

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6



Mother of Lies

Westcrown is bleeding. The mayor has fled the city, and its supposed “protectors,” the Hellknights and the dottari, seem more interested in squabbling over jurisdictional rights than anything else. And as they squabble, powerful agents work in the city’s shadows, drawing their net ever tighter around its commerce, politics, and citizens. The Council of Thieves has suffered a violent coup and its leadership now lies in the hands of two aggressive and ambitious criminals—Chammady and Ecardrian Drovenge. Yet as they turn their attentions to launching their assault on the city, they leave their flanks exposed, and there may never again be a chance like this to strike at one of Westcrown’s most infamous curses—the shadows that rule her nighted alleyways.

Mother of Flies

Advancement Track

Characters should be well into 9th level when they begin “Mother of Flies.” By the time they are ready to explore the guildhouse known as Walcourt, they should be 10th level—they should reach 11th level by the adventure’s end.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As devastating as Aroden’s death was to Cheliox, and to the city of Westcrown in particular, not everything changed during the resulting Chelish Civil War. The Adivian River continued to flow, the seasonal winter storms continued to blow, and on the far shore across the river, the insect-infested wetlands endured. And within these wetlands, in a particularly forested area to the northeast of the city of Westcrown, a coven of hags known as the Flies continued to rule the scattered woodlands.

The Flies have been a part of Hagwood for as long as anyone can remember—long enough that the scattered and sodden woodlands within which they made their home became known as Hagwood. Far enough from Westcrown that the three hags weren’t considered a major threat, yet close enough to remain a constant menace in folktales and bedtime stories, these three green hags (the Mother, the Sister, and the Daughter) have for years played upon the fringes of Wiscrani society, working their nefarious plots for their own unknowable ends beneath the noses of the government of arguably Avistan’s most powerful kingdom. Such was their pervasive influence that Aroden’s death had no real impact on their lives and insulated positions—save perhaps in making it easier than ever to prowl the streets of Westcrown to further their complex web of plots.

Since the rise of House Thrune, the Flies have maintained their fastness at the aptly named Maggot Tree in the heart of Hagwood, where they constantly seek new methods to spin the tangles and threads of their schemes. When Sidonai Drovenge approached them in 4686 AR seeking an infernal heir, the Flies cackled with glee. From the depths of Erebus, the coven procured a coin from the archdevil Mammon’s own treasury that, if swallowed within 24 hours of his heir’s conception, would impart the power of that duke of Hell upon Sidonai’s offspring. Little did Sidonai Drovenge know that by accepting this potent gift, he was cuckolding himself—the coin in fact held the possessing spirit of Mammon, and the heir would not be Sidonai’s but Mammon’s own son, begat upon the world through a mortal coupling. When Sidonai’s son was born a fiendish freak 9 months later, Sidonai’s father Vassindio flew into a terrific rage. He ordered the deaths of all involved—midwives and house staff alike (the mother having escaped this fate by dying herself from complications in birthing the infernal heir). While Vassindio tempered his rage when it came to his

son (exiling him rather than executing him), the Flies themselves did not escape his wrath.

Of the three green hags, only the Mother of Flies was away when Vassindio’s forces stormed Hagwood with a deadly combination of fire, assassins, and charmed giants and fey. The Mother learned of Vassindio’s rage and, nursing her own grudge against the Droveniges for the deaths of her sister and daughter, relocated deeper into Hagwood and began the process creating a new Maggot Tree. To gird herself against further Drovenge vengeance, she sought and found an unlikely ally among the dark fey of the Court of Ether hidden within the upper reaches of the Darklands region of Nar-Voth. Her alliance secured, allowing agents of the Court of Ether a foothold within the surface realm of Cheliox and providing the Mother with the added protection she wanted, she set out on the slow process of thoroughly learning about her foe—Vassindio Drovenge, de facto leader of the Council of Thieves—and the many secrets of his criminal order. That Vassindio apparently neither cared about her continued existence nor sought further retribution against her mattered not in her one all-consuming lust for vengeance.

Yet the Mother of Flies may have taken too long in plotting this revenge, for now things have changed in the Council of Thieves. Control has passed to Chammady and Ecarrdian Drovenge, and now the infernal heir the Mother helped to engineer seeks to destroy all records of those who know the secrets of his past. If the Mother of Flies is to live to see her revenge, she’ll need to swallow her pride and find aid from the very city she has so long preyed upon—she needs the PCs’ aid.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

After the PCs secure the ruins of Aberian’s Folly and prevent the pit fiend Liebdaaga from escaping into the city of Westcrown, they are faced with the fact that Westcrown is adrift. With the mayor fled, the Hellknights and the dottari arguing over who should establish and maintain order, and ominous signs that the Council of Thieves is moving to make a power play, something must be done. After learning of the schism in the Council of Thieves and following up on a lead that links the Council to Westcrown’s shadow beasts, the PCs learn of a new ally as agents of the Mother of Flies contact them and invite them to her home seeking an alliance against their shared enemy.

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

At the Maggot Tree, the PCs discover that the Drovenges have not been idle either—a veritable army of mercenaries has laid siege to the Maggot Tree in an assault reminiscent of Vassindio's vengeance a generation earlier. By allying with the fey of the surrounding woods, the PCs work to defeat this besieging force and rescue the Mother of Flies before she too can be silenced. From their new hag ally, the PCs learn the location of a key Council of Thieves secret guildhall and the means to gain access to it. The Mother of Flies further makes gifts to them of some enchanted items to be used against the Drovenges.

Upon returning to Westcrown from the Maggot Tree, the PCs infiltrate the secret guildhall in hopes of striking a blow against the Council and freeing Westcrown from its nighttime curse of shadows. Battling their way through the many traps and minions, they finally encounter the vampiric Master of Shadows himself.

PART ONE: A MOTHER SCORned

Following the events of “The Infernal Syndrome,” the PCs find their fame at an all-time high. While the Fame Points they've been accumulating over the course of Council of Thieves still don't have a direct impact on the game (that happens in the last adventure, “The Twice-Damned Prince”), you should take pains to have NPCs recognize the PCs relatively often as they pass them on the street or encounter them in shops or taverns.

As such, it isn't long after the completion of those events that a man by the name of Jarvis Alebrecht seeks out the PCs to offer them a chance to learn more about the Council of Thieves in the Parego Dospera. How and when Alebrecht approaches the PCs is up to you, but he comes with the assurances of Arael the Fletcher, leader of the Westcrown rebels, who vouches for his loyalty and veracity as a tried and true member of their movement.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Once the PCs have agreed to meet with Jarvis (likely at the Children of Westcrown's safe house and with either Janiven or Arael in attendance), the nervous-looking blond man relates the following.

“Friends of Westcrown—I come to you with a singular offer. I have long lived on the edge of legality in this, our city, but never have my plans or desires run along routes that might put the city in peril. I have heard the whispers that the Council of Thieves had something to do with the destruction of Aberian's Folly, and I know these rumors to be fact—as I suspect you do as well. As you have doubtless learned, the Council of Thieves has not the best intentions for Westcrown. I may live on the other side of law, but I have no wish to see Westcrown suffer, for it is my home as

well as yours. And as you now find yourselves aligned against the Council's machinations as well, I think we can find common cause to work together.

“My trade is information. Sensitive information. One of my most talkative contacts, a certain black-market pesh merchant named Goren One-Ear who keeps his shop in Parego Dospera, has fallen silent. It worries me, for he had long claimed to have ties with the Council of Thieves. Indeed, when the manor burned and fire scorched the sky, Goren contacted me with a short but cryptic message. He claimed that the fires and destruction were linked to the Council—more precisely, to the grandchildren of one of the Council's leaders (whom Goren had hinted on multiple meetings with me was none other than nobleman Vassindio Drovenge). Worse, he indicated to me that there was a coup wracking the Council, and that these grandchildren were all but assured of seizing control if they could engineer the death of their grandfather, and that if they accomplished this, things would grow dangerous indeed for the Council's enemies.

“You see, here we share a dangerous commonality. My trade in information has long made the Council uneasy, but I have always been sure to give as well as take with their agents. Likewise, if word on the street is to be believed, your group has done much, indirectly or otherwise, to vex the Council. Yet as long as the traditionalists held power in the Council, things maintained a balance. These upstarts—these Drovenge siblings—care nothing for tradition. If they claim control over the Council's resources, no Wiscrani is safe—particularly not you or I, who have already troubled the Council on numerous occasions.

“Goren One-Ear claimed to have new and important information about the burgeoning coup in the Council—he also wanted out of Westcrown. I had promised him funds and aid in escaping the city under the Council's collective noses in return for everything he knew about these Drovenge siblings, their plans, and both who they intended to strike against and how these strikes would go down. Yet this was two days hence, and I have had no contact with Goren. I fear the worst.

“If you can investigate his shop in the Dusk Market alley in Parego Dospera... if you can find any clue to his fate or any notes he may have hidden in his home... I am prepared to pay you the funds I had set aside to aid him in his escape from Westcrown. Certainly, the information Goren possessed can help you as much as I, if not more!”

Jarvis would like to leave for the Dusk Market before sundown in order to have his contact safely out of Westcrown, but if the PCs need a day to rest or prepare, he begrudgingly agrees and arranges to meet them at Goren's shop at their earliest convenience.

Creature: Jarvis Alebrecht has been a member of the Westcrown underground for nearly 5 years. He has a thick mane of blond hair, blue eyes, and a short-cropped beard that hides his unsightly jowls. Just past middle age, his years have begun to tell on him, though he is still hale

Mother of Lies

Alternative Hooks

If, in the previous adventure, the PCs befriended or allied with one of the NPCs involved in “The Infernal Syndrome” (such as loyalist thief Jalki or a repentant Aberten), it might be better to have that character contact the PCs instead of Jarvis to send them to the pesh merchant’s shop—not only will the PCs already know the NPC in this case, but that NPC already has an extant reason to help the PCs fight against the Drovenges. This adventure assumes that this NPC contact is Jarvis, but if you wish to swap him out for another NPC, anyone with a score to settle with the Council of Thieves will do.

If you’re using another NPC like Jalki or Aberten to begin the adventure, that NPC instead contacts the PCs via a cryptic note, *whispering wind*, courier, or other short and relatively anonymous message service. The NPC contact warns the PCs that the schism in the Council is all but complete, and that he has learned critical information about the Droveng siblings’ plans for not only the PCs but all of Westcrown. The NPC has arranged a safe meeting place in an alley off of Dusk Market, at the shop of an allied pesh merchant named Goren One-Ear. All the PCs need to do is meet the NPC at Goren’s shop this evening to gain the critical intelligence they’ll need to move directly against the Council of Thieves.

and hearty. He originally came from Galt, where he served as an interrogator to the provisional council ruling at that time but fled when their methods became more bloodthirsty than he was comfortable with. His departure was most timely—the regime fell and met bloody Galtan justice only a week after he left.

After he settled in Westcrown, his training and skills swiftly earned him a place amid the city’s underground, where he became a quite successful information broker. Although he has dealings with the Council of Thieves, he makes a point of not becoming beholden to that organization and, if any group has captured his loyalty, it is the Children of Westcrown. Although only a Wiscrani himself for just over half a decade, he has become enraptured by the city’s history and tradition, and would very much like to see it return to the prominence his studies and research of old documents indicate. Jarvis is brave but not foolhardy, having seen his share of blood, and tends to hold ranks with his allies in a fight.



JARVIS ALEBRECHT

sling at a distance if possible. In melee, he teams up with an ally to gain flanking attacks and prevent the same.

Morale Jarvis is no coward, but he is also not a front-line fighter. He defends himself and his allies to the best of his abilities but will not make foolhardy moves.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16

Base Atk +7; CMB +8; CMD 20

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Alertness, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Persuasive, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +15, Heal +8, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +10, Sense Motive +11

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ armor training +1, bravery +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds (3), potion of eagle’s splendor*; **Other Gear** +2 studded leather armor, cloak of resistance +1, masterwork short sword, masterwork sling, 20 sling bullets, 82 pp

JARVIS ALEBRECHT

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human fighter 4/expert 5

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 52 (9 HD; 4d10+5d8+4)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8; +1 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +9/4 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk sling +10/+5 (1d4)

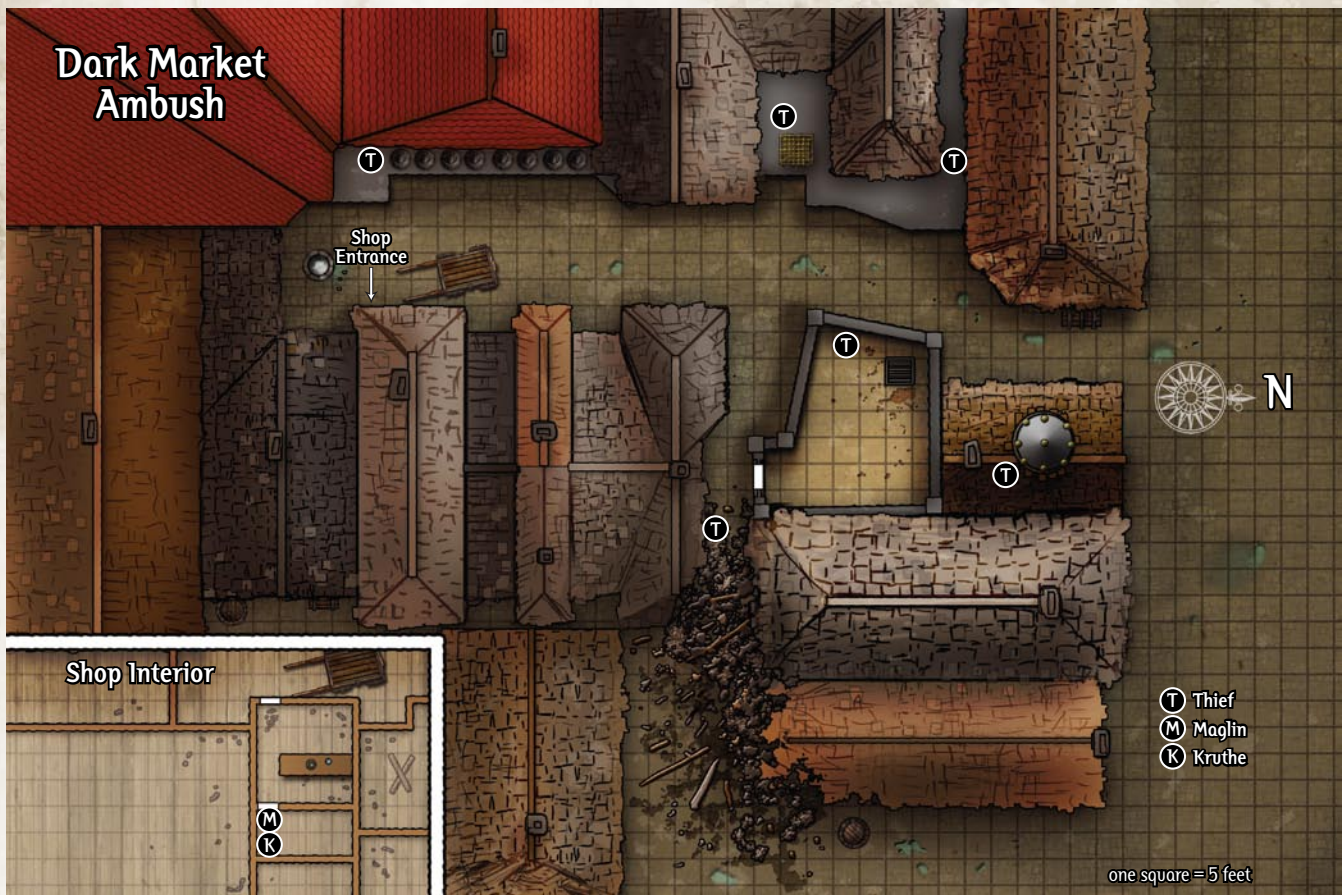
TACTICS

During Combat Jarvis tends to hang back in battle and use his

THE DUSK MARKET

The Dusk Market’s current location is near an abandoned customs house that once inspected and processed the cargoes and immigrants coming in through Westcrown for the various manufactories in Rego Cader back in its heyday. Now this building is little more than a massive stone shell, most of its glass skylights or windows broken out and creating a fragmented maze of jagged prisms hung between ancient stone buttresses and rusted iron girders. Beneath this massive structure’s roof were dozens of offices, holding areas, warehouses, guardrooms, and plazas for organizing the thousands of individuals who passed through every day, creating a city in miniature within its

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6



walls. Yet it is to an alley behind this building that the PCs most go to meet Goren.

If he travels with the PCs, Jarvis leads them around the building's side to this alley, pointing to a dilapidated cart near the far end that sits next to a red door. This door, he points out, opens into Goren's shop. Otherwise, the PCs know only that his shop is one of the buildings down the alley—in which case a casual examination of the doors reveals only one that isn't boarded up.

The alley itself is deserted, but the sound of the busy market in the immense stone building next door is constantly present, almost giving the place an air of a haunted marketplace peopled by the invisible ghosts of merchants and customers. A smaller side alley leading to the east comes to an end in the ruins of a collapsed building, while to the south the main alley ends at a tumbled-down old well, now filled in with rubble.

If Jarvis is with the PCs, he is emboldened by their presence and heads down the alley, opens the red door, and ducks inside. Unfortunately for Jarvis and the PCs, the Council of Thieves have already tended to Goren One-Ear and, suspecting that his unknown contact would arrive soon to investigate, have set up an ambush. The arrival of the PCs gives the thieves lying in wait an unexpected but welcome

opportunity to capture the troublemakers that have caused so many problems for the Drovenge siblings.

THE AMBUSHERS

The participants in the ambush consist of Maglin (a Council "cleaner"), Kruthe the Hammer (a Council "enforcer"), and 6 thieves.

Maglin is the leader of this group of ambushers, a Council cleaner tasked by the Droverages to seek out several Wiscrani who "know too much" about the organization. The Droverages hope to start afresh with the Council now that they've seized control of the guild, and part of that involves the assassination of any one-time allies who might still harbor allegiances to the old guard. Maglin is not only an expert at delivering death, but has developed a particularly cruel method of ensuring that those he kills stay dead through the use of what he calls "quieting needles." Maglin prefers to operate alone, but for this mission the Droverages insisted that he bring backup—they suspected that the PCs might have come along with Jarvis, even if Maglin did not.

As subtle and sly as Maglin is, his second-in-command for this mission is the opposite. Called the "Hammer" for his hideous, malformed, hammer-shaped hand, the half-

Mother of Lies

ogre, half-human enforcer Kruthe was born and raised by the Council of Thieves for a single purpose—to serve as a heavy. Kruthe enjoys his job and is loyal to Chammady Drovenga, sometimes thinking of her as a sister and at other times lusting for her as a lover, although he lacks the self-confidence and bravery to act on his feelings. Instead, he blindly follows her wishes—unknown to Kruthe but certainly not to Maglin, the ogrekin is along on this operation as much represent an unspoken threat to the cleaner to remain loyal to the new leaders as he is to provide additional muscle.

The other six thieves are all low-ranking pullers from the guild—cutthroats and burglars and bandits eager to earn favor in the eyes of their new commanders.

MAGLIN, COUNCIL HUSHMAN CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human rogue 7/assassin 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +7; Senses Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 54 (7d8+3d8+10)

Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +2; +1 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, improved uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +9/+4 (1d6+2/18–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +10/+5 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attack bleeding sneak attack +6d6 plus 6 bleed, death attack (DC 14), surprise attack

TACTICS

During Combat Maglin attempts to flank foes, making trip attacks on his second attacks until Kruthe manages to pin someone in a grapple, at which point he focuses his sneak attacks on that target.

Morale Maglin fights to the death, believing he has reinforcements on the way. He tumbles behind his minions and makes ranged attacks if reduced below 20 hp.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 22

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Rapid Reload, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +13, Climb +12,

Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +13, Disguise +13, Heal +6,

Intimidate +13, Perception +12, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +16

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ poison use, rogue talents (bleeding attack, combat trick, surprise attack), trapfinding

Gear +2 leather armor, +1 buckler, masterwork rapier, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts (each poisoned with blue whinnis), ring of protection +1, thieves' tools, quieting needles (see sidebar on page 12), pouch with 6 diamonds (200 gp each)

KRUTHE THE HAMMER CR 7

XP 3,200

Male ogrekin human fighter 8 (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #3 90)

NE Medium humanoid (giant)

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

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 112 (8d10+64)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 warhammer +17 (1d8+9/19–20/x3), claw +13 (1d8+5)

TACTICS

During Combat Kruthe is loud and unimaginative but still deadly in combat, prone to calling out his targets as he attacks them with crude and simple-minded threats, like “Die you dumb metal person!” when fighting an armored warrior, or “You go squish now on Kruthe’s hammer, little girly!” when facing an unarmored sorcerer.

Morale Kruthe sees this battle as another chance to impress Chammady, and fights to the death as a result.

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 6

Base Atk +8; CMB +13; CMD 24

Feats Greater Weapon Focus (warhammer), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (warhammer), Power Attack, Throw Anything, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialization (warhammer)



MAGLIN

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

Quieting Needles

A set of quieting needles costs 25 gp. Inserted into a corpse's heart, lungs, and other organs, the needles can be well hidden inside a slain body with a minute of work and a Sleight of Hand check—the result of this Sleight of Hand check determines the Heal check DC to notice the use of quieting needles on a corpse. This Heal check gains a cumulative +1 bonus for each day the body has been allowed to decay, as the presence of the needles grows increasingly obvious as the flesh rots away.

A body pierced with quieting needles can be brought back to life as normal via *raise dead*, but upon being restored to life, the victim immediately begins suffering from the fact that his major organs are perforated by hidden needles. This grisly fate can even strike someone brought back to life via *resurrection* or *true resurrection* if the body itself was intact and the needles were thus hidden. (Casting *resurrection* or *true resurrection* with only a fragment of the body or no body, forcing the spell to rebuild the body as appropriate, is a surefire way to avoid having the victim come back to life with the needles still inside him.)

A creature brought back to life with quieting needles inside him is immediately struck with pain and must make a DC 25 Fortitude save each round to avoid being nauseated from the pain and suffering 1d6 points of Constitution damage. A successful Fortitude save negates the nauseated condition and reduces the Constitution damage to 1.

Removing quieting needles from a dead body takes 1d6+6 rounds (and a DC 20 Heal check if the process is to leave the body in a condition where *raise dead* is still viable). Removing quieting needles from a freshly restored living body causes 2d6 points of damage per round the procedure continues, with a successful DC 25 Heal check reducing damage caused that round to 2.

The use of quieting needles is relatively uncommon, meant as much to punish enemies for attempting to raise dead allies and force them to waste the resources on such expensive magic as well as to cause the restored creature agonizing pain—using quieting needles is an evil act that is as illegal as murder in most civilized regions.

A set of quieting needles costs 25 gp.

Skills Intimidate +9, Survival +12

Languages Common

SQ armor training +2, bravery +2, deformed, weapon training (hammers +1)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +2 *spiked banded mail*; +1 *warhammer*; shrunken head pouch with 13 gp, 25 sp, and a cracked ruby worth 800 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deformed (Ex) Like all ogrekin, Kruthe is deformed. His right wrist ends in an ugly, fleshy lump of cartilage and bone from

which protrude two hook-like spurs, giving his hand the appearance of a claw hammer. This hand cannot wield weapons or shields, but the misshapen club grants him a natural weapon that deals 1d8 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage on a successful hit. Kruthe gains a +2 bonus on attempts to grapple, trip, and disarm foes with this claw.

THIEVES (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Human rogue 4

NE Medium humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

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

hp 29 each (4d8+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +9 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat These eager thieves work together to set up flanking attacks against foes, ganging up against single targets unless following specific orders to the contrary from Maglin.

Morale As long as Maglin survives, these thieves fight to the death. If Maglin is defeated, these thieves flee if brought below 10 hit points (or immediately once three of them are defeated).

