



## CHAPTER 2: On the Hunt

As any explorer of the Darklands can tell you, the farther you descend, the wilder and stranger things become. As Belcorra dug the Abomination Vaults deeper, she found an extensive system of caverns. Unlike the self-contained Farm level, these caverns were truly wild. At first, she fought against the fierce denizens and tried to close off the passages to deeper places, but the task was futile. She dubbed the place the Hunting Grounds and left it mostly alone, save for building alliances with the communities there. Belcorra established only a few strongholds in the area, including a lodge, a vault, and the entrance to the Gate of Nhimbaloth, the subterranean temple holding the Empty Vault.

### The Urdefhan Cult

Urdefhans are vampire-like humanoids who largely pursue lives of violence and slaughter. As brutal killers obsessed with ending life and existence itself, the

urdefhans who regularly emerged from their caves to raid the caverns and lake of the Hunting Grounds were precisely the kind of soldiers Belcorra needed for her campaign. She made a calculated, overwhelming attack to awe the urdefhans, and when the sorcerer called for a parley, the urdefhan war champion listened. Belcorra swore the urdefhans would be the vanguard of her eventual assault on the surface and gave the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* to the war champion as a token of her favor until then. Generations passed, and the war champions passed down the *fulcrum lens* as their symbol of leadership.

### Drow Allegiance

With the deep gnomes cowed and the urdefhans awed by her power, Belcorra next turned to the drow of the Hunting Grounds. From their secure stronghold of Yldaris, the drow ranged through the caverns like

deadly apparitions, retreating in the face of significant danger. Belcorra knew that she must trap the drow into an alliance, so she captured and imprisoned more and more of their hunters until Yldaris's leader agreed to meet with her. She traded the captives for a promise that the drow would keep the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* safe and provide aid in her attack on the surface.

## Belcorra's Return

When Belcorra arose as a ghost, she first visited the Hunting Grounds. She checked on her treasure vault to ensure its most important contents remained secure and then sent the vault's graveknight guardian to retrieve the valuable books she'd left on an upper level when she'd died. She next visited the urdefhans, who still told vague legends of the quasi-mythical sorcerer. Their new war champion, Khurfel, carried the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* and agreed to follow their Ghost Queen to raze the surface world. The urdefhans have since stepped up their summoning of daemon allies, preparing for the pending assault.

Belcorra's visit to the drow of Yldaris went less well. Quara Orshendiel, the granddaughter of the leader from whom Belcorra extracted a promise to serve, had little idea who Belcorra was. Belcorra nevertheless accepted Quara's promise to serve.

## Hunting Grounds Features

The numerous interconnecting caverns in the Hunting Grounds are mostly dark, but patches of glowing fungus illuminates enough areas to provide a sense of the caverns' great size. Ceiling height varies widely: large caverns are 40 feet high, smaller caverns are 20 feet high, and the several areas of stone worked for humanoid habitation—such as Yldaris, the calignis' lodge, and the Gate of Nhimbaloth—are 12 feet high. Doors in most areas are made of stone or sturdy fungal wood, with entrances to inhabited areas are often being thicker or otherwise reinforced for defense.

The map of the Hunting Grounds level appears on page 26.

### B1. GUARDED INTERSECTION

TRIVIAL 9

The passage upward to the Farm level is reasonably secure, but the cautious drow keep a guard here regardless.

**Creatures:** A surly drow hunter named Rikizlia sits here on a stool, carving a bit of fungus wood with a small carving knife. If the heroes stroll down without escort, she's surprised and speeds toward area **B2** for help. If other drow accompany the heroes, she watches them with open curiosity but doesn't stop her whittling.

#### RIKIZLIA

CREATURE 7

Female drow hunter (page 82)

**Initiative** Perception +16

### B2. CARAVAN STAGING

MODERATE 9

Several bags, barrels, and crates line the walls between this cavern's three exits.

Caravans going between Yldaris and Lozardyn load and unload in this cave. It isn't always busy, as the caravans are on an erratic schedule, but usually at least a few drow linger here. The passage east leads to a network of Darklands caverns beyond the scope of this adventure.

## CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The Hunting Grounds contains aggressive urdefhans, insular drow, and some of the most powerful monsters the heroes face in this Adventure Path. It's key for the heroes to learn about the *fulcrum lenses*, such as from the drow Quara.

This chapter provides substantial treasure, by design, as there's very little treasure on the level below.

**Environmental Cues:** mold, echoing roars, patches of slick slime, rough stone walls, strange tracks

## CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

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

- +1 repeating hand crossbow (7; page 73)
- +1 resilient full plate
- +1 shauth blade (4; page 73)
- +1 striking corrosive longsword
- +1 striking kukri
- +1 striking repeating hand crossbow
- +1 striking rhoka sword (page 73)
- +1 striking shauth lash (9; page 73)
- +2 armor potency rune
- +2 resilient chain shirt
- +2 striking battle axe
- +2 striking dagger
- +2 striking mace
- boots of elvenkind (2)
- cloak of elvenkind (2)
- Emerald Fulcrum Lens (page 76)
- Fulcrum Lattice (page 76)
- greater healer's gloves
- greater pendant of the occult
- iron medallion
- lethargy poison
- moderate necrotic bomb (page 74)
- mummified bat
- Ochre Fulcrum Lens (page 76)
- oil of keen edges
- ring of lies
- scroll of spirit blast
- standard-grade adamantine warhammer
- stupor poison (3; page 74)
- swan boat feather token
- wand of continuation (stoneskin)
- wand of manifold missiles (1st level)

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# LEVEL 9: HUNTING GROUNDS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET





**Creatures:** When the heroes first arrive, six drow are unloading cargo from a large, harnessed pack lizard. If the heroes are under guard, or have otherwise gained the trust of Yldaris, the drow don't confront or question them; otherwise, they mobilize a quick defense. A warden takes 2 Interact actions to unhitch a riding lizard to fight alongside it. When combat starts, one of the hunters races to area **B3** to rally the creatures there to join the attack. Drow who are badly outnumbered or injured flee into the caverns to the east and don't return for a few days.

**DROW HUNTERS (2)** **CREATURE 7**

Page 82  
**Initiative** Perception +16

**DROW WARDENS (4)** **CREATURE 4**

Page 82  
**Initiative** Perception +11

**RIDING LIZARD (2)** **CREATURE 5**

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)  
**Initiative** Perception +11

**Treasure:** These trade goods include spices, dried fungus, and cloth that are all uncommon on the surface. The 18 Bulk of goods is worth 100 gp in total.

**B3. STABLE** **MODERATE 9**

This cavern contains pens for half a dozen giant lizards. A jumbled pile of harnesses sits near the corrals.

**Creatures:** Three drow wardens are usually here, guarding and feeding Yldaris's riding lizards. The lizards can climb out of the pens along the walls, but they don't do so unless directed to fight.

**DROW WARDENS (3)** **CREATURE 4**

Page 82  
**Initiative** Perception +11

**RIDING LIZARDS (6)** **CREATURE 5**

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)  
**Initiative** Perception +11

**B4. SECRET TUNNEL**

This tunnel appears to come to a rocky end in the south, but this ersatz collapse hides a secret door the Yldaris hunters use to come and go from the caverns. Characters who Search this dead end can discover the secret door with a successful DC 26 Perception check. Any character who is Detecting Magic or is an expert

in Survival automatically finds it, as the secret door is magical in nature and there are several subtle tracks leading right to it.

The rubble swings aside when an invisible magical wall panel is touched by someone speaking any words in Elven. Magic reinforces the secret door, so it's impossible to break through.

**B5. YLDARIS ENTRY** **TRIVIAL 9**

Iron sheets cover the outside of the western door, with a slot at drow eye level covered by a sliding plate on the inside. The door has no keyhole or handle and is reinforced by heavy bars. Anyone seeking entrance must either burst through the door (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60) or supply the secret knock known to all of the outpost's drow (and which occasionally changes).

The door to the east, leading into Yldaris, uses the same construction, but it's normally open and unbarred.

**Creature:** A drow warden named Taklitur stands guard inside the door, ready to admit anyone who gives the proper knock. If the warden hears the wrong knock, he first ignores it, thinking another drow is just misremembering. If the beats persist, or if he realizes someone is trying to break down the door, he opens the slot to take a shot at anyone on the other side, shuts it, and raises the alarm.

**TAKLITUR** **CREATURE 5**

Male drow warden (page 82)  
**Initiative** Perception +11

**B6. WATCH CHAMBER** **MODERATE 9**

A table and chairs sit in the northeast corner of this large room. The walls feature words carved in a flowing script underscored with hash marks. Of the four doors leading out of this chamber, the door leading west looks sturdier than the others.

The words on the wall are drow aphorisms in Elven about staying alert and protecting one's home. The hash marks record times the drow have repelled invaders and lived up to these sayings.

**Creatures:** When the heroes first arrive, a drow shootist named Yrorix and a pair of hunters are playing cards with a drow version of a harrow fortune-telling deck. In the event of an assault, they knock on the three doors leading deeper into Yldaris to alert more defenders, but they make their stand here.

If the heroes are allies of Yldaris, the drow cheerfully invite the heroes into their game. The stakes aren't high, and the drow cheat relentlessly, but it might be an enjoyable way for the heroes to pass the time.

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If the heroes rescued the drow rogue Falxi Orshendiel in *Hands of the Devil*, he's also here gambling. Falxi is well-regarded because he's a distant cousin of Yldaris's leader, but he's fundamentally lazy. He greets the heroes warmly and insists to his companions that they can be trusted.

