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BURNT OFFERINGS

BY JAMES JACOBS



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CHAPTER BACKGROUND

THE COASTAL TOWN OF SANDPOINT HAS FACED FEW TRIALS AND DANGERS OVER THE COURSE OF ITS FORTY-TWO YEAR HISTORY, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THAT IS ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE. UNKNOWN TO THE TOWN'S FOUNDERS, THEY CHOSE TO BUILD THEIR COMMUNITY OVER THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT STRONGHOLD ONCE USED AS LABORATORY AND PRISON, A PLACE WHERE HORRIFIC EXPERIMENTS AND UNHOLY EXPLORATIONS INTO WHAT DIVIDES MAN FROM MONSTER TOOK PLACE. THESE ARE THE CATACOMBS OF WRATH, A PLACE WHERE ARCANISTS EXPLORED AND PERFECTED THE STOLEN ARTS OF LIFESHAPING AND FLESHWARPING, ONE OF SEVERAL SUCH SITES USED BY RUNELORD ALAZNIST'S APPRENTICES DURING THASSILON'S HEIGHT, WHEN THASSILON FELL, THESE CATACOMBS WENT DORMANT, BUT THE ONE BURIED UNDER SANDPOINT WAS NOT FATED TO STAY THAT WAY.



Five years ago and hundreds of miles from the Varisian coast, a wicked and ambitious stone giant named Mokmurian awakened a slumbering tyrant—Runelord Karzoug. In his time thousands of years ago, at the height of Thassilon's rule, Karzoug drew his magic from traditions closely tied to the seven primal sins. After many centuries of magical slumber, Karzoug wasted no time in beginning his triumphant return by activating an ancient Thassilonian artifact called a *runewell*, a device capable of extracting magical essence from the souls of certain creatures who, in life, exemplified specific spiritual traits—in this case, greed. Only these souls were useful to Karzoug in completing his return to life, and so he sent Mokmurian, now his puppet, back into the world to make ready the harvest. Karzoug uses a potent scrying device called a *soul lens* to focus on sacrifices prepared with the proper rituals and marked with the Sihedron Rune (the ancient symbol of all seven schools of Thassilonian magic). As the sacrifice dies, the soul lens draws his soul across any intervening distance to empower the *runewell*. Karzoug's growing need for greedy souls has spurred Mokmurian and his stone giant kin to further and further violence, and in time, the PCs must stand before these giants. Yet for now, the activation of the ancient *runewell* has had another, unanticipated, effect. Other runelords kept similar receptacles of magical sin as well, and when Karzoug activated his *runewell*, these others also flared to dangerous life.

In most cases, the other *runewells* were hidden deep underwater, buried far underground, or lost in remote regions, and this sudden flare of ancient magic had little noticeable effect. Yet in the Catacombs of Wrath below the sleepy town of Sandpoint, where Runelord Alaznist kept a *minor runewell* keyed to the sin of wrath, these effects were not so isolated. Although possessing but a shadow of the power

of a true *runewell*, it sent a shock wave of magical energy up through the town above, manifesting in the form of violent nightmares from which many folk woke in a terrible rage that vanished in the span of a heartbeat. In a few unfortunate cases, however, the wrath found fertile soil.

Lonjiku Kaijitsu, a bitter noble who still seethed with rage at being cuckolded years before, woke in the middle of the night, called his wife to the back porch of their cliffside manor, and threw her over the edge to die on the jagged rocks below.

Jervas Stoot, an eccentric artist who channeled his rage from years of paternal abuse into the creation of hauntingly beautiful woodcarvings of birds, began to lay his plans for the murder of nearly two dozen folk whom he felt had wronged him over the years.

Nualia Tobyn, left pregnant and abandoned by a local cur and shamed in her foster father's eyes, finally succumbed to her anger and forsook the goddess of dreams and stars for the goddess of monsters and madness, promising herself that she would burn her father and his church to the ground.

These three unfortunates became consumed by their wrath, and their actions over the course of the next several months came to be known as the Late Unpleasantness (see page 372 for a full accounting of these events). Those days are over now, fresh in memory still, but thankfully past. The people of Sandpoint now prepare to consecrate a new cathedral to replace the old one that recently burnt to the ground, and are eager to put all reminders of the Late Unpleasantness behind them for good.

Lonjiku's murderous act has gone all but unnoticed, and Stoot is long dead, yet Nualia has not been idle over the past several years. She is ready to finish what she started with that first fire. This time, all of Sandpoint shall become burnt offerings to her insane goddess.




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CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

The PCs attend the Swallowtail Festival (a ritual to consecrate Sandpoint's new cathedral) and end up defending the town from a goblin raid. In the days to follow, the PCs come to terms with their growing local fame, making friends and contacts among Sandpoint's citizens. As rumors of massing goblin armies build, the disappearance of a local tavern owner leads the PCs to uncover treachery within The Sandpoint Glassworks and the existence of an ancient catacomb below the town. An investigation of these discoveries reveals two things: that monsters dwell below the city and that the goblin raid on the town was but the first the monsters have planned.

In order to save Sandpoint, the PCs must travel to Thistletop, the lair of the most powerful goblin tribe in the region, where they can confront the woman whose madness and wrath presents such a menace, yet who is herself the tip of a much larger conspiracy that will soon threaten all of Varisia.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Rise of the Runelords assumes that the adventuring party consists of four PCs, and that experience points are earned on the fast advancement track. At this rate, you can expect your party to gain approximately three levels of experience in each chapter of this adventure. The start of each chapter includes an advancement track that lists the assumed points during the chapter at which the party will be leveling up. Use these tracks as guidelines—if you reach a point of the adventure where the PCs are lower level than the region's encounters

expect them to be, you might consider incorporating a few additional encounters of your own design to give the PCs a chance to catch up in level. Alternatively, if you don't give out experience points in your campaign but simply inform the PCs when they can level up their characters, you can use the advancement track as a guide for when the PCs can level up.

You can even use the medium or slow advancement tracks if you wish. On the medium track, you'll find that as the adventure progresses the PCs will be about a level below what's expected, while on the slow track you'll find them to be two (or at times even three) levels lower than expected. A particularly experienced group of players might enjoy the challenge that these slower tracks can thus provide!

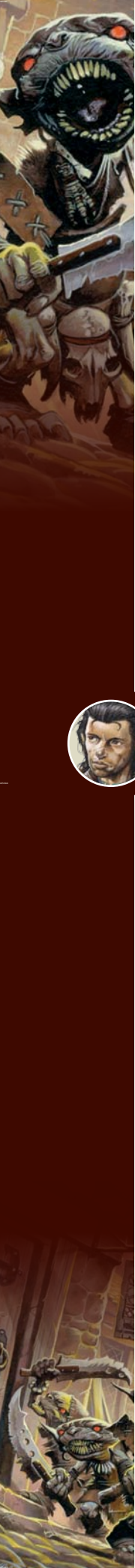
STARTING CHAPTER ONE: The player characters should begin as brand-new 1st-level adventurers (preferably with campaign traits selected from those provided in the *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition Player's Guide*; see page 7).

2ND LEVEL: The PCs should reach 2nd level after dealing with the situation in the Glassworks, just before they enter the Catacombs of Wrath.

3RD LEVEL: The PCs should reach 3rd level early in the exploration of Thistletop—or perhaps even at the climax of the Catacombs of Wrath.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: The PCs should reach 4th level by the conclusion of this chapter.





NUALIA'S STORY



The primary villain of this chapter is a bitter aasimar woman named Nualia. She was a foundling raised by Sandpoint's previous religious leader, a man named Ezakien Tobyn, and her childhood was lonely and sad. Her unearthly beauty made the other children either jealous or shy, and many of them took to playing cruel jokes on her. The adults in town weren't much better—many of the superstitious Varisians viewed Nualia as blessed by Desna, a sort of "reverse deformity." Rumors that her touch or proximity could cure warts and rashes, that locks of her hair



brewed into tea could increase fertility, and that her voice could drive out evil spirits led to a succession of awkward and humiliating requests over the years. Poor Nualia felt more like a freak than a young girl by the time she came of age, so when Delek Viskanta, a local Varisian youth, began to court her, she practically fell into his arms in gratitude.

Knowing her father wouldn't approve of a relationship with a Varisian (he wanted her to remain pure so she could join a prestigious convent), they kept the affair secret. The couple met many times in hidden places, a favorite being an abandoned smuggler's tunnel under town that Delek had discovered as a child. Before long, Nualia realized she was pregnant. When she told Delek, he revealed his true colors and, after calling her a slut and a harlot, fled Sandpoint rather than face her father's wrath. Nualia's shock quickly turned to rage, yet she had nowhere to vent her anger. She bottled it up, and when her father discovered her delicate condition, his reaction to her indiscretions only furthered her shame and anger. He forbade her to leave the church, lectured her nightly, and made her pray to Desna for forgiveness. In so doing, he unknowingly nurtured her growing hate.

When the *minor runewell* in the Catacombs of Wrath below Sandpoint flared to life, Nualia's own anger was a magnet to its magic. The wrathful energies suffused her mind and she flew into a frenzy. Seven months pregnant, she miscarried her child later that night, a child whose monstrously deformed shape she only glimpsed before blanching midwives stole it away to burn it in secret. As the child had been conceived in the smuggler's tunnels below town, in close proximity to a hidden shrine to Lamashtu (the goddess of monstrous births), the child itself was deformed and horrific. The double shock of losing a child and the realization she had been carrying a

fiend in her belly for 7 months was too much. Nualia fell into a coma. As Nualia slept, she dreamed unhealthy dreams. Fueled by the wrath from below and the taint of Lamashtu, Nualia became further obsessed with the cruel demon goddess and the conviction that her wretched life was inflicted on her by those around her. She came to see her angelic heritage as a curse, and the demon-sent nightmares showed her how to expunge this taint from her body and soul, replacing it with chaos and cruelty. When she finally woke, Nualia was someone new, someone who didn't

flinch at what Lamashtu asked of her. She jammed her father's door shut as he slept, lit the church on fire, and fled Sandpoint. The locals assumed Nualia had burned in the fire, a tragedy made all the worse by the death of Father Tobyn as well. Yet Nualia lived. She fled to Magnimar, where she enlisted the aid of a group of Norgorber-worshiping killers known as the Skinsaw Cult. With their aid, she tracked down Delek and murdered him. Yet his death did not fill her need for revenge—it only quickened her need for more of the same, for Sandpoint and its hated citizens still lived.

Seeing a kindred spirit in the tortured woman, the mysterious leader of the Skinsaw Cult gave Nualia a medallion bearing a carving of a seven-pointed star called a "Sihedron medallion." Nualia learned that she had a larger role to play, and that her dreams were a map to her destiny. Taking the advice to heart, Nualia returned to Sandpoint and found herself drawn to the brick wall in the smuggler's tunnels where she and Delek had conceived her deformed child. Nualia bashed down the wall, and in so doing, discovered the Catacombs of Wrath and the quasit Erylium, also a follower of Lamashtu. For many months, Nualia studied under Erylium's tutelage. During this time, Nualia received another vision from Lamashtu—a vision of a monstrous goblin wolf imprisoned in an underground room. In Nualia's dreams, she learned that this creature, a barghest named Malfeshnekor, was also one of Lamashtu's chosen. If she could find him and free him, he would not only help her achieve her vengeance against the town of Sandpoint, but he would be the key in cleansing her body of what she had come to see as her "celestial taint." Nualia wanted to be one of Lamashtu's children now. She wanted to become a monster herself.





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PART ONE: FESTIVAL AND FIRE

FOR FIVE YEARS, THE FAITHFUL OF SANDPOINT HAVE ATTENDED CHURCH IN TEMPORARY STRUCTURES ERECTED AFTER FIRE DESTROYED THE PREVIOUS TEMPLE, AND WHILE THEIR NEW RELIGIOUS LEADER WAS HELPFUL, KIND, AND WISE, CHURCH WASN'T THE SAME. NOW, THE NEW CATHEDRAL IS FINALLY DONE. ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR THE SWALLOWTAIL FESTIVAL TO RENEW THE SITE'S BLESSINGS FROM THE GODS AND IT WILL BE AS IF THE SANDPOINT FIRE HAD NEVER OCCURRED.

If you're using the campaign traits from the *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition Player's Guide*, the PCs should already be in Sandpoint when this adventure begins. If they're not, you'll need to arrange for their arrival before starting. The Swallowtail Festival itself is held on the Autumnal Equinox—generally on the 22nd or 23rd of the month of Rova.

Make sure to familiarize yourself with the town of Sandpoint, detailed on pages 370–387, before you begin this adventure. Much of the first half of “Burnt Offerings” is left for the PCs to experience in an organic order, and while they wait for the next stage of the adventure to unfold, you should encourage them to explore the town of Sandpoint. Likewise, they'll be returning to Sandpoint several times during *Rise of the Runelords*, and as such, a strong familiarity with the town on your part will help make these visits easier to run.

THE SWALLOWTAIL FESTIVAL

The Swallowtail Festival begins promptly, as scheduled, on the Autumnal Equinox. The square before the church quickly becomes crowded as locals and travelers arrive, and several merchant tents featuring food, clothes, local crafts, and souvenirs are there to meet them.

WELCOMING SPEECHES: The turnout for the opening speeches is quite respectable, and the four keynote speakers each deliver short but well-received welcomes to the festival. Mayor Deverin's friendly attitude and excitement prove contagious as she welcomes visitors to town and jokes about how even Larz Rovanky, the local tanner (and notorious workaholic) managed to tear himself away from the tannery to attend, much to everyone's amusement (except Larz's). Sheriff Belor Hemlock brings the crowd down a bit with his dour mood, his reminder to be safe around the evening's bonfire, and his request for a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives in the fire that claimed the town's previous church several years ago. The next speaker is scheduled to be local nobleman Lonjiku Kaijitsu, but a sudden illness has prevented him from attending the ceremony (this

isn't something that surprises the locals, given Lonjiku's well-known dislike of frivolity and festivals). Sandpoint's own showman Cyrdak Drokkus is more than up to the challenge of bringing the crowd's mood back up with his rousing anecdotes. He delivers a not-completely-irreverent recap of the long process the town went through to finance and construct the new cathedral. He throws in a bit of self-promotion at the end, as is his wont, inviting everyone to stop by the Sandpoint Theater the following evening to check out his new production of “The Harpy's Curse,” revealing that the lead role of Avisera the harpy queen will be played by none other than the famous Magnimarian diva Allishanda! Finally, Father Zantus steps up to give a short speech thanking everyone for coming before declaring the Swallowtail Festival underway.

FESTIVAL FUN AND GAMES: Numerous games and contests take place during the day, including sack races, games of hide-and-seek, weight-lifting challenges, balance beam contests, tug-of-war events, and the like. The PCs can take part in as many or as few of these games as they wish—you can use these games as a method to introduce the PCs to each other or to key NPCs in the town. Resolve games with opposed ability score or skill checks. Winners of these games generally win nothing more than bragging rights for the rest of the day, but for many of Sandpoint's residents, this is a fine prize indeed!

SWALLOWTAIL RELEASE: At noon, Father Zantus and his acolytes wheel a large covered wagon into the square, and after recounting the short parable of how Desna first fell to earth and was nursed back to health by a blind child whom she transformed into an immortal butterfly as a reward for her aid, they pull aside the wagon's cover, releasing the thousand children of Desna—a furious storm of swallowtail butterflies that swarm into the air in a spiraling riot of color to a great cheer from the crowd. Throughout the rest of the day, children futilely chase butterflies, never quite quick enough to catch them.

LUNCH: Lunch is provided free, at the expense of Sandpoint's taverns. Each brings its best dishes—this event is as much a marketing push by the taverns to win



MAPS FOR THE MAYHEM

The Swallowtail Festival map is also available as *Flip-Mat: Town Square* (available at paizo.com). When you move on to the “Die, Dog, Die!” fight, use the map of Northgate on the Flip-Mat’s opposite side.





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new customers as it is to feed a hungry crowd. It soon becomes apparent that the darling of the lunch is, once again, Ameiko Kaijitsu, whose remarkable curry-spiced salmon and early winterdrop mead easily overshadow the other offerings, such as the Hagfish's lobster chowder or the White Deer's peppercorn venison.

CONSECRATION: Finally, as the sun begins to set, Father Zantus takes the central podium, uses a thunderstone to attract everyone's attention, and clears his throat as he prepares to recite the Prayer of First Dreaming. Unfortunately, the thunderstone's detonation is also the prearranged trigger for the goblins, who have slowly been infiltrating the town while its citizens are merrily distracted.

GOBLINS IN THE STREETS!

Goblins are sneaky little monsters, but even so, their infiltration of Sandpoint required the aid of a few key assistants. Most notable among these is local noble and businessman Lonjiku Kaijitsu. Although Lonjiku's involvement in the assault is far from willing, it's crucial to the goblins' plans. Lonjiku's been blackmailed, and by his own son Tsuto, no less. Tsuto threatened to reveal his father's ties to one of Sandpoint's most notorious Sczarni families (a loosely affiliated network of Varisian criminals), promising to keep quiet if his father would simply comply with a few "innocent" requests; namely, making sure that someone leaves the north town gate open, that a ladder is left against the wall in the cemetery, and that on the night before the big festival no one would be at the Sandpoint Glassworks. Shamed by his son's knowledge of his ties to the Sczarni and his own lack of courage to stand up to his offspring, and ignorant of Tsuto's alliance with the local goblins or his part in the plan to raid Sandpoint, Lonjiku set things into motion and then feigned illness—he remains in his home on the bluff overlooking Sandpoint during the Swallowtail Festival.

When Father Zantus uses a thunderstone to signal the start of the cathedral's consecration, three different groups of goblins quickly mobilize. One group (smuggled in by Tsuto in a covered wagon and left behind some buildings south of the festival square) emerges and races north into the festival grounds. Another band invades via the open northern gate. Both of these groups are timed to throw the town into panic and distract the town guards from realizing that a third band of goblins is infiltrating the city's cemetery to steal the remains of the town's previous religious leader, Ezakien Tobyn.

Dozens of goblins take part in the raid, members of five different tribes scattered throughout the Sandpoint hinterlands who have been organized into this strike by the most powerful local goblin tribe of them all—the Thistletop goblins.

When the goblins attack, they shriek and leap and race and cackle, taking great joy in the panic and fear they spread among the humans (whom most goblins insultingly call "longshanks"). Some goblins wave

torches and light tents on fire, while others chase children and pets with ill intent. The entire time, goblin warchanters sing a horrifically catchy and nerve-racking goblin song at the top of their lungs, further spurring their kin into murderous frenzy. Everywhere the PCs look, goblins tear through merchant stalls, menace locals with their dogslicers, throw rocks through windows, and otherwise make terrors of themselves.

There are 30 goblins raiding Sandpoint, but there's no need to run combat with all of them. You can focus strictly on the goblins the PCs encounter, using the following three encounters to introduce players to the kneebiting horror that is the goblin.

INITIAL ASSAULT (CR 1)

As Father Zantus takes the stage to begin his speech, the PCs should be nearby. The point of this encounter is to force the PCs, who might or might not yet know each other, to work together to fight against a group of goblins. Read or paraphrase the following to start the encounter.



A sharp retort, like the crack of distant thunder, slices through the excited crowd as the sun's setting rays paint the western sky. A stray dog that has crawled under a nearby wagon to sleep starts awake, and the buzz of two dozen conversations quickly hushes as all heads turn toward the central podium, where a beaming Father Zantus has taken the stage. He clears his throat, takes a breath to speak, and suddenly a woman's scream slices through the air. A few moments later, another scream rises, then another. Beyond them, a sudden surge of strange new voices rises—high-pitched, tittering shrieks that sound not quite human. The crowd parts and something low to the ground races by, giggling with disturbing glee as the stray dog gives a pained yelp and then collapses with a gurgle, its throat cut open from ear to ear. As blood pools around its head, the raucous sound of a strange song begins, chanted from shrill, scratchy voices.

THE GOBLIN SONG

GOBLINS CHEW AND GOBLINS BITE.
GOBLINS CUT AND GOBLINS FIGHT.
STAB THE DOG AND CUT THE HORSE,
GOBLINS EAT AND TAKE BY FORCE!

GOBLINS RACE AND GOBLINS JUMP
GOBLINS SLASH AND GOBLINS BUMP.
BURN THE SKIN AND MASH THE HEAD,
GOBLINS HERE AND YOU BE DEAD!

CHASE THE BABY, CATCH THE PUP.
BONK THE HEAD TO SHUT IT UP.
BONES BE CRACKED, FLESH BE STEWED,
WE BE GOBLINS! YOU BE FOOD!





CREATURES: Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check sees that the shape that raced by and killed the dog now hides at the wagon's edge—a single goblin, licking the blood from its dogslicer as it looks excitedly at the crowd, seeking out a new target. The song is a nameless goblin rhyme, performed by several goblin warchanters and intended to give the goblins a boost of bardic music to spur them on. There are several goblin warchanters generating this effect, and they spread out their performances so that for the first 5 rounds of these first two initial combats, all goblins gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against fear and charm effects and on attack and damage rolls—these bonuses are included in their stat blocks below.

In this initial battle, a group of three goblins (including the one who just killed the dog) attacks the PCs.

GOBLINS (3)

| XP | CR | HP |
|----------|-----|--------|
| 135 each | 1/3 | 6 each |

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +3 (1d4+1/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat You should take care to present these goblins' tactics in battle as scatterbrained at best. One goblin might try to clamber up onto a nearby table of food (Climb DC 5) so he can gain a +1 bonus on attacks for higher ground against a PC. Another might get distracted by a plate of salmon and waste his action stuffing his pockets with food for later. A third could grab up a big carving knife if his dogslicer breaks. Each time a goblin takes an action, he should interact in

some way with the environment, even if doing so wastes an opportunity to hurt a PC. The point of this battle isn't to test PC resources but to set the scene and flavor for the insanity that is the goblin.

Morale These goblins are convinced that the plan to raid Sandpoint can't fail and are far too excited to consider the possibility of losing the battle. As such, they fight to the death—but more by accident than out of any real sense of bravery.

GOBLIN PYROS (CR 2)

After the PCs defeat the initial three goblins, give them a few rounds to recover from the first battle. As they do, impress upon them the chaos that has engulfed Sandpoint. Goblins race everywhere, running amok and singing and slashing indiscriminately. At the point the PCs seem about ready to take action, a sudden bloom of fire from a nearby unattended wagon or cart should grab their attention.

CREATURES: A group of goblins has found the cart full of fuel for the sunset bonfire just south of the festival grounds and has lit it on fire. Even if the PCs don't rush to investigate the burning wagon, they are soon confronted with several cackling and shrieking goblins armed with dogslicers and torches. As soon as the goblins see the PCs, they shriek in delight and attack. These goblins have not only armed themselves with burning torches (weapons they wield with maniacal delight), but also have the support of one of their warchanters—a goblin bard with great skill at whipping fellow goblins





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into furious, shrieking frenzies by using her bardic performance ability.

| GOBLINS (3) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 6 each |
|-------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|
|-------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +3 (1d4+1/19–20) or torch –1 (1d2+1 plus 1 fire)

TACTICS

During Combat On the first round, the goblins gleefully try to burn PCs with their torches, but as soon as one of them is slain, the surviving goblins realize the fight is for real and switch to their dogslicers.

Morale If the warchanter dies, remaining goblin warriors panic and flee.

| GOBLIN WARCHANTER | XP 200 | CR 1/2 | HP 9 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|

Goblin bard 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 9 (1d8+1)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dogslicer +1 (1d4/19–20) or whip +1 (1d2 nonlethal)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4+1/×3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 5 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1)

Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st (2/day)—*cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 12)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 11), *ghost sound* (DC 11), *mage hand*, *message*

TACTICS

During Combat The warchanter continues her bardic performance during combat, using her whip to try to trip PCs. She casts *hideous laughter* on any PC who seems to be particularly dangerous, and *cure light wounds* on herself after she is first wounded.

Morale The warchanter fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +0; **CMB** –2; **CMD** 12

Feats Martial Weapon Proficiency (dogslicer)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Linguistics +3, Perception +5, Perform (sing) +5, Ride +8, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ bardic knowledge +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** studded leather, dogslicer, shortbow with 20 arrows, whip, 20 gp

DEVELOPMENT: After tangling with the first two groups of goblins, the PCs are likely to be wounded.

Keep them on their toes by describing goblin antics around them (perhaps a goblin leaps off a roof in an attempt to land on a victim but misses and breaks his neck, or maybe a goblin throws a lit torch at a fleeing mother only to have it land on another goblin and light his armor on fire), but allow them a few rounds to catch their breath. If they're particularly wounded, Father Zantus rushes to their side. He thanks them for what they're doing to help fight the goblins and can cast up to three *cure light wounds* or use channel energy two more times on the PCs to heal them (he's used the ability already several times to save wounded citizens). He heals 2d6 points of damage with each use of channel energy.

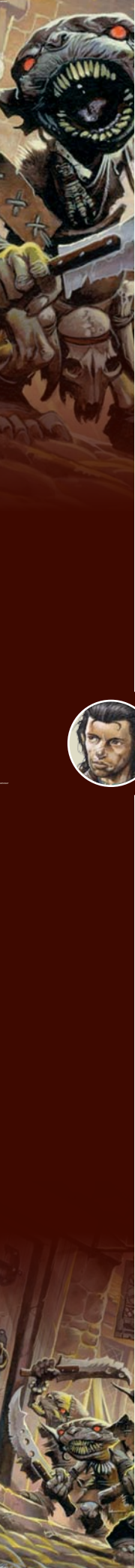
As soon as the PCs have mostly recovered, its time to spring the big fight on them.

DIE, DOG, DIE!

This final event during the goblin raid occurs after things at the festival itself have calmed somewhat. Here and there, the sounds of battle, clanging swords, calls of support by the town guard, and shrieking and singing goblins echo through the streets, but at the festival itself, most of the citizens have fled. One or two goblins remain behind to scavenge food, and many more lie dead (along with a few unfortunate citizens). It should be obvious that the fight has moved on, especially when the sound of a scream and a frantic barking come from the north.



GOBLIN WARCHANTER



CREATURES: Just east of the White Deer, near Sandpoint's north gate, a goblin commando mounted on a goblin dog has bravely attacked a noble and his hunting dog. The man in question is named **ALDERN FOXGLOVE** (CN male human aristocrat 4/rogue 3), a noble destined to play an important role in Chapter Two, but who for now is merely another frightened citizen. Aldern cowers behind a rain barrel where he calls for help, while his dog fights against the commando. As the PCs arrive on the scene, they're just in time to see the goblin commando kill the dog with his horsechopper. The dog crashes dying to the ground as the commando's goblin kin (who were themselves cowering nearby as the dog was handled) throw up a cheer and emerge from hiding.

The goblins are still distracted by their kill, and as they turn their attention to Foxglove, the PCs have the opportunity to attack with surprise. These goblins do not gain the benefits of a warchanter's bardic performance, for by this time, the goblin bards have exhausted their daily uses of this ability.

| GOBLIN COMMANDO | XP | CR | HP |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----|
| | 200 | 1/2 | 12 |

Male goblin ranger 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size)

hp 12 (1d10+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk horsechopper +4 (1d8+1)

Ranged shortbow +5 (1d4/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (animals +2)

TACTICS

During Combat The goblin commando makes sure to use his Mounted Combat feat as often as possible to try to negate an attack each round against his mount, and uses his superior mobility to remain out of melee so he can shoot at the PCs with his bow from dogback (taking the standard -4 penalty for using a ranged weapon while mounted). If all of his goblin warriors are defeated, he drops his bow and races in to fight the PCs in melee.