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Disable Device +11, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1

leather armor, masterwork rapier, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts, stolen coins and jewelry worth 300 gp

GREETINGS FROM THE COUNCIL (CR 11)

The ambushers arrive on the scene an hour before the Dusk Market opens, so if the PCs have the foresight or luck to be in the area before this point, they could well have a chance to ambush the ambushers. Likewise, the PCs are free to step in and force the ambush to begin through accident or design as the result of their actions. What is presented here is the way that Maglin and his minions hope the ambush will play out—feel free to alter the course of these events as you wish.

Mother of Flies

A few hours before the Dusk Market opens, Maglin and his men invade Goren's shop and home and torture him, forcing him to reveal that he is expecting visitors that evening. The thieves then murder him, removing his lower jaw to prevent *Speak with Dead* and inserting quieting needles into his body to sabotage resurrection attempts. They then take up positions as detailed on the map—thieves at locations marked "T" on the surrounding roofs, nearby alley, and in the shop itself. Kruthe and Maglin wait within Goren's bedroom at the back of his shop. All are using Stealth to remain hidden—before beginning this encounter, take the time to roll their Stealth checks individually and note each result (for a major encounter like this, it's best not to assume all of the thieves roll the same Stealth checks).

The ambushers wait for the PCs to arrive. Consult the Ambush Rules sidebar for important physical information about the area, then allow the players to describe how they are going about approaching the shop and hope to contact Goren. The ambushers hope the PCs don't notice them lying in wait and that they enter the shop, whereupon they can swoop down to prevent their escape while Maglin, Kruthe, and the thief waiting inside the shop attack.

The PCs can choose to follow Jarvis within, remain outside to keep watch, or even look around. Ideally, at least one PC should go in as well to witness the events that unfold. These happen simultaneously to any investigations outside, so the ambush should be sprung as soon as any ambushers are discovered. If the PCs enter the Pesh Merchant's shop before the ambush springs, they find a small smoke shop lit by the dim glow of a lamp hanging from the ceiling. The shop's walls are decorated with pipes, smoking tobacco, and more exotic wares, while a counter runs across the back and a door beyond leads to a small bedroom. Poor Goren One-Ear has been pinned, spread-eagled, to the back wall of the shop by a number of long, wicked-looking daggers. Furthermore, the lower half of his face is a bloody mess where his jaw has been brutally torn away—the missing jaw sits on the counter, a smoking pipe perched decoratively on the lip and tongue (a grisly touch of humor courtesy of Maglin).

An instant after the PCs enter the shop and are confronted by this grim scene, Kruthe barrels out of the back room with a roar, the prearranged signal to begin the ambush. The jobs of each member of the ambush are as follows.

Kruthe: Needing no stealth or subtlety, Kruthe engages the PCs loudly and noisily in the shop, pursuing foes into the street if they get that far. On the third round of battle, Kruthe pretends to lose his nerve and flees into the back room, hoping to lure a PC into range of Maglin's death attack, after which the ogrekin continues the fight.

Maglin: The assassin hides in the back room via Stealth and studies one of the PCs to attempt to set up a death attack when Kruthe lures them near. He then fights with Kruthe to maximize his flanking options.

Fireball-Enhanced Rogues

Each of the thieves that takes part in this ambush carries on him a single 6d6 *necklace of fireballs* globe. Other thieves encountered in this adventure that make use of this stat block are not armed with these globes.

Ambush Rules

The initial positions of the thieves lying in wait to ambush Jarvis are indicated on the map of the Dusk Market alley.

Roofs: The wooden rooftops on the east side of the alley are 20 feet off the ground at the edge, rising to 30 feet high at their peaks. The stone roof of the Customs Building to the west is 20 feet high at the edge with roofs rising to 40 feet at their peak. The loose shingles make movement on these rooftops difficult terrain.

Walls: It's a DC 15 Climb check to scale any wall in the alleyway.

Collapsed Building: The collapsed building is difficult terrain to move through.

Wagons: The wagon before the shop front and the wagon at the end of the side alley can provide cover to a standing creature or total cover to a creature who crouches behind the wagon.

Noticing the Ambush: A rooftop ambusher gains an effective +5 bonus to Stealth checks against those on the street level below due to distance and favorable conditions for hiding. Those who successfully notice the ambush are unlikely to actually see the ambushers from ground level—if they notice, they do so via hearing (sounds of footsteps or of a crossbow being loaded, or perhaps a single falling shingle).

Fire: The buildings in this alley are unlikely to catch fire from exposure to fireballs thrown by the thieves due to the region's generally foggy and moist weather.

Thieves: The thieves use poisoned bolts against any PCs who remain outside. If large groups of PCs attempt to exit the building or flee the alley, they use their fireball globes against them. These thieves avoid melee, preferring to snipe with their hand crossbows. Note that all of the rooftops put any creatures on the ground directly below in sneak attack range.

AMBUSH COMPLICATIONS

Unknown to the ambushing thieves, though, they are themselves being set up to be ambushed. A few rounds after they spring their attack (either after 4 rounds or at about the point where it looks like victory is in the bag—either for the PCs or the thieves), the Council thieves are in turn ambushed by forces sent by the Mother of Flies, who has been waging her own war against the Council for the past several days. Knowing that the PCs could make good allies and acting on advice imparted to her via a *contact other planes* spell and other divinations, she's sent several of

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

her agents into Westcrown to attempt to make contact with the PCs and to strike against Council agents as they can.

This particular agent is a creature named Dog's Tongue—a violent fey creature known as a redcap. Small in size but huge in violence, a redcap is a gnome-like creature that thrives on murder and has a knack for wielding weapons that should be too large for something of its frame. Dog's Tongue moves through the city's shadows swiftly, yet still comes to the ambush site a little late. He was hoping to make contact with Goren and use him to contact the PCs, but upon finding the PCs and thieves in battle, he realizes that luck was on his side and swiftly enters the fray.

How Dog's Tongue interacts with the combat is left to you, but his most likely entrance is to strike against one of the thieves sniping on the PCs from the surrounding rooftops.

Dog's Tongue's gnome-like body is bent and gnarled, no more than 3 feet tall, and his large hands grip a scythe much too big for him. His mouth bears a smile too large for his diminutive frame, and a shapeless hat atop his head drips crimson with fresh blood. He lets out a tittering giggle as he tips that gore-smeared cap to the PCs.

DOG'S TONGUE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male redcap (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #4 8o)



NE Small fey

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 60 (8d6+32); fast healing 3

Fort +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

DR 10/cold iron

Weaknesses irreligious

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee +1 scythe +11 (2d4+7/×4), kick +4 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks boot stomp

TACTICS

During Combat Dog's Tongue moves in to strike the closest thief in melee, shrieking obscenities and challenges in high-pitched Aklo and clomping loudly across rooftops with his iron boots until all the thieves are slain, taking time to dip his red cap in the blood of anyone he helps to murder.

Morale Dog's Tongue flees back to the Mother of Flies if brought below 15 hit points or if the PCs attack him.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+27 jump), Bluff +13, Climb +15, Escape Artist +15, Fly +0, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +14, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +19

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant

SQ heavy weapons, red cap

Combat Gear *potion of water walk*; **Other Gear** leather armor, +1 Medium scythe

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Boot Stomp (Ex) A redcap wears heavy iron boots with spiked soles that it uses to deadly effect in combat. These boots give the redcap a kick attack that it can make as a secondary attack, either as part of a full attack action or as part of its movement just as if it had the Spring Attack feat.

Heavy Weapons (Ex) A redcap's powerful hands and arms allow it to wield Medium weapons without penalty.

Irreligious (Ex) Bitter and blasphemous, a redcap cannot stand the symbols of good-aligned religions. If a foe spends a standard action presenting such a holy symbol, any redcap that can see that character must make a DC 15 Will save or become frightened for 1 minute and attempt to flee. A redcap who successfully saves merely becomes shaken for 1 minute.

Red Cap (Su) A redcap wears a tiny, shapeless woolen hat, dyed over

Mother of Flies

and over with the blood of its victims. While wearing this cap, a redcap gains a +4 bonus on damage rolls and fast healing 3. These benefits are lost if the cap is removed or destroyed, and caps are not transferable, even between redcaps. A redcap can create a new cap to replace a lost cap with 10 minutes of work, although until the redcap takes a standard action to dip the cap in the blood of a foe the redcap helped to kill, it does not grant its bonuses.

AMBUSH AFTERMATH

Once the PCs defeat Maglin and his men, they should be able to look through Goren's shop and start to piece together what occurred.

The removal of an individual's lower jaw is a relatively common method used by organizations like the Council of Thieves to prevent them from being able to provide information, even from beyond the grave, as it prevents a *Speak with Dead* spell from functioning. Anyone making a DC 18 Knowledge (local) check or a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check realizes this. Furthermore, anyone inspecting the merchant's corpse and making a Heal check opposed by Maglin's Sleight of Hand notes the telltale signs that quieting needles have been used to prevent him from being the recipient of a *Raise Dead* spell. These methods, and the torture that poor Goren underwent before his death, have had yet an additional effect on the man's soul—if the PCs do manage to try to resurrect him, the terrified man refuses the option to return to life for fear that the Council of Thieves will visit an even more heinous fate on him. This lead for the party is truly a dead end.

Dog's Tongue, on the other hand, represents the strongest lead for the PCs. After the battle, he capers up to the PCs, bows low with blood-dripping cap in hand, and then puts the cap back on his head before he addresses the PCs in Common, introducing himself and claiming to have been sent by his mistress, the Mother of Flies. He indicates that the Mother and the PCs share a common enemy, indicating the dead thieves by way of explanation, and goes on to tell the PCs that the Mother of Flies would like very much to entertain them at her abode in Hagwood and discuss certain matters of family, nostalgia, and bloody vengeance.

Despite his evil nature, Dog's Tongue invokes the adage of "the enemy of my enemy" and assures the PCs that they will be safe from the Mother and her minions during the parlay. If the PCs agree, he's even willing to provide them with a guide into Hagwood to meet with the legendary hag. If he survives the fight, Jarvis Alebrecht loudly proclaims, "I will not accompany this foul little devil into Hagwood to be eaten by his wrinkled Mother!" Dog's Tongue cackles at this, then very seriously points out that Jarvis is completely wrong—the hag isn't really Dog's Tongue's mother.

Treasure: The Council thieves have only those treasures they carry. A search of the shop itself reveals a stash of 280

gp behind the counter, and with a DC 15 Perception check, a poorly hidden secret compartment in the floor of the shop behind the counter that holds 8 bricks of pesh. This addictive narcotic is detailed on page 21 of the Pathfinder Chronicles product *Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh*; each brick is worth 200 gp, but the drug is illegal to sell in Westcrown.

PART TWO: WAR IN HAGWOOD

While attempting to seek the aid of the Mother of Flies is only an option in this adventure, and certainly not required for PCs who are eager to actually take direct action against the Council of Thieves, there is much to offer to PCs who do agree to accompany Dog's Tongue into Hagwood. Not only will this part give the PCs more experience so that they'll be able to handle the dangers that await them in Walcourt, they'll also gain several helpful magic items and even a greater insight into the nature of their enemies, as well as specific helpful advice and clues on how to efficiently work against the Drovenges—the tiefling Ecarrdian in particular.

In a purely physical sense, Hagwood doesn't lie far from Westcrown at all—the southern expanse of the dense woodland is a mere 2 miles from the city's western edge, across the waters of the Adivian River to the northeast. Unfortunately for the PCs, no matter when they decide to head out to Hagwood, they'll soon find that the Council of Thieves has again reached the site first. Yet unlike the situation in the Dusk Market, the PCs don't arrive too late—this time, they find the Council of Thieves besieging the Maggot Tree and can move to break the siege and earn the gratitude of a powerful ally in the Mother of Flies.

The redcap Dog's Tongue plans on returning to Hagwood the same way he came to Westcrown—by crossing the Adivian under cover of darkness with the aid of a *potion of water walk*. If the PCs wish to accompany the murderous fey, they'll need to engineer their own route over the river. Dog's Tongue agrees to wait for them on the eastern bank of the Adivian for a few hours if they PCs need time to arrange transport, but the redcap refuses to accompany the PCs into civilized Westcrown—he knows full well his kind would not be welcome there, especially since he's relatively certain he wouldn't be able to resist the urge to cut down some child or homeless vagrant he passed in the street if he grew too bored, and thus might run the risk of unduly delaying his return to the Maggot Tree.

If the PCs never meet Dog's Tongue or refuse to ally with the redcap, they still might hit upon the idea of paying a visit to the Mother of Flies on their own. They might have learned in the previous adventure from an interrogation with a captured thief of the Mother of Flies' link to the

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

The Hagwood Situation

From a successful interrogation of a Council agent or by speaking to the redcaps of the Bloody Tarn, the PCs can learn about what's going on in Hagwood, as summarized here.

- An “army” of humans, dark folk, dogs, and giants have invaded Hagwood.
- The army's surrounded the Maggot Tree, but every time they make an attempt to destroy it, the Mother of Flies stops them and repulses the attack. But there's far too many of them for the Mother of Flies to handle at once—the resulting stalemate is looking to develop into a siege.
- Many of the Mother of Flies' allies are cut off from the Maggot Tree, but they lack any real centralized leadership to organize a counterattack on the humans.
- There are two camps of humans; one consists of humans and ogres and dogs, while the other consists of dark folk. The dark folk seem to be held back as a reserve force.
- The humans have created several large, smoky fires around the Maggot Tree—this keeps the Mother of Flies from using swarms of insects against the humans. If these fires were to be extinguished, the insect swarms commanded by the Mother of Flies could tip the balance of the siege in her favor.
- In all, there are about three score humans, two dozen ogres, a handful of hill giants, and a couple dozen hounds comprising the human forces. At this point, the obvious forces of the Mother of Flies are limited to her insectoid swarms and a few strange birds known as gryphs that roost in the tree's branches.
- The humans are led by a brawny woodsman who wields a pair of immense axes; his name is Stiglor. (A DC 25 Knowledge [local] check is enough to note that this is likely the same Stiglor who, once a bounty hunter, became a notorious local bandit rumored to have an affiliation with the Council of Thieves, yet who lived in a hidden den in the hills somewhere east of the city.)

Drovenge family, or you might allow the PCs to discover this link during the course of any research they take it upon themselves to perform during this adventure. What they learn should be little more than rumors that one of the Drovenges struck some sort of bargain with the Flies many years ago—details remain obscure, but the legendary lair of the Flies is anything but secret. Finally, the PCs might come across evidence of the link between the Drovenges and the Flies while exploring Walcourt—in this case, and even if the PCs pay a visit to the Maggot Tree after they've already started exploring the Council guildhouse, you can still run the events as described here.

If the PCs decide to make the journey in Dog's Tongue's company, the redcap is happy to relate something of the history of the Mother of Flies in his own grotesque, spittle-prone manner of speaking (complete with the discomfiting habit of licking his teeth every few moments with his oversized, dog-like tongue). Dog's Tongue tells how over 20 years ago, the Drovenge family patriarch, Vassindio Drovenge, declared a vendetta against the hags of the Maggot Tree and mustered an army of thieves to slay the coven. This force marched into Hagwood and caught two of the hags—the Sister and the Daughter—by surprise and slew them both. The Mother of Flies was away at the time and returned home to find her kin slain and home destroyed. She swore vengeance upon the Drovenges and has slowly marshaled her forces over the years to exact her revenge upon them. Now, he explains, with all the turmoil within the Council of Thieves and the Drovenge family itself, she has seen her opportunity and wishes to ally with the PCs to assist them in their own struggle against the Drovenges.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Unbeknownst to Dog's Tongue, while he led his raid into Westcrown, the Council organized and sent a large assault force into Hagwood to silence the Mother of Flies once and for all. Led by a ranger named Stiglor, this force consists of a large number of thieves, several dark folk, and many ogres and hill giants the Council secretly gathered from tribes scattered across the rugged hills east of Westcrown. The route the PCs take to the Maggot Tree is left to them—if they follow Dog's Tongue's lead, the trail he follows takes the PCs about 3,000 feet through the rolling hills to the edge of Hagwood, and thence another 3,000 feet through dense woodland along winding trails the redcap knows quite well but which are difficult for visitors to find—both sections of the journey are essentially across trackless wilderness as a result. Assuming the group moves at a speed of 30 feet, the trek to the Maggot Tree from the eastern banks of the river should take about 40 minutes of walking, but indications that something's amiss should strike the travelers well before they reach their destination.

Even before the PCs reach central Hagwood and the site of the Maggot Tree, they should have ample warning that something's wrong. As the PCs approach Hagwood through the low rolling hills, a DC 20 Survival check is enough to notice signs of the passage of a large number of people here and there, and periodically signs of larger humanoids (ogres and hill giants). As the dark green scar of Hagwood itself becomes visible, plumes of smoke rising from the interior indicate the presence of fires—consulting with Dog's Tongue confirms that the fires look to be relatively close to the location of the Maggot Tree.

Mother of Flies

CONFLICTS IN HAGWOOD

The center of Hagwood is a dense forest grown wild and foreboding—the legends and fearful whispers that have circulated about this wilderness over the past few hundred years have ensured that, despite the woodland's proximity to the city of Westcrown, it has remained relatively unexplored and avoided by the locals. The majority of the forest consists of towering oaks, firs, pines, and redwoods that often soar to heights of 350 feet or higher. The plants here often grow unnaturally large and are usually stricken with strange, tumorlike growths, so even the non-redwood trees are immense in scale—particularly the Maggot Tree at the wood's core. The entire area gives the impression that it is not wholly natural. Hagwood has served as the Flies' abode for nearly 200 years (hags being exceptionally long-lived), and has recently grown even more warped from the introduction of many dark fey from the Court of Ether, with whom the Mother of Flies has become allied. While many forms of vile and twisted fey now make this part of Hagwood their home, not all of them are friendly to the Mother of Flies and certainly resent any interlopers (though they avoid the larger Council army).

The wood itself is considered medium forest with light undergrowth (costs 2 squares of movement, provides concealment, and Acrobatics and Stealth DCs increase by 2). You can use the wandering monster table from page 77 to generate encounters as the PCs move through Hagwood as you see fit. More importantly, though, the PCs should encounter a patrol of Council agents before they get too far into the woods, and from there Dog's Tongue should be handy to divert their attention to the Bloody Tarn and Trollclaw Cleft to seek aid in defending the Maggot Tree.

COUNCIL PATROL (CR 10)

Commander Stiglor keeps several patrols sweeping the surrounding woods, effectively preventing the disorganized and relatively self-serving fey of Hagwood from organizing a defense of the Maggot Tree. Each of these patrols consists of six thieves, four savage hounds, and a pair of lumbering ogres. An encounter with one of these patrols can certainly clue the PCs and Dog's Tongue in to the fact that something very unusual is going on in Hagwood.

If the patrol notices the approaching PCs before they are themselves seen, they attempt to create an ambush. Unfortunately, the clumsy ogres make poor ambushers, and at the last minute, the group settles for sending the two ogres and the hounds in to attack the PCs while the thieves try to flank them to either side in groups of three, opening with sneak attacks from the brush with their crossbows.

A thief captured and interrogated can serve to inform the PCs as to the events in Hagwood—see the sidebar on page 16 for information on what can be learned of the Hagwood situation.

Organizing the Defense

While the PCs could just storm the Council encampment around the Maggot Tree, there are an awful lot of thieves and giants and dark folk to face. If Dog's Tongue is with the PCs, he points out that there are options other than a frontal assault—likewise, a PC can come up with either of the following options by making a DC 25 Knowledge (history or local) check. Feel free to build similar encounters or opportunities for the PCs to seek aid if you wish.

Bloody Tarn: The redcaps of Bloody Tarn are Dog's Tongue's people, and would likely come to the aid of the Mother of Flies if someone first deals with their leader, Madjaw—a cantankerous barbaric satyr who has long rankled at the concept of owing fealty to a superior like the Mother of Flies. With Madjaw defeated, the redcaps can be led to the Maggot Tree to aid in the assault

Trollclaw Cleft: The cavern known as Trollclaw Cleft is said to be the den of one of the largest of the Mother of Flies' verminous minions—a beetle called Fmughwa the Deathgorger. The Mother of Flies grew the beetle to its size over the course of several years of care and special foods, and has entrusted it to a tribe of jinkins (gremlins from the Darklands) who keep the beetle fed and mask their presence from it by smearing themselves with foul-smelling juice from specially prepared compost. If the jinkins have not followed the Mother's standing orders to lead the beetle to her aid, there must be a reason—perhaps the gremlins are dead, or perhaps they have simply neglected to hold up their end of the bargain. In any event, a visit to Trollclaw Cleft to determine why Fmughwa has not awakened could be important.

THIEVES (6)

CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

WARHOUNDS (4)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Riding dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

hp 13 each

OGRES (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

THE BLOODY TARN (CR 10 OR 13)

Either with Dog's Tongue's guidance or the advice of a PC who can make a successful DC 30 Knowledge (local) check, the PCs can make a short detour to the southern reaches of Hagwood, where a narrow creek with a bottom formed of red clay empties into a swampy lake, the waters

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

of which are thick with red algae and clay deposits. This grisly-looking lake is known as the Bloody Tarn, and has long been the lair of a small clan of redcaps to which Dog's Tongue once belonged.

The redcaps of Bloody Tarn call themselves the Blood Drinkers, and for many years have been led not by one of their own but rather by a half-mad satyr named Madjaw who has lived in the area for decades. Dog's Tongue fled the clan many months ago after he dared to challenge Madjaw's rule and failed to defeat the barbarian. Dog's Tongue didn't remain without a liege for long, and soon after his exile he became an agent of the Mother of Flies, but he's still bitter about his previous defeat. While recruiting the aid of the Blood Drinkers is a sound plan, Dog's Tongue is as eager to depose Madjaw to soothe his own injured pride as anything else (although he tries to hide this ulterior motive, as he fears it might backfire on him if the PCs knew the truth).

The Bloody Tarn fills a low, swampy defile in Hagwood. The redcaps mark their territory with bright red bits of cloth and flensed hide stretched taut on frames built from tied twigs and branches, surrounding a clearing of relatively solid ground about 30 feet in diameter on the tarn's northern shore. A half-dozen crude lean-tos and shelters similarly composed of stretched hides decorate this clearing—the doubtful village of the Blood Drinkers.

Creatures: The Blood Drinkers consist of nine redcaps and their insane satyr leader, Madjaw—a barbarian whose rages and violence both infatuate and frighten the redcaps themselves. As much a mascot as a leader to the tribe, Madjaw barely sees the redcaps as anything more than pests, but as long as they respect him and bring him raw red meat to eat each day (usually animals but sometimes unfortunate travelers), he's content to suffer their companionship.

The Blood Drinkers don't normally bother with guards—the group's reputation is enough to keep them safe from Hagwood's other denizens, and the Council's passage through the woods simply bypassed this region entirely. While the redcaps are eager to seek out these intruding humans and put them in their place, they've so far been held in place by Madjaw's inherent laziness—the satyr barbarian sees no need to rush out and attack these humans since there's a whole city just across the river for him to fight, should the urge ever strike him.

As soon as the PCs make their presence known, the redcaps stomp out of their crude lairs and shout challenges and curses in Aklo, especially if they notice Dog's Tongue, in which case their insults focus primarily on him—"Come back to lick Madjaw's hooves? It's what you were made to do, Dog's Tongue!" Dog's Tongue holds his enraged responses in check, but only for a minute or

so—if the PCs want to try to secure the Blood Drinkers' aid, they'll need to do so by making a DC 32 Diplomacy check or a series of nine DC 19 Intimidate checks to cow the group.

Madjaw himself is snoring loudly in his own shabby den when the PCs arrive, and the surly satyr arrives on the scene just as the PCs' interactions with the redcaps is coming to a head. Madjaw roars in anger at finding humans in his den and the redcaps, clapping excitedly and cheering at the bloodshed to come, scamper out of the way to watch from the surrounding tree branches and roots.

