

PATHFINDER[®] MODULE[™]

DOWN THE BLIGHTED PATH

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WINNER

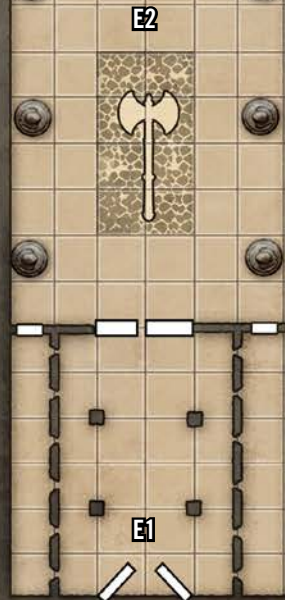
A PATHFINDER RPG ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 5

BY MONICA MARLOWE

E. Firebrand's Redoubt



LOWER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PATHFINDER MODULE

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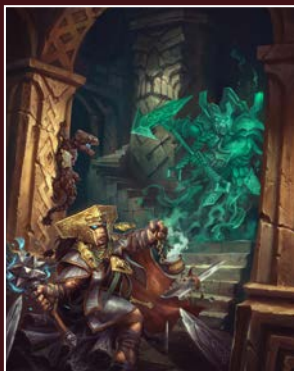
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ON THE COVER



Shardra bravely faces one of the haunts that festers in Firebrand's Redoubt as the result of a shattered dwarven soul in this exciting cover art by Caio Maciel Monteiro.



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REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, though these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/prd.

<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM
<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC		



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DOWN THE BLIGHTED PATH

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Down the Blighted Path is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 5** The PCs begin the adventure at 5th level.
- 6** The PCs should be 6th level by the time they finish exploring Firebrand's Redoubt.
- 7** The PCs should be 7th level at the end of the adventure, after defeating Zohir Totek and reclaiming *Firebrand*.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In *Down the Blighted Path*, the heroes arrive in the dwarven town of Davarn to attend the Spring Festival, only to be attacked by undead forces. Upon investigating, they learn that Zohir Totek, a death-obsessed fey, plots to turn the late Delbera Axebringer and her descendants into undead minions in an act of vengeance. To stop Zohir and save Davarn, the heroes must contend with the dangers that inhabit Delbera's former home, descend into the Darklands, and confront the sorcerer in her tower lair.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Two centuries ago, an unassuming dwarven acolyte put hammer to steel and touched the divine. The faith of Torag stirred something deep in the heart of young Delbera Axebringer, and after weeks spent at her anvil with no food and little rest, she had forged an axe of unparalleled beauty and elegance that shimmered as if swathed in flame. Stunned by her encounter with her god and driven by her youthful confidence, Delbera ventured to the surface world, brandishing the faith of Torag to protect others. Despite her family's objections and her unease over her own obligations, Delbera Axebringer soon found like-minded souls in the Rising Blades adventuring band, and together they saved countless lives from the cruel whims of fate. The entire time, she continued to pour her magic and faith into her beloved weapon, *Firebrand*.

Delbera's journey mirrored that of a young sorcerer named Zohir Totek. As an orphan—a death-obsessed breed of fey—Zohir enjoyed a privileged position in the subterranean city known as the Court of Ether, and served the court necromancer, Audalot Karexin. And just as forces larger than herself drove Delbera from her home, so too did courtly scandal drive Zohir's master—and by extension, Zohir—from the fey settlement's sophisticated towers. Karexin, Zohir, and their followers journeyed north to the underground chasm known as Phaedextrin's Maw, where the necromancer established a vile new tower from which to conduct his research.

Fate drew Delbera and Zohir together when Karexin's growing undead horde began to encroach on the surface and attack small communities in Andoran. The Rising Blades' war against this threat took them deep below the surface, until they finally clashed with the ancient necromancer in his hanging tower. As the battle raged and members of both sides fell, Delbera battled Zohir. Although the dwarf finally managed to defeat Karexin's young apprentice, a stirring of mercy in Delbera's heart halted the killing blow. The orphan then fled into the Darklands as Delbera turned to slay the evil necromancer master.

The Rising Blades eventually disbanded to return to their families or begin their own; their adventures faded into history and became legendary stories known to everyone who hails from the area. Delbera returned to her hometown of Davarn, but she never gave up her adventurous streak, building her home—Firebrand's Redoubt—on the outer edge of Davarn's influence. She patrolled the Five Kings Road, which connected the town to the more powerful Sky Citadels. Her service to Davarn earned her the respect of Davarn's citizens and the noble title of Lady Delbera; over time, her passion and charisma attracted a legion of followers, who joined her in defending the far-flung settlement. The members

WHERE ON GOLARION?



Pathfinder Module: Down the Blighted Path takes place in the Five Kings Mountains, between Druma and Andoran. Significant portions of this adventure take place in the Darklands, deep below the surface. More information on the Five Kings Mountains can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, and additional details on the Darklands can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Into the Darklands* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Darklands Revisited*.

of Delbera's legion eventually swore their loyalty to her upon her divinely enchanted axe, finding strength through her faith and purpose in service to her ideals. While she had no children of her own, the Axebringer clan is extensive and influential in the town, numbering in the hundreds. All of its members are proud inheritors of Lady Delbera's legacy and take satisfaction in the family's place of honor in Davarn.

However, Zohir Totek never forgot the pain delivered to her and her mentor. Her white-hot rage left deep scars that shaped her every decision as she wandered aimlessly throughout the Darklands for more than a century, collecting minions and forbidden lore. She reemerged to invade Davarn with a duergar army in tow, just as the Rising Blades once invaded her home. Though the attack was ultimately repelled, Lady Delbera died defending Davarn, alongside many of her legion. Her sacrifice mobilized the city to more thoroughly guard its borders, and with her mercenary army devastated, Zohir fled back to her master's long-abandoned tower in Nar-Voth to plot.

Zohir swore unending pain to the Rising Blades, for once they died, they entered into her sphere of influence. She has waited patiently for Davarn's guard to drop just long enough to slip into Firebrand's Redoubt—now a beloved monument and mausoleum—and claim Lady Delbera Axebringer's mortal remains as well as her cherished axe, *Firebrand*. Undoubtedly the symbol of Delbera's power, the magic weapon binds her family's legacy to the power of Torag himself; naturally, Zohir wants nothing more than to see the entirety of this dwarven family laid low.

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CHAPTER 1

FIREBRAND'S REDOUBT

Although Zohir Totek's revenge has been nearly a century in the making, she has been able to begin her schemes only in the past week. Since the day of her master's defeat, the sorceress has kept watch over the Rising Blades' ascension and eventual dissolution. Thanks to the considerably shorter life span of Delbera's human companions, Zohir long ago stole their bodies to raise them as undead minions. She reserved a special hatred for the leader and guiding force of the adventurers who slew her master, ultimately deciding that the greatest revenge she could take would be to raise Lady Delbera as her unliving slave and extend that curse to all who shared her blood, erasing all the good Delbera did in life for the town of Davarn and the Five Kings Mountains as a whole.

Impatient with her foe's long life span, Zohir recruited a band of duergar mercenaries 40 years ago to siege the

Lady Axebringer's new home of Firebrand's Redoubt. Zohir achieved her goal: Lady Delbera and many of her guards—the Firebrand Legion—lost their lives defending the redoubt and Davarn. Unfortunately, the swift and violent attack mobilized Davarn's militia, which absorbed the surviving members of the Firebrand Legion and their resources, and ultimately proved too daunting a defense for Zohir or her duergar soldiers. Only Zohir's trusted forlarren spy, Sarxa, could slip in and out of the city and report its developments back to her.

As time passed, the patrols were reduced in both ability and frequency. As Davarn's readiness dwindled even further with its annual preparations for the Spring Festival, Zohir finally started her grim work. With Sarxa and a new company of duergar mercenaries, she stormed the redoubt—now little more than a mausoleum and



historical curiosity—and slew its few guards. Raising the long-dead members of the Firebrand Legion entombed within as her undead servants, Zohir seized the enchanted axe, *Firebrand*. As she worked her necromancy to animate Delbera Axebringer's corpse, however, some combination of the dead priestess's willful spirit and *Firebrand*'s magic warped the ritual, shattering Delbera's spirit into seven pieces and transforming the redoubt into a nest of deadly haunts. Frustrated by the delay, Zohir opted to split her forces, leaving Sarxa and many of her duergar mercenaries behind to unravel the haunts and recover Delbera's body while the necromancer herself returned with *Firebrand* to her base of operations—Karexin Tower, deep below Davarn in the Darklands region known as Nar-Voth.

Able to conceal herself from the haunts, Sarxa has spent the past week looting the redoubt and shirking her duties, as her duergar soldiers grow increasingly uncomfortable with their eerie surroundings. Bored and not entirely understanding Zohir's plot to use *Firebrand* to slay and reanimate all of Delbera's siblings and their descendants, Sarxa has decided to send her undead soldiers into Davarn to kidnap Delbera's remaining family. In her mind, this circumvents her current problems, and means she can return to Nar-Voth that much sooner.

GETTING STARTED

The player characters start out in the dwarven trading town of Davarn in the Five Kings Mountains. The town hosts its Spring Festival every year to celebrate the spring thaw that opens the mountain passes into Druma and Andoran. The PCs may have arrived to attend the Spring Festival—which features many strange wares from across the dwarven nation. Alternatively, they may have arrived with the first outside trade caravan or spent the past 4 months stuck in Davarn while snow in the passes rendered travel impossible. The adventurers may be natives of the town; dwarven characters may even be descendants of the Axebringer line, making the quest a personal one and Zohir's ritual an eventual threat to their lives.

Davarn's Spring Festival is especially known for its tournament, the Spring Muddle, which attracts competitors from neighboring human and dwarven communities. The competitors vie for a prize of gold and magic items, which the town guards and the temple of Torag jointly fund to attract new recruits. *Down the Blighted Path* assumes a local merchant named Lukher Stinnison sponsors the PCs to compete in the Muddle, either from the contest's beginning, or else as last-minute replacements for his previous team. While it is not necessary for the PCs to compete in the Spring Muddle, doing so gives them a brief connection to Lukher before his kidnapping; if the PCs don't seem interested in a friendly competition, GMs should provide some other attachment to the town and a reason to care about the kidnapped members of the Axebringer clan.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR THIS ADVENTURE

To run *Pathfinder Module: Down the Blighted Path*, you'll need at least the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*. Several encounters in this adventure use also rules from *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*, *Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex*, and *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. These rules can also be found online for free in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/prd. This adventure features the Darklands region of Nar-Voth, so GMs may find *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Into the Darklands* particularly valuable, though any necessary rules are provided here.

DAVARN SPRING FESTIVAL

When the winter's cold releases the Five Kings Mountains and the spring rains wash away the snows that blanket the area, the residents of Davarn celebrate the return of songbirds and trade caravans with their annual Spring Festival. The event occurs a full week after the spring equinox to celebrate Davarn's official reopening along trade routes to Druma, Isgar, and Andoran. While some caravans arrive earlier, the town sends out engineering teams before the event to clear and repair any road damage caused during the winter months. Colorful banners decorate the public square surrounding the city reservoir, and the surface doors are thrown wide to flush out the stagnant winter air and replace it with mountain breezes and the smell of freshly baked pies and roasted meats. Traveling performers set up their stages to entertain the young and old alike with puppet shows, music, and death-defying stunts. Davarn's residents build temporary stalls to display their finest handicrafts, worked metals, and raw materials mined deeper in the cave systems beyond the town.

For the duration of the festival, Davarn functions as a small city rather than a large town. This increases its Base Value and Purchase Limit to 5,600 gp and 37,500 gp respectively, and adds to the number of magic items available. During the festival, 4d4 minor items are available, 3d4 medium items are available, and 1d6 major items are available. The sheer number of traders and merchants in the area increase the likelihood that visitors can find whatever they need. (For Davarn's full stat block, see page 49).

The festival serves as an opportunity for the PCs to meet the smiling dwarf merchant **Lukher Stinnison** (N male dwarf expert 4), an eager buyer and seller of minor magical goods. Lukher primarily banks on his family reputation as the grandson of Delbera Axebringer's sister; he is also the cousin of Erna Stoneheart, the leader of the Davarn Chokers (see the sidebar on page 8) and the great-niece of

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Delbera. While he usually provides quality merchandise, a few questionable business deals and his overbearing charm have earned him a reputation as a huckster. Hoping to combat this image, Lukher sponsors a team in the Spring Muddle every year. If the PCs arrive in Davarn specifically to compete, Lukher seeks them out to pay their entry fees and be seen in their company. If they don't arrive specifically looking to join the competition, Lukher seeks them out after a few rounds, having heard that resourceful adventurers were in attendance and needing replacements after half his team ditches him before the final round (in actuality, Lukher's team—made up entirely of his cousins—have been kidnapped by Sarxa's undead forces).

A. SPINEBREAKER MOUNTAIN (CR 7)

The highlight of every Spring Festival is the Spring Muddle, where dozens of teams composed of everyone from children to professional athletes compete in challenges of combat, skill, and speed. It all culminates in a final trial, affectionately called Spinebreaker Mountain. The “mountain” is a tough spit of granite poking up from the town's reservoir, and over the centuries, Davarans carved it into a spiraling obstacle course capped with a low crater. The children's event is a free-for-all, and every youth who reaches the summit is awarded a small prize. The adult competition is more strategic, and teams compete against one another to reach the mountaintop, waylay their opponents, and capture flags along the way. It is possible that PCs will not wish to participate in the tournament, and subsequently won't compete in Spinebreaker Mountain. If that's the case, the adventure begins for the PCs at the Final Feast, an open-air meal to close out the festival, and you should find some alternative reasons to endear Lukher or another descendant of Lady Delbera to the PCs.

The PCs may play through qualifying rounds, with contests of swordplay, axe throwing, smithing, swimming, and footraces, but this module assumes they have already performed well enough to qualify for the final round, or else Lukher Stinnison recruits them to replace his missing team. Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs.

The festival grounds begin to thin out as most attendees line up along the rope barrier surrounding the city reservoir. An angry-looking spur of granite pokes up from the water, carved into a spiraling obstacle course marked with poles, logs, and ropes.

The crowd bursts into cheers as the other semifinalist team and defending champions, the Davarn Chokers, approach the

starting line. Their dwarven leader, Erna Stoneheart, waves to the crowd as they shout her name. Her teammates follow suit, waving and smiling as the chant of “Chokers! Chokers!” rises above the general cheering.

The course is outfitted with climbing nets and towers, balance beams, swinging ropes over the river, and red flags. A large bat familiar hangs lazily from a perch near the starting line, clutching an additional red silk flag.



LUKHER STINNISON

Spinebreaker Mountain (depicted on the poster map included with this book) is an obstacle course run simultaneously by two teams. It begins at the waterline for the “mountain” itself in the city reservoir, and spirals upward until competitors reach the peak. Participants line up on the southwestern landing, and six obstacles block the way, each with its own red flag. Teams score points by getting as many members as possible to the peak and by capturing flags.

Each flag is worth 10 points, and each team member to reach the peak is worth 10 points. The first person over the finish line earns 10 bonus points for her team. The competition ends when all the members of one team reach the peak or are disqualified.

Game Masters should conduct the race as if it were combat, and in a great many cases, combat may actually break out between teams. The contest officially ends when all non-disqualified members of one team reach the peak.

A few other rules aim to keep the competition both safe and entertaining for the audience.

- Each member of a team does not need to complete every obstacle. Some have even scaled Spinebreaker Mountain's slick, steep walls (Climb DC 30, with 15 feet separating each tier) to reach the peak directly, but only competitors tackling an obstacle are allowed to reach that obstacle's flag.
- Anyone falling into the water may climb out and rejoin the race anywhere they are able, though only the southwest and southeast outcroppings are level with the water.
- Any use of lethal force immediately disqualifies a competitor. Real weapons may not be carried or used during the race, though wooden practice versions of weapons that deal nonlethal damage are permitted (and are available for purchase at half the normal weapon price at several stalls in the town's market), as are any weapons that deal nonlethal damage. Knocking an opponent unconscious is legal, but it's considered poor sportsmanship, and unconscious team members do not need to reach the peak to end the competition.
- The use of magic is acceptable, so long as that magic aids or enhances competitors' abilities, rather than



circumvents the challenges. A competitor may transform herself into a monkey to better handle some of the obstacles, for example, but could not simply teleport to the peak. Any form of teleportation or flight immediately disqualifies a competitor.

- Competitors may steal flags from the opposing team using disarm and steal (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 322) combat maneuvers, or simply claim them from unconscious competitors as a move action.
- Participants must stay on the mountain or within 15 feet of it if they fall into the reservoir below.

Creatures The PCs compete against Davarn's hometown favorites: the Chokers.

ERNA STONEHEART CR 4

XP 1,200

Female dwarf ranger (skirmisher) 5
(*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 128)

LG Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

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

hp 43 (5d10+11)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities defensive training

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk sap +6 (1d6+2 nonlethal), mwk sap +6 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged composite shortbow +7 (1d6+1/×3)

Special Attacks combat style (two-weapon combat), favored enemies (aberrations +2, goblinoids +4), hatred

TACTICS

During Combat During the race, Erna prefers sticking to her natural abilities and only resorts to her potions or elixir if other competitors have a clear advantage. She prefers to block members of opposing teams, knocking them down or off of obstacles using combat maneuvers.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

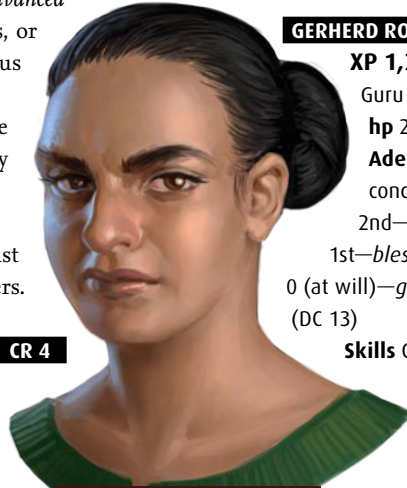
Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20 (24 vs. bull rush, 24 vs. trip)

F feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+3 when jumping), Appraise +0, Climb +10, Handle Animal +7, Heal +6, Intimidate +8, Perception +8, Stealth +8, Survival +8, Swim +6; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Appraise to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones, +2 Perception to notice unusual stonework

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ favored terrain (underground +2), hunter's bond



ERNA STONEHEART

(companions), hunter's trick (quick climb), track +2, wild empathy +6

Combat Gear elixir of tumbling, potion of bear's endurance, potion of bull's strength; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, composite shortbow (+1 Str), masterwork handaxes (2), masterwork saps (2), 11 gp

GERHERD RODOERSON CR 4

XP 1,200

Guru (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 246)

hp 27

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *cat's grace*

1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds*, *obscuring mist*
0 (at will)—*guidance*, *stabilize*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Skills Climb +2, Craft (armor) +4, Knowledge (religion) +10

MAVIN MARBEKET ZCR 3

XP 800

Tainted sorcerer (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 161)

hp 28

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +8)

2nd (4/day)—*alter self*

1st (7/day)—*enlarge person* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *reduce person* (DC 16), *shield*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Climb +2, Use Magic Device +8

TARGRENON RAEDAD CR 3

XP 800

Charlatan (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 145)

hp 21

Melee mwk sap +3 (1d6-1 nonlethal)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +9, Climb +6, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +9, Disguise +9, Heal +3, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +8, Use Magic Device +10

A1. The Swim

This 40-foot gap between landings is the first obstacle, and can be crossed fastest by swimming.

Skill Check: A competitor can move through the water at half his speed as a full-round action, or at one-quarter his speed as a move action, with a successful DC 12 Swim check. Alternatively, a competitor may sidle along the adjacent stone wall at the same speeds with successful DC 12 Climb checks.

Failure: The character makes no movement progress. If he fails by 5 or more, he slips underwater and must hold his breath.

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THE DAVARN CHOKERS

The Davarn Chokers are all locals and friends, and train for this tournament in their free time. While far from undefeated, they're all strong and resourceful athletes who love the semiannual competition.

Guard Captain Erna Stoneheart: A steadfast defender of the city against ruffraff and duergar attacks alike, Erna sees the Muddle as a fun distraction from her very serious life. Erna fills whatever role she needs to give her allies the best shot at victory, often blocking opposing team members or recovering flags her teammates have lost.

Gerherd Roderson: Gerherd serves loyally as an acolyte and smith at the temple of Torag, though he is more broadly spiritual and offers prayers to half a dozen gods. Despite his legendary stoicism, he takes Mavin's teasing in good humor, secretly enjoying the gnome's attention and wit. Gerherd uses his magic to augment his teammates rather than harry opponents, and struggles to keep up with his more athletic teammates.

Mavin Marbeket: A member of Lilijen Marbeket's overabundant gnome clan, Mavin returned after a winter in Isger with a sour wit and alien magical powers. She is always first to laugh, even at herself, and especially likes taking jabs at her teammate and childhood friend, Gerherd Roderson. Mavin uses expeditious retreat to rush ahead, and her other spells to assume larger and smaller forms to overcome obstacles.

Targrenon Raedad: Formerly a traveling con man, Targrenon discovered Davarn during a Fall Festival, decided to stay for the winter, and never left. He finds a strange peace in the solitude of the mountains and the small-town atmosphere. Targrenon uses his vast skills to capture most of the flags directly from the obstacles for the Chokers while his teammates keep the competition busy.

Flag: The flag is just barely visible 20 feet below the surface midway through the crossing.

A2. The Stump Walk

Stone columns, each slightly taller than the next, jut up from the water here, forming a sort of stairway to the next level.

Skill Check: A competitor can leap to an adjacent column with a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check, or to a column 10 feet away with a successful DC 20 Acrobatics check.

Failure: The character falls into the water below.

Flag: The flag is tied to the northernmost column. Slightly taller than the others, this column requires a successful DC 23 Acrobatics check to reach, but the added height provides a +2 circumstance bonus to any

character leaping from this height to either of the two closest columns.

A3. The Net Climb

A net is draped over this 20-foot-tall cliff face.

Skill Check: A competitor can ascend the net at one-quarter her normal speed with a successful DC 12 Climb check, or at half her normal speed with a successful DC 17 Climb check.

Failure: The character makes no progress. If she fails by 5 or more, she falls to the gravel below and takes an appropriate amount of falling damage.

Flag: The flag is located atop a 20-foot-tall pole at the top of the net, which requires additional successful DC 15 Climb checks to scale. Carved from flexible wood, this pole wobbles and sways as more weight is added; increase the Climb check DC by 2 for every additional Small or Medium creature on the pole.

A4. The Balance Beams

Two beams run across a long gap that is 20 feet above the water. One is a 40-foot-long, 8-inch-wide beam, and the other a 25-foot-long, 4-inch-wide beam.

Skill Check: A competitor can walk across the 8-inch-wide beam at half speed with a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check, and across the 4-inch-wide beam at half speed with a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check.

Failure: The character makes no progress. If he fails by 5 or more, he falls into the water 20 feet below.

Flag: The flag is tied to a revolving pole that runs between the two bars, which requires a successful DC 20 Acrobatics check to traverse.

A5. The Rope Swing

A pair of knotted ropes are secured above this 15-foot gap.

Skill Check: A competitor can swing on the ropes with a successful DC 10 Climb check, or leap across the gap with a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check.

Failure: The character makes no progress. If she fails by 5 or more, she falls into the water 20 feet below.

Flag: The flag hangs slightly below the bottom of the rope's arc, and requires a successful touch attack against AC 20 to snatch midway through a character's swing.

A6. The Dummy Gauntlet

An array of spinning, wooden dummies crowds this 30-foot stretch of the course.

Skill Check: A successful DC 14 Acrobatics check allows a competitor to move through this area at half speed, or a successful DC 19 Acrobatics check allows movement at full speed.

Failure: The character is shoved by a spinning dummy, which performs a bull rush combat maneuver with a +6 CMB. If the dummy's check succeeds, the character is bull rushed north, west, or south (determined randomly).



Flag: The flag is lashed to the central dummy; a character can remove the flag with a successful DC 20 Sleight of Hand check or steal (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 322) combat maneuver check.

A7. The Creature Flag

In addition to the six obstacle flags, a different creature carries a seventh flag every year, wandering the course to harry or hide from competitors. This year's creature is Skagit, the bat familiar of one of the event organizers, **Zonia Verart** (NG female dwarf evoker 9).

Skill Check: A competitor can steal Skagit's flag with a successful DC 18 disarm or steal (*Advanced Player's Guide* 322) combat maneuver check, or by otherwise taming or immobilizing the wily creature.

Special: Skagit harries whichever team is doing well. It chooses one creature to distract each round, imposing a –5 penalty on all skill checks. If no team is doing especially well, the bat keeps its distance.

Development: Whether they win or lose, so long as they give the competition an honest try and play fairly, the PCs win the respect of Davarn's residents and their rival team, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks in Davarn for the next week. If they were caught cheating or being bad sports, the people of Davarn turn against them, imposing a –2 penalty on those same checks for the next month.

Treasure: The first-place prize for the Spring Muddle is 2,500 gp, an adamantite battleaxe, and a *pearl of power* (1st). Second place still awards an impressive 1,000 gp, a masterwork battleaxe, and *bracers of armor* +1.

Story Award: Whether the PCs win or lose, award them XP as if they had defeated a CR 7 encounter.

B. THE FEAST (CR 6)

Davarn's Spring and Fall Festivals both conclude with large, public feasts in the market square alongside musical performances and speeches from various important locals. Dinner, served across dozens of buffet tables, consists of mushroom dishes, hearty breads, and beer from downside as well as roast boar, game hens, and fresh greens from the surface. Most attendees bring out their own tables or spread blankets on the cobblestones, and festival-goers wander from blanket to blanket, saying their final goodbyes and sharing one last drink before returning to the trade routes or their everyday tasks.

The winners of the Spring Muddle join Mayor Bensik at her table as honored guests, sitting with local officials as well as Erna Stoneheart, who attends as guard captain rather than a competitor. If the PCs won, Lukher declines to join them as he needs to find a few business contacts in the crowd. Allow the PCs to interact with Davarn locals as much or as little as they like or conduct any last-minute trade, and then read or paraphrase the following to the PCs.

CHOKERS TO SPARE

The Davarn Chokers should field as many athletes as the player character team. If the PCs have more than four party members participating in the race, add one or more of the following members to the Chokers to balance the numbers.

Hetty Skree: Targrenon's on-again, off-again love interest, Hetty works as a surveyor in Redin's Mine, and practices with the Chokers infrequently. Use the statistics for a sapper (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 262).

Gazebelle the Green: Another member of the Marbeket clan, Gazebelle fell in with the church of Erastil as a girl and eventually became a knight, protecting the roads from bandits and monsters. She visits Davarn frequently, and helps out her sister's team when their numbers fall short. Use the statistics for a skirmishing crusader (*NPC Codex* 113).

Willy White: A childhood friend of Erna's, "Wheedling" Willy was rescued from a life of slavery when his family fled Isger not long after his birth. Now the handsome young halfling works odd jobs over the winter and entertains caravans each summer, which often leaves him too busy during festivals to join his fellow Chokers on the field. Use the statistics for a taunting comedian (*NPC Codex* 27).

Screams of terror rise from the picnic area near the market square's far end. A dwarf dressed in a Davarn guard uniform runs into the pavilion and calls to Erna Stoneheart. "Captain, come quickly, they have Lukher!"

Erna Stoneheart follows the guard back into the crowd toward the screaming people.

Erna grabs her axe and rushes to follow her guard. The PCs are welcome to follow; they may feel concern for Lukher or he may still owe them a chunk of their prize money. At the far end of the market square, Sarxa's undead are continuing their mission to kidnap descendants of Lady Delbera, and have assaulted Lukher to drag him away.

Creatures: Four of Zohir's bone legion soldiers—powerful skeletal champions created from the dead remains of the dwarven Firebrand Legion—have already defeated Erna's guards and are dragging Lukher east into the winding streets of Davarn. Each undead still bears a flaming double-headed waraxe insignia on its tattered uniform, which may be identified with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nobility) check as belonging to the house of Lady Delbera. One of the skeletons has already successfully grappled the young dwarf when help arrives. Erna leaps into battle against the creatures, whether the PCs attack or not, and her assistance decreases this encounter's CR by 1.

BONE LEGION SOLDIERS (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Skeletal champion fighter 2

LE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 35 each (4 HD; 2d8+2d10+2)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4 (+1 vs. fear); +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, defensive training; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk dwarven urgrosh +8 (1d8+4/x3) or 2 claws +1 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks hatred

TACTICS

During Combat The bone legion soldiers are straightforward combatants, relying on their Power Attack and Cleave feats to deal damage to as many people as possible.

