

PATHFINDER®



EXTINCTION BY COURSE

LIFE'S LONG SHADOWS

By Greg A. Vaughan

The Aerobatic Lumberjack



TRAITS: AGILE,
INJURY, PROP

CHECKS: ACROBATICS +19,
ATHLETICS +19

SEE THE WORLD'S MOST ACROBATIC LUMBERJACK,
DINGO DRAY, PERFORM ASTOUNDING LEAPS
AND FLIPS WITH HATCHETS IN HAND!

LEVEL 10
(DC 27)

BOORALU THE DEADSINGER

TRAITS: EMOTION,
MAGICAL, MUSICAL



CHECKS: DIPLOMACY +18,
NATURE +20

SEE THE SHOONY WHO SINGS TO THE DEAD!
WATCH AS THE SPIRITS OF THE DEPARTED FLY
AND DANCE TO HIS MELODIOUS VOICE!

LEVEL 10
(DC 27)

The Invulnerable Beast-Juggler

TRAITS:
ANIMAL, EARTH



CHECKS: ATHLETICS +22,
NATURE +16

THIS STATUE JUGGLES WILD BEASTS!
NEVER HAVE YOU SEEN STONE WITH SUCH
AGILITY OR SUCH MASTERY OVER ANIMALS!

LEVEL 10
(DC 27)

PATHFINDER

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The heroes arrive with their circus in the town of Kerrick and make contact with Opper Vandy, an influential local leader. From Vandy, the heroes learn more about the aeon towers in the Swardlands, as well as disturbing evidence of a murderous haunting.

Chapter 2: The Wellspring Tower22

At the Wellspring Tower, the heroes learn that their foe is a xulgath alchemist named Thessekka who is using her abilities to siphon energy directly from that tower's *aeon orb*.

Chapter 3: The Liferoot Stone.....32

Near the Castinlee Hollows, the heroes discover the Liferoot Stone largely in ruins. However, Thessekka has used her strange affinity with stone to take control of ancient golems left behind by long-dead masters of the aeon tower, and these creatures hinder the heroes' explorations.

Chapter 4: The Old Forest Tower..... 40

The Turpin Rowe Stump Festival is in full swing when the heroes arrive, and they learn of strange murders and stranger marauders issuing forth from the Old Forest Tower. The heroes must confront the xulgaths of the tower to save local lumberjacks and slay the foul dero vivisectionist preying upon them.

A FARMLAND SANDBOX

This adventure is substantially more open-ended than the previous adventures in the Extinction Curse Adventure Path. The heroes travel a great deal around the Swardlands, described in the gazetteer beginning on page 56. There are, in essence, three concurrent tracks in this adventure you should weave together.

The first track, and the most straightforward, is the heroes' circus performances in the four communities of the Swardlands (see Circus Shows in the Swardlands on page 8).

The second track is the exploration of the three aeon towers. The Wellspring Tower is probably the least dangerous of these, but there isn't a specific order the heroes must visit them. Thessekka, the xulgath leader, doesn't confront the heroes until they visit the last of the three towers (see Facing Thessekka on page 52).

The third track is the "haunting" afflicting the heroes' new friend and patron, Opper Vandy. As the heroes learn about the strange deaths in the Swardlands and discover that a night hag is tormenting Vandy, they must ultimately confront the hag in Vandy's home (see The Hag's Heart on page 21).

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Life's Long Shadows is designed for four characters.

- 9** The heroes begin this adventure at 9th level.
- 10** The heroes should reach 10th level while exploring the aeon towers in the Swardlands.
- 11** The heroes should reach 11th level before confronting Thessekka.

The heroes should reach 12th level by adventure's conclusion.



CHAPTER 1: HOME ON THE GRANGE

The Swardlands has always been the breadbasket of Absalom. With its bountiful harvests, this land has provided a surplus of food for the City at the Center of the World, despite its dense population, and even allows the Isle of Kortos to be a net exporter of foodstuffs. Given the Swardlands' usual gentle climate, long growing seasons, and complete historical absence of drought or pestilence—always thought to have been a sign of the blessing of Aroden—the first dry season a few years after the god's death brought fears that the locals' good fortune had changed. The dry season passed, however, and though a few more have occurred in the century since (and, more than once, localized blights or infestations of vermin have occurred), these have never been as severe or as protracted as ones in other lands. The farmers, herders, and loggers of the Swardlands continued to count themselves lucky to live in their virtual cornucopia.

The extent of the changes occurring across multiple generations may not be evident at any one point of time, but is alarming when viewed with the perspective of history. With records compiled for more than a hundred years and studied among the wise and learned of Absalom, an inconvenient truth has come to light: the Swardlands is failing. The droughts are still minor and relatively short, and the climate remains mild, if winters are perhaps somewhat longer and colder. Yet there has been definite change in the fecundity of the Swardlands. Crop yields are down among even the most profitable farms along the Verdant Passage, and loggers of the Immenwood are finding trees slower to grow and previously harvested sections recovering only partially or not at all. The blessing of the dead god Aroden appears to have left the Swardlands, and the engine that feeds the greatest metropolis of the Inner Sea appears to be in danger of foundering.

EXTINCTION CURSE

Still well ahead of the rest of Avistan and Garund on favorable growing conditions, the hardy Swardfolk have adapted to their slowly deteriorating circumstances. They have worked harder, become more efficient, and come together for common cause. The Kerrick Grange was established a generation ago to unify the efforts of the growers and give them collective influence and resources in the greater politics of the Isle of Kortos. A series of farsighted and influential masters of the grange have enabled them to stave off disaster, but things have taken a downturn of late. Within the last year the sweet water spring at the base of the Wellspring Tower has gone dry and a mysterious blight has begun to spread from that location, ruining crops and water sources in an ever-widening expanse around the site. Where it was once safe to take offerings and pay homage at the other aeon towers across the Swardlands, now folk who do tend to disappear or are frightened away, telling tales of strange creatures or lurking marauders. Dark times are descending on the Swardlands, and if they appear to have been staved off for the moment, no one doubts that worse is to come.

While the truth is that the protections manifested through the *aeon orbs* are fading, the process has certainly become hastened of late. The theft of the Marsh Tower's *aeon orb* a decade ago has greatly affected the fate of Willowside and the Dunmire (as described in the next adventure in the Extinction Curse Adventure Path, "Siege of the Dinosaurs"), but the more recent arrival of the xulgaths in the Swardlands has had more immediate effects upon the communities of the Kerrick Grange. The xulgath alchemist Thessekka wasted no time in eliminating the rival leaders of the other clutches sent to the area, and she has taken control over the entire expeditionary force in the Swardlands. Loyal to the plot of her master, Sarvel Ever-Hunger, Thessekka seeks to destroy the three *aeon orbs* of the Swardlands using either cunning science or brute force. Her activities have resulted in the recent blight along the Verdant Passage as well as the disappearances of locals and sightings of strange creatures in the area. If the people of the Swardlands are to survive this latest threat, Thessekka must be stopped.

The Aeon Towers

Each of the three Swardlands aeon towers was constructed in the same style and has roughly the same overall structure. The Wellspring Tower stands to the north near a road called the Verdant Passage, the Liferoot Stone stands near the Sulwen Hills to the southwest, and the Old Forest Tower stands within the Immenwood to the east. Each tower has its own differences—for example, the Liferoot Stone has partially collapsed, and the Old Forest Tower is overgrown with vegetation—yet they all share numerous similarities.

The three Swardlands aeon towers were constructed as 300-foot mudbrick step pyramids with unevenly spaced tiers. With a base of 200 feet on each side, the lowest tier rises steeply to 180 feet, slants shallowly inward for 20 feet, then rises another 55 feet. The third tier rises 35 feet higher still, with a 10-foot platform and a final rise of 15 feet to a 10-foot-wide rooftop. The tower's *aeon orb* floats in the air around this uppermost extension, orbiting slowly but regularly. The mudbrick of the towers requires a successful DC 32 Athletics check to Climb, although the slight incline on the lower tiers reduces this DC to 30, and the ledges between each tier are flat enough that they don't require Athletics check to Climb or Acrobatics checks to Balance on.

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

This first chapter serves as a framework for "Life's Long Shadows." The heroes meet the well-meaning mortician Opper Vandy, Master of the Kerrick Grange, who offers to make arrangements for their circus. Vandy has troubles of his own, however, in the form of a mysterious "haunting" inflicted by a scheming night hag. This chapter not only details Vandy's home and his mystery but also provides several encounters the heroes have on the road when traveling around the Swardlands.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows.

- +1 *striking hand crossbow*
- *javelin of lightning*
- *mummified bat*
- *oathbow*
- *shoony shovel*
- *Skarja's heartstone*

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SWARDLANDS RUMORS

A hero can learn more about the Swardlands by attempting a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. A successful check gives the hero a fact from the list below that they don't already know (although the final fact should be discovered last). A critical success yields two facts, while a critical failure provides a false rumor of your invention.

1. "Things haven't been as good around the Swardlands these last few seasons. Weather's not as gentle; harvests aren't as good. Something's up for sure, but all the priests do is frown and look concerned when you ask them."
2. "The Stump Festival's starting up in Turpin Rowe soon. That's the best party on this side of the island. I wouldn't miss it for all the sun orchids in Thuvia."
3. "There's a curse on Matten Cleave. The land around there is blighted; even the spring at the Wellspring Tower has gone dry. It's like some land-vampire is drinking up its vitality. Not that I believe in such things, mind you."
4. "There's a shoony—you know, one of those dog folk—in Castinlee who sings to the dead. He digs their graves, but apparently that isn't enough for him, so he sings to them too... and their ghosts get up and dance for him!"
5. "There's things been seen movin' in the woods near the Old Forest Tower, and I don't mean fairyfolk. It's something' else...somethin' worse. Me? No, I ain't seen 'em, just heard the rumors."
6. "The Liferoot Stone is waking up; I heard its statues are starting to walk again, just like in the old wars. People don't go there to leave offerings anymore."
7. "Opper Vandy was already rich, but he's about to get richer with the way Swardfolk have been dying lately. I tell you, it's unnatural. People passing in their sleep for no good reason, and not just the old and the sickly either—young folks, too! The undertaker business is really booming."

The front face of each aeon tower has a pair of platforms that are 30 feet high and 30 feet square. There are no easy ways for a hero to travel to the top of these platforms other than to climb the mudbrick. A steep staircase built into the side rises through a series of switchbacks from the rightmost platform to a terrace 150 feet above the ground (and 120 feet above the platforms). This staircase is only 3 feet at the widest, has no rail, and is completely exposed; it requires a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb, and combat upon it requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check to Balance.

The terrace lacks a railing, and serves as a balcony for the only obvious entrance to the tower (although most towers have other entrances, such as the collapsed portion of the Liferoot Stone and the secret entrance at the base of the Old Forest Tower). This main entrance is a 20-foot-tall, 10-foot-wide opening flanked by monolithic posts that once held elaborate painted bas-reliefs that have been erased by wind and age. The interiors of the aeon towers are all different and contain their own dangers, as described in each tower.

Thessekka brought her xulgaths through secret underground passages to the area near each of the aeon towers and has taken control of all three. She travels between the towers by use of her magical *ring of stoneshifting*, and so might be encountered at any of them. The xulgath presence is strongest at the Old Forest Tower, but it's also the site of Thessekka's most distinct failure. She alchemically mutated several xulgaths to climb to the tower's *aeon orb* and knock it down, but her physical efforts haven't been successful. She was even less successful at the Liferoot Stone; due to the long-ago collapse of the upper tower, its *aeon orb* now floats more than a hundred feet in the air above it. Thessekka hasn't yet worked out how to reach the orb, much less what to do with it when she does. Her principal success has been at the Wellspring Tower, where she's engineered a device to drain the *aeon orb's* energy. This draining has had the most dramatic effect, drying up the Wellspring Tower's spring and accelerating the blight around the tower. Should Thessekka's device prove successful in destroying the *aeon orb* at the Wellspring Tower, she's certain to replicate the effect at the other towers as well.

Getting Started

The adventure begins as the heroes and their Circus of Wayward Wonders arrive by ship from Escadar at the coastal town of Kerrick. Kerrick is the principal town of the Swardlands, the region of the Isle of Kortos that serves as the breadbasket for the island nation of Absalom. The "Swardlands Gazetteer" article beginning on page 56 details Kerrick and the surrounding area.

Despite its modest size, Kerrick is a busy port, shipping the provender of its hinterlands by boat to the city of Absalom and beyond. The docks are bustling as the heroes' vessel arrives, and while the ship's master tends to the business of docking, the heroes must arrange for room and board for themselves and their circus as well as find a venue where their show can set up and begin its new run in the Swardlands. The heroes are in luck, for news travels quickly in the demesne of Absalom. Interested parties have already heard of their coming and await their arrival. To begin this adventure, read or paraphrase the following.

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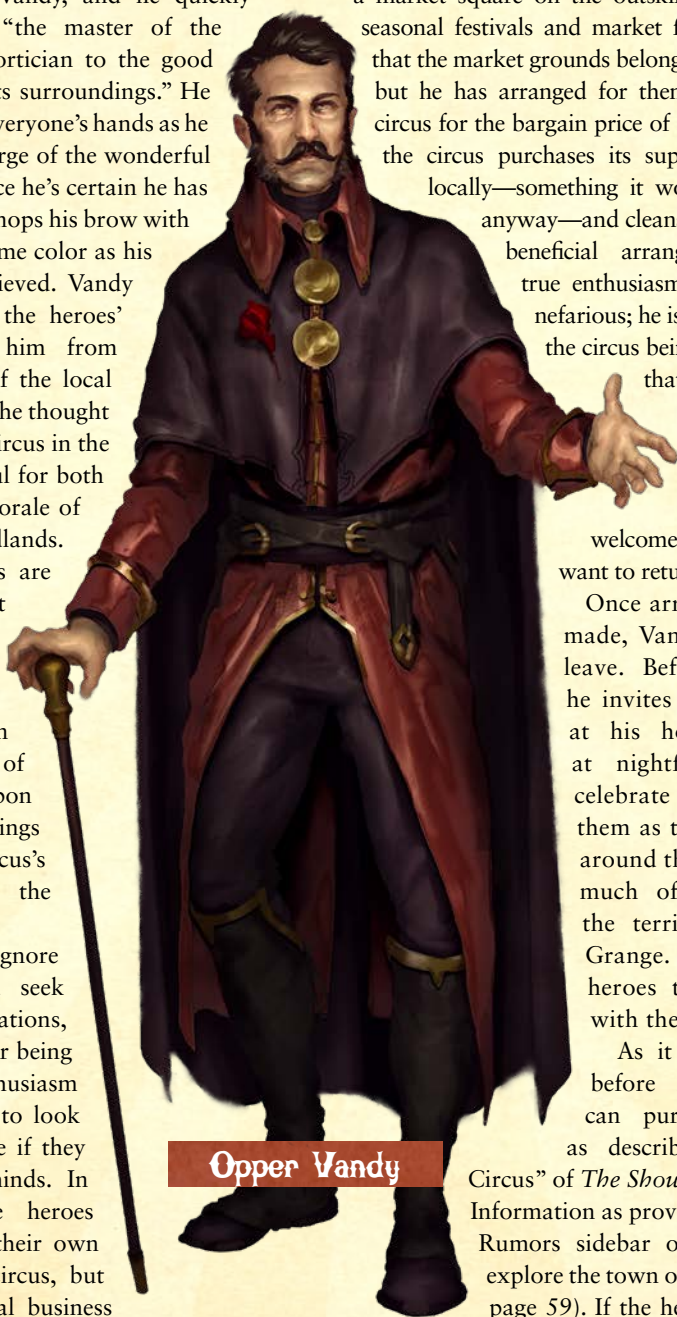
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Through the bustle of the town docks, a distinctive figure appears. He is a human of medium height and middling age with thinning salt-and-pepper hair swept back from his brow above bushy eyebrows, thick mutton chop sideburns, and a neatly trimmed moustache above a smooth-shaven chin. He wears the somber formal garb of a solicitor or an undertaker. The small flower pinned to his lapel is a sullen shade of purple. His eyes sweep the crowd as if searching out someone, only to alight on you, and he immediately smiles and raises his ornate walking cane in salutation.

The man is Opper Vandy, and he quickly introduces himself as “the master of the Kerrick Grange and mortician to the good people of Kerrick and its surroundings.” He enthusiastically shakes everyone’s hands as he confirms they are in charge of the wonderful circus from Escadar. Once he’s certain he has the right people, Vandy mops his brow with a handkerchief of the same color as his boutonniere, clearly relieved. Vandy explains that word of the heroes’ coming had reached him from Escadar, and as head of the local agricultural association, he thought that having a traveling circus in the area would be wonderful for both the economy and the morale of the people of the Swardlands. He mentions that times are bad enough lately that the chance for a little good, wholesome fun might be just the thing to put the spring back in people’s step. In light of that, he has taken it upon himself to help get things arranged for the circus’s stay in Kerrick and the surrounding area.

Should the heroes ignore Vandy’s overtures and seek their own accommodations, he politely apologizes for being overbold in his enthusiasm and enjoins the heroes to look him up at Vandy House if they should change their minds. In this circumstance, the heroes can set about making their own arrangements for the circus, but time after time the local business



Opper Vandy

owners and merchants that they deal with direct them to Opper Vandy. The heroes can seek land and permissions independently, but it should quickly become apparent that doing so will be prohibitively costly and require a lot of groundwork locally that can be avoided simply by going through Vandy.

If the heroes agree to work with Vandy, he quickly arranges for the dockmaster to see to the unloading and temporary housing of the circus personnel, equipment, animals, and assorted paraphernalia until it can get itself organized on land. He then guides the heroes to a market square on the outskirts of town that holds seasonal festivals and market fairs. He informs them that the market grounds belong to the Kerrick Grange, but he has arranged for them to be let out to the circus for the bargain price of 5 sp per night provided the circus purchases its supplies and labor needs locally—something it would likely have to do anyway—and cleans up after itself. Vandy’s beneficial arrangement derives from true enthusiasm rather than anything nefarious; he is honestly excited about the circus being in town and believes that the crowds it’ll draw will greatly benefit the local businesses. He hopes that the circus will find its stay welcome and profitable and will want to return in the future.

Once arrangements have been made, Vandy politely takes his leave. Before going, however, he invites the heroes to dinner at his home, Vandy House, at nightfall. He wishes to celebrate their arrival and help them as they plan their travels around the Swardlands region, much of which falls within the territory of the Kerrick Grange. He then leaves the heroes to their preparations with the circus.

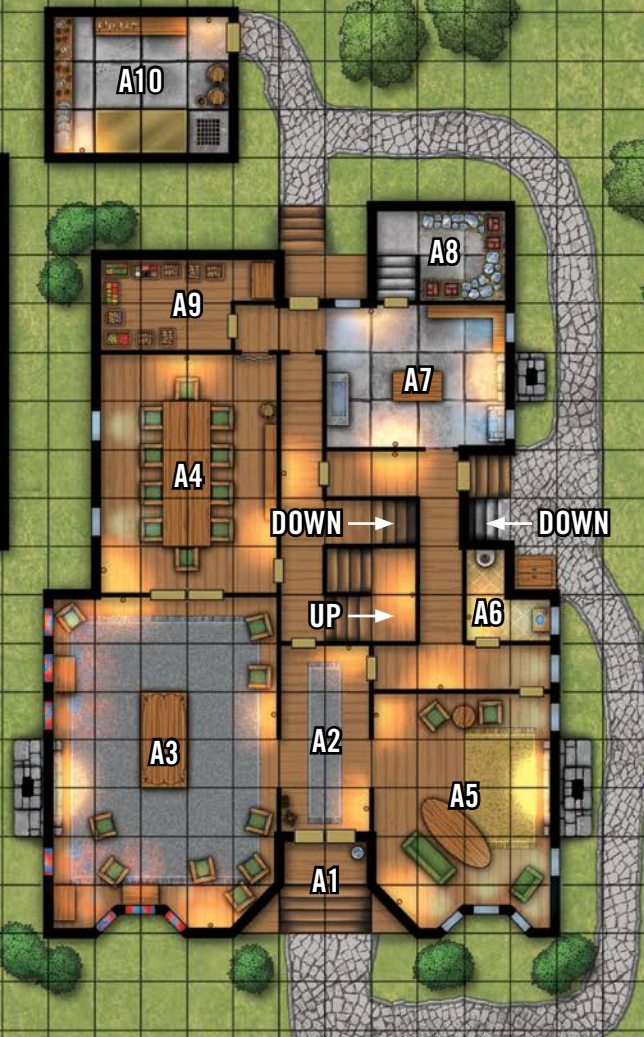
As it is still several hours before nightfall, the heroes can purchase advertisements as described in “Life in the Circus” of *The Show Must Go On*, Gather Information as provided in the Swardlands Rumors sidebar on page 6, or simply explore the town of Kerrick (described on page 59). If the heroes choose to attend

VANDY HOUSE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

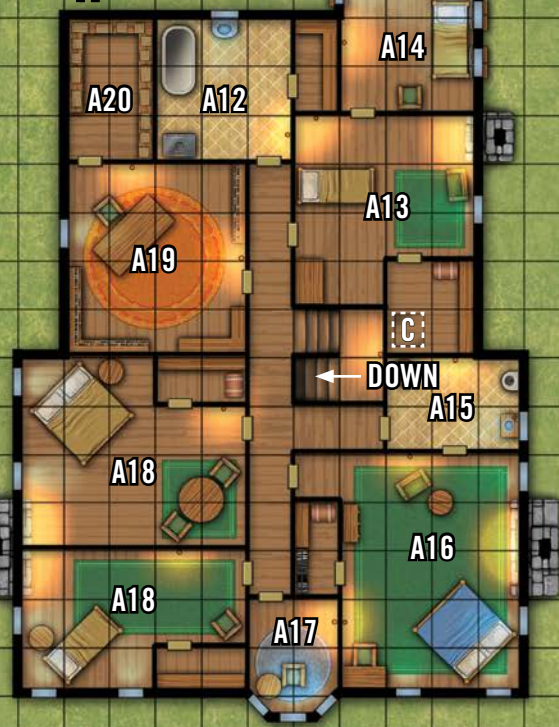
Basement



Ground Floor



Upper Floor



Vandy's dinner, proceed with the description of Vandy House and the events described under The Haunting of Opper Vandy on page 11.

Circus Shows in the Swardlands

This adventure provides no restrictions about where and how often the heroes can set up circus shows while in the Swardlands. Each of the primary settlements—Kerrick, Matten Cleave, Castinlee, and Turpin Rowe—has good sites for the circus to set up, and the heroes can set up their shows within these locations in any order and with any frequency they choose. The more distant communities of Matten Cleave, Castinlee, and Turpin Rowe all have specific considerations about how the heroes can put on a show in those locations, as detailed in the following chapters. No matter where or how often the heroes put on a show, however, their circus's Prestige can't exceed 16 in this adventure.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for the first successful show they put on in each of the Swardlands' four communities (Kerrick, Matten Cleave, Castinlee, and Turpin Rowe).

Vandy House

When the heroes arrive at Opper Vandy's house, whether for dinner during the night of their arrival or another time, read or paraphrase the following.

This is a home of obvious wealth constructed of red brick with white granite accents. Wooden shingles cover the roof between three tall, brick chimneys. At the roof's peak is a weather vane in the shape of a cockatrice. A path of crushed gravel leads to the front stairs as well as around the house. Wide stairs rise to a front porch between stately, inset windows. The base of the stairs is flanked by a pair of decorative stone urns from which grow small plants, and a stone font is set into the wall next to the front doors.

The home of Opper Vandy is a study of modest opulence. He constructed it to show his stature within the community but did not want to be too ostentatious with it. The building serves as his home and funeral parlor from which he conducts his business, while an outbuilding behind the house holds his embalming lab (area A10). The gravel path leads to the east side where stairs lead up to a door next to the kitchen (area A7)

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and lead down to the cellar (area **A11**). Next to these are the doors of a coal chute that likewise enters the cellar. The coal chute doors bear an average lock whose key hangs on a hook in the hallway just outside the kitchen.

The exterior doors have good locks, though the front door is kept unlocked during daylight hours or when there is a viewing underway. Vandy keeps the master key on his person. The interior floors are polished hardwood, and the ceilings are 12 feet high except for the cellar, which has only an 8-foot ceiling. The walls are made of plaster painted the color of parchment with mahogany wainscoting. Each room has at least one oil lamp that can be lit to provide illumination, but during the day most lighting is provided by the windows.

A1. FRONT STOOP

The front door of Vandy House is a cherrywood double door with elaborate glasswork and a wide fan light above. A bellpull beside the door rings a small bell in the house. Next to the bellpull is a stone font bearing the engraved symbols of Abadar, Aroden, and Pharasma. Though the font is only filled with normal water, some visitors use it for religious ablutions.

A2. FOYER

This elegant foyer has wide entrances leading to the viewing parlor (area **A3**) and the front room (area **A5**). The head of a small elephant taken on a safari in Garund hangs next to the north door; Vandy purchased this in Absalom many years ago. A hat rack and an umbrella stand flank the main entrance.

A3. VIEWING PARLOR

An elaborate wooden bier takes up the center of this chamber, with a wide, bricked fireplace occupying the wall directly behind it. A number of uncomfortable-looking chairs are arrayed around the room, interspersed with small end tables. A gray carpet covers the floor, and stained-glass windows of deep reds and blues create somber patches of light upon it. A sliding double door stands in the north wall.

This room is where Vandy brings the bodies of the deceased to lie in repose for viewing by family and friends. He usually allows viewings for 12 hours a day for up to 3 days (to allow travel time for more distant family members), but if the family participates in the custom of the vigil (see area **A17**), he allows 24-hour viewings. One of the end tables has a drawer in it, but the table is currently turned to the wall. Thus, noticing the drawer requires a successful DC 24 Perception check. Inside the drawer are a number of funeral

service-related documents, including a letter from the Kerrick Grange thanking Vandy for his generosity in taking care of the burial expenses of a drunkard named Yungor Swinten, dated 7 years ago.

A4. DINING ROOM

This elegant dining room has a long mahogany table with 10 comfortable chairs and a sideboard with several bottles of liquor and wine, as well as a small cask of ale. A chandelier of crystal and red quartz hangs above the table. Sliding pocket doors lead to the viewing room (area **A3**), and a curtain covers the servants' entrance to the kitchen (area **A7**).

A5. FRONT ROOM

A comfortable leather sofa and low, polished teak table stand before a wide fireplace and mantle. Comfortable chairs are spaced around the room, and a rug of dark chartreuse lies before the hearth.

A6. DOWNSTAIRS PRIVY

This chamber holds a porcelain commode beneath the east window that drains into the septic tank in the cellar. The northern portion of the room holds a cabinet with pitcher and wash basin, hand towels, and bundles of aromatic dried herbs.

A7. KITCHEN

This is a well-equipped kitchen with an iron grill over the low fireplace next to a brick oven. A large chopping block occupies the center of the room beneath a rack of hanging cutlery. Counters and storage cabinets stand along the north wall. Against the west wall is a stone sink fed by an attic cistern.

A8. COLD STORAGE

Steps descend into a dark, brick-walled chamber lined with large ice blocks packed in straw. Meat and other perishable foodstuffs hang from hooks in the ceiling or occupy bins situated among the ice.

A9. DRY STORAGE

This cool, dark room is lined with bins holding grains, vegetables, wheels of cheese, and assorted foodstuffs. An alcove next to the door holds dozens of bottles of quality wine from throughout Absalom and the Inner Sea region.

A10. EMBALMING LAB

This chamber has a strong odor of chemicals and decay. A long, brass table stands by the south wall, and at the foot of it, a stained iron grate is fixed in the floor near a pair of

barrels and a bucket. The north wall holds a work table with a variety of unusual implements, including a large syringe with tubing attached to a glass tank filled with a cloudy fluid, and a large number of surgical instruments, some still showing bloodstains. The back wall of the chamber is covered in shelving that holds hundreds of urns of clay, stone, and metal as well blank nameplates in brass, and even a few gravestones that have yet to be inscribed with names of the deceased.

This laboratory is where Vandy drains bodies and embalms them with a chemical mixture of alcohol, camphor, and myrrh. It is an imperfect process, but it preserves a body reasonably well for a few days if the weather isn't too warm. Drained fluids are poured through the grate in the floor, which descends 6 feet to a gravel sump. Vandy regularly dumps chemicals down this drain, but it does little to forestall the stench of death that arises from within. The shelving at the rear of the lab holds unused urns and grave markers that he sells to clients. Cremations are performed off-site.

Treasure: Several of the urns are made of lead, and one of these holds the ashes of a deceased Swardlander cremated years ago and forgotten. This filled urn can be identified with a successful DC 33 Perception check (although a hero who is aware that the night hag Skarja may have hidden her *heartstone* here and checks every urn discovers it automatically). A hero who searches or empties out these ashes discovers a clear gemstone. This is *Skarja's heartstone* (page 89). Because the urn is made of lead, attempts to locate the *heartstone* with *locate* or similar spells fail. The night hag Skarja has placed the *heartstone* here as a means to stake her claim over Vandy's domicile. As long as she visits it at least once every 7 days, she is able to use the stone's powers as if she carried it. If the heroes discover this magical gem, Skarja instantly becomes aware and confronts the heroes as described under The Hag's Heart on page 21.

A11. CELLAR

Stairs lead down from outside and from the central hallway of the house to doors that enter this coal cellar. In addition, a coal chute accessed from outside leads into a bin beside the stairs that is half full of coal. The smell of sewage is faint but distinct, and the top of a copper septic tank with pipes feeding from the house's

privies and bath is set into the floor. The rest of the room is cluttered with broken or discarded furniture, incomplete coffins, and a number of discarded gravestones that appear to have been broken in the course of being constructed or with engraving errors chiseled into them.

A12. BATH

A claw-footed tub stands next to the west wall near a stone sink beneath a window. A metal coal-burning stove stands at the foot of the tub and heats water delivered by a pipe from the attic cistern. A door opens into a linen closet.

A13. GUEST BEDROOM WITH ATTIC ACCESS

This chamber is outfitted with a comfortable bed and assorted furnishings, as well as a small fireplace. A large closet to the south that contains a ceiling hatch providing access to a large attic filled with assorted bric-a-brac and a large copper cistern fed by drainage gutters in the roof.

A14. SUMMER TERRACE

This balcony is enclosed by unfinished brick walls that bear large windows covered by thin sheets of sheer muslin to admit cool night breezes but keep out insects. The balcony holds a simple bed and chair, which Vandy uses during hot nights. The windows' heavy wooden shutters can be closed during inclement weather.

A15. UPSTAIRS PRIVY

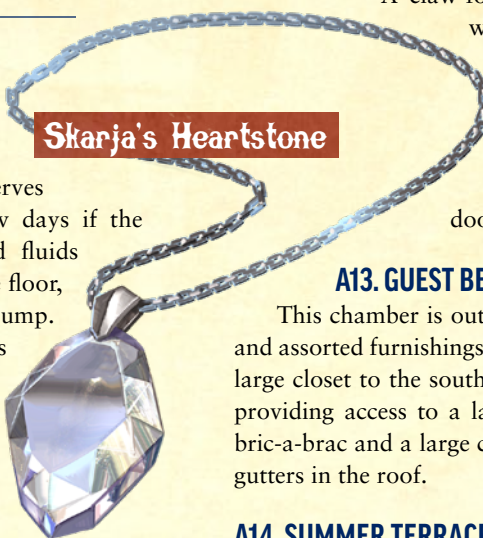
Though more spacious and better decorated, this privy is essentially identical to area A6.

A16. MASTER BEDROOM

Vandy's bedroom has a large four-poster bed, a comfortable sitting chair, a chest of drawers, and a small writing desk. His wardrobe hangs in a closet on one side of the room. A hero who carefully searches this room and succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check discovers a slip of parchment tucked beneath the desk blotter long ago and forgotten. It is a handwritten receipt for funeral services for one Rogor Swinten dated 12 years ago and marked as "gratis."

A17. VIGIL PERCH

A single chair and side table sit before a bay window here. A candle rests on the window sill. For families that practice the tradition of holding a vigil for a deceased loved one, Vandy allows the viewing parlor



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to remain open 24 hours, though the family is required to station somebody here at all times after nightfall to let those into the building who wish to see the decedent during the late hours.

A18. GUEST BEDROOM

These rooms are virtually identical to area **A13** but lack the attic access found in that room's closet. If any heroes stay the night with Vandy, he offers to put them up in these rooms.

A19. OFFICE

Vandy uses this room, which features a heavy antique desk and wall shelves packed with books, ledgers, and folios to run his funeral business as well as to tend to many of his duties with the Kerrick Grange. In addition to years of mundane records, the desk holds a small tin box where Vandy keeps a spare master key to the house. Vandy doesn't realize that the box is currently empty; if this is brought to his attention or to the attention of any of his servants, they have no idea where the missing key could be (it has been claimed by the night hag Skarja).

A20. SAFE STORAGE

The door to this large closet bears a good lock that the master key of the house doesn't open; it has only a single key, which Vandy keeps on his person. Within, shelves of boxes hold Vandy's most sensitive business records as well as some of his accumulated treasures. The coins and valuable items in here are worth a total of 4,050 gp, though the heroes shouldn't seek to rob their benefactor. In addition, a hero who searches the room and succeeds at a DC 28 Perception check uncovers a handwritten note dated 15 years ago that indicates a debt to someone named Rogor Swinten in the amount of 750 gp. The due date written on the note was 10 years past. There is no indication that this debt was ever paid.

The Haunting of Opper Vandy

When the heroes take Opper Vandy up on his offer for dinner, he hosts them at his home and funeral parlor in Kerrick. Vandy greets the heroes at the door and ushers them inside congenially, offering them drinks from the modest selection of liquors that he keeps. He is glad to give a tour of the house and happily explains its dual purpose as his residence and the local mortuary house. In fact, he points out, he has one local currently in repose in the parlor and may have to excuse himself from dinner from time to time to tend to any folk who have come for a viewing. Vandy retains an old married couple, Martins and Sarinah Gheeley, to cook

and clean his home, and Martins skillfully prepares the evening's meal.

By the time Vandy is done with initial greetings and any tours, Martins comes in and announces that dinner is served. He and his wife then excuse themselves for the evening and return to their own home nearby while Vandy ushers the heroes into the dining room. Laid out on the table is an excellent meal of goose roasted in a raspberry sauce, artichokes, turnip and barley stew, collard greens in goat cheese, and warm black bread served with fresh butter. A selection of good wines of local vintage as well as a small cask of ale can be found on the side table, next to a cooling pie made from custard and imported lemons. Everything is delicious and the servings are generous.

As the dinner progresses, the heroes have the opportunity to question Vandy about Kerrick and the Swardlands, and he in turn asks about their past exploits as well as details of the circus's attractions. The heroes have the option of using their discussion with Vandy to gain information from the Swardlands Rumors sidebar on page 6, except that Vandy doesn't relate the final point in that list. If the heroes have learned of the local deaths and bring them up, proceed to the boxed text on page 12.

Vandy also provides the heroes with information about likely locations in the Swardlands for them to set up the circus. He also identifies local contacts to smooth over the process. Feel free to provide any relevant details about the Swardlands as provided in the gazetteer beginning on page 56. Vandy recommends that the circus would have the greatest exposure at the four principal settlements of the Swardlands: Kerrick, Matten Cleave, Castinlee, and Turpin Rowe. If asked about the aeon towers, he says that there are three ruined towers of ancient design scattered throughout the Swardlands: the Wellspring Tower, the Liferoot Stone, and the Old Forest Tower. (He knows there is a fourth tower near the town of Willowside, but that is farther afield and beyond the knowledge of the Swardfolk.) Traditionally, Swardfolk have gone to these three towers to leave offerings to Aroden for his bounty, though this tradition has fallen out of favor in recent years, especially with the vague, unsettling rumors now circulating regarding the towers.

As Vandy predicted, during the course of the meal, the bell on the front door rings as townspeople occasionally arrive to view the deceased, a man named Homber Huttonfell. On each of these occasions, Vandy quickly excuses himself and sees to the new arrivals. He ushers them into the viewing parlor, where he leaves them for a few moments to privately pay their respects to the departed before showing them out

when they are through. As soon as the townspeople have departed, Vandy always returns and resumes his infectious good cheer; he has done this for many years and is quite accustomed to the practice.

At some point in the dinner, either as a result of the heroes bringing up the matter of local deaths or because the evening has grown late and conversation is winding down, Vandy decides that the heroes are not only trustworthy but perhaps even capable enough to at least hear, if not actually address, his problems of late. When this occurs, read the following.

The mood at the table palpably dampens as Vandy takes a moment to swallow a bite of food while apparently lost in thought, his face marked by previously hidden lines of worry and exhaustion.

"You have all been such fine company," he begins, "and I am so thrilled that you have brought your circus of wonders to the good people of the Kerrick Grange. But I suppose I must level with you.

"As you have no doubt heard, times have been hard of late for the Swardfolk. The grange has come together to try and ease everyone's suffering as much as possible, but the weather has been poor and the crops aren't growing like they used to; there's lean times ahead, I fear. But that's not all. There're things happening at a much more personal level for me, yet that also seem to be afflicting my friends and neighbors. So you should probably know the truth of it.