Madjaw himself is far from interested in talking—if the PCs don't immediately leave, he draws his immense greataxe and charges them.

The redcaps and Madjaw are initially hostile when the PCs arrive. If their attitude can be changed to indifferent, they hear the PCs out without attacking. The presence of Dog's Tongue causes a –5 penalty to any checks. If asked for aid, Madjaw demands the right to fight one of the PCs to the death for leadership of the group. If he is bested in single combat, whether the PCs cheat or not, the redcaps are suitably impressed and join the PCs' cause. If the PCs' champion is defeated, the redcaps and Madjaw fall upon them in a relentless bloodlust.

The redcaps themselves attack only if they are attacked first, in which case they and Madjaw work together to murder the PCs.

REDCAPS (9)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 60 each (see page 14)

MADJAW

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male satyr barbarian 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 241)

CN Medium fey

Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, –2 rage)

hp 178 (14 HD; 8d6+6d12+118)

Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +14

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2, trap sense +2, improved uncanny dodge; DR 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *gnomebane greataxe* +20 (1d12+13/19–20/x3), gore +18 (1d6+8), bite +13 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks pipes, rage (20 rounds per day), rage powers (animal fury, quick reflexes, renewed vigor [1d8+8 hp])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th, concentration +13)

At Will—*charm person* (DC 16), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC

Mother of Flies

15), *sleep* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 18)

1/day—*fear* (DC 19), *summon nature's ally III*

TACTICS

During Combat Madjaw's hatred of humanoids is particularly strong when it comes to gnomes—he attacks them in preference to any other target. He rages immediately upon starting combat, and unless he's missing foes with his attacks he uses *Power Attack* to make his blows particularly ruinous. He generally doesn't use his spell-like abilities except when hard-pressed against foes who avoid melee.

Morale Madjaw fights to the death.

Base Statistics AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19; hp 150; **Fort** +13, **Will** +12; **Melee** +1 *gnomebane greataxe* +18 (1d12+10/19–20/x3), **gore** +18 (1d6+6), **bite** +13 (1d4+3); **Str** 23, **Con** 22

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 17, **Con** 26, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 28

Feats *Cleave*, *Dodge*, *Improved Critical* (*greataxe*), *Mobility*, *Power Attack*, *Vital Strike*, *Weapon Focus* (*greataxe*)

Skills *Bluff* +16, *Climb* +14, *Intimidate* +22, *Perception* +23, *Perform* (*Wind*) +20, *Stealth* +21, *Survival* +13

Languages *Common*, *Sylvan*

Gear *hide armor*, +1 *gnomebane greataxe*

Treasure: Hidden among the redcaps' abodes are a total of 852 gp and a set of *pipes of haunting* in Madjaw's lean-to. If Madjaw is slain, the PCs can claim his gear and this meager stash as their reward without angering the redcaps too much.

Development: If the PCs defeat Madjaw, the redcaps are only too willing to accept Dog's Tongue back into their clan—in time, they likely look to the “man-friend Dog's Tongue” as their new leader. In any event, defeating Madjaw in combat ensures the Blood Drinkers' aid in the coming assault on the Council encampment at the Maggot Tree—the redcaps either accompany the PCs to the campsite or make their way there on their own to await a signal from the PCs before they launch their attack, depending on the PCs' preferences.

TROLLCLAW CLEFT (CR 8 OR 11)

The other location the PCs can travel to in an attempt to “recruit aid,” according to Dog's Tongue (or player knowledge), lies just beyond Hagwood's borders to the east, amid a

small copse of trees that grows against a ridge. Here is located a large cavern called Trollclaw Cleft, so named for once having served as the lair of a particularly large and violent troll who was slain by heroes long ago, several decades before Aroden's death. The cave entrance lies at the northeastern end of a shallow, 40-foot-long cleft in the escarpment, a 20-foot-wide opening that leads into a 50-foot-diameter cavern with a thick layer of soil, fungus, and grit on the floor. The cave itself reeks of a breath-stealing stink of carrion and bitter vinegar, and thick tangles of roots and foul-looking fungi grow thick around the cave's walls, making the 5 feet around the inside perimeter difficult terrain to navigate.

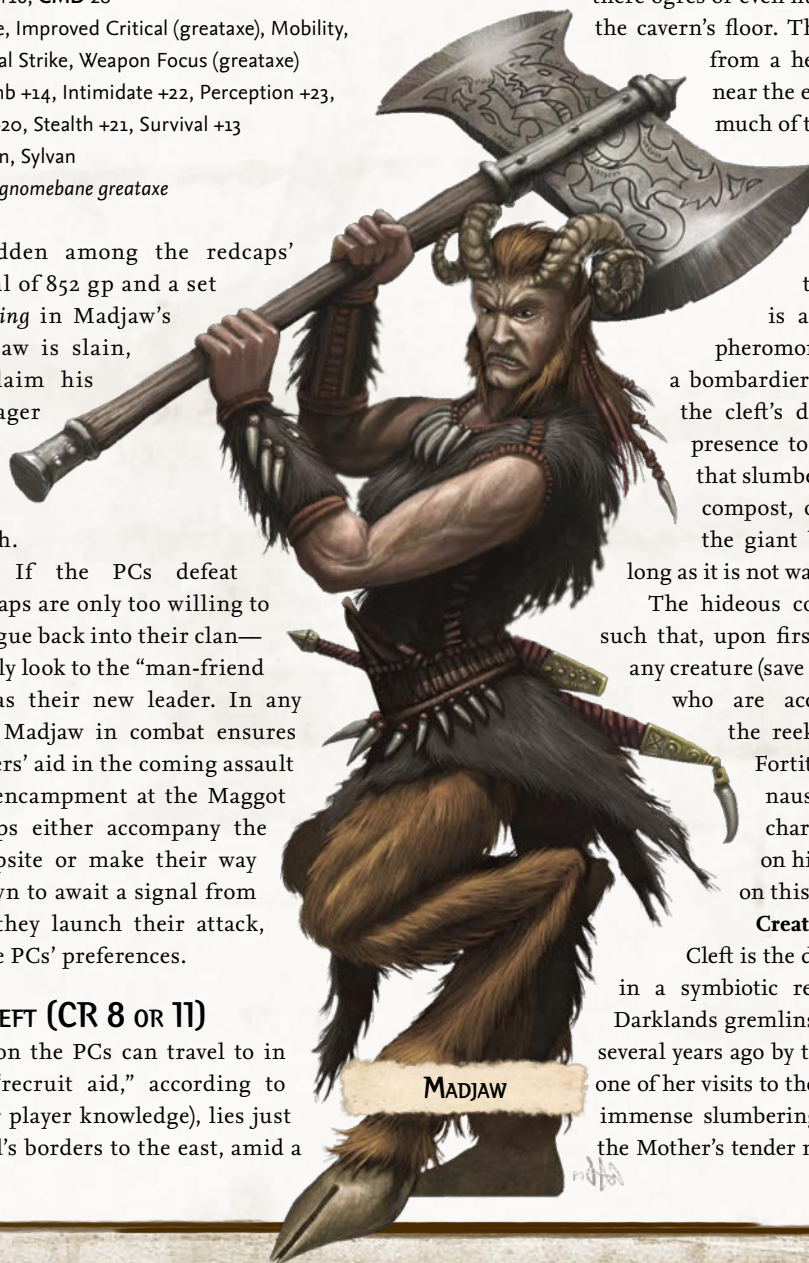
The source of the carrion stink is obvious to anyone who enters the cave, for the half-eaten bodies of dozens of animals (mostly deer, boar, or wild horses, but here and there ogres or even humans) lie strewn about the cavern's floor. The vinegar stink comes from a heap of rotting compost near the entrance to the cavern—much of this compost consists of

heaps of fermenting berries and a sticky alchemical paste.

The scent exuded by this mound of compost is almost identical to the pheromone scent given off by a bombardier beetle, and is used by the cleft's denizens to mask their presence to the immense creature that slumbers within. A dose of the compost, once applied, can trick the giant beetle for 24 hours (as long as it is not washed or cleaned off).

The hideous combination of stink is such that, upon first entering this cavern, any creature (save for the jinkin gremlins, who are accustomed by now to the reek) must make a DC 15 *Fortitude* save to avoid being nauseated for 2d6 rounds. A character who rubs compost on himself takes a –4 penalty on this save.

Creatures: Today, Trollclaw Cleft is the den of two species living in a symbiotic relationship—a tribe of Darklands gremlins brought to the surface several years ago by the Mother of Flies after one of her visits to the Court of Ether, and an immense slumbering beetle grown vast on the Mother's tender ministrations and a diet



MADJAW

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

of rare and rancid plants and tinctures brewed over the years by the hag. This great beetle is known as Fmughwa the Deathgorger, and as long as the beetle is kept well fed, it is content to slumber under the layer of moss and soil and mold that makes up this cavern's floor.

After Fmughwa reached his full potential in size, the Mother of Flies set up the tribe of jinkin gremlins in this cave to serve as both caretakers and keepers of the beetle. Jinkins are diminutive humanoid creatures, devilish in countenance with scaly hides, large bat-like ears, fanged maws, and glittering, beady eyes. Keen on tinkering with magic items and the magical auras intrinsic to all forms of life, the jinkins originally had a healthy fear and respect for the Mother of Flies—this, plus her semi-regular offerings of victims or minor magic items to tinker with, kept the jinkins quite content with their charge of keeping Fmughwa fed and comfortable.

Of course, that changed several months ago. As the Mother of Flies grew negligent in “bribing” the jinkins (she essentially forgot about them as her focus on her nearing vengeance against the Council of Thieves grew foremost in her mind), the gremlins have grown less loyal in their dedication and fear. The jinkins have seen the smoke rising from near the Maggot Tree to the west, but haven't yet bothered to lead the Deathgorger to the Mother's aid simply out of sheer laziness.

There are a total of 12 jinkins lurking in the cave, dwelling in small nooks and crannies in the walls or amid the thick fungal tangle around the cave's edges. They watch from hiding as intruders make their way into their den, holding off on an attack until the beetle itself awakens or until the PCs either find one of the hiding gremlins, attempt to rob them of treasure, or begin to smear themselves with compost.

If Dog's Tongue is with the PCs, he makes sure to tell them to slather themselves liberally with the rank-smelling compost heaped near the front door—if the PCs neglect to take this step, their presence is noted 1d6 rounds after they enter the cave by the great beetle, who erupts from his torpor under the soil in the center of the cave to attack mindlessly any target not caked with the stuff. It is at this point that the jinkins join the fight. The Deathgorger doesn't attack the jinkins as long as they're filthy with smeared compost, of course.

JINKINS (12) CR 1

XP 400 each

Pathfinder Adventure Path volume #19, page 82

CE Tiny fey

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

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

hp 3 each (1d6)

Fort +0, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

DR 5/cold iron; **SR** 16

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee short sword +6 (1d3–4/19–20), bite +6 (1d2–4)

Space 2–1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6, tinkering

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st, concentration +3)

At Will—*prestidigitation*

1/day—*dimension door*

TACTICS

During Combat The jinkins rely on flanking PCs (with each other or the Deathgorger) so they can make sneak attacks in combat. If the PCs have used compost on themselves, the canny jinkins can use *prestidigitation* to clean the filth off of the PCs. (A PC can resist this unusual use of *prestidigitation* by making a DC 12 Reflex save—and swift-thinking PCs can use this tactic against the jinkins in return!)

Morale A wounded jinkin immediately flees from the cave and into the surrounding wilds.

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 18, **Con** 11, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 9

Feats Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8 (+12 jump), Bluff +6, Climb +0, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +8, Fly +0, Perception +6, Stealth +16

Languages Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tinkering (Su) A group of 6 jinkins, working together over the course of an hour, can create an effect identical to *bestow curse* (CL 6th; target must either be willing or helpless). The save DC is set by the jinkin with the highest Charisma score, and is equal to 14 plus that Charisma modifier (DC 16 for most groups of jinkins). Alternatively, the six jinkins can attempt to infuse a magic item with a curse—the nature of the curse is determined randomly. Half the time the curse simply makes the magic item unreliable so that there's a 20% chance each time it's used that it simply doesn't work, but the remainder of the time the curse creates a randomly determined drawback (see page 538 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). A jinkin can take part in a tinkering only once per day, and may only tinker with a creature or object that isn't already cursed. Once a tinkering curse is in place, it is permanent until removed.

FMUGHWA THE DEATHGORGER CR 10

XP 9,600

Advanced HD giant bombardier beetle (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 33)

N Gargantuan vermin

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 6, flat-footed 21 (+15 natural, –4 size)

hp 147 (14d8+84)

Mother of Flies

Fort +15, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +18 (6d6+18)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks trample (2d6+18, DC 29), spray acid

TACTICS

During Combat Fmughwa mindlessly attacks the closest living target, ignoring only creatures that have taken the time to coat themselves with special compost.

Morale Fmughwa fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 10, **Con** 23, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 36 (44 vs. trip)

Skills Fly –10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spray Acid (Ex) Once per round as a standard action, Fmughwa can spray a 40-foot cone of acid. Those in this area take 4d6+8 points of acid damage (DC 23 Reflex save negates).

Treasure: A search of the foul tangle of fungus encircling the cave (DC 18 Perception check) locates the jinkins' sleeping burrows and their accumulated wealth, consisting of 22 garnets worth 25 gp each and a collection of minor magic items, all of which they've tinkered with and cursed. This collection includes a *ring of the ram* (32 charges) that forces its user to make a DC 19 Will save each day (or whenever it is put on) to avoid taking 1 point of Wisdom damage, a *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th, 29 charges) that causes the user's skin color to change to a new and random hue each time it is used, a *potion of haste* that changes its user's alignment to chaotic neutral when it is used, and a pair of *boots of speed* that causes the wearer to develop painful bleeding sores on the feet that inflict 1d10 points of damage each round the boots are used.

Development: Once the troublesome jinkins are dealt with, Dog's Tongue and the PCs can get around to the task of luring the Deathgorger to the Maggot Tree. Wakening the beetle is a simple matter of digging away some of the soil or stabbing the ground with something like a spear; this causes the beetle to rise up in confusion. As long as all present in the cave wear a filthy layer of compost stink, the beetle won't attack and immediately sets to munching on bits of carrion. Any particularly large chunk of fresh carrion (if the PCs don't think of using dead jinkins, Dog's Tongue does) is more attractive to the beetle, and it'll scamper after this bait mindlessly, following as long as it can continue to smell the delicious food (although Fmughwa doesn't have the scent ability, he'll certainly follow visually once he's focused on a particular lure). At this point, leading the beetle into Hagwood to the Council encampment around the Maggot Tree is a relatively simple task—as long as the

PCs are followed by the big hungry beetle, no wandering monsters dare attack.

THE MAGGOT TREE SIEGE

Hagwood's twisted heart is this single, towering oak tree, the lair of the Mother of Flies—a hideous den known as the Maggot Tree. This thick-trunked monstrosity of massive boles, knots, splayed roots, and mazes of limbs covered in wide leaves is supernaturally immense—the result of various magical infusions and eldritch manipulations from the Mother's magic.

Below the immense tree is a wide clearing formed in the giant's shadow, and it is around the perimeter of this large clearing that the besieging Council has set up its encampment. The siege is precariously balanced at this point—the Mother of Flies has retreated to the heart of the Maggot Tree 150 feet above so she can keep an eye on the besiegers, but this (and her relative lack of area-effect attacks) keeps her from directly opposing the large number of opponents—particularly as long as the smoky fires that help to oppress her swarms persist. The Council forces, while they have a strong grip around the perimeter of the clearing, have so far been unable to reach the Mother of Flies in the Maggot Tree, for she can direct the immense tree to lash out and attack any who draw near. Until the PCs arrive, this siege is likely to last for days until the thieves finally manage to unseat the Mother from her roost high above, at which point she'll take out a fair number of the aggressors but won't be able to stand against their numbers for much longer.

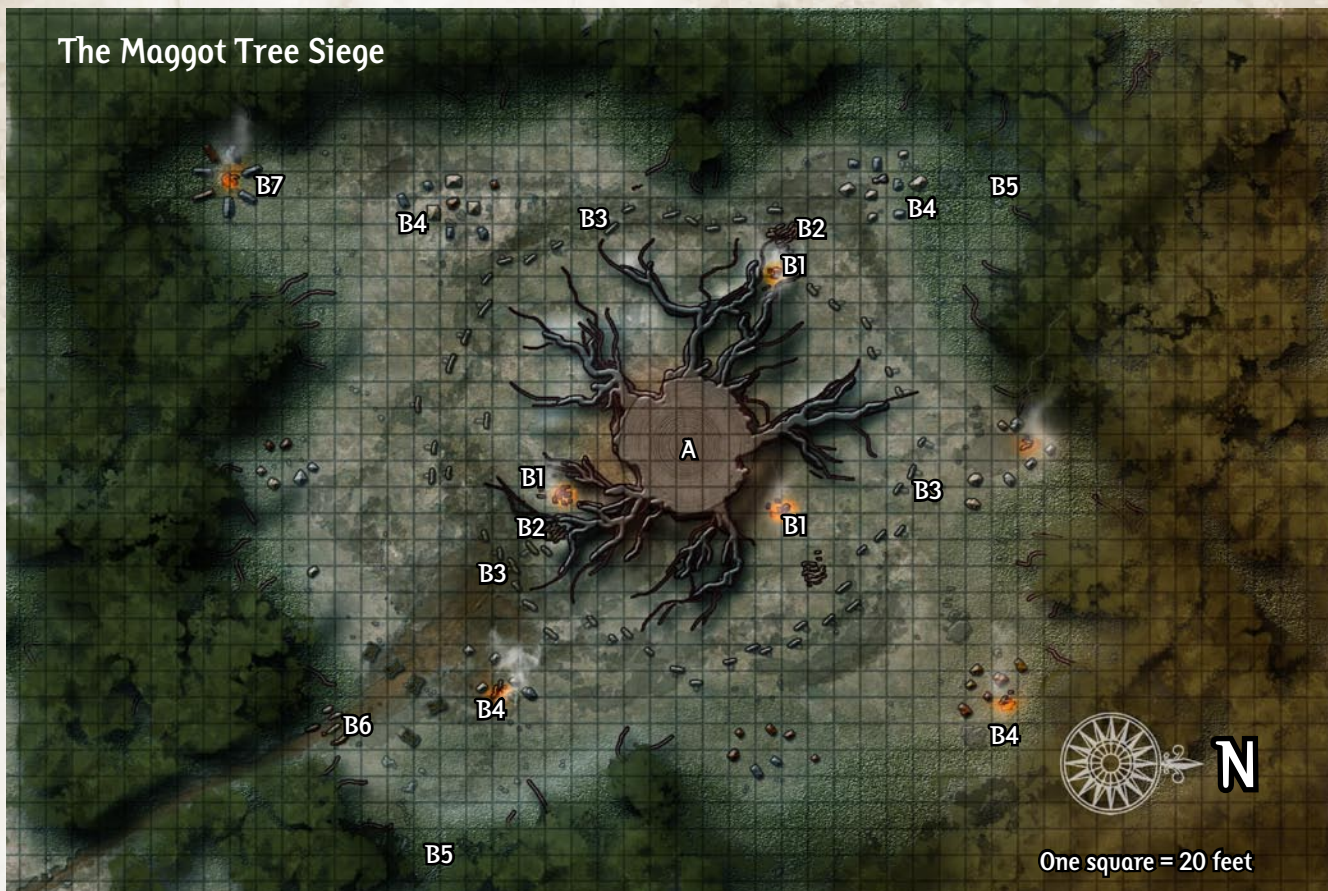
A. THE MAGGOT TREE

Close inspection reveals that the Maggot Tree is in fact a twisted knot of nearly two dozen trees (oak, redwood, and fir) that have grown into one vegetable behemoth. At ground level, the hoary trunk is creased and creviced through its thick bark, and an incredible 100 feet in diameter. Yet despite this girth, the tree appears squat compared to normal trees, even though its crown rises to a height of just over 300 feet (Hagwood's other towering trees help to cloak the Maggot Tree's immense size). At a height of 150 feet, the separate trunks of the trees magically merged to form its base branch out, widening to a tangle of upward-thrust limbs that are practically trees themselves—the crown of the Maggot Tree is its own forest in miniature. The tree sags and weeps with sap and other fluids, its branches encased in thick webs and crawling with vermin—the Mother of Flies herself dwells in a series of platforms and web-tents amid the tree's higher branches.

At the center of the tree's upper branches lies the tree's twisted core, a tangle of webs, maggots, and eldritch fetishes the Mother of Flies uses to cultivate and shape

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

The Maggot Tree Siege



the tree's growth and activity. As long as the Mother of Flies remains ensconced at this core, she can observe everything around her both visually and audibly and also via tremorsense in a 100-foot radius around the tree's trunk. She can direct the branches of the maggot tree to strike at any number of foes in a 20-foot radius of the tree's trunk or anywhere amid its branches (although no more than one attack per single target), with a +20 attack roll for 3d6+15 points of damage on a hit. In addition, the tree's upper branches are home to a dozen strange bird-like creatures called gryphs and to six spider swarms and eight swarms of biting poisonous flies (treat as wasp swarms). The gryphs are ugly stork-like monsters with six legs and a hideous habit of laying their eggs in living flesh—all of these denizens of the tree are cowed by the foul-smelling plumes of smoke rising from the campfires below, and while they'll rise to defend the tree itself from invaders, they do not seek out foes beyond the tree's reach.

The Mother of Flies strikes at the PCs via the Maggot Tree's branches as well if they do not make clear their intentions and opposition to the Council. If Dog's Tongue is with the PCs, she'll also hold back her attacks, but she'll use *message* spells if anyone comes within 240 feet of her,

warning them to not approach—and that if they help her defeat the siege, she'll grant them an audience.

It's a DC 15 Climb check to climb the Maggot Tree's lower 50 feet, but above this it's a DC 5 check due to the numerous long branches.

GRYPHS (12)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Tome of Horrors Revised 230

NE Small magical beast

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

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 15 each (2d10+4)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee bite +5 (1d6/x3), legs +5 (attach)

Special Attacks implant eggs

TACTICS

During Combat A gryph tries to attach itself to a foe to lay its eggs, then flees once it does so.

Morale A wounded gryph immediately flees back to its nest up in the Maggot Tree—if confronted there, it fights to the death.

Mother of Flies

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +8, Perception +5, Stealth +10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When a gryph hits with its legs, its six talons latch tightly onto the target, anchoring it in place. An attached gryph is effectively grappling its prey. The gryph loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 11, but holds on with great tenacity and gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls with its bite. Alternatively, an attached gryph can attempt to implant eggs in the target. An attached gryph has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached gryph can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself—if its prey manages to win a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the gryph is removed.

Implant Eggs (Ex) Once per day, a gryph can implant eggs into a helpless target or a target that it is currently attached to as a full-round action by extending an ovipositor from its abdomen and penetrating the victim's flesh by making a successful +4 melee attack. On a hit, the ovipositor inflicts 1 damage and implants 1d4 eggs into the victim's body. As long as a victim has gryph eggs implanted in his body, he is sickened as the eggs draw nutrients from his blood and flesh. The eggs grow swiftly, hatching in a mere 1d4 minutes into ravenous baby gryphs that immediately burrow out of the victim's body. This inflicts 2 points of Constitution damage per baby gryph, after which the hatchlings immediately take wing and fly away.

Treat a gryph hatchling as a bat if statistics are needed. Gryph eggs can be cut out of a victim's body with a successful DC 20 Heal check made as a full-round action that inflicts 1 point of damage per attempt. Although immunity to disease offers no special protection against gryph egg implantation, *remove disease* or *heal* immediately destroys any implanted gryph eggs.

