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ADVENTURE PATH™



SERPENT'S SKULL

THE THOUSAND FANGS BELOW

By Graeme Davis

Mwangi Flora

Gnome Caps

The variety of fungus found in the Darklands is truly incredible, rivaling the variety of flora in the most fecund of jungles. The mushrooms known commonly as gnome caps are among the most common fungi in these deep realms. Sporting pointed caps of wildly varying colors, gnome caps are quite edible and have a pleasing, earthy flavor. These delectable mushrooms are at the base of the food chain in many Darklands environments.

Stinkpods

The majority of the fungi found in the Darklands are nasty at best, and dangerous or deadly at worst. The pallid puffballs known as stinkpods fall into the first category. While not deadly, the noxious fumes they exude have been known to make even the foulest mannered dwarf blanch and vomit. Of course, stinkpod-sniffing contests are quite popular among many lower class dwarves.



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SERPENT'S SKULL

ADVENTURE PATH PART 5 of 6

THE THOUSAND FANGS BELOW



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“The Thousand Fangs Below” is a Pathfinder Adventure Path scenario designed for four 13th-level characters.
By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 15th level.

This product makes use of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, and *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*. These rules can be found online as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd.

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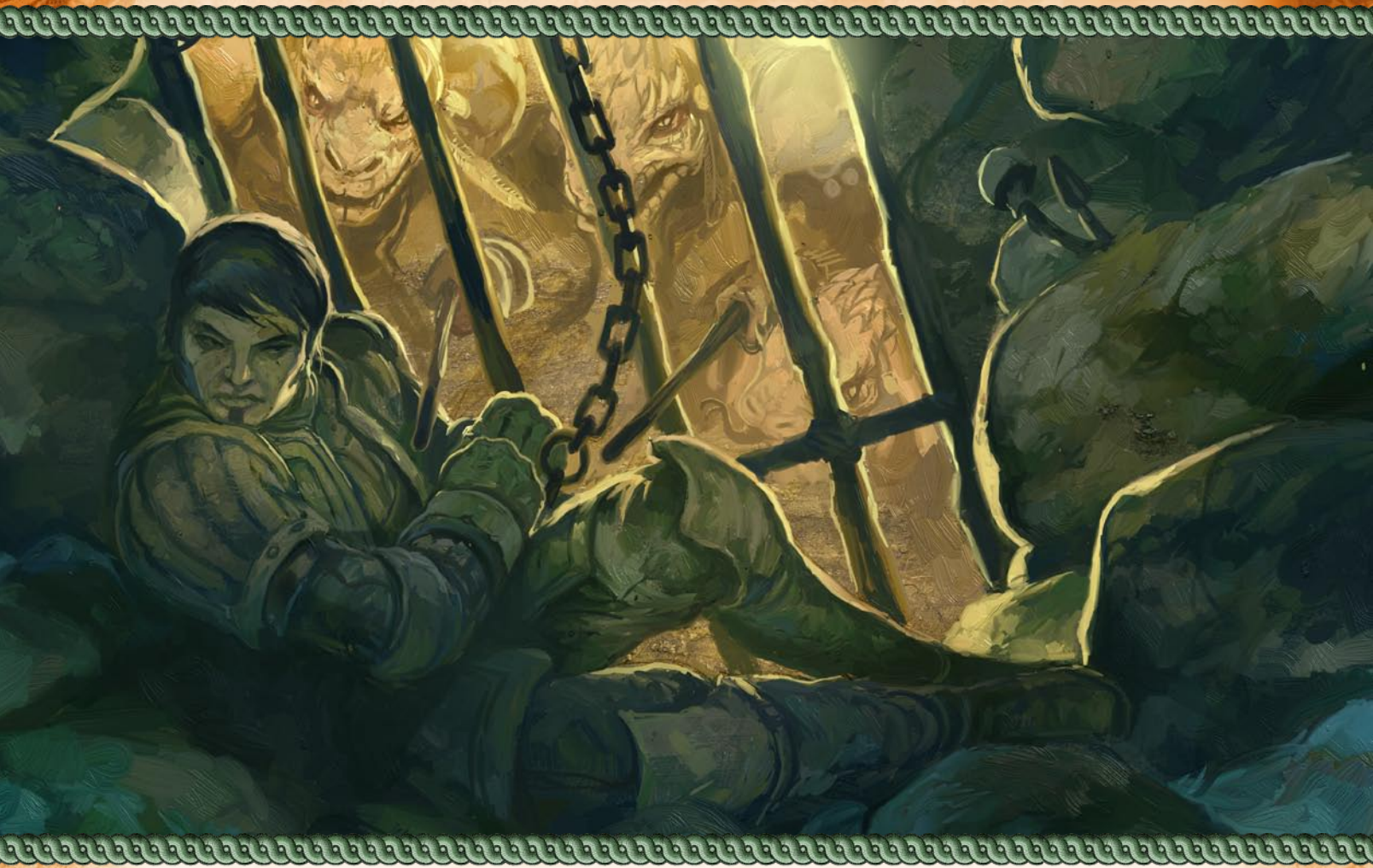
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SERPENT/ULTIMATE

Going into the design of the Serpent's Skull Adventure Path, I didn't know very much about African mythology. And now that we're wrapping up the series' penultimate volume, I still don't. Somewhere along the way, Golarion itself became a total distraction.

As often as possible, I try to draw content for *Pathfinder's Bestiary* from stories and folklore, whether those sources be real-world tales or the ever expanding legendry of our campaign setting. In the same way that *Legacy of Fire's Bestiaries* were a what's what of Middle Eastern mythological monsters and *Carrion Crown's Bestiaries* promise a tour through the traditions of gothic horror, I wanted *Serpent's Skull* to delve into the dangers of the same jungles and deadly wildernesses that inspired the *Mwangi Expanse*. Turns out, that pretty much meant undertaking a casual survey course on the folklore of several dozen cultures at once—in retrospect, a fascinating but frustratingly daunting task.

Jan Knappert's concisely titled *African Mythology* proved an invaluable aid in these studies. Although the name suggests an overview, its encyclopedic organization perfectly suited our needs. Leafing back through and scanning over the passages I've highlighted, there are entries on the impundulu (appropriately listed under incubus), the eloko (a monster utilized twice in this series thanks to an unexpectedly scholarly bout of parallel design), the tikoloshe, and several other ideas that evolved into creatures or stories featured in the past several volumes. There are also some less... game-ready ideas in there, for example: "Some monsters are said to be nothing but an enormous mouth on a pair of legs. All it does is run from one victim to another, shouting 'Hungry! Hungry!'"

Despite all the fantastic sources for monstrous beasts and brutes, for one reason or another, it's been a challenge finding folkloric creatures that simply scream for inclusion in *Serpent's Skull*. Many that I've encountered come from

the realm of monstrous animals—giant hippos, talking apes, crocodile-snakes, and the like. While these make for fine stories, they're simply less than fertile ground for new monster rules. I suspect this preponderance of mythical animals as opposed to mythical monsters might have to do with Africa's several animistic religions, but also with the sheer diversity of deadly beasts one finds across the continent. While I'm not saying they had an easy time, I do wonder if the ancient Greeks would have created tales so riddled with imaginatively deadly creatures if they lived with the same daily risks and teeming predators as one imagines faced many African storytellers. I also admit to having had a poor introduction to this vast body of stories. Beyond Gerald McDermott's memorably artistic interpretation of *Anansi the Spider*, I can't recall much exposure to African tales (beyond those of Egypt) prior to this year. Maybe if the *Monster in My Pocket* figurines I coveted throughout my childhood had had a few more creatures from the southern hemisphere, I would have had more of a hit list of creatures to seek out. C'est la vie.

Having confessed and accepted my inexpert knowledge of the countless myths of Africa's diverse cultures, I've tried to season this series' Bestiaries with more than just those real-world legends that captured my attention. This, of course, meant returning to a familiar font of inspiration: our endless love of fantasy film, prehistory, and cryptozoology—snake swarms, eurypterids, and mokele-mbembe being just a few obvious examples of creatures from these traditions. But I feel like *Serpent's Skull*, more than any Adventure Path before it, leans upon the mythology of Golarion. Beyond the predictably present heralds of the gods, several creatures inspired by *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Heart of the Jungle*, our guide to the Mwangi Expanse, have also seen their debut within these pages, specifically the umasi and sabosan. Next month you'll also see a few new creatures tied to Ydersius's reptilian cult, terrors that draw upon his status as a former deity and the threat of his potential resurrection (along with several of the baddest beasts the jungle depths have to throw at your high-level PCs). It's been a strange experience over the past years to watch Golarion grow from a place that absolutely needed to draw upon the legendry of the real world to populate its shores, to the point today where it's an easy matter to look within a country's borders and find new stories and dangers to present within these pages.

This comes through not just in the last dozen pages of *Pathfinder*, but also in our new *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, which I sincerely hope you've all seen on store shelves by now. Aside from collecting and updating some of the best-loved and most loathed monsters that appear herein, several races only hinted at as we've explored Golarion finally come to life—the d'ziriak, jyoti, and

ON THE COVER

This month's cover features a particularly dashing interpretation of our iconic Pathfinder: Eando Kline, star of the *Pathfinder's Journal* from *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #2 to #18. Eando's clash with the serpentfolk comes to a head in this volume as he takes up arms along the PCs to put an end to a blasphemy that threatens to crush the entire world in its vengeful coils. Eando Kline's statistics appear on page 60 of this volume.

thrasfyr jump immediately to mind. While these names might be little more than jumbles of letters to some, others might remember mysterious references in *The Great Beyond* or in "The Skinsaw Murders" in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #2 to unknowable denizens of realms beyond reality. It seems like they're knowable now, and it's been rewarding seeing what were once half-baked ideas and throwaway references in a world that until recently was pitifully lacking in details now becoming vital entities in a many-faceted cosmology.

As the *Serpent's Skull* Adventure Path draws to a close and we begin to look forward to the horrors of the *Carrion Crown*, expect this melding of real-world myth and Golarion's inhabitants to continue. For as long as we're telling stories, we're going to want to use and provide details on our favorite creatures from literature, legend, and beyond. At the same time, as Golarion and the worlds around it continue to expand and be explored, we'll seek to include ever more details on its denizens, whether in the form of cultural treatises, ecologies, or new entries in our endless march of monsters. Some of what we've learned early in this Adventure Path has also inspired several new ideas we'll be unveiling in the upcoming series, so just as our inspirations for creatures continues to evolve, so too will the ways in which we present them. If, like me, one of your favorite parts of any roleplaying game is the monsters, just keep watching our Bestiary and remember how awesome it is to play the bad guys.

Wes

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THE THOUSAND FANGS BELOW

AFTER MONTHS OF TREKKING THROUGH THE LIGHTLESS DARKLANDS, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE FINALLY REACHED OUR DESTINATION. UNLIKE THE CITY I FOUND UP NORTH, THIS ONE SEEMS TO BE INHABITED—BY MORLOCKS, ORVIAN VAMPIRES, AND LIVING SERPENTFOLK! THIS IS WHAT I HAD FEARED, AND WHAT I MUST STOP—A RESURGENCE OF THE ANCIENT SERPENTFOLK EMPIRE. WE'VE ALREADY LOST SOME OF OUR NUMBER TO THE INHABITANTS OF THIS ELDRITCH CITY, AND IT'S OBVIOUS I'LL NEED HELP IF I'M TO PUT A STOP TO THE SERPENTFOLK'S PLANS. JULIVER SUGGESTS THAT PERHAPS WE CAN GET THE MORLOCKS ON OUR SIDE...

—EXCERPT FROM EANDO KLINE'S JOURNAL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The city of Ilmurea was founded countless centuries ago deep beneath the land that is now called the Mwangi Expanse, as a sister city to the notorious serpentfolk capital of Sverenagati far to the north. Ilmurea was built to provide a stepping-stone to the southern part of the surface world, where the power of mighty Azlant was weaker and the serpentfolk could win their longed-for stronghold on the surface. Ilmurea grew into a mighty fortress-city, and the serpentfolk were able to move into and conquer the jungle lands above.

The serpentfolk had scant time to consolidate their position on the surface, however, before a huge Azlanti army arrived upon the continent of Garund. As in the north, the Azlanti drove the serpentfolk back underground. Deep in Ilmurea, the Azlanti heroine Savith fought the serpentfolk god Ydersius, ultimately defeating and beheading him. She cast his head into a pool of lava and disposed of his body in a bottomless pit within the serpentfolk's holiest temple. In the process, Savith was poisoned, and she died soon after. But despite Savith's sacrifice, Ydersius was not destroyed. His body wandered the Darklands mindlessly for thousands of years while his head remained entombed in rock after the lava cooled.

With the conquest of Ilmurea and the apparent death of their god, the strength of the serpentfolk empire was broken, never to recover. The survivors slunk away into hidden redoubts in Sekamina, there to hibernate and await the day they could rise again and reclaim their rightful place above the lesser races of Golarion. With the serpentfolk retreat, the Azlanti collapsed all of the tunnels connecting the city to the rest of Sekamina, save for the six serpent gates that opened onto even deeper Darklands realms.

To further guard against a serpentfolk return, Savith's followers founded a city in the jungles above, naming it Saventh-Yhi ("Savith's Grave") in her honor. Yet the advent of Earthfall eventually brought an end not only to Saventh-Yhi, but to the entire Azlanti empire. Far below in Ilmurea, the tremors that accompanied Earthfall caused a vast chasm to open in the cavern floor, dealing extensive damage to that city as well. Both Saventh-Yhi and Ilmurea lay forgotten for ages.

But the destruction of the two cities did not claim all of their denizens. While most of Saventh-Yhi's inhabitants fled or perished during the horror of Earthfall, a small contingent of Azlanti guards was trapped below in Ilmurea. Sheltered from the worst of Earthfall's effects, these survivors eked out a meager existence far beneath the surface, gradually regressing into feral, degenerate creatures called morlocks.

For many centuries Ilmurea belonged to the morlocks, until a group of daemon-spawn urdefhans discovered

Advancement Track

Characters should be 13th level when they begin "The Thousand Fangs Below." The PCs should be 14th level when they enter the fortress of Thousand Fangs, and by the time they rescue Eando Kline, they should be well on their way to 16th level. This adventure uses the medium advancement track for experience.

the ruined city. These dangerous native outsiders dwelt in a deeper realm far below—infused with otherworldly energy and bred for war, urdefhans (known to some as Orvian vampires because of their bloodthirsty appetites) have long served as minions of Abaddon on the Material Plane. The group of urdefhans who came to Ilmurea did so after they fled their home nation of Doga-Delloth following a failed coup. The fugitives initially planned to return to Orv once they gathered their strength, but they found the city much to their liking, and their temporary sanctuary soon became a new home.

For many more centuries, the morlocks and urdefhans shared the city between them, periodically warring with one another and any others who happened upon the lost city, until the recent return of the serpentfolk. In far-off Sverenagati, a serpentfolk priest of Ydersius named Vyr-Azul learned of the existence of Ilmurea, and realized that his god's severed head might very well still remain in the forgotten city. Vyr-Azul gathered an army of serpentfolk and journeyed through the Darklands to Ilmurea. Upon arriving in the ancestral city, Vyr-Azul set his minions to unearthing Ydersius's severed head, believing that if he could recover the god's skull, it might somehow empower a resurgence of the ancient serpentfolk empire.

Even more recently, Pathfinder Eando Kline and his group of explorers arrived in Ilmurea. Kline had recently discovered a smaller city of slumbering serpentfolk far to the north, from which he barely escaped with his life. Carrying on his own researches after being ostracized from the Pathfinder Society, Kline eventually learned of Ilmurea and that the possibility of restoring the entire serpentfolk empire conceivably lay there as well. Arriving through the Darklands, Kline and his team began exploring the city. In the process, they discovered the imminent threat posed by Vyr-Azul's plans, and Kline decided that the only hope of preventing the resurrection of Ydersius was to unite the city's other inhabitants against the serpentfolk.

Taking advantage of the morlocks' reverence for their Azlanti ancestors, Kline convinced the morlocks that he and his followers were an Azlanti expedition sent to

recover the lost city and destroy the serpentfolk once and for all. After securing the morlocks' aid, Kline turned his attention to the urdefhans, who had been warring with the serpentfolk since their unexpected return. Kline's brazen proposal piqued the interest of the urdefhans' leader, a half-fiend named Izon, but before he would agree to an alliance, he wanted Kline to kill or recapture an urdefhan warrior who had defected to the serpentfolk. Unfortunately, Kline and his group failed in this task, and were themselves captured by the serpentfolk. Only one of Kline's followers managed to escape—the Pathfinder chronicler Juliver, who made her way to Saventh-Yhi above in search of help.

Now Eando Kline sits in a serpentfolk prison waiting for Vyr-Azul to question him personally. The presence of a surface-dweller in Ilmurea, so close to the culmination of his plans, is disturbing, and the serpentfolk priest needs to know if it is a token of a greater threat to his ambition to restore his people to their former power and glory. Yet being so close to the realization of his life goal, Vyr-Azul has delayed turning his full attention to the lesser task of interrogation—the PCs have some time, as a result, to rescue Eando and learn what he knows of the rising threat to the world above.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Once they have repaired the magical portal in the Vaults of Madness, the PCs find themselves in Ilmurea, far below the city of Saventh-Yhi. From Juliver, they know that Eando Kline is held prisoner somewhere in the city, and that an ancient and terrible evil is about to be awakened. The PCs must find the captured Pathfinder and learn what he knows, so that they can take action to prevent the serpentfolk from rising to their former power and threatening the rest of the world.

Entering the city, the PCs find out that Kline made contact with a group of morlocks, but before they can talk with these “friendly” morlocks, they must fight through a group of morlock barbarians controlled by intellect devourers. After lifting the morlock siege, the PCs discover that Eando Kline went on to meet with another group inhabiting the city—a race of vampire-like outsiders from Orv called urdefhans.

To find Eando, the PCs must somehow deal with the urdefhans. Whether they approach the urdefhans peacefully or with force, the PCs have the opportunity to learn that the leader of the urdefhans, a half-fiend named Izon, met with Eando Kline. In exchange for the urdefhans' support against the serpentfolk, Eando went into the serpentfolk-held portion of the city on a mission for Izon, but was captured and never returned.

The PCs finally learn that Eando Kline is being held in the great fortress of Thousand Fangs in the center of

the city. They must infiltrate the fortress, sneaking past or fighting through the degenerate serpentfolk guards to reach the captive Pathfinder in the dungeons below the fortress. Once the PCs have rescued Kline, they must escape the fortress and Ilmurea and return to Saventh-Yhi, where Kline will reveal the true magnitude of the serpentfolk's plans.

PART ONE: THE SHIMMERING SPIRAL

The serpentfolk city of Ilmurea lies far below the Azlanti city of Saventh-Yhi, at the upper reaches of the Darklands region known as Sekamina. At one time, the serpentfolk reigned over all of Sekamina, but their power waned before the might of Azlant, and only Earthfall prevented the destruction of their entire race. Though mostly forgotten by the few serpentfolk who remain active in modern times, Ilmurea still contains one great secret that could threaten the whole of Golarion—the still-living skull of the serpentfolk god Ydersius.

The following section details Ilmurea's major features and specific locations, as well as the current situation in the city. In addition, a detailed gazetteer of Ilmurea is presented on pages 62–67. You can use this article to further populate the city of Ilmurea beyond what is detailed in this adventure if your players are eager to explore further.

FEATURES OF ILMUREA

Ilmurea occupies an immense cavern thousands of feet beneath Saventh-Yhi. The city itself is built on the shores of a vast lake that dominates the cavern's floor, fed from above by five great, circular waterfalls. At its highest point, the ceiling of the cavern rises 200 feet above the towering fortress of Thousand Fangs in the center of the city's northern lake. The southern districts of the city sit on a ledge 50 feet above the level of the northern portion of the city. Over time, tremors have caused collapses within the cavern housing Ilmurea, destroying structures and shifting the earth in places. These tremors also opened a vast chasm in the city that divides the lake into two parts, whose waters fall thousands of feet into the abyss.

The spiral, or coil, is a common motif in serpentfolk art and culture, and many of Ilmurea's streets and buildings reflect this theme. Major structures tend to be circular or even spiral in plan, and all buildings display spiral and serpentine decorations. Roads tend to be curved, following the lakeshore, and smaller alleys wind sinuously between buildings. The entire cavern flickers with an eerie, ghostly light—the byproduct of decaying serpentstone (see page 63 of the Ilmurea gazetteer for more details about this magical building material). As a result, the city has dim light throughout, although most of the building interiors remain unlit and truly dark.



ILMUREA



THE SERPENT GATES

Six massive, circular gateways are spaced throughout the city. Known as the serpent gates, each guards the entrance to a network of ancient tunnels and chasms connecting to the vaults of Orv. In the city's heyday, travelers from across the Darklands entered Ilmurea through these gates. With the Azlanti's destruction of the other tunnels that once connected the city to the rest of Sekamina, these gates are now Ilmurea's sole access to the rest of the Darklands. The urdefhans, serpentfolk, and Eando Kline all entered the city through these gates.

One serpent gate lies in morlock-held territory, though the morlocks themselves do not control it. This is by far the most ruined of the six serpent gates, and is currently the lair of a group of cloaklers (see area **B4**). To the southeast, the urdefhans control two serpent gates, and the urdefhans' leader, the half-fiend Izon, has even claimed one of them as his palace. These gates (areas **F5** and **G**) are detailed in Part Three. To the north, the serpentfolk have put two of the serpent gates back into commission; these are linked by an ancient road encircling the central lake. Serpentfolk guards are posted at each gate, both to hold the gates against the city's other factions and to defend the city from invasion from below. These gates (area **M1**) are described in more detail in Part Four. The final gate (area **P**) is not controlled by any of the three factions, and is inhabited by Darklands monsters known as gugs.

Ilmurea's six serpent gates follow a common design, as detailed on the map on page 30. Unlike normal fortifications, they were built to guard against threats from within rather than without. Each gate is contained within a dome 550 feet in diameter and 60 feet high, topped with a colossal statue of a coiled serpent. A single 50-foot-wide gate flanked by guardhouses provides access to the interior.

The majority of the space within each dome is a wide, open courtyard, used for temporary markets and visitor encampments, and as a killing field and containment zone for attackers who might seek to invade the city from below. Inside, two large buildings lie against the wall of the dome opposite the gate, containing barracks, armories, storerooms, meeting rooms, and a small shrine to Ydersius. A large, domed building stands in the center of the enclosure, 40 feet tall and 150 feet in diameter, its sole entrance facing away from the dome's main gate. This was the main Darklands gateway, built around a vast pit and spiral stair leading down thousands of feet to a network of deep tunnels connecting to Orv. Arranged around this central pit were more guardposts, processing and interrogation rooms, holding cells, and teleport chambers, into which nobles and other dignitaries could teleport to spare themselves the perils of a long journey through Sekamina.

If the PCs decide to explore any of the stairways, they find that the stairs descend thousands of feet into Orv. It is possible to reach other Darklands locations through these tunnels, but only after thousands of miles of travel and countless hazards.

THE BALANCE OF POWER

Three factions currently vie for control of Ilmurea—serpentfolk, urdefhans, and morlocks. Although they currently control the majority of the city, the serpentfolk are the most recent arrivals to Ilmurea of these three factions. They have claimed the northern half of the city around the large central lake, including the colossal fortress of Thousand Fangs in the center of the lake and the hidden Sanctum of Ydersius. The influx of serpentfolk into Ilmurea pushed the urdefhans into the city's southeastern districts, where they established themselves on and around the southern lake, driving the morlocks into the far southwestern part of the ruins.

For now, the serpentfolk are content with the part of the city that they hold, and are waiting for the outcome of Vyr-Azul's ritual to restore Ydersius. Once the ritual is complete, with the god's power once more fully behind the serpentfolk, Vyr-Azul intends to sweep the city clean of the other races and use it as a base to reestablish his kin's control over Sekamina. This close to the ritual's completion, degenerate serpentfolk patrol the northern ruins regularly, killing or enslaving any non-serpentfolk they find.

The urdefhans know that the serpentfolk are planning something, but they have been unable to learn any concrete details. When the serpentfolk arrived, they dealt a resounding blow to the urdefhans' infrastructure and ego, and those who survived were forced to scatter throughout the city—most of these consolidated in the northern portion of the city's upper tier, wedged between the morlocks and the serpentfolk armies. While these urdefhans suspect that others of their kind survived, they assume that the others have either been captured or are trapped in small buildings or cavern complexes scattered throughout Ilmurea, and have effectively written them off, especially since none of the urdefhan scouting parties that have been sent into the northern part of Ilmurea have returned, and one of their most trusted generals has apparently defected to the serpentfolk. The urdefhans lack the strength to assault the Sanctum of Ydersius directly and drive the serpentfolk from the city, and their current leader, Izon, is becoming increasingly concerned. The daemon-spawn have been absent from Orv so long that Izon had been pondering setting up his own kingdom in the upper reaches of Sekamina, and the arrival of the serpentfolk has all but crushed those goals. As a result, Izon has ordered his troops to capture

and interrogate any serpentfolk they find in the city, and skirmishes are frequent at the borders between urdefhan and serpentfolk territory.

The morlocks, meanwhile, have been stretched to the limit simply trying to survive. Lacking the strength to repel either the serpentfolk or the urdefhans, they have been pushed back into farthest margins of the city and forced to scavenge for food where they can find it.

A fourth faction also inhabits the city, though their presence is almost unknown among Ilmurea's other denizens. The mysterious intellect devourers came to Ilmurea following their own inscrutable agenda, and have begun taking over the bodies of some of the city's inhabitants. Though curious about the urdefhans and serpentfolk, the intellect devourers have had little success in infiltrating either the daemon-spawn or the snake people, and so have focused their attentions on the morlocks instead. Currently, a group of intellect devourers in stolen morlock bodies are indulging their appetite for cruel pleasures by setting the morlocks against each other.

EXPLORING ILMUREA

This adventure assumes that the PCs venture into Ilmurea at Juliver's request to rescue the captive Pathfinder Eando Kline. Yet like the city of Saventh-Yhi of above, Ilmurea is a vibrant place of ancient ruins, lost wonders, and strange inhabitants, ripe for exploration. For one reason or another, the PCs may be more interested in exploring this long-lost city than rescuing Eando Kline.

If this is the case, allow the PCs to go where they want to. Any explorations of Ilmurea will almost certainly still bring the PCs into contact with the morlocks, urdefhans, serpentfolk, and other denizens inhabiting the subterranean city, and you can use the encounters in this adventure to slowly guide the PCs toward Eando Kline's prison.

Assume that most of the other ruins and buildings in Ilmurea are uninhabited, but some of them certainly serve as lairs for Darklands creatures of one sort or another—these inhabitants could be members of the various factions controlling the city or creatures rolled on the Ambushes in Ilmurea table on page 81, or you can place specific denizens of your choosing to meet the needs of your campaign. You can also use the optional encounters detailed in the Ilmurea gazetteer that begins on page 62 to further populate the city as the party explores it.

If Juliver is still with the party, the PCs may attempt to get information from her on where Eando Kline is being held in the hope, perhaps, of bypassing many of the encounters in the city. Unfortunately, Juliver's memories of her time in Ilmurea are jumbled as a side effect of the *feeblemind* spell, exposure to the midnight spores of the

Vaults of Madness, and the sheer terror of her ordeals while she was imprisoned and escaping. She remembers being in the city, encountering the serpentfolk there, and making her escape through the magical portal, but her recollections of anything else are hazy at best, and she is of little help in navigating the city or providing information about its dangers and inhabitants. You can play up her haphazard memories by occasionally having her remember certain visuals or architectural features, particularly to guide the PCs toward specific encounters that advance the adventure's storyline.

ILMUREA ENCOUNTER AREAS

The remainder of this chapter summarizes the major encounter areas in Ilmurea. Most of the encounters that take place in the subterranean city are detailed in Parts Two through Four, but several minor encounter areas are presented below.

As in "City of Seven Spears," no maps or floor plans are provided for the hundreds of buildings present in the city. Should an encounter occur in a location without a map, you can simply prepare a map of the location by hand based on the environment of the area where the encounter takes place, or you can use one of Paizo Publishing's numerous Flip-Mats or Map Packs, available at paizo.com and local gaming stores. We've reprinted a page of maps taken from these products on page 12—you can use these maps to represent a wide variety of encounter areas in your game.

A. ENTRANCE TO ILMUREA

PCs using the magical portal in the Vaults of Madness end up in a single subterranean chamber far below the earth. A long tunnel exits this chamber, winding for thousands of feet before ending in Ilmurea at area **B1**. A DC 20 Perception or Survival check made while searching the floor of the tunnel finds the tracks of several humanoids (Juliver and her serpentfolk pursuers).

At the far southern end of this tunnel lies the portal room, which contains a detailed mural on the west wall surrounded by six focusing crystals. This is the portal to Saventh-Yhi—stepping through the mural instantly transports creatures to a room in the First Vault just below Saventh-Yhi. More details on this vault and the magical portal may be found in the previous adventure, "Vaults of Madness."

As long as the focusing crystals are in place on both sides of the portal, the PCs can use the portal to travel back and forth between Ilmurea and Saventh-Yhi. Most of the inhabitants of Ilmurea are unaware of the portal's existence, but if the PCs use it too often, some of these denizens may take notice, and the PCs could find an ambush waiting for them here the next time they return from the city above.



Serpent's Skull



B. MORLOCK RUINS

This area is described in Part Two.

C. UDARRA'S MANOR

This area is described in Part Two.

D. PILLAR WATERFALLS

Water from Saventh-Yhi's lakes slowly drains through narrow fissures in the lakebeds and mingles with subterranean rivers in the earth between the two cities, before pouring from the roof of the cavern in five immense, roughly circular waterfalls. Looking like huge, foaming pillars, these waterfalls fill Ilmurea's lake system with water from the surface, which eventually drains away into the Steaming Chasm (area K). Two of these pillar waterfalls empty into the South Lake (area E), while three more cascade into the North Lake (area L).

E. SOUTH LAKE

Spire of rock jut up from the surface of this dark lake, and its waters appear oily and threatening. The lake is only 10 to 20 feet deep, with a slight current pulling to the northeast, toward the cataracts (area I). The water itself is harmless, if cold, but dangerous creatures lurk in the placid waters, such as giant octopuses, giant moray eels, albino freshwater sharks, and the occasional piscodaemon from the urdefhan quarter. In uninhabited areas, bands of chuuls haunt the shores of the lake. In places where the lake meets the cavern wall, a DC 30 Climb check is needed to scale the wet, slippery walls.

F. CITY OF FIENDS

This area is described in Part Three.

G. IZON'S PALACE

This area is described in Part Three.

H. CANYONS OF THE VEMERAK (CR 14)

North of the serpent gate in urdefhan territory (area F5), the ground drops steeply to a riven landscape of canyons haunted by giant spiders and other subterranean vermin. While most of these creatures pose little threat to powerful characters such as the PCs, one particularly dangerous monster also makes its home in these canyons.

Creature: When the urdefhans escaped to Ilmurea from Orv, they brought a vemerak egg with them. When the egg hatched, the urdefhans found the creature harder to control than they expected, and ended up releasing it into these canyons. Over the centuries, the practically immortal vemerak has preyed upon the denizens of Ilmurea, including the urdefhans themselves. With the arrival of the serpentfolk, Izon has taken to sending

slaves into the canyons for the vemerak to hunt and kill, hoping to appease it into acting as an unwitting guardian against serpentfolk attacks from this quarter. The vemerak has no true lair, and can be encountered anywhere in the canyons. It looks like a huge, multi-legged alien insect with a vaguely humanoid torso, scorpion-like claws, and three thrashing, tentacular tails. The vemerak attacks any living creatures that it finds in the canyons.

VEMERAK CR 14

XP 38,400

CE Huge aberration (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 278)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;

Perception +23

Aura spore cloud (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)

hp 195 (17d8+119)

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

DR 5/—; **Immune** acid, disease, electricity, mind-affecting, poison; **Resist** sonic 20; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee bite +22 (2d6+11), 2 claws +22 (1d8+11 plus grab), 3 tentacles +19 (1d6+5 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (90-foot line, 14d8 acid damage, DC 24 half, once every 1d4 rounds), constrict (claws 1d8+11 or tentacles 1d6+5), earthquake

TACTICS

During Combat The vemerak attacks at range with its breath weapon. As opponents draw closer, the vemerak creates an earthquake, then makes full attacks at any creatures within range, hoping to grab and constrict them.

Morale The vemerak attempts to flee into the canyons if reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, using its breath weapon to deter pursuit.

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 17, **Con** 23, **Int** 5, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +25 (+27 bull rush, +29 grapple); **CMD** 38 (40 vs. bull rush, 50 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claws)

Skills Climb +19, Perception +23

Languages Aklo

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) A vemerak's acidic breath weapon has no effect on inorganic or undead material. If the breath weapon deals damage to a living, fleshy creature, the acid creates a transparent cloud of foul-smelling vapor that fills that creature's space and persists for 1 round. Any

creature that is within the cloud or passing through it must make a DC 24 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. This cloud is a poison effect. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Earthquake (Su) As a full-round action, a vemerak can burrow its tentacles, legs, and mouth into the ground—this action does not provoke attacks of opportunity. At the start of the next round, it creates an effect identical to an *earthquake* spell (CL 17th). A vemerak can maintain this zone of trembling earth indefinitely, as long as it continues to take full-round actions to maintain the effect.

Spore Cloud (Su) A unique form of magic-resistant mold grows upon the body of a vemerak. This mold is the source of the vemerak's spell resistance. When the vemerak moves, the mold exudes a cloud of spores in a 30-foot radius that acts as a targeted *greater dispel magic* spell (CL 17th) against the highest caster level magical effect the cloud touches as part of the vemerak's move that turn.

Treasure: The vemerak has turned the ruins in the westernmost canyon into a shrine dedicated to its dark and inscrutable subterranean gods. Among the remains of the creatures that the vemerak has offered as sacrifices may be found a *potion of aid*, a *figurine of wondrous power* (onyx dog), three gems worth 1,000 gp each, and 894 gp in assorted coins.

I. CATARACTS

A series of cascades drop a total of 50 feet from the South Lake into a lower pool, which then pours into the vast chasm that divides the north and south lakes. Characters in the water within 100 feet of the waterfall must make a DC 20 Swim check (for characters in the water) or Profession (sailor) check (for characters in a boat) each round. A failed check results in the boat or swimmer being swept toward the waterfalls at 60 feet per round. Characters going over the falls plummet 50 feet into the pool below, taking 2d3 points of nonlethal damage and 3d6 points of lethal damage from collisions with various rocks along the way. In addition, all characters swept over the waterfall must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d3 rounds. Every passenger in a boat is affected equally. The lower pool below the waterfall is 20 feet deep, with a strong northerly current pulling toward the Steaming Chasm (area K).

J. GREAT FOUNTAIN

In the pool below the waterfall, the builders of Ilmurea created a huge fountain using engineering and magic that throws three immense, interweaving, serpentine plumes of water 60 feet into the air. By some miracle, the fountain was unaffected by the tremors that opened the chasm and ruined portions of the city, and it continues to

function. From a distance, it may seem to the PCs that the lower pool is inhabited by some kind of pale, translucent, three-headed serpent, until they come close enough to realize the fountain's true nature.

K. STEAMING CHASM

A great chasm splits Ilmurea in two. The chasm is shrouded with mist from the waterfalls that pour into it on both sides. Its sides stretch down into darkness, and the floor—if indeed it has one—is too far down to be visible. This great rift opened long ago amid tremors that ruined much of the city during Earthfall.

Exploring this chasm is beyond the scope of this adventure. It plummets thousands of feet, eventually reaching the Darklands region of Orv, and its slick walls form a weird, vertical ecosystem inhabited by all manner of monsters—fungi, molds, oozes, immense giant spiders, black puddings of incredible size, and even the occasional shoggoth. Delving into this abyss would likely require extensive preparation; if the PCs insist on exploring, don't be afraid to deter them with encounters that are clearly beyond their abilities.

L. NORTH LAKE (CR 13)

Like its southern counterpart, the waters of the northern lake are oily and dark, reaching depths of 250 feet around Thousand Fangs (area N). Strong currents pull to the south and southeast toward the Steaming Chasm (area K). Characters in the water within 250 feet of the chasm must make a DC 20 Swim check (for characters in the water) or Profession (sailor) check (for characters in a boat) each round or be swept toward the edge at 60 feet per round. Only two checks in a row are required to escape the currents and reach safety on one of the many islands lining the lip of the chasm.

Creature: The north lake holds its own share of dangerous creatures, including giant octopuses, giant moray eels, and huge anacondas. The lake's most deadly denizen, however, is a massive sea serpent descended from a sacred beast kept there by the serpentfolk in ancient times. Called "Ydersius's Thalassic Daughter" by the city's current serpentfolk inhabitants, the sea serpent normally lurks in the depths of the lake, but it may surface to attack any boats plying the lake's waters. The serpentfolk avoid her wrath by sticking close to the ruined bridge that once joined the fortress in the middle of the lake to the eastern shore, an area that the great serpent instinctively avoids.

YDERSIUS'S THALASSIC DAUGHTER

CR 13

XP 25,600

Advanced sea serpent (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 244, 294)

hp 217



Treasure: The sea serpent makes its lair among the half-submerged docks along the lake's northwest shore. Jumbled in the silt below the docks are a suit of +1 chainmail, a +3 heavy steel shield, a *potion of bull's strength*, and 830 gp in assorted coins.

M. CITY OF SERPENTS

This area is described in Part Four.

N. FORTRESS OF THOUSAND FANGS

This area is described in Part Four.

O. FUNGUS FIELDS (CR 14)

The west-central part of the city has been overrun with mold and fungi. While most of the fungal growth found here is harmless, there are enough hazardous varieties to make traveling through this district dangerous. Green slime and yellow mold grow in profusion on and within the ruined buildings, and dangerous ascomoids, basidiroids, and violet fungi wander the deserted, fungus-choked streets.

Creatures: Voracious, four-armed Darklands monsters known as gugs also inhabit this quarter. While they occasionally raid into serpentfolk-controlled lands in search of fresh meat, they have been repelled enough times that most of them rely on the fungus and mold growing here for sustenance. Most of the gugs travel throughout this portion of the city in small nomadic "camps" of 3–10 individuals. An average encounter here is with four gugs, who attack any living creatures they come across. A gug is a towering humanoid creature covered with wiry, dark hair. Its arms split at the elbow into two forearms, each tipped in a murderous talon, yet it is the creature's hideous, vertically aligned, fang-filled maw that is perhaps its most distinctive feature.