## YRORIX

## CREATURE 8

Male drow shootist (page 83)

**Initiative** Perception +16

## DROW HUNTERS (2)

## CREATURE 7

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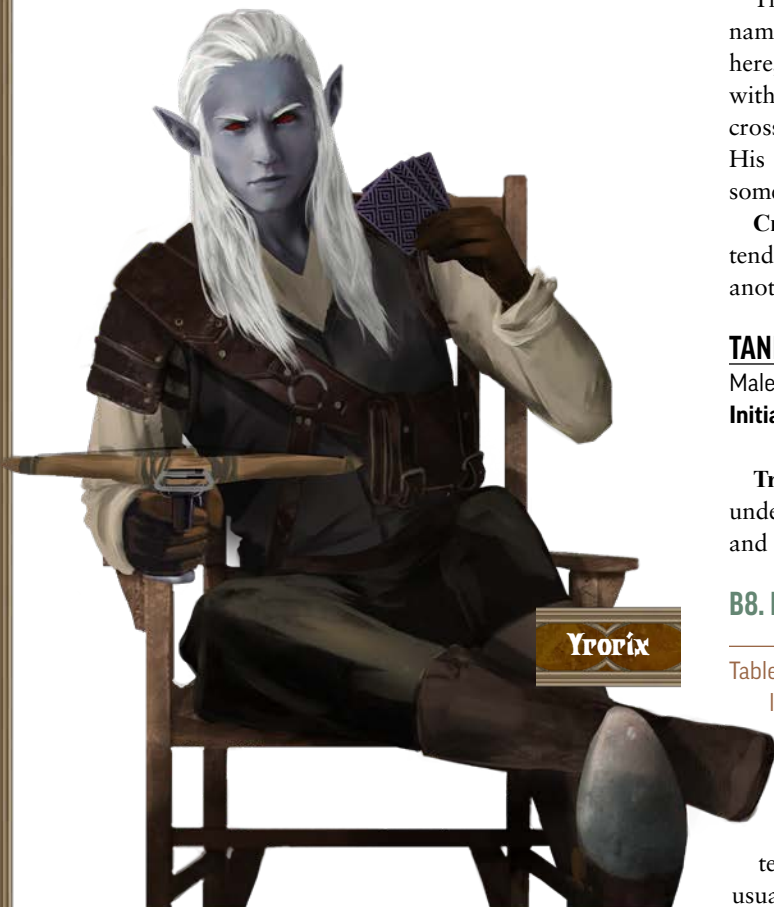
**Initiative** Perception +16

## FALXI ORSHENDIEL

## CREATURE 2

Male drow rogue (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 137)

**Initiative** Perception +6



**A Peaceful Meeting:** If any drow led the heroes to meet with Quara, they stop here and ask the heroes to leave their weapons for the duration of the meeting. Falxi (or, in his absence, Yrorix) promises to watch over their gear personally. As bringing armed strangers before their leader is expressly forbidden, the drow don't negotiate on this point. If the heroes balk, the drow lead them back out of Yldaris and invite them to return if they change their minds.

**Treasure:** The deck of harrow cards is well worn but features unusual drow iconography. It's worth 15 gp. Stacks of wagers worth 24 sp sit around the table.

## B7. TANIETH'S ABODE

## TRIVIAL 9

This small room has a bed and table next to it. A ceramic mug and a modified hand crossbow sit next to the bed.

This is the sleeping quarters for a solitary shootist named Tanieth. Tanieth is a loner; when he isn't resting here, tinkering with his repeating hand crossbow with parts from another, inoperable repeating hand crossbow, he's ranging the Hunting Grounds alone. His good looks and remote demeanor make him something of a heartthrob among some Yldaris drow.

**Creatures:** Tanieth doesn't like being disturbed. He tends to shoot first and ask questions later, even if it's another drow who bothers him.

## TANIETH

## CREATURE 8

Male drow shootist (page 83)

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Treasure:** Tanieth has hidden several treasures under his mattress, including a small sack with 50 gp and three opals worth 100 gp each.

## B8. HUNTERS' MESS

Tables, chairs, dirty dishes, empty bottles, and utensils litter this chamber. It's evident that creatures eat their meals here but very rarely clean up afterwards.

Yldaris's hunters are skilled at their craft and keep their equipment in good working order, but tend to be slob in their day-to-day living. They usually avoid this place unless they're eating.

## B9. HUNTERS' QUARTERS

## LOW 9

The five bunk beds in this area are a mess of blankets and furs. A trio of locker boxes is stacked at the foot of each bunk.



While not in the total disarray of the adjacent mess hall, this room is remarkably untidy. The beds are unassigned; hunters simply grab a bunk when they can. Unlike the beds, each padlocked locker box belongs to a specific hunter. Each padlock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to unlock or a single DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open. Most hunters carry their keys on their person.

**Creatures:** At least three hunters are usually resting here. They're quick to rouse and confront danger.

**DROW HUNTERS (3) CREATURE 7**

Page 82

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Treasure:** Each locked box has some personal items, 2d10 gp, and 4d10 sp. One contains a *mummified bat*.

**B10. TARGET PRACTICE LOW 9**

A cluster of stools takes up one corner of this room, but most of it is empty space, with several reed-stuffed dummies dangling from the ceiling on the south wall. The dummies are full of holes, a few bolts still lodged in them.

The shootists engage in close-range target practice here. A secret door conceals a storage closet to the west; a hero who Searches the room and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check locates it. One of the hooks for hanging dummies, when pulled, causes the door to slide open. The closet holds discarded dummies and some atrocious fungus wine.

**Creatures:** There are typically a pair of shootists practicing here. Fiercely competitive, they ignore any sounds outside this room, as they're so focused.

**DROW SHOOTISTS (2) CREATURE 8**

Page 83

**Initiative** Perception +16

**B11. SHOOTISTS' QUARTERS LOW 9**

Four bunk beds are crammed into this room. In front of each sits a trio of sturdy, padlocked boxes.

The shootists tend to be much more orderly than the hunters, but this is still a communal space. Shootists come and go when they aren't doing other tasks in and outside of Yldaris and sleep where they'd like. The lock boxes are similar to those in area B9.

**Creatures:** There are typically a pair of shootists resting here at any given time. They're quick to respond to any alarm or sounds of trouble.

**DROW SHOOTISTS (2) CREATURE 8**

Page 83

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Treasure:** Each locked box has personal items, 3d10 gp, and 5d10 sp. One contains an *oil of keen edges*.

**B12. WARDEN BARRACKS TRIVIAL 9**

This room contains a pair of bunks and a low table.

Like the hunters and the shootists, drow wardens dwell in these barracks. The more regimented wardens insist on assigned bunks, but don't have lock boxes and thus keep their valuables with them and their personal items tucked inside their blankets.

**Creatures:** There is typically at least one warden resting in each room. When any are in danger, they call out for the others, who quickly come out of their rooms. Encountering these wardens together constitutes a Trivial challenge for 9th level characters (if Salaisa Malthulas is present in area B14, she joins the fight, making this a severe challenge).

**DROW WARDENS (5) CREATURE 5**

Page 82

**Initiative** Perception +11

**B13. OVERFLOW LODGING**

This room contains a pair of bunks, each with a carefully folded bedroll atop the mattress. At the foot of each sits a pair of strongboxes with padlocks and keys.

As with any border outpost, Yldaris's population waxes and wanes with caravans coming and going at any given time. These rooms are set aside for visitors, and Quara offers them to the heroes. The empty locker boxes and padlocks are like those in area B9.

**B14. MASTER WARDEN'S QUARTERS MODERATE 9**

Master Warden Salaisa Malthulas keeps the door to her bedroom locked and carries the only key. It requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to unlock or a single DC 33 Athletics check to Force Open.

This room is tidy and clean. It contains a bed, a small desk, and a large trunk.

Yldaris drow all look to Salaisa for leadership when Quara isn't around. If something happens to Quara, Salaisa becomes Yldaris's next leader.





The desk contains extensive notes about the wardens of Yldaris: their names, schedules, personal quirks, and other evidence that Salaisa is watching them all very closely. The trunk contains only personal items.

**Creatures:** Salaisa is continuously on the move, and rarely uses her room for anything but sleep. The heroes might encounter Salaisa anywhere in or near Yldaris. She's not nearly as friendly with the heroes as Quara is, and she's concerned that having unknown surface dwellers in Yldaris puts the whole community at risk.



Salaisa Malthulas

In a fight, Salaisa quickly seeks aid from any nearby drow. She's reluctant to let opponents flee because she doesn't want to fight them again later. She's utterly loyal to Yldaris, and she fights to the death to protect it.

## SALAIISA MALTHULAS CREATURE 11

UNIQUE N MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Female drow head warden (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

**Perception** +22; darkvision

**Languages** Elven, Undercommon

**Skills** Acrobatics +21, Athletics +22, Intimidation +20, Stealth +21, Survival +20

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

**Items** breastplate, hand crossbow (10 bolts), +1 striking corrosive longsword, stupor poison (3; page 74)

**Light Blindness**

**AC** 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +21, **Will** +22; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

**HP** 200; **Immunities** sleep

**Attack of Opportunity** ↻

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ✦ longsword +24 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus 1d6 acid

**Ranged** ✦ hand crossbow +22, **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus stupor poison

**Divine Innate Spells** DC 28; **2nd** darkness (at will), faerie fire (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** dancing lights

**Attack Now!** ✦ Salaisa shouts, and a drow ally within 30 feet that can see or hear Salaisa makes a melee or ranged Strike as a reaction.

**Storm of Blades** ✦✦ Salaisa Strides up to her Speed. She can make up to three longsword Strikes at any point during this movement, each against a different target within reach. These attacks count toward her multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after she makes all of her attacks. If she moves half her speed or less during Storm of Blades, that movement doesn't trigger reactions.

**Treasure:** Salaisa's desk contains suspicious items confiscated from visitors, including a ruby idol of the evil god Mazmezz worth 40 gp.

## B15. COMMON AREA

LOW 9

This large room contains several tables with benches and a few padded chairs. Heads of strange creatures hang stuffed and mounted on the walls.

The heads are trophies of creatures slain in the Hunting Grounds. They include an albino basilisk, a chuul, an ether spider, and a seugathi (see *Hands of the Devil*).



The secret door on the south wall is one-way; it doesn't open from this side and can't be detected here.

**Creatures:** There are 2d4 wardens here at any time, eating meals or swapping stories.

**DROW WARDENS (2D4) CREATURE 5**

Page 82  
Initiative Perception +11

**B16. KITCHEN TRIVIAL 9**

Several fire pits and small ovens with flues bored into the rock walls stand about this chamber. Dishes and utensils are stacked on a central table. A basin of water stands in one corner, a soapy film across the top. Stacks of barrels and crates totter precariously against the south wall.

As a rough and tumble outpost, Yldaris has no dedicated cooking staff. Drow prepare their own food or talk others into cooking for them (a common penalty for losing at gambling or an athletic contest).

**Creatures:** There are typically 1d4 wardens preparing meals here, rushing through the food preparation.

**DROW WARDENS (1D4) CREATURE 4**

Page 82  
Initiative Perception +11

**B17. GREAT CHAMBER MODERATE 9**

This massive chamber has a high, vaulted ceiling. At its center stands a small forge, anvil, and worktable with various tools. A few benches line the walls.

This massive chamber serves double duty as the outpost's workroom and meeting hall. The drow sometimes move tables here for banquets or meetings.

**Creatures:** Quara meets with the heroes here.

**QUARA ORSHENDIEL CREATURE 11**

Page 90  
Initiative Perception +21

**Treasure:** A repeating crossbow magazine (page 73) and a superb repair kit are on the worktable.

**Befriending the Drow**

If the heroes dealt peacefully with the drow and earned an audience with Quara, wary drow wardens escort them here and ask them to wait for Quara to arrive. Various staff bring in chairs from the common area (area B15) and food and fungus wine from the kitchen (area B16). The wardens are curious and talkative, as

they have little experience with surface-dwellers, but they diplomatically avoid conversation that would color their questions as an interrogation—that's Quara's prerogative. If the heroes are reticent or rude, the drow simply watch over them in silence. If the heroes unwisely attack, the wardens call for backup.