SPIDER SWARMS (6) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 9 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

BITING FLY SWARMS (8) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 31 each (as wasp swarm—*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 275)

B. THE COUNCIL ENCAMPMENT

The range of the Maggot Tree's thrashing branches has determined the range at which

the Council has set up its camp. The thieves keep several large bonfires constantly lit, sending palls of thick smoke rising up and through the tree's branches. Spaced around these are the temporary shelters, fighting positions, and midden heaps of an armed encampment. Some distance away near the southwest edge of the clearing is a neatly arranged cluster of tents designating a second, smaller encampment placed beneath the very edges of the surrounding boughs.

The camps are alive with activity from pacing thieves who periodically seem to fire at random into the smoke-fogged branches of the tree where dark shapes are glimpsed hiding and flitting about among the foliage. Porters feed logs from large piles of cordwood into the fires, and everywhere are the sounds and activities of a military force. Sporadically spaced about the field are the broken forms of crushed and poisoned corpses, casualties of the ongoing conflict.

The forces sent by the Council of Thieves, supplemented by hired mercenaries drawn from a half dozen bandit groups similar to the Bastards of Erebus the PCs defeated in the first adventure, have set up their encampment here around the Maggot Tree. Other than occasional scuffles with monstrous vermin and a periodic clash with a gryph or a swarm of vermin, there have been no major battles since the initial attempt to storm the tree. Because of the smoky fires lit by the Council army that force the vermin into a quiescent stupor, the Mother of Flies has been unable to direct her swarms of vermin against the attackers. Likewise, the Council forces have found the tree to be largely impervious to axe and fire and have yet to safely navigate its branches. As such they are forced into a siege footing, with very few casualties on either side so far.

Two council patrols (see page 17) walk the perimeter of the camp during the day so that anyone within 50 feet of the clearing must make a Stealth check to avoid having the alarm raised (the warhounds automatically detect the scent of PCs that approach within 30 feet). If this occurs, see *The Camp Alerted* on page 24. After nightfall, these patrols are replaced by groups of 1d3 dark creepers and a dark stalker—these forces spend the day resting in their dark tents (area B7). It should be virtually impossible for the PCs to take



Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

on this entire camp with a frontal assault, especially once the alarm is inevitably raised. But by using allies recruited from the surrounding area, the resources available, and some clever planning, the PCs should be able to turn the tide of battle and make the fight much more manageable. See the Breaking the Siege section on page 26 for details on how to handle this potentially complex fight. Notes on specific locations in the encampment are listed below.

B1. Bonfires: These large, smoky fires are continuously fed with green logs harvested from the surrounding woods, augmented by various noxious additives the thieves have learned work as insect repellent. While the smoke is too thin to provide concealment, it does irritate the eyes and throat—swarms are much more impacted by the smoke and grow slow and lethargic in the presence of the foul-smelling stuff. These fires can be extinguished by direct application of 60 gallons of water (or other nonflammable liquid) or spells such as *quench*, *sleet storm*, *move earth*, *pyrotechnics*, or even *forcecage* (as an airtight box). Likewise, the smoke of a fire can be diverted away from the tree with spells such as *gust of wind*, *wall of wind*, *control winds*, or *control weather* (which could also be used to extinguish the fire).

B2. Fuel Piles: These piles of wood were cut from the surrounding forest and are used to feed the bonfires. They are considered dense rubble for movement purposes and provide cover to anyone behind them. At any given time, there is a 10% chance that 1d3 ogres are hurriedly carrying loads of wood from the pile to the nearest bonfire.

B3. Siege Mantlets: These are crudely constructed wooden frames approximately 10 feet square covered with layers of branches, foliage, hides, cloth and various other bits of debris. They've been erected in a perimeter around the Maggot Tree just outside the range of the tree's direct observation. They provide total concealment to anyone behind them.

B4. Siege Camp: The main siege camp is roughly divided into four quadrants. Bivouacked in each of these areas are 10 thieves, four ogres, a hill giant, and six warhounds, some in lean-tos or shallow pits but most just sprawling wherever they lay down. During the day, half are armed, armored, and alert at any given time; at night only 10% are in such a state of readiness, though they are further reinforced by the dark creepers and shadow mastiffs that patrol from area **B7**. Any troops slain are subtracted from this force, but do not include those patrols previously encountered in the forest.

B5. Camp Middens: The thieves and their mercenaries are lazy and not particularly clean, and have gathered these reeking piles of garbage, excrement, and assorted rotted carcasses on the outer edges of their camp sites.

B6. Baggage Train: The equipment and supply wagons brought with the attacking force are gathered here and protected at all times by eight thieves and four warhounds.

They include the camp's chuck wagon where meals are served to chow lines on rotation throughout the day. Nearby are picketed the 10 draft horses that drew the wagons.

B7. Base Camp: This marks the location of the troop commander's camp. The Council's force is led by the ranger Stiglor and his cadre of three dark stalker guild officers. Present in the camp with them are two thieves serving as aides-de-camp, as well as 12 dark creepers. Though the dark ones prefer to operate at night, since the entire glade is within the shadows of the Maggot Tree's and forest's canopy, they are able operate without penalty during daylight as well.

THE CAMP ALERTED

If the alarm is raised, activity spreads through the camp. All occupants are awake and armed after 3 rounds, and after 1 minute everyone is fully (if hastily) armored and in position. If the alarm is from the direction of the tree, the troops take positions behind the mantlets and wait for orders while the command cadre from area **B7** moves up among the baggage train with their aides shuttling orders. If the alarm is from a direction other than the tree, the nearest quadrant of the camp moves to investigate and intercept, while one quadrant maintains its vigil on the Maggot Tree (spreading out around its perimeter), and the other two quadrants hold back in reserve to reinforce wherever they seem most needed (cumulative 10% chance per round of moving in to reinforce). In these circumstances, the command staff first moves into position with the reserve quadrants but soon begins sending reinforcements from the reserves and its own numbers to quell any situations. Once an alarm is raised, the camp remains alerted for 3 hours. After that, if no further events have occurred to cause the alarm to be maintained, it goes back to its normal activities, though all chances of encountering a patrol are doubled for 24 hours.

Creatures: The dark stalkers are immigrants from Nidal that have allied with Ilnerik Sivanshin and serve to advise Stiglor—they're the primary points of contact to the Council of Thieves in the encampment. They are pallid-skinned humanoids that wear robes of filthy, tattered cloth and bear the strong odor of rotting meat. They avoid direct exposure to sunlight due to their light blindness. Likewise, their dark creeper underlings resemble smaller, even smellier versions of themselves, with gray skin and rank scraps of clothing and gear. Stiglor himself is a huge bear of a man wearing blackened scale mail. A court-marshaled former officer of the Wiscrani Dottari, his skin is scarred from long years of exposure to the elements and countless scraps. He's missing his left ear and bears scars on his left cheek due to frostbite from mountain expeditions. He is never seen without his two battleaxes.

Mother of Lies

THIEVES (42) CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

WARHOUNDS (24) CR 1/2

XP 200

Riding dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

hp 13 each

OGRES (16) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

HILL GIANTS (4) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 102 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

DARK CREEPER FOOTPADS (12) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Dark creeper rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 53)

CN Small humanoid (dark folk)

Init +9; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +1 size)

hp 44 each (3d8+2d8+22)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities evasion

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +7 (1d3+2/19–20)

Special Attacks death throes, sneak attack +2d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +1)

At Will—*darkness, detect magic*

TACTICS

During Combat The dark creepers create darkness when trying to make sneak attacks, flanking foes when they can't and following the orders of their dark stalker commanders as necessary.

Morale They fight to the death as long as any dark stalkers live—otherwise they flee if reduced to less than 10 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +14, Fly +0, Linguistics +4, Perception +13, Stealth +24

Languages Common, Dark Folk, Infernal

SQ poison use, rag armor, rogue talent (fast stealth), trapfinding

Combat Gear black smear (5 doses); **Other Gear** rag armor, masterwork dagger

DARK STALKER GUILDSMEN (3) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Dark stalker rogue 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 54)

CN Medium humanoid (dark folk)

Init +7; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +2 natural, +1 shield)

hp 89 each (6d8+4d8+44)

Fort +7, **Ref** +13, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +10/+10/+5/+5 (1d6+3/19–20)

Special Attacks death throes, bleeding sneak attack +5d6 plus 5 bleed

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th, concentration +8)

At Will—*deeper darkness, detect magic, fog cloud*

TACTICS

During Combat The dark stalkers create darkness in battle, attempting to sneak attack their opponents. They bellow orders and curses in Dark Folk at their underlings the entire time, directing them to set up flanking attacks.

Morale These dark stalkers fight to the death as long as Stiglor lives. If he falls, they immediately retreat, covering their escape with a fog cloud. They hope to flee all the way to Walcourt, and canny PCs can follow them right up to the guildhall.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 27

Feats Double Slice, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +20, Linguistics +4, Perception +16, Stealth +24

Languages Common, Dark Folk, Infernal

SQ poison use, rogue talents (bleeding attack, finesse rogue), trapfinding

Combat Gear black smear (5 doses); **Other Gear** +2 leather armor, 2 masterwork short swords

STIGLOR CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human ranger 10

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 shield)

hp 105 (10d10+50)

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 cold iron battleaxe +11/+11/+6/+6 (1d8+4/19–20/×3)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +12 (1d8+3/×3)

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

Special Attacks favored enemy (fey +4, elf +4, gnome +2), hunter's bond (hunting companions)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +8)

2nd—*barkskin*

1st—*alarm, animal messenger, longstrider*

TACTICS

Before Combat Stiglor casts an audible *alarm* on his tent every night. Before combat he casts *barkskin* and *longstrider* on himself.

During Combat Stiglor prefers to enter melee combat wielding his two battleaxes and attempting to make Two-Weapon Rend attacks on a single opponent. He pauses to use his healing magic when necessary, behind the cover of his underlings.

Morale If reduced to 30 hp, Stiglor retreats to take pot shots with his bow from a position of cover. If reduced below 0 hp, he retreats into the forest, not to be seen again in this adventure (after all, he'll need to hide not only from the PCs, but from the Council's new leaders as well).

Base Statistics AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; **Speed** 30 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Diehard, Double Slice, Endurance, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Rend, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Climb +13, Handle Animal

+12, Intimidate

+12, Knowledge

(geography) +13,

Perception +14, Stealth

+12, Survival +14

Languages Common

SQ favored terrain (forest +4, urban +2), swift tracker, track, wild empathy +9, woodland stride,

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2);

Other Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *cold iron battleaxe*

(2), masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with

20 cold iron arrows, *belt of mighty constitution* +2,

key to chest in area **D17**

BREAKING THE SIEGE

If the PCs launch an attack on the encampment and allow an alarm to be raised without some preparations first, they are likely to be quickly overwhelmed or forced to retreat. However, by making use of the addressed tactics (or additional tactics as deemed appropriate by the GM), they gain the ability to reduce the besiegers' strength and morale, and eventually force the Council agents to break off their attacks and flee.

The exact tactics the PCs take are up to them. If the PCs bring allies with them (such as the Blood Drinker redcaps or Fmughwa the Deathgorger), it's probably fastest and best to simply describe the chaos these creatures cause in their own attacks, note the Battle Points earned, and then have the PCs fight their own battle against a group of thieves and giants.

By accomplishing the goals listed on page 27, the PCs can earn the indicated amount of Battle Points ("BP"). Once they reach a total of 50 BP, the besieging forces break and crumble—giants and ogres lumber off to the east to return to their homes while the bandits flee in all directions. Dark folk who survive try to make their way back to Walcourt, while Stiglor, if he lives, flees to the northwest, hoping eventually to lie low for a few months in the Barrowood.

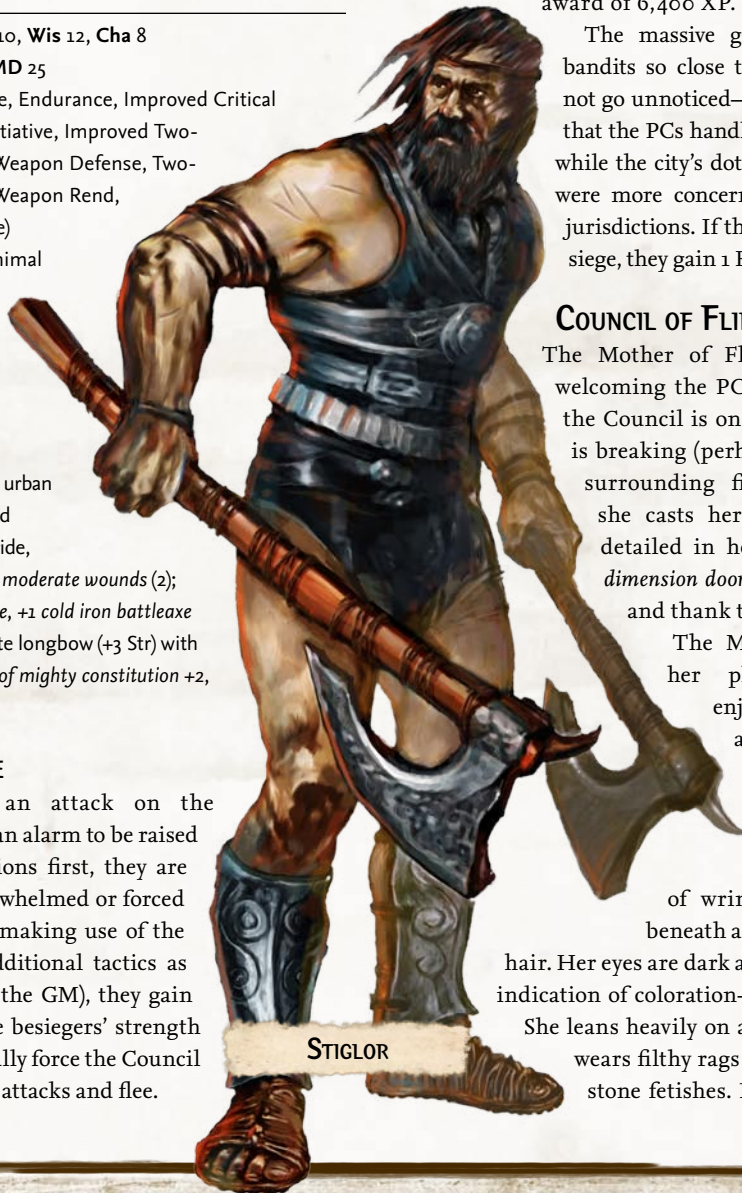
Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs experience points for any foes they directly defeat in combat during the siege as normal. For breaking the siege and forcing the Council agents to retreat, grant them an additional award of 6,400 XP.

The massive gathering of giants and bandits so close to Westcrown's walls did not go unnoticed—and neither did the fact that the PCs handled the gathering quickly while the city's dottari and the Hellknights were more concerned with bickering over jurisdictions. If the PCs defeat the Council siege, they gain 1 Fame Point.

COUNCIL OF FLIES

The Mother of Flies isn't interested in welcoming the PCs into her den, so once the Council is on the ropes and the siege is breaking (perhaps even as soon as the surrounding fires are extinguished), she casts her preparatory spells (as detailed in her stat block) and then *dimension doors* down to greet the PCs and thank them for their services.

The Mother of Flies, despite her pleasant attitude (she enjoys giving off the air of a kindly grandmother to those she isn't about to kill or eat), is a hideous crone indeed. Her face is a gray mass of wrinkles, warts, and scars beneath a mop of coarse, bark-like hair. Her eyes are dark and sagging, but lack any indication of coloration—they're flat black orbs. She leans heavily on a large gnarled staff and wears filthy rags and dozens of bone and stone fetishes. But perhaps worst of all



Mother of Flies

is the layer of maggots and crawling flies that cover her. With every step, the flies take flight, only to land on her body again whenever she comes to a rest.

The last surviving member of a once-powerful coven, the Mother of Flies wants nothing more than vengeance against the Drovenges for the murder of her kin. News that Vassindio Drovenga is dead elicits a hearty cackle from her wrinkled throat, but does not lessen her desire to see the Drovenges laid low along with their precious Council. While she is grateful for the party's assistance against her besiegers, she won't tolerate disrespect or aggression. As long as the PCs are not insulting or threatening, she gladly tells them what she knows and even provides them with some aid as a reward for their timely intervention in that "unpleasant matter with all the noise and smoke."

The Mother of Flies relates to the PCs the history of her covey and its dealings with the Drovenga family as set forth in the Adventure Background, cackling in delight at the double-crossing they perpetrated upon Sidonai and snarling in repressed fury at the retribution visited upon her kindred hags. She does not hide or apologize for the fact that she is a fundamentally evil creature and that perhaps the destruction of the covey was justified for the act of inflicting an infernal heir upon the Drovenges. If confronted with this logic, she merely smiles and acknowledges that fools should know what they are getting into when they have truck with their betters. She goes on to add that she is aware that the PCs have their own reasons for pursuing the Council of Thieves and that she merely wishes to use them for her own ends by helping them in their quest. She has no intention of double-crossing such obviously capable individuals and, in fact, does not intend to have any further dealings with them beyond this moment as long as they agree to defeat the Council. Beneath it all, the Mother of Flies seethes with a bitter anger at Ecarrdian—in many ways, he owes his very existence to her, after all!

To assist the PCs in their mission, the Mother of Flies offers them information that she has obtained about one of the Council of Thieves' secret guildhalls. She's gained this lore after years of spying, infiltration by her agents, and interrogation of captured thieves. Furthermore, she provides the PCs with magical items that she has created in order to help them on their way, provided they promise to make sure that the deaths of any Drovenges are spectacularly gruesome and that they know before their deaths that the Mother of Flies has had her touch in their fates. Using her gifts against the Council all but guarantees this message is sent. Finally, she offers to provide the PCs with a secret of such magnitude that they can use it to forever destroy Ecarrdian and Chammady Drovenga when their final conflict with the treacherous siblings occurs.

Battle Point Awards

BP Award	Actions
+1	Every 2 thieves defeated
+1	Every 3 warhounds defeated
+1	Every dark creeper defeated
+3	Every dark stalker defeated
+1	Every ogre defeated
+3	Every hill giant defeated
+6	Stiglor defeated
+1	Successful distraction diverting attention to another part of the camp.
+2	Each bonfire extinguished.
+8	The Blood Drinker redcaps ally with the PCs.
+12	Fmughwa is unleashed upon the camp.

Walcourt: The Mother tells the PCs that while the Council of Thieves maintains numerous secret guildhalls throughout Westcrown, it is the one known as Walcourt that may house their greatest asset—control of the night. Walcourt is located at the eastern edge of Rego Laina, not far from the Trivardum itself in a former guild lodge once dedicated to followers of Founder Crucisal. This complex was abandoned shortly after Aroden's death and the degradation of Rego Crua and never repatriated by the church of Iomedae in the increasingly hostile clime of Cheliox during its political upheavals. Falling into ruin over the years, Walcourt was used briefly as an orphanage and then later as a flophouse—both secretly serving as fronts for the activities of the Council of Thieves and overseen by none other than Sidonai Drovenga, the father of the siblings currently in charge of the Council. Most recently, she's come to believe that Walcourt has been given over to serve as the lair of one of the Council's most dangerous leaders—and one of the greatest allies of the Drovenga siblings—a mysterious figure most of the Council knows only as the "Lord of Shadows." According to the Mother's research, this Lord of Shadows controls the movements and actions of the shadow beasts that plague Westcrown's nights, and the fact that he's been allied all this time with the Drovenges explains a lot as to how they and their treacherous allies could move about the city unseen and uncontested at night. An invasion of Walcourt could not only reveal much of the secrecy surrounding the Council of Thieves but also give the PCs an opportunity to lift the curse of shadows from Westcrown's nights. And if such an invading force were truly lucky, it might even find one or more of the leaders of the guild within.

Gifts: The items that the Mother provides the party with are a dozen *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *wand of restoration* (14 charges), a *wand of secret door detection* (10 charges), and a *scroll of resurrection*—items she's been gathering for some time in preparation for this day.

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

Drovenge Secrets: The final information she gives the PCs is the means to drive a wedge between Ecarrdian and Chammady Drovenge and possibly even turn them against each other. The great strength of the siblings is their devotion to each other—between Chammady’s guile and Ecarrdian’s prowess in combat, the two are a formidable pair. Yet if the PCs can sow seeds of anger between them, they’ll have a much easier time defeating the Council when the final battle for Westcrown begins.

Unbeknownst to Sidonai Drovenge, when he willingly swallowed the gold coin of Mammon gifted by the Flies, he voluntarily entered an infernal pact with the archdevil. The seal for that pact is Ecarrdian himself—the fruit of the pact’s execution. As a result, Ecarrdian’s very existence is a link to his infernal *pater familias*, embodying his very traits of lust and greed. The infernal pact created a connection between Ecarrdian and his closest familial tie; Mammon had hoped this tie would be with Sidonai himself, but the father’s vanishing prevented this bond from forming. Instead, Ecarrdian’s close relationship with his sister Chammady became that bond. As a result, Ecarrdian’s very existence is connected with that of his sister. With each personal success and increase in power by Ecarrdian, Chammady’s soul has become entwined further and further with Mammon’s, such that if Ecarrdian truly comes to rule Westcrown, then Chammady’s soul will be eternally forfeit to exist as a lemure in the Infernal Court of Erebus, a plaything for Mammon’s every whim. The Mother of Flies knows that Chammady has great loyalty to her brother but suspects that were this secret to be revealed, not even her filial ties to her tiefling half-brother could overcome her desire to not succumb to such a fate—a fact that could very likely create an irreparable rift between the siblings. “And then,” the Mother says, “things should get very interesting.” She goes on to state that Sidonai was given a copy of this infernal contract, though he never bothered to really read it and the Mother doubts he ever understood its true ramifications, blinded as he was by his own ambition. Since Walcourt has been used as a repository of incriminating documents over the past several decades, chances are very good that a copy of this contract still exists somewhere within the manor, forgotten or simply unsuspected by the building’s current caretakers.

Final Farewells: Once the Mother of Flies has imparted her secrets and gifts to the PCs, she wishes them well. They are now her instruments—much to her liking, she can retreat to deeper hidden lairs and wait to see if the PCs can be the tools of her revenge without placing herself at undue risk against the consolidated fury of the Council of Thieves. She promises the PCs that they’ll have safe passage out of Hagwood, but should they return at a later date, she cannot promise they will be welcomed.

Dog’s Tongue bids his farewells to the PCs at this point as well, commenting that he’s enjoyed the opportunity to

share some bloodshed with some delightfully murderous humans but that their presence had started to grate on his nerves and he welcomes the sight of their exit from his company.

MOTHER OF FLIES

CR 14

38,400 XP

Female green hag sorcerer 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 167)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 30 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +8 natural, +4 shield)

hp 190 (9d10+14d6+92)

Fort +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +17

Immune disease, nausea, sickness; **SR** 16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +22 (1d4+5/19–20 plus weakness)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +21)
10/day—*plague’s caress*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +16)

Constant—*pass without trace, tongues, water breathing*

At Will—*dancing lights, disguise self* (DC 18), *ghost sound* (DC 17), *invisibility, pyrotechnics* (DC 19), *tree shape, whispering wind*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 14th; concentration +21)

7th (4)—*insanity* (DC 24), *plant shape III*

6th (6)—*eyebite* (DC 23), *flesh to stone* (DC 23), *shadow walk*

5th (7)—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *contact other plane, insect plague, teleport*

4th (7)—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *dimension door, phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *repel vermin* (DC 22), *scrying* (DC 21)

3rd (8)—*contagion* (DC 20), *dispel magic, fly, nondetection, suggestion* (DC 20)

2nd (8)—*acid arrow, cat’s grace, detect thoughts* (DC 19), *hideous laughter* (DC 19), *summon swarm, web* (DC 19)

1st (8)—*charm animal* (DC 18), *grease* (DC 18), *mage armor, obscuring mist, shield, silent image* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*acid splash, bleed* (DC 17), *detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat The mother of flies casts *mage armor* and *nondetection* on herself every morning and every evening.