GUGS (4) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

CE Large aberration (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dex, +14 natural, –1 size)

hp 127 each (15d8+60)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12

Immune disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d8+7), 4 claws +17 (1d6+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

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

TACTICS

During Combat The gugs wade into combat, with few tactics other than rending their foes to pieces before moving on to

the next enemy.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, a gug tries to flee into the fungus fields.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +19 (+23 bull rush); **CMD** 30 (32 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Lunge, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Climb +15, Escape Artist +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Perception +27, Stealth +15, Survival +21

Languages Undercommon

SQ compression

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Compression (Ex) A gug can move through an area as small as one-quarter its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing.

P. GUG GATE (CR 14)

The gugs of the Fungus Fields (area O) first entered Ilmurea through this serpent gate. This dome has the same structure as the city's other serpent gates (see page 30) but is by far in the worst condition of the six. Large holes gape in the walls and dome, and many of the interior buildings have collapsed. Thick fungus and mold grow in profusion throughout the dome.

Creatures: At any one time, four gugs may be found scavenging within the building. They attack any creatures they encounter.

GUGS (4) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 127 each (see above)

Q. HUNTER'S MAZE

The tremors that ruined much of the city and opened the great rift in the cavern's floor also caused part of the roof to collapse in the northwestern portion of the city, forming a choked maze of rubble and fallen rock. This entire region is considered difficult terrain, and the DCs of all Acrobatics checks made in these areas are increased by +5. One of the more remote rifts deep in this maze leads to an ancient complex now used by an isolated group of urdefhans who were cut off from those dwelling in southern Ilmurea when the serpentfolk returned—this complex plays a key role in the final adventure in the Serpent's Skull Adventure Path.

R. SANCTUM OF YDERSIUS

These subterranean tunnels lead to Ilmurea's most sacred locale, the Sanctum of Ydersius, where Savith long ago beheaded the serpent deity, and where Vyr-Azul now plans to bring his back his headless god. The Sanctum of

Ydersius does not feature in this adventure; it is detailed in the next installment of this Adventure Path, "Sanctum of the Serpent God."

PART TWO: THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

The magical portal from Saventh-Yhi opens onto a long tunnel (area A) that leads to the section of the city that is most ruined (and therefore least desirable), and as such is the realm of the Ilmurean morlocks. Few buildings here are completely whole—most have crumbled beneath the weight of the ages or falling rocks from the cavern roof. The central portion of this area has been overrun with fungus, which provides much of the morlocks' food. In the northwestern reach of the district, ancient rockfalls have blocked access to the northern portion of the city, and have damaged this region's serpent gate (area B4) in the process.

The morlocks are the only remnant of the ancient Azlanti garrison trapped here after Earthfall. They are currently divided into two warring factions—those who allied themselves with Eando Kline and those who have been taken over by the intellect devourers. The morlocks loyal to Kline are led by an oracle of the morlocks' ancestor gods named Udarra, and have been driven into a single building in the southwestern section of the city. They are currently under siege by the warriors of the tribe, all of whom are controlled by intellect devourers, under the leadership of a powerful warrior named Ixolan (who is actually a vessel for the intellect devourer Uthothot).

Many more morlocks are not members of either faction—these morlocks are unaware of the intellect devourers' infiltration of their tribe. They huddle in the ruins, avoiding the conflict (and the PCs), and waiting for a victor to emerge. As the PCs travel through this area, the morlocks watch them stealthily from the ruins. The morlocks' high Stealth skill makes them difficult to detect, but the odd sound or glimpse of movement at the edge of the shadows can be used to make the PCs nervous. These morlocks do not attack the PCs. If the PCs attack them, the morlocks defend themselves only until they can find an opportunity to escape into the ruins.

MORLOCKS CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209)

Creatures: Pairs of morlock vessels controlled by intellect devourers patrol this portion of the city, a CR 12 encounter. Use the Ambushes in Ilmurea table on page 81 to generate an encounter with one of these patrols. A morlock patrol attacks any creatures it happens upon, as the intellect devourers are eager to experience new sensations from stolen bodies other than those of the

morlocks they've been inhabiting. When a morlock vessel is killed, the intellect devourer controlling it exits the body and attacks.

MORLOCK VESSELS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 127 each (see page 19)

INTELLECT DEVOURERS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

B1. CAVE OF SPIDERS (CR 11 OR 13)

The twisting tunnel opens onto a wide cavern. Crumbling ruins lean drunkenly against the walls, draped with thick cobwebs crawling with fist-sized spiders. The faint sound of rushing water echoes through the empty space.

The long tunnel from area A leads to this cavern. Though this area is only nominally under their control, the morlocks have been expecting more surface-dwellers to arrive since their encounter with Eando Kline, and they have been watching the entrance to the city since they saw Juliver escape down the tunnel. Unfortunately, the morlocks left behind to await her return soon fell prey to the cavern's newest residents.

Creatures: Two immense vagabond spiders and their brood have taken over this cavern as their lair. When the PCs first enter this area, there is a 50% chance that one of the spiders is out hunting, leaving the other to defend the lair. The tarantula-sized spiderlings that infest the cavern are scary-looking but harmless. The vagabond spiders attack any living thing entering the cavern. They pursue fleeing prey within the cavern, but do not follow them into the city; instead, they return here to protect their brood.

VAGABOND SPIDERS (2) CR 11

XP 12,800 each

N Colossal vermin

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 4, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +20 natural, -8 size)

hp 152 each (16d8+80)

Fort +15, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

Melee bite +20 (4d6+24 plus poison)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

Special Attacks poison, web (+14 ranged, DC 23, 16 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 43, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 48 (60 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +32, Perception +5, Stealth –6 (–2 in webs); **Racial Modifiers** +16 Climb, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth (+12 in webs)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 25; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Strength; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Treasure: Searching the webs thoroughly will turn up 200 gp in assorted coins, mostly on and around the corpses hanging in the webs. In addition, a DC 25 Perception check finds an ancient weapon lost in the ruins, a +1 *flaming burst throwing warhammer*.

Development: The husks of several humanoid corpses hang among the webs, with a few spiderlings still feeding upon them. A DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the corpses as morlocks. A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals that one of the morlocks is still alive, but unconscious and near death. If the morlock is cut down from the webs, PCs making a DC 10 Perception check notice a familiar-looking symbol painted on his clothing in pale mud that matches the tattoo on Juliver's shoulder—a crude rendition of the Glyph of the Open Road, the symbol of the Pathfinder Society.

THE MORLOCK PATHFINDER

The morlock, named Thekola, is at –2 hit points but stable, and has taken 10 points of Strength damage from spider venom. If the PCs heal him, the morlock prostrates himself before them in an embarrassing display of devotion, and is automatically considered helpful—the morlock assumes that the PCs are allies of Eando (especially if Juliver is with the party) come to save his people. Thekola's answers to the PCs' most likely questions are given below.

What's the symbol on your clothing? “Kline gave it to us. All my tribe wear it. It shows we are blessed by ancestors, to fight against snakewalkers.”

What are the snakewalkers? “Evil. Enemies of ancestors. Snakes that walk like humans, far below.”

Tell us about Kline. “He come here, not long ago. Bring word from ancestors. They still remember us. They know we still here, watching for return of snakewalkers. Kline say we work with vampires to kill snakewalkers again.”

Where is Kline now? “Kline go to talk to vampire devil-chief. Not see him since.”

There are vampires here? “Yes. Chase us here, take our homes. Now in middle between us and snakewalkers. They ride big bats, steal us, kill us. No can fight. No come back.”

Why are you here? “Udarra send us here to wait. In case Kline's female come back. In case others come. But giant spiders come instead. Kill us. Eat us. Everything go black.”

Who is Kline's female? “She.” (Thekola points to Juliver, if she is present.) “She Kline's female. Go with him to vampires. Come back hurt, scared, snakewalkers chase her. Go in here, no come back. Udarra say maybe she get help for us.” (At this point, feel free to allow Juliver a flash of memory to resurface of her encounter with the urdefhans—not enough for the PCs to seek the urdefhans out, perhaps, but enough for them to get a hint of what is to come.)

Who is Udarra? “High priest. Very wise. Talks to ancestors, talks to Kline. Follows ancestors, follows Kline. But Ixolan no like, try to take power for himself. He attack Udarra, and all Kline's followers.”



Vagabond Spider

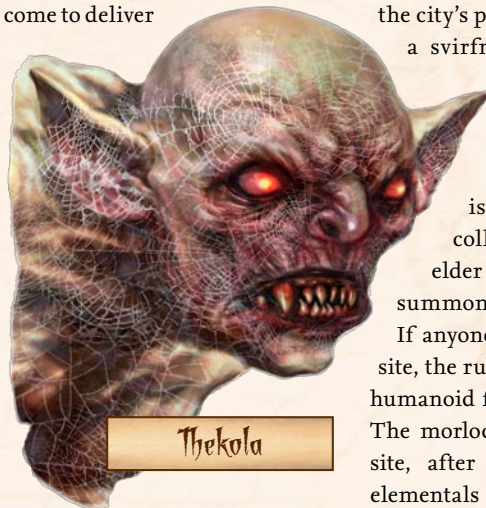
Who is Ixolan? “Strong warlord. He no listen to words of Kline. He and mightiest warriors fight Udarra. Trap her and all who follow Kline in old building.”

Can you take us to Udarra? “Yes. I here in case others come after Kline. Udarra say others come, now you come. I take you to her, you help against Ixolan and snakewalkers.”

Development: If the PCs are accompanied by Juliver, or if they bear any visible symbols of the Pathfinder Society, Thekola assumes that they are “emissaries of the ancestors” like Kline himself, and have come to deliver the morlocks from the urdefhans and serpentfolk. He guides the PCs through morlock territory, leading them along the southern shore of the lake, through the Gate of the Guardians (area B2), and then to Udarra’s Manor (area C).

THEKOLA CR 2

Male morlock (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209)
hp 22 (currently –2)



B2. GATE OF THE GUARDIANS (CR 13)

A stone wall stretches between the walls of the cavern, pierced by a single fortified gateway flanked by two towers. A larger-than-life statue of a warrior in archaic armor stands before each tower. The fortifications are obviously ancient, and display a different architectural style than that seen in the rest of the city, but the defenses still appear strong.

After they conquered Ilmurea, the Azlanti built these fortifications as a redoubt and base for the garrison they left in the city. They can be recognized as Azlanti rather than serpentfolk in origin with a DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) or (history) check. The walls are 40 feet tall and 10 feet thick, with 60-foot-high towers. The wooden gate has long since decayed, leaving a 20-foot-wide passage through the wall.

Creatures: The two statues flanking the gate are stone golems left by the Azlanti to reinforce their Ilmurean garrison. The golems have instructions to attack any non-Azlanti creatures passing through the gate. As the morlocks are descended from the original Azlanti garrison and their devolution to savagery has been so gradual over the centuries, the golems consider them Azlanti and ignore them. Thekola has no idea of the golems’ existence, thinking them just ancient statues of the morlocks’ ancestor gods. If the PCs try to pass through the gate, however, the golems immediately animate and attack.

AZLANTI STONE GOLEMS (2) CR 11

XP 12,800 each
hp 107 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 163)

B3. TEMPLE OF STONE (CR 13)

A large pile of rubble stands in the middle of a field of fungus, apparently the collapsed remains of some structure.

Long ago, after the serpentfolk exodus, but before the city’s present denizens took up residence, a svirfneblin priest stumbled upon the ruined city. He dedicated this former serpentfolk temple to his gods of the deep earth.

Creatures: The svirfneblin priest is long gone, and the temple has collapsed into rubble, but the two elder earth elementals that the priest summoned to defend his temple remain. If anyone approaches within 25 feet of the site, the rubble forms itself into two towering humanoid figures, which immediately attack. The morlocks learned early on to avoid this site, after they accidentally awakened the elementals while foraging. The elementals do not pursue fleeing enemies more than 100 feet from the site they are bound to protect.

ELDER EARTH ELEMENTALS (2) CR 11

XP 12,800 each
hp 168 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 123)

B4. CLOAKER GATE (CR 13)

A huge stone serpent coils around this large domed building. Dark holes gape in places where the roof has fallen away, and great cracks run through both the statue and dome. A single gate stands in the southeast wall, opening onto the dark interior.

This large building has the same basic plan as Izon’s Palace (area G), but is in much worse condition. Rockfalls have partially caved in the main dome, and many of the interior buildings are ruined or completely collapsed. Fallen rubble fills the central courtyard, making the interior difficult terrain. Eando Kline and his party entered Ilmurea through this gate, though the staircase spiraling down the central pit is choked with rubble and in places has collapsed entirely. You can use the map of Izon’s Palace on page 30 to represent his area, but most of the interior buildings are ruined, and only the area marked G4 is currently inhabited.

Creatures: Four cloakers have journeyed up from Orv through this gate and have made it their lair while they carefully scout out the city, occasionally snatching a lone morlock. In between their forays, they lurk out of sight near the roof of the central dome over the pit, but they swoop down to attack any creature that enters the area.

CLOAKER INFILTRATORS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Cloaker rogue 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 47*)

CN Large aberration

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 146 each (13d8+85)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities evasion, shadow shift, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +16 (1d6+5), tail slap +9 (1d8+2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (5 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks engulf, moan (DC 18), sneak attack +4d6

TACTICS

During Combat The cloakers hide near the roof above the pit until victims come close enough for them to strike from surprise. Each then makes a sneak attack and attempts to engulf a chosen foe. Thereafter, the cloakers use their moan attacks, each causing a different effect. Once a cloaker has chosen its target, it casts *blur* and focuses its attacks on that target.

Morale A cloaker flees back into the pit if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 22, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30 (can't be tripped)

Feats Ability Focus (moan), Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Stealthy, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +22 (+14 jump), Disguise +19 (+27 to appear as a cloak or sheet), Escape Artist +26, Fly +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +19, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +24, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +22, Swim +20

Languages Aklo, Aquan, Orvian, Undercommon

SQ rogue talents (fast stealth, finesse rogue, surprise attack), trapfinding +3

Gear *amulet of mighty fists* +1

C. UDARRA'S MANOR

This ruined mansion once belonged to a serpentfolk noble, but is now the refuge of the morlocks loyal to Eando Kline—the oracle Udarra and her followers. Under siege by the warlord Ixolan and the tribe's former warriors who

now controlled by intellect devourers, Udarra and her people have barricaded themselves inside, hoping that help will soon arrive from the missing Kline, or from Juliver and any allies she found on the surface world.

Thekola leads the PCs here from the Cave of Spiders (area B1), begging them to lift the siege and rescue Udarra and his people, but once he sees the morlock barbarians at area C1 he runs and hides.

C1. SERPENT STAIR (CR 13)

A large building sits atop a ledge against the cavern wall. Though partially ruined, it still has an air of faded glory—spiral carvings decorate the walls, and carved serpentine heads rise above the wavy lines of the building's eaves. A wide stone stairway climbs up the ledge, flanked by a line of large stone snake heads on each side. At the top of the stairs, dual portals lead into the building, both marked with the same crude symbol.

The stairs ascend about 20 feet to the level of the ledge and the entrance to the mansion. The two doors at the top are unlocked, and the symbol painted on them matches the symbol on Thekola's clothes, the Glyph of the Open Road.

Creatures: Ixolan has left three of his warriors on the stair to guard against any other morlocks coming to Udarra's aid. All of them are vessels for intellect devourers. They are not expecting any trouble, however, and the intellect devourers controlling them are engrossed in experimenting with the sensation of pain by having their hosts take turns hitting each other. They take a -2 penalty on Perception checks to notice approaching enemies as a result. When a morlock is killed, its head splits open, disgorging the intellect devourer inhabiting the body, which then continues to attack the PCs.

MORLOCK VESSELS (3) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Morlock barbarian 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 209*)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, -2 rage)

hp 127 each (9 HD; 3d10+6d12+69)

Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2;

Immune disease, poison

Weaknesses light blindness

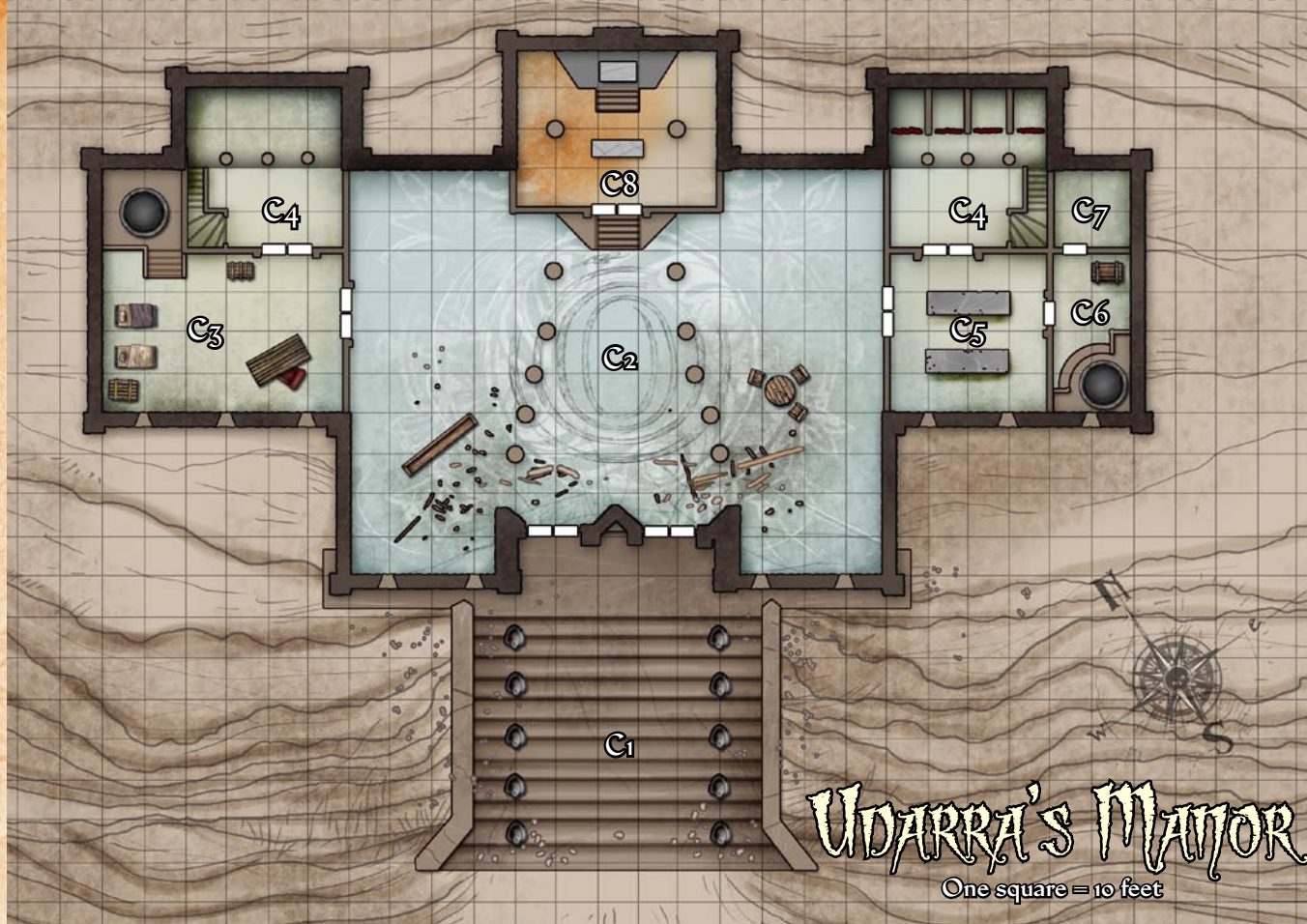
OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee mwk greatclub +16/+11 (1d10+9), bite +10 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks leap attack, rage (19 rounds/day), rage powers

Serpent's Skull



UDARRA'S MANOR

One square = 10 feet

(raging climber +6, raging leaper +6, superstition +3), sneak attack +1d6, swarming

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

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*confusion* (DC 17, single target only), *daze monster* (DC 15, no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as *reduce person* but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

TACTICS

During Combat The morlocks rage, using their swarming ability to flank foes.

Morale The morlocks fight to the death, at which point the intellect devourers that were controlling them leave the bodies and attack.

Base Statistics When not raging, the morlocks' statistics are AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16; hp 109; Fort +11, Will +6; Melee mwk greatclub +14/+9 (1d10+6), bite +9 (1d6+2); Str 18, Con 20; CMB +13, Skills Climb +30

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 21, Con 24, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +9; CMB +15; CMD 29

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+24 jump), Climb +32, Perception +10, Stealth +12 (+16 in caverns), Survival +7

Languages Undercommon

SQ expert climber, fast movement

Gear +1 hide armor, masterwork greatclub

INTELLECT DEVOURERS (3)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

TACTICS

During Combat When removed from its morlock host, an intellect devourer casts *globe of invulnerability*, then uses its spell-like abilities to confuse or daze foes. It casts *invisibility* to make sneak attacks, returning to its globe if opponents target it with spells.

Morale An intellect devourer flees when reduced to 20 hit points or fewer.

C2. MAIN HALL (CR 13)

The ceiling of this once-grand hall has collapsed in places, leaving piles of rubble on the tiled floor. Serpentine carvings adorn the walls and the double row of columns that leads from

the main entrance to a short flight of stairs, ending in a pair of double doors against the far wall. Additional double doors stand in each of the side walls.

This chamber was once the grand salon of the serpentfolk manor, but is now the site of a siege. The ceiling in this room is 30 feet high. The stairs lead up to a 10-foot-high landing with double doors at the top. The doors are made of iron and are barred (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 30). The morlock oracle Udarra and her loyal followers are barricaded within (see area C8).

Creatures: Ixolan, the leader of the intellect-devourer-controlled morlocks, stands in this room directing two alchemical golems in their attempts to batter down the barred doors to the northeast. Ixolan was the tribe's most respected warrior and scout until his body was taken over by the intellect devourer Uthothot. In short order, he claimed leadership of all of the tribe's warriors, who were soon infiltrated by the intellect devourers as well. Under Uthothot's control, Ixolan tried to seize power from the tribe's oracle Udarra. Many morlocks were killed in the ensuing battle, but Udarra was able to escape here with her most loyal followers.

The alchemical golems are legacies of the exiled intellect devourer M'deggog (see page 58 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #40). Before it was banished, M'deggog used its alchemical skill and esoteric knowledge to create these golems. Rather than consuming the brains of victims, M'deggog extracted the brains and implanted them in mechanical bodies. This process allowed one victim to provide two services—the body could serve as a host vessel for an intellect devourer, while the brain could power a construct. Like M'deggog's experiments in remotely controlling host vessels, however, this pseudo-scientific magic was considered too unorthodox for the other intellect devourers, who exiled M'deggog from Ilmurea. Despite their heretical origin, Uthothot has decided to use the golems for the obvious advantages they have over the intellect devourers' morlock hosts.

The two alchemical golems stand next to the doors in the northeast. Ixolan stands near the doors to area C5 directing their efforts. He wears a breastplate crafted from the shells of giant subterranean insects and wields a morningstar made from a giant scorpion stinger. He paints his face with blue war paint that glows when seen with darkvision.

ALCHEMICAL GOLEMS (2) **CR 9**
XP 6,400 each
 N Large construct (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 135)
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE
AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 96 each (12d10+30)
Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4
DR 10/adamantine or bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.
Melee 2 slams +19 (2d8+8 plus alchemy)
Ranged bomb +15 (8d6 energy damage)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks alchemy, bombs, splash

TACTICS
During Combat The golems throw bombs at opponents, then move forward to engage foes in melee combat. They use more bombs against anyone attempting to attack Ixolan in melee.
Morale The golems fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS
Str 27, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +12; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 35

SPECIAL ABILITIES
Alchemy (Ex) When an alchemical golem strikes a foe, the attack has an additional random effect, chosen from the options below. The attack can either deal 1d6 points of acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage, or cause the target to become sickened (Fortitude DC 16 negates) or entangled (Reflex DC 16 negates) for 1d4 rounds. These save DCs are Constitution-based.

Bombs (Ex) As a standard action, an alchemical golem can throw a bomb as a ranged touch attack to a distance of 60 feet (no range increment). If the attack misses, treat it as a thrown splash weapon to determine where it lands. Anyone who is struck by an alchemical golem's bomb takes 8d6 points of acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage (determine type randomly). All creatures adjacent to the location where the bomb hits take 1d6 points of energy damage of the same type.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) An alchemical golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, save for spells with the sonic descriptor. *Shatter* damages an alchemical golem as if it were a crystalline creature.

Splash (Ex) Any strike on an alchemical golem with a non-reach melee weapon deals 1 point of acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage (determine type randomly) to the attacker. This amount increases to 1d6 points of damage if the attack is a critical hit.

IXOLAN **CR 10**
XP 9,600
 Male intellect-devourer-controlled morlock ranger (skirmisher)
 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 128)
 CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +11 (+15 underground); **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; Perception +12 (+16 underground)

Serpent's Skull

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 shield)

hp 116 (11d10+52)

Fort +10, Ref +16, Will +6

Immune disease, poison

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee *morningstar of venom* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+5), *mwk kukri* +14/+9 (1d4+4/18–20), bite +10 (1d6+6)

Special Attacks favored enemy (monstrous humanoids +2, native outsiders +4), leap attack, sneak attack +1d6, swarming

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

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*confusion* (DC 17, single target only), *daze monster*

(DC 15, no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as *reduce person* but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ixolan casts *globe of invulnerability* and *invisibility* on himself before entering combat.

During Combat While his golems attack the PCs, Ixolan attempts to weaken them using *confusion* and *daze monster*. If these seem ineffectual, Ixolan enters combat with his weapons. After every attack, he retreats to the shadows and becomes invisible again.

Morale Ixolan tries to flee if he is reduced to fewer than 30 hit points or is in immediate danger of being captured. If Ixolan is slain, the intellect devourer Uthothot emerges from his body and attacks.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 24, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +11; CMB +15; CMD 33

Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (*morningstar*)

Skills Acrobatics +20, Climb +36, Perception +12, Stealth +15 (+23 in caverns or underground), Survival +10 (+14 underground)

Languages Undercommon

SQ expert climber, favored terrain (underground +4, urban +2), hunter's bond (companions), hunter's tricks 5/day (second chance strike, surprise shift)*, swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Gear +1 *breastplate*, *morningstar of venom* (as *dagger of venom*), *masterwork kukri*, *amulet of natural armor* +1

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

UTHOTHOT

CR 8

XP 4,800

Intellect devourer (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

hp 84

TACTICS

During Combat When Ixolan dies, Uthothot immediately casts *invisibility*, waiting for enemies to come close so it can make a full sneak attack. Uthothot's primary aim is to find a new body, so it focuses all of its attacks on a single foe.

Morale Uthothot flees when reduced to 30 hit points or fewer.

Development: If the combat in this room last for 5 rounds or more, the morlock vessels in area C5 come forth to join their leader.

C3. SALON

This bare room shows signs of recent habitation, but is now abandoned, its inhabitants having moved into area C8 with Udarra. A wide set of steps leads up to a sunken bath; the water within is stagnant and thick with algae. The ceiling is 20 feet high.

C4. LIVING AREAS

In Ilmurea's heyday, these rooms served as living quarters for the serpentfolk living in the manor. The



Ixolan

ceilings are 30 feet high. Curving staircases lead up 15 feet to elevated lofts supported by pillars. All of the furnishings are now gone, but the rooms show signs of recent habitation by morlocks.

C5. GUARDROOM (CR 14)

Two long stone tables take up the center of this chamber. Like the walls and ceiling, coiling spiral motifs decorate the tables, though many of them have been defaced.

Once a dining room for the manor, this chamber now serves as a guardroom for the morlocks loyal to Ixolan. The ceiling is 20 feet high in this room.

Creatures: Four intellect-devourer-controlled morlock vessels wait in this room for Ixolan to finish breaking down the doors to area C8. They attack anyone entering the room. When their host bodies are slain, the intellect devourers exit the corpses and attack.

MORLOCK VESSELS (4) CR 8
XP 4,800 each
hp 127 each (see page 19)

INTELLECT DEVOURERS (4) CR 8
XP 4,800 each
hp 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

C6. GUEST BATH

This room contained a sunken bath for the use of guests visiting the manor. The bath's plumbing has not survived the passage of time, so the pool is now just an empty, bowl-shaped depression filled with dirt and small pieces of rubble.

C7. MIDDEN

The original serpentfolk inhabitants of the mansion stored live food in this chamber. The morlocks use it as a midden; the chamber is now filled with refuse and the remains of past meals.

C8. SHRINE OF THE ANCESTOR GODS (CR 13)

Two black columns support the ceiling of this twenty-foot-high chamber; the ceiling has been painted black, along with the walls. A stone table stands between the two columns. Against the far wall, a short flight of stairs leads up to a stone altar. Behind the altar hangs the skin of some nameless creature, painted with the same crude symbol seen on the manor's outer doors.

Once a personal shrine to the gods of the serpentfolk who originally lived here, the morlocks have turned this

room into a shrine to their ancestor gods. The morlocks painted over the serpentine carvings on the walls, ceiling, and columns, and placed what few Azlanti artifacts they were able to scavenge from the ruins atop the altar. The symbol behind the altar is the Glyph of the Open Road.

Creatures: The morlock oracle Udarra and 14 loyal morlocks have sought refuge here from Ixolan and his intellect-devourer-controlled warriors. The morlocks do not open the doors to this chamber, so the PCs will have to break their way in. The morlocks throw rocks at the PCs as soon as they enter the room.

All of the morlocks wear the same symbol as is on Thekola's clothes, that of the Pathfinder Society. If the PCs recognize the Glyph of the Open Road and stop fighting, the morlocks stop fighting too, and there is an uneasy standoff until the PCs speak. If Thekola is with the PCs, he calls out to the morlocks that the PCs are friends and know of Kline. The morlocks react to the name Kline or to the sight of Juliver or any Pathfinder Society insignia by breaking off all attacks and backing away from the PCs with weapons lowered.

If one or more PCs speak Undercommon, they can make themselves understood easily. If not, the morlocks know the name Kline and treat the PCs with respect if it is uttered. They treat Juliver as if she were a goddess, and if she is with the PCs, the morlocks' attitude is automatically friendly. Once peaceful relations have been established, Udarra steps forward to speak with the PCs (see Development below). She is an old, hunched morlock, wearing a drab, tattered cloak. Her eyes are a milky white, and constantly weep bloody tears.

MORLOCKS (14) CR 2
XP 600 each
hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209)
Ranged rock +1 (1d4+2)

UDARRA CR 13
XP 25,600
Female old morlock oracle 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +8; Senses blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE
AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+9 armor, +4 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)
hp 133 (15 HD; 3d10+12d8+57)
Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +16
Immune disease, poison
Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Serpent's Skull

Melee +1 club +12/+7/+2 (1d6), bite +6 (1d6–1)

Special Attacks leap attack, sneak attack +1d6, swarming

Oracle Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +16)

6th (3/day)—*heroes' feast*, *mass cure moderate wounds*, *mass owl's wisdom*

5th (5/day)—*contact other plane*, *greater command* (DC 19), *mass cure light wounds*, *true seeing*

4th (7/day)—*chaos hammer* (DC 18), *cure critical wounds*, *giant vermin*, *legend lore*, *spiritual ally**

3rd (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *borrow fortune**, *contagion* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds*, *locate object*

2nd (7/day)—*calm emotions* (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 16), *instant armor*, *oracle's burden** (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16), *tongues*

1st (7/day)—*bane* (DC 15), *cure light wounds*, *doom* (DC 15), *identify*, *magic weapon*, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*

o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

Mystery Lore

TACTICS

Before Combat Udarra casts *instant armor* (as +3 chainmail), *magic weapon*, and *shield of faith* as soon as she hears someone coming through the doors.

During Combat Udarra would like to avoid combat, but if it seems unavoidable, she casts *spiritual ally* to attack enemies

while she casts damaging spells against them. She uses her mass cure spells to heal her morlocks in combat.

Morale Cornered in the mansion, Udarra has nowhere else to run, and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 30

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +19, Craft (alchemy) +17, Heal +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (engineering) +9, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (planes) +9, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +15

Languages Undercommon

SQ expert climber, oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelations (automatic writing [commune], lore keeper, mental acuity, spontaneous symbology)

Combat Gear *potion of resist energy* (cold), *potion of resist energy* (fire), *wand of searing light* (21 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork club, *cowardly crouching cloak**, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *slippers of spider climbing*, eye ointment (for *true seeing*, worth 500 gp), spell component pouch, 125 gp

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Development: Udarra is happy to speak with the PCs if Juliver is with them or they mention Eando Kline's name. If no PCs speak Undercommon, Udarra casts *tongues* so that they can communicate. Her answers to the PCs' most likely questions are listed here.

What do you know about Eando Kline? "He came from the World Above, like the ancestors. He was worried about the snake people, and said we must fight them. I spoke to the ancestors, and they said he spoke wisdom. It is a hard thing, but he said the snake people will kill everything if we do not unite against them."

Where is Kline? "Gone. He went to the vampires to ask them to join with us, but he did not return. Only his woman came back, and she was wounded, and the snake people chased her. We hid from them, but saw her go into the old tunnels. The ancestors told me she would return and so we waited."

Who are these vampires? "They have been here for a long time, but not as long as our people. They are tall, and their insides show through their skins. Their mouths open too wide, and they have terrifying teeth. They drink blood and steal lives. Sometimes they ride great bats. They are strong fighters, and no morlock has ever captured one, but they can be killed. They are dangerous, even in death. Sometimes, when they die, a great wave of pain and sickness comes from them, and they share their deaths with those around them." (A DC 20 Knowledge [planes] check recognizes this as a description of urdefhans.)



Udarra

Where do these vampires live? “Beyond the lake, beyond the cave where you entered this place. Between our lands and those of the snake people. A devil-vampire rules them. That is who Kline went to talk to. He lives in the big snake-dome on the far side of the lake, past the falling water.”

What do you know about the serpentfolk? “They live inside a giant snake in the middle of the great lake, past the vampires, around the great lake. They have captured many morlocks, to serve as slaves, to eat, and to kill. Once the snake people take you, you never come back.”

What do you know about this place? “There are many legends. They say the snake people once ruled this entire world, until the ancestor gods came to destroy them. They fought many great battles, and the ancestor gods finally drove the snake people away. But the ancestor gods became weak and corrupt, and a great disaster befell them. The way to the World Above was closed, and those who were trapped here gave birth to us. The prophecies say that if we become strong again and drive out the snake people once more, we will become like the ancestor gods again and everything will be as it should be. But we are too weak, and the vampires stand between us and the snake people.

“But Kline offered to lead us against the snake people, to help us become what we once were. You must go to the vampires. Find Kline, and return him to us. Without him, we all fail, and the snake people will rule both worlds, Above and Below.”

Udarra’s information is the first clue the PCs have received about Eando Kline’s whereabouts. If the PCs accept Udarra’s request (and it should match their own goal of finding the captive Pathfinder), a feast is held in their honor. Udarra casts *heroes’ feast* to aid the start of their journey, and more than one morlock (including Thekola, if he survived) offers to accompany them on the quest to free Kline, drive out the urdefhans and the serpentfolk, and bring about the salvation of the morlocks. While the morlocks will be of little help in combat, they can serve as enthusiastic (if weak and cowardly) scouts and followers, and as reminders to the players of the reason they are in Ilmurea in the first place—to rescue Eando Kline.

Story Award: If the PCs break the siege on Udarra’s manor and learn about Eando Kline, award them 25,600 XP, as if they had defeated Udarra in combat.

PART THREE: CITY OF FIENDS

Based on the information received from Udarra in Part Two of the adventure, the PCs’ next likely step is to follow Eando Kline’s trail into the section of Ilmurea ruled by the violent urdefhans.

The urdefhans’ territory is centered on the city’s southern lake, primarily on the two headlands that flank the cataracts to the north. These areas consist of rubble-strewn streets running between the ruined walls of the

original serpentfolk buildings. Garbage fires burn here and there, casting unsettling shadows over the ragged walls. The occasional street corner or open square has been converted into a makeshift torture chamber, where captive morlocks and serpentfolk suffer for the entertainment of their captors. The air is filled with foul-smelling smoke, and the screams of torture victims rend the air. An intact serpent gate stands on each headland, and the urdefhans’ leader, the half-fiend Izon, has claimed the easternmost one as his palace.

In order to find Eando Kline, the PCs will have to talk to the urdefhans, and specifically to their half-fiend leader Izon. Simply attacking the urdefhans outright is likely doomed to failure, though being captured is one way to accomplish their goal. Stealth is also a possibility, but being caught trying to sneak into Izon’s palace will naturally arouse suspicion. The PCs can find a dangerous ally in the drow assassin Vedavrex (see area G), who is in Ilmurea for her own reasons, and might be willing to help them get into Izon’s palace.

The PCs may be able to enter the urdefhan territory openly if they seem strong but peaceable, or if they have something to trade. The mere presence of surface-worlders in Ilmurea makes them of interest to Izon, who will want to interrogate them as soon as he learns that they are here. If the PCs openly approach the urdefhans and state their business, they can convince the guards to take them to see Izon with a successful Diplomacy check (the urdefhans are considered hostile). If successful, the PCs will not be harmed (much) by their urdefhan escort, but they will be surrounded by guards at all times. Izon is curious about newcomers, but takes no chances with them.

Creatures: Urdefhan guards mounted on undead bats known as skavelings fly above urdefhan territory watching for intruders. Use the Ambushes in Ilmurea table on page 81 to generate an encounter with one of these patrols. An urdefhan air patrol consists of four urdefhan guards riding skavelings, a CR 13 encounter. An air patrol attacks any non-urdefhan creatures they encounter in their portion of the city.

URDEFHAN GUARDS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Urdefhan fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 276)

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 104 each (8d10+61)

Fort +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, negative energy affinity; **DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** death effects, disease, fear, level drain; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 14



SERPENT'S SKULL



OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rhoka sword +16/+11 (1d8+10/18–20), bite +8 (1d4+2 plus 2 Str)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+5/x3)

Special Attacks blood drain (1 Con), strength damage (DC 17), weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd, concentration +5)

At will—*feather fall*

3/day—*align weapon*, *death knell* (DC 14), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat The urdefhans fire arrows at enemies while the skavelings make flyby attacks. If knocked from their mounts, the urdefhans draw their rhoka swords and attack.