Morale The undead are fearless and fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11



BONE LEGION SOLDIER

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+8 overrun); **CMD** 18 (22 vs. bull rush and trip, 20 vs. overrun)

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dwarven urgrosh)

Skills Acrobatics –1 (–5 when jumping), Appraise –1, Climb +4, Intimidate +7, Perception +4

Languages Common, Dwarven

Other Gear mwk scale mail, mwk dwarven urgrosh, tattered uniform, obhian spike (see the sidebar)

Development: If the PCs don't engage the skeletal champions, they carry Lukher off, moving through the crowd and deeper into the city toward the tunnels. While it is unlikely that the attackers escape due to the distance to the tunnel gates, the presence of guards, and Erna Stoneheart, it is not imperative for the kidnapping to be stopped. If the PCs choose to become involved, the guards focus on keeping the population at a safe distance.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully rescue Lukher, award them an additional 400 XP each for earning the respect of Davarn. If the PCs don't engage in the combat at all, award them no XP for this encounter.

C. AFTER THE FESTIVITIES

Once the undead are dispatched or escape, reports of other missing dwarves begin to arrive in the crowded marketplace, including dozens of members of the town guard. Mayor Bensik asks people to return to their homes and secure themselves against additional undead incursions, while Erna Stoneheart begins rallying any guards who remain unabdected and uninjured. Both officials ask for the PCs' assistance in light of their resourcefulness in the games that afternoon, and Mayor Bensik offers them a reward of 3,500 gp if they investigate where these undead came from and rescue as many of her citizens as possible.

Adventurers may attempt a variety of skill checks to investigate exactly what may have happened before they set out into the tunnels. Successful Diplomacy checks to gather information yield the following results.

Result	Information
10	So many people were crowded into the market square that the rest of town was all but abandoned.
15	All of the missing are related to the late hero, Lady Delbera Axebringer, who spent over a century defending Davarn from foreign threats.
18	All the skeletons' victims were seen being dragged down Taggun's Crawl to the east, which connects to other dwarven cities, but the tunnel hazardous and unpatrolled beyond Firebrand's Redoubt.
25	At least one person remembers seeing a bizarre stranger skulking around the east side of town earlier that day—a slight, hooded woman whose feet clopped like horses' hooves.



Adventurers who took note of the insignia emblazoned on each skeleton's uniform may attempt Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) checks to recall more.

Result Information

15	The flaming axe head is the symbol of the Firebrand Legion, a group of local heroes in Davarn. Based out of a subterranean fortress several hours east of the town, they patrolled the underground roads and fought against threats from the Darklands.
18	The Firebrand Legion was disbanded when many of their number—including their leader, Lady Delbera Axebringer—perished while repelling a larger duergar force 40 years ago.
23	Members of the Firebrand Legion swore their fealty to their commander upon her weapon, a legendary axe called <i>Firebrand</i> , said to be blessed by the dwarven god Torag.

Adventurers who wish to recall what they can about Lady Delbera or Firebrand's Redoubt may attempt Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) checks to recall more, or learn what Davarn residents know with a successful Diplomacy check to gather information.

Result Information

10	Firebrand's Redoubt is an old fortress that marks the farthest eastern influence of Davarn and its guards. Local hero Lady Delbera Axebringer constructed it. This result also yields the fortress's precise location.
15	Lady Axebringer had her keep constructed after a relatively long adventuring career, both as a place to keep her trophies and as a forward position from which she and her assembled mercenaries could defend her hometown.
17	A large group of duergar assaulted Firebrand's Redoubt about 40 years ago. The dwarves ultimately repelled their Darklands cousins, but many members of the Firebrand Legion died in that defense, including Lady Axebringer. Unable to finance the fortress, Davarn consecrated most of it as a mausoleum for the fallen, only maintaining the foyer as a remote guard station.
22	Firebrand's Redoubt had a concealed sally port a quarter mile west; sometimes local kids used it as a clubhouse. This result reveals the location of the port (see page 12).

Near the open tunnel gates are four dead guards (a successful DC 15 Heal check reveals small puncture wounds in their backs and signs of poison around the wounds). Sarxa dispatched the guards and unlocked the city gates to let the undead soldiers in her command

OBHIAN SPIKES

Audalot Karexin first rose to prominence in the Court of Ether when he crafted a unique ritual he titled the Words of Obhiation, which allowed him to channel the orphne's natural ability to deeply offend the spirit tethered to mortal remains. The process, still poorly understood by the Court's other necromancers, allowed Karexin to raise skeletal champions to serve him, rather than mere skeletons, and began his ascension to power that eventually ended in defeat.

Only Zohir Totek, as his apprentice, knows the ritual today. Wary of Court of Ether spies, she refuses to record it in any form. All that is known is that the ritual requires an obhian spike as a focus. This fiendish-looking pin of onyx and tarnished silver must be driven into the corpse's chest, and remains there as long as the corpse is animated. While nonmagical on its own, each spike is still worth 400 gp, and may be used as a material component for casting the *animate dead* or *create undead* spell, replacing an equivalent value of onyx.

through, though without the benefit of survivors, the PCs are unlikely to learn that. Erna assigns investigators to the situation, but does not have much hope of discovering who murdered her guards.

If the PCs made a positive impression on Erna Stoneheart, she can give them a good idea of Firebrand's Redoubt's location and layout. She visited her great-aunt there often in childhood, but has rarely returned since its conversion into a crypt. Erna is unaware of who may be currently inside the redoubt and raising the dead guards buried there. She can only confirm that many more members of the Firebrand Legion are entombed at the redoubt than appeared in Davarn. She does not immediately remember the redoubt's sally port (see page 12), but she eventually recalls playing in it as a child if the PCs can keep her reminiscing about the fortress and her childhood for 10 minutes—a task requiring a successful DC 16 Bluff or Diplomacy check.

Story Award: If the PCs learn anything regarding the Firebrand's Redoubt or Delbera Axebringer from their investigations around town, award them 200 XP each.

D. TAGGUN'S CRAWL

Taggun's Crawl is a well-maintained tunnel winding its way east to from the town of Davarn to Taggoret. It was once quite secure thanks to the efforts of the Firebrand Legion, but in the decades since their collapse, Davarn has focused primarily on defending the 6-mile stretch between the town and Firebrand's Redoubt. Dwarven bandits or creatures from the Darklands below sometimes besiege points east of the redoubt, and most

INTRODUCTION

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FIREBRAND'S REDOUBT

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BUILT

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dwarven caravans traveling Taggun's Crawl bring guards to defend themselves.

Despite its excellent condition, the Taggun's Crawl doubles back on itself repeatedly and sees several steep elevation changes—travel along its length proceeds at half a creature's normal overland speed. Many side tunnels branch off from its length. Some of them are natural caverns, others active or abandoned mines, and still more are abandoned homesteads or even small communities hailing back to the dwarven golden age following the completion of the Quest for Sky. PCs wishing to rest or camp can find a safe side tunnel in which to conceal themselves with a successful DC 15 Survival check; failure indicates the terrain is uncomfortable, cold, or especially damp, and any characters without the Endurance feat awaken fatigued. Failure by 5 or more indicates that the PCs have stumbled into a creature's lair; roll for a random encounter on the Blighted Path Encounters table on page 29, but subtract 10% from the result.

E. FIREBRAND'S REDOUBT

Located 15 minutes down one of the ancient lava tubes branching off from Taggun's Crawl, Firebrand's Redoubt rests among a scattering of truly ancient dwarven ruins dating back to the Quest for Sky. The building is carved directly into the basalt of the mountains in the shape of Lady Delbera's favorite weapon: her double-headed flaming axe. The redoubt is close enough to Davarn that the tunnel was easily maintained, but the expense of caring for an entire keep was beyond the capabilities of a small town. After the duergar attack 40 years ago that decimated the Firebrand Legion, Davarn sealed most of the fortress up as a mausoleum for fallen soldiers, and the town has since maintained only the foyer as a guard outpost. The crypt is occasionally reopened to inter former members of the Firebrand Legion as they pass on, but none have died in over a year.

Currently, the redoubt (the map of which is located on the inside front cover) is inhabited primarily by the Ashen Company, a force of duergar mercenaries Zohir recruited to help her invade the fortress and claim *Firebrand*. Zohir's spy, Sarxa, keeps a handful of undead bone legion soldiers around, as well.

As the PCs approach, read or paraphrase the following.

A dwarven-built wall surrounds a courtyard cut into the cavern. Grand doors depicting dour, dwarven faces and angular glyphs stand beyond that open space. The metal doors to the redoubt are ajar, twisted and bent by brute force, and a line of light spills out from the opening. Statuary of

dwarves decorates the courtyard, some of them showing signs of recent vandalism. The walkway from the main gate to the front door is littered with debris from the broken statues and overturned benches.

The courtyard is empty and safe, and adventurers pausing to investigate can find a few recently discarded, sturdy clay bottles with dregs of a sour-smelling ale inside.

THE HAUNTED REDOUBT

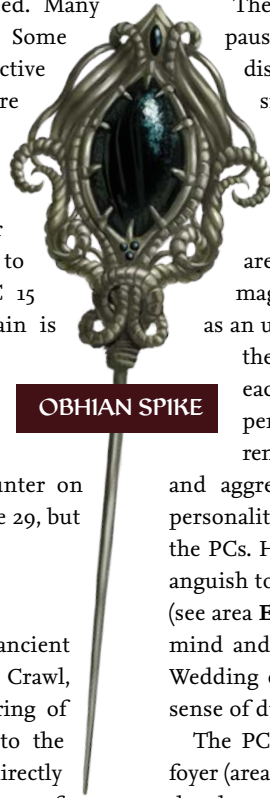
Once a sacred resting place, Firebrand's Redoubt is now afflicted by haunts; they are the gruesome side effect of Zohir's botched magical ritual to raise Lady Delbera Axebringer as an undead slave. The failed attempt has shattered the dwarven adventurer's spirit into seven pieces, each containing a specific fragment of her personality and memories. Lady Axebringer's ghost remains (see area E21), though she is fractured and aggressive, lacking the memories and defining personality traits that would allow her to engage with the PCs. Her broken mind combines with her fear and anguish to seal shut the entrance to her burial chamber (see area E20). Each haunt defeated restores some of her mind and loosens her hold on the door. Reciting the Wedding of Flames oath (see the sidebar) restores her sense of duty, and the door immediately unseals.

The PCs encounter Lady Axebringer's haunts in the foyer (area E1), the kitchen (area E6), the library (area E8), the theater (area E10), the trophy room (area E15), the chapel (area E16), and the grand hall (area E20).

All of the redoubt's haunts are persistent and chained (see the sidebar on page 27), and will last until defeated or until Delbera's spirit is laid to rest. Because of their ties to Lady Axebringer's ghost, the haunts can be fooled by *hide from undead* and similar effects, and are considered mindless. Destruction guidelines are given for each haunt, but any creative solution (left to the GM's discretion) that taps into a sense of teamwork and companionship would be sufficient to overcome the haunts' protective nature.

THE REDOUBT'S SECRET ENTRANCE

The redoubt's sally port opens into a small side cavern a half-mile up Taggun's Crawl west of the fortress. If the PCs did not hear rumors of the port's existence, it is all but impossible to notice between its cunning camouflage and obscure placement, requiring a successful DC 35 Perception check to locate. If the PCs heard rumors about the tunnel entrance from townsfolk, or heard Erna Stoneheart's recollections, they receive a +10 circumstance bonus to locate the concealed entrance; these bonuses are cumulative. The tunnel leads to area E14.



OBHIAN SPIKE



Treasure: The bodies of two of the Davarn's outpost guards lie in the secret tunnel, beginning to decay. They slipped into the secret tunnel, already bleeding, and died before making it back to town. Between them, two masterwork dwarven waraxes and an everburning torch remain.

E1. FOYER (CR 6)

Four stone columns stand evenly spaced in a square in the center of this foyer. Closed double stone doors matching the outer doors stand opposite the entryway. Narrow slits line the walls that run the length of the room. The stone tile floor and walls are scarred with the signs of a battle long past. Three gray-skinned dwarves lie in dried pools of blood in the middle of the room.

With its sturdy doors and murder holes, the foyer served as the first line of defense against intruders. In times of peace, the arrow slits in the walls were covered by decorative tapestry hangings, otherwise the stone walls were left bare in order to allow the fastest response time from the archers who manned the arrow slits. When Firebrand's Redoubt was transformed into a tomb, this chamber was reserved as a guard outpost, with guards from Davarn camping in this chamber for a week at a time while they patrolled the surrounding tunnels. The archers' positions to either side were transformed into storage rooms, but now their wooden shelves stand empty, as the duergar have looted any foodstuffs and weapons.

The large interior doors are locked (hardness 8, 60 hp), but the lock is a replacement (Disable Device DC 25) the duergar installed after breaking the original.

Haunt: The haunt in this foyer represents Delbera's need to defend her friends and community, and replays the final moments of her life as she and the Firebrand Legion fought to repel the original duergar invaders 40 years prior.

LAST STAND CR 6

XP 2,400

N persistent and chained haunt (foyer; see page 27)

Caster Level 6th

Notice Perception DC 20 (the smell of leather and blood) **hp** 27; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect Whenever a living creature enters this chamber, a ghostly image of four armored dwarven soldiers bearing crossbows appears. An armored, elderly dwarven woman materializes behind them, bearing a resplendent axe, and levels a dour finger at the intruders. She orders, "Drive these ashen-faced bastards back! Drive them out!" The four translucent warriors function as *spiritual weapons*, firing once each round (crossbow +6, 1d8+2 damage) for 6 rounds or until destroyed. They attack the closest targets

THE WEDDING OF FLAMES

Each member of the Firebrand Legion swore an oath of fealty to Lady Axebringer upon her enchanted weapon, *Firebrand*. This powerful bond granted her soldiers unwavering courage, and is part of why Zohir's plot to corrupt *Firebrand's* magic could actually succeed. The PCs may recite this same oath to unseal Lady Axebringer's burial chamber and swear themselves to her service. If they do, they gain a permanent +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear, though they leave themselves vulnerable to Zohir's corruption should the orphne succeed.

The PCs can discover the various lines of the oath by defeating the redoubt's haunts, or by researching Lady Axebringer's journal in her bedroom (area E19). Assembled, the full oath reads as follows.

*By sweat and blood, we have come here,
We who are sired by the will to defend,
We who are born with blade in hand,
We who court the ways of honor,
And wed ourselves to duty,
Pledge ourselves to the Firebrand and her mistress,
And in the blaze of both, find eternal strength.*

preferentially, and their attacks do not draw attacks of opportunity despite being ranged weapons.

Destruction The redoubt's initial defenders were slain under the duergar press, and the haunt is vulnerable to even nonmagical weapons. Physically slaying these spiritual manifestations just as they were slain 40 years ago defeats the haunt. Alternatively, hauling all three of the duergar corpses out of the foyer sates the haunt. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, "And in the blaze of both, find eternal strength."

Treasure: The bodies belong to three of Zohir's duergar sharpshooter mercenaries, who were slain by one of the newly awakened haunts. They still carry their gear (see the Ashen Company mercenaries on page 14), and one carries a badger statue carved from topaz (worth 300 gp) that she looted from the library. Additionally, one carries a key to the duergar-made lock to area E2.

E2. HALL OF ANCESTORS (CR 6)

Statues depicting stern dwarven figures line this hall, separating 60 body-sized niches carved into the walls. A meticulous mosaic of a flame-enshrouded axe covers the floor at the room's center. Heavy stone doors lead south, and two smaller doors nearly blend into the walls on each

side of the main entrance. A short hallway leads deeper into the redoubt.

The redoubt's forward hall also served as its primary crypt, holding over 50 bodies of fallen legionnaires, interred in their old uniforms. Zohir used her magic to raise these long-dead servants, and marched most of them back to Nar-Voth with her when she left days ago. Five much fresher bodies—guards from Davarn slain in Zohir's raid—are the only immobile corpses remaining in the hall.

Creatures: Three members of Delbera's legion remain here, animated as undead guards identical to the ones the PCs faced in Davarn.

BONE LEGION SOLDIERS (3) CR 3

XP 800 each
hp 35 each (see page 10)

Development: If the PCs didn't rescue Lukher Stinnison during the feast, his body is also here, crammed into one of the burial niches.

Treasure: Pushed back into the corner of one niche (Perception DC 18 to notice) lies a forgotten *handy haversack* bearing the Firebrand Legion's distinctive insignia. It contains five wool blankets, two tents, two-dozen iron spikes, 100 feet of silk rope, a hammer, a crowbar, and 6 weeks' worth of moldering rations.

E3. CENTRAL HALLWAY AND STAIRWAY

Beyond the main hall, a divided hallway branches off diagonally to the northeast and northwest. Two sets of metal double doors are located in the center of each of the southeastern and southwestern walls. An open stairway in the eastern hallway leads to the upper level.

Both sets of massive, bronze doors leading into the main hall (area E2o) have been sealed with a sturdy duergar lock (Disable Device DC 30), thanks to the danger of the haunt and of Delbera's ghost beyond. Hastily painted letters spell out "Danger, do not enter" in Undercommon. Only Sarxa (see area E19) carries the key.

Creatures: If the PCs travel up the northeastern fork, the duergar mercenaries keeping watch from area E17 may notice them.

E4. DINING HALL (CR 4)

A large, stone dining table bedecked with a feast of wax fruit and fake roast meats lies in the center of this room.

Creatures: A pair of duergar mercenaries are stealing a few quiet moments to themselves in the dining room, but they attack immediately and viciously if disturbed. They use the dining room table for cover to open fire with their crossbows.

ASHEN COMPANY MERCENARIES (2) CR 2

XP 600 each
Duergar warrior 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 117)
LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)
Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 armor, -1 Dex)
hp 30 each (4d10+8)
Fort +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2; +2 vs. spells and spell-like abilities
Immune paralysis, phantasms, poison
Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee mwk warhammer +8 (1d8+3/x3)
Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +4 (1d10/19-20)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +2)
1/day—*enlarge person* (self only), *invisibility* (self only)

TACTICS

Before Combat If they hear danger approaching, the duergar mercenaries each use *enlarge person*.
During Combat The duergar mercenaries are unsophisticated combatants, firing with their crossbows until opponents close with them, then switching to their hammers.
Morale If reduced to fewer than 8 hit points, the mercenaries activate their *invisibility* spell-like ability and flee back to their camp (see encounter F).

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 15 (19 vs. bull rush and trip)
Feats Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (warhammer)
Skills Acrobatics -5 (-9 when jumping), Handle Animal +3, Perception +5, Stealth -1, Survival +3; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth
Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon
Other Gear mwk chainmail, mwk heavy crossbow, mwk warhammer, 18 gp

ASHEN COMPANY MERCENARY (ENLARGED) CR 2

XP 600
Duergar warrior 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 117)
LE Large humanoid (dwarf)
Init -2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 7, flat-footed 13 (+6 armor, -2 Dex, -1 size)
hp 30 (4d10+8)
Fort +6, **Ref** -1, **Will** +2; +2 vs. spells and spell-like abilities
Immune paralysis, phantasms, poison
Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee mwk warhammer +8 (2d6+4/x3)
Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +2 (1d10/19-20)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +2)



1/day—*invisibility* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 6, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 16 (20 vs. bull rush and trip)

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Acrobatics –6 (–10 when jumping), Handle Animal +3, Perception +5, Stealth –6, Survival +3; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Other Gear mwk chainmail, mwk heavy crossbow, mwk warhammer, 18 gp

Treasure: A pair of silver candelabra (worth 75 gp each) are placed one on each end of the table. One of the duergar is carrying an elven-made mithral buckler looted from the trophy room.

E5. KITCHEN STAIRS

A stone stairwell on the southern wall of this room leads down to a lower level. A dumbwaiter is located next to an open cabinet filled with serving utensils and trays.

The dumbwaiter is large enough for a Small creature to fit into comfortably.

Treasure: The silver serving utensils and trays in the cabinet are all worked with the Firebrand Legion's axe sigil. The entire collection is worth 1,500 gp, but no merchant in Davarn will buy it.

E6. KITCHEN (CR 4)

Cabinets and counters line two of the walls of this spacious kitchen. A large oven occupies the western wall. Dried herbs, meats, and pots hang from hooks set in the ceiling, and a tapped keg of ale still sits in one corner.

While only a dozen or so members of the Firebrand Legion could be found in the redoubt at any given time, the kitchen here is large enough to service a hundred soldiers or dining guests with relatively short notice. In her later years, Delbera enjoyed spending a good chunk of her time in the kitchen preparing the various human, halfling, and gnome recipes she learned while adventuring far from home. Despite having servants in her retirement, she was often known to prepare meals for her guests or enjoy a mug of ale with her guards in the kitchen.

The kitchen is dark and cool when the PCs enter. The haunt triggers only when a creature approaches or passes the preparation table in the center of the room.

Haunt: The haunt here manifests Delbera's maternal aspects, both her need to protect and provide for others and her tendency to micromanage and demand more from people than they might be able to deliver.

OVERBEARING AUNT

CR 4

XP 1,200

N persistent and chained haunt (kitchen; see page 27)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 18 (to notice the sounds of humming and rhythmic chopping)

hp 22; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect If a living creature approaches or passes by the preparation table, a ghostly image of a matronly dwarven woman manifests. She looks up from her task of serenely chopping mushrooms and happily announces, "I am so glad you're finally here. We have so much to do!" Each living creature in the kitchen must succeed at a DC 16 Will saving throw or be immediately compelled to pick up knives or pans and begin dinner preparations with any ingredients at hand, whether they be real or imaginary. Treat this as a *confusion* effect that lasts for 4 rounds, with any results that cause a target to injure itself or attack the nearest creature representing various painful kitchen accidents.

Destruction This haunt may be extinguished by positive energy damage, or by cold damage, which snuffs out the kitchen's fires. Delbera had fond memories of sharing meals with her family, friends, and soldiers, and if the PCs offer to share a meal or mug of ale (such as from the barrel in the corner) with one another, this haunt is immediately put to rest. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, "Pledge ourselves to the Firebrand and her mistress."

Treasure: A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals a hidden pantry located behind a sliding shelf. The pantry holds the fortress's supply of wine and dry stores, and hundreds of small recessed compartments lining the walls here contain bottles of wine, mead, and other spirits of all types. A successful DC 20 Appraise check reveals a bottle of Jeggare Vineyard's red wine worth 100 gp and three bottles of aged dwarven mead worth 150 gp each.

E7. SERVANTS' QUARTERS (CR 3)

Five nearly identical rooms once housed the redoubt's small staff.

Creature: Delbera's housekeeper, Fander Whitehair, sealed himself in his room during the redoubt's fall 4 decades ago amid a nervous fit, which eventually led to a heart attack. Zohir's necromantic rituals have accidentally animated his nervous spirit as an allip, which rushes any trespassers in the servants' quarters, begging for safety.

ALLIP

CR 3

XP 800

hp 30 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 12)

E8. LIBRARY (CR 5)

The smells of old parchment and lamp oil fill this room. Stone bookcases reach from floor to ceiling along the curved walls. Chairs surround tables loaded with lamps, open books, maps, and scrolls. Cabinets of small statuary and other assorted items line the open remaining wall space.

Retiring from adventuring left Delbera with ample free time to write her memoirs and read accounts from Golarion's other heroes and villains. A bound copy of her adventure stories—which Sarxa has periodically leafed through for clues—lies open on the table. Delbera's memoir delves into her time with the Rising Blades adventuring company. The leather binding is rubbed and worn on the spine, and the pages are soft from use. In the stories, time and again she found the good in others and encouraged them to grow beyond their current limitations. Most of her personal narration focuses on her fellow adventurers and their contributions, rather than on her own deeds, painting them in the best light and glossing over some of their failings.

Delbera passed many nights in this room, recounting tales to her beloved nieces and nephews, or boasting to young adventurers looking to their mentor for inspiration or sponsorship.

Haunt: The library haunt embodies Delbera's youthful rebellion and wanderlust, and reflects the fear of commitment that motivated her for years.

YOUTHFUL COMMITMENTS CR 5

XP 1,600

N persistent and chained haunt (library; see page 27)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 18 (to feel a claustrophobic sense of commitment and obligation)

hp 22; Trigger proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect Mumbblings emerge from the floor and walls, stern voices reminding intruders of their commitments to family and community and demanding they stay "just another season." Long, sinewy arms emerge, grasping for living creatures and holding them tight—the arms have a total CMB of +10 and deal 1d6+4 points of damage for each successful grapple maneuver they perform after they've pinned a character, as they drain away ambition and vitality. This effect persists for 1 minute once the haunt is activated.

Destruction This haunt may be dispatched with positive energy or fire damage fire damage, as it arises from Delbera's scribbled notes as much as her memories. The haunt may also be sated by a stirring speech about commitments to a wider world or the gods, requiring a successful DC 21 Bluff or Diplomacy skill check. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, "We who are sired by the will to defend."

Development: The library is filled with biographies and dwarven history books. A collection of scroll cases in one of the cabinets contains maps that the Rising Blades made during their travels in the Darklands, including one of Karexin's Tower. If the PCs reference or copy these maps, they gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to navigate the Blighted Path (see Chapter 2).

Treasure: A successful DC 20 Perception check to search the library uncovers three magic three scrolls: *cure critical wounds*, *lesser restoration*, and *remove curse*, as well as a small velvet bag containing 800 gp worth of loose gems. The search also reveals an ornate hand-illuminated book of metallurgy and prayers to Torag worth 500 gp to a collector, though the temple of Torag in Davarn will instead offer 1,000 gp in spellcasting services, scrolls, and potions in exchange for the book.

E9. INFIRMARY

This small clinic was used to patch up soldiers injured in training exercises as well as to give drunken guests a space where they could recuperate away from the grand hall.

Treasure: A *wand of cure moderate wounds* (17 charges) still sits on a table where Delbera last used it 40 years ago.

E10. THEATER (CR 5)

Faded blue curtains line the stage on the southeastern side of this theater. The benches, stage, and framing have all been carved from the living stone. A yellowed playbill still hangs from the doors, promising "A night of excitement, friendship, and sacrifice in *Dawn Shines on the Legion*."

The Firebrand Legion used this space for training demonstrations, and Lady Axebringer often opened it up for stage plays for anyone in Davarn willing to make the long trek. A particular favorite among both the soldiers and the townsfolk was *Dawn Shines on the Legion*, an over-romanticized account of the Firebrand Legion's original founding, as a motley collection of dwarven soldiers rallied under the returning Delbera's banner to repel vicious human bandits (usually also played by dwarves).

The secret door at the end of the theater's entry hall requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to notice.

Haunt: Delbera's dramatic nature, ego, and need for command have appropriately manifested in her private theater, generating images of perhaps her proudest moment as a military commander—rallying Davarn's defenders against an outside threat.

DAWN OF THE LEGION CR 5

XP 1,600

N persistent and chained haunt (theater stage; see page 27)

Caster Level 5th



Notice Perception DC 18 (to notice ghostly figures moving on the darkened stage)

hp 22; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt triggers, the figures of the Firebrand Legion appear amid a din of combat, locked in battle. The ghostly image of a middle-aged Delbera appears, her flaming axe in hand, ordering, "Rally to me and shields out! Don't give them an inch!" As she yells, any living creatures on the stage or within 20 feet of it are filled with fighting spirit, and must succeed a DC 17 Will saving throw or begin attacking the nearest living creature, as if affected by a *song of discord*. Affected creatures have a 50% chance of attacking the nearest creature again each round for 5 rounds unless they are physically restrained.

Destruction This haunt may be damaged by positive energy as well as sonic energy, which disrupts the din of battle. Living creatures may also defeat the haunt by playing the part of loyal dwarven soldiers rather than human bandits, which requires a successful DC 12 Bluff or Perform (act) check from everyone in the theater; dwarves receive a +5 circumstance bonus on this check. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, "And wed ourselves to duty."

E11. PROP ROOM

A prop room sits off the stage along the theater's back wall. Dried makeup and dry, rotting costumes give the room a musty smell. Fake treasure troves and plaster monster masks are carefully stored in the cabinets.

Development: Lady Delbera penned several of the scripts found here herself to immortalize her many and varied adventures, including *The Fall of Karexin*, *The Wedding of Riellal*, and *Dawn Shines on the Legion*. These three scripts describe the period in Delbera's life when she transitioned from roving adventurer to stalwart defender of Davarn. While none of the scripts are especially groundbreaking or valuable, *The Fall of Karexin* tells the tale of how her adventuring band, the Rising Blades, entered Nar-Voth to stem the tide of undead plaguing a small town in Andoran. The Rising Blades discovered the origin of the raiders—a fey necromancer named Karexin—and, in the process, saved the svirfneblin village of Oremont. The Rising Blades, assisted by the svirfneblin, eventually triumphed over Karexin and his undead hordes, finally casting his body into the abyss.

