

# WARRIORS

*A Pathfinder Fanzine made by Fans for Fans*

The Harrowed Lands  
June 2011

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# Foreword

## *Sounds Made-Up*

For a good long while, when people talked about the Pathfinder campaign setting, they were talking about Varisia. There a runelord rose. On its borders, crazed fey terrorized the paths of Bloodsworn Vale. In its greatest city, a mad queen seized power. And in the sleepy town of Sandpoint, untold thousands of heroes took their first steps into a new world freshly dubbed Golarion. Over the past four years, the Pathfinder campaign setting has exploded beyond that magical land's diverse frontiers, but for many, Varisia remains home to favorite characters, beloved companions, loathed villains, ongoing campaigns, and epic memories. For those people, as evidenced by the breadth of passion and creativity spilled across the following pages, Pathfinder is still synonymous with Varisia.

But there was a time when we didn't even know what to call the bloody place.

About four years ago, we were desperate for nouns. James Jacobs and I had charted out the course of a new Adventure Path, but our notes were little more than scribbles and Mad Libs, rife with "XXXs" and evocative names like "big city" and "stone giant boss." Time was also short, as on top of launching *Pathfinder Adventure Path* we were doing our best to bring our past periodical efforts to a respectful conclusion. That made secret resources like names from personal works and past campaigns fantastic boons, but we still needed more. At that point, one of the only things we knew for sure was that an evil wizard and the seven deadly sins were going to feature prominently. We'd already shot down all of the other seven deadlies—pride was too obvious, as were wrath and lust, gluttony and sloth didn't scream great cover characters, and envy sounded boring—before landing on greed. A wizard from James's homebrew eventually lent his name to the newly christened Runelord of Greed, but the new land we were creating as we worked still needed something.

Taking a cue from mad world builders of RPGs past, I'd been doing a lot of wordplay, working over a number of our favorite authors' and directors' names as anagrams and palindromes, hoping to turn up new location, deity, and character names. Most of those silly names never saw the light of day, but one or two don't seem so silly after a few years of daily use. Having had some success on that front, I took a stab at naming the region. There's a page in one of my old graph-paper Moleskines that fiddles with a ton of seemingly relevant words: vice, deadly sins, mageocracy, etcetera. It didn't take too long to land on "avarice," or to throw some classic "fantasy sounding" syllables on the end. The name came pretty quick from there: "Avariceia," "Variceia," "Varisia."

The name stuck pretty quickly—there wasn't really time to nitpick, after all. A few weeks later we had scarf-wearing wanderers, Shoanti barbarians, dozens of insane ancient monuments (thanks to Wolfgang Baur), and goblins terrorizing a little village sort of named after James's hometown. At that point, our little corner of a world that only sort-of existed was pretty much out of our hands, ready to flourish or fail on whatever merits it might have.

But it actually did something completely different that we totally didn't expect. It took on a life of its own.

This series, *Wayfinder*, is what it looks like when a fantasy world takes on a life of its own. It's droves of talented players, Game Masters, authors, artists, poets, and designers indulging their



imaginations and going beyond what gets printed in sourcebooks or within the boundaries of an adventure's map. It's storytellers of all walks sharing their tales with others who might want to join in their adventures. It's an inspired lot choosing to take up the creative challenge and join in exploring a world just as surely as those of us who were making up weird names for places we didn't know anything about. For me, seeing projects like this take shape and hearing new stories from Golarion day after day have been the most exciting parts of the whole Pathfinder experience. We might have been the first ones to get ideas like runelords, harrow decks, and sinspawn in print, but it's been everyone who grabbed a hold of those ideas and not just made them their own, but used them as launch pads for stories we could never have dreamt of that have really brought Varisia and the whole Pathfinder world to life.

But now I'm excited to turn the page and see what's new in all those places that are now so, so much more than just collections of silly names and made-up nouns.

*Wes*

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# Weal or Woe: Monstrous Pride

by Neil Spicer  
Art by Todd Westcot

The Varisian frontier presents a melting pot of cultures—from the native Shoanti and ever-wandering Varisians, to the descendants of Chelish settlers and even ancient Thassilon. For the adventurous, these inhabitants can provide a wealth of information and supplies—or utter betrayal and certain death.

## Weal: Pellius Abinor, Master Weaponsmith

Among the varied dreams of those living in Korvosa, few have grown as prominent as the meteoric rise of Pellius Abinor. A distant cousin of the renowned Henderthanes in Cheliah, this master weaponsmith embraced his family heritage after a leg wound from a Shoanti spear cut his adventuring career short. Now he turns out the finest blades in Varisia, many for the Korvosan Guard as well as those who train in the city's many fighting schools. More recently, his skills have progressed to the point where he can manufacture enchanted weapons, bringing him to the attention of adventurers and collectors alike.

### Adventure Hooks

Adventurers may find themselves referred to Pellius to forge a masterwork or magic weapon. Conversely, he might also become a potential buyer of any weapons from their hard-earned treasure.

Pellius hires the PCs to investigate the disappearance of a Korvosan-bound shipment of forge-bars he ordered from the dwarves of Janderhoff.

A wealthy noble asks the PCs to check in on Pellius and his progress with an enchanted blade they ordered some time ago. When they arrive at his forge, they discover all is not what it seems.

### Boon

Once on friendly terms with the PCs, Pellius can provide access to his workshop for the crafting and enhancement of magic weapons, either allowing them full use of his forge or working with them to provide a +2 bonus on Craft checks.

#### PELLIUS ABINOR CR 4

XP 1,200

Male middle-aged human expert 4/fighter 2  
LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 41 (6 HD; 2d10+4d8+12)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *longsword* +10 (1d8+4/19–20) or +1 *light hammer* +8 (1d4+3) or mwk silver dagger +8 (1d4+2/19–20)

**Ranged** +1 *distance light crossbow* +7 (1d8+1/19–20) or +1 *light hammer* +7 (1d4+3)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Though he's lost a step since his fighting days, Pellius still wields a blade better than most men, always making use of his handcrafted weapons. If hard-pressed, he relies on Combat Expertise to gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC.

**Morale** If reduced to less than 10 hp, Pellius bargains for his life with his goods and services.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Master Craftsman (weapons), Persuasive, Skill Focus (Craft [weapons]), Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Appraise +10, Bluff +5, Craft (weapons) +16, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Perception +5, Ride +4, Sense Motive +7, Survival +4

**Languages** Common, Shoanti, Varisian

**SQ** exceptional resources

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *potion of heroism*, *potion of lesser restoration*, *screaming bolts* (5);

**Other Gear** +2 *longsword*, +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *distance light crossbow* with 10 bolts, +1 *light hammer*, +1 *light steel shield*, cold iron masterwork longsword, masterwork

artisan's tools (Craft [weapons]), masterwork silver dagger, 893 gp, 5 sp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

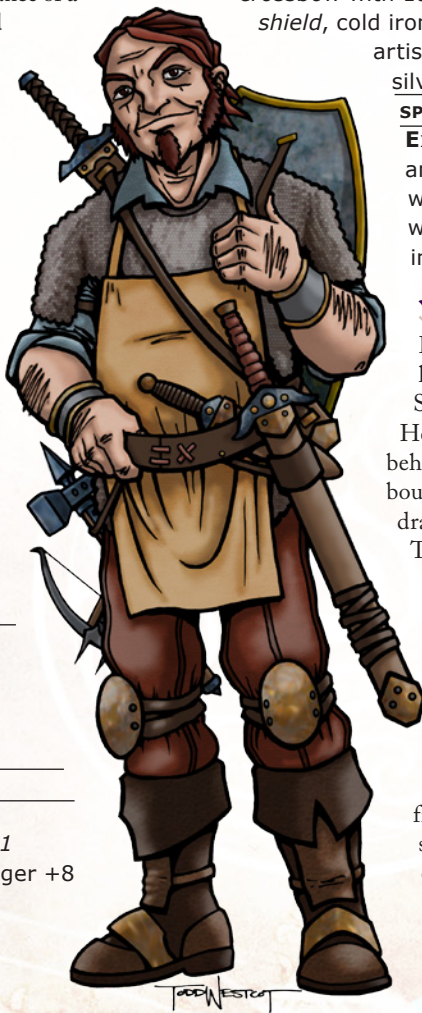
**Exceptional Resources (Ex)** Pellius amassed quite a fortune from crafting weapons over the years, giving him the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC. This increases his CR by 1.

## Woe: Vastriig, the Pridehunter

Long ago in ancient Thassilon, one runelord held power above all others—Xanderghul, the Satrap of Cyrusian and the Runelord of Pride. He cloaked his domain with a veil of illusion, behind which his enemies feared to tread. In boundless arrogance, Xanderghul enslaved angels, dragons, and giants alike. And, though the Thassilonian Empire eventually waned, the descendants of these servants continued to lair within the runelord's hidden strongholds.

One such outpost lies within the Lurkwood. Here, the ancient sin dragon, Xerdigris, lies coiled about a *runewell* intending to use it to elevate its own power. The artifact's recent activation enabled the beast to raise several pridespawn from its sinful waters. Now, these minions serve the dragon by refueling the *runewell* with ceremonial sacrifices—prideful souls culled from the ill-prepared cultures they infiltrate.

The pridespawn wizard, Vastriig, represents one of these skilled hunters. With his *bat* of





*disguise*, he freely mingles with the inhabitants of Varisia, letting his sin-scent guide him to those most suited for Xerdigris' ritual. He then marks these victims with the Sihedron rune, while manipulating and encouraging them into greater feats and accomplishments to swell their personal pride. Once properly conditioned by this regimen of sin, Vastriig abducts these poor souls, dragging them back to his master in the Lurkwood.

### Adventure Hooks

Adventurers may be called upon to investigate the disappearance of several sons and daughters of proud nobles in Korvosa and Magnimar—each one the handiwork of Vastriig's murderous abductions.

While masquerading as a learned sage of history and arcane lore, Vastriig assists the PCs with deciphering Thassilonian runes, identifying magic items, and procuring certain wands or scrolls.

A recently-discovered Thassilonian ruin attracts the interest of both the PCs and Vastriig. He either strives to insinuate himself in their party or prepares an ambush for when they emerge at their weakest.

### Drawback

Once drawn to the PCs—either by hearing of their boastful reputation or after interacting with them in the guise of a knowledgeable expert on Thassilonian history, Vastriig marks one of them for abduction and ritual sacrifice.



## VASTRIIG THE PRIDEHUNTER CR 5

XP 1,600

Male sinspawn illusionist 5  
NE Medium aberration

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., sin-scent; **Perception** +10

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 59 (8 HD; 3d8+5d6+29)

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

**Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 16

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +4 (1d6 plus sinful bite), 2 claws+4 (1d4)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +10)

8/day—*blinding ray*

**Illusionist Spells Prepared** (CL 5th; concentration +10)

3rd—*displacement*, *major image* (DC 18)

2nd—*flaming sphere* (DC 17), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *mirror image*

1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *chill touch* (DC 16), *color spray* (DC 16), *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *light*, *read magic*

**Opposition Schools** Conjunction, Transmutation

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Whether alerted by his underlings (or while under the guise of a trusted ally), Vastriig always protects himself with *shield* before combat.

**During Combat** Vastriig quickly casts *mirror image* or *displacement* to further defend himself. He then targets opposing spellcasters with blinding rays or charms powerful warriors to turn them into temporary allies. Thereafter, he relies on damaging effects such as *flaming sphere* or his *wand of magic missile*, biting or casting *chill touch* or *shocking grasp* to deal with anyone who gets too close.

**Morale** If reduced to 15 hp or less, Vastriig flees, withdrawing to turn invisible or by invoking *color spray* to blind and stun his opponents. He then uses his *wand of silent image* to raise obstacles like locked doors, solid stone walls, or open pits to impede pursuers. Or, he creates a *major image* of himself enhanced by his extended illusions ability to elude those giving chase.

**Base Statistics** Without his *shield*, Vastriig has **AC** 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Appraise +10, Climb +7, Disguise +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Linguistics +10, Perception +10, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +12, Survival +12

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Ancient Thassilonian, Common, Draconic, Giant, Shoanti, Varisian

**SQ** arcane bond (*wand of silent image*), extended illusions +2 rounds, martial proficiency

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of alarm*, *scroll of misdirection*, *scroll of protection from energy*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 5th, 21 charges), *wand of silent image* (34 charges); **Other Gear** *dust of tracelessness*, *hat of disguise*, spellbook, 32 gp, 5 sp

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Martial Proficiency (Ex)** Vastriig is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, armor, and shields (except tower shields).

**Sin-Scent (Su)** Vastriig has scent against creatures of a prideful nature. The GM should adjudicate which creatures he can scent according to their allegiances, cultural traditions, and demeanor.

**Sinful Bite (Su)** A creature bitten by Vastriig is overwhelmed with sinful thoughts (DC 13 Will save negates). These emotions are so powerful that the target becomes sickened for 1d6 minutes. An affected target that is bitten a second time is staggered for 1 round if it fails its saving throw. *Calm emotions*, *remove curse*, or *break enchantment* negates the effects of sinful bite. The save DC is Charisma-based. ?



# The Fall After Pride

by Neil Spicer  
Map by Joshua Benet

Great accomplishments often lead to great pride, blinding those who achieve them to what matters most in life.

Characters should be 4th level at the start of this adventure and should accumulate enough XP using the Medium advancement track to reach halfway to 5th level.

## Adventure Background

The popularity of master weaponsmith Pellius Abinor has drawn the attention of more than just his growing number of customers. A murderous pridespawn named Vastriig also learned of the proud Chelaxian's handiwork upon visiting Korvosa. This monstrous creature serves the sin dragon, Xerdigris, who plans to raise an army of pridespawn from a *runewell* deep in the Lurkwood. To do so, however, Vastriig's master requires the ritual sacrifice of captives filled with the sin of arrogance. Unfortunately for Pellius Abinor, his rising success, and that of his family, marks them as prime candidates.

## Adventure Summary

The adventure opens with a friendly Korvosan noble named Vencarlo Orsini asking the PCs to look in on Pellius Abinor at the weaponsmith's forge in the Midland District. Orsini hasn't yet received an order he placed for five new swords and his inquiries have gone unanswered. Arriving at Abinor's forge, the PCs discover his home and business in disarray, invaded by Vastriig and his allies. From there, they have the opportunity to rescue Pellius and his family from a grisly end.

## The House and Forge of Abinor

The Abinor "estate" serves as home and business with a storefront, forge, modest house, and shared stable between them. With the exception of the stone-walled forge, each building is constructed of wood. Doors are locked (DC 25 Disable Device) and made of strong wood (hardness 5, 20 hp, Break DC 25). The house and stable remain in dim light, while common lamps provide normal illumination in the forge.

To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following:

The sun hangs low over Korvosa where three buildings stand at the corner of Shoreview and Narrow Street in Midland. One, an obvious storefront bears a weaponmaker's sign with smoke rising from an active forge at the rear. Next door, a small stable opens to the street, nearly hiding the modest homestead behind it.

On this particular evening, the PCs arrive late in the day when most shops have closed.

### 1. Stable (CR 3)

Wide doors provide access to this modest stable. Four stalls line the north wall and a ladder provides access to a small hay-filled loft overhead.

**Creatures:** Vastriig has one of his derro allies keep watch from the loft of this barn. He attacks anyone approaching one of the buildings.

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### DERRO LOOKOUT

CR 3

XP 800

hp 25; *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Bestiary™ 70*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The derro uses *sound burst* to alert his friends (at **area 4**), then attacks from range with poisoned bolts from his crossbow.

**Morale** The derro fights until 10 hp or less, then casts *darkness* and runs to join his friends (at **area 4**).

### 2. Entrance Hall

This decorated hall welcomes visitors to the Abinor home. The body of a dead derro lies on the floor just inside the south entrance, slain by Pellius' daughter, Abigail, before the rest subdued her.

### 3. Bedrooms

These rooms provide sleeping quarters for Pellius, his wife, and daughter, Abigail.

### 4. Family Room (CR 5)

Hot coals from a large fireplace provide dim light for this room. Seven chairs and a table stand across from a small kitchen area and a simple rug lies thrown back from a locked trapdoor in the floor.

**Creatures:** Two of Vastriig's derro accomplices raided Pellius' home, capturing his daughter Abigail. Since becoming a member of the Korvosan Guard, Abigail learned to defend herself, allowing her to kill one of her attackers. The others then subdued and locked her in the root cellar beneath the trapdoor (Disable Device DC 25 to open). If alerted to the PCs' arrival, they ready a volley of crossbow bolts before taking them by surprise.

### DERRO ACCOMPLICES (2)

CR 3

XP 800

hp 25; *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Bestiary™ 70*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The derro cast *darkness* and *daze* so they can sneak attack from concealment and set up flanks for one another.

**Morale** Each derro fights to the death.

### ABIGAIL ABINOR, ENTERTAINER

CR 1

XP 400

hp 19 (currently 1); *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide™ 260*

### 5. Storefront (CR 4)

Common lamps illuminate this large shop, their light gleaming off the many blades displayed along the walls and lying upon several tables. A counter takes up the north side of the room across from the two street entrances. Two additional doors lead south and west.

**Creatures:** Two animated daggers defend the storefront, both given as gifts to Pellius by an appreciative wizard for assisting him in weaponcrafting. The daggers respond to any member of the Abinor family and Pellius uses them as deterrents against would-be burglars and troublemakers. Both weapons activated when Vastriig took his





## The House and Forge of Abinor

wife hostage (see **area 8**). They aggressively attack anyone who enters the shop, unable to tell friend from foe without Pellius' guidance.

### ANIMATED DAGGERS (2) CR 2

XP 600

N Tiny advanced construct

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;  
Perception -3

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)  
**hp** 5 (1d10)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** -3

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 15 ft., fly 15 ft. (clumsy)

**Melee** +1 dagger +8 (1d4+1/19-20)

**Special Attacks** weapon attack

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The daggers separate and attack different opponents, using charge attacks whenever possible.

**Morale** The animated daggers fight until destroyed or commanded to stop.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Weapon Finesse(B)

**Skills** Fly -4

**SQ** construction points (additional movement [fly], metal)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Construction Points (Ex)** Each animated weapon has a fly speed for additional movement and hardness 10 as a metal object.

**Weapon Attack (Ex)** Animated weapons have proficiency in their actual weapon type and deal weapon damage rather than slam damage for objects of their size. These daggers also carry a +1 magic enhancement bonus.

### 6. Meeting Room

Pellius uses this room to meet with important clients and discuss custom weapon designs. It has a simple table and four chairs.

### 7. Storerooms (CR 1)

These rooms store the raw materials used for Pellius' business. Aside from iron forge-bars and various pieces of treated wood and leather goods, there's nothing of value here.

### 8. Armory

A large cage dominates the southwest portion of this room, behind which a dozen elaborately carved and decorated weapons hang displayed on the wall. Doors exit north and west.

**Creatures:** Held captive within the armory's cage (Disable Device DC 25 to open) is Pellius' wife, Miverna. Vastriig took her hostage to ensure the weaponsmith's cooperation. In addition, an ill-tempered imp named Aufestes watches over her, alternately harassing the woman so her screams will further spur her husband's efforts at the forge (see **area 9**). When the PCs arrive, Miverna warns



them about the invisible imp and offers to arm them with weapons from the cage if they'll rescue her.

**Treasure:** The armory's cage contains a +1 *battleaxe*, +1 *keen dagger*, +1 *spell storing warhammer* (*shocking grasp*, CL 3rd), masterwork silver longsword, masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 +1 *bolts*, and a masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows and 3 *sleep arrows*.

**AUFESTES THE ILL-TEMPERED IMP CR 2**

XP 600

hp 16; *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Bestiary™ 78*

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Aufestes remains invisible to strike from surprise with his poisoned stinger, attempting to weaken as many PCs as possible.

**Morale** Aufestes fights until reaching 5 hp, then flees to rally any remaining derro to aid Vastriig.

**MIVERNA ABINOR, SHOPKEEP CR 1**

XP 400

hp 13 (currently 5); *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide™ 284*

**9. Forge Room (CR 7)**

A massive anvil dominates this room, where sparks fly under the constant ringing of a smith's hammer.

**Creatures:** Vastriig the Pridhunter and his two derro bodyguards force Pellius to craft his finest weapon here upon the weaponsmith's anvil or forfeit the lives of his family. In truth, the pridespawn already scribed *arcane marks* of invisible Sihedron runes on each victim, fully intending to murder them all in a ritual to draw their sinful souls to Xerdigris' *runewell*.

**VASTRIIG CR 5**

XP 1,600

hp 59; see pg. 5

**DERRO BODYGUARDS (2) CR 3**

XP 800

hp 25; *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Bestiary™ 70*

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Each derro protects Vastriig so the pridespawn can cast spells as effectively as possible.

**Morale** Each derro fights to the death.

**PELLIUS ABINOR CR 4**

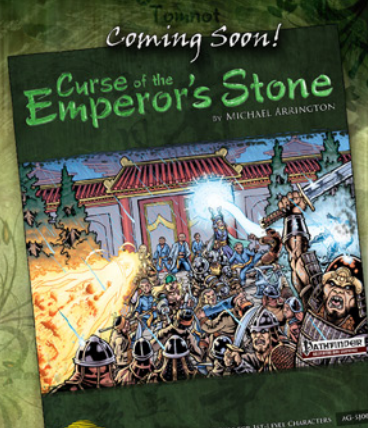
XP 1,200

hp 41; see pg. 4

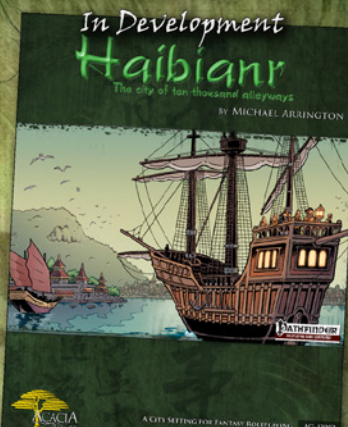
**Concluding The Adventure**

Award each PC a story award of 100 XP per Abinor family member they rescue from Vastriig. With the pridespawn's death, the rash of disappearances in Korvosa comes to an end. However, the sin dragon Xerdigris may soon send more of minions to determine his servant's fate when Vastriig fails to report. ?

*Adventure awaits your players in the exotic lands of Dazhou...*



*Curse of the Emperor's Stone* is an adventure about an artifact: Huangdi Shi, the Emperor's Stone. While this long-lost treasure of the First Emperor offers its bearer, over time, great power, it often brings more woe than weal. When one of the adventure's heroes, through an unfortunate series of events, winds up becoming the artifact's "Chosen One" he and his associates quickly find themselves on a run-away rickshaw ride that just won't end...at least until they find a way to rid themselves of the Emperor's Stone once and for all.



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Also watch for *The Tomb of Le Wusbi*, an upcoming free adventure from Acacia Games!

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# Tales from the Front: Decline of Empire

by Robert Grasham

**P**urvis Wade walked through the leather-covered doors of Sir Dominicus Rell's office with a feeling of restlessness in his bones. Rell, the imposing head of the secretive Lion's Fang organization, stood in front of the mahogany desk that dominated his office. Baron Jacquo Dalsine stood beside him. Wade was struck by the contrast between the two; Rell had fair skin and jet-black hair, his multi-colored eyes hinting of Azlanti ancestry. Dalsine on the other hand was the very image of an aging Taldoran dandy; he had a precisely trimmed beard and tailored clothes. His bronze skin was lightly perfumed with exotic orchids. The Baron wore an elaborately decorated falcata at his waist.

Wade averted his eyes from the Baron, a habit learned from long years dealing with Taldor's bearded aristocracy. Despite this courtesy, Wade hardly respected the man and Dalsine knew it.

"Ah, Commander Wade." Dalsine began, "I see the rumors of your injuries were greatly exaggerated."

"They often are my lord Baron," Wade said with poison in his voice.

Sir Rell loudly cleared his throat. The gesture chastened both Wade and Dalsine as it was meant to.

"The baron has brought me a request," Rell said, "and it has to do with your former captain, Iadon Railford."

"Old Iadon?" Wade responded casually, strolling over to Rell's well-stocked bar. He poured Vudran genever over ice. "He's retired up north with his winery. What does the Pathfinder Society want with him?"

"He *was* retired." Dalsine interjected, "He's since passed on. The Pathfinder Society had been negotiating with him to establish a lodge at Railford. His son Becher converted the place into a distillery and is producing a quality product. The Society is unsure if Becher will be as receptive as his father was to the construction of a new lodge."

"However, word in the canals is that Old Iadon passed without bequeathing the land to Becher. That makes Becher a rogue lord. By decree, such lands must be reclaimed for the empire." Dalsine took a drink from his own glass of spirits. "I have no doubt that Becher is not some treacherous upstart king. Regardless, a rather ambitious army captain by the name of Gald Kretchmoor has taken up arms and marches toward Railford with a contingent of twenty men. The high generals have not sanctioned his mission; it's the captain's power play. I know Kretchmoor personally. He's not the sort of man the empire needs grabbing lands and title. If Railford isn't controlled by a rogue lord now, it will be once Kretchmoor takes it."

"That's where you come in." Rell said to Wade, walking around his desk and removing a coin purse from one of the drawers. "Lion's Fang wants you to go to Railford. The lands surrounding the distillery are swampy so you should be able to travel more quickly than a contingent of armored men. Once you're there, rendezvous with Becher and subordinate the property's deeds. If they're not lawfully signed over, there's nothing we can do to stop Kretchmoor from seizing the land."

"However, if they are legal," Baron Dalsine said, "and Becher is receptive to the proposed lodge, convince him to sign the property over to Dominicus Blelor. This would force the Decemvirate to put the lodge into local hands. Dominicus Blelor was a strong ally of Iadon. Knowing the lands are in Blelor's capable hands would honor Iadon Railford's memory in his county's eyes."

Wade had heard that line used to justify other, darker acts by unsavory nobles and army captains. It did not give him confidence in the merits of this mission.

"I mean no offense, but I'm retired from the Society. In fact, I quit with prejudice." Wade met Dalsine's gaze, a risky act if the Baron was in a particularly petulant mood. "Surely you have anxious spelunkers eager to prove themselves and scribe their names in the chronicles."

Rell walked back to the front of his desk and handed Wade the coins.

"This is not just a Society interest, but also for the security of the Empire. Understood? Good. Quartermaster Llewellynn is awaiting you in his workshop. He will provide any weaponry or magic you will require."

"Of course sir." Wade said, downing his gin and walking toward the office door.

"One more thing," Rell said. Wade stopped in his tracks and turned to face him.

"Do not fail me. Do not fail Prince Stavan." Rell saluted Wade. It was an unfamiliar gesture to the Lion's Fang agent. It filled him with dread.

Wade returned the salute and left the office.

\* \* \*

Travel through the swampy lands surrounding Railford was difficult and the rain did not help. Overgrowth and creepers choked the path. Night fell long before Wade reached the settlement, the dark and the rain obscuring the wooden sign markers, increasing the length of the journey. More than once the muck sucked Wade's boots from his feet causing him to reach in to retrieve them.

Nearly to Railford, at the base of a hillock, Wade saw the campfires. Stealthily approaching, he saw guards and dogs within the small clearing in the muck. Wade carefully backed up the way he came and gave the soldiers a wide berth as he made his way into the settlement.

Half a dozen small stone cottages surrounded a tall brick and timber building topped with a massive tin-covered water drum. A sign over its looming doors read "Railford Distillery est. 4693." A long cylindrical chimney rose from a squat brick building sharing an adjoining wall with the distillery. A low, moss-covered cobblestone wall encircled the entire property. Wade strolled between the buildings casually searching about for signs of life but finding only empty streets and shuttered windows. The sounds of raucous music emanated from one of the stone buildings.

A hand painted sign nailed to a tree before the building read "Bloodknuckles Inn." Smiling, Wade tried to open the door but found it locked. He rapped hard on the wooden frame, the knock echoing in the night. There was no response. Wade took a few steps back and looked up. Slivers of yellow light shone through the cracks of two shuttered windows on the second floor.

A voice in the rain shouted from behind Wade. As he turned, a thrown whiskey bottle crashed hard against Wade's temple, immediately causing everything to go black.

\* \* \*

Purvis Wade regained consciousness and he saw that he was in a small room. Across from him on a dingy cot lay a young man covered to his throat with a heavy wool blanket. The young man's face was covered in black boils and dark veins, which spread sickly up his cheeks. Tending him was an older man dressed in green. In the doorway of the room stood a grizzled Andoran wearing a faded blue tunic and heavy leather pauldrons. Wade rubbed the lump on his temple as he sat up on the cot.

"Purvis Wade," the man in the doorway said.

"Dalard Frith," Wade responded. "What the hell are you doing here?"



"I might ask you the same thing. Some think you're a scout for those troops camped at the bottom of the hill. It took a lot to convince them otherwise. Now it's your turn to convince me."

The man with the boils let out a deep, guttural cough that wracked his body with convulsions.

"Dalsine sent me. He wants me to find Becher Railford and get him to sign off on a new Pathfinder lodge. Do you know where he's at?"

"Unfortunately I do. When Iadon died, he never turned over the deed to the winery. He and Becher fought a lot before the end. Iadon didn't approve of the winery becoming a distillery. Threatened to leave the property ownerless on his death. Becher knew that the old man kept his important papers up in a cave in the swamp. Jessup there went with Becher and a few others two days ago to search for them. This morning Jessup came back without the others."

"The Teeth!" Jessup suddenly screamed from his cot.

Dalard approached the sick man and laid a hand on the cot. When he spoke again his voice was soft and comforting. "Jessup? Can you tell me again, what happened in the swamps?"

The sick man began in a stuttering whisper that grew louder and almost frantic as he spoke.

"Becher led us down an old trail to what used to be the barrel-aging caves. When we got there, the caves were all boarded up, so it took us a while to get in. The place was flooded, barrels floating everywhere and it had a foul stink to it. We poked around a bit till Becher found the back office and the strongbox where he said the deed was. That's when they came... rising out of the muck, dead folk with sharpened fangs. We tried to fight 'em but they was too strong. They tore Padrik's arm right off and started eating it... we tried to get out the way we came in. I made it out, but some of the creatures blocked the entrance, trapping Becher and Walmont inside. After that the entrance collapsed on them. One of the creatures tried to grab me and took a bite out of my leg, so I ran as fast as I could. I don't know what happened after that."

Wade shuddered and pulled back the wool blankets covering Jessup. He looked at the leg wound: it had festered and begun to rot. The telltale boils told Wade that Jessup was suffering from ghoulish fever, and a severe case at that.

"Dalard. That wound is going to kill him. Worse, the things that did it can smell that sickness on the air like a halfling smells a campfire roast. They will follow it back here. You have to get this town secured."

"Purvis, we've been securing buildings and arming townspeople to fight against those soldiers at the base of the hill and you're telling me we might have a graver threat?"

"I am. The distillery is the most defensible building. Plus the whiskey there can be used to create incendiary potions." Wade said, turning to the man in green, "You, priest, what spells can you call down?"

"I've exhausted most of my ability tending to poor Jessup here," the priest replied.

"He's suffering from ghoulish fever. If you do not possess restorative magicks he is lost," Wade said matter-of-factly. The prospect of facing a hungry mob of ghouls assailing the town spurred Wade to action.

"I have a scroll with that magic," Dalard said, "but I cannot cast it."

"Give it over," Wade said. He unfurled the vellum and turned towards Jessup, but the young man was dead.

"Quickly! Burn the corpse before it rises!" Wade instructed.

Dalard and the priest hurriedly moved the body towards a large hearth in the central room of the building, which Wade now saw was Bloodknuckles's Inn. A dozen men and

women occupied the room, some armed with broken bottles, others with farming equipment. They threw the body onto the fire, doused it with whiskey, and watched as flames ate at the corpse.

Wade re-rolled the scroll and put it in his belt.

"Okay now, grab the most able bodied and let's get to the distillery. It may be our only chance." Wade walked straight towards the door of the inn and threw it open, walking into the dark, rainy night.

\* \* \*

Purvis Wade along with Dalard, the priest, and four armed men, forced their way into the locked distillery. The ceiling of the taproom was twenty feet overhead. Eight-foot high scaffolding surrounding the walls laden with heavy whiskey casks, the barrels along the bottom shelf tapped with spigots. There were doors on the far right and left walls of the taproom.

Wade quickly moved toward the right, northern doors and threw them open, breathing in the heavy, dazing fumes of the stillroom. A massive exhaust chimney occupied the center of the brick room, while complex coils of glass piles, alembic tubes, vats and beakers chugged and bubbled, powered by a nearby hot iron stove.

"Dalard. Let's get some barrels by the doorways and windows." Wade said, "My wand fires missiles that burn hot and pack a punch. A couple shots should take each barrel out."

Dalard and the others began moving the barrels when a shout from the priest brought their attention to the left, southern doors.

"Help! We have a man down!" The priest yelled.

Wade rushed over and found a man lying face down just beyond the southern doors. He was soaked and covered with thick mud. Through the grime, Wade could see terrible wounds gnawed out of the man's forearms and calves. He was clutching a wooden box with thin iron bands and a simple rusted lock.

"It's Becher," the priest said.

Wade reached down and checked Becher's pulse. It was faint and dying. Without hesitating he took the scroll from his belt and handed it to the priest. With a somber tone, the man in green intoned the divine magic written there. When he was done, the priest checked Becher's throat and armpits.

"The spell may have removed the fever but his wounds are so severe he may still perish," the priest said. "I am unable to channel any further power to him."

"Something's outside!" a man near the rear windows in the taproom yelled.

"Already?" Wade asked as he ran towards the windows, meeting up with Dalard. The other man was loading a firearm.

"Worse." Dalard said.

Outside, Wade saw that Railford was surrounded by armored Taldoran phalanx carrying torches and spears.

"By the luck of Desna," Dalard whispered.

