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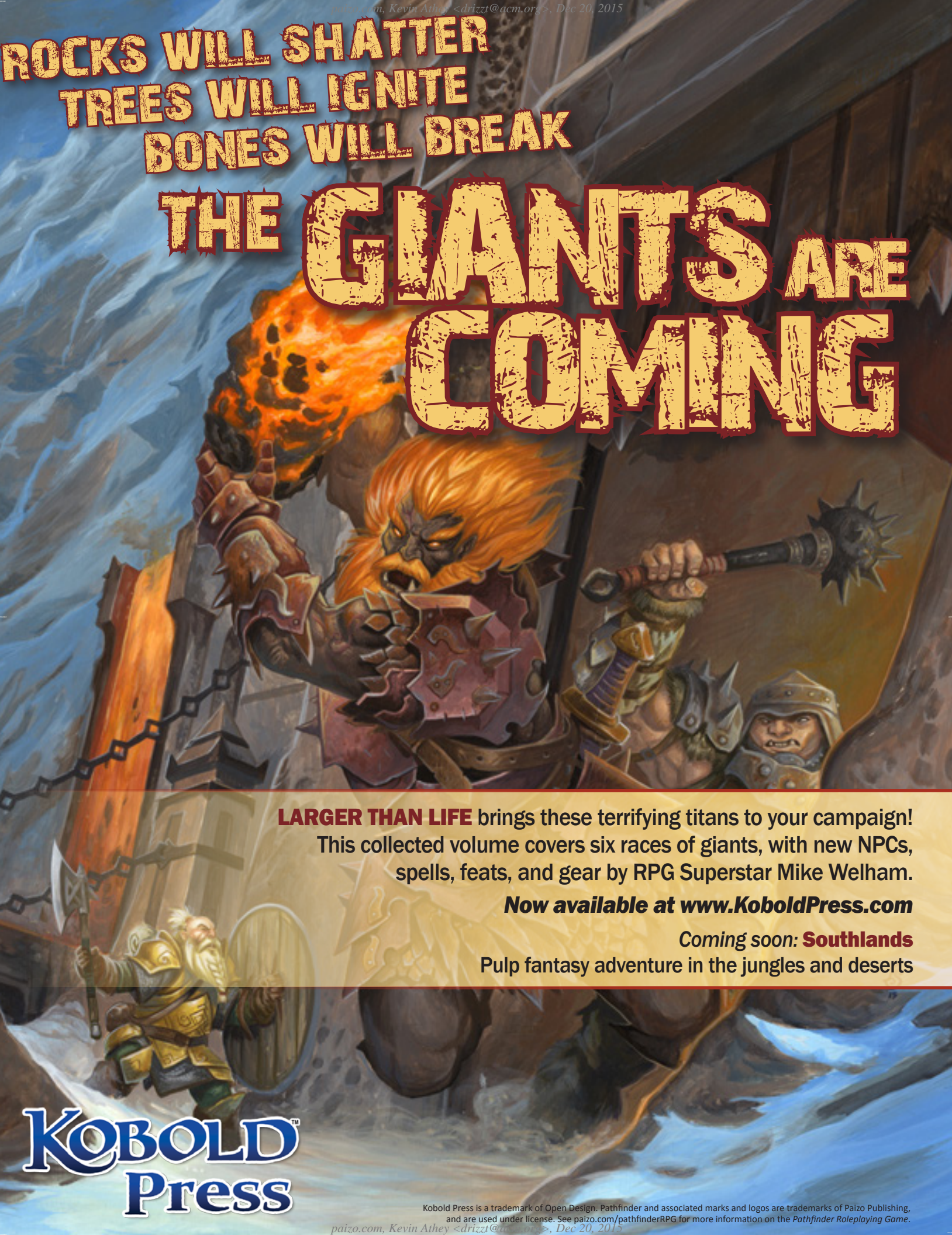


## Ustalav

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# Foreword

## What Mist Veils

Art by Paige Connolly

It's always daunting writing a foreword for *Wayfinder*. The sheer amount of talent and enthusiasm that go into creating any volume of this magazine is staggering. When all that zeal turns toward a part of the world that I created and have spent years exploring, though, the results are nothing short of humbling. The Pathfinder community certainly has no lack of twistedly brilliant souls.

I could wax repetitive and spoil all the great stories, clever rules, and unnerving art you're about to sadiistically enjoy—or I could tell you something you don't know.

Things no one knows.

I might have written the book on Ustalav, but in keeping with that land of mists and mystery, I certainly didn't share all its secrets. Since so many of you have distilled your favorite nightmares into this collection, let me tell you about a few of mine you that you might not have noticed. Here is one subtle bit of inspiration or veiled homage from each of Ustalav's 13 haunted regions.

**Amaans:** Prior to its renaming, Lake Kavapest was Lake Divirmis. The name for that disease-riddled lake hearkens to *De Vermis Mysteriis*, an infamous fictional tome originating from Robert Bloch's "The Shambler from the Stars."

**Ardeal:** Rather than taking its inspiration from the ghost stories of many gothic tales, I wanted war-scarred eastern Ardeal to evoke more modern horrors, particularly the sobering realities of the American Civil War and the labyrinthine trenches of World War I and II—hence its name, the Furrows.

**Barstoi:** Aspects of Count Aericein Neska's personality are modeled after the ruthless calm of Thomas Harris's iconic villain, Hannibal Lecter. Fittingly, one of the villages in his thrall is named Sturnidae—the root of the word "Starling."

**Caliphas:** The mysterious palace known as Chateau Douleurs has been home to generations of eccentric, oft-sadistic members of the Caliphvaso family. As such, Swinburne's poem "Dolores (Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs)" came to mind when naming this bastion of decadance and severity.

**Canterwall:** My second-favorite haunted location in all of Ustalav, the Saffron House hunkers in the depths of the Sclerain Swamp, a place of disappointed love and shattered sanity. Much of the inspiration behind it, and even its titular color, are owed to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper."

**Lozeri:** Among the most famous tales to feature monstrous wolves are those of the Beast of Gévaudan, which terrorized France in the 1760s. That deadly beast was finally slain by hunter Jean Chastel, whose last name now lends courage to the people of Lozeri's largest city.

**Odranto:** The name Odranto stands only a step away from Otranto, the Italian town that serves as the setting of *The Castle of Otranto*—Horace Walpole's 1744 novel, which is widely considered the first work of gothic fiction.

**Sinaria:** Those familiar with Robert E. Howard stories set in the piney woods of eastern Texas—like the chilling "Pigeons from Hell"—might notice the connection between the Brides of Damballah in "Black Canaan" and the Graidmere swamp's Queens of Baallalota.

**Ulcazar:** The Monastery of the Veil, the mountaintop redoubt of the masked assassins known as the Anaphexia, bears similarities to Prince Prospero's secluded, death-stalked abbey in "The Masque of the Red Death."

**Varno:** In honor of Tracy and Laura Hickman's classic horror adventure, the home of Ustalav's only vampire count is named Corvischoir. Corvus, of course, is the genus name for ravens. Then there's also the high, loft-like architectural structure known as a "choir" or "choir loft." The portmanteau was too tempting not to use.

**Versex:** As the county for cosmic horror, Versex holds several locations with names suggestive of Lovecraft's New England haunts. Among these is Rozenport's Sincomakti School of Sciences—"Sincomakti" being an anagram of "Miskatonic."

**Vieland:** The home of Vieland's Dr. Frankenstein-like Count Alpon Caromarc rises from the marshlands called the Dipplemere. Dubiously, this bog honors Johann Conrad Dippel, a real-world alchemist born in Castle Frankenstein who is said to be one possible inspiration for Mary Shelley's famous novel.

**Virlych:** The cultists of the Whispering Way seek to restore the infamous Whispering Tyrant. As such, it's no coincidence that their fortress, Renchurch, shares similarities with the name of the archetypical undead slave, R. M. Renfield.

Lest any of you be too concerned, though, don't worry—I haven't given away all of Ustalav's secrets quite yet. In truth, I can't even claim to know them all anymore—especially not with the shuddersome collection bound between these covers. So if you're hungry for more unsettling truths from Golarion's cradle of terrors, just turn the page.



Wes

F. Wesley Schneider  
Editor-in-Chief  
Paizo Inc.

# Suspicious and Superstitions

By Matt Duval

Art by Mike Lowe

Nijole eased back from her soup as the latest travelers brushed through the inn's door. For three weeks she had sought the beast known as the Red Wolf up and down Varno, tracking it from murder to murder. She carefully examined each newcomer, her right hand idly running over the half dozen charms and bands on her left arm—ash wood for the undead, iron for fey, silver for shapechangers.

As the fifth man entered, Nijole felt the silver charm heat up. She observed him as he settled into a chair. He was human in appearance, but his hands bore long index fingers and were gloved even by the hot fire. His wandering eyes lingered on the coughing barmaid and reflected the firelight. She noted a stripe of red hair twisting through his black mane.

When the traveler left, laughing, with the drunken local smith, Nijole followed. She carefully twined wolfsbane around a silver amulet sprinkled with the blood of the Red Wolf's first victim, staying downwind as she traced the pair's steps through the snow, and found the hungry beast crouched over the smith's pleading form.

Its growls soon turned to yelps of pain as the silver icon struck its snout. After the fur receded, leaving a shivering, nude man, his pleading mirrored his victims' as Nijole went to work with her blade.

## Folklorist (Investigator Archetype)

Folklorists know that monsters masquerade as ordinary folk to better hunt mortals. Using knowledge gleaned from old wives' tales, superstitions, and their own research, these investigators learn how to expose such supernatural predators and render them powerless.

**Suspicious Gaze (Ex):** The folklorist is vigilant for the strange signs and behaviors of concealed monsters and the telltale hints of supernatural influence. At 2nd level, whenever the folklorist comes within 10 feet of a creature using a disguise to conceal its race, he can attempt a Perception skill check to notice the disguise, regardless of whether he is actively looking. At 5th level, when within 10 feet of a creature with the shapechanger subtype, he can attempt a Knowledge skill check to identify the creature. At 8th level, when within 10 feet of a creature under the influence of a charm, compulsion, or possession effect, he can attempt a Sense Motive skill check to sense the enchantment. The folklorist can use inspiration on these skill checks without expending a use of inspiration, provided he is trained in those skills.

This ability replaces poison lore and poison resistance.

**Ward against the Unnatural (Ex):** From old tales and legends, the folklorist learns the secret weaknesses of many supernatural foes. At 3rd level, the folklorist can produce a talisman that holds a specific creature at bay. The folklorist must first make a Knowledge check to identify the creature, successfully recalling a weakness, a racial spell-like or supernatural ability, or damage reduction or regeneration it possesses and that can be

negated. He can then spend a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity and expend one use of the folklorist's inspiration to produce a special talisman.


While the folklorist holds the talisman, he gains the benefits of *protection from evil* against that creature for up to 1 minute per level. The talisman loses its power if it leaves the folklorist's possession.

The folklorist may expend the talisman and use it to make a melee or ranged touch attack against the creature. If successful, the creature must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the folklorist's level + the folklorist's Intelligence modifier) or shed any disguise and revert to its true form and cannot use spells or abilities to alter its shape or appearance for a number of rounds equal to the folklorist's Intelligence modifier. The creature can spend a full-round action to attempt another Fortitude saving throw to end the effect.

At 9th level, the talisman grants the folklorist and nearby allies the benefits of *magic circle against evil* against the chosen creature, and the creature cannot enter the warded area. If the creature fails its save against the talisman when expended, it also loses the benefits of any racial defensive abilities and

regeneration for the duration of the effect.

At 15th level, the folklorist's talisman renders the chosen creature powerless. If the creature fails its save against an expended talisman when expended, it is also nauseated for the duration of the effect but can still attempt to end this effect as a full-round action.

This ability replaces the investigator talents gained at 3rd, 9th, and 15th levels. 



# Weal or Woe: Captains of Caliphas

By Joe Smith  
Art by Bob Greyvenstein

## Weak: Captain Almira "Cardinal" Perine

Almira Perine's family has long served the Ustalavic Navy on Lake Encarthan. Her late father, a respected captain and close friend of Admiral Marris Riddian, imposed a strict regime to raise her as a strong sailor. Her experience rising through the ranks taught her much about Lake Encarthan and its many dangers.

As she grew, Perine gained the nickname "Cardinal" for the way she flew from ship to ship using her grappling hook. Recently, she saved an Ustalavic village from a raid by Razmiran fanatics. The cultists had rarely been so bold, and this time it appeared they were looking to abduct a member of the village.

### Adventure Hooks

- The Ustalavic Navy sends out a call for volunteers to crew a ship under Almira's command to rescue a merchant ship that sailed too close to the Isle of Terror at the center of Lake Encarthan.
- The PCs purchase transportation across Lake Encarthan in Almira's ship, the *Devilfish*, though there are many dangers on the water.
- Almira is friendly toward newcomers who are interested in improving Ustalav—the people of Caliphas may point adventurers her way.

### Boon

PCs that gain Captain Almira's favor receive a good word with members of the Caliphas aristocracy (+2 to Diplomacy checks) and the Ustalavic military (+4 to Diplomacy checks).

## CAPTAIN ALMIRA "CARDINAL" PERINE CR 5 XP 1,600

Female human (Varisian) ranger (freebooter) 6 (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea* 23)

NG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +1

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

**hp** 43 (6d10+6)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 boarding axe<sup>POTIS</sup> +9/+4 (1d6+4/x3) and +1 dagger +8 (1d4+4/19–20)

**Ranged** composite longbow +9/+4 (1d6+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** freebooter's bane<sup>POTIS</sup> +2

**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

1st—*glide*<sup>APG</sup>, *read weather*<sup>1SG</sup>

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** She prefers to start fights at range, using her flight arrows. She drinks her *potion of barkskin* before closing with the enemy.

**During Combat** Almira trades her composite longbow to draw her boarding axe and dagger, then leaps aboard enemy ships to bring the fight up close and personal.

**Morale** Almira continues fighting while her crew is still engaged in battle. If she is reduced to fewer than 14 hp or loses more than three-fourths of her crew, she calls for a strategic withdrawal to heal herself and her crew with her wand.

### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Double Slice, Endurance, Power Attack, Sea Legs<sup>UC</sup>, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (boarding axe)

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Climb +14, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography) +8 (+2 to navigate in the wilderness), Knowledge (nature) +8, Profession (sailor) +10 (+2 to navigate at sea), Survival +10 (+4 to avoid getting lost if used with astrolabe, +2 to navigate in the wilderness), Swim +14

**Languages** Common, Varisian

**SQ** favored terrain (water +2), freebooter's bond, track +3, wild empathy +7

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin*, *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 boarding axe<sup>POTIS</sup>, +1 dagger, composite longbow (+3 Str), flight arrows<sup>APG</sup> (20), *cloak of resistance* +1, astrolabe, backpack, canteen<sup>UE</sup>, grappling hook, sextant, spell component pouch

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Freebooter's Bane +2 (Ex)** A freebooter can, as a move action, indicate an enemy in combat and rally her allies to focus on that target. The freebooter and her allies gain a +2 bonus on weapon attack and damage rolls against the target. This ability applies only to allies who can see or hear the freebooter and who are within 30 feet of her at the time she activates this ability. The freebooter's bane lasts until the target dies or the freebooter selects a new target.

**Freebooter's Bond (Ex)** A freebooter forms a bond with her crewmates. This bond allows her to spend a move action to grant all allies within 30 feet who can see or hear the freebooter an additional +2 bonus on attack rolls when flanking with the freebooter or with another ally affected by this ability.



## Woe: Captain Liald Gaspair

The path to becoming Captain of the *Princess Maraet* has been a long one for Liald Gaspair. His rise through the ranks of the Caliph's Navy was punctuated with acts of valor and determination. In truth, his audacious success resulted from a deeply rooted, deviant ambition—he discovered and joined the Whispering Way. He has nearly completed his quest for lichdom, but for him the process requires blood from members of an ancient Varisian bloodline.

To achieve eternal undeath without compromising his standing in the navy, he disguised himself and trusted crew members as Razmiran cultists to raid coastal towns and abduct suitable sacrifices. Although his latest target perished in the attack foiled by Almira Perine, Liald discovered that the Perine line branches from the same root, making her a worthy replacement to fuel his ascension.

### Adventure Hooks

- The PCs arrive in a coastal town to find a survivor barely recovering from a Razmiran raid. He says that an Ustalavic ship bearing several of his family members sailed away just a short while ago.
- If Captain Almira Perine has become an ally of the PCs, then Liald attempts to abduct her—preferably on the open waters away from any witnesses or assistance.

### Drawback

If the PCs defeat Liald without proving his involvement with the Whispering Way, they will be branded criminals within Caliph's and receive a –8 penalty to all Diplomacy checks from its citizens. In addition, the Whispering Way may seek to remove the PCs before they can uncover more of the Way's schemes within Ustalav's military.



### CAPTAIN LIALD GASPAIR

CR 4

#### XP 1,200

Male human (Varisian) bard (dirge bard) 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 26)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** –1; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, –1 Dex)

**hp** 26 (5d8)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5; +4 vs. fear, energy drain, death effects, and necromantic effects

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 longsword +4 (1d8+1/19–20)

**Ranged** mwk composite shortbow +3 (1d6/×3)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance 17 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2)

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +10)

2nd (3/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *scare* (DC 18), *summon*

*swarm*

1st (6/day)—*cause fear* (DC 17), *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *secret speech*<sup>1SG</sup>, *sotto voce*<sup>FG</sup> (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 15), *know direction*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *scrivener's chant*<sup>50S</sup>, *unwitting ally*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 15)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Given time, Liald drinks his *potion of bull's strength*.

**During Combat** Liald attempts to disable as many of his enemies as possible, using spells or fascinate. If they prove resistant to this form of attack, he casts *summon swarm* to set bats upon ranged foes then wades into battle with his longsword.

**Morale** Although Liald is intensely focused on achieving his goals, he is more interested in the success of his long term plans than in winning near-sighted victories. If reduced to fewer than 8 hp, Liald flees and plots his revenge.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 8, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Athletic, Craft Wondrous Item, Innocent Blood<sup>UCA</sup>, Spell Focus (necromancy)

**Skills** Bluff +13, Climb +2, Disguise +13, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11 (+2 to identify undead creatures and their abilities), Perform (keyboard) +15, Perform (oratory) +13, Profession (sailor) +9, Spellcraft +10, Swim +2

**Languages** Common, Necril, Varisian

**SQ** bardic knowledge +2, haunting refrain, secrets of the grave

**Combat Gear** *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 studded leather armor, +1 longsword, mwk composite shortbow with 20 arrows, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of protection* +1, journal<sup>UE</sup>, mwk pipe organ, Razmiran disguise, spell component pouch

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Haunted Eyes (Ex)** A dirge bard gains a +4 bonus on saves against fear, energy drain, death effects, and necromantic effects.

**Haunting Refrain (Su)** A dirge bard can use a Perform (keyboard) or Perform (percussion) check in place of an Intimidate check to demoralize an opponent, with a bonus equal to half his bard level. In addition, saving throws against any fear effect he creates are made with a –2 penalty, and this penalty increases by –1 every 5 levels beyond 5th.

**Innocent Blood** Liald gains a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks. Each time he slays an intelligent creature, he gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls and caster level checks for 1 minute (this bonus does not stack with itself).

**Secrets of the Grave (Ex)** A dirge bard gains a bonus equal to half his bard level on Knowledge (religion) checks made to identify undead creatures and their abilities. A dirge bard may use mind-affecting spells to affect undead as if they were living creatures, even if they are mindless (though spells that affect only humanoids do not affect them). In addition, he may add one necromancy spell from the spell list of any arcane spellcasting class to his list of spells known at 2nd level and every four levels thereafter.

# Golarion Gazetteer:

## Kavapesta

By *Michael Riter*

Art by *Tanyaporn Sangsnit*

**K**nown to outsiders as “The Graveyard”, the city of Kavapesta stands as the only beacon of civilization—albeit a dim one—in the Ustalavic county of Amaans. Even so, few stay long and fewer think of living in the city for fear of the maladies that rise out of the contaminated lake every few years to plague the citizens. Beyond this, the rocky land and rough hills make farming all but impossible, thereby making food shortages quite common.

Most Ustalavs believe Kavapesta and the lake which shares its name are cursed—all, that is, except the Pharasmians who make up the overwhelming majority of the city’s population. Many Ustalavs believe Kavapesta’s inhabitants would have fled the settlement centuries ago in favor of much more hospitable lands were the city not home to the terrifyingly magnificent Cryptgate Cathedral, a site of pilgrimage for those who follow The Lady of Graves.

Most people living within the city are impoverished and spend the majority of their time working in the coal mines outside the city just to scrape together enough coppers to buy the necessities they need to survive. Despite their many trials, the people of Kavapesta seem content with their lives, overcoming one challenge at a time. By embracing the future, no matter how bleak it may be, the people believe they will be rewarded in the afterlife, blessed by Pharama for their patience and dedication to her ideals. In the immortal words of Mother Kavapesta, the priestess after whom the city is named, “Through struggle comes strength and through strength comes salvation.”

## Noteworthy Sites in Kavapesta

### *Cryptgate Cathedral*

Located at the very center of the city, the Cathedral is certainly the most important aspect of Kavapesta. Rising hundreds of feet into the air, Cryptgate is among the tallest structures in all of Ustalav and can be seen for miles outside the city. The black-robed priests regularly conduct ceremonies here in honor of any births or deaths to occur within the city. During holidays, such as the Day of Bones, the citizens gather within the massive Cathedral for long, prayer-filled days with short breaks for meals of coarse bread and wine.

Cryptgate’s two grand towers, which rise out of its southern side, are not only home to the Pharasmin clerics and inquisitors, but also the more militant members of their faith: warpriests, monks, and even a host of rangers. All who dwell within Cryptgate are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities to the Church. Some lead sermons,

while others patrol the borders of the city for signs of hostile creatures. Some adherents accept quests elsewhere in Ustalav to hunt dangerous criminals or villains who grossly violate the tenets of the faith, such as necromancers or powerful, intelligent undead. Though she holds many administrative duties, Sister Toyal, a local celebrity viewed by the lay people as the unofficial head of the Cathedral, somehow finds the time to occasionally head out of the city on her own to strike down threats to the church and its followers.

### *The Undercroft*

Royalty, wealthy businessmen, and commoners alike share their final resting place in this vast underground complex beneath the city. Serving as Kavapesta’s graveyard, the Undercroft is considered one of the safest places within Ustalav—perhaps in all of Golarion—for the deceased to be laid to rest. With the entirety of the Undercroft being hallowed ground, there is no threat of any undead rising within it. Even so, Pharasmin priests and others have added even more protections over the centuries. The only entrance to the Undercroft lies in the heart of Cryptgate, and hundreds of animated statues in the form of Pharama herself guard the catacombs. Any intruder hoping to disturb the tombs will meet a very quick end. It is little wonder why aristocrats all around Ustalav request to be buried within these halls.

### *The Necropolis*

Interestingly enough, the Necropolis of Kavapesta is not a place where one finds tombs or any sort of burial grounds. Instead, it is the colloquial name for the town square. Located just south of the Cathedral, the Necropolis is littered with a variety of merchant stands, occasionally accompanied by those of food merchants from Ardeal. Here also lies the meeting place between the Copper Quarter, whose inhabitants spend their nights in the mud and cobbles, and the Silver Quarter, a spread of ramshackle structures where the majority of the city’s population lives. Overlooking the entire scene is a massive statue of Mother Kavapesta, who perpetually glares down on those within the Necropolis, holding an hourglass in one hand and a dagger in the other. It is said that she watches over all the dealings within the area, ensuring fair trade practices.

### *The Drunken Prophet*

This tavern is an odd place of merriment and borderline sacrilege in the normally dour city of Kavapesta. Run by a peculiar but high-spirited gnome named Trig, this tavern is rarely empty when night falls. In a strange mix of reverence for the Lady of Graves and lackadaisical debauchery known by those who worship Cayden Cailean, The Drunken Prophet is normally filled with people who come here to unwind after a long day in the mines, though it is not unheard of for a priest or two to step in on occasion. The tavern’s main attraction is actually the owner herself. As a talented bard and former adventurer, Trig regularly entertains guests with stories of her days spent roaming the horror-filled lands of Ustalav and occasionally uses a harrow deck to mystify the Pharasmians and tell their fortunes. Whether or not her readings are accurate remains to be seen, as most are so intoxicated by the time they leave that they forget her readings altogether.

### *Devil’s Hut*

It is quite difficult for a wizard to simply hide within an isolated community such as Kavapesta, especially if the wizard in question is a diabolist from Chelifax. The citizens of the city have few qualms



about letting such a wizard practice his art, however, provided that it does not harm them in any way and his magical research stays well clear of necromancy.

Devil's Hut is the home of this Chelish wizard, a human by the name of Alkyd Bier. Living in one of the more isolated parts of the Silver Quarter, Alkyd performs his experiments behind closed doors for the most part, but this is mostly for the sake of keeping things quiet in Kavapesta. After all, like any good Asmodean, he made sure there was no law against diabolism, and in fact regularly invites Pharasmin inquisitors into his home to check for traces of necromancy. Although his cooperation has earned him the trust of the people of Kavapesta, Alkyd has also shown that he is always there in times of need. He always offers his magic and expertise in times of plague or crisis, though few know what bargains he strikes for providing such aid.

### *Willowmourn*

Despite technically being located outside of the city, it is impossible to speak of Kavapesta without mentioning Willowmourn. This beautiful manor is the envy of aristocrats around Ustalav and is known for its vast gardens filled with exotic plants from all over Ustalav, Razmiran, Lastwall, and even the River Kingdoms. Servants can regularly be seen from outside of its gate trimming the massive hedge labyrinths and tending to the other parts of the grounds.

Located on the west bank of Lake Kavapesta, this grand estate is the home of the Galdana family, where the current ruler of Amaans, Count Lucinean Galdana, supposedly spends his nights. The people of Amaans generally see him as a fair and just leader, rarely interfering with the state of affairs within Kavapesta or the few hamlets spread about the county. Rumors have spread as

of late, however, that the Count disappears from his manor late at night and doesn't reappear for days, or even weeks, at a time. There are those who say that he has given himself over to wild fey creatures—such as the beautiful nymphs—in pursuit of desires beyond normal human understanding. These rumors have made many, especially the conservative folk within Kavapesta, wary of Lucinean's rule. Those within the estate deny these allegations, of course, and unconvincingly insist that the Count's pleasures are no more extreme than those of the average Pharasmin cleric.

### **KAVAPESTA**

N small city

**Corruption** -1; **Crime** -4; **Economy** -1; **Law** +2; **Lore** +1; **Society** -3

**Qualities** holy site, insular

**Danger** +5; **Disadvantages** plagued (filth fever)

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** overlord

**Population** 5,370 (5,300 humans, 30 gnomes, 20 dwarves, 10 elves, 10 other)

#### Notable NPCs

**Alkyd Bier** (LE male human wizard 6/diabolist 3)

**Sister Rudia Toyal** (LN female human cleric of Pharamasma 15)

**Trig the Minstrel** (NG female gnome bard 6)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 3,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 25,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 8th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6 🐉



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# Rituals Secret and Superstitious

By Wojciech "Drejk" Gruchala

Art by Allen Morris

**S**outherners ignorant of Ustalav's history might consider it the land of superstition where unenlightened folks are terrified by wind rustling in the forest and of their own shadows, but anyone who has studied the turbulent history of the region knows the dark forces shaping the past and the present. With this knowledge, many of the practices and fears shared by Ustalavs make sense, and plenty of their hearth lore and folk rituals contain grains of actual power.

## Feats

These new feats can be taken by any character who meets the prerequisites.

### Feverish Blessing Of Urgathoa

Illness keeps you awake and sharp.

**Prerequisites:** Great Fortitude, worshiper of Urgathoa.

**Benefits:** You cast spells and spell-like abilities with the disease descriptor at +1 caster level. While you are afflicted with a disease, your blood is rushed with fever, making you immune to sleep effects. If you deliberately fail a Fortitude saving throw against a disease, reduce the resulting ability damage by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

**Special:** Undead with this feat spread filth fever with their natural attacks. The initial saving throw of the disease is Charisma-based.

### Household Wards

You know the folk wards and protections against malicious entities.

**Benefits:** Once per day you can spend 10 minutes warding an inhabited house against a specific kind of intruder: evil outsiders, fey, hags, shapechangers, or undead. Creatures of the chosen kind suffer a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks within the warded household, and the inhabitants of the household gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against all special abilities of such creatures. For every 5 ranks you possess in the corresponding Knowledge skill (arcana for shapeshifters, nature for fey

and hags, planes for evil outsiders, or religion for undead), the bonuses and penalties increase by 1. Effects of a household ward last for 24 hours.

**Special:** Creatures invited or summoned to a household by any of its current inhabitants are unaffected by the household wards.

## Secret Whispers

You have learned how to listen to whispered gossip of elements, animals, trees, or spirits. Other people might consider you crazy or worse, though.

**Prerequisites:** Alertness, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana, nature, planes, or religion]).

**Benefits:** You cast divination spells and spell-like abilities at +1 caster level. You can use the Knowledge skill you have Skill Focus with in place of Diplomacy to gather information—instead of speaking with the local people you listen to the wind, water, animals, local spirits, or ghostly vestiges, as appropriate for the skill being used.

**Special:** Dragons, fey, outsiders, and undead have innate affinity for listening to secret whispers of their corresponding Knowledge skill—arcana, nature, planes, and religion, respectively. They can select this feat without meeting the Skill Focus prerequisite.

## Rogue Talents

These new talents can be taken by any rogue. Talents marked with an asterisk add effects to a rogue's sneak attack. Only one such talent can be applied to each attack, and the rogue must decide to apply the talent before making the attack.


*Curse-Dodger (Ex):* A rogue with this talent has a 20% chance of

having a random minor accident (e.g. slipping, sneezing, cutting oneself on a sharp item) just before touching a cursed item for the first time, preventing the contact and acting as forewarning. Additionally, the rogue gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against curse effects.

*Healer's Knack (Ex):* A rogue with this talent gains a bonus equal to half her level on Heal checks and Use Magic Device checks made to activate conjuration (healing) effects. When she restores hit points using a spell-completion or spell-trigger item activated with Use Magic Device, or the treat deadly wounds or long term care applications of the Heal skill, the rogue restores additional hit points equal to 1/2 her level.

*Offensive Recognition\* (Ex):* When a rogue with this talent damages a creature with her sneak attack, she can attempt an appropriate Knowledge check as a free action to recognize the creature and identify its abilities and weaknesses. The rogue gains a bonus on this check equal to number of sneak attack dice rolled, and she attempts the check as

if trained in the relevant skill.

*Readied Resistance\* (Ex):* When a rogue with this talent damages a creature with her sneak attack, she gains a bonus to saving throws against the creature's special abilities equal to half the number of sneak attack dice rolled (minimum +1). This bonus last for 1 round. 





# The Account of the

## Lingering Dead

By Joseph "RainyDayNinja" Kellogg

Art by Todd Westcot

"I think," Karnavi said, pushing away his plate away, "that it is time we retired to the parlor."

He and I dined alone that night, which was quite unusual. Karnavi often invited a small group of friends and acquaintances to hear his tales of investigations into the arcane and occult, but he said this evening's story would be of particular interest to me. I could only speculate as to the reason. I did have peculiar tastes in my collection of antiquities, but the secrecy with which he called me suggested a more sensitive matter—perhaps a scandal among our close circle, or revelations about the Orcish invasions responsible for the dark side of my lineage.

Silent servants collected our dishes as we strolled across well-traveled carpets, past racks of heirloom weapons and trophies of Karnavi's previous investigations, and into a sumptuously furnished, modestly lit parlor. Karnavi sat in a large and imposing chair, his pointed ears, inherited from his mother, resting against the white antimacassar. I chose a smaller, but no less comfortable, chair near the fireplace where the crackling logs settled slowly into ash.

Karnavi languidly struck a tindertwig and lit his old rosewood pipe. "I mentioned previously that I was retained to investigate and exorcise a manor on the outskirts of Ardis, which had lain unoccupied amidst rumors of a haunting."

"Of course," I replied.

Karnavi began, "I arrived at the manor just as the sun was beginning to set, as the spirits lingering inside were said to be most active just after dusk. It was also believed that somewhere within the walls resided a shrine to Pharasma. To capitalize on this, I carried with me a scroll purchased from a Pharasmin priest, which I intended to use to consecrate the area and establish a place of refuge against whatever horrors awaited me.

"The manor's reputation evidently did little to keep away the vermin. Cobwebs hung from every corner and I could occasionally hear rats scrabbling within the walls. But even in decay, the grand hall was impressive. Beneath the shroud of fine dust, magnificent carpets flowed across marble floors, and crystal chandeliers hung from the vaulted ceiling. I quickly surveyed the area and found no auras of magic, though I did spy a trap that had been sprung long ago, likely by some unlucky scavenger.

"I continued through the house, every step announcing my trespass on the poorly maintained wooden floors. Advancing slowly, I kept a watchful eye for dangers arcane, undead, or mechanical. I passed through the dining room and into the kitchen, where the pantry had been abandoned to mold. Fortunately, the stench of decay had dissipated years ago. With great caution I approached the ancient stone steps leading into the wine cellar."

I chuckled at this point in his tale. "You never did discriminate in your

attention to all kinds of spirits."

"Quite so," he replied with a smile. "Speaking of which," he trailed off as he poured two glasses of brandy. He passed one to me, which I gladly accepted.

He leaned forward and continued. "I gave this entrance special attention. The last residents of the manor were known for their love of fine drink, and I expected the valuable contents of the room to be well protected. I was rewarded and soon found slots where poison darts were poised to launch at less careful souls. I had my tools with me, as always, and made short work of the springs, which rendered the darts immobile. Now that the passage was secure, I continued underground.

"Racks upon racks of wines and liquors remained, their labels and contents obscured by dust. I allowed them to remain untouched. I did not wish to anger any spirits lingering in the area.

"Pressing to the back of the cellar, I happened upon the shrine I'd been seeking. However, it was not dedicated to Pharasma as I had been led to believe, but to Cayden Cailean. The Pharasmin scroll would be useless on such an altar, but night was drawing nearer and I chose to pause there as I waited to see how the haunting manifested. I prayed that the Lucky Drunk would be with me in my defense. Upon further examination, I saw that it was host to a number of powerful magical auras, though they were beyond my skill to identify.

"As I prepared my scrolls and wands for the night's ordeal, I heard a great clock chiming in the rooms above me. I knew that no mortal had been in the manor recently enough to wind the clock, so I could be certain that the haunting was beginning. The hair on the back of my neck prickled. I kept one hand ready to seize any spell components I might need, while the other drew my sword from its sheath.

"With no warning but a sudden shriek, a spectral figure leapt from the wall. It lunged at me. When its claws passed through my flesh, I could feel them tear into my soul. I staggered back, but regained my footing and forced the melancholy refrains of a dirge that would render the spirit corporeal. The creature grew more solid, making it easier to see and avoid its attacks.

"I hacked at the shadowy form. My blade, almost gleeful in my hand as it sliced into its favorite foe, gave off flashes of light with each hit. I heard the wail of a second approaching spectre, and quickly slayed the first. But I wasn't ready in time, and the second spirit pushed its black claws into my chest.

"I lurched around the altar, seeking cover and divine protection from my foes. I had managed to strike down the first spirit, but the second proved harder to dispatch, especially since I had no chance to cast any spell on it. I placed my hand on the altar and cried out 'Preserve me!' It was only then that the Caydenite trappings dissolved into ether, and I saw the visage of the Pallid Princess carved into its surface. Evidently the auras that I had failed to discern earlier had been ones of illusion, meant to mask the sinister purpose of the hidden shrine.

"Immediately, I could feel the tug on my own spirit, as the goddess I had inadvertently beseeched for aid began to grant my wish. The very fiber of my essence was twisted, knit and transmuted by necromantic energy, and I collapsed on the floor. The spirit continued to wail, but kept its distance as its patron did her dastardly work."

My host grew silent at this point, and I pressed him to continue. "But how didthoo escape?" My tongue was heavy, more so than the late hour and the amount of drink I'd consumed would account for.

"How did I escape?" Karnavi echoed my question. "But that is why I called you here. I didn't escape! My soul remains in the wretched state it was placed in that night. I've sought the cure for my condition for the last week, but it still eludes me. You see my hand?" He held it up, still clutching his untouched brandy which sloshed with each tremor of his frame. "It shakes so because I feel the urge, the need, for sustenance. A



sustenance that no mortal has a right to, but that I must have all the same.”

I could see now in his face the sunken eyes and pale skin of a man who suffered from a most dreadful disease of the soul.

I struggled to cry out, but my body betrayed me and refused to move. I recognized now that his story was no mere yarn, but the means by which to magically enrapture me and leave me ignorant of the foreign taste in my drink. I’d known he possessed such tricks but never suspected I would fall victim to them myself.

“I am truly sorry,” Karnavi said, drawing a dagger from the writing desk in the corner. “Please take heart dear friend. The knowledge I gain from your sacrifice might grant me insight into my condition. But above all, I must feed.”

\*\*\*

The snail-like psychopomp dispassionately watched the half-orc’s spirit as he prattled on.

“You understand now? Do you see? I...I should be allowed to return, to help my friend find his way. It wasn’t fair, not fair at all, that Pharasma abandoned such a loyal servant, one who’s helped so many find peace too.”

The creature shook its head vigorously, wagging its horns and waving its staff disapprovingly. “No. You died, you go. No exceptions. The Boneyard awaits you.”

The spirit’s face grew sad, then fell slack in resignation. “Yes, yes, of course. I can feel the silver rush of the River around me even now. But you will promise me, won’t you, that Pharasma will find him peace as well?”

The shoki wagged its head again. “No promises. Only inevitability.”

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# Heroes' Hoard:

## Forbidden Tomes

By Cole Kronewitter

Art by Carlos Torreblanca

Hidden across Golarion are repulsive libraries filled with books of alien lore. Created by insane members of the Old Cults, these forbidden tomes grant strange powers to those who read them. Reading a forbidden tome is a lengthy and dangerous process. It typically requires 2d10+30 hours and has a 10% chance of attracting the attention of a cosmic horror from the Dark Tapestry. The exact nature of this attention is left to GM discretion, but should involve a creature with a CR at least 4 higher than the reader's character level.

