

PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH[™]



SHATTERED STAR

SHARDS OF SIN

By Greg A. Vaughan

MISSING PERSONS



People go missing in a big city like Magnimar all the time, but lately, they've been doing so more often. The majority of these folk who go missing do so from the waterfronts and under the Irespan—neighborhoods without a strong city watch presence. Despite the fact that the majority of missing people eventually turn up (although living as vagrants with no memories of their time spent away from Magnimar—if indeed they ever left), rumors are spreading that the city has no interest in solving the mystery and preventing future disappearances. Lord-Mayor Haldmeer Grobaras has grown frustrated with these rumors and with the city's apparent inability to explain the mystery, and has approached a few key organizations with offers of rewards if the problem can be solved; one such group is the Pathfinders of Heidmarch Manor.

Reward: 1,200 XP for solving the mystery and finding out what's been happening to the missing people. Anyone rescued earns a reward of 500 gp per victim returned to Magnimar.



CAPITAL DISTRICT

MYSTERIES OF THE CROW



The entrances to the Irespan's internal chambers are well hidden—they almost seem to prefer to be found by accident rather than by design. So when the PCs stumble across a way into the Crow (one of the Irespan's pilings), Sir Canayven Heidmarch becomes excited. Alas, other responsibilities prevent him from joining the PCs or mounting his own expedition, and so he settles for the next best thing—he'll reward the PCs for every significant new piece of information they can learn about the ancient empire of Thassilon while they're exploring the Crow.

Reward: The following discoveries each earn a 400 XP award and a payment of 500 gp once they're reported in writing (with illustrations if possible) to Sir Canayven Heidmarch:

Area B19: Image of Alaznist and Thybidos

Area C1: Alaznist statue that can serve as a remote observer

Area C18: Image of Alaznist and Yamasoth

Area C20: Map of the Rift Siphon; samples of runes on walls


Area D15: The Sihedron Shrine



ALABASTER DISTRICT

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ADVENTURE PATH  PART 1 OF 6

SHARDS OF SIN



SHATTERED STAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Shards of Sin by Greg A. Vaughan	6
NPC Gallery by Greg A. Vaughan	60
Shattered Star Treasures by Greg A. Vaughan	64
The Shattered Star by James Jacobs	66
Pathfinder's Journal: Light of a Distant Star 1 of 6 by Bill Ward	72
Bestiary by Benjamin Bruck, Craig Campbell, Adam Daigle, Amanda Hamon, and James Wilbur	78
Campaign Outline	90
Preview	92

SHATTERED STAR



BACK TO VARISIA

Wow.

Volume #61.

In other words, it's been 5 years since we started Pathfinder Adventure Path. In that time, we've had campaigns featuring runelords and insane queens, devastating threats from above and below, thieves and kings, lost cities and haunted houses, and of course everyone's favorite tag team of ninja and pirates.

In that time, we've covered the deserts and jungles of Garund, the width of Avistan from Varisia to the River Kingdoms, and even two other continents—the Crown of the World and Tian Xia. And as we move on to the volumes after this current Adventure Path, we'll be covering more and more largely untouched regions.

But here, in volume #61, with the 11th Adventure Path, we're coming back home to Varisia.

The Shattered Star Adventure Path is more than just a return to old stomping grounds, though—it's also the first full-on sequel to an Adventure Path we've done. The events of Shattered Star are assumed to take place after those of Rise of the Runelords, Curse of the Crimson Throne, and Second Darkness. Karzoug has been defeated and Xin-Shalast rediscovered. Queen Ileosa has risen to power in Korvosa only to be overthrown. And the legendary tales of drow are now known to be facts.

But while Shattered Star covers many themes and enemies that were important in those previous Adventure Paths, players don't need to have played through those previous campaigns to enjoy the plot of this one. With the exception of the city of Magnimar (which plays a brief role in Rise of the Runelords), we're not revisiting any locations from the first three Adventure Paths.

FOREWORD

EXPLORING MAGNIMAR

Much of this adventure focuses on the exploration of an enormous dungeon, but that doesn't mean you have to abandon Magnimar entirely! After all, the PCs will likely need to retreat from their explorations to rest and recover many times over the course of the adventure, and these are excellent moments for them to have additional encounters with various people and locations in the City of Monuments. The inside front covers of each volume of the Shattered Star Adventure Path provide example encounters with significant local NPCs who have quests for the PCs to take on, and also highlight the benefits of seeking out and meditating at any of the twelve greatest monuments of the city. The third volume of Shattered Star will also present a number of additional encounters you can run in Magnimar, and 2012's Free RPG Day adventure *Dawn of the Scarlet Sun* (available at paizo.com) chronicles a short adventure set in Magnimar that should fit in quite naturally between the second and third Adventure Paths. If you're looking for more inspiration and information about Magnimar, you should consult *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar, City of Monuments* for more details on the city's districts, as well as additional stat blocks and encounter tables.

DELVING THE DUNGEON

Exploring the depths of immense dungeons can get overwhelming—especially if there's only one goal to achieve at the very end of the delve. As such, we've included a number of side quests the PCs can accomplish while they're working toward the recovery of each part of the *Shattered Star*. These side quests aren't connected to each other, but taken as a whole weave a web of plots. This system of side quests will continue for each significant dungeon featured in future volumes of the Shattered Star Adventure Path.

Key NPC Quests: Each volume of Shattered Star includes key NPCs that are featured in that volume's adventure—and each NPC's profile ends with a "Side Quest" entry.

Magnimarian Quests: Heidmarch Manor's reputation for working with brave adventurers is well known in Magnimar, and many of the city's prominent or notable citizens file mission requests with the manor. As she sends agents out into the world, Sheila manages these mission requests, and when a group of Pathfinders is sent into the right area, she presents them with the chance to accept side missions as well. These quests are presented on the inside covers of each volume, along with the rewards granted upon completion. You should give the PCs these optional quests whenever they set out for the primary dungeon of that volume. Heidmarch Manor receives its share of the payment separately from these quests.

Minor Quests: Each volume of the Shattered Star Adventure Path also features a "Minor Quests" section, which offers several additional side quests. These side

ON THE COVER

Wayne Reynolds returns to the Adventure Path! On the cover of this volume, we see Pathfinder Sheila Heidmarch, Venture-Captain of the first and (so far) only Pathfinder lodge in the land of Varisia. She's the primary point of contact for the PCs in the early portions of the Shattered Star Adventure Path.

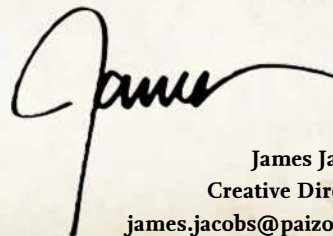
quests are intended to be easy to customize for any NPC. PCs might learn of a minor side quest while looking for rumors about the dungeon they're headed to, from an NPC they rescue from the dungeon, or anywhere between.

MINOR QUESTS

The following minor side quests can be completed in "Shards of Sin."

Nazir Kalmeralm: If the PCs find the *pendant of the souk* in area **B23b**, a character who succeeds at a DC 14 Knowledge (local) check realizes that this pendant was once owned by Nazir Kalmeralm, the first Prince of the Market in Magnimar's Bazaar of Sails. If the PCs don't make this realization, you can have an NPC notice the pendant (perhaps when the PCs try to sell it) and reveal this information. Nazir vanished nearly 28 years ago. Informing his daughter Sabriyya, the current Princess of the Market, of their discovery may earn the PCs a reward—or more. **Reward:** 1,200 XP. Sabriyya is depressed but grateful to learn of her father's fate. She allows the PCs to keep the pendant, and rewards them with 1,000 gp. Furthermore, she becomes a strong supporter of the PCs, providing aid that may well bring greater riches and benefits in future adventures.

Seeking Sinspawn: At some point, an NPC who finds out the PCs are exploring new chambers in the Irespan contacts them with an offer: If they encounter any of the ancient Thassilonian monsters known as "sinspawn," the NPC will pay a bounty for every sinspawn head that they recover. What this NPC wants with sinspawn heads is left to you to devise, but if the PCs can deliver at least three heads, the NPC is satisfied and pays them a bounty. **Reward:** 800 XP upon delivering three sinspawn heads. The NPC pays 300 gp total for the first three heads delivered, and 100 gp per head thereafter.



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SHATTERED STAR



SHARDS OF SIN

PART ONE: A GAME AFOOT IN MAGNIMAR

New recruits into the Pathfinder Society are given their first task: tracking down a missing informant and trying not to get killed in the process.

PAGE 8

PART TWO: THE SEEKER'S SHARD

The missing informant has been found, but she's not too happy about it. The heroes must infiltrate her hideout to find out why she went missing—but they're not alone in wanting answers.

PAGE 17

PART THREE: IN THE CROW'S NEST

The discovery of an ancient artifact—the Shard of Pride—points the way to the second fragment of the Shattered Star, somewhere deep within the ruin known as the Crow.

PAGE 23

PART FOUR: A LEGACY OF WRATH

Deep under the Crow, the heroes continue their search for the Shard of Greed, coming up against ever-increasing dangers: devils, derros, and ancient horrors from old Thassilon.

PAGE 39

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Shards of Sin” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 1 The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2 The PCs should be 2nd level by the time they recover the *Shard of Pride* and enter the Crow.
- 3 The PCs should reach 3rd level by the time they're exploring dungeon level 1 of the Crow.
- 4 The PCs should reach 4th level during their exploration of the Ancient Laboratories.

The PCs should be well into 5th level by the end of this adventure.



SHARDS OF SIN

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Many were the wonders created during Thassilon's time, with the vast cyclopean monuments, the seven swords of sin, and strange clockwork constructs being among the most legendary. But the most significant wonder may also be the most ubiquitous in Thassilonian lore—the *Sihedron*.

This seven-pointed star appears often in Thassilonian writings and carvings, for it symbolizes more than just the seven schools of Thassilonian magic. It represents the seven virtues of rule, but also the seven deadly sins. It represents the seven runelords. It symbolizes the seven skymetals. It exemplifies the power of magic itself.

The first of these stars was more than just a rune, though—the first *Sihedron* was a physical object crafted from seven conjoined spikes made of seven different skymetals and given vast magical power by its creator—First King Xin, the founder of Thassilon. With the *Sihedron* as his personal symbol, Xin ruled Thassilon for 11 decades, until he was betrayed by his favored minions, the seven runelords. At the time of this betrayal, Xin had temporarily dismantled the *Sihedron* so as to siphon some of its magic into a new project—a clockwork reliquary designed to give his failing body an immortal shell in which he could live forever. The runelords timed their treachery well, for Xin's greatest defense could not save him. Instead, a tremendous magical explosion slew Xin and the would-be assassins sent by the runelords and devastated the First King's palace. The runelords investigated the ruins soon thereafter, and there they found the seven shards of the *Sihedron*. The runelords each claimed a shard as their own after learning that the only way to destroy the shards would be to rebuild the *Sihedron*—an event they also knew would resurrect Xin from death. And so instead, the runelords hid away their shards, intending to keep them apart forever. The seven fragments of the artifact became collectively known as the *Shattered Star*.

When the end came to Thassilon, the runelords had more on their minds than safeguarding the *Shattered Star*. The empire crumbled and the runelords fell into hibernation as the Age of Darkness washed over the world. In the thousands of years that followed, some of the fragments of the *Shattered Star* remained forgotten in the vaults where they'd been placed by runelords past, while others were periodically rediscovered by explorers and adventurers. Even as fragments, the shards of the *Shattered Star* remained potent items, and those that were found were coveted. Periodically, someone would discover that by affixing a specific *ioun stone* to a shard of the *Shattered Star*, one could receive visions of the location of the next fragment in the sequence, yet as each shard lay in the clutches of dangerous guardians and devious dungeons, quests for additional shards invariably came to ignominious ends. And more often, the curse each shard bore (infusions of sin and treachery absorbed by the shards during their time in the clutches of the seven traitorous runelords) ensured that

the new owner of a shard would increasingly be swallowed up by his or her own flaws. And so, over the course of the Ages of Darkness, Anguish, Destiny, Enthronement, and Lost Omens, the *Shattered Star* remained shattered, its fragments scattered across Varisia.

Indeed, for much of that time, the entire legacy of Thassilon remained an obscure footnote in the history texts. Even in recent years, as southern nations began to colonize Varisia, the monolithic remnants of Thassilon remained more a curiosity than a true source of scholastic pursuit. As the Pathfinder Society grew more and more interested in the region, though, Varisia's reputation for hidden mysteries and Thassilon's seductive call to investigation grew, but it took the near rise of one of the seven runelords, Karzoug the Claimer, to truly bring Thassilon's legacy to full light.

With Karzoug's defeat at the hands of resourceful adventurers, Varisia narrowly avoided a true disaster. Had Karzoug managed to rebuild his forces in Xin-Shalast, armies of giants, lamia-kin, dragons, and ancient wizards would have quickly conquered Varisia. His near return was a wake-up call. The threat of one runelord rising from slumber was bad enough, but six more remained hidden in secret places. Varisia's numerous contentious factions and governments see that this is one peril they all share in common, and a race to prepare for the rising of another runelord (or, perish the thought, the rising of all six) has been quietly growing—and chief among those who seek to prepare Varisia for such an event is a single woman.

Sheila Heidmarch recently retired from fieldwork and moved to Magnimar with her husband to help found the region's first Pathfinder lodge, and in the few years she's lived here, she's grown to love the land. She watched, helpless to provide aid because of her responsibilities to the new lodge, as Karzoug's rise sent rumbles throughout Varisia. Thankful that his rise was defeated, she has vowed to not let Varisia be unprepared for future events of this magnitude. She spent years researching the ancient past, and her discovery of the legendary first *Sihedron* has given her a purpose. She hopes to locate the other shards and rebuild the *Sihedron*, so that if the runelords do rise, Varisia will have a potent defense indeed.

Sheila also understands the need for secrecy, for if competition for the shards were to arise, the hope of gaining control of all seven shards would quickly fade. Furthermore, as an increasingly public figure in both Magnimar and in the Pathfinder Society, she knows she can't afford to draw more attention to the quest by seeking the shards herself. What she needs are eager adventurers—preferably those who have not yet made names for themselves—to find the shards and bring them together to rebuild the *Sihedron*. She's already started the process of tracking the shards down, but as fortune would have it, one of the first adventurers she hired, a woman named Natalya Vancaskerkin, has plans of her own for the first shard.

SHATTERED STAR

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs, freshly recruited by the Pathfinder Society, are given their first significant mission by Sheila Heidmarch: tracking down a missing agent named Natalya Vancaskerkin and finding out why she hasn't reported in. Sheila warns the PCs that Natalya may have fallen under the influence of a cursed magic item—a shard of the *Shattered Star*.

The PCs investigate this missing Pathfinder, and eventually find her lurking in the slums of Magnimar in the district of Underbridge. Unfortunately, members of the Sczarni gang of criminals she stole the shard from have tracked her down as well, and the PCs must race the Tower Girls to reach Natalya first.

Whether or not they save Natalya, the PCs eventually secure the shard she stole—the *Shard of Pride*. When they return to Sheila Heidmarch, she reveals the secret of installing an *ioun stone* into the shard to not only suppress the shard's curse, but also grant visions of where the next shard is located. The PCs use the shard and learn the next fragment is close by indeed—it's hidden within the Irespan itself!

Further clues lead the PCs to the Crow piling, one of the remaining pillars that once supported the massive stone bridge. Within, they find the rest of the Tower Girls, a tribe of vermin-riding mites, a maniacal and miniature devil king, a cabal of derro kidnappers, and all manner of ancient Thassilonian traps and guardians. Deep below, in an ancient chamber far below the Irespan itself, the PCs finally discover the second fragment of the *Shattered Star*, the *Shard of Greed*, and from it learn the location of the next piece. Their quest for the *Shattered Star* has only begun!

PART ONE: A GAME AFOOT IN MAGNIMAR

As the *Shattered Star* Adventure Path begins, the PCs should already be in the city of Magnimar with some sort of connection to the Pathfinder Society. If you're using the *Shattered Star Player's Guide* (available at paizo.com as a free download), the campaign traits that your players can choose from within that document are tailor-made to provide new characters with reasons why they're in Magnimar and why they're new members of the Pathfinder Society (or at the very least have good reasons to be looked upon as allies by Sheila Heidmarch).

Whether or not the PCs all know each other as the campaign begins is mostly irrelevant, for each PC receives a brief and compelling invitation from Sheila Heidmarch at the start of this adventure (see the Player Handout on page 9).

GUESTS OF THE LODGE

Heidmarch Manor is located in the Alabaster District of Magnimar, not far from the city's easternmost gate. The manor grounds are surrounded by a stone wall, but the front gate hangs open during the day—visitors are always welcome to the manor, which has recently come to

double as the first Pathfinder Lodge in Varisia.

When the PCs arrive, they are asked to wait in the foyer, as Sheila Heidmarch is finishing up a meeting with an unexpected visitor—a relatively well-known Pathfinder named Koriah Azmeren. This also gives the PCs a chance to gather together for the first time as a party. Give the players a few moments to describe their characters to each other as they gather here. Once they're all present, two women step into the room. The first is Sheila Heidmarch, while the second is her guest, Koriah.

Sheila greets the PCs in an unusually deep voice and with a non-sense attitude, thanking them for answering her summons. She then introduces Koriah, an attractive half-

elfen woman dressed in leather armor and armed with a distinctive-looking mithral-and-redwood aklys (a hooked club attached to a cord) and a bastard sword (both weapons are currently sheathed or hanging from her belt). A successful DC 18 Knowledge (dungeoneering or local) check is enough for the PCs to recognize Koriah Azmeren as one of Varisia's most famous Pathfinders and a well-renowned expert on the Darklands—if none of the PCs realizes this, Sheila offers this information soon enough, explaining that Koriah has just returned from an expedition to the Darklands below Varisia, having successfully scouted out a new (but relatively minor) route down to Nar-Voth from the Fogscar Mountains. Sheila goes on to explain that Koriah has returned with a surprising number of Thassilonian artifacts from this expedition, and that she must spend a few more moments discussing the implications of this discovery with Koriah. She apologizes for the further delay, then pauses for a moment as if in thought. She then asks the PCs and Koriah to accompany her into an adjoining room.

This chamber is the lodge library and study. The walls are lined with bookshelves, while several tables in the middle of the room are heaped with scrolls and books. One table in the center, however, supports only a single object—an ornate cubical stone coffer covered with Thassilonian runes. Sheila asks for the PCs to have a seat around the table while she speaks to them.



KORIAH AZMEREN

"I apologize for the delay, as I must conclude my business with Pathfinder Azmeren before we meet. In the meantime, though, I thought you could help us with another minor issue. This stone coffer is an ancient Thassilonian puzzle, a cunning feat of magical engineering known as a paradox box. As you'll see from even a casual investigation, what appear to be seams on the sides are only shallow grooves—there's no obvious way to open the thing. Each paradox box has its own secret method of being opened. Essentially, a paradox box substitutes hidden catches and magical triggers for a lock. Given time, anyone clever enough could figure out how to open a paradox box, just as given time, a locksmith can open any lock. This particular box was among those items recovered by Koriah—the scrolls next to the box are her preliminary notes on possible triggers or methods of opening it, but she's not yet had a chance to sit down and properly investigate the thing. So... why don't you put your heads together and see if you can't do that for me? Even if the box is empty, as I suspect it probably is, knowing the method of opening it makes it a valuable find anyway. I'll return shortly, and I hope to see that box open! Think of this as an audition, if you will—because the actual task I want to speak to you about soon will require as much wit as it will brawn!"

WHAT'S IN THE BOX? (CR 1)

The PCs have been left with the both daunting and enviable task of cracking the secret of this *paradox box* (see page 64 for details on this item) and learning its method of opening. Sheila's meeting with Koriah lasts for another hour, giving the PCs a fair amount of time to puzzle out the *paradox box's* method of opening. Shaking the box, moving it from one face to another (since it has no obvious top), and listening at the box's sides provide no clues to its contents.

Koriah's notes are an invaluable resource for PCs who wish to avoid using force to open the box (smashing the box open destroys it and greatly disappoints Sheila). The scroll lists translations of the significant runes on the box—one of the most oft-repeated symbols was the rune for "wrath," which Koriah also notes is associated with evocation magic, and in the earliest days of Thassilon with the word "kindness." Her notes (correctly) indicate that this rune merely marks the box has having once belonged to a citizen of the Thassilonian nation of Bakrakhan, and that the rune likely has little to do with the method of opening this particular *paradox box*.

Another of Koriah's scrolls lists a few other key observations—the key observation being that five of the box's faces are identical, but on one face, several additional runes appear. These runes spell out the word "CRUEL." Koriah has correctly deduced that this word is somehow linked to the box's mystery. She's also noted that each of the individual runes in the word can be reorganized by touching two runes at once—doing so causes the two

Greetings, fellow seeker of adventure!

I am Sheila Heidmarch, Venture Captain of the newest Pathfinder Society lodge—and the only such lodge in Varisia at this time. You have come to my attention as someone who possesses a certain amount of skills and interests that make you an excellent addition to a highly specialized team I'm putting together for a matter of grave import, not only to the Society, but to Varisia as a whole. Please report an hour before noon to Heidmarch Manor—you will be compensated for your visit, but that reward will pale in light of the riches that await you should we come to an agreement on my proposition to you. I look forward to meeting you soon!

—Sheila Heidmarch

Player Handout

touched runes to exchange places for an hour before reverting to their original spelling of "CRUEL."

In effect, this *paradox box* is locked with a clever combination lock, although since there are no moving parts, it cannot be cracked via Disable Device. By studying the word "CRUEL," a character who succeeds at a DC 10 Linguistics check or a DC 12 Intelligence check realizes the key might be hidden in anagrams of each word. In this way, "CRUEL" can be rearranged into "LUCRE." If you wish, you can simply spell the word out on your game table using cards, tiles, or slips of paper on which are written each letter, allowing the PCs to rearrange the tiles in whatever order they wish until they stumble upon the proper anagram. If the idea of using a real-word anagram puzzle breaks verisimilitude or otherwise won't work for your group, you can simulate the puzzling out of these anagrams by a series of skill checks. In order to open the box, the PCs must accumulate a total of five successes among them all with either DC 13 Linguistics checks or DC 16 Intelligence checks. Each attempt takes 10 minutes—once the PCs have built up a total of five successes, they manage to hit the right combination of "LUCRE." A character who can read Thassilonian gains a +4 bonus on all checks associated with deciphering Thassilonian anagrams.

Trap: Unfortunately for the PCs, the box holds no secrets of ancient Thassilon—it instead holds an ancient trap. As the box is opened, it summons a pair of pugwampis (as if via *summon monster I*, caster level 10th). This trap triggers regardless of the method used to open the *paradox box*—at one point, there existed a command word to bypass

SHATTERED STAR

the trap, but that word vanished along with its creator over 10,000 years ago. These two dog-faced gremlins are released and immediately spring out to begin wreaking havoc throughout the chamber. The pugwampis attack the PCs only if they are themselves attacked—otherwise they spend a round ripping up scrolls, carving obscenities into wooden surfaces, slashing books, chewing on candles, or otherwise defacing things in the room. Additionally, each time a PC fails at an attack roll or a skill check as a result of the pugwampis' unluck aura (this aura is wide enough to fill the whole room the PCs are in, alas), the result of the PCs' unlucky check causes some form of minor damage to the room (a sword swing might chop into a chair back, or a failed Acrobatics check might cause a PC to stumble against a shelf and jostle a vase onto the floor, for example). Keep track of the number of times an unattacked pugwampi is left to vandalize the room or a PC fails an attack roll or skill check—if this collateral damage occurs more than six times, Sheila will be quite disappointed!

SUMMON MONSTER TRAP

CR 1

Type magical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset repair

Effect spell effect (*summon monster I*, CL 10th)

PUGWAMPIS (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 144)

Treasure: The box is mostly empty—it contains three garnets worth 50 gp each, a masterwork silver dagger, and a *ring of feather falling*. Sheila allows the PCs to keep these treasures as payment for the unexpected confrontation with the pugwampis, but wants to keep the *paradox box* herself.

Development: If the battle against the gremlins goes longer than 5 rounds, Sheila and Koriah arrive in the room. With these two joining the fight, you can assume that the gremlins are defeated in a single round.

Story Award: If the PCs notice and disable the trap, award them XP as if they had defeated the pugwampis in combat. In addition to the XP for defeating the gremlins, award the PCs an additional 600 XP if they manage to defeat the gremlins without accumulating six or more instances of collateral damage to the room. If the PCs cannot defeat the gremlins by the time Sheila and Koriah arrive, they earn half the normal XP awards for this encounter.

A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

After the PCs defeat the gremlins (or if they take too long during their fight), Sheila and Koriah return to the room, drawn there by the sounds of battle. Sheila demands an explanation, but despite her apparent anger, she's more

angry at herself for leaving a possible dangerous item unattended. She quickly makes it clear to the PCs that she's quite pleased with their ability to not only open the *paradox box*, but also dispatch the pugwampis (if indeed they did). If they did so without allowing much damage to scar the room, she's even happier. If the PCs didn't get the *paradox box* open, Sheila merely shrugs and sets the box aside, explaining that she'll tend to its mysteries later, but that for now she's got some more pressing topics to discuss.

Sheila bids farewell to Koriah; the half-elf bows to the PCs as she leaves and wishes them luck in their endeavors as Pathfinders. Once Koriah has left, Sheila asks the PCs to take their seats again, and then informs them of the true reason she's called upon their services. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players at this time (amending the text as appropriate if the PCs didn't actually manage to open the *paradox box*).

"First, allow me to apologize for that unpleasantness regarding the gremlins—but it does provide an excellent object lesson. The life of an adventurer is not one for the weak-hearted. That you not only took care of the gremlins but also got the box open in the first place is all the confirmation I need that my gut was right—you're the perfect group for the job I have in mind.

"You see—I've recently had trouble with one of my informants here in Magnimar, Natalya Vancaskerkin. She's a half-Varisian who recently approached the Pathfinder Society with an offer to serve as a street informant. She runs with the Sczarni—I'm not sure with which group. A week ago, Natalya sent me a cryptic hint that her gang was on the verge of uncovering an item that would be of great interest to the Society. Since the Sczarni's methods of uncovering something often involves an armed robbery or breaking into somebody's personal chambers, we thought it prudent not to press for further details and instead wait to see what it would produce. Suffice it to say, she hinted strongly that it pertained to Thassilon, and promised to meet with me to discuss this find three days ago.

"She never kept that promise—instead, she seems to have simply vanished. Initially, I assumed that the acquisition of this item was simply taking longer than expected, but now I'm hearing rumors that the Sczarni are looking for her as well.

"It seems likely that Natalya has absconded with this item she's discovered. And this is where you enter, my friends. I want to know what it was that Natalya and the Sczarni found. In fact, I'm more interested in that than in what happened to Natalya herself. For now, I'd like to keep all of this quiet—if you can find out what happened to Natalya without letting a lot of people know she was also working for me as an informant, that would be preferable—that's a big part of why I'm coming to you, as new members of the Pathfinder Society, with this task. You don't yet have a reputation in Magnimar, and as such, the lowlifes and criminals you are likely to encounter may be more likely to talk.

SHARDS OF SIN

“So... go out there and look for Natalya. Find out what happened to her, and to this item she and her gang discovered. If you can secure the item, all the better—bring it back to me and I’ll have a reward of 500 gold pieces for you. And if you can bring Natalya back alive for me to speak to, I’ll double that!”

Sheila Heidmarch would like for the PCs to begin their investigation as soon as possible, but she doesn’t mind if they take a bit of time to prepare themselves. If they were injured during the fight against the pugwampis, she’ll give the PCs up to four *potions of cure light wounds* to help repair the damage. If the PCs ask for an advance on their reward money, she’ll agree to give them 100 gp early to help them buy needed gear (with a successful DC 16 Diplomacy check, the amount increases to a maximum of 250 gp).

STARTING THE INVESTIGATION

Sheila unfortunately doesn’t know much about Natalya, other than that the woman approached the Pathfinders and offered to be a sort of double agent among the Sczarni. As the Pathfinders have recently forged alliances with the Sczarni in many cities throughout the Inner Sea region, Sheila knew that having a member of a Sczarni gang as a double agent could be useful—the Sczarni have yet to fully earn the trust of the Pathfinder Society, after all. Unfortunately, one of Natalya’s conditions for entering this alliance with the Pathfinders was that she wanted to retain a good amount of anonymity and autonomy, so she’d be free to handle things as she saw fit. Sheila now realizes that agreeing to these terms may have been a mistake—but until she knows more, she’s not willing to write off Natalya as a traitor.

Before the PCs leave, Sheila can give them some information about the Sczarni, and perhaps a bit more that the PCs can go on to begin their investigations. The Sczarni have been a part of Magnimar from the start—they’re not the most dangerous or powerful of the city’s criminal organizations, but they are the most visible. The Sczarni generally don’t involve themselves in particularly violent crimes, and in many cases in Magnimar, they actually help to protect and police less fortunate neighborhoods, and as such are often well regarded by the lower-class. There are six major Sczarni gangs in the city: the Creepers, Doolun’s Lads, the Gallowed, the Tower Girls, the Washside Wringers, and the Wreckwash Blades, with the Gallowed being the most powerful Sczarni family in the city.

When Natalya initially approached Sheila with the offer of serving the Pathfinders as an informant, she engaged the aid of a man known as the Amazing Zograthy, a Varisian who keeps a permanent tent and fortune-telling business in Washers’ Row in Dockway—specifically, at the end of a narrow alley that serves as a permanent street fair. A DC 14 Knowledge (local) check is enough for a PC to know that the Amazing Zograthy often works as a sort

FOLLOWING THE LEADS

Sheila’s initial clues into Natalya’s disappearance lead the PCs to Zograthy, to a rumored slaver ring, and to the city watch stationed at the Arvensoar. The PCs will uncover additional leads at each location—many of these clues are red herrings in regard to the case of Natalya’s vanishing, but they help to foreshadow other elements the PCs will encounter later in the adventure—particularly the presence of a group of derros toiling deep under the Irespan with victims abducted from the city streets.

The “lead” encounters can be run in any order and should be played in the natural progression that results from the players’ direction of inquiry. The PCs need not follow up on all of these clues—doing so will certainly prepare them better for the challenges ahead, but eventually the clues should lead them to Fenster the Blight—the man who knows Natalya’s current whereabouts. It is not necessary that the PCs complete all of the encounters before going to find Fenster, though some valuable XP might be missed, so you may want to stage the events anyway.



of middle-man between Sczarni and outsiders, but he expects gold in payment for his services.

Sheila has little more information for the PCs, unfortunately—there are rumors of Nidalese slavers prowling the streets of late, and if these are true, being abducted by a slaver in the middle of the night would certainly explain Natalya’s absence. She might even have been picked up by the city guard for some reason, in which case a visit to the Arvensoar, the garrison for the city’s watch, might yield some clues. Beyond this, she can offer nothing but wishes for luck.

LEAD 1: THE AMAZING ZOGRATHY

Washers’ Row is a tangle of open-air washhouses, launderers, and Varisian wagons and tents—while the bulk of those who live and toil here do so in the laundry and tailoring industries, there are some who practice other trades, such as the Amazing Zograthy. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check knows that Washer’s Row is also primarily a front for one of Magnimar’s larger Sczarni gangs, the Washside Wringers. As the PCs approach the street fair, read or paraphrase the following.

At the southern end of Washers’ Row, a tattered banner hanging over the entrance to the small side street advertises “Professor Callivario’s Stupendous Exhibition of the Outrageous and Sublime.” Beyond this overly exuberant advertisement is a squalid setup consisting of little more than a series of rundown sideshow booths and carts with assorted games and

SHATTERED STAR



amusements of the meaner sort. To one side, urchins pitch pennies at lily pads floating in a small, scum-covered fountain while a bored carnie looks on. Nearby, the sound of cats hissing and fighting arises from behind a cart where a small crowd of ne'er-do-wells has gathered to cheer and place bets. Everywhere lurk faces pinched with suspicion or hunger—expressions worn by carnival workers and visitors alike. This is not the sort of place to be careless with a coin pouch.

By talking to one of the questionable carnies or a stooped old barker with a retching cough, the PCs are quickly pointed to the abode of the Amazing Zograthy, Seer of the Dark, a small, well-patched tent crudely painted with mystical symbols and decorated with chicken bones and other oddments. Within the stuffy, cluttered tent is a table covered in blue velvet stitched with moons, stars, and arcane symbols. A dusty crystal ball and a dog-eared harrow deck sit upon it. Behind this table sits an aged, bald, Varisian man with threadbare purple robes and piercing eyes—the one and only **Amazing Zograthy** (CN male human expert 4). Upon the PCs' entrance, he gestures broadly and states in a tremulous voice, "The Amazing Zograthy sees all and knows all. A double fist of silver for a turn of the cards or a vision in the crystal; a treble fist of gold for the secrets of

the multiverse." The prices may seem high for a street-side fortune—but that's because Zograthy doesn't recognize the PCs. Anyone who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check or a DC 12 Heal check on Zograthy notices the telltale signs of pesh addiction.

For 10 sp, Zograthy performs a bogus reading from a harrow deck or nonmagical crystal ball. For 15 gp he'll hand over a dose of pesh (he keeps 10 doses hidden in pockets on his person). Rules for drugs and fortune-telling can be found on pages 236–239 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*, should you need them. If the PCs just want to talk, Zograthy leans back in his rickety chair and says, "Aaaah... Secrets! Perhaps my greatest trade!" He then flatly demands a fee of 50 gp—if the PCs pay, he'll answer their questions quickly and truthfully. His initial attitude is indifferent; he has a +1 Charisma modifier, and attempts to get him to lower his fee count as complicated aid. It's thus a DC 21 Diplomacy check to get him to lower the 50 gp price to his minimum of 15 gp—the same price for a dose of pesh. The PCs can attempt to intimidate him once—if he's not made helpful by this, the attempt only results in a shout of "Hey, rube!", after which a dozen angry Varisian thugs converge on the tent to expel the interlopers. (Use the statistics for the thugs found on page 19.) If these thugs are defeated,

SHARDS OF SIN

Zograthy falls to his knees and promises to talk if the PCs spare his life.

If asked about anything related to Natalya Vancaskerkin, Zograthy knows nothing about any supposed “discovery” she may have made, but he does confirm that she hasn’t been heard from among the Sczarni. Zograthy adds that many folk along the waterfront, both here in Beacon’s Point and over in Dockway and Underbridge, have been disappearing of late—a few each week, in fact, with many simply vanishing out of their very beds at night. He suspects that Natalya is among those who have disappeared in this manner, and bitterly adds that as long as only poor Varisians and other destitute folk are being targeted, the chances of the city doing anything about the disappearances is nil. He does know that it’s not a Sczarni plot—indeed, the Sczarni seem quite interested in solving the vanishings themselves, but are not seeking aid in that effort. If anything, it’s harder to contact actual Sczarni leaders these days than it is normally. The leading theory on the street is that the vanished folk are the victims of slavers who then secretly sell them offshore at night to Nidalese ships—but Zograthy doesn’t put much stock in such rumors.

Before the PCs leave, Zograthy clears his throat and extends his empty palm one more time. If the PCs put at least 1 gp in it, he quickly adds that Natalya was, at least until recently, a member of a Sczarni gang known as the Tower Girls, a group of cat burglars. They are themselves searching for Natalya, and word is that when they find her, she’ll be in deep trouble. He doesn’t know exactly what is going on with them but has heard them say that Natalya went mad before her disappearance. Attempts to learn of the location of the Tower Girls or other Sczarni receive only a cold stare in response—such information is not suitable for sharing with *gorgios* (he doesn’t know the answer to such questions anyway). He has no further information of use to the PCs, though he could be used to feed the PCs additional clues later for a price if they get off track.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully gain all of the available information from Zograthy without starting a fight in the carnival, award them 600 XP.

LEAD 2. NIDALESE SLAVERS (CR 2)

If the PCs track down rumors of Nidalese slavers, a successful DC 12 Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy check made to gather information reveals a rumor that a pick-up for one of these slave runs has been scheduled for this very midnight at an old, boarded-up shoreline tavern

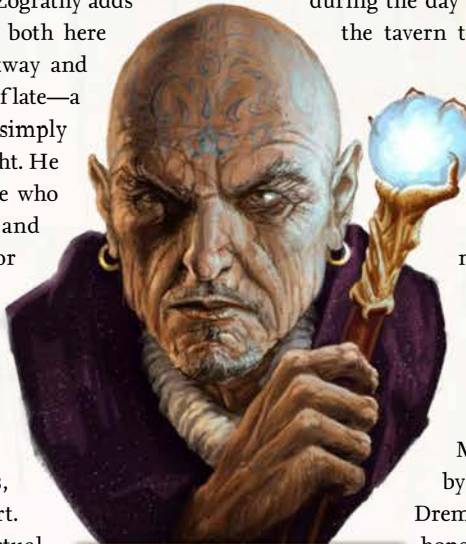
in Dockway. The tavern was once known as the Puffy Pelican—a faded painting of a fat pelican still graces the facade of the empty building, and the building’s back features a half-collapsed wooden deck that hangs over the high-tide mark. A preliminary investigation of the building during the day reveals nothing out of the ordinary—the tavern truly looks abandoned, and bears no signs of having been used recently.

If the PCs return at night, at or near midnight, a successful DC 10 Perception check is enough to note what appears to be the dim light of a hooded lantern inside the tavern—no Perception check is necessary if the PCs move around to the back where the boards over the building’s back door have been recently removed.

Creatures: In truth, there are no Nidalese slavers operating in Magnimar—the rumors were started by an ambitious man named Plutivarch Dremis, a slightly unhinged sorcerer who hopes to impress the local branch of the Aspis Consortium by capturing a batch of Pathfinder recruits for ransom. Plutivarch

paid a network of agents well to spread the word of Nidalese slavers through the city, and whenever the city guard followed up, Plutivarch simply let them find no evidence of slavers. Only when he hooks Pathfinder recruits like the PCs does he begin stage two of his somewhat foolish plan.

The light inside the tavern is in fact nothing more than a *dancing light* placed there by Plutivarch to lure the PCs into the building. He waits for the PCs to enter, lurking in the far corner of the tavern’s main room, ready to spring his ambush. Plutivarch is a thin man with a weak chin and a ratty, self-inflicted haircut. He wears once-fine noble’s clothing (stolen from a laundry and worn daily for weeks) and carries a wickedly curved dagger (also stolen, but in much finer condition than his clothing).



AMAZING ZOGRATHY

PLUTIVARCH DREMIS

CR 2

XP 600

Male human sorcerer 3

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 16 (3d6+3)

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; +2 vs. sleep and charm

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dart +3 (1d4)

SHATTERED STAR

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

1st (6/day)—*color spray* (DC 15), *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *read magic*, *resistance*

Bloodline arcane

TACTICS

Before Combat Plutivarch casts *mage armor* when he arrives at the tavern an hour before midnight. While he lies in wait, he listens carefully—if he hears the PCs approach, he drinks a *potion of invisibility*.

During Combat Plutivarch waits for the PCs to be clumped together so he can spring up and cast *color spray* on them, trying to catch as many as possible. He saves *magic missile* for foes that seem particularly resistant to his *color spray* tactic, and drinks a healing potion whenever he's below 10 hit points.

Morale Plutivarch surrenders if brought below 4 hit points, dropping to his knees and begging for his life.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials

Skills Bluff +9, Diplomacy +6, Perception +2, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +5

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ arcane bond (dagger), metamagic adept

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of invisibility* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, darts (6), pouch with 35 gp and an amethyst worth 250 gp

Development: If Plutivarch is captured and questioned, he admits the nature of his ruse and that there are no actual Nidalese slavers—he capitalized on the vanishings for his own personal gain by inventing the rumors of slavers. If the PCs ask about the disappearances, Plutivarch wryly invites the PCs to talk to the city watch. They're the ones who are supposed to be watching over the city, after all—shouldn't they know why citizens have been disappearing? While this answer might feel insincere—the advice is sound. Furthermore, Plutivarch is a wanted man—a successful DC 13 Knowledge (local) check is enough for a PC to recall the 100 gp bounty the city watch has placed on his head for various minor crimes (many of which have put the city watch in a bad light). If turned over to the city watch, the PCs receive the reward for his capture and can more easily convince the guards at the Arvensoar to open up to them.