Morale The commando fights to the death—yet does so more by accident than out of bravery.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Mounted Combat

Skills Handle Animal +3, Linguistics +0, Perception +5, Ride +9, Stealth +13, Survival +5

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ track +1, wild empathy +0

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** studded leather, masterwork horsechopper, shortbow with 20 arrows

| GOBLIN DOG | XP | CR | HP |
|------------|-----|----|----|
| | 400 | 1 | 9 |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

| GOBLINS (3) | XP | CR | HP |
|-------------|----------|-----|--------|
| | 135 each | 1/3 | 6 each |

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +2 (1d4/19-20)

DEVELOPMENT: Once the goblins are dealt with, Aldern thanks the PCs profusely. If one of the PCs is an attractive female human, elf, or half-elf, he focuses his attentions on her, complimenting her on her skills in the fight and on her beauty. Otherwise, he focuses his attention on the PC who seemed to do the most damage in the fight, complimenting him on his skill at arms and bravery.

As he glances about nervously looking for more goblins, he informs the PCs that he'll be in town for a few more days; he's staying at the Rusty Dragon to the south, and when they get a chance, he'd love to talk with them more and perhaps reward them properly for saving his life.

VICTORY!

By the time the PCs defeat the goblin commando and save Aldern Foxglove from his fate, Sandpoint's overall battle against the goblins has been decided. Surviving goblins flee north in droves, in some cases preferring to leap to their certain deaths off the cliff at Junker's Edge rather than be captured. Several of the little menaces are caught alive, but they prove useless when interrogated; none of these goblins know much more than that they were given orders to kill everyone in town and burn down the place. None of the captured goblins can even remember their leader's name, apart from the fact that he was one of "you longshanks." Their leader was on a secret mission to the town's graveyard—that much most goblins can say, but none of them know what that mission was. It was secret, after all!

In fact, this "leader" was Tsuto Kajitsu. He led a group of Thistletop goblins into the cemetery, stole Ezakien Tobyn's remains, and then returned to Thistletop so his lover Nualia could offer the remains to Lamashtu in return for the first stage of her transformation into a demon.

In the shadow of the goblin attack, Sandpoint is hardly interested in finishing up the Swallowtail Festival—citizens retreat to their homes to hide and recover from the day's horrors, yet as they go, they take the time to thank the PCs for saving them. Finally, at some point before the end of the day, the PCs are approached by Ameiko Kajitsu. The innkeeper has been quite impressed with the PCs' actions, and offers them free rooms at the Rusty Dragon for a week as a way to thank them for helping to defeat the goblins.



BURNT OFFERINGS

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PART TWO: LOCAL HEROES

AS SANDPOINT RECOVERS FROM THE ATTACK AND BURIES ITS (THANKFULLY FEW) DEAD, THE CITIZENS DO THEIR BEST TO GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES. THE CATHEDRAL IS CONSECRATED THE NEXT DAY DURING A MUCH MORE SUBDUED AND INDOOR CEREMONY, BUT BY THE END OF THE WEEK, THE GOBLIN ATTACK IS REMEMBERED MOSTLY WITH CHUCKLES. NOW THAT THE TERROR OF THE RAID IS OVER, IMAGES OF GOBLINS ACCIDENTALLY LIGHTING THEMSELVES ON FIRE, GETTING STEPPED ON BY HORSES, OR DROWNING IN HALF-FULL RAIN BARRELS COLOR MEMORIES OF THE RAID IN AN ALMOST COMICAL LIGHT. BUT ONE THING THE LOCALS HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN IS THEIR NEW HEROES.

Unless a PC takes extra care to hide it, his name soon becomes household knowledge. Everywhere the PCs go in town, locals welcome them. A simple walk down Main Street might result in local baker Alma Avertin charging out to press a fresh-baked loaf of bread into the arms of the skinniest PC with worried comments that he must be starving. A visit to the Hagfish brings an immediate round of cheers, applause, and a round of drinks on the house (and likely a challenge to drink from Norah's tank). A trip to the Sandpoint Theater might have Cyrdak Drokku trying to talk the PC with the highest Charisma into auditioning for his new play. A stop at Savah's Armory is greeted with an instantaneous offer of 20% off anything in stock. Certainly not everyone in Sandpoint wants to be the PCs' new best friend, but they should feel more than welcome.

The events detailed in this part can happen in any order—feel free to mix things up as you wish, or to fit logically with the PCs' actions in town. These events can even continue to occur after the PCs have turned their attention to the Catacombs of Wrath or Thistletop, or even well into the next adventure.

THE DESECRATED VAULT (CR 1/2)

In the aftermath of the raid, Father Zantus doesn't immediately notice the desecration of Ezakien Tobyn's vault, but soon after (perhaps even that evening), he realizes that the stone door to the previous priest's burial vault hangs ajar. Fearing the worst, Zantus quickly seeks out Sheriff Hemlock, who in turn contacts the PCs and asks them to accompany him to the Sandpoint Boneyard. Belor Hemlock doesn't expect much—in a worst-case scenario, maybe a goblin got trapped in the vault—but he wants the PCs along so he can appraise them. During the walk up to the Boneyard, Hemlock thanks the PCs again for their aid during the goblin assault, and asks many additional questions. He wants to find out more about the PCs—like, what their plans for the future are. Having an allied group of adventurers is a significant resource, and Hemlock hopes to foster such an alliance with the PCs.

Hemlock asks Zantus to wait in the Cathedral once they reach the Boneyard, but asks the PCs to aid him in investigating the scene. The vault in question is a 20-foot-square stone structure that stands near the wall. Used to house the remains of previous caretakers, priests, and acolytes who served at the Cathedral, the stone door does indeed hang ajar. The ground around the place is churned up as well—a DC 13 Perception check is enough to reveal many of the footprints are goblin prints, but some of them appear to have been left by a larger humanoid. A DC 13 Survival check is enough to confirm that about six goblins and one Medium humanoid climbed the wall, then approached and entered the vault.

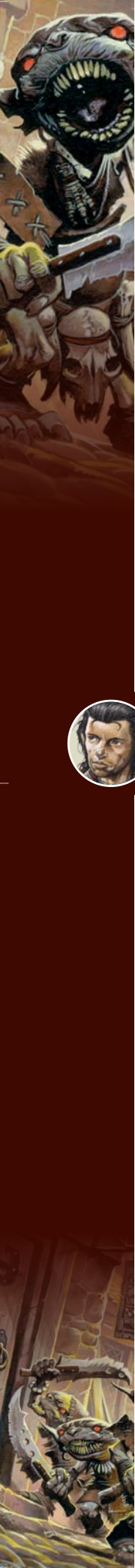
CREATURES: It's an easy enough task to open the vault door, but Tsuto's left a frightening surprise behind to further the campaign of terror against Sandpoint. After he stole Tobyn's bones, he used a *robe of bones* to place two human skeletons in the vault as he left. The skeletons have remained within ever since—they immediately lurch out to attack anyone who opens the vault door, and fight until they are destroyed.

| HUMAN SKELETONS (2) | XP | CR | HP |
|---------------------|----------|-----|--------|
| | 135 each | 1/3 | 4 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 250)

DEVELOPMENT: A search of the vault's interior turns up two things of interest. First, the discarded *robe of bones* lies in a corner (no patches remain on the now only faintly magical robe). Second, and more disturbing, is the fact that the sarcophagus that contained Ezakien's body has been opened and his remains stolen. Sheriff Hemlock has little insight into why the bones have been taken, but if the PCs don't come to the conclusion, he'll muse that, perhaps, the goblin raid was a distraction so that this unknown thief could steal the remains of the town's previous priest. The sheriff recommends that the PCs keep this information to themselves, in any event—the townsfolk have had enough distress this week, after all!





THE SHOPKEEP'S DAUGHTER (CR 2)

Pick a PC, preferably one who fancies himself a ladies' man or a popular fellow (while this encounter assumes the PC is a male, it can just as easily work for a female PC). The combination of this character's good looks, fame, and heroic qualities sends ripples through town, and now and then the PCs should overhear rumors and whispers about this PC's "availability." The PC should catch local young women giggling or blushing as he walks by, and he might receive a few anonymous love letters or other minor trinkets left as gifts at wherever he's been staying the night.

At some point before these idle fancies have a chance to develop into real relationships, one of Sandpoint's most brazen citizens makes her move. Daughter of the owner of the Sandpoint General Store, **SHAYLISS VINDER** (CN female human commoner 1) is certainly an attractive young woman, but it's her older sister who's been in the gossip lately. Rumor holds that Katrine Vinder's been "shacking up" with one of the workers at the lumber mill, and her overly protective father's been up in arms about it.

So when Shayliss bashfully approaches a PC, her claim that her father has been too distracted with her sister's private life to keep up with the store's pest problem should seem plausible. Shayliss explains that the store has rats. Why, just yesterday, she's sure she saw one the size of a goblin hiding behind a barrel at the far end of the basement. Her father doesn't believe her, but she knows he's just more distracted by what Katrine might or might not be up to at the lumber mill. And since there's this handy new hero in town, well, Shayliss just thought maybe said hero could come back with her to kill a few rats in the store's basement. She stresses that there's not many rats, certainly not enough to warrant having more than one hero to take care of them. If other PCs insist on coming along, she throws her hands up in the air in disgust and says, "Never mind, I'll take care of them some other way" and walks off in a huff, hoping her hero comes with her alone anyway. If he doesn't, she simply approaches him again when he's alone and repeats her request.

Of course, there are no rats in the basement. Shayliss is, if anything, even more of a trouble-seeker than her sister, something that a DC 20 Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check can warn a PC about. Any refusal to accompany flirtatious Shayliss back to the store must be handled delicately; without a successful Bluff check (against her Sense Motive +0) or a DC 20 Diplomacy check, her infatuation with the PC might quickly turn into bitter hate, and she could become a recurring foil as she spreads slanderous rumors about the PC and his friends.

Shayliss reveals her true intentions as soon as she has her chosen PC alone in the basement of her father's store; her bodice comes off and she slides herself into an

embrace as she tries to guide the PC over to a convenient cot someone's set up in the back of the room.

Whatever develops from this awkward interlude, Shayliss' father Ven Vinder is destined to head down into the basement not long after Shayliss makes her move. Allow the PC a DC 15 Perception check to hear Ven coming down the stairs at the far end of the basement. If the PC fails to notice Ven's approach, he certainly will when the shopkeep finds the PC and his daughter, roars in rage, and threatens the PC with his large and meaty fists.

If the PC flees, Ven won't follow, but neither will he allow the PC or his friends to shop in his store anymore. Being a well-liked man in town, Ven's displeasure with the PCs imposes a -2 penalty on all Diplomacy checks made in town until the PCs find some way to make things right with him.

A PC who tries to talk his way out of the situation can do so with a successful Bluff check or a DC 20 Diplomacy check; success with a roll 10 higher than the required DC indicates that the character has not only extricated himself, but has done so in a way that leaves no hard feelings with Shayliss, who might try to seduce the PC again at a later date.

This encounter is not meant to be physically ruinous to the PCs, but it can certainly head that way—Ven might be a commoner, but he knows his way around a fistfight. If the PC retaliates with lethal force, Ven tries to flee with his daughter to call the sheriff, at which point the PC's reputation in town immediately falls under scrutiny. If either Ven or Shayliss is killed, the PC faces a murder charge, spends 1d3 days in jail, and is then sent to Magnimar for trial.

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| VEN VINDER | XP 600 | CR 2 | HP 31 |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|

Male middle-aged human commoner 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-1 Dex)

hp 31 (7d6+7)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d3+4)

TACTICS

During Combat Ven always uses Power Attack when pummeling foes. Although he's enraged to find his beloved daughter in the arms of a "thug," he won't continue beating on a foe once his target is unconscious—but neither will Ven attempt to stanch a beaten foe's bleeding.

Morale Ven is enraged, but if reduced below 5 hit points, he drops to his knees and begs for mercy. Of course, if granted mercy, Ven's anger remains, and he'll nurse a grudge against the PC once he's had a chance to recover and foster fresh anger.





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STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 8, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 14

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill

Focus (Intimidate), Toughness

Skills Appraise +7, Intimidate +12, Perception +9, Profession

(merchant) +9

Languages Common

STORY AWARD: If the PCs manage to navigate this delicate encounter without hurting anyone and without disrupting the Vinder family, award the party 800 XP.

THE BOAR HUNT (CR 2)

This event occurs whenever the PCs decide to pay a visit to the Rusty Dragon to take up Aldern Foxglove’s invitation after they saved him from certain “gobling.” If they don’t visit him, he seeks them out 1d3 days after the goblin raid. Before he returns to his townhouse in Magnimar in a few more days, he is hoping to go on a boar hunt in nearby Tickwood Forest, and would like to invite along the PCs. If they decline the offer, he seems disappointed but covers it quickly with a shrug. True to his word, he gives the PCs a reward of 50 gp for saving his life, then invites them to stop by his home in Magnimar the next time they’re in town.

Whether they agree to the hunt at the Rusty Dragon or after Aldern seeks the PCs out on his own, the hunt itself takes place in nearby Tickwood. Aldern gladly buys each PC his own mount from Goblin Squash Stables, then eagerly leads the PCs and his three menservants west over Tanner’s Bridge and along the southern banks of the Turandarok River.

It’s a mile-and-a-half ride to Tickwood Forest, just north of the upthrust limestone escarpment known as the Devil’s Platter. Despite its ominous name, Tickwood is actually a relatively safe woodland, one well known to be the home of wild boars, deer, firepelt cougars, and the rare giant ticks for which the wood is named—but no goblin tribes dwell within its boundaries.

The ride to Tickwood takes about half an hour, and you can take advantage of this time to build up Aldern’s character. He’s a charming conversationalist, well read and with a seemingly endless cache of stories about the high life in Magnimar. He’s more interested in the PCs, though, and you can use Aldern’s interest in the PCs to help the players further establish small details about their characters. Who are they? Where are they from? How long have they been fighting goblins? Do they have any harrowing tales of their adventures? In particular, Aldern should be interested in the PC he was taken with in their previous encounter. Preferably, this should be an attractive female character, in which case his attention should seem like friendly flirting. If instead his attentions are on a character who seemed especially good at fighting goblins, his attention should almost seem like a desperate

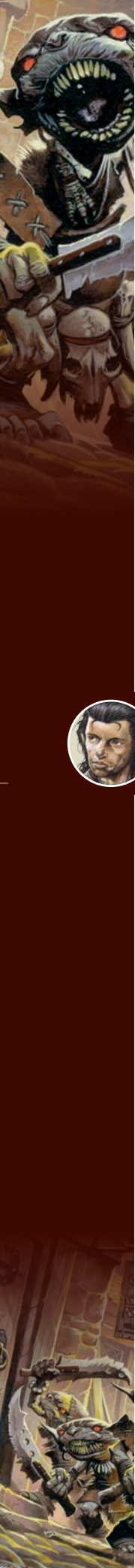
attempt to “learn how to be a hero.” Play up his attentions as friendly at first, but by the time the PCs finish the hunt, they should feel a little bit annoyed or disturbed at Aldern’s seemingly growing obsession.

Feel free to make as much or as little of the actual boar hunt as you wish. The boars of Tickwood are typical specimens of their ilk—ill tempered and quick to attack anyone who intrudes upon their territory. Aldern invites them back to the Rusty Dragon that evening, where he hands the boar over to Ameiko to cook for a big dinner (see “Trouble at the Rusty Dragon”).

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| TICKWOOD BOAR | XP 600 | CR 2 | HP 18 |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 36)





TROUBLE AT THE RUSTY DRAGON

There are only two inns in Sandpoint, so unless all of the PCs are local, they'll need to visit either the White Deer or the Rusty Dragon whenever they need to rest. Since the owner of the Rusty Dragon offered the PCs free rooms for a week as thanks for their heroics, and since Aldern Foxglove is staying here and might invite the PCs here to share a meal, chances are good that the PCs soon become regulars at the Rusty Dragon. Ameiko runs a very adventurer-friendly establishment, and the locals who frequent the establishment's tavern enjoy hearing stories of derring-do and hijinks from the tavern's visitors.

At some point during a visit to the Rusty Dragon (preferably when most or all of the PCs are present—while they're enjoying the boar that they and Foxglove caught is a good time), a surly visitor slams the tavern's door open and bellows out a sharp-tongued command in a strange language.

This is local aristocrat Lonjiku Kaijitsu, an elderly Tian man and one of Sandpoint's most well-known nobles. Characters who speak Minkaian can understand what it is he barks out as he enters the tavern: "Where the hell is my daughter?" The other patrons of the bar, recognizing him and knowing of his reputation for wrathful outbursts, grow very quiet and interested in their meals. If the PCs don't intervene, Lonjiku stalks farther into the tavern, his eyes scanning the room for his daughter only to alight on Sandpoint's newest heroes.

Lonjiku is a middle-aged Tian man, although he looks much older than his age due to lack of sleep caused by recent events—namely, his incidental role in the goblin raid. Increasingly paranoid and wracked with shame, Lonjiku has decided it's time to move back to Magnimar for a while, and he's planning on taking his daughter with him. Accordingly, he's come to the Rusty Dragon to issue an ultimatum to Ameiko—come with him or be cut out

of the will. Secretly, Lonjiku hopes she opts for the latter, as her becoming an adventurer and then an innkeeper has all but shamed him into disowning his daughter already.

When he notices the PCs, though, he gets distracted. Here are the heroes who saved Sandpoint from the raid he played a small part in orchestrating (even if Lonjiku didn't realize exactly what Tsuto was up to at the time). In a fit of jealousy and misguided anger, Lonjiku approaches the PCs and starts accusing them of endangering the townsfolk with their ill-advised "antics" against the goblins, implying they should have left the defense of the town to the city guard and other "trained professionals." If the PCs claim to be adventurers or mercenaries or some similar profession,

Lonjiku barks a derisive laugh, rolls his eyes, and says, "Just what we need—a filthy

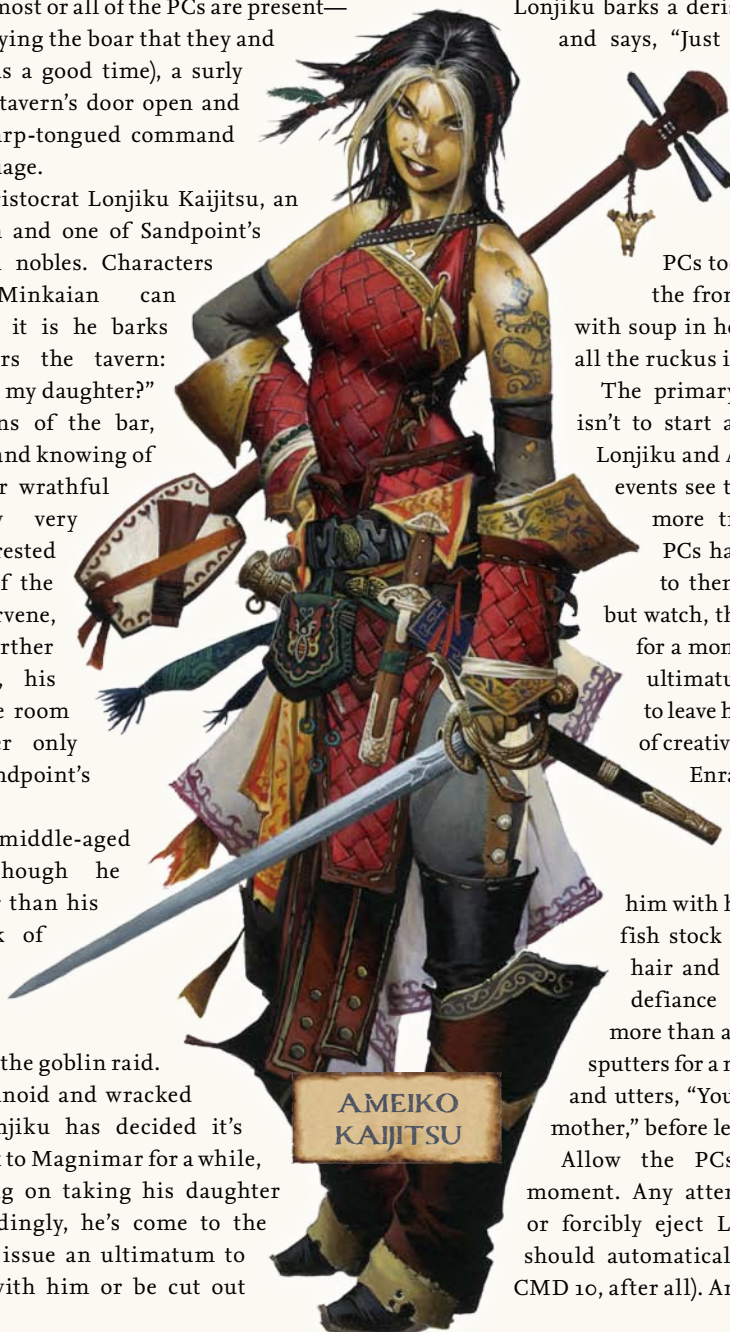
band of vagrants to attract even more trouble to town." Play Lonjiku as an arrogant, insulting old man, but just before you push the

PCs too far, Ameiko rushes into the front room, a ladle dripping with soup in her hand, to find out what all the ruckus is about.

The primary goal of this encounter isn't to start a fight—it's to introduce Lonjiku and Ameiko so that when later events see these two pop up again in more tragic circumstances, the PCs have some sort of reference to them. If the PCs do nothing but watch, the two argue in Minkaian for a moment as Lonjiku issues his ultimatum and Ameiko tells him to leave her inn (albeit with a string of creative and shocking profanity).

Enraged, Lonjiku tries to grab her by the hair to drag her from the tavern, but she dodges and brains him with her soupy ladle, splattering fish stock and potatoes all over his hair and outfit. This act of public defiance wounds Lonjiku's pride more than anything else, and after he sputters for a moment, he finds his voice and utters, "You're as dead to me as your mother," before leaving the tavern.

Allow the PCs to intervene at any moment. Any attempt to subdue, grapple, or forcibly eject Lonjiku from the tavern should automatically succeed (he only has CMD 10, after all). Any actual violence against





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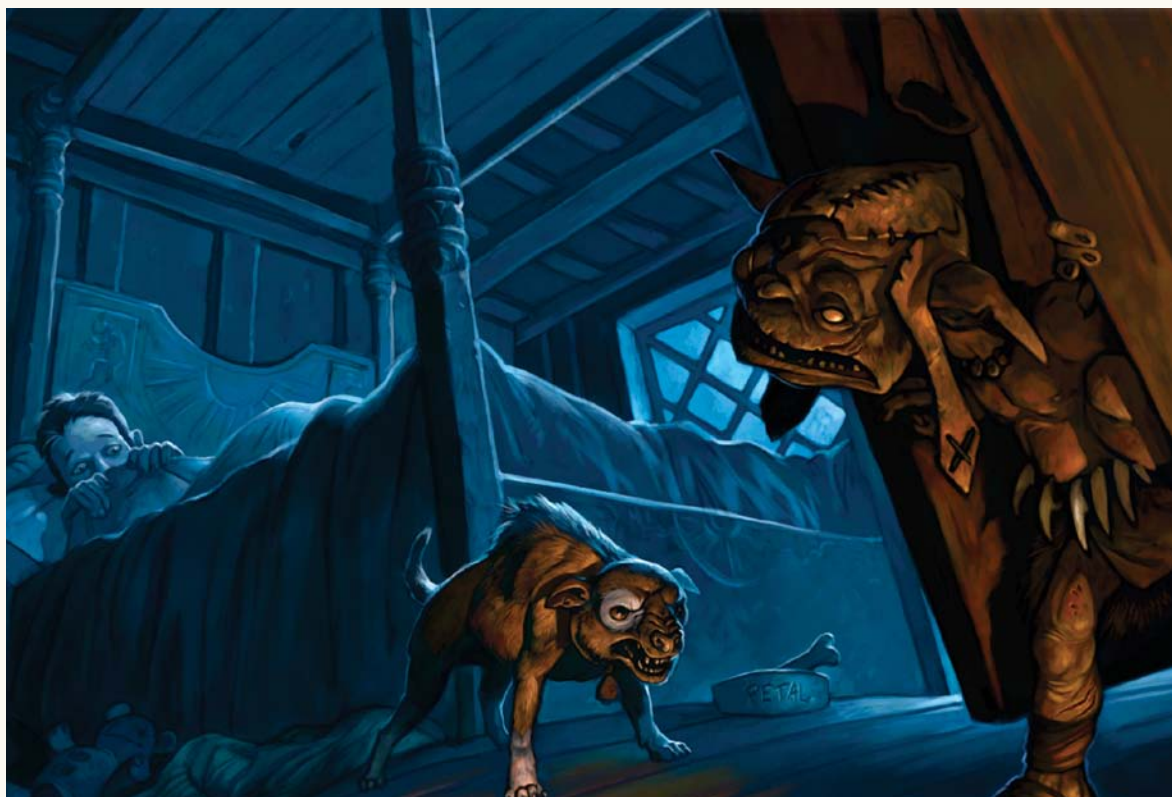
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Lonjiku brings his cowardice to the fore, and he shrieks and flees the tavern. If they attempt instead to help Lonjiku subdue his daughter, he shrieks at the PCs, “I don’t need the help of a band of curs!” before abandoning his attempt and leaving the tavern. Regardless of how Lonjiku leaves, he can’t resist the parting shot to his daughter about her mother—a cruel comment that almost brings Ameiko to tears, yet as her father leaves, she bravely picks up her ladle, inspects it, pulls a hair out of the mess, and says, “I’ll need a well-cleaned ladle now, since jackass stew’s not on the menu.” The resulting cheers and laughter from the tavern’s patrons help her attitude immensely—if the PCs came to her aid, she thanks them, extends their free rooms another week, and tells them their dinner’s on the house.

STORY AWARD: Award the PCs 400 XP if they get involved in the altercation—you can raise this award to 600 XP if they do a particularly good job roleplaying, at your discretion.

MONSTER IN THE CLOSET (CR 1/2)

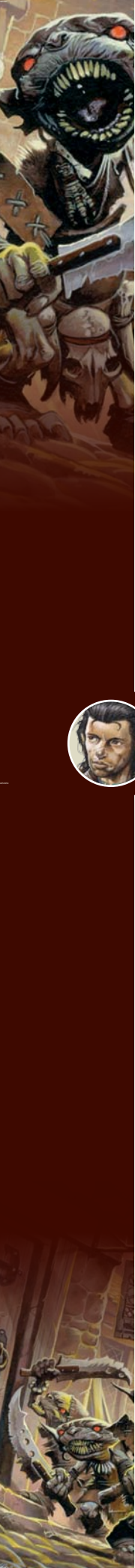
Alergast and Amele Barrett are a typical Sandpoint family, with two children (little Aeren and baby Verah) and a loyal family dog named Petal. They were present at the Swallowtail Festival, where Aeren saw a goblin light a cat on fire and then caper around the burning remains—the poor boy really hasn’t been the same since. Every night, his howls of terror send Petal into a barking fit, and when his parents investigate, Aeren claims a

goblin came out of his closet. Alergast checked the closet dutifully but found nothing, and ever since, the kid’s complaints about the “closet goblin” have grown more and more tiresome to his parents. Yesterday, Alergast threatened to make Aeren sleep in the woodshed if he couldn’t learn to “be a man” and sleep through an entire night without crying and telling stories.