Before long, Quara arrives to greet the heroes, radiating calm command and curiosity. She is joined by the stern-looking Salaisa Malthulas, commander of the outpost's wardens, and the strange twin drow cavern seers, Bhazrade and Klathor, who remain quietly at a distance. Quara does the talking.

"You have the look of surface dwellers. I've never met any of your kind, but I've seen artwork. Strange, you are not nearly as ugly as our art makes you out to be. I am Quara Orshendiel, leader of this outpost. Let's figure out whether or not we can help one another."

If the heroes rescued Falxi, Quara adds her thanks for rescuing her cousin from "one of the scrapes he keeps getting himself into."

Quara is sincere in her words and her goals. The seers foretold that surface dwellers would come as potential allies, and Quara wants to believe it.

Quara invites the heroes to tell their story. She sympathizes with hardships, laughs at humorous parts, and asks questions when she doesn't understand something. If the heroes mention the *fulcrum lenses* or show her one, she takes an obvious interest. Quara overlooks petty slights or rudeness, but she chastises any overt aggression calmly—once. Her patience is not infinite, and overly obnoxious heroes are asked to leave Yldaris and not return.

At the end of the conversation, Quara says, "You've given me some things to think about. Thank you." She then invites the heroes to stay in the overflow lodging (area B13) until she makes up her mind. Quara spends a few hours thinking, then gambles on an alliance.

She calls the heroes back into this room, either a few hours later or the next time they return to Yldaris. Bhazrade and Klathor are, as before, lurking at the edges of the room. Quara explains the following.

"I believe you've been truthful with me, so I'm going to be truthful with you. Yldaris only exists at Belcorra's pleasure. It was here when she first created her vast dungeons; at the time, my grandfather was its leader. Belcorra made allies of several groups, including drow, urdefhans to the west, and the deep gnomes above, who have embraced undeath. To each, she gave a large magical lens with strange powers. For safekeeping, I believe. Ours was the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*, and it could manipulate emotions.

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### DROW AID

Gaining the drow's trust is a tremendous boon to the heroes' mission in the Hunting Grounds and beyond. Not only do they gain a safe place to rest, but they can also use the outpost's forge and workspace (area B17) to repair or even craft items. Furthermore, traders can sell them any common items up to 7th level including alchemical items, gear, and weapons from the Adventure Toolbox. Items they don't have on hand require a week or so to fetch from Lozardyn.

Lastly, heroes who learn from Yldaris's shootists gain access to the shootist archetype (page 77).

"But there was more to the lens. My grandfather told my father, Larathols, who became Yldaris's leader after him. But my father never told me." Quara sighs. "I was never meant to lead. My older sister was to succeed my father. They both embarked on a secret expedition a few years ago. On an island in the great lake, the urdefhan warlord Khurfel caught and killed them. Their expedition had something to do with the lens, I believe, and I suspect my father had it with him. Perhaps he hid it someplace; perhaps Khurfel took it. I don't know.

"Belcorra came to me as a ghost shortly afterward. She insisted I swear Yldaris's support and aid in a surface invasion that drives her even in death. For the good of Yldaris, I renewed the vows my grandfather made. But I've never felt bound by mere words. I won't help her. I'll help you. You're welcome in Yldaris as long as you'd like."

The heroes can ask Quara more questions if they'd like, but she knows little more than she's already told them. Before the conversation winds down, however, Bhazrade and Klathor speak.

"There is more..." One of the twins says. They move their mouths in unison, making it hard to tell which is speaking.

"...you should know," the other drow continues.

This plainly piques Quara's interest, and she motions for the brothers to go on.

"The ochre lens lies in a dark and wet place. Khurfel didn't claim it. Larathols dropped it in the water to deny it to his enemy. He died attempting to learn more of its purpose, more than the partial truth we know," one twin speaks.

"We have seen in a vision that the stones both empower the Ghost Queen and hold the key to her demise. They are slivers of something ancient, alien, evil, and hungry," the other continues.

"We saw eyes of Empty Death!" they cry in unison.

"She separated the lenses because, together, they draw the baleful attention of the Empty Death. Even the Ghost Queen cannot withstand the Empty Death when their powers are joined within her. The secrets to the lenses are in the old treasure vault, which overlooks the lake."

"Find the lenses and the answers Larathols sought."

The twin seers fall silent again, and Quara looks back to the heroes. She explains, "I would say you get used to Bhazrade and Klathor, but one never does. Let me assure you that when they do speak, it's important. This is all news to me, but when the cavern seers speak, it's to the benefit of Yldaris, and you as well."

**Consulting the Whispering Reeds:** The heroes might have recovered a book of Nhimbaloth's lore, called *The Whispering Reeds*, from higher in the Abomination Vaults. A hero who consults this tome finds references to the *fulcrum lenses* without a check to Recall Knowledge and without suffering from the book's curse. *The Whispering Reeds* speaks of slivers of Nhimbaloth's essence existing in the *fulcrum lenses*, perhaps as a means to contact the Outer God. The *fulcrum lenses* possess different and powerful (but, in the text, unspecified) abilities. Yet the *fulcrum lenses* are dangerous in close proximity, and even Nhimbaloth's worshippers fear to have more than two or three together at one time. Using their powers draws Nhimbaloth's scrutiny and invites destruction.

**Side Quest:** Finding the *fulcrum lenses* and using them against Belcorra is the primary goal of this adventure. But Quara has a side task that's personally important to her: she'd like Khurfel killed and his rhoka sword brought to her as a trophy. As pragmatic as Quara is, she carries the common drow vice of vengeance. She emphasizes to the heroes that Khurfel would never part with his lens while he draws breath, so defeating him is necessary regardless.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 120 XP for allying with Quara and the Yldaris drow.

## B18. SEERS' QUARTERS

### MODERATE 9

This large room contains only two thin sleeping mats. The ceiling is painted with patterns resembling constellations.

Bhazrade and Klathor live here. The twins receive enigmatic divinations from the stone of the Darklands and share this wisdom to benefit Yldaris. When here, they are usually meditating or resting.

**Creatures:** In a fight, the seers use their occult powers to harry and incapacitate foes one at a time.



## BHAZRADE AND KLATHOR CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Male drow cavern seers (2; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

**Perception** +18; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Elven, Undercommon

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Nature +18, Occultism +18 (+20 underground), Stealth +19, Survival +18


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

**Items** staff, wand of manifold missiles (1st level)


### Light Blindness

**AC** 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +19, **Will** +18; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

**HP** 110; **Immunities** sleep

**Stone Defense**  **Trigger** An enemy is about to damage the cavern seer with bludgeoning damage or with a spell that has the earth trait; **Effect** The cavern seer gains resistance 10 against the triggering damage.

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee**  staff +19 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

**Divine Innate Spells** DC 28; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *dancing lights*

**Occult Spontaneous Spells** DC 28, attack +20; **5th** (3 slots) *black tentacles*, *ectoplasmic expulsion* (page 75), *prying eyes*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *globe of invulnerability*, *outcast's curse*, *sound burst*; **3rd** (4 slots) *blindness*, *heroism*, *slow*, *wanderer's guide*; **2nd** (4 slots) *augury*, *false life*, *invisibility*, *paranoia*; **1st** (4 slots) *bless*, *command*, *grim tendrils*, *mending*; **Cantrips (5th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *shield*

**Rituals** DC 28; *commune*, *geas*

**Cavern Distortion**  (occult, transmutation)

**Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** The cavern seer is underground; **Effect** Pebbles and dust rise from the stone to impede vision. The cavern seer and their allies within 60 feet become concealed for 1 minute. This concealment can't be used to Hide or Sneak.

**Underground Stride** The cavern seer ignores difficult terrain while underground.

### B19. QUARA'S CHAMBER

Both doors along this hallway are locked, and Quara carries the keys. Picking a Lock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks or a successful DC 33 Athletics check to Force Open. The inner door bears a *glyph of warding* containing a 4th-level *sound burst* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers if the door is opened without the key.

An unmade bed piled with pelts sits next to a table stacked with papers and a half-eaten meal on a plate. A chest sits crookedly in the corner, with clothing spilling out of it.

This chamber has always housed Yldaris's leader; it was most recently Larathol's room, and now it's Quara's. This fact sits uneasily with her, as she still considers the room to be her father's private space.

The north wall contains a cunning secret door, which Quara can use to slip into the common area to find



**Klathor**

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reinforcements or escape from trouble. Locating the secret door requires a successful DC 30 Perception check, and opening it involves pushing the correct sequence of hidden wall panels to cause the wall to slide outward.

**Treasure:** Within the open chest, amid personal items and changes of clothes, is a small iron box containing 50 gp, a gold and opal bracelet worth 75 gp, and 5 tiny diamonds worth 30 gp each. The chest also contains two black *cloaks of elvenkind* and two pairs of *boots of elvenkind*. Quara loans these items to



Caligni Defender

her people during particularly sensitive missions in the Hunting Grounds. She might loan them to the heroes if they're on especially good terms with her.

## B20. MEDITATION CAVE

This massive cavern is stunning. Among its gray stones cut veins and growths of crystals in lustrous shades of pearl white, dark purple, glimmering blue, and brilliant scarlet. At the center of the chamber waits a shallow pool, its bottom and sides made of the same glittering crystals.

This chamber is the closest thing that the outpost has to a temple, though few Yldaris drow are religious. Bhzrade and Klathor perform their rituals here.

## B21. LODGE ENTRY

This large stone structure is flanked on one side by the massive *Gauntlight* footprint to the north, and on the other by the enormous iron ladder descending from the chasm in the Farm level. Belcorra built this lodge so those hunting in the wild caverns could relax in relative safety. In the earliest days, urdefhans, drow, and various mercenary hunters all used the lodge in a series of uneasy truces enforced by Belcorra and her Children. These fragile truces fell apart when Belcorra died, and the lodge has changed hands several times since then.

The calignis currently holed up within are insular and reclusive. They only rarely leave through this door to hunt, as their leader Galudu takes care of most of their needs. The heroes' best way to speak to the calignis peacefully is to speak with Custodian Dulac in the shrine (area A8). Otherwise, the calignis view anyone barging through this door as a threat, and the heroes need to be especially diplomatic to placate them.

The door had a massive lock, but it was smashed long ago. Now, the calignis bar the door from the inside. It can't be Forced Open, but it can be destroyed (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60). It's also protected by the glyph described below.

**Glyph of Warding:** Galudu placed a *glyph of warding* on this door that affects any non-caligni who touches it. It contains a 5th-level *lightning bolt* (DC 26 basic Reflex save; DC 26 to notice and disarm the glyph).

## B22. GREAT HALL

SEVERE 9

This large hall was once grand and impressive. Now the walls' murals are chipped and stained, the floor is covered with mud, and the few pieces of furniture look like they've



been hastily repaired many times. A fire pit sits at the center of the chamber.

Once a lively meeting place and banquet hall for hunters, the area now serves as an outpost where caligni refugees keep a careful watch for intruders. The two smaller doors of the area are unlocked, but the large double door to the west is barred from this side.