If Plutivarch manages to overwhelm the PCs, he ties them up, stashes their gear in a heap near the back door, and leaves them in the tavern overnight—he then scurries a few blocks to the south over to Bronze House (the Aspis Consortium headquarters in Magnimar) and announces

he's "caught a few Pathfinders for them!" Fortunately for the PCs, the Aspis Consortium wants nothing to do with unsanctioned aggression against their competitors at this time, and they beat Plutivarch senseless and stash him aboard a ship bound for Bloodcove the next morning. They then leave an anonymous tip at Heidmarch Manor regarding the PCs—if the PCs don't engineer an escape themselves by dawn, Koriah arrives to rescue them. She explains that she intercepted the message and Sheila doesn't know about this—she's had her share of unfortunate "accidents" while adventuring, and is diplomatic about the PCs' embarrassing predicament. She promises them that she'll not breathe a word of what happened to anyone, because who knows? Someday the PCs might be in a position to return the favor and save her!

Story Award: If the PCs manage to interrogate Plutivarch and turn him over to the city watch, award them 200 XP.

LEAD 3. A TRIP TO THE ARVENSOAR

At some point, the PCs should approach the city watch—either because they're curious to find out what the watch knows about the disappearances or whether Natalya was arrested, or simply because they've captured a prisoner like Plutivarch they want to claim a bounty on. Any attempt to question members of the city watch on patrol yields the same response—a gruff suggestion that the PCs take their questions to the Arvensoar, the watch's barracks and fortress.

The Arvensoar looms in the southern part of the city, high above the districts of Lowcleft and Naos. The tower itself is about 400 feet tall, with the lower portion built into the side of the Seacleft that splits the city in half. The watch officers stationed at the Arvensoar have busy schedules, and unless the PCs have Plutivarch in chains to collect the bounty or succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check, it'll be 1d4 hours before an officer has a chance to talk with them. In either event, the officer they eventually speak to is a woman named **Kasadei** (NG female Varisian fighter 3), a busy watch officer who nonetheless tries her best to make time for concerned citizens.

If the PCs have brought in Plutivarch, it's Kasadei who pays the PCs their 100 gp bounty. She does her best to provide answers to any questions the PCs may have—likely questions and their answers are presented below.

Do you know where Natalya Vancaskerkin is? Kasadei confirms that Natalya Vancaskerkin is known to the city watch—she's a petty burglar known to run with the Tower Girls. That Natalya has vanished is news to the watch—she hasn't been picked up by any patrols, in any event. Kasadei's not surprised that Natalya's disappearance hasn't been reported—the Sczarni tend to try to solve their own problems. If anyone knows more, it's probably the Tower Girls.

How can we contact the Tower Girls? That could be a problem—tracking down any of the Sczarni gangs is tricky normally, but as far as Kasadei knows, the Tower Girls themselves have recently changed their headquarters. No informants have yet been able to update the city watch as to their new headquarters, but Kasadei does know that a few months back, the Tower Girls had a falling out with another Sczarni gang, the Wreckwash Blades. For several weeks after that, rumor was that the Tower Girls were slumming it in an abandoned warehouse in Underbridge that they shared with a disreputable local by the name of Fenster the Blight—he may know where the Tower Girls (or perhaps Natalya) are located now. Kasadei can provide the PCs with directions to this warehouse if asked.

What does the city watch know about the disappearances? With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, the PCs note that Kasadei bristles slightly when they ask about the recent vanishings. If they press, she admits that she's frustrated at the persistent rumors that the city watch is doing nothing to solve the disappearances—especially considering that they've confirmed that the rumors of Nidalese slavers are false, and that the majority of those who vanished have actually been found. Kasadei muses that rumormongers don't find happy endings nearly as fun to gossip about, and as a result news that the vanishings have been solved isn't nearly as gossiped about as the vanishings themselves have been. In fact, as far as the city watch is concerned, the investigation into the disappearances is concluded.

Why has the investigation into the disappearances been closed? Many of those who went missing have been found, with the few remaining missing cases likely the results of mundane misadventure. The fact that Natalya is not among those who have been found is of little concern to the watch—as was mentioned, she is a Sczarni, after all. A successful DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that Kasadei seems to be holding something back, but it'll take a successful DC 17 Diplomacy check to get her to say more. If the PCs brought in Plutivarch, though, Kasadei is pleased enough that she'll say more automatically. She goes on to say that many of those who had disappeared were not vagrants, but rather were gainfully employed merchants, fishermen, shopkeepers, and laborers. In many cases, they were found days or weeks after they vanished, living as homeless wretches in the city slums. Those who were questioned proved to have amnesia and had no idea of where they had been during their disappearance. They seemed none the worse for wear other than their amnesia and the effects of their deplorable living conditions. Kasadei is baffled as to what may have caused the amnesia, but since most victims seem to have returned safe and whole otherwise, the watch has declared the spate of vanishings to be a closed case. At this point, Kasadei lowers her voice and confides in the PCs that she worries that whatever's been

SPEAKING WITH THE SCZARNI

The PCs know that Natalya ran with the Sczarni—they may even learn that she was a member of the Tower Girls. Seeking out information about her from the Sczarni of Magnimar might seem like a good idea, but unfortunately, the disappearances are vexing the Sczarni as much as they are the city watch—especially since the vanishings are mostly occurring in slums and other neighborhoods traditionally “policed” by the Sczarni themselves and not so much by the city guard.

As a result, the town's Sczarni gangs are particularly quiet and hard to contact during this adventure—attempts to contact the Sczarni should meet with frustrating dead ends, forcing the PCs to follow up on other clues. That said, if the PCs are having a difficult time finding out where Natalya is hiding, you can use anonymous hints from a Sczarni source to push the PCs in the right direction, either urging them toward the final lead (Fenster the Blight), or even directly to Part Two. If the PCs missed out on a lot of the information the city watch has to offer, a Sczarni encounter can certainly fill them in—at the very least, it can tip them off that the Tower Girls had a connection to Fenster the Blight.

going on in these cases, the city of Magnimar's not seen the last of it, and if they can figure out what's been causing hard-working citizens to abandon their lives and become amnesiac vagrants, she'll see to it that the PCs get a 1,000 gp reward. If the PCs ask to speak to any of the amnesiacs, Kasadei is hesitant to give out names, saying that they've been through enough already and that she doesn't expect the PCs will be able to extract any more information than the city watch has—and in this case, she's right. These poor souls are the victims of derro torture, and have had their memories scrubbed via foul magic. See page 54 for more information about what the derros are up to and what the PCs might learn from victims whose memories they somehow manage to restore (a process likely out of the reach of low level PCs at the start of this adventure, but perhaps not by the end of the adventure when they come up against the derros themselves).

Story Award: Award the PCs 400 XP for learning what the guards know about the disappearances, and 400 XP for learning about Fenster the Blight.

LEAD 4. FENSTER THE BLIGHT (CR 2)

Fenster the Blight is as unsavory as denizens of Magnimar's most notorious slum get. He has lived in Underbridge for decades, although he's changed homes many times over the years. His current haunt is a partially collapsed

SHATTERED STAR

warehouse on the shoreline, in a particularly filthy stretch where tidal currents often cause the filth and refuse of the city to collect in stinking clots along the shore.

Fenster's home is a partially collapsed warehouse—the building has a relatively large open area within, but he keeps to one corner. Here, he's made a sort of crude shelter from rowboats (one or two of which might still be almost seaworthy) and timbers leaning against the warehouse's frame. The entrance to this hovel consists of a pair of skiffs leaning against each other to create a triangular "arch" from which a moldering remnant of a ship's sail hangs like a curtain. Sitting next to the entrance is an old sea chest with a broken lid. A sign leans against the front of the chest—"LEEV A GIFT AND WATE OUTSID." A dented tin platter sits on the ground before the sign.

Creatures: Fenster is a wretched creature, more skin and bone than meat. His flesh is clammy and gray in places, one of his eyes is clouded over with a white film, and his clothing is caked with filth. His breathing is raspy and gurgling and smells of bad meat—he's plagued by a wet, hacking cough. Fenster is a truly vile wretch, a carrier of several diseases who hires himself out for any foul job that might come his way. In the past, he's worked as a garbage scavenger, a goblin baiter, an alchemy test subject, and a disposer of bodies. Most recently, he actually served as a sort of landlord by allowing the Tower Girls to shelter for a week in his warehouse. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check is enough to know the procedure: leave a gift on the tin platter, wait for Fenster to come out and examine the gift, and if he likes the gift, he'll do whatever you need him to do. If the PCs put an object on the platter and wait 2d6 rounds, Fenster comes creeping out of his hovel to examine the payment—if the item is worth at least 5 gp, he'll pocket it and then sit down on the broken chest as he asks the PCs, "What yew want Fenster ta'do?" Attempts to open the chest and rummage its contents or to enter his home drive Fenster into a frenzy, compelling him to attack.

Fenster is always eager to claim responsibility for things he thinks might bolster his infamy. If the PCs ask him about the disappearances, he puffs up his chest and proudly claims responsibility for the vanishings (threatening to "disappear" the PCs as well if they don't watch themselves) before breaking out in a series of alarmingly wet coughs. If confronted with facts to the contrary, he readily admits that it was not him after all—though he wishes it were in his own mad logic. He does claim to have seen those responsible for the disappearances, though. He calls them the "blue dwarfies" and states he has seen them skulking about the alleys of the waterfront now and then, though he does not know where they come from or go to (nor has he seen them in the past several days).

If asked about the Tower Girls, Fenster proudly claims to be their landlord. If a PC points out the Tower Girls aren't around, he shrugs and claims, "They'll be back... they always come back ta ol' Fenster!" In fact, he has no idea where they've gone—although he does have some knowledge about where Natalya has gone. If the PCs ask about her, he grows wary, then brags that he knows where she is but won't say more without a better payment. He's looking for anything worth at least 100 gp—although a Bluff check to convince him of a worthless object's value works just as well, as does attacking him or otherwise intimidating him into cooperating.

If convinced to reveal what he knows about Natalya, Fenster admits that he's seen her lurking about in a nearby building—and that she's no longer hanging out with the other Tower Girls. In fact, she seemed to be doing her best



FENSTER THE BLIGHT

SHARDS OF SIN

to stay unobserved—here Fenster proudly points out how “Nuthin’ in th’Shadow gits by me good peeper!” as he taps the sallow cheek under his non-clouded eye. He gives the PCs directions if they ask.

FENSTER THE BLIGHT

CR 2

XP 600

Male human fighter (unarmed fighter) 2/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 48)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 22 (3 HD; 2d10+1d8+3)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** –3

Defensive Abilities harsh training^{UC}

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d3+3)

Ranged broken dagger +2 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks disease carrier, sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat If Fenster sees the PCs attempt to open his chest, or if they enter his home, he shrieks and charges in to attack, hoping to get in a sneak attack on a surprise round if possible. If he can’t reach a foe via a charge, he throws his dagger on the first round. He focuses his attacks on unarmored foes if possible.

Morale If reduced to 6 or fewer hit points, Fenster drops sobbing to his knees and begs for his miserable life.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5 (+7 grapple); **CMD** 18 (20 vs. grapple)

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Tiger Style^{UC}

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +8, Disable Device +8, Perception +3, Stealth +8, Survival +3

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding +1

Other Gear rusty broken dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease Carrier (Ex) Fenster is swimming in disease. If he critically hits a creature with his unarmed strike, or if he grapples or is grappled by a creature, that creature is exposed to a random disease, as determined by a d4 roll: 1—filth fever; 2—leprosy; 3—red ache; 4—shakes. See page 557 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for details on each disease.

^{UC} See *Ultimate Combat*.

Treasure: Aside from various bits of junk, rotting fish, and shiny rocks, two items of value can be found in Fenster’s chest—a pearl worth 100 gp and a masterwork hand crossbow (this last item having been how the Tower

Girls paid their rent for the few days they stayed in Fester’s warehouse before they moved on to their new hideout in the Crow piling—see Part Three).

Story Award: If the PCs manage to handle this encounter peacefully, award them XP as if they had defeated Fenster in battle.

PART TWO: THE SEEKER’S SHARD

Natalya Vancaskerkin’s sordid tale is revealed in full in her NPC entry on page 60—but the short version is that she discovered the *Shard of Pride* in the Irespan. She immediately fell victim to the shard’s curse and abandoned her fellow Tower Girls and responsibilities to the Pathfinders alike, overwhelmed with a new driving pride that made it difficult for her to assume a subservient role. Now, she’s hiding out in an abandoned boarding house in Underbridge, where she uses her magic and silver tongue to build up her own gang of sewer goblins and lowlifes, hoping to some day soon launch an attack against the Tower Girls and wrest control of the Sczarni gang for herself. Her megalomaniacal plans are, of course, hopelessly outlandish, but the curse of the shard does not let her see that.

The primary way the PCs can learn about Natalya’s new hideout is from Fenster the Blight, but if the PCs spend a significant amount of time exploring Underbridge and asking around its treacherous alleys and dangerous establishments, a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check made to gather information uncovers a local vagrant who, for a bribe of at least 5 gp, reveals that he spotted a woman of Natalya’s description at an old boarding house. This Diplomacy check requires a full day of exploration, and up to 3 other characters can provide assistance via the aid another action. If the PCs spend significant amounts of time in Underbridge, you can spice up their stay with random encounters from the table for The Shadow on page 51 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar: City of Monuments* (you might wish to reroll results of CR 4 or higher encounters... or you might not).

Natalya’s new hideout has seen better days. Its clapboard sides are dark with mildew and marred by scorch marks. In places fire has gutted portions of the roof’s moss-covered tile shingles, but the building appears to be structurally intact. The building stands near the stark wall of the Seacleft, and scree from several decades of minor rockfalls has piled up along its southern face. The structure was built over a group of collection pools in the city’s early sewers, and when its interior was gutted, the floors collapsed into the septic system below. Natalya herself lairs among the rafters and attic space that still exists between the building’s ceiling and the roof. The building’s windows are heavily boarded over and should be considered to have the same statistics as its wooden walls. Doors are made of wood and cannot be locked.

TOWER GIRL AMBUSH (CR 4)

The PCs are not alone in their interest in Natalya and her new hideout. After she abandoned her sisters and stole off with the *Shard of Pride*, the leader of the Tower Girls, a wererat named Ayala Javeski, was enraged. She almost considered abandoning her current operation in the Irespan (see Part Three) to go after Natalya, but eventually decided to send her second-in-command, a woman named Terisha Skiloni, out to track Natalya down. Ayala urged caution, though—the Tower Girls aren't sure what the extent of the *Shard of Pride*'s powers are, after all. She gave Terisha strict orders to not engage Natalya if she found her, but to observe her quietly for a few days to try to determine what she was planning and whether the *Shard of Pride* was as much of a game changer as Ayala feared.

Creatures: Ayala wasn't willing to let any of her other girls go on the mission, so Terisha cashed in a few favors for support by contacting three mercenaries who owed money to the Tower Girls—in return for helping her on this mission, she's promised to absolve the three Varisian thugs of their debts. It took Terisha several days to track Natalya down—she only located Natalya's new hideout about a day before the PCs first arrive in the area. She and her three thugs have been biding their time in a shack a block to the east of Natalya's hideout, some 150 feet away. The three thugs spend their time waiting in the building below while Terisha watches from hiding on the roof above, keeping an eye on the comings and goings (as sporadic as they are) from Natalya's building. She's been awake for over 24 hours, but has downed a *potion of lesser restoration* to stave off the effects of fatigue for now. Remember, because of the distance, the PCs take a -15 penalty on Perception checks to notice Terisha watching from the distant rooftop. If

the PCs notice her and accost her, she and her thugs try to flee, returning at a later point to watch if they can. If cornered, though, Terisha and her goons don't back down from a fight.

Terisha would prefer to let the PCs test the waters with Natalya first, however, and if she notices the PCs approaching Natalya's hideout, she lets her thugs know that they may be needed soon. She waits for the PCs to enter the building, then sneaks over to the building to peek through boarded-up windows, listen at cracks, and otherwise keep tabs on what's going on inside.

If the PCs attack Natalya, Terisha lets the combat play out, then ambushes the PCs on their way out of the building.

In this case, she demands the *Shard of Pride* but is willing to let the PCs go about their business if Natalya's dead.

If the PCs capture Natalya alive, or worse, resolve things peacefully, Terisha wastes no time—she doesn't want the PCs learning about what the Tower Girls have going on in the Crow piling—she and her thugs immediately attack the hideout, attempting to kill Natalya first and the PCs second. In this case, Natalya and any of her surviving



TERISHA SKILONI

SHARDS OF SIN

minions may be willing to help the PCs fight Terisha and her goons.

TERISHA SKILONI CR 2

XP 600

Female human rogue (acrobat) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 132)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 26 (3d8+9)

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk whip +4 (1d3+1 nonlethal), mwk short sword +4 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Terisha opens combat with her hand crossbow if she can get a sneak attack with it; otherwise, she uses Acrobatics to stay mobile and flank foes with her thugs.

Morale Terisha flees combat if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points—she does not flee to the Crow piling until she's sure that she's not being followed. If cornered, she surrenders.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 16

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Climb)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +5, Climb +12, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ expert acrobat^{APG}, rogue talents (finesse rogue), second chance^{APG} 1/day

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (3), *potions of lesser restoration* (2), smokestick, tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork short sword, masterwork whip, climber's kit, grappling hook with 50-foot silk rope, second story harness, silver holy symbol, thieves' tools, 4 pp, 47 gp

^{APG} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

VARISIAN THUGS (3) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Human warrior 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 shield)

hp 18 each (2d10+7)

Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0

TACTICS

During Combat These thugs spread out in combat, each attacking different foes. They prefer to fight in melee.

Morale The thugs surrender if reduced to fewer than 5 hit points. If Terisha is defeated or flees, the thugs attempt to flee as well.

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee morningstar +5 (1d8+2)

Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 14

Feats Toughness, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills Intimidate +4, Ride –1

Languages Common

Gear chainmail, light wooden shield, light crossbow with 20 bolts, morningstar, 12 gp

Development: If the PCs capture Terisha, her initial attitude is unfriendly. If the PCs interrogate her, she claims that Natalya went crazy and that she was sent by her boss to watch the thief and to catch her and bring her back into the fold (this admission counts as an unimportant secret, and results in a +5 increase to Diplomacy DCs). Getting Terisha to reveal the fact that Natalya stole an artifact, what the name of her boss is, or that the Tower Girls are now located in the Crow piling are important secrets (resulting in +10 increases to Diplomacy DCs).

A1. GUARD CHAMBER (CR 1)

A small shack leans against the side of the building, probably a storage shed of some sort. Boarded windows look into an interior littered with fresh garbage and debris of recent habitation.

Creatures: Natalya keeps a pair of thugs stationed in this shack—as with all her minions, she initially secured their cooperation via *charm person*, but retained their allegiance via a combination of diplomacy and intimidation—and periodic payments of coin. During the day, both thugs watch the approach to the house through cracks in the boarded-up windows, while at night they each take shifts while the other sleeps. If they spot anyone approaching, they exit the building and loudly order the trespassers to leave—alerting Natalya and the others inside the building with their shouted demands. They attack anyone who tries to enter the building, but flee from combat if brought below 5 hit points.

VARISIAN THUGS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 18 each (see above)

SHATTERED STAR



A2. ENTRY

The entire floor of this chamber has collapsed into the pool of water five feet below. The earthen walls of this flooded subcellar ooze with foul rivulets, and the smell is abominable. Two oozing sewer pipes protrude through the east wall of this pit just above the level of the sewage. Part of the ceiling above the entrance has collapsed, revealing an attic crawlspace above; a rickety ladder leads up from the water into the crawlspace. A door stands in the far wall across the sludge pit. A wooden plank balanced between both doors makes a precarious bridge between the two doors.

The plank can hold the weight of two Medium or four Small creatures at one time without breaking—crossing the 8-inch-wide plank requires a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check. The sludge in this pit (and throughout the building) is 3 feet deep, and is considered a shallow bog for movement purposes (*Core Rulebook* 427). If someone falls into it from the plank or a doorway, she takes no damage, but the first time a person comes in contact with the water, she must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or contract filth fever. Climbing the oozing pit walls requires a successful DC 15 Climb check. The ladder leading up to area A7 above is in terrible shape, as a DC

15 Perception check reveals—if anyone attempts to climb it, it immediately breaks and dumps her into the sludge below. Climbing up the wooden walls into the crawlspace above requires a DC 20 Climb check.

Medium creatures must squeeze to wriggle through the pipes into area A3.

Development: PCs attempting to move through this room must make a Stealth check opposed by the Perception checks of the sewer goblins in area A3. If the goblins hear intruders, they emerge from the sewer pipes. Three of them begin throwing handfuls of sewage at the PCs, while one uses a broom handle to dislodge plank (requiring a successful touch attack against an AC of 10 and a DC 12 Strength check) and dump anyone on it into the pool. Anyone falling into the pool is immediately swarmed by the sewer goblins that are able to move through the sludge without penalty due to their affinity with it.

A3. SEWER GOBLIN LAIR (CR 1)

A pair of sewer pipes open into a cramped and filthy lair. The air is foul and the floor is worse—a slowly flowing shallow morass of sludge. A large sewer pipe exits, going deeper into Magnimar's sewer system to the east.

SHARDS OF SIN

Characters who wish to follow the sewer pipe to the east come to a grate after 100 feet—the grate is rusted shut, but opens into the city sewers under Magnimar beyond. It should be obvious under even casual examination that this route has not seen any traffic for months.

Creatures: A group of three sewer goblins under Natalya's command make their lair here. They listen for the sounds of intruders in room A2, and eagerly move to attack foes they hear in that room. The brutes are filthy and vicious and fight until killed. Unlike typical goblins, each sewer goblin is armed not with a bow but with a pair of burlap pouches filled with night soil and broken glass. These are improvised weapons that need only a touch attack to strike a foe—on a hit, the broken glass deals 1 point of damage and the target becomes sickened for 1d6 rounds (a successful DC 12 Fortitude save reduces this duration to 1 round). On a successful critical hit, the goblin hits his target in the face, blinding the target for 1 round.

SEWER GOBLINS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Ranged pouch of filth –1 touch (1 plus sickness and possible blinding)

Treasure: Stuffed in a dried and half-eaten dire rat carcass are 13 cp and a small topaz worth 15 gp.

A4. FORTIFIED POSITION (CR 1/2)

The floor of this room has fallen away, leaving a narrow, charred ledge along the south and east walls. To the northwest, a ledge heaped with crates and barrels sits, while above the rafters of the attic lay bare to view.

The ledge is safe to walk on, but is sloped dangerously at places, and requires a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check to navigate. Concealed behind the crate barricade, a hole has been cut through the north wall large enough to allow easy passage for a Small creature (a Medium creature can squeeze through) to area A5.

Creatures: Two sewer goblins lurk amid the crates on the northwest ledge, armed with heavy crossbows sized for Medium creatures and a supply of 12 crossbow bolts between them. They have total cover from anyone on the ledge or in the doorway except when they rise to fire, when they have only cover. They also have only normal cover from anyone on the rafters above (room A8).

They alternate firing every other round and prefer to fire upon targets in the rafters over those on the ledge.

SEWER GOBLINS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Ranged Medium heavy crossbow +2 (1d10/19–20)

A5. DEAD END

This chamber has no floor, opening directly into the sump of a sewage pit below. Likewise, the charred ceiling has fallen away, revealing the fire-blackened rafters above. Next to a hole cut in the southwest corner of the wall, a crude ladder that has been nailed to the wall provides access to the rafters above.

The hole provides access to the barricaded platform in room A4. The ladder leads up to area A9, but like the ladder in area A2 is fragile and falls apart immediately if used.

A6. ESCAPE ROUTE (CR 1)

This room is floorless, with only an exposed septic pit where the floor should be. A dry sewer pipe extends from the wall of this pit. The west wall is dominated by a massive brick fireplace that still remains anchored in place, overlooking the sewage. A ladder extends from the sewage to the fire-blackened hearth above. As in other rooms, the ceiling here has collapsed to reveal the attic space.



SEWER GOBLIN

SHATTERED STAR

The sewer pipe is a squeeze for any creature larger than Small—it extends along a winding course for 620 feet before exiting near the shoreline not far from the Irespan piling known as the Harpy. A ladder inside of the chimney of the large fireplace allows easy access to area A10 above.

Creature: Lurking within the shadowed depths of the fireplace is a goblin snake named Cyvis. Before Natalya came along, Cyvis served as the leader of the sewer goblin tribe that inhabited this derelict building. He is not charmed, but has grudgingly allied himself with Natalya because she's somewhat frightening. He avoids combat unless confronted here, instead waiting for an opportunity to steal her shard as described in A10.

CYVIS CR 1

XP 400

Goblin snake (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 132)

hp 13

A7. ATTIC ENTRY

A hole in the ceiling of the room below provides access to this attic crawlspace. Rafter beams extend across the area to the opposite side.

The crawlspace is 5 feet high, requiring most Medium creatures to crouch slightly but not otherwise impeding their movement. The rafters are 8 inches wide, and require a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check to cross—they are solidly built and can easily support the weight of Medium creatures. The ceiling is composed of thin slats that break if more than 25 pounds is placed upon them. Anyone who falls through the ceiling lands 13 feet below in the sludge below, taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from debris.

A8. PRECARIOUS CROSSING (CR 1)

The ceiling of the room below has collapsed, revealing a drop into the filth below. Charred rafters extend to the western wall, providing a means of crossing the space to the north or south.

As in A7, the rafters in here are safe to cross with the appropriate Acrobatics check. However, anyone on the rafters is likewise exposed to crossbowfire from the goblins in area A4 below.

Trap: Sections of two rafters have been weakened by being partially sawn through. If a Small or larger creature crosses one of these rafters, it collapses and drops anyone on it into the cesspool below.

WEAKENED RAFTERS

CR 1

XP 400

Type mechanical; Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset repair

Effect 13-foot fall into sewage (1d6 nonlethal damage, fall plus disease—see area A2 for details); Reflex DC 20 save avoids; multiple targets (all targets on rafter)



NATALYA VANCASKERKIN

A9. RAFTER GUARDIANS (CR 1)

The ceiling has collapsed, exposing the room below. A ladder nailed to the wall in the southwest corner provides access to the rafters here. Major sections of the firewalls to the south and west have been destroyed providing access to other areas.

Creatures: One of the members of the goblin tribe that Natalya charmed kept stirges as pets. These creatures have been left in this room to guard the upper rafters, where they crawl about eagerly. The two stirges are

trained to avoid goblins and Natalya, and ignore anyone down in the room below, but quickly attack anyone who attempts to move through this area.

STIRGES (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 260)

A10. NATALYA'S LAIR (CR 3)

Like elsewhere, the ceiling has collapsed into the room below, but most of the rafters have gone with it in this area, leaving large gaps of empty space over the drop. A large fireplace in the room below climbs the wall as a wide chimney into here. The crumbling, charred brick of the chimney has been chipped away to create a large hollow within, with a tangle of discarded planks and other rubbish now serving as a floor.

Creatures: Natalya has claimed the hollowed out chimney as her lair. Its access to the roof above has been blocked off, but a ladder built into the back of it leads down into the fireplace below. The rogue Pathfinder now spends her days crouched upon this makeshift platform, issuing grandiose orders to her underlings below and filling her journals with details on her plans for taking over the Tower Girls. She always keeps two sewer goblin archers here to serve as an "honor guard." These two are stationed on the rafters to

SHARDS OF SIN

block the approach of intruders to Natalya's high seat. They fight to the death in defense of their liege.

NATALYA VANCASKERKIN

CR 2

XP 600

hp 20 (see page 60)

SEWER GOBLINS (2)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Treasure: The meager treasures that Natalya has gathered for her new "army" have been placed in a tattered burlap sack stuffed into the back of her chimney lair among a pile of well-gnawed rat bones and other detritus. This stash consists of 33 gp, 86 sp, 192 cp, a brass comb worth 2 gp, assorted buttons made from semiprecious stones worth 30 gp total, and a faded printed handbill declaring its possessor to be rightful owner of the Grand Mastaba of Korvosa (an obvious fake sold as a novelty at carnivals).

Development: If battle occurs here, the goblin snake Cyvis watches from hiding in the fireplace of room **A6**. If Natalya falls, the goblin snake immediately moves to snatch the *Shard of Pride* from her, carrying it in his mouth and trying to escape through the drain pipe north from area **A6**. If he escapes, you should engineer a new plot by which the PCs should be able to recover the shard—perhaps Cyvis returns to the Crow piling and gives the shard back to the Tower Girls in return for a position in their group. Ultimately, they should end up with the shard, but he can lead them a merry chase first.

Story Award: For recovering the *Shard of Pride*, award the PCs 1,200 XP.

PART THREE: IN THE CROW'S NEST

The recovery of the *Shard of Pride* represents the true beginning of the Shattered Star Adventure Path. This adventure assumes that the PCs find and defeat or capture Natalya Vancaskerkin and secure the strange, coppery fragment as their own. Once a PC claims the shard, it shouldn't be long before its curse starts to manifest—you should take that player aside at this point and inform him that ever since he started carrying the shard, he's grown more and more convinced that he should be the one leading the party—that the thought of following the orders of anyone else in the group makes him feel increasingly sick to the stomach. Stress to that PC that these feelings don't yet make him want to leave the group—instead, they're compelling him to take on more of a leadership role.

Determining exactly what the *Shard of Pride* is should be difficult for low level PCs—it's obviously magic (especially if Natalya used it to make a *major image* of a fire—see her tactics on page 60), and a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana

NATALYA'S FATE

This adventure makes no assumptions about Natalya's fate—but neither does she have a further role to play in the Shattered Star Adventure Path. If she's killed, the PCs can proceed to the next part of the adventure once they activate the *Shard of Pride* and learn that the second shard lies somewhere in Magnimar near or below the Irespan.

If Natalya is alive and questioned, the madness caused by the *Shard of Pride* immediately ends once the shard is activated by an *ioun stone*. She is despondent and depressed not only by her recent actions but also by her failure to achieve her haunting dream of conquest. She is morose and communicates only grudgingly, but persistence will get her to admit that she found the shard on a skeleton inside a secret chamber she discovered in the Crow. She further confirms that the Tower Girls have since moved their hideout to the Crow. If anyone thinks to ask, she can provide a rough map of the parts of the Crow piling that she is familiar with along with information about numbers and locations of her former gang members. She knows that the Tower Girls hope to find more rare and powerful items in their exploration of the Crow. Perhaps the most important bit of information she can convey to the PCs is the fact that the leader of the Tower Girls, Ayala Javeski, is a wererat—she's turned a few of her favorite underlings into wererats as well. If the PCs are thinking of confronting her, they should bring some silver weapons.

If the PCs ask Natalya where she found the *Shard of Pride*, she tells them she located it in a secret room (area **B23b**) inside the Crow, further explaining that there were other treasures in the room but that she didn't have time to gather them—the shard's curse compelled her to abandon her allies immediately.

or nature) check confirms that it's made of horacalcum (a failure simply confirms that while it looks like copper—it is certainly not copper). A *detect magic* spell reveals its overwhelming illusion aura, but since a successful DC 40 Spellcraft check is needed to identify the artifact for what it is, the PCs are unlikely to be able to learn much more. Seeking Sheila's advice at Heidmarch Manor is their best bet—this is what the adventure assumes the PCs do. If they don't seek the venture-captain out, she'll track them down soon enough, if only to find out what they've learned about Natalya.

LEARNING ABOUT THE SHARD

When Sheila is shown the shard, her eyes widen and her jaw drops in shock. She obviously recognizes what it might be, but isn't immediately forthcoming with what she knows. Instead, she invites the other PCs to join her in Heidmarch

SHATTERED STAR

Manor's parlor, phrasing her invitation carefully so as to appease the shard carrier's pride. Once in the parlor, she reveals to the PCs that she suspects she knows what the shard is, but in order to be sure, she would like to affix an *ioun stone* to the indentation in the shard's face—she explains that she suspects the shard is based on Azlanti magic similar to that the Pathfinders based the design of their *wayfinders* on, and if this shard reacts to an *ioun stone* in the same way, her hunch will be proven correct.

Sheila excuses herself for a few moments, then returns quickly with a scarlet-and-blue sphere *ioun stone* in her hand (this *ioun stone's* associated skill is Knowledge [history]). She gives the *ioun stone* to the shard's current carrier but doesn't ask him to put the stone in the shard's slot—she hopes he'll realize that's what she wants on his own without risking a request that the cursed PC might misinterpret as an order. Once the *ioun stone* is placed, it flashes with coppery light and fuses to the shard, and its appearance changes to look as if it were made of the same material as the shard itself. The *ioun stone* still functions, but more importantly, by bonding to the shard, it suppresses the curse and confirms to Sheila what she'd hoped—the PCs have recovered one of the shards of the *Shattered Star*. Inform the PC that the strange feeling of pride has vanished; at the same moment, Sheila clears her throat and speaks to the PCs.

"What you have found, my friends, is nothing short of a miracle. Varisia has seen its share of miracles of late—the discovery of Xin-Shalast and the defeat of Runelord Karzoug, or Korvosa's release from mad Ileosa's rule come to mind—but this discovery will soon be remembered as an equal to those events. This is a powerful Thassilonian artifact, a fragment of horacalcum and a portion of the *Shattered Star* of Xin: to be precise, the *Shard of Pride*. I suspect that the shard's current carrier already knows more about it than I do, in fact..."

As she adds that last sentence, inform the carrier of the shard that as soon as the *ioun stone* was placed, the shard's abilities manifested in his mind. If you wish, you can hand that player a list of the *Shard of Pride's* abilities, or you can simply tell the players what the artifact can do. At this point, the PCs likely have many questions for Sheila—sample questions and how she answers them are listed below.

What is the *Shattered Star*? The *Shattered Star* was a powerful defensive item created well over 10,000 years ago by the founder of the empire of Thassilon, an exiled Azlanti named Xin. At that time, the item was known as the *Sihedron*—a seven-pointed star made of the seven skymetals infused with powerful magic. When the runelords rebelled against him, this item was broken into seven parts (at least, according to the legends), and the runelords each claimed a shard for their own. In the 10 millennia since Earthfall and the end of Thassilon, the

shards have shifted locations, yet they have never been reassembled into the *Sihedron*.

How did you know what the shard was? Over the past several years, Sheila's become something of an expert on Thassilon—the legacies of this ancient empire and its monuments and magic are, after all, the primary reason that the Pathfinders have become interested in Varisia. The story of the *Shattered Star* is one of the most oft-repeated legends of that time among those who write about ancient Thassilonian artifacts—surpassed only by the *Seven Swords of Sin* in popularity. Even so, the *Shattered Star* legend is still relatively obscure, yet Sheila has long hoped to stumble across the location of a shard. Never in a thousand years did she even dare to hope that a shard would simply fall into her lap like this.

How can we find the other shards? The most important thing that Sheila can tell the PCs is that the *Shattered Star* represents a powerful defense against the dangers that seem to be rising up against Varisia, and that rebuilding the artifact will give the region a powerful defense indeed—both in terms of the item itself and the heroes that the quest to recover the other six fragments will doubtless produce. As the interview comes to a close, she'll invite one of the PCs to hold the *Shard of Pride* and concentrate on the *Sihedron's* shape. In doing so, that PC receives a powerful vision of the Irespan and Magnimar's harbor, around one Irespan piling in particular—the Crow. Sheila then explains that each fragment of the *Shattered Star* is linked to one more fragment in a set sequence, and that by concentrating on the *Sihedron* while holding a shard that's been "awakened" with the proper *ioun stone*, one can receive a vision of the region in which the next shard in the sequence is located. Unfortunately, the location isn't completely exact—but it should be enough to set the PCs on the right course.

What does this all mean? Sheila finishes by telling the PCs that they have in their hands an opportunity for great glory. By questing for the six remaining shards, they can rebuild the *Shattered Star* into the *Sihedron* and give Varisia a powerful defense against the dangers the region will doubtless face in the future—and in so doing prepare themselves to be some of Varisia's great defenders! Questing for the shards of the *Shattered Star* allows the PCs to bolster their reputation in the Pathfinder Society as well, and while Sheila can't promise specific rewards for the PCs, she notes that, as word of their quest spreads, their growing fame will bring with it its own rewards.

Is there anything else you can tell us? Sheila promises to do some more research about the other five shards and the *Sihedron* itself, and should have the results of that research for the PCs to use in several days or a few weeks (these notes are covered at the start of the next adventure, when the quest for the *Shattered Star* moves beyond Magnimar). For now, she advises the PCs to remain low-key about their goal.

The longer they can keep the fact that they're rebuilding the *Shattered Star* a secret, the bigger head start they'll have against possible competitors for the prize, after all!

FEATURES OF THE CROW

Whether the PCs turn their attention to the Crow because of discussions with Natalya or visions granted by the *Shard of Pride*, it is within and under this prominent piling protruding from the waters of Outcast Cove that the rest of "Shards of Sin" takes place. The Crow and the dungeons beneath are quite extensive, with over 80 encounter areas to explore—numerous different groups and factions dwell in this complex, and since few of them have many direct interactions, the site lends itself well to multiple forays. Let the PCs set the pace of their explorations, in other words—they should be able to leave the dungeon and retreat to Magnimar as often as they need in order to sell treasure, buy gear, research mysteries, or just recover from their ordeals.

The Crow itself is located just under half a mile from the Dockway. The ruined piling itself is most easily reached by boat—Sheila can provide the PCs with a large rowboat or skiff that can carry four people. Rowing out to the piling is a relatively simple task even for someone who has no training in Profession (sailor), although without training it takes 30 minutes to make the journey from the shore to the Crow because of the trickiness of the tidal currents (with a successful DC 12 Profession [sailor] check, this time is halved).

The Crow is a massive stone monument that rises from the waters of Magnimar's harbor. It was once a support for the Irespan, but with that monument's collapse, the Crow is nothing more than an immense freestanding piling. As with every one of the Irespan's columns, the Crow is intricately carved and embossed with ancient statuary and bas-reliefs featuring the motif of a specific animal or monster—in this case, hundreds of crowlike gargoyles and carvings and decorations. Like all of the surviving pilings, the Crow is 200 feet wide along its midsection (widening to over 250 feet at the upper section where the piling once supported the Irespan above). The Crow extends 220 feet above sea level, and extends another 50 feet underwater to the harbor floor.

While the idea of chambers being found within an Irespan piling is nothing new, the number of chambers within most pilings is relatively small. The idea of a complex as extensive as the one inside of the Crow is somewhat unprecedented. In fact, until Natalya found a cleverly hidden secret door, popular opinion was that, like a few other pilings, the Crow lacked any existing entrance—that if there had been at one time, it had crumbled away long ago.

Within the Crow, all walls, floors, and ceilings are of carefully fitted masonry—the chambers are well over 10,000 years old, but are in remarkably good shape

because wherever the structure hasn't collapsed, ancient preservative magics still function. There is no lighting unless otherwise noted. Ceilings are 10 feet high in corridors and 15 feet high in chambers. Most of the doors within the Crow were wooden and have long since rotted away—those that still exist are carefully crafted of stone and can be opened as normal doors, though they have no locks unless noted as such.

THE TOWER GIRLS

The primary enemy group the PCs will face in the first portion of the Crow is the Tower Girls. This Szarni gang directly controls areas **B1–B23** of the Crow. The Tower Girl guards automatically notice any open approach to the Crow via boat during the day. An attempt to approach the Crow more stealthily (such as by approaching at night, or during the typical early morning or late evening Magnimarian fog) requires all of the PCs to make DC 12 Stealth checks as they approach. If more PCs fail these checks than succeed, the PCs' approach is noticed. If the Tower Girls spot the PCs approaching their hideout, an alarm is raised and they go on alert. Ramifications on encounter areas when the Tower Girls are on alert are indicated in the encounter text as appropriate. The alert remains until the Tower Girls drive the intruders out of the Crow or 12 hours with no sign from the PCs have passed. Then a scouting party of two Tower Girls travels to area **B1** to determine whether the intruders are still present or the alert can be cancelled. Obviously, the PCs should try to avoid causing an alert as they may quickly find themselves in over their heads. However, the Tower Girls do not pursue fleeing intruders, fearing a feint, so PCs should be able to escape to try again later if necessary.

