuits proved expensive, driving him to serve as a guard in the slave pits of Absalom for extra coin. His efforts brought him to the attention of the Onyx Alliance first as additional muscle, but eventually as a trusted human agent of that shadowy organization.

Lord Maravan is in area **C2** when the PCs ascend up to The Warden's Lab from the Shadow Throne. Unless some extraordinary measure is used to dampen the sounds of combat, he likely hears the PCs fighting with the anchorites. He has spent the last several hours studying the *shadow obelisk*, and has no interest in risking capture or death at the hands of interlopers. He uses the power of the minor artifact to *shadow walk* to area **B1** with his remaining attendants.

Once there, he begins performing a dark ritual necessary to become ultimate master of the *shadow obelisk*, using the stream of shadow essence. He only partially understands this ritual, having gleaned its details from images that have infested his mind since he first touched the *shadow obelisk*. Lord Maravan is a ruthless man, but he has just witnessed the death of his entire party and faced the horrors of the Cairn of Shadows. He's become a bit unhinged, and is convinced he has the insight needed to claim the demiplane as his own.

The ritual involves loud chanting, and the outsiders with Maravan—who obey him as holder of the *shadow obelisk*—gnash and wail as well. This can be heard even in the Warden's Lab, so eventually the PCs become aware that someone is making significant noise in area **B1**.

Subtier 5–6 (CR 8)

CHAIN SLAVE (3) CR 4

Chain slave

LE Medium outsider (evil, lawful, native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;

Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 38 each (7d10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

DR 5/silver or good; **Immune** cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 chains +8 (1d8+1 plus grab)

Special Attacks chain bound, constrict (1d8+6)

TACTICS

Before Combat One of the chain slaves lurks in the center of the room and calls out to the party while trying to stay out

CAIRN OF SHADOWS

of sight amid the chains. It attempts to draw the party across the bridge in the center of the room before attacking. The other chain slaves use Stealth to circle the party and attack from the rear.

Morale The chain slaves take pleasure in killing for the Cairn of Shadows' warden and don't have any fear of death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11 (+15 grapple); **CMD** 24

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +11, Perception +10, Stealth +12

Languages Infernal

SQ chain armor, chain climber

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chain Bound (Ex) A chain slave is covered in the chains that it uses as weapons and armor. If the chain slave is disarmed or drops his chain, it can rearm itself using the chains on its body as a free action. If a chain slave makes a successful grapple check to pin a foe, it can make a second grapple check as a free action to entangle the creature. Once a creature is entangled the creature automatically moves whenever the chain slave moves. The entangled creature can escape with a successful CMB check. The chain slave can release an entangled creature as a free action.

Chain Armor (Ex) The chains that adorn a chain slave grant it a +5 armor bonus, but are not treated as armor for the purpose of arcane spell failure, armor check penalties, maximum Dexterity, weight, or proficiency.

Chain Climber (Su) A chain slave has a climb speed equal to his normal move speed when moving on chains.

LORD MARAVAN

CR 4

Human magus (kensai^{uc}) 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 shield, +3 Int)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities canny defense

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *keen rapier* +7 (1d6+2/15-20)

Special Attacks spellstrike

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8, +12 to cast defensively)

2nd—*blur*, *scorching ray*

1st—*ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*

TACTICS

During Combat During the first round of combat, Maravan

uses his arcane pool to make his rapier a +1 *keen rapier*, and casts *shield*. (The modifiers for this are included in his stat block.) If there are already foes in melee range, he does this using spell combat and makes a melee attack.

As soon as possible afterward he casts *blur*. He uses spell strike to deliver his ray spells (with the close range magus arcana), using *scorching ray* on the toughest looking foe in melee, and *ray of enfeeblement* on the melee foe doing the most damage. He uses true strike on a heavily armored foe he has already missed, then shocking grasp. When out of other spells he uses spell strike with *acid splash* to get two melee attacks a round (one with the extra *acid splash* damage).

Morale Lord Maravan has the *shadow obelisk* and attempts to flee with it if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points.

