



3

THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

BY NICOLAS LOGUE



CHAPTER BACKGROUND 128

PART ONE 130
In the Hook's Shadow

PART TWO 146
Retaking Rannick

PART THREE 161
Down Comes the Rain

PART FOUR 171
The Haunted Heart

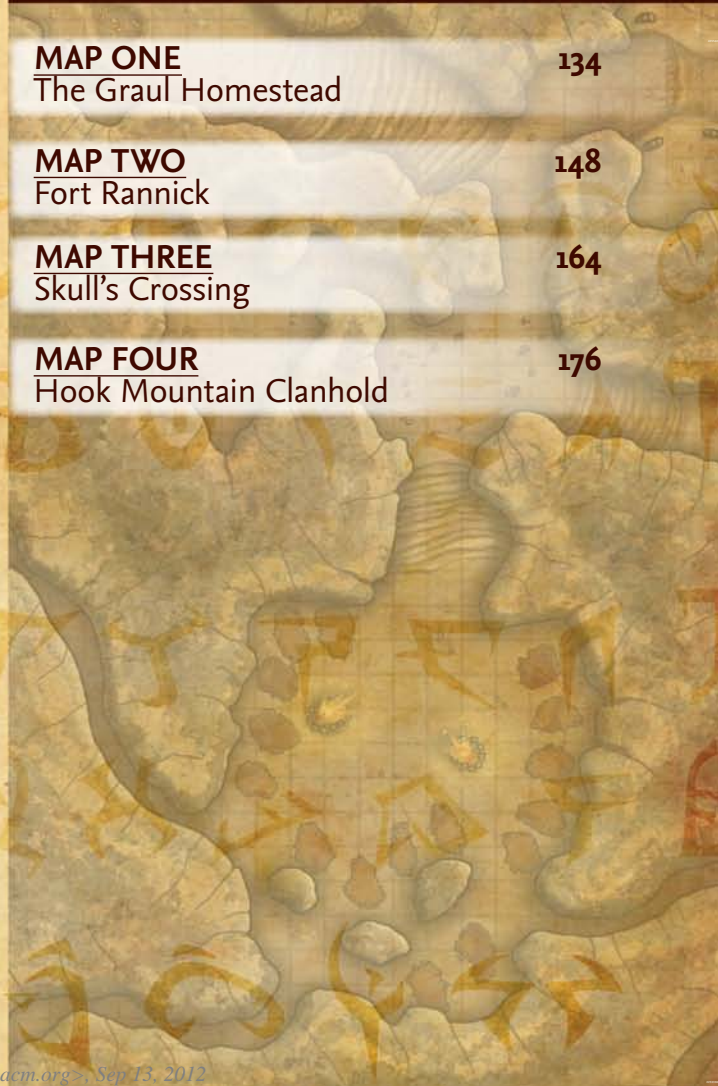
PART FIVE 175
Harrowing the Hook

MAP ONE 134
The Graul Homestead

MAP TWO 148
Fort Rannick

MAP THREE 164
Skull's Crossing

MAP FOUR 176
Hook Mountain Clanhold





CHAPTER BACKGROUND

THE INBRED OGRES OF THE KREEG CLAN HAVE LONG MENACED THOSE WHO STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE IN THE SHADOW OF HOOK MOUNTAIN. THE KREEGS, MORE THAN ANY OTHER OGRE CLAN DWELLING UPON THE HOOK, ARE AGGRESSIVE, RAVENOUS BUTCHERS, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SLAUGHTER OF COUNTLESS MINING AND LUMBER CAMPS. TALES OF THE HORRORS VISITED UPON THOSE CAPTURED BY THE KREEGS ARE SOMETHING OF A LOCAL LEGEND. THE OGRES THEMSELVES HAVE LONG WAGED WAR AGAINST THE REGION'S BASTION OF WILDERNESS LAW, FORT RANNICK, YET UNTIL RECENTLY THEY HAVE MADE NO HEADWAY. TODAY, THOUGH, THE FORT LIES IN RUINS AND UNDER KREEG CONTROL.



Turtleback Ferry, a remote village not far from Hook Mountain, has long borne the brunt of Kreeg violence. Although closer to the city-state of Korvosa, it was Magnimar that answered the town's request for aid. Eager to extend their holdings and influence to the east, the lord-mayor of Magnimar established Fort Rannick to provide Turtleback Ferry with protection from the ogres, securing promises of regular taxes and trade. He stationed a band of rangers there—the Order of the Black Arrows—and charged them with keeping the region safe and free from ogres. Short but bloody skirmishes between the Kreegs and the Black Arrows have gone on for decades since then, but after their first decisive defeat at the entrance to the Valley of Broken Trees 45 years ago, the Kreegs have never quite built up enough bravery to mount a second attack on Fort Rannick... until now.

A month ago, the Kreegs experienced a most unusual event—a visitor. Barl Breakbones was a boulder-bellied stone giant, a necromancer who towered a full 5 feet over the current Kreeg patriarch, Grolki. Sent by his master, Mokmurian, to subjugate the ogres of Hook Mountain and prepare them for assimilation into the growing giant army, Barl's initial reception by the Kreegs was anything but friendly. But after Barl dispatched many of the ogres with ease (including their leader, Grolki), the rest saw the wisdom of accepting a new leader.

Barl settled into his new role as chieftain of Hook Mountain with ease, and immediately set the Kreegs to work. They began forging massive weapons and shields from veins of iron, enough to arm the host of marauders gathering at the stone giant fortress of Jorgenfist.

The Order of the Black Arrows spotted plumes of greasy smoke rising from these forges and sent several scouts up the slopes to spy on the Kreegs. Alas, soon after discovering what appeared to be ogres preparing for war, the scouts were spotted, captured, and killed. Furious at the incursion and concerned the rangers might divulge his purpose, Barl decided to act against Fort Rannick.

Breakbones's plans were facilitated by another of his master's servants, a lamia matriarch known as Lucrecia, sister of the lamia matriarch Xanasha who recently troubled the city of Magnimar itself. Under orders from Karzoug, Lucrecia had arrived in Turtleback Ferry under the guise of an entrepreneur several years ago; she bought an old barge there and refurbished it as a floating gambling hall. She dubbed the barge *Paradise*, and offered any and all patrons myriad opportunities to enjoy themselves in her games of chance. Lucrecia used the den of sin as a place to foster and grow souls of greed to facilitate Karzoug's return. Favored guests were given small tattoos to show on following visits to receive discounts off the entrance fee and other, less seemingly benefits. Of course, this tattoo was none other than the Sihedron Rune, and by so branding her customers, Lucrecia managed to prepare nearly half of Turtleback Ferry's populace for Karzoug's *runewell*.

Many were willing to be marked in order to enjoy Paradise's "members-only" benefits, and even the steadfast Black Arrows of Fort Rannick weren't immune to the lure of easy women and easy money. One such unsteady soul, a skilled scout and archer named Kaven Windstrike, slipped out of the fort often to sate his desire for gold and women. Lucrecia recognized him by his gear, charmed him, and sent him back to Fort Rannick as her agent. Over the following months, Kaven's dependence on Lucrecia and the exotic offerings she provided only grew, to the extent that he is now firmly her minion even without magical control. Of the many secrets Kaven shared with Lucrecia, though, none intrigued her more than the discovery that Fort Rannick's commander, a man named Lamatar Bayden, was carrying on a not-so-secret love affair with a nymph named Myriana in the nearby wilds.

When Barl Breakbones decided to mount a devastating raid on Fort Rannick, it was a simple matter for Lucrecia to organize two key points of treachery to ensure the success of the coming assault. Having learned from Kaven that Commander Bayden made regular





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

monthly trips into the Shimmerglens to tryst with his nymph lover, Lucrecia advised Barl upon the best time to mount his raid—while the fort's commander was absent. Then, Lucrecia convinced Kaven to delay a large patrol of rangers returning from the wilds on that very night, so that when the Kreegs descended on the fort, it was not only without its commander, but also missing many of its defenders (including its second-in-command, a man named Jakardros Sovark, who was leading Kaven's ill-fated patrol).

A night of red ruin followed as the Kreegs descended upon Fort Rannick and also on its absent commander's clandestine night of bliss. The sun rose on a fort now ruled by ogres, its commander in chains and being led back to the clanhold near the summit of Hook Mountain. In one horrific night, the Order of the Black Arrows lost its commander, its greatest leaders, and its keep.

Fort Rannick is now ruled by "Papa" Jaagrath Kreeg and his deformed family of deviants. Worried that her presence in Turtleback Ferry was beginning to draw too much suspicion, Lucrecia abandoned *Paradise*, sinking it in Claybottom Lake while it was full of gamblers, and in so doing sent two dozen greedy souls to Karzoug. The lamia matriarch has relocated to captured Fort Rannick and now waits for the next stage in the plan—with the aid of a coven of hags manipulating the early winter storms, a flood is poised to destroy Turtleback Ferry. Already secretly marked with the Sihedron Rune, half the populace of the town are unknowingly set to fuel Karzoug's *runewell* when the ancient dam known as Skull's Crossing bursts.

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

The PCs travel to Turtleback Ferry and discover that ogres have taken the fort. After rescuing the last three surviving members of the Black Arrows, the PCs mount a daring raid against Fort Rannick and defeat the ogres within, only to learn that greater dangers are afoot.

Soon thereafter, unnatural rains flood Turtleback Ferry and the PCs must explore the ruins of an ancient dam called Skull's Crossing. After saving the town from disaster, the PCs learn the ogres of Hook Mountain were to blame for the strange weather. The PCs climb Hook Mountain to end the ogre menace once and for all, only to learn that the ogres might be the least of Varisia's problems: the giants of the Storval Plateau are preparing for war.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

7TH LEVEL: The PCs should be very close to 8th level when they begin Chapter Three.

8TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 8th level during their first foray against the Grauls.

9TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 9th level midway through the grueling task of retaking Fort Rannick.

10TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 10th level near the end of Skull's Crossing.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: The PCs should be close to (if not at) 11th level at the conclusion of this chapter.



PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

A FEW MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE EVENTS OF THE FATEFUL SWALLOWTAIL FESTIVAL—WINTER IS HERE, AND WITH IT COMES THE SEASONAL RAINS. BUT AS THE DAYS WEAR ON, IT SOON BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT THIS IS NO TYPICAL RAINY SEASON. NOT A DAY PASSES WITHOUT A DOWNPOUR IN CENTRAL VARISIA, AND THE RIVERS SWELL AGAINST THEIR BANKS, THREATENING EARLY FLOODS. TEMPERS FLARE AND RELATIONSHIPS FRAY AS THE CONSTANT DREARY WEATHER WEARS AT THE SOUL, YET THERE ARE MORE SINISTER THINGS IN HOOK MOUNTAIN'S SHADOW THAN THE CONSTANT RAIN.



This chapter assumes that the PCs earned the favor of Magnimar's lord-mayor after revealing the Skinsaw Cult's plans for him. If the PCs haven't earned Lord-Mayor Grobaras's gratitude, however, they can still come to his attention when he hears reports of their actions in Sandpoint or their work in stopping the murders that have been plaguing both communities. New heroes like the PCs make perfect candidates for a problem that's just been brought to his attention—according to a recent message from Turtleback Ferry, the village has had no contact for weeks with Magnimar's most distant holding, remote Fort Rannick near Hook Mountain. The Black Arrows, the soldiers stationed at Fort Rannick, have traditionally been isolated, but such a long silence is uncharacteristic even for them. Magnimar's government has been pressing Grobaras to send a patrol to Hook Mountain to investigate, but until the PCs came to his attention, Grobaras had no one he felt he could spare for what he viewed as a "pointless and silly trip to talk to those foul-tempered Black Arrows." Grobaras offers the PCs 750 gp each to cover their expenses for the trip and to pay them for their services—if the PCs ask for more, he grows flustered but can be talked up to 1,000 gp each with a DC 30 Diplomacy check.

In some cases, particularly good-aligned parties might balk at doing the relatively unscrupulous lord-mayor a favor—in such a case, you should impress upon the PCs (perhaps via one of the lord-mayor's aides) that the Black Arrows aren't as disagreeable as the lord-mayor makes them out—that there are, in fact, a lot of good folk among them, and that if they've fallen on hard times, someone needs to send them some help.

The lord-mayor suggests that Turtleback Ferry be the PCs' first stop—this is the closest settlement to Fort Rannick, and there's a good chance someone in town will know why the fort's gone silent. By land, the journey to Turtleback Ferry from Magnimar is a voyage of nearly 400 miles through lightly patrolled rural terrain along the north bank of the Yondabakari River. By foot at a speed of 30 feet, this amounts to a 2-week journey, while

on horseback at a speed of 60 feet it's only a week-long trip. Alternatively, the PCs can take one of the many river barges that ply the Yondabakari and Skull Rivers from Magnimar all the way to Turtleback Ferry (at a total cost of 50 gp per person—with a DC 20 Diplomacy check, the lord-mayor agrees to pay the party's passage), in which case the journey also takes a week.

You can spend as much or as little time on the details of this journey as you wish, using the encounter tables on pages 404–405 to liven things up as you see fit. If the PCs are running shy on XP, a few random encounters might just be what they need to prepare themselves for the horror awaiting them in Hook Mountain's shadow.

A FRIENDLY GUIDE

As the PCs prepare for their journey, they are contacted by a familiar face—the elven ranger Shalelu Andosana. The PCs first encountered Shalelu during "Burnt Offerings," when she brought Sandpoint more news about the goblin threat. She might have joined with the group to face the goblins, or might even have developed a romantic relationship with one of the PCs. In any event, Shalelu learned that the PCs are heading east to Fort Rannick, and she would like to accompany them on their journey. If she's in a relationship with one of the PCs, this alone is reason enough for her to tag along. Alternatively, if one of the PCs recently took Leadership, he might wish to recruit the elf as a cohort. Finally, the additional archery and survival support should be attractive to any group.

Of course, Shalelu's got her own reasons for wanting to make the journey to Fort Rannick. One of the rangers stationed there, a man named Jakardros, was at one time her mother's lover. Shalelu's memories of Jakardros are mostly of a young, exuberant man. She wasn't sure what her mother saw in the impulsive young human, but she was glad he was there for her. When her mother was slain in a dragon attack, Jakardros left suddenly and without explanation, leaving Shalelu with a bitter impression that eventually drove her into the isolated life she has lived for the past several years as a bounty hunter in





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

the Sandpoint hinterlands. She recently learned that Jakardros has taken up with the Black Arrows of Fort Rannick and would very much like the opportunity to find out why the man abandoned her so abruptly after her mother's death, if only to convince herself that he hadn't been taking advantage of her mother in some way. And if he had, Shalelu wants a chance to even the score.

SHALELU ANDOSANA	XP 6,400	CR 5	HP 53
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Female elf fighter 2/ranger 4
(see page 26)

TURTLEBACK FERRY

Appendix Four of this book presents Turtleback Ferry in detail. Until the floodwaters rise later in this adventure, there's not a lot to do in Turtleback Ferry (save for perhaps noticing a few Sihedron tattoos—see "Mark of the Sihedron" below) except ask around for rumors and news (see page 395 of the Appendix) and perhaps do some idle shopping for mundane supplies.

MARK OF THE SIHEDRON

Every day the PCs spend in Turtleback Ferry, have them make DC 30 Perception checks. With a success, that PC notices a disturbing tattoo on one of the locals, hidden on the small of the back, the shoulder, or on the ankle. Exposed for a moment when the local bends over to pick up a crate or otherwise allows his clothing to slip, this tattoo is of a seven-pointed star—the same star the PCs have seen used by goblins and murderers over the past several weeks: the Sihedron Rune. If the tattooed local is confronted in a public place, he'll deny that he's got a tattoo while simultaneously attempting to make sure that his tattoo is covered up again. The villager's initial attitude to the PCs is unfriendly if confronted in this way, but if he's made friendly, he quietly admits that he got the tattoo 2 months ago at *Paradise*, a floating barge converted into a gambling and drinking hall that recently sank. The villager sullenly explains that by allowing *Paradise's* owner, the lovely and silken-tongued Lady Lucrecia, to place the tattoo on him for a small fee, he could then show the tattoo at *Paradise's* door and avoid paying the cover fee to board. Further, those who got "*Paradise's* Mark" (the Sihedron Rune) were often rewarded with additional gambling chips and other perks, and were told that only a select few regular patrons had been chosen for the honor.

The villager admits he was coy about the tattoo because his wife would be furious if she found out he'd been gambling, but defensively points out that he's not the only one in town with the mark. In fact, of Turtleback Ferry's population of 430 citizens, 210 secretly bear the mark—far more than anyone in town suspects, since Lucrecia told them all to keep their tattoos a secret.

Investigations into the fate of Lady Lucrecia are destined to hit dead ends for now; everyone in town

suspects she died in the fire that sank the barge several weeks ago. If the PCs wish to investigate the sunken barge, locals can point out the location on Claybottom Lake where the barge sank easily enough. See Appendix Four for more details.

It's certainly possible to remove a Sihedron Rune tattoo from a villager with an *erase* spell; while doing so would rob Karzoug of the possibility of harvesting that villager's soul for his *runewell*, it won't stop Lucrecia's plans to destroy Turtleback Ferry by flooding it.

THE ROAD TO FORT RANNICK

Eventually, either from rumors gathered in town or simply because they're eager to solve the mystery the lord-mayor of Magnimar has placed before them, the PCs should head north from Turtleback Ferry toward Fort Rannick to investigate the Black Arrows' silence for themselves. The simplest route to the fort is to follow an old road leading up along the banks of the Skull River. The road crosses an old wooden bridge to the western shore about 3 miles north of Turtleback Ferry, and from there heads all the way up to the impressive Thassilonian ruin known as Skull's Crossing, an immense stone dam that holds back the waters of the Storval Deep. A side road branches off about 3 miles before the dam, and a crooked wooden sign pointing up this trail proclaims "Fort Rannick."

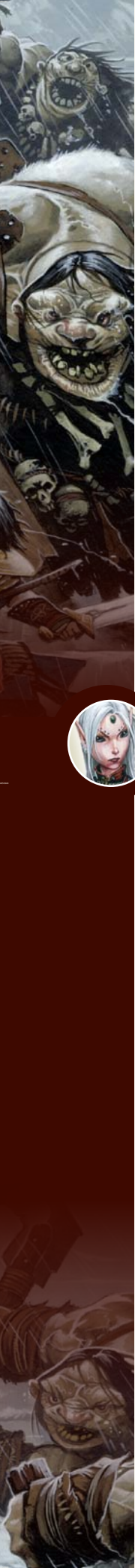
THE STRANGE FIREPELT (CR 7)

As the PCs cross over the old wooden bridge, have each PC make a Perception check. The PC who gets the highest result hears a yowl of pain in the woods nearby, as if a large cat were wounded. If the PCs don't investigate at once, they soon hear barking dogs approaching from deeper in the woods, accompanied by a low voice singing an off-key song about eating kittens. If the PCs still avoid investigating but remain behind to listen, the barking of the dogs soon grows excited, and the sounds of combat between dogs, firepelt cougar, and ogrekin becomes impossible to ignore.

If the PCs ignore the sounds and continue north, let them. They'll reach Fort Rannick as detailed in Part Two, but without forewarning and aid from the surviving Black Arrow rangers kept at the Graul homestead, they might find themselves in over their heads.

CREATURES: The wounded animal noise comes from Kibb, a firepelt mountain lion and the animal companion of Jakardros, one of the rangers who survived the ogre assault on Fort Rannick only to become the captive of a particularly foul and brutal band of ogrekin known as the Grauls. Kibb managed to escape and has spent the last 3 weeks eluding the Grauls (who've been desperately attempting to recapture the firepelt ever since) while trying to find someone whom he can lead back to the homestead to save his master. So far, none of the hunters Kibb has encountered realized





that the firepelt was trying to get them to help, and now, the poor mountain lion has fallen prey to one of the Graul traps. His foot stuck in a bear trap, Kibb knows it's only a matter of time before the Grauls' best hunter, a lumbering half-ogre named Rukus, finds him and kills him.

Kibb grows excited if he sees human-sized creatures approaching, enough so that he advances, only to tug painfully at the iron bear trap around his back leg. A DC 15 Handle Animal, Knowledge (nature), or wild empathy check is enough for a PC to realize that the firepelt is well trained and likely a druid or ranger's animal companion, while *Speak with animals* allows a PC to learn the whole grim truth about what's going on (see Development, below). Kibb does not attack anyone who draws near unless that person attacks him first. A DC 28 Strength check (or a DC 20 Disable Device check) is enough to spring the trap and free the firepelt.

The sound of Rukus and his hounds broadcasts the ogrekin's arrival 1d4+2 rounds in advance, giving the PCs plenty of time to set up an ambush if they desire. The five hounds arrive first, howling and barking as they attempt to surround and attack Kibb or any other creatures they encounter. Rukus himself, a strapping young ogrekin with a wide mouth and one huge misshapen finger for a right hand, barrels into the clearing 1d4 rounds later. Once he sees the PCs, he roars in anger: "I's huntin' kitty cat! No concern o' you's less you's wanna be hunted too!"

RUKUS GRAUL	XP 3,200	CR 7	HP 85
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Male ogrekin fighter 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 204)

CE Medium humanoid (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 85 (7d10+42)

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 spear +14/+9 (1d8+13/x3)

Special Attacks weapon training (spears +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Rukus sics his dogs on the PCs and watches the fight from the edge of the clearing for 1 round before he joins the fray. He prefers to fight against smaller or unarmored foes, flanking them with his dogs.

Morale Rukus flees back to the Graul homestead if dropped below 30 hit points or if more than three of his dogs are slain, crying and blubbering loudly the entire way.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lunge, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness, Weapon Focus

(spear), Weapon Specialization (spear)

Skills Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +12, Survival +14

Languages Common

SQ armor training 2, ogrekin deformities

Gear +1 spear, belt of giant strength +2, favorite blanket (ratty, flea-infested, and decorated with several Black Arrows insignias)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Rukus is particularly mean-looking and gains a +4 racial bonus on Intimidate checks, but has a deformed right hand that imparts a -2 penalty on attack rolls with two-handed weapons (this hand cannot wield weapons on its own).

GRAUL HOUNDS (5)	XP 400 each	CR 1	HP 13 each
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Riding dogs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

KIBB	HP 39
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Firepelt cougar (small cat animal companion)

N Medium animal

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+4 plus trip), 2 claws +8 (1d3+4)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Climb +9, Perception +6, Stealth +10

SQ sprint

DEVELOPMENT: If Rukus is taken alive, he barks savagely at the PCs when questioned. The ornery cuss refuses to give any information but his name unless his interrogators can shift his initial attitude of hostile to at least friendly, in which case Rukus launches into a long-winded, stuttering disclosure of his family's captives back at the "farmstead." Rukus likes patches and symbols a lot, and he brags about how "Mammy" sewed the insignias of dead captives to his favorite blanket—he proudly shows off the ratty, stained thing if asked, since he never leaves home without it tucked into the back of his belt. Five patches bearing the Black Arrow crest are sewn onto the blanket—in some cases, the patches are bloodstained. If Rukus is dead, the patches can be recognized with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check. If Shalelu is with the party, she automatically recognizes the patches.

If Kibb survives, the firepelt frantically tries to communicate with the party. If they cannot speak with animals, a successful DC 20 wild empathy or Handle



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

Animal check reveals that Kibb is very concerned about someone or something and wants the party to follow him. The firepelt nibbles at their cloaks, tugging them toward a poorly maintained trail that leads deeper into Kreegwood. If Rukus fled the battle, tracking him along the trail is a simple matter, and even if both Rukus and Kibb died in the battle, a successful DC 10 Perception check reveals the partially overgrown path. Following it for a half-mile leads to the Graul homestead.

THE GRAUL FARM (CR 7)

This is where the PCs get their first taste of ogrish hillbilly horror. The Grauls are notorious in Kreegwood as one of the more disgusting and aggressive half-ogre families. Not only do these ogrekin have the grit to live less than half a mile from “man-land,” but they do so with ease, snatching lone hunters and trappers with such quiet skill that they have yet to be discovered by the locals of Turtleback Ferry as the primary reason their folk periodically go missing.

The Grauls dwell on a sickly farm in a clearing in the forest. The woods around their land are decorated with several hanging cornhusk-and-leather humanoid-shaped fetishes meant to ward off intruders—an investigation of any of these fetishes reveals they're stuffed with what appears to be a mix of dirt and human hair. A tangled field of corn and other diseased plants grows in the eastern section of their land, while to the north slump two sagging buildings: a barn and a farmhouse. Both have had their windows boarded over, and moss and fungus grow heavy on the shaded sides of the decrepit structures.