If the Tower Girls manage to capture any PCs alive, they are taken to area **B20** where they're bound and gagged. The Tower Girls then ransom them back to the other PCs or the Pathfinder Society for 500 gp each.

B1. BOAT DOCK

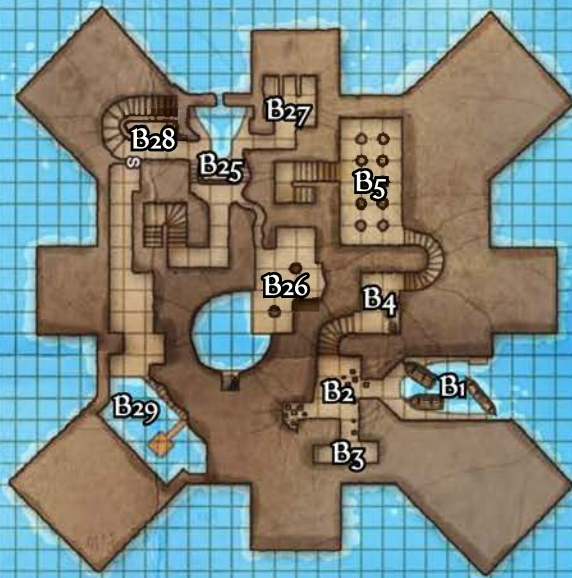
A tall lancet arch at water level leads into a chamber at sea level within the side of the Crow. Inside is what was once a small, stepped terrace, now filled with sea water to the level of its top step. Three rowboats are tied off to heavy stones placed on this step. Above, the ceiling rises almost all the way up to the top of the monument—an opening leads off this shaft to the west near the ceiling. At the west end of this room lies a small alcove whose floor shows the stains of countless campfires—the back wall of this alcove has broken through, revealing a passageway beyond.

The inhabitants of Magnimar have long known of this chamber, but the alcove was sealed by a solid stone wall, causing those daring enough to explore the piling to choose to perilously scale this chamber's walls to reach

SHATTERED STAR

THE CROW

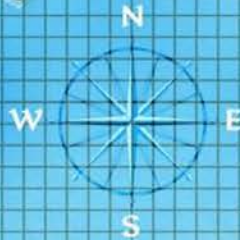
1 square = 10 feet



First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor

the openings above (both of which led to single chambers with well-hidden secret doors). In fact, the alcove once held a secret door that had fallen into disrepair—Natalya discovered this secret door and the Tower Girls relocated to this new hideout after she and a few others used pick axes to smash through into area **B2**.

The soot is from decades of explorers camping here—unknowingly, next to an entrance to the piling. A successful DC 16 Perception check reveals guano on the walls and floor, evidence that bats have made use of this chamber. See **B8** for the details of the top of this shaftlike chamber, used by the bats as an egress. The windows into areas **B19** and **B23** are covered by *illusory walls* (Will DC 18, CL 15th).

PCs must succeed at a DC 20 Climb check to navigate the walls of the shaft. The Tower Girls typically use the ropes from area **B9** to make the climb easier—with these ropes, scaling the walls requires a mere DC 5 Climb check.

B2. ENTRY HALL

Rubble from the collapsed wall has been pushed out into the chamber. Traces of recent habitation—bits of trash and rubbish and the odd piece of clothing or equipment—are scattered here and there, though the room now appears to be unused.

This chamber served as the Tower Girls' first base camp as they explored the piling. They have now abandoned it for other quarters and no longer even bother posting guards here. A successful DC 15 Survival check reveals that this chamber accommodated as many as a dozen or more inhabitants based on the unpleasant evidence, giving an idea of the number of Tower Girls that have called the piling home (though not all are currently present).

B3. ABANDONED PRIVY

The foul odor and suspicious stains on the floor reveal that this chamber was used as a privy within the last few weeks. Huddled in one corner are the rotten remains of a small dog.

The Tower Girls made use of this chamber but have not done so in some time. Inspection of the “dog” reveals that it's actually a donkey rat—a sizable rodent native to the region, with long legs and a bushy tail. The Tower Girls keep several donkey rats as pets; this one got sick and snuck off down here to die. Anyone investigating the carcass is exposed to filth fever (Fortitude DC 12 resists; *Core Rulebook* 557).

B4. LANDING

Between two curving stairwells lies a small landing. Three stone boxes, their lids raised, stand lined up against the east wall. A fine yellow powder surrounds them on the floor.

The Tower Girls found these chests and managed to safely disarm the ungol dust trap that protected them. The dust on the floor can be identified as spoiled ungol dust with a successful DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check—but it looks like yellow mold to the untrained eye. The chests have been thoroughly looted.

B5. ROSTRUM HALL (CR 2)

Pillars line the center of this long hall. At the far end is a long rostrum, the dusty stumps of ancient votive candles lining its outer edge. Two of these have been knocked over. Colorful murals of Thassilon pilgrims and giants marching over an intact Irespan cover the walls.

The western stairs lead all the way up to area **B6** on the uppermost level of the Crow.

Creature: Lurking in the northwest corner of the room in dire rat form is Sasha, one of the Tower Girls Ayala has graced with the gift of lycanthropy. As a dire rat, she has a Stealth check of +12; as soon as the PCs come further than 20 feet into the room (or immediately, if she's spotted earlier), she squeals and flees up the stairs to the west to warn the Tower Girls upstairs. If she's cornered, she attempts to shift into hybrid form to fight—since she's not a true lycanthrope, this requires her to succeed at a DC 15 Constitution check as a full-round action. She fights to the death if she can't escape upstairs to join her companions.

SASHA VIDAXUS

CR 2

XP 600

Female human wererat rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 197)
hp 18

Treasure: Sasha carries 18 gp in a belt pouch along with her other gear.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Sasha flees to area **B6**.

B6. LOOTED ROOMS

Bits and pieces of old rubble, fragments of furniture, and broken weapons and armor clutter the floor of this room.

All four of the rooms in this area, once guard rooms, have been thoroughly looted by the Tower Girls. Area **B6a** features a flight of stairs that leads down to area **B5**. Area **B6b** contains only an overturned table in the middle of the room. Area **B6c** was used until recently as a storage area by the Tower Girls until they moved their gear downstairs. Area **B6d** was used as a privy and garbage disposal area.

Development: If the Tower Girls are on alert, then the occupants of areas **B5** and **B7** are located here, gathered around the overturned table and ready to defend against

SHATTERED STAR

further entrance into the Crow. The Tower Girls warn off intruders before they attack, giving cautious parties a chance to escape this difficult encounter, fall back, and regroup for a later assault. The table they hide behind is ancient and brittle—it has no hardness rating and only 10 hit points, but until it's destroyed, it grants cover to the defenders.

B7. UPPER CAMP (CR 1)

A small cook fire has been built in the center of the floor with spits holding the sizzling carcasses of two donkey rats. The broken

scraps of a crate now serving as fuel are stacked nearby, and blankets have been pushed together into a large bedroll.

The secret door to the south has been propped open by a stick of kindling, so only a DC 8 Perception check is required to locate it. While the door is propped open, moving through the easily swinging unlatched door is a free action. If the Tower Girls are on alert, the kindling's been removed and finding the door requires a DC 20 Perception check.

Creatures: Area B7 was once the Tower Girls' main camp, but only two of the gang (jittery Embyr who picks at her teeth and foul-mouthed, prematurely gray-haired Nayven) can be found here now. Both have fallen out of favor and have been assigned here as a rear guard. They have not been to the lower camp, however, and can give no information on it. The two are currently roasting two of Ayala's pet rats in revenge for their treatment.



TOWER GIRL

TOWER GIRLS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Female human rogue 1 (acrobat) (*Advanced Player's Guide* 132)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 11 each (1d8+3)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +1 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged hand crossbow +3 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat A Tower Girl uses Acrobatics to stay mobile in a fight, repositioning as needed to provide her allies flanking opportunities.

Morale A Tower Girl flees deeper into the Crow to warn her sisters and join larger groups in defending the Crow if brought below 4 hit points unless otherwise noted in the text.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Base Atk +0; CMB +3; CMD 14

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Skill Focus (Climb)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +3, Climb +10, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ expert acrobat^{APG}

Combat Gear smokestick, tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** studded leather, hand crossbow with 10 bolts, short sword, climber's kit, grappling hook with 50-foot silk rope (see page 65), hooded lantern, oil, second-story harness, thieves' tools, 15 gp

^{APG} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

B8. UPPER ENTRANCE

The murals in this room are scratched and faded. Several portions of the wall and floor show signs of past chipping. An empty plinth where a statue once stood rests by a small alcove.

Prior to the Tower Girls, several previous explorers to the Crow examined this room, thoroughly looting it and picking it apart in the process. From this side, a successful DC 30 Perception check reveals the secret door if it's closed—until recently, the door had gone unnoticed.

B9. SHAFT APEX

A ledge festooned with old bird nests looks out over a shaft dropping nearly two hundred feet to sea level below. A large coil of rope sits on the ground near the shaft, one end anchored to a large piton driven into a crack near the wall. Opposite the shaft is another ledge with a window looking out over Magnimar's harbor. The ceiling is a mere ten feet above, and crisscrossed by a complex tangle of stone arches that support the roof. Between the two ledges, a five-foot-square wooden platform hangs from four thick ropes that hang from the stone arches. The platform is further anchored by two thick ropes to spikes hammered into the walls near the edge of the western ledge, while another pair of ropes hang from the ceiling above, anchored to a hook driven into the wall near the same ledge.

A fall from this height into area **B1** below, a distance of 180 feet, is enough to kill most low-level characters (the fall deals 2d3 + 14d6 points of damage). A deliberate dive from this height requires a successful DC 30 Acrobatics or Swim check to negate the falling damage.

Further entry into the Crow requires navigation to the platform suspended in the middle of the shaft, for directly above this platform is a hidden trap door in the ceiling—another discovery made by Natalya during her first few forays into the Crow. Crossing to the platform suspended in the middle of the room may look harrowing, but it's actually not all that dangerous—the rig the Tower Girls have set up looks rickety but is actually quite stable. The two coils of rope can be lowered all the way down to area **B1** to aid those climbing up the shaft, while the ropes hanging from the ceiling allow someone to swing out and onto the platform with a successful DC 5 Acrobatics check. Alternatively, the PCs could jump or tightrope walk across to the platform. The ropes that suspend it are well anchored to the stone beams (themselves marvelous feats of Thassilonian engineering). The platform can hold up to 400 pounds before it begins creaking ominously, and breaks if more than 800 pounds is placed on it.

A long wooden boat hook sits on the platform, tied to one of the ropes so if it's dropped it won't fall all the way to area

B1. The secret trap door above was once better hidden, but the Tower Girls wedged a hooked piton into the door so they could open it more easily with the boat hook—noticing the trap door requires a DC 15 Perception check. When opened, it hangs down and forms a ladderlike extension, making it only a DC 0 Climb check to clamber up into the 5-foot-wide passageway above. This passageway leads to area **B10**.

B10. EMPTY CRYPTS

The walls along this short passage bear murals showing strangely dressed Thassilonian priests placing bodies into crypts. Several niches in the walls may have once been burial crypts themselves, but today, the hall is strewn with bones and the niches lay empty.

This hallway and the room at the end once served as a crypt for several of the architects who designed the Crow. The bones on the floor are the remains of the skeletons that once guarded this area, which were defeated by the Tower Girls.

B11. ALARM

This room appears empty, but the Tower Girls have strung a thin length of twine across the entrance from area **B10** at ankle height. Anyone who simply walks into the room tugs at the twine and rings a brass bell hung in the northeast corner of the room, which immediately alerts the Tower Girls in area **B12**. A DC 15 Perception check reveals the trip line before it's triggered—it's easy to disable the line by cutting it or simply stepping over it once it's been noticed.

B12. GUARD POST (CR 1)

A hooded lantern sits on the lip of a fountain in the west wall. A tinkling rill of water runs from a demon-shaped mouth on the wall into the fountain. A bedroll and several bags of rations sit on the floor just to the north of the fountain.

The fountain radiates faint conjuration magic. The demonic face constantly creates water to fill the fountain below, which destroys the water at a rate sufficient to prevent it from overflowing. This fountain serves as the primary source of water for the Tower Girls.

Creatures: Two more Tower Girls stand guard here, sleeping in 8 hour shifts. The taller of the pair is Yazlenda, a woman who hopes to make enough money as a burglar someday to afford to bribe her way into high society with an arranged marriage. Tellavee, on the other hand, is a bitter woman who only speaks when she's got something mean to say. The two do not get along well, and if the alarm in area **B11** goes off, the one who's awake scurries off to the north to area **B15** to alert the Tower Girls downstairs, leaving the other to fend for herself if she fails the DC 0 Perception check to

notice the bell (remember that sleeping imparts a –10 penalty on Perception checks). If caught by surprise there, the Tower Girls beat a fighting retreat to area **B15**.

TOWER GIRLS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 28)

B13. COLLAPSED CHAMBER

The eastern wall of this room is buried under an ancient pile of rubble. Sitting near the entrance is a wooden crate and a dull gray amphora.

During Thassilon's height, another level existed within the Crow above this one—it was this upper level, connected directly to the Irespan, that originally served as the primary entrance into the Crow. With the Irespan's collapse, that entire upper level crumbled away. This room once led to a large flight of stairs leading up to that level, but today ends in a wall of solid rubble.

Treasure: The Tower Girls have stored a few items looted from the piling that they have not yet transported to the city for sale. The amphora is worth 35 gp, but also holds 486 gp worth of ancient Thassilonian coins (98 coins in all). Buried in the straw of the crate is a bronze statuette depicting a rune giant in full battle regalia worth 300 gp.

B14. STAIRWELL

The stairs here twist and turn, leading down to area **B15**.

B15. MARSHALING ROOM

Development: This large but empty room has been thoroughly looted by the Tower Girls. Now it's used as a marshaling room in which to gather and defend the Crow from further intrusion in the event of an alarm. If the alarm is raised, the occupants of areas **B12**, **B16**, and **B20** gather here, hiding in the shadows in the corners of the room or on either side of the stairs leading down from area **B14**, while Karisa (from area **B21**) stands in the middle of the room. She challenges anyone who descends the stairs, warning the intruder to turn back and leave the Crow to the Tower Girls—she only offers this warning once. If a fight breaks out here (a CR 6 encounter), the Tower Girls attempt to catch the PCs alive for ransom if possible. If the PCs flee, the Tower Girls do not immediately pursue, opting instead to regroup for a few minutes before moving as a group up to the upper level to make sure the PCs have fled the Crow entirely.

B16. COMMON HALL (CR 2)

Two tables of planks and trestles have been set up in here, and a large alcove holds the ashes and soot stains of many recent

fires, along with a stone statue of a beautiful woman wielding a ranseur. A hooded lantern burns atop one of the tables.

The Tower Girls use this as a common room for meals and meetings. The statue can be identified as being of Alaznist, the Runelord of Wrath, with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or history) check.

Creatures: Seated upon benches at the tables are three Tower Girls taking a meal of thin gruel and stale bread washed down with jacks of fiery Varisian whiskey. These three, Cassa, Derru, and Lisimandy, are close friends and enjoy playing towers with a tattered harrow deck. They shout an alarm if surprised here, then quickly move to attack, making a fighting retreat toward area **B20** as soon as one of the three falls.

TOWER GIRLS (3) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 28)

B17. STAIRS DOWN

These stairs descend down to area **B22**.

B18. FOOD STORES (CR 1/2)

Several crates, barrels, and sacks lie here, stacked in an orderly fashion in the middle of the room.

The Tower Girls store foodstuffs here. These consist of barrels of salted fish, dried beans, and stale bread, sacks of rye flour, two casks of Varisian whiskey, and boxes of traditional Varisian spices.

Creatures: A pair of donkey rats are currently rooting among a spilled sack of rye. They shriek in anger if disturbed, but have been trained to attack only men on sight—if the PCs' group consists of only human females, the rats ignore them and go back to eating rye. If they attack, they fight to the death. Donkey rats are similar to dire rats, but have shorter tails and longer legs, and lack the dire rat's disease ability.

DONKEY RATS (2) CR 1/4

XP 100 each

Variant dire rat (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

hp 5 each

Treasure: The two casks of whiskey are worth 10 gp each, while the boxes of spices are worth 35 gp in all.

B19. ALAZNIST'S VICTORY

This chamber may seem at first to be merely another empty room, but a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals a cool breeze wafting in from the south—an opening into

SHARDS OF SIN

the shaft there is masked by an *illusory wall* (Will DC 18, CL 15th).

Treasure: The Tower Girls missed a bit of treasure here. The eastern wall depicts a fresco of a tall, redheaded woman with a ranseur standing over a short, hunch-backed man—the ranseur is impaled in the man's belly, and his twisted demonic hands clutch at the shaft as black smoke wafts up from his face and wounds. With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check, a PC identifies the woman in the scene as Runelord Alaznist—if the result exceeds 25 by 10 or more, the observer realizes that the man on the ground is Thybidos, the Runelord of Wrath who preceded Alaznist. Images of Thybidos are quite rare—if the PCs make a good copy of this image (with a successful DC 25 Craft or Profession check of an appropriate type) and give the image to Sheila, she'll give them a 1,000 gp reward for the discovery. This reward is halved if the PCs only report the existence of the fresco.

B20. DORMITORY (CR 3)

A dozen bedrolls occupy this large chamber, and a few pieces of crude wooden furniture have been set up between them—a couple of scavenged chairs, a bench, and a short table. Torches mounted on brackets in each wall burn merrily.

This chamber serves as the main dormitory of the Tower Girls and accommodates far more than are currently present—the Tower Girls sleep in shifts. It also serves as their storage for artifacts they have looted from the piling and intend to sell, all packed in bags and crates.

Creatures: Three Tower Girls (Ulandia, Lerrisien, and Sadja—particularly beautiful women, save that Ulandia's odious physical habits mar her beauty, resulting in constant mockery from the other two)—occupy themselves by tossing bread crumbs to two donkey rats that spring about the floor scooping them up. They respond violently to intruders, bringing Karisa from area B21 with their shouts after 2 rounds.

TOWER GIRLS (3) CR 1/2
XP 200 each
hp 11 each (see page 28)

DONKEY RATS (2) CR 1/4
XP 100 each
Variant dire rat (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)
hp 5 each

B21. PACK MISTRESS'S ROOM (CR 3)

This room smells strongly of rats—a mix of spoiled food, dander, and the pungent sting of rat feces, all under an

incongruous scent of lavender. A blanket has been spread on the floor, and a recovered antique brass platter holds a few bits of rat-gnawed food.

Creatures: Ayala's pack mistress—the woman in charge of taming and controlling the donkey rats kept by the Tower Girls—occupies this room. This woman, Karisa, has also been given the gift of lycanthropy by her leader, a gift that has gone far in helping her in her job as rat keeper. She is currently relaxing here in hybrid form, soaking her feet in a pan of warm, lavender-scented water while a pair of donkey rats slumber at her side. She sighs heavily if forced to abandon her foot soaking for combat, but fights to the death nonetheless.

KARISA KEMADANDUS CR 2
XP 600
Female human wererat rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 197)
hp 18

DONKEY RATS (2) CR 1/4
XP 100 each
Variant dire rat (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)
hp 5 each

Treasure: The brass platter is of Thassilonian make and worth 100 gp, while the fine pottery basin that Ayala is soaking her feet in is worth 250 gp.



DONKEY RAT

B22. THE SICCATITE DOORS (CR 2)

A massive pair of double doors dominates the western end of this spearhead-shaped chamber. These doors are made of a silvery metal decorated with images of burning eyes that look inward toward two sets of runes carved onto the face of each door. The walls bear the remains of complex mosaics that once covered much of them, but which has crumbled and collapsed in heaps of colored tiles and debris around the edges of the room.

These double doors are stone sheathed in a layer of hot siccattite, one of the seven types of skymetal (see page 71). Physical contact with these silver doors deals 1 point of fire damage per round. The tiles on the doors bear Thassilonian runes in a pattern that the PCs should recognize—they resemble the *paradox box's* tiles, and when two runes on one door are touched simultaneously, they magically exchange places (runes cannot move from one door to the other). The Tower Girls have had no luck so far getting through the doors, much to Ayala's growing frustration, since until the anagrams are solved, the "doors" are a solid block of siccattite-encased metal embedded in the wall. As none of the Tower Girls have yet puzzled out the fact that the tiles are an anagram lock, Ayala's about ready to abandon style and simply order her girls to use picks to break through the door.

There are two different sets of runes on each door. The left set spells "LISTEN" while the right spells "THE EYES." To open the doors, "LISTEN" must be rearranged to "SILENT," while "THE EYES" must be rearranged to "THEY SEE." As with the *paradox box* earlier, you can use real letter tiles on your game table to let the players solve the problem, or they can attempt a series of DC 13 Linguistics or DC 16 Intelligence checks—if they choose the latter, they need to accumulate 13 successes in order to open the door.

Each time a person swaps two runes, the siccattite deals 1 point of fire damage to that person. The runes only change when touched by living flesh, but creative players are sure to come up with ways to avoid touching the tiles too much—copying the runes onto pieces of paper in game and using the paper to try out combinations is one way to minimize the damage.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 800 XP for opening the siccattite doors.

B23. AYALA'S QUARTERS (CR 4)

Several pieces of furniture decorate this room, the modern furnishings clashing with the ancient carvings of Thassilonian wizards crafting deformed monsters from dead bodies decorating the walls. Luxurious crimson Varisian drapes have been pinned up in an archway to the southeast.

The sound of wind and waves comes from the narrow windows to the east that look out over area B1—as elsewhere, each of these windows is masked via a permanent *illusory wall* (Will DC 18, CL 15th). The furnishings in this room were brought here by the Tower Girls—in area B23a, a large comfortable bed sits surrounded by crimson drapes as well.

The secret door leading to B23b is well hidden—it can be found with a DC 30 Perception check. If the PCs spoke with Natalya about where she found the *Shard of Pride*, though, they know a secret door is nearby and gain a +4 circumstance bonus on Perception checks made to locate it—if Natalya's with them, of course, she can open the door for them with ease.

Creatures: This room currently serves as the personal quarters of Ayala Javeski, the leader of the Tower Girls. A pair of loyal donkey rats caper in the main room—they squeal and shriek if anyone enters the room, female human or not, quickly alerting Ayala to the intrusion. She spends the majority of her time either studying various relics and treasures that her girls have recovered so far, sparring, plotting her next moves in a number of journals, or (25% of the time) sleeping in area B23a. If the alarm is raised, though, she's hiding in area B23a, ready to attack intruders.

Ayala Javeski was one of a dozen wererats born to an established clan of wererat Sczarni who dwelled in Riddleport. Infighting and treachery eventually saw the destruction of that clan, with several of the siblings fleeing the city rather than be slaughtered by their kin. Today, the only scion of this clan who still lives in Riddleport is the crimelord Ziphras. Ayala ended up in Magnimar, where she worked for several years as hired muscle for the Wreckwash Blades. Through a combination of manipulation, seduction, and coercion, she managed to become apprenticed to a local cat burglar who taught her many of the finer points of breaking and entering. She repaid him with a knife to the back, leaving his bleeding corpse in a gutter one moonless night. Since then, Ayala has founded her own female-only gang of cat burglars, calling them the Tower Girls.

The Tower Girls have thrived under Ayala's hard-nosed leadership. But after a failed attempt to seize power from the Wreckwash Blades forced Ayala to flee Dockway and go into hiding for a time in Underbridge, the Tower Girls' fortunes seemed to be growing shaky. The discovery of the chambers within the Crow represent a great stroke of luck to Ayala—she hopes to use the treasures she finds within to restore her gang's place in Magnimar's underworld. The apparent betrayal of Natalya has left Ayala in a particularly bitter mood, and she's increasingly turning her plans away from using her newfound resources to restore her gang toward financing a large-scale hunt in Magnimar to track down Natalya and destroy her.

SHARDS OF SIN

Ayala's spent most of her time in the Crow in hybrid form. She knows that wererats tend to galvanize reactions from the city guard, and as such has taken care to prevent spreading lycanthropy too far—choosing only her closest allies as recipients of the condition. She doesn't use her bite attack against the PCs, viewing them as unworthy of the gift of lycanthropy.

AYALA JAVESKI

CR 3

XP 800

Female human natural wererat fighter 1/rogue (acrobat) 2
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 197*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 132*)

LE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 27 (3 HD; 1d10+2d8+8)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities evasion; **DR** 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 bladed scarf
+8 (1d6+2)

Ranged mwk comp.
shortbow +7
(1d6+1/x3)

Special Attacks sneak
attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Ayala

uses her 2 vials of bloodroot to poison her bladed scarf and one arrow.

During Combat Ayala starts combat by making a sneak attack with her bow if she wins initiative; otherwise, she works with her donkey rats to flank foes. If both donkey rats are slain, she retreats up into the Crow, using tanglefoot bags to slow pursuit. If she can't find other Tower Girls to aid her, she picks a hiding spot and waits to ambush the PCs, continuing this cat-and-mouse game as best she can while trusting her damage reduction to keep her from becoming too wounded.

Morale If reduced below 5 hit points, Ayala flees to a safe hiding place, assumes dire rat form, and then flees back to Magnimar. She harbors a grudge—at this point, she'll swallow her pride and seek out new allies among another Sczarni gang. Eventually, she'll organize revenge against the PCs, perhaps ambushing them with a new gang of recently infected wererats at a later date.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bladed scarf), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bladed scarf)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +9, Disable Device +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +8, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; *polymorph*), expert acrobat^{APG}, lycanthropic empathy, rogue talents (combat trick)

Combat Gear bloodroot (2), tanglefoot bags (3); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 bladed scarf, masterwork composite shortbow with 20 arrows, climber's kit, grappling hook with 50-foot silk rope, masterwork thieves' tools, second-story harness (see page 65)

^{APG} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.



AYALA JAVESKI

SHATTERED STAR

DONKEY RATS (2)

CR 1/4

XP 100 each

Variant dire rat (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

hp 5 each

Treasure: Heaped on a table are sections of wall mural, ancient coins, pieces of jewelry, gems, bits and pieces of pottery, and more for eventual sale in the markets of Magnimar—all treasures the Tower Girls have scavenged from the Crow. These treasures are worth 900 gp in all. In addition, several journals on the table, written in Varisian, provide details on Ayala's history with and plans for the Tower Girls, including her increasing frustration at Natalya's betrayal. A small chest under the bed in area **B23a** holds 87 gp and 175 sp.

Area **B23b** contains a skeleton (as yet unnoticed by Ayala)—the earthly remains of Nazir Kalmeralm, former Prince of the Market, who disappeared in 4685 AR. After gaining possession of the *Shard of Pride* in a trade with a strange merchant, Nazir fell under the shard's curse and became obsessed with tracking down the next shard in the sequence. He told no one of his plans, and set out that evening to seek the second shard—he made it this far before he was attacked by a hungry fog (*Pathfinder RPG* 3 152) that once lived in area **B23b**. He retreated into this room to try to escape, but the fog pursued him through the cracks around the door and killed him. Since then, his vanishing has endured as one of Magnimar's great unexplained mysteries.

Natalya Vancaskerkin stumbled upon this chamber and found the *Shard of Pride* where it had fallen beside Nazir's body, but had to leave quickly as her Tower Girl companions approached, so that she didn't have time to properly loot the remains. She fell under the curse before she could return to finish the job, and this room has remained undiscovered since. A search of Nazir's bones reveals his masterwork chain shirt, a masterwork rapier, a *pendant of the souk* (see page 65), 50 feet of silk rope, and a leather pouch containing 250 gp.

B24. ABANDONED FOYER

The Thassilonian murals here are as vibrant as if they were painted yesterday. A dusty, cobweb-choked corridor runs northward.

This room has lain undisturbed since Earthfall, but holds little of interest. The stairs to the north descend to area **B25**.

B25. ANCIENT BATH (CR 4)

A green, scum-covered pool extends across the far end of this room. Passages exit to the sides, and curving stairs rise to a balcony over the south end of the room. The floor and walls are streaked with dark smears of guano in thick layers.

A crevice in the east wall, impassable for creatures larger than Tiny, provides passage for the bats that live in area **B27** to come and go. The balcony to the south is 20 feet above the lower floor, while the ceiling rises to a dome 40 feet overhead. As elsewhere, the window to the north is masked via a permanent *illusory wall* (Will DC 18, CL 15th).

The pool was once a heated bath, but now holds only 3 feet of filthy, algae-covered water—and something more.

Creature: The pool is the home of a pair of giant amoebas. These oozes feed on the bats—they snatch a few every dawn and every dusk as the bats fly in and out of this room, but both swiftly slither up and out of the pool to attack larger prey that passes within 10 feet of the pool's edge. The oozes do not pursue foes farther than 60 feet from this room.

GIANT AMOEBAS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 15 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 24).

B26. CISTERN (CR 3)

This room is littered with desiccated fish carcasses and a few larger bodies, and the ground is a thick, sticky sheet of webbing. A narrow tunnel exits the chamber to the north, while to the southwest, the room opens into a forty-foot-diameter silo-like chamber from which the sound of sloshing water can be heard.

The floor of this room lies 10 feet above sea level, as evidenced by the churning water in the silo-shaped cistern to the southwest. This room serves as a feeding ground and den for the water spiders that dwell below in area **B37**—among the bodies of various fish left here by the spiders are a few jigsaw sharks and a hapless, long-dead fisherman. The webbing on the floor here makes the entire room function as difficult terrain.

The cistern has a ceiling that's 30 feet above sea level. An alcove in the south wall contains several old lead pipes that once siphoned sewage and waste from other rooms above into this cistern. The cistern is 30 feet deep and is detailed in area **B37** (see the Catacomb map on page 36).

Creatures: The first time the PCs visit this room, they'll encounter a pair of giant water spiders feeding on a freshly killed dolphin in this room—the spiders prefer eating their meals here. Giant water spiders are similar in most ways to typical giant spiders, but they have a swim speed of 20 feet. These particular spiders are black with crimson markings on their backs. When they dive beneath the water, the hairs on their bodies cover their abdomens with hundreds of bubbles that allow them to breathe while underwater for up to 8 hours. These spiders have a symbiotic relationship with the mite tribe that lives deeper in the piling, serving the mites as steeds. A mite astride a

water-strider can likewise breathe from the air bubbles—the mites use these spiders to come and go from the Crow in the rare cases that they need to sneak into Magnimar. Both spiders can move through the webbing in this room with ease.

GIANT WATER SPIDERS (2) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

Variant giant spider (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

hp 16 each

B27. DRESSING ROOM (CR 2)

Thick guano covers the floor of this room. Stalls divide the western wall, and a stone bench and fountain stand to the east.

Creatures: Once a dressing room for the bathing chamber next door, this room is now occupied by a single bat swarm during the day; it is not present at night. This swarm is always hungry and does not retreat from battle.

BAT SWARM **CR 2**

XP 600

hp 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 30)

Treasure: Lost in the guano-filled fount (and requiring a successful DC 16 Perception check to locate) is a tarnished silver bracelet worth 45 gp.

B28. STAIRS AND SECRETS (CR 1/4)

The stairs that curve around to the east lead down to area B30. The secret door to the south can be located with a successful DC 22 Perception check.

Creature: This featureless room is empty of all save a single miserable mite on guard duty. It is suffering from a cold and has been banished by its fellows to guard this entrance because of its excessive sneezing. It sits on the sixth step down, watching the entrance back to the lower chambers longingly. If combat takes place in area B25, it sneaks up to this room to watch the fight, but as soon as the PCs enter, it shrieks in fear and tries to run downstairs to raise the alarm.

MITE **CR 1/4**

XP 100

hp 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 207)

B29. CORRAL

A ledge looks out over a long chamber filled with sea water ten feet below. The ledge winds along to the northeast, leading to a wooden plank that serves as a bridge to the top of a stone pillar. A bucket with a second board over it sits atop the pillar.

Whatever the original use of this chamber, it's now used by the mites who dwell below to summon their water spider steeds. Navigating the narrow ledge requires a successful DC 12 Acrobatics check, as does creeping across the soggy board to the platform (note that the board is rotten, and immediately breaks as soon as a Medium creature steps on it). The bucket on the platform is filled with nasty-smelling dead bats—when the mites wish to summon spiders to ride, they drop a few bats into the water below. If the PCs do the same, the spiders from area B37 below emerge, then immediately climb up the walls to attack.

B30. ANT MOUNDS (CR 5)

This wide catacomb chamber has rows of burial niches cut into the stone walls. These have all been stripped bare of any former occupants. Half a dozen ten-foot-high mounds of dirt and debris dominate the floor of the chamber, reaching nearly to the ceiling fifteen feet above.

This level once served as a dungeon and crypt, but today has been mostly colonized by a tribe of mites who fled from relentless goblin persecution in Magnimar's sewers on the backs of giant water spiders. Over the past year, these mites have settled in quite well. Led by a slightly larger mite named King Zuuga, the tribe has smuggled all manner of monstrous vermin into the area to serve as guardians, pets, and food. The majority of these insectoid creatures were hatched here and raised from grubs—the mites keep them fed, but only enough so that the vermin don't wander off, ensuring that they're always hungry enough to attack intruders ravenously.

The burial niches on the walls are stacked four high, and each is 2 feet deep and 2 feet high. The secret door in the south wall is in the lowest niche and can be located with a successful DC 20 Perception check. A successful DC 17 Perception or Survival check reveals the small, three-toed tracks of mites ascending the sides of the southernmost ant mound. This mound leads to a 3-foot-wide tunnel to area B31.

Creatures: The mites have been trying to turn this room into a giant ant nest, but have yet to breed an ant queen—or even drones or soldiers. While the southernmost mound is empty, the other five each house a single giant ant. The northeastern mound (the largest) serves as the home of a soldier ant, and each of the other four serves as the den of a worker ant. The ants emerge one at a time (one per round) from their mounds to attack any foes in this room that they notice with a successful Perception check—or automatically if the intruders bring light into the room.

GIANT WORKER ANTS (5) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

hp 18 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 16)

SHATTERED STAR

THE CROW — CATACOMB

1 square = 10 feet



B31. EXPANSION PROJECT (CR 2)

This irregularly-shaped room seems to have been chiseled recently out of the surrounding rock.

Creatures: The mites who dwell here, under the command of King Zuuga, have been chiseling out a bigger den. The rate of expansion here is slow—which is for the best, since it's only blind luck so far that the mites haven't chiseled into area B37 and flooded the entire dungeon.

There are currently six mites toiling in here with dull chisels and tiny hammers. They spit and shriek if their work is interrupted, but as soon as one of them is dropped, the remaining mites flee to area B32 and then to B35, joining the rest of their kin there to make a last stand.

MITES (6) CR 1/4

XP 100 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 207)

B32. SPIDER AMBUSH (CR 3)

The ceiling of this roughly octagonal room is shrouded by thick sheets of tangled webbing.



THE CROW — DUNGEON

1 square = 10 feet

The secret doors to the east and west represent the height of mite engineering—a successful DC 12 Perception check is needed to notice either one.

Creature: While the mites' skill at building secret doors is questionable, their rapport with vermin is not. They've raised a giant black widow spider as a guardian, and the bloated monster dwells above in the thick webs. The black widow descends to attack any non-mite that enters this chamber, and pursues foes as long as it is able.

GIANT BLACK WIDOW SPIDER CR 3

XP 800

hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 256)

B33. HALL OF KING ZUGGA (CR 1/3)

Pillars run down the center of this hall to an alcove at chest height at either end. The eastern alcove holds a silver statuette, while the western one holds an upside down ogre's skull.

Creature: This hall is the home of the self-proclaimed king of the mites. King Zuuga sits in the western alcove upon a throne made from the skull of an ogre, spending the days eating food brought to him by his people and

SHARDS OF SIN

issuing royal decrees to the empty room. King Zuuga isn't much more dangerous than a typical mite—he's perhaps a few inches taller and a little more muscular than most mites, though. He also happens to be completely insane. The other mites generally leave him alone here, but occasionally bring him food. He wears a single bracer sized for a Medium creature on his head.

King Zuuga has little concept of relative power, and thinks of himself as an invincible ruler. When the PCs arrive, he chirps in delight, motioning them to step forward and bow before him, speaking in nasal Undercommon. The king asks the PCs if they are the heroes he sent for—if the PCs tell him they are, he claps his hands and tells them that his beloved pet Clickylegs wandered off. Zuuga wants this pet (the exact species of which he can't seem to remember) returned to him not because of any affection he had for the thing, but because he keeps his "spare crown" in a pouch tied to one of its legs. Unfortunately, Zuuga can't provide much more information to the PCs, but he promises them a reward of a diamond the size of his head if they return his sleeping crown (actually the matching bracer to the one he wears on his head) to him. Whether or not the PCs wish to undertake this "quest" or not, King Zuuga won't remember sending them on the quest when they return—instead demanding that his imaginary "executioner squad" behead the interlopers and take from them his spare crown. It should go without saying that King Zuuga doesn't actually own a head-sized diamond.

KING ZUUGA

CR 1/3

XP 135

Advanced mite (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 207, 294)

hp 5

Treasure: The silver statuette depicts a sphinx, and is worth 175 gp. Zuuga's crown is actually a *bracer of armor* +2—the second bracer in the set is located in area B45.

B34. SECRET DOOR

As with the secret doors in area B32, only a DC12 Perception check is required to notice the secret door in the wall here.

B35. MITE DEN (CR 5)

Thick sheets of spiderwebs hang from the walls and ceiling of this filthy rubble- and trash-strewn room. In places, the rubble and garbage have been heaped up into mounds and shapes that almost look like undersized furniture—beds and tables and chairs sized for small humanoids.

Creatures: The bulk of the mite tribe dwells here, along with two giant spiders they use as mounts. If faced with

intruders, two mites leap onto the spiders and lead the charge against the PCs. Once one of the giant spiders or three of the mites are slain, the remaining mites shriek and flee—those who escape spread out through the dungeon below and can be encountered alongside the various vermin found there at your whim. This can allow you to give the vermin encountered below the capacity to use more complex tactics than normal.

MITES (8)

CR 1/4

XP 100 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 207)

GIANT SPIDERS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

B36. STAIRS DOWN

These stairs descend 30 feet to area B38.



B37. SUBMERGED ENTRANCE (CR 4)

This submerged area represents an alternative but relatively well-hidden entrance into the Crow—the southern exit is 10 feet wide but is draped with thick sheets of seaweed hanging from the piling’s sides. A successful DC 15 Perception check is required to notice the opening from outside—the opening lies 20 feet under sea level, in any event. The area beyond connects to areas **B26** and **B29** above.

Creatures: Three giant waters spiders are encountered in this area the first time the PCs visit, unless they’ve already attracted the spiders’ attention and dealt with them in area **B29**.

GIANT WATER SPIDERS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Variant giant spider (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)
hp 16 each

B38. DUNGEON ENTRANCE

This dank stone hallway is increasingly choked with spiderwebs to the south, while to the west they thin quickly.

These stairs ascend 30 feet to area **B36**. The chambers beyond once served as a dungeon for the keeping and interrogation of prisoners caught on Bakrakhan’s border, but today, they’ve been colonized by enormous vermin that have, over the course of the past several years, escaped the influence of the mites on the level above.

B39. CELLBLOCKS (CR 4)

Three long cell block corridors extend out from a central guardroom, each hall featuring numerous iron cell doors.

Creatures: Although this cell block lacks the webs that increasingly choke the hallway to the east, this part of the dungeon is no less infested. A total of four pale yellow crab spiders—scuttling hunters that don’t spin webs—dwell in the area and quickly converge on any intruders.