### BOOK OF CALAMITOUS SIGNS

**Aura** faint divination; **CL** 3rd  
**Slot** none; **Price** 4,300 gp;  
**Weight** 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

Rows of interlocking teeth surround the edges of a *book of calamitous signs*. After the wielder reads the ruinous prophecies contained within the tome, the book comes alive and constantly whispers ominous warnings. These whispers are barely audible, but can be heard in a quiet room.

Once per day as a standard action, the wielder can ask the book to portend the future. This functions identically to *augury*, except that if the divination's result would clearly be woe, the spell has a 100% chance of success.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *augury*, *doom*; **Cost** 2,150 gp

### CANTICLES OF THE SQUAMOUS EMPIRE

**Aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 7th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 25,200 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

A copy of *canticles of the squamous empire* drips with slime and squirms when touched. After reading the ululating verses contained within, the wielder gains the ability to transform the rubbery pages of the book into grasping tentacles.

As a standard action, the wielder may tear up to 10 pages from

the book and throw them anywhere within 30 feet. When the pages land, they instantly transform into a pile of squirming tentacles, as per the *black tentacles* spell (CMB +12). These tentacles cover one 5-foot square for each page torn from the book. The squares can be arranged in whatever pattern the wielder chooses, but they must all connect to at least one other square.

A typical copy of *canticles of the squamous empire* has 50 pages. Once all the pages are removed, the book is destroyed.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *black tentacles*; **Cost** 12,600 gp

### BOOK OF THE APHOTIC DEPTHS

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 11th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 47,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

A typical copy of a *book of the aphotic depths* has a cover crafted from whalebone and dried seaweed. After reading the forgotten secrets within, the wielder gains the ability to summon water from the lightless ocean depths.

Once per day, the wielder can create a 20-foot-radius sphere of water at a chosen point within 60 feet. The water is fixed to that point and retains its spherical shape, even if summoned in the air.

The sphere's waters are icy and absolutely black (as *darkness*).

The water is also highly pressurized and deals 4d6 points of damage per round (Fort DC 19 half) to creatures submerged inside it. Creatures with the aquatic subtype take half damage from this water pressure. Deep-sea creatures (such as krakens or aboleths) are immune to this damage entirely.

The sphere evaporates after 11 rounds.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *control water*, *darkness*; **Cost** 23,500 gp

### THIRTEEN CHANTS OF THE NUMINOUS EYE

**Aura** moderate divination; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 32,400 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

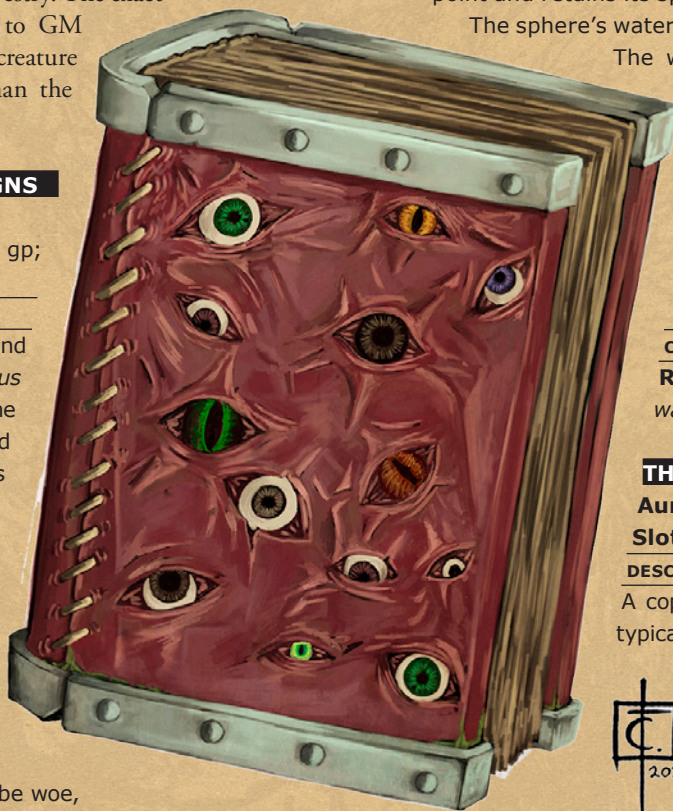
A copy of *thirteen chants of the numinous eye* is typically a leather-bound book with a lidless eye etched onto the cover. After reading the entirety of the obscene rites listed therein, the wielder gains the ability to remove one or more eyes from his head once per day as a standard action. Once removed, his eyes freely float through the air, and he may direct their movement as the *prying eyes*

spell. The wielder is blind while his eyes are removed, but he may replay everything his eyes saw after they return to his head.

If an eyeball is destroyed or moves beyond its maximum range, the eye is lost and the wielder takes 1 point of damage. If all his eyes are lost, the wielder remains blind until his eyes are restored. The wielder regrows new eyes every 1d4 days as long as *thirteen chants of the numinous eye* remains in his possession. He also recovers from effects that otherwise cause permanent blindness in 1d4 days.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *prying eyes*, *regenerate*; **Cost** 16,200 gp





# Children's Songs of

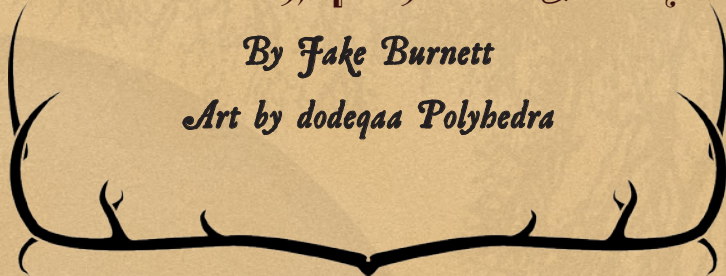
## Ustalav

as Collected by Mortmain

Quibblemuch, Pathfinder Society

By Fake Burnett

Art by dodeqaa Polyhedra



**E**ven in Ustalav they have children. And children, no matter how dark their homeland, sing songs. The songs of children often hold more lore than their simple singers know.

With this in mind, I have collected the following Ustalavic skip-rope ditties. I hope they may be useful, not just to my fellows of the Pathfinder Society, but equally to would-be visitors to the Immortal Principality. If these are the light-hearted fancies of Ustalavic children, how much grimmer must be the truths of their parents.

### Nine Naïve Ninnies

Nine naïve ninnies the Counties call:  
they come to Ustalav, one and all.

*Four brave paladins all in a row  
off to the Shudderwood they must go.*

One will sup of noble meat,  
one will feast on the ash of defeat,  
one will dance in a dead wolf's skin,  
one will tumble down a well of sin.

*Three changeling witches all in a ring,  
hear their mother in the Graidmere sing.*

One will stay and play with dolls,  
one will obey her mother's call,  
one will find love in the heart of a crone,  
and sip the grief from a maid's marrow bone.

*Two bright soldiers from Andoran,  
charge to Ardis for the Rights of Man.*

One will languish in liberty's cell,  
one will study the virtues of Hell  
to learn to tempt a devil to good  
and how you sacrifice Is to Should.

Nine naïve ninnies the Counties' call:  
one by one they all must fall.

### The Whispermen's Wail

Life is the cell without a lock,  
tick and tock, tick and tock.  
Life is the lonely prison shout  
let us out, let us out.

Death is the home without a door,  
what's more, what's more,  
death is the place where we begin,  
let us in, let us in.

### Counting Cutter Jack

*Count your sorrows one, two, three,  
into the Shudderwood, come play with me.*

One for sunshine  
two for rot  
three for Is  
and four for Ought.

*Count your sorrows seven, six, five,  
you'll never leave these woods alive.*

Five for the Harrow  
six for the hoe  
seven for a secret  
no one must know.

*Count your sorrows eight, ten, nine,  
here in the woods your life is mine.*

Eight for never  
nine for lies  
ten for the wind  
where the black crow flies.

*Count your sorrows back from ten  
you're never going home again. 🐉*





# Songs Heard in the Void

## Between the Stars

### Bardic Masterpieces of Versex

By Ian "Set" Turner

Art by Catherine Batka

**T**he Music of Erich Zann. The mad pipings of the blind idiot god Azathoth, forcing lesser gods into his orbit. Artists compelled to craft the likeness of Great Cthulhu. The psychosis-inducing finale to *The King in Yellow*. The ties between artistic expression and the inherent madness of the Old Ones have always been close, and in Versex, where cults to these Outer Gods thrive, one can find such madness given voice.

The rules for bardic masterpieces are found in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*.

#### *Catalytic Catastrophe (Orgesh)*

**Prerequisite:** Perform (oratory) 1 rank or Perform (percussion) 1 rank.

**Cost:** Feat or 1st-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** With a sharp sound, you cause a single alchemical item within 30 feet to discharge, detonate, or ignite, damaging its holder normally and possibly endangering those nearby if the item has a splash or area effect. Alchemical items with no damaging or dangerous properties are merely destroyed by this effect. If the item is in hand, the bearer is allowed a Reflex save (DC 15) to drop it in any adjacent square (possibly still suffering splash damage). This performance can only detonate an alchemist's bomb as part of a readied action, as they are only empowered at the moment they are thrown.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round.

**Action:** 1 standard action.

#### *Corruption's Call (Xhamen-Dor)*

**Prerequisite:** Perform (string instruments) 4 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 2nd-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This performance causes necrotic black fungoid tendrils to spring from the wounds of an injured foe. A single wounded creature within 60 feet, which can be living or corporeal undead but not a construct or incorporeal creature, takes 1d6 damage and sprouts wiry fibrous growths that wrap around them, acting as a tanglefoot bag for 1 round. The duration can be maintained with additional rounds of bardic performance, requiring only a standard action, with damage recurring on the performer's turn. If an entangled creature suffers a bleed effect, the unwholesome growths gain vigor. They regain hit points equal to the amount of bleed damage taken, and add 1 to the DC of Strength checks

to break free for every 2 points of bleed damage suffered that round.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per round.

**Action:** 1 full round.

#### *Dance of the Spheres (Azathoth)*

**Prerequisite:** Perform (dance) 7 ranks or Perform (wind instruments) 7 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 3rd-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This performance compels listeners to move according to the inscrutable mechanics of the mad piper, circling inevitably in the performer's orbit. The performance affects a number of targets (allies and enemies, combined) equal to the bard's class level. All targets must be within 60 feet and be able to perceive the performance. The bard chooses a direction, clockwise or counterclockwise, around himself. Affected allies who move in the chosen direction are granted an additional 5-foot step per round, can ignore the effects of difficult terrain, do not provoke attacks of opportunity by moving, and can move through squares occupied by hostile targets without penalty. Affected foes must move in the chosen direction or take 1d6 damage each round from mysterious abrasive pressure, treat all terrain as difficult terrain, and always provoke attacks of opportunity while moving. Allies moving counter to the bard's selected direction also suffer these penalties. The bard can spend a standard action and an additional round of bardic performance to maintain the effect each round.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per round.

**Action:** 1 full round.

#### *Dreamers in the Deep (Cthulhu)*

**Prerequisite:** Perform (sing) 7 ranks or Perform (wind instruments) 7 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 3rd-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This performance calls up quasi-real dream imagery to confound the senses. Allies within 30 feet gain a single *mirror image* that refreshes each round on the performer's action, while enemies within 30 feet are treated as if flanked, as indescribable horrors lurk at the edges of their perception and divide their attention.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per round.

**Action:** 1 full round.

#### *Proclamations of the Black Pharaoh (Nyarlathotep)*

**Prerequisites:** Oratory 10 ranks, must speak Aklo.

**Cost:** Feat or 4th-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This guttural chant causes everyone within 30 feet to become unable to speak, read, or hear any language other than Aklo as their ears bleed and their mouths become disfigured. Anyone affected who did not already speak Aklo is treated as deafened for the purposes of spell failure. For every round that this effect is maintained, the radius increases by 30 feet to a maximum of 90 feet after 3 rounds. The duration can be maintained with additional rounds of bardic performance, requiring only a standard action.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per round.

**Action:** 1 full round.

#### *Rite of Hideous Fecundity (Shub-Niggurath)*

**Prerequisite:** Perform (dance) 10 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 4th-level bard spell known.



**Effect:** This boneless supplication causes a number of foes within 30 feet to be nauseated for 1 round as they vomit a swarm of misshapen creatures that function as a bat, rat, or spider swarm (as the spell *summon swarm*) attacking its “creator.” This masterpiece affects a number of targets equal to 1 + 1 for every 5 bard levels the performer possesses.

The bard chooses what type of swarm is brought forth from each target. The duration can be maintained with additional rounds of bardic performance, requiring only a standard action.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per target to initiate, plus 1 bardic performance round per round per target to maintain.

**Action:** 1 full round.

### Sealing the Gates of Horn (Yog-

#### Sothoth)

**Prerequisite:** Perform (sing) 13 ranks or Perform (string instruments) 13 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 5th-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** The twisting notes of this performance weave an ethereal barrier, sealing the doors between worlds within 60 feet of the performer, placing the entire area under the effects of a *dimensional lock*. Anyone attempting to use a forbidden movement effect is staggered for 1 round in addition to the failure of that movement type, and anyone attempting to move by mundane means out of the affected area must succeed at a Will save (DC 15 + performer’s Cha modifier) or find themselves unable to leave.

**Use:** 3 bardic performance rounds, plus 1 bardic performance round per round to maintain.

**Action:** 1 full round.

### The King in Yellow (Hastur)

**Prerequisite:** Perform (act) 16 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 6th-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This macabre spectacle maddens viewers as the performer pantomimes fearful revelation, then violent madness, culminating in attempted suicide. Viewers within 60 feet are fascinated by the performance in the first round. In the second round, a single affected viewer, plus an additional viewer for each additional round of bardic performance spent (up to a maximum of the performer’s Charisma modifier), are violently maddened, gaining the effects of a *rage* spell and attacking the nearest creature, preferring

to target those not similarly enraged by the performance first. In the third round, those affected by the madness of the second round (requiring the expenditure of another round of bardic performance each) are overcome with remorse and attempt suicide, making a coup de grace maneuver against themselves as a full-round action. If the performer is interrupted or if a subject becomes incapable of perceiving the performance, subsequent effects do not occur.

**Use:** 3 bardic performance rounds, plus 1 bardic performance round for each additional target during the second and third rounds.

**Action:** 3 full rounds.

### Wake the Sleeping Thunder (Mbar)

**Prerequisite:** Perform (dance) 1 rank or Perform (percussion) 1 rank.

**Cost:** Feat or 1st-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This forceful performance causes the earth to shake violently and glow red with heat, affecting a single 5-foot square within 30 feet. Those fully in the affected squares must succeed at a Reflex save or fall down and take 1d6 magic bludgeoning and piercing damage. All creatures in affected squares

or adjacent to affected squares suffer an additional 1d6 fire damage from contact with superheated earth and stone. By spending additional rounds of bardic performance, additional 5-foot squares can be affected, but all additional squares must be adjacent to at least one other affected square. The effect can be maintained as a standard action once initiated, and the squares affected can be changed round by round.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per 5-foot square affected, plus one bardic performance round (for any number of squares) to maintain per additional round.

**Action:** 1 full round.


### Watery Grave (Bokrug)

**Prerequisite:** Perform (dance) 4 ranks or Perform (sing) 4 ranks.

**Cost:** Feat or 2nd-level bard spell known.

**Effect:** This performance causes a single target within 60 feet to feel as if they are underwater, suffering the usual penalties to movement and fighting underwater (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 432-433), as well as requiring them to hold their breath to avoid drowning. No actual water is created, and they gain no cover from this effect.

**Use:** 1 bardic performance round per round.

**Action:** 1 standard action. 



# Despair in Darkwell

## A Side Trek Adventure

By Jeff Lee

Maps by Liz Courts and Alex F. Moore

### Adventure Background

On the southern shore of Lake Prophyria, near the Numerian border, sits the hamlet of Darkwell. Those who know of it speak of inbreeding among the populace, pointing to various deformities in the younger folk as proof. The Darkwellers do not welcome outsiders, and only the desperate or unlucky willingly stay the night.

Mordant Spire elf Ahspar Uthilvara, her Varisian mate Yasen Kovac, and their followers founded Darkwell two decades ago. Ahspar, Yasen, and their followers are cultists of Xhamen-Dor, and saw the signs of corruption and rumors of hauntings in the area as indications that the Great Old One they worship lies beneath the lake. Since their arrival, they have attempted to wake the Star Seed from its slumber, conducting profane rituals and sacrifices in the Darkwell, a secret underground chamber for which the city is named. Years ago, one such ritual met with surprising success: fungal horrors rose from the remains of sacrificial victims, and Ahspar's weapon gained potent eldritch power.

However, what the cultists see as signs of the Great Old One are actually the machinations of a hezrou demon named Golgorath, magically bound within the Darkwell. The hezrou amused itself empowering the cultists' ceremony, but the magical surge attracted Xhamen-Dor's notice. Frightened by the Old One's power, Golgorath chose not to participate in further rituals. Without any recent successes, frustrated cultists, especially the younger generation, suggest the Inmost Blot desires more sacrifices.

### Adventure Summary

The adventure is designed for a party of four 5th-level characters. The PCs go to Darkwell to search for a missing person (an overdue contact, ally, family member, or loved one) along their last known route. The inhabitants are preparing the for ritual sacrifice. The PCs can uncover clues that the was definitely in the hamlet recently and that something is amiss.

### Part One: Arrival in Darkwell

Arriving after dusk, the PCs find the place mostly deserted. Some residents can be found in a few of the buildings, but most are in the chapel or the Darkwell, preparing for the ritual. Should the PCs arrive earlier, the cultists are found in or around their homes, tending to the shops, or visiting the inn, while Ahspar prays in the chapel or studies her tomes in her room.

sagging roofs and age-gray walls have the look of an abandoned settlement, but smoke curls from the chimneys of at least two of the buildings, and the rhythmic clangor of a smith's hammer carries in the air. There is an unwholesome air about the place. The plant life is stunted and sickly. The churned mud of the road carries a sulfurous taint, and the ubiquitous algae of Lake Prophyria is contaminated by patches of pus yellow. A weathered board on a worm-eaten post simply declares: "Darkwell."

#### 1. The Smithy (CR 1 or 4)

The steady ringing of hammer on anvil comes from this open-fronted shop.

**Creatures:** In the evening, the smith is here, finishing the day's work before the ritual. He is a young, strapping man, but suffers from a large, gnarled growth on his forehead, nearly hiding his eyes and giving him a rather hideous appearance. During the day, his father—the former smith—and mother are either in the smithy or in their living area above it.

#### SMITH

CR 1

XP 400

Shopkeep (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 284)

**Perception** +6; **hp** 13; **Melee** hammer +4 (1d6+2), slam (headbutt) -1 (1d4+2); **Str** 15; **CMB** +3

#### FATHER & MOTHER

CR 1

XP 400 EACH

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)

hp 13

**Development:** If questioned about the missing person, the smith denies any knowledge. If caught in a lie, he snarls that he's closing up shop for the night and tells PCs to leave. If they force the issue, he hurls a hammer at the nearest PC and runs for the chapel.

#### 2. The Chapel (CR 7)

This building sports a rickety bell tower. Inside are two rows of pews and a dais with a pulpit. The room otherwise lacks any religious trappings or symbols.

PCs who succeeded at a DC 15 Perception check locate a trapdoor behind the pulpit. A ladder beneath that leads down to area D1.

**Creatures:** Eight of the cultists are here, donning their ceremonial robes before descending to the Darkwell. When the PCs enter, the cultists stare ominously at them for a moment, then seven of them attack. One cultist moves to the trap door to warn Yasen and Ahspar.

#### CULTISTS (8)

CR 1

XP 400 EACH

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)

hp 13

**Development:** During the day, there is a 40% chance that Ahspar is here (see entry D3). She explains the lack of religious trappings, saying that this building is for traveling followers of any god to offer prayers or simply reflect. If questioned about the missing person, she claims not to have seen anyone matching that description, but offers to ask around. She invites the PCs to take a meal at the inn and await his arrival, then has Ilhene poison them with oil of taggit.

Weathered buildings cluster around the road ahead. The



## VILLAGE OF DARKWELL

- 1 SMITHY
- 2 CHAPEL
- 3 TRADING POST
- 4, 5, 6 RESIDENCE
- 7 INN
- 8 BOATHOUSE
- 9 DOCK

### 3. Trading Post (CR 3)

**Creatures:** The trader and her husband are in the chapel. Their daughter, who has a twisted leg, is at the inn, so the post is unoccupied. During the day, the three tend the shop.

#### TRADER AND HER HUSBAND CR 1 XP 400 EACH

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)  
hp 13

#### TRADER'S DAUGHTER CR 1 XP 400 EACH

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)  
hp 13; **Speed** 20 ft.

**Development:** The trader and her family deny seeing the missing person, but a DC 15 Perception check reveals that some of the person's items are on the shelf behind the counter. Accusations provoke a fight. The father and daughter facing off against the PCs while the mother slips out the back and runs for the inn, yelling for help.

**Treasure:** A locked (DC 25) chest behind the counter holds 97 gp, 58 sp, and 32 cp.

### 4. Residence

This is the home of the trader and her family.

### 5. Residence

Nana Pilk sits in a rocking chair on this shack's warped porch. The gnarled old woman is blind, a bit senile, and addicted to flayleaf.

She happily chats with visitors, possibly forgetting she's talking to strangers and speaking of the cult and the upcoming ritual. Smooth-talking PCs can learn much from Nana Pilk, including the location of the passage to the Darkwell. Nana Pilk is a noncombatant. If threatened she yells for help and attempts to flee. Nana carries two doses of flayleaf (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 237) and another three in a pouch in the house.

### 6. Residence

Two cultists and their two teenage children live here.

**Creatures:** The cultists are only here during the day. In the evening the parents are in the chapel, and the children at the inn. The son has a vestigial arm (+4 to grapple) and the daughter is extremely obese (−2 Dex).

#### CULTISTS (4) CR 1 XP 400 EACH

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)  
hp 13

### 7. The Inn (CR 7 or CR 8)

This large building has no name, only a wooden sign with "INN" carved on it hanging from rusty chains over the entrance.

**Creatures:** During the day, Yansen runs the place with Ilhene, and there is a 20% chance that Ahspar will be upstairs poring over her books of Old One lore. During the evening, the cultists' children—eight young cultists—are here with Ilhene. At any given time, 1d4+1 cultists are also found here.

**ILHENE CR 1/2****XP 200**

Tavern Singer (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 26)

**hp** 9; **Feats** Skill Focus (Perform [dance]); **Skills** Perform (dance) +12; **Combat Gear** *wand of color spray* (7 charges)

**Morale** If half the cultists fall, Ilhene uses *grease* to cover her escape through the kitchen.

**CULTISTS (8) CR 1****XP 400 EACH**

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)

**hp** 13

**Development:** If the PCs enter peaceably, Ilhene flirts with them and sees to their needs. Ilhene is young and attractive, save for her left hand, which sports only two large, thick-nailed fingers and a thumb. She puts oil of taggit in their drinks or food to incapacitate them and deliver them to her parents as additional sacrifices. If asked about the missing person, she Bluffs and says a person meeting that description passed through recently, but left. She and the other young cultists defend themselves, if the PCs become hostile.

**Treasure:** A cash box behind the bar holds 110 gp, 397 sp, and 142 cp, as well as 6 doses of oil of taggit. In Ahspar's room is a partial transcription of *The Book of Leng*, worth 200 gp to some scholars.

**8. Boathouse**

This building holds several boats needing repair, as well as a set of rusty but serviceable artisan's tools.

**9. The Dock**

This pier has weathered the years better than the rest of the hamlet. Two rowboats are tied here.

**Part II: Entering the Darkwell****D1. Entrance**

Rusted iron rungs lead down to a small, natural cavern, damp and smelling of mold. A winding tunnel leads north.

**D1a. Wall Marker**

Yasen embedded a slime-covered stone in the left wall here to remind the cultists to cover any light sources and proceed in darkness, following the wall, until they are past the shrieker in D2. A similar stone past D2 marks where lights may be used again.

**D2. Fungal Guardians (CR 6)**

This rough chamber has a riot of fungus growing through most of it, with a path running along the wall to the west.

**Hazard:** A shrieker grows here (marked S on the map). If creatures follow the left wall and use no light, it remains dormant.

**Creatures:** If the shrieker is disturbed, the fungus-infested ghouls hiding here shamle forward to attack.

**INFESTED GHOULS (4) CR 2****XP 600**

Fungal ghoul (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146, *Pathfinder RPG*

*Bestiary* 4 116–117)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 13 (2d8+4)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, poisonous flesh (DC 13); **Immune** undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +4 (1d6+3 plus disease) and 2 claws +4 (1d6+3 plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** create spawn, disease (ghoul fever), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 13, elves are immune), poison spore cloud (DC 13)

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +3, Climb +8, Perception +7, Stealth +6, Swim +5

**Languages** Aklo, Common

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Create Spawn (Ex)** A creature killed by Constitution damage from an infested ghoul's spore cloud rises as an infested ghoul over a period of 24 hours. A *plant growth* spell halves the transformation time, and a *diminish plants* spell doubles it. A *blight* spell destroys the fungal spores and prevents the corpse's transformation, but spells that remove disease are ineffective against the growing spores.

**Poisonous Flesh (Ex)** An infested ghoul's flesh is poisonous. Any creature that makes a bite attack against it or ingests any part of it must succeed at a Fortitude save or be afflicted by the poison.

**Fungal Flesh** Poison—ingested; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/minute for 6 minutes; *effect* 1 Str damage, 1 Dex damage, and nauseated for 1 minute; *cure* 2 saves.

**Spore Cloud (Ex)** Once per day, an infested ghoul can release a choking cloud of spores in a 15-foot-radius that lingers in the air for 10 rounds. Any breathing creature in the cloud must succeed at a Fortitude save or inhale the spores. A creature that remains in the area of the spore cloud must continue to attempt Fortitude saves against its effects. Multiple spore clouds require multiple saves from any creature in an area where the clouds overlap.

**Fungal Spores** Poison—inhaled; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con damage and fatigued for 1 minute; *cure* 2 saves.

**D3. The Darkwell (CR 9)**

Fungus grows on the walls and floor of this cavern around the edge of a deep pool, and roots hang from the ceiling. A twisted hunk of black rock rises from the pool with an unconscious figure chained to it, waist-deep in the water.

Ahspar chained the missing to the rock, which is both the cultists' altar and prison of the hezrou, Golgorath. Golgorath can speak telepathically to anyone in the chamber, but does not do so unless he believes that person can free him.

**Creatures:** Ahspar and Yasen organize the ritual. If alerted to



intruders, they prepare for combat.

**AHSPAR UTHILVARA** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

Female elf cleric of Xhamen-Dor 8

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

**Aura** decay (30 ft., 1d6 damage [2d6 vs. plants], -1 Str penalty/round, 8 rounds/day)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +3 natural)

**hp** 55 (8d8+16)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +11; +2 vs. enchantment; **Immune** sleep

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *blighted spear* +12/+7 (1d8+7/×3 plus ability damage) or *mwk dagger* +12/+7 (1d4+6/19–20)

**Ranged** *needle* +6 ranged touch (1 plus 1 bleed)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 5/day (DC 16, 4d6), *scythe of evil* (4 rounds, 1/day), *wooden fists* (+4 dmg, 6 rounds/day)

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th, concentration +13)  
6/day—touch of evil (4 rounds)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 8th, concentration +13)

4th—*divine power*, *poison* (2, DC 20), *unholy blight*<sup>D</sup> (DC 19)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *contagion*<sup>D</sup> (DC 19), *invisibility purge*, *summon monster III* (2)

2nd—*barkskin*<sup>D</sup>, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *owl's wisdom*, *silence* (DC 17)

1st—*bane* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *entangle*<sup>D</sup> (DC 16), *entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from law*

0—*bleed* (DC 16), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*

<sup>D</sup> Domain spell; **Domains** Decay<sup>APG</sup>, Evil

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Ahspar casts *barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *owl's wisdom*, and *divine favor* on herself.

**During Combat** Ahspar will use her spells until opponents close, then casts *divine power* and enters melee.

**Morale** Ahspar is fanatical and will fight to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without *barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *owl's wisdom*, and *divine favor*, Ahspar's statistics are as follows: **Will** +9; **Melee** *blighted spear* +8/+3 (1d8+2/×3 plus ability damage) or *mwk dagger* +8/+3 (1d4+1/19–20); **Str** 12, **Wis** 16; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18; **Skills** Perception +5, Sense Motive +9.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Channel Smite, Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Spell Focus (necromancy)

**Skills** Bluff +5, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +7 (+9 to identify magic item properties);

**Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Elven

**SQ** elven magic

**Combat Gear** *potion of delay poison*, *wand of cure light wounds* (25 charges), *unholy water*; **Other Gear** *blighted spear*, *masterwork dagger*, *masterwork chainmail*, *ring of protection +1*, *robe of needles*<sup>UE</sup>, *wooden unholy symbol*, *black opal ring* (150 gp), *ornate ivory mask* (75 gp)

**YASEN KOVAC** CR 6

**XP 2,400**

Male human blight druid<sup>APG</sup> 7  
NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Aura** miasma (5 ft., sickened 1 round or nauseated 1 round and sickened 1 minute [animal, fey, plant], Fort DC 17)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +10

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+6 armor, +3 natural, +3 shield)

**hp** 56 (7d8+21)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +9; +4 vs. effects that cause him to drop items

**DR** 5/piercing

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**Melee** mwk blood crystal sickle +9 (1d6+3 plus 1 damage vs. bleeding foe) or *shillelagh* +9 (2d6+4)

**Ranged** sling +5 (1d4+3)

**Special Attacks** wild shape 2/day

**Domain Spell-like Abilities** (CL 7th, concentration +11)  
7/day—bleeding touch (+6 melee touch, 1d6 bleed, 3 rounds)

**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 7th, concentration +11)

- 4th—*cure serious wounds*, *death ward*<sup>D</sup>, *slowing mud*<sup>ACG</sup> (DC 18)
- 3rd—*animate dead*<sup>D</sup>, *contagion* (DC 17), *resinous skin*<sup>UC</sup>, *spike growth* (DC 17)
- 2nd—*barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *death knell*<sup>D</sup>, *pox pustules*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 16), *tar ball*<sup>UM</sup>
- 1st—*cause fear*<sup>D</sup>, *entangle* (DC 15), *faerie fire*, *pass without trace*, *shillelagh*, *touch of the sea*<sup>APG</sup>
- 0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *resistance*

<sup>D</sup> Domain spell; **Domain** Death

**TACTICS**



**BLIGHTED SPEAR**

**Aura** moderate necromancy; **CL** 7th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 8,302 gp; **Weight** 6 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

This +1 *spear* has slimy, blue-black fungus growing on the last foot of the haft behind a spearhead spotted with rust. Three times per day, on a successful hit, the virulent fungus corrupts the wound. A creature struck by the *blighted spear* must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1 point of Strength or Constitution damage (50% likelihood of either). On a critical hit, the save DC increases by 2, and on a failed save the creature struck suffers 1 point of both Str and Con damage. This is a poison effect.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *poison*, creator must be a druid or have access to the Plant domain; **Cost** 4,302 gp



Spellcraft +7, Survival +10, Swim +5

**Languages** Common, Druidic

**SQ** miasma, nature bond (Death domain), nature sense, vermin empathy +8, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *antitoxin* (2);  
**Other Gear** +1 *horn lamellar armor*, +1 *heavy wooden shield*, club, masterwork blood crystal<sup>UE</sup> sickle, sling with 10 bullets, gold bracelet (100 gp), 17 gp

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# The Feast of Urgathoa

## An Ustalav Holiday

By Fessie Staffler

Art by Andrew DeFelice and Hugo Solis

Visitors in Ustalav during the winter month of Kuthona may bear witness to an unusual occurrence: children, dressed as ghosts, ghouls, and other undead, going from door to door begging for food. They may also bear witness to the sights and smells of Varisian families cooking in the middle of the town square while setting out a huge banquet table. This is the feast of Urgathoa, an unusual holiday which is celebrated only in Ustalav as well as some remote areas of Varisia and Geb.

### History

The Feast of Urgathoa traces its roots back to the reign of the Whispering Tyrant, who was once known as Tar-Baphon. In the early winter months, the Whispering Tyrant would send his undead minions to the homes of frightened townsfolk to slaughter them and bolster the undead army against the forces of the Shining Crusade. After entire towns were emptied, orcs and other servants of the Whispering Tyrant would pillage the towns of anything edible and hold a massive feast in honor of the Whispering Way's patron, Urgathoa.

When the Shining Crusade finally defeated the Whispering Tyrant, the church of Desna and Pharasma sought to both heal the scars left by the Whispering Tyrant's reign and thumb their noses at Urgathoa. They actively worked to replace memories of the annual slaughter with a night of fun and togetherness.

Despite the transformation of the holiday into something more positive, the church of Iomedae frowns upon it. They believe it glorifies the undead and insults the memory of those who died in the Shining Crusade. The feast is outlawed in cities where Iomedae's church has a large influence. Elsewhere, Iomedae's worshipers refuse to participate in the festivities and sometimes even protest them.

### The Festival

The Feast of Urgathoa is celebrated on the third of Kuthona, but the festivities begin the night before. It starts with parents dressing their children up as various undead (and occasionally as orcs, evil cultists, and other monsters). They go to every home

with a light on in the window and ask for food. Traditionally the item given is about a pound of food, but richer families have been known to give out more. Participating families will usually communicate with each other ahead of time so they each know to give something different.

Once the children have gathered all the food, they bring it to the town square and either the Church of Desna or Pharasma or the town officials collect and store it for the next day.

The festival continues the next day at the crack of dawn when the food is prepared and cooked in the town square. All the food is cooked by noon and a large table is set in the middle of town. Alternate sites for inclement weather include the town hall or a temple. All who donated food to the festival are invited to come and eat.

The feast is a wonderful time for many small towns. The townsfolk get to reconnect with their neighbors and enjoy themselves while eating a good meal. The leftovers of the feast are traditionally given to the poor or to local orphans.

### The Geoffry Melon

Another tradition of the Feast of Urgathoa involves a large melon which has been hollowed out, had a face carved into it, and a lit candle placed inside. This is the Geoffry Melon and it traces its origin back to an old myth concerning Urgathoa and a lazy, greedy melon farmer named Geoffry the Lesser. Because of the similarity between the tale and the feast of Urgathoa, the two stories were connected.

Geoffry lived in a small Ustalav town whose name is lost to antiquity. Geoffry constantly begged, borrowed and stole food from his neighbors until he drove all his friends and neighbors away. He was ultimately left alone with only melons to eat. Geoffry had inherited his farm from his father, and most of his melons rotted on the vine as Geoffry only harvested those he needed for food. He quickly grew to hate the taste of melons.

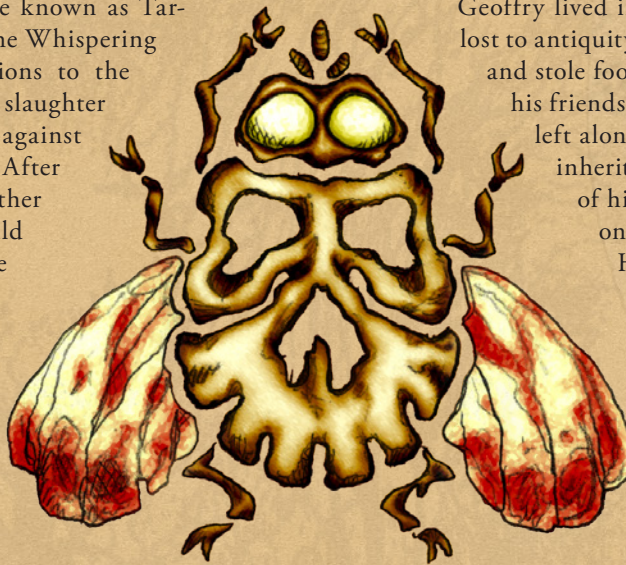
One night, when he had grown sick at the thought of yet another meal of melons, Geoffry saw a procession of pilgrims carrying food for a holy feast. Geoffry followed them, hoping to steal some of their food. He continued to follow despite the realization that they were headed into a graveyard.

As he watched from the shadows, he was horrified to discover the pilgrims were worshipers of Urgathoa who had summoned an army of undead to create a feast for their dark Goddess.

Despite his fear, Geoffry's greed and hunger overrode his common sense. He painted his face up like a ghoul, walked past the undead guarding the food, and managed to steal a large ham meant for the feast. Geoffry made his way home with the ham and was about to eat it when he heard a knock at his door. Geoffry looked out the window and saw none other than Urgathoa standing outside his door.

"Come out and show yourself!" The Pallid Princess snarled. "Show me the fool who dares to steal from my children."

Were Geoffry a wiser man, he would have returned the stolen food and begged for Urgathoa's mercy. But Geoffry was not wise





and thought to swindle the Goddess.

“I have taken no ham, milady,” Geoffry said as he brought an old, spoiled melon with him to the door. “I am afraid this is all the food I have in the world.”

Urgathoa considered the melon. “Is it true? This is the only food you have?”

“Indeed it is,” Geoffry lied. “This melon is all the food I have for an entire month.”

The Pallid Princess smiled, amused by the melon farmer’s gall and foolishness.

“Do not fret little mortal. Although I am renowned for my gluttony, I would not take the last scrap of food from a starving farmer. Instead, I shall take something else from you.”

“What will you take, O Pallid Princess?” Geoffry said, convinced he had tricked the Goddess with his lies.

Urgathoa smiled as she raised her scythe and exclaimed. “YOUR HEAD!”

With a single cut of her scythe, Urgathoa beheaded Geoffry. Then she left, taking the ham, the melon, and his head with her. Urgathoa still has the head in her collection and poor Geoffry is doubly cursed, both to exist as a head who can endlessly eat but never fill the stomach he no longer has, and as a headless body who is endlessly hungry but has no mouth to eat with. The headless body is said to wander Ustalav while carrying a melon lantern on an eternal search for his head (use an advanced dullahan from *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* if you want Geoffry to make an impromptu appearance at your Feast of Urgathoa).