Before entering combat, she always takes the time to also cast *cat’s grace, fly, and shield*.

During Combat The Mother of Flies directs any swarms available to her to distract foes while she tries to remain out of range with flight, using her spells against foes. She’ll retreat to the Maggot Tree core to use the tree’s attacks against attackers if possible. In melee, she uses Arcane Strike, Power Attack, and usually Vital Strike to maximize damage while allowing her to move out of melee after each attack.

Morale The Mother of Flies uses *teleport* to flee to the Court of

Mother of Flies

Ether if reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, but harbors a grudge if she's forced to do so. She might even throw aside her hatred of the Council of Thieves if the PCs force her to flee in this manner, and could show up in the final adventure as an additional foe in this case.

Base Statistics Init +0; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Ref +10; Dex 14; Skills Fly +11

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 31

Feats Arcane Strike, Blinding Critical, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Critical Focus, Deceitful, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (claw), Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +37, Craft (alchemy) +24, Disguise +17, Fly +13, Heal +20, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (planes) +21, Linguistics +5, Spellcraft +21, Swim +13

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant, Infernal, Sylvan, Undercommon

SQ bloodline arcana, mimicry

Combat Gear staff of swarming insects (10 charges); **Other Gear** headband of alluring charisma +2, ring of protection +2

PESTILENCE BLOODLINE

You were born during the height of a great magical plague, to a mother suffering from an eldritch disease, or you suffered an eldritch pox as a child, such that your very soul now carries a blight of pestilence within it.

Class Skill Heal

Bonus Spells *charm animal* (3rd), *summon swarm* (5th), *contagion* (7th), *repel vermin* (9th), *insect plague* (11th), *eyebite* (13th), *creeping doom* (15th), *horrid wilting* (17th), *power word kill* (19th).

Bonus Feats Brew Potion, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Self Sufficient, Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), Silent Spell, Toughness

Bloodline Arcana Vermin are susceptible to your mind-affecting spells. They are treated as animals for the purposes of determining which mind-affecting spells affect them.

BLOODLINE POWERS

You awaken and quicken the lurking pestilence in your own body or the surrounding world to wreak hideous malice, or to command and commune with agents of such plagues.

Plague's Caress (Sp): At 1st level, you can make a melee touch attack as a standard action that causes a living creature's flesh to break out into rancid-smelling pustules and sores for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your sorcerer level (minimum 1 round). These sores cause the victim to become sickened for the duration of the effect; this is a disease effect. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Accustomed to Awfulness (Ex): At 3rd level, you become immune to the sickened condition and gain a +4 bonus on all saving throws against effects that cause nausea or disease. At 9th level, you become immune to the nauseated condition and to the debilitating effects of disease (but you can still be a carrier of diseases).

Shroud of Vermin (Su): At 9th level, swarms no longer see you as prey. You can walk among swarms without fear of being harmed by them at all, and by taking a standard action to mentally command a swarm in which you stand, you can direct that swarm's attacks and movements as long as you have more Hit Dice than the swarm. Even when

you aren't standing amid a swarm, your body crawls with vermin, and their chitinous bodies increase your natural armor bonus by +1. At 11th level, this bonus increases to +2, and at 17th level it increases to +3.

Pestilential Breath (Su): At 15th level, the sickness within your body finally becomes so potent that your very breath is deadly. Once per day as a standard action, you can exhale a cloud of pestilence in a 30-foot cone. Those caught in the area of this miasmatic cloud receive a single Fortitude save to avoid suffering the effects of two different diseases. The DC of this save is equal to 10 + 1/2 your sorcerer level + your Charisma modifier. You can choose what two diseases you inflict on each target that succumbs to your plague breath, but they must be two different diseases chosen from the following list: blinding sickness, bubonic plague, cackle fever, filth fever, leprosy, mindfire, red ache, shakes, or slimy doom. The victim suffers the initial effects of these two



MOTHER OF FLIES

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

diseases immediately—use the diseases' frequency and save DC normally to determine further effects as detailed on page 557 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. At 17th level, you can use this ability twice per day. At 20th level you can use this ability three times per day.

Plague Carrier (Su): At 20th level, your touch inflicts mummy rot on those you strike. You can choose to suppress this ability for 1 round as a swift action. You can make a touch attack to inflict this disease on a target, or transfer it as part of an attack with any melee weapon or touch-based spell. The creature touched can resist contracting mummy rot by making a Fortitude save—the DC is equal to 10 + 1/2 your sorcerer level + your Charisma modifier.

PART THREE: THE HIDDEN WAYS OF WALCOURT

At this point in the adventure, the PCs should be ready to move directly against the Council of Thieves. Walcourt isn't the only Council guildhouse in Westcrown, but it is one of the more important ones. In particular, an investigation of Walcourt can reward the PCs with a copy of the infernal contract between Sidonai Drovenge and Mammon (something they can use to drive a wedge between Chammady and Ecarrdian), and gives the PCs a chance to put an end to the curse of shadows that haunts Westcrown's nights. Finally, they'll learn that the Council of Thieves is preparing a major assault on multiple parts of the city—and that while it's too late to stop it, what the PCs learn in Walcourt can certainly help them during the Westcrown War that dominates the events in the final adventure in the campaign.

Note that for the duration of this adventure, neither Chammady nor Ecarrdian should be encountered—they are busy planning a final set of audacious assassinations and acts of sabotage to throw Westcrown into chaos. But by defeating the vampire Ilnerek Sivanshin, to whom the Droveniges have entrusted the protection of Walcourt, they can strike their first telling blow against the thieves.

If the PCs pause before their investigation of Walcourt to meet up with their allies among the Children of Westcrown, they are congratulated on their success in Hagwood but given grim news: Jarvis Alebrecht (or whoever served as their contact in Part One) has disappeared, and it is believed he was taken captive by the Council of Thieves for his role in the Dusk Market battle. Arael solemnly asks the PCs to do whatever they can to save the man. Further complicating this matter is the news that Jarvis had a wife and child—and that they have gone missing as well! Of course, Jarvis has been taken by the Council and imprisoned in Walcourt—divinations and other magic used to track Jarvis serve as yet another clue pointing toward this location.

WALCOURT FEATURES

Walcourt once served as a social club and lodge for the adherents to Founder Crucisal (patron of the city's ferrymen and adeliers) until a century ago when Aroden fell. Since that time, it has fallen into dilapidation, serving off and on as an orphanage, alms house, flophouse for derelicts—but increasingly as a cover for the actions of the Council of Thieves. Traditionally, the keeping of Walcourt as a hidden safe house, training ground, and repository of Council documents has been the charge of the Drovenge family, but once Sidonai Drovenge fell from grace, his father allowed the vampire Ilnerek Sivanshin to take over rule of the building. Since then, Walcourt has also served as the “command center” for the shadow beasts that stalk the streets at night.

Despite the building's decrepit appearance, it is actually quite stout. The walls are of reinforced masonry, and all doors are of strong wood and can be locked from within (only a few members of the Council possess keys to these doors)—most locks in Walcourt can be picked with a DC 30 Disable Device check. The building contains a large number of particularly cleverly hidden secret doors—unless otherwise indicated, these require a DC 30 Perception check to locate. Numerous spy holes in the walls allow the inhabitants to watch from these secret passageways—a spy hole can be spotted with a DC 20 Perception check. Close inspection of the windows reveals that behind the boards each has actually been bricked over, and the roof's “sagging shingles” are merely a veneer over sturdy wooden planks. Within, ceiling heights are 10 feet and the rooms are unlit unless otherwise noted.

The wall surrounding the grounds is built of river stones with crumbling mortar and is 10 feet high. It is easily climbed (DC 10 Climb check) but has a 50% chance per round of partially breaking away beneath a PC's weight, dropping him 10 feet to the ground in a shower of rubble (1d6 points of damage) that automatically draws the attention of the roof guards or the Midnight Guard (see below).

Walcourt is magically protected as well. The building's interior (including that of the caretaker's abode and the lower levels) is under the effect of a *false vision* spell to create the illusion of empty, debris-strewn chambers occupied by the occasional drunken derelict to anyone who uses *scrying* or similar magic to peer inside. This effect is maintained by Sandor (see area D19).

Every 10 minutes the PCs spend in the aboveground levels, there is a 25% chance that they are spotted by one of Sandor's *greater prying eyes*. If not intercepted, the eye reports back to Sandor after observing the PCs for 1d4 rounds. Thereafter, the frequency increases to 50% every 10 minutes, and these eyes attempt to shadow the party from a distance, only reporting back if they near Sandor's chambers (area D19).

Mother of Lies

A number of rooms within Walcourt have been emptied of their contents, other than the occasional piece of broken furniture and bits of general rubbish. Their original purpose is not clear, and the Council has not currently put them to any other use. Combat may well spill over. These rooms do not have encounter tags within them, and while combat might spill over into an abandoned room, the room itself holds no additional peril within.

Creatures: During the day, Walcourt's grounds are empty and silent (though interlopers who don't take care to be stealthy are likely to be spotted by the roof guards at areas **E3–E4**). However, at night the shadows of the undergrowth are thick with Sivanshin's Midnight Guard, and it won't be long before intruders are attacked by a pack of four of these slaving midnight-black hounds—shadow mastiffs.

SHADOW MASTIFFS (4) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Bonus Bestiary 16

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 51 each (6d10+18)

Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5

Defensive Abilities shadow blend

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+6 plus trip)

Special Attacks bay

TACTICS

During Combat A shadow mastiff uses its bay attack throughout combat, alerting most of the other denizens of Walcourt that something has blundered into the grounds. They generally focus their attacks on any foe that carries a light source.

Morale Shadow mastiffs fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 22

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +11, Survival +10

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bay (Su) When a shadow mastiff howls or barks, all creatures except evil outsiders within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same mastiff's bay for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Shadow Blend (Su) In any condition other than bright light, a shadow mastiff disappears into the shadows, giving it

The Jarvis Factor

Jarvis Alebrecht is a wild card in this portion of the adventure. After he provided aid to the PCs at the start of this adventure, Ilnerek struck against his family while the PCs were in Hagwood. Jarvis's wife Faerlyn and daughter Glynnis were stolen from their home by dark folk and now lie imprisoned in area **F15**. Jarvis escaped a similar fate purely out of luck, and managed to track his family's abductors to Walcourt. He breaks into the manor even as Ilnerek's agents continue to search Westcrown for him.

You can use Jarvis in any way you wish. He might step in to save the PCs at the last moment if they get in over their head in an encounter in Walcourt. He might be someone the PCs encounter in a cell or trapped and have to escort safely out of the manor. He could even be an additional foe—crazed with guilt, he might see the PCs as the cause of his troubles when they encounter him in Walcourt and assume their presence here is proof of their part in his family's peril, in which case he'll attack them.

You can, of course, replace Jarvis and his family with any other NPC you've chosen to serve as a PC informant—he and his family could even be members of the Children of Westcrown if you wish. In any event, if the PCs successfully rescue Jarvis and his family, award them 6,400 XP for the good deed.

total concealment (50% miss chance). A shadow mastiff can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

CI. OVERGROWN WALL (CR 4)

This wall of the building has been completely overgrown by thick, twisted creeper vines, completely obscuring the masonry beneath all the way to the roof's eaves.

Unknown to the current occupants of the building, a long-forgotten secret door lies hidden at the base of the wall. The overgrown ivy makes it very difficult to spot (DC 40 Perception check).

Trap: The creepers on this wall make it relatively easy to scale (DC 7 Climb check), but razor-sharp, spring-loaded iron spikes are hidden in the masonry beneath the shroud of greenery across the entire face of the wall at a height above 10 feet. Each move action made by a PC within this trapped zone allows a new attack role by the spikes, and the damage caused might result in a fall.

HIDDEN SPIKES CR 4

Type mechanical; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect Atk +15 melee (2d6+3)

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

C2. CESSPIT

Concealed behind a screen of surrounding trees and brush is a gaping pit in the center of the building's backyard. The pit's walls are of crumbling earth, striped by furrows of erosion. Its interior is lost in darkness, but the hideous stench rising from it reveals it to be a cesspool.

This collapse does indeed breach Walcourt's cesspool, but it is much deeper than one would believe. The earthen hole extends downward 30 feet before penetrating the ceiling of area **F3**. A DC 15 Survival check reveals an unusual concentration of humanoid footprints around the edges of the pit, and DC 25 recognizes the marks of objects being dragged to its edge and correctly identifies many of the erosion furrows as the marks of objects tumbling down its sides. The sides of the pit can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check, but after 30 feet it opens out into the chamber below and provides no means of climbing farther. Anyone falling into the pit takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from tumbling down the steep slope, and the actual fall into the cavern below is cushioned by sludge, dealing only another 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

C3. CARETAKER'S HOUSE (CR 8)

This two-story structure is in worse shape than the nearby building. Its walls are composed of wooden planks, now deteriorated and sagging. The windows bear panes of thick, opaque glass—many broken—and are all heavily curtained from within and caked with filth. The entire structure has a definite lean to the south, where its extended upper floor has actually come to rest against the mortared wall of the larger building. Despite its forlorn appearance, a thin plume of smoke rises from the chimney, while the barest hint of candlelight escapes from a second-floor window.

Built to house a succession of caretakers retained to oversee the building and grounds of Walcourt, this abode is still inhabited by the present keeper of the almshouse, though this is little more than a cover for the thieves' guild's activities. All floors within the house consist of creaking, sagging wood (–5 penalty on Stealth checks) with walls of cracked and flaking plaster. Doors are simple wooden affairs and are not locked unless noted as such on the map. The windows are all nailed shut.

Examination of the structure's exterior at the back reveals the deterioration of the wooden walls to be much worse near floor level, with large sections of it eaten away by worms or termites over the years, revealing the rotten frame and back of the interior walls within. This was actually caused by the massive rat infestation described under area **C4**.

Creatures: The current caretaker of Walcourt is a misshapen old crone named Ophal who claims to be the granddaughter of the last Grand Steward of the Crucisal Lodge in Westcrown, and that it has since fallen on her family honor to care for the building as it has continued to serve as a mission to the poor and needy among the Wiscrani. A successful Sense Motive check opposed by her Bluff skill detects this to be a lie. In fact, Ophal is an ogre mage in the employ of the Council of Thieves and serves as both an outer watchmen and an alchemist and manufacturer of poisons. She wears her haggard crone form most of the time, and while her natural form is only 9 feet tall (rather short for an ogre mage), she prefers to remain in her Medium human form for comfort reasons—when she assumes large size, she often has to squeeze through parts of this building, and the floors sag alarmingly beneath her.

If the PCs knock at the door of the caretaker's house, Ophal opens the door cautiously after a few minutes and asks who the PCs are and what they want. If they identify themselves other than as thieves or brigands, she visibly relaxes and welcomes them in, escorting them to the sitting room (area **C4a**). She asks them to remain there while she prepares them some nice hot tea so they can talk—she gets so few visitors these days. If the PCs begin exploring and run afoul of the swarms in the dining room, she retreats to the second floor to make a stand there. Otherwise she brings them tea laced with oil of taggit (DC 25 Perception check to smell it in the tea) and makes small talk until the PCs begin to succumb before she assumes her true form and attacks. She tries to take prisoners for questioning if possible and pursues PCs beyond the Walcourt grounds if necessary, though not into crowded public areas. Ophal is unlikely to present a major threat to the PCs directly, but if she's reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, she flees by turning invisible and then gaseous, heading for the roof of Walcourt to report the event to the thieves there and waiting to reopen her attack on the PCs once they emerge from the building. If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, her nerve breaks and she flees Westcrown entirely if possible, or begs for mercy and promises to show the PCs the location of the secret door in area **D1f** above if they spare her life. She does not know the location of the infernal contract and never goes inside Walcourt or asks questions of those who do.

OPHAL

CR 8

XP 4,800

Ogre mage (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 221)

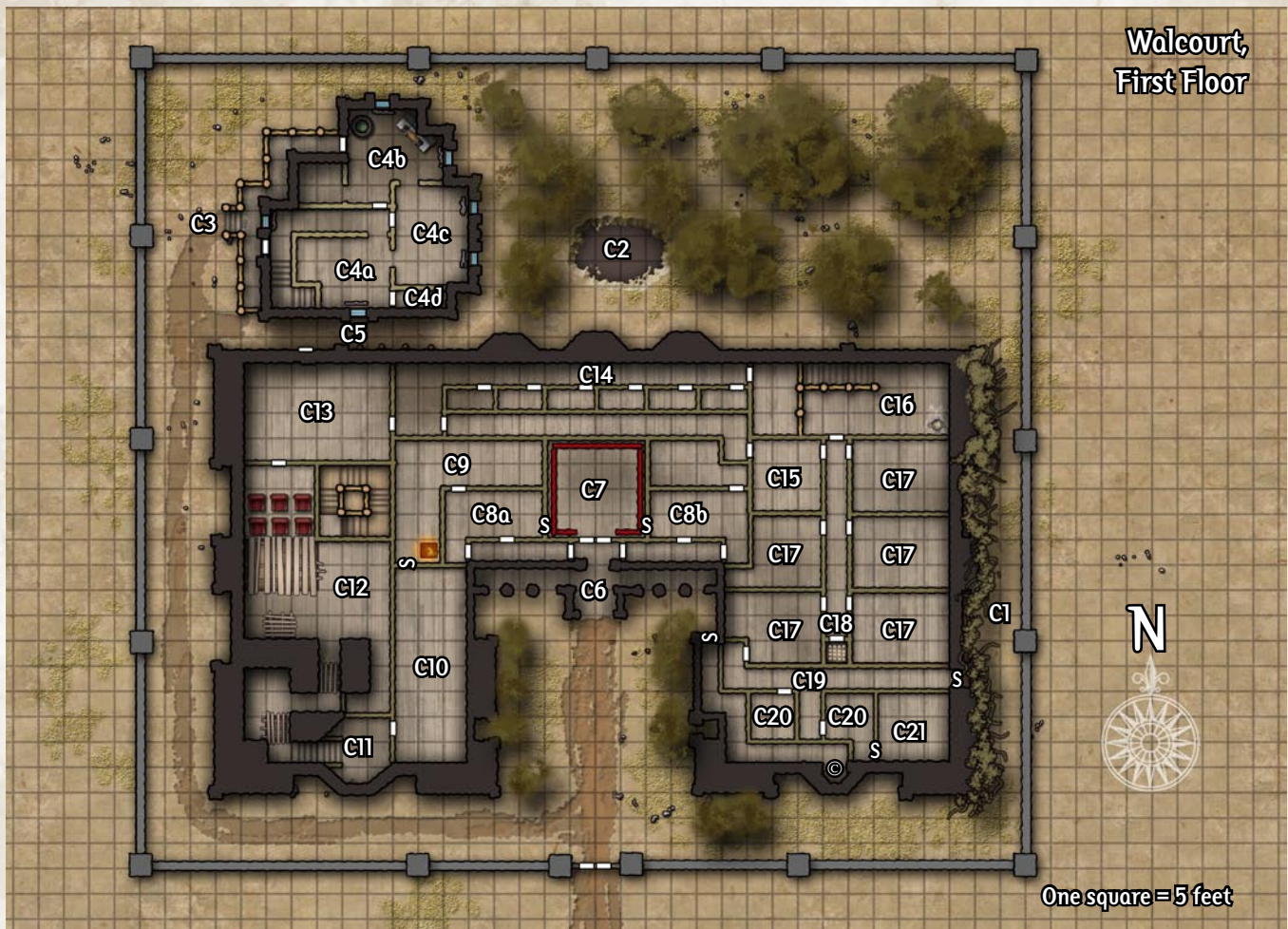
hp 92

C4. CARETAKER'S HOUSE—FIRST FLOOR (CR 4)

The lower floor of the caretaker's house consists of a sitting room (area **C4a**), a kitchen with well and pantry

Mother of Lies

Walcourt, First Floor



(area C4b), a dining room (area C4c), and a small privy (area C4d). Furnishings are worn antiques, dry-rotted and in poor repair. The pantry holds only a modicum of rough foodstuffs—most of it spoiled. Ophal keeps a banked fire in the stove with a pot of water for tea always close at hand. Spice racks hold unlabeled bottles covered in decades of grime. The dining room is in shambles with the table and chairs collapsed and apparently worm-eaten.

Creatures: The eastern wall of the dining room is riddled with dozens of holes—a DC 12 Perception check is enough to detect a hideous surging sound coming from the walls, as if of waves on a pebbly shore. This wall is in fact the abode of two rat swarms, and as soon as they notice anything entering the room, they boil hideously out of the walls to attack. Ophal knows better than to venture into the dining room, but might try to lure a PC into the room.

RAT SWARMS (2) CR 2
XP 600 each
 hp 26 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

Treasure: Three of the jars in the pantry hold 5 doses each of oil of taggit.

C5. HITCHING SHELTER

The overhang of the caretaker's house leans against the brick wall of the main building here, creating a tunnel of sorts. Lining the southern wall is a number of iron rings sunk into the masonry serving as hitching posts for mounts. A short stone stair rises to a door set into the brick wall.

Visitors could once hitch their mounts beneath the shelter of the overhang. Now the door has been bricked over on the inside, preventing entrance from this area. The bricked-over doorway is the equivalent of a reinforced masonry wall.

C6. CLOISTER ENTRANCE

A wide arch beckons into a cobbled entry foyer flanked by two cloister breezeways looking out over the yard. Two side doors

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6



open off of this foyer and a double door stands opposite the arch. Engraved in the stone lintel above this arch is a single word in the Common tongue—"Walcourt."

The side doors lead to hallways with false doors appearing to lead to locked side rooms. These are merely distractions—if the PCs waste time in these halls, the inhabitants of area **C8** can get the drop on them. A DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Survival check reveals a preponderance of footprints leading out of the far eastern end of the cloisters and a slight path worn into the ground behind the shrubs and trees growing to that side of the entry yard. This is the hidden route used by the thieves to enter the true guildhall, and the path leads to the wall behind a thick olive tree. Searches for the secret door behind this tree gain a +5 bonus if the searcher arrived at this area by following the hidden path.

C7. RECEPTION CHAMBER

Moth-eaten curtains of red velvet drape the walls of this chamber, with low-burning torches mounted on sconces between them. A large oaken table stands in the center of the room, its rickety benches pushed back against the far wall. Atop the scarred surface of the table is a human corpse, so mangled

and mutilated with cuts and slashes that it is difficult even to tell if it was a man or woman. A pool of blood has formed on the floor beneath.

Once the reception area for the flophouse where local volunteers would supposedly assign homeless drifters (all low-level members of the guild serving as decoys) beds for the night, this room has been turned into a trophy room of sorts. The body on the table has been dead for several hours and is none other than Vassindio Drovenge. His lower jaw has been cut away, and a set of quieting needles transfix his mutilated body. His body was placed here after he was tortured to death by his own grandchild Ecarrdian, left as a spectacle for all to see the changing of the guard that has occurred in Westcrown's underworld. Although mutilated, the identity of the unfortunate corpse can be gleaned with a DC 25 Knowledge (local or royalty) check. The quieting needles are, ultimately, an unnecessary measure, as the shame of his death has done more to end the elder Drovenge than anything else—he has no desire to return to life.

Development: Several novice rogues assigned to play the role of derelicts wait in areas **C8a** and **C8b**, one each observing at tiny spy holes cut through the wall behind the curtains to the east and west. If one notices the PCs

Mother of Lies

enter, he stealthily uses a rapier blade inserted through the peephole to part the curtains slightly (he suffers a -4 penalty on his Stealth check to do this unnoticed). If the PCs are obviously not other derelicts looking for a place to stay, the rogues attack—half charge through the secret door while the others rush through the cloisters to try and gain flanking positions for sneak attacks. If the other room of rogues was not already alerted, they join the battle in a similar fashion after 3 rounds.