Morale The urdefhans pursue intruders for as long as they can see them. If three guards are slain, the fourth immediately retreats, flying to area **F1** to inform the other urdefhans of the patrol's fate.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 22, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Toughness, Weapon Focus (rhoka sword), Weapon Specialization (rhoka sword)

Skills Intimidate +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +13, Ride +12, Sense Motive +7, Survival +7

Languages Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon

SQ armor training 1, daemonic pact (DC 17)

Combat Gear +1 arrows (10), *potion of inflict serious wounds*;

Other Gear +1 *scale mail*, masterwork composite longbow (+5 Str) with 10 arrows, masterwork rhoka sword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daemonic Pact (Su) Urdefhans are infused with daemonic energy; as an immediate action, an urdefhan can attempt to allow this energy to consume its soul (50% chance of success per attempt). If it succeeds, the urdefhan dies and releases a 5-foot-radius burst of negative energy that deals 2d6 points of damage (DC 17 Reflex half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Negative Energy Affinity (Ex) An urdefhan is alive, but it reacts to positive and negative energy as if it were undead—positive energy harms it, while negative energy heals it.

Strength Damage (Su) An urdefhan's bite drains vitality, turning the skin and muscle around the wound transparent and causing 2 points of Strength damage unless the target succeeds on a DC 17 Fortitude save. The flesh remains transparent until the Strength damage is healed, but this does not have any other effects. The save DC is Constitution-based.

SKAVELINGS (4) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

CE Large undead (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 42)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 58 each (9d8+18)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +10 (2d8+7 plus disease and paralysis)

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

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 16), screech

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Fly +13, Perception +14 (+18 when using blindsense), Stealth +14

Languages Undercommon

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) *Ghoul Fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146*).

Screech (Su) Once per day as a standard action, a skaveling can produce an ear-splitting screech that stuns non-skavelings in a 20-foot-radius burst. All creatures within the area must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d3 rounds. Other skavelings and urdefhans are immune to this effect. This is a sonic mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

F1. SKAVELING AERIE (CR 15)

This fortified island is home to the air patrols that are a constant sight over the urdefhan-controlled part of the city. Air patrols return to the aerie every hour, with new patrols leaving immediately thereafter.

Creatures: At any one time, 1d4 air patrols, each consisting of four urdefhan guards and four skavelings, are off duty on the island. They attack any intruders on the island.

URDEFHAN GUARDS (4-16) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 104 each (see page 25)

SKAVELINGS (4-16) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 58 each (see above)

F2. GUARD STATIONS (CR 13)

The urdefhans have several guardposts scattered throughout the portion of the city they control. While these buildings vary in size and layout, the urdefhan guards within remain on constant lookout for morlocks, serpentfolk, or other intruders into their territory.

Creatures: Six urdefhan guards are posted in each of these locations. They attack any non-urdefhans they encounter.

URDEFHAN GUARDS (6) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 104 each (see page 25)

TACTICS

During Combat The guards begin combat by firing their bows, then move in to attack in melee with their rhoka swords.

The guards work together to flank opponents, ganging up on the most powerful warriors.

Morale If three or more guards are slain, one guard attempts to flee to area G to warn the urdefhans there of the intruders. The rest fight to the death, using their daemonic pact to take as many of their enemies with them as possible.

F3. AZLANTI CEMETERY (CR 13)

Four obelisks mark the corners of a wide plaza here. Between them, a litter of headstones stands in the gloom like rotten teeth, leaning at drunken angles.

This square was turned into a cemetery holding the remains of Azlanti soldiers who died during operations in Ilmurea. A DC 20 Knowledge (history) check can recognize the style of the headstones and the inscriptions on them as Azlanti in origin. A character who knows Azlanti (or who makes a DC 30 Linguistics check) can decipher the inscriptions and tell that those buried here were soldiers.

Creatures: Four of the Azlanti soldiers interred here have risen as undead mummies. They believe their work in Ilmurea is not finished, and have taken it upon themselves to hold this plaza until they receive further orders. They currently hide among the tombstones (DC 25 Perception check to notice). If any living creature enters the plaza, one of the mummies shows itself and issues a challenge in Azlanti. If the correct response (now known only to the mummies themselves) is not given, the rest of the mummies come out of hiding and attack.

AZLANTI MUMMIES (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Mummy fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 210*)

LE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

Aura despair (30 ft., paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, Will DC 18 negates)

SERPENT'S SKULL

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, +2 shield)

hp 122 each (12 HD; 8d8+4d10+64)

Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +11; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; DR 5/—; Immune undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 longsword +21/+16 (1d8+16/19–20) or

slam +20 (1d8+13 plus mummy rot)

Special Attacks mummy rot (DC 18)

TACTICS

During Combat The mummies begin combat with their slams, attempting to infect opponents with mummy rot. They then switch to their longswords, attacking any creature in the plaza. They do not pursue fleeing foes out of the square.



Drider Scout

Morale The mummies fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 12, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 19

Base Atk +10; CMB +19; CMD 30

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill

Focus (Perception), Step Up, Toughness, Weapon

Focus (slam), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon

Specialization (longsword)

Skills Climb +15, Intimidate +19, Perception +23, Stealth +15

Languages Azlanti

SQ armor training 1

Gear masterwork heavy steel shield, +1 longsword

Treasure: Each of the 40 graves in the plaza has a 10% chance of containing either a random Medium magical suit of armor or shield (50% chance) or a random Medium magical weapon (50%), generated using the tables on pages 461 and 468 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

F4. DRIDER HIDEOUT (CR 14)

An ancient serpentfolk manor perches on the shore of the lake. No other buildings stand near it, and its windows and doors gape like empty eye sockets in the darkness of the cavern.

The drow assassin Vedavrex Misraria (see area G) has taken over this structure as her base of operations in Ilmurea. She has left her entourage here while she reconnoiters Izon's palace alone.

Creatures: Vedavrex's entourage consists of four male drider sorcerers who serve her as slaves and bodyguards. Vedavrex has outfitted them with silver daggers and *oil of align weapon* to get through the urdefhans' damage reduction. Though under strict orders not to leave this building without their mistress, the driders are bored and long to give in to their predatory instincts. If they notice the PCs outside their hideout, they use *dancing lights* and *ghost sound* to try to lead the PCs inside, where they can indulge their bloodlust without revealing themselves to the city at large. You can use the map of Udarra's Manor on page 20 for this encounter. The driders take up positions in the room labeled C2.

DRIDER SCOUTS (4)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

Male drider sorcerer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 113)

CE Large aberration

Init +3; Senses darkvision 120 ft., detect good, detect law, detect magic; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, –1 size)

hp 125 each (12 HD; 9d8+3d6+75)

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11; +2 vs. poison
DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** sleep, **Resist** electricity 5;
SR 18

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee +1 *silver dagger* +12/+7 (1d4+4/19–20), bite +5 (1d4+2 plus poison) or
 2 claws +10 (1d4+4), bite +5 (1d4+2 plus poison)

Ranged mwk *silver dagger* +11 (1d4+3/19–20)

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

Special Attacks claws 8/day, poison, web (+9 ranged, DC 19, 9 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +14)

Constant—*detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*

At will—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

1/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 18)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +14)

4th (5/day)—*enervation*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd (7/day)—*fly*, *hold person* (DC 18), *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *rage*

2nd (7/day)—*acid arrow*, *bull's strength*, *scorching ray*, *spider climb*, *web* (DC 17)

1st (8/day)—*cause fear* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shocking grasp*, *silent image* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 15), *daze* (DC 15), *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Bloodline Abyssal

TACTICS

Before Combat The driders cast *mage armor*, *stoneskin*, *spider climb*, and *greater invisibility* before combat.

During Combat The driders climb up on the walls and ceiling of the manor's first room to ambush opponents with spells, moving around to avoid being targeted.

Morale The driders fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Penetration, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy mace)

Skills Climb +25, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +17, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +18

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ bloodline arcana, undersized weapons

Combat Gear *oil of align weapon (good)*; **Other Gear** +1 *silver dagger*, masterwork silver daggers (3), drow-patterned jewelry worth 650 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 19; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save.

F5. ABANDONED GATE (CR 17)

A giant snake carved of stone coils around the dome of this large building. A wide gateway gapes in the southeast wall of the dome.

This building is one of Ilmurea's six serpent gates. All of the rooms in the dome are empty and in disuse. The urdefhans occasionally send patrols to sweep the structure of any occupants, but it stands unoccupied for most of the time. The actual Darklands gate in the center of the dome remains open, and provides both an entrance to and exit from Ilmurea. This is the gate that Eando Kline and his companions used to enter the city.

Creatures: Should the PCs decide to descend into the gate, they encounter a neothelid and its six charmed gug slaves coming up from Orv. Such an encounter in the depths of the earth is likely too much for the PCs at this level, and it might be safer for them to retreat back to Ilmurea rather than continue their explorations into Orv.

CHARMED GUGS (6)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 127 each (see page 15)

NEOTHELID

CR 15

XP 51,200

hp 230 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 214)

G. IZON'S PALACE

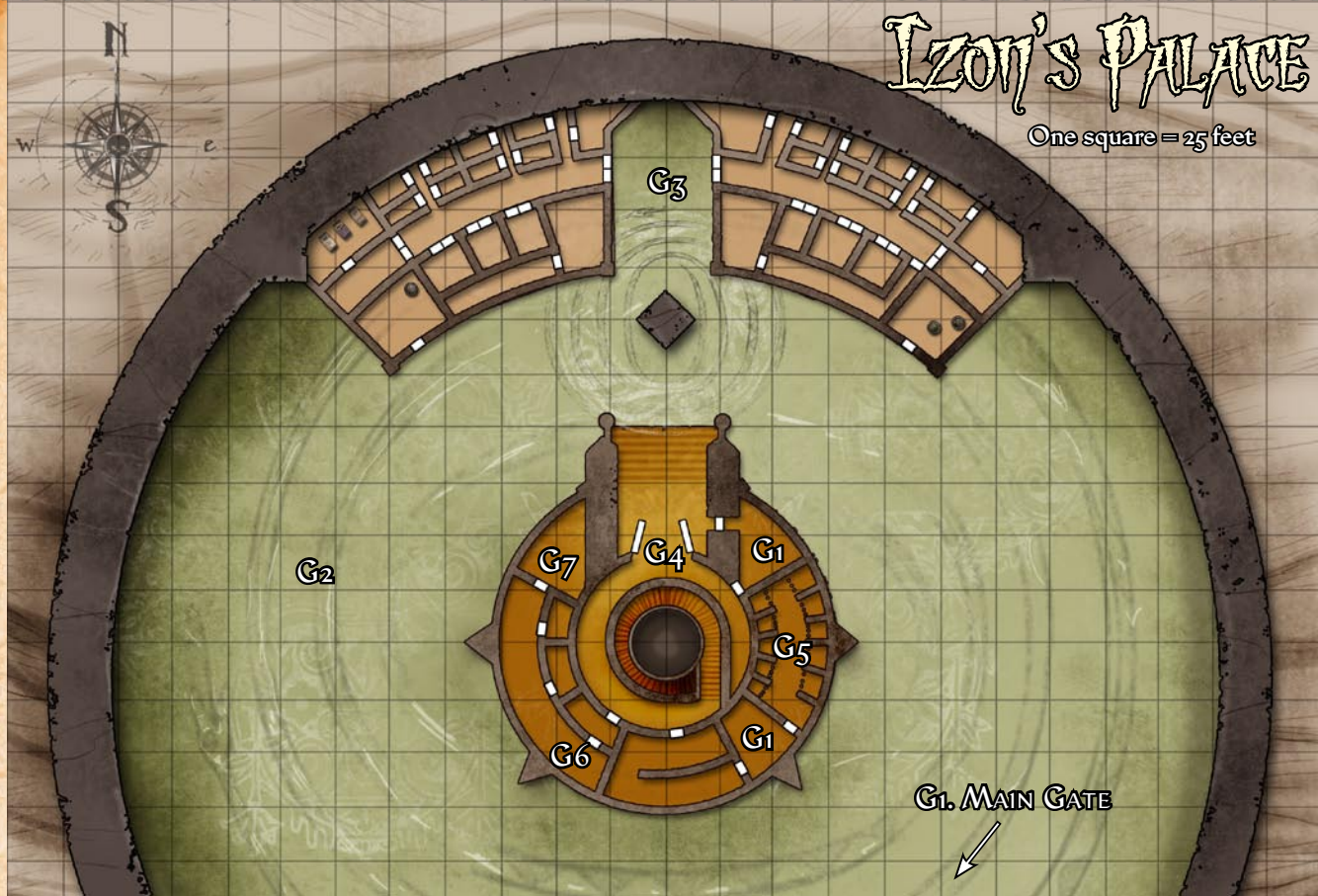
The urdefhans' leader, the half-fiend Izon, has turned this serpent gate into his personal compound, a combination fortress and palace. The compound follows the same layout as the city's other serpent gates (see page 30), but far more of its buildings and rooms have been repaired and are currently inhabited by urdefhans.

If the PCs have made peaceful contact with the urdefhans, they are escorted directly to area G7 to speak with Izon. Otherwise, they must sneak past or fight their way through the guards posted throughout the complex.

A THIEF IN THE DARK (CR 14)

The urdefhans and their allies are not the only creatures to be found inside Izon's palace. A drow assassin is also skulking about inside the compound, seeking a way to get inside the central dome.

Creatures: Vedavrex Misraria is a devout follower of Noctacula, demon lord of darkness and lust, but her true calling is as an assassin for the noble houses of the drow city of Telderist. When a drow named Deloral Parastric (see area G5) tried to sell his house's secrets to the duergar, House Parastric contracted Vedavrex to assassinate the troublesome male. Unfortunately,



Deloral got wind of his fate and fled Telderist before Vedavrex could complete her contract. Vedavrex has been chasing Deloral through the Darklands ever since. She finally caught up to him in Ilmurea, but not before he made contact with the urdefhans.

Vedavrex's mission is to kill Deloral—nothing else matters to her. She cares little about the politics or current situation in Ilmurea, unless it can help her fulfill her contract. With Deloral in urdefhan custody, her task has become much more difficult. She knows that she has no hope of taking on the urdefhans by herself, but she cannot simply abandon her contract.

Vedavrex has so far managed to avoid detection by the urdefhans while she scouts the palace, and has discovered a concealed hole in the roof of the central dome that would allow entry into the dome while avoiding most of the guards. She has not yet taken advantage of this secret entrance, however, as she is not sure exactly where Deloral is being held, and in her profession, it is always better to wait than to take rash action.

Vedavrex may be encountered anywhere in Izon's palace. She is likely invisible, and if she sees the PCs, she follows behind them, hoping that whatever their purpose in Izon's palace is, she can take advantage of their presence

by using them as a diversion while she goes after Deloral. If the PCs detect her, she holds up her hand to show her peaceful intentions, and claims to be trying to rescue one of her kin (using Bluff if necessary). She suggests that she and the PCs work together to get inside the dome and past the guards.

Vedavrex has no interest in the PCs' mission, but she is willing to aid them so long as they serve her purposes. If she has the chance to kill Deloral, she takes it. She doesn't view the PCs as enemies, only as tools to be used and discarded when they are no longer useful. Likewise, she bears them no ill will, and does nothing to hinder them unless they betray her first.

If attacked, Vedavrex escapes using her *cape of the mountebank*, but returns later, still hoping to use the PCs as a diversion. At your option, she might also seek revenge on the PCs for this slight, but only after she has taken care of Deloral once and for all.

Vedavrex wears white leather armor and carries a well-used hand crossbow. Like her drider slaves in area F4, Vedavrex has silvered her *assassin's dagger* and crossbow bolts and carries *oil of align weapon* to bypass the urdefhans' damage resistance in case she must fight any of them.

VEDAVREX MISRARIA**CR 14****XP 38,400**

Female drow noble rogue 5/assassin 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 115)

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 21, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +4 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 81 (14d8+19)

Fort +5, **Ref** +17, **Will** +5; +2 vs. enchantment, +4 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 25

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *silver assassin's dagger* +21/+16 (1d4+7/17–20)

Ranged +1 *hand crossbow* +19 (1d4+4/19–20 plus poison)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 22), quiet death, sneak attack +8d6, swift death, true death (DC 24)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +13)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*dancing lights, deeper darkness, faerie fire, feather fall, levitate*

1/day—*divine favor, dispel magic, suggestion* (DC 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat Vedavrex activates her *ring of invisibility*, drinks one of her *potions of shield of faith*, and casts *divine favor* before combat.

During Combat Vedavrex tries to avoid hand-to-hand combat entirely. She prefers to hide and watch her opponents, taking her time before making a death attack with her crossbow or *assassin's dagger*.

Morale Vedavrex flees using her *cape of the mountebank* if engaged in melee combat or if reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, only to return later and stalk her enemies, picking them off at her leisure.

Base Statistics Without her preparations, Vedavrex has **AC** 23, touch 17, flat-footed 16; **Melee** +2 *silver assassin's dagger* +18/+13 (1d4+4/17–20); **Ranged** +1 *hand crossbow* +16 (1d4+1/19–20 plus poison).

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 23, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 28

Feats Dodge, Improved Critical (dagger), Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Acrobatics +23, Bluff +13, Climb +12, Disable Device +16, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +15, Perception +20, Sleight of Hand +23 (+32 to conceal weapons), Stealth +23

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ hidden weapons, hide in plain sight, poison use, rogue talents (bleeding attack +8, finesse rogue), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *oil of align weapon (good)* (2), *potions of shield of faith* +4 (2), drow poison (10 doses); **Other Gear** +4 *leather armor*, +1 *hand crossbow* with 10 bolts and 10 silver bolts, *silver assassin's dagger*, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cape of the mountebank*, *ring of invisibility*, thieves' tools

Development: If the PCs make peaceful contact with Vedavrex and agree to ally with her, she tells them of the secret entrance she has found in the roof. This concealed hole opens into the guardpost (area G1) just south of the torture cells where Deloral is being held (area G5).



Vedavrex Misraria



SERPENT'S SKULL

G1. GUARDPOSTS (CR 13)

Each of these locations, including the main gate into the dome, functions as a guardpost for vigilant urdefhan guards. The guardpost just south of the torture cells (area G5) has a hole in the ceiling (a DC 25 Perception check is required to notice it). This is the concealed entrance that Vedavrex found, and the guards in the room are unaware of it. Anyone entering the guardpost through that entrance automatically surprises the guards within.

Creatures: Six urdefhan guards stand watch in each of these guardposts at all times. They attack any creatures they encounter, unless the creatures are escorted by urdefhans.

URDEFHAN GUARDS (6) CR 8

XP 4,800 each
hp 104 each (see page 25)

G2. INNER COURTYARD (CR 14)

This vast, circular courtyard fills up the majority of the giant dome. A smaller domed building sits in the center of the space.

Creatures: Four giant morlocks roam the huge inner courtyard of the dome. Refugees from the Honored Academy of Fang and Blade (see page 66), these brutish degenerates are larger and stronger than normal morlocks, but are even less intelligent. The urdefhans easily brutalized the dim giants, who now serve the fiends as something between pets and slaves, guards and attack beasts. The morlocks attack any non-urdefhans they see inside the dome.

GIANT MORLOCKS (4) CR 10

XP 9,600 each
Advanced morlock (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209)
CE Large monstrous humanoid
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+3 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)
hp 149 each (13d10+78)
Fort +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12
Immune disease, poison
Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.
Melee bite +19 (1d6+7), 2 claws +19 (1d6+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks leap attack, sneak attack +3d6, swarming

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 3, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 34
Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+21 jump), Climb +31, Stealth +9 (+13 in caverns)

Languages Undercommon

SQ expert climber

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Swarming (Ex) Morlocks dwell and fight in cramped quarters every day of their lives, and as such are quite adept at swarming foes. Up to two morlocks can share the same space at the same time. If two morlocks in the same space attack the same foe, they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares.

G3. BARRACKS (CR VARIES)

Two large buildings stand against the inner wall of the dome. The structures are in good repair, and appear to be inhabited.

These buildings house both normal urdefhans and those urdefhan guards posted to the palace.

Creatures: At any one time, 3d4 normal urdefhans and 1d8 urdefhan guards may be found within, though they are likely resting or sleeping, and are not ready for combat.

G4. DARKLANDS GATEWAY (CR 14)

Stone stairs spiral down into the darkness of a huge pit in the floor beneath the central dome.

This 50-foot-diameter pit is the Darklands gateway for this serpent gate. Like the city's other gates, this pit eventually leads to the vaults of Orv.

Creatures: This area is patrolled by four urdefhan guards, accompanied by two piscodaemons, hideous daemonic allies of the urdefhans. Piscodaemons are humanoid in form, with the pincers of giant lobsters and tentacled, octopoid heads. While their primary duty is to guard against intruders coming out of the pit, they attack any creature not escorted by urdefhans.

PISCODAEMONS (2) CR 10

XP 9,600 each
NE Medium outsider (aquatic, daemon, evil, extraplanar)
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 272)
Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good, detect magic, see invisibility; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+4 Dex, +10 natural)
hp 137 each (11d10+77)
Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9
DR 10/good; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison;
Resist cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.



Melee 2 claws +19 (2d6+7/18–20/3 plus grab and 1d6 bleed), tentacles +17 (1d10+3 plus poison)

Special Attacks constrict (2d6+10)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +14)

Constant—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*

At will—*dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

3/day—*fly*, *stinking cloud* (DC 16)

1/day—*summon* (level 4, 1d3 hydrodaemons 35%)

TACTICS

During Combat The piscodaemons focus their attacks on the strongest-looking warriors, attempting to weaken them with their poisoned tentacles. Hydrodaemons are detailed on page 67 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*; if you don't have this book handy, simply ignore the piscodaemons' *summon* ability.

Morale The piscodaemons fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 18, **Con** 24, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 32

Feats Critical Focus, Improved Initiative,

Multiattack, Power Attack, Sickening Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Escape Artist +18, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +18, Survival +16, Swim +29

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ amphibious, augmented critical

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Augmented Critical (Ex) A piscodaemon's claws threaten a critical hit on an 18–20 and inflict $\times 3$ damage on a successful critical hit.

Poison (Ex) Tentacles—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con plus staggered for 1 round; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

URDEFHAN GUARDS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 104 each (see page 25)

G5. THE TORTURE CELLS (CR 10)

Prison cells line the walls of this curving chamber, lit by the hellish glow of braziers scattered throughout the room. Many of the cells appear to be filled with dead bodies, though occasional whimpering noises hint that some of the creatures held here might still be alive, if only barely.

The urdefhans keep all of their prisoners in these cells, and as they are more interested in death and war than taking slaves, these prisoners suffer cruelly at the hands. Prisoners are occasionally taken out of their cells to provide entertainment for their captors in the form of torture, but the urdefhans think so little of them that after the prisoners inevitably succumb to torture and are returned to their cells, the urdefhan let their bodies lie where they fall and don't bother checking whether they still live. Only when the cells become full of corpses do the urdefhans finally empty them, before refilling them again with fresh meat.

Creatures: Most of the prisoners here are morlocks, and the few who have so far survived the urdefhans' torture are only barely alive, not to mention heavily scarred, both mentally and physically.

Only one prisoner is in relatively good shape—a drow named Deloral Parastric, who hangs shackled and bleeding from the ceiling. A native of the drow city of Telderist, Deloral became fed up with his subservient role as a male within matriarchal drow society, and stole the secret of successfully fleshwarping dwarves from his house to sell to the duergar.

When his house matron discovered his treachery, she immediately contracted a drow assassin named Vedavrex Misraria to kill him. Deloral barely escaped Telderist with his life, and fled into the Darklands with Vedavrex on his heels. Dogged by the persistent assassin, Deloral eventually found his way to Ilmurea, coming up through the serpent gate that the urdefhan leader Izon had claimed as his palace. Quickly captured, Deloral offered to sell his secrets to the urdefhans in exchange for his life. Izon was far too preoccupied with the serpentfolk situation in Ilmurea to care much about the drow, however, and turned Deloral over to his torturers.

Deloral has been repeatedly tortured by the urdefhans, and his face and body are marked with scars. Compared to the morlocks the urdefhan torturers normally have to work with, however, Deloral is a paragon of endurance. If the PCs come into this room, Deloral begs to be freed. If he sees Vedavrex with them, he pleads with them to protect him from her. He claims to have been framed for a crime he did not commit, and appeals to the PCs' sense of justice.

There is one other reason that Deloral might be valuable. If he learns the PCs are looking for Eando Kline, he claims to have information about the missing Pathfinder—and for once in his life, Deloral is telling the truth. He was



Deloral Parastric

present when Eando Kline visited Izon, and overheard the two of them talking. If the PCs killed Izon before talking to him, this knowledge is even more valuable. Deloral can give the PCs all of the information presented on page 36 in Interview with the Fiend, provided they agree to protect him from both the urdefhans and Vedavrex.

If attacked, Deloral snatches a long knife (treat as a short sword) from one of the braziers to defend himself. Unarmored and barely armed, Deloral is only considered a CR 10 encounter.

DELORAL PARASTRIC CR 10

XP 9,600

Male drow fighter 6/rogue 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 114)

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 109, currently 62 (14 HD; 6d10+8d8+36)

Fort +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5; +2 vs. enchantment, +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 20

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +17/+12/+7 (1d6+6/17–20) or unarmed strike +15/+10/+5 (1d3+3 nonlethal)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6, weapon training (light blades +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +14)
1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

TACTICS

During Combat Deloral has suffered much at the hands of his urdefhan captors, but if attacked, he fights back with his fists or whatever improvised weapon he can find.

Morale Deloral hasn't run so far and for so long to throw his life away now. He tries to flee at the earliest opportunity. If escape is out of the question, he surrenders and begs for his life, promising to share the secrets he possesses about drow fleshwarping.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 32

Feats Bleeding Critical, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Deceitful, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Improved Critical (short sword), Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +21, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +16, Perception +16, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +18

Languages Elven, Undercommon

SQ armor training 1, poison use, rogue talents (combat trick, finesse rogue, resiliency, weapon training), trapfinding +4

Development: Once he has shared his information with the PCs, Deloral wants nothing more than to flee back into the deeper Darklands. If Vedavrex is still alive, however, he stays with the PCs for as long as possible, hoping they can protect him from the vengeful assassin and her drider minions.

Any PCs captured by the urdefhans are stripped of their gear and brought to this room after being interrogated by Izon in area G7. This area could also be a good location to introduce replacement PCs if the party has lost one or more characters.

Story Award: If the PCs question Deloral and learn the whereabouts of Eando Kline from him, award them full XP for his CR (25,600 XP).

G6. THE LONG HALL (CR 13)

This long hallway curves out of sight, one wall studded with doors. Large doors stand at either end of the corridor.

This corridor is the only means of getting to Izon's personal sanctum (area G7). The doors along the eastern wall lead to the piscodaemons' personal quarters.

Creatures: Izon's personal guards, three piscodaemons, stand guard in the hallway, controlling access to the urdefhan leader. They attack anyone not escorted by urdefhans, and fight to the death to defend their lord.

PISCODAEMONS (3) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 137 each (see page 32)

Development: If the piscodaemons hear the sounds of combat from area G7, they immediately enter that room to assist Izon. They do not leave their posts under any other circumstances.

G7. IZON'S SANCTUM (CR 15)

Glowing crystals provide dim, blue illumination in this chamber. Rich tapestries hanging on the walls depict urdefhan armies sweeping through subterranean vaults, slaughtering everything in their path in an orgy of bloodshed and destruction. A large throne, apparently crafted from bones, sits against the curving outer wall of the room.

This is Izon's throne room and personal sanctum, where he meets with his followers and entertains guests. If the PCs are captured, or if they have convinced the urdefhans to take them to their leader, they are brought here to be questioned by the room's inhabitant.

Creature: The urdefhans' leader is a half-fiend named Izon. The product of an urdefhan mother and daemon

father, Izon's birth was auspicious, and the strength and abilities that are his daemonic birthright allowed him to rise quickly through the violent ranks of urdefhan society, eventually culminating in his leadership of the exiled daemon-spawn. Izon is a cleric of the archdaemon Szuriel, the Horseman of War. He wears leather robes and carries a large glaive as both a weapon and a symbol of his office. Great bat wings unfurl from his shoulders, and his mouth is wider and toothier than those of his kin, betraying his daemonic heritage.

If the PCs wish to talk with Izon, see Interview with the Fiend on page 36. If they decide to attack him, he calls for his piscodaemon guards in area G6 to join him and fights back as described in Tactics, below. Though he would prefer to speak with the PCs, he loves violence and death, and is happy to oblige the PCs if that is what they seek.

IZON **CR 15**

XP 51,200

Male half-fiend urdefhan cleric of Szuriel 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 276, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 171)

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., *true seeing*; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+8 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 188 (14 HD; 3d10+11d8+123)

Fort +19, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities negative

energy affinity; **DR** 5/good or silver, **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** death effects, disease, *disintegrate*, fear, *holy smite*, level drain, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +1 *thundering glaive* +23/+18/+13 (1d10+16/19–20/x3 plus 2d8 sonic), bite +16 (1d6+5 plus 2 Str) or bite +16 (1d6+5 plus 2 Str), 2 claws +21 (1d4+10)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+9/x3)

Special Attacks blood drain (1 Con), channel negative energy 8/day (DC 20, 6d6), scythe of evil (5 rounds, 1/day), smite good 1/day, strength damage (DC 16), weapon master (11 rounds/day)

Half-Fiend Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +19)

3/day—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 19), *unholy aura* (DC 23)
1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 22), *contagion* (DC 19), *desecrate*, *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 19)

Urdefhan Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd, concentration +8)

At will—*feather fall*
3/day—*align weapon*, *death knell* (DC 17), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +17)

9/day—*battle rage* (+5 damage), *touch of evil* (5 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +17)

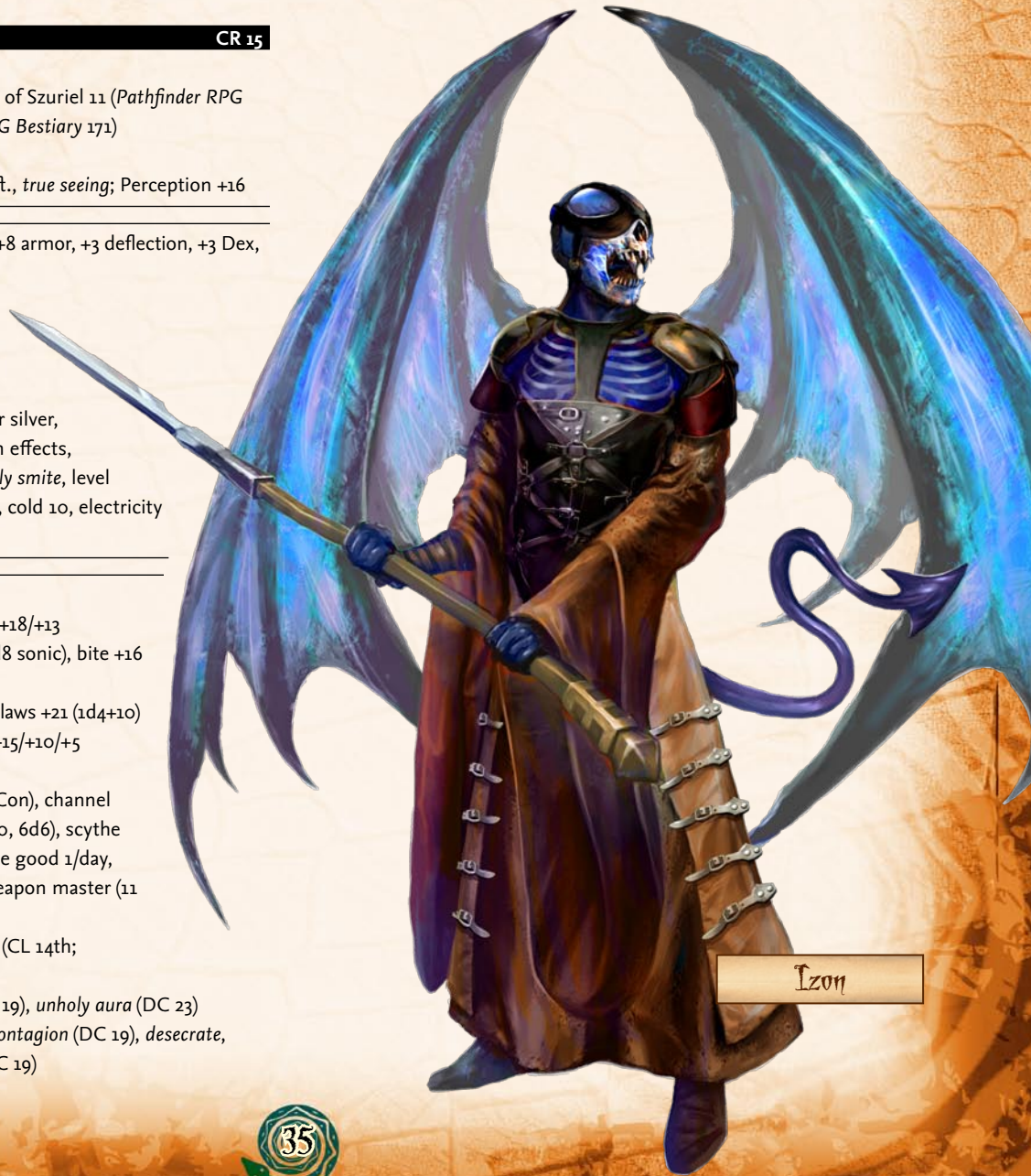
6th—*blade barrier*^D (DC 22), *greater dispel magic*, *harm* (DC 22)

5th—*flame strike*^D (DC 21, 2), *slay living* (DC 21), *true seeing*

4th—*chaos hammer* (DC 20), *divine power*^D, *freedom of movement*, *spell immunity*, *unholy blight* (DC 20)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 19), *magic vestment*^D, *searing light* (3)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *silence* (DC 18, 2), *sound burst* (DC 18, 2), *spiritual weapon*^D



Other Routes to Thousand Fangs

While this adventure assumes that the PCs spend a fair amount of time working with the morlocks and the urdefhans in order to learn where Eando Kline is being imprisoned, there are certainly other routes they can take to learn this information. Simply exploring Ilmurea until they stumble across Eando in the fortress of Thousand Fangs is one possibility (although a fantastically inefficient and time-consuming one). The PCs could also rely upon powerful magic like *divination* or *commune* to attempt to learn his fate. Remember that such divinations often provide roundabout or cryptic answers, though, and you should frame your answers to such inquiries so as not to send the PCs directly to the endgame, but rather to coax them toward the morlocks or the urdefhans. Thousand Fangs is a dangerous location, and if the PCs aren't at least 14th or 15th level before they attempt to infiltrate it, they may find themselves in over their heads. The morlocks, the urdefhans, and the simple act of exploring Ilmurea are intended to give them the experience they need to reach these levels; if they skip this section of the adventure, they may find themselves facing threats they can't handle. Of course, if they do effectively skip the first few parts of this adventure, you can always recycle them later if and when the PCs' curiosity sends them into the city to explore.

1st—*bane* (DC 17), *doom* (DC 17), *inflict light wounds* (DC 17, 3), *protection from good*^D, *shield of faith*
 o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*
 D Domain spell; Domains Evil, War

TACTICS

Before Combat Izon casts *magic vestment* every day. Before combat, he casts *spell immunity* (against *disintegrate* and *holy smite*), *shield of faith*, *true seeing*, *bear's endurance*, and *bull's strength*.

During Combat Once in combat, Izon casts *unholy aura*. He attempts to kill as many enemies as possible using his spells. If forced into melee, Izon casts *divine power* and activates his battle rage and scythe of evil abilities before attacking with his glaive.

Morale Here in his sanctum, Izon fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without his spells, Izon has AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21; hp 160; Fort +17; Melee +1 *thundering glaive* +21/+16/+11 (1d10+13/19–20/x3 plus 2d8 sonic), bite +14 (1d6+4 plus 2 Str) or bite +14 (1d6+4 plus 2 Str), 2 claws +19 (1d4+8); Str 26, Con 21; CMB +19; CMD 35.

STATISTICS

Str 30, Dex 16, Con 25, Int 14, Wis 22, Cha 20

Base Atk +11; CMB +21; CMD 37

Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (glaive), Martial Weapon Proficiency (glaive), Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (glaive)

Skills Diplomacy +14, Fly +21, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +16, Ride +6, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +12

Languages Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon

SQ aura, daemonic pact (DC 16)

Other Gear masterwork breastplate, +1 *thundering glaive*, +1 *composite longbow* (+8 Str) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *eye ointment* (for *true seeing*, worth 1,000gp), spell component pouch, silver unholy symbol of Szuriel

INTERVIEW WITH THE FIEND

Izon wants to know why the PCs are in Ilmurea, and what they know about the situation in the city. After his earlier encounter with Eando Kline, the appearance of more people from the surface intrigues him. He wants to know more, particularly whether he can use them to his own advantage against Vyr-Azul and the serpentfolk. Izon tries to appear intelligent, cultured, and reasonable—a strange contrast to his terrifying appearance—and attempts to draw information out of the PCs.

As the PCs talk with the urdefhan leader, here are some of Izon's answers to their possible questions.

What do you want? “Merely to talk to you, like civilized, intelligent beings. Unsurprisingly, the morlocks and serpentfolk are not the cleverest of creatures. Perhaps we can be of service to each other. I imagine you're looking for someone—one of your kind who passed this way not long ago?”

What do you know about him/Eando Kline? “He came here, as you have. We talked, as you and I are talking now.”

What did you talk about? “What everyone talks about in Ilmurea of late—the serpentfolk and their plans. There are more of them each day, and they're up to something in that great temple of theirs. Your friend Kline seemed to think there was a very great threat growing amid the serpents, perhaps even the rebirth of their ancient empire. He wanted my help—he wanted me to join some kind of grand alliance to defeat the serpents once and for all.”

Where is Eando Kline now? “I sent him on his way, so to speak. In order to join his grand army, I needed to know he had what it took to lead in war. I haven't heard from him since, which leads me to believe he failed in the task I set before him. I assume the serpentfolk have captured and killed him.”

What was this favor you asked him to do? “One of my generals has betrayed me. Once, Belkor and I were comrades, but he grew jealous of my power and my

station. When he realized I would always be stronger than him, he fled to join the snakes. While I would normally expect them to kill any of my people out of hand, as we do to theirs, Belkor's position gave him information that he could use as a bargaining chip. Belkor is a coward and traitor, and the damage he could do to my interests is incalculable. And so I asked your friend Kline to find him and kill him for me. If he succeeded, I agreed to aid him in his little war. Obviously, he failed, as I suspected he might."