The Grauls are ruled by a notorious female ogrekin known only as “Mammy” Graul, an accomplished cannibal, necrophile, and vile wizard. Grottesquely fat, Mammy Graul rarely moves beyond the walls of her reeking bedroom, letting her boys see to her needs—all of them. She's birthed dozens of strong ogrekin sons over the decades, and although her childbearing days are now behind her, she still enjoys visits from her sons and the occasional ogre from the highlands. She's long had an obsessive crush on Jaagrath Kreeg, in fact, and when her boys caught several of the rangers who fled the massacre at Fort Rannick, she saw a chance to get herself further into the good graces of the powerful ogre. She's not sure how best to approach Jaagrath, though, and in the meantime has been running out

of captives as they slowly succumb to the hungers and tortures of her sons. She's promised herself that she'll figure out what to do with them before they're all dead, but time is running short.

CREATURES: While most of the Grauls prefer to spend their time indoors, either in the farmhouse or the barn, two of them prefer the outdoors. One of these two is Rukus, but if he survived his previous encounter with the PCs, he's already retreated to his room in the farmhouse (area A6) to nurse his wounds.

The second is an 8-foot-tall son Mammy Graul affectionately calls “Old Crowfood.” Crowfood's grotesquely deformed head resembles a giant pumpkin on the right side—a huge puffy mass of tumors and overgrown bone giving his head a lopsided look. The ogrekin stalks the perimeter of the farmstead day and night, constantly on the lookout for intruders and working to scare crows and other animals away from his pride and joy: the cornfield.

Crowfood automatically notices the PCs' approach unless they take pains to be stealthy. If he sees intruders, he gives cry and lumbers to attack. The sounds of battle here certainly alert the ogrekin within the buildings, but they prefer to wait inside for intruders to come to them rather than confront them out in the open—especially since their home is so riddled with cruel traps.



RUKUS GRAUL

THE GRAUL HOMESTEAD

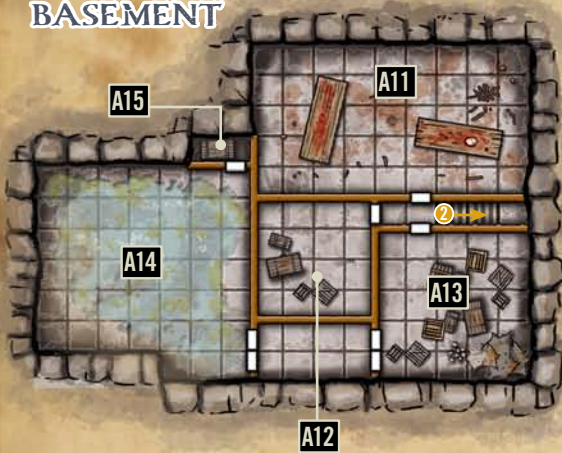
GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR



BASEMENT



BARN



THE GRAUL FARM



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
 STAIRS ○ UP ● DOWN

1 INCH = 90 FEET



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

MAP ONE: THE GRAUL HOMESTEAD

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

CROWFOOD	XP 3,200	CR 7	HP 71
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Male ogrekin fighter 3/rogue 4

CE Medium humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 71 (7 HD; 3d10+4d8+32)

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 ogre hook +14/+9 (1d10+10/×3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Crowfood bellows and yells as he fights.

Considerably braver than Rukus, he focuses his attacks on the largest foe, using Power Attack on every strike.

Morale Crowfood flees to area **A16** if brought below 15 hp.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (ogre hook)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +16, Handle Animal +8, Perception +11, Stealth +12

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, ogrekin deformities, rogue talents (bleeding attack +2, combat trick), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, +1 ogre hook, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *ring of protection +1*, tattered rags and tunic

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Crowfood has a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves and heals damage twice as fast as from rest. He's also quite ugly and takes a -4 penalty on all Charisma-based checks.

A1 FARMHOUSE PORCH (CR 5)



This moss-encrusted, decaying farmhouse slumps drunkenly at the edge of the damp forest clearing. Rickety steps crawl up to a porch covered by a huge eave held aloft by thick pillars of pine. These timbers are decorated with crude carvings of manticores impaling children with their tail spikes and women being ripped apart by wolves. The carvings look like a child's work, but the subject matter grows more gruesome and depraved from one depiction to the next. An unsettlingly large rocking chair of lashed wood and bone sways erratically in the breeze at the far end of the porch under a vast menagerie of wind chimes composed of decidedly humanoid bones. The house's windows have all been boarded

up with thick timbers, although it's unclear whether this was done to keep intruders out or imprison whatever things make their home within.

A host of ants march happily away here and there on the porch, many the size of a grown man's thumbnail. A moth the size of a shovel head clings to the porch ceiling, watching the party with alien eyes, but it allows them to pass unmolested. The scent of bad meat, urine, sweat, and decay wafts now and then from between the cracks in the boarded-up windows.

TRAP: Concealed among the hanging bone-chimes are sharpened bone spurs mounted on a hinged rack rigged to swing down at anyone who touches the front door (the Grauls never use this entrance, preferring to come and go via the side door that opens into area **A4**). Additionally, several rusty saw blades are housed between the cracks of the porch's floorboards.

DOOR SPIKE	XP 800	CR 3
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Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect 4 bone spikes (+10 melee, 1d6+2 each; 1 target)

FLOOR SAW	XP 800	CR 3
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Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect saw blades (+14 melee, 2d6+7); multiple targets (all creatures in area **A1**)

A2 FAMILY ROOM (CR 3)



A mangy bearskin rug lies before a tremendous hearth set into the wall, its pained visage still snarling at whatever cruel hunter took its life. A huge couch haphazardly upholstered in animal hide and human flesh, replete with a collection of talons, monstrous hairy spider's legs, fox heads, and human hands and feet, sits to the west.

TRAP: The sofa is part of a hidden pit trap. Anyone coming within 5 feet of the sofa is in danger of falling through a hole in the floor into a chute lined with sharpened stakes coated in spider venom. The sofa itself is affixed to the floor via several sturdy timbers. It does not follow falling victims into area **A14** below.

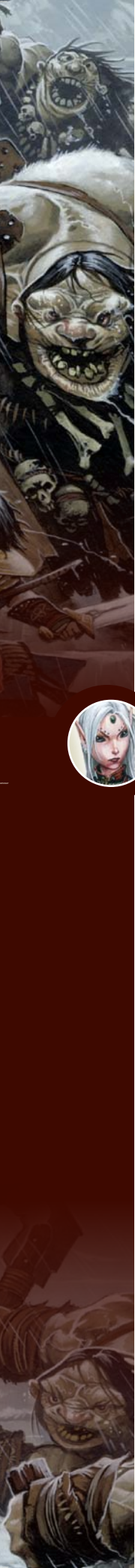
PIT TRAP	XP 1,600	CR 5
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Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 12

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual





Effect multiple targets (all characters adjacent to or on the sofa); fall (10 feet deep, Reflex DC 20 avoids); spikes (+15 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 each plus poison), poison (ogre spider venom—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save)

A3 DINING ROOM (CR 6)



This dark room stinks of putrefying flesh. Eight wooden chairs with grinning bleached skulls crowning their backs circle a monstrous four-foot-high oak dining table covered with a crude tablecloth of crinkly human leather. The centerpiece of the dining table—a rotting human head, its stringy red hair thankfully draped over its mutilated face—serves as a gathering place for a host of buzzing, bloated flies.

TRAP: Scythes attached to coils of tightly bound rope can be set to cut into anyone stepping through any of the three doors into this room. Hidden switches on the doors themselves allows the ogrekin to disable these traps before they come into the room, but if they hear combat outside, they make sure all three scythe traps are ready to go.

SCYTHE TRAPS (3)

XP	CR
800 each	3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

Bypass hidden switch on each door (Perception DC 20)

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect Large scythe (+15 melee, 2d6+4/x4)

A4 KITCHEN



This musty chamber smells of blood and week-old meat, and is thick with clouds of fat, greasy flies. Thumb-sized cockroaches dance along the walls, floor, and ceiling. A thick butcher's block sits under three cruel-looking cleavers that hang on a rack above. Bloodstained smocks of thick leather, one still dripping fresh gore, hang on bone-spur hooks by the door. A crockery platter of severed fingers and toes sits on a rickety old table next to a dried sinew basket overflowing with hacked-off hands and feet, all sporting stubs of congealed blood where their digits once were. A family of lucky rats gorges itself on the red stumps.

The smell in this room is horrific. Anyone (apart from one of the Grauls, who are all used to the stink) who enters this room must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid becoming sickened for 1d6 minutes. The door to the north opens into a narrow stairwell that leads down into the basement.

TREASURE: Despite their filthy condition, the three cleavers are exceedingly well made and function as masterwork handaxes.

A5 PLAYPEN (CR 5)



This simple room is strewn with “toys,” some of carved wood or bone, while others appear to be little more than partial animal carcasses. Old bloodstains mark the walls; some resemble crude, childlike paintings and feature images of dismembered horses, a ridiculous grinning horned devil tossing children off a cliff, and a big lake with a black reptilian monster sprouting tentacles from its back. Bookshelves rest against the wall, but instead of tomes they hold skulls of all shapes and sizes.

CREATURES: This “playpen” is where the two youngest Grael boys spend their time. Both are full-grown, yet out of all the Grauls they act the most like spoiled children, and rarely emerge from this chamber into other parts of the farmhouse. Maulgro Grael is a hairless and pale bloated thing with malformed, stumpy legs and a wide mouth filled with ragged teeth. Maulgro keeps his skull collection here; he says he wants to be a Kreeg and someday dance the skull-jig when Mammy captures a priest-man to fix his dead legs. Mammy has no intention of doing so, as she finds the crippled boy’s awkward crawling amusing.

Maulgro’s younger brother Lucky is here as well. Lucky’s limbs bend in strange ways, but he’s blessed not to have any other hideous deformity and almost looks human. Mammy doesn’t like Lucky nearly as much as Maulgro and often neglects to even change the youngster’s clothes for days at a time. The hapless fool reeks of his own waste as a result. He often steals Maulgro’s favorite skulls to play keep-away, mocking the slower ogrekin to tears by dancing the skull-jig his brother will never dance himself.

LUCKY AND MAULGRO GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	25 each

CE male ogrekin fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 204)

hp 25 each

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Lucky gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves thanks to his double-jointed limbs, and has no disadvantageous deformities. Maulgro has an oversized maw and stunted legs (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*).

A6 RUKUS'S ROOM



This filthy bedroom contains little more than a lumpy mattress heaped with twigs, mud, and hopefully little else, although the stink of sewage





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

in the room indicates otherwise. Dozens of humanoid fetishes crafted of bits of leather, straw, corn husks, twigs, and bones hang from cords throughout the room.

This room belongs to Rukus—it's to here the cowardly ogrekin retreats if he survives his earlier encounter with the PCs. Cornered here, Rukus has little choice but to fight, and if he does, he fights bravely, gaining a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls.

TREASURE: Most of the fetishes hanging from the ceiling are worthless, but a successful DC 25 Perception check reveals that one of them incorporates several finger bones, one of which still wears a jade ring worth 300 gp.

A7 STORAGE

This small chamber is used now and then to store refuse and other remnants from the various antics the Grauls get up to. Among the refuse here are the tiny bones of every girl child Mammy has birthed—a grisly testament to the overabundance of menfolk in the Graul family. Mammy doesn't like female competition.

A8 MAMMY'S ROOM (CR 11)



The cloying stink of this room is nearly overwhelming. Buckets of filth are stacked against the walls, fat ravenous flies lazily circling their rims. The room itself is dominated by an immense bed, its ratty sheets stained beyond hope. A huge easel sits next to the bed with a palette of various shades of brown and red paint. The sources of these morbid pigments—several crushed organs and ragged stumps of flesh—sit in receptacles next to the easel. A set of brushes made with human hair jut from a broken skull by the easel, while a comb made from a human mandible sits on a small oak bedside table nearby, its teeth clotted with thick strands of greasy black hair. The bodies of three horribly deformed men dressed in ragged finery are propped up in huge open coffins against the far wall, their mouths sewn tightly shut with lengths of hair.

CREATURES: This hellish room belongs to Mammy Graul, an incredibly corpulent monster with stringy hair and bald patches. Her obesity makes it difficult for her to move far, and she's been more or less confined to this reeking chamber for several years. She wears a huge red curtain as a shroud, and her bed creaks out in anguish as she shifts her massive form to regard any intruders to her home.

Mammy is also attended by three of her dead sons—Benk, Kunkel, and Hadge. Black Arrow rangers

killed them all over the course of the last couple years, but Mammy “saved” them by casting *animate dead* on their remains, and now the three zombies serve her tirelessly. Benk has a useless third leg on his left hip and a pin head—three old arrows still protrude from his chest. Kunkel has an extra nose jutting from his right cheek and a hunched back, his head split by a ranger's axe. Hadge's deformities are hard to determine exactly. He was trampled to death by a charging warhorse and is now little more than a shambling fleshy bag of broken bones and mashed features that flops about when ordered to attack.

MAMMY GRAUL	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 94
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Female ogrekin necromancer 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 204)
CE Medium humanoid (giant, human)

Init -3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, -3 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 94 (8d6+64)

Fort +6, **Ref** -1, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee mwk quarterstaff +10 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 14, 6/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

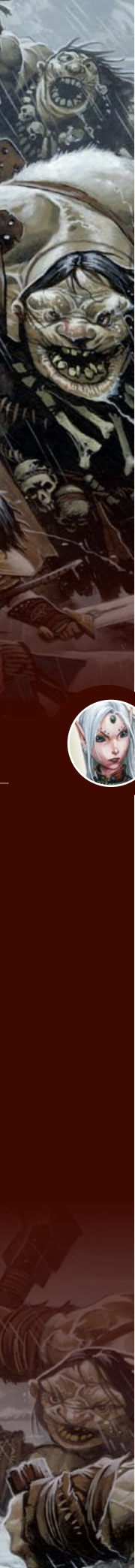
6/day—grave touch (4 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *contagion* (DC 17), *dimension door*



MAMMY GRAUL



3rd—*displacement, fly, ray of exhaustion* (DC 16), *slow* (DC 16), *vampiric touch*
 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *false life, ghoul touch* (DC 15), *mirror image, spectral hand*
 1st—*chill touch* (DC 14), *grease* (DC 14, 2), *mage armor, reduce person* (DC 14), *true strike*
 0 (at will)—*light, mage hand, message, open/close, touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as she hears trouble outside, Mammy Graul casts *mage armor* and *false life* on herself. If she realizes someone's about to enter her room, she casts *mirror image* and *fly* as well.

During Combat If the PCs confront Mammy Graul here, she's more enraged at her boys for allowing the PCs to get this far than she is at the PCs themselves, and her profanity-laced shrieks against her boys fill any surviving Grauls with such fear that none of them dare come to their mother's aid. Mammy Graul sends her three zombies to engage the PCs while she remains on her bed in the northwest corner of the room and casts spells. She starts with *spectral hand* and follows up with her offensive spells.

Morale If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, she casts *dimension door* and retreats to area **A16** to secure the aid of any surviving Grauls there. She leads them back to the farmhouse to attack the PCs, this time fighting to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 4, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness, Command Undead, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Natural Armor, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Fly +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +10, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Necril

SQ arcane bond (toad familiar named Blub-Blug), life sight (10 feet, 8 rounds/day), ogrekin deformities

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 44 charges), *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (28 charges), *wand of vampiric touch* (33 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork quarterstaff, spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus *animate dead, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*, and 2d4 additional spells of your choice)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Mammy Graul's thick layers of blubber increase her natural armor bonus by an additional 3 points, but her obesity also reduces her speed to 5 feet and imparts a -4 penalty to her Dexterity.

BENK, HADGE, AND KUNKEL	XP 200 each	CR 1/2	HP 12 each
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Ogrekin zombies (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288; use human zombies for statistics)

A9 BEDROOM (CR 3)



This room is filled with large, filthy beds. Human skulls with antlers fixed to them are mounted on the bedposts and headboards. Against the west wall sits a large cedar chest.

This is where most of the Graul boys sleep when they aren't bedding down in the barn.

TRAP: The chest in this room is one of the boys' favorite toys. Although not locked, the chest's lid sticks and must be wrenched open with a DC 20 Strength check. Opening the chest triggers no traps and reveals a sack of coins within. Unfortunately, the coins sit on a pressure trigger set to release a cleverly concealed war razor housed within the wall of the chest. As soon as the sack is lifted, this blade snaps out with tremendous force. The blade is also laced with poison. The boys enjoy daring each other to "beat the blade," but not quite as much as telling prisoners that they'll be let free if they can get the chest open and steal the coins.

HAND CHOPPER	XP 1,600 each	CR 5
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Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect war razor (+12 melee, 1d4+8/18-20 plus poison); poison (ogre spider venom—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save)

TREASURE: The sack of coins contains a mix of 121 cp, 110 sp, and 23 gp, along with 17 mostly skeletal severed fingers—trophies from the hand chopper trap collected and stored here by the ogres.

A10 ATTIC



Tables strewn with beakers, glass vials, old tin cans, rope, animal traps, bits of twisted metal, spikes, bones, and all manner of junk litter this area. In one corner sits some old furniture and other keepsakes.

This area is the workshop of Hucker Graul, the eldest of Mammy's boys and the mastermind behind the devious traps that lace this building. Hucker himself lives in a room in the basement (area **A12**).

TREASURE: Five flasks of acid are stored under one of the tables. With 1d10 minutes of scrounging, three full sets of masterwork thieves' tools can be scavenged from the gear here.

A11 SKIN-SHUCKING ROOM



This dark, recessed corner of the basement smells of rot and old blood. Piles of gore-spattered skin lie





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

heaped on the floor. A horrid rubbery face robbed of its supporting skull and muscle rests on top, its toothless mouth agape and empty eyes revealing only the layer of tan flayed skin resting beneath.

Much of the furniture in the farmhouse above is upholstered in human leather or decorated with human bones. This grim room is where Hucker Graul prepares skins and bones for just such purposes. The face on the pile of skin once belonged to one of the Black Arrow rangers—Hucker hasn't decided what to do with it yet.

A12 HUCKER'S LAIR (CR 8)



This low-ceilinged room features a floor of hard-packed earth stained in many places by blood and mold. A lumpy mattress lies heaped against the west wall, and what appear to be several half-finished chairs made of flesh and bone lie against the eastern wall.

CREATURES: Hucker Graul creeps around here in the dark below the farmhouse. As the eldest of Mammy's sons, Hucker is also the most responsible of the Grauls. His gift for trapmaking and knack for building furniture keeps the farmhouse defended and relatively comfortable. He has little patience for his brother-sons, though, and if he hears traps sprung above or the sounds of combat, he makes a note that he'll need to reset the traps later but doesn't investigate, assuming the other Grauls are simply having another of their petty disagreements or are tormenting a new prisoner.

Hucker shuffles with a pronounced limp from an old injury suffered when one of his own traps backfired on him, a wound he bears with misplaced pride. Hair grows lopsided from the right side of his head and face rather than atop his brow, and a vestigial twin capable of grunting and gasping protrudes from the back of his neck. Hucker's best friends are two overgrown donkey rats he named Chuckles and Drooler. They eagerly defend their master, chewing intruders to pieces.

HUCKER GRAUL

XP 3,200	CR 7	HP 94
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Male ogrekin barbarian 1/rogue 6

CE Medium humanoid (giant, human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural, -2 rage)

hp 94 (7 HD; 1d12+6d8+55)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +3, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 ogre hook +14 (1d10+11)

Special Attacks rage (8 rounds/day), sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat Hucker rages on the first round of combat and sends his rats to attack the PCs while he delays so he can move into a flanking position once the rats go.

Morale If brought below 25 hit points, Hucker attempts to retreat to area **A14**, hoping to lure the PCs into a fight with the tendriculos the Grauls keep there. He then fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill

Focus (Craft [trapmaking]), Toughness, Weapon Focus (ogre hook)

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+15 when jumping), Climb +15, Craft

(trapmaking) +11, Handle Animal +9, Perception +11, Stealth +11, Survival +7

Languages Common

SQ fast movement, ogrekin deformities, rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, combat trick, surprise attack), trapfinding +3

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear**

+1 *hide armor*, +1 *ogre hook*, *amulet of natural armor* +1,

collection of severed noses in wax-sealed tin, 235 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Hucker has a deformed vestigial twin growing from the back of his neck, granting him a +2 racial bonus on Will saves. His malformed jaw gives him a speech impediment and a -2 penalty on any skill check that relies on speech.

CHUCKLES AND DROOLER

XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 38 each
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Donkey rats (variant dire rat; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

N Medium animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 38 each (4d8+20)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d8+6)

TACTICS

During Combat Both donkey rats focus their attacks on the same target each round, preferring smaller foes over larger ones.

Morale A donkey rat flees if brought below 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (bite)

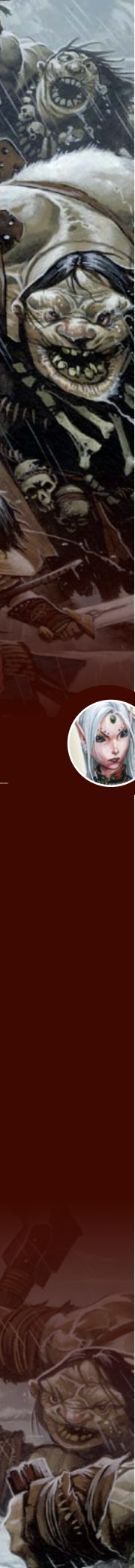
Skills Climb +16, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Swim +16

A13 STOREROOM



It's difficult to gauge the exact dimensions of this cluttered room, thickly packed with old crates, broken farm equipment, and furniture.





Most of the things the Grauls break eventually end up stacked in this room. Hucker periodically sifts through the junk for raw materials for his projects, but currently there's little of value in here.

A14 TENDRICULOS PIT (CR 6)



This damp, steamy room reeks of rotting vegetable matter. Pools of mud and stagnant water dot the mossy floor, and the walls are caked with thick swaths of puffy fungus and mold.

CREATURE: This mossy, vine-covered section of the basement is home to one of the least fortunate of the Grauls. Ironically, Muck Graul used to be one of the handsomest of Mammy's boys, but after he caught and tortured a nymph princess for days on end, she spat a foul curse upon him with her dying breath. Muck began a slow, painful transformation, his flesh showing strange greenish sores and moss growing from his orifices. His limbs grew spongy and insubstantial until he collapsed into a shuddering mass of plant matter. Mammy consigned him to the basement to keep him from "mussing up the house." Muck grew larger day after day, nurtured by his brothers even as they ridiculed him for his new hideous appearance. Muck Graul is now a massive carnivorous plant—a tendriculos. He barely remembers his life before, and although he recognizes the Grauls as allies, he attacks anyone else who enters this room.

MUCK GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
2,400	6	76

Tendriculos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 259)

A15 THE GRAUL FORTUNE



A large chest sits against the wall of this low-ceilinged chamber.

TREASURE: While the Grauls have used most of the loot taken from their victims over the years to pay tribute to the Kreegs, they've kept hold of a fair amount of treasure for themselves. This loot is kept here, in an unlocked chest. Within lies an agate-studded gold ring worth 50 gp, a necklace of emeralds and silver worth 350 gp, a pair of small leather gloves studded with pearls (actually *gloves of arrow snaring*), a large sack filled with assorted coins (210 gp, 452 sp, and 108 cp), and a ruby-inlaid red dragon-scale cloak clasp worth 600 gp. In addition, all of the equipment belonging to the three captured Black Arrows in area A17 can be found here, including an elven-made +1 *shocking longbow*. If Shalelu is with the party, her eyes widen upon seeing this weapon—it belongs to Jakardros, her stepfather. If she's already revealed her relationship

with the ranger, she'll reveal the bow's owner to the PCs at this time; otherwise she remains silent for now and hopes the weapon's presence here doesn't indicate that Jakardros is already dead.

A16 KENNEL (CR 7)



The barn houses several mounds of molding hay, grain stores, and even a large but crude still. Two catwalks rise up along the walls, leading to doors near the ceiling in the east wall. Lower, a pair of massive doors, boarded over with thick timbers, allows ground access to the room beyond. Several dingy kennels are built into the walls under the catwalks.

If any of Rukus's hounds survived the initial encounter with the PCs, they've been kenneled here. The boarded-up door to area A17 is clogged on the far side by thick webs. Wrenching it open is nearly impossible, requiring a DC 36 Strength check.

The still functions, but the moonshine it produces is nauseating—the Graul boys have never cleaned the thing, and the ingredients they use to brew the stuff are suspect at best. A character who drinks from the still must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid being nauseated for 1d6 rounds and must succeed at a second DC 16 Fortitude save to avoid catching blinding sickness (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557) from the contaminated booze.

Several keys hang on a bent nail by the main entrance; these keys are for the manacles in the cages in area A17.

CREATURES: Three of the younger Grauls (Jeppo, Hograth, and Sugar) spend most of their time here, drinking away their days and periodically inflicting unimaginable tortures on any captives kept in area A17.