"I think that I'm being haunted... and I think that whatever is haunting me is murdering folk of the grange to

torment me. It has brought me to the brink of despair, and I admit that I find the thought of your wonderful circus a welcome distraction. Truth be told, though, I doubt it will help in the long run. Even with your circus here, I fear the hauntings—and the deaths—will continue. But I find in your company that you are much, much more than simple circus performers or business managers. You have in you the stuff of heroes, I believe, so I can't help but allow myself to feel a little bit of hope. Hope that you might be willing to help."

Vandy drops the entire matter, embarrassed, if the heroes aren't interested. They don't need to address his haunting to complete their immediate quest of gaining *resonant reflections* from the region's *aeon orbs*. However, they will undoubtedly run across further developments related to Vandy's plight and might return later to learn more from the mortician.

Vandy relates the gist of the situation to interested or sympathetic heroes. For the last 14 months, he has been experiencing what he believes to be vivid nightmares or actual hauntings. Since the deaths of townspeople have occurred in conjunction with these terrifying visions, he believes they are more than simple dreams. The nightmares always start the same: Vandy awakes late at night—or at least believes he awakens—to find a hollow-eyed young girl standing in the doorway of his bedroom. She wears a funeral shroud, though he does not recognize her as any person he's ever tended. She always stands for a moment and then leaves the bedroom, disappearing from sight.

On the first few occasions, Vandy was too frightened to follow her. After multiple occurrences, however, he worked up the courage to follow. Each of these times, the girl has always descended the stairs to the viewing parlor, where she stands beside the empty catafalque, silently pointing at it. Vandy always comes awake standing before the catafalque in the viewing parlor, drenched in cold sweat. The young girl is gone, and he is never sure if what he saw was real or if he just sleepwalked there. In any case, the next day there is always a death somewhere in Kerrick or the surrounding area; by nightfall Vandy has a new corpse for his catafalque.

Vandy has not been able to discern much of a pattern among the deaths that have



Vandy's Viewing Parlor

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occurred following his nightly visitations. The deceased are of all ages and walks of life, some have been ill, some old, some young and healthy—but all have died unexpectedly in their sleep. There has never been any evidence of foul play, and Vandy has never told anyone of his visitations, but some folk are beginning to talk (as revealed by rumor circulating in town), and Vandy himself is beginning to develop a crushing sense of guilt as he perceives that he is somehow causing the deaths of his fellow Swardfolk. He is at a loss as to what to do. He has considered going to the local priest, but with the grange already experiencing the stresses of the bad harvests he fears a loss of confidence in its leadership could cause an economic collapse among its members at a time when they're already vulnerable. If the heroes would be willing to spend any spare time they have as they manage their circus and other affairs to look into the matter, Oppor Vandy would be extremely grateful.

Vandy is being entirely sincere, though he is holding something back. He divulges the last piece of the story only if the heroes present him with at least four clues from among the following:

- The letter of thanks from the Kerrick Grange (area **A3**)
- The receipt for Rogor Swinten's funeral (area **A16**)
- The discovery that his spare master house key is missing (area **A19**)
- The record of the debt owed to Rogor Swinten from his safe storage (area **A20**)
- Reports of nightmares among the deceased (see Investigating the Deaths on page 14)
- Reports of nightmares among new victims (see Highway Harassment on page 17, The Hollows on page 33, and Sirens of the Spheres on page 23)
- The ravings of the spirit at Old Currew's Place (area **B3**)
- The notes found among Ginjana's belongings (area **F11**). This may also encourage the heroes to search Vandy's house, which he permits. He even suggests a thorough search of the embalming lab and the cellar, as they're the places in his house he visits least often and are places where something as small as a gemstone could be easily hidden.

If the heroes present Vandy with enough clues, he confesses the history in Vandy's Shame below.

Treasure: Vandy rewards the heroes with 300 gp if they put an end to his hauntings and the corresponding unnatural deaths.

XP Award: When the heroes earn Vandy's confession about Rogor Swinten, award them 80 XP.

VANDY'S SHAME

Opper Vandy was the son of a gravedigger in Absalom. When his father died young with a broken body and almost nothing to his name after a life of hard work, the younger Vandy wanted more than simply digging holes. Having worked with morticians in Absalom in the course of helping his father, Vandy managed to pick up a bit of the funeral trade. Yet he soon realized that the market for such skills had been cornered in Absalom by the city's many churches and well-established mortuaries. Without the means to buy himself an apprenticeship with one of the larger operations and no aptitude for the clergy, Oppor looked outward beyond the city walls to the rest of the Isle of Kortos to find a locale that might need his services.

Packing his few belongings in his father's funeral caisson, Vandy hitched an old mule and traveled northwest, eventually arriving in Kerrick. The town's own undertaker had recently died and Vandy saw an opportunity to set himself up as the new mortician. With little to his name, however, he struggled to acquire the funds necessary to open his funeral parlor until a wealthy and kindhearted local farmer named Rogor Swinten stepped in and offered Vandy a loan. Swinten agreed to the loan privately, with a simple handshake and Vandy's promise of repayment in 5 years' time.

Before the loan came due, Swinten died in a farming accident. When the time came for repayment, Swinten's wife and children knew nothing of the loan he had extended to Oppor Vandy. Vandy's own business was still new and struggling, and repaying the loan at that time would have seriously hurt his chances to remain solvent. When none of the Swinten family came forth to request repayment of the loan, the mortician reasoned that he could just keep quiet and delay a few years in order to pay it back later at even greater interest with no harm done. Unbeknownst to Vandy, though, the Swinten farm had fallen on particularly hard times. Vandy learned only a little of this 3 years later when plague took Rogor's wife and young daughter and the farm came into the hands of the sole heir, Rogor's wastrel son, Yungor. The farm went into arrears under Yungor Swinten's mismanagement and ultimately had to be auctioned off, but Vandy didn't hear of this until a few months later, when Yungor unexpectedly drowned while drunk. The Swinten line in the Swardlands had ended.

Sick with guilt over the family's misfortunes and his own part in unknowingly exacerbating them by withholding payment, Vandy found that there was no one left to whom he could repay the money. Shame stilled his tongue. Even as he threw himself into efforts to better his community and give back by joining the

local grange, he felt he'd never be the good, honest man he once was. He was elected as Master of the Grange 10 years ago, but carried his shame with him the whole time.

Vandy never met Swinten's deceased daughter, and he fears that the hollow-eyed girl in his dreams might be her ghost, punishing him for not paying back her father's loan. Vandy is stricken with guilt that she might be taking his secret sin out on his neighbors.

THE TRUTH OF THE HAUNTING

The truth behind Opper Vandy's problems is not a haunting at all, but rather the cruel machinations of a night hag named Skarja. Upon arriving in the Swardlands, Skarja discovered a wicked old farmer named Currew who was already close to death. The night hag immediately went to work on the old man to claim his soul, and in the course of haunting his dreams, she discovered that he had been aware of the loan between Opper Vandy and Rogor Swinten. Currew had always despised Swinten and took great delight in watching his family fall into misfortune after his untimely death, as well as in making sure that the young Opper Vandy did not learn of the extent of the Swinten family's plight until it was much too late. By the time Skarja finally claimed the despicable old man's soul, she was well aware of the details of Vandy's secret sin and saw a way that she could corrupt Vandy's soul enough to cause his alignment to shift to chaos or evil and allow her to claim it as well. To this end, Skarja appears to Vandy disguised as Swinten's daughter. She then proceeds to the home of one of her victims and slays them with her dream haunting to ensure that a new corpse turns up at Vandy's funeral parlor the next day. Vandy's guilt has already pushed his alignment from lawful good to neutral good.

INVESTIGATING THE DEATHS

The heroes can use several means to investigate the recent nocturnal deaths while they are in Kerrick. These are listed below, but the heroes will find enough information to help them fully solve the mystery only if they undertake further investigations in and around the Swardlands.

Asking Vandy (Kerrick): If the heroes think to ask Vandy specifically about who the first victim was after

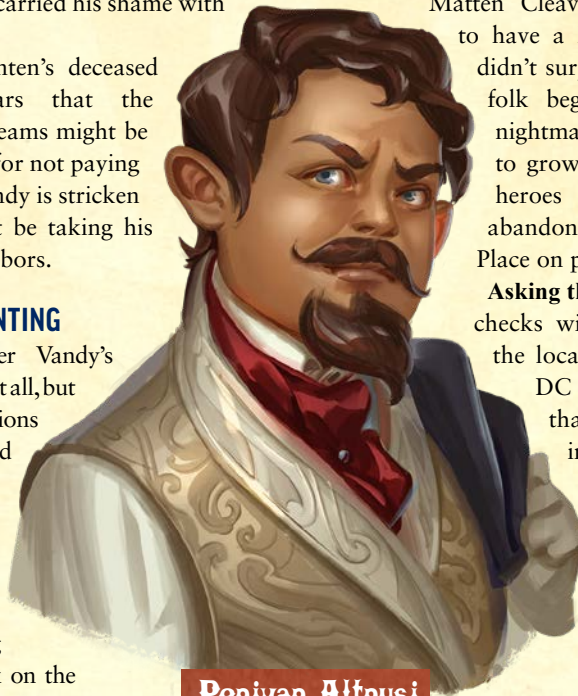
his night hauntings began, he recalls that it was a despicable old farmer named Currew who lived near

Matten Cleave. Currew was long known to have a heart condition, so his death didn't surprise anyone. Only after other folk began dying following Vandy's nightmares did the mortician begin to grow alarmed. Vandy provides the heroes with directions to Currew's abandoned farm; see Old Currew's Place on page 23.

Asking the Law (Kerrick): A hero who checks with Mayor Perivar Altrusi or the local constabulary can attempt a DC 22 Diplomacy check to learn that 21 Swardfolk have died in their sleep over the last 14 months. They have been of various ages, ancestries, occupations, and stages of health. Other than dying in their sleep, nothing has appeared to connect the deaths. A high proportion of the victims had run-ins with the law during their lives, mostly for minor infractions of varying kinds, but this tendency toward unlawful behavior wasn't universal among the victims. Opper Vandy naturally handled the funeral arrangements for each of the deceased.

Asking the Clergy (Turpin Rowe): The local priest is uninterested in investigating the deaths. Jemaig Hendri is a fussy, elderly priest of Abadar who lives a good life from his secondary position as the Swardland's tax collector. Although his office is in Kerrick, he's currently out at the Stump Festival in Turpin Rowe to ensure the entertainments there pay their appropriate share of taxes. Jemaig claims he has too many duties to spare time for "circus people," but a hero who succeeds at a DC 22 Diplomacy check to Request convinces Jemaig to talk. The priest has thought little of the matter, being more preoccupied with matters of commerce. He knew of many of the victims but holds a low opinion of most of them—usually because they were slow at paying their taxes or suffered from "defects of character" such as laziness or cruelty. Jemaig scoffs openly at any mention of hauntings. He believes any deaths are merely a symptom of the greater misery currently afflicting the Swardfolk, and he feels that no one has any power to stop such matters, himself least of all.

Asking the Families (multiple locations): The families of the deceased are scattered throughout the Swardlands (one of these, the Gudfast family of



Perivar Altrusi

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Matten Cleave, approaches the heroes as described in Sirens of the Spheres on page 23). The heroes can interview other family members as they visit the communities in the area during the course of this adventure. The easiest of these families to visit is the Huttonfells, as Humber Huttonfell is currently lying in state in Vandy's viewing parlor, but the heroes can proceed however they wish. Skarja's victims were all chaotic or evil, but this isn't immediately obvious; as the people the heroes interview are all disinclined to speak ill of the dead, they couch these descriptions in flattering words or justifications such as "They had such a capricious spirit," "He didn't have a lot of respect for the law when his own heart told him to do something," or "Sure, she put herself above others, but we all do that sometimes." A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression during an interview also learns that the deceased had been inflicted with horrible nightmares on the night or nights before their death.

XP Award: Award the heroes 10 XP for each person they interview about the deaths (to a maximum of 60 XP).

Encounters in the Swardlands

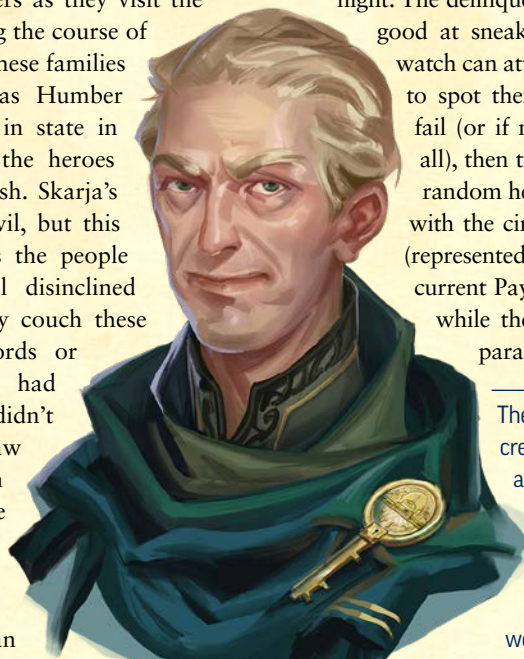
The following encounters occur as the heroes travel across the Swardlands. Each encounter has some suggestions about when it occurs, but their precise timing and order are up to you. Each encounter should occur only once. If these encounters occur while the heroes are traveling with the Circus of Wayward Wonders, the circus workers hold back and let the heroes handle obvious dangers.

These encounters don't have associated maps; any general terrain maps fitting the descriptions of these encounters (such as *Pathfinder Flip-Tiles: Forest Starter Set*) work well for them.

NIGHT RUFFIANS

This encounter should take place at least a day before the heroes reach Castinlee Hollows. (If the heroes have already encountered Anylla's dead body in Castinlee Hollows (page 33), skip this encounter.) Word of the circus has spread far and wide throughout the Swardlands. A group of young delinquents in the region makes an attempt to steal the circus's cash box

(if the heroes are traveling with the circus), or valuables from the heroes themselves. The encounter occurs at night. The delinquents know the land well and are good at sneaking around; any hero keeping watch can attempt a DC 24 Perception check to spot them. If all heroes keeping watch fail (or if no heroes are keeping watch at all), then the thieves steal a few gp from a random hero or, if the heroes are traveling with the circus, from the circus's cash box (represented as a loss of the circus' total current Payout). If a hero spots the thieves while they are with the circus, read or paraphrase the following.



Jemaig Hendri

The noise is quiet but distinct: the creaking of wooden planks that are being pried apart. In the dim illumination of the circus's night lamps, figures are visibly crouched near the wagon that holds the circus's funds. One is working at the rear hatch with a pry bar while three others skulk nearby.

Creatures: These four teenagers (Anylla, Gabrien, Horvallo, and Lummund) have decided to rob and vandalize the circus as it travels. By no means professional criminals, these delinquents have succeeded thus far based on luck and stealth more than skill. One of them is trying to quietly open the wagon's locked hatch with a crowbar, while another is busy painting the words "Go Home Freaks" on the side of the wagon in red. The other two are ostensibly on watch but are more absorbed in the activities of their companions than keeping a lookout. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Stealth check can catch them by surprise. If discovered, the delinquents attempt to flee in different directions and fight only if cornered. A wounded delinquent immediately surrenders.

SWARDLANDS DELINQUENTS (4) CREATURE 4

RARE CN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +8

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +9, Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Stealth +12 (+14 while in the Swardlands), Thievery +12

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

Items leather armor, club, dagger; one delinquent carries a crowbar and another carries a brush and pot of red paint

AC 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

HP 65

Nimble Dodge \curvearrowright **Trigger** The delinquent is targeted with a melee or ranged attack by an attacker she can see;
Effect The delinquent gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee club +11, **Damage** 1d6+5 bludgeoning

Ranged dagger +12 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S),
Damage 1d4+5 piercing

Quick Draw \blacklozenge The delinquent draws a weapon with an Interact action, then Strikes with the weapon they just drew.

Rattling Blow Creatures the delinquent critically hits are clumsy 1 and can't make reactions until the end of the delinquent's next turn.

Sneak Attack The delinquent deals 1d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Capturing the Delinquents: The heroes can elect to take the youthful troublemakers prisoner and turn them over to a local sheriff, escort them shamefacedly to their own homes and turn them over to their mortified parents, or simply let them go with a stern scolding. In any case, they have no more trouble from these individuals—though they will encounter Anylla again in Castinlee Hollows (page 33).

XP Award: If the heroes capture the delinquents without killing any of them, award them 80 XP.

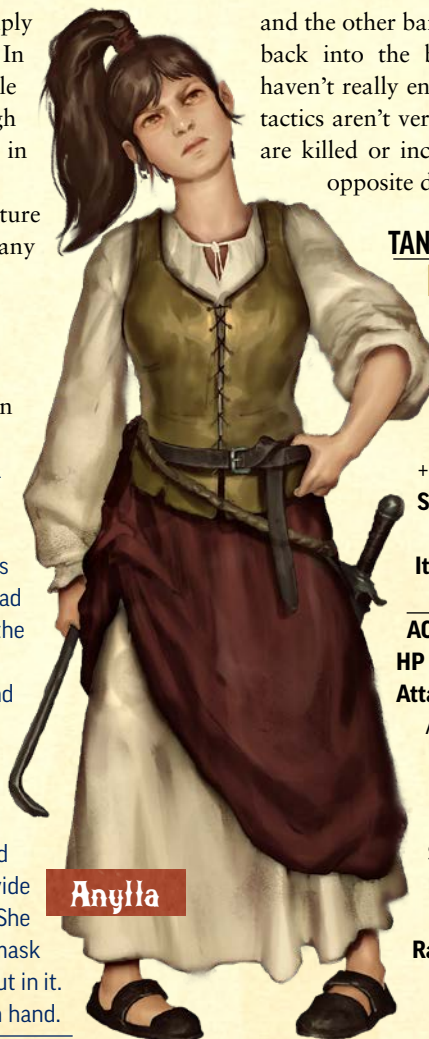
HIGHWAY HARASSMENT MODERATE 9

This encounter works anywhere in the Swardlands.

The quiet is broken by the whistling of arrows and the echoing of loud shouts. Three colorful arrow shafts land quivering in the center of the road while the brush on both sides of the road rustles with movement.

A single clear voice calls, "Stand and deliver, scoundrels, or the devils take your guts!"

A lone human figure steps out into the roadway clad all in browns and greens and with bits of grass and leaves tied to her clothing to provide concealment among the foliage. She wears a wide-brimmed hat and a mask made of burlap with two eye holes cut in it. She holds a loaded crossbow in each hand.



Creatures: The heroes are being held up by a group of bandits calling themselves the Bitter Truth Gang. The gang is led by a mean-spirited hunter named Tanessa Fler and consists of three more bandits and Tanessa's younger brother, Tanner (who stays out of any fight). The gang is relatively new, having formed as a result of the hardships facing the Swardlands region, so it has not yet gained much of a reputation. The bandits believe the heroes to be either a group of easy marks or simple circus hands (if they are traveling with the circus), and intend to merely rob them. They have no desire to fight if they don't have to, but they attack if Tanessa gives the order.

Tanessa stands in the center of the road and keeps her hand crossbows trained on the heroes, ordering them to keep their hands away from their weapons and empty their pouches onto the road. If the circus is present, she demands its cash box as well. The other bandits are all concealed behind brush, but one of them rushes out to collect the loot if the heroes comply with Tanessa's demands. If the heroes resist or draw weapons, Tanessa and the other bandits all fire, after which Tanessa dives back into the brush for concealment. The bandits haven't really encountered true resistance yet, so their tactics aren't very coordinated. If at least two of them are killed or incapacitated, the rest panic and flee in opposite directions.

TANESSA FLEER

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human bandit

Perception +19

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +17, Intimidation +16, Stealth +17, Survival +19, Thievery +17

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +1

Items chain shirt, +1 striking hand crossbow (2, 20 bolts), shortsword

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +10

HP 155

Attack of Opportunity \curvearrowright Tanessa can make Attacks of Opportunity with a loaded ranged weapon she's wielding if the triggering creature is within 5 feet of her.

Speed 30 feet; mobility

Melee \blacklozenge shortsword +19 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

Ranged \blacklozenge hand crossbow +20 (magical, range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing

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Hunt Prey ♦ Tanessa designates as her prey a single creature that she can see and hear or that she is Tracking. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks when she Seeks her prey and a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks when she Tracks her prey. She also ignores the penalty for making ranged attacks within her second range increment against her prey. Lastly, she deals 1d8 precision damage to her prey the first time she hits her prey each round. Tanessa can have only one prey designated at a time.

Incredible Reload ♦ (concentrate, manipulate) **Requirement** Tanessa has a hand crossbow in each hand; **Effect** Tanessa quickly juggles her hand crossbows from one hand to another, reloading them both as she does so.

Mobile Shot Stance Tanessa's ranged Strikes don't trigger Attacks of Opportunity or other reactions triggered by ranged attacks.

BITTER TRUTH BANDITS (3) CREATURE 6

RARE CN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +12

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +14, Intimidation +12, Society +10, Stealth +16, Survival +12

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

Items composite shortbow (20 arrows), hatchets (2), padded armor

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +10

HP 95

Speed 30 feet, mobility

Melee ♦ hatchet +16 (agile, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

Ranged ♦ composite shortbow +16 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus muscle striker

Ranged ♦ hatchet +16 (agile, sweep, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

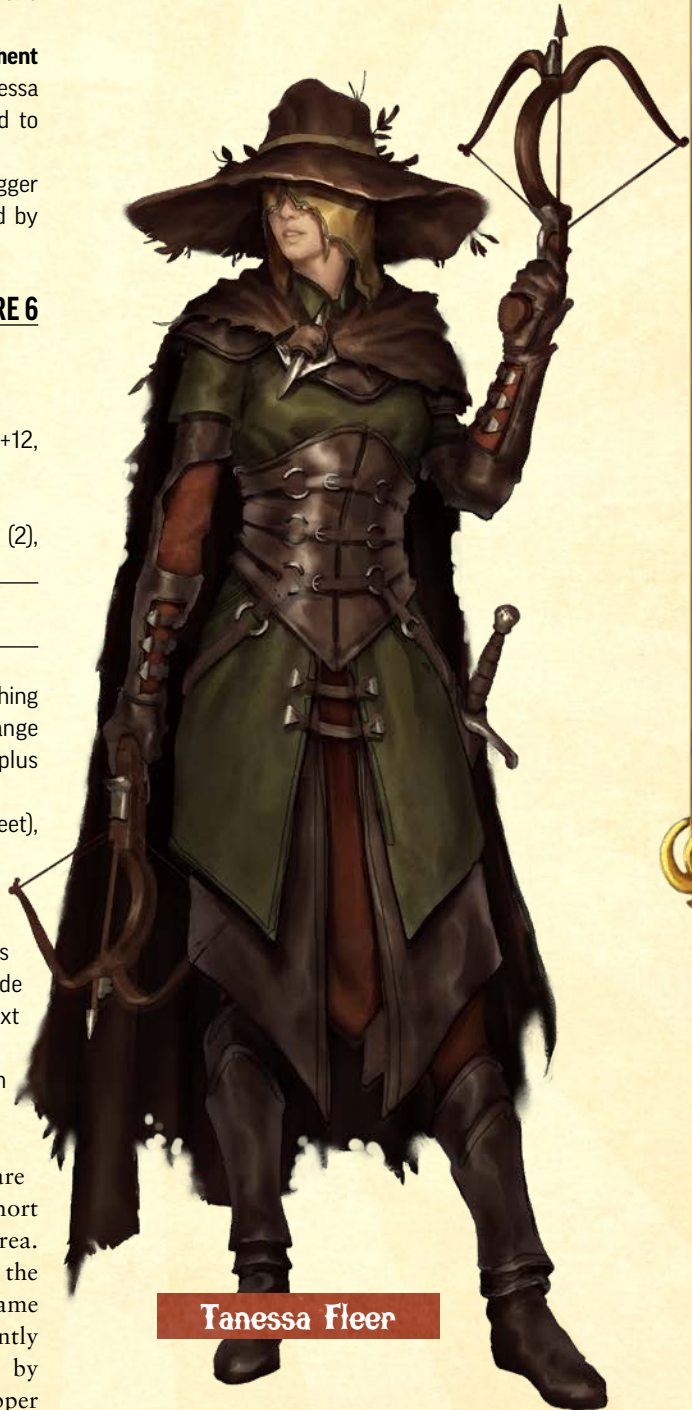
Experienced Ambusher Striking from concealment doesn't cause the bandit to become observed.

Muscle Striker A target damaged by the bandit's shortbow Strike must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or be slowed 1 until the end of the bandit's next turn.

Sneak Attack A bandit deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

The Bandit Camp: Assuming the bandits are defeated, the heroes can find their camp a short distance away simply by looking around the area. There, the heroes find five hobbled horses and the fifth gang member, Tanner Fleeer. Tanner has the same statistics as a Bitter Truth bandit, but he is currently fatigued and drained 5 from dream hauntings by the night hag Skarja (see The Haunting of Opper

Vandy on page 11). He doesn't know the source of his weakness, only that he's been extremely sick and weak the past couple of days and was unable to participate in the heist with his sister's gang. He puts up no resistance if the heroes want to capture or question him. If the heroes ask, Tanner admits that two nights ago he began to have horrible nightmares of a black horse with glowing eyes and hooves of



Tanessa Fleeer

flame. He assumed that it was connected with him falling ill and has no idea of its true ramifications. Unless the heroes remove his drained condition (which first requires curing him of the Abyssal plague), Tanner dies the next time he falls asleep and Skarja captures his soul.

Treasure: Stashed among the bandits' baggage is the haul they've obtained so far: 51 gp, 128 sp, a peridot worth 38 gp, and a *javelin of lightning*.

XP Award: If the heroes learn of Tanner's nightmares, award them 80 XP. If they reduce or eliminate Tanner's drained condition, Skarja does not return to torment him, and they earn 30 XP.



Bitter Truth Bandit

SHOONY CHUMMING

SEVERE 9

This encounter works best near Matten Cleave but might happen anywhere in the Swardlands. The heroes hear sudden yells and frightened howling just over the next rise. When they investigate, read or paraphrase the following.

A traveling group of small, furry humanoids has come upon trouble. A tipped handcart is surrounded by scattered turnips. Two of these doglike people—known as shoonyies—cling to the side of this overturned cart and shout for help. Several shoonyies scramble about, seeking safety, as the furrowed ground of the surrounding grasslands is periodically broken by great, finlike protuberances that rise up in bursts of loose soil and then sink again as they travel in ever-tightening circles around the terrified travelers.

Creatures: The party has come upon a group of five shoony farmers who were bringing a cartload of produce to Matten Cleave for sale when they were beset by four bulettes. The first bulette surfaced and upset their cart, sampling a few bites of the turnips before deciding they were not to its taste. Now it and the other bulettes circle the frantic shoonyies as they slowly move in for the kill. The top of the hill is 90 feet away from the imperiled shoonyies. The bulettes are currently focused on their potential meal, and after 2 rounds the bulettes start eating the shoonyies. Any bulette attacked by a hero quickly refocuses its attacks on them instead of the shoonyies. A bulette reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points flees.

BULETTES (4)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 48

Initiative Perception +16

SHOONY TILLERS (5)

CREATURE 0

Page 82

Initiative Perception +6

Shoony Thanks: The shoonyies are thankful for the assistance and offer the heroes the *shoony shovel* (page 69) that they have brought from their village as a reward. They happily relate any information about the Matten Cleave area and the Wellspring Tower that the heroes haven't already obtained in town. If the heroes mention the circus, the shoonyies promise to bring their entire clan to the next show in Matten Cleave; this show automatically has Overflowing Crowd as its random circus event.

One of the shoonyies also mentions a cousin named Booralu who works as a gravedigger

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in Castinlee and sings to the spirits of the dead; she recommends the heroes talk to Booralu as a possible unique circus act.

XP Award: Award the heroes 10 XP for each shoony that survives this encounter.

REVENGE SONG

SEVERE 9

This encounter occurs as the heroes travel along the road through an isolated stretch of woodland.

A curve in the trail reveals a gruesome scene. The grass at the side of the trail is sodden with pooled blood, and an emaciated figure is pinned to a nearby tree trunk with a heavy iron spike. Small, goatlike horns protrude from the corpse's forehead, and its lower body is a pair of furry legs that end in cloven hooves. The blood on the figure descends both from the deadly wound in its chest and from its mouth and nose. The scene here is at least several hours old, and the air is thick with the scent of blood.

The heroes have come upon the scene of a recent victim of Ginjana Mindkeeper (page 86). The evil dero saw the satyr as an excellent candidate from which to extract a brain specimen and ambushed him. The satyr put up more of a fight than expected, but the irritated dero managed to spike him to the tree with a piton she carried. She then extracted a tissue sample through the dying fey's nose as he struggled feebly. The dero departed in the opposite direction from which the party arrived and then cut through the forest several hours ago. The hardpan of the trail here prevents any of her tracks from showing, so the heroes have no real means of identifying or tracking the culprit beyond the evidence of her handiwork and the single item she left behind.

With a successful DC 16 Nature check to Recall Knowledge, a hero identifies the corpse as that of a satyr; with a critical success, the hero knows that satyrs usually carry pipes, and that his are missing—probably taken by the killer. A hero who examines the body and succeeds at a DC 16 Medicine check realizes that the satyr bled to death. On a critical success, the hero also realizes that some narrow instrument was shoved forcibly up the satyr's nose only moments before the satyr died of blood loss. If a hero who gets a critical success also has expert or better proficiency in Medicine, the hero realizes that some small portion of the satyr's brain—the pituitary gland—was extracted through his nose by this instrument.

Creature: While the heroes are examining this gruesome scene, they hear the sound of strange singing echoing through the woods from the north. A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception or

Performance check realizes that the words of the song are crude attempts at lyrics that say, "Go away! I'm coming! You shouldn't look! No peeking!" This is the song of a bugul noz, a strange fey whose appearance is deadly. The fey is traveling through the area and making their usual warning to help others avoid looking upon their deadly appearance.

When they see the dead satyr, the bugul noz stares in shock for a moment before crying out in rage. Their first instinct is to get revenge on the satyr's killer. If the heroes are present, the bugul noz assumes the heroes are to blame; they attack the heroes and fight until reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, at which point they flee.

If the heroes refuse to fight back or insist upon their innocence, the creature pauses just long enough to hear what the heroes have to say. In this case, a hero can attempt a DC 33 Diplomacy check to Request that the bugul noz stand down. On a success, the fey listens to the heroes and apologizes for leaping to a hasty conclusion. On a failure, the fey resumes their attacks; on a critical failure, their renewed rage gives them a +1 circumstance bonus to their checks and DCs.

The bugul noz knows that there are several smelly humanoids prowling around the greater region, but they haven't personally encountered any and don't know why these creatures would want to kill a satyr like this. Even if the heroes convince the bugul noz that they aren't to blame, the creature doesn't spend much time answering questions before mumbling apologies, resuming their song, and going on their way.

BUGUL NOZ

CREATURE 12

Page 76

Initiative Perception +23

XP Award: If the heroes find that something was harvested from the satyr's brain, award them 10 XP. If they convince the bugul noz that they aren't the killers, award them XP as if they defeated them in combat.

MASTER OF THE SKIES

SEVERE 9

This encounter occurs as the heroes travel through a lightly wooded area of the Swardlands.

The road here cuts through a large copse of trees, some remaining trace of a former primeval connection to the Immenwood. The trees are not too dense, and the sunlight filtering from above brings a cheery air to the greenery. The serenity is cut moments later by a high-pitched scream cutting through the air from the road ahead.

The sound is coming from 100 feet ahead around a short bend in the road. A hero who examines the trees



Pin Tingwheely

in that direction and succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check notes wisps of large spiderwebs high up in the trees. Upon rounding the bend, describe the following.

The road ahead is blocked by a sheet of webbing strung across the trees. A tiny humanoid form—no larger than two feet high—struggles in the webbing. An arachnid the size of a cottage lumbers toward the struggling captive, only to stop in confusion as the tiny figure winks out of existence. There is a buzzing of wings and a shrill laugh as a small rock appears in midair and plunks into one of the spider's massive eyes.

Creatures: The fairy in the web is the pixie Pin Tingwheely, who was only pretending to be trapped. He has been taunting the goliath spider and its two young offspring for the last hour with his aerial

acrobatics and derring-do.

The spiders throw webs at the pixie, who simply shrugs them off. The arrival of the heroes attracts the spiders' attention, and they ignore the pixie to focus on the party. The enraged and hungry goliath spider fights to the death, but the offspring flee if their parent is slain.

GOLIATH SPIDER **CREATURE 11**

Pathfinder Bestiary 307

Initiative Perception +22

JUVENILE GOLIATH SPIDERS (2) **CREATURE 6**

Giant tarantula (*Pathfinder Bestiary 307*)

Initiative Perception +14

PIN TINGWHEELY **CREATURE 8**

UNIQUE **CN** **SMALL** **FEY** **SPRITE**

Male pixie daredevil (*Pathfinder Bestiary 309*)

Perception +19; low-light vision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +18, Deception +16, Nature +15, Performance +18, Stealth +21

Str +0, **Dex** +6, **Con** +1, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items +1 *striking longbow* (60 arrows), shortsword

AC 29; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 95; **Weaknesses** cold iron 10

Evasion When Pin rolls a success on a Reflex save, he gets a critical success instead.

Nimble Dodge **Trigger** Pin is targeted with a melee or ranged attack by an attacker he can see; **Effect** Pin gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 15 feet, fly 45 feet

Melee **◆** shortsword +18 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

Ranged **◆** *longbow* +19 (deadly d10, magical, range increment 100 feet, volley 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 26; **4th** *invisibility* (at will, self only); **3rd** *dispel magic*, *illusory disguise*; **2nd** *entangle*, *faerie fire*; **Cantrips (4th)** *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *shield*

Sprinkle Pixie Dust **◆** (manipulate) Pin sprinkles pixie dust onto one of his arrows. If Pin hits a creature with that arrow before his next turn, the arrow inflicts one of the following special effects instead of dealing damage. Each effect depends on the target's DC 26 Will save. On a critical hit, the target treats its save result as one degree worse.

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- **Befuddlement** (enchantment, mental) On a failed Will save, the target is stupefied 1 for 1 minute (stupefied 2 on a critical failure).
- **Charm** (emotion, enchantment, incapacitation, mental) The target suffers the result of a 4th-level *charm* spell, except it doesn't gain a bonus to its save if the only hostile act was Pin firing his bow, and Pin can choose to direct the target's adoration to another creature rather than himself.
- **Memory Loss** (divination, mental) On a failed Will save, the target loses the last 5 minutes of its memory. Pin can add a single false memory if he chooses, which is the only memory the target retains in that time period.
- **Reckless Pride** (emotion, enchantment, mental) The target suffers the result of *delusional pride* (Core Rulebook 391).

Pin's Performance: Throughout the course of the fight, Pin Tingwheely remains in the air alternating between shouting taunts at the spiders and complaining about the heroes spoiling his fun. He darts in and out of invisibility while making acrobatic aerial maneuvers. The heroes should quickly realize that the pixie is an extremely skilled flyer with a real flair for showmanship. At the conclusion of the battle, the pixie lands in the road in front of the party and introduces himself as "Pin Tingwheely, Master of the Skies" (allow for some humorous banter and feigned outrage if the heroes mistake his title as "Master of Disguise"). He is an excellent recruit for the Circus of Wayward Wonders, and if the heroes offer him a position in their show he accepts on the spot. Provide them with the Master of the Skies trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: The webbing contains a dead half-elf bearing an *oathbow* across her back with a *mummified bat* affixed to it.

XP Award: If the heroes recruit Pin Tingwheely into the Circus of Wayward Wonders, award them 30 XP.

THE HAG'S HEART

SEVERE 11

This encounter should take place only once the heroes have found *Skarja's heartstone* in Vandy's embalming lab (area A10). Although Skarja can spy on Vandy and the heroes from the Ethereal Plane, she doesn't want a confrontation with foes as powerful as the heroes seem to be. When they find her *heartstone*, however, she has no choice but to stop the heroes' meddling.

This encounter likely occurs outside Vandy's embalming lab within moments of the heroes finding the *heartstone*, but at your discretion it might take a few minutes or even a few hours for Skarja to arrive.

If Skarja can attack the heroes without alerting Vandy to her presence, she does so, hoping to maintain her influence over Vandy's teetering morality.

The air is split by a cloud of brimstone-laden steam, which parts to reveal a hideous hag with elephantine feet and a body covered in razor-sharp horns.

Creatures: When Skarja appears, she arrives with a greater nightmare that serves her bidding. Rather than begin combat right away, Skarja declares that she will trade the "mortician" for her gemstone in the hope the heroes will just hand the *heartstone* over to her. This is a lie, however; she has no intention of stopping her predations on Vandy's soul. If the heroes threaten to destroy or steal the *heartstone*, Skarja nonchalantly claims that replacing it is only a minor setback, which is false. With a successful Perception check to Sense Motive against Skarja's Deception DC of 24, a hero identifies her lie. Assuming the heroes reject her trade, Skarja attacks. Each time she uses a power granted by her *heartstone*, the gem briefly glows and grows warm, providing a substantial clue to its role in her powers. If the heroes destroy it (Hardness 7, Hit Points 26), they significantly decrease her threat. Skarja flees if she's reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points and her *heartstone* is destroyed, abandoning her plans in the Swardlands.