Today families put carved melons on their doorsteps or in their windows on the eve of the feast to invite children to visit their house. It is also believed that these melons ward off or confuse Geoffry since they remind him of the terrible night Urgathoa took his head.

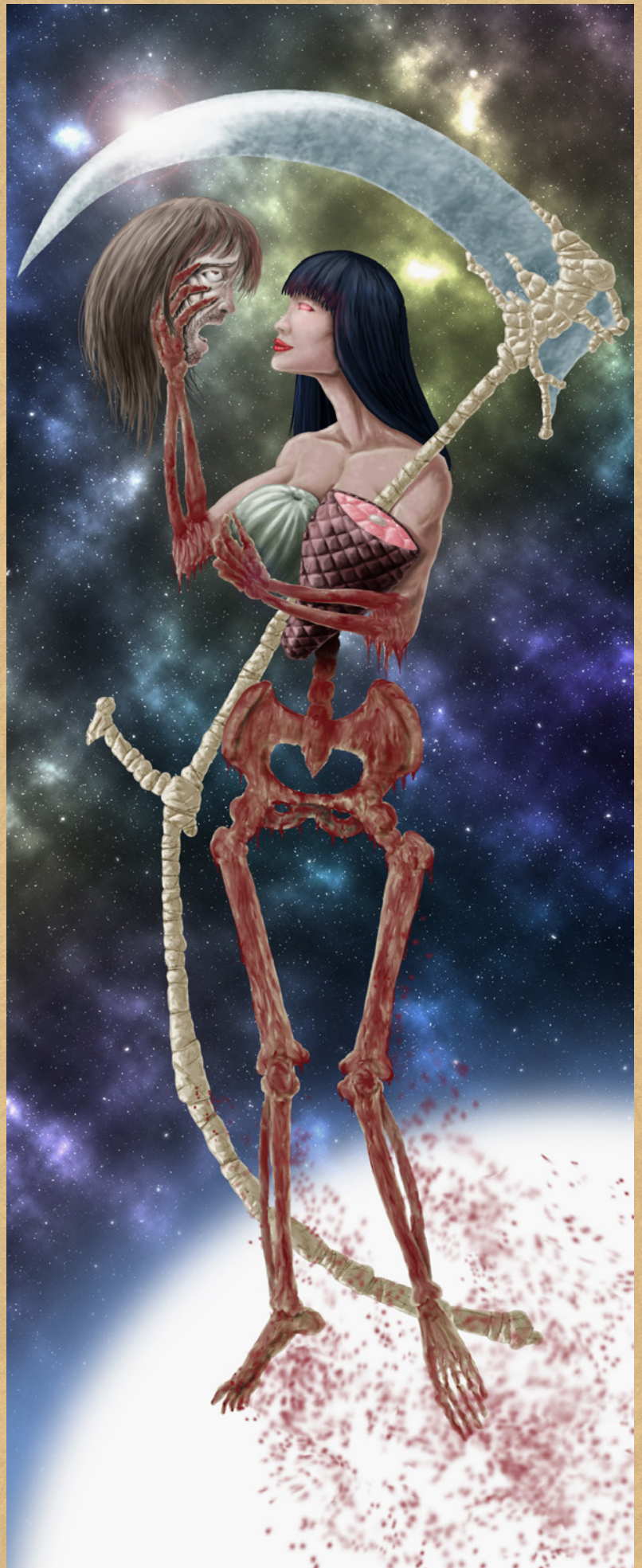
## The Festival Elsewhere

While the Feast of Urgathoa is primarily celebrated in Ustalav, and the disapproval of the Church of Iomedae and their efforts to stamp it out have prevented the holiday from gaining traction elsewhere, it is still celebrated in some other regions.

In Varisia, the ritual is carried out by nomads who celebrate the festival in whichever town they find themselves. Mistrust and prejudice sometimes stymie their efforts to celebrate the feast, but they are also sometimes rewarded with a warm welcome from the locals who choose to join in their festivities.

The Feast of Urgathoa is celebrated in Geb as well, but there it is a sincere tribute to the Pallid Princess. The ritual is performed much the same as in Ustalav, but there are some differences. In addition to dressed up children, undead children (attic whisperers, as well as ghouls and wights) are sent out along with other creatures such as soulbound dolls and even the rare *vulnudaemon*. Because those who participate in the feast aren’t always alive, items collected by the children include barrels of human blood, corpses, and even live slaves that are added to the grisly menu.

Regardless of where and how it is celebrated, the Feast of Urgathoa is steeped in the history of the land. And it is certainly an event that will not be easily forgotten. 🦋



# Under a Hunter's Moon

By Sarah "Ambrosia Slaad" Counts

Art by Darran Caldemeyer

**S**kinwalkers and their lycanthrope kin can be found all over Golarion, but they are most prevalent in haunted Ustalav. In addition to the numerous character options presented in the core books and *Pathfinder Player Companion: Blood of the Moon*, the following new options are available to skinwalkers.

## Skinwalker Race Traits

**Frightening Transformation:** Revealing your inner beast can shake mere humans to their cores. For the purpose of Intimidate checks, you may treat humanoids as if they had the shapechanger subtype. As part of your action to change shape to bestial form, you may make an Intimidate check with a +2 trait bonus to demoralize a single opponent that witnesses the transformation. Regardless of the outcome, they cannot be affected again by your transformation for at least 1 hour.

**Feral Heart:** Unlike the capricious humans, you have an open and easy bond with the creatures of the wild. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Handle Animal checks, and on all Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (local), and Heal checks related to animals, skinwalkers, and lycanthropes. One of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**Iron Spirit:** Your lycanthropic heritage may be considered a curse, but it has given you an innate defense against baleful magic. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against curses and curse effects. This trait bonus increases to +4 on saving throws against contracting lycanthropy.

**Night's Orphan:** An arrogant undead lordling sought to break your will, but you violently taught him the error of his thinking. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks about undead and a +2 trait bonus on Will saves against mind-affecting spells and effects from undead.

**Not the Prey Anymore:** Living among humans has honed your hidden predatory reflexes. During the surprise round and before your first action in combat, you can apply half your Dexterity bonus (if any) to your AC. You still count as flat-footed for the purposes of attacks and effects.

**Trash Scavenger:** Your childhood was difficult at best; the occasional stolen chicken or fish was a feast compared to your usual fare of scavenged leftovers. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against diseases and ingested poisons (but not other poisons). You receive a +2 bonus on Survival skill checks to find food.

**Unfettered:** Captivity is an anathema to your wild soul. You gain a +1 trait bonus on any skill check or attack roll made during the process of escaping capture, or in helping an animal, skinwalker, or lycanthrope escape bondage. Escape Artist is always a class skill for you.

## Skinwalker Favored Class Options

**Alchemist:** While in bestial form, add +1/4 to the alchemist's natural armor bonus from mutagens or +5 minutes duration to mutagen use.

**Barbarian and Bloodrager:** Add +1 to the character's total number of rage rounds per day while in bestial form.

**Brawler and Fighter:** Choose two of the following combat maneuvers: bullrush, dirty trick, grapple, or trip. Gain a +1 bonus to the character's CMD when resisting these two combat maneuvers.

**Cleric:** Add +1/2 to the cleric's channeled energy total when affecting animals, magic beasts, and shapechangers.

**Druid:** Add +1/3 to the druid's natural armor bonus when using wild shape.

**Hunter and Ranger:** Add +1 hit point or +1 skill rank to the hunter's animal companion. If the character ever replaces this companion, the new companion gains these bonus hit points and skill ranks.

**Inquisitor and Investigator:** Add +1/2 to Intimidate checks while in bestial form and +1/2 to Bluff checks to feint.

**Magus:** Select one known magus arcana usable only once per day. The magus adds +1/6 to the number of times it can be used per day. Once that magus arcana is usable twice per day, the magus must select a different magus arcana.

**Oracle:** Add +1/2 to the oracle's level for the purpose of determining the effects of the oracle's curse ability.

**Rogue:** Add +1/2 to Intimidate checks while in bestial form and +1/2 to Bluff checks to feint.

**Shaman and Witch:** Add 5 feet to the range or 1/3 to the DC of a chosen shaman hex. Multiple bonuses from this ability can apply to the same hex, to a maximum of an additional 30 feet and +1 DC for any single hex.

**Skald:** Add +1/4 to the skald's total number of raging song rounds per day.

**Slayer:** Add +1/4 to the slayer's studied target bonus on Perception and Survival checks. When the slayer gains the stalker class feature, this increase also adds to the studied target bonus on Stealth checks.

**Sorcerer and Wizard:** Add one spell known from the sorcerer/wizard spell list. This spell must have the curse, emotion, or polymorph descriptor, and be at least one level below the highest spell level the mage can cast.

**Warpriest:** Add 1/2 to the number of times per day the warpriest can use blessings, but the warpriest can use these additional blessings on only those from the Air, Animal, Charm, Magic, Plant, or Sun domains.

## Skinwalker Feats

Skinwalkers are treated as possessing the racial and wildshape prerequisites for the following feats: Ankle Biter<sup>ARG</sup>, Aspect of the Beast<sup>APG</sup>, Eldritch Claws<sup>APG</sup>, Feline Grace<sup>ARG</sup>, Ledge Walker<sup>ARG</sup>, Natural Spell, Wild Speech<sup>UM</sup>. In addition, the following feats are available to any skinwalker character who meets the prerequisites.

### Animal Hide

Your werewolf has increased in potency, toughening your bestial skin.

**Prerequisites:** Con 13, skinwalker.

**Benefit:** Your natural armor bonus increases by +1. While you are in bestial form, this bonus increases to +2; however, your penalty to Disguise checks increases to -4. Your bestial natural armor resembles the natural coloration, fur, hide, scales, etc. as appropriate for your skinwalker breed; your hide's appearance is static and unique to you.

### Animal Shape

You have honed your powers of transformation to the point where you can become entirely animalistic.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 13, skinwalker.

**Benefits:** When you use your change shape ability, you can instead take the form of an animal appropriate to your skinwalker heritage. Your animal form uses the size, movement rate(s), natural attack(s), and

special qualities listed in the statblock for the appropriate 1st level druid's animal companion's starting statistics: coldborn (bear), fanglord (tiger), nightskulk (dire rat<sup>B1</sup>), ragebred (boar), scaleheart (crocodile), seascarred (shark), and witchwolf (wolf). You gain a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks to appear as this animal, whose appearance is static and unique to you. Changing shape is a standard action. This ability otherwise functions as *beast shape II*, and your ability scores change accordingly.

If you wear a *pelt of the beast*<sup>BOTM</sup> that matches your skinwalker heritage, you may choose to adopt a form resembling the pelt you are wearing instead of your normal animal form.

### **Bestial Pounce (Combat)**

You can charge and make an attack with your natural attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Str 13, Dex 15, base attack bonus +10, skinwalker or lycanthrope.

**Benefit:** When you make a charge in bestial or hybrid form, you can make a full attack with your natural attack(s) only.

### **Improved Animal Shape**

You can become a dire animal.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 13, Animal Shape, base attack bonus +4, skinwalker.

**Benefits:** When you use your Animal Shape ability, you can instead take the form of an animal or dire animal. Your dire animal form is Large, and grants you a +4 size bonus to your Strength, a -2 penalty to your Dexterity, and a +4 natural armor bonus; the damage die for your natural attack(s) also uses the amount typical for a Large creature. You also gain all special qualities listed in the statblock for a druid's animal companion appropriate to your animal shape.


### **Wild Healing**

Vestiges of your lycanthropic resilience awaken, allowing you to supernaturally heal your injuries.

**Prerequisites:** Con 13, Cha 13, base Fortitude save +2, skinwalker.

**Benefit:** Once per day, you can expend 2 uses of your skinwalker change shape ability to heal a number of hit points equal to 1/2 your character level + your Charisma bonus + your Constitution bonus. Using this ability leaves you fatigued for 1 minute.

### **Skinwalker Equipment**

**Claw Razors:** These masterwork wrist-length gauntlets cover the back of the hand and five fingers, ending in short claw-like razors. When used to make unarmed attacks, they function as brass knuckles, but do slashing or bludgeoning damage. If worn by a skinwalker with a claw attack in bestial form, they grant a +1 enhancement bonus on claw attack rolls with that hand, and they change the weapon type from a natural weapon to a light slashing weapon with a critical range of 19-20/x2. Skinwalkers (and other humanoids with claw natural attacks) are proficient with this weapon; all others treat it as an exotic light melee monk weapon. Claw razors can be enhanced like a masterwork weapon or forged of non-steel metals for the normal costs. While worn, the weapon's razors impose a -2 penalty on all precision-based tasks involving that hand (such as opening locks). The listed cost of the item is for one hand. *305 gp, 1 lb., Craft DC 25* 



# Professor Nicodemus' Emporium of Wonders

By *Christoph Ryan/Le Gimmler, Jason Herzog/stei Keeley, Joe "Ignotus Advenium" Kondrak, Thomas*

*"Kibrex" LeBlanc, Jeff Lee, Andrew Omphrey*

*Art by Emilie Cormier, Alex F. "Canada Guy" Moore, and Stephen Wood*

Professor Nicodemus Fauzten, a fast-talking human merchant in a dusty top hat, travels the fog-shrouded roads in his colorful, rickety, wagon. Most of what he sells is snake oil, but hidden among his trinkets and baubles are a few items of true magic.

## BLOOD-CALL BRACERS

**Aura** moderate necromancy and transmutation; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** wrists; **Price** 24,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Deep crimson veins spider-web their way down the length of these iron bracers. Believed to have originated in the eldritch laboratories of Gallowspire, *blood-call bracers* were favorite among the diabolical agents of the Whispering Tyrant. When the wearer is adjacent to a living creature, the veins pulse with a dim light and the bracers' magic pulls the creatures' blood toward the surface of their skin. This effect increases the DC to save against any injury poison by 2 and increases hit point damage taken due to the bleed condition by 2.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse, telekinesis*; **Cost** 12,000 gp

## DECK OF DISTRACTION

**Aura** faint conjuration; **CL** 3rd  
**Slot** none; **Price** 3,600 gp; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

The backs of these harrow cards are illustrated with a motif of swirling mists and clouds of fog. They function like a normal harrow deck for divination purposes, but they are enchanted with a sliver

of power siphoned from the Elemental Plane of Air. Three times a day on command, a deck of distraction flies forth from its bearer's hands to surround a target within 60 feet in a whirlwind of cards that lasts for 3 rounds. The target's melee and ranged attacks suffer a 20% miss chance and he must succeed on a concentration check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell.

A strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the cloud of cards. When dispersed or the duration expires, the cards return to the bearer's hands. This item cannot be used underwater.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *obscuring mist*; **Cost** 1,800 gp

## HEX EFFIGY

**Aura** moderate abjuration;  
**CL** 10th

**Slot** belt, neck, or wrists; **Price** 1,250 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

This crude, tallow doll dangles from a loop of hempen twine. In order to function, a *hex effigy* must first be attuned to the wearer by pressing a piece of the creature (blood, hair, or nail paring, for example) or small personal item into the tallow, or a piece of its clothing attached to the doll. It is then worn around the neck, wrist, or waist, occupying that item slot. Any time the wearer fails a saving throw against a hex, the



hex is transferred to the effigy rather than affecting the wearer. The wearer is aware of attempts to hex her as the tallow of the effigy bubbles and smokes. A *hex effigy* can bear up to six hexes before it turns black and ceases to function. A major hex counts as two hexes; grand hexes cannot be absorbed.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *hex ward* or the creator must have the waxen image major hex; **Cost** 625 gp

## INCENSE OF SPIRITUAL PANACEA

**Aura** moderate abjuration and necromancy; **CL** 9th



**Slot** none; **Price** 6,250 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

**DESCRIPTION**

This small, cone-shaped piece of sweet-smelling incense is commonly burned in a thurible. When lit, it gives off a honeyed fragrance and pearl-gray smoke. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the burning incense and knows its special properties. The incense burns for 2 hours before being depleted.

Living, breathing creatures within 30 feet of the burning incense are focused and calmed, gaining a +2 sacred bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects. The smoke also affects disembodied spirits. Hostile incorporeal undead within the area of effect must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or ignore those within the smoke, and on their next action, must spend a full round moving away from the area.

If the burning incense enters an area affected by a haunt, its smoke turns black. This warning grants those aware of its meaning the ability to act on the haunt's surprise round (roll initiative as normal). The owner of the incense may choose to expend the incense's remaining duration to call forth a cloud of pure white smoke which neutralizes the haunt and enables the owner to cast *speak with haunt* (DC 18, 4 questions, 9 minutes). The haunt still manifests and may still be disturbing, but its effects are harmless and fade away when the *speak with haunt* effect ends.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, Turn Undead, *detect undead*, *hide from undead*, *speak with haunt*; **Cost** 3,125 gp

**MASK OF THE GARGOYLE**

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 7th

**Slot** head; **Price** 33,600 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

This heavy stone mask, carved into the visage of a fearsome, leering gargoyle, grants its wearer a bite attack as a primary natural attack that deals 1d4 damage (1d3 for a Small wearer). In addition, 3 times per day the wearer can disguise himself as a statue, allowing him to use the gargoyle's freeze ability.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *monstrous physique*<sup>TUM</sup>; **Cost** 16,800 gp

**NECKLACE OF ST. MARTIUS**

**Aura** faint abjuration; **CL** 5th

**Slot** neck; **Price** 2,250 gp; **Weight** —

**DESCRIPTION**

This finger bone is worn around the neck on a modest silver chain. The first of these items was said to be a relic of St. Martius, a devout paladin of Iomedae in the Shining Crusade, though most now are just copies. The item grants the wearer a +1 sacred bonus on saving throws.

Should the need arise, the wearer can break the bone, destroying the necklace and causing silvery dust to

billow forth in a 15-ft. cone from the one holding it. The dust deals 2d4 points of damage to evil creatures and evil magic objects within its area. In addition, incorporeal undead in the area take full damage from all attacks for 1d4 rounds. When used this way, the necklace of St. Martius does not function underwater.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *resistance*, *bless water*, creator must be good-aligned; **Cost** 1,125 gp

**SHINING BULLET**

**Aura** faint evocation; **CL** 5th

**Slot** none; **Price** 1,007 gp; **Weight** —

**DESCRIPTION**

Each of these +1 *firearm bullets* glows brightly from the sunlight stored within. A *shining bullet* deals normal damage, but is especially dangerous to vampires. A vampire struck by a *shining bullet* loses its fast healing and damage resistance for 5 hours.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *daybreak arrow*<sup>UC</sup>; **Cost** 507 gp

**SPECTRAL HAMMER**

**Aura** moderate conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 9th

**Slot** none; **Price** 36,312 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

The head of this +2 *ghost touch hammer* is wreathed in ghostly blue flame. Once per day as a standard action that doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity, the wielder can slam the hammer's head against the ground, releasing a wave of incorporeal force. This creates a 20-foot radius blast centered on the wielder. While the energy deals no damage, all incorporeal creatures within the blast are subjected to a bull rush with a CMB of +12.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *plane shift*, *telekinesis*; **Cost** 18,312 gp

**STAFF OF THE SINISTER EYE**

**Aura** moderate necromancy; **CL** 8th

**Slot** none; **Price** 61,334 gp; **Weight** 6 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

Suspended in brine within a heavy glass orb, a hag's bloodshot eye glares from the top of this lichen-covered staff. It allows the use of the following spells:

- *Barrow haze*<sup>ACG</sup> (1 charge)
- *Excruciating deformation*<sup>UM</sup> (1 charge)
- *Bestow curse* (2 charges)





- *Clairaudience/clairvoyance* (2 charges)
- *Pierce disguise*<sup>ACG</sup> (2 charges)
- *Threefold aspect*<sup>APG</sup> (2 charges)
- *Enervation* (3 charges)

In addition, the staff's wielder can expend an additional 2 charges to use the evil eye hex as a swift action and the target suffers penalties on two of the available options of the caster's choice, instead of only one. The wielder uses his own caster level and casting ability score bonus to determine the hex's DC, duration, and effect.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Staff, *barrow haze*, *bestow curse*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *enervation*, *excruciating deformation*, *pierce disguise*, *threefold aspect*, creator must have the evil eye hex; **Cost** 30,667 gp

#### WEREWOLF HUNTER ARROW

**Aura** faint necromancy; **CL** 5th

**Slot** none; **Price** 629 gp; **Weight** 1/10 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

This +1 *alchemical silver* arrow has a rough, bark-like bulb just behind the arrowhead. When the arrow deals damage, tendrils sprout from the bulb, infiltrating the wound and

poisoning the target with wolfsbane (onset time of "immediate"). If a lycanthrope struck by the arrow fails its initial saving throw, it also suffers the sickened condition while poisoned.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *poison*; **Cost** 329 gp

#### WHISPERING SKULL

**Aura** strong necromancy; **CL** 12th

**Slot** none; **Price** 13,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This bleached skull floats in the air, its hollow eye sockets glowing unnaturally. It functions as an ioun stone, except its AC is based on the size of the creature it came from (AC 18 for a typical Medium creature). A creature's spirit is bound to its skull, causing it to whisper incessantly in the languages it knew in life. The skull's whispering grants the owner a +2 circumstance bonus on saving throws against language dependent spells and abilities. Stowing the skull silences it.

If the skull's owner understands at least one language spoken by the skull, it can warn him of some attacks he might not otherwise see. Creature's flanking the owner do not get the usual +2 bonus to attack but still count as flanking for other purposes. Additionally, the owner can ask the *whispering skull* up to six questions per day as if it were the target of a *speak with dead* spell. The GM determines what the skull knew in life.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *rest eternal*<sup>APG</sup>, *speak with dead*, creator must be 12th level; **Cost** 6,500 gp

#### WRAPPINGS OF THE LICH

**Aura** moderate enchantment; **CL** 10th

**Slot** hands; **Price** 40,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

These yellowing bandages wrap over the wearer's hands. After wearing the wrappings for 1 full week, the wearer's hands take on a gaunt, skeletal appearance, and the gloves gain 10 charges. The charges disappear if the gloves are removed. Newly made *wrappings of the lich* contain no charges. By succeeding at a melee touch attack and expending a number of charges, the wearer of these gloves can perform one of the following effects:

- The wearer can inflict 1d6+5 points (1 charge), 2d6+7 points (2 charges), or 3d6+10 points (3 charges) of negative energy damage to a living creature or heal that same amount of damage on an undead creature.
- The wearer can paralyze a living target for 10 rounds (3 charges, DC 16 Fortitude save negates).

After the first charge is spent, the wrappings regain 1 charge per week, to a maximum of 10 charges.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *hold monster*, *inflict serious wounds*; **Cost** 20,000 gp



# The Field Hands of

## Zyphus

By Garrett Guillotte

Art by Stephen Wood

A tall, grey-robed traveler speaks to a rough, wooden door framed by a dilapidated wooden house, “I pray thee, Dear Sir, to open your door to us! We seek only to help!”

From behind the cottage door the traveler hears only the sound of frantically locking deadbolts and muffled prayers.

A shorter companion steps up, leans in and presses her ear to the door, “Your son is lost, his adventures ending in his untimely death,” she pleads. “Lord Zyphus, our father of misfortune, cradles his foolish soul!”

The barricaded man shouts back between heavy sobs. “I’ll not hear such lies!”

“Fear not, good sir!” the tall traveler says, undeterred. “For he purchased from us a plan—”

“—Our finest plan!” his companion interjects.

“—as a contract to recover his woeful corpse from whatever wretched horrors slew him and return it to your loving home. Will your goddess of bones do that for you?”

“Nooooo,” scoffs his short, stout companion. “Pharasma cares not for the flesh of the dead, only their souls! She will leave his body to rot or to rise from the dead and walk among the living—”

“Unnaturally!” the tall man adds.

“—or leave it to be consumed by all manner of horrors—”

“Oozes! Eldritch terrors wriggling about in his abandoned skull!”

The grieving man’s sobbing abates. After a moment of silence, the pair hears a thud against the wood and a few quiet words, “How can you save him?”

The two Field Hands of Zyphus glance at each other, the woman flashing a bold smile. “Let us discuss the terms of his policy.”

### Recovering The Dead

Fortune-seekers, warriors, hunters — all venture from their homes to pursue lives filled with danger, many leaving behind friends and loved ones. Knowing that their fate is left as much to chance as to their own skill, some erstwhile adventurers eschew divine blessings in favor of a more pragmatic arrangement: to have a third party

recover their body upon death, avoiding an eternity as a restless spirit or undead abomination.

In Ustalav, where death is often followed by corruption and undeath, a baronet of Ardis by the name of **Avar Nelemtas** (NE human gravewalker<sup>UM</sup> 4) organized cultists of Zyphus to provide such a service. After a wing of his Merridweigh Gardens manor mysteriously collapsed and killed his husband, Nelemtas focused his anger against Pharasma—the nation’s dominant divine patron and target of Zyphus’s own hatred—and recruited other grieving survivors to the cult of Zyphus. Dubbing themselves the Field Hands of Zyphus, the baronet’s group provides corpse recovery services to evangelize Zyphus’s disbelief in fate itself, spreading the nihilistic gospel of the god of accidents even in the shadow of one of Pharasma’s grandest cathedrals.

Pairs of wandering cultists, keeping a low profile against Pharasmin inquisitors, seek would-be heroes, military recruits, and aspiring travelers to offer insurance against the desecration of their corpse, should they die on their adventure, campaign, or journey. If recovery isn’t necessary, or if a field hand can’t recover a deceased policyholder’s body, the Field Hands



## FIELD HANDS OF ZYPHUS

**Alignment:** NE

**Headquarters:** Ardis, Ustalav

**Leader:** Avar Nelemtas

**Structure:** Loose affiliation of cultists

**Scope:** Regional

**Resources:** Profits from corpse-retrieval policies totaling 15,000 gp per year, and a cache of items “recovered” during policy claims.



refund the policy’s full value to the insured or the next of kin.

### Terms of the Deal

The policy’s cost is scaled to whatever the policyholder can afford.

Additionally, the “donation” of part of a policyholder’s toe or finger seals the contract. A Field Hand fashions the bone into an enchanted die, which activates and guides its holder to the corpse’s general location upon the policyholder’s death.

Field Hands, always in pairs, are experienced dungeoners and have an exceptionally good reputation for fulfilling a policy’s claim. When they locate the policyholder’s corpse (and put it back to rest if it’s already been unnaturally re-animated), Field Hands return it in whatever shape they found it.

However, suspicion surrounds the effect such a contract has on the signatory’s fortune. Some fear buying a policy from a Field Hand is a self-fulfilling prophecy—that merely associating with Zyphus leads one to a premature death. Others believe the Field Hands’ enchanted dice are actually attuned to activate traps left by the Field Hands themselves, triggered only when a policyholder passes, making the entire process a long con to cause more “accidental” deaths explicitly in the name of the god of misfortune. ☠️





## Weal or Woe:

# Songs and Secrets

By Mark 'Morbemic' Nordheim

Art by Taylor McKeown

**T**wo promising young singers compete by day for the heart of the Karcau Opera. By night, they compete for its soul.

### Weal: Zusa Parneste

Zusa Parneste possesses a voice that is pure and heavenly, yet crisp. Having studied at the Karcau Opera from her youth, she rose to become a great talent. She routinely stars in the leading roles of popular performances. Yet the critics whisper that Miss Parneste is not sufficiently devoted to her craft. Rumors about her activities circulate throughout the Opera scene, and she recently lost several roles to other, less-experienced singers.

In truth, Zusa's interest in the Karcau Opera extends far beyond music and stardom. The many secrets of the Opera and its history fascinate her—its secret passages, exclusive chambers, and hidden artifacts. Zusa's singing talent grants her access to the Opera's many buildings, where she uses her skill at deduction and reasoning to uncover its secrets. In her few years of stardom, Zusa has recovered lost masterworks from ages past, prevented ghosts of long-dead Opera stars from ravaging the theater, and rid the conservatory of a dangerous, cursed pipe organ. Of course, such activities are wildly inappropriate for star performers. Her career would be in jeopardy if they were discovered, so she has carried out these missions in secrecy. Few suspect that the young star is the one behind such daring achievements.

### Adventure Hooks

- Zusa has discovered a clan of wererats living in the tunnels under the Opera. She suspects they are dangerous and needs help fighting them—but only from those willing to keep her activities secret.
- Zusa's rivals, hoping to gain advantage and steal better roles, might hire the PCs to investigate her in order to uncover a scandal.
- The PCs might encounter Zusa while exploring the labyrinth under Karcau. She could rescue them from some danger, or they could rescue her.

### Boon

Zusa gladly helps anyone who assists with her investigations and keeps her adventures secret. She can provide access to nearly any building in

the Karcau Opera, including numerous secret passages and chambers. She can also use her fame to help the PCs obtain an audience with various patrons of the arts and other important members of Karcau society.

### ZUSA PARNESTE

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female human (Varisian) investigator<sup>ACG</sup> (sleuth<sup>ACG</sup>) 6

CG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 48 (6d8+18)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5; +4 vs. poison

**Defensive Abilities** trap sense +2

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 rapier +8 (1d6/18-20)

**Ranged** hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19-20)

**Special Attacks** studied combat +3 (2 rounds), studied strike +2d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Zusa suspects that she will encounter lycanthropes, she applies weapon blanch to her rapier or some crossbow bolts.

**During Combat** Zusa fights cautiously, but uses her studied combat and studied strike to take down the most dangerous opponents quickly. She is willing to expend her inspiration and luck in combat if it gives her an advantage.

**Morale** If she is reduced below 15 hit points, Zusa escapes using run like hell.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

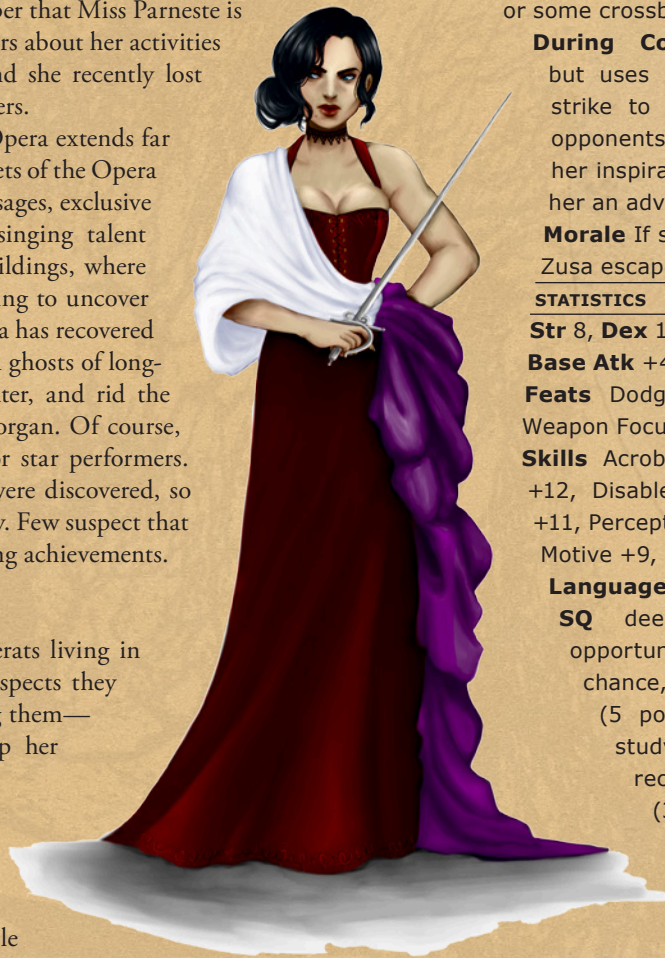
**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Dodge, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +9, Perform (sing) +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +11

**Languages** Common, Hallit, Skald, Varisian  
**SQ** deeds (daring, make it count, opportunistic evasion, run like hell, second chance, sleuth's initiative), inspiration (5 points), investigator talents (quick study, underworld inspiration), keen recollection, poison lore, sleuth's luck (3 points), trapfinding +3

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, weapon blanch (silver)<sup>APG</sup> (3); **Other Gear** +1 mithral chain shirt, +1 rapier, hand crossbow and 30 bolts, sunrod (2), thieves' tools, 28 gp



### Woe: Yelen Valkroma

As a relative newcomer and budding star at the Karcau Opera, Yelen sings with a style that is unorthodox, aggressive, yet enchanting. She recently won several leading roles which would have gone to her chief



rival, Zusa Parneste. Yelen's fans find her exotic and refreshing, but her harsher critics prefer more traditional singers.

Few observers suspect how truly exotic Yelen really is—for Yelen is a wererat. Born into the Valkroma clan of wererats who dwell in the labyrinthine sewers of Karcau, Yelen was groomed for leadership from an early age. She developed talents in music, magic, and combat that are extremely rare among her kind. She has used these talents to further her immense aspirations.

Yelen infiltrated the Karcau Opera to acquire wealth and power for her clan. Her success has fueled her ambition and gained her and her closest allies access both to influence the elite of the city and to steal magical artifacts from the Opera—all while being adored by audiences.

Secretly using Yelen's position as a star in the Opera, the Valkroma clan corrupted officials who normally deal with threats from the sewers. Yelen has also helped her clansmen pilfer great wealth from the conservatory, further increasing the wererats' influence.

### Adventure Hooks

- Dangerous monsters have emerged from the sewers, and the PCs are called in to determine why. Their investigation reveals that members of the city guard are no longer doing their jobs. The trail of bribes and corruption leads to Yelen.
- Guards at the Museum of Song recently chased away a thief attempting to steal the powerful and famous *spirit cello*. The Valkroma clan is behind the brazen attempt.
- While helping Zusa Parneste, the PCs find that Yelen is the source of the worst rumors about her.

### Drawback

Getting on Yelen's bad side or defeating her earns the ire of the entire Valkroma wererat clan, who will seek revenge. Yelen's public position as an admired performer at the Opera causes problems for those who accuse her of crimes or openly attack her. If the PCs kill her but cannot prove her true identity, the authorities in Karcau will seek to punish those responsible.

<b>YELEN VALKROMA</b>	<b>CR 4</b>
<b>XP 1,200</b>	
Female human (Varisian) natural wererat <sup>B1</sup> skald <sup>ACG</sup> 4 (augmented humanoid)	
NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)	
<b>Init</b> +3; <b>Senses</b> low-light vision, scent; Perception +9	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, -1 inspired rage, +2 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 41 (4d8+20)	
<b>Fort</b> +7, <b>Ref</b> +4, <b>Will</b> +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic	
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> uncanny dodge; DR 10/silver	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> 2 claws +7 (1d6+4), bite +7 (1d4+4 plus disease and curse	



of lycanthropy; DC 15)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +7 (1d4+4/19-20)

**Special Attacks** rage power (lesser beast totem<sup>APG</sup>), raging song 18 rounds/day (inspired rage +2 [+2 Str/Con], song of marching)

**Skald Spells Known** (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd (2/day)—*invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 15)

1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *cure light wounds* (DC 14), *expeditious retreat*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14)

0th (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *read magic*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Yelen initiates a song of inspired rage for herself and any allies before combat begins. She also grants them claw attacks by sharing her lesser beast totem rage power. Yelen prefers to fight in her hybrid form.

**During Combat** Yelen fights with extreme savagery, tearing into the nearest opponent with her claws and bite attacks. If confronted with physically tougher opponents or if forced to fight in her human form, she depends on her spells and magic items.

**Morale** If she is raging, Yelen fights to the death. If she is fighting without her inspired rage, she uses either *invisibility* or *expeditious retreat* to flee when reduced below 15 hit points.

**Base Statistics** While in human form and not using her inspired rage, Yelen loses her DR 10/silver and her base statistics are **Init** +1; **AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; **hp** 29; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4; **Melee** mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2/19-20); **Ranged** mwk dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20); **Str** 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Wis** 10; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16; **Skills** Acrobatics +8, Climb +9, Perception +7, Swim +9.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Extra Performance, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perform [sing]), Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Bluff +13, Climb +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +9, Perform (sing) +13, Sense Motive +13, Swim +11

**Languages** Common, Skald, Varisian

**SQ** bardic knowledge +2, change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; polymorph), lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats), versatile performance (sing)

**Combat Gear** *pipes of the sewers*, *scroll of glitterdust*, *scroll of grease*, *scroll of mirror image*, *wand of ear-piercing scream*<sup>UM</sup> (21 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, masterwork studded leather armor, spell component pouch, 129 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Ex)** Filth fever: Bite—injury; save Fort DC 15; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

# Legends of Lepidstadt

By *Matt 'Helio' Roth*

Art by *Erin Frye*

His foot slid back upon the loose dirt, sending pebbles clattering down the face of the rise just behind him. Wresten turned, shifted his weight, and thrust with his rapier. His opponent seemed to stumble, but Wresten saw the ruse in the faintest twitch at the corner of her mouth. He returned the smirk, but his weapon's point remained steady.

Wresten Caromarc had heard the legends of the select few who graduated from Lepidstadt without scars—not through cowardice, but through mastery of their art. From the moment he'd heard the tales, he knew he would be among them. Wresten would finally escape the shadow of his uncle's reputation and be judged on his own merit.

He brushed a loose hair from his face. A quick glance confirmed what he already knew. His glove was clean. He was yet unmarked.

The onlookers were as deathly silent as the city below them. All of Lepidstadt—nay, all of Ustalav—had silenced itself in anticipation of this duel. It had already lasted for hours. Each of Wresten's classmates had stepped forward to challenge him, and each had slunk away in the shame of defeat. His arms were tired, his legs were weary, but his fortitude had not failed.

"Lost in thought again, I see," chuckled his opponent. Witty repartee was not a typical element of Lepidstadt dueling, but it was the trademark of his greatest rival. "You bore our audience, Wresten! Let us have a proper duel!"

She dashed forward, but her deliberately clumsy attack was pushed aside by Wresten's counterattack. Their weapons danced in artful symmetry as the duelists circled each other.

"A proper duel would require silence, Susandra."

"True enough," she admitted. "But when have you and I ever had a proper duel?"

Impeccably white teeth accented the faint bronze of her cheeks as she flashed a wide smile. The sun dipped toward the western horizon and long shadows flittered across Fifthstones Hill.