Hograth is the eldest of the three, a hulking brute with a vestigial arm growing from his left elbow and a no-necked, dented head. Jeppo Graul is a big, handsome boy towering over his brothers. His eyes are huge and milky white, and his skin pale as the full moon. Sugar is the shortest of the Grauls, standing barely more than 5 feet tall, with crooked stumpy legs and constantly twitching skin.

These Graul boys take their charge of tending to the Black Arrow prisoners in area A17 very seriously and ignore any sounds of combat elsewhere on the property unless Mammy Graul flees here to recruit their aid in mounting an assault on the PCs.

HOGRATH, JEPPO, AND SUGAR GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	25 Each

CE male ogrekin fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 204)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hograth's Deformities (Ex) Hograth has a vestigial arm that grants him a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, but has a deformed head (and corresponding weak mind) that imparts a -2 penalty on Will saves.





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

Jeppo's Deformities (Ex) Jeppo's overlarge, milky eyes grant him a +2 bonus on Perception checks but are also sensitive to light (exposure to bright light dazzles him for as long as he remains in the area).

Sugar's Deformities (Ex) Sugar is particularly jumpy and prone to bodily twitches—a manifestation of a fast metabolism that grants him a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves and doubles his healing from rest, though his stunted legs reduce his speed to 20 feet.

A17 PRISON (CR 5)



The majority of this large, stuffy chamber is covered in filthy webs forming a funnel that dips down into the ground. A catwalk runs around the rim of the room near the ceiling, twenty feet above the ground. In northeast and southeast corners, the catwalk expands into a ten-foot-square platform that's fenced in by wooden beams, forming cages. The walls within each cage are hung with iron manacles. Most of the manacles—while bloody—are empty, but three in the southeast corner imprison emaciated men.

Anyone who falls into the thick webs below takes no falling damage but does immediately become entangled in the webs of the ogre spider that dwells below.

CREATURES: One of the Grauls' prides and joys, the immense ogre spider that dwells in this room is also one of their worst-behaved pets. The Grauls call the spider "Biggin'," and most of them have been bitten by it before. Still, the spider's too mindless to bother trying to get to anything locked in the two cages in the upstairs corners of the room. As long as the Grauls keep the thing fairly well fed, and make sure to throw a deer, pig, gnome, or other sizable creature into the web before they venture in to check the cages, Biggin' leaves those moving around on the catwalk alone.

Of course, the PCs aren't likely to know this. The immense spider scurries up out of its web to attack if no offering of food has been thrown into its web within 4 rounds of someone entering this room.

All three of the humans locked in the southeast cage are unconscious—they are the last three surviving Black Arrow rangers from Fort Rannick.

BIGGIN'

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	52

Ogre spider (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 254)

LAST OF THE BLACK ARROWS

The Order of Black Arrows has been a secretive and insular order for decades, since its founding by Zarnath Rannick. Traditionally a wandering order of hunters and rangers dedicated to patrolling the Storval Rise, the Black Arrows saw it as their duty to prevent incursions

of giants from the plateau into Varisia. When Magnimar offered the order a fort in the shadow of Hook Mountain, Zarnath accepted graciously but died in a battle against the Kreeg ogres before it was completed. His men named the keep after him, and ever since, Fort Rannick has been instrumental in keeping the ogres, trolls, and other giants of the region from spreading too far into the lowlands.

During the 45 years they've been stationed at the fort, the Black Arrows have inducted new members often—typically petty criminals given a choice between severe punishment or a lifetime sworn to manning the walls of the fort and patrolling the perilous heights of Hook Mountain. Conditions at Fort Rannick swiftly made honest men out of most of these criminals, forcing them to engage in a vicious regimen of training that stripped away all sense of their life prior to joining the order. The task of keeping the horrors of the Hook at bay is a grueling one and requires a level of discipline unattainable by many soldiers. They have a reputation for dealing with trouble among the ranks of the order in their own way—coldly and efficiently. Those who disobey commands are flogged nearly to death before being exiled to the south. Those who betray the order are mercilessly executed. Their justice is swift, their reputation fierce; it wasn't until 3 weeks ago that the Black Arrows finally met their match—and then only due to treachery from within.

Of the dozens who once composed the Order of the Black Arrow, only three survive today, and they are in bad shape. The only reason this group escaped the slaughter at the fort was because they were on a long-range patrol during the massacre. Their leader, a weathered old ranger whose worn face is as hard as leather, is named Jakardros. He and two of his men (Kaven and Vale) are all that remain; the others in the patrol have already been taken away for torture and death at the Grauls' hands.

Note that while the statistics provided for these three men on the following pages present them in full health with all of their gear, when the PCs rescue them, all three are unconscious at 0 hit points and wear only their underclothes—all of their gear lies heaped in area A15.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs rescue the three Black Arrows, award them XP as if they had defeated the three Black Arrows in combat (7,200 XP for all three).

JAKARDROS SOVARK

Jakardros lost his eye to a close call with an ogre hook a decade ago. For many years he was second-in-command of Fort Rannick under Commander Bayden. Jakardros fears the worst, for he knows the commander would sooner die than surrender to the Kreegs. After his patrol was delayed, they arrived back home to find the fort under Kreeg control. He lost a third of his unit in an attempt to retake the fort, and when they were forced to flee south into Kreegwood, the remainder were easy targets for the Grauls. Jakardros carries the loss of Fort Rannick heavily



and feels it was his fault that the ogres were able to take it. Had he been a bit more prompt returning from his patrol, he would have been back in time to help defend the place. But he wasn't, and now a 45-year tradition is dead.

When Jakardros was younger and before he joined the Black Arrows, he spent a few years as an adventurer. His group eventually ended up in the region around the Mierani Forest, where they helped a small village of elves defeat a group of murderous ettercaps led by a green dragon. Jakardros's adventuring companions all perished in the fight, giving their lives for the elven community of Crying Leaf. Jakardros was nursed back to health by an elven priestess of Desna there, and the two of them fell in love. Jakardros would have lived the rest of his life in Crying Leaf had not his lover, Seanthia, herself perished when the village was attacked by the resurrected dragon 3 years later. With Jakardros's aid, the

town defeated the dragon again, but Jakardros was too broken-hearted to remain. He gathered his belongings and, within minutes of the dragon's death, left Crying Leaf behind him, abandoning the sorrowful task of attending to Seanthia's funeral to his stepdaughter. His heart hardened, he eventually heard of the Black Arrows and applied for membership, hoping that service to the order would help him bury his broken heart.

To a certain extent, his plan worked. But now that Fort Rannick is lost, his old melancholy has returned—the loss of the fort wakening similar memories of Seanthia's death. He bitterly regrets abandoning Crying Leaf, and between wishing he'd died in either the second dragon attack or in the more recent ogre attack, his mood has grown increasingly dark—almost suicidal.

Unfortunately for Jakardros, his life is about to grow even more complex, for his stepdaughter is none other than Shalelu Andosana.



JAKARDROS SOVARK

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	72

Male middle-aged human ranger 8

CG Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 72 (8d10+24)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +10/+5 (1d8+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 *shocking composite longbow* +12/+7 (1d8+2/×3 plus 1d6 electricity)

Special Attacks favored enemy (dragons +2, giants +4)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin, cure light wounds*

1st—*animal messenger, speak with animals*

TACTICS

During Combat Jakardros's strength lies in his archery. He trusts (and depends) on his allies and his animal companion Kibb to hold off foes in melee while he provides ranged support. Yet when his allies are in desperate need, he won't hesitate to lay down his bow and join them in melee.

Morale Jakardros has little concern for his own safety, and is actively looking for a foe that can finish him off. He fights to the death as a result. Once he's reconciled with Shalelu, though, his outlook shifts dramatically; he devotes his life to protecting the elven ranger, doting on her as if she were his own daughter. He'll fight to the death to protect her, but otherwise breaks off combat and retreats if brought below 20 hit points so he can stay alive to defend Shalelu in the future.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Endurance, Manyshot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

Skills Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Linguistics +8, Perception +13, Stealth +13, Survival +13

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblinoid, Shoanti, Sylvan, Varisian

SQ favored terrain (forest +2, mountain +4), hunter's bond (animal—firepelt cougar named Kibb), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Gear studded leather, +1 *shocking composite longbow* with 20 arrows, masterwork longsword

VALE TEMROS

Vale is a dark-skinned man with piercing gray eyes. His towering height of 6–1/2 feet and his muscular build consigned him to the warrior's path at an early age. Despite his stature, Vale is a quiet and withdrawn man whose passion for life only awakens during the heat of battle.

Vale was born into the Order of the Black Arrow; both his parents were members, as were his two younger brothers. All of them are now dead, slain either years ago (in the case of his parents) or weeks ago (in the case of his brothers) by various Kreeg ogres. Vale's oath of vengeance against the Kreegs has become the only thing holding him together over the past several days of torture and mind-numbing horror at the Grauls' hands. Vale seizes any opportunity to strike back at the ogres with grim satisfaction.

Apart from his prowess in battle, Vale also had a passing fancy for sieges and architecture, and spent many of his off hours in the fort talking with the resident architect, a now-dead man named Drannis. Apart from battle, discussions about normally dry topics like engineering and fortifications are among the few activities that break Vale out of his taciturn shell, making him excited and animated.

fight recklessly. He approaches battle with a wide-eyed excitement, viewing each fight as a puzzle to be solved with mind and steel. He has a knack for seeking out subtle tactical advantages (higher ground, flanking, cover, and the like) that serve him well. Vale prefers to fight with a battleaxe and handaxe, and once an enemy is engaged, he makes Power Attacks unless he can't quite hit foes with his secondary attacks. He views his greatest flaw as his lack of talent in finesse fighting, and when he grows too overconfident, he often makes trip, disarm, and flanking attacks that provoke a dangerous number of attacks of opportunity.

Morale If Vale is left on his own, the concept of retreat would never occur to him. He becomes so enthralled with the battle that he loses track of his own well-being.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22



VALE TEMROS

VALE TEMROS	XP 1,600	CR 5	HP 53
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Male human fighter 4/ranger 2

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 53 (6d10+16)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

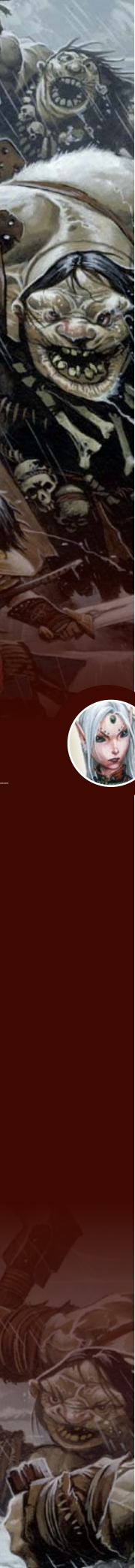
Melee +1 *battleaxe* +10/+5 (1d8+7/×3), +1 *handaxe* +10/+5 (1d6+5/×3)

Ranged composite longbow +7/+2 (1d8+4/×3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (giants +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Although Vale pays little attention to how much damage he takes during a fight, he certainly doesn't



Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Focus (handaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)

Skills Climb +9, Craft (stonemasonry) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Perception +10, Profession (siege engineer) +6, Survival +10

Languages Common, Osiriani

SQ armor training 1, track +1, wild empathy +1

Gear chainmail, +1 battleaxe, +1 handaxe, composite longbow with 20 arrows

KAVEN WINDSTRIKE

Kaven Windstrike, a handsome young man with dark hair and emerald eyes, has traditionally been able to get what he wants out of life via his good looks and smooth tongue. He was a wayward youth born to harried parents in Turtleback Ferry, and his antics finally got him in over his head when he assaulted and robbed an old goatherd who turned out to be a longtime family friend. Infuriated, his father was all but ready to press charges and have the boy taken south by the law to serve time in a jail in Ilsurian, but his mother managed to temper that reaction. Kaven was given a choice: be disowned and spend time in prison, or seek membership among the Black Arrows. His father always admired the order, and figured if they couldn't shape Kaven into an upstanding man, no one could. Kaven, balking at the thought of prison, chose the Black Arrows.

At first, the disciplined lifestyle did Kaven good, and he reformed into a respected and effective member of the order. However, when Lady Lucrecia opened *Paradise's* gambling halls to the public a year ago, Kaven and two other Black Arrows sneaked down to the barge one night to sample its offerings. It was enough to remind Kaven what he liked about the quick and exciting life of gambling, high risk, and crime. Kaven volunteered for the weekly southern patrol (a route most of the Black Arrows disliked due to its relatively boring route along the eastern shore of Claybottom Lake). Rather than spending his nights in Turtleback Ferry or Pendaka, though, he took to spending them at *Paradise*. Of course, Lucrecia recognized him as one of the Black Arrows and, knowing that having an ally on the inside might someday be a vital boon, she seduced him, charmed him, and made him her pet.

As the months wore on, Kaven fell deeper and deeper into Lucrecia's thrall, to an extent that she no longer needed to keep him charmed. He not only began to steal from his fellow rangers to fund his secret nights of debauchery on the *Paradise*, but in the end it was he who betrayed them at Lady Lucrecia's request. Kaven gave her all the information about patrols and defenses she needed to ensure a swift and decisive strike on Fort Rannick, and then Kaven volunteered for the patrol that would keep him out of the fort when the assault came. He even engineered several delays during that patrol

to ensure they would not return to the fort in time to provide aid in the fight. What Kaven hadn't counted on was being captured by the Grauls—Lucrecia had promised to flee the region with him once the attack was over, and he had planned on meeting her at a prearranged time in Turtleback Ferry. In fact, Lucrecia planned to murder him at that meeting, so even though he doesn't realize it, being captured by the Grauls actually saved his miserable life.

For the past several days, Kaven has feigned loyalty to the dwindling number of Black Arrows, caught between the horror of being found out by his comrades and the possibility of being the next one chosen for torture and dinner by the Grauls. When the PCs rescue the Black Arrows, Kaven pretends to be helpful during preparation for the assault on Fort Rannick but secretly keeps an eye out for a chance to finish his betrayal and escape to Turtleback Ferry so he can track down his lover, unaware of the fact that she's already written him off as ogrekin food.

Although neither of his fellow Black Arrows suspects Kaven of being the traitor, they have noticed the seven-pointed tattoo the man bears on the inside of his left wrist. Kaven kept the tattoo hidden as long as he could, but now that he's wearing only rags, the others have noticed—they've simply had other things on their mind (like staying alive while remaining prisoners of the Grauls) and haven't asked him about the tattoo yet. Kaven knows the tattoo links him to *Paradise*, and thus to his true nature as a craven and a turncoat, and attempts to hide the tattoo from the PCs as soon as he's conscious. While he's unconscious, it's merely a DC 12 Perception check for the PCs to notice the tattoo, but once he's awake, the Perception check to notice the tattoo at any one time is opposed by Kaven's Sleight of Hand check. If asked about the tattoo, Kaven claims he's had it for years (a DC 15 Craft [tattoo] or similar skill reveals the truth—the tattoo is only a few months old), and that it represents his love of the stars. He doesn't know about its true significance, but does know that it's a good idea to keep the PCs from finding out he'd been spending a lot of time at *Paradise*.

KAVEN WINDSTRIKE	XP	CR	HP
	2,400	6	49

Male human ranger 2/rogue 5

CN Medium humanoid

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

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 49 (7 HD; 2d10+5d8+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+1/18-20), mwk dagger +8 (1d4/19-20)





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

Ranged composite longbow +9 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (giants +2), sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat Kaven is most comfortable wielding small and fast weapons like daggers, short swords, or rapiers. In battle, he seeks out wounded foes, leaving stronger enemies for his "allies" to handle.

Morale Kaven is a coward at heart, but his worries—that abandoning his "allies" too soon would reveal the depths of his treachery—keep him in a fight longer than he might otherwise remain. If brought below 10 hit points, he feigns death with a Bluff check, hoping to seize a chance to escape once attentions are focused elsewhere. If this tactic fails, he gives in to his fear and makes a run for it. Kaven has already betrayed his allies once, and if he thinks betraying the PCs might aid in his own survival, he won't hesitate for a moment to do so again. If the opportunity presents itself, he's not above taking a hostage—although he'd prefer to take someone smaller and weaker than himself if possible, like a wizard or a gnome or a halfling.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +14, Survival +9, Swim +10

Languages Common, Giant, Varisian

SQ rogue talents (combat trick, finesse rogue), track +1, trapfinding +2, wild empathy +4

Gear +1 leather armor, +1 rapier, masterwork dagger, composite longbow with 20 arrows, ring of protection +1

DISCOVERING THE TRAITOR

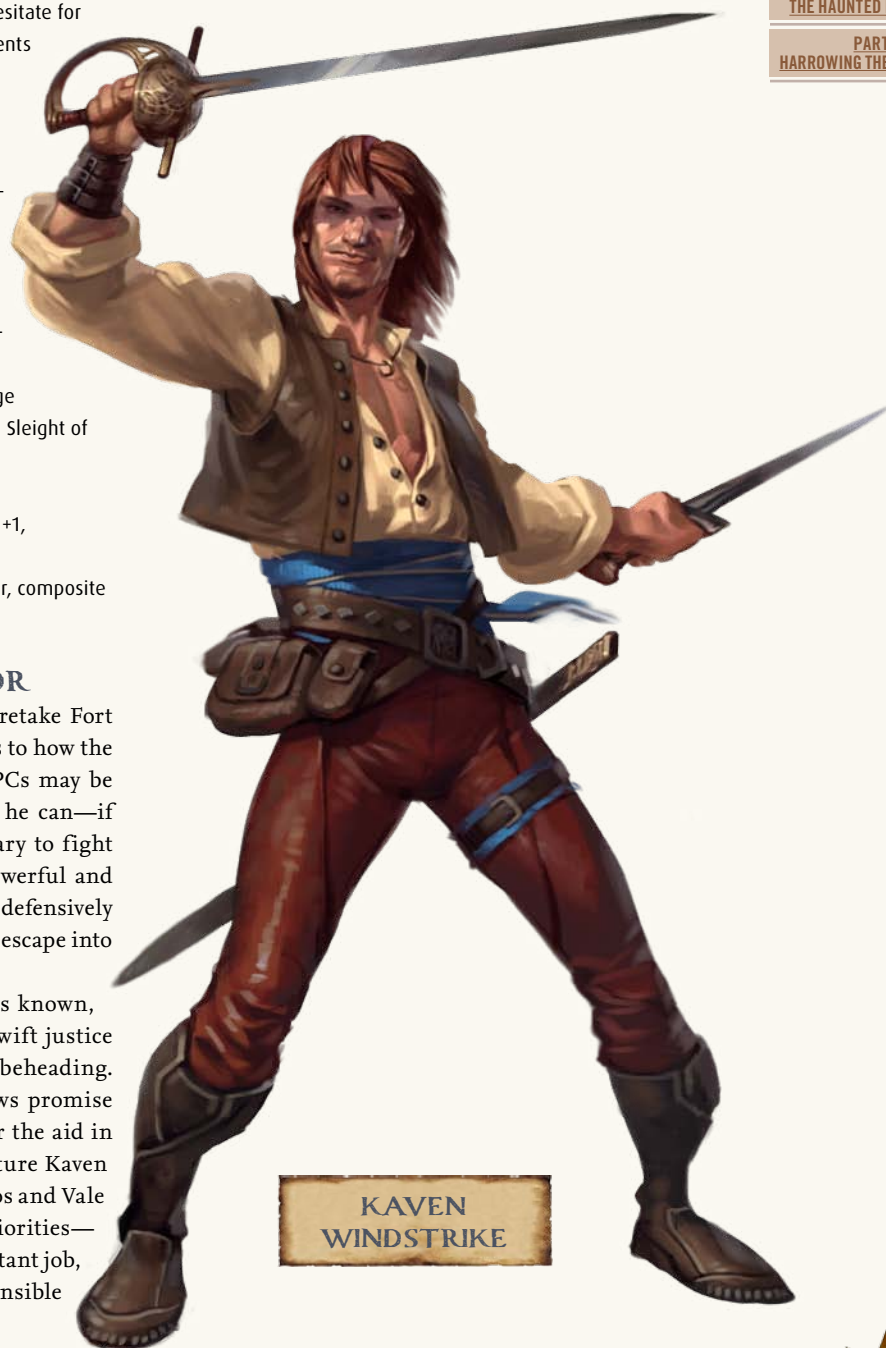
As the PCs work with the Black Arrows to retake Fort Rannick, they'll find more and more clues as to how the fort fell to the ogres. If Kaven thinks the PCs may be on to him, he tries to slip away as soon as he can—if confronted, he'll resort to combat if necessary to fight his way to safety. He knows the PCs are powerful and that alone, he's no match for them. He fights defensively as a result, constantly looking for a chance to escape into the wilds.

Once the truth about Kaven's treachery is known, Jakardros and Vale are eager to carry out swift justice in the Black Arrow fashion—execution via beheading. Assuming the PCs comply, the Black Arrows promise to award the PCs Kaven's gear in thanks for the aid in finding out the truth. If the PCs fail to capture Kaven upon learning the truth about him, Jakardros and Vale have a difficult time managing their priorities—defeating the ogres remains the most important job, but the fact that one of their own was responsible

for the situation is a fact that neither Black Arrow can stomach for long.

If Kaven manages to escape, stubborn pride and lingering adoration for Lucrecia prevent him from taking the smarter route of fleeing the area. If the PCs haven't yet encountered and defeated her, Kaven's report to the lamia convinces her to retreat with him to the Hook Mountain clanhold, and the PCs will encounter both of them at Barl's side. Kaven may even show up in a subsequent chapter if you wish, having fled all the way to Jorgenfist in search of a more powerful ally like Mokmurian himself!

STORY AWARD: If the PCs learn that Kaven is the traitor, award them 3,200 XP.





PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

FORT RANNICK HAS FALLEN. A NOTORIOUS CLAN OF OGRES KNOWN AS THE KREEGS LAUNCHED A DEVASTATING ASSAULT ON THE FORT THREE WEEKS AGO, AN ASSAULT THAT LEFT LITTLE DOUBT OF TREACHERY IN THE MIND OF THE FEW SURVIVORS. SOMEONE MUST HAVE GIVEN THE KREEGS DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORT'S DEFENSES—THE ASSAULT WAS TOO PERFECT IN ITS EXECUTION AND TIMING FOR ANY OTHER EXPLANATION TO MAKE SENSE. AS A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO RETAKE THE LOST FORT BEGINS, WILL TREACHERY STRIKE YET AGAIN?



If the PCs make clear their intentions to try to retake Fort Rannick, all three Black Arrows pledge their assistance to the effort (Kaven must make a Bluff check to put on a brave face at this point—if he fails, the PCs might be able to uncover his treachery early). If the PCs don't come up with the idea of retaking the fort on their own, Vale eventually suggests the audacious plan. If the PCs contact Magnimar with the news, they're asked, at the very least, to scout the region and gather intelligence about the ogres now occupying the fort. If they can retake the fort, Lord-Mayor Grobaras implies that there could be a healthy reward for the PCs. In any event, the news encourages Magnimar to organize a large force to travel to the region to provide aid, but unfortunately winter has other plans. Heavy winds, rains, and even snow all but prevent easy travel around central Varisia—as a result, it will be several weeks before reinforcements arrive, and by then, Barl and the ogres will be on the move.

FORT RANNICK

Fort Rannick is located at the northern end of a wide valley that runs along the southern edge of the mountains. This bleak landscape stretches on for miles along the border between the mountains and Kreegwood. This rugged, forlorn landscape fits well with the morose and grim attitude of its guardians, the Order of the Black Arrow.

Vale can provide the PCs with a detailed map of Fort Rannick (Handout 3-1) well in advance, so they should be able to plan their invasion of the fort as they wish. The Black Arrows provide answers to any questions about locations that the PCs have, including the presence of the shocker lizards in area **B37** (they're unaware of the undead in area **B15**, though). They don't know where the ogres are located, or exactly how many ogres are still stationed within the fort. They can all but guarantee that there are a lot. While the ogres have the advantage of numbers, the PCs have the advantage of surprise and superior knowledge of the area—the rangers are positive that the ogres wouldn't have discovered the secret caverns or tunnels, for example.

INFILTRATING THE FORT

The PCs are free to explore any means of gaining access to the fort they wish. A few options (and likely suggestions from the Black Arrows or Shalelu if the PCs ask) include the following:

DEATH FROM ABOVE: Any PCs capable of flight can descend on the fort proper from above. Alternatively, if they fly up to the eagle aerie (see area **B5**), they can approach the fort via the hidden ledge and tunnel from the north.

THE SECRET TUNNELS: These tunnels have not been used in decades. They are infested in some places by shocker lizards, but they might provide the perfect means of infiltrating the fort without alerting the ogres. The tunnels can be entered via the waterfall cave at area **B12**.

THE SLUICE GATE: On the south wall of the fort (area **B7**), a sluice gate opens to release refuse and sewage downhill into the creek. The PCs can attempt to circumvent the gates of Rannick by breaching this narrow access instead, but its proximity to the South Gate might be a problem.