All of this is told to the PCs by a tearful Amele Barrett several evenings after the goblin raid; she approaches the PCs in a panic, clutching baby Verah to her chest with one hand and clinging to the back of Aeren’s shirt with the other. She goes on to say that last night Alergast didn’t go to soothe Aeren when he had his night terrors. But then, a few moments later, they heard poor Petal cry out in pain and Aeren’s screams turn shrill. This time Aeren wasn’t just having nightmares. Amele pauses, takes a breath, and then shows the PCs Aeren’s arms. They’re covered with fresh goblin bites.

When Alergast burst into the room, he found a goblin crouched on his son’s chest. Petal was dead, a knife deep in his ear, and the goblin was frantically trying to chew off Aeren’s arm. Alergast attacked the goblin and chased it back into the closet, where it clambered into a hole it had cleverly hidden under an old fur. Alergast flew into a rage, and as he started tearing apart the closet in an attempt to get at the goblin, Amele panicked and fled the house with her children to seek out the PCs for aid.

CREATURE: The goblin in the Barrett house is a commando named Gresgurt who sneaked into the building after the raid turned sour. He found a loose



floorboard in the closet, frantically hacked an opening large enough for him to fit into the enclosed crawl space under the house, and pulled a fur over the hole to hide it. He only intended to stay there for a few hours until things died down outside, then planned on sneaking out of town, but the exhaustion of the raid caught up with him and he fell asleep. When he woke the next night and tried to sneak out, he woke Petal and Aeren. As frightened by the dog as the kid was of him, Gresgurt fled back into the crawl space, visions of the hateful and frightening dog filling his little goblin mind. It seemed like every time Gresgurt peeked out, that dog was there, ready to bark. Unable to escape for fear of the dog, Gresgurt subsisted on spiders and worms plucked from the dirt floor of the small crawl space for days, and over those days, his fear turned to anger. His driving desire shifted from escape to a burning need to kill the dog. And yet, he had no real weapons; he'd broken his horsechopper in his efforts to get into the crawl space below the house. All he had left were fragments of the blade, one of which he used to build a crude knife. Tonight, he emerged, killed Petal, and in his nearly starved state tried to eat Aeren alive.

When the PCs arrive at the Barrett house, they find it disturbingly silent. Upon reaching Aeren's room, they find Alergast Barrett on his belly, as if he had crawled into the closet. In truth, he did just that. In an attempt to kill the goblin, Alergast underestimated the creature. When he reached down into the hole to try to grab Gresgurt, the goblin jumped up and cut his throat. Ravenous, the commando tried to haul Alergast's body into the crawl space to eat it, but the body got stuck once he got the upper torso through the hole.

If the PCs pull back Alergast's body, they find him to be quite dead, the flesh of his face and upper torso eaten away. An instant later, the insane goblin shrieks in rage at its stolen dinner and leaps up out of the hole to attack. By this point, Gresgurt's long captivity in the crawl space has left him almost feral with hunger and fear, and he's come to view the entire house as his.

GRESGURT

| XP | CR | HP |
|-----|-----|----|
| 200 | 1/2 | 12 |

Goblin commando (see page 18)

Melee dagger +3 (1d3+1)

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs kill Gresgurt, Amele is thankful until she learns of her husband's fate, whereupon she has a complete breakdown. The PCs might be at a loss as to what to do with the situation, but fortunately the commotion quickly summons Sheriff Hemlock, who takes in the scene with his customary grim expression. He thanks the PCs for helping and arranges to have the Barrett family stay at the cathedral for a few days. Amele's sister from Magnimar soon arrives in Sandpoint to take the distraught family back south to live with her. If the

PCs are present when she collects her sister's broken family, she shoots them a cold glare and mutters, "Too bad you heroes weren't a bit more thorough in your 'heroing.'"

GRIM NEWS FROM MOSSWOOD

Shalelu Andosana isn't quite a bounty hunter, a survivalist, or a mercenary, but rather a mix of all three. The elven woman passes through town once or twice a season to buy supplies and never remains more than a few days, always staying in the same room at the Rusty Dragon free of charge thanks to her long friendship with Ameiko. Near the end of each visit, she meets with Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin for a few hours at the garrison to give a report on the state of the hinterlands before she leaves town again, a pouch of gold at her side. Both Hemlock and Deverin value Shalelu's reports, since they provide unbiased insight into how the local farmlands are faring and keep the town council abreast of burgeoning dangers in the region.

Shalelu pays a visit to Sandpoint during the days after the goblin raid—you should time her visit for a point after the PCs have had a chance to get to know folks in Sandpoint and have played through several of the encounters on the preceding pages. Her visit to Sandpoint is unexpected—she last passed through town only a month ago and wasn't expected until the last week of autumn. She dispenses with her visit to the Sandpoint Market and the Rusty Dragon, instead requesting an immediate meeting with Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin. The unusual meeting and Shalelu's ragged look combine to make an already jumpy populace suspect that the woman brings news of a new goblin threat.

Sheriff Hemlock seeks out the PCs and asks them to join himself, Mayor Deverin, and Shalelu at the town hall, explaining that he's got some news that might interest them. The meeting takes place in a comfortable office on the second floor of the town hall. If they haven't met Kendra Deverin yet, Hemlock introduces the PCs to the mayor and she gratefully thanks each of them for the help they provided Sandpoint during the raid.

Hemlock then introduces Shalelu to the PCs as an "unofficial member of Sandpoint's town guard" (an introduction that causes her to smirk) and the PCs to Shalelu as "Sandpoint's newest crop of goblinslayers." Hemlock explains that Shalelu has been a thorn in the side of the local goblin tribes for years, and that few in the region know more about them than she does. He goes on to recap her report that Sandpoint hasn't been the only place in the region that's had goblin troubles. In short, there's been an increase in goblin-related raids along the Lost Coast, particularly in the dale between Nettlewood and Mosswood. Only a day ago, a farm south of Mosswood was burnt to the ground by a group of goblins. Shalelu was thankfully nearby, and while the farm couldn't be saved, she did rescue the family and drive off the goblins; the family is staying



at a nearby farm for now, but the goblin problem is obviously not going away.

At this point, Hemlock cedes the floor to Shalelu, asking her to tell the PCs what she told him.



“Belor’s told me of your work against the goblins—well done. I’ve dedicated the last several years of my life to keeping them from causing too much trouble around these parts, but they’re tenacious and fecund little runts. Like weeds that bite.

“There are five major goblin tribes in the region, and, traditionally, they’re pretty good at keeping each other in line with intertribal squabbles and the like. Yet from what I’ve been able to piece together, members of all five tribes were involved in the raid on Sandpoint. A fair number of the Mosswood goblins I dealt with yesterday were already pretty beat up, and there was a lot of chatter about the ‘longshanks’ who killed so many of them. Now that I’ve met you, it seems obvious from their descriptions who they were talking about. Seems like you’ve made an impression.

“In any event, the fact that the five tribes are working together disturbs me. Goblin tribes don’t get along unless they’ve got something big planned, and big plans require big bosses. I’m afraid that someone’s moved in on the goblins and organized them. And judging by these recent raids, what they’re organizing seems like bad news for all of us.”

After Shalelu’s speech, Sheriff Hemlock announces that he’s taking a few of his guards south to Magnimar to see about securing additional soldiers to station at Sandpoint for a few weeks, at least until the extent of the goblin threat can be determined. While he’s out of town, he’s asked Shalelu to sniff around Shank’s Wood, Brinestump, Mosswood, Devil’s Platter, and other places where goblins live to see if she can discover anything else about what’s going on. He would also like the PCs to maintain a public presence in Sandpoint over the next few days, if they don’t mind. “The locals seem to have taken to you,” he says, “And seeing you around town will do a lot for keeping worries down over the next few days.”

Once the meeting is over, Shalelu asks to join the PCs for dinner at the Rusty Dragon (or wherever else they may be staying); she’d like to hear more from them about the Sandpoint raid, and in return she’s got a fair amount of goblin lore she can impart to the PCs.

GOBLIN TRIBES: As she mentioned earlier, there are five major goblin tribes in the region. The closest to Sandpoint are the Birdcruncher goblins, who live in caves along the western edge of the Devil’s Platter, although traditionally these goblins are the least aggressive of the five. To the south are the Licktoad goblins of the Brinestump Marsh, pests who are excellent swimmers. East are the Seven Tooth goblins of Shank’s Wood,

goblins who’ve secured a place for themselves by raiding Sandpoint’s junkyard and rebuilding the stolen refuse into armor and weapons. Farther east are the Mosswood goblins, likely the largest tribe but one traditionally held back by feuding families within their own ranks. And finally, there are the Thistletop goblins, who live on the Nettlewood coast atop a small island that some say holds a passing resemblance to a decapitated head.

GOBLIN HEROES: Shalelu notes that goblins generally live short, violent lives. It’s unusual for a single goblin to achieve any real measure of notoriety, but when one does, it’s well earned. Currently, six goblins in the region enjoy the status of “hero.”

Big Gugmut is an unusually muscular and tall goblin from Mosswood who, it is said, had a hobgoblin for a mother and a wild boar for a father.

Koruvus was a champion of the Seven Tooth tribe, as well known for his short temper as he was for his prized possession—a magic longsword sized for a human that the goblin stubbornly kept as his own (despite the fact that it was too large for him to properly wield). Koruvus vanished several months ago after he supposedly discovered a “secret hideout” in a cave along the cliffs, but the Seven Tooth goblins remain convinced he’s out there still, a ghost or worse, waiting to murder any goblin who tries to discover his hideout.

Vorka is a notorious goblin cannibal who lives in the Brinestump marsh, a “hero” mostly to goblins other than the Licktoad tribe.

Rendwattle Gutwad is the obese chieftain of the Brinestump goblins, a corpulent monster who, it is said, never leaves his throne.

Ripnugget is the leader of the Thistletop goblins and controls what the five tribes agree is the best lair.

And then there’s Bruthazmus, an infamous bugbear ranger who lives in northern Nettlewood and often visits the five tribes to trade things he’s stolen from caravans for alcohol, news, or magic arrows. Shalelu notes that Bruthazmus has a particular hatred of elves, and that they have fought on several occasions. To date, neither of them has managed to get the upper hand on the other, but Shalelu bitterly vows that she won’t be the first to fall in their private war.

Shalelu continues to have a presence throughout the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path; as with Sheriff Hemlock, Ameiko Kaijitsu, and Father Zantus, you should use her as a recurring NPC to keep the PCs invested in the region. She can become an ally of the group, even joining them in their efforts against the goblins for a time if you think they need a little extra help. She might even develop a romantic relationship with one of the PCs, especially if one of them is of a like mind and shares her love of the natural world and hatred of the goblins who squat in its tangled places.

It’s likely that, after this event, the PCs will want to start scouring the region for goblins and reasons



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for their increased aggression, but you should use Hemlock's request for them to stay in town as an anchor for now. Once the next chapter begins, the PCs will have plenty to keep them busy in town before they turn their attention to the hinterlands.

SHALELU ANDOSANA

| | | |
|-------|----|----|
| XP | CR | HP |
| 1,600 | 5 | 53 |

Female elf fighter 2/ranger 4

CG Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 53 (6d10+16)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantments, +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +8/+3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +11/+6 (1d8+1/×3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (goblinoids +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st—*resist energy*

TACTICS

During Combat Shalelu prefers to fight with her bow, resorting to melee only when truly desperate or when an ally seems in dire need of healing from her wand.

Morale Shalelu is loyal to her friends, and as long as even one of them remains in danger, she won't abandon them. That said, if she feels she can escape, get help, and return in time to save anyone captured by enemies before it's too late, she might try to do so.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Weapon Focus (composite longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +12, Stealth +15, Survival +10, Swim +10

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

SQ elven magic, favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), PC gear, track +2, weapon familiarity, wild empathy +3

Combat Gear *sleep arrows* (10), *potion of delay poison*, *potions of lesser restoration* (2), *wand of cure light wounds* (25 charges), *antitoxin* (2); **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather*, +1 *composite longbow* with 20 arrows, *masterwork short sword*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *campfire bead**, *cloak of resistance* +1, backpack, bedroll, climber's kit, flint and steel, manacles, silk rope (50 ft.), sunrods (3), trail rations (4 days), waterskin, winter blanket, wooden holy symbol of Desna, 8 pp, 2 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

THE MISSING BARTENDER

Run this event in the morning at some point after Sheriff Hemlock has left town to request more soldiers from Magnimar. The PCs are approached by a timid elderly halfling woman named **BETHANA CORWIN** (NG female halfling commoner 1), a maid who works for Ameiko Kaijitsu at the Rusty Dragon. She's obviously upset and asks to speak to the PCs somewhere in private.

In short, her employer has gone missing. Bethana woke earlier this morning to find that Ameiko hadn't already started breakfast, for the first time Bethana could remember. Worried, she knocked on Ameiko's door but didn't get a response. Against her better judgment, Bethana entered Ameiko's room to find it empty and the bed unspent in. Worse, she found a crumpled piece of parchment near the bed—a note from Ameiko's older brother Tsuto.



SHALELU ANDOSANA



Hello, sis!

I hope this letter finds you well, and with some free time on your hands, because we've got something of a problem. It's to do with father. Seems that he might have had something to do with Sandpoint's recent troubles with the goblins, and I didn't want to bring the matter to the authorities because we both know he'd just weasel his way out of it. You've got some pull here in town, though. If you can meet me at the Glassworks at midnight tonight, maybe we can figure out how to make sure he faces the punishment he deserves. Knock twice and then three times more and then once more at the delivery entrance and I'll let you in.

In any case, I don't have to impress upon you the delicate nature of this request. If news got out, you know these local rubes would assume that you and I were in on the whole thing too, don't you? They've got no honor at all around these parts. I still don't understand how you can stand to stay here.

Anyway, don't tell anyone about this. There are other complications as well, ones I'd rather talk to you in person about tonight. Don't be late.

Tsuto

At this point, Bethana hands the PCs the note. Although it was written in Minkaian (likely to keep prying eyes from reading it, Bethana muses), Ameiko had been teaching Bethana the language over the last few years. The halfling has helpfully already translated the note's message on the opposite side—this note is reproduced as Handout 1-1.

Bethana explains that Tsuto was something of a scandal when he was born back in 4688 (a year before Ameiko), since he's a half-elf. Bethana sagely notes, with big eyes, that neither of Ameiko's parents are elves. It was obvious that old Lonjiku wasn't the boy's father, and his rage at the discovery of his wife's indiscretion was the talk of the town for months. Lonjiku's wife Atsuii never revealed who the father was, and it's a testament to Lonjiku's stubbornness that they remained married. Tsuto was handed over to the Turandarok Academy to be raised outside of the Kajitsu family, ignored by his father and forbidden visits from his mother. Ameiko started visiting him in secret once she learned about his existence at the age of 10, visiting him a few times a month to keep him company, bring him some food, and promise him that someday things would get all sorted out. That all changed in 4705, when they had a terrible argument in which Tsuto struck Ameiko. Bethana doesn't know what the argument was about, but whatever it was sent Ameiko away from Sandpoint for a year, during which time she made a living as an

adventurer. She returned to Sandpoint a year later to attend her mother's funeral. Tsuto was quite public in his opinions that his father had pushed Atsuii off a cliff to her death, and during the funeral there was a confrontation. Lonjiku nearly broke Tsuto's jaw with his cane, after which Tsuto cursed him and left Sandpoint. Ameiko has tried to reestablish contact with him ever since, but was never able to track him down.

Bethana's worried that Tsuto's up to no good. Since Sheriff Hemlock's out of town, the PCs are the only ones she can turn to. She begs them to head over to the Glassworks and find out what happened to Ameiko as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

You can certainly design additional encounters in Sandpoint after this part of the adventure is over. Appendix Two: Sandpoint (see pages 370–387) provides numerous NPCs whom the PCs can encounter—perhaps the PCs are approached by Daviren Hosk of Goblin Squash Stables and offered a bounty of 5 gp for every pair of goblin ears they bring him, or maybe the PCs are invited by Cyrdak Drokus of the Sandpoint Theater to do reenactments of their fights against the goblins (accompanied, of course, by fine illusion-work from Cyrdak as special effects). They could even be invited to Niska Mvashti's house for a harrow deck reading to reveal the secrets of their future. Take advantage of this opportunity to foreshadow events to come as you see fit!



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PART THREE: GLASS AND WRATH

THE PROCESS OF GLASSMAKING IS AS MUCH AN ART AS IT IS A CRAFT, AND ONE THAT THE KAIJITSU FAMILY HAS HELD PRIDE IN FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS. AFTER THE FAMILY WAS EXILED FROM TIAN XIA AND MADE THE PERILOUS JOURNEY OVER THE CROWN OF THE WORLD, THEIR SKILL AT GLASSMAKING PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN SECURING A ROLE AMONG THE ARISTOCRACY. WHEN THE SANDPOINT MERCANTILE LEAGUE WAS ESTABLISHED TO FOUND THE TOWN, THE KAIJITSUS WERE THERE. NOT LONG AFTER SANDPOINT WAS FOUNDED, THEY BEGAN CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT WOULD BECOME ONE OF THE TOWN'S MOST UNIQUE AND PROFITABLE BUSINESSES—THE SANDPOINT GLASSWORKS.



The main components of glass are all found in abundance nearby: sand, seaweed, salt-resistant plants (the ashes of which form an important reagent in the process), and lime extracted from stone quarried from the cliffs of Devil's Platter. All that remained was the technical proficiency to work these components into glass. The fact that the building's basement once doubled as a smuggler's base is one of the Kaijitsu family's secrets. Lonjiku's more scrupulous father, Rokuro, put a stop to the smuggling operation once he realized some of his employees were involved, and bricked up the offending chambers in the basement, but knowledge that the Glassworks were once part of an early smuggling operation has persisted in the town's not-so-hidden lore.

Now the Glassworks are little more than a front for the machinations of a bitter, vengeful son. When Tsuto Kaijitsu joined Nualia's group of malcontents in Magnimar a year ago, he was already in love with her. He'd seen her on the streets of Sandpoint many times, but had never had the courage to approach the mysterious beauty. So when she approached him with a job offer, he felt as if fate had finally dealt him a good hand. When he learned that her plans involved burning his hometown as an offering to her goddess, Lamashtu, Tsuto was even more thrilled—not at the opportunity to serve the goddess of monsters (Tsuto doesn't have much interest in religion) but at the chance to get revenge on the town he blamed for his bitter and joyless childhood.

Tsuto's primary responsibility to Nualia was to serve as the link between Sandpoint and Thistletop, since not only did he know the town the best, but he also had links to one of its most important citizens—his father. After blackmailing Lonjiku into aiding in the preparation of Sandpoint for the goblin raid, Tsuto had his father right where he wanted him. A few days after the raid, he sent his father a note demanding a payment of 2,000 gp or Tsuto would reveal Lonjiku's role in the raid. Infuriated, Lonjiku privately decided it was time to take care of his wife's son, once and for all. He agreed to the payment,

and when he arrived at the Glassworks late one night several days after the raid, he attempted to murder Tsuto. Unfortunately for Lonjiku, Tsuto had come up with the same plan. Before Lonjiku arrived, the goblins killed all of the workers who lived on site. Tsuto and a half-dozen goblins ambushed Lonjiku as he entered the Glassworks, murdered him, and put his body on display in area **A17**.

Lonjiku dealt with, Tsuto sent a note to his sister, Ameiko, the one person in Sandpoint he didn't hate. He asked her to meet him at the Glassworks the night after he murdered Lonjiku, hoping to convince Ameiko to join Nualia's band. Unfortunately, he miscalculated his sister's loyalty to Sandpoint, and when she refused to join with him, he had his goblins beat her unconscious, bound her, and locked her in area **A21** below the Glassworks. He's not quite sure what to do with her and plans on heading back north to Thistletop with her to ask Nualia for advice, intending to leave the Glassworks an abattoir to further throw fear into the hearts of Sandpoint's citizens.

INVESTIGATING THE GLASSWORKS

When the PCs arrive at the Glassworks, they find the building curiously silent. Neighbors have noticed the lack of traffic into and from the building, but since the furnace chimney still plumes with smoke, most assume that the building is simply closed to allow Lonjiku and his workers some privacy while they work on a big project. A quick investigation of the building perimeter reveals that curtains have been drawn over the windows and all the doors are locked. The skylights above that look into areas **A1** and **A17** are unobscured, and a character who makes a DC 20 Climb check to get on the roof can look through them (which, in the case of **A17**, reveals a gruesome sight indeed). The rumble of the Glassworks' furnace is plainly audible from within, but a character who listens at any of the curtained windows along area **A17** and makes a DC 12 Perception check can also hear what sounds like high-pitched giggles, shrieks, and breaking glass as well.

All of the external doors can be picked with a DC 20 Disable Device check; battering them down takes a bit





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more work (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23). In either case, such acts are quick to draw gawkers eager to find out what Sandpoint's new heroes are doing trying to break into the Glassworks. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check or a Bluff or Intimidate check is more than enough to calm and disperse the locals, especially given the odd fact that the Glassworks should be open for business anyway. Several locals suggest that the PCs head up to Kaijitsu Manor to talk to Lonjiku or his servants rather than breaking into the place, but a trip up Schooner Gulch Road to the manor reveals that none of the servants there have seen Lonjiku since yesterday evening. They assume he's working down in the Glassworks and point to the smoke pouring out of its chimney as proof. In fact, the Glassworks are now under the control of Lonjiku's treacherous son and his goblin allies.

A1 DISPLAY ROOM: This room contains a shop where customers can browse the various glassware produced here. Bottles, windowpanes, and glasswork art are the primary contents.

A2 STOREROOM: Finished products are stored here.

A3 CLEANING CLOSET: Cleaning supplies and tools such as brooms are stored here.

A4 STOREROOM: Tools, clothing for servants, firewood, and other miscellaneous supplies are kept here.

A5 SERVANT'S QUARTERS: Lonjiku's staff of skilled laborers lived on site; the eight workers slept here. The beds are all in various states of disarray and blood is spattered over the walls and sheets. No bodies are apparent—they've been taken by the goblins to area A17 for entertainment after they murdered the sleeping workers the night before.

A6 DINING ROOM: The staff used this room to relax, eat, and play cards in their off hours. The room is a wreck—when Tsuto's goblins came through here, they made a mess of it.

A7 WASHROOM: This room contains several washtubs for bathing and laundry; the small room adjacent is a toilet.

A8 KITCHEN: This is where the staff prepared their meals; the goblins tore this place apart looking for food, and the room is in disarray as a result.

A9 PANTRY: This room is a mess; barrels and sacks of grain and crates of dried fish and venison have been completely demolished, and most of the food is missing. A broken

dogslicer lies near the northern corner, discarded by a goblin who ruined it trying to get at the food.

A10 STOREROOM: This room contains several mounds of firewood for the kitchen stove.

A11 MEETING ROOM: The staff meets here to discuss work schedules or large projects.

A12 RECEPTION: Customers seeking custom glass jobs or looking for business opportunities to export glass meet with a representative here to arrange business.

A13 OFFICE: A smaller office for more private meetings with important customers.

A14 FILES: Several cabinets and shelves containing files and contracts with dozens of exporters and businesses from Magnimar, Korvosa, and other local towns fill this room.

A15 PREPARATION: The primary agents for glassmaking (sand, soda ash, and lime) are prepared here.

A16 LOADING ROOM: A wheelbarrow sits against a wall here, and shelves on the walls contain additional reagents to create different colors of glass (manganese for clear glass, cobalt for blue, and tin for white; untreated glass is green, while a high quantity of any reagent makes black glass). A safe on the floor hangs open after Tsuto used his father's key to open it and stole the gold and silver used to make red and yellow glass. Through a doorway, stairs lead down to area **A19**.

A17 GLASSWORKING ROOM: A furnace burns along the southeast wall of this room. Marble tables sit in the chamber, used to work raw glass into usable shapes, with nearby wooden tables cluttered with various tools of the trade. The building's furnace rumbles loudly, penalizing Perception checks with a -4 penalty. The main furnace burns at the northeast end, a large chamber that utilizes alchemically treated wood that burns with a hot blue light. The workers use this room to melt glass, but Lonjiku also periodically "rented" the furnace to Sczarni thugs for the disposal of evidence, as the fires are hot enough to burn bones and teeth. A creature bull rushed or otherwise placed in the furnace takes $6d6$ points of fire damage per round. The opening is narrow enough to prevent a Medium creature from being pushed inside easily (bull rush attempts to do so take a -8 penalty). As the furnace's stone pipes run southwest, they reach smaller and progressively cooler furnaces used to keep glassworking projects at the proper temperature—glass shatters if it's allowed to cool too quickly.

When the PCs arrive, this room is a gruesome display of goblin boredom. The bodies of the eight murdered staff

lie in various stages of dismemberment; the goblins have been burning legs and arms in the furnace with glee, and pouring melted glass on the remains in an attempt to duplicate Tsuto's masterpiece. This would be his father's body, propped up in a chair in the central alcove and encased in thick, runny sheets of hardened glass.

This is where the PCs are most likely to encounter Tsuto's goblins—see "Against the Goblins" for details on this fight.

A18 STAIRS: These stairs lead down to the beach below.

A19 UNDERGROUND STORAGE: This room is used to store sand and other raw materials. Two wheelbarrows sit against the wall. Just east of the stairs up to area **A16**, a brick wall has been dismantled to reveal an older passageway leading south. This is one of two walls Rokuro Kaijitsu bricked over after he learned that several of his employees were using the basement as a staging ground for their smuggling operation. Tsuto's goblins removed this wall and the one north of area **A22** the night before the raid. With his father blackmailed, Tsuto had no worries that word of his actions unblocking these tunnels would spread.

A20 STORAGE: This room is used to store glassware, windows, and other finished goods.

A21 STORAGE: The door to this room is locked. Although the room is used for storage, Tsuto has recently turned it into an impromptu holding cell. His sister, Ameiko, lies on her side on the floor in here, bound at the wrists and ankles with rope and blindfolded and gagged with strips of leather. For more information about her reaction to being rescued, see Rescuing Ameiko on page 32.

A22 SECRET OFFICE: Once used by smugglers to track their illicit businesses, this room served Tsuto Kaijitsu for the past few days as a place to orchestrate his actions in Sandpoint. After murdering his father and imprisoning his sister, Tsuto drank himself to sleep in this room. He likely wakes when a goblin fleeing from the PCs races down here to warn him of trouble (see "Against the Goblins").