C8. FLOPHOUSES (CR 6)

Each of these rooms is littered with assorted rags and a number of tattered bedrolls and is, for all appearances, a common room where local drunks, indigents, and homeless folk can find a warm place to sleep at night.

Creatures: Each of these rooms seems at first to contain a group of six vagrants, but these are all in fact novice rogues loyal to the Drovenge siblings who have been charged with guarding the lower floor of Walcourt. This task is as much an initiation as it is a delaying tactic meant to alert the hall's true defenders elsewhere, for once the novice thieves attack, they fight loudly. Their tactics for battle are described in area C7. A battle in one of these rooms draws the rogues from the other area C8 in 1d4+2 rounds.

NOVICE THIEVES (6)

CR 1

XP 400

Human rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; Senses Perception +4

DEFENSE

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

hp 15 (2d8+6)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will -1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +3 (1d6+1/18-20)

Ranged hand crossbow +3 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat Confronted here in relatively tight quarters, half the rogues take a stand against the PCs while the others flee through the secret doors through area C7 to try to come around and flank the enemy.

Morale Eager to please their new masters, these novices fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +6, Appraise +6, Bluff +5, Climb +5, Disable Device +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +4, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +6

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding

Gear studded leather, masterwork rapier, hand crossbow with 20 bolts, 25 gp

C9. SOUP KITCHEN (CR 9)

This room has been set up as a soup kitchen with two trestle tables running down its center. A kitchen area is cobbled together in the southern alcove near a small fire pit that holds a large cauldron for preparing meals. The fire box is currently unlit and the cauldron empty.

Stacked beside the fire box are a number of sacks of meal for making the thin gruel the kitchen serves and a large sack of stale bread. A search behind the sacks of meal with a DC 15 Perception check reveals that a portion of the wall, roughly 3 feet in diameter and about a foot off the ground, has been chipped through.

This hole in the wall is part of the initiation process for the novice rogues. They are not told of its existence, and they must find it on their own. It is also a deadly trap that thins the ranks of many who attempt to use it—a guillotine blade has been mounted in a decorative frame in area C10 above the hole and set to drop on anyone who crawls through. The deviousness of the trap is such that searching the crawlway itself is not sufficient to find the trap, as it and its mechanism are on the far side of the wall, resulting in a particularly high Perception check to notice it from area C9 (the check is automatic if made from area C10). Furthermore, crawling through the hole for a creature of Medium size requires squeezing and a resulting -4 penalty to AC.

GUILLOTINE TRAP

CR 9

Type mechanical; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +20 melee (10d6/18-20)

C10. DINING ROOM

This chamber bears the ornamentation of an elegant dining room with a fine mahogany table surrounded by eight padded chairs. Upon the table are settings for each chair, complete with crystal goblet, silver, and fine porcelain. A folded card stands tented upon the place setting at the head of the table.

This chamber is designed to serve as the beginning of the test for novices in the guild. The guillotine trap

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

is clearly visible from this side of the wall. The folded card on the table reads in elegant Common script, "You have survived your first exam, and so begins your test for admission. Beyond the west door lies the remainder of your test. The grading system is simple: survive and be welcome, guild brother; die, and rest easy knowing your body becomes a lesson for your betters."

Treasure: The fine place settings are worth a total of 1,640 gp but are delicate and bulky—likely to lose 10–50% of their value due to breakage unless carefully packed in padding.

C11. TEST ENTRANCE

This chamber is empty save for a stairwell descending to the west. A plaque on the lintel above, illuminated by a single oil lamp, says, "Your test lies beyond. Good luck, but know that only one will be admitted. How you resolve this is up to you." Suspicious brown stains mar the flagstones of the floor.

This antechamber merely served as a final warning before the guild test began and served to encourage hopefuls to attempt it only one at a time. The few novices with some amount of scruples would agree for one to go ahead and the others to wait until the first's completion of the test. Most, however, resorted to their own culling process, as evidenced by the old bloodstains on the floor.

13. TESTING CHAMBER (CR 11)

This chamber once consisted of a series of challenges and traps to test the novice rogues of the guild. Most of these have been disarmed since the dark folk have assumed control of this portion of the building, except for the spiked pit traps (marked on the map) to which the dark creepers have thoughtfully added an element of poison. Beyond the initial series of traps and corridors, the room opens into a larger area to the north, likewise seeded with pit traps, its ceiling 20 feet high and its floor cold flagstones. The upper 10 feet of the western portion of the north wall is actually an *illusory wall* (CL 15th, Will DC 20) that hides a terraced viewing gallery with a half-dozen comfortable chairs for guild officials to watch aspirants perform, as the wall is transparent from the north. The center of the illusory portion of the wall appears to have a door in it that must be reached by climbing or flight. Anyone successfully avoiding the large pit beneath the



wall and then climbing up to the illusory portion must make a DC 18 Reflex save once he reaches the illusory portion and his hand passes through unexpectedly (the illusion cannot support the climber's weight) or fall the 20 feet to the bottom of the pit (2d6 falling damage plus spikes—see trap description). Such a fall allows an automatic Will save to disbelieve the illusion with a +5 bonus.

Creatures: Six dark creeper footpads occupy this chamber and are camped in the main portion of the room, enjoying a feast of rancid dog meat from a recently captured stray. A bored dark stalker guildsman watches over them from the viewing gallery. The dark creepers are alerted if any of the room's traps are sprung and prepare an ambush after cloaking the northern portion of the room in darkness. Once the ambush is sprung, the dark stalker gathers the dark creepers from area C13 and prepares a second ambush in the viewing gallery to be sprung as soon as anyone makes it through the illusory wall.

DARK CREEPER FOOTPADS (6) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 44 each (see page 25)

DARK STALKER GUILDSMAN CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 89 (see page 25)

Trap: Four spiked pits can be encountered in this area—three 5-foot-diameter pits to the south and one larger one to the north. All four pits have cleverly hidden lids that snap open as soon as any appreciable weight (a Small or larger creature) is put upon them.

SPIKED PITS CR 6

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 30-ft.-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each plus blackadder venom [Fort. DC 11, 1/rd. for 6 rds., 1d2 Con, cure 1 save]); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; multiple targets for the large pit (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-15-ft. area)

C13. MEETING ROOM (CR 8)

A wide, oaken table sags under the weight of long years of use. Scattered around it are a number of mismatched chairs. A bricked-over doorway stands in the north wall. The stuffy chamber smells strongly of stale sweat and the reek of filthy bodies.

Mother of Lies

Creatures: Once a meeting room for guild officers judging new aspirants, this chamber has been taken over as a camp by four dark creeper footpads. They respond to alarms as described in area C12.

DARK CREEPER FOOTPADS (4) CR 4

XP 1,200 each
hp 44 each (see page 25)

C14. GUILDSMEN'S QUARTERS

A series of small private chambers opens off of this hall, each sparsely furnished with a simple bed, chest, and night table. A larger room with accommodations for two is at the far end of the hall.

All of these chambers bear the reek of dark folk, and the bed sheets are fouled and dirty. These chambers once served as quarters for guild officers—largely depleted in the recent pogrom enacted by Ecarrdian and Chammady as well as the foolhardy assault upon Hagwood. More recently, dark stalker guildsmen have taken up quarters here, though none are currently present.

C15. ARMORY

The walls of this room have been hung with racks for weapons and stands for suits of armor, although most are now empty.

Treasure: Most of the contents of the armory have been emptied by the Hagwood raid or the coming assassination coups, but there still remain three suits of studded leather armor (one Small), seven short swords, three masterwork daggers, 12 short bows, and a dozen quivers holding 20 arrows apiece. A thorough search (DC 17 Perception check) turns up three flasks of *oil of keen edge* and one of *silversheen* hidden among some polishing cloths.

C16. GUARDROOM (CR 10)

Stairs descend from the upper floor to this chamber holding two tables and a scattering of chairs. A single brazier smolders in one corner, giving off only minimal light and doing little to cover the reek of curdled milk and unwashed bodies that fills the chamber.

Creatures: This stuffy room has been taken over by a force of four dark creeper footpads led by a dark stalker guildsman. They attack any non-dark folk that enter, whether members of the guild or otherwise. These dark folk reinforcements were brought in by Sivanshin as part of the recent coup and have loyalty only to him—not to the Council or the guild.

DARK CREEPER FOOTPADS (4) CR 4

XP 1,200 each
hp 44 each (see page 25)

DARK STALKER GUILDSMAN CR 8

XP 4,800
hp 89 (see page 25)

C17. BUNKROOMS (CR 4)

This chamber holds a half-dozen bunks and a single low table surrounded by four chairs.

Each of these bunkrooms was originally utilized for members of the guild staying at the guildhall. Though the membership did not normally reside here, at any given time there were a few dozen rogues on hand for defense. The bunks are simple wood frame affairs, and each room likewise holds a table with chairs and an unlit oil lamp. The chambers are currently empty of guild members, as they were all called upon for the coup, executed in the coup, or sent to Hagwood as part of the assault force.

Creatures: The first of these rooms the PCs enter is infested—a swarm of dark gray rats with glowing red eyes seems to seethe out of the shadows along the walls to attack. This is a swarm of shadow rats, dangerous pests from the Plane of Shadow and evidence that the shadow beast taint may well be focused in the area.

SHADOW RAT SWARM CR 4

XP 1,200
NE Tiny undead (swarm) (*Tome of Horrors III* 184)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)
hp 39 (6d8+12)
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities half damage from piercing and slashing, incorporeal form, shadow blend; **Immune** swarm traits, undead traits

Weaknesses swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee swarm +4 (2d6–2 plus 1d4 Str and distraction)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Special Attacks distraction (DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat The rats attack the closest target, preferring to attack foes that carry light sources.
Morale The swarm fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 12

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +4 (+8 jump), Climb +10, Fly +0, Perception +9, Stealth +19

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Incorporeal Form (Su) A shadow rat swarm can, as a standard action, assume an incorporeal form for up to 1 hour per day. In this form, the swarm loses its natural AC bonus but gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC. While in this form, the shadow rat swarm is AC 16 (+2 deflection, +2 Dex, +2 size), touch 15, flat-footed 13. The shadow rat swarm can still swarm attack corporeal opponents while in its incorporeal form, but its attack only inflicts Strength damage and cannot distract foes or cause physical damage. The shadow rat swarm gains the incorporeal subtype while using this ability.

Shadow Blend (Ex) A shadow rat swarm can disappear into the shadows as a move action, gaining total concealment in all levels of illumination save bright light.

Strength Drain (Su) A shadow rat swarm deals Strength damage to living foes over which it swarms. A creature reduced to 0 Strength cannot move but does not die—at least, not until the swarm's physical damage takes its toll.

C18. TRAPPED DOOR (CR 9)

Trap: Anyone who attempts to open this door causes a 5-foot section of the floor to slope downward as the door flies open, dumping the victim into a 10-foot-deep spiked pit.

SPIKED PIT

CR 9

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each plus deathblade [Fort. DC 20, 1/rd. for 6 rds., 1d3 Con, cure 2 saves]); DC 25 Reflex save avoids; multiple targets for the large pit (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-15-ft. area)

C19. ABANDONED HALLWAY

The door to this hallway from the nearby bunkroom has not been used in years and has swollen in its frame, becoming stuck fast (Break DC 23). The hallway beyond has more than an inch of undisturbed dust layering the floor. Once a series of storage chambers for the guildhall, this area has been neglected and unused for nearly a century, which suits the inhabitant of area C21 just fine.

C20. STOREROOM

This storeroom is thick with dust and discarded furniture, equipment, and assorted junk. Rat droppings and signs of gnawing and moth damage abound.

The guild stored various items and discarded objects in these chambers, which are largely forgotten today. The concealed door in the room next to area C21 is hidden behind an old chest of drawers with a broken mirror. It can be found with a DC 17 Perception check, but is clearly visible if the furniture is moved. Moving the furniture automatically alerts the inhabitant of area C21.

C21. FORGOTTEN STORAGE (CR 8)

Beyond the hidden door is another storeroom, likewise piled with dusty crates, sheet-draped furnishings, and less-identifiable objects pushed back against the walls in great piles. Before the far wall is a desk, its wood stained black from the long years. Atop it rests a worm-eaten blotter and an unlit tallow candle burned down to little more than an amorphous lump. Slumped in a chair behind the desk is a skeletal form wearing a leather jerkin and a tattered tricorn hat. A gold eyepatch obscures part of its cadaverous face.

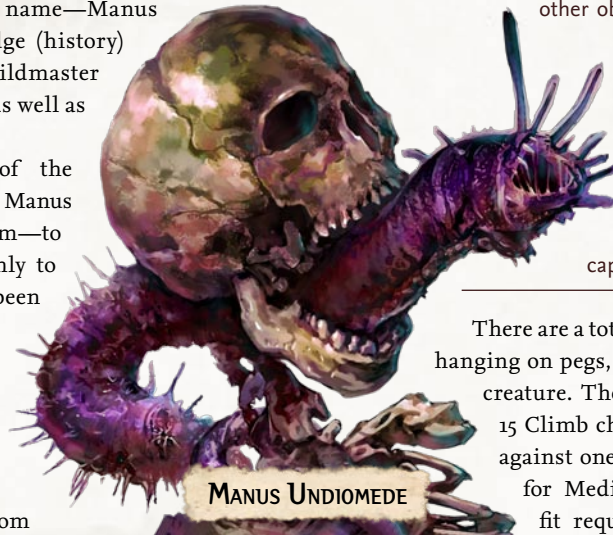
This storeroom has lain sealed and forgotten for more than 50 years. At one time it served as the clandestine office of a former guildmaster who disappeared after



Mother of Lies

his noble sponsors decided to move the leadership in another direction. Searching the desk drawers reveals much of the guild's operation and organization from those days, though it had many differences from the current operation. A DC 10 Perception check can find reference to the guildmaster's name—Manus Undiomedede. A DC 20 Knowledge (history) check recalls his role as guildmaster among the Council of Thieves, as well as his unexplained disappearance.

Creature: Catching wind of the Council's decision to replace him, Manus fled to this—his secret sanctum—to plot his escape and revenge, only to realize that he had already been poisoned at a previous meal with a slow-acting toxin. He writhed in his chair as the magical poison caused rot grub eggs to hatch in his stomach—once hatched, the grubs swiftly consumed him from within. A DC 20 Perception check notices the withered and twisted larval husks that still rest in the hollow of his ribcage. Unfortunately the horrific nature of his death and his own unadulterated evil have not allowed him to rest easily, changing him into a horrid undead creature and incorporating his own killers into his form. Manus Undiomedede is now a mohrg, and has spent the last 5 decades in this small room quietly contemplating a revenge that he'll never achieve.



MANUS UNDIOMEDE

CR 8

XP 4,800

Mohrg (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 208)

hp 91

TACTICS

During Combat Manus is likely alerted to the presence of the PCs, and if so, continues to play dead until they come within reach or his true nature is discovered. He readies an action to strike out with his tongue against the first person that comes within range.

Morale If reduced to below 40 hp, Manus attempts to flee the room with a tumbling dive (Acrobatics +11) and hide. He then begins to roam the halls of Walcourt, taking out his vengeance upon all those he finds. The PCs could run across signs of him later in rooms of freshly slain rogues before meeting him for a final confrontation.

Treasure: Manus's gold eyepatch is worth 150 gp. A search of his desk locates an *assassin's dagger*, three *potions of invisibility*, and a bag of 12 flawless citrines worth 200 gp each.

C22. GUILDHALL ENTRANCE

The cramped passage leads to a small chamber hollowed out of one of the building's buttresses. Here a narrow shaft rises into the darkness above without ladder or other obvious means of surmounting its height. Strangely, hanging on the wall opposite this shaft are a number of wide-brimmed hats—everything from a farmer's straw cover to a fisherman's hat, a safari cap, and even a naval captain's tricorn.

There are a total of 13 hats of assorted sizes hanging on pegs, each suitable for a Medium creature. The shaft itself requires a DC 15 Climb check, as a climber can brace against one wall as he ascends, though for Medium climbers it is a tight fit requiring squeezing and a –4 penalty to AC. Unless the climber succeeds on a Stealth check opposed by the guard at area D2 taking 10 on his Perception check, he will be heard climbing and attacked as explained below.

D1. CARETAKER'S HOUSE—SECOND FLOOR

The floor of this level has a perceptible tilt to the south, though this does not interfere with movement. Located here are three guest bedrooms (areas D1a), a storage closet of broken shelves holding dust-covered linens (area D1b), Ophal's bedroom (area D1c), a living area (area D1d) off of which lies a lavatory complete with a water barrel, small fireplace, and claw-footed bathtub (area D1e), and an adjoining dressing room (area D1f).

Behind a rack of moldering dressing gowns in the dressing room is a secret door (DC 28 Perception check) accessing the main building where the house leans up against it. A hidden access door to the attic is in the hallway and can be found with a DC 17 Perception check. Ophal's room has a simple old brass bed and night table near the window upon which sits a single smoldering taper (an all-clear signal to the thieves' guild when it is lit).

D2. HANGMAN'S ROOM (CR 6)

This garret chamber is plain and unadorned. An open shaft in the floor leads down near the south wall.

Creatures: Two Council cutthroats lurk in the dark here at all times. One wears *goggles of night* and is armed with a heavy 50-foot length of rope ending in a noose. He

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

is tasked with strangling any intruders ascending the shaft below. Only those who wear tricorn hats are safe, for wearing these is a sort of “password” that allows allies to ascend into the room without fear of mayhem.

In order to noose a foe, the thief must first make a ranged touch attack with his noose to drop the loop around the target’s neck. He then immediately jerks it upward while his companion helps him haul on it. The attacking thief must make a CMB check (modified by +2 for the aid provided by his friend) against the victim’s CMD. With a success, the victim is dragged into the air and immediately begins to suffocate. If he makes a DC 20 Fortitude save, he can gulp a deep breath and resist the effects suffocation for 2 rounds per point of Constitution. Otherwise, he must make a DC 10 Constitution check each round (the check DC increases by +1 each round) to avoid of suffocation (see page 445 of the *Pathfinder Core RPG Rulebook* for details). A hanging character has the grappled condition, and can escape this fate by making a DC 30 Escape Artist check or by beating his captor’s CMD (though the noose grants a +10 bonus to the thief’s CMD score for the purposes of this check, resulting in CMD 29). Cutting the wildly thrashing rope (AC 20, hp 5) can also save the victim, but doing so drops him back into area **C22**.

If the PCs manage to avoid this trap, or manage to engage the thieves in combat, the thieves abandon their post and retreat into area **D3** to join their kin there in preparing a defense of the second floor.

THIEVES (2) CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

Ranged noose +8 ranged touch (special)

Gear *goggles of night* (one thief only)

D3. GUARDROOM (CR 8)

Creatures: A group of four Council cutthroats huddle nervously around a table with a single candle, rolling bones. They are among the last of the rank-and-file members of the guild who haven’t been assigned tasks, and are extremely fearful of the other inhabitants in the guildhall. A curtained alcove holds a spy hole for keeping an eye out for the guards in area **D2**.

THIEVES (4) CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

D4. LONG HALL (CR 9)

This hallway stretches for over fifty feet with only an occasional closed door to break its length. Two candle sconces provide a dim illumination among it many shadows.

This hallway is actually a trap. The far wall is in fact only 35 feet away, but is covered by a *permanent image* at its end (CL 15th, Will DC 22) to appear much longer. Midway along its length is a covered pit trap that drops anyone stepping on it 20 feet into the pit in area **C18** below. The sound of the trap activating draws the shadow guards from area **D5**, as well as those in area **D3** if they have not already been dealt with.

SPIKED PIT CR 9

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each plus deathblade [Fort. DC 20, 1/rd. for 6 rds., 1d3 Con, cure 2 saves]); DC 25 Reflex save avoids; multiple targets for the large pit (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-15-ft. area)

D5. SHADOW SENTRIES (CR 7)

Creatures: Three more Council thieves lie in wait here, ready to ambush any intruders thrown into chaos by falling prey to the pit trap in area **D4**.

THIEVES (3) CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

D6. ABANDONED AMBUSH

This guardroom has been rigged with a large spring-loaded spear trap designed to punch through the thin eastern wall onto any hapless individuals in the corridor beyond, but though set, no one is stationed here to use the manually activated trap. Instead, several dark-clothed humans lie sprawled upon the floor in pools of rapidly congealing blood that appear to have been crudely mopped up.

This guardroom was manned by four Council cutthroats who were recently murdered by the dark folk in area **D30** who could no longer resist their bloodthirsty nature and took out their bloodlust on the nearby rogues. All of the rogues’ possessions have been taken by the murderous dark folk.

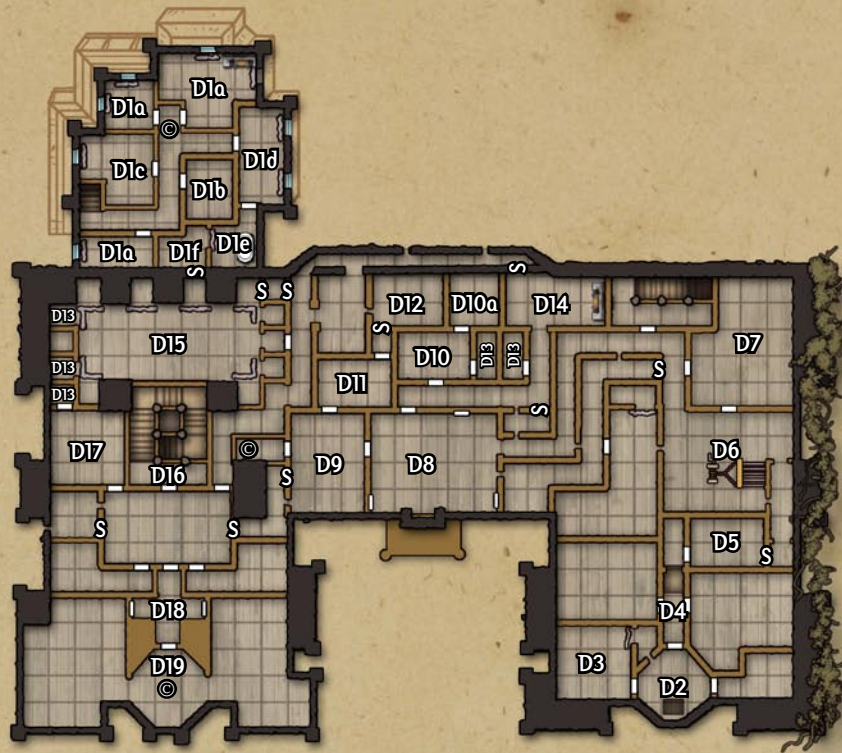
The trap, if triggered, causes the long nest of spikes to punch through the thin wall into the 5-foot square in the hallway to the east (Atk +15 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d8+5 damage each).

D7. UPPER ARMORY (CR 9)

The contents of this mostly empty armory seem mainly to consist of badly damaged weapons and ruined pieces of armor.

Mother of Lies

Walcourt, Second Floor



N



One square = 5 feet

Creatures: A force of six dark creepers is posted in this chamber. They are currently passing around several blood-soaked trophies gathered from the four thieves they murdered in area D6, taking turns sucking the blood from the gear as if licking sauce from a delicious meal. They attack any intruders with delighted shrieks.

DARK CREEPER FOOTPADS (6) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 44 each (see page 25)

D8. THIEVES' LOUNGE (CR 12)

This room is warm and inviting, with a small cheery fire on the hearth, thick rugs on the floor, and a number of comfortable-looking chairs. A sideboard holds a pair of tapped kegs and a pile of drinking jacks next to a small pile of firewood. Many doors exit from the chamber.

Off-duty thieves could relax in this room over a warm meal or a cup of ale. It is still used occasionally by those few remaining guild members still in residence, but is empty at this time.