**Creatures:** Three calignis try to contain intruders and keep them from penetrating any deeper into the lodge. If possible, a defender moves to the smaller doors and knocks on them, alerting the other calignis to an attack. This brings the calignis in area **B23**; together, this makes up a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters.

If Custodian Dulac accompanies the heroes, the calignis grudgingly point her toward area **B25** to speak with Galudu. They look upon the heroes with undisguised suspicion.

**CALIGNI DEFENDERS (3) CREATURE 8**

RARE CN MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

**Perception** +16; greater darkvision  
**Languages** Caligni, Undercommon  
**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Athletics +18, Intimidation +16, Stealth +17, Survival +16  
**Str** +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2  
**Items** black smear poison (2 doses; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 51), chainmail, shortbow (20 arrows)

**Light Blindness**

**AC** 28; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16  
**HP** 125; death flame

**Bravery** When the caligni defender rolls a success on a Will save against a fear effect, they get a critical success instead. In addition, any time they gain the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.

**Death Flame** (light) When the caligni defender dies, their body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 6d10 fire damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). Their gear and treasure are unaffected by the flames and are left in a pile where they died.

**Attack of Opportunity** ↻

**Speed** 25 feet  
**Melee** ✦ shortsword +19 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus black smear poison  
**Ranged** ✦ shortbow +19 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus black smear poison

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 24; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *obscuring mist* (at will); **Cantrips (3rd)** *detect magic*

**Shoulder to Shoulder** When adjacent to one or more defenders they can see, the defender deals an additional 2d6 damage with their Strikes.

**B23. CALIGNI BUNKS LOW 9**

This room is filthy and smells stale. Rags and tattered rugs and blankets litter the floor.

This sleeping chamber is dimly lit, as the cracks around the door to area **B24** glow.

**Creatures:** The two calignis resting here respond to commotion in the great hall. If outclassed, a defender opens the door to area **B24** to set the undead free.

**CALIGNI DEFENDERS (2) CREATURE 8**

See above  
**Initiative** Perception +16

**B24. STRANGE DEAD MODERATE 9**

If the heroes examine the glow in the cracks around this door, they see it shift, as if the light source within the room is moving around.

A stack of dusty urns is heaped against the east wall of this small room. Each is covered with jagged runes.

The caligni keep out of this room due to its strange occupants, a pair of rare undead calignis called bright walkers. Only Galudu regularly comes here to speak with them; the other calignis only open the door if they need serious and immediate aid.

The urns are left over from when this place was a lodge for hunters. There are 11 urns in total, each 3 feet tall. They were used to magically preserve creature parts taken as trophies, but their magic expired long ago. Four urns contain shriveled claws or bones.

**Creatures:** The two bright walkers pace restlessly in this room. The only reason they don't go on a rampage is because Galudu does her best to keep them grounded and calm. When they see non-calignis, they assume the lodge is under attack and fight until destroyed, or until Galudu calls them off.

**BRIGHT WALKERS (2) CREATURE 9**

Page 78  
**Initiative** Perception +19

**B25. OLD RUBBISH**

Piles of broken furniture, rags and other rubbish litter this dirty room.

Galudu sometimes meets with others here, rather than in her private chamber to the south. If the heroes are with Custodian Dulac, she asks them to wait here while she privately informs Galudu about them.

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## B26. GALUDU'S ROOM

## MODERATE 9

A large bay window of transparent stone overlooks the wilderness outside the lodge, but it's so covered in grime that it's difficult to see through with any clarity. A makeshift table has been erected near the center of the room, and a sleeping mat is rolled up to one side of it.

**Creatures:** Galudu spends most of her time here. She's not only the leader of the calignis but their chief



Galudu

provider, feeding them with conjured food and water when hunters return empty-handed—or not at all.

If the heroes have fought their way through the lodge, Galudu uses her spells to drive them off. With nowhere else to go, she fights to the death.

If Custodian Dulac led the heroes here, Galudu is wary but welcoming; if the heroes aided Dulac and her band of foolish cultists, they might be able to help her as well. She listens to the heroes but quickly introduces the topic of her side quest, below.

### GALUDU

### CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Female caligni leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

**Perception** +18; greater darkvision

**Languages** Caligni, Common, Undercommon

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Arcana +18, Deception +22, Diplomacy +20, Stealth +20

**Str** +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

**Items** dagger, *wand of continuation* (stoneskin)

**Light Blindness**

**AC** 30; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +22

**HP** 195, death notes

**Death Notes** (force, light) When Galudu dies, her body explodes into brilliant motes of magical energy. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 12d6 force damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). Galudu's gear is unaffected by the explosion and is left in a pile where she died.

**Opportune Step** **Trigger** A dazzled or blinded creature, or a creature with light blindness, ends its move adjacent to Galudu; **Effect** Galudu Steps.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** **◆** dagger +22 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

**Melee** **◆** dagger +22 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *darkness*; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *obscuring mist* (at will); **Cantrips** (6th) *detect magic*

**Arcane Prepared Spells** DC 30, attack +22; **6th** *dominate*, *mislead*, *repulsion*; **5th** *banishment*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold* (×2); **4th** *create food* (×2), *globe of invulnerability*, *veil*; **3rd** *blindness*, *glyph of warding*, *lightning bolt* (×2); **2nd** *create food*, *hideous laughter*, *invisibility*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** *alarm*, *create water* (×3); **Cantrips** (6th) *acid splash*, *daze*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

**Sneak Attack** Galudu deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

**Survivor's Nourishment** (healing) A creature that eats food conjured by Galudu's *create food* spell regains 4d4 Hit Points. A creature can only benefit from this healing once per week.



**Side Quest:** Galudu explains that the calignis here are all refugees, fleeing from some calamity deeper in the Darklands that she doesn't explain. She recounts that several calignis died before they made it to the safety of this lodge, and only the strongest now remain. She quickly glosses over the schism that led to Dulac breaking away to occupy the upper levels and establish the Cult of Urthagul; Galudu considers Dulac and her cult to be simpletons clinging at misplaced hope and doesn't particularly care about their fate. Galudu is more interested in finding a safe exit for herself and for the caligni defenders; the cultists are welcome to come along, too, if they don't slow Galudu down. Galudu explains that there are two ways to leave, but both are blocked by powerful monsters: a daemon to the south (area **B31**) and a dragon to the west (area **B51**). Furthermore, hunting bands of urdefhans can—and have—whittled down the calignis' numbers. If the heroes agree to eliminate either the daemon or the dragon (or, better yet, have already done so) and escort the calignis to the opened passage, Galudu gives them her magic wand as payment. Galudu doesn't know that area **B42** also leads to a way out of the Hunting Grounds, but she's happy to take that passage instead, if the heroes clear the way.

The heroes are on their own to defeat the creature they choose and can come back to escort the calignis. As the defenders in **B22** don't let them in through area **B21**, they'll have to return to the Farm level and descend through the shrine to return to Galudu.

**Urdefhan Attack** **Severe 9**

If the heroes accept the side quest, the journey isn't without incident. Urdefhan death scouts are waiting for the calignis to come into the open. The denizens of areas **B35** and **B36** come together to assault the group. This is a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters, but they have the calignis on their side to help.

**B27. LADDER BASE** **LOW 9**

A large, iron ladder stretches upward into the darkness. Its chains and rods are cracked and flaked with rust.

This ladder leads over 100 feet up to area **A34**.

**Creatures:** Four ceustodaemons prowl amid the rubble and fungus at the ladder's base. They're supposed to report to the urdefhans if anyone unusual uses the ladder, but they're so eager for violence that they fight anyone they see to the death.

**CEUSTODAEMONS (4)** **CREATURE 6**

*Pathfinder Bestiary 71*  
**Initiative** Perception +14

**B28. CENTRAL PIT**

A ribbon of twisting light extends from a circular hole in the ceiling to a matching hole in the floor. The stone near the light looks pockmarked and infected. The rounded walls are decorated with snarling stone heads of fearsome monsters.

*Gauntlight's* interior can't be reached from this level; the only access is from 100 feet above (area **A37**) or 100 feet below (area **C20**). A living creature that ends its turn within the 5-foot-diameter ribbon of light takes 9d6 negative damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). The stone heads are simply decor that Belcorra liked; they constitute a checklist of sorts for aberrations. They include chuuls, fleshwarps, gugs, and other monsters the heroes have likely already encountered. They aren't made of the same invulnerable stone as *Gauntlight*, and thus can be removed or destroyed normally.

**B29. BOATHOUSE** **MODERATE 9**

This squat stone building, only eight feet high, hugs the shore. Two wooden docks jut from the building into the dark waters of the massive underground lake. The doors are caked with mold and lichen, as if they haven't been opened in years.

The Children of Belcorra once tended to this lake as they did the one above, but the urdefhans routed them centuries ago. During this rout, the urdefhans drove Beluthus, a powerful occultist among the Children of Belcorra, back to this boathouse and locked him in. Beluthus has remained inside ever since, succumbing to torpor like many of the other undead gnomes.

In addition to being caked with mold, the doors have makeshift planks nailed across them on the outside. They're easy to pry off, but doing so is noisy and alerts Beluthus.

Inside, an old but serviceable rowboat hangs from the ceiling on short chains. Oars hang on the walls that are covered with mold but otherwise usable.

**Creatures:** Beluthus wakes when anyone pries open the doors or intrudes into the boathouse. He lashes out with fury, eager to recover more souls after his long torpor and rejoin the other Children of Belcorra.

**BELUTHUS** **CREATURE 9**

**UNIQUE** **NE** **SMALL** **UNDEAD**

Variant devourer (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 78*)

**Initiative** Perception +22

**Treasure:** The rowboat contains a small sea chest with a *swan boat feather token*, a *runestone* with a +2 *armor potency rune*, and a +2 *striking dagger*.

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## THE CAVERN VAST

Most of the Hunting Grounds is a wilderness of rock formations, crystal growths, mineral springs, and vast swaths of towering fungi. Its denizens aren't always found in their respective encounter areas. Every 15 minutes that the heroes spend traversing the cavern, make a secret DC 5 flat check. On a success, they face one of the following random encounters. If the result would be a creature the heroes have already faced, treat it as no encounter.

d12	Encounter
1	An escaped riding lizard from area <b>B30</b>
2	Salaisa Malthulas from area <b>B14</b> and 1d4 wardens from area <b>B12</b>
3-4	2 drow shootists from area <b>B10</b>
5	2 caligni defenders from area <b>B23</b>
6-7	Urdefhan warband: 2 death scouts and 2 lashers from area <b>B34</b>
8-9	Urdefhans and daemons: 4 warriors and 2 ceustodaemons from area <b>B34</b>
10	Urdefhan sacrifice seekers: 1 blood mage and 3 tormenters from area <b>B35</b>
11	The cauthooj from area <b>B41</b> , which returns to its nest after 2 rounds
12	Ravirex from area <b>B51</b>

## B30. LIZARD RUN

LOW 9

The ceiling of this cavern sports many crystal growths and stalactites. A pattering drizzle drips from these formations, and paths wind through thick fungus growing on the ground.