While somewhat exaggerated accounts, the scripts grant any who read them a +2 insight bonus on any Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) checks to recognize or learn clues about the redoubt's haunts.

Treasure: In the drawers of a dressing table is a *hat of disguise*. A successful DC 18 Appraise check identifies that the four hollow, life-sized kobold statues here are actually made from copper (150 gp each).

E12. THEATER PASSAGE

This hidden passageway connects the theater hallway to the main hall. From outside the hall, each secret door requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to notice. The duergar and Sarxa have not yet discovered this passage, making it an excellent fallback location for adventurers to rest and heal.

E13. SITTING ROOM

This pentagonal room is decorated with comfortable chairs and sofas around a fireplace. A small bust of Delbera Axebringer sits in the northernmost corner.

Treasure: The bust of Delbera is finely crafted marble worth 300 gp, though no merchant in Davarn will buy it.

E14. TAPROOM (CR 7)

The smell of stale beer and whiskey hang in the air of this room. A large wooden bar, complete with taps and a mirrored backsplash, runs along the far curved wall of this room. Tables, chairs, and barstools are scattered with use, while dirty glasses and empty bottles litter the sticky floors and flat surfaces.

Delbera's own private bar has become a camp for Zohir's duergar mercenaries, who have wasted little time draining the long-soured beer from the dusty taps. The bar provides partial cover to anyone standing behind it.

A secret door to an escape tunnel is hidden behind a table in the southwest wall. The release for the tunnel entrance can be found with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The tunnel leads to a sally port half a mile up Taggun's Crawl (see page 12).

Creatures: Commander Haab Nuervagan lost his right hand to a delver attack while serving the militia in his home of Hagegraf, and responded to his subsequent discharge orders by beating his superior to death with the stump. His prowess and resistance to pain inspired several fellow soldiers to join him in forming a small band of mercenaries, the Ashen Company, which has since sold its services to many Darklands powers and would-be tyrants. Zohir approached Haab 5 years ago to recruit scouts to probe the tunnels above, and when she finally dedicated herself to a timetable, she selected the Ashen Company to provide the muscle, promising him the redoubt itself as part of his payment.

Haab views the redoubt's haunts like he would any other challenge: a miserable inconvenience to be overcome. He lacks any expertise and has already lost several soldiers to the strange effect, and so he has dedicated himself to digging in and waiting for Sarxa and Zohir to solve the problem while he and his mercenaries continue to provide the security for which they were contracted.

Haab spends most of his time smoking and reviewing maps of the area alongside two mercenary guards and two raw foot soldiers, who are too shaken to be trusted outside his sight. The foot soldiers must succeed at a DC 12 Will saving throw or be staggered during the first round of combat.

HAAB NUERVAGAN CR 5

XP 1,600

Male duergar fighter 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 117)

LE Large humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield, -1 size)

hp 61 (6d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7 (+2 vs. fear); +2 bonus vs. spells and spell-like abilities

Immune paralysis, phantasms, poison

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 warhammer +11/+6 (2d6+5/×3) or

+1 warhammer +7/+2 (2d6+5/×3), heavy shield bash +5 (1d6+1)

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

Special Attacks weapon training (hammers +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +4)

1/day—*enlarge person* (self only), *invisibility* (self only)

TACTICS

Before Combat Haab prefers to huddle up if he expects problems, loading his crossbow and casting *enlarge person* on himself. The effects of this spell-like ability are already factored into his statistics.

During Combat Haab uses his Improved Shield Bash to shove opponents into his soldiers, but if opponents prove especially difficult to hit, he instead focuses on using his warhammer alone.

Morale More proud than practical, Haab fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without *enlarge person* cast, Haab's statistics are **Size** Medium; **AC** 21; **Ref** +5; **Melee** +1 warhammer +11/+6 (1d8+4) or +1 warhammer +7/+2 (1d8+4) and mwk heavy shield +5 (1d4+1); **Space** 5 ft., **Reach** 5 ft.; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20 (24 vs. bull rush and trip)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. bull rush and trip)

Feats Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Shield Focus, Shield Slam, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (heavy shield), Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Acrobatics -1 (-5 when jumping), Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +4, Stealth +3, Survival +7; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

SQ armor training 1

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

Other Gear mwk breastplate, mwk heavy steel shield, +1 warhammer, *cloak of resistance* +1, key ring (with keys to the doors leading to area E20, the chest below the bar, and the slaves' shackles in encounter F), two heavy brass rings (40 gp each), 138 gp

ASHEN COMPANY MERCENARIES (2) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 30 (see page 14)

ASHEN COMPANY FOOT SOLDIERS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Duergar sergeant (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 50)

hp 23 each

Development: A letter from Zohir detailing her offer to the mercenaries (see Handout #1 on page 19) can be found in Haab's pocket. PCs may recognize some of the names mentioned. A successful DC 21 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies Phaedextrin's Maw as a massive crevasse in the Darklands region of Nar-Voth that stretches for nearly 8 miles,



HAAB NUERVAGAN



and is one of the dominant features in the area by which subterranean explorers can navigate. A successful DC 18 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check also identifies the name Zohir Totek as the apprentice to the fey necromancer Karexin, whom Delbera Axebringer and her adventuring companions made their name defeating. Adventurers who read Delbera's scripts in area **E11**, or her journal in area **E19** identify this name automatically, though neither source makes more than a passing reference to it.

Treasure: Commander Nuervagan stashed most of his company's payroll in a sturdy, locked chest (Disable Device DC 30) below the bar. It contains 120 pp, 453 gp, four *potions of cure light wounds*, two *potions of hide from undead*, and five cut amethysts (worth 100 gp each). Scattered among the packs are several items looted from the trophy room (area **E15**), including an ornate longsword carved from onyx worth 225 gp, a suit of masterwork full plate, and an adamantine spiked chain. The longsword is an art piece that can be wielded as a club.

E15. TROPHY ROOM (CR 4)

A heavy partition divides this room into two sections. Shattered glass and looted armor and weapon racks litter the north end of the room, where a massive display case stands open and empty. A half-dozen animal trophies fill the southern half of the room, including the mounted head of a bulette looms from the eastern wall, a stuffed cloaker hangs from the ceiling in mid-swoop, and a taxidermic dire boar prepares to charge from his central plinth.

Like many adventurers, Delbera had a weakness for trophies and often claimed the weapons and bones of those she defeated. The duergar have looted many of the valuable weapons and armor, smashing much of

the room in the process. The empty display case in the northern half of the room once contained *Firebrand*, Delbera's legendary axe; the impression of a large, double-bladed waraxe is still visible in the velvet lining. A successful DC 18 Perception check also reveals a similarly intact but empty case against the eastern wall, simply labeled "Rod of Karexin the Mad," though the word "Mad" has been crossed out, and a delicate, precise hand has written "Visionary."

Haunt: The trophy room's haunt channels Delbera's fear of mortality—her own and especially that of those around her, and manifests by replaying the first time she felt the cold hand of death reach for her, when she was mauled and nearly killed by a bulette.

FIRST BLOOD

CR 4

XP 1,200

N persistent and chained haunt (southern half of the trophy room; see page 27)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 18 (to feel the ground begin to rumble)
hp 18; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect This haunt triggers whenever a living creature enters the southern half of the trophy room, causing the ground to rumble and floor tiles to crack. The ghostly image of a young dwarven woman in a breastplate appears in the room, shuffling nervously and looking from side to side while holding an axe in her hand. At initiative rank 0, a ghostly bulette leaps from the ground and pulls her below. Any creatures within 30 of this scene must succeed a DC 16 Will save or become panicked and flee in fear for 4 rounds; creatures that succeed at their saving throws are only shaken for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting, fear-based effect.

Destruction This haunt may be damaged by positive energy as well as negative energy, due to its strong associations with death. It may also be dismissed if a living creature

Commander Nuervagan,

As their Spring Festival approaches, the dwarves grow lazy in their defenses. Meet me and my forlarren associate along the Blighted Path near Phaedextrin's Maw. Bring enough forces to take control of the redoubt. I will have half your payment, as previously discussed. Your men will need to assist in opening the gates and holding the building until the items I need are secured. Once everything I require is in my possession, Firebrand's Redoubt is yours to do with as you please. A man could go far holding a fortified position so deep in the Five Kings Mountains.

Zohir Totek

readies an action to attack before the bulette emerges. The phantom bulette has an AC of 22; successfully attacking it immediately neutralizes the haunt, “saving” the ghostly Delbera from her fate. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, “We who are born with blade in hand.”

Treasure: While many of the valuables from the trophy rooms have been looted, a few noteworthy items have been left behind, including a *+1 spear*, a *+1 light steel shield* depicting a Taldan wedding, a mithral shirt, a slightly vandalized suit of masterwork half-plate, a masterwork longspear, a masterwork composite longbow (Str +4), and a bejeweled longspear sized for a pixie (worth 350 gp).

E16. CHAPEL (CR 4)

An anvil-shaped altar stands prominently at the northeastern end of this chapel. A cold furnace is cut into wall behind the anvil, while tools of the forge lie carefully arranged about the worship space. A blacksmith’s apron lies across the anvil.

The redoubt’s chapel hosted the Firebrand Legion’s many private services and occasional weddings.

Haunt: Delbera first found her calling to serve Torag while working as an apprentice, when she fell into an inspired trance and forged the axe she would carry for over a century. While she improved on the masterwork waraxe many times over her lifetime, her sense of faith still remained tied to her sense of youthful wonder. When Zohir accidentally splintered Delbera’s spirit, both aspects took up residence here, and manifest by replaying her original divine experience.

FORGING OF FIREBRAND CR 4

XP 1,200

N persistent and chained haunt (chapel; see page 27)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Sense Motive DC 18 (to feel the swelling of evangelical devotion)

hp 18; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt triggers, the forge behind the altar flares to life, and the image of a dwarven girl—barely beyond puberty—appears beside the flames, hammering steadily as she melodically sings hymns to the Father of Creation. After 3 rounds, each blow of her hammer causes waves to ripple throughout the chapel, and all living creatures within must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude saving throw or become fatigued as they absorb the toil and effort Delbera divinely shed. This has no effect on creatures that are already fatigued.

Destruction This haunt may be damaged by positive energy as well as electricity damage thanks to its firm focus on metal. Living creatures may also defeat the

haunt by singing hymns to Torag along with Delbera’s spirit. This requires a successful DC 12 Knowledge (religion) check or DC 17 Perform (sing) check; any creature who succeeds in singing along with Delbera’s hymns automatically succeeds at its saving throw to resist the haunt’s fatigue effect. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, “By sweat and blood, we have come here.”

E17. STAIRWAY LANDING (CR 5)

Stout dwarven pillars support this open stairway. A balcony overlooks the floor below. Three doors stand to the north, east, and south.

This landing offered a quiet space for reading or conversation. It overlooks area E3. The doors to the guest bedrooms (areas E18) are both locked from the outside with good-quality duergar locks (Disable Device DC 30).

Creatures: Sarxa’s personal guards—two Ashen Company mercenaries and a grenadier—stand watch over the forlarren and their captives.

ASHEN COMPANY MERCENARIES (2) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 30 each (see page 14)

ASHEN COMPANY GRENAДИER CR 1

XP 400

Duergar bombardier (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 48)

hp 18

Development: The dead body of a dwarf in a Davarn town guard uniform lies on the floor here. This is Kromir, one of the kidnapped descendants of Lady Delbera’s family, whom Sarxa killed to set an example to her other captives. As a result, they are all terrified of her and refuse to make any moves to secure their own freedom.

E18. GUEST BEDROOMS

A worn bed, wardrobe, dresser, and chairs furnish this room. A cold fireplace sits on the room’s eastern wall.

These massive bedchambers served alternatively as guest suites or barracks depending on the redoubt’s needs, the furniture being swapped out as needed.

Development: Each guest room holds a dozen captive dwarves—all descendants of Delbera Axebringer’s family whom Sarxa’s undead minions have kidnapped over the past several days.

Story Award: If the PCs release the prisoners here, award 400 XP to each of them.



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1:
FIREBRAND'S REDOUBT
- CHAPTER 2:
WINDING INTO DARKNESS
- CHAPTER 3:
THE TOWER SPITE
BUILT
- APPENDIX 1:
DAVARN
- APPENDIX 2:
MONSTERS
- APPENDIX 3:
MAGIC ITEMS

E19. MASTER BEDROOM (CR 7)

This richly decorated bedroom features a large four-poster bed atop a raised platform. A portrait of Lady Delbera hangs from the wall at the head of the bed, and tapestries line the walls. A wardrobe, dressing table, chest of drawers, and two comfortable chairs round out the room's furnishings. The faint smell of steel, cedar, and crushed berries still looms in the air.

Delbera's bedroom suite was left largely untouched after her death. Much of her old clothing—now slightly mildewed—still hangs in the wardrobe, and a stained mug still sits beside the bed.

Creatures: Zohir's forlarren assistant, Sarxa, has claimed this bedroom for her private quarters while she remains behind trying to retrieve Delbera's body for her mistress. Zohir saved the twisted fey woman from death at the hands of Oremont's svirfneblin decades ago, and Sarxa has reluctantly looked up to the necromancer ever since. She ultimately just wants Delbera's corpse so she can leave, and with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check, she even agrees to release her captives and allow them safe passage back to Davarn if the PCs just bring her the dwarven cleric's body. Loath as she is to admit it, she misses Zohir and her on-again, off-again relationship with Utrat, Zohir's apprentice.

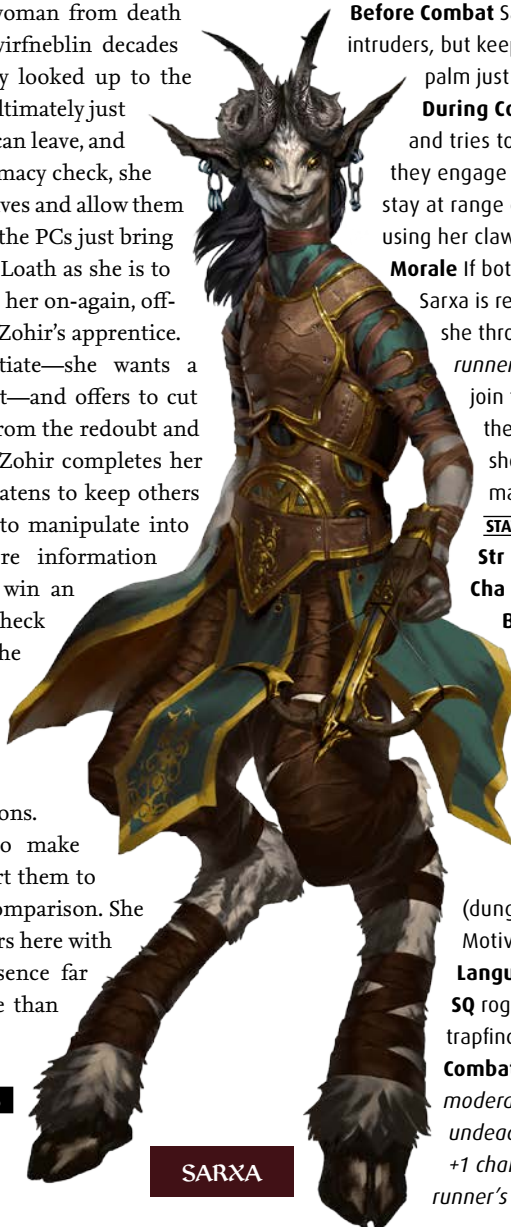
Sarxa is willing to negotiate—she wants a solution far more than a fight—and offers to cut the PCs in on any loot taken from the redoubt and eventually from Davarn once Zohir completes her master plan. She flirts or threatens to keep others off-balance, but is fairly easy to manipulate into bragging and revealing more information than she should. If the PCs win an opposed Bluff or Diplomacy check against Sarxa's Sense Motive, she lets slip that Zohir plans to corrupt *Firebrand*—Delbera's sacred weapon—to slay any members of her bloodline and raise them as undead minions.

Sarxa only really wants to make others uncomfortable and hurt them to make herself seem better by comparison. She retains two bone legion soldiers here with her, finding the undead presence far more familiar and personable than the duergar.

SARXA CR 6

XP 2,400

Forlarren rogue 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 125)



SARXA

NE Medium fey

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 59 (9 HD; 4d6+5d8+23)

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron

Weaknesses remorse

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d6+1)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +10 (1d8+1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +5)
3/day—*heat metal* (DC 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat Sarxa hopes to negotiate with any intruders, but keeps her *potion of blur* concealed in her palm just in case.

During Combat Sarxa drinks her *potion of blur* and tries to slip behind her opponents while they engage her undead guards. She prefers to stay at range during combat, but doesn't mind using her claws in close quarters.

Morale If both of her guardians are destroyed and Sarxa is reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, she throws a smoke pellet and uses her *quick runner's shirt* to retreat. She falls back to join the duergar caravan (encounter **F**). If the caravan has already been destroyed, she retreats to Karexin Tower, where she may be encountered in Chapter 3.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Point-Blank Shot, Step Up, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +8, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +15, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +9, Knowledge

(dungeoneering) +6, Perception +9, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ rogue talents (fast stealth, finesse rogue), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potion of blur*, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potions of hide from undead* (2), smoke pellet^{UE} (7); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 light crossbow, *quick runner's shirt*^{UE}, disguise kit, masterwork

4 Pharast 454φ

Some of my soldiers have come to me and requested to swear an oath on my blade. I've never asked for such a level of devotion from them, but they're insistent. I have always opened myself up to be guided by Torag, to allow him to wield me as his hammer at the Forge. Never did I expect that I would find myself in this position. I have asked them to let me consider it. I do not wish to turn them away—they follow me because I follow Torag, and because they care for their homes and families just as I do. I bade them to huddle together and pen an appropriate oath, but I requested they not swear to me. That feels wrong. They already claim all of their victories in the name of Firebrand. "For the Firebrand" is a cheer that goes up more often than not. It fills me with pride to know we are keeping Davarn safe and my soldiers are proud of the work they are doing.

24 Sarenith 4653

My niece, Radha, brought her son and daughter to the redoubt to visit for the Blessings of Torag. The girl begged to stay, so her mother agreed to let her come back for a few days next week. She is quite a child, strong of heart and fierce. Radha named her for my mother: Etha.

HANDOUT #2

thieves' tools, key ring (containing keys to areas **E18**, **E20**, **E21**, the southern doors in **E2**, as well as the doors to area **Q5** and the chest in area **Q10**), 90 gp

BONE LEGION SOLDIERS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 35 each (see page 10)

Development: Beside the bed lies a rough, hand-drawn map of the surrounding tunnels, labeled with the redoubt and Davarn, as well as the duergar caravan (encounter **F**). With this map, PCs can automatically locate the caravan without a Survival check.

A battered old journal is located in a false-bottomed drawer in the bedside table (DC 15 Perception to locate). This is Delbera's adventuring journal and contains her firsthand accounts of her adventures. The stories contained within may also be found in her memoirs in the library (area **E8**) and the scripts in the prop room (area **E10**).

Several of Lady Delbera's personal journals are scattered around the room where Sarxa had been researching them. Reading them reveals a very unsure and insecure young acolyte studying at the feet of Father Grandich. She left home to meet the calling of her god even as commitments to her family, friends, and community demanded she stay. She feared that her choice to leave made her an exile, and that those she loved would never accept her back, and so she threw herself into loving and caring for the Rising Blades. Delbera reached out to protect and encourage her companions and those they encountered in their

travels, and they in time grew fiercely protective of her as well.

Her accounts take care to describe their adventures below the mountains of northern Andoran and the Five Kings Mountains, when the Rising Blades fought a surge of undead crawling forth from the caves. Her fear becomes palpable in the journal as she describes the caverns—not dissimilar to her childhood home—as oppressive and evil. Her accounts focus on supporting and healing her teammates, and later doing what she can for the tiny gnome settlement they discovered hidden near Karexin's Tower.

Journals dated much later, written in a steadier and aged hand, describe her return home and the fanfare that followed, as well as the fact that she oversaw the excavation of the redoubt as paranoia steadily gnawed at the back of her mind, warning of dangers from deeper tunnels that might threaten those she loved. In time, like-minded defenders flocked to her banner. The final two entries are presented in Handout #2.

In addition to these notes, a successful DC 15 Linguistics check allows a PC to piece together Delbera's notes to reveal the Wedding of Flames loyalty oath (see the sidebar on page 13) her legionnaires swore upon her magical axe, *Firebrand*, which may help the PCs open the sealed door in area **E20**.

E20. GRAND HALL (CR 5)

A brilliant crystal chandelier hangs in the center of this open room. Five portraits hang on the walls: a Chelish man in plate armor pictured with a sword and shield, a half-elven



woman leaning against a bow, a ruggedly handsome half-orc in long robes, a Varisian woman holding a crystal ball, and a muscular but maternal dwarven woman. Several statues have been smashed to rubble, cluttering the floor.

Part of the chamber's northern wall has been torn down, revealing a once-secret door of bronze and gently shimmering runes.

Once used for grand banquets and military drills, the redoubt's grand hall was the fortress's beating heart. The portraits on the walls depict Delbera's old friends: the Rising Blades (see the sidebar on page 24), many of whom grew old and died even before the redoubt's construction. A secret door in the west wall requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to notice.

Haunt: Delbera's pride and fear were closely intertwined, as she rose in power to keep harm from befalling those around her. Both impulses revolved around her final confrontation with Karexin, where she nearly lost her friend Drovok. The haunt here manifests that pride and fear by replaying that fateful encounter, animating the shattered memories of the past into a larger-than-life simulacrum of the necromancer.

MEMORIES OF KAREXIN **CR 5**

XP 1,600

N persistent and chained haunt (grand hall; see page 27)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Sense Motive DC 20 (the feel the swelling of evangelical devotion)

hp special; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt triggers, a ghostly image of Delbera appears, frozen in fear. Another ghostly form—this one a half-orc man—falls to the floor beside her, gasping in short, ragged breaths. The stentorian voice of Karexin booms through the grand hall. "Pitiful girl. Do you really think what you and your companions have done here today has achieved anything but merely slow my rise to power? I shall take great satisfaction in adding your corpses to my army." As the voice echoes, the shattered bits of statue assemble themselves into a 12-foot-tall form of Audalot Karexin (recognizable with a successful DC 16 Knowledge [history] check, or from sketches in the scripts in area **E10** or the journals in area **E19**). This haunt creates an animated statue (see Creatures below).

Destruction This haunt is dismissed by destroying the statue it creates, and the statue is as vulnerable to damage as any other construct. In addition, the statue is vulnerable to positive energy and necromancy spells as if it were undead. Finally, assisting the ghostly image of Delbera's fallen friend, Drovok, further damages the haunt; any healing spells cast on the half-orc's image deals the same amount of damage to the statue, and staggers the statue for 1 round. A successful Will saving

throw to resist the spell also negates the staggered condition. If the haunt is defeated, a thrumming chant of dwarven voices sounds through the hall, swearing, "We who court the ways of honor."

Creature: The haunt in this room manifests as a large amalgam of rubble and debris that takes the form of Audalot Karexin, similar to an animated object. It attacks until destroyed or until all living creatures flee the grand hall, at which point it crumbles back into broken bits of stone.

STONE MEMORY **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Unique animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

N Large construct

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

Perception -5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 15 (-1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 52 (4d10+30)

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** -4

Defensive Abilities hardness 8; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +9 (1d8+6)

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

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 20

SQ Construction Points (additional natural attack [slam], fast, stone)

Development: The runes on the northern door of this chamber are Dwarven, and in that language read, "Those who stand against injustice, those sired by the will to defend, announce yourselves and enter." The door is locked and magically sealed through a combination of Delbera's will and *Firebrand's* magic. These forces combined require a successful DC 55 Disable Device check to open the lock, and they magically increase the door's hardness to 24. Though the door is magically augmented, the key Sarxa carries cannot unlock it, but the lock may still be picked normally.

Familiar words and loyalties ease both *Firebrand's* magic and Delbera's restless spirit. Each line of the *Wedding of Flames* (see the sidebar on page 13) the PCs recite reduces the Disable Device DC by 5 and the door's hardness by 2 for 1 hour. If the PCs recite all seven lines (they don't necessarily need to be recited in the correct order), the ward is permanently dispelled, reverting the lock's Disable Device DC to 20 and the door's hardness to 10, and allowing the key Sarxa carries to open it normally.

Treasure: The five portraits are worth 200 gp each, but no merchant in Davarn will buy them.

THE RISING BLADES REMEMBERED

The members of the Rising Blades adventuring group serve as frequent elements of Delbera Axebringer's memories and journals, and are remembered well by the svirfneblin Patamot in Chapter 2, as well. Some background information on this adventuring band is included here for GMs who wish to tie the events of *Down the Blighted Path* to other members of the team rather than to Delbera.

Delbera Axebringer: Known for her compassion as much as her fiery axe, Delbera (LG dwarf cleric of Torag) eventually became the leader of the Rising Blades. While empathic and patient, she was also a brutal warrior, and led the charge against many of the Blades' enemies when tact may have been the better strategic choice.

Drovok: Accustomed to harsh words thanks to his heritage, Drovok (N male half-orc wizard) preferred to earn others' respect with bold deeds and complex displays of magic. Dour, patient, and quiet, he preferred books to people, and traveled with the Rising Blades as much to expand his own library as for the company. Drovok nearly died in battle with Karexin, trading spells with the necromancer as the rest of the Rising Blades cut through his undead troops. He retired from the group shortly thereafter.

Emalla Ardani the Far Seer: A renowned psychic spellcaster from Varisia, Emalla (NG female human medium^{DA}) spent much of her time in seances, contacting powerful spirits to exploit secrets of the past and outwit her enemies. Her close kinship with the dead made her few long-term friends, but the svirfneblin of Oremont found her talent endearing. When the Rising Blades parted ways, Emalla dedicated her remaining years to visiting other svirfneblin and gnome communities to study their unique perspective on death.

Kandin Mallox: Kandin (NG human male fighter) was boisterous, but possessed a natural mind for strategy as well. His moral compass and willingness to speak out against injustice washed him out of his youthful Hellknight training, and he fled his homeland of Isger to become a free agent. He often served as the group's moral compass when laws or custom dictated turning a blind eye to cruelty. Kandin's strong emotions were tempered well by Riellal's cool confidence, and the two eventually fell in love and wed.

Riellal: Riellal (CG female half-elf ranger) was soft spoken and observant, but she was an expert at keeping her fellow travelers focused in lean or confusing times with a few well-placed words. She favored the bow, only commenting that it "reminded her of home," but was otherwise very tight-lipped about her background, even with her husband.

E21. BURIAL CHAMBER (CR 8)

Ornate chests, tapestries, and geometric stone carvings line this expansive tomb. A heavy stone sarcophagus—its lid shattered and scattered across the floor—rests on a dais to the north. The dry air is heavy with the smell of cedar and berries. Seven dead duergar lie sprawled around the room, their bodies contorted in unnatural angles and their faces frozen in screams of agony.

Formerly the redoubt's vault and safe room, Lady Axebringer's burial chamber was furnished with the richest appointments the smiths and stonemasons of Davarn could provide, and filled with much of Delbera's mortal wealth that wasn't willed to her family.

Trap: A sophisticated scything blade trap was installed after Delbera's internment to discourage thieves. Using a powerful, spring-loaded mechanism, it resets itself automatically after each activation.

GIANT WALL SCYTHE TRAP

CR 5

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic reset

Effect Atk +20 melee (2d6+8/×4)

Creature: Accidentally created by Zohir's necromantic rituals, the ghost of Lady Delbera Axebringer still haunts this chamber. If the PCs have not destroyed at least four of the haunts infesting the redoubt by the time they enter this chamber, Delbera's mind is too fractured to interact with them and she immediately attacks, lashing out with her telekinesis. If the PCs have defeated at least four haunts, much of Delbera's sense returns to her, though she remains confused and unable to accept her existence as a ghost. She repeats herself, and has trouble remembering new information or accepting that any time has passed since her time protecting Davarn.

Delbera can explain that she was "disturbed" by an orphne, a death-obsessed race of fey from which her old nemesis, Audalot Karexin, hailed.

"I... I saw those who violated my redoubt and stole my *Firebrand*. Vile duergar thieves and that... that woman. She looked so familiar, like Karexin's wisp of an apprentice, but older, more confident... perhaps her mother? I... it is difficult to put the pieces together... She held my axe, and her touch... the blessing of Torag and the symbol my soldiers swore their fealty to... I feel her fingers closed around it even now as if they were on my own throat. I do not know who she is, but I can feel the tug of my axe on my soul. It screams in pain over what she is doing to it... and through it I can feel the cold spite of the miserable creatures her magic has corrupted my soldiers into. She lies down the twisting narrows of the Blighted Path."