The heroes might stumble upon *Skarja's heartstone* early in the adventure, before they're prepared to handle such a difficult encounter. In this case, you should have Skarja attack without her nightmare present, or have the hag merely threaten the heroes and attack them later.

SKARJA

CREATURE 13

Page 88

Initiative Perception +25

GREATER NIGHTMARE

CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 244

Initiative Perception +22

Soul Bottles: Skarja carries several tiny black bottles with swirling mist inside. When broken (Hardness 1, Hit Points 10), these bottles release the souls of her victims—including Old Currew, the elder Nelvy Gudfast, and others—to their final judgements in the afterlife. A successful DC 26 Occultism check reveals the nature of these bottles.

XP Award: If the heroes slay or drive off the night hag and Opper Vandy still lives, award them 80 XP for ending his haunting. If they recover and break all of the bottles Skarja carries, award them 30 XP.



CHAPTER 2: THE WELLSPRING TOWER

The town of Matten Cleave lies 8 miles up the trade road called the Verdant Passage, northeast of Kerrick. The Verdant Passage is an extremely fertile stretch of land along the north coast of the Isle of Kortos and is an important part of the Kerrick Grange. For details on the area around Matten Cleave, see the Swardlands Gazetteer beginning on page 56. The heroes likely have three sites of interest to visit in this area: the town of Matten Cleave itself, Old Currew's Place outside of town, and the Wellspring Tower near Ferny.

Matten Cleave

Matten Cleave is little more than a stop on the Verdant Passage and a central gathering place for the 2,000 or so residents in the area to bring their crops and discuss local business. The village has several storehouses, a good wainwright, two blacksmiths, and a nice inn and tavern called the Sea of Clover. A wide, flat shelf of land

has long served the community as a gathering place to discuss important village matters, and it makes a good place for the Circus of Wayward Wonders.

If Opper Vandy has provided the heroes with an introduction, their meeting with mayor Marta Lieschari goes smoothly and they can set up right away. If the heroes didn't rely on Vandy's introduction, one of the heroes must pay 50 gp and succeed at a DC 24 Diplomacy or Society check to obtain necessary accommodations and permissions for their circus. On a failure, the heroes can't try again for a week; on a critical failure, they can't try again for a month.

The people of Matten Cleave are excited for a circus and particularly enjoy a good spectacle. Reduce the DC of Society checks to Promote the Circus (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #151 61) by 2. Performers gain a +1 circumstance bonus to trick checks for tricks with the alchemical, fire, or magical traits. This bonus is

EXTINCTION CURSE

cumulative, so a trick with both the fire and magical traits would provide a +2 circumstance bonus. Any hero who successfully Gathers Information in Matten Cleave learns of these bonuses automatically, in addition to any other information gained.

In addition to running their circus, the heroes can seek out information about Matten Cleave. The rumors presented in the sidebar on page 24 is in addition to those in the Swardlands Rumors sidebar on page 6.

SIRENS OF THE SPHERES

After the heroes have put on their first performance in Matten Cleave, three human siblings approach them. Nelvy Gudfast, the oldest sister, speaks on behalf of her younger brother Rudon and her younger sister Wilfreda. Nelvy explains that the three of them had spent years caring for their elderly grandmother, a priestess of Desna named Nelvy (after whom she was named). As the elder Nelvy recently passed away, the siblings are free to leave Matten Cleave at last—and they want to join the circus to have both the freedom of travel and the camaraderie of a community. The Gudfast siblings don't take no for an answer, and they follow the circus from town to town until they're allowed to perform.

To their credit, the Gudfast siblings are exceptionally good entertainers. They know a large number of songs (primarily sprightly hymns to Desna) and they're skilled dancers. They perform under the name Sirens of the Spheres, an homage to Desna. If the heroes permit them to join the Circus of Wayward Wonders, give the players the Sirens of the Spheres trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

The Elder Nelvy's Death: Although the Gudfast siblings are prone to oversharing their history, they are all reticent about discussing the specific circumstances of their grandmother's recent death. A hero who succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check to Request convinces one of the siblings to talk about it; on a failure, the heroes can try again after the next circus performance, and the DC decreases by 5 after each such performance.

On a success, the siblings share that their grandmother reported having terrible nightmares. The nightmares sapped her little remaining strength and ultimately killed her. The Gudfast siblings don't realize that their grandmother was yet another victim of the night hag Skarja.

XP Award: If the heroes recruit the Gudfasts into the Circus of Wayward Wonders, award them 30 XP.

Old Currew's Place

Currew's ramshackle farmstead lies down an unused track 2 miles south of Matten Cleave. The heroes might come here if they learned Currew was the first victim of Vandy's haunting, or due to rumors they hear.

This farm is worse for wear. The fields around it are abandoned and overgrown, beginning to show the telltale yellowing of the local blight that afflicts these lands. The farmstead itself is simple enough, consisting of a house and a lone barn. The barn appears ramshackle but still in stable condition. Though much of the house's roof is gone, its walls remain intact. A front porch festooned with two decorative columns, now warped and cracked with age, are the only hint of former prosperity. The door of the house hangs open limply on its hinges.

Currew, as the former owner was simply known, was a prosperous—though not wealthy—farmer who was known throughout the Swardlands

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The chapter details the heroes' explorations of the town of Matten Cleave and the Wellspring Tower nearby. This tower is the source of a mysterious blight afflicting the area, and the spring at the base of the Wellspring Tower has totally dried up. While in this area, the heroes might also explore a dilapidated farm belonging to a deceased farmer named Currew, who knew about the secret shame afflicting Opper Vandy in Kerrick.

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows.

- *axiomatic rune*
- *force shield*
- *greater cheetah's elixir*
- *moderate potion of fire resistance*
- *oil of keen edges*
- *standard potion of flying*

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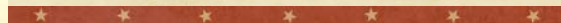
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MATTEN CLEAVE RUMORS

A hero may want to learn more about Matten Cleave and its environs by attempting a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. A successful check gives the hero a fact from the below list that they don't already know. A critical success yields two facts, while a critical failure provides a false rumor of your invention.

1. "Matten Cleave has been the richest farming in the grange for as long as anyone can remember, but that's all been changing the last year or so. A blight has been spreading through the area from the southeast farms."
2. "The Verdant Passage is the coastal road and main tradeway that leads to Willowside. It's got the best farmland on Kortos, but some of the farms have begun to fail of late. That's the first time that's happened on the Verd from as far back as I can remember."
3. "The Wellspring Tower is one of the legendary towers that dot this part of the island—they're all in ruins. Nobody goes to the Wellspring Tower much."
4. "The tower out there is called the Wellspring because a sweet water spring bubbles up at its base, though I heard it dried up. The best way to reach it is on a little footpath from Ferny. Otherwise you end up climbing over half the fences in the district."
5. "Ferny is a small village of shoopies. Their pipeweed and hops are fantastic, let me tell you."
6. "A mean ol' cuss named Currew up and died in his sleep about a year ago. The grocer's delivery boy found him stone dead. No family and no will, so the place is just moldering out there."



as a cruel and miserly old man. When he died suddenly 14 months ago, he was not mourned by the local community. With no known heirs or will, his farm went into probate that has yet to be cleared up through the circuit magistrate. Currew's evil reputation has served to keep curious locals away.

Other than the roof collapse over the main portion of the house (area **B2**), the place appears to be in decent shape. Strangely, the back room (area **B3**) has no windows. There are sills and window frames on the house exterior, but no windows, only wooden planking. This is a manifestation of the haunt in area **B3**.

Between the house and barn is a 12-foot-deep well with 3 feet of bitter water its the bottom. The water becomes potable in 24 hours if the haunt is destroyed.

B1. HORSE BARN

Despite being in somewhat rickety shape, this structure is still sound. The main door opens into a long barn rife

with the smell of musty straw and decay. Three horse stalls line the east side. The walls' widely spaced planks allow light to filter in from the outside giving the interior a dusty glow. Standing in each of the three stalls is an unmoving skeleton of a horse.

Even before Currew finally died he had failed to feed or water his livestock for some time, so all three of his horses were found dead when the old farmer's body was discovered. The haunt's manifestation caused the skeletal remains of the creatures to rise. These skeletons are not animate and crumble if disturbed in any way.

B2. MAIN HOUSE

The roof over the main portion of the house collapsed some time ago, allowing the elements to have their way. Roof beams and broken shingles lie atop the crumpled remains of simple furnishings. A door still stands in the wall of the roofed, northern portion of the house, as do an intact fireplace and chimney.

Currew never bothered to invest much in upkeep, so his old, sagging roof caved in only a few months after his death. The door leads to the sealed room (area **B3**) and it is locked with a good lock (four DC 25 Thievery checks to open) whose key is currently inside the room. If the door remains unlocked for a day, the haunt locks it again. A hero can instead Force Open the door with a successful DC 30 Athletics check.

B3. SEALED ROOM

MODERATE 9

This bedroom is surprisingly intact given the destruction in the rest of the house. There are no windows, though there are sills and frames on the walls as though to indicate where windows should be. A single narrow bed lies against the far wall, its moldering blankets twisted as if its last occupant did not rest easily. Beside the bed is a simple night table bearing a single lit candlestick that provides a dim radiance to the otherwise darkened room.

This stuffy little bed chamber was where the foul farmer Currew spent the last miserable hours of his life and died in his sleep as a result of the attacks of the night hag Skarja. A grocer making a delivery the next day found the old man dead and took the corpse to Kerrick for burial, leaving the house vacant ever since.

Haunt: Currew's hateful spirit doesn't rest, and manifests in this room as a haunt. When the haunt manifests in the room and begins its ravings, anyone present clearly hears it muttering the names Vandy and Swinten over and over. A hero who uses an

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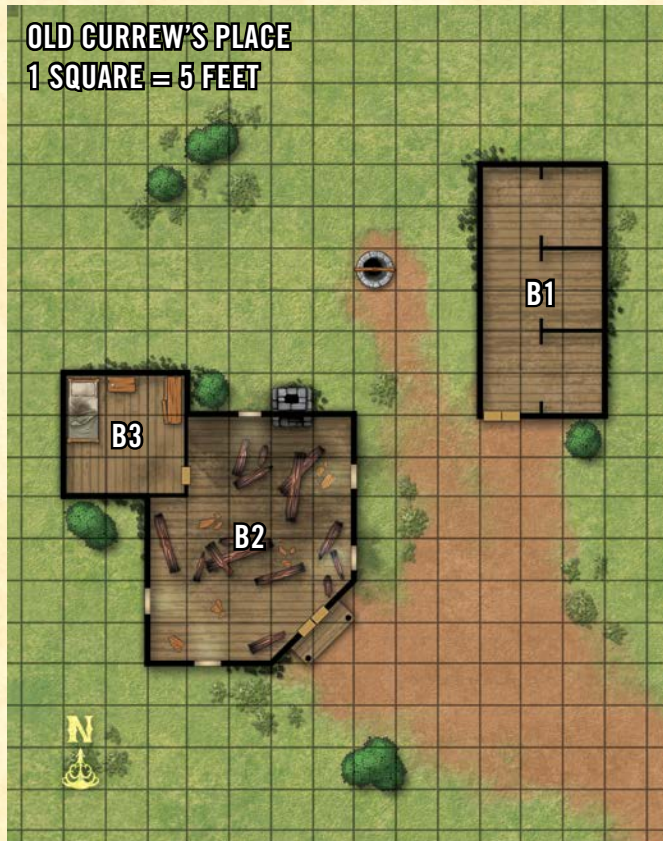
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OLD CURREW'S PLACE 1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



action to listen (this action has the concentrate trait) can attempt a DC 25 Perception check to make out the words, “Old Lady Swinten’s broke, and Rogor Swinten can rot in his grave. Should’ve sold me that acre, Rogor, your widow is gonna’ starve. Don’t tell her about Vandy. No, no, no. Now Vandy’s money is blood money. Blood money now. She rides with spurs of fire; the Night Lady, oh, the fire it burns!”

RAVING SPIRIT

HAZARD 11

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +20 (expert) or DC 30 (master) to detect the spiritual nexus

Description The restless spirit of Currew raves against his tormentors when someone enters his room.

Disable DC 30 Intimidation (expert) to quiet the spirit for 1 round, or DC 32 Religion (master) to exorcise it

Raving Diatribe ⤴ (death, emotion, fear, illusion, mental, occult) **Trigger** A creature remains in area **B3** for longer than 1 round; **Effect** Each creature in the sealed room is targeted by *nightmare* (DC 30 Will save). The haunt counts as having met the targets. It then rolls initiative.

Routine ⤴⤴ The haunts casts *phantasmal killer* (DC 30 Will save) on a random creature who can see Currew’s bed (it can even target creatures outside of area **B3**, so long as the target can see the bed). Everyone affected by the

phantasmal killer sees the same image: a sickly old man lies in the bed, screaming and ranting about his guilt, shame, and eventual death.

Reset The haunt grows quiet and resets 1 minute after no creatures are in area **B3**.

Treasure: A chest of drawers by the door holds only old clothing and mouse droppings. However, the bottom drawer has a false back the heroes find if they Search it. Within is Currew’s hidden stash: 2 pp, 13 gp, 1,017 sp, and three pearls worth 100 gp each.

The Wellspring Tower

The glow of the small sphere orbiting the top of the Wellspring Tower is visible from miles away, but even at that distance it is obvious that something is wrong. The glow is unsteady; dimming to a dull brown every few seconds.

The tower itself is an imposing structure. A mudbrick-stepped pyramid with four tiers and steep sides, it is clearly many thousands of years old. Two platforms protrude from its base and have ladders leaning against them from the ground. From the northern platform climbs a series of narrow steps all the way to a terrace balcony just below the first tier, some 150 feet up, where a great, cavernous doorway enters the tower’s interior. The entire tower appears to be covered in a network of fine cracks—these are actually dead, brittle vines that must have covered nearly the entire structure in a carpet of greenery. Like the dead creepers that cover the tower’s surface, the land around it for miles is likewise sere and lifeless. A dry watercourse extends from the base of the tower where there must have once been a babbling stream.

The Wellspring Tower stands at the center of a slowly spreading blight, the result of Thessekka siphoning power from the *aeon orb* that hovers above the tower. While the drain continues, the tower’s spring remains dry and plant life continues to die in an ever-increasing radius that already encroaches upon local farms.

The tower interior is dark, except the room with the draining device (area **C9**), which is illuminated by the erratic light of the tower’s *aeon orb*. The dried mud that makes up the tower is smooth and slick; scaling the walls requires a successful DC 32 Athletics check to Climb (the tower exterior is slightly angled, reducing this DC to 30). There are no doors inside the tower.

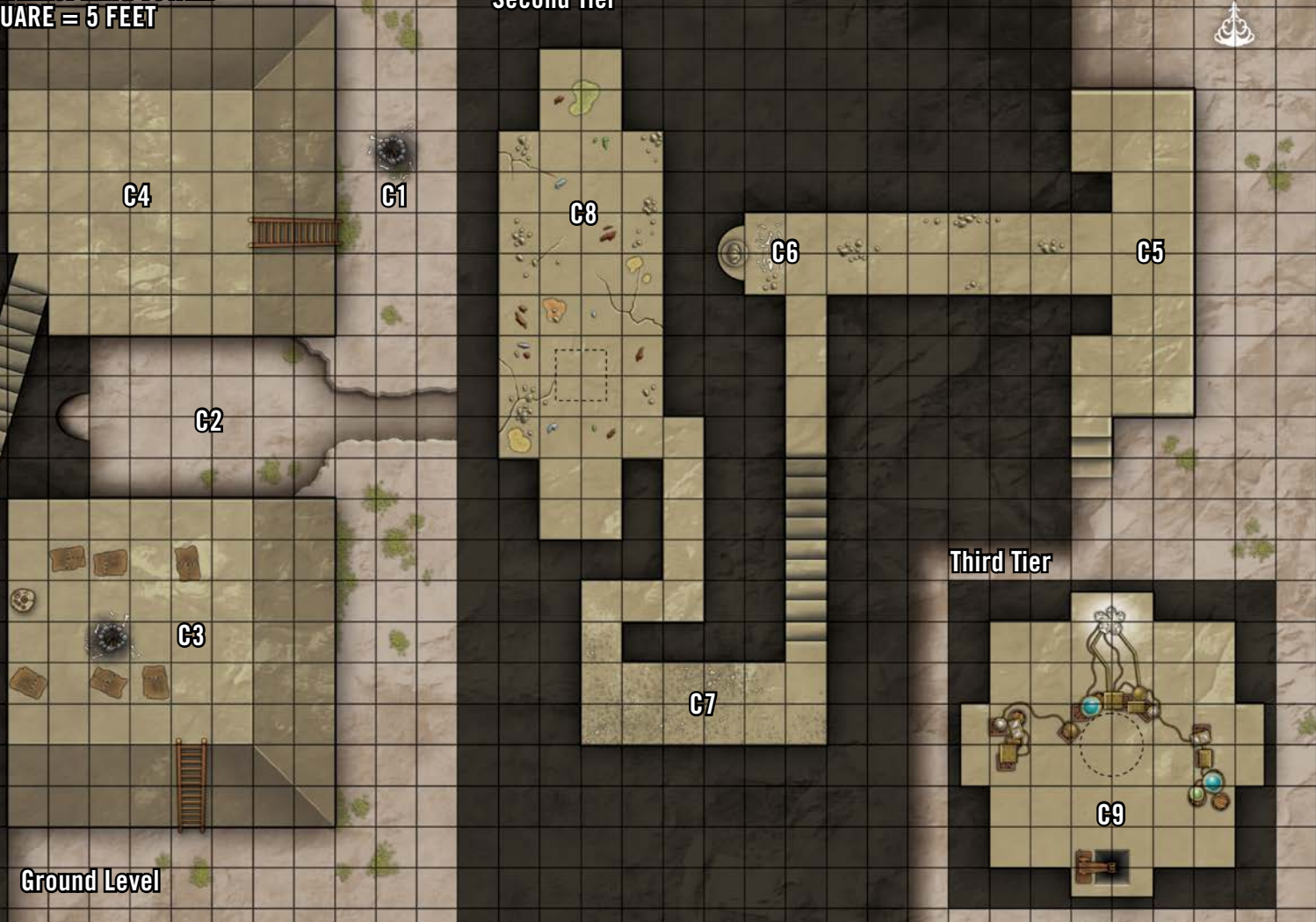
MINEFIELD

Two groups of xulgaths keep watch from the front of the Wellspring Tower: a clutch of skirmishers in the

THE WELLSPRING TOWER

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Second Tier



Ground Level

Third Tier

base camp (area C1) and group of bombers atop the south platform (area C3). The latter are easier to spot from a distance, as they keep their cookfire roaring at all times. The heroes can generally spot these xulgaths from a distance of about a quarter-mile away. If the heroes aren't making any precautions to camouflage their approach, however, these xulgaths can see the heroes as well.

Traps: The xulgath bombers have seeded the area around the Wellspring Tower with bomb snares (*Core Rulebook* 589). Each contains moderate alchemist's fire (*Core Rulebook* 545) and makes an audible roar when triggered. This minefield is a ring around the tower 100 feet away and 100 feet across. Heroes walking through this area must each attempt a DC 10 flat check; on a success, the hero triggers one of the bomb snares. Heroes who are traveling through the area while Tracking xulgaths with the Survival skill, Investigating, or Searching have a DC 15 flat check to encounter a mine, you should roll a secret DC 26 Perception check for each such hero to see if they spot it before blundering into it. Dozens of bomb snares have been placed throughout the ring.

XP Award: If the heroes spot the bomb snares and don't trigger any of them, award them 30 XP.

C1. SKIRMISHER CAMP

MODERATE 9

The banked embers of a fire mark a shallow pit near the base of the tower. The ground is bare save for a few wisps of dried grass from the lush carpet that must have covered this area not long ago. Five nest-like hollows have been lined with hides, shiny rocks, scales, and assorted odds and ends. The entire area is suffused with a nauseating stench.

Creatures: A clutch of six xulgath skirmishers makes its base camp here at the foot of the tower. They have been charged with Thessekka to ensure that her experiment above continues to drain the land, though they are not permitted to enter. Every few days, Thessekka emerges from the tower and asks for a report of what has occurred since her last visit. These xulgaths never see Thessekka leave and are at a loss to explain how she comes and goes.

These skirmishers fight in melee only if they are surprised here in this camp. Otherwise, they retreat up

the ladder to the north platform (area C4) and pull the ladder up after them, shooting their bows at foes they can see. They call to the higher platform to warn of intruders, even though they're never sure whether Thessekka is present. The xulgaths fight to the death.

These xulgaths are rivals of the bombers on the south platform (area C3). They don't coordinate their attacks with the bombers and avoid attacking any intruders focused on fighting their rivals, in the hopes that the intruders and the bombers weaken each other.

XULGATH SKIRMISHERS (6) CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +15; darkvision
Languages Draconic, Undercommon
Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +14, Stealth +16, Survival +15
Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0
Items javelins (6), scimitar, studded leather armor
AC 24; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13
HP 95

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 2, and on a critical failure, the creature is also slowed 1 for as long as it is sickened. While within the aura, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgaths' stench for 1 minute.

Speed 30 feet, light step
Melee ♦ scimitar +16 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing
Melee ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing
Melee ♦ claw +16 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d4+4 slashing
Ranged ♦ javelin +16 (thrown 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing damage
Light Step When a skirmisher Strides or Steps, they ignore difficult terrain and treat greater difficult terrain as difficult terrain.
Powerful Arm The xulgath skirmisher doubles the range increment of its thrown weapons.
Skirmishing Movement ♦♦ (attack, move) The xulgath skirmisher Strides or Steps, then Strikes. This Strike deals an additional 3d6 precision damage.

Treasure: Searching the camp uncovers 12 pp, 47 gp, 355 sp, a silver eel figurine worth 75 gp, a *moderate potion of fire resistance*, and an *oil of keen edges*.

C2. DRY SPRING

The area between the base of the tower and its two lower platforms forms a low natural basin, the bottom of which

is dry, cracked earth with the remains of various stunted grasses. The dusty stream bed exits this basin on the east side. A small hollow leads into the aeon tower, apparently the point from which a spring once issued.

The power of the *aeon orb* atop this tower caused a sweet spring to emerge from beneath its base. This spring flowed for millennia and watered the surrounding land. With the gradual decline over the last century, the spring has not flowed as freely—going nearly dry during a few droughts—but it always maintained some flow. Thessekka's siphon of the orb's power has dried up the spring entirely.



Xulgath Skirmisher

Treasure: A hero who searches the basin and succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check unearths a small gold idol of Aroden worth 100 gp. The idol bears an *axiomatic* rune, which can be transferred to a weapon just as though the idol were a runestone (although the idol isn't destroyed in the process). The idol was deposited here as an offering thousands of years ago.

C3. BOMBER CAMP

MODERATE 9

This stone platform bears the detritus of a long-term camp. Crudely tanned hides create rough nests for a half dozen creatures, and the ashes of a fire ring containing many scorched bones mark

a cookfire. A hewn log serves as a rough table, and holds a jumble of powders and vials.

Creatures: This platform serves as the camp of four xulgath bombers assigned as additional guards to this aeon tower. Thessekka shares a few basics of alchemical lore with these bombers from time to time, and they are entirely devoted to her service. Unlike the xulgath skirmishers, the bombers believe that Thessekka spends all her time working in the upper level of the tower, coming out only every few days. (But the bombers can't visit Thessekka, even if they dared to intrude on her work, because the skirmishers won't let them onto the north platform.)

The xulgath bombers are from a different clutch than the xulgath skirmishers in area C1 and the rival clutches hold one another in low esteem. If these bombers spot danger, they pull up their ladder to defend their position and hurl bombs at foes. They focus their attacks on intruders who have reached the north platform (area C4) or are ascending the stairs. They don't attack the skirmishers, but also don't mind dealing splash damage to them.



Xulgath Bomber

XULGATH BOMBERS (4)

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +14, Crafting +17, Stealth +15, Thievery +15

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

Items alchemist's tools, greatpick, studded leather armor

Infused Items A xulgath bomber carries the following infused items: 2 doses of concentrated xulgath bile, 2 moderate acid flasks, and 2 moderate alchemist's fires. These items last for 24 hours, or until the next time they make their daily preparations.

AC 25; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

HP 115; **Resistances** poison 5

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath skirmisher (page 27), but DC 24.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ greatpick +16 (fatal d12), **Damage** 1d12+5 piercing plus concentrated xulgath bile

Melee ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +16 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d4+5 slashing

Ranged ♦ acid flask +17 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 5 acid damage plus 2d6+2 persistent acid and 4 acid splash

EXTINCTION CURSE

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Ranged ♦ alchemist's fire +17 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d8+2 fire plus 4 persistent fire and 4 fire splash

Concentrated Xulgath Bile (poison) The sickened condition from concentrated xulgath bile doesn't improve on its own until the target recovers from the poison. A target who recovers from concentrated xulgath bile is immune to being sickened by this poison for 1 minute; **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 22; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d10 poison damage and sickened 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d10 poison damage and sickened 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 2d10 poison damage and sickened 3 (1 round).

Quick Bomber ♦ The bomber Interacts to draw a bomb, then Strikes with it.

Treasure: The table contains a greater cheetah elixir, formulas for a bleeding spines snare and a bomb snare, and 67 sp for some game of chance involving chipped pieces of stone.

C4. NORTH PLATFORM

This platform is bare save for a stack of 20 stone javelins that lie near the base of the tower's exterior stair. The xulgath skirmishers at area C1 retreat to this position and defend it against invaders.

C5. TERRACE

SEVERE 11

If the heroes have already explored the Liferoot Stone and the Old Forest Tower, Thessekka makes her last stand here, as described in area F9 on page 52. Otherwise, this terrace is empty.

C6. ENTRY HALL

LOW 9

The interior of the tower is dark and cool. A wide corridor extends back 45 feet with a vaulted ceiling 20 feet overhead. A smaller side passage extends to the south. An alcove at the back of the corridor holds a crudely rendered statue. The floor before it bears a scattering of broken rubble and the bones of what appears to have been a freshly killed deer.

This corridor's small shrine to Aroden was destroyed by its current occupant.

Creature: A roper named Ro'oosk accompanied Thessekka from the Darklands, and it lairs here. Thessekka occasionally brings Ro'oosk food; the deer was its most recent meal. In its boredom, it smashed the statue of Aroden that stood in the alcove and has been attempting to emulate it with its stalagmite-like body. Because the creature isn't good at posing as a humanoid, it doesn't receive the usual bonus to its Stealth check for being in a stony area.

Ro'oosk fights any creature other than xulgaths who enter this corridor. If reduced to fewer than 70 Hit Points, it attempts to fight its way past the heroes and escape down the terrace.

ROPER

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 282

Initiative Perception +21

Treasure: The roper jealously guards a small hoard of treasure, consisting of five aquamarines worth 80 gp each, a diamond worth 500 gp, and a steel flask worth 20 gp that contains a *standard potion of flying*.

C7. TRAPPED CORRIDOR

MODERATE 9

The steep stair exits into another wide corridor with a 20-foot vaulted ceiling. The ancient masonry is worn and countless holes riddle the mortar.

Trap: Not the result of a natural process, the damage here was caused by Thessekka's use of stonebinding and alchemy to create a trap. Behind the tiny holes are three launching mechanisms that shoot darts containing caustic chemicals.

CAUSTIC DART TRAP

HAZARD 11

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +20 (expert) or DC 30 (expert) to notice the three launching mechanisms built into the wall

Description Three launching mechanisms built into the mudbrick walls expel darts containing acidic chemicals. All three launching mechanisms must be disabled or destroyed to deactivate the trap.

Disable DC 32 Thievery (master) to sufficiently jam the tubes to make the trap unable to attack creatures in a single 5-foot square in the room, or DC 34 Crafting (master) to alter one of the three launching mechanisms

AC 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +15

Hardness 20; **HP** 80 (BT 40) per launching mechanism; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Dart Barrage ⤵ (attack) **Trigger** A creature reaches the midpoint of the hall; **Effect** The trap makes an acid dart against three different random creatures in the hall. The trap then rolls initiative.

Routine ♦♦♦ The trap uses each action for a caustic dart Strike. The trap loses 1 action for each launching mechanism that is broken or destroyed.

Ranged caustic dart +28, **Damage** 2d4+5 piercing and 4d4+8 acid

Reset The trap deactivates and resets 1 minute after no creatures are in area C7.

C8. GUARDIAN GOLEMS

SEVERE 9

This central chamber is bare of furnishings, though the floor bears many cracks and bits of broken mud. The corbelled arch of the ceiling rises to a height of 20 feet, and a 5-foot wide opening pierces the apex just south of its center. In addition to the rubble, the floor is scattered with other bits of debris ranging from shards of wood and glass to strange bits of metal and pools of foul-smelling substances.

The hole is a 5-foot-square shaft bored straight up through the interior of the tower for 45 feet. Thessekka formerly used this chamber as a workshop, but she has since perfected her energy-draining equipment and relocated it all up the shaft to area C9.

The winch and pulley up in area C9 can be used to haul materials into the higher room, but this mechanism is currently withdrawn up into area C9. Navigating the shaft without it requires magical flight or a successful DC 32 Athletics check to Climb. Creatures who can brace against the opposite walls of the shaft to climb—which includes most Small and larger creatures—gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Athletics checks to ascend the shaft.

Creatures: Two alchemical golems stand in alcoves at either end of the chamber. They resemble collections of tubes, gears, and wiring supported by large, spindly frames composed of metal and crystal. They attack any creature entering this chamber other than Thessekka or creatures accompanying her. They fight until destroyed, although they do not pursue foes beyond this chamber and seek cover in their alcoves from creatures making ranged attacks from the hallway.

DARKLANDS ALCHEMICAL GOLEMS (2) CREATURE 10

Variant elite alchemical golem (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 185)

Initiative Perception +17

Crystalline Construction Crafted in areas where glass is rare, the Darklands alchemical golem instead incorporates crystalline components. The golem's vulnerable to shatter ability functions only for *shatter* spells of at least 4th level.

C9. DRAINING DEVICE

This room near the tower's pinnacle is pyramidal in shape. Its corbelled walls rise at a steep angle to an apex 50 feet overhead, where a cylindrical shaft rises another 10 feet before opening to the sky at the tower's point. The stuttering light of the tower's *aeon orb* swings around the top of the shaft, casting dizzying shadows and occasionally shining its light straight down into the shaft.

The 30-foot-square chamber has four alcoves, one in the center of each wall, and the entire room is cluttered with crates bearing a sprawling contraption of glass-and-metal boxes, mirrors, liquid-filled tubes, and copper wiring. The south alcove has a simple hoist with a winch and pulley for hauling items up through a square-cut shaft that descends through the floor. The northern alcove holds a giant piece of rough-cut crystal three feet in diameter. This crystal rests on the floor and glows with an inner fire. Tubes and wiring from the assorted paraphernalia in this room converge on this giant mineral.

A low humming pervades the room, originating from the connected apparatuses. Every so often, the swinging light of the orbiting *aeon orb* shines down through the shaft from above, striking the device, which sparks wildly as it absorbs the light. The crystal's inner light then perceptibly brightens. Whenever the orb's light is momentarily absorbed, the orb takes on a dull, brownish cast for a few moments before gradually regaining its former sheen.

Thessekka constructed a specialized device in this chamber to siphon the energy off of the Wellspring Tower's *aeon orb* while she's working at the other towers. This gradual depletion of the *aeon orb*'s power has exacerbated the blight, killing local plant life and dried up the tower's spring. In another few weeks of uninterrupted operation, Thessekka's device will leach all power from the *aeon orb* into the crystal, leaving only a burnt-out husk to float above the tower. She plans to thereafter relocate this device to the Liferoot Stone and the Old Forest Tower and drain their *aeon orbs* as well.

The sprawling device is extraordinarily complex. Shutting it down is no simple matter, although heroes who discover Thessekka's working notes (page 31) are best equipped to do so. A hero who succeeds at three DC 26 Crafting or Thievery checks safely deactivates the device and stops the energy drain from the *aeon orb*. A critical success counts as two successful checks for the purpose of deactivating the device. On a failure, or if the heroes simply smash or move the equipment or the crystal, magical backlash destroys the device and each creature in the room takes 8d10 force damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). For a hero who critically fails the Crafting or Thievery check, their result on the subsequent Reflex save is one degree of success worse.

Whether the heroes succeed at carefully dismantling the device with successful skill checks or destroy the device with magical backlash, the device immediately and permanently ceases drawing power from the *aeon orb*. The orb shines brightly and consistently again, and the spring at the base of the tower once again produces clean water. The heroes gain the *resonant reflection* of the *aeon orb*, as described on page 31.

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Thessekka's Notes: A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check while Searching this room discovers several thin metal sheets carved with diagrams and notes in Undercommon. A ring of metal keeps these pages together. This heavy booklet contains Thessekka's working notes on the device she's built. A hero who speaks Undercommon and references these notes gains a +8 circumstance bonus on Crafting checks to carefully disassemble the device.

The Crystal: The giant crystal currently functions as a battery, storing the life-giving power pulled from the *aeon orb*. It thrums with life-giving energy drawn from the *aeon orb*; anyone casting a *heal* spell while touching the crystal adds the level of the *heal* spell to the number of Hit Points restored by the spell. The crystal loses this ability if it is moved from its current spot, or if backlash destroys the connected device.

Treasure: The copper wires and high-quality mirrors of Thessekka's device are worth a total of 200 gp. The crates contain pieces from an early prototype, including crystals embedded in a circular plate of steel that serves as a *force shield*.

XP Award: If the heroes destroy the device drawing the energy of the *aeon orb* away, award them 30 XP. If they do so without triggering a magical backlash, instead award them 80 XP.

Resonant Reflection

When the *aeon orb*'s power is no longer being drained away by Thessekka's device, it grants its *resonant reflection* to anyone in area C9. This is in addition to the *resonant reflection* the heroes gained in the Erran Tower in *The Show Must Go On* and other *resonant reflections* gained in this adventure. *Resonant reflections* are magic items that don't have any physical substance, are automatically invested, and don't count toward a character's limit of 10 invested items. *Resonant reflections* aren't visible—though their effects can be—although a hero who has one is aware of its presence.

As with other *resonant reflections*, a hero who later joins the campaign can receive this *resonant reflection* by standing beneath the shaft in the *aeon orb*'s light. The new hero's connection to the heroes who initially received the *resonant reflection* allows it to be shared.

REFLECTION OF WATER RESONANT REFLECTION 10

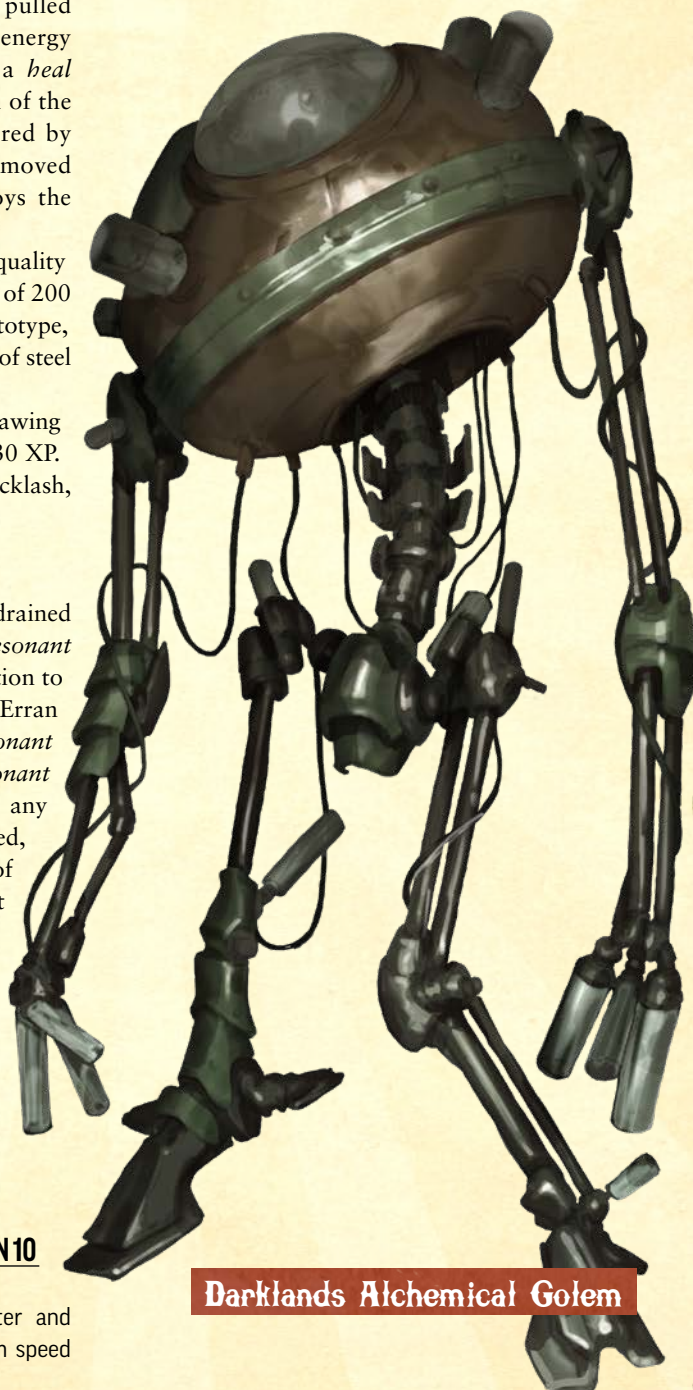
MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION WATER

Your body is infused with the essence of water and becomes adapted to its presence. You gain a swim speed

of 10 feet and can breathe underwater. In addition, you can also focus this affinity to gain an additional effect.