A23 SMUGGLER'S ENTRANCE: The long tunnel leading from this room winds for some distance through the bedrock below Sandpoint. Built decades ago by smugglers, the tunnel remains stable and serviceable as it winds lazily northeast for just over 1,750 feet before reaching a dead end. A DC 20 Perception check reveals a secret door that opens into a 30-foot-diameter cave on the side of the cliff overlooking the Varisian Gulf. The cave mouth slopes down to a narrow beach; no Survival check is required to note the crude collection of goblin beds or remnants of their meals strewn about the cave.





From the tunnel's southern half, two side tunnels branch off. One leads east to a collapse after 400 feet (it once led all the way to the Turandarok River), but the one to the west seems to have once been bricked over at the point where it diverges from the main tunnel. This westerly passageway winds for 50 feet before turning north for another 100 feet. This tunnel was an attempt to break into what the smugglers assumed would be the garrison basement, so that they could smuggle prisoners out for great profit. Yet what they discovered were the Catacombs of Wrath, and what the smugglers found there convinced them to brick up the tunnel and never speak of it again. The brick wall was torn down recently on Nualia's return to the area, after which she established contact with the quasit queen of the catacombs.

AGAINST THE GOBLINS (CR 3)

In all, there are eight goblins in the Glassworks. If the PCs follow the sound of breaking glass and evil little shrieks, they find the goblins capering and defiling the bodies of the murdered workers in area **A17**. Unless the PCs are particularly noisy, they should be able to reach area **A17** without alerting the goblins. Give the PCs the advantage of a surprise round against the little monsters, because once the battle begins, things can get ugly quickly.

Keep in mind that this fight is in a glassworking factory. Goblins are masters of improvisational fighting, and are quick to use the environs of the room to their advantage in the following ways.

BROKEN GLASS: As the battle progresses, feel free to mark certain squares as containing broken glass. Treat these squares as if they contained caltrops.

FEEDING THE FURNACE: A goblin might attempt to trip a PC; if he falls prone, three goblins pile onto him and attempt to carry him into the furnace. Chances of this succeeding are nil as long as the PC isn't helpless, but it should give the PCs a bit of a hair-raising time nevertheless—especially if the PC being fed into the furnace is unconscious.

HOT GLASS TONGS: Some goblins use tongs dripping with molten glass as improvised weapons to burn the PCs.

THROWN GLASS: Goblins who can't reach a PC in melee throw bottles or sling panes of glass at them as improvised ranged attacks.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| GOBLINS (8) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 6 each |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +2 (1d4/19–20) or
tongs of molten glass –2 touch (1d4 fire)

Ranged hurled glassware –1 (1d3)

TACTICS

During Combat The goblins are still riding the high from killing the staff, and react to the PCs' arrival with excitement. Most of them fight with dogslicers, but one or two goblins attack the PCs using tongs dripping with molten glass.

Morale Once at least five are dead, one of the surviving goblins recognizes the PCs as the heroes of Sandpoint, drops his weapon, and shrieks out (in Goblin), "Wait! It's those longshanks what stopped the raid! Run for your lives!" The remaining goblins panic and flee for the basement, seeking to regroup below with Tsuto. Once at his side, the goblins fight until he is defeated, at which point any surviving goblins flee down the smuggler's tunnel or cower and beg for mercy.

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| TSUTO KAJITSU | XP 800 | CR 3 | HP 31 |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|

Male half-elf monk 2/rogue 2

LE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 Wis)

hp 31 (4d8+10)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d6+1) or
flurry of blows +4/+4 (1d6+1)

Ranged composite shortbow +5 (1d6+1/×3)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, sneak attack +1d6, stunning fist (2/day, DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat Tsuto's main advantage in battle is his mobility.

He uses Acrobatics to move around the battlefield and flanks foes with his goblins as he can. When facing spellcasters, he uses stunning fist to keep them occupied.

Morale If brought below 8 hit points, or if all of his goblins are slain, Tsuto runs for his life down the smuggler's tunnel, abandoning all thought of returning to Nualia with his sister in tow and fleeing back to Thistletop.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 20

Feats Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Bluff), Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +10, Disguise +6, Intimidate +6, Perception +11, Perform (wind) +4

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

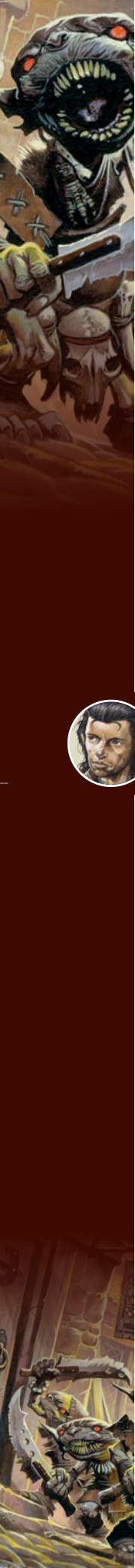
SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1, elf blood

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** composite shortbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork thieves' tools, masterwork flute, silver earrings (25 gp for the pair), journal, 6 pouches of gold dust worth 50 gp each, 8 pouches of silver dust worth 5 gp each, 10 pp

INTERROGATING TSUTO

Although the goblins know close to nothing if captured and interrogated, Tsuto is a different story. His loyalty to Nualia is unwavering, and unless the PCs use magical





means like *charm person* to secure his cooperation, he remains silent in the face of any attempt to get him to talk. He attempts to escape at the first opportunity, but if faced with no other option, tries to take his own life, trusting (erroneously) that when she grows powerful enough, Nualia will bring him back from the dead.

Tsuto's journal (see Handout 1–2) likely proves a better source of information. This small, leather-bound booklet contains two dozen parchment pages, most of which Tsuto has filled with maps of Sandpoint or erotic drawings of Nualia (who can be recognized as the presumed-dead adopted daughter of Father Toby in with a DC 15 Knowledge [local] check). The maps each depict different attack plans. The first set shows the attack plans for a group of 30 goblins—one of these battle maps is circled, and the PCs should recognize it as the attack the goblins made on Sandpoint at the start of the adventure. Of more pressing concern are the next several pages, which illustrate an assault on Sandpoint by a force of what appears to be 200 goblins. None of these are circled, and while many are scratched out as if they've been rejected, the implications should be ominous nonetheless.

Most of the drawings of Nualia do not depict her with her demonic hand, although one on the last pages of the book does; it portrays her with not only a single demonic hand, but also bat wings, horns, a forked tail, and fangs.

Three short passages in Tsuto's journal contain information that is of particular interest to the PCs—these are reproduced below as Handout 1–2.

If the PCs secure Tsuto's cooperation via magic, he can be a font of information, revealing the entirety of Nualia's plans, her current location, and even information on Thistletop's layout and defenses. If asked about his journal, he confirms that Nualia plans to offer Sandpoint as a burning sacrifice to Lamashtu in return for a transformation from the angelic to the demonic, a ritual she's already begun by burning Father Toby's remains. He doesn't know much about the creature she calls "Malfeshnekor," only that it's some monster that she believes is imprisoned somewhere below Thistletop and that releasing and recruiting it will make their coming raid on Sandpoint a guaranteed success.

RESCUING AMEIKO

If for some reason the PCs wait until after sunset to investigate the Glassworks, Tsuto and his goblins have returned to Thistletop; Ameiko is placed in a cell there (in area **D9**), and if the PCs don't rescue her in a few days, she is eventually sacrificed to Lamashtu in area **D12**, yet another burnt offering to appease Nualia's wrath.

Ameiko is conscious but badly wounded, stable at –2 hit points and in no shape to aid the PCs unless they can heal her. Even if healed, she remains distraught at her brother's treachery. Tsuto revealed to Ameiko that he and several other mercenaries were led by Nualia and hinted that she's got big plans for Sandpoint's future. Tsuto warned Ameiko

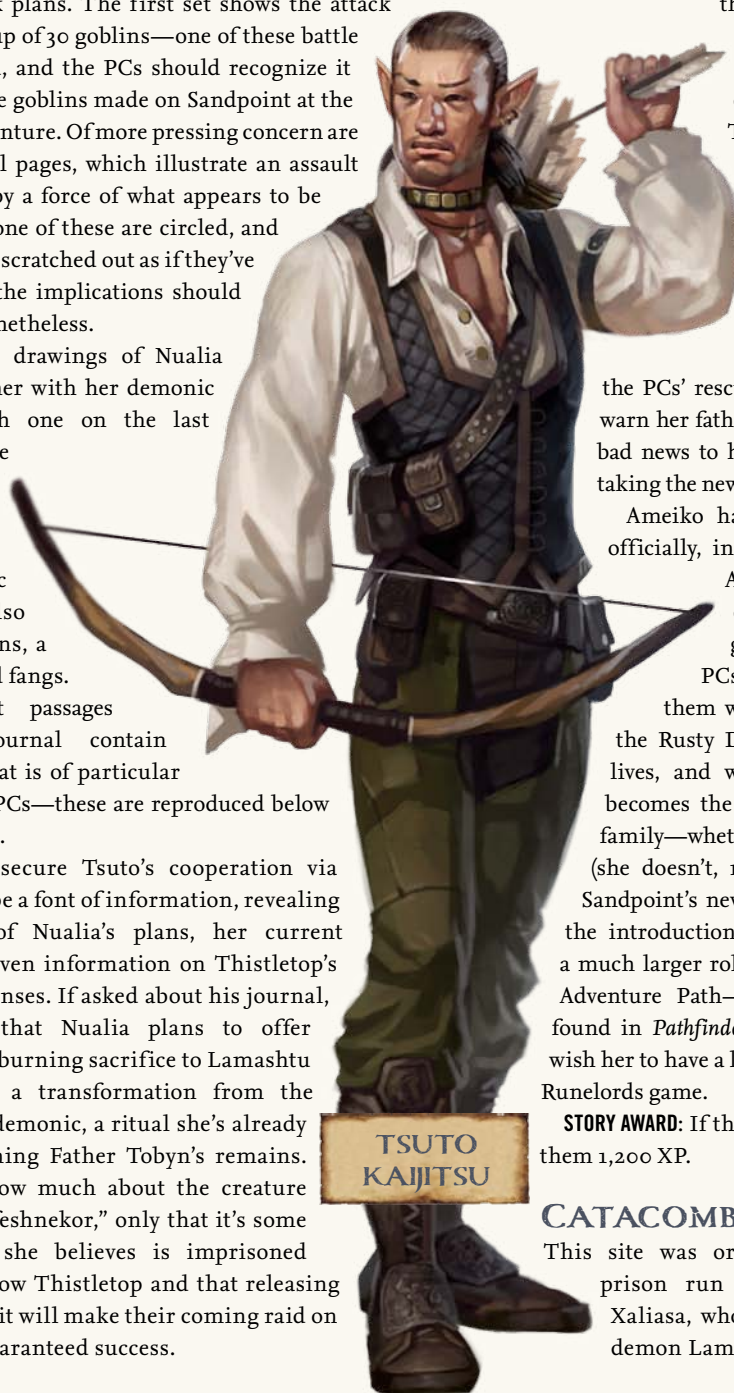
that she didn't want to be in town when those plans came through, and offered her a chance to join his group at Thistletop. Ameiko recoiled at the suggestion and slapped her brother in shock that he'd sunk to such a low. He responded by unleashing his goblins on her. They overwhelmed her and left her here. She's grateful for the PCs' rescue, but is eager to leave and warn her father. If the PCs don't break the bad news to her, she learns soon enough, taking the news stoically.

Ameiko has no further role to play, officially, in the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, but this can certainly change in your game. Certainly, after the PCs rescue her, she rewards them with free room and board at the Rusty Dragon for the rest of their lives, and with her father's death she becomes the sole heritor of the Kajitsu family—whether she likes it or not (she doesn't, really), Ameiko has become Sandpoint's newest noble. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, Ameiko has a much larger role to play in the Jade Regent Adventure Path—her full statistics can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #49 if you wish her to have a larger role in your Rise of the Runelords game.

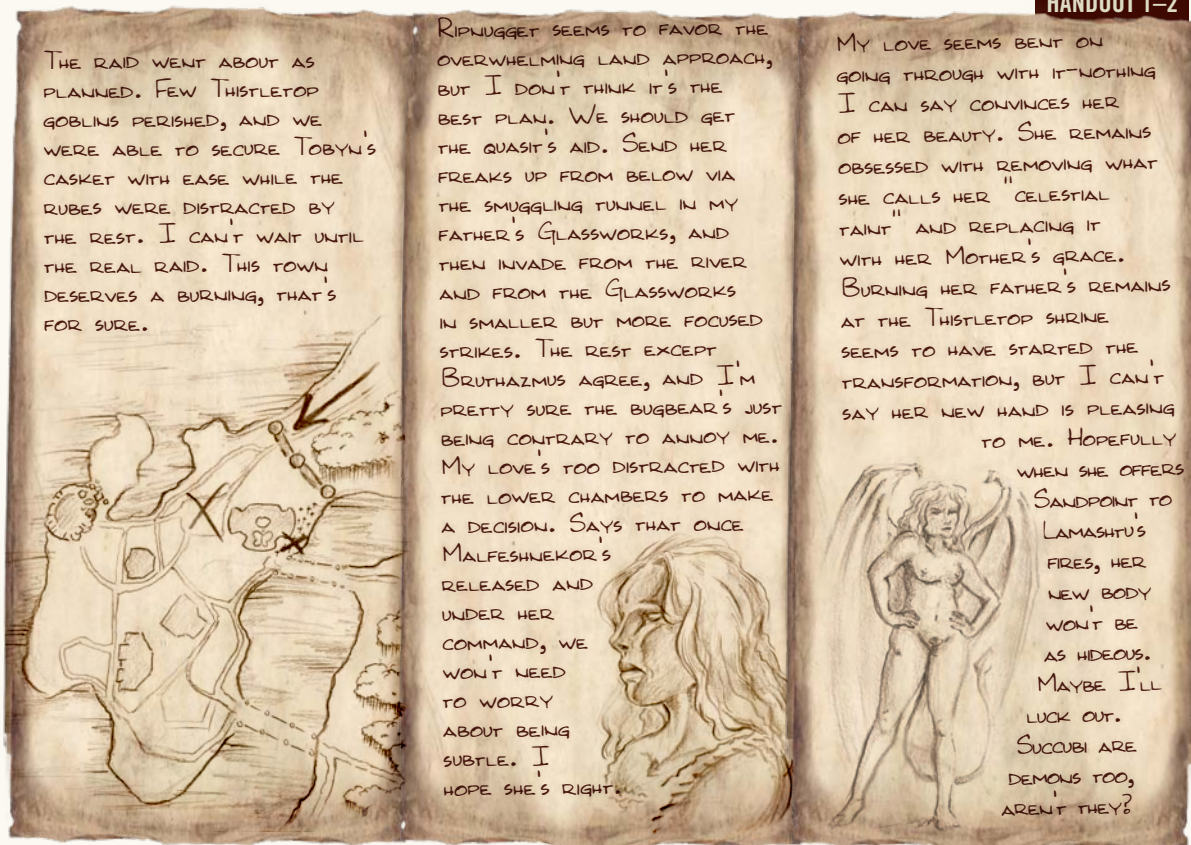
STORY AWARD: If the PCs rescue Ameiko, award them 1,200 XP.

CATACOMBS OF WRATH

This site was originally a laboratory and prison run by a cruel man named Xaliasa, who had given his soul to the demon Lamashtu in return for eldritch



TSUTO
KAJITSU



and dark powers. He was a cleric of Lamashtu in the service of Runelord Alaznist, but unknown to her, Xaliasa was also a secret assassin pledged to Karzoug. Working as a double agent eventually drove Xaliasa mad, and he came to be known to his minions as the Scribbler. He was thought to have perished in the currently inaccessible lower levels of the catacombs when Thassilon fell and Alaznist's empire sank under the sea. Yet not all of his allies perished—his quasit minion Erylium survived.

After spending centuries alone and trapped in the dark catacombs, Erylium went somewhat insane as well. Originally obsessed with escaping, she eventually came to see the complex as her own private empire. The zombies imprisoned in area B9 became her subjects, and the vargouille guardian of area B4 her pet. She pored over the crumbling texts and notes left behind by her master, and eventually became a witch, selecting Lamashtu as her demonic patron as had her master so long ago. And for thousands of years more, Erylium ruled her tiny realm with petty cruelty and glee.

When smugglers broke into the catacombs only 4 decades ago, they caught Erylium off guard. Rather than attempting to trick the intruders into serving her, she attacked them and scared them off. By the time she'd recovered from her triumphant celebrations, they'd already bricked up her escape route. Yet the event had done the trick and broken the quasit out of her madness.

Over the next 4 decades, she listened for countless hours at the top of the ruined stairs at area B5, eager to learn more of those whom she soon came to think of as the Enemy Above. Every week, Erylium used her *commune* ability to learn more and more about Sandpoint from her demonic patron, or sent her black wren familiar out to spy. As the years wore on, Lamashtu's cryptic responses and her wren's reports led Erylium to believe that something was coming, something that would provide her with a real army, and that her general was even now being groomed by Lamashtu for her glory.

Five years ago, the *minor runewell* located in area B13 mysteriously reactivated. Erylium saw this as a sign, and used the *minor runewell* to call forth several monsters called *sinspawn* to aid her in the times to come. Soon thereafter, Lamashtu revealed that Erylium's general was nearly ready, but that it fell to Erylium to recruit her. She would know her by her silver hair and violet eyes, a rarity in the world above. When Nualia arrived not long thereafter, a fresh convert to Lamashtu's side, Erylium took to the role of mentor with pride. The quasit knows that soon her empire shall grow.

B1 GUARD CAVE (CR 2)

CREATURE: A *sinspawn* dwells in this cave, charged by Erylium to guard the approach to her realm. The *sinspawn* does its job admirably, standing at its post for hours at a time until it is relieved by another.



BURNT OFFERINGS

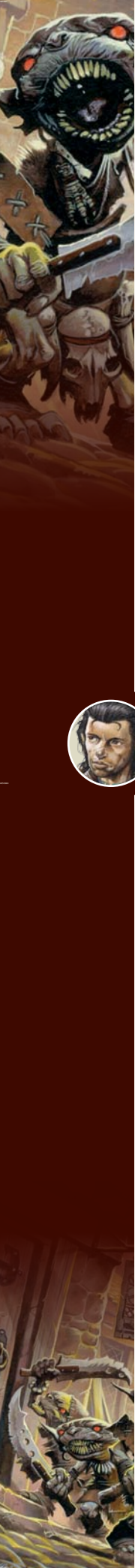
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SINSPAWN

| XP | CR | HP |
|-----|----|----|
| 600 | 2 | 19 |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 246)

B2 OLD STOREROOM



The original purpose of this chamber is unclear, but large mounds of rubble lie strewn on its floor. The wall to the west has been torn down to reveal a tunnel leading to the west.

An investigation of the rubble reveals that most of it seems to have consisted of broken urns and other pottery containers that once held food stores, long since crumbled to dust.

B3 WELCOMING CHAMBER



A red marble statue of a strikingly beautiful but, at the same time, monstrously enraged human woman stands in the middle of this room, her stony expression twisted in fury. The woman wears flowing robes, and her long hair is held back from her face by an intricate headdress of hooks and blades. In her left hand she carries a large book, the face of which is inscribed with a seven-pointed star. Her right hand holds a glittering metal-and-ivory ranseur.

The statue depicts Runelord Alaznist, identifiable as such with a DC 25 Knowledge (history) check.

TREASURE: The masterwork ranseur clutched by the statue can be removed with a little tugging. As a replica of Runelord Alaznist's signature weapon, the ranseur is a work of art as much as a weapon. It's worth 400 gp.

B4 WASHING POOL (CR 2)



Water ripples quietly in this circular stone pool, the rim of which is lined with skulls.

This pool was once used as a place to wash the grime of the world above from the feet of visitors to the Catacombs of Wrath. Once per hour, the waters of the pool magically replenish and are purified.

CREATURE: This approach to the Catacombs of Wrath is still guarded by an ancient creature, a hideous vargouille that generally rests in the shadows near the wall. The monster was placed here by the Scribbler, and over the centuries has remained, patiently waiting for a release from its duties and eager to attack anything that enters the room save sinspawn, Koruvus, Erylium, or anyone who openly displays a symbol of Lamashtu.

VARGOUILLE

| XP | CR | HP |
|-----|----|----|
| 600 | 2 | 19 |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 272)



RISE OF THE RUNELORDS

B5 STAIRS



A flight of spiral stairs winds up around a circular pillar into darkness above.

These stairs once led up to a small vault on the surface, but when Thassilon fell, that structure collapsed. If the PCs somehow manage to dig their way up through the 30 feet of rock between the top of the stairs and the surface, they find themselves emerging in an alley in the cluster of buildings between Tower Street and Junker's Way. Narrow fissures remain in the stone, helping to keep (relatively) fresh air in the catacombs, and providing a route for Erylium's familiar to come and go.

B6 ANCIENT PRISON (CR 4)



This large chamber was obviously once a prison, as testified by the twenty cells that line the room's perimeter. A rickety wooden platform overlooks the room, with two flights of stairs descending to the prison floor ten feet below. A five-foot-wide wooden walkway runs from the northern edge of the platform to a passageway to the east.

As its appearance suggests, this room was indeed used to keep prisoners, mostly agents of Shalast who ventured too close to Bakrakhani holdings. Skeletons lie in most of the cells—prisoners who starved to death ages ago. Although the walkway above the room looks rickety, it's actually quite stable, for the wood (as with many ancient Thassilonian ruins) still retains its ancient magical preservative aura to help withstand the passage of time. These same preservative magics have kept the bones in the cells from crumbling to dust, although they remain quite dry and brittle.

CREATURES: Two sinspawn wait here. If an alarm has been raised, they've hidden themselves in the rafters just under the platform, waiting to reach up and attack anyone who comes too close to the edge. If the alarm hasn't been raised, the sinspawn are bickering in the eastern part of the room over some crumbling skulls stolen from the remains in the surrounding cells.

SINSPAWN (2)

| XP | CR | HP |
|----------|----|---------|
| 600 each | 2 | 19 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 246)

B7 INTERROGATION CHAMBER



This room contains several ancient relics of what appear to be torture implements, although their function and style seem strange and archaic. In one corner sits a spherical cage with spikes protruding inward from its iron bars. In another stands what appears to be a star-shaped wooden



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frame, its surface studded with hooks. And in the center of the room is a long table covered with leather straps and a number of cranks that seem designed to rotate and swivel.

All of the torture devices here saw plenty of use back in Thassilon's day, but are far too decayed or rusted to be of much use today.

B8 ANCIENT STUDY



The crumbling remnants of several chairs and a long table clutter the floor of this room. To the south stand three stone doors, each bearing a strange symbol that resembles a seven-pointed star.

This room once served as a study, but time (and Erylium's centuries of frustration) have taken their toll here. A search of the rubble uncovers the fragments of countless books and scrolls with bits of spiky writing in a strange language all over them. These were once part of the Scribbler's library, and taught Erylium much of what she knows today as a witch and a follower of Lamashtu, but are now useless.

The three solid doors to the south were once prison cells. Within each is a single skeleton of a badly

deformed humanoid; one has three brittle arms, another has an enormous misshapen skull, and the third has a rib cage that goes all the way down to its pelvis—a pelvis with stunted leg bones strewn below its strangely flat girth.

TREASURE: A DC 20 Perception check while looking at the torn-up pages reveals a *scroll of flaming sphere* (CL 5th) under a broken chair.

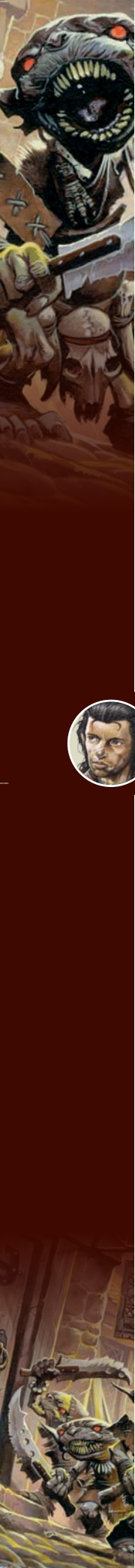
B9 PRISONER PITS (CR 4)



The ceiling of this strangely cold chamber arches to a vaulted height of twenty feet. The floor contains eleven wooden lids strewn haphazardly over eleven five-foot-wide pits in the ground. From the darkness within these pits echo up strange shuffling sounds and, every so often, a low moan.

Each of the pits is 20 feet deep. The wooden covers over the top of each are quite fragile, and collapse if anyone walks on them. A DC 15 Reflex save allows a character to leap to safety in an adjacent square; otherwise a 20-foot fall into the pit below is only the beginning of the victim's problems.

CREATURES: Each of these pits contains a single human zombie, a pitiful creature left over from an age



thousands of years in the past, its flesh maintained by necromantic magic. These zombie pits once served as yet another way the Bakrakhani tormented their prisoners; now, they serve only as Erylium's playthings.

After Nualia opened the Catacombs of Wrath, very few creatures wandered into the dungeon from the hidden smuggler's tunnel entrance. One of them, though, was a goblin hero of the Seven Tooth tribe named Koruvus. When he discovered the secret tunnel, he brashly declared to the other goblins that he was going to explore it, loot the treasure doubtless hidden within, and come back to take over the Seven Tooth tribe. He never returned, but the Seven Tooth goblins expect him to do so any day.

In fact, Koruvus stumbled into the Catacombs of Wrath and drank from the waters atop the altar at **B12**, whereupon he was twisted into a monstrous, insane mockery by the fickle cruelty of Lamashtu's whims. He's come to see Erylium as his new queen, and follows her orders slavishly. The quasit was initially amused by this development, but it didn't take her long to grow tired of Koruvus's loud nature and she ordered him to guard her flock in area **B9**. Koruvus does so obsessively, leaving only to drink from the fountain at **B4** or to scavenge rats in the smuggler's tunnels for food when he can't stand the hunger pangs any longer.

Skills Intimidate +5, Ride +6, Stealth +6

Languages Goblin

Gear +1 longsword, silver dagger, masterwork handaxe

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, Koruvus can spew a 20-foot-long line of foul-smelling and acidic blood from his mouth. Any creatures in this area take 2d4 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 13 half). A creature that takes damage from the acid must also make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| HUMAN ZOMBIES (11) | XP | CR | HP |
| | 200 each | 1/2 | 12 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 288)

STORY AWARD: The zombies are relatively harmless in their pits—if the PCs destroy them with ranged weapons, award them 200 XP for the lot.

B10 **BLOCKED STAIRS**

This twisting flight of spiral stairs once led down to even deeper complexes below Sandpoint, but like the flight of stairs leading up from area **B5**, this route was closed by the ancient cataclysm. In time, this rubble will be cleared, in which case these stairs lead to the Scribbler's realm in Lamashtu's Shrine (see Chapter Five for more details).

B11 **MEDITATION CHAMBER**

This strange room is a fifteen-foot-diameter sphere. Several objects float in the room, spinning lazily in space—a ragged book, a scroll, a bottle of wine, a dead raven surrounded by a halo of floating and writhing maggots, and a twisted iron wand with a forked tip. Yet perhaps the most unnerving aspect of the room is the walls, for they are plated in sheets of strange red metal that ripple every once in a while with silent black electricity that seems to coalesce into strange runes or even words far too often for the effect to be chance.