Delbera can answer a few questions, but much of her memory is fractured, or lost to death and Zohir's necromancy. Her ghost is not much more than a shell, and she grows more agitated the longer she remains in the presence of living creatures.

How can we lay you to rest? "I need... my heart, my connection to the divine. I need Firebrand. Can you bring it to me? I miss its warmth, and I cannot sleep when I am so cold."

Why is your axe important? "My Firebrand... Torag, the Father of Creation, shaped it using my hands and forge. Every life I saved and every life I took came by that axe, and when my soldiers swore their loyalty to me, they chose it as the symbol in which to invest themselves. It is my life, my family's legacy, and my soldiers' hearts, bound in marbled steel. I don't exactly know what magic can do to such a symbol, but I know I cannot sleep again without it safe in my home..."

Who was Karexin? "Karexin was a beast... a soulless corrupter clad in an elegant man. He was some kind of fey, an orphne, exiled from the Court of Ether far to the south. His undead abominations dominated so much of our young lives, and confronting him nearly killed us all. But we crushed his body—burned him in Torag's divine light—and wiped out his unloving army. Only... only the youth survived."

Who was the youth/apprentice? "The... the girl... Young and wide-eyed, but willingly taken of corruption. She was Karexin's apprentice, and to my shame we spared her. I could not split the skull of a child."

Where was Karexin's Lair? "Down the twisting narrows, down the Blighted Path. It hung, or dripped, from the cavern ceiling, high above Phaedextrin's Maw... deep down in Nar-Voth, where light never shines."

What is the Blighted Path? "Twisting, turning, narrow streaks of death. They were mines, old and forbidden when I was still flush with the gift of youth. The stone bled death, and coaxed back the worst pieces of those who died within. So we walled it off, but bleak things still crawl up through it from the Darklands below. We followed the Blighted Path to fight Karexin, and I can feel *Firebrand* being dragged back through those cold tunnels."

Delbera's ghost is only vaguely aware of where Karexin's Tower was located, somewhere along Phaedextrin's Maw, on the Nar-Voth level of the Darklands. She is not certain who Sarxa was in specific terms, only that she was a forlarren.



DELBERA AXEBRINGER

DELBERA AXEBRINGER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Dwarf ghost cleric of Torag 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)
LG Medium undead (humanoid, dwarf, incorporeal)

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

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+6 deflection, -1 Dex)
hp 54 (6d8+24)

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +10; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, defensive training, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +3 touch (7d6)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 6/day (DC 16, 3d6), hatred, telekinesis (DC 16)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities

(CL 6th; concentration +9)

At will—*mending*

6/day—*artificer's touch* (1d6+3), resistant touch (+2)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th;

concentration +9)

3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*^o, *summon monster III*

2nd—*hold person* (DC 15), *lesser restoration*, *silence* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*, *wood shape*^o (DC 15)

1st—*command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *protection from chaos*, *sanctuary*^o (DC 14), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*guidance*, *read magic*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Artifice, Protection

TACTICS

Before Combat Delbera's ghost casts *shield of faith* whenever someone approaches.

During Combat If combat erupts, Delbera casts *summon monster III* to call a lantern archon, then uses *hold person*, *telekinesis*, and her corrupting touch to thin out opponents' ranks.

Morale Delbera's ghost fights without fear, and cannot leave the burial chamber. If destroyed, she returns in 2d4 days or until *Firebrand* is returned to her.

Base Statistics Without *shield of faith* cast, Delbera's statistics are **AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16 (20 vs. bull rush and trip)

Feats Channel Smite, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Skill Focus (Craft [weapons])

Skills Appraise +0, Craft (armor) +4, Craft (mechanical) +4, Craft (weapons) +10, Fly +7, Heal +8,

Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +11, Stealth +7; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth, +2 Appraise to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones, +2 Perception to notice unusual stonework

Languages Common, Dwarven

Treasure: Delbera's burial chamber contains much of her accumulated wealth from life. Much of it consists of family heirlooms and cherished gifts of little monetary value, but included among the trove are a *ring of feather fall*, *healer's gloves* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 238), a *scroll of darkvision*, a *scroll of magic circle against chaos*, a *wand of bless* (13 charges), a *wand of jump* (32 charges), 37 dwarf soldier figurines cast from bronze (worth 10 gp each) representing the 37 legionnaires who died alongside her, and scattered gems worth a total of 200 gp. Most of her remaining wealth was bequeathed to her family or the town itself.

Delbera was interred wearing her +2 *benevolent* (*Ultimate Equipment* 115) *breastplate*, but her ghost shrieks if anyone approaches her mortal remains, and attacks if anyone attempts to touch them. Once she is laid to rest, the armor may be removed safely.

Story Award: If the PCs interact peacefully with Delbera and learn what happened in the redoubt, award them XP as if they defeated the ghost in combat.

F. THE DUERGAR CARAVAN (CR 6)

A half-mile beyond Firebrand's Redoubt, down yet another winding side tunnel, the Ashen Company has established a small camp, where the remainder of the forces await their commander's return and guard more of Sarxa's captives. Three dozen dwarven slaves—additional descendants or suspected descendants of Delbera Axebringer—are chained together around a massive stone column.

Approaching the camp requires some guile or stealth, and their slightly elevated position in a large cavern affords the caravan guards an excellent view of the area. The caravan guards assume that any individuals they don't recognize are reinforcements from Davarn, and so they immediately take cover behind rocks. Once the intruders come within range of their darkvision, the guards open fire with ranged weapons. The camp has a single everburning torch, but the guards keep it securely covered unless they need the light for delicate repair work. This makes their encampment especially difficult to pick out in the darkness as they begin their defense.

Thanks to the uneven terrain along the Blighted Path, the duergar have forgone wagons and lashed their supplies to a quartet of pack beetles. A distant relative of fire beetles, pack beetles are considerably larger than their cousins, and they glow with a light that's visible only to creatures possessing darkvision. This trait makes the beetles easy for underground natives

to spot even at a distance, but it does not give away the caravan's location to surface dwellers. These vermin are domesticated, curious, and friendly, but not trained for combat, and scurry as far from any fighting as their reins allow. PCs may claim these sturdy subterranean companions once the remainder of the Ashen Company is defeated; the beetles may be controlled using Handle Animal skill, but their limited intelligence and alien nature increases the DC for all checks by 10. They are not trained to be ridden.

Creatures: The camp consists primarily of the Ashen Company's trainees, the slaves, and pack animals, with a single ranking member to maintain discipline. The foot soldiers are still spooked by the strange encounters in the redoubt, and must succeed a DC 12 Will saving throw or be staggered the first round of combat. In addition, if any duergar Ashen Company mercenaries fled battle, they return here to rest and heal, adding their numbers to the fight, potentially increasing the encounter's CR.

ASHEN COMPANY FOOT SOLDIERS (5) CR 1

XP 400 each

Duergar sergeant (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 50)

hp 23 each

ASHEN COMPANY MERCENARY CR 2

XP 600

hp 30 (see page 14)

DARK SPITTER BEETLES (2) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 26 each (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 52)

PACK BEETLES (4) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Giant fire beetle (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 33)

hp 6 each

Development: Each of the dwarven slaves is attached to a single length of chain by a locking slave collar (Disable Device DC 20). The dwarves have only minor injuries, and can make it back to Davarn on their own if freed.

Treasure: The caravan carries the Ashen Company's field supplies, including 8 weeks' of bland, mushroom-based trail rations, an everburning torch, five healer's kits, and 300 feet of *spider's silk rope*^{UE}, as well as five spare battleaxes, eight daggers, two heavy picks, and four heavy steel shields, all of masterwork quality. A locked iron chest (Disable Device DC 30) on one beetle's back also contains two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, two *potions of lesser restoration*, a jar of restorative ointment, and 312 gp.

Mayor Bensik announces that she will amend her original reward to the PCs, adding 50 gp for every citizen of Davarn the PCs return alive and (relatively) healthy.



Returning all 36 dwarven captives increases the PCs' reward by 1,800 gp.

CLAIMING FIREBRAND'S REDOUBT

Canny adventurers may notice that Firebrand's Redoubt now stands empty of its invading force, with nothing but a fairly agreeable ghost watching over it. The now-abandoned fortress may eventually make an excellent base of operations for heroes hoping to launch expeditions into the Darklands or operate in and around the treacherous mountain areas of northern Andoran, eastern Isger, and southern Druma. For the time being, though, Lady Axebringer's various haunts remain a threat to anyone occupying her home. While the PCs know how to temporarily appease these fractured elements of the dead dwarf, their nature as chained haunts means they will continue to manifest (perhaps even occasionally changing form, presenting new challenges over time) so long as Delbera's spirit remains. Worse, the longer Lady Axebringer's ghost remains, the more her connection to her mortal commitments and ideals slips, and the more confused she becomes. Over weeks or months, she may slip far enough to become little more than a restless, angry spirit, unable to communicate and attacking even those she would consider allies.

If they wish to use the redoubt as a launching point for their Blighted Path expedition, the PCs are advised to use the sally port rather than risk the return of the fortress's defensive haunts. Delbera's spirit will tolerate their presence in the taproom and guest rooms for the time being. Because Delbera left it to the people in her will, the redoubt technically belongs to the town of Davarn. However, Mayor Bensik appreciates the value of having loyal adventurers operating from nearby, and agrees to lease the site to the adventurers in lieu of their financial reward. A successful DC 25 Diplomacy check persuades the mayor to grant the PCs both a reward in gold pieces and ownership of the redoubt, as long as they occupy and maintain it. While taking on the redoubt does not obligate the PCs to defend Davarn, the town does become their immediate source for supplies, hirelings, and buyers for their accumulated treasure, and keeping it safe and productive may become an important preoccupation.

Rules for PCs operating their own stronghold, and the potential complications, additional rewards, and story possibilities, are detailed in the pages of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign*. Game Masters should roll for random events depending on how the PCs use the building, rather than basing it on its original purpose as a castle. Enterprising adventurers are welcome to make their own additions to the site, but it currently contains the following rooms: 1 Altar, 1 Armory, 3 Bedrooms, 1 Bunk, 1 Common Room, 1 Courtyard, 1 Escape Route, 1 Forge, 2 Fortifications (in areas **E1** and **E20**), 1 Gauntlet, 1 Infirmary,

EXPANDED HAUNT RULES

Down the Blighted Path includes several new rules for haunts detailed in *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures*, reprinted here for the Game Master's convenience:

Chained Haunts: Some haunts are intrinsically connected with incorporeal undead entities (most commonly ghosts) and manifest as displays of the associated creatures' fractured psyches. Chained haunts can be destroyed only by bringing final rest to their connected entities. Chained haunts cannot be permanently destroyed until their associated undead is destroyed or laid to rest, but immediately vanish once the spirit that manifested them is defeated. In Firebrand's Redoubt, all the haunts are chained to Lady Delbera, and once her spirit is laid to rest, all the persistent haunts vanish.

1 Kitchen, 1 Lavatory, 1 Office, 1 Sitting Room, 2 Storage, 1 Trophy Room, 1 Vault, 1 War Room. The redoubt's Vault is currently serving as Lady Delbera's tomb.

RETURNING TO DAVARN

Returning to Davarn provides the PCs with an opportunity to replenish supplies, heal, and rest before setting out deeper into the Darklands, and additional information should they require it. If the PCs return alongside freed captives, the town eagerly embraces them as heroes, and the Lucky Imp Inn offers them free room and board for up to 1 month in appreciation. The temple of Torag also offers heroic PCs a 10% discount on any spellcasting services they can provide while they remain in town.

Erna Stoneheart can offer to fill in any missing pieces of information the PCs have yet to learn, thanks to her investigations. She has learned a fey agent (Sarxa) entered the city and assassinated the gate guards, then opened the tunnel gates to allow undead soldiers in. The guards have found a handful of dead bodies as well—nearly a dozen dwarves who resisted their captors and were cut down—and eventually destroyed another five skeletal bone legion soldiers still within the town.

If the PCs ask about the Blighted Path, Erna explains that one of Davarn's oldest mines eventually hit a vein of a strange stone no one could identify, which drained the warmth from miners' bones and cast long shadows, even to dwarven darkvision. Strange creatures crawled up from the darker shafts and natural caverns the mines joined, snatching workers and dragging them away in the shadows. Eventually it was discovered that those who had worked those mines rose as hungry undead after death, and the people of Davarn sealed up "the Blighted Path," as they'd come to call it.

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CHAPTER 2

WINDING INTO DARKNESS

With Firebrand's Redoubt cleared of its squatters, the PCs should be keenly aware that a very dangerous force has seized Delbera Axebringer's weapon, *Firebrand*, and intends to use it to level vicious revenge against her descendants. Whether they have learned her name or not, they should realize that Zohir Totek's plan could not only kill a sizeable portion of Davarn—up to 5% of its citizens can prove some family connection to the Axebringer clan—but also provide a bitter necromancer with a ready-made army of undead.

If Lukher Stinnison survived Chapter 1, he is distressed by whatever news the PCs bring back and offers to retain them as special agents if they can recover his great aunt's axe and protect him (and, begrudgingly, his family) from

whatever fate now looms. Erna Stoneheart is similarly concerned, both for her family and for the safety of her community, and offers to deputize any adventurers willing to travel down the Blighted Path and investigate further. Deputized guards receive healing they need free of charge from the temple of Torag, and may borrow any mundane exploration gear they require, including silk rope, climbing kits, lanterns, and rations. Within a few hours of hearing the news, Mayor Bensik and Lukher Stinnison manage to gather a total reward of 5,000 gp for anyone who can recover *Firebrand*.

WALKING THE BLIGHTED PATH

Exploring the Darklands is a slow and dangerous endeavor—one even many dwarves shy away from.



INTRODUCTION

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Karexin's Tower lies in the subterranean level of Nar-Voth, well over a thousand feet below the surface, past many dangerous hazards, lairs of strange creatures, and miles of winding, claustrophobic tunnels. The Blighted Path itself is an old dwarven iron mine, which uncovered a vein of lazurite (see sidebar on page 31). Both the strange radiation from the lazurite and the Darklands creatures it attracted earned the dangerous tunnels their new name, and eventually drove the dwarves to seal up the mine entirely. While the Blighted Path moniker originally referred to the mines themselves, the much larger cavern complex the mines uncovered have long since adopted the name as well, in reference to the pockets of creatures the area's unusual lazurite deposits attract or create.

Many interactions with Zohir's minions make mention of Phaedextrin's Maw—where Karexin's old tower hangs, and where Zohir still lairs today—and many maps available in Davarn point out this major local landmark. Maps in the redoubt's library (area E8) present much more detailed descriptions of how to reach the Maw and Karexin's Tower, providing PCs who recover them a +5 circumstance bonus to avoid becoming lost.

Most of the Blighted Path consists of secondary tunnels, ranging from 5 to 30 feet wide and occasionally opening into large caverns. Ancient magma flows and tectonic activity, as well as the movement of large creatures such as delvers and purple worms, formed most of these passageways, creating a confusing labyrinth of switchbacks and elevation changes that reduce overland movement to one-quarter normal speed (approximately 6 miles per day for humans or 4 miles per day for dwarves). Staying on the correct path requires a successful DC 15 Survival check; a failure indicates finding a dead end, taking the wrong tunnel, or otherwise wandering off course and losing 1d6 hours of progress as the PCs backtrack or find a way around their obstacle. For every 8 hours they travel, the PCs have a 20% chance of encountering especially challenging natural terrain, such as a long, tight tunnel requiring them to squeeze (Escape Artist DC 13), a cliff to scale or descend (Climb DC 15), or a narrow ledge or natural bridge to traverse (Acrobatics DC 10). The Blighted Path is mostly cleared of any landslides or cave-ins, thanks to Zohir's recent journey. The distances between areas are indicated on the map on page 30.

Only one Davarn resident who worked the original mines remains alive today, a cantankerous old man named Rodert. Turning to smuggling after the mine closed, Rodert has explored much of the upper reaches of Nar-Voth around Davarn. In exchange for PCs paying off his bar tab of 15 gp, Rodert will share what he knows about the caves ("The weather's always nice—warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and it only ever rains in the same spots all the time."); what is and isn't safe to eat ("Cave crickets are easy enough to catch and they toast up nicely. And those little fish without eyes, they're pretty

BLIGHTED PATH ENCOUNTERS

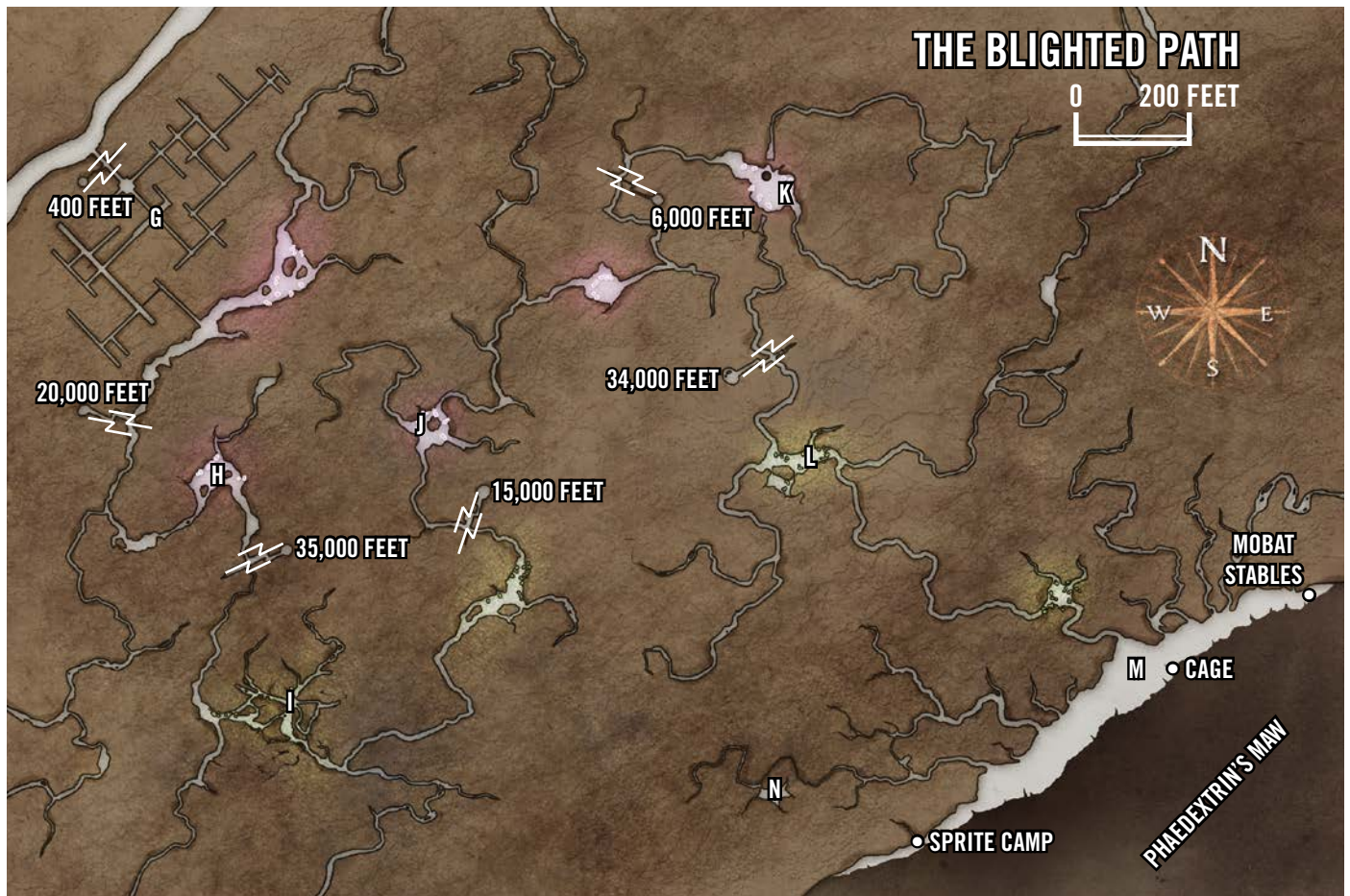
Every 8 hours they spend in the Darklands, the PCs have a 10% chance of randomly encountering its denizens. This chance remains even while resting, though a successful DC 20 Survival check allows the PCs to find a less-used side tunnel in which to make camp or otherwise conceal themselves, reducing the chance for a random encounter to 1% for every 8 hours spent resting.

d%	Encounter	Average CR	Source
1-5	1 mimic	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 205
6-11	1 cloaker	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 47
12-17	1 gibbering moulder	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 153
18-23	Troglodyte hunting party	5	<i>Monster Codex</i> 221
24-29	1 wraith	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 281
30-36	2d4 chokers	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 45
37-43	1d6 shadows	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 245
44-50	1d4 bone legion soldiers	6	See page 10
51-57	1 deathweb	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 65
58-64	1 gloomwasp	6	See page 55
65-71	1 revenant	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 235
72-78	1d4 tentamorts	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 261
79-83	1 black pudding	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 35
84-88	1d4 deeplits	7	See page 53
89-93	1 geomaw	7	See page 54
94-98	1 spectre	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 256
99-100	1 rot grub swarm	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 215

tasty too, but you need about a handful to get full."); and general safety ("It's maddening at times, and you should never travel alone in the caves. Take someone with you to help keep you sane. I've seen some lone travelers and they were never quite right in the head, if you catch my meaning."). He doesn't have any interest in returning to those caves—he passed on his knowledge and contacts to a new generation of criminal importers almost 2 decades ago—but for the price of 1,000 gp and a promise that someone else will lug his 50-pound rucksack, he agrees to accompany the PCs as a guide. He refuses to enter into fights and complains constantly about his rheumatism, but provides the following skills with a total skill check modifier of +10 to each: Appraise, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (local), and Survival.

G. THE OLD MINES (CR 6)

Clean, worked tunnels occasionally give way to crumbling, chalky stone shot through with sickly black veins of an alien mineral. A damp coldness seems to roll off the walls, and the musty stench of long-ignored decay fills the air.



This mine complex breaks away from the Five Kings Road about an hour beyond Firebrand's Redoubt. Its main entrance has been bricked up, leaving only a stout, iron door to provide access. The door's padlock has been freshly broken.

Creatures: The dwarves of Davarn locked up these mines after discovering those miners who perished within would rise again as hungry ghouls. Over the years, criminals and explorers occasionally break in to use the tunnels, fall to its extant dangers, and rise again as undead. A quartet of dwarven smugglers opened the mine 5 years ago, but died in a cave-in. Three have since risen as ghouls and prowl the mines, and sometimes the deeper tunnels, for scraps.

Zohir charmed the ghouls into obedience and forbade them from kidnapping duergar, their preferred snack, leaving them starved for fresh meat. They stalk any intruders for a few minutes before launching a surprise attack with tanglefoot bags, hoping to chase off whoever isn't held fast and then pulling their prey back to their lair.

DWARVEN GHOULS (3) CR 3
XP 800 each
Ghoul creepers (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 82)
hp 37 each

Treasure: In addition to their equipment, the ghouls nest in the carapace of their old pack beetle, which can be located by following their tracks (Survival DC 18). Here, some of their old cargo remains: a crate of 10 vials of alchemist's fire, three tanglefoot bags, and four vials of soul stimulant (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 101). The sacks of flayleaf they had been smuggling have long since rotted away.

H. CRICKETS' POOL (CR 7)

Long ruts are worn into the floor of this massive cavern, as if it saw heavy traffic, but the roads have no apparent destination. The sound of chirping cave crickets and water trickling into the chamber's large pool seem deafening compared to the silence of the surrounding tunnels.

The steady seeping of water here has fed a healthy ecosystem of cave insects and mold. The cavern's pool is crystal-clear and 8 feet deep, and it's filled with translucent, eyeless fish. While the water tastes heavily of minerals, it is safe for consumption.

Creatures: A spirosekke tops the local food chain in this region of the Blighted Path, protecting its nest and feeding on cat-sized cave crickets. With its young so close



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to hatching, it attacks any intruders, both for food and to protect the developing larvae. A pair of fungal crawlers follow in the spiroskek's wake like hyenas, waiting to snatch away a straggler once the larger predator charges.

SPIROSKEK **CR 6**

XP 3,200
hp 68 (see page 59)

FUNGAL CRAWLERS (2) **CR 3**

XP 800 each
hp 37 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 127)

Treasure: The spiroskek population here has thrived at least in part thanks to the ancient remains of a long-dead explorer, upon whom they constructed their nest. The bony remains still wear a *ring of sustenance*, whose magic has helped the strange insects' eggs to flourish before hatching.

I. THE BREATHLESS LABYRINTH (CR 6)

Countless small halls and chimneys break off from the primary tunnels here, blocked or redirected by occasional collapses, and creating a dizzying, three-dimensional maze.

Centuries ago, this passage served as the nest for exiled pechs, and later a ravenous purple worm their digging attracted. The final result is a confusing mishmash of tunnels, passageways, and monster-dug burrows.

Hazard: The Breathless Labyrinth is confusing and difficult to navigate, requiring three successful DC 20 Survival checks. Failure indicates wasting 1d4 hours wandering in circles. Granting the Breathless Labyrinth its name, the convoluted twists and turns trap a variety of noxious gases. Failing a Survival check to navigate the passageways marches the PCs through a pocket of bad air, while failing a Survival check by 5 or more results in stumbling into a cloud of quickdeath.

Bad Air (CR 1): Travelers who pass through this low-quality, stale air must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued. Fatigued creatures who remain in an area of bad air may begin suffering from slow suffocation (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 445).

Quickdeath (CR 6): This clear, odorless natural gas pools in depressions and low points of passageways. It acts as an inhaled poison, though a successful DC 25 Survival check allows a PC to identify its presence and hold her breath before being exposed. Creatures rendered unconscious by quickdeath immediately begin to suffocate.

QUICKDEATH

Type poison, inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 18
Frequency 1/round

LAZURITE

Eons ago, volcanic eruptions pushed rich deposits of iron, gold, and quartz into the bedrock of what eventually became the Five Kings Mountains, but it also carried with it a strange, radioactive mineral from deep within the planet. While this original stone has long since decayed, small deposits of the mineral created by its decay, lazurite, still dot the Blighted Path.

Lazurite is a crumbling, black mineral that winds its way through chalky, white rock called marrowstone. It seems to cast long shadows and drain the warmth from living things, though it ultimately has no long-term effects on the living beyond its unsettling presence. It exudes a strong aura of necromancy, attracting undead and creatures sensitive to magic auras. Any relatively intact corpse left within 30 feet of a deposit of lazurite for 24 hours has a 50% chance to spontaneously rise as a free-willed ghoul (often with the same class levels it possessed in life). Undead creatures within the area of effect of lazurite radiation gain a +4 bonus to their channel resistance. Almost unheard of outside the lower Darklands region of Sekamina, the strange material is virtually impossible to mine or harvest without destroying its unique properties.



Initial Effect 1 Wis damage; **Secondary Effect** 1d3 Wis damage and unconsciousness; **Cure** 1 save

J. STRIPED CROSSROADS (CR 5)

Brilliant stripes of red and black stone and growths of glittering crystal line this massive chamber's central pillar.

A large gas pocket in the primordial magma formed this enormous, geode-like cavern. A successful DC 12 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies the crystal formations as beautiful but low-quality quartz. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies the striping in the central column as hematite, a high-quality iron ore, and—strangely out of place given the cavern's dry air—rust.

Creatures: The large iron deposit in this chamber often attracts migrating nests of rust monsters. Two currently reside here, gorging on the iron-rich rocks, but they happily indulge in higher-quality metals adventurers may provide.

RUST MONSTERS (2) **CR 3**

XP 800 each
hp 27 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 238)

Treasure: While the quartz crystals aren't particularly valuable, a successful DC 15 Appraise check can identify a dozen large formations of citrine among them. Even uncut, these arm-sized spars are worth 200 gp each.

Development: The PCs aren't the first creatures to happen across the cavern or its inhabitants. **Goruk** (CN male half-orc cleric of Rovagug 6), a half-mad prophet of Rovagug, discovered it weeks ago and found the destructive talents of the inhabitants nearly transcendent. He fed the beasts his maul, then set up a small campsite nearby to appreciate the rust monsters' work and contemplate their place in Rovagug's message. He isn't especially angry to see these divine messengers potentially slain by the PCs, either; all things die eventually, after all.

Goruk lives alone, wandering Nar-Voth as a hermit. He believes the voice of Rovagug spoke to him as a boy, and he followed the sounds he heard into nearby caves and eventually deep below the surface. He finds the destructive potential of the Darklands endlessly and joyously fascinating. With only the voices in his head to keep him company, Goruk is quite insane from years of isolation, and now speaks in generalities and assumptions; he knows he is not worthy of comprehending his god's full plan, and believes any amount of certainty to be the height of presumption and an insult to Rovagug. These traits have combined to create a remarkably nonviolent worshiper of the Rough Beast, one who focuses his destructive leanings on objects and concepts (especially governments) rather than people. Goruk is even willing to offer newcomers some basic provisions, spellcasting, or directions should they seem lost.