The Yldaris drow cultivated this area with a thick, fast-growing fungus developed by drow mycologists in distant communities. These mushrooms hide drow movements and provide the community with a ready source of food.

Movement in this area is challenging, as the thick mushrooms conceal stalagmites and crystalline growths on the ground. For Yldaris drow and their riding lizards, who know the terrain, the ground is difficult terrain; for all other creatures, it is greater difficult terrain.

**Creatures:** The drow let their riding lizards run free in this area. The predators of the cavern sometimes catch and kill an errant lizard, but the drow don't mind the loss, as they can study the site of the kill and learn more information about creatures hunting near their home. Four riding lizards currently reside

here, all just reaching maturity. As two of their siblings were recently killed by urdefhans, they're aggressive to non-drow humanoids. A lizard reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points flees the area.

## RIDING LIZARDS (4)

CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

**Initiative** Perception +11

**Treasure:** While the giant frilled lizards have no treasure, 87 gp and 120 sp are scattered near the remains of a spider's web. A dead drow in the web wears *greater healing gloves* and a *cloak of elvenkind*.

## B31. THE BARRENS

SEVERE 9

The fungus growth thins in this cavern, giving way to barren rock and rubble. Amid the dull gray stone, strange clouds of thick, grayish-black fog hug the ground.

The Yldaris drow skirt the north stretch of this cavern when they come this way, knowing of the dangers that lurk deeper in. The drow call this place the Barrens; if the heroes have earned their aid, they warn the heroes of its risks: the fog is deadly, and the cavern harbors a dangerous monster.

The fog imposes a -2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks. Everything beyond 10 feet is concealed, and visibility ends at 30 feet.

A narrow passage leads south to distant, equally treacherous Darklands caverns outside the scope of this adventure.

**Hazard:** The fog arose due to the derghodaemon's presence, and its effects are tied to the daemon's miasma. When a non-fiend, non-urdefhan creature ventures halfway into the cavern, the mist solidifies into life-draining mouths. If the derghodaemon is killed, this hazard disappears in minutes.

## DAEMONIC FOG

HAZARD 10

ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

**Stealth** DC 30 (expert)

**Description** The fog solidifies into tiny, gnawing creatures that devour everyone within before fading back into mist.

**Disable** DC 28 Survival (expert) to disrupt the fog before the hazard triggers or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to counteract the magic.

**Gnawing Fog** ☞ (divine, evocation) **Trigger** A creature crosses the cavern's midpoint (the dotted line on the map); **Effect** The hazard deals 9d6 piercing damage (DC 32 basic Reflex save) to the triggering creature and all other non-fiend creatures within 20 feet. A creature that critically fails the saving throw is confused for 1d4 rounds.



**Reset** The hazard resets over the course of an hour as the daemonic stain reenergizes the fog.

**Creatures:** A derghodaemon lurks in the fog at the south end of the cavern. It keeps an eye on the deeper Darklands passages to protect the urdefhan hunting grounds from anything that might come from that way. It scuttles forth whenever anyone triggers the hazard, or when it otherwise hears intruders come close.

**DERGHODAEMON** **CREATURE 12**

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 60  
**Initiative** Perception +24

**B32. SOUTHERN JUMBLE** **MODERATE 9**

Fungus grows wild and tall throughout this enormous cavern, sometimes reaching as high as thirty feet. The cavern ceiling, when visible through the fungal canopy, is higher still.

**Creatures:** Some fungus in this wild section of the cave is dangerous. Two deadly puffballs float toward the heroes when they first enter this area, descending from the mushroom tops high above.

**REAPER SKULL PUFFBALLS (2)** **CREATURE 9**

Page 79  
**Initiative** Stealth +17

**B33. FEROCIOUS DISPLAYS** **LOW 9**

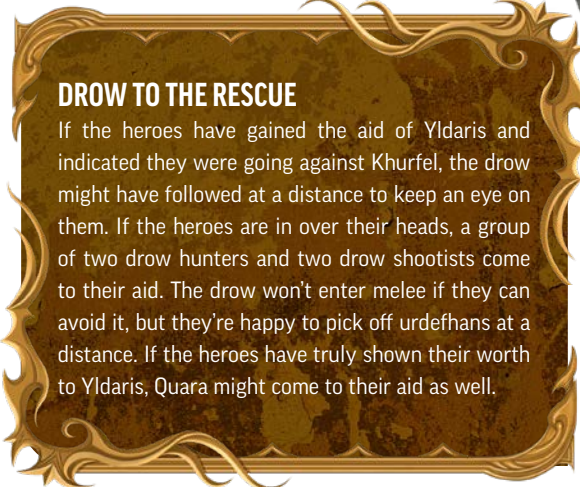
This wide cavern entrance is a disgusting sight. The walls are splashed with ochre and scarlet images in a riot of violent and obscene symbols. Stakes around the entrance hold up skulls and dismembered parts of strange creatures.

This is the main entrance of the cavern complex where the urdefhans live. Intelligent creatures in the Hunting Grounds avoid this place, knowing the urdefhans ruthlessly protect their territory.

**Creatures:** Two urdefhan lashers stand guard, while two death scouts lurk amid the gruesome displays of skulls and body parts. They've been directed to shout an alarm in the face of powerful or numerous foes, but they jump eagerly into a fight as soon as they detect any enemies. If any three urdefhans are defeated, the survivor suddenly realizes they should have called for help sooner and flees to area **B34** to raise the alarm.

**URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUTS (2)** **CREATURE 6**

Page 84  
**Initiative** Stealth +14



**DROW TO THE RESCUE**

If the heroes have gained the aid of Yldaris and indicated they were going against Khurfel, the drow might have followed at a distance to keep an eye on them. If the heroes are in over their heads, a group of two drow hunters and two drow shootists come to their aid. The drow won't enter melee if they can avoid it, but they're happy to pick off urdefhans at a distance. If the heroes have truly shown their worth to Yldaris, Quara might come to their aid as well.

**URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)** **CREATURE 7**

Page 84  
**Initiative** Perception +16

**Replacements:** If these guards are defeated, they're first replaced with death scouts and lashers from area **B34**, then with a pair of nervous urdefhan warriors from the same area.

**B34. URDEFHAN HORDE** **SEVERE 9**

This massive cavern holds a jumble of low-lying tents made of stitched-together pelts and blood-streaked leather. Most of the tents surround a natural stone pillar decorated with strange symbols in brown and red paint, amid skulls tied or spiked to the pillar. Hides cover the entrances to three large caves to the southeast, each with a narrow wooden door.

Most urdefhans in the Abomination Vaults dwell in this enormous cavern. They sleep in small, cramped tents but spend their time awake eating, sparring, or working with their weapons. Other accouterments to support their camp, such as food storage and mundane supplies, are in the tents.

Traversing this war camp to face Khurfel is difficult. With their craving for destruction, the urdefhans are always ready for battle. As they spend so much time sparring and fighting among themselves, the denizens of the adjacent caves (areas **B35**, **B36**, and **B37**) don't respond to the sounds of combat here. The heroes might have an easier time bypassing these forces if they use stealth or trickery, but keep in mind the daemons here have a constant *see invisibility*.

**Creatures:** Nearly 20 urdefhans can be found here at almost all times, along with two ceustodaemons who stoke their bloodlust. About a third of the urdefhans are sleeping, but they're quick to grab

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## B35. SUMMONING CAVERN

LOW 9

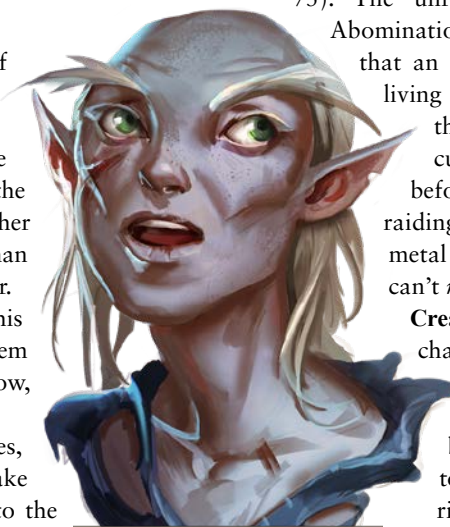
### KHURFEL ON THE MARCH

If the heroes assault the urdefhan camp and retreat or escape, Khurfel is active in his retribution. He doesn't wait for the heroes to return. Instead, he leads a lasher, a death scout, and four urdefhan warriors in the search for them. The next random encounter the heroes have is an encounter with Khurfel's war party. Alternatively, you can have the war party show up whenever the heroes are traveling outside of Yldaris.

their weapons and join in a fight if other urdefhans raise a hue and cry. All the urdefhans fight with growling whoops and revel in the battle, even if they're losing. If the heroes defeat all the foes here other than urdefhan warriors, the urdefhan warriors all break and flee together.

If the heroes retreat from this battle, most of the urdefhans let them go; 1d6 urdefhan warriors follow, screaming for the heroes' blood.

If the urdefhans defeat the heroes, they don't kill them, but rather take them alive and hand them over to the tormentors in area B35, where they might have a chance to escape before being slain as sacrifices.



Calinth Narogblom

This cavern slopes upward to a flat area on the far side. A metal box about three feet across sits against the northern wall, its lid pressed against the wall to prevent it from opening. A bloody circle surrounded by runes is painted on the floor to the south.

Dedicated to bringing more daemons into their midst, the urdefhans use this chamber for vile summoning rituals. They currently keep one prisoner they intend to sacrifice: a deep gnome rockwarden named Calinth Narogblom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 75). The unfortunate Calinth came to the Abomination Vaults searching for evidence that an offshoot of his people were still living here. He never even met up with the Children of Belcorra—whose current state would horrify him—before being captured by an urdefhan raiding party. They keep Calinth in the metal box pushed against the wall so he can't *meld into stone* and escape.

**Creatures:** Three urdefhan tormentors chant and wail, casting a lengthy summoning ritual with the assistance of a scarred and cruel blood mage. The tormentors hope to empower their *daemonic pact* ritual to bring in a more powerful daemon; whether or not they succeed is up to you. All four urdefhans attack any intruders that interrupt their rite. They fight to the death.

### URDEFHAN WARRIORS (12)

CREATURE 3

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272

**Initiative** Perception +9

### URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)

CREATURE 5

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 273

**Initiative** Perception +13

### CEUSTODAEMONS (2)

CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 71

**Initiative** Perception +14

### URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 6

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**Initiative** Stealth +14

### URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

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**Initiative** Perception +16

### URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (3)

CREATURE 5

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**Initiative** Perception +13

### URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE

CREATURE 8

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**Initiative** Perception +15

**Side Quest:** Calinth carries no gear, but he nevertheless still wants to find out about the deep gnomes living here. If the heroes show him evidence of the Children of Belcorra—even their corpses from past fights—Calinth is sad but his curiosity is satisfied. If the heroes lead him to one of the exits to the Darklands, he can make it back to his people. A week later, Calinth sends them a token of his appreciation: a jet and opal complete set of the Dark Chase board game, worth 120 gp. If the heroes told Calinth that



they are friendly with the Yldaris drow, he sends it by the caravan route between the outpost and Lozardyn. Otherwise, he searches the heroes out himself, even braving the surface world if he must.