STEALTH: Ogres can see in the dark, so night is likely to be a bigger problem than it is an advantage for the PCs. If the party consists of stealthy characters, they might be able to infiltrate the fort undetected, especially if they use spells like *invisibility* or *fog cloud* to mask their approach.

TRICKERY: The ogres recognize the Sihedron Rune as the mark of their new lord, Barl Breakbones. If the PCs march brazenly into the keep and act as if they belong there and openly display the rune, the ogres assume they are envoys sent by Barl to check up on them and quickly lead them into the keep interior to meet with “The Boss” (Jaagrath in area **B29**) or “The Lady” (Lucrecia in area **B36**). How the PCs handle their likely short-lived fame with the ogres is left to them, as neither Jaagrath nor Lucrecia is foolish enough to fall for this ruse for long.

ATTACK PLANS

The following tidbits of information are available to PCs based on skill checks or by asking the right questions





of the Black Arrows. In the event that an attack plan goes wrong, the PCs should not discount the option of retreating, regrouping, and attacking again. The ogres are disorganized and slow to rouse in an organized defense, and even if a fight turns noisy, nearby ogres are prone to assume it's just another argument between brothers.

THE NEW BARRACKS: Area B10 is known as the “new barracks,” even though they were built 20 years ago. Erected when the rangers grew concerned that Fort Rannick was going to outgrow its original barracks space, the wooden barracks (though spacious and less dank than the quarters in area B20 and B24) were abandoned after it was pointed out they were deathtraps: If fire were used during a siege, the barracks would go up like tinder and everyone inside would burn to death. The ogres are not so observant or knowledgeable, and a good number of their hulking brood make their quarters here—using fire on this building would likely kill several of them and distract the others long enough for an infiltration elsewhere. A character who spends an hour observing the fort from afar can make a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check to realize this.

LURE THE KREEGS OUT: While Jaagrath is not stupid, the same can't be said for most of the other ogres in the fort. If something provokes the ogres, they are likely to send out a sizeable force to attack (and could thus be easily lured into an ambush). Additionally, a distraction in one area of the fort might draw the brunt of the ogres to this area to investigate, leaving other key areas undefended.

SMOKE OUT! If the PCs ask about the creatures that infest the secret tunnels, the rangers can confirm that a large number of shocker lizards dwell down there. They keep to themselves in the tunnels, mostly, but during their mating season when they grow more aggressive, the rangers use bitterbark smoke to sicken and repulse them, keeping them from overrunning the castle. It takes a day and a DC 18 Knowledge (nature) check to harvest bitterbark from the surrounding region, but if the PCs do so and stage the smoke at the right places, they could possibly drive the shocker lizards up into the keep and into the ogres' midst, weakening them and allowing a greater chance to get at the leaders.

FORT RANNICK GENERAL FEATURES

The slovenly ogres have turned this battle-worn but well-run fort into a charnel house of slaughter and drunken debauchery. The Kreegs did their best to make their initial captives last, but recently, the last of their living playthings perished and the ogres have been spreading out, searching outlying areas for new victims to torment and eventually eat. Dozens of skulls and mangled corpses hang from trees near the fort, with gigantic rusty hooks spitting them like meat awaiting a butcher's block. The stench of sweat, urine, blood, and ogre-musk befouls the air for hundreds of yards around the fort. Hulking deformed brutes of the Kreeg clan roam the walls of Rannick and lurk within, fattening themselves on human



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

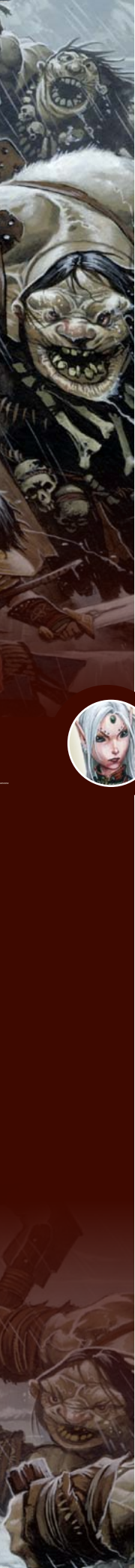
PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK



FORT RANNICK
(GROUND FLOOR)



FORT RANNICK
(UNDERNEATH)

FORT RANNICK

FORT RANNICK
(FIRST FLOOR)



FORT RANNICK
(SECOND FLOOR)





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

MAP TWO: FORT RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

flesh, slaking their thirst on the Black Arrows' stores of whisky and ale, and dancing their macabre skull-jigs.

In addition to the Kreeg leaders, there are a total of 32 ogres in Fort Rannick. Of these, 26 are typical ogres without class levels, but the remaining six are more powerful 5th-level fighters. While these six have different names and personalities, their stats are presented below for ease of reference.

OGRE FIGHTER	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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Ogre fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 104 (9 HD; 4d8+5d10+59)

Fort +13, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 ogre hook +16/+11 (2d8+13/19-20/x3)

Ranged javelin +8/+3 (1d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks weapon training (axes +1)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26

Feats Improved Critical (ogre hook), Improved Natural Armor, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (ogre hook), Weapon Specialization (ogre hook)

Skills Intimidate +11, Perception +5

Languages Giant

SQ armor training 1

Gear +1 hide armor, +1 ogre hook, 2 javelins

B1 APPROACH



Talons of lightning claw at the sky, casting pale light on the mountainside below. The lightning storm reveals a grim fortress of dark gray stone standing sentinel over the valley, huddled desperately at the base of two sheer cliff sides. Crumbling, fifteen-foot-high walls ring the citadel, the stone pitted and cratered from hurled boulders and ogre hooks. Like the face of a veteran with decades of winters under his belt, the fort's craters, cracks, and scars are testament to its battle-weary history. A stone keep, a stubborn shadow against the mountainside, rises from behind the worn walls, a single tower jutting up from its ramparts like an ugly broken tooth. Nearby, a rushing curtain of white water cascades down the mountainside into a large pool of water just outside the fort's walls.

It's a DC 15 Climb check to scamper over the fort's 15-foot-high wall; bits of rubble break free in the process, imparting a -5 penalty on Stealth checks made while climbing. The nameless creek that runs along the perimeter of the walls like a moat is 10 feet deep but relatively placid, requiring a DC 10 Swim check to cross.

B2 EAST GATE (CR 3)



A twenty-foot-tall gatehouse surrounds two battered double doors that look as if they're barely hanging on their hinges.

The ogres smashed this gate on their assault, but have since mounded up debris on the other side to fortify it. Until the rubble is cleared, these doors won't open.

CREATURE: Since the Kreegs assume they've completely blocked this gate, only one ogre is posted here, busily scrubbing at a freshly claimed skull to polish it to a fine sheen. He takes a -4 on his Perception checks as a result.

OGRE	XP 800	CR 3	HP 30
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(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

B3 STABLE



A large wooden building sits against the cliff side here. The structure's southern facade is open, revealing an empty stable.

A proud herd of fine horses bred and kept by the Black Arrows was once stabled here. The brave animals detected trouble in the fort the night of the massacre and several smashed free of their stalls to rush to their masters' aid, only to be massacred by the ogres.

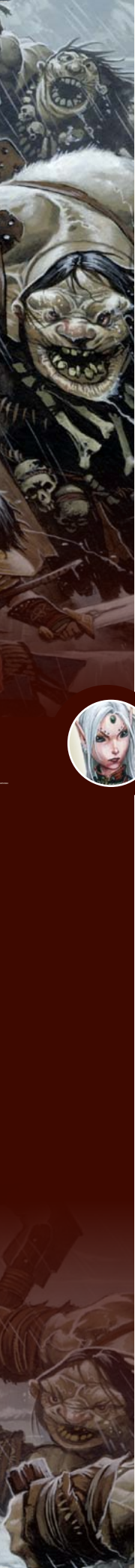
B4 OLD GUARD POST (CR 9)



This old guard post is falling apart. Most of the mortar has cracked or sloughed away, leaving stone to grind on stone. The structure itself is nearly thirty feet high.

The ogres don't realize how close to a catastrophic collapse this building is. The structure itself has a hardness of 8, but if any single attack manages to deal a mere 15 points of damage to it, the entire structure collapses. Any creatures inside take 10d6 points of damage when it collapses, while any creatures within 15 feet take 6d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex save for half). Collapsing the building brings all of the ogres from areas **B2**, **B6**, **B8**, and **B10** running, leaving those areas unguarded for 2d6 minutes.

CREATURES: The ogres, not known for their powers of observation, have stationed three of their number here.



Two are unexceptional ogre thugs, while the third is a sick, grunting thing with knees that bend in reverse like a goat and a host of angry red pustules covering his face and hands. This horror, Karly-Lop Kreeg, spends most of his time tormenting the other two ogres—all three of them take a –4 penalty on Perception checks as a result.

KARLY-LOP KREEG	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

OGRES (2)	XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 30 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

TREASURE: Karly-Lop wears a necklace of shriveled women’s hands about his neck, each adorned with shiny copper rings. Of the rings, 21 are worth 10 gp each, while the 22nd is actually a *ring of animal friendship* (though Karly-Lop has no idea it is magical).

B5 COLLAPSED TUNNEL

⚔ A huge pile of rubble slumps against the cliff face here, almost completely blocking a cave entrance.

The tunnel beyond winds up to a ledge that overlooks the fort, 120 feet up the cliff face above. This ledge rises a further 450 feet to a tor that once served as the nesting ground for a group of giant eagles allied with the Black Arrows. The eagles swooped down to aid the fort in defense against the ogres, but all were slain.

There’s enough room for a Tiny creature to squeeze through the gap into the tunnel; a Small creature can do the same by succeeding at a DC 30 Escape Artist check. Clearing away enough rubble to make room for a Medium creature takes 3d6 minutes of noisy work.

B6 COOK HOUSE (CR 8)

⚔ This open-air structure contains several large racks for storing smoked meat. The ogres don’t seem to have taken good care of the place, for everything is in a jumbled, broken ruin now. Several dead bodies lie haphazardly on the damaged smokers, slowly (and inefficiently) curing as the fires smolder. The smell is disturbingly flavorful.

Ogres love a good barbecue. The nine bodies slow-roasting here were all Black Arrows captured alive—they didn’t last long once they were threaded onto skewers and left here to cook, though.

CREATURE: Jaagrath put his best cook in charge of this project, a constantly wheezing and sweating, obese ogre named Jolly Kreeg. With tiny little hands and feet and a grotesquely oversized head and rear end, the ogre almost

looks like a bulbous gourd. Jolly is currently making a big batch of dough to bake up the entrails he’s just extracted from the smoking corpses in a huge “gutworm pie” for Pappy Jaagrath.

JOLLY KREEG	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

B7 DRAINAGE DITCH

⚔ A vile pool of sewage sits at the base of a nook in the wall. The pool drains through a two-foot-wide sluiceway in the wall to the creek beyond, but a body is lodged headfirst inside it.

The body is one of the rangers of Fort Rannick; his head was claimed for Jaagrath’s grotesque collection, and the rest of him was deposited carelessly here. The ogres never bothered to kick him through the sluice, and have taken to calling the bloating corpse “Spongy.” The sluiceway is slick with reeking gore, algae, and waste. A Small creature can clamber through it easily, but a Medium creature must succeed at a DC 20 Escape Artist check to do the same. Pushing aside the body wedged in the opening requires a successful DC 18 Strength check. A character who attempts to enter the fort via this route must make a DC 12 Fortitude save to avoid catching filth fever (Core Rulebook 557).

B8 SOUTH GATE (CR 9)

⚔ This twenty-foot-tall gatehouse is protected by an iron gate.

The ogres left this entrance relatively undamaged, since this is the one they use to come and go from the fort. The mechanism to lift the portcullis is located atop the defense platform directly west of the gate—it takes 5 rounds to raise the portcullis, but a DC 28 Strength check allows someone to lift it from the ground in 1 round.

CREATURES: Since this gate is still functional, more ogres are on guard here. Four stand on watch in all—three average ogres led by Minktuck Kreeg, an unfortunate ogre who lost most of his lower jaw in a fight many years ago. He’s taken to fixing freshly shucked minks (head, paws, and all) onto each jowl every few weeks, so the little dead animals dangle and bounce about freakishly as he slobbers out orders. Minktuck keeps his ogres focused and relatively alert; these ogres do not take distraction penalties on their Perception checks as a result.

MINKTUCK KREEG	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

OGRES (3)	XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 30 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B9 POND



What once might have been a crystal-clear mountain lake has become an abattoir. Partially butchered and mutilated bodies—some human, some horse, some giant eagle—lie sprawled along the shore. A waterfall plummets from the cliffs to the west into the pool, which keeps much of the water clean save for near the shores where the dead lie thick.

This lake is the primary source of drinking water for the fort. The pool itself is 30 feet deep at its center. A cursory examination of the waterfall from afar (and a DC 30 Perception check) allows a character to see a cave behind the cascade 10 feet above the water. It's only a DC 10 Climb check to get up to the cave. The ogres are unaware of this cave entrance, since they generally just drink right out of the stream when they're thirsty.

B10 NEW BARRACKS (CR 10)



This wooden building seems to have been abandoned for some time; it's in fairly poor repair and seems almost to lean against the cliff wall behind it for support. A short flight of wooden steps leads up to the single door. The building itself sits on raised timbers over the uneven, sloping ground below—excess lumber is stored haphazardly in the space below.

These barracks were still called “new” by the older members of the order, though they were built 20 years ago. Constructed at a time when no sensible architect resided among the Black Arrows, the building is a deathtrap should it ever catch on fire. With the heavy rains, setting fire to the barracks from outside is a difficult task. A character who sneaks into the barracks, or who clammers under the building where all of the extra lumber is stored, however, can light a fire relatively easily. If the building burns, the ogres within panic at the single tiny exit, fight over who's supposed to escape first, and eventually cook inside.

The secret door in the base of the cliff wall behind this building can be found with a DC 25 Perception check.

CREATURES: Many of the ogres balked at sleeping in the main keep, opting instead to shack up in this nice unused barrack (“No man-stink! Who wants to smell food all night long while sleeping?”). The bulk of the raiding party's ogres can be found here, sleeping, eating, or arguing—a dozen in all.

OGRES (12)	XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 30 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B11 ENTRANCE TO FORT RANNICK



A single set of double doors allows entrance to the central keep of Fort Rannick. The doors are made of oak and have been brutally battered and savaged. Crude repairs have been effected, but the doors still hang somewhat askew.

The ogres did their best to repair these doors, but until an actual skilled carpenter works on them, they'll remain in sad condition. They cannot be locked, but they don't open easily—it takes a successful DC 16 Strength check to pry them open. The entrance leads to area **B16**.

B12 WATERFALL CAVE



The floor of this cave is dotted with puddles. Patches of pale moss and fungus grow in sheets on the wall, while to the north, a five-foot-wide passageway angles up into darkness. A walkway of soggy planks leads from this opening southeast to a second opening curtained by cascades of falling water.

Apart from the wooden walkway, the floor in this cave is slippery, requiring a successful DC 12 Acrobatics check to navigate.

B13 SECRET ARMORY (CR 4)



The floor, walls, and ceiling of this cool, damp cave are coated from floor to ceiling in soft, dark gray fungus. Several crates are stacked in a nook to the northwest.

This cave was used by the Black Arrows to store weapons in the event of a prolonged siege. Unfortunately, the ogres' assault on the keep came with such sudden force that none of the Black Arrows were able to reach this armory in time to make use of the weapons kept in the crates. A passageway to the east leads to a secret door that opens out behind the new barracks. Just before this door, a side passage winds down under the central keep, connecting to area **B37**.

CREATURES: Two shocker lizards that wandered away from the larger colony in area **B37** have come up here to look for more food. The creatures squeal in surprise when they see the PCs, and hang around only long enough to generate a lethal shock before they attempt to flee to the east and back to area **B37**.



SHOCKER LIZARDS (2)	XP 600 each	CR 2	HP 19 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 248)

TREASURE: Apart from a fair supply of mundane weapons (including two dozen longswords, shortswords, daggers, and longbows), one of the crates contains an oilcloth wrapped around six +2 *shocking burst arrows*.

B14 RAVINE (CR 3)



A deep ravine stretches across this cavern, splitting the room in half. Geodes and veins of glittering minerals shimmer along the walls of the chasm, which drops away into the dark. A ten-foot-wide wooden bridge spans the gulf.

The gems glittering along the walls of the chasm, while pretty and shiny, are relatively worthless rock crystal. They do make the walls of the 50-foot-deep chasm very slick and difficult to climb, though—a successful DC 25 Climb check is required to scale these walls.

TRAP: The bridge itself is in poor condition. If more than one Medium creature attempts to cross it at the same time, the bridge collapses.

COLLAPSING BRIDGE	XP 800	CR 3
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Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect fall (50 ft., 5d6, Reflex DC 20 negates); multiple targets (10-ft. middle section of bridge)

TREASURE: The skeleton of an unlucky halfling thief lies at the bottom of the ravine. His pack contains a broken flask, some prospecting tools, and a pouch with two large garnets, each worth 100 gp. His trusty +1 *mithral short sword* is still sheathed at his side.

B15 CRYPT (CR 7)



The walls of this fairly dry cavern contain twenty seven-foot-wide, two-foot-high niches, in each of which rests the ancient body of a long-dead humanoid. The skeletons bear ceremonial armor and weapons. One of the bodies has been pulled from its niche and lies in a jumble on the ground.

This is where the Black Arrows once interred the remains of their brothers and sisters. The crypt filled far more quickly than the Black Arrows anticipated, and rather than spend more time expanding the crypt, they began sending off their fallen kin in elaborate pyres and then scattering the ashes. No Black Arrow has been buried in this crypt for nearly 30 years—which is unfortunate,

since the last body they interred here has not rested peacefully. The armor and weapons the bodies are buried with are ceremonial only—ever thrifty, the Black Arrows recycle their members' weapons after death.

CREATURE: The last Black Arrow buried here was a bitter, brutal man named Lorgus Fenker. His "accident" while on patrol was rightly suspected of being an arrangement made between the others in his group, but since the leaders of the order at the time felt that his passing was for the best, there was little investigation into the particulars of his fatal fall from a ledge up on the Hook.

Fenker was indeed murdered by his brethren, and his bitter, surly soul rose from the dead a week after he was buried here (several days after the order decided to quit using the crypt). He exists now as a spectre, bound to this crypt by the presence of his bones. He cannot stray farther than the confines of this chamber, but anyone who dares intrude shall feel his wrath.

LORGUS FENKER	XP 3,200	CR 7	HP 52
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Spectre (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 256)

B16 MAIN HALL



What might once have been a well-maintained entrance hall is now swathed in horror. Dried blood cakes the stone walls; bits and pieces of armor, weaponry, and flesh litter the floor; and flies cloud the air. Tapestries that once bore the insignia of the Black Arrows have been torn from the walls and now lie on the floor in shreds, coated with filth.

The keep is old, its masonry battered by the elements for hundreds of years. The walls are worn and chipped in many places and significantly weakened. Ceiling height in the main keep averages 12 feet—high enough that most of the Kreegs within don't need to stoop.

B17 TOWERS

Each of these round rooms contains a ladder that can be used to access a trap door in the ceiling above (area B28). The ogres are too ungainly to navigate these ladders.

B18 WORKROOM (CR 8)



The lathes, sawhorses, and other tools in this workroom lie in scattered, shattered ruin on the floor. The walls are smeared with gore, in some places forming messy graffiti.

The graffiti, written in Giant, includes such phrases as: "Me Big-a-Big, You-Small-a-Small, I Eat Your Head!" and "You Never Think Me Write All Over with You Bloody Neck, I'm Holding You by Mig-a-Mug and Use You as Paint Brush! Har!"





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

CREATURE: The happy painter of these verses is taking a break from his work to chew on the mangled, decapitated body of his latest “paintbrush.” One of the few literate Kreegs, Gragavan is an ogre who fancies himself something of a poet. Shortly after taking the keep, Gragavan found that one of the Black Arrows, a lanky mumbling simpleton named Petter, kept a diary of utterly inane “poetry” that proved even more puerile than his own. He promptly hooked off the ranger’s head and has been using the man’s putrefying corpse as a calligraphy brush ever since. He laughs and hurls Petter at the PCs when he notices them, then draws his weapon and goes to bloody work.

GRAGAVAN KREEG	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

B19 ARMORY (CR 5)



This large room is filled with several heavy wooden racks, all bristling with pikes, longswords, and quivers of barbed arrows. The wall where the door once was has been smashed in.

CREATURES: Two ogres are at play here, trying on human-sized suits of armor and helmets, guffawing at each other’s “tiny man clothes” and then shuffling about in them. The two have also started their own collection of heads mounted on the pikes here. Every couple of days, Jaagrath stops by to examine the new additions, claiming the best of the skulls these two have gathered, much to their chagrin. If they hear battle in the keep, they run out, still bedecked in tiny clinging suits of armor and with silly miniscule helms balanced on their giant heads, to join the fray. Both ogres take a –2 penalty on all attack rolls and Reflex saves and to their Armor Class while wearing the awkward clothing.

OGRES (2)	XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 30 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B20 GUEST QUARTERS

These rooms are where the Black Arrows quartered guests, trainees, and other visitors. The ogres have tossed all of these rooms but haven’t bothered to go out of their way to ruin the furniture—yet.

B21 LIBRARY



A long table with benches to either side sits in this room opposite a bookshelf filled with dozens of books, most of which have been torn from the shelves, mangled, and then messily stuffed back in place.

The rangers used this room as a place to keep important documents about their order, atlases, bestiaries, and other books that held their interest.

B22 STOREROOM



Crates, barrels, and a stack of firewood have been smashed apart and heaped in a tangled pile in the corner of this room. A flight of stairs leads down to the west.

Nothing of value remains in the ruined containers. The stairs double back on themselves after a landing before reaching area **B36** below.

B23 INFIRMARY (CR 8)



Once used to house the wounded and sick, this chamber is now a slice of blood-drenched nightmare. Hacked pieces of bodies litter the sick beds. The floor is slick with gore, strewn with mangled organs and heaps of entrails. A dead fat man sits at one of the operating tables, arranged as if he were merrily spooning chunks of his own disembodied organs out of a brown bowl. His guts spill out of a large slash in his belly.

CREATURE: One of Jaagrath’s sons, an unfortunately handsome ogre named Silas, resides here. Although Silas’s body resembles his hulking father, his face was strangely symmetrical and free of warts, bonespurs, and gristle—far too pretty for Jaagrath’s liking. Jaagrath shaved off the entire right side of Silas’ face, leaving a pulped ruin with skull showing through in places. Every week or so, Jaagrath “fixes” his son’s face with his hook, keeping him looking “right.” Silas was the first over the wall on the night of the massacre, taking his own ogre hook to the necks of the sleeping rangers in the barracks before the alarm was raised.

Silas has a bit of a cruel artistic streak in him—his medium is death. The fat man, once a cleric of Erastil who dwelt here, is his latest masterpiece. Silas changes the dead cleric’s pose two or three times a day, often inviting other ogres in so he can make them admire his work and shower him with praise.

SILAS KREEG	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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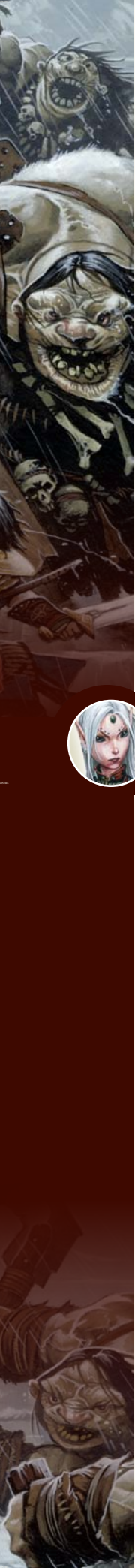
Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

B24 BARRACKS (CR 7)



These barracks were once comfortable and well-appointed, but they are now filled with nothing but splintered bunks, torn bedding, and smashed tables and chairs.






CREATURES: Four ogres squat and squabble here, constantly arguing over who gets to wear the hollowed-out horse head Grothrak made. Grothrak was murdered by his kinsfolk when he refused to share his “horsey-mask.” Five other ogres have since died in heated battles over the “funny” horse head. If the PCs find a way to exacerbate the argument (perhaps using stealth or magic to place the horse head into one ogre’s sack, or using magic to compel one to claim it for himself), the remaining ogres snatch up clubs and rusty hooks and murder each other with relish.

OGRES (4)	XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 30 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B25 MESS HALL

 This ramshackle area is a mess of smashed tables, broken crockery, and rubble. No living thing stirs here.


Once where the rangers took their meals, this chamber is now just another demolished room.

B26 KITCHEN

 This kitchen is in total shambles, as if a cyclone had moved through the room, smashed every bit of furniture, bent every bit of silverware, and partially collapsed the stone fireplace.

When they cook their food, the ogres prefer to use methods like those on display at the cook house (area B6). This room held their interest for a few hours, but now they’ve abandoned it.