Where is Belkor?/Where did you send Kline? "Where else? The great serpent fortress in the middle of the lake. Their temple is forbidden to anyone without scales or a forked tongue, so all outsiders are taken to Thousand Fangs. If you're so eager to find your friend, perhaps you'd like to complete his task as well? While you're there, find Belkor and destroy him. Bring me back his gear and I might be willing to lend my forces to this grand alliance Kline proposed. I can't quite picture my people fighting alongside morlocks instead of just eating them, but the overwhelming serpent presence in my city leaves me few other tactical choices."

What do you know about Ilmurea/the serpentfolk? "I don't know how familiar you are with Ilmurean politics, but we were here before the serpentfolk. The fact that their ancestors originally built the city is irrelevant. They were weak. They could not keep what they built, and therefore they do not deserve to reclaim it. We claimed this city for our own, and then the serpentfolk upset the balance of power and delayed my own personal plans. And for that, this cavern will run red with their blood."

Development: If the PCs refuse Izon's proposal, he shrugs. "So be it," he says. "In truth, I was somewhat disappointed that I didn't have the chance to see what your friend Kline looked like on the inside. But I'm happy to use you as test subjects instead." At that point, Izon calls in his guards from area G6 and attacks, attempting to take the PCs alive so he can torture them at his leisure.

If the PCs agree to help Izon, they are free to leave and travel safely through urdefhan territory. Izon assigns a patrol of six urdefhan guards to escort the PCs as far as the urdefhans' northernmost guard station (area F2), on the border between urdefhan and serpentfolk territory. After that, the PCs will be on their own.

Story Award: If the PCs talk to Izon and learn of Eando Kline's whereabouts, award them 51,200 XP, as if they had defeated Izon in combat.

PART FOUR: CITY OF SERPENTS

After talking to Izon (or Deloral) in Part Three, the PCs should know where Eando Kline is being held—the great fortress of Thousand Fangs, deep within serpentfolk territory.

The serpentfolk control the northern portion of the city, encircling Ilmurea's northern lake. Most of this section of the city consists of ruined and semi-ruined buildings, still just as they were left by the tremors of Earthfall. Only the Sanctum of Ydersius, Thousand Fangs, and two serpent gates have been extensively rebuilt, but the streets have largely been cleared of rubble and debris. This part of the city is inhabited almost exclusively by degenerate serpentfolk—the few advanced serpentfolk in Ilmurea serve as Vyr-Azul's lieutenants and enjoy high positions of prestige and power.

As Vyr-Azul's ritual nears completion, the serpentfolk have become more concerned with intruders and spies in their territory. This works both ways, however—while the serpentfolk are more vigilant, they are also less likely to leave their assigned posts to investigate disturbances or come to their comrades' aid. The PCs will be unable to brazenly and openly enter the serpentfolk district, but if they take care and move quickly, they should be able to avoid raising the entire district against them.

Creatures: Groups of six degenerate serpentfolk guards regularly patrol those areas controlled by the serpentfolk, a CR 9 encounter. Use the Ambushes in Ilmurea table on page 81 to generate an encounter with one of these patrols. Serpentfolk guards attack any non-serpentfolk they encounter in the portion of the city they control.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Degenerate serpentfolk fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 242)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 111 each (10d10+55)

Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk heavy flail +21/+16 (1d10+15/17–20), bite +13 (1d6+4 plus poison)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +14/+9 (1d8+8/x3)

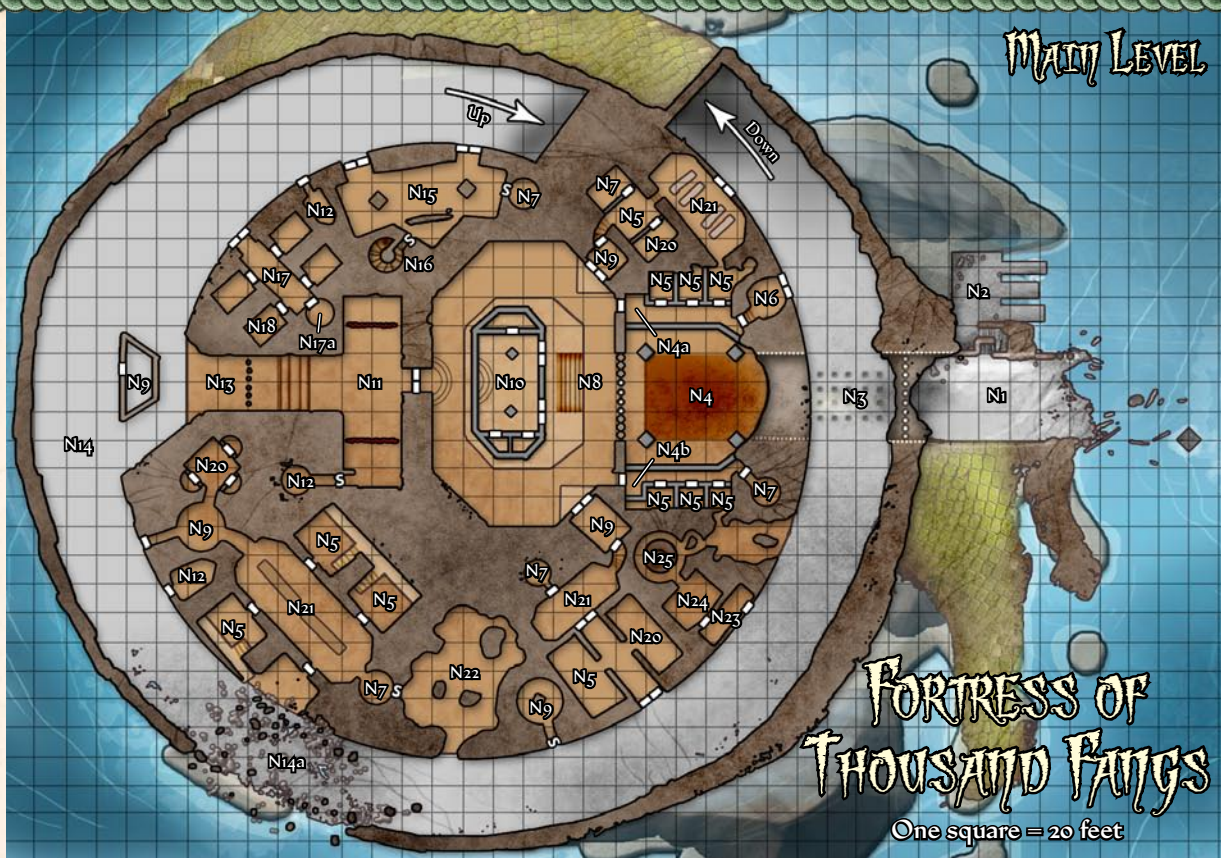
Special Attacks weapon training (flails +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Serpentfolk guards are straightforward fighters, using bows against enemies at range but preferring to engage closer opponents with their weapons and poisonous bites. Serpentfolk guards use their flails to disarm and trip their foes.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, serpentfolk guards attempt to flee to safety. If cornered, they do not surrender or beg for mercy, but rather fight to the death.

Serpent's Skull



STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 16, **Con** 21, **Int** 4, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 31

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (heavy flail), Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (heavy flail), Weapon Specialization (heavy flail)

Skills Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +12, Perception +16, Stealth +6

Languages Aklo, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other**

Gear masterwork breastplate, masterwork heavy flail, masterwork composite longbow (+8 Str) with 20 arrows

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 2 saves.

M1. SERPENT GATES (CR 14)

This large, domed structure seems to have been recently repaired. The coiling stone serpent atop the dome faces the even larger snake-fortress in the middle of the central lake.

The serpentfolk control two of Ilmurea’s ancient serpent gates. They have repaired the great domes, and the smaller central domes within, but most of the other structures within the domes have not yet been rebuilt. It is through these Darklands gateways that most of the serpentfolk entered the city.

Creatures: The serpentfolk don’t currently have the manpower to fully staff and defend the serpent gates, but they do keep a detachment of six serpentfolk guards posted at the entrance to each gate at all times. While their primary duty is to guard against incursions from below, the serpentfolk don’t hesitate to attack any outsiders they encounter.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 111 each (see page 37)

M2. DANCE OF RUIN (CR 13)

Two streets come together here; the surrounding buildings are little more than crumbling ruins.

This intersection is indistinguishable from any other in the city, save for the creatures that now inhabit it.

Creatures: Four vrocks, the entourage of the succubus Selaxasp (see area **N18**), have taken over this crossroads. Rather than bringing them into Thousand Fangs with her, she turned them loose into the city. The vrocks have been wandering the city, killing anything they

encounter, and have recently set up camp in this open area. When the PCs first arrive, the vrocks are engaged in a dance of ruin, having already competed 1 round of the 3 rounds required.

VROCKS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 112 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 69)

TACTICS

During Combat The vrocks complete their dance of ruin in 2 rounds. Afterward, they take turns using their stunning screeches to stun opponents while they attack in melee. The vrocks use their spores against adjacent foes.

Morale The vrocks fight to the death.

M3. BRIDGE BARBICAN (CR 14)

A fortified barbican stands at the end of a great bridge that heads west across the lake. Once, the bridge ran all the way to the giant serpent fortress in the center of the lake, but it has fallen in several places, leaving gaping holes in its span.

A barbican guards the eastern abutment of the bridge that once connected Thousand Fangs to the mainland. Though most of the bridge has long since collapsed, this barbican still guards a jetty for boats leaving the fortress’s dock (area **N2**). This jetty lies under the portion of the bridge that still stands west of the Steaming Chasm, and has slips for three boats. Currently, only one boat is tied up at the dock—a large rowboat, which can hold up to four Medium-sized passengers.

Creatures: Though the barbican no longer serves its original purpose since the collapse of bridge, six serpentfolk guards are still posted here to watch the dock and guard the lake approach to the fortress. Hiding behind the barbican’s walls and arrow slits, they fire arrows at any non-serpentfolk approaching the bridge or the dock.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 111 each (see page 37)

N. FORTRESS OF THOUSAND FANGS

The immense fortress of Thousand Fangs occupies an island in the northern part of the lake, and forms the heart of Ilmurea’s circular layout. This grim, fortified building takes the form of a huge serpent coiling around a central peak, similar to the statues atop the city’s serpent gates but many times larger. The snake’s eyes glow a baleful red, and crimson lights shine from other openings in the structure.

Since arriving in Ilmurea, the serpentfolk priest Vyr-Azul and his followers have made extensive repairs

SERPENT'S SKULL

to the fortress of Thousand Fangs and put it back into commission. It is a nearly impregnable citadel, staffed by over a hundred degenerate serpentfolk warriors. It also holds Eando Kline, who is imprisoned in the dungeons beneath the fortress.

SCOUTING THE FORTRESS

Scouting the fortress is a challenging task. It stands alone in the middle of the north lake, surrounded by water. The only way to reach it is by boat, flight, or magic. Magical scrying can reveal many of the fortress's interior details, but the majority of the dungeon level (areas N38 through N43) is protected by a permanent *mage's private sanctum* effect. These defenses do not extend to the rest of the fortress, though some individual rooms have their own magical protections.

Reconnaissance in person is much riskier—the serpentfolk guards are exceptionally alert and highly motivated following the recent execution of their commander. If the PCs are captured, they are stripped of their gear (which is stored in the strongroom at area N39) and thrown in the slave pens (area N40). In this event, the PCs find themselves that much closer to Eando Kline, but now they need to effect their own escape before they can rescue him.

FORTRESS FEATURES

Thousand Fangs rises 180 feet high from the level of the lake to the top of the great serpent's head, but the outcropping of rock it is built on goes down another 250 feet to the bottom of the lake. The exterior walls of the fortress are of magically treated superior masonry, often incorporating serpentstone (see page 63 of the *Ilmurea gazetteer*) into the structure. The serpent's body forms a long corridor coiling around the central island that runs from the serpent's tail to the serpent's head. This cylindrical corridor connects the fortress's many rooms, which are dug into the rock of the island itself. Internal walls are of hewn stone, and the floors are smooth stone. Unless otherwise noted, doors within the fortress are of stone and are unlocked. Secret doors within the fortress require a DC 20 Perception check to find. Ceilings are usually between 20 and 30 feet high, though the cylindrical outer corridor is 60 feet in diameter.

The fortress is eerily silent inside, as the serpentfolk are telepathic and have no reason to communicate vocally. In addition, their darkvision allows them to see clearly in the absence of light, so most rooms are unlit, unless described otherwise.

GETTING INSIDE

The fortress's main gate (area N3) opens on the shattered span of a bridge that once led to the lake's eastern shore, but two other areas also allow ingress to the interior of the fortress. The serpent's tail dips into the waters of

the lake, forming a postern gate (area N33), while the gaping maw of the serpent's mouth (area N32) provides access to climbing or flying creatures. In addition, a DC 20 Perception check made while studying the fortress from afar (or through *scrying*) reveals a gaping hole in the snake's body on the southern side of the island, about 30 feet above the water. This hole leads to area N14a.

A direct assault upon the fortress is likely doomed to failure—there are simply too many serpentfolk inside. The PCs might use *teleport* or similar magics, but some areas of the fortress are off limits to this kind of magical entry. A *forbiddance* effect blocks planar travel to or from the serpent's head (areas N30, N31, and N32), while a permanent *dimensional lock* wards the dungeon level (areas N38 through N43). However the PCs manage to enter the fortress, they will likely have to use subterfuge and stealth or risk alerting the fortress's entire complement of guards to their presence.

RAISING THE ALARM

Once the PCs enter the fortress and engage its residents, knowledge of their presence quickly spreads throughout the citadel. Unless the PCs disable guards in the first round of combat or have access to *antimagic field* or similar effects, the serpentfolk will use their telepathy to alert their comrades that the fortress is under attack.

The serpentfolk guards are well trained, however, and do not necessarily leave their posts if an alarm is raised, realizing that any attack could be a diversion while the main attack could come from a different direction. Instead, the guards prepare themselves for action, making it more difficult to surprise them in their normal posts.

Only after three alarms have been given does the fortress go on general alert. In this case, all of the fortress's gates are closed. Most posted guards remain where they are, but other inhabitants move about the fortress, as outlined in the Development portion of their original locations. You should familiarize yourself with the actions taken by these inhabitants, and modify the encounters in the fortress to reflect the serpentfolk's heightened alertness.

N1. BROKEN BRIDGE

The remains of a wide stone bridge end in a crumbling precipice over the lake to the east. To the west, the bridge turns into a tunnel that bores into the side of the island beneath the coils of a great carved serpent.

This bridge once ran all the way to the eastern shore of the lake, but large sections of it have collapsed over the millennia. The bridge stands 20 feet above the lake. Curving stairs lead down from the northern side of the

bridge to the boathouse (area N2). The guards at the outer gate (area N3) have a clear view of the bridge from their post and attack any obviously hostile creatures approaching from this direction.

N2. DOCK

A stone dock juts from the rocky shore of the island into the dark waters of the lake.

Most of the serpentfolk traffic between the fortress and the mainland goes through this dock. Currently, two large rowboats are tied up to the dock. A third slip stands empty. Each rowboat can hold up to four Medium-sized passengers. Stairs lead up from the dock to the bridge above (area N1).

N3. OUTER GATE (CR 14)

This 20-foot-high tunnel is the main entrance to the fortress of Thousand Fangs, and slopes up to area N4. An iron portcullis stands at the eastern end of the tunnel (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28 [lift DC 25]). The portcullis is controlled from area N4a. The ceiling above the gate is fitted with murder holes through which defenders can fire on intruders below.

Creatures: Six serpentfolk guards are posted at the gate at all times. They stop and question any creature attempting to enter the fortress, likely attacking any non-serpentfolk.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 111 each (see page 37)

Development: If the fortress is on alert, six more serpentfolk guards from the barracks (area N5) are posted at the murder holes above the gate.

N4. GATEHOUSE YARD (CR 15)

Arrow slits line both sides of this chamber. To the east, a wide tunnel goes into the rock. To the west, a large chamber opens up beyond a wall of iron bars that stretch from floor to ceiling.

This courtyard just inside the outer gate is intended as a killing zone for intruders breaching the gate. The wall of iron bars blocks access to the central courtyard (area N8), but the middle 20-foot section is a portcullis controlled from area N4b. The ceiling is 20 feet high here.

Areas N4a and N4b are watchposts. The doors from the central courtyard are barred (Break DC 30). Area N4a holds the controls for the portcullis in area N3, while area N4b contains the controls for the portcullis in area N4.

Creatures: Four serpentfolk guards are stationed in both area N4a and are N4b. They have a clear line of fire on any intruders in the gatehouse yard.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (8) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 111 each (see page 37)

Development: If the fortress is on alert, four more serpentfolk guards from the barracks (area N5) are added to the complement within each watchpost, for a total of eight guards on each side.

N5. BARRACKS

Each of these rooms contains sleeping platforms and equipment lockers for 30 degenerate serpentfolk guards, though none of these barracks is being used to capacity. There is a 30% chance of encountering 2d4 serpentfolk guards resting in any one of these rooms. If they are taken by surprise, they snatch up their weapons and defend themselves.

N6. FORGE (CR 11)

This chamber contains a working forge for making and repairing weapons and tools.

Creatures: Two serpentfolk guards work in this forge. They are unarmored, but snatch up red-hot tools from the furnace (these count as improvised clubs that deal an additional 1 point of fire damage) and attack any non-serpentfolk entering the room.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (2) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +7 natural)
hp 111 each (see page 37)
Melee improvised club +14/+9 (1d6+8 plus 1 fire), bite +13 (1d6+4 plus poison)

N7. ARMORY

Each of these rooms contains weapon racks holding 30 longswords, 30 spears, 30 masterwork flails, 30 masterwork composite longbows, and 30 quivers of 20 arrows. In addition, there is a 25% chance that each room contains a single random minor magic weapon, suit of armor, or shield.

N8. CENTRAL COURTYARD (CR 14)

Blazing flames on the ceiling illuminate this cavernous chamber. In the center of the courtyard, wide steps lead up to an impressive building. Smaller steps lead up to a set of double doors in the west wall. To the northeast and southeast, small balconies project from the walls.

SERPENT'S SKULL

Bloodwine

Bloodwine, a favorite serpentfolk drink, is made from the blood of sentient creatures and spiced with brain mold spores and other subterranean seasonings. Its main ingredient is usually drow, duergar, or svirfneblin blood, but the best vintages of bloodwine contain a higher concentration of morlock blood. Bloodwine affects serpentfolk much like wine affects humans, but it is poisonous to most other creatures.

Generally, bloodwine is less harmful to members of races that are used to ingesting blood. Urdefhans suffer no ill effects from drinking it. Drow are immune to the sickening effect but are still susceptible to the bloodwine's Wisdom damage. Vampires heal 2 hit points or gain 2 temporary hit points for each cup of bloodwine drunk. Immunity to poison gives immunity to the harmful effects of bloodwine. A single dose of bloodwine is worth 100 gp.

BLOODWINE

Type poison, ingested; **Save** Fortitude DC 25

Frequency 1/minute for 6 minutes

Initial Effect sickened for 1d4 hours;

Secondary Effect 1d3 Wis damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves.

The ceiling above the courtyard is 50 feet high. Glowing tiles of serpentstone on the ceiling provide dim light through the entire chamber. The balconies to the northeast and southeast are 10 feet above the floor of this chamber, and lead to guardposts (area N9).

Creatures: Two great cyclopes, degenerate descendants of the titans who once ruled vast swaths of Garund above, guard the courtyard. They are dominated slaves of the fortress's commander, Sskhavo, and attack any non-serpentfolk entering the courtyard.

GREAT CYCLOPES (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

CE Huge humanoid (giant) (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #33 84)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +13 natural, -2 size)

hp 195 each (17d8+119)

Fort +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities ferocity, rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee mwk greatclub +24/+19/+14 (3d8+19) or

2 slams +23 (2d6+13)

Ranged rock +13 (2d6+19)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks powerful charge (gore, 4d8+24)

TACTICS

During Combat The cyclopes throw rocks at invaders, then make powerful charges before engaging opponents in melee combat.

Morale Under magical control to defend the fortress, the cyclopes fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 13, **Con** 25, **Int** 7, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +27 (+29 bull rush); **CMD** 38 (40 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Improved

Bull Rush, Iron Will, Power Attack, Staggering Critical,

Throw Anything

Skills Perception +22

Languages Cyclops

SQ flash of brutality

Gear hide armor, masterwork greatclub

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flash of Brutality (Su) Every round that a great cyclops makes an attack, there is a 5% chance that it gains a burst of savage inspiration. If this occurs, the cyclops triples the threat range of all weapons it attacks with for that round. For all of a great cyclops's natural attacks, tripling the threat range allows for a critical hit on any attack roll of 18–20. If a great cyclops is reduced to fewer than half its hit points (typically 97 or lower), its chance of gaining a flash of brutality increases to 15%. Should the cyclops have 0 hit points or fewer (conscious only because of its Diehard feat) and choose to attack, its chance of gaining a flash of brutality increases to 25%.

Development: Combat in this chamber alerts the guards in the guardposts to the northeast and southeast (area N9), who come out onto the balconies to attack intruders with their bows in 1d6 rounds.

N9. GUARDPOST (CR 14)

Each of these rooms contains a table and chairs for on-duty guards.

Creatures: Six serpentfolk guards are posted in each of these rooms at all times. They attack any intruders.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 111 each (see page 37)

N10. HOUSE OF RECEIVING

A large stone building dominates the center of the cavern. Wide stone steps carved to resemble the coils of a giant snake lead up

to a wraparound balcony above the floor of the courtyard. Two sets of double doors lead off the balcony into the interior of the building. Elaborate serpentine carvings decorate every exterior surface, while the floor is covered with scale-like tails inlaid in spiral patterns.

This large building stands on a platform 15 feet above the floor of the central courtyard. The fort's commander, Sskhavo, makes proclamations or reviews his troops from atop the stairs. Inside is an audience hall where Sskhavo receives distinguished guests or meets with his staff. The ceilings are 30 feet high inside. To the south are two small chambers for servants and storage. To the north is a private meeting room containing a long table and several chairs. A cabinet on one side of the room contains cages holding a number of live Tiny mammals for snacks (bats, moles, rats, and the like) and a stone decanter with six stone cups. The decanter contains a serpentfolk drink called bloodwine (see sidebar).

Development: If the fortress is on alert, Sskhavo coordinates the citadel's defenses from here, along with three serpentfolk officers from area **N2o**.

N11. HALL OF ENTRANCE (CR 15)

The stone floor of this long room is polished to a high sheen, its walls decorated with intricate carvings of serpentfolk life. Thick curtains conceal either end of the chamber. Two metal statues, depicting humanoids with the hooded heads of cobras twice as tall as a human, flank a wide corridor exiting the room to the west. A pair of double doors stands slightly recessed in the east wall.

The curtained areas are posts for guards to unobtrusively stand out of sight when powerful guests visit the fortress, but they are currently empty. To the south, a DC 20 Perception check reveals a secret door to area **N12**.

Creatures: The two snake-headed statues are iron golems used in the defense of the fortress. They animate and attack any non-serpentfolk entering the chamber.

IRON GOLEMS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 129 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 162)

N12. STOREROOM

Each of these rooms is stacked with sacks, crates, and barrels containing mundane supplies for the fortress. There is a 65% chance of finding any piece of normal equipment worth less than 100 gp in one of these rooms. Preserved rations are also stored in these rooms, though the serpentfolk's definition of food differs somewhat from anything the PCs are used to. Any non-serpentfolk

partaking of these rations must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds.

N13. INNER GATE

An iron portcullis can be dropped to block the corridor here, but the gate is normally left open. The portcullis is controlled from the guardpost (area **N9**) to the west.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, the portcullis is closed (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28 [lift DC 25]) and the six serpentfolk guards from area **N9** to the west are posted at the gate.

N14. SERPENT CORRIDOR

This floor of this wide corridor curves up to form the walls and ceiling, giving the corridor a circular cross-section. Immense carved ribs, spaced every fifty feet or so, encircle the hallway, giving the impression of walking through the belly of some immense snake. The corridor curves out of sight in both directions.

This long corridor follows the contours of the giant snake coiling around the fortress, descending in a spiral from the top of the snake's head to the tip of its tail. Essentially a giant tube, the hallway is 60 feet in diameter.

The corridor has suffered damage in places, which the serpentfolk commander Sskhavo has not yet had time to have repaired. The walls and ceiling of the corridor have collapsed at area **N14a**, leaving the floor in that section covered with rubble (treat as difficult terrain) and the interior of the fortress open to the cavern outside. A gate once closed off the corridor at area **N14b**, but a partial collapse has ruined it as well, leaving the stone doors ajar and frozen in place. Cracks in the wall have allowed water to seep into the corridor at area **N14c**, allowing a damp garden of brightly colored fungus and mold to proliferate here.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, the nagas from area **N41** patrol this corridor invisibly, making regular circuits from top to bottom and back again.

N15. HALL OF TRIBUNAL

Two columns entwined with serpentine carvings support the vaulted ceiling of this chamber, which contains stone benches facing a high stone table in front of a deep triangular alcove in the far wall. Four ornate, throne-like chairs sit in the alcove behind the table.

Trials and hearings were held in this chamber before tribunals in Ilmurea's distant past. It sees little use these days, but Sskhavo and his officers occasionally use it to hold courts-martial or otherwise discipline troops.

The secret door in the east wall leads to an armory (area N7) and may be found with a DC 20 Perception check. The secret door in the southwest wall behind the judges' bench is more difficult to find, requiring a DC 25 Perception check. It opens on the secret stairs (area N16) that lead down to the dungeon level.

N16. SECRET STAIRS (CR 11)

This spiral staircase is the sole entrance to the fortress's dungeon level, descending 75 feet to area N38.

Creatures: Two serpentfolk guards are posted at the top of the staircase to guard against intruders or prisoners trying to escape. They do not leave their posts under any circumstances. If attacked, the guards telepathically alert their comrades in the dungeon entrance below (area N38).

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 111 each (see page 37)

N17. GUEST QUARTERS

Four guest suites open onto a central common room for the use of guests visiting the fortress. The central chamber contains comfortable furniture arranged around a long, rectangular pool in the middle of the room. The guest quarters themselves are fairly well appointed, each consisting of a sitting area with a table and chairs, a desk, a curtained sleeping area with a bed, and a luxurious bath. Only two suites contain guests at this time (areas N18 and N19); the unmarked rooms are currently unoccupied. The circular chamber at the end of the common room (area N17a) is set aside as an intimate eating room for guests, where they can consume meals in private following serpentfolk custom.

N18. DEMONIC VISITOR (CR 15)

These comfortable living quarters hold a table and several chairs, a desk against one wall, and a large bed in a curtained alcove. A spacious stone bath sits in one corner. Skins dyed in spiral patterns lie on the floor and are draped on the bed. Candles in cobra-shaped iron holders light the room and give off a pleasing scent.

This guest suite is furnished similarly to those in area N17, but is currently occupied. The candles provide dim illumination throughout the entire room.

Creatures: The current occupant of this room is a succubus named Selaxasp, summoned to Ilmurea by Vyr-Azul by means of a *gate* spell. Ostensibly summoned as an advisor to Sskhavo and Khavith, Selaxasp is also a spy for Vyr-Azul, giving the serpentfolk priest regular reports

on the actions of his underlings and watching for any treachery on their part against his plans.

If the alarm has been raised or if she hears the PCs coming, Selaxasp uses her change shape ability to appear as a human Varisian woman, pretending to be a prisoner. Selaxasp is a master of disguise and guile, and her Bluff skill is high enough that is unlikely that the PCs will see through her deception. In addition, her master spy abilities allow her to mask her alignment and fool truth-detecting magic and other divinations.

Selaxasp pretends to have an injured leg, and breaks down in tears when "rescued." If questioned, she claims to be Selennia, one of Eando Kline's companions who was captured by the serpentfolk and brought here. "Selennia" says that she is kept here rather than in the dungeon because the fortress's commander, Sskhavo, took a fancy to her and regularly forces his unspeakable attentions upon her.

If Juliver is with the party, she is surprised to see "Selennia." Juliver swears that she saw Selennia dragged away by the serpentfolk and killed. In truth, Selaxasp took the Varisian's identity for her own—the real Selennia's remains may be found in area N41. While Juliver won't see through Selaxasp's bluff, her immediate confusion at her companion's unexpected reappearance may be the PCs' only clue that "Selennia" is not who she appears to be.

Selaxasp willingly accompanies the PCs as they explore the fortress further, though she claims to have no knowledge of the fortress's layout or where Eando Kline is being held. She does not immediately betray the PCs to the serpentfolk, instead keeping an eye on them to eventually report their doings to Vyr-Azul. If she has the opportunity to get one PC alone, she may take advantage of the situation, or if a combat seems to be going too easily for the PCs, she might make a move from behind the party to complicate things further.

SELAXASP

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female succubus rogue (spy) 3/master spy 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 68, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135, 270)
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good; Perception +35

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 19, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 182 (20 HD; 8d10+12d8+83)

Fort +10, **Ref** +19, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities concealed thoughts, evasion, slippery mind; **DR** 10/cold iron or gold; **Immune** electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

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

Melee +1 *starknife* +20/+15/+10/+5 (1d4+2/19–20/x3) and +1 *starknife* +20/+15/+10 (1d4+1/19–20/x3) or 2 claws +21 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 24), energy drain (1 level, DC 25), profane gift, sneak attack +5d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +23)

Constant—*detect good*, *tongues*

At will—*charm monster* (DC 25), *detect thoughts* (DC 23), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 24), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *vampiric touch*

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 26), *summon* (level 3, 1 *babau* 50%)

Master Spy Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th, concentration +20)

At will—*elude detection*, *hidden mind*

2/day—*nonmagical aura*

TACTICS

During Combat In her guise as Selennia, Selaxasp tries to stay out of combat, unless inaction would give away her disguise. If the PCs see through her disguise or reveal her true identity, she uses her spell-like abilities to gain allies from among the PCs before attacking with her *starknives*.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 80 hit points, Selaxasp immediately teleports away to the Sanctum of Ydersius (see Development below).

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 20, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 33

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 36

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (*starknife*), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (*starknife*), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +55, Diplomacy +34, Disguise +47, Escape Artist +28, Fly +28, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (local) +28, Knowledge (nobility) +18, Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +35, Sense Motive +36, Stealth +28, Use Magic Device +20

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic; *tongues*, telepathy 100 ft.

SQ art of deception +9, change shape (Small or Medium humanoid, *alter self*), fool casting, glib lie (DC 24), mask alignment, master of disguise, poison use, quick change (–5), shift alignment, skilled liar, superficial knowledge, rogue talents (honeyed words*), trapfinding +1

Gear +1 *starknife* (2), *bracers of armor* +4, *ring of protection* +4

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Development: If the PCs kill Sskhavo and Khavith, but Selaxasp survives, she immediately teleports to the Sanctum of Ydersius to inform Vyr-Azul. Selaxasp does not return in this adventure, but at your option, she may

reappear in the next adventure, “Sanctum of the Serpent God,” to continue being a thorn in the PCs’ sides, possibly in another guise.

N19. THE DEFECTOR (CR 14)

This sizeable room is furnished with a bed, desk, table, and chairs. A large stone bath sits in one corner, filled with a deep red liquid. Glowing crystals in a bowl on the table do little to dispel the darkness. The smell of fresh blood hangs heavily in the air.

This guest suite contains similar furnishings to those found in area N17. The bath is filled with blood, primarily from *morlocks*, which the chamber’s current occupant



Selaxasp

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likes to bathe in. The glowing crystals are sculptures carved from serpentstone—Belkor finds their pale blue glow pleasing.

Creatures: This room holds the fortress's other major guest, the urdefhan defector Belkor. Once a general in the urdefhan military and a close friend of the urdefhan leader Izon, Belkor grew jealous of Izon's continued success. When he realized a coup would never be successful against the half-fiend cleric, Belkor defected to his people's greatest enemies, the serpentfolk, offering them information about the urdefhans' troop strengths and strategy. As Vyr-Azul's ritual reaches its conclusion, however, the serpentfolk have put their own plans for war against the urdefhans temporarily on hold, and have left Belkor cooling his heels in the fortress and playing at being an honored guest. Sskhavo doesn't fully trust Belkor yet, however, and has assigned two serpentfolk as an "honor guard" to escort the urdefhan around the fortress. The guards attack any

non-serpentfolk entering the room. If the PCs agreed to Izon's request to kill Belkor, he joins in the attack once he realizes the PCs are there to kill him.

BELKOR THE DEFECTOR

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male urdefhan fighter 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 276)

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 25 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 164 (13d10+88)

Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +8

Defensive Abilities bravery +3, negative energy affinity; **DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** death effects, disease, fear, level drain; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *rhoka sword* +26/+21/+16 (1d8+16/18–20), bite +15 (1d4+3 plus 2 Str)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +18/+13/+8 (1d8+8/×3)

Special Attacks blood drain (1 Con), strength damage (DC 16), weapon training (heavy blades +2, bows +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

At will—*feather fall*

3/day—*align weapon*, *death knell* (DC 13), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 12)

TACTICS

During Combat Belkor wades into combat with his *rhoka sword*, targeting the strongest-looking warrior in the group to bite and drain of blood and strength.

Morale If his serpentfolk guards are killed and he is reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, Belkor tries to flee and join up with Sskhavo. If he is cornered, he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12

Base Atk +13; CMB +20 (+22 trip); CMD 34 (36 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Disruptive, Greater Weapon Focus (*rhoka sword*), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Spellbreaker, Stand Still, Step Up, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*rhoka sword*), Weapon Specialization (*rhoka sword*)

Skills Intimidate +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +17, Ride +15, Sense Motive +8, Survival +17

Languages Aklo, Canto, Orvian, Undercommon

SQ armor training 2, daemonic pact (DC 16)

Gear +1 *banded mail*, +2 *rhoka sword*, masterwork composite longbow (+7 Str) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +4, *ring of protection* +1

Belkor

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (2) **CR 9**

XP 6,400 each
hp 111 each (see page 37)

Story Award: If the PCs kill Belkor and bring back proof of his demise (his gear) to Izon in area **G7**, award them an additional 25,600 XP.

N20. OFFICERS' QUARTERS (CR 14)

These spartan rooms contain three beds, three lockers, and three desks with an equal number of chairs. The desks contain various documents (written in Aklo) dealing with the mundane management of a military fort. Some of these quarters have small rooms attached to them—these are private eating chambers where officers can eat in solitude, unlike the normal soldiers who are less cultured and gorge themselves in public.

Creatures: Each of these rooms serves as quarters for three serpentfolk officers. They snatch up weapons to attack anyone entering the room.

SERPENTFOLK OFFICERS (3) **CR 11**

XP 12,800 each
 Degenerate serpentfolk fighter 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 242)
 NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+9 armor, +2 Dex, +7 natural)
hp 147 each (12d10+79)

Fort +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, **Immune** mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *bastard sword* +21/+16/+11 (1d10+13/17–20), bite +14 (1d6+3 plus poison)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +15/+10/+5 (1d8+7/x3)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Two of the officers work together to flank foes, while the other targets spellcasters or archers with his bow.

Morale Loyal to the last, the officers fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 14, **Con** 22, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 31

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Knowledge (engineering) +4, Perception +16, Stealth +4

Languages Aklo, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ armor training 2

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

+1 *half-plate*, +1 *bastard sword*, masterwork composite

longbow (+7 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance* +1, 65 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 2 saves.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, 3 serpentfolk officers from one of these rooms join Sskhavo in area **N10** to help coordinate the citadel's defenses.

N21. GYMNASIUM

These large, open chambers are used for physical training and weapons practice. Weapon racks line the walls—each of these rooms yields 2d6 longswords, 2d6 heavy flails, 2d3 spears, and 2d6 daggers. The gymnasiums also serve as common rooms for off-duty degenerate serpentfolk guards, and contain tables, chairs, and large, recessed communal baths in the floors.

Creatures: There is a 50% chance of encountering 1d6 serpentfolk guards sparring in any one of these rooms. If an alarm is raised, they take 1d3 minutes to collect their equipment before moving to the nearest guardpost (area **N9**).

N22. GUG CAVES (CR 14)

The uneven floor of this natural cavern is littered with cracked bones, pieces of fur and skin, and other less identifiable remains. Deep scratches mar the walls and stone pillars that stretch between the floor and ceiling.

This chamber is one of only a few natural caverns in the rock of the island that were left in their natural state and incorporated into the fortress's layout. The secret door in the west wall that leads to area **N7** may be found with a DC 20 Perception check.

Creatures: Four gugs, dominated slaves of the serpentfolk wizard Khavith, lair in this room. They are used to supplement the fortress's defenses, and have been trained not to attack serpentfolk. But Khavith has neglected to feed them recently, so they have taken to gnawing on the stone walls of their cave (the source of the deep scratches in the walls). They are ravenously hungry, and attack any creature that enters the room, serpentfolk or not.

Gugs (4) **CR 10**

XP 9,600 each
hp 127 each (see page 15)

TACTICS

During Combat The gugs have little use for tactics; each

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of them picks one target to bite, rend with its claws, and ultimately eat.

Morale Thoroughly dominated, the gugs fight to the death.

N23. COMMANDER'S OFFICE (CR 16 OR 17)

This small, spartan room contains a desk, a low table, a couple of chairs, and a small cabinet against one wall. The preserved head of a male drider, complete with fanged mandibles, hangs on the wall behind the desk. A single door sits in the far wall, next to a suit of armor on a stand.



Sskhavo

This room is the office of Sskhavo, the fortress's commander. The desk contains various documents written in Aklo on parchment made from the cured skin of morlocks and members of other subterranean races). Most are troop rosters, readiness reports, and other documents concerning the day-to-day running of the fort. The cabinet contains a decanter of bloodwine (see page 42) and two stone cups. The armor is an ornate suit of masterwork scale mail of drow origin—both it and the drider head are trophies from defeated enemies.

Creatures: If he has not been encountered previously, there is a 50% chance that the serpentfolk commander Sskhavo is found here, looking over reports and doing administrative work. Otherwise, he is found in his quarters (area N24, 25% chance) or in his seraglio (area N25) with his mates (25% chance). Sskhavo is a tall serpentfolk with a cobra-like hood. His scales are green and marked with numerous scars from his many battles. Unlike his troops, Sskhavo is an advanced, purecaste serpentfolk, though he is as brutal as any degenerate. He is also a devout follower of Ydersius, and longs for the day when his god will return and restore the serpentfolk empire, and the serpentfolk can enslave the rest of Golarion's peoples. Sskhavo is currently struggling to redeem himself in Vyr-Azul's eyes, as the serpentfolk priest blames him personally for Juliver's escape. He longs to kill Eando Kline and be done with the meddling "overlanders," but he knows the Pathfinder's imprisonment serves a greater purpose, at least until Vyr-Azul can interrogate him.