As Wade watched, the armored men slowly moved beyond the small cobblestone fence and advanced on the distillery. The rain beat heavily down, obscuring his vision. The torches the soldiers held sputtered in the wind, threatening to extinguish. One man stood ahead of the others, holding a helmet crested with zebra hair. He had the bare wisps of a new beard on his chin.

"Becher Railford!" The Captain yelled. "I claim these lands in the name of Emperor Stavian the Third and proclaim you a rogue and a criminal! Come out and face justice!"

The phalanx soldiers rushed for the entrances. One pair attacked the northern entrance, one pair was at the western bay doors, and another pair was trying to climb through the barricaded windows.



# THE BLACK MASK

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Townsfolk guarding the doors propped up additional barrels of whiskey while Wade smashed out the windows and began dousing the sill with whiskey. Dalard fired shots from his pistol out towards the guards, his steel bullets ripping through armor. Wade could not bring himself to fire on his countrymen, even if they were there to kill them.

A pair of guards made it through the western doors and clashed with two townspeople there. Their farming tools could not match the phalanx spears. Dalard broke off from the windows to assist them.

Then the screams began.

Shrieks, louder than the storm, caused everyone within the distillery to pause to determine its source. A Taldoran soldier, busy forcing himself through a window, suddenly, broke off, torn violently away from the sill.

The ghouls had arrived. A dozen of the creatures bounded up the hill and crashed into the unwary soldiers. Quickly and in eerie silence, the ghouls tore and gnawed at their prey. Some men fought, some were downed quickly. Capitan Kretchmoor abandoned the distillery and took up his falcata against the horrific creatures. Wade could tell by the man's stance that he was a trained rondelero duelist. With a fluid strike, Kretchmoor dispatched a ghoul with a skill Wade had to acknowledge. Two ghouls smashed through the western distillery door, their faces twisted by starvation and hate.

Wade unleashed two violet bolts from his wand, sending them sailing into the whiskey casks by the door. The barrels exploded in a fireball. Wood fragments showered the room along with gobs of ignited whiskey. The force of the explosion ripped both creatures to shreds. Two more bolts from Wade's wand finished them off.

Dalard rejoined Wade at the window, reloading his firearm as he approached.

"This is a bloody mess."

"Absolutely *ghoulish*," Wade replied smirking.

Dalard smiled and lifted his weapon to the window. Outside, Kretchmoor dispatched another creature, while three other soldiers dispatched the four remaining ghouls. Wade could tell that at least half of the Captain's men had deserted. The observation did not brighten his spirits.

Wade surveyed the area. There were four dead townsfolk and three dead soldiers. The corpses would need burning. Becher Railford however, was stirring, coughing and trying to sit up. He was going to survive after all. Outside, the carnage was worse. Nearly a dozen dead soldiers surrounded the distillery. As Wade and Dalard approached Captain Kretchmoor, the man fell to his knees. He was sobbing. The gaping bite wound on his cheek bled an ugly black. Dalard did not hesitate to put his pistol to the man's forehead, obliterating it with a shot of steel.

Wade and the priest quickly gathered and burned the corpses inside the still's furnace. The destruction of the bodies took up the rest of the night. By morning, Purvis Wade was ready to collapse in exhaustion. The rain had stopped by then and the dawn illuminated the extent of the destruction. Nearly a third of the townsfolk had died. Buildings throughout the settlement had suffered damage just as the distillery had.

"It doesn't look good," Becher admitted as he eagerly signed over the property deeds—which turned out to be legal and proper after all—to Dominicus Blelor. Wade had to agree. The price for this small, almost inconsequential piece of land had cost too many lives.

Wade offered a quick prayer to Desna, asking if it was worth it. He didn't expect an answer. ?



# Of Steel and Spell: The Battle Scion

by Marc Radle



**B**attle scions can be found operating throughout most of Golarion. In particular, battle scions from across the Inner Sea have recently become quite active in eastern Varisia and the Hold of Belkzen. Specifically, battle scions seem drawn to the Hold of Belkzen, where they can test their mettle against the never-ending hordes of ettins, giants, orcs, and ogres common to these unruly lands.

Highly trained, uniquely dedicated, and supremely disciplined, battle scions are warriors first and foremost. In addition to countless hours spent in combat training, battle scions are also tireless in the study of arcane knowledge in hopes of enhancing their battle prowess through magic. Almost single-minded in their determination to master both arms and spells, battle scions equally feel at home on the field of battle or in the musty libraries of long-forgotten wizards.

**Role:** Battle scions are highly competent warriors, skilled in a wide variety of weapons and martial tactics. They rely on intense study and magical research in order to learn a handful of spells and other arcane powers aiding them both in and out of combat.

**Alignment:** Any

**Hit Die:** d10.

## Class Skills

The battle scion's class skills are Appraise (Int), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Fly (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (engineering) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

**Skill Ranks per Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

**Starting Wealth:** 4d6 × 10 gp (140 gp average)

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the battle scion.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Battle scions are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor (heavy, medium, and light), and with shields (except tower shields). Due to highly specialized training, battle scions can cast arcane spells while wearing any type of armor (heavy, medium, and light), and with shields without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance. A multiclass battle scion still incurs the normal arcane spell failure chance for arcane spells received from other classes.

**Force Blast (Sp):** As a standard action, the battle scion can unleash a single blast of arcane force that automatically strikes a foe, as *magic missile*. The force blast deals 2d4 points of damage at 1st level plus an additional 1d4 points of damage for every three battle scion levels beyond 1st (3d4 at 4th, 4d4 at 7th, and so on). This is a force effect. For purposes of overcoming spell resistance with his force blast, the battle scion's caster level is equal to his full battle scion level. A battle scion can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier.

**Arcane Aura (Su):** Beginning at 2nd level, a battle scion gains a +1 deflection bonus to his AC. This deflection bonus increases by +1 for every four battle scion levels beyond 2nd.

10

## Spells:

Beginning at 4th level, a battle scion gains the ability to cast a small number of arcane spells which are drawn from the sorcerer/wizard spell list. A battle scion must choose and prepare his spells in advance.

To prepare or cast a spell, a battle scion must have an Intelligence score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a battle scion's spell is 10 + the spell level + the battle scion's Intelligence modifier.

A battle scion can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment is given on Table: Battle Scion. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Intelligence score (see Table 1-3: Ability Modifiers and Bonus Spells in the *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook™*).

A battle scion may know any number of spells. He must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time by getting 8 hours of sleep and spending 1 hour studying his spellbook. While studying, the battle scion decides which spells to prepare.

Through 3rd level, a battle scion has no caster level. At 4th level and higher, his caster level is equal to his battle scion level – 3.

**Cantrips:** Battle scions can prepare a number of cantrips, or 0-level spells, each day, as noted on Table: Battle scion under "Spells per Day." These spells are cast like any other spell, but they are not expended when cast and may be used again.

**Combat Casting:** At 4th level, the battle scion gains Combat Casting as a bonus feat.

**Spellbooks:** Beginning at 4th level, a battle scion's prior arcane research allows him to create a spellbook. A battle scion must study



Table: The Battle Scion

Level	Base Attack				Special	Spells per Day				
	Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will		0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1 <sup>st</sup>	+1	+2	+0	+2	Force blast	—	—	—	—	—
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+2	+3	+0	+3	Arcane Aura	—	—	—	—	—
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+3	+3	+1	+3		—	—	—	—	—
4 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+4	+1	+4	Combat Casting	2	0	—	—	—
5 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+4	+1	+4	Still Spell	3	1	—	—	—
6 <sup>th</sup>	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Bonus feat	4	1	—	—	—
7 <sup>th</sup>	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Spell tactician	4	1	0	—	—
8 <sup>th</sup>	+8/+3	+6	+2	+6		4	1	1	—	—
9 <sup>th</sup>	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6		4	2	1	—	—
10 <sup>th</sup>	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat	4	2	1	0	—
11 <sup>th</sup>	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+7		4	2	1	1	—
12 <sup>th</sup>	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+8		4	2	2	1	—
13 <sup>th</sup>	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+8		4	3	2	1	0
14 <sup>th</sup>	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+9	Bonus feat	4	3	2	1	1
15 <sup>th</sup>	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+9		4	3	2	2	1
16 <sup>th</sup>	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+10		4	3	3	2	1
17 <sup>th</sup>	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10		4	4	3	2	1
18 <sup>th</sup>	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Bonus feat	4	4	3	2	2
19 <sup>th</sup>	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11		4	4	3	3	2
20 <sup>th</sup>	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Master scion	4	4	4	3	3

his spellbook each day in order to prepare his spells. He cannot prepare any spell not recorded in his spellbook, except for read magic, which all battle scions learn to prepare from memory at 4th level.

The battle scion's new spellbook initially contains all 0-level cantrips plus two 1st-level arcane spells of his choice. The battle scion also selects a number of additional 1st-level spells equal to his Intelligence modifier to add to the spellbook. At each new battle scion level after 4th, he gains two new spells of any spell level or levels that he can cast (based on his new battle scion level) for his spellbook. At any time, a battle scion can also add spells found in a wizard's or other battle scion's spellbook to his own (see Chapter 9: Magic in the *Pathfinder RPG*).

**Still Spell:** At 5th level, the battle scion gains Still Spell as a bonus feat.

**Bonus Feats:** At 6th, 10th, 14th, and 18th level, a battle scion gains a bonus feat. At each such opportunity, he can choose a metamagic feat or a combat feat. The battle scion must still meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat, including caster level minimums. These bonus feats are in addition to the feats that a character of any class gets from advancing levels. The battle scion is not limited to the categories listed here when choosing those feats.


**Spell Tactician (Su):** Beginning at 7th level, a battle scion learns how to manipulate his spellcasting in order to use spells more effectively in combat. The bonus to concentration checks a battle scion

receives from the Combat Casting feat increases to +6. At 13th level, this bonus increases to +8.

Beginning at 9th level, a battle scion may cast one prepared arcane spell per round as a swift action. Only spells with a casting time of a standard action or less and a range of personal may be cast in this way. A battle scion can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier.

At 11th level, the battle scion may spontaneously use Still Spell on any spell he is about to cast without needing to use up a higher level spell slot. A battle scion may use this ability once per day at 11th level and one additional time per day for every two battle scion levels beyond 11th.

At 13th level, the battle scion may apply any one metamagic feat to a spell he is about to cast without needing to use up a higher level spell slot. The battle scion may use this ability once per day at 13th level and one additional time per day for every two battle scion levels beyond 13th.

**Master Scion (Su):** Beginning at 20th level, the battle scion's caster level becomes equal to his full battle scion level instead of his battle scion level – 3. In addition, whenever a battle scion successfully confirms a critical hit, he may also cast any one spell he has prepared as a swift action. The spell must include the target of the critical hit as one of its targets or in its area of effect. Casting this spell does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The battle scion must still meet all of the spell's requirements. 



# VIKRAM'S ZERNUL

by Adam Daigle  
Art by Chad A. Dulac

**12** ew friends always write words on scrolls and draw circles and lines on words in books so i think it be good to do tonight i get wood for cookfire i take out ink and kwill to make words. i look at DEBBAN paper now and he put dots after words when he done to write something. i learn it here. no paper so i start to make words on the wide leather strap i hang MORA on my shoulder with. MORA is my swordname for my wife. she cuts as sharp. DEBBAN make his stew again and it good. he catch six small birds. birds strange here. short and round and brown and white with some feathers sticking up from the head. but the birds good to.

Debban say we make tomb in five days. This land dangerous so I need to watch the city people. Meeko tried to eat cullberry. At dinner I ask him how many men I fight there. He says none. Says they dead or monsters or

both. I write more words now each week since I leave. Debban book show me I write names in big letters only for first letter. Also big letter when start after dot. Need to watch camp now. More tomorrow if fight go well.

Meeko wanted to watch the front of tomb so I take time to make words now. Debban making words too and he make numbers next to his words. He says putting the date help to keep words in order. I know when I make words and what they mean. He says making words for others to. Debban knows things I need....

## 8 Erastis 4711

I stop last time I did because monsters come from tomb. They look like big man with brown and grey fur but with face of goblin but eyes white like milk. They wear armor and fight with good swords. They fight not as good as Mora and she and me able to put them down. Debban look worried and Meeko want to go ahead and listen. Shibola says a prayer and says it safe right in front of the tomb so Meeko go listen. Little friend go for ten minutes and I get worried so I ask Debban can I go. Debban says no says that Meeko know what he doing.

## 14 Erastus 4711

Many days since I write. The caves much bigger than we think before. Debban call the monster men bugbears. They live with walking dead and make bad writing all over walls in caves. Some blood writing too. We push through and fight the bugbears and the walking dead even in one cave we fight a spider bigger than two horses. It had a hundred and hundred babies and the babies crawled at us so Debban makes his magic and burns them all. Meeko got too close and got bit but Shibola take care of him. I look at Debban book some more and he let me. He even show me more how to make words. Many of my people would look at Debban as weak but even with no magic he is a strong man.

## 20 Erastus 4711

Again, many days. The last week, we stop the evil in this part of Varisia. In the bottom of caves, we found the man that leads the bugbears and zombies and other monsters here. We fought many more monsters, and rested many times, before we find the mask man. The town is safe, but they weep because the m a s k man was respected like elder there in the town. When we fought him, Meeko snuck against the walls and got up close, because Debban made him invisible. Shibola called down light of Sarenray to be burning him. I run in and bring Mora down into his shoulder. Meeko jumps and sticks him in the kidney from behind a big chair. I cuts him more in the chest with my Mora. Debban does the light attack, but this time two lights hit the mask man, and he falls down, just before Mora cleaves his skull. I grant the honor of this battle to Debban. Debban shows me more of his book, and shows me how he makes dots with tails, to be where I take a breath, but only when I make the words with ink and kwill. He calls the dots with tails kamas. Debban helps me make words better, but I need to make them better he says so others understand them. He helps me instead of making me feel silly like Meeko does. ?





# The Staring Contest

by K. Neil "Scribbling Rambler" Shackleton

Art by Chad A. Dulac

I look at the Man where he lies sleeping, and consider my options for waking him. I'm not sure when such considerations became possible. At one time, I would have gone with my instincts, without regard for the eventual consequences. Now I know that an ill-timed scratch or yowl is less likely to yield the desired outcome than to lead to unfortunate consequences. The sun has risen, and today we are to arrive in Korvosa, the city he was driven out of by his litter-mates in the days before he had me. Though I detest cities and their tail-crushing carts, I cannot let him continue to snore while we have so much to do.

There is a stream nearby, fed from the high places. I make my way there carefully, and after a short time spent observing a fish swimming just out of reach (Soon, fish. Soon), I lap at the icy water until my nose goes numb from the cold. Quickly, I return and approach where his dark-haired head is pillowed on the ground. Making the comfort sound as loudly as I can, I press my freshly chilled nose directly on his closed eyelid, then bound away out of reach as he bolts upright.

"PROPHET!!!"

I know there were other times before this. First, there was a time of darkness and warmth, when I was surrounded by others and the comfort sound. I also remember a time of hunger, but not how one became the other. The Man, Janosz, says that was when he found me, gave a farmer a disc of copper for me and named me his Prophet. He still doesn't understand that I had already made him mine when he slept in the loft and I ran my face over all of his gear. Then came the traveling time, where I grew, and learned his feelings, and he learned mine. When others thanked us for using our powers to help them, or cursed him for a "Sczarni witch" and me as his "bound demon." And we began the daily staring contest.

Janosz pours from the flask into the dish he uses for my morning offering. "That's the last of the milk until we reach town, Prophet."

I continue to watch him, until he sighs and casts the cantrip that makes the liquid the right temperature. As I enjoy my breakfast, he recites his list of wishes. "Hopefully we will reach Korvosa by noon, so I will need less combat spells, and more of social interaction. Perhaps the spell of altering appearance, to avoid the Sczarni. And the one that helps me determine who tells the truth..."

I finish and hop onto a large moss-covered rock, so my head is level with his, and we both settle in and prepare. Muscles relax as our dark heads face each other. Breathing slows as his green eyes meet mine. I do not know if things actually go silent around us as we engage in the staring contest, or if our concentration tunes everything else out. As the world fades, we become more and more alone in it.

Until suddenly, there is the Other.

I never know how much Janosz really senses of the Other. The rage. The hunger. The scent of not-quite-fish. The feeling of being prey shivering between its paws. All these sensations nearly overwhelm



me, as I strain to fulfill Janosz's needs. The Other's eyes float like translucent ovoid moons at the edge of my field of vision, but I will my gaze to stay locked with that of my human. The power fills me, then flows from my green eyes to his, until both of us have had as much as we can take. He falls back on the turf to recover, while I go to fulfill a promise.

I clean a few bits of trout that mar the perfection of my white fore-paws while he packs our belongings. He chuckles, "That was quite a trick with the cold nose this morning, O Prophet of Kalistrade. It's a good thing for you that your survival instinct taught you to purr while doing it." Shaking his head, he continues, "I'll never understand why you don't just tell me it's time to get up."

Pausing in my grooming, I reply, "I could do that. I could catch a mouse. I could let it go, or kill it quickly. But where is the fun in that?"

His green eyes stare into mine.

As always, he blinks first. ?



# Weal or Woe:

## Heinous Hanna and Mia the Mirthless

by Christoph "RuyanVe" Gimmber  
 Art by Ashton "Nwahi" Sperry

**H**anna and Mia are twin girls, born to the wife of an innkeeper in a small hamlet in Lastwall. The twins' parents had fallen on hard times due to a lack of customers at the inn, so they were grateful when a stranger arrived and offered them her services as a midwife.

But the midwife, Ulazuj, was actually a priestess of Gyronna in disguise. She drugged the girls' mother right after she gave birth, causing her to fall into a deep sleep. Meanwhile, Ulazuj whisked away the firstborn, who she named Hanna.

When the mother awoke, Ulazuj presented the second-born baby to the parents. The innkeeper's wife named her daughter Mia.

### Weal - Mia the Mirthless

Growing up in the austerity of her tiny hamlet, Mia developed a strong sense of fairness, justice and independence. With such sensibilities, it was natural for her to join the soldiers of Lastwall, with whom she could guard and protect her liege's fortress and surrounding lands against the threat of forces from beyond Ustlavian soil.

Her regular exposure to Lastwall's history and its proximity to religious orders centered on duty made her a devout woman, further hardening her resolve to defend Ustlav against evil.

On the night of her consecration, the young woman received a vision of Iomedae, calling to her to become one of her Shield Maidens. Mia was overjoyed and pledged her very soul to the cause of her goddess, thus becoming a paladin of Iomedae.

After her consecration, Mia was sent to the Palatinate of Canterwall to help protect the breadbasket of Ustlav against the orcs from the west and the horrors from the south. She and her companions settled in at Marian Leigh and began their patrols followed by the cheers of the population.

Lately, Mia has harbored a nagging feeling that something is amiss. Every time she rides out on patrol, she feels something like a breeze brushing past her, whispering to her about a great loss. Mia is unsure of what to do. Not knowing what exactly is amiss, she has kept to herself. But she is beginning to question her devotion and fitness to serve Iomedae.

When not on patrol, Mia can normally be found at the shrine to Iomedae inside the barracks. Mia is aloof and rarely smiles. She has a stern demeanor and disapproves of squandering time, money or anything else. She has short-trimmed hair and

stands erect when speaking with others, as if she is surveying troops in her charge.

### MIA THE MIRTHLESS

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female human paladin of Iomedae 5

LG Medium humanoid (human)

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

**Aura** courage (10 ft.)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 19 (+7 armor, +1 deflection, -1 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 47 (5d10+15)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6

**Special Defenses** divine grace, **Immune** disease, fear

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk longsword +9 (1d8+3/19-20) or mwk lance +9 (1d8+3/x3)

**Ranged** light crossbow +4 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 2/day (DC 14, 3d6), smite evil 2/day (+2 attack and AC, +5 damage)

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +7)

At will—*detect evil*

**Paladin Spells prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

*1st—bless, lesser restoration*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17 **Dex** 8 **Con** 12 **Int** 13 **Wis** 11 **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +5 **CMB** +8 **CMD** 18

**Feats** Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Diplomacy +7, Handle Animal +6, Heal +7, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +3, Ride +1, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +5

**Languages** Celestial, Common

**SQ** aura of good, divine bond (weapon +1), lay on hands (3d6, 4/day), mercies (sickened)

**Combat gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (3, CL 5th), *potion of delay poison* (CL 5th)

**Gear** light crossbow (40 bolts), mwk half-plate, mwk heavy steel shield, mwk lance, mwk longsword, heavy horse (combat trained) with military saddle, *ring of protection* +1, silver holy symbol of Iomedae, 117 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Boon** Befriending Mia allows the PCs to buy all mundane items within Marian Leigh at a 10% discount. Additionally, when she accompanies the PCs, they receive a +2 bonus to all Charisma-based skill rolls dealing with the population of Canterwall.

#### Hooks

- Mia approaches the party, surveying and judging their talents. If the PCs indicate they will stay longer in Marian Leigh, she asks them to join her and her troops





on their patrols around the hamlet or invites them on a foray across the border into Belkzen.

- The women of Marian Leigh whisper about their neighbors giving birth to monstrosities—children with blotched skin and fangs for teeth. The mayor has approached Mia and asked for divine protection against this curse. Mia has heard of the PCs staying in Marian Leigh and turns to them for help.
- If one of the PCs is a cleric or oracle, Mia approaches and asks to speak with her in private. Once they are alone, she reveals the strange whispering winds that she encounters on patrol and her nagging doubts about her worthiness to serve Iomedae.

### Woe - Heinous Hanna

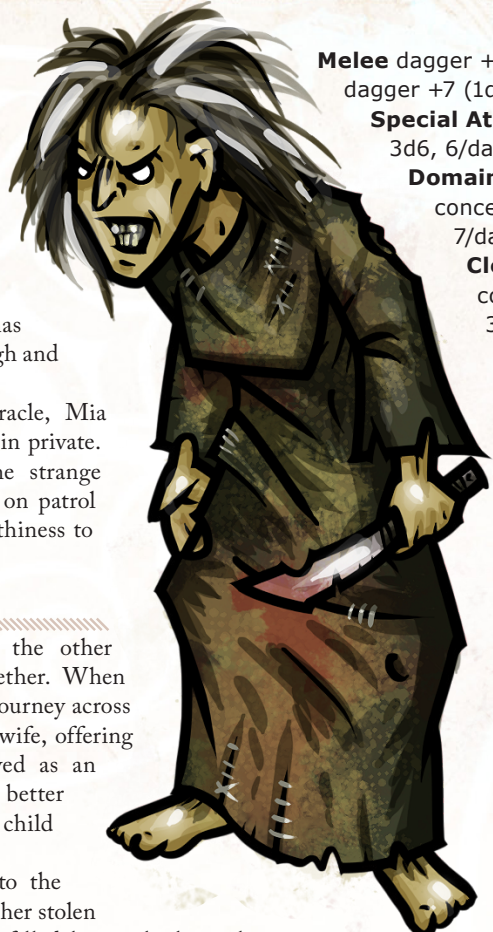
After Ulazuj abducted Hanna, she and the other members of her cult raised the child together. When Hanna was only four, Ulazuj took her on a journey across Ustalav, where she posed as a traveling midwife, offering to help to mothers she met. Hanna served as an excellent example of her credentials—what better advertisement for a midwife, than a young child clinging to her apron.

As she got older, Hanna was exposed to the darker rites of Gyronna's cult. Ulazuj reared her stolen child on a diet of contempt and guile and filled her with the evil teachings of the Angry Hag.

Now grown into a woman, Hanna's wanderings have brought her to Marian Leigh to establish her own cell of cultists. She frequents the local market, looking for prospective followers—women cast to the outer edges of society.

Four times has she seen the proud and popular figure of Mia riding by on her black war horse. Each time, she had the eerie feeling that she should know this woman. But she quickly brushed the feeling aside, seeing Mia as a woman trying to rise above her preordained station in society. Hanna is convinced she is only doing the paladin a service by causing her downfall and showing her there are others who will really care for her.

Hanna is a middle-aged woman, but looks at least 15 years older than her real age. Growing up in Ulazuj's care has taken a toll. Her hair is short and unkempt, and she dresses in a dirty frock of stitched and frequently-mended leather over which she wears an apron in similar condition.



**Melee** dagger +1 (1d4-2/19-20), or *spiritual weapon* dagger +7 (1d8+1/19-20)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy (DC 15, 3d6, 6/day)

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th, concentration +9)

7/day – touch of chaos, vision of madness

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 5th, concentration +9)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *contagion* (DC 17), *magic circle against law*<sup>P</sup>

2nd—*death knell* (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*, *touch of idiocy*<sup>P</sup>

1st—*cure light wounds*, *death watch*, *lesser confusion*<sup>P</sup> (DC 15), *protection from good*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *guidance*, *resistance*, *spark*\*

**D** domain spells; **Domains** Chaos, Madness

\*See Chapter 5 of the Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide.

#### STATISTICS

**Str 6 Dex 10 Con 12 Int 13 Wis 19 Cha 16**

**Base Atk +3 CMB +1 CMD 11**

**Feats** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +6, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +10, Heal +10, Intimidate

+7, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +5, Profession (midwife) +10, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +5

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Gear** leather armor, dagger, *hag's shabble* (see *Gods and Magic*, p. 57), wooden holy symbol of Gyronna, 16 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Drawback** If the PCs are seen interacting with Hanna more than twice, all Charisma-based skills checks when interacting with the local population receive a -2 penalty. Prices for goods and services increase by 10%, and some citizens might refuse to sell them their wares or take them on as lodgers.

#### Hooks

- A dirty, spent woman approaches a pregnant female member or friend of the party. She gently pats the female PC's belly, asking her when the baby is due or whether she needs other female-oriented oils or ointments. Or an *elixir of love*, perhaps?
- While the PCs are engaged in conversation with Mia, Hanna approaches. Irritated because she cannot discern her connection with Mia, she underestimates the strength the group might bring to a fight. Hanna casts *bestow curse* on Mia, using the spell's option to make the target indecisive about her next actions. Hanna hopes the curse will cause Mia to fall from grace and into her arms.
- The PCs find an abandoned granary outside of town. Inside, they find signs of a shrine to Gyronna, sloppily hidden behind some crates and bales of hay. ?

<b>HEINOUS HANNA</b>	<b>CR 5</b>
<b>XP 1,600</b>	
Female human cleric of Gyronna 5	
CE Medium humanoid (human)	
<b>Init</b> +4; <b>Senses</b> Perception +5	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 12, <b>touch</b> 10, <b>flat-footed</b> 12 (+2 armor)	
<b>hp</b> 32 (5d8+10)	
<b>Fort</b> +5, <b>Ref</b> +1, <b>Will</b> +8	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.	



# The Littlest Bellflower

by Dawn "Dark Sasha" Fischer  
Art by Tanya-Sang "Yuikami" Feddicini



**I**n the Downmarket District of Kaer Maga, every day is a crowded market day. All manner of individuals come in search of goods that cannot be easily obtained elsewhere, and all manner of transactions take place. Varisians in their colorful if eye-jarring garb, Chelish merchants from the lowlands with their eye for coin, even a few Shoanti from the uplands looking like the savages their reputation attests, and others weave through these infamous market stalls. Among these there are even stranger folk, common in Kaer Maga and nowhere else. From the "Sweettalkers," with mouths sewn shut, gesticulating to merchants their desires, to the disgusting troll augurs, always willing to demonstrate their own peculiar brand of soothsaying. The so-called worm folk, the naga crime lords, are rarely openly in evidence this day. Indeed, it would be rare for those folk to appear outside the dark recesses of their lairs. Rare is another commodity that is easily obtained in Kaer Maga, if one knows how to look.

Resembling a human girl-child until one looked closer, Tintisie skipped along humming a tuneless song while dodging between persons and creatures that could easily squash her flat. She was shorter than the average halfling lass, with copper skin and dirty blonde, close-cropped hair. As she moved through the crowds, articles small in size but high in value appeared in her hand and vanished into one of the many pouches sequestered on her person. The day was overcast, making Downmarket darker than normal; not that much of the sky could be seen from the ground level with the soaring heights of the city surrounding it. Only the sharpest of eyes could see these items before they disappeared, and even those tended to blink and wonder if they were mistaken.

Tintisie sidled past a booth containing poison vials, the sale of which were banned in every "civilized" market on this side of the Inner Sea. As she passed the stall, she spotted out of the corner of her eye a transaction taking place between a robed wizard and an strangely serpentine figure well-shrouded in a misshapen cloak. The sibilant words the shrouded figure uttered jarred her into a hyper-aware state.

"Thisssss stock is underutilissed, mussst ssssell to free up ssspasssss for otherssss more in demand..."

Observing from her vantage point on the other side of the booth, she recognized the mage. "*Khal Xanros, recently exiled from Korvosa for dabbling in deeds that were too extreme even for their corrupt society of mages,*" Tintisie mused as she watched the pair. "*Now what does he want with the worm?*"

Noticing the booth's merchant approaching, she picked up a vial without even glancing at the label. "How much is this one?" Feigning interest as the merchant quoted some price she nodded disinterestedly while continuing to watch the pair. "*That's the worm I've been watching for, the one with the block of Halfling slaves bought from some former lord in Cheliox now out of favor with the House of Thrune, probably for some ridiculous reason... Now what does he want with that necromancer? I've got to get closer...*"

Pretending to walk on, at the last second before it was out of reach, Tintisie snagged a poison vial from the poison merchant's stall as the owner's attention focused on an approaching customer. Once past the two figures of her interest she ducked behind a battle-scarred half-orc approaching the poison merchant with his eye on the assortment of vials. Hidden between the half-orc and the booth behind, she crouched down. Tintisie stopped first to drop the poison vial into a belt pouch at half-orc's back, and moved silently towards the pair. Upon arriving at the back of the shrouded figure in his voluminous robes, she reached up to his robes and found a pocket. Into the pocket her hand travelled. She withdrew a slip of paper and quickly made her way beyond the booth into the packed crowds.

"*You take too many risks, Tintisie.*" She recalled Banner's accusation. Sighing, she shook her head and focused on the twisting path ahead, through the tents and stalls of Downmarket. Way back in the heart of the market a shout of "Thief!" was heard. Tintisie grinned at that shout and skipped into a side alley. Nearby in a shadowy recess of the Augur Temple, sheltered by a tarp made of some skin best not questioned was a troll augur performing in front of a small crowd. A Chelish man, watching the Augur's performance, turned just as she attempted to pass without notice. "Here, what's this, eh? Looks like some Slip has gotten herself separated from her master," he grinned maliciously and reached for her arm. "Let's see just who you escaped from, shall we?"

The Chelaxian abruptly jumped backwards, alarm on his face as a dagger appeared like magic in Tintisie's hand. She looked upon



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him with disdain. "Don't touch me, Chel, or it'll be the last thing you touch. This isn't Cheliox. There are no 'Slips' here. Best you remember that." Tintisie looked upon the man with calm assurance. Sheathing her dagger she tossed a bauble into the soothsayer's basket before speaking. "I have a free bit of advice. Pay attention to Shredder's soothsay. He might warn you not to mess with a jinx or bad luck will come your way." She smiled viciously at the Chelaxian's discomfiture and nodded to the troll before continuing on. His hands occupied with his own entrails, Shredder just nodded back.

Once past the Augur Temple and into an avenue at the base of the rising balconies of Bis, Tintisie began to jog. Through Bis and over the bridges in the Cavalcade she ran. Arriving in the Bottoms, she turned into an alley. In a sudden move she dove into an alcove set slightly lower than many of the surrounding doorways. There at the base of the steps to a basement beneath some merchant's shop, Tintisie pushed on the stone at the bottom with her foot, and a secret door opened next to her. Sliding inside and chuckling to herself she stopped short as she came face-to-face with a blonde, blue-eyed halfling with a loaded short bow pointed at her.

Raising her hands slowly, she looked the other Halfling right in the eyes. "Relax Banner," she insisted. "I got the information. We gotta go this night though, that worm is gonna sell his stock to a necromancer. They're sure not to live long once he gets 'em."

The bow lowered and the male halfling looked upon her sternly, his crystal blue eyes making her heart pound as they always did. "I see you didn't pay attention to my request to lay low and listen, did you?"

Pursing her lips into a pout, she placed both hands on her hips. "I did so 'just listen'. Then I acted. That's what we do. If all we did was listen, we would only hear about fellow halflings in distress and no one would be rescued."

Rubbing his temples, Banner sighed at her in exasperation. "And what did you steal while you were 'listening and acting'?" He set down his bow and folded his arms at her attempt at a disarming grin.

"Never mind about that," Tintisie shrugged. "We gotta eat, don't we?" Approaching him closer she pulled out a slip of paper and opened it. Reading quickly she smiled at him in the delightful manner that he loved, her hazel eyes sparkling with joy. Pointing at the words on the paper she said eagerly, "Just as I thought, these are instructions on how to get to the worm's new stock. They're in a temporary slave compound below his main one in the Flesh Block. He'd kept the list to give to that necro once they had agreed upon a price."

Banner attempted to keep the worry from his voice as he reached down to pick up the note. "I am not sure whether to rejoice or bemoan the monster I created when I freed you from slavery in Cheliox." Banner went to the drawer of a nearby desk and took out several hand sketched maps and notes. "Alright, you win." Attempting and failing to ignore her cheerful bubbly laugh and dimpled cheeks as she clapped in delight. Suppressing a groan, he tapped one of the maps laid out upon the table. "Now what plans are rolling around in that devious mind of yours on how we are gonna get by this worm's traps and guards and locked doors? You got some ideas on how to work your jinxing in our favor this time, I hope?" he asked, grinning back at Tintisie's knowing smile. ?



# Realm Building

by Blake Davis, Charles Evans, and Thomas Le Blanc

Art by Carlos "Celurian" Torrealba and Jonathan Roberts

**P**resented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #32 "Rivers Run Red"* are rules for overland exploration, creating and expanding kingdoms, and city building. In this article, we will offer several new settlement traits, new city buildings, hex improvements, and more!