This unusual room still bears a magical effect placed here long ago. Any creature or object that enters the room is immediately affected by a *levitate* spell and floats in the air. The Scribbler found levitation to be an excellent way to relax, but was unable to cast the spell himself and so hired one of Alaznist's apprentices to create this room for him.

Erylium spends a few hours each day here, drinking and snacking on maggots while she reads her favorite book, but she is currently located in area **B13**.

This room was important to the Scribbler in life, and echoes of his madness and personality manifest here as the crackling lighting. Someone who can read Thassilonian may recognize snatches of words here and

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| KORUVUS | XP | CR | HP |
| | 800 | 3 | 26 |

Variant male goblin fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 26 (2d10+11); fast healing 1

Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** -1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Immune** acid, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 longsword +4 (1d8+4/19-20), silver dagger +3 (1d4+1/19-20), mwk handaxe +3 (1d6+1/x3)

Special Attacks breath weapon

TACTICS

During Combat Koruvus takes his duty as guardian of this chamber seriously, and immediately attacks anyone who enters the room. He uses his breath weapon on the first round of combat, then moves in to engage the largest, most dangerous-looking foe with his weapons.

Morale Koruvus fights to the death, and pursues foes all the way to the Glassworks or the catacombs' exit if necessary before returning here.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 3, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting





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there in these shapes, words having to do with anger, wrath, and a need for revenge, but never anything close to a full thought. More information about the Scribbler can be found in Chapter Five—for now, the lightning should seem like nothing more than a strange feature of these peculiar chambers.

TREASURE: The bottle of wine was brought to Erylium by Tsuto several hours ago as a gift. The scroll is a *scroll of burning hands* (CL 3rd).

The book is a magically preserved but still ancient prayer book dedicated to the worship of Lamashtu, the Mother of Monsters. Written in Abyssal, this well-read tome is Erylium's pride and joy, the most important of her belongings. The book reads as much like a bestiary of the world's most horrific and cruel monsters (along with numerous woodcut illustrations of how they kill) as it does a religious text. The book is worth 100 gp.

The iron wand is a *wand of shocking grasp* (28 charges) that Erylium knows is magic but can't use—she plans on someday using it to bargain for a magic wand that she can use.

B12 SHRINE TO LAMASHTU



The tunnel widens here into what appears to have once been a small shrine, for to the northeast, steps lead up to a platform of gray stone. Sitting atop the platform is an ancient altar, little more than a jagged block of black marble with a shallow concavity on top of it. This basin is filled with what appears to be filthy water.

Unlike the other Runelords, Alaznist was a woman of faith—faith in ruin, devastation, and wrath. While she had an alliance with the nascent demon lord Yamasoth, she drew inspiration from all demon lords. She encouraged her minions to venerate demons as well—she cared not whom they revered, as long as they were destructive.

The demon queen Lamashtu was a favorite choice, and the Mother of Monsters was the Scribbler's patron. The Scribbler used this altar to commune with Lamashtu—Erylium uses the altar for the same purpose, and it was here that she baptized Nualia and began to teach her.

Treasure: The basin on the altar constantly generates 4 doses of the *waters of Lamashtu* (*The Inner Sea World Guide* 297). It was by drinking this vile fluid that the goblin Koruvus became the mutant he is today. If harvested from the altar, the waters degrade to normal unholy water after 1 hour—the altar replenishes itself at the rate of 1 vial's worth per day.

B13 CATHEDRAL OF WRATH (CR 5)



This huge room looks like nothing more than an immense underground cathedral. Stone doors stand to either side of the main entrance, but beyond this, the walls are carved with strange, spiky runes. In the center of the room is a large pool, with a ring of polished human skulls balanced on stone spikes arranged in a circle around the deeper midsection. At the far end of the room, a pair of stone stairways leads up to a pulpit on which sits a second pool, this one triangular and filled with churning, bubbling water that looks almost like translucent lava. Yet while wisps of what look like heat and steam rise from the strange orange liquid, the room itself is deathly cold.

While Runelord Alaznist encouraged the veneration of demons, her true faith lay in the purity of wrath. And thus, at each of her most important holdings, she made sure to place a “shrine” to her favored sin in the form of a *minor runewell*. Less potent than those used by the other runelords, but more numerous, the *runewells* of wrath allowed communication between those stationed at distant locations. In addition, they were empowered with the capacity to harvest wrath from the souls of the dead so as to create her favored shock troops—sinspawn. When Karzoug activated his much more powerful *runewell* several years ago, the *minor runewell* in this room



flared back to life. Ever since, Erylium has taken care to nurture it. Its magic had been waning, but the recent slaughter of so many goblins above has done wonders to recharge the pool's wrath, and now it glows and bubbles nearly as much as when it was first reactivated years ago. Erylium hopes that when Nualia leads the second, "real" assault on Sandpoint, the number of goblins slaughtered alone will give her enough sinspawn to expand her own army into the world above and to begin harvesting more victims to transform into new sinspawn.

Rules for *minor runewells* can be found on page 425 of this book—this particular *minor runewell* currently stores 20 sin points. It is from this *minor runewell* that the

sinspawn that haunt the catacombs were recently created by Erylium.

The two small rooms to the northeast and southwest of the cathedral entrance were once used as storage and robing chambers—both rooms are empty today, and their doors hang ajar. The ceiling of this room is 20 feet high.

CREATURES: Although the Catacombs of Wrath are now open and Erylium is free to leave, her thousands of years spent as the catacombs' queen have left her with a bit of agoraphobia and the senseless worry that if she leaves her catacombs, someone could move in and steal her crown. As a result, she still spends nearly all of her time here.

When the PCs enter the room, the quasit flies into a rage. She shrieks, accuses the PCs of "daring to intrude upon the Mother's sanctum," and slashes her own wrist with her dagger, allowing some of her blood to drip into the *minor runewell* and form a sinspawn. As she does, the *minor runewell's* glow diminishes noticeably. A DC 20 Sense Motive allows a character to note the sudden look of worry that Erylium gets when she sees this. She does not create any more sinspawn after the first one.



| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ERYLIUM | XP 1,200 | CR 4 | HP 35 |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|

Female quasit witch 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 66, *Advanced Player's Guide* 65)

CE Tiny outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 35 (6 HD; 3d10+3d6+9); fast healing 2

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

DR 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +10 (1d4-1), 2 claws +10 (1d3-1 plus poison)

Ranged +1 *cold iron returning dagger* +11 (1d2/19-20)

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

Special Attacks hexes (slumber [3 rounds], tongues [understand only, 3 minutes])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +7)

At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only)

1/day—*cause fear* (DC 12, 30-foot radius)

1/week—*commune* (6 questions)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*hold person* (DC 14), *summon monster II*

1st—*command* (DC 13), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13), *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 12), *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)

Patron Shadow

TACTICS

Before Combat Erylium becomes invisible as soon as she hears enemies approaching.

During Combat Although tough to hit and capable of healing

ERYLIUM



from wounds quickly, Erylium remains something of a coward in a fight. She uses flight to maintain ranged superiority over foes, using spells like *summon monster* or *hold person* (aimed at the best-armored of her foes) in the first few rounds of combat. She uses her *Tiny +1 cold iron returning dagger* against foes once she runs out of spells, but if cornered, she fights with her claws and bite.

Morale If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, Erylium becomes invisible and flees, waiting for her fast healing to fix her up before returning here to attack the PCs again.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +10, Fly +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +9, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +21

Languages Abyssal, Thassilonian; telepathy (touch), *tongues*

SQ change shape (Small centipede or raven; *polymorph*), witch's familiar (Diminutive-sized wren named Orm)

Other Gear +1 *cold iron returning dagger*, tiara worth 50 gp, black silk gown worth 25 gp, obsidian unholy symbol of Lamashtu worth 10 gp

SINSPAWN

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| XP 600 | CR 2 | HP 19 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 246)

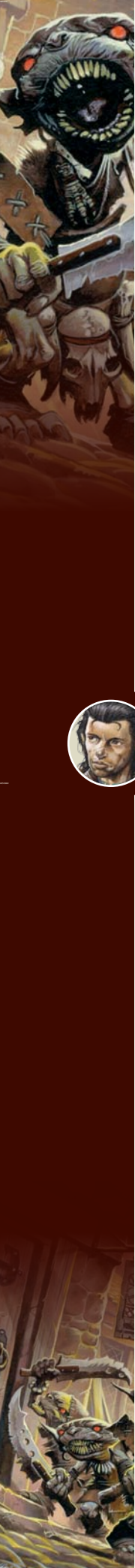
STORY AWARD: If the PCs use the *minor runewell* to create and then kill enough sinspawn, they can remove the

menace the *minor runewell* poses to the Sandpoint region. Grant the party a reward of 1,200 XP if they accomplish this.

FORESHADOWING THE SINKHOLE

The Catacombs of Wrath constitute only the first of two dungeon levels that exists under northern Sandpoint. A deeper level (Lamashtu's Shrine) exists below this upper level, accessible via the stairwell found at area **B10**. Although these stairs are currently clogged with rubble, a portion of the Catacombs of Wrath collapses in Chapter Five, forming a large sinkhole and drawing attention to the stairs.

The currently inaccessible stairwell can function in and of itself as a hint that there are deeper dungeon levels, but if you wish to place a little bit more foreshadowing into your game, feel free to have strange manifestations of the evil growing in the chambers below the catacombs. The PCs could hear the distant, muted howl of strange dogs that a DC 20 Perception check seems to indicate are coming up from somewhere below the ground of this level. Short scribbled threats written in Thassilonian or Abyssal might appear on walls here and there, only to vanish before another player can confirm the presence of the eerie scribbles. As long as the PCs suspect that there's something more going on in or below the Catacombs of Wrath, you're doing your job—just take care not to intrigue them too much! At 2nd level, they're far from ready to deal with the horrors that wait in Lamashtu's Shrine far below!



PART FOUR: THISTLETOP

THE ANCIENT SITE KNOWN AS THISTLETOP HAS LONG SERVED AS A DEN FOR GOBLINS. TODAY, IT SERVES AS SOMETHING MORE—THE LAIR OF A BAND OF OUTLAWS LED BY NUALIA, KNAVES AND CRIMINALS WHO HAVE RECRUITED THE GOBLINS AS THEIR INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION. IN ORDER TO SAVE SANDPOINT FROM THESE GOBLINS, A JOURNEY TO THISTLETOP MUST EVENTUALLY BE UNDERTAKEN—BUT THE LOST COAST'S NEW HEROES SHOULD TAKE CARE TO ENSURE THEY ARE PREPARED FOR THIS STAGE OF THE ADVENTURE. GOBLINS ARE THE LEAST OF THE DANGERS THAT LURK IN AND BELOW THISTLETOP—FOR THE SITE WAS ONE OF MANY USED BY RUNELORD KARZOUG IN HIS ANCIENT WAR AGAINST HIS ENEMIES TO THE WEST.



The map of the Sandpoint hinterlands on page 386 shows the location of Thistletop. If the PCs follow the Lost Coast Road east, they can reach the Thistle River crossing relatively quickly—it's only a 6-mile journey (2 hours by foot), and unless you want to spring an attack on the PCs by a group of six goblin warriors (a CR 2 encounter), they shouldn't run into much trouble along the way.

Thistletop is located on the Varisian coast—approaching by land is difficult since the tangles of Nettlewood are in the way. A DC 14 Survival check reveals a route through the woods. If the check exceeds this DC by 10, the PCs come across one of several narrow goblin trails that eventually lead to area C1. Each attempted Survival check takes 1d4 hours of wandering in the woods, and for each hour of wandering there's a 30% chance that 1d4 PCs stumble into a patch of poisonous plants, either stinging nettles (Fortitude DC 12 to avoid 1 point of Dexterity damage) or a goblinberry patch (Fortitude DC 12 to avoid 1 point of Strength damage). A character can substitute a Knowledge (nature) check for these saving throws to avoid damage.

Thistletop is a curiously round island about 60 feet off shore, connected to the mainland by a rope bridge. The island had an unusual genesis—it was once the head of one of Karzoug's sentinel statues that stood upon the ridge of land called the Rasp before the nation of Bakrakan became the Varisian Gulf. The statue has long since crumbled and become overgrown by the Nettlewood, but the head escaped such obscurity by landing in the surf. The magical nature of the statue's construction drastically slowed the process of erosion on the head's features, and when the sun hits the western cliff of the isle just right, one can just make out the ancient features of the statue's face. The statue once contained a small complex, but today only a few of the original rooms within the head itself remain accessible.

One of these rooms contains an imprisoned barghest named Malfeshnekor. An ancient agent of Alaznist, the monster was captured by Karzoug's minions and imprisoned here for interrogation. Yet the end came too quickly, and when the statue's head tumbled into the sea, Malfeshnekor found himself one of the few surviving creatures. And yet,

the outsider remained trapped. For the next several thousand years he waited. For a time, a group of Lamashtu cultists settled in the rooms above. Himself a loyal minion of Lamashtu, Malfeshnekor quickly discovered he was able to communicate empathically with any priest who stood before the altar. In so doing, he was able to lead the cultists to discover the small complex in which he waited, but the cultists were slaughtered by a hellcat guardian before they reached him.

Well over a century later, Malfeshnekor sensed new creatures settling nearby—goblins. As with the Lamashtan cultists, the barghest had a crude empathic link with these goblins. Malfeshnekor couldn't quite communicate with them as he had with the clerics of Lamashtu, but the goblins could still sense him. They felt drawn to Thistletop for reasons they didn't quite comprehend, and it quickly became the most coveted tribal land among their kind. Traditionally, the Thistletop goblins were led by clerics who sensed the barghest's empathic urgings during their rituals. These urgings encouraged the goblins to explore the lower levels of their lair, yet goblins are fragile and stupid creatures. None ever found the secret door that led to Malfeshnekor's level, and now that the current leader of Thistletop is himself too unwise to receive Malfeshnekor's empathic sendings, the barghest had begun to despair.

And then, with Nualia's arrival and the reconsecration of the temple, Malfeshnekor realized his time of freedom was close. Nualia is his salvation, and he her path to becoming a true demon.

C1 HIDDEN ENTRANCE



The briars and thistles that grow so rampantly in Nettlewood are even more dense and tangled here, close to the shore. Although not quite dense enough to block the sound of waves crashing on the unseen shores to the west, the undergrowth is certainly thick enough to block sight and access to the coast. Few trees grow this close to the edge of the sea, but the briars themselves often reach heights to rival them; here, the patch is nearly twenty feet high.





BURNT OFFERINGS

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: FESTIVAL AND FIRE

PART TWO: LOCAL HEROES

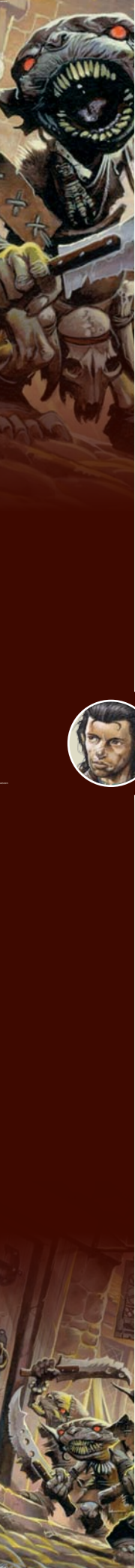
PART THREE: GLASS AND WRATH

PART FOUR: THISTLETOP

MAP FOUR: THISTLETOP

THISTLETOP





The thorns that comprise the “walls” here are quite damp; the fog every morning and evening ensures that. As a result, the brambles don’t burn well. An attempt to smoke out the goblins or burn down their thistle maze only results in a slow-burning smoky fire that alerts the goblins to the PCs’ precise location.

While the PCs can certainly attempt to reach Thistletop by the sea or by traveling along the beaches, they’ll still need to navigate the treacherous sea cliffs to get to the stockade built atop the island. The cliffs themselves are 80 feet high, and since the damp sea air makes the walls slick, it’s a DC 15 Climb check to navigate them—no easy task for most goblins, or most low-level PCs, for that matter!

As a result, the goblins created this small network of tunnels and chambers in the briars to make it easier for them to come and go. If the PCs discover these tunnels, they can certainly use them as well. A cleverly constructed rigid mat of thistles and nettles hides the entrance to the tunnels. A DC 12 Perception check is enough to notice that the briars here can be lifted aside to reveal a 4-foot-high tunnel leading into the briars. Similar “thistle doors” are within the tunnels beyond—they can be discovered with a DC 12 Perception check as well. Opening a thistle door is a standard action, although a character can try to open one quickly as a move action. Doing so requires a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid being scratched and jabbed by thorns and taking 1 point of damage. A character wearing gauntlets or heavy armor automatically makes this saving throw.

C2 THISTLE TUNNELS



A four-foot-high tunnel winds through the dense briars and nettles. The floor is hard-packed earth, with patches of wiry plants growing stubbornly here and there.

Large creatures must crawl to navigate the thistle tunnels. Bipedal Medium creatures can navigate them by stooping over and hunkering down, effectively squeezing to move, and thus taking a –4 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to AC; such characters must spend 2 squares of movement for each square traveled. Small and smaller creatures can move about normally, as can most quadrupedal Medium creatures (including goblin dogs). The larger chambers within all have higher ceilings, wherein these penalties do not apply to Medium creatures.

Although the ceilings and walls of these tunnels consist of tangled, thorny vines, a character who brushes against them need not worry about damage. A character pushed into a wall must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 1 point of damage (characters in heavy armor automatically make this save).

A creature with the woodland stride ability (such as any druid of at least 2nd level) can move through these tunnels without penalty, despite size, and can even

pass through the tangled briars with ease, effectively walking through the walls of this area. Gogmurt the goblin druid uses this ability to great effect when defending the area, but certainly doesn’t expect to ever face enemy druids who can do the same.

It’s possible to hack a new path through the briars with any slashing weapon. A 5-foot-square section of briars has hardness 1 and 40 hit points. Hacking at briars counts as being pushed into a wall for chances of taking damage from the nettles and thorns.

A character who searches for tracks in the thistle tunnels automatically sees the countless goblin and goblin dog prints in the soft earth. A DC 12 Survival check, however, allows a character to notice that a large object was recently dragged through the tunnels. Following these drag marks can lead a character from the entrance at area C1 directly to the exit at area C9—these signs are evidence left from the goblins’ recent transportation of the unconscious horse Shadowmist through the tunnels to the fort—this horse is currently imprisoned in area C18.

C3 THE HOWLING HOLE



Three thistle tunnels open into a large cavelike chamber. Above, the thorny canopy grows thin enough that tiny slivers of the sky above can be seen, while below, the ground consists of trampled dirt. To the west, the distant sound of sloshing waves echoes up from a hole.

The Thistletop goblins use this chamber as a staging room for raids, gathering here to receive final pep-talks from the commandos. The hole drops down into area C27 below, a sea cave inhabited by a dangerous tidal predator known as a bunyip. It’s a DC 20 Climb check to navigate the 70-foot shaft, which opens into the sea cave 10 feet above sea level. The water is deep enough that the 80-foot fall into the water below deals only 2d3 points of nonlethal damage plus 4d6 points of lethal damage.

The goblins know something monstrous lives down below—the bunyip’s howls drive them into a panic on a daily basis—but none of them have actually seen the bunyip up close. At best, they’ve had brief glimpses of something big and gray swimming in the water now and then. Depending on the goblin interrogated, the shape is that of a fish, an octopus, a ghost, or an enormous crab. The goblins have taken to dropping prisoners (and unruly goblins) into the hole, since the “Howling Hole,” as they call it, usually remains quiet for a few days after such a sacrifice.

C4 REFUGEE NEST (CR 4)



This thirty-foot-diameter, low-ceilinged chamber stinks of smoke. A shallow fire pit smolders in the center of the floor, while nine tangled reed-and-leaf nests line the walls.





CREATURES: After the assault on Sandpoint, the Birdcruncher goblins were left leaderless. Many of them fled into the wilderness, but nearly two dozen of them fled north to throw themselves upon Chief Ripnugget's mercy. The Thistletop chieftain is a hard goblin to please, and he's forced the Birdcruncher refugees to live here for the past several days while he decides what to do with them. So far, half of their number have been tossed down the Howling Hole or handed over to Nualia for living sacrifices. The remaining goblin refugees huddle here in fear that one of them may be next. Nonetheless, if presented with intruders, the 10 goblin refugees launch into a frenzy of shrieks and fury in a desperate attempt to gain Ripnugget's favor by killing "longshank" intruders.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| GOBLIN REFUGEES (10) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 5 each |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

C5 GOBLIN DOG KENNEL (CR 5)



The floor and walls of this musty-smelling chamber are covered with matted, wiry fur. Well-gnawed bones lie scattered about the floor, and a dozen wooden stakes have been driven into the ground near the walls.

CREATURES: The Thistletop goblins kennel their 12 goblin dogs here, keeping them tied to the stakes via leashes of hairy, fraying rope. Currently, only four goblin dogs are here; the other eight can be found to the north in areas **C10** and **C16**.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| GOBLIN DOGS (4) | XP 400 each | CR 1 | HP 9 each |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

C6 TANGLETOOTH'S DEN (CR 3)



A cloying musky scent lies heavy in the air here. A matted nest of red and black hair sits to the east.

CREATURE: Tangletooth, Gogmurt's firepelt animal companion, spends the majority of her time sleeping here, periodically snarling at goblins who wander by the tunnel to the northwest. A firepelt is a cougar native to the region, its silky fur a mix of red and black stripes.

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| TANGLETOOTH | HP 26 |
|--------------------|-----------------|

Firepelt cougar (small cat) animal companion
N Medium animal

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.; sprint

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3 plus trip), 2 claws +6 (1d3+3)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22 (26 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Acrobatics +9 (+17 when jumping), Climb +7, Perception +5, Stealth +12

C7 GOGMURT'S LAIR (CR 4)



A tangle of vines hang from the thorny ceiling of this chamber, each suspending a clattering collection of bird skulls, rib bones, teeth, and other bits of gruesome decor. In a few places the vines droop all the way to the floor. A large nest of nettles and thorny vines sits to the south, a halo of half-eaten dead birds and rats indicating that whatever sleeps there eats in its bed.

CREATURE: Gogmurt has served Warchief Ripnugget as an advisor and the Thistletop goblins as a spiritual leader for many years, but over the last few months, the presence of "the longshanks" (Nualia and her allies) has been an unwelcome thorn in Gogmurt's side. He argued against the attack on Sandpoint, reasoning it would only rile up the humans and visit eventual retaliation in the form of hunting dogs, horse-mounted soldiers, and adventurers. Yet Nualia's words made more sense to Ripnugget, who then chose to ignore Gogmurt's advice. The bitter goblin druid has all but washed his hands of the tribe as a result, and in his foul mood has ordered more goblin refugees than necessary into the Howling Hole.

Gogmurt has been brooding here for days, and has been expecting adventurers to strike at Thistletop at any time, day or night. While he doesn't agree with Ripnugget's current tactics, he remains loyal to the idea of the Thistletop goblin tribe, and reacts swiftly to defend this area once he hears intruders. His woodland stride ability gives him incredible mobility in this area; he can step through the thorny walls with ease during fights. He hasn't been sleeping lately, and has taken to casting *lesser restoration* daily to fight off fatigue.

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| GOGMURT | XP 1,200 | CR 4 | HP 39 |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|

Male goblin druid 4/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

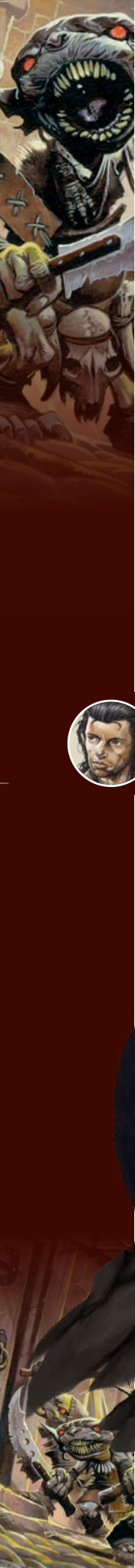
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

hp 39 (5d8+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +4 vs. Fey and plant-targeted effects



OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *flame blade* +3 (1d8+2 plus fire) or
spear +3 (1d6-1/x3)

Ranged sling +7 (1d3-1)

Special Attacks wild shape 1/day, sneak attack +1d6

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*animal messenger*, *flame blade*, *lesser restoration*
(already cast)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *entangle* (DC 14),
speak with animals

0 (at will)—*flare* (DC 13), *guidance*, *mending*, *stabilize*

TACTICS

Before Combat Gogmurt uses *speak with animals* and casts *flame blade*, then uses his *wand of produce flame* before investigating the PCs' arrival. If he thinks there's time, he also casts *animal messenger* to send a thrush out to the island to deliver a bloodstained goblin tooth to Warchief Ripnugget—a prearranged code to warn that the adventurers have finally arrived to murder them all. Gogmurt calls Tangletooth to his side and directs her in combat using *speak with animals*.

During Combat Gogmurt casts *entangle* on the first round

of combat, taking care to place the spell so that it blocks access to area **C9** but doesn't block his own possible escape routes. If the PCs have animal minions, he casts *charm animal* on one of them. On following rounds, he fights with his *flame blade* in one hand, throwing fire from *produce flame* in the other when he needs to make ranged attacks. As soon as he's brought below 20 hit points, he retreats by fleeing into the brambles, heals himself as best he can, and then returns to ambush the PCs from behind by swapping out a remaining 1st-level spell for *summon nature's ally I*.

Morale If he is ever brought below 10 hit points and has no healing left, Gogmurt attempts to flee north to warn Warchief Ripnugget about the PCs. If surrounded or captured, Gogmurt's resolve breaks and he sobs for mercy.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge

Skills Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (nature) +9, Linguistics +3,
Ride +12, Stealth +16, Survival +12

Languages Common, Druidic, Goblin

SQ nature bond (animal companion), nature sense, wild
empathy +4, trackless step, trapfinding +1, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *wand of produce flame* (34 charges), *wand of tree shape* (4 charges); **Other Gear**
+1 leather armor, sling, spear, *cloak of resistance* +1

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs capture Gogmurt alive, he responds to interrogation attempts with cursing and spitting unless he's made friendly (his initial attitude is hostile) with a Diplomacy check, successfully intimidated, or reduced to 5 or fewer hit points. At this point, the craven druid sobs for mercy. He knows that the PCs are here for what the goblins did to Sandpoint, and tries to justify the assault by saying it was all the longshank's fault before clapping a hand over his mouth when he realizes he probably just insulted his captors.

Gogmurt knows that Warchief Ripnugget has become enthralled with several taller folk of late, in particular a "very angry woman with white hair and weird eyes and a torn-up belly" whom he suspects Ripnugget has become infatuated with. The chieftain has certainly been placing a lot of trust in this strange woman's advice—it was at her urging that the assault on Sandpoint took place. Gogmurt has distanced himself from the chieftain and these new allies, not wanting to be tainted by her bad ideas. He does know that she has four dangerous

GOGMURT AND
TANGLETOOTH





allies of her own: a brutish bugbear mercenary named Bruthazmus who lived for many years in a hut on the northeastern side of Nettlewood, a quiet human man who wears lots of metal armor, a dark-skinned violent human woman who's used fire to scorch several goblins who got too close to her, and a male half-elf who seems too happy all the time and who sometimes plays the flute. Gogmurt suspects that the half-elf and the angry woman with the torn-up belly are lovers, because he's seen them "going at it like donkey rats" in the woods at times. He woefully mutters that this news only made Chief Ripnugget angrier when the druid tried to use it in an attempt to win back his chieftain's favor. "Worse than a harpy, that one!" Gogmurt spits. Then he quickly clarifies his accusation: "The woman. Not Chief Ripnugget. Don't tell him I called her a harpy!"