Goruk will not join the PCs in their journey, but he may confirm directions through the Blighted Path; whether or not the PCs believe him is left to their discretion. Goruk thoroughly believes conflict provides divine insight, and any directions he offers the PCs gives them a +5 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to avoid becoming lost for 24 hours, but it also doubles the PCs' chance of random encounters. Goruk knows of the narrik that lairs in the Screaming Chamber (area K), but conveniently forgets to mention that fact. He also watched Zohir's expedition travel up to the dwarven tunnels a week ago and return only a few days later, a fact he is all too happy to recall.

K. THE SCREAMING CHAMBER (CR 7)

The walls and ceiling open up from the path to reveal stalactites and stalagmites on both sides of the tunnel. The formations

nearly touch one another, like an open mouth of pointed teeth. The sound of a small waterfall comes from behind the pillars.

A steady waterfall of snowmelt high above has carved a deep channel through this chamber and continues below, and massive stalactites and stalagmites have formed from millennia of mineral deposits. Weblike fungi and molds grow between the pillars, and a thick mulch of guano coats the insect-riddled floor.

The waterfall in this cavern collects in a cloudy, 20-foot-wide pool, and eventually drains into a nearly vertical, 10-foot-wide shaft. The shaft itself connects to a lower level of the Blighted Path (noted on Delbera's maps) that the winding tunnels eventually join. Descending the 800 feet through the drain is dangerous. The walls are smooth and require successful DC 25 Climb checks without additional handholds or ropes, and the constant fall of water increases the DC of any climb checks by 5—but doing so cuts a day's travel from the PCs' journey.

Creatures: A narrik—a vicious mutation that can smell fear—nests in the shadows of this chamber, and occasionally descends through the drain to hunt the svirfneblin and duergar in the Nar-Voth tunnels below. It watches any newcomers from the shadows, curious as to why they've come, but immediately attacks if its new prey tries to escape or leave the chamber.



GORUK

NARRIK **CR 7**
3,200 XP
hp 75 (see page 55)

Story Award: If the PCs successfully navigate the dangerous drain to bypass a portion of their long trip, award them XP as if they overcame a CR 4 encounter.

L. THE RAINBOW GARDEN (CR 6)

A dazzling array of color blooms throughout this large chamber. Mushrooms, molds, and even small plants crowd into the glow of luminous fungus clinging to the cavern walls and ceiling, lending the massive cave the appearance of a spring day. A cobblestone road winds through the verdant terrain, leading down several side tunnels.

This chamber serves as a frequent crossroads between the Blighted Path, Phaedextrin's Maw, and more distant Nar-Voth locations such as Hagegraf and the Court of Ether, and serves as a frequent campsite for a wide variety of evil, subterranean fey. The bioluminescent fungi that



provide its light are natural, but the cavern's permanent inhabitants also magically coax it along.

Creatures: The Rainbow Garden is the handiwork of Darux, a rare and disgusting fey known as a fear eater. Originally taking advantage of the crossroads here to hunt for prey—sentient creatures she can cocoon and grow her emotionally charged, psychoactive mushrooms on—Darux now takes some pride in maintaining her collection of exotic Darklands plants. Many of her cultivated strains are poisonous or hallucinogenic, and the fey now makes a profitable living selling her wares to travelers to and from the Court of Ether much further south.

Three particularly vicious brownies—Aemo, Ceuth, and Dolich—serve Darux in exchange for food and protection, and occasionally drag back new captives from the tunnels for their mistress to cocoon. The brownies immediately attack non-fey visitors with their *confusion* spell-like ability, and Darux joins in after the first round. The brownies primarily assist Darux using aid another checks.

BROWNIES (3) CR 1

400 each

hp 4 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 49)

DARUX CR 5

XP 1,600

Female fear eater (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary 27*)

NE Medium fey

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+6 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 52 (8d6+24)

Fort +5, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

DR 5/cold iron; **Immune** disease, fear

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d6+2 plus anxiety spores)

Special Attacks anxiety spores, dread burst, fungal snare

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th, concentration +7)

At will—*cause fear* (DC 13), *dancing lights*

3/day—*faerie fire*, *paranoia*^{OA} (DC 14)

1/day—*fear*, *feather fall*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 22, **Con** 17, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17, Climb +21, Intimidate +10, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +17;

Racial Modifiers +8 Climb

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Anxiety Spores (Ex) Any creature struck by the fear eater's

claws must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude saving throw or be infected with anxiety spores, which cause nervousness and muscle tremors.

Anxiety Spores: Disease—injury; save Fort DC 17; onset 1 round; frequency 1/minute; effect cumulative –1 penalty on saving throws against effects with the emotion descriptor (maximum –5); cure 2 consecutive saves

Dread Burst (Su) As a standard action, a fear eater can cause mushrooms to erupt from any creature within 30 feet already infected with its anxiety spores. The targeted creature takes 1d6 points of Charisma damage (Fortitude DC 17 negates) as the growing spores siphon away her emotions. If the affected creature is currently shaken, frightened, or panicked, any creature within 10 feet gains the same condition for 1d4 rounds (Will DC 17 negates). This is a mind-affecting fear effect with the emotion descriptor. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Fungal Snare (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds, a fear eater can spew a fungal mass up to 30 feet, which coats all creatures within a 10-foot-radius burst with sticky filaments. Creatures other than fear eaters are entangled (Reflex DC 17 negates). An entangled creature can attempt to break free with a successful DC 14 Strength or Escape Artist check as a move action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: Several body-shaped cocoons are scattered across the garden. Ten of these each contain loose bones and dried flesh, along with 4d6 silver pieces and 2d6 gold pieces. The remains of an Andoran explorer, Gillian Saulgaighn, are sealed inside another. She perished several weeks ago, but her adventuring gear remains in good condition. It includes a suit of +1 *scale mail*, an *oil of continual flame*, a *potion of spider climb*, a masterwork heavy wooden shield, 50 masterwork arrows, a masterwork dagger, a masterwork trident, and a masterwork backpack (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment 58*) containing 10 sunrods, a thunderstone, a bedroll, five vials of ink, 2 weeks of rations, and a mysterious jade idol worth 450 gp.

M. PHAEDEXTRIN'S MAW (CR 7)

The twisting tunnels suddenly give way to a massive canyon, a half-mile wide and untold miles long. Hanging rock formations, some the size of buildings, dangle from the ceiling a hundred feet overhead. Thousands of glowing points line the walls and ceiling, bathing everything in an eerie mock-starlight.

A ledge, nearly a hundred feet wide, winds along the edge of the chasm. Countless black cracks and passageways split into the rock walls alongside it, opening into a myriad of new caves. Rough-hewn metal fences line a small portion of the ledge, penning in several dozen shuffling figures.

Phaedextrin's Maw runs at a slight curve for nearly a dozen miles, southwest to northeast, and follows the edge of a long-cooled volcano's massive magma

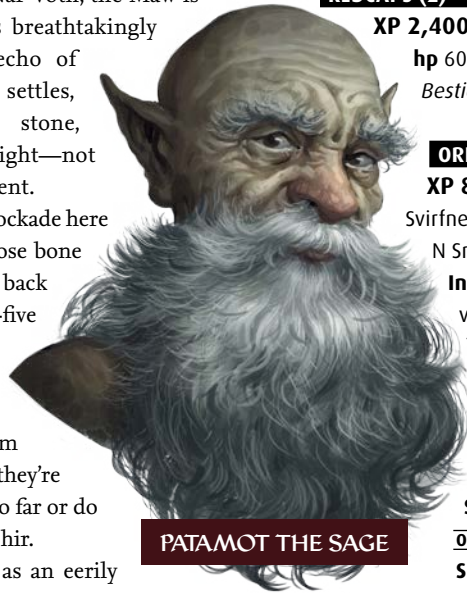
chamber. It plunges nearly a thousand feet to the floor covered in writhing insects, guano, and rubble from the crumbling ceiling. Bioluminescent fungus grows along the walls and ceiling, providing dim light and feeding a huge variety of insect species which, in turn, support a massive population of eyeless bats and massive mobs. Unlike most other parts of Nar-Voth, the Maw is vast and open. The space is breathtakingly large. There is a hollow echo of sound that never quite settles, reverberating against the stone, akin to a buzz of insects at night—not overwhelming, but ever present.

Zohir has erected a small stockade here along the ledge to contain those bone legion skeletons she brought back with her from Davarn. Twenty-five undead mill around within the enclosure. The 5-foot fences are easily scaled, and the paddock gate is barred from the outside, though even if they're released, the skeletons don't go far or do much without orders from Zohir.

Karexin's Tower is visible as an eerily regular pattern of lights several thousand feet from where the Blighted Path exits onto the chasm's ledge, though no bridge or walkway connects it to the edges of the canyon.

Creatures: Phaedextrin's Maw has long been the front line in a quiet war against the aberrations and subterranean fey who lair here, waged by a persistent tribe of svirfneblin from the village of Oremont. Satisfied to hunt evil fey and raid the occasional duergar caravans along the nearby Long Walk, the clan found a true nemesis in Zohir Totek, who attempted to wipe out the deep gnomes to please her former master, Karexin. Her actions brought the svirfneblin of Oremont together with Delbera Axebringer's Rising Blades, and ultimately allowed their combined forces to defeat a warlord neither could have overcome alone. In the years since, Zohir has passed much of her time quietly capturing and torturing members of the clan, but has been unable to locate their village.

Three Oremont svirfneblin rangers—Vamberpack, Notirim, and Vankamuth—thought the penned and nonresponsive undead presented an ideal opportunity to sabotage Zohir's newest scheme, only to find themselves assaulted by a pair of redcaps the necromancer left to guard her chattel. As the PCs emerge along the ledge, they can hear the sounds of combat some 100 feet ahead and see the conflict. The Oremont rangers are overwhelmed and fall quickly. Without aid, the first svirfneblin dies in 4 rounds, and the second 2 rounds after that. The third ranger then flees, leaving only the redcaps.



PATAMOT THE SAGE

The presence of the svirfneblin rangers reduces the CR of this encounter by 1. If the PCs do not come to the deep gnomes' aid, the encounter eventually becomes a CR 8 fight, and they lose their chance of allying with the svirfneblin village.

REDCAPS (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 60 each, currently 45 and 38 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 233*)

OREMONT RANGERS (3) CR 3

XP 800 each

Svirfneblin ranger 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 261*)

N Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +2 dodge, +1 shield, +1 size)

hp 30 (3d10+9)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

SR 14

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk heavy pick +4 (1d4+1/×4), mwk

light pick +4 (1d3/×4)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4/×3)

Special Attacks combat style (two-weapon combat), favored enemy (fey +2), hatred

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +2)

Constant—*nondetection*

1/day—*blindness/deafness* (DC 11), *blur*, *disguise self*

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17

Feats Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +2 (-2 when jumping), Climb +7, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Perception +7, Ride +7, Stealth +13, Survival +6; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception (+4 to notice unusual stonework), +2 Stealth (+4 underground)

Languages Gnome, Undercommon

SQ favored terrain (underground +2), gnome magic, track +1, wild empathy +2

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork heavy pick, masterwork light pick, shortbow with 20 arrows, map of nearby area, grappling hook, silk rope (50 ft.), 72 gp

Development: If the PCs aid the svirfneblin and defeat the redcaps, the deep gnomes are wary but grateful. They answer any basic questions about the area, and they know the location of Karexin Tower, which is Zohir's lair. If the



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PCs make it known that they are in pursuit of Zohir Totek and her minions, the svirfneblin deliberate for several minutes before offering the PCs a place to rest in their nearby settlement. The scouts, however, are unwilling to join the PCs on their mission.

If the PCs do not assist the svirfneblin, two perish in the fight while the third runs off, and the svirfneblin of Oremont become unfriendly toward the PCs. Four rangers eventually begin following the PCs from a discreet distance, but only attack the PCs if they draw too close to Oremont. The svirfneblin rangers each carry a basic map of the nearby area, marked with areas of interest and directions to reach the duergar-patrolled Long Walk to the north. These maps do not contain any clues about how to find the Oremont, but the Tower of Karexin is clearly marked.

N. OREMONT

Once residents of the First World, svirfneblin have long resided in Nar-Voth as a first line of defense against the wicked creatures that flourish in the dark. The Oremont clan mines veins of copper, zinc, and iron, and do what they must to maintain themselves, including raiding other Darklands settlements. Their village is built into the cavern walls high above and is concealed behind fungus webs.

The deep gnomes eke out a meager existence in the tunnels. Residents of Oremont are a suspicious and private lot. Survival is a personal responsibility of each villager and for the town as a whole. They are wary of travelers in the surrounding tunnels and avoid casual interactions. Fungus growing on nearly every surface of the cavern illuminates it in hues of blues, greens, and yellows.

If the PCs assisted the svirfneblin rangers in their battle against the redcaps, word of the heroes' actions reaches the village long before they arrive. The residents openly scrutinize the visitors and make wide paths to avoid coming too close to the PCs and their guides, but the gnomes do not hide. The rangers take the PCs to meet Patamot, one of the oldest svirfneblin and leader of the council of elders.

Patamot is over a century old and is the lore keeper of Oremont. He remembers the clan's original struggles when Karexin first moved to the region, and their slow losses against the fey's growing army of undead. His mother's own records describe the attempts of Audalot Karexin's apprentice, Zohir Totek, to subjugate the svirfneblin and take over their mining operations. Both of his parents fell in the final battle between the Rising Blades and the orphnes. Patamot directed the Oremont clan to become more aggressive when Zohir returned 50 years ago.

The old gnome was a child during the battle, and his memories are tinged with youthful wonder and are not necessarily accurate, but he can generally provide the PCs with any background information they may still lack regarding Karexin or Zohir. He knows that Zohir has not left the tower since returning from a trip several days ago. He also knows that she has claimed two apprentices—a

OREMONT

Oremont is a small and well-hidden village that is home to a svirfneblin clan. The village is not easy to find, by design. Without a map or a guide, it blends in with the surrounding tunnels and caverns. Even with the knowledge of its existence, the village is hidden at the end of a maze of tunnels that seem to double back on themselves or lead back to the main tunnel. An unfamiliar traveler must already know its general location, and then succeed at a DC 28 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or (geography) check in order to locate the svirfneblin village. Lookouts provide Oremont with advanced warning of raids and man traps to slow down invaders.

OREMONT

N village

Corruption -1; **Crime** -2; **Economy** -1; **Law** -2; **Lore** -3, **Society** +3

Qualities insular, magically attuned

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 64 svirfneblin

Notable NPCs

Elder Patamot (N male svirfneblin druid 6)

Scoutmaster Grejeter (CN female svirfneblin ranger 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp;

Spellcasting 3rd

Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** —

vicious forlarren woman and a sycophantic pech—as well as a small circle of fey and undead servants. Other members of the village have scant recollections of the Rising Blades that differ from Patamot's rendition, but they know that their village benefited greatly from their intervention and are willing to help Lady Delbera's family if they can.

The svirfneblin are happy to trade, but have no use for coins or gems. Oremont is a more accessible fallback location for the PCs between encounters at Karexin Tower than Davarn. The svirfneblin are willing to point the PCs to a hidden cave in which to rest while they remain in the area, and provide them with healing kits and food during their stay, but the poor community has little else they can afford to part with. Perhaps most importantly, the Oremont svirfneblin have been navigating the region around Phaedextrin's Maw for a dozen generations, and have many ingenious ways of navigating the hostile terrain and helping the PCs reach Karexin Tower, which hangs suspended from the chamber's roof far out above the cavernous void.



CHAPTER 3

THE TOWER SPITE BUILT

Upon his exile from the Court of Ether far to the south, Audalot Karexin journeyed to Phaedextrin's Maw with his loyal apprentice Zohir Totek and his tiny retinue in tow. Karexin chose Phaedextrin's Maw specifically to study the deposits of lazurite it possessed—a rare feature so far from Sekamina. The terrain reminded the two of the familiar hanging city of their home, easing the pain of their exile. Using magic and summoned servants, Karexin carved one of the canyon's largest stalactites into an inverted tower where he could live, study, and entertain occasional guests from the fey city. The tower lacks any attachment to the cavern walls, and magic or flight is required to reach it.

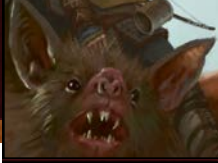
After Karexin's defeat at the hands of the Rising Blades, the tower stood empty for decades and became a nest for flying scavengers and vermin, and eventually, a vile band

of sprite bandits called the Stirge Hounds. When Zohir returned to her master's tower half a century ago, she subjugated its current inhabitants and set her hirelings to work restoring the edifice's lost glory. Today, visitors would be hard-pressed to realize the tower was ever in a state of ruin thanks to its rich decor, fresh paint, and lavish garden.

Currently, Zohir resides deep within her tower-laboratory, rarely even taking breaks for meals or rest. The secrets of *Firebrand* have begun to consume her, and she works feverishly to work her corruption into it.

CROSSING THE VOID

Dark stone monoliths hang from above, concealing small forms darting between the stalactites. Carrying the smell of



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molds and fungi, the air is cool and dry as it blows through the great rift in the stone. Spores from the phosphorescent molds swirl in the air before falling deeper into the crevasse.

Karexin's Tower hangs approximately halfway across Phaedextrin's Maw, nearly a mile northeast of where the PCs emerge from the Blighted Path. The PCs can learn of the tower's exact location from the Oremont svirfneblin or by interrogating captives such as Sarxa or the redcap guards. Without assistance, spotting the tower requires a successful DC 40 Perception check, meaning the PCs will likely need to spend some time exploring Phaedextrin's Maw before finally discovering it, possibly running afoul of additional random encounters at the GM's discretion.

Whether the PCs know the location of Karexin's Tower or are merely exploring, much of Phaedextrin's Maw lacks a horizontal surface to traverse—even its floor a thousand feet below is a twisting affair of broken hills, narrow cracks, and deep bogs of waste. Traveling this terrain requires specific methods.

Climbing: The Maw's rough walls require successful DC 15 Climb checks to traverse, but hanging from or traveling along its ceiling 100 feet overhead requires successful DC 30 Climb checks. The ceiling is covered with large stalactites that may be navigated as if they were the cavern walls, and may even offer alcoves or flat surfaces where climbers may rest. Characters with climb speeds may traverse the walls and ceiling with little difficulty.

Flight: Creatures that can fly may navigate much of the Maw easily, and many of the creatures who call the cavern home can indeed fly. The larger stalactites—many the size of trees or small buildings—may present hazards for flying creatures traveling too close to the ceiling. Reaching Karexin's Tower from the ledge (area O) requires 5 minutes with a flight speed of 60 feet.

Flying Mounts: Many of Zohir's visitors reach her tower via flying mounts, and the orphne maintains a stable of trained mobats at the northeastern edge of the Maw's ledge (see below). Other flying mounts, including summoned creatures, eidolons, and shapeshifted companions, can navigate the expanse with relative ease, though given the great heights involved, riders may wish to rely on military saddles that strap them securely to their mount. If the PCs interact with the villagers of Oremont, the svirfneblin wholly endorse this option for reaching the Tower as the safest and easiest, as the mobats' blindsense allows them to navigate in the dim light of the cave even at high speeds.

Story Award: If the PCs find a solution for reaching Karexin's Tower without relying on the mobat mounts, award them 600 XP each.

O. MOBAT STABLES (CR 6)

A round structure of stacked logs and piled stone leads right up to the cliff's edge, and extends several thick spars

twenty feet out into the darkness. A trivial bit of red bunting decorates the exterior. The air reeks of ammonia.

A heavy, bronze gong rests near the cliff's edge.

The logs making up this building are actually the stalks of giant cave mushrooms that grow in small stands on the canyon floor. Though referred to as "stables," the structure built at the cliff's edge is more of a feeding station for the Maw's large colony of mobats—enormous and relatively intelligent bats large enough for humanoids to ride. The stable attendants provide regular meals of mushrooms and giant grubs, both farmed by undead slaves on the guano-soaked canyon floors far below.

Over several generations, the mobats (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 42) have come to trust the fey, flocking to the stable when a gong is sounded and allowing themselves to be saddled. The batlike creatures are not especially picky about who rides them as long as they remain well fed and receive some respect for their role, and even the Oremont svirfneblin occasionally use the mounts to travel the Maw or sabotage Karexin's Tower. Despite their exotic nature, the mobats are accustomed to handling riders and do not impose a –5 penalty on Ride skill checks. The mobats are considered combat-trained, and any creature able to speak Undercommon gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Ride checks to control a mobat mount.

Creatures: Since the Oremont villagers occasionally hijack her mounts for sabotage and theft against her otherwise secure home, Zohir maintains a few guards here at the stables who double as attendants for the mobats. Vashana and her two quickling assistants maintain a cozy lair in the nearby rock face, and while Vashana spends her days working in the stable, her assistants spend their time sleeping or climbing through the tunnels; if combat breaks out, the assistants require a full round to reach the stable before they can join the melee.

VASHANA THE SWIFT

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female quickling fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 227)

CE Small fey

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 44 (6 HD; 4d6+2d10+14)

Fort +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities evasion, natural invisibility, supernatural speed, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron

Weaknesses slow susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed 120 ft.

Melee +1 kukri +12 (1d3+2/18–20)

Ranged thrown tool +11 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +7)
1/day—*dancing lights*, *flare* (DC 13), *levitate*, *shatter* (DC 15), *ventriloquism* (DC 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat Vashana spends most of her time in the stables, crafting new saddles, packs, bridles, and other associated riding equipment.

During Combat Vashana relies on throwing her assortment of knives, punches, and awls from her tool kit. When using *Deadly Aim*, she takes a -2 penalty on ranged attack rolls and gains a +4 bonus on damage rolls. Neither she nor her assistants stay in one place long, taking advantage of their speed and natural invisibility to move across the terrain.

Morale While her assistants fight to the death, Vashana flees into the tunnels if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 22, **Con** 15, **Int** 15, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Animal Affinity, Dodge, Mobility[®], Spring Attack[®], Step Up, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+51 when jumping), Bluff +10, Craft (leather) +9, Escape Artist +13, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +7, Perception +11, Ride +12, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +17, Survival +9, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

SQ poison use

Other Gear mwk leather armor, +1 *kukri*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, mwk leatherworking tools, 7 wings of mobat leather (15 gp each), 27 gp

QUICKLINGS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 18 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 227)

Treasure: In addition to the quicklings' gear, the stable contains eight exotic military saddles, two exotic pack saddles, 20 bit and bridle sets appropriate for mobats, and three *potions of feather fall*. Hidden within Vashana's work bench (Perception DC 20) is an *equestrian belt*^{UE} finely tooled from mobat leather.

Development: Ringing the gong placed in the stable calls six (or more, depending on the PCs' needs) mobats in 1d6 rounds. The creatures will not approach during combat, but afterward will land and allow themselves to be saddled for a ride through the canyon to Karexin's Tower.

P. THE STIRGE HOUNDS (CR 6)

Stalking Phaedextrin's Maw is a tribe of sprites called the Stirge Hounds. Isolated in the Darklands centuries ago, they adapted by domesticating stirges to steal the blood from more dangerous underground dwellers, and then they milked that same blood as their primary food source. Over time, their tribe became nomadic bandits, riding their trained stirges into battle to threaten and harry trespassers into bribing them for safe passage.

The gang nests in a large crack southwest of the svirfneblin tunnels, and the crack is similarly difficult to discover if PCs search for it. A dozen ordinary sprites and two dozen stirges lair in the mostly vertical complex, led by only a single rider while the others hunt.

Creatures: While the Stirge Hounds know enough to leave well-to-do fey visitors alone, they harass anyone else flying (or climbing) in Phaedextrin's Maw. A trio of riders circles and threatens anyone who takes to the skies magically or astride mobats, demanding coin and blood in exchange for safe passage. If the PCs are willing to offer up 1,000 gp and enough blood to fill one of their stirge mounts, the riders let them pass in peace' otherwise they attack.

STIRGE HOUND RIDERS (3)

CR 3

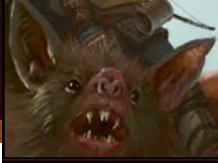
XP 800 each

Sprite fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 256)

CN Diminutive fey



STIRGE HOUND RIDER



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Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 size)

hp 39 each (5 HD; 1d6+4d10+14)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3 (+1 vs. fear)

DR 2/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee mwk longsword +8 (1d3-1/19-20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +13 (1d2-1, plus 1d6 fire/x3)

Space 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +4)

Constant—*detect evil*, *detect good*

At will—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 9)

1/day—*color spray* (DC 10)

TACTICS

Before Combat Before mounting up, the riders apply one *oil of flame arrow* to a single quiver of 50 arrows and divvy up the enchanted ammunition.

During Combat The Stirge Hounds circle or chase prey on their stirge steeds, firing arrows and unleashing their *color spray* spell-like effects against any opponents who prove especially dangerous. After a few rounds, they attempt to fast dismount and direct their mounts to attach to enemies and drain their blood. Ironically, the dismounted sprites are much faster and more maneuverable.

Morale A rider flees if reduced to fewer than 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point-Blank Shot

Skills Acrobatics +4 (–4 when jumping), Escape Artist +8, Fly +22, Handle Animal +4, Perception +6, Ride +10, Sense Motive +2, Survival +4

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ armor training 1, luminous

Combat Gear *oil of flame arrow*, *oil of magic weapon*, *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork diminutive longsword, masterwork diminutive shortbow with 20 arrows, exotic military saddle, 42 gp

STIRGE MOUNTS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

AC 18

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 260)

Gear mwk studded leather barding

Story Award: Whether they battle the Stirge Hounds, bribe them, or find another means of bypassing them, award the PCs XP as if they defeated the gang in combat.

Q. KAREXIN'S TOWER

Karexin's Tower is an inverted complex carved from the living stone of the one of the Maw's largest stalactites.

PLUMMETING PERILS

The Stirge Hounds present a danger to the PCs' mounts more than to the PCs, but a killed or stunned mount does not necessarily mean an untimely death for its rider. A stunned mobat does not immediately plunge from the sky, but must succeed at a DC 15 Fly check as a free action each round to hover or else it begins falling. Alternatively, a rider may attempt to keep a stunned mobat aloft and gliding forward with a successful DC 15 Ride check.

If these checks fail, or her mount slain, a rider may still save herself with a successful DC 20 Acrobatics or Ride check to leap from the saddle to a nearby handhold, stalactite, or friendly mobat. Spells that are cast as an immediate action, such as *feather fall*, may rescue a fallen rider from a painful end. A character falls approximately 500 feet each round, potentially leaving her within range of long-range spells (such as *telekinesis*) after 1 round, and giving her at least 2 rounds to drink a potion or activate other magic items before reaching the canyon floor.

Its entryway and primary level are located near the cavern's ceiling, and personal rooms with increasing levels of security lie farther down its length. A deck of fungus-grown planks forms a garden at the highest level, connecting the primary tower to the nearby mobat roost.

The walls of the tower are magically treated hewn stone, and the doors are unlocked unless otherwise stated. The tower is well lit with a combination of phosphorescent fungi and *continual flame* spells.

Q1. MOBAT ROOST (CR 4)

A yawning cavern opens up on the side of this large rock formation, and a deck of sturdy, gray platforms awaits within.

This landing platform has enough room for up to three mobats at a time to cling to its edges and allow their riders to dismount. The mobats are trained to land here rather than the garden deck (area Q2) unless coaxed away with a successful DC 20 Ride check.

A box on the wall contains cave solifigid nymphs, a favored treat, and if the PCs don't reward their mounts with one, the mobats begin pawing at it in irritation.

Creatures: A patrol of unusual undead called beheaded like to nest in the roost. These creatures arose spontaneously thanks to the Maw's lazurite deposits and a particularly gruesome duergar commander who held the Maw centuries ago. The residents of the tower find the pests delightful, if annoying, and usually chase them away if they draw too close, but with Zohir absorbed in her studies, the undead have returned.