Base Statistics Lord Maravan's base statistics are: AC 15, Melee rapier +6 (1d6+1/18-20)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Bluff +5, Climb +9, Diplomacy +5, Perception +5, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +11

Languages Common, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Tien

SQ arcane pool (+2, 5/day), chosen weapon (rapier), magus arcana (close range), perfect strike, spell combat

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*, *potion of levitate*; **Other Gear** *masterwork rapier*, *cloak of resistance +1*, spellbook (contains notes on the arcane uses of torture, shadow, and pain, but no actual spells), 1,100 gp

Subtier 8–9 (CR 11)

ADVANCED KYTON (3)

CR 7

hp 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 185, 294)

LORD MARAVAN

CR 8

Human magus (kensai^{uc}) 9

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +3 shield, +1 dodge, +3 Int)

hp 80 (9d8+36)

Fort +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities canny defense

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *frost keen rapier* +12/+7 (1d6+3+1d6 cold/15-20)

Special Attacks spellstrike

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +12, +16 to cast defensively)

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

3rd—*displacement, haste, ray of exhaustion* (DC 16)
2nd—*blur, mirror image, scorching ray* (2)
1st—*ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *shield, shocking grasp, true strike* (2)
0 (at will)—*acid splash, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand*

TACTICS

During Combat During the first round of combat, Maravan uses his arcane pool to make his rapier a +2 *frost keen rapier*, and casts *shield*. (The modifiers for this are included in his stat block.) If there are already foes in melee range, he does this using spell combat and makes a melee attack. As soon as possible afterward he casts *haste*, then *mirror image*, then *displacement*. If his *displacement* is dispelled, he casts *blur*. He uses spell strike to deliver his ray spells (with the close range magus arcana), using *scorching ray* on the toughest looking foe in melee, and *ray of exhaustion* and *ray of enfeeblement* on the melee foe doing the most damage. He uses *true strike* on heavily armored foes he has already missed. When out of other spells he uses spell strike with *shocking grasp* then *acid splash* to get two melee attacks a round (one with the extra spell damage).

Morale Lord Maravan has the *shadow obelisk* and attempts to flee with it if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points.

Base Statistics Lord Maravan's base statistics are: AC 17, Melee +1 rapier +11/+6 (1d6+2/18–20)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Bluff +9, Climb +13, Diplomacy +9, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +15

Languages Common, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Tien

SQ arcane pool (+3, 7/day), chosen weapon, critical perfection, iaijutsu, magus arcana (close range, lingering pain), spell combat, perfect strike

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility, potion of levitate*; **other**

Gear +1 rapier, belt of incredible dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +1, spellbook (contains notes on the arcane uses of torture, shadow, and pain, but no actual spells), 4,000 gp

Hazard: Once Lord Maravan comes to the first floor, the chains above the bridge in area **B1** become more active. Any PC passing over the bridge treats it as difficult terrain, and must make a DC 15 Reflex save or take 1d8 points of slashing damage from the chains. The chains do not hinder Lord Maravan or his chain-covered allies.

Treasure: In addition to Lord Maravan's gear, the outsiders have favored trophies from past victims. There is a +1 *meteor hammer* (*Ultimate Equipment*) in Subtier 5–6, and a +1 *cold iron meteor hammer* (*Ultimate Equipment*) in Subtier 8–9.

If the PCs fail at this encounter, they receive 519 fewer gp in Subtier 5–6, and 1,685 fewer gp in Subtier 8–9.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to defeat Lord Maravan and recover the *shadow obelisk*, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 5–6: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 468 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 1,189 gp.

Subtier 8–9: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 1,910 gp.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have the *shadow obelisk*, the Cairn of Shadows begins to shake and cracks appear in the walls and floor. If the PCs wish to run back and grab any prisoners they left behind, they have time, but things are clearly coming apart.

Once the PCs exit the Cairn of Shadows, the passageway out of the barrow seals and becomes a flat sheet of obsidian. If the *shadow obelisk* is carried out of the demiplane, it fades away like smoke, and the cairn is destroyed forever. If the amulet is left in the cairn, the demiplane prison may be reclaimed someday from the Plane of Shadow.

The Whispered Song agent who has guided the PCs can sneak them safely to the town of Albatross, where a fishing boat gets them safely out of Nidal and back to the Pathfinder Society, so they can report.

Primary Success Conditions

If the PCs obtain the *shadow obelisk* and get out of the Cairn of Shadows alive, the mission is a success, and each PC earns 1 Prestige Point.