If he is encountered here or in his quarters (area N24), Sskhavo leaps to his feet and draws his sword, attacking any invaders while telepathically alerting his mates in area N25 and any other serpentfolk in range to come to his aid. Sskhavo's mates join him in 1d3 rounds.

SSKHAVO

CR 16

XP 76,800

Male serpentfolk fighter 3/duelist 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 242)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +15; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 24, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 Int, +5 natural)

hp 176 (17d10+88)

Fort +13, **Ref** +19, **Will** +12; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, canny defense, elaborate defense, grace, parry, **Immune** mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 keen short sword +26/+21/+16/+11 (1d6+13/17–20), bite +19 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+4/x3)

Special Attacks acrobatic charge, no retreat, precise strike +9, riposte

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +6)

At will—*disguise self* (DC 15), *ventriloquism*

1/day—*blur*, *dominate person* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 15), *mass suggestion* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 17), *teleport*

TACTICS

Before Combat Sskhavo casts *blur* and *mirror image* before combat.

During Combat Sskhavo uses precise strike as often as possible (the bonus is already included in his stat block). He attempts to disarm foes who engage him in melee combat, focusing all of his attacks on disarmed opponents while parrying and riposting attacks from other foes. He uses his enhanced mobility to avoid being cornered or flanked.

Morale If he is reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, Sskhavo teleports to area **N10** and summons his officers to rally the fortress's defenders. If the fortress is already on alert, he instead teleports to area **N26** to join Khavith in a last-ditch defense of the citadel. Otherwise, Sskhavo fights to the death, aware that failure or surrender will only result in an even more painful death at the hands of Vyr-Azul.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 22, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +20 (+24 disarm); **CMD** 38 (40 vs. disarm)

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Disarm, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +27, Bluff +22, Climb +13, Escape Artist +35, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +26, Knowledge (engineering) +26, Perception +22, Perform (dance) +9, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +27

Languages Aklo, Azlanti, Common, Cyclops, Draconic, Necril, Orvian, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ armor training 1, enhanced mobility, improved reaction +4

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 leather armor, +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, +1 keen short sword, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of giant strength* +2, key to area **N34**, 80 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 2 saves.

Treasure: The drow scale mail is worth 1,000 gp, but could bring up to 2,500 gp from a collector on the surface.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, Sskhavo moves to area **N10** to coordinate the fortress's defense.

N24. COMMANDER'S QUARTERS

This room is luxuriously appointed, with sumptuous furniture, plush rugs, and furs and skins hanging from the walls. Shelves along the walls are filled with various curios and trophies.

These are Sskhavo's living quarters, where he eats, sleeps, relaxes, and occasionally meets with his wives and other intimates. The room contains a large bed, a comfortable sitting area, and a desk and chair. The shelves on the walls hold trophies Sskhavo has taken from his defeated foes.

Treasure: Among the mundane trophies, the shelves hold the following items of value: a +2 *warhammer* of duergar make, a derro injection spear (worth 750 gp to a collector), an engraved masterwork rhoka sword (worth 1,000 gp to a collector), a pair of masterwork short swords taken from a dark stalker (worth 1,500 gp as a matched set), and a gold pendant inset with a huge blood ruby that has been carved with the insignia of a drow noble house (worth 2,500 gp).

N25. SERAGLIO (CR 13)

A sunken pit filled with cushions and hides fills most of this circular, open room. Gauzy silks hang from the walls, and two incense burners add a spicy, vaguely disturbing scent to the air.

This room is Sskhavo's seraglio, the living quarters for his mates. The sunken pit is only 5 feet deep, and contains mostly morlock hides and morlock-hide cushions stuffed with morlock hair.

Creatures: Sskhavo's four mates reside in this chamber. Though Sskhavo would much prefer purecaste serpentfolk like Khavith as mates, there are far more degenerate serpentfolk in Ilmurea, so he has had to make do with them. These four degenerate females remain here at all times unless one or more of them has been chosen to accompany him for a special occasion, or unless they have been telepathically summoned to defend him. Sskhavo's mates have the same stats as serpentfolk guards, but are unarmored and armed only with masterwork daggers. They wear rich clothing and jewelry, and paint their scales in vividly colored patterns. They attack anyone other than Sskhavo who enters the room.

SSKHAVO'S MATES (4)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Female degenerate serpentfolk fighter 5 (see page 37)

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 111 each

Melee masterwork dagger +19/+14 (1d4+8/19–20), bite +13 (1d6+4 plus poison)

Serpent's Skull

Treasure: Each of Sskhavo's mates wears jewelry worth 1,250 gp.

N26. WIZARD'S WORKROOM (CR 15)

A large stone table, covered with all manner of arcane and esoteric equipment, cuts across this room. Points of flame at each corner of the table illuminate the chamber, the walls of which are lined with workbenches, cabinets, and shelves. Beyond the table, a barred cage stands atop a raised portion of the floor.

This chamber has been outfitted as a magical laboratory. The room is well lit by *continual flame* spells. The cage in the center of the room holds the partially

dissected corpse of an urdefhan captive. The outer door is secured with an *arcane lock* (CL 13th). A secret door in the west wall (DC 20 Perception check to find) leads to area N27.

Creatures: The serpentfolk wizard Khavith, who provides magical support for the fortress, uses this laboratory for her magical experiments and studies (such as the urdefhan corpse in the cage). Like Sskhavo, Khavith is a purecaste serpentfolk, but she finds the degenerate serpentfolk in the fortress distasteful, so she spends most of her time sequestered here. Khavith has blue scales and wears comfortable green robes.

If she is surprised in this room and the fortress is not yet on alert, Khavith avoids combat, and immediately teleports to area N23 to inform Sskhavo and raise the alarm. Otherwise, she engages invaders with her spells, while telepathically summoning the guards in the nearby guardpost (area N9) to assist her.



Khavith

KHAVITH CR 15

XP 51,200

Female serpentfolk evoker 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 242)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 19, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +4 shield)

hp 177 (18 HD; 5d10+13d6+105)

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 frost dagger +18/+13/+8 (1d4 plus 1d6 cold/19–20), bite +12 (1d6–1 plus poison)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +18 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks intense spells +6 damage

Serpentfolk Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +6)

At will—*disguise self* (DC 15), *ventriloquism*

1/day—*blur*, *dominate person* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 15), *mass suggestion* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 17), *teleport*

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +20)

At will—*elemental wall* (13 rounds/day)

10/day—*force missile* (1d4+6)

Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +20)

7th—*forcecage* (DC 26), *mass hold person* (DC 24), *prismatic spray* (DC 26)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 25), *contagious flame** (DC 25), *quicken scorching ray*, *unwilling shield** (DC 23)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *cone of cold* (DC 24),

hold monster (DC 22), *hungry pit** (DC 22), *quicken magic missile*

4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *silent dispel magic*, *dragon's breath** (DC 23), *shout* (DC 23), *stoneskin*
 3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 22), *fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 22), *pain strike** (DC 22), *slow* (DC 20), *wind wall*
 2nd—*dust of twilight** (DC 19), *false life*, *glitterdust*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (2), *touch of idiocy*
 1st—*charm person* (DC 18), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *shield*, *unseen servant*
 o (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 17), *flare* (DC 19), *ray of frost*, *resistance*

Opposition Schools Divination, Illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat Khavith casts *false life* and *mage armor* every day. If she has the opportunity, she also casts *blur*, *mirror image*, *resist energy* (fire), *shield*, and *stoneskin* before combat.

During Combat Khavith tries to control the battlefield as soon as possible, casting *mass hold person*, *slow*, and *black tentacles*. She casts *unwilling ally* as soon as possible on a strong warrior type, and uses spells like *forcecage* or *hungry pit* to entrap dangerous opponents.

Morale Khavith's research is much more important to her than Vyr-Azul's plans. If wounded enough to trigger her *contingency* spell, she likely teleports to safety into the Sanctum of Ydersius (after stopping to retrieve her spellbook from area N27), unless she feels that she can come back later to defeat the PCs with surprise. If she flees, you can have the PCs encounter her again in the next adventure.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 22, **Con** 20, **Int** 25, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 36

Feats Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Weapon Finesse

Skills Disguise +20, Escape Artist +23, Fly +27, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (nobility) +19, Knowledge (planes) +19, Perception +25, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +28, Stealth +18, Use Magic Device +24

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Common, Draconic, Gug, Infernal, Orvian, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ contingency, arcane bond (dagger)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *frost dagger*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2, diamond dust (worth 500 gp), ruby dust (worth 750 gp), spell component pouch, 63 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency If Khavith ever falls below 60 hit points, a *dimension door* spell immediately transports her out of harm's way.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 24; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Str; cure 2 saves.

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Treasure: The laboratory equipment and supplies here are worth 1,500 gp if they can be safely transported. Searching the laboratory turns up the following items of interest: a *crystal ball*, a *lens of detection*, a *potion of comprehend languages*, and a pot of *restorative ointment* containing 3 applications. In addition, the PCs can find pouches of powdered amber (worth 500 gp), gold dust (worth 150 gp), diamond dust (worth 500 gp), and ruby dust (worth 1,000 gp)—all material components for some of Khavith's spells.

N27. KHAVITH'S QUARTERS

This small room houses the serpentfolk wizard Khavith. It is comfortably furnished, but not lavishly so, containing a bed, a desk and chair, and a bookshelf. The outer door is secured with an *arcane lock* (CL 13th). The secret door that leads to area N26 may be found with a DC 20 Perception check.

Treasure: An ivory statuette of a female serpentfolk wizard bearing Khavith's likeness sits on the desk (Khavith's *contingency* focus, worth 1,500 gp). The bookshelf holds 13 scrolls. The first is a *scroll of clone*, which Khavith has been studying but has not yet mastered. The other 12 are treatises on serpentfolk magic, all written in Aklo. If these scrolls are read, which takes a minimum of 48 hours, the reader can make a DC 35 Spellcraft check to understand the complicated arcane theory therein. A successful check grants a permanent +2 competence bonus on all saves against the spells and spell-like abilities of serpentfolk. This collection of scrolls is worth 10,000 gp.

Khavith's spellbook is also in this room, though it is trapped with a *sepia snake sigil* (DC 20) that triggers when anyone else reads the book. The spellbook contains all 0-level wizard spells and all of Khavith's prepared spells, plus *alarm*, *arcane lock*, *contingency*, *continual flame*, *sepia snake sigil*, and 1d6 additional spells from levels 1–7.

N28. PRIESTS' QUARTERS

The walls of this large, semicircular room are inscribed with common prayers to Ydersius in Aklo (DC 18 Knowledge [religion] check to identify, provided the creature can read Aklo). The chamber is otherwise bare except for 12 sleeping pallets, 12 desks and chairs, and 12 individual prayer rugs made from morlock hide. The room is empty of inhabitants, as the serpentfolk priests who normally reside here have all been summoned to the Sanctum of Ydersius in order to assist in Vyr-Azul's great ritual.

N29. VESTRY

This room holds religious equipment and priestly vestments for use in the Chapel of Ydersius (area N30).

Treasure: A scroll cabinet holds a complete set of the sacred texts of Ydersius, written in Aklo on parchment made from the hides of drow, duergar, and members of other humanoid races. These scrolls would be worth 1,000 gp to a scholar on the surface. Other cabinets contain a block of *incense of meditation*, 10 flasks of consecrated blood (these function as unholy water; see area N30), 50 pounds of powdered silver (worth 250 gp), and mundane incense worth 100 gp.

N30. CHAPEL OF YDERSIUS (CR 15)

The body of the giant serpent ends here at its head, where three columns support a vaulted ceiling. High above, two red crystal windows form the snake's eyes. Reliefs on the walls depict a giant serpentfolk leading smaller serpentfolk armies in battle against other underground races, slaying enemies and taking captives, and receiving sacrifices from his followers. A candlelit dais between two sets of double doors at the far end of the room holds a bloodstained altar.

This small temple occupies the rear half of the serpent's head at the very top of the fortress. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the carvings on the walls as depictions of the serpentfolk god Ydersius.

An altar to Ydersius stands atop the dais against the far wall, carved to resemble a giant, coiled snake. Shackles are set into the top of the altar, which is stained with blood. A hole in the center of the snake's coils drains into a stone bowl set into the steps of the dais for catching the blood of living sacrifices. This bowl contains the blood of the most recent sacrificial victim. When mixed with powdered silver, this blood can be consecrated to Ydersius to function as unholy water. The bowl holds enough blood to create 8 flasks of unholy water. Four tall, serpentine candlesticks stand atop the dais, holding blackish-brown candles made from the fat of sacrificial victims.

The whole chamber has been dedicated to Ydersius, and the entire head of the serpent-fortress (including both the temple and areas N31 and N32) is warded by both *forbiddance* and widened *unhallow* effects (caster level 18th). The *forbiddance* effect blocks all planar travel into or out of this area. It is keyed to chaotic evil alignments, and deals damage to anyone of a different alignment who enters the area (DC 22 Will save for half). As the rank-and-file serpentfolk are neutral evil, they must speak a password ("The glory of the Reborn King" in Aklo) to enter the temple safely. The widened *unhallow* effect is centered on the sacrificial bowl and is linked to a *dispel magic* spell that targets each creature entering

the area (caster level 18th). The faithful of Ydersius are excluded from this effect.

The ceiling in this chamber is 50 feet high. A DC 25 Perception check reveals a secret door behind the altar that leads to the reliquary (area N31).

Creatures: A nightmarish aberration known as a gohl, or serpent cloud, inhabits the chapel. A conglomeration of thrashing, serpentine tails and three fanged snake heads with gold and emerald scales, the gohl hovers a few feet above the floor in front of the altar. The serpentfolk priests found this abomination in the deep vaults of Orv and brought it to Ilmurea as a sacred icon of their headless god. The gohl does not speak, but it understands Aklo and has been trained not to attack serpentfolk. This conditioning extends to creatures that look like serpentfolk as well, so if the PCs have disguised themselves to look like serpentfolk (such as by wearing the vestments found in area N29) the gohl does not attack them. Otherwise, it attacks any non-serpentfolk entering the chapel. The gohl is protected by the *magic circle against good* effect of the chapel's *unhallow* effect, so it enjoys greater protections against good characters.

ADVANCED GOHL

CR 15

XP 51,200

CE Huge aberration (*Tome of Horrors III* 93)

Init +3; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+3 Dex, +17 natural, -2 size)

hp 231 (22d8+132)

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

DR 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (good)

Melee 3 bites +24 (1d8+9 plus 1d6 acid), 3 tentacles +21 (1d8+4 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+4)

TACTICS

During Combat The gohl divides its attacks among several foes, attempting to grab and constrict as many as possible.

As soon as an opponent is grappled, the gohl attacks that victim with as many of its bite attacks as possible.

Morale The gohl fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 17, **Con** 21, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +27 (+31 grapple); **CMD** 40 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Hover, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Stand Still, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Fly +13, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +30, Stealth +8

Languages Aklo (cannot speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) A gohl sees in all directions at once. It cannot be flanked.

N31. RELIQUARY

The secret door to this hidden chamber may be found with a DC 25 Perception check. This room contains three *candles of invocation* (chaotic evil), and sacred relics and implements used in the chapel, such as cloth-of-gold chasubles and sacrificial daggers, flensing knives, bowls, and chalices, all made of gold (worth a total of 5,000 gp).

N32. THE SERPENT'S MOUTH

The fanged mouth of the giant serpent overlooks the entire city of Ilmurea. A large silvery lens floats above a pedestal in the center of the snake's mouth, turning slowly in midair. In the rear of the chamber, two sets of double doors lead into the snake's body.

This area is warded by the same *forbiddance* effect as the chapel of Ydersius. The chapel's widened *unhallow* effect extends into the western half of this area as well (see area N30).

The giant lens is a *thought lens*, an ancient artifact that focuses and enhances the serpentfolk's natural telepathic abilities to communicate over great distances. Once, this *thought lens* connected Ilmurea to the other great cities of the vast serpentfolk empire, but the intervening millennia have resulted in a gradual failure of lenses in various serpentfolk cities, and in some cases, the outright destruction of receiving lenses in other former serpentfolk strongholds. Currently, this particular *thought lens* is only able to broadcast communications between the fortress and the Sanctum of Ydersius across the cavern.

The *thought lens* is 10 feet in diameter and crafted of a strange, transparent alloy of mithral and glass. This unknown alloy makes the lens immune to any magical attempts to move or damage it. Likewise, the lens cannot be broken, and physical attacks have no effect on the weirdly shimmering glass. The *thought lens* radiates overwhelming divination magic.

A DC 35 Spellcraft check (coupled with a *detect magic* spell) is enough to recognize that the lens focuses and amplifies telepathic energy, but only functions for a creature with telepathy. If a telepathic creature (such as a creature with innate telepathy or under the effects of *telepathic bond*) attempts to use the lens, it can activate the lens blindly with a DC 25 Use Magic Device check. If this check is successful, the user broadcasts his thoughts to Vyr-Azul in the Sanctum of Ydersius. The user sees a vision of two burning, ophidian eyes, and hears a sibilant

voice in his head saying, *!Headless King returns/lives prevent you cannot you cannot return/rise to glory*. Vyr-Azul then uses his telepathy to send mental feedback back through the telepathic link. The user must make a DC 30 Will save or be confused for 2d6 rounds. Regardless of the outcome of the save, the telepathic link is immediately broken.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, Sskhavo sends one of his officers here to use the lens to inform the Sanctum of the attack. Concerned with the details of his ritual, Vyr-Azul does not send troops to aid the fortress at this time, but this communication likely means that the serpentfolk in the Sanctum of Ydersius will be aware of the PCs and their actions in the next adventure.

N33. POSTERN GATE

The serpent's tail dips into the lake here, creating a ramp from the water's edge that forms a postern gate for the fortress.

Because no attack is expected from the lake, no guards are posted at this gate. An iron portcullis blocks the entrance (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28 [lift DC 25]), which is controlled from area N34.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, six guards from the barracks attached to area N34 are posted here to guard the gate.

N34. POSTERN GUARDPOST (CR 15)

This large room is furnished similarly to the normal guardposts (area N9), with tables and chairs for guards. An armory (N7), barracks (N5), and officers' quarters (N20) are all attached to this area. The alcove to the northwest contains the controls for the portcullis at area N33.

Creatures: One serpentfolk officer and six serpentfolk guards are on duty here at all times.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6)**CR 9****XP 6,400 each**

hp 111 each (see page 41)

SERPENTFOLK OFFICER**CR 11****XP 12,800**

hp 147 (see page 47)

Development: If the guardpost comes under attack, the two remaining officers from area N20 and any serpentfolk in the attached barracks (area N5) join the battle in 1d4 rounds.

N35. VOICES FROM THE PAST

Two alcoves flank this antechamber, each containing a lifelike statue of a tall serpentfolk garbed in robes.

The stone doors to this area are sealed with both a superior lock and an *arcane lock* (CL 13th) cast by Khavith. This lock requires a DC 50 Disable Device check to open, but Sskhavo's key (see area N23) opens the lock and bypasses the *arcane lock*.

When a living creature enters the room, the eyes of the statues glow a pale green, and they begin to speak in Aklo in whispering, sibilant voices. The first statue says, "The truepeople sleep," while the second statue says, "The truepeople wake."

The voices are a manifestation of the ghost Tsskath in area N36. Channeling positive energy in this area suppresses the effect for 1d10 rounds, but it cannot be dispelled or removed. Putting the ghost to rest as described in area N36 also permanently ends this effect.

N36. CHAMBER OF SLEEPERS (CR 15)

The floor of this deep chamber is lost in darkness. From a platform in the northern corner, two stone catwalks stretch across the room to another platform, though the catwalks have fallen away in places. A ziggurat-shaped throne sits atop the far platform. Just visible in the darkness below the platforms are countless stone cylinders carved in scale-like patterns.

This room contains the cylindrical sarcophagi of hundreds of sleeping serpentfolk, ancient inhabitants of Thousand Fangs who secretly went into magical stasis rather than flee their city when it fell to Azlant. They have slept here for thousands of years, waiting for the time when they can rise again to once more rule Golarion.

Vyr-Azul discovered this chamber when he first came to Ilmurea, but he did not have the time or magical energy necessary to awaken all of his slumbering brethren. Instead, he has left them in stasis until he completes his ritual to restore Ydersius, when the newly risen god will have plenty of power to spare to reawaken his ancient followers. In the meantime, he instructed Sskhavo to place this entire area off-limits. Fortunately, the hundreds of preserved bodies of ancient purecaste serpentfolk (not to mention the presence of the ghost here) have inspired a superstition bordering on dread among the degenerate serpentfolk of the fortress, making Sskhavo's task much easier.

All along the walls of the great pit in the center of room are niches containing over 100 scaled, cylindrical sarcophagi. In front of each sarcophagus is an inlaid mosaic pattern containing a fingernail-sized gap in the center. Each sarcophagus holds one serpentfolk in a form of hibernation similar to *temporal stasis*. Though the sarcophagi can be forced open or even destroyed (hardness 15, hp 60, Break DC 38, Disable Device DC 35), there is no way to wake the serpentfolk inside without the

proper ritual (see Development below), and no force or effect can harm them while in stasis.

The ceiling in this room is 40 feet high above the level of the platforms and catwalks, though the actual floor of the room extends downward for another 60 feet. A secret door in the southwest wall of the far platform can be found with a DC 30 Perception check.

Creatures: Not all of the serpentfolk in this chamber are sleeping peacefully. A serpentfolk sorcerer named Tsskath was tasked with ensuring the process that allowed the serpentfolk to sleep for ages without aging or decaying ran smoothly. He was the last serpentfolk to enter stasis, and was to be the first to awake when the time was right. Unfortunately, something went wrong with his own hibernation—his sarcophagus was damaged and his stasis ended prematurely, allowing the ravages of time to catch up with him. He awoke centuries too early and died horribly as his body withered and decayed in the space of mere minutes. His sense of duty to his race was too strong to allow him to rest peacefully, however, and he became a ghost who has haunted this chamber ever since.

With the return of the serpentfolk to Ilmurea, Tsskath thought his long vigil was over, but when they did not awake the sleepers here, he was filled with rage. He can sense the serpentfolk in the fortress above, but cannot comprehend why they would leave this ancient army still sleeping. He has no knowledge of Vyr-Azul or the serpentfolk priest's plans, and lashes out at any creature entering this area.

When the PCs first enter the room, Tsskath comes flying out of the pit, ghostly arms outstretched. He telepathically screams, *!Shoeshod dimlight sunworlder men/women cannot be here be here the truepeople have not awoken/arisen have not. !Leave sunworlders leave now LEAVE or serve the truepeople kneel/bow servant shoeshod slave/food of the truepeople your masters BEGONE.* Tsskath attacks anyone who remains in this area, but he does not pursue fleeing foes past area N35.

TSSKATH	CR 15
XP 51,200	
Male serpentfolk ghost sorcerer 11 (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 144, <i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 2 242)	
NE Medium undead (augmented monstrous humanoid, incorporeal)	
Init +10; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +27	
DEFENSE	
AC 26, touch 26, flat-footed 19 (+8 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 insight)	
hp 188 (16 HD; 5d8+11d6+128)	
Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +17	
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal,	

unusual anatomy (25%) **Immune** mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, rejuvenation, undead traits; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +16 (15d6 plus Fort. DC 26 half)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with melee touch attack)

Special Attacks corrupting gaze (DC 24), frightful moan (DC 24), long limbs (15 ft.), malevolence (CL 16th, DC 24), telekinesis (CL 16th, DC 24)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +19)
11/day—acidic ray (1d6+5 acid)

Serpentfolk Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +12)
At will—*disguise self* (DC 19), *ventriloquism*
1/day—*blur*, *dominate person* (DC 23), *major image*,
mass suggestion (DC 24), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 21), *teleport*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +19)
5th (5/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *feeblemind* (DC 23), *mind fog* (DC 23)
4th (8/day)—*black tentacles* (DC 22), *crushing despair* (DC 22), *dimension door*, *fear* (DC 22)
3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 21), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 21), *stinking cloud* (DC 21), *tongues*
2nd (8/day)—*acid arrow*, *blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *gust of wind* (DC 20), *scorching ray*, see *invisibility*, *summon swarm*
1st (8/day)—*enlarge person*, *grease* (DC 19), *hypnotism* (DC 19), *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *true strike*
o (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 18), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 18)

Bloodline Aberrant

TACTICS

During Combat Tsskath uses his frightful moan and corrupting gaze in an attempt to scare away intruders. If this does not work, he resorts to his spells, casting *mind fog* and *crushing despair* to weaken his foes' minds before using his long limbs to make corrupting touches.

Morale Tsskath fights until destroyed, but rejuvenates 2d4 days later. The only way he can be put to rest permanently is to awaken the hibernating serpentfolk here.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 23, **Con** —, **Int** 20, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 35

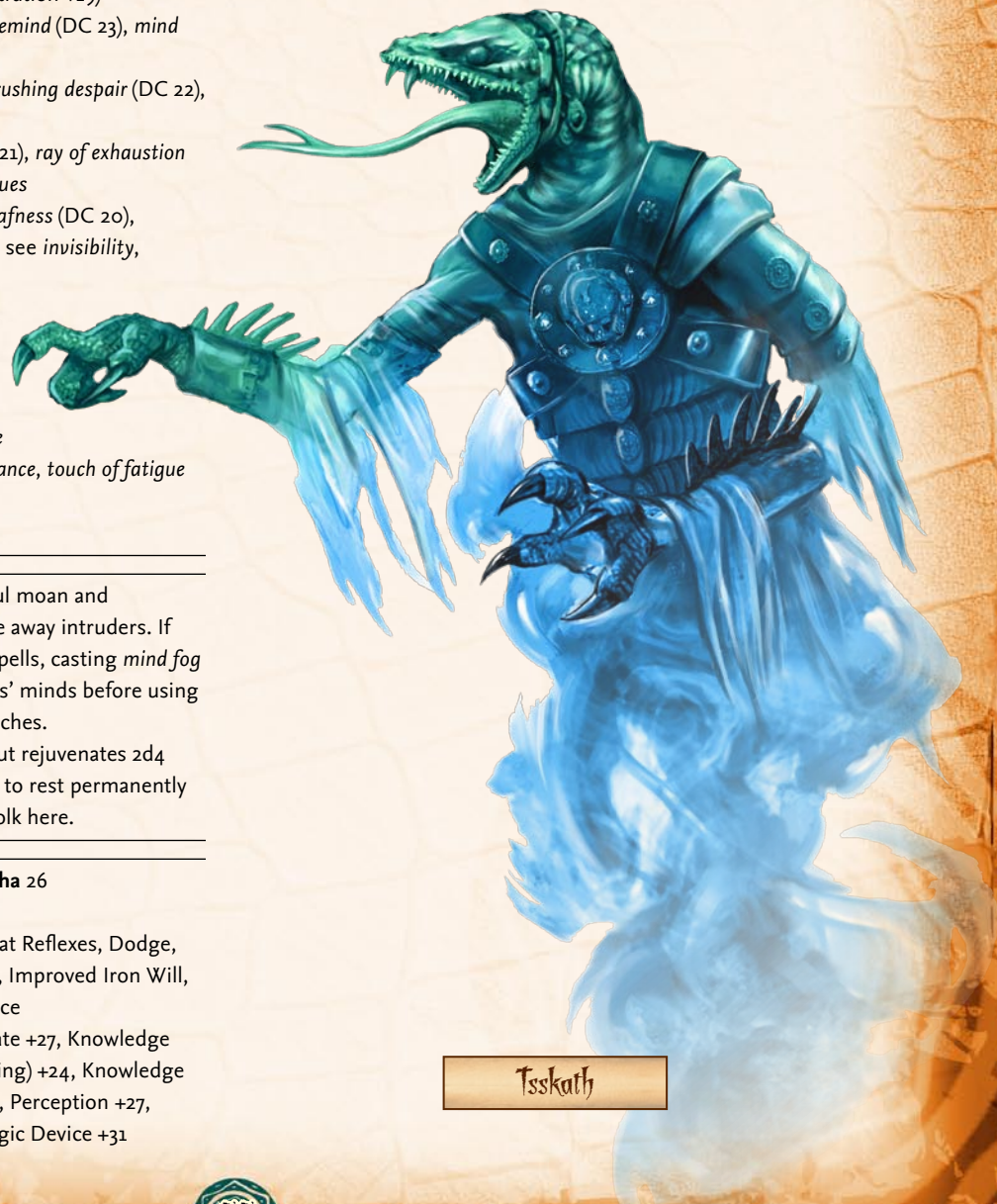
Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse, Wind Stance

Skills Escape Artist +14, Fly +33, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +24, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (nobility) +21, Perception +27, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +14, Use Magic Device +31

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Cyclops, Draconic, Necril; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ bloodline arcana

Development: The hibernating serpentfolk can be awoken in one of two ways—through a complicated magical ritual known to only a few living serpentfolk (such as Vyr-Azul), or by using an *ioun stone*. The mosaic in front of each sarcophagus includes a gap in the center that is the exact size of an *ioun stone*. If an *ioun stone* is placed in the gap, the sarcophagus opens and the serpentfolk within wakes in 1d6 rounds. Most of the serpentfolk in stasis here are advanced serpentfolk clerics, sorcerers, and wizards. They immediately try to dominate any



Tsskath

non-serpentfolk they see. The effects of waking these slumbering serpentfolk survivors is beyond the scope of this adventure, but it should quickly become clear to curious PCs that these ancient serpentfolk would upset the balance of power in Ilmurea and provide a huge boost to Vyr-Azul's forces should the PCs continue to tamper with the sarcophagi.

Treasure: Tsskath's sarcophagus stands among the other sarcophagi in the walls of the pit, but it is cracked and the door hangs open, revealing his dusty skeleton. Most of his clothing and equipment has rotted to dust, but his one skeletal hands still wears a jade *ring of force shield* in the shape of a serpent devouring its own tail and the other clutches a *rod of the python*. In addition, a *dusty rose prism ioun stone* sits in his left eye socket.

N37. SECRET VAULT (CR 15)

The presence of the ghost and the hibernating serpentfolk in area N36 have kept this area from being fully explored, and as a result, the current serpentfolk inhabiting the fortress are unaware of this chamber's existence. The ancient serpentfolk of the city built this vault to house supplies and equipment for the serpentfolk in area N36 to use when they finally woke.

Trap: The secret door to the vault requires a DC 30 Perception check to find, but its ancient builders placed a trap on the door, which triggers when the door is opened.

CHAIN LIGHTNING TRAP CR 15

Type magical; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect spell effect (empowered *chain lightning*, 13d6 electricity damage plus 50%, DC 24 Reflex save for half); multiple targets (up to 13 secondary targets within 30 ft. of primary target, DC 22 Reflex save for half)

Treasure: Most of the mundane weapons and armor stored here have long since rusted or rotted away, but the following items of value still remain: a +2 *sickle*, a *darkskull* (with *invisibility purge*), five *feather tokens* (whips), a *golembane scarab*, six *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *staff of healing*, a *wand of summon monster III* (50 charges), and 10,000 gp in gold and silver ingots (weighing 1,100 pounds).

N38. DUNGEON ENTRANCE (CR 13 OR 15)

Stalactites hang from the ceiling of this large, rough-hewn chamber, and stalagmites are scattered across the floor. In some places, the two have grown together, fusing to form columns between the floor and ceiling. To the west, a series of natural rock ledges function as wide stairs dividing the room

into two levels. Three stone doors exit out of the southern wall of the cavern, while a stone staircase exits the room to the north.

This natural cavern is the only point of ingress and egress for the fortress's dungeons. The entire dungeon level of the fortress (areas N38 through N43) is warded by both *dimensional lock* and *mage's private sanctum* effects (caster level 18th). Note that while these effects block extradimensional travel (including advanced serpentfolk's *teleport* ability) and scrying spells, the serpentfolk within this area can still use their innate telepathy to communicate with other serpentfolk in the fortress.

The ceiling varies between 20 and 30 feet high in this cavern, and the floor is of natural stone (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 412). The western portion of the room is 15 feet higher than the floor to the east (Climb check DC 5). The stairway to the north leads up to area N16.

Creatures: Four serpentfolk guards are stationed in this cavern at all times. If alerted by the guards posted on the stairs above (area N16), two of the serpentfolk take up flanking positions on either side of the stairs. The other two stand at the top of the rock ledges to the west and attack invaders with their bows.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 111 each (see page 41)

Development: If attacked, the serpentfolk here use their telepathy to alert the guards in the wardroom (area N42). Four of these guards arrive in 1d4 rounds.

N39. STRONGROOM

The secret door to this room requires a DC 20 Perception check to find. The door is locked (DC 30 Disable Device check to open); the serpentfolk torturer Asaam (area N43) also has a key. Any equipment that is brought in with captives is stored in this strongroom until Sskhavo or Khavith have the chance to inspect it.

Treasure: All of Eando Kline's gear (see page 61) is stored here, and if any PCs have been captured, their equipment is also found here. In addition, the strongroom contains the following: an adamantine dagger, two masterwork drow hand crossbows and 32 bolts, four masterwork silver rapiers of drow design, eight masterwork rhoka swords, 6 doses of drow poison, a *potion of invisibility*, and a selection of mundane gear such as ropes, backpacks, and the like.

N40. SLAVE PENS

Iron cages line the walls of this chamber, and another double row of cages fills the center of the room. Hundreds of filthy

morlocks huddle together in the cells, looking out with wide eyes. The stench of unwashed bodies and filth fills the room.

The serpentfolk keep most of their prisoners and slaves in the cages in these two rooms. Unfortunately, Eando Kline is not here—he is being held separately in the torture chamber (area N43). All of the cages here are locked (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28). The locks can be opened with a DC 25 Disable Device check, but all of the guards in the wardroom (area N42) have keys.

Searching the slave pens turns up nothing of interest or value, but any character digging through the accumulated filth and debris must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or contract bubonic plague (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557).

Creatures: Almost 200 morlock slaves occupy the cages. The slaves are a combination of normal morlocks and advanced morlock barbarians (use the stat block for morlock vessels, but without the spell-like abilities gained from intellect devourers). They are unarmed, filthy, dressed in ragged scraps of clothing, and clearly not in good health. The morlocks have been beaten into submission, so the serpentfolk do not see the need to post guards in the pens.

MORLOCKS**CR 2****XP 600 each****hp 22 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209)**MORLOCK BARBARIANS****CR 8****XP 4,800 each**

(use the stats for a morlock vessel; see page 19)

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 9 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, –2 rage)**hp 127 each**

Development: If the PCs try to release the morlocks, the slaves huddle closer together but make no attempt to leave. They are more afraid of the serpentfolk than of their confinement in the slave pens. In order to free the slaves, the PCs must convince the morlocks that they are truly free with a successful Diplomacy check (the morlocks are considered unfriendly). If one of the PCs carries the Glyph of the Open Road, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus on the check. If the PCs have rescued Eando Kline, the morlocks recognize him, whispering excitedly that the great Kline has come to rescue them from the snakewalkers, and immediately exit their cells to join him.

Once freed, the morlocks swarm up from the dungeons, quickly overwhelming any guards in the dungeon level, to seek an escape either through the central courtyard to the outer gate (area N3) or through the postern gate (area

N33). The large numbers of morlocks running rampant through the fortress distract the serpentfolk guards and can serve as a diversion for PCs trying to escape the fortress. If the PCs have already rescued Kline, the morlock diversion allows the PCs to automatically escape the fortress.

If the PCs wish to keep exploring the fortress, you can have a few morlock barbarians accompany them. While the morlocks have little knowledge of the layout of the fortress or the composition of its inhabitants, they can help fight the serpentfolk guards by flanking with the PCs or attacking the serpentfolk, if the PCs arm them. You should use the freed morlocks to provide minor help to the PCs while they explore the fortress. The morlocks could jump out of the shadows at critical moments to distract a guard, accidentally set off a trap, or even find secret doors that the PCs have missed. Under no circumstances will any of the morlocks enter the torture chamber (area N43). They have heard too many screams echoing off its walls, and have seen the broken bodies of its victims brought out.

Story Award: If the PCs free the morlocks, award them 38,400 XP.

N41. NAGA CAVE (CR 14)

Water drips from stalactites clinging to this natural cavern's ceiling, running in rivulets across the floor to drain into a twenty-foot-wide pit in the center of the chamber.

The natural stone floor here is slippery with water and subterranean mold (the DC of Acrobatics checks in this cavern are increased by 10). The pit in the center of the room is 20 feet deep, and dark, stagnant water fills the pit to a depth of 5 feet.

The body of one of Eando Kline's companions, the Varisian woman Selennia, floats in the pool at the bottom of the pit. After being captured by the serpentfolk, she was given to the nagas, who used her as a charmed plaything before they finally killed her. A DC 20 Heal check made while examining the body reveals that she was tortured, but that her death was the result of poison.

If the PCs have met the succubus Selaxasp in her guise as Selennia (see area N18), they immediately recognize Selennia. If Selaxasp is with the party, the discovery of Selennia's real body forces the succubus into an awkward situation—she might try to “explain” the body as serpentfolk trickery, but is more likely at this point to simply attack the PCs for a few rounds before trying to escape to report to Vyr-Azul.

Creatures: A coven of four fiendish spirit nagas inhabits this cavern. They came to Ilmurea some time ago, before the serpentfolk arrived, and took up residence

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in the fortress, drawn to the giant serpentine citadel. When Vyr-Azul reclaimed the fortress, he offered the nagas a place in the hierarchy of the reborn serpentfolk empire in exchange for their loyalty. The degenerate serpentfolk believe the nagas are fiendish servants of Ydersius, and though the nagas themselves have no faith in the serpentfolk god, they are more than willing to play that role for the superstitious serpentfolk to gain wealth, power, and prestige. They attack any non-serpentfolk entering the chamber, though they could be convinced to abandon their serpentfolk allies if offered a better deal.



Asaam

FIENDISH SPIRIT NAGAS (4)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 95 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 213, 294)

TACTICS

Before Combat If they have time, the nagas cast *cat's grace*, *displacement*, *invisibility*, and *shield of faith* on themselves before entering combat.