B27 PANTRY


 All that remains in this room is a half-smashed crate and an untouched barrel.

The ogres raided this pantry early in their stay, moving most of the food into the kitchen to sort. The barrel to the north contains pickled fish—a delicacy whose smell the ogres simply can’t stomach.

B28 RAMPARTS

These stone platforms are shielded by crenellations spaced at even intervals, offering those behind them cover against archer fire and a perfect killing angle on foes charging the keep below.

B29 CHAPEL (CR 10)

 The walls within this enormous chamber are mounted with dozens of trophy antlers, some

taken from stags that must have stood as tall as dire bears. Most of the antlers are draped with bits of rotten flesh, strips of skin, or coils of viscera. To the west, a marble altar has been heaped with the mangled remains of at least a half-dozen dead men and women. A crude image of what might be a three-eyed jackal has been painted in blood on the wall above the altar’s alcove.

This chapel, once dedicated to Erastil, was a place of worship for the Black Arrows—the antlers on the wall being trophies offered up to the god of the hunt. The shrine has been thoroughly defiled in every way by the ogres, and converted into a makeshift altar to Lamashtu.

CREATURE: Jaagrath, the dread “pappy” of the Kreegs, doesn’t respond to the sounds of violence elsewhere, assuming his deranged brood can quell any threat. He quietly and calmly sits here, creating taxidermy terrors out of dead rangers, horses, bits of giant eagle, and the many antlers found here. His “masterpieces” hang about the room on bloody hooks—men with eagle heads sewn to their bodies, a horse with a woman’s face where its own face once drooped, dead men with huge sets of antlers jutting from their bodies, and men with stags’ heads and hooves.

Jaagrath Kreeg is “pappy” by blood but also by might. He stands easily 14 feet in height, and his arms are the size of the Mushfens’ largest boa constrictors. He squeezes the life out of foes face-to-face, casually gnawing off cheeks and lips so their screams resonate through his skull (he likes the funny buzzing their cries make in his head). He maintains dominance over the rest of his kin through a number of brutal means ranging from rape to mutilation. None dare disobey his commands.

JAAGRATH KREEG	XP 9,600	CR 10	HP 158
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Male ogre barbarian 7 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 7, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +5 natural, –2 rage, –1 size)

hp 158 (11 HD; 4d8+7d12+95)

Fort +16, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2;

DR 2/—

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 human bane ogre hook +20/+15 (2d8+16/19–20/×3)

Ranged javelin +9/+4 (1d8+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rage (21 rounds/day), rage powers (no escape, renewed vigor [1d8+9 hp], scent)

TACTICS

During Combat Jaagrath is perhaps a bit overconfident in his fighting prowess, but that certainly doesn’t mean he’s a pushover. He rages on the first round of combat, then focuses





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

his attacks on humans, saving other races for "clean up."
Morale If Jaagrath is brought below 25 hit points, he attempts to flee to area **B30** to recruit aid, drinking both of his potions as soon as he gets a chance. Once at area **B30**, Jaagrath fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 10, **Con** 24, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 29

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (ogre hook),

Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Climb +16, Intimidate +19, Perception +9

Languages Giant

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds (2)*; **Other Gear** +1 *hide armor*, +1 *human bane ogre hook*, *belt of giant strength +2*

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs defeat Jaagrath and use his head or ogre hook as a trophy to intimidate the ogres, they gain a +15 bonus on Intimidate checks. If an Intimidate check beats its required DC by 10, those ogres panic, and rather than taking a penalty on attack rolls, they flee Fort Rannick entirely. Once three groups of ogres flee, word spreads and the remaining ogres flee as well.

B30 **COMMANDER'S QUARTERS (CR 11)**



The walls of this room are decorated with finely crafted longswords, stuffed animal heads, and a map of the Hook Mountain environs. A large oak table surrounded by several chairs has been smashed to splinters, and an immense bed has similarly been ruined. An open cabinet that once contained several bottles of wine has been crushed as well, and broken bottles and the faint scent of wine lingers around its ruins.

CREATURES: This is where the commander of the Black Arrows, Lamatar, once resided. The current occupant is Jaagrath's mistress and seer, a sorcerer named Dorella. The ogress is attended in turn by one of her lovers, Harlock "Hookmaw" Kreeg. Hookmaw is Jaagrath's son and half-brother. Jaagrath tortured the boy day and night when he was young, and when he came of age, as a special rite of passage, papa pulled his teeth and replaced them with a specially forged set of metal teeth strapped to his face by a too-tight leather harness that squeezes his skull tortuously.

Dorella Kreeg herself is Jaagrath's daughter and wife. Dorella is the only spellcaster among the Kreegs, and is both feared and prized by her kin. The ogres believe she's got the "touch o' spirits," granting her magic powers. Dorella had her head bashed in by one of her dozens of brothers when she was young. She "ain't never

been right" since, but the nearly fatal head wound seems to have granted her a strange magical gift.

DORELLA KREEG	XP 9,600	CR 10	HP 114
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Female ogre sorcerer 8

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +6 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 114 (12 HD; 4d8+8d6+68)

Fort +12, **Ref** +3, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee dagger +10/+5 (1d6+4/19-20)

Ranged javelin +6/+1 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +10)

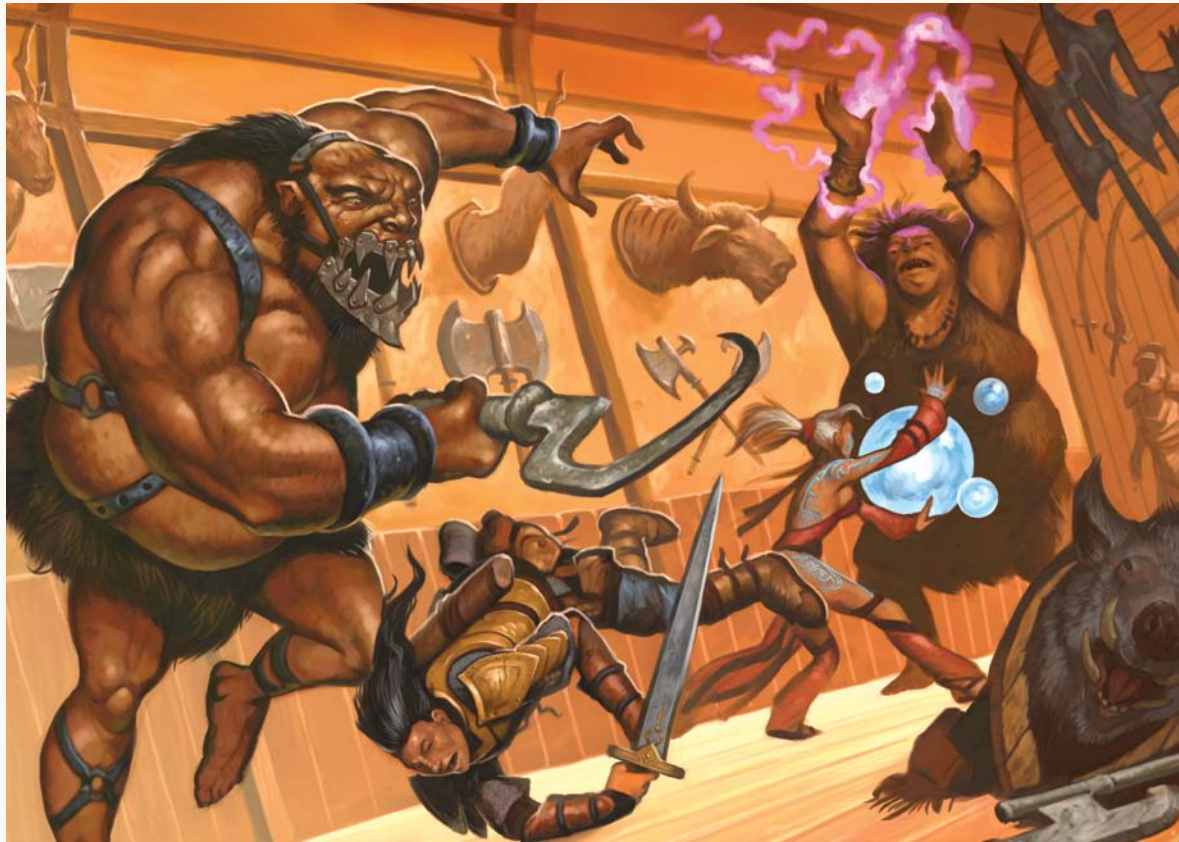
4th (3/day)—*confusion* (DC 18)

3rd (5/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 15)



JAAGRATH KREEG





2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 14), *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *mirror image*
 1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*
 0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *ghost sound* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

Bloodline arcane

TACTICS

Before Combat Dorella casts *mage armor* as soon as she suspects trouble's come to the fort.
During Combat While Hookmaw distracts the PCs, Dorella casts *shield* and *mirror image* before using her spells against them, letting Hookmaw block access to her in melee.
Morale Dorella attempts to escape if brought below 20 hit points, after casting *confusion* to delay pursuit.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23
Feats Alertness, Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness
Skills Climb +11, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics -1, Perception +7, Sense Motive +3
Languages Common, Giant
SQ arcane bond (Tickles the rat), bloodline arcana (+1 DC for metamagic spells that increase spell level), metamagic adept (2/day)
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *wand of acid arrow* (43 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of protection* +1

HARLOCK "HOOKMAW" KREEG

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

TREASURE: Although the Kreegs have done a number on the contents of this room, they aren't quite observant enough to have noticed that the bottom of the wine cabinet contained a hidden compartment. The compartment is partially smashed open from the top, so only a DC 15 Perception check is required to notice—the latch to open it is broken, so the thin slats of wood above it must be pried away to expose what's hidden within: a flat wooden coffer, a pair of soft green leather boots, and a tiny jewelry box.

The coffer contains dozens and dozens of parchment sheets, all containing beautifully-written love sonnets to someone named "Myriana," who (if the sonnets are to be believed) is so beautiful that the moon itself was "blinded when it spied her dancing on the tarn," and who is "the truest grace to know Whitewillow's soft embrace." A successful DC 30 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that "Whitewillow" is a section of the Shimmerglens said to be particularly close to one of the portals to the First World.

The boots are a pair of *boots of the mire*. The jewelry box contains a silver locket on a chain; inside the locket is a lock of silky golden hair. A successful DC 22 Knowledge (nature) check is enough to identify this as nymph hair.





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

All three of these items are surprises to any of the surviving Black Arrows—none of them knew Lamatar had a creative side, much less a poetic side, and only Kaven knew anything about him having a mistress (although he'll deny knowing it as long as he can). After a few minutes of thought, both Vale and Jakardros agree that Lamatar did in fact leave Fort Rannick for 2 to 3 days at a time, once each month, on what he called his "communion walks," lone treks made through the region, supposedly to put him closer to the realm he had been charged to guard. Jakardros notes that the commander was on just such a walk the night the attack on Fort Rannick came, which further indicates that treachery was involved. How would the ogres have known when exactly to strike the fort unless one of the Black Arrows told them when their commander was leaving the fort for a night?

Both Jakardros and Vale become hopeful upon learning of Lamatar's affair, and cling to the possibility that their beloved commander may yet live, and is only hiding out in Whitewillow—perhaps preparing to strike back against the ogres. If the PCs don't come up with the idea on their own, either of these men can eventually suggest a journey into the Shimmerglens to determine their leader's fate—the results of this expedition are detailed in Part Four.

B31 TRIBUNAL (CR 5)



Smashed chairs and a ruined table sit in this once-regal chamber. Along the curved east wall hang tattered remnants of several regional maps.

CREATURES: Two ogres have hung three Black Arrow ranger corpses from the rafters here, and are in the process of bleeding them into grimy buckets. When they detect intruders, they kick aside the buckets and, with cries of rage, leap forward to attack.

OGRES (2)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B32 MAP ROOM



Wood and glass cases lie in ruins; the hundreds of sheaves of parchment within are now spilled about, spattered in blood and torn to shreds.

TREASURE: This room contained dozens of maps of the Hook Mountain region and other Varisian locales. Now, only a few remain intact; one detailing several of the smugglers' tunnels beneath Riddleport (worth 50 gp to a smuggler), another detailing the first few poisonous levels of Viperwall (worth 400 gp to an interested party), and another of the hidden paths of Lurkwood's interior

(worth 700 gp to explorers set on investigating the mist-shrouded woods).

B33 STOREROOM

This room was used to store miscellaneous supplies and tools, but nothing of value remains now that the ogres are done with it.

B34 TOWER STAIRS

This flight of stairs ascends to area **B35** above.

B35 WATCHTOWER



A cracked bell hanging from a huge oaken frame takes up most of this chamber's upper half. The ringer has been removed and replaced with an upside-down dead ranger, a steel helm strapped tightly to his skull. A broken worktable and three chairs sit below, stained with the dead man's blood.

The ogres loved to play up here, smashing away at the bell with hammers and clubs day and night, until finally Jaagrath killed a few of them to ensure an end to the racket. If the PCs ring the bell, Jaagrath flies into a rage and leaves area **B29** to investigate, giving the PCs a good chance to catch the ogre commander off guard and perhaps corner him here where he can't easily escape.

B36 LUCRECIA'S RETREAT (CR 7)



This simple room might have once been a jailer's den, or perhaps even a torture chamber, but someone has gone through great pains to repurpose it. The air now smells of sweet exotic incense, and veils of multicolored silk drape from floor to ceiling throughout. Between the rustlings of the veils, glimpses of giant cushions are revealed. The floor is strewn with luxuriant red throw rugs and sheets.

CREATURE: After abandoning her pleasure barge *Paradise* on the evening of the assault on Fort Rannick, Lucrecia made her way north to the keep to seek temporary quarters here. Jaagrath and his ogres recognized the *Sihedron medallion* she wore and were quick to offer her lodging in the fort while she waited for the rains and coming flood to finish the work she had started in Turtleback Ferry.

Lucrecia prefers to spend her time in her humanoid form: an aristocratic-looking human woman with fire-red hair and alabaster skin. Her face is pure elegance—high cheekbones, demure but lust-stirring green eyes, and perfectly shaped eyebrows to accent them. Her true form is similar from the waist up, while from the waist down she has the body of an emerald green snake.



Lucrecia greets intruders with open arms and a smile—she has no confusion about the PCs being here to do her harm, but wants to offer them a chance to join her masters before she kills them—going so far as to say “Mokmurian would love to meet you!” If the PCs rebuff her, she shrugs coyly, assumes her true form, and attacks.

If Kaven is still with the PCs, Lucrecia can't resist twisting her dagger. When he reacts to her presence here with obvious guilt and shock, she sweetly compliments him on a job well done—“These oafish Kreegs would have had quite a lot of trouble taking Rannick without the lovely details you provided us. Well done, my love!” She hopes to see the PCs tear the man apart—party strife does Lucrecia's cold heart good.



LUCRECIA

LUCRECIA

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	141

Female lamia matriarch sorcerer 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 175)
CE Large monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 141 (14 HD; 12d10+2d6+68)

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Immune mind-affecting; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *keen dagger* +18/+13/+8 (1d4+8/17-20 +1 Wisdom drain on first strike in a round), *mwk dagger* +18/+13/+8 (1d4+7/17-20) or touch +14 (1d4 Wisdom drain+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks Wisdom drain

Lamia Matriarch Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +19)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 21), *ventriloquism* (DC 18)

3/day—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *dream*, *major image* (DC 20), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +15)

10/day—*laughing touch*

Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +15)

4th (4/day)—*dimension door*

3rd (7/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *haste*

2nd (8/day)—*enthrall* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *sanctuary* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

Bloodline Fey

TACTICS

Before Combat Lucrecia casts *mage armor* as soon as she becomes aware of trouble in the keep above (or in the shocker lizard caves in area **B37**).

During Combat Lucrecia assumes her true form on the first round of combat, preferring to fight with her daggers and activating *false life* on the first round of combat. If faced with overwhelming odds or brought below 80 hit points, she attempts to flee, recover, and then attack the PCs again in an area where she has more room to move around so she can utilize her spells more effectively.

Morale Lucrecia attempts to flee to the Hook Mountain clanhold if brought below 40 hit points—if she escapes, she'll be encountered at Barl Breakbones' side in area **D9**.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 21, **Con** 19, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 36 (can't be tripped)

Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Critical (dagger), Inscribe Magical Tattoo, Power Attack, Still Spell, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills **Acrobatics** +19, **Bluff** +24, **Craft** (tattoos) +13, **Knowledge** (arcana) +20, **Knowledge** (local) +10, **Linguistics** +6, **Sense**



Motive +16, Spellcraft +20, Swim +17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Giant, Sylvan, Thassilonian

SQ *bloodline arcana* (+2 DC for compulsion spells), change shape (fixed Medium humanoid form, *alter self*)

Combat Gear *wand of scorching ray* (22 charges); **Other Gear** +1 keen dagger, masterwork dagger, lesser caster's tattoo, Sihedron medallion, gold and pearl ring (worth 300 gp), silver necklace (worth 200 gp), scroll of Sihedron sacrifices (see Treasure, below)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Magic Tattoo Lucrecia used her Inscribe Magical Tattoo feat to give herself a *lesser caster's tattoo*. This magical tattoo looks like a Sihedron rune—tattooed on her left breast, it grants her the ability to enhance a 3rd-level or lower spell she casts with Still Spell and Silent Spell. She can do this once per day as a swift action. This feat and magical tattoo are detailed in full on page 16 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*.

TREASURE: Lucrecia carries a single scroll in a small scroll tube on which she has listed every citizen of Turtleback Ferry who received a Sihedron tattoo from her as “favorite customers of *Paradise*.” Kaven's name is on this list with a circle around it. The list itself bears only this intriguing header: “Those who have agreed to grant their greed to the master's need.”

B36a – B36h CELLS



These grimy, blood-spattered cells are empty save some fetid straw mats and vermin-ridden blankets.

These cells were until recently occupied by captives and a few sorry, bedraggled rangers of the Black Arrows. Now, however, they are empty, their former occupants dead and eaten. If the PCs are having a particularly bad time retaking the fort or are severely overmatched, you can place additional surviving Black Arrows in these cells, waiting for rescue. They'll need healing and gear, but once freed are eager to aid in retaking the fort. Some might be young trainees and rangers of the fort who, if armed, can aid the PCs.

B37 LIZARD WARRENS (CR 9)



These dank caves of dirt and stone wind and bend dizzyingly, narrowing to as small as three feet wide at points. In places, claws of exposed tree roots hang from the ceiling.

CREATURES: These winding tunnels are the nesting ground for a large pack of shocker lizards that have infested the place for decades. Introduced secretly to the caves years ago by a Black Arrow who had a soft spot for the cute little things, the lizards took to the environs with an unexpected tenacity. Since that ranger's death, the lizards

have established a fairly stable ecosystem here, feeding happily on the grubs, cockroaches, and centipedes that scuttle around the caves. The fact that their presence keeps these vermin from infesting the keep above was enough (barely) for the rest of the Black Arrows to leave the lizards be, but during shocker lizard mating season the rangers took care to light stacks of bitterbark wood chips (the scent of which the lizards find repugnant) to keep them from swarming up into the castle.

The shocker lizards are relatively nonaggressive as long as intruders move slowly through the warrens, don't approach too closely to any of the several egg mounds in the caves, and don't hurt the lizards. If any of these conditions are broken, the dozen adult lizards in the warrens quickly rise to defend their home.

SHOCKER LIZARDS (12)	XP	CR	HP
	600 each	2	19 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 248)

RANNICK RECLAIMED

With the ogres slaughtered to the last or driven back up the mountainside, the PCs liberate Fort Rannick. Yet the Order of the Black Arrows remains dead; Vale and Jakardros alone cannot carry the torch, as much as they might wish to—they'll need help.

Although Fort Rannick was built by funds from Magnimar over 4 decades ago, it's been under the jurisdiction of Turtleback Ferry for most of that time. When Mayor Maelin Shreed learns of the fate of the Black Arrows and that the PCs have defeated the ogres who claimed the keep, he is quite impressed and sends a new group of rangers to occupy the fort, placing them under Jakardros's command. If you wish, Magnimar could even place the PCs in charge of Fort Rannick, although the repercussions of the party's responsibility for the fort in such a case are beyond the scope of this adventure.

In any event, once the PCs reclaim the fort, where they go next is largely left up to them. If they simply decide to return to Magnimar to report on what happened to the fort in person, proceed with the events detailed in Part Three. Alternatively, you can use Jakardros and Vale to provide guidance to the PCs if they don't take matters into their own hands and follow up on the clues they discovered in the fort. Based on what the PCs have learned and accomplished so far, the primary options can be summarized as follows. Note that the exact order in which the PCs tackle the remaining three parts of this chapter are largely irrelevant—they're presented in this book in the most likely order for them to occur, but there's no reason why the PCs can't tackle Barl and the ogres at the top of Hook Mountain before they investigate Skull's Crossing or the Shimmerglens. If they do attempt these parts out of order, though, they may



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK



well find themselves unprepared for the difficulty of the encounters that take place!

LUCRECIA'S LIST OF NAMES: This mysterious list can help lead players into wondering exactly why they've encountered so many instances of villains carving or tattooing the Sihedron onto their victims, and can also compel them to return to Turtleback Ferry to follow up on the tattoos. The list can also reveal Kaven as a traitor, if this revelation has not yet occurred. While there's relatively little to learn from the tattooed inhabitants of Turtleback Ferry, if the PCs head back to the village, you can immediately proceed with Part Three.

SEARCHING FOR THE COMMANDER: Finally, even if the PCs don't find the clues in Lamatar's chambers in the fort, Jakardros and Vale are eager to find out what happened to their commander. They can tell the PCs he'd made one of his "communion walks" into the Shimmerglens the night of the raid—if the PCs take the bait and head into the swamps, continue with Part Four.

EXPLORING HOOK MOUNTAIN: Whether it's simply out of curiosity, or whether the PCs are seeking to strike at the Kreeg clanhold immediately, if they wish to explore Hook Mountain, you can have them encounter a few wandering monsters before eventually discovering the clan's cave near the peak—continue with Part Five.

REBUILDING RANNICK

The remainder of *Rise of the Runelords* is destined to take the PCs even deeper into the wilds of Varisia, and as such they won't be spending much time in the

Hook Mountain region after this adventure—yet if the PCs display an interest in helping to rebuild Fort Rannick and get it back on its feet, the Black Arrows could certainly use the help! Full details and rules for how to build and maintain a castle are beyond the scope of this adventure, but one thing that you could do fairly easily is simply assume that the Black Arrows themselves are handling that part of Fort Rannick's recovery. In this case, as certain needs arise, the Black Arrows can contact the PCs for aid, requesting them to undertake small side missions. Magnimar soon sends Fort Rannick a healthy fund to help rebuild, and this allows the Black Arrows to offer cash rewards of 2,500 gp per mission accomplished by the PCs. Several example missions that the Black Arrows might send the PCs on are mentioned briefly below.

FOULED WATERS: The cascade at area B9 is the fort's primary source of fresh water, so when the waters become polluted, the Black Arrows send the PCs up the mountainside to defeat the source—a green hag alchemist named Tevexia who's allied with the Kreegs.

TROLL TROUBLES: When the Kreegs are pushed back, the trolls of several nearby tribes grow more aggressive to fill the gap—find their chieftain and kill him!

WE NEED A MASON!: The PCs are asked to travel downriver to Illsurian to pick up and escort a talented dwarven stonemason named Vrankus to Rannick, but when they show up, Vrankus has problems of his own—a local gang of criminals has kidnapped his wife, and until she's rescued, he won't leave town.





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

WINTER RISES, BUT BEFORE HER COLD BREATH DESCENDS ON THE HOOK, THE SKIES DARKEN LIKE BLOOD-MUDDIED WATER, AND OMINOUS CLOUDS WRITHE ON THE HORIZON, BRINGING THE NEAR-CONSTANT RAIN TO NEW HEIGHTS OF TORRENTIAL DOWNPOURS. STORMS GO ON FOR DAYS WITHOUT THE SUN SO MUCH AS PEEKING FROM BEHIND HER CLOUDY VEIL, AND THE RIVERS AND LAKES BEGIN TO SWELL. PURE MISERY REIGNS AS COLD AND WET BECOME THE ORDER OF EVERY DAY, AND MUD SEEMS TO BEFOUL EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF THE REGION... WILL THIS RAIN NEVER END?