Trap: Of the chamber's many doors, three are in fact false doors that bear wasp arrow traps that trigger if attempts are made to open them. One hides a secret door which, if discovered, can be opened safely without activating the trap.

WASP ARROW TRAPS (3) CR 9

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d8+4/x3 plus giant wasp poison [Fort DC 18, 1/rd. for 6 rds., 1d2 Dex, cure 1 save])

D9. OCCUPIED BUNKROOM (CR 7)

This chamber holds a half-dozen bunks and a single low table surrounded by four chairs.

Creatures: This room are still used by the guards posted on the rooftops. During the day it is empty, but at night it houses all of the thieves normally stationed on the roof above—there is a 50% chance if they're here that all but one is sleeping after their guard duties; the thieves always keep at least one of their number on watch due to mistrust of the dark creepers that dwell elsewhere in Walcourt.

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

THIEVES (5)

CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

D10. DAYMASTER'S OFFICE

This simple office is outfitted with an elegant desk and chair. A tall cabinet stands to the northwest.

This office is currently abandoned after the previous daymaster was murdered by the Drovenge siblings. If Maglin survived his tangle with the PCs at the start of this adventure and escaped, he may well be found here, sifting through the contents of the cabinet in an attempt to make sense of the hundreds of files stored within.

Area **D10a** is a small and empty bedroom once used by the daymaster but now abandoned as well.

Treasure: The cabinet contains hundreds of documents that describe the daily operations of the Council of Thieves, including names of fences and informants. This information is worth 1,500 gp if turned over to the dottari or the Hellknights.

D11. NIGHTMASTER'S OFFICE

This simple office is outfitted with an elegant desk and chair. A tall cabinet stands to the northwest.

This room is similar to area **D10** save that its paperwork pertains to guild rolls, a listing of pending night jobs, and targets of future jobs. The room shows signs of recent use and has a sour odor about it.

Treasure: The paperwork in here contains extensive lists of guild agents, as well as a list of current long-running jobs. These documents are worth 1,500 gp to the dottari or the Hellknights, but should also serve to alert the PCs to the extensive nature of riots, assassinations, and violence the Council has planned for the near future. Unfortunately, no exact details of these future events can be found here—the Droveniges are too canny to let their exact plans for Westcrown's future sit around out of their direct control.

D12. NIGHTMASTER'S CHAMBER (CR 10)

This filthy bedroom features a sagging bed and a small writing desk and chair. The reek of spoiled food and unwashed flesh is thick in the air.

Creatures: A pair of dark stalker guildsmen share this room. They are deeply engrossed in a floor plan showing the layout of a dottari stronghold, and do not notice the PCs until they enter the room. Once they do, though, they hiss in rage and fight to the death.

DARK STALKER GUILDSMEN (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 89 each (see page 25)

D13. PRIVY

This chamber is a simple privy with the usual features—Walcourt features extensive use of chamber pots, and most show few signs of recent use.

D14. KITCHENETTE

A small fireplace and grill are set into one wall, and the opposite holds a closed cupboard. A small table with a few chairs sits in the center of the room.

This chamber allowed guild members to prepare themselves light meals when off duty. The cupboard holds assorted foodstuffs that are on the verge of spoiling. A spigot in the south wall provides potable water with a metallic taste from the roof cistern.

D15. COUNCIL CHAMBER (CR 11)

This grandiose chamber is dominated by a massive slate table surrounded by leather-bound chairs. Black curtains cover the walls at intervals, and between them hang works of art in gilded frames. A chandelier of black iron dangles from the center of the ceiling, but its fat, black candles are currently unlit. An elegantly enameled tinder box sits in the center of the table.

This is one of many chambers across the city where the Council of Thieves held its formal and secret gatherings. It is not currently in use due to the coup, but is no less dangerous for that. The curtains hide alcoves, perfect for posting unseen guards. Two of these serve as privies, and one holds the Council's secret entrance into Walcourt.

Trap: The council chamber also contains a deadly trap. If any living creature remains in the room for more than 3 rounds without lighting at least one of the chandelier's candles, a number of overlapping *cone of cold* effects spray from no less than a dozen different hidden nozzles spaced throughout the area, filling the entire room (including the alcoves) with devastating cold. Although there are multiple cones, their overlapping effects do not stack.

CONE OF COLD TRAP

CR 11

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; Reset automatic (after 3 round delay)

Effect spell effect (*cone of cold*, 15d6 cold, DC 20 Reflex half);

multiple targets (all targets in the room)

Mother of Lies

Treasure: There are a total of seven paintings in here, all works of art by past and present master painters of Cheliah. They are also all stolen and have long been sought after by the authorities. Each is worth 2,000 gp. The tinder box is worth 100 gp and contains a small amount of ash in addition to the regular items. This ash radiates faint divination and is the key to opening the secret door at area F7 when smeared in the eyes, though this causes watering and irritation and reduces vision by half until it is washed out. There are 12 applications remaining, and each lasts for 1 hour. See area F7 for more details.

D16. DUNGEON STAIR

This twisting stair descends 50 feet to the subterranean level of the guildhall. It has a worn wooden railing, and a cool breeze emanates from below.

D17. STIGLOR'S CHAMBER

This bedchamber bears the marks of heavy use, its furniture battered and nicked by weapons play and its walls marred by errant blows. A pair of armor stands is located beside the fur-covered bed, one empty and the other bearing a suit of blackened studded leather armor. A huge, heavy footlocker rests beside the bed.

Treasure: This chamber served as the quarters of Stiglor during his visits to the city. Most of his belongings were taken with him to Hagwood. The huge footlocker is locked (DC 30 Disable Device check or Stiglor's key to open) and holds Stiglor's accumulated treasure in the form of assorted gems worth a total of 5,780 gp along with half a dozen dried human heads kept as trophies from past foes. Folded neatly at the bottom of the footlocker is Stiglor's spare suit of *+1 shadow studded leather armor*—armor Stiglor favored for more stealthy missions than called for by his latest foray.

D18. TRAPPED INTERSECTION (CR 6)

This is a cross-shaped intersection with a door for each compass direction. Each door has been painted blue and features the carving of a serpentine draconic head.

Trap: Four doors—two false and two real—open off of this hall. Anyone who tries to open any of the doors in this hall without first saying, "Dark glow the stars of eternity," causes the blue dragon carvings on all four doors to swing open and each launch a lightning bolt through the center of the junction. Behind the false doors are simple stone walls inscribed with glowing runes of power that deactivate the trap if defaced.

LIGHTNING BOLT TRAP

CR 6

Type magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (two lightning bolts, 6d6 electricity each, DC 14 Reflex half for each); multiple targets (all targets in area D18)

D19. ABODE OF SANDOR THE STRANGE (CR 13)

This door is warded with an *arcane lock* (CL 12th), making it a DC 40 Disable Device to open the locked door.

This garret chamber is paneled in fine mahogany wainscot. The ceiling is painted black and decorated in twinkling patterns by tiny shards of crystal glued to its surface. A circular trapdoor has been painted bone white in the ceiling of the central room. Archways open off this room onto an elegant bedchamber to the west and a well-appointed study to the east.

These chambers house Walcourt's spellmaster, Sandor the Strange, a handsome wizard with dark hair and beard and an obsession with blue dragons. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals the crystal flecks to represent the constellations of Golarion and the trapdoor its moon, and a perusal of the small library locates many speculative books on astronomy, astrology, the stars, and what worlds or entities may lie between them.

Creature: Sandor has served as a guild wizard for nearly 7 years. He has been happy to serve the current Council members while indulging his own habit of astronomy and astrology and quietly keeping a watch out for his true masters to return from beyond the Dark Tapestry. Sandor is secretly a member of the Night Heralds and finds the guild's facilities and resources a convenient cover for his studies. Always observant and eager to keep the people in power happy, he pledged his loyalty to the Drovenge siblings as soon as he realized they were about to seize control of the Council but has had relatively little interaction with either Drovenge. He attacks any interlopers immediately, and if they surrender and disarm themselves, he merely takes all of their magic items and sends them down to area F3 for suitable punishment. He has not paid a great deal of attention to the recent coup and has little of anything useful to reveal if interrogated. If asked about the shadow beasts during a successful interrogation, Sandor can confirm that the "true master" of Walcourt, the Lord of Shadows, dwells in the chambers below, and it is he who commands the night terrors of Westcrown. If asked about the infernal contract, he has no advice other than to muse that Walcourt's treasury is said to be kept below—a likely place for something as valuable-sounding as an infernal contract, but not a place that Sandor has had the pleasure of visiting.

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

SANDOR THE STRANGE

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male human diviner 12

CE Medium humanoid

Init +12; **Senses** *arcane sight*, *darkvision* 60 ft., *prying eyes*, *see invisibility*, *true seeing*; Perception +13

DEFENSE

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

hp 81 (12d6+39)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee +1 *quarterstaff* +7 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks *diviner's fortune* (+6, 9/day)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 12th; concentration +18)

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 22), *forceful hand*, *mislead* (DC 22), *true seeing*

5th—*cone of cold*, *false vision*, *overland flight*, *passwall*, *prying eyes*

4th—*enervation*, *greater invisibility*, *locate creature*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20), *scrying*

3rd—*clairaudience*/
clairvoyance, *dispel magic*,
fireball (DC 19), *slow* (DC 19),
vampiric touch (2)

2nd—*arcane lock*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts* (DC 18), *false life*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray* (2)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *comprehend languages*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Prohibited Schools Conjunction, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat Sandor typically casts *false life*, *prying eyes*, *overland flight*, and *protection from arrows* on himself each day, and all are in effect when the PCs arrive. Assuming that the PCs are spotted by his *prying eyes*, he casts the following spells to prepare for their arrival: *greater invisibility*, *protection from good*, *true seeing*, and *shield*. He then hovers invisibly near the ceiling in the garret chamber, awaiting the necessity of defending his home.

During Combat When the PCs enter, Sandor uses flight and invisibility to position himself before he begins hitting

the party with *lightning bolts* and *fear* from his staff, then switches to ranged spells like *disintegrate*, *cone of cold*, *phantasmal killer* and others.

Morale If badly wounded, Sandor casts *mislead*, ducks into a nearby room, then uses his *scroll of shadow walk* and seeks out Chammady and Ecarrdian—if he does so, he can appear in the next adventure as an additional enemy, but his report to the Drovenges does not encourage them to increase protection at Walcourt. They assume that Ilnerik has things well in hand, and neither is aware that there's something hidden in the treasury below that could undo their devotion to each other.

Base Statistics AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; hp 66

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 22, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

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

Feats *Combat Casting*, *Craft Magic Arms and Armor*, *Craft Wondrous Item*, *Dodge*, *Eschew Materials*, *Great Fortitude*, *Improved Initiative*, *Magical Aptitude*, *Mobility*, *Scribe Scroll*

Skills *Appraise* +21, *Craft* (Trapmaking) +21, *Fly* +12, *Knowledge* (arcana) +21, *Knowledge* (history) +21, *Knowledge* (local) +21, *Perception* +13, *Spellcraft* +25, *Use Magic Device* +15

Languages Aklo, Azlanti, Common, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Varisian

SQ *arcane bond* (staff), *contingency*, *forewarned*, *permanent spells*, *scrying adept*

Combat Gear *scroll of shadow walk*; **Other Gear** *staff of the blue dragon*, *bracers of armor* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2 (Use Magic Device), *key*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency If Sandor takes damage, a *stoneskin* spell activates on him.

Permanent Spells Sandor has made the following spells permanent on himself: *arcane sight*, *darkvision*, and *see invisibility*.

Staff of the Blue Dragon This +1 *quarterstaff* is Sandor's arcane bonded object. The *staff of the blue dragon* allows Sandor the use of the following spells: *ventriloquism* (1 charge), *lightning bolt* (2 charges), and *fear* (4 charges).

Treasure: One table holds a scale model of Walcourt's aboveground floors. This magical focus allows Sandor to amplify his *false vision* spell to cover the entire facility, and is worth 2,000 gp. Included among the furnishings of these rooms are a complete Varisian Harrow deck



SANDOR THE STRANGE

Mother of Lies



of elaborately enameled wooden plaques worth 150 gp, a silver mirror worth 1,000 gp, and a brass orrery worth 50 gp. The astronomy books could be sold for 1,000 gp to an interested scholar. A locked chest (DC 23 Disable Device check or Sandor's key to open) in the bedroom holds 880 gp, five diamonds worth 500 gp each, and Sandor's spellbooks (these contain all of his prepared spells plus an additional 2d4 spells of 1st–6th level of your choice).

E1. ATTIC

This stuffy, cramped attic has been set up with work tables and a full alchemist's lab.

Here, Ophal concocts her poisons for use by the Council of Thieves. She cares not who heads the Council at any given time as long as they continue to pay in bloodstones and freshly butchered humanoid meat.

Treasure: A chest under one of the tables holds two blood-soaked, fly-covered sacks—one holding 35 bloodstones worth 50 gp each and the other holding the prime cuts from a recently slain tax collector. In addition, the tables hold a total of three doses of sassone

leaf residue, one of deathblade, 10 of greenblood oil, and one of dragon bile.

E2. OBSERVATORY

This cupola has been fitted with large skylights but is otherwise unadorned. A complicated brass telescope sits anchored in the center of the floor.

Treasure: The telescope is bulky and fragile but is worth 1,500 gp. Sandor uses this chamber to make his astronomical observations.

E3. WATCHPOST (CR 6)

Creatures: This section of roof has been cut away to form a flat area protected by a low lip. During the day, two sharpshooters lie low and keep watch over the grounds from here, with one occasionally climbing to area E4 to join his allies there. Climbing on the angled roof requires only a DC 7 Climb check. At night this post is abandoned.

THIEVES (2)
XP 800 each

CR 4

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

Retaliation

Walcourt's a large place filled with bad guys and traps. Chances are strong that the PCs won't be able to finish it off in one go, and will need to retreat to rest and recuperate. In this event, Ilnerik does not rest idly. Although he respects the PCs' strength and persistence (and if they carry the *Morrowfall*, he also fears them), he won't remain passive and in hiding once it becomes obvious that the PCs know where he's hiding and begin making assaults on Walcourt. While the Drovenges are occupied with other matters and ignore his pleas for reinforcements, Ilnerik is far from unable to build his own reinforcements or retaliate.

If the PCs retreat, therefore, Ilnerik will certainly send a group of dark folk out to attack them. If the PCs retreat a second time, he'll send out the shadow lord from area **F3**, along with a group of 4 shadows, to attack them. After this, he'll send vampire spawn or maybe even his vampiric lover out to attack the PCs. Keep the pressure up, so the PCs know that once they make their initial assault on Walcourt they'll need to complete its exploration sooner than later.

hp 29 each (see page 12)

E4. CRAWLWAY (CR 7)

Creatures: The peak of the roof has been cut away to create a 3-foot-deep crawlway where guild members can crawl along with total cover and concealment from below and gain a vantage over any part of the grounds. At each end is a 100-foot coil of rope and grappling hook. Three thieves maintain a watch over the grounds below by day here; they observe intruders but only attack with their crossbows if anyone attempts to climb up onto the roof or attempts to leave the grounds.

THIEVES (3)

CR 4

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 12)

E5. ROOF CISTERN

This 10-foot-high copper cistern sits atop iron brackets bolted to the roof. It is still functional, though covered in a patina of green corrosion. A ladder on its south side leads to the top, where a hatch can be used to gain access within, though it is currently full of brackish rain water. Several pipes exit the bottom and provide water to the building.

WALCOURT — LOWER LEVELS

Once the areas for training as well as storage of hostages and treasure, these chambers have now been fully taken over by Ilnerik Sivanshin and the members of the Midnight Guard—a combination of his vampiric thralls and minions called from the Plane of Shadow to aid him.

The lower levels of Walcourt lie beneath the building itself and connect with some of the city's surrounding deeper sewer ways. Parts of the lower levels actually lie below the sewers. Thirty feet of solid rock separate the lower level from the ground above. For the most part, rooms on this level are constructed of reinforced masonry and have 10-foot ceilings (unless otherwise noted). There are no light sources unless listed.

F1. HIDDEN GROTTO (CR 9)

A set of rickety, rotten stairs ends on a stone landing overlooking a dark cavern pool. A flat-bottomed boat with a pole for pushing it is moored to the platform's edge. Parts of the north and west walls are mortared stone, but the rest is natural formation and extends eastward around a bend in the flooded tunnel. The ceiling soars twenty feet overhead through a maze of stalactites. To the north, a ten-foot-high water-filled tunnel exits past a set of rusty iron bars.

The thieves expanded this natural grotto to serve as a hidden entrance to their underground lair not long after claiming Walcourt as their own during the latter parts of the Chelish civil war. The water averages 20 feet deep and is not especially clean, as the northern tunnel connects to Westcrown's sewers. The bars to the north are actually an ancient portcullis and can be opened with a DC 25 Strength check (or broken with a DC 28 Strength check). The tunnel north of these bars ends after 150 feet and a graceful curve to the northeast at a narrow, submerged pipe that connects to a larger sewer tunnel running under the city.

Creatures: Once, rogue sharpshooters posted on hidden platforms among the stalactites guarded this chamber. Yet now, it is the lair of three hungry chuuls lured into the cavern with promises of a regular food supply and a safe den. The chuuls wait until someone attempts to travel over the water before bursting from the water to attack anyone who they do not recognize as Council agents. They fight to the death.

CHUULS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200

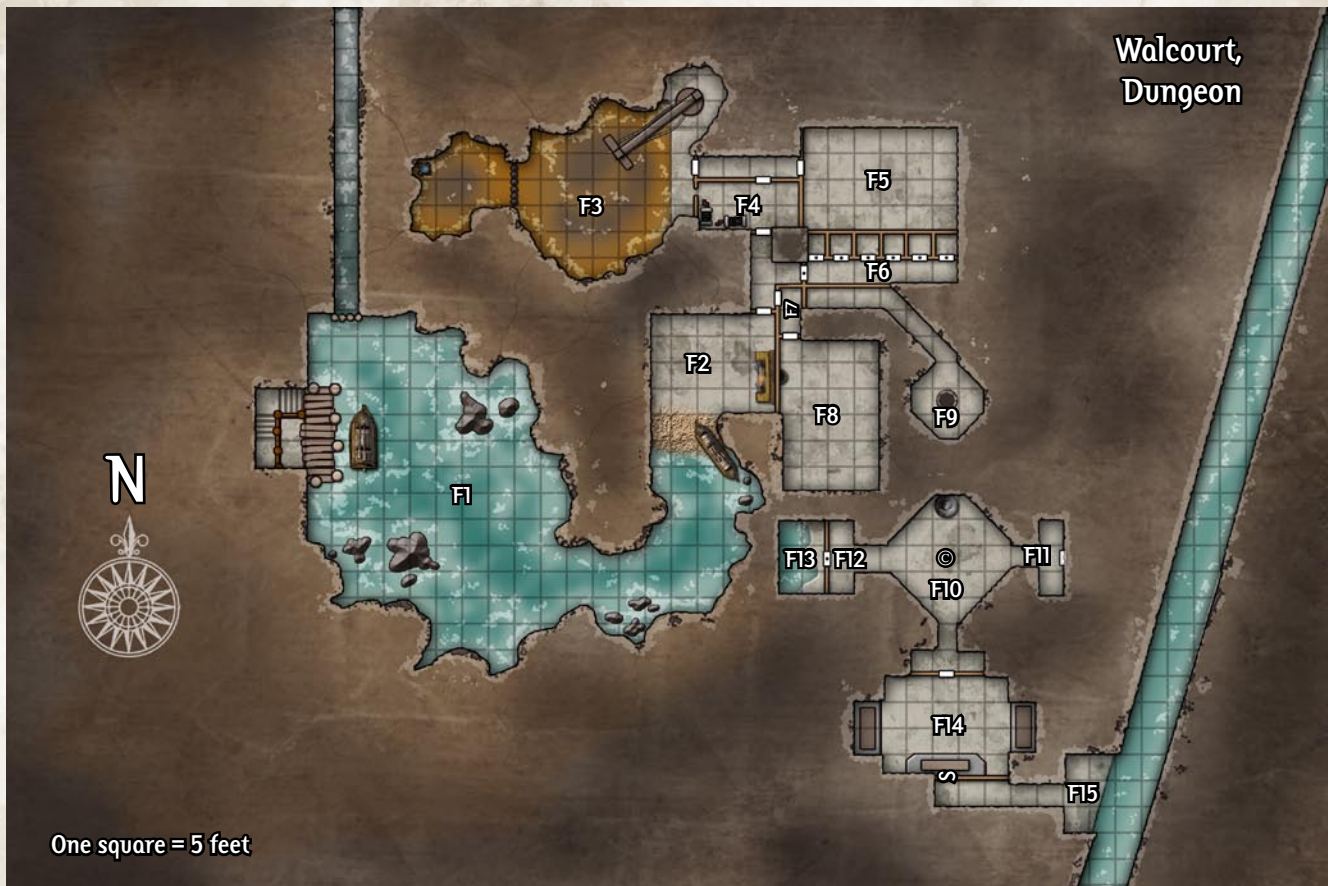
hp 85 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 46)

Treasure: A search of the water near the southern cave wall and a DC 26 Perception check reveal a lime-encrusted submerged skeleton of a long-dead thief that still clutches a *sword of subtlety*.

F2. GUARDED LANDING (CR 9)

A grotto lake ends here at a beach of dark pebbles, a canoe pulled up on it. Beyond this landing is a room of mortared stone with

Mother of Lies



two wooden tables and several chairs, sodden with rot in the damp atmosphere. A small, brick fireplace has been built into the east wall. A heavy iron-banded wooden door stands in the north wall.

Creatures: This once served as a guardroom, but the rogues who manned it are now gone. Ilnerek has now posted a pack of four shadow mastiffs here. As soon as the PCs enter or land on the beach, the large dark hounds begin baying as they attack, incidentally alerting the rest of the dungeon's denizens to the presence of intruders.

SHADOW MASTIFFS (4) **CR 5**
XP 1,600 each
hp 51 each (see page 31)

F3. CESSPOOL (CR 7)

This chamber is a low, natural cavern with a wide hole breaching the center of its ceiling. Periodic hints of fresh air wafting down from this opening are all that relieves the sewer stench rising from the fetid muck that covers the floor of this chamber. A cavern opening at the west end of the chamber has a portcullis that can be lowered to block it. At the east end is a stone landing which

supports a heavy wooden block-and-tackle system and a wooden door banded with iron. Foul effluvia trickles onto the floor of this chamber through small pipes that penetrate its walls.

This serves as both the cesspool of Walcourt (ever since the Council of Thieves commandeered the local sewer tunnels for their own use) and as a well-guarded secondary entrance for the delivery of prisoners and contraband goods. People and items are thrown into the pit at area C2 and then retrieved from the mud via the crane to be hauled into the nearby chambers for proper storage or imprisonment. Guards posted at area F4 could watch through a spy hole for new arrivals. Other than the landing, the entire floor of this chamber is a 3-foot-deep sump of sewage and counts as a shallow bog (costs 2 squares of movement, Acrobatics DCs increase by 2) for creatures smaller than size Large. The door to the east is locked.

Creature: Since Ilnerek assumed control of Walcourt, this chamber has served as the lair of a powerful being conjured from the Plane of Shadow—a shadow lord, or nihiloi. This dangerous outsider serves as a “commander” of sorts of the shadow army called and commanded by Ilnerek’s *Totemrix*—many nights, the shadow lord leads large groups of shadows and shadow mastiffs on hunts through Westcrown’s alleys

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

in search of victims, but with the coup in progress Ilnarik has commanded the nihiloi to remain here, hidden amid the cavern's shadows to serve as a guardian for this back entrance to the dungeons. The nihiloi does its job well, and fights intruders to the death, pursuing them throughout the dungeon or even outside if necessary.