## Map: New Hex Improvements

**Border Crossing (5 BP; must have a river or road):** Constructed in a hex adjacent to another kingdom or unclaimed area, the crossing provides military and monetary benefit by collecting tolls and warning of enemy movement. *Economy and Stability +1.*

**Fortress (46 BP, -5 BP if built in mountainous terrain, +10 BP if built in swamp terrain.):** A fortress provides a defensive position and a safe place for travelers to stay. *Economy, Loyalty, and Stability +1; Defense Modifier +4 for settlements in the same hex.*

## Kingdom

### Changing Alignment

Once set, a kingdom's alignment cannot be changed without difficulties, and can only change once per year. During the alignment change, for one month, the kingdom does not gain any BP, and gains 2d4 Unrest. If the kingdom's alignment shifts more than one step, it instead gains 3d4 Unrest. A successful Loyalty check reduces the Unrest penalty by 1d4.

The following month, cities within half of the kingdom's overall hex size from the capitol shift two steps in alignment to match the kingdom's new alignment. Cities outside of the capitol's influence only shift one step. Cathedrals and Temples within cities whose alignment are two or more steps away from the city's alignment are considered destroyed—new Cathedrals or Temples may be built in their place for the usual half cost.

### New Events

**Carnival (continuous):** A Varisian troupe has set up a carnival in your fairgrounds. You receive a -2 penalty on Loyalty checks, lose 1 BP at the

beginning of the Upkeep phase, and Unrest is increased by 1. You must make a Stability check at the next Upkeep phase to convince the Varisians to leave. One of your cities must have the Fairgrounds building in order for this Event to appear, and the chance is doubled in the month of Desnus.

**Military Parade:** Your armed forces put on a parade in one of your settlements. You gain a +1 on Loyalty and Stability checks and a +2 Defense Modifier until your next Event phase.

**Sabotage!** A saboteur has damaged your military's armaments. You receive a -1 penalty on Loyalty and Stability checks and a -2 Defense Modifier until your next Event phase. The Sabotage event can only happen once per month.

### New Leadership Role: Lord Chancellor

The lord (or lady) chancellor is the chief aide to the monarch in running a kingdom and can be called upon to fill a variety of roles.

**Benefit** A lord chancellor can choose between one of two options at the beginning of a kingdom build phase:

Negate the penalties to kingdom checks incurred by up to two vacancies in other leadership roles

Claim an extra hex and the construction of additional buildings equal to the lord chancellor's lowest mental ability score modifier (minimum 0).

If the kingdom has a councilor, high priest, ruler, and spymaster, the lord chancellor can choose to coordinate efforts to maintain the well-being of the kingdom, reducing Unrest by 1d3 points.

**Vacancy Penalty** While the role of a lord chancellor is not necessary, they handle much of the minutiae of a kingdom's paperwork that would otherwise be left to the ruler. The GM can opt that the bonuses to kingdom checks provided by a single ruler are all halved (round down). If there are two rulers, this penalty does not apply.

## Settlements

The *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game® GameMastery Guide™* presents rules for quickly creating settlements, as well as adding traits to flesh out villages, towns, and cities in your game. Below are several new additions for your settlements.

### New Advantages

**Artistic:** The settlement has a large contingent of painters, sculptors, writers, and other artists. *(Economy +1, Lore +2)*

**Cosmopolitan:** Large varieties of cultural and racial groups have made their home in this settlement. *(Lore +1, Society +2)*

### New Buildings

**Bank (30 BP):** A place to store valuables and exchange monies. *Economy +1, Stability +1; City value +1,000 gp. (1 city block)*

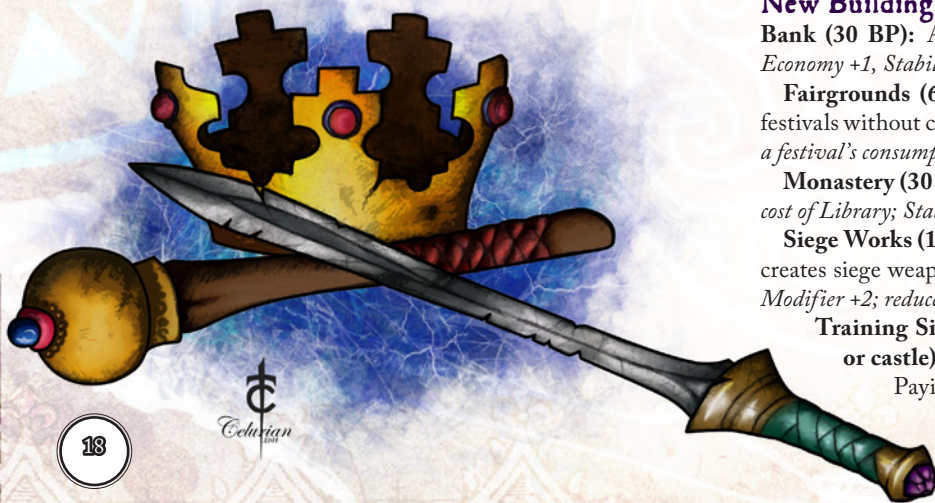
**Fairgrounds (6 BP):** This wide open field is designed to hold festivals without crowding into city streets. *Loyalty +1; Unrest -1; reduce a festival's consumption by 1 BP. (4 city blocks)*

**Monastery (30 BP):** A place of quiet meditation and study. *Halves cost of Library; Stability +2. (4 city blocks)*

**Siege Works (16 BP, must be adjacent to a smith):** This workshop creates siege weapons and defenses for the city. *Stability +1; Defensive Modifier +2; reduce siege equipment cost by 10% (1 city block).*

**Training Site (6 BP, must be adjacent to barracks, garrison, or castle):** An area for the army, guards, or militias to train.

Paying the Consumption cost introduces the Military Parade event, which happens at the beginning of the Event Phase. Rolling 1 on any Stability





check introduces the Sabotage event at the end of the Event Phase. *Consumption +1 (optional), Stability +1; Defensive Modifier +2. (4 city blocks)*

## New Disadvantages

**Crime Syndicate:** A group, such as the Sczarni, have set up shop in this settlement. Burglary, robbery and all manner of schemes are common, but the group shies away from violent crimes. (*Crime and Law -1*)

**Declining:** Full of shabby, empty buildings, this settlement is in a cultural and economic downturn. (*Economy and Society -2, decrease purchase value by 25%*)

**Haunted:** Plagued by cultists of the Whispering Way or other sects, or even undead, this settlement is dangerous for both residents and visitors alike. (*Danger +5 [+10 for undead encounters], Society -2*)

## Expanded Rules for Cathedrals

A Cathedral can only be built if the city's alignment is the same as the deity's alignment. A lawful good city, for example, can only build Cathedrals dedicated to Erastil, Iomedae, or Torag.

Chaotic and neutral evil gods are not represented here due to the rarity of large organized sects within settlements.

Deities marked with "L" reduce the Loyalty bonus granted by a Cathedral to +2, but otherwise gain the normal Cathedral benefits.

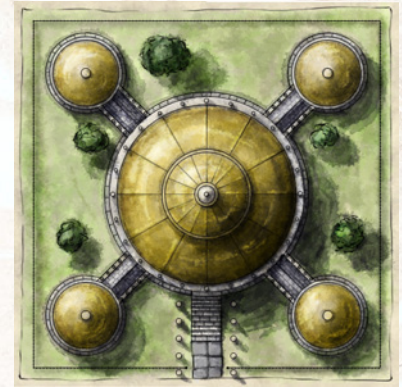
Cathedrals to deities marked with "P" do not grant the reduced price on Academies or Temples in the same city for the first Cathedral to that deity built, but otherwise use the normal Cathedral rules. When building a second Cathedral for the same deity in a different city, the new bonuses listed below do not apply—the normal reduced price for Academies and Temples applies instead.

Armies created from cities with Gorumite or Iomedean Cathedrals reduce the kingdom's Economy, Loyalty, and Stability by an extra 1 (total 3 each) if defeated. As long as the Cathedral remains standing, a new army can be recruited again after one month has passed.

- **Erastil<sup>P</sup> (LG):** One farm per month can be established for half cost (minimum 1 BP).
- **Iomedae<sup>P</sup> (LG):** You may designate any one army created by this city "Legion of the Inheritor." The Legion requires 1 less Consumption and gains +1 OM.
- **Torag<sup>L</sup> (LG):** The Defense Modifier of this city increases by 4.
- **Sarenrae<sup>P</sup> (NG):** Sarenrae's healing of the sick and blessing of the crops reduces Consumption by 2.
- **Shelyn<sup>L</sup> (NG):** A single Theater in this city can be upgraded to an Opera House of the Rose, increasing the Economy and Stability it provides by 1.
- **Desna<sup>P</sup> (CG):** Two roads per month can be established for 1 less BP (minimum 0 BP).
- **Cayden Cailean<sup>L</sup> (CG):** A single Tavern in the city can be designated as the Lucky Drunk, holy to Cayden Cailean, increasing the Economy and Loyalty it provides by 1.
- **Abadar<sup>L</sup> (LN):** The cathedral of Abadar doubles as a Bank, increasing Economy by 1 and the city's base value by +1,000 gp.
- **Irori<sup>L</sup> (LN):** A free Monastery to the Master of Masters can be established in any controlled mountain hex, increasing the kingdom's Loyalty and Stability by 1. If the kingdom does not control a mountain hex at time of this Cathedral's establishment, it may "save" this until it does.
- **Gozreh<sup>P</sup> (N):** Preparing a forest hex for settlement only requires 2 BP and takes 1 month to prepare (same as a hill hex). In addition, cities settled in forest hexes may be treated as a free partial farm,

reducing Consumption by 1 BP.

- **Pharasma<sup>L</sup> (N):** A single Graveyard in this city can be upgraded to a Boneyard, increasing the Economy and Loyalty it provides by 1.
- **Nethys<sup>P</sup> (N):** A single Caster's Tower in this city can be upgraded to the All Seeing Eye, increasing the amount of items it provides by 1 for each category (minor, medium, and major).
- **Calistria<sup>L</sup> (CN):** A single Brothel in the city can be upgraded to the Flames of Lust sacred brothel, increasing the Economy and Loyalty it provides by 1.
- **Gorum<sup>P</sup> (CN):** Any one regular army created by this city may be designated as the Iron Warriors. These troops receive the Improved Armor upgrade for free and begin with the Defensive Wall Tactic—this does not count against the maximum tactics it may learn.
- **Hanspur<sup>L</sup> (CN):** All rivers within two hexes of the city this Cathedral is built in count as roads for determining bonuses to Economy and Stability, along with reducing travel time in those hexes.
- **Asmodeus<sup>L</sup> (LE):** The Loyalty penalty for all Taxes (except none) is reduced by 2.
- **Zon-Kuthon<sup>L</sup> (LE):** Fear inspired from a city in the shadow of the Midnight Lord increases Loyalty by 1 and the Defense Modifier by 2.

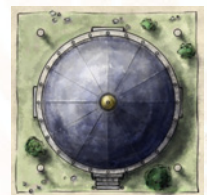


## Expanded Rules for Temples

A Temple can only be built if the city's alignment is within one step of the deity's alignment. A Temple dedicated to Calistria, for example, could be built within a neutral, chaotic neutral, or chaotic evil city.

As with cathedrals, chaotic and neutral evil gods are not represented here due to the rarity of large organized temples within settlements.

- **Erastil (LG):** Halves cost of Park, Mill, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +2, Stability +2; Unrest -2.
- **Iomedae (LG):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Watchtower, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +3, Stability +1; Unrest -2.
- **Torag (LG):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Smith, and City Wall in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +1, Stability +3; Unrest -2.
- **Sarenrae (NG):** Halves cost of Park, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +2, Stability +2; Unrest -2.
- **Shelyn (NG):** Halves cost of Park, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Economy +1, Stability +3; Unrest -2.
- **Desna (CG):** Halves cost of Park, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +3, Stability +1; Unrest -2.
- **Cayden Cailean (CG):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Brewery, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Economy +2, Loyalty +3, Stability -1; Unrest -2.





**Table 1**

Rank	Lands	Cost	Radius of Influence	Extras per Turn	Cost to Reallocate
Duke/Duchess	Duchy	105 BP	60 hexes	7 hex claims, 2 new cities, OR 4 roads and 4 farmlands, 4 buildings	6 BP
Margrave/Margravaine	Marquisate	68 BP	50 hexes	6 hex claims, 1 new city, OR 3 roads and 3 farmlands, 3 buildings	5 BP
Count (or Earl)/Countess	Count	45 BP	40 hexes	5 hex claims, 1 new city, OR 2 roads and 2 farmlands, 3 buildings	4 BP
Viscount/Viscountess	Viscounty or Shire	30 BP	30 hexes	4 hex claims, 1 road, 1 farmland, 2 buildings	3 BP
Baron/Baroness	Barony	20 BP	20 hexes	3 hex claims, 1 road, 2 buildings	2 BP
Knight/Dame, Lord/Lady	Manor	12 BP	1 hex	1 hex claim, 1 road, 2 buildings	1 BP

- **Abadar (LN):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Monument, and Shop in same city; 3 minor items; Economy +3; Unrest -2.
- **Irori (LN):** Halves cost of Park, Library, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +1, Stability +3; Unrest -2.
- **Gozreh (N):** Halves cost of Park, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +2, Stability +2; Unrest -2.
- **Pharasma (N):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +1, Stability +3; Unrest -2.
- **Nethys (N):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Library, and Shrine in same city; 3 minor items; Economy +1, Loyalty +1, Stability +1; Unrest -2.
- **Calistria (CN):** Halves cost of Brothel, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +1, Stability +3; Unrest -2.
- **Gorum (CN):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Smith, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +3, Stability +1; Unrest -2.
- **Hanspur (CN):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Mill, and Shrine in the same city; 2 minor items; Economy +2, Stability +2; Unrest -2.
- **Asmodeus (LE):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +2, Stability +2; Unrest -2.
- **Zon-Kuthon (LE):** Halves cost of Graveyard, Monument, and Shrine in same city; 2 minor items; Loyalty +3, Stability +1; Unrest -2.

## A Noble Calling: Creating a Feudal Society

Managing a growing kingdom is a lot for a small group of people to do. Appointing a group of trusted aides and lieutenants can help tremendously, and that includes figures beyond a realm's most obvious leaders.

### The Right Person for the Job

If the players don't already have a candidate, finding the right person for the job might take some time. If the PCs lack the time to do the work themselves, they can initiate a search for a suitable candidate during step 1 of the Improvement phase. After giving any specifics required for candidates (including alignment), the search takes one month. Every additional requirement above the first increases the time required by one dice step. For example, looking for an elven wizard of at least 3<sup>rd</sup> level would take 1d3 months. Each ongoing search temporarily increases kingdom Consumption by 1 for its duration. Consumption does not reduce until the start of the next leadership step of a Build phase after either the search is called off or the candidate is found.

After the required time passes, an NPC candidate with the Heroic ability score array arrives to fill the position. If not immediately promoted to nobility, this candidate typically remains available for another 1d6 months.

### An Award of Arms: Promotion to the Nobility

Once a candidate is found, the NPC is assigned land according to their new station. During the first step of the Improvement phase, the kingdom must pay a BP cost appropriate to the rank assigned. The costs cover the NPC's income, their new home, and a staff to assist to the new noble.

If, during the establish and improve cities step of the Improvement phase, a castle, mansion, or noble villa is built for the new noble in their assigned settlement, the cost of one building for that noble is reduced by one-quarter (round down). A noble can add the items in the "Extras per turn" column in any of the hexes they can influence. Moving a noble's house from one settlement to another incurs a BP cost, and is made during the first step of the Improvement phase; a noble in the process of moving does not grant any of its benefits until they have settled into their new home.

An existing noble may be raised to a higher rank at a cost of 50% of their new rank. For example, a Knight may be made a Baron for 10 BP; a Baroness to Margravaine for 25 BP.

Multiple nobles can be appointed to the same hex or even the same settlement, but for every hex of overlapping influence, there is a cumulative 1% chance of the Feud event occurring.

When a kingdom claims a new hex with an existing settlement, they can optionally appoint a noble at this time. A noble appointed in this fashion cannot perform any of the Extras in Table 1 until the BP cost to appoint them has been paid, but they do grant the bonuses on Table 2.

### The Benefits of Rule

A noble ensconced in their appointed settlement grants a bonus to Kingdom checks, depending on the noble's alignment. Nobles that are feuding or moving do not grant any of these benefits.

In a time of war, a noble may be assigned to accompany an army to act as a leader or aide. If assigned, they do not provide their regular benefits and kingdom bonuses to their assigned settlement; instead, they provide bonuses to the army they are assigned to. In addition, each noble assigned to an army grants a +2 to morale checks made by that army. An army can have a number of nobles appointed to it equal to the leader's Charisma modifier.

In addition, the highest ranking noble in an army can provide a morale bonus equal to half their Charisma modifier (rounded down;



Table 2

Alignment	Lawful	Neutral	Chaotic
Good	+1 Economy, +1 Loyalty	+1 Loyalty, +1 Stability	+2 Loyalty
Neutral	+1 Economy, +1 Stability	+2 Stability	+1 Loyalty, +1 Stability
Evil	+2 Economy	+1 Economy, +1 Stability	+1 Economy, +1 Loyalty

minimum 1) to either the army's DV or OM until the next tactics phase. There is a chance that a noble can be eliminated when they provide this bonus—this chance is equal to the hp damage that the opposing army deals. If the noble provided an offensive bonus, this chance is doubled.

A noble can appoint an interim ruler while they are away, in case of a lethal accident or death in battle.

### End of the Reign

In the event of the death of an appointed noble, a designated heir can step into the role at no cost to the kingdom. If there is not, the kingdom must appoint a new noble as outlined above, though the cost of appointment is only half for pre-established lands.

Dismissing a noble within the first year of their appointment requires a Stability check that results in 3d4 Unrest if the check fails. ?



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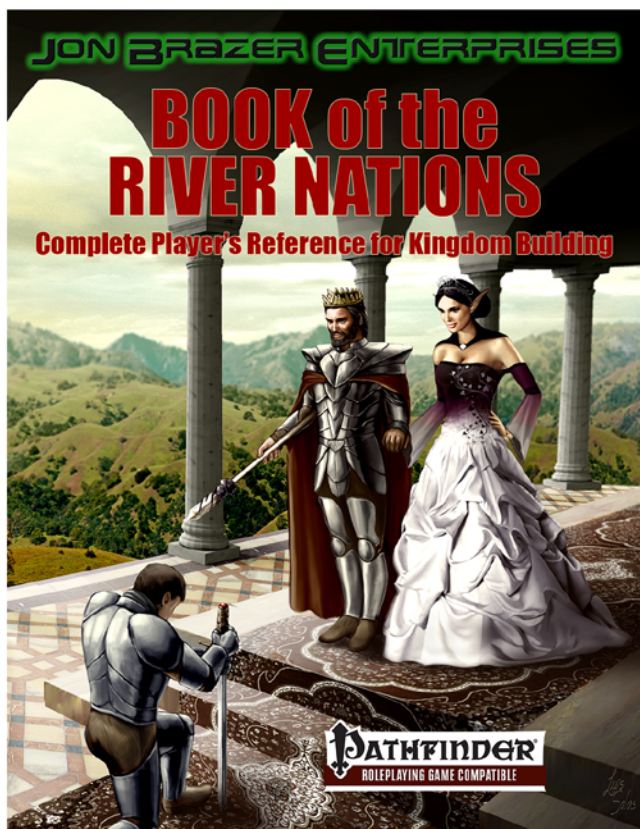
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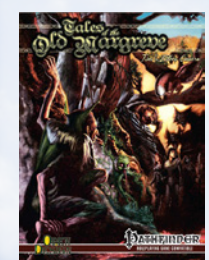
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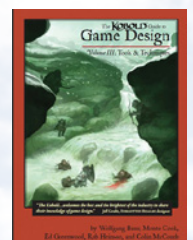


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# The Oracle of Rulership

by Ian "Set" Turner

Art by Carlos "Celurian" Torreblanca

**T**he seven doctrines of rightful rulership in ancient Thassilon were wealth, fertility, honest pride, abundance, eager striving, righteous anger, and well-deserved rest. The Runelords corrupted those values, celebrating instead greed, lust, boastful pride, gluttony, envy, wrath, and sloth as their 'virtues of rulership,' each associated with one of the schools of magic they practiced. The clergy and rites of Lissala have long since fallen into obscurity, as have those of the Peacock Spirit. Yet, some force still honors these ancient virtues, and in the Varisian lands that were once ancient Thassilon, hooded oracles have been seen, seeking to preach the return of these long-forgotten virtues, or, in some cases, vices....

## Rulership

**Deities:** Lissala, the Peacock Spirit.

**Class Skills:** Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nobility), Linguistics.

**Bonus Spells:** *unseen servant* (3rd), *shatter* (5th), *vampiric touch* (7th), *charm monster* (9th), *flesh to stone* (11th), *greater dispel magic* (13th), *project image* (15th), *symbol of death* (17th), *miracle* (19th).

**Revelations:** An oracle with the rulership mystery can choose from any of the following revelations.

**Abundant Repast (Su)** Once per day, plus once per day per five oracle levels, you can either devour magical energy, or confer it to another with a kiss. As a standard action, you can either kiss another

to replenish their own magical reserves, by expending one or more spell slots of your own, to replenish equal numbers and levels worth of prepared spells or spell slots expended, or attack another with a primary bite attack that does damage based on your size.

A spellcaster bitten must make a Will save (DC 10 + ½ your oracle level + your Charisma modifier) or lose their highest level prepared spell, or one of their highest level spell slots (choose randomly if a target has multiple prepared spells of their highest level available), and one of your expended spell slots of equal or lower level is refreshed. At 5th level, this bite attack is treated as a magic weapon for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction. At 10th level, you gain the Improved Natural Attack feat with this bite attack.

**Arcane Forfeiture (Su)** You can counter any spell on the oracle spell list using any abjuration spell known of equal or higher level. A number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier, when you counter or dispel a spell effect, you can choose to either replenish a spell slot of equal or lower level, transfer the effects of the spell negated to target yourself, or cause the spell to manifest under your control, as if cast by you, from your position, at your caster level, and upon a target or area of your choice.

**Designation of Authority (Su)** As a full round action, you can duplicate the effects of any *summon monster* spell that you could cast at your current oracle level. You are treated as dazed when the summoning is in effect, directing their actions in place of your own. If you choose to abandon control of the summoned creature(s), they are instead dazed, and take no action until you resume control. This summoning lasts 1 minute per oracle level and you can use it once per day, plus once per day per five oracle levels.

**Fecundity (Sp)** In a 10 minute ritual, you can replicate the enrichment option of *plant growth* or cause a similar effect by blessing a herd of livestock. You can enact this ritual a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier, but cannot bless the same crop or herd more than once in a single year. On a smaller scale, you can instead use this ability on any source of food to reproduce the effects of a *create food & water* spell at your caster level, although you cannot affect a single food-producing animal or plant more than once in a 24 hour period.

**License to Rule (Sp)** You can invoke the properties of rulership to act as a *suggestion* spell, but add your Charisma modifier to the difficulty of the saving throw if the target would be attracted to someone of your gender, race and/or station. You can use this ability once per day, plus once per day per five oracle levels. At 10th level, you can use three daily uses of this ability to simulate *mass suggestion*.

**Mastery of Quality (Su)** As a standard action, you can either add or subtract an armor or weapon quality worth +1 to any armor or weapon, plus an additional +1 per five oracle levels you possess. This ability can be used a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier. You can only increase the armor or weapon enhancements on an item in your possession, and the enhancement fades at the end of the round if the enhanced item ever leaves your possession, but you can decrease the magical enhancements on a piece of armor or weapon within 30 ft.

The modification lasts a number of rounds equal to your oracle level. You cannot confer or remove a portion of a weapon or armor enhancement, and you cannot add another enhancement to an item that does not already have at least a +1 enhancement bonus. (So you must be at least 10th level before you can turn a breastplate into a +1 *light fortification breastplate*, and 15th level before you can turn a longsword into a +1 *holy longsword*).

**Prideful Dominance (Su)** As a swift action as part of an attack or charge action, you can cause your appearance to swell with the illusion of arcane power, superior equipment and unbeatable might. This effect





is similar to the Frightful Presence trait of a dragon, affecting all foes that can see you within 30 ft. that have less HD than your oracle level, inflicting upon them the frightened condition for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier, and then leaving them shaken for additional rounds equal to your oracle level.

An affected foe can attempt to resist this effect with a Will saving throw (DC 10 + half your oracle level + your Charisma modifier), and if they save, are merely shaken for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier, and cannot be affected again with this ability for 24 hours.

*Runes of Rulership (Sp)* You can create a *glyph of warding* as a spell-like ability once per day, plus an additional time per day at 10th level, and a third time per day at 20th level. At 15th level, each use of this ability instead creates a *greater glyph of warding*.

*Weapons of Rightful Rule (Ex/Su)* You gain proficiency with the following weapons; glaive, guisarme, halberd, lucerne hammer, ranseur and scythe, as well as the ability to brace a longspear as an immediate action. If you have dazzling display with any of the above weapons (you must have the feat and qualify for it normally), the duration of any shaken effect is doubled on a successful use of the feat.

These traits count as exceptional abilities. If anyone attempts to strike you with one of the above weapons of rule, you are treated as if under the effects of a *sanctuary* spell at your oracle level. If they drop this weapon and draw another, the effect ends. This effect is a supernatural ability.

*Wrath of the Storm (Su)* As a standard action, by touch, you can infuse yourself or another with elemental spirits of wrath, causing body,

mind, and spirit to warp and shudder with elemental fury. Initially, the subject merely gains the effects of the rage spell for a number of rounds equal to your oracle level.

At 5th level, the subjects body also dramatically transforms, gaining a +2 size bonus to Strength, a +2 natural armor bonus, a +10 ft. bonus to ground move, climb, fly and swim speeds of 20 ft., 60 ft. darkvision, low-light vision, scent and a bite and 2 claw attacks that function as primary weapons with damage appropriate for the recipients size (1d6 bite and 1d4 claws, if size medium).

At 10th level, all unarmed or natural weapon attacks inflict +1d6 elemental damage (acid, cold, electricity or fire), chosen at the time the power is activated. At 15th level, the target increases in size by one size category, and gains an additional +4 size bonus to Strength and another +2 natural armor bonus, as well as resistance 10 vs. acid, cold, electricity and fire. The recipient is fatigued for the remainder of the encounter once the effect ends, and cannot be affected by this power more than once in a 24 hour period. You can use this power once per day, plus an additional time per day per ten oracle levels.

**Final Revelation:** Upon reaching 20th level, you become a paragon of rulership, gaining a +5 insight bonus to all Diplomacy, Intimidate and Sense Motive checks, spell resistance equal to 10 + your oracle level and immunity to the detrimental effects of aging. ☯

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# In Hell's Embrace, Part 3

by Dane Pitchford  
Art by Isaac Royo

Ailyn winced, the man behind her forcibly twisting her arm behind her back and marching her along the familiar corridors of her home. Her mind raced, trying to process everything that had just occurred. She knew her brother held little love for their father, but to openly act against him, to bring a small, armed band into his home with the intent of killing him, seemed unfathomable. Yet there was no mistaking the murderous gleam she had seen in Rhevan's eyes; or rather, the black, empty pits they had become.

The sound of tramping feet mingled in her ears with her own labored breathing and the hammering of her heart. There had to be something she could do to dissuade her brother, but nothing came to mind. Whoever this man now was, she was quite certain there was little of the Rhevan she knew within him. The best she could hope for was that her father's own men would stop his traitorous son. Yet she had seen no sign of them since their arrival, and surely by now they would have stumbled across a patrol of some sort. Rhevan's force was too large to go entirely unnoticed.

Ailyn felt a surge of hope when a pair of men in House Dartherian livery rounded a corner directly ahead of them, stopping short at the sight of Rhevan and his soldiers. Rather than turn back to rouse the rest of the guard, however, one of them grinned, and they strode forward, neither reaching for their weapons.

"Excellent work, Arden, Thorn," Rhevan said as the pair reached them and turned to walk alongside the younger man. "Did you have much trouble putting my father's men down?"

"Not at all, M'lord," said the first man, a grey-bearded soldier with a jagged scar around his neck only partially hidden by the high collar of his uniform. "It was as you said. The rabble your father employed were complacent . . . easily taken care of once we helped them fall asleep." He laughed, patting the hilt of a dagger protruding from his belt.

"And where is my father?" she heard her brother ask the men, and this time the younger, Thorn, spoke up.

"In the midst of a ritual, M'lord. Completely unaware of what's going on."

"Excellent. That means the majority of his spells will be chosen to aid in the casting."

Rhevan paused as they reached an intersection, turning and motioning down either side. "Secure the rest of the household. Thorn, you can have the honor of chaperoning my dear sister."

Thorn leered at Ailyn as the man behind her released her arm, but she met his gaze evenly as he stepped forward and his calloused fingers tightened around her wrist.

"My pleasure, M'lord." He crooned, his gaze never leaving her.

"Do treat her carefully, Thorn. She's not one of your doxies," her brother sneered, and she immediately felt Thorn's grip relax.

"Of course, M'lord."

The trio continued to march Ailyn along, Thorn grasping her arm and Arden at her other side, with Rhevan ahead of them. They turned down a less familiar hallway, down a stairwell that led to the deeper levels of the manor. Soon the small group passed into a region of the building that Ailyn and Rhevan had always been forbidden from entering. This was where their father, a renowned diabolist, practiced his art, and she could almost feel a



growing heaviness in the air the deeper they descended. Here and there, a flickering torch cast dim light across the increasingly narrow corridors, the natural light from above fading completely.

The patriarch of House Dartherian had taken great care to distance his darker activities from his children while they were growing up. "To truly seize power, one must be old enough to understand it, and willful enough to master it," he had always told them. Rhevan often asked their father to teach him, but his requests were always met with the same response. "When you're old enough," at first, then "I'm afraid you lack the proper talent" as Rhevan had matured. Ailyn lifted her gaze, looking ahead to try and gain some glimpse of her brother's face, but it was cast in shadow. Still, from the set of his jaw, she knew he was revisiting the same memories. They had been, after all, the catalyst for his departure, if not the entire reason.

Now her brother's impetuosity had come to this, marching through the forbidden levels of House Dartherian with bared blades and murderous intentions. Ailyn wasn't sure how much longer she could take the silence, the thick air, and the familiar static sensation of magic at work. She opened her mouth to try once again to reason with her brother, however futilely, but was stopped short. Rhevan signaled a halt before a pair of heavy doors carved of black marble, their surface etched with arcane symbols and images of devils of all kinds.

"We're here." Rhevan simply said, reaching out to brush his fingertips against an image of Asmodeus that dominated the center of the doors. That bare touch caused them to click softly, opening inward in eerie silence, revealing a chamber that neither of them had ever set eyes on before.



The room, covered floor to ceiling in ebon marble spidered with lines of bloody crimson, was dominated by a massive circle inscribed in the floor. Picked out in silver and gemstones, the giant device crackled with energy, its perimeter ringed by four robed apprentices, positioned to form an invisible pentagram within the circle with the figure in blood red robes at the pattern's far end. Power arced along these invisible lines as the red-robed man raised an ebony staff into the air, his voice charged with the same energy as he chanted.

Though she was no mage, Ailyn had witnessed enough magic growing up to know that the spell was nearly complete. She felt it in her bones, and in her flesh. It was an almost palpable sensation that resonated within her. Her father was summoning something... something big. Something dangerous. Rhevan stood within the doorway just ahead, still and unreadable, though Thorn and Arden stood with mouths agape, clearly awed by the raw power in the room.

Suddenly, Rhevan lunged forward, so quickly that he seemed to be in the doorway one instant and behind the closest of the robed apprentices the next.

"Rhevan, no!"

Her cry went unheeded as her brother lifted his sword high, a wolfish, almost unnatural grin spreading across his features. He brought his sword down with a savage cry, the steel glimmering with a sickly green light as it bit deep into flesh. Hot blood sprayed from the wound, the enchanted blade nearly cleaving the apprentice in two. As if on cue, Thorn released Ailyn's arm, and he and Arden dashed at opposite angles across the room, each of them driving his own sword through another apprentice as the surviving men spun toward the sudden disruption.

The one remaining apprentice snarled something in a guttural language that Ailyn vaguely recognized, but couldn't quite place. The ground beneath Rhevan's feet seemed to darken and swell, tentacles as black as pitch erupting upward to entwine around his limbs and torso. He let out a pained cry as they began to crush him, but then he snapped out words of his own. The air around him warped, and in an instant the binding tentacles were shredded into wisps of darkness. His visage twisting, Rhevan lashed a hand out toward the mage, fingers curling into a fist. The apprentice tried to step back, hands flashing through the signs of a counterspell, but whatever he would have cast only came out as a wet gurgle as a fist of arcane force shimmered into existence around him, and crushed him with the audible snap of bones.

"Pathetic," Rhevan growled, flicking his hand as if it was coated with the gory mess that the mage had been reduced to. The air in the room still crackled and undulated, as if something was trying to force its way through the weakened veil between worlds. It was all Ailyn could do to remain upright, and finally she sank to her knees as Rhevan and his men turned their attention to the red-robed figure.

"And now, father...you die," her brother snarled, taking a step toward the man. The robed figure whirled his staff, bringing the butt down against the marble floor with such a loud crack that even Rhevan faltered, the black, empty voids of his eyes widening as the man lifted his head, his face cast in unnatural shadow save for two burning pinpoints of crimson light. ?