During Combat The nagas move rapidly around the room, casting *fireballs* and *magic missiles* from different locations, then casting *invisibility* to hide again. They trust in their innate fire resistance to protect against their companions' *fireballs*. The nagas use their charming gaze to take warriors out of combat, or against opponents who engage them in melee. If forced into melee combat, the nagas cast *divine favor* before attacking with their poisonous bites.

Morale The nagas have no loyalty to one another, and if reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, a naga tries to flee to the upper levels of the fortress.

Treasure: At the bottom of their pit, the nagas have collected a +2 rapier, a *potion of gaseous form*, a *scroll of phantom steed*, and 486 gp in assorted coins.

Development: If the fortress is on alert, the nagas leave the dungeon for the fortress's upper levels. They cast *invisibility* and patrol the serpent corridor (area N14) for intruders, making regular circuits from top to bottom and back again.

N42. WARDROOM (CR 15)

The iron cages lining the walls of this chamber are empty, their doors standing open. Two tables stand in the center of the room, each surrounded by four chairs.

Once another slave pen, it now serves the serpentfolk as a wardroom and barracks for the guards posted in the dungeon.

Creatures: Eight serpentfolk guards inhabit the wardroom. If they were alerted by the guards in the dungeon entrance (area N38), only four are found here. Each of these guards has keys to the slave pens (area N40).

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (8)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 111 each (see page 41)

N43. TORTURE CHAMBER

A brazier of glowing coals provides dim illumination to this room. A row of iron cages stands against the north wall, and three more cages stand in the center of the room. Iron chains

ending in cruelly curved hooks hang from the ceiling. A pool of still, dark water sits at the far southern end of the chamber. The tangy smell of blood and burnt flesh hangs in the air.

The serpentfolk interrogate and punish prisoners in this chamber—and on occasion, torture them for entertainment. An iron brazier glows dully at the center of the room, and the handles of two iron pokers stick out of the coals. Next to the brazier, a set of iron shackles is fixed to the floor, and more chains hang down from the ceiling above them. These chains can be used to secure a Large or smaller captive spread-eagled on the floor or in a standing position. In addition, 10 sets of masterwork manacles are fixed to the walls (hardness 10, hp 10, Break DC 28). Each one can hold a Medium or Small creature against the wall so that it cannot move (any creature held in the shackles takes a –4 penalty on Escape Artist or Strength checks to break out of the shackles).

The torture chamber currently holds only one prisoner, Eando Kline (see Development), but you can decide whether any other prisoners are being held in the room at this time. This area can be a good place to introduce replacement PCs, although the captives are all unarmed and unarmored. If any PCs are captured by the serpentfolk at any time during this adventure, they are stripped of their gear, brought here, and shackled to the walls. The equipment of any prisoners found here is stored in the strongroom (area N39).

Creatures: The serpentfolk's chief torturer, a muscular, degenerate brute called Asaam, spends most of his time in this chamber. Though not purecaste, Asaam has proven so skilled in his chosen profession that he has been promoted far higher than the rest of his degenerate brethren, and has been given command of the fortress's dungeons. Asaam is a green-scaled degenerate serpentfolk who wears leather armor and a spiked gauntlet with wicked blades. He has been torturing Eando Kline, and is currently holding a long, red-hot, iron poker. He hisses in annoyance at any interruptions and attacks any intruders.

ASAAM **CR 15**

XP 51,200

Male degenerate serpentfolk (thug) rogue 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 242, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)
NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 18, flat-footed 24 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 224 (18 HD; 5d10+13d8+139)

Fort +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge;

Using the Faction Guide

If you're using the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Faction Guide* in your Serpent's Skull game, your PCs can also gain Prestige Award (PA) from their faction for meeting certain milestones in the adventure. This PA can then be spent on special resources and rewards offered by that faction. The Sargavan Government is not covered in the *Faction Guide*, but PCs working for that faction can still spend PA on the standard boons available to all factions, as outlined on pages 54–55. The PCs can earn PA for completing the following tasks:

- Rescuing and talking to the morlock Thekola (area B1): 1 PA
- Rescuing Udarra and learning about Eando Kline (area C8): 1 PA
- Allying with Vedavrex (area G): 1 PA
- Learning Eando Kline's whereabouts from Izon or the drow prisoner Deloral (area G7 or G5): 1 PA
- Slaying Belkor at the behest of Izon (area N19): 1 PA
- Defeating Sskhavo (area N23): 1 PA
- Defeating Khavith (area N26): 1 PA
- Freeing the morlock slaves in the slave pens (area N40): 1 PA
- Rescuing Eando Kline (area N43): 2 PA

Immune mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee hot poker +19/+14/+9 (1d8+5/19–20 plus 1d4 fire), bite +14 (1d6+2 plus poison) or +1 spiked gauntlet +21/+16/+11 (1d4+6), bite +14 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Special Attacks brutal beating* (6 rounds), sneak attack +7d6

TACTICS

During Combat Asaam uses his *dust of disappearance* to turn invisible and make sneak attacks. If visible, he uses Dazzling Display to make his opponents shaken, then uses Shatter Defenses to make sneak attacks with his spiked gauntlet.

Morale Asaam fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 37

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Dazzling Display, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improvised Weapon Mastery, Intimidating Prowess, Mobility, Quick Draw, Shatter Defenses, Toughness, Weapon Focus (spiked gauntlet)

Skills Acrobatics +26, Disable Device +20, Escape Artist +20,

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Intimidate +25, Perception +25, Stealth +26

Languages Aklo, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ frightening*, rogue talents (bleeding attack +7, combat trick, crippling strike, hunter's surprise*, strong impression*, weapon training)

Combat Gear *dust of disappearance* (3), *potions of stabilize* (3);

Other Gear +3 leather armor, +1 spiked gauntlet, daggers (3), *ring of protection* +2, key to strongroom (area N39), torturer's tools

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 25; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 2 saves.

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Development: A ragged figure squats inside one the cages in the center of the room, his wrists and ankles chained together and his neck chained to the side of the cage by a spiked iron collar. Once the PCs have defeated Asaam, he wearily raises his head and hoarsely whispers, "Get me out of here!" The PCs have found Eando Kline.

When Kline and his companions tried to infiltrate the serpentfolk-controlled area of Ilmurea to find the urdefhan defector Belkor for Izon, they were quickly discovered by the serpentfolk. Only Juliver managed to escape during the attack—Eando and the rest were quickly captured and brought to the fortress of Thousand Fangs. Since then, all of Eando's companions have been killed. Eando is the sole survivor, kept alive only because Vyr-Azul believes he can get more information out of the surface-worlder.

Eando is in bad shape—he's been confined in this cage, unable to move, and the cuts and scars visible through the rags of his clothing show that he has been cruelly tortured. Eando's manacles and collar are masterwork adamantite (hardness 20, hp 40, Break DC 28, Disable Device DC 28). His cage is made of magically strengthened adamantite sealed with an *arcane lock* (hardness 20, hp 120, Break DC 38). The cage is also locked (Disable Device DC 40 to open), and only Vyr-Azul has the key. In addition, Khavith (see area N26) has placed a permanent *alarm* spell on the cage to mentally alert her if it is opened. If she is still alive when Kline is freed, Khavith, Sskhavo, and a detachment of guards immediately come to investigate.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully rescue Eando Kline and get him safely out of Thousand Fangs, award them 51,200 XP. The stats for Eando given below assume he regains his gear and is healed—before this event, he has no gear and is at 5 hp.

EANDO KLINE

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male human bard 5/rogue 6/sorcerer 1
CG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 67 (12 HD; 11d8+1d6+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *short sword* +13/+8 (1d6+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +11 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 15 rounds/day

(countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2), sneak attack +3d6

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +4)

6/day—touch of destiny (+1)

Bard Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +8)

2nd (3/day)—*delay poison*, *glitterdust* (DC 15), *shatter* (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—*comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *feather fall*, *grease* (DC 14)

o (at will)—*flare* (DC 13), *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (4/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *sleep* (DC 14)

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *read magic*

Bloodline Destined

TACTICS

During Combat Eando prefers to sneak, run, or talk his way out of any conflicts, but his time spent searching for Ilmurea has taught him that sometimes a fight is necessary. He tries to make use of his sneak attacks as often as possible, while inspiring courage among his allies. Though he's a capable spellcaster, Eando tends to save his spells for emergencies, relying on his physical reflexes and his trusted weapons.

Morale Eando attempts to flee if reduced below 15 hit points, as long as his allies are able to do the same. If they are unable to escape, Eando fights to the last to defend them.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

Feats Dodge, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes,

Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Bluff +16, Climb +10, Disable Device +16, Disguise +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Linguistics +7, Perform (oratory) +16, Ride +12, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +18, Survival +3, Use Magic Device +12

Languages Aklo, Common, Orc, Shoanti, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +2, bloodline arcana, lore master 1/





day, rogue talents (finesse rogue, resiliency, trap spotter), trapfinding +3, versatile performance (oratory)

Combat Gear *elixir of hiding, elixir of swimming, scroll of fireball;*

Other Gear +3 leather armor, +2 short sword, masterwork daggers (2), mysterious ioun stone, ring of protection +1, backpack, journal, numerous belt pouches, writing supplies (all stored in area N39)

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs rescue Eando Kline, they only need to get him to safety. If the PCs have already freed the morlock slaves in area N40, the morlocks provide enough of a distraction for the PCs and Eando to escape the fortress automatically. Once they manage to get clear of the fortress, the PCs must decide where to go next. If they agreed to kill Belkor for Izon, they might wish to return to urdefhan territory with proof of his death. Similarly, they may wish to return to Udarra's manor to inform her of their success in rescuing Eando.

The safest course of action is to return to Saventh-Yhi through the magical portal at area A. Eando has been through a lot and needs healing and rest, and the PCs likely have a well-supplied camp already established on the surface. Eando has much to tell the PCs about the serpentfolk and their leader, Vyr-Azul, and his plans to resurrect his lost god. Kline's tale and what it means for Saventh-Yhi and the rest of Golarion, are fully detailed in the final installment of the Serpent's Skull Adventure Path, "Sanctum of the Serpent God."

Of course, there is likely a significant portion of Ilmurea that the PCs have not yet fully explored. The next adventure assumes the PCs are well into 15th level by the time they finish "The Thousand Fangs Below." If the PCs have only just reached 15th level, there are still plenty of adventure opportunities to be found in Ilmurea. In addition to the encounter areas already presented in the adventure, the Ilmurea gazetteer on the next page contains several more locations ripe for exploration.



Ilmurea

SHIMMERING SPIRAL OF THE SOUTH

FOR A THING TO BE TRULY VALUABLE, WORTHY OF YDERSIUS, OUR LORD OF COILING POISON, IT MUST SERVE THREE PURPOSES AT ONCE.

A SPELL-WEAPON MUST BE AS EXACT AS A SCALPEL, BRUTAL AS A TYPHOON, AND FEARSOME AS DEATH ITSELF.

A STRONGHOLD MUST BE AS BEAUTIFUL AS THE JEWELLED SKY, UNASSAILABLE AS A FLOATING MOUNTAIN, AND INVISIBLE AS A SHADOW ACROSS A POOL OF INK.

A PRIEST MUST BE MIGHTY IN SERVICE TO HIS GOD, CUNNING IN THE RULE OF HIS FOLLOWERS, AND OVERWHELMING IN THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS ENEMIES.

ILMUREA, THRONE OF YDERSIUS, BANE OF AZLANT, IS EACH OF THESE, AND ALL OF THEM.

—EMBLAZONED WITHIN TEMPLES BESIDE ILMUREA'S SIX SERPENT GATES,
TRANSLATED FROM AKLO

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ILMUREA

By the standards of the incalculably ancient and potent serpentfolk, the city of Ilmurea is a relatively recent and humble settlement, built in short order and with limited resources as a hidden, fortified enclave from which to strike out and subjugate a mere single continent. Now ravaged, having suffered cataclysmic damage from the subterranean shocks of Earthfall, and having been looted and vandalized by untold generations of Azlanti warriors, subhuman morlocks, and daemon-worshipping urdefhans, Ilmurea is little more than a barely recalled memory among present-day serpentfolk, the abandoned remnants of a besieged emergency military fortification thrown together in the twilight of the fading serpent empire, now inhabited by creatures of utter degeneracy.

Of course, the vast cavern that contains Ilmurea can scarcely, even now, be called a ruin. Many of its countless mansions still stand, their serpent-scaled walls scarred but not yet fallen; the shining, spirit-engineered corkscrew waterfalls that irrigate the city remain intact, even over 100 centuries after the demise of Azlant and the tremors unleashed by a falling star; and strange incenses yet waft down from hanging sculptures wrought from the strange rock called serpentstone that paints the city in a weave of alien lights, sounds, and smells, cutting through even the choking fumes of urdefhan dung-fires and the screams of morlocks.

Though Ilmurea may possess only a ghost of its former splendor, the city is far beyond the scope of all human engineering, and it resonates with the undeniable grandeur of the serpentfolk's ancient power. Established as a sister city to the more impressive and far older enclave of Sverenagati below the Kodar Mountains in the north, Ilmurea was hastily cut from the bedrock of Sekamina in the waning days of serpentfolk dominance over Golarion, as the war with the conquering Azlanti took heavier and heavier tolls upon the onetime rulers of the world. From this place, their last bunker as the great Age of Serpents finally drew to a close, the serpentfolk sought to reclaim much of the surface work lost to them during the war.

The final sundering of Ydersius by the Azlanti heroine Savith, however, put an end to all such endeavors. With the subterranean city crippled in the wake of the Azlanti attack, repeated sorties into Ilmurea from the Azlanti city of Saventh-Yhi above forced the slow abandonment of the city by the serpentfolk, who vanished into smaller and better-hidden enclaves deeper beneath the world. The later fall of the *Starstone* damaged the city badly and cut off all means of escape for the Azlanti garrisoned there, leaving the empty, echoing city almost entirely in the hands of the degenerate, inbred descendants of the city's conquerors.

SERPENTSTONE

A strange substance unique to the precursor alchemies of the ancient serpentfolk, this mystical material was used extensively in the construction and design of Ilmurea. Its ancient Aklo name is lost to time, but modern explorers have dubbed it "serpentstone" after its ophidian creators.

Exceptionally resilient, all serpentstone is magically treated stone (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 411). When properly worked and treated through eldritch means known only to ancient serpentfolk wizards and sorcerers, serpentstone can be programmed to emit sound and light in a variety of ways, shifting at predetermined times from color to color and tone to tone, from brightness equal to that of daylight to a dim, shadowy glimmer like that of a candle. In addition, serpentstone can be set to radiate heat or cold, or produce illusory smoke, roiling forth thin streams of scented, incense-like fumes designed to delight, enlighten, or otherwise inform serpentfolk in the vicinity. All of these effects function as *major image* (caster level 18th).

In combination, these effects orchestrated the cavern of Ilmurea into an ecology more complex than any artificial structure upon the surface world, using subtle cues of lighting, sound, and scent to guide semi-sentient creatures such as mind-blanked slaves and degenerate *aapoph*-caste serpentfolk through the complex design of the city's streets, and to mark which places within the city were private or off-limits.

ILMUREA AT A GLANCE

There can be no doubt, upon first gazing upon the vault-city of Ilmurea, that the serpentfolk were ultimately and intimately creatures of purest beauty, refinement, and elegance. The coils of Ilmurea are as intricate as any Vudran mandala, as finely woven as any Taldan lace, and as delicately shaped as any crystal rose of Cheliox. The city was once lit by a thousand flames in colors beyond description, the bejeweled ceiling of the immense cavern a mosaic of constantly moving, living light reflected in the swift, singing waters of the city's crystal-clear lakes.

Engineering on an unimaginable scale was employed in the construction of Ilmurea, which was crafted in a complex design that provided its masters both incredible security and access to epicurean and hedonistic delights,

THRONE OF YDESIUS ASCENDANT (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong abjuration; **CL** 18th

Slot none; **Weight** 2,000 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This huge, ornate throne, carved from white marble and inlaid with flickering, smoking, multicolored spirals of serpentstone, is uncomfortably tall and thin for most humans, as it is designed to seat a high priest of the serpentfolk. While seated upon the throne, a divine caster who worships Ydersius may use a spell slot or exchange any prepared divine spell (including domain spells) of 3rd level or higher to cast *dispel magic*. Once per day, a divine caster of sufficient level may instead cast *greater dispel magic* in place of a spell of 6th level or higher. This ability is in most other ways identical to the spontaneous casting of clerics and druids (see the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*), but may also be employed by antipaladins, inquisitors, oracles, or other divine casters faithful to Ydersius. The throne bestows one permanent negative level on any creature that sits upon it, other than divine casters who worship Ydersius. This negative level remains as long as the non-sentient or heretical creature sits upon the throne and disappears when the throne is vacated. This negative level cannot be overcome in any way (including by *restoration* spells) while the throne is occupied.

DESTRUCTION

The *Throne of Ydersius Ascendant* can only be destroyed by anointing it with the blood of Ydersius, followed by a successful *mage's disjunction* spell cast on the throne by a cleric of an Azlanti deity.

including fresh air, scented gardens, artificial weather, indoor plumbing providing hot and cold water, vast libraries, arenas for bloodsport and orgies, and soft lights set overhead in ever-shifting patterns to remind the diurnal creatures of their former dominance over the surface world.

An oppressive gloom now hangs across the city, the serpentstone lights high above having slowly faded with each passing century until their glow is little more than hollow sparks in the subterranean darkness. Since the time of Earthfall and the slow degeneration of the Azlanti victors into morlocks, Ilmurea's serpentstone has lost much of its power and beauty. Cracked and broken by tremors and looted by invaders and squatters, the stone no longer lights, scents, heats, cools, or refreshes the city as it once did.

SIGHTS, WONDERS, AND MYSTERIES OF ILMUREA

Arrayed throughout the lost city of Ilmurea are a myriad of eldritch and incomprehensible buildings, works of art, devices, and other less identifiable structures, buried in darkness thousands of feet beneath the soft, sane, sunlit world and left to gather dust in the millennia since the rise, conquest, and final, utter destruction of Azlant. Some few of the serpentfolk's elder works of wonder and engineering are listed below.

ARENA OF HUMAN APOSTASY

A terrible sort of nesting, mechanical theater stands here, with grand, opulently appointed galleries ringing an enormous white throne, all looking down upon a central, recessed pit. Curved slabs of serpentstone programmed as mirrors that hang from the ceiling above are designed to make every inch of the pit visible from every seat in the gallery. The pit is equipped with winches, chains, and many platforms that can be raised and lowered upon command, and elegant racks that once held weapons, scrolls, chemicals, and perhaps things stranger still are arrayed along the pit's walls.

The serpentfolk elite gathered here to humiliate, twist, enslave, and slay their most reviled enemies—humans imbued with the powers of their weak, pink deities. Within the stained pit, lined with sharp, shattered icons of heretical faiths and littered with defaced, razor-edged symbols once considered holy to pitiful “gods” far beneath the notice of all-powerful Ydersius, the coil-crowned masters of Ilmurea tossed down captured “holy warriors” to be ripped apart by summoned beasts, vat-grown snake-hulks, experimental horrors, captured aberrations, or the captives' own magically coerced allies.

From the records scratched and stamped into the walls ringing the arena, it is clear that no holy champion of Azlant thrown into the pit ever escaped martyrdom, although some apparently survived for hours or even days until their gods failed them utterly and they succumbed to the cruel ministrations of the serpent-priests, for no spirit or prophet could face the power of Ydersius and live.

In truth, it was the massive white throne above the pit that made the spectacle of human misery all the more rewarding to the assembled devout among the serpentfolk—the magic-canceling powers of the throne and the priest upon it ensured that any caster hurled to the floor of the pit would be bereft of his divine gifts and easy prey for his opponents. This artifact, the *Throne of Ydersius Ascendant* (see sidebar), is well known to Vyr-Azul and the serpentfolk priests now in Ilmurea, but the throne is too large to be moved easily at this time, and too delicate to be entrusted to slave labor. With the coming of the new Golden Age, however, it will surely see much use.

GARDENS OF STATH-AZAL

This ancient mansion was the home of the great wizard-priest Stath-Azal, Ever-Favored of the Mighty One, a distant ancestor of Vyr-Azul. Its high garden walls enclose untold riches, and are protected from intrusion by exquisite and sublime magics that have repelled rude and barbarous invaders for more than a hundred centuries. The gardens are protected by permanent *forbiddance* (set to chaotic evil) and *mage's private sanctum* effects. The sole entrance is sealed with an *arcane lock*, and warded with a *symbol of insanity*. Even if these wards are bypassed, a permanent *antipathy* effect repels non-serpentfolk from the entrance (DC 24 Will save partial). Inside, more *glyphs of warding* and *symbols* await intruders, as well as traps that create *forcecages* that fold and bend into invisible prisons for the unwary. All of these effects are at caster level 18th. Stath-Azal's password to bypass all the gardens' wards and guardians has been lost to time, but at the GM's option, powerful divination magics might be used to recover the password.

Entering these gardens is all but impossible to those untrained in magic, but for those capable of divining the proper password, this palatial estate might become an oasis of safety in the dangerous ruins of Ilmurea. Within, interwoven copses of trees (created with *permanent image*) hang protectively over a series of heated, scented bathing pools. The illusory trees bear actual meaty fruit designed by the most fearsome of intellects for epicurean serpentfolk tastes. Although disturbingly strange in flavor and texture, these morsels are edible and nutritious, and replenish themselves every 24 hours (as *create food and water*).

The area is lit by glowing sculptures of cold serpentstone wrapped in caphorite and ice, many of them enchanted to move, speak, dance, or dispense sweet liquor. Numerous *unseen servants* cater to visitors, carrying chilled platters of bloodwine (see page 42) kept fresh and safe from clotted, vinegary stagnation since before Earthfall.

Throughout the sprawling courtyards, *programmed images* animate when visitors approach, showing displays of private debauchery and sybaritic joy designed to entertain jaded serpentfolk guests, from silent assassinations to suggestive dances, and from brutal eviscerations to savage couplings between serpentfolk, humans, and beings from spaces beyond the worlds we know.

Creatures: Four slithering serpentstone golems shaped like mighty snakes and hydras patrol the grounds. These golems lose their slow ability, but gain a breath weapon that petrifies intruders, making this sweet-smelling paradise a nightmarish murder-ground for the uninvited. The golems do not attack anyone who bypassed the gardens' wards using Stath-Azal's password.

SERPENTSTONE GOLEMS (4)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Variant stone golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 163)

hp 129 each

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-foot cone, turn to stone, Fortitude DC 17 negates)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) A serpentstone golem can use its breath weapon once every 1d4+1 rounds to create a 60-foot cone of green gas. Those caught in the area of the gas can attempt a DC 17 Fortitude save to resist the effects, but those who fail the save are immediately petrified. This petrification is temporary—each round, a petrified creature can attempt a new DC 17 Fortitude save to recover from the petrification as long as it is not caught within the area of effect of the golem's breath weapon a second time while petrified. A creature exposed to the golem's breath a second time while already petrified becomes permanently petrified, and can no longer attempt to make additional Fortitude saves to recover naturally. The save DC is Constitution-based.

GRAND ARMILLARY OF WORLDS BEYOND

A vast and improbable object wrought of cold iron and adamantine, long since looted and collapsed into age-warped unusability, this huge rotating installation once marked the movement of the cosmos around the sun. The Grand Armillary depicts the 11 true planets of the solar system, more than a dozen distant moons too small to be seen with the naked eye, thousands of unique planetesimals floating within the Diaspora between Verces and the Dead Planet of Eox, and representations of stranger, more ill-suggested objects of the Dark Tapestry far beyond the light of Golarion's star.

Most curiously, the bejeweled plaques surrounding the plaza of the Grand Armillary, engineered to rotate their icons through some clockwork means long lost to the ages, contain coded inscriptions regarding many locations highlighted upon the enormous structure that seem to indicate special coordinates of intersection between faraway places. If these notations could be cleansed of the tarnish of empty centuries and deciphered, it is possible that the stars might open once again to those who would stride from Golarion to worlds undreamed.

THE GREAT EYE

An artifact of exquisite construction, now shattered and twisted into a mere tangle of burst glass and heat-warped, tarnished mithral, this edifice was Ilmurea's far-seeing eye before the besieging Azlanti tore it down piece by piece, leaving no part intact.

This immense *thought lens* was designed to channel and amplify the innate telepathic abilities of the serpentfolk into spears of pure thought that could be cast for leagues through the cold black of the Darklands. With these devices, the serpentfolk coordinated use of the

city's teleportation chambers, arranged for conferences between minds separated by continents or even planets, and traded insights upon topics unfathomable to the weak and humble souls of men.

A smaller *thought lens* rests inside the mouth of the monumental serpent encircling the fortress of Thousand Fangs (see page 53), but the limited range and power of that tiny replica pale in comparison to that of the great lens that once stood here, connecting Ilmurea to all the far-flung outposts of the mighty serpentfolk empire.

HALL OF HUMAN BEAUTY

In the days of Azlant's ascendancy, the serpentfolk's most hated foe was the spell-wielding human, armored in service to some false and apish deity, but the most prized treasure of the serpentfolk was a willing and eager human slave, especially one of surpassing skill, cleverness, beauty, poise, and manner.

This hall is dedicated to the celebration of humanity at its height—but humanity in service to the serpentfolk. Within, incredibly lifelike statues depict learned sages and enticing body servants, noble warriors and sly masseurs, all carved from rare woods and stone and decorated with jewelry befitting kings, and all bowing before their serpentine masters. It was in this place that precious human slaves, so much more delightful than crude and indelicate subhumans such as dwarves and orcs, were bought, traded, trained, sold, sampled, sacrificed, broken, and bred. Written in Aklo upon all of the walls are passages from *The Alaberos Analects*, extolling in carved letters the many virtues of humans even in light of their foolish and utterly doomed uprising, and ending always in the following refrain: "Pinks skinned, shoeshod, against truepeople, fool-headed and weak, truly; but even in this treachery/rebellion there [is] some black humor, as-truly-as-Ydersius-is-mighty. Must the great-lord not always stifle a small/indulgent smile when his fool, all-in-motley-clad, shrieks curses toward the throne? Pray, pity the pink, and lead them firmly back to their proper place."

HONORED ACADEMY OF FANG AND BLADE

A training ground for the bestial legions of lesser, *aapoph*-caste serpentfolk, this puzzle-box of an academy is a maze of lecture halls atop a bewildering array of traps and pits all concealed beneath permanent *hallucinatory terrain*. The noble serpentfolk trained their degenerate counterparts here in the ways of battle and in the discipline necessary for organized warfare, while young purecaste trained both in combat and in command of these legions, alongside human slaves taught swordplay and unarmed fighting styles to better defend their masters.

The walls of this multilevel structure are adorned with icons of the great serpentfolk heroes, usually standing in glory over the bodies of their defeated enemies and

surrounded by their victorious minions, often depicted gnawing on the flesh of their living prisoners of war.

Creatures: Dens beneath the massive training grounds were apparently built to house thousands of degenerate serpentfolk, but these subterranean tunnels have now become the home of a tribe of morlocks. Strangely, some ancient magic or emanation within the walls of these catacombs has mutated the morlocks even further, enlarging their twisted frames and granting them prodigious strength. These giant morlocks are even more xenophobic than their normal-sized kin, and angrily attack any creature that enters their cramped warrens.

GIANT MORLOCKS

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 149 each (see page 32)

MANDALA OF THE UNKNOWABLE EXALTED

Inscribed upon the cavern wall before the Sanctum of Ydersius itself, this flowing and flowering mandala consists of elaborate, serpentine pictographs marked with complex stud-clusters of ever-changing serpentstone arranged in something like a fanged, snake-headed lotus. Incomprehensible to modern minds, the carving appears to be a circular genealogy of the eldest serpentfolk and their lines of ancestry, dating back to eras before humanity's rise.

Of special note, however, are the masses of cryptic hieroglyphs that run in jagged lines from the unions of great mages and unnamed "elder serpents." These sunbursts of wicked thorns and spiraling barbed chains evoke nausea if gazed upon for too long, but apparently represent the lineages and deeds of the highest "exalted" caste of serpentfolk, ageless and undying progeny perhaps more akin to fiends than to mortals, whose lines trail across multiple millennia, and who were spoken of only with subdued reverence.

RUNES OF THE DEPARTED FIRST

This odd, almost incongruously hallowed structure is the only evidence within the city that the cavern which cradles Ilmurea was perhaps ruled, in a time before time, by creatures older than even the serpentfolk. Within these walls lies a bare, stoic stone floor covered in small blocks of runes, dots, and alien symbols of unknowable meaning and purpose, but which predate the rise of sentient life on Golarion by centuries, if not by millennia.

There is, however, a certain mocking tone to the false austerity here. While these simple carvings of some elder hand are illuminated and swept clean by soft light and gentle breezes from unadorned serpentstone columns at the perimeter, they are dwarfed by the magnificence of

the city and the monolithic fortress of Thousand Fangs visible through the building's massive bay-like windows. In addition, the remaining serpentstone walls have been ensorcelled to depict titanic events from the height of the Age of Serpents—the raising of a mountain into the sky; the rune-cracking of a 200-mile-wide breach of seabed, giving birth to a massive, diamond-encrusted island from the very floor of the ocean; and the construction of a great, towering city on what appears to be the moon.

In a grand form of old Aklo, the following legend is inscribed upon one wall, seared with brass into the stone and lit from within by *continual flame*:

“It was within our power to, unthinking and unblinking, wipe away from the world this very last memory, this final and quintessential evidence, of forgotten visitors to our world's shores; to make them as the dust of yesteryear: forever gone and unmourned.

“How much more power, then, did it require for us to preserve this final, humble footprint?

“Let none ever forget: where others once stood, we now rule. Where others once struggled for survival, we have thrived. Where lesser life once merely clung to existence, we have raised ourselves high and named ourselves god-kings. We are the masters of all knowledge and mysteries, and when the lords of the outer stars have fallen, we shall rule still.

“Like the Ouroboros, our reign has no end.”

TEMPLE OF HONORABLE SUICIDE

In Ilmurea's heyday, the serpentfolk kept no true prisons or dungeons, no penal colonies or rehabilitation centers. Small concessions were often made, in the interest of hostage-taking between warring noble houses or mage-schools, or for the secure capture of a rival in spell-proofed chambers, but in that time there was but one punishment for crimes against another serpent-lord or failure in the sight of great Ydersius: death.

Purecaste serpentfolk are dignified creatures, however, and one right of the accused was esteemed above all others—in the course of justice, even in the depths of utter and complete humiliation, guilty parties retained the right to publicly end their own lives. Here, on a bloodstained altar atop a wide serpentstone dais before

dozens of spectators and witnesses, those brought low by their crimes or their failings could at least make a noble end for themselves, offering their blood and their lives to Ydersius.

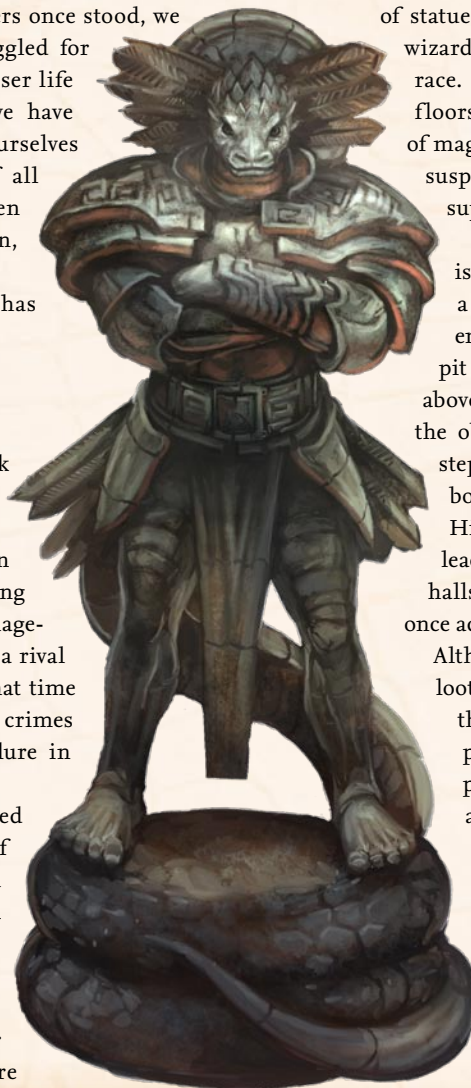
TOWER OF THE CLIMB OUT OF SAVAGERY

A winding, discursive, and highly allegorical overview of the serpentfolk's rise from bestial monstrosity to thaumaturgical mastery over all life is presented in a sort of spiraling museum within this great tower. Purecaste serpentfolk once wandered its branching and looping ways, reflecting upon their own individual climb from savagery to self-control and domination over their inferiors.

This complex, rambling history lesson ascends the tower with each subsequent “age” of the serpentfolk species, beginning in a maze of damp, rough-hewn caves and climbing ever upward past primitive traps marked with philosophical fallacies, and into labyrinthine gardens of statues representing the ancient scholars, wizards, heroes, and traitors of the serpent race. The museum finally ends many floors above on a vertigo-inducing patio of magically strengthened glass that hangs suspended, seemingly without visible support, overlooking the city.

Of special note within the museum is the three-tiered representation of a gladiatorial area, wherein visitors emerge into a bloodstained, sand-lined pit to face a great coliseum that loomed above. Further paces bring them up into the observer's stands, and another set of steps leads to a great throne overlooking both the house and the action below. Hidden behind the throne, more steps lead upward and into more confusing halls full of mirrors and portals that were once adorned with gems.

Although it was long ago sacked and looted of countless treasures, it is plain that the tower once boasted many public cafes, small theaters, libraries, private lounges, libraries, laboratories, and other, less identifiable ceremonial rooms. The various exhibits of the museum apparently featured live performances of famous orations, medical demonstrations (such as vivisection and psychosurgery), and artistic commentaries on the proper humiliation and sacrifice of deposed rivals.





Nethys

NETHYS (NETH-UHS) IS SAID TO HAVE ONCE BEEN A GOD-KING OF OSIRION, OBSESSED WITH MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE. WHEN HIS STUDIES ALLOWED HIM TO PERCEIVE ALL THAT TRANSPIRED, EVEN ON OTHER PLANES, THIS OMNISCIENCE FUELED HIS TRANSFORMATION INTO A DEITY, BUT AT THE COST OF HIS PSYCHE. NOW HIS FRACTURED MIND SEEKS TO DESTROY THE WORLD AND TO HEAL IT, TO BEND AND TO PRESERVE IT, TO CONQUER AND TO FREE IT. AS SUCH, HE REPRESENTS THE MOST BENIGN SPELLS AND THE MOST VILE NECROMANCY, AND MORTAL SPELLCASTERS OF ALL ALIGNMENTS ASK FOR HIS BLESSING.

Nethys's only concern is magic—its use, creation, and innovation. He is aware of his mortal worshipers and rewards their devotion with divine power, but not just for their use or abuse of magic. When some mortal tyrant outlaws the use of magic, Nethys expects his followers to intervene, though he issues no call to crusade. Alternatively, if a magocracy were to exile all commoners with no magical talent, he does not consider this a cheapening of magical knowledge or power. His total awareness means he sees every success and every failure, from the first cantrip learned by a fledgling hedge wizard to the rudiments of star-exploding magic being developed on the farthest-flung planet.

Other gods may lead their churches like parental figures, but Nethys acts more like the volatile but disinterested guardian of an estate, unconcerned about individual heirs as long as the vast legacy of the family continues. Queries via *commune* and similar spells always give accurate information, but the tone may be amused, belligerent, cold, disappointed, enraged, and so on. Nethys's extreme mood swings are a symptom of his ultimate knowledge and the price of his power. Other deities have tried to

stabilize or cure him, with and sometimes without his permission, but he inevitably perceives any progress as a depletion of his energy and reacts as if he is being attacked, negating their efforts. His allies have learned to tolerate his ever-changing nature, keeping him at a respectful arm's length for the sake of his knowledge.

Nethys is the master of all magic: helpful, harmful, creative, destructive, arcane, divine, conventional, alchemical, and everything in between. He is a proponent of magic for all purposes, even frivolous or wasteful ones. Magic is an infinite resource that permeates all dimensions, and thus he insists there is no need to limit its use for fear of its eventual depletion. He sees magic-drained places like the Mana Wastes as aberrations, tumors in the world that can be excised, though dealing with them is not a high-priority concern unless they begin to grow and threaten the healthy flow of magic elsewhere. He is not adverse to technology unless it interferes with or supplants magic; indeed, he relishes the blending of technology and magic much as a chef enjoys mixing new foods into favorite dishes.

He embraces all who practice magic, regardless of the nature of that magic, how they practice it, what they do with it, or how good they are at it. He rejects those without the talent or discipline to learn it; a lowly rogue who knows

a single cantrip is more valuable to him than the mightiest magic-less fighter. He doesn't dispute the martial prowess or physical strength of those without magic, but they are as useless to him as a sailing ship is to a man living in a mountain cave. Other than this devotion to knowledge and magic and rejection of non-magic, Nethys is indifferent. Pleas for mercy or justice, incitements to violence, and invocations of fairness or the balance of power have no effect on him; he will act in the interest of increasing magical knowledge or according to his whim, but is otherwise unpredictable and unreliable.

Nethys's avatar is terrible to behold: a male human crackling with power, one side burned or even skeletal, the other flush with power and bleeding energy into the air. Nethys is often shown in his dual aspect; one side of him is burned and broken, unleashing terrible magic upon the world, while the other half is calm and serene, using magic to heal the sick and protect the innocent. Some depictions downplay this schism, showing him whole and focused, or put the

undesired aspect in shadow, obscured by other creatures or extending beyond the border of the artwork, so only the preferred aspect is visible. Though most art depicts him as Garundi,

some regional temples deviate from this by showing him as a member of a prominent local race, or even as an Azlanti.

Nethys is not known for showing favor or wrath to his followers or enemies in the form of divine intervention, a fact that many of his worshipers note with some pride. Though this self-important attitude does not endear them to members of other churches, it does reinforce the idea that Nethys doesn't care what they do with their magic as long as they are using it. Layfolk, especially peasants, believe that invoking his name may help to ward off curses, hexes, the evil eye, and other superstitions, though his utter disregard for those who do not practice magic means these invocations fall on deaf ears. The devout believe that manifestations of zones of unpredictable magic are the result of Nethys passing close to the Material Plane—though there is no confirmation of this from the god himself. Likewise, his church teaches that the manifestation of zones of "empty magic" (where magic simply doesn't function) are indications of his anger at someone or something in that area, though there is no evidence that this is true.