Susandra's brilliant hazel eyes shone in the dusk. Wresten watched her with resolute determination.

Neither opponent stood with their backs to the rise. They stood astride the hill with the city sprawled below them. They were the only duelists left unmarked. One of them would return home with a fresh scar upon their cheek, a symbol of honor across Avistan. The other would enter the annals of legend.

It was time to end the game. Wresten stepped forward, feinting a blow. Susandra read his intent and struck into the line of his momentum. He wheeled into a return strike as he dodged her thrust. The sound of clashing steel rang out across Lepidstadt. The spectators were transfixed and watched in rapt silence as the contest stretched past the hour mark.

Wresten worked to measure his breath as the exertion of the extended duel began to take its toll. Susandra saw an opening as his strength flagged, and her blade flashed through his defense. Wresten lifted his blade at the wrist in a desperate attempt to parry the strike.

It was too slow. He could feel the sharp sting of steel against the flesh of his face. His dream had been shattered in an instant. The legacy he'd trained so hard to establish was stillborn in the blood upon his cheek.

He glanced up at Susandra only to see her wide smile. It was closer now than it had been in the midst of the duel. In it was a soft happiness that held no arrogance of victory. Her own cheek was marked with a trickle of crimson just beneath her radiant eye.

Wresten's desperate maneuver had not saved him, but his blade had somehow found purchase on his opponent. Lepidstadt would produce no legends today.

"Nonsense, Wresten," she said, reading his thoughts with a wink. "There will be a new story told after this night. Now—we bore our audience!"

He dropped his weapon and embraced his opponent. She was both his rival and his love. He knew then that it was not his legacy, his name, nor even the glory of victory that mattered. Susandra's warmth held a meaning more profound than any of them.

Wresten did not care when the spectators in Ustalav's night finally broke their deathly silence. He had found his legend. 🐉





# Behind The Veil of Mist

## Witchcraft of Ustalav

By Jeremy "He's Dead Jim" Clements

Art by Fess Door

While always present, witchcraft in Ustalav has only become more common as the years passed. Pathfinders in the region consider it to be at its highest levels in recorded history. Unfortunately, it has also become a too-often whispered topic among the commoners when horrible or inexplicable things happen, whether or not a witch is actually involved. Therefore, witch burnings have also become more common, especially in the northern counties.

The cause of this groundswell of eldritch magic is left to speculation, but the most prevalent theories surmise it is due to the nation's close proximity to so many strange forces. From the east come the influences of strange Numerian technology and creatures from beyond the stars. To the west lie Gallowspire and the Whispering Tyrant; and to the north, the Worldwound and its demonic hosts. No sane person believes the demons are held completely in check in that hostile land, and most realize their influence must be spilling over the border as well.

As witchcraft has grown in Ustalav, so has the variety of witch patrons. The most common patrons found in Ustalav are Death, Deception, Insanity, Moon, Portents, and Spirits, but there are other, stranger entities seeking to influence the world, and the servants they send—the witches' familiars—can reflect this strangeness.

### Alternate Witch Patrons

#### Harrowed

Many witches in Ustalav use the harrow for divining, whether or not they have Varisian blood. For some witches, especially those who take the Harrowed feat, harrower prestige class, or cartomancer archetype, the forces behind the harrow serve as their guide and source of power. The spells granted by this patron are a variation of the Portents patron but more strongly reflect the unique nature of the Harrow itself.

**Harrowed:** 2nd—*comprehend languages*, 4th—*knock*, 6th—

*harrowing*<sup>PC:THH</sup>, 8th—*chaos hammer*, 10th—*communal stoneskin*<sup>UC</sup>, 12th—*greater harrowing*<sup>PC:THH</sup>, 14th—*vision*, 16th—*crown of glory*<sup>PCCS</sup>, 18th—*foresight*.

#### Whispers

While Tar-Baphon is still locked away in Gallowspire, his legacy most certainly is not. Glorifying in the decadent and decaying remains of Ustalav, these witches prey upon the fringes of Ustalavic society. Whether they are selling deadly poisons to the aging aristocracy or just eating the local runaway children that happen upon their lonely cottages, these witches are the ones most Ustalavs think of when they mention witchcraft. This patron is similar to the Occult patron, but is more focused on the forces of negative energy and necromancy.

**Whispers:** 2nd—*blood transcription*<sup>UM</sup>, 4th—*command undead*, 6th—*unliving rage*<sup>ACG</sup>, 8th—*charm monster*, 10th—*baleful polymorph*, 12th—*create undead*, 14th—*blasphemy*, 16th—*trap the soul*, 18th—*energy drain*.

#### Righteous

Not much is known of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, but there are those who claim to have seen some of the enigmatic group's arcane followers with a rare Osirian scarab beetle as a familiar. One can only speculate on what force or forces grant these odd witches their powers.

**Righteous:** 2nd—*protection from evil*, 4th—*aid*, 6th—*remove curse*, 8th—*death ward*, 10th—*insect plague* (see below), 12th—*undeath to death*, 14th—*temporary resurrection*<sup>UM</sup>, 16th—*sunburst*, 18th—*refuge*.

Witches of the Righteous patron may select a scarab beetle as a familiar. Use the physical stats for the greensting scorpion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 232), removing its poison ability and giving it a fly speed of 20 (clumsy maneuverability). A scarab beetle familiar grants its owner a +1 bonus to natural armor.

When a witch of the Righteous patron casts *insect plague*, she may summon scarab beetle swarms (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #79: *The Half-Dead City* 89) instead of the normal wasp swarms.

#### Void

Witches who follow the Void are usually highly intelligent, but are often mentally unstable—extremely paranoid and reclusive. They are compelled to seek out forbidden lore on Golarion, between the distant stars, and within themselves. Unfortunately, this search often leads them to uncover truths that mortal minds were never meant to know. These witches are often found muttering to themselves, locked away with their gathered lore in hidden spaces protected by cunning and deadly devices of both magical and mundane nature.

**Void:** 2nd—*corrosive touch*, 4th—*communal protection from law*, 6th—*countless eyes*<sup>UM</sup>, 8th—*fleshworm infestation*<sup>UM</sup>, 10th—*contact other plane*, 12th—*planar ally* (chaotic creatures only), 14th—*insanity*, 16th—*maw of chaos*<sup>DF74</sup>, 18th—*implosion*.



# Afflicted: A Witch

## Archetype

By Nick Wasko

Art by Alex F. Moore

**A**fflicted witches draw power from horrific diseases. An afflicted has the following class features:

**Spells:** An afflicted replaces some of her patron spells with the following: 6th—*contagion*, 10th—*epidemic*<sup>UM</sup>, 14th—*creeping doom*.

**Orphan Disease (Ex):** At 1st level, an afflicted forms a bond with a disease that resides within her body. The disease holds spells and grants bonuses in a manner identical to a witch's familiar (see Table: Orphan Diseases and Special Abilities).

If an afflicted is cured of her orphan disease, she loses all learned spells and cannot prepare new spells until it is replaced (see rules for replacing a witch's familiar); simply re-infecting herself is insufficient. She must relearn spells as if replacing a dead familiar. The effective DC of her orphan disease is equal to the DC of her harbinger hex. She never treats the saving throws or spell resistance of spells that would remove her orphan disease as harmless.

An afflicted is immune to the negative effects of her orphan disease. The disease is initially dormant and cannot be spread normally (see Carrier below).

The following familiar abilities work differently for an afflicted:

**Alertness:** An afflicted gains the Alertness feat while infected with her orphan disease.

**Adding Spells:** An orphan disease cannot learn spells from another familiar. The afflicted can only gain spells at a new level or by eating scrolls in the same way a witch teaches her familiar spells.

**Empathic Link (Su):** An afflicted gains blindsense 60 ft. against all creatures infected with her orphan disease.

Table13-1: Orphan Diseases and Special Abilities

Disease	Special Ability
Blinding sickness	Master gains a +3 bonus on Stealth checks
Bubonic plague	Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves
Cackle fever	Master gains a +3 bonus on Diplomacy checks
Demon Fever	Master gains a +3 bonus on Bluff checks
Devil Chills	Master gains a +3 bonus on Sense Motive checks
Filth fever	Master gains a +3 bonus on Survival checks
Leprosy	Master gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC
Mindfire	Master gains a +2 bonus on Will saves
Red ache	Master gains +3 hit points
Shakes	Master gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves
Slimy doom	Master gains a +3 bonus on Escape Artist checks

**Deliver Touch Spells (Su):** At 3rd level or higher, an afflicted can cast a touch spell as a ranged touch attack against any target within 5 ft. per caster level who is infected with her orphan disease.

**Speak with Master (Ex):** At 5th level or higher, an afflicted witch's empathic link also detects infected creatures' conditions, as per the *status* spell.

**Speak with Animals of its Kind (Ex):** At 7th level or higher, an afflicted witch's empathic link and speak with master abilities function for all diseases.

**Spell Resistance (Ex):** At 11th level or higher, an afflicted gains spell resistance equal to 15 + 1/2 her level + her Intelligence modifier against spells that cure her orphan disease.

**Scry on Familiar (Sp):** At 13th level or higher, an afflicted may scry on one creature she knows to be infected with her orphan disease (as though casting the *scrying* spell) once per day.

This ability replaces the witch's familiar.

**Harbinger (Su):** At 1st level, an afflicted may infect a target with a cursed strain of her orphan disease. Infecting a target is a standard action that requires a touch attack. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be the target of this curse again for 24 hours.

**Harbinger Hex:** *type* curse and disease; *save* Fort negates (hex DC); *onset* as orphan disease; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* as orphan disease.

The hex is both a curse and disease and can only be cured if the curse is first removed, at which point the disease can be magically removed or cured naturally.


An afflicted can only have one harbinger. If another creature is targeted with this ability, the first curse immediately ends. If the curse ends before the completion of the onset period, the disease is cured with no effect.

Initially, the harbinger is not contagious. At 5th level, the infection can spread to new victims. At 9th level, an afflicted can make the onset period instantaneous.

This replaces the witch's 1st-level hex.

**Carrier (Ex):** At 6th level, an afflicted becomes immune to the effects of diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases. She can still contract diseases and spread them to others.

At this point her dormant orphan disease becomes virulent and can be spread normally. The afflicted may choose not to infect a target with her orphan disease.

This replaces the witch's 6th-level hex. 





# Tanjit's Travel Guide:

## County of Caliphas

By Kalyna "LightSprite" Conrad

Art by Basil Arnould Price

Ustalav is widely agreed to be a dark place full of haunts, spooks, and plenty of the macabre, but that's only one aspect of this multi-faceted country. Most people don't realize what a quaint, idyllic, and even tourist-friendly place the Ustalavic countryside can be if you know where to go. So, if you find yourself in the great city of Caliphas with a few days to kill, why not consider a trip out into the surrounding county to explore?

**The Chapel Bridge:** If you follow the Path River west from Caliphas, you'll come to the small farming and weaving town of Grayce. Though it may not seem like much at first glance, the town hosts a vital river crossing known as the Chapel Bridge. This picturesque drawbridge was built straight through the middle of an ancient, well-preserved Pharasmin temple that is still in use today. **Tanjit's tip:** Visit the Shepherd's Rest Inn for the best lamb pie this traveler has ever tasted! The innkeeper's wife also runs a woolens shop next door. Their goods are high quality for the price. Definitely a must-do if you want a cozy souvenir.

**The Maid of Anactoria:** The little hamlet of Anactoria slumbers on the banks of the Droa River, but it has one thing to recommend it. If you're a fan of the bizarre, be sure to stop off and visit the Maid of Anactoria. This corpse, found in a local bog, is eerily well preserved for its considerable age. No one knows who she was, but her beauty even in death will haunt your dreams. **Tanjit's tip:** Anactoria boasts some of the best peat bogs in the area. If you need fuel for your

travel fires, be sure to take a few chunks to go!

**Esblem's 'Pick-Your-Own' Alabaster Quarries:** You'll find this mine-your-own-stone quarry less than an hour along the Droa's shore from the village of Anactoria. Like many regional quarries, Esblem's has access to perfect alabaster. You may ask what makes this place different. Simple: Unlike most quarries, which mine and sculpt the rock before offering it for sale, this quarry will kit out visitors with a helmet and pick and allow them into the mines to choose a stone for themselves. Once you choose your piece, their team of highly qualified artisans will turn your rock into a unique work of art. **Tanjit's tip:** While waiting for your stone to be sculpted, visit Ermina's Tea Room and sample some of the farmwife's county fair winning recipes.

**Arts Markets of Vauntil:** The town of Vauntil, located almost due north of Caliphas, is noted for its large and thriving arts community. If unusual handcrafted items are your pleasure, you're sure to find something to your liking here! This is where Caliphas' finest come to find trinkets to adorn their fabulous mansions. If you look carefully enough, you may even find a few with a hint of magic. **Tanjit's tip:** Visit Stullik and Sons Fine Woodworks for good, sturdy wooden dishware. Best bowls in the business!

**Trans-Ustalavic Test Gardens:** Vauntil is known all over Ustalav as the best place to get prize-winning flowers. If you're a

blooming horticulturalist, the Trans-Ustalavic Test Gardens are a must-see. These gardens span from the main gates all the way to the horizon. The fields and greenhouses host some of the rarest flowers in Golarion. **Tanjit's tip:** The gift shop offers rare seeds, dried petals, and pollens from every flower they grow. It's a great place to pick up a few hard-to-find ingredients for any magic user!

**Seasonal Treat - The Last Breath Festival:** The town of Vauntil hosts its infamous "Last Breath" festival every fall. This extravaganza of food, drink, and artistic endeavor is an oasis for the senses. If you're lucky enough to visit during this festival, be sure to partake in some of the delicious wines and first-class food. As an added bonus, there's bound to be a murder or two to spice up the nightlife. **Tanjit's tip:** Be sure to stick to public places after dark. Even though this is a tourist-friendly festival, you don't want to end up as the mystery ingredient in tomorrow's stew!

*Tanjit Frepath is a gnomish travel-writer and avid adventure-seeker touring Golarion with her trusty pen by her side and wonder in her heart. 🐉*



# Heroes' Hoard: The Knight, Soul of Honor

By Charlie Bell

(with inspiration from Fay Ozment)

Art by Carlos Torreblanca

## THE KNIGHT

**Aura** strong conjuration and evocation; **CL** 20th  
**Slot** none; **Price** —; **Weight** 6 lbs.

### STATISTICS

**Alignment** LG; **Ego** 6

**Senses** 30 ft.

**Intelligence** 10, **Wisdom** 12, **Charisma** 14

**Communication** empathy

### DESCRIPTION

A Knight of Ozem once bore his standard atop this +1 *keen mithral spear* during the Shining Crusade, though the standard is no longer attached. He died in single combat with a wight lord in the last days of the Siege of Gallowspire. With his final strength, the Knight drove his spear into the wight's foul corpse, even as its strangling fingers drained his soul. Fragments of the Knight's siphoned soul infused the spear, granting it intelligence.

*The Knight* generally does not attempt to gain dominance over its wielder as long as it is used in a good and honorable cause. However, it abhors undead, and will attempt to dominate a wielder who refuses to slay an undead creature.

*The Knight* can cast *stabilize* at will as a spell-like ability.

The weapon's animating soul remembers nothing of its origins, not even its own name, preferring its wielder refer to it by the only title it recalls: *The Knight*. Learning legends and stories about the Knight of Ozem unlocks the weapon's memories and grants it greater powers. The legends must be learned sequentially. Divinations such as legend lore and vision will reveal the next memory in sequence, but will only reveal a single memory.

1. *The Fall of Antimon*. Antimon, cleric of Arazni, was the Knight of Ozem's mentor and spiritual advisor during the Shining Crusade. When the Whispering Tyrant flung Arazni's murdered corpse from the battlements of Gallowspire, Antimon charged its gates alone

to challenge Tar-Baphon to single combat. Contemptuously, the Tyrant sent a company of spectres to overwhelm the cleric. Only General Arnisant himself kept the Knight from breaking ranks to rescue Antimon. The last image he saw of his friend was Antimon's spirit, wrenched from his body, rising to join the spectres.

Research at any Ustalavic center of learning, such as the Quarterfaux Archives or Lepidstadt University, along with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check, reveals Antimon's story. *The Knight* automatically recalls the story if it ever encounters the spectre that once was Antimon.

*The Knight's* reverence for Antimon and wrath at his corruption by the spectres grant it the *ghost touch* property and the ability to cast *divine favor* on the wielder three times per day. Its enhancement bonus increases to +2 and its Ego to 9.

2. *The March to Gallowspire*. During the Shining Crusade's advance on Gallowspire, the Knight of Ozem carved his way through hordes of zombies, skeletons, and other undead whose necrotic flesh resisted different kinds of weapons. Through bitter experience, he discovered the strengths and weaknesses of such undead.

The Knight recalls this memory one day after fighting any undead creature whose damage reduction it cannot overcome. Alternately, any intelligent undead creature who fought in the Shining Crusade can relate this legend if made friendly using Diplomacy or compelled by magic.

When *The Knight* recalls its knowledge of undead, it gains the *undead bane* weapon property, 10 ranks in Knowledge (religion),

and the power to use *versatile weapon*<sup>APG</sup> 3/day. It uses *versatile weapon* on itself to overcome the damage reduction of undead creatures it identifies with Knowledge (religion). Its enhancement bonus increases to +3 and its Ego to 14.


3. *Arazni's Accolade*. When still a simple sergeant of Lastwall, the Knight distinguished himself by recovering his regiment's fallen standard, affixed to this very mithral spear, from overwhelming numbers of the Whispering Tyrant's orcs. The moment the sergeant's hands lifted up the fallen standard is the spear's earliest memory. The sergeant was inducted into the Knights of Ozem in recognition of his valor. Arazni herself bestowed the accolade: "I dub thee Sir Galadon."

Any Knight of Ozem who studies the spear recognizes it as Sir Galadon's standard, but only reveals this information if made helpful. Alternately, Sir Galadon's citation can be researched at the Crusader War College in Vigil with a DC 30 Knowledge (history) check.

When *The Knight* finally remembers its name, it gains the ability to communicate telepathically with its wielder and asks to be referred to henceforth as *Sir Galadon*.

Its enhancement bonus increases to +4 and its Ego to 20. Furthermore, it gains the special purpose of defeating the Whispering Way and the dedicated power to cast *divine power* at will on its wielder.

### DESTRUCTION

*The Knight* is destroyed if a fallen paladin of Arazni uses it to slay a living Knight of Ozem. 



# Geist Warden:

## A Witch Archetype

By Matt Morris

Art by Dio Mabesa

With the number of mysterious forces moving in Ustalav, it is no wonder that the country has so many witches. While Ustalavic witches face persecution from (understandably) jittery peasants, those accepted by their communities are fiercely loyal and dedicate themselves to protecting their neighbors from eldritch forces and unquiet spirits. Working in tandem with her familiar, a geist warden witch seeks to dispatch the restless dead that plague so many of the Immortal Principality's towns and villages. She is a boon to her chosen community and peerless in dealing with haunts, ghost, spectres, and other creatures arisen from malevolent energy. While some witches would see these unfortunate souls as tools to be controlled, the geist warden knows that, for the safety of all, they must be given their final rest.

**Skills:** The geist warden adds Knowledge (religion) to her list of class skills and removes Knowledge (nature) from her list of class skills.

**Patron:** A geist warden normally chooses a patron from ancestors<sup>UM</sup>, boundaries<sup>CoP</sup>, death<sup>UM</sup>, healing<sup>UM</sup>, peace<sup>CoP</sup>, or spirits<sup>UM</sup>.

**Spells:** A geist warden replaces some of her patron's spells with the following: 4th—*calm spirit*<sup>OM</sup>, 6th—*halt undead*, 8th—*cast out*<sup>APG</sup> (as a 4th-level spell), 12th—*undeath to death*, 16th—*binding*.

**Rebuking Hex (Su):** At 2nd level, the geist warden may target an undead creature within 30 feet and disrupt the energies that animate it. The target takes 1d8 points of positive energy damage plus an additional 1d8 points

of damage for every 2 witch levels she possesses above 2nd (to a maximum of 10d8 at 20th level) and is staggered for 1 round. A successful Will save halves this damage and negates the staggered condition. Regardless of whether the save is successful, a creature cannot be targeted by this hex more than once in 24 hours. This ability replaces the witch's hex gained at 2nd level.

**Grim Influence (Su):** At 6th level, the geist warden's spells retain their potency even against foes normally immune to mind-affecting magic. She receives the Threnodic Spell metamagic feat (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*) as a bonus feat, even if she does not meet the prerequisites. In addition, as an immediate action a number of times per day equal to her Intelligence modifier, the geist warden can apply the Threnodic Spell feat to any spell she is casting without increasing its spell level. This ability replaces the witch's hex gained at 6th level.


**Uncanny Communion (Sp):** At 7th level, the geist warden's familiar serves as a conduit not only to her patron, but also to the spirits of the dead and can help her ascertain what will grant these spirits final peace. As a full-round action, the geist warden's familiar can concentrate on the area of a haunt or the physical remains of a ghost or other rejuvenating undead creature, conversing with the unquiet spirit as though using *speak with haunt*. The familiar uses the geist warden's caster level and ability modifiers to determine the effects of this ability. The witch's familiar may use this ability a number of times per day equal to its master's Intelligence modifier. This ability replaces the familiar's ability to speak with animals of its kind.

**Spectral Guide (Ex):** At 11th level, a geist warden's familiar's frequent brushes with the spirit world begin to warp the creature. The familiar gives off a ghostly glow and seems nearly transparent. The animal is under the constant effects of *blur*, with a caster level equal to the witch's level. This replaces the familiar's spell resistance.

**Containment Hex (Su):** At 18th level, the geist warden gains the ability to permanently confine the spirits of undead creatures within her familiar. She may target one undead creature within 30 feet and capture its spirit as the *trap the soul* spell, substituting her familiar for the spell's material component. Incorporeal undead are completely subsumed by the familiar, while the bodies of corporeal undead are left as empty husks. A successful Will save negates this effect. Regardless of whether the save is successful, a creature cannot be the target of this hex again for 1 day. This ability replaces the witch's hex gained at 18th level.

**Hexes:** The following witch hexes complement the geist warden archetype: aura of purity<sup>CoP</sup>, cauldron, healing, ward.

**Major Hexes:** The following major hexes complement the geist warden archetype: hidden home<sup>UM</sup>, major healing, weather control.

**Grand Hexes:** The following grand hexes complement the geist warden archetype: curse of nonviolence<sup>CoP</sup>, life giver. 





# Fear Not the Dead: Ustalavic Alchemical

## Items

By *Matt "Helio" Roth*  
Art by *Carlos Torreblanca*

To the well-traveled of Golarion, it is no secret that Ustalav is home to any number of horrors lurking in the dark. Between the machinations of conspiring nobility in the royal court and the wandering dead undermining the regrowth of the turbulent nation, danger awaits the traveler at every turn.

Fortunately for those who must walk the shadowed paths of the world, Ustalavic alchemists faced with the evils of their land have devised clever ways of dealing with them. The alchemical items presented below represent only a fraction of the ingenious devices and substances that have come out of the beleaguered nation, but they are among the most common within Ustalav and the best known around the Inner Sea. While these new alchemical items may be of little help amidst the intrigues of court life—except, perhaps for those who are extremely clever—brave adventurers, intrepid scholars, and driven treasure hunters might all find great use for them as they go about their work.

The following items may be constructed with Craft (alchemy).

### ALCHEMICAL DISJUNCTION

**Cost** 900 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

**Craft** DC 30; **Type** alchemical tool

This carefully prepared greenwood jar is filled with a sparkling clear fluid. When applied to non-living matter as a full-round action, it causes the material to become partially incorporeal for a short time. Objects affected by alchemical disjunction can phase through solid objects. The effect lasts for 1d4 rounds. One jar has enough material to affect 1 square foot of a surface or 20 smaller applications of approximately 2 square inches each. An object that rematerializes inside of another solid object is instead pushed to the nearest available space.

### BREATH OF DEATH

**Cost** 100 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

**Craft** DC 30; **Type** alchemical tool

An incessant, soft wheezing sound escapes from a preserved and partially zombiefied lung. When you carry it openly, it provides a measure of protection against inhaled poisons. When exposed to an inhaled poison, the lung's wheezing hastens as it rapidly bloats to absorb the poison. The lung's carrier is protected from the poison's effects for 1 round. The bloated lung converts the poison

into a disgusting, phlegmatic paste, rendering it mostly inert and harmless. A breath of death can only be used once and provides no protection against magical effects such as *cloudkill*.

### DEADLURE

**Cost** 50 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

**Craft** DC 25; **Type** alchemical tool

This hunk of juicy, meat-like substance has the same smell and texture as a rotting carcass. For the iron-gutted, deadlure can be used to direct the attention of undead with an appetite for flesh—either away from oneself or toward a trap. When removed from the insulated leathers that bind the deadlure, its stench immediately begins to attract undead creatures that actively seek and feed upon flesh, such as ghouls and festrogs. Any such undead within 50 ft. that can sense the deadlure must succeed at a DC 12 Will saving throw to avoid the urge to devour it. Mindless undead do not receive a save, and festrogs are particularly susceptible to the smell, suffering a –2 penalty on their saving throws. The use of a deadlure grants a +3 alchemical bonus on Sleight of Hand and Stealth checks against affected creatures for 1 minute.

### DEANIMATION SALVE

**Cost** 30 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

**Craft** DC 20; **Type** alchemical weapon

This viscous, sooty sludge is a mixture of the sap of a centuries-old tree and ashes from undead that have been purified upon a pyre. Though harmless to the living, deanimation salve weakens the negative energies that drive mindless undead. You can throw the salve as a splash weapon with a range increment of 10 feet.

An undead creature without an Intelligence score takes 2d4 points of damage on a successful hit and must make a successful DC 11 Will saving throw or become staggered for 1 round. Creatures that are already staggered are instead dazed. Mindless undead within 5 feet of where the salve strikes take 1 point of damage, but are not staggered. Deanimation salve has no effect on intelligent undead.

### DEATHSCENT

**Cost** 70 gp; **Weight** – lbs.

**Craft** DC 25; **Type** alchemical tool

This soft purple powder burns when inhaled, but greatly enhances your ability to detect certain smells. When you use deathscents, you gain the scent special ability, but only for sensing corporeal undead. If you already benefit from the scent ability, you instead double its range. Deathscents' effects last for 1 hour.

### ECTOPHASE

**Cost** 75 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

**Craft** DC 25; **Type** alchemical remedy

The slimy, slightly iridescent fluid in this flask is composed partially of ectoplasmic residue. You can drink its contents to inure your body against the destructive effects of contact with ghostly entities. A dose of ectophase grants a +5 alchemical bonus to saving throws against a ghost's corrupting touch ability for 1 hour. After this hour, you become sickened for 1 hour as your body rejects the ectoplasm.

### NECROTIC PASTE

**Cost** 50 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

**Craft** DC 30; **Type** alchemical weapon

This congealed and blackened ichor causes living tissue to atrophy



temporarily. As a standard action, you may coat your weapon with the substance. A successful attack against a living creature exposes it to the necrotic paste, inflicting 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Additionally, the target must succeed at a DC 10 Fortitude saving throw or be staggered for 1 round. Necrotic paste begins to calcify upon contact with the air, and becomes useless after 1 minute or after a successful attack, whichever comes first.

### PARALYTIC CONVERTER

**Cost** 100 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

**Craft** DC 30; **Type** alchemical remedy

The fluid in this flask is more like a thick porridge than a liquid, and unpleasantly numbs the tongue and throat. When you imbibe a flask of paralytic converter, it paralyzes you for 1d4 rounds (no save). After this period, your muscles return to their previous state, and you are fortified against paralysis for 1 hour, gaining a +5 alchemical bonus on saves to resist any paralyzing effect.

### POLTERCATE

**Cost** 100 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

**Craft** DC 30; **Type** alchemical weapon

This fragile sphere, crafted from thick glass and an iron frame, traps a small, corporeal fragment of a poltergeist. When broken open, the faint remnants of the spirit within immediately affect all creatures within a 5-foot radius with a limited telekinetic attack. Affected creatures must succeed at a DC 12 Will saving throw, or be levitated 1 foot into the air for 1 round. This prevents movement and makes attacks increasingly unstable, causing a -1 cumulative penalty on each melee or ranged attack. A poltercate may be thrown as a splash weapon with a range increment of 10 feet.

### SOUNDPROOF PUTTY

**Cost** 60 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

**Craft** DC 25; **Type** alchemical remedy

This block of tough but moldable putty muffles sound around it. When you form it over your ears as a standard action, it insulates you against sound-based effects. This grants a +5 alchemical bonus to all saves against sonic or sound-based attacks, such as an attic whisperer's aura of sobs. However, soundproof putty's effects do not discriminate; the wearer receives a -2 penalty on initiative checks, takes a -4 penalty on Perception checks based on sound or a -2 penalty on opposed Perception checks, and has a 10% chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components. These penalties do not stack with the penalties imposed by the deafened condition. One block of soundproof putty has enough material for two uses. When broken and molded into a usable form, the putty begins to soften rapidly, losing its effects after 1 hour.

### SUNCORK

**Cost** 60 gp; **Weight** - lbs.

**Craft** DC 25; **Type** alchemical weapon

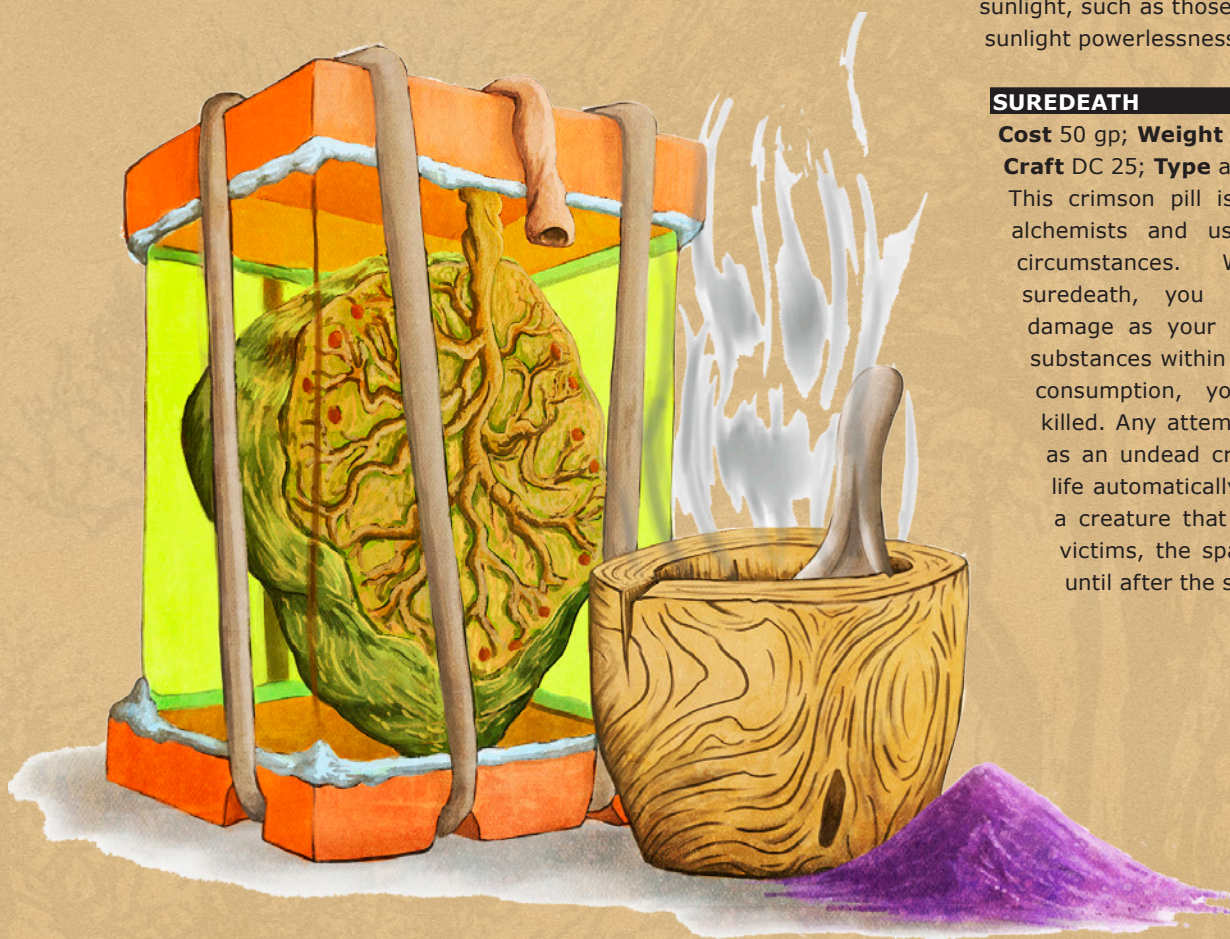
A sulfurous yellow crystalline substance flecks this cork-like sphere. Sometimes referred to as "alchemist's sun," suncork reacts violently when the tindertwig inside it is ignited. When lit as a standard action, the crystals combust instantaneously and flash with incredibly bright light in a 10-foot radius. You may instead light and throw the suncork as a full-round action, treating it as a splash weapon with a 15-foot range increment. Creatures with light sensitivity or light blindness are affected as though by sunlight for 1 round. A suncork does not produce other effects of sunlight, such as those affecting creatures with sunlight powerlessness.

### SUREDEATH

**Cost** 50 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

**Craft** DC 25; **Type** alchemical remedy

This crimson pill is unmistakable to most alchemists and used only in the direst circumstances. When you consume suredeath, you immediately take 1d6 damage as your body absorbs the acrid substances within the pill. For 1 hour after consumption, you remain dead when killed. Any attempts to raise your corpse as an undead creature or return you to life automatically fail. If you are slain by a creature that creates spawn from its victims, the spawning effect is delayed until after the suredeath expires. ☠️



# The Accidental

## Necromancer

By Jeff Evans

Art by Brian Patterson

His full name was Alexei Andropov, but “Fingers” was what everybody had called him since childhood. The name stuck due to his speed in robbing the dead, particularly corpses found in the early dawn hours on battlefields. He would take the rings from the fingers of soldiers clutching bloody weapons, grabbing festering wounds or clawing at the sky in death. The rings were mostly copper and silver, but he had been known to cut off fingers that wore gold. He always carried a bag of the fingers he cut.

Once he’d found a magical ring carved with two crossed feathers. For years he had used its powers to aid in his heists. He’d leap from the highest window, loot tucked in his burlap sack, and float down like the softest pigeon feather. Alas, someone had stolen the ring five years ago, and he had yet to find another like it.

His days of cutting the fingers from corpses as he and other orphans wandered the mist-covered battlefields were behind him. He had retired from the work of children and had graduated to more impressive assignments, such as home invasions and heists. Fingers’ favorite work was grave robbing. His palms would sweat in anticipation and his breath would catch in his throat as he cracked open tombs and pulled back coffin lids. There was nothing better. And what treasures he had found in three years of such sweaty endeavors! If his luck held out, he estimated he could retire from the life in five years. There would be no more thieving. He would find new sources of excitement. But his plan was a toss of the dice.

\*\*\*

Fingers heard a sudden noise and crouched down. An owl called from the darkness. Another creature cried far off in the hills. It sounded like a mix of some barking beast and a laughing child. He shivered. What kind of animal made a sound like that?

The graveyard was a wide expanse of crooked tombstones and black, reaching trees devoid of foliage and twisted like tortured, frozen forms in the murk. It was mid-autumn, and already cold air ruled the night in Ustalav. The graveyard was named the Black Willows, although he saw no willow trees. The tomb he faced was the resting place of one Vasily Ivazov. Ivazov had been a merchant of some renown in life as well as an accomplished wizard. It was said that he had specialized in arcane antiquities. Fingers’ was always searching for arcane antiquities. He hoped he would find another ring of feather falling, but any magic object would do.

Fingers squished down in soft soil, and his boots made a sucking sound with each step. He approached the black door of the squat tomb and got to work. He found a pair of traps within seconds: some sort of magical, sound-based trap and another, more mundane mechanism that sprayed a burst of acid from overhead. He worked quietly and, with two satisfying clicks, he disabled them both. Traps out of the way, he took crowbar and hammer to the seam around the door. After

half an hour, he managed to get his fingertips in enough to pull. Before he did so, he tied a handkerchief over his face. There was no telling what might emanate from the tomb’s opening.

Fingers swore, muttering something about Nethys’ anatomy, as he pulled open the heavy tomb door.

Dust motes floated like startled spirits in the light of his torch. Luckily, no poison gas was inside. The wall to his left had a small alcove with a brass bowl and a pair of unlit red candles. To his right was a tapestry with the black-and-white face of the god of magic glaring down from above. Though he had already blasphemed against the deity once, Fingers mocked the icon. He greeted each half of the bisected face, “Hello, sir, and hello to you as well. Watch this.”

Stepping deeper into the room, he spied the treasure chest resting at the head of the stone coffin and let out a brief whistle. The coffin itself was placed on a raised pedestal four feet high, its polished lid almost at chest level. What to do? Open the chest, or crack the coffin lid? Open the chest first, he decided.

Fingers stooped to examine the chest. There were no traps, but the lock was difficult. Just as Fingers’ bent knees were starting to complain, the lock gave in to his pokes and prods. The chest’s lid creaked loudly as he opened it.

“Hush,” he chided the box. He looked around as if he was committing a robbery in plain sight, not alone in a dusty tomb. Within the chest were more gold coins than he could carry. On top of the coins was a key.

He stood. The closed sarcophagus beckoned. Examining it, Fingers noticed a small keyhole high on one side. He laughed. “I am so good, and lucky too! Thank you, Mister Ivazov! Thank you very much!” He unlocked the coffin with the key he had found.

*Fingers swore, muttering something about Nethys’ anatomy, as he pulled open the heavy tomb door. Dust motes floated like startled spirits in the light of his torch. Luckily, no poison gas was inside. The wall to his left had a small alcove with a brass bowl and a pair of unlit red candles. To his right was a tapestry with the black-and-white face of the god of magic glaring down from above. Though he had already blasphemed against the deity once, Fingers mocked the icon. He greeted each half of the bisected face. “Hello, sir, and hello to you as well.*

*Watch this.”*



Fingers was surprised at how light the sarcophagus lid was as he easily pushed it off. Before him lay the corpse of Vasily Ivazov, hands crossed on his chest, dead eyes closed.