Gogmurt begs the PCs not to hurt any more goblins, pointing out that the angry lady and her friends are the real troublemakers. If they can get into Ripnugget's fort to the north and get rid of them, Gogmurt promises that no goblin will ever bother Sandpoint again—a promise he can't possibly honor, but he's desperate enough to say anything. He refuses to accompany the PCs north. If he's forced to come with them, his piteous sobbing and sniffing should make stealth close to impossible.

C8 WATCHPOSTS

Three of these passageways, closed off at either end by a thistle door, allow goblins to keep an eye on the sea surrounding their main lair to the north. The assault on Sandpoint left the goblins a little underpopulated, though, and currently no one mans these posts.

C9 ROPE BRIDGE (CR 4)



A rope bridge spans the gulf between the cliff and a roundish, flat-topped island sixty-some feet to the north. Thick patches of nettles and briars grow here and there atop the island, but its most impressive feature is a wooden one-story stockade. Two thirty-foot-tall watchtowers guard the stockade's southern facade. The rope bridge itself is made of hairy rope and thick wooden planks; the whole thing creaks and sways in the wind above the churning surf eighty feet below.

TRAP: This rope bridge might seem treacherous, and it is. The goblins have rigged it so that if more than three Medium creatures (with a Small creature counting as a third of a Medium creature and a Large creature as three Medium ones) attempt to cross, the western supports tear free, dropping the planks down to hang vertically from the eastern rope and dumping anyone on the bridge into the waters below. A DC 13 Reflex save allows

a creature on the bridge to grab at the remaining ropes (or leap to safety if it's within 5 feet of either shore). A series of knotted ropes at the base of the northern posts allow one to tie off the trap so that it can support many times the weight. (The goblins rigged the bridge this way recently when they hauled their unconscious horse hostage Shadowmist over the bridge.)

Originally, the goblins rigged the bridge so that it would fall completely into the water below, but when they tested it and realized that they'd stranded themselves on the island, they rebuilt the bridge so it would leave one rope connected, making it easier to repair.

RIGGED ROPE BRIDGE

| | |
|-------|----|
| XP | CR |
| 1,200 | 4 |

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger location or manual; **Reset** manual

Effect 80-ft fall into water (2d3 nonlethal plus 4d6 lethal); multiple targets (all creatures on rope bridge); DC 13 Reflex save avoids fall

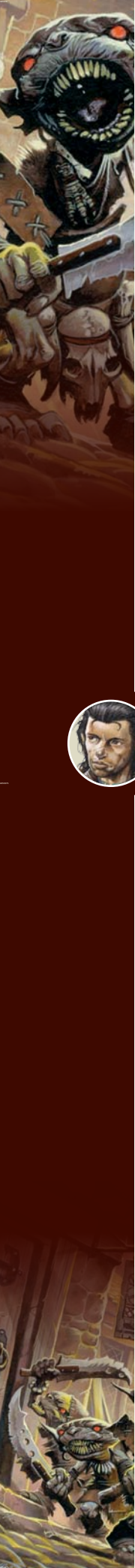
C10 THISTLETOP (CR 5)



The stockade is made of thick wood. Closer inspection reveals that most of the wood seems to have been scavenged from ships—a few nameplates remain affixed to some of the beams, while other timbers look like they might have once been masts.

The front doors leading into area C11 are barred from the inside if the alarm has been raised; otherwise they hang ajar. The walls of the stockade itself can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check. Note that while the stockade is made of wood, the damp sea air and thick layers of soggy moss and lichen that grow here and there make it difficult to burn without significant work—a fortunate feature indeed, for most goblin dens made of wood don't last much longer than it takes for the first goblin to light a fire.

CREATURES: Four goblins mounted on goblin dogs patrol the grounds surrounding the stockade, but being goblins, they are easily distracted. Unless the alarm has been raised, the four goblins are gathered to the northwest of the stockade, enraptured by a game of "killgull," a mean-spirited pastime in which a seagull is caught and a 30-foot length of twine is tied to its leg while the far end is held by a goblin. The other goblins take turns trying to pelt the gull out of the sky with thrown rocks, while the goblin holding the twine tries to help the gull avoid being hit by tugging and yanking the twine. Each goblin gets three throws. If the gull still lives at the end, the goblin holding the twine wins. Otherwise, the goblin whose stone kills the gull wins. Whoever wins gets to eat the seagull. Whatever's left



over is then used to attract new seagulls. While the goblins play, they let their goblin dogs wander around as they will, although the creatures generally run around the goblins and shriek and yap at the gulls.

Note that additional goblin guards watch from the towers (area **C13** and **C15**); see those areas for details on how closely they're paying attention.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| THISTLETOP GOBLINS (4) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 5 each |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| GOBLIN DOGS (4) | XP 400 each | CR 1 | HP 9 each |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

C11 TROPHY HALL



The floor of this room is hard-packed soil, as if the builders either ran out of lumber after building the walls and roof, or as if they simply never thought about building a floor. A number of poorly preserved horse and dog heads are mounted along the eastern wall, while along the southern wall hangs a pair of large black-feathered wings tacked to the wall with daggers.



The wall hangings represent Warchief Ripnugget's greatest trophies. The horses and dogs are farm animals that Thistletop's commandos have caught over the years and brought back here for Ripnugget to kill in area **C16**. The feathered wings once belonged to a harpy named Bristanch that dwelt a half-mile down the coast. Ripnugget's triumph over the harpy is perhaps the single greatest victory the goblin can boast of, since Bristanch murdered nearly half the Thistletop tribe (including two of the previous chieftains) before Ripnugget killed her.

TREASURE: One of the daggers used to display Bristanch's wings once belonged to the harpy herself—this dagger has a pearl handle, and is worth 100 gp. The other six daggers are mundane.

DEVELOPMENT: If the alarm has been raised, the six goblins from area **C14** are found here, ready to defend the room from any intruders.

C12 FOOD STORES

This door has been nailed shut; it can be opened with a DC 24 Strength check, or by a DC 10 Disable Device check and 1d4 minutes of work.



This storeroom is half-filled with crates, barrels, and large sacks of grain. A small hole has been chopped into the lower side of one of the barrels, allowing pickles and brine to drain out and giving the room a singular stink of vinegar.

Like all goblins, the Thistletop goblins enjoy eating. The broken pickle barrel is something of a recent scandal here; none of the goblins are confessing to the crime, and Warchief Ripnugget has become flustered enough by the vandalism that he's threatened to lock whoever's responsible in with the "monster" in area **C18** once he finds out who's responsible. Until then, Ripnugget has had the door nailed shut to prevent future crimes.

C13 PICKLE THIEVES (CR 1/2)



An open flight of wooden stairs winds up to a trap door in the ceiling, thirty feet above.

CREATURES: Two goblins are, in theory, on guard duty atop this tower, but they've both fallen asleep. These goblins are responsible for raiding the pickle barrel in area **C12**, as a search of a bag hidden in the northeast corner of the watchtower confirms. This bag can be found with a DC 15 Perception check; within are a few half-eaten pickles. The goblins were planning on eating all of this evidence, but after eating most of their stolen pickles they collapsed into a food coma. If wakened by the sound of battle (remember that the Perception DC to hear anything while sleeping increases by +10) or a raised alarm, these two goblins assume that they've been caught and, in a panic, hurl their remaining stolen pickles out of the tower into the thistle patch to the west, and only then move to support any fights down below with hurled javelins.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| THISTLETOP GOBLINS (2) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 5 each |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

C14 BARRACKS (CR 3)



Six poorly constructed bunk beds, little more than hammocks slung from rickety frames, stand along the walls of this room. Each is heaped with a vermin-infested blanket and a lump of straw that serves as a frustrating pillow.

CREATURES: Each of these bunk beds sleeps three goblins—the Thistletop tribe numbers 18 in all (not counting Warchief Ripnugget, his wives, or Gogmurt), although 12 of them are on duty elsewhere. As long as the alarm hasn't been raised, the remaining six goblins are here, sleeping. If the alarm has been raised, these six goblins move into area **C11** to help guard the trophy hall.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| THISTLETOP GOBLINS (6) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 5 each |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)





C15 EASTERN GUARD TOWER (CR 2)



An open flight of wooden stairs winds up to a trap door in the ceiling, thirty feet above.

CREATURES: This open-air tower gives a great view of the surrounding area. The goblins guarding this tower aren't quite as irresponsible as the pickle thieves in the other tower, but neither are they paragons of observation. Habitual card-players, these two play with a deck of 43 cards cobbled together from three different sets of cards, making up the rules as they go along. Their games are generally more argument than anything else, but if they hear battle or other signs of intrusion, they abandon their cards at once to join the fight.

THISTLETOP COMMANDOS (2)

| XP | CR | HP |
|----------|-----|---------|
| 200 each | 1/2 | 12 each |

Goblin commando (see page 18)

C16 EXERCISE YARD (CR 5)



This large courtyard is open to the sky. Tenacious clumps of partially trampled grass grow fitfully here and there in the hard-packed earth, in places stained with blood or scratched with furrows. To the north, what appear to be two dead goblins lie slumped at the entrance to an outbuilding.

This yard serves the goblins as a place to exercise, to train their goblin dogs, and as an impromptu arena. Warchief Ripnugget often uses this area to challenge creatures and prisoners brought back by raiders (typically horses and dogs, but sometimes actual humanoid prisoners).

CREATURES: Four goblin dogs have been left to run free in this yard. The slaving creatures often scratch at the walls around area C18 to torment the creature within, but otherwise have fun chasing each other and fighting.

GOBLIN DOGS (4)

| XP | CR | HP |
|----------|----|--------|
| 400 each | 1 | 9 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 157)

C17 STORAGE SHED



Shelves lined with crude tools, nets, and tack for goblin dogs line the walls here. To the northeast stands a large L-shaped wooden cage that contains dozens of rabbits.

The rabbits are used to feed the goblin dogs, while the other tools here are used to train the creatures. In emergencies, the rabbits can serve the goblins as backup food supplies, but goblins who snack on rabbits before

the rest of the food runs out are generally thrown into the Howling Hole, under Chief Ripnugget's "steal food, become food" policy.

C18 CAGED HORSE (CR 2)

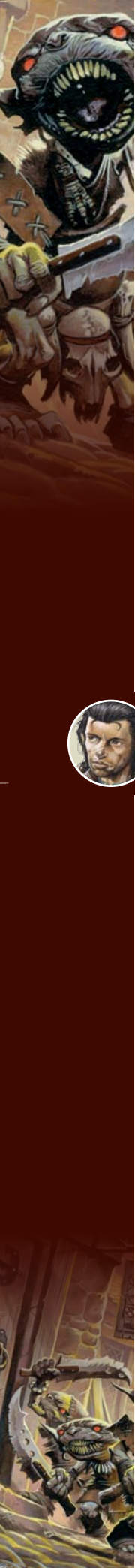


The door to this outbuilding has been nailed shut, and additional boards have been nailed over these nails. The door itself is cracked and splintered in places. Two dead goblins, their heads crushed in by something heavy, lie in the dirt by the door, their ripening bodies covered with flies.

The door to this outbuilding can be opened with a DC 25 Strength check, or by a DC 15 Disable Device check and 2d4 minutes of work. A DC 20 Heal check can establish that both goblins were slain when a large hoofed animal, likely a horse, stepped on their heads.

CREATURE: The Thistletop goblins have captured horses many times before, bringing them back here for their chieftain to kill during cruel bloodsports in the exercise yard. Yet always before, these captured horses were light riding horses. Locked inside this room is a terrible mistake—a heavy warhorse named Shadowmist, stolen several days ago from traveling merchants. The goblins murdered the two caravan guards and one of the two remaining horses (the merchants escaped on horseback to Sandpoint), but Shadowmist proved to be more than a match for the goblins. Through a mixture of luck and false bravado, the goblins managed to knock Shadowmist unconscious while only losing four of their own. They bound up the horse's legs, loaded it into the merchants' wagon, and hauled it back here as a prize for Chief Ripnugget. Though the methods by which they managed to drag the unconscious horse through the thistle maze and across the rope bridge were as ingenious as they were ill-advised and risky, the goblins managed to get the horse here.

Tragedy struck when the excited goblins dumped the horse in the exercise yard, cut its bonds, and poured a potion of *cure light wounds* into its mouth so that their chief could show off his horse-killing skills on a live horse. Shadowmist immediately leapt up and began racing in circles in the yard. The goblins panicked and fled, shrieking for Chief Ripnugget to kill the creature, but when he tried to do so, the horse proved even tougher than Ripnugget was expecting. The chief took a crushing blow to the arm, breaking it and forcing him to flee. Enraged, he accused the goblins who had caught the horse of trying to assassinate him, then told them to trap the monster in the shed while he figured out what to do with it. Mortified, the goblins managed to lure the horse into the shed (losing three of their number in the process—two outside, one inside), but in the end managed to nail the door shut while Shadowmist



stomped and raged inside. None of the bodies hide anything of value.

Ripnugget asked Gogmurt to come “take care of the monster horse,” but the druid has refused to help as long as Ripnugget allows Nualia to stay in Thistletop. Enraged at the druid’s answer, the equally stubborn goblin chief has decided to let Shadowmist reach the verge of starvation before attempting to kill him again.

Shadowmist is a magnificent creature, yet his days in captivity have begun to take their toll. Slowly starving, the wild-eyed horse can be a great asset for the PCs if they can calm him down with a DC 25 wild empathy or Handle Animal check or magic like *charm animal*. If the PCs offer Shadowmist food, they gain a +10 bonus on their checks to calm the horse down.

SHADOWMIST

| | | |
|-----|----|----|
| XP | CR | HP |
| 600 | 2 | 19 |

Advanced horse (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 177, 294)

hp 19 (currently has 14 points of nonlethal damage from abuse)

STORY AWARD: If the PCs manage to rescue Shadowmist and either return him to his proper owners back in Sandpoint or claim him as their own, award them XP as if they had defeated the horse in combat.

C19 THRONE ROOM (CR 6)

If the alarm has been raised, all of the doors into this room are closed tightly and locked. Ripnugget carries the keys, but the doors can be picked with a DC 20 Disable Device check.



This large throne room is decorated with hanging furs along its walls, mostly black-and-red striped firepelt skins, various dog pelts, and in some cases, what look like horse hides. Four square timbers support the ceiling, their faces studded with dozens of iron spikes, with the lower reaches decorated with dozens of impaled and severed hands in various stages of decay. To the northeast, a wooden platform supports a throne heaped with dog pelts and horse hides. Dog skulls adorn the armrests and a horse skull leers over the throne’s back.

The hands are all that remain of the last several dozen human victims of the Thistletop goblins; the rest of these victims have long since been eaten or smoked and put into storage in area C20. The spikes make it relatively easy to climb the pillars with a DC 5 Climb check.

Warchief Ripnugget, lord of the Thistletop goblins, has been spending an increasing amount of time here in his throne hall. His favorite pastimes include watching his commandos stage mock battles, being entertained by warchanters, or plotting additional raids on Sandpoint to present to his new obsession—Nualia. His interest

in his wives has all but vanished, so enthralled has he become by the exotic aasimar.

While most of the Thistletop goblins personally feel that Ripnugget’s obsession with Nualia is embarrassing and even traitorous, none of them are brave enough to confront their leader with their feelings (with the exception of the druid Gogmurt).

In truth, Ripnugget’s obsession with Nualia has nothing to do with sexual attraction—her skin is too smooth, her ears are too small, and she’s just too tall to interest the goblin in that way, but it makes a convenient cover to hide his real interest—he believes that she may well be the key to unraveling the mystery of what Malfeshnekor really is. When she arrived with her entourage and an offer of alliance, Ripnugget (in a rare display of common sense) realized that they were more than a match for him and his goblins, and, instead of fighting, chose to listen to what she had to say. When she revealed her holy symbol and spoke of Malfeshnekor, Ripnugget was shocked but recovered his wits quickly enough. He came to believe that this strange woman was in fact Malfeshnekor’s mouthpiece, and that she had been sent to Thistletop to usher the goblins into a new age of triumph. Certainly, her plan to assault Sandpoint seemed like a good idea at the time, and even though it didn’t quite go like she promised, the fact that she’s managed to consecrate the shrine (area D12), establish a link with Malfeshnekor, and slowly but surely opened up the ancient chambers deep below (and in so doing increased the size of the Thistletop holdings) has been more than enough proof to Ripnugget that Nualia is the best hope for his tribe’s future.

CREATURES: Even if the alarm has been raised, Warchief Ripnugget can be found here. If caught by surprise, he’s in the middle of watching his goblins reenact the raid on Sandpoint as they fight against a *silent image* provided by the warchanter. If the alarm is raised, his goblins clamber up the three pillars closest to the throne and hide, while the warchanter ducks behind the throne. In either case, his pet gecko Stickfoot waits loyally at his side.

Assuming the PCs don’t immediately attack when they enter the room, Warchief Ripnugget is willing to parley in the same way that he spoke to Nualia several months ago. This time, though, he doesn’t have any intentions of allying with his visitors; he merely wants time to size the PCs up before he orders them slain. He certainly recognizes them from their heroic stand at Sandpoint—although he wasn’t present at the assault, he’s heard plenty of stories about the longshanks who proved so key to the town’s defense. He knows the PCs are formidable foes, especially since they’ve reached his throne room alive. In any case, he refuses to let the PCs step more than 5 feet into his throne room, informing them that they have not yet earned the right to approach him.



BURNT OFFERINGS

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: FESTIVAL AND FIRE

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If the PCs agree to talk, he picks the least-armored PC, compliments that character on being someone who looks like she understands the value of the spoken word over battle, and allows that one PC to approach. Of course, Ripnugget doesn't really have any intention of talking. As soon as that PC is within 5 feet of the northeast pillar, he gives the order to attack.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|
| WARCHIEF RIPNUGGET | XP 1,200 | CR 4 | HP 42 |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|

Male goblin fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 42 (5d10+10)

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

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +10 (1d4+5/19-20)

Special Attacks weapon training (light blades +1)

TACTICS

Before Combat Ripnugget drinks his *potion of barkskin* +2 as soon as he hears anyone about to enter his throne hall if the alarm has been raised.

During Combat Ripnugget mounts up on Stickfoot the first chance he gets, so he can take advantage of his Mounted Combat feats in battle. He prefers to use a combination of Spirited Charge and Ride-By attacks.

Morale Ripnugget fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword)

Skills Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +9, Ride +12, Stealth +13

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +2, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, +1 short sword, dented crown worth 20 gp, key ring for all locks in areas **C11-C24** and areas **D1-D3**

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------|----------|
| STICKFOOT | XP 400 | CR 1 | HP 11 |
|------------------|-----------|---------|----------|

Giant gecko (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 186)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| THISTLETOP COMMANDOS (3) | XP 200 each | CR 1/2 | HP 12 each |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|

Goblin commando (see page 18)

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| THISTLETOP WARCHANTER | XP 200 each | CR 1/2 | HP 9 each |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|

Goblin bard 1 (see page 17)

TACTICS

During Combat The warchanter inspires courage in all of her allies on the first round of combat. On the second round, she casts *hideous laughter* on the most heavily armored PC, then uses *ghost sound* to make it sound like more goblins are approaching from one of the southern doors to trick the PCs into wasting time reacting to that illusory threat. She may also use her *wand of silent images* to create an illusion of a curtain dropping down between her and the rest of the room, providing herself cover she can use to shoot arrows at anyone who fails to see through the illusion. She runs to Ripnugget's aid with a *cure light wounds* (spell or potion) if she sees him reduced to fewer than half his hit points.

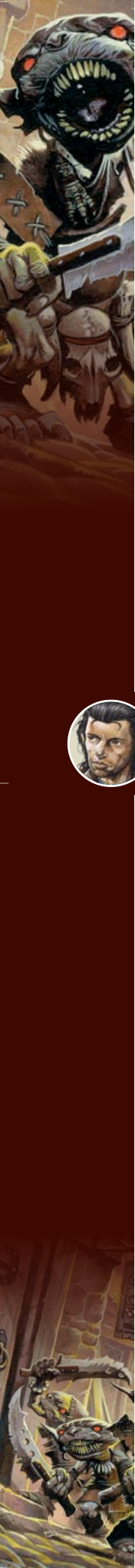
STATISTICS

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *wand of silent image* (5 charges); **Other Gear** studded leather, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, whip, 20 gp

DEVELOPMENT: Warchief Ripnugget fights to the death, but it's still possible to catch him alive. In this case, he tries to bluff the PCs into thinking that he was responsible for the raid on Sandpoint, and that he should be brought back



WARCHIEF RIPNUGGET & STICKFOOT



to town for a trial, because “isn’t that what you longshanks do?” This is, of course, a stalling tactic; he hopes to escape at the first opportunity to seek aid from Nualia or, if he’s really desperate, from Gogmurt the druid. Only if he’s charmed or otherwise magically compelled can he be made helpful, in which case he knows the layout of the rooms on level one below (but not level two), and can tell the PCs much about Nualia, her plans, her allies, and Malfeshnekor (whom he suspects is a goblin goid imprisoned somewhere below).

C20 FOOD STORAGE

The door to this room is locked; the key is carried by Chief Ripnugget. The lock can be picked with a DC 20 Disable Device check.



This foul-smelling butchery is a horrifying affront to all the senses. Haunches of poorly smoked meat hang from hooks along the ceiling or lie heaped in and atop crates. In some cases, the meat seems to be dog or horse, but in many other cases, the meat has all-too-recognizable features, like feet, hands, or grimacing faces.

This food store contains the goblins’ favorite food—the meat of their vanquished enemies. The fate of several missing travelers and merchants is revealed here, although no single body is intact enough to be easily recognizable.

C21 ARMORY



This room contains a small armory of crudely made weapons (mostly dogslicers and shortbows) and several small goblin-sized suits of studded leather armor and dented shields. To the south stand a pair of workbenches.

TREASURE: The workbenches are where the goblins cobble together weapons for their tribe. All of the weapons and suits of armor here are Small. In all, there are 23 dogslicers, 11 shortbows, 80 arrows, 11 suits of studded leather, six light wooden shields, and two coiled whips. On the north wall hangs a single masterwork dogslicer. With the exception of this lone dogslicer, the gear stored here is of poor quality, bespeaking typical goblin crafting expertise.

C22 MEETING ROOM



A round table and a few chairs are this room’s only furnishings.

Warchief Ripnugget uses this room to meet with his commandos, issuing orders or receiving reports from the field.

C23 CHIEFTAIN’S ROOM



Several rugs made from dog or horse hide lie strewn over the dirt floor of this room. Against the north wall stands an impressive collection of horseshoes, each nailed to the wall. To the east sits a ragged padded chair next to a rickety desk that may have once been an expensive antique. In the northwest corner sits a canopied bed covered with silk sheets and sporting an elaborately carved headboard that features nymphs and satyrs cavorting in a forest. The bed’s sheets are stained with dirt, while the headboard is bashed and battered.

Warchief Ripnugget lives in style—even if his furniture has been mostly scavenged from shipwrecks or Junk Beach in Sandpoint, it’s the best junk a goblin can find. The horseshoe collection is currently 122 shoes strong, although none of them are intrinsically valuable.

TREASURE: Although Ripnugget keeps most of the tribe’s treasure in area C24, he keeps one item to himself—a silver holy symbol of Lamashtu with tiny garnets for eyes, given to him by Nualia and worth 40 gp. Ripnugget keeps this symbol under his pillow, where a DC 15 Perception check can uncover it.

A DC 20 Perception check on the chair to the east finds a large iron key wedged under the seat; this key opens the treasure chest in area C24.

C24 TREASURY (CR 3)



This small, foul-smelling room features little more than a reeking hole in the ground, its rim stained with refuse and waste.

Although goblins are prone to relieving themselves in the wild or off the edge of the cliff outside, some of them sometimes remember that they’re supposed to keep this latrine looking used. In fact, the west wall of this nasty-smelling room hides a secret door that can be discovered with a DC 20 Perception check. Beyond is another small room, this one much less foul-smelling and containing a single extra-large sea chest with a heavy iron padlock. The key to this lock is hidden in Chief Ripnugget’s room (area C23).

TRAP: The sea chest is trapped, courtesy of one of Chief Ripnugget’s predecessors who had a great talent for such devices. The trap triggers if the chest is attacked, if the lock is attempted with a pick, or even if the lock is tried with the proper key and turned left instead of right. When triggered, a rusty blade of jagged metal springs out of the chest’s lid. The blade was once poisoned, and while the poison has long since decayed, the blade still has a great chance of giving victims tetanus.





FILTHY SLASHER TRAP

| | |
|-----|----|
| XP | CR |
| 800 | 3 |

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect Atk +8 melee (scything blade; 1d8+4/19–20 plus tetanus). This disease, also called “lockjaw,” is typically introduced via deep wounds from contaminated objects like rusty metal. Tetanus victims become more and more prone to violent muscle spasms, splitting headaches, fever, and difficulty swallowing. Stiffness of the jaw is a common result of tetanus infection.

Tetanus: Scything blade—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *onset* 1d6 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Dex damage. Each time someone takes Dexterity damage from tetanus, there’s a 50% chance his jaw muscles stiffen, preventing speech and the use of spells with verbal components for the next 24 hours.

TREASURE: Inside the chest lies the accumulated wealth of the Thistletop tribe, culled from junkyards, shipwrecks, ambushed merchants, and unfortunate rival goblin tribes over the past decade or so. This collection consists of an unorganized pile of 7,432 cp, 2,490 sp, 89 gp, 3 pp, a leather pouch of 34 badly flawed malachites worth 1 gp each, a Medium chain shirt, a Medium masterwork scimitar, a pair of masterwork manacles, a gold holy symbol of Sarenrae worth 100 gp, a jade necklace worth 60 gp, and a fine blue silk gown with silver trim worth 150 gp.

C25 SUBMERGED SEA CAVE

This entrance to the sea caves under the thistle maze is underwater, but can be noticed from above with a DC 20 Perception check. Navigating the waters is tough, requiring a DC 20 Swim check due to the surf’s strong undertow. The cliffs leading up from the beaches here are 80 feet high, and can be scaled with a DC 15 Climb check.

C26 SECONDARY SEA CAVE ENTRANCE

Unlike the entrance at C25, this sea cave entrance remains above water even at high tide, although there are no ledges leading into the cave beyond. It’s a DC 20 Swim check to navigate the churning surf leading south.

C27 BUNYIP LAIR (CR 3)



A glittering grotto sparkles here, its walls dripping with moisture and alive with sea urchins, anemones, and other tidal life. The cave’s roof rises to a natural dome ten feet above the water where a five-foot-wide chimney rises through the roof in a shaft. The waters here are less choppy, but they are far from still. A five-foot-wide, fifteen-foot-long ledge sits just above the water level to the south.