Activate ♦♦ *envision*; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cast *control water* as a 5th-level innate divine spell. The area of water you control increases by 10 feet in length and width for every 2 levels you have beyond 10th level.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for obtaining the *reflection of water*.



Darklands Alchemical Golem



CHAPTER 3: THE LIFEROOT STONE

The road from Kerrick to Castinlee follows the Sulwen Hills where they meet the basin of the Swardlands. It is a trip of some 16 miles from either Kerrick or Turpin Rowe. Travelers from Kerrick pass through a somewhat marshy combe between the hills and surrounding plains and skirt a broad, low hill sheltered among scores of willow trees that has served as a cemetery since the earliest records of the Swardlands. This place is the Castinlee Hollows Burying Ground, known locally as the Hollows.

The heroes have likely come to this area to perform in the town of Castinlee or investigate the aeon tower known as the Liferoot Stone. They may also investigate the Hollows because they've heard of Booralu the Deadsinger, or simply because they're passing through the area. For details on the area around Castinlee, see the Swardlands Gazetteer beginning on page 56.

Castinlee

Castinlee is renowned for its orchards and is surrounded by hundreds of acres of apple, pear, plum, cherry, and pecan groves. A cleared patch of land between two sweet-smelling apple orchards provides an excellent spot for the Circus of Wayward Wonders to set up. As in *Matten Cleave*, the party can quickly make arrangements for the Circus of Wayward Wonders with an introduction from Opper Vandy. Julpin Crag, the local mayor and a wealthy cabbage farmer, is excited about a circus but is skeptical that "circus folks" are sometimes known to con hardworking people. Without Vandy's recommendation, a hero must allay Mayor Julpin's concerns before he'll allow them to set up. This requires a successful DC 28 Diplomacy or Society check. On a failure, the heroes can't try again for a week; on a critical failure, they can't try again for a month.

EXTINCTION CURSE

The people of Castinlee spread news quickly. Society checks to Promote the Circus (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #151 61*) take only a day and a half rather than two days, so the party has up to four chances to Promote the Circus before each circus show (rather than only three). As they have fewer domestic animals—and generally fewer wild animals—than other areas of the Swardlands, the people of Castinlee respond well to animal acts. Performers gain a +1 circumstance bonus to trick checks for tricks with the animal trait. Any hero who successfully Gathers Information in Castinlee learns of these bonuses automatically, in addition to any other information gained.

In addition to running their circus, the heroes can seek out information about Castinlee. The rumors presented in the sidebar on page 35 are in addition to those in the Swardlands Rumors sidebar on page 6.

THE HOLLOWES

LOW 9

The road passes through a swampy lowland between the hills and the plains here. It's muddy and furrowed from years of traffic on its soft surface, and standing water forms puddles in the ruts. Willows grow profusely in this area, and between them and the stony outcrops of the rising hills to the north and west there is a shadowy, close quality to the air unlike the bright, open feel of the rest of the Swardlands. It is as if you have taken a step away from the sunlit fields and villages into a darker and more remote land altogether.

The road parallels an iron fence along its north side where the ground rises to a large hillock covered in willows. Spread out in the gloom beneath these trees are limestone and marble tombstones. An open gate in the fence bears an elaborate wrought iron arch bearing the words "Castinlee Hollows Burying Ground." A track branches off and climbs the hill among the trees. A mournful song comes from that direction.

The heroes might already be aware that the singer is Booralu the Deadsinger, a locally famous shoony who sings to the departed. Heroes who take the sidetrack into the burying ground find the shoony hard at work digging a grave on the gentle slope of the hill and crooning a melancholy song that is both haunting and heart-wrenching to hear. The shadows of the looming Sulwen Hills and surrounding willows create a dim grotto where the shoony works, and fireflies dance in the gloaming light. The fireflies gather around Booralu in prodigious numbers and dance gracefully in time with his song. Heroes who have already heard of the shoony can see why the fireflies might be mistaken for dead spirits among the sepulchral surroundings.

Booralu stops his work if interrupted, and the fireflies rapidly disperse. So long as the heroes are friendly and intend no offense, Booralu quickly warms to them. His initial attitude condition is friendly, and he becomes helpful if the heroes mention knowing Opper Vandy, as Booralu has worked with the mortician on many occasions. If asked about the fireflies, he states they are just his "friends" who like to listen to him sing. He has no real understanding of why or how they are drawn to his singing.

A New Body: As the heroes are talking to Booralu, they hear a creak of axles and see the light of a lantern coming up the road from the gate. Soon, a human carter from Castinlee named Clive Bowiger arrives, driving a small horse-drawn cart. The cart holds a single plain pine coffin. Booralu explains that this is the burial he was expecting.

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

This chapter details the heroes' explorations of the Liferoot Stone, the southernmost of the aeon towers. The nearby town of Castinlee is hungry for entertainment, and the heroes might encounter a strange gravedigger in the cemetery known as the Hollows. The *xulgath* presence at the Liferoot Stone is light, but several old golems from the tower's long-dead inhabitants still roam the area, and Thessekka has harnessed the golems to her own ends. The greatest impediment to reaching the *aeon orb* above the Liferoot Stone is its height; the upper half of the tower collapsed long ago, but the *aeon orb* still swings on its original course, more than a hundred feet above the highest surviving point of the tower.

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 3 are as follows.

- *breastplate of command*
- *golem stylus*
- greater juggernaut mutagen
- moderate elixir of life
- *ring of wizardry type III*

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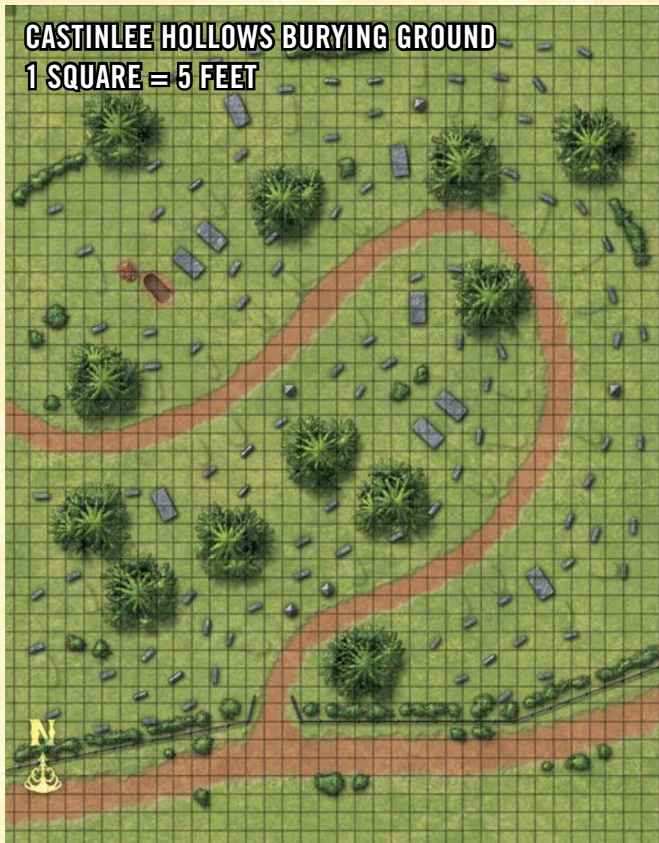
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CASTINLEE HOLLWS BURYING GROUND**1 SQUARE = 5 FEET**

Booralu and Clive can identify the deceased as Anylla, a local teenaged girl who had no family. They know she was a bit rough around the edges and sometimes ran around the Swardlands with a group of young delinquents—stealing chickens, knocking over outhouses, and that sort of thing—she was in good health as far as anyone knew. She was found dead in her hovel this morning without a mark on her; she'd just passed away in her sleep. Clive says Anylla's neighbors remarked to him that she'd looked haggard and hollow-eyed in the last few days, and she'd complained about terrible nightmares featuring a little girl. If the heroes dealt with the delinquents during the Night Ruffians encounter, they recognize Anylla as one of the people who attempted to rob the circus.

Creature: The lights and activity in the graveyard have attracted the attention of a wicked fey that has recently come down from the hills to investigate rumors of misfortune sweeping the Swardlands. The yaganty uses its candle fingers to impersonate a traveler carrying a lantern through the trees down from the hills to the north. It shouts "Hello!" a few times, but it doesn't respond to any hails in return. It hopes to draw one or two victims closer among the trees so it can ambush them, but it retreats back into the hills if reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points.

YAGANTY**CREATURE 10**

Page 85

Initiative Perception +20

Hiring Booralu: If the heroes offer Booralu a role in the Circus of Wayward Wonders, the shoony bows his head thoughtfully for a few minutes. He doesn't mind his work as a gravedigger, but it's gotten a bit boring and he's been thinking about trying something else. After some deliberation, Booralu accepts. Give the players the Booralu the Deadsinger trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for offering Booralu a position in their circus.

The Liferoot Stone

Uneven ground and sporadic foliage mark the edges of the Sulwen Hills. A break in the scattered copses of trees provides a view of the tower known as the Liferoot Stone just beyond the next ridge. Its basic shape of a stepped pyramid is still discernible, but much of its upper portions have collapsed, leaving only a broken fragment of its former immensity rising above its first tier. Along with this destruction, it's apparent that the years have not been kind to this structure. Nevertheless, hundreds of feet above the ground, its shining orb still floats in the air completely unsupported, giving off light as a beacon visible for miles in every direction.

Many centuries ago, the dwarven wizards Luko and Jormir Grundryn used the tower as their base of operation from which to tap into the power of the *aeon orb* and launch a campaign against the city of Absalom. Like for so many would-be conquerors before and after, their gambit ended in catastrophic failure—but not before they had constructed scores of stone and clay golems with which to assault the city. Exactly what doom befell Luko and Jormir, none can say, but their golem army was scattered and their base of operations atop the Liferoot Stone was obliterated, along with the top portion of the great tower itself. When the dust cleared, the wizards' golems were strewn about like broken toys and the unharmed *aeon orb* continued its silent, serene orbit high above.

The area around the Liferoot Stone is scattered with pieces of crudely carved, articulated statues destroyed long ago. A hero who succeeds at a DC 26 Arcana check to Identify Magic learns that these pieces were once clay golems and stone golems. A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Arcana or Society check to Recall

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Knowledge remembers the story of the Grundryns' attempt to raise a golem army against Absalom.

Few have had any reason to visit the Liferoot Stone after its upper levels collapsed; unlike the other towers, there aren't many defensible interior chambers to occupy. Smugglers or monsters would occasionally establish a lair at the Liferoot Stone, but never for long, as the ghosts of Luko and Jormir would scare away intruders. Further, not all of the wizards' golems were destroyed, and every time the ghosts became agitated, so too did the scattered golems. Local legends hold that when the statues around the Liferoot Stone are seen walking, it's a good time to keep one's distance.

Thessekka came to the Liferoot Stone after her previous commander's forces had been decimated by golems. She discovered a hidden magic item called a *golem stylus* (page 69), allowing her to take control of active golems. Yet she was unable to effectively reach the *aeon stone* with the upper part of the tower gone. She elected to address this problem later and turned to the other *aeon* towers in the short term. When Thessekka returned a short time later, the xulgath guards she'd posted told her they'd spotted dwarven ghosts in the tower. Thessekka learned that the ghosts couldn't exit the tower, so she simply ordered her xulgaths to leave the interior alone. She plans to deal with the ghosts in the future, but for now her xulgaths and her subverted golems protect the Liferoot Stone from intruders.

GUARD PATROL

MODERATE 10

Thessekka left only seven xulgaths to guard the Liferoot Stone: a powerful xulgath stoneliage and six xulgath skirmishers. These skirmishers take turns patrolling the area around the Liferoot Stone, and the heroes are likely to cross their path.

Creatures: Four xulgath skirmishers patrol with a tyrannosaurus. The dinosaur follows the xulgaths' simple commands (primarily, to keep its presence concealed by hills as they travel). Presented with the prospect of larger prey, such as the heroes, the tyrannosaurus roars and rushes ahead of the skirmishers. These foes fight to the death—the xulgaths from fear of punishment, and the dinosaur because it hasn't yet encountered prey that can defeat it.

TYRANNOSAURUS

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 101

Initiative Perception +19

XULGATH SKIRMISHERS (4)

CREATURE 6

Page 27

Initiative Perception +15

CASTINLEE RUMORS

A hero may want to learn more about Castinlee and its environs by attempting a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. A successful check gives the hero a fact from the list below that they don't already know. A critical success yields two facts, while a critical failure provides a false rumor of your invention.

1. "Castinlee is the apple capital of the Inner Sea; nobody grows an apple like the Castinlee Crisp! I just hope the blight over by Matten Cleave doesn't make it this far. The orchards are already producing less."
2. "The Hollows is a cemetery on a hillock in a lowland area at the foot of the Sulwen Hills. The main road goes right by there."
3. "There's been less burying in the Hollows since most funeral duties went over to Opper Vandy in Kerrick, but a shoony gravedigger still handles burials there. They say he sings to the dead and their spirits answer."
4. "The Liferoot Stone is an old, ruined tower, like those others they call towers throughout the Swardlands. It's in worse shape than the others, though. An old foot trail from the Hollows follows the base of the hills all the way to the stone."
5. "Would-be conquerors of Absalom took up in it in the old days to plan their attack on the city. It's said they created statues from stone and clay to smash the city's walls. Of course, it went about as well as it did with the rest of 'em over in the Cairnlands, and now the tower's upper half is rubble. Most of the statues too. Word is that some have been stirring again of late."

D1. MARCHING GOLEMS

SEVERE 10

The area around the Liferoot Stone is bare of vegetation and has been trampled flat over the years. Stairs lead up the north side of the northern platform to area D2.

Creatures: Two stone golems constantly patrol the base of the Liferoot Stone. They patrol on opposite sides of the tower and therefore almost never see each other, each taking about 3 minutes to make a complete circuit. The golems are attracted to the sounds of combat, although it takes a golem 15 rounds to reach its counterpart in the event of an attack. The heroes might also use the golems' tendency to plod toward the sounds of combat to distract the constructs, although neither of them travels more than a quarter-mile from the base of the tower.

Both of these stone golems bear markings on the back of their heads from the *golem stylus* used by Thessekka. She commanded them to maintain their centuries-old patrol, but not to harm any xulgaths or anyone accompanying Thessekka personally. If Thessekka is

THE LIFEROOT STONE



present (see area **D3**) and aware of the heroes, she orders the golems to converge on them in the most efficient manner to keep them from the tower. The stone golems attack relentlessly and fight until destroyed.

STONE GOLEMS (2) **CREATURE 11**

Pathfinder Bestiary 187
Initiative Perception +17

D2. DEFENSIVE PLATFORM **MODERATE 10**

A pair of 30-foot-square platforms protrude from the front face of this crumbling tower. The northern terrace has a large yurt made of reptilian skins. From the northern terrace, a narrow stair with multiple switchbacks ascends to another terrace bearing a dark opening high above. A rough staircase carved in a different style descends from this northern terrace to the ground. Standing at the top of this lower stair is an unmoving humanoid statue of prodigious proportions but with little true detail.

The xulgaths have set up their encampment atop the northern terrace. The xulgath stoneliege that leads

them used its *shape stone* ability to carve makeshift stairs into its north face.

Creatures: The clay golem currently stands guard at the top of this stair. It's not only under the xulgaths' command due to the influence of the *golem stylus* Thessekka found, but it's also the repository of the stylus, as described below. A xulgath stoneliege and two xulgath skirmishers spend their time resting in the yurt they've erected, although they quickly prepare for battle if they hear combat.

The clay golem and the stoneliege both fight to the death, but the skirmishers retreat to area **D3** if either the golem or the stoneliege falls. From there, they throw javelins at anyone attempting to climb the tower. If Thessekka is present, the skirmishers defend her.

CLAY GOLEM **CREATURE 10**

Pathfinder Bestiary 186
Initiative Perception +16

XULGATH STONELIEGE **CREATURE 8**

Page 84
Initiative Perception +14

XULGATH SKIRMISHERS (2)

CREATURE 6

Page 27

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: The xulgaths have several treasures within their yurt: a baton made of obsidian and onyx worth 95 gp, a chrysoberyl worth 95 gp, a greater juggernaut mutagen, and a moderate elixir of life. Thessekka hid the *golem stylus* (page 69) in a panel in the back of the golem's head to avoid losing it as she traveled between the aeon towers. The heroes can find it if they Search the destroyed golem and succeed at a DC 27 Perception check.

D3. TERRACE

SEVERE 11

If the heroes have already explored the Wellspring Tower and the Old Forest Tower, Thessekka makes her last stand here, as described in area **F9** on page 52. Otherwise, this terrace is empty other than a few scratches Thessekka made in the face of the aeon tower when she was here previously. These scratches have been made near the door and consist of several calculations about the *aeon orb*'s height. They also include a message in Draconic reading, "Ghosts. Stay Out."

D4. HAUNTED CHAMBER

MODERATE 10

The tunnel that pierces the upper level of the aeon tower is shrouded in gloom, an effect of the ghosts dwelling here. As long as either ghost is active, the tunnel connecting area **D3** to area **D5**, and all of area **D4** (as shown by the dotted lines on the map), are covered by a 5th-level *darkness* spell. The ghosts can see through this *darkness* normally.

The tunnel into the tower widens into a small chamber. A stone table against the north wall has several clay tablets upon it; nearby, a shelf holds several large, stone hands.

The dried clay tablets are only a fraction of the lore the dwarven wizards discovered. They contain fragmentary lore about constructing golems, as well as an overview of their plan to assemble an army of golems to besiege Absalom. The wizards chose the Liferoot Stone because of its *aeon orb*, which can impart remarkable durability; they'd hoped to render their golems invulnerable with its magic. Although none of these materials are dated, it's clear they are many centuries old. With a successful DC 27 Perception check, a character Investigating the tablets spots a reference to a magic item called the *golem stylus*. The tablets describe what the *golem stylus* is, but not where it can be found.

Creatures: The ghosts of the dwarven wizards Luko and Jormir Grundryn haunt this chamber. They can't leave the interior of the Liferoot Stone, and are therefore confined to this chamber and the short hallways to either side. When the heroes arrive, the ghosts cause the many unattached stone golem hands to rattle ominously before the ghosts lunge forth, demanding in Dwarven to be left in peace. The ghosts fight until destroyed.

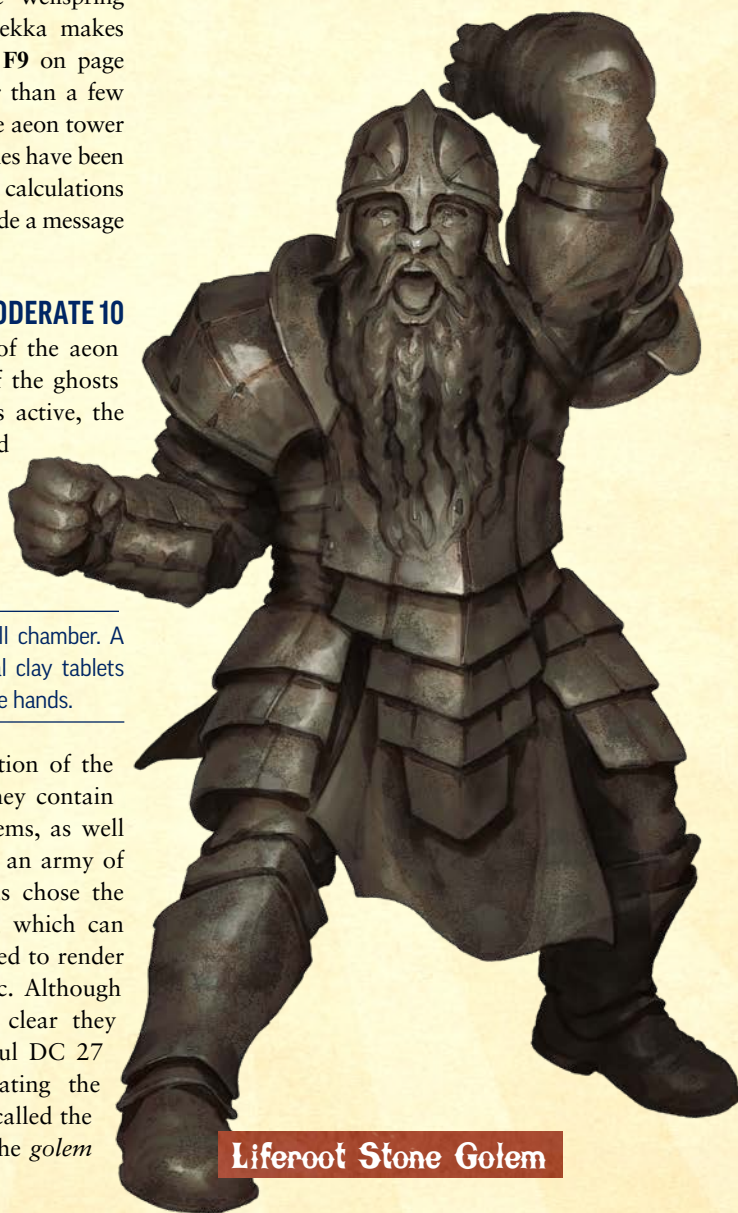
LUKO AND JORMIR GRUNDRYN

CREATURE 10

Ghost mages (2; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 167)

Initiative Stealth +21

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) The ghosts are tied to this tower and can't enter the afterlife until another creature gains the *reflection of stone* from the *aeon orb*.



Liferoot Stone Golem

Treasure: The shelf holding the stone golem hands also holds a *ring of wizardry type III*. The interior of the ring is inscribed with the words, “Conquer the city, Jormir, then come back to me.”

D5. COLLAPSED CORE

MODERATE 10

The tunnel from the terrace opens into the collapsed core of the broken aeon tower. The peak of the rubble pile is 10 feet lower than the mouth of the tunnel. Read the following description when the heroes first view the tower’s broken interior, whether they enter through the tunnel, fly over the top, or simply climb the tower’s broken walls to see over the edge.

The truth of this tower’s failure to weather the passing ages is apparent when looking below. At some point in the distant past, the tower’s inner core of fill material

collapsed, causing the mudbrick exterior of its highest level to fall inward. The result was the total collapse of the upper portions of the tower into a great central pile of rubble within the intact sides of the tower’s remaining lower tier. Tumbled stone, broken bricks, and centuries of tangled overgrowth fill the tower beneath the aeon orb, which continues to orbit serenely nearly 200 feet above the pile.

Other than area **D4**, the interior of the Liferoot Stone has been completely destroyed. The heroes must resort to magic or their own ingenuity to reach the *aeon orb* slowly orbiting high above. The *aeon orb* is 300 feet above the ground level, and 160 feet above the mound of rubble filling the tower’s collapsed center.

The rubble pile provides a vantage point directly beneath the orb, but it is difficult terrain and occupied by a hungry predator.

Creature: A shuln dwells within the mass of weathered rubble, having burrowed up from underground and claimed this sheltered area as its nest. The xulgaths are aware of the creature, but they leave it alone—

Thessekka is happy to have it as an additional guardian for the *aeon orb* while she works out how to reach the artifact. The shuln is irritable and hungry, so it attacks anyone descending to its rubble pile.

SHULN

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 294

Initiative Perception +20

Treasure: Heroes who Search the shuln’s burrow in the rubble discover an ancient skeleton lying crushed beneath the debris that still wears a *breastplate of command*.

Resonant Reflection

Any creature that manages to approach within 10 feet of the *aeon orb* above the crumbled Liferoot Stone gains its *resonant reflection*, called the *reflection of stone*. See page 31 for more information about *resonant reflections*.

REFLECTION OF STONE RESONANT REFLECTION 10

ABJURATION EARTH MAGICAL

Your body is infused with the resilience and durability of stone. You are protected against the effects of severe cold and severe heat. In addition, you can also focus this durability to gain an additional effect.

Activate ◆◆ envision; **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You cast *stoneskin* as an innate divine



Jormir Grundryn

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spell, heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for obtaining the *reflection of stone*.

THE LIBERATED GOLEM

After the heroes have defeated the ghosts and gained the *reflection of stone*, a golem lumbers up to them with peaceful intentions. This encounter works best when the heroes are leaving the tower, or when they are resting near it.

This squat clay golem is sculpted to vaguely resemble an enormous female dwarf. The golem's hands are raised in the air, stubby fingers splayed in a gesture of surrender.

A magical accident in this golem's creation gave them a measure of sentience, and they fled from the Grundryn brothers as soon as they could manage. The dwarven wizards didn't recognize the creature's unusual intelligence and thought the golem lost or destroyed; the golem, on the other hand, was magically bound to remain near their creators—even in death—and couldn't range far from them. The golem therefore spent their days hiding from the wizards, curiously examining local wildlife but keeping hidden from travelers. The golem didn't even realize the wizards had died, as they remained bound to the area. But when the heroes vanquish the ghosts and obtain the *reflection of stone* to put the ghosts permanently to rest, the golem is now free. They recognize the heroes as their liberators and are resolved to assist and accompany them.

Creature: The golem calls themselves Runkrunk, which is the noise wild boars in the area make. Runkrunk is far more intelligent than most golems, but can't speak other than to say their name. Although Runkrunk wants to thank the heroes and offer to serve them, the golem must do so in pantomime. Runkrunk accompanies the heroes, if they allow, but refuses to fight, even to defend themselves; even to this day, the golem wants no part of the violent role their creators planned for them. They are therefore surprisingly gentle and docile, with a keen appreciation for nature.

RUNKRUNK CREATURE 10

Clay golem (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 186)

Initiative Perception +16

Awakened Runkrunk has an Intelligence modifier of -2, a Nature skill of +16, and knows Common and Dwarven (but can't speak any language).

Hiring Runkrunk: Because Runkrunk won't fight, the heroes might find little use for the golem during their adventures. As a circus attraction, however, Runkrunk is positively unique; they are incredibly strong and have a way with animals. If the heroes offer Runkrunk a role in the Circus of Wayward Wonders, the golem nods in acceptance. Runkrunk's preferred act is to work alongside animals like boars and wolves (whose tusks and bites they can mostly ignore), hefting the animals above their head and even juggling them for the amusement of crowds. Give the players the Invulnerable Beast-Juggler trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for offering the golem a position in their circus.



Runkrunk



CHAPTER 4: THE OLD FOREST TOWER

The logging town of Turpin Rowe lies on the far side of the Swardlands from Kerrick, at the verge of the Immenwood. The best roads to Turpin Rowe swing south through Castinlee or east through Arbo. Both roads meet at Cawshax at the edge of Potter's Lake, and a logging road runs for about 7 miles from Cawshax to Turpin Rowe.

Turpin Rowe

Turpin Rowe once stood within the Immenwood. Over the years, the forest has been cut back several miles through systematic logging, though the timber industry is still thriving. The drought and blight afflicting other parts of the Swardlands have had a different effect on the old growth forest of the wood that the loggers of Turpin Rowe harvest, and one that is less obvious: the forest doesn't regrow with the same rapidity after logging. The town of Turpin Rowe is

now surrounded by scrubby, open country rather than tall trees, and the loggers must venture further for their work than their parents or grandparents ever did.

The heroes might have difficulty setting up their circus in Turpin Rowe, as the town has just started its 2-week Stump Festival in celebration of the local industry. A dour dwarf named Commissioner Ikener is the town's leader, as the lead representative of the Yalbrough Consortium that owns the land and buildings in town. Commissioner Ikener worries that the circus would draw attendance away from the Stump Festival, and therefore away from the city coffers that receive the Stump Festival's proceeds. He allows the circus to set up during the Stump Festival only upon payment of 100 gp to offset this loss. If the heroes agree to wait until after the Stump Festival, Ikener still charges them 50 gp to offset the loss of productivity from the loggers' attendance at the circus.

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Even Opper Vandy's recommendation does little to sway the dwarf; he respects Vandy, as Commissioner Ikener has his bottom line to consider.

If the heroes rescue the distillery workers (area E4), their reputation in Turpin Rowe becomes so good that Ikener must bow to public sentiment. He thereafter allows the heroes' circus to set up without any fee.

Turpin Rowe has several public notice boards; normally, these are used for announcements from the Yalbrough Consortium, but the heroes can use them to post circus advertisements instead. Advertisements in Turpin Rowe generate Anticipation for the next higher tier (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #151* 60). People of Turpin Rowe are excited to see dangerous acts performed as public spectacles, so performers gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Perform a Trick with the injury trait. Any hero who successfully Gathers Information in Turpin Rowe learns of these bonuses automatically, in addition to any other information gained.

In addition to running their circus, the heroes can seek out general information about the surrounding area. The rumors presented in the sidebar on page 42 are in addition to those in the Swardlands Rumors sidebar on page 6.

THE STUMP FESTIVAL

The focus in town is on the Stump Festival, which runs for 2 weeks from the time the heroes arrive. As the Stump Festival is open only to Turpin Rowe loggers and their families, the heroes aren't allowed to participate, but they can enjoy the spectacle of it. If the heroes attend the Stump Festival at all, they have the opportunity to witness the deeds of local young logger named Dingo Dray. Read or paraphrase the following for heroes who attend.

Several tree trunks stand upright for a climbing competition at the edge town, near a wide stream. In the stream itself, logs float for a competition where two loggers stand on a log to spin it and topple each other. Townspeople gather around the area as loggers move into place. At the sound of a horn, the log-rolling begins and loggers begin climbing the tree trunks using a hatchet in each hand. One particularly lean fellow with a head of shocking red hair considerably outpaces his fellows. Once at the top, he gives a deep bow to the cheering crowd before doing a backflip off the log. He lands on one of the logs in the stream below, spinning it with his landing and sending the two competitors on the log flying. The red-haired logger then begins running in place while spinning his log, only to be met with laughs and raucous applause from the crowd.



Dingo Dray

Hiring Dingo Dray: Dingo's natural athleticism and crowd-pleasing antics make him a natural candidate for the Circus of Wayward Wonders.

CHAPTER 4 SYNOPSIS

When the heroes arrive in Turpin Rowe, the annual Stump Festival is in full swing, providing competition for their circus. The locals worry about the absence of workers from a nearby distillery, and their anxieties are well founded—the distillery workers are under attack by xulgath forces. The heroes can save the distillery and learn the best route to the Old Forest Tower. The xulgaths in the Swardlands are most entrenched at the Old Forest Tower, and the tower is filled with alchemical mutants Thessekka has created.

CHAPTER 4 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 4 are as follows.

- +1 striking dagger
- +1 striking shortsword
- +2 resilient leather armor
- +2 striking heavy crossbow
- dust of disappearance
- earth elemental gem
- greater acid flask
- greater alchemist goggles
- greater antidote
- lich dust
- mnemonic acid
- moderate salamander elixir
- oil of animation
- ring of lies
- ring of stoneshifting
- scroll of dragon form
- shadow essence

TURPIN ROWE RUMORS

A hero may want to learn more about Turpin Rowe and its environs by attempting a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. A successful check gives the hero a fact from the list below that they don't already know. A critical success yields two facts, while a critical failure provides a false rumor of your invention.

1. "The Stump Festival is here! This two-week festival is full of drink, food, and good cheer. Local loggers compete in events of strength and skill for prizes and to impress others. More than one couple gets hitched at the festival every year. Dingo Dray is the solid favorite to win the Top Stumper prize."
2. "Turpin Rowe is primarily a logging town. Its secondary industry—and the source of the town's original name—is distilling turp spirits from local tree resin. It's used in paints and liniment. There's a distillery in the woods a few miles outside of town."
3. "None of the distillery folks have come into town for the Stump Festival, which is strange. Normally it shuts down for at least a few days of the festival for its workers to join the celebration."
4. "Things have been seen shambling through the woods recently, usually at night. Whatever they are, they aren't human and they smell awful. It's not a good idea to go wandering under the trees these days, and some of the loggers usually based further out feel safer here in town—good thing it's the Stump Festival."
5. "The Old Forest Tower is somewhere northeast of town. No one goes there, because it's cursed—if you look too closely at its light, you turn into a monster. Folks at the distillery probably know the best way there."
6. "The commissioner has been hushing it up, but some folks have been dying hard around town within the last month. Two people, Harper Fie and Miss Landra at the Stump 'n Chow, died in their sleep, but both were fit as fiddles the day before. There's some bloody business at hand here for sure."

Getting a chance to speak to Dingo is difficult, as he's frequently surrounded by admirers vying for his romantic attentions—something that makes Dingo visibly nervous. If the heroes persevere, however, the logger makes some time for them. Heroes who speak with Dingo realize that he's much more halting and unsure in conversation than he is in physical exploits.

Dingo explains that he grew up in the Immenwood with his "da'," and he and his father rarely saw others. He's been to Turpin Rowe only a handful of times in his life. But pneumonia took his da' last winter, and he's finally warming up to living among other people.

He finds the idea of life in the circus appealing, but the life of a logger—and perhaps settling down with a family of his own in the Immenwood someday—is also attractive. A hero must succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to Request Dingo join the Circus of Wayward Wonders; on a failure, he decides to stay around Turpin Rowe instead. If the heroes hire the logger, give the players the Aerobatic Lumberjack trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if Dingo Dray joins their circus.

TURPIN ROWE DEATHS

Heroes who have been following up on Opper Vandy's haunting might ask around in Turpin Rowe about recent deaths. Alternatively, heroes might have heard the rumor about Harper's and Landra's murders when asking around town. In either case, asking about recent deaths earns the heroes the following information.

Both Harper Fie and Miss Landra are the most recent deaths in town, and both deaths appear to be murders. Harper was the town drunk, considered a shiftless yet harmless layabout. Miss Landra was a cheery woman who waited tables at Turpin Rowe's busiest tavern, the Stump 'n Chow. Both were discovered in similar circumstances, two mornings apart: stone dead just east of town, in pools of blood running from their noses and from deep knife wounds. Commissioner Ikener hasn't done much about these killings, since neither victim was technically an employee of the Yalbrough Consortium. The murders would cause more outrage or even panic in other times, but Ikener has been working hard to keep everyone focused on the Stump Festival. He even had the bodies both buried here in Turpin Rowe, rather than sending them to Kerrick for Opper Vandy's services. Most people blame the vague yet menacing "monsters" wandering the forests at night, which is substantially true. Harper and Landra were both victims of Ginjana Mindkeeper, who caught them each out after dark, killed them, and took pieces of their brains. Perceptive heroes might note the similarity between these victims' injuries and those of the satyr further out in the Swardlands (see *Revenge Song* on page 19) or of Hansdirk at the distillery (area E1).

Turp Spirits Distillery

Four miles southeast of Turpin Rowe, near the northeast edge of the Immenwood, sits the turp spirits distillery established by the townsfolk. Here workers harvest resin from a grove of terebinth trees and distill it into turp spirits for medicinal use and commercial trade in paints, varnishes, and solvents. The heroes

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might have learned that no one from the distillery has shown up for the Stump Festival, and the unfortunate truth is that the occupants are currently under siege by a raiding party of xulgaths. The distillers had been aware of some group of creatures operating out of the Old Forest Tower for some time but hadn't been attacked. Likewise, the xulgaths at the tower were aware of the distillery, but their patrols gave it wide berth as they didn't want to alert such a large group of humans and possibly jeopardize their mission.

Everything changed a few days ago when the dero Ginjana murdered one of the distillers—a jovial man named Hansdirk—to claim a piece of his brain. When his body was discovered by his fellows, several of the enraged workers formed an armed party to head to the tower and put an end to the menace there, while another worker was sent to town to get help. Almost immediately things went wrong. The armed party ran into a trap in the forest, and the messenger was intercepted and killed by a xulgath patrol. Realizing that the distillery was now understaffed, the xulgath patrol made a raid on its weakened force in hopes of capturing the humans for their cookfires. The distillery workers managed to fight off the initial assault, but the xulgath skirmishers merely pulled back into the tree line to ensure the humans didn't run for help. Other xulgaths have since joined them.

When the heroes arrive, the situation has become desperate for the surviving workers. Of the 16 workers on site, one was killed by Ginjana, eight left with the armed party to investigate the Old Forest Tower, and one was sent to town as a messenger (and subsequently killed). When the xulgaths attacked, one more was killed and one captured while the four survivors retreated to the bunkhouse (area E3) and fortified it to prepare for the xulgaths' next assault. The xulgaths are preparing to make that assault when the heroes arrive.

Use the map on page 44 for this location.