The rings went first (it was tradition). Both of them looked magical. Next was an amulet with a sinister, staring eye, bloodshot and lifelike. He shuddered, but took it as well. The robe the dead wizard wore looked valuable, but it was the glass vial clutched in the corpse's withered hands that caught Fingers' eye.

It was full of fluid that shone with an unnerving violet light. The vial was icy cold to the touch. When he pulled on the vial, the skeletal hands held it tight. Its leathery arms lifted as Fingers tugged. Frustrated, he tried to free the vial several more times, but the corpse would not give up its treasure.

"Come now, Vasily, let's have it."

With a harsh final jerk, the vial and Vasily Ivazov's left arm tore free. Fingers lurched back and stumbled, and the corpse arm and vial sailed over his head. He reached out for them in vain. Time slowed to a crawl as the severed arm bounced and the vial struck the stones. The vial shattered, and purple liquid spilled out on the mossy ground outside. It dripped off the threshold of the tomb.

"Gods!" He slapped the stone floor in anger.

He stood and looked down at the arm that still clutched the shattered vial. "We'll never know now, Vasily." It was too bad. Potions were valuable.

Fingers heard a sound and looked up. It originated from off to his right, deep in the graveyard. He ducked down and squinted into the darkness. He saw no one. A bump from the other direction

made him jerk in place. It sounded like knocking on a heavy door, muffled by distance and the heavy mist. Then a wall of sound rose from the ground all around him, a crescendo of increasing noise.

\*thump thump thump thump thump THUMP THUMP THUMP\*

It was all around him, and the ground shook beneath his feet. The vibration rattled Fingers to his bones and fear twisted his innards. Things were breaking free from their graves. He looked out from the tomb's entrance. The graveyard went on and on and on. How far had he walked? Reaching arms ripped free of black soil ten feet away. Two more sets of arms poked up toward the night sky a short distance behind. He counted nine to his right as the dead dragged themselves free of cracked graves. Moans filled the night in every direction. Left and right, shambling bodies neared. Fingers backed away from the unbelievable sight. So many! He counted five, then twelve and then thirty. More and more rose and headed in his direction.

The moans of the dead were deafening. Fingers giggled. The liquid on the mossy ground glowed a necrotic violet in the gloom. He stepped away from it, as if to deny his blunder. Vasily Ivazov's one remaining skeletal hand dug deep into Fingers' throat as the rogue stumbled backwards into him. Fingers turned and faced glowing violet eyes. He felt his own blood rushing warm down his neck and chest, soaking his shirt. They were all around him, a circular wall of slavering undead. He shrieked helplessly as they bore him down, and the wet sound of tearing flesh echoed among the tombstones. 🐉



# Ustalav is for

# Usta=Lovers

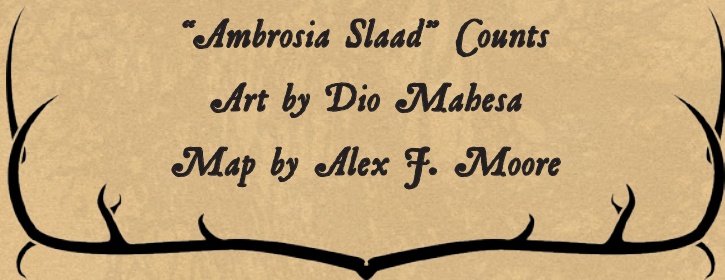
## A Side Trek Adventure

By *Andrew Hoskins*; Concept by *Sarah*

*"Ambrosia Slaad" Counts*

Art by *Dio Mabesa*

Map by *Alex F. Moore*



### Adventure Background

Henric Locnave was looking for a drastic lifestyle change after his involvement in the almost bloodless Chastel revolution. His part in the revolt removed his paladin powers, left his hands bloodstained and his heart weighted with guilt. His new wife, Zeldana, was also looking to escape her past. After being raised by hags in the Mushfens, she was searching for a way to atone for her sins when a paladin of Shelyn, Henric, helped her find love in her heart. Zeldana promised to stay with Henric for eternity, a promise she may get to keep.

In 4671 AR, Henric and Zeldana purchased a small inn on the banks of the Vistear River, 30 miles outside of Chastel. The four-bedroom inn originally had just enough space to house travelers for a single evening as they traveled from Chastel to Tamrivena. The Locnaves remodeled the inn into a romantic getaway for lesser nobles and wealthy merchants, renaming it The Eternal Rose Bed, after Shelyn.

In the spring of 4690 AR, while Zeldana was away, cultists of the Whispering Way stopped at the inn while smuggling a powerful necromantic artifact, a *soul anchor*, to Caliphaz. Henric discovered their mission, took up his glaive and fought the cultists, but not before their terrible magic killed every creature in the inn except Henric himself. Zeldana returned to find only corpses and a terrible curse devouring Henric's soul. Being a powerful witch, she called on her patron to slow the artifact's evil influence. She then created a locket to preserve his spirit, a *life echo amulet*, but she was too late. His soul retreated into the inn's stone walls. In a fit of despair, Zeldana donned the amulet herself then took her own life to be with her husband in death.

The inn still stands on a rocky hill on the northern banks of the Vistear. While it is still open for business, only an occasional couple or traveler passes through to visit. Its grounds conceal many secrets and most visitors remain unaware that no living soul tends the inn.

### Plot Hooks

The PCs may learn of a lost *soul anchor* and track it to The Eternal Rose Bed, or be traveling through the area on some other errand and discover some strange phenomenon as a result of the inn's ghostly occupants.

### Adventure

#### Summary

This adventure is organized in a sandbox style and can be used in multiple ways. If the PCs decide to destroy the *soul anchor*, the inn's ghostly inhabitants

attempt to stop them, as they'd rather remain there forever. Henric does not interfere. He loves his wife but would prefer to pass with her into Pharasma's Boneyard. If the PCs are content to leave the *soul anchor* alone, they may find a strong ally in Zeldana.

The inn's walls are made of hewn stone with thick timbers making up the doors, roof, and supports. Bedrooms feature a strong oak door with a good quality lock, a privy, bed, desk, and wardrobe. Each room's door bears a sign: "Love", "Beauty", "Art", and "Music".

#### A1. Common Room (CR 10)

This spacious room is comfortably furnished with a rainbow of colors harmoniously splashed throughout, the colors centering on an altar to Shelyn, which is nestled in the corner. A long oak table with seating for 10 fills the center of the room, a narrow deck arrayed for a reading. A softly glowing glaive rests in a case mounted above the fireplace. Behind the front counter is a door with a heavy lock. A stairway ascends to the second floor, garden doors open to the north, glass double doors to the south, and a single door to the east labeled "Art."

Henric's spirit, which haunts The Eternal Rose Bed, encourages unsuspecting visitors and would-be lovers to fall in love by confining them in tight or dark spaces. His powers over the inn manifest as *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, and *open/close*, but only within the inn itself.

**Creatures:** Zeldana is an attractive middle-aged woman who typically wears a simple, well-made dress and flowered apron. She carries herself gracefully and appears light on her feet as she spends her time cleaning, talking with guests, or giving wine tastings. She is a pleasant woman who wears a peculiar-looking locket, her *life echo amulet* (see sidebar), which enables her look like a living person. She uses *telekinesis* to interact with most of the mortal realm. If confronted with hostile customers, she attempts to flee, not betraying her ghostly existence unless given no other choice.

#### ZELDANA LOCNAVE

CR 9

#### XP 6,400

Female changeling ghost witch 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 65, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide* 184, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)

NG Medium undead (augmented humanoid, changeling, incorporeal)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

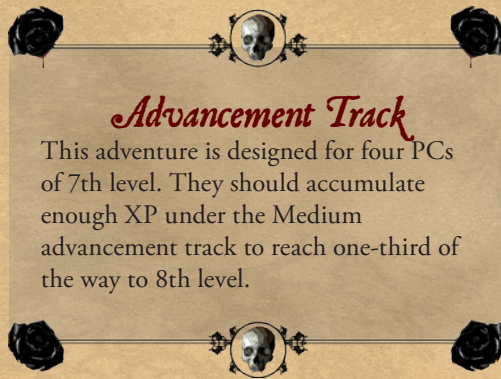
#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex)

**hp** 78 (8d6+48)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8; +4 bonus vs. channeled energy

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



#### Advancement Track

This adventure is designed for four PCs of 7th level. They should accumulate enough XP under the Medium advancement track to reach one-third of the way to 8th level.

**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** corrupting touch +6 (9d6; Fort DC 19 half)**Special Attacks** corrupting touch, hexes (cauldron, charm [3 rounds, 2 steps, DC 17], coven, feral speech [birds], healing [2d8+8])**Witch Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +11)4th—*greater false life*<sup>UM</sup>, *scrying* (DC 17)3rd—*dispel magic*, *harrowing*<sup>SWG</sup>, *lightning bolt* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 16)2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 15), *see invisibility*1st—*beguiling gift*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *mage armor*, *sleep* (DC 14), *unseen servant*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mending*, *message*, *spark*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 13)**Patron** Spirits**STATISTICS****Str** —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Toughness**Skills** Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +12, Craft (cloth) +10, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +7, Fly +15, Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Linguistics +5, Perception +14, Profession (cook) +9, Profession (innkeeper) +9, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +10; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Bluff vs. creatures sexually attracted to her, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Dwarven, Goblin, Orc, Varisian**SQ** witch's familiar (thrush named Harmony)**Gear** *life echo amulet***Treasure:** Henric's +1 *undead bane glaive* is in the glass case above the mantle, sealed with a superior lock and *arcane lock* (Disable Device DC 50, Break DC 15). Zeldana is able to bypass the *arcane lock*, as can Henric, because it is attuned to their spirits.**A2. Art Room**

Surrealist landscape paintings cover the bedroom walls. Many small sculptures and an easel adorn the room. Tucked in the corner sits a pottery wheel and rolls of blank canvas. The bed is simple, with a multi-colored patchwork quilt and goose-down pillows. Glass double doors with lacey curtains open to the west, while a sturdy oak door stands to the south.

**LIFE ECHO AMULET****Aura** moderate conjuration and illusion; **CL** 9th**Slot** neck; **Price** 12,600 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.**DESCRIPTION**

Placing the bone of a deceased creature in this large cold iron locket attunes the amulet to their spirit, and they can wear it as if it had the *ghost touch* property. Incorporeal creatures wearing an attuned amulet gain a semblance of life, granting a +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks to look alive. While worn by an incorporeal creature, it bonds with their spirit, allowing the amulet to become incorporeal as well.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *ghostly disguise*<sup>UM</sup>, *plane shift*; **Cost** 6,300 gp

**DRUNKARD'S KEG****Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 1st**Slot** none; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.**DESCRIPTION**

This miniature keg holds 1-1/2 gallons of liquid, or about 12 pints. Speaking a command word transforms the liquid inside as *enhance water*, though it takes 1 hour per pint of liquid in the keg to transform. Gathering liquid from the keg before all the liquid has been transformed negates the process, which must be restarted by speaking the command word again. Each *drunkard's keg* has two command words: one to create wine and another to create beer or ale.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *enhance water*<sup>ISG</sup>; **Cost** 1,000 gp



**Treasure:** The collection of art is from a variety of artists from all over the Inner Sea, worth 100 gp. A half-used pot of *marvelous pigments* is hidden under the bed and can be found with a successful DC 10 Perception check.

**A3. Back Room**

Cluttered shelves filled with cleaning supplies line the walls of this windowless room. Three doors and a hatch exit this room. The north doors lead to the kitchen (A5) and a pantry with a dumb waiter, while the eastern door leads into the common room. The very strong wooden hatch leads down into the basement (D1), but Zeldana locked it with a superior lock and threw the key into the river long ago.

**A4. Kitchen**

Two large wood-burning stoves occupy most of the northern wall, while a large prep-table fills the center of the kitchen. Doors to the south lead to the back room (A4) and food pantry. The western door once acted as a back door for servants, but ill-use and neglect have warped it shut (Break DC 16).

**Treasure:** On one of the counters sits a *drunkard's keg* (see sidebar), which Zeldana tries to keep full in case guests arrive, usually with a dark fruity wine. She uses the *drunkard's keg* to fill other barrels with various alcoholic drinks and stores them in the pantry.

**A5. Stables**

These stables contain spaces for two large animals and a magnificent carriage. Large double doors open to the east directly onto the road, while a sturdy oak door opens to the south, leading to the garden path.

**Creatures:** Two ghostly horses can pull the carriage. Zeldana claims it is an enchanted ride that follows a basic path. In fact, the ghostly horses follow the same path they followed daily in life. They flee from combat, taking the carriage with them, but still follow basic commands as domesticated animals.

**Treasure:** Because the carriage itself is not haunted, it can leave the inn. It is very well made and worth 200 gp.

**A6. Garden (CR 7)**

Filled with statues and topiaries, this garden contains several colors of roses. A squat gazebo sits in a clearing about 60 feet to the north.

**Creatures:** The dim-witted half-giant gardener haunts the gazebo. Treat it as a huge animated object.



**HAUNTED GAZEBO**

**CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

N Huge animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

**hp 78**

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** The gardener knows Zeldana will scold him if he moves the gazebo in front of guests, so he will only reach out and attack if she is not around.

**During Combat** The gazebo only deals nonlethal damage, as the gardener is just trying to give visitors a hug. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check convinces it to let go.

**Morale** If reduced to 26 hp or less, it releases any held creatures and attempts to flee, albeit slowly. It cannot move further than 1,000 feet from the *soul anchor*.

**SQ** construction points (additional slam attack, constrict, exceptional reach, grab, haunted, improved attack, slower)

*B1. Love Room—Honeymoon Suite (CR 3)*

Draped from floor to ceiling in crimson velvet, this room is the definition of extravagance. A large canopy bed sits against the western wall, complete with muslin curtains. Half-melted candles cover the room's many shelves and desk. A huge fireplace with an iron gate fills the northeastern corner. Soft red carpets cover the polished wooden floor. A single oak door opens to the east at the southern end of the room.

**Hazard:** The collected desires of passionate lovers in this room has caused a haunt, powered by the *soul anchor* and bound to the bed.

**LOVER'S BED**

**CR 3**

**XP 800**

The dalliances and marital celebrations of many young lovers have coalesced, their urges and desires manifesting on the canopy bed. CN haunt (entire honeymoon suite)

**CL** 5th

**Notice** Perception DC 15 (to hear soft moaning)

**hp 13; Trigger** proximity (2 or more humanoids in the room);

**Reset** 1 hour

**EFFECT**

All humanoids in the room are subject to *unnatural lust*<sup>UM</sup> (1 minute duration, DC 14), with each other person in the room as the target of their affection.

**DESTRUCTION**

Complete destruction or removal of the *soul anchor*, or destroying the bed (hardness 5, hp 30).

*B2. Music Room (CR 6)*

A variety of musical instruments hang on the walls as decorations of this bedroom. Music notes, painted in a grand mural, swirl around the room. Two music stands, facing to look out the western window, hold sheet music for a romantic duet. A single strong wooden door opens to the south next to a quaint fireplace in the southwestern corner.

When the Whispering Way cultists stopped at the inn, Devon and Curt were staying here, celebrating their one-year anniversary. Hearing a ruckus, they investigated the sounds of fighting. A cultist

hid outside their room and slew them the moment they stepped outside. This has caused even their ghosts to become a bit reclusive.

**Creatures:** The young reclusive lovers, Devon and Curt, sometimes leave their room to mingle with travelers or explore the nearby countryside. The young men permanently reside in this room, singing and playing the room's many musical instruments using *telekinesis*. They only appear to travelers who have learned the inn's secret and do not wish to harm them. If intruders forcefully trespass, they relive their horror from the night they died and attempt to defend themselves.

### DEVON AND CURT, GHOST CELEBRITIES CR 6 XP 1,200 EACH

NE ghost bards 3 (local celebrity [Pathfinder RPG Codex 27])

hp 23 each

**Special Attacks** corrupting touch, telekinesis

**Gear** none

### G Beauty Room (CR 5)

Sitting atop the inn, this bedroom has a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. A round bed sits in the center of the room, while sparse furniture fills the small portions of walls without windows. To the south, glass double doors open to a wide covered balcony, while a spiral staircase in the northwest corner of the room leads down to the second story.

Captain Derdoff, a river pirate from Daggermark, was supposed to meet his lover Lenore here before running away to Kaer Maga together. He had been waiting a week on the night Henric battled the Whispering Way, but did nothing to assist as he was paralyzed by grief. The magic of the cultists consumed all life in the inn, including his. Lenore had never planned to come; she married the fifth son of a baron in Ardis, bore him three children, and perished from disease in 4704 AR.

**Hazard:** The spirit of a heartbroken pirate captain who pines for his lost love haunts this room. If the PCs complain to Zeldana about the cold, she reasons with the Captain, negating the effect for 1d4 nights. If the PCs tell the captain they are not Lenore, they will also negate the effect for 1d4 nights.

### CAPTAIN'S LAMENT CR 5

XP 1,600

*Still waiting for his lost love to meet him, this captain's frozen peril still follows him in death.*

NE haunt (entire suite)

CL 5TH

**Notice** Perception DC 15 (to hear a gruff man's voice calling out, "Lenore, is that you?")

hp 22; **Trigger** sundown to sunrise; **Reset** 1 day

#### EFFECT

The temperature in the room drops, affecting all occupants as if in a cold weather climate.

#### DESTRUCTION

Complete destruction or removal of the *soul anchor*, or presenting the haunt with proof of Lenore's marriage or death.

### D. Basement (CR 9)

This dusty basement contains stacks of rotting crates, barrels, a collapsed wine rack with shattered bottles, and a watermelon-sized glowing green stone. A dumb waiter door has been worked into the hewn stone wall, and stairs lead up to a trapdoor.

Zeldana used her magic to tie the souls of the cultists to the *soul anchor*, but she was unable to move it, even in life. Before committing suicide, she purchased the best lock she could find, sealed the trap door with pitch, locked the door, and threw the key into the Vistear River.

**Creatures:** The wraiths cannot leave the *soul anchor's* line of effect, but will hide in the shadows and attack any living creature who approaches it. The *soul anchor's* abilities raise the CR of this encounter by +1.

### WRAITH (3) CR 8

XP 1,200 EACH

hp 47 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 281)

**Treasure:** The *soul anchor* rests on a pile of rotting debris, glowing with a sickly green light.

### Concluding the Adventure

Freeing the inn's occupants from the *soul anchor* could be an adventure itself. Regardless of whether the PCs decide to ally with Zeldana, they can also use the inn as a base of operations. 🐉



### SOUL ANCHOR

Aura strong necromancy; CL 20th

Slot none; Weight 8 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This fist-sized stone appears to be made of uncut green crystal and sheds dim greenish light in a 20-foot radius. The stone emanates a *desecrate* spell as an unholy altar. The soul anchor draws any incorporeal or ethereal creatures within 1 mile to it like a whirlpool. Once in the presence of the stone, they cannot travel more than 1,000 feet from it; souls are only free to move within the area. Corporeal creatures can move and function around the stone as normal.

Slain living creatures must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or have their soul either reduced to a haunt or forced inside an emotionally important object (GM discretion); success allows them to continue existence as a ghost.

Living organic matter withers and dies at the stone's touch; any living creature that touches a *soul anchor* gains 2 permanent negative levels immediately upon touching the stone (no save) and gains an additional permanent negative level for each minute they carry the stone in their possession. Corporeal undead creatures who carry the stone gain regeneration 5, the advanced simple template, and can control all incorporeal undead affected by the stone.

#### DESTRUCTION

The *soul anchor* must be submerged in holy water and take 100 points of positive energy damage in a single round.



# Lycanthropic Bloodlines

New Options from

the Shudderwood

By Nate Love

Art by Lynnette Fetters

Many strange creatures lurk along the edges of Ustalav's forests. Werewolves, werbears, and other lycanthropes are powerful in the deep forests, and their strong connection to the moon over Ustalav is well known. Some Ustalavs who live near or in these forests, like the Shudderwood, have gained a bit of that bestial might and lunar power. Whether an ancestor was a lycanthrope, or they were merely born under a full moon in the Shudderwood, these sorcerers and bloodragers have unlocked the power of the beast in their blood.

## New Sorcerer Bloodline: Lycanthrope

At some point your family line was touched by the blessings of the moon, leaving the latent mark of lycanthropy in your veins. You tend towards bursts of bestial rage and prefer the outdoors to the cramped comforts of city life.

**Class Skill:** Perception.

**Bonus Feats:** Combat Expertise, Endurance, Extend Spell, Fleet, Great Fortitude, Improved Trip, Skill Focus (Knowledge [Nature]), Track.

**Bonus Spells:** *faerie fire* (3rd), *cat's grace* (5th), *beast shape I* (7th), *moonstruck*<sup>APG</sup> (9th), *commune with nature* (11th), *transformation* (13th), *greater arcane sight* (15th), *animal shapes* (17th), *shapechange* (19th).

**Bloodline Arcana:** Whenever you cast a spell under moonlight, the save DC increases by 1. If you are under the light of a full moon, the save DC instead increases by 2.

**Bloodline Powers:**

**Claws (Su):** Starting at 1st level, you can grow claws as a free action. Your claws deal 1d4 points of damage (1d3 if Small). At 5th level, these claws are considered magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming DR. At 7th level, the damage increases to 1d6 points of damage (1d4 if Small). At 11th level, your claw attacks are also considered to be silver. You can use your claws for a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

**Woodland Stride (Ex):** At 3rd level, you can move through any sort of non-magical undergrowth at normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment.

**Strength of the Beast (Su):** At 9th level, whenever you cast a transmutation spell that grants a bonus to Strength, the bonus increases by 2, with an additional +2 to the bonus for every 4 levels you have (maximum +6 bonus at 17th level).

**Moonlight Summoning (Su):** Starting at 15th level, creatures you summon gain DR 5/silver and treat their natural weapons as silver and magic for the purpose of overcoming DR.

**Born of the Moon (Su):** At 20th level, you gain DR 10/silver and immunity to curses and non-magical disease. You gain the shapechanger subtype and gain the ability to cast *commune with nature* once per day as a spell like ability.

## New Bloodrager<sup>ACG</sup> Bloodline: Lycanthrope

At some point your family line was touched by the blessings of the moon, leaving the latent mark of lycanthropy in your veins. Your rage tends towards the bestial and wild.

**Bonus Feats:** Combat Expertise, Endurance, Fleet, Great Fortitude, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Track.

**Bonus Spells:** *faerie fire* (7th), *cat's grace* (10th), *greater magic fang* (13th), *beast shape II* (16th).

**Bloodline Powers:**

**Claws (Su):** At 1st level, you grow claws that deal 1d6 points of damage each (1d4 if Small). At 4th level, they are considered magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming DR. At 8th level, the damage increases to 1d8 points (1d6 if Small). At 12th level, these claws are also considered to be silver.

**Leaping Charger (Su):** At 4th level, you are able to leap over brush and undergrowth while charging. When you charge, you ignore difficult terrain, but not other creatures.

**Child of the Moon (Su):** At 8th level, your body changes to take on the bestial appearance of a lycanthrope. You sprout fur on your hands and feet, and your teeth become more pronounced like fangs. You gain DR 5/silver.

**Lycanthropic Visage (Su):** At 12th level, your bestial appearance continues to change, your nose turning more snout-like and your muscles strengthening. Your animal senses are heightened. You gain low-light vision, a +4 racial bonus on Acrobatics checks, and the scent ability.

**Lunar Fury (Su):** At 16th level, the morale bonuses to Strength and Constitution while bloodraging increase by 2, and you also receive a +2 morale bonus to Dexterity.

**Born of the Moon (Su):** At 20th level, you become immune to diseases, curses, and your DR increases to DR 10/silver. You gain the shapechanger subtype. In addition, once per day you can *commune with nature* as a spell-like ability. These benefits remain when not in bloodrage.







# Folk Charms of the Common People

From the Journals of Polin  
Gilsdotter, Gnomish Scholar

By Dylan "SteelDraco" Brooks

Art by Dave Mallon

**P**eddlers and hedge witches across Ustalav make their livings selling folk charms to the masses. For the most part, they just take advantage of superstition and fear, but in my travels, I have found some that carry genuine magic.

These curious trinkets take the form of traditional charms: bits of decoration or artistry designed to hang on a wall. The craft of making these charms is passed down from elder to apprentice or kept within a particular faith. They are most often metal, bone, or antler engraved with protective sigils and often religious accoutrements. Without exception, they only work within a given home and typically do not last more than a year before their magic is exhausted. They protect the common folk from the trials of life in a land where people shiver at the approach of twilight. These intriguing objects bear further study, as those presented below are only a handful of those discovered in my journey.

## FOLK CHARMS

**Aura** faint abjuration; **CL** 1st

**Slot** none; **Price** 25 gp (bone chimes), 25 gp (craftsman's charm), 15 gp (guiding star), 15 gp (hearthheart), 25 gp (hex stone), 10 gp (sunburst charm), 125 gp (token of victory)

### DESCRIPTION

**Bone Chimes:** Long, hollowed-out bones comprise this grisly set of wind chimes, hung just outside the home to warn of danger. Even in the strongest wind, they remain lifeless and silent. However, if a creature they are keyed to approaches within 110 feet, they ring and clatter loudly (DC 0 Perception check). They can be crafted to

warn of any one type of creature, as per the list of ranger favored enemies. In Ustalav, most are tied to undead, fey, orcs, or humans of Kellid ancestry. Craft Wondrous Item, *alarm*, bones of the kind of creature to which the chimes are keyed.

**Craftsman's Charm:** Most craftsman's charms are tiny sets of intricately carved wooden tools for a particular skill: an anvil and hammer for a blacksmith's charm or a tiny keg and bottles for a brewer's charm. They are often hung in windows to advertise services available within. They provide a +1 competence bonus on the associated skill check. Once per month, on the night of the new moon, the charms bring helpful brownies to perform a single Craft check of the appropriate type with the craftsman's normal bonus, adding a free day's progress on a Craft check each month. If the brownies are interrupted in any way, this item's magic is forever lost. Craft Wondrous Item, *crafters fortune*<sup>APG</sup>, *summon nature's ally II*.

**Guiding Star:** This silver charm hangs in a home's window, and depicts a field of stars over a swallowtail butterfly. Made and sold by Desnan priests, its magic allows those who live within to find their way home safely. Residents gain a +4 competence bonus on Survival checks to avoid getting lost, as long as they travel toward home. Craft Wondrous Item, *know direction*.


**Hearthheart:** This charm of carved obsidian is hung inside the hearth of a home. While the hearth burns, the fire's warmth transfers to the home's inhabitants, granting a +2 resistance bonus on Fortitude saving throws against cold weather. Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*.

**Hex Stone:** Unlike other helpful folk charms, this small piece of carved grey marble is hidden in a home cursing its residents, making them more vulnerable to a specific spellcaster's powers. Residents who sleep in a home containing a hex stone suffer a -1 penalty on saving throws against spells and hexes generated by the person who placed the stone. Craft Wondrous Item, *bane*.

**Sunburst Charm:** This simple charm is an amber sunburst of Sarenrae. Hung above beds in many Ustalavic homes, it promotes the residents' health, granting them a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws against disease. Craft Wondrous Item, *resistance*.

**Token of Victory:** Given annually to the victor of a series of physical competitions held in Caliphas honoring the demigod Kurgess, this short golden chain grants its owner a one-time surge of incredible fortune. They may expend the token's magic to spend a single hero point (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*). Craft Wondrous Item, *heroic fortune*.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, additional spells, see text;  
**Cost** 12 gp 5 sp (bone chimes), 12 gp 5 sp (craftsman's charm), 7 gp 5 sp (guiding star), 7 gp 5 sp (hearthheart), 12 gp 5 sp (hex stone), 5 gp (sunburst charm), 62 gp 5 sp (token of victory) 



12/20/15

# Playing Cards in Ustalav

## Two Horror-Themed Pathfinder Adventure Card Game Scenarios

By Ron Lundeen

### Death in the Furrows

This scenario is appropriate for characters that have completed Chapter 1 or Chapter 2 of Pathfinder Adventure Card Game: Rise of the Runelords. It requires the cards from the Rise of the Runelords Base Set and Adventure Decks 1 and 2. The game box should only contain cards with a set indicator of B, C, 1, or 2.

Created a generation ago in the brutal war between the counties of Barstoi and Ardeal, the blasted wasteland known as the Furrows—scarred by trenches, then scorched and salted by withdrawing troops—remains sparsely populated and nearly uninhabitable. Visitors to the area are rare. There are some, though, whose need or desire drives them to enter this blighted land. Pathfinder Society agents search for lost treasures; adherents of the Green Faith strive to undo the damage and restore the devastated land. Unsurprisingly, the Furrows also draws visitors of a more malefic inclination.

One such interloper is a necromancer named Caizarlu Zerren, who seeks to command the ghosts of dead soldiers. A priest of Pharasma learned of the necromancer's plans and has asked you to confront Caizarlu and stop his blasphemous work. The priest knows that he is lurking near the abandoned village of Tillhollow on the Millrun River. Tillhollow once boasted a fine glassworks and mill, but the village is now the home of terrible monsters and the restless dead. The necromancer is not the only danger you will face. May Pharasma watch over you!



**Villain:** Caizarlu Zerren

**Henchmen:** Haunts

**Players:** Location

1: Farmhouse

3: Desecrated Vault

1: Glassworks

4: City Gate

1: Junk Beach

5: Town Square

2: Mill

6: Academy

**During This Scenario:** If you flip over a Blessing of Pharasma when you advance the blessings deck, each character may attempt a Wisdom or Divine 8 check to banish all Haunts in front of that character.

**Reward:** Each character chooses to draw a random spell from the box or gain a Blessing of Pharasma.

### Ageless Yearning

This scenario is appropriate for characters that have completed Chapter 4 or Chapter 5 of Pathfinder Adventure Card Game: Rise of the Runelords. It requires the cards from the Rise of the Runelords Base Set and Adventure Decks 1 through 5, as well as the Svevenka card from Adventure Deck 6. The game box should only contain cards with a set indicator of B, C, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

You stand in the drawing room of a minor Ustalav nobleman. The Caliphan aristocrat offers you a glass of wine before speaking. “My great-grandfather loved a nymph named Svevenka, but he had a rival: a wizard named Azaven. In a fit of jealousy, Azaven murdered my great-grandfather, forever separating him from the one he loved most in the world. Now, his soul will not rest. Some in my family have seen great-grandfather’s ghost; I myself have seen his pleading shade a half-dozen times, at least.

“To end my great-grandfather’s anguish, I hired a medium to commune with his spirit. I learned two surprising things. First, Azaven is now a powerful lich. Second, Azaven keeps Svevenka imprisoned in some hidden location to this day. Great-grandfather cannot rest until his beloved is freed from her captivity. I need you to descend into the crypts below Caliphas and find Azaven. If you can best him, he will have to retreat to his hidden safe house. Follow him there, free Svevenka, and destroy the lich for good. Only then can my great-grandfather be at peace.”

**Villain:** Azaven

**Henchmen:** Hounds of Lamashtu

**Players:** Location

1: Deeper Dungeons

1: Vault of Greed

2: Desecrated Vault

3: Thassilonian Dungeon

4: Prison

5: Ravenous Crypts of Gluttony

6: Warrens

**During This Scenario:** The first time you defeat Azaven and he cannot escape, you do not win the scenario; instead, summon and build the Iron Cages of Lust location and shuffle Azaven and Svevenka into it. The Iron Cages of Lust location may not be closed. If you would banish Svevenka (such as if you fail to acquire her, or if you use her power), shuffle her into the Iron Cages of Lust instead. If you defeat Azaven after the Iron Cages of Lust location is summoned, a character must reveal Svevenka from his hand before Azaven can be defeated.

**Reward:** Each character draws a random non-Basic, non-Elite spell from the box. 🐉



# Operatic Duelist

## A Swashbuckler Archetype

By Stephen "mechaPoet" Stack

Art by Tanyaporn Sangsnit

Even the glittering opera houses of the Ustalavan city of Karcau have their share of hauntings, so some performers hone their flair for art and grace to combat all manner of horrors.

**Deeds:** The operatic duelist gains the following deeds, each of which replaces an existing deed.

**Swashbuckling Artist (Ex):** At 3rd level, an operatic duelist chooses one Perform skill. While she has at least one panache point, she can use her bonus in that skill in place of her bonus in associated skills. This functions as the bard ability Versatile Performance, except that the operatic duelist cannot select additional types of Perform to substitute at later levels. This replaces the swashbuckler initiative deed.

**Ghost Whisperer (Su):** At 3rd level, an operatic duelist can soothe or distract the restless dead. If the operatic duelist notices a haunt before it acts on its initiative rank, she can spend 1 panache point to make a Perform skill check with a DC equal to 10 + the haunt's CR. If she succeeds, the haunt is delayed and does not trigger for 1 round, plus 1 additional round for every 5 points by which she beats the DC. If the haunt takes any damage during this time, the haunt immediately triggers. This replaces the menacing swordplay deed.

**Ectoplasmic Feint (Su):** At 7th level, an operatic duelist with at least 1 panache point can, as a standard action, attack an incorporeal creature with a wielded light or one-handed piercing weapon. If the attack would deal damage (as from a *ghost touch* or other magic weapon), the damage is negated. Instead, the attack disrupts the creature and brings it partially into the Material Plane. Until the start of the operatic duelist's next turn, the creature takes full damage from magical weapons and half damage from nonmagical attacks. This replaces the superior feint deed.

**Hitting Your Mark (Ex):** At 11th level, when the operatic duelist hits a creature normally immune to sneak attacks or critical hits with a light or one-handed piercing melee weapon attack, as a free action she can spend 1 panache point to have that attack deal half of the additional damage granted by her precise strike deed. If the creature hit has a percent chance to negate critical hits, the operatic duelist can spend 1 panache point as a free action to decrease that chance by 25%, to a minimum of 0%. This replaces the bleeding wound deed.

**Theater Life (Ex):** Compared to the rigorous studies in Karcau's academies, the whims of tyrannical directors, or the wrath of overworked stage managers, life's other nastiness is trifling to an operatic duelist. At 2nd level, an operatic duelist can use the Perform skill in place of a saving throw against one type of effect, chosen from this list: charm, compulsion, curses, death effects, disease, fear, paralysis, or poison.

At 6th level and every 4 levels thereafter, she can choose an additional type of effect. This replaces charmed life.

**Haunt Sense (Ex):** At 3rd level, the operatic duelist is able to react more quickly to and defend herself better against malevolent lingering spirits. She gains a +1 insight bonus on Perception checks to notice haunts and to AC and saving throws versus their effects (this bonus applies to saving throws affected by the theater life ability). This bonus increases by 1 for every 4 levels beyond 3rd (to a maximum of +5 at 19th level). This replaces nimble.

**Phantom Hunter Training (Su):** At 5th level, an operatic duelist gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with one-handed or light piercing melee weapons. While wielding such a weapon, she can affect incorporeal creatures with that weapon as if it had the *ghost touch* property. A nonmagical weapon deals half damage to incorporeal creatures as if it were a magical weapon without the *ghost touch* property. The attack and damage bonuses increase by 1 for every 4 levels beyond 5th (to a maximum of +4 at 17th level). This replaces swashbuckler weapon training.

**Dare:** The following dare can be taken by gunslingers or swashbucklers. The rules for dares are found in the new rules options for gunslingers in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide*.

**Artistic Appreciation (Ex):** While this dare is active, you increase the bonuses from any bardic performance affecting you by 1. Alternatively, when a bardic performance begins while you are in combat, you may forgo the bonuses for 4 rounds to regain 1 grit or panache point.



# Tales from the Vales

An Abridged Version of Fact and Folklore  
from Ustalav's Hundred Haunted Vales  
as Recorded by Tarn Thrice-Cursed,

Collector of Legend

By Scott "GM Lamplighter" Young

Art by John Bunger

Few locations in Ustalav are as shrouded in mystery as the fog-haunted peaks of the Hungry Mountains. The highest summit of the range belongs to county Ulcazar, originally established as an estate-in-exile for Nuilivisso the Betrayer after the fall of Ustalav's first king more than two millennia ago. Little survives at such altitudes in such inhospitable conditions, making it an appropriate hideout for those seeking privacy. The lower slopes and rough foothills fall under the purview of county Amaans and provide a rich tapestry of folklore, legend, and myth for the collector of tales. It is this that drew me to Amaans' legendary Hundred Haunted Vales.

My first destination was the largest village in the Vales, the beautiful, though remote, little hamlet of Eran's Rest. Each day's travel brought me higher into the mountains, and the thin, clear air was refreshing after so much time spent at sea level. After climbing for days along trails scarcely wide enough to navigate, I reached Eran's Rest, and immediately knew why its founder had chosen this site for her retirement. Sited on a ridgeline overlooking a wooded vale, the place was breathtaking, with mountain streams feeding a small lake full of fish.

The village itself comprises about 200 souls, all native Ustalavs with no other races represented. The nearby vales, however, are inhabited by the fey, and non-humans like myself are often suspected of being a faerie in disguise. As I strode down what passed for the main street, an elderly lady muttered something under her breath and threw a bent horseshoe nail at me—presumably to see if I recoiled from the sting of cold iron. Once she was satisfied with my mortal, dwarven existence, she became quite courteous and welcoming and plied me for news from "away."

I spent several days in Eran's Rest, gathering tales and folklore to guide the next stage of my journey. The locals tend to keep to themselves, largely among family lines, with no central church or religious order to instill a sense of broader community. They eke out a meager existence surrounded by natural beauty, yet they do so in fear of the nature spirits who lurk just beyond light from the candles burning in every window. Furtive and superstitious, the people admitted to no religious affiliation, but I sensed that a secret faith was indeed shared by many, one based on placating the fey nearby.