## Dear Ask a Shoanti



*I see that the new Inner Sea World Guide at last puts Shoanti on equal footing by finally giving them their own run-down in Chapter 1: Races. Are you as elated as I am?*

*Sincere Regards,  
Raises a Klar*

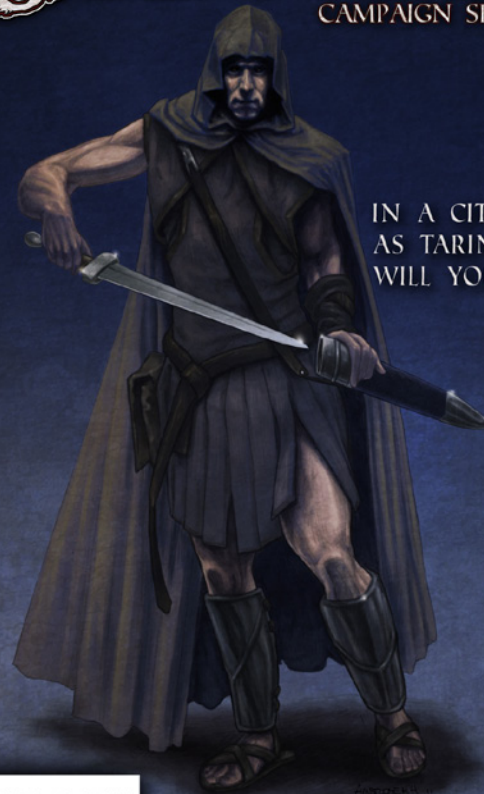
## Dear Raises a Klar

Indeed, I, too, am very happy with this development. But for this injustice to be fully corrected, Paizo must now fix their other remaining blunder. Namely, the entry for Chelaxians should be relocated to their proper spot: the Chapter on Diseases and Poisons in the Core Rules.

*Yours very truly,  
Ask a Shoanti*

# SHADOWLANDS

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# Freedom Town

by Michael Lane  
Art by xxx

*"Watch your head" – graffiti at Nine Skulls tavern*

In a godforsaken corner of the Hold of Belkzen, hard against the Ustalav and Lastwall borders, brave or foolhardy travelers find the foil to Lastwall's glorious Vigil. While Vigil represents a beacon to warriors of good heart, Freedom Town is a dark lantern to the dangerous and distressed of Avistan – a place where only the fearless dare to tread and the desperate come to die.



## FREEDOM TOWN

CN small town

**Corruption** +0; **Crime** +2; **Economy** +0; **Law** -3; **Lore** -1;  
**Society** +4

**Qualities** notorious, racially intolerant (elves)

**Danger** +10

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** council

**Population** 937 (679 humans, 124 halflings, 88 orcs, 43 half-orcs, 2 dwarves, 1 gnome)

## Notable NPCs

*Magistrate Lysander Sharpe* (N male human bard [detective] 9)

*Tribute-Master Eryx Balaban* (NE male human rogue [spy] 7/  
master spy 2)

## MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 1,300 gp; **Purchase Limit** 7,500 gp;

**Spellcasting** 4th

**Minor Items** 3d4 items, **Medium Items** 1d6 items

## Appearance

Most visitors enter Freedom Town through one of two gates. To the northwest, toward Urgir, stands the Gore-Gate, a blackened and scarred wooden gate in a 10-foot high palisade of aged oak timbers running from the river to the granite cliffs. Those that approach Freedom Town from Lastwall enter through the Prissy-Gate, an iron lattice and white oak gate in a similar palisade to the southeast. Beyond the gates, Freedom Town sprawls along the north bank of the Path River from rickety docks jutting into the river, to a jumble of shacks jostling for space until they reach the remains of the old quarry. From there, wood and stone buildings rise up broken granite steps until they collide with an unblemished sheer granite wall to the north. Across the river to the south, acres of rich farmland dotted with the homesteads of human and halfling farmers stretch for miles until the ground turns treacherous and swampy at Ghostlight Marsh.

## History

Before the emergence of Freedom Town, the region along the West fork of the Path River was home to a granite quarry and later a fort constructed for Harchrist's Blockade. In 4237 AR, Harchrist's Blockade fell to the orc hordes of Belkzen and the unnamed fort along the Path River was sealed, abandoned, and consigned to oblivion.

In 4689 AR, fresh off a wildly successful scam in Vellumis that bankrupted the Taldan ambassador, the Sharpes Gang hatched a brilliant scheme to make a fortune off Vigil's weakness for horses. The gang spent two years in Vigil, gradually building

trust and favors with marks throughout the famously cautious city. But a series of unlucky breaks struck and on a warm early summer evening in 4691 AR, the entire con crumbled. Reacting quickly, lest they end up in Vigil's infamous "magnificent prison," the gang scrambled for Lastwall's border with the Hold of Belkzen thinking to make their way to Urgir and then to lose pursuit with an escape to Varisia.

All that changed when the gang happened across the old fort on the Path River. Thirsting for revenge, the gang initially decided to hole up in the fort to see if there was any opportunity to recover some of their funds tied up in Vigil. But, after a few frustrating months, Lysander Sharpe woke one morning and realized he was looking out at acres and acres of forgotten, rich farmland and the perfect opportunity to tweak Vigil's nose. Freedom Town was born.

## Relations and Trade

Freedom Town's continued existence is questionable. To deal with the challenge of survival amongst the community's three deadly neighbors, Lysander designated one of his top lieutenants to an unusual position. As Tribute-Master of Freedom Town, Eryx Balaban ensures threats to the town are neutralized. Knowing military force to be doomed, Eryx cultivates a network of informants throughout Freedom Town and the surrounding communities and deals with threats through a combination of favors, bribes and assassinations.

Trade flourishes in Freedom Town. Varisian caravans chancing the risky crossing between Varisia and Ustalav make regular stops in Freedom Town and sometimes shield merchants in their midst. Grask Uldeth's discipline and organization of Urgir and surrounding communities creates unexpected opportunities with the orcs. Trade is less welcome with Lastwall, but a band of Vodyanov smugglers working from the docks are extending their tendrils into communities along the Path River and River Esk.

## Sites of Interest

**Small's:** A wooden sign of a sly halfling in a patch of blue bellflowers marks Freedom Town's only inn. Visitors are warmly greeted by **Antal "Small" Beltrish** (CN male halfling rogue 5) an escaped slave from Cheliox, heart of the halfling community in Freedom Town and one of the leaders of the Bellflower Network. In addition to popular gaming tables and the famed honey cider, Small's represents the northern terminus of one of the many rows within the Network. Escaped slaves often work for a short time at the inn before settling into the farms surrounding Freedom Town or setting out for new lives in Varisia or Ustalav.



**Sophonria's Spirits:** The oldest tavern in Freedom Town belongs to Lysander Sharpe, mastermind of the Sharpes Gang and ostensible head of the town council. Lysander's competitive nature drove the Sharpes Gang to many successes and the final, spectacular failure. His wry humor is captured in his tavern's name, a gibe at the source of his downfall – the Sophronia Steeplechase. Lysander himself is an ardent worshiper of Kurgess and delights in inventing new twists on Vigil's famed race for competition in Freedom Town.

**Nine Skulls:** Perhaps the most dangerous establishment in a very dangerous town, Nine Skulls results from an arrangement between **Tribute-Master Eryx** and **Tark Uldeth** (CN male orc cleric of Gorum 4) of the Empty Hand tribe. In exchange for Tark's assistance with the orcs, Eryx arranged for the disappearance of the owner of the formerly-named Nine Stones tavern. Renamed and redecorated, Nine Skulls is the center of the orc community and temple to one of two rival factions of Gorum in Freedom Town. Inside, furnishings include severed heads, orc graffiti, a giant sand pit, drums, and Tark's greatsword "Elf-Ripper" over the bar. Under the direction of house bard **Splinter** (CE male half-orc bard 3) the thunder of drums roars throughout the night while deadly fights take place in the Pit. Some losers become the latest décor.

**Fallen:** Three years ago, a quiet, unassuming warrior walked into town, hired a crew, and built the smallest of Freedom Town's three taverns - Fallen. Like many in town, **Stavros Galanis** (LN male ex-paladin 4/inquisitor of Iomedae 3) has a mysterious past and, in his case, it remains a secret. Stavros, a fallen paladin of Iomedae, established Fallen as a secret base for the Burners, a radical sect of Iomedae, most common in Kenabres near the Worldwound, but seeking converts and heretics in Lastwall.

**Stink's Inks:** Nestled in a rock chimney inside the old granite quarry, this tattoo parlor looks like it could drop onto the street during the next stiff wind. **Stink** (CN male human wizard (creator) 7), the grumpy, aging Varisian proprietor was the Sharpes Gang's creative genius, a mad inventor responsible for all manner of special tricks and tools. Stink considers the tattoos he designed to stand in as Vigil Shield-Marks to be one of his greatest creations.

**Lost Tomes & Forgotten Runes:** Deep inside the old Lastwall fort, **Menas** (CE male dhampir rogue 3), master of forgery and disguise for the Sharpes Gang runs the only bookstore in Freedom Town. Menas commands an extensive network of clients across northern Avistan who pay dearly for his knack to locate rare manuscripts or provide remarkable forgeries.

**Tip of the Spear:** For those that see battle as brutal melee won by the strongest, fastest, and most violent, Tip of the Spear may be the best fighting school in the region. **Captain Theron** (CN male human fighter 9), a frustrated former Lastwall soldier runs a no-nonsense school inspired by the Church of Gorum. Increasingly, Tip of the Spear has become a home for Lastwall deserters, particularly those that seek to take the fight to the orcs causing some trepidation in town among those that seek co-existence. A recent addition to the teaching staff is **Acacia Tantalo** (CG female human ranger 4), a spy for Lastwall. Keyron Saiville, Vigil's Precentor Martial for Scouting sent Acacia to Freedom Town to confirm growing concerns about nuisances harbored in the community.

## Encounters

**Hunters.** Keyron Saiville has word that Avinash, leader of the Catspaw Marauders, was recently seen in Freedom Town. The PCs must infiltrate Freedom Town, capture Avinash, and return to Vigil.

**Tribute.** Tribute-Master Eryx summons the town's new "heroes" to fetch an object for the commander of the Death's Head tribe or become tribute themselves.

**Whispers.** The Black Book, a lost Thassilonian relic is Menas's latest acquisition. The Church of Pharasma tasks the PCs to recover the tome before a cult seeking the return of Zutha, Runelord of Gluttony, or agents of the Whispering Way secure it from Menas. ?



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## Dear Ask a Shoanti



*We at the Center for Disease Control are looking to develop Avistan's Pandemic Preparedness Plan, and we understand you have considerable experience with population risk (having caused most of it yourself apparently). What advice do you have for us?*

*Sincere Regards,  
Epidemiologist of the Inner Sea  
Dear EPIS*

First, focus on mass buffs for Fort saves. The new antiplague alchemical item is handy, but pricey on a population basis. Instead, ensure you have adequate clerics and shamans with sufficient spell slots with *remove disease*. Finally, above all, keep your GMs away from the "Curse of the Crimson Throne" Adventure Path.

*Yours very truly,  
Ask a Shoanti*



# 4 WINDS FANTASY GAMING

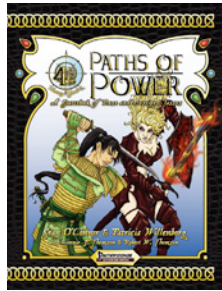
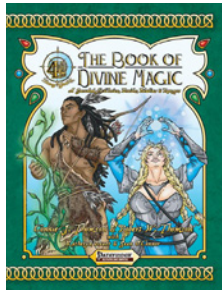
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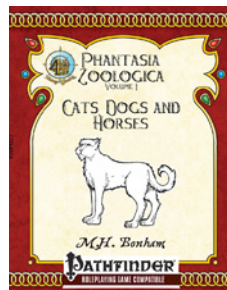
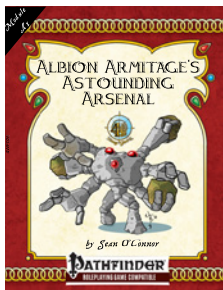
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## **COMING SOON:**

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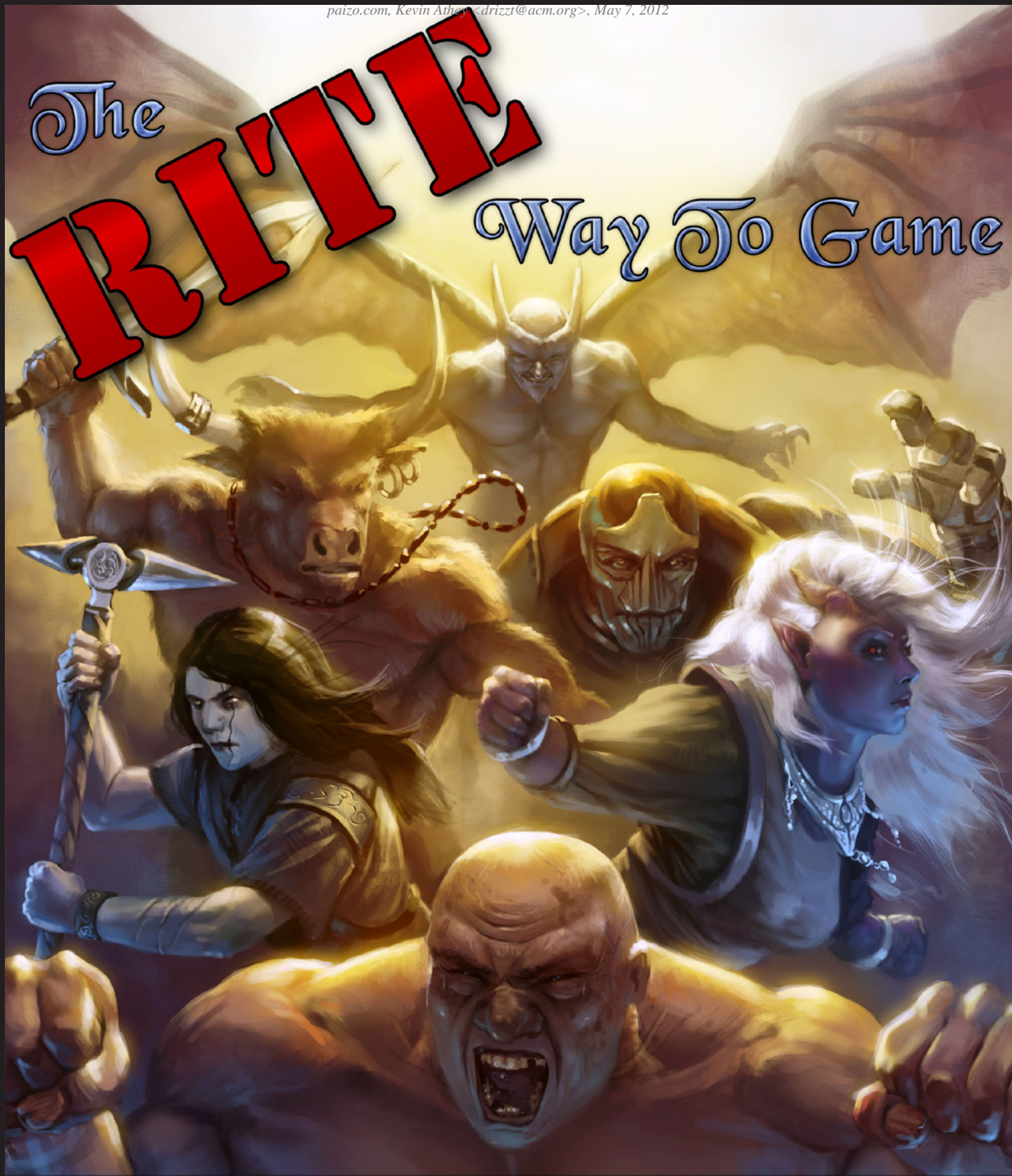
**Apothecary's Handbook (Pathfinder, August 2011)**

**CJ Ruby's Exploding Aces (original game system, August 2011)**

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# All in the Cards

## Character Generation with Harrow Cards

by Liz "Lilith" Courts  
Art by Carolina Eade

When the first Varisian laid out the first Harrow deck, they learned how to read secrets in its symbols. Able to pull the past, present, and future together for their subjects, the Varisians are renowned for their ability to prophesize, even in this Age of Lost Omens. A traditional Harrow reading relies heavily on the concept of the Three Faces—the past, present and future. Young Varisians receive a Harrowing on their seventh birthday, which speaks of their friends, family, and even of their enemies and rivals. For these youngsters, this Harrow reading can set them on paths never expected, and often determine what professions they choose to take up. In rare cases, Varisians offer this special reading for the children of non-Varisians as repayment for some great deed committed on their behalf. These rare readings are usually conducted as close to the child's seventh birthday as possible, or on some multiple of the number seven. Superstition holds that not following this long tradition can hold dire consequences for both the reader and their subject, opening doorways for ancient spirits best left resting.

This quick system will help you generate ability scores for your character, as well as his or her alignment and background. Through the course of this article, we will be introduced to Sadrika, a Varisian about to start her way in the world.

### Determine Your Ability Scores

First, shuffle your Harrow deck and draw a set number of cards. The number of cards you draw depends on the type of campaign that your GM is running. For a low fantasy game, draw 6 cards. For standard fantasy, draw 11, and for high fantasy, draw 16 cards. Epic fantasy games allow you to draw 22 cards. Set aside the remainder of the deck.

*Sadrika is destined for a high fantasy game, so we'll draw 16 cards for her.*

After you have drawn your cards, sort them by their suit (Book, Crown, Hammer, Key, Shield, and Star). Your character's base ability scores are all 10. For each card in a suit, you add 1 to its associated ability score. For example, drawing five Shield cards gives your character a Constitution of 15. Add her racial ability modifiers at this point.

*In her reading, Sadrika's player pulls one Hammer, two Keys, six Shields, six Books, and one Crown. This results in an ability score array of 11, 12, 16, 16, 10, and 11. Sadrika's player puts her +2 ability score bonus in Charisma, resulting in a Charisma of 14.*

### Determine Your Alignment

With the cards you've drawn, sort them on their law/chaos axis. The location of the suit symbol on the card determines its alignment. The left column represents lawful, the middle neutral, and the right column chaotic—sort them by this classification. The alignment with the most cards determines the first half of your character's alignment. If there is a two-way tie, you can select which one you'd like. In the case of a three-way tie, the character is neutral.

Repeat this process for the good/evil axis. The top row is good, the middle neutral, and the bottom row evil.

*With five lawful cards, five neutral cards, and six chaotic cards, Sadrika leans towards chaos. She has six good cards, four neutral cards, and six evil cards. We have a choice between evil or good. We'll select good, making Sadrika chaotic good.*

### The Three Faces of the Harrow

Shuffle the cards drawn earlier and lay three of them out, face up. The left card represents the subject's family; the middle card friends, mentors, patrons, and teachers; while the right card is enemies or rivals. While the Face cards often represent people, they can just as often represent situations that persist throughout the character's life.

If any of these are true matches (the card's alignment matches the character's own), she adds 2 to that card's corresponding ability score. If it is a partial match (the card's alignment matches either on the law/chaos or good/evil axis), she adds 1 to the ability score of that suit. If it is an opposite match (opposing on both the law/chaos and good/evil axes), she subtracts 2 from the card's corresponding ability score.

*The Three Faces Sadrika draws are the Hidden Truth, the Courtesan, and the Mountain Man. The Hidden Truth is a lawful good card, which is a partial match, granting her a +1 to her Intelligence. The Courtesan is chaotic neutral and is a partial match, giving a +1 to Charisma, and the Mountain Man is also chaotic neutral, which is a +1 bonus to Constitution. This changes Sadrika's ability scores to 11, 14, 17, 17, 10, and 12.*

### Interpreting the Cards

While it is easy to assign mechanical attributes to the cards pulled from a Harrow deck, it is much more fun to add flavor along the way.

*Sadrika has high Constitution and Intelligence, as well as an above-average Dexterity. What does this mean in the context of a character background? Sadrika was likely very physically active as a child, but more agile than strong (she probably got called "monkey" by the other kids). As she got older, she gained a love of books and learning, accounting for her high Intelligence.*

*Sadrika's Family card is the Hidden Truth. Since this card represents secrets, someone in Sadrika's immediate family holds a secret, either benign or terrible. Her Friend card is the Courtesan, indicating that someone close to her (perhaps even a fellow party member) loves political intrigue and sometimes pulls Sadrika into their machinations. Her Rival card is the Mountain Man—fitting, as Sadrika is not a physically strong person and often faces challenges related to this.*

For the Face cards, it is important to *not* strictly interpret the cards drawn. While drawing the Rakshasa card as a Rival could mean that a character might indeed have a rakshasa as an enemy, the Harrow more often relies on subtler interpretations of its symbols. It does take some practice on the GM's part to become fluent in the Harrow's symbols, but this comes with time. The Harrow article in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #7: Edge of Anarchy* presents a quick guide for reading the cards, while the booklet included with the Harrow Cards is fuller in detail. Characters created through this fashion may gain Harrowed as a bonus feat at the GM's discretion (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea World Guide*). The bonus granted by the Harrowed feat is doubled if the character pulls one of their Face cards.

### Sadrika the Harrowed

After her birthday Harrowing, Sadrika decides to take up the life of a wizard. Knowing that both intrigue and secrets will affect her life in some fashion, she has tattooed herself in the ancient runes and symbols of *carnasia*—enchantment. Collecting the verbal lore of many Varisian families and the small bit of information she has pried from



her grandmother, she knows that something lies within the city of Korvosa that has answers for her.

**SADRIKA THE HARROWED CR 1**

**XP 400**

Female half-elf enchanter (manipulator†) 2

CG Medium humanoid (elf, human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +2

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

**hp** 16 (2d6+6)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3 (+6 vs. enchantment effects)

**Immune** *sleep* effects

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** quarterstaff +1 (1d6)

**Ranged** light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +5)

6/day—*beguiling touch* (DC 14); 3/day—*daze* (DC 11)

**Enchanter Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd;

concentration +5)

1st—*charm person*<sup>E</sup> (DC 15), *hypnotism*<sup>E</sup> (DC 15),

*memory lapse*<sup>E†</sup> (DC 15), *sleep*<sup>E</sup> (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*,

*read magic*, *resistance*

**E** enchantment spell (CL 3rd); **Opposition**

**Schools** Conjuration, Necromancy.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 11, **Dex** 12, **Con** 17, **Int** 17, **Wis** 10, **Cha**

14

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Harrowed<sup>†</sup>, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus

(Spellcraft), Spell Focus (enchantment)

**Skills** Acrobatics +2, Appraise +3, Bluff +5, Climb +0,

Diplomacy +5, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +1, Heal

+0, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge

(geography) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Perception +2,

Ride +1, Sense Motive +0, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +1,

Survival +0, Swim +0

**Languages** Common, Varisiant†, Elven, Sylvan,

Thassilonian†

**SQ** arcane bond (raven named Zsuzsa), enchanting smile

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *potion of*

*endure elements*, *potion of mage armor* (3), *wand of*

*burning hands* (14 charges); **Other Gear** quarterstaff,

light crossbow with 20 bolts, scholar's outfit, mwk backpack

(common lantern, Harrow deck, 2 vials ink, 3 inkpens,

journal, magnifying glass, 2 pints oil), bedroll, spell

component pouch, 3 gp, 3 sp

**Spellbook** all above plus

1st—*color spray*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *unbreakable heart*†

0—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect poison*, *flare*,

*ghost sound*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *ray*

*of frost*

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Harrowed:** Once per day, Sadrika can draw from her Harrow deck and gain a +2 bonus on any d20 roll modified by that card's suit. This bonus must be assigned before the results of the roll are determined.

† *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea World Guide*;

‡ *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide*





# The Harrower's Song

by Kevin Andrew Murphy  
Art by Cris "Lestingraven" H.

**T**his song is sung by the Harrowers of Varisia as a mnemonic device to remember the Harrow cards in order, as well as provide clues to their proper interpretation. Many Harrowers also hum the tune as they lay the cards, both as an aid to focus and a way to put their client at ease for a reading.

**First Canto:** I visited a dwarven smith  
Down in a dwarven hall.  
He had nine hammers hanging there  
Upon his smithy wall.  
The first he'd named *The Paladin*  
For it was strong and true.  
The second hammer clept *The Keep*—  
Quite stout and doughty too.  
The third that hung suspended there,  
He called it *The Big Sky*  
For slaves who once cast off their chains  
And their exultant cry.  
The fourth most hammer was *The Forge*,  
For that's where it resides.  
The fifth most hammer was the *The Bear*,  
Haft wrapped in ursine hides.  
The sixth was named *The Uprising*  
And it was forged to beat  
The head of any foolish king  
Who treads on peasant feet.  
The seventh hammer was *The Fiend*  
For it would bite your hand.  
*The Beating* was the eighth of them  
For that's what it had planned.  
*The Cyclone* was the ninth of them,  
Destruction in its wake  
And woe to who stands in its path  
For few it cannot break.

**Second Canto:** I met a castle chamberlain.  
Her keyring had nine keys,  
And three were gold, and three were brass,  
And three caused great unease.  
The first seemed for a music box.  
She called this one *The Dance*.  
The second for a wind-up toy,  
*The Cricket* that could prance.  
*The Juggler* looked like it should fit  
Some castle in the air,  
A giant's key—dropped on your toe,  
That third would make you swear.  
The fourth she called *The Locksmith* and  
It fit a treasure vault.  
The fifth one, called *The Peacock*,  
Fit a vanity from Galt.  
The sixth she called *The Rabbit Prince*  
And it was clear to me  
That key, while not a weapon,  
Fit a royal armory.  
The seventh, called *The Avalanche*,

Unlocked unthinking doom.  
The eighth of them was called *The Crows*  
And fit a plundered tomb.  
*The Demon's Lantern* was the ninth,  
Engraved with a false map.  
Whatever door that key is for  
Conceals a fatal trap.

**Third Canto:** I came upon a set of graves  
Upon a battlefield.  
I did not know the dead knights' names  
But each one held a shield.  
The first one showed *The Trumpet*  
From a holy archon's hand.  
The second, *The Survivor*  
Of a lost embattled band.  
The third shield showed *The Desert*  
Where a traveler might stray  
Yet a sphinx could pose a riddle  
That might guide you on your way.  
*The Brass Dwarf* was the fourth of them,  
An azer of the fire.  
*The Teamster* was the fifth I saw.  
He yoked and whipped desire.  
The sixth shield showed *The Mountain Man*  
Of great and mighty thew,  
A dragonslaying giant  
With the dragon he just slew.  
The seventh showed *The Tangled Briar*  
Of painful history.  
The eighth shield showed *The Sickness*  
Of a maid in agony.  
The ninth shield had *The Waxworks*  
Where a victim dipped in wax  
By a vile and evil chandler  
Would be frozen in his tracks.

**Fourth Canto:** There was an ancient library  
All filled with empty nooks.  
I found a secret bookshelf  
And on it sat nine books.  
The first spine read *The Hidden Truth*.  
That volume was still locked.  
The second was *The Wanderer*.  
Its hero roamed well stocked.  
The third book's title was *The Joke*,  
And oh, it's very true,  
If you should fail to get that book  
I'd say the joke's on you!  
The fourth was *The Inquisitor*.  
With questions it was filled;  
The fifth, *The Foreign Trader*,  
With trade secrets for the skilled.  
The sixth book, called *The Vision*,  
I could not comprehend,  
Yet if I did, the preface said,  
I might go round the bend.  
The seventh, *The Rakshasa*,  
Told me how to keep a slave.  
The eighth book was *The Idiot*.  
Its foolishness was grave.  
The ninth book was *The Snakebite*



All penned with poisoned hate  
And wicked thoughts of strong appeal  
I'm sorry to relate.

**Fifth Canto:** I went to an astronomer  
Who wanders the bazaars.  
She let me use her telescope  
And pointed out nine stars.  
The first was a coatl's wink,  
*The Winged Serpent's* eye.

A twin star formed *The Midwife's* lips,  
"Goodnight" and "Lullaby."

The third was in *The Publican*  
And was his mug of beer  
That sailors call "The Compass Star"  
And pilots use to steer.

The fourth, in *The Queen Mother*,  
The formian queen's grape.  
The fifth was hidden in *The Owl*  
And was its needle's nape.

The sixth was in *The Carnival*,  
The lolly in the hand  
Of Fel, the frightened child who  
Is lost in Fairyland.

*The Eclipse* held the seventh star.  
It was a zombie's tooth.

The eighth was in *The Mute Hag's* mouth  
And was her Eye of Truth.

The ninth most star was in *The Lost*,  
The pommel of the blade  
Of the poor and pitied bodak  
Who pure evil has unmade.

**Sixth Canto:** There was a coronation,  
A new king to obey.

I did not know which crown he'd wear  
For nine were on display.

The first was called *The Empty Throne*  
And was his mother's crown.

The second was *The Theater*  
Of prophecy's renown.

The third crown was *The Unicorn*  
That offers up its pear,  
A gift of health and healing such as  
Noble rulers share.

The fourth was called *The Marriage*  
In which two are joined in one.

The fifth of them was named *The Twin*—  
The former now undone.

The sixth crown was *The Courtesan*  
Of use in court intrigue  
With courtiers and courtly things  
And niceties in league.

The seventh was *The Tyrant's* crown,  
A dragon's helm of fear.

The eighth crown, *The Betrayal*,  
Blood would once again besmear.

The ninth crown was *The Liar*,  
Band of insincerity,  
Bejeweled with harlots' promises  
And every falsity. ♪









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# Varisian Priests of Milani

by Jasper "Kajehase" Haglund  
Art by Jon Salazar

The church of Milani is not big in numbers, but its influence is felt throughout Avistan and Garund. As a region with close cultural ties to Chelax, one of the faith's centers of activity, Varisia is no exception. The organization of Milani's faithful is best described as so loose as to be non-existent; even veteran members of the church can find it hard to spot a fellow follower of the Everbloom who does not wish to be spotted. However, most priests dedicated to Milani try to keep a rose or some sort of depiction of one on their person or on the walls of their home. These are not shown off in a flamboyant way, but rather in a discreet manner designed not to draw the attention of someone who might be searching them out for less than benign reasons. Below are some of the Petals of the Everbloom (as Milani's followers are sometimes called) who can be found in Varisia.

**Bertoldo Elmo Alfinia** (CG human male cleric of Milani 7/rogue 4) is the most senior priest of Milani in Varisia—something few people visiting his derelict boathouse on Korvosa's Old Dock suspect. Beginning life as a street urchin, Bertoldo was inducted as a pickpocket into one of the city's lesser gangs at the tender age of six. At first, he had no problems with this kind of life. However, when Bertoldo was 15 years old, the gang's leader sold his younger sister to a Chelaxian smuggler. Bertoldo swore revenge, but he was lucky to escape the failed attempt with his life. He fled to Kaer Maga, where he encountered an old priest of Milani. The elder Petal of the Everbloom managed to channel his rage toward the broader target of oppressors everywhere. Today, 30 years later, he has traveled throughout much of Varisia, gaining a wide network of contacts with malcontents from the shadow of Magnimar's Irespan, to the slums of Riddleport and



even the pesh-smokers' dens of Korvosa. PCs who befriend Bertoldo may use him if they wish to get into contact with the people's hero of Korvosa – Blackjack – who is an old friend of Bertoldo's.

**Abhirati** (CN human female bard 4/diviner 3) is the seer of a band of Varisians traveling the routes between Korvosa and Riddleport. A staunch opponent of the Chelish "newcomers" to Varisia whom she sees as a threat to her people's way of life. She often comes into conflict with the Hellknights of Citadel Vraid, as their rigid views of lawful society have no place for nomadic travelers such as the Varisians. It was after one such encounter Abhirati began paying homage to Milani. The Hellknights were accusing two youngsters in Abhirati's caravan of horse theft. They were taking the whole group in for questioning when a band of escaped bond servants ambushed the black-armored lawmen as they and their prisoners passed through Sanos Forest. Abhirati came to speak with the spiritual leader of the group, a cleric of Milani, and found that the Everbloom's message of hope and devotion in the face of oppression struck a chord with her.

**The Sanos Forest Outlaws:** This band of merry men mostly consists of a group of former bond servants who hijacked a ship in the Chelaxian port of Kintargo and sailed north to Korvosa, where they discovered that the authorities were more interested in staying on good terms with the Imperial Majestrix than in helping out escaped near-slaves. The twenty-three men and women fled the city before they could be clapped in irons. With the help of Bertoldo Alfinia, they made their way to Sanos Forest where they have lived for the past six years. They make a living mostly by hunting, scavenging, trading with the gnomes of the area, and occasionally waylaying traveling representatives of Korvosa or the Hellknights in Citadel Vraid. They are led by the half-elf woman **Lirylina** (NG cleric of Milani 4), who harbors hopes of turning her small band of desperados into something bigger. Maybe even something large enough to bring down the regime in Korvosa or Magnimar and create a haven for escaped slaves and outcasts without the lawlessness that permeates Kaer Maga. She is encouraged in this by Ezojigh, a brijidine azata who possesses a wooden pool in a glade near the outlaws' encampment. ?

## Dear Ask a Shoanti

*We at the Society for the Morality of Inexcusable Innuendo in Gaming (SMIIG) are campaigning to remove a number of controversial items from the Pathfinder lexicon.*



*In particular, the "Swallow Whole" monster ability must finally go and the magic mouth spell must be banned. We believe we need to think harder about the message we send to young gamers about promiscuity. Also, "Versatile Performance." I mean, seriously, who were they kidding with that? May we publicize your endorsement?*

*Sincere Regards,  
SMIIG for Families  
Dear SMIIG*

I'll, ah, get back to you. But for now, I think you might want to take a deep breath as a standard action and put your klar back in the upright and locked position.

*Yours very truly,  
Ask a Shoanti*



# Items of Varisia: Enchanted Scarves

by Eric "Boxhead" Hindley  
Art by Carlos "Celurian" Torreblanca

In the eyes of most inhabitants of Golarion, scarves are the defining attribute of Varisia and its people. This is especially true among the Varisians themselves, whose *kapenia* scarves serve to denote both family and history. Many useful variations of scarves are well known throughout Golarion – notably the bladed, pocketed and reinforced scarves; but the most devout of Varisian adventurers will soon tire of the more mundane options and seek more unique choices.