Formal ceremonies in the church require an elaborate robe, skullcap, mozzetta, and hood, all in similar colors (such as red, maroon, and burgundy); the particular color range is chosen by each temple. A two-colored face may be included as an insignia, or the mozzetta itself may be dark



“Magic is all things, and in all things. It is in the air, the stone, the flame, the water. It is time, space, and the void. It will nurture you, it will consume you, and always will it be your master.”

—The Book of Magic

on one side and light on the other. Because most priests focus their energies and interests on knowledge rather than fashion, many “ceremonial” robes are worn in other circumstances; an adventuring wizard or cleric’s battle robe may be the very same one she wears to the highest religious function, honoring the god by wearing a potent magic item. Skullcaps and hoods are popular among the faithful. Many priests tattoo their faces and hands on one side to match their god’s image; darker-skinned priests rub white ash or other irritants into their fresh tattoos or cuts to create white scars.

Nethys is neutral and his portfolio is magic. His weapon is the staff, usually represented as a magical artifact rather than a mundane weapon. His holy symbol is his face, half black and half white, which may be very detailed or abstracted to little more than a two-colored shield-shape with eyes. His domains are Destruction, Knowledge, Magic, Protection, and Rune. His clergy is nearly equally divided between arcane and divine spellcasters; almost all of the divine casters are clerics, and over two-thirds of the arcane casters are wizards.

A typical worshiper of Nethys is one who seeks magical knowledge or power, whether as a sorcerer, a wizard, an alchemist, or a mere scholar. Most couldn’t care less about politics, and are only interested in what power they can amass, whether that leads to riches or merely more power. Some are generous and willing to teach what they know, but many are the stereotypically jealous and paranoid practitioners who seclude themselves and guard their scraps of knowledge from all potential rivals.

Worship services vary from temple to temple, but usually include a weekly ceremony requiring chanting and spellcasting demonstrations. In many cases, the hymns are phonetic transcriptions of verbal components of spells favored by that temple, allowing the faithful to chant a representation of the words of power. Musical instruments are rarely part of services unless the temple has a bardic priest, though limited percussion involving the tapping of wands or stamping of staves is not unusual.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Overall, the church of Nethys tries to balance the god’s two aspects, but individual temples often focus on one particular kind of magic and draw worshipers interested in that type. Opposing temples might war on each other, but Nethys doesn’t care, just as he doesn’t care if a good temple siphons magic from evil items, locks them away, or converts them to a more benign use. A few temples alternate between the god’s aspects or directly oppose the actions of other temples to keep the balance. Specialized temples are usually named in an identifying way so visitors are fully aware of their natures. For example, a Numerian temple devoted to deciphering the magical properties of

starmetals may be called the Church of Skysteel, while a Gebbite temple studying necromancy may be called the Bone Cathedral.

Temples are often decorated in the same colors as those of the priests’ preferred ceremonial raiments, though they may just as easily be whitewashed, painted black, or left unmodified—aesthetics are secondary to the pursuit of magic. Any significant temple has at least one chamber set aside for the specific magic its inhabitants favor, such as a summoning circle for a temple of conjuration, an infirmary for a temple of healing, and so on; sometimes the true nature of a temple is a secret kept from the public, and this special chamber is hidden away so that no outsiders see it.

Once a year, the church demands of its priests a tithe of a minor magic item—such as a scroll or potion—that the temple can use or sell. Other priests (in hierarchal order) have the option to purchase these before layfolk or the public know about them; the temples do not want to become marketplaces sullied by the feet of the unworthy pecking at scraps of power discarded by the chosen elite.

A PRIEST’S ROLE

Any wielder of magic may become a priest of the church, whether she be a standard practitioner of spells or something more primitive or exotic like a hedge wizard, witch doctor, adept, or folk ritualist. Even an alchemist, paladin, or ranger could become a priest, though most of these folk follow other gods and their actual magic is internalized or very specialized. However, advancement in the clergy is based on power and magical knowledge, which means most practitioners of simpler magic can only aspire to low ranks in the church. Priests associated with Nethys’s temples are used to magical folk being in charge, and often make the mistake of barking orders in more egalitarian groups such as adventuring parties; independent priests are less likely to do this, though most do consider themselves superior to nonmagical folk.

Those without magic may work for the church, but are treated as second-class citizens (or even as expendable in the more evil temples); even a lowly apprentice who has only mastered a few cantrips has higher status in a temple than a master rogue or talented fighter. Most senior temple guards have at least one level in a magical class or have acquired (via a feat or special ritual) the ability to cast a few spells in order to gain some respect in the eyes of the priests and establish a firm seniority over the common guards. Even the newest recruits are trained in Spellcraft so they recognize and do not needlessly fear magic.

Priests tend to be very mercenary in their services. They craft and sell magical goods, advise nobles and merchants on how magic can improve their stations, hire themselves as bodyguards for ships or caravans, or act as battle-casters for armies or adventuring companies. Some tithe service to a

lord in exchange for property and a staff of peasants so they can focus on research. Others use their magic to entertain or swindle others. The only unifying feature of the followers of Nethys is an absolute love of magic. Some love the act of using magic, just as a master blacksmith loves shaping steel or a hedonist loves the act of sex. Others appreciate it as a tool of the highest quality, or even merely for the raw power it affords. The idea of conserving magic is ridiculous to them, and a member of the faith who refuses to use magic at an opportune time is considered suspect, if not cursed—much like the old adage of “never trust a skinny chef.”

Rank in the church is based on magical knowledge and power, with the former more important in benign temples and the latter more valued in malevolent ones. As masters of magic, priests are fully aware of the natural ranking of spell levels and caster levels and use this knowledge to quickly assess where someone fits in the pecking order. Individuals of a certain rank usually have one or more apprentices who have no status in the church until their master declares them sufficiently trained. Many young mages and clerics are recently graduated apprentices—or those whose masters died or cast them out for disobedience—hoping to use their meager knowledge to practice and learn more magic.

Priests have a limited role in most rural communities; unless the priests' focus is animals, crops, or healing, they have little reason to interact with common folk. Urban priests have stronger ties to locals, particularly those connected to construction, trade, and the exotic interests of nobles; even a small temple can support itself comfortably on such business. Temple priests always have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft, and depending on the temple's focus, they may also have ranks in Appraise, Heal, Intimidate, and Use Magic Device. Temple priests are addressed as “disciple,” “priest,” “brother,” or “sister,” depending on the speaker's familiarity with the priest (and the priest's gender). The head of a temple is usually just called “high priest,” though individual temples may use unique titles. Members of the faith who are not associated with a temple are usually called “acolyte,” “disciple,” or “master” depending on their apparent skill with magic; while it is not considered an insult to address a stranger by a lower-than-actual rank if the stranger isn't dressed according to his or her actual rank, persisting in this error after a correction is made is considered very rude, or could even be taken as a challenge.

HOLY TEXT

The official text of the church is *The Book of Magic*, a comprehensive guide for channeling magic and discussing the moral ramifications of its use and misuse (often taking opposing positions in the space of a few paragraphs). The information within the book is detailed enough that



someone with the proclivity for wizardry can, after reading it cover to cover, eventually come to understand the basics of a few cantrips; more than one great wizard has started out by reading a stolen copy of this book and using it as the foundation for decades of study and innovation.

APHORISMS

Given that Nethys knows more about magic than any being in the Outer Sphere, most of the aphorisms among his faithful refer to intimate knowledge of these studies and make little sense without similar understanding. A few even rely on word-play through phonetic pronunciations of certain magical runes that take on additional meaning in key languages. Two examples of this are as follows.

The Cube is the Red is the Sphere: This phrase requires an advanced level of magical knowledge to fully understand,

and refers to an intellectual test between three wizards in which one realizes the answer to a puzzle because the other two have not answered it. In casual use among the faithful, this phrase refers to finding an answer to a problem based on the failures of others, as well as transforming something worthless into something useful or valuable.

Point with the Finger of the Scorched Black Hand: While technically this refers to a somatic component of many spells, it is a reference to the will of Nethys (whose right hand is blasted with raw magic) indicating the path to learning. In the Draconic tongue, the words for “point with the finger” sound similar both to a related phrase (“seek the greater knowledge”) and (depending on the syllables stressed) to a vulgar suggestion. Members of the faith sometimes use this as a written catchphrase to indicate their divine allegiance. Apprentices snicker about it once they understand the colloquial Draconic translation.

HOLIDAYS

The month of Neth is named for the All-Seeing Eye. The church has three common holidays shared by all temples.

Abjurant Day: Occurring on 8 Neth, this is a day of working together to shore up mutual defenses and training friends and children in defensive magic. Benevolent casters traditionally use this day to test possible apprentices; evil casters do so as well, often by kidnapping prospective students and performing deadly tests to determine their readiness—or to eliminate potential rivals.

Evoking Day: 18 Neth is a day of magical fireworks displays, dueling (both mock and actual), and trading spells. In lands where Garundi people live, even commoners celebrate helpful magic by dancing with bright streamers and wearing black and white flowing robes (often designed to rise at the waist when the wearer spins).

Transmutatum: The 28th of Neth is a day of reflection and self-improvement. Some traditionalists believe it is fortuitous to begin researching spells or crafting difficult magic items on this day.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Although Nethys's madness makes it hard to keep him active in long-term plans, many deities rely upon his aid from time to time. In this way he is much like his martial counterpart, Gorum—indifferent to the ethics of an engagement and only concerned with his role and the use of his abilities. Despite his shattered mind, he is able to negotiate with other beings of similar power, and he does not unexpectedly turn on visitors or allies unless his omniscient senses reveal he is being threatened or double-crossed. Because Nethys supports the use of any magic, he might ally with anyone in the pantheon, supplying spells, magic items, or even raw magical power. Of course, he



knows better than to lend aid to agents of Rovagug if that assistance could free the Rough Beast, and is careful to limit these exchanges to minor spells and items; despite his destructive aspect, he does not wish the entire world ruined. Though other deities may assume his disdain for anything but knowledge and magic would make him ignore Gorum entirely, the Lord in Iron appreciates battle magic, and the two have a mutual appreciation for power and strategy. Irori is of special interest to Nethys because they are both ascended mortals, neither of whom used the *Starstone* “shortcut,” and because Irori’s perfection of his physical self transcends the divide between the extraordinary and supernatural; Nethys paradoxically wants to praise Irori for his achievement and tear him apart to figure out how he did it.

NEW SPELL

Sorcerers and wizards who worship the All-Seeing Eye may learn *imbue with spell ability* as a 4th-level spell, and bards may do so as a 3rd-level spell. Priests often use this spell to teach cantrip-level apprentices the feel of more powerful magic. Nethys’ followers are, however, forbidden from using *imbue with spell ability* (or similar spells that grant spellcasting abilities) on living targets that cannot normally cast spells or use spell-like abilities; it is considered an unworthy sharing of blessed magic. Clerics may prepare *arcane mark* as an orison. Clerics can prepare and bards can learn *arcane lock* as a 2nd-level spell, and clerics can prepare *fox’s cunning* as a 2nd-level spell. Clerics can prepare *permanency* as a 5th-level spell, and bards can learn it as a 4th-level spell.

In addition to *channel the gift* (see *Gods and Magic*), Nethys’s priests have access to the following spell.

FRACTIONS OF HEAL AND HARM

School transmutation; **Level** bard 3, cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 3 (Nethys)

Casting Time 1 swift action

Components V, S

Range personal

Target you

Duration instantaneous

This spell channels a portion of the next spell you cast into magic that heals you. The next instantaneous area damage spell you cast deals only 75% of its damage, but you heal hit points equal to the remaining 25% of the spell’s damage. For example, if you cast this spell and followed it with a *fireball* that would normally deal 40 hit points of damage, the *fireball* instead deals 30 hit points of damage and you heal 10 hit points. The spell affected by this spell must be cast before the end of the next round. This spell has no effect on spells that do not deal damage or spells higher than 3rd level. This healing is treated as if you had been affected by a cure or inflict spell (whichever would heal you), and is treated as the

CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Nethys’s priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells. Blink dogs can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*.

Summon Monster III

Blink dog*

Summon Monster V

Cloaker*

* This creature is summoned with the celestial template if you are good, or with the fiendish template if you are evil; you may choose either if you are neutral.

same spell level as the area-affecting spell for the purpose of effects that relate to the spell level of cure or inflict spells.

PLANAR ALLIES

The All-Seeing Eye’s divine servants are ascended mortals (uplifted to near-divine status by direct action of the god) and magical beings. Mirroring his many aspects, some of his minions are as nurturing as the most benign angels, while others are as murderous and destructive as the vilest fiends. Any mortal follower seeking their advice or assistance had best make sure the one she conjures has similar goals, lest the divine minion turn on her. Nethys’s herald is the Arcanotheign (see page 82), an incorporeal, woman-shaped cloud of black or white magical energy (depending on the god’s intentions for sending her) who can transform objects and shoot eldritch energy with various effects.

Bard: Perhaps the noblest of Nethys’s servants, this neutral good being resembles a trumpet archon wearing a two-colored silver mask. Skilled with any magic relating to sound, music, or rhythm, she uses the mask in place of a trumpet, projecting bolts of pure sonic energy with the power of her voice.

Takaral: Other than his white eyes and skeletal forearms, this neutral evil lich could pass as fully human. Knowledgeable in most arcane magic (especially necromancy), he is capable of blasting enemies into pieces smaller than dust, aided by a strange spherical device that allows him to create “holes” in the areas affected by his spells so as to avoid harming allies.

Yamasha: Sinfully beautiful, this hawk-winged neutral succubus-like creature is a master of conjuration and enchantment magic. When she answers a summons, she insists on an oath of service from the mortal conjurer, and offers him a single feather from her wing as a token of their agreement.



PLAGUE OF LIGHT: 5 OF 6

Justice in the Ruins

We approach the ruins of Kembe. I have tracked Mwonduk's kidnappers to its boundaries of crumbled stone.

Brachantes and Tarood have lost their retinue—torn to shreds by Arok, for their trespasses against nature. Stripped of servitors, they seek shelter here while they plot their next move.

Their weakened position cannot be taken for granted. Tarood's cousin, Verkusht, testifies to the slaver's abilities. His men used weird magics. We assume these were provided by Brachantes, and that he has other arcane surprises in store for us. If nothing more, he'll likely possess supernatural means to contact more of Tarood's men and effect a rescue from this place. This may be why they have chosen it: compared to trackless jungle, the ruins will be easy for reinforcements to find.

Even if we are lucky, and their threat has been spent, we must still retrieve the boy quickly. Every extra day we spend here is one in which the firefly plague continues to rage. There is no saying how many lives Brachantes will have cost, by delaying us as we take the boy to the temple of Kitumu.

There is no thinking of the fate that awaits him there. The boy is resigned to it. We serve nature, and this season it thirsts grimly for blood.

We will think, then, only of our task.
Only of our task.

It is our good fortune that Tarood made his escape from us alongside an outlander. A hardened slave-hunter, he knows movement in the jungle as well as any Zenj. But Brachantes errs as he journeys, leaving footprints in the

soft mud and breaking the stems of low bushes. Mwonduk may have tried to leave clues in his wake. Along the path I find shavings from a yam, which he had on him when he was taken. Most of these would be carried away by ants within moments of hitting the ground, but a few remain to keep us on the path.

And now we reach Kembe, hours behind them. We lost time as the spellcasters restored their magics. I would rest easier if I'd persuaded them to forge ahead regardless, but I have yet to hear an argument that would prompt a magician to head into danger without her hexes.

A sensible person does not head into Kembe on a whim. All the tribes know it as a place of bad luck and sudden doom. Yet I have been here before. So has Tarood, or so Verkusht claims.

"He sometimes keeps a holding pen here, when he captures more slaves than he can take home in one trip," the Bekyar says. "The locals don't like to come here, so that's good for, uh, slaving operations." He winces. Looks at me from the corner of his eye, to see if I could tell what he was about to say.

I can. He was about to say that's good for us. Had he a choice, he would still be a slaver.

Lianas and edgelines cover Kembe's gray stone walls. Great blocks of stone, hauled from distant quarries by means unknown, lie like fallen soldiers across its grassy landscape. Crumbled clods of masonry attach to them still. We pass through a stone gate, the top of its archway more than twenty feet above our heads. Vines reach down to brush at us; we part them like a curtain.

Kembe's remaining walls stand in three circles. The inner circle is the tallest, scaled for giants. We venture toward it, hacking our way through clinging bushes and dense stands of spear thistles, and come upon the second ring, the bones of a city built to human proportions. If we turned around and searched, I know, we would find the third ring that we passed over without noticing—a tiny version of the inner two cities, fading from halfling size into miniatures too small for use. You might think it an idol or model of the real cities, except that its crumbled hearths show the soot of ancient flames. Shattered pot shards, sized for beings no more than a foot in height, cover the floors of these tiny buildings.

Fragments of tile cling to the walls of all three cities—the giant, the man-sized, the shrunken. Some bear a script found only here. Figures appear on a few. They have the shapes of men, though with fewer fingers and curious heads. The heads may be headdresses; the hands might be drawn that way because it is easier than making four fingers and a thumb.

Some say that they were not human, nor were they elf, dwarf, or any other race still known. From these broken images, men have made a story to explain Kembe and its

vanished builders. They say that the Kembe came from the sky, riding silver chariots. Once here, they could not leave. Perhaps they lost the magic that propelled their sky vehicles. More likely, they broke taboos and were punished by the gods. Foreigners assume it was the Kembe's own gods the giants transgressed against. The locals say it was ours.

Either way, the Kembe shrank. They stopped being giants, and became merely men. They rebuilt their city to suit their reduced stature. For many more years they must have survived at this height. Then they shrank again, to become the beings occupying the last, tiny city on the outer edges.

They shrank one last time, the story says, until they fell between the cracks of this earth, into another, smaller world, where perhaps they dwell today. Sometimes you'll hear that they came not in silver chariots from the sky, but fell like rain, having lived once in another, larger world, where they were bigger than anything this one could hold.

When this tale is told, it is always as a warning. Behave rightly, it says. Obey the gods, upholding their taboos. Do not be like the Kembe, or you and yours will shrink to nothing and vanish from sight. People like the story this way. The Kembe deserved what they got, it says. We can avoid their fate through rightful action.

But when I see the Kembe ruins, I think they were like any people. Some good, a few bad, most in between. Yet still they were doomed, because the world devours.

They were doomed as Mwonduk is doomed. Through no misdeed of his own, and for reasons we can never exactly find. When it is over, Obai will try to make sense of it. She will talk of balance restored and cosmic this and cosmic that.

That is, if we succeed in getting him back at all. If not, there will also be doom. It will be of a different sort, and suffered by many instead of one. Still, the world will devour, and from a big enough distance—from the giant height of the original Kembe, perhaps—it will be the same one way as the other.

My dark thoughts seem to leap across to Sunasuka. Or perhaps it is her melancholy, dimly sensed, that sets me to brooding. The halfling has a gourd of mash—how she saved it for this long I cannot guess—and now swigs deep from it, muttering. "I don't like this place," she says.

"Put that down," Katiwa hisses.

"I don't like this mission," Sunasuka says, a little louder.

We cling to the sides of an ancient wall. Above us jut the remains of broken steps, and atop the wall is a high walkway. As Sunasuka stomps and grumbles, I wrestle with a thought: if the Kembe were giants, who did they have to build giant walls against?

"What are we doing?" the halfling grunts. Without our noticing, she has made herself very drunk. "We aren't hunting the evil ones. We *are* the evil ones!" She spins to face us, face red and bleary. "They're saving the boy. We want to take him to his death."

Obai holds up placating hands. "You know why we must."

Sunasuka turns away. "I know why we have to, but none of you can make me like it!" She finishes the rest of her gourd and tosses it aside. It lands on a fallen stone with a resounding crack. "If we're to be slaughterers of children, let's at least do it quick and get it over with!" She bounds heedlessly through the choking vegetation and around eroding blocks. Her voice bounces off the walls, collides with itself, growing louder as she forges on.

We have no choice but to chase our drunken druid. We bound after her.

Behind us, in the spot where we had just been standing, lands a vast chunk of stone. Its impact throws up a shower of dirt and pulverized vine leaves. A fine snow of powdered mortar dusts down after it. The stone occupies a wide crater.

***"When Tarood dies,
not even his wives
will mourn."***



Had we not run after our impetuous ally, all of us would have been crushed.

Above us, behind a fresh, yawning hole in the wall defenses, lurks the slaver captain, Tarood.

Verkusht launches himself at the wall. Deftly grabbing at its ragged handholds, he scampers up toward his kinsman. "Snake! Betrayer!" he cries. "Too much the coward to meet us face on?"

The Bekyar captain laughs. "Coward? You're one to talk, Verkusht! When did you ever kill a man, except when his back was turned?" With slow confidence he draws a bow from his pack.

"Whatever I may or may not have been forced to do, I have done to survive." Verkusht clammers sideways, zigzagging up the wall with surprising speed. "I'm not the one who extracts a thick, greasy thrill from the infliction of pain."

Tarood speeds his actions. He fumbles his arrow as he draws it. "I do what I must to enrich our clan," he snarls.

Verkusht pauses, hanging precariously from one hand, to whoop and chortle. "Is that how you think others see you, Tarood? Everyone knows you'd sooner stick a knife in a man than bed a woman!"

Tarood fires an arrow. Despite the seeming ease of the shot, it flies far wide of the mark. "You dare speak to me thus? I am clan-captain. You stole from your own."

Verkusht has taken the time to zip several yards higher. "Yes, Tarood, and were I to return, they'd take more than my hand this time."

Another arrow flies. It hits closer to the mark, but is still a wild, careless miss. "You made yourself doubly a pariah when you had it reattached!"

Verkusht crabs his way closer to his target. "Indeed, and if I did go home, as our kinfolk burned me alive or had me quartered by galloping horses, they'd shed a tear at my demise. Whereas you, for all the gold you bring them, the perfumes you douse them in, all the glory and wealth—no one likes you, Tarood."

He swings wide to dodge a third arrow. For a moment, he seems suspended in air, then finds his handhold again. The creaking sound of bending cartilage accompanies him as he retains his hold on the wall. "The day you die, all due ceremonies will be held in your honor. You'll be remembered as a hero and a shrewd man with a coin. But no one will weep for you. Your brothers will vie for your title. Your wives will drink tea and wipe their brows in relief."

Verkusht has nearly reached the top now. Tarood drops his bow and quiver. He draws his scimitar. It flashes angrily in the sunlight.

"You've flung your last insult, clown," Tarood says, through clenched teeth.

Verkusht reaches the crumbled battlement and struggles to find purchase.

“That’s you, Verkusht. Full of defiance and bravado, until the time comes to win. Then you falter.”

Mortar turns to sand under Verkusht’s clawing fingers. Tarood raises his scimitar, ready to chop at them.

Tarood’s tongue darts snake-like between salivating lips. “Wheedle and beg, Verkusht. Do as you always do. Wheedle and beg.”

Verkusht hugs the battlement, wincing. “Listen, there’s something you need to know about the boy.”

Tarood leans back to enjoy his victory. “Always something to offer at the last moment, eh, Verkusht? Well, this time it will avail you not. Let’s start with that hand which is supposed to be severed.”

He raises his blade.

The blue point of Katiwa’s jagged harpoon pricks the back of Tarood’s neck. She commands him to drop the scimitar. It rattles to the stone catwalk.

Verkusht stoops to seize it up. He pauses to admire the expensive giltwork on its curved pommel before stashing it in his belt. “That’s the difference between you and me, Tarood,” he says. “I have comrades. They may not respect me, and half the time they don’t trust me at all. But they are friends and I can count on them nonetheless.”

Someone must guard the prisoner; Katiwa claims the right. Verkusht agrees with surprising ease. “Couldn’t trust myself with him,” he mutters.

“I can restore your position in the clan,” Tarood says to him. “Pronounce you redeemed, as is my captain’s right.”

“Who’s the clown now, always with the last humiliating negotiation?” says Verkusht, his tone curiously flat.

“Brachantes has the boy?” I ask him. “Tell us where.”

“What consideration will you grant?” Tarood asks.

“When I was the prisoner and you the captor, I was tortured and threatened with worse,” I observe.

Tarood shrugs. “He is in the place that it would make sense to be.”

“In a building in the middle circle?”

The slaver nods.

“Is there a landmark?”

He looks at Verkusht. “If I were a betrayer who wheedles to survive... but find it yourselves. Then boasts will be tested, and true measures taken.”

“What do you mean by that?”

Tarood says nothing else.

We find Brachantes waiting for us, outside one of the few intact Kembe buildings of the middle city. The structure is round and topped with a conical roof, like a curing hut of the Ikihing or Hatangu. Where theirs are made from reeds and planks, this is built from piled and mortared stone. Even the odd sloping shingles on its roof are of solid rock.

Brachantes stands amid a circular patch of browned and flattened vegetation. Acrid steam rises from the freshly cleared earth. He has used the magical liquid Tarood’s slavers used to array the jungle trees against us, or something like it, to clear the ground for battle. Yet he carries no weapon, either in his hand or in his belt. Feet apart, head cocked, he greets us, smiling like a child with a secret.

Mwonduk kneels nearby. A leather collar has been wrapped around his neck. A short length of leash attaches the collar to a wooden stake, which has been driven deep into the ground. The boy could not stand if he wanted to. His arms are tied behind his back. Relief strikes me when I see that he bears no signs of injury. His head is bowed in shame. At the sound of our approach, he looks up. Hope comes suddenly upon him.

Brachantes offers him slavery; we, death. The boy has chosen us.

“You have Tarood?” Brachantes asks.

Having met the northerner before, I am the one who speaks for the group. “Yes. Give us the boy, and we will help you to a place of safety, if you desire it. Or we will leave you supplies to wait for more of Tarood’s men to come and get you. Whichever you prefer.”

“I present a counteroffer. Turn your backs now, admit yourselves outmatched, and I will not harm you.”

“You speak confidently for a weaponless man.”

“My weapons are far away from here, on my island. Yet if you take one further step against me, you will feel their sting all the same.”

“Your threat is unconvincing.”

“Trust me when I say this, jungle man: you do not want to see a demonstration.”

Verkusht reaches for his dagger, Obai for her double-faced holy symbol.

Brachantes addresses the others. “The Zenj is a stubborn man. I sense that he nurses a grudge against me, because he dislikes the company I keep. Fair enough. Also, he lost friends in the so-called plague, and thus lacks perspective. The rest of you, I will assume, are sensible persons and open to a fair offer.”

“Talk as long as you want,” says Obai. She means for him to reveal more of the invisible weapons with which he threatens us. Or so I trust.

“Balance priestess, what is it to you that a few have died from this firefly plague, and that a few more might do so until the boy is well away from here? These jungles are a place of rot and pestilence. In the cosmic scheme of things, what matter is one more plague?”

Obai presents him with both sides of her mouth, the frown and the grin, and remains inscrutable.

“Verkusht, with your cousin a captive, it seems that the position of captain might be made available to a man of ambition.”



The Bekyar snorts. "Maybe he didn't tell you, but my clan and I are not on friendly terms."

"Your clan is a family, but also a commercial enterprise. They will present no objections that money can't fix."

Verkusht strokes his beard as if contemplating a deal. "Let's imagine that their vision of profit and loss aligns with yours. You have no similar inducement to offer my friends here."

"Then step away. Or better yet, fight by my side when they prove intransigent."

"That would be my last chance with them, I'm afraid."

"Who counts for more? Your clan, or these mighty ragamuffins?"

Verkusht chucks his head from side to side. Weighing options.

"Halfling. I didn't know what to dangle before you, until I saw you gaze upon the boy just now. You don't want him dead. Still you hope for his salvation. Yet he lives only if I am allowed to take him. You're on my side already, you just haven't admitted it to yourself. Fight for his life, world-priestess. Follow your heart."

Sunasuka wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

Brachantes turns to Arok. "Ape-man, of all the so-called Scarred Ones, only you are of genuine interest to me. I offer you what I offer the child—a place in my sanctuary. All the fruit you can eat. Or meat, if that's what you fancy. A life led in comfort and free from fear."

Arok charges him.

The outlander braces for the impact as the gorilla barrels his way. Around him, the air pops and shimmers. A crackling hiss rises from Brachantes' flesh, and the taste of metal hangs in the back of my throat.

Arok swipes at Brachantes. Between the launching of the blow and its landing, Brachantes changes. His skin turns to stone. A terrible crunch resounds as the bones of Arok's mighty fist break against his granite flesh. Brachantes' stone fist catches Arok under the chin. The ape staggers back. Brachantes seizes him, hurling the gorilla who outweighs me by double or triple dozens of feet behind us. Arok lands with a thud on the collapsed remains of a Kembe wall.

"What is he?" I ask Obai, as we run toward the outlander.

"I don't know," she says, calling the dark touch of divine death-dealing into her hand. Her fingers curl into a claw, wreathed by swirling brimstone.

The ripple of disturbed space again surrounds Brachantes' body. Stone flesh melts back into skin and bone. Leather wings sprout from his shoulders. Obai swipes at him with her deathly hand, but he rises into the air, leaving her leaping fruitlessly up at him. I poise my spear for throwing.

A tail appears to twist itself around Brachantes' rising body. From its bulbous end sprout dozens of spikes. The

bulb points at us; spikes fly through the air. They hit both Obai and me. We lurch back, pierced in the arms and chest.

Flying daggers volley at Brachantes, slicing the membranes of his freshly grown wings. He judders down. Again comes the rippling air, the crackling hiss, the tang of metal in the back of the throat. New wings replace the old; black reptilian scales rise to blot out mammalian skin. He opens his throat. A belch of acid rains down on us. The stink of vomit coats my burning, bubbling skin. I glance back; Verkusht and Sunasuka have been hit, too.

I look to the boy: Brachantes has aimed his spray to miss him. Mwonduk hides his face in the crook of his arm. He weeps, shaking.

Arok has also been spared, but lies unmoving on his pile of old stones.

Sunasuka, her hide tunic still smoking, steps forward to invoke nature's power. The flying, reptilian Brachantes shudders in midair. He shrinks, transformed by her magic into a shrew. As a small gray rodent, he drops to the ground.

The halfling surges ahead, ready to stomp the shrew with her pan-like feet. An electric crackle surrounds it as Brachantes shakes off the forced shape-change. He rises as a column of flame and wraps burning limbs around Sunasuka's throat.

I dash around this new fiery form to plunge a spear into the back of its head. Heat radiates from it. The hairs on my arm withdraw into curls and drop off, singed.

Obai swings at the fiery Brachantes with her iron-shod club. Its head, cast with Nethys's mocking and mourning faces, swipes deep into the flame-form. It reels, momentarily dissipated. As it comes back together, the crackling aura returns. When Brachantes reforms, it is no longer as a creature of flame, but as himself—except that now patches of his skin are carpeted with a tiger's striped fur.

A lightning bolt bursts forth from Brachantes' palm, which is half hand, half paw. It arcs into me, knocking me back, then sizzles into Sunasuka, who has dropped to her knees, and to Verkusht, behind her.

Obai is left as the only combatant standing against him. "I know what you're doing," she shouts, as she aims a club blow against the outlander's head. It bounces off, striking a shimmering helmet of translucent arcane armor.

"Congratulations!" Brachantes roars, baring tiger fangs.

"Your distant menagerie—you're drawing power from the creatures imprisoned there," Obai says, as she and her foe circle one another, seeking openings to strike. Claws descend from the outlander's partly furred fingers. "You have a dragon there, yes? And a stone golem, a fire elemental, a rakshasa..."

Brachantes' answer is a feline grin. "Wait till you see the next one."

"This is why you want the boy?"

I stagger forward, chest blackened and blistered. Obai scoffs at him. "Idiot! What power do you hope to leech from one cursed by a god?"

"You are the fool, priestess." Brachantes rakes her with his claws. "The boy isn't accursed. He is god-touched. Through him I can gain the power of a god. Perhaps, in time, become one myself! And none of you pathetic specimens will interfere."

A square-cut boulder of Kembe stone comes crashing onto the back of his skull. Arok stands behind him, having crept silently up as Obai's words distracted his target.

Brachantes' legs buckle. His tiger features blur into something else as he weaves over scorched ground.

Arok raises a paw to smash at him again, but I give the signal and he follows—we are all badly hurt. Only the spirits know what powers the outlander will next summon. We will take the boy and flee, while Brachantes remains addled.

Verkusht slashes Mwenduk's leash. He dips to lift the boy into his arms, but Mwenduk runs ahead, faster than any of us. I pull Sunasuka to her feet. She blinks, dazed; the lightning strike has left a spreading bruise across her chest.

With an eye cast back to Brachantes and his still-changing form, we cut a maze-like path through the confusing shelter of Kembe's walls.

Katiiwa hears us coming. When she tells it later, she will say that she hears Mwenduk's voice. It tells us that the rest of us have no further need of Tarood, and that she may now do what she has come for.

"Do you know of me?" she asks Tarood.

Her voice startles him. She has stood silent watch over him since we left. "Know of you?"

"Your clan has been searching for Verkusht. Have you learned about those who sometimes travel with him?"

"The so-called Scarred Ones?" he laughs. "You flatter yourself. There are more profitable occupations than seeking gossip on misfit mercenaries."

"I thought as much."

"Is that supposed to mean something?"

"If you knew of us, you'd be nervous."

"Nervous?"

"To be left with me."

He sweats the same way his cousin does. Beads of it bloom on his forehead, a mass of them all together.

"What should I know about you?"

"That I am Katiwa, of the Azure Harpoon. That the blood of a demon flows in my veins. That it hungers, and that I feed it on the souls of the justly slain. That the world needs executioners, and I am one."

His fine complexion turns to mottled ash. "The name... is familiar now that you say it." He turns to face her, begging with wrists bound. "There is no justice in slaying me... a helpless prisoner... in cold blood..."

"Four years ago, you ordered an attack on the village of the Waliyo people. You took their young men. You took their young women. Your clan stole their prince, their princesses, their apprentice spirit-talkers. Those who opposed you were slain. So were children, and old people, who merely annoyed you. Or who you thought it pleasurable to harm."

"Do not listen to my cousin's lies about me."

"It is not from Verkusht that this testimony comes. It is from those who were once Waliyo. Who can no longer call themselves by that name, because so many of the Waliyo were taken that their tribe cannot continue. The few survivors have toiled ever since to afford my modest fee. You slew an entire people. Now, in their name, I do the same to you."

He is still imploring when the Azure Harpoon pierces his throat.

Katiiwa throws her head back; the demon inside her drinks its fill.



"Brachantes' arrogance knows no bounds."



BESTIARY

AND TO THE BOWL OF DARK WORKS CAME ADDER AND ASP, KRAIT AND MAMBA, RATTLER AND VIPER, AND SO COMMENCED TO DANCE. UPON HER GREAT BLACK BELLY MOTHER WIDOW KEPT THE TIME, AND TO THE REVEL HER THOUSAND DAUGHTERS BROUGHT DRAUGHTS FROM DISTANT LANDS: THE SCORPION'S MILK, THE SEA RAY'S TEARS, THE LAND DRAGON'S DROOL, AND MORE, AND MORE, AND MORE. THROUGHOUT THE MOONLESS NIGHT, THE SNAKE KINGS DANCED AND THE SPIDERS POURED ON THEIR GIFTS. AND IN THE MORNING, WHEN THE GODS LOOKED DOWN, THE SNAKES HAD A NEW LORD: LUKWATA, POISON'S PRINCE.

—FROM THE TALES OF THE ZENJ

The snaking horrors of the serpent world and beings both inspired and possessed by magic overrun this month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary. From denizens of the swiftly flowing waters and hidden pools of the Mwangi's depths to primal powers presided over by Nethys, god of magic, ancient dangers creep forth to be featured in this month's delve into the deadly dark.

AMBUSHES IN ILMUREA

The wreckage of the vast underground city of Ilmurea sprawls before the PCs in this month's adventure. Yet serpentfolk are far from the only creatures that slink through the crushing shadows of that nighted city. Intellect devourers, morlocks, urdefhans, and worse creep through the buried metropolis, waging unseen wars far from the world of light. As the adventurers journey into this subterranean war zone, they find themselves caught between multiple factions eager to employ them as pawns, crush them as trespassers, or consume them as prey. How the PCs contend in this new wilderness largely depends on how they make their way through the city and whose—or what's—attention they attract.

While the specifics of the city and its occupants are presented earlier in this volume, GMs might add any of the following ambushes as random encounters during the course of the game. Alongside ravenous monsters of the deep, patrols of organized subterranean dwellers prowl the city, guarding territories and pursuing unknowable agendas of dark masters. As such, in addition to the monsters presented on the Ambushes in Ilmurea random encounter table, the PCs might also run afoul of any of the following groups of Darklands dwellers.

MORLOCK VESSELS

Intellect devourers invade not just the borders of Ilmurea but also the minds of their savage slaves. In their explorations, the PCs might encounter a pair of strangely lucid morlocks serving as hosts for exploring intellect devourers. Given the opportunity, the intellect devourers would much prefer to inhabit slaves from the surface world rather than their current degenerate bodies. This encounter is CR 12.

MORLOCK VESSELS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 127 each (see page 19)

INTELLECT DEVOURERS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 84 each (see page 20)

URDEFHAN AIR PATROL

Despite the countless tons of crushing rock precariously hanging above the spires of Ilmurea, not all the denizens

Ambushes in Ilmurea

d% roll	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–6	1 cloaker infiltrator	9	see page 19
7–16	4d6 morlocks	9	Bestiary 209
17–21	1 bebilith	10	Bestiary 32
22–29	6d6 morlocks	10	Bestiary 209
30–36	2d6 skavelings	10	see page 27
37–42	1d4 urdefhan guards	10	see page 25
43–46	1d4 black puddings	11	Bestiary 35
47–52	1 vagabond spider	11	see page 16
53–57	2 morlock vessels	12	see text
58–64	1 roper	12	Bestiary 237
65–69	1 iron golem	13	Bestiary 162
70–74	Urdefhan air patrol (4 members)	13	see text
75–78	1d8 gugs	14	see page 15
79–82	1d8 giant morlocks	14	see page 32
83–86	Urdefhan air patrol (6 members)	14	see text
87–90	6 serpentfolk guards	14	see text
91–95	1 vemerak	14	see page 13
96–98	1 neothelid	15	Bestiary 214
99–100	8 serpentfolk guards	15	see text

of that shadowed cavity crawl through the smothering darkness. On the tattered wings of rangy skavelings soar urdefhan hunters, guarding the depths against any who dare intrude upon their savage realm. Four skavelings and four riders make a CR 13 encounter, while six skavelings and six riders make a CR 14 encounter.