Navigating the sheltered waters here is somewhat easier than at the entrances to the sea cave—it’s only a DC 15 Swim check to move around in here. The western entrance remains underwater even at low tide; the water in the cave itself is 20 feet deep at its deepest point directly under the shaft, but never gets shallower than 10 feet.

CREATURE: This cave is the lair of a dangerous coastal predator called a bunyip. A sleek aquatic hunter that looks something like a seal with fins and a mouth full of several rows of sharklike teeth, the bunyip has learned that food often falls down from the hole above, especially when it roars. It’s grown somewhat lazy in its hunting as a result, and rarely leaves this cave anymore, spending much of its time sleeping on the southern ledge.

BUNYIP

| | | |
|-----|----|----|
| XP | CR | HP |
| 800 | 3 | 32 |

hp 32 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 50)

TACTICS

During Combat The bunyip roars as soon as it sees intruders, then dives into the water to attack the closest foe. Once it selects a target, it only switches to another foe when its current foe is dead or when another target hits it for more than 8 points of damage.

Morale Although the bunyip is territorial, it still flees into the open sea if brought below 8 hit points. It returns 3d6 hours later to try to reclaim its lair.

TREASURE: A search of the cave pool’s bed quickly turns up an incredible tangle of bones, all that remains of the bunyip’s meals. Many of the bones are from goblins, but a fair amount are larger and human-sized. Several items of value lie scattered down here as well. Each search of the mess takes 5 minutes, and with a successful DC 20 Perception check, one of the following treasures is uncovered: 3d6 gp (to a maximum of 100 gp), a deep green spinel worth 100 gp, a rusted kukri with an intact violet garnet in its hilt worth 500 gp, a rotted quiver containing three +1 arrows, and a bone *wand of shield* with 9 charges remaining.

THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL ONE

It was 200 years ago that a Varisian cult of Lamashtu fled here from the east to avoid being slaughtered by the advancing Chelish army. Taken with the unique shape of this small island, the cultists established a church of Lamashtu atop it, expanding into the ground below and excavating the chambers on this level. Near the end of that excavation, they discovered the intact second level below, but in opening it, they also unwittingly released a hellcat that had been trapped in area E2 for thousands of years. The cultists were quickly slaughtered by the outsider, which had gone insane after its long imprisonment. The monster has long since fled into the world, leaving





the complex roughly in its current condition when the Thistletop goblins first came to dwell here.

Although goblins can see in the dark, several of Nualia's followers cannot, and so hooded lanterns hang in each hallway and in most rooms throughout the complex; these lanterns are generally left lit only during daylight hours. Ceiling height averages 8 feet in most rooms, and doors are generally rickety wooden affairs rigged by the goblins.

D1 ABANDONED FEAST HALL



A single lantern hangs from a hook on the wall next to where the stairs enter this room from the north. Several rickety doors open into this room, and a few discarded dog pelt rugs lie forgotten in the northeast corner.

Before Nualia arrived, the goblins used this room as a feast hall. Ripnugget let Nualia move the table and chairs that once stood in here up north to area D14, and since then the goblins have taken to having their meals wherever they want.

D2 CHIEFTAIN'S HAREM (CR 4)



Dozens of ratty cushions, lumpy pillows, and rumpled dogskin furs lie heaped in the south half of this chamber, which smells of a nauseating mixture of vinegar and rotten flowers.

CREATURES: The stink in the air is, horrifyingly enough, perfume worn by the four hideous goblin women who lounge about in this chamber. These four are Warchief Ripnugget's wives, although he hasn't had time to visit them in weeks. Starved for attention, the goblins have taken to one of Nualia's allies with an obscene and disturbing glee. This is Bruthazmus the bugbear, and unless he suspects intruders have reached this level, he's 80% likely to be encountered here (he's otherwise to be found in his lair at area D4d).

For many years, Bruthazmus lived a lonely life as a trapper in the northern reaches of Nettlewood, periodically stalking the Lost Coast Road for merchants and couriers to jump. The day he met Nualia, he thought the exotic-looking woman was some sort of nature spirit. He tried to catch her to sell her to pirates from Riddleport, but she handily defeated him without taking a wound herself. When she offered him a job as her bodyguard rather than executing him, the bugbear seized the chance. He's long coveted the prime location claimed by the Thistletop tribe, and now that he's here, he knows he has Nualia to thank for his turn in fortunes. He remains cruel and abusive to most others he meets (including Nualia's other allies, whom he does not enjoy the company of, excluding these delightful goblin wives), but has taken to treating Nualia almost as a mother.

Bruthazmus hasn't quite gotten over the fact that he hasn't been given permission to go down to Sandpoint and cause problems. He's bitterly jealous of Tsuto as a result, whom he suspects has been razing Sandpoint all the time Bruthazmus has been caged up here. His hatred of elves doesn't help the bugbear's attitude toward Tsuto, and he often fantasizes about adding Tsuto's ears to his elf-ear necklace, even though the half-elf's ears aren't nearly as pointed as he would like.



BRUTHAZMUS

BRUTHAZMUS

| XP | CR | HP |
|-----|----|----|
| 800 | 3 | 31 |

Male bugbear ranger 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 38)
CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 31 (4 HD; 3d8+1d10+13)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.





BURNT OFFERINGS

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MAP FIVE: THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL ONE



Melee heavy flail +7 (1d10+6/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +8 (1d8+4/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (elves +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Bruthazmus reacts to intrusions on his personal time with roars and curses. There's a 50% chance he's not wearing his armor if encountered in area **D2**; in any event, he flies into combat with his heavy flail with a murderous glee. He attacks elves in preference to any other target.

Morale If brought below 15 hit points, Bruthazmus attempts to flee to area **D15**, where he barricades the door and then races downstairs to area **E4** to join Nualia, hoping to get some healing and then remaining at her side as a bodyguard until the PCs are no longer a threat.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

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

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow)

Skills Intimidate +3, Stealth +13, Survival +8

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ stalker, track +1, wild empathy +0

Combat Gear 4 +1 elf bane arrows, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** studded leather, heavy flail, mwk composite longbow with 20 arrows, 4 pp

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| THISTLETOP GOBLINS WIVES (4) | XP 135 each | CR 1/3 | HP 5 each |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

D3 GOBLIN NURSERY



The walls of this room are lined with small wooden cages. Inside each cage is a dirty mound of straw.

Horrifyingly, this is the Thistletop nursery. Most goblin tribes have equally reprehensible methods of raising children—very few tribes actually coddle and protect their young, since the theory is that such activity only results in adult goblins who can't defend themselves. Goblin wisdom instead supports methods like these cages, where fast-growing goblin babies and children are raised like animals on daily regimens of raw meat and abuse so they grow up properly mean and strong.

There are no babies kept here currently—the Thistletop goblins have had other things (such as planning the raid on Sandpoint) on their minds lately. GMs seeking to confront their players with awkward social situations might want to put a few sharp-toothed feral goblin children and babies in these cages for the unsuspecting adventurers to discover.

D4a TSUTO'S CHAMBERS



This room is clean and well organized. A low dresser to the southwest has a stack of papers sitting atop it, weighted down by a large chunk of obsidian, while to the northwest sits a well-made bed.



If Tsuto escaped from death earlier in this adventure, there's a 30% chance he's here, sleeping. Otherwise, he's encountered at area D15. If he's here, the half-elf does everything in his power to escape to area D15.

The notes on the nightstand are mostly rough drafts of Tsuto's plans to blackmail his father and to use the Sandpoint Glassworks as a staging ground for the coming investigation of the Catacombs of Wrath—it's unlikely that there's anything here that's news to the PCs by this point, although if they haven't discovered the Catacombs of Wrath yet, these notes should point them in that direction.

D4b ORIK'S CHAMBERS (CR 3)



This one-person bedroom shows many signs of having been lived in. The bed itself is rumpled and unmade, and a half-eaten meal of bread and smoked salmon sits on the nightstand. A few articles of dirty clothing sit at the foot of the bed.

CREATURE: This is the current home of Orik Vancaskerkin, a down-on-his-luck mercenary from the lawless city of Riddleport. After a scam involving a tiefling prostitute, a shifty alchemist, and an *elixir of love*, Orik was forced to flee town. He's pretty sure that Clegg Zincher, the now-dead alchemist's powerful brother, still carries a grudge for what Orik did to the alchemist when he discovered, to his horror, that the *elixir of love* was actually just cheap ale laced with lavender. While Orik bears no regrets for murdering the alchemist, he does regret the fact that Clegg Zincher effectively made it impossible for him to continue living in Riddleport. He misses his hometown greatly, despite the fact that little good ever came of living there, and has several half-formed plans to return there some day to face Clegg and perhaps seize control of Zincher's power for himself.

But doing something like that requires allies and money, and when a strange but beautiful woman approached him in the seedy Magnimar bar he'd taken up in, he accepted her offer to serve as her bodyguard without question. Since then, and since helping plan the assault on Sandpoint, Orik has come to think that his allegiance to Nualia may be just the latest in a long string of bad choices. Still, she pays regularly in platinum, and to date he hasn't really had to do much actual bodyguarding, since she's remained here at Thistletop for some time. He knows she's after something in the chambers below, but doesn't know (or care) what it is. Orik has also developed something of an infatuation with another of Nualia's minions, the foul-tempered (charmingly so, to Orik) Lyrie Akenja. Unfortunately, Lyrie seems more obsessed with Tsuto than anything else. Orik has considered murdering Tsuto to remove him from the picture, but since the half-elf is currently Nualia's lover, he's avoided such drastic moves to this point. Things have become so unbearably complicated for Orik that he's considering giving up on the whole thing and heading east to Korvosa to try his luck there.

Orik is ruggedly handsome, with a visage and demeanor that doesn't mesh well with smiles and laughter. Of late, he's spent most of his time here, waiting for something—anything—to develop down in the chambers below or with the Sandpoint situation so he can collect his final payment from Nualia. The raid on Sandpoint has left him somewhat conflicted, since on his one visit to the town on his way south to Magnimar several months ago, he found the place friendly and charming.



ORIK
VANCASKERKIN





BURNT OFFERINGS

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PART TWO: LOCAL HEROES

PART THREE: GLASS AND WRATH

PART FOUR: THISTLETOP

ORIK VANCASKERKIN

| | | |
|-----------|---------|----------|
| XP 800 | CR 3 | HP 42 |
|-----------|---------|----------|

Male human fighter 4

CN Medium humanoid

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

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 42 (4d10+16)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear,

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk bastard sword +9 (1d10+5/19-20)

Ranged composite longbow +5 (1d8+3/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Orik relies on his strength in battle, focusing his attacks on taking down one target at a time and preferring to fight with his back to a wall or an ally. He generally fights with Power Attack.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, Orik throws down his weapons and begs for mercy. He promises to help the PCs however he can if given his life—this promise is mostly legitimate, as detailed in Development below.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Athletic, Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Linguistics +1, Swim +6

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 banded mail, masterwork heavy steel shield, composite longbow with 20 arrows, masterwork bastard sword, everburning torch, 2 pp, 95 gp

DEVELOPMENT: If Orik surrenders, he does what he can to ensure his continued well-being. If that includes giving his wealth to the PCs or even aiding them against Nualia and her other allies, so be it. Unfortunately, Orik hasn't explored much of the dungeon here, and can say nothing about areas **D7–D8** (except that there's some kind of wriggly monster in there), areas **D9–D10**, or any of the chambers on level two. He's only been in the temple of Lamashtu (area **D12**) once, enough to know that he doesn't want to go back if he can help it; that religion kind of gives him the chills. He knows that the temple is guarded by a pair of "monster dogs," but beyond knowing that their howls are horrifying, he isn't sure what they are.

D4c LYRIE'S CHAMBERS



While this bedroom is clean and brightly lit by an everburning torch lying on the nightstand, its spartan decor makes it unclear whether it's actually lived in.

In fact, this chamber does belong to another of Nualia's minions, but since Lyrie spends most of her time in area **D15** researching the various artifacts and relics recovered from the dungeons below, she's only encountered here during the night as she sleeps.

TREASURE: The everburning torch belongs to Lyrie, a spare in case the one she carries is lost.

D4d BRUTHAZMUS'S CHAMBERS



This bedroom has a faint musty odor. The bed is covered with matted gray and black hair, and bloodstains mar the stone floor, while a morbid stack of birds' feet lies heaped on the floor by the side of the bed.

Bruthazmus the bugbear has taken to sleeping in area **D2** of late, and hasn't been back to this room in days. The bloodstains are all that remain of his last meal taken here—the bugbear prefers his food still alive and wriggling as he eats, and has taken a liking to seagull (he gobbles the whole bird, but detests the texture of the feet and won't eat them).

D5 NUALIA'S CHAMBERS



This large chamber seems to serve a dual purpose. To the north is a fine bed with silk sheets, while to the south, a desk and chair under a hanging lantern make a comfortable-looking study.

This large room serves Nualia as a bedchamber, although she's not spent much time here recently. She had the fine bed in the north side of the room brought in piece by piece from Magnimar, one of her few concessions toward luxury.

D6 STORAGE ROOM



Crates, barrels, and mounds of miscellaneous refuse lie heaped against the walls here. To the north, the sound of crashing surf echoes.

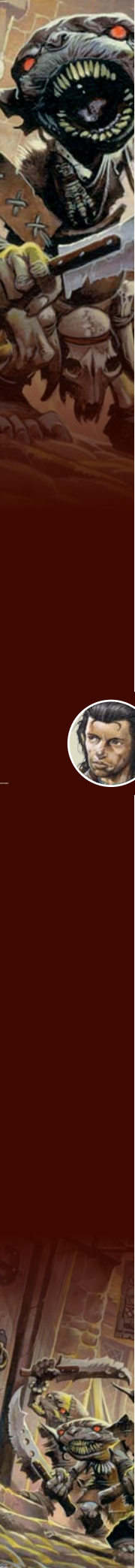
Most of the junk scavenged from Junk Beach by the Seven Tooth goblins ends up here, tribute sent north to the Thistletop goblins to keep them on the greater tribe's good side. While the raw materials here can be turned into furniture, dogslicers, or even armor, at this point only a goblin is likely to see value in the mounds of refuse.

D7 TENTAMORT HUNTING GROUNDS (CR 4)



The floor of this cavern seems strangely polished and smooth. To the east, a thick curtain of vines and nettles hangs down over a wide opening overlooking the Varisian Gulf.





CREATURE: This cavern has been the hunting grounds of a tentamort for many years. The monster looks something like a leathery, eyeless squid with a squat body the size of a rain barrel. Its lower body splits into a tangle of tentacles the creature uses to slowly move, while two longer tentacles, one thick and muscular and the other lithe and tipped with a bone stinger, emerge from either side. Exceptionally long-lived, the nearly mindless predator has fed on sea birds for years and has grown quite adept at snatching them out of the sky from its perch overlooking the sea to the east. When the goblins moved in, they lost several to the tentamort's tentacles (including one of their best fighters) before they decided to leave the monster alone.

Lyrie spent several days studying the monster after she arrived, going so far as to lure several goblins in here so she could watch the monster eat them, but she's learned all she can of the creature and grew bored with it a few days ago.

TENTAMORT

| | | |
|-------|----|----|
| XP | CR | HP |
| 1,200 | 4 | 39 |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 261)

D8 TENTAMORT LAIR



Dozens of strange dead bodies lie scattered about this room. Most are sea birds and ospreys, but there are six dead goblins here as well. Each body is literally skin and bones, as if all of the interior organs and muscles have somehow been drained away, leaving behind skeletons draped with leathery, slowly rotting skin.

TREASURE: The bodies of the goblins who fell victim to the tentamort were never recovered, and their armor and weapons lie in rotting, rusty heaps. One of the bodies belongs to the ex-goblin hero Tiovunk; his carcass still wears a suit of *+1 hide armor* (made from dogs) and bears a ruined (but once masterwork) horsechopper and a masterwork short bow.

D9 PRISON



The southern wall of this room is a bank of cells with iron doors, six in all. The rest of the room is obviously a torture chamber; a rack sits against the far wall, an iron maiden stands to the north, and a fire pit smolders below a spiky cage dangling from a chain in the ceiling to the east.

If the goblins have captured any prisoners during the adventure, they're kept here. Since their jailer and torturer, Brunkel, went missing during the raid on Sandpoint, this area has been neglected by the goblins, who often forgot to come down to check on prisoners

for several days anyway, leaving the prisoners to ration their already meager food and water to avoid thirst and hunger. If she's been brought to Thistletop, Ameiko Kaijitsu (or any other key NPCs who've been captured by the goblins) can be found languishing here.

Each of the iron doors enclosing the cells can be broken with a DC 26 Strength check, or the locks picked with a DC 25 Disable Device check. Keys for the cells can be found in area **D10**.

D10 BRUNKEL'S LAIR



A dusty nest of rags, dog hides, and straw sits in the northeast corner of this room. To the south, a long workbench cluttered with pliers, hooks, tongs, saws, and knives runs along the wall.

Brunkel, a goblin fighter/rogue and once the second-toughest goblin in the tribe, lived here where he served as a torturer and jailer. The Thistletop goblins assumed that if anyone could survive the raid on Sandpoint, it would be Brunkel. They were wrong—Brunkel died on the sheriff's sword within minutes of the raid's beginning.

Keys to the cells in area **D9** can be found scattered among the torture implements on the southern workbench.

D11 CHAPEL ENTRANCE



Two large stone doors sit in the western wall here, their faces carved with images of horrific, deformed monsters clawing their way out of pregnant women of all races.

These two stone doors are well maintained, and open easily. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the scene depicted on the doors as one common to churches of Lamashtu.

D12 CHAPEL TO LAMASHTU (CR 5)



Stone fonts containing frothy dark water sit to the north and south of the eastern entrance to the room, and twin banks of stone pillars run the length of the long chamber. At the western end, shallow stairs rise to a platform about two feet off the ground. The walls surrounding this platform are lit by hanging braziers that emit glowing red smoke, giving the place an unnerving crimson lighting that throws the bas-relief carvings of countless monsters feasting on fleeing humans into lurid display. A black marble altar stone, its surface heaped with ashes and bone fragments, squats before a ten-foot-tall statue. The sculpture depicts a very pregnant but otherwise shapely naked woman who wields a kukri in each taloned hand and has a long reptilian tail, birdlike



taloned feet, and the snarling head of a three-eyed jackal with a forked tongue. The left kukri flickers with fiery orange light while the right one glows with a cold blue radiance.

Recently reconsecrated by Nualia, this shrine to Lamashtu had lain dormant for many years, ever since the previous chieftain succumbed to rabies and left Ripnugget in charge. Ripnugget has always viewed his inability to receive Malfeshnekor's empathic sendings as a flaw, but after he threw several goblins who dared question this flaw into the Howling Hole, no one at Thistletop talks about it. Ripnugget has come to view Nualia's arrival as Lamashtu's blessing, and attending her weekly sermons has become mandatory for the goblins, despite the fact that one or two of them end up sacrificed on the altar if they can't offer up other goblins or prisoners in their place. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the temple and statue as being sacred to Lamashtu. The glowing effects on the statue's kukris are *continual flame* spells.

Every day that Nualia leads a service here, she prepares a *desecrate* spell instead of a *cat's grace* spell, and casts it at the start of her sermon. If the PCs wish to time their infiltration of Thistletop to coincide with one of her ceremonies, they'll find the upper reaches of the fortress empty and easy to infiltrate, but if they come upon this room they may well encounter more than they can handle.

An examination of the altar reveals smears of ash and bits of bone—all that's left of Nualia's foster father after his remains were sacrificed to Lamashtu as burnt offerings.

CREATURES: When Nualia arrived here, drawn by her dreams, she quickly rededicated this chapel to Lamashtu in much the same way Sandpoint would rededicate their own chapel several months later. In reward, Lamashtu sent Nualia three of her minions, lean creatures that look like jackals with smoking red eyes and black fangs—yeth hounds. Two lurk in the shadows of the chamber while the other remains at Nualia's side; all three are completely loyal to her. When she performs sacrifices to Lamashtu, Nualia does so with her bastard sword, beheading the victim and then inviting the yeth hounds to feast on the body while she holds the decapitated head over the altar so it can watch its body being consumed during the last few moments of its consciousness.

When no one else is here, the yeth hounds hover near the ceiling in the north and south sides of the room. If they sense any intruders, they quickly race down through the air to attack, their howls quickly putting the complex on alert.

During rituals, all of the goblins in the complex, as well as Tsuto, Lyrie, and Bruthazmus, gather here to watch and pray. Orik attended the first service, but has since bowed out, claiming that someone needs to guard the complex during the ceremony. To his relief, Nualia agreed. In any event, taking on a room of goblins and

cultists is not a good plan for low-level PCs, as a battle against Nualia, three yeth hounds, 22 goblins (including a warchanter and five commandos), and the other three members of Nualia's band is approximately a CR 10 encounter! (Note that there's actually not enough room for all of the goblins to observe in this room during such ceremonies—any overflow spills into area D11 and the adjoining hallways.)

While Nualia is immune to a yeth hound's fear-inducing howl (since she's an evil outsider), the goblins and other inhabitants of Thistletop are not. Depending on which doors in the dungeon remain open, the howls of these monsters when they attack the PCs could well affect many of the other denizens as well. Goblins affected by the howls shriek and panic and run in circles, while other NPCs hide under beds or in corners if they're affected by the fear. Remember that a yeth hound's bay is a spread, and as such, it can turn corners but can't pass solid barriers (such as closed doors). Nonetheless, the baying is quite loud, and should suffice to alert every denizen of Thistletop that intruders have entered the chapel.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| YETH HOUNDS (2) | XP 800 each | CR 3 | HP 30 each |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 286)

D13 GOBLIN ART GALLERY



The lower four feet of the walls in this empty room are covered with crude drawings in mud, blood, and paint. Most of the drawings show goblins engaged in some sort of violence against humans, horses, or dogs. One picture on the north wall is at least three times the size and complexity of the other scrawlings. This image shows Thistletop from the side, the goblin stockade perched atop it like a crown. A cave has been drawn into the center of the image, and looming inside is what appears to be an immense, muscular goblin with snakelike eyes and a dogslicer in each taloned hand. If the scale compared to the rest of the drawing is to be believed, this goblin must be at least thirty feet tall.

Fortunately for the PCs, the depiction of Malfeshnekor here is based on nothing more than the goblins' hopes and dreams.

D14 WAR ROOM



A large table surrounded by chairs fills much of this room. A slate board to the north is covered with scribbles in chalk, but the map of Sandpoint that has been carefully inscribed on it leaves no doubt as to the purpose of this room—this is doubtless where the recent raid was planned.



BURNT OFFERINGS

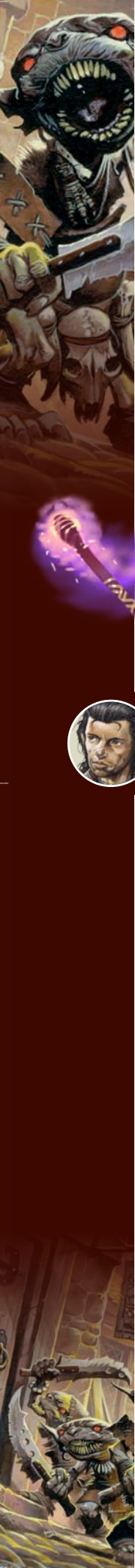
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An investigation of the slate and the notes written there can confirm this and more. Namely, that once “the whispering beast is tamed,” the architects of the plan intend to mount a second raid on the town, one that incorporates not only additional goblin tribes culled from as far as the Fogscar Mountains to the north, but creatures referred to as “sinspawn” who will invade Sandpoint from below. If the PCs have fought sinspawn already, they recognize these dangerous monsters as the ones mentioned here. No exact timetable is given for when this second raid is to happen, but close examination reveals that the final assault is scheduled for only a few weeks in the future.

D15 RESEARCH ROOM (CR 3)



A large wooden worktable sits in the middle of this room, its surface cluttered with scrolls, books, stone tablets covered with dense, spiky runes, and fragments of carvings that appear to have been chipped off of statues or bas-reliefs. To the north, a floor-to-ceiling set of wooden shelves sags with picks, shovels, brushes, lanterns, and other equipment one might expect to see at an archaeological site.

This chamber has been claimed by Nualia and her minions as a place to study and research the artifacts that they’ve recovered from the chambers below and from other ancient Thassilonian sites they’ve raided. The secret door to the east was built by the cult of Lamashtu that once dwelt here after their excavations uncovered a sealed stairway leading down to the chambers below; they installed this door to prevent the discovery of the chambers by their enemies. The door’s been used often recently, and if the alarm hasn’t been raised, it actually hangs ajar. If it’s closed, it’s only a DC 18 Perception check to find it due to the heavy traffic that’s been passing through it over the past few weeks.

CREATURES: Although all five of the bandits have spent time in this room, only Lyrie Akenja and Nualia have the obsessive interest in these ruins to spend much time here. And since Nualia’s been spending more and more of her time in the observation deck below (area E4), Lyrie’s been able to study here in peace and quiet, a luxury she’s quite enjoyed.

Nualia hired Lyrie primarily for her knowledge of arcana and architecture, her ability to read Thassilonian, and her arcane magic. Lyrie was in a desperate place when Nualia encountered her in Magnimar—she had recently been informed that she was no longer under consideration to join the Pathfinders as an initiate. She suspects bitterly that they kept copies of her notes and applicant thesis, and that their rejection of her application had more to do with the fact that they suspect she murdered two of the competing initiates. That this is true doesn’t matter to Lyrie. When Nualia offered to pay her in platinum to study Thassilonian relics, she gratefully accepted.

Lyrie is in her early twenties, with dark skin and long hair braided tightly into cornrows. She’s always had a poor self-image, a quality that has left her bitter, cruel, and quick to assume insult in innocent comments or to look at things in the bleakest possible manner. Her only true friend is her cat familiar, Skivver, even though he has a bad habit of scratching and marking his territory.



LYRIE
AKENJA



LYRIE AKENJA

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| XP 800 | CR 3 | HP 24 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|

Female human wizard 4
CE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 24 (4d6+8)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (6/day)

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*invisibility*, *mirror image*, *shatter* (DC 16)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *grease* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

TACTICS

Before Combat Before combat starts, Lyrie casts *mage armor*.

During Combat Lyrie knows she's outclassed in most fights, and prefers to avoid combat when alone if possible. If forced into combat, she first casts *mirror image*, then focuses most of her spells on heavily armored characters, casting *shatter* on a weapon and *ray of enfeeblement* in an attempt to get them to suffer for wearing such heavy armor. She relies heavily on her *wand of magic missile* in combat.

Morale Lyrie is a coward at heart, and as soon as she's hit for damage, she attempts to flee to the closest ally for help. If she believes the PCs have harmed Tsuto, though, her anger takes over and she fights to the death in an attempt to avenge him.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +2, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin, Osiriani, Thassilonian

SQ arcane bond (cat named Skivver)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of comprehend languages*, *scroll of minor image*, *scroll of see invisibility*, *scroll of sleep*, *scroll of whispering wind*, *wand of magic missile* (38 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, silver comb (25 gp), fine silk gown (60 gp), everburning torch, small pouch of artifacts (hair, fingernail clipping, used handkerchiefs, and a pearl earring worth 50 gp) stolen from Tsuto Kajijitsu, 3 pp, 278 gp

Spellbook Contains all prepared spells plus *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *floating disc*, *identify*, *locate object*, *minor image*, *obscuring mist*, *see invisibility*, *sleep*, and *spider climb*.