E1. DISTILLERY GROVE

MODERATE 10

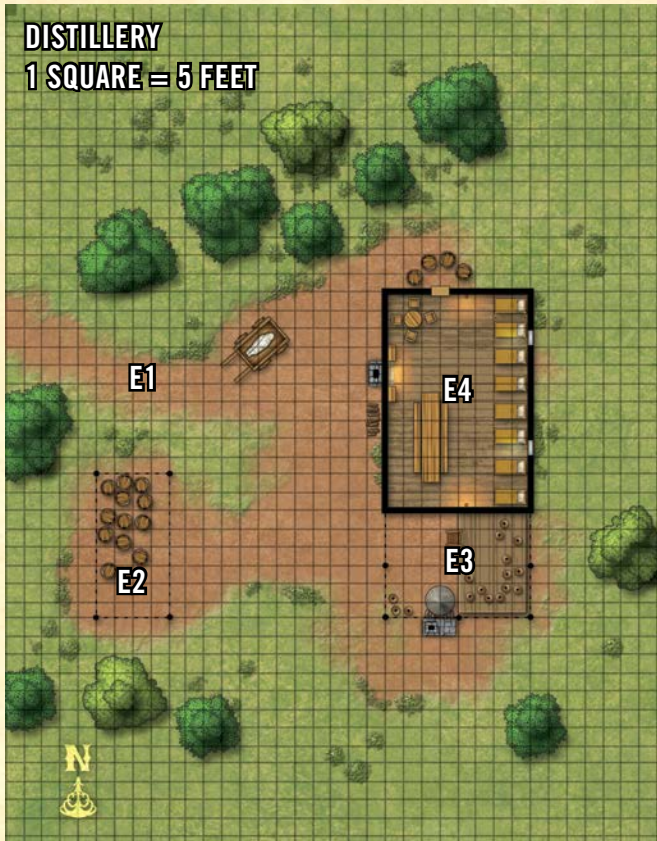
A silence descends upon the forest as the track reaches the distillery, constructed in the middle of a grove of terebinth trees. It's possible to see where workers have driven metal gutters into tree trunks to gather the sap in clay pots. Two structures stand in the clearing along with a single wagon. The largest structure is a combination bunkhouse and covered shed with an oven and tanks for distilling the turp spirits. A second covered shelter stands some distance away and contains barrels awaiting shipment. The pungent smell of the chemical hangs heavy along with traces of xulgath stench. The bloody corpse of a horse lies dead in the wagon's traces.

Anyone examining the dead horse can see that it was recently killed and has a number of javelin shafts protruding from its flanks. There are also other blood stains and signs of battle on the ground, but no other bodies or evidence of the combatants.

The bed of the wagon holds a single body wrapped tightly in a sheet. This is Hansdirk, the distillery worker Ginjana murdered. A hero who examines the body and succeeds at a DC 16 Medicine check realizes that he was killed by a narrow metal rod inserted into his nose. On a critical success, a hero who also has



Distillery Worker



expert or better proficiency in Medicine realizes that some small portion of the man's brain was extracted through his nose by this instrument.

Creatures: The attacking force consists of eight xulgath skirmishers. They are currently hiding among the trees and bracken north of the bunkhouse. Unless the heroes are stealthy in their approach (generally requiring the heroes to Avoid Notice as they travel by succeeding at a Stealth check against the skirmishers' Perception DC [DC 25]), the xulgaths spot their approach and attack the heroes before they can reinforce the distillery workers in the bunkhouse. The xulgaths are too ashamed to admit that their raid on the distillery was a mistake, so they fight to the death.

XULGATH SKIRMISHERS (8) CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +15

Aid from the Survivors: When the party engages the xulgaths in combat, the survivors in the distillery take notice. After the first round of combat, the survivors unbar the door, step out behind their barricade of wooden barrels, and fire arrows at the xulgaths to aid the heroes. However, it's clear the survivors are disorganized and need some leadership. The heroes can take the following action in this fight, but not more than once per round.

DIRECT SURVIVORS' FIRE ➤

AUDITORY **CONCENTRATE** **FLOURISH**

The hero calls out directions to the survivors firing their bows from the barricades and identifies a single target the survivors can see. The hero attempts a DC 25 Diplomacy check.

Critical Success The target of the survivor's fire takes 4d10 piercing damage.

Success The target of the survivor's fire takes 4d6 piercing damage.

Failure The survivor fails to hit a target and deals no damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but the instructions confuse the survivors. The next check to Direct Survivor Fire takes a -2 status penalty.

Discovering the Captive: If the heroes locate the xulgaths and attack them first—or if they track the xulgaths after the battle—they find the corpses of two slain distillery workers in the brush and another injured worker who



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has been bound and gagged for transport back to the xulgath encampment at the Old Forest Tower. This captive, named Shienna, can explain the background of the xulgath attacks. She knows that one of the corpses here is the messenger, so she had all but given up hope of rescue.

Treasure: One of the xulgaths carries a pouch containing a carnelian worth 125 gp and a scrap of hide with a crude map of the distillery grounds. The other side of the map is a *scroll of dragon form*, but the xulgath never realized it.

E2. TURP SPIRITS STORAGE

Four wooden columns support a roof over a collection of barrels that reek of turp spirits. These 23 barrels hold the products of the distillery and are awaiting transport to town for sale. They are stored away from the bunkhouse in an open-sided shelter so their volatile fumes don't collect and risk an explosion. If a barrel takes persistent fire damage, it explodes after 1d4 rounds in a 30-foot burst dealing 8d6 fire damage and 2d6 persistent fire damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save; a success or critical success negates the persistent fire damage). One such explosion would likely set off a chain reaction detonating all of the barrels and burning the grove to the ground.

E3. DISTILLERY

The southern end of the structure is the covered distillery with an oven and metal tanks for the distilling process. Clay pots of terebinth resin are carried up to the platform and poured into the tanks for distillation before the finished product is placed in barrels and stored in area E2.

E4. BUNKHOUSE

Several empty barrels have been stacked around the entrance to this bunkhouse, forming a makeshift barricade. Although the bunkhouse has two windows, mattresses leaning up against the windows from the inside prevent a view of the bunkhouse interior. Read the following aloud once the heroes gain entrance to the bunkhouse.

This cabin of rough-hewn logs and a roof of planks has bunk beds for sixteen, a serviceable kitchen, and a wide table for eating.



Gretana Shoom

The four remaining distillery workers are holed up in the bunkhouse, and don't venture far for fear of the xulgaths in the surrounding forest.

Meeting the Survivors: The surviving workers are extremely grateful for the heroes' timely arrival. They initially believe the heroes arrived because of the messenger they sent to Turpin Rowe and are puzzled (and alarmed) if the heroes inform them that the messenger never made it. They don't know what type of creatures their stinking attackers are, but they are aware that creatures have been skulking about the Old Forest Tower for at least a few weeks.

They assume their attackers are part of the same group. They relate that a few days ago one of the workers, Hansdirk, was found dead in the forest, tied to a tree with dried blood trailing from his nose. They assumed it was the work of the mysterious creatures, so the foreman, Gretana Shoom, sent a messenger to town and led an armed group toward the tower to get answers. Later, the creatures attacked and drove the remaining workers into the bunkhouse, where they've been holed up ever since. The creatures killed one of their friends and captured another, who they hope may still be alive somewhere nearby (this is Shienna in area E1).

These workers worry about their foreman and their comrades who went to the Old Forest Tower. They ask the heroes to investigate, and give them good directions through the forest.

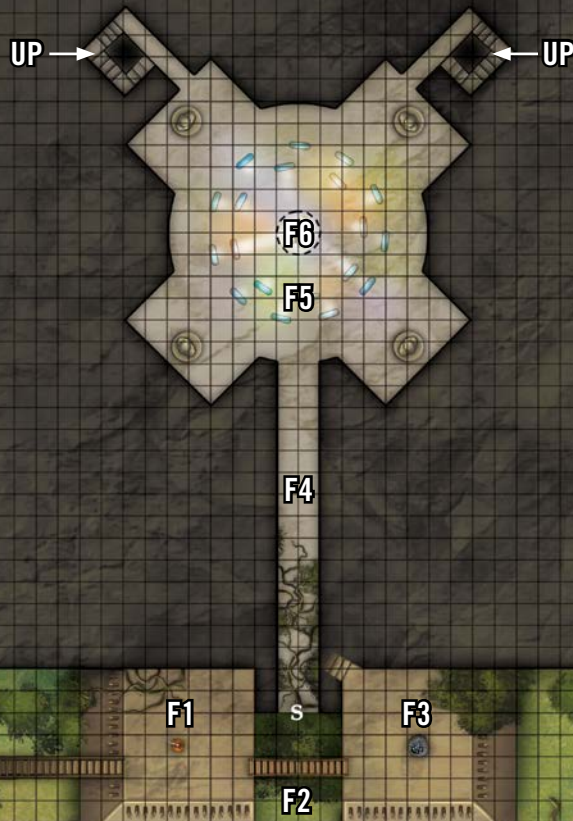
Dangerous Grove Moderate 10

Following the directions given by the distillery workers brings the heroes to this area. Even without the directions, the tracks of the distillery foreman and the workers she brought with her are easy to follow.

The floor of the clearing is covered with large dandelions and flytrap plants. A truly massive specimen of one of the flytraps, fully 15 feet tall, looms over the bodies of several humans.

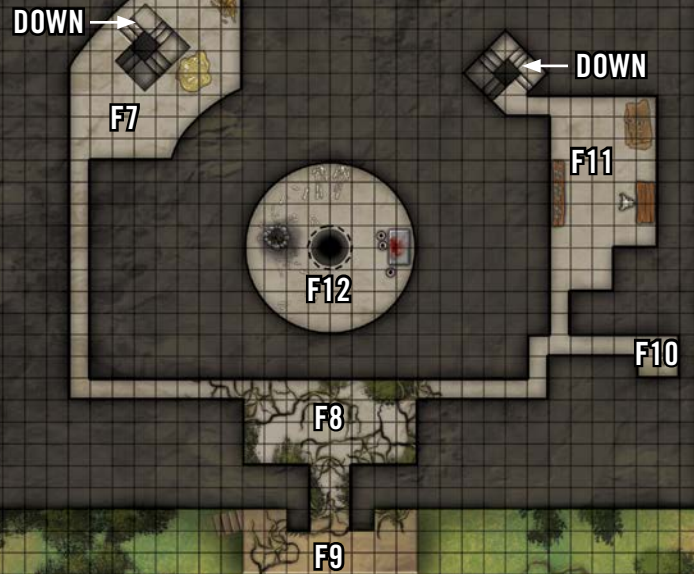
This small grove is not exactly what it seems. The giant flytrap in the center of this clearing is now dead, as are several of the smaller flytraps in the area. The giant flytrap used to feed on creatures passing by, but when two dandelion-like plants called countefloras

Lower Level



THE OLD FOREST TOWER

Upper Level



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

came through, the giant flytrap paid them no attention. This was to the detriment of the flytrap, however, as the countefloras released poisonous spores that quickly killed the giant flytrap as well as several other plants in the area. The countefloras now lurk among the ordinary—if large—dandelions here. A successful DC 34 Perception check is required to spot them.

The fact that tiny, poisonous spores killed the giant flytrap means it currently remains upright and it's hard to notice that it's dead. A hero notices that the flytrap is dead with a successful DC 25 Perception check; on a critical success, the hero recognizes similar damage to other plants around it and realizes that poisonous spores released in a large burst killed it. On a critical failure, the hero sees the giant flytrap shudder in a breeze and thinks it's preparing to strike.

When the distillery workers came this way, they were wary of the giant flytrap; they didn't realize it was already dead. The countefloras ambushed them and took them by surprise. All of the distillery workers are now dead except for the foreman, Gretana Shoom, who is unconscious. The countefloras are now simply waiting for the corpses to decay and nourish the soil.

Creatures: The countefloras are happy to add to the body count here, as more corpses mean more fertilizer. They ambush anyone they see moving through this area and fight until destroyed.

COUNTEFLORAS (2)

CREATURE 10

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Initiative Stealth +24

Rescuing Gretana: If the heroes recover Gretana from where she lies near the dead giant flytrap, she quickly comes around and is grateful for the assistance. She can provide the heroes with good directions to the Old Forest Tower. She hasn't been there, but she and her workers defended themselves against some xulgath warriors a short time ago. Gretana knows a bit of Draconic, and was able to question the lone xulgath who survived the fight before they died of their wounds. Gretana learned that the creatures have invaded all three of the aeon towers in the Swardlands at the command of a high chieftain called a stoneliege, whose name is Thessekka. This Thessekka has many abilities, and the xulgaths are all in awe of her. She has powers over not only alchemy

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but also stone. She comes and goes from each of the towers by some kind of magic, but the xulgath that Gretana questioned didn't know how. Thessekka's goal is to destroy the balls of light atop each of the towers. There are rumors among the xulgaths that Thessekka uses alchemy to warp and mutate xulgaths into powerful guardians to protect the Old Forest Tower—mutants with multiple limbs, or dripping with poison, or similarly fearsome modifications.

Gretana is quick to tell the heroes what she knows. Once she realizes that the other workers who accompanied her are dead and the distillery has suffered a serious attack, she is anxious to return there.

The Old Forest Tower

A bright light pierces the foliage of the Immenwood, its source slowly orbiting the top of a tower 300 feet high. Beneath the thick overgrowth, the tower is a steep-sided structure with three tiers at the heights of roughly 180 feet, 240 feet, and 280 feet, with its slender peak rising another 20 feet above that to the gleaming orb that crowns its height. Two squat, 30-foot-high platforms jut from the tower's southern base, beneath a terrace halfway up the tower's south side. This terrace is so overgrown with vines and small plants that it resembles a waterfall of greenery. The platforms are also overgrown, but sharp stakes pointing upward from the perimeter of each make them appear more like defensive encampments. A wooden stair rises along the side of the western platform, and a swaying rope bridge extends between it and the one to the east. Trails of smoke rise from each platform.

The Old Forest Tower serves as the primary stronghold of the xulgath forces in the Swardlands. The Old Forest Tower is far more overgrown than either of the other towers in the Swardlands, with vines and creepers growing across its inner and outer surfaces; the Athletics DC to Climb the Old Forest Tower is only 20. Although the vegetation is present throughout the tower, it's only thick enough to create difficult terrain in a few locations (areas **F4**, **F8**, and **F9**). This overgrowth also makes the narrow stair leading up from the lower terrace to the upper terrace difficult to spot from a distance.

Xulgath Camps: Multiple clutches of xulgath warriors and xulgath skulkers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 336, 337) encamp in the woods around the tower, but they are often out patrolling much further afield. These are the sources of the rumors in Turpin Rowe about stinking monsters in the woods. You might choose to have the heroes discover one or more of these camps, but even if the xulgaths are present, they don't pose

a challenge to characters of the heroes' level. Any encounter with a xulgath camp should instead be used to show that the xulgaths have come in large numbers to the surface, or as a source of information about the Old Forest Tower's defenses or guardians.

F1. DEFENSIVE PLATFORM

LOW 10

A crude stair constructed of wooden scaffolding leans against the western slope of this platform, while a narrow bridge of rope and wooden planks extends from its east side to the opposite platform. The sides of the platform just below its lip have been set with downward-pointing wooden stakes embedded between the mudbricks of its surface to discourage climbers. A copper cauldron near the platform's center glows red hot and gives off a thin streamer of smoke.

The undergrowth around this defensive platform has been cut back to 100 feet from the south side, except for a narrow strip of brush right at the base of the platform. This narrow strip has been doused with oil. Once ignited—such as from the torches the xulgaths keep atop the platform—the brush fire spreads from here through area **F4** and to the brush around area **F3**. A creature entering the burning brush or starting its turn there takes 6d6 fire damage and 2d6 persistent fire damage. The brush burns away in 5 minutes; during that time, the thick plumes of smoke alert everyone in the upper level of the tower (areas **F7** to **F11**) to the presence of intruders.

Although climbing one of the platforms is as easy as climbing any other part of the Old Forest Tower (DC 20 Athletics check to Climb), the sharpened stakes make climbing to the top of this platform hazardous. A creature moving through a square with sharpened stakes takes 3d6 piercing damage and 1d6 persistent bleed damage. The stakes can't be simply removed, as they have been anchored into the mudbrick of the tower via shape stone, but they can be destroyed. Each 5-foot-by-5-foot section of the stakes has AC 10, Hardness 10, and 20 Hit Points.

The xulgaths constructed the wooden stair and rigged it to collapse. If a creature at the top of the stairs uses an Interact action to remove a wooden pin, the stairs collapse, dropping everyone on them. A creature near the top of the stairs can attempt to Grab an Edge (DC 20 Reflex save) to cling to the edge of the platform. The ropes suspending the wooden bridge can also be cut, as described in area **F2**.

The xulgath have cleared much of the brush from the top of the platform, except for a tangle of vines and thorns to the north. A large copper cauldron

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sits in the middle of the platform; to keep the fire from spreading, the xulgaths built their cooking fire within it, rather than under it. It is surrounded by the charred bones of their previous meals and three casks of oil. The xulgaths can grab logs from the fire and drop them over the side of the platform to ignite the brush.

Creatures: The platform is guarded at all times by four xulgath skirmishers who make their camp here and their leader, a xulgath stoneliege named Garkar. These xulgaths remain on lookout, and are occasionally relieved by xulgath skirmishers who camp further away from the tower. The xulgaths sometimes cross over to the other platform to watch from that side; the skirmishers use the bridge, whereas Garkar climbs or jumps across to the other platform instead.

If these sentries spot intruders, two xulgath skirmishers stand atop the stair to defend it and the other two rush to the edge of the platform nearest the intruders to hurl javelins. Garkar takes cover behind the cauldron and shouts orders to the skirmishers, using her earthen blow ability on intruders who get close. If it seems intruders are likely to reach the top of either platform, she uses her earthen blow ability to attack the geode there and release the elementals inside it.

GARKAR **CREATURE 8**

Female xulgath stoneliege (page 84)

Initiative Perception +14

XULGATH SKIRMISHERS (4) **CREATURE 6**

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Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: These xulgaths have accumulated 74 gp and 563 sp between them.

F2. ROPE BRIDGE

A crude bridge constructed of wooden planks is suspended between two ropes that are anchored to both platforms. No rail of any sort provides handholds on the swaying span, and it's a 30-foot drop to the bracken growing below between the platforms.

The xulgaths built this rough bridge to provide access between the platforms. The bridge is uneven ground, requiring a successful DC 25 Acrobatics check to Balance. A creature falling from the bridge lands in the brush below (area **F4**). The bridge can be cut with 2 Interact actions and a slashing weapon.

F3. GEODE PLATFORM

LOW 10

Dense brush grows along a portion of this platform and down its side, though most of it has been cleared of such growth. A rope bridge connects the platform with its counterpart to the west. Wooden stakes mounted around the edge of the platform point downward to impede climbers. Near the center of the platform is a large, cracked stone with glittering crystals inside.

This platform's brush and stakes are identical to those at area **F1**. The overgrown portion of the platform counts as light undergrowth and requires only a DC 12 Athletics check to Climb, but the vegetation has been soaked with oil like the surrounding brush and burns along with the brush around the platforms.

The stone in the center of the platform is a special geode the stonelieges hauled with them up to the surface from the Darklands. It contains the essences of two elementals, which remain bound in the geode until it's cracked or smashed. If necessary, the stoneliege Garkar uses her earthen blow ability to automatically smash the geode and release the elementals, but any solid blow that cracks the geode (Hardness 5, Hit Points 5) also releases them. The skirmishers consider the geode sacred to the stonelieges and don't crack it as long as Garkar is still alive, but they might try to do so if she's been defeated and they need more aid against intruders.

Creatures: Two stone maulers are bound in the geode. If released, they attack any non-xulgaths they see. They follow orders given by any xulgath stoneliege; if none are present, they eventually burrow down from the platforms and wander off into the forest to cause more destruction.

STONE MAULERS (2) **CREATURE 9**

Pathfinder Bestiary 147

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Whether or not it's been cracked, the geode contains an *earth elemental gem* inside.

F4. SECRET ENTRANCE **MODERATE 10**

This area between the two lower terraces is choked with undergrowth and is greater difficult terrain. The xulgaths have soaked this undergrowth in oil, and ignite it as described in area **F1**. The undergrowth conceals a secret door into the tower; a successful DC 32 Perception check reveals the door's location (DC 27 after the undergrowth burns). The xulgaths have seen Thessekka use this secret door, but they're under strict orders never to use it without her permission.

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A corridor runs straight through the base of the tower. The mudbrick lining the corridor is cracked and crumbled from the roots and vines that grow through it. The plant life here is so thick that it dangles from the walls and the ten-foot ceiling, obscuring vision down the passage.

This corridor is difficult terrain and blocks vision. Targets more than 5 feet away from a creature are concealed from that creature.

A side effect of the prodigious plant growth is that the mudbrick of the walls and ceiling is no longer stable and can be damaged if struck hard enough, causing partial collapses. Creatures in the corridor can take the following action.

CRUMBLE CORRIDOR

ATTACK

Make a melee Strike against a weak spot in the ceiling or wall in the corridor you can reach. The weak spot has an AC of 25. If this spot is more than 5 feet away from you, it is concealed from you.

Critical Success If you deal damage in excess of the weak spot's Hardness of 14, you cause a minor collapse of rubble. Creature in the square you attacked and any adjacent square takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 27 basic Reflex saving throw).

Success As success, but 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

Critical Failure If you attempted the melee Strike with a weapon, your weapon is knocked out of your grasp, falling to the ground in your space.

Creature: Thessekka placed one of the more powerful golems she coopted from the Liferoot Stone here to guard this passage. It stands in the center of the corridor, moving aside for xulgaths but attacking anyone else it detects. In melee, it uses the Crumble Corridor action as its last action in combat each round. It fights until destroyed.

ELITE STONE GOLEM

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 187

Initiative Perception +19

F5. MIRROR DOME

LOW 10

The center of the tower is occupied by a massive domed chamber, 60 feet high and with four large alcoves. Each alcove houses a defaced statue of Aroden. Corridors lead out of this room in each of the north alcoves and one between the two south alcoves. In addition, a 10-foot diameter shaft pierces the apex of the dome. Dozens of silvery mirrors float in the air in a series of concentric rings, slowly rotating in opposite directions. A pedestal in the

center of the room supports a large, multifaceted crystal. A beam of bright light extends through the shaft in the dome above and strikes the crystal, where it is refracted into hundreds of rays that bounce across the room, creating a kaleidoscope of colors on every surface.

Unlike the other aeon towers, the Old Forest Tower holds a resplendent shrine to the glory of Aroden at its heart. Each of the chamber's alcoves once held a statue of the god depicting him in some act of creation, though these have all been defaced by Thessekka and are now unrecognizable.

The large crystal isn't magical, but it is precisely cut to reflect the light from the shaft upward in several dazzling beams. The floating mirrors are sheets of silver 4 feet high and 3 feet wide. They float 20 feet above the floor and are angled inward and slightly downward to catch the light from the crystal. Aroden's magic had sustained the magic in these mirrors until his death; they now are tarnished around the edges and occasionally bob irregularly, causing the play of light around the room.

The beams of light keep the room brightly lit. In addition, the light interacts with any creature bearing a *resonant reflection* from at least one *aeon orb*, granting the same magical buoyancy of the *aeon orbs* as a fly Speed equal to the creature's Speed. Affected creatures entering the room feel themselves floating an inch or two off the floor, and are thus aware of this effect. This effect used to apply in area F6 as well, allowing easy passage up the interior of the tower, but with the weakening of the *aeon orb*, its effect is now limited to this room.

The side tunnels lead to stairwells that rise through the heart of the tower 150 feet to areas F7 and F11 above. These stairs are in good shape, but they are only 5 feet wide and have no railing. They are open in the center with a shaft descending all the way to the floor at ground level.

Creature: Guarding this chamber is one of Thessekka's more successful alchemical experiments, a four-armed xulgath swollen so grotesquely that its head and neck have been swallowed by its muscular pair of upper arms. The result looks like a monstrous, headless xulgath, and despite having no discernible face, it is sensitive to vibrations in the air. As this headless xulgath can't fly, the heroes may have an advantage in fighting it, although it tries to climb the walls to get at heroes who try to stay out of its reach. The headless xulgath fights until destroyed.

If the heroes have made their presence known in the area, then Ginjana is also here. As she has the *reflection of light*, she's able to fly in this chamber,

and uses this to her advantage. She hides among the floating mirrors when the heroes arrive, hoping to ambush them. She doesn't remain in this room for more than an hour during the day; although the reflected light from the *aeon orb* doesn't trigger her vulnerability to sunlight, the ambient sunlight coming down the shaft bothers her, so she retreats to her quarters (area **F11**) if the heroes don't show up in that time.

HEADLESS XULGATH

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CE LARGE HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +20; motion sense, no vision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +23, Intimidation +21, Survival +21

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

Motion Sense The headless xulgath can sense nearby motion through vibrations and air movement

AC 29; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +20, **Will** +22

HP 195

Attack of Opportunity ↷

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath skirmisher (page 27), but DC 29.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ claw +22 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+13 slashing plus Grab

Choke Slam ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements**

The headless xulgath has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The headless xulgath slams the creature against a nearby surface. The creature takes 6d6+6 bludgeoning damage and must attempt a DC 30 Fortitude save.

Furious Claws ♦♦♦ (attack) The headless xulgath makes up to four claws Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks all count toward the headless xulgath's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after the headless xulgath makes all its attacks.

Critical Success The creature is no longer grabbed.

Failure The creature is slowed 1 for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is stunned for 1 round.

GINJANA MINDKEEPER

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The 16 mirrors are made of silver and are worth 100 gp each. They lose their magical levitation if removed from the chamber. The large crystal at the room's center is affixed to the floor, but if broken free with a several minutes of work, it is worth 1,000 gp. If any of the mirrors are removed or if the crystal is pried up, the play of light around the room ceases and the room no longer provides its flight effect.

F6. SHAFT

This 10-foot-wide shaft runs from the mirror dome (area **F5**) up through the center of the Old Forest



Headless Xulgath

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Tower to the top, 300 feet above. Halfway up the shaft, it widens to form Thessekka's sanctum (area **F12**). Vines growing along the walls of the shaft provide good purchase; a successful DC 20 Athletics check is required to Climb the interior of the shaft. A hero with a *resonant reflection* who falls down the shaft can attempt to Arrest their Fall (*Core Rulebook* 472) if they fall down into area **F5**, as they can fly in that room.

The shaft is perpetually lit with the glow of the *aeon orb* circling the tower above. The top of the shaft contains several stationary silver mirrors, which reflect the *aeon orb's* light into the shaft. These mirrors also reflect sunlight, so natural sunlight also pours into the shaft on days without cloud cover. This doesn't provide an extra illumination in the shaft, as the *aeon orb* itself shines so brightly, but it is harmful to creatures affected by sunlight (such as the dero Ginjana).

Resonant Reflection

Any creature that approaches within 10 feet of the *aeon orb* above the Old Forest Tower—whether in the shaft or on the tower's exterior—might gain its *resonant reflection*, called the *reflection of light*. The *aeon orb* grants this reflection only to living creatures that aren't actively attempting to harm it. As a result, Thessekka and her mutant xulgaths haven't gained the *reflection of light*, but Ginjana gained the *reflection* because she doesn't care one way or another about destroying the orb.

See page 31 for more information about *resonant reflections*.

REFLECTION OF LIGHT RESONANT REFLECTION 10

LIGHT MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Your eyes are imbued with an inner light that is not visible externally but that provides you with darkvision and the ability to distinguish color in darkness. You can also focus this inner light to manifest as a brilliant beam of energy from your eyes.

Activate ◆◆ **envision**; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cast *searing light* as an innate divine spell, heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for obtaining the *reflection of light*.

F7. WESTERN STAIR

MODERATE 10

A stairway rises through the floor of this 20-foot-high chamber and another opening leads south. The stairway has no railing and descends around a central shaft. Two xulgath skeletons mired in thick goop sprawl near the

stairs, and a nest of dried bark fills the room's northeast corner. A faint, acrid stench fills the room.

The skeletons in this room belong to two xulgaths who failed a task Thessekka demanded of them. As punishment, she had the denizens of this room destroy them for their incompetence.

Creatures: Thessekka posted two more of her alchemically mutated xulgaths in this chamber as guards. She mutated their oil production glands to produce a gummy paste rather than stinking oil, and these creatures are perpetually coated with this noxious, resin-like crust.

The resin-seep xulgaths have been ordered to stay in this chamber and prevent anyone but Thessekka or Ginjana from passing. As they prefer to fight at range, they quickly skitter out of melee, preferably to the other side of the pit in the middle of the room. Against foes on the stairs or near the edge of the pit, the resin-seep xulgaths use their Resin Spray ability. The fall to area **F5** is 150 feet and deals 75 bludgeoning damage, although a hero can Grab an Edge on the staircase with a successful DC 25 Reflex save. Loyal to Thessekka, the xulgaths fight to the death.

RESIN-SEEP XULGATHS (2)

CREATURE 10

RARE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +23, Athletics +20, Intimidation +16, Survival +19, Thievery +21

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items +1 striking dagger

AC 30; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +23, **Will** +17

HP 195; **Weaknesses** acid 10, slashing 10

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ *dagger* +21 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d4+11 piercing

Melee ◆ *jaws* +20, **Damage** 1d8+11 piercing plus resin crust

Melee ◆ *claw* +20 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+11 slashing plus resin crust

Ranged ◆ *dagger* +21 (agile, magical, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 2d4+11 piercing plus xulgath bile

Resin Crust (incapacitation, poison) A creature damaged by a resin-seep xulgath's jaws or claw Strike must succeed at a DC 28 Reflex save or be covered with clumps of noxious resin, taking 2d8 poison damage and a -15-foot penalty to its Speeds for 1 minute (on a critical failure, the creature is also clumsy 1 for 1 minute). The creature is sickened 1 for as long it has a Speed penalty. A creature can spend an Interact action to scrape the resin off, decreasing the Speed penalty by 5 with each such action.

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Resin Spray ◆◆ (poison) The resin-seep xulgath flexes its pores and emits a 30-foot line of resin that deals 3d12 poison damage and knocks the target 5 feet back (DC 28 basic Reflex save; on a success or critical success the target isn't knocked back, and on a critical failure the target is knocked back 10 feet). The resin-seep xulgath can't use Resin Spray again for 1d4 rounds.

Treasure: One of the dead xulgaths here still wears a *ring of lies*.

F8. ANTECHAMBER

LOW 10

The interior of this chamber is almost entirely obscured by a profusion of vines growing inward from the exterior terrace. The floor is a virtual maze of tangled roots, vines, and foliage.



Resin-Seep Xulgath

Close proximity to the *aeon orb* has caused this heavy growth to extend inward from the tower's exterior to cover this room. This undergrowth makes this chamber difficult terrain.

Creatures: Five xulgaths work in this chamber at Thessekka's direction, carefully extracting sap from the vines that Thessekka uses in her alchemical concoctions in area **F12**. Four are xulgath skirmishers, who do the bulk of the labor, and their leader is a stoneliege named Krargekkiss, whom Thessekka relies on as her chief assistant (as she doesn't fully trust Ginjana). These xulgaths fight intruders to the death, pursuing intruders that flee as best they're able.

KRARGEKISS

CREATURE 8

Male xulgath stoneliege (page 84)

Initiative Perception +14

XULGATH SKIRMISHERS (4)

CREATURE 6

Page 27

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: Krargekkiss has stashed a small sack of treasure amid the foliage, which the heroes find if they Search this area. It holds 7 pp, 18 gp, 232 sp, and packet holding *dust of disappearance*.

F9. TERRACE

If the heroes haven't already explored the Wellspring Tower and the Liferoot Stone, then this terrace is empty. It is covered with vines and other plants and is difficult terrain. If the heroes have already explored the other two *aeon* towers, Thessekka makes her last stand here.

Facing Thessekka Severe 11

Thessekka rotates occupancy between the three towers, using her *ring of stoneshifting* to travel between them. Though the heroes can visit the three towers in whichever order they choose, Thessekka faces them at the last tower they visit, as she's decided to end their meddling in her affairs once and for all. This encounter is likely to occur at the Old Forest Tower, based on its distance from the other main sites in the Swardlands, but can occur at any of the tower's terraces. When the heroes ascend to the terrace of the final tower, read or paraphrase the following.

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On this high balcony overlooking the wide expanse of the Swardlands stands the source of the troubles for these peaceful lands. The creature looks like the reptilian, subterranean humanoids that have been plaguing the Swardlands, but her hide and bones seem laced with veins of minerals and stony plaques. She wears a headdress made from the skull of some great lizard and rattling armor constructed of ribs and bony plates. Bottles and pouches hang from her wrists and waist, and her dead black eyes stare as stony claws elongate from her hands.

Creature: Thessekka is the mastermind behind the troubles plaguing the Swardlands. She has stayed one step ahead of the heroes throughout their sojourn across the Swardlands, but now at this—the last of the aeon towers—she has chosen to take her stand and face them. If the battle occurs at the Wellspring Tower, she retreats to area **C6** if reduced below 100 hit points to gain the aid of the roper Ro'ook. If the fight occurs at the Old Forest Tower, the xulgaths at area **F8** emerge to defend her as soon as combat begins; three xulgath arrive at the beginning of the second round, with three more emerging each round thereafter.

Thessekka doesn't retreat from the final tower and battles to the death to defeat the heroes.

THESEKKA

CREATURE 14

Page 90

Initiative Perception +26

F10. HOLDING CELL

This isolated chamber is dark and dirty. A pair of iron manacles has been attached to a piton driven into the wall.

This cell contains a single prisoner, a human from Turpin Rowe named Alika Kweenk. Alika has a strange, reptilian look to her features and skin that resembles scales, which is the only thing that's saved her life. Ginjana captured Alika and brought her to Thessekka because of her unique appearance, planning to extract the reptilian woman's brain matter once Thessekka had investigated her. To Ginjana's continued frustration, Thessekka hasn't gotten around to examining the woman, so she's remained here. Freeing Alika from the average manacles requires four successful DC 27 Thievery checks, or the key located in Ginjana's quarters (area **F11**).

Alika begs for rescue. She explains about her capture by a "white-eyed dwarf" and how someone named Thessekka is supposed to examine her—something Alika is certain won't be pleasant—and then the white-eyed dwarf gets to "take her brain."

Alika doesn't know the origin of her strange appearance, but it's always been a source of ridicule from the locals in Turpin Rowe. Something she hasn't told them but admits to heroes who rescue her, is that she has always had the ability to speak with snakes and even the ability to transform herself into a snake for a few minutes at a time. She can't do so while her hands are bound, though, and thus hasn't been able to free herself with her ability. Alika doesn't realize that she has nagaji ancestry and that this heritage is the source of her powers; a hero who examines her and succeeds at a DC 27 Occultism check realizes the source of Alika's unusual gift.

Hiring Alika: Alika doesn't have much to go home to in Turpin Rowe. If the heroes offer her a role in the Circus of Wayward Wonders, she eagerly accepts. If Mistress Elizia is still with the Circus of Wayward Wonders, she and Alika become fast friends. Give the players the Serpent Woman trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for offering Alika a position in their circus.

F11. GINJANA'S QUARTERS

LOW 10

The smell of decomposition is strong in this low-ceilinged chamber, and though it's sparsely furnished, it has the despoiled look of a ransacked home. Ratty, flea-bitten furs form a makeshift bed while a number of warped, salvaged planks are placed between stacked bricks to form shelving. Rows of glass jars line these shelves, each holding a fleshy-looking lump. Near the shelves is the poorly cleaned skull of a bull rests of the floor and appears to serve as a stool for another bit of planking on stacked bricks that serves as a crude writing desk.

This chamber belongs to the dero Ginjana Mindkeeper. Most of the room is in a state of chaos, though her specimen shelves are meticulously organized. Each of the 47 jars is filled with brine in which floats a small, whitish-pink scrap of tissue. Each jar bears a label in Undercommon with the type or description of a creature. A hero who succeeds at a DC 30 Medicine check realizes that these are bits of surgically removed brain; if the heroes previously realized that one of Ginjana's victims had a piece of their brain removed, this DC decreases to only 20. In fact, they are the pituitary glands of 47 different victims, harvested by the dero in her gruesome studies. Most of them belong to dero, xulgaths, duergar, and other Darklands species, but the dozen most recent ones are labelled as humans, shoonies, and surface animals (including one cow); another recent specimen

is labelled “Squirmy Goat-Fey” (the satyr from the Revenge Song encounter in Chapter 1). One of the jars is labelled “Snake-Human Hybrid?” but contains only brine—Thessekka has yet to allow Ginjana to take a piece of Alika’s brain.

The desk bears an inkwell and quill and is covered in scraps of parchment covered in haphazard notes, also written in Undercommon. These are primarily notes on various species and the “brain source of the messages.” A careful reading indicates that Ginjana is fixated on overcoming the inborn dero aversion to the surface world’s sun, and she believes that survival in sunlight may be somehow tied to this “source” gland. The notes also reveal Ginjana’s great excitement about her relocation to the surface in recent months to collect specimens from a variety of “uplanders.”

The key to the manacles in area **F10** has slipped behind the writing desk; even Ginjana has forgotten what happened to it. A successful DC 29 Perception check is required to find it.

Creature: If Ginjana hasn’t been alerted to the presence of the heroes then she has not moved to ambush them in area **F5** and can be found here instead, working on her latest scientific observations.

GINJANA MINDKEEPER

CREATURE 11

Page 86

Initiative Perception +22

Clues to Skarja’s Haunting: Searching among Ginjana’s notes reveals a set of recent pages that discuss several unexplained deaths among the xulgaths. Each of these deaths occurred while they xulgaths were asleep. The xulgaths haven’t been alarmed by the deaths, considering it a hazard of relocating to the strange surface world, but Ginjana believes something more is at work. After studying the corpses of several afflicted xulgaths and finding no physical damage upon them, she’s concluded that the culprit may be a planar fiend called a night hag.