The versatile scarf can easily serve in place of many existing items with a gentle twist, and intrigue jaded adventurers in these items. Such cosmetic “re-skinning” transforms a *belt of dexterity* into a *sash of dexterity*, a *cloak of resistance* becomes a *shawl of resistance*, or a *hat of disguise* appears as a *headscarf of disguise*. Similarly, a *+1 keen bladed scarf* ought to prove a more memorable weapon for a key NPC than, ho-hum, another magic longsword.

Yet sometimes even that won't be enough to please Varisian characters. Presented here are a few new magic scarves to flavor your next Varisian campaign.



Celurian

## SCARF, CONCEALING

**Aura** faint illusion; **CL** 4th

**Slot** shoulders; **Price** 3,500 gp; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

This scarf is a shimmering length of barely perceptible silk. It makes the wearer more difficult to notice, granting a +5 competence bonus on Stealth checks. In addition, once per day as a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, the scarf can be wrapped around the bearer's head. The translucent scarf subtly obscures the wearer's features and voice, granting a +5 competence bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks for 10 minutes, as well as on Perform (act) checks made to act in character.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *disguise self*, *invisibility*; **Cost** 1,750 gp

## SCARF, ENTANGLING

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 1st

**Slot** —; **Price** 1,800 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

A pattern of intertwining turquoise vines adorns this 6 foot long scarf. As a standard action, it can be thrown up to 15 feet, seeming to take on a life of its own mid-flight, wrapping about a target creature. The target must save (Reflex DC 12 negates) or gain the entangled condition. As a standard action, an entangled creature can attempt a new save to escape. This effect lasts 1 minute or until the creature escapes. Once an *entangling scarf* is no longer entangling a foe, it falls inert at the target's feet.

## CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *entangle* or *animate rope*; **Cost** 900 gp

## SCARF, ENTRANCING

**Aura** faint illusion; **CL** 3rd

**Slot** —; **Price** 12,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

This multi-hued silk scarf transforms an already seductive Varisian dance into an enrapturing spectacle. When handled by a character with at least 1 rank in Perform (dance), the bearer can take a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity to perform a distracting dance. This functions as *hypnotic pattern* (Will DC 13). The bearer can maintain the dance each round as a standard action, in place of the standard duration of the spell.

If used by a bard with Perform (dance), the bearer gains a +4 circumstance bonus to his effective bard level for his *fascinate* performance.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *hypnotic pattern*, Perform (dance) 1 rank; **Cost** 6,000 gp

## SCARF OF HOLDING

**Aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 2,200

gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

A common tool of Varisian smugglers, this pocketed scarf has small extra-dimensional spaces in its six pockets. Each functions as a miniature *bag of holding* with a capacity of 20 lbs. or 2 cubic feet. No matter how many items are placed in the scarf, it appears no bulkier and never weighs more than 4 lbs.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *secret chest*; **Cost** 1,100 gp

## SCARF, SHINGLEWALKER'S

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 5th

**Slot** —; **Price** 1,500 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

This long scarf sports a simple orange diamond pattern along its length. When a command word is spoken, it stretches to form a rigid surface 10 feet long by 1 foot wide, which can support up to 1,000 pounds. With a simple snap of the fingers (a swift action) it returns to its cloth-like state. In its rigid form, the scarf has a hardness of 5, 10 hp and a break DC of 13. The utilitarian nature of the scarf provides a +2 circumstance bonus in Chases (see *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: GameMastery Guide™*).

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects* or *animate rope*; **Cost** 750 gp



# Pride of Belkzen

by John C. "Valmax The Mad" Rock  
Art by Russell Akred

Deep in the Shuddermounds, a heavy spring rain soaked through cloth and armor alike. Cold, wet droplets wound their way down the spines of the assembled orcs of the Broken Fang tribe. The warband was camped in the open, beneath the dark grey sky and rolling thunder. Their banner, torn and ragged, fluttered weakly in the wet breeze. They had been traveling for weeks.

They had first sought an audience in Urglin, but Kurg Gutscar simply sent them away. Rejected, they roamed the Hold hoping to find members of the Broken Spine Clan, the Dead Eye Clan or even the Death's Head Tribe of mercenaries—anyone who had raided with them in the past and who might ally with them now. None of the other tribes wanted anything to do with the Fangs, despite being deep within the harsh land where Orcs ruled uncontested.

Something was *hunting* the Broken Fangs—picking off stragglers and scouts, yet leaving no trail or clue. The tribe had been harried for weeks and their frustration mounted with each loss.

The grey rain struggled to keep the baleful light at bay, but the sun was unrelenting in its battle for the heavens. King Nargash Bonebreaker's ear flicked in agitation. As the first rays of sunshine pushed through the rain, his agitation turned to rage. His lip curled back into an irate sneer, and his deep voice carried the fury of the dying storm.

"Nothing?" Nargash's eyes narrowed and his ears flattened like those of an angry dog.

Keeping his gaze low, not meeting his King's eyes, not giving Nargash any hint of challenge, the scout's voice was as soft as his guttural tongue would allow. "No trace, no track, no trail."

"Today, they send another Fang back to us with *this* around his neck!" Nargash up-ended the black leather tube and a piece of rolled parchment fell to the wet ground. Nargash's ears twitched, "I should kill you." His lip curled into a sneer. "You disappoint our mother with constant failure, Vrok."

The scout hung his head in shame.

"But your death would displease her more." Nargash shook his head and clenched his fists, "And she'd blame me for it."

Vrok opened his mouth to speak.

Nargash's ears folded back as he slammed his mailed fist into the scout's stomach. His strike knocked the wind out of Vrok, staggering him. Nargash swept the scout's legs out from under him and kicked Vrok in the ribs as savagely as he could. Nargash's hob-nailed boots dazed and bloodied the scout.

Nargash knelt beside his younger half-brother and pulled the scout's axe from his waist. Pressing the haft across the Vrok's throat, leaning down with enough pressure to make it difficult to breathe, he snarled, "Fail again, and I will risk our mother's wrath."

Nargash stood and dropped the axe to the muddy ground. "Get out of my sight." Nargash glanced down at the axe as the other orc slowly got to his feet, then his yellow eyes flicked up to stare into Vrok's.

"Someday, you will tire of your failures. You will blame me for your own shortcomings." Nargash lunged, picked up the axe, and threw with the same motion. The axe buried itself into the mud between the scout's feet. "Be sure your strike is true."

The sun broke out from behind the clouds, its harsh glare reflecting off the wet rocks and rainwater, "Send Halfbreed

to me." Nargash swept the rough hide flap aside and stepped into his tent, fleeing the searing daylight. "You can burn in the sun."

\*\*\*

Valen turned to Cyon. "What's going on?"

Cyon was sweeping the small, black spyglass over the orc encampment. Despite their distance, the elf kept his voice low, "One of their scouts just returned." Cyon handed the spyglass to Valen.

Valen looked just in time to see Nargash punch Vrok. "They're fighting."

Cyon rolled his eyes. "That's like saying, 'They're breathing.'"

Valen watched with a mixture of fascination and repulsion. "Yeah, but why?"

"Well, since I can read lips and I just happen to speak Orcish..."

Cyon snatched the spyglass from Valen and focused on the action in front of Nargash's tent. He pursed his lips a moment, then nodded.

"Hmm, the big ugly one was reciting *The Mariner and the Mermaid*—in Azlanti no less—and the little ugly one didn't like it." Cyon paused and looked at Valen with a wry grin. "I guess bards can't take criticism."

Valen frowned. "You're an ass."

Cyon shrugged and collapsed the two-section spyglass. He handed the tube back to Valen. "They're murdering, raping, pillaging cannibals—and you're lucky if that's the order you get. Does it matter what they're saying?"

Valen ignored Cyon. "The Lodge wants me to figure out what's going on."

"You're Pathfinder Society." Cyon rolled over onto his back just as the sun emerged from the clouds. He was soaked and chilled from the earlier rains. The sunlight offered little warmth, but its presence was comforting in the grey wastelands of Belkzen. "I'm just here to make sure we survive."

Cyon wanted nothing more than to be back in Absalom, or even Korvosa, somewhere civilized, clean, and *warm*. He closed his eyes, imagining Imarra's splendid company as they enjoyed the sweltering haze of smoke and laughter that was The Gelded Peacock. He sighed as he pictured the well-worn bar, his hand slapping coins down to buy a round for the house, the bar maids scurrying to serve everyone, the gleam in their eyes as coins flowed freely, and the coy smiles that hinted that gold often buys more than mead at the Peacock...

A cold breeze returned his thoughts to the present and Cyon sighed again, loudly. Their small, grassy hillock was the only place free of mud that had any vantage on the Broken Fang's camp. Still, it wasn't much higher than the surrounding plains.

Everywhere Cyon looked there was exposed rock, barren and cracked, or else there was mud—tired, beaten mud, shapeless and worn from centuries of battering by wind and rain. Their tiny clump was the only place where the yellowed grass even tried to grow, and it wasn't thriving.

"This place is depressing. No wonder they cook each other; there's nothing else."

"I suppose," Valen agreed absently. "But what's got them running from one end of the Hold to the other?"

Cyon pulled a small stone from under his back as he watched the sun reflect off wet rocks. Without looking at his companion, he tossed the stone into a nearby puddle. "It probably has something to do with that letter."

Valen turned away from observing the camp and focused his narrowed, blue eyes on Cyon.

"What letter?"



\*\*\*

Vrok led Halfbreed to Nargash’s tent. Iron shackles prevented her from taking a full stride, so her gait was hobbled and slow. Her hands were held low, fingers clasped around her chain so it wouldn’t rattle. The iron cuffs had worn fresh trails of blood into her wrists and ankles, but she’d become used to the pain. It was her constant companion, always there no matter how she moved, or what she did. And she knew that greater pain was always only a moment away. Pain from the lash, from the cudgel, pain from whatever torments the Fangs could dish out. The Hold of Belkzen was for Orcs, not half-breeds, and the Broken Fangs took great joy in reminding her of her status within the clan—she had none.

Vrok paused outside Nargash’s tent, and fixed his yellow eyes on hers. “Go.”

Halfbreed nodded, keeping her eyes focused on the mud beneath her bare toes.

Unlike the orcs, her eyes were the color of the clearing sky—bright and deep blue. Her long hair was knotted and snarled, filthy and lice-ridden, but it was the color of the sun, and far softer than the coarse black hair of most of the tribe. Her skin was olive, smooth and soft—and covered with too many bruises and scars to count. Her nose had been broken several times, but it still held a roughly aquiline shape. And while her teeth were decidedly sharper than any human’s, her lower canines barely stuck past her lips.

Vrok pulled the flap aside, and Halfbreed ducked into the tent. Nargash lunged for her the moment she entered. He threw her to the ground and drew his blade.

“Lie and die.”

He grabbed the chain between her wrists and pulled her to her feet. He dragged her to the crude table, and locked her chain to a large iron ring affixed to its center. He kicked her behind her knee, and as her leg collapsed he slammed her head into the table with his free hand.

Nose bloodied and knees now in the dirt, she was eye-level with the letter. A rock held each corner down, mud and water staining the parchment where Nargash had dropped it earlier. Nargash loomed over her, his blade resting upon her left shoulder.

“Who sent it? What do they want?”

Halfbreed’s hands shook as she reached out and carefully wiped mud off the letter, trying not to further smudge the writing. It was written in Common, but the script was ornate and flowing. Halfbreed found it quite beautiful.

She cleared her throat, but her voice was soft even as her tongue formed crude Orcish syllables. “They say they are The Black Banner. They say they are *‘the forsaken men of Vigil, and the forgotten sons of Koldukar.’* They claim that they are *‘coming for your blood.’* And they say that they *‘will visit upon you one-thousand times the terrors you have inflicted.’*”

She looked down at the rough dirt floor, and her sharp eyes spotted a large black beetle. She watched as it trundled its way across the broken terrain, as she watched she idly wondered if its home was nearby, if it had family, and what it was doing out here alone. She swallowed softly and folded her hands back in her lap.

“That’s all.”

Nargash pulled the blade off her shoulder and sheathed it.

“What do you know of this ‘Black Banner’?”

Halfbreed kept her eyes on the dirt. “Old wives’ tales, children’s stories from when I was a...” She trailed off, then took a deep breath. “They were a Thassilonian legion. They did something wrong, and Emperor Xin banished them. He cursed them to forever wander the empire until they had redeemed themselves. They’re still roaming



Varisia and the rest of the old empire, looking for a way to appease the emperor.”

Nargash’s ears twitched and he pounded his fist on the table.

“What the hell does that have to do with me?!”

Halfbreed shrank away from Nargash, as far as her chains would allow.

“There are rumors of a new Black Banner, led by a revenant named Xanthos the Unyielding—a fallen paladin of Vigil killed by orcs long ago. He’s craftier than normal, and burns for vengeance upon all orcs.” She swallowed again, her throat dry. “It’s said he recruits from the living and the dead to fill his ranks.”

Nargash lashed out, breaking the table’s leg with a kick, sending the rocks scattering. The letter curled itself back up and rolled onto the dirt.

Halfbreed cringed reflexively and waited for the next blow, but Nargash didn’t strike her. Instead, he tore the metal ring free of the table, and yanked Halfbreed to her feet.

“Ghost stories aren’t killing my men or chasing us. There’s something more to this.” He dragged her to the doorway, put his foot into the small of her back and booted her outside.



She collapsed into the muddy ground. Vrok took one step toward her, and then looked up just as the tent's flap opened. Nargash stepped out.

"Fetch water for the Fangs!"

Vrok grabbed the metal ring and dragged her to her feet. "Move!"

\* \* \*

Cyon snatched the spyglass from Valen. "Forget the letter."

"Why?"

Cyon shrugged. "It'll be easier to intercept those two orcs away from the camp—unless you'd rather sneak into an army of murderous and paranoid orcs?"

Valen pursed his lips, then nodded. "I suppose you're right."

Cyon grinned. "I always am." He handed the spyglass back to Valen to carry. "We'll shadow them from a distance."

Valen frowned. "This better lead somewhere."

"It will." Cyon slid down the hillock, and then set off toward the west. Valen sighed heavily and did the same.

\* \* \*

Outside of the camp, and beyond range of the sentries, Vrok dragged Halfbreed to a halt. He turned around to face her, his fetid breath hot on her cheeks, his yellow eyes boring into hers.

"Does he suspect?"

Halfbreed shook her head. "He only knows what I told him. He can't read."

Vrok slowly smiled, the tips of his long ears moving up towards the sky as he did so.

"Good." Vrok took a key from his belt pouch and knelt down. He reached for Halfbreed's shackles. "We won't need these anymore."

Cyon's dagger slammed into Vrok's neck, severing the spinal cord, even before he twisted the blade.

Vrok made a choking gurgle and then fell forward, dead before he hit the ground.

Halfbreed backpedaled away from Cyon, tripping as the chain between her ankles caught on a protruding grey rock. She slammed into the ground but her face was filled with rage, not fear.

"You'll ruin everything!"

Cyon narrowed his eyes. "That's gratitude."

Valen ran up beside him. "I told you to knock him out."

Cyon shrugged, wiping the dagger off on Vrok's shoulder. "So? He's out."

He stepped over Vrok's body and grabbed Halfbreed's ankle chain. "Move wrong and you die."

Valen pushed Cyon aside. "We're not doing that."

He placed his crossbow on the ground and found Vrok's key. He approached with his left hand up and open, palm towards her, the right hand holding the key.

"We're here to help, we'll free you. We just need to know what's going on." He took another step closer, carefully picking up her ankle chain with his left hand. "Okay?"

Cyon muttered something in Elvish, but Valen ignored it and set the key into the shackle's lock. Halfbreed ground her teeth and glared at Cyon, then slowly turned to Valen and nodded.

The heavy iron shackles fell away, and Valen reached for the ones around her wrists.

Cyon drew his dagger and moved around behind her. "Do I have to bother threatening you?"

Halfbreed shook her head and very steadily held out her wrists. Valen freed her, and stood up. She gasped as the

weight left her wrists. She held out her hand, and Valen pulled her to her feet.

Halfbreed took a deep breath, and let it out. She nodded slightly, with minimal deference.

"Thank you, I suppose, for freeing me." She could feel Cyon behind her, but she laughed anyway. "This wasn't the plan." She cocked her head, staring emptily past Valen's shoulder a moment. Returning her gaze to the half-elf, she appraised her would-be rescuer. "Why do you trespass in my Hold?"

Valen passed his waterskin to Halfbreed and waited as she took several gulps. Slowly, he met her blue eyes with his own. "I'm a Pathfinder seeking answers."

Cyon snorted, shaking his head.

Halfbreed cocked an eyebrow. "And so I should just tell you everything?"

Valen nodded. "Please?"

Halfbreed smiled without humor. "War. A dirty, private little one—waged by men who hate orcs, supported by the Consortium, directed by hidden hands in Vigil, and led by a revenant from the Shining Crusade." She laughed softly. "Even Grask Uldeth has a hand in this pie—as does the Crimson Throne and the Ustalavian Conte. Everyone who matters is playing my game—or being played by it." Her mirthless smile turned jovial. "Does that satisfy you, Little One?"

Valen blinked in surprise and glanced over the half-orc's shoulder, giving Cyon a questioning look.

Cyon shrugged and replied in Elvish, toying with his dagger. "Too complicated yet too tidy—and how would she know any of this?"

Halfbreed laughed, loudly, in a voice far deeper than should be possible. She faced Cyon, grabbing his wrist with incredible strength, and bringing her face close to his.

"I know all of this, *elf*, because I have been orchestrating it for years, plotting the demise of one small tribe after another, hunting and picking them off as I wished. The Black Banner exists because I built the myth. I created the army. I sent it to lurk in the shadows."

Cyon blanched slightly as the half-orc applied more pressure to his wrist, slowly forcing him to his knees. Valen moved to intercede, but hesitated. The dagger fell from Cyon's numb hand, his face showing the pain of impending broken bones.

Halfbreed released his arm, pushing Cyon onto his back with barely a hint of effort.

"My father, Kazavon, may have brushed with bolder strokes, but it's the same painting. In the end, it's all bloody sunsets and broken banners. I will show orcs and men the folly of trying to tame this land, or claim what is rightfully mine."

The half-orc smiled menacingly and straightened to her full height. She leaped into the air and a flash of azure flame engulfed her entire body. When it dissipated, a large and imposing blue dragon stood in the half-orc's place. She fixed her cerulean stare on Valen.

"Pass word to your meddlesome Society that what was once Kazavon's is now Aristavon's. I will tolerate no intrusion into my realm or obstruction of my agenda." With a single downbeat of her leathery wings, Aristavon launched into the clear sky and flew off towards the Kodar mountains. "Tell them that they've been warned."

Cyon rubbed his wrist and frowned. "I hate dragons."

Valen watched Aristavon's form diminish. "Why didn't she just kill us?"

Cyon laughed softly. "Pride. What good's the perfect plan if no one knows it's hers?" ?



# HEED THE CALL OF THE BEASTLANDS!

IT IS EVERYWHERE – TEEMING WITH LIFE AND DEATH. THE ANCIENT CALL OF THESE LANDS IS SO THICK AND PURE, IT SEEPS INTO YOUR MIND AND SOILS YOUR BODY LIKE A SECOND SWEAT. AT YOUR MOST VULNERABLE, ALONE OUT IN THE WILDS, IN THESE FERAL LANDS OF ANARCHY AND JUNGLE LAW, THAT’S WHEN YOU’LL SEE OR HEAR IT.

GLISTENING FANGS, DRIPPING WITH SALIVA THIRST FOR YOUR BLOOD, HUNGER TO GORGE ON YOUR FLESH. PERHAPS YOUR EARS WILL CATCH A THROATY BREATH, A LOW MOAN, SEARING HOWL, OR THE HORRIFIC ROAR OF THUNDER LIZARDS. WHATEVER IT IS, IT IS THE SIGNAL OF THE PURSUIT, AND IT’S YOUR PERSONAL CHALLENGE TO AVOID DEATH ON THIS DAY.

THE STRONG SURVIVE, THE INTELLIGENT PREVAIL, AND GOODNESS THRIVES IN THESE LANDS, BUT IT IS NOT WITHOUT DANGERS, BOTH MORTAL AND SUPERNAL. THE CALL ECHOES IN EACH OF US, MAKES OUR HEARTS BEAT FASTER, OUR FUR BRISTLE AND SCALES TINGLE. IT CAUSES US TO SEEK THE ANCIENT TRUTHS OR THE WISDOM OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

THIS IS NOT A DAY FOR ENLIGHTENMENT, HOWEVER. TODAY THERE WILL BE NO SEEKING OF ETERNAL TRUTHS, OR FOLLOWING PATHS WITHIN YOURSELF. TODAY, WE HUNT. REMEMBER, THOUGH, THIS IS NOT THE ‘HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS’ OF THE ANCIENTS. PERHAPS SOME DAY YOU SHALL HUNT THERE, BUT NOT TODAY... FOLLOW ME IF YOU WISH TO STAY ALIVE; AND STAY AWARE.

*-Maruk Todaksharee of Clan Tallowfeather, to an apprenticing hunter before a Great Hunt*



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# Bestiary

by "Tom Ladin" Phillips, Justin "Black Fang" Sluder, Ian "Set" Turner, and Mike "taig" Welham

Art by William Dodds, Danny Krog, Kate Nove, and Silvia Gonzalez



cross the lands of Belkzen, Ustalav, and Varisia range creatures both majestic and terrifying. Below are just a few of the many creatures one could encounter while traveling the lands.

## Basilim

*The ancient and weather-worn statue of a being of an age long past, and mostly forgotten, shuffles forward with malicious intent.*

BASILIM	CR 3
XP 800	
LE Medium construct	
<b>Init</b> +0; <b>Senses</b> blindsight 30 ft.; Perception +2	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 42 (4d10+20)	
<b>Fort</b> +1, <b>Ref</b> +1, <b>Will</b> +1	
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> construct traits, madness; <b>DR</b> 8/adamantine	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 20 ft.	



**Melee** 2 slams +7 (1d6+4)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Iron Will, Power Attack

**Skills** Intimidate +3, Perception +2

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary or garden (5-10)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Madness (Ex)** All basilim are somewhat unhinged. Unlike artificial constructs, they are not immune to mind-affecting effects. However, a basilim can continue making saving throws against a mind-affecting spell or effect each round until free of the effect. This drives the basilim deeper into madness, causing it to hallucinate or act in a bizarre fashion.

Whether by the gaze of a medusa, the bite of a cockatrice, or some other effect, a basilim was turned to stone. Unlike most victims of petrification, a basilim has reanimated itself through sheer force of will. Though it is both blind and deaf, it can feel its surroundings with a perfection it never knew in life. Most basilim take hundreds, if not thousands of years, to learn to move their new bodies. This process drives the creatures insane.

Unlike other constructs, such as golems, a basilim cannot be constructed on purpose.



## Blisterfoot

*This massive black-scaled lizard has a vicious gleam in its eyes, and flames well up from within the beast's mouth.*

BLISTERFOOT	CR 4
XP 1,200	
N Large magical beast (fire)	
<b>Init</b> +9; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +9	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 17, touch , flat-footed (+5 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)	
<b>hp</b> 37 (5d10+10)	
<b>Fort</b> +6, <b>Ref</b> +9, <b>Will</b> +2	
<b>Immune</b> fire; <b>Resist</b> cold 10	
<b>Weaknesses</b> vulnerability to cold	



**OFFENSE****Speed** 50 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** bite +10 (2d6+6 plus 1d6 fire plus grab)**Space** 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.**Special Attacks** breath weapon (30 ft. line, 3d6 fire, DC 14, once every 1d4 rounds), pounce, rake (2 claws, +9, 1d6+2)**STATISTICS****Str** 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** 15, **Int** 5, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 25 (27 vs. trip)**Feats** Improved Initiative, Run, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Acrobatics +13 (+25 jumping), Climb +16, Perception +9, Stealth +10 (+14 underground); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth (+8 underground)**Languages** Orc (cannot speak)**ECOLOGY****Environment** any underground**Organization** solitary, pair, or gang (3-8)**Treasure** none

Bred for war by the orcs of Blisterwall, these massive lizards often serve as mounts to war-chiefs of the Haskodar and One-Eye tribes. Though less intelligent than their orc masters, blisterfoots are far more intelligent than regular reptiles and are able to understand the language of their masters.

**Blood-drinkers of Varisia**

Varisian fireside tales are rife with stories of the undead. A people with a flair for the dramatic, Varisian parents use these chilling tales to teach their children valuable lessons about family, loyalty, and unity. Chief among these tales are those that focus on vampires, for few creatures invoke as much dread and superstitious awe as the lords of the night.

Presented below are three undead creatures who, like vampires, share a common desire: to feast on the blood of the living.

**Obours, Ustrels, and Varkolaks in Real Life:** The monsters presented in this article are all taken from Bulgarian vampire tales. Bulgarian legends regarding vampires vary greatly. The obour (also known as an ouber) was an invisible vampiric spirit that terrorized the living. The ustrel was an undead infant who had died before receiving baptism. The varkolak (or vorkolak) formed from the soul of an outlaw who died in the wilderness, and whose corpse was eaten by crows or wolves.

**Obour**

*A sudden, unnatural chill fills the air, yet no enemy can be seen. An overwhelming sense of malevolence and dread is the only clue to the entity's presence.*

**OBOUR****CR 5****XP 1,600**

LE Medium undead (incorporeal)





**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15  
**Aura** chilling aura (30 ft., 1d3 cold plus fatigued, DC 15)

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 45 (6d8+18)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal, natural invisibility;

**Immune** cold, undead traits

**Weakness** sunlight powerlessness

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 50 ft. (good)

**Melee** incorporeal bite +8 (1d4 plus blood drain)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** -, **Dex** 16, **Con** -, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Fly +16, Intimidate +12, Perception +15, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban or ruin

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blood Drain (Ex)** When an obour bites an opponent, it also drains blood, dealing 1d2 points of Constitution damage.

**Chilling Aura (Su)** An obour radiates a bone-chilling aura that saps the vitality of its victims. Each round, living creatures within 30 feet take 1d3 cold damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued for as long as they remain inside the aura's area of effect. The save is Charisma-based.

**Natural Invisibility (Ex)** This ability is constant—an obour remains invisible at all times, even when attacking. Since this ability is inherent, it is not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell. Against foes that cannot pinpoint it, an obour gains a +20 bonus on Stealth checks when moving, or +40 when standing still—these bonuses are not included in the statistics above.

**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** A obour caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

Obours are invisible vampire-spirits that terrorize communities and gorge themselves on the blood of living beings. Most obours are the remnants of evil humanoids who in life sought to emulate the feeding habits of vampires. This all-consuming thirst for blood remains when an obour returns from death. Obours are rather short-lived in their invisible, incorporeal form. After they rise from the grave, a vampire-spirit will haunt a community for 40 nights. After 40 nights, the obour returns to the soil where it regenerates its original physical form. The next night, its transformation complete, the creature rises from the grave as a true, free-willed vampire.

## Ustrel

*A moment ago this creature was a cooing human infant, but that was only an illusion. It has suddenly transformed into an abomination of rotting, filth-caked flesh, sharp claws, and a maw of jagged, shark-like teeth.*

## USTREL

## CR 4

**XP** 1,200

**CE** Tiny undead

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 39 (6d8+12)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2; **DR** 5/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weakness** sunlight powerlessness

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +10 (1d6 plus attach) and 2 claws +10 (1d2)

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

**Special Attacks** blood drain (1d4 Constitution)

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +8)

*At will* – *disguise self*, *ghost sound*, *open/close*, *spider climb*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 19, **Con** -, **Int** 6, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +2 (+10 grapple when attached); **CMD** 16

**Feats** Sow Terror, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Escape Artist +15, Perception +10, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +8 on Escape Artist, +8 Stealth

**Languages** Common (cannot speak)

**SQ** shadowless

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any urban

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** incidental

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Attach (Ex)** When an ustrel successfully bite an opponent, its jaws lock into place. An attached ustrel is effectively grappling its prey. The ustrel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC, and has an AC of 14, but holds on with great tenacity and greedily begins to drain blood from its victim. An ustrel has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached ustrel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself—if its prey manages to win a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the ustrel is removed.

**Blood Drain (Ex)** An ustrel can suck blood from a grappled opponent; if it establishes or maintains a pin, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The ustrel heals 5 hit points or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its full normal hit points) each round it drains blood.

**Shadowless (Ex)** An ustrel casts no shadow and shows no reflection in a mirror.

**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** An ustrel caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

If a stillborn child sired by a vampire is not burned or buried in consecrated ground, they sometimes return from the grave as an ustrel—an undead infant with a vampire's craving for blood. Though not particularly intelligent, ustrels are cunning and stealthy predators. They enjoy terrorizing in their victims, often stalking their prey for hours before finally feasting upon their blood. Ustrels haunt their



birth communities, preying on livestock, domestic animals, and the human inhabitants. Ustrels are especially driven to slay the living members of their family, though they are strangely protective of their human birth mothers. Powerless in sunlight, ustrels are compelled to return to the soil before sunrise each day.

**NEW MONSTER FEAT: SOW TERROR**

Beyond stealthy, you can use your skill at furtiveness to inspire dread in your foes.

**Prerequisite:** Stealthy.

**Benefit:** Anytime your Stealth check is 5 or more over your opponent's Perception check, you may sow terror as a standard action. You do so by scraping your nails slightly on a solid surface, causing a board to creak ever so lightly, or rapping on a window pane. The victim cannot detect the source of the sound, dismissing it as the wind or other mundane source, but the idea that something might be lurking nearby festers in the victim's subconscious. The victim must roll a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Charisma modifier) or become shaken for 1d4 rounds.

**Varkolak**

*Though obviously a humanoid, the feral, red-eyed creature rushes forward on all fours like a slaving beast. The creature's hairless, rotting flesh reeks of an open grave.*

<b>VARKOLAK</b>	<b>CR 4</b>
XP 1,200	
CE Medium undead	
<b>Init</b> +6; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., Scent; Perception +11	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 45 (6d8+18)	
<b>Fort</b> +5, <b>Ref</b> +6, <b>Will</b> +7	
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> channel resistance +2; <b>DR</b> 5/magic and silver; <b>Immune</b> undead traits; <b>Resist</b> cold 5, electricity 5	
<b>Weakness</b> sunlight powerlessness	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 50 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> bite +10 (1d8+5 plus trip)	
<b>Special Attacks</b> blood drain, dreadful howl (DC 15)	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
<b>Str</b> 21, <b>Dex</b> 14, <b>Con</b> -, <b>Int</b> 8, <b>Wis</b> 14, <b>Cha</b> 17	
<b>Base Atk</b> +4; <b>CMB</b> +9; <b>CMD</b> 21 (25 vs. trip)	
<b>Feats</b> Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (bite)	
<b>Skills</b> Intimidate +10, Perception +11, Stealth +9, Survival +10; <b>Racial Modifiers</b> +4 Survival	
<b>Languages</b> Shoanti (cannot speak)	
<b>ECOLOGY</b>	
<b>Environment</b> temperate forest, mountains, or plains (Shoanti lands)	
<b>Organization</b> solitary	
<b>Treasure</b> standard	
<b>SPECIAL ABILITIES</b>	
<b>Blood Drain (Ex)</b> A varkolak can suck blood from a grappled opponent; if the varkolak establishes or maintains a pin, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage.	
<b>Dreadful Howl (Su)</b> As a full-round action, a varkolak can emit a soul-haunting howl that can be heard up to a mile	

away, up to three times each day. Anyone hearing the howl must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage and become shaken for 1 hour. Creatures within 100 feet of the varkolak when it howls also become panicked for 1d6 rounds, and those within 30 feet also become paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Anyone who makes the saving throw is immune to that particular varkolak's howl for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** A varkolak caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

A creature of Shoanti legend, a varkolak sometimes forms when a Shoanti warrior dies alone in the wilderness after betraying his *quah* through murder or treachery. The disgraced and hateful varkolak transforms into a rotting, vaguely wolf-like beast with a craving for human blood. Varkolaks are bound to their place of death and can never move more than 1,000 feet from the spot on which they died. They continue to haunt this place each night, savagely attacking any living creature that wanders into its territory. Before sunrise each day, the varkolak burrows into the ground to hide from the light of the sun.



**Blood Golem**

*A humanoid form composed of blood shuffles along at an uncomfortably swift pace.*

<b>BLOOD GOLEM</b>	<b>CR 3</b>
XP 800	
N Small construct	
<b>Init</b> +2; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0	



**DEFENSE****AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, +1 size)**hp** 37 (5d10+10)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1**DR** 5/magic; **Immune** construct traits, magic**Weaknesses** vulnerable to piercing damage**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +8 (1d4+2)**Special Attacks** drown**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18 (26 vs. grapple)**Skills** Escape Artist +2 (+10 squeezing), Swim +9; **Racial****Modifiers** +8 Escape Artist when squeezing**SQ** blood bank, blood renewal**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary**Treasure** none**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Blood Bank (Ex)** Creatures dependent upon blood for survival can drink from a blood golem as a full-round action. This provokes an attack of opportunity. The drinker is healed 2 points of damage for each Hit Dice the drinker possesses, to a maximum of half the blood golem's hit points. Damage healed by drinking from a blood golem deals an equal amount of damage to the blood golem itself.