**B36. THE BLOOD TEMPLE** **LOW 9**

A raised platform with a bloody altar stands on the east side of this roughly triangular cavern.

A constant orgy of bloodletting goes on in this chamber, all part of the strange and gory urdefhan religion. If interrupted, the participants are anxious to cover their altar with fresh blood.

**Creatures:** Two tormentors guide two lashers in the rites. All of them attack nonbelievers who interfere with their gruesome rituals and fight to the death.

**URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)** **CREATURE 5**

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**Initiative** Perception +13

**URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)** **CREATURE 7**

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**Initiative** Perception +16

**B37. KHURFEL'S TENT** **MODERATE 9**

At this cavern's center sits a single fur-and-skin hovel. A path to the hovel is flanked with skull-topped spears.

It's the tradition of this urdefhan cult that the war champion dwells apart and lives in a home no more elaborate than that of other urdefhans. The skulls all belong to rivals that Khurfel defeated to obtain and maintain his position as war champion. Their teeth are gone, having been used for the shauth weapons these urdefhans use (page 73).

**Creatures:** Once Khurfel notices the heroes, he looks pleased, his face contorting in a terrifying grin. He calls out "We meet on a good day to kill" in Undercommon as he draws his rhoka sword and strides forward. As his blood visions foretold his fight with the heroes, he doesn't shy away from it, and he neither offers nor accepts quarter. He keeps the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* on his person at all times, strapped across his back so it doesn't get in the way during a fight. He's invested the lens, so *harm* spells cast on him heal additional Hit Points.

Two tormentors advise Khurfel and join any battle with him. They're careful not to get in their war champion's way, and they use their *harm* spells to keep him in the fight. They flee if Khurfel is defeated.

**URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)** **CREATURE 5**

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273*

**Initiative** Perception +13

**KHURFEL** **CREATURE 10**

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**Initiative** Perception +19

**Treasure:** Inside Khurfel's hovel are mounds of tribute: 180 gp, 1,320 sp, five moonstones worth 10 gp each, and two chrysoberyls worth 20 gp each.



**Urdefhan Death Scout**

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**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*.

## B38. GUARD POST

LOW 9

The urdefhans use this passageway to come and go from the lakeshore.

**Creatures:** The three urdefhan lashers assigned to guard this little-used entrance are itching for a fight. Unwilling to accept the shame of admitting defeat, they fight to the death.

### URDEFHAN LASHERS (3) CREATURE 7

Page 84

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Reinforcements:** If these guards are defeated, they're replaced by the ceustodaemons in area **B34**. If the daemons are defeated, this area remains unguarded.

## B39. DEADLY LAKE

MODERATE 9

The murky waters of this massive lake shift ominously.

Though not covered with a cloying, sickly mist like the large lake in the Farm level, this lake is hundreds of feet deep in its center and harbors strange aquatic life.

**Creatures:** A total of six deepwater dhuthorexes swim in this lake. Two quickly come to investigate any disturbance in the water. This attack should occur the first time the heroes venture into the lake, but you can have another pair of dhuthorexes attack during later excursions if you choose. The dhuthorexes attack singly or in pairs and are shockingly aggressive; they pursue foes on land and fight to the death.

### DEEPWATER DHUTHOREXES (2) CREATURE 9

Page 80

**Initiative** Perception +18

## B40. CRYSTAL SHORE

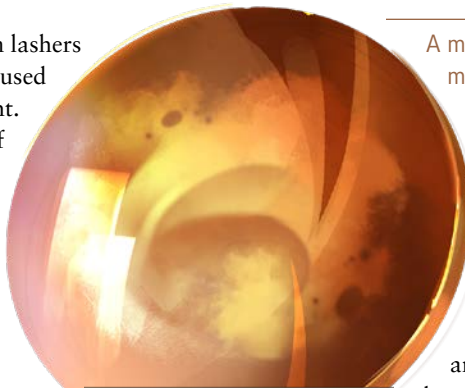
The stone along the shore here sprouts large growths of pale-green crystals. The crystals hang from the ceiling, climb up the wall, and reach toward the water in long strands.

While some of these crystals are pointed, they aren't hazardous. However, if a creature touches one of the crystals it begins to vibrate, which starts a chain reaction of resonant, ringing sounds among the crystals.

The sound is loud but not unpleasant. The noise piques the attention of the cauthooj nesting in area **B41**, which swims over to investigate.

## B41. ISLAND NEST

SEVERE 9



Ochre Fulcrum Lens

A mix of green crystals and grayish stone make up the mass of this island. A few patches of fungus grow across the rocks, with a particularly thick patch near the island's eastern shore.

The thick patch is a cauthooj nest holding two eggs.

**Creatures:** A cauthooj recently came to this island to lay its eggs and stockpile corpses to feed the hatchlings. When it detects the heroes, it attacks immediately to secure a source of food. If reduced to fewer than 40 Hit

Points, it flees the island and abandons its eggs. It's wary of a trap and doesn't pursue anyone who flees into a narrow passage, such as to areas **B38** or **B43**.

### CAUTHOOJ

CREATURE 12

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 55

**Initiative** Perception +22

**Finding the Lens:** Quara's father dropped the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* in the water near the eastern shore of this island during his battle with Khurfel. Spells like *detect magic* locate it easily; otherwise, a hero Searching the water finds it with a successful DC 28 Perception check. If the heroes haven't already encountered deepwater dhuthorexes in area **B39**, those monsters might harass anyone spending a lot of time searching this area.

**Treasure:** The two cauthooj eggs are valuable to the right buyer, but finding one can be difficult. Worliwynn, who runs the Stone Ring Pond just outside of Otari, has contacts who offer 400 gp or any common permanent magic item that's 8th level or lower for the eggs.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*.

## B42. STEEP EXIT

This rubble-filled passage slopes steeply downward. The passage's ceiling undulates as an echoing chitter fills the air.

The passage leads deeper into the Darklands, but the going is not easy. The steep and rocky decline slopes downward for 80 feet before reaching a sheer, 300-foot drop. Several disused natural passages radiate



outward from its base, but where these passages may lead is beyond the scope of this adventure.

Hundreds of tiny subterranean bats lair here. They don't pose a threat to high-level characters, even with their staggering numbers and tendency to swarm around the heads of intruders. The bats sometimes hunt in the Hunting Grounds, or in deeper Darklands caverns, but are just as often food for larger creatures.

### B43. SANCTUARY

A thick growth of fungus blocks this narrow cave entrance.

The harmless fungus can easily be pushed aside. It conceals an out-of-the-way cavern with a small spring of fresh water. This cavern makes a perfect place for the heroes to rest, as wandering monsters ignore it.

### B44. DIGGER'S CAVERN SEVERE 9

A jumble of fungus grows in the center of this roughly square cave. A large lizard's corpse lies amid the fungus.

The giant frilled lizard barely escaped the roper in area **B45** but collapsed and died in this harmless fungus patch.

**Creatures:** When the heroes examine the lizard or the fungus, the entire cavern starts to shake as a shuln chews its way through the north wall. The enormous, rodentlike shuln scented the dead lizard and was coming to eat it, but it's more excited for living prey. It's hungry and fights until slain. It pursues foes that run away but doesn't like the water, so it gives up chasing anyone that flees into the lake.

### SHULN CREATURE 12

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 294

**Initiative** Perception +20

### B45. DEAD ROPER

A rocky depression at the south end of this chamber contains a thick stalagmite toppled over in a pool of dark ichor.

Upon closer inspection, the stalagmite is a dead roper. The shuln in area **B44** burrowed up from beneath it and bit off its lower third before deciding its taste was wholly unpleasant and leaving the rest of the body behind. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature or relevant Lore check realizes that a Huge burrowing beast came up beneath the roper and bit it, but the burrowing creature's tunnel has collapsed behind it and is now impassable.

### B46. PUDDING WALLOW

A pool of thick black goo coats a large patch of the floor in this cave.

A black pudding stripped most of the fungus in this room clear before it was defeated by another predator. Its gooey remains rest in a shallow pit.

### B47. CORRUPTED GARDEN LOW 9

An ancient and crumbling stone bridge stretches across the water to an island teeming with reeking fungus.

The old stone bridge is still stable enough to traverse safely, though it's slick with slime and moist lichen that make it difficult terrain. The island used to be a tended garden, but it's now greater difficult terrain thanks to the dense, slick fungus. The slime growing on the fungus emits a terrible smell, but one overwhelmed by the stench of the island's denizen.

**Creatures:** An ofalth dwells on the island. The fungus and the layer of filth it grows from fuels the creature's Filth Wallow ability. It treats the slime-covered fungus as difficult terrain rather than greater difficult terrain.

### OFALTH CREATURE 10

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 251

**Initiative** Perception +18

### B48. HORRID CARNAGE

Bones and discarded viscera are strewn across this cavern as if some horrifying battle recently occurred here. A trail of the gruesome remains winds to the northeast, up a narrow tunnel.

The carnage is the result of gogiteth feeding. The gnashing, nightmarish aberration lairs in area **B49**, but it sometimes lurks in the passageway to ambush prey. When the heroes approach this area, make a secret DC 15 flat check. On a success, it's watching from the passageway and is prepared to strike.

### B49. GOGITETH CAVE SEVERE 9

If the heroes haven't already defeated the gogiteth lairing here, as they approach, they hear its clacking and popping legs as it moves about. Any hero who succeeds at a DC 30 Occultism check recognizes the sound as that of a gogiteth.

**Creatures:** If the gogiteth is here, it's tearing up an urdefhan corpse. It drops the dead urdefhan with a sickening plop to skitter forward and feast upon

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the heroes. It fights until slain, but it doesn't pursue creatures out of areas **B48** and **B49**.

### GOGITETH

### CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 183

Initiative Perception +21

### B50. COINS AND SLIME

Hanging streamers of mold dangle from the ceiling here. Several coins protrude from a shelf of stone to the north.

A traveler left the coins in the wall here long ago, hoping to keep them safe, though they never returned. A patch of green slime grew from the streams of mold, particularly over the coins, where it could fall upon greedy treasure-seekers, dissolve them, and slither up the ceiling to await a new victim.

**Hazard:** The green slime is hard to spot amid the hanging mold. It drips upon anyone who tries to pull the coins free.