Ginjana spends several pages rhapsodizing about how fascinating it would be to obtain the “brain source of the messages” from a night hag, and traces the beginnings of a plan to locate and ensnare her. Ginjana’s planning doesn’t get much farther than trying to identify the hag’s base of operations by locating where she keeps a special gem called a *heartstone*. Ginjana has ascertained that the *heartstone* hasn’t been secreted anywhere in the aeon towers. She postulates that the fiend might be working from one of the uplander settlements where there are more victims available for her, and that she might have hidden the gem in the home of some key victim—someone whose

soul she is patiently corrupting before claiming it. While the dero’s planning was inconclusive, the heroes should make the connection to the haunting of Opper Vandy and get the idea to search in or around his house for a night hag’s *heartstone*.

Treasure: Scattered among Ginjana’s possessions are 866 sp, 4,837 cp, a set of pan pipes worth 50 gp, and a gold ring inset with a ruby in the shape of a coiled worm worth 200 gp. Mixed in with the specimen jars is one vial of mnemonic acid, two vials of lich dust, and a stoppered gourd containing *oil of animation*.

F12. THE SSEKKA’S SANCTUM MODERATE 10

This chamber lies in the midpoint of the Old Forest Tower, 150 feet above area **F5** at the base of the tower and 150 feet below the *aeon orb* circling above.

The shaft widens into a circular chamber 40 feet in diameter with a corbelled ceiling that rises from 10 feet at the edges to 20 feet in the center. The room shows signs of habitation, with the remains of a cooking fire and a scattering of scorched bones, including two reptilian-looking humanoid skeletons that are almost fully intact and propped against the walls. A flat block of stone, like a table or altar, is crusted with blood. Several clay jars of foul-smelling liquid are clustered at the base of the bloody block. The chamber’s only exits are the illuminated shafts leading upward and downward.

Thessekka uses this room as a personal chamber, as it’s difficult for others to reach yet easily accessible to her with her *ring of stoneshifting*. She isn’t here much, using it only as a place to perform alchemical experimentations and a cache in which to store some of her treasures. The skeletons adorning the chamber’s walls are powerful xulgaths she killed and ate to assume control of the Swardlands forces.

The stone block once served as an altar to Aroden, but Thessekka uses it as an operating table to perform alchemical experiments on xulgaths from time to time. The jars all contain various alchemical fluids useful for mutating xulgaths, all of which incorporate the sap from the lush plants in area **F8**. Thessekka prefers to keep her mutated xulgaths nearby, and so they are all here in this tower—including the denizens of this room.

Creatures: Even though Thessekka doesn’t use the room much, she doesn’t leave it unguarded. She mutated three xulgaths to have overlarge muscles and exceptionally long, hooked arms to climb the shaft interior to the top of the tower and snatch the *aeon orb* as it rotates. The mutations were successful, but the mutated xulgaths proved unable to even slow down

the *aeon orb* at all. Thessekka plans to experiment on these xulgaths further once she determines how best use them to destroy the *aeon orbs*.

In the meantime, these xulgaths defend this room, fighting to the death to eliminate trespassers.

HOOKLIMB XULGATHS (3) CREATURE 10

RARE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +21, Intimidation +16, Stealth +19, Survival +16

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

AC 29; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +21, **Will** +16

HP 190

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath skirmisher (page 27), but DC 28.

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ✦ jaws +22, **Damage** 1d6+13 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +22 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+13 slashing

Quick Catch The hooklimb always critically succeeds at checks to Grab a Ledge.

Raking Claws ✦ The hooklimb flexes hooklike barbs on its claws. Until the start of the hooklimb's next turn, its claws Strikes deal an additional 1d10 persistent bleed damage.

Rend ✦ claw

Treasure: Among the odds and ends is a small satchel holding 13 pp, 50 gp, 50 sp, 89 cp, and two emeralds cut in spiral patterns worth 250 gp each. Most of the alchemical materials here are valueless, with the exception of a moderate salamander elixir, a greater acid flask, and a greater antidote.

Concluding the Adventure

“Life’s Long Shadows” has a very open structure, and should conclude when the heroes have completed three key goals in the Swardlands. First, they should have entertained the people of the Swardlands with the Circus of Wayward Wonders. No matter their number of successful shows, however, their Prestige cannot rise above 13 during this adventure. Second, they should have obtained the *resonant reflections* of the three Swardlands *aeon orbs*, which almost certainly means eliminating the xulgath threat. Finally, the heroes have likely confronted the night hag Skarja and solved Opper Vandy’s haunting.

At the conclusion of “Life’s Long Shadows,” the heroes should be ready to move on to the final *aeon orb* tower near Willowside, north of the Swardlands. The grateful Opper Vandy does everything in his power to assist them. Willowside’s mayor is Estessa Vandy, his aunt, and he sends a glowing letter of introduction. He relates rumors of strange attacks on the Verdant Passage, the road to Willowside, and purchases ship passage for the heroes and their circus so that they can reach Willowside safely and bring their wondrous show to its rustic citizens... plus, he’s worried about his aunt with all the foul rumors afoot. The dangers of Willowside are revealed in the next volume of this Adventure Path: “Siege of the Dinosaurs”!



Hooklimb Xulgath



SWARDLANDS GAZETTEER

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A city with nearly a third of a million souls, Absalom—the City at the Center of the World—has a huge logistical burden in feeding its populace. When Aroden, the Last Azlanti, raised the island from the depths of the sea, he foresaw this need and blessed it with fecundity through the aeon towers and their magical *aeon orbs*. Even after Aroden's death, these towers nurture what was once barren, submarine rock.

However, as the influence of Aroden has waned in the century since his death, so too has the power of the *aeon orbs*. What was once a near-perfect cornucopia of growing lands for crops and timber—a region virtually untouched by climatic fluctuation or soil exhaustion—has begun, in small increments, to creep back toward a more mundane environment as the power of the *aeon orbs* slowly dwindles. The expected multiple harvests per year have become unreliable, timber stands are sparse and recover slowly from logging, and the soil in some fields has become exhausted, forcing farmers to leave them fallow. Some people of the Swardlands—Swardfolk, as they call themselves—are on the verge of panic, while others blithely ignore the changes around them, insisting any change must be only temporary or imaginary. Something has to change, and soon, or the Swardlands will fail. And if the Swardlands fail, can Absalom be far behind?

Frequently referred to as “the Sward” by its residents, the Swardlands occupy the western portion of the Isle of Kortos between the Kortos Mountains and the Sulwen Hills. It's a pastoral land consisting mainly of farms, mines in the Inland Hills, logging camps at the fringes of the Immenwood, and villages and settlements that support them all. The lands are watered by many streams and springs, though its major waterways are the Husna and Irr Rivers.

To the north, the port of Kerrick serves as the central hub for shipping the produce of the Swardlands' fields and is also connected by a well-traveled road called the Verdant Passage to the nearby town of Willowside, just beyond the Swardlands region. The only other major

thoroughfare is a well-established logging trail called the Merovan Road that cuts through the Immenwood from the town of Turpin Rowe to Merovan to the east. The interior of the Swardlands is crisscrossed by a network of farm tracks that connect the many farmsteads and villages, as well as an uncountable number of lesser trails—known only to the locals—leading through the maze of hedgerows and fieldstone walls.

Aeon Towers

Three aeon towers stand in the Swardlands, each with a life-giving *aeon orb* orbiting its top: the Liferoot Stone near the Sulwen Hills, the Old Forest Tower between Turpin Rowe and Brume, and the Wellspring Tower near Matten Cleave. Despite the *aeon orbs* shining their bounty across the Swardlands, few locals live near them. For the most part, they're out of the way and built high on stony hills or rises to maximize their height. It was typical in generations past to leave offerings to Aroden at the aeon towers, although this tradition has fallen out of practice since Aroden's death. In addition, the tougher life of the Swardlands has left little time for such pilgrimages. Although the three towers were constructed to be superficially similar, the upper levels of the Liferoot Stone collapsed long ago, and it's now much shorter than the other two.

Arbo

The village of Arbo used to be larger than its current population of 117 people, as evidenced by its abandoned houses and buildings, enough to hold a population two or three times this size. For much of its history, Arbo served as a limestone quarry for creating quicklime and slaked lime. Several lime kilns remain as reminders of the old days, but only one is still in use, producing alchemical reagents for sale in Absalom. The quarry was largely abandoned after the explosion of one of the larger kilns, which killed several villagers some 75 years ago. Still known as the Hell Pit, this blackened cavity is avoided by locals and travelers alike. Today, the

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village occupants primarily reside near the monastery of Sarenrae that stands at the edge of the old town limits. Led by Abbot **Viddersham** (LG male human priest of Sarenrae 6), the monks tend the vineyards that now grow along the slopes surrounding the quarry and produce some of the better wines of the region.

Brume

Like Arbo, Brume is a mining town, though it's more focused in that endeavor than its neighbor. Absalom's Grand Council appointed the hardheaded **Paldresha Atterbay** (N female dwarf manager 3) as mayor to oversee the two local gypsum mines. With a population of 180, Brume rests in a sheltered bowl below the mine entrances. Frequent morning mists give the town its name. Contaminated runoff is a perennial problem at the mines, but hasn't affected the town.

Castinlee

Next to Matten Cleave, Castinlee is perhaps the most prominent farming center of the Swardlands. With a population of 2,080 people, Castinlee is overseen by Mayor **Julpin Crags** (NG male gnome farmer 4), a

local cabbage farmer who was elected locally, rather than appointed by Absalom's Grand Council, unlike the leaders of other towns in the area. Castinlee resides on rocky ground where the hills converge into the rolling lands of the Swardlands' central plain. As a result, it doesn't produce the same quantities of cereal crops as other towns of the Swardlands. However, it has an abundance of orchards that thrive in the alkaline soil, producing huge crops of apples, peaches, and pecans.

Cawshax

With a population of 316 humans and halflings, Cawshax consists of a scattering of houses, barns, and silos built around a crossroads of the main trails between Castinlee, Turpin Rowe, and the villages of the Inland Hills. A little-known cow path provides a shortcut between Cawshax and the Kerrick road, but only the locals can find it easily. The town was originally called "Cow Shacks" for the cattle sheds that once marked its location, and the surrounding land is still used for a mix of farming and herding. Fields of barley and millet sit to the south and east, and relations between the village's farmers and herders are good. The keen-eyed and burly

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Hanley Casterog (N male human peace officer 5) serves as the village's mayor and its sheriff.

Ferny

Ferny is home to the largest settlements of shoonies in the Swardlands, with a population close to a hundred of the dog-like humanoids. Most shoonies of the Swardlands reside in smaller family steadings and kits scattered throughout the region north of the Husna River. Ferny itself is renowned for its pipeweed and hops, both of which are greatly prized in Kerrick and beyond. Elder **Rooshaya** (LN female shoony leader 3) is the village's elderly leader and directly oversees the growing and harvesting of crops.

The Hollows

Less than 4 miles northwest of Castinlee, the Castinlee Hollows Burying Ground, also known as the Hollows, covers a hillock in a combe where the base of the Sulwen Hills meets the basin of the central Swardlands. It's surrounded by a marshy area where the scrub oak and tangled brush of the hills give way to willow trees and tall grasses that thrive in the boggy soil. In the early ages of habitation on the Isle of Kortos, the more primitive dwellers of the hills used the marsh as a burial ground, sinking the departed into the mires. Now, farmers draining lands along the marshy edges of the hollow sometimes come across mummified bodies, preserved from their long immersion in the anaerobic water of the bogs. This burial form has since been abandoned in favor of the well-drained hillside cemetery.

Husna Crossroads

A crossroads of cart tracks lies on the banks of the Husna River, where the road from Kerrick forks into routes leading deeper into the island's interior and to the monastery and village of Arbo. Gallows have stood here for centuries as a means for the superstitious Swardfolk to execute criminals and ensure that any restless spirits are unable to find their way home for revenge. The first execution at these crossroads was the notorious pirate captain Teller Graw. It's said that Graw sailed up the Husna River and buried a treasure on the banks, then was later captured and executed on the spot when he tried to retrieve it. Numerous pits dug by past searchers mark the land and riverbank surrounding the crossroads, but if anyone has discovered any pirate treasure, they're not saying.

Immenwood

The greatest woodland of the Isle of Kortos, the Immenwood is an old-growth forest that stretches along the southeastern border of the Swardlands. It has

been logged for years and once reached to Potter's Lake, though this extent of it has been thinned to a scattered woodland. Though the area was once renowned for its unusually fast recovery from timbering operations, which had barely left a mark before, logging has begun pushing back the wood line over the last few decades. This part of the Immenwood is known for strange plants and mysterious fey, but the recent changes to the ecosystem have seen the fey act with more sinister paranoia and given rise to an unusually large number of carnivorous plants.

Inland Hills

The Kortos Mountains descend from rugged peaks into a range of hills until finally reaching the basin of the Swardlands. Home to clans of dwarves that operate Absalom's many mining concerns, the Inland Hills are less exploited for their mineral wealth than the higher peaks to the east. A few small mines operate here and there, with the primary efforts focused at Brume and, to a lesser extent, Arbo. Hunters and trappers from the Swardlands visit the hills frequently to hunt the plentiful game and fur-bearing animals. Most of the vineyards of the Swardlands are found in the Inland Hills.

Kerrick

No discussion of the Swardlands can take place without first looking at Kerrick, the region's principal city and hub of trade. Kerrick has an extremely large harbor for a town its size, well able to handle to the constant shipping traffic carrying the bountiful harvests of the Swardlands to other ports. Most of these ships are coasters making the trip around the island to Diobel and Absalom, as well as across the channel to Escadar, but some are caravels and galleons making for points farther abroad. Like the mayor of Kerrick, the dockmaster is a position appointed by the Grand Council of Absalom and given to a trusted political ally capable of ensuring the all-important flow of food staples. The current dockmaster is Lartessa Toulune, a woman close to the powerful house of Gixx, while the town mayor is Perivar Altrusi, a halfling who is little more than a puppet of the Candren family.

As a whole, Kerrick is a city of large-scale local farmers and the factors of costers and consortiums that invest in local farms. However, despite these financial backers and investors, political power still remains largely within the hands of the local farmers themselves through the powerful Kerrick Grange. The grange is a farmers' cooperative that includes most of the area of the Swardlands. Only farmsteads that are close to other trading centers such as Willowside or Diobel aren't involved in this communal agreement.

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KERRICK**SETTLEMENT 6****LN TOWN****Government** autocracy**Population** 3,533 (64% humans, 11% halflings, 8% half-elves, 17% other ancestries)**Languages** Common**Religions** Abadar, Erastil**Primary Exports** fruit, grain, livestock, lumber, vegetables**Primary Imports** luxury goods, spices**Jemaig Hendri** (LN male human minister 8) town priest of Abadar**Lartessa Toulune** (LG female human landowner 5) dockmaster**Opper Vandy** (NG male human mortician 10; page 7) master of the Kerrick Grange**Perivar Altrusi** (N male halfling lackey 3) mayor

Because the grange is focused on the Swardfolk who bring in the crops, even hired farmhands can claim membership. This prevents the largest and wealthiest landowners—and foreign investors—from dominating the local economy. Trading occurs in the large Grange House in central Kerrick, where deals are brokered between members, investors, and shippers hired to move the region's crops to markets abroad.

The Kerrick Grange was organized centuries ago, and its success is largely due to a series of wise and prudent masters who have carefully guided its course to strengthen its trading and ensure the well-being of its constituent members. Since the death of Aroden and the slow decline of the Swardlands' crop yield, the grange has become increasingly involved in ensuring equity and collective benefit to all members so none are hit overly hard by a crop failure or hard frost. The influence of the Kerrick Grange stretches from the town itself to Matten Cleave and Castinlee. Turpin Rowe doesn't participate, but the Yalbrough Consortium has contracted with the grange to supply its town with provisions and thus enjoys a close relationship with Kerrick. The current master of the grange is Opper Vandy. He is also the primary mortician of Kerrick and its surrounds, and one of the Swardlands' leading citizens.

Matten Cleave

The town of Matten Cleave has little identity or history of its own. It serves primarily as a gathering place for transporting harvested crops to Kerrick and purchasing necessary supplies to raise and bring in those crops. **Marta Lieschari** (CN female half-elf landowner 5) is the appointed mayor for this town of 2,134 people and

does little more than provide a strong, unified voice for the Kerrick Grange and ensure that the necessary support for the local farming operations runs smoothly, preferring to otherwise guide her community with a loose hand. Of late, she and the local landowners have become greatly concerned with the blight spreading southeast of town from the direction of the Wellspring Tower, whose lucky river has totally dried up. So great has this concern become that she has given little thought to the disappearances and rumors of marauders on the northern stretches of the Verdant Passage region.

Not far south of Matten Cleave lies an abandoned farm with an evil reputation. Even in life, Old Currew, the former owner, was shunned and disliked. A decade earlier, the misfortune and destruction of his much-beloved neighbors, the Swinten family, had brought the bitter man great delight. After his sudden death little more than a year ago, the farmstead has only increased in notoriety. Rumors state that the spirit of evil Old Currew still haunts the place.

Potter's Lake

A small freshwater lake fed by the Irr River draining from the Inland Hills, Potter's Lake lies in the geographic center of the Swardlands. It was named for the legend of a local potter said to have fallen in love with a nixie, joining her to live in her cavern at its bottom. The lake itself is fairly shallow, averaging less than 15 feet deep everywhere except its center, and dense thickets of lush reeds grow around it. In addition to providing good fishing for the folk of Stump, frog gigging among its thickets is also a favorite past time of locals. The hostels in Stump and Cawshax boast excellent recipes for frog legs and frog stews.

Stump

Originally a logging town called Egert and home to five or six hundred souls, this village became a virtual ghost town as the timber played out with the thinning of the Immenwood's northern extent. In recent years, a small population of perhaps 50 individuals has moved back in, making their living from fishing in Potter's Lake and maintaining the trade route between Brume and the rest of the Swardlands. A hostel called the Welcome Back Inn recently opened, run by **Elithu Vargan** (CG male gnome innkeeper 2). He also serves as the de facto village leader. Unbeknownst to his neighbors, one of the local fisherfolk, **Zan Gander** (LE male human spy 9), is actually a former agent of House Thrune who defected from Cheliox after displeasing a vindictive bureaucrat. Zan keeps a low profile, but watches all newcomers, fearing they might be Thrune agents hunting for him.

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Sulwen Hills

This range of hills extends from the western reaches of the Swardlands all the way to the Western Wood at the isle's farthest extent. Unlike the steeper and more regular Inland Hills that rise as an extension of the Kortos Mountains beyond, the Sulwen Hills are lower and more broken, with thick brambles and undergrowth in the many draws and folds, and they quickly become impassible to travelers who don't know the hidden trails. The lower slopes likewise bear growths of stunted scrub oak and other trees acclimated to the rocky, thin soil. Game fowl reside among these heights, but other forms of hunting and trapping are poor, and the dangers of the deeper hills are well known to the Swardfolk. All manner of creatures and bogeymen are rumored to originate from the depths of these hills, from vicious fey and enormous vermin to the bulettes and ankhraivs known to bedevil the farmers of the lowlands from time to time. For this reason, few Swardfolk venture into the Sulwen Hills—and disappearances among those who do aren't entirely uncommon.

Turpin Rowe

Unlike the other communities of the Swardlands, Turpin Rowe's 862 residents don't own their lands or dwellings. Rather, Turpin Rowe is a company town of the Yalbrough Consortium of Absalom, a major logging concern on the Isle of Kortos. The inhabitants are principally concerned with logging the Immenwood, although a turp spirits distillery provides the town with significant income as well. Previously, the stands of trees surrounding the town would recover very quickly from the timbering and tapping operations, but in the last three decades, the forest's verge has shifted more than a mile south. This isn't lost on Commissioner **Ikener** (LN male dwarf overseer 7), who oversees operations for the consortium and is kept awake at night over the quarterly progress reports of diminishing productivity that he must provide to his superiors.

Verdant Passage

The Verdant Passage is more than just the main road that stretches between Kerrick and Willowside to the north. The name is also used for the entire stretch of land north of Kerrick that extends roughly between the road and the lightly forested areas to the east toward the Husna River, all the way to the Welt in the north. Abundant fields of grain extend across the rolling countryside, separated by quaint stone fences and hedges, and farmsteads abound. This is the fertile

heart of the Swardlands, and it's said the soil is so rich that a dwarf could grow gold here with little effort. The truth of the matter is that while rich, the soil isn't what it once was. In addition, creatures such as insect swarms and even the dreaded bulettes have begun to plague the area, while hints of darker things attacking travelers on the road north have all but cut off overland travel to Willowside. Once the jewel of the Swardlands, the Verdant Passage is in a rapid and sad decline.



Ian Gander

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Zevgavizeb—the Beast of Gluttondark, Lord of Reptiles, and Sun-Devourer—is a ravenous and cruel demon lord whose followers commit heinous sacrifices and engage in long, brutal wars in the name of their deity. Beyond his followers among the xulgaths (also known as troglodytes) who form the majority of his congregation, Zevgavizeb is little known among mortals, for his interests rarely extend beyond his own Abyssal demesne and his insatiable hunger. Most scholarly works describe him briefly, pointing to his origins as a qliploth before his ascension to demonkind as one possible explanation for his insatiable hunger and unquenchable bloodlust. The Sun-Devourer alternates between periods of genocidal gluttony and torpid slumber, with his followers reflecting this pattern of war and peace in their cycles of catastrophic collapse and societal elevation.

Faithful xulgaths believe that each period of Zevgavizeb's infamous slumber allows the demon lord to literally digest and incorporate some portion of the knowledge of those he devours and those sacrificed in his name. In this state of torpor, there is little to fear from the Lord of Reptiles, and his followers enjoy periods of peace and prosperity. When the demon lord's hunger riles him once more, though, the shock waves of his cravings can be felt in the very bones of his devotees, who themselves become driven to rage-fueled violence. These "ravenings," as xulgaths refer to the periods of war that coincide with Zevgavizeb's hunger, have kept his cults in eons-long conflicts and stunted the development of their societies for as long as they have worshipped the dread demon. His adherents believe that each cycle of sleep and rampage progresses the Beast of Gluttondark toward some unknown endgame. While other civilizations disregard Zevgavizeb's followers as brutish cannibals and warmongers, they fail to see that the deity's adherents remain in a state of relative unenlightenment only due to the nightmarish culls that fuel their ancestral deity's continuing apotheosis.

The history of the Beast of Gluttondark is fraught. As a qliploth, he ruled over his corner of the Abyss during those early, primordial years of the multiverse. At this time qliploth and proteans waged war against one another and time had no meaning. It was only eons later, when the first demons were introduced to the Abyss and the qliploth fell back and retreated, that Zevgavizeb forsook his qliploth kin and transcended his origins to become a demon lord. Whereas Dagon and Jubilex devoured their way to power, and Cyth-V'sug ascended via misplaced mortal worship, Zevgavizeb attained divinity not by worship or ravenous hunger like his holy texts proclaim, or through daemons' experiments, but via the inscrutable whims of a small group of powerful proteans. A sect of these beings of chaos known as the Wyrms of Paradox, so the story goes, changed select qliploth—including Zevgavizeb—into demons to weaken the Abyss and further turn its hunger inward upon itself. In this way, the Wyrms of Paradox distracted the dread beings of the Abyss from the rest of the multiverse, allowing the Maelstrom to continue to bleed entropy into other planes and the rest of reality to spring up from its wounds.

Just as Zevgavizeb's followers lurk within the darkness of caves and craters, below the earth and below the attention of their prey, so too does the Sun-Devourer dwell in darkness, hungering and waiting, eager to emerge and sate his bloodlust once again.

Personification and Realm

Zevgavizeb's monstrous form is indicative of both his alien origins as a qliploth and his new station as a demon lord, though he maintains bestial elements of the monsters that roam the darkest, dankest places of the cosmos, including titanic dinosaurs, hungry bats, and writhing cephalopods. Acid-spitting tentacles lined with suckers and tipped with lamprey-like mouths, massive tattered wings with phalanges sharpened like claws, saurian fangs that ring the insides of a slaving maw—these are physical features often ascribed to

the Beast of Gluttdark, though like all deities, his form is so incomprehensible to mortal eyes that it is impossible to truly define his corporeal aspect. The overwhelming nature of Zevgavizeb's presence is compounded by the demon lord's profound psionic powers—a force of will strong enough to tear enemies apart with just a thought. His gut-wrenching screams can be heard echoing among the caverns of the Abyss whether he is midslumber and dreaming his violent dreams or awake and rampaging throughout his realm of Gluttdark.

The Abyssal realm called Gluttdark is a massive series of interconnected, planet-sized cavern-worlds within a deep, remote corner of the Abyss. Each lit by a lurid, magical star, these hollow worlds house entire competing nations of demon-touched xulgaths, saurians, and lizardfolk, both mortal and ghostly petitioners, in addition to hordes of full-blooded demons. Mountains, chasms, wild jungles, and lightless oceans teem with ravenous demonic fauna, including an entire ecology of otherworldly dinosaurs, fiendish sea serpents, vampiric flying monstrosities, and all manner of mutated creatures defying rational classification.

Everything in Gluttdark displays an unnatural fecundity; evolution and mutation occur on an accelerated scale thanks to the ambient radiation that seeps from the jungle moon at the heart of Zevgavizeb's domain, where the demon lord himself dwells and sleeps. On rare occasions, Zevgavizeb emerges from his lunar throne to feast upon the inhabitants of his realm. The repercussions of his periodic ravensings can be felt across the multiverse, with his followers experiencing intense psychic tremors that in turn send them flying into their own destructive rages. After the demon lord has sated his bloodlust—typically through the total annihilation of one of his cavern-worlds—Zevgavizeb coaxes the star of his chosen feeding ground to go supernova, sterilizing the realm and resetting its evolutionary clock, before lumbering back to his demesne to enter another eons-long hibernation.

For more information on Gluttdark and its monstrous denizens, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #154: Siege of the Dinosaurs*.

Dogma and Worshipers

One could be forgiven for thinking that the worshippers of Zevgavizeb—whose existence is defined by long periods of inertia interrupted by brief rampages—would have few goals beyond survival and violence, and for the most part this is true. Most of his followers' dogma is not derived from his holy texts and direct commandments, but inferred from the cruel rantings of priests who claim (truly or falsely)

to speak for the dread fiend. Zevgavizeb's adherents are not interested in scripture or study; to them, the power of the divine is best experienced via the ecstasy of bloodshed.

Strength, stealth, domination, and bloodlust are the only coherent tenets of Zevgavizeb's faith, which his xulgath, saurian, and lizardfolk followers observe with ease if not outright delight. In addition to these reptilian followers, Zevgavizeb attracts other subterranean devotees such as gugs and morlocks, as well as a few evil druids of surface ancestries. This latter group sometimes congregates under a shared banner, calling themselves the Scions of the Sun-Devourer. These druids eschew more typical druidic shapeshifting abilities in favor of mixing the primal magic of the natural world with their divine energies to augment their bodies with fiendish and reptilian features.

Zevgavizeb cares neither for the wellbeing of his followers nor about how exactly they accomplish his core tenets, only that they expand in number, grow in strength, conquer, enslave, and sacrifice. The demon lord's faithful take their precepts seriously and pursue the goals of the Lord of Reptiles with little regard for even their own safety. Xulgath followers of Zevgavizeb often outbreed with summoned demons, specifically vavakias, to fiendishly accelerate the mutations that mark their species, viewing such abnormalities as the key to growing their strength and gaining favor in the eyes of their dark god.

Whereas some might look to gods who bolster their spirits or give them hope in trying times, Zevgavizeb's faithful live in perpetual abject fear of their divine patron. It is a common Zevgavizebian belief that when the Beast of Gluttdark awakens to cull his herd, either directly or through the work of his stronger zealots, the unworthy—those who fail to enslave, dominate, and sacrifice other creatures in sufficient quantities—are first on the chopping block. This fear, coupled with different populations' divergent theological practices, is just one reason why worshippers of Zevgavizeb are so prone to infighting; fear-stoked paranoia leads to persecution for even the slightest missteps. When Zevgavizebians are faced with environmental or material scarcities, as is often the case for xulgaths, devotees look to their god for guidance, and his answer, when he deigns to give it, is invariably to thin the herd. The resulting episodes of uncontrolled warfare and cannibalism are part of a brutal cycle that mimics the natural order within Zevgavizeb's realm of Gluttdark and is the primary reason why Zevgavizeb's worshippers, particularly xulgath worshippers, often remain restricted in their cultural and technological advancement.

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Temples and Shrines

Zevgavizeb's places of worship are simple, dank, and bloodstained subterranean locales that reflect the cultural practices and lack of technological sophistication of his most common worshippers. The typical temple can be found within deep natural caverns or ruined, abandoned cellars and dungeons, more often than not protected by one or more of his favored demonic servants, vavakias. Temples are typically situated about a central altar carved from bedrock, surrounded by stalagmites decorated by the remains of ancillary sacrifices, their tips set afire by burning pitch, phosphorescent paints, or magic.

Altars take the form of fanged, reptilian maws made of stone, meant to approximate the monstrous mouth of Zevgavizeb. A particularly blessed xulgath clutch may host a vavakia at its altar who acts as an intercessor and accepts blood and prayers on the Sun-Devourer's behalf. Either way, altars over time accrete ever more decorations, not just blood and remains, but also gold, jewels, and even weapons and magical objects that adorn the altar's carved horns, fangs, or wormlike tendrils. The largest temples sport interplanar portals to Gluttodark that open to accept sacrifices to the demon lord or disgorge fiends from Zevgavizeb's domain in response to a priest's prayers—or failures.

Invariably, shrines to Zevgavizeb become covered with ritually distributed bones, viscera, and blood spilled from the frequent sacrifices. Such sacrifices are often eaten alive by priests and lucky worshippers, who anoint themselves in smeared bodily fluids and drape themselves with lengths of extracted intestines. The most zealous adherents, unwilling to wait for periods of sacrifice, tattoo and brand themselves with prayers and bits of theology, some of which are ultimately flayed from their bodies, tanned, and added to the local corpus of *The Screams* (see Holy Text on page 66).

The grandest temples to Zevgavizeb are located deep within the Darklands and were crafted by xulgaths long ago at their civilization's height. Perhaps the greatest and most terrifying example of these blood-crusting ziggurats is the Pyramid of Frozen Screams. Located within the depths of Orv in one of the satellite caverns of Deep Tolguth, the pyramid is the site of much conflict between Zevgavizebians and qliploth-worshipping xulgaths. The monumental structure was built from the heads of sacrificial victims, each magically petrified at the moment of death, eyes forever wide, mouths forever agape in silent agony.

A Priest's Role

Among xulgaths, priests of Zevgavizeb are known as "deepmouths," and these spiritual leaders are frequently the driving force behind their clutch's expansionist and militaristic activities, if not the direct political rulers of their communities. Rites and sacrifices are open and communal; the priest praises followers for their extreme brutality or victories in battle and publicly shames those who fail to bring honor to the church. The frailest of Zevgavizeb's followers are routinely selected for sacrifice, and in keeping with the Sun-Devourer's ethos, the priest leads the cult in gutting these weaklings



before setting them on fire and ritually devouring them. Priests are not immune to these rites—more than one established cleric of Zevgavizeb has met a bloody fate at the hands of an ambitious novice priest.

In the absence of complex social and cultural hierarchies in the vast majority of Zevgavizebian societies, priests take a central role in daily life. Since the clergy represents the clearest path to power in such communities, the most brutal and sociopathic individuals are drawn to the station like leeches to warm flesh, and their whimsical, often sadistic excess lives on in the additions they make to their peoples' codified theology and rituals. In communities where demon worship is taboo, priests practice greater secrecy in their rites and tend to act behind the scenes, often conducting elaborate schemes on the outskirts of the settlement in concert with evil druidic circles such as the Scions of the Sun-Devourer.

Regardless of species, most priests of Zevgavizeb are clerics, though a select few champions, druids, sorcerers, or even barbarians take up the demon lord's worship as well. Priests of Zevgavizeb tend to be more intelligent than the rest of their flock, though this is not always the case; sometimes a brutish but charismatic leader can inspire more devotion than one who displays nuance in their interpretation of Zevgavizeb's will. In line with their holy texts, most xulgath priests of Zevgavizeb believe that adherence to their faith will not only enrich them but also empower them in the same way their ancestors were, and some of their kind develop psionic abilities.

Holidays

Most Zevgavizebians have little concept of calendars to mark the passage of time or denote specific days of worship. Instead they celebrate whatever holidays or periodic rituals their clergy receives by "revelations" from their god. The most dramatic and obvious occasion among these worshippers is the ravening—a time of intense infighting, sacrifice, and upheaval that coincides with the Beast of Gluttondark's periodic rampages. The distortion of time between the planes of the multiverse mean that the span of time between ravengings might be as long as centuries apart or as little as a few days.

Worshippers believe that a ravening is a sign that their vile god is displeased and will soon be upon them, slaving up from the darkness should they fail to sate him with blood and war. Every priest of Zevgavizeb receives a psychic premonition when a new ravening

is upon them, and some priests will howl and ramble incoherently in tongues of pure Abyssal speech to mark the occasion. Leaders launch a period of brutal, indiscriminate sacrifice that often devolves into outright warfare, or barring that, open fratricide and cannibalism.

Aphorisms

While many phrases arose from the feverish rantings of Zevgavizeb's egotistical clerics, the following aphorisms are prevalent, if not in exact wording then at least in their common meaning.

Consume Lest You Be Consumed:

The simplest and most direct of Zevgavizeb's commandments is spoken by his adherents on all manner of occasions. It evokes a fear common to Zevgavizebians: personal failure or shortcoming is often enough to warrant sacrifice at the altar of the demon lord, so

that the weak may be dragged down the Abyss for Zevgavizeb to personally devour. It is telling, then, that the term also is used as a common phrase of polite greeting or farewell, usually parsed down to the simple exhortation "Consume!"

The Silent Do Not Scream: Zevgavizeb embraces darkness and silence as elements of a successful predator. Whispered prior to assaults on rivals or raids on settlements to plunder and enslave for servitude and sacrifice, the saying "The silent do not scream" contrasts followers' own surreptitiousness to their agonized victims' wails. At the same time, the phrase serves as a prayer of stoic resolve and a warning to obey one's stronger leaders, lest one find themselves sacrificed for some perceived failure or weakness.

Holy Text

Two holy texts of Zevgavizeb exist—the partially lost original dating from xulgaths' enlightened era, *Screams of the Verdant Moon*, and *The Screams*, a heavily redacted, altered, and simplified common text.

The Screams is a brutally simplistic compilation of prayers and illustrations of rituals and sacrifices written in a debased mixture of Draconic and Abyssal. Over half the text consists of repeated commands to dominate others and offer Zevgavizeb sacrifice lest he awaken and feast upon the readers instead.

In comparison, *Screams of the Verdant Moon* is an elaborate, baroque text. Its volumes are also stuffed with leather pages made by branding or tattooing verses onto a living being's flesh before skinning the victim alive and sacrificing them. Bizarrely, the text's words are psychogenic and hallucinatory when read by any

* * * * *

**"Dominate, masticate,
propitiate. Zevgavizeb grant
us his power, his fury puissant
in our veins, and spare us his
unending hunger."**

—Screams of the Verdant Moon

* * * * *

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even vaguely reptilian creature, with repeated readings instilling a profound belief that further obsessive study will unlock powerful psychic abilities.

Relations with Other Religions

Despite his reclusive nature, Zevgavizeb maintains relations with numerous divinities. Most prominently, the Beast of Gluttondark has comfortable, at times almost familial, relations with other qliploth-turned-demon lords, including Pazuzu, Dagon, and Jubilex.

By contrast, the Sun-Devourer has a brutally antagonistic relationship with the Abyss's remaining qliploth lords, including the ascended deific qliploth Rovagug, for whom Zevgavizeb has such disdain that the faithful of these two beings frequently wage war against one another. Shigarreb specifically is a focus of recent and continuing hatred, with the Marauding Maw increasingly seeking to usurp Zevgavizeb's worshippers from among the enlightened xulgaths of Deep Tolguth on Golarion.

While most gods have little interaction with the Zevgavizeb since his designs at present touch little outside of the Abyss, he despises the dwarven pantheon and has a complicated relationship of mixed rivalry and grudging respect with Lamashtu, Dahak, and Noctula. While he shares portfolio elements and concerns with these gods, he may also have eventual designs on godhood himself, in which case his callous admiration could simply be a prelude to attempted usurpation.



Zevgavizeb (CE)

The Beast of Gluttondark's sphere of influence encompasses caverns, reptiles, the strong, and all-consuming hunger. A primordial qliploth-turned-demon lord, Zevgavizeb seems to care little for his followers, and so he is more often propitiated than worshipped.