GIANT CRAB SPIDERS (4)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 254)

B40. TORTURE CHAMBER (CR 4)

Stairs descend into the room from the north, a heavy stone door blocks passage to the west, and an eastern corridor exits between cells blocked by doors of rusty iron bars. Scattered about the room are a number of instruments of torture from bygone days, now mostly gone to rot and ruin.

The cell doors are rusted shut—a successful DC 22 Strength check is required to open either of them.

Creatures: The southern cell’s occupant is long dead, his bones crumbled to dust, but the northern cell is occupied. It holds a single sinspawn—a deformed, vaguely human-shaped monster from ancient Thassilon. Once kept as a living torture instrument, the sinspawn, being immortal, has languished in this cell since the fall of Thassilon. It has long since forgotten its previous life, but once it sees the PCs, it flies into a furious frenzy—throwing itself against the cell’s bars in a futile attempt to escape. If its cell door is opened, it quickly lurches into action and attacks the PCs—as a creature of wrath, it has no capacity to feel or express gratitude.

SINSPAWN

CR 2

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 246)

B41. ASSEMBLY HALL (CR 4)

This wide hall is lined with pillars, between which hang thick sheets of webbing. These do not seem to be the older, dusty cobwebs of the corridors, but rather fresh webs. The brittle carcasses of several albino crickets the size of small dogs hang among the tangle.

The webs on the floor here create difficult terrain.

Creatures: Once a barracks, this chamber has now been taken over as the lair of a colony of giant spiders. The three enormous arachnids immediately converge on any intruders that enter and attempt to trap prey with their web attacks. If a spider manages to tangle an opponent in a web, it ignores that target as long as other victims remain mobile—only when all enemies are immobilized do the spiders move in for the kill.

GIANT SPIDERS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

B42. PERPETUAL POOL

This circular room is empty save for a ten-foot-wide circular pool filled with clear water. The water appears to be only six inches deep and is crystal clear, leaving the tiled decoration of a swirling vortex plainly visible on the pool’s basin.

This pool radiates faint conjuration magic—it constantly refreshes and fills with fresh water that, even after over 10,000 years, retains its magical healing qualities. The waters of this pool heal 1d8+3 points of damage and affect those who drink from them with *lesser restoration*, but a

single creature can only benefit from this effect once per day. Water gathered from this basin retains its healing and restorative qualities for 8 hours.

B43. KITCHEN (CR 4)

The chamber opens out in a wide half circle. Giant brick ovens have been built into the curved wall, and fire pits outfitted with multiple spits for roasting are set nearby.

Creatures: It has been thousands of years since this kitchen has seen any use as anything other than a den for vermin—every round the PCs remain in this room, allow them a DC 20 Perception check to notice a strange rustling coming from the southernmost brick oven. Only 1d4+1 rounds after the PCs enter, the swarm of pale yellow centipedes that dwell in the cracks and crevices within that oven come swarming out. The centipedes attack any living creatures and pursue them until slain.

CENTIPEDE SWARM CR 4
XP 1,200
hp 31 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 43)

B44. MAIN STOREROOM (CR 3)

Ancient shelves hold only the dust of whatever foodstuffs were once stored here. In the alcoves to the south, iron hooks for hanging meats dangle from the ceiling.

This room once housed the food stores for the dungeon, though the contents are long gone now. The secret door to the west can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

Creatures: Ages ago, the cook who toiled here kept several undead servitors on hand to aid in distributing meals to the guards and prisoners. Today, six of these skeletons remain, standing at attention here awaiting more orders that will never come. Of course, upon seeing other living creatures, the skeletons react with typical murderous intent—they pursue living creatures until they or their quarry are destroyed.

HUMAN SKELETONS (6) CR 1/3
XP 135 each
hp 4 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 250)

B45. MEETING HALL (CR 4)

A damp natural grotto opens up in the earth here, its stone ceiling rising forty feet above. Fat columns of brick support the northern end of the room, and the floor of the southern end has been carved into a low dais upon which stands the mold-slick statue of a beautiful woman wielding a ranseur.

The preservative magics that helped keep the Crow from eroding away have begun to fail here, and as a result, much of what was once used as a meeting hall for the dungeon guards has begun crumbling away and turning into an increasingly naturalistic cavern.

The secret door in the southern wall hangs askew in a broken frame, which a PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check can notice.

Creature: A particularly large cave fisher lurks in this room. This monster was once King Zuuga's favorite pet, but after he lost track of it during a particularly long bout of hallucinations, the monster wandered off into these lower caves. It's quite hungry now, and attacks the PCs on sight, fighting to the death.

CLICKYLEGS CR 3
XP 800
Advanced cave fisher
hp 28 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 41, 294)

Treasure: A small leather pouch is tied tightly to one of the cave fisher's legs. Within are a dozen polished rocks, 23 tiny teeth, and a *bracer of armor +2*—the mate to the one worn by King Zugga in area B33.

B46. EMPTY BARRACKS

This room seems to have once served as guard barracks, but the beds and other furniture here have long since crumbled into almost unrecognizable ruins.

The southern corridor leads to a series of stairs that descend to area C1.

PART FOUR: A LEGACY OF WRATH

Hidden beneath the Crow lies a small but secret complex that was known only to Runelord Alaznist and members of her inner circle. Built on the very cusp of the border with Shalast and Eurythnia, this complex consisted of a garrison fort and laboratories for the development of all manner of horrible living weapons for use against the enemies of Bakrakhan. In the piling above, arcanists and guards stood fast, giving the outward appearance that the piling was merely a garrison. Yet below, in a deep laboratory, Alaznist's most talented arcanists not only toiled at crafting new monsters to serve in her armies, but also drew upon foul energies from the lower planes using a large, maze-like chamber called a *rift siphon*. When Thassilon began to fall, these arcanists abandoned the laboratory, taking their secrets and magical gear back to Xin-Bakrakhan while they sent the bulk of their monsters the other direction, into Shalast, as part of one final attack.

While Runelord Alaznist's armies and advisors alike were lost during Thassilon's fall, this laboratory remained

SHATTERED STAR



behind, with the *rift siphon* still aligned to a backwater corner of Hell. The portal created by the *rift siphon* is only stable enough to allow the least of devils through—but that's enough to have infested this level with two bickering factions of infernal invaders—one led by an imp, and one by an accuser devil.

C1. ANCIENT WELCOME (CR 3)

A red statue of a beautiful woman armed with a large ranseur stands in the center of this chamber. Slime cakes the floor.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (history) check recognizes the statue as being of Runelord Alaznist. At one point, Runelord Alaznist could animate this statue from afar, and used it to observe the Laboratory and communicate with her minions. Since Earthfall, the link between this statue and Alaznist has fallen quiet, and the statue itself now only radiates faint divination. A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check reveals that the statue once may have served as a sort of remote observation device or even as a guardian, but now no longer functions.

Creature: The trails of slime on the floor are the work of this chamber's denizen, a bloated maggot the color of old pus with a vaguely humanoid head, twisting horns, and a fang-filled maw. This creature is an abyssal larva, a petitioner from the Abyss that was summoned long ago as an experiment and was left behind when the complex was abandoned. Normally, a larva on the Abyss either is eaten or is transformed by the environment into a demon or qliphoth, but when a larva is removed from that environment, it can grow bloated and enormous with time, as this 10-foot-long abomination has. The larvae has spent the intervening millennia locked in this room—unable to comprehend the way doors work, it has crawled mindlessly in circles for thousands of years. The monster reacts to the PCs' arrival with instinctual wrath, and the wet bellows its half-formed throat makes as it attacks are more than enough to alert the denizens in area C2 of intruders.

ABYSSAL LARVA

CR 4

XP 1,200

Tome of Horrors Complete 15

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

SHARDS OF SIN

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17 (–1 Dex, +9 natural, –1 size)

hp 42 (5d10+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

Immune mind-affecting effects; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+6 plus 1d6 acid)

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

Special Attacks maggot spray

TACTICS

During Combat The larva is barely intelligent, but knows that foes with large weapons hurt more—it focuses its attacks on the target with the biggest weapon as a result. It pursues foes relentlessly, but can't open doors. It also doesn't differentiate between PCs and the other denizens of this dungeon, and can be used to attack other creatures if the PCs lure it along.

Morale The larva fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 15, **Int** 3, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 19 (can't be tripped)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Step Up, Toughness

Skills Perception +11, Swim +9

Languages Abyssal

SQ tortured mind

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Maggot Spray (Ex) Once per day, an abyssal larva can spew a stream of maggots at a single opponent within 20 feet. The larvae makes a +3 ranged touch attack—if it hits, the target is sickened for 1d4 rounds (Reflex DC 16 reduces the duration to 1 round). The save DC is Strength-based.

Tortured Mind (Ex) An abyssal larva's mind is pain and chaos. As a result, it is immune to mind-affecting effects. In addition, any creature that attempts to contact an abyssal larva with a mind-affecting effect or spell must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or be confused for 1 minute. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

Treasure: The ranseur held by the statue is not a part of it, and can be removed from the statue's hand with a successful DC 18 Strength check (or by smashing the hand—hardness 10, hp 20). It is a +1 cold iron ranseur.

C2. ELEMENTAL GUARDS (CR 3)

A thirty-foot-diameter, softly glowing circle of runes shimmers on the floor. What appears to be a single flickering flame burns with no apparent source of fuel in the middle of the room.

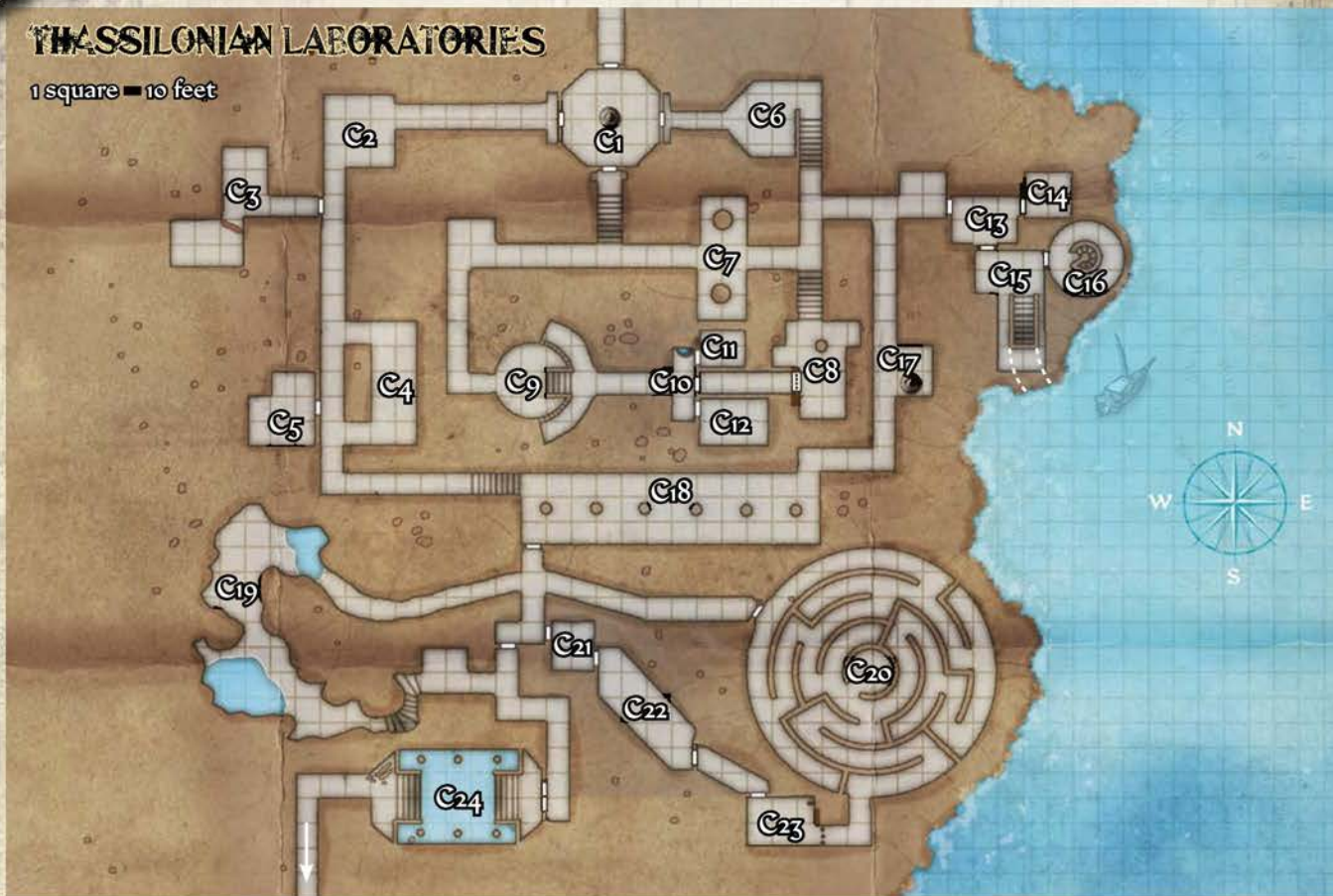
This circle once functioned as a potent trap that would summon a small army of elementals to attack any who attempted to enter the room, but the trap has decayed over time. Today, the circle of runes functions as a permanent and oversized *magic circle against law* (CL 15th)—a potent ward that the devils of this level cannot cross. A successful DC 23 Spellcraft check reveals the nature of the circle, and that at one point, long ago, it held a powerful creature of fire within. As such, this room could make an excellent



SHATTERED STAR

THASSILONIAN LABORATORIES

1 square = 10 feet



place for the PCs to rest and recover—at least, once the guardians bound within the circle are defeated.

The fire in the center of the room is real, the result of a pinhole portal between this world and the Plane of Fire. It cannot be moved, and deals 1d6 points of fire damage to any who touch it.

Creatures: Once, these runes bound a noble efreeti to this room—a potent resource the arcanists once used for its wishes and as a guardian. The efreeti fled during Earthfall when the magic of this circle faltered, and all that remains now are two small fire elementals that lurk near the flame at the center. They surge out to attack any who dare enter the room, but cannot pursue foes beyond the rune circle's edge.

SMALL FIRE ELEMENTALS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 11 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 124)

C3. THE SUZERAIN (CR 5)

An alcove to the south of this empty room is partially blocked by a curtain of red mesh formed from fine steel chains, rusty from long exposure.

The curtain actually blocks an entire second half of the room, which becomes readily noticeable when someone approaches within 10 feet of it. The walls of the room beyond the curtain are marred by crude inscriptions rendered in charcoal. These scribbles are written in Infernal and repeatedly claim the “domain” in the name of the “Suzerain of Little Erebus.”

Creatures: The inner half of this chamber is the domain of one of the two bickering factions of devils, an emaciated imp who calls himself the Suzerain of Little Erebus, his pet name for this dungeon. The Suzerain keeps a pair of lemures posted in the outer room; they serve the imp as guards, and bellow out roars should anything besides other lemures enter the room. They move to attack when the PCs enter, while the Suzerain becomes *invisible* and then slips out from behind the curtain 1 round later. The imp doesn't immediately join the attack, though—he merely watches the fight, and is impressed by the PCs if they win. He then informs them in his high-pitched voice that they have “passed the first test.” He goes on to introduce himself (while still *invisible*) as the Suzerain of Little Erebus, and promises them valuable roles in his kingdom and great riches if they perform two tasks for him: he wants the PCs not only to rescue two lemures that have been captured by

SHARDS OF SIN

his enemy (these lemures are held in area C11), but also to kill his hated enemy, Lord Baz. If the PCs refuse, he uses *suggestion* on the most heavily armored PC to force her to carry out this mission—this, of course, renders him visible and likely subject to the PCs' attacks. He fights back if attacked, surrendering if brought below 4 hit points and begging for his life. If the PCs show mercy, he cackles, turns *invisible*, and flees into the dungeon to heal and plot revenge.

If the PCs agree to undertake these quests and later return to the Suzerain, he first demands the return of the hostages (his missing lemure footsoldiers, imprisoned in area C11); if these are not forthcoming, he flies into a rage and attacks. If the PCs recovered the lemures and report having slain Lord Baz, the imp cackles with glee and tells them they're free to live in this room for as long as they want—he's going to move into Lord Baz's much nicer quarters. The "riches" he promised the PCs consist of the contents of the leather bag he carries around—see *Treasure*, below.

THE SUZERAIN OF LITTLE EREBUS CR 3

XP 800

Advanced imp (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 78, 294)

hp 22

LEMURES (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 79)

Treasure: The Suzerain carries an old leather bag that holds 117 sp and a scroll of *animate dead*.

C4. ANCIENT DISTILLERY (CR 3)

This room appears to have once been an ancient alchemical laboratory, but most of the equipment here has been smashed.

A DC 18 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (arcana) confirms not only that this room was once an alchemical laboratory, but also that it was specifically outfitted to distill and enhance potions—particularly potions that enhanced and bolstered the physical body in strange ways. Some of the ruined equipment is similar to that used by alchemists to craft mutagens, in fact. The ancients used this lab to develop strange elixirs and mutagens to enhance *sinspawn* and other creatures brewed in the *fleshforges* (area C18).

Creatures: A pair of lemures slop around in this room, milling around mindlessly as they keep an eye on the passageway to the west for intrusions from Lord Baz. They attack the PCs on sight.

LEMURES (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 79)

C5. ABANDONED STORAGE (CR 2)

This room is piled high with crumbling remnants of crates, barrels, urns, and casks of all sizes and descriptions.

The stone door to this room has shifted on its ancient hinges and requires a DC 22 Strength check to open. The room's contents are the mundane furnishings and accoutrements stripped from the laboratories when they were abandoned. They have all succumbed to the ravages of time and are worthless.

Creature: Even a casual search of this chamber reveals a strange contraption that resembles a three-legged, four-armed humanoid made of iron and brass. This clockwork servant has long since run down, but its key can be found in area C10—if the clockwork is reactivated by winding it back up, the creature springs to life after a few shuddering fits and starts, then stands motionless until the person who wound it up moves. At this point, the servant follows that person, never straying farther than 10 feet away. It functions as a bodyguard, attacking any foes who attack the person it's "imprinted" upon. It won't stop to repair itself until it's brought below 6 hit points, but otherwise follows the person who wound it faithfully until it winds down, at which point it imprints upon the next person to wind it.

CLOCKWORK SERVANT CR 2

XP 600

hp 31 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 56)

Treasure: Amid the refuse here are two objects of interest. The first is a brass crank with a pearl-inlaid handle—this crank is worth 100 gp, and can be used to open the portcullis in area C8. The second is a set of masterwork smith's tools made of mithral worth 500 gp.

Story Award: If the PCs activate the clockwork servant, award them XP as if they had defeated it in combat.

C6. MINDLESS GUARDIANS (CR 3)

The bare stone floor of this room overlooks a stair that descends to the south.

Creatures: Two vaguely humanoid, deformed figures with waxy, almost liquid flesh that hangs from their twisted bones in ropes stand guard here; each is armed with a spear and stands motionless. These are some of the least of all devils—*nupperibos*. These mindless drones rank even lower than lemures and serve as little more than mindless sword fodder for their betters—in this case, the accuser devil Baz in area C12. The devils are almost like constructs in their mindlessness, and cannot be communicated with—they raise their spears and attack any non-devil on sight.

SHATTERED STAR

NUPPERIBOS (2)

CR 1

XP 400

Tome of Horrors Complete 200

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +0; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)

hp 5 each (1d10)

Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

DR 5/good or silver; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee spear +1 (1d8/x3), 2 claws +1 (1d4)

TACTICS

During Combat A nupperibo attacks the closest target. It reverts to attacking with its claws only if it is disarmed.

Morale Nupperibos fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

SQ infernal slave

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Infernal Slave (Ex) Nupperibos are devils, yet they are essentially mindless shells of solidified torment. Like golems, they have no real minds of their own, but rather follow orders and programming instilled within them by more powerful devils. In the case of multiple orders, only the orders of the most powerful devil are followed. They can utilize simple weapons if commanded, attacking with proficiency, and can also manipulate simple objects like doors. Armor, more complex weapons, and complex tools are beyond their ability to comprehend.

C7. FIRST AND SECOND THASSILONIANS

A pillar stands at either end of this wide room. The northern pillar is carved with the image of a beautiful woman wielding a ranseur. The southern pillar depicts seven robed men and women, their features eroded with the years. Each of them holds one segment of the seven-pointed star. Strange runes are carved into the floor.

The runes are in Thassilonian and ask, “Does true power lie within the one or the many?” A DC 25 Knowledge (history) reveals that the northern pillar depicts Alaznist, the Runelord of Wrath, while the south pillar shows the seven original runelords after they sundered the *Shattered Star*. The runes pose a question that was meant to remind Alaznist’s followers that the key to their power as the heirs of Thassilon lay in following one ruler rather than seven. If the north pillar is touched, Alaznist’s image glows for a moment and the individual who touched the

pillar receives a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 24 hours. A person who touches the southern pillar instead receives a –1 penalty on the same checks and rolls for 24 hours. A person who touches both pillars cancels the effects of each out. Both effects can affect a person only once.

C8. GATEHOUSE (CR 2)

This oddly shaped room retains some of the trappings of its former glory. Remarkably well-preserved tapestries hang at the back of alcoves above stone benches. Both depict a mountain with a woman’s face carved into the peak above an immense bridge that crosses the ocean below, while at the mountain’s base rises a strange city. A single stone pillar stands in the middle of the room, the image of a seven-pointed star with a hole in its center carved into its north face. A brass portcullis stands to the west, barring entry into a hallway leading beyond.

Once an ornate salon, this room now stands empty—the devils haven’t figured out how to raise the portcullis yet, and simply use the route through area C7 to reach the rooms beyond. The tapestries both depict the city of Xin-Bakrakhan at its height (Knowledge [history] DC 25 to recognize).

An examination of the pillar reveals two points of interest. First, the hole in the middle of the Sihedron carved on its side is triangular, not circular. Second, as a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or history) check reveals, the Sihedron is presented with a point straight down rather than straight up—an unusual departure from how the image is normally displayed. If an appropriately shaped tool is wedged into the triangular hole (such as the brass crank from area C5), the star can be rotated; turning it 180 degrees so the bottom-pointing star points up causes the portcullis to grind and shriek (alerting the occupants of areas C9–C12).

Treasure: Both of the tapestries have been treated with preservative magic—they are worth 250 gp each, but each weighs 50 pounds. Hidden within the hollow hanging rod that suspends the western tapestry (Perception DC 23 to locate) is a *wand of lesser restoration* (17 charges).

C9. FIGHTING PIT (CR 4)

A curving balcony wraps around the east side of the room. A stair descends ten feet to the floor below.

This room was used by the arcanists to observe their newly created creatures in battle—sinspawn and other fleshwarped monstrosities would fight in the lower area while the arcanists watched from benches on the balcony.

SHARDS OF SIN

Creatures: A pair of nupperibos lurk in the pit area, while up in the balconies above a pair of imps are seated. The imps have been wiling away the days fighting the two nupperibos against each other—they try to take care to avoid having the two kill each other though, since it takes a while for replacement nupperibos to wander into the dungeon from the rift siphon in area C20.

When the PCs arrive, the imps order the two nupperibos to attack, squealing in delight as they compete against each other for kills. As soon as the PCs attack one of the two imps, they both shriek in terror, turn invisible, and flee to area C12 to report to Lord Baz.

IMPS (2) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 78*)

NUPPERIBOS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 5 each (see page 44)

C10. ANTEROOM (CR 4)

Three doors and corridor open off of this small anteroom. A fountain made of green stone on the north wall still provides a constant flow of water.

The fountain in the wall here functions similarly to the one located far above in area B12. The devils, having no need to drink, have largely ignored the fountain, and have missed the treasure hidden within.

The door to area C11 has a mound of rubble stacked before it to keep the occupants locked inside.

Treasure: A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals a long, thin key made of pale green crystal (actually noqual—see page 71) inside the fountain. This is the key to the clockwork in area C5—it's worth 500 gp.

C11. LEMURE PRISON (CR 4)

Creatures: A pair of lemures are “locked” in here. Mindless, they simply sit and wait—they make no attempt to leave the room unless the door is opened. They attack any non-devil they see, fighting to the death. Lord Baz “stole” these two lemures from the Suzerain (see area C3) many decades ago (in fact, the two lemures wandered away from the Suzerain and Lord Baz stashed them here). This is the

primary reason for the Suzerain's feud with Lord Baz, for the Suzerain still maintains the lemures are his—but the lemures comprehend none of this.

LEMURES (2) CR 1

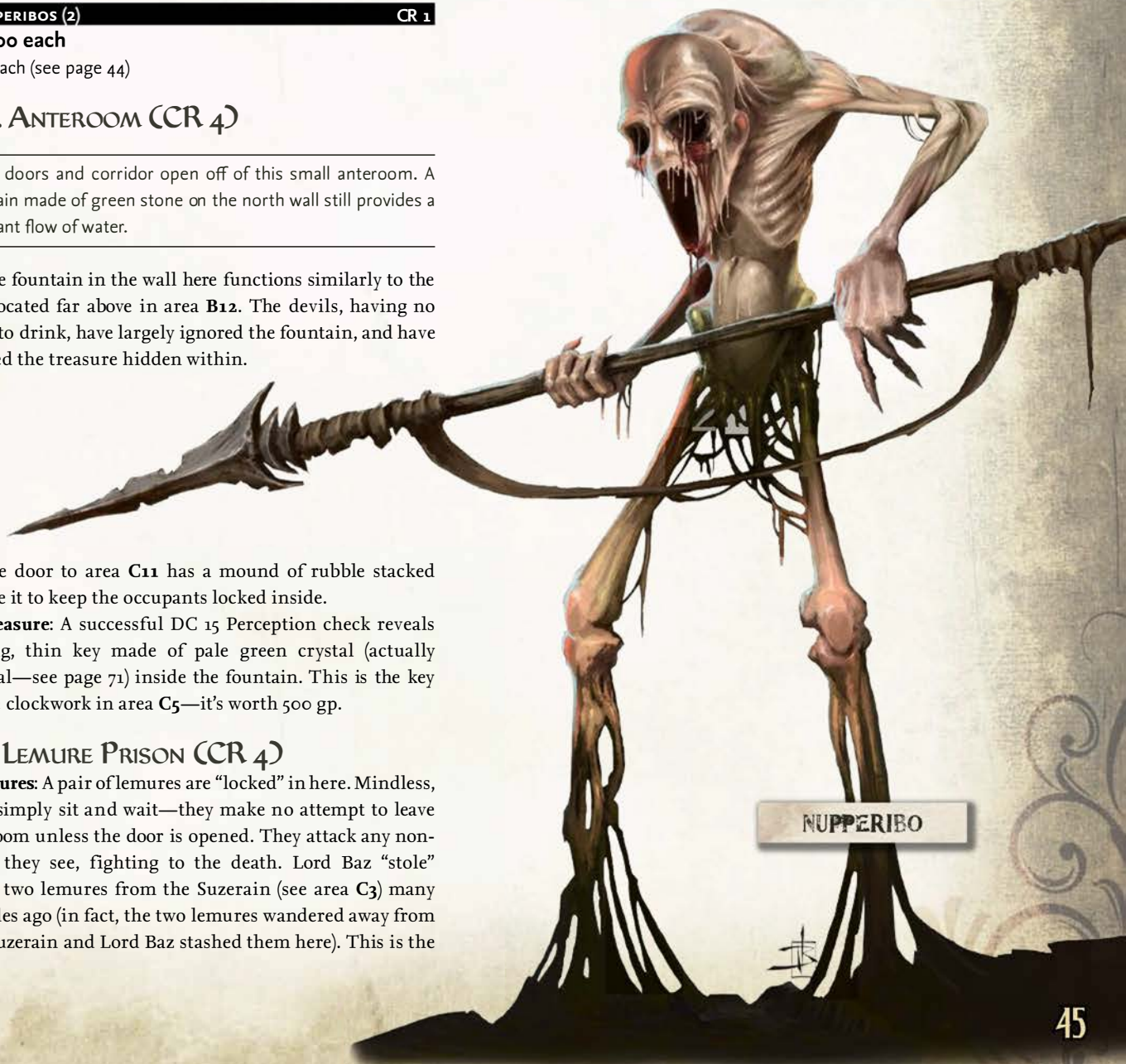
XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 79*)

C12. LORD BAZ'S ROOM (CR 3)

A low table sits in the center of the room. Two low benches sit on either side of the table, and a wooden stringed instrument of archaic design leans against one of them.

This room belonged to one of the chief arcanists of the laboratories, but today serves as the den of a fat accuser devil



NUPPERIBO

SHATTERED STAR

named Baz. With the head and torso of a pudgy human infant and the lower body, wings, mouth, and eyes of a fat housefly, Baz was the first devil with any real sense of self to come through the rift siphon, and as such he thinks of himself as the proper lord of this complex. He views the Suzerain as an upstart and wants him killed—he stole two of the lemures the Suzerain fancied were his in an attempt to lure the imp into his territory so he could kill the upstart. Lord Baz himself is a consummate coward, and though he could likely personally defeat the Suzerain in combat, he is too afraid to try. If the PCs make it to this room, he tries to put on a brave air and demands their service in killing the upstart imp, but if they attack, he shrieks and fights back with his magic and diseased bite. If the imps from area C9 aren't here already, Lord Baz starts combat by teleporting to that room, recruiting them and their nupperibos, then marches back here to attack the PCs. If brought below 10 hit points, Lord Baz curses, saying, "Fine! Fine. You can have this damnable laboratory!" before he teleports into the sewers of Magnimar. He may become a troublemaker in the future, but for now, he's abandoned his interests in this complex.

LORD BAZ CR 3

XP 800

Accuser devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 84)

hp 30

Treasure: The ancient zither is a work of art and a true treasure of Thassilon worth 500 gp. The silver coffer is worth 100 gp and holds 22 gp, 175 sp, and 312 cp.

C13. OCCUPIED GUARDROOM (CR 4)

The smell of the sea is strong in this room, and salt encrusts the floor in a trail leading from the south door.

The door to area C14 has been barricaded from within, and forcing it open requires a successful DC 22 Strength check. Up to two people can work together to open the door.

Creatures: The denizen of area C14 has gathered five nupperibos into this room to serve as guards against

intruders, but also periodically uses them as a larder for its own peculiar tastes. These creatures mindlessly attack anything other than a devil that enters the chamber, but do not pursue intruders beyond this room.

NUPPERIBOS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 5 each (see page 44)



C14. STINK'S REDOUBT (CR 4)

The walls of this chamber have been coated in dried black ichor. Rudimentary lines and smears within the layers of gunk have been added to create crude examples of simplistic art.

Creature: An unusually large and intelligent lemur has taken up residence in this chamber. Its transformation into a more intelligent version of its kind is the chance result of its cannibalistic urges combined with a strange fluctuation of infernal energies as it was pulled through the rift siphon. Today, just barely intelligent enough to speak a few words in Infernal, the lemur has taken the name of "Stink" after having been called that countless times by the imps elsewhere in the dungeon. Stink is even more of a coward than Lord Baz, though, and isn't quite smart enough to realize it's among the strongest of the devils trapped in these halls. Instead, after being bullied by imps nearly to the breaking point, it retreated to this room, bringing along a few nupperibos as snacks and guards. Stink refuses to exit this room, and enjoys its solitude. If the PCs start hammering on the door in an attempt to break it down, Stink begins wailing and sobbing hideously. It freezes in panic when intruders enter, but if they do not immediately attack, it pitifully begs the PCs to "kill the bullies" for it (by which it means all of the other intelligent devils on this level). The blubbering lemur honestly offers its treasures as a reward if the PCs comply.

STINK

CR 4

XP 1,200

Advanced variant lemur (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 79, 294)

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +10

Aura stench (10 ft., DC 16)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

SHARDS OF SIN

hp 38 (4d10+16)

Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +7

DR 5/good or silver; Immune fire, poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d6+4)

TACTICS

During Combat Stink is a coward, and never begins combat.

It prefers to whine and cry, even if attacked. That said, once it's reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, it suddenly flies into a furious rage—this replaces its cowardice and sends it into a rampage of unleashed anger. At this point, Stink attacks the nearest foe in sight. It reverts to its cowardly persona only once no obvious living targets remain.

Morale Stink fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 17, Cha 7

Base Atk +4; CMB +8; CMD 22

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claws)

Skills Escape Artist +11, Perception +10, Stealth +11

Languages Infernal

Treasure: Stink has managed to collect some treasures stolen from the other devils of the level. This small stash consists of 35 gp and three small garnets worth 50 gp each.

C15. THE SEA STAIR (CR 3)

The salty tang of the sea fills the air of this chilly room. Wall carvings showing soldiers marching to war are encrusted with salt, and a descending stair in the center of the room is filled to nearly floor level with sea water. A thin layer of blue energy shimmers across the surface of the water in the stairwell.

What serves Magnimar as a cove and harbor was actually a freshwater lake many miles from the ocean during the time of Thassilon. These stairs served as a faster, more secret entrance and exit into the laboratories when the arcanists wanted to avoid trudging up through all the levels of the Crow. The shimmering field of energy across the surface prevented the waters of the lake from flooding the dungeon, just as they prevent the waters of the Varisian Gulf from doing the same today—solid objects can move through the barrier with ease, but liquids not transported within an object or living creature cannot.

The stairs exit onto the bottom of Outcast Cove from the base of a stony underwater escarpment, 40 feet below the surface. From the outside, seaweed and silt work to obscure this entrance—a DC 25 Perception check is required to find the entrance for those who don't know it's there.

The wreck of a fishing trawler called the *Liza Jane* lies nearly upright on the floor of the harbor not far from this

entrance. Seaweed has overgrown its rails and deck, and barnacles encrust its broken mast that rises above the green mound of its hull. The *Liza Jane* went down several years ago after accidentally sideswiping the Crow's side. The wreck makes an excellent landmark for PCs who wish to return to this entrance at a later time.

Creatures: A pair of reefclaws—long eel-like creatures with lobsterlike heads and pincers—lair in the wreck of the *Liza Jane*. These aquatic aberrations are aggressive, and swim out of the wreck to attack anyone who approaches within 10 feet. They fight to the death, pursuing foes up into area C15 and beyond if necessary.

REEFCLAWS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 234)

Treasure: A minute spent searching the wreck, along with a successful DC 20 Perception check, reveals a gold-and-pearl brooch inscribed with the letters "L. B." worth 150 gp, a mithral masterwork rapier, and a +1 *buckler*. The brooch once belonged to the *Liza Jane*'s captain, Lockerbie Brast—a poor soul who lives on to this day in area D5.

C16. UNDERWATER OBSERVATION

A spiral stair rises from the center of this otherwise empty chamber leading up to a domed chamber some twenty feet above.

The upper room of this underwater tower was built to give the arcanists a place to relax and look out into the waters of the surrounding lake, something like an underwater observatory. Three permanent walls of force (CL 15th) serve as windows that look out to the west across what is now Outcast Cove. The view is somewhat murky, and seaweed growing up from the sides of the tower serves as billowing curtains that sometimes block the view, but during the day the wreck of the *Liza Star* is visible with a successful DC 15 Perception check. From outside, noticing the windows beyond the seaweed curtains requires a successful DC 20 Perception check.

Treasure: A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a hidden slot in the sill of the central window, within which sit two very well-preserved *scrolls of water breathing*, leftovers from a larger stash once used by the arcanists to come and go via the sea stairs in area C15.

C17. DEFECTIVE TRAP (CR 3)

This chamber is bare save for a statue depicting a regal-looking woman wielding a ranseur—she stands in a battle-ready pose, with the tip of the ranseur aimed at the northern entrance to the room.

SHATTERED STAR

Trap: This statue of Runelord Alaznist was once a dangerous trap, but unlike the dungeon itself, the trap hasn't weathered the passage of time all that well. Originally, the statue unleashed *fireballs* into the room whenever anyone not prominently bearing the Thassilonian rune of wrath stepped inside. Today, the statue sputters and smokes for a round before it triggers, and the *fireballs* it emits are a pale shadow of the devastating explosions it once generated. The center of the detonation is focused on the tip of the statue's raneur, so that when the fireball detonates, it fills the room and a 10-foot square extending into the hallway to the north and south. The trap does not trigger if there are no targets in motion in the room.

DEFECTIVE FIREBALL TRAP

CR 3

XP 800

Type magic; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger sight (*true seeing*); **Onset Delay** 1 round; **Reset** automatic (after 1 minute)

Effect spell effect (*fireball*, 6d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 14 half)

C18. HALL OF FLESHWARPING (CR 5)

A line of pillars runs down the center of this hall, between which lie the ruined remains of what was once an immense magical laboratory. Crumbled tables, broken stone urns, rusted cauldrons, and ancient fragments of broken glass lie scattered throughout. The northern wall depicts a vast mural of armies of deformed monsters and demons gathering on the shores of a mountainous island. Above, a woman's face has been carved into the mountaintop, and an immense bridge arches out from just below this woman's face. Below the mountain, at the end of a side view of a tangled network of caverns, lies a vast underground vault in which an immense monstrosity of tentacles surrounds a central fanged mouth; within the mouth glares an angry red eye.

This room was once the primary fleshwarping laboratory—a place where the arcanists worked to craft sinspawn and other monstrosities for Alaznist's armies. The tangle of broken and ruined equipment on the ground functions as difficult terrain. The mural on the northern wall depicts the armies of Bakrakhan on the shores of what is known today as Hollow Mountain (Knowledge [geography] DC 20 to recognize), while the monster that dwells in the caves deep below is a representation of one of Runelord Alaznist's most powerful allies, the nascent demon lord Yamasoth (who can be identified with a successful DC 30 Knowledge [planes] check). It's unlikely the PCs will be able to decipher this last bit of information now, but it still foreshadows events to come in the fourth Shattered Star adventure, "Beyond the Doomsday Doors."

C19. WET CAVERNS (CR 4)

Stalactites of various sizes hang from the irregular ceiling of this cavern, dripping slowly onto the stone floor to form a pair of shallow pools. Sheets of fungus grow in a riot along the walls and floor of these dank caves, while what appear to be the fossilized bones of some huge monster lie slumped to the northwest.

The builders of the complex struck a natural cavern here and never bothered to finish it out, instead opting to use it as a den for a bulette the arcanists kept as a pet. All that remains of the bulette today are its bones—while they look ominous, they're harmless. Both pools of water are 5 feet deep at their deepest points—they're freshwater after filtering in through the surrounding rock, and drain away through narrow fissures.

Creatures: A single gray ooze lies along the edge of the water, looking like nothing more than a swath of mud. The ooze is ravenous, and immediately lunges up to attack any creature that comes nearby—it does not pursue prey far from this room, though.

GRAY OOZE

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 50 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 166)

C20. RIFT SIPHON LABYRINTH (CR 3)

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this curving corridor are sheathed in rusty plates of iron that have been bolted in place. Scorch marks mar this armor plating at periodic intervals, and the gnawed fragments of blackened bones are scattered here and there. Row after row of tiny runes have been etched into each iron plate.

This entire room is a complex magical item, and radiates strong conjuration magic. A PC who can read Thassilonian and succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check can deduce that the entire chamber is built to be some sort of device to focus planar energies, with the layout of the walls and their rune-infused iron plates designed to create a thin spot between the planes at the center of the maze. The entire thing is known as a *rift siphon*. Before Earthfall, the arcanists could alter the other plane to which the rift siphon was focused, so that they could more easily draw planar energies in to aid their work. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check confirms that the *rift siphon* is currently focused on Hell.

The thin spot the siphon creates has a minor side effect in that it allows periodic visitations by relatively weak natives of those other planes—nothing more powerful than a CR 3 foe can wander through the thin

spot, and since these unanticipated arrivals were few and far enough between, the arcanists simply took care of the occasional visitors with a few spells whenever they showed up. Over the past 10,000 years, however, a fair number of infernal visitors have emerged through the thin spot to infest the dungeon.