**Blood Renewal (Su)** A blood golem regains hit points at a rate of 4 hit points per hour.

**Drown (Ex)** If a blood golem hits with both slam attacks, it is treated as having the grab special ability. Once a blood golem successfully grapples a creature, it can attempt to force itself into the opponent's mouth and nose, drowning it in blood. If the blood golem successfully maintains the grapple for three consecutive rounds, it kills its target. Creatures that don't need to breathe are immune to this ability.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex)** Blood golems are immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spells resistance, with the exception of spells and spell-like abilities dealing piercing damage. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below. Casting *contagion* on a blood golem does not affect the creature, but it prevents creatures from gaining any benefit from the golem's blood bank ability for 24 hours.

*Remove disease* or *heal* cancels this effect.

Casting *control water* (to lower water) deals 2d6 points of damage to the blood golem. *Horrid wilting* instantly slays a blood golem.

Found in areas frequented by vampires, blood golems are little more than walking sacks of blood, just feed for other creatures dependant on blood. The vast majority of their form is composed of rich, red blood held within a thin, transparent membrane in the shape of an undefined halfling or gnome body.

**Construction**

Blood golems are composed almost entirely of the blood of a dozen medium sentient creatures.

**BLOOD GOLEM**

CL 7th; Price 10,000 gp

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *gentle repose*, *restoration*; **Skill** Heal DC 15; **Cost** 5,000 gp

**Marwor Swarm**

*A cloud of glowing cinders drifts lazily over the blasted plain. Abruptly, the cloud shifts direction, as if it has suddenly gained malicious intent.*

**MARWOR SWARM****CR 7****XP** 3,200

N Diminutive outsider (elemental, fire, native, swarm)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 20, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +4 size)

**hp** 76 (9d10 + 27)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits; **Immune** elemental traits, fire, weapon damage

**Weaknesses** cold**OFFENSE****Speed** 5 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)**Melee** swarm (2d6 plus burn and distraction)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** burn (2d6, DC 19), distraction (DC 17), embers on the wind

**STATISTICS****Str** 1, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 4, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** -; **CMD** -**Skills** Fly +26, Perception +16, Stealth +31; **Racial****Modifiers** Perception +4

**Feats** Ability Focus (burn), Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Stealth)

**ECOLOGY****Environment** any warm land



**Organization** solitary, pair, or coelcerth (3-6 swarms)

**Treasure** none

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Embers on the Wind (Ex)** Any attempt to disperse a marwor swarm with high winds works as normal. However, every other creature in the effect's range must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC 17) or take 2d6 points of fire damage.

Shoanti legends speak of a terrible fiery creature ravaging the Cinderlands shortly after Earthfall. Great warriors dispersed the creature to the winds, cutting off its link to the Plane of Fire, but the remnants of the creature survived as swarms of intelligent cinders, marwor swarms. An uncommon sight in the Cinderlands, a marwor swarm floats—typically hidden within emberclouds—along the dry lands without any apparent purpose. When the swarm nears civilization, it enters into a frenzy, seeking to set ablaze as many animals, homes, and people as it can before returning to its volcanic home. Marwor instinctively know their home provides natural protection from flammable humanoid enemies.

Some Shoanti elders fear the swarms will unite to recreate the ancient creature, which will then slaughter all those eking out their existence in the Cinderlands and blast the land into uninhabitability. Therefore, sightings of multiple marwor swarms, known collectively as a coelcerth, raise considerable alarm, rousing large hunting parties to disperse or drive off the creatures.

**Silt Drake**

*With but a ripple as warning, a serpent the size of a small dog leaps from the water and spews a caustic line melting all in its path.*

**SILT DRAKE CR 3**

**XP 800**  
N Small dragon (aquatic)  
**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

**DEFENSE**  
**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 34 (4d12+8)  
**Fort** +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5  
**Immune** paralysis, sleep

**OFFENSE**  
**Speed** 40 ft., swim 50 ft.  
**Melee** bite +7 (2d6+3 plus grab), 2 claws +7 (1d4+2)

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (40 ft. line, 4d6 acid, DC 16, once every 1d6 rounds)

**STATISTICS**  
**Str** 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10



**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5 (+9 grapple); **CMD** 18 (22 vs. trip)

**Feats** Ability Focus (breath weapon), Dodge

**Skills** Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana, nature) +6, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +12, Swim +16

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**SQ** amphibious

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any aquatic  
**Organization** solitary, pair  
**Treasure** standard

Not terribly common, silt drakes live in rivers and lakes known for thick layers of silt. One of the creature's favorite ways to kill is subduing its victims with a grapple and then spraying the unfortunate creature with its acid breath weapon.

**Skitterbird**

*Less a bird and more an insect, the creature swoops through the air with chitinous talons, clawing for prey.*

**SKITTERBIRD CR 3**

**XP 800**  
N Medium magical beast  
**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

**DEFENSE**  
**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +2 natural)  
**hp** 26 (4d10+4)  
**Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

**OFFENSE**  
**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)  
**Melee** bite +8 (1d6+1), 2 talons +8 (1d6+1 plus grab/19-20)

**STATISTICS**  
**Str** 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 5  
**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5 (+9 grapple); **CMD** 19  
**Feats** Flyby Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

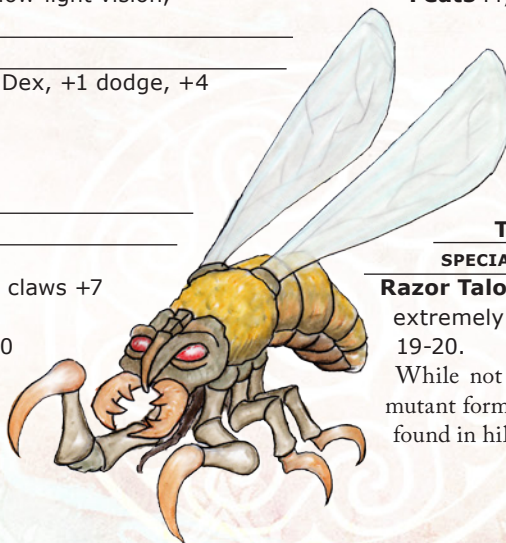
**Skills** Fly +12, Perception +10, Stealth +8  
**SQ** razor talons

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any hills  
**Organization** solitary, pair, flock (5-12), or storm (20-100)  
**Treasure** incidental

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Razor Talons (Ex)** The talons of a skitterbird are extremely sharp, threatening a critical hit on a roll of 19-20. While not immediately obvious, skitterbirds are actually a mutant form of ankhegs. These creatures are most commonly found in hills near where ankhegs frequent.





## Witchlight

*This finch-sized blue-skinned humanoid floats in the air, fluttering strips of sheer white linen somehow serving it as wings. It clutches a glowing shard of sharp-edged rock crystal, crackling with white light, making the fey itself hard to see. Its laughter fills your mind...*

**WITCHLIGHT** **CR 1/2**

**XP 200**

**CG** Diminutive fey

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

**DEFENSE**

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

**hp** 3 (1d6)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **DR** 5/cold iron; **Immune** electricity; **Resistance** sonic 10

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

**Melee** rapier +8 (1d2-4 plus 1d6 electricity/18-20)

**Ranged** lightning arc +8 touch (1d3 electricity + *faerie fire* for 3 rounds, 30 ft. range)

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

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 1st; concentration +2)

At will—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 11), *flare* (DC 11), *know direction*, *ghost sound* (DC 11), *lullaby* (DC 11)

1/day—*shocking grasp*

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 2, **Dex** 19, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -8; **CMD** 6

**Feats** Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Fly +20, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +6, Stealth +20; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Fly, +2 Perception

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** cold plains or hills

**Organization** solitary, dance (3-6) or constellation (5-20)

**Treasure** incidental (diminutive rapier, other treasure)

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Empathy (Su)** Witchlights have blindsense, sensing the presence of living beings within 60 ft. Those in the grip of strong emotions, such as fear or rage, can be detected at twice this range, but those in a dreamless sleep, or unconscious, or able to suppress their emotions (Will save, DC 15, if the individual thinks of doing so), cannot be detected by this ability. Powerful negative emotions strike them like a blow, and someone succumbing to the effects of a *confusion* spell, fear effect, or entering a rage, acts like a *daze* spell (Will DC 15) on a witchlight within 30 ft. A witchlight can empathically communicate simple emotions with anyone within 60 ft. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

**Stormchaser (Su)** Witchlights fly into the skies on stormy nights, often being struck by bolts of



lightning among the clouds. The tiny blades of iron or crystal they carry become charged, allowing them to use them to strike with a potent electrical jolt, as if the miniscule weapon had the *shock* property, for the next 30 days. During that time, the blade glows with candle intensity light, and can be used to hurl tiny arcs of lightning at range, or to fuel its *shocking grasp* spell-like ability. If a witchlight loses its blade, it cannot use its lightning arc or *shocking grasp* abilities, and any substitute blade it finds does not have the *shock* property until it can fly into a storm and properly charge it.

Witchlights are kindly fey that are sensitive to those in distress, seeking to offer aid and comfort, and most commonly being found in dank marshes, forbidding forests, or treacherous mountain passes or Ustalav, where they often lead lost travelers to safer grounds, basking in the warmth of their gratitude.

Sadly, their empathic nature makes them susceptible to violent or tormented emotions, and if a traveler being led comes to harm, the trauma of the event can traumatize the creature. Tainted by such an experience, some develop a taste for suffering and terror, becoming as evil as they once were good. These tainted witchlights are called corpse candles, and appear little different than any other, although they are typically crueler in appearance, and someone familiar with witchlights might recognize the sinister timbre of their emotional communications (Knowledge – nature, DC 20). Such twisted fey gain their emotional nourishment by leading the unwary into dangerous situations, such as quicksand, traps or the territories of dangerous predators, feeding off of despair, pain and fear, the same way that untainted witchlights derive sustenance from feelings of joy, fellowship and gratitude.

Witchlights and corpse candles recognize each other immediately when within empathic range of one another, and corpse candles often torment their untainted kin, chasing and taunting them, until the witchlights turn and fight, or succumb to despair. Some witchlights are slain by their cruel cousins, others are so traumatized that they too fall into wickedness, and become corpse candles themselves.. ?



# Crisis of Faith

by Paris Crenshaw  
Art by Glenn Zimmerman

Ceindra waited in the shadows next to a coffee house whose owner had extinguished the lights at least an hour before. The smell of the roasted beans still permeated the air, mingling with the light scent of rain on cobbled stone streets. She cast her gaze across a small plaza to the edifice of Saint Maleah's Church.

The cathedral rose into the night like a shining gemstone above darkened streets. With its gleaming statues, bright stained-glass windows, and delicate spires, the building was a work of art. Even the falling rain could not dim the beauty of a temple dedicated to Shelyn, especially when it was the only temple in all of Varisia dedicated solely to the worship of The Eternal Rose.

Huddled against the chill damp of spring, Ceindra marveled at its beauty, just as she had when she first set eyes upon it. She recalled the many stories Magnimar's residents told about its construction, which took far less time than most buildings of its size. Some speculated, or claimed to know, that wizards had been hired to complete the project so quickly. One imaginative fellow even proposed that it had been the work of genie-binders from mysterious Katapesh, though he could not say that he had ever seen such potent magic in use. Whatever the builders' methods, the cathedral had sprung up like a flower adorning Magnimar's Naos district. Businesses had sprouted around it to bask in and profit from the light that attracted visitors from all over Varisia to it.

Ceindra shook her head to break her reverie then peered into the darkness that surrounded the plaza to make sure she wasn't being watched. She knew better than to let such memories distract her. Reassured, she crossed the plaza to the entrance of the church.

The door opened easily, and Shelyn's house of worship welcomed her, even at that late hour. Slipping through the narthex, Ceindra stepped into the wide aisle that bisected the nave. Shadowed by night's embrace, the church's central chamber still glinted with gold and silver reflected off the mirror-smooth surfaces of white and rose-colored marble. High above, images of men and women of unearthly beauty mingled with sublime depictions of nature. In the center, a ring of twelve golden birds encircled a rose painted with such luminous colors that it glowed softly in the night.

"The hour is late, Ceindra," said Bishop Osmon, drawing her attention as he stepped from a door on the left side of the public altar. The bishop's voice was smooth and silky, but edged with a hint of irritation as he looked at the half-elf standing in the middle of his church. "It is unusual to carry weapons within a temple of Shelyn, isn't it?" The bishop motioned with his hand to the glaive at Ceindra's side.

"Yes, Excellency. It is."

"So, I'm not going to like the results of your investigation." The bishop smirked. "I knew you were talented. I should have sent a better assassin." Bishop Osman stepped toward Ceindra. There were deep lines on his face and dark circles beneath his eyes.

"I forgave you that, Excellency. I thought you unwell or confused. It wasn't until our own clerics attacked me that I came to suspect that it wasn't Bishop Osman I forgave."

The bishop's eyes widened, just slightly, and a wry smile spread slowly over his lips. "Tell me, inquisitor. What is it you think you know? I'm a busy man. Even at this late hour the burdens of my office are unrelenting."

The bishop's arrogance surprised Ceindra. She had expected him to deny the charge. She hesitated for just a moment, but it was too late to second guess herself.

"I began my investigation expecting only to find you guilty of heresy. Your interpretation of the goddess's teachings has warped and confused this congregation and made a mockery of the principles we all hold dear," Ceindra gestured to the church around her as though she could summon the spirit of the congregation. "You have encouraged people to worship the gold and jeweled creations within this church, rather than the Shelyn herself. Instead of appreciating the joy and love within the act of creation, you have set them on the path to covetousness and iniquity."

She paused, waiting for the bishop to consider her words. He merely gazed at her with the same thin-lipped, mocking smile.

"After they ambushed me in the Bridgeward, those misguided clerics shared some interesting facts with me. They said you fell ill a year ago, just as Saint Maleah's neared completion and shortly after you were chosen to administer it." Ceindra began to walk down the aisle, closing the distance between them as she continued. "It was only after recovering from this illness that you began espousing your *altered* view of Shelyn's message for her faithful. Many noted the change in your sermons, but few suspected that the change was so complete."

Ceindra stopped between the front-most pews, and fixed him with a baleful glare.

"You are *not* Bishop Osman. You are a doppelganger. You did something to the bishop while he was sick, stole his form for your own selfish ends. Now, I will stop you. Your errant teachings cannot be allowed to undermine the truth of Shelyn's words."

The inquisitor's verdict hung in the air. She waited for the false bishop to make a move. She did not expect his rumbling laughter, which welled up in him before exploding into the vast openness of the cathedral.

"Oh, you *are* good, Ceindra. That little bout of fever didn't last more than a few days, but that is indeed when I arrived. To look back more than a year and deduce the moment at which I 'turned to evil'—that is impressive. There's only one, glaring problem with your theory: I am most certainly *not* a doppelganger."

The bishop stepped forward, and the soft light in the cathedral cast strange shadows over his face. Ceindra didn't immediately realize that the darkness spreading onto his cheeks and outward from his mouth were actually signs of some change in the man, but then his eyes became black and empty, and his mouth collapsed inward. When he next spoke, his hideously transformed voice echoed not in the cathedral, but in Ceindra's mind. "My turn to investigate, inquisitor."

Whatever the thing was, Ceindra could feel its presence in her mind. It groped about, touching her thoughts the way a lecherous old man touched a dockside barmaid. She fought against the intrusion, but it was too strong.

"Aaah," it said, finally. "There's the young girl! I knew I would find her." The voice laughed insidiously. "Oh, ho ho! This explains so much!"

Old, long-buried memories awakened within Ceindra. Images flew before her inner vision and with them came emotions she could not control. Ceindra recognized the mental attack for what it was and charged the bishop, sweeping her glaive before her in an arc, swift and graceful, beautiful and deadly in its sudden power. Mastery of this weapon was her art, her show of devotion to Shelyn.

The bishop-creature reacted with a sweep of its hand, as though swatting at a fly. Still paces away, Ceindra felt a crushing blow to her chest, as she flew backward and



slammed into a massive support column. The air left her lungs in a sudden rush. She collapsed to the ground, desperately trying to breathe.

“Poor child. You have no idea what you face. All those years of training, and yet you know nothing of our kind. But you will. One day, all mortals will know us and our masters. And then, you will know nothing more.”

Ceindra gasped as her spasming lungs finally let her draw breath. She clawed at the marble floor, pulling herself around to the other side of the pillar and dragging her glaive to her. She stood, leaning heavily against the pillar. On her feet and oriented, she sprinted across the nave, seeking a place where she could be safe long enough to regroup.

Her world erupted into a flurry of small statues, candles, and hymnals. Anything not attached to the walls or floors flew at her in a vicious storm, battering her from all sides while the voice in her head cackled gleefully. She skidded to a halt in the shadow of another pillar.

“Ceeindraaaa.” With the voice came something else. From some black well deep within her, feelings of doubt bubbled upward. Those old, hateful images again hovered before her mind’s eye. Her will faltered, and she collapsed. Her glaive clattered to the floor.

“So much effort expended trying to prove yourself. Why? You must realize you can never be their equal. Never truly worthy of her. Their words are sweet and inviting, but don’t you see the truth behind them? They can’t really love you, can they, Ceindra? Not after what happened.”

Ceindra wanted to argue. She wanted to shout out against the voice and scream her denial so that all of Magnimar would hear. But her despair muted her voice. She could hear the creature’s footsteps. They had become a hideous scraping over the marble floor. Its words reverberated in her head, leaving no room for other thoughts.

She could feel it touching her mind, causing memories of her youth to erupt like ulcers. She saw the orphanage in Almas. She saw the children’s faces twisted in mocking laughter. She heard their words in her ears, those hateful names they called her. Sorrow and regret filled her as she remembered what had happened when she had finally unleashed her rage upon them.

“Did the priests take you in just to do their dirty work? Train the fighting dog to hunt and kill so they don’t have to? Better to worship outward beauty and seek pleasure there. Why not take up your mother’s profession? Wouldn’t that be so much easier than wasting your life trying to find purity amidst all this putrescence?”

The chamber echoed with the sound of shattering stone and glass as the creature moved about, casually knocking works of art from their pedestals.

“Love is an illusion, Ceindra,” the voice rang in her mind and she could not silence it, “A goddess may talk of love, but for mortals there is no hope. For your kind, love will always be tainted... flawed by your own weaknesses. Your mother’s ‘friends’ weren’t interested in love, were they? You are your mother’s daughter. Why fool yourself with hopes of something you can never attain?”

A new wave of emotions washed over her: shame, regret, horror, hopelessness, and the self-loathing she had long held at bay. Her faith faltered as that spark of doubt grew into a raging flame threatening to burn her soul. She looked up into the shadowed dome of the cathedral. She closed her eyes and tried to block out the horror, to imagine she was in a safe place. She had used the technique many times as a child. A sob escaped her lips and she opened her eyes again to gaze at the ceiling. Through the tears, she caught the glint of light on a gilded statue high above. Had it moved?

Then she heard them— words that were neither her

own, nor those of the creature. The feminine voice was soft, clear and beautiful. Its warmth filled her completely, as did the message it delivered. “I am here,” the voice echoed in her soul, “And you *are* loved.” It was as though a girder of iron had been erected around her heart, strengthening it, and protecting it, making it unbreakable.

The thing recoiled from her mind, driven out by a far stronger presence. While it raved and cursed the name of Shelyn, Ceindra gathered her holy symbol to her and intoned a prayer, thanking the goddess and entreating her for further aid. When she stepped from behind the pillar, glaive in hand, an aura of holy protection surrounded her, her mind and body both strengthened by the power of Shelyn’s pure love.





What had once been the bishop stood in the center of the church, transformed into a misshapen humanoid figure with limbs too long and empty pits where its eyes and mouth should have been.

"Whatever you are," Ceindra said, "it's time for you to leave." She charged forward.

With a wave of its hand, the creature sent another hail of debris at her.

Ceindra spun her glaive, deflecting the barrage. The weapon glowed, imbued with the power to harm otherworldly beings. Be it demon, devil or something worse, it would feel the sting of her blade even more profoundly. The creature hissed and spat at her. At the last moment Ceindra spun, bringing her glaive around and down in a glittering arc.

The creature caught the heavy blow with a clawed hand, but halting such force cost it two of its fingers. Ceindra cut short its howl of pain with a boot to the chest that sent it flying backward toward the altar.

Climbing back to its feet, the thing spared a backward glance.

Despite its misshapen features, Ceindra could sense the creature's fear. In that instant, Ceindra's weeks in Magnimar came into crystal focus. Details snapped into place, forming a picture that had always been there, but was only now complete. In all those many weeks, she had never seen the bishop enter the high altar. As the highest ranking cleric in the region, he should have visited the place frequently to commune with Shelyn. Instead, he had avoided it. Only now did Ceindra understand the reason. Action followed understanding with blinding speed.

She charged the creature again. Shards of black energy shot from his fingertips, but the power of her faith scattered them. When her blade came down, it cut deeply into his chest. Black, clotted blood erupted from the wound, sending a stench of decay to wash over Ceindra. She fought the urge to wretch and pressed her attack, driving the creature closer to the altar.

"You cannot stop me, inquisitor," the thing shrieked. She heard it both in her mind and in her ears. "Hope *will* die. And when hope is dead, the end will come for you all!"

Ceindra's breath was controlled, her focus on defeating her enemy too intense to reply. But as she guided her weapon in a dance of spectacular beauty, rivalling any painting or fresco in the cathedral, she thought the words, knowing that the creature would hear them.

"Hope will *not* die. You cannot—will not—pervert Shelyn's message. Where we create beauty, you will find love *and* hope. We will fight you. *I* will fight you. I am my mother's daughter, but I am *not* that girl, not anymore. I know where I have been, and I know what I can become. As for you, you...are...**NOTHING!**"

With her final words, she spun again, channeling all of her strength into the blunt end of her glaive as she drove it into the bishop's chest where his heart should have been. The force of the blow knocked him into the partition that separated the public altar from the high altar. The gold and silver gate gave way under the impact. Both it and the creature careened into the white crystal altar bearing the image of a beautiful songbird, Shelyn's holy symbol.

The creature shrieked. The holy symbol on the altar pulsed with light, accompanied by an audible *whump* that cast out all other sound.

For a moment, Ceindra could see nothing but a dazzling display of color. When her vision returned, Bishop Osman was laid out on the metal gate, still propped against Shelyn's altar. His face had returned to normal. His torn robes were stained a deep crimson. A line of dark blood trickled from the corner of his mouth. He gave sputtering cough that wracked his body and sent a spray of blood into the air.

## Dear Ask a Shoanti



*My friends and I have been analyzing the playtest material for the new "Ultimate Magic" rulebook and giving thought as to how we can best integrate it into our game. What do you think of the new Words of Power?*

*Sincere Regards,  
Avid Playtester*

### Dear Avid

"Earthbreaker", "klar", "Shoanti" and "crit!" are my favorite words of power so far. When I'm in a really tough spot I find "^\#%!" works pretty well too.

*Yours very truly,  
Ask a Shoanti*

Ceindra rushed to the bishop's side. She sang the prayer of healing and placed her glowing hands upon his chest. Dimly she was aware of doors opening and the sounds of running feet, followed by angry challenges. Ignoring them, she poured all the divine power she could muster into the bishop, hoping it would be enough. She could sense his wounds closing, but his deepest injuries were not those she had inflicted with her glaive.

Bishop Osman stirred, barely conscious. He raised a hand, waving it weakly to calm the priests who were gathering at the entrance to the high altar. He turned his unfocused gaze toward Ceindra. When he spoke, he rasped, as though his vocal chords had suffered terrible damage.

"Ceindra, my child," he whispered, "I am so sorry. I could not stop the thing inside me from hurting you. You saved me. Your patience and love saved us both."

Ceindra hushed the bishop, but he shook his head.

"That thing," he said, "...that daemon. It mocked me...told me things. It called itself Tychiavallo...'The Empty Light.' It must be opposed, Ceindra. It must." The bishop's words devolved into a fit of coughing.

At this, a few senior priests rushed in to help and Ceindra stepped back to let them. She whispered one last prayer for Shelyn to intervene on the bishop's behalf. The bishop needed rest. So did she. The immediate threat had ended. Soon Shelyn's churches in Varisia would recover and her teachings, her *true message*, would reach the masses. Hope was still alive.

As Ceindra stepped out of the cathedral, into the warming light of dawn, she vowed, both to herself and to her goddess, that she would do everything in her power to keep it that way. ?



# Encountering the Carnival

by Jeff "Jeff de Luna" Erwin  
Art by Ashton "N'wah" Sperry

*Come one, come all! Infinite wonders & terrible delights await in the Carnival!*

**G**olarion is a dangerous place, and the travels of entertainers across its wilderness and rural regions will frequently attract unwanted attention. The more widely-ranging circuses often contain a few competent spell-casters and combatants mixed into their repertoire of performers and roadies.

Nonetheless, Golarion is also rife with strange things, unusual people, and powerful magic. For the ordinary humanoid, the travelling circus is a window into a world of danger and mystery that they ordinarily avoid.

## Varisian Carnivals

The word carnival is associated with the Varisian term for enchantment magics: *carnasia*, which carries senses of lust, desire, and voluptuousness.

Some scholars connect the travelling carnivals of Varisia and northern Avistan with ancient Thassilon. It is believed that the tradition originated within the realm of Eurythnia and served as a spectacle of enthralling magics, rare pleasures, and enchanting music.

Traditional Varisian carnivals, however, eschew any home turf and tend to be small, humble affairs, featuring dancing, knife-throwing, beast tamers, magical goods, music, and acrobatics.

Successful Varisian circuses often include a few outsiders or adopted family, who could be from almost any background.

## Troupes of Note

*The Arcadée Mermaid:* This craft plies the Inner Sea, hewing to the coasts of Chelifax, Andoran, Taldor, Absalom, Qadira, and Osirion. A fabulous menagerie is paired with the rope-dancers of its nimble crew when entertaining at ports and sometimes ships at sea.

*The Shadow Circus of Nidal:* A shadow-puppet play of tragic betrayals and decadence is the centerpiece of this dark-clad troupe, one of the few hailing from grim Nidal.

*The Seven Stepsisters:* An all-female troupe, more familiarly known as the Ballancori Family, makes its ways through all Avistan. All the sisters are adopted by each other and share a secret language.

*The Half-High Carnival:* Gnomes, halflings, and few unusual creatures notably smaller than humans make up this large company, which travels through rural regions of central Avistan.

## The Gods and the Faire

Gods and demons who are frequently venerated by carnies folk include Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Desna, Lamashtu, Norgorber, Kurgess, Sivanah, and Socothbenoth. Sivanah, as mistress of illusion, and Kurgess, as patron of strength and athleticism, are more common amongst entertainers than amongst the peasants and city folk they gain a living from.

## The Tour

While possibly linked to specific religious festivals in ancient Thassilon, the Carnival now profits from visiting communities during their customary celebrations. Carnivals generally move every day or two, with entertainment every day except

Sundays. The performances are in the evening and lit by magic lanterns.

Standard admission to the main performance is 4 sp to the pit, 8 sp to the stalls, and 16 sp to a box. Impromptu shows, fairground attractions, and very small carnivals generally charge around 5 cp. Children half price.

As a rule of thumb, a carnival can expect to take in about 10% of a settlement's population in copper pieces each night. Thus a village of 500 souls would provide about 5 sp a night, whereas a city of 10,000 would provide 10 gp. Troupes have expenses of about 2 sp a head per week on a normal basis in salaries, consumables, and other costs.

During the winter months (Kuthona to Calistril), Circuses and Carnivals with sufficient resources often remain in a single large city, usually in the warmer parts of Avistan. Smaller Carnivals continue travelling, though they tend to the less harsh regions within their rounds.

## Mythologies

Carnivals can be old indeed. As travelers within a small subculture, Carnies find they survive best by gleaning out practical truths and rumors about the lands and peoples they encounter.

Occult and ancient symbolism and trappings are used by many Carnivals to add to their mystique. A few may in fact retain rituals, beliefs, or customs from the distant past, though in the main, these are generally garnishments to attract the superstitious, the curious, and the ignorant.

## Heroic Carnies and Showmen

A travelling sideshow or faire is one of the more fitting ways to incorporate strange and monstrous PCs into a campaign, and makes for a different take on the itinerant life of the adventurer. Extreme abilities and exotic origins are all appropriate, with carnies often being highly attractive or hideous.

NPCs will often be suspicious or hostile to carnies characters who have left the bounds of the Faire, and assume they are involved in criminal behavior.

Most Carnival characters are bards, rogues, sorcerers, summoners, or witches, since these classes are singularly effective as performers. However, non-standard characters could be justified: an animal tamer could be a ranger or a druid, a fortune-teller could be an oracle, a snake-oil salesman could be an alchemist, and clerics of carnies-favored gods could even conduct faith healings.

Because of the importance of fortune-telling, carnies mythology, and the motley nature of the crew, Carnival-based campaigns lend themselves well to themes of destiny, free will, otherness, and folklore.

## Villains

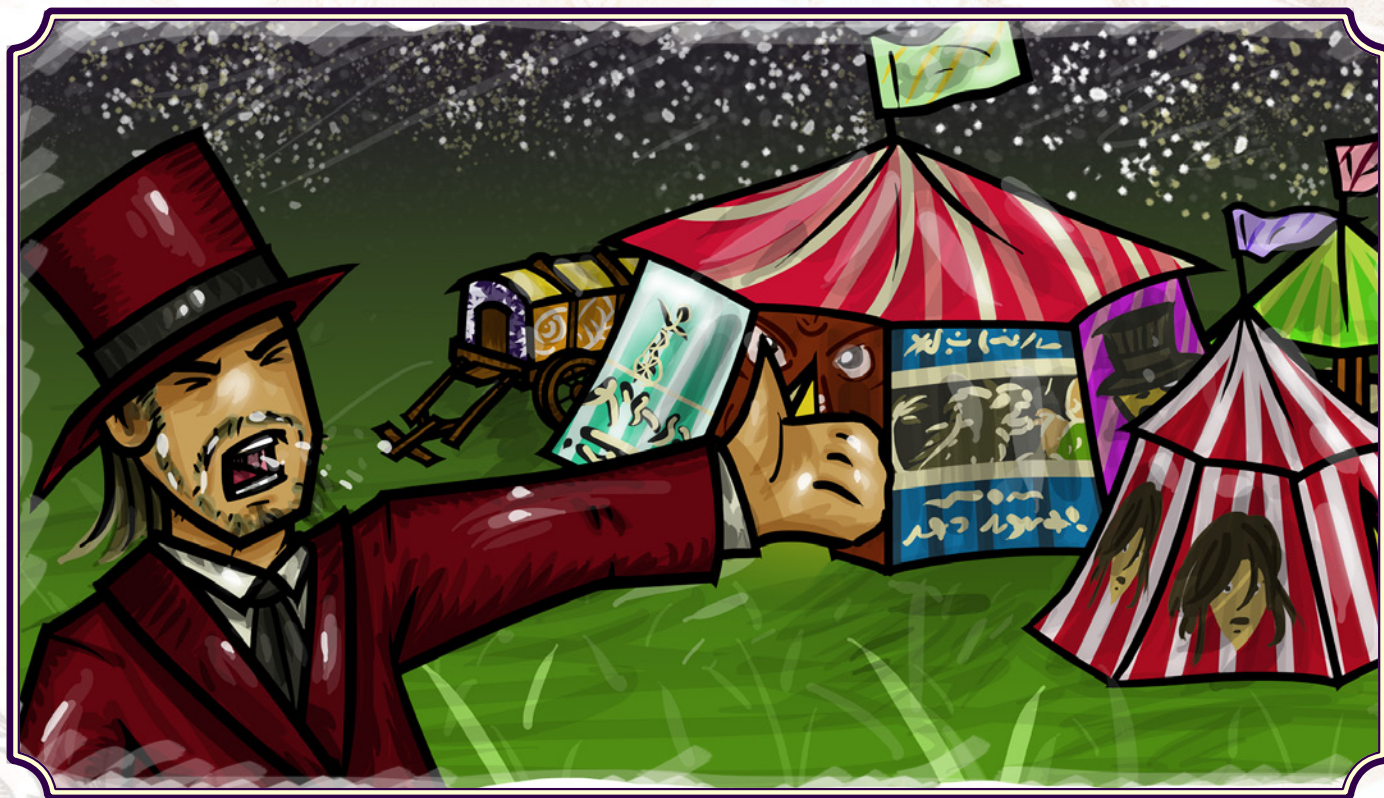
The Carnival has been a significant source of terror and vice in much fantasy media. Because the trope of the dangerous sideshow is common, GMs should consider how to mislead or play up this aspect of the story.

Traditional Carnies villains include the evil clown, vampires, witch fortune-tellers, sideshow owners, and evil roadies. Popular fiction often revolves around the abduction of children, the hypnotism or enthrallment of attendees, the murder of young lovers, or human sacrifice for arcane power or dark gods.

## Characters

**The Beast Tamer:** Beast tamers, trainers, and menagerie keepers can belong to a number of classes, ranging from expert to ranger to druid





to even narbarian. An easily transportable and unique act would be managed by a Summoner with a specially trained eidolon.

**The Clever Animal:** Counting horses, talking dogs, and musical monkeys are all part of small-scale circus performances. These may merely be well trained animal companions, or they may be magical beasts, such as awakened animals.

**The Clown:** Clowns are mostly experts or Bards. Clowns who combine feats of endurance, agility, or contortion may be multi-classed narbarians or rogues.

**The Fortune-teller:** Witch archetype. The Fortune-teller uses an arcane nond with a fortune-telling apparatus rather than a familiar to learn and store spells. This otherwise acts in all ways as a bonded item (see wizard).

**The Freak:** Freaks are strange or unique people in the eyes of the audience; to some extent, any sufficiently foreign or nonhuman person could be at least partly a Freak in their presentation. Truly bizarre freaks who attract the most paying customers would be lycanthropes, tieflings, out of place humanoid races, and constructs.

**The Juggler:** Jugglers combine the performance skills of nards with the speed and sleight of hand of rogues. Jugglers can be formidable opponents, skilled in knife throwing and fast on their feet.