SKAVELINGS (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 58 each (see page 27)

URDEFHAN GUARDS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 104 each (see page 25)

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS

The masters of Ilmurea, the serpentfolk guard their ancient city against all who would disrupt their ageless plan. While the grandest of their kind work foul magic in the palace-tombs of their people, through the streets creep their debased brethren, assuring that no eye falls upon their lords' works until it's too late. Bands of these degenerate serpentfolk attack all not of their ilk they discover trespassing in Ilmurea. A group of six serpentfolk guards makes a CR 14 encounter, while eight serpentfolk guards make a CR 15 encounter.

SERPENTFOLK GUARDS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 111 each (see page 37)



ARCANOTHEIGN

This woman-shaped cloud of swirling black-and-white energy flickers like lightning, with raw magical power playing about her fingertips.

ARCANOTHEIGN CR 15 

XP 51,200

N Medium outsider (extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +12; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., arcane sight 120 ft.; Perception +26

Aura energy channel (10 ft., DC 27)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 27, flat-footed 18 (+8 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 207 (18d10+108)

Fort +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18; +2 resistance vs. chaos/evil/good/law

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, adaptive life force; **Immune** poison, **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, divine power 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30; **SR** 31

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 incorporeal touches +26 (4d6 plus energy channel)

Ranged 2 eldritch blasts +26 ranged touch (4d6 plus special)

Special Attacks alter objects

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +26)

Constant—*arcane sight*, *comprehend languages*, *protection from chaos/evil/good/law*

At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *telekinesis* (combat maneuver or sustained force only)

3/day—*cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, *cure critical wounds*, *fireball*, *inflict critical wounds*, *lightning bolt*, *quicken telekinesis* (combat maneuver or sustained force only), *scrying*

1/day—*harm*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *plane shift*

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 27, **Con** 22, **Int** 31, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 27

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 45

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*telekinesis*), Spell Penetration

Skills Craft (alchemy) +31, Diplomacy +26, Fly +37, Heal +23, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (planes) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Linguistics +28, Perception +26, Perform (sing) +26, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +29, Use Magic Device +37;

Racial Modifiers +8 Use Magic Device

Languages Abyssal, Ancient Osiriani, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Protean; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ corporeal form

ECOLOGY

Environment any (extraplanar)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Life Force (Su) When subject to any effect, the Arcanotheign is always treated as the most favorable alignment subtype pertaining to that effect (for example, if in the area of a *holy smite*, the Arcanotheign counts as a good creature, which means she takes no damage from the spell). Though she is a living creature (for the purpose of harmless spells such as *deathwatch* and *detect undead*), she counts as either a living creature or an undead creature, depending on which outcome is more favorable to her (for example, rendering her immune to both *circle of death* and *undeath to death*).

Alter Objects (Su) At will, the Arcanotheign can transmute nonliving objects into different shapes (as *fabricate*), transform solid materials into other materials (such as wood into stone or stone into metal), or imbue physical objects with temporary life (as *animate objects*). These transformations last 1 minute before reverting to their previous state, though the herald can extend this duration as long as she concentrates and remains within 1,000 feet of the transformed object. When animating objects, she prefers to create lifelike animals out of earth, stone, or wood, and can sustain up to four Large creatures at a time (treat as normal animals, except the animal's natural armor increases by +5, its type changes to "construct," and it gains construct immunities). The Arcanotheign must be within 100 feet of the object to use this ability, and can only maintain one type of transformation (alter shape, alter material, or animate objects) at a time.

Corporeal Form (Ex) As an immediate action, the Arcanotheign can take physical form, losing her incorporeal special quality and subtype and her deflection bonus to AC, but gaining a Strength score of 20 and a natural armor bonus equal to her normal deflection bonus. She can remain in this form indefinitely or revert to her incorporeal state as a free action (this happens automatically if she is knocked unconscious). This ability allows her to pretend to be a mortal and physically manipulate objects. In this form she looks like a tall woman with pale, gray, or black skin.

Eldritch Blast (Su) The Arcanotheign's ranged touch attacks are incorporeal touch attacks that deal 4d6 points of damage and an additional effect chosen by the herald. A saving throw (DC 25) negates the additional effect (the exact type of save depends on what effect the herald chooses); a creature hit by two blasts in the same round suffers an increased effect if it fails both its saves against the eldritch blasts. The possible effects are the following:

Bleed (Fortitude): The creature takes 10 points of bleed damage. **Increased effect:** The creature is disintegrated.

Dement (Will): The creature is confused for 1 minute.

Increased effect: The creature goes insane (as *insanity*).

Displace (Fortitude): The creature teleports (as *dimension*

door) 5 feet in a random horizontal direction at the end of its turn each round for the next 10 rounds. *Increased effect:* The creature is banished as if under the effect of a *maze* spell.

Ignite (Reflex): The creature takes 2d6 points of fire damage. *Increased effect:* The creature catches on fire, taking 4d6 points of fire damage every round on the herald's turn for the next 10 rounds. The DC to extinguish the flames is equal to the save DC of the eldritch blast.

Paralyze (Will): The creature is paralyzed as if by *hold monster*. *Increased effect:* The creature is slowed (as *slow*) when the paralysis ends or is broken.

Energy Channel Aura (Su) The Arcanotheign's aura is charged with energy, whether acid, cold, electricity, fire, negative, or positive. The herald can change the energy type, suppress her aura, or reactivate her aura once per round on her turn as a free action. If the energy is positive or negative, it acts like channeled energy from a cleric, and the herald decides the effect of the channel (positive energy could heal living creatures or harm undead; negative energy could heal undead or harm living creatures). The aura's effect is always 2d6 hit points (Reflex DC 25 negates). A creature that is struck by the herald's incorporeal touch attack takes this damage in addition to the normal touch attack damage, and it gets no saving throw against this extra damage. The herald can use her Selective Channel feat to exclude creatures from the effect of her aura, regardless of the aura's energy type.

Resistance to Divine Power (Su) The Arcanotheign has resistance 30 against damage caused by divine power, such as the non-fire damage from a *flame strike* spell.

The Arcanotheign is a mysterious creature serving the mad god Nethys. Because her creator sends her to Golarion on missions to heal, destroy, or spy, she is familiar with creatures of the mortal world, yet still very much an outsider, and she is fascinated by the intricacies of mortal interactions and history. In her natural, incorporeal form, she is a storm of magic, immediately recognizable as a creature of the arcane and divine. Ever curious, she often asks personal, direct questions of those she is

sent to interact with, even as she repairs their wounds or tears their souls from their bodies. Sometimes she is told to assume a physical form, and lives among humanoids as a mysterious oracle for days or weeks, observing those near her and giving cryptic answers to those who dare approach her. She stands just over 7 feet tall, and has a habit of floating a few inches above the ground instead of walking.

ECOLOGY

The Arcanotheign understands she is foreign to mortal life and mortal needs. She enjoys experiencing new aromas and tastes; someone wishing to get on her good side should bring her strongly scented flowers, a tasty meal, or some other physical object that may be new to her experience, even if humans would think it stinks or is inedible. She is interested in animals, and if she spends much time in the same place, she may "adopt" those living near her, especially orphaned ones. Some in the church suspect that her attention can cause mutations in these creatures, either directly or in its offspring, creating strange hybrids or magical creatures. The Arcanotheign has a lesser interest in children, though if a lost child finds its way to her, she is more likely to protect it or return it home than to ignore or harm it. Some of these children develop sorcerous power, typically with the arcane or destined bloodline.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

As a supernatural creature created in a moment of lucidity by an insane, omniscient god, the Arcanotheign is often left to her own devices when her master does not need her, and wanders Golarion and the planes searching for new sensations and meaning to her existence and that of the multiverse. She is a lonely creature and welcomes those who would speak to her as part of a normal conversation rather than an attempt to get information from her. Her affection for animals is related to this; they are simple creatures who make no demands of her, and her habit of animating giant bears, lions, and other animals out of earth, stone, or wood represents her respect for animals she has known in the past ages.



SERPENT'S SKULL

INKANYAMBA

This monstrous serpent rises to a great height, unfurling an opalescent hood the size of a tower shield. Swaying from side to side, the creature drops open its elongated jaw to reveal an assortment of different-sized fangs. As it hisses, lightning slashes the storm-gray sky behind it.

INKANYAMBA

CR 13



XP 25,600

CE Gargantuan magical beast

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; scent, venomsense; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +18 natural, -4 size)

hp 178 (17d10+85)

Fort +15; **Ref** +15; **Will** +10

DR 10/magic; **Immune** electricity, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +25 (4d8+12 plus grab and poison), tail slap +20 (3d8+6)

Special Attacks breath weapon, constrict (4d8+12), hypnotic sway, protean venom

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th)

1/day—*call lightning* (DC 18), *control weather*

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +33(+37); **CMD** 47

Feats Awesome Blow, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack

Skills Climb +23, Intimidate +12 Perception +16, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +0, Swim +33

Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

SQ hold breath

ECOLOGY

Environment tropical rivers and lakes

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds, an inkanyamba can spit a 60-foot line of venom at its foes as a standard action. Any creatures struck must make a DC 23 Reflex save or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage and be blinded for 1d6 rounds. A successful save halves the Constitution damage (minimum 1 point) and negates the blindness.

Hold Breath (Ex) An inkanyamba can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 times its Constitution score before it risks drowning or suffocating.

Hypnotic Sway (Su) As a full-round action, an inkanyamba can unfurl its hood and sway back and forth. Any non-mindless creature within 30 feet that views an inkanyamba's hypnotic sway must make a DC 23 Will save or be fascinated for 1d4 rounds. Any attack by the inkanyamba breaks the fascination effect. Any creature that successfully saves or has the fascination effect broken cannot be affected by the same inkanyamba's hypnotic sway for 24 hours.

Poison (Ex) An inkanyamba's body contains a host of different venoms. Once per round as a swift action, it can change which ability score its poison affects.

Vacillating Venom: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 23; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds, *effect* 1d4 ability damage, *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Venomsense (Ex) An inkanyamba that makes physical contact with a living creature through either its bite, tail slap, or constriction ability gains an automatic knowledge of the target's ability scores, allowing the inkanyamba to better use its protean venom on its victims.

Sometimes called elder serpents, inkanyambas are enormous, malevolent snake-like creatures that dwell in tropical lakes and deep jungle rivers. Measuring over 60 feet long and weighing nearly 3,000 pounds, an inkanyamba resembles a dense snake with a vaguely crocodilian head,



filled with multiple sets of fangs of varying lengths. Its long body is covered in multicolored scales that range from emerald green to golden and even vermilion. Males have larger hoods than females, who also have small, pointed frills running the length of their bodies.

Inkanyambas live for centuries; their maximum possible lifespan is unknown.

ECOLOGY

Larger than the biggest constrictors and possessing more venom than a hundred asps, the inkanyamba combines the deadliest and most efficient predatory traits of serpentkind with a diabolical intelligence. Able to attack from the water or the land, an inkanyamba is always the top predator in its region, capable of devouring prey as large and formidable as rhinos, dire crocodiles, and even elephants. Sages once thought that the inkanyamba's elongated head was evidence of the creature being crossed with some other species, suggesting magic in the inkanyamba's origin. In reality, the inkanyamba's long skull is necessary to house the numerous glands storing the creature's venom. Once thought to be a shifting, mutating poison, the inkanyamba actually carries several different toxins in its body, each type linked to a different set of fangs within the creature's mouth. Making this ability even more potent, all inkanyambas have a latticework of small sensory organs inside their mouths and throughout their bodies in the small spaces between scales. When an inkanyamba makes physical contact with a living creature, these sensory organs detail the target's physiology in a manner that allows the inkanyamba to know which of its many types of venom would be deadliest. Additionally, special ducts on the inside of the inkanyamba's frontmost fangs allow the creature to spray goutts of venom up to great distances. Although an inkanyamba can only spit a single life-sapping venom, this spray needs only to make contact with a target to take effect and can blind victims caught in its blast.

Even without their fabled variety of poisons, inkanyambas are capable predators. When an inkanyamba unfurls its massive hood and sways back and forth, a scintillating pattern of multi-hued scales on the inside of the creature's neck can cause a hypnotic state in those that observe it. Inkanyambas often use this ability to approach targets on land or when confronted with multiple enemies. Once a target has been bitten, an inkanyamba can throw the rest of its body forward like a coiled rope, biting and then wrapping the victim in the creature's crushing body.

Inkanyambas dwell near large lakes and deep rivers. Such locations not only allow them to attack from the cover of water, but inkanyambas also lair in underwater caves where pockets of air have become trapped. Such nests are inaccessible to most intruders and allow the great serpents to slumber safely after gorging themselves.

Inkanyamba in Mythology

The inkanyamba is a lake-dwelling creature in Zulu mythology believed to exclusively inhabit the lake at the base of the Howick Falls in South Africa. Folklore describes it as a massive serpent with a long, horse-shaped head, though some legends claim it has more than one. Local sangomas or witchdoctors were the only people allowed to approach the inkanyamba's home for fear of waking the creature's wrath. Said to bring the summer storms, when angry, the inkanyamba supposedly flies from its home on the backs of clouds and even tornados to destroy huts and houses. Zulu witchdoctors appeased the inkanyamba with prayers, offerings, and even living sacrifices of other tribe members. Although sightings of the creature are circumstantial at best, some scientists think that the inkanyamba's legend was inspired by local eel populations in the Umgeni River. Nevertheless, some local inhabitants still keep daily rituals aimed at appeasing the great serpent.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Inkanyambas are solitary creatures except for the brief couplings that occur during mating. They favor areas that are populated by both animal life and human settlements. Pathfinders chronicling the history of the Mwangi Expanse have recounted instances of human and lizardfolk tribes alike revering inkanyambas as gods. In such cases, the monsters use their ability to control the weather and call up storms to create false portents that instill awe in the local inhabitants, extorting offerings and even living sacrifices from their terrified "subjects."

Cruel, malicious, and accustomed to being worshiped, inkanyambas are likely to attack anything they perceive as a threat. When facing well-prepared or powerful opponents, inkanyambas retreat deep beneath the closest body of water to exert their control over weather, using high winds to ground airborne opponents and thunderstorms to bolster their ability to summon lightning. If threatened, inkanyambas prefer escape to surrender, but some have been known to parlay with powerful groups of adventurers, usually to help the serpent acquire an item that it cannot gain for itself. Such offers, however, are never genuine, as all inkanyambas seek only their own selfish ends.

In the depths of the Mwangi Expanse, the Zenj have a saying: "Speaking to an inkanyamba only gives it time to encircle you."

SERPENT'S SKULL

LUKWATA

This enormous creature has the long, dense body of a fish with a huge tail that leaves behind massive waves as the beast swims by. Its mud-colored body sports a long, eel-like head that teems with sharp teeth. As it nears its prey, a strange discordant hum is just audible.

LUKWATA

CR 11



XP 12,800

N Huge magical beast (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+4 Dex, +13 natural, -2 size)

hp 161 (14d10+84)

Fort +14; **Ref** +13; **Will** +8

DR 10/nonmagical weapons; **SR** 22

Weakness eldritch encrustation

OFFENSE

Speed swim 40 ft.

Melee bite +22 (4d10+15/19-20 plus grab)

Special Attacks capsize, dispelling bite, savage throw

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +26 (+30 with grapple); **CMD** 40

Feats Awesome Blow, Bleeding Critical, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Perception +9, Stealth +0, Swim +32

ECOLOGY

Environment tropical rivers, lakes, and swamps

Organization solitary, pair, or school (3-8)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Capsize (Ex) A lukwata can attempt to capsize a boat or ship by ramming it as a charge attack and making a CMB check. The DC of this check is 25, or the result of the boat captain's Profession (sailor) check, whichever is higher. For each size category larger the vessel is than the lukwata's size, it takes a cumulative -10 penalty on this CMB check.

Dispelling Bite (Su) When a lukwata scores a critical hit with its bite, the target is affected as if by a targeted *greater dispel magic* spell. The caster level for this effect is equal to the lukwata's Hit Dice.

Eldritch Encrustation (Su) Crystalline growths along the lukwata's digestive track contain large deposits of magical energy. These nodes are responsible for the magical feedback that surrounds each lukwata, granting it its spell resistance and damage reduction, and powering its dispelling bite ability. Casting a targeted *dispel magic* spell on a lukwata and succeeding against a DC 25 negates these abilities for 5 minutes. The DC equals 11 + the lukwata's Hit Dice.

Long regarded as creatures out of legend, lukwatas slip through the dark waters of the Mwangi Expanse, preying upon all who dare enter their deep jungle rivers and pools, including beasts typically considered apex predators. Lukwatas are enormous, insatiably carnivorous creatures that hunt the oldest rivers and lakes of the most eldritch jungles. Some say they favor the dark, owing to their genesis amid vast Darklands seas, but even if this is true, light doesn't deter them in their relentless pursuit of prey. Their long flat bodies are reminiscent of those of dolphins or large fish, but their heads are distinctively eel-like, and their prominent teeth quickly identify



them as dangerous predators. A lukwata's hide is thick and mottled, ranging from muddy brown to a tarnished copper color. Females are known to have dark blue spots along either side of the dorsal ridge, below the fin. Lukwatas grow to over 20 feet in length, and their dense bodies can weigh over 4,000 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Lukwatas prowl the rivers and lakes of jungles and tropical swamps. They primarily feed on fish and waterbirds, but lukwatas' low, flat bodies allow them to prey on land-dwelling creatures that approach the water's edge to drink or cross to the opposite shore. When making such attacks, a lukwata uses its oversized jaws to grab its victim and then fling it into the water, making it easier prey. Capable of snapping ship timbers and cutting through the muscle, sinew, and bone of giraffes and even hippos in a single bite, lukwatas' jaws can grapple or toss creatures of almost unthinkable size into the water to be eaten. Because of their size and strength, lukwatas are also particularly dangerous to vessels and can capsize them with unsettling ease. Fortunately, they do not often mistake watercraft for prey, but swimming creatures and violent motion on the water (such as fast paddling or combat) can easily draw their attention.

Lukwatas hate crocodiles, their chief predatory rivals, and attack them on sight, even if the lukwata has recently fed. Most crocodilians are not large enough to pose a significant threat; however, some accounts do exist of lukwatas and dire crocodiles crossing paths. These fights are renowned for their destructiveness, with the embattled creatures destroying piers, flotillas, and even dams in their fury.

An unknown substance in the lukwata's bloodstream attracts magical energy from the surrounding area. This energy mixes with the silt and sand passing normally through the creature's system to create small, crystalline nodes along the lukwata's digestive track. Functioning as gallstone-like encrustations aiding in the digestion of food, these nodules also infuse a lukwata's body with an aura that disrupts magic brought into contact with the creature. As a result, spells often bounce harmlessly off the monster's hide, and victims of the lukwata's bite can have even the most potent magical wards dispelled.

Lukwatas form mated pairs annually and for a brief period only. During the mating season, females produce large quantities of eggs along river bottoms and lakebeds. The males follow afterward and fertilize the eggs, which then float to the surface and hatch. The survival rate for these eggs is extremely low, as they are considered a delicacy by local fishermen and are a source of food for other predators. A female lukwata produces over 1 million eggs in a lifetime in an effort to combat this harsh reality.

Lukwata in Mythology

The lukwata is said to inhabit Lake Victoria and other large Ugandan lakes. Accounts of the creature differ, with some witnesses claiming that it can grow to a length of 100 feet or more. Although some accounts describe the creature as having a long, plesiosaurus-like neck, most locals describe it as a dolphin-like creature with a square head and jaw. Locals also believe that battles between the lukwata and crocodiles, said to be natural enemies, cause the lukwata to lose fragments of bone. If recovered, these shards are believed to have magic powers. Although a handful of sightings have been reported, Lake Victoria's relatively young geological age rules out the likelihood that the lukwata is a prehistoric creature that has survived to the present day. Some locals of Lake Victoria and scientists have theorized that the lukwata is an extremely large variety of catfish or eel, noting that the extreme depth and abundance of food in the large lakes of East Africa could easily support such creatures.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Lukwatas prefer to hunt alone when trolling rivers and other running waterways. In large and deep lakes, however, schools of five to eight can sustain themselves for brief periods of time before migrating elsewhere as their predations deplete local populations (of prey and, often, of locals). Although savage and cunning predators, they are neither inherently evil nor inherently violent, and some human and humanoid tribes near Lake Ocota and Desperation Bay revere them as powerful totem animals, praising their strength and inherent magical nature. For some more primitive inhabitants of the Mwangi Expanse, swimming with and even hunting these river giants is a rite of passage. If a lukwata is killed, such tribes both celebrate the animal and thank it for its gifts; almost every part of the creature is used.

For others who do not have the same cultural reverence for the creature, the lukwata is an invaluable resource for the creation of magic items. Wizards, merchants, and exotically skilled artisans will often pay adventurers exorbitant sums to harvest the arcane growths within a lukwata. Such a proposition, however, is risky at best since not only are lukwatas a dangerous and powerful quarry, but those tribes that do revere the animal, as well as local druids and rangers, monitor their populations to prevent overhunting and do not take poaching lightly.

UMDHLEBI

What appeared at first glance to be the decaying husk of an enormous tree erupts into motion, as thick tendrils reach outward hungrily from all sides. Amid the jumble of motion, a subconscious whisper promises sleep and sweet rest to any that lie down at the thing's base.

UMDHLEBI CR 12  XP 19,200

N Huge plant

Init +5; **Senses** tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 26 (+1 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)

hp 178 (17d8+102)

Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

DR 10/magic slashing or bludgeoning; **Immune** plant traits

Weaknesses fire

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee 2 slam +21 (3d8+10/19-20 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks compelling whisper, constrict (3d8+10)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 13, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 35

Feats Alertness, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Fly +0, Perception +12, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +0, Survival +4

SQ treacherous ground, writhing tendrils

ECOLOGY

Environment tropical forests and jungles

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Compelling Whisper (Su) As a standard action, an umdhlebi can entice any humanoid creature within 30 feet to approach and lie down at the base of its trunk. This acts as a *suggestion* spell, but the umdhlebi can only compel this one action. A creature that makes a DC 20 Will save is unaffected, and is immune to the same umdhlebi's compelling whisper for 24 hours. An umdhlebi can also use this ability on creatures it is grappling, increasing the DC to 25. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treacherous Ground (Ex) The mass of gnashing roots and stems at the base of an umdhlebi's trunk are constantly in motion. As a result, all squares within 5 feet of the umdhlebi's space are treated as difficult terrain for the purposes of movement through the area.

Writhing Tendrils (Ex) All umdhlebis have eight tendrils, but the creature can only make 2 slam attacks in a single round. However, an umdhlebi can continue to make 2 slam attacks

even while its other tendrils are grappling or constricting. An umdhlebi can use this ability as long as it has two or more tendrils free to attack.

Umdhlebis are massive, intelligent, and carnivorous plants that take root in jungles. Their outer shell is brown and resembles the thick bark of a dead tree, while concealing the softer layer of green cellulose beneath. When they flower, umdhlebis grow broad, fragile-looking crimson leaves with sharp, grasping edges. Umdhlebis draw their prey close with mind-affecting suggestions, enticing would-be victims to rest at the plant's base, and then strike with their vine-like tendrils, each as thick as a man's forearm.

Umdhlebis grow to almost 20 feet in height, but can be shorter or taller depending on the surrounding vegetation. An umdhlebi's trunk ranges from 3 to 5 feet in diameter, and the plant as a whole weighs over 10,000 pounds.

Umdhlebis can live for up to 50 years.

ECOLOGY

Legends say that the first umdhlebi was created when an assassin vine crawled into the hollow corpse of a slain, jungle-dwelling treant. The creatures fused together, returning the treant to life, but instilling in it a devastating hunger. Regardless of its true origins, the umdhlebi is known and feared throughout the jungles of the world. Resembling a tree with a hard outer coating, the umdhlebi is actually an intelligent and mobile plant, capable of uprooting itself to find food or escape danger. Although ambulatory, the umdhlebi is too slow to truly hunt and has evolved several methods to attract prey. An umdhlebi uses its large vines and brightly colored leaves to draw in animals and other creatures of lesser intelligence. Once in range, the umdhlebi lashes out with its strong, vine-like tendrils, enveloping and crushing its prey with bone-shattering force. Umdhlebis, however, prefer to feed on humanoids and can compel even the most strong-minded individuals to approach their waiting snares. When sensing a nearby humanoid, an umdhlebi vibrates rows of fine, cilia-like hairs along its trunk, producing a sound that targets the minds of any close enough to hear it. This enticing drone causes those under its sway to approach the base of the tree where the umdhlebi can strike. Although the majority of an umdhlebi grows aboveground, the creature's mouth and digestive system are just below the surface. Large, thick roots at the base provide stability and allow for movement, but between these larger roots and beneath the umdhlebi's central trunk exists a populous network of long, thin stems. Each of these growths ends in double-sided fronds lined with spine-like teeth, similar to the leaves of a flytrap. When an umdhlebi roots itself to the ground, these stems

burrow up to breach the surrounding earth, forming a moss-like border around the larger roots. Fresh kills are thus devoured from beneath, as the umdhlebi's under-stems feed. Numbering in the thousands, the umdhlebi's tiny mouths can strip a human carcass to its bones in under an hour, and although these under-stems are too small to effectively damage foes in melee, their shifting, undulating motion of makes traversing the ground around an umdhlebi difficult.

Umdhlebis produce a spiny red fruit twice a year. This fruit appears similar to the seed pods of chestnut trees, but instead of holding tough seeds, it contains a bland meat riddled with dozens of triangular seeds. While well-fed umdhlebis sometimes allow monkeys and birds to pluck their fruit and carry it to new ground, they often use their own tendrils to pick and fling the fruit where they please. Some stories tell of umdhlebis braining wanderers with these dense pods, or of passersby warned of the dangerous plants by their flying fruit, but these seasonal growths never reliably serve as weapons or warnings. Some tribes maintain dangerous traditions of seeking out and collecting umdhlebi fruit to use in the creation of mashes or alcohols. Such products possess a distinctive dry-bitter taste and so are only prepared for use in coming-of-age rituals or other rites of passage.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Umdhlebis root themselves along roads and waterways near humanoid settlements whenever possible. As their roots are highly sensitive to vibrations and can detect the movement of other nearby creatures, they can stay out of sight, despite their size, and still be aware of their surroundings.

As the dry shell of their outer layer is particularly susceptible to fire, umdhlebis always entwine themselves with surrounding foliage so that any such attacks against them also risk setting the entire wilderness ablaze. If threatened and such cover is not available, umdhlebis use their compelling whisper ability to manipulate one or more opponents and then draw them in to surround the plant's trunk, using them as living shields. Although they have no use for treasure, umdhlebis pile any leftover items from their prey into the base of their trunks as bait for passersby.

When an umdhlebi moves on to other hunting grounds, it sheds its fruit first, hoping that the seeds will take hold and grow. Denizens of the Mwangi Expanse and other jungles are taught to recognize and burn umdhlebi seeds from an early age. Nevertheless, some umdhlebi seeds do make their way into the earth and take root, reaching maturity with frightening speed.

Umdhlebi in Mythology

The umdhlebi is a plant species of the Zulu Kingdom of southern Africa. According to legends, the plant had a dead outer layer and a living layer underneath, as well as large, fragile-looking leaves that bore black and red fruit. Zulus believed the umdhlebi were possessed by evil spirits, and sacrificed sheep and goats at the plant's base to appease the spirit within. The first official record of the umdhlebi was in 1882, when a local missionary claimed that the plant emitted a deadly poisonous gas at all animals that approached in order to fertilize the ground in which it grew. To this day, the missionary's account stands as the first and last anecdote recorded about the elusive plant.



SERPENT'S SKULL



MALE HUMAN

DEITY Atheist
HOMELAND Absalom

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Wizard 13
ALIGNMENT Neutral Good
INITIATIVE +3
SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 11
DEXTERITY 9
CONSTITUTION 12
INTELLIGENCE 27
WISDOM 15
CHARISMA 9

DEFENSE

HP 77
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, -1 Dex)
Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +15

SKILLS

Appraise +24, Diplomacy +12, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (geography) +24, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (local) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Linguistics +24, Perception +15, Spellcraft +24, Swim +16

FEATS

Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration

OFFENSE

Melee +2 cane +8/+3 (1d6)
Ranged +3 light crossbow +8 (1d8+1/19-20)
Base Atk +6; CMB +6; CMD 15
Special Abilities arcane bond, hand of the apprentice (11/day), metamagic master

Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +20)
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 24), *disintegrate* (DC 24), *true seeing*
5th—*cone of cold* (2; DC 23), *telekinesis* (DC 23), *wall of force*
4th—*d. door*, *ice storm* (2), *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*
3rd—*dis. magic* (2), *fireball* (2; DC 21), *haste* (2)
2nd—*bull's strength*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray* (3), *web* (2; DC 20)
1st—*alarm*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *shield*, *unseen servant*
o (at will)—*daze* (DC 18), *detect magic* (2), *light*, *read magic*

Familiar weasel named Sneak

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 7th, 50 charges), *alchemist's fire* (2); **Other Gear** +2 cane (as club), +3 light crossbow with 20 bolts, dagger, *bracers of armor* +6, *cloak of resistance* +5, *headband of vast intelligence* +6 (Knowledge [planes]), backpack, scroll case, spell component pouch, rations (4), spellbook, 743 gp

Ezren's childhood was pleasantly safe. This changed when his father was charged with heresy. Ezren spent much of his adult life attempting to prove his father's innocence, only to discover his father was in fact guilty. The revelation shook to the core Ezren's faith in family and church, and he abandoned both, setting out into the world to find a new life. Ezren fell naturally into the ways of wizardry, and swiftly became a gifted spellcaster.



FEMALE HUMAN

DEITY Sarenrae
HOMELAND Qadira

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Cleric 13
ALIGNMENT Neutral Good
INITIATIVE -1
SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 13
DEXTERITY 8
CONSTITUTION 14
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 26
CHARISMA 12

DEFENSE

HP 90
AC 30, touch 13, flat-footed 30 (+11 armor, +4 deflection, -1 Dex, +6 shield)
Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +21

SKILLS

Diplomacy +14, Heal +21, Knowledge (religion) +16, Perception +14, Swim -3

FEATS

Channel Smite, Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Selective Channel, Turn Undead, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

OFFENSE

Melee +3 scimitar +14/+9 (1d6+4/18-20)
Ranged +2 light crossbow +10 (1d8+2/19-20)
Base Atk +9; CMB +10; CMD 23
Special Abilities channel positive energy 6/day (DC 17, 7d6 [+13 vs. undead]), healer's blessing, nimbus of light (13 rds.), sun's blessing
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; conc. +16) 9/day—*rebuke death* (1d4+5)
Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +21)
7th—*holy word* (DC 25), *sun beam*^P (DC 25; 2)
6th—*banishment* (DC 24), *heal*^P (2), *heroes' f.*
5th—*cure crit. wounds* (2), *flame strike*^P (DC 23), *neutralize poison* (2)
4th—*div. power* (3), *fire shield*^P, *free. of move.* (2)
3rd—*dispel m.* (3), *prayer*, *searing light*^P (3)
2nd—*aid* (2), *bull's strength* (2), *heat metal*^P (DC 20), *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*
1st—*bles. e. elements*^P (3), *shield of faith* (3)
o (at will)—*c. water*, *d. magic*, *light*, *mending*
D Domain spell; Domains Healing, Sun

Combat Gear *potion of c. serious wounds* (2), *wand of c. serious wounds* (CL 5th, 50 charges); **Gear** +5 chainmail, +4 hvy. wooden shield, +2 light crossbow with 20 bolts, +3 scimitar, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of inspired wis.* +6, *ring of pro.* +4, backpack, silver holy symbol, rations (6), 743 gp

Kyra was one of the few survivors of a brutal raid on her hometown, and on the smoking ruins of her village, she swore her life to Sarenrae. She lost her family and home that fateful day, yet where another might be consumed by anger, Kyra has found peace in the Dawnflower, and in the belief that if she can prevent even one death at evil hands, her own losses will not have been in vain.



FEMALE ELF

DEITY Calistria
HOMELAND Varisia

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Rogue 13
ALIGNMENT Chaotic Neutral
INITIATIVE +11
SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 14
DEXTERITY 24
CONSTITUTION 14
INTELLIGENCE 10
WISDOM 13
CHARISMA 10

DEFENSE

HP 103
AC 29, touch 19, flat-footed 23 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)
Fort +10, Ref +19, Will +9; +2 vs. enchantments
Senses low-light vision
Defensive Abilities improved evasion, uncanny dodge

SKILLS

Acrobatics +29 (+39 on jumps), Bluff +17, Climb +19, Disable Device +24, Perception +20, Sleight of Hand +24, Stealth +24, Swim +19

FEATS

Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

OFFENSE

Melee +3 keen rapier +19/+14 (1d6+5/15-20)
Ranged mwk dagger +17/+12 (1d4+4/19-20)
Base Atk +7; CMB +9; CMD 27
Special Abilities sneak attack +7d6, trapfinding +6, trap sense +4

Rogue Talents bleeding attack, combat trick, fast stealth, improved evasion, surprise attack, trap spotter

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of invisibility, acid, alchemist's fire (2); Other Gear* +4 shadow studded leather armor, +3 keen rapier, masterwork daggers (8), amulet of natural armor +3, belt of physical perfection +4, boots of elvenkind, cloak of resistance +3, ring of improved jumping, ring of protection +3, stone of good luck, backpack, grappling hook, hooded lantern, oil (5), rations (3), silk rope, thieves' tools, 104 gp

Merisiel's life experiences have taught her to enjoy things to their fullest as they occur, since it's impossible to tell when the good times might end. Never the sharpest knife in the drawer, Merisiel makes up for this by carrying at least a dozen of them on her person. She hasn't met a problem yet that can't, in one way or another, be solved with things that slice. While she's always on the move and working on her latest batch of plots for easy money, in the end it comes down to being faster than everyone else—either on her feet, or with her beloved blades. She wouldn't have it any other way.



MALE HUMAN

DEITY Cayden Cailean
HOMELAND Andoran

CHARACTER TRAITS

CLASS/LEVEL Fighter 13
ALIGNMENT Neutral Good
INITIATIVE +8
SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH 20
DEXTERITY 19
CONSTITUTION 16
INTELLIGENCE 13
WISDOM 8
CHARISMA 10

DEFENSE

HP 129
AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 23 (+10 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +1 shield)
Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +5; +3 vs. fear

SKILLS

Climb +21, Intimidate +16, Perception -1, Survival +15, Swim +21

FEATS

Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Disruptive, Dodge, Double Slice, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Staggering Critical, Step Up, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

OFFENSE

Melee +3 icy burst longsword +25/+20/+15 (1d8+13 plus 1d6 cold/17-20) or
Dual Wielding +3 icy burst longsword +23/+18/+13 (1d8+13 plus 1d6 cold/17-20) and +2 short sword +18/+13 (1d6+4/19-20)
Ranged +2 composite longbow +20/+15 (1d8+8/x3)
Base Atk +13; CMB +18; CMD 35
Special Abilities armor training 3, bravery +3, weapon training (heavy blades +3, light blades +2, bows +1)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, alchemist's fire; Other Gear* +4 breastplate, +2 composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, +3 icy burst longsword, +2 short sword, belt of physical might (Str and Con) +4, cloak of resistance +2, ring of protection +2, backpack, rations (2), silk rope

Born a farmer's son in the quiet Andoren countryside, Valeros spent his youth dreaming of adventure and exploring the world. For the past several years, he's been a mercenary, a freelance bounty hunter, and hired muscle for a dozen different employers. Gone is his youthful naivete, replaced by scars and the resolve of a veteran warrior. While noble at heart, Valeros hides this virtue beneath a jaded, sometimes crass demeanor, often claiming that there's no better way to end a day's adventuring than with "an evening of hard drinking and soft company."

SANCTUM OF THE SERPENT GOD

by Neil Spicer

The PCs must return to Ilimurea to find an ancient Azlanti weapon, before gathering an army and activating Saventh-Yhi's seven spears so they can invade the serpentfolk city. As their army attacks the serpentfolk forces in the underground city, the PCs must infiltrate the holy Sanctum of Ydersius and face the serpentfolk priest Vyr-Azul. Can they stop Vyr-Azul from reuniting Ydersius's head with his body, or will the reborn serpent god lead his people in a conquest of the surface world? Find out in the earth-shaking climax to the Serpent's Skull Adventure Path!

BEYOND SERPENT'S SKULL

by James Jacobs

The Serpent's Skull Adventure Path finally draws to a close, but the adventure continues! Face more dangers in the Mwangi Expanse, continue the fight against the resurgent serpentfolk empire as it turns its gaze toward the Inner Sea region, and explore the tomb of the legendary Azlanti hero Savith!

YDERSIUS, THE HEADLESS KING

by Rob McCreary

Discover the secrets of this ancient deity who seeks to return an inhuman empire to its former glory in an article about the decapitated, but still-living, god of the serpentfolk.

AND MORE!

Mwonduk discovers his destiny in the ruins of Kembe in the Pathfinder's Journal, and frightening new serpentine horrors, including the Herald of Ydersius himself, slither forth in the Pathfinder Bestiary.

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Mwangi Fauna

Shaveling

As if the prospect of a bat the size of a horse weren't horrifying enough, the foul shaveling presents an even greater terror. Bred and slaughtered and then animated as mounts, these large ghoulish bats spread fear and disease wherever they fly.



Whip Centipede

The whip centipede only measures a few inches in diameter, yet few would ever think to classify this vermin as "small." A typical whip centipede can grow to a length of seven feet, and specimens with a length of nearly a dozen feet have been reported. Dwelling in the fissures of deep underground realms, the whip centipede is a relatively harmless fungus eater, despite its unsettling length.



Into the Viper's Nest

All the danger of Saventh-Yhi, the jungle city lost from the modern age, pales before the terrors that lurk below its shattered streets. Beneath the ancient ruins rots a realm of darkness and monsters over which Saventh-Yhi long stood guard. Into the eternal night of that realm below the adventurers delve, coming face to face with the degenerate inheritors of a lost empire, fiend-worshiping denizens of the dark, and the zealots of a decapitated god, all in the hope of saving Eando Kline, one of the greatest explorers the world has ever known. But even if they can manage to free Eando, will the PCs be able to escape his captors, the fanged legions of the serpentfolk?

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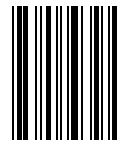
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