The rift siphon can be closed relatively simply, as a successful DC 25 Spellcraft check confirms. By prying no fewer than 10 iron plates from the walls (no two of which can be closer than 10 feet apart), the entire device can be ruined. Prying an iron plate from a wall requires a successful DC 24 Strength check (up to two people can work together on this)—destroying an iron plate (hardness 10, hp 10) also works. Each time a plate is destroyed, there's a 10% chance that the surge of energies causes a new creature to suddenly manifest at the center of the maze—a nupperibo, a lemure, an imp, or a hell hound (determine what arrives by rolling 1d4).

Creature: The latest arrival to the dungeon came here 2 years ago—but it's been trapped here ever since. This is a single hell hound—a creature that's gone nearly insane with frustration at being trapped in the maze. The sound of its claws clicking along the stone floor and its growls and howls echo ominously through the maze—if you don't want to keep track of the hell hound's position as the PCs explore the maze, you can simply have it attack them at any point you wish. It fights to the death.

HELL HOUND CR 3
XP 800
hp 30 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 173)

Story Award: Do not award XP for any outsiders the PCs incidentally call into the dungeon while they're trying to destroy the *rift siphon*—but if they do manage to destroy it, award them 1,600 XP.

C21. WARNING CHAMBER

A bronze plaque, green with corrosion and inscribed with spiky runes, hangs a door to the southeast.

The plaque is inscribed in Thassilonian and reads, "Do not leave cages open." The door itself is locked—the key's long gone, but the old lock can be picked with a successful DC 25 Disable Device check.

C22. SPECIMEN LAB (CR 4)

Stone tables line the sides of this room. Atop them are battered iron cages of various sizes, many of which hold the skeletal remains of various occupants. A number of these have been forcibly wrenched open and lie in ruins.

Creatures: The cages in this room were used to hold freshly created sinspawn, along with other creatures that the arcanists created in area C18. Increasingly, they'd taken to storing failed sinspawn—the results of errors in fleshwarping—in these cages. At the time of Earthfall, three of these creatures, known as fleshdregs, were imprisoned in here, and over the centuries, they've managed to wrestle their way out of the slowly failing cages. The three fleshdregs aren't smart enough to leave this room, and they immediately attack anyone who enters, fighting to the death.

FLESHDREGS (3) CR 1
XP 400 each
hp 13 each (see page 82)

C23. GATEHOUSE

A stout iron portcullis blocks the eastern entrance; its winch stands to the side. A skeleton, still in the scorched half-plate armor it wore in life, is slumped over the winch.

The iron portcullis is locked in place unless the winch's locking bar is disengaged (this cannot be done from the east side of the portcullis).

Treasure: The ancient skeleton's masterwork half-plate is rusty but still usable (it has the broken condition until repaired). The bones themselves crumble to dust if the armor is moved.

C24. SOUTHERN GUARDPOST (CR 4)

Two flights of steps descend into a wide pool of murky water in this room. Pillars carved to look like coiling tentacles support the vaulted roof, rising from the pool to the north and south.

The pool of water in the room is 10 feet deep—its levels are maintained in the same manner as the fountain in area B12. The tunnel at the far end of the room turns south and slopes downward, leading to area D1 after a span of 100 feet.

Creatures: A trio of sinspawn originally grown with gills and webbed hands and feet swims in the waters of this pool. Each has a swim speed of 30 feet and the aquatic subtype, but is otherwise identical to the typical sinspawn. They lie in wait in the corners of the room, then swim out to attack once intruders start crossing the pool. They are not amphibious, and do not pursue foes from this pool.

AQUATIC SINSPAWN (3) CR 2
XP 600 each
Variant sinspawn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 246)
hp 17 each

D1. SEWER ENTRANCE

A short flight of stairs leads down to a thirty-foot-square chamber with a cistern filled with dark water taking up most of the floor. Troughs of this dark water run east, west, and south through hallways alongside five-foot-wide walkways. Soggy timbers have been draped over the gaps to provide unstable-looking bridges over the troughs. An ornamental torch made of onyx burns in a sconce next to a hallway heading east, from which the distant sound of someone singing with a raspy throat wafts down the hall.

These chambers once served the Crow as a small network of sewers, but also linked to a complex where the Crow's ancient administrator, a powerful wizard assigned to the piling by Runelord Alaznist, dwelled. This wizard is long dead today, but her chambers (areas **D8–D14**) remain in use today by a band of derro. These derro use the northern sewers, which are connected to Magnimar's sewers via a long underground tunnel (see area **D7**) to come and go.

The water in these sewers today isn't waste, but rather filters down from the harbor above, then filters down deeper into the groundwater below—there is no current in this water, which has had the majority of the salt strained from it yet remains bitter and stagnant. The cistern in this room is 20 feet deep, while the troughs along the adjoining halls are 10 feet deep. The planks that cross the troughs are as unsafe as they appear, and immediately break if any weight is placed upon them.

The sound of singing comes from the denizen of area **D5**. A DC 14 Perception check is enough to make out the fact that the singing is in Necril—the language of the dead—and is a gloomy song about what happens to a body after it's buried and becomes a feast for the worms.

D2. TREACHERY AT EVERY STEP (CR 4)

The stone walkway turns into a bridge as it winds through this room, supported by pillars of stone over the still dark water.

This is a dangerous room to navigate for two reasons: the bridge leading across the room has grown weak in two areas (indicated on the map by the red hash marks), and the air itself is infused with poison and flammable gas. The bad air seeps in silently through the northernmost sewer pipe on the east wall, filling the room with odorless toxic fumes.

The toxic gas takes a round to build up in any creature's lungs, but starting on the second round a creature is in this room, it is exposed to the gas's effects (poison gas—inhaled; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save). The gas is flammable, and introducing an open flame into the room causes the air to ignite and

burn off in a single round of bright crimson flame—all creatures in the room at this time take 4d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 15 half), after which the air in the room is breathable (it takes 24 hours for the level of gas in the room to return to toxic levels). A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check recognizes the nature of the gas before anyone is exposed to it.

The unstable sections of the bridge can support up to one Medium or two Small creatures at a time—if more than this limit stands upon any unstable stretch of bridge, though, the bridge collapses. All creatures on the bridge fall into the 10-foot-deep water below, taking 1d6 points of damage from stony debris. A creature within 5 feet of a stable section of bridge can make a DC 15 Reflex save to leap to safety as the bridge falls. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) or a DC 20 Perception check discerns the bridge's unstable sections.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to navigate this room and avoid or survive the dangers within, award them 1,200 XP.

D3. PARTIAL COLLAPSE

A sewer channel runs through this room, though it has collapsed to the west. A fungus-draped passageway winds further into the darkness.

The collapse here once led to a larger network of sewer tunnels that eventually connected to similar complexes located under all of the Irespan pilings. If you wish, you can allow the PCs to excavate the rubble and explore these other tunnels—perhaps even finding unexplored ways to enter the other pilings. Further details on these other dungeons, alas, are beyond the scope of this adventure.

D4. HAZARDOUS SLIME (CR 4)

A pool occupies the west end of this room. The stench of decay, mold, and fungus here is powerful and eye-watering.

This chamber formed a natural sump for the channels flowing through the sewers so that heavier waste was caught here to slowly decay. The pool is 10 feet deep.

The moisture has allowed all manner of fungus to flourish here. Unfortunately, growing among the thick sheets of fungus here is a patch of green slime. The dangerous slime clings to the ceiling just above the everburning torch, and drops from the ceiling when the first creature moves under it. That creature can avoid the dropping slime with a successful DC 15 Reflex save.

GREEN SLIME

CR 4

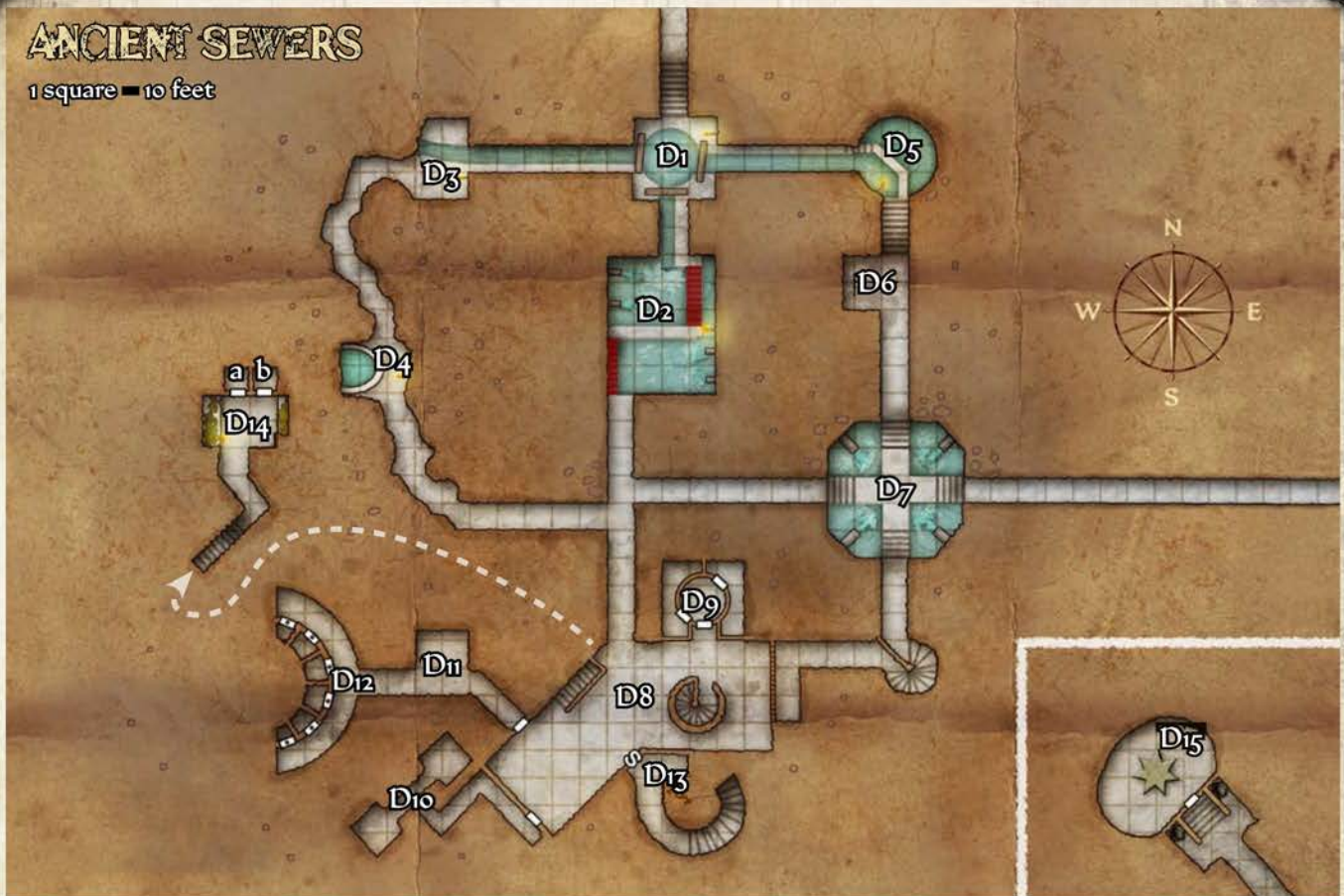
XP 1,200

Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook 416

SHARDS OF SIN

ANCIENT SEWERS

1 square = 10 feet



D5. THE LOST CAPTAIN (CR 4)

A stone bridge supported by stone pillars curves through this cylindrical reservoir. A few feet below the bridge, dark water fills the room. The walls within a few feet of the water's surface have been painted into a remarkable mural that depicts the skyline of Magnimar, complete with numerous ships seeming to float on the waters of the room.

Creature: If the PCs manage to reach this room without being noticed, they'll catch the chamber's occupant floating in the water and singing a song about worms and corpses as he works on adding a new ship painting to his constantly evolving mural, but otherwise, the sound of his off-key singing cuts off and he ducks into the water before the PCs see him. In this case, they may be in time to see ripples on the water's surface but little more.

This room is the den of a lacedon ghastr who, in life, was a fisherman named Lockerbie Brast, captain of the *Liza Jane* (see area C15). He was already suffering from ghou fever (due to a prior attack at sea from a group of lacedons), and in his fever-induced delirium, he wrecked his ship against the Crow. After returning to life as a lacedon himself, Lockerbie has lived a lonely life split between periodic

hunts of the depths of Outcast Cove for meals of the drowned dead and working on his painting of Magnimar here in his lair. He spends most of his time here, using the Sea Stair at area C5 to come and go and relying on stealth to sneak by devils and sinspawn along the way.

Although evil, Lockerbie is no fool—he's not eager to fight a group of adventurers, and knows that they'll likely attack him on sight. Instead, when the PCs enter, he tries to speak to them from the shadows under the bridge if he can. Lockerbie is willing to talk, and even warns the PCs of the dangers of areas D2, D4, and D7 in an attempt to earn their favor before he asks a favor of his own—he reveals that he lost a valuable broach when he sunk his ship, the *Liza Jane*, just to the east of the Crow. If the PCs can recover his broach and then show it to him, he promises to tell them something important about what they'll encounter to the south. And if the PCs will go one step further and promise to deliver the broach to his wife (the eponymous *Liza Jane*) with an explanation that they found the broach in the shipwreck but found no sign of Lockerbie, he'll even agree to aid them against those dangers to the south.

Lockerbie knows about the derros in areas D8–D14—he's seen them dragging numerous victims through area D7. While he has no particular hatred of the derros, he

figures the PCs are here to kill them. If the PCs secure his aid, Lockerbie tells them there are four derros in all, led by a witch of some sort, but that the derros seem to have some sort of growing feud. If the PCs want a better chance against the derros, they'll need to approach the southern room slowly—he suggests via the balcony accessed by the southern tunnel from area **D7**. This should give them a chance to observe the derros and plan an ambush.

Convincing Lockerbie that the PCs honestly intend to deliver the brooch to Liza Jane Brast requires a successful DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy check—or alternatively, some sort of proof from Liza Jane that the delivery has been made. If the PCs manage to do this for the lacedon, he'll accompany them and aid them in fighting the derros. Of course, despite his artistic talent and unusually friendly demeanor, Lockerbie remains an evil undead monster beset with hungry urges. For example, if, during a fight against the derros, things turn bad, he's not above snatching a fallen PC and fleeing back here with the body.

LOCKERBIE BRAST CR 4

XP 1,200

Male lacedon rogue 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

NE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 45 (5d8+23)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, evasion, trap sense +1;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +6 (1d4+3 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks disease (DC 15), paralysis (DC 15), sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Lockerbie attacks the closest foe in the first round of combat, hoping to maximize his sneak attacks.

Once the battle begins in earnest, he fights using Combat Expertise and disarms foes, dropping weapons into the water to give himself a greater advantage.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 12 hit points, Lockerbie flees south to area **D7**, then east down the tunnel there, hoping to make it to Magnimar to escape into the slums to recover. He does not return to these sewers, nor does he seek revenge on the PCs.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +12, Craft (painting) +9, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Perception +11, Stealth +11, Swim +19

Languages Common, Necril

SQ rogue talents (combat trick), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear necklace of fireballs I; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, painting supplies in a water-tight case (the case itself is worth 100 gp, but the painting supplies are mundane)

Development: Liza Jane Brast still lives in Magnimar, a down-on-her-luck widow who works as a laundress at Washer's Row. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check made to gather information reveals where she lives. She reacts to the presentation of her long-lost husband's brooch with thankful tears. She has no way to reward the PCs aside from her thanks. Revealing to her the truth of her husband's current condition undoes her relief, and in fact could drive her to a desperate and suicidal attempt to seek him out—repercussions of this are left to you to determine.

Story Award: If the PCs secure Lockerbie's assistance against the derros, award them XP as if they had defeated the ghoul in combat. If they deliver the brooch to his wife and thus ease her pain, award them an additional 800 XP.

D6. UTILITY ROOM

Two picked clean skeletons wearing the rags of laborer's garb lie sprawled on the floor of this otherwise empty room.

Treasure: Once a utility room, this chamber now serves as the grave of two greedy sewer workers who discovered the tunnel in area **D7** and followed it to this complex, hoping to find hidden treasure. They were instead attacked by the monsters in area **D7**, then fled here only to be killed by a now-departed spider swarm. One skeleton still has 16 gp and a pearl worth 100 gp in the tatters of its sock, while the other clutches an everburning torch in one hand.

D7. SEWER FALLS (CR 4)

A flight of stairs leads up to a wide stone crossing ten feet above the dark waters below in this large room.

The tunnel to the east extends for about 2,400 feet, twisting and turning under Outcast Cove as it goes. The tunnel quickly gives way to a more natural cavern, often featuring 2- to 3-foot-deep pools of cold water, but otherwise leads safely all the way to Magnimar. The tunnel ends at a secret door that opens into one of the city sewers in the border between Dockway and Underbridge—in precisely the area where many of the disappearances have occurred. From the sewer side, a DC 25 Perception check is needed to notice the door, but from this side the door is obvious.

SHARDS OF SIN

Creatures: A pair of strange subterranean creatures lurk within the northeast and southwest sewer pipes—cave morays. These limber creatures are mutated versions of the more common moray eel, adapted to life out of water.

CAVE MORAYS (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Tome of Horrors Complete 99

N Medium magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 19 each (3d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +5 (2d6+3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks ambush, recoil attack

TACTICS

During Combat The cave morays lunge out to attack anyone who passes within reach of their recoil attack.

Morale The cave morays fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18 (can't be tripped)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +11 (+15 in rocky or stony areas)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ambush (Ex) A cave moray gains a +4 circumstance bonus on attack rolls made during a surprise round.

Recoil Attack (Ex) When a cave moray attacks from a cyst, it gains the benefit of a charge attack even though it doesn't actually move. This lunging attack, combined with a second set of jaws that can extend further from its primary jaws, work to extend its reach to 15 feet.

D8. DERRO VAULT (CR 6)

Blue, glowing fungus grows in numerous patches across the walls of this large chamber. To the east, a shadowy balcony overlooks the room at a height of ten feet, while in the center of the room a wide spiral stairwell descends into the darkness. A second flight of stairs descends along the western wall.

The patches of glowing blue fungus are cytillesh, a toxic fungus that causes birth defects and madness—and constitutes one of the staples of derro diet and alchemical research. A patch of cytillesh provides bright illumination to 20 feet. Every 24 hours a creature spends in this illumination it must succeed at a DC 15 Will save (+1 to the DC for each previous save) to avoid taking 1d4 points

of Wisdom damage, to a maximum equal to 5 less than its normal Wisdom score. Further failed saving throws once this limit is reached cause lingering madness, such as those detailed in the *GameMastery Guide*. This is an insanity effect, and as such, derros are immune.

The stairs along the northwest wall lead down to area D14. The spiral stairs in the middle of the room lead down much farther than that—after descending for nearly 400 feet, they suddenly end at an open gulf, exiting into the roof of a large cavern filled with all manner of deadly fungi and creeping oozes. It's an 80-foot drop to the floor below—this cavern is one of the chambers of the upper reaches of the Darklands known as Nar-Voth. It is from this route that the derros first came to the region (with their leader Khrysm granting them all the effects of *levitate*), but further details are beyond the scope of this adventure.



SHATTERED STAR

The secret door leading to area **D13** can be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check—but a character who carries the *Shard of Pride* feels a sudden urge to search this portion of the wall as soon as he enters area **D8**, gaining a +10 insight bonus on that Perception check as the urging to proceed toward the *Shard of Greed* compels him forward.

Creatures: The source of the vanishings that have plagued Magnimar can be found here, in this room and its adjoining chambers. A group of four derros, led by a witch named Khrysm, have come to Magnimar via the deeper caverns below. For several months, they've been using the tunnel from area **D7** to abduct stock for their experiments. The majority of their victims are subjected to hideous procedures (most of which involve vivisections and other studies the derros hope will provide a solution to their aversion to sunlight) before having their minds wiped clean via poison and magic, at which point they're returned to Magnimar's streets, typically with enough Wisdom damage from cytillesh exposure that they're barely able to function on their own.

The derros are each responsible for their own specialized type of experiments carried out in the adjoining rooms. They use this large central area for meetings, particularly to discuss tactics for upcoming raids. The first time the PCs approach this room, that's what three of the derros are doing here—arguing in Aklo about the best type of victim to abduct (their leader, Khrysm, remains in area **D14** for now). If the PCs approach stealthily, they find the derros finally coming to an agreement about abducting several fishermen from a Dockway tavern. If the PCs wish to ambush the derros at this point, the derros take a –4 penalty on Perception checks. Alternatively, if the PCs wait, the three derros split up to their own rooms, allowing the PCs to pick and choose whom they fight.

The derros are named Caedimus, Portioque, and Atlatia—see areas **D9–D11** for information about each's personality. The three are bitter rivals; each believes his or her own specialty represents the best approach, and they argue bitterly even in combat. If one of the derros is defeated, the other two immediately break off combat and flee to their respective chambers, planning on utilizing their own personal defenses and guardians in each room to increase their own chances of survival rather than rely upon each other.

CAEDIMUS CR 3
XP 800
Male derro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)
hp 25

PORTIOQUE CR 3
XP 800
Male derro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)
hp 25

Melee injection spear +2 (1d8/x3 plus frostspore)

Skills Craft (alchemy) +6, Perception +0

ATLATIA CR 3

XP 800

Female derro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)

hp 25

Skills Perception +0, Use Magic Device +6

Gear wand of charm person (19 charges)

D9. CAEDIMUS'S LABORATORY (CR 4 OR 5)

This twenty-foot-square domed chamber contains a jury-rigged pair of low operating tables, complete with leather straps at both ends to hold the patients down.

Creatures: Caedimus is most interested in how the body decays after death sets in—the derro believes that this decay is linked to the decay that derros suffer in the sunlight, and if he can find a way to retard or reverse the decay, he can adapt that solution to the larger problem. His primary subject has been a hunch-backed carrion golem he found in the caverns deep below—a creature the derros captured and whom Caedimus has managed to surgically reprogram so that it thinks of Caedimus as its father. To date, the derro has not been able to discover why the carrion golem's body refuses to rot further—a failure he is ever more frustrated by. Caedimus is by nature a loner, and only associates with the other derros because of strength in numbers.

If the carrion golem (a hideous patchwork made of equal parts troglodyte, duergar, giant spider, and giant rat, but with the lolling head of a half-shaved dwarf bearing a gaping trepanation to the side of its skull) is alone, it fights until destroyed to protect the lab.

CARRION GOLEM CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 136)

CAEDIMUS CR 3

XP 800

Male derro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)

hp 25

Treasure: The surgical tools, while filthy, could be cleaned up; they are of quite good quality, and are worth 200 gp as a set.

D10. PORTIOQUE'S LABORATORY (CR 1 OR 4)

The corridor splits and ends in two equally sized square rooms—a bedroom to the northeast and some sort of abattoir to the southwest.

SHARDS OF SIN



Creatures: The room to the northeast is the home and study of the derro Portioque. His favored theories on the nature of the derro vulnerability to sunlight is that the decay is caused by warmth, and that by protecting or canceling the sun's heat, a derro could exist with comfort under those deadly rays. The room to the south has several haunches of meat kept at a freezing temperature due to the presence of a patch of carefully cultivated brown mold. Whenever Portioque gets a living victim, he alternates his experiments between exposing the victim to the mold and then pulling it back from the brink of death, and injecting victims he keeps bound in his room with solutions of distilled brown mold spores mixed with various bodily humors extracted from previous victims or himself.

Portioque fancies himself an alchemist, and has studied the effects of various bodily humors for many years. To date, none of his subjects have emerged from their torments alive, and as such the other derros are hesitant to allow him to take the lead on experiments, knowing full well that victims who aren't returned to the surface are more likely to arouse unwanted attention.

Embittered and vile, Portioque prefers to fight with a sinister weapon called an injection spear (see page 64) he keeps loaded with 5 doses of his own brew of brown mold spores—a concoction he calls frostspore (see page 64).

Portioque's chambers are guarded by his pet darkmantle—if anyone enters this room when Portioque isn't present, the darkmantle attacks all intruders.

DARKMANTLE CR 1

XP 400

hp 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 55*)

PORTIOQUE CR 3

XP 800

Male derro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 70*)

hp 25

Melee injection spear +2 (1d8/x3 plus frostspore)

Skills Craft (alchemy) +6, Perception +0

BROWN MOLD CR 2

XP 600

Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook 416

Treasure: An alchemist's lab, used primarily for distilling the inherent qualities of bodily fluids, sits on a table in Portioque's bedroom. His greatest treasure, an *extraction scarificator* (see page 64), sits amid the lab's components. In addition, 7 more vials of frostsore sit nearby.

D11. ATLATIA'S DUNGEON (CR 2 OR 4)

This square room seems to serve a dual purpose as a bedroom and a torture chamber.

Creatures: Atlatia takes a less invasive approach to her researches—she believes that the key to defeating the killing rays of the sun lie in the minds of those who live on the surface. She uses a *wand of charm person* and noninvasive (but nonetheless painful) surgical torture to break the minds of her victims, then subjects them to extensive interrogations and thought-expanding injections of various drugs and toxins to try to navigate the pathways of the surface-dwelling mind. Alas, her own madness means her interrogations follow a recursive pattern that frequently drives her victims permanently mad, forcing her to replace her subjects with new ones.

Atlatia's current victim should be picked by you—if Fenster the Blight survived his encounter with the PCs, he's been abducted recently by Atlatia and is now her charmed minion here. Other possible recruits include Terisha Skiloni or even Natalya Vancaskerkin, depending on who survived.

ATLATIA

CR 3

XP 800

Female derro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)

hp 25

Skills Perception +0, Use Magic Device +6

Combat Gear *wand of charm person* (19 charges)

FENSTER THE BLIGHT

CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (see page 17)

Treasure: Atlatia keeps several mind-altering substances in a chest near her bed. Within are 3 doses of id moss, 2 doses of striped toadstool, 10 doses of flayleaf, 8 doses of pesh, an *elixir of love*, and an *elixir of truth*. Rules for drugs appear on page 237 of the *GameMastery Guide*.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to rescue Atlatia's prisoner, award them 600 XP.

D12. PRISONER PENS

A curved hallway stretches to the left and right, with stone cell doors lining the inner wall.

These cell doors are used to keep recent prisoners; the derros haven't yet started work on. Currently, three of these cells contain hapless, unconscious victims snatched from the streets of Magnimar—these NPCs can be significant characters the PCs have encountered, named NPCs from *Magnimar: City of Monuments*, or merely unfortunate citizens. Rescuing these prisoners is a part of Lord Mayor Grobaras's mini-quest (see the inside cover of this book).

The door to any cell containing a prisoner is locked (Disable Device DC 30 to pick the lock); Khrysm carries the keys to these doors. The prisoners are naked, and any gear they may have been captured with is kept in area D14.

D13. FORGOTTEN CORRIDOR

A curving stairwell shrouded in tattered cobwebs and a thick layer of dust extends into the darkness. A bulky cobweb-shrouded shape looms in an alcove directly to the east.

These stairs wind 250 feet down into the dark, eventually leading to area D15. The large bulky shape is a long-dead and well-preserved shriezyx—a monstrous, spiderlike aberration. A successful DC 14 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check is enough for a PC to recognize the dead thing for what it was, while a PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Knowledge (history) check recalls the event in 4623 AR in which swarms of these creatures clambered up out of the Irespan to menace Magnimar—an event that caused the lord mayor to issue a ban on quarrying the Irespan's stone.

D14. KHRYSM'S LABORATORY (CR 7)

This large room is set up as a crude alchemical lab—planks laid over barrels and crates serve as tables, but the alchemical gear set up on these crude tables appears to be quite high quality.

Creature: This room has been claimed by the leader of the derros—a derro magister named Khrysm. An unabashed hedonist, Khrysm seeks to experience the full range of mortal sensations both personally and by observing others. She is a master torturer and has learned to use her aklys, drugs, alchemical skill, and inhuman instruments of her own design to bring victims to the heights of pleasure and the depths of agony again and again until they eventually go mad. The victims who survive are broken shells of who they once were—if indeed Khrysm deigns to leave any memories intact at all. She has largely abandoned the pursuit of discovering a cure for derro sunlight vulnerability, instead viewing her role as a magister as affording her the luxury of exploring the realm of pleasure and pain while her underlings toil on more immediate concerns.

SHARDS OF SIN

Khrysm is attended by a pair of homunculi she created with the aid of long-dead allies from Nar-Voth—both creations look like tiny, bat-winged duplicates of the derro magister herself, and are completely loyal to their mistress.

MAGISTER KHRYSM CR 6

XP 2,400

Female derro alchemist 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

CE Small humanoid (derro)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 70 (7d8+39)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9; +2 vs. poison

Immune confusion, insanity; **SR** 18

Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk aklys +6 (1d6–1)

Ranged mwk aklys +12 (1d6–1) or bomb +12 (2d6+4 fire)

Special Attacks bomb 8/day (2d6+4 fire, DC 16), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +12)

At will—*darkness*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *levitate*

1/day—*daze* (DC 15), *deeper slumber* (DC 18), *modify memory* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 17)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *invisibility*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*, *shield*

TACTICS

During Combat Khrysm throws a bomb (she prefers acid bombs) on the first round of combat if there are still flat-footed targets available. She drinks an extract of *shield* otherwise (or drinks the potion on the second round), and in the next round uses *invisibility*, then makes another sneak attack with a bomb the next round. She repeats this tactic until she runs out of *invisibility* extracts and potions, after which point she levitates up out of reach to throw her remaining bombs. She saves *deeper slumber* for use against foes that seem capable of reaching her in melee easily.

Morale When reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, Khrysm uses *sound burst* to try to stun a few PCs and then flees toward the stairs in area D8 to retreat back down to Nar-Voth—if she escapes, she does not return anytime soon, but may gather more resources to seek revenge on the PCs at a later date.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 18, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 19

Feats Brew Potion, Derro Magister, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Throw Anything, Toughness

Skills Craft (alchemy) +14, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +14,

Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +7, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +16

Languages Aklo, Common, Dwarven, Necril, Terran, Undercommon
SQ alchemy^{APG} (alchemy crafting +4, identify potions), discoveries^{APG} (acid bomb, precise bombs [4 squares]), madness, mutagen^{APG} (+4/–2, +2 natural, 40 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy^{APG}

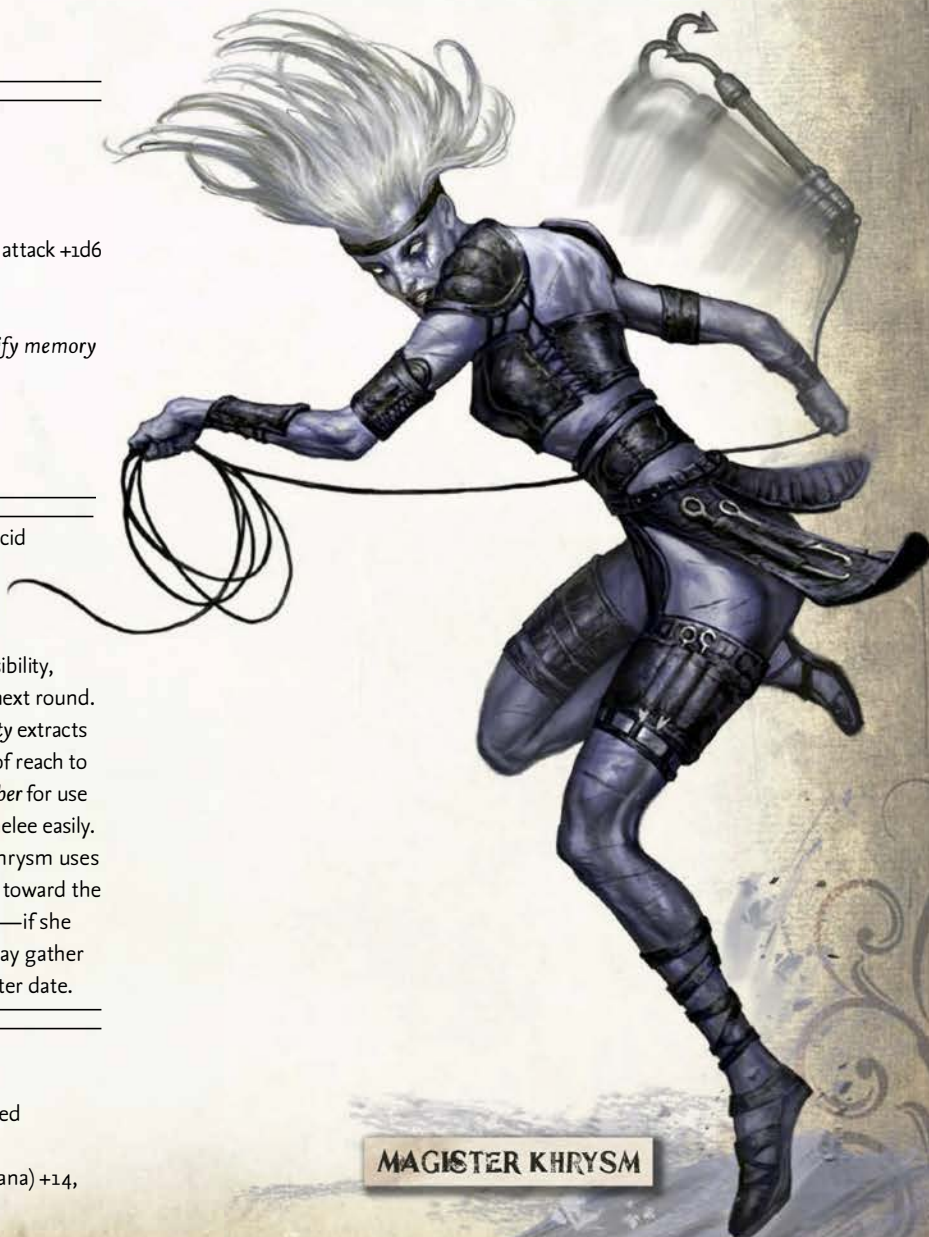
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potions of invisibility* (2), acid (4); **Other Gear** masterwork leather armor, masterwork aklys, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, key ring to doors in area D12

HOMUNCULI (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 11 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 176)

^{APG} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.



MAGISTER KHRYSM

SHATTERED STAR

NEW FEAT—DERRO MAGISTER

A derro magister's mind is particularly affected by the consumption of strange mold, granting enhanced resistance to magic and additional spell-like abilities and traits.

Prerequisites: Cha 20, derro

Benefit: A derro magister's spell resistance equals the derro's Hit Dice +10. Heal is always a class skill for a derro magister, and it gains a +4 racial bonus on all Heal checks.

A derro with this feat treats its caster level for all spell-like abilities as equal to his Hit Dice. In addition, as soon as a derro with this feat achieves a total of 6 Hit Dice by gaining enough levels in any combination of classes, it gains the use of additional spell-like abilities as detailed below.

At will—*levitate*

1/day—*deeper slumber, modify memory*



Treasure: The equipment on the table constitutes a masterwork alchemist's lab. Area **D14a** serves as Khrysm's personal chambers—in addition to a large mound of cushions and blankets, she keeps her supply of cytillesh extract (the toxin she brews and uses to ensure that victims the derros are done with have no memories of their time as experiments) here in a wooden case—there are currently 3 doses of cytillesh extract. Any gear taken from prisoners is stored in area **D14b**, along with several bags of coins the derros have taken from previous victims. In all, this area contains 232 gp, 1,423 sp, 2,100 cp, a *lens of detection*, a *golembane scarab*, and a *wand of spiritual weapon* (11 charges).

D15. SIHEDRON SHRINE (CR 7)

The room shines with a golden light emanating from crystals embedded in the domed ceiling. The entire dome is painted in reds and golds depicting the glory days of ancient Thassilon and remain as pristine as if the pigments were just laid. An altar shaped like a seven-pointed star sits in the center of the room—a smaller seven-pointed shape has been carved into the center of this larger block of stone. Sitting in one of the star's arms is a shard of black metal.

This secret vault was used by Runelord Alaznist not only to hide the adamantine *Shard of Greed* she stole from one of Karzoug's vaults long ago, but to house a potent creation of her own she built in secret—the stone itself is a *Sihedron Shrine*, a replica of the one King Xin used to first create the *Sihedron*. The indentation in the center of the *Sihedron Shrine* is sized perfectly to fit all seven of the *Shattered Star* shards—with the proper ritual and magic, this stone can be used to rebuild the *Shattered Star*!

Creatures: Alaznist once kept much more powerful guardians in this room, but when Thassilon began to fall, she called the more dangerous of them from this room to her side, leaving behind only a pair of particularly large but (in the grand scheme of things) not so particularly powerful monsters—spiderlike horrors called shriezyx. Citizens of Magnimar know these monsters as the strange beasts that swarmed out of the Irespan back in 4623 AR. These two shriezyx have remained in temporal stasis since the fall of Thassilon, but as soon as the door to the room is opened, that effect ends and restores the two monsters to animate life. They have no idea that Thassilon has fallen, and assume the PCs are agents of Karzoug come to reclaim the *Shard of Greed*—they accuse the PCs of this in Thassilonian as they swiftly move to attack.

ADVANCED SHRIEZYX (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

CE Medium aberration (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar, City of Monuments* 60)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **Immune** mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses fear of fire, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+3 plus poison), 4 claws +10 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks slowing toxin, web (+10 ranged, DC 16, 7 hp)

TACTICS

During Combat The shriezyx work together, using their webs at first to slow down enemies and then ganging up to flank foes still able to reach them. Any creature that uses fire against them earns both monsters' wrath, and assuming they can avoid becoming frightened, they focus all their attacks on these foes to the exclusion of others.

Morale The shriezyx fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 7, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Step Up, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +21, Perception +13

Languages Thassilonian

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear of Fire (Ex) A shriezyx within 30 feet of a fire the size of a torch or larger becomes shaken as long as it remains within that range. If damaged by fire, a shriezyx must make a successful Will save (DC equals the amount of fire damage dealt) or become frightened for 1 round.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save.

SHARDS OF SIN



Slowing Toxin (Su) A shriezyx's web is coated with a toxin that deadens the nerves on contact. Any creature struck by a shriezyx's web must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become slowed (as per the spell) for 1 minute. Each round, a victim may attempt a new DC 14 Fortitude save to end the effect early. This toxin fades quickly from spun webs—it can only affect targets on the round the web is spun. Existing webs, while they remain sticky and tangled, do not have this slowing effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treasure: The *Shard of Greed* lies atop the *Sihedron Shrine*, nestled in one of the arms of the indented Sihedron.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the *Shard of Greed* is recovered, the PCs should take care in handling it if they wish to avoid its curse. Fortunately, this shard's curse isn't nearly as debilitating as that carried by the *Shard of Pride*, and even if a PC succumbs, the PCs should be able to return to Heidmarch Manor with their prize. Sheila is eager to hear all about their adventures in and under the Crow, but before that, she's eager to see the

Shard of Greed. She informs the PCs that she's completed her initial research and knows which *ioun stones* mix with which shards—in fact, she already has a *pale blue rhomboid ioun stone* for the PCs to place in the *Shard of Greed*.

Sheila and her husband Canayven are quite pleased with the PCs' discoveries and exploration of the ancient dungeon—as detailed on the inside cover, Canayven is willing to grant particular rewards to the PCs for specific discoveries made in and under the Crow. Beyond that, once the PCs document their explorations (a process that should take no more than a day's work writing), the Fame scores of PCs who are members of the Pathfinder Society faction increase by 8 and they earn 8 Prestige Points for their accomplishments.

Yet five shards remain. Sheila is eager for the PCs to use the *Shard of Greed* to try to locate the next shard in the sequence—the *Shard of Lust*, which lies to the south of Magnimar within a monolithic Thassilonian ruin known as the Lady's Light... and as the PCs will soon learn, in the clutches of an insane survival from Thassilon itself who fancies herself the one and only Runelord of Lust!

NATALYA VANCASKERKIN

Twice a betrayer, Natalya Vancaskerkin has turned against both her Sczarni kin and her fellow Pathfinder Society agents. She alone holds the key to one of the greatest discoveries of ancient Thassilon, but it has cursed her with madness.