### GREEN SLIME

### HAZARD 9

Gamemastery Guide 78

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

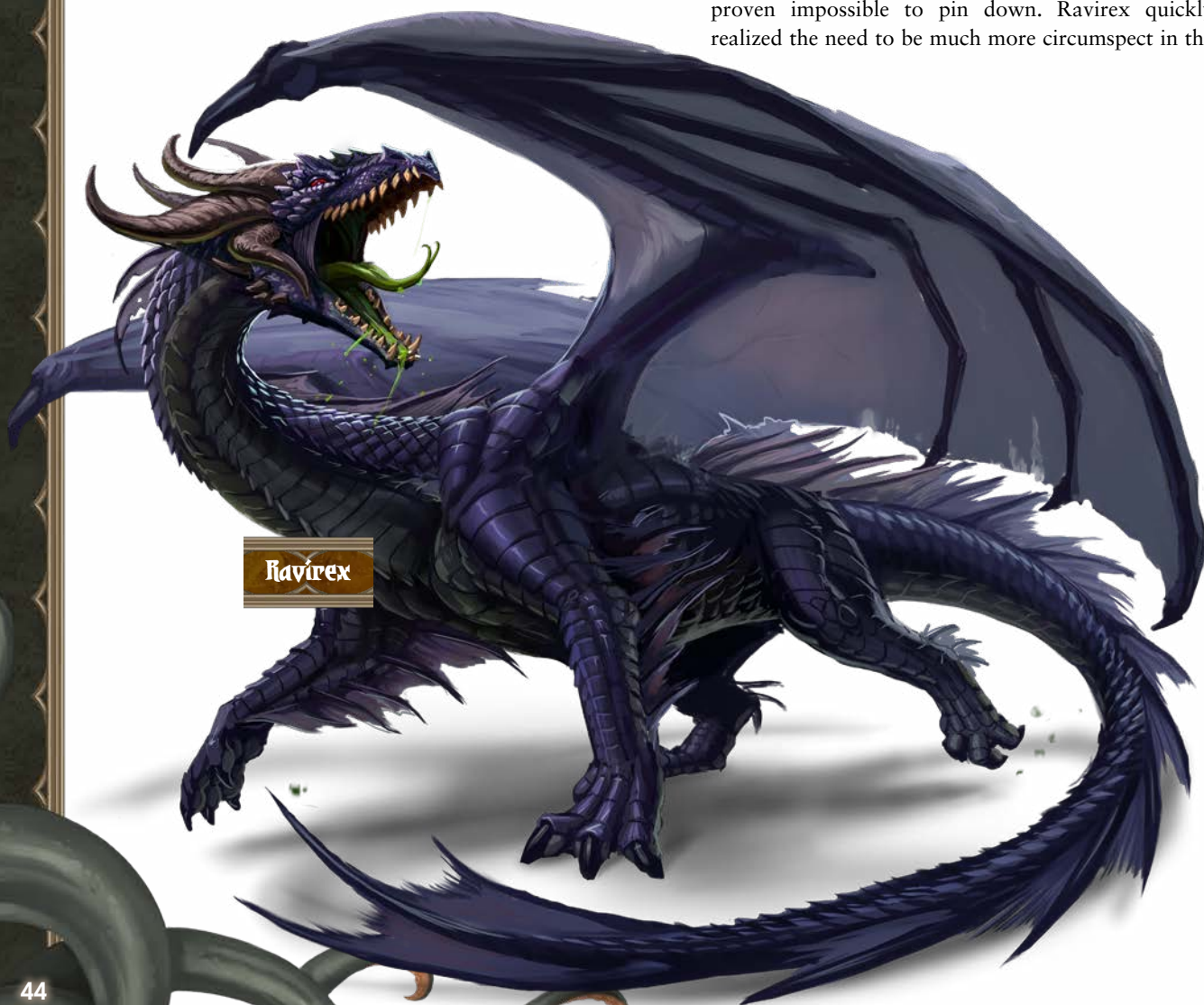
**Treasure:** There are only 15 sp stuck in the floor, and breaking out each coin requires a few minutes' chiseling or *shape stone* or similar magic (which is how the coins got stuck in the stone in the first place).

### B51. RAVIREX'S FEN

### MODERATE 9

A morass of mud sprouting thick fungus and clinging vines makes up the floor of this large cavern. A few boulders protrude from the mud.

Not long ago, a black dragon named Ravirex moved into the swampy cavern at the edge of the Hunting Grounds to make his lair. He initially thought to dominate the area but soon ran afoul of powerful creatures like the derghodaemon in area **B31**, the gogiteth in area **B49**, and the drow hunters who've proven impossible to pin down. Ravirex quickly realized the need to be much more circumspect in the





Hunting Grounds, and these days he primarily works on sculpting the growth in his wide cavern to his liking. He's too arrogant to consider defense, assuming that even the other dangerous creatures of the Hunting Grounds know better than to attack a dragon.

Belcorra appeared to Ravirex a short time ago to open negotiations about aiding an attack on a surface city that Ravirex doesn't know, and the dragon awaits her next visit to learn more. She mentioned something about entrusting a colored magical lens to Ravirex, so he's keeping an eye out for those in the hopes of currying favor with Belcorra.

Two passages lead out of this area to wild Darklands areas to the west. Swamp water floods the southern passage entirely, while the northern passage is clear but very narrow.

**Creatures:** While not working to sculpt the fungus in its lair or out hunting, Ravirex rests upon his hoard in the alcove to the north. He defends his lair ferociously and works hard to drive intruders away so he can preserve his privacy. If he learns that the heroes have any of the magic lenses he believes Belcorra wants, he targets the heroes who carry them and tries to take them.

## RAVIREX CREATURE 11

Male adult black dragon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 105)

**Initiative** Perception +22

**Treasure:** The dragon's hoard consists of 260 gp, 1,412 sp, 4,303 cp, a golden goblet worth 200 gp, a +2 *striking mace*, an *iron medallion*, a *scroll of spirit blast*, and a *mummified bat*.

## B52. VAULT LEDGE

The lake's water laps lazily on a wide stone ledge surrounding a structure built into the cavern wall. The ledge is thick with lichen and barely wide enough to stand on. A single iron, vault-like door with a metal handle and a keyhole leads into the structure.

Belcorra built this secure vault as a place to gather the treasures she planned to use to fund her assault on Absalom. Beneath the profusion of lichen, the ledge holds several cleats for securing boats.

The vault door looks formidable but is, surprisingly, unlocked. The vaults' only intelligent occupant, a graveknight named Caliddo, recently traveled to the third level of the Abomination Vaults to recover some books Belcorra wanted, and he neglected to lock the door when he returned.

**Hazard:** The vault door isn't locked but is trapped.


## BLAST TUMBLER HAZARD 10

MAGICAL MECHANICAL TRAP

**Stealth** DC 32 (master)

**Description** A hard-to-reach rune is placed on the lock's tumbler. It emits a blast of force when the door is jostled.

**Disable** DC 32 Thievery (master) to disarm the rune, or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 28) to counteract the rune's magic.

**Force Blast**  (evocation, force, occult) **Trigger** A non-undead creature opens the door or critically fails an attempt to disarm or dispel the rune; **Effect** A 30-foot cone of force issues forth from the lock. Creatures within the cone must succeed a DC 29 basic Fortitude saving throw or take 8d12 force damage. Those who fail the save are pushed 10 feet, and those who critically fail are pushed 20 feet and are stunned 2.

**Reset** The rune resets 1 minute after it triggers.

## B53. VAULT ANTECHAMBER LOW 9

The dust is thick in this room, save for footprints that lead to and from the southernmost of three iron doors, which look similar to the vault's entrance.

On the south side of the chamber is a hardened clay statue sculpted to resemble Belcorra.

Each door leads to another vault. The doors to areas **B54** and **B55** are both locked, and Caliddo the graveknight has the keys. The locks require six successful DC 40 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock to open, and they can't be Forced Open. The door to area **B56** is unlocked; this is where Caliddo went.

**Creatures:** The statue is a clay golem charged with attacking any creature other than Belcorra or Caliddo. It fights until destroyed, its old clay grinding as it attacks. The sound quickly brings Caliddo to fight as well. Together, they are a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters.

## CLAY GOLEM CREATURE 10

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 186

**Initiative** Perception +16

## B54. COIN VAULT

Three iron chests, all in different sizes, are lined up against the north wall of this room.

The boxes hold a mass of treasure that Belcorra accumulated in life to aid in her assault on Absalom.

**Treasure:** The largest box contains 8,000 sp, and the next largest holds 500 gp. The smallest has 100 gp. All these coins were minted centuries ago.



### B55. ALCHEMICAL VAULT

This door is difficult to open, even once unlocked, because the inside has been warped by an explosion. Inside the vault is a tangle of ancient wood and shattered glass and pottery. Scorch marks scar the stone walls.

Belcorra stored a variety of alchemical bombs in this vault. As the centuries passed, the wooden shelves that

held some of them collapsed, creating a chain reaction of explosions and leaving the room and its vault door in its current state. Nothing of value remains.

### B56. CALIDDO'S VIGIL

LOW 9

This small, bare room contains more vault doors, just as in area **B53**; Caliddo Haruvex carries these two keys as well. There's also a remarkably well-hidden secret door here; a hero Searching this room discovers the hidden switch to open it with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

**Creatures:** A warrior in archaic armor stands in this room, clutching a greatsword. This is Caliddo Haruvex, a skilled mercenary who came to serve Belcorra when he heard how powerful his distant relative had become. Belcorra accepted Caliddo's offer of aid and promptly killed him, raising him as a graveknight eternally bound to serve her. Caliddo proved his worth and loyalty to Belcorra many times, so she entrusted him with guarding her vault. He kept a silent vigil here for centuries.

When Belcorra returned, she put Caliddo to work fetching several books she wanted out of the hands of others who might use them against her. For the first time in centuries, Caliddo left the vault. He recovered the texts from an upper level of the dungeon and locked them in area **B58**.

Caliddo remains at his post and assaults anyone who enters. If the heroes don't face him with the golem in area **B53**, he's encountered here. Caliddo fights until destroyed, but he doesn't leave his post in the vault unless Belcorra expressly orders him to.

### CALIDDO HARUVEX

CREATURE 10

Male graveknight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 191)

**Initiative** Perception +19

**Items** composite longbow (20 arrows), +1 resilient full plate, greatsword, keys to Belcorra's vault (areas **B52** to **B59**)

**Caliddo's Return:** Destroying Caliddo for good proves difficult because his armor rebuilds him. If he rejuvenates after the heroes have plundered the vault, he pursues them in an attempt to recover the items. He doesn't have any special connection to the treasures, though, so he might have to search around a lot to find out where the heroes went. Caliddo isn't likely to negotiate, but he's most interested in reclaiming his keys and returning the books to the vault (as those were the last things Belcorra expressed particular interest in and, he assumes, the most valuable to her). Heroes who turn over the keys and books might avert Caliddo's implacable retribution and keep the other treasures from the vault.



Caliddo Haruvex



## B57. DERELICT ARMORY

Ancient weapon racks have collapsed over time, leaving many swords, spears, and axes jumbled on the floor.