Secondary Success Conditions

The PCs successfully complete their secondary success condition if they accomplish all three of the following: rescue Golbrier Frosh and end the adventure with his attitude toward them being indifferent or better, kill Lord Maravan, and bring back information about the horselords of ancient Nidal (by rescuing or questioning Telendrak or one of the prisoners in training to be Telendrak). If the PCs fulfill these conditions, they each earn 1 additional Prestige Point and the Return the Favor boon on his Chronicle sheet.

CAIRN OF SHADOWS

Faction Notes

Andoran faction PCs must rescue either the horselord Telendrak, or the two living prisoners in area B5, to complete their faction mission.

Cheliox faction PCs must obtain a potential source of power from the Cairn of Shadows. Escaping with the current Telendrak satisfies this need, as does Lord Maravan's spellbook (with notes on magical uses of torture, shadows, and pain).

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

My Precious Ally,

My vantage in Korvosa has granted me a unique opportunity to listen in on the society's business, which more and more often aligns with our own. Nidal has long been the ally of Cheliox, and the worshipers of Zon-Kuthon seem most adept at ingratiating themselves with their Chelish friends and gathering power that might one day threaten House Thrune.

Despite what my detractors claim, I am ill acquainted with the Kuthites' practices, yet the power they command is most alluring. While you are in Nidal, stay alert for any way we might better learn some measure of their infamous techniques. The juicier the secret you can recover the better—so long as the price doesn't seem too high.

Safe travels,
Zarta Dralneen

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-23: Cairn of Shadows

Event _____	Date _____		
GM # _____	GM Character # _____		
GM Name _____	GM Prestige Earned _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Andoran <input type="checkbox"/> Qadira <input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheliox <input type="checkbox"/> Sczarni <input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Lodge <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Crusade <input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> Osirion <input type="checkbox"/> Taldor <input type="checkbox"/> D
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Character Name _____			
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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-23: Cairn of Shadows

Character Chronicle #

_____ A.K.A. _____ - _____
 Player Name Character Name Pathfinder Society # Faction

This Chronicle sheet grants access to the following:

Light of Hope (Andoran): You have brought light into the dark places and proved that darkness has no hold over you. You may grant yourself darkvision, or double the range of your existing darkvision, for 10 minutes. Once you have used this boon, cross it off your Chronicle sheet.

Shadowy Secrets (Cheliox): You have seen what power lurks in shadow and darkness, and learned how to use some of it for yourself. As a free action, you can grant your weapon or a weapon you can touch the *frost* weapon property for 1 minute. If the weapon already has the *frost* weapon property, it instead gains the *icy burst* weapon property. This cold damage ignores the cold resistance and cold immunity of any creature in dim or no lighting. When you use this boon, cross it off your Chronicle sheet.

Return the Favor: You have gone into the dark and dangerous lands of Nidal, learned about the horselords, and thwarted the enemies of the Lodge. You may use this boon to have your body and possessions recovered by a Pathfinder rescue team (*Guide to Pathfinder Society Organized Play* 26) at no cost. When you use this boon, cross it off your Chronicle sheet.

All Subtiers	Subtier 8-9
<i>cloak of elvenkind</i> (2,500 gp) <i>heavylift belt</i> ^{APG} (2,000 gp) <i>ring of sustenance</i> (2,500 gp) <i>robe of bones</i> (2,400 gp)	<i>belt of giant Strength</i> +2 (4,000) <i>belt of incredible Dexterity</i> +2 (4,000) <i>boots of striding and springing</i> (5,500 gp) <i>rope of climbing</i> (3,000 gp) <i>vest of escape</i> (5,200 gp)

Notes

MAX GOLD	SUBTIER <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Normal		
	5-6	1,264 gp	2,529 gp
	SUBTIER <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Normal		
Out of subtier	1,990 gp	3,979 gp	
SUBTIER <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Normal			
8-9	2,715 gp	5,429 gp	
SUBTIER <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Normal			
-	-	-	
EXPERIENCE	Starting XP		
	+	XP Gained (GM ONLY)	GM's Initials
	=	Final XP Total	
	Initial Prestige		Initial Fame
	+	Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)	GM's Initials
FAME	Prestige Spent		
	Current Prestige	Final Fame	
	Starting GP		
GOLD	+	GP Gained (GM ONLY)	GM's Initials
	+	Day Job (GM ONLY)	GM's Initials
	Gold Spent		
	=	Total	

For GM Only

EVENT	EVENT CODE	DATE	Game Master's Signature	GM Pathfinder Society #
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