**The Magician:** A useful magician archetype is presented for the bard class in the *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide™*. Besides their performances (mainly achieved by inexpensive spells such as *prestidigitation*, *light*, *flare*, and illusions, Carnival magicians often sell magical amulets and potions. Some of these spell-casters are multi-classed as Alchemists, using chemical effects to create fireworks, distract the audience, or distill snake oil for the visiting locals. A Summoner could combine a beast-taming act with a magic act.

**The Ringmaster:** The Impresario of a troupe, depending on their fixtures – either in the ring, or rounding up customers and negotiating

with locals outside – a Ringmaster is often a bard, though this position is often combined with another trade in smaller troupes.

**The Trick Rider:** Even small Varisian bands can usually manage this act, given a smart enough horse and a skilled rider. More elaborate exhibitions may involve many animals and even exotic steeds.

**The Tumbler:** The acrobat archetype for the rogue, and the street performer archetype for the bard are possible approaches to this act, though a misplaced monk could be an amazing tumbler.

**The Wrestler:** Professional wrestling began as a sideshow act, and has always incorporated a great deal of acting. Wrestler characters might be monks, fighters, or barbarians, depending on their approach to the art.

## Carnival Equipment

One-ring circus tent	3,000 gp
Living wagon	250 gp
Ring horse	500 gp
Menagerie tent and equipment	2,000 gp

Circus tents generally are approximately 118 feet by 150 feet, and enclose both the 42-foot diameter performance ring and rows of bleacher seating. They can house about a thousand spectators.

A ring horse is trained to perform, ignoring all distractions. A standard ring is 42 feet in diameter (8 squares), to comfortably allow a galloping horse to run. Most Carnivals have as few as 8 performers and that many horses.

The carts in the *GameMastery Map Pack: Caravan* measure 3 by 6 squares. These are bowtop styled caravan wagons, one of two major designs to travel in. Most carnivals form a ring by arranging their wagons in a circle. Standard sized carnival wagons are 8 feet by 14 feet, with a height of 10 ½ feet. ?



## Tale of the Arcane Archaeologists:

### Into the Mists of Ustalav

by Ryan Castello, Jr.

Art by Tyler Clark

The Arcane Archaeologists are driven by a hunger for knowledge to travel the Inner Sea Region. The mysteries whispered about Ustalav are appetizers for their cravings for history, anthropology, technology, and cryptozoology. They work as a group, with an eye into every shadow and on one another's backs, to uncover the secrets of the Immortal Principality.

Formally, the Arcane Archaeologists are: Mazi Verrechia, a human historian from Andoran whose persistence will outlive him by generations; Ahiyo Kyishi, a Tian elf with a history of contacting ancient spirits; Redalucca "Red" Daiepati, a tinkerer the likes of which no gothic community has ever seen; Leclair Shnag, a half-orc cryptozoologist ever looking for a new monster to stalk and study. The Arcane Archaeologists seek to find or produce new spells and items, and discover new magical beasts from their exploits.

### Within a Silver Grip

Among the Arcane Archeologists, Leclair Shnag was particularly excited by the expedition to Ustalav. She hoped to uncover the truth of an oft-spread story amongst cryptozoologists, that of the dawn grappler debacle. A golem designed in Ustalav to hunt and capture werewolves and vampires, instead used by its intended prey to capture human victims until the fall of night.



## Dawn Grappler

*Meat formed to pass for muscle hangs off this rigid creature's humanoid frame. Slivers of argent metal reflect through the seams of its sewn-on flesh.*

DAWN GRAPPLER	CR 4
<b>XP 1,200</b>	
N Medium construct	
<b>Init</b> -1; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; (-1 Dex, +10 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 47 (5d10 + 20)	
<b>Fort</b> +1, <b>Ref</b> 0, <b>Will</b> +1	
<b>DR</b> 5/adamantine; <b>Immune</b> construct traits, magic	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Spd</b> 20 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> silver slam +9 (1d4+6 plus grab)	
<b>Space</b> 5 ft.; <b>Reach</b> 5 ft.	
<b>Special Attacks</b> statue grip	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
<b>Str</b> 18, <b>Dex</b> 9, <b>Con</b> —, <b>Int</b> —, <b>Wis</b> 11, <b>Cha</b> 1	
<b>Base Atk</b> +5; <b>CMB</b> +9 (+13 grapple); <b>CMD</b> 18 (23 to maintain a grapple)	
<b>ECOLOGY</b>	
<b>Environment</b> any	
<b>Organization</b> solitary or gang (2–4)	
<b>Treasure</b> none	
<b>SPECIAL ABILITIES</b>	
<b>Statue Grip (Ex)</b> Dawn grapplers are mobile vice traps. A dawn grappler gains a +5 racial bonus to their CMD to resist a target escaping from a grapple. When maintaining a grapple using statue grip, a dawn grappler can only choose to move its speed or use the total defense action, but always deals damage equal to its slam in addition to the above.	
<b>Immunity to Magic (Ex)</b> A dawn grappler is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A magical attack that deals electricity or fire damage bestows a +5 bonus to the dawn grappler's CMB for 2d4 rounds. Additional electricity or fire attacks during this time increase the duration by 1 round.</li> <li>• A magical attack that deals cold damage bestows a -5 penalty to the dawn grappler's CMB and CMD for 2d4 rounds. Additional cold attacks during this time increase the duration by 1 round.</li> </ul>	
Officially the existence of this construct is denied within Ustalav, but Varisians outside speak openly of it with contemptuous mirth. Designed as a bear trap for horrors of the night, the dawn grappler is a silver golem camouflaged with flesh – often human and always fresh – to pass for a ripe victim. Once a dawn grappler seizes a target, it locks its joints around a captive until morning. What the designers failed to consider was the ample time given to escape. Rather than face the burn of the sun or the consequences of their midnight persona, many creatures caught by a dawn grappler resort to desperate measures to escape. Whether impaling themselves and escaping in the wind, or chewing their own arms off, once free they can leisurely devise a	



method to capture the expensive constructs. Many such dawn grapplers have been reprogrammed to seek out the living during the day and hold them until the unforgiving sun falls behind the mountains.

### Construction

A dawn grappler's body is built out of 1600 pounds of silver, costing at least 8,000 gp and covered with the fresh flesh of one whole medium humanoid creature.

#### DAWN GRAPPLER

**CL** 10th; **Price** 28,000 gp

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Construct, *animate dead*, *bull's strength*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, creator must be caster level 10th; **Skill** Craft (alchemy) DC 15; **Cost** 18,000 gp.

### Trap Jaws

Surrounded by voracious creatures that can walk undetected among mortals, the people of Ustalav suspect any sign of a bite. Mazi Verrechia uncovered a spell used by druids to neuter the threat of animals. Consulting with a willow father druid, Verrechia adapted an arcane version of the spell to protect the hides of Ustalav's citizenry.

#### MUZZLE

**School** conjuration (creation); **Level** druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 4, witch 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Effect** a muzzle of thick leather straps sized to the target's mouth

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** reflex negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

#### DESCRIPTION

A net of leather straps captures the target's mouth, preventing it from biting or speaking as long as the muzzle remains in place. The straps may be attacked to sever them, but without taking a full round action to line up an attack, half the damage is dealt to the target instead of the straps. Collectively, the straps have an AC of 9, with a hardness of 2 and 2 hp per caster level. Alternatively, the target can attempt an Escape Artist check as a standard action, against a DC equal to the DC of the spell (-5 on the check if the target does not have opposable thumbs). If the target has a bite attack, it can still prod its face violently, following its instinctual attack routine. It deals nonlethal bludgeoning damage equal to its normal bite damage. It does not retain any additional effects of its bite, such as poison or trip.

### Spirit Diplomat

Undead, ghosts specifically, are viewed differently in Ahiyo Kyishi's homeland. There they are a direct link to an ancestor, the embodiment of a family's history. So although spirits tethered to the material plain are aggressive and dangerous threats, Ahiyo developed a spell to aid in communicating with such lost souls. A side effect of the spell makes it particularly tempting for evil clerics.

#### DISCORPORATE SPIRIT

**School** necromancy; **Level** bard 2, cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a glob of ectoplasm)

**Range** touch

**Target** living creature touched

**Duration** 1 minute/level (D)

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

#### DESCRIPTION

Body and soul divide, attached only by shadow thin threads.

The target becomes almost imperceptibly tainted to the living: children won't make eye contact; the target's name is slurred when spoken in its presence; animals sneeze when touched by the target. Only you are immune to the air of unease around the target.

The target is treated as undead for the effects of positive and negative energy. Additionally, it suffers a -3 penalty on all Charisma-based checks when dealing with living creatures. It gains a +3 profane bonus on all Charisma-based checks when dealing with undead characters. This bonus increases to +6 when dealing with incorporeal undead.

### Hilt of Many Contingencies

Although it is a fair assumption that one should not adventure in Ustalav without a silver weapon, one never knows when a devil or like creature of particular vulnerability might impose itself. With Redaluccala "Red" Daipeati's exigency hilt, an adventurer need no longer keep a bag of holding filled with weapons of every special material hanging from his belt for unexpected eventualities.

#### EXIGENCY HILT

**Aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 8th

**Slot** —; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This remarkably shiny ebony cylinder adopts the shape any weapon handle slid into it, grinding up and expelling the original handle without harm creatures nearby. If used upon a non-masterwork (or magic) weapon, there is a 20% chance the weapon will shatter; otherwise the weapon is unharmed. Once adapted to a weapon, it will only revert to its original state if the weapon is destroyed. An exigency hilt perfectly mimics the weapon's original handle with one exception: a hidden compartment at the base, accessed by a command word designated by the owner when it is adapted to a new weapon. Up to four items of about the size of an arrowhead may be slipped into this compartment. As a move action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, the wielder can cause the hilt to coat the weapon for 2d4 rounds with the material of one of the items stored in the hidden compartment, destroying the item in the process. The weapon functions as a weapon made of that material for the duration. A weapon can only be coated in one material at a time, whether from an *exigency hilt* or another source, such as *silversheen*.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *mage hand*, *secret chest*; **Cost** 10,000 gp. ?



# Prestigious: Whispering Herald

by Jess Door

While the call of the Whispering Tyrant has not been heard for generations, denizens of the Hold of Belkzen still tell tales of the glorious slaughter and the fear the entire world held of great orc armies under the Whispering Tyrant's banner.

Some warlords can channel these fearful myths into battle rages that envelop their followers, even as they demoralize all who dare face them in battle. The orc of Belkzen who can command these powers of persuasion and magic is rare, but he is feared and admired wherever he holds sway.

**Role:** Whispering heralds are leaders that raise the effectiveness of bands of warriors, driving them with fear to heights of martial prowess. While a whispering herald has the ability to fight, he is usually best at whipping his allies into a frenzy as his enemies are overcome with dread. Many spellcasting classes are capable of becoming whispering heralds, but the importance of Charisma and early access to the rage spell make the bard class a particularly good choice, often with levels in a fighting class.

**Alignment:** Most whispering heralds are evil, inflicting fear on enemies and allies alike in the pursuit of power. Their reliance on emotion rather than training or planning means they tend not to be lawful.

**Hit Die:** d8.

## Requirements

To qualify to become a whispering herald, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.

**Feats:** Dazzling Display, Weapon Focus (any weapon).

**Spells:** Ability to cast *rage*.

## Table: Whispering Herald

Level	Base Attack Bonus					Special	Spellcasting
	Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special		
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Fearful rage	–	
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Tyrant's own	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	Fearful projection	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	
4th	+3	+2	+1	+2	Undying rage	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	
5th	+3	+3	+2	+3	Whispers of glory	–	

## Class Skills

The whispering herald's class skills are Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Linguistics (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

**Skill Ranks per Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the whispering herald prestige class.



**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Whispering heralds gain no proficiency with any weapons or armor.

**Spells per Day:** At the indicated levels, a whispering herald gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. He does not, however, gain other benefits a character of that class would have gained, except for additional spells per day, spells known (if he is a spontaneous spellcaster), and an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a whispering herald, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

**Fearful Rage (Ex):** When the whispering herald uses the Dazzling Display feat, it affects enemies as normal. In addition, allies within 30 ft. (including the herald) can choose to gain the effects of the rage spell. A fearful rage lasts for one round, plus an additional round for every 5 point by which the whispering herald's Intimidate check beat an affected ally's demoralize DC (10 + the target's HD + the target's Wisdom modifier). This ability can be used a number of times per day equal to 3 + the whispering herald's Charisma modifier.

**Tyrant's Own (Su):** At 2nd level, while under the effects of a fearful rage the whispering herald and his allies are not seen as threats by the undead. Treat this as the *hide from undead* spell, except the effect is not broken if an affected character attacks a non-undead creature. The save DC for this effect is 10 + 1/2 the herald's character level + his Charisma modifier. Each new fearful rage begins a new *hide from undead* effect.

**Fearful Projection (Ex):** At 3rd level, when using the Dazzling Display feat, the whispering herald can affect enemies and allies within 60 feet.

**Undying Rage (Su):** At 4th level, the whispering herald's allies—but not the herald himself—ignore the disabled, dying, and dead conditions while under the effects of fearful rage. They suffer the full effects of these conditions when the fearful rage ends.

**Whispers of Glory (Su):** At 5th level, while under the effects of fearful rage, the whispering herald and his allies are also affected as by the *greater heroism* spell.



# Prestigious: Crone Disciple

by Joseph "Guy Humual" Scott

Art by Tanya-Sang "Yuikami" Feddicini

**W**hen the mists roll in from the bogs and the moon goes dark, the simple folk living on the edges of civilization huddle together in fear. They know full well that on nights like these, the dreaded hags creep the land. Old yarns and legends abound; some claim hags were once ordinary women, which is more truth than any could know.

**Role:** The crone disciple combines the spellcasting ability of an arcane class with the strength and savagery of a hag.

**Alignment:** Crone disciples must be chaotic, as they assume the capriciousness of a hag. They may not be good.

**Hit Dice:** d10.

## Requirements

**Race:** Any humanoid.

**Gender:** Female.

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral or Chaotic Evil only.

**Skills:** Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks.

**Spellcasting:** The ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

**Special:** Must have the ability to join a coven (e.g. from the witch coven hex).

## Class Skills

The crone disciple's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Perception (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Stealth (Dex).

**Skill Ranks per Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the crone disciple prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Crone disciples gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

**Spells per Day:** At the indicated levels, a crone disciple gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in an arcane

spellcasting class she belonged to before adding the prestige class. She does not, however, gain other benefits a character of that class would have gained, except for additional spells per day, spells known (if she is a spontaneous spellcaster), and an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a crone disciple, she must decide to which class she adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

**Hag Hexes:** When determining the save to resist a crone disciple's hexes, her levels in crone disciple stack with levels in any class which grants hexes.

**Natural Armor Increase (Ex):** As a crone disciple takes on more and more of the hag's physical aspect, her skin shifts and hardens. At 1st, 4th, and 7th level, a crone disciple gains an increase to her existing natural armor (if any). These armor bonuses stack.

**Ability Boost (Ex):** As a crone disciple gains levels in this prestige class, her ability scores increase. These increases stack and are gained as if through level advancement.

**Darkvision (Ex):** At 2nd level, a crone disciple gains darkvision with a range of 60 ft. If she already has darkvision, the range increases by 30 ft.

**Hag's Claws (Ex):** At second level, the crone disciple's nails become hard as steel. This allows her to make two claw attacks as a full attack action using her full base attack bonus. Each claw deals 1d4 points of damage plus Strength modifier (1d3 if she is Small).

**Hag Talent (Ex):** At 3rd level, the crone disciple begins her transformation. She chooses one type of hag and gains an associated ability. Her choices are Annis (grab special attack), Green (ability to mimic the sounds of any animal), or Sea (ability to breathe and freely cast spells underwater).

**Spell Resistance (Su):** At 5th level, the crone disciple gains spell resistance equal to 5 plus character level. At ninth level this increases to 10 plus character level.

**Hag Transformation:** At 10th level, the crone disciple completes her transformation. She gains all the special attacks, qualities, and spell-like abilities of the hag chosen for her hag talent, as well as the monstrous humanoid type. All spell-like abilities are at the crone disciple's caster level, and abilities based on HD use her crone disciple level. She is now considered a true hag. ♪



## Table: Crone Disciple

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Hag hexes, natural armor increase (+1)	
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Ability boost (Str +2), darkvision, hag's claws	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	Hag talent	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
4th	+3	+1	+2	+2	Ability boost (Str +2), natural armor increase (+1)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5th	+3	+2	+3	+3	Spell resistance (5)	
6th	+4	+2	+3	+3	Ability boost (Str +2)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
7th	+5	+2	+4	+4	Natural armor increase (+1)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
8th	+6	+3	+4	+4	Ability boost (Str +2)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
9th	+6	+3	+5	+5	Spell resistance (10)	
10th	+7	+3	+5	+5	Hag transformation	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class



## The Wages of Sin: Sorcerous Survivors

by Thomas "Majuba" McQueen  
Art by Chad A. Dulac

For millennia, the darkest aspects of the arcane have been found in the abuse of others to harness greater energies. Whether sin magic or the draining of souls, always there are wizards who will seek out the strongest bloodlines to feed their hunger for power. Families inheriting such strength are nearly hunted to extinction, yet some do remain, though not unchanged by the centuries of depravities inflicted on them...

### New Bloodline: Runescarred

Your family has been prey for practitioners of the eldritch arts for longer than any remember. Mighty wizards and arcane energies were the bogeymen in your childhood bedtime stories. While many of your relatives—those who are still alive—have become adept at ducking or eluding magicians, you have learned to fight magic with even more magic and thrive.

**Class Skill:** Escape Artist.



**Bonus Spells:** *disguise self* (3rd), *silence* (5th), *dispel magic* (7th), *dimension door* (9th), *interposing hand* (11th), *repulsion* (13th), *spell turning* (15th), *dimensional lock* (17th), *prismatic sphere* (19th).

**Bonus Feats:** Combat Casting, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Counterspell, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Escape Artist), Toughness.

**Bloodline Arcana:** You gain a +1 competence bonus on saving throws against spells you know. At 6th level and every four thereafter, this bonus increases by +1.

**Bloodline Powers:** Something mystical in your blood draws spellcasters to you, but you tap that same source to empower and protect yourself.

**Deceptive Motions (Ex):** At 1st level, you can integrate nonsense syllables, gestures, and materials into your casting to confound your enemies. As a free action when you cast a spell you can add half your sorcerer level (minimum +1) as a bonus to the Spellcraft DC to identify the spell you are casting, and as a dodge bonus to your touch AC (only) for one round. Alternatively, as a standard action you may make a Bluff check with the same bonus (opposed by observers' Sense Motive or Spellcraft checks) to pretend to cast a spell you know or have observed cast in the past week. You can use this ability a number

of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. Spells cast while using this ability may take on a distinctive personal flourish, such as adding a bluish tinge to any visual effects.

**Sense Magic (Su):** At 3rd level, you gain the ability to sense magical abilities in creatures. By observing a creature within 30 ft. as a full-round action, you can identify magical qualities it possesses. Make a caster level check against a DC of 15 + the creature's CR to identify the creature's supernatural or spell-like abilities or vulnerabilities, up to a number of abilities equal to your Charisma modifier. You may retry this check after spending another full-round action observing the creature, either if you failed, or to learn additional abilities. At 7th level and every four levels thereafter, you gain a +1 bonus to this check, to a maximum of +4 at 19th level. Additionally, at 7th level you may make the initial check as a standard action, at 11th as a move action, and at 17th as a swift action. Repeat checks still require a full-round action.

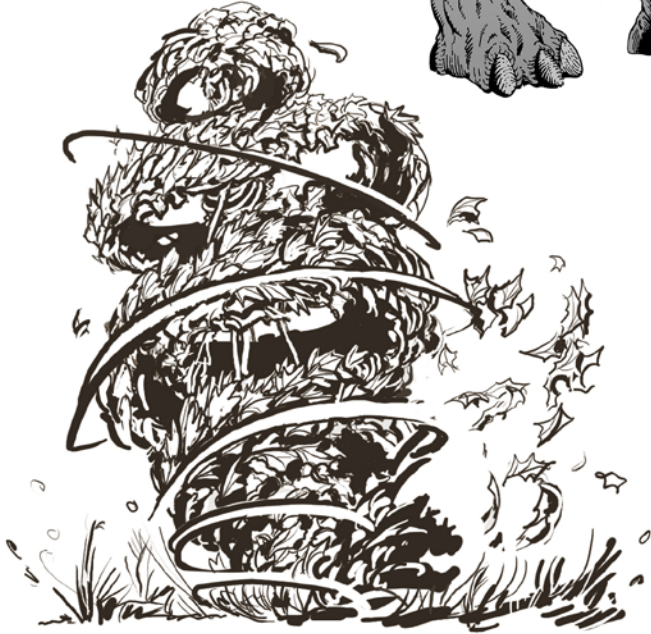
**Scarred Soul (Su):** At 9th level, you have unlocked the anguish of your ancestors. You can cast one of your known spells using a lower level spell slot than would normally be required for that spell, including any metamagic effects applied. This does not change the spell's level. Immediately after casting the spell you take 1d6 points of Intelligence damage and 1d6 points of Charisma damage for each level the slot is below the required level. At 13th level, the damage is reduced to 1d4 each per level.

**Runic Reflection (Su):** At 15th level, your mimicry of other spellcasters is such that whenever you successfully counterspell a spell, it is reflected fully upon the caster (as *spell turning*).

**Risen Runelord (Su):** At 20th level, living runes grow upon your flesh. You have fully turned from prey to predator and embody the might of an ancient magical nemesis. Choose one school of magic, other than divination. You gain a +1 bonus on all saving throws against spells of that school, as well as to caster level and saving throw DCs of spells you cast from that school. Also, you may use your deceptive motions ability to mimic and actually cast any sorcerer spell of this school. This expends a spell slot of the appropriate level as normal. ?



# GOT MONSTERS?



# BOOK OF BEASTS

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# The Wolf Shifter

by Brandon "Frank" Waldenberg and Darrick "Drackso" Dahl  
Art by Mauricio Herrera

**W**olf shifters usually trace their powers from a distant lycanthrope ancestor, though some gain their powers through totem worship. These warriors tap into the power and skill of the wolf, an animal feared and worshipped by many barbaric tribes. Their connection with this animal comes with a deep respect and kinship at times, though some shifters may turn their back on this fundamental connection. Just like the wolf, shifters often travel great distances, partly from a keen wanderlust, and partly from unwelcoming treatment by common folk.

While some that become wolf shifters are looking for a way to both control and hone their animalistic urges, others partake in them at every chance they get. These shifters become terrors of the forest, often dominating lycanthropes and packs of wolves to raid and pillage nearby settlements. Delighting in fear and carnage, these monsters reinforce the common stereotype that shifters are crazed



animals that need to be put down, no different than their lycanthropic ancestors or the animal that they seek to emulate.

**Role:** The shifter travels at the front of the party, always ready to confront any threat that would harm her allies. Thanks to her wolf form, the shifter can travel faster than most of the party and can be a proficient scout. In battle, she is always at the front line, tearing through the enemies with snapping jaw and swinging weapon.

**Alignment:** Any nonlawful.

**Hit Die:** d12

## Class Skills

The wolf shifter's class skills are Acrobatics (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Perception (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

**Skill Ranks per Level:** 4+ Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the wolf shifter.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A wolf shifter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor, medium armor, and shields (except tower shields).

**Hybrid Transformation (Su):** A wolf shifter can change into a hybrid wolf-humanoid form. A wolf shifter can transform for a number of rounds per day equal to 4 + her Constitution modifier. At each level after 1st, she can transform for 2 additional rounds. Temporary increases to Constitution, such as those gained from transformation and spells like bear's endurance, do not increase the total number of rounds that a wolf shifter can transform per day. A wolf shifter can start a transformation as a full-round action. Using a full-round action to start a transformation does not count towards the number of rounds a wolf shifter can stay transformed in a day. The wolf shifter can also start a transformation as an immediate action after taking damage from an attack. The total number of rounds of transformation per day is renewed after resting for 8 hours, although these hours do not need to be consecutive.

While in hybrid form, a wolf shifter gains a +2 morale bonus to her Strength and a +4 morale bonus to her Constitution. She also gains low-light vision and a natural bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage. While transformed, a wolf shifter cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except Acrobatics, Fly, Intimidate, and Stealth) or any ability that requires patience or concentration.

A wolf shifter can end her transformation as a free action and is fatigued after the transformation for a number of rounds equal to 2 times the number of rounds spent in the transformation. A wolf shifter cannot start a new transformation while fatigued or exhausted but can otherwise start a transformation multiple times during a single encounter or combat. If a wolf shifter falls unconscious, her transformation immediately ends, placing her in peril of death. A wolf shifter must stay in one of her two forms (see wolf transformation) during transformation and can only switch between the two forms when she starts a new transformation.

**Wolf Transformation (Su):** A wolf shifter can take on wolf form. Wolf transformation works like hybrid transformation except spending a round of transformation grants the wolf shifter the ability to be in wolf transformation for one minute (a fraction of a minute rounds up to one round). In addition to the benefits of hybrid form, in wolf form the wolf shifter has a speed of 50 feet and gains the trip creature ability. A wolf shifter



**Table: Wolf Shifter**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Hybrid transformation, Wolf transformation
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Rage power, shifting resistance
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Wolf empathy
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Rage power
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Lunar link +1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Rage power
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Fast transformation
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Rage power
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Lunar link +2
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Rage power
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Greater transformation
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Rage power
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Lunar link + 3
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Rage power
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Improved fast transformation
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	Rage power
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Lunar link +4, tireless transformation
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Rage power
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	Shifting forms
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Mighty transformation, rage power

loses her ability to speak while in wolf form. All items the wolf shifter carries meld into her body in this form. When in wolf transformation the wolf shifter cannot use rage powers. The wolf shifter cannot use wolf transformation when wearing heavy armor or carrying a heavy load. A wolf shifter is fatigued after the transformation for a number of rounds equal to 2 times the number of minutes spent in the transformation.

**Rage Powers (Ex):** As a wolf shifter gains levels, she learns to use her transformation in new ways. Starting at 2nd level, a wolf shifter gains a barbarian rage power and gains another rage power for every two levels of wolf shifter attained after 2nd level. A wolf shifter gains the benefits of rage powers only while in hybrid transformation (not wolf transformation), and some of these powers require the wolf shifter to take an action first. Unless otherwise noted, a wolf shifter cannot select an individual power more than once.

**Shifting Resistance (Ex):** At 2nd level, the wolf shifter gains DR/silver equal to half her wolf shifter level when in hybrid or wolf transformation. The wolf shifter also gains immunity to lycanthropy. At 11th level the DR/silver becomes DR/silver and magic.

**Wolf Empathy (Ex):** At 3rd level, a wolf shifter can improve the attitude of wolves and dire wolves. This ability acts as wild empathy (use the wolf shifter's level as her druid level) except it affects only lupine animals. The wolf shifter can use this ability while transformed.

**Lunar Link (Ex):** At 5th level, the wolf shifter gains a +1 insight bonus on Perception, Stealth, and Survival checks while under direct moon light and during the entire day of the full moon, including the

two days before and after the full moon (during this phase, the wolf shifter gains the bonus during night and day, regardless of being under moonlight). This bonus increases by +1 every four levels beyond 5th.

**Fast Transformation (Ex):** At 7th level, a wolf shifter can transform as a standard action instead of a full-round action. Transforming in this way spends a round of transformation.

**Greater Transformation (Su):** At 11th level, when a wolf shifter transforms into a hybrid or wolf transformation she gains a +2 natural armor bonus. In hybrid and wolf transformation the natural bite attacks damage increases to 1d10.

When transforming into the wolf transformation the wolf shifter can choose a dire wolf form instead. The wolf shifter must choose which wolf form she is becoming when starting a transformation. The dire wolf form causes the wolf shifter to increase her size by one size category. This size increase grants the wolf shifter a +2 size bonus to Strength, a -2 size penalty to Dexterity (to a minimum of 1), and a -1 penalty on attack rolls and AC due to her increased size. The wolf shifter's bite attack also increases by one size category.

**Improved Fast Transformation (Ex):** At 15th level, a wolf shifter can transform as a move action. Transforming in this way spends a round of transformation.

**Tireless Transformation (Ex):** Starting at 17th level, a wolf shifter no longer becomes fatigued at the end of her transformation.

**Shifting Forms (Su):** At 19th level when a wolf shifter is transformed she can change between hybrid and wolf transformation as a swift action without ending the transformation.

**Mighty Transformation (Su):** At 20th level when a wolf shifter transforms into a hybrid or wolf transformation she gains a +4 natural armor bonus (instead of +2). In hybrid and wolf transformation the natural bite attacks damage increases to 2d6. ?

## Dear Ask a Shoanti

*I am embarrassed to say, I've put on a few too many pounds. I'd like to get back into shape as soon as possible. Will I burn more calories slaying duergar or drow?*

Sincere Regards,  
Dieting in the Darklands



## Dear Dieting in the Darklands

Killing drow is more aerobic, but eliminating duergar is better for building muscle tissue. I recommend both, but in an alternating schedule. We call it "cross-training." Also, always remember to stretch and warm-up first.

Yours very truly,  
Ask a Shoanti



# Terror at Churlwood's Edge

by Jeff "Shadowborn" Lee

Art by Dave "The Eldritch Mr. Shiny" Mallon

*These excerpts from the journal of Pathfinder Marcian August (deceased) and accompanying notes were recovered from courthouse archives in Magnimar and delivered to Heidmarch Manor.*

## Wealdy, 28 Gozran 4710 AR

After wintering in Magnimar at Heidmarch Manor, I now begin my investigations into a local legend. While trading tales in the taverns with Varisian merchants, I have been intrigued by certain stories of missing children. The person or creature held responsible has captured my imagination. I set out tomorrow, weather permitting, north and east of Magnimar. Is there truly some unknown creature behind these incidents, or is it simply a bogeyman made up as a scapegoat to explain losses common in the wilderness? For now I lie in my bed, listening to the storm howl outside and branches scratching at my window shutters as if requesting entrance.

## Oathday, 29 Gozran 4710 AR

The storm passed in the night and I woke to greet a glorious spring morning. I set out today for the southern edge of the Churlwood. I am accompanied by Esmerelda, a Varisian woman of middle years that agreed to be my guide. She has wandered these lands since she was a girl and is skilled at tracking and woodcraft. Her presence should also help convince the folk of any caravans we encounter to speak with me openly about the mysteries I wish to uncover.

All I was able to find out in the city was that the Varisians of the area attribute the disappearance of children with an enigmatic figure: a man, exceptionally tall and thin, dressed in tight, black, courtier's garb, who is often seen lurking amongst the trees. Such a vague description could be anything. Perhaps it is some type of fey, or an ancestral spirit. It might even be a lone ogre-kin, lurking in the woods and coming forth to wreak depravity on those nearby. This is all conjecture, however. I'm certain that a thorough investigation will reveal the facts of the matter. We should make it to the wood in about five days' time.

## Fireday, 30 Gozran 4710 AR

A fortuitous find! Tonight we enjoy the hospitality of Rustic Grove, a country estate. While perusing books in the manor's chapel, I came across a pair of woodcuts. Done by the Rev. Uric Togs, circa 4600 AR, they at first seem to depict an archetypal representation of death. Tall and skeletally thin, in one scene it is seen dispatching a knight in combat. It is the second scene which captured my attention. In it, the figure is snatching a child from his commoner parents through the window of their cottage. Could this be referencing the tales of child abduction in this area? If so, they go back further than I realized. The text of this volume is unhelpful. The pictures accompany homilies on dealing with unexpected deaths.

Examination reveals certain disturbing deviations from the accepted archetype. In the first, what appears to be a lance upon which the knight is impaled is, in fact, an extension of the figure's arm. Also, it sports an additional pair of legs, skewed at unnatural angles. Likewise, in the second woodcut the figure sports additional limbs—both arms and legs—grasping the child and bracing itself against the house as it pulls him from the embrace of his parents. In

both the figure is disturbingly disproportionate. Most unsettling is the figure's head. It does not sport the ubiquitous grinning skull. Or if it does, it is covered. Whether it is a sort of eyeless mask, ill-fitted and slipping, or sloughing skin, is uncertain. Whatever the case, being prevented from gazing into the face of death seems somehow more terrible than full revelation.

## Oathday, 6 Desnus 4710 AR

Found a caravan camped on the outskirts of the Churlwood. They are obviously disturbed and wary. Esmerelda convinced them to speak with me. They say they are being stalked. The best translation I can give from the Varisian is the Lithe Gentleman. None of the details give me any inkling of what I'm dealing with, despite my considerable knowledge. Their fear is almost palpable. I was moved to swear to them that I would do what I could to assist.

## Sunday, 9 Desnus 4710 AR

Such horror! It came upon the camp in the night and made off with one of the children. E. and I accompanied three of the adults to track it into the woods. A fog had risen and we were separated. I wandered alone in the trees and mist. Shrieks, screams from out of the night. I ran in that direction, following the sounds until they ceased abruptly. Wetness, spattering down from above. Looking up, I saw them. Their tattered remains decorated the trees like garlands some twenty feet above.

There was a sound then, echoing through the trees. At first I thought it was a child's laughter, but no. The sound was wrong. The pitch was somehow inhuman and where laughter changes, this was one repetitive sound, continuing without difference in volume or the gasps of air needed for a living thing to keep projecting it. A sound that twists a mind with madness. I whirled about, seeking its source.

It was there, silhouetted in the moonlight, slender as the tree trunks around it. Impossibly tall, its proportions were a grotesque mockery of human form. I saw it, and it saw me. I ran, Desna help me. Unsure where I am, where E. has gone. Gods, what is this thing?

## Toilday, 11 Desnus 4710 AR

I found Esmerelda at the edge of the wood. She lay open like a footlocker, and her insides had been torn from her. Worse still, what had been ripped from her had been returned. The bolt of turquoise fabric she'd bought from a traveling merchant had been sliced into pieces. Each organ had been wrapped in a piece of fabric as one wraps a gift, and then returned to the precise spot from which it had been removed. It left her for me. I know it.