NIHILOI CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 135 (see page 86)

F4. GUARDROOM (CR 8)

This simple chamber has a pair of wooden cots, a table with a hogshead and a number of metal tankards, and two heavy winches bolted to the walls, their chains running through small openings in the ceiling. A single chair sits before a peephole cut into the western wall.

This guardroom monitors the entrance in area F3. The western winch operates the capstan in area F3, and the southern winch operates the portcullis. The hogshead still holds a bit of rancid ale. No living guards have stood watch here for months, but the place is far from unguarded. The southern door is locked—Ilnarik carries the key.

Creatures: Ilnarik has claimed several novice thieves as his own, transforming them into vampire spawn and using them as guardians. Four such spawn stand guard here, vigilant and ready to raise the alarm should anyone attempt to enter the complex from area F3. If they notice such an intrusion, one of the spawn becomes gaseous and flees to area F8 to warn Silana while the other three remain here to ambush the PCs should they attempt to enter area F4 or F5. The vampires use gaseous form to move through locked doors as necessary.

VAMPIRE SPAWN (4) CR 4

XP 1,200

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 271

CE Medium undead

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

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

hp 30 (4d8+12); fast healing 2

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5

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

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability, vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +4 (1d4+1 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks blood drain, dominate (DC 14), energy drain (1 level, DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat Eager to slay the PCs, the vampire spawn focus their attacks on the same foe, hoping to overwhelm enemies one at a time with energy drains.

Morale The vampire spawn fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +11, Stealth +16

Languages Common

SQ gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

F5. ILLICIT STORES

The stench of death is strong in this room. It is long and dusty, with a few broken boxes and crates tucked into the corners. Of paramount interest are the stripped corpses—primarily humans but with a mixture of other races thrown in. All are bloated and appear to be in the early stages of decomposition.

This chamber was used to store contraband brought in by the guild. Ecarrdian and Chammady liquidated this stash to fund their insurrection. The 37 corpses are former members of the guild who resisted the recent change in leadership and were “retired” as a result. All have had their jaws removed to prevent *Speak with Dead* spells.

F6. PRISON CELLS

This is a simple hallway lined by heavy cell doors that block entry into cramped and filthy cells. A ring of keys to these cells hangs on the south wall beside the door. Each cell holds one or more naked corpses.

The bodies here were once hostages held by the guild who died from neglect during the recent internal turmoil. However, closer inspection of the “dead” reveals that those in the cage farthest from the entrance still live—three emaciated and unconscious men, weak and helpless from deprivation. All three were persons of some importance to the guild or one of the noble houses of Westcrown. One of the living prisoners is of particular interest in that it is Eirtein Oberigo, head of the Oberigo family and a former council member of the Council of Thieves. He has languished in the cell for over a week and is weak from dehydration and the cramped conditions. He can be of no help to the party physically, but if freed and cared for, he revives somewhat and can answer the party's questions. He can tell them anything they need to know about the history of the Council and the recent war between Ecarrdian and Chammady Drovenge and their grandfather, and their successful bid to take over the entire guild and ultimately

Mother of Lies

all of Westcrown's underworld. He can also reveal that there is a secret guild treasury somewhere on the lower level where he believes Ecarrdian and Chammady to be hiding, but to locate it requires the ash from the guild's council chamber (area **D15**) be smeared in the eyes of the searcher. He promises any reward if freed, and if safely returned to his family will be good to his word to the extent that he will pay each PC 500 pp and erase any debts or vendettas born against them by the Oberigos. Eirtein's rescue also earns the PCs 1 Fame Point.

F7. HIDDEN DOOR

This short corridor hides the secret entrance to the guild's treasury. The secret door itself is a magical portal—finding its location is a difficult task as a result and requires a DC 40 Perception check. *Detect magic* allows for an easier time of it, granting a +5 bonus to the roll—*true seeing* adds a further +10 bonus to the Perception check. *Detect secret doors* works normally. Rubbing ash from the container in area **D15** over the eyelids allows a viewer to automatically notice the door.

Once it's located, opening the door can be just as vexing. The door is magical, and opens only if a series of three concentric circles are drawn on the door using a dose of the magical ash from area **D15**—doing so causes the door to shimmer and activate as a *phase door*. Without this ash, the door can be tricked into opening with a successful DC 35 Use Magic Device check. *Knock* opens the door only if the spellcaster can make a successful DC 25 caster level check. Teleportation, *gaseous form*, *passwall*, and similar magic also work to bypass the clever door, as can physical destruction of the door (although such efforts treat the door as a magically treated reinforced masonry wall—hardness 16, hp 360, break DC 65).

F8. SHADOW PLAY (CR 11)

The stench of sweat and filth is strong in this musty chamber. A few wall sconces provide a feeble, guttering light, illuminating what seems to be a workhouse of some sort, complete with numerous workbenches for crafting weapons and armor and clothing. Along the wall sit what appear to be numerous wooden coffins, stacked five high in places.

This room was once used as a workhouse, where mind-controlled artisans and craftsmen toiled to create armor, clothing, and other gear for the Council. When Ilnerek took over, he fed on these poor souls and transformed the chamber into a communal lair for his vampiric minions.

Creatures: If the PCs have been diligent at destroying Ilnerek's spawn, they still face a guardian here—a dark-haired beauty who serves as Ilnerek's lover as the need takes him. This woman is a human vampire named Silana—a Nidalese sorcerer whom Ilnerek brought with him when he

first took up the task of infesting Westcrown's streets with shadows. Silana is not allowed to leave this chamber, as Ilnerek is dreadfully possessive of her. Silana is a morbid creature, and spends much of her time here reading violent stories and plays—when the PCs arrive, she is ironically reading an old copy of “The Six Trials of Larazod.”

Silana is accompanied by a group of eight shadows Ilnerek has provided her with as “courtiers.” The vampire often directs the loyal undead to act out scenes from her favorite plays, but longs to be able to direct living souls in a production. If the PCs interrupt her thoughts, she attempts to do just this by using her dominate gaze, resorting to actual combat only if the PCs seem unwilling to play along. She orders her shadows to attack them while she hangs back and uses her magic, and if she is brought to 0 hit points, she flees to area **F15**, perhaps inadvertently showing the PCs the location of the secret door at area **F7** as she goes.

SILANA

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female human vampire sorcerer 8

hp 102 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

SHADOWS (8)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

Treasure: Apart from Silana's gear (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, page 270), the only thing of value in this room is the beautiful edition of “The Six Trials of Larazod” the vampire owns. A rare edition and beautifully illustrated, this booklet is worth 750 gp. Of more import to the PCs, though, might be what is inscribed on the inside cover—“Property of Thesing Umbero Ulvauno.” This is the same insufferable actor the PCs endured earlier in the campaign. Silana came into the possession of his copy of the play after the actor fell victim to her master, Ilnerek. Thesing, now a vampire himself, has a role to play in the next adventure—see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #30 for details on Thesing's fate, should the PCs attempt to learn more about what happened to him after the events in “The Sixfold Trial.”

F9. DRY WELL

A stone well opens in the cobbled floor of this octagonal chamber. No lip guards the edge of the dark opening. An iron ring has been driven into the stone ceiling directly above the well shaft.

This open shaft provides entry into the Council's secret treasure vault. A rope looped through the iron ring was used to lower objects. The shaft descends 30 feet before

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

opening into the domed ceiling of area **F10**—the total distance to the floor of the treasury below is 50 feet. The walls of this shaft are extremely slick, with few handholds (DC 30 Climb check to scale).

F10. TREASURY (CR 12)

This chamber's ceiling is a dome of mortared stone rising to a height of twenty feet. In the exact center of the dome is an open shaft. Archways open off of three sides of the chamber, while the chamber itself is a literal treasure house filled with sacks and chests of coins, assorted pieces of elegant or antique furniture—much of it gilded—luxuriant art objects, pedestals displaying fantastic gemstones, and more than a few magical-looking objects.

This chamber is only one of several secret treasuries of the Council of Thieves, accessed only by the highest-ranking members. Despite the opulence of the chamber, many of the resources within have been spent by the Drovenges, as they fought part of their coup not with blades but coins.

Creature: Despite all of this chamber's amazing treasure, its most exotic and unusual feature is its guardian—an immense six-armed giant known as a calikang. Native to distant Vudra, where they often serve as temple, harem, or treasury guards, calikangs are powerful protectors of their assigned wards or chambers. This calikang was purchased at great expense over 140 years ago by the Council of Thieves and shipped at nearly equal expense to Westcrown from the Ivory City of Kellketta on Vudra's western shores. Like all calikangs, this monster spends much of its already long life in a state of suspended animation, awaiting the time upon which it must be called to obey its master's commands.

This particular calikang is the protector of the treasury. Loyal to anyone it recognizes as a scion of one of the ruling members of the Council of Thieves, the calikang steps in to attack anyone it does not recognize as an ally of the Drovenges. It fights to the death, and continues to use ranged attacks against foes who leave this room but does not pursue those who escape out of line of sight.

CALIKANG **CR 12**
XP 19,200
hp 157 (see page 80)

Treasure: The chamber contains wealth totaling 108,406 cp, 27,312 sp, 8,480 gp, 2,323 pp, assorted lesser gemstones worth a total of 27,550 gp, 7 magnificent jewels worth 5,000 gp each, and 14 pieces of art or furniture worth an average of 2,000 gp each. In addition, the treasury contains several magic items, including a suit of +2 *ghost touch chainmail*, a suit of +4 *full plate* emblazoned with the symbol of Abadar, a *sword of the planes*, a +3 *light crossbow*, a *ring of protection +4*, a *staff of*

healing, a 5-foot-by-10-foot *carpet of flying*, a *horn of blasting*, and a *bronze griffon figurine of wondrous power*. The most impressive item in this treasury, though, is the ugly black rock that sits upon a velvet cushion near the southwest wall—this fist-sized stone is in fact a *philosopher's stone*. Yet for the PCs, perhaps the most important item to be found here sits within a bejeweled scroll tube buried under a mound of copper coins. The scroll tube itself is worth 800 gp, but within is kept a copy of the infernal contract between Mammon, the Flies, and Sidonai Drovenge—proof that on the eve of Ecarrdian's greatest success, the person he most loves in life will be seized by the archdevil Mammon forever.

Most of this is quite bulky, and a great deal of it is recognizable on the open market as stolen goods—attempts to sell most of these items can result in awkward confrontations. If the PCs instead take pains to return the stolen objects, they can effectively “purchase” 1 Fame Point for every 15,000 gp in materials they return to various owners, to a maximum of 75,000 gp (for 5 Fame Points); items beyond this limit once belonged to individuals who are now dead or simply cannot be legally claimed by anyone of note. Note that the greatest treasure in here, the *philosopher's stone*, has no one to properly claim it as it was stolen nearly 200 years ago from a now long-dead lich.

F11. TRAPPED DOOR (CR 10)

Beyond the archway is a short corridor leading to a door flanked by two alcoves. The door is composed of bronze and banded with iron. A large lock is inset in its surface. Heavy chains locked into ringbolts to either side likewise secure the door.

Trap: This door is false. Anyone attempting to open it or pick the lock activates a deadly trap causing a storm of slashing blades to spring from the walls for ten rounds.

CHAMBER OF BLADES **CR 10**

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 10 rounds; **Reset** automatic
Effect Atk +20 melee (4d6+6); multiple targets (all targets in area **F11**)

F12. LOCKED DOOR

The appearance of both of these doors is identical to the one in area **F11**, but neither are trapped and both are actual doors (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 34). Opening each without the key requires a total of four DC 30 Disable Device checks.

F13. FLOODED CELL

This chamber was used to hold extremely valuable prisoners. Its rear wall is slick with rivulets of moisture where the water at area **F1** seeps through. The rear portion of the cell is a couple inches deep in the cold, musty water.

Mother of Lies

F14. SHRINE OF THE GRAY MASTER (CR 15)

This dank chamber has a twenty-foot-high ceiling of stone blocks. Raised alcoves on either side of the chamber each hold an open stone sarcophagus covered by a heavy grillwork of iron bars. Directly across from the entrance is low dais upon which rests a block of stained marble, the image of an eight-pointed star incised on its front face.

This chamber was once a secret shrine to the Gray Master, an aspect of Norgorber formerly venerated by the guild. It has since seen little use until recently, when Ecarrdian and Chammady gave it over to Ilnerik Sivanshin as a lair.

The iron grills over the sarcophagi are locked in place (DC 30 Disable Device check to open them) or can be broken open (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 25). These cruel cages were once used to offer up sacrifices to the Gray Master—a lever on the southern side of the altar causes the sarcophagi to fill with foul water drawn in from the nearby sewers to swiftly fill to the rim.

The eastern sarcophagus holds Faerlyn, the wife of Jarvis Alebrecht, while the other holds his daughter, Glynnis. Both are bound tightly with rope, and upon hearing the PCs begin shrieking desperately to be freed.

Creature: This chamber is the den of one of the major villains of the Council of Thieves Adventure Path—ex-Pathfinder, now vampire, the half-elf Ilnerik Sivanshin, keeper of the *Totemrix* and Lord of Shadows, master of the shadow beasts of Westcrown. His defeat would signal a major victory for the PCs, but would also force the Drovenges to accelerate the final stages of their plans for Westcrown.

Ilnerik wears elegant, gothic clothing, befitting a minor nobleman, and has decadent pale features, though they seem to be constantly obscured by an unnatural play of shadows about him. He hopes his minions handle the PCs, but if they manage to find him here in his lair, he greets them with a cold anger, offering them one last chance to simply turn around and leave Westcrown. He doesn't expect the PCs to comply, and is certainly ready for a fight—especially if they seem ready to use the *Morrowfall* against him. This artifact, with its powerful sunlight powers, is the thing that Ilnerik fears the most—mostly because it can enable the destruction of the *Totemrix*.

There's a chance that some of the other denizens of this level have fled to Ilnerik's side—in this case, these vampires and shadow beasts stand ready to defend their master and fight to the death in doing so.

Ilnerik's "coffin" is a hollow space under the altar filled with rich soil from Nidal. The altar can be pushed aside to reveal his den with a DC 26 Strength check—up to two additional people can aid someone in attempting to topple the altar.

A Dangerous Foe

Ilnerik is a deadly enemy, and a battle against him can be ugly. Yet if the PCs have done their job, they also possess a powerful artifact that should grant them a potent weapon to use against the vampire. If they bring the *Morrowfall's* powers up against Ilnerik and manage to destroy him swiftly as a result, don't feel too bad—that just means that the PCs get to enjoy the results of their previous success in defeating a particularly deadly foe!

Without the *Morrowfall*, or if Ilnerik has several allies, this battle can quickly turn bad for the PCs. If Ilnerik defeats them, though, the campaign isn't necessarily over. He won't kill them—instead, he'll take their gear and keep them imprisoned in area **F13** for a while until the Drovenges can come to deal with them. In this case, you can have Jarvis rescue the PCs if you haven't used him yet—alternatively, you can simply start the final adventure with the PCs as prisoners of the Council—see the start of that adventure for how to handle this unusual event.

ILNERIK SIVANSHIN

CR 15

51,200 XP

Male half-elf vampire bard 7/rogue 3/Pathfinder chronicler 3
CE Medium undead (elf)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 20, flat-footed 24 (+5 armor, +3 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 197 (13d8+140); fast healing 5

Fort +13, Ref +18, Will +7; +2 vs. enchantments; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion, live to tell the tale 1/day, trap sense +1; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +15 (2d4+12)

Special Attacks blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 25), energy drain (DC 25), mastermind, sneak attack +2d6, bardic music 13 rounds/day (move action—countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion)

Bard Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +16)

3rd (3/day)—*charm monster* (DC 22), *haste*

2nd (5/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 21)

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *grease* (DC 20), *obscure object*, *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ilnerik has an *unseen servant* active at all times.

Council of Thieves Part 5 of 6

During Combat Ilnerik orders his *unseen servant* to trigger the lever to fill both sarcophagi with water, hoping that the peril this places the two women in forces the PCs to split their attention between fighting him and saving Faerlyn and Glynnis. Ilnerik's first act in combat is to cast *invisibility* on himself, followed by casting *haste* and inspiring courage before opening battle by making a sneak attack on a foe that can't see through his invisibility. Ilnerik trusts his high Armor Class once battles begin and deliberately lets his foes surround him so he can use Whirlwind Attacks, and uses Arcane Strike and Vital Strike with his slam attacks at all times. He saves his dominate ability and ranged spells to combat foes at range.

Morale Ilnerik fights until destroyed, at which point he flees under the altar stone to recover, unless the PCs are present, in which case he flees to room F8 if he thinks he can get there without being observed. Unfortunately for Ilnerik, the running water in the numerous canals and sewage tunnels in the area make escaping to other locations more distant relatively impossible.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 34

Feats Alertness, Arcane Strike, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (slam), Whirlwind Attack

Skills Acrobatics +22, Bluff +0, Disable Device +22, Knowledge (arcana) +0, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +0, Knowledge (engineering) +0, Knowledge (geography) +16, Knowledge (history) +0, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (nature) +0, Knowledge (nobility) +0, Knowledge (planes) +0, Knowledge (religion) +23, Linguistics +14, Perception +30, Perform (oratory) +25, Perform (sing) +25, Sense Motive +0, Stealth +30

Languages Ancient Osiriani, Common, Dark Folk, Elven, Infernal, Osiriani, Polyglot, Shadowtongue, Undercommon, Varisian
SQ bardic knowledge +5, deep pockets (300 gp), gaseous form, improved aid, lore master 1/day, master scribe, pathfinding, rogue talent (weapon training), shadowless, spider climb, trapfinding, versatile performance (oratory, sing), well-versed

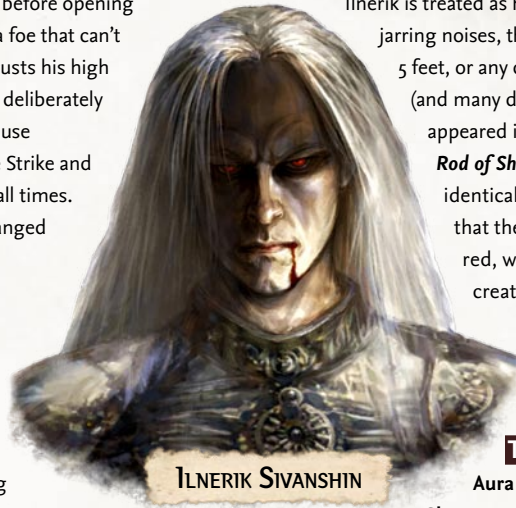
Combat Gear *Totemrix*; **Other Gear** +3 *leather armor*, *amulet of mighty fists* +2, *belt of physical might* +4 (Strength, Dexterity), *ring of protection* +3, *rod of shadowy splendor*, *boots of teleportation*, 3000 gp in elegant jewelry, master key to locked doors in Walcourt

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mastermind (Su) Ilnerik does not possess the usual vampiric ability to change shape. Instead, he can have a number of enslaved spawn totaling four times his Hit Dice (up to 52 spawn at any

one time). In addition, he may enter a trance to observe a single spawn's surroundings as if looking through that spawn's eyes, provided the spawn in question is on the same plane. Exercising or ending this ability is a standard action—he can maintain the clairvoyance link as long as he wishes, but while the link persists, Ilnerik is treated as helpless (although he is alerted to any jarring noises, the presence of any visible creature within 5 feet, or any damage that befalls his body). This ability (and many different alternate vampire powers) first appeared in *Classic Horrors Revisited*.

Rod of Shadowy Splendor This magic rod functions identically to a standard *rod of splendor*, save that the garb it creates is always in the hues of red, white, and black, and the palatial tent it creates contains no food and is dimly lit. This gloom cannot be further darkened or illuminated by any effect less potent than a 5th-level spell.



ILNERIK SIVANSHIN

THE TOTEMRIX (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 15th

Slot none; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The *Totemrix* is the dark half of the *Aohl*, an artifact gifted to the lost Jaytirian Society of the Mwangi Expanse following a sacred truce between their two feuding gods. The *Totemrix* is a manifestation of power from the now-dead demon lord of shadows, Vyriavaxus. It's a DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check to know this, but any evil-aligned creature that touches the *Totemrix* immediately knows the name and how to use the artifact's powers. The *Totemrix* constantly emits *darkness*, as per the spell of the same name, reducing illumination levels in a 20-foot radius by one step.

As long as the *Totemrix* is carried, the wielder's demeanor and attitude become increasingly morbid. After a day of keeping the *Totemrix* in his possession, its owner becomes incredibly possessive of the artifact and will not voluntarily relinquish it—if the wielder loses possession of the *Totemrix*, he becomes obsessed with recovering it. Every day that the owner maintains possession of the *Totemrix*, he gains 1 “shadow point.” When the owner's shadow point total equals his experience level, he must make a DC 25 Fortitude save. Regardless of the results of this save, the owner dies—if the Fortitude save is a success, though, he rises the next evening as a vampire. If a player character succumbs to this potent curse and becomes a vampire, you should assume control of that PC until the other characters can defeat him and, hopefully, resurrect him. The compulsion to maintain ownership of the *Totemrix* is a curse that functions at CL 15th.

A vampire created in this manner continues to covet the *Totemrix*, and indeed, if separated from its ownership (or unable to benefit from its power, as in the case of it being joined to the *Morrowfall*), suffers a –4 penalty on all skill checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until he recovers the artifact.

In the hands of a vampire, the *Totemrix* gains a potent new ability—when the vampire uses his children of the night ability,

Mother of Lies



he may call upon shadow beasts. When he calls upon shadow beasts, he calls 2d6 shadowgarms (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #25), 1d4 shadow rat swarms (see page 37), 1d4+1 shadows, or 1d3 shadow mastiffs (see page 31). Although the vampire can only do so as often as he can use children of the night (once a day for most vampires), shadow beasts called in this manner persist in the area and follow the vampire's last command until they are slain or banished. At any one time, a vampiric wielder of the *Totemrix* can maintain a number of shadow beasts equal to the amount of spawn he can control (up to 52 at a time for Ilnerik); attempts to call more shadow beasts while this total number is maxed still function, but the called shadow beasts persist for only up to 1 hour before vanishing.

DESTRUCTION

When the *Totemrix* is joined with its counterpart, the *Morrowfall*, its powers (as well as those of the *Morrowfall*) are suppressed. In this state, both it and the *Morrowfall* can be destroyed by anything capable of destroying a magic metal object of its size.

F15. SEWER LANDING

This brick landing looks out over one of the city's deeper sewer channels, a 10-foot-diameter tunnel with 5 feet of sewage running through it. A permanent *illusory wall* hides the entrance to this area from the sewer tunnel itself. Although these sewer tunnels do provide a back door of sorts into Walcourt, only a few know about the entrance—at least, until the PCs discover it for themselves.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Walcourt cleared out, Ilnerik defeated, and possibly the infernal contract recovered, all that remains for the PCs to lift the curse of the shadows from Westcrown is to rebuild the *Aohl* and smash the conjoined artifact. With the destruction of the artifact (or at the very least, with the *Totemrix's* power negated from the conjoining with the *Morrowfall*), the shadows that stalk Westcrown's alleys are banished silently back to the Plane of Shadow. This event comes with no fanfare, and it may take some time for the citizens of Westcrown to realize their streets are safe—the PCs and the Children of Westcrown can certainly speed this news along, of course! Once it becomes public knowledge, the PCs gain 3 Fame Points for accomplishing such a magnificent achievement.

But such a development has an unanticipated side effect—it shows the Drovenges that the PCs are even more dangerous to their plans than they feared and forces them to act. Not long after the PCs lift the curse, and not long before they have a chance to turn their full attention on the ringleaders of the new Council of Thieves, the Drovenge siblings strike. Arson, assassinations, undead, riots in the streets, devils, and worse are set to strike Westcrown, and it will be up to the PCs to defeat Chammady Drovenge and her brother Ecarrdian, the Twice-Damned Prince of Westcrown!