These unnatural rains are all part of the evil design Mokmurian's minions have for the region. Barl Breakbones' primary goal on Hook Mountain is to push the Kreeg ogres to forge weapons for the army gathering on the Storval Plateau, and then to personally lead the ogres up to join that army. The destruction of Fort Rannick was merely an idle diversion for the stone giant. Less of a diversion are the plans Lucrecia has for Turtleback Ferry. With the aid of a coven of annis hags allied with the Kreegs, Barl and Lucrecia hit upon the plan to mark as many of the residents of Turtleback Ferry for Karzoug's *runewell* as possible and then flood the village, killing hundreds and giving their runelord a sudden and unexpected boost of soul energy. To engineer the flood, Barl sent a group of ogres to Skull's Crossing, the immense dam that holds back the waters of the Storval Deep, with orders to begin weakening the structure. At the same time, the annis coven used their *control weather* ability to ensure constant rain in the region so that the waters near the Storval side of the dam are properly swollen. The combination, Barl hopes, should soon result in a catastrophic flood. Of course, two factors Barl wasn't counting on were the PCs and a tribe of trolls who dwell in Skull's Crossing and didn't take lightly to ogres coming to break down their home.

As the ogres work at the dam, hammering at it with their picks and hooks, the rhythmic sounds sing through the massive stones of the dam and into the waters of the Storval Deep, where one of the lake's most notorious denizens takes notice. This is the monster Black Magga, and on this day, she arrives at the dam to investigate the strange sounds. Finding several ogres hacking away at the stone near the dam's eastern side, she attacks, eager to taste these large, juicy-looking morsels. As she surges up onto the dam to do so, her bulk proves the final straw and the ogre-weakened section collapses. Black Magga, several ogres, and hundreds of tons of stone fall down along the face into the valley below, followed by a deluge of water. It doesn't take long for the flood to reach Turtleback Ferry.

THE TURTLEBACK FLOOD

The timing of this chapter's initial events are left to you to stage—the best time to have the flood hit Turtleback Ferry is just before the PCs return to town for the first time after they finish Part Two, but you can have the flood hit at any time—even before the PCs are done clearing out Fort Rannick, if you wish.

If the PCs don't conveniently head back to Turtleback Ferry, you can have one of the panicked villagers come to beg help of them—this man is a hunter named Bran Fered who risked the weather and possible ogre attack to ride up to Fort Rannick to, hopefully, find the PCs and get their help in evacuating the village before the floodwaters swallow it whole.

There should be little time to prepare. Press upon the PCs that if they do not depart immediately, they stand little chance of saving the citizens of Turtleback Ferry. Unless the PCs can all fly, they must hurry if they wish to use the road to reach Turtleback Ferry, for it would seem that the floodwaters of the rising Skull River will swamp it within hours. In fact, the flooding won't reach the point where the roads are washed away quite yet (the damage Black Magga did to the dam wasn't quite that extensive), but it should spur the PCs on nonetheless. As long as they make haste, they should reach Turtleback Ferry in time to help. When the PCs arrive on the scene, read them the following.



The village of Turtleback Ferry is drowning. The muddy, surging waters of the Skull River tear through the center of the community to fill Claybottom Lake with a terrible fury—many of the buildings that once sat comfortably on the river's banks are already flooding and in danger of collapsing from the rushing water. A group of children and a woman huddle aboard one of the old turtleshell ferryboats, the tiny flood-bashed vessel lodged up against the general store and threatening to capsize at any moment. Beyond, the town's church stands solid, its foundations already three feet deep in floodwaters.



Frantic movement is visible in the upstairs windows as townsfolk trapped inside rush about in a desperate attempt to save scriptures, comfort the sick, and pray for deliverance.

The extent of the floodwaters is shown on the map of Turtleback Ferry on page 394 via the dotted line. The floodwaters themselves are swift and treacherous—it's a DC 25 Swim check to navigate them.

SAVING THE SCHOOLCHILDREN (CR 5)

When the flash flood struck, **TILLIA HENKENSEN** (NG female human expert 2) was instructing a class of young boys and girls in the schoolhouse. As the floodwaters poured into the front door of the riverfront building, Tillia and her class evacuated and sought out one of the ferries for shelter, but were then pinned to the side of the general store by the rushing water before they could reach safety on the shore. They have languished here for the past several hours, watching the waters rise. And as the PCs arrive, a new threat makes itself clear.

CREATURE: The villagers are not the only ones uprooted by the flood. A 16-foot-long nightbelly boa, one of the more dangerous predators to ply the river, was dislodged by the waters several miles upstream and has been carried by the current all the way to the village. As the PCs attempt to mount a rescue, the waters carry the snake up against the side of the ferry. The constrictor rises from the water with a loud hiss and attacks, attempting to constrict and swallow young Tabitha Kramm, pigtails, freckles, and all. Tillia Henkenson screams along with the rest of the children, powerless to stop the ravenous reptile. This task falls to the PCs.

NIGHTBELLY BOA

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	59

Variant constrictor snake (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 255*)

N Large animal

Init +3; **Senses** scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 59 (7d8+28)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d8+10 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+10)

TACTICS

During Combat The boa immediately switches its attention to the PCs as soon as they attack, ignoring the schoolchildren.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, the boa flees.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 26 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+7 when jumping), Climb +15, Perception +14, Stealth +9, Swim +19

STORY AWARD: If the PCs rescue the children and the schoolmarm, award them 4,800 XP. In addition, Tillia Henkenson gushes all over them and sends fresh-baked pies to Rannick every week thereafter in gratitude.

BLACK MAGGA RISES (CR 15)

Not long after the PCs rescue the schoolchildren, something more harrowing develops. Black Magga herself, damaged from her fall and furious at the sudden awkward turn of events, comes into town.

Give the PCs a DC 20 Perception check. Those who succeed notice what at first appears to be a huge black tree being swept downriver on a collision course with the church. Moments before the "tree" hits, it submerges. A few moments later, the floodwaters surge violently, and with a thunderous roar, legendary Black Magga rises from the flood.

CREATURE: The sight of the immense monster—its primeval head rising as high as the church steeple—sends the villagers of Turtleback Ferry into a blind panic. No one even notices that the rains have stopped, and that perhaps the flood waters are already beginning to slow. For now, the spectacle of the lake monster seemingly preparing to destroy the church is all that matters.

If left to her own devices, that is precisely what Black Magga does. She takes less than 5 minutes to reduce the chapel to rubble, and when she's done, nothing remains—the two dozen villagers who had sought shelter within are either crushed to death or eaten by the ravenous menace.

It's unlikely that the PCs are much of a match for Black Magga, even in her current damaged state. Yet fortunately for them, they need not slay her to drive her off. If the PCs engage the monster, she fights back for only a few rounds before fleeing into Claybottom Lake (see her tactics below).

BLACK MAGGA

XP	CR	HP
51,200	15	232

hp 232 (currently 152; see page 406)

TACTICS

During Combat On the first round of combat, Black Magga uses her breath of madness ability on the PCs. On the second round, she attacks the PCs, moving up to one of them to bite. On the third round, she repeats this tactic, adding her tentacles if she wasn't able to make a full-attack action on the second round.

Morale Black Magga retreats on the fourth round of combat, dropping any foes she's currently grappling, and deciding that tangling with these unknown enemies is not currently in





her best interest. Alternatively, she retreats if the PCs bring her below 80 hit points before the fourth round. Abandoning Turtleback Ferry and the PCs (for now), she surges downriver (possibly destroying a few minor buildings as she crashes by) and vanishes into the depths of Claybottom Lake.

DEVELOPMENT: After Black Magga is forced to retreat, a cheer rises from the villagers who have gathered on the shores to watch. It takes only a moment longer for them to notice that the floodwaters seem to be receding.

It should be obvious that the villagers' initial fear that Skull's Crossing has burst has not been borne out, yet the sudden rush of water seems to indicate something dire has happened. Several locals certainly recognize Black Magga from local legend and can explain that the monster was said to dwell in the Storval Deep, not in Skull River.

All signs point north—something must have happened at Skull's Crossing. When, in the past, storms threatened to spill over the dam, the structure's floodgates opened automatically to release water pressure in a controlled flow. None in Turtleback Ferry know exactly how the mechanism for opening the floodgates works, as Skull's Crossing has long been the den of a tribe of trolls known as the Skulltakers. Yet as long as anyone can remember, the floodgates have functioned without fault. If the floodgates are malfunctioning, someone needs to brave the wrath of the Skulltaker trolls to determine what, if anything, can be done to repair the ancient Thassilonian structure before a cataclysmic flood washes the entire region away.

Turtleback Ferry is far from a rich village, but if the PCs can prevent a more deadly flood by opening the floodgates, Mayor Shreed promises the PCs a reward of 1,000 gp. He can be talked up to as high as 2,000 gp with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check.

STORY AWARD: For driving off Black Magga, award the PCs 19,200 XP—unless they managed to kill the monster in the few rounds of combat for which it remained, in which case they instead earn the full XP award for defeating a CR 15 foe.

SKULL'S CROSSING

Skull's Crossing was one of the final—and perhaps most ambitious—projects Runelord Karzoug's giants erected. Much of the stone used to craft the towering monuments scattered throughout Varisia was taken from an immense quarry in the heart of the Storval Plateau. It took centuries, but near the end, the quarry finally played out and all that remained was a vast canyon. Karzoug had little use for or interest in the ugly scar, and so ordered the construction of Skull's Crossing at its southern end to transform the quarry into the region's largest lake.

As with many of his projects that didn't feature his own countenance, the dam incorporated one of Karzoug's favorite design elements—the human skull. The colossal dam is decorated with thousands of them. Five immense skulls adorn the center of the dam's face—ancient machinery built into the dam allowed the jaws of these skulls to be opened or closed to act as floodgates should the waters of the Storval Rise ever flow too high.



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

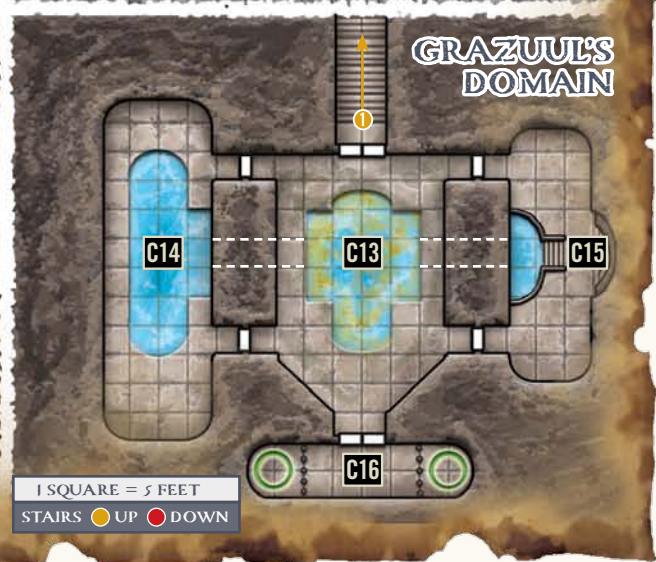
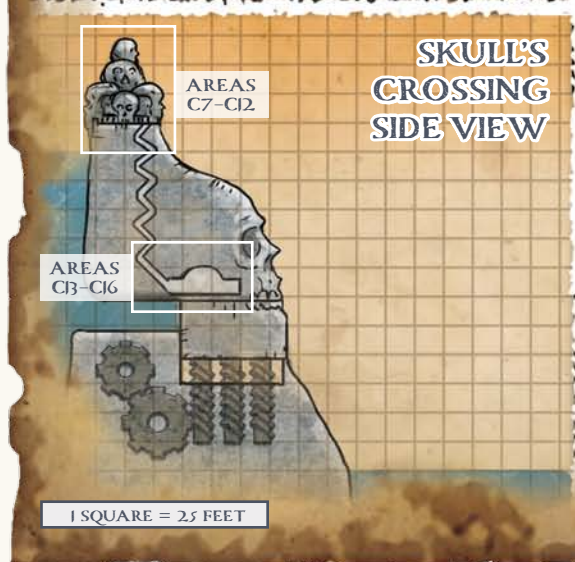
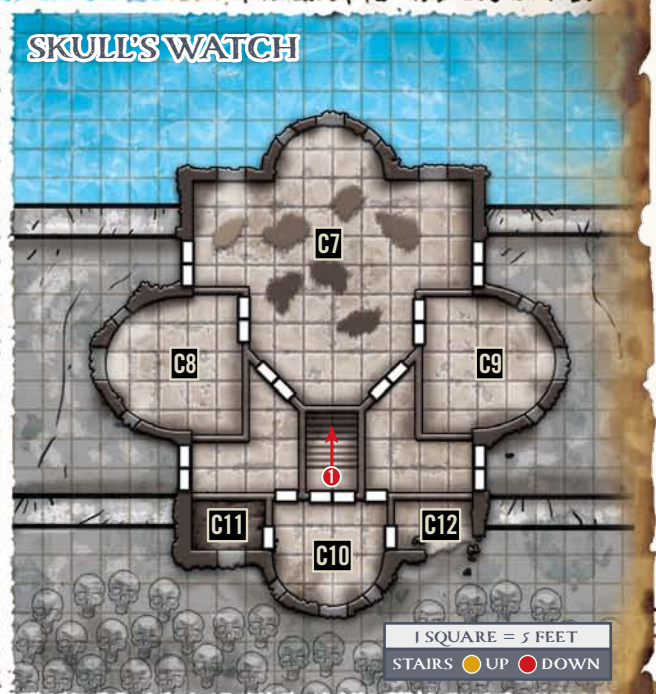
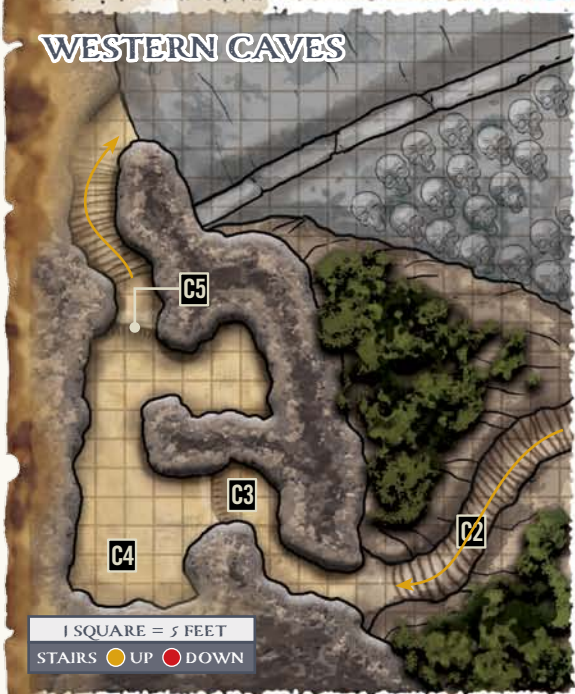
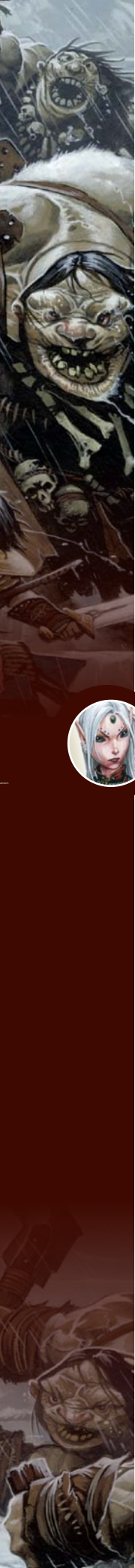
PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

MAP THREE: SKULL'S CROSSING

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

This machinery still functions, but the source of power, a pair of pit fiends imprisoned in life-draining magic circles, has faltered. If the PCs hope to save Turtleback Ferry, they must not only defeat the ogres bent on destroying the dam and the trolls who have claimed it as their lair—they must also find a way to power the floodgates one more time, perhaps with the aid of a dying pit fiend who has powered Skull's Crossing for 10,000 years.

C1 WESTERN SHORE



Spanning the great breadth of the gorge is Skull's Crossing. The massive wall of stone holds back the waters of the Storval Deep—but only just. Thousands of skulls have been carved into the dam's face, with five larger ones decorating the middle length. The easternmost of these immense skulls is all but hidden by a steady flow of cascading water pouring through what appears to be a recent break in the dam. For now, the ancient dam seems to be holding its own against the Storval Deep, but unless these rains end soon, the recent flood looks to be but a minor precursor to a fantastic disaster.

The eastern slopes of the gorge are sheer and slick with rain, but to the west, a narrow stone stairway, its edge decorated with hundreds of poles bearing the skulls of as many different creatures, winds up to a cave mouth near the western rim of the dam itself.

The break in the dam was where Black Magga attacked the ogres and inadvertently finished the job that they started. Since then, the ogres have relocated to the other side of the dam at area C6 to continue their work. The rain starts again not long after the PCs arrive here, but before it does, a DC 20 Perception check is enough for them to notice several lumbering shapes moving about on the dam's upper reach.

C2 THE STAIRWAY OF SKULLS



A seven-foot-wide winding stairway of stone climbs the cliff face here, reaching a height of nearly two hundred feet before ending at a cave mouth above. Hundreds of stakes line the edges of the stairway, many of them decorated with skulls—some animal, some humanoid, all marked with a strange skull-shaped rune on the brow.

Anyone who speaks Giant recognizes the runes on the skulls as warnings—these are territory markers for the Skulttaker trolls who dwell in the region. The stairs themselves are sized for Large creatures, and as such require a DC 7 Climb check for Medium or smaller folk to ascend. A fall results in a plummet of 1d10x10 feet before the victim reaches one of the many narrow ledges that line the cliff face.

C3 ETTIN'S DOORSTEP



The short passageway ends in a small alcove, but to the west, a fifteen-foot-high ledge provides access to a larger cave beyond.

It's a DC 15 Climb check to scramble up the ledge, since the surface is so crumbly. Worse, the crumbling pebbles impart a -4 penalty on Stealth checks—Gorger and Chaw is likely to hear anyone trying to get into his home via this route.

C4 GORGER AND CHAW'S LAIR (CR 6)



The air in this forty-foot-high cave is thankfully freshened by a brisk breeze whistling through from the north, yet the dozens of mostly eaten firepelts, deer, and even a few humans heaped along the walls fill the room with a stomach-turning stink.

CREATURE: This cave has long been the lair of an ettin named Gorger and Chaw. When the Skulttaker trolls moved into the region, they formed an alliance with the ettin—as long as he left the dam itself to the trolls and served as a guard, protecting this approach to its heights from intruders, he would be allowed to remain in the region. Gorger and Chaw saw no problem with this arrangement, since there's nothing to interest him up on the dam anyway. Ever since that time, he's been regarded as an honorary member of the Skulttaker tribe.

When the ogres arrived, Gorger and Chaw was initially inclined to kill them, but when the ogres offered the ettin a hefty bribe of several delicious smoked humans, Gorger and Chaw decided to look the other way. Now, the ettin is wracked with guilt about failing the Skulttaker tribe, and is afraid to head up to the dam to help the tribe fight the ogres for fear that the trolls will smell his treachery. He sees the PCs' arrival as an opportunity to prove his loyalty to the tribe, and attacks them on sight with the battle cry "YOU NO BRIBE ME! I SMASH YOU FOR SKULTTAKERS!"

GORGER AND CHAW

XP 2,400	CR 6	HP 65
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Ettin (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 130)

TREASURE: The ettin keeps his treasure in a disorganized heap near his collection of sleeping furs in the northeastern cave. The loot consists of 693 gp; 1,240 sp; a velvet pouch containing six 100 gp pearls; a *phylactery of positive channeling*; and an ivory scroll tube inset with strips of jade (itself worth 300 gp) that contains a *scroll of cone of cold*, a *scroll of hold monster*, and a *scroll of telekinesis*.



C5 UPPER PASSAGE

As with the one in area C3, the 15-foot-high ledge at the southern end requires a DC 15 Climb check to scale. The stairs above lead up to the top of the dam itself.

C6 OGRE DEMOLITION CREW (CR 8)



The upper walk of Skull's Crossing is relatively clear of rubble, though a three-inch layer of water has pooled across much of its surface. Here and there, sections of the dam's surface have crumbled away, although this damage appears relatively old. A tower of skull-shaped domes sits at the center of the dam's walk. To the north surge the choppy waters of the Storval Deep, while to the south, the slope of the dam's face drops away nearly three hundred feet to a muddy lake below.

Anyone who walks along the dam's edge must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check, as the rock along the edges is particularly slippery with algae and water. A fall off the north side results in a short drop into the stormy water—fallers take no damage, but it's a DC 15 Swim check to stay afloat. A fall off the south side is a rough tumble down the steeply sloped surface into the water far below for 20d6 points of damage.

CREATURES: Sent by Barl Breakbones himself, the team of ogre demolitionists charged with weakening Skull's Crossing originally numbered two dozen. After several fights with the Skultaker trolls and the disaster to the east when Black Magga attacked, however, this group is down to only four miserable, tired, and sick ogres led by a fighter named Malugus. Jaagrath's third son, Malugus initially viewed the task of destroying Skull's Crossing as a tremendous honor, but now he's close to giving up on the entire thing and fleeing east into the Wyvern Mountains. Malugus and his ogres have just recently reached this side of the dam after fighting their way through area C7, and while he takes a nice long break sitting on a block of stone in the rain, he has put his four remaining hench-ogres to work hammering their hooks against the stone.

All five ogres are exhausted from the work and conditions. They move at half speed and take a -6 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. Each ogre's CR has been reduced by 1 to account for this exhaustion.

MALUGUS

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	104

Male exhausted ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

EXHAUSTED OGRES (4)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

C7 – C12 SKULL'S WATCH

The two northern sets of double doors that lead into this structure have been repeatedly smashed by the ogres, only to be hastily repaired by the Skultaker trolls who dwell inside. The doors no longer open, and must be pushed down with a DC 24 Strength check to access area C7. The two sets of southern doors are intact and barred from the inside—they can be forced open with a DC 28 Strength check. The "windows" into the structure are in fact the eye sockets of the skull-shaped facade; they're 5 feet in diameter and 10 feet off the ground. It's a DC 10 Climb check to scramble up to one of them, but entry through any of these windows is perhaps the simplest way into Skull's Watch.

C7 BATTLEFIELD (CR 9)



Piles of rubble dominate this large room, along with bits of flesh, broken weapons, splashes of blood, and a few dead ogres that have been torn limb from limb. Wind and rain howl through circular openings to the north that look out over the Storval Deep, and puddles of water have collected on the floor. Thick sheets of ropy green fungus grow along the walls here, winding in through the windows and through numerous cracks in the domed ceiling thirty feet above; behind the fungal vines, the walls are decorated with hundreds of skull-shaped carvings.

CREATURES: Although the trolls recovered quickly from the ogre attacks, several of them perished when the ogres hit on the idea of throwing trolls over the edge of the dam once they were beaten unconscious in battle, drowning the trolls before they regenerated back to consciousness. All that remain now are four trolls. They've taken the time to hide among the fungus hanging down along the walls, and while they're expecting ogres, they react to the PCs' intrusion with the same anger and shrieking wrath.

TROLLS (4)

XP	CR	HP
1,600 each	5	63 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 268)

C8 – C9 SKULTAKER DENS



The walls of this room are thick with green ropy fungus that hangs down over several windows, almost like curtains. Several large nests made of the stuff cover the floor.

These rooms were used by the Skultakers as lairs, but now that so few remain, they've been all but abandoned.

TREASURE: A DC 25 Perception check in area C9 reveals a loose stone near the base of the southern wall that hides a small cache of treasure one of the trolls hid from his





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

kin. The cache consists of a cracked emerald worth 400 gp, a bent gold comb that looks like a behir (with its legs comprising the comb's teeth) with tiny pearls for eyes worth 850 gp, and a pair of lacy pink *gloves of swimming and climbing* that were too small and effeminate for the troll to wear (but since they never grow dirty and always smell faintly of lilacs, the troll was strangely intrigued by them).

C10 OBSERVATION DECK

Three round windows in this room look out over the southern view from Skull's Crossing. Additional skull carvings decorate the walls, ceiling, and even the floor. In the middle of the north wall stand massive stone double doors, their smooth surfaces smeared with graffiti written in dried blood.

Though unlocked, the double doors are exceptionally heavy, and their hinges are old and gritty. A DC 22 Strength check is required to open them. The graffiti, written by the trolls in Giant, reads: "BELOW DWELLS WET PAPA GRAZUUL! ALL HAIL WET PAPA GRAZUUL!"

Beyond the doors, a flight of stone steps leads down into the darkness, descending 150 feet to area C13.

C11 STOREROOM

This room is nearly clogged with thick coils of the strange, vinelike fungal growths, transforming the chamber into a miniature jungle that reeks of damp mold and rot.

Although all of this fungus is harmless, the thickness with which the stuff grows in here may intrigue the PCs. The reason behind the thick growths is mundane—the trolls simply never used this room and never cleared the stuff out.

C12 COLLAPSED ROOM

The southeastern section of this ancient room has collapsed away, leaving a treacherous-looking gap in the wall overlooking the lake far below.

Although the collapse looks dangerous, the room itself remains stable. This unofficial entrance to Skull's Watch could be used by flying PCs to avoid encounters with the trolls to the north.