Edicts expand your clutch's domain, dominate your enemies, demonstrate mastery over your crafts and environment, devour the weak

Anathema surrender in combat, express weakness in the face of adversity, show mercy to the weak

Follower Alignments NE, CE

DEVOTEE BENEFITS

Divine Font harm

Divine Skill Survival

Favored Weapon spiked gauntlet

Domains might, nature, tricker, tyranny

Alternate Domains destruction, indulgence, wyrmkin
(*Pathfinder Lost Omens: Gods and Magic*)

Cleric Spells 1st: *ray of enfeeblement*, 3rd: *meld into stone*, 5th: *ravening maw* (see below)

New Rules

DREAMER OF THE VERDANT MOON BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

You spent your early days in the aftermath of one of the great ravengings. You survived thanks to your resourcefulness and perhaps your patron's favor and were blessed with skills and drive thereafter, but you must always hold to his standards, lest the hunger from the depths seek you out once again.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Ravening's Desperation skill feat (below), and you're trained in the Survival and Zevgavizeb Lore skills.

RAVENING'S DESPERATION FEAT 1

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites trained in Zevgavizeb Lore

Your study of the Beast of Gluttondark has taught you how to make do in the most trying of circumstances rather than succumb to weakness. As long as your current Hit Points are less than half your maximum Hit Points, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Survival and Stealth checks. If your current Hit Points are less than a quarter your maximum Hit Points, the circumstance bonus is +2 instead.

RAVENING MAW SPELL 5

UNCOMMON EVIL HEALING NECROMANCY

Traditions divine, occult, primal

Cast >> somatic, verbal

Range 60 feet; **Targets** one living creature

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** 3 rounds

You evoke Zevgavizeb's unceasing hunger and inflict it upon your target. The target becomes overwhelmed with cannibalistic hunger and can restore its vitality by feasting on the flesh of the fallen. On its turn, the target can use 2 actions (these actions have the manipulate trait) to cannibalize an adjacent dying or dead creature. If the cannibalized creature is dying, it dies. If the cannibalized creature is an ally of the target, the target regains 5d8 HP; otherwise, the target regains 5d4 HP. Certain monsters (such as those whose blood is acidic or magical) might inflict additional effects on those who cannibalize them at the GM's discretion. Once cannibalized, a particular creature's body doesn't have enough meat to cannibalize again. During any round that there's a dying or dead creature within 30 feet of the target, if the target can't or doesn't cannibalize a creature, the target takes 5d4 mental damage.

Heightened (+1) The amount of HP restored by cannibalizing a creature increases by 1d8 for eating an ally and 1d4 otherwise, and the mental damage increases by 1d4.

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Magic Items

The following magic items appear throughout “Life’s Long Shadows.”

GOLEM STYLUS

ITEM 10

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 850 gp

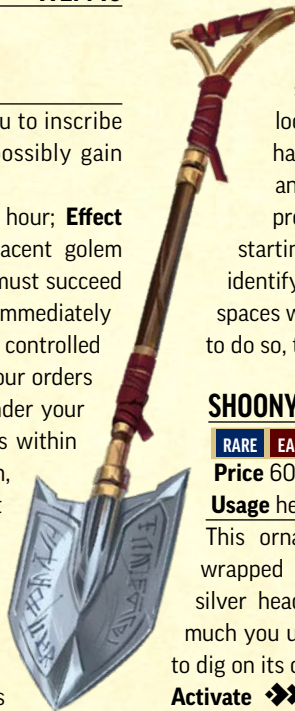
Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

This small, diamond-tipped stylus allows you to inscribe a magical symbol on a golem’s body and possibly gain control over it.

Activate **◆◆** Interact; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect**

You make a quick inscription on an adjacent golem creature of 11th level or lower. The golem must succeed at a DC 27 Reflex saving throw or you immediately gain control over the golem for 1 minute. A controlled golem is helpful toward you and follows your orders to the best of its ability as long as it is under your control. If the golem’s original controller is within 60 feet of the golem and can see the golem, that controller can attempt a counteract check (DC 27) as a reaction to counteract this effect; on a success, the inscription disappears and the golem reverts to its pre-inscription state. The inscription can also be counteracted with *dispel magic*.

If the golem you are targeting has already been inscribed with a *golem stylus*, you must attempt a counteract check against the previous inscription as part of activating the item, using your *golem stylus*’s item level or your Arcana skill check modifier as your counteract check modifier. If successful, you modify the existing inscription so that the golem falls under your control.



RING OF STONESHIFTING

ITEM 12

UNCOMMON CONJURATION EARTH INVESTED MAGICAL TELEPORTATION

Price 1,800 gp

Usage worn; Bulk L

This simple iron ring is faceted with a bulbous geode

lined with bright purple crystals. A ring of stoneshifting grants you the ability to ignore difficult terrain caused by rubble or uneven ground made of stone and earth.

Activate 1 minute; **Frequency** three times per day;

Requirements You are standing on at

least 5 feet of earthen material (such as stone, soil, clay, or sand); **Effect** You

sink into the ground and emerge at another location within 100 miles. This location must have an earthen surface at least 5 feet deep and you must be able to identify the location precisely by both its position relative to your starting position and its appearance or other identifying features. You can’t carry extradimensional spaces with you to the destination, and if you attempt to do so, the activation fails.

SHOONY SHOVEL

ITEM 9

RARE EARTH MAGICAL

Price 600 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk 2

This ornate, compact shovel has a golden handle wrapped with beautiful crimson bulette leather. Its silver head never gets dirty or worn no matter how much you use it. Its true magic, however, is in its ability to dig on its own.

Activate **◆◆** command, envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You place the shovel in a starting position and specify the dimensions and direction to dig (such as “Dig down 8 feet in a rectangle sized 30 feet by 40 feet” or “Dig straight ahead for 30 feet”). The shovel then animates and digs on its own at a rate of one 5-foot cube per 10 minutes until the task is complete or it is picked up. It can dig through dirt, gravel, sand, snow, or similar loose material, but the shovel stops digging (or digs around, if commanded) if it strikes stone or another solid material. A *shoony shovel* can sense if its digging path will cause a building to collapse, harm a creature, or otherwise create significant problems, in which case it automatically stops digging.

Shoony Ancestry

Diminutive humanoids who resemble squat, bipedal dogs, shoonies are sometimes mistaken for weak and insular pacifists. However, their sheer perseverance, incredible work ethic, and resourceful use of diplomacy make shoonies far from helpless.

According to shoonies, Aroden created their kind to provide him with pleasant company soon after he created the Isle of Kortos. Shoony culture is rooted in this myth and its implications, which help to explain the ancestry's long reputation for hospitality, good will, and pacifism. War is antithetical to the shoony way of life; shoonies rely on cooperation and persistence to make their way through a world that can seem at times

hellbent on destroying them. Shoonies are unflappable in their optimism and always see the best in others, even when faced with frequent subjugation and exploitation that might create bitterness or xenophobia among other societies. To shoonies, peace is a goal always worth striving for, and no villain is beyond redemption, so they aim to resolve problems with peaceful solutions.

YOU MIGHT...

- Fight to protect those you care about and strive to do the right thing.
- Work hard for long hours in a focused pursuit of distant goals.
- Provide comfort, necessities such as food, and a sense of kinship to those in distress.

OTHERS PROBABLY...

- Involuntarily fawn over (or recoil from) your physical appearance.
- Protect you from scary situations or terrifying phenomena, out of either friendship or overprotectiveness.
 - Appreciate your pragmatism and natural ability to care for others.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Shoonies are squat, furry humanoids with flattened canid faces and wet, black eyes. Their fur can be a variety of hues and patterns, with the most common colors being fawn or black, and their loose skin gives even the fittest shoony a pudgy appearance. Shoonies have short, curly tails that sometimes wag involuntarily when the shoony is content or particularly excited or pleased. Like canines, shoonies cannot sweat; they pant to mitigate heat and exertion, and it is not uncommon to see a shoony with a perpetually lolling tongue.

A shoony reaches maturity after just 8 to 10 years, and the elders of their villages rarely reach the age of 50. Little differentiates male and female shoonies except during the late stages of pregnancy, and as they age, both sexes develop graying facial fur, wrinkled skin, and frail joints. The average shoony is 3-1/2 feet tall and weighs 100 pounds.

SOCIETY

Despite the shoony drive toward communal living, most shoony settlements are farming villages with populations of no more than a hundred. Shoonies work hard to make their lands bountiful and recognize



EXTINCTION CURSE

that large, dense populations can negatively affect the ecosystem. Monster attacks, natural disasters, and exploitation from stronger cultures have all also limited the spread of shoonies across the Inner Sea region.

Despite their short lifespans, shoonies are happy-go-lucky people with an irrepressible love for the land and their fellow shoonies, and remain optimistic even under the worst circumstances. The simple pleasures of living on this beautiful world, engaging in hard work, and surrounding themselves with loved ones motivate shoonies to push through the hardships that all too often befall their people.

ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

Most shoony societies encourage empathy and loyalty, so they're rarely evil, but they're also practical, traditional, and timid. Most shoony adventurers are neutral good or lawful good. Religion is a cornerstone of shoony village life; shoonies primarily worshipped Aroden until his apparent death. In his absence, many shoonies have adopted Erastil as their patron deity because his emphasis on family, community, and living off the land naturally meshes with typical shoony values. Noble shoonies—especially warriors—sometimes look to Iomedae as an exemplar of integrity, hard work, and sacrifice.

NAMES

With their strong family values and emphasis on found friends, it's no wonder that shoonies take particular pride in naming their children after other loved ones. Shoony names are short, guttural, and often sound like loose strings of unassociated vowels and soft consonants to people of other ancestries. Shoonies value names and take great care to learn and speak the correct pronunciations of their friends' names.

Sample Names

Ahogo, Arnbin, Bighmor, Bondin, Domwurd, Ebmeur, Gopor, Gurna, Hiemgur, Mufurlo, Oriog, Pulumar, Raliamar, Ruggion, Uhlurig, Ungrin.

Shoony Heritages

Shoonies have developed a variety of physiological traits to account for their various roles in shoony society. Choose one of the following shoony heritages at 1st level.

BLOODHOUND SHOONY

Your ancestors were famous trackers, and you carry in your blood that same gift of the hunt. You gain a special sense: imprecise scent with a range of 30 feet. This means you can use your sense of smell to determine the location of a creature, but it remains hidden (as detailed on page 465 of the *Core Rulebook*). In

SHOONY ADVENTURERS

Few shoonies willingly choose to leave their homeland and friends in favor of facing the unknown, and the circumstances that lead a shoony to adventure are often dramatic and life-altering, if not tragic. That said, some shoonies do travel the world in search of riches to bring back to their village or to avenge their kinfolk, and shoony adventurers who show bravery or ingenuity are sure to earn a place in the legends of their people.

Typical shoonies have the acolyte, farmhand, hunter, laborer, or warrior backgrounds from the *Core Rulebook*, or the animal wrangler or rigger backgrounds from the *Extinction Curse Player's Guide*. Many shoony adventurers are fighters who hone their skills to become stalwart defenders of their friends. Some shoonies pursue religious study and become clerics or champions, while others develop their foraging and hunting skills as talented druids and rangers.

In addition, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks to Track creatures that you have previously sensed with your scent.

FISHSEEKER SHOONY

You come from a long line of fisherfolk and have inherited the quick reflexes necessary to nab and reel in big game. If you roll a success on an attempt to Grab an Edge, you get a critical success instead; if you roll a critical failure, you get a failure instead. A creature that rolls a failure on a check to Disarm you gets a critical failure instead.

PADDLER SHOONY

You hail from shoonies who have lived long and successfully among the reeds and cattails of swamps and marshes, and have adapted to the challenges of living near waterlogged areas. You ignore difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain from bogs. When you roll a success to Swim, you get a critical success instead.

THICKCOAT SHOONY

You are a rare shoony who hails from colder climes. You gain cold resistance equal to half your level (minimum 1), and you treat environmental cold effects as if they were one step less extreme (incredible cold becomes extreme, extreme cold becomes severe, and so on). You don't need to succeed at a flat check to target a concealed creature if that creature is concealed only by snow. Unless you wear protective gear or take shelter, environmental heat effects are one step more extreme for you.

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RARE

Shoonies are scarce throughout the Inner Sea region. You should clear your decision with your GM before choosing to play a shoony character.

HIT POINTS

6

SIZE

Small

SPEED

25 feet

ABILITY BOOSTS

Dexterity
Charisma
Free

ABILITY FLAW

Constitution

LANGUAGES

Common
Shoony

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if it's positive).

Choose from Dwarven, Gnomish, Goblin, Halfling, Terran, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region).

TRAITS

Humanoid
Shoony

LOW-LIGHT VISION

You can see in dim light as though it were bright light, so you ignore the concealed condition due to dim light.

BLUNT SNOUT

Your small, blunt snout and labyrinthine sinus system make you resistant to phenomena that assail the nose. When you roll a saving throw against inhaled threats (such as inhaled poisons) and olfactory effects (such as xulgath stench), you get the outcome one degree of success better than the result of your roll.

Ancestry Feats

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th level). As a shoony, you select from among the following ancestry feats.

1ST LEVEL

DIG QUICKLY 

FEAT 1

MANIPULATE SHOONY

Requirements You are standing on dirt, sand, snow, or similar particulate material.

Your hands work as effectively as shovels when you need to dig a quick hole. You dig a shallow pit in the square you currently occupy, turning the square into difficult terrain (including for you). In addition, you also kick up a cloud of grit in a direction of your choice. The cloud extinguishes small, unattended, non-magical fires and helps smother the flames on burning creatures located within the cone; creatures in this cone that are taking persistent fire damage can immediately attempt an additional flat DC 15 check to end the persistent damage.

ESTEEMED VISITOR

FEAT 1

SHOONY

Your polite manners and natural ability to comfort others make it easy for you to break down cultural barriers and earn strangers' trust. While you are in a settlement, when you roll a critical failure on a Diplomacy check to Gather Information or Make an Impression, you get a failure instead.

HANDY WITH YOUR PAWS

FEAT 1

SHOONY

You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Crafting checks to Repair non-magical items, and you don't need a repair kit for such repairs as long as you have any amount of junk, spare parts, or debris at your disposal.

IMPROVISATIONAL DEFENDER

FEAT 1

SHOONY

You are always prepared for fights that frequently disrupt seemingly peaceful times. When you use an improvised weapon or a shoddy weapon, you don't take the -2 item penalty to attack rolls.

SCAMPER UNDERFOOT

FEAT 1

SHOONY

You are used to ducking under foes and can scurry around the battlefield with ease. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Acrobatics checks to Tumble Through the spaces of Medium or larger enemies, and the presence of an enemy doesn't make the squares difficult terrain.

SHOONY LORE

FEAT 1

SHOONY

Growing up in shoony society, you learned the value of honesty, friendship, and hard work, even during trying times. You gain the trained proficiency rank in Diplomacy and Survival. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills (from your background or class, for example), you instead become trained in a skill of your choice. You also become trained in Shoony Lore.

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5TH LEVEL

LOYAL EMPATH

FEAT 5

SHOONY

You have incredible empathy for your friends and family, and you have an innate timing for helping others in distress. You can use the Aid reaction to grant a bonus to another creature's Will saving throw. As usual for Aid, you need to prepare by using an action on your turn to encourage the creature to bravely withstand the effect.

PRACTICED PADDLER

FEAT 5

SHOONY

Prerequisites paddler shoony

You're skilled at navigating bogs and marshes, even for a paddler shoony. You gain a swim Speed of 15 feet.

TOUGH TUMBLER

FEAT 5

SHOONY

Prerequisites Scamper Underfoot

You've taken your share of licks while scurrying around the battlefield and know how to defend yourself against opportunistic attackers. Your movement ends only when you critically fail an Acrobatics check to Tumble Through an enemy's space (or when you don't have enough Speed to move all the way through its space). You still trigger reactions on a failure to Tumble Through, but you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC against attacks that you trigger in this way.

9TH LEVEL

IMPROVISATIONAL WARRIOR

FEAT 9

SHOONY

Prerequisites Improvisational Defender

When you use an improvised weapon, you apply the critical specialization of a brawling weapon to it. Depending on the shape and nature of the improvised weapon, your GM might determine another weapon group's critical specialization is more appropriate.

SODBUSTER

FEAT 9

SHOONY

Prerequisites Dig Quickly

Years toiling in soil have made you an expert digger. You gain a burrow Speed of 10 feet through loose soil or dirt.

13TH LEVEL

STEADFAST ALLY

FEAT 13

SHOONY

Prerequisites Loyal Empath

Your presence alone is enough to provide your allies with emotional support. You can use the Aid reaction to grant a

bonus to another creature's Will saving throw even when you haven't prepared to help.

UNRIVALED BUILDER

FEAT 13

SHOONY

Prerequisites Handy with Your Paws

Building things is like solving a puzzle, and you know how to use anything at your disposal to get the job done. You gain *creation* as a 5th-level innate primal spell. You must have an equivalent Bulk of material to create an item, such as wood or scrap metal to make a wheelbarrow. You can cast this spell once each day.



Golem Grafter Archetype

You have replaced a portion of your body with artifice of the kind used to create golems, fortifying your flesh with the unyielding might of magical constructs.

GOLEM GRAFTER DEDICATION

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites expert in Arcana and Crafting, or an ally with expert proficiency in those skills willing to augment you
Your flesh has been specially treated with the same arcane



and alchemical processes used to toughen the skin of flesh golems. Increase your maximum Hit Points by an amount equal to your level. You gain resistance to physical damage (except adamantine) equal to your number of class feats from the golem grafter archetype.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the golem grafter archetype.

ACCURSED CLAY FIST

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE CURSE

Prerequisites Golem Grafter Dedication, expert in unarmed attacks

You have replaced one of your forearms with one made of clay and infused with cursed arcane magic. When you make an unarmed Strike with your clay fist and hit, your target takes a -2 status penalty to saving throws against curse effects for 1 hour.

Special The damage die for your clay fist is 1d8, and it loses the agile and finesse traits of a typical fist.

QUICKEN HEARTBEAT

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE PRESTIGE

Prerequisites Golem Grafter Dedication

Frequency once per turn

You've replaced your heart with one made of animated quicksilver and living adamantine. You reduce your slowed condition by 1. Alternatively, if you are not slowed, you are quickened 1 during your next turn, and can use your extra action to Stride or Strike.

LEGS OF STONE

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE PRESTIGE

Prerequisites Golem Grafter Dedication

You gain a +2 status bonus to your Fortitude and Reflex DCs against attempts to Shove or Trip you. You can Shove creatures even if you don't have a hand free. When you successfully Shove a foe, you can Stride away from your opponent (instead of toward it), but you must move the same distance in the opposite direction from where you Shoved it.

IRON LUNG

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Golem Grafter Dedication

Your lungs are infused with the resilience of iron. Treat the result of your save against an inhaled poison as one degree of success better than you rolled. Additionally, you gain the following ability.

Exhale Poison (arcane, necromancy, poison) **Requirements**

You were within the area of an inhaled poison within the last minute; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You sharply exhale the poison that previously surrounded you in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the area are affected by the poison; the poison's DC and effects are unchanged.

EXTINCTION BY CURSE

Turpin Rowe Lumberjack Archetype

You are a feller of trees and a skilled axe wielder, trained in the art of forestry by the hard-working loggers of Turpin Rowe.

TURPIN ROWE LUMBERJACK DEDICATION FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Survival; **Access** You must befriend at least one Turpin Rowe logger.

Your logging training has made you intimately familiar with all aspects of forestry, and you have trained extensively to reach around trees and utilize their bulk to your advantage. You become trained in Milling Lore and Forest Lore, or an expert if you were already trained. You can always Take Cover when you are within forest terrain to gain cover, even if you're not next to an obstacle you can Take Cover behind. In addition, any enemy who gains standard cover from a tree gains only lesser cover against your attacks (or only standard cover, if the enemy otherwise gains greater cover).

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Turpin Rowe lumberjack archetype.

AXE CLIMBER FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Turpin Rowe Lumberjack Dedication

When you are climbing a wooden surface and have a hatchet or battle axe in each hand, you have a climb Speed equal to half your normal Speed. You must still have both legs available to climb and can't use either of the axes in combat while climbing. This feat can also be used to climb a surface of ice if you have a light pick in each hand.

LOG ROLL FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Turpin Rowe Lumberjack Dedication

Requirements You and an adjacent creature are both on a narrow surface or uneven ground and the other creature is flat-footed.

You shuffle your feet to dislodge the surface beneath you or otherwise cause your opponent to become unsteady. Attempt an Acrobatics check against the adjacent creature's Reflex saving throw DC. On a success, the creature falls. On a critical failure, you fall.

AXE THROWER FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Turpin Rowe Lumberjack Dedication

You have mastered the weight and balance of a variety

of axes and can lob them with ease. Any one-handed axe weapon you wield has the thrown trait with a range of 10 feet. For axes that already have the thrown trait, the range increases by 10 feet. When you critically succeed at an attack roll with a thrown axe weapon, you apply the axe's critical specialization effect.

WIDEN THE GAP FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Turpin Rowe Lumberjack Dedication

Once you have penetrated a foe's defenses, you can home in on the same spot to exploit your opponent's wound and deal some serious damage. The second time you hit and deal damage with a melee axe Strike to the same opponent or object during your turn, you ignore half of the opponent's or object's Hardness, if any. If you hit and deal damage with a melee axe Strike to the same opponent or object a third or fourth time during your turn, you ignore all of its Hardness, if any.



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LONELY WANDERER

The bugul noz's eternal sorrow renders it immune to all other emotions, including (and especially) happiness. The reason it wanders is to find others of its kind to ease its loneliness. Short of this, the bugul noz's greatest wish is to find friends who can help it change its vile appearance.

Bugul Noz

This gangly fey humanoid wanders the overgrown paths of dark, misty forests, voluntarily isolating himself in an attempt to protect others from their hideous form. A bugul noz's appearance is not merely unsightly—to view the being's form is said to tempt death, and backwoods villagers tell tales of wanderers found struck dead after merely glancing at the creature.

As they jaunt through the forest, the bugul noz sings an eerie tune to alert others to their presence and deter these creatures from looking upon them. The bugul noz does not, after all, want to harm anyone; they are inherently kind, if unpredictable, and if they accidentally kill a creature out of panic or confusion, they grieve. A bugul noz who roams the same road long enough compiles a long list of such accidental victims, and they might carry the corpses off to a single mass grave deep in the forest. When not wandering, the bugul noz watches over this grave to ensure that the spirits of their victims are never lonely.

BUGUL NOZ

CREATURE 12

RARE CN MEDIUM FEY

Perception +23; darkvision

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +19, Forest Lore +22, Nature +25, Survival +25

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +7

AC 31; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +25, **Will** +23

HP 200; **Immunities** emotion; **Weaknesses** cold iron 18

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 29. Animals take a -2 circumstance penalty to the Will save.

Horrid Visage (visual) Creatures that see the bugul noz must succeed at a DC 31 Fortitude saving throw. On a failure, creatures are doomed 1 (or doomed 2 on a critical failure).

Mirror Vulnerability Upon seeing its own reflection in a mirror or other reflective surface, the bugul noz must succeed at a DC 34 Will save or become confused and immobilized for 1d4 - 1 rounds (minimum 1 round). While confused and immobilized, the bugul noz cries and wallows in misery, making it immune to visual and auditory effects for the duration.

Speed 25 feet; forest jaunt

Melee ♦ claw +23 (magical), **Damage** 3d8+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ rock +25 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 33; **3rd** *blindness* (×3), *wanderer's guide*; **2nd** *pass without trace*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *dancing lights*

Flail ♦ The bugul noz swings its limbs about wildly. It makes up to three claw Strikes, each against a different creature and each with a -2 circumstance penalty. Its multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after it makes all the attacks.

Forest Jaunt The bugul noz ignores difficult terrain in forests.

Haunting Wail ♦♦ (illusion, vocal) The bugul noz lets out a hair-raising kean. Other creatures within 30 feet must attempt a DC 31 Fortitude save. The bugul noz can't use this ability again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes 2d10 sonic damage.

Failure The target takes 4d10 sonic damage and gains sonic weakness 10 for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As failure, and the target becomes fleeing for 1 round.

Cat Sith

Cat siths can easily pass for common black house cats, noteworthy only for the white spots on their chests and their unusually bristly personalities. In actuality, they are cunning fey, fully capable of speech, trickery, and even walking upright on their hind legs and using their forepaws almost as skillfully as hands. Cat siths live around highland towns and cities, regularly venturing unnoticed into nearby communities by posing as domesticated felines or using magic to take humanoid form. While some cat siths gather information and undertake tasks for more powerful fey creatures, others serve only their own mysterious agendas.

Cat siths are harbingers of misfortune and find amusement in the unluckiness that follows in their wake. Though they are rarely malicious, they are fascinated by death in all its forms, and may go so far as to steal the souls of the dying for some inscrutable purpose.

CAT SITH

UNCOMMON CN TINY FEY

Perception +14; low-light vision

Languages Sylvan; *Speak with animals*

Skills Acrobatics +15, Deception +15, Stealth +15

Str +0, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +14

HP 110; **Immunities** misfortune effects; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

Ill Omen (aura, curse, misfortune, occult) 60 feet. Any creature within the area that can see the cat sith must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or become struck by an ill omen. On a failure, the creature becomes immune to fortune effects as long as it remains in the aura and for 1 minute thereafter. On a critical failure, the creature takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws while within the ill omen aura and becomes immune to fortune effects for 1 day.

Speed 35 feet

Melee ✦ jaws +12, **Damage** 2d12+3 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+5 slashing plus cat sith's mark

Occult Innate Spells DC 23; **3rd** *humanoid form* (at will); **2nd** *paranoia* (x2)

Cat Sith's Mark (curse, misfortune) A creature hit by a cat sith's claw must succeed at a DC 23 Will save or be cursed with misfortune. Whenever the cursed creature rolls a critical success on a skill check or saving throw, it gets a success instead. Each day, a cursed creature can attempt a DC 10 flat check to break the curse.

Steal Soul ✦✦ (necromancy, occult) The cat sith touches a dying creature or a creature that died within the past 3 days. If the target is a dying creature, it must attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save; on a failure, its dying value increases by 1 (or 2 on a critical failure). If the target is dead, it receives no save and its soul is imprisoned in the cat sith's body, becoming freed only if the cat sith is slain. While the soul is imprisoned, the creature can't be brought back to life by any means short of a *wish* or *miracle*. The cat sith can hold only one soul at a time and can release a soul as a free action.

CREATURE 6



CAT SITHS ON GOLARION

Many cat siths found on the Material Plane are agents of the Lantern King, one of the powerful rulers of the First World known collectively as the Eldest.



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COUNTEFLORA FIELDS

Countefloras are bountiful in regions where the soil is rich and predators are few, and in some remote parts of the world, entire fields of the plants can be found. These counteflora fields can be incredibly hazardous for travelers. However, in the winter, when countefloras shrivel slightly and become dormant, these fields can make for perfectly safe (if eerie) foot highways.

Counteflora

The counteflora resembles an oversized dandelion with black flowers and sinister patterns on its bracts, which it can contract for additional protection and to turn its flower head into a deadly bashing weapon. Unlike dandelions, countefloras do not have separate flowering and seeding stages, and can release their intoxicating seedpods as long as their bracts are open.

Countefloras exhibit a strange intellect and communicate with one another by releasing invisible pheromones into the air. Alone, a desperate counteflora may ally with another creature if it is offered water or fertile soil. Contrary to popular belief, countefloras absorb sunlight for sustenance; they do not attack other creatures to feast upon them. Rather, the reason countefloras go to such lengths to kill their opponents is to fertilize the surrounding soil and create a nutrient-rich environment for their seedpods.

COUNTEFLORA

CREATURE 10

N LARGE PLANT

Perception +18; tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Athletics +23, Stealth +20 (+24 in jungles and flower fields)

Str +5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

AC 29 (31 with tightened bracts); **Fort** +22, **Ref** +20, **Will** +14

HP 220; **Immunities** poison; **Weaknesses** cold 10, fire 10

Frost Susceptibility Whenever the counteflora takes cold damage, it takes a -10-foot circumstance penalty to Speed for 1 round.

Tighten Bracts ♦♦ The counteflora stiffens the specialized leaves around its flower head, protecting its sensitive seedpods. While its bracts are tightened, a counteflora gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC and can use its head Strike and Furious Swing abilities, but it cannot use its Black Seed Cloud ability and it loses its sense of sight (so it must rely on its imprecise tremorsense when targeting other creatures). The counteflora can't use its head Strike or Furious Swing ability unless its bracts are tightened. The counteflora can loosen its bracts as a free action (this action has the concentrate trait).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ vines +21 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing

Melee ♦ head +23 (reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 3d10+9 bludgeoning

Black Seed Cloud ♦♦ The counteflora releases a cloud of black seedpods in a 15-foot-radius emanation. Non-counteflora creatures in the area must succeed at a Fortitude save or breathe in the toxic seeds. (Against plants and fungi, the seeds burrow into the creatures' flesh rather than infiltrate their lungs.)

Counteflora Toxin (contact [for plants and fungi] or inhaled, poison) **Saving Throw** DC 30 Fortitude (DC 32 for plants and fungi); **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 4d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 6d6 poison damage, enfeebled 1, and fascinated (1 round)

Furious Swing ♦♦♦ (attack) **Requirements** The counteflora's bracts are tightened; **Effect** The counteflora makes up to four headbutt Strikes (see Flower Headbutt), each against a different creature within reach.

Cu Sith

Cu siths are hound-like doorkeepers of remote portals to other planes, particularly portals to the untamed realm of the fey, the First World. They are highly territorial and roam the highland moors they call home, constantly on the hunt for any creatures that might intrude on their territory. Those that bargain for safe passage to or from a portal find cu siths to be vigilant escorts that keep travelers safe from extraplanar threats but also ensure their charges don't veer from the most direct path to their destination. Cu siths are highly proficient hunters, and to mortals they offer a single warning in the form of their terrifying bark. Creatures that refuse to flee upon hearing a cu sith's warning bark risk a quick and brutal death.

Cu siths cut imposing figures; they are as large as bulls and covered in intertwining roots, plant matter, and shaggy green and white fur that terminates in a long, plaited tail. Their eyes glow with a fiery green light.

CU SITH

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON N LARGE FEY

Perception +16; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Sylvan (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +17, Stealth +17, Survival +16

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

HP 140; **Immunities** fear; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +17, **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing plus Grab

Dooming Bark ♦♦ (auditory, concentrate, fear, mental, necromancy, primal) Any creature within 200 feet of the cu sith that hears its Dooming Bark must attempt a DC 24 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and immune to Dooming Bark for 24 hours.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The creature is frightened 3 and fleeing.

If a creature is already frightened when it fails a save against Dooming Bark, its frightened value increases by 1 and it becomes doomed 1. A creature in an area that the cu sith can't easily reach—such as a hidden burrow or enclosed building—increases the degree of success of its saving throw against Dooming Bark by one step.

Worry Prey ♦ (attack) **Requirements**

The cu sith has a Large or smaller creature grabbed in its jaws; **Effect** The cu sith viciously shakes its prey. The cu sith makes a jaws Strike against the grabbed creature with a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll. If the cu sith hits, it deals jaws damage, maintains its Grab, and attempts an Athletics check to Disarm its target of anything it is holding. On a miss, the cu sith releases the creature.



CU SITHS ON GOLARION

Cu siths can be found wherever the barrier between the Material Plane and the First World is weak, particularly in the marshy highlands of Ustalav, where stories of the fey stretch back as far as memory. Superstitious townsfolk believe cu siths drag their prey back to the First World, where their victims' immortal souls fuse with the vital energy of that wild plane.





BLASPHEMOUS REBIRTH

The ritual to create a herecite demands the sacrifice of five devotees of the same non-evil god. During the ritual, the devotees' bodies and souls meld together to form a single profane entity. Regardless of the deity it worships in undeath, the herecite always bears a debauched likeness to the god its constituent members previously worshipped. Followers of Erastil may reform into an aged man with a stag's skull for a head, the blood of would-be hunters dripping from its monstrous fangs; worshippers of Desna might transmute into a woman weighed down by chains, her butterfly wings hacked to limp shreds.

Herecite

Secreted away in the dark corners of unnamed libraries, necromancer's dens, and heretical scriptoriums, obscure texts describe a horrifying ritual that combines sacrifice and suffering to create a powerful undead being known as a herecite. These monsters, stripped of personal will or desire, are born into the service of an evil god whom they worship unerringly and untiringly, often in spite of any opposing religious leanings they may have had in life. Every herecite harbors an unquenchable self-hatred because it was defiled by such a foul resurrection—a rage it turns outward in an attempt to rob others of their faith and lives.

Herecites often outlast the cults that create them. Stranded herecites are drawn to others of their kind, even if they are dedicated to different evil deities, and when brought together they perform rites to magically bind themselves in a group known as a cabal. While cabal members share enhanced magic and defenses, induction into a cabal appears to hold even deeper significance for herecites. The presence of others of their kind with whom they can pray—in verses warped to venerate wicked gods—seems the only solace these tormented beings can find in undeath. Such a fellowship of sorrow is nigh unbreakable, as many an overzealous crusader has discovered far too late.

Customarily found within heavily modified temples to the pantheon of gods they collectively worship, herecites act in service to their creators or as protectors of unholy ground. High priests of different evil gods may even trade herecites among themselves, allowing their minions to form cabals strengthened by their varied faiths. A lone herecite cut off from its creators—often because it is the sole remnant of a destroyed temple or its master has perished—may wander far and wide in search of a cabal to join. Other times, the herecite seeks out a place sacred to the deity it worshipped in life. Whether motivated by a desire for contrition or vengeance, the end result of this baleful pilgrimage is always the desecration of the holy site and the slaughter of its congregants, who may in turn rise as lesser forms of undead.

HERECITE OF ZEVGAVIZEB

CREATURE 10

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +20; darkvision, *detect alignment* (good only)

Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal

Skills Athletics +20, Intimidation +23, Religion +22, Zevgavizeb Lore +19

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7

Items +1 *striking spiked gauntlet*

Cabal Multiple herecites can form a cabal to gain increased magical abilities and defenses. A cabal consists of two to five herecites. The ritual to form a cabal (or to welcome new herecites into an existing cabal) requires 24 hours of worship, prayer, and vile sacrifice, after which point the herecites become magically bound to one another. All herecites in a cabal gain the cleric domain spells granted by each individual herecite's deity, and each herecite's focus pool increases to 3 Focus Points. As long as the cabal exists, herecites in the cabal gain a +2 status bonus to Perception checks and fast healing 10. These benefits persist as long as the cabal consists of two or more herecites that remain within 1 mile of one another.


Herecite Deity A herecite is associated with one evil god and is always of the same alignment as that god. Whenever it wields its deity's favored weapon, that weapon gains the *unholy* rune. The herecite's creators select

EXTINCTION BY CURSE


two domains from their deity; the herecite can cast the domain spells and the advanced domain spells from those domains as cleric focus spells. The herecite can cast the deity's other granted cleric spells as divine innate spells. Most herecites have 2 Focus Points in their focus pool. The herecite presented here is a herecite of Zevgavizeb.

AC 30; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +20, **Will** +22

HP 200, negative healing; **Weaknesses** good 10

Perverse Prayer  (auditory, divine, evil) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet uses the Sustain a Spell action to sustain a divine spell or the Cast a Spell action to cast a divine spell with a verbal component; **Effect** The herecite warps the caster's prayers into a sacrilegious echo praising the evils of its own deity. The triggering caster must succeed at a DC 29 Will saving throw or their spell is disrupted and their action wasted.


Speed 30 feet

Melee  *unholy spiked gauntlet* +22 (agile, free-hand), **Damage** 2d4+10 piercing plus 1d6 evil


Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **5th** *ravens maw* (page 67); **3rd** *crisis of faith*, *harm* (at will), *meld into stone*; **2nd** *darkness* (x3); **1st** *ray of enfeeblement*; **Constant (5th)** *detect alignment* (good only)


Cleric Focus Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 28; **4th** *enduring might* (Core Rulebook 392), *nature's bounty* (Core Rulebook 394); **1st** *athletic rush* (Core Rulebook 389), *vibrant thorns* (Core Rulebook 399)

Rituals DC 28; *consecrate*

Assault the Soul  (concentrate, divine, evil, necromancy)

Requirements The herecite is in a cabal of three or more members, two of which are within 60 feet and have used Cabal Communion within the last round; **Effect** The herecite casts *bind soul*, *spirit blast*, or *spiritual epidemic* (DC 31). Once a herecite has used this ability (whether or not it was successful), the cabal must wait 24 hours before one of its members can use Assault the Soul again.

Cabal Communion  (auditory, concentrate) With murmurs and chants, the herecite casts its consciousness toward the other members of its cabal. For 1 round, it senses what other members are sensing, knows their thoughts, and knows their exact location.

Curse of Defiled Idols  (curse, divine, evil) Recalling the cruelty of the foul ritual that birthed it, the herecite curses an enemy with a fragment of its blasphemy. The herecite targets one creature within 30 feet, which must attempt a DC 29 Will save. On a failure, the creature is cursed. As long as the creature is cursed, any art object, symbol, or implement of religious significance in the creature's possession—such as a divine spellcasting focus, holy text, fetish, or rendering of a deity—becomes physically corrupted in a way that debases the deity's tenets (a depiction of Shelyn's songbird, for example, might lose its beautiful plumage to reveal a hideous skeletal form beneath). While these items continue to function normally, the cursed creature is stupefied 2 as long as it possesses an object corrupted in this fashion. The creature can cast off its corrupted objects to remove the stupefied condition, but any new religious objects it takes into its possession become similarly corrupted. The curse can be lifted by a *remove curse* spell or by an *atone* ritual. After a creature is targeted with this ability, regardless of whether it was affected, it becomes immune to herecites' Curse of Defiled Idols for 1 day.