DEVELOPMENT: If Tsuto escaped from the PCs earlier and the alarm has been raised, he's encountered here. He

and Lyrie have pushed the table up against the eastern door, making it a DC 22 Strength check to push the door open. If Bruthazmus escaped the PCs as well, he passes through this room on his way to alert and defend Nualia, alerting Lyrie to the PCs' approach as he passes by.

THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL TWO

Cracks line the walls here and there, and while the first few rooms are fairly clean, dust and rubble clutter areas **E6–E10**. Spiderwebs clutter the corners of the rooms. Areas **E1–E4** are lit by lanterns left on the floor by Nualia and her minions, but areas **E5–E10** are unlit unless otherwise indicated.

This level is part of the original complex that was hidden in the head of Karzoug's sentinel statue. When the statue collapsed, the head came to rest at an angle; as a result, this entire level is sloped downward toward the west. While the canted floor doesn't appreciably impact movement, it does grant creatures a +1 bonus on attack rolls made against foes who stand in squares west of the attacker's square.

Air quality in these chambers is surprisingly good, despite the fact that many of the rooms here have been sealed shut for a long, long time. The temperature never varies from a comfortable 60° F. Both of these conditions are remnants of what once were several magical concessions toward comfort from long ago; most of the other effects (such as lighting) have long since failed, but the replenishment of air and temperature maintenance remain functional. *Detect magic* reveals this as a faint transmutation aura.

E1 ANCIENT DOOR

A stone door just around the corner from the steps hangs slightly ajar, the detailed carvings that once covered its surface defaced by chisel marks and hammer blows to the extent that only a few remnants of images (mostly of gemstones and crowns) remain. The floor here is slanted downward toward the west.

This door was damaged hundreds of years ago when the cultists of Lamashtu tried to batter it open, only to release the monster that once lurked in the room beyond.

E2 THE HELLCAT'S HALL

Two pillars support the ceiling in here. In many places the stone walls, floor, and ceiling are caked with ancient grime and soot. Alcoves in the north and south walls contain partially damaged statues of a man in robes clutching a book and a glaive. The entire room is canted toward the west, and whatever ancient upheaval caused the complex to tilt knocked the statues from their bases so that now they lean against the western walls of their alcoves.



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THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL TWO



The statues once depicted Runelord Karzoug, although time and the hellcat's endless anger have left them too damaged to be recognizable beyond their basic shapes. The hellcat is long gone, having been released hundreds of years ago by the clerics of Lamashtu who settled in the chambers above.

E3 TRAPPED HALL (CR 4)



This short hallway rises in a slope to the east. Five feet from the western door, the floor is polished and shiny, unlike the dusty floor elsewhere. A pair of stone statues depicting stern men wielding glaives stand in alcoves north and south of this section of the hallway. At the eastern end stand two stone doors, their faces carved with strange runes. Just past the doors is a third alcove in which a partially collapsed statue sits. The top half of the statue is missing, leaving behind a ragged stump of a torso.

The eastern statue broke long ago, tumbling down the hallway to come to a rest against the western door, which made it difficult to open for Nualia and her minions on their first visit. They've cleared away the rubble since then.

TRAP: Two hidden iron portcullises are recessed into the ceiling around the polished section of floor, as indicated on the map. When a creature steps between them, a pressure plate causes them to both drop with a clang; 1 round later, the two statues began slashing at

the space between them, cutting the trapped intruder to ribbons. A lever that raises and lowers the portcullises and switches the trap on and off can be found in area E4.

When Nualia first explored this area with her allies, one of her bodyguards (a stoic Shoanti barbarian named Jagen) triggered the trap and was killed by it. Since then, she and her remaining allies have explored these chambers very slowly, with Tsuto checking for traps extensively before they move on to new areas. The polished section of floor is all that remains of the mess Jagen made after the survivors cleaned the place up—Nualia burnt his remains in the temple (area D12) as an offering to Lamashtu and sold his gear during a trip to Magnimar a few days later.

While she's working in area E4, Nualia keeps the trap activated; when her allies wish to visit her, they call out from the doorway to area E2 to have her turn the trap off. If the PCs trigger the trap, Nualia hears the noise and prepares for trouble. Once the trap is triggered, the glaives continue slashing whoever stands in the room as long as pressure remains on the square between them. Both glaives are standard glaives and can be sundered (the trap has a CMD of 18, and attempts to sunder the glaives do not provoke attacks of opportunity from the trap). Two rounds after the trap activates, a 10-foot-deep pit opens in the square, dumping what remains of the victim into the area below before the whole thing resets itself. A still-living victim can attempt a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid falling into the pit by either clinging to the portcullises or the statue alcoves, but when the pit closes automatically





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MAP SIX: THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL TWO

1 round later, the victim's weight on the lid could start the cycle all over again.

SLASHING CAGE TRAP XP 1,200 CR 4

Type magical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effect portcullises drop to seal target in 5-foot area between them (Reflex DC 15 to jump to an adjacent 5-foot-square as they drop); 1 round later, both statues slash at the area with their glaives for 2 rounds; 2 glaives +8 (1d10+4/x3); 10-foot fall after 2 rounds (1d6 damage, fall, Reflex DC 20 negates).

E4 OBSERVATION DECK (CR 6)



Wide stone ledges of red marble line the curving walls of this room, which is well lit by four burning skulls that sit in each corner. Three chairs rest in the room, and both stone ledges are covered with old books, scrolls, teeth, bones, scrimshaw artwork, jars of deformed creatures soaking in brine, taxidermied animals and limbs, and other strange objects. To the north, a large round fountain filled with frothy blue water fills the room with the gentle sound of bubbling.

The bubbling font of water used to allow those who drank from it the ability to view the surrounding terrain from the sentinel statue's eyes. Now, the fountain merely functions as a perpetually full container of drinking water. The burning skulls bear continual flames.

The objects on the shelves are various holy texts, scrolls, relics, and objects sacred to the worship of Lamashtu, identifiable as such with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check.

CREATURES: The primary villain of this adventure is likely encountered here. Nualia's recent success with the ritual to offer her foster father's corporeal remains to Lamashtu saw her rewarded with a promise of things to come—her left hand has been transformed into a red demonic talon. With the exception of her demonic hand and her scarred belly, the rest of her body is incongruously beautiful. Yet in her madness, Nualia has come to view her silver hair, violet eyes, and shapely figure as a curse, a scar visited upon her by her angelic heritage. She wants to shed this

part of her, to become fully monstrous to better serve her new mistress. She wears the mark of her devotion to Lamashtu proudly, keeping her midriff bare to expose the ugly scars and wounds across her belly. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check is enough to recognize this as the Mark of Lamashtu, denoting the carrier not only as one devoted to the Mother of Monsters, but one capable of birthing monsters from her own body.

The transformation of her hand into a talon is not the only reward Lamashtu has sent Nualia. Her third yet hound is a constant companion, loyal and eager to please her.

NUALIA XP 1,600 CR 5 HP 59

Female aasimar cleric of Lamashtu 4/fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 7*)

CE Medium outsider (native)
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

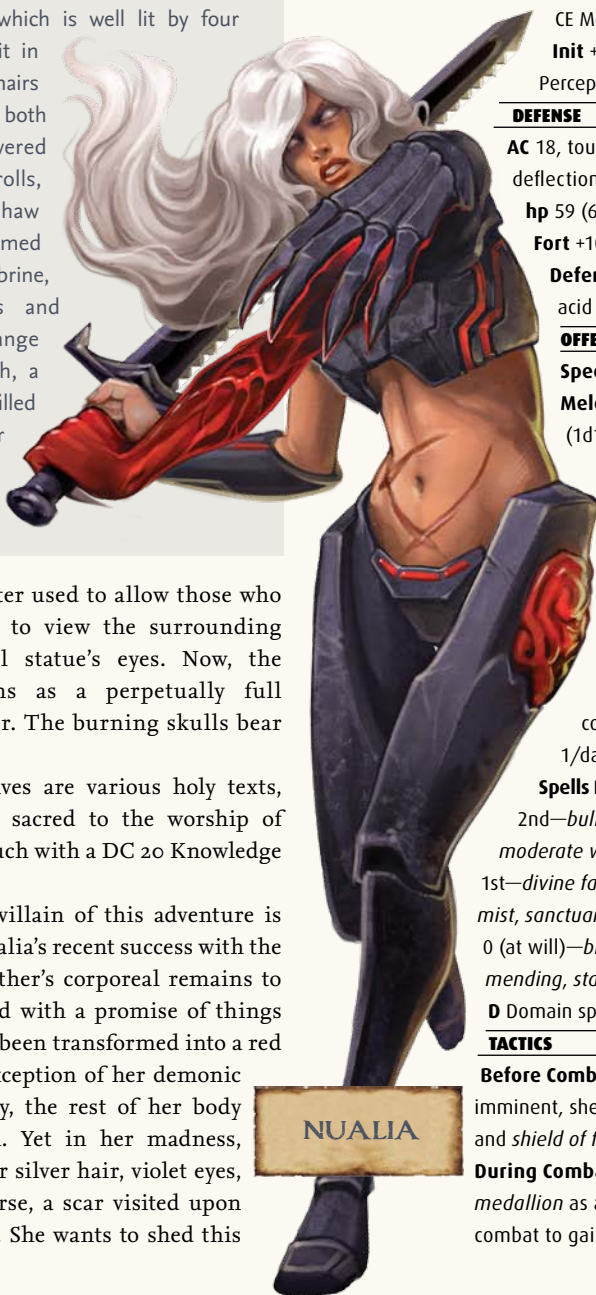
AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, -2 fury of the Abyss)
hp 59 (6 HD; 4d8+2d10+26)
Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +8; +1 vs. fear
Defensive Abilities bravery +1; Resist acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 bastard sword +10 (1d10+4/19-20), claw +3 (1d6+1)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8+3/x3)
Special Attacks channel negative energy 6/day (DC 15, 2d6), ferocious strike (+2 damage) 6/day, fury of the Abyss (+2) 6/day, Lamashtu's Mark (DC 16)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9) 1/day—daylight
Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7) 2nd—*bull's strength*^o, *cat's grace*, *cure moderate wounds*, *shatter* (DC 15) 1st—*divine favor*, *doom*^o (DC 14), *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith* 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *mending*, *stabilize*
D Domain spell; Domains Demon, Ferocity

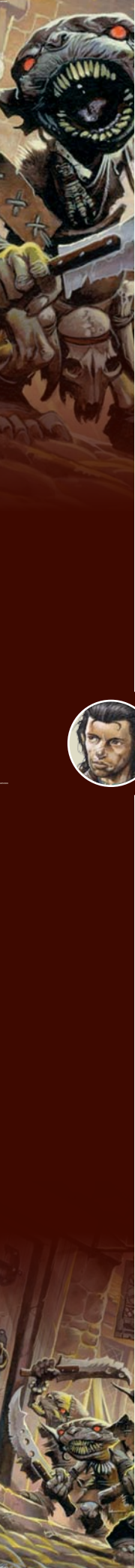
TACTICS

Before Combat If Nualia suspects combat is imminent, she casts *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, and *shield of faith* on herself.
During Combat Nualia activates her *Sihedron medallion* as a free action at the start of combat to gain *false life* and casts *divine favor*.



NUALIA





She prefers to fight with her bastard sword, her face an impassive mask save for her eyes, which blaze with anger. She uses fury of the Abyss on each of the first 6 rounds of combat (these bonuses are included in the stats above), and activates her ferocious strike on the first six successful hits. She saves *shatter* to use on any weapon that seems to be particularly dangerous in an enemy's hands. If possible, she moves into the hall to the south so that it's harder to surround her, and so she has an escape route handy, using channeled negative energy to clear a path if needed.

Morale Nualia is loath to abandon her hard work, but if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, she does just that, reasoning that escape and eventual revenge is better than death at the hands of the PCs. She uses *obscuring mist* and/or *sanctuary* to aid her escape, then does her best to flee Thistletop, ordering any surviving minions she encounters to guard her retreat. If she escapes, she makes her way to Magnimar to reunite with the Skinsaw Cult—see page 67 for more details.

Base Statistics Without her prep spells, Nualia's statistics change as follows: **AC** 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; **hp** 49; **Ref** +1, **Melee** +1 *bastard sword* +8 (1d10+2/19–20), *claw* +1 (1d6); **Ranged** mwk composite longbow +5 (1d8+1/×3); **Str** 12, **Dex** 8; **CMB** +6, **CMD** 15.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Lamashtu's Mark, Power Attack, Selective Channeling, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Skills Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +4, Perception +5

Languages Celestial, Common, Goblin

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *bastard sword*, masterwork composite longbow with 20 arrows, *Sihedron medallion*, gold holy symbol (100 gp), 7 pp, 5 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Subdomains Nualia's subdomains (introduced in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*) grant her unusual abilities. Fury of the Abyss allows her to gain a +2 bonus on melee attacks, melee damage rolls, and combat maneuver checks for 1 round as a swift action, during which round she takes a –2 penalty to her AC. Ferocious strike allows her to gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls with a melee attack up to six times per day.

YETH HOUND

| XP | CR | HP |
|-----|----|----|
| 800 | 3 | 30 |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 286)

TREASURE: Nualia's notes and several journals lie on the tables here. Sorting through these notes takes several hours, but reveals the whole of Nualia's story, as detailed on page 12. The notes also outline her plans to send an army of goblins against Sandpoint and burn the town to the ground, not only to offer it all as a burnt offering to Lamashtu in hopes of being made a half-fiend, but also to fuel the *runewell* in the catacombs below.

The notes go on to detail how to cause *sinspawn* to manifest from the *runewell*, and claim that if someone were to overextend the *runewell*'s stores, it would be deactivated. Nualia isn't sure how to reactivate it, and several times stresses that the *runewell* shouldn't be used much until after Sandpoint is razed and the deaths of hundreds of angry citizens and goblins have refilled the well.

E5 PORTAL OF GREED



The southern wing of this L-shaped hallway ends at a pair of stone doors carved with the depictions of two skeletons reaching out to clutch a skull between them, while to the east the hallway narrows down to frame a circular carving of what seems to be an immense stack of tens of thousands of gold coins that rises from floor to ceiling. The edges of these coins are carved with tiny, spiky runes.

The stack of oversized coins is actually a cleverly carved stone pillar that can be triggered to sink into the floor to provide access to the rooms beyond. Nualia and her allies have not yet discovered the method to trigger the pillar—hidden in the wall to the left and right are tiny, coin-sized slots. A successful DC 28 Perception check reveals the coin slots and the fact that there's a hollow space beyond the pillar. Inserting at least 1 gp into each slot causes the pillar to noisily grind down into the floor. The coins themselves vanish, transported to Karzoug's treasury hundreds of miles away in legendary Xin-Shalast.

The pillar itself bears a *permanent image* (CL 15th) to make it look as if it were made of gold—it is in fact made of stone.

E6 CRYPT (CR 6)



Four pillars support the domed ceiling of this room. Several dark alcoves containing standing sarcophagi grace the walls, and a statue of a stern man wielding a glaive and holding a book stands in the southern part of the chamber.

This small crypt was used to inter the bodies of the complex's architects, as was tradition in Karzoug's time. The architects, in this case, were interred alive, but now only bones remain inside. The carvings on the walls can be identified as depicting Runelord Karzoug with a DC 30 Knowledge (history) check.

A secret door to the west can be found with a DC 25 Perception check.

CREATURES: Although the architects willingly allowed themselves to be buried alive here, three of the six were not able to maintain their devotion for long. They died in horror, and now their shadows haunt the chamber. These three shadows emerge to attack any intruders 1d6 rounds after the room is entered (they do not pursue foes



out of this room, though). Nualia and her allies haven't discovered the secret door here yet, and have largely left the room alone for now.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| SHADOWS (3) | XP 800 each | CR 3 | HP 19 each |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 245)

E7 COLLAPSED TREASURY (CR 5)



The sound of sloshing water fills this room, which has almost entirely collapsed into a large tide pool. What few walls do remain intact here bear detailed and impressive carvings of incredible treasuries filled to overflowing with coins, gems, jewelry, and other items of value. To the east, the walls depict a carving of a towering mountain, its peak carved in the shape of a stern face just above a great palace. Below, the side of the mountain's valley cradles an immense city of spires.

In the pool, the remains of what must have once been an incredible treasure lie in the sloshing waters. Shattered urns, crumbled stone chests, rusted bits of once-beautiful armor and weapons, and other long-ruined treasures from an ancient past lie below. Most impressive of them all is a large, coral-encrusted helmet sized for a giant; the helm measures nearly 5 feet across, and its full-face guard bears an expression of twisted rage and fangs. The helm itself appears to be made of gold.

A DC 30 Knowledge (history) check identifies the city depicted as legendary Xin-Shalast, a lost city rumored to be hidden somewhere in the Kodar Mountains. Tales speak of the city as having streets of gold and buildings carved from immense gems, but although countless explorers have sought it (and many have died or vanished), none have ever managed to locate this fabled city. Most scholars agree that it never existed at all, that it was a fictitious location invented by the ancients.

The pool is connected to the sea via a 10-foot-wide underwater tunnel. The tunnel is 20 feet long in all, and the powerful riptide within makes navigating it possible only with a DC 20 Swim check. It emerges at the base of the island, about 30 feet underwater, an entrance hidden by coral growth and seaweed that can be discovered from outside by a DC 25 Perception check.

CREATURE: Only 1d3 rounds after the PCs enter this room, the gold helmet down below suddenly shifts and moves, as if it were rotating to look at them. While paranoid PCs might suspect the helmet is haunted or animated, it is in fact nothing more than a discarded rune giant helmet. The helm itself has become the home of a 450-pound hermit crab, and it reacts poorly to any attempts to enter what it's come to think of as its pool. When it attacks, the helm suddenly rises up to release a pair of immense claws and spindly legs.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| GIANT HERMIT CRAB | XP 1,600 | CR 5 | HP 51 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|

Variant giant crab (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 50)

N Medium vermin (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 51 (6d8+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d4+6 plus grab)

Special Attacks constrict (1d4+6)

TACTICS

During Combat The crab pursues foes who flee no farther than the top of the stairs or the underwater exit to the sea bed.

Morale The crab fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 23 (35 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +14, Swim +14

SQ water dependency

TREASURE: Although this was once a treasury, the loot gathered here normally didn't stay long before it was transported to Xin-Shalast. A search of the pool takes 3d6 minutes, but uncovers 3,500 sp, 630 gp, 40 precious stones worth 10 gp each, and a jade *amulet of natural armor +1*. The greatest treasure in the room is the ancient helm. The helm isn't solid gold (some of it is bronze) but it's still worth 3,000 gp if the PCs can haul its 300-pound weight up out of the hole it's been resting in for hundreds of years.

E8 COMMUNICATION ROOM



This barren room contains an upraised dais on which sits a marble throne. To either side stand statues of a man clutching a book and a glaive. A ghostly figure seems to be seated in the throne, an image of the same man who appears in the statues. He seems to be addressing an audience as he moves his hands about, his fingers decorated with hooked rings, but the words issuing from his phantom mouth are difficult to make out and in a strange language.

This room once allowed the agents stationed here to communicate with a projected image of Karzoug. When the statue collapsed, the magic here was damaged, and now a short loop of Karzoug's last message plays endlessly; over the ages, the illusion has slowly faded, so that all that remains is this ghostly echo.

His spoken words are in Thassilonian, and repeat the following short message over and over: "...is upon



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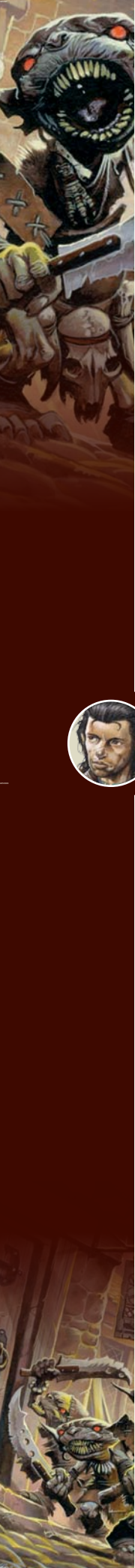
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us, but I command you remain. Witness my power, how Alaznist's petty wrath is but a flash compared to my strength. Take my final work to your graves, and let its memory be the last thing you...".

The image is harmless, and functions at CL 20th.

E9 TRANSMUTATION ROOM



This room contains three low tables, their tops covered with a strange and chilling selection of tools, saws, long-bladed knives, and objects whose purpose is not readily apparent. A strange collection of bones lies near the southern table—too many to be one skeleton, but too few to be two.

The working of transmutation magic went beyond the classic transformation of lead into gold for the wizards of Shalast—they worked the magic of change upon every matrix they could shape. This room was used to change and modify living flesh; the tools remaining on the tables being used for quick adjustments where magic wasn't necessary, or to cut away extraneous tissue. The skeleton seems to have belonged to a two-headed man with an additional partial skeleton of a smaller man growing from the small of his back—all that remains of the last poor soul worked on here before the end came. The ancient skeleton crumbles to dust if touched.

TREASURE: The surgical tools on the tables are exquisitely made, and are worth 100 gp in all. Sitting on the easternmost table is an object that, upon closer examination, isn't a tool at all. It appears to be a silver-and-gold seven-pointed star; one surface is studded with nodules and blades, and the other features a thin, curved handle. This object is the only remaining key to area E10.

E10 MALFESHNEKOR'S PRISON (CR 7)



The doors to this room are made of stone but bear no handles. An indented outline of a seven-pointed star, its shape covered by hollows and slits, graces the spot where handles should be.

This door is sealed with an *arcane lock* spell (CL 20th), but the key in area E9 can be used to easily twist and open the doors.

This room is lit primarily by a 10-foot-long pit of flickering fire that fills the room with a strange humid heat and the smell of burning hair. In the northern corners of the room, wooden risers each hold several dozen golden candles that burn without melting, while to the south the wall bears an immense carving of a seven-pointed star.

The fire pit is only a few inches deep—stepping into and out of the pit doesn't impact movement, but

each time a creature passes through the pit, it takes 1d6 points of fire damage (but no more than once per round). The flames themselves are magically sustained, and can burn forever without going out.

Two alcoves to the south are hidden by secret doors. A successful DC 25 Perception check reveals the doors (one check per door)—the alcoves beyond were once used to store valuable supplies for the conjuration and entrapment of magical creatures, but when the end came to Thassilon, one of the wizards stationed here raided the chambers and fled with most of the contents. Each alcove contains little more than dusty shelves today, although a bit of treasure still remains in the western one (see *Treasure*, below).

CREATURE: The powerful barghest Malfeshnekor, once one of Alaznist's lieutenants and the commander of a legion of sinspawn, has spent the last several thousand years imprisoned in this room. Karzoug's agents captured the barghest and transported him here, using a *binding* spell (hedged prison) to imprison him here so that he could be interrogated at a leisurely pace. Yet when the end of Thassilon came, it happened fast. Malfeshnekor was forgotten, survived the sentinel statue's collapse, and has now gone nearly insane with rage and hunger—despite the fact that he need not eat, his supernatural hunger has not abated. Although the binding keeps him from physically leaving this room, nothing prevents him from assaulting anyone who enters it.

MALFESHNEKOR

| XP | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 3,200 | 7 | 85 |

Male greater barghest (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 27*)

TACTICS

Before Combat If Malfeshnekor hears activity outside, he casts *invisibility sphere* on himself. In the following rounds, he casts *blink* and *mass bull's strength* on himself only, then waits for the intruders to enter.

During Combat Malfeshnekor prefers to engage foes inside of his prison in melee, casting *rage* on the first round of combat. He saves *crushing despair* and *charm monster* to use against foes who attack him with ranged attacks beyond the limits of this room.

Morale Malfeshnekor has no choice but to fight to the death.

TREASURE: Each of the racks in the northern corners contains 30 *eternal candles* (60 candles in all), minor magic candles that burn eternally without heat, similar to a *continual flame* spell but shedding only shadowy light in a 5-foot radius. Each *eternal candle* is worth 25 gp.

A single silver coffer sits on its side on one of the shelves in the western alcove. The coffer itself is worth 100 gp, but the real treasure sits inside, buried in a bed of fine white sand—a *ring of force shield*. When activated, the shieldlike pane of force generated manifests as a seven-pointed star—the Sihedron rune.





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CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Relatively little involving the metaplot of *Rise of the Runelords* occurs during the course of “Burnt Offerings.” Although the chapter’s events are closely tied to Karzoug’s awakening, and certain characters in the adventure have ties to characters whom the PCs are destined to meet later in the campaign, the adventure’s primary purpose is to introduce them to their new home of Sandpoint and to instill in them a desire to protect it and its citizens.

In the short term, the goblin menace facing Sandpoint is most easily dealt with by defeating Nualia; with her out of the picture, her surviving minions quickly fall to bickering among themselves. Of them all, only Tsuto might harbor enough of a need for revenge against the PCs that he might become a recurring problem. Defeating Malfeshnekor is purely optional; doing so causes the Thistletop goblins to fall apart as a tribe over the course of a few months. Without Nualia to lead all five tribes, the goblins return to being only a minor menace at the fringes of the wild lands.

The second danger facing Sandpoint is, of course, Erylium and the *minor runewell* in the Catacombs of Wrath. If the PCs fail to defeat Erylium, she makes sure that now and then as time goes on, additional sinspawn periodically emerge from the *minor runewell* to cause problems for the town. Without a major source of wrathful souls, they never become a significant threat, but the place remains a peril. Eventually, the PCs will be returning to the Catacombs of Wrath (see Chapter Five), but for now, let them think that deactivating the *minor runewell* closes the book on this particular dungeon.

In any event, once the PCs have stopped Nualia’s plans for good, they deserve a rest and a chance to relax in Sandpoint. Give them some time to craft magic items, bolster relationships with NPCs, and perhaps meet new characters in town. They might even have a few additional encounters with local creatures; a lost goblin snake or reefclaw that ends up in the harbor can rile things up pretty good, and the appearance of an attic whisperer in a local home might give the PCs a creepy bit of foreshadowing for the inevitable *Skinsaw Murders*.

It’s possible that Nualia escapes death in this adventure—in this case, she makes her way to Magnimar as soon as she can to rejoin her allies there. When the PCs confront the *Skinsaw Cult* in Chapter Two, they should find evidence that Nualia has visited them recently, but her exact role in the rest of the campaign is left to you. She could end up aiding Lucrecia’s efforts against Turtleback Ferry, become one of Mokmurian’s allies, join forces with the Scribbler, or even make the pilgrimage to Xin-Shalast to pledge her service to Karzoug. You should advance her levels as appropriate to keep her a powerful enemy (three levels or so above the average party level)—consider giving her levels of the divine scion prestige class detailed in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*. She could even complete her transformation into a demon—this ritual is detailed in full on page 45 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Book of the Damned II: Lords of Chaos*. Nualia as a half-fiend, or even as a succubus, would certainly make an even more dangerous foe than a mere wayward aasimar!