NATALYA VANCASKERKIN

CR 2

XP 600

Female human rogue (acrobat) 1/sorcerer 2 (*Pathfinder RPG*

Advanced Player's Guide 132)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 20 (3 HD; 1d8+2d6+5)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +2 vs. illusions

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk mithral short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

5/day—touch of destiny

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *grease* (DC 13)

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Bloodline destined

TACTICS

Before Combat Once Natalya knows combat is nearing (likely after she hears the PCs fighting elsewhere in her hideout), she uses her *wand of mage armor*. She uses a *scroll of shield* as soon as she can once she fears combat will begin.

During Combat Natalya uses *charm person* on non-spellcasters, and *grease* on beams or ladders leading to her position to prevent anyone from reaching her in melee. She prefers fighting at range with her crossbow and *acid splash*, but if forced into melee combat relies on her magically increased AC to protect her as she moves around to try to get into positions where she can use sneak attack. If she's confronted by two or more foes in melee, or if she's reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, she uses the *Shard of Pride* to create a *major image* of her shooting flames out of the shard to light the room on fire—she takes care to not put any PC directly in the flames, but puts up illusory fire between herself and any enemies.

Morale Natalya's megalomania prevents her from fleeing or surrendering. If the PCs wish to take her alive, they'll need to keep that in mind and use appropriate tactics on her.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15, Climb +13, Disable Device +13, Perception +12, Sense Motive +1, Stealth +13

Languages Common

SQ bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus on saves when casting personal-range spells), expert acrobat

Combat Gear *scrolls of shield* (2), *wand of mage armor*

(11 charges), smokestick, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear**

masterwork mithral short sword, *cat burglar's boots* (see

page 64), *Shard of Pride* (see page 69), climbers' kit, second-story harness (see page 65), masterwork thieves' tools, 55 gp

Natalya Vancaskerkin is the daughter of one of Riddleport's most notorious figures—Saul Vancaskerkin. Half-Varisian, Natalya was born of Saul's first wife, a beautiful Varisian harrower from Magnimar named Adreea Valitrosa. Unfortunately for the star-crossed lovers, the Sczarni to whom Adreea belonged did not approve of this relationship, and a month after Natalya was born, the gang attempted to “reclaim” the babe as payment for Adreea choosing Saul over the Sczarni. Saul's criminal contacts warned him in time, and he and his family fled to Riddleport to escape, but not before Adreea took a poisoned bolt to the back. She died soon thereafter, leaving Natalya entirely under her father's care.

Saul mourned, but eventually remarried—a marriage that produced Natalya's half-brothers. Eventually, they left home for their own reasons, leaving Natalya alone with her father and his third wife, Bertrida—a woman who despised Natalya. Feeling neglected by her father and persecuted by her stepmother, Natalya sought solace with some of Riddleport's Sczarni, who happened to be bitter rivals of her father's own criminal enterprises. When Bertrida discovered Natalya's activities and then gleefully revealed them to her father, Saul was outraged. At Bertrida's urgings, he disowned Natalya, turning his daughter out into the street with orders to never return. Saul never saw his daughter again.

And so Natalya returned to Magnimar. As she began to build her new life, the only thing she retained from her time in Riddleport was her father's name—something she kept out of a mixture of guilt and shame. She resigned herself to what would likely be a short life working with the Tower Girls, one of Magnimar's more notorious gangs.

But Natalya was impatient. She wanted to be the one in charge—the one who was making the most money and drawing the most respect. In the Sczarni, she grew increasingly frustrated at how much of each take got kicked up to her superiors. When the Pathfinders entered an alliance with the Sczarni in Magnimar, Natalya saw a chance to pad her pocket and, just perhaps, build her reputation in another group as well. She approached Sheila Heidmarch in secrecy, and Sheila recognized Natalya's potential and hired her as an informant on the spot. Still part of the gang of second-story burglars known as the Tower Girls, Natalya used the skills and knowledge acquired in each organization to benefit the other as well.

Recently, the Tower Girls fell out of favor with the Wreckwash Blades, another Sczarni gang. Forced to relocate their hideout, the Tower Girls spent a few miserable days squatting in Underbridge at Fenster's warehouse. This changed when Natalya found a hidden sanctuary for the gang within an Irespan piling locally called the Crow for its signature exterior carvings. The Crow contained undiscovered chambers within it, and Natalya led the exploration of the chambers within the upper levels that then became the Tower Girls' current hideout. When exploration of their new hideout led to the discovery of a shard from an ancient Thassilonian artifact, it was Natalya who took possession of it. She intended to return to Sheila Heidmarch at that point, hoping for a big payday, but hadn't planned for the artifact's curse. She soon fell victim to the full influence of the *Shard of Pride*.

Now fully under the *Shard of Pride's* spell, Natalya's set her sights even higher. No longer is she content with the idea of running a Sczarni gang. That's just a stepping stone now—a stepping stone to progressively greater positions of power. If she can rule her own gang, why not all the Sczarni gangs in Magnimar? And if Magnimar's Sczarni... why not Magnimar itself?

CAMPAIGN ROLE

If rescued from the *Shard of Pride's* influence, Natalya spends some time being both depressed and ashamed at the mess she's made of her life. If you think the PCs could use the help, she might join with them in an attempt to explore the Crow or to wipe out the Tower Girls.

Beyond this adventure, Natalya can serve the PCs as an informant (use her to give the PCs clues that they might otherwise have missed), a cohort, or a romantic interest.

SIDE QUEST

If the PCs rescue Natalya and befriend her, she asks them to defeat her ex-boss, Ayala Javeski, the current leader of the Tower Girls. Ayala is located somewhere in the Crow—by defeating her, the PCs throw the Tower Girls into chaos. The Sczarni gang might or might not recover, but even if they do regroup, they don't seek revenge against Natalya for her acts without Ayala leading them.

Reward: 800 XP. Natalya gives the party her *cat burglar's boots* in thanks.



ARTIST
2012

SHEILA HEIDMARCH

The Pathfinder Society's expansion into the frontier of Varisia is a fairly recent development, but the Society is confident that its interests are in competent hands—those of Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch of the Heidmarch Manor lodge in Magnimar.

SHEILA HEIDMARCH

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female human fighter (tactician) 3/monk (weapon adept) 4
(*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 114, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 47)

LN Medium humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+1 *defending quarterstaff*, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +3 Wis)

hp 64 (7 HD; 3d10+4d8+25)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10; +2 vs. enchantment

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *merciful defending quarterstaff* +8/+3 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 nonlethal) or
+1 *merciful defending quarterstaff* +7/+2 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 nonlethal) and unarmed strike +7 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (4/day, DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Sheila drinks a *potion of haste* on the first round of combat. She always fights with the +1 bonus from her quarterstaff allocated to her Armor Class (these modifiers are built into the stats above). Sheila also uses Combat Expertise to further increase her AC by +2, at the cost of a –2 penalty on attack rolls. Note that since her quarterstaff always deals nonlethal damage, she can make an Intimidate check to demoralize a target as a free action when she damages a foe in that way, thanks to her Enforcer feat.

Morale Sheila never flees combat if allies remain in danger. Otherwise, if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points she makes a fighting retreat or flees.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Enforcer^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Perfect Strike^{APG} (4/day), Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Linguistics +6, Perception +13

Languages Common, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ armor training 1, destined for greatness, fast movement, *ki* pool (5 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft., still mind, strategic training, tactical awareness

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of haste* (2);

Other Gear +1 *merciful defending quarterstaff*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *wayfinder*, 23 pp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Destined for Greatness (Ex) Sheila Heidmarch's ability scores use a 20-point build, and she has the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC. These advantages increase her CR by 1.

^{APG} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Sheila Heidmarch cuts an imposing figure among Magnimar's elite. With her unusually low and sultry voice, she both turns heads at high society events and commands respect from Pathfinder field agents.

Born the daughter of a Thuvian merchant and a minor Chelish aristocrat of Korvosa, Sheila Astimarish knew from an early age that she was destined to spend her life exploring the wild Varisian frontiers that stretched beyond her city's walls, so fascinated was she by both the tactics of battle and ancient stories of Varisian legends. When she later met the well-known adventurer and successful Pathfinder Sir Canayven Heidmarch of Magnimar at a ball while visiting her distant kin in Cheliah, she knew she had found her match and lifemate.

Sheila lamented that the Pathfinder Society wasn't well known in her homeland of Varisia, and soon arranged with her doting father and mother for a visit to Absalom under the pretense of gaining exposure for some of her father's business interests. Once there, she quickly found her way to the Grand Lodge and secured admission as an initiate, soon receiving her commission as a Pathfinder field agent. She longed to journey back to the trackless reaches of her homeland, but the Pathfinder Society was more focused on central Avistan and Garund at the time, and thus she found her options limited. Not experienced enough to go it alone, she instead joined in with a Pathfinder expedition heading to her father's native Thuvia. Their adventures eventually took them into the Barrier Wall mountain range, where she encountered an awakened mountain

gorilla who became a boon companion to her and her comrades, and something of a personal protector to her. He called himself Mandali, and Sheila declared that he must be a prince among his kind for his bravery and wisdom—a declaration that won Mandali's loyalty more than anything else Sheila had done to that point.

When Sheila learned that Sir Canayven Heidmarch was going to be a part of a Mwangi expedition to the ruins of Jah, she planned her own field assignment accordingly, manipulating her own team to head in that direction as well. Soon enough, her team “accidentally” met up with Sir Canayven's, and they joined forces to expedite their exploration of the ruins. Though the expedition proved to be only a qualified success, the headstrong and decisive Sheila accomplished her actual mission—catching Sir Canayven's attention.

The two grew increasingly close thereafter, and soon departed from their respective teams and began their own missions of exploration and adventure, accompanied only by Sheila's stalwart ape guardian Mandali. At some point along the way, the two quietly got engaged, and soon thereafter were married. The Heidmarches grew increasingly homesick for their homeland, and increasingly intrigued by the fact that the Pathfinders seemed not to realize the potential Varisia held for exploration. Indeed, it was viewed by most in the society as a backwater wilderness with little to offer but giants and goblins.

Sheila petitioned the Decemvirate to open a Pathfinder lodge in Magnimar, and was soon granted that honor. She and her husband returned to his manor in the city, and Sheila became Varisia's first venture-captain, immersing herself in all the frontier wonders that had so enthralled her in her youth. Now she is seen as the Society's steady hand in the North, bringing ever more fresh recruits to her lodge to plumb the secrets of ancient Thassilon.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Sheila Heidmarch serves as the Shattered Star's core NPC—she's the one who gets the PCs started on their quest for the artifact, and she serves as the primary point of contact between the PCs and the Pathfinder Society. By keeping Sheila as the PCs' main patron and informant, you can simplify their interactions between adventures if you wish to downplay the role the Pathfinder Society plays.

SIDE QUEST

Sheila asks the PCs to provide a relatively accurate map of the interior of the Crow and the chambers below. The players don't need to physically create this map, nor does the map need

to be particularly artistic. Once the PCs have explored the Crow, taking a few days to organize their notes is enough to earn them a reward from Sheila.

Reward: 1,200 XP. Sheila gives each PC a *wayfinder* (or 500 gp to a PC who already owns a *wayfinder*), an item detailed on page 299 of *The Inner Sea World Guide*. If you're using the Pathfinder Society faction from the *Shattered Star Player's Guide*, completing this mission also earns each PC 1 point of Fame and 1 Prestige Point.



SHATTERED STAR TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “Shards of Sin.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the GameMastery Shattered Star item card set.

CAT BURGLAR'S BOOTS

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot feet; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

These soft-soled boots provide their wearer with a +2 competence bonus on Acrobatics, Climb, and Stealth checks. Once per day as an immediate action, the wearer of *cat burglar's boots* can reroll any one failed Acrobatics, Climb, or Stealth check, taking the result of that check in place of the first failed check (even if the second result is worse). In addition, a secret pocket in the boots is built to hold a fully functional set of masterwork thieves' tools. A DC 22 Perception check is required to notice this pocket. Any other object in the pocket causes it to bulge and become obvious to even casual observation.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *cat's grace*; **Cost** 1,000 gp

CYTILLESH EXTRACT

Brewed from the spores of the glowing blue fungus called cytillesh (or “brain mold”), this extract is often used by derros to cloud minds and instill amnesia in their victims.

Cytillesh Extract: poison—ingested; *save* Fortitude DC 18; *frequency* 1/hour for 8 hours; *effect* victim loses all memory of events that took place in the previous hour and cannot form new memories as long as he remains poisoned—after he recovers, the time spent poisoned (plus the hour before his poisoning) is simply missing from memory (these missing memories might return later as dreams, and can be returned with a *restoration* or *heal* spell); *cure* 2 saves; *cost* 800 gp.

EXTRACTION SCARIFICATOR

Aura faint conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot none; **Price** 2,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

An *extraction scarificator* is a horrid variant of the more common bloodletting device used by healers and doctors. An *extraction scarificator* can be used only on a willing or helpless target. When placed against exposed flesh, the *extraction scarificator's* blades deal 1d4 points of damage plus 1d4 bleed.

Once per day, an *extraction scarificator* can be used to extract and concentrate one of the four bodily humors from its target as well. The humor to be extracted can be adjusted as needed, and must be immediately poured into a potion

vial or the extracted humor is lost. Extracting a humor takes a variable number of rounds—as soon as the victim has taken a total of 6 points of damage in all from the bleed effect, the extraction is complete. For 24 hours after extraction, this purified humor has an additional effect, functioning as one of four potions as listed below (all function at caster level 3rd).

Black Bile: *potion of lesser restoration*

Blood: *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Phlegm: *potion of calm emotions*

Yellow Bile: *potion of rage*

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *bleed*, *calm emotions*, *cure moderate wounds*, *lesser restoration*, *rage*; **Cost** 1,250 gp

FROSTSPORE

This blend of brown mold spores in a pale blue solution feels cool to the touch.

Frostspore: poison—ingested or injury; *save* Fortitude DC 13; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d6 cold damage plus staggered for 1 round; *cure* 2 saves; *cost* 100 gp.

INJECTION SPEAR

This exotic two-handed weapon allows the user to inject targets with liquid on a hit. The spear's reservoir can hold up to 5 doses of a single fluid—a single dose is automatically injected when the spear hits a target. A non-proficient user can wield an injection spear as a standard spear but cannot trigger the injection. An injection spear is otherwise identical to a normal spear, save that it cannot be thrown, weighs 8 pounds, cannot be used to brace, and costs 60 gp.

PARADOX BOX

Aura moderate abjuration and conjuration; **CL** 9th
Slot none; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** 30 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A *paradox box* resembles a small stone chest of ornate design that measures approximately 1-1/2 feet by 1-1/2 feet by 1 foot. Closer inspection reveals the *paradox box* to be a solid piece of stone that's been carved to resemble a box—it has no seam for a lid or hinges to allow opening. It is a secure storage device that can be accessed only by use of the proper command word or combination. Until the command word is intoned or the combination is correctly entered (the box's creator decides

SHATTERED STAR TREASURES



Paradox
Box



Pendant of
the Souk

Second-Story Harness



Cat Burglar's
Boots

Extraction
Scarificator



which method of opening works for the box—most boxes have combination locks that function similarly to the one detailed on page 9), the box is effectively a solid piece of stone with no lid or aperture or even an interior, and as such, attempts to open the box by bypassing a lock (with *Disable Device* or *knock*) do not work. Some creators also build magical traps into *paradox boxes* (*summon monster* traps are particularly popular), but these traps are not included in the standard model.

Once the proper command is given, a seam appears around the chest, and nested hinges within allow this lid to open, revealing an extradimensional space 1 cubic foot in size. Anything that will fit completely within that space (regardless of weight) can be successfully stored within, and the chest can be sealed again simply by closing it. The contents of the storage space do not change the weight of the chest, since they actually stay in an otherwise inaccessible extradimensional space. If the chest is destroyed (hardness 8, hp 90), the extradimensional space collapses and any contents are jettisoned randomly into the Ethereal Plane.

Paradox boxes were especially popular in Thassilon for their relative inexpensiveness as well as their superior security and durability. Many Thassilonian creators, burdened with arrogance and hubris, constructed their *paradox boxes* such that their surfaces were decorated with elaborate and carefully constructed riddles or wordplays that gave clues to their command words. These items are prize finds for organizations such as the Pathfinder Society, because a particularly clever investigator can often still open them, revealing their time-lost secrets even though the command word might have been lost millennia ago.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *arcane lock*, *secret chest*;
Cost 2,500 gp

PENDANT OF THE SOUK

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot neck; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This golden pendant is of Qadiran make. Crafted from gold beaten into the image of a lanner falcon and suspended upon a gold chain, it's the traditional badge of office for the Prince or Princess of the Market in Magnimar's Bazaar of Sails—although they are often given as rewards to those who are particularly helpful or well-liked by the Prince or Princess.

The wearer of a *pendant of the souk* gains a +5 competence bonus on Appraise checks. By holding the pendant to her brow, the wearer can gain the effects of an *identify* spell once per day. Finally, the pendant grows warm in the presence of illusions, granting a +2 insight bonus on saving throws made to disbelieve existing illusion effects.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *identify*; **Cost** 2,000 gp

SECOND-STORY HARNESS

A second-story harness is a series of straps, trusses, and buckles that can be worn over clothing or armor. A second-story harness allows the wearer to, as a move action, secure herself in place on a vertical surface so that both her hands are free. The wearer can remain in this position without needing to make additional Climb checks, and does not lose her Dexterity bonus to AC as long as she remains anchored. As long as the wearer is anchored in this way, she cannot move and gains a +5 circumstance bonus on Climb checks made to avoid falling whenever she takes damage. The wearer can release herself to start moving again as a move action. A second-story harness costs 55 gp and weighs 3 pounds.

SHATTERED STAR



THE SHATTERED STAR

THE MIGHTY MONUMENTS OF THASSILON ARE NOT THE ONLY LEGACY OF THE OLD EMPIRE HIDDEN IN THE WILDS OF VARISIA. THE ANCIENTS CRAFTED POWERFUL MAGIC AS WELL. ARTIFACTS LIKE THE SEVEN SWORDS OF SIN HAVE RECENTLY CAPTIVATED THE IMAGINATION OF SEVERAL EXPLORERS AND CHRONICLERS, BUT THERE ARE EVEN GREATER MAGICS HIDDEN IN THE CORNERS OF VARISIA—ARTIFACTS LIKE THE SHATTERED STAR ITSELF, SAID TO BE THE FIRST MAJOR CREATION OF KING XIN, LEGENDARY FOUNDER OF THASSILON. I BELIEVE THE SHATTERED STAR EXISTS STILL, ITS SKYMETAL FRAGMENTS SCATTERED ACROSS VARISIA, WAITING TO BE REDISCOVERED.

—SHEILA HEIDMARCH, *PATHFINDER CHRONICLES*, VOLUME 44

THE SHATTERED STAR

The empire of Thassilon was founded in -6530 AR, 1,237 years before Earthfall brought the Age of Legend to an abrupt and apocalyptic end. The nation was founded by a visionary—if controversial—Azlanti wizard named Xin, a man exiled from his homeland for his belief that the so-called “lesser races” of the world could rival the achievements of Azlant. Xin brought with him an army of apprentices, followers, and their families, all loyal subjects who chose exile with their lord rather than remain in Azlant. When they arrived on the shores of what would someday be known as Varisia, Xin knew he had found a place where he could prove his beliefs to the elitist Azlanti. He embraced the cultures of the native peoples—the nomadic and superstitious Varisians, the proud and headstrong Shoanti, the powerful and mystical taiga and stone giants, and the alien and magical elves of Celwynvian. Xin drew from the strengths of multiple cultures to shore up the weaknesses of any one group, and in so doing built the nation of Thassilon into a true empire.

Though his intentions were certainly noble, Xin did not fully account for humanity’s capacity for treachery. It would take Xin decades to establish Thassilon and build it into a burgeoning empire, but only a fraction of that time for his self-appointed subordinates—the so-called runelords of Thassilon—to turn against him and seize the empire as their own. And so history remembers Thassilon not for what Xin had imagined it to be, but as a perversion of all his hopes and dreams.

Eleven thousand years is a long time for a man’s lost soul, trapped within the ruins of his own palace and prevented from escaping to the Boneyard for final judgment, to ruminate on his failures. And when Xin’s ghost rises, those eleven millennia will prove to have been unkind indeed.

SEVEN VIRTUES, SEVEN SCHOOLS

In Azlant, tradition held that rulers of nations must abide by the “seven virtues of rule”—seven qualities a leader must engender in his people and personify himself, lest his state collapse and fall into ruin. In practice, this philosophy never quite lived up to its promise. No ruler and no nation of Azlant ever managed to excel at all seven virtues, and more than a few failed to uphold even a single one. The seven virtues of rule (charity, generosity, humility, kindness, love, temperance, and zeal) appealed greatly to Xin, but in a more intellectual manner than an emotional one. Xin believed that the seven Azlanti schools of magic flowed from these virtues (the school of divination stood outside the rest in Azlant arcane society, viewed as a “universal” school that no wizard should ignore). More than anything

else, his exhaustive work developing methods of wizardly specialization earned him his extensive network of apprentices, followers, and admirers. Xin took his research and network with him when he was exiled from Azlant. Most of his contemporaries were more than happy to see Xin’s “ridiculous and stubbornly deliberate misinterpretation of magic” leave the realm.

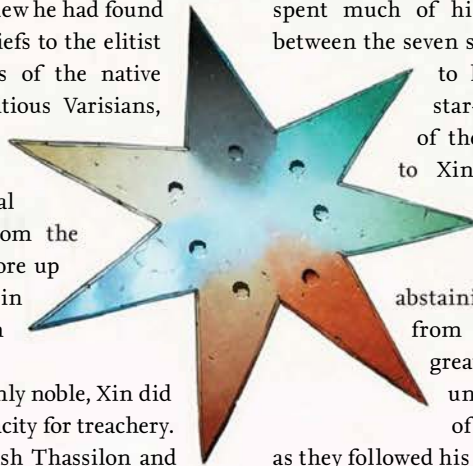
THE SIHEDRON

In the first quarter century of Thassilon’s history, Xin spent much of his time exploring the relationships between the seven schools and the seven virtues. Central to his philosophy was a seven-pointed star—a rune he called the Sihedron. Each of the points of the Sihedron, according to Xin’s philosophy, represented one of the virtues of rule and one of the schools of magic. By focusing on one virtue and school while abstaining—in both virtue and magic—from the two points opposite, Xin could greatly increase his power. Though he was unwilling to fully embrace this new type of magic, his apprentices rose in power as they followed his theories and put them into practice.

Despite his apprentices’ advances, Xin continued to regard himself as the master of all seven schools of this new “Thassilonian magic.” Drawing upon yet another mystical septimal unity—the seven skymetals—Xin fashioned a powerful artifact in the shape of the Sihedron. A different skymetal formed each of its arms, and each one symbolized and bolstered a separate school of Thassilonian magic and philosophy. Not only had Xin created an artifact that proved his theories, but he also provided Thassilon’s first truly enduring magical legacy. With the *Sihedron* floating behind his head like a halo, the artifact served as a constant reminder of his power.

But creating a single artifact wasn’t enough for Xin. He realized that in order to fully devote himself to the study of this new form of magic, he would need to divest himself of his other responsibilities. So he called the seven greatest practitioners of Thassilonian magic before him and named them runelords of Thassilon, granting each a portion of his empire to rule so he could focus entirely upon magical theory and study.

For the next 60 years, Xin grew increasingly isolated in his work, rarely leaving his palace and never leaving his capital city of Xin on the southwesternmost corner of Thassilon’s coastline. He became increasingly obsessed with infusing the seven virtues and their attendant magic into inanimate objects, and created many clockwork creatures in a quest for artificial life. As time wore on and Xin felt his already magically extended lifespan ebb, he began researching ways



SHATTERED STAR

to transfer his mind into a new, stronger body. His paranoia grew—perhaps justifiably, for his seven runelords had become decadent and increasingly abusive of their powers. Whispers of rebellion spread, and Xin knew he needed to step in and replace the seven Runelords—perhaps to return to ruling Thassilon alone. Yet his body was now frail and sickly. Before he could stand against the powerful runelords, he needed to complete his new body. In a desperate attempt to speed the process, Xin disassembled the *Sihedron* to siphon portions of its power into his replacement body—a powerful construct he called a clockwork reliquary.

The runelords had been watching and waiting for this moment. With Xin's greatest defense, the *Sihedron*, temporarily neutralized, they saw the perfect time to strike. The runelords sent assassins to slay Xin, who had already started the process of transferring energy from the disassembled *Sihedron* into the clockwork reliquary. Catching the First King off guard, the assassins struck. In the resulting battle, the energies being transferred exploded in a fiery conflagration that destroyed Xin, the assassins, and much of the palace. The runelords, investigating the ruins soon thereafter, found the remnants of the *Sihedron*. Each of them claimed a shard, as both a trophy and a symbol of what they viewed as the folly of creating a nation ruled by one.

The centuries to follow saw the swift fall of Thassilon, and eventually its destruction. The *Sihedron* fragments became known as the *Shattered Star* during this period, and after Thassilon's end during Earthfall, the fragments were forgotten. In the thousands of years to follow, parts of the *Shattered Star* were rediscovered periodically. Even as fragments, they retained potent energies and magical properties, and were coveted whenever they were found.

By placing an *ioun stone* in a shard, its possessor can fully waken the artifact's powers. Perhaps more importantly, this causes the shard to point the way to the next fragment in the sequence, encouraging the new owner to seek out more pieces and rebuild the *Sihedron*. If anyone reforms the *Sihedron*, a devastating echo from time's abyss will rise.

THE SEVEN SHARDS

The powers of the seven shards of the *Shattered Star* are given below. The PCs can recover only two of these shards (the *shard of pride* and the *shard of greed*) in the course of this volume's adventure, with the remainder to be recovered in the next four parts of this Adventure Path. The seven shards possess magical abilities, but do not grow in power as more are gathered. Only when the seven shards are united to restore the *Sihedron* itself (during a ritual described in part six of this Adventure Path) can their true power return. In fact, carrying more than two shards can cause additional problems. A character who carries three or more shards of the *Shattered Star* becomes sickened by the competing magical effects. A character becomes

staggered with four shards, nauseated with five, stunned with six, and unconscious with seven. These effects can be negated for 1 minute if the character succeeds at a DC 20 Will save, but immediately manifest if the character continues to carry multiple shards beyond that minute.

Each shard comes with a curse that affects anyone who carries it. Even when the character ceases to carry a shard, the curse continues to affect him for another 24 hours. By placing an *ioun stone* of a specific type in the indentation in the shard, this curse is suppressed and the shard is activated. The *ioun stone* does not bolster the shard's powers in any other way, but continues to affect the person who carries the shard as though it were orbiting that person's head normally (even if the shard's carried in an extradimensional space like a *bag of holding*).

The caster level for the *Shattered Star* is unusual. In its current shattered state, the *Sihedron* draws its power from the creature that carries the shards, setting the caster level as equal to the owner's Hit Dice. All spell effects generated by a *Shattered Star* shard manifest at this caster level. For other effects, the shards have a caster level of 25th. Unlike other artifacts, the shards cannot be destroyed individually. Only by recombining them into the *Sihedron* and then using that artifact's method of destruction can one destroy the shards.



SHARD OF ENVY (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming abjuration; **CL** 25th

Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Envy* is made of shimmering green noqual. As long as the *Shard of Envy* is carried, its owner can use *dispel magic* as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus abjuration spells and spell-like abilities, and gains a +1 insight bonus to AC.

Curse: The owner covets the success, wealth, and appearance of all other creatures, and becomes sickened whenever she is within 30 feet of any creature of the same race or character class as herself. Physical contact with such a creature nauseates the owner for 2d6 rounds if she fails a DC 20 Fortitude save.



SHARD OF GLUTTONY (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming necromancy; **CL** 25th

Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Gluttony* is made of pale inubrix. As long as the *Shard of Gluttony* is carried, its owner can use *vampiric touch* as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus necromancy spells, and

THE SHATTERED STAR

increases his maximum hit points by 1 point per Hit Die.

Curse: The owner is always hungry and thirsty, and is sickened whenever he has not eaten food in the past hour. The owner must make a DC 20 Will save to resist consuming any food or beverage (including potions and the like) he carries immediately. If the save is successful, the owner can resist the urge for 1 hour before being forced to make the save again.



SHARD OF GREED (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming transmutation; **CL** 25th
Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Greed* is made of black adamantine. As long as the *Shard of Greed* is carried, its owner can use *haste* as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus transmutation spells, and gains a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls.

Curse: The owner becomes greedy, and is sickened whenever she is not wearing at least 500 gp per Hit Die in nonmagical jewelry and fine clothing. Each time the owner sells a belonging or gives one away, she must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage.



SHARD OF LUST (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming enchantment; **CL** 25th
Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Lust* is made of a deep red djezet alloy. As long as the *Shard of Lust* is carried, its owner can use *suggestion* as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus enchantment spells, and gains a +4 insight bonus on Initiative checks.

Curse: The owner becomes narcissistic, and is sickened whenever he has not engaged in sexual relations with another creature within the past 12 hours. While the owner wears any sort of armor or magic item that occupies the body slot, he is staggered.



SHARD OF PRIDE (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming illusion; **CL** 25th
Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Pride* is made of coppery horacalcum. As long as the *Shard of Pride* is carried, its owner can use *major image* as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus illusion spells, and gains a +2 insight bonus on all skill checks.

Curse: The owner suffers

delusions of grandeur, and is sickened whenever she must serve another creature as a subordinate of any sort for as long as that arrangement persists. She cannot gain the benefit of the aid another action, nor can she take the aid another action.



SHARD OF SLOTH (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming conjuration; **CL** 25th
Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Sloth* is made of blue-green glowing abyssium. As long as the *Shard of Sloth* is carried, its owner can use *summon*

monster III as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus conjuration spells, and gains a +4 insight bonus on all concentration and caster level checks.

Curse: The owner becomes lazy and sedentary, and becomes sickened for 1 hour whenever he makes more than a single move action in any round. All of the owner's movement speeds are halved.



SHARD OF WRATH (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming evocation; **CL** 25th
Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Shard of Wrath* is made of sparkling silver siccattite that feels hot one day, but cold the next. As long as the *Shard of Wrath* is carried, its owner can use *fireball* as a spell-like ability once per day, gains a +2 insight bonus on saves versus evocation spells, and gains a +2 insight bonus on all weapon damage rolls.

Curse: The owner becomes addicted to violence, and is sickened whenever she hasn't brought a living creature to -1 hit points or fewer within the last hour. Once the owner attacks a creature, she must make a DC 20 Will save if she wants to cease attacking; otherwise, she does what she can to kill the creature.

ACTIVATING A SHARD

Each of the *Shattered Star* shards bears a small indentation the exact size of an *ioun stone*. When an *ioun stone* of a certain type is placed in the indentation, the shard activates (see table). The *ioun stone* is destroyed if removed, but otherwise grants its full benefits to anyone who carries the shard. As long as a shard has the proper *ioun stone* embedded in it, its curse is suppressed and does not affect the carrier of the shard.

The *ioun stones* needed to activate each shard, the shards' current locations, the Knowledge DCs to know those locations, and the sequence in which the shards grant visions of each other are summarized in the following table.

SHATTERED STAR

SHATTERED STAR ACTIVATION

Shard Sequence	Ion Stone	Initial Shard Location	Knowledge DC
1. Pride	Scarlet and blue sphere	Magnimar	DC 10
2. Greed	Pale blue rhomboid	Irespan	DC 12
3. Lust	Pink and green sphere	Lady's Light	DC 14
4. Gluttony	Pink rhomboid	Kaer Maga	DC 14
5. Envy	Dusty rose prism	Windsong Abbey	DC 20
6. Wrath	Deep red sphere	Guiltspur	DC 25
7. Sloth	Incandescent blue sphere	Guiltspur	DC 25

UNITING THE SHARDS

By holding one of the Shattered Star shards and concentrating upon it as a full-round action, the owner receives a mental image of the region or location in which the next shard in a specific sequence is currently located. Identifying this location requires a Knowledge (geography) check, the DC of which varies depending on the location in question. If the shard isn't activated yet, the vision granted is hazy and blurry, and the Knowledge (geography) check suffers a -5 penalty. A character who has been to that location before automatically knows what the site is.

The *Shattered Star* can't be rebuilt into the *Sihedron* until all seven shards are brought together and placed in a specially prepared carving infused with ancient power. One such stone remains in Magnimar—the *Sihedron Shrine* deep under the Crow (see page 58). The repercussions of rebuilding the *Shattered Star*, as well as the full abilities of the rebuilt *Sihedron*, are detailed in the final adventure in the Shattered Star Adventure Path.

SKYMETAL

Rules for the seven types of skymetal are detailed below, along with the school of magic, virtue, and sin that Thassilonians associated with each. Unless otherwise noted, skymetal has hardness and hit points identical to that of steel. Items without metal parts cannot be made with skymetal.

Abysium: Known also as feverstone (a somewhat misleading name, as abysium is a metal like all the others), this glowing, blue-green substance can be a source of great energy. However, it also causes those who spend extended amounts of time near it to grow ill and die unless proper precautions are taken. Abysium is associated with conjuration magic, zeal, and sloth. Abysium functions as steel when used to craft weapons and armor, but anyone who carries or wears abysium arms or armor becomes sickened for as long as the gear is carried or worn, plus an additional 1d4 hours after it is removed. Likewise, a character in an area with heavy concentrations of abysium becomes sickened as long as he remains in the area. This is a poison effect. In Thassilon,

wealthy lords often built manacles or prison bars out of Abysium in order to keep their prisoners debilitated.

Weapons and armor made from abysium glow with an intensity equal to that of a candle. Scholars have long debated where the glow and associated sickening effect come from, but most agree that the source of the power comes from the Abyss itself, due to the nature of the energy contained in abysium. Pure or properly refined abysium produces this energy in a way that can be harnessed by arcane engines and technologies to generate energy sources strong enough to power extensive magical creations like golems, traps, or magical items the size of buildings. Most secrets of harnessing this power have long been lost, but as the Shattered Star Adventure Path continues, the PCs will have many chances to learn more about this dangerous technology.

Abysium can also be powdered and alchemically distilled with other rare catalysts and chemicals to form a much more potent toxin. It was in this form that the metal was most traditionally used in ancient Thassilon. A pound of Abysium is enough to make 1 dose of abysium powder.

Abysium Powder: Poison—ingested; *save* Fortitude DC 18; *onset* 10 minutes; *frequency* 1/minute for 6 minutes; *effect* 1d4 Con plus nausea; *cure* 2 saves; *cost* 900 gp.

Adamantine: The most commonly known starmetal, adamantine is extremely strong and favored by weapon and armor smiths alike for its ability to cut through solid barriers with ease and endure heavy blows. In ancient Thassilon, adamantine was most often associated with transmutation magic, generosity, and greed, for it was the most valuable of the skymetals (although not the rarest). Adamantine is detailed on page 154 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

Djezet: One of the strangest of the seven known types of skymetal, rust-red djezet is liquid at all temperatures. This makes the metal relatively useless for crafting metal objects (although many gifted metallurgists, such as Xin himself, have had some success creating djezet alloys), but most who seek out this metal intend to use it instead as an additional material component for spellcasting, since it possesses an ability to enhance magic. Djezet is associated with enchantment magic, love, and lust. Used

THE SHATTERED STAR

as an additional material component, a dose of djezet increases the effective level of a spell by +1, as if it were being modified by the Heighten Spell feat. In order to function as an additional material component, the spellcaster must use a number of doses of djezet equal to the spell's level—additional djezet used beyond this amount does nothing. Djezet costs 200 gp per dose.

Horacalcum: The rarest of the known skymetals, this dull, coppery substance warps time around it, making things seem to speed up or slow down. Horacalcum is associated with illusion magic, humility, and pride. Almost never found in amounts greater than a pound, horacalcum is the same weight and density as steel, but is much more durable. A weapon made of horacalcum gains a +1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls (ammunition can be made of horacalcum, but does not grant any bonus on attack rolls). An entire suit of armor made from this rare metal is fantastically expensive, but since a suit of horacalcum armor simultaneously allows its wearer to react more quickly while perceiving time more slowly, some consider the cost justifiable. A suit of light horacalcum armor grants a +1 bonus on Initiative checks, medium horacalcum armor grants a +2 bonus on Initiative checks, and heavy horacalcum armor grants a +3 bonus on Initiative checks. Weapons and armor made of horacalcum are always of masterwork quality—the masterwork cost is included in the prices given below.

Weapons and armor made of horacalcum have one-fourth more hit points than normal. Horacalcum has 30 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 15. A weapon made of horacalcum costs +6,000 gp. Light armor costs +10,000 gp, medium armor +30,000 gp, and heavy armor +60,000 gp.

Inubrix: This metal's structure allows it to pass through iron and steel without touching them, seemingly shifting in and out of phase with reality. This quality earned the pale metal the nickname "ghost iron." Inubrix is associated with necromancy magic, temperance, and gluttony. Inubrix is the softest of the solid skymetals, being only slightly less malleable than lead. It doesn't function well for crafting armor as a result, and though inubrix weapons can penetrate most metal armors with relative ease, the weapons tend to break easily. Inubrix has 10 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 5.

An inubrix weapon deals damage as if it were one size category smaller than its actual size, and is always treated as if it had the broken condition. It ignores all armor or shield bonuses granted by iron or steel armor or shields. Inubrix weapons cannot damage these materials at all (and, by extension, cannot harm iron golems or similar creatures). An inubrix weapon costs +5,000 gp.

Noqual: Noqual looks almost like a pale green crystal to the untrained eye, but can be worked as iron despite

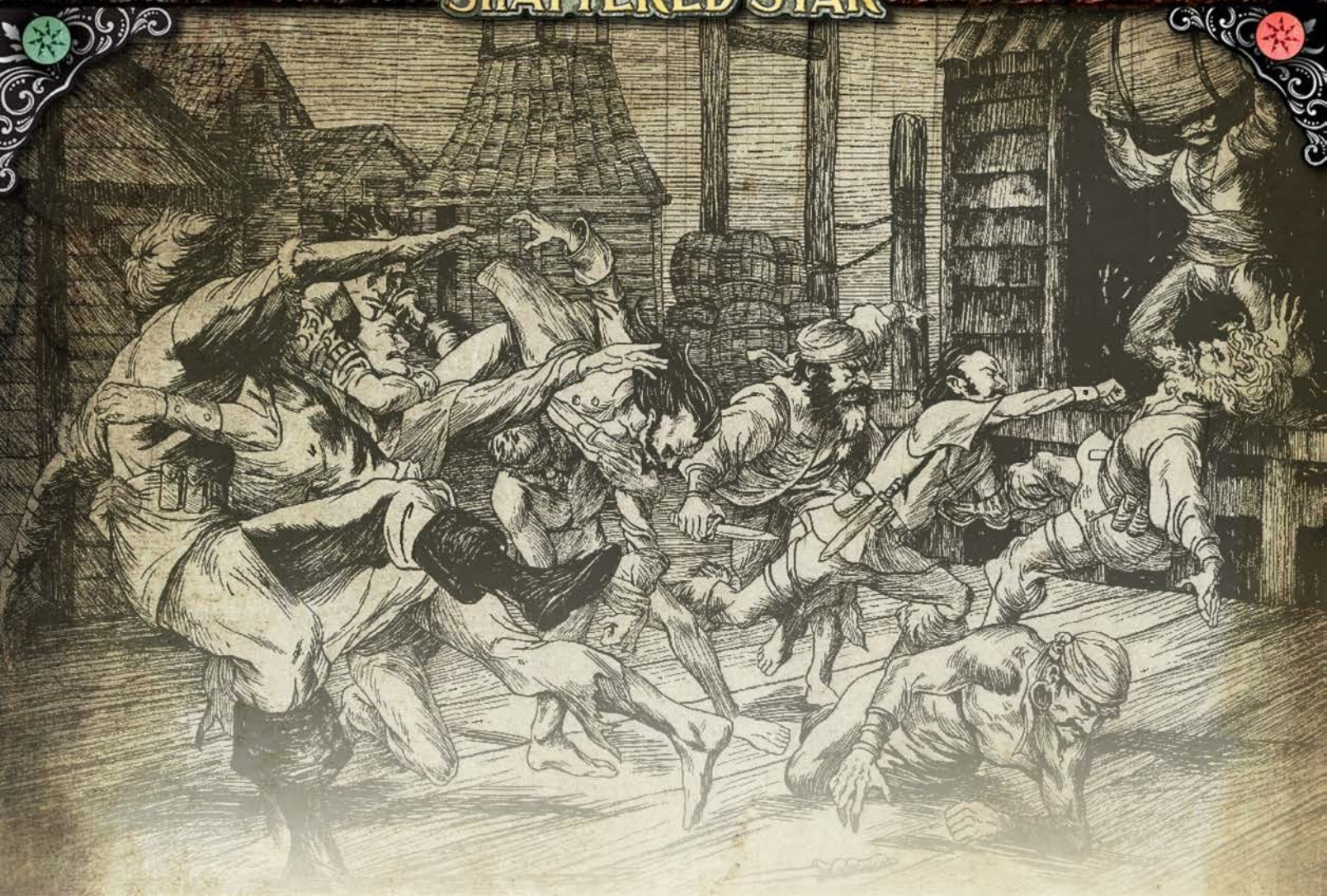
its appearance. It is associated with abjuration magic, charity, and envy. Noqual is light—half as heavy as iron, yet just as strong. More importantly, noqual is strangely resistant to magic. An object made of noqual gains a +4 bonus on any saving throw made against a magical source. Creating a magic item that incorporates any amount of noqual into it increases the price of creation by 5,000 gp, as costly reagents and alchemical supplies must be used to treat the metal during the process.