MAIN
FLOOR



KAREXIN'S TOWER

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

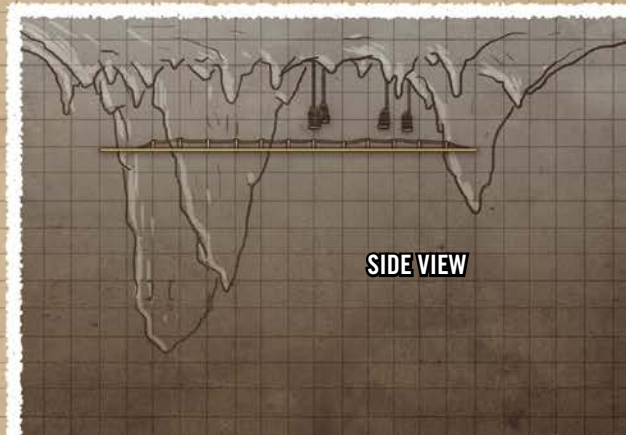
SECOND FLOOR
(BELOW MAIN FLOOR)



THIRD FLOOR
(BELOW SECOND FLOOR)



FOURTH FLOOR
(BELOW THIRD FLOOR)





The beheaded swarm out after one mobat lands at the roost, or after two or more humanoids enter the roost (if the PCs land elsewhere or arrive under their own power). Extremely territorial, they try to kill or chase away intruders and target those in flight first.

LAZURITE BEHEADED (4) CR 1

XP 400 each

Variant beheaded (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 17*)

NE Tiny undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 6 each (1d8+2)

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

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee slam +4 (1d2+2)

Ranged belch +6 ranged touch (1d6 acid)

Special Attacks belching

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14 (can't be tripped)

Skills Fly +16

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Belching (Ex) A lazurite beheaded can spew a stream of acid once per round as a ranged touch attack.

Q2. HANGING GARDENS (CR 6)

Dismal gray planks form the foundation of an otherwise vibrant garden of molds, fungi, and even surface plants. Black iron cages, each large enough to hold a single person, dangle from lengths of rusting chain above.

While Zohir holds no love for nature, she does like growing her spell components rather than buying them from merchants. Much of the work of maintaining this miraculous garden deep below the surface falls to her assistant, Sarxa, whenever the spy isn't scouting Davarn. The forlarren found some peace maintaining the haunting beauty of the garden in this bleak and dark environment. Many of the plants here are edible and find their way to the tower's tables, but many more (especially the mushrooms) are poisonous.

The cages above hold mostly dwarven prisoners. Zohir enjoys leaving her prisoners to die of exposure, only to have them rise again days later thanks to the lazurite vein in the cavern ceiling above. Three of the cages hold ghouls, while six hold dwarves in varying degrees of health.

The double doors that serve as the tower's main entrance are locked (Disable Device DC 30). The back door leading into area Q5 is also locked but is less secure

(Disable Device DC 20). One of the keys Sarxa carried opens this rear entrance.

Creatures: The experiments performed by Zohir's apprentice Utrat have produced a spider-shaped living topiary from the garden's flora, which has grown increasingly territorial around any but a few of the tower's residents and the undead. Zohir once paid duergar to guard her tower, but after her apprentice's pet slew them, she simply flayed their skin and animated the remains as a pair of cunning shredskins.

If combat begins, the shredskins each spend a turn flying up to the overhead cages and releasing a ghoul, which they wrap themselves around using their control body ability. These additional bodies merely provide the shredskins with additional hit points and do not act on their own or contribute to the encounter's CR.

LIVING TOPIARY CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 181*)

SHREDSKINS (2) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 243*)

Development: Each cage above is easily unlocked by a lever on the bottom, dropping its captive in the process. None of the captive dwarves are healthy enough to fight. Two have been infected with ghoul fever and are 2 days from death without assistance.

Treasure: Utrat grew his living topiary around a platinum spider statuette that's dotted with glass reservoirs that once housed strange alchemical ingredients. The device is worth 2,000 gp as a curio, but if combined with Utrat's notes from area Q9 and 4,000 gp worth of rare alchemical reagents, it can be used to grow a new spider-shaped living topiary over the course of a month. This living topiary is not immediately under its creator's command, though its attitude is considered friendly toward its master. The shape of the living topiary can be modified by rebuilding the statuette with a successful DC 25 Craft (jewelry) or Craft (sculptures) check. Failure by 5 or more destroys the statuette and its agricultural properties, leaving only 500 gp worth of platinum.

Q3. SITTING ROOM

The interior of the tower looks like it has grown into its current shape over the years, rather than having been carved out of the stone. The walls and floors are smooth—no tool marks are evident. Elaborate rugs cover the floor. Several plush chairs and a sofa form a cozy circle near the room's center, while a line of stern-looking statues overlooks the room.

RESPLENDENT DIPLOMAT'S PALETTE

Common among fey and coming to prominence in the courts of Taldor, the resplendent diplomat's palette is a boon to any world traveler.

RESPLENDENT DIPLOMAT'S PALETTE

PRICE
5,500 GP

SLOT none

CL 3rd

WEIGHT 2 lbs.

AURA minor enchantment and illusion

This shallow box contains an assortment of beeswax, oils, pigments, brushes, and quills, and allows a user to blend seamlessly into new cultures and fashion scenes. By spending 5 minutes applying these contents, a user may adopt the hairstyle, fashion, and social cues of any culture with which he is familiar, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff or Diplomacy checks with members of that culture, but leaving him otherwise recognizable. Alternatively, the palette may be used to conceal the user's identity entirely; it cannot make the user appear shorter or taller or otherwise alter their body, but otherwise allows him to adopt the appearance of another creature of the same type with the same body type and build. Either application lasts for 5 hours or until removed with soap and water. A *resplendent diplomat's palette* has 50 charges when created, and each use consumes 1 charge.

The palette qualifies as a disguise kit, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. Using it as such does not consume a charge.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 2,750 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *disguise self*, *eagle's splendor*

The top floor serves as a receiving area and entertaining space. Several chairs and a sofa are arranged in the center of the room. Stone columns mark the end of the room and a long stone table with chairs arranged around it is visible behind the columns. The table and columns rise up from the floor without seams or breaks in the stone.

Creatures: The servants in the dining room (area Q5) can see anyone who enters the front door, and rush to attack.

Treasure: A silver tea set worth 250 gp is carefully arranged on the coffee table.

Q4. LAVATORY

This lavatory holds a row of garderobes, as well as a counter of soaps, colognes, and cosmetics. The room's most prominent feature, concealed behind a gauzy curtain, is a massive marble bath. Clever use of magic and piping provides nearly endless water in a variety of temperatures.

Treasure: The various scented oils and perfumes are worth a total of 300 gp, and scattered among them are an *oil of fox's cunning*, an *oil of eagle's splendor*, three *oils of*

lesser restoration, four *bandages of rapid recovery* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 220), and a *resplendent diplomat's palette* (see the sidebar). The lavatory's true treasure, however, is concealed in the walls. A successful DC 22 Perception check uncovers a panel to expose the bath's elaborate lead plumbing, at the heart of which lies a *decanter of endless water*.

Q5. DINING ROOM (CR 6)

A dark, wooden dining table dominates this cavernous chamber, while a short, raised stage overlooks the room from the northern end. Lovely silver and porcelain fixtures fill cabinets along the walls, and a stairwell in the eastern wall leads below.

Though rarely used, this elaborate dining room is ideal for fine dinners and musical recitals—both common features of Karexin and Zohir's life before their exile.

Creatures: Two jinkin gremlin slaves are polishing the silverware in this room, while Zohir's redcap butler, Malwell, watches them suspiciously. Unless the PCs are especially noisy, all three are surprised when the adventurers first enter the tower, but recover quickly. The gremlins try to escape the room in the confusion, and if successful, they flee the tower permanently.

MALWELL

CR 6

XP 2,400

Redcap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 233)

hp 60

JINKINS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 142)

Treasure: Two silver candelabra worth 100 gp each and a serving platter worth 75 gp sit on the massive table. The gremlins flee with the silverware they were polishing, worth 150 gp altogether; if they die, the silverware is with their bodies.

Q6. LOWER HALL (CR 5)

This long hall gently slopes downward to the south. A widened middle portion serves as a guard room.

Creatures: Two of Zohir's bone legion soldiers remain on guard here to stop intruders.

BONE LEGION SOLDIERS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 35 each (see page 10)

Q7. KITCHEN (CR 7)

The overwhelming scent of spices fills this large and well-



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appointed kitchen. Niches and shelves molded from the stone walls hold jars and satchels in every color, while barrels and crates along the west wall occasionally grunt or squeak.

The tower kitchen is far larger than it needs to be for Zohir and her staff, and could easily be used to prepare a banquet if required. Several of the crates along the western wall contain live animals for future meals, including ducks, bats, a piglet, and several cats. A secret door in the eastern wall requires a successful DC 18 Perception check to discover.

Zohir's apprentice, Utrat, holds dominion here, and uses his *stone shape* spell-like ability to create counters and ovens as he needs.

Creatures: Utrat is disturbed, even as pechs go. Far too codependent and addicted to cytellish, he has begun a painful metamorphosis he doesn't yet understand. Only meeting Zohir during the elder's years of wandering the Darklands has given the young pech the insight and strength of will to resist his slow degeneration. Eventually, the orphne took on her sycophantic follower as an apprentice, though she has found herself unable to coax any inherent magical potential from Utrat. Eventually, thanks to his fascination with cytillesh spores and other drugs, the young pech opened his mind to the world of alchemy, and he has vainly attempted to recreate his mistress's impressive feats with an array of reagents.

To date, Utrat's greatest "necromantic" success is Murgo, a small carrion golem he spent weeks stitching together. He realizes that this creation isn't undead, but he believes that she marks his first real step toward necromancy—the fact that he can shift his drudgery of chores onto his construct has also gone a long way toward improving his mood and his studies.

Utrat is more cautious than the upstairs guards, and he realizes that anyone who has delved so deeply into the tower must be powerful. If the PCs enter, he demands their names and threatens them with a kitchen knife, but doesn't immediately attack, hoping to delay them while attracting the guards from area Q6 with his yelling.

Utrat and Sarxa share a tepid romance. Neither is especially attracted to the other, and their relationship is one of boredom rather than genuine love. Even so, Utrat has some friendly affection for the forlarren, and he immediately attacks if he discovers the PCs have killed her.

UTRAT **CR 6**
XP 2,400
 Male pech alchemist 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 26, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 206*)
 NE Small fey (earth)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield, +1 size)

hp 103 (11 HD; 6d6+5d8+38)

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7; +4 bonus vs. poison

Defensive Abilities light fortification (25%); **DR** 5/cold iron; **Immune** petrification; **Resist** poison resistance; **SR** 14

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee dagger +12/+7 (1d3+5/19–20)

Ranged shock bomb +11 (3d6+3 electricity)

Special Attacks bomb 8/day (3d6+3, DC 15), earth mastery, stone knowledge

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +11)
 3/day—*stone shape, stone tell*

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)
 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, resist energy, spider climb*
 1st—*comprehend languages, crafter's fortune^{APG}, cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, shield*

TACTICS

Before Combat If Utrat hears a fight with the guards in area Q6, he downs his extracts of *spider climb* and *shield*, and consumes his Constitution mutagen.

During Combat Utrat is tough, but clumsy and weak willed. He tries to keep out of close combat, and hurls shock bombs into melee, knowing the electrical bursts aid his golem.

Morale Utrat fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without his extracts and mutagen, Utrat's statistics are: **AC** 21, **hp** 81, **Fort** +12, **Con** 16, **Cha** 12

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 16, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23 (23 vs. bull rush and overrun)

Feats Brew Potion, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Heal), Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Throw Anything

Skills Acrobatics +3 (–1 when jumping), Bluff +5, Climb +13, Craft (alchemy) +15 (+20 to create alchemical items), Craft (stonemasonry) +11, Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +11, Heal +15, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +12, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +13; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (stonemasonry)

Languages Common, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +5), discoveries (precise bombs, shock bomb), mutagen (+4/–2, +2 natural armor, 50 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy

Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of darkvision, potion of endure elements*; **Other Gear** +1 light fortification leather armor, dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, 38 gp

MURGO

CR 3

XP 800

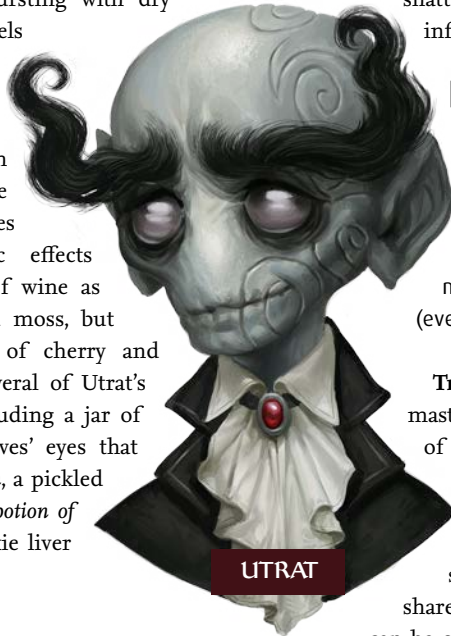
Young carrion golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 293, 136

hp 34

Q8. PANTRY

This pantry is stuffed to bursting with dry goods and wine, including barrels of flour, dried mushroom meal, and salt.

Treasure: Three bottles of wine from Zirnakaynin (worth 150 gp each) that are brewed from fleshwarped vines have potent, hallucinogenic effects on non-elves; treat a glass of wine as a poison effect similar to id moss, but with a delightful aftertaste of cherry and tobacco. Further back are several of Utrat's unique cooking projects, including a jar of marmalade made from dwarves' eyes that acts as five *potions of darkvision*, a pickled druid's tongue that acts as a *potion of beast shape II*, and a salted pixie liver that acts as a *potion of fly*.



Q9. UTRAT'S CHAMBER

A large unmade bed with a single nightstand occupies one end of this cluttered room opposite a desk and bookcase that are stacked with assorted papers, books, and scrolls. A wardrobe stands next to the bookcase.

This messy room belongs to the alchemist Utrat (see area Q7). Most of the books lining the shelves discuss anatomy or necromancy, with surprisingly few on the subject of alchemy.

Treasure: A complete alchemist's lab is set out on the desk and shelves, and five sets of courtier's clothing still hang in Utrat's wardrobe. A successful DC 18 Perception check uncovers several potions in the pockets, including two *potions of bull's strength*, a *potion of disguise self*, and three *potions of cure light wounds*. Several poems written in Terran lie among the stacks of papers on the desk, and they're all quite good, if somewhat grim; the poems are worth 22 gp to the right collector.

Q10. SARXA'S CHAMBER (CR 4+)

A tidy room with a bed, dresser, bookcase and desk occupy this room. A crystal vase holding a blown-glass lily on the bedside table is the only decoration.

Sarxa's room is well kept, with nothing out of place and very little in the way of extraneous items or decoration.

If Sarxa survived Firebrand's Redoubt, she is found in this room, licking her wounds after a painful reprimand from Zohir.

Trap: Whether Sarxa lives or not, her room remains dangerous thanks to a poison trap installed beneath her rug. Triggering the trap causes the lily on her table to shatter, spraying the entire room with poison-infused glass splinters.

GLASS LILY TRAP

CR 1

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20;

Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect poison gas (shadow essence); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (everyone in area Q10)

Treasure: Inside the dresser is a set of masterwork thieves' tools, inscribed with terms of endearment in Sylvan, and a small stack of handwritten notes in Sylvan from Utrat, which bluntly describe several particularly intimate moments they shared (or perhaps that he hopes they will share). A locked chest (Disable Device DC 30) can be opened with one of Sarxa's keys. Inside is 157 pp, 100 gp, and six pearls worth 100 gp each.

Q11. ZOHIR'S CHAMBER (CR 6)

A fan of bookshelves fills this large room. Only a bed draped in silk sheets and a small desk mark it as a bedroom rather than a library. The portrait of a large and severe-looking man with ash-white skin hangs from the eastern wall.

This was once Karexin's chamber, but Zohir claimed it and old library when she returned to the tower, and has expanded it greatly in the intervening decades. Books and scrolls line the walls, detailing the Darklands, arcane theory, and the myriad intrigues of the Court of Ether.

Creatures: Tucked among the shelves are three loyal guardian scrolls that watch over Zohir as she researches and rests.

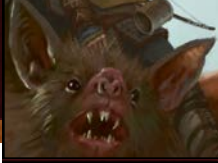
GUARDIAN SCROLLS (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 27 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 138)

Development: A set of leather-bound journals rests on the dressing table, most of which are weathered and heavily worn. These are Zohir's personal journals, written in Sylvan, and describe much of her life, from being accepted as an apprentice by Audalot Karexin over 2 centuries ago, to their expulsion from the Court



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of Ether because of Karexin's "romantic indiscretions," to finding Phaedextrin's Maw and its unusual lazurite deposits. She delves into some detail on the protracted battle with the Rising Blades, but glosses over the decades she spent wandering the Darklands, except to mention recruiting a "useless pech" and a "backstabbing half-fiend" into her personal retinue.

The last several entries contain more specific information. See Handout #3.

Treasure: A successful DC 18 Appraise check identifies the most valuable books in the collection, including a *blessed book* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 283) as well as *Adrift in the River of Souls* (worth 75 gp); *Life, Death, and Afterlife* (worth 50 gp); *The Necrology of Kabribri* (worth 150 gp); *Seven Fey to Appease* (worth 50 gp); and *Ruminations on Life's Transitions and Reintroduction* (worth 100 gp). With a successful DC 18 Perception check, adventurers can also uncover scrolls of the following spells: *detect undead*, *false life*, *fear*, *ironwood*, *spectral hand*, and *stone shape*.

Q12. STUDY

This small alcove includes a ready table, an oil lamp, and a neatly arranged bookshelf.

Q13. LABORATORY (CR 9)

The air in this room carries the faint smell of chemicals and herbs, as well as a peculiar, alkaline stink. Glass jars,

REINFORCING THE TOWER

While Zohir is vaguely aware that Sarxa has been defeated at Firebrand's Redoubt, she believes herself safely insulated from reprisals given the dangers of the Blighted Path and the creatures of Phaedextrin's Maw. If the PCs assault her tower and then retreat, she learns from her hubris and reinforces her security. Using the Words of Obhiation ritual, she creates additional bone legion soldiers, placing another trio in area Q6 and replacing any lost guardians in area Q2. If Utrat has been slain, she uses a similar ritual on his form, though his fey nature and cytillesh addiction warp the ritual and transform him into a wraith, which Zohir assigns to guard the sitting room (area Q3) and dining room (area Q5) on the uppermost floor.

tubes, beakers, and body parts preserved in fluids clutter every flat working space of this sprawling laboratory. Two large stone slabs occupy this room; chains and shackles hang from both. Two empty cages hang in the northeast of the room near a heavily barred window in the eastern wall. The floor slopes slightly toward the east, where a grate opens into the outer wall. Saws, pliers, knives, blades, hammers, pokers, and other assorted tools of torture are meticulously arrayed in trays or hanging behind the closed glass doors. A large wooden rack stands beside the cabinets of tools.

The dark elves are wretched zealots, but their knowledge of mortal blood is enticing and deep. With these new books I've acquired, I think I have the knowledge I need to unravel the bloodline of that squat, self-important crone, Axebringer. I have acquired blood closely related to Delbera, and it boils and spits quite vigorously in response to my ritual—I need only her wretched axe as a focus to carry this curse to all who share her heritage. Her suffering will be my balm.

The redoubt was all but abandoned. I have returned with Firebrand and a retinue of new guards, much to my delight. I left Sarxa behind to open the tomb while Utrat and I refine the ritual and break this blasted axe's spirit. She assures me it will not take long to figure out the locks on the tomb door. Soon.

Sarxa has failed me! She and those duergar idiots could not hold the redoubt, nor open the tomb. I should have expected as much. Delbera is surely suffering, and now that fortress of hers can stand as her prison for all eternity. I'd love to raise her bloated corpse as my scullery maid, but for now just knowing she suffers is sufficient.

Zohir Totek's laboratory is equal parts hall of learning and torture chamber. She assisted Karexin's grotesque explorations of life and death here, and now her own apprentice helps with her research and quest for vengeance. The lab is well stocked with spell components and alchemical reagents, as well as masterwork restraints and healing equipment that can keep a living creature immobile and alive for hours on end.

All of Zohir's recent work, however, has focused on the enchantments imbued in *Firebrand*. The axe, empowered by Delbera's faith and a subtle connection to Torag, has proven resistant to her rituals to corrupt it and destroy the Axebringer clan. Regardless, Zohir has made some progress in suppressing the blade's willful nature for the moment, and in time will be able to turn it to her own wicked ends. The axe currently lies on one of the heavy stone workbenches, chained in place and soaking in a black mixture of bile and green dragon acid. A faint, orange flicker can barely be seen through the murky fluid.

Creatures: Zohir Totek spends her waking hours here, slowly corrupting *Firebrand* and perfecting her ritual to slay the Axebringer line using the weapon's power. She is surprised to discover that anyone managed to survive the Blighted Path's dangers and reach her, and generously offers to transform the PCs into more powerful, immortal versions of their current selves if they abandon their attempt to stop her.

Zohir is condescending and entitled. The only creature in the world she respected more than herself was her former master, Karexin, and deep down she hoped he would eventually find her a suitable mate once she completed her arcane tutelage. Even in exile, she found a sense of safety in one of the few other orphnes she had ever encountered. While all orphnes are twisted and disdainful, Zohir truly learned what it was to hate with a cold and ruthless precision the day that her master was slain.

Zohir is flanked by a pair of wraiths, which are furious undead members of

Delbera's bloodline, whom she raised in perfecting her kin-slaying ritual. The undead dwarves have forgotten themselves entirely, and throw themselves wholly into protecting their fey mistress. Zohir's desecrating aura encourages them in death just as *Firebrand's* holy light rallied them in life, and they benefit from the increased attack bonus, damage, hit points, and saving throws the aura provides.



ZOHIR TOTEK **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Female orphne sorcerer 3 (see page 58)

NE Medium fey

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

Aura desecrating aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 88 (9 HD; 6d6+3d6+57)

Fort +19 **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities bone dance;

DR 5/bludgeoning and cold iron;

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4+2)

Ranged necrotic ray +10 (3d6 negative energy, plus 3 Con)

Special Attacks necrotic ray (3d6, DC 17)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th;

concentration +10)

Constant—*detect undead*

At will—*command undead, hide from undead*

1/day—*animate dead*

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd;

concentration +7)

7/day—*grave touch* (1 rounds)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd;

concentration +7)

1st (6/day)—*chill touch* (DC 15),

disguise self, ray of enfeeblement

(DC 15), *sculpt corpse*^{APG} (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic,*

mending, read magic, resistance

Bloodline undead

TACTICS

Before Combat

Zohir uses her *wand of alarm* to mark the hallway above and alert her to intruders. If aware of interlopers,

ZOHIR



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she activates her bone dance ability, becoming partially incorporeal.

During Combat Zohir sends her wraiths forward, then uses her *animate dead* spell-like ability to turn the four corpses in her lab into zombies. After that, she relies on her necrotic ray and *ray of enfeeblement*, and uses her *wand of vampiric touch* if her enemies close in to melee.

Morale Zohir is too close to her revenge to flee now. She fights until slain.

Base Statistics Without her bone dance activated, Zohir's statistics are **hp** 79; **DR** 5/cold iron; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9; **Melee** 2 claws +5 (1d4+1); **Ranged** necrotic ray +9; **Skills** Bluff +13, Diplomacy +9, Use Magic Device +15.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 15, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 21

Feats Arcane Armor Training, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +14, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Common, Sylvan, Undercommon

SQ bloodline arcana (corporeal undead affected by her humanoid-affecting spells)

Combat Gear *lesser extend metamagic rod*, *wand of alarm* (22 charges), *wand of false life* (12 charges), *wand of vampiric touch* (8 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *spell storing leather armor*, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *onyx necklace* (125 gp)

WRAITHS (2)

CR 5

XP 800 each

hp 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 281)

Melee incorporeal touch +7 (1d6+1 negative energy plus 1d6 Con drain)

Development: If Zohir is slain, any remaining fey in the tower flee and her undead creations crumble into dust.

Treasure: A variety of treasures are scattered around the laboratory, including three *scrolls of cure moderate wounds*, a *wand of breath of life* (4 charges), a glass jar filled with 38 onyx gems (worth 25 gp each), a fey-made silver syringe (worth 350 gp), and 183 pp.

Far more valuable than anything else, though, is *Firebrand*, sitting in its pool of tepid bile. After a week of Zohir's constant experimentation and desecration, the



axe is now a +2 *flaming dwarven waraxe* that may be used as a holy symbol for Torag. (If no PCs are proficient with a dwarven waraxe, change the weapon's type to an axe that at least one of the PCs can wield with proficiency.)

Prior to these rituals, however, Firebrand was a +2 *holy flaming burst dwarven waraxe*, whose nascent intelligence spoke empathically to its wielder and offered divine magic to anyone who served its cause of defending the common people. The potential for these abilities still exists within the axe, though the process for restoring them is left up to the GM and lies beyond the scope of this adventure.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Zohir slain and *Firebrand* recovered, Davarn is once again safe from the dangers of fey necromancy. The PCs must still find their way back to Davarn or the surface, which may prove a simple matter of retracing their route back up the Blighted Path, or may involve a new series of adventures bypassing duergar patrols, fighting additional monsters, and exploring deeper mysteries within the Darklands. Leads within Karexin's Tower and the orphnes' history may even draw the PCs to the Court of Ether, nearly a month's journey south through treacherous Nar-Voth.

Davarn is elated to see the adventurers return, and Mayor Bensik organizes another public feast in their honor. She happily pays whatever reward has been promised, and the hundred or so remaining members of the Axebringer clan assemble to offer their thanks, small tokens of appreciation, and promises to name future children in the heroes' honor.

Once they return to Firebrand's Redoubt, Delbera Axebringer's ghost breathes a heavy sigh of relief, and a lively flush of color returns to her ghostly cheeks. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

Thank you, bold adventurers. You have not only given of yourself to bring some rest to this old soul, but you've protected untold innocents from a vile fate. What you have done here, I hope, will be remembered more fondly than anything I have done. I have perhaps grown too fond of this old axe, if its theft can cause so much unrest. I entreat you to take it with you, and put its blades to use against more threats to the common people. I have carried its weight too long, and if I am to rest, I think I must let it go.

Her words said, the ghost of Delbera Axebringer moves on into the afterlife, at last at peace knowing her family and community are safe.



APPENDIX 1: DAVARN

In the wake of the Kerse Accords, which united the squabbling dwarven Sky Citadels into a coherent kingdom, the dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains strengthened their trade relationship with the newborn nation of Druma. What began as a simple exit point from the tunnels snaking through the Five Kings Mountains grew as trade with Druma, Isger, and Cheliox increased. With time, the temporary settlement became a full-fledged city. Davarn's location lies at the confluence of many underground streams and meltwater seeps, and the original founders excavated the cavern surrounding the underground lake and set their defensive gates against the lava tubes that marked the city's eastern edge. Lake Davarn still dominates the center of the city, using clever channels and interlocks to hold the increased snowmelt that causes the lake to swell every year.

Most of the town's income comes not from any one trade, but from its role serving as a major commercial hub between the Five Kings Mountains and its human neighbors. Davarn is situated in the primary pass between Druma and Andoran, and its merchants and craftspeople offer food, water, shelter, and fine dwarven-made goods to travelers in the spring and summer months. Only the harsh winters that close the pass and virtually isolate the town have thus far prevented it from growing in prosperity and size.

Davarn is governed by a council of five members, one of whom, by law, must hail from the surface settlement. All council members are voted in by general election for 10-year terms, staggering the elections to occur every 2 years. This keeps the political atmosphere in the town livelier than most small communities, since at least one



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council member is almost always subtly campaigning for reelection.

Davarn is divided into its surface settlement—a small, human-dominated farming community—and its subterranean urban district. Referred to locally as the upside and downside respectively, residents of both communities trade jobs and friendly rivalries, but the businesses of both settlements rely on one another so thoroughly that humans and dwarves alike consider themselves a shared community. Downside is further divided into three districts. The Iron District wraps to the north and east of the cavern, filling a large shelf overlooking the rest of the town and housing most of the mine entrances, foundries, and trade guilds. The Artisan District occupies much of the city center, and its inhabitants range from whitesmiths and brewers in the north to gong farmers and tanners to the south. Finally, the Mercantile District encompasses Lake Davarn—the city reservoir—and the town's southeastern side with government buildings, schools, and trading houses.

Miners and artisans make up the overwhelming bulk of Davarn's citizens, with nearly half its adult workers divided in their loyalties between the opportunistic Kardack's Shaft mining company and the more conservative Redin's Mine and Ironworks. The two industries have different focuses, and so their antagonism rarely escalates beyond friendly competition or good-natured pranks, but a worker quitting one organization to work for the other can potentially drive a bitter wedge between families, as the rivalry sometimes extends deeper than it seems. Sculptors and smiths make up most of the remaining professionals. Davarn trades for much of its leather and wooden goods, as few artisans of such crafts find steady employment (or supplies) in the city.