C13 OBSERVATION POOL (CR 10)

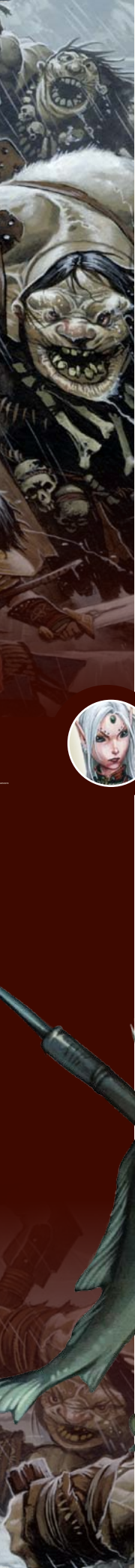
This cold, damp room features a large pool in the floor, the edges of which are caked with pale yellow slime and fungus. The surface of the pool bears a similar film. Additional carvings of skulls decorate the walls here. To the south, an impressive mound of skulls—mostly from humanoids—lies heaped against the wall, where they partially block a large stone double door.

The film of algae on top of the pool of water is foul-smelling but harmless. The pool itself is 15 feet deep. Submerged tunnels connect the bottom of this pool to the ones in areas C14 and C15.

The mound of hundreds of skulls to the south must be cleared away (a task that would take one person 10 minutes to accomplish) before the door to area C16 can be opened.



MALUGUS KREEG



CREATURE: This room is the lair of the Skultaker chieftain, an aquatic troll named Grazuul. Hardly more intelligent than an animal, Grazuul barely knows that the “dry ones” who live above think of him as their lord—all he knows is that he appreciates their regular offerings of skulls. Grazuul particularly enjoys the look and feel of a freshly polished skull, which is why he’s lived most of his life deep inside of Skull’s Crossing. One of his favorite pastimes, in fact, is to tear away the flesh of his own face so he can feel the cool water rushing against the raw bone of his own skull before the flesh regenerates back.

GRAZUUL	XP	CR	HP
	9,600	10	147

Scrag troll fighter 5

CE Large humanoid (aquatic, giant)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 147 (11 HD; 6d8+5d10+93); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +17, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +7 *vicious adamantine trident* +18/+13 (2d6+14/19-20), bite +10 (1d8+3) or 2 claws +15 (1d6+7), bite +15 (1d8+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+10), weapon training (spears +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Grazuul attempts to remain in the water throughout the entire combat so he can continue enjoying the effects of his regeneration, but once he’s brought below 50 hit points, he drops his trident and switches over to using his claws to let his regeneration catch up with all the damage he’d been doing to himself by using the *vicious* weapon. If facing characters wearing heavy armor, he clambers out of his pool to try to bull rush them into the water if the opportunity presents itself.

Morale Grazuul fights to the death, confident that his regeneration will save him if he’s defeated. If, on the other hand, the PCs use fire or acid against him, he abandons Skull’s Crossing once brought below 20 hit points and flees into area **C14** and thence north into the Storval Deep.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 18, **Con** 26, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (trident), Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialization (trident)


Skills Perception +6, Swim +23

Languages Giant

SQ amphibious, armor training 1


Gear +1 *vicious adamantine trident*

C14 FLOOD CHAMBER ACCESS

 This narrow chamber is empty save for a long, ten-foot-wide pool.

The pool in this room is 15 feet deep. A tunnel connects it to area **C13**. In the bottom of the pool (just under the “**C14**” tag) is a secret door that a DC 20 Perception check can locate. It leads through a series of several doors that can only be opened one at a time, and eventually to the underwater channel leading to the Storval Deep. It was through this route that Grazuul came to these chambers years ago.

C15 FLOODGATE CONTROLS (CR 9)

 A pool of water sits against the wall to the west of this chamber, with a set of steps leading down into it along the pool’s east side. Opposite the steps is an alcove in which rises a fantastically detailed scale model of Skull’s Crossing. The five skulls along its face seem to be actual human skulls, the bone polished to a gleaming sheen.



GRAZUUL



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK



This scale model of Skull's Crossing once served to help regulate the water level on the Storval Deep side of the dam. When the water rose to within 30 feet of the top of the dam, this device would automatically open the five floodgates to prevent a catastrophic failure. The floodgates themselves were powered by the lifeforce of the two pit fiends once trapped in area **C16**, but now that one of them is dead and the other is nearly so, not enough power remains to operate this fail-safe. An examination of the skulls reveals that the jaws of each can be pulled down like levers to reveal tubes leading into the wall. The scale model itself radiates strong transmutation magic (CL 20th). A DC 35 Spellcraft check is enough to deduce that the device is used to control the dam's floodgates, and that the source of its power seems to have waned to the point where the device no longer functions. Once the infernal engines that power the dam in area **C16** are recharged, the levers in the skulls automatically trigger here and open the dam's floodgates.

CREATURE: A remnant of the ancient past lingers on in this room—a lumbering, scorpionlike construct called a skull ripper. After a frightening initial encounter with this creature, Grazuul never returned to this chamber—and beyond that one visit, no creature has tested the skull ripper's power in thousands of years. Yet the construct has been patient—charged with guarding the floodgate controls, the monster has no intention of abandoning its post. It lurches to life as soon as anyone enters the room, and it fights to the death.

SKULL RIPPER

XP 6,400	CR 9	HP 112
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(see page 415)

TACTICS

During Combat The skull ripper still obsesses over its ancient commands to guard the flood controls, and anyone who seems to be making a move toward those controls earns the full attention of the scorpionlike construct. It won't fall for simple attempts to lure it from the room—if the PCs attempt to engage it at range from area **C13**, the monster merely closes the doors or steps out of view, ready to start the fight again once the intruders return.

Morale The skull ripper fights until it is destroyed.

TREASURE: A DC 25 Perception check is enough to notice a long-forgotten pale lavender ellipsoid *ioun stone* (capable of absorbing up to six more spell levels) wedged in a crack in the model of Skull's Crossing.

C16 INFERNAL ENGINES



This narrow chamber ends at two curved alcoves, one to the east and one to the west. Each alcove is enclosed by a dull iron portcullis. A winch next to each provides a way to raise or lower the gates. Beyond each portcullis a circle of runes glows with a faint orange light on the floor. Inside the circle to the west is a pile of crimson ash, while inside the circle to the east is curled what appears to be a long-dead devil, its flesh taut and dry on its bones.

These two magic circles are powerful prisons that once held the energy source for Skull's Crossing's floodgates—a pair of pit fiends Karzoug captured. Whenever the floodgates needed to be opened, the magic circles drained life energy (inflicting a negative level on the pit fiend trapped inside) and used it to power the immense gears hidden deep within the dam that governed the use of the floodgates. Over the last 10,000 years, powerful storms caused the Storval Deep to rise to flood levels only 150 times. After most of those occurrences, the trapped pit fiends recovered from the energy drain, but as the years wore on, they began failing their saving throws to shrug off the negative levels and grew progressively weaker. When the last powerful storm wracked the region and triggered the dam's flood controls 54 years ago, one of the two pit fiends died, and its body crumbled to crimson ash. Today, there is simply not enough life force remaining to power the floodgates, and unless this changes soon, the Storval Deep will rise above the dam's level and flood the lands to the south.

The “dead” pit fiend in the eastern magic circle is not actually dead—it can be recognized as a pit fiend with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check. Once a powerful devil named Avaxial, the pit fiend currently suffers from 19 negative levels. His body now feeble, the devil has spent the last several decades in a comatose fugue, barely able to move. When the PCs enter this area, Avaxial rouses from his torpor to feebly reach for one of them, gasping in a raw whisper for freedom. As long as the pit fiend remains trapped in the magic circle, he can use neither his supernatural abilities nor his spell-like abilities, but he can still communicate. He begs the PCs to dispel the magic of the circle that traps him, or barring that, to destroy the runes so he may escape. The circle itself functions at caster level 20th, and if a *dispel magic* spell successfully affects it, the circle is only rendered nonmagical for 1d4 rounds—long enough for the pit fiend to use *greater teleport* to flee to a distant sanctuary to begin the long process of recovering from his 10,000-year ordeal. Destroying the circle is even more difficult, for the runes themselves are set in a ring of magical stone that must be physically destroyed by weapons or magic to render the circle inert (hardness 16, hp 120, Break DC 34).

Wise PCs instead take advantage of the pit fiend's plight to learn how to open the floodgates. Avaxial tries to bargain with the PCs, hoping to extract promises of release in exchange for what he knows, but he lacks the will and energy to press the deal too far. Over the millennia, the devil has gone somewhat insane. He knows nothing of Thassilon (as he was conjured into this trap from Hell itself) and remembers his captor only as a vague hatred and a name—Karzoug. Avaxial does know he's been used for the past age as an engine to power the floodgates—he can sense the shape of the

dam around him and can feel the gates open. He knows that the gates open automatically when the waters rise high enough, and can even feel those waters rising. He's felt the circle tugging at the last shards of his spirit for days, if not weeks now, but knows that since his onetime companion succumbed over 5 decades ago, there's simply not enough life force left to activate the floodgates.

Skull's Crossing requires only one level of energy in the west circle to trigger the floodgates. Both magic circles function as cages only for those they were designed to constrain—anyone else can step into and out of either circle with ease. As soon as a living creature is within each circle, the dam awakens with a rumble. The creature in each circle gains a negative level as the floodgates in the dam grind open, releasing waters from the Storval Deep in a constrained torrent into the valley below. A successful DC 20 Fortitude save is required to remove one of these negative levels. Back at Turtleback Ferry, the waters rise again, but this time the rise is more controlled and less destructive—the peril of the storms is averted.

Any creature (including summoned creatures) with only 1 Hit Die that gains a negative level from one of these circles is immediately reduced to ashes—if a creature steps into the west circle before Avaxial is released from his own circle, this is the demon's fate. The moral repercussions of destroying a pit fiend in this manner are left for philosophers to argue, but the act certainly fulfills the greater good of saving Turtleback Ferry.

No stat block is given for Avaxial, as the devil is in no condition to fight or defend himself.

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs fail to open the floodgates and relieve the pressure building on Skull's Crossing, the dam is fated to burst 1d4 days after the PCs reach this room and fail to reactivate the floodgates. This may be enough time to evacuate Turtleback Ferry, but the village itself is doomed to destruction when a surge of water washes down from the mountains. Note that once the floodgates open, they'll close automatically once the water level is no longer a danger—this does mean that at some point in the future, further volunteers to fuel the floodgates during new storms will eventually be needed, but such a requirement is unlikely to be necessary during the length of this campaign.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs open the floodgates, award them 9,600 XP. If they manage to accomplish this without killing a creature at all, award them an additional 4,800 XP. The PCs gain no additional experience for slaying the mostly dead pit fiend (since that award is technically a part of the 9,600 XP they can earn for opening the floodgate), but if they do release him, he may or may not return at some later point, healed and revitalized, seeking to murder the PCs in order to ensure those who saw him in such a humiliated state do not spread tales!





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

ALTHOUGH SIMPLY MARCHING UP HOOK MOUNTAIN TO CONFRONT THE SOURCE OF THE OGRE PROBLEM IS ALWAYS AN OPTION, WISE (OR SIMPLY CURIOUS) PARTIES FIRST LOOK INTO THE MYSTERY OF WHAT HAPPENED TO FORT RANNICK'S COMMANDER. IF THEY DON'T HIT UPON THIS ON THEIR OWN, YOU CAN HAVE JAKARDROS OR VALE INFORM THE PCs THAT THEIR COMMANDER WENT OUT ON ONE OF HIS "COMMUNION WALKS" THE NIGHT OF THE OGRE ATTACK, AND THAT HE HASN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE. INVESTIGATING THE SHIMMERGLENs—THE LOCATION OF HIS WALKS—WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO START TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO COMMANDER BAYDEN.

The Shimmerglens have long been shrouded in mystery, for these trackless swamps are said to lie quite close to the First World, particularly where they border Sanos Forest. Capricious and sometimes malicious creatures are known to harass travelers in this domain. The Wicker Walk between Sanos Forest and the hamlet of Bitter Hollow was built expressly to offer travelers a way to cross through the swamps without annoying the area's denizens, but stories still abound of nixies laying traps to confuse and baffle travelers, of nymphs seducing men and women and leaving them besotted and lost in the marsh, and of sprites stealing supplies and replacing them with rotten fish, poison mushrooms, or disturbing little dolls made of clay and string.

But now, a darker horror holds court in the heart of the riverside swampland. A nymph named Myriana, the lover of Fort Rannick's former commander, Lamatar Bayden, has been brutally murdered. Her ghost now haunts the swamps, and this entire domain has become polluted with her restless hate. And the focus of this misplaced hate is upon those whom she once counted as her court.

MYRIANA'S FATE

The Kreeg attack on Fort Rannick was not staged randomly. Operating on critical information provided by the traitor Kaven, the ogres chose the exact night that Jakardros was leading many of the rangers on an extended patrol and the fortress's commander was out on a so-called "communion walk." In fact, Lamatar was visiting his lover, and in so doing, unknowingly doomed her.

As the ogres led by Jaagrath Kreeg assaulted Fort Rannick, the lamia matriarch Lucrecia led a smaller group into the Shimmerglens under the cover of magic. As they approached Myriana's domain, Lucrecia sacrificed some of her ogres, sending them out to savage and destroy a dryad's tree. Both Myriana and her lover Lamatar were quick to respond to this assault, only to discover the attack was an ambush. Even as they put down the ogres who had attacked the dryad, Lucrecia and the rest of her minions surrounded and overwhelmed them.

Lamatar was captured and made to watch while Lucrecia let her ogres have their way with the nymph. It may have been a blessing that the ogres were too enraged by their losses in the fight to do anything but tear the nymph limb from limb, yet the sight was enough to drive Lamatar mad. Lucrecia escorted Lamatar and the ogres back to the peak of Hook Mountain, where they handed the broken man over to the three annis hags for an even more horrific fate, while here in the Shimmerglens a terrible rage rose from the remains of the nymph's body. Her spirit, anguished and insane, became a ghost, and now her madness has twisted Whitewillow into a place of growing corruption. Many of her servants and minions have perished or become mad as well, but one loyal pixie, a normally chatty fellow named Yap, avoided this fate by fleeing into the Land of Big Folk in search of help.

A DESPERATE PLEA

If the PCs take it upon themselves to investigate the Shimmerglens, you can simply have them encounter Yap as one of their encounters in the swampland. But if the PCs don't seem interested in following up on what may have happened to the fort's commander, you can have Yap track them down and beg them for help. Yap looks like a typical pixie—a waifishly thin humanoid with gossamer wings, large expressive eyes, long pointed ears, and a diminutive 2-foot-tall stature. His rumpled clothes and eyes puffy from crying, though, indicate just how much things are out of place for the poor creature. Once Yap has the PCs' attention, he delivers his message and plea in a rapid, breathless speech, as if he's afraid at any moment the PCs will turn him away.



"My mistress, she is... ill. Very ill. Death would have been a kindness. The land sickens with her heart, and it cannot be cleansed until her misery is purged. I cannot do this myself. Please, you must help her! You are friends with her human lover, yes? He wouldn't want her left like this! I can take you to her—maybe you can do something. I have tried

everything to cure her forlorn heart, but to no avail. She wails and moans in Whitewillow, and the trees and plants and nixies and frogs and everything are dying or worse! I can take you there! Please!"

If the PCs agree to aid Yap, the pixie's mood brightens considerably as hope returns. He wants to leave immediately, but agrees to wait for the PCs to prepare for the journey if they need to. Yap insists on accompanying the PCs throughout their adventures in the Shimmerglens, and he'll even promise the PCs a reward (3 doses of pixie dust) if they let him come with them. Unfortunately, Yap is something of a liability. His manic attitude and desperate urge to reach Myriana and save her leads him to not only be an incessant chatterbox, but also to make poor tactical decisions. He may forget to turn invisible in combat, for example, or use mind-affecting attacks against undead foes. Despite this, he remains a good-natured (if desperate) creature, and keeping him alive until Myriana can be placated would be a kindness.

YAP

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	18

Male pixie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 228)

STORY AWARD: If Yap survives this part of the chapter, award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated him in combat.

INTO THE SHIMMERGLEN

The Shimmerglens themselves quickly grow tangled and densely packed once one travels out of sight of the swamp's edge—the easiest way to get around is by rowboat, navigating via the narrow channels of water. This far from the mountains, the hag coven's *control weather* spells are far enough removed that the rains that have been plaguing the northern areas are thankfully absent—all that remains is the subtle chill of winter's approach.

WHITEWILLOW

Twisted black trees rise wretchedly from shallow pools, seeming to have lurched from the land, their arthritic branches curled into miserable tortured claws. The sun seems to scorn this place, and a cold, dark mist looms within the canopy of bone-bare branches above. Evil murmurs ride an unnatural wind that flows forth from the glens, and shadows dance in the dark mists within.

The trees of the swampy region of Whitewillow, once beautiful and mystic with drooping boughs of sparkling ivory leaves, have gone dark and twisted with Myriana's torment. Now, they shift and move when they should not. Shadows play cruel tricks on the sharpest eyes, and sanity-shredding whispers cause even the canniest woodsman to lose his way. As Yap leads the

PCs deeper into the depths of Whitewillow, the degree of the corruption grows. Spiders, languid and fat with poison, hang from trees. Dying birds twitch in the shallows. Slithering things with too many eyes squirt away through the water. Whitewillow is about a mile in diameter, and as the PCs march deeper and deeper into Myriana's madness, you can use some of the following mood-setting noncombat encounters to amplify the PCs' fears.

With the exception of a possible fight against Myriana herself, none of the moody, disturbing encounters the PCs have along the way should be combats—you can certainly add additional fights with wandering monsters if you wish, but by having the PCs encounter and interact with some or all of the strange manifestations of Whitewillow's curse listed below, you can impress upon them the fact that what haunts the swamp is not necessarily something that can be fought with weapons. Keep in mind, though, that not all players enjoy moody encounters that have little or no chance for retaliation—and if your players are the type who might get frustrated by the nature of these encounters, you can simply omit the game effects caused by each, or even just skip the encounters entirely and proceed directly with the Heart of Sadness section.

APPARITIONS OF DEATH: Nothing but chill silence surrounds the PCs, though they occasionally glimpse tall, dark-robed figures in their peripheral vision. The creatures' enlarged skeletal claws extend from their outstretched arms as if reaching toward the party. When the PCs look, they see these apparitions are nothing more than horribly twisted black trees. If attacked, the trees weep blood and seem to cackle in the wind. **GAME EFFECT:** *Each PC must succeed at a DC 15 Will save to avoid becoming shaken for the remainder of her visit to Whitewillow (this is a mind-affecting fear effect).*

DEAD POOL: A natural pool of water created by runoff from the hulking dark trees stands in a clearing ahead of the party. The water looks clear and refreshing enough, though a successful DC 20 Survival check notes that no algae or larval insects dwell in the pool, possibly indicating the water is poisoned. **GAME EFFECT:** *Anyone who gazes into the water too intently must make a DC 15 Will save. Failure indicates her own reflection is normal, but other party members appear reflected as decaying corpses. In addition, the other party members appear to be glaring hungrily at the PC gazing into the water as if they are about to attack and devour her. The PC immediately takes 1d4 Wisdom damage.*

GHOSTLY REVELS: All around the PCs, ghostly translucent forms emerge from the trees. Fey of all sorts—spectral satyrs, ghostly grigs, phantom nixies, and sprightly spirits float gently from the swamp around the party, followed by a parade of phantom animals. These were once the proud denizens of Whitewillow, now polluted by their mistress's unsettled soul. The fey cavort and frolic as they march, eventually washing over the PCs.





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

They caress, dance through, and embrace the PCs before passing. **GAME EFFECT:** The PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be caught in a ghostly party's path, riveted by the otherworldly spectacle. Affected creatures take 2d6 points of negative energy damage as the unnatural chill of the spectral fey burns them. The ghostly fey and their undead animals ignore the party; the unfathomable business of the dead draws them elsewhere in short order.

MYSTERIOUS DERELICT: Deep in the swamp, the PCs suddenly come upon a derelict ship inexplicably located hundreds of miles from the Varisian shore. The vessel is badly worn and covered in thick dark green moss, but is completely intact and is obviously of a seagoing model. The ship is deserted, but in his quarters belowdecks, the long-dead captain sits at a moldering darkwood harpsichord carved with demons battling angels. Still dressed in his rotten uniform, he clutches in one hand nautical charts that seem completely alien even to the most well-traveled PC, and a silver goblet inlaid with opals worth 100 gp in the other. A book of sheet music bearing several lyrical masterpieces never before heard by any of the PCs sits on the harpsichord. The songs contained in the book appear worthless unless a PC succeeds at a DC 20 Perform (any musical instrument or sing) check. The book and the wondrous music contained within are worth 5,000 gp to a collector, musician, or noble. When the PCs emerge from the ship, a white dog sits on deck watching them with milky blind eyes. The dog stares but does nothing else, eventually wandering off into the swamp and leaving behind no trace it was ever actually there. The source of this strange event is a true mystery—whether the wreck is anything more than crystallized dreams or an actual phantasm of a real wreck is left to you to decide. In any event, if the PCs return to the site of the mysterious derelict at a later date, they find that the ship has vanished without a trace, with only any sheet music they might salvage remaining as proof that the wreck ever existed in the first place. **GAME EFFECT:** The first time the music is played with a successful DC 30 Perform check (using sing or any musical instrument), whether or not the musician is still in the Shimmerglens, all creatures within a 30-foot spread become so enraptured by the beauty of the music that they gain a +2 morale bonus on all attack rolls and skill checks for 24 hours.

WHISPERS OF REGRET: The PCs come upon the mangled body of a beautiful dryad half protruding from a tree whose limbs have been smashed from the trunk by massive clubs. If the PCs approach within 10 feet, they hear soft feminine whispers in their ears—"She should not have fallen in love—her heart brought this upon us—why won't she let us go?" **GAME EFFECT:** Anyone who listens to the whispers is filled with regret, but also with an increased resolve to lift the curse that vexes the swamp. These creatures gain a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws made

against encounters like these, or against Myriana's attacks and spells as appropriate. If Myriana is defeated, these whispers fill the PCs with joy and life, immediately affecting each creature with the effects of a heal spell (CL 11th).

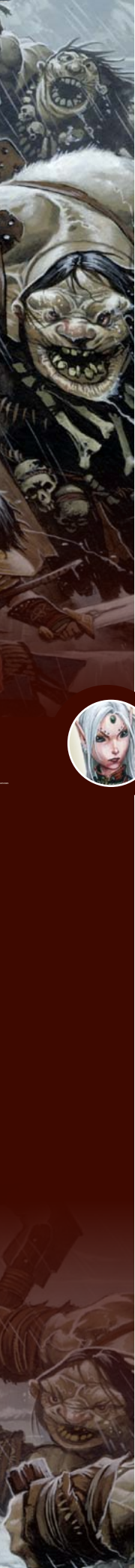
HEART OF SADNESS (CR 10)



The tangled swamp gives way to a relatively large clearing, a calm pool of unnaturally still water ringed by twisted, decayed willow trees. Wind blows, but the trees do not sway. It is as if the very land has died.



MYRIANA



If he's still with the PCs, Yap quails at the edge of the clearing. "We're here... my lady waits for you within. I dare not go any closer..." he says before stepping back to cower behind a gnarled tree.

CREATURE: Once soul-shakingly beautiful, the nymph princess Myriana is now a haggard, ghostly horror. Her disembodied arms float at her sides, exposed bone and sinew stretching toward her torso but ever too far out of reach. Her lower torso fades away to smoke, savaged too cruelly by the ogres for even her insane ghost to retain. But her most terrifying feature is her eyes: wells of hellish horror, crying out silently in an agony beyond anything a mortal creature could ever know. They reduce those who try to hold her gaze to gibbering children. She is beauty undone, and torment incarnate.

As the PCs enter her twisted glade, the ghostly nymph rises with a howl from the waters. Although she doesn't immediately attack the PCs, her blinding beauty is in full effect. In a shrieking, hate-filled voice, she accuses the PCs of failing Lamatar, of failing to protect Fort Rannick, and of allowing the Kreeg ogres to take him to their lair high on Hook Mountain. She allows the PCs a few minutes to state their case, and to explain why they have come to Whitewillow. If the PCs ask her what they can do to help, she simply bemoans the fact that her love Lamatar was taken by ogres and that she was unable to save him. She knows in her heart he is now dead, but when she tried to reincarnate him, foul magic prevented his soul from returning to his new body. She begs the PCs to find his remains and return them to her—she needs not the entire body. A lock of hair or a single finger will do.

If the PCs insist on the possibility that Lamatar can't be reincarnated due to the fact he may still live, Myriana grows increasingly agitated—for if he still lived, he would surely have returned to her by now. Further insisting Lamatar is alive, mocking the ghost, or simply not agreeing to seek out the commander's remains quickly spurs the undead nymph to attack.