Weapons made of noqual weigh half as much as normal, and gain a +1 enhancement bonus on damage rolls against constructs and undead created by feats or spells. Noqual armor weighs half as much as other armors of its type, and is treated as one category lighter than normal for the purposes of movement and other limitations (light armor is still treated as light armor, though). The armor's maximum Dexterity bonus increases by 2, and armor check penalties are reduced by 3. The armor's spell failure chance increases by 20% and applies to all magic cast while wearing the armor, regardless of the magic's source or class abilities possessed by the wearer. The wearer of a suit of noqual armor gains a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities.

Noqual has 30 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 10. Noqual ore is worth 50 gp per pound. A suit of noqual light armor costs +4,000 gp, medium armor +8,000 gp, and heavy armor +12,000 gp. A shield costs +2,000 gp, and a weapon or other item +500 gp.

Siccatite: This shining silver metal is either incredibly hot or freezing cold when found. Siccatite is associated with evocation magic, wrath, and kindness. As of yet, scholars have not determined whether siccatite is actually two similarly hued metals or a single type that determines its own temperature via some unknown process. When raw siccatite is found, it has a 50% chance of being hot siccatite; otherwise, it's cold siccatite. Physical contact with siccatite deals 1 point of energy damage each round (either fire or cold, as appropriate). Hot siccatite can eventually ignite objects, and cold siccatite in water quickly surrounds itself with a 1-foot-thick shell of ice. A weapon made of siccatite deals +1 point of damage of the appropriate energy type each time it strikes a foe, but also deals 1 point of the same energy damage to the wielder each round it is used in combat. Likewise, siccatite armor deals 1 point of energy damage per round to a creature wearing it, and deals 1 point of energy damage each full round a creature is grappled by someone wearing siccatite armor. Cold siccatite armor grants fire resistance 5, while hot siccatite armor grants cold resistance 5. (The type of armor does not alter the amount of resistance granted.) Weapons made of siccatite cost +1,000 gp. Armor made of siccatite costs +6,000 gp.

SHATTERED STAR



OLD FRIENDS

PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: LIGHT OF A DISTANT STAR 1 OF 6

As soon as I saw the gnome, I knew trouble couldn't be far behind. It was only the merest glimpse of her, a flash of green somewhere out there in the lawless, jostling crowds of Riddleport's Wharf District, but that one glance was all I needed.

I had most definitely not been looking for an adventure, not in this place. In the few months since my arrival, I had adopted the habit of keeping my head down and my hood up, covering the elven ears and blonde braid that attracted too much of the wrong kind of attention. Even Mordimor clinging with a badger's tenacity to my shoulder seemed to elicit fewer stares than the sight of

an unaccompanied woman, clearly neither pirate nor whore, walking these seedy streets. Life in Riddleport, most anarchic of Varisia's cities, had taught me to keep my head down, my clothes baggy, my stride masculine, and my dagger close at hand.

But upon sighting that familiar, unmistakable green hair, I didn't hesitate to push through the hot spaces of the crowd to verify what I already knew instinctively. I had not seen Shess, nor any of my Magnimarian friends, since we parted soon after docking in Riddleport's silty common harbor. The excited knot in my gut and the recklessness with which I made my way toward her—one knife-armed

OLD FRIENDS

fishmonger threatened to gut me for treading on his bootless toe, and only a warning hiss from Mordimor backed him off—had undermined the lie I told myself whenever thoughts of my friends should intrude upon my work. I had missed them. It was that simple, and that honest realization felt like the first salve of comfort in a long summer of exile.

I also felt trouble in my bones, and the sight of Shess confirmed it.

She was marching with girlish enthusiasm at the head of a gang of some of the worst-looking wharf dogs I had ever laid eyes on. Even in a city that, in places, is little more than extended shore leave for the most nefarious, notorious, and downright depraved seamen in all of Varisia, Shess and her pack stood out.

“Out the way, bilge drinkers!” Shess wailed. She had changed one set of outlandish finery for another since the last time I had seen her, clomping along in heavy hobnailed boots beneath the rough-cut hem of billowy silk pantaloons dyed a vibrant crimson. In contrast, a suit of corseted leather armor snugged and shaped her torso to exaggerated effect, calling to mind the sort of thing you might pay extra to see in the back room of a Calistriian temple. In her tiny fist she brandished a battered tricorne hat, and at her waist she wore the same short sword I had seen her use to such deadly effect when last we were in Magnimar. Her face was red from shouting. “Make way for the Char Street Clippers, you bunyip-lovin’ sons of seacows!”

The crowd parted, but not without first cursing and yelling imprecations at Shess and her bunch of thugs. Like Shess, her gang wore a motley of styles and mismatched bits of armor and gear, as if they had made a random sampling of all the lands north of the Arch. But what was endearing in Shess seemed a symptom of derangement in her followers. The incongruity of the childlike gnome leading a band of cutthroats and sea dogs seemed at least as intimidating to onlookers as the notched blades and well-used cudgels each of the thugs brandished openly as they loped along with the aggressive assurance of natural predators.

As soon as I had taken in the scene I moved back further into the crowd, ducking behind a trio of colorfully dressed Garundi traders and trying to maneuver out of the line of sight of Shess and her gutter sharps. For a moment I doubted that it had actually been her, and not some other green-haired gnome. A dozen speculations as to the meaning of what I had seen began to swarm within me. How well did I know her, really?

I paused for a tense moment as Shess and her coterie moved by, fighting the urge to just go back to my real business in Riddleport and my already overdue appointment with my employer, Gundsric. I should

just do what the Lodge expected me to do, my duty as a member of the Pathfinder Society, and forget about this mad piece of happenstance. I thought of Master Shaine, and his ironic, often cryptic warnings to us about the dangers of storytelling. “Seek truth, not tales,” he would say. “If you look first for a story, you’ll always find one.”

Well, I had found my story, and I couldn’t help but follow it.

As the locals say, summer is the worst time to visit Riddleport—except for all the other seasons. The air is stifling, dense with heat and salt-tanged humidity and the radiant warmth of ten thousand unwashed bodies. Thumbnail-sized black flies buzz around the chaotic middens and trash heaps left by an ungovernable populace. In places, the open sewers create an air so fetid that you have to hold your breath to keep your stomach down. Riddleport rests between two great insulating spurs of rugged rock, and the winding, narrow streets and leaning buildings found across much of the shore-side sections of the city trap the hot summer air in stagnant pockets. At night there is some relief when the ocean air blows strong toward the land, but holdouts can always be found, seemingly unreachable bubbles of heat and foul air that refuse to relinquish their dominion over the muddy streets and overflowing gutters.

All of which affects the mood of the pirates, smugglers, thieves, and mercenary scum that are the lifeblood of the city’s erratically beating heart. Moving swiftly in the wake of the gnome and her wolf pack, I wove through the mob, heading southwest toward the deepwater docks and the caulking yards. The aroma of hot pitch and sawdust crept in among the pervading odor of sewer, sweat, and rotting shellfish. I slowed my progress as, ahead of me, one of Shess’s thugs clubbed a brawny dockworker out of the way and the crowd, teetering on the edge of riot, roared and spat curses in half a dozen languages.

“Filth like that keeps this town down,” a gap-toothed, skinny young man in rough-spun cloth said on my right, clearly trying to engage my attention. Immediately suspicious, I tensed, and felt a faint contact on my left. I whirled and smacked away a boy’s hand as he fumbled at my belt pouch clasp. Mordimor bristled on my shoulder, emitting a rasping hiss that chilled even my blood. The would-be pickpocket—a boy of no more than ten years—dodged away into the crowd, and I turned back to face his accomplice. The man simply smirked and held his hands up in a helpless gesture, and I noted his red-rimmed, squinting eyes, one of the telltale signs of gleam addiction. He backed away, slipping into the crowd until he became just another part of the ever-moving tide of humanity.

I noticed then that my dagger was in my hand. I didn’t remember drawing it. Two months in Riddleport had

honed a certain feral instinct within me, more so even than the years I had spent traveling the wilds of Avistan with my father. Something about Riddleport breaks down the civilizing barriers that those of us possessing a healthy moral compass erect against our inner savage. The city is a knife-edge of instinct and aggression, and few are immune to its influence for long. And to think I had once been excited to come here.

Shess and her gang were moving again, and I followed, trying to do so with minimal disruption. Keep the head down, use the peripheral vision, never make eye contact. The armed sea-killers of a dozen pirate crews swarmed these streets in various states of drunken belligerence and with little censure from the local gendarmes of Overlord Cromarcky—himself the chief crime lord in a city of crime. You took your life into your own hands in Riddleport, and the biggest surprise of all was that more people weren't killed or maimed or robbed at knifepoint on any given day.

Halfway across a square in which armed guards collected tolls for the use of a hand-pumped well, Shess and some of her thugs turned in my direction, shouting. For a tense moment I knew I had been seen, that they would come after me, and that the Shess I had so briefly known had slid down into some strange abyss of violent criminality that would make murdering me seem perfectly sensible to her gnome mind. But it was something else they barked about, someone else they had seen, and the pack moved on. I followed, heartbeat gradually slowing back to something approaching normal, Mordimor chattering on my shoulder in an attempt to soothe me.

The narrow maze of streets necessitated that I stay closer to my quarry than I would have preferred, so scares like that were inevitable. The principles of tracking a game animal through woodland and tailing a person around town share much in common, perhaps more than those who have only ever attempted one and not the other could ever realize. Having lived in both worlds, I would say that creatures of the two legged variety are generally easier to track, at least if you have some passing familiarity with their environment. Unlike the predictable behavior of elk or deer, however, most people have a nasty tendency to do something unexpected should they spot a tail, such as sound an alarm, lay an ambush, or start flinging spells. While the fundamental truth of remaining undetected applies to both situations, the results of failure are radically different.

Emerging from a switchback alley in which I had been forced to drop ever farther behind Shess and her gang lest they see me, I came upon a broad, gas-lamp-lined street slanting seaward, one of the main thoroughfares of the Wharf District. I caught the briefest glimpse of one

of Shess's trailing thugs rounding a corner to my left, which placed them in a section of bunkhouses and pitch sheds that served the wharves. The street here was wider and better cared for, with most of its cobbles still intact, unlike the patchy, ankle-rolling mud ruts I had just passed through. But what really caught the eye was a sight I never tired of, a reminder not only of my true purpose in Riddleport, but of my life's goal, and my reason for returning to Varisia after a decade's travel across Avistan.

The Cyphergate.

Neither the largest nor the most spectacular of Thassilonian monuments, the 'Gate nevertheless stands out as unique. No doubt this is partly due to the way most visitors first encounter it. Coming out of the Varisian Gulf, edging slowly into Riddleport's harbor, all travelers pass under that massive, rune-inscribed arch. Its dimensions are unusual, however, as the Cyphergate is not an architecturally sound arch at all, but rather a true section of a circle, one that many scholars believe continues underground to form a perfect ring of stone. Thus we pass not under it, but through it—a distinction that is no mere semantic argument for anyone who has done so. When last I had seen Shess, she had taken a little girl's delight in imitating the many sailor's rituals and wards that the seamen enacted whenever their ships passed through the 'Gate. Now it seemed she may have crossed the line from imitating pirates to becoming one.

Even with the Cyphergate looming in the middle distance, it is easy to scoff at such superstition. But aboard ship, sliding slowly beneath the ancient, inscrutable stone, all scholarly detachment vanishes, and one is left instead with an imagination laid bare, raw right down to the bone. It is not fear that causes the crews to cover their heads, flash the tines, or recite a few lines of crude verse in Varisian. Rather, it is awe—awe in the awareness that the age and mystery of the great arch eclipses the entirety of their experience with an utter and nearly annihilating sense of timelessness. It is a thing perhaps only ever felt, and never truly articulated, though we Pathfinders might find ourselves without vocation should we ever stop trying.

I picked up my pace. As always, I longed to linger and marvel at the great monument. Despite my hard-won familiarity with Thassilonian script—the language of the empire that once ruled these lands—the runes of the Cyphergate remained a prevailing mystery. Some have suggested that they are mere decoration, which to me seems about as sensible as stenciling a pretty flower on the Starstone. No, to dismiss what we do not know with such a banal explanation undermines the very fabric of our motivations as scholars and explorers. It is to suggest that these relics are only truly significant because of their pedigree, and not their inherent power. As much as I may disagree with the Cyphermages in their obsessive

OLD FRIENDS

approach to studying the 'Gate, they have at least never been guilty of the sin of too little imagination.

Drawing my hood close, I slipped around the corner, catching sight of green-haired Shess in the distance as I lost the Cyphergate behind a long row of three-story bunkhouses. But the 'Gate lingered with me, like the afterimage of some bright star, and I felt as if I could close my eyes and redraw the entire monument from memory—not just what I had seen, but all of it, even those portions hidden from mortal view for millennia. It was an exhilarating sensation, this heightened intuition, and one that had become familiar during my stay in Riddleport. Testament, I thought, to some newly achieved level of visceral understanding, a finely realized integration of my scholarly and imaginative impulses.

I stayed along the line of the bunkhouses, ignoring the looks or occasional comments from the dockhands, mates, carpenters, and tar-spattered caulkers I passed. The crowd here had thinned out, and Shess's gang made better time. Again they slipped around a corner farther ahead, moving toward the harbor, and I quickened my pace.

It was quieter here, as if the summer heat had muffled all sound in a damp blanket. The air was thick with the almost overwhelming smell of pine tar and charcoal fires. I flattened myself against the final bunkhouse's wall—clinker-built like the hull of some northman's linnorm-prowed raider—and peered around the corner.

Shess and her gang had stopped a stone's throw away in the lot of a vacant pitch yard immediately behind the bunkhouse. Half concealed by barrels of tar and stacked bundles of oakum, another armed gang of thugs was rapidly forming up to bar Shess's passage. The two forces squared off, spitting and shouting, waving their weapons in the air.

With a shock, I realized that the tall, regal-looking man leading the other gang, Shess's opposite number in this drama, was also known to me from my time in Magnimar.

Just then, Mordimor chirped a warning.

"Tazza, Explorer-Queen of Arcadia, makes an important discovery," whispered a well-known voice from behind me.

"And Kalashar the Unvanquishable, Deadliest Blade in All Casmaron," I said, smiling despite myself as the old names of childhood came back to me, "has a whole hell of a lot of explaining to do." Mordimor let out a quiet bark of agreement as we turned toward this third familiar face of the afternoon.

"That I do, Taldara—but not here." Kostin Dalackz, my oldest friend and the man I had been avoiding since we both set foot in Riddleport two months ago, flashed

his lopsided, rakish smile and gestured that I should follow. I did, feeling at once relieved and apprehensive.

"How long were you tailing Shess? Did she see you?" Kostin led us into the same bunkhouse I had been hiding behind. I lowered my hood. The place seemed empty save for a few rats that scampered away as we entered, though obviously it was still in use by a couple of dozen workers. Seeing my scrutiny of the rows of straw bunks spanning each wall, and perhaps sensing my anxiety, Kostin gave my non-badger-bearing shoulder a gentle pat. "Relax, I bought off everybody in this place for the day. We're finally doing the job."

The job. I had been there for Kostin's last "job," a bit of skullduggery that had apparently irritated certain parties in the Night Scales, one of Magnimar's nastiest thieves' guilds, to the point that it was suggested we leave town. Suggested, that is, by a certain Sczarni crime boss of Kostin's acquaintance, who happily provided us passage on an outgoing crayer at no charge—so long as Kostin took care of a little job for him once in Riddleport.

Kostin must have seen my frown. He dropped his hand from my shoulder and stepped back, taking me in from boots to braid, really looking at me for the first time.

**"MORDIMOR IS MORE COMPETENT
THAN MOST HUMANOID COMPANIONS."**



"You look tired," he said.

He, on the other hand, looked good—"purposed with life" as my father would say, though the phrase sounds better in Elven. Riddleport seemed to agree with him, confirming what little I had heard about his antics over the last few months. His dark hair was shorter than it had been since we were kids running through the streets of Magnimar brandishing broomstick swords; Kalashar and Tazza killing giants and mapping distant, uncharted lands. I had seen a bit of this change in him aboard ship as Kostin's Varisian blood stirred at the prospect of travel to other lands. After a lifetime, albeit an eventful one, cooped up in Magnimar, Kostin was finally on the road,

**"IN RIDDLEPORT,
DRAWING ATTENTION
TO ONESELF IS
NEVER WISE."**



as was every Varisian's birthright. He positively glowed, and his brown eyes danced as if he were privy to some private joke between himself and the universe.

"You don't know how tired, Kostin. But do you care to explain why Shess and Aeventius seem about to start a gang war out there?" It came out as somewhat petulant, and I winced. I was too on-edge. Our last days on the ship had been awkward, and our parting perfunctory. I was irritated at having run into him like this, and at having not expected it. Most of all, I was angry with myself for being angry in the first place, to put so much stock in this moment with Kostin in a squalid little bunkhouse while outside I could hear a score or more people readying to shed each other's blood.

"Think of it as a play, a bit of opera." Kostin broke eye contact to move over to a south-facing window, little more than a ship-style porthole. I followed. We peered out, both of us stooping slightly, our heads close. He smelled of oil and leather and smoke. "Shess needs to get in good with the Clippers. She's been doing this and that for them—you know, Shess-style jobs. Now she has to do something big."

Outside, the two gangs faced each other, fanning out to fill the tight confines of the yard. I couldn't see Shess at all, as the cluster of thugs standing behind her completely blocked the tiny gnome from view. I could, however, see Aeventius quite clearly, dressed as ever in expensive clothing more suited to a nobleman's ball than a tussle in a pitch yard. The wizard was standing with icy arrogance while one of his lieutenants ranted and spat at the intruders.

"This is 'the something big,'" Kostin said, just as Aeventius, seemingly tired of the exchange, made a casual gesture that knocked one of Shess's Clipper boys—a man standing some twenty feet away from the wizard—sprawling into the dirt of the yard as if he had been felled by a mallet to the skull. The two sides immediately converged upon one another like packs of starved wolfhounds, and Mordimor and I both flinched at the suddenness and ferocity of the fight.

Kostin chuckled. "Aevy did a great job getting these pitch yard boys to provoke the Clippers—the promise of gold and his insufferably overbearing nature really worked wonders." Outside a wave of painfully vivid multicolored light swept over a part of Aeventius's crew, blinding or stunning half of them. That would be Shess's handiwork. Kostin and I both instinctively turned away from the flash, our faces very close now.

"Of course..." Kostin beamed like the kid I had known, the kid he still was in many ways. "Aevy and I were setting them up all along to be hammered by the Clippers as part of Shess's full initiation."

Looking back at the chaos outside, I watched Shess roll under the legs of an adze-wielding assailant and spring up behind him, driving her short blade through the small of his back. He dropped in agony, revealing the delighted

OLD FRIENDS

face of the gnome, her tricorne hat somehow still affixed to her head. The Char Street Clippers were outclassing Aeventius's gang, most of whom I now noticed were armed with little more than tools and other makeshift weapons. A great many had already scattered for cover among the barrels and sheds of the caulking yard.

The wizard stood archly among the mayhem, occasionally staggering an attacker with a flick of his finger. Then, with a gesture as elegant as a composer conducting a Chelish symphony, he cast a different sort of spell.

Aeventius disappeared.

In the very next instant he reappeared a few paces away, took a step, and winked out of sight once more.

"A new one," Kostin said. "He seems to really like it."

The wizard was moving toward the bunkhouse, blinking in and out of the startled crowd. Once he came within inches of Shess, who feigned a thrust in his direction with convincing sincerity. Aeventius was running now, his progress difficult to follow.

In fact he was running directly toward us where we stood watching him through the porthole, but there was no door on this side of the building.

"Uh, we need to move back now."

Fascinated by what I was seeing, I didn't move.

"Tal..."

Aeventius continued to appear and disappear in a manner almost hypnotic. One falcion-wielding thug almost hit him with a wild swing, and Aeventius promptly stepped into the man's guard and dropped him with a precise uppercut. Few suspected a wizard of packing that much punch, but I knew he had once made a study of the art of boxing—part of a street hustle Kostin and he had perfected years ago. Aeventius blinked out of existence again before the man even hit the ground.

And appeared right outside our window an instant later, running full speed toward the wall.

"Tal!" Kostin took hold of my arm and tugged.

Where there had been two of us, there were now three—the wizard hit us like a runaway carriage as he passed through the plank wall. There was a loud smack, as if someone had actually been thrown against the wall rather than run *through* it, and a yelp of pain. Kostin's tug had got me out of the worst of it, but he had pulled me off balance as Aeventius plowed into us. I whirled, feeling Mordimor fly free of my shoulder, and toppled into a bunk on the other side of the narrow room.

Kostin, clinging to me, fell atop me in a sprawl, face to face.

In the second of stillness that followed, I heard Aeventius's muffled moan. I twisted my head to see the wizard lying on his back, no longer flashing in and out of reality. Mordimor, by some twist of badger luck, was wrapped belly-down around the nobleman's head.

"Arrgh!" Aeventius said, flailing himself into a sitting position as Mordimor hopped off him, bristling. Both were spitting, though for different reasons. Aeventius cast a baleful eye at the embarrassing tangle Kostin and I had made on the straw mattress.

"Glad to see you're keeping yourself entertained, Kostin—and what the hell is she doing here?" Aeventius rose to his feet, rubbing his back as if it pained him. Walking through walls was apparently not without its consequences.

"It worked just as we planned, Aevy." Kostin settled into a comfortable spread atop me. "Real good job out—"

I pushed him off of me and out of the bed, and he tumbled to the floor with a grunt.

"Save it!" I said, pointing to the window as I swung out of the bunk. "What about Shess's thugs?"

But Aeventius was already up and scanning the yard through the window. "She's leading them away, toward the docks, though a few have stayed behind to take some trophies. They'll round up the stragglers and kill them. No loss—they were a truly tedious bunch of dullards."

"Trophies?" I asked, a queasy sensation in the pit of my stomach.

"Ears." Aeventius turned to smile at me. "Why did you think they were called the 'Clippers?'"

"Then it seems the pocket is half picked, my friends." Kostin, regaining his feet, moved between Aeventius and me and threw an arm over our shoulders, squeezing us into an embrace. "Let's go get that scepter. You in, Tal?"

I had been in this position before, and had thought then that it wasn't what I had wanted. I had just seen men die. Die because these two desired to steal something—a scepter?—for a Szarni cutthroat and fence. I looked at Aeventius, scowling as he pushed Kostin's arm away; the wizard was a callous and self-obsessed elitist. Kostin, next to me, was smiling, eyes alight with the prospect of pulling a job; my friend the thief, the cad, the con man. They were asking me to do what I swore to myself I would never do again, and asking as if they were bound for something no more odious than a picnic in the hills.

I thought of the dying dwarf Gundsric, my real reason for being in Riddleport, no doubt furious I had missed our daily appointment. I thought too of Master Shaine, shaking his head in disappointment as I weighed the needs of the truth and the needs of the tale.

I looked at Mordimor, head cocked in consideration, one clawed forepaw raised as if he were uncertain which way to run.

"I'm in," I said, almost without meaning to. Kostin hugged me in triumph as Aeventius sneered.

They were both talking now, fast—about their plans, about the job—but I wasn't listening. All I could do was wonder if I had really chosen this story for myself, or if it had in fact chosen me.

SHATTERED STAR



BESTIARY

THE LAST RAYS OF SUN WERE STREAMING THROUGH THE THICK FOREST CANOPY WHEN WE HEARD THE CREATURE'S PIERCING SHRIEK. A FLOCK OF BIRDS EXPLODED FROM THE TREES IN A CACOPHONOUS RUSTLE OF LEAVES AND FEATHERS JUST AS THE THING CAME INTO VIEW. THOUGH RESIDENTS OF THE REGION HAD DOZENS OF FRIGHTFUL STORIES TO TELL OF THIS STRANGE BEAST, THEIR DESCRIPTIONS DIDN'T PREPARE US FOR WHAT WE SAW. ITS LEATHERY WINGS BEAT THE AIR, STIRRING UP CLOUDS OF DEAD LEAVES AND FOREST DETRITUS AS IT DOVE FOR OUR PARTY. ITS TAPERED BEAK READY TO STAB.

—FROM THE JOURNAL OF MAYTHORN CALVROS, MONSTER HUNTER

BESTIARY

Danger comes in all forms and from all places. Whether delving a dungeon or simply walking the avenues of a bustling city, adventurers must always remain alert. The sewers and forgotten places underneath the surface teem with dangerous monsters, but even the seemingly safe streets of civilization carry their own threats.

CHANCE MEETINGS, MALCONTENTS, AND MONSTERS

Urban threats, both those walking the streets and those lurking below them, make up this month's random encounter table. Even while PCs explore the city and dig into forgotten dungeons, threats wait just on the horizon, eager for some adventurer's blood. Here you'll find a random encounter table suitable for the City of Monuments, as well as three encounter hooks to add to your Shattered Star campaign.

Some of the creatures on the table can be encountered on the surface in the vicinity of the dungeon, while others are found in the darkened depths. If the resulting roll is a creature not suitable for the current environment, roll on the table again or simply choose an appropriate encounter. This table and these entries build upon some of the typical encounters found in Magnimar. For an even wider variety of encounters, consult the encounter tables on page 51 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar, City of Monuments*.

Dodgy Buskers (CR 3): Given Magnimar's few laws and support of free enterprise, playing on its streets can be quite profitable for a good musician. If that musician happens to be a criminal as well, the profits easily increase. Sabin Turshaw (use the stats for a storyteller on page 272 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) sings songs, tells tales, and plays a lute while his youthful companions Marlan and Shevy Grindsmord (use the stats for a pickpocket on page 264 of the *GameMastery Guide*) lighten the purses of those in the crowd. The trio has been working like this in city streets across Varisia, from Riddleport to Korvosa. They stay in town only long enough to nab some coin, then vanish before trusting citizens or dangerous thieves' guilds catch on to their racket. If discovered, the three hope to make a break for it, but they're not above fighting if cornered.

Murderous Beggars (CR 4): This pair of chokers (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 45) is infatuated with humanoid life. They recently found some cast-off rags, and began dressing in those clothes and hanging out in alleyways to get closer to civilization. After nightfall, they cavort along streets in the seedy parts of town, pretending to walk as humans, and hoping all the while to not stand out. Their small stature and strange gait reveal their true nature more often than not. The pair can't control

MAGNIMAR ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-4	1d6 fire beetles	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 33
5-8	1 ghoul	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 146
9-12	1d4 giant cockroaches	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 58
13-16	1d8 mites	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 207
17-22	1d4 tiefling rogues	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 264
23-25	1 bat swarm	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 30
26-28	1 iron cobra	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 182
29-33	1 poltergeist	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 211
34-38	1 quasit	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 66
39-42	1d6 rabid dogs	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 87
43-46	1 vargouille	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 272
47-51	1 doppelganger	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 89
52-55	1 giant black widow	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 256
56-59	1 giant rot grub	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 215
60-63	1 phantom fungus	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 219
64-69	1 shadow	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 245
70-74	1d4 skulks	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 248
75-78	1 vampiric mist	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 277
79-82	1 attic whisperer	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 34
83-86	1 crab swarm	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 50
87-89	1d4 dark creepers	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 53
90-94	1d6 sczarni thugs	4	<i>Magnimar</i> 57
95-96	1 shriezyx	4	<i>Magnimar</i> 60
97-99	1d6 vexgit gremlins	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 145
100	1d4 allips	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 12

their murderous urges for too long, and at least once a week they kill a beggar and take his rags and few possessions as their own, adding them to their cache of treasured "human things." The two chokers have grown more aggressive in recent weeks, and moved beyond beggars to mug more well-to-do people walking around late at night. Now they add more treasures to their pile nearly every day.

The Spider King (CR 5): Completing the image with a battered costume crown, this sinister ettercap (*Bestiary* 129) holds court in the dank sewers beneath Magnimar. He calls all spiders his subjects, and protects his domain with a host of traps and thick webbing. His most trusted subjects are a group of four giant crab spiders (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 254) that he calls his knights. Each of the stout arachnids has a name, a title, and even a parcel of land to protect within the kingdom. In recent weeks, the Spider King has become more paranoid about encroachment into his realm, and began breeding spiders and nurturing spider eggs in order to hatch an army to defend his imaginary kingdom.

AGATHION BISHOP

Layers of translucent, shimmering fins flow along this fish-man's spindly body. Tentacles curl below its stately mouth, and its humanlike hands and feet end in stubby but sharp claws.

BISHOP AGATHION

CR 4

XP 1,200

NG Medium outsider (aquatic, extraplanar, good)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *detect evil*; Perception +11

Aura fear (30 ft., DC 16)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 38 (7d10)

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

DR 5/evil or silver; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **Resist** cold 10, sonic 10; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d10+3)

Special Attacks stunning strike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +3)

Constant—*detect evil*, *spek with animals*

At will—*create water*, *dancing lights*, *stabilize*

3/day—*bles*, *discern lies*, *remove disease*

1/week—*commune* (6 questions, CL 12th)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 11, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Improved Initiative, Self-Sufficient, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +9, Heal +5, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +11, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +12, Survival +12, Swim +10

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; *spek with animals*; truespech

SQ amphibious, lay on hands (3d6, 2/day, as a 7th-level paladin)

ECOLOGY

Environment any waters (Nirvana)

Organization solitary, pair, or contingent (6–8)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear Aura (Su) A bishop's eerie, fishlike appearance evokes feelings of unsettling fear in foes within a 30-foot radius. The bishop can use this aura as a free action, and any creature within this area must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or become shaken for 5d6 rounds. A creature that succeeds at its save is immune to the bishop's aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Stunning Strike (Ex) Five times per day, a bishop can stun a creature it hits with a claw attack. The targeted creature must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1

round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Possessing perhaps one of the strangest appearances of all agathions, bishops look as much like fish as they do humans. On their native plane of Nirvana, bishop agathions act as liaisons between the celestial generals of the lands and seas, though their activity is not restricted to Nirvana alone. Bishop agathions perform their duties anyplace their adaptive bodies are needed, such as on watery planes or worlds that are wholly aquatic. The few mortals who have met these noble creatures report that bishop agathions can traverse even the roughest and driest terrain as easily as they can glide through the deepest, most isolated oceans. It's believed bishop agathions are born from the souls of mortals who led lives of harmonized duality on land and at sea—goodly sailors, ocean-hopping priests, or kindhearted fisherfolk all are said to be candidates for rebirth as these fascinating creatures.

Bishop agathions' striking coloration ranges from glittering silver to sparkling coral to smoky auburn and green. Layers of fine, translucent fins cascade down their bodies, and combine with the strange enzymes in their skin to give them the appearance of being perpetually wet. Bishops' heads are rounded, tentacles grow like beards from their chins, and their eyes—which come in all the colors of the tumultuous waves—look like those of a fish, but with a distinguished glint. Bishops' bodies vaguely resemble those of humans in shape, but webbing in their hands and feet facilitates deep-sea travel. Bishop agathions typically stand about 6 feet tall and weigh anywhere from 140 to 250 pounds.

ECOLOGY

On Nirvana, other agathions respect bishops for their ability to think clearly, logically, and with the best interest of all parties in mind. Because of this, bishop agathions serve as Nirvana's trusted diplomatic liaisons. Bishops also have been known to carry vital messages between celestial beings and mortal heroes, who often see agathions through warped lenses. Far from being ashamed of their strange appearances, bishops consider their bodies to be among the most beautiful and versatile in all the planes—a fitting reward for a life well spent in meditation, martial mastery, and harmony with the seas. Anyone who suggests otherwise can count on incurring a bishop's ill will.

Although primarily used as diplomats, messengers, and celestial ambassadors, bishops also excel in battle. With the power of Nirvana behind them, bishops' claws and nimble fighting style eliminate enemies who stand in the way of their missions. More martially inclined bishops often choose to wield quarterstaves, many of which are

enchanted. Bishop agathions don't go looking for fights, but they intervene when they come across those imposing cruelty or evil on innocents. Bishops particularly abhor piracy and slavery. Legends speak of more than one unlucky pirate slave master who, ostensibly mad, spent his final days blubbering about the tentacle-beards that destroyed his ship and drowned his crew. No one takes these stories seriously except for the few who've become acquainted with bishops' complex ways.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Bishops typically conduct their diplomatic work alone. However, planar experts believe that on Nirvana bishops more commonly work in pairs when dealing with simple matters of diplomacy or while on courier missions. When their missions are especially vital, bishop agathions work in contingents of six to eight, engaging in lengthy discussions and lively debate to find the best solution to their particular problem. These conferences sometimes last a long time, and some of the more hotheaded celestials regard them as a great waste of time. These contingents of bishop agathions can, some experts believe, cross into the mortal realm, and though such sightings have yet to be recorded, philosophical texts from across Golarion seem to reach similar conclusions.

The few reported bishop agathion sightings in the Inner Sea mention only one agathion being seen at a time, and these reports are concentrated along the shores of western Varisia, particularly in the Varisian Gulf near Magnimar. Outside of the Inner Sea region, the majority of reports of bishop agathions come from the other side of the world. Some researchers who study the planes believe that a portal to either Nirvana's oceans or the Plane of Water lies in the southern region of the Embaral Ocean, since both the western coast of Tian Xia and the eastern coast of Casmaron report more instances of bishop agathions than does the Inner Sea region.

Like other outsiders, bishops do not need to eat or sleep while spending time on Golarion. Additionally, bishops do not reproduce among themselves; each individual is formed from the soul of a good mortal. It's believed bishops retain the deep emotions that marked their mortal lives, giving them a propensity to fall in love with creatures living outside their native plane. Ancient stories speak of bishops who traveled to Golarion for missions, only to fall in love with a remarkable member of an aquatic species. Some coastal storytellers even claim that merfolk, with their otherworldly beauty, descended from such a union, and that sahuagin are

their corrupted cousins. Predictably, debates about the veracity of such claims have raged for as long as these tales have been told.

Although few known bishop agathions remain on Golarion for any length of time, some cultures revere their arrival as an omen of fortune and luck. Those seeing a bishop agathion—and being entrusted with its diplomatic knowledge—consider the encounter to be the greatest honor one can receive. Therefore, groups of eager adventurers have set sail from Varisia over the years, hoping to reap the rewards of encountering one of these strange creatures. These seekers are inevitably disappointed. Bishops appear to only those with whom they have business—or whose evil they witness and wish to stop.



SHATTERED STAR

FLESHDREG

Composed of half-formed body parts, this creature stands on two monstrous legs. A mouth full of jagged teeth dominates the creature's bulbous head. Its veins pulse just beneath transparent flesh.

FLESHDREG

CR 1



XP 400

NE Small aberration

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., sin-scent; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 13 (2d8+4)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

Immune mind-affecting effects; **SR** 12

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d6+1 plus sinful bite)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Lightning Reflexes

Skills Acrobatics +5, Escape Artist +5, Perception +4, Stealth +9

Languages Aklo

ECOLOGY

Environment any ruins

Organization solitary, pair, or batch (3–8)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sinful Bite (Su) Each fleshdreg possesses an additional attack depending on its particular sin type. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Envy: An envy fleshdreg's bite attack can temporarily interfere with magic. If an envy fleshdreg deals damage with its bite attack to any creature under a magic effect, the fleshdreg makes a dispel check as if it were caster level 3rd against the spell of the highest caster level. If the dispel check is successful, the effect is suppressed for 1d4 rounds.

Gluttony: A gluttony fleshdreg's bite attack can wither and weaken the body of the creature it attacks. Any creature that takes damage from a gluttony fleshdreg's bite attack must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or become fatigued. Subsequent uses of this ability do not cause a creature to become exhausted.

Greed: A greed fleshdreg's bite can twist and warp the body of a creature it attacks. Any creature that takes damage from a greed fleshdreg's bite attack must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or have its speed reduced by half and take a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity for 1d6 rounds.

Lust: A lust fleshdreg's bite can addle the mind of the creature it attacks. Any creature that takes damage from a lust fleshdreg's bite attack must succeed at a DC 12 Will save or become confused for 1 round.

Pride: A pride fleshdreg's bite floods the senses of the creature it attacks. Any creature that takes damage from a pride fleshdreg's bite attack must succeed at a DC 12 Will save or be blinded for 1 round and dazzled for the next 1d4 rounds.

Sloth: A sloth fleshdreg's bite conjures an amber crust that covers the target and restricts the target's movements. Any creature that takes damage from a sloth fleshdreg's bite attack must succeed at a DC 12 Reflex save or take a –2 penalty on attack rolls and Reflex saves for 1d4 rounds.

Wrath: A wrath fleshdreg's bite delivers energy damage to creatures it attacks. Any creature that takes damage from a wrath fleshdreg's bite attack takes an additional 1d4 points of energy damage (fleshdreg's choice).

Sin-Scent (Su) Fleshdregs have scent against creatures whose nature reflects the fleshdreg's related sin. For example, a wrathful fleshdreg can scent creatures using rage effects. The GM should adjudicate what creatures a particular fleshdreg can scent.

Sometimes a runewell becomes erratic after millennia without maintenance and disgorges an incomplete horror. Such misshapen lumps of tissue, appendages, and biting mouths are called fleshdregs. These incomplete sinspawn creep around forgotten ruins of the Thassilonian empire. Some escape the ruins and make their way to the surface to feed upon the sins of humankind.

Fleshdregs vary in appearance from one another depending on various factors, such as the sins that powered their creation and the runewells that spawned them. Wrathful fleshdregs develop with a more predatory form than lustful fleshdregs do, and slothful fleshdregs look like little more than bloated piles of flesh atop stubby legs. Most fleshdregs stand between 3 and 4 feet tall, and weigh little more than 60 pounds. Greed fleshdregs are the tallest of their kind, and sloth fleshdregs the heaviest.

ECOLOGY

Fleshdregs are practically immortal. They require little food to sustain their unnatural physiology, and don't seem to age or mature beyond the moment of creation. Violence or accidents claim the lives of fleshdregs more often than anything else.

Fleshdregs emerge from runewells that have malfunctioned over the ages—no self-respecting follower of Thassilonian magic would want to create such pitiful creatures, after all. Sometimes a runewell absorbs particularly sinful souls through a soul lens without the device being calibrated correctly; other times, a creature is marked with a Sihedron rune to have its soul collected, and the inscriber performs the ritual incorrectly. In either case,

the collected sins cause the runewell to vomit forth these broken, spoiled sinspawn.