Belcorra hoarded dozens of weapons for her campaign in this room, intending to arm the humanoid warriors who fought alongside the aberrant monsters in her attack. While most of the weapons are merely well-made, a number of them are genuinely superior.

**Treasure:** Amid the weapons are a standard-grade adamantite warhammer and a +2 *striking battle axe*. A fallen armor stand is tangled up with the +2 *resilient chain shirt* that was once displayed on it.

## B58. VAULT OF SECRETS

The shelves of this room contain several old books and various odds and ends. In the center of the room is a dusty mechanism of copper and silver. It's missing its lenses, but otherwise looks like the framework of a lantern that belongs in the top of a lighthouse. The dust in this room has been recently disturbed.

This is Belcorra's most protected vault, holding her treasures and secrets of her past. The books that have been most recently shelved here—as evidenced by the trails in the dust—are research journals Belcorra penned when she was alive. They are centuries old, but careful magical preservation has kept them from falling apart. These journals describe four *fulcrum lenses* (in crimson, ebon, emerald, and ochre) that focus Nhimbaloth's soul-extinguishing gaze across space and time. Belcorra's journal details how she built *Gauntlight* and created a special framework called the *Fulcrum Lattice* to fit the four lenses and harness their power. A diagram of the *Fulcrum Lattice* makes it clear that the device is the very one sitting here. Belcorra expresses some trepidation at using the *fulcrum lenses*; they each contain a sliver of Nhimbaloth's essence, and bringing them in close proximity can be dangerous. More specifically, the lenses impart Nhimbaloth's essence into those who use or are touched by them. Having all four essences imbued at once is sure to bring Nhimbaloth's dreadful scrutiny. Belcorra had her talented apprentice, Volluk Azrinae, fashion mundane lenses that would allow *Gauntlight* to function at a diminished capacity until the *Fulcrum Lattice* and the *fulcrum lenses* could be installed, on the eve of Belcorra's assault on Absalom. The *Fulcrum Lattice* allows all four of the large, heavy lenses to be carried with ease.

Belcorra's journals explain that she used only the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* in the Empty Vault at *Gauntlight's*

base, deeming the essence within one *fulcrum lens* a minimal risk. She gave the other lenses to trusted groups in the lower vaults: the emerald lens to the urdefhans, the ochre lens to the drow, and the crimson lens hidden where her undead gnome minions could protect it. She trusts that the groups won't work together, much less learn that bringing the lenses together to imbue a single creature with all four splinters of Nhimbaloth's essence would impart total annihilation.

**Other Books:** The other books are aging tomes full of occult knowledge; they've been in the Haruvex family for generations. They hold a wealth of occult lore about ghosts, Nhimbaloth, and the Haruvexes. A hero who peruses these tomes for at least an hour gains a +2 item bonus on checks to Recall Knowledge on these subjects when using the Investigate exploration activity here.

**Treasure:** Belcorra keeps many valuables here, including a skull-shaped key worth 30 gp that unlocks the doors to the Gate of Nhimbaloth (area **B60**) and two signet rings that each bear the symbol of a tentacle wrapped around a skull with a moss-filled mouth. One is a *ring of lies* and the other functions as a *greater pendant of the occult*. The *Fulcrum Lattice* is also here, and it's surprisingly lightweight for its size. If the heroes have discovered any *fulcrum lenses* so far, they fit neatly into the lattice, and the lattice grows no heavier for their weight.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 80 XP for uncovering the lore of the *fulcrum lenses* and learning how to destroy Belcorra.

## B59. LEVEL 9 PORTAL CHAMBER

Spiraling runes filled with silver cover this chamber's curved walls. The same silvery metal covers the floor and ceiling.

This room contains another inactive *teleportation circle* that the heroes might connect to others in the Abomination Vaults with the *awaken portal* ritual. The others in this adventure are areas **A33** and **C5**.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

## B60. EBON DOORS

These massive double doors are made of black and green stone. An oxidized bronze lock has a keyhole but no handles.

This door leads to a structure called the Gate of Nhimbaloth, an ancient temple made of black stone streaked with a greenish, nauseating hue. Belcorra didn't built this place; she found it and incorporated

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it into her ever-expanding dungeon. Whether the Gate of Nhimbalth always existed underground or was once cast down from the surface is a mystery, as are the cultists who once inhabited it. In any case, its entry is now seamless with the stone of the Abomination Vaults. The Gate of Nhimbalth includes not only the rooms beyond it, but most of the lower level as well.

The door's ancient lock is incredibly complex. Six successful DC 40 Thievery checks are required to Pick the Lock, and it can't be Forced Open. The skull-shaped key in area **B59** opens this door.

### B61. HALL OF PRIESTS

### MODERATE 9

This large chamber is made of the same black stone as the imposing ebon doors to the north. Eight alcoves, four on each side, line the east and west walls. Each alcove contains the remains of jade-colored statues.

All of the figures have been defiled; none have any heads remaining, most are missing hands, and one is just a pair of bare feet upon a pedestal. An enormous stone throne carved out of heavy blocks stands in a domed chamber opposite the black doors.

Well before Belcorra's time, this served as a semipublic area of worship for a cult of Nhimbalth. Those seeking vengeance, an enemy's obliteration, or assurance that a lost loved one would return as a ghost left offerings and sacrifices around the throne and the creature sitting on it, who was called Lady's Whisper—the creature that sits there still. Aspirants hoped the shrouded skeleton would rise and lead them through one of the three doorways to take the tests to become an initiate in the cult. Lady's Whisper sometimes remained still for years, or ushered in new cultists for days on end. Although even the senior cultists never understood the connection between Lady's Whisper and Nhimbalth, none questioned the skeleton's role as gateway to cult membership.

The cultists did know, however, that only those Lady's Whisper ushered into the eastern door would join the cult. The western doors lead to grim fates reserved for those unworthy to even be tested for admittance to the cult.

**Creatures:** Lady's Whisper is a unique undead creature distantly related to the lesser deaths that serve the Grim Reaper (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 196). For reasons long lost, the skeletal creature is irrevocably tied to Nhimbalth. It knows that the heroes are here to face Belcorra and are ill-suited to join the now-nonexistent cult, but it decides to put them through the initiation trials anyway, in the hopes of weakening and killing them. Lady's Whisper commands the allegiance of the many dread wisps within the Gate of Nhimbalth, but there are none here to defend it when the heroes first arrive, so it deals with the heroes cautiously.

Lady's Whisper rises and holds forth both hands, gesturing for peace. It then points to the eastern door and whispers the names of each hero, one by one. It steps toward the eastern door, gesturing for the heroes to follow.

If the heroes attack, Lady's Whisper lashes out with its claws to teleport heroes away, preferably into the adjacent chambers with dangerous wisps and traps. It flees if it takes more than 50 points of damage, but tries to lure the heroes deeper into the Gate of Nhimbalth as it does.



Lady's Whisper



## LADY'S WHISPER

## CREATURE 11

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

**Perception** +25; darkvision, *see invisibility*, *true seeing*

**Language** Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Deception +21, Diplomacy +21, Intimidation +21, Occultism +21, Religion +23, Society +21, Stealth +22

**Str** +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +4

**Death's Grace** Lady's Whisper can choose whether or not it counts as undead for effects that affect undead differently. Even if it does not count as undead, Lady's Whisper never counts as a living creature.

**AC** 31; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +20, **Will** +25; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

**HP** 195, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

**Negative Recovery** Lady's Whisper can choose whether or not it takes positive damage.

**Sibilant Whispers** (auditory, aura, divine, emotion, enchantment, mental) 20 feet. Each creature that begins its turn within the aura and can hear the ominous whispers must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or become frightened 2. On a success, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** **◆** claw +23 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d10+7 slashing plus unwilling teleportation

**Divine Innate Spells** DC 30, attack +22; **Constant (6th)** *true seeing*; **(3rd)** *haste*; **(2nd)** *see invisibility*

**Occult Spontaneous Spells** DC 30, attack +22; **5th** (4 slots) *crushing despair*, *mind probe*, *shadow blast*, *vampiric touch*; **4th** (4 slots) *blink*, *gaseous form*, *modify memory*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** (4 slots) *hypercognition*, *levitate*, *paralyze*, *slow*; **2nd** *calm emotions*, *death knell*, *mirror image*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *command*, *fear*, *illusory disguise*, *magic missile*; **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

**Gatekeeper's Will** **◆** (concentrate) Lady's Whisper mentally causes any doors or portals within the Gate of Nhimbaloth (areas **B60** to **B64** and areas **C1** through **C18**) to open or shut. If Lady's Whisper wills a door closed, it must be Forced Open or battered down.

**Unwilling Teleportation** (conjunction, divine, teleportation) When Lady's Whisper hits and damages a creature with its claw Strike, it can choose to teleport that creature to any open space within 15 feet, even if Lady's Whisper can't see the destination. The target can attempt a DC 30 Will saving throw to resist this effect.

## B62. OBLIVION FALL

Made of the same dark stone as the rest of the temple, this passage opens into a rectangular chamber.

**Hazard:** The chamber at the end of the hall has no floor. It's a bottomless pit that, unlike the hazard in the *Core Rulebook*, has no trapdoor; nevertheless, because it's set into reflective black stone, it's still difficult to notice. Lady's Whisper led aspirants whom it judged to be useless to Nhimbaloth's cause into this pit—forcefully, when necessary.

## BOTTOMLESS PIT

## HAZARD 9

*Core Rulebook* 524

**Stealth** DC 26 or *detect magic*

## B63. GARDEN OF FAILURES

## TRIVIAL 9

A black-stoned passage opens into this octagonal chamber. The room is a riot of foul-smelling swamp weeds.

Creatures who made it into the Gate of Nhimbaloth but were, in their hearts, too afraid to undertake the initiation tests below were brought here. Often, Lady's Whisper gave them comforting words about how they could simply rest and depart in peace, but this was a lie—creatures were brought here to be killed, their blood and essence used to fuel the cavern's sunless garden.

**Creatures:** A single dread wisp floats in this room. It attacks anyone who enters, desperate to feed for the first time in many, many years.

## DREAD WISP

## CREATURE 9

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**Initiative** Perception +20

## B64. INITIATES' CHAMBER

## SEVERE 9

The walls of this room are carved from black stone and feature four large alcoves, two to the east and two to the west. Three contain large stone basins filled with reeds, moss, and other swamp plants. The basin in the fourth alcove is empty. Stairs lead downward to the north.

The stairs lead down to area **C1**.

**Creatures:** Three dread wisps hover over three of the stone basins (the fourth was slain long ago, and its basin now contains only desiccated soil). If the heroes are accompanied by Lady's Whisper, two of them follow it and the heroes at a distance, ready to intervene if the heroes become violent. If the heroes aren't with Lady's Whisper, the dread wisps attack.

## DREAD WISPS (3)

## CREATURE 9

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**Initiative** Perception +20

## EYES OF EMPTY DEATH

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