Religious leadership and teaching in Davarn often blend together, with the various temples offering free education to Davarn's youths, keeping parents from being overwhelmed during the long, isolated winter months. Wealth disparities between Davarn's districts aren't especially severe, as the community provides a basic allowance of dense bread and clean water for every citizen, meaning even those unable to work need not beg and don't become burdens on their families. Still, small class differences between the neighborhoods exist, with dwarves from the upper-class areas more noticeably privileged than those from the lower-class areas; the latter are often fiercely proud of their origins despite their humble nature.

Though not officially under the authority of any of the major Five Kings Mountains city-states, Davarn relies heavily on neighboring Taggoret, both as a market for the town's iron ore and concrete, as well as for military protection. Many of Davarn's recent immigrants since its founding have been prospectors and merchants leaving

the crowded city for new opportunities, and many of the old traditions and cuisines of Taggoret remain popular here. Davarn pays an annual compensation to the nearby city in exchange for regular patrols along the tunnels that connect the two and frequent visits by inquisitors and judges. In reality, the road to Davarn is lucky to see one patrol every two weeks and, more often than not, the small town is left to its own defenses. While the occasional presence of Taggoret guards is enough to dissuade full-scale invasions, it leaves ample opportunity for bandits and raiders to prey on merchant traffic to and from Davarn, and the town frequently relies on mercenaries and adventurers to remove these temporary threats. Of course, the proud dwarves of the city dislike admitting that they need such outside help, and so the council appreciates tact and decorum in those they hire to defend the town when necessary.

DAVARN

LN large town

Corruption +0; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +2; **Law** 0; **Lore** -2; **Society** +4

Qualities prosperous, strategic location, subterranean

Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 2,009 (1,879 dwarf, 118 human, 7 gnome, 5 other)

Notable NPCs

Customs Collector Novar Rinaldi (N male human rogue 5)

Father Razik Kentin (LG male dwarf cleric of Torag 7)

Guard Captain Erna Stoneheart (LG female dwarf ranger 4)

Innkeeper Lijini Marbeket (CG female gnome expert 5)

Mayor Ranti Bensik (LN female dwarf aristocrat 6)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 15,000 gp;

Spellcasting 5th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Subterranean Davarn is primarily built underground, sheltering it from enemies but also isolating it culturally. (*Law* +1, *Lore* -1, *Danger* -5)

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Though small, Davarn has seen many periodic spikes in wealth over its lifetime, and enjoyed many unique public works projects and colorful leaders over the years.

1. **Bensik Estate:** Davarn's largest home belongs to the Bensik clan, which has provided leaders who have served as the town's mayors off and on almost since Davarn's founding. The squat, practical architecture calls back to the styles of Droskar, whom the earliest settlers of their

clan honored. While the Bensik family long ago turned from the worship of the Dark Smith, the facade remains intact out of respect for their ancestors' sacrifices on the city's behalf.

2. Choker's Run: This tangled neighborhood houses Davarn's poorest residents, and is named not for the residents but for the establishment—Choker's Hall—around which it once formed. Choker's Hall was a small tavern built atop of a natural gas fissure. The founder capped the leak and sold puffs of the hallucinogenic fumes to patrons for a fraction of the price of ale. The huffing tavern has long since been closed and the gasses diverted, but the block retains its name, and many locals have since adopted the vicious aberration as a neighborhood mascot to reflect their tenacity. Rather than being ashamed of the neighborhood's ignoble origins, these hardy dwarves consider them a point of pride. The common saying "tough as a choker" refers to dwarves born in the neighborhood who persevere and become successful; the Davarn Chokers, a team of locals that regularly competes in the Spring Muddle, considers its name an homage to this colorful maxim.

3. Davarn Reservoir: The abundant fresh water that pooled in this cave first made it appealing to explorers from Rolgrimmdur, and centuries later this carefully carved artificial lake continues to dominate Davarn's culture. Most of the lake is about 100 feet deep, and it supports a thriving population of blind cave fish known as five kings trout. When prepared by a trained chef, these fish are quite tasty and a local delicacy, although getting the recipe right is far more difficult than one would expect.

4. Davarn Town Hall: As one of the oldest buildings in Davarn, the town hall bears many of the practical touches of the Torag-influenced design that was popular during its construction. However, the edifice has been refurbished so many times over the years, some of its hallways and stairwells lead nowhere, and some rooms have been bricked up and left forgotten.

5. Davarn Waterworks: The waterworks are a marvel of engineering that dominates the reservoir's western shore. It maintains a fairly constant water level thanks to small canals dug into adjoining caves and several ingenious pumping stations. The water pressure maintained by the building allows every home to flush away its waste to abandoned mine shafts below the city, but the system requires near-constant oversight and repairs. The town's leaders typically attend to these municipal needs without much hassle, although the occasional political spat means that sometimes the work remains undone, raising the possibility of smelly and unsanitary floods in the shafts.

6. Five Kings Customs House: Davarn's customs house operates on behalf of both the city and neighboring Taggoret, and it collects specific levies for more distant

dwarven city-states. Unraveling the mess of red tape and mixed trade laws falls to Novar Rinaldi, Davarn's customs inspector, and his small circle of dwarf and human collectors. Rinaldi and his crew are far from bribable, and they remain relatively safe from reprisal thanks to the support of Davarn's wealthiest citizens and the fact that no one else understands how to properly do their jobs.

7. The Hall of Torag: After a landslide swept away Davarn's original surface temple of Torag, the hardy dwarves and their human companions rebuilt it below ground, where it has served as a holy gathering place to the town's many faithful of the Father of Creation. The high priest, the pious and kind Father Razik Kentin, welcomes all dwarven supplicants as his children. He also gracefully welcomes all worshipers of Erastil into the hall, as long as they show proper respect to Torag. Most notably, the humans of Davarn's farming community often send wandering priests of Erastil to this temple, and Father Kentin allows them to hold services in the facility, providing them with shelter where they might normally be in danger espousing their faith unprotected in the wilds. Father Kentin views the philosophies of Torag and Erastil, who both value community and family, as opposite sides of the same coin, although he has a decidedly dwarven take on the value of hands-off guidance and its role in building self-sufficiency.

8. Kalistrade Library: This temple accommodates Davarn's small but growing population of devotees to the Prophecies of Kalistrade. **Mimon Tabberwel** (LN female human oracle^{APG 2}) tends the archives, answers religious questions, and takes orders for books and specialized clothing the faithful require that are only available in Druma. Every spring marks several large deliveries that have accumulated over the snowy season.

9. Kardack's Shaft: Arguably the oldest mine in Davarn, Kardack's Shaft takes advantage of anything and everything miners can pull from the ground, and it supplies much of the stone used to build Davarn and the gravel for seasonal road repairs. More recently, the mine has begun manufacturing concrete to take advantage of large limestone and volcanic ash deposits their explorations uncovered. Seven different families jointly own the mine, but none of them descend from the original Kardacks who opened it. The families employ **Steed Jomark** (N male human expert 5), a Drumish follower of the Prophecies of Kalistrade, as foreman to run it on their behalf.

10. The Lucky Imp: Davarn's premier inn, tavern, and dance hall rests near the tunnel that joins upside and downside, making it a popular stomping ground for dwarven and human caravans alike. The proprietor, Lijini Marbeket, is the matriarch of her large gnome family, and regularly shoves children or grandchildren out into the world each spring to make their own way



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and bring her back something interesting to adorn the inn's crowded and ever-changing decor. The Lucky Imp recruits extra employees during town festivals to help oversee the swell of visitors and provide additional meal service. These temporary employees are usually paid in free room and board, although sometimes Lijini can be persuaded to part with a good amount of gold in exchange for highly competent workers or for those willing to sell her particularly scrumptious ingredients for her special festival menus.

11. Redin's Mine and Ironworks: Redin's Mine is in a steady feud with Kardack's Shaft over which is the oldest, most productive, and safest mine in Davarn. Redin's Mine specializes in iron and quartz, and many of their oldest shafts double as chimneys for their associated smelting operation. The current owner, **Yugga "Red" Rambus** (LN female dwarf commoner 9), began as a common miner and has deep concerns for the safety of her employees.

12. Stinnison's Emporium: Run by local gadfly Lukher Stinnison (see page 5), a much-loved but rarely trusted fixture in the merchants' guild, the emporium specializes in "affordable magical solutions," primarily potions and alchemical goods within the reach of everyday citizens, alongside a few snake oils, folk remedies, and "lucky" baubles to cater to the superstitious. Lukher deals in

everything magical Davarn has to offer, aside from weapons and armor, but charges an additional 5% over market price as he finds it difficult to restock most of his arcane supplies.

13. The Stone of Elders: While most of Davarn's faith belongs to Torag, the small town honors the remainder of the dwarven pantheon on their respective holy days or when their circumstances beg divine assistance. This large, round temple provides shrines for the nine additional members of the dwarven pantheon, and its circular shape theoretically means no one god is prioritized above the others. In reality, the shrines of Bolka and Grundinnar see the bulk of the citizens' attentions, while the shrines of Droskar and Dranngvit are all but ignored.

14. The Tippy Scales: The enterprising **Vampa Kardack** (LE female dwarf rogue 7) owns and operates the largest gambling hall in Davarn, which caters more to travelers than residents. Referred to by locals as the Crooked Scales thanks to the graft it purportedly pays to the town council, the hall offers all manner of dwarven games of chance. Vampa Kardack is descended from one of Davarn's original founders, and is the closest thing the small town has to a crime lord, assisting smugglers, fencing illegal goods, and hiring out her guards to anyone who needs muscle.

APPENDIX 2: MONSTERS

The following new monsters were designed by the top 8 contestants in Paizo's 2015 RPG Superstar competition: Gabriel Almer (gloomwasp), Brian Fruzen (geomaw), Ben Iglauer (occulari), Scott LaBarge (coryphae), Monica Marlowe (narrrik), Rep Pickard (spiroskek), and Christopher Wasko (deephlit). The orphne was created specifically for this module.

CORYPFAE

A crown of softly glowing crystals caps the head of this hauntingly beautiful, midnight-black figure.

CORYPFAE

CR 6



XP 2,400

NE Medium fey

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 10 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 65 (10d6+30)

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities cut in with care, elegant maneuvers, evasion; **DR** 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks enchanting dance

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th;

concentration +15)

Constant—*feather step*^{APG}

At will—*charm person*

(DC 16), *dancing lights*,

ghost sound (DC 15),

lesser confusion (DC 16)

3/day—*quicken ghost sound* (DC 15),

suggestion (DC 17)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 19)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12,

Cha 21

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*ghost sound*)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Escape Artist +18, Perception +14, Perform (dance) +18, Stealth +18

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground or urban

Organization solitary, troupe (2–6), or company (8–12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

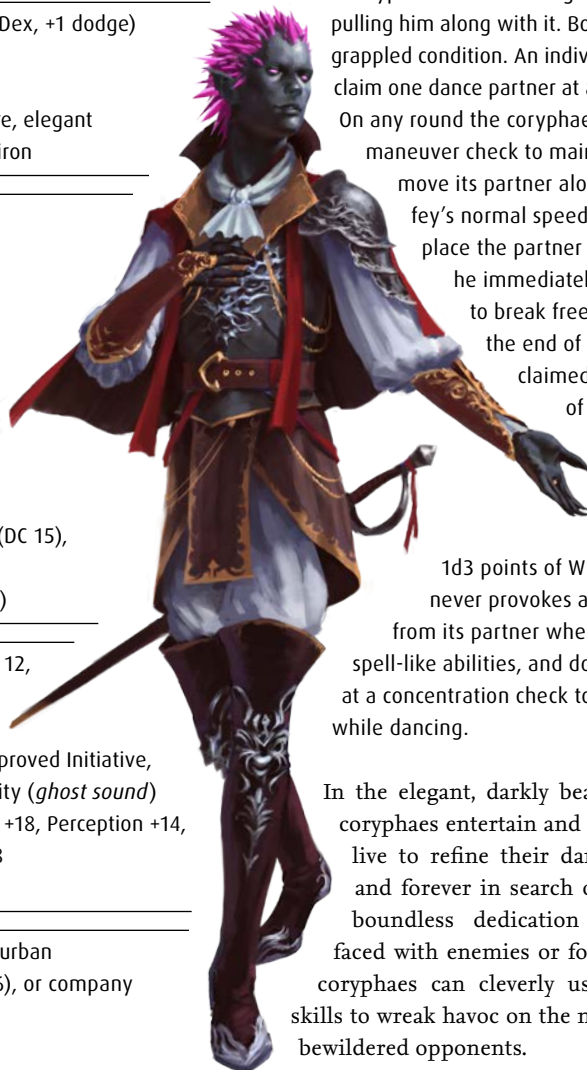
Cut in with Care (Su) If a coryphae successfully claims someone as a dancing partner (see enchanting dance below), any attack made against the coryphae has a 50% chance of targeting its partner until the beginning of its next turn.

Elegant Maneuvers (Su) Whenever a coryphae moves more than 5 feet in a round, it can add its Charisma bonus as a circumstance bonus to its attack rolls and CMB, and as a dodge bonus to its AC. If the coryphae moves 5 feet or less in a round, these bonuses are lost.

Enchanting Dance (Su) As a full-round action, a coryphae may move up to its speed while dancing and attempt a combat maneuver check against a single target within 5 feet of any square it passes through. Its movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal, but this combat maneuver does not. If the maneuver succeeds, the coryphae claims the target as its dance partner, pulling him along with it. Both creatures gain the grappled condition. An individual coryphae may only claim one dance partner at a time.

On any round the coryphae succeeds on its combat maneuver check to maintain this grapple, it may move its partner along with it at up to the fey's normal speed. If this movement would place the partner in a hazardous location, he immediately receives a free attempt to break free with a +4 bonus. At the end of the coryphae's turn, the claimed partner takes 2d6 points of nonlethal damage from the frantic dancing and buffeting, and must succeed at a DC 15 Will saving throw or take 1d3 points of Wisdom damage. A coryphae never provokes an attack of opportunity from its partner when targeting him with its spell-like abilities, and does not need to succeed at a concentration check to cast a spell-like ability while dancing.

In the elegant, darkly beautiful courts of the fey, coryphaes entertain and protect their rulers. They live to refine their dances, honing their skills and forever in search of a liege worthy of such boundless dedication and perfection. When faced with enemies or forced onto the battlefield, coryphaes can cleverly use their courtly dancing skills to wreak havoc on the minds and bodies of their bewildered opponents.





DEEPLIT

This granite-skinned humanoid stands as tall as a dwarf, though a flickering flame hovers where its head should be.

DEEPLIT

CR 5



XP 1,600

NE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

Aura palelight (20 ft., DC 16)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Immune blindness, undead traits

Weaknesses pattern susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk heavy pick +13 (1d6+10/x4)

Ranged rock +7 (1d4+7)

Special Attacks consume light

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12 (+14 sunder); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. sunder)

Feats Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Throw Anything

Skills Climb +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Perception +13, Profession (miner) +10

Languages Dwarven, Undercommon (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, or team (3–12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Consume Light (Su) A deeplit can inhale nearby lights as a standard action. The deeplit makes a single Charisma check against all light sources within 20 feet (DC = 10 + the flame's spell level; nonmagical torches and lanterns have a DC of 10, while alchemical light sources have a DC of 11). Affected light sources are immediately extinguished. If the deeplit consumes a light source that is at least normal brightness, it can either immediately regurgitate or swallow the light as a free action. Regurgitating the light deals 2d6 points of fire damage to all creatures in a 15-foot cone, and blinds affected creatures for 1d6 rounds. A successful DC 16 Reflex saving throw halves the damage and dazzles victims instead of blinding them. Swallowing the light enhances the deeplit's palelight aura for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based. Deeplit are immune to this ability, and to any damage inflicted by regurgitated light.

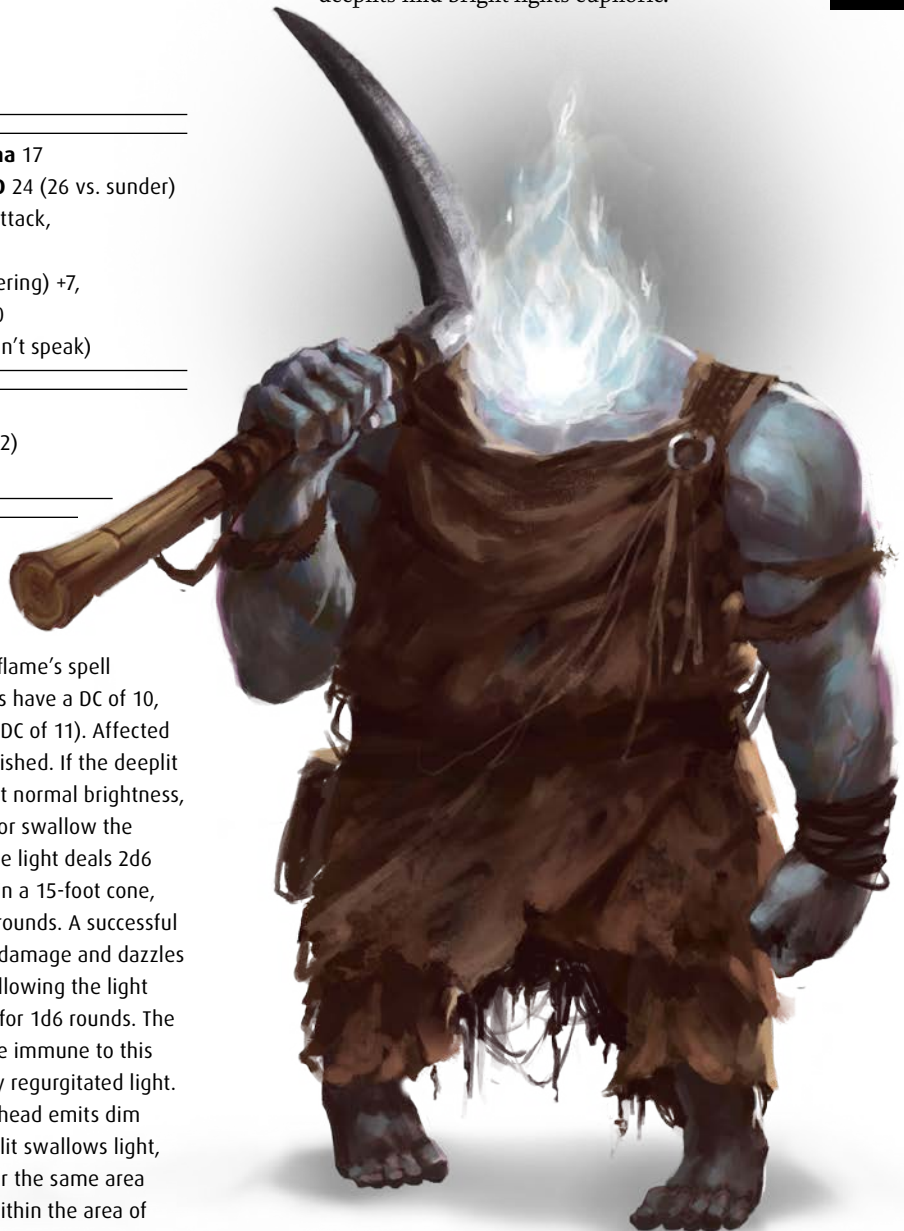
Palelight Aura (Su) A deeplit's flaming head emits dim light in a 20-foot radius. When a deeplit swallows light, its head instead emits bright light over the same area for 1d6 rounds. Any living creatures within the area of

this unholy light become fatigued for 1 hour (Fortitude DC 16 negates). A creature that successfully saves against a deeplit's palelight aura can't be affected by that same deeplit's aura for 24 hours. Its save DC is Charisma-based.

Pattern Susceptibility (Ex) Pattern effects and spells affect deeplits normally, ignoring the normal undead immunity to mind-affecting effects.

Deeplits spawn from unfortunate creatures lost underground. Many were dwarves who fell during the Quest for Sky, but miners and explorers may also succumb to similar fates. Deeplits dig through caves and mines, yearning to see sunlight one last time, but are cursed to repeat the same confused paths they followed in life.

Deeplits paradoxically crave the light other undead despise. Thanks to their long exposure to lightless realms, deeplits find bright lights euphoric.



GEOMAW

This wormlike creature's outer body consists of stone plates, and a cavernous maw contains a sparkling mass of red crystals.

GEOMAW CR 7   

XP 3,200

NE Large aberration

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19 (-2 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 95 (10d8+50)

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

Weaknesses blind, blood gorger

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee bite +14 (2d6+14)

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

Special Attacks blood lantern, fast swallow, powerful bite, swallow whole (2d6+14 plus 2d6 points of acid damage, AC 16, 10 hit points)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 7, **Con** 20, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 23

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +13, Stealth +7 (+15 in rocky terrain); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in rocky terrain

Languages Aklo

SQ freeze

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary or frenzy (2-5)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Gorger (Ex) A geomaw dedicates much of its energy to digesting prey it has captured, and loses its burrow speed while digesting a creature using its swallow whole ability.

Blood Lantern (Su) As a swift action in any round it inflicts damage to a victim it has swallowed whole, a geomaw can emit a scintillating pattern of red-hued light from its crystalline interior. All creatures within 30 feet must succeed at a DC 16 Will saving throw or be fascinated. This is a sight-based, mind-affecting compulsion effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same geomaw's blood lantern for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Freeze (Ex) While lying motionless with its mouth open, a geomaw appears to be a natural crystal formation. A geomaw that uses freeze can take 20 on its Stealth check to hide in plain sight as a natural cave feature.

Powerful Bite (Ex) A geomaw applies twice its Strength bonus to bite damage.

Birthered from the unfathomable terrors of the cavernous deep, geomaws roam the Darklands, finding easy prey among the covetous races of Nar-Voth and Golarion's surface. Their hulking bodies can extend up to 15 feet long and weigh between 2,000 and 4,000 pounds. Despite their great size, geomaws require little sustenance, and can go weeks or even months between meals. They pause for days or weeks on end, remaining perfectly motionless as they wait for prey. This creature's open maw resembles a cache of valuable crystals, ripe for the plucking. Curious beasts and greedy prospectors alike flock to these shining gemstones—drawn by the subtle shimmering light they radiate and the faint, sweet scent the geomaw exudes—only to be quickly gobbled up.

These strange aberrations reproduce rarely, gathering in great numbers in the wet, hot underground chambers that surround volcanoes. Geomaws lay caches of eggs that take three years to hatch. The mineral-laden waters of these caverns are vital to the formation of a young geomaw's stony hide and gemlike teeth.

Geomaws have little society of their own and seem content to traverse the outskirts of wilder civilizations, feeding on the blood and flesh of unwary creatures that seek shelter or riches in the caves near the surface. On the rare occasion one cares to communicate, it does so through a series of tail thumps and clinks produced by tapping its crystalline teeth together. Mating groups of geomaws sometimes produce hauntingly beautiful sounds in such a manner.



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GLOOMWASP

The stinger and antennae of this dog-sized wasp pulsate with a dim, violet light.

GLOOMWASP

CR 6



XP 2,400

N Small magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see invisibility; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +1 size)

hp 59 (7d10+21)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities shadow blending;

Immune poison

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee sting +9 (1d6+1 plus blacklight)

Ranged 2 light rays +13 (1d6/×4 plus blacklight)

Special Attacks blacklight, light ray

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)

Constant—see *invisibility*

1/day—*dancing lights*, *dust of twilight*^{APG} (DC 15), *light*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 5, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot

Skills Fly +16, Perception +12, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

Languages Undercommon (can't speak)

SQ corrupt light

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, cluster (2–6), or nest (7–24)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blacklight (Ex) A strange, radiant energy empowers gloomwasps, and infests their natural attacks. A creature exposed to a gloomwasp's strange radiation emits a violet light for 1 minute (as if affected by *faerie fire*) and must make a successful DC 16 Fortitude saving throw or suffer low radiation poisoning. The save DC is Constitution-based. Radiation functions similarly to poison. All radiation damage is a poison effect, and as such it can be removed with any effect that neutralizes poison.

Low radiation poisoning—blacklight; save Fort DC 16, frequency 1/day initial effect 1 Constitution drain, secondary effect 1 Strength damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.



Corrupt Light (Su) Three gloomwasps can focus their light rays on a single light source within 30 feet, such as a lantern, a torch, or a *continual flame*, as a full-round action. The affected light source becomes corrupted, shedding only dim light and exposing all creatures within range to the gloomwasps' blacklight. An attended light source resists this effect with a successful DC 19 Will saving throw. The effect immediately ends if any of the participating gloomwasps are slain, stunned, or otherwise prevented from using their light rays.

The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Light Ray (Ex) A gloomwasp can fire beams of ultraviolet light from its

antennae. These light

rays have a maximum range

of 30 feet, overcome damage

reduction of any type, and deal

double damage to fungi, mold, oozes,

undead, and creatures with the light

sensitivity or light blindness weakness.

Shadow Blending (Su) Attacks

against a gloomwasp in dim light

have a 50% miss chance instead of the

normal 20% miss chance. This ability

does not grant total concealment; it only

increases the miss chance.

Infused with shadow magic and wielding light as a weapon, these aggressive hunters prowl the endless, twisting caverns and canyons of Sekamina. Gloomwasps are the result of giant vermin exposed to the flesh-altering radiations of the Darklands, becoming vibrantly colorful if highly toxic additions to the strange ecosystem that thrives below Golarion's surface. They hunt by using their natural glow to attract curious creatures and travelers, then lash out with beams of energy. Gloomwasps often need only strike their victims a few times, then follow them for days while the lingering radiation slowly saps their prey's ability to flee or fight back.

Surprisingly intelligent and tenacious, a small band of migrating gloomwasps can quickly become a full infestation. They build faintly radioactive nests high into cave ceilings, narrow tunnels, and hollow rock formations, where they nurse their drab, rat-sized grubs on a steady diet of regurgitated blood. The grubs eventually seal themselves within hexagonal cells, emerging weeks later as adult gloomwasps.

While relatively fragile, gloomwasps' intelligence makes them formidable. They communicate with a system of dance, light flashes, and pheromones, and work together effectively to overwhelm prey of superior size and strength, including humanoids.

NARRIK

Glossy eyespots bulge from the neck of this long-limbed figure. Jagged teeth line the open mouth in its chest.

NARRIK CR 7 

XP 3,200

CE Medium aberration

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, taste fear; Perception +12

Aura frightful presence (30 ft., DC 17)

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 75 (10d8+30)

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

Defensive Abilities alien anatomy

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +13 (1d8+6 plus poison), 2 claws +13 (1d4+6)

Ranged tanglespit +11 (see below)

Special Attacks death throes, poison, tanglespit

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28



Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills Climb +15, Intimidate +13, Perception +12, Stealth +9, Survival +12

Languages Aklo

SQ compression

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alien Anatomy (Ex) A narrik’s internal organs are composed of a viscous goo, rendering them immune to precision damage (including sneak attacks) and bleed damage.

Death Throes (Ex) When a narrik is slain, its internal alchemy begins a violent chain reaction. 1d3 rounds after death, a narrik’s corpse erupts, spraying all creatures within 5 feet with narrik poison (Reflex DC 18 negates; see below).

Poison (Ex) Bite or tanglespit—contact; *save* Fort DC 19; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1 Wisdom damage and shaken for 1 minute; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A shaken target becomes frightened, and a frightened target becomes panicked. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tanglespit (Ex) As a ranged touch attack, a narrik can spit a glob of viscous, psychotropic saliva at a single creature within 30 feet. Creatures struck by tanglespit become entangled, and must succeed at a DC 18 Reflex saving throw or be glued to the floor; a flying creature must succeed at a DC 18 Reflex saving throw or be unable to fly. A creature glued in place may break free with a successful DC 18 Strength check, by inflicting 15 points of damage to the spit with a slashing weapon, or by dissolving the adhesive with at least a pint of alcohol or an application of *universal solvent*. Tanglespit becomes fragile and brittle after 2d4 rounds, freeing any entangled creature.

Taste Fear (Ex) Narriks taste the subtleties of their surroundings, especially the fear of other creatures, effectively granting them blindsight to detect all creatures suffering the shaken, frightened, or panicked conditions within 60 feet.

In the lightless tunnels leading between Darklands settlements and to surface entrances, packs of narriks stalk their favored prey: terrified sentient beings. Their bodies are bizarre, alchemical laboratories that naturally produce a cocktail of potent venom and hallucinogenic pheromones, as well as a sticky saliva in which they trap their victims. Nearly blind, a narrik’s cluster of eyespots atop its body allows it to only detect light and movement, and the aberration hunts almost entirely by scent, especially savoring the heady aroma of terror.



OCCULARI

Bundles of viscera hang from the hundreds of levitating eyes in this mass. Jagged teeth protrude from each eyelid, forming makeshift fanged maws.