SUPPLICATING HERECITES

When conflict fails, it is possible to appease a herecite by offering sacrifices and gifts. The sacrifice of a mortal is almost always sufficient for the herecite to allow supplicants passage into its temple or beyond.

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RESOURCES

Shoonies typically lack the resources to smelt and forge metal tools, weapons, and armor in any major capacity. Instead, they trade with other peoples for these precious resources. Farming, fishing, and hunting tools made of metal are especially vital to the shoony way of life, so shoony clans maintain good relations with any other clans or villages willing to trade with them. In exchange, shoony crops and animals grown for food make for reliable trade offerings, though the exchange rate is such that a shoony clan might acquire only one metal tool in a poor growing season.

Shoony

Shoonies are reclusive humanoids who resemble bipedal dogs with wrinkled faces and bulging eyes. They predominantly dwell in the grasslands and hilly plains of the Isle of Kortos. Shoony societies on Kortos are known for their agricultural prowess, industrious work ethic, and skill with tools to shape their environment.

Shoonies have a rich oral history and claim that their kind flourished all around Kortos in the days when the living god Aroden walked among them. Many shoonyes believe that Aroden himself personally created the shoonyes after he raised the island from the bottom of the sea, and that he had a deep affinity for their people. Whether or not such tales of companionship with the god of humanity are true, shoonyes have drastically declined in numbers since Aroden's death over a hundred years ago. Shoony elders point to strange environmental phenomena around their island home as one cause of their diminishment, and others attribute their decline to the rise of warmongering monsters in the area. In a world where might often makes right, it is hardly a surprise that the peaceful but timid shoonyes are becoming increasingly rare.

SHOONY TILLER

Nearly all shoonyes in a given settlement are farmers, fishers, or foragers. Shoonyes are not expected to fight to protect their settlements; most agree it is better to live in cowardice than to die with that foolish, intangible principle taller races call "honor." Many shoonyes hone their skill with tools rather than arms in the knowledge that whatever is lost to violence can be rebuilt. When cornered, a shoony may put up a fight with whatever they have on hand; the average shoony can wield a simple shovel or pick in melee as well as most humans can wield a sword.

SHOONY TILLER

CREATURE 0

RARE NG SMALL HUMANOID SHOONY

Perception +6; low-light vision

Languages Common, Shoony

Skills Athletics +7, Crafting +1, Diplomacy +4, Farming Lore +3, Society +1, Survival +4

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

Items hoe

AC 15; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6; blunt snout (page 72)

HP 16

Speed 25 feet

Melee **◆** hoe +6, **Damage** 1d4+3 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** dirt clod +4 (range increment 10 feet, thrown), **Damage** 1 nonlethal

Dig Quickly **◆◆** (manipulate) Page 72.

SHOONY MILITIA MEMBER

If shoonyes had their way, war would cease to exist altogether, but they know this isn't likely. Shoonyes' relative wealth of resources and their frailty compared to other humanoids make them a common target of violence and subjugation.



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Because of this, basic combat training is typically mandatory for all shoony village members. Few individuals pursue lifelong careers in service to their settlement's militia, however. The passing down of a sword from one shoony soldier to another is a time-honored tradition, owing to the rarity of weapons in shoony society.

SHOONY MILITIA MEMBER

CREATURE 2

RARE LG SMALL HUMANOID SHOONY

Perception +8; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Shoony

Skills Acrobatics +8 (+9 to Tumble Through spaces of Medium or larger creatures), Athletics +10, Crafting +4, Society +6, Survival +6

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

Items hide armor, javelin (2), longsword

AC 17; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8; blunt snout (page 72)

HP 40

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +10 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+4 slashing

Ranged ♦ javelin +10 (range increment 30 feet, thrown), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

SHOONY HIERARCH

For all their advancement in agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry, shoonyes subscribe to a remarkably antiquated form of leadership; the role of hierarch is normally inherited, passed on to the oldest living child of the village's previous hierarch. In the instance that the village's hierarch does not produce an heir, the village holds a general election. Elected hierarchs hold the term for life and are just as highly regarded as hierarchs raised from birth. When the settlement comes under attack, it is up to the hierarch to decide when to fight and when to flee. In most cases, shoonyes prefer to elect individuals with a preference toward the latter.

SHOONY HIERARCH

CREATURE 4

RARE NG SMALL HUMANOID SHOONY

Perception +12; low-light vision

Languages Common, Shoony

Skills Crafting +11, Diplomacy +12, Shoony Lore +13, Society +13, Survival +11

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

Items longbow (20 arrows and 5 signal arrows), staff

AC 19; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13; blunt snout (page 72)

HP 60

Speed 25 feet; paddler (page 71)

Melee ♦ staff +9 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ longbow +11 (deadly 1d10, range 100 feet, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+2 piercing

Signal Arrow ♦♦ The shoony hierarch sparks and launches an alchemically treated arrow that creates a bright light high in the sky. A signal arrow cannot be used to deal damage. Hierarchs carry a number of different arrows that signal different things; a red signal arrow might mean retreat, whereas a green arrow might be a call to gather in the village commons.



SHOONY CROPS

While many shoony settlements rely on staple crops such as barley and beans, talented shoony farmers rarely settle for such mundane produce. Rumors speak of fiddlehead ferns that increase the speed of one's gait, cabbages that fortify against toxins, and carrots that grant improved vision. Because shoonyes alone know the secret to cultivating such wondrous vegetables, and because such veggies still rot and expire like mundane produce, finding these rare foodstuffs outside the Isle of Kortos is practically impossible.





ROLE WITHIN THE CLUTCH

A stoneliege's power reinforces common xulgath values of dominance and control. This makes stone-binding a mark of prestige, given to the strongest or most clever members of a clutch. The former relish in the destructive potential of their newfound power, while the latter use their abilities to build structures or shape their clutch's home cavern.

Xulgath Stoneliege

Stonelieges are xulgaths magically infused with living earth—the very bones of the world. They are created through a process xulgaths call stone-binding, which can be performed with complex alchemy, powerful psychic magic, or Abyssal rituals. Their scales are like stone slabs, and their bones are as dense as bedrock, so they are among the hardest and longest-lived xulgaths. To stonelieges, earth is as mutable as water, and their innate power to shape the soil and stone beneath their feet makes them integral members of xulgath society (as well as formidable combatants).

XULGATH STONELIEGE

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +14; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +19, Cave Lore +15, Geology Lore +15, Intimidation +18, Survival +18

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +6, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 26; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

HP 135; **Resistances** physical 8

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath warrior (*Bestiary* 336), except DC 24.

Speed 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee ♦ digging bar +18 (fatal d12, forceful, versatile B), **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +21, **Damage** 2d8+9 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +19 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing plus Grab

Primal Innate Spells DC 26; **4th** *shape stone* (×3)

Earthen Blow ♦ (earth, transmutation) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The stoneliege commands nearby earth to attack a foe. The stoneliege makes a claw Strike against a creature that is within 60 feet of the stoneliege and 10 feet of an earthen surface, such as dirt, mud, stone, or sand. The Strike originates from the surface's square and has a reach of 10 feet. On a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.

Earthen Torrent ♦♦ (earth, transmutation) **Frequency** once per minute; **Requirements** The stoneliege is standing on or next to at least 10 cubic feet of dirt, stone, or other earthen material; **Effect** The stoneliege creates a violent wave of roiling earth. Creatures in a 15-foot cone take 7d8 bludgeoning damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save; on a critical failure, creatures are also knocked prone).

Stone Throes ♦ (earth, transmutation) The stoneliege turns their own body into solid stone like a statue and immediately becomes petrified (*Core Rulebook* 621). Any creature grappled or restrained by the stoneliege becomes immobilized; to get free, the creature must damage the statue enough to break it or succeed at a DC 28 Acrobatics check to Escape.

Yaganty

Yaganties are lean, hairy humanoids with lanky torsos, horned heads, and bulbous black eyes. The elongated fingers of one their hands are made of candlestick wax, and their fingertips, which have wicks instead of nails, burn endlessly. In the dead of night, the flickering light of a yaganty's fingertips casts dramatic shadows across their face and highlights their trollish visage.

Yaganty fables follow a common formula. A wayward pedestrian, traveling at night and usually in a forest, follows distant lights with the hope that the lights belong to a fellow wayfarer, only to come face-to-face with a gangly monster. The story ends in one of three ways: the traveler appeals to the yaganty with a gift of gold (the exact sum necessary varies wildly by the telling), the yaganty slays the traveler over some incomprehensible transgression, or, even more inexplicably, the yaganty offers the lost traveler five candles in simple charity so that the light might guide them home.

YAGANTY

CREATURE 10

UNCOMMON LN LARGE FEY

Perception +20; greater darkvision

Languages Common, Infernal, Sylvan

Skills Deception +23, Nature +21, Occultism +18, Stealth +23

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +7

AC 29; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +17, **Will** +21

HP 200; **Weaknesses** cold iron 10; **Resistances** fire 10

Light in the Darkness (aura, light, mental, primal, visual) 60 feet. The flames from a yaganty's fingers shed bright light in a 10-foot radius and are visible even in areas affected by magical darkness, but they do not shed dim light beyond that radius. Any creature within 60 feet in an area of darkness or dim light that sees the yaganty's candle fingers must succeed at a DC 27 Will save or become fascinated by the yaganty for 1 minute or until the yaganty uses a hostile action against the creature, whichever comes first.

Vulnerability to Extinguishing A yaganty who is doused with water or otherwise has their candle fingers extinguished takes 3d6 persistent mental damage, becomes quickened 1, and screams in agony until they reignite their candles (typically by casting *produce flame* and lighting their fingers with an Interact action).

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 20 feet

Melee ✦ candle fingers +20 (fire, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+5 fire

Melee ✦ claw +22 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus Grab

Occult Innate Spells DC 29, attack +23; **5th** *dimension door*; **4th** *darkness*; **3rd** *burning hands* (×2); **Cantrips (5th)** *produce flame*

Fling Wax ✦✦ (fire) The yaganty whips a stream of scalding wax in a 30-foot line. Each glob deals 1d6 persistent fire damage. An affected creature or adjacent ally can remove one glob of wax by spending an Interact action to scrape it off. The yaganty can't use Fling Wax again for 1d4 rounds. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 27 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is splattered with 1d2+1 globs of wax.

Failure The creature is splattered with 1d4+2 globs of wax.

Critical Failure As failure, and the creature is blinded until it removes the globs of wax.



FIENDISH ORIGINS

Scholars believe that yaganties are closely linked to the infernal duke Yan-gant-y-tan, though yaganties are ominously silent on such matters.

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GINJANA MINDKEEPER

Ginjana is a dero who serves the xulgaths in the Swardlands out of convenience. Her true calling is brain experimentation, and she's seized the opportunity to venture to the surface to expand her gruesome research.

Like many deros, Ginjana Mindkeeper is obsessed with discovering a way to overcome her people's allergy to the rays of Golarion's sun. She experimented for years, engaging in the usual kidnapping and vivisection of other residents of the Darklands under the eerie blue glow of the cytillesh fungus growing in dero lairs. One night, while heavily under the influence of cytillesh, Ginjana experienced an epiphany. While examining the brain and nervous system she had carefully extracted from a kidnapped deep gnome, she theorized that the brain was sending invisible messages of some sort along the nervous system. She realized that if she could find the source of these messages in the brain, she might be able to manipulate it to overcome deros' light sensitivity. Feeling on the verge of a breakthrough, she sought brains to experiment on with a new fervor. Keeping her subjects alive as long as possible, Ginjana cut open different parts of their cerebral tissue and poked and prodded until she saw signs of the messages she was looking for—physical and emotional responses. Through considerable trial and error, she managed to narrow these signals down to a message source: a small lump of glandular tissue nestled in a saddle-like niche above the bones separating the nose from the brain. Ginjana learned to stimulate this gland—the pituitary gland—to cause specific results in her victims.

Having determined the source of her invisible brain messages, Ginjana set out to learn how this gland works differently between species. She believes that in some, these messages allow creatures to survive easily under the light of the harsh surface sun. In others—such as deros—the messages cause them to react to the presence of the sun with great pain. Ginjana believes the secret of surviving the Overburn—the dero name for the surface world—lies within this gland. She developed a collection technique that involved shoving a steel rod up the nose of a captive creature to break through the bone and then using a hooked probe to reach up to the gland and extract it. But her collection of glands extracted from various Darklands inhabitants

(including no small number of her fellow deros) failed to endear her to her comrades. As the number of dero discontent with her studies grew, Ginjana realized that to truly expand her understanding, she needed to collect specimens from the surface creatures of the Overburn.

To this end, she set out—barely one step ahead of a dero mob—to explore the world above and expand her studies. She stumbled upon Surkitama's xulgath war bands as they too made their way to the surface in search of the stolen *aeon orbs*. Ginjana had long ago exhausted the possibilities from extracted xulgath brains, so she saw no need to prey upon these travelers. She instead offered her services as a researcher and an expert on the peoples of the surface world—a lie, but one Ginjana hoped she could back up once she'd been able to engage in a few experiments on the Overburn. Most of the xulgaths ignored her, but one—the alchemist Thessekka—accepted Ginjana's offer and allowed the dero to accompany her raiding band to the Swardlands of Kortos.

Today, Ginjana assists Thessekka in keeping the Old Forest Tower secure, while still managing to collect brain matter from a variety of surface creatures for her gruesome experiments. Despite Ginjana's usefulness, it has become clear to Thessekka that the dero has ulterior motives, so Thessekka has been relying on Ginjana less and less.

Yet Ginjana is more treacherous than Thessekka realizes. She has managed to search Thessekka's private chamber a number of times, and has corrupted or poisoned some of the Thessekka's alchemical materials to slow the xulgath's progress in mutating other xulgaths. Ginjana has even climbed the vine-covered shaft up to the *aeon orb* at the tower's top. As Ginjana had no particular wish to destroy the *aeon orb*, she received its *reflection of light* (page 51); the dero keeps this ability hidden from Thessekka.

Ginjana is a wiry, balding dero woman with large, expressive eyebrows. She dresses in tight leather armor crisscrossed with bandoliers containing scalpels, metal hooks, bone saws, and other paraphernalia used in the

dissection and examination of living creatures. She tends to idly fondle these tools, particularly when in conversation, and the echoing clinking of her metal rods and hooks often alerts others to her presence.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

In this adventure, Ginjana operates as a menacing presence behind the scenes. The heroes likely encounter her handiwork several times before they meet her in the Old Forest Tower. Gruesome signs of Ginjana's experiments are likely to confuse the heroes at first, since she represents a vastly different threat than the dangers they know about in the Swardlands. The heroes eventually gain enough insight into the nature of Ginjana's killings to uncover the difference between her work and that of the xulgaths or the night hag Skarja. However, after facing the cruel dero and discovering her personal notes, the heroes are likely to be much better equipped to deal with the night hag tormenting Opper Vandy.

GINJANA MINDKEEPER

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CE SMALL DERO HUMANOID

Female dero anatomist

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +24, Anatomy Lore +24, Athletics +20, Intimidation +19, Medicine +20, Stealth +26, Thievery +24

Str +3, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items expanded healer's tools, +2 *striking heavy crossbow* (18 bolts and 2 bolts coated with shadow essence), +2 *resilient leather armor*, +1 *striking shortsword*

AC 31; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12

HP 195; **Weaknesses** vulnerable to sunlight

Deny Advantage Ginjana isn't flat-footed to hidden, undetected, or flanking creatures of 11th level or lower, or by creatures of 11th level or lower using surprise attack.

Evasion When Ginjana rolls a success on a Reflex save, she gets a critical success instead.

Vulnerable to Sunlight Ginjana takes 20 damage for every hour she's exposed to sunlight.

Sidestep **Trigger** An attack roll to Strike Ginjana fails or critically fails; **Effect** Ginjana redirects the attack to a creature of her choice that is adjacent to her and within reach of the triggering attack. The attacker rerolls the Strike's attack roll against the new target.

Speed 20 feet; light step, mobility

Melee **◆** *shortsword* +24 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+13 piercing

Ranged **◆** *heavy crossbow* +25 (magical, range increment 120 feet, reload 2), **Damage** 2d10+13 piercing plus shadow essence

Divine Innate Spell DC 30, attack +24; **6th** *searing light*

Hampering Blow When Ginjana critically succeeds at an attack roll, the target of the attack is clumsy 1 and flat-footed until the end of Ginjana's next turn.

Light Step When Ginjana Strides or Steps, she ignores difficult terrain.

Mobility Ginjana's movement doesn't trigger reactions when she Strides or Steps to move half her Speed or less.

Shadow Essence (poison); **Saving Throw** DC 29 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 negative damage and 2d6 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d6 negative damage, 2d6 poison damage, and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 3d6 negative damage, 2d6 poison damage; and enfeebled 2 (1 round)

Sneak Attack (precision) Ginjana deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Surprise Attack On the first round of combat, if Ginjana rolls Deception or Stealth for initiative, creatures that haven't acted are flat-footed to her.



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SKARJA

Skarja has been collecting souls on the Isle of Kortos for many years. Recently, the night hag set her sights on corrupting and culling the soul of the Swardlands' most prominent citizen, Opper Vandy.

Skarja arrived in Absalom long ago as a captive on an ancient Azlanti ether ship called the *King Xeros*. She was inadvertently released from her captivity by Pathfinder Society agents and found herself free to roam among the abundance of souls just waiting to be harvested in the City at the Center of the World. However, she didn't want to attract the Pathfinders' attention, so she elected to haunt the city's outskirts.

Night hags value souls, which they hoard as keepsakes or trade in extraplanar markets. Over the years, Skarja has found collecting souls of already-corrupt mortals too easy to be truly satisfying. She instead prefers to slowly corrupt honorable mortals herself; there are secret soul-markets where only souls of corrupted mortals are traded, and the debased souls of once-virtuous mortals command the highest prices. By trading in this market, Skarja has unlocked secrets that most other night hags don't know, such as the ability to maintain her *heartstone* at a distance. Yet for all her care, Skarja has had to operate further and further from Absalom. She recently came to the Swardlands and found a land rife with opportunity.

Opper Vandy is Skarja's current target because he is not only virtuous, but beloved by his community. She learned of Vandy's arrangement with Rogor Swinten while claiming the soul of a wicked farmer named Currew, and the hag saw this crack in Vandy's integrity as a valuable opportunity. The thought of corrupting a pillar of the community delights her, and Skarja is in no hurry to see this delectable corruption completed. She torments Vandy with foreknowledge of deaths in the Swardlands, and thereafter reaps a chaotic or evil soul she's carefully primed just for that purpose. While Vandy's guilt and shame grow, Skarja's collection of souls grows as well. Soon, she hopes, Vandy will perform some great, desperate act of wickedness, and the upright mortician's soul will be hers at last.

Like all hags, Skarja appears as a twisted crone with curving horns and sharp fangs, though Skarja also has blue-black skin covered with sharp, thorny protrusions and thick legs that end with elephantine feet.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Skarja has survived this long because she is careful and cautious. She learns about the heroes' arrival early on, and she is canny enough to realize that they might pose a threat. She plans to keep entirely out of the heroes' sight, hoping they never discover her existence. Skarja doesn't appear to Vandy while the heroes are in Kerrick, but to keep close to Vandy, both spiritually and physically, Skarja keeps her *heartstone* hidden on his property. She doesn't consider it dangerous to leave it there, as she knows the mortician's habits well enough to know he won't discover it.

Skarja isn't aware of how many clues she left while collecting souls throughout the Swardlands. The heroes might pick up on these clues and put the pieces together when they recover Ginjana's notes. If the heroes collect enough evidence to convince Vandy to confide in them, he suggests they search his home. Skarja isn't expecting the heroes to discover her hidden *heartstone*, either. If they claim it, she has no choice to but to eliminate them, lest all her hard work to claim Vandy's soul go to waste.

SKARJA

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM FIEND HAG HUMANOID

Female night hag corruptor

Perception +25; darkvision; *detect alignment*, *detect magic*

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Infernal

Skills Arcana +23, Deception +26, Diplomacy +24, Intimidation +24, Occultism +25, Religion +25

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Items *Skarja's heartstone* (page 89)

Coven Skarja adds *dominate*, *nightmare*, *scrying*, and *spellwrack* to her coven's spells.

Nightmare Rider When Skarja rides a nightmare, the nightmare also gains her status bonus to saves against magic, and both the hag and rider benefit when Skarja uses her *heartstone's ethereal jaunt* innate spell.

AC 34; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +22, **Will** +23, +2 status to all saves vs. magic, -2 to all saves if Skarja doesn't have her *heartstone*

HP 260; **Immunities** sleep; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15; **Resistances** mental 15

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +26 (magical), **Damage** 3d8+9 piercing plus 1d10 evil and Abyssal plague

Melee ♦ claw +26 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d10+9 slashing plus 1d10 evil

Occult Innate Spells DC 33, attack +25; **9th** *bind soul* (at will; from *heartstone*), *ethereal jaunt* (at will; from *heartstone*); **8th** *dream council*; **6th** *shadow blast* (×2, from *heartstone*), *spirit blast* (from *heartstone*); **5th** *nightmare*; **4th** *dream message* (at will), *magic missile* (at will); **2nd** *invisibility* (at will); **1st** *ray of enfeeblement* (at will), *sleep* (at will); **Constant (3rd)** *detect magic*; **(2nd)** *detect alignment* (all alignments simultaneously)

Abyssal Plague (disease) A creature can't recover from the drained condition until Abyssal plague is cured; **Saving Throw** DC 33 Fortitude; **Stage 1** drained 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** drained increases by 2 (1 day)

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) Skarja can take on the appearance of any Medium female humanoid. This doesn't change her Speed or her attack or damage bonuses with her Strikes, but might change the damage type her Strikes deal (typically to bludgeoning).

Dream Haunting (enchantment, occult, mental) If Skarja is ethereal and hovering over a sleeping chaotic or evil creature, she can ride the victim's back until dawn. The creature endures tormenting dreams as Skarja casts *nightmare* on it, and is exposed to Abyssal plague. Any drained condition caused by dream haunting is cumulative. Only an ethereal being can confront the night hag and stop her dream haunting.

Spell Ambush A creature flat-footed to the night hag takes a -2 circumstance penalty to checks and DCs to defend against her spells.

SKARJA'S HEARTSTONE

ITEM 13

UNCOMMON ABJURATION INVESTED OCCULT

Price 2,500 gp (1,000 gp when non-magical)

Usage worn; **Bulk** -

This pale gemstone grants its wearer a +2 item bonus to saving throws and the ability to discern a target's alignment (as *detect alignment*, but can detect chaotic, evil, good, and lawful auras simultaneously) at will by peering through the gemstone.

Like all hag *heartstones*, this gemstone is powered by Skarja's spirit. Skarja does not need to wear her *heartstone* to benefit from its powers, but she cannot use them if she hasn't touched her *heartstone* in the past 7 days. If Skarja's *heartstone* is separated from her for more

than 7 days (or if she's been dead for 7 days), it becomes a non-magical gemstone. Skarja's *heartstone* allows her to use additional occult innate spells: *ethereal jaunt* (9th level) and *bind soul* at will, *shadow blast* (6th level) twice per day, and *spirit blast* once per day.

Activate ♦ command; **Requirements** You must be touching the heartstone; **Effect** The heartstone attempts to counteract one disease affecting you (counteract level 7, counteract modifier +23).

Craft Requirements You must be a night hag.



THESEKKA

As a leader in the xulgath incursion of the surface of the Isle of Kortos, Thessekka—a xulgath alchemist with the powers of a stoneliège and more—has risen swiftly through the ranks of her Darklands kin, although her hunger for domination is far from sated.

Thessekka has hungered from the moment of her birth: hungered for food, hungered for companionship, and hungered for power. As she grew, she began to learn stone-binding, with an eye toward earning her place as a stoneliège, a rare and prestigious position. Such was her desire for power, however, that moments after she completed the ritual to become a stoneliège, she threatened the alchemist who performed the ritual and demanded he teach her all he knew of mixing chemicals and warping flesh. Thessekka proved an eager and intelligent student, and once she had exhausted the alchemist's knowledge, she killed and ate him. But this, too, failed to fill the ravenous void within her. When rumors of an invasion of the sun-blighted surface rippled among xulgath tribes, Thessekka knew she had found a mission that might finally satisfy her.

Thessekka bullied a few minions into joining this invasion force alongside her, but she lacked the influence of a true leader. Instead she was given the position of a hardscale, a subsidiary position below Surkitama, a leader in her clutch. Surkitama's force was assigned to a surface region called the Swardlands, where three aeon towers stood that held *aeon orbs* stolen from the xulgaths five millennia ago. Surkitama's force was to secure these towers from uplander interference before finding a way to crack the stolen orbs to bring destruction to the surface world. Always looking for opportunities to seize power, Thessekka used the journey to gather misfits to her side, including the dero Ginjana Mindkeeper and the roper Ro'oosk. She also won the trust of a duergar explorer, eyeing his useful magical ring, only to kill him and take the ring for herself.

Surkitama's force moved swiftly upon reaching the Swardlands, locating and securing the three aeon towers. By this time, Thessekka had risen in prominence enough to command one of the tower garrisons. She quickly established a hold over her assigned garrison, the Wellspring Tower, and set up an alchemist laboratory within it. Without much oversight from Surkitama, who had underestimated

the difficulty of travel among the towers and was preoccupied with trying (and failing) to conquer the Swardlands, Thessekka devised a way to siphon the *aeon orb's* energy even as Surkitama's leadership began to falter. Thessekka used her *ring of stoneshifting* to secretly journey between the towers and foment rebellion in the discontented clutches under Surkitama's command.

When golems at the Liferoot Stone decimated the xulgath garrison there, Thessekka knew her time to strike was at hand. Traveling via the *ring of stoneshifting*, she rallied her disgruntled allies to move against Surkitama's loyalists. Able to appear and disappear in an instant, she prevented the xulgath leader from bringing the full force of his power to bear against her. And when the shadowy form of a dero slipped unseen into Surkitama's personal chambers, Surkitama became just another of Ginjana's experiments, and Thessekka stepped into the power vacuum to lead all the xulgaths in the Swardlands. By the time her xulgath superiors discovered her coup, Thessekka's efforts to siphon the Wellspring Tower *aeon orb* were proving successful, so she was given official command of the Swardland forces.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Thessekka is the true mastermind behind the xulgaths in the Swardlands. Once she has drained away the energy of all the *aeon orbs* and met her obligations to her xulgath masters, she plans to carve out her own surface world kingdom. She sees the soft humanoids who currently inhabit the Swardlands as mere cattle for her consumption, and she plans to subjugate them as the bountiful land that has sustained them dies.

With her *ring of stoneshifting*, Thessekka can move freely between the three aeon towers and directly oversee operations. At first, she dismisses the heroes as too feeble and too few in number to pose a real threat, and she keeps her focus on other towers. By the time the heroes prove themselves a true threat by clearing the xulgaths out of two aeon towers, Thessekka

EXTINCTION BY CURSE

LIFE'S LONG SHADOWS

Chapter 1:
Home on the
Grange

Chapter 2:
The Wellspring
Tower

Chapter 3:
The Liferoot
Stone

Chapter 4:
The Old Forest
Tower

Swordlands
Gazetteer

Zevgavizeb

realizes that dismissing them was a mistake. She confronts them at the final tower, where she plans to end their threat and devour their charred corpses.

THESEKKA CREATURE 14

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Female xulgath commander
Perception +26; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet
Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Undercommon
Skills Arcana +24, Athletics +28, Crafting +28 (+30 to Craft alchemical items), Intimidation +23, Medicine +24, Nature +22, Survival +22
Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1
Items *greater alchemist goggles*, expert alchemist's tools, formula book, infused reagents (8), *ring of stoneshifting*
Infused Items Thessekka carries the following infused items: 1 greater acid flask, 2 greater alchemist's fires, 1 moderate bravo's brew, 2 greater frost vials, 1 greater quicksilver mutagen, 1 greater tanglefoot bag. These items last for 24 hours, or until the next time Thessekka makes her daily preparations.

AC 35; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +19, **Will** +22

HP 255; **Resistances** physical 14

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 34 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 2, and on a critical failure, the creature is also slowed 1 for as long as it is sickened. While within range of Thessekka's stench, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgath's stench for 1 minute.

Speed 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +28, **Damage** 3d8+12 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +28 (agile), **Damage** 3d6+12 slashing plus Grab

Ranged ♦ alchemical bomb +27 (range increment 30 feet, splash), **Damage** varies by bomb

Primal Innate Spells DC 34; 4th *shape stone*

Alchemical Formulas (14th) greater acid flask, greater alchemist's fire, greater antidote, moderate bravo's brew, greater comprehension elixir, greater frost vial, greater quicksilver mutagen, stone fist elixir, greater tanglefoot bag

Earthen Blow ♦ As xulgath stoneliege (page 84).

Earthen Torrent ♦♦ As xulgath stoneliege (page 84), but 10d10 bludgeoning damage and DC 34.

Expanded Splash Thessekka's bombs with the splash trait deal 4 additional splash damage and deal splash damage to all creatures within 10 feet.

Quick Alchemy ♦ **Cost** 1 batch of infused reagents; **Effect** Thessekka creates a single alchemical item from her formula book (see Alchemical Formulas). This item has the infused trait, but it remains potent only until the end of her next turn.

Quick Bomber ♦ Thessekka Interacts to draw a bomb, then Strikes with it.

Stone Throes ♦ As xulgath stoneliege (page 84), but DC 36. The only action Thessekka can take while petrified is to use Stone Throes again to end the effect.



EXTINCTION CURSE

Next Month

SIEGE OF THE DINOSAURS

by Kate Baker

Seeking new audiences in a remote town, the heroes' circus is caught behind a blockade of dinosaur-riding xulgaths. Why have these enemies come to Willowside, and can they be stopped before the town is destroyed?

DENZENS OF GLUTTONDARK

by Amber Stewart

Explore the cursed jungles, blood-soaked swamps, and radioactive cavern-worlds of Zevgavizeb's Abyssal realm.

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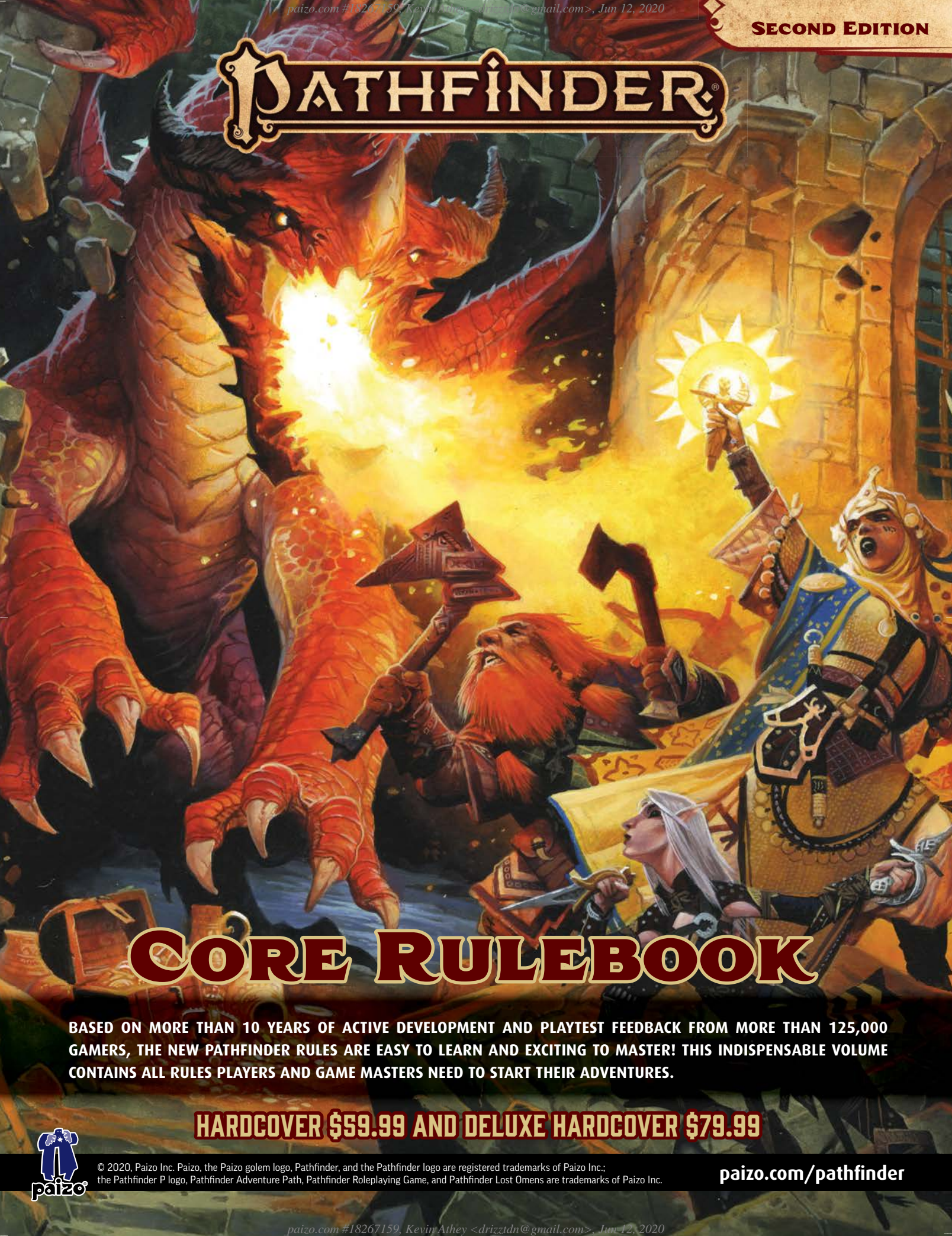
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MASTER OF THE SKIES

TRAITS: AERIAL, AGILE, MAGICAL

CHECKS: ACROBATICS +18, PERFORMANCE +18

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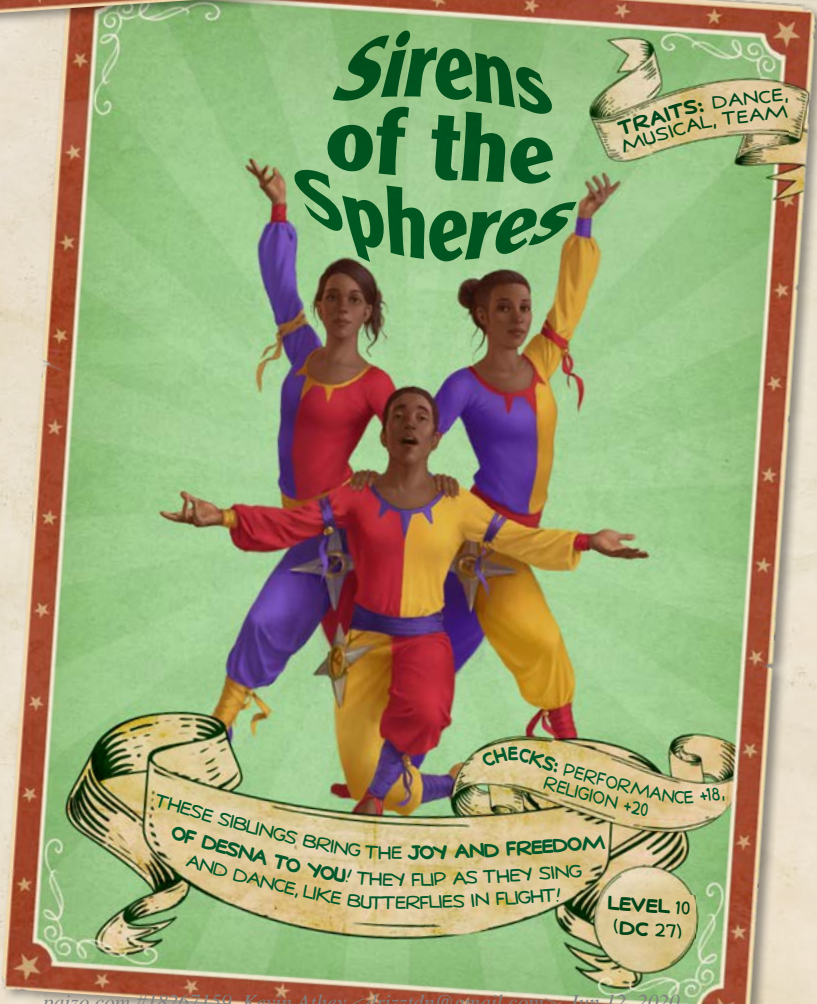
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TRAITS: ANIMAL, MAGICAL

CHECKS: DECEPTION +18, NATURE +18

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LEVEL 10 (DC 27)



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LEVEL 10 (DC 27)

DEATH STALKS THE FARMS AND FIELDS

Strange forces assail the Swardlands, breadbasket to the city of Absalom. A malevolent spirit haunts the region's leader, an unseen murderer mutilates her victims, and malicious forces occupy the once-sacred aeon towers. The heroes must stop the killings, repel subterranean invaders, and stun the people of the Swardlands with circus shows the likes of which they've never seen! The Extinction Curse Adventure Path continues with "Life's Long Shadows," an adventure for 9th- to 11th-level characters.



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