## ? Desnus 4710 AR

No longer sure what day— It follows, it always follows. —somehow made my way back to the caravan. It must have led me here—so hard to keep track of my thoughts—

## Date unknown

—locked myself in. Old hunting cabin. He is outside. He taps upon the door, upon the windows. A caller requesting entrance. But He is already here. I brought Him here. The more I see, the more I know, and the more He IS. Tapping on windows now, both sides of the cabin at once. Lithe Gentleman. Slender Man. Old. Ancient. Timeless. Indefinable. More of Him, more. Reaching out, reaching THROUGH. The more aware I am of Him, the more powerfully He manifests. He comes through the darkness. The darkness comes through Him.



—will take the children. I know this now. He wants them. They will not end like Esmerelda...not like the Varisians in the trees. Their fate is worse, and they will go to Him willingly. Just as I will. I must go prepare the way. Their parents cannot suffer His taking them. I cannot allow that. I must be merciful. I must do this. For them. For Him. I do what is right, yet it is what He wishes me to do.

Desna have mercy.

\* \* \*

To the Lord Justice, Bayl Argentine:

Sir,

After investigating reports of murders in the area, we discovered this man locked in an abandoned cabin. His clothes were bloody, as was the dagger he wielded attempting to fend off my men. Witnesses confirmed that he was seen in their camp shortly before the bodies were discovered. Accompanying my full report you will find the remnants of his journal. He was attempting to burn the blood-soaked pages when we broke in. Much of what remains seems the ravings of a madman. Still, I send it in the hopes that you will find it useful.

If I may be so bold, I suggest this cur find the end of a rope quickly. Word has spread about these incidents and the Varisians are in an uproar. Even the Sczarni seem disturbed. Perhaps a display of swift justice will calm this unrest. The Pathfinder Society may take umbrage at such treatment of one of their own, but I believe it would be in the best interests of the city.

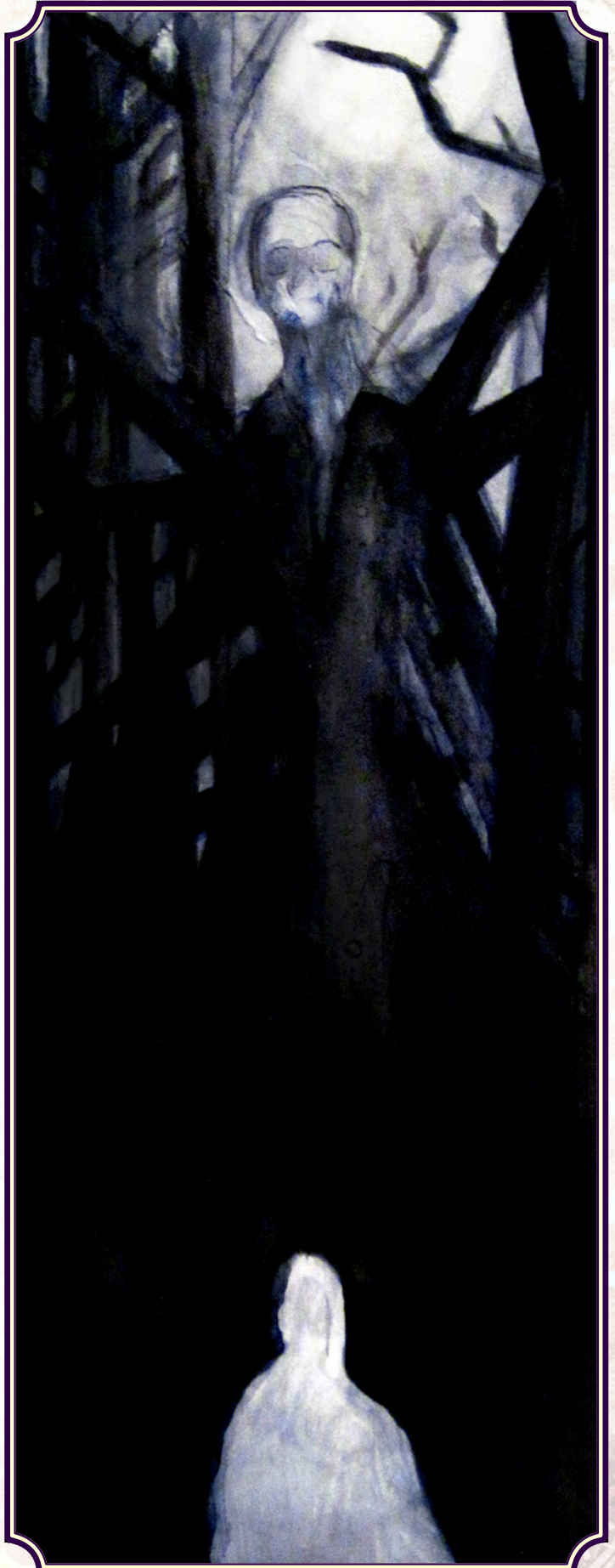
I have given my squad two days leave. These occurrences have unnerved them, particularly young Pavo. He claims to have seen an individual following our patrol, sounding quite like the figure described in this lunatic's journal. After our scout found neither tracks nor such a person, I ordered him to speak no further about the matter. I think it best to nip such tales in the bud straight away. They are bad for morale and these things have a tendency to take on a life of their own.

I await further instruction.

In service of Magnimar,

*Talia Petronus*

Captain ☺



**Dear Ask a Shoanti**

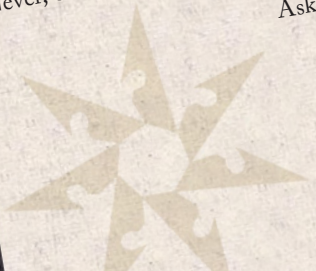
*Haunts are all the rage these days, but as a rogue, I don't channel positive energy. What tips can you give me for battling this new fad?*



*Sincere Regards,  
Haunted in Ustalav*

**Dear Haunted in Ustalav**

*Never, ever cross the streams.  
Yours very truly,  
Ask a Shoanti*





# Side Treks

by Michael "Lurgon" Kelley and David "Mik Giant" Schwartz  
 Art by Danielle Gawwin and Matthew "The Twitching King" Stinson

## Fading Away

The PCs arrive in Wartle to find many of the townsfolk are walking around in an ethereal state. The ghost-like villagers beg for help to end this strange curse.

## Background

Recently, the fur trappers of Wartle have made deeper and deeper incursions into the Sanos Forest, coming dangerously close to a secretive gnome settlement. Afraid the humans will stumble upon them, the gnomes have tried to dissuade them by sabotaging their snares, laying false trails, and even using their ability to speak with animals to lead the trappers away.

As irritating as this all was, it still did not work. Instead of wavering, the trappers became more determined to overcome the forest's trials, until the gnome druid, Brinkleton Bramblebush, got involved.

A specialist in magical plants, Bramblebush had cultivated a peculiar weapon to use against the humans: etherbloom.

Anyone who breathes in the strong fragrance of these petals soon becomes insubstantial and ghost-like.

After a recent rainstorm, the strange vines with their large, translucent flowers began growing around the small town of Wartle. The fast growing vines spread to cover the town buildings. The townsfolk's attempts to clear the vines away have failed. It seems to grow back as fast as it is cut.

What the people of Wartle don't know is Bramblebush regularly sneaks into town in animal form to re-enforce the vines with his magic.

## Potential Resolutions

To end this strange "curse", the PCs must remove the vines that cause it. With the vines gone, the effects of the etherbloom will soon wear off, and the townsfolk will return to normal.

If the PCs drive off Bramblebush, his magic will no longer protect the vines, and they can easily be destroyed.

If the PCs discover the druid and attempt to negotiate with him, he agrees to undo his magic and remove the vines if the people of Wartle promise not to trespass into the gnomes' part of the forest again.

## Overnight Delivery: A Side Trek in Two Acts

A quarter of a century ago, the orcs were on the march from the Hold of Belkzen into the heartland of Ustalav. In that terrible time, a lone rider galloped out of the border post of Brumenfort to deliver a warning to the village of Adarac. Feverish and fatigued, the rider failed to see a deadfall ahead. His horse tripped, throwing the rider to his death.

Without the rider's warning, the people of Adarac were unprepared for the attack, and the orc horde razed the village. Eventually, the orcs were defeated and forced back to their blighted lands.

Brumenfort became just another ruined garrison along the Bleakwall. Adarac was rebuilt, and today, it is a thriving community.

However, the orcs of Belkzen are on the offensive again. Even now, a band of orc raiders makes its way toward Adarac.

Awakened by the new threat and the opportunity to complete his unfinished mission, the spirit of the long-dead messenger rides again to warn the villagers and redeem his soul. This side trek is suitable for a party of four 5th-level characters.

## Act I (CR 7)

The heroes are asked to help the townsfolk of Adarac, who suffer the terror of a vengeful spirit. A PC may have relatives in the village or they might be deputized by Captain Rhasrakin of the Wallguard, himself a survivor of the original Adarac Massacre.

On their way to the village, the heroes might encounter some orc outriders, not uncommon in these parts.

When they arrive in Adarac, Burgermeister Vanderlek tells them the town has been plagued for nearly a week. Each night a headless horseman gallops into town, carrying a glowing sword in one hand and a scroll tube in the other.

People and animals who encounter the rider are filled with uncontrollable fear. The horseman, himself, circles the town hall and batters at its doors until the light of dawn causes it to retreat.





The Burgermeister is terrified by the spirit and promises the heroes a generous reward if they can save him and Adarac from the horseman's ire.

Allow the heroes to make whatever preparations they wish. The townsfolk are helpful during the day, but as soon as night falls, they lock themselves in their homes. Soon after, the horseman arrives, just as described.

The ghostly rider is a dullahan (*Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2™*) who attacks anyone who obstructs his mission. He cannot rest until he delivers his missive to the Burgermeister of Adarac.

If the heroes can shield Burgermeister Vanderlek from the monster's frightful presence, the rider politely hands him the dispatch before collapsing into a heap (as the horse and rider's spirits pass into the Great Beyond).

Otherwise, the heroes must defeat the undead in combat. When slain, the horseman drops both sword and scroll case. Giving the scroll to the Burgermeister also completes the rider's mission.

The scroll is brittle with age and contains a message in faded ink from the commander of Brumenfort to the Burgermeister of Adarac: Orc raiders are heading toward the village; the townsfolk should flee immediately.

The date, along with the fact that Brumenfort lies in ruins, confirms that the warning is twenty-five years too late.

### Act II (CR 7 and CR 7)

How the second act plays out depends on the heroes. The PCs might realize the old scroll is, in fact, a warning of a new threat.

Unfortunately, there is not enough time to evacuate the village. The heroes must hold off the raiders here.

If the heroes don't recognize the new threat, neither do the townsfolk. In this case, Adarac is abuzz the next day as its people prepare a celebratory feast for the heroes. That evening, during the festivities, the orcs invade.

If the heroes are there, they can rally the people and defend the town. If they decide to leave before the feast, history repeats itself.

The orcs attack in two waves, giving the heroes and the villagers a short rest between encounters:

The first wave consists of six orc berserkers (barbarian 2; *Pathfinder Chronicles: NPC Guide*) reinforced by two orc skulls (fighter 2; *Pathfinder Chronicles: NPC Guide*) mounted on worgs.

The second wave is made up of four orc berserkers led by a half-orc battle mage (evoker 6; *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: GameMastery Guide™*).

### Continuation

This side trek can be run on its own or as a prelude to greater events. These orcs are merely the vanguard of a larger orc army, intent on conquering their neighbors to the east.

In recognition of their actions at Adarac, the heroes are asked to undertake other missions against the orcs. This might lead them to discover and eventually face the foul entity that impels the orc horde. ?





# Weal or Woe: The Mourning Knight

by Robert "Snorter" Feather

Art by Jaw Door

As travelers leave the Hungry Mountains and pass through the forested lands of Lozeri, they might believe they have departed the haunted lands of Ustulav. This would be a mistake, for though the terrain is gentler, fear still lies behind shuttered windows. Despite the efforts of the recently restored nobles and their militias to eradicate them, the remnants of the Whispering Tyrant's legacy may still be found.

One of those dedicated to restoring Ustulav's glory is Trajan Kraask, a former knight of Odranto, who now takes orders from a higher power. Returning from campaign to find his family holdings in an uproar, his parents dead and his wife and child missing, he forsook his knightly company and took holy vows at the nearby monastery of Pharamasma. Leaving his land in the trust of a younger cousin, he became one of the Grey Goddess's 'magistrates', passing judgment on those who evade their final rest and on the misguided fools who aid them.

Trajan is a tall, hawk-nosed man with barely a trace of fat on him—a result of his harsh, nomadic lifestyle. He wears a wide-brimmed black hat and a cloak, closed with a scarab brooch, over his armor. Trajan is short on words, but not impolite, merely seeking to get to the heart of matters quickly. He is awkward in polite company, due to the relative solitude required by his duties as a magistrate.

Trajan might be introduced to the PCs in several ways. He is likely to ride to the aid of anyone accosted by the undead or may offer to accompany injured travelers for safety. He could serve as a guide, if they intend to travel the Shudderwood, or even as a mentor for those needing martial or divine training.

The locals recognize Trajan as a good, if morose man, and will often open their homes to him, refresh his supplies, and pass on dark rumors. Trajan has built a small network of regular contacts and informants who help him in his duties.

One such contact is Dostyan Treel, a half-elf trapper who runs a way-station on the forest road. Dostyan has accompanied Trajan on many raids, resulting in the eradication of several fiendish covens and six vampire spawn. Dostyan maintains a show of poverty, ensuring to keep his high-quality armor (and jewelry) hidden from view.

Unknown to Trajan, Dostyan is, in fact, the thrall of Mircea Tagofis, a noble vampire who is using the unwitting knight as a weapon against his rivals and ungrateful, absconded minions. He created many of the spawn Trajan has slaughtered for the exact purpose of being thrown, still weak and bewildered, to the enemy. The magistrate's successful hunts serve to reassure the peasantry and cover Mircea's atrocities.

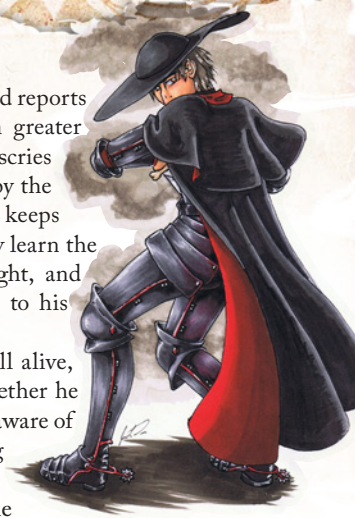
Mircea is mindful not to let a potential threat grow too powerful and has ordered Dostyan to be on his guard for the day that Trajan begins to suspect the sacrificial thralls could not be responsible for the foul deeds committed in the region. Until then, Dostyan has orders to locate and destroy any caches of evidence and dispose of any of the knight's allies that prove too capable.

Trajan has been forced to move his safe houses several times, and has never been able to recruit permanent followers. He does not suspect Dostyan, partly due to the half-elf's proven worth, and partly due to the amulet he wears, a 'present' from Mircea, which prevents

Trajan from detecting his evil. Trajan blames his setbacks on the actions of unknown witches, sorcerers and bandits who would benefit from the land falling back into anarchy.

Aside from the Dostyan's deception and reports to Mircea, the knight is beset by even greater troubles. The vampire lord occasionally spies on Trajan personally, a task made easier by the possession of Trajan's daughter, who he keeps as insurance should the knight eventually learn the truth. Dostyan has evidence of her plight, and will not hesitate to use the information to his advantage, if his treachery is discovered.

When he finds out his daughter is still alive, Trajan's next actions will depend on whether he thinks he can get to her before Mircea is aware of the revelation. He would most likely beg the PCs for their help, so he could keep up the pretence of ignorance to ensure the girl's safety while they infiltrate Mircea's castle.



<b>TRAJAN KRAASK</b>	<b>CR 7</b>
<b>XP 4,800</b>	
Male human cavalier 1/inquisitor of Pharamasma 7	
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
<b>Init</b> +8, <b>Senses</b> <i>detect alignment, discern lies</i> ; Perception+8	
<b>DEFENSE</b>	
<b>AC</b> 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)	
<b>hp</b> 56 (8 HD; 7d8+1d10+15)	
<b>Fort</b> +8, <b>Ref</b> +3, <b>Will</b> +8	
<b>OFFENSE</b>	
<b>Speed</b> 20 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> +1 <i>ghost touch longsword</i> +10 (1d8+4/19-20)	
<b>Ranged</b> mwk composite longbow +8 (1d8+3/x3)	
<b>Special Attacks</b> bane, challenge, judgments	
<b>Inquisitor Spells Known</b> (CL 7th; concentration +10)	
3rd (2/day)— <i>keen edge, remove curse</i>	
2nd (4/day)— <i>cure moderate wounds, invisibility, lesser restoration, resist energy</i>	
1st (5/day)— <i>alarm, cure light wounds, detect undead, hide from undead, shield of faith</i>	
Orisons (at will)— <i>create water, detect magic, disrupt undead, light, read magic, stabilize</i>	
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
<b>Str</b> 16, <b>Dex</b> 13, <b>Con</b> 12, <b>Int</b> 12, <b>Wis</b> 16, <b>Cha</b> 13	
<b>Base Atk</b> +6; <b>CMB</b> +9; <b>CMD</b> 20	
<b>Feats</b> Combat Reflexes, Duck and Cover <sup>B</sup> , Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Outflank <sup>B</sup> , Power Attack, Precise Strike <sup>B</sup> , Ride-By Attack	
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +10, Climb +5, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +5, Handle Animal +5, Heal +7, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, nature, planes) +5, Knowledge (geography, history, local, nobility) +2, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +3, Perception +8, Ride +8, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +3, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +5, Survival +7, Swim +5	
<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven, Skald, Varisian	
<b>SQ</b> cunning initiative, domain, monster lore, mount, order, solo tactics, stern gaze, tactician, teamwork feats, track +3	
<b>Combat Gear</b> <i>feather token</i> (bird), holy water, <i>potion of lesser restoration, scroll of align weapon</i> (lawful) (2), <i>scroll of cast out, scroll of delay poison, scroll of invisibility, scroll of remove curse, scroll of remove paralysis, sunrod</i>	



(5), *wand of cure light wounds* (5 charges); **Gear** +1 *full-plate*, +1 *light steel shield*, +1 *ghost touch longsword*, mwk composite (Str 16) longbow with 20 arrows and 5 +1 *undead bane arrows*, mwk dagger, backpack, healer's kit, scroll case, silver holy symbol, mwk manacles, *everburning hooded lantern*

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Bane (Su)** Trajan can imbue one of his weapons with the *bane* weapon special ability as a swift action for up to 7 rounds each day that need not be used consecutively. He can change the target of the bane ability as a swift action.

**Challenge (Ex)** Once per day, as a swift action, Trajan can challenge a foe to combat. He gains a +1 bonus to damage against his challenged foe, a -2 penalty to Armor Class against opponents other than his challenged foe, and a +1 morale bonus to his saving throws while threatening the target of his challenge. The challenge remains in effect until the target is dead, unconscious, or the combat has ended.

**Cunning Initiative (Ex)** Trajan adds his Wisdom bonus on initiative checks, in addition to his Dexterity modifier.

**Detect Alignment (Sp)** At will, Trajan can use *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, or *detect law*, but only one of these at any given time

**Discern Lies (Sp)** Up to 7 rounds each day, as an immediate action, Trajan can *discern lies*, as the spell. These rounds need not be used consecutively.

**Domain** Trajan has the *gentle rest* ability from the *Repose* domain. He can use it 6 times per day.

**Judgments (Su)** As a swift action three times per day, Trajan gains one of the following abilities: *destruction* (+3 sacred bonus to weapon damage), *healing* (fast healing 3), *justice* (+2 sacred bonus on all attack rolls), *piercing* (+3 sacred bonus on concentration and caster level checks to overcome spell resistance), *purity* (+2 sacred bonus to saving throws), *resiliency* (DR 2/magic), *resistance* (resist 6 to acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic), or *smiting* (weapons count as magic and lawful for bypassing DR). He switch abilities as a swift action once per round. These abilities end as soon as combat ends.

**Monster Lore (Ex)** Trajan gains his Wisdom modifier on all Knowledge skill checks when making skill checks to identify the abilities and weaknesses of creatures.

**Mount (Ex)** Trajan has a loyal and trusty steed named Ludvik, a male horse. Trajan is effectively a 1st-level druid for the purpose of determining Ludvik's statistics. Trajan suffers no armor check penalty to Ride checks with Ludvik, and Ludvik is considered combat trained and has Armor Proficiency (light) as a bonus feat, but does not have the *share spells* special ability.

**Order (Ex)** Trajan must obey the edicts of his order, striving to protect the faith and all those who follow its teachings, from priest to common man. He must adhere to the strictures of the faith, promote its cause whenever possible, and serve the agents of the divine.

**Solo Tactics (Ex)** Trajan's allies are treated as possessing the same teamwork feats as him. This ability does not actually grant his allies any bonuses from these feats.

**Stern Gaze (Ex)** Trajan gains a +3 morale bonus to all Intimidate and Sense Motive skill checks.

**Tactician (Ex)** Trajan has gained the teamwork feat *Outflank* as a bonus feat. Once per day, as a standard action, he can grant allies the benefit of *Outflank* for 3 rounds.

**Teamwork Feats** Three times each day, as a standard action, he can change his most recently gained teamwork feat (*Precise Strike*), gaining a different teamwork feat.

**Boon** If Trajan is impressed by the PCs' efforts and is convinced they are trustworthy, he may show them to one of his safe houses, containing a secret priest-hole that leads to a nondescript lead-lined chamber.

**DOSTYAN TREEL CR 7**

**XP 4,800**  
Male half-elf ranger 2/rogue 5/assassin 1  
LE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +16

**DEFENSE**

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

**hp** 50 (8 HD; 2d10+6d8+8)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +1; +2 vs. enchantments

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **Immune** sleep

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk short sword +9 (1d6+1/19-20)

**Ranged** +1 *composite shortbow* +9 (1d6+2/x3)

**Special Attacks** death attack (DC 13), favored enemy (human +2), sneak attack +4d6 plus 4 bleed

**STATISTICS**

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

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Catch Off Guard, Combat Expertise, Extra Rogue Talent, Precise Shot<sup>8</sup>, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse

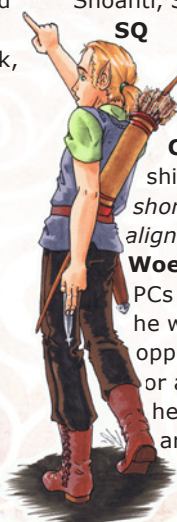
**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Bluff +12, Climb +7, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +8, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +7, Handle Animal +5, Heal +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering, geography, nature) +6, Knowledge (local) +10, Linguistics +9, Perception +16, Profession (cook) +4, Ride +7, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +13, Survival +11, Swim +5, Use Magic Device +5; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

**Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin, Hallit, Shadowtongue, Shoanti, Skald, Varisian

**SQ** combat style (archery), poison use, rogue talents (bleeding attack, slow reactions, surprise attack), track +1, trapfinding +2, wild empathy +2

**Combat Gear** blue whinnis (4); **Gear** mwk chain shirt, mwk short sword, +1 *composite (Str +1) shortbow* with 20 arrows, *amulet of undetectable alignment*, mwk thieves' tools

**Woe** If Dostyan is able to prove that Trajan or the PCs have discovered the true source of the killings, he will relay this information to his master at the first opportunity, either via their nightly scrying meetings or a disreputable messenger. If they show signs of heading straight for Mircea's castle, he can arrange for bandits to waylay them en route. ?





# Jumping the Tracks

by Carl "Tokoj" Rossi

**I**t's a problem for most GMs: "What if they *don't* go that way?" In other words, "I've presented this adventure hook, but I'm not sure the players will take it." Just as GMs don't want their players sidestepping the adventure, no player wants to hear: "You can't go that way!"

While players and GMs may call for a more open, "sandbox" style of adventure, there are many equally, if not more, enjoyable types of adventures that require players to think rather linearly. Over the years, I've come up with a few solutions for this.

## All Roads Lead to Rome

I can't take credit for this method. I first came across this in a module written by Tracy Hickman and Margaret Weiss. The players were given a scenario that required them to go in a specific direction. They weren't told what that direction was, because it didn't matter. One choice would take them directly there, but all the other choices would eventually bring about the same result.

One of my players belittles that module for using this method, saying that it's basically forcing the players to go where the module wants them to go. He says it would be better to just tell the players where they needed to go. What he doesn't know is that I've used that technique in about half the sessions I've GMed for him. I use it not only in situations where players are going the wrong way, but also to give a more open feel to an adventure that might otherwise seem restrictive. I'll give you an example, but I'll put it in modern terms to avoid having to present the campaign world's entire background:

Imagine that a group of people suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the Manhattan Project during World War II. The site is located on an open plane with a battalion of the country's best troops guarding it. For the adventure to proceed, the players must be captured and questioned. There is no escape possible.

But there are lots of things can do before they get captured. They can surrender, fight until overwhelmed or try to sneak off and discover that the country employs mages and rogues to prevent that. Once captured, they can break out of their cells and discover that they're overwhelmed, yet again, because the place is very well guarded.

You can even turn this into a major part of the adventure, if your group is stubborn enough (mine wasn't). They only see ten guards or so to begin with, but after a few random rolls that mean nothing to you, more appear. Then *more*.

Since you don't want to make it look like you have it in for the PCs (you don't, do you?), you even say, "You're not very lucky today."

You're making them unlucky, but they don't need to know that. The cell guard might fall asleep to allow them to get out and their gear might "luckily" be nearby, but eventually that "bad luck" you're generating catches up to them.

## This Above All: Play

When things are going the wrong way, a very simple and often overlooked solution is to appeal directly to the players' desire to keep playing.

Let's say they don't want to go to the ruins outside of town. They'd rather investigate the crypts you mentioned a few sessions back.

You do remember telling them about the crypts, don't you?

It was a random comment you made to help the town seem a little more developed. But some of the players would get

together for a *Living Dead* marathon on the night before your game, and now they're more interested in fighting undead than finding out why wolves are suddenly eating sheep in the ruins.

Because you're a good GM and even the best adventure hook won't change their minds, you describe the crypts to the players. But there's nothing there. The place is empty. There's nothing for them to do. They can, however, hear the howling of wolves in the direction of the ruins.

Established groups of players might make a few jokes about trains, or "choo choo" at you a bit, but they'll get the hint. Then they'll head to the ruins. Letting the players go wherever they want doesn't mean that you have to have something prepared for every place they will go.

Sometimes my players have made more than one false start before heading down the path I had prepared for them. I never use it more than twice, though. If two hints don't work, I appeal directly to their desire to play.

"Look, I haven't finished the crypt part of this, yet. Can we start with the ruins, instead?"

Forget the fact that you never had a crypt part to the adventure. You've told bigger lies as a GM that they've swallowed whole. The important part is that you got them going the way you need and they still feel like they had a valid choice.

You'll need to make good on that promise, though, and that brings me to the third method of keeping things in the sandbox.

## Simple Plans

Another good option when your players want to go in a different direction than you had planned is to add a short adventure that fills the gap. I'm not just talking about published short adventures like the Pathfinder Society Scenarios, although I'll get to those later.

Most GMs have a list of creatures they've used in many adventures. The longer you've been GMing, the more you're likely to have. But even the first-time GM has picked up some creatures while preparing the adventure that can be used in other parts of duplicate easily.

In the example above, my players insisted on going to the crypt. Instead of having them find an empty crypt, I could have added some undead and turned it into an impromptu mini-adventure.

Undead are easily scalable monsters. A mini-adventure with them is probably the simplest to come up with on the fly. It doesn't need to be much.

In this case, I could have an encounter outside in the graveyard, one inside the crypt, and then a final big fight in the deepest chamber. Use successive encounters to help figure out how difficult you should make things. This is a simple pattern you can apply to most any location or setting:

Start with a small group of simple enemies (about one for each party member). Give each enemy the same hit points as the highest character in the group.

Based on the results of the first encounter, add more of these enemies to the next encounter. You want the fight to be challenging, but not overwhelming.

For the final fight, use half the number of enemies as you did in the previous fight, then add one nasty one with a hit point total equal to half the combined total of all creatures from the previous encounter. Give this creature a few special abilities, for good measure.

In the crypt this would result in my party of four facing four skeletons in the first encounter. Each skeleton has the same hit dice as the party's average level and has 40 hit points, since the fighter has 37 hp (rounding up).



In the first fight, the cleric's channeling ability was very effective against the undead. He still has a number of uses remaining for this ability, so I double the number of skeletons in the next encounter.

If that fight goes well, then the final encounter will be four skeletons with 40 hps each as well as a big skeleton with 160 hps and maybe a *necklace of fireballs I* to use against the party. However, I would give the *necklace* just enough charges to leave the party a few afterwards.

I can tie the adventure into my campaign by making the big skeleton a dead noble who ruled from the nearby ruins. A necklace the party finds in the crypt now acts as a key to a door in the ruins. The door wasn't locked in my original plan, but it is now.

This mini-adventure might take up an entire gaming session, but your players get to battle the undead they were hoping for, while you get to lead them back to the ruins without making it obvious. The players just think that you were planning a huge adventure hook they couldn't pass up.

Instead of using a quick "template" like the one above, you might keep a library of one shot modules, like those Pathfinder Society Scenarios, to use on short notice. If you have a scenario that might work, take a short break in the session to review the details and modify it and use that instead.

It bears repeating: Never tell your players, "You can't go that way!" Let them jump the tracks all they want. Now you've got some tools to make sure that whatever tracks they're on will lead them to a fun game. ?

## Words from Many Roads

by Russell "Sorical Minoi Mousefoot" Estes

**U**nbearable isn't it? The suffering of strangers, the agony of friends—there is a secret song in Ustalav and its sound is like razors through flesh. I am here to show you. Help you see black miracles, dark wonders, and unknown pleasures wondrous to behold. Read on brave travelers.

### Jervis Stoot, To the Children of Sandpoint

Beware.  
Come inside,  
Come inside.  
Evil is in the air.  
A man of shadow,  
A man of hate,  
Always looking  
For children  
Out  
Late.  
Don't be caught,  
Not alone.  
He loves his work,  
He makes it art  
Made of skin,  
Hung on bone  
On display,  
By others

He tucked away,  
So mind me now.  
Come inside,  
No safer place  
Than your bed  
To hide.

### Whispers in the Attic

Of toys  
And dust  
Lies a doll,  
Of broken trust.  
Of cloth  
And bone  
Calls a voice,  
To a child alone.

### Doctor Calls

In the war  
Against depravity,  
Shall be heralded a hero  
Who rids the world,  
Of those  
That do not belong.  
It is time,  
For a house call, my friend  
Too long  
Have I watched you  
Sicken my city.

### Virlych

A land plundered,  
And left barren,  
From rotted womb  
Abominations  
Spill forth, accursed.  
Kingdom ruined,  
Denizens await  
Commands to come  
The whispers speak.

### Zon-Kuthon

Oh midnight lord,  
I pray  
Experience my flesh,  
I pray  
Grant me a taste,  
But one,  
Of your dark decadence,  
I pray  
Show me  
The way of pain,  
Pleasures to rival my own,  
I pray  
What sweet suffering  
Lies ahead,  
Oh midnight lord  
When I offer my body,  
With tears to shed. ?



# The Hole Behind Midnight

For Adults Only

by Clinton J. Boomer



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### Goal

The goal for the fanzine is to create a collection of fan-created articles and supporting art set in Paizo's Pathfinder Chronicles world of Golarion.

*Wayfinder #6* will be focusing on the one of the northernmost realms: the Lands of the Linnorm Kings! Please use the *Inner Sea World Guide* as your main reference (as well as that handy-dandy [PathfinderWiki](#)!) In the case of a plethora of articles on similar subjects, preference will be given to articles that follow this theme. As always, crunch, fiction, and flavor articles are welcome! In addition, writers can submit to one of several regular series featured in *Wayfinder*:

- **Advice:** Have some advice you want to pass on to new GMs or players to the world of Golarion?
- **Bestiary:** New creatures to terrorize your PCs with!
- **Prestigious:** This article is devoted to a new prestige class for the world of Golarion.
- **Realm Building:** The Kingmaker Adventure Path introduced a lot of new goodies for building armies, cities and kingdoms. This column is focused on building upon those rules.
- **Side Treks:** Side Treks feature short outlines for a sidetrek adventure set in a particular region of Golarion. For *Wayfinder #6*, this region is the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. One sidetrek outline per submission for this column. Please reference earlier *Wayfinders* for the layout for this article. Submission size: 325 words.
- **Tales from the Front:** Fiction articles based on any of Paizo's adventure modules or paths.
- **Taste of Golarion:** We're continuing collections for The Golarion Cookbook! One recipe per submission for this column.
- **Weal or Woe?** Two NPCs (including statblocks), one helpful, one not so much. Include hooks for the PCs to know (or hate) this NPC and how to use them in a campaign. Include a boon (Weal) and drawback (Woe) for the NPCs in your article.

### Guidelines

- *Thou shalt not disregard canon, thou shalt build upon it.*
- *Keep in mind thy audience.* Keep it PG-13. No slash fic/porn fantasies, cheesecake/beefcake/fan service.
- *Short and sweet.* Unless otherwise specified, article sizes are 750 and 1,500 words. These are HARD targets, not a range, so come as close as possible to these targets. Anything over 1,500 words will have to be pre-approved by the Editor-in-Chief.
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- Include your name and board name in your submission - example, "Liz 'Lilith' Courts". Your entries will go through editing passes for clarity and concision. Depending on time constraints, you may or may not receive feedback on the editing process and your script.
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