One of the people I learned from was Wise-Singer Neithe, perhaps the oldest human I have met. She claimed to have seen more than a hundred and thirty winters (although I suspect that her count of winters may be exaggerated due to the frequent and unnatural storms that plague the upper reaches of these mountains). She spoke slowly yet eloquently of the past, and of how the villagers lived in balance with the spirits of hill and air who controlled their environment. I'd heard hints of secret rituals chanted in stone rings higher in the mountains, structures that had been there before the land was settled by Varisian wanderers. My questions were gently but firmly rebuffed; it seems that secrecy is one of the covenants these villagers have struck with the powers they revere.

The trail leading down from Eran's Rest into the Adghain Valley is exceptionally steep and treacherous, and so the Wise-Singer offered to loan me one of the village's ponies. These fell ponies of Ustalav are short, stout beasts well-suited for a dwarf rider. They possess a hardy constitution and sureness of foot that rivals the nimblest mountain goat. Their temperament, however, is more similar to a wolf than a pony. I found myself battling the beast more often than the terrain. I had no doubt that, were I to fall off, the creature would stomp on me out of spite.

Once down in the wooded valley, I entered a world completely unlike the picturesque mountain village I had left only a few hours before. While there was no trail, the spaces between the towering conifers were largely clear of branches to a height of seven feet or more. This allowed easy passage over a carpet of dried needles and cones. Here and there, fallen trees covered with moss provided obstacles, but also the rare patch of color with small and delicate yellow or pink flowers growing in the lee of the fallen log.

No sooner had the terrain leveled off than we were climbing again, heading ever northward and gaining in altitude swiftly. When we finally broke out of the treeline again, I saw a small but welcoming-looking hamlet. A dozen or so huts crowded around both sides of a small stream that ran out of the mountains.

This village, which was not on any map I had seen, called itself Hillhome—a descriptive enough title. The people greeted me as they had in Eran's Rest, by throwing nails and banging pots at me to see how I would react. Once assured of my dwarven heritage, I was again welcomed most cordially. The elders of the town again asked for news of the outside world, and I freely traded information with them in exchange for folklore and tales of

*There were faeries, he said,  
who lived on the upper slope  
of the mountain, and they  
did not like to be disturbed.*

*They chanted at night  
sometimes, around bonfires  
lit in old stone circles or  
ruins. The rites they invoked  
were of the most evil sort.*

*It was they, he said, who  
caused the strange storms,  
and anyone who went up  
those slopes was unlikely to  
return.*



their history. I received only a stubborn silence when I asked about any strange weather events, however—while the rumored unnatural storms are surely a reality, there seems to be a taboo against speaking of them.

One of the old men of Hillhome, Elder Hurrin, seemed freer in his telling, despite the glares the other elderly villagers gave him. There were faeries, he said, who lived on the upper slope of the mountain, and they did not like to be disturbed. They chanted at night sometimes, around bonfires lit in old stone circles or ruins. The rites they invoked were of the most evil sort. It was they, he said, who caused the strange storms, and anyone who went up those slopes was unlikely to return. Even those who went along the lower slopes at certain times of the year seemed to go missing. Days or weeks later, they would be found dead from exposure, no matter how mild the weather had been.

Upon leaving Hillhome, I took Elder Hurrin's tale to heart, descending quickly to the valley floor and avoiding the upper reaches of the nearby peaks. Here I found a completely different environment than the Adghain Valley. Instead of tall conifers, this valley was a morass of thick brush and peat bogs, wet and teeming with biting insects. After only a few hours' travel I decided the fey of the upper slopes were less of a threat than the loss of blood to these swarming creatures.

I led my pony higher to avoid the worst of the swampy terrain. Of course, this decision proved fruitless, as the lower slopes were home to packs of stirges even more deadly than the nuisance flies and chiggers of the lowland. More than once, I found myself forced to use my magic to drive off the four-winged bloodsuckers. I felt certain any spirits watching in the hills would sense my presence, but had little choice.

I crossed the valley, and the terrain changed yet again. The opposite slope seemed pulled from a boreal landscape more akin to Irrisen or the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. I wondered how much of the Hundred Haunted Vales' reputation for strange happenings is owed to the seemingly magical change in ecosystems. Climbing further, I encountered several rocky outcroppings which seemed to have been purposefully cleared, and glimpsed several standing stones protruding from the sparse copses of trees above.

As the sun set, it illuminated one final oddity: several uniformly-spaced caves along the near-vertical wall of one of the larger outcrops. They almost appeared to be aligned with the strata of the geology, suggesting a connection with mining, although none of the normal accoutrements of such enterprise were visible.

Surprisingly, I had seen no evidence of any actual fey during my travels through the Vales thus far. Given the secret and insular nature of the locals, perhaps "faerie" is simply a term applied to anything they cannot (or will not) understand. I must put this to the test at the next village I encounter.

As I sat down to write this afternoon, an unusually cold breeze sprang up, and it seemed there was a snowstorm building. The snow seemed localized and directional.

Perhaps...



*The preceding partial manuscript was recovered by Pathfinder agents investigating rumors of a colony of mi-go in the Hundred Haunted Vales region of Ustalav. Research indicates that the purported author, Tarn Thrice-Cursed, disappeared while en route from Caliphast to Ravengro in 4712 AR.*

# A Letter to the New Investigator

By *Michael Riter*

Art by *Dave Mallon*

New Friend,

So you are the young hound who has been sent to track me.

It is about time you and I became acquainted.

Madam, I would appreciate it were you to free  
Your mind of any falsities Caise may have planted,  
And allow instead my artwork to speak for itself.

I was quite perturbed when my old friend strayed from the path

And suggest you refrain from the occasional delve  
Into corruption yourself, lest you provoke my wrath.

But, I suppose that's enough unpleasantries for now,

As you likely want to learn about my latest work.

He was a swine hiding beneath a dwarf's skin and how  
Beautifully he proved this whilst trying to flee my dirk!

Constable, you should be grateful that he's on my plate,  
For with this pig gone, I have cleansed the world of a taint,

Leaving goodly Ustalav in a much better state,  
One where you investigators should find no complaint.

After all, shouldn't we strive to destroy the cancer  
Which has been rooted so profusely within our land?

Often, extermination is the only answer,

Something your predecessor could never understand.

Indeed, I think that we may have some thrilling times ahead,  
Provided, of course, that you remain honest and pure.

I would certainly find it a shame to have to shed  
Your life before our friendship has had time to mature,  
Though I don't believe that should prove to be a problem

As our game of cat and mouse has only just begun.

But where is the fun if I do not test your wisdom?

*My next stop is where the wolf once howled under the sun,  
And where that same wolf once thought himself without rival.*

Alas, I'm afraid that time is short and I must part,

So I leave you with the wish that you will be able

To keep up with my work and appreciate the art.

I do understand that life here bears a heavy toll,  
Yet try and keep its evil from entrapping your soul.

Yours always,



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# Solarion Gazetteer:

## Chastel, The Crossroads

By Ben Martin

Art by Todd Westcot

Chastel is located at the junction of the Vistear and Vhatsuntide rivers, twenty-five miles down-river from Ardis. Its location makes it a natural stopping point and marketplace for those transporting goods from or to rural Ardeal, Canterwall, and Lozeri. Despite Chastel's wealth and importance to regional trade, it never achieved the status for which its wealthiest residents yearned. When Ustalav's capital moved to Caliphass, their hopes fell further. Chastel's greatest assets are its society and economy, but its greatest threats are more material. It has suffered from repeated attacks and predation from wolves (most notably the infamous Devil in Gray), dire rats, and other predators.

Livestock, lumber, and furs are the main goods that flow through Chastel via the rivers or, less often, over land from Shudderwood to the north. Grain, livestock, and cheese come to its markets and docks from the surrounding farmlands (both in Lozeri and across the rivers in the two neighboring counties). Trade goods, tools, and hunting weapons travel down-river from Ardis. Most of the boats and wagons that arrive in Chastel merely pass through to other destinations, but many are loaded with goods destined to middlemen and merchants based in Chastel or to the town's sprawling and active markets.

Chastel itself is located a few hundred yards north of the rivers' confluence on firm, dry ground, though there are several docks and landings along the rivers. In the center of Chastel rest the town hall, the cathedral to Pharasma, and the market—the town's true heart. Market booths fill the central plaza, while shops surround the plaza's outer edge and line Locnave Avenue, which splits Chastel along its east-west axis.

Wealthier residents are found in the area surrounding the central market, especially to the south of the central plaza. More shops and market booths fill the eastern edge of the town. Lumber yards, mills, stockyards, livestock markets, and warehouses fill the western and northern parts of Chastel. This is the most dangerous part of town as predators are frequently found here at night, hoping to haul away some of the livestock. Working class folk live to the south and east toward the rivers or to the north toward the fields that spread out from town.

Despite its importance in trade, and its historical significance as the first front in the revolution that formed the Palatinates, Chastel has a rustic feel, perhaps because its reliance on agriculture and logging keeps it grounded, though it may be more because the merchants here feel that the purpose of money is to make more money and not to improve the town or society. Only Locnave Avenue, Ardis Road (which runs southeast toward the rivers), and a few small side streets are properly paved. The town hall and some of larger stores are built from river stone and wood. Only the temple to Pharasma is built of

quarried stone. Most of the buildings are wood, and in the poorer parts of town it is not unusual to see buildings constructed from unfinished logs.

The people of Chastel are practical, eschewing fine clothes and other status symbols. This is not to say that the residents do not love money and power. They just don't flaunt it. Often, money is simply reinvested in ever larger schemes and enterprises. Greed, desire for power and influence, and perhaps an occasional over-fondness for drink are the greatest of the local vices, with industriousness being the greatest of the local virtues. Though Chastel has not yet achieved the success its wealthiest residents might desire, it is not for a lack of effort.

Besides avarice, the greatest flaw in Chastel's society is the superstitious nature of its residents, but given Chastel's proximity to Shudderwood and its problem with predators, such superstition can perhaps be forgiven. Visitors are generally received warmly—Chastel's residents know that new faces often mean new opportunities to sell, buy, or extend influence—but anything that indicates a touch of the supernatural about a guest, especially evidence of lycanthropy, is likely to be met with suspicion or hostility from the inhabitants. Vigilantism is not tolerated, however. Crime or any interruption of commerce invites a hostile response from residents, but law-abiding and orderly adventurers are more than welcome to spend their money in town, and so much the better if they bring back some quality wolf pelts or other fine goods from their adventures.

### Places of Interest

**Clarke and Co. Outfitters:** This three-story wooden building is one the largest buildings in Chastel, barring warehouses and barns. It is located along the central plaza. Inside can be found any common tool or weapon one might need for farming, boating, or hunting—and they will deliver, too. Lesser minor magic arms and armor are readily available here (with a special line of silvered weapons prominently displayed). Any more mundane item of use to a hunter or adventurer can almost certainly be obtained here. **Alfred Clarke** (N ranger 4) will readily tell stories from his own youth hunting in the Shudderwood, which are fairly reliable, or entertain with more recent tales he overheard at the White Stag Tavern.

**Fields and Son Dry Goods:** This large store located on the plaza deals in food, clothing, and other essential goods. If Clarke and Co. doesn't carry an item, Fields probably does, and vice versa.

**Temple of Abadar:** This square, flat-roofed stone building is located to the southwest of the main market and is especially popular with the merchants of Chastel. **Sergei Jelen** (LN cleric of Abadar 5) presides over the temple.

**Temple of Pharasma:** This gothic cathedral—the largest building in Chastel—is located prominently across the plaza from the town hall. The chief cleric **Katherine Stamitz** (N cleric of Pharasma 5) ensures that the temple runs smoothly.

**The Vhatsuntide Inn:** Comfortable, if slightly expensive, accommodations can be found at the Vhatsuntide Inn located in central Chastel. The inn is especially popular with the merchants and other well-to-do travelers who pass through Chastel. Those with experience in security or transportation may be able to find work at the inn's bar. **George Weiss** (NG commoner 3) runs the inn. He and his wife Margaret are helpful and reliable.

**White Magic:** Magic is viewed with some distrust among the residents of Chastel, but they are nothing if not pragmatic, so this shop owned by **Anton Yeater** (N wizard 5)—helpfully named to



emphasize the “safe” nature of his magic—does a brisk business. This shop is located on the central plaza in an unassuming building of moderate size. Magic supplies, scrolls, and alchemical items are readily available, and Yeater and his staff are willing to work on commission on a limited basis.

**White Stag Tavern:** This compact tavern located on the north edge of Chastel is frequented by some of the sturdier locals and many of the hunters who pass through Chastel. Beer, tales (some true, most not), and opinions flow freely here on any given night. Given its popularity with hunters, the White Stag is likely the best source of information on the environs around Chastel.

### Notable Inhabitants

The following are some of Chastel’s better known residents.

**Karl Adolfo** (LE commoner 4) is a prominent member of the town council and a local dock and warehouse owner. He would like to see Chastel’s wealth increase further.

**Genna Gothear** (NG ranger 5) is a member of the town guard and the individual most responsible for protecting the town from external threats. While the occasional bandit is a concern, her and her deputies’ main task is patrolling the northern outskirts of town watching for dangerous predators.

**Alexander Gregoi** (NE ranger 4) is a hunter of some standing. He favors wolves and werewolves as his quarry but prefers to hunt for a bounty. He has a reputation for being surly, but his abilities as a hunter are unquestioned.

**Erika Jurmala** (CG cleric of Desna 5) is the local Desnan priest. Erika spends only part of her time in Chastel and the rest traveling the region. She almost always returns for the Ritual of Stardust on every solstice.

**Henri Praga** (LN fighter 5) is a member of the town guard and charged with keeping the peace inside of Chastel. The town guard is quite efficient at dealing with crime, and as a result violence and theft are almost never a problem in Chastel.

**Henry Smithson** (NE commoner 5) owns the largest lumber mill in Chastel. Though he does not sit on the town council, his wealth gives him a disproportionate say with them. Though he is undoubtedly a savvy businessman, Smithson benefits in part from some family connections in Versex.

**Siega Vegdal** (NG commoner 4) is a local trader and town council member. She would like to see some of Chastel’s wealth reinvested in the town. She is especially concerned with what she feels is an



inadequate infrastructure for a town of Chastel’s size and importance.

#### CHASTEL

NE large town (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #45: Broken Moon* 83)  
**Corruption** +1; **Crime** -4; **Economy** +2; **Law** +2; **Lore** -1;  
**Society** +6

**Qualities** prosperous, strategic location, superstitious  
**Danger** +5

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** council  
**Population** 2,385 (2,298 humans, 68 halflings, 19 other)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 2,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 15,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd  
**Minor Items** 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4 🐾

# Haunts of Ustalav

By Alex F. "Canada Guy" Moore, Jeff

Lee, and Laura "LauraBow" Sheppard

Art by Jeremy Corff and Catherine Batka

Ustalav has witnessed great atrocities in its past. The echoes of sorrow and loss, rage and pain, linger here, empowered by tendrils of necromantic energy or by the sheer force of will of those long passed.

## Corpse Tree

Corpse trees are found throughout Ustalav. They spring up along roadsides, in fields and ditches, or even outside the local tavern. Each one marks the site of an unconsecrated burial.

### CORPSE TREE

CR 5

XP 1,600

LE persistent haunt (15-ft. radius around the tree's trunk)

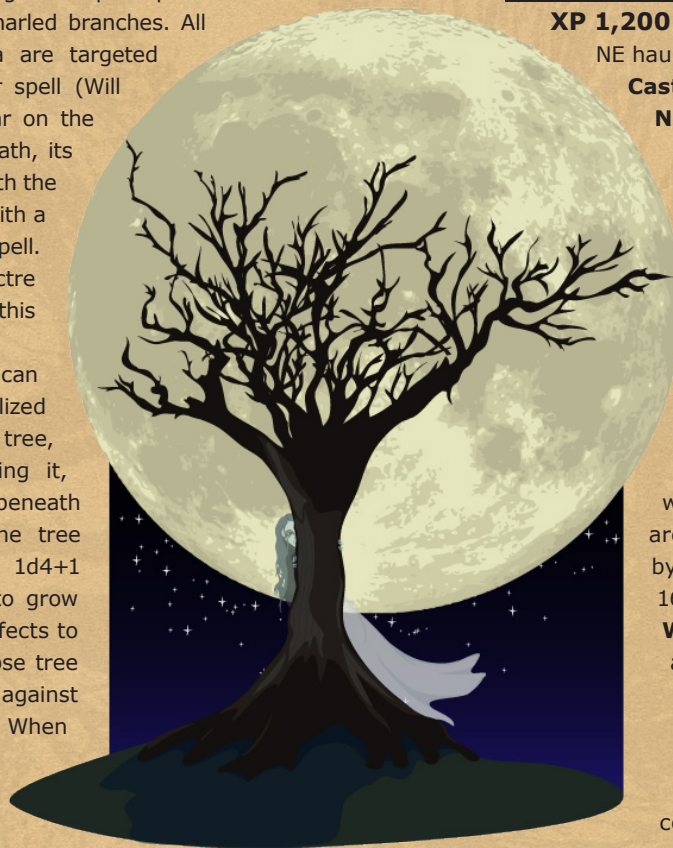
Caster Level 5th

**Notice** Perception DC 15 (to feel a strange sense of unease about approaching the tree)

**hp** 22; **Weakness** special (see below); **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** Nothing grows around the base of this ugly black tree, and one cannot escape a feeling of deep despair when passing beneath its gnarled branches. All creatures in the area are targeted by a *crushing despair* spell (Will DC 16). Once per year on the night of the spirit's death, its spectre appears beneath the tree as if summoned with a *summon monster IV* spell. If the summoned spectre is encountered, this becomes a CR 7 haunt.

**Weakness** A corpse tree can be temporarily neutralized by cutting down the tree, or otherwise destroying it, but until the corpse beneath is properly buried, the tree will regrow. It takes 1d4+1 months for the tree to grow large enough for its effects to become active. A corpse tree has a hardness of 5 against physical attacks. When damaged, the tree oozes an ichorous red sap.



**Destruction** The spirit's corpse must be exhumed and given a proper burial. This causes the corpse tree to crack and crumble to dust, never to regrow. Alternatively, casting a *consecrate* spell on the ground beneath the tree quiets the haunt and causes the corpse tree to sprout fresh green leaves as it transforms into a mundane tree with healthy brown bark and sweet golden sap.

## Remorseful Killer

*As great violence can leave stains upon our physical world that linger for centuries, so too can great sorrow leave its mark upon the spiritual world.*

### REMORSEFUL KILLER

CR 4

XP 1,200

CE haunt (20-ft. radius)

Caster Level 4th

**Notice** Perception DC 18 (to notice a blood stain slowly spreading across the floor)

**hp** 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

**Weakness** slow (manifests at Initiative rank 0)

**Effect** The haunted creature sees the pale apparition of a soldier weeping over the body of a child. As the haunted creature watches, the soldier draws a blade out of the child's body, looks up to the heavens, and plunges the blade into his own neck before collapsing atop the child in a pool of blood. The creature witnessing this haunt is targeted by a *terrible remorse<sup>UM</sup>* spell (Will DC 16 partial).

**Destruction** The haunt may be permanently cleansed by casting a *consecrate* spell upon the area or by washing away the blood stain with holy water.

## Worm-Eaten Corpse

*The fresh corpse of a young woman lies upon the ground. You can't tell what killed her without closer inspection.*

### WORM-EATEN CORPSE

CR 4

XP 1,200

NE haunt

Caster Level 4th

**Notice** Perception DC 23 (to notice something squirming beneath the corpse's skin)

**hp** 8; **Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 hour

**Weakness** susceptible to physical attacks (see below)

**Effect** To observers, the haunted creature's flesh appears to squirm as if dozens of tiny creatures crawl beneath its skin, originating at the point of its body that touched the corpse. The haunted creature simultaneously perceives that a cavity in the corpse bursts open, spraying it with bits of gore and hundreds of tiny, glistening worms. The haunted creature believes the worms are chewing their way into its flesh and is targeted by the *fleshworm infestation<sup>UM</sup>* spell (CL 7th, Fort DC 16 partial).

**Weakness** This haunt can be damaged by physical attacks upon the woman's corpse, but any creature making a melee attack against the corpse must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid immediately experiencing the haunt's effect.

**Destruction** Permanently disposing of the woman's corpse ends the haunt.

## Headless Lady

When a prestigious noble house in Caliphas devised a mutually beneficial alliance through marriage with a local baron, there was one obstacle to the plan: the baron's current wife. Vicious rumors whispered in the right ears, and the planting of false evidence, soon resulted in her trial and conviction for treason. When she was executed by beheading at a now-abandoned country manor, she used her last words to lay a curse of vengeance against those who wronged her. Now the site is shunned, said to be haunted by the angry spirit of an innocent woman murdered decades ago.

### HEADLESS LADY

CR 9

XP 3,200

NE haunt (30-ft. square centered on the chopping block)

Caster Level 9th

**Notice** Perception DC 25 (to hear the sound of soft footsteps and a faint rustle of skirts approaching)

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

**Effect** When this haunt is triggered, the apparition of a woman in noble garb walking up behind the block appears. The hood of her cloak is empty, and her head is tucked under her arm. The apparition's angry and accusing eyes flick among those present, then her head lets out a mad scream. All living creatures within the area are targeted by a modified *phantasmal killer* spell (Will, Fort DC 19). Those who fail their Will saves fall to their knees, and are shaken for 10 minutes. Those who fail their Fortitude save are decapitated. On a successful Fortitude save, an affected creature feels a sudden pain, like a blade cutting into its neck, and a liquid warmth washing over its torso before the effect ends.

**Destruction** Expose the false accusations by the family that framed the noblewoman and have the current lord posthumously exonerate her. The private diary of the nobleman can still be found in the manor, giving crucial clues about why the woman haunts the location.

## Haunted Scepter

An archaeological expedition in Virlych once uncovered a scepter of pewter and black onyx, its head fashioned in the likeness of a snarling wolf. The artifact was transferred to Lepidstadt University for study. A month later, a museum curator was killed and the scepter disappeared. It surfaces again from time to time, but those who possess the thing often meet a gruesome end.

### HAUNTED SCEPTER

CR 11

XP 12,800

LE persistent haunt (5-ft. radius around the scepter)

Caster Level 11th



**Notice** Perception DC 20 (to notice the scepter trembling slightly where it sits)

**hp 49; Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 week

**Effect** An intelligent creature adjacent to the square the scepter occupies is subject to a variant *dominate monster* effect (Will DC 23) and picks up the scepter, handling and examining it with interest, then looks up as if startled and starts speaking aloud, playing out two sides of a conversation.

"You? What are you doing here? Put that down!"

"Easy, friend. I just called on you to see if you would change your mind."

"I will not. It is not for sale. It has historical importance and needs to be studied and shared, not locked up in your private collection."

"I would be glad to loan it to the University for a reasonable amount of time. Surely we can make some kind of arrangement?"

"It is not for sale. Now please put it down. I want you to go."

"Oh, I'll go. But you are a fool if you think I'll walk out empty-handed. To whom do you think you are speaking? Who are you to deny me, you foolish old man? I'll show you what happens to those who try!"

The scepter's wielder then attacks the nearest person, dealing damage as a light mace. If alone, the wielder strikes herself, with each strike considered an automatic critical hit. This continues until the haunt is neutralized; the wielder is disarmed, immobilized, or otherwise unable to strike; or the wielder drops to the floor. The target of the attack can end the haunt by falling to the ground and playing dead. Until neutralized, the haunt affects any new person who wields the scepter.

**Destruction** The person who murdered the museum curator must be discovered and brought to justice, or the scepter must be melted down and destroyed.

## Screeching Porcelain

This bone china is exquisite to look upon, but those who dine upon these dishes will know the terror and pain of those sacrificed to make them.

### SCREECHING PORCELAIN

CR 3

XP 800

NE haunt (5-ft.-by-15-ft. area in front of a table setting or china cabinet)

Caster Level 3rd

**Notice** Perception DC 22 (to notice the dishes vibrating and rattling)

**hp 6; Weakness** susceptible to bludgeoning damage; **Trigger** touch

**Reset** 1 hour

**Effect** When this haunt is triggered, cracks appear in the dishes and screeches and shrieks issue forth as if pieces of ghostly silverware are being scraped over their surfaces. All creatures in a 10-foot radius are subject to the effects of a *sound burst* spell (Fort DC 14).

**Destruction** The dishes must be shattered into small pieces and be buried in consecrated ground.



# Side Trek Seeds

## A Collection of Adventure Ideas Set in Ustalav

By Laura "Laurabow" Sheppard, Cole

Kronewitter, and Bran Hagger

Art by Clay Lewis and Darran

Caldemeyer

apart from the main village by a sprawling vineyard. The artisan is at home but entirely engrossed in his work firing the latest of his pottery. A stealthy examination of his home and surrounding grounds yields evidence of his nefarious deeds, including a notebook, human ash, trinkets from his previous victims, and an unconscious woman bound in the back room of his home. If challenged, the unstable Zode flies into an insane rage, hurling his works of art and attempting to shove PCs who get too close into the blazing furnace. With Zode's defeat or surrender, the party can return to Caliphias and gain the Countess' favor, providing her with a story that only serves to heighten her reputation as an avant-garde, fashionable, and dramatic hostess.

### *The Witch Hunter's Library*

#### *Plot Hook*

The famed witch hunter Mistlav Sambor is missing. For decades, the scarred man roamed the haunted vales of Amaans and protected the herders of Eran's Rest from foul beasts and black magic—until yesterday, when a raven flew into town bearing a hastily scrawled message, "Mistlav Sambor has been

### *The Mourning Lace Mystery*

#### *Plot Hook*

Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso has commissioned a set of "mourning lace" porcelain from the up-and-coming artisan, Jhival Zode, to be the feature centerpiece dishes at her latest dinner soiree at Lethean Manor. Moments into the unveiling of the main course however, the first strokes of silverware upon the plates elicit screams and shrieks from patrons and platters alike! \*(See the screeching porcelain haunt on page 57.)\* Her dinner party ruined, the Countess tenders a group of investigators to locate the artisan and seek recompense for the debacle.

#### *Backstory*

Jhival Zode, while truly a gifted ceramicist, is also a serial murderer. From his secluded studio near Vauntil, he has created his latest line of fine bone porcelain using the ashes of childless widows wooed through his talent and charm to finance his art for the upcoming Last Breath festival. The delicate and macabre pattern of his "mourning lace" porcelain attracted the attention of the Countess and, eager to increase his fame among the local nobility in Caliphias, Zode accepted her commission without disclosing his new design's haunted flaw. Riding the fine edge between insanity and creativity, Zode has no intention of going to jail and will do anything to continue pursuing his art and unorthodox financing methods.

#### *Potential Resolution*

Travelling to Vauntil, the party can locate Zode's secluded cottage, workshop, and kiln set



defeated. Send help at once!” Fearful of what evil could best the great Mistlav Sambor, the villagers of Eran’s Rest hire the PCs to investigate.

### Backstory

The message sent to town was actually written by Mistlav himself. The witch hunter was warned of his imminent defeat by a minor artifact that he acquired long ago called *The Folio of Impending Doom*. Using this tome, he foresaw his own kidnapping and knew he couldn’t prevent it. Instead, he sent a message for help and gathered information to aid his rescuers.

After bypassing the numerous traps surrounding the paranoid hunter’s home, the PCs discover that Mistlav left them clues to solve his kidnapping. His messy notes indicate that the party can find him by consulting the books in his library.

### Potential Resolutions

In his haste, however, Mistlav failed to mention that the “books” in his library are actually dimensional prisons created to trap foes from his long career of witch hunting. Opening each book pulls the PCs into a fairytale world inhabited by a dangerous creature that Mistlav chose to keep alive for questioning.

After traveling into books containing maniacal tooth fairies, talking serpents, and one-eyed trolls, the PCs eventually uncover enough clues to learn that a vampire witch named Granny Candystitch has learned to travel between story books. She then gathered spell components from other prisoners and completed a powerful spell to pull Mistlav into her prison so she could exact her vengeance. To rescue him, the party must defeat the witch in her cottage lair, which lies in a candied forest filled with sugared zombies.

## Plague of Whispers

### Plot Hook

Rumors of Tar-Baphon’s spells escaping Gallowspire and traveling on the wind might sound like superstitious mumblings—that is, until a stormy night wreaks havoc in a Canterwall hamlet, when the air fills



with whispers of doom in a half-dozen languages. Reports of these whispers come from throughout the county, and the deaths that accompany each tempest have given the phenomenon its name: the Plague of Whispers.

### Backstory

Tar-Baphon may be called the Whispering Tyrant, but his words spread far. To this end, his cult enchanted a pipe organ near Gallowspire to spread his messages quickly throughout Ustalav. The magic faded over time and the cultists forgot how to control the instrument, but when the wind hits the pipes just right, they can still carry the Tyrant’s faint necromantic whispers tens of miles.

Far from their source, the whispers that reach Canterwall carry none of the lich’s magic, but will-o’-wisps and other creatures that feed on fear have learned that a town gripped by this curse is the perfect hunting ground. These creatures cause the deaths, bringing the wind’s prophecies true

to make their meals even more piquant. If the deaths continue unabated, the townsfolk’s rampant fear will only strengthen the feasters.

### Potential Resolutions

Stopping the Plague of Whispers requires travelling to the ruins around Gallowspire and permanently destroying the pipe organ. Player characters attempting such a task must trek through lands no one dares settle and face the instrument’s powerful undead guardians and few remaining insane musicians. Close to the source, the power of Tar-Baphon’s cacophony of whispers remains strong, functioning as a persistent haunt that deafens intruders (as the spell *blindness/deafness*).

Fortunately, an alternative approach exists. If the player characters can consistently defend the towns on the border between Canterwall and Virlych when the whispers hit, they have a chance to put the locals’ fear to rest and force the creatures that follow the Plague of Whispers to look elsewhere for sustenance. 🐉

# Solarion Gazetteer:

## Ardagh, Bastion of the North

By *Jacob Trier*

Map by *Crystal Frasier*

The fortified city of Ardagh looms atop a rocky hill high above the point where the Whatsuntide River flows into the mighty Moutray. Since the first brutal Kellid tribes settled here centuries ago, war and bloodshed have ravaged this strategic location. The citadel city was razed and rebuilt countless times, and both the living and the undead have fought to control the land.

The inhabitants of Ardagh must keep a constant vigil. From the gargoyle-covered ramparts and watchtowers they stand ready to defend Ustalav against any threat. Their gaze sweeps across the demon-infested Sarkorian Steppe, over the Moutray River, and down towards the accursed, undead-spawning Castle Kronquist to the northeast. They fear, laired within the haunted Ground of Lost Tears to the east and lurking among the hidden vaults below the city itself, powerful relics and piles of gold protected by ancient Kellid curses.

The city's well-maintained curtain wall occupies the entire hill top. Below, the harbor and the lower city lie safely within the shadow of the upper fortifications. Beyond the rings of walls encircling the city, the landscape opens up to scattered fields and rolling hills dotted with rocky cairns, and the ruins of hundreds of abandoned castles.

### Noteworthy sites in Ardagh

#### *The Marshall's Tower*

This octagonal tower serves as Ardagh's administrative center and home to **Lord Marshall Theodric Xantrian** (LN human male cavalier 4/ aristocrat 2). As both mayor of Ardagh and commander of the military forces defending the town, Xantrian has no shortage of worries to keep him and his men occupied.

While he officially owes fealty to Count Conwrest Muralt of Castle Odranto, he is also keenly aware that both Prince Aduard Ordranti III and the church of Pharasma take an active interest in the area due to its strategic location. Xantrian maintains a cordial relationship with the church, and the divine Voices of the Spire accompany every patrol that rides out into the countryside. Every morning and evening, haunting bagpipes issue from the top of the tower, marking the changing of the guard from the adjacent garrison.

The Mendevian Crusade usually stations an emissary at the tower.

#### *Pharasma's Needle*

The name of this gargoyle-covered Pharasmin chapel comes from the spear-like watchtower that rises high above the temple. Situated centrally in the fortified upper city, the chapel effectively functions as the town's keep.

As in most Pharasmin temples, three priests officially share leadership, but everyone acknowledges the authority that **High Priestess of Death**,

**Belryn Adler** (N female human cleric 8 of Pharasma) holds over **High Priestess of Birth, Viniana Lorhin** (N female middle-aged human cleric 5 of Pharasma) and **High Priest of Prophecy, Lutor Phandel** (N male old human oracle [lore] 5 of Pharasma). Below the chapel, centuries-old crypts and catacombs occupy much of the underlying hill. Some of the oldest date back to the early Kellid settlers, and are rumored to contain cursed gold and mystic treasure. Local legend says the vengeful spirit of one of the earliest clan-chiefs of Ardagh lies bound within his accursed greatsword deep in one of the tombs. The entrance to the crypts remains under constant guard.

Unlike the crown, the church of Pharasma has not turned its attention away from the undead-infested Castle Kronquist to the northeast, and the Voices of the Spire maintain a strong presence in Ardagh under the command of high priestess Adler. She frequently dispatches scouts to the castle and reacts promptly to any reports of undead activity in the area.

Count Conwrest Muralt spent his first years at the church orphanage before the late Count Muralt adopted and moved him to Castle Odranto.

#### *Ardagh Harbor*

Boats manned by rangers ply both rivers, but the patrols pay special attention to the Moutray. It acts as the border between Ustalav and the Worldwound, and lines of wardstones stand in ranks along the bank. They stay well clear of the many small forts and fortified villages protecting the wardstones, but observe them closely and report any irregularities back to their commander, the young and dutiful **Rafel Lorck** (N male human ranger 4).

#### *The Black Rose*

Just beyond the South Gate sits an elegant two-story inn offering great food, luxurious lodging, and local entertainment. An elaborate black rose, a sign of luck among Pharasma's faithful, is carved above the double doors leading into the spacious common room.

The proprietor, **Eudonius Ghalmont** (CN male human expert 4), is a devout and well-respected member of society. For some time, though, he's had strange dreams—visions of macabre chants and twisted things that slumber beyond reality. Over the past few months, he has hosted several discreet meetings with others who have had similar experiences. Increasingly, the topics discussed in these meetings have been of debauched Kellid rituals, strange inscriptions found on old stones in the ruined city wall, and forbidden names like Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, Shub-Niggurath, and Yog-Sothoth.

#### *The Countryside*

##### *Starling Well*

Located on a hilltop just outside the city limits, this old well is a popular stop for inland travelers headed for the South Wall Markets. Some, especially Szarni and Kellids who know they are unlikely to find a warm welcome inside the city, choose to set up camp around the well, creating a semi-permanent settlement. The well also serves as a gathering place for residents who revere Desna rather than Pharasma. Most nights, **Myra Draesta** (CG female halfling cleric of Desna 3) comes here to minister to those who wish to hear the words of the goddess of dreams.

##### *Waernell Hall*

This impressive estate is one of Prince Aduard Ordranti III's favorite hunting lodges. The massive hall and a large portion of the surrounding area belong to the Ordranti family, and the ruler of Ustalav comes here several times a year with friends and political allies. When the prince is absent, his steward **Seneschal Tiberius Selpher** (LN male old human



expert 4) manages the affairs of Waernell Hall. In charge of a score of experienced huntsmen, and authorized to act with the authority of the prince, Selpher's words and actions carry heavy weight around Ardagh.

### *Prewler's Field*

From time to time, strange lights and eerie chanting can be observed in this area in the dead of night. A large menhir covered in strange symbols stands in the center of the haunted and barren area. Local rumors say that the stone was uncovered by the Prewler family, who used to own the field. The stories tell that the youngest of the Prewler sons murdered his entire family a few days later, laying their mutilated bodies before the menhir before slitting his own throat.

### *Adventure Hooks*

- Count Conwrest Muralt ordered Theodric Xantrian to retrieve certain items from the crypts beneath the chapel. With his own men occupied by other duties, the Lord Marshall is looking for a group of able individuals to carry out the assignment.
- The river rangers report signs of battle in one of the small towns that guard a wardstone on the Worldwound side of the Moutray River. The Mendevian Crusade denies that there is a problem, but Rafel Lorck remains unconvinced and needs a small team without any official ties to Ardagh to investigate.
- Mangled animal carcasses are turning up in the woods near Waernell Hall, and two of the huntsmen sent to find the beast responsible have gone missing. With a large hunt attended by Prince Ordranti himself scheduled to take place in just a few weeks, Seneschal Tiberius Selpher is prepared to handsomely reward anyone who restores peace to the forest and safely returns the missing men.

- Unknown to anyone in the city, a real gargoyle has taken up residence among the statues atop the harbor's customs building. At night, it preys on visiting sailors and unfortunate townsfolk returning home alone from the dockside taverns.
- The Sczarni camped around Starling Well sing a haunting song every night. Nobody who hears it is able to repeat the words, but the tune leaves a creeping dread in the audience's minds.

### **ARDAGH**

LN Large town

**Corruption** +2; **Crime** -6; **Economy** +1; **Law** +5; **Lore** +1; **Society** +0

**Qualities** pious (Pharama), strategic location, superstitious

**Danger** +5

#### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Government** Overlord

**Population** 2,113 (1,972 humans, 58 halflings, 23 half-orcs, 17 dwarves, 43 other)

#### **Notable s**

**River Patrol Commander Rafel Lorck** (N male human ranger 4)

**High priestess Belryn Adler** (N female human cleric 8 of Pharama)

**Lord Marshall Theodric Xantrian** (LN human male cavalier 4/aristocrat 2)

**Seneschal Tiberius Selpher** (LN male old human expert 4)

#### **MARKETPLACE**

**Base Value** 2,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 10,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th

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

# The Tale of Haral Moritz

By *Nicholas S. Orvis*

Art by *James Keegan*

It was a bad plan from the start, and I'd said so. Too few people, those not tested, and no backup for getting us out if things went south.

But Ulimenses would hear none of it.

I remember that day when the junior professor first called me into his office in Lepidstadt. He was standing by the window, and there was a fire going in the little hearth. He greeted me, all smiles and words of welcome.

"Moritz," he said. "I couldn't be more thrilled to have a chap like you along for our little expedition to the Gate. I think—nay, I'm quite certain—that it will be a fascinating journey. I'm sure a man of your proclivities and heritage will find it most stimulating, indeed!"

Yes, I'm related to Dr. Henri Moritz. Distantly. Very distantly.