HABITAT & SOCIETY




Fleshdregs follow true sinspawn around like pets or curious children. Sinspawn use these weaker creatures as slaves, troops, or hunting companions. Though they're treated horribly, fleshdregs still seek out the company of their larger, more advanced cousins.

Despite their low intelligence, these pitiful creatures recognize the Sihedron rune and its connection to their creation. Many fleshdregs remain in the ruins of their birthplace, surrounded by Sihedron runes, for this very reason, waiting patiently for the return of their runelord masters.

Fleshdregs behave differently according to their associated sins. Sloth fleshdregs rarely hunt for sinful creatures, preferring to keep to their lairs, while wrath fleshdregs are the most likely to wander outside of a Thassilonian ruin as they seek to spread rage.

FLESHDREG SWARM

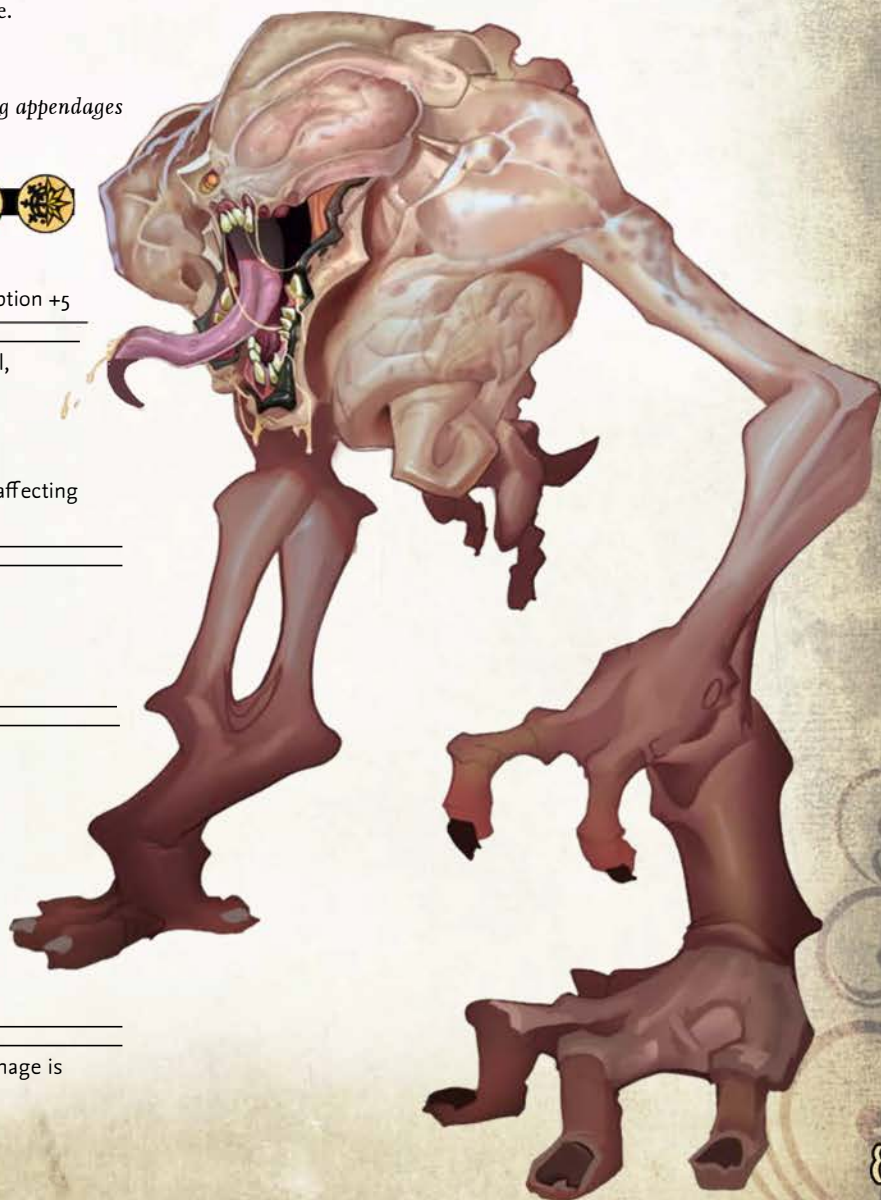
Hundreds of wads of squirming flesh with flailing appendages move together in a cluster of teeth and claws.

FLESHDREG SWARM	CR 2	  
XP 600		
NE Tiny aberration (swarm)		
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., sin-scent; Perception +5		
DEFENSE		
AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)		
hp 19 (3d8+6)		
Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3		
Defensive Abilities swarm traits; Immune mind-affecting effects; SR 13		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft., climb 10 ft.		
Melee swarm (1d6 plus distraction)		
Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft.		
Special Attacks distraction (DC 13)		
STATISTICS		
Str 2, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 2		
Base Atk +2; CMB —; CMD —		
Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes		
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +13		
SQ arcane bite		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any ruins		
Organization solitary, pair, or infestation (3–5)		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Arcane Bite (Su) A fleshdreg swarm's swarm damage is		

considered magical for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Sin-Scent (Su) Fleshdreg swarms have scent against creatures whose nature reflects the fleshdreg swarm's related sin. For example, a wrathful fleshdreg swarm can scent creatures using rage effects. The GM should adjudicate what creatures a particular fleshdreg swarm can scent.

Fleshdreg swarms form from scraps and leftovers of malformed fleshdregs and incomplete sinspawn. These foul, misshapen creatures pour out of runewells by the hundreds, seeking sinful flesh to destroy. Little more than pests, these swarms attack indiscriminately. Some malfunctioning runewells and other fleshvats produce nothing more these days than swarm upon swarm of these pests.



SHATTERED STAR

MELFESH MONSTER

Covered with mossy growths and creeping vines, this towering creature glides effortlessly across the ground. A hood of damp moss and crusty bark conceals the monster's face.

MELFESH MONSTER

CR 6



XP 2,400

NE Medium plant (extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** all-around vision, low-light vision, *see invisibility*; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 67 (9d8+27); regeneration 5 (acid)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Immune plant traits, poison; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 slam +10 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks envelop, poison cloud

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

Constant—*see invisibility*

At will—*scare* (DC 15), *scorching ray*

3/day—*blur*, *nonetection*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot

Skills Fly +14, Knowledge (planes) +3, Perception +16, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +14

Languages Infernal, Sylvan; telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Varisia)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Envelop (Ex) The Melfesh Monster can wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its vines as a standard action. The Melfesh Monster attempts a grapple that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and deals 1d4 points of Wisdom damage if the target fails a DC 17 Fortitude save. Attacks that hit the Melfesh Monster while it has a target enveloped deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim.

Poison Cloud (Ex) The Melfesh Monster can exude a cloud of poisonous gas in a 20-foot radius up to 3 times per day. Creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds and sickened for 1d4 hours afterward. This is a poison effect, and the save DC is Constitution-based.

The sleepy town of Melfesh has endured threats ranging from a gang of displaced troglodytes causing havoc to the

strained political ramifications of having a drawbridge controlling trade through southeastern Varisia, but none trouble the place like the Melfesh Monster. Miners working the foothills of the Fenwall Mountains and farmers in the countryside surrounding Melfesh speak in hushed tones of a strange and malevolent monster that haunts the area. Those who claim to have encountered the thing return from their encounters pale and ill, speaking of a bizarre plantlike creature with burning red eyes, and twisted limbs that shoot jets of flame. A stench like acrid, burning dung follows the monster. Some who encounter the creature stumble out of the woods addlebrained, raving of a hovering creature and its fire and poisonous mist. Adults away from the safety of town aren't the only ones terrorized by the creature, as parents use embellished stories of the Melfesh Monster to frighten children into behaving properly.

ECOLOGY

Very little information is recorded about the Melfesh Monster, since so few have seen the creature. A handful of researchers enamored with studying monsters have written about the creature on their travels through Varisia, though no two accounts agree on its true nature. Some think it to be from another world or dimension, while others believe it is a plant creature of magical sentience, akin to a corrupted treant or some dark, fey-stricken creature. Even the camp claiming otherworldly origin is split on the details. Some say the Melfesh Monster hails from the horrid wastes of Abaddon, and others insist the First World birthed this frightening creature. Both its form and behavior could easily suit either of these theories.

The Melfesh Monster never consumes its kills; it simply leaves charred corpses, twisted by fear, in its wake. Victims of the Melfesh Monster are found curled into a fetal position and burned so thoroughly they are barely recognizable to even their closest friends and relatives. Some speculate the creature feeds on strong feelings of agony, despair, and terror.

Most who encounter the Melfesh Monster are solitary travelers, miners, hunters, or farmers. This suggests the creature prefers to prey upon single targets, but a few stories tell of it attacking a wagon full of farmers returning from a day at the market or a trio of teenage boys playing around in the woods at night. Either way, as of late, most citizens of Melfesh and the surrounding countryside don't go out alone after dark for long.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Officially, the Melfesh Monster exists only in the minds of drunkards and those prone to fanciful daydreams. The sparse evidence of the creature has yet to compel the local

militia (or any of the nearby Hellknights) to mobilize any significant hunting party to eradicate the creature, and authorities who are shown places scorched by the monster's fiery jets write them off as merely small-scale wildfires caused by lightning or out-of-control campfires left by local hunters or miners. When would-be monster hunters show up in Melfesh, the locals have no shortage of stories to tell about the monster—usually heard from a distant cousin or a friend of a friend who claimed to have seen it. Several unscrupulous merchants in the area made a small industry of selling bits of slag supposedly resulting from the monster's fire, or maps to various caves and lairs the monster might inhabit. With little credible information to go on, and the creature's ability to fly making it impossible to track, most of the hunters give up the chase after having their purses lightened at nearby inns and taverns.

To date, no lair thought to belong to the creature has been found, nor have any tracks of the Melfesh Monster been accurately identified (just the scorch marks from its jets of flame). In Melfesh, sketches of the creature hang on the walls in taverns and inns, some drawn by those who encountered the creature and lived, and others sketched by those interested in the monster and the stories about it. All of these depictions are roughly the same, though some contain certain embellishments or exaggerations, such as extra appendages, varying color schemes, or inflated body size. Some inn owners sell these drawings to monster hunters for prices that fluctuate wildly, seemingly set only by how severely the inn owners think they can gouge any particular

buyer. Just last fall, a group hailing from Korvosa bought a skillfully drawn illustration of the Melfesh Monster from a tavern for 10 gold pieces, though it was little help to the group in finding the monster.

Though the monster has become a major nuisance only in the last 30 years, stories with details matching recent accounts of the Melfesh Monster circulated among the Varisian wanderers as long as 600 years ago. These tales, told around campfires as a warning to the traveling people, hint that a creature like the monster—or even the monster itself—has been a threat in the region for a long time. No one knows what made the creature lie dormant for so long, and frankly, the frightened populace is merely waiting until this particular bit of local folklore fades into the past.



SHATTERED STAR

SKVADER

This small creature has the forequarters and hind legs of a hare, and the wings and tail of a wood grouse.

SKVADER

CR 1/2



XP 200

N Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 6 (1d10+1)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

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

Melee bite +5 (1d3–1 plus attach)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 10 (14 vs. trip)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Stealth +14

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forest and hills

Organization solitary, pair, family (3–12), or pack (1 wolpertinger and 3–12 skvaders)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When a skvader hits with its bite attack, it automatically grapples its foe, dealing automatic bite damage each round. An attached skvader loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12.

A combination of hare and grouse, skyvaders boast features and mannerisms of both animals. At first glance, a skvader appears to be a common hare, though its shorter ears distinguish it from the longer-eared rabbits. Its wings, hindquarters, and tail usually have a coloration similar to its fur, and its birdlike features are only easily distinguishable up close. Skvaders are twitchy and nervous, constantly on the lookout for predators. They switch between standing stock still upon sensing danger and quickly bolting to escape. While generally docile, skvaders become dangerous if cornered.

A skvader is about 1-1/2 feet long and weighs around 10 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Skvaders live primarily in temperate forests, though they are also found in hillier regions with enough vegetation to provide them easy sustenance. They're also drawn to open, low-lying areas, particularly farm fields and plains covered in an abundance of tall grasses upon which they can feed.

Their high metabolisms give these herbivores voracious appetites, which force them to consume such large quantities of plants that they pose significant threats to farmers' livelihoods. A family of skvaders infesting a farmer's fields can lay waste to his crops in just a couple of weeks. Once they've destroyed the vegetation in an area, the skyvaders move on to nearby farms and continue feeding.

If cornered, a skvader emits a shrill screech that can be heard as far as a mile away. Other skvaders in the area immediately rush to its aid, causing a confrontation with a lone skvader to quickly escalate into a fight with a ferocious group of the creatures. When in combat, a skvader prefers to single out a threat and attach itself to that target.

Scholars postulate that skvaders are a lesser form of their wolpertinger cousins, a variant that never fully developed into the greater threat the wolpertinger is. Others believe that the skvader is a distant precursor to the owlbear, citing the combination of mammalian and avian features, though on a much smaller scale. These scholars believe skvaders might have been an early experiment to combine two creatures into one, undertaken by the same lunatic wizard who supposedly created the owlbear.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

To protect themselves and secure a safe birthing environment, skyvaders often dig small burrows. A large enough skvader population frightens off other small herbivores, which leave their burrows behind for the skvaders to claim. They sometimes have to spend some time expanding the burrow's size, particularly if one or more wolpertingers are among the pack.

In skvader families, adult females care for the young and the males dig the burrows, patrol for predators, and offer protection when their mates deliver a litter. Skvaders mate for life, though if one of a mated pair dies, the other seeks a new mate after a mourning period. Skvader young often stay with their parents for the first year of life. Multiple skvader families in the same region generally coexist peacefully. If one family grows significantly larger than the others, the smaller family simply moves on to new feeding grounds.

SKVADERS AND WOLPERTINGERS AS FAMILIARS

While most skvaders and wolpertingers prefer the company of their families and packs, occasionally the more adventurous among them come to serve as familiars. Service to a powerful spellcaster brings with it protection and long-term companionship, which these creatures take advantage of. A neutral spellcaster can gain a skvader as a familiar at 3rd level by taking the Improved Familiar feat, and a neutral spellcaster can gain a wolpertinger as a familiar at 5th level by taking the Improved Familiar feat.

BESTIARY

WOLPERTINGER

This creature appears to be a large hare with long fangs, feathered wings, and a set of antlers.

WOLPERTINGER CR 1



XP 400

N Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 15 (2d10+4)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +6 (1d3–1 plus bleed 1d4), gore +6 (1d3–1)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (1d4)

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 11 (15 vs. trip)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +6, Perception +5, Stealth +14

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or hills

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)

Treasure none

Wolpertingers are a bizarre amalgamation of hare and bird with the antlers of a deer. A wolpertinger's mottled fur ranges from light browns and tans to nearly black. A pair of brown-and-tan feathered wings sprouts from its back. While on the ground, wolpertingers fold these wings tight to their bodies. Fierce predators, wolpertingers hunt in packs using clever tactics. While capable of flight, they find prolonged flight taxing and tend to stay on the ground most of the time.

A wolpertinger has a 4-foot wingspan, is nearly 2 feet long, and weighs around 15 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Wolpertingers are usually encountered in temperate forests and hills, though scarcity of their favored foods can sometimes drive them to warmer or colder climes. Though they are omnivores, wolpertingers prefer fresh meat to grasses and berries. They typically hunt creatures smaller than themselves (favoring rabbits, mice, squirrels, and the like), but often take on larger predatory animals, such as foxes. Given a large enough pack, wolpertingers can even take down a solitary wolf.



Wolpertingers mate only once per year, in the spring. Kits stay with their packs until they are full-grown, but rarely remain with their birth-packs beyond a year, instead setting out to establish their own packs.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Though related to skvaders, wolpertingers are quite different beasts. Unlike their somewhat nomadic cousins, wolpertingers are aggressive and fiercely territorial. Packs stake out territories large enough for their hunting needs, and keep constantly vigilant against invaders. At the first indication of any significant threat, the pack mobilizes and attempts to kill or drive off the intruders. This territoriality extends to different packs of wolpertingers, though multiple packs have been known to coexist peacefully near one another as long as none of them violates another pack's territory.

When on the hunt, wolpertingers vary their approaches, from slinking through the underbrush to flying in from above, as befits the terrain and the capabilities of their prey. When approaching from afar, they charge in quickly to get close enough to deal a forceful attack with their horns. Once in close combat, they gang up on their prey in flanking pairs. The strongest and oldest wolpertingers focus on melee, leaving the younger members of the pack to dart in for quick charges.

Given their antlers, it's difficult for wolpertingers to create burrows like skvaders and normal hares. Instead, they seek shelter in naturally secluded areas as well as in the former dens of larger predators.

SHATTERED STAR

SNALLYGASTER

With a terrible screech, the lean, scaly beast swoops down from the sky on great dark wings. A single eye stares out from its cruel face, and tentacles writhe within its sharp, toothy beak.

SNALLYGASTER

CR 3



XP 800

CE Medium aberration

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

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

Melee beak +6 (1d8+3 plus bleed) or

2 claws +6 (1d4+3), tentacles +1 (1d4+1 plus grab)

Special Attacks aerial charge, bleed (1d6), grab, sucking tentacles

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 5, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 18 (22 vs. trip)

Feats Flyby Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Fly +10, Perception +7, Stealth +9 (+13 in forests); **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Stealth in forests

Languages Aklo (cannot speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or mountains

Organization solitary, pair

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aerial Charge (Ex) The snallygaster can hurl itself downward through the air at tremendous speed, using the force to inflict terrible wounds with its lance-like beak. When the snallygaster charges downward at an angle of 45 degrees or more, it deals double damage with its beak attack. If the charging beak attack is a critical hit, it deals triple damage instead. Bleed damage is not multiplied for this attack.

Sucking Tentacles (Ex) A snallygaster uses its retractable tentacles to suck blood from its victim's already open wounds. Any creature affected by the snallygaster's bleed special attack that the snallygaster successfully grapples with its grab ability or maintains a grapple against takes double the amount of bleed damage at the beginning of its next turn. A snallygaster cannot make attacks with its beak in any round that it uses its tentacles in this way.

Strange things lurk in the wild places of the world, hiding in remote forests or isolated mountains, away from prying eyes. The snallygaster, a hideous amalgamation of lizard and bird that preys on unwary travelers, is one such creature. Black stripes run the length of its scaly green hide all the way to the tip of its long, sinuous tail. Muscular, membranous wings sprout from the creature's

back, bearing it through the sky at tremendous speed. Its claws and beak have an almost metallic sheen to them, hinting at their sharpness and strength. The snallygaster's serpentine neck terminates at a small, birdlike head with a single eye set in the center of the forehead. In place of a tongue, its long throat contains a slobbering mass of tentacles that twist and squirm grotesquely whenever the creature extends them.

A typical snallygaster measures 9 feet long from the tip of its tail to the point of its beak. Its wingspan measures over 15 feet, and it weighs approximately 200 pounds.

ECOLOGY

The snallygaster, mainly carnivorous, subsists primarily on deer, sheep, or similar animals, although it prefers to hunt sentient creatures when given the chance. The snallygaster is an ambush predator, attacking its prey from above. Once it spots a potential victim, it soars high into the air before diving sharply down toward its unsuspecting foe, using the fall to build up momentum. At the end of the dive, the snallygaster impales its prey with its 2-foot-long serrated beak, plunging the razor-sharp bill straight into its victim's chest. The snallygaster's thick skull and muscular neck allow it to withstand the sudden impact unharmed, while its target usually suffers several broken bones and internal hemorrhaging. If its victim is stout or lucky enough to survive the initial attack, the snallygaster employs the vicious claws on its forelegs to inflict savage wounds upon its foe.

Once its foe lies dead or unconscious, the snallygaster uses its tonguelike tentacles to slurp up the victim's blood. Some experts theorize the snallygaster thirsts for blood because of its iron content, which might help maintain the semimetallic composition of the beast's beak and claws. Others claim the snallygaster's tentacle-filled throat makes swallowing solid food difficult, an idea supported by the creature's tendency to leave its kills out to rot for several days before consuming them. The truth may be that the snallygaster enjoys drinking the blood of its enemies, deriving a sort of ritualistic satisfaction from gulping down the still-warm life essence of its prey. If the snallygaster feels that it or its kill is being threatened, it uses its surprisingly powerful tentacles to latch on to the body and carry it deep into the forest where it can exsanguinate the corpse in peace.

The only thing a snallygaster craves more than blood is alcohol. Scholars still debate whether this is an instinctive dependency, or whether a snallygaster acquires the addiction later in life. What is known is that snallygasters spend much of each fall scouring their territories for fermenting fruit, which they gorge themselves on until thoroughly inebriated. Snallygasters grow extremely aggressive when intoxicated. When drunk

they rampage across the countryside in a violent stupor, slaughtering anyone and anything that crosses their paths. Snallygasters that range into lands populated by humanoids quickly develop a taste for man-made liquor, especially distilled spirits. Such drinks are far more potent than the snallygaster's natural sources of alcohol, and regularly imbibing them can greatly exacerbate the snallygaster's addiction. Even the most cautious of snallygasters can go mad with desire once it catches the scent of drink. It charges into town, heedless of danger, and smashes its way into a local still or brew-house, leaving a trail of victims in its wake. One survivor's report tells of a snallygaster so entranced by the smell of whiskey mash that it dove headfirst into a brewing vat, where it quickly succumbed to the fumes and drowned.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Snallygasters might inhabit any remote, backwoods area of Avistan, but are most often encountered in the wilds of Varisia. They prefer to nest in wooded, mountainous regions where they can put their camouflage to good use. Snallygasters are primarily active during the day, which they spend searching for food or scaring off rivals. A snallygaster claims a quite large territory, often hundreds of miles wide, though snallygasters rarely keep the same territory for more than a year at a time. Eventually, the snallygaster grows bored with the area—or is overcome by wanderlust—and sets off in search of a more interesting roost. When snallygasters meet, they regard each other coolly, but rarely fight over territory. The conflicts that do arise are almost never lethal, though the presence of a particularly valuable resource in the area, such as easy access to human victims or a reliable supply of alcohol, can turn such a contest into a bloody aerial combat.

Snallygasters assemble during mating season since they have few opportunities to reproduce. Female snallygasters lay only one to two eggs per year, which they consume if the eggs are not quickly fertilized by a male snallygaster. Should a male snallygaster present himself, the female allows him to fertilize the egg, and then immediately retreats with it and hides it somewhere high in the mountains. Occasionally humans run across these melon-sized eggs and attempt to hatch them, usually with disastrous results. Snallygasters cannot be trained, and are lethal predators at the age of 4 weeks.

Snallygasters are not afraid of humans, though they are intelligent enough to refrain from attacking large or well-armed groups of them. A snallygaster whose territory includes a human settlement genuinely enjoys terrorizing the community, often by flying just out of bow

shot and screeching at the residents. It's no surprise then that snallygasters figure strongly in some early Varisian and Shoanti myths. The Shoanti name for the creature is a corruption of the Skald phrase for "swift ghost," chosen because the creature's attacks come suddenly and silently, and also for the way the monster disappears into the forest after claiming a victim's life. When Chelish explorers arrived in Varisia, they further corrupted the name into the creature's modern appellation, "snallygaster."



UNEARTHING THE PAST

SPOILER WARNING: On these pages you'll find the background and outline for the Shattered Star Adventure Path. If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! These pages spoil the upcoming adventures as thoroughly as possible.

A few short years ago, Varisia and the world narrowly avoided a massive catastrophe when Karzoug, Runelord of Greed, rose from his eons-long slumber. Although a band of resourceful heroes eventually defeated Karzoug, many of Varisia's factions and leaders fear what could happen should one of the six other runelords rise—or if all six awoke at once! In the Shattered Star Adventure Path, one possible defense against such a doom comes to light: an artifact called the *Shattered Star*.

GMs can find more information and tools to aid in running their Shattered Star campaigns in the following resources: *Magnimar, City of Monuments*; *Varisia, Birthplace of Legends*; *Shattered Star Item Cards*; *Shattered Star Map Folio*; and the *Shattered Star Player's Guide*, which is available for free at paizo.com.

SHARDS OF SIN

By Greg A. Vaughan

Pathfinder Adventure Path #61, Levels 1–4

Starting as newly recruited Pathfinders, the PCs are summoned to Heidmarch Manor to help Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch track down a missing informant. When the PCs succeed at their task, they learn this informant had discovered and fallen under the curse of the *Shard of Pride*, one of seven fragments of an ancient Thassilonian artifact known as the *Shattered Star*. At the Heidmarch Manor lodge, Sheila Heidmarch recognizes the shard for what it is: part of a powerful weapon that might be Varisia's only hope against an ancient evil that now threatens to rise from the region's ruins. She shows the PCs how to counter the shard's curse as well as how to divine the location of the next shard in the sequence. By doing so, the PCs discover the second shard lies somewhere within or below the Irespan piling known as the Crow.

Upon investigating the Crow, the PCs find the upper levels under the control of a group of Sczarni thugs, but the deeper into the ruinous dungeon they delve, the more ancient, strange, and deadly its denizens become. After fighting through a colony of vermin and mites, an ancient laboratory infested with infernal invaders from Hell, and a long-lost sewer used by derros to conduct strange experiments, the PCs finally reach the source of their quest and find the second shard, the *Shard of Greed*, in a chamber deep underground.

CURSE OF THE LADY'S LIGHT

By Mike Shel

Pathfinder Adventure Path #62, Levels 5–7

Now that the PCs possess the first two shards of the *Shattered Star*, they feel the pull from the third shard somewhere to the southeast of Magnimar, in the Mushfens. After a chance encounter with a raving worshiper of Groetus who accuses the PCs of ushering in the end times, they make their way south to arrive at the Lady's Light, an ancient Thassilonian lighthouse and monument. Unfortunately, this monument has since become a sacred site to nearby humanoid tribes of boggards and troglodytes.

Dealing with these threats, the PCs discover that others have recently made their way to Lady's Light—a band of Gray Maidens who fled the city of Korvosa after the overthrow of their queen. Led by a woman named Oriana, this group of Gray Maidens hoped to plunder the Lady's Light of its treasures and return to Korvosa to enact vengeance on the city that robbed power from the rightful queen. But the Gray Maidens soon fall under the influence of a greater threat in the ancient lighthouse—an insane half-succubus who's become so corrupted by the *Shard of Lust* that she now believes she is Runelord Sorshen herself. Faced with boggard tribes, renegade Gray Maidens, and a powerful fiendish creature, the PCs must use all their skill with sword and spell if they hope to make it out alive and claim the *Shard of Lust* as their own.

THE ASYLUM STONE

By James L. Sutter

Pathfinder Adventure Path #63, Levels 8–10

The *Shard of Lust* directs the PCs east, up the Yondabakari to the enigmatic city of Kaer Maga. Venturing up the river and traveling the Halfflight Path to reach the city, the group has a chance to ally with one of Kaer Maga's many factions—the Duskwardens, urban warriors dedicated to ridding their city of its subterranean menaces.

In the city, the PCs interact with different groups and factions as they try to discover the location of the next shard. The PCs find that the troll augur information brokers have gone on strike after a rogue member of the golemcrafting Ardoc family abducted one of their brethren. The trolls agree to help the PCs, but only if they

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

first retrieve the kidnapped troll from the laboratory of an insane construct crafter in the fabled balconies of Bis.

Succeeding in this, the PCs are directed to the great library known as the Therassic Spire. There they discover the place is not only a repository for ancient knowledge, but also an entrance into the Undercity—specifically, a long-lost workshop of one of the runelords. The librarians of the Therassic Spire have already sent one group of adventurers after the artifact as part of a deal with the strange caulborn who live below. The group never returned, and it's up to the PCs to uphold the agreement.

From the workshop, the PCs enter an underground cavern called the Dark Forest. Its protector, a headless horseman called the Dark Rider, maintains a bizarre castle in which he has defended the *Shard of Gluttony* for centuries, keeping it locked in stasis in a strange machine.

BEYOND THE DOOMSDAY DOOR

By Tito Leati

Pathfinder Adventure Path #64, Levels 11–13

By following the visions granted by the *Shard of Gluttony*, the PCs set off for Windsong Abbey on the Lost Coast. Windsong Abbey was originally established as a holy site outside of the established nations, where clerics of the 21 most popular deities could meet in a neutral place to discuss philosophy, politics, and religion. When Aroden died and the abbey's priest of Pharasma went mad, these lofty ideals began to fall apart. Today, a few priests remain to watch after the place, but recently something went wrong.

A day before the PCs arrive at Windsong Abbey, Koriah Azmeren, a famous half-elf Pathfinder and adopted daughter of one of the clerics, travels there to check up on her father. She discovers the abbey has been overrun with murderous redcaps, giants, and other menaces. Instead of going for help, she tries to fight back and ends up captured by the insane priest of Pharasma, who has returned to Windsong Abbey to claim it as his own. The PCs arrive to find the abbey a slaughterhouse. Koriah's father, barely alive after a run-in with bloodthirsty redcaps, managed to barricade himself in one of the inner chambers. The PCs learn from him that the *Shard of Envy* lies deep in the sublevels below. It's theirs for the taking—if only they can survive passage through the Doomsday Door and defeat the monstrous armies of the abbey's insane, murderous protector.

INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

By Richard Pett

Pathfinder Adventure Path #65, Levels 14–15

The *Shard of Envy* sends the PCs northeast to the next piece of the *Shattered Star*, high up on the Storval Plateau in the ruins of Guiltspur. In the days of ancient Thassilon, this complex acted as a bridge between Golarion and the

demiplane of Leng—part embassy, part laboratory, and part portal built by Karzoug's minions.

When the PCs arrive, they find the place to be a giant-held stronghold. These giants uncovered the ruins and lava caves around Guiltspur at the command of Cadrilkasta, a blue dragon who has since ventured into Guiltspur in search of the *Shard of Sloth*. She left the *Shard of Wrath* in the hands of the giant tribe's leader, a lumbering thug named Jubbek. The PCs must navigate the ruins and lava caves leading up to his lair and defeat Jubbek to wrest the *Shard of Wrath* from his hands. But this is only the beginning of their ordeal, for once the PCs awaken the shard, they learn that the *Shard of Sloth* is also nearby—somewhere below Guiltspur itself. The PCs must venture into the ruined monument, fighting an ancient cleric of Lissala, nightmarish invaders from Leng, and a group of drow cultists of Zura before at last encountering Cadrilkasta. Overcome with the shard's curse, the dragon now resides fully within Leng, forcing the PCs to travel to the bizarre plane in order to defeat her and obtain the *Shard of Sloth* for themselves.

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

By Brandon Hodge

Pathfinder Adventure Path #66, Levels 16–17

Having recovered the final shard, the PCs return to Magnimar to assemble the *Shattered Star* into the *Sihedron*, First King Xin's masterpiece artifact. The PCs and their allies join together atop the Irespan to witness the historic rebuilding of this ancient artifact in a grand celebration. Yet as they rebuild the seven shards into one, ancient contingencies activate in the lost city of Xin, sunken deep beneath the Varisian Gulf. The PCs and their contingent see the wreckage of the ancient city rising from beneath the waves just as an earthquake shakes the region, causing a section of the Irespan to crack and plummet into the water, waking a powerful creature slumbering within the Giant's Bridge and driving the beast to attack the PCs. Even if they defeat it, the city of Magnimar still lies in the path of a devastating tsunami carrying more than just a wall of water.

After doing what they can to aid Magnimar, the PCs venture to the newly risen clockwork-and-crystal city of Xin, once the capital of Thassilon but now known in legend as the Darkened Star. Here they must deal with the awakened Emperor Xin and his frightful army of clockwork creatures and other strange monsters that have slept beneath the Varisian Gulf for 10,000 years. Within Xin's newly risen palace, the PCs must use the very item they risked their lives to collect in order to defeat its ancient creator—now a twisted abomination—and save Golarion from the horror of a reclaimed Thassilon. Should they lose, the whole world may yet be crushed beneath the heel of the First King.

NEXT MONTH

CURSE OF THE LADY'S LIGHT

by Mike Shel

Varisia's newest heroes have stumbled across a powerful relic from the ancient empire of Thassilon—yet the artifact has been sundered into seven fragments. The third of these fragments lies in the swampy Mushfens south of the city of Magnimar, hidden within an ancient, towering lighthouse known as the Lady's Light. With squabbling bogbards, troglodytes, and other swamp monsters dwelling around the ruins, approaching the Light will require either stealth or bravado. But the threats posed by slimy and scaly humanoids pale in comparison to the exiled Gray Maidens who have claimed the interior of the Light as their new headquarters, or to the sinister curse that afflicts the powerful, ancient caretaker of the ruin.

GRAY MAIDENS

by F. Wesley Schneider

Find out more about Korvosa's now-disbanded elite queen's guard. Learn the sadistic secrets of this militaristic order once fiercely loyal to an evil, deposed queen, and see what nefarious plans the Gray Maidens are up to now.

TORAG

by Sean K Reynolds

Learn the secret ways, peerless techniques, and ancient traditions of Torag, stern god of the forge, protection, and strategy. Torag is more than just a god of dwarves—the Father of Creation's hammer defends all he deems worthy, and woe be to those who stand against his chosen people.

AND MORE!

Follow author Bill Ward into the lair of one of Riddleport's seediest alchemists in the *Pathfinder's Journal*. Also, hunt down and discover hideous swamp creatures and ancient terrors in the *Pathfinder Bestiary*.

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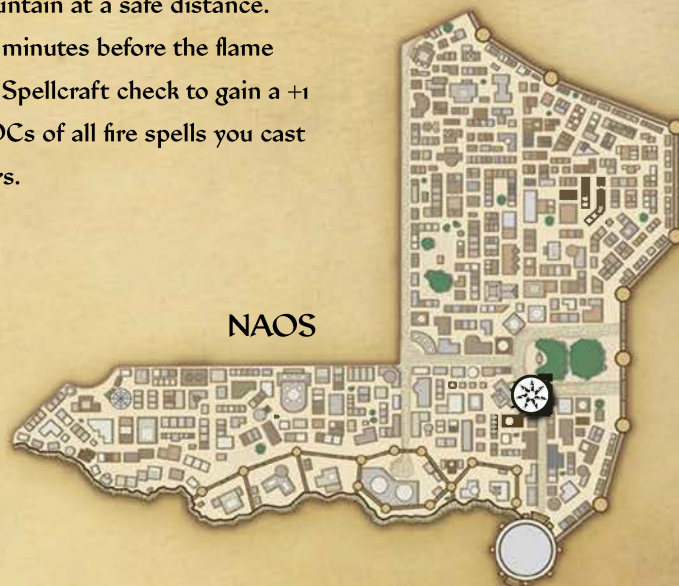
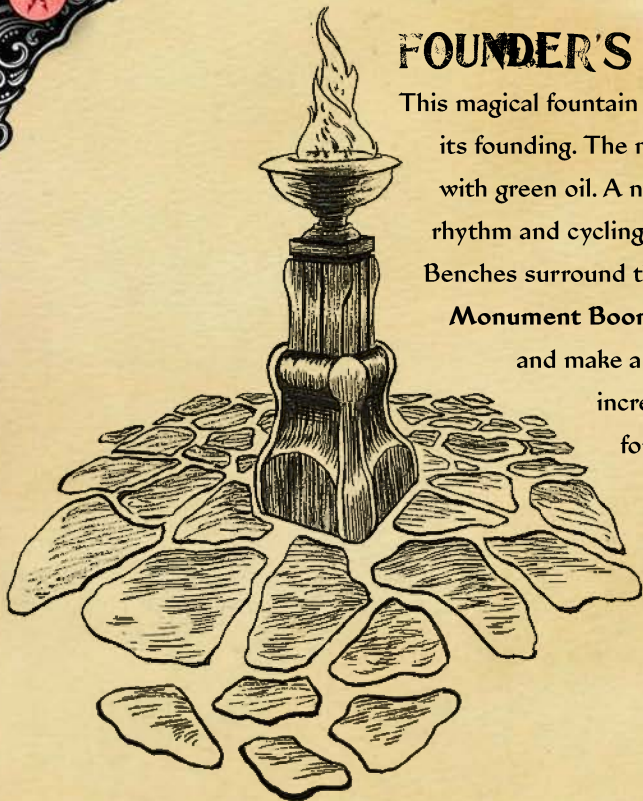
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FOUNDER'S FLAME

This magical fountain of flame was built by Antholus Kaddren—a gift to the city soon after its founding. The monument itself consists of a pedestal that supports a bronze bowl filled with green oil. A nimbus of fire perpetually burns within the bowl, dancing to an arcane rhythm and cycling in color from yellow to orange to violet to blue.

Benches surround the remarkable fountain at a safe distance.

Monument Boon: Meditate for 10 minutes before the flame and make a successful DC 15 Spellcraft check to gain a +1 increase to the save DCs of all fire spells you cast for the next 24 hours.

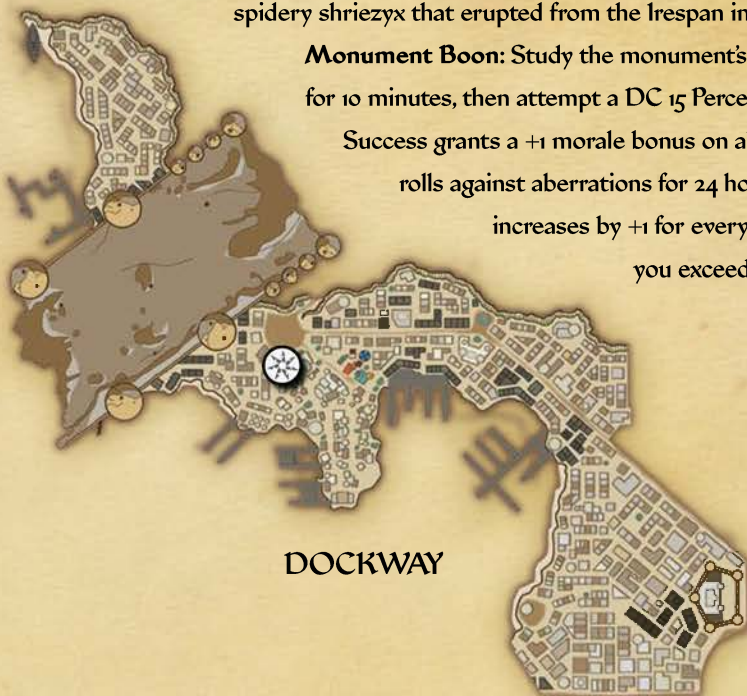


EYES OF THE HAWK

This monument depicts the twin wizards Cailyn and Romre Vanderale and their adventuring party, the Eyes of the Hawk, as they defeated the monstrous, spidery shriezyx that erupted from the Irespan in 4623 AR.

Monument Boon: Study the monument's complex carvings for 10 minutes, then attempt a DC 15 Perception check.

Success grants a +1 morale bonus on all weapon damage rolls against aberrations for 24 hours. This bonus increases by +1 for every 5 points by which you exceed the initial check.



RELIQS OF THE FIRST KING

The Shattered Star Adventure Path begins with a thrilling new adventure from fan-favorite author Greg A. Vaughan! In Varisia's bustling frontier city of Magnimar, the Pathfinder Society's newest lodge recruits a team of rookie Pathfinders to track down rogue agent Natalya Vancaskerkin—who also happens to be one of the Varisian criminals known as the Sczarni. Yet when these heroes track down the missing woman, they find far more than a Pathfinder on the run, becoming embroiled in a swiftly expanding hunt for a fragmented artifact from the ancient empire of Thassilon—a quest that will take them to some of the most dangerous corners of Varisia.

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* launches the Shattered Star Adventure Path and includes:

- “Shards of Sin,” a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 1st-level characters, by Greg A. Vaughan.
- An exploration of the ancient *Sihedron* artifact and its ties to powerful Thassilonian magic, as well as details on the mysterious skymetals that fall to Golarion, by James Jacobs.
- Forays into the even seedier underbelly of Riddleport in the *Pathfinder's Journal*, by Bill Ward.
- Five new monsters, by Benjamin Bruck, Craig Campbell, Adam Daigle, Amanda Hamon, and James Wilbur.



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