MYRIANA	XP	CR	HP
	9,600	10	135

Female advanced nymph ghost (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144, 217)
 CN Medium undead (augmented fey, incorporeal)
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24
Aura blinding beauty (30 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 24, flat-footed 19 (+9 deflection, +5 Dex)
hp 135 (10d8+90)
Fort +21, **Ref** +21, **Will** +19
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Melee corrupting touch +5 (10d6, Fort DC 24 half)

Special Attacks corrupting gaze (DC 24), stunning glance (DC 24), telekinesis

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*reincarnation*

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 18), *dominate animal* (DC 16), *summon nature's ally III*

2nd—*chill metal* (DC 17), *flame blade*, *flaming sphere* (DC 17), *gust of wind* (DC 17)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 14), *entangle* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*, *produce flame*, *speak with animals*

0—*detect magic*, *flare*, *light*, *mending*

TACTICS

During Combat Although Myriana is undead, she was made so by despair, not hate. She would rather recruit the PCs than harm them. She prefers to use her stunning glance to defeat foes without causing lasting harm, but if pressed uses her magic and corrupting gaze to get her point across.

Morale As long as her lover remains atop Hook Mountain as an undead monster, Myriana cannot be slain forever. She fights until destroyed, then rejuvenates with the next sunset and sends Yap to gather the PCs to her side once again—if she's ignored, she may turn her wrath against Turtleback Ferry.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 29

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 29

Feats Ability Focus (blinding beauty), Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Diplomacy +22, Escape Artist +18, Fly +13, Handle Animal +19, Heal +13, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perception +24, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +26, Swim +13; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ inspiration, unearthly grace, wild empathy +25

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs defeat Myriana, she cries out, "Return my beloved to me! Return my commander to my heart, or I shall find him with my vines and my dark trees will eat the land and churn your people to bone and misery. Return Lamatar to my embrace!" With that, her shade fades back into the waters only to reform with the next setting of the sun.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs successfully put Myriana to rest, award them 9,600 XP. In addition, as she fades away forever, she picks one PC (preferring a bard, or barring that, the PC with the highest Charisma score) to gift with a lasting inspiration. This effect functions the same as the standard nymph inspiration ability, save that it lasts as long as the PC lives (even returning if he dies and is later brought back to life). Not only does this effect bolster the character's Will save, Craft checks, Perform checks, and bardic performances, but it can also aid him in negotiations with Myriana's older sister, the ice nymph Svevenka, in the final chapter of *Rise of the Runelords*.



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

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THE GREAT RAINS TURN TO DRIVING SNOW AS WINTER COMES WITH A FURY UPON THE HOOK. AUTUMN IS A FORGOTTEN DREAM AS CUTTING WIND LANCES THROUGH WOOL AND LEATHER, AND TREACHEROUS ICE CRAWLS ALONG THE MOUNTAINSIDE. LIFE IS CRUEL AND SHORT ON THE HOOK, MORE NOW THAN EVER AS WINTER SINKS HER TEETH INTO ITS CRAGS. AND NEAR THE TWISTED PEAK OF THE NOTORIOUS MOUNTAIN, THE FORGES OF THE KREEG OGRES RING OUT WITH RENEWED VIGOR—THEY HAVE LOST FORT RANNICK, BUT THEIR ANGER LIVES ON!

Reaching the base of Hook Mountain is no huge problem, but the last few miles include several frightening climbs. With a successful DC 20 Survival check, the PCs can follow hunting trails used by the Kreeg ogres and make the climb to the hold in 3 hours; otherwise the party must make DC 15 Climb checks once per hour or be delayed an additional hour in their journey as they find the ice-laced trails and steep cliffs insurmountable—after making four successful Climb checks, they reach their goal. Random encounters with mountain-dwelling monsters (see page 405) can also serve to liven up this journey.

Snow falls for the duration of their trip, and the temperatures are cold. Consult the section on cold dangers on page 442 of the *Core Rulebook* for more information on how the severe cold conditions affect the PCs.

HOOK MOUNTAIN CLANHOLD

As the PCs finally crest the last craggy outcrop about a half-mile from Hook Mountain's 10,000-foot-high peak, they find a gaping cave belching forth foul black smoke. The cave entrance looks out over a wide ledge of windswept stone, while the chambers within are prowled by ogres aplenty, clutching their rusty hooks and constantly looking out for anyone foolish enough to encroach upon their den.

The clanhold itself is a large cave. The Kreegs have lived here for generations, and the walls and ceilings are thick with the soot of their fires. The caves are roomy, even for ogres. Passageways average 25 feet high, while the caverns themselves tend to have vaulted domelike ceilings up to 50 feet tall.

This final retaliation against the ogres of Hook Mountain is meant to be not only the climax of this chapter, but also a turning point in the campaign. With the defeat of Barl (combined with the earlier defeat of the lamia matriarch Lucrecia), the PCs finally start to learn of the machinations of Karzoug and his imminent return. The remainder of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path depends increasingly upon the PCs being self-motivated to take steps against Karzoug's

return, and as such you should make sure that they have the chance to learn about Mokmurian during this adventure. Whether or not they believe the stone giant to be the actual driving force behind the sudden increase in activity on the Storval Plateau is largely irrelevant at this time, though—they'll certainly learn the truth behind it all soon enough!

Finally, you'll note that the encounters here in the Hook Mountain Clanhold are relatively tough—the PCs themselves should be 10th level by this point, and should also not balk at bringing along help—Shalelu and any surviving Black Arrows certainly come along to aid in this final assault on the ogres of Hook Mountain. If the PCs retreat, the clanhold can replenish slain ogres at the rate of one Kreeg ogre and 1d3 typical ogres per day.

D1 ENTRANCE (CR 10)



Constant flurries of windborne snow and frost lash at a gaping hole in the side of Hook Mountain here. Smoke pours forth from the cave entrance, only to be instantly dispersed by the wind.

CREATURES: Two Kreeg fighters stand guard at the mouth of the clanhold, swathed in furs and leathers. Since news of Rannick's fall reached Barl's ears, things have been unpleasant in the hold, and these usually easily distracted ogres keep a sharp lookout. Another ogre was recently caught sleeping by Barl, and the stone giant tore off the lazy ogre's legs and left him rolling in the snow to bleed out before animating him as a zombie and turning him over to the three sisters for an eventual meal. These memories are enough to keep the Kreegs on alert for at least another week. Eager to prove to Barl that they can do a simple job like guarding the entrance, these two ogres don't think to raise an alarm until one is dead.

KREEG OGRES (2)	XP	CR	HP
	4,800 each	8	104 each

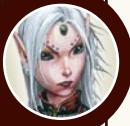
Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)



HOOK MOUNTAIN CLANHOLD



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET
 STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

MAP FOUR: HOOK MOUNTAIN CLANHOLD

D2 BONES OF THE BEHEMOTH



At the mouth of darkness, jagged spurs of bone protrude from the stone on either side of the cave entrance, each towering twenty feet in height—apparently the ribs of some monstrous behemoth.

The bones of a blue dragon (identifiable as such with a successful DC 25 Knowledge [arcana] check) laid low by Kreeg ancestors still adorn the clanholds' entryway, a testament to the ancient ogre overlords of Hook Mountain. The Kreegs have decorated the bones with crude scrimshaw carvings, incorporating the seven-pointed Sihedron Rune into the markings in many locations.

D3 THE RUNE-BOUND KING



An enormous statue stands here in frozen vigil—a forty-foot-tall giant with black skin covered by fissures and cracks, like the bed of a dried river. He wears majestic armor, gilded and encrusted with gems, and grips a towering glaive in his armored fists. The giant's face is hidden by a ferocious full helm forged into the sneering grimace of a fanged devil. Around the giant's neck hangs a medallion—a seven-pointed star.

This gigantic “statue” is in fact a preserved body—the remains of the rune giant Gargadros, a onetime general in Karzoug's army. In the chaos that followed the fall of Thassilon, Gargadros seized Hook Mountain and the surrounding environs as his own, becoming the first of the line of Dread Kings. The Kreegs' previous leader, Grolki Kreeg, claimed to be able to trace his heritage directly to this great warlord, a fact of which he was most proud. Draped around Gargadros's neck is a *Sihedron medallion*, its magic the sole thing that's preserved his flesh for the millennia the frozen corpse has stood here on display. When Barl arrived and revealed his own *Sihedron medallion*, Grolki fell to his knees in shock. The rune was once his family's mark, borne on their faces or arms in testament to their eternal servitude to the archmage Karzoug. Grolki immediately swore allegiance to Barl and offered no resistance when Barl executed him moments later. From that point on, the Kreegs belonged to Breakbones.

TREASURE: The *Sihedron medallion* around Gargadros's neck is sized for a Gargantuan creature and weighs 20 pounds, but still functions after all these years. It is far too large to be worn by a Medium creature, but can certainly be sold to a collector of ancient Thassilonian magic. The instant this medallion is removed from Gargadros, the ancient giant crumbles to dust and is gone; all that remains is his Gargantuan masterwork half-plate armor, which weighs in at 400 pounds and is worth 4,950 gp.

D4 THE BURNING PIT



A deep pit hewn from hard stone here descends into soot and darkness. The stale reek of decay wafts up from the depths below.

The Kreegs formerly offered up sacrifices to Lamashtu here, but now they burn the rune-marked corpses of captives for their new liege-lord, Barl Breakbones. The PCs might think to clamber down the pit (DC 20 Climb check) to search for Lamatar's remains within, but all that waits for them 100 feet below is a swath of ash and shattered bone. Lamatar's body is not here.

D5 CHOKEPOINT (CR 11)

CREATURES: A pair of Kreeg ogres and a dim-witted hill giant named Lunderbud guard the entryway here, under orders to raise an alarm if they detect intruders. If they do raise the alarm, they do their best to hold off intruders while the ogres in area **D6** gather weapons and come to their aid in 1d6 rounds. The denizens of areas **D7–D9** do not join battle here, preferring to face intruders in their lairs where they have stronger advantages. The hill giant himself is something of an idiot—he thinks of himself as an ogre, but the ogres themselves, though smaller, enjoy tormenting the dim-witted fool.

KREEG OGRES (2)	XP	CR	HP
	4,800 each	8	104 each

Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

LUNDERBUD	XP	CR	HP
	4,800	8	105

Advanced hill giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150, 294)

D6 THE CLANHOLD (CR 11)



Fire and thick black smoke reign here, spewing from black pits in the bedrock where forge fires glow. Anvils loom throughout this enormous cavern. The ring of steel on steel thunders here as giant hammers crash down again and again on glowing half-forged blades and axe-heads.

Once the Kreeg family den, this chamber was converted into a forge at Barl's order. Many more ogres toil deep in the bowels of Hook Mountain, in cave mines hundreds of feet below. These ogres are too distant and exhausted to be of any aid to those in the caves above when the PCs arrive, but could be used as reinforcements if the PCs retreat from the clanhold and come back later.

CREATURES: A work crew of 10 ogres slave away here, toiling endlessly at these forges to craft giant blades and other weapons from the obstinate iron they've carved from the mountain's innards. A single Kreeg taskmaster snarls, belches, guffaws, and roars incessantly as the

rank-and-file ogres toil away at the forges. The Kreeg orders the ogres to attack intruders, laughing as they stumble to their likely deaths. The Kreeg then snatches up a red-hot blade and goes to work as well (dealing an additional 1d6 points of fire damage with each hit for the first 3 rounds of combat).

KREEG OGRE

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

OGRES (10)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

D7 CIRCLE OF THE SISTERS (CR 9)



This foul-smelling cave is cluttered with an appalling amount of body parts, dead animals, spoiled food, and filth, but most hideous is what bubbles and cooks in a huge cauldron over a sputtering fire in a nook to the north.

CREATURES: This cavern is the foul redoubt of the Sisters of the Hook—a coven of annis hags who have long served as allies of and consorts to the Kreeg clan. Now that Grolki is dead, the hags aren't sure what to make of Barl, who appreciates their skills, if not their appearances. For now, they work with the stone giant, but suspect he doesn't have their best interests in his heart. The sisters know all too well that they are short on allies.

Kreeg lore holds that these three annis hags were once related to Princess Myriana before envy and jealousy polluted them and they engaged in monstrous acts and vile rites in hopes of improving their beauty to outshine their sister. Briselda is a hulking, humpbacked hag with oversized talons sprouting from her stumpy arms. Grelthaga is tall and thin, like a skeleton wrapped in ugly purple flesh and a sagging white robe. Larastine's face is a mass of pustules, warts the size of gold pieces, and craters that weep ooze. She is squat and fat with bulbous breasts that hang almost to her knees. The sisters see each other for the horrors they are, but in their madness, they see their own reflections as pure loveliness.

BRISELDA, GRELTHAGA, AND LARASTINE

XP	CR	HP
2,400 each	6	66 each

Annis hags (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 16)

TACTICS

Before Combat All three hags are protected by *mind blank*, cast as part of their coven spell-like abilities.

During Combat The hags are nearly ready to abandon the Kreegs, but if intruders confront them here, they put up a fight for a few rounds, favoring their more powerful coven spell-like abilities like *bestow curse* and *forcecage* at the start of the fight before finishing things off with their melee attacks.

Morale If any of the hags are dropped below 15 hit points, all three attempt to flee the clanhold. If prevented from doing so, they beg for their lives and might even be convinced to aid the PCs in a fight with Barl.

D8 ABANDONED SHRINE (CR 10)



A shrine bearing the feral visage of a brutally beautiful monstrous maiden with the head of a three-eyed jackal and the belly of a pregnant young woman leans against the far wall.

This was once the Kreegs' well-tended shrine to Lamashtu, but now that Barl has arrived and their old leader Grolki is dead, no Kreeg has visited this shrine recently. Instead, the twisted and vile remains of what was once the commander of Fort Rannick holds a lonely post as guardian here.

CREATURE: Barl was quite pleased after he finished torturing the onetime commander of Fort Rannick with necromantic techniques he learned from his master Mokmurian. He gave Lamatar over to the three hags as a servant in reward for their aid in bringing the rains to the region, but the hags were worried the undead ranger was a spy sent by Barl to watch over them. They've ordered the powerful but pitiful creature into this chamber to serve as a guardian. Lamatar's body is caked with ice; his left hand looks almost to be a claw made of icicles and his brow is decorated with a crown of the same.

LAMATAR BAYDEN

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	130

Male frost wight ranger 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276)

LE Medium undead (cold)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 130 (12 HD; 4d8+8d10+68)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

Immune cold, undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +14 (1d4+4 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain)

Ranged +1 icy burst composite longbow +16/+11/+6 (1d8+4/+3 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (DC 16), favored enemy (giants +4, humans +2)

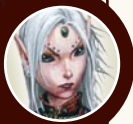
Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*

1st—*longstrider*, *resist energy*

TACTICS

Before Combat Lamatar casts all three of his spells on himself if he has a chance.





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

During Combat Lamatar retains no trace of his living personality, and follows the orders of his three mistresses without question.

Morale Lamatar fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +11, Handle Animal +19, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +17, Stealth +20, Survival +21

Languages Common, Giant, Varisian

SQ favored terrain (cold +2, mountain +4), frost wight qualities, hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +12, woodland stride

Gear +1 chain shirt, +1 icy burst composite longbow with 20 arrows

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+5 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 152 (19 HD; 12d8+7d6+74)

Fort +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities improved rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk earth breaker +22/+17/+12 (2d8+13/19-20/x3) or 2 slams +20 (1d8+9)

Ranged rock +18/+13/+8 (1d8+13)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 13, 6/day), rock throwing (180 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10) 6/day—grave touch (3 rounds)


Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*animate dead*, *fear* (DC 19, 2)

3rd—*fireball*, *fly*, *ray of exhaustion*, *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17, 2), *command undead*

D9 AS THE DREAD KINGS OF OLD (CR 12)

 This gigantic chamber extends into darkness to the east, sloping upward between two wide ledges on which loom statues with angular faces, stern brows, and strong jawlines. Above, the ceiling opens to the slate gray sky above. The ramp leads up in tiers, finally coming to an end before an immense stone throne.

CREATURES: Once the throne room for Grolki Kreeg, this open-air cleft in the lee of Hook Mountain's summit has become Barl Breakbones's den. He has taken to the role of overlord with excess, and has delayed the gathering of weaponry for Mokmurian simply to extend his time here as king. Originally, Barl was attended by two bodyguards, but when one of them commented that perhaps Barl needed to step up his schedule and get this army of ogres back to Mokmurian, Barl had that one executed. The remaining stone giant guard has held his counsel to himself.

When encountered, Barl sighs wearily before waving an arm at his remaining bodyguard (and Lucrecia, if she fled earlier) and saying (in Giant), "Deal with these mites. They've caused enough problems for me."

BARL BREAKBONES	XP	CR	HP
	12,800	11	152

Male stone giant necromancer 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)
NE Large humanoid (giant)
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +21

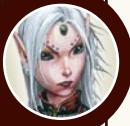


LAMATAR BAYDEN

HANDOUT 3-2

BARL—
 LATEST CONTACT WITH TERAKTINUS
 INDICATES HE HAS NARROWED THE
 SEARCH—HE BELIEVES A HUMAN TOWN
 CALLED SANDPOINT COULD HIDE WHAT
 MY LORD SEEKS. TERAKTINUS WILL LEAD
 SEVERAL OF THE PEOPLE, AS WELL AS
 THE DRAGON, ON A RAID INTO THE TOWN
 SOON. WHEN THEY RETURN, THEY MAY BE
 PURSUED, AND I MAY NEED YOUR OGRE
 SLAVES TO AID IN TERAKTINUS'S RETREAT
 TO JORGENFIST. BE READY TO RETURN AT MY
 COMMAND!

M



(DC 15), *ghoul touch* (DC 17, 2), *spectral hand*
 1st—*chill touch* (DC 16), *magic missile* (4), *ray of*
enfeeblement (DC 16, 2)
 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read*
magic, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat If Barl hears the sounds of combat nearby, he stations his stone giant bodyguard near the entrance. Once that guard notices the PCs approaching, he calls out to Barl, who casts *fly* and *spectral hand* if he has the chance.

During Combat Barl activates his *Sihedron medallion's false life* on the first round of combat. He would rather let his bodyguard fight his fights while he remains seated on his throne, casting spells from there. If the PCs manage to reach him in melee, he sighs heavily, lifts his earth breaker, and responds in kind. If one of the PCs is killed, Barl gets a gleam in his eye and casts *animate dead* on the body the first chance he gets, more to see the anguish of the new zombie's onetime allies than out of any real sense of tactics.

Morale Barl is no stranger to death, but does not want to die himself. If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, the giant drops his weapon and begs for his life. He's willing to reveal much of what Mokmurian has planned for the region if the PCs are willing to grant him mercy (see *Concluding the Adventure*, below).

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 20, **Con** 17, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 37

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Wand, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (earth breaker), Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Focus (earth breaker)

Skills Climb +22, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +21, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +20

Languages Common, Giant, Shoanti, Terran, Thassilonian

SQ arcane bond (*Sihedron medallion*), Thassilonian specialist

Combat Gear *wand of enervation* (12 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork earth breaker, *headband of vast intelligence* +2 (enhances Knowledge [arcana]), *Sihedron medallion*, 650 gp in black onyx gems, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, plus all other necromancy spells of 1st-4th level)

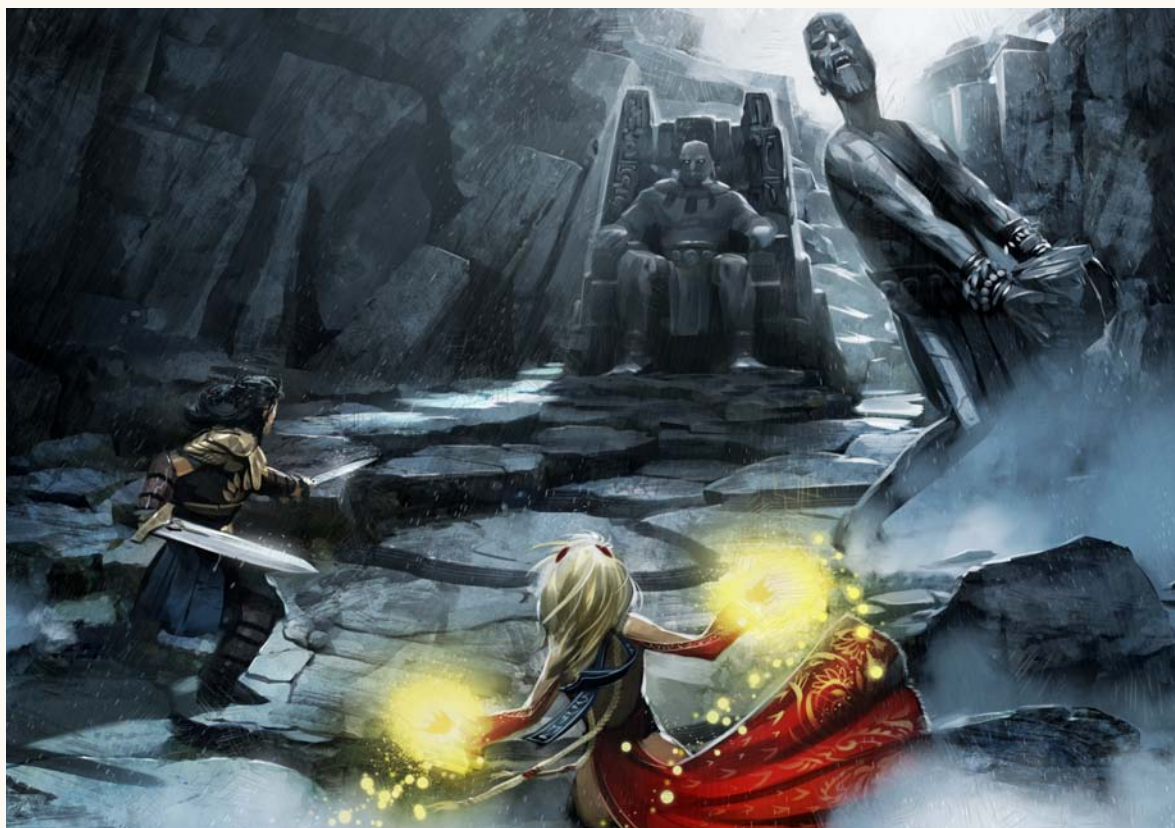
STONE GIANT

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	102

hp 102 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)

TREASURE: While Barl Breakbones has shipped a fair amount of the Kreeg clan's treasures to Jorgenfist, some still remains here, heaped haphazardly behind his throne. The bulk of this stash of treasure is worth 9,200 gp, and consists of various weapons, art objects, gems, trade goods, and other treasures weighing just over 300 pounds in all. Mixed in with all of this treasure,





though, are a few magic items—most of them taken from defeated Black Arrows. These include 32 *+1 arrows*, 12 *+1 giant bane arrows*, a suit of *+2 light fortification studded leather*, a *+1 longsword*, a *+1 composite longbow*, a *belt of incredible dexterity +2*, a *cloak of elvenkind*, and a pair of *boots of the winterlands*.

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs capture Barl Breakbones alive, it shouldn't take much to convince the craven stone giant to talk. Barl's eagerness to tell the PCs about his lord Mokmurian, and how he is gathering an army of giants to march on Sandpoint, could be mistaken for pride in his master's plot, when in fact Barl is simply desperate to please the PCs so that they'll let him live. Barl can even provide the PCs with the location of Jorgenfist if they press; although he's only been into the caverns below the fortress once and can't recall the layout, he does remember there being a particularly ancient library on the second level. If the PCs defeat Barl without giving him a chance to talk, they can learn of the imminent raid on Sandpoint from a missive written upon mammoth hide that was delivered to him via roc some days ago, but they miss out on the giant's other insights into Jorgenfist. This missive is reproduced as Handout 3–2.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs return all of the treasure to the Black Arrows and don't claim any of it for themselves, award them 12,800 experience points. At your discretion, if the PCs do so in a gracious and

charitable manner, the surviving Black Arrows might allow them to keep a few of the magic items.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

With the defeat of Barl Breakbones, the PCs not only free the Kreegs from being enslaved and pressed into war but also prevent further assaults on the region—now leaderless, the Kreegs themselves are weak and vulnerable. Those who survive the PCs' visit scatter into the wilds of Hook Mountain. The lucky ones find new homes with other ogre tribes, but most fall prey to these same tribes as there is no love lost between the ogres of the Hook.

If the PCs defeat the undead Lamatar and return with his body (or even just a portion of it) to Myriana, the nymph is overjoyed and casts *reincarnate* upon him. Normally, this spell would not work on Lamatar—not only has he been dead for longer than a week, but his body and soul have been tainted by undeath. Yet such is Myriana's love that her spirit infuses the spell with power—although it causes her ghostly form to fade away, it enhances the reincarnation such that it can restore Lamatar to life in a new body. Whatever form he returns to life in, Lamatar is at first shamed by his failure to protect both Fort Rannick and his lover, but decides not to waste the new life she gave him. He becomes the new guardian of Whitewillow and does not return to civilization.