I'd opened my mouth to reply and again voice my dissatisfaction with the plans when another voice interrupted us. "It's such a thrill to have you here, Mr. Moritz!" The Professor had company; a young woman leaned against his desk. She came toward me and extended a hand, "I'm Salvi. Salvianella, if you want to be fancy." She laughed, and Ulimenses cleared his throat. He looked simultaneously pleased and embarrassed. She continued, "Xan has told me so much about you. I'm so pleased that you'll be our guide out into the wilderness!"

"Miss Salvianella is my, ah, student, Moritz," the professor added, coloring slightly. "And quite a capable munitions expert. I've asked her along for that."

"Charmed, I'm sure," was all I said. I had already sussed out what was going on between them. He was a young professor, so it seemed natural enough.

The rest of the meeting didn't take long, and there wasn't much out of the ordinary. I made my usual appeal for more men and more time, and I was ignored. I spent the rest of that day buying the last supplies we still needed, checking everything twice, and wandering the streets of Lepidstadt. The next morning went off

without a hitch, and we made it all the way to Emberstow, where we picked up a Kellid shaman the professor had hired.

I took an instant dislike to Gurog. He was old Kellid stock, sure enough, which I have no problem with, personally. But he didn't bathe, clearly drank, leered at Salvi, and heckled us. He also seemed to have some sort of spider as a pet. I saw the red beast crawl from his shirt and rove over his chest entirely unmolested. Once, I swear I even saw it crawl right up to his ear, almost inside it, and the witch doctor didn't seem to feel a thing. He must have seen me looking, though, because he gave an odd little laugh, murmured something beneath his breath, and glanced my way.

We rode for three days, camping under the stars each night, and I found myself feeling better and better as we got away from Lepidstadt. I reckon the others—Salvi and Ulimenses, at least—were worried about orc outriders, but I knew enough to keep us safe from them.

I stopped feeling good that third day, after we got to the Gate.

I'd seen it plenty of times before, but never had cause to get too near. It was a massive thing, carved into one of the larger hills, old menhirs set there by who knows what tribe of cursed Kellids years ago. We rode right up to it, unpacked, and set up a camp for the night. We had planned to delve a bit, and then return.

"Fascinating stonework," I heard the professor murmur as he unloaded the mule.

"Isn't it just?" Salvi asked with a laugh. I glanced up and saw what they were speaking of: the lintel of the Gate was carved with disgusting pictures. It was a blood sacrifice, a crowd of worshipers offering up a naked slave to some hideous spider god. The details were too gory for words. They turned my stomach.

Once we'd unpacked, Salvi set charges around the great stone slab that blocked the gate. Five great bangs, a crack, and a rumble, and the stone slab lay in pieces before us. Darkness yawned within the gate. We lit our sunrods and headed in.

Stairs wound deep into the hill, and so we went down with me in front, followed by Gurog, then the professor, with Salvi taking up the rear. How long they wound down I couldn't say. The closeness of the walls made me nervous, but emerging out of that closeness into the cavern we found was far worse.

It seemed large enough to hold a city: a massive cave, a still subterranean lake filling the bottom, the light from our sunrods vanishing into the vaulted ceiling. We worked our way around the lake slowly, taking notes, for there were runes and carvings of the same workmanship that had made the Gate along the shore. We'd just passed the last and most direful of the carvings when we heard it: a sound

like pebbles skittering down a slope. At first I feared a distant cave-in, and was preparing to stop the others, when the noise increased. However, it wasn't rumbling that I heard; the sound simply *multiplied*, as though someone was rolling more and more pebbles downhill.

*We'd just passed the last and most direful of the carvings when we heard it: a sound like pebbles skittering down a slope. At first I feared a distant cave-in, and was preparing to stop the others, when the noise increased.*

*However, it wasn't rumbling that I heard; the sound simply multiplied, as though someone was rolling more and more pebbles downhill.*



And then they came: great waves of them, big as dogs, low to the ground, rushing towards us like spiders with their many legs. Their eyes glinted in the light of our sunrods, but their teeth! Their teeth were black as obsidian, sharp as knives, and they gnashed at us with an unearthly frenzy. The creatures seemed to be all head and mouth, and as they charged forward they snapped and gulped at the air in a frenzy.

Gurog stepped forward with a laugh and spoke something, holding up a hand—whether he thought he could command or reason with them, I know not. They did not falter, though Gurog's smile did. He spoke again, sharply, and a ball of flame appeared in his hand. He threw it once, twice, three times into the oncoming swarm, blasting a few of them away, but more filled the space. Then they were upon him, and Gurog screamed.

Salvi, the professor, and I were already running—back along the lakeshore, back toward the stairs, back toward our horses. The professor looked back when Gurog's scream rang out and tripped on a rocky outcropping. The things took him in minutes, jaws snapping the sword he held clean in half. I heard Salvi sobbing next to me as we ran pell-mell for the stairs, but then she was behind me, and one of the creatures' claws seized her leg. She fell, scrabbling at the floor, and I looked back just in time to see her reaching for her belt, eyes wild as the beasts lunged forward. Realizing what she intended, I threw myself sideways.

The blast exploded through the cavern, a boom echoed by the ancient stone walls until it roared louder than anything above ground. I surfaced in the lake, and began swimming without looking back. I heard a splash behind me, and redoubled my strokes; only when I had pulled myself from the lake and taken several steps on the opposite shore, did I risk a glance.

The horror I saw propelled me forward, even as I realized I was safe. The gnashing swarm had seized our tools, and were hurling our sunrods away from themselves, into the deepest crannies they could find. In the dancing lights, I saw the swarm clustered at the water's far edge, gnashing their teeth and swinging their claws at me, but refusing to enter the water. Salvi's blast had broken the narrow shoreline, hollowing an inlet for the lake that now cut the cave in half. I saw several of the beasts pushed into the water by the pack behind them; they sank like stones.

Behind that first rank the writhing mass was an orgy of bloody feasting I dared not look upon too closely. Nevertheless, I still saw grisly trophies thrust into the air and other things that can never be unseen. Then the sunrods were pulled beyond a crag, and all I heard was the noise of the devouring.

I was up the stairs in just minutes, and on my horse faster than that. I cut the other horses loose, and I rode. I rode and rode, away from the Gate, away from Lepidstadt, not caring that I was pointed toward the Hold or that I had no supplies. I rode for days, and though I slowed or slept, I knew no peace. Even now, hundreds of miles away and safe behind walls, I dream of that cave, of that lake, and those teeth, sharp and hard enough to chew through steel and stone. Predators' teeth. Tunnelers' teeth. They could be anywhere with those teeth. Lurking and waiting and...chewing...just beneath our feet. 🐜



# Power Over Undeath

## Spells Influencing the Undead

By Kiel "theheadkase" Howell

Art by Paul Chapman and Tyler Clark

During the Whispering Tyrant's rule and in the years since, spellcasters have devoted themselves to creating magic to rid the world of undead. Others, of course, seek the power that the great lich possessed.

### FORCEFUL REPOSE

**School** necromancy; **Level** cleric 4  
**Casting Time** 1 round  
**Components** V, S, M/DF (lime stone powder)  
**Range** touch  
**Target** corporeal undead creature touched  
**Duration** see text (D)  
**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

The caster hastens the putrefaction and decay of the unliving. By disrupting the negative energies animating the corpse, the spell destroys an unintelligent undead creature in a number of rounds equal to half its Hit Dice (minimum 1). An intelligent undead is staggered for an equal duration.

### IMPELLING REPOSE

**School** necromancy; **Level** cleric 7  
**Target** undead creature touched  
 This spell functions as *forceful repose*, except it can destroy any undead creature, and the target is staggered for the duration.

### REANIMATE DEAD

**School** necromancy [evil]; **Level** antipaladin 3, cleric 4  
**Casting Time** 1 round  
**Components** V, S, DF  
**Range** touch  
**Targets** touched remains  
**Duration** instantaneous  
**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no  
 Touching the remains of a skeleton or zombie that has been destroyed allows it to be reanimated, exactly as if by a new casting of *animate dead*. You can only reanimate a creature destroyed for up to 1 day per caster level. Undead reanimated

by *reanimate dead* count toward the number of creatures that can be controlled by spells such as *animate dead*.

### REANIMATE DEAD, MASS

**School** necromancy [evil]; **Level** cleric 8  
**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)  
**Area** 30-ft.-radius emanation  
**Duration** 1 round/level

This spell functions as *reanimate dead*, except it affects the remains of any number of skeletons and zombies inside the area. Remains of skeletons or zombies can be reanimated with *mass reanimate dead* once per round as long as the spell is in effect and their remains are within the emanation's range.

### REDEEM UNDEAD

**School** transmutation; **Level** cleric 6  
**Casting Time** 1 round  
**Components** V, S, DF  
**Range** touch



**Target** undead creature touched

**Duration** 1 hour/level (see text)

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

By touching an unintelligent undead creature, you can channel divine grace and give it some semblance of life. The creature loses all undead traits and gains base Constitution and Intelligence scores of 10 while reverted to its living form, and he target's alignment changes to neutral. The transformation can be made permanent if the creature willingly dedicates itself to a good deity and receives an *atonement* spell (*redemption* option). If the creature purposefully commits an evil act, it immediately reverts to its undead state in a horrifying transformation that acts as the spell *fear* in a 10-foot radius.

### REDEEM UNDEAD, GREATER

**School** transmutation; **Level** cleric 8

**Duration** 1 day/level (see text)

This spell functions as *redeem undead*, except it can affect any undead creature. An intelligent undead creature retains its intelligence score and reverts to the alignment it had prior to becoming undead. This spell can only be made permanent by means of *miracle* or *wish*, but still ends instantly if the creature purposefully commits an evil act.

### UNDEAD BASTION

**School** abjuration; **Level** cleric 5

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, DF

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Area** 20-ft.-radius emanation

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Will partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

Undead creatures are protected from harm by living creatures. Any living creature who attempts to harm an undead creature within the area must succeed at a Will save each round or be unable to target any undead in the area, as *sanctuary*. A living creature may attempt a new save each round.

Any living creature entering an area of *undead bastion* must succeed at a Will save or suffer the staggered condition while inside the emanation area.

### UNDEAD CLONE

**School** transmutation; **Level** antipaladin 4, cleric 5, sorcerer/wizard 6

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S, M/DF (bone powder)

**Range** touch

**Target** undead creature touched

**Duration** 1 minute/level

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

Touching an undead creature of 8 Hit Dice or fewer under your control causes a copy

of it to instantaneously spring forth and act under the caster's control. The clone is an exact copy, except it possesses half the hit points of the original undead creature and cannot use any spells or spell-like abilities.

### UNLIFE

**School** necromancy; **Level** antipaladin 1, cleric 1

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** S, DF

**Range** touch

**Target** creature touched

**Duration** 10 minutes/level

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

Touching an undead creature fills it with negative energy, granting it 1 temporary hit point from negative energy per level (maximum 10). Living creatures touched take an equal amount of nonlethal damage. ☠



# Weal or Woe: Wizardry and Witchcraft

By Neil Spicer  
Art by Frank Hessefort

For ages, wizards and witches have challenged one another, allowing adventurers to capitalize on such power struggles even at the considerable risk of getting caught within them.

## Weal: Gevester Olymarius

From the hallowed halls of the University of Lepidstadt, few have emerged as academically honored as Gevester Olymarius. His graduate studies turned to wizardry upon leaving school, and he joined a band of adventurers for several years, pursuing interests in Ustalav's history by exploring battlefields and ruins. In time, he retired to Caliphas, whereupon he joined the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye and founded his own school of magic to teach new generations of spellcasters and loremasters.

## Adventure Hooks

- The PCs might accompany Olymarius to a soirée at the University of Lepidstadt, where he runs afoul of an old enemy.
- Historians could direct the PCs to Olymarius for help in researching the ancient legends of Ustalav.
- Olymarius summons the PCs to his death bed for a reading of his last will and testament, leaving them a mysterious item to safeguard.

## Boon

Olymarius might accept a PC as a part-time apprentice, serving to identify magic items, teach new spells, and curate an extensive library granting them +2 circumstance bonuses on Appraise and Knowledge checks.



## GEVESTER OLYMARIUS

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male middle-aged human wizard (exploiter wizard<sup>ACG</sup>) 7/loremaster 1 NG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 61 (8 HD; 7d6+1d6+31)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

**Immune** *detect thoughts, discern lies*, and any attempt to magically discern alignment

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk quarterstaff +2 (1d6–2)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*lesser globe of invulnerability, resilient sphere* (DC 18), *scrying* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic, fireball* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 17), *protection from energy*

2nd—*defensive shock*<sup>UM</sup>, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 16), *share memory*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 16)

1st—*heightened awareness*<sup>ACG</sup>, *mage armor, memory lapse*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 15), *protection from evil, shield*

0 (at will)—*detect magic, light, prestidigitation, read magic*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Olymarius casts *defensive shock, lesser globe of invulnerability, mage armor, protection from energy* (fire), and *shield*.

**During Combat** Olymarius uses his *wand of magic missile* against individual attackers, while trapping especially dangerous foes in a *resilient sphere*. Against groups, he casts *fireball* or *major image*, taking care to recall them with his *pearl of power*. If necessary, he uses his quick study exploit to prepare different spells for the matter at hand.

**Morale** If reduced below half his hit points, Olymarius uses his dimensional slide exploit to escape.

**Base Statistics** Without his prepared spell effects, Olymarius's statistics become: **AC** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 7, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Detect Expertise<sup>UM</sup>, Improved Counterspell, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Toughness

**Skills** Appraise +12, Craft (alchemy) +12, Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +8, Perception +5, Perform (oratory) +8, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +15, Use Magic Device +10

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Sylvan, Varisian

**SQ** arcane reservoir<sup>ACG</sup> (10/day), exceptional resources, exploiter exploits<sup>ACG</sup> (dimensional slide 70 ft., quick study), focused study<sup>ARG</sup>, secrets (instant mastery [Diplomacy])

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of magic missile* (CL 7th, 50 charges remaining); **Other Gear** masterwork quarterstaff,

*amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *ring of protection* +1, *bag of holding* (type II), *pearl of power* (3rd), *ring of mind shielding, robe of components, spellbooks* (all prepared spells plus 0—all; 1st—all; 2nd—all; 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, explosive runes, halt undead, lightning bolt, nondetection, shrink item*; 4th—*black tentacles, mnemonic enhancer, remove curse*), 590 gp

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Exceptional Resources (Ex)** Having retired after a long adventuring career to start a school of magic, Olymarius has resources and gear equivalent to a PC. This increases his CR by 1.

**Focused Study (Ex)** Unlike most humans, Olymarius has specialized in a handful of skills rather than becoming a generalist. At 1st, 8th, and eventually 16th level, he gains Skill Focus in a skill of his choice as a bonus feat. So far, he has selected Diplomacy and Knowledge (arcana) for this benefit. This alternate racial trait replaces the normal bonus feat for humans.

### Woe: Meraina Savine

Ostracized by her peers and viewed as argumentative, Meraina Savine left wizardry school to pursue darker interests, turning to witchcraft and the ethereal call of her changeling ancestry. Subsequent adventures introduced her to a nefarious coven led by the blood hag Desudhira—who'd known and served her true mother. Meraina strove to prove herself in the eyes of the coven, but, in all that time, she also continued to harbor resentment toward her former mentor, Gevester Olymarius, and her classmates at the school of wizardry he founded. The coven has its own, longstanding rivalry with Olymarius, and now they intend to strike at him, using Meraina as a proxy.

### Adventure Hooks

- Meraina comes into conflict with the PCs by adventuring in the same location for an item they're seeking.
- The PCs could encounter Meraina as a captive changeling whom they free from a coven of hags, only to have her become a new villain herself.
- Meraina may spite or curse a cohort or other acquaintance on friendly terms with the PCs, including Olymarius, should they befriend him.

### Drawback

Meraina's efforts to undermine Olymarius stem from a blood feud between the wizard and the coven which took her in. If the PCs slay her, they'll draw the attention of Desudhira and her entire sisterhood.

## MERAINA SAVINE CR 5

XP 1,600

Female changeling<sup>ARG</sup> witch 6

NE Medium humanoid (changeling)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 52 (6d6+29)

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

**SR** 12

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +2 (1d4–1) or mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** hexes (charm [1 step, 3 rounds], disguise [6 hours], flight [*feather fall* at-will, *levitate* 1/day, *fly* 6 minutes/day], slumber [6 rounds])

**Witch Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd—*lightning bolt* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 16), *summon monster III*

2nd—*false life*, *haunting mists*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 15), *summon swarm*, *web* (DC 15)

1st—*charm person* (DC 14), *chill touch* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *sow thought*<sup>ARG</sup> (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*

**Patron Spirits**

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Every day, Meraina casts *false life* and *mage armor*.

**During Combat** Meraina uses *summon monster III* and *summon swarm* to gain extra allies to occupy attackers. She then targets especially difficult foes with enchantment spells and hexes to turn them, as well. For groups, she relies on *web*, *lightning bolt*, or her *wand of hold person*.

**Morale** If necessary, Meraina casts *haunting mists* and uses her flight hex to escape battle, plotting an elaborate vengeance on those who crossed her.

**Base Statistics** Without her prepared spell effects, Meraina's statistics become: **AC** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; **hp** 41

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Improved Familiar, Mother's Gift<sup>ARG</sup> (uncanny resistance), Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +8, Craft (alchemy) +8, Fly +6, Heal +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +2, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +10

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Varisian  
**SQ** object of desire<sup>ARG</sup>, witch's familiar (stirge named Bloodsucker)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *wand of hold person* (7 charges); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, 7 gp, 5 sp, 13 cp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Object of Desire (Ex)** Meraina adds +1 to her caster level when casting *charm person* and *charm monster*. This replaces her green widow racial trait as a changeling.

## BLOODSUCKER, STIRGE FAMILIAR CR –

N Tiny magical beast

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 20 (6 HD)

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

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** touch +9 (attach)

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

**Special Attacks** blood drain, deliver touch spells

#### STATISTICS


**Str** 3, **Dex** 19, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5 (+13 grapple when attached); **CMD** 11 (19 vs. trip)

**Feats** Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +4, Fly +9, Intimidate +1, Perception +5, Stealth +16

**SQ** alertness, diseased, empathic link, share spells, speak with master

**Stored Spells** All prepared spells above, plus: 0—all; 1st—*burning hands*, *ghostbane dirge*, *obscuring mist*, *summon monster I*; 2nd—*enthrall*, *summon monster II*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *speak with dead* 

# Blood Drawn Reunion

## A Side Trek Adventure

By Neil Spicer

Art by Catherine Batha, Gabrielle Clark, Lynnette

Fetters, Basil Arnould Price, and Stephen Wood

Map by Liz Courts

**A** friendly gathering of scholars turns deadly when a failed apprentice takes revenge on her former master and classmates.

### Adventure Background

Five years ago, loremaster Gevester Olymarius founded the Versoluminae, a prestigious academy in Caliphaz devoted to teaching the principles of spellcraft and wizardry. He graduated his first apprentices only last year, but not before he had to expel a troublesome young student—a spiteful changeling named Meraina Savine. Unable to keep up with her classmates, Meraina squandered the last of her mentor's goodwill when she lashed out and maimed a fellow student. Now, a year later, Olymarius has excluded her from a reunion meant to honor his inaugural class.

Meraina had recently met a coven of hags, and the crones used this final slight to fan the flames of her anger and encourage her to crash the event, murder the old loremaster, and forcibly take the arcane secrets he would not give her. Meraina is supported by a loose coalition of witches displaced from the county of Barstoi many years ago.

Known as the Blood Coven, this organization once included Meraina's late mother, a powerful green hag named Belmina. During his adventuring career, Olymarius helped crusading Pharasmin Penitent witch-hunters from the Chapel of Guilts slay Belmina. Neither the wizard nor Meraina knew she was Belmina's offspring when he accepted her as a student several years later. The coven's current leadership—a triumvirate of witches headed by a blood hag named Desudhira—told Meraina of her legacy, fueling the girl's hatred for Olymarius. The coven seeks its own vengeance against him for his role in diminishing their influence over Barstoi, so Desudhira has happily supplied Meraina with the necessary allies to exact her revenge—all in exchange for vile magic items hidden in the wizard's vault.

### Adventure Summary

The adventure opens with the PCs attending a special reunion prepared by Olymarius for his former students. As the event winds down, Olymarius is found murdered. With the identity of the murderer unknown, one of the party's attendees—an off-duty constable named Jaribold—holds the staff and guests under suspicion until he can sort out what happened. Thereafter, Jaribold interviews the guests in hopes of identifying the murderer, and as the PCs are being questioned, they have a chance to acquit themselves by coming to his aid when his own men attack him, having fallen victim to Meraina's charms.

After the PCs gain Jaribold's trust, they can search the rest of the tower to solve the mystery. This brings them into conflict with more of Meraina's accomplices, the tower's less discerning guardians, and finally the changeling witch herself.

### Advancement Track

This adventure is designed for four PCs with connections to loremaster Gevester Olymarius and his school of wizardry in the cosmopolitan city of Caliphaz. Characters should be 3rd level at the start of the adventure and should accumulate enough XP under the Medium advancement track to reach halfway to 4th level.

### A Warm Reception

The special reunion takes place at the Versoluminae, a private, unassuming tower in eastern Caliphaz near the Quarterfaux Archives. The PCs may be attending as former apprentices, visiting dignitaries, or scholars using the school's library. Before the soirée winds down, they have opportunities to rub shoulders with similar attendees, gaining insight into potential suspects once Meraina murders Olymarius. To get the action underway, read or paraphrase the following:

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Invitations to the Versoluminae arrived just a few days ago, summoning guests to a special reunion of former students—all of whom graduated from the school under the tutelage of none other than Gevester Olymarius, one of the most renowned wizards and loremasters in Caliphaz. The event not only promises wine and entertainment, but also an opportunity to socialize with some of the city's most influential citizens. Footmen have already delivered guests from their carriages, leading them through the academy's great iron doors, where music and laughter carry on the cool night air.

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As the PCs mingle with the other attendees, they can interact with **Gevester Olymarius** (see pg. 66), as well as his former and current students, distinguished guests, and fellow colleagues. Some of the more important guests appear below. Be sure to review this section thoroughly, as each may provide further information while discussing the school or its headmaster which could provide clues in solving the wizard's untimely death.

Each guest is presented in the same format—name, alignment, gender, race, class, and level, followed by the guest's role in Caliphaz or relationship with Olymarius. Next, is the guest's "first impression" DC. This DC applies to the initial Diplomacy check a PC makes when arriving at the party and interacting with them—if the check equals or exceeds the DC, that becomes favorably disposed towards them. As a result, the PC gains a +4 bonus on subsequent checks to learn that guest's clue. Following this are details on the guest's appearance, personality, clue, weakness, and Sense Motive skill. Each weakness involves a skill check appropriate to the guest's background. The PC earns the listed benefit by succeeding at a DC 15 check with at least one skill. Finally, an XP award is indicated for learning a particular guest's clue.

To reveal a clue, the PC must ask the right questions, then secure the guest's trust with another Diplomacy or Bluff check opposed by the guest's Sense Motive check. As a general rule, PCs may attempt such a check only once during each conversation, but further attempts to learn this information may be possible through more active interrogation later (see "Investigating the Suspects" below).

### ABRAUN CHALEST

LN male human aristocrat 3/expert 6  
(see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #47: Ashes at Dawn* 11)

**Role** Curator of Quarterfaux Archives, Member of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye

**First Impression** DC 10

#### DESCRIPTION

**Appearance** Pudgy, aged gentleman wearing an expensive pair of silver spectacles

**Personality** Always smiling, prone to laughter, immediately likeable

#### INTERROGATION

**Sense Motive** +5

**Weakness** A successful Knowledge (history) check in Abraun's presence grants a +2 bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks against him.

**Clue** Shares that after graduating from Lepidstadt University but before becoming a loremaster, Olymarius adventured for many years and helped the witch-hunting Pharasmins from the Chapel of Guilts weaken a nefarious group of hags known as the Blood Coven.

**XP Award** 1,200



### EMILIO LOCNAVE

N male human commoner 2/wizard 3  
(use statistics for Hedge Wizard, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 296)

**Role** Colleague and rival

**First Impression** DC 11

#### DESCRIPTION

**Appearance** Old-fashioned, struggling academic

**Personality** Slightly envious, unlucky, always searching for a big breakthrough

#### INTERROGATION

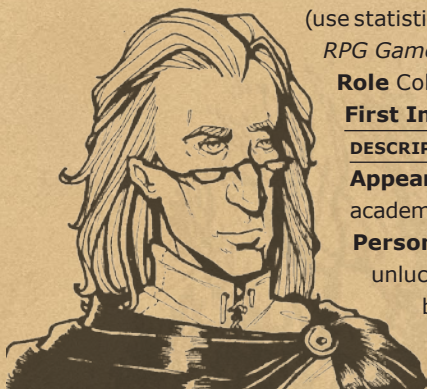
**Sense Motive** +3

**Weakness** A successful

Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check in Emilio's presence grants a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against him.

**Clue** Often competed with Olymarius to attract talented apprentices. Approached by the loremaster's former student (Meraina Savine) who Olymarius expelled during her first year. Considered taking her on as a student, but even Emilio had to turn her away for her disagreeable temperament.

**XP Award** 800



### JELKS PITNER

LE male human bard 3  
(use statistics for Local Celebrity, *Pathfinder RPG Codex* 27)

**Role** Party entertainer; local actor, dancer, and singer

**First Impression** DC 13

#### DESCRIPTION

**Appearance** Young, attractive, well-dressed bard

**Personality** Attentive, intelligent storyteller, conversationalist, and boastful liar

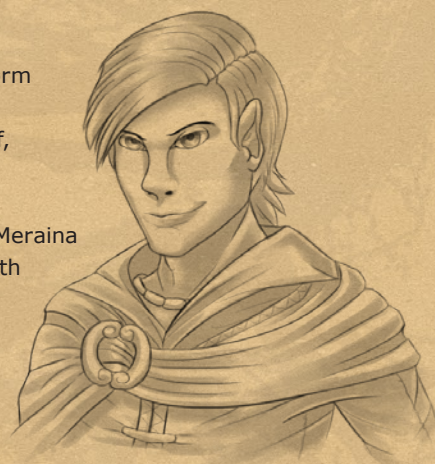
#### INTERROGATION

**Sense Motive** +5

**Weakness** A successful Knowledge (local) or Perform check in Jelks' presence grants a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against him.

**Clue** Saw Korinne (actually Meraina in disguise) fraternizing with each of the constable's guards. Would like to woo her himself, but she rebuffed him.

**XP Award** 600



### BRESHARD BEAUTURNE

LG male human aristocrat 4  
(use statistics for Heir Apparent, *Pathfinder RPG Codex* 251)

**Role** Beauturne nobility, wealthy patron of the Versoluminae

**First Impression** DC 15

#### DESCRIPTION

**Appearance** Immaculately groomed, well-dressed nobleman

**Personality** Gracious, etiquette-minded patron of the arts

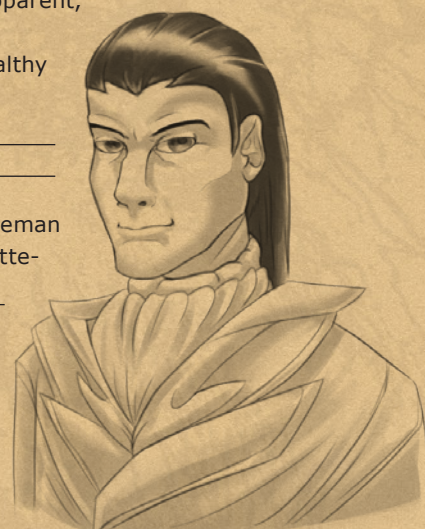
#### INTERROGATION

**Sense Motive** +4

**Weakness** A successful Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) check in Beauturne's presence grants a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against him.

**Clue** Knows Olymarius keeps important relics in his vault and that the wizard recently sealed it with a ritual using his own blood to protect something important.

**XP Award** 600



### PETRICE ZINDELAY

N female human expert 1/rogue 1  
(use statistics for Prostitute, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 301)

**Role** Courtesan; Lord Beauturne's escort

**First Impression** DC 11

#### DESCRIPTION

**Appearance** Gorgeous, nimble dancer and courtesan

**Personality** Street-savvy opportunist; flirtatious kleptomaniac; gold-digger

#### INTERROGATION

**Sense Motive** +5

**Weakness** A successful Appraise or Perform (act, dance, or sing)



check in Petrice's presence grants a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against her.

**Clue** Noticed Olymarius has twin maids serving him (actually Meraina and Runlen simultaneously disguised as Korinne; see "Investigating the Suspects" below). Petrice noticed one of them (Meraina) had a wand tucked into her apron.

**XP Award** 400

**GARIG VASSER**

N male human wizard 1  
(use statistics for Cautious Mage, *Pathfinder RPG Codex 178*)

**Role** First-year student

**First Impression** DC 13

**DESCRIPTION**

**Appearance** Gangly, unkempt student in hand-me-down robes wearing a holy symbol of Nethys

**Personality** Nervous, religious-minded introvert

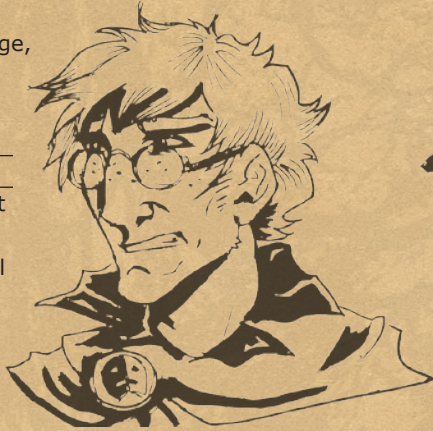
**INTERROGATION**

**Sense Motive** +3

**Weakness** A successful Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check in Garig's presence grants a +2 bonus on future Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against him.

**Clue** Noticed the school records for the Versoluminae included an additional student's name (Meraina Savine) who wasn't invited to the reunion.

**XP Award** 200



**IVEY SHAULINDER**

NE female elf wizard 3  
(use statistics for Battle Mage, *Pathfinder RPG Codex 179*)

**Role** Third-year student

**First Impression** DC 12

**DESCRIPTION**

**Appearance** Sharp, conservatively-dressed elf with an affinity for jewelry

**Personality** Cold, reserved intellectual

**INTERROGATION**

**Sense Motive** +0

**Weakness** A successful Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (planes) check in Ivey's presence grants a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against her.

**Clue** Has trained extensively in the tower's dueling chamber (area 13) with Olymarius, where he once shared stories of his arcane battles against the witches of Barstoi in his youth.

**XP Award** 600



**TANLON NESS**

CN male gnome enchanter 2  
(use statistics for Street Magician, *Pathfinder RPG Codex 179*)

**Role** Second-year student

**First Impression** DC 10

**DESCRIPTION**

**Appearance** Eccentric student dressed in mismatched clothes, shoes, and colors

**Personality** Excitable, overly talkative jokester

**INTERROGATION**

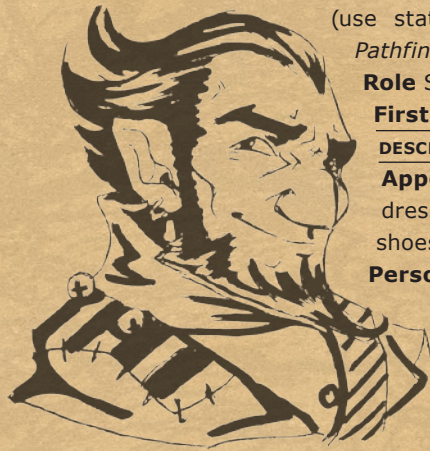
**Sense Motive** -1

**Weakness** A successful Acrobatics or Perform (comedy) check in Tanlon's

presence grants a +2 bonus on future Bluff and Diplomacy checks against him.

**Clue** Heard a strange fluttering sound (Meraina's stirge familiar, Bloodsucker) in the upper levels of the tower before coming down for the party. Suspects another bat must have gotten into the tower's attic.

**XP Award** 400



**Murder Most Foul (CR 5)**

At some point during the party, Olymarius temporarily leaves the dining hall to retrieve a relic of the Shining Crusade, which he wishes to show everyone, from his upstairs study. Soon after, a piercing scream leads to the discovery of his desiccated body on the staircase—victim of a well-planned murder carried out by Meraina and her allies. To initiate this scene, read or paraphrase the following:

*A sudden scream pierces the festive atmosphere of the party, leading to confusion and concern as party guests quickly climb the tower stairs to investigate.*

Jelks Pitner and Patrice Zindelay are the first to discover the lifeless body of Olymarius, encountering him when they slip away for a scandalously amorous moment in the tower's upper level. The loremaster's body lies on the stairs leading from the apprentice's bedroom (area 7) to his loft (area 8). The PCs are free to examine him. A successful DC 20 Heal check reveals that he died of blood loss, despite the fact that there is very little blood on or around the body.

However, another guest soon takes charge—an off-duty constable named Jaribold. Olymarius invited him to the party so he'd provide a squad of men for security. Having failed at this task, Jaribold immediately begins investigating the wizard's death, summoning his guardsmen to detain the remaining guests until he can sort things out.

For the next several minutes, the constable takes aside the partygoers (including the PCs) to interrogate them in the study (area 4). Unfortunately, he doesn't yet realize Meraina charmed his four guardsmen and led them to believe Jaribold is behind the murder. At some point during the PCs' interrogation, these men assault the constable with their saps in an attempt to hold him accountable.

If the PCs rescue Jaribold, he becomes convinced of their innocence and requests their aid in exploring the rest of the tower to unmask the killer.

**CONSTABLE JARIBOLD**

**CR 3**

**XP 800**

**hp** 37 (use statistics for Turnkey with Skill Focus (Sense Motive),





Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide 271)

**JES, LYEL, MORN, AND NAN, CHARMED CITY GUARDS (4) CR 1  
XP 400 EACH**

hp 19 each (use statistics for Guard, Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide 260)

**Investigating the Suspects (CR 4)**

Once the PCs save Jaribold and agree to assist his investigation, they may want to question the other guests, especially if they gleaned useful information while socializing with them at the party. One last attempt can be made to reveal further clues they might have missed during their more cordial conversations. This requires an active interrogation by asking further questions and securing the guest's compliance with a Diplomacy check (if the is already friendly) or an Intimidate check opposed by the guest's Sense Motive check. As a general rule, PCs can attempt a check on each guest only once during an interrogation. If successful, award the PCs the full XP for uncovering their clue.

If the PCs think to interview Olymarius's maid, Korinne, they may also succeed in uncovering one of Meraina's accomplices, a skilled doppelganger named Runlen. This creature has long served the interests of the Blood Coven and adopted the guise of Korinne to gain access to the tower. He then let Meraina into the upper levels to carry out the murder, staying behind to play out his role until she retrieves the items Desudhira desires from Olymarius's vault. If revealed, Runlen lashes out at the PCs, confidently fighting to the death and secure in the knowledge that the Blood Coven will *reincarnate* him if he proves loyal to their cause.

**RUNLEN, DOPPELGANGER CR 3  
XP 800**

hp 26 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 89)

**Investigating the Scene**

Once the PCs have cleared themselves to the satisfaction of Jaribold and investigated the potential suspects, they may well turn their attention to exploring the tower itself. The constable gives them his full blessing in carrying out the investigation while he summons more city guardsmen to secure the grounds and remaining guests.

**1. Dining Hall**

Two, large dining tables heaped with food dominate this vaulted great room. To the north, a long tapestry hangs from the rafters above, depicting a series of interwoven runes.

This area serves as the main gathering place for the class reunion. PCs will likely do most of their socializing here with the party's guests prior to the murder. Even afterward, Jaribold holds any suspects here until he can call them to the study (area 4) for interrogation.

**2. Kitchen**

A large fireplace warms this small kitchen, flanked by cabinets, serving tables, and a barrel of wine. A wooden trapdoor also lies set into the flagstone floor to the north.

This kitchen is run by Korinne Gill, the serving maid Olymarius hired just a few months ago.

At some point during the evening, the real Korinne was assaulted by Meraina's accomplice, the doppelganger Runlen. He subdued the poor girl and locked her in the cellar (**area 2a**) so he could take her place.

**Clue:** A DC 20 Perception check reveals spilled wine, broken plates, and a slight trace of blood on the floor—all evidence of Korinne's struggle.

### 2a. Cellar (CR 1/2)

A short ladder descends into this cramped cellar, its base surrounded by casks of wine and sacks of potatoes.

Olymarius had this small root cellar put in place to preserve the school's food supplies.

**Creatures:** The real Korinne lies tied and gagged here among the food stores. If rescued, she describes her harrowing ordeal at Runlen's hands.

#### KORINNE GILL

CR 1/2

#### XP 200

hp 7 (use statistics for Barmaid, *Pathfinder RPG: GameMastery Guide*)



### 3. Guest Room

Four bunk beds and storage lockers occupy this room. They appear tidy and undisturbed.

Olymarius reserves this room for overnight guests and visitors. This often includes those seeking temporary use of his extensive library or the loremaster's

services in crafting or identifying magic items on their behalf. Currently, he has no such guests unless the PCs themselves are staying with him.

### 4. Study

A round table and six chairs sit within this room of bookshelves. Nearby, several display cases hold a number of preserved documents, clay tablets, and ancient scrolls.

This room serves as a quiet place for study and meditation on the magical arts. The many display cases contain several recorded writings that Olymarius collected on different arcane traditions.

**Development:** Jaribold uses this room to interrogate those he suspects of murdering Olymarius. This includes the PCs until they demonstrate their trustworthiness during the attack described in the timed encounter for "Murder Most Foul."

### 5. Parlor

Two statues of robed figures wielding staves stand along the north wall of this art gallery. A couple of prominent paintings decorate the remaining walls near the doors leading east, west, and south.

Olymarius decorated the school's art gallery here with a few pieces from his favorite era of arcane advancement—namely the Age of Destiny when Ancient Osirion, the Jistka Imperium, and the Shory Empire flourished. One of the statues depicts an ancient God-King of Osirion known as the Song Pharaoh. The second provides an approximation of Old-Mage Jatembe, whose teachings provided the foundation of wizardry following mankind's emergence from the Age of Darkness. The paintings are more recent, however, with one showing a scene of arcane conflict between famed arcanists Nex and Geb, and the other an unnamed Varisian spellcaster falling victim to the Whispering Tyrant.

### 6. Main Library

A large, spiral staircase takes up one quarter of this vaulted, 15-foot-high chamber. To the north, a curved bookcase stretches along the wall with sturdy ladders hanging from iron rails that slide in both directions. The floor is covered in lacquered ceramic tile with the centermost portion arranged in a circle of arcane runes.

This area serves as the school's primary working library. It contains a vast collection of treatises on Ustalavic history dating back several centuries. The circle of runes acts as a permanent *teleportation circle* to transport those standing within it down to the basement (**area 11**). Any of Olymarius's students (including Meraina) know the command word to activate it. After each use, it requires 1 hour to recharge—an unexpected limitation which has temporarily trapped Meraina and her green hag accomplice, Iketra (see **area 12**), downstairs. However, during the recharge period, it is still possible for a wizard's (or witch's) familiar that is separated from its master to pass through the *teleportation circle* and rejoin him (or her). Meraina and Bloodsucker also know about this function and use it to their advantage later.

### 7. Apprentice Bedroom

Four bunk beds, a large wardrobe, and an oak chest occupy most of this floor. To the east, another flight of stairs climbs upward, next to an open door looking in upon a washroom.

The current students of Olymarius use this room as their sleeping quarters. It looks well-lived in, all the way down to the dirty laundry strewn about the floor.

## 8. Loremaster's Apartment (CR 4)

An expansive bedroom takes up this well-appointed loft. To the southeast, a pair of glass doors open onto a balcony overlooking the city of Caliphas, and a small metal ladder occupies the southwest corner to access an open trapdoor in the 10-foot ceiling.

Olymarius claims this room as his own when staying overnight at the Versoluminae. He has another estate elsewhere in the city, but prefers living here during the school year to encourage his students.

**Treasure:** Beyond a curtain near the balcony doors lies a small nook Olymarius uses for his personal studies. The bookcase near his desk contains several spell scrolls, including *knock*, *see invisibility*, and *share memory*<sup>UM</sup>.

**Creatures:** A slithering tracker lurks under the desk to the north and attacks anyone entering here. Meraina brought it with her to release from the overhead attic (area 9) and catch Olymarius by surprise when he walked into the room. After the tracker immobilized him, Meraina sent her stirge familiar to obtain a sample of the wizard's blood so she could access his vault (area 14). She then left the tracker to finish him, but Olymarius eventually broke free of the paralysis to escape downstairs. Meraina's familiar dutifully followed after him, finishing him off by draining his remaining Constitution before he could reach the party again.

### SLITHERING TRACKER CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 250)

## 9. Attic

A soft breeze from a tiny, open window carries the musty smell of exposed wood and dry dust within this attic. Cobwebs hang from the rafters, reaching down to a collection of carefully stacked crates. Another ladder leads to a trapdoor in the 8-foot ceiling.

Olymarius stored a few mementos here of his early days teaching at the school. A DC 15 Perception check notices one recently-opened crate, which contains a portrait he commissioned of the Versoluminae's inaugural class five years ago. It includes all the reunion's attendees as well as Meraina Savine.

**Creatures:** Meraina's familiar, a vicious stirge named Bloodsucker, keeps watch on the loremaster's bedroom (area 8) through the open trapdoor. It retreats to hide among the rafters if anyone climbs up (DC 26 Perception to notice) and focuses on relaying all it perceives to its mistress (at area 14). If discovered, Bloodsucker flees for the open window or trapdoor and only fights if cornered. If the stirge escapes, it heads for the *teleportation circle* (at area 6) to access the basement and rejoin Meraina, even crashing through one of the downstairs windows again if necessary. Clever PCs who act quickly may be able to use the *teleportation circle's* special properties for familiars: holding onto the stirge while it passes through the circle transports them without requiring the command word.

### BLOODSUCKER, STIRGE FAMILIAR CR —

hp 20 (see pg. 67)

## 10. Rooftop

A 3-foot ledge with sculpted downspouts surrounds this sloped, stone rooftop overlooking the city of Caliphas.

Olymarius built the Versoluminae to a height of 40 feet to give it an impressive view of the city, especially the nearby Quarterfaux Archives.

## 11. Archives (CR 5)

Three bookshelves flanked by elaborate winged statues of mythical beasts stretch along the walls of this 20-foot-high round chamber. Iron doors lead east, west, and north.

This massive library represents the collected notes and magical research conducted by Olymarius over the years. Spread across 300 individual tomes, it includes equivalent spellbooks covering all wizard cantrips, 1st, and 2nd level spells. The northernmost door to the vault (area 14) is sealed with an *arcane lock* (DC 20 Disable Device to open).

**Trap:** A magical trap also protects the door to the vault. It activates if anyone other than Olymarius attempts to open it, even those using Disable Device or *knock*. If someone bears a sample of the loremaster's blood, they count the same as if Olymarius himself accessed the door (which is the method Meraina used).

**Creatures:** The statue next to the vault is actually a charmed gargoyle named Yawtred, whom Olymarius secured as a guardian for the library. Meraina cast *suggestion* on him to let her pass with prompting to prevent others from following after her.

### YAWTRED, GARGOYLE CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 137*)

### BURNING HANDS TRAP CR 2

XP 600

(*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook 420*)

## 12. Laboratory (CR 5)

Three vats connected by copper tubing dominate the center of this laboratory, surrounded by tables of beakers, flasks, and vials.

Olymarius stocked this laboratory to train students in the rudiments of alchemy. A secret door (DC 20 Perception check to notice) to the north can also access the vault (area 14), but it has an *arcane lock* (DC 20 Disable Device to pass).

**Treasure:** The western shelves contain several potions and alchemical items, including five flasks of acid, three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, three *potions of lesser restoration*, a *potion of darkvision*, a *potion of bear's endurance*, two containers of bottled lightning<sup>APG</sup>, and an *elixir of dragon breath* (bronze)<sup>UE</sup>.

**Creatures:** Before Meraina entered the vault, she and the green hag, Iketra, investigated this lab. The latter stayed behind to pilfer useful potions, and she's still busily identifying the choicest selections when the PCs arrive.

### IKETRA, GREEN HAG CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 58 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 167*)

## 13. Dueling Chamber (CR 9)

Six equally-spaced alcoves line this long hall. At either end, two mannequins stand in place, facing one another at progressive distances from three separate circles of painted runes drawn upon the floor.



Reserved for advanced apprentices, Olymarius had this dueling chamber built to train students in the arts of counterspelling and ray spells. A secret door (DC 20 Perception check to notice) in the northeast alcove can also access the vault (**area 14**), but it's sealed with an *arcane lock* (DC 20 Disable Device to bypass).

**Creatures:** A lone clockwork mage occupies this room as its main instructor. Olymarius inherited the mechanical construct from his former master. It activates as soon as anyone enters the room, prepared to defend the far end of the hall.

#### CLOCKWORK MAGE CR 9

**XP 6,400**

**hp** 102 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 32)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** If attacked, the clockwork mage only fights to subdue, using its wand magic to protect itself and its slam attacks to deal nonlethal damage.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Wand Magic (Su)** The clockwork mage's wand crystal allows it to cast abjuration spells as if using a spell trigger magic item (CL 9th). It may cast *hold portal* and *shield* at will, *protection from arrows* and *resist energy* 3/day, and *dispel magic* 1/day.

### 14. Vault (CR 6)

A pentagram marks the center of this large chamber where various alcoves display a number of collected treasures ranging from glittery coins and jewels to finely crafted wares, books, and garments.

Olymarius built this vault beneath the Versoluminae to house items

of importance to him. This often included magic items he was either studying to identify their properties, or which he kept on hand to loan to his students.

**Creatures:** After arranging Olymarius's demise, Meraina found her way here using a sample of his blood. She's currently assessing which items to take back to Desudhira so she can secure a position in the Blood Coven.

**Treasure:** The vault itself contains only a fraction of Olymarius's wealth. Included among a handful of items he hasn't yet enchanted are: 1,080 gp, 2,122 sp, 576 cp, three 100 gp opals, ten 50 gp sapphires, *boots of the cat*<sup>UE</sup>, an *amulet of natural armor +1*, a *cloak of resistance +1*, *blood-call bracers* (see pg. 26), an archaic tome called the *Thirteen Chants of the Numinous Eye* (see pg. 12), a *golem manual* for blood golems (same statistics as a *flesh golem manual*, but containing spells for *animate objects*, *bleed*, *cure critical wounds*, and *geas/quest*), and a *wand of shrink item* (35 charges remaining).

#### MERAINA SAVINE CR 5

**XP 1,600**

**hp** 52 (see pg. 67)

### Concluding The Adventure

Award each PC an additional story award of 500 XP if they successfully solve the murder of Olymarius and hold all involved parties accountable. In the meantime, Meraina's defeat doesn't sit well with the Blood Coven. Though Desudhira exults in the death of her hated rival Olymarius, she resents the loss of Meraina, turns her attention to avenging, freeing, or *reincarnating* the young changeling, and attacks the PCs before they can threaten her sisterhood.

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# Bestiary

By Dylan "SteelDraco" Brooks, Ryan Crossman, Cole Kronewitter, Christopher "Acre" Lockwood, Matthew Medeiros, and Christopher Wasko

Art by Becky Barnes, Andrew DeFelice, Crystal Frasier, Michael Faecks, Jason Kirckof, Danny Hedager Krog, and dodeqaa Polyhedra

## Alchemical Dreadnought

Thick green smoke pours from where this titanic humanoid should have a head. A harsh, irritating chemical stench heralds its approach, and as it lumbers closer, the multitude of corpses comprising it become clear.

### ALCHEMICAL DREADNOUGHT

CR 12

XP 19,200

CE Huge undead

**Init** -1; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., mistsight; Perception +22

**Aura** stench (60 ft., DC 23, 10 rounds)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26 (+2 deflection, -1 Dex, +17 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 143 (19d8+58)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision, amorphous; **DR** 10/ slashing and magic; **Immune** acid, undead traits; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +20 (2d6+22/19-20)

**Ranged** corpse bomb +13 touch (1d8+10 plus acid splash and corpse cloud)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** absorb, breath weapon (acidic vomit, 60-ft. cone, 8d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 21 for half, usable once per day), corpse bomb (usable every 1d4 rounds), trample (1d8+15, DC 31)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 35, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +28; **CMD** 37

**Feats** Ability Focus (stench), Bull Rush Strike<sup>APG</sup>, Cleave, Crippling Critical, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Power Attack\*, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

**Skills** Intimidate +24, Perception +22

**Languages** Common (can't speak)



#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** battlefields or magical wastelands

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** half (acid-resistant treasure on absorbed bodies)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Absorb (Su)** An alchemical dreadnought can absorb the bodies and life energy of its foes to increase its own power. Any time the alchemical dreadnought enters the space of a dead or dying creature of Large size or smaller, it can absorb the target. Dead creatures are automatically absorbed, while a dying creature must succeed at a DC 21 Will save to resist absorption. Each corpse absorbed this way functions similarly to a *death knell* spell. The bonuses from this effect stack, to a maximum of 50 temporary hit points and a +10 enhancement bonus to Strength. These bonuses fade after 10 minutes per HD of each creature absorbed. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Corpse Bomb (Su)** As a standard action, the alchemical dreadnought can infuse a corpse from its body with alchemical power and throw it at its foes, similar to an alchemist's bomb. This is a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 20 feet. The corpse bomb deals 1d8 + the dreadnought's Strength modifier in bludgeoning damage from the impact. The target and everyone within 5 feet are sprayed with acid from the bursting corpse, dealing 2d6 damage (Reflex DC 21 half). Additionally, a corpse cloud (see below) forms at the point of impact. The alchemical dreadnought can throw a corpse bomb every 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Corpse Cloud (Su)** A cloud of acidic, choking fumes erupts from a corpse bomb's point of impact, as a *stinking cloud*. In

addition to nauseating creatures, everything in the cloud takes 2d6 points of acid damage per round on the dreadnought's turn (Fortitude DC 21 negates nausea). A corpse cloud dissipates after 1d6+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Mistsight (Ex)** The senses of an alchemical dreadnought are not hindered by fog, mist, smoke, or similar effects.

An alchemical dreadnought is a towering figure composed of the fused corpses of many creatures. Thick green smoke pours from the hole in its shoulders where most humanoids would have a head, and it tears at prey with powerful claws of bone. It has no discernible face, but sees the world through the eyes of all the corpses fused into its flesh.

In battle, an alchemical dreadnought throws corpse bombs at the largest concentration of foes, then wades into the cloud and slaughters anything it can reach. It favors fighting from inside a corpse cloud and dropping corpse bombs on melee opponents, reveling in the destruction it causes. It prefers to start combat by slaughtering weaker foes and absorbing them with its trample attack, then dealing with any more significant threats.

The first alchemical dreadnoughts were accidentally created from mass graves on battlefields where horrific alchemical weapons were used.

A typical dreadnought is about 30 feet tall and weighs 12,000 pounds, but can grow larger if it absorbs enough corpses.

\* Power Attack bonuses included in statistics

## Aridnyk

*This floating crystalline mass sheds an eerie white light. Gossamer wings hold it aloft as it flutters from corpse to corpse.*

### ARIDNYK CR 6

XP 2,400

NE Tiny undead

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*, *detect undead*, *lifesense* 60 ft.; Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 59 (7d8+28)

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

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

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

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 7/day (DC 17, 4d6)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +11)

Constant—*deathwatch*, *detect undead*

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*enervation* (DC 17)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *contagion* (DC 16)

2nd—*desecrate*, *protective penumbra*, *silence* (DC 15), *unliving rage*<sup>ACG</sup>

1st—*bane* (DC 14), *cause fear* (DC 14), *chill touch* (DC 14), *doom* (DC 14), *ray of sickening* (DC 14)

0—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 1, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 3, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse



**Skills** Fly +21, Knowledge (religion) +2, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +16

**Languages** Common (can't speak)

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary or pair

**Treasure** none

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Spells** An aridnyk casts spells as a 7th-level cleric, and can cast *inflict* spells spontaneously as a cleric of an evil deity, but does not have access to domains. An aridnyk can cast all necromancy spells as divine spells.

When a healer of considerable power and selflessness dies from exposure to negative energy, there is a minute chance the healer's soul will cling to this world as an aridnyk. Born from the spirit's regrets and unfinished duties, aridnyks crave above all else to heal the injured, cure the sick, and bolster the weak. However, the aridnyk's mind is twisted in undeath, and its connection to the divine is severed. The aridnyk can only call upon the unholy power that birthed it, and in its madness, it is unable to discern between negative and positive energy.

Because of their single-mindedness and tendency to target the most injured creatures with negative energy attacks, aridnyks are considered by the uninformed to be especially malicious undead. In reality, the spirits are zealously attempting to heal others with their deadly powers. Aridnyks wander in search of those in need and often end up hounding unwilling "patients" or following groups

of undead, empowering them with negative energy in a misguided attempt to lay them to rest.

Aridnyks' appearance can vary wildly, though most often they appear as masses of white, shining crystal with abstracted traits of animals or other beings that the soul associated with goodness and purity in life. Should two of these creatures encounter one another, they invariably see each other as kindred spirits and allies, joining and redoubling their efforts.

Aridnyks cannot be created by conventional necromancy. Attempts to engineer one—by deliberately killing a cleric of a good deity with massive amounts of negative energy, for example—always fail. These rare and unusual undead are highly prized by necromancers as naturally occurring wellsprings of unholy power because they are relatively simple to trick, train, or outright force into serving as a combat medic for hordes of zombies or skeletons. Packs of undead bolstered by aridnyks are rightly feared for their durability and ferociousness.

Aridnyks are typically no larger than a foot in diameter and weigh virtually nothing.

## Beetle, Fulgur

*Electricity arcs across the shell of this fluorescent blue, man-sized beetle.*



FULGUR BEETLE	CR 1
<b>XP 400</b>	
N Medium vermin	
<b>Init</b> -1; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (-1 Dex, +6 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 15 (2d8+6)	
<b>Fort</b> +6, <b>Ref</b> -1, <b>Will</b> +0	
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> electrified; <b>Immune</b> mind-affecting effects; <b>Resist</b> electricity 10	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft., fly 15 ft. (poor)	
<b>Melee</b> bite +3 (1d6+3)	
<b>Ranged</b> jolt +0 touch (2d6 electricity)	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
<b>Str</b> 14, <b>Dex</b> 9, <b>Con</b> 16, <b>Int</b> —, <b>Wis</b> 10, <b>Cha</b> 11	
<b>Base Atk</b> +1; <b>CMB</b> +3; <b>CMD</b> 12 (20 vs. trip)	
<b>Skills</b> Fly -5	
<b>SQ</b> temporary revivification	
<b>ECOLOGY</b>	
<b>Environment</b> temperate hills and swamps	
<b>Organization</b> solitary, cluster (2–6) or colony (7–12)	
<b>Treasure</b> none	
<b>SPECIAL ABILITIES</b>	
<b>Electrified (Ex)</b> A creature that strikes a fulgur beetle with a natural weapon, unarmed strike, or metal weapon takes 1d6 points of electricity damage. Creatures grappling a fulgur beetle take this damage when initiating the grapple and on each round the grapple is maintained.	
<b>Jolt (Ex)</b> By connecting the tips of its antennae as a standard action, a fulgur beetle can fire a jolt of electricity at any target	

within 30 feet.

**Temporary Revivification (Ex)** Three times per day, a fulgur beetle can animate a mostly-intact corpse as the spell *animate dead* (CL 1st), except that the zombie remains animated for a number of rounds equal to the beetle's HD + Constitution modifier (usually 5 rounds). A newly animated zombie attacks the nearest target that is not a fulgur beetle on the beetle's next turn.

Nesting in marshes, foothills, abandoned buildings, and cellars, these scavengers feed primarily on brain matter and lingering electrical impulses. Fulgur beetles are persistent problems in graveyards, wandering in at night and digging up shallow graves to feast on fresh corpses.

Fulgur beetles produce and transmit electricity through a complex network of organs. This electricity courses through their carapace and can be directed outward in short bursts through their antennae, either to defend themselves or jump-start a prospective meal. When carrion is scarce, fulgur beetles swarm live prey with blasts of electricity. The beetles' bioelectric organs and shells often find use as alchemical reagents or spell components. Fulgur beetles are typically 3 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds, with females being slightly bulkier.

## Harvest Hag

*A tangle of straw-filled hair hangs from the head of this foul witch. Her skin is blood red and pulled tight over her bony frame.*

HARVEST HAG	CR 4
<b>XP 1,200</b>	
CE Medium monstrous humanoid	
<b>Init</b> +2; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 38 (4d10+16)	
<b>Fort</b> +5, <b>Ref</b> +6, <b>Will</b> +7	
<b>SR</b> 15	
<b>Weaknesses</b> counting obsession	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> 2 claws +8 (1d6+4)	
<b>Special Attacks</b> blood drain (1d4 Constitution), paralyzing gaze (1d4 rounds, DC 15)	
<b>Spell-Like Abilities</b> (CL 4th; concentration +7)	
At will— <i>speak with animals</i> (rats and fleas only), <i>whispering wind</i>	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
<b>Str</b> 18, <b>Dex</b> 14, <b>Con</b> 18, <b>Int</b> 12, <b>Wis</b> 13, <b>Cha</b> 16	
<b>Base Atk</b> +4; <b>CMB</b> +8; <b>CMD</b> 20	
<b>Feats</b> Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth)	





**Skills** Bluff +7, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +8, Stealth +12, Survival +6, Swim +9

**Languages** Common, Giant

**SQ** compression

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#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** swamps, temperate farmlands

**Organization** solitary or coven (3 hags of any type)

**Treasure** standard

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#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Counting Obsession (Ex)** Harvest hags are easily distracted by brooms, hay poppets, or other straw objects blessed with a vial of holy water. A hag that sees such an item must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or become fascinated for one minute. During this time, it obsessively counts each straw on the item. A hag that succeeds its save is immune to the fascinating effect of that particular item for 24 hours.

**Paralyzing Gaze (Su)** A harvest hag's gaze can paralyze victims within 30 feet. Those who fail a DC 15 Will save are paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. Each round on its turn, a paralyzed creature may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect. Once a creature successfully saves against a harvest hag's paralyzing gaze, it is immune to that hag's gaze for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting enchantment effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Harvest hags are foul crones that venture from their swampy homes every harvest season to plague rural villages. They have lanky frames and typically stand 7 feet tall when not stooping. Their emaciated bellies become bloated and distended after they drain blood from a victim.

Harvest hags relish sleeping on a bed of hay, and they use the plentiful supply of crops during harvest season to hide during daylight hours. Harvest hags can easily compress their thin bodies to squirm into bales of hay, haystacks, grain silos, or even thatched roofs. During sunlit hours they pass time by quietly counting grains of wheat or strands of hay. After sunset, they seek new victims to drain of blood and meticulously skin. Before every dawn, the hag leaves behind the skin of her most recent victim, stitched together and stuffed with hay. She then slinks away and seeks out a new hiding place for the day.

Finding a harvest hag while she rests is difficult, and some villages are forced to burn their entire year's harvest in order to end the killings. Every village elder has a different remedy for distracting or locating harvest hags.

Many believe that harvest hags have a love for fleas and rats, using them during the daylight hours to find new victims. Following these vermin, the stories say, will eventually lead to the hag's current lair. Others claim that is possible to hear the whispered voice of the hag endlessly counting straws on the wind when drawing close to her lair.

The wisest elders know that harvest hags have a weakness for counting and they instruct villagers to hang blessed poppets and brooms over their beds every night. Such distractions often ward away the hags entirely, or at the very least, allow time for victims to escape.

Due to their obsessive natures, harvest hags are considered simple-minded by other hags. When in a mixed coven, a harvest hag is usually considered the weakest member, and her opinions are rarely considered. Covens composed entirely of harvest hags operate with a unified purpose and can terrorize the countryside for miles around. These covens often strike bargains with desperate farming communities, offering to use their magic to produce bountiful crops in exchange for regular sacrificial offerings.

When a harvest hag joins a coven, the coven adds *diminish plants* and *plant growth* to its spell-like abilities.

## Moon Wisp

*This lithe humanoid figure glows with cold white light, its slender body draped in a shawl of starry sky. Its head is almost perfectly spherical, with facial features reminiscent of shadowy craters on its surface.*

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### MOON WISP

**CR 8**
**XP 4,800**

CN Medium fey

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

**Aura** lunar (30 ft., DC 19)

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+3 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 78 (12d6+36)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

**Defensive Abilities** serene presence; **DR** 10/cold iron; **SR** 18

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#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** 2 slams +7 (1d6+1 plus moonbeam; see below)

**Ranged** 2 moonbeams +9 touch (see below)

**Special Attacks** moonbeam, dominate beast

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +15)

 Constant—see *invisibility*

 At will—*dust of twilight*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 15), *moonstruck*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 17)



3/day—*deep slumber* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 15), empowered *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *suggestion* (DC 16)

---

**STATISTICS**

**Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 17**

**Base Atk +6; CMB +7; CMD 19**

**Feats** Dodge, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*ray of enfeeblement*), Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (ray)

**Skills** Escape Artist +17, Fly +25, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18

**Languages** Sylvan

**SQ** nocturnal manifestation, unearthly grace

---

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any forest or plains

**Organization** solitary or cult (1 plus 1d6 lycantrhopes and 2d6 animals)

**Treasure** standard

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**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Dominate Beast (Sp)** This functions as *dominate animal* (DC 16), except that it also affects lycantrhopes.

**Lunar Aura (Su)** A moon wisp's body sheds normal light like a sunrod. Creatures within 30 feet must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or be fascinated. The save DC is Charisma-based. While fascinated, animals and lycantrhopes suffer a -4 penalty on saves against the moon wisp's spell-like and supernatural abilities, and they never interpret the moon wisp's actions as hostile or threatening. Once a creature has been exposed to the aura—regardless of whether it is affected—it cannot be affected by that moon wisp's lunar aura again for 24 hours. Creatures that are within an area of normal or bright light from a separate light source are immune to a moon wisp's lunar aura as long as they remain within the separate area of light.

**Moonbeam (Su)** A moon wisp can shoot a ray of concentrated

moonlight that grants an animal or lycantrhpe 1d12 temporary hit points and affects it as the *rage* spell (Will DC 16 negates). Against other creatures, a moonbeam inflicts 2d12 points of nonlethal damage and causes the target to become fatigued for 1d3 rounds. A moon wisp's moonbeams cannot cause exhaustion. Both of these effects last for 2d6 rounds. A moon wisp may use this ability as part of a slam attack.

**Nocturnal Manifestation (Su)** A moon wisp becomes ethereal during daylight hours.

**Serene Presence (Su)** Animals and lycantrhopes cannot willingly attack a moon wisp unless they first succeed at a DC 19 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Unearthly Grace (Su)** A moon wisp adds its Charisma modifier as a racial bonus on all its saving throws and as a deflection bonus to its Armor Class.

Moon wisps are eerie creatures of moonlight that hold tremendous sway over lycantrhopes and their ilk. Standard animals are instinctively drawn to a moon wisp's presence, but lycantrhopes hate and fear these fey, going to great lengths to destroy them whenever possible.

Although they are fey, moon wisps dwell primarily in the Ethereal Plane and manifest on the Material Plane only at night. They feed on natural moonlight and are intrigued by their influence over the beasts of the Material Plane, performing all manner of callous social experiments upon their shape-shifting thralls.

Moon wisps are most numerous in the Shudderwood and other woodlands of Ustalav, where lycantrhpe populations are high. Citizens of nearby settlements often try to parley with the fey, offering all manner of tribute in exchange for keeping the beast-folk away. Moon wisps' perceptions of such diplomats are strange, however, and the unpredictable creatures are as likely to sic their bestial minions on their guests as they are to entertain their proposals. Not even other fey entirely understand the peculiar moon wisp's agenda.

A moon wisp is about 5 feet tall and weighs only 70 pounds.

## Nachzehrer

*This creature has pulsing veins running beneath its pallid skin. Its hands end in long talons, and its left eye bulges alarmingly. Its shadow seems to bend around it, and a belt of bells tinkles from around its waist.*

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**NACHZEHRER**
**CR 11**
**XP 12,800**

CE Medium undead

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

**Aura** death's shadow (5 ft., DC 21), hell's bells (30 ft., DC 21)

---

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 Dex, +8 natural)

**hp** 126 (12d8+72); fast healing 5

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +6; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits

---

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 60 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +15 (2d4+3/19–20)

**Ranged** shadow reach +14 touch (4d6+5 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** energy drain (2 levels, DC 21)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +15)

1/day—*cause fear* (DC 16)



Nachzehrers are peculiar undead. Legend states they arise from the bodies of those who die from an accident or sickness with great regrets in their hearts. They frequent crypts and sewers, eating dead things much like a ghoul but preferring to kill and eat the living. Aware of their ability to spread disease by ringing church bells, they often make forays into populated cities to bring about an epidemic of ghoul fever for their own amusement.

A typical nachzehirer stands up to 6 feet tall and weighs about 110 pounds.

## Smotherscum

*This onyx-skinned mass stumbles awkwardly on thin stalks that masquerade as legs. The false outline of an overcoat and top hat, composed of protruding ridges and hanging folds of skin, shimmers behind outstretched arms ending with pudgy, fingerless hands.*

### SMOTHERSCUM

CR 3

XP 800

N Medium ooze

**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception -5

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 26 (4d8+8)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** -4

**Immune** acid, ooze traits

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** slam +6 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 acid plus grab)

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d4 Str damage plus 1d6 acid), smother, suffocating embrace

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 18

**Skills** Disguise -5 (+15 when mimicking a creature, see below)

**SQ** caricatured reconstitution, compression

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban

**Organization** solitary, pair, or gang (3-5)

**Treasure** none

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Adhesive Grasp (Ex)** A smotherscum can grapple up to four Medium or smaller creatures without any penalty to its grapple check, but it must initiate each grapple separately. Once a creature has successfully been grappled, the smotherscum need only take a single standard action each round to maintain all its grapples.

**Caricatured Reconstitution (Ex)** When mimicking the form of a creature, the smotherscum gains a +20 bonus on Disguise checks against creatures from which it has concealment.

**Smother (Ex)** As a move action, a smotherscum can use its nearly amorphous form and seering adhesive skin to cover the the airways of one grappled victim, preventing it from breathing.

**Suffocating Embrace (Ex)** When the smotherscum grapples more than one creature, it converts the motion of each creature into deadly suction. While the creature's smother ability is acting on a grappled creature, if any grappled creature takes a standard or full-round action, the remaining duration that the smothered creature can hold its breath is reduced by 1 round. These acidic oozes have developed the ability to walk upright in an

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Improved Critical (claws), Scent of Fear<sup>CMR</sup>, Sure Grasp<sup>UC</sup>, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claws)

**Skills** Climb +26, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +26;

**Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +6 Stealth

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** belt of silver bells (worth 100 gp)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Death's Shadow (Su)** A nachzehirer's "shadow" saps the life from its enemies. Any living creature within 5 feet of the nachzehirer must succeed at a DC 21 Reflex save each round to avoid the writhing black mass or be subject to the nachzehirer's energy drain. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Hell's Bells (Su)** A nachzehirer has a belt of silver bells that constantly jingles as it moves. Anyone within 30 feet who can hear the bells must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or be shaken for the next hour. If it rings a larger bell (like those in church towers), the range of this fear effect increases to a mile. Anyone who hears this bell's tolls three times within a minute must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or contract ghoul fever. A nachzehirer may only attempt to cause ghoul fever in listeners once per day. The DCs are Charisma-based.

**Shadow Reach (Su)** A nachzehirer can lash out with its shadow at a target within 30 feet.

unnerving charade of bipedal movement. Awkward protruding ridges and hanging skin flaps crowd their jet-black skin, creating a mockery of clothing, armor and headwear; they cannot mimic specific, finer details, such as facial features, fingers, and toes. Their nearly amorphous form and lack of bone structure cause the smotherscum to move akin to a drunken, ambling idiot: continually stumbling, randomly bumping into objects, and swaying in place even when not walking.

Suffering from light sensitivity, smotherscums prowl at night in search of food, seeping into available cracks and crevices before sunrise to wait out daylight. Smotherscums find sustenance by luck alone, aimlessly wandering streets and alleyways, stupidly bumping into walls, fences, and stoops. If the smotherscum finds no living creatures during this directionless ramble, it uses its amorphous form to seep through slightly open windows, door seams, cracks in walls, or between prison bars if it senses a meal is close. Using their adhesive bodies, a smotherscum ascends vertical walls to find prey, seeping through seemingly inaccessible points of ingress.

A smotherscum ungracefully falls upon its prey, adhering to the hapless creature with its sticky, acidic skin, burning away muscle and tendons to prevent escape. Its flabby skin seeps to cover the grasped prey's airways, quickly smothering them.

When the last of its grappled prey is finally motionless, the smotherscum continues its embrace as it slowly melts and absorbs the creature(s)'s form(s). Only charred patches of acid burns remain where a smotherscum has fed and absorbed a creature.

A smotherscum reproduces 24 hours after consuming a Medium-sized or smaller creature, dividing into two separate creatures that both resemble the outline and shape of the last creature it absorbed.

A typical smotherscum can assume the form of a 5- to 6-foot-tall humanoid and weighs approximately 200 pounds. 🐛



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what do they mean??!?*

ACG	Advanced Class Guide
APG	Advanced Player's Guide
ARG	Advanced Race Guide
B1	Bestiary
B2	Bestiary 2
B4	Bestiary 4
BotM	Player Companion: Blood of the Moon
CMR	Classic Monsters Revisited
CoP	Player Companion: Champions of Purity
FG	Faction Guide
GMG	GameMastery Guide
ISG	Inner Sea Gods
ISWG	Inner Sea World Guide
OM	Occult Mysteries
PCCS	Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting
PA#47	Pathfinder Adventure Path #47: Ashes at Dawn
PA#79	Pathfinder Adventure Path #79: The Half-Dead City
PA#74	Pathfinder Adventure Path #74: Sword of Valor
PotIS	Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea
SoS	Seekers of Secrets
THH	Player Companion: The Harrow Handbook
UCA	Ultimate Campaign
UC	Ultimate Combat
UE	Ultimate Equipment
UM	Ultimate Magic

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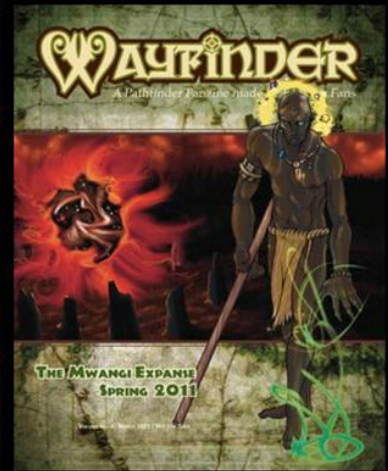
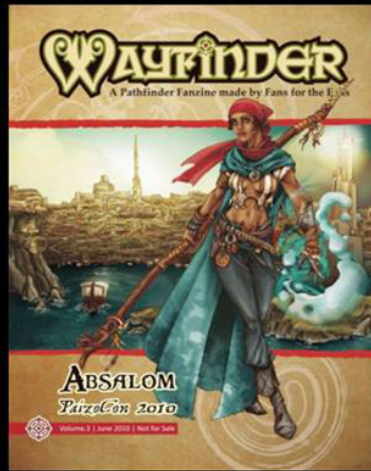
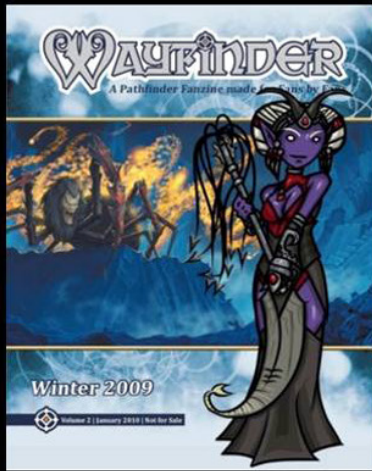
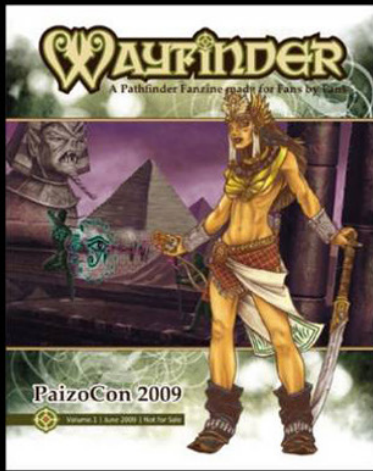
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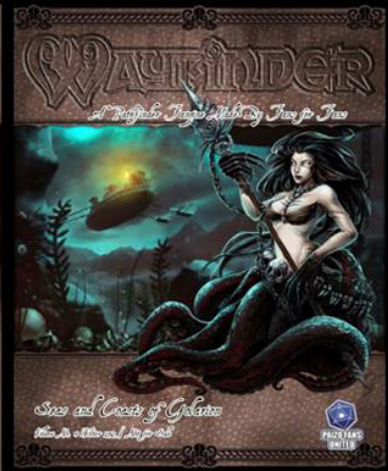
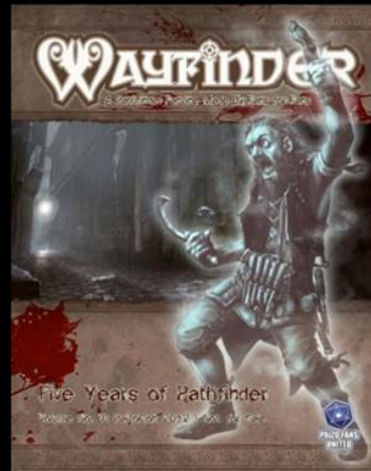
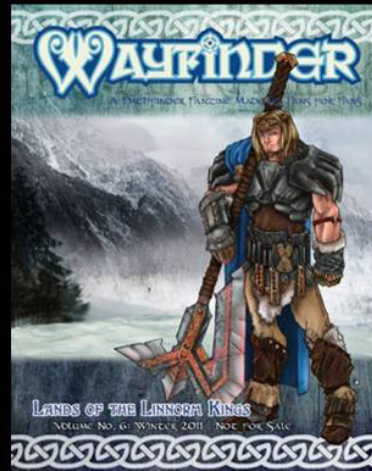
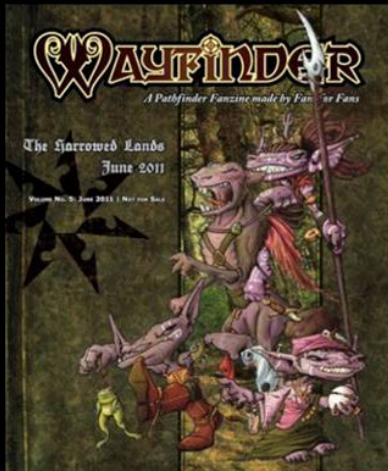
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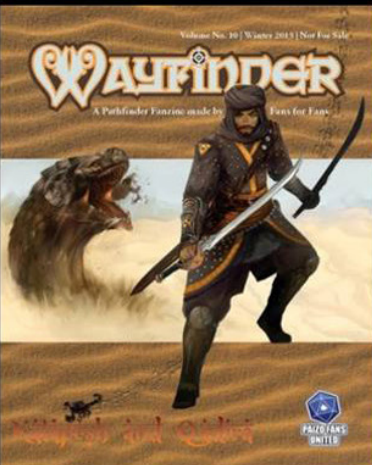
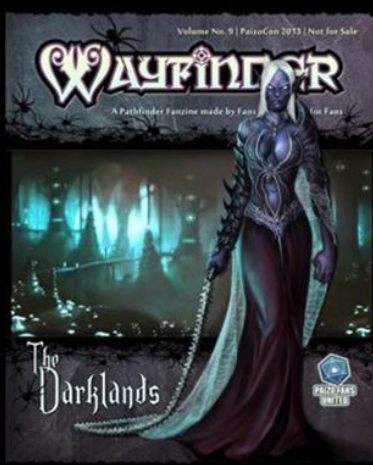
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