OCCULARI

CR 7



XP 3,200

CE Diminutive aberration (swarm)

Init +9; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 size)

hp 82 (11d8+33)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee swarm (3d6)

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

Special Attacks capitulating gaze, distraction (DC 18), eye possession, multigaze

STATISTICS

Str 4, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +8; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved

Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Fly +29, Knowledge

(dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (local) +12,

Linguistics +6, Perception +26, Stealth +22, Survival +13;

Racial Modifiers +10 Perception

Languages Aklo, Common, Dwarven, Orc, Terran,

Undercommon (can't speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SQ unavoidable gaze

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, surveillance (2-5), or reconnaissance (6-12)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Capitulating Gaze (Su) Creatures within 30 feet that meet the oculari's gaze are lulled into a complacent stupor and cannot move, as if affected by *hold monster* (Will DC 18 negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

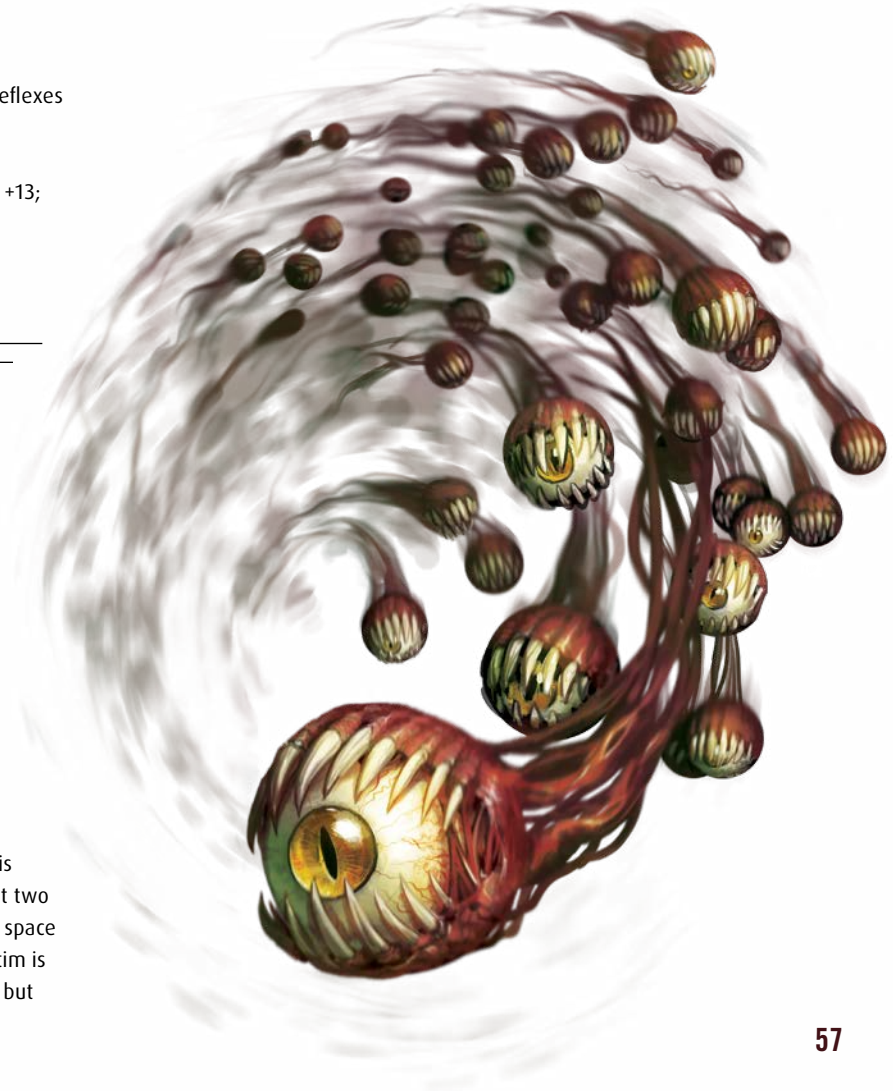
Eye Possession (Su) An oculari that begins its turn in a space occupied by a creature paralyzed by its capitulating gaze attack may spend a full-round action to burrow tendrils into the victim's eyes, plucking them out and blinding the creature; a successful DC 18 Fortitude saving throw resists this attempt. As a standard action, an oculari can insert two of its own eyes into a blinded victim that shares its space (Fortitude DC 18 negates). On a failed save, the victim is cured of its blindness and gains darkvision 60 feet, but

the oculari can see through its victim's new eyes at will. An oculari may also cloud the sight of any eye possession victims at will, granting it total concealment against any creature whose eyes it has replaced. A *remove disease* spell removes the parasitic eyes, rendering the creature blind, while a *regenerate* spell removes the oculari implants and restores a creature's vision. If the oculari is killed, any victims of its eye possession are blinded. The saving throw DCs are Constitution-based.

Multigaze (Su) As a standard action, an oculari can actively gaze at up to 3 creatures within 30 feet.

Unavoidable Gaze (Su) Sighted creatures in an oculari's space cannot avert their eyes to avoid the oculari's gaze attack, and take a -4 penalty on saving throws against the gaze attack.

Ocularis are amalgams of grotesquely mutated eyes. Motivated by their desire to see all things, they hunt down hosts for their component parts and use them to experience the wider world. Many covet the sights that the aboveground world offers, while others work as spies for intellect devourers, who provide these hideous swarms with a sense of purpose and ample prey.



ORPHNE

Pale skin and dark features frame this starkly beautiful creature, which is surrounded by a palpable aura of death.

ORPHNE CR 4   

XP 1,200

NE Medium fey

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

Aura desecrating aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 39 (6d6+18)

Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities bone dance; **DR** 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +5 (1d4+2)

Ranged necrotic ray +6 (2d6 negative energy, plus 2 Con)

Special Attacks necrotic ray (2d6, DC 15)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)

Constant—*detect undead*

At will—*command undead*,

hide from undead (DC 15)

1/day—*animate dead*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16,

Int 15, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3;

CMB +5; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Point-Blank Shot,

Precise Shot

Skills Bluff +11,

Diplomacy +11, Disguise +8,

Escape Artist +9,

Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Sylvan, Undercommon

ECOLOGY

Environment Any underground or urban

Organization solitary, pair, or wake (3-8)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bone Dance (Su) As a standard action, an orphne can transform its flesh into ectoplasm, becoming incorporeal except for its skeleton. This transformation improves the orphne's damage reduction to DR 5/bludgeoning and cold iron, although attacks capable of striking incorporeal creatures inflict full damage. The orphne using bone dance benefits from its own desecrating aura as if it were undead. An orphne may remain in this state for up to 1 hour or until sunrise, whichever comes first, and is fatigued afterward for as long as it maintained its bone dance ability.

Desecrating Aura (Su) Orphne emanate negative energy in a 30-foot-radius that acts as a *desecrate* spell. Undead within this radius gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, as well as +1 hit point per Hit Die. The saving throw DC of channeled negative energy is increased by 3 within this aura. An orphne's desecrating aura can be negated by a *dispel evil* spell, but an orphne can reactivate it on its turn as a move action. A desecrating aura suppresses and is suppressed by a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell; both effects are negated within any overlapping area of effect.

Necrotic Ray (Su) An orphne can project a ray of pure negative energy as a ranged touch attack with a range of 30 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of negative energy damage and 1 point of Con damage per 3 Hit Dice (2d6 damage and 2 Con for standard orphne).

Often exiled from the First World for their experimentation with necromancy and disregard for boundaries, orphnes are elegant and sadistic fey obsessed with death, pain, and undeath. Blessed with the ability to channel negative energy, their presence sustains the dead and withers living things. They surround themselves with undead chattel of their own creation, and they often serve powerful undead masters in turn.

Orphne adore art, music, and all the finest luxuries in life, but abuse and suffering truly sustain them. They love to be cared for and appreciated like the beatific creatures they see themselves as, and can quickly turn to anger when not treated as such. Orphne are immeasurably cruel, and without oversight, their lives gravitate towards hurting others for their own amusement, pulling the wings off songbirds or scarring mortal captives in artistic ways. They delight in watching creatures that were once full of life decay into shells of corruption or undeath.



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SPIROSKEK

The rear limbs of this elk-sized insectoid loop into a large, chitinous sphere, and it nimbly propels itself forward with balance and grace.

SPIROSKEK

CR 6



XP 2,400

CN Medium magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 68 (8d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities wheel barbs; **Immune** disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee bite +13 (1d6+4 plus bleed), claws +12 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks freewheeling charge, bleed (1d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

3/day—*glitterdust* (DC 15), *silent image* (DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 5, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Nimble Moves, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +17, Perception +12, Stealth +9, Survival +5 (+13 when tracking); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +8 Survival when tracking

Languages Aklo (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, or nest (3–6)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Freewheeling Charge (Ex) A spiroskek can prime its wheel-limb for a swift and powerful charge attack, allowing it to move triple its normal speed on a charge, double move, or run action. While using a freewheeling charge, a spiroskek may run or charge over difficult terrain (though each square of difficult terrain still counts as 2 squares of movement). If the spiroskek successfully hits during this charge, it can immediately attempt either a bull rush or an overrun combat maneuver with a +4 circumstance bonus on the check without provoking an attack of opportunity. The effort needed for a freewheeling charge leaves the spiroskek staggered until the end of its next turn.

Wheel Barbs (Ex) The spiroskek's wheel-limb is covered in tiny, flexible barbs. These grant the spiroskek a +4 bonus to CMD against bull rush, drag^{APG}, reposition^{APG}, and trip maneuvers, and to Acrobatics checks to avoid falling on slippery terrain.

Wise Darklands-dwellers learn to listen for the faint, eerie “skek-kek-kek” noise that a prowling spiroskek’s wheel-limb makes. These insectile carnivores of Nar-Voth stalk a variety of intelligent prey, and generations of devouring derros, duergar, and fey has imparted the creatures with a measure of illusory magic. They are clever ambush predators, capable of phenomenal bursts of speed. Once their prey has been wounded, a pack follows like vultures, waiting for their anticoagulant saliva to bleed a creature dry before moving in to feast. Many spiroskeks target slaver parties, taking advantage of the meat that arrives bound or hobbled; duergar especially hate the beasts.


Spiroskeks are clever, but have little culture. They communicate in a language of mandible clicks and bodily gestures, which they use to give warnings and exchange tales of successful hunts. Normally loyal to their nests, spiroskeks consider most other creatures—even others of their kind—either enemies or prey.

Spiroskeks are 5 to 6 feet tall and weigh approximately 170 pounds.




APPENDIX 3: MAGIC ITEMS

The following new magic items were submitted for Paizo's 2015 RPG Superstar competition, and all led their creators to the second round. The contestants who earned a place in the top 16 are Gabriel Almer (*staff of the prime mover*), Charlie Bell (*crook of unseen forces*), Russ Brown (*ice fang*), Brian Fruzen (*pyroclastic spike*), Jeff Heikkinen (*flowing fortress armor*), David Higaki (*earthcracker*), Dana Huber (*ophidian coil*), Ben Iglauer (*fool's scepter*), Scott LaBarge (*keyhole stiletto*), Anthony Pennington (*depth charger*), Newton Philis (*breach barrier*), Chris Shaeffer (*vibrant frog hide*), and Christopher Wasko (*windstrider mail*).

BREACH BARRIER		PRICE 2,370 GP
SLOT none	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 15 lbs.
AURA faint abjuration		
		<p>This +1 <i>heavy steel shield</i> is often stylized by its dwarven crafters to look like a door or archway. Once per day after uttering a command word, the wielder can press this shield against a portal to secure it as per the <i>hold portal</i> spell. The shield remains adhered to the portal for 3 minutes, after which the shield comes free. The wielder can remove the shield from her arm as a move action, leaving the shield attached to the portal for the remainder of the duration. Before the end of the duration, the wielder can pull the shield from the portal, automatically ending the effect.</p>
CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS		COST 1,270 GP

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hold portal*

CROOK OF UNSEEN FORCES		PRICE 56,300 GP
SLOT none	CL 12th	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
AURA strong conjuration and evocation		
		<p>This iron staff, silvered and inlaid with diamonds, curves at one end like a shepherd's crook. It functions as a +1/+1 <i>quarterstaff</i> and grants an additional +2 bonus on drag^{APG} and reposition^{APG} combat maneuvers. However, its true power is to summon and command invisible forces, allowing the use of the following spells.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Spiritual weapon</i> (1 charge) • <i>Spiritual ally</i>^{APG} (2 charges)


- *Summon monster VI* (3 charges, invisible stalker only)

Both the *spiritual weapon* and *spiritual ally* gain a +1 enhancement bonus to attack and damage, and any *spiritual*

weapon or *spiritual ally* created by the crook is invisible as per *greater invisibility*, gaining the usual benefits when attacking creatures are unable to see it.

The wielder of a *crook of unseen forces* can spend 1 or more charges as a standard action to create an invisible wave of force in a 30-foot line. This wave of force attempts a drag^{APG}, reposition^{APG}, or trip combat maneuver (wielder's choice) against one creature in this line for each charge expended. This special combat maneuver check does not provoke attacks of opportunity and uses the better of the wielder's Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom modifiers in place of his Strength modifier to his CMB.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 28,300 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, <i>spiritual ally</i> ^{APG} , <i>spiritual weapon</i> , <i>summon monster VI</i> , <i>telekinesis</i>	

DEPTH CHARGER		PRICE 58,800 GP
SLOT none	CL 11th	WEIGHT 3 lbs.
AURA moderate conjuration and transmutation		
		

Carved to look like the bones of fish, the barrel and mechanical components of this blunderbuss are made of mithral. A *depth charger* is a +2 *reliable*^{UE} *blunderbuss*^{UE} that gains an additional +2 enhancement bonus on attack rolls against creatures with the aquatic subtype, and deals an additional 2d6 points of damage to such creatures with a successful attack. All ammunition used by a *depth charger* is considered to have the *dry load*^{UE} weapon special ability in addition to any other magical enhancements it previously contained.

When a *depth charger* is wielded underwater, it enables its wielder to breathe normally. The wielder can continue to breathe underwater for a total of 12 hours as long as she continues to hold the blunderbuss. These hours do not have to be consecutive but must be used in 1-hour increments. The available breathing time is reset only if a *depth charger* is kept dry for 12 continuous hours.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 30,550 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Gunsmithing ^{UC} , <i>air bubble</i> ^{UC} , <i>mending</i> , <i>summon monster I</i> , <i>water breathing</i>	

EARTHCRACKER		PRICE 20,340 GP
SLOT none	CL 12th	WEIGHT 18 lbs.
AURA moderate evocation		

Molded and crafted from a single large chunk of raw iron ore, this +1 *thundering earth breaker*^{UE} is as cool as loose soil to

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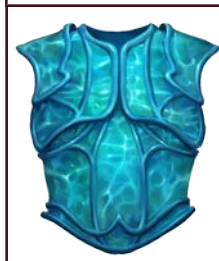
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the touch. Three times per day as a standard action, the wielder may slam an *earthcracker* against the ground, causing earth and stone to rise and fall in a violent wave that travels in a 30-foot line from the wielder's location. All of the affected squares become difficult terrain. The wielder can perform a free trip combat maneuver on a single creature within the affected squares; this attempt does not provoke attacks of opportunity and the wielder is not knocked prone if the attempt fails. If the trip combat maneuver check is a natural 20, the blow is so mighty that it also deals 2d8 points of sonic damage to the target.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 28,300 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>blindness/deafness, stone shape</i>	

FLOWING FORTRESS ARMOR		PRICE 30,350 GP
SLOT armor	CL 10th	WEIGHT 30 lbs.
AURA moderate evocation		



This pale-blue +2 *breastplate* is made from flowing ocean water enchanted to retain its shape. The armor check penalty of a suit of *flowing fortress armor* doesn't apply to Swim checks. When the wearer speaks a command word, the armor flows on or off the

wearer, allowing it to be donned or removed with a single move action from up to 10 feet away.

A suit of *flowing fortress armor* has 3 charges, which refresh automatically every day at sunrise. By spending 1 charge as a standard action, the wearer transforms into water for one of two effects.

Gush: The wearer transforms into water and bursts forward like a geyser up to 40 feet in any direction, then returns to her normal form, allowing her to cross chasms or vault obstacles. The wearer may attempt bull rush combat maneuvers against any creatures and moveable objects along her path, regardless of size. The wearer rolls a single combat maneuver check and applies the result to each creature within the area. This bull rush does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the wearer encounters an immovable object, she may attempt a Strength check to destroy that object as a free action. On a failed bull rush combat maneuver check or Strength check, the wearer's progress is stopped and she reforms next to the obstacle that blocked her path.

Melt: The wearer melts into a puddle, gaining a swim speed of 60 feet, the ability to flow through any space a Tiny creature could squeeze through, and a +8 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks. The wearer can see and hear normally, but can't speak, attack, or cast spells in this form.

This transformation lasts up to 10 minutes, but may be dismissed as a free action.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 15,350 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>control water, elemental body I</i>	

FOOL'S SCEPTER		PRICE 50,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 12th	WEIGHT 3 lb.
AURA strong divination and enchantment		

This wooden marotte is topped with a jester's head whose comical face takes on the likeness of the wielder. As a free action, the wielder of a *fool's scepter* can speak through the jester's head and imitate voices and sounds with a volume up to that of a dragon's roar. The wielder can also cause the jester's face to transform into the comic likeness of any creature she can visualize. Using a *fool's scepter* in this manner grants a +5 circumstance bonus to Perform (comedy) checks.

Once per day as a standard action, the wielder can cause the jester head to take on the likeness of an individual creature within 60 feet and then harangue that creature with magically honed mockery. If the creature possesses an Intelligence of 3 or higher, they are dazed with humiliation for 2d6 rounds and shaken for 10 minutes. This is a mind-affecting, language-dependent compulsion effect, and is negated by a successful DC 15 Will saving throw.

Once per week as a standard action, the wielder can query the jester's head for information regarding an individual creature. The head transforms into the likeness of that creature and recites a number of jocular stories over the next 2d6 × 10 minutes, providing information as per the *legend lore* spell. If the subject of the wielder's query is present and within 60 feet, the head also provides information regarding the subject's thoughts, desires, personality, and motivations as if using *detect thoughts*, though the subject may negate this divination with a successful DC 15 Will save. In this circumstance, the head always answers in a voice that is loud enough to be audible to the subject of the query.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 25,000 GP
Craft Rod, <i>ghost sound, hideous laughter, legend lore</i>	

ICE FANG		PRICE 39,515 GP
SLOT none	CL 9th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA moderate evocation		



This +2 *frost short sword* has a blade made of sparkling blue ice. Anyone wielding an *ice fang* is protected from cold weather as if they were affected by *endure elements*. As a move action, the wielder may cause the blade to either grow to the size of a longsword, melt away to the size of a dagger, or return to its original size. An *ice fang* left unattended

automatically reverts to its original size in 1 minute. An *ice fang* functions as a dagger, short sword, or longsword depending on the current size of its blade.

Once per day upon confirming a critical hit, the wielder may choose to have the blade shatter and send razor-sharp shards of ice flying in a 15-foot cone. The original target of the attack must be within this cone's area of effect. Roll the damage for the critical hit normally and apply to the original target. All other creatures in the cone take damage equal to the amount of the critical hit; one half of this damage is piercing, the other half is cold damage. A successful DC 16 Reflex saving throw reduces the damage by half. After using this ability, the wielder must spend a standard action to reform the blade of the *ice fang*, at any size, before it can be used as a weapon again.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 19,915 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *endure elements, ice storm, shrink item*

KEYHOLE STILETTO		PRICE 23,002 GP
SLOT none	CL 11th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA moderate transmutation		

This sturdy *+1 ghost touch adamantite dagger* can be used as a punch to destroy the workings of a lock or other mechanical device, granting a +2 bonus to Disable Device checks for that purpose, but leaving obvious signs of tampering. Its true usefulness becomes evident when wielded against force magic. The wielder of a *keyhole stiletto* ignores armor bonuses granted by a force effect (such as the *mage armor* spell or *bracers of armor*). Once per day, the user may whisper a command word to allow the stiletto to cut a single small hole in a force effect such as a *wall of force* or *resilient sphere*. The hole can be any shape, but the blade cannot cut a line longer than 3 feet or carve a circle wider than 1 foot.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 13,002 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *disintegrate, plane shift*

OPHIDIAN COIL		PRICE 15,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT —
AURA faint transmutation		



This small wooden ring resembles a serpent with tiny gemstone eyes coiling around the wearer's finger. If worn for 24 hours, it causes its wearer to manifest many serpentine traits. The wearer's skin develops a faint, diamond-shaped pattern, and the pupils of her eyes elongate. The wearer grows a pair of fangs, gaining a bite attack as a primary natural attack that

deals 1d4 points of piercing damage for a Medium wearer or 1d3 points of damage for a Small wearer.

Three times per day as a free action, the wearer of the

ring may cause her fangs to drip with venom, making her bite attack poisonous for 1 round. The save DC of this poison is equal to 10 + 1/2 the wearer's Hit Dice + the wearer's Constitution modifier, but otherwise acts as black adder venom. If the wearer rolls a natural 1 on an attack with her poisonous bite, she is exposed to the poison.

Once per day as a standard action, the wearer may command her tongue to lengthen and become forked for 1 minute, gaining the scent special ability. While this ability is active, the wearer has a 20% chance of failure when casting any spell with a verbal component, as the tongue makes it difficult to speak.

The ring makes its wearer more sensitive to cold. She takes a -2 penalty to saves against spells with the cold descriptor and the effects of cold weather. Additionally, if the wearer is successfully affected by a spell with the cold descriptor, she is slowed for 1 round.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,500 GP
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Forge Ring, *beast shape I, poison*

PYROCLASTIC SPIKE		PRICE 28,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 7th	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
AURA moderate transmutation		

This 3-foot-long, magically reinforced obsidian rod is capped with a globe of volcanic glass at one end, and a gleaming spike at the other. Veins of molten earth glow faintly beneath the rod's surface, flowing from a swirling fiery mass at the orb's core.

Once per day, the spiked end can be driven into sand, mud, or loose earth as a move action, into dense soil or loose gravel as a standard action, or into stone or metal as a full-round action. Once anchored, the earth in a path that is 5 feet wide and 30 feet long cracks and erupts with superheated gases in the direction of the wielder's choosing, originating in a square adjacent to the *pyroclastic spike*. Creatures standing in the path take 2d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 16 half) from the flaming jets of sulfuric gases as the ground beneath them begins to liquefy.

One round after anchoring the rod, liquid fire begins to pour from the *pyroclastic spike* along the affected area, creating a molten river 2 feet deep. The pyroclastic flow deals 10d6 points of fire damage to any barriers it encounters until it is able to flow freely forward to the full range of effect. Creatures in the area of effect automatically take 2d6 points of fire damage each round; those falling prone or held under the liquid fire take 10d6 points of fire damage each round. The molten river persists until the *pyroclastic spike* is removed from the ground as a full-round action, at which point the affected area immediately cools. Any creature in the molten terrain becomes entangled when the rock cools, but may escape with a successful DC 16 Reflex save.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 14,000 GP
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Craft Rod, *firefall*^{PG}



STAFF OF THE PRIME MOVER		PRICE 38,300 GP
SLOT none	CL 10th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA moderate evocation		

This slender silver cane feels more unwieldy than its low weight might suggest, as if a hidden force fights its wielder for control. The staff functions as a +1/+1 *anchoring*^{UE} *mithral quarterstaff*, and allows use of the following spells.

- *Kinetic reverberation*^{UC} (1 charge)
- *Force hook charge*^{UM} (2 charges)
- *Force punch*^{UM} (2 charges)

As long as the staff's *anchoring* special ability is in effect, these spells work differently when cast by the wielder, as noted below.

Kinetic reverberation not only damages an attacker's weapon, but also pushes the attacker away. Immediately after the spell's damage is dealt, as an immediate action, the wielder may attempt a bull rush combat maneuver against his attacker, using his opponent's attack bonus as his combat maneuver bonus. This combat maneuver does not provoke attacks of opportunity and the wielder does not move with his opponent.

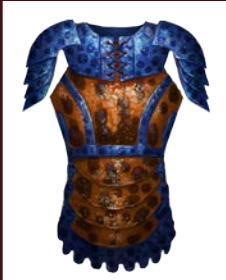
Force hook charge pulls the target to a square adjacent to the staff on a successful ranged touch attack, rather than pulling the staff and wielder toward the target. The spell's target may resist this pull with a successful Fortitude save. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Force punch deals 1d6 points of force damage to its target per caster level (maximum 10d6) against an opponent that is affected by the staff's *anchoring* special ability, rather than 1d4 points of force damage per caster level. An anchored opponent is not pushed away.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 20,300 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, *force hook charge*^{UM}, *force punch*^{UM}, *kinetic reverberation*^{UC}, *levitate*

VIBRANT FROG HIDE		PRICE 28,165 GP
SLOT armor	CL 7th	WEIGHT 25 lbs.
AURA moderate transmutation		



Cut from the colorful flesh of an enormous frog, this +1 *hide armor* squishes thickly and tightly around the body as it is donned. Light sheens brightly off the slippery skin, revealing vivid patterns in myriad hues.

Five times per day as a swift action, the wearer of a *vibrant frog hide* can cause the armor to ooze a virulent toxin. The next creature that touches the wearer must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 1d3 points of Wisdom damage every round for 4 rounds. A poisoned creature can attempt the save again at the beginning of each of its turns, and is

cured after one successful save. Successful unarmed strikes and natural weapon attacks made by or against the wearer count as touching. The wearer is immune to his own *vibrant frog hide*'s poison.

After being worn for 24 hours, a suit of *vibrant frog hide* armor causes the wearer to grow a froglike tongue. The tongue acts as a whip for the purposes of damage, reach, and special features, except that it is a natural weapon with which the wearer is automatically proficient. In addition to its normal trip and disarm weapon features, the tongue may also be used to perform a drag^{APG} combat maneuver with a +2 circumstance bonus, but only to pull a creature closer to the wearer (the wearer cannot step back as part of this attack). The wearer cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components for 1 round after he uses his new tongue to attack (including any attacks of opportunity).

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 14,000 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *beast shape II*, *poison*

WINDSTRIDER MAIL		PRICE 10,100 GP
SLOT armor	CL 5TH	WEIGHT 10 lbs.
AURA faint evocation and transmutation		

Sleek dull gray stripes line the sides of this +1 *mithral chain shirt*, slightly marring the otherwise shining metal. When worn, the wearer's clothing and hair dance about as though caught in a faint breeze, no matter the prevailing weather conditions.

Three times per day as a standard action, the wearer can momentarily transform into a surge of living wind, moving up to 60 feet in a straight line. This line need not be horizontal; the effect can be used to traverse hazards or reach elevated platforms. All creatures in the line between the wearer's starting point and destination are blasted by the squall. The wearer attempts a trip combat maneuver against every creature in the area, with a +5 circumstance bonus on those checks. Failed trip attempts do not stop the wearer's movement, and these maneuvers and movement do not provoke any attacks of opportunity. Any flying creature in the area must succeed at a DC 15 Fly check or fall 20 feet, taking appropriate damage and falling prone if it reaches a solid surface.

Creatures more than one size category larger than the wearer are not affected by a wearer taking advantage of a suit of *windstrider mail*'s living wind effect, but they do not inhibit the wearer's movement. If the wearer's path is blocked by an object, such as a door, she may continue moving forward with a successful Strength check to break the obstacle as a free action. If this check fails, her movement is halted and she takes damage as if she had fallen the distance that she traveled. If the wearer's movement does not end on a surface that can support her weight, she falls to the ground upon transforming back.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,100 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *gaseous form*, *gust of wind*

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It Runs in the Family!

More than a hundred years ago, Delbera Axebringer—a mighty warrior and dwarven leader—slew the necromancer Audalot Karexin, but spared his young apprentice Zohir. In the ensuing decades, the bitter survivor brooded and plotted her revenge. Now, descendants of the Axebringer clan are vanishing, dragged screaming into the darkness by the animated bodies of their fallen kin. The Axebringers and their hometown of Davarn need heroes to break this family curse. What mysteries lie sealed within Delbera Axebringer's ancient abandoned fortress? And what challenges lurk along the Blighted Path winding through the Darklands beneath Golarion's surface?

Down the Blighted Path is a deluxe adventure for 5th-level characters, and includes 64 action-packed pages of exciting battles, supernatural mysteries, and monstrous foes, plus a gorgeous double-sided poster map featuring an overview of the dwarven trading post of Davarn and a miniatures-scale battlemap! The author of this adventure, Monica Marlowe, was the winner of the 2015 RPG Superstar contest, in which hundreds of unpublished authors competed for the chance to write a Pathfinder Module. In addition to her adventure, this book contains a host of new monsters and magic items designed by the contest's runners-up. Players can expect to reach 7th level upon completion of this adventure—if they can survive its deadly haunts, Darklands horrors, and furious